HYPER 132 OCTOBER 2004

# HYPER

# THE STAR WARS ISSUE

Knights of the Old Republic 2 previewed • Republic Commando previewed
Star Wars: Battlefront previewed • Trilogy DVDs reviewed
Star Wars Classic Gaming Super Special!

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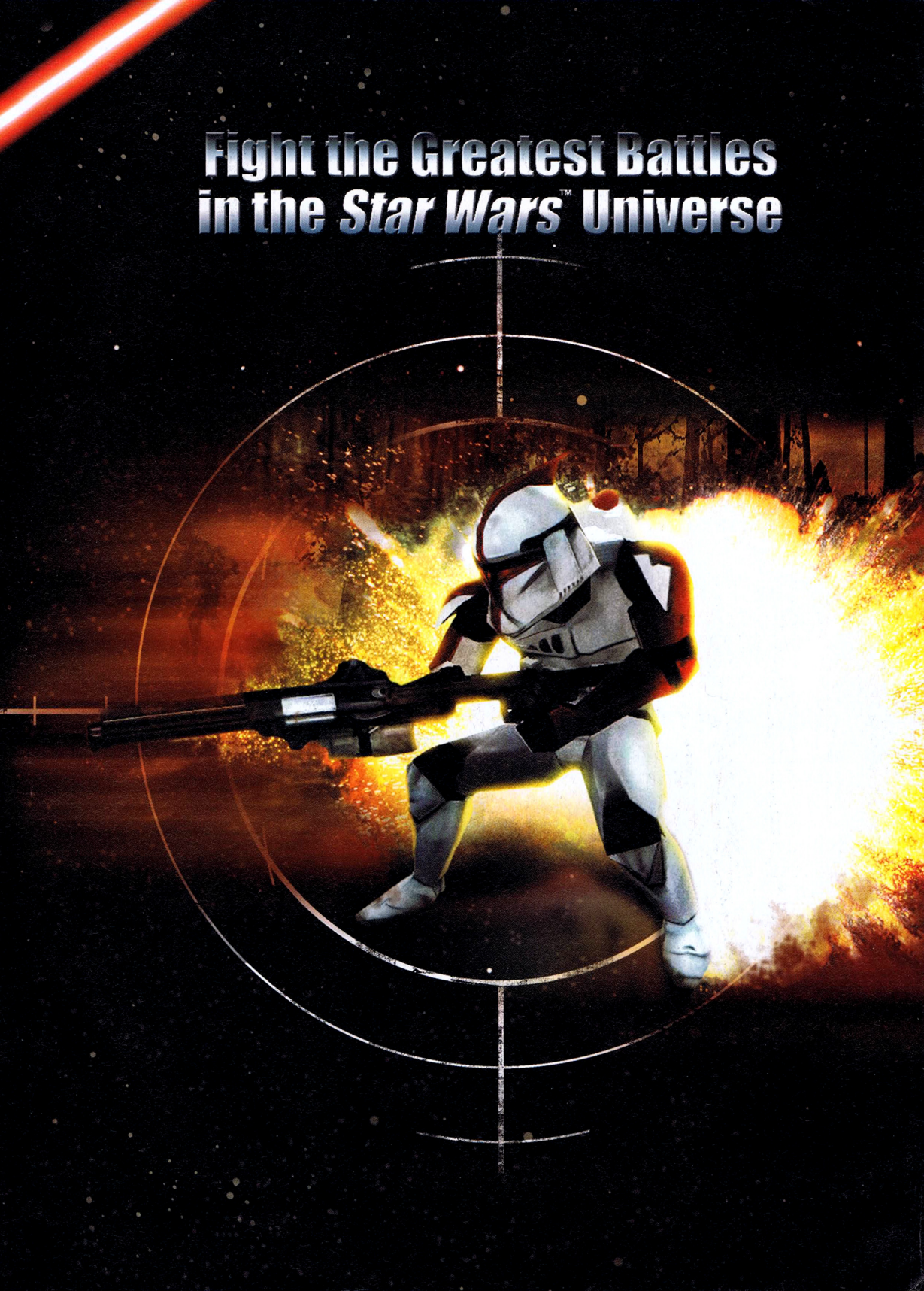

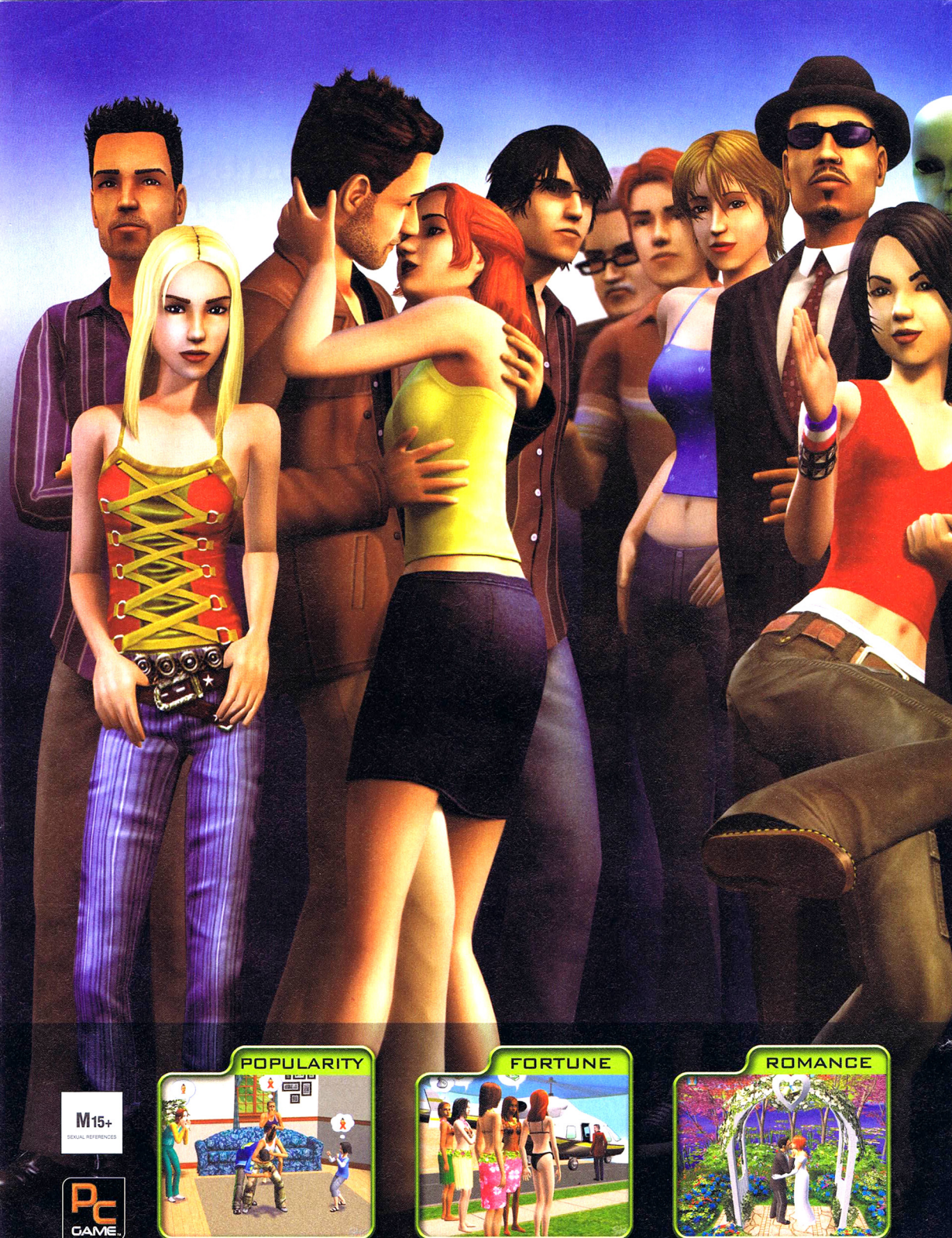


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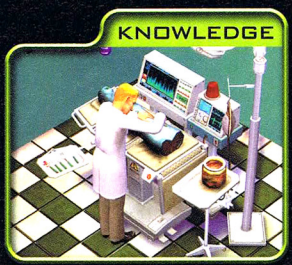


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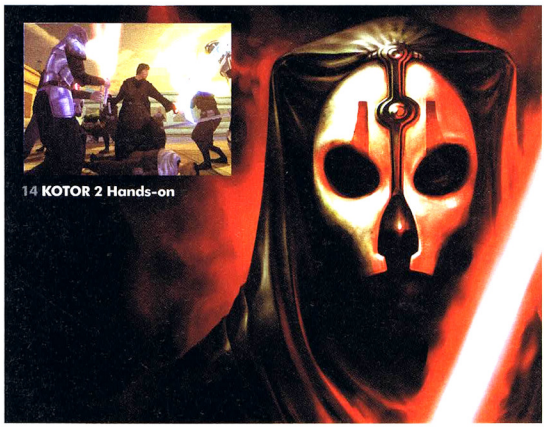

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# EDITORIAL

[above] Kicking it HK style. If it's good enough for Jackie it's good enough for me...

» You guys are my best friends, through thick and thin, we've always been together. We're four of a kind having fun all day, laughing around and pal-ing away. Just best friends, best friends are we. I love you guys.

**Cam's evil twin aka good Cam**

But seriously, it's nice to have an issue filled so full of "the good stuff" that I can devote my editorial to singing a delightful Cartman song. As you may have guessed from the cover, you're holding our special Star Wars issue in your hands. We've gone hands-on with the biggest Star Wars games on the horizon, as well as taking a fond look back at the history of games based on one of the most enduring film franchises of all time. There's a bunch of other stuff in there too, but hell, I'll let you discover that for yourself. What else has been going on in the last month? Daniel went to Singapore and I went to Hong Kong, but we'll be telling you more about that next issue. Other than that we've pretty much spent day after day playing Burnout 3, which is about as brilliant a racing game as has ever been created. Mind you, for a game that's supposed to reward risks, the balance of gameplay in Burnout 3 has really shifted - takedowns are now far more valuable than the previous stunts of driving into and narrowly missing oncoming traffic. Whether this is a change for the better is debatable but it's still good to see Criterion shaking things up. We're also really excited that the arcade racing genre is coming back to life: this month it's Burnout 3 and next month it's the superb Outrun 2. Now all we need is a new Ridge Racer game... you listening Namco?

**Cam Shea » Editor**

## HYPER CREW MONTHLY TOP 5 GAMES

**Cam Shea -** Mr Editor type person
1. Burnout 3 - PS2
   **"God wept"**
2. Doom 3 - PC
3. KOTOR II - Xbox
4. DJ: Decks & FX - PS2
5. Lemony Snicket

**Daniel Wilks -** Did not kill the deputy
1. Burnout 3 - PS2
   **"I've never been a fan of racing games before now"**
2. Mashed - PS2
3. Star Ocean - PS2
4. Champions of Norrath - PS2
5. Pokemon: Leaf Green - GBA

**Eliot Fish -** King under the sea
1. Doom 3 - PC
   **"I think this game is going to give me a heart attack"**
2. Pro Evolution Soccer 3 – PS2
3. Loom - PC
4. The Sims 2 - PC
5. Colin McRae Rally 2005 - Xbox

**Tim Levy -** Funk soul brother
1. Battlefield 1942 - PC
   **"42 player mayhem on an ihug server- hilarious"**
2. Ping Pong (table tennis)
3. Wangan Midnight R - Arcade
4. Futsal in-door soccer
5. Red Dead Revolver - PS2/Xbox



HYPER»

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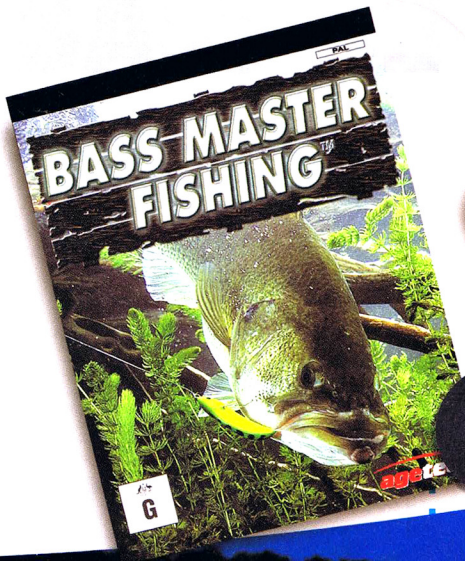

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# NEWS

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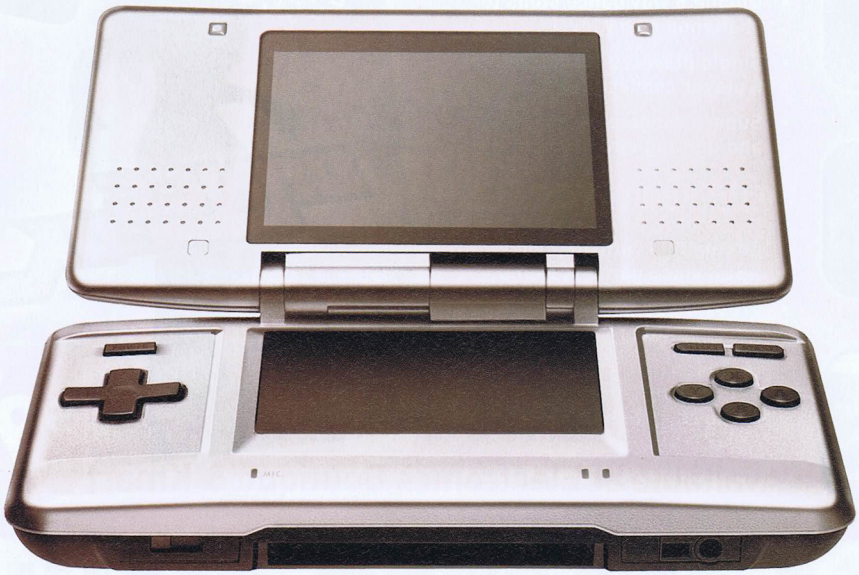
**IN THE NEWS:** Become a game designer! / Uwe Boll... we're not fans / Scarface the videogame! / Where's the Ep III stuff?



[left] But can it play Oil Panic?

DS LINEUP

# NINTENDO UNVEIL FINAL DS DESIGN

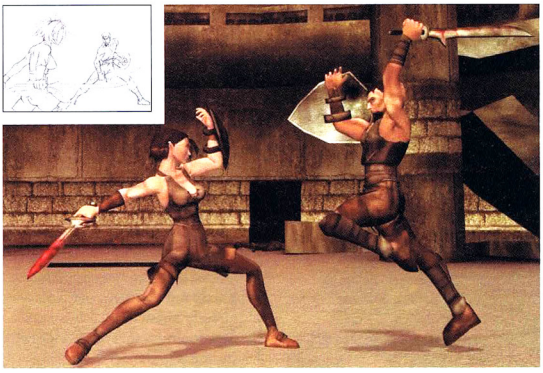
## It's not long now people!

Nintendo has finally released a list of 70 or so games that will launch with the DS in Japan as well as the final look for the much anticipated handheld. As you can see the new design looks quite swanky and with any luck they will have fixed the uncomfortable shoulder buttons as well. Whilst it's unlikely we'll get to see the majority of these games on our hallowed shores, here are some of the games from Japanese developers we may be able to expect to see when the DS arrives in Australia early next year.

- **Boktai** (working title) - Konami Entertainment Japan
- **Bomberman** (working title) - Hudson
- **Bust a Move series** - Taito
- **Castlevania** (working title) - Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo
- **Choro Q DS** (working title) - Atlus
- **Dragon Ball Z** (working title) - Banpresto
- **Dragon Quest Monsters game** (working title) - Square Enix
- **Dynasty Warriors** (working title) - Koei
- **Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles** (working title) - Square Enix
- **Harvest Moon for DS** (working title) - Marvelous Interactive
- **History Simulation** (working title) - Koei
- **Living High Killing Low** (working title) - Genki
- **Egg Monster Heroes** - Square Enix
- **Made in Wario DS** (working title) - Nintendo
- **Mario Kart DS** (working title) - Nintendo
- **Metroid Prime Hunters** - Nintendo
- **Monster Farm game** (working title) - Tecmo
- **Nintendogs** (working title) - Nintendo
- **Original RPG** (working title) - Marvelous Interactive

NINTENDO DS™

- **One Piece** (working title) - Bandai
- **PictoChat** (working title) - Nintendo
- **Powerful Pro Baseball Series** (working title) - Konami Entertainment Japan
- **Project Rub** (working title) - Sega
- **Rockman X series** - Capcom
- **Slime Morimori Dragon Quest game** (working title) - Square Enix
- **Sonic DS** (working title) - Sega
- **Spectral Force** (working title) - Idea Factory
- **Super Mario Brothers game** (working title) - Nintendo
- **Super Mario 64x4** (working title) - Nintendo
- **Team NINJA title** - Tecmo
- **Vandal Hearts** (working title) - Konami
- **Viewtiful Joe** (working title) - Capcom
- **Winning Eleven Series** (working title) - Konami Entertainment Tokyo
- **Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour** - Konami
- **Zoids** (working title) - Tomy



[above] Fighting for places at QANTM

QANTM

## GETTING INTO GAMES

### Want to become a game developer?

Many people email us each month to ask how to get into the games industry. Up until now we've been pretty thin on the ground with details on how. QANTM is a Brisbane based, Australian educational facility with nationally endorsed courses specialising in 2D and 3D animation and, of course, games development and design (amongst other things). More exciting than the fact that Australia actually has a degree in games development is the recent announcement that the Sony Foundation of Australia has teamed with QANTM to offer a scholarship to games development students that have completed the first twelve months of the two year games development course. QANTM will also be offering two scholarships (one male and one female) to year 12 leavers who wish to enter the game development arena in animation, multimedia or graphic design.

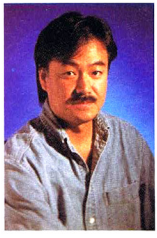
More exciting still is the fact that QANTM have entered into a deal with Auran for internships, allowing students in their final trimester of the Bachelor of Interactive Entertainment majoring in Games Programming to work hand in hand with the Australian developer for 20 hours a week for 13 weeks, gaining valuable insight into the industry as well as much coveted hands on experience. If you're interested in entering the college you'd better get your butts into gear though - the next intake kicks off on the 20th of September.

JAP RPG

## NOT SO FINAL FANTASY

### Brand spanking new studio

In a move sure to please fans of Japanese style RPGs, Final Fantasy creator and head honcho, Hironobu Sakaguchi's independent studio, Mist Walker has just announced that they are working on two new, as yet unnamed role playing games. No real details on either of the games has been released at this point but Sakaguchi has been quoted as saying that he is going to pack his 20+ years of industry and genre experience into the titles and hopes that he will be able to bring players to tears with the levels of immersion, heretofore unseen in anything but the greatest of movies and novels. The only information we have been able to uncover so far is that each of the games will feature many of the strongest points we have come to expect from the Final Fantasy series, namely strong and layered characters and a challenging and immersive plot line. It is unknown at this time on which platform/s the games will be released on and when we can expect to see them on shelves but the developers have been hard at work since April so we should expect some preliminary information on both titles in the coming months.



[left] Mr Sakaguchi and his excellent mustache

[below] Scared yet? You should be

SCARY

## UWE BOLL IS THE DEVIL

### Licenses turn evil again

Hot on the tail of the truly abominable House of the Dead and the recently finished Alone in the Dark, the new German menace Uwe Boll has announced the production of a BloodRayne movie. Although the idea of him making yet another film based on a game will take no-one by surprise, the real surprise is the caliber of actor he's actually managing to attract to the project. So far Kristanna Loken, best known as the dull but attractive blonde terminator in T3: Rise of the Machines has signed on as the titular dhampir, Ben Kingsley who was recently brilliant in Sexy Beast is Kagan, the villain of the piece and Michelle Rodriguez (Resident Evil, Fast and the Furious, Girl Fight) and Michael Madsen (Reservoir Dogs, Kill Bill Vol 2) have signed on as two vampire hunters whose mission it is to recruit Rayne.

Although none of the cast aside from Ben Kingsley are what you would call A-listers, one has to wonder what type of dirty blackmail material Boll has on them to make them agree to work. Either that or all of the actors have been living under a rock for a while, have no access to the internet, don't know anyone who has warned them that it might be a bad idea or just really, really need money for a new Porsche.

## CAPTION THIS!

### PART 59

Come on, make us laugh. Just send your funny screen captions to us at captionthis@next.com.au with Caption This Part 59 in the subject line.

titmouse... hee hee hee... hee hee hee

# Bad Cop No Doughnut

DANIEL WILKS - THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS DEPUTY EDITOR

If you have an MP3 player you're a criminal. Did you know that? As it stands there is no real legal way of having a portable music player that isn't a CD player without infringing copyright laws in Australia. Due to our archaic legal system the very act of ripping a CD you own to MP3 is a direct contravention of the copyright laws. Likewise taping a TV show carries the same type of legal issues. Up until now the legal system has been lenient on such "crimes" but with the incumbent American FTA we could start facing stiff RIAA style sanctions for the use of such music devices. At the current time Australians can only be sued for copyright infringement for burning an MP3 or taping something off TV but when the FTA comes in people can actually face criminal proceedings which can include gaol time. Gaol time for having a fucking iPod and buying a couple of CDs you like. I currently have 14Gb of music on my iPod. By RIAA standards I could face a fine of over a hundred grand and maybe spend a few years in pound-me-in-the-arse penitentiary.

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COKE

## SCARFACE THE GAME

### Say Hello to my little friend

In the post GTAIII gaming world, what would seem like the perfect film license to be transformed into videogame fodder? Scarface. And thanks to Vivendi Universal Games it's happening. Players will take on the role of Tony Montana, a Cuban refugee who lands in Florida and sets about creating a massive cocaine empire. It's got it all - drugs, guns, women, a gaudy 80s setting (with the resulting poodle-like hairdos) and a bad guy lead you want to root for.

According to Michael Pole, Executive Vice President, Worldwide Studios for Vivendi Universal Games: "The game will feature cutting-edge technology, a compelling storyline and the unprecedented experience of playing as one of Hollywood's most notorious gangsters, Tony Montana." Sounds good to us. The storyline has been written by screenwriter David McKenna (American History X, Blow, Get Carter) which, considering his pedigree, is definitely good news.

Scarface will take you from hustling on the streets of Miami, to the islands of the Florida Keys and to the Bahamas, presumably to set up a massive mansion with an indoor fountain proclaiming that the world is yours. We have our fingers crossed that the game will have a great hip hop soundtrack, given the influence Scarface has had on so much rap music from the mid 90s. More info coming!

MIA

## EPISODE III WOES

### Star Wars Stuff-up

We'd like to start by offering our apologies. On the foil bag this issue we promised pics of the upcoming LucasArts game based on the third movie in the Star Wars series Episode III: Revenge of the Sith, but due to an unfortunate turn of events we are currently unable to do so. To have a foil bag printed the master needs to be sent weeks in advance of the magazine. At the time the master was sent we were going to receive the pictures but in the time between it going and the magazine deadline LucasArts has undergone a staff reshuffling. Due to the delays caused by the reshuffle we were not able to get the images in time. This is obviously a real shame as the game is being developed by The Collective and promises to be very good. Once again we'd like to apologise but you can rest assured that we'll be bringing you the images and a first look as soon as we can.

[left] We wanted a picture of the Star Wars kid but no such luck

## WINNERS

### HYPER 130

#### EVO CRUSHINATORS

- Emma Plint, Upper Mount Gravatt, QLD
- Sharon Ling, Aberfoyle Park, SA
- Luke Lakeman, Ferny Creek, VIC
- Narelle McCray, Wynyard, TAS
- Shyan Williams, Frankston, VIC
- Cameron Biggelaar, Surrey Hills, VIC
- Gail Plint, Pialba, QLD
- Garry Watts, Southern Cross, WA
- Jay Baker, Gracemere, QLD
- Cathy Donnelly, Swan Hill, VIC

#### RISE OF NATIONS

- Alita Pereira, Glenmore Park, NSW
- Carlie Fay, Gordonvale, QLD
- Tim McLoughlin, Ferntree Gully, VIC
- Zachary Stokes, Carindale, QLD
- Tracy Emmerson, Regents Park, QLD

GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT

## OVERFLOW

Some very cool Halo 2 news surfaced this month. Apparently four players will be able to play on one Xbox over Xbox Live. Four player splitscreen over Live? Sounds awesome to us, and means you'll be able to compete against other players online, but still have your mates around.

**Mortal Kombat: Deception is barely out the door, yet we already know that Midway are developing a seventh installment for the popular series. Yes, Mortal Kombat 7 is on its way to both PS3 and Xbox 2.**

Silent Hill 5 is next gen system bound. Yes, after the release of Silent Hill 4: The Room, SH freaks will be waiting for the new consoles before they can get stuck into any more twisted survival horror action.

**It has been confirmed that the PS3 will have a Blu-Ray disc drive. What's Blu-Ray you ask? A new DVD format that can hold up to 27GB on one layer (as opposed to 4.7GB on standard DVDs). The drive will also be able to read current DVDs, so you should still be able to watch DVDs and possibly play PS2 games. Not only is this good news for the storage capacity of next-gen games, but when high definition movies start coming out on Blu-Ray, gamers will be well equipped for the next home theatre revolution.**

Two of the big GameCube games on the horizon - Star Fox and Geist have both been pushed back to releases sometime in 2005.

**As you may know, after Core Design was stripped of the Tomb Raider franchise following the disastrous Angel of Darkness, Crystal Dynamics have been put in charge of developing the next game. What you may not know is that the man that created Lara in the first place - Toby Gard (who spent the last seven years making Galleon), is now on board as a senior designer. Let's hope he can steer them in wise directions.**

Neverwinter Nights 2 has been officially announced, and guess who's developing it? Obsidian - the guys behind Knights of the Old Republic II and countless other classic games. It will undoubtedly be first class.

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# STAR WARS
## KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC II:
# THE SITH LORDS

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**XBOX / PC**

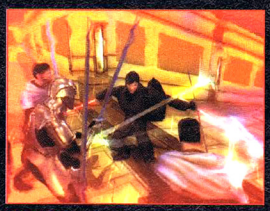
**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** RPG
**PLAYERS:** 1
**DEVELOPER:** Obsidian
**PUBLISHER:** LucasArts
**AVAILABLE:** December 2004

**AMOS-O-METER**

And you thought the first game was good. We've been in the privileged position of being able to play Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords in its current unfinished state. Yes, in the privacy of the Hyper office, we've been able to load her up (a good old punch to the Xbox, just like Han Solo in the Falcon), create a character, and start exploring that galaxy far, far away... one more time. This is as hands-on as a preview can get, so we're here to impart to you as much information as we can slip by the LucasArts Stormtroopers that have been garrisoned here at Hyper HQ for the past few weeks that we've had with the game. Thankfully, all blasters were set to stun (and they couldn't hit a Gungan at point blank range, anyway), so come with us and together we will rule the galaxy!

### FASTER MORE INTENSE

The Sith Lords is set roughly five years after the events of the first Knights of the Old Republic. In the wake of the civil war, the Republic has scattered and the Sith have proliferated throughout the galaxy, nearly wiping the Jedi out of existence. The former council on Dantooine lies in ruins, the Jedi Temple on Coruscant stands an empty shell, and if any Jedi still do exist in the galaxy, then they're good at keeping themselves well hidden. You, the player, are one of those few remaining Jedi.



[above] Et tu Brute?

[above] Havin' it! I'm havin' it!

The game begins with your character coming out of stasis, confused as to what events led to your deep sleep in a Kolto tank. Your memory of how you got there is somewhat foggy, and a number of important questions spin around your head - questions which could be answered were it not for all the dead bodies lying about the place. Priority number one: Find out just what the hell is going on!

A nice twist to the beginning of the game is that the optional tutorial also serves as a "prelude" to the game proper. Play through the tutorial and you'll take on the role of the utility droid (similar to R2-D2), T3-M4, on board a distinctly damaged and eerily empty Ebon Hawk, floating in space. Repairing the ship's systems will give you a few clues as to what's going on, to prep you before you start playing with your created character in an entirely different location.

Unlike the first KOTOR, your character is a Jedi from the get-go – it's just about the only thing you know about yourself for certain. No, you're not the same character as you were in the first KOTOR, but an altogether new Jedi who served under Revan in the war. Character creation begins with you choosing your Jedi class: Sentinal, Guardian or Consular. Do you want to be more skilled with lightsaber combat or more powerful in manipulating the Force? Each of these classes will also branch out later in the game to prestige classes, such as Sith Lord and Jedi Master, or variations such as the Jedi Weapon Master and Sith Marauder. Choosing the light or dark side is now a far more complex path to travel, with many cool new character options to choose from along the way.

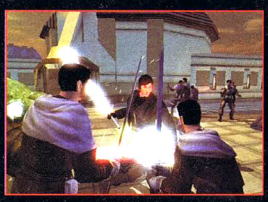
Despite the fact that you begin the game as a new Jedi, you won't actually start the game with a lightsaber or the ability to use Force powers. This has been explained by the fact that your character was exiled and abandoned their Jedi ways many years previously. Upon waking from unconsciousness, your link

**BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS, WHATCHA GONNA DO?** If you're wondering why the game is called The Sith Lords, then you're not thinking very hard. LucasArts have only officially unveiled Darth Sion, the creepy Sith Lord who keeps his shattered body alive through sheer hate and dark side power, but he's not the only bad guy in the game. There are a number of Sith Lords that will cross your path during your adventures, including the towering and intimidating Darth Nihilis and a female Sith Lord who looks a lot like the evil queen from Disney's Snow White. We'd tell you more, but the LucasArts torture probe is hovering perilously close to our desks.
There are also returning characters from the first KOTOR, if it wasn't possible for them to have died in the first game. Wondering what happened to Bastila, HK-47 and Carth? You just might find out.

THE SITH HAVE PROLIFERATED... NEARLY WIPING THE JEDI OUT OF EXISTENCE

[above] It's such a lovely day, let's put down our sabers and have a cup of tea

[below] If you squint that looks like Lando... and Slimer. What a combo!



to the Force has become extremely weak, and it takes some time for your powers to fully return. Acquiring a cool lightsaber will also be a fun quest that any self-respecting Jedi will happily look forward to.

Because every gamer out there will have played the first KOTOR differently, The Sith Lords handles the back story in a very clever way. Your character will discuss the events of the last game with other NPCs, and your dialogue choices help to establish how your character remembers those events. This way, every player will find that the story in The Sith Lords continues on from the first game seamlessly, regardless of whether you played as good or evil in the first KOTOR.

### SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

As you wander around in a daze, half-naked (which makes for some amusing conversations with NPCs), you discover that you're on the mining facility, Peragus. It's here that you'll get your first taste of combat, as well as experience how the developer, Obsidian, have enhanced certain aspects of the gameplay. If you used the Computer skill in the first game, it seemed to only be useful for unlocking doors or spying through security cameras. Now the computer skill is far more useful, giving you the ability to hack for logs containing hidden information, run diagnostics and repair sub-systems and have the chance to solve specific side-quests that wouldn't be possible without the appropriate skill. Logging onto a terminal now presents the player with an abundance of choices, and quite some time can be spent poking around. Likewise, the Security skill means you will get access to many rooms or containers that will be completely inaccessible otherwise. Player skills have basically been made far more worthwhile, rewarding the player with game content that they can't experience without the appropriate abilities. It's a far deeper and more complex system than the first KOTOR, and as you'll discover exploring the Peragus facility, computer systems are more in-depth, interactions with the technology more interesting, and solutions far more tricky than just hacking the locks on doors.

## >> EVERY CHOICE YOU MAKE HAS DIRECT CONSEQUENCES

Player stats and skills also play a part in how your character interacts with NPCs, because if you have the appropriate abilities, extra choices will become available in dialogue trees. If you have a high repair skill, for instance, your character may be able to suggest a technical solution to a problem to an NPC, thanks to your knowledge in that area. This kind of detail helps to make the game experience feel far more personalised. Every choice you make in shaping your character has direct consequences to your experience in the game, on a far more detailed level than was possible in KOTOR.

Likewise, the paths of good or evil both have many more twists and turns for the player to navigate. Playing towards the dark side, for instance, is no longer a case of just choosing the one evil response in dialogue. Now players can be manipulative, arrogant or plain crazy, as well as have different evil solutions to missions or puzzles. Killing an NPC might not be as enjoyable as making them suffer, or having someone else take the blame for their demise. We all remember with glee what it was like at the end of KOTOR, where you forced your NPC companions to bow before you to test their loyalty... well now, the Sith Lords has more of that kind of evil interaction throughout the entire game. But it's not all doom and gloom. If you want to play as a pure and noble Jedi, the light side will also have just as many choices in the way you choose to do good – there's never the one obvious "light side" solution. It seems that The Sith Lords is all about more player choice, and more variables to mission outcomes. This is a much deeper game than the first, and for that we can thank the deft writing skills of the experienced RPG team at Obsidian Entertainment.

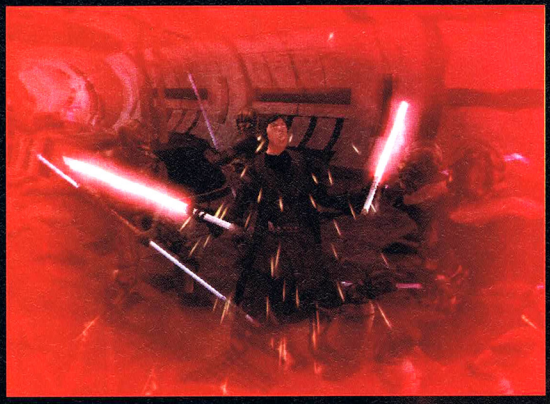
Workbenches are another example of how much more depth has been put into The Sith Lords. Now you won't just upgrade items, but create them from scratch with various components, as well as take apart items in your inventory so as to cannibalize their components in order to make new, more useful items.

### FRIEND OR FOE... OR BOTH?

Your NPC companions obviously play a big part in how you experience either the light or dark side. In The

**NAVIGATE THIS, FLY BOY** A welcome change in The Sith Lords is a revamp of the game's many sub-menus. The equip screen has had a tweak so that it's much easier to manage useable items without losing track of what gear you own, as well as being able to have two different weapon sets configured, so that you can switch weapons on the fly whilst in combat. If your blaster rifle isn't doing the job, you can now switch to double lightsabers, for example, without even needing to open the menu. In fact, the combat menu has its own set of fancy new options, including being able to take a completely defensive stance in combat – very handy for lightsaber users who'd rather sit back and deflect lasers about.

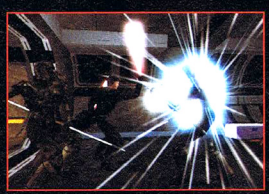
There are now new filters for most menu screens too, so on the inventory screen, for instance, it's easy to get a look at all the datapads you're carrying, without having to scroll through your recently collected items.



Sith Lords, there's a total of about 10 characters that will become available to accompany you over the course of the game, however some of those 10 will be different depending on whether you turn evil or not, and whether you're male or female. Yes, some potential companions won't join you depending on your alignment, and others might become so fearful of your slide towards evil that they hightail it home or even get corrupted themselves and start acting out of character.

There's Mira, the bounty hunter, with her wrist-mounted rocket launcher; Atton Rand, a Han Solo style space cowboy; Kreia, a mysterious older Jedi woman; as well as many other cool companions that, without spoiling too much, may or may not wield lightsabers/have a lot of shaggy body hair/sport Darth Maul style head horns/wear fancy Mandalorian armour/wear sexy tight leather/have cyborg body parts... and more.

Your adventures will take you to all new planets, and a few familiar ones, but it might surprise some of you to find out that Tatooine won't feature in The Sith Lords. You will however, get to explore the mountainous vistas and jungles of Dxun; the glossy halls of Telos; the smuggler capital that is Nar Shaddaa; Onderon, which is just a shuttle ride away from Dxun; And also what remains of Dantooine... as well as one other familiar location from the last game. At our last count, there seemed to be about seven planets, but more than 12 unique locations to explore in the game, however, this may change as The Sith Lords gets banged into shape for release. Excited? You should be. You should be. <<



**[above]** And this is for Ghostbusters 2!
**[above right]** Force Fury - proof that PCP and lightsabers don't mix...

# STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**XBOX / PC**

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** FPS
**PLAYERS:** 1-16
**DEVELOPER:** LucasArts
**PUBLISHER:** LucasArts
**AVAILABLE:** Early 2005

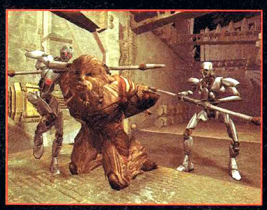
**AMOS-O-METER**

Maybe it's a sign of the times or maybe it's the fact that after nearly 30 years of popularity the franchise is beginning to mature (perhaps at the same rate as the original fan base), but the games based in and around the Star Wars universe are becoming steadily more complex and, dare we say it, darker in tone. Take Republic Commando, for example. Players are set to take the role of a gritty, hard-bitten, goal oriented Clone Trooper, tasked by the Republic to perform the tasks that no one else can or will. As all Clone Troopers are the same, Republic Commando comes across as somewhat less character oriented than basically every other Star Wars game that has been released (with the notable exception of Battlefront) but rather than working to the detriment of the title it serves to enforce the tactical, goal oriented focus of the action.

### THE CEREBRAL ROUTE LESS TRAVELED

Rather than simple run and gun action, Republic Commando will take a far more cerebral route, putting the player in charge of not only their own Clone Trooper but three other clone squad members, issuing them simple commands via the Xbox D-Pad or PC keyboard. The addition of the squad members will undoubtedly make combat a significantly different experience from previous Star Wars shooters such as the Jedi Knight series, as the addition of player controllable AI characters will allow for tactically more advanced encounters. Although it will be possible (albeit extremely hard) to blast your way through the 15 odd missions Schwarzenegger style, a thinking man's approach should give players a far more enjoyable time. The major encounters we've seen so far show a depth of design that will allow players to tackle the combat in a number of different ways depending on their individual style of play. For instance, one section may see you and your troops holed up behind a barricade being assaulted by a massive, boss sized battle droid. On one hand, the player could order their troopers to whittle away at the droid from cover, although their weapons do little damage to the superior armour of the droid. Alternatively they could command the squad to give covering fire, hopefully attracting the attention of the enemy whilst the player makes a run for the turret behind the droid, capable of doing massive and sustained damage. For players who prefer to take a more hands off role in combat it will even be possible to play out the entire battle from the safety of cover, only issuing orders to the subservient troopers.

Not only does the AI follow orders given in battle, they will also be able to function intelligently and autonomously in all fields of action including healing. Rather than standard health packs to speed recovery, Republic Commando will feature a regenerating shield in the vein of Halo, as well as what can only be described as a "health gun", a piece of equipment that must be equipped and fired to achieve any effect. And it's not only the player who is equipped with the ability to heal – all of the clones have access to the equipment and can heal each other as well as the player without being specifically instructed to. Keeping with the general theme of equipment, players will have access to a range of weapons and equipment well known in the Star Wars universe, ranging from blaster rifles and pistols through to the iconic Thermal Detonator and Wookiee Bowcaster, as well as new weapons such as the Trandoshan Slaver Shotgun and Geonosian Beam Cutter. The core weapon of the clone troopers, the blaster rifle, is also upgradable throughout the game and can be converted to a powerful sniper rifle or armour piercing cannon.



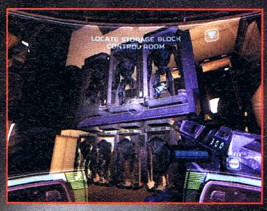
**[above]** We didn't know Wookies went in for robot spanking shenanigans either

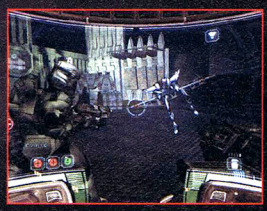
### ROBOTO LABS?

Throughout the course of the game the player will move through such disparate environments as a Separatist capitol ship, the dense jungles of the Wookiee home-planet Kashyyyk and the insect like colonies and robot factories of Geonosis, last seen in Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones. The game will contain around 15 missions broken up into 50 or so sub missions, with goals ranging from infiltration and sabotage through to assault and assassination. This breadth of locations and gameplay is backed up by some equally impressive graphics too. But hey, that's just icing on an already appetising cake right?

Simply put, whether you're a goody two-shoes Jedi or an evil makeup wearing Sith Lord, Republic Commando is a game to keep an eye on. It's due out early 2005. <<

**WHO ARE YOU GOING TO OWN TODAY?** **Both the Xbox and PC versions of Republic Commando will feature online modes with games including such faves as Capture the Flag, Deathmatch and Team Deathmatch. The online modes for both formats will support up to 16 players and feature downloadable content in the future. The Xbox version of Republic Commando will ship with two and four player split screen multiplayer as well. It is unknown at this stage as to whether the split screen multiplayer will include a cooperative mode but we'll keep our fingers crossed. The PC version will ship with a level editor allowing the players to make their own maps and mods to extend the life of the title.**



# TAKE THE ROLE OF A GRITTY, HARD-BITTEN CLONE TROOPER

# STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Multiplayer Shooter
**PLAYERS:** 1-16 (32 over PC LAN)
**DEVELOPER:** Pandemic
**PUBLISHER:** LucasArts
**AVAILABLE:** September

**AMOS-O-METER**

After decades of performing the same old duties of Luke, Han, Leia and Chewie in ad infinitum, it's about time gamers were given the chance to experience some of the actual Galactic war that was taking place whilst Skywalker and friends were getting priority shuttle service and blue milk in tall glasses. We're talking about the poor Rebel troops in the trenches on Hoth, the squads of Stormtroopers sent to their deaths at the hands of the ferocious Ewoks (*shiver*), the many Bothans who died to bring Mon Mothma the Death Star plans... these are the real heroes of the Galactic Civil War - the men, women and droids that just got on with the job. Now, finally, we get to celebrate their achievements in Star Wars: Battlefront.

### WITH A REBEL YELL...

Battlefront is primarily designed for online play. Yes, there's a single player Galactic Conquest to play through if you're without broadband and have no friends, but the reality is that any multiplayer game played solo against AI bots is a pretty lifeless experience. The real kicker here is being able to form teams and go at each other with Star Wars vehicles and weaponry of all shapes and sizes, online or via System Link or LAN play. It's the teamplay, communication with fellow players and advanced tactics of gamers co-operating together that make a multiplayer shooter such as Battlefront really come alive. Put together a rag tag band of rebels, an elite squad of crack Imperial troops, a kiwi-loving team of Republic soldiers or a clanking band of Separatist droids, and blow the Bantha poodu out of each other... and then rag on your victims for added amusement. This is Battlefield 1942 in the Star Wars universe, and it's destined to acquire a fervent fanbase of gamers.

Each faction in Battlefront offers a varying selection of player classes, from standard infantry to snipers, pilots, heavy gunners and special classes such as the Separatist's Droidekas (Destroyer Droids) or the Rebel's Smuggler class (Wookiees). Each brandish their own firepower so you can assemble squads that compliment each other in battle ability - have your Rebel scouts camp out between the towering Endor tree trunks whilst your Rebel Vanguards march in with their Blastech missile launchers in an attempt to knock out the oncoming AT-ST walkers - the Scouts picking off any Imperial who tries to make a run for it. Likewise, you could have a handful of Super Battledroids flank a small collection of Republic troopers who think they have some Battledroids cornered in the streets of Theed. Unit balance has been carefully taken into consideration, so classes with heavy firepower tend to take longer to reload their weapons and are generally less versatile than players such as the Pilot who can make repairs to damaged equipment. Whilst player balancing is crucial to a multiplayer game such as Battlefront, we'd like to think a bunch of Original Trilogy Stormtroopers could easily tear apart a squadron of puny Prequel Battledroids without breaking a sweat... unless they constantly miss all their shots, of course.

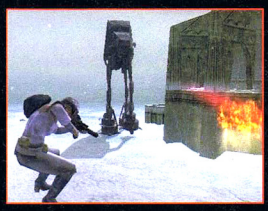
However humans and droids aren't the only heroes in Battlefront. Expect to find Wookiees, Ewoks, Bothans, Tusken Raiders and a selection of notable Star Wars characters popping up to lend you a helping hand on occasion. Darth Vader, for instance, doesn't take too kindly to players trying to shoot him in the butt with their blaster rifles. Fans of the expanded universe will also be pleased to see that the Republic faction includes the ARC trooper and that the Imperial forces include the much-loved Dark Trooper from the classic PC game, Dark Forces.

### HUTT HUTT HUTT

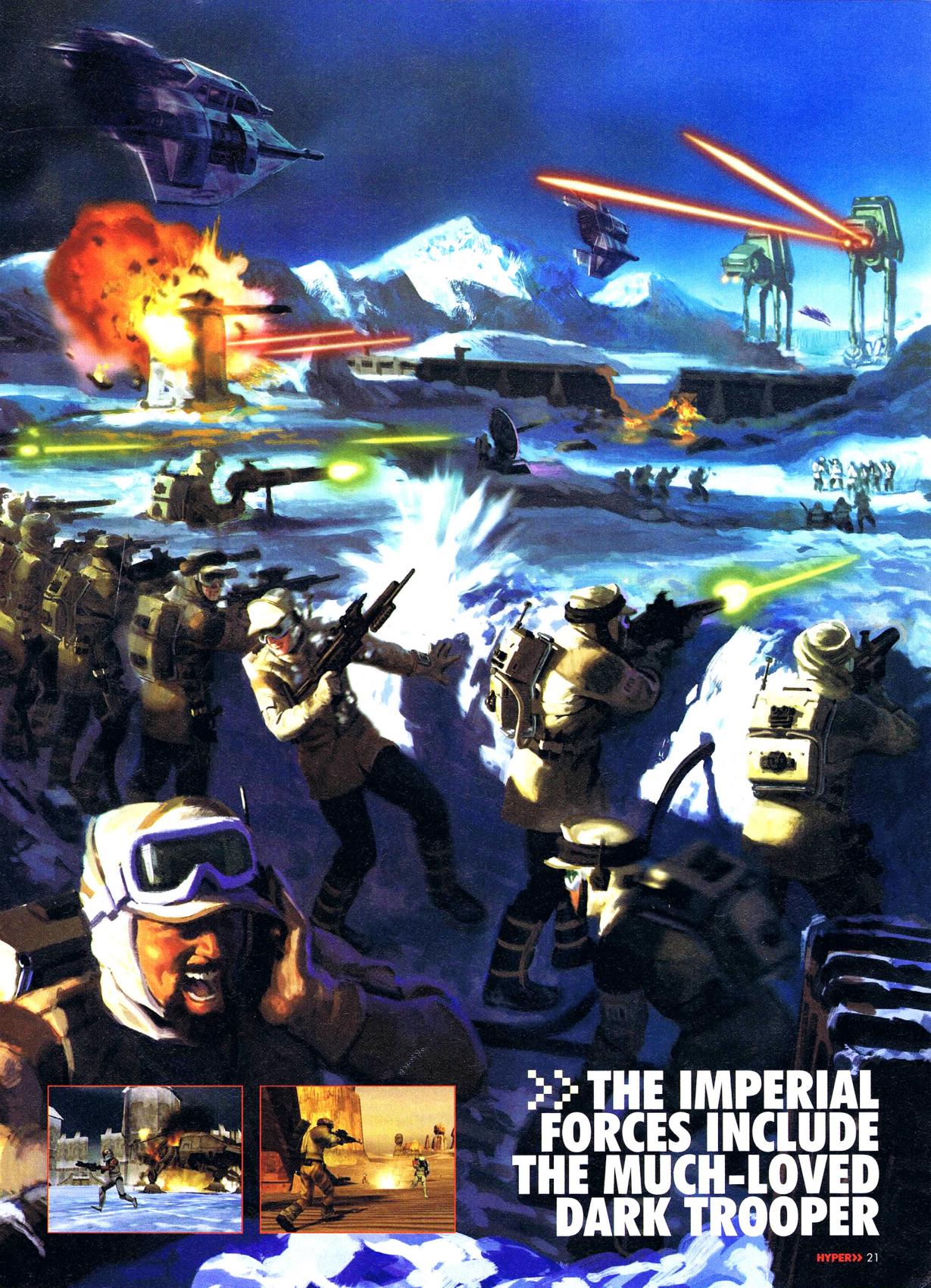
Battlefront is played across ten planets - with each planet offering a variety of different settings. There's Hoth, Naboo, Tatooine, Yavin 4, the forest moon of Endor, Geonosis, Kamino, Rhen-Var, Bespin and even a planet from the upcoming Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith. Each planet has a number of hot spots to fight in, and obviously some maps are designed to incorporate vehicles too - like the snowfields of Hoth where Rebels can jump into the good old Snowspeeders and zoom over Imperial infantry. Expect to also pilot TIE fighters (and bombers), Jedi Starfighters, Republic Gunships, Geonosian Starfighters and even the Cloud City twin-pod fighters, alongside ground vehicles such as the AT-ST, Trade Federation tank and ever-beloved Imperial Speederbike. This really will be all-out Star Wars carnage!

One thing we noticed from our hands-on play of the PS2 version was that troop movement is a lot slower than expected, as is the firing rate of blasters and mounted turrets. Players who cut their teeth on Battlefield 1942 and Counter-Strike are going to find Battlefront's slower pace somewhat difficult to adjust to.

We were pleased to find a splitscreen option available for offline play, so at least you can also co-op or tackle a friend if you don't have access to a broadband connection for your PS2 or Xbox. The PC, naturally, offers LAN play for an offline blast fest. With a local release imminent, Star Wars: Battlefront might be just the game you're looking for. Move along, move along. <<



Let's hope Chewie isn't in there...







## THE IMPERIAL FORCES INCLUDE THE MUCH-LOVED DARK TROOPER

>> TALENTED PLAYERS WILL GENERALLY HAVE A BETTER FIRST TOUCH

# PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Sport
**PLAYERS:** 1-8
**PUBLISHER:** Konami
**AVAILABLE:** Late 2004

**AMOS-O-METER**

>> Our dreams are finally coming true. Yes, Pro Evolution Soccer 4 is due at the end of the year, but that's not the only reason to sleep soundly until Christmas. This time around, Pro Evo is being released on PS2, PC and Xbox, and the promise of online multiplayer is very possible. But wait - as Tim from Demtel would say - there's more! Konami has also started snapping up proper licenses! Yes! Official kits, names... sorry, did we start drooling there? From all reports, the King of football games is on a path to complete Galactic rule.

### BAGS BE HENRY

Recently announced by Konami is the fact that they're acquired the official licensing for 56 clubs from three different leagues: the Spanish, Italian and Dutch. That's a fair chunk of the 136 total clubs on offer in the game (Pro Evo 4 includes brand new clubs and international sides to the series). That now means the big clubs such as AC Milan, Juventus, Ajax, Real Madrid, PSV Eindhoven, Feyenoord and Parma – just to name a few – will be properly represented in the game with their official kits (and sponsors), more accurate player stats and details (including real player names, of course) and all the other bells and whistles that can come with such agreements. Konami of Europe is also confident that "further deals with other clubs will follow in the near future". If there was only one thing holding Pro Evo back from grinding FIFA into the pavement, it was the inclusion of official licenses, so this is a major step forward for Konami's now legendary football series. Will we start to see famous players on the front of the box?

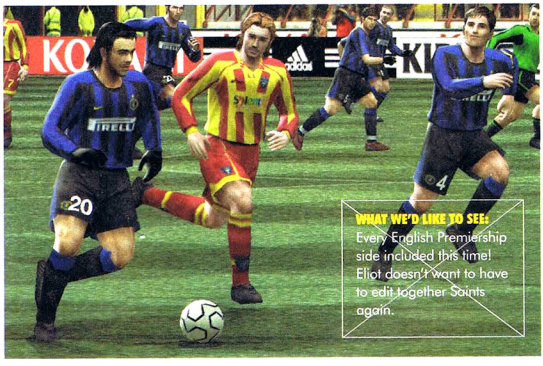
However, Konami aren't content with just superficial changes to their game in the hope that fans will mistake Pro Evo 4 for a re-jigged gaming experience. Oh no, Konami have been doing some pretty serious re-jigging! Pro Evo 4 will include some major enhancements to the game mechanics and in-game aesthetics to further evolve the Pro Evo experience.

One small detail that has always been missing from the Evo games is the inclusion of an on-screen referee and linesmen. This year, referees have made it into the game and will track up and down the field with play. The refereeing will

also be either more strict or lenient depending upon which referee has been chosen to run the game. Some refs will play advantage for a minor foul and allow play to continue, whilst another might stop the game and start handing out cards. They will also visibly react to what's happening on the field and move in to calm things down when tempers start to fray. Finally we can try all sorts of shenanigans with the on-screen ref!

## YOU CAN BE RADZINSKI

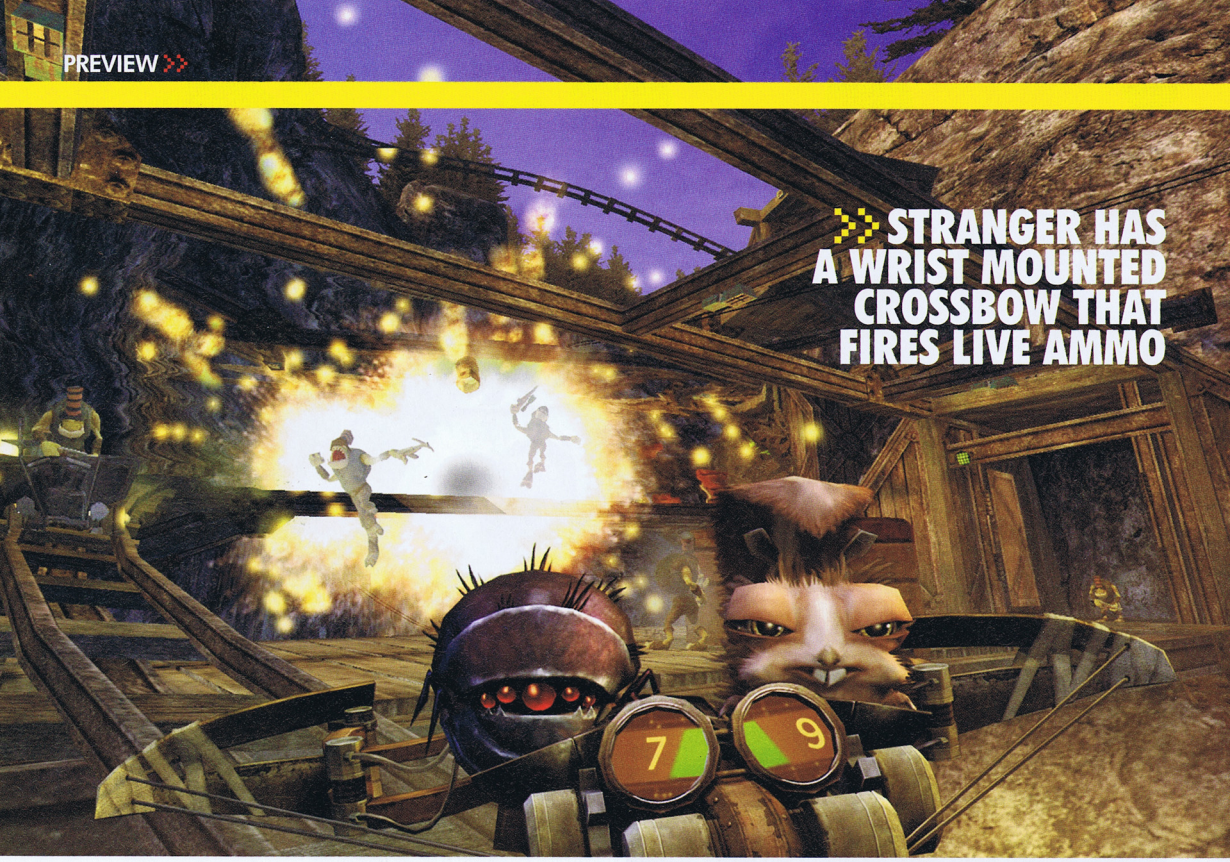
As for changes to actual play mechanics, individual player stats will now have an even greater bearing on your ability with the ball. Whilst Zidane might trap the ball with perfection and send through an immaculate one-two, Julio Arca might screw up a one-touch pass and spoil the play. Talented players will generally have a better first touch, whether it be controlling a high or fast ball, or taking a first time shot, cross or pass. That isn't to say that only the world-class footballers will be worth playing as, as these enhancements are likely to be subtle tweaks depending on specific stats. The devoted player will no doubt discover these subtleties with extended play, but it won't make players with great stats superhuman. Famous players should be more visually identifiable at least, with more individual movement animation and better likenesses. Kits will even get dirty by the end of a rough game in the wet!



A new dribbling system will allow for more control in one-on-one situations, such as beating an opposing defender, and certain passes have been tweaked to allow for more accuracy. Crosses and cut-back passes will now be easier to direct to where the player intends, allowing for far more accurate attacking plays. New penalty and free-kick taking techniques can also be utilised, and in-direct free kicks have finally been introduced for added realism.

For lovers of the Master League (and who isn't?), Pro Evo 4 promises to enhance it once again, this time with the possibility of players being forced to retire with a critical injury during the season, the chance to name "My Best Eleven" to save your favourite line-ups, as well as more formation screens and a more flexible transfer system.

With Pro Evo 4, it could be that the world's greatest soccer game won't ever have to play second fiddle to FIFA ever again.




# STRANGER

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Tripped out Western
**PLAYERS:** 1
**PUBLISHER:** Oddworld Inhabitants
**AVAILABLE:** TBA

**AMOS-O-METER**

>> After the mixed success of Munch's Oddysee, Oddworld Inhabitants have shelved plans to continue the Abe/Munch series for the full five games and have instead been hard at work on an all new title. Fear not though, as the new game – Stranger – has the same quirky design, oddball personality and interesting gameplay that we've come to expect from the team.

## PLANET OF THE APE

You play as an ape-like bounty hunter, who's referred to as Stranger. As you'd expect you'll be able to choose from a number of available bounties at any one time, with some worth more than others but being more difficult. You'll also get more for bringing back a bounty alive, so this adds an extra optional difficulty level.

The world is populated by odd (who'd a thought?) animalistic creatures which certainly helps put a new spin on the frontier style setting. Stranger himself benefits greatly from his animal genetics – he can bound around with great athleticism in third person, even knocking Outlaws over, or switch to first person for some fisticuffs or shooting.

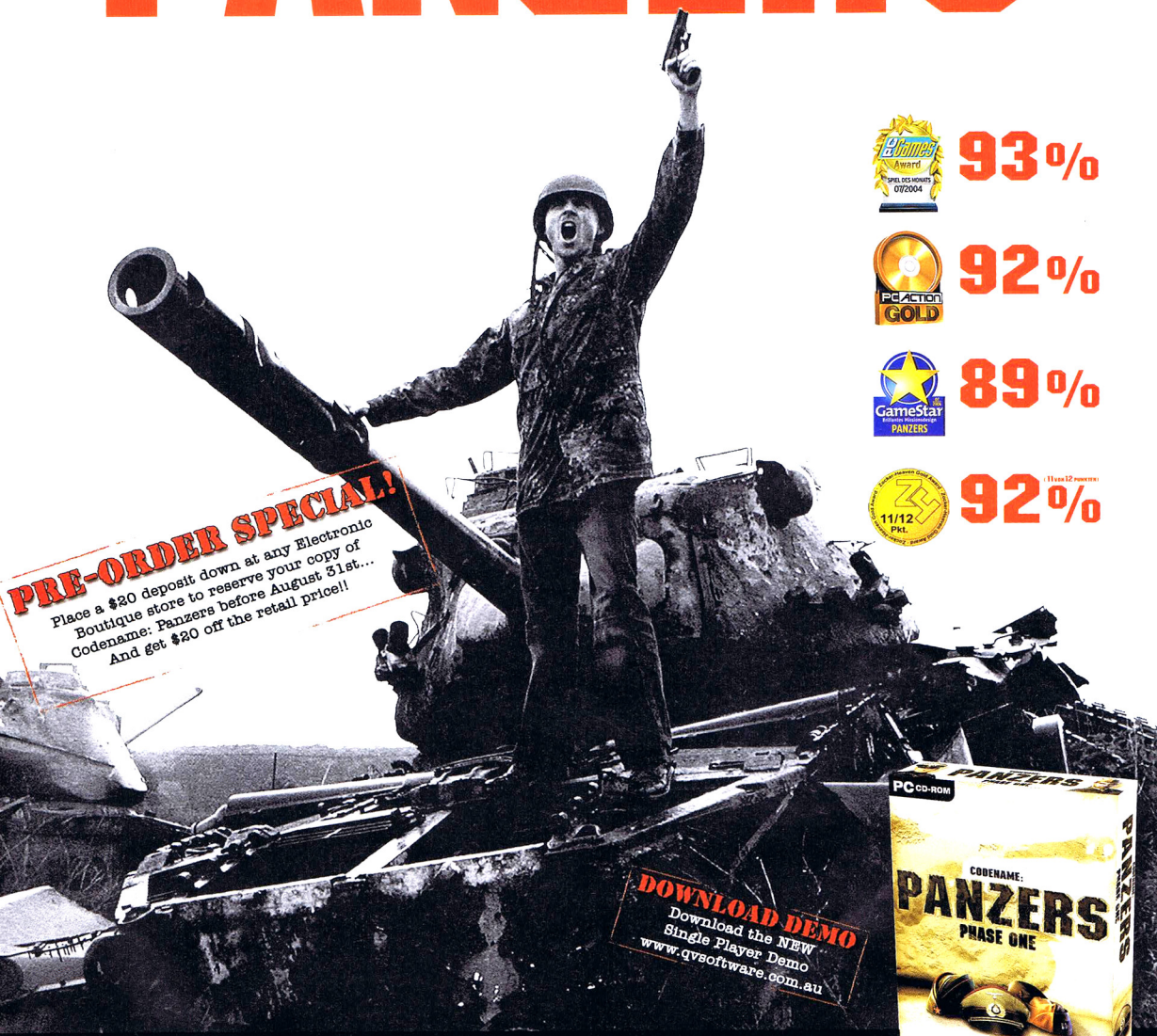
One of the most interesting elements of the gameplay is the fact that Stranger is a bounty hunter who doesn't like guns. Instead, he has a wrist mounted crossbow that fires live ammo. Yes, live ammo. You're able to capture (yes, you have to hunt your ammo – which sounds counter-intuitive but actually works well) and use a variety of live creatures as weaponry, and each has its own strategic importance.

The Chippunk, for instance, is used as a distraction. Fire it near an Outlaw and it'll start talking shit, and generally bugging the guy. This will give you the opportunity to sneak up on the guy and bag him. Other "weapons" you have include Fuzzles which can be used like land mines, Stingbees which function a little like a machine gun, and Skunk Bombs which make any Outlaws nearby sick to the point of being disabled. All creatures can be upgraded too, so the Chippunk can earn a little PA system which allows him to attract more enemies at once. Much of the gameplay will come from combining the creatures at your disposal, and trying to outwit and outmaneuver the many intelligent enemies you come up against.

In addition to good combat AI, the team are also working hard on making the characters around Stranger react to him in a dynamic way. Thus, they'll be aware of what's going on around them and have appropriate responses; whether you've just beaten up a whole heap of townsfolk for the fun of it or whether you've just taken on a new bounty.

It's part first person shooter, part adventure game, part stealth and part acid trip gone wrong. That's the Oddworld we know and love. <<

# THE PASSION OF THE PANZERS



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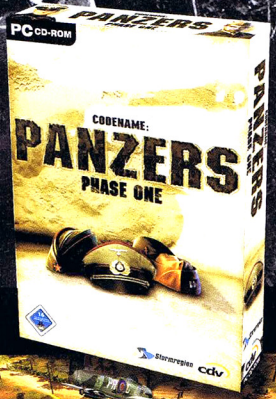


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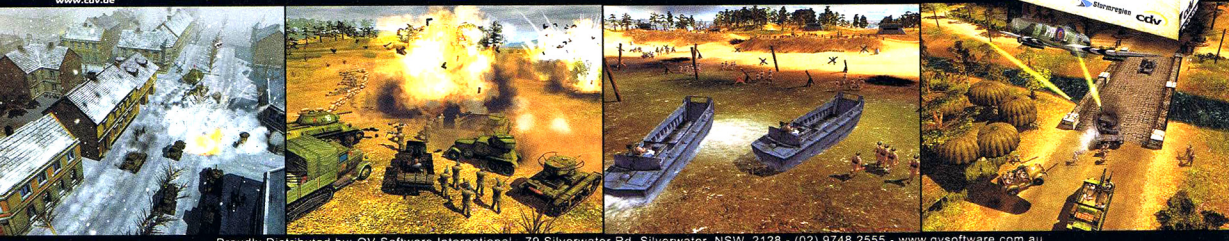

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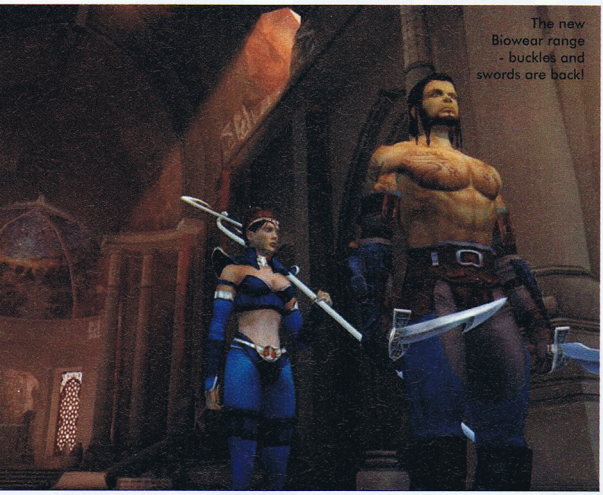


The new Biowear range - buckles and swords are back!

# DRAGON AGE

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / XBOX / **PC** / GCN

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** RPG
**PLAYERS:** 1
**PUBLISHER:** Bioware
**AVAILABLE:** Late 2005

**AMOS-O-METER**

With games like Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter Nights and Knights of the Old Republic it's easy to see why Bioware have such a strong reputation in the RPG genre but up until now the developer has played it safe as far as properties go, only utilising already well known franchises or titles in their games, ensuring that no matter the quality there would have an audience.

With Dragon Age this is all set to change, as it will be their first game based on an entirely Bioware owned and controlled intellectual property. If Bioware branching out with their own world and rules isn't enough to get you interested, try this on for size; Dragon Age will integrate every aspect of the game into the story line in some way – even character creation will effect quests, love interests, villains and missions later in the game, offering excellent replay potential on top of the reported 40-50 hour play time. More details for you when they come in.

The clean definition of bad head

# D&D: DRAGON SHARD

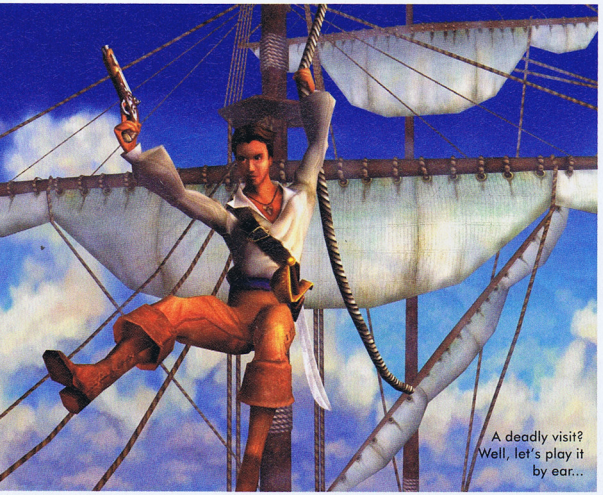
**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / XBOX / **PC** / GCN

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** RTS
**PLAYERS:** 1-4
**DEVELOPER:** Liquid Games
**AVAILABLE:** Q2 2005

**AMOS-O-METER**

It seems that the D&D license is getting its grubby little fingers into everything – there's a whole slew of computer games, clothing, pen and paper RPG books, trading cards and more but this is the first time that it's made an appearance as an RTS.

Dragon Shard will also be the first game to feature the new D&D game world of Eberron, a fantastic world surrounded by a ring of magical crystals that sometimes fall to the surface, giving any who find them incredible powers. Dragon Shard will feature two distinct styles of gameplay: surface battles in which large sieges are the flavour of the day, and underground missions in which stealth and guerilla tactics will be more advisable. The game will feature three playable races and only two resources that need to be managed; crystals, which can be found scattered throughout the battlefields and gold, which will be gathered automatically from bases through a taxation system.



A deadly visit? Well, let's play it by ear...

# SID MEIER'S PIRATES

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / **XBOX / PC** / GCN

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Aaaarrr me mateys sim
**PLAYERS:** 1-2
**DEVELOPER:** Firaxis
**AVAILABLE:** Early 2005

**AMOS-O-METER**

In the genre that is strategy gaming there are a few true classics that stand head and shoulders above the vast majority. Strangely enough many of these are Sid Meier games. Now, 17 years after it first appeared, Sid Meier is in the process of revamping his brilliant Pirates for the modern crowd. Pirates will be available for both PC and Xbox and will feature a whole new slew of gameplay styles including ship to ship battles, sword fights, trading and plundering as well as a host of as yet unrevealed pirate themed mini-games.

Although the game is shaping up well on both platforms it seems as though Xbox gamers will be getting the slightly better deal with controls optimised for the different game modes and the possibility of fighting epic ship to ship battles from the couch with nothing but two controllers and one Xbox. Of course a new 3D engine will make Pirates look like a million dubloons. Find a parrot and strap on a wooden leg, cos Pirates is coming!

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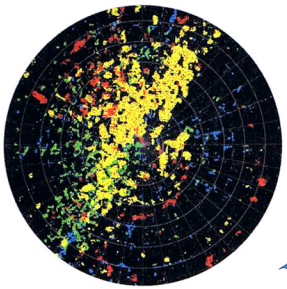

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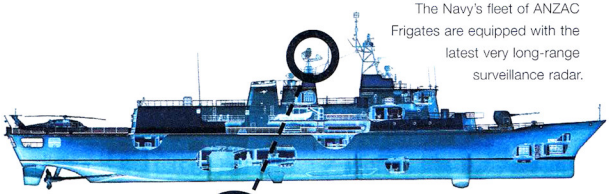

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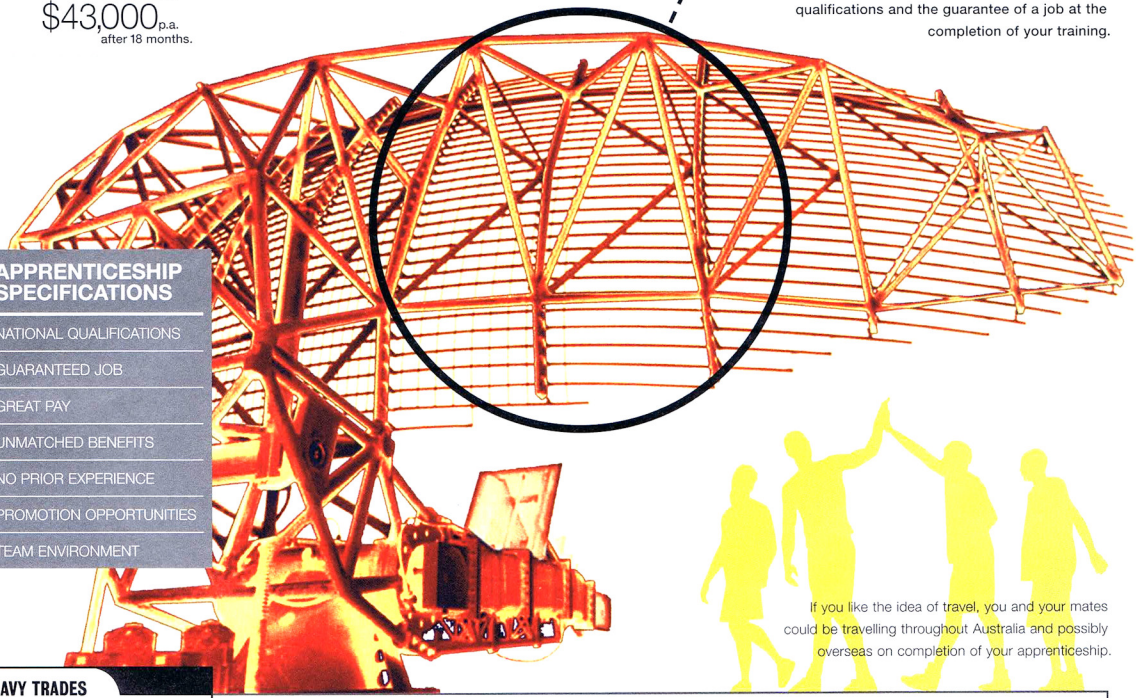

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# PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

One of the most exciting titles coming out later this year would have to be Prince Of Persia 2. The first title was a masterful reinvention of a classic series, but Ubisoft Montreal certainly aren't resting on their laurels for the sequel. They've gone back to the proverbial drawing board and redesigned the Prince as a darker, more kick-ass character. To find out a little more about what POP2 is about and the development process, we had a chat with **Bertrand Hellias**, the producer of the game.

**HYPER: The Prince is a much darker and more mature looking character in the new game. Tell us about what happens to the Prince after the events of the original and leading into this game.**

**Bertrand Hellias:** Indeed - The Prince in PoP2 is a more mature hero. He is older and has evolved a lot. But he is cursed. In Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time, he did an irreversible action, he changed his fate. And now he is hunted by the Dahaka, the Guardian of Time and has no way out – he will die.

We want the player to feel the Prince as more powerful, a real epic hero able to face new challenges: he is stronger, more self confident and able to act with much more determination.

**Where did the inspiration for the Dahaka come from?**

Well, there is no direct inspiration from a known character. We wanted the Dahaka to be mysterious, gigantic and to look undefeatable...

The inspiration for the Dahaka maybe partly comes from the nemesis of Resident Evil and various baddies from horror movies. But it looks absolutely unique.

## >> THE PRINCE IS NOW A WEAPONS MASTER...

**What was the rationale behind moving in this direction for the sequel – especially the decision to focus heavily on combat?**

Even if Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time has been a great success, we do think that our fans expect each episode to be different, to provide new emotions. They want us to take risks and be innovative and not do 'more of the same'. We want the player's experience in PoP2 to be even deeper and richer.

Especially, we want a lot of diversity and a real freedom while fighting for the player. We want to provide him a totally immersive and unique experience! Eventually, in PoP2, each player will be able to define his own style... in other words, each player will be able to face the Prince's destiny in his own way – this might make the game a bit tougher than Sands of Time was – but the fighting sequences will be really impressive and very exciting!

**At the beginning of this game the Prince has already elevated his weapon and fighting techniques far beyond his skills in the original game. What does this allow him to do?**

Free form Fighting: with his free left hand, the Prince can grab his opponents and from there on choose from various outcomes. We try to feature a system where for every starting move, you can choose from several options to continue the move. Also the prince is able to steal an enemy's weapon and use it. Now that he has a secondary weapon in his left hand, he cannot grab anymore, but he can use the weapon in deadly combos that have a larger area of effect. He can also throw the weapon giving him more range to attack his foes. Last but not least, the prince now has extended environmental moves: using columns to attack with sword or feet, walls to dive at his opponents or perform special moves during his vertical wallrun such as swirling dive and angel drop attack...

**It sounds as if the Prince has an endless pool of moves to draw from, so how do you ensure that the actions of the enemies are just as entertaining? What were some of the challenges in building compelling enemy AI? Do they adapt to a player's skill level or style of fighting? And how does the AI vary across the different enemies?**

Yes – the Prince has more moves and can chain them as the player wants. About the enemies, we changed the AI from Sands of Time quite drastically. In PoP2, you will face very, very diverse enemies. We put a lot of effort in designing enemies with very specific abilities and fighting styles. There will be giants, female bosses, animals attacking in groups, others having synchronized attack patterns.

Each enemy generates a different gameplay. The challenge we propose to players is to find a new fighting style for each enemy for maximal efficiency.

**Tell us about the core gameplay changes that are part of this new, more action orientated Prince.**

As I said, the Prince is now a weapons master, a warrior... he's now facing his own fate. To face this situation, he'll need to be strong, but also to use all his new abilities to defeat tremendous enemies. To do so, he will use the double swords attack, grab, slicing, etc.

Let me explain the overall philosophy of the new fighting system. To design the new combat system, we closely looked at swashbuckling and Hong Kong movies. In these genres, combat is visually impressive, diverse and intense. This is precisely what we wanted to provide the player: power and freedom.

In PoP2, the player will be able to use a lot of environmental elements in combat: most of the background elements will provide you with a variety of new possibilities for stunning and deadly moves. Swing around a pillar and kill your enemy; use ropes, beams, curtains, walls etc... to rebound and give more strength and velocity to every move!

**AVAILABLE ON:**

**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Action Adventure
**PLAYERS:** 1
**DEVELOPER:** Ubisoft Montreal
**PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft
**AVAILABLE:** November 2004

**AMOS-O-METER**

[above] With the weight of the world on his shoulders it's good to see the Prince can still prance...

**WHO'S THAT GIRL?**

That'd be Shahdee, trusted servant of the Empress of Time, whose mission is to stop the Prince reaching the Island of Time, knowing failure could mean her life. According to her bio she "wears very little clothing – a sign that she's an incredible warrior (doesn't believe she can be harmed by her opponents)." According to Hyper she "wears very little clothing – a sign that Ubisoft know the power of a leather bikini".

**[above]** I don't get mad - I get stabby
**[above right]** He must eat, like, a million Weet Bix a day

Additionally, the Prince is now able to perform a vast array of combos (which you can use all the time) and special attacks (which are contextual and specific to an enemy or specific to the environment – wall, pillar). Thanks to an opportunity windows system, you will be able to combine all these moves together at any time in combat.

And of course we worked on the enemies to bring as much visual diversity and variety in the gameplay as possible.

**A fluid interaction with the environment was definitely one of the most compelling elements of the original game. What's the next step for giving the player the power to use the environment?**

You are right – The Prince can perform new moves, both in combat and navigation phases. He can swing around pillars for impressive attacks, stab his sword in a curtain and slide down from highs, use a rope to perform longer wallings etc ... as you see almost all the new moves have been inspired from cloak and dagger movies. This results in visually stunning sequences!

**How many of the Sand Powers will be returning in this game? Can you give us any examples of new powers the Prince may have, and how they factor into gameplay?**

The Sand Powers are back in PoP2. Indeed, the player is still able to use the Time Powers, but it would be preferable to use them in a more strategic way: in combat. Several powerful attacks can be triggered if you have enough Sands of Time available. For instance, you will be able to slowdown the Time of your enemies without slowing yours. You will then be able to take them down more easily. We will have new powers related to the time, each new one will be more impressive and more powerful than the previous one and as a player, you will want to use them as much as possible otherwise you will have a tough time.

**Tell us about the use of time travel between the past and the present in the game, and how this affects gameplay and puzzle solving.**

One of the coolest features of this new episode is that you will play in 2 different time lines: in the past and in the present. The player will cross the same places but at 2 different periods. And each period will have completely different atmospheres: the present will be ruins and desolation when the past will be lush and oppressive. And now imagine all the gameplay situations that can be related to that feature: any action you will do in the past will have a direct impact on the present. Say, you destroy a piece of environment (a wall, a door etc) in the past; it doesn't exist anymore in the present. This allows very interesting and unique gameplay possibilities.

**What role will the Prince's ship play in the game?**

The game will start on the ship, we want to be sure to surprise the players from the beginning on, and starting in a fortress would be too classic for a PoP game.

**The visual style of both games is hugely impressive. The original was obviously heavily influenced by Persian design – where are you drawing inspiration from for this game? And how has the engine been modified to squeeze more out of each system?**

Thanks for the compliment! As I said, all our design decisions are the consequence of one original wish to provide new emotions – namely fear and a feeling of oppression and emergency. So does the design of enemies, the new combat system or the Prince design...

Same thing for the general visual style; we wanted something close to horror / suspense movies – but still true to the Prince of Persia atmosphere. Our inspiration comes from Tim Burton movies, or movies like Underground and Lord of the Ring for certain parts.

Technically speaking, we are still using the same engine, which is now one of the best engines for action gameplay on current generation.

## OUR INSPIRATION COMES FROM TIM BURTON MOVIES

We pushed further and optimized it to allow us to develop new special effects and ambient effects. I do think that we are now using 99% of the capacity of the machine; it won't be easy to push it much further.

**What are you most proud of in terms of gameplay in PoP2? And what are you most proud of in terms of art design?**

I think the whole new fighting system is what I'm the most proud of. I do think it's really innovative and will offer new sensations to players. It was quite a big risk to change this system, but I feel it's really strong now.

In terms of design, we put a lot of effort into the Prince design. He now looks exactly as we wanted. Playing this character, fans will feel much stronger and tougher...

But well, I must say I have also a little special feeling for those girls that the player will meet in the game ;)

## 50 Doom 3

The wait was worth it!

# REVIEWS

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# Game Theory

DANIEL STAINES

I'd like to thank Bennett Ring for his excellent work in writing last month's instalment of Game Theory. Cheers, Bennett. As expected, your piece was interesting and informative - a well-researched, well-written and well-argued column that made a strong case for the pre-eminence of graphics in gaming. In addition to that, it was also drastically flawed for a number of very important reasons. Let's have a look at some of those reasons now, shall we?

As I understood it, the primary thrust of Bennett's article was that good graphics are of equal importance to good gameplay when it comes to developing AAA quality games. To quote: "If a game doesn't look great, chances are it won't work its way onto any of my gaming platforms ... for most gamers, great graphics are equally as important as great gameplay". To imbue this rather strong claim with some objective credibility, Bennett cites a gaming study conducted by a US college showing that good graphics rank as the most important feature gamers look for in a game. "Without great graphics," Bennett says, "a game is going to find it very difficult to make its mark amongst the mainstream gaming audience".

Bollocks. The number one selling game in this country at the moment is SingStar: a PS2 karaoke title that can barely be said to have any graphics at all. The current top selling game on the graphics whore platform of choice - the PC - is The Sims Deluxe Edition. In fact, SIX of the top ten selling PC games at the moment are Sims games. You know The Sims, right? It's the best-selling game of all time that just happens to look marginally better than something you'd expect to see on a PSOne. One has to wonder how a game that looks so completely mediocre could possibly be so successful when "most gamers" value eye-candy as much as Bennett claims they do.

Of course, it's possible to turn this argument around by simply claiming that games like SingStar and The Sims don't actually sell to gamers in the sense that Bennett uses the term. They're mainstream titles aimed at casual consumers of electronic entertainment - they're not what "real" gaming is all about. Okay, for the sake of debate, let's say I grant this dubiously elitist rebuttal: what other aspects of the column in question can we address? I thought Bennett's list of anticipated games with "mouth-wateringly" good graphics was interesting... especially since the majority of the games he mentions are from franchises famous for their groundbreaking gameplay. Really, is it reasonable to say that the pre-release fervour surrounding Half-Life 2 is attributable to its beautiful visuals when many of us were anticipating the game long before we even knew what it looked like?

Then there's the issue of money. Bennett argues that the incredible amount of money being spent on the development of new graphics technologies is evidence of the supreme importance of cutting-edge visuals to... well to what? The fact that companies like NVIDIA are spending hundreds of millions of dollars developing their latest chipsets while nobody is investing comparable sums in gameplay research doesn't mean that graphics are somehow more important to gamers. NVIDIA is a videocard manufacturer, what *else* are they supposed to be using their money for? Furthermore, computer graphics technology is an established field of technical research; gameplay is a nebulous semi-artistic discipline without an established research tradition. Hence, it's hardly surprising that nobody is spending huge amounts of money on the latter - there really isn't anything concrete to spend money on.

I have to wonder: what is it that makes a man like Bennett - a self-professed graphics whore - play videogames at all? Surely his penchant for photo-realistic graphics could be better satisfied with the plethora of CGI-driven movies that have become so popular over the last decade. I believe the answer to this question is that Bennett likes to *play* games. Gameplay is what defines and differentiates gaming as a medium. How could the visual - an aspect of gaming that it shares with almost every other medium on the planet - possibly be as important as that which makes it the most unique and exciting form of entertainment to emerge in the last century?

Until next month,


**daniels@next.com.au**


THE HYPER SCORING SYSTEM The Overall Score – what's it all about?

| 0-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70-79 | 80-89 | 90+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| And the devil came unto Earth, taking the form of these games | Like a gaming hand-grenade filled with toxic gameplay | Like counting sheep, these games will put you to sleep | The Ghost of Wildgoose says: "these games are okay you guys..." | Games in this range are the BULLSHIT SICKNESS!! | If loving these games is wrong - I don't wanna be right |

# DOOM 3

"On why the shotgun is the best thing ever" by **MARCH STEPNIK**

It's beautiful, it's dark and it's terrifying, and above all else, it's a gas - in a horrific rollercoaster and white-knuckle sort of way - right to the very end. But the real magic is that the totality of the Doom 3 experience is greater than the sum of its parts; it's so polished that you'll find yourself mesmerised the moment the intro movie smoothly and seamlessly transitions to the first-person perspective of the un-named marine and beckons you to explore the seamy underside of the United Aerospace Corporation research and development facility on Mars.

We always suspected that Doom 3 was going to be good. But not *this* good.

### "IT'S DOOM, JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT"

Let's get a few things out into the open first. While Doom 3 is a firstperson shooter and a reverent extension to the infamous series, its execution is markedly different to its predecessors. Oh, sure - there's a vast number of minions-of-hell to obliterate with a varied arsenal of bombastic weaponry, but the scale of things is much more intimate than ever before. Where Doom and Doom II's design was in part defined by a balance of vast exteriors and claustrophobic interiors, Doom 3 is set almost exclusively (for the first two thirds of the game at least) in tight, indoor environments. Doom's other trademark theme of pitting you against scores of nasties at the same time has also been largely abandoned for a smaller - but no less stressful - number of simultaneous opponents.

These differences are significant: Doom 3 feels like Doom and there are numerous nods to its heritage as the action unfolds, but it plays out more like a survival horror (delivered from a firstperson perspective) with its accompanying adventure-game elements, than the style of FPS id Software themselves pioneered. The exceptional System Shock series comes to mind as an example, and Doom 3 compares to these sci-fi classics in more ways than one.

To id's credit, the development team lay their cards on the table in the opening moments of the game. Doom 3 begins with your arrival at the UAC facility on Mars to complement the existing security force. After clearing security and being handed a PDA, you are directed to Marine Command where you are to meet with your superior officer and await further instructions.

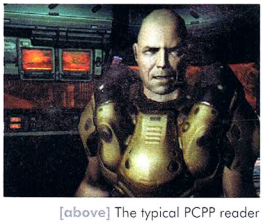
Serving as an excellent and tension-free introduction to the seemingly unassuming setting, it's hard to shake the nagging feeling that something's missing. For the first time in an id Software title you start the game without a gun in your hand.

While it's been done before (Half-Life artfully opened this way back in 1997), the team at id uses

HYPER GAME OF THE MONTH

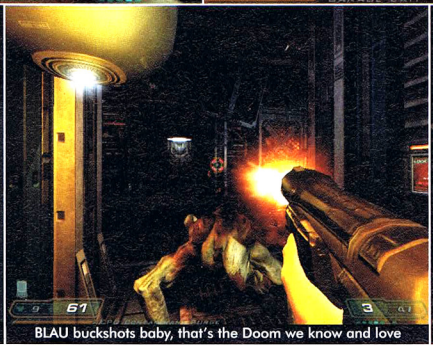
[above] One of the cast of The Lion King

[above] All it wants is a Schmackos

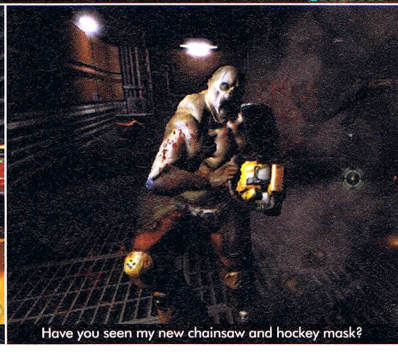


[above] The typical PCPP reader

I'd wager that there's happy dancing clowns inside




BLAU buckshots baby, that's the Doom we know and love



Have you seen my new chainsaw and hockey mask?

this trick to great effect - and they take the opportunity to really strut their stuff. Without the pressure of flaming Imps to pump lead into (don't worry too much, it's not twenty minutes before the blast-a-thon starts), you're given ample opportunity to both connect with the fictional world of a future Mars and to appreciate the technological achievement that is Doom 3.

The UAC facility is a joy to explore. The textures, models, physics and particle effects are of an impressively high standard, but it is their arrangement that brings the whole thing to life. The design team deserve the most limelight with the success of Doom 3 for taking John Carmack's brilliant technical tools and crafting a world that grabs you very firmly by the jugular and pulls you right in. The entire UAC facility and its ominous bowels have been designed with such care that id dares to convince you that this is a real, functioning place and you had better watch your step.

The audio team also deserve a large helping of praise for doing such fine work in immersing us in the Martian landscape; lacking a conventional soundtrack, Doom 3 offers a comprehensive accompaniment of functional noises. Taken individually they offer tactile feedback; taken together they become music which tells a very compelling story.

!!! Martian Buddy is real! Visit its website at www.martianbuddy.com for some useful information.

## the most fear-inducing creature in the game is the darkness itself

Once things go sour in the UAC facility (you weren't expecting id was going to have you run patrol routes for the rest of the game now, were you?), Doom 3 proper begins. A beautifully paced mix of exploration and combat, id Software displays mastery in scaring the living crap outta you. A big part of id's success is the story it builds, System Shock style. Complementing the sparing cut-scenes, you discover the history of the UAC Mars facility and the "incident" piecemeal through the audio-logs (the fantastic voice acting another highlight) and email messages that can be accessed via your PDA. Coming from former employees of UAC, the tragedy of the whole debacle takes on a more human tone. This gateway to hell was once populated by ordinary people just going about their business, and their posthumous presence does wonders for the atmosphere.

### HAVE AT YOU, FOUL DEMON!

While there are plenty of gorgeously modelled monsters to decimate (the majority of them are modern updates of the all-star cast from Doom and Doom II), the most fear-inducing creature in the game is the darkness itself. Showing off its exemplary light modelling, id

**DOOM 3 MULTIPLAYER** Or the near lack of. We can imagine that Doom 3 multiplayer won't go down too well with some people for its modest supply of only 5 maps, 4 play modes (Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Last Man Standing and Tournament) and a maximum of four simultaneous players.

But what multiplayer lacks in size, quantity and variety is more than made up for in quality. The maps are brilliantly designed to give fast and furious multiplayer action in what's sure to become a staple on networked PCs that can run the thing. One of our favourite levels is Lights Out, where the lighting intermittently goes on and off (perfect for stalky ambushes - something that this map seems to encourage with its abundance of shadowy alcoves to hide in).
Those wanting more will need to download (or make their own!) Doom 3 mods. At time of press a number of mods were already available, including a mod allowing 16 players in a single multiplayer game.

This is for eating my neighbours, zombie!

Erm... I wonder if they French kiss each other a lot?

There's nothing scarier than Phil Collins' disembodied head

[below] He's a microcalifragalistics expert

[below] Zombie Spidey - give him a kiss

[below] Page 36 eh? How fascinating...

software manipulates the darkness in devious ways and to chilling effect. Combined with excellent audio (the haunting voices and whispers are downright unsettling), and the frequent set-pieces (sometimes it's just the sudden movement of a fallen corpse, more often than not it's several nasties unleashed on you at the same time), things are never as they seem and Doom 3 demands that you never let your guard down. Just as things settle down, id throws a spanner in the works and not usually from the most obvious direction. The team wants you to second guess its next trick so that they can lead you up a blind alley and then sock you one from behind. Almost everything about the world in Doom 3 is about terrifying you, and while it's a satisfying experience, it is also a significantly unnerving one too.

All of Doom and Doom II's weapons make a comeback (minus the double-barrel shotgun of Doom II), with only the grenade and an entirely unique weapon - the Soul Cube - making their debut in the game. Each of the reprised weapons has been given a full make-over, and each has a distinct personality. The standard issue pistol is the weakest weapon in the game (after your own fists - but even these become one of the most powerful weapons with the stim/rage powerup), but it's perfect for picking off the slower-paced zombies in the game. The machine and chain-gun are both excellent in stopping multiple targets from a safe distance, but consume ammo at an alarming rate. The use of the powerful plasma gun is restricted by a limited supply of ammo, but unstoppable against the skeletal revenant character - the balls of plasma melt away the incoming homing missiles as well as the main target. The rocket launcher undeniably has the most stopping power (the BFG and Soul Cube come much later in the game), but because of its large area of effect and the smaller environments present, should be used with great caution. The chainsaw also returns and is devastating in operation, though the cacophony it produces will see it stowed away more often than not - you just can't hear the important tell-tale signs of monster presence over the noise.

And then there's the shotgun. Blessed be the almighty shotgun, for thou dost rock so hard. Hands-down the most satisfying weapon in the game, the slow-but-steady shotgun has the power to fell even

**ON SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS** So it's a P4 1.4 GHz/Athlon XP 1500, 384MB RAM and a GeForce 3 64MB video card as a minimum for entry on the Doom 3 thrill ride. Of course, that'll give you only low to medium settings at 800 x 600 resolution, but don't despair - Doom 3 will still manage to impress at this level. Those wanting to see Doom in all of its visual glory (ultimate setting) and at a decent resolution will need the latest rig (minimum of a P4 3.0 GHz and 1GB RAM) with a 512MB video card installed. Oh, and make sure there's ample cooling inside the PC too.

some of the bigger and nastier creatures in Doom 3 with one shot. The catch is: it must be at almost point blank range. Useless over medium to long distances, effective use of the shotgun means you have to take the fight to the enemy, face-to-face. And it's no coincidence that the most useful weapon in the game also brings you so close to the action - combat in Doom 3 is largely exhilarating.

Which brings us to the torch: the only weapon that gives you some control over the abundant darkness in Doom 3. At first it was frustrating that you couldn't attach this vital item to your weapon. Now c'mon, surely a civilisation that has managed to populate Mars might also manage to design a combat suit with a mounted light source. And if the marine's gaffa tape has gone walkabout, then surely a spare shoelace might do? It doesn't take long, though, before you appreciate what id's trying to do here. The feeling of vulnerability as you put your weapon away to illuminate the many dark corners of Doom 3 is palpable, and the terror as you frantically switch to a weapon as you come fact to face with an attacking zombie is nauseating. It may not make much sense, but it sure as hell raises the thrill factor by a couple of significant levels. At time of press there was a duct-tape mod already available, but we implore you to ignore it - having tried it, Doom 3 feels like a lesser game because of it.

## >> Blessed be the almighty shotgun, for thou dost rock so hard

!!! Doom 3 will be released for the Xbox in the not too distant future, and is looking really good. We'll review the Xbox version as soon as we get our hands on it.

**HERE PINKY, PINKY, PINKY...**

Of course, Doom 3 isn't perfect. We'd have liked to have had the option to lean - the perceived increase in control complexity would have been a small price to pay for the ability to peer around corners and the immersive qualities it would bring. Given that Doom 3 encourages you to creep around the place, the absence of such a function is glaringly obvious.

We also baulk at the age-old problem of supply placement. It's disappointing that id didn't take the opportunity to creatively solve the problem of sticking weapons and ammo boxes in implausible places. In the first two-thirds of the game these are appropriately placed around the UAC facility, but in the closing third of the game, your antagonist has conveniently left them around his own abode - to his own peril. It just doesn't make a lot of sense. But these are minor issues. Rather than being show-stoppers, they highlight the high standard present in Doom 3.

Doom 3 is a magnificent experience, and a remarkable achievement by id Software. The sumptuous graphics and excellent level design set the stage for a most taxing and compelling game of survival horror. Doom 3 will scare you - mercilessly and repeatedly - as you attempt to make your way out of the mess that is the UAC Mars facility. Cheers id, you've still got it. <<

HYPER BIG RUBBER STAMP OF APPROVAL

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / XBOX / **PC** / GCN

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** First-Person Shooter
**PLAYERS:** 1 (2-4 in multiplayer)
**DEVELOPER:** id Software
**PUBLISHER:** Activision
**PRICE:** $99.95
**RATING:** MA15+
**AVAILABLE:** Now

**HYPER VERDICT:**

**PLUS:** Shiz-nit hot graphics, sound, atmosphere, the shotty, and Hell.

**MINUS:** Minor, inconsequential issues. Lack of a lean option?

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 96 | 96 | 92 |

OVERALL
**94**
**Brilliant. It's Doom-a-licious.**

# BURNOUT 3: Takedown

**CAM SHEA** finds arcade racing nirvana

Just when you thought the PlayStation 2 was being pushed to its limits, Criterion release the next Burnout game and suddenly you have to radically adjust your expectations. Burnout 3 continues this fine tradition, packing the kind of pure, uncut, high speed eye candy that drops your jaw to the floor at no less than 60fps. Better still, it's also a damn fine racing game.

### CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

Plenty has changed since Burnout 2. There's a much greater emphasis on neck and neck competition with the other drivers, and in particular, "takedowns". In the last game the quickest ways to build up your Burnout meter were driving on the wrong side of the road and near misses, whereas in Burnout 3 your best bet is to take out another driver. Forget building up boost in small increments – slamming another driver into a wall increases the length of your boost meter and instantly fills it. Crumple another competitor and you can expand it again, and so on until it's four times the original size and filling up at a much faster rate.

Of course, stack it and your boost bar will reduce in size. And this is where one of our only complaints about Burnout 3 comes in. Later on in the game when the AI is much tougher, if you fall behind it becomes very difficult to catch up. You can't get a takedown because you're coming last, therefore you can't expand your boost meter, therefore it fills up very slowly (too slowly - traditional "risks" aren't rewarded as much as they should be), therefore you can hardly use it, therefore you can't catch up. It's a vicious cycle and demands racing perfection, but hey, if you want a challenge Burnout 3 provides it.

Using boost is, however, more flexible in B3. You no longer have to wait for the meter to fill – you can kick in the boost any time you like, which makes its use feel much more integral to the action, and introduces a little more strategy to proceedings.

Another huge change is in the way you progress through the game. It's all about the World Tour mode baby. All events – including Crash mode – are wrapped up in the World Tour, and you have a grand total of 173 events to unlock and beat, not to mention 67 vehicles, a whole host of awards to win, signature takedowns to nail, Burnout Points to earn and even a cumulative crash damage figure to build up. It's really gratifying to have so many stats to check out, and so many ways to unlock new content. Criterion have obviously worked hard to create a reward system that's on a whole new scale, and they've succeeded admirably... even though it often feels like you spend half your time clicking through screens announcing stuff you've unlocked.

In addition to the return of Crash mode, Face Offs, Races and GPs, there are a host of new events. Our favourite would have to be Road Rage, where you have a time limit to get as many takedowns as possible... with only one car to do it. Yes, all (well, some) damage from each crash remains until you total your car or hit the time limit. It's great, destructive fun, and ramming your opponents into oncoming traffic or sending them careening off an embankment

[above] A black guy's boost meter...

[above] ...A white guy's boost meter

After coming to rest he found himself in the Ewok Village

Get out of my dreams, and into my car

He ain't pretty no more...

at top speed will never get boring.

Despite the increased focus on car combat, don't think for a moment that Burnout has lost its racing edge – the handling is superb and varies dramatically across the various vehicle types. It's also considerably faster than previous Burnouts, and if you don't believe us, just sample a couple of the Burning Lap challenges. These are white knuckle time trials where you're racing against the clock in the fastest cars the game has to offer. Yes, unlike most racing games where you gradually work your way through speed classes, in Burnout 3 you're given a lick of that sweet speed stick very early on. The fastest cars are truly intimidating beasts, sending adrenaline coursing through your veins as you hurtle around each course, always teetering on the brink of being out of control.

## In Burnout 3 you're given a lick of that sweet speed stick very early on

**BEST. EVERYTHING. EVER.**

Not only is the speed raw and the powersliding divine, but the crashes themselves are unbelievable. You've never seen damage modelling this convincing. These cars crumple with wince inducing force, and when paired with exaggerated (and somewhat comical) physics, produce spectacular crashes, with cars flipping and pirouetting through the air and wheels flying in all directions. All in glorious super slow motion if you hold the R1 button. It's very visceral, and the line between streaking along with boost roaring and motion blur eating at the edges of the screen, and ending up as a small pile of smoking wreckage has never been so fine.

The action is complemented by some fantastic sound effects (especially when you punch down on boost with a full 4x boost bar) and a massive punk/indie soundtrack. Pity there wasn't a bit more variety but it's impressive nonetheless.

So, should you buy Burnout 3? Without question. Even if you have no interest in racing games, if you care about gameplay this game has it in spades. Brilliant.

**CRASH MODE MK 2** Crash mode is back in Burnout 3 but it's quite a different beast. The basic principle remains the same – you start out a few hundred metres from an intersection of some sort and must cause as much damage as possible, but there are a number of twists on the formula. For a start, you no longer start with a full boost meter but must hit lightning bolt icons for increased speed. There are also 2X and 4X multipliers on the course, which double and quadruple your score, not to mention the "heartbreaker" which halves your score. There are also cash bonus icons and even icons that trigger an explosion. Best of all though, once a certain number of cars have crashed, you can blow up your own car to cause even more mayhem.
Whether the new Crash mode is as good as the more "pure" previous version is debatable. In some ways the game becomes about hitting the multipliers rather than creatively finding the best/most skilful way to crash, but it's great fun nonetheless.

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX** / PC / GCN

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Arcade racing
**PLAYERS:** 1-8
**DEVELOPER:** Criterion
**PUBLISHER:** EA
**PRICE:** $99.95
**RATING:** M15+
**AVAILABLE:** September

**HYPER VERDICT:**

**PLUS:** Beautiful, fast, powerslides, great online modes.

**MINUS:** Annoying "DJ", EA billboards, cheaty AI, not all risk taking rewarded.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 94 | 92 | 92 |

OVERALL
**92**

Insert glowing adjectives here. Best. Arcade. Racer. Ever.

# ZELDA: Four Swords Adventures

**KOSTA ANDREADIS** wonders why there aren't four Zeldas

When it first made its appearance on the GBA port of A Link to the Past, Four Swords took the classic top-down gameplay of the Zelda series and translated that into a co-operative multiplayer experience. Although immensely fun, the end result was better suited as an add-on to the existing fully fleshed-out adventure. With Four Swords Adventures for the GameCube, Nintendo have taken the core multiplayer components of the original GBA version and have built around that a cohesive and rewarding gameplay experience that can be enjoyed alone or with four-players.

### TWO PLUS TWO IS FOUR, TWO PLUS TWO IS FOUR

Apart from using your GBA to play the game, the most obvious aspect of Four Swords Adventures is its visual presentation - it looks a hell of a lot like A Link to the Past from the SNES. And when comes down to it, plays very much like it too. This doesn't necessarily mean that the gameplay is dated, in fact it's very far from it. Four Swords Adventures provides an experience that is all about multiples. Multiple Links, players, screens, enemies and rewards all add up to a game that feels like a twisted sequel (ala Majora's Mask) to the original SNES title – albeit one that has appeared a decade after its predecessor.

The story, although reminiscent of the GBA add-on has been fleshed out considerably, as we find Links embarking on a quest to once again restore the balance to Hyrule from the evil Wizard Vaati who has kidnapped Zelda.

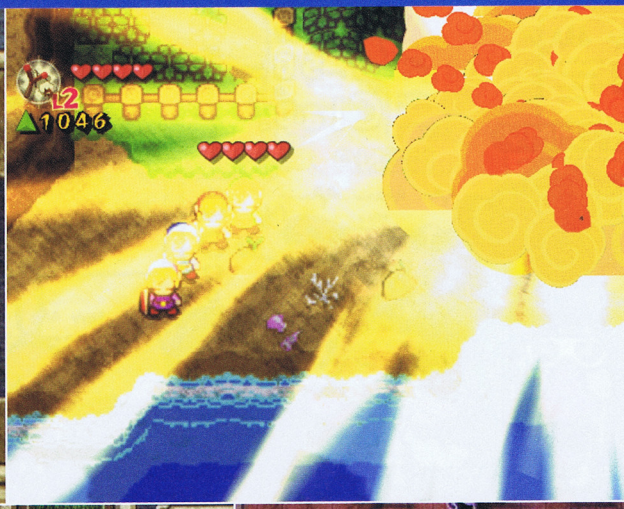
Four Swords Adventures has no overworld to traverse so the experience is purposefully kept linear with the various dungeons and locations found in Hyrule being split up into levels. And although the idea of a level based Zelda title may raise a collective eyebrow or two, with multiple players it helps keep the game more focused. The levels themselves contain on average approximately an hour of gameplay and in comparison playing Four Swords would be like playing A Link to the Past sans Hyrule field. That's not to say that the game is simply another dungeon crawler, as the addition of the GBA has helped Nintendo create numerous intelligent puzzles that make the experience competitive in addition to being co-operative. Although initially obvious, such as all four players standing on a switch or lighting torches, the puzzles progressively get a lot more involving and make great use of the GBA screen as players work together both on screen and off.

Walk into a cave or a house and you'll be transported to your GBA screen to continue playing - un-interrupting any of the action on-screen. Interacting with NPCs is done in a very similar fashion

[above] Link blowin' up da spot

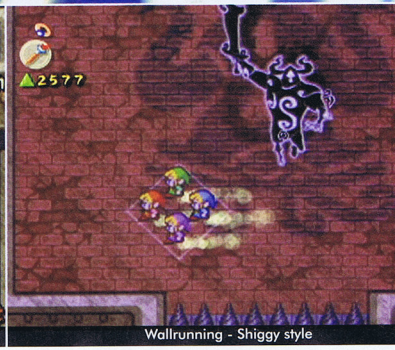
[above] Link goes grave robbing again

[above] A faithful recreation of Egypt



This formation is called whirling blades of cuteness

Link, scaling the heights of "connectivity"



Wallrunning - Shiggy style

as players use their GBA screens to gather information, once again keeping the flow of the game. Working together is great but thankfully Nintendo have added that much needed element of competition, which of course leads to rivalry and ultimately a few controllers being thrown around the room – the hallmark of any great multiplayer title. As you find yourself getting rewarded for collecting the most Ruppees and items, cursing and betraying the player next to you will become as important as working together to solve the next puzzle. Frankly there's nothing quite like walking into a cave to discover a hidden treasure all to yourself whilst your team mates are still on screen defeating enemies. Once they finish they'll also walk into the now empty cavern, continue to play on their GBA screens and wonder what goodies the now empty cave may have held. They'll definitely ask, and you'll most likely tell them it was nothing too special, only a few Ruppees and or a handful of bombs, when in fact it was something far better.

With puzzles designed around the premise of there being four Links one would believe that the single player aspect of the title would feel tacked-on and un-involving. Instead the single-player mode plays very much like the multiplayer mode as the player will find themselves controlling all four Links in an almost squad-like formation. And the best part about this is that once you get used to the various commands to change the formation and control each character, the game still plays great. Couple this with an adventure mode that contains at least 15-20 hours of solid gameplay and you definitely have a winner. However, playing with two to four players does add that extra indiscernible quality that takes the experience to the next level.

## Literally hundreds of items, enemies and effects appear on screen, at once

### HYRULE THE OLD SCHOOL

Although sprite based, and using a similar visual design to that seen almost a decade ago, the improved GameCube hardware has allowed for literally hundreds of items, enemies and effects to appear on screen, at once. And although not jaw dropping, it will definitely bring a smile to the face of anyone who's played the original SNES title. Four Swords also implements various 3D visual effects seen in The Wind Waker, such as the lighting and the purple clouds of smoke, to great effect. The only drawback would be some slight pixelation in the sprites when the action zooms in - minor but bothersome nonetheless. Unfortunately the same sentiments don't translate to the music and sound effects found in the game, as they pretty much sound like every other Zelda title that has come before it with pretty much nothing new to offer. Small gripes maybe, but as this is a new Zelda title, Nintendo should have put a little more focus into its presentation. Although up until this point the whole concept of GBA and GameCube connectivity may have seemed like an ill-conceived gimmick, thankfully Four Swords Adventures does much to prove otherwise. Great stuff. <<

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / XBOX / PC / **GCN**

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Action/Adventure
**PLAYERS:** 1-4
**DEVELOPER:** Nintendo
**PUBLISHER:** Nintendo
**PRICE:** $TBA
**RATING:** G
**AVAILABLE:** TBA

**HYPER VERDICT:**

**PLUS:** Thoroughly engaging and lengthy co-operative experience.

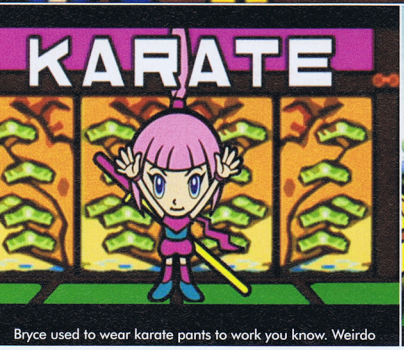
**MINUS:** Requires multiple GBAs and link cables for the multiplayer modes.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 80 | 60 | 90 |

OVERALL
**89**

**The multiplayer sequel to A Link we didn't know existed.**

Wario Ware Inc. was actually Nintendo's rebuttal to the argument games need to be longer to be enjoyed – an idea the company firmly disagrees with.




Bryce used to wear karate pants to work you know. Weirdo

Spitz... the loogie powered mascot Nintendo should leave behind

He's no "Dr Crygar" that's for sure

# WARIO WARE, INC Mega Party Games

**STEPHEN FARRELLY** is studying certificate III in Wario Ethics

You have to be fair. If a game is great; if it's just a lot of fun to play, then you have to reward that game despite any shortcomings it might have in visuals, sound or tech. If it's good, it deserves its kudos.

But you have to be realistic. If a great game has already been released and then gets another release, with no real improvements over its previous self, you have to question the need for shelling out another hundred bucks.

This is the case with Wario Ware Inc., a game released originally on GBA to critical acclaim, which has now been ported to GameCube with only the addition of a superfluous presentation and a very lacklustre multiplayer mode. The game is still a lot of fun to play, but when it was originally designed for the GBA and still looks like a GBA game on a powerhouse console like the GameCube, you have to question Nintendo's motives. Surely, with the power of the Cube Nintendo could have designed some interesting 3D mini-games, utilised the hardware to really put on the three second pressure and create a visceral gaming experience separate to that found on the GBA and its limited technology (in comparison to the GameCube, that is). But alas, no, it was not meant to be.

That being said, if you own a GameCube but not a GBA, hiring this game for a weekend is a lot of fun, especially if you have a few friends around and a select range of beverages - so we'll tell you a little about what to expect.

## PILES OF MONEY

Despite looking like a GBA game on GameCube, Wario Ware is still a fun game to indulge as the premise lends itself to an experience not too dissimilar to crack (note: Hyper does not condone the use of crack and wishes to relay the use of the substance in our pages as a mere comedic tool). With over 200 mini-games at your disposal, each designed to challenge your reaction time within a three-second time frame, Wario Ware Inc. is Nintendo's gift to multiplayer mayhem, which is why – in an intoxicated, crowded environment – Wario Ware Inc. can actually work.

Up to 16 people can battle it out in an elimination style arena where the game's many mini episodes are thrown about at random (in the Single Player you progress in a thematic order, exactly as you did on GBA). However, you don't have to have 16 friends, and if you're like Kosta and play with your split personality, you can settle on two players in a deathmatch or winner stays on.

Aside from the multiplayer factor, however, Wario Ware Inc., fails to convince us to shell out the bucks, which is why we insist you check your video store shelves for this one. Fun, but too little to show investment interest.

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / XBOX / PC / **GCN**

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Party Game
**PLAYERS:** 1-16
**DEVELOPER:** Nintendo
**PUBLISHER:** Nintendo
**PRICE:** $69.95
**RATING:** G
**AVAILABLE:** TBA

**HYPER VERDICT:**

**PLUS:** Awesome and inventive mini games as well as multiplayer.

**MINUS:** No new mini games, no exploitation of GameCube hardware.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 50 | 65 | 78 |

OVERALL
**63**

**Too similar to its GBA bro, but still fun with friends.**

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LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU.

# Crimson Sea® 2

SEPTEMBER 2004

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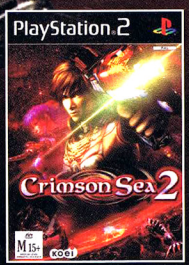


M15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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DOLBY DIGITAL PRO LOGIC II

PlayStation®2

# SUDEKI

**DANIEL WILKS** is protected by a chainmail bikini

Sudeki is a game of vast paradoxes. On the one hand it contains some truly stunning graphics, a kick-arse real time combat system that allows for combos or first person shooting, a well developed story and well implemented character development system, but on the other hand it contains some of the worst voice acting ever heard in an RPG, poorly designed and rather boring puzzles and terribly fleshed out characters that you will have a hard time liking, let along caring about. It would be easy to be harder on Sudeki considering Microsoft's pre-game hype about how it would change the face of action RPGs forever but such promotional hyperbole is par for the course and routinely taken with a grain of salt.

### WOULD YOU LIKE FRIES WITH THAT GRAIN OF SALT?

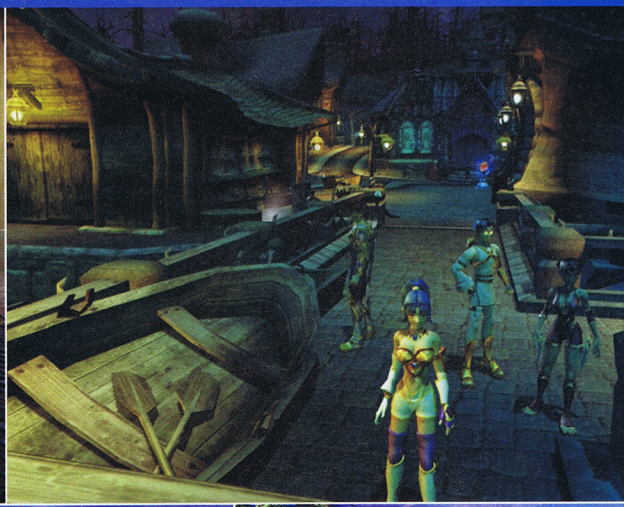
Players take the role of four disparate and two-dimensional characters from the realm of Illumina, a world under attack from the forces of a dark mirror universe (is Dark Samus involved? - Ed). Of course there are the obligatory twists in the plot that mean that not everything is as it is meant to appear but the majority of the characterisation is so two dimensional that you'll be able to pick them up before you're one quarter of the way into the game. Initially playing as Tal, a loner member of the guard who lost his brother in an earlier battle and subsequently is disowned by his father, players will pick up Ailish, a spoilt princess mage who wants to impress her mother the queen, Buki, an anthropomorphic animal woman who hates technology and Elco, an Asian looking, Swedish sounding, bionic armed technologist who distrusts magic. This is as far as character development is taken. We never find out much more about our characters. Ailish is petulant, Buki is god fearing and Elco puts his faith in facts and has no truck with instinct or intuition. Tal fares worse than the other three, as he is given more back story... which is then ignored. After Tal's father plays a semi role as a villain in the early part of the game he is quickly forgotten and appears no more. Giving the writing of the game such a hard working over may seem harsh but players have come to expect more from the role playing genre than a simple excuse for the action.

It's a pity the characters are so forgettable (and in some cases unlikable) because the action, and there is a lot of it, is excellent. Sudeki utilises a novel real time combat system that combines third person combos and first person shooting. Both Tal and Buki use hand to hand weapons, the former a series of rather typical exceptionally large swords and the latter clawed gauntlets. The A and X buttons control all attacks with combos being made up of combinations of the two buttons. Instead of simple mashing, Sudeki utilises a great timing system to make combat more interesting. To the bottom right of the screen are three small circles. Pressing either the A or X button will kick-start the combo which is continued by hitting one of the two buttons when the next circle flashes and is completed when a button is pressed on the third flash. If the player presses a button too early or late the combo is broken.

[above] Beware The Fish!

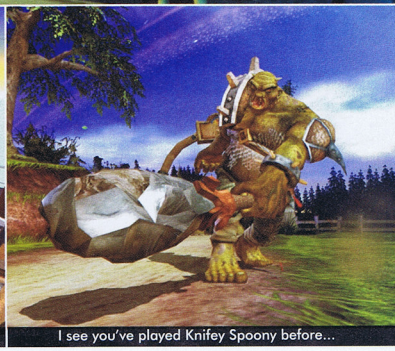
[above] A Natalia Silva designed outfit?

!!! Although Sudeki has its flaws, it's coming out at a reasonable RRP, and thus is worth a look!



Well this screen makes for an exciting caption...

As does this. The Adventures of Captain Standaround...



I see you've played Knifey Spoony before...

Through experimentation the player can discover quite a wide range of moves ranging from devastating attacks on a single enemy through to attacks that will damage all enemies in the immediate area.

### GUN, SPELLS AND BIG NORGS

The other two characters, Elco and Ailish, are armed with a range of guns and spells respectively. When the player switches to one of these characters they will be immediately switched into a first person perspective for some shooting action. Players can switch which character they are playing at any time making combat a very fast paced and enjoyable thing. Lucky thing too since you'll be doing a lot of it.

As well as normal weapon attacks, each character has access to a number of spell-like effects called skill strikes. Depending on the character these skill strikes range from area effect attacks to healing or doubling the damage done by the party for a short period of time.

All characters also have access to Spirit Strikes as well, massive attacks essentially working as a smart bomb that does massive damage to all enemies in play. Unfortunately these strikes are too easy to recharge taking some of the fun out of battles. Sudeki also contains no group boss battles, instead insisting that each character faces their level boss or bosses alone. Whilst these one on one fights are fun it would have been more enjoyable to be able to pit the entire party up against a truly massive enemy.

Outside of battle, each of the four characters also has access to a signature skill used in the game's "puzzles", a term which is used loosely in this context. Tal can pull and push things, Ailish can see invisible and dispel some objects, Buki can climb and Elco can fly for brief periods with a jetpack. Unfortunately only two of the puzzles in the game require any real thought and they come too late in the piece to be rewarding.

A lot of detail has gone into the look and feel of Sudeki but it is very much let down by the puzzles, lack of character and overall derived nature of the title. Sudeki is definitely fun and for the price worth a play but rather than revolutionise the action RPG genre, Climax has simply rehashed a number of parts from other games and wound up with a whole that's not the sum of its parts. <<

## >> It's a pity the characters are so forgettable, because the action is excellent

**COR GUVNA** **Another glaring flaw in Sudeki is the voice acting which is, to say the least, terrible. Each of the main characters has a somewhat generic accent – Tal is Californian, Allish is British, Buki sometimes sounds South African and Elco, the Asian technologist for some reason sounds Swedish. Whilst the range of accents is good to show the various regions of Illumina, it seems as though every character you come across has a different accent, giving no feel to the terrain or culture aside from saying it's a melting-pot. Worse still is the delivery of nearly all of the lines which range from sounding like they're being read off a cue card to sounding like a terrible fifth-grade school play.**

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / **XBOX** / PC / GCN

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** RPG
**PLAYERS:** 1
**DEVELOPER:** Climax
**PUBLISHER:** Microsoft
**PRICE:** $69.95
**RATING:** M15+
**AVAILABLE:** Now

**HYPER VERDICT:**

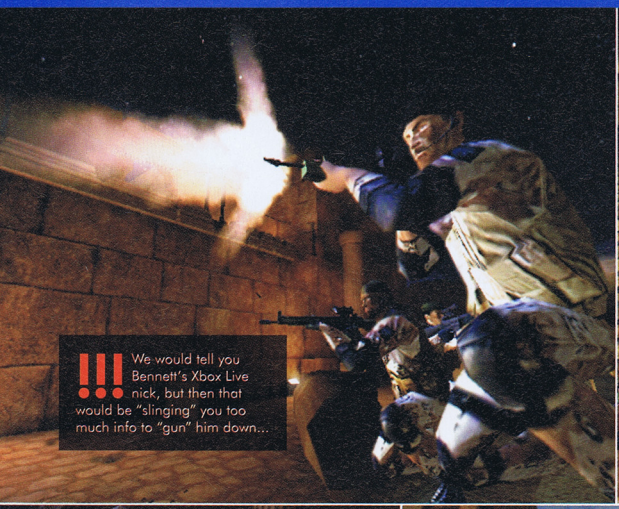
**PLUS:** Great combat system, attractive world, good monster design.

**MINUS:** Woeful voice acting, lackluster characters, dull puzzles.

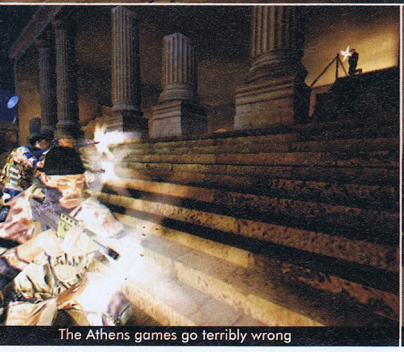
| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 85 | 61 | 80 |

OVERALL
**74**

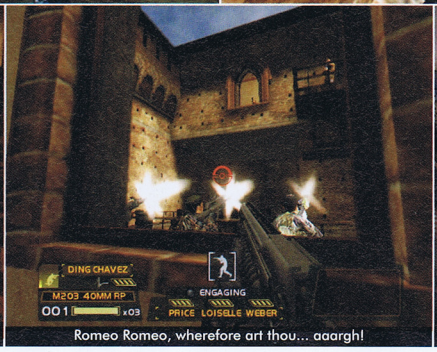
**Great combat and nice design, but boring "puzzles".**



We would tell you Bennett's Xbox Live nick, but then that would be "slinging" you too much info to "gun" him down...



The Athens games go terribly wrong




Romeo Romeo, wherefore art thou... aaargh!

Synchronised shooting, the new Olympic sport

# RAINBOW SIX 3: Black Arrow

**BENNETT RING** has smoking guns...

If you're looking for a shooter for Xbox that doesn't encourage bunny hopping or the use of thermonuclear powered handguns, it's hard to look past Rainbow Six 3. As a realistic shooter it's probably the pinnacle of console goodness, evident by the hundreds of Aussies now addicted to shooting Tangos over Xbox Live until the wee hours of the morning. We've got good news for fans of the Ding, as the expansion pack has now shipped in the form of Black Arrow.

### THE TERROR OF CELLULITE

You needn't go digging through your last twelve months worth of games to find the original Rainbow Six, as this expansion pack doesn't need it to be played. Which is a nice touch, but not quite as nice as the price – a meagre $50 is all you need to join the war on terror. Even the most cash-strapped terror cells can afford this game.

Those expecting a radically evolved version of Rainbow Six 3 are going to be disappointed with Black Arrow. However, if you're after more of the shooty righteousness that the original offered, you've blown down the correct door. It looks and plays almost identically to the first game, but the enemy has obviously been studying the Idiot's Guide to Terrorism, as they're a smarter bunch this time around. These guys will call for backup, use hostages as meat shields and have finally figured out how to use an RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade). Which really, really hurts if it hits you.

A total of ten new killing fields are ready to be traversed, all up to the same top quality of the original maps. Once again a cohesive story is absent, but all you really need to know is that once upon a time there was an Uzi, loaded with 9mm full metal jacket rounds...

Considering that Rainbow Six 3 is the most played game over Xbox Live, it's no surprise to see that this area of the game has received a lot of attention. In fact, this is the first Xbox game to fully support the Live 3.0 features. Clan management is now integrated directly into the game, and the inclusion of a tactics lobby means your team should be a better organised killing machine. Two new online game modes are also included. Retrieval has you retrieving an object from the centre of the map, which you'll then need to protect all the way to the extraction point. Total Conquest is a capture and hold style game, with certain points that must be controlled for victory. Both of these modes promise to be an absolute blastfest. Finally, splitscreen multiplayer has also made it into the Xbox version, although the framerates do suffer a little as a result.

The singleplayer game also warrants your attention, offering some of the finest realistic action on the Xbox. If you're an Xbox Live gamer with a penchant for high powered weaponry, purchasing this game really is a no brainer.

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / **XBOX** / PC / GCN

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Shoot stuff
**PLAYERS:** 1-16
**DEVELOPER:** Ubisoft
**PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft
**PRICE:** $49.95
**RATING:** MA15+
**AVAILABLE:** Now

**HYPER VERDICT:**

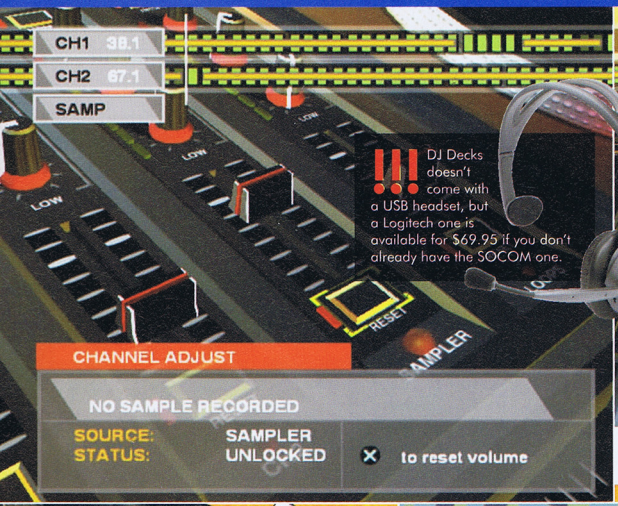
**PLUS:** Loads of new content and refined online play, low price.

**MINUS:** Doesn't do anything new... but it never intended to.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 80 | 88 | 90 |

OVERALL
**87**

**Great value for money and a great realistic shooter.**



Needle in the Groove... minus Elliot the bass player

I'm 'avin' it! Aceeeeeeeeeeeeeeed!

Mix Master Malks is on the cross fader

# DJ: DECKS & FX

**CAM SHEA** goes in search of liquid music...

HYPER BIG RUBBER STAMP OF APPROVAL

Consoles have dabbled in music software for years now, but this, right here, is what I call a moment of epiphany. DJ: Decks & FX just nails what it tries to do in such a comprehensive manner and with such a simple interface that it's amazing no one has done this before. Better still, Decks & FX doesn't pussyfoot around trying to appeal to everyone. This is a game for house music heads, pure and simple. If you don't like dance music, you won't like this game.

If you do, though, boy are you in for a treat. With a record box 82 tunes strong, including tracks from great labels like Defected and Soulfuric, this is a serious treasure trove of musical goodness.

### JUST SHAKE THE GLOBE...

So how does it work? You have two turntables, an FX box, a sampler and a loops console, as well as a four channel mixer with faders and EQs and a cross fader. You can make the process as simple or as complex as you want. Starting out you might want to just mix records but it won't be long until you're mercilessly sampling from every source, playing music that runs four layers deep, mixing in effects over one or all channels, cutting with the cross fader and tweaking the EQs to create your own unique groove. Even the fact that you're interacting through a controller is no obstacle - it won't take long until you're nimbly bounding all over the setup, bringing things in, cutting others out and skipping through your record box with the calculating eye of a pro.

Once you have a good working knowledge of the tracks (they're organised into instrumental, percussion, vocal and acappella folders to make things a little more user friendly) you can build your own playlists, but that's about it for customisation options. Unfortunately, you can't associate tracks in a playlist with specific loops or save samples to the memory card and tag them to the tracks, which is a shame but fair enough. Even so, it's very cool that you can hop into the Studio mode and save entire sets to the memory card as you play them. And the best part? The selection of music is good enough that you actually CAN play your set at a party. For once, it all comes together into a music program that's awesome fun on your own or in a party context.

Mind you, a wider variety of drum loops would have been good; in particular more quirky percussive loops to help flavour the tracks with more of a jacking Chicago-style groove. If only the PS2 had a HD and online out of the box... then we might have been able to download loop updates online. Oh well. A way to preview loops/tracks in the headphones on the selection screen, rather than having to assign them would also have been good. But hey, we're just nit-picking really, as Decks & FX is a stunningly effective piece of software. A must-buy for lovers of house music and videogaming. <<

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2** / XBOX / PC / GCN

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Mixing
**PLAYERS:** 1
**DEVELOPER:** Relentless Software
**PUBLISHER:** Sony
**PRICE:** $99.95
**RATING:** G
**AVAILABLE:** September

**HYPER VERDICT:**
**PLUS:** Great music, great interface, so many possibilities.

**MINUS:** Better loops needed and a few more customisation options.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 85 | 94 | 90 |

OVERALL
**92**

**The best music program for console EVER.**

# COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005

**ELIOT FISH** goes for drive number five...

One look at the box and you'd be forgiven for dismissing this new installment in the Colin McRae Rally series as yet another incremental update. However, this time around you'd be... well, half-wrong at least. Whilst 03 and 04 were disappointingly weak rally packages hanging on to the solid McRae Rally engine for dear life, 2005 is a sudden shift in the right direction. Yep, there's actually a reason to want to buy another Colin McRae Rally game.

## ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM

The real improvement here is that Colin McRae Rally 2005 is more of an actual game again - there has been a real attempt here to provide an entertaining rally package, as opposed to the last two very drab installments. As you'd expect, there's the predictable Championship mode in which you pretend you are Colin McRae himself and race through all the same old stages all over again, but there is now a far more interesting Career mode that puts some fizz back into the experience.

Playing through the Career mode is more akin to the non-linear challenge selection found in Rallisport Challenge 2 (inspiration perhaps?) in which you acquire career points through winning rallies that unlock further cars and challenges. What this means is that you don't have to get stuck on the same rally stage, instead hopping between different cups or challenges to keep the rallying interesting. The perpetual tease of unlocking a new car or upgrade test also keeps you powering through stages in the hope that you'll get your hands on that brand new Audi A3 Quattro or Montero Evolution II. This is a much better structure for a videogame based on this particular sport, because unless you gaze lovingly at pictures of chrome exhaust pipes every day, systematically working your way through tough rally after tough rally can get a little dull. Giving the player more freedom to tackle the game the way they choose simply makes for a more entertaining game.

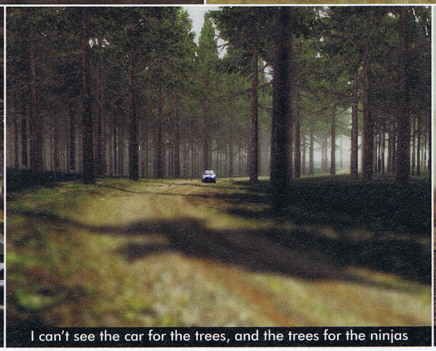
There are a few other new features under the hood too. If you thought Colin McRae Rally 04 looked pretty, then you'll be surprised at how well 2005 has turned out. It doesn't have the spectacular dazzle of Rallisport Challenge 2 or the stylish realism of Richard Burns Rally, but this is definitely the best Colin McRae Rally to date in terms of visuals. The level of detail now goes to all new levels of realism, with foliage dropping from trees when you slam into them, weather effects that are more effective than ever and cars that get banged up in a satisfyingly scruffy way. The game looks as good as it feels to drive, which is, in a word: excellent. There's no denying that the rally engine at the heart of this series remains the best around.

[wherever - it's all dull] That's it Malky...

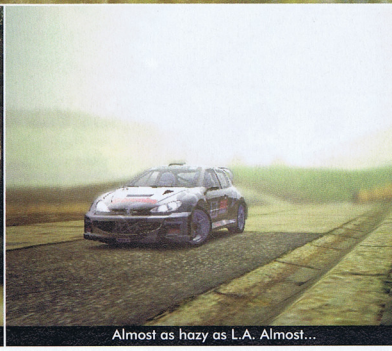
[meh] From next issue onwards...

[someplace] No more car captions!

Herbie goes to MuddyCarlo in search of adventure!



I can't see the car for the trees, and the trees for the ninjas



Almost as hazy as L.A. Almost...

### TO GRIST OR NOT TO GRIST

The improvements don't stop there either, as there's also a funky new visual effect when you stack your car or slam headfirst into an immovable object; the visuals blurring momentarily to really give you the feeling you've been rattled by the impact. A nice touch.

Replays also feature the new depth of field blurring and bloom lighting effect that's becoming all the rage these days in games such as Star Wars: Battlefront. It certainly adds a nice layer of eye candy, although it's not present whilst you're actually driving through the stages, which is a minor disappointment.

In the game options you'll find that you can choose from five different co-drivers, forgoing the legend that is Nicky Grist for someone who speaks in German, Spanish, Italian or French - you know, someone easier to understand than our beloved Welshman.

**» The game looks as good as it feels to drive, which is, in a word: excellent**

However for all these encouraging new layers of polish and more depth to the career mode, this is still the same Colin McRae Rally we've been playing for a few years now. There's nothing amazingly innovative, nothing ground-breaking or unexpected. Not that there's anything wrong with that - a good game can only really go so far until it's resigned to these types of yearly graphical upgrades, or unless it vanishes for good into the pages of gaming history. The fact is that if you've played any of the previous three Colin McRae games, then 2005 will still feel like an expensive luxury. There just aren't enough new stages (other than the welcome addition of Germany) or unexpected twists to make 2005 a must-have game for those who already have one or two Colins in the cupboard. However, if you're a Colin McRae Rally virgin, then by all means grab 2005 and enjoy every last kilometre of it, because this is one of the best rally games on the market. «

!!! 2005 fully supports Xbox Live and PS2 network play so you can get online and race up to 8 other players.

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / **XBOX** / PC / GCN

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Rally racing
**PLAYERS:** 1-8
**DEVELOPER:** Codemasters
**PUBLISHER:** Codemasters
**PRICE:** $99.95
**RATING:** G
**AVAILABLE:** September

**HYPER VERDICT:**

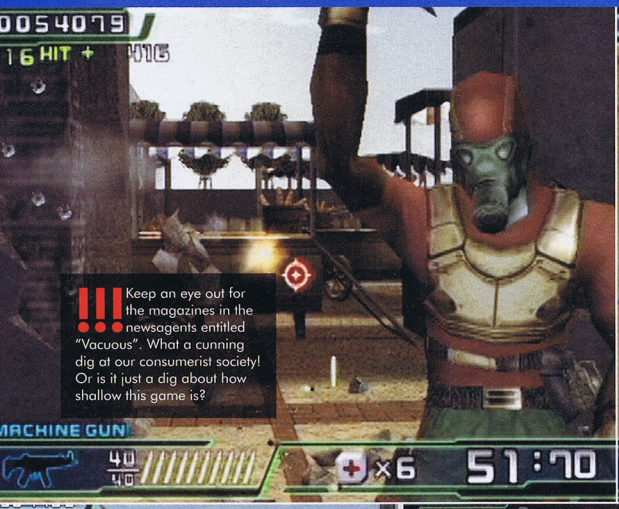
**PLUS:** Good visuals, good career structure, great car handling.

**MINUS:** Nothing innovative nor ground breaking; the same old Colin.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 89 | 87 | 87 |

OVERALL
**88**

**Colin McRae is back in control again.**



When Arnie Pie finally cracks...

I figured if anyone knew where to get some tank, it'd be you!

Getting drunk and hassling shopkeepers

# CRISIS ZONE

**EVIL CAM** messes up the place...

After taking a significant step forward with Time Crisis 3 by introducing a multi-weapon system where you had to collect ammo and strategically weapon switch depending on the situation, it feels as though Namco have lost their way somewhat with Crisis Zone. Or more accurately, they've made a solid but shallow game that should have stayed in the arcades where it belongs.

### LIGHT GUN SHOOTER CRISIS

You see, in Crisis Zone you're now toting a sub-machine gun, and to be honest, moving away from the pistol towards a weapon where you can just spray entire areas with bullets feels satisfying at first. After all, mowing down a screen full of enemies with a couple of sweeps from your GunCon is undeniably cool, as is pockmarking the walls with bullet holes. The colour code system is also intact to a certain degree – take out the red guys first and duck as soon as you see red muzzle flashes.

The reality is, however, that having a machine gun takes away all of the one shot precision that made Time Crisis so damn cool in the first place. No longer can you clinically head shot everything in sight and in a particular order. Instead, you're wearing down health bars and shooting up inanimate objects.

And indeed, that's where much of the fun of Crisis Zone comes from. There's no doubt that this game has the most destructible environments in the series thus far. You're blowing chunks out of support columns Matrix style, shooting up a sports store sending tennis balls and snowboards flying, destroying an office and condemning its computers to the fiery pits of Mac or Windows hell, shattering more glass than a Jerry Brockheimer chase scene and generally just racking up the kind of insurance bill that would cripple most third world countries. It's fun for about five minutes... and then you start wondering where the gameplay is. Indeed, once you've memorised when the red guys pop up and the movements of the bosses, there's going to be very little reason to play this game again.

And just as Tomb Raider taught us that it's okay to shoot endangered animals, so too does Crisis Zone encourage similarly antisocial behavior. In this case it's shooting the shit out of priceless artworks, sculptures, offices and stores just for the fun of it. But then again, it's all in the name of defeating the generic "terrorists" so it must be okay.

Crisis Zone does have some redeeming features. In addition to the Story Mode, there's also a large number of Crisis Missions, each of which has certain criteria to meet – get through with only one life, without a shield, rack as much collateral damage as possible, and so on. These extend the life of the game to some extent, but in the end this is a hard one to recommend. Play it in the arcades instead.

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2** / XBOX / PC / GCN

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Light gat game
**PLAYERS:** 1-2
**DEVELOPER:** Namco
**PUBLISHER:** Sony
**PRICE:** $99.95
**RATING:** M15+
**AVAILABLE:** Late September

**HYPER VERDICT:**

**PLUS:** Simultaneous two player, nice visuals, fun at first.

**MINUS:** Same old stupid voiceover, gameplay has taken a step backwards.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 80 | 70 | 72 |

OVERALL
**73**

**Crisis Zone sees the series going backwards...**

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!!! An entire two page spread without a single rain-slicked street screenshot? What the hell is going on Malky?

# JUICED

**ELIOT FISH** likes carrot, apple and ginger juice in the morning.

It must be an intimidating prospect, starting up development on a racing game for the Xbox. Not only do you have to compete against Burnout 2 and Project Gotham Racing 2, but any day now will see the release of Burnout 3, Need For Speed Underground 2 and the gorgeous-looking Forza. How in god's name can yet another racing game offer a valid alternative? Gambling. Illegal modding. Crews. Street cred. Juiced is that game.

### WHO CAN STOP AT ONE DONUT?

Regardless of whether you carry a dislike for R&B/Hip-Hop or the hopped-up car heads burning donuts in your local McDonald's car park, Juiced is a racing game that just might convert you into a nitrous-loving, sub-woofer hugging, spoiler-caressing, street racing junkie. If you can get past the lame music-video style introduction, you'll find a very solid game indeed.

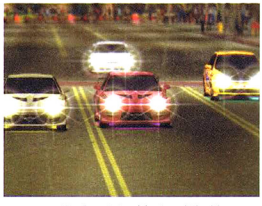
Jump straight into the career mode to discover just what an addictive structure it contains. You start out with $75,000, and with that you can buy a fairly pissy little car such as a Civic Type R or Golf MKIV. With the rest of your money, you can choose to mod the hell out of that car as you see fit, whilst keeping a bit of cash in your pocket for entering races later on. Eventually, you'll have enough cash to buy an 800+ horsepower beast.

The whole dynamic behind Juiced is the balance between spending money on your car, and trying to win races to keep the cash flow going so you don't end up totally bankrupt. If you ever find you can't afford to repair your wheels after a race, there's always the option of heading to a race meet just to bet on other racers. You can assess their cars, and then put your money down.

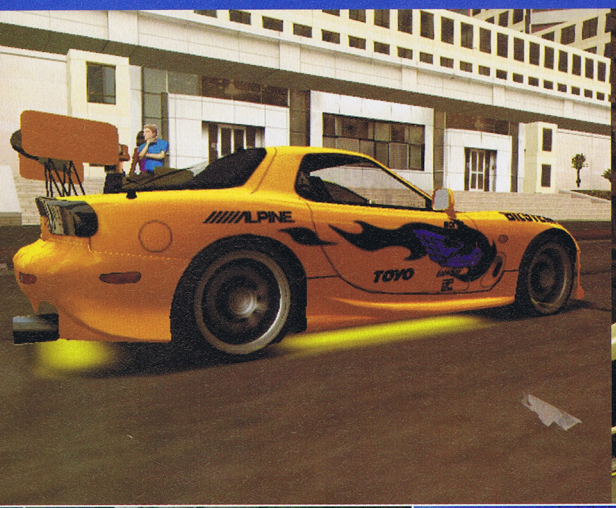
Juiced also carries a Respect system where you gain respect with other crews depending on how well you race, how well you mod your car, and how well you perform at the critical car meets where you need to show off your wheels by performing style tricks ala Project Gotham Racing. Earning Respect is crucial to winning over racers to join your crew and getting invitations to higher-earning race meets. Using a humorous Nokia mobile interface, you can also make calls and accept challenges with other racers, or even challenge them to a pink slip race, where you race for possession of the other's car.

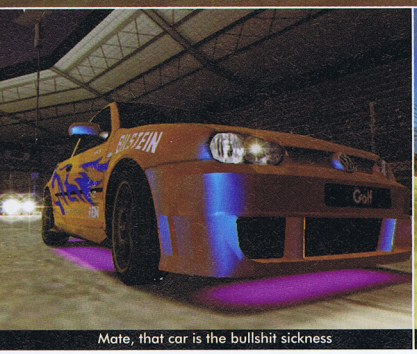
Modding your cars is one of the most fun aspects to Juiced. Not only does it directly affect how the car performs, but there are all the ever-more important aesthetic considerations. What colour do you want your dials? What about your neons? How about an Alpine sound system? How about a pearlescent

[above] It's all about RESPECK...

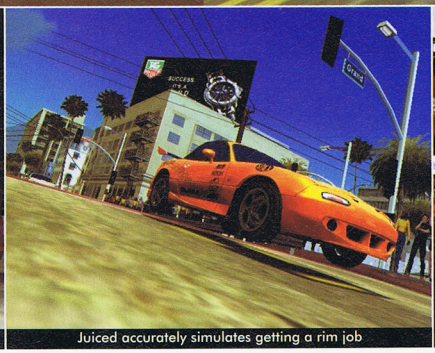


[below] And batmobile like cars

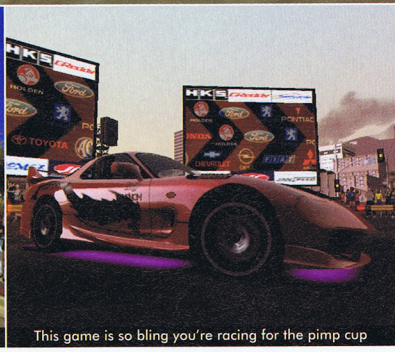





Mate, that car is the bullshit sickness



Juiced accurately simulates getting a rim job




This game is so bling you're racing for the pimp cup

paint job? If modding doesn't terribly excite you, then take solace in the fact that it didn't interest me either until I started playing Juiced. Now I'm eager to get my hands on a new car, just so I can splurge on an outrageous new look, tweak it to within an inch of its life, and take it for a spin to see how it performs. After you tinker with your car, you can even set it on a Dynamometer in your garage and check out the performance. This allows you to suss out the RPM and torque, amongst other details, so you can make sure you fine tune things properly.

The racing and car handling is probably closest to Project Gotham Racing, and whilst the visuals aren't quite as nice as Bizarre's racer, they certainly do the job. The cars really do look great - and they look even better in the slick replays. Even better is that all the cars feel great to drive and the handling makes for some very satisfying and tight racing. Punching in the Nitrous is always a thrill.

## Earning respect is crucial to winning over racers to join your crew

### STREET RACING CREW ELECTRIC BOOGALOO

Because you can access different race events from a calendar in any way you see fit, Juiced does become quite an additive exercise in making cash, winning races and gambling on the outcome of sprint events and the like. But the career mode isn't all this game has to offer. Arcade mode lets you jump straight into a selected car class (Japanese Super Cars, Classics, Import Coupe etc) and get stuck straight into a race, sprint or show-off. You can also set-up your own custom races and indulge in split-screen and system-link racing with your friends. Probably most exciting for Xbox Live users is the options Juiced has for those of you online: put an online crew together and show everyone else out there who owns the streets – as well as stripping them of their cars and cash! Racing as teams also allows you to gang up on other cars and ensure one of you crosses the finish line first. It's tonnes of fun.

It must also be said, Juiced has exceptionally fast loading times (on the Xbox at least) making navigating all the sub-menus and entering races super sweat-free.

If illegal street-racing and the car mod scene is your bag, then you should know that Juiced does this much more authentically than Need For Speed Underground. Whilst it might not have as much visual glam as EA's affair, Juiced is the game you've been looking for. <<

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Racing
**PLAYERS:** 1-Multi
**DEVELOPER:** Juice Games
**PUBLISHER:** Acclaim
**PRICE:** $99.95
**RATING:** M15+
**AVAILABLE:** September

**HYPER VERDICT:**

**PLUS:** Great career structure, purposeful racing, endless modding.

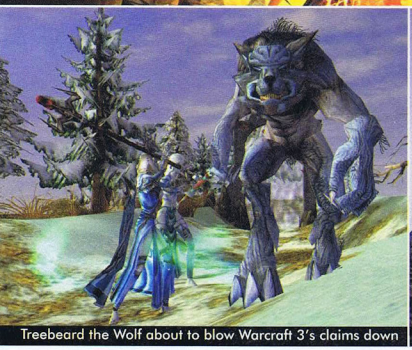
**MINUS:** Some repetitive circuits, slow to progress in career mode, odd AI.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 84 | 83 | 84 |

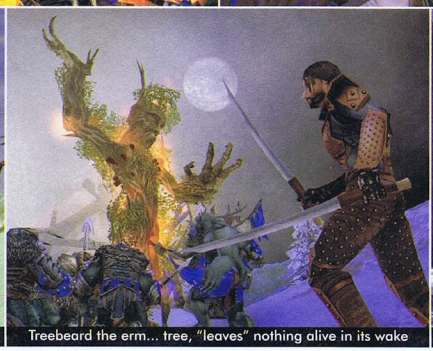
OVERALL
**84**

**An addictive street racer to fulfill all your hot rod fantasies.**

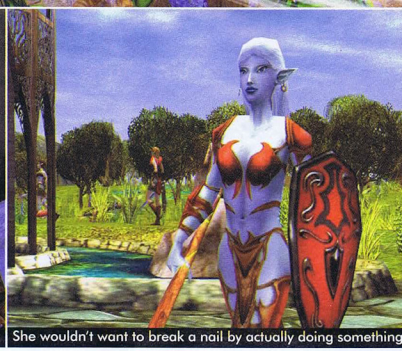
!!! Keep an ear out for the voice actors' use of down inflection for a question and up for a statement. It sounds ridiculous...



Treebeard the Wolf about to blow Warcraft 3's claims down



Treebeard the erm... tree, "leaves" nothing alive in its wake



She wouldn't want to break a nail by actually doing something

# SPELLFORCE: The Order of Dawn

**DANIEL WILKS** wants a Summon Lvl 6 Amos rune

After so many games in the last year or so have promised to fully integrate the genres of RTS and RPG we finally have a game worthy of the title. SpellForce casts the player as a powerful Rune Warrior, one of a select few semi immortal characters capable of wielding the power of runes to summon great armies to defeat their enemies. As a newly resurrected Rune Warrior, the player must first create their character RPG style from one of three general archetypes: archer, warrior or wizard and through a series or levels and missions take on a great evil with their summoned army made up of up to six races: humans, elves, dark elves, dwarves, orks and powerful trolls.

### RUNE GOONS

Whilst the main character is a powerful figure capable of a great many skills, leveling up and equipping many of the magical items found around the maps, the true power of the Rune Warrior is their ability to use shrines to summon heroes and armies. There are two distinct types of shrines in the game: hero shrines and race shrines. Hero shrines allow the player to summon additional powerful hero characters to aid them in their missions if they have the correct rune equipped, whilst race shrines allow the player to summon up workers and warriors of the six races to build bases as well as serve as the foot soldiers of the army.

Whilst this mix may sound like typical RTS fare the approach that SpellForce takes is quite novel and makes for a good deal of fun. Instead of having to build up tech trees and research new technologies, all building in SpellForce comes through Runes and Plans. These can be found throughout the maps, either as treasure or bought from merchants. When equipped these items allow the player to instantly summon the heroes and troops as long as the required resource levels are met and the workers have built the prerequisite buildings. Instead of focussing on resource management, SpellForce concerns itself more with exploration and combat – once the base is built up and resources are gathered the player can virtually ignore the base and concentrate on the fun things.

Graphically SpellForce is something of a mixed bag. The engine is capable of rendering some very nice environments and figures, and can be zoomed a long way with the mouse wheel. Unfortunately whilst the third-person view is very attractive it is all but useless in the game and you will find yourself playing mostly in the most zoomed out perspective. Load times are also shocking, often taking a few minutes to load each level.

Although SpellForce features a nicely overwrought orchestral score, it also features voice acting where actors frequently mispronounce words, use the absolute wrong inflection and resolutely ignore most of the punctuation.

**AVAILABLE ON:**
PS2 / XBOX / **PC** / GCN

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** RTS/RPG
**PLAYERS:** 1-8
**DEVELOPER:** Phenomic
**PUBLISHER:** Encore Software
**PRICE:** $69.95
**RATING:** M 15+
**AVAILABLE:** Now

**HYPER VERDICT:**

**PLUS:** Fun missions, runs smooth, an actual RTS/RPG hybrid.

**MINUS:** Worst. Voice. Acting. Ever.

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 81 | 64 | 88 |

OVERALL
**86**

**This is the game that Warcraft 3 initially promised to be.**

auran presents

# SpellForce
## The Order of Dawn

In a world full of magic, battles and adventure, the courage of one will seal the fate of worlds!

"It's so rare to see a role-playing game which gets us licking our chops and dusting down our GeForce FXs. Jaw-dropping battlefield sequences, a bewitching blend of Dungeon Siege and Warcraft ." PCGAMER

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: www.spellforce.com

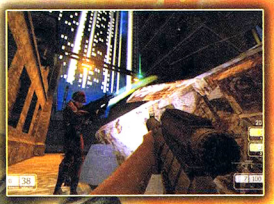
OFFICIAL WEBSITE: www.chasergame.com

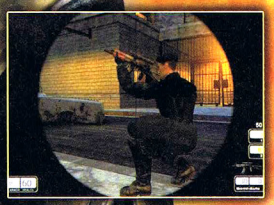
# Chaser
If You Can Hold A Gun You're Not Dead

All-out action, enthralling storyline, accurate enemy AI, benchmark graphics and a custom-built game engine all combine superbly to make this the supreme experience in immersive gameplay and possibly the greatest First Person Shoot 'Em Up ever created.

As the bullets fly, you bravely arm yourself with 20 powerful weapons and stagger through 40 levels of action-packed gun-fights in amazing settings on Earth and Mars. As your epic adventure continues you gradually uncover the frightening truth about your past, exposing a deadly web of intrigue and corruption that will shake the world to its very foundations...

Just remember: Everyone is your enemy





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PC CD ROM

AURAN

## CATWOMAN

Some cats (very few) are lovable little creatures you want to lavish attention on, pet them until they purr and spoil them rotten. Most however are arrogant little bastards who think they're far better than they actually are, make a mess of your furniture and stink up the joint with their nasty body fluids and rancid "personality". Take a wild guess which type of feline Catwoman is.

Imagine if you can, taking Rise to Honor and Prince of Persia, forcing them to have sex at gunpoint and then putting down any of the offspring that had the full complement of chromosomes. Then take the deformed child of violence, put a mirror in front of its malformed visage and repeatedly tell it it's beautiful until it believes you and you have Catwoman.

Catwoman is essentially a series of mindless combats in which bad-guys are only knocked out if you manage to fluke it and knock them through some terrain, interspersed with Prince of Persia esque movement puzzles in which the objective is obscured 90% of the time due to the camera being placed in a manner that only seems to be good for showing off Halle Berry's virtual arse. Speaking of Halle Berry, when will people start to notice that during her entire career she's only turned in two good performances, namely in Bulworth and Monsters Ball? Her voice performance in Catwoman is terrible with supposedly sultry lines coming across more like a whiny teenager who spends too much time on LiveJournal telling everyone how soulless the world is. This moggie needs to be put down.

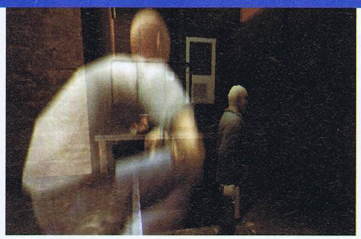
**SCREW FLANDERS**

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Crap / **PLAYERS:** 1
**DEVELOPER:** Argonaut Games / **PUBLISHER:** EA
**PRICE:** $89.95 / **RATING:** M15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY | OVERALL |
|---|---|---|---|
| 80 | 60 | 12 | 24 |

[above] Almost as bad as an Uwe Boll film...



## SECOND SIGHT

It's usually a sign of lazy reviewing when the writer compares one game to another for any longer than to illustrate a point but with a game like Second Sight, being so similar in so many ways to the vastly superior PSI Ops, it is virtually impossible not to. Once again players take the role of a man whose psychic powers conveniently return to him when the plot dictates they need them to solve the next puzzle. Instead of playing a soldier with psychic powers, this time around you play a research scientist who, for no particularly good reason at the beginning of the game is forced to go through weapons and stealth training because, we're assuming, certain science is better observed when either shot or snuck up upon.

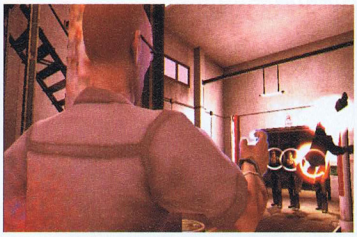
Whilst Second Sight's mixture of stealth and action gameplay is quite enjoyable, where the game really falls down is actually in the use of psychic powers. Instead of seamlessly integrating them into the game-world if feels as though Free Radical have simply tacked a number of them on because psychic powers and the manipulation of physics engines are the flavour of the month. TK is a prime example of this – instead of objects having mass and acting as though they have real physics, TK in Second Sight simply lifts any object the game says you can and slowly pushes or pulls it around the room. Oddly enough it's still possible to kill enemies like this. Apparently a plastic garbage bin flying at about 2Kph is more deadly that 9mm high velocity lead.

**CHOKEY CHOKENSTEIN**

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Action / **PLAYERS:** 1
**DEVELOPER:** Free Radical / **PUBLISHER:** Codemasters
**PRICE:** $99.95 / **RATING:** M15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY | OVERALL |
|---|---|---|---|
| 84 | 82 | 73 | 76 |



[above] Quick! Levitate a plastic garbage bin at them...

## CONFLICT: VIETNAM

Vietnam is the new black. Every developer worth their salt has either released or is releasing a Vietnam game within the near future – or so it seems at any rate. Cynicism aside, Conflict: Vietnam is the third game in the Conflict series and as such suffers from many of the flaws that plagued the first two games, but also goes some of the way to fixing some of the others.

Players take the role a young recruit in the 101st Airborne, drafted in '67 (or thereabouts) and put on the front lines. As in previous games the player not only controls their own character but also gives commands to the three partially AI controlled squad-mates. This is perhaps where Conflict: Vietnam most falls down. Whilst the enemy AI has been nicely tweaked and the action is by and large solid, the controls for giving party orders are needlessly complex and clunky, making it almost impossible to do anything in a tense situation other than simply blasting away with the main character and hoping that the AI will acquit itself well enough that none of your squad will die in the proceedings.

To give a simple command like for the medic to heal a wounded trooper the player must first hold down the left trigger, select the medic, press B, select the target with the order reticule, select it with B and then press Black to issue the order. Not really what you would call intuitive is it? Although the series was never particularly attractive, Conflict: Vietnam looks like an absolute dogs breakfast with ugly, ugly models and dull, often washed out textures.

**DANIEL WILKS**

**AVAILABLE ON:**
**PS2 / XBOX / PC / GCN**

**DETAILS:**
**CATEGORY:** Action / **PLAYERS:** 1
**DEVELOPER:** Pivotal Games / **PUBLISHER:** Gathering
**PRICE:** $89.95 / **RATING:** MA15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY | OVERALL |
|---|---|---|---|
| 71 | 82 | 65 | 68 |

[above] Look out for Frank Castle, up in the trees!

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# POKÉMON Leaf Green and Fire Red

**Cam:** Well, the long awaited new Pokemon titles are out this month, and to celebrate Daniel and I have been wasting time at work playing Leaf Green and Fire Red respectively. I dunno about you dude but I'm really underwhelmed.

**Daniel:** This is the first time I've actually played a Pokemon game and I honestly can't see why this is the craze that's taken over the world. Sure it's addictive for a while but it's all busy work and no real content. I think South Park was right - it is a Japanese conspiracy to take over the world using children.

**Cam:** Nah, the Pokemon titles are genuinely good games. It's a great combination of the drive to collect and level up your Pokemon, the rock, paper, scissors battle mechanics and exploration. The reason I'm underwhelmed is... it's exactly the god damn same as the last one. Well actually, it's almost the same as the old GB games so there's actually less to it. I must admit I only started playing Pokemon with Ruby and Sapphire, but after getting thoroughly addicted and sinking around 50 hours into Ruby it feels like a kick in the teeth to have to start all over again in what is essentially a lesser game. As for you, although it will undoubtedly open up a lot more after you've unlocked enough of the TM and HM abilities, I'd suggest getting a copy of Ruby or Sapphire.

**Daniel:** So what you're saying is that I have so much time on my hands because of how little effort I put into the magazine that I can afford to sink 50 hours into a game about leveling up teddy bears and pitting them against each other in gladiatorial combat? Actually, that doesn't sound like such a bad idea. Like I said, I didn't mind the game but so far I haven't found that much meat. The collection part is pretty cool but I guess when I do get some of the cooler skills the game will open up some. I must admit though, beating up disgustingly cute things with my unbeatable team of my Lvl 23 Wartortle Benton and Lvl 20 fish thin Lord Seafood is pretty damn amusing.

**Cam:** As is winning with my Lvl 30 Chortle "Finbar". Hehe, and yeah there's nothing like guiding Amos (or Amosina in your case) through a series of trainer battles (and re-battles — one of the new features is being able to take on trainers you've already beaten again for more money and EXP). Especially against guys who say stuff like "I like wearing shorts. They're so comfortable". What the hell is wrong with Japanese people? Speaking of "trainers" (cringe) you can pick up the running shoes that were introduced in Ruby/Sapphire in Red and Green now. There are a few new areas too, namely the "Mystery Islands" which have a number of mini-games and abilities to unlock. You can also find gems that let you import Pokemon from Ruby, Sapphire and Colosseum which players like myself will appreciate. It's also cool that the game comes with the wireless network dealie so we can "chat", trade Pokemon, play mini-games and battle remotely. But it's hard to shake the feeling that this is just a marginally tarted up version of a game from 1995. And where are the goddamn beauty contests? I want to know how pretty my Pokemon are!

**Daniel:** Steady on big fella, you're beginning to sound disturbingly like a furry, or, worse yet, a plushy. I gotta admit that the wireless dealie is pretty cool, although I find the fact that you seem to get no XP or anything form battling other trainers through the network a little weird. I also discovered that any traded Pokemon hate my guts. I've got this Lvl 14 bat thing that won't obey any of my commands. Stupid bat thing.

**Cam:** Muahaha! That's because I routinely subjected the poor little thing to my plushy ways before trading it. You didn't think I'd trade you a well adjusted Pokemon did you?

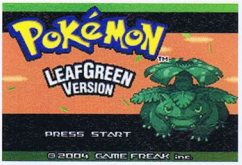
So should you (the reader that is) buy this latest Pokemon? Maybe. If you played the original and want a trip down memory lane it's worth checking out. Just don't expect anything all that fresh. <<

[S.P.] American have very big...

[up] But does it like wearing shorts?

[up] The legend of the dog faced boy

[above] The club's called No Homers




[above] Just don't try and smoke it

**DETAILS:**

**CATEGORY:** Collect-a-thon
**PLAYERS:** 1-Multi
**DEVELOPER:** Nintendo
**PUBLISHER:** Nintendo
**PRICE:** $69.95
**RATING:** G
**AVAILABLE:** Now

| GRAPHICS | SOUND | GAMEPLAY |
|---|---|---|
| 70 | 70 | 80 |

OVERALL

**75**

**We were hoping Nintendo would surprise us... but nope.**

MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT

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Earth's ultimate fate depends on the might of a giant-robot god called GRAVION!

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- ANIMEINFO.COM

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- ANIME ON DVD

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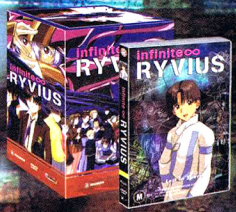
- ANIMERICA

sneak peek: www.madman.com.au/infiniteryvius



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The complete series on 4 DVDs!

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Meet Tylor...
He's lazy, care-free and a total goof-ball.

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# Final Fantasy XI

>> Kelly Starr

With Final Fantasy X a huge success as the first Final Fantasy game on the PS2, and the girly but still decent success of X-2 following, fans of the series are eagerly following news of the development of Final Fantasy XII and are impatiently awaiting any new tidbits on the game. But wait, aren't we missing something here? Whatever happened to Final Fantasy XI?

Well, it exists, and has for quite some time. XI was launched in Japan way back in early 2002 and an English version finally became available with the American launch in late 2003. It's not surprising if you've heard nothing about this game, because up until recently there was no sign that it would ever reach our shores, so most people simply forgot about it and focused on upcoming games that they would actually get to play. Now that it has been confirmed that there will be a PAL launch of the title, the time has come for people to learn a little of what the game is about and decide if it's for them or not.

Here's a quick rundown for those that are still in the dark about the game. Final Fantasy XI is what is known as a 'Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game' (MMORPG), which greatly sets it apart from all previous titles. It is playable on either PS2 or on the PC, though you must have the Hard Drive and Network Adapter to be able to play the PS2 version. It is pay to play, which means that after you fork out your hard earned cash to purchase the game, you will still need to pay a fee every month to play it and will need to have a credit card. It is online only, there is no way to play without an internet connection, though it's nice to know that dial-up users are not disadvantaged as they get the same speed connection to the servers as broadband users do.

[above] I wager 400 quatloos on the newcomer...

**THIS IS IT. THIS IS YOUR STORY. IT ALL BEGINS HERE...**

The game is structured like Everquest and other MMORPGs, which means that you create your own character to play as, and that most of the characters you interact with during the game are other real people from all over the world. Although this type of game seems to lack the one thing the Final Fantasy games have become famous for,

[above] Kelly goes out in search of the other red meat
[right] The usual fantasy suspects. Except for the midget with Obelix pants

their stories, to say that there is no story in XI wouldn't be entirely accurate. Of course there is the basic background story that creates the purpose of the game, but as you level up and complete more quests, the story does grow deeper and more mysterious, something that most other MMORPGs lack. Mostly though, the game is your story, the people you meet and the way you play your character will shape the experience for you, and whether you embrace life in the world of Vana'diel or chose to shy away from it, is up to you.

Aside from the main obvious difference, that you play as your own character and make your own story, there are many other key differences that make FFXI unlike every other FF game ever made. The most important is that there are no random battles. FFXI is the only game in the series (aside from the upcoming FFXII that is!) where you can see your enemies and fight them in real time.

[above] Chat about the virtual weather
[left] Some of the races are (from left) Elvaan, Mithra, Tarutaru (aawww) and Galka. It's the Ewoks meet Bloody Roar

**OUR REASONS MAY BE DIFFERENT, BUT OUR GOALS ARE THE SAME...**

So with all of these things that make FFXI different from the rest of the games in the series, why is it still part of the series at all? Well there are still plenty of elements in the game that help give it a distinctly Final Fantasy flavour. You will find Chocobos to tame and ride, Moogles to converse with and Cactuars and Tonberrys to fight. Of course there are familiar jobs to play as too: Warrior, Summoner and Thief, Mages of every colour and all the spells and items that are standard with Final Fantasy games.

So what are the game's strengths? FFXI has everything that a good MMORPG needs; a variety of jobs and character types to play, plenty of quests, story based missions, crafting, mini games and special events. There is so much to do in Square-Enix's online world, that they even included a warning for players not to forget their real lives when they log in.

It may seem bizarre and a little scary at first, but anyone who calls themselves a fan of the series but doesn't want to try it is obviously a few Moogles short of a Mog Central. Many fans may hate FFXI, but many will find themselves loving being part of the Final Fantasy world and cherishing the experiences they will have and the friends they will make there. See you in Vana'diel!

FINAL FANTASY XI ONLINE

**EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS**

**When FFXI was released in the US, it came pre-packaged with the first expansion pack, Rise Of The Zilart. By the time the game is released here, the second expansion pack, Chains Of Promathia will be out as well and will also be included in our version of the game. FFXI on PC hits stores Mid September. But there's still no sign of the PS2 version...**

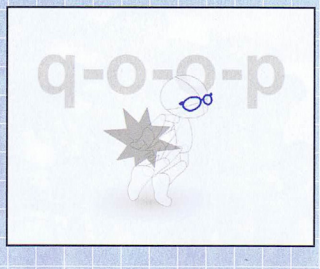
# Links

>> Kosta Andreadis

## The Rich and the Famous

***http://japander.com/***

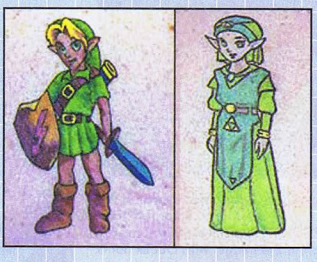
>> You'd think that when you've made it in Hollywood and have amassed a reasonable Scrooge McDuck-esque Tower O' Wealth that you'd be pretty comfortable. Apparently not, as the Hollywood stars featured on Japander prove that much like bling bling, ho's in various area codes, rides, and nine millies – you can never have too much of a good thing. So they fly off to Japan, where they get paid obscene amounts of money to endorse Japanese products in very Japanese commercials. Governor Schwarzenegger's ads are probably the pick of the bunch as he endorses what seems to be some sort of 'cocaine-in-a-can' soft drink.




## Smack!

***http://www.q-o-o-p.net/temp/testneo.swf***

>> Here's a cool little flash ditty that proves that when it comes down to it, some things are best kept simple. No points, no levels, no character development just the simple pleasure of smacking around an animated character. You might be thinking to yourself what fun is there to be had with smacking around an animated character? Well to this I say – use your imagination numb nuts! Pretend it's your boss, with his crazy baseball cap, baggy pants, and the predilection for the phrase "don't go there" – and smack the crap out of him (thanks K - Ed). The stress will fade, or if you're lucky, ooze away.



## The Nerd and the Tattoo Parlour

***http://www.bmezine.com/news/pubring/20040720.html***

>> Ah those crazy nerds. They live in their own little worlds of digital bites and bits and pieces they don't realise that outside their own world is another world, the real world. Few people are aware that outside that world is yet another world, the realer world, but that's beside the point. The point! Tattoos and nerds, is like mixing two things that weren't meant to be mixed. And although we can admit that it does look kinda cool to have Pac Man and Megaman tattoos on your body – you'd be a fool to actually go out and do it.

## CELEBRITY SITE OF THE MONTH

## Coolio

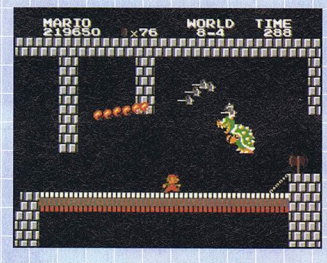
***http://www.coolio.com/***

>> Does anyone remember Coolio? I'm guessing probably not, so let me try and refresh your memory. You're back in the early nineties and Michelle Pfeiffer has just released a stunning new film called Dangerous Minds, about a teacher who teaches some kids from the 'hood' things like Shakespeare and poetry. They all die. Anyway Coolio had a song that featured prominently in that film called 'Gangsta's Paradise', which you can listen to when you visit Coolio's very own website. You may notice that on the awards page it writes "coming soon". Our advice to Coolio is simple - don't hold your breath buddy.

## Signup-o No More-o

***http://www.bugmenot.com/***

>> It a familiar story, you've come across a website article that you want to read only to find out that you needed to sign up to said site and provide the pre-requisite email address and details. You can't be arsed doing so, you don't bother signing up, ponder for a moment what the article may have contained then go straight back to leaching the latest movie, music and porn releases. Hey, it happens. Here's a site that aims to put the kybosh on that whole racket with thousands of pre-made accounts ready to be used, simply enter the URL and the login is yours.




## Speed Run

***http://home.comcast.net/~arcthelad/***

>> In order to create a successful speed run you need two things – a copy of the game and a videogaming godlike freak of nature. If you want examples of the second item look no further, as this site displays feats of videogaming prowess worthy of placement in any museum. We're talking completing Metal Gear Solid in less than 90 minutes and Super Mario World in under 12. Yep, against these freaks we'd pretty much stand no hope of survival, thankfully the defensive power of sunlight keeps them from taking over the world as we know it – in record time no doubt.

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OPT3848

# 鉄拳 Tekken 5

## Hands-On Arcade Report

### スパ・ハピ・ブリスデス・ハハ・ステプ

**Bryce McDonough** is a man who loves Tekken, and indeed has been the butt of many a "haha" step joke over the last few years. We have to admit, however, that we're very jealous that he had the chance to go to a Tekken 5 test in Osaka recently. Here's what he thought...

Tekken 5 is here to do what Tekken 4 never could – to be a sequel to Tekken 3, the king of 3D fighting games. Numerically speaking of course, Tekken 4 was precisely that – but the similarities stopped there. Tekken 4 was as different from Tekken 3 as KOF from Streeties, Mario from Sonic. The new features in the game were not only radical, but so fundamentally game-changing that the very Tekkenness of the game was arguable.

**TEKKENNESS IS A WORD NOW?**

As one of the first people in the world to get my hands on Tekken 5 I'm here to tell you that Namco may just be in a position to reclaim their crown.

Firstly, the set-up of the machine is a killer. Gone are the days of slipping a PCB into an old SF2 machine – this baby's gotta be special-ordered, and clocks in at US$28,000. If you think that's pricey, you're right, and there's a cheaper version available. But this is the deluxe model. This includes 2 battle cabinets (i.e. two complete machines, not one pair), along with Tekken's latest and greatest installed. And it gets better.

There is a huge widescreen plasma display attached at the side, which televises the current challenge, win streaks, win percentages and much more. These percentages come from Tekken-net, Tekken's own version of Virtua Fighter's incredibly popular VF-net system. How does it work? Simple, buy a card, slot it into the Tekken 5 machine, choose your character, and start challenging people. Your win record (and loss record) is stored in the card and TkNet system and then shows up every time you challenge. Pretty nifty, right? Now, Sega's system unfortunately never made it out of the isles of Japan, but we have it on good word (a Namco employee no less) that this system is hitting the USA, which raises the chances of someone giving us in the far-too-often-ignored Oceania a look-in. At least I'd like to think so.

But don't think the card system stops at wins and losses. Oh no. This time around we get to custom-colour and clothe our characters as we unlock and win items in single-play and challenge matches.

Of course all this doesn't mean a rat's if the game plays like a dog (touché – Ed). Or like Tekken 4 for that matter. But luckily, and sweetest of all, it really, really doesn't. As I said earlier, Tekken 5 is likely to be considered the TRUE sequel to Tekken 3. Tag was a gift, and a yummy one at that, but completely removed from the Tekken storyline. Tk4 felt like Namco had taken someone you loved ever so dearly, locked them in a dungeon, and kicked them every hour, on the hour, over a period of 17 years. Tk5 is there in both story and gameplay.

Not that Tk4 is being left completely out of the loop - from Tekken 4 we are seeing a return of the sidewalk (though in its new modified version – see below), walls (though in their new toned-down version – see below) and of course the new characters. Plus a huge cast of returnees.

How many? Well, we don't know about all the time-release characters, but there are 20 ready-to-play out of the box, and through my connections I've learnt of a couple more. We have Jin Kazama (Tk4 version, not Tk3), Kazuya Mishima, King, Julia Chang, Marshall Law, Lei Wulong, Nina Williams, Craig Marduk, Christie Monteiro, Steve Fox, Ling Xiaoyu,

Lee Chaolan, Paul Phoenix, Jack-5 (yeah, a new one), Bryan Fury, Yoshimitsu and Hwoarang. Three new faces fill out the top 20 — Feng Wei (hardcore Chinese guy in a red pimpsuit), Asuka Kazama (fans of Jun Kazama should be happy...) and Raven (think Wesley Snipes in Blade — as a ninja). These are the only truly confirmed characters, however we also know that Anna Williams, Kuma, Bruce Irvin, a sumo wrestler (most likely Ganryu) and *spoiler* Heihachi Mishima will be time-released. The end-boss is likely to be from a past game but, in the arcades at least, an unplayable one. This should keep tournaments more balanced.

### JUGGLES AND HAHA STEPS

But what's so good about the gameplay? First, let's get down to what's *different* from Tk4. The walls are there, but the uneven ground and inhibitively small fight arenas are not. Neither are the ever-so-lame wall-pushes. Yep, the Position Change from 4 has been given the heave-ho, and Tekken's traditional 2 standard throw system has returned. Back-dash is in again, and it actually dashes backwards this time. However, to limit its abuse, it has been shortened, and many moves have been given far greater range, as well as everyone now having a longer-range standard throw. Sidewalk is still present, but now you have to doubletap for it, with up and down reverting to their traditional jobs of jump and crouch (a single tap still being sidestep of course). Most importantly, JUGGLES ARE BACK! I cannot stress how much this simple fact helps Tekken 5 feel like a true Tekken game. One of the greatest changes in the last chapter was to movement, however playing Tekken 5 I really felt in control again. The characters have shrunk a little since last time, but this is more to do with the distances between characters being greater than anything else.

The graphics are fantastic too. The arenas are large and lush, full of unrelated things going on. Also, they finally have the presence they never had until Tk4, being more akin to the arenas in Soul Calibur. The locales are simply too breathtaking to do justice to here, but burning temples, Pirates of The Caribbean-style treasure chambers and wind-swept vistas usually make for great atmosphere. And, to the delight of everyone (especially in the Hyper office), it looks like the music is going be worth leaving on this time around.

With the full arcade release not due here in Japan until November or December, Namco still have time to twist and tweak and make sure everything's ready. But if the TkNet feature goes global, I just hope we're ready. <<

## NAMCO MAY JUST RECLAIM THEIR CROWN

[left] Note the racing gloves and racing stripes... he's obviously a pro
[below] It's called Wangan but there's sadly no sign of Q. Wang

# Wangan Midnight Maximum Tune NAMCO

>> Tim Levy

>> I prefer to use the word 'Wangan' these days. In days of old, Australians would describe powering down the highway in a beefy V8 muscle car that weighed as much as sixty million gerbils as 'fangin'. E.g. "I was FANG'IN down the highway the other day in my fully blown Monaro when I had to turn a corner and because the car had the cornering capabilities of an ocean liner, I smashed the car and scratched my duco". Wang'an just seems to sound much kooler and more, (how you say) ballsey (cough cough) and just more 'now'.

### A LITTLE WANG ACTION?

When the manga inspired street racing game Wangan Midnight R appeared in the arcades over a year ago, although it had its moments of mirth, it did not come close to the visceral excitement that its other manga inspired main competitor 'Initial D' provided. But this has all changed and Namco have given arcade driving fans the game we really wanted in the first place. i.e. excellent graphics, a six speed manual gearbox, more corners and loads of sidewayz drifting action.

The raised expressways that weave through the Tokyo Megopolis have to be seen to be believed. As property is at a premium, the only place to put expressways are in the air. There is something definitely trippy about gunning down a road surrounded by buildings lit by tonnes of neon in your teched out RX7. Wangan Midnight takes place on the pixelated version of Tokyo's Metropolitan Expressway which is divided into 8 different tracks. As before, in Single player mode you cruise the highway listening to techno and looking for comic book challengers (who say inane things such as "I feel light with excitement!"), or you can be challenged by other arcade players.

There are no checkpoints to make in this game. You are just given 1 circuit to complete which is approximately 7-12 km long taking you approximately 3-4 minutes at 200 kph+ to complete. It's great that no matter how shitty you are as a driver, you still get a full game. Unfortunately, the game ends after each race - unless someone from the real world challenges you. So the way to get extra value for money is by playing in two player mode.

And indeed, the two player mode is totally awesome. You can either race with 'handicap' which means the cars are standardised, or you can use cars that you have modified (breaks, exhaust, suspension etc) by winning races in single player 'Story Mode' and saved on a propriety 'maximum tune' card.

The game's 'catch up' programming is excellent which ensures you that throughout a two player race, even if you do skillfully detour (crash) your opponent into traffic or a wall, they can still easily catch up and continue the high speed duel. This is actually what makes the game so rad – the neck and neck, door handle to door handle, highspeed, red line pinging action which lasts for 4 minutes- kool!

### WANG CHUNG TONIGHT

But the 'Story Mode' is also worthy of mention, as the goal of the game is to defeat the legendary 'Devil Z', and the only way of doing that is by defeating all the other opponents and getting your car fully worked. This in itself could take at least a dozen or so individual games to get to this 'final boss' stage.

So if you are into street racing then this game is a must play. In fact, it's best not to drive a real car just moments after playing this game as you might just prang from too much wang.

SCORE: **9/10**

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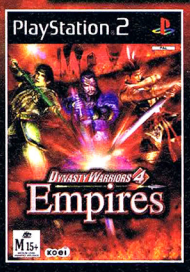


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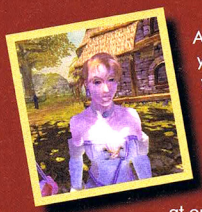

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# Jedis & Joysticks

>> ELIOT FISH

**1977** was a momentous year. It was the year Elvis Presley died, football genius Thierry Henry was born, Atari launched its VCS home videogame console, and brit comic 2000 A.D. was launched. It was also the year that the phenomenal Star Wars hit cinemas worldwide and captured the imaginations of millions of people. But it wasn't until five years later, in 1982 (co-incidentally the year that Atari renamed the VCS to the Atari 2600), that the first Star Wars videogame came into existence. Ironically, it wasn't based on the first Star Wars film, but its sequel, The Empire Strikes Back (1980).

The debut of Parker Brothers' The Empire Strikes Back on the Atari 2600 would spark to life what is now 22 years worth of Star Wars videogaming entertainment. With the upcoming release of Knights of the Old Republic II, Star Wars: Battlefront and Republic Commando, you'd have to agree that Star Wars gaming is at its strongest in years.

Let's take a look back at the long rich history of Star Wars games and see how it went from Ewok to Wookiee...

## 1982
### The Saga Begins




#### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

**PLATFORMS:** Atari 2600, Intellivision
**Developer:** Parker Brothers

Piloting a Rebel Snowspeeder, the object of this fast and furious side-scrolling shooter is to destroy as many Imperial Walkers (AT-ATs) as possible before they reach the power generator or destroy your fleet of Snowspeeders.

The game was programmed by one man, Rex Bradford, who went on to develop more Atari 2600 titles and enjoy a long career in the games industry. He has since worked on System Shock (Looking Glass Studios, 1994) and most recently was lead programmer on Sierra's Empire Earth!

***Trivia:*** *Legendary games programmer, Jeff Minter, parodied Atari's Empire Strikes Back with his own game, Attack of the Mutant Camels (Llamasoft, 1983) for the C-64 and Sinclair ZX Spectrum.*

## 1983
### A Classic Is Born

#### STAR WARS (A.K.A. Star Wars: The Arcade Game)

**Platforms:** Arcade, Various
**Developer:** Atari

This is the Star Wars game that most people instantly recognise and mistakenly assume was the "first". Debuting in the arcades, it didn't take long for this masterpiece to get ported to the home systems. The aim was to shoot down TIE Fighters, skim the surface of the Death Star destroying gun turrets and then drop down into the trench for the legendary proton torpedo sequence. The 3D colour Vector graphics (and cool sit-down arcade cabinet) was very impressive, as was the music and sampled speech from the film – from Obi-Wan's "Use the Force, Luke" to Darth Vader's "The Force is strong with this one" – which was extremely difficult to achieve on the hardware of the time.

#### RETURN OF THE JEDI: DEATH STAR BATTLE

**Platforms:** Atari 2600, Atari 5200
**Developer:** Parker Brothers

Where the Battle of Endor from 1983's Return of the Jedi was an amazing spectacle to behold on the silver screen, this Parker Brothers game based on the same action sequence wasn't much more than a damp squib. Piloting a tiny Millennium Falcon at the bottom of the screen, the aim was to slip through the Imperial shield and then shoot through to the core of the Death Star and dodge the resulting fireballs. Then repeat. Ugh.

***Trivia:*** *Death Star Battle is rather similar in design to Atari's 1981 cult hit, Yar's Revenge. Just flip the screen 90 degrees and there you go.*

#### STAR WARS: JEDI ARENA

**Platforms:** Atari 2600
**Developer:** Parker Brothers

Another game from Rex Bradford (The Empire Strikes Back, 1982), Jedi Arena was a rather poor attempt at implementing the lightsaber into a Star Wars game for the very first time. This game was played using the Atari paddles, and rather than it being a clash of sabers, the aim was to shoot bolts from the seeker in the middle of the screen at your opponent by "aiming" with your lightsaber. You then had to defend your force shield from your opponent's shots by blocking with your lightsaber. Our advice is to play with the blast shield down so you don't have to stare at this ugly mess of a game for too long.

## 1984
## Atari Strikes Back

### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

**Platforms:** Arcade, Various
**Developer:** Atari

■ Atari returned Star Wars to the arcades with this successful conversion of their previous hit. The Empire Strikes Back used the same vector engine, but instead took players through the battle of Hoth, a TIE Fighter space battle and an asteroid field escape in the Millennium Falcon. Not quite as memorable as the original Star Wars arcade game (although it carried many more cool speech samples), but a simple fun shooter nonetheless.

### RETURN OF THE JEDI

**Platforms:** Arcade
**Developer:** Atari

■ For their final Star Wars arcade game, Atari sadly abandoned the sexy vector graphics and first person perspective for a more traditional raster graphics style and third person view. This game was divided up into three stages: the speederbike chase, AT-ST/Millennium Falcon and Death Star attack, and mimicked the isometric perspective gameplay of other arcade hits such as Zaxxon. Most gamers will remember this one as a deadly coin guzzler, as it was incredibly difficult to survive even past the first stage.

***Trivia:*** *Corey Feldman can be seen playing a Return of the Jedi arcade cabinet in The Goonies (Warner Bros, 1985).*

## 1991
## Our Only Hope

### STAR WARS

**Platforms:** NES, Game Boy
**Developer:** Lucasfilm Games, Beam Software

■ After almost 7 years lost in hyperspace, Star Wars eventually returned to the world of videogames with not so much a bang as a harmless pop. The debut of Star Wars on the NES was exciting for fans, but the game turned out to be a rather drab platformer that failed to recapture the events from the film.

However, in terms of the survival of Star Wars videogames, the most important thing was that this was a rebirth of Star Wars games on home console that would eventually lead to the incredible Super Star Wars series on SNES and a seriously big boom in Star Wars games on all platforms.

***Trivia:*** *Back in 1987, Namco developed a Star Wars game for the NES that was never released outside of Japan, and considered by many to be a superior game to Beam's 1991 effort. Lucky Japanese gamers!*

## 1992
## A Super Year

### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

**Platforms:** NES, Game Boy
**Developer:** Lucasfilm Games, Sculptured Software

■ Only a year later, the NES sequel to Star Wars materialised, this time co-developed by Sculptured Software instead of Australia's Beam Software. The general consensus was that this was worse than the first Star Wars NES game, even though it was more impressive graphically, had more Force powers and stuck more strictly to the plot of the film. Frustratingly difficult. On the evidence, it probably comes as no surprise that Return of the Jedi for NES never got made.

[top] Jedi Arena
[above] Super Star Wars
[right] Star Wars Arcade

### SUPER STAR WARS

**Platforms:** SNES
**Developer:** LucasArts, Sculptured Software

■ It was around this time that Lucasfilm Games officially became LucasArts Entertainment Company; this also coincided with a rebirth of Star Wars on the home games consoles. Super Star Wars on the Super Nintendo may have been yet another remake of the first Star Wars film, but it took the world by storm, garnering rave reviews and thrilling gamers with its rich graphics, great music and amazing sound effects. It was a typical style of game for the time – a side-scrolling platformer – but it had so much detail, inventive level design and variety that many felt it was an instant classic. Pretty good for a game based on a movie license. Who can forget the Jedi double jump?

Super Star Wars proved to be more than a fair challenge too – to finish the game you had to play from the first level to the last in one sitting (unless you were happy to leave your console on overnight) as no password save system had been implemented! Despite its incredible difficulty, the action was so much fun that gamers were more than willing to stick with it and cement Super Star Wars into gaming history as a true 16-bit classic.

### X-WING

**Platforms:** PC, Mac
**Developer:** LucasArts, Totally Games

■ We're really getting into the classics now... X-Wing was a bombshell on the PC platform when it was released, coming from the same development team that had brought the world the critically acclaimed WWII flight combat simulator, Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe in 1991. The PC platform had never seen a Star Wars game as ambitious as this, previously only being host to creaky ports of the old Atari Star Wars arcade game.

Finally gamers got to pilot an X-Wing with complete freedom, navigating through space, targeting Imperial craft and completing a variety of cool Star Wars missions, from escorting other craft to running bombing missions on Star Destroyers and even attacking the Death Star. This was the world's first Star Wars simulation, immersing gamers in the Star Wars universe like never before, complete with 3D polygon graphics! Naturally, the game went on to win numerous awards from the industry, as well as becoming the best selling game of 1993.

**Add ons:** There were two expansion packs released for X-Wing: B-Wing and Imperial Pursuit.

***Trivia:*** *The main man behind X-Wing, Lawrence Holland, is still CEO of Totally Games, and most recently oversaw Secret Weapons Over Normandy for LucasArts.*

## 1993
## Gold Medals For All

### STAR WARS ARCADE

**Platforms:** Arcade, Sega 32X
**Developer:** Sega

■ Star Wars returned to the game arcades with a big budget blockbuster outing from Sega. This huge impressive cabinet seated up to two players at once (one player as pilot and another player as gunner). Though it was titled Star Wars, the game was actually set during the events of Return of the Jedi and the huge space battle above Endor, culminating in an attack on the unfinished Death Star II. The huge screen pumped some fat polygons about the place, complete with thumping sound effects to make the experience suitably cinematic with lots of flashy effects.

The home conversion for the Sega 32X had to make some fairly major sacrifices to the graphics, but it is still an impressive example of the polygon capabilities of this Sega home console device and one of the best games available for it.

### REBEL ASSAULT

**Platforms:** PC, Mac, 3DO, Sega CD
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ Rebel Assault was an attempt at providing a truly cinematic Star Wars experience. Rather than plonking the player in a cartoony gameworld, Rebel Assault featured

### SUPER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (1993)

**Platforms:** SNES / **Developer:** LucasArts, Sculptured Software

■ The Super Star Wars series returned in style with Super Empire Strikes Back. LucasArts learnt from their mistakes with the first game and implemented a password save function into this game to offset the difficulty of the platforming gameplay. Even better was the variety of action on offer and the overall quality of the level design, animation and sound. Sega Megadrive fans were known to cry themselves to sleep at night that the Super Star Wars series was exclusive to the Super Nintendo. These games are still highly playable today – over ten years down the track – such is their quality.

Just like the Star Wars film trilogy, Super Empire Strikes Back would become the fan favourite of this videogame series.

**Halt! Rebel Scum!**
True to the movies, the Stormtrooper rifle in Dark Forces (pictured) was wildly inaccurate

pre-rendered backgrounds that were considered photo-realistic at the time, thanks to the storage capacity of the new CD-Rom format. CD-Rom also allowed for the actual film soundtrack to be used, along with clips from the Star Wars films.

Gameplay was mostly on rails, with the action revolving around aiming and shooting at targets or guiding your spacecraft around obstacles as the camera panned through the environment. Whilst now considered to be a rather crap piece of semi-interactive entertainment, it was a massive hit at the time for its impressive use of technology.

### STAR WARS CHESS

**Platforms:** PC, Sega CD

**Developer:** Software Toolworks

■ Dressing up the wonderful game of Chess with Star Wars characters in a bid to sell software was a very canny piece of marketing. Just like the PC game, Battle Chess, successful moves are rewarded with an animated battle between the characters. Thanks to the cute Star Wars characters, sound effects and music, the game of Chess was brought to life for fans of the movies. Star Wars Chess probably marked the beginning of more Star Wars themed interactive edutainment and kids' software – most of which we've ignored in this feature.

## 1994
## The Power of the Dark Side

### SUPER RETURN OF THE JEDI

**Platforms:** SNES, Game Boy

**Developer:** LucasArts, Sculptured Software

■ Super Return of the Jedi is considered the weakest of the three Super Star Wars games (maybe for making gamers play as Wicket the Ewok), although it still qualifies as a cool platformer. The game begins with a landspeeder ride to Jabba's Palace and ends with a deadly fight against the Emperor himself, complete with frantic dodging of Force Lightning! The main problems were that by this stage the same gameplay ideas were being rehashed and there was nothing terribly new to get excited about, apart from a very cool attempt at replicating the awesome speederbike chase from the film.

***Trivia:*** *The Game Boy version of Super Return of the Jedi is a different game altogether and resembles more the early*

*NES Star Wars games. The Super Star Wars series is yet to be revived on the GBA or any other platform.*

### TIE FIGHTER

**Platforms:** PC, Mac
**Developer:** LucasArts, Totally Games

■ TIE Fighter has a reputation for being one of the best Star Wars PC games of the last decade. This was a continuation of the X-Wing series, the difference being that this time around you were flying for the Empire. Again, it was developed by Larry Holland and his team at Totally Games in conjunction with LucasArts, turning out another stunning space combat simulation that was challenging, immersive and authentic. TIE Fighter still struggles into various PC games magazines' top games of all time lists, and in 1997 was voted "Best Game of all Time" by PC Gamer magazine.

**Add-ons:** TIE Fighter was successful enough to enjoy two expansion packs, Defender of the Empire and Enemies of the Empire.

**Fan-sites:** There are still existing fan sites for TIE Fighter. Go take a look at: **www.ehtiecorps.org** and marvel at the fervent fanbase.

***Trivia:*** *TIE Fighter gave fans their first look at the Imperial homeworld of Coruscant a good five years before The Phantom Menace.*

## 1995
## Nothing Like A Blaster At Your Side

### DARK FORCES

**Platforms:** PC, Mac, PSOne
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ Dark Forces, along with Doom, is considered to be one of the most formative games of the first person shooter genre. Dark Forces was the first FPS to allow gamers to investigate their environment by looking up and down, as well as being able to crouch and jump. But aside from introducing innovative controls, Dark Forces boasted a strong storyline, incredible level design and seat-of-your-pants action. Many still consider Dark Forces as the best game LucasArts ever made, and one of the best PC games of all time (yes, along with TIE Fighter!). It wasn't just a superb game for fans wanting to immerse themselves in the Star Wars world and take it on with a blaster in hand, but a quality PC game that stunned critics and still to this day holds a special place in the hearts of PC gamers worldwide.

The main protagonist was the gruff commando-for-hire, Kyle Katarn, who quickly became a much-loved character in the Star Wars Expanded Universe, spawning action figures, comic books and merchandise. Kyle Katarn was destined to continue his adventures in Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight, Jedi Knight II and Jedi Outcast. However, many gamers believe his time in Dark Forces when he was a gunslinger in the mold of Han Solo – before he discovered the power of the Force in the subsequent sequels – is still his best incarnation to date.

Dark Forces was so popular that it also inspired hundreds of fan made mods. All-new single-player campaigns, bizarre spin-off adventures and expansions worthy of LucasArts itself have now been available for download for years.

***Trivia:*** *Dark Forces' Kyle Katarn has become so popular, that he now has his own official databank entry on Lucasfilm's Star Wars website, alongside the characters from the films* **(www.starwars.com/databank/character/kylekatarn/eu.html).**

***Bonus Trivia:*** *The actor who voiced Kyle Katarn in Dark Forces, Nick Jameson, recently provided the voice of Emperor Palpatine in the Clone Wars cartoon mini series, as he did in TIE Fighter, Rebel Assault II, X-Wing: Alliance and Star Wars: Galactic Battlegrounds!*

### REBEL ASSAULT II: THE HIDDEN EMPIRE

**Platforms:** PC, Mac, PSOne
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ In the shade of the massive success of Dark Forces, LucasArts had another shot at the pre-rendered cinematics of Rebel Assault with Rebel Assault II: The Hidden Empire. Promising far more interaction than the original, Rebel Assault II was certainly a much improved game over the original, however it still suffered from limited interactivity, despite its entertaining cinematic presentation. Gameplay was still on rails, although the visual thrill more than made up for that in the eyes of hardcore fans who wanted to experience the first ever live-action FMV cutscenes in a Star Wars game.

***Trivia:*** *Rebel Assault II is also bursting with "easter eggs" of which LucasArts still has a list for gamers to investigate. Check it out at* **www.lucasarts.com/products/rebel2/reb_eggs.htm.**

## 1996
## Merchandising Mayhem

### SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

**Platforms:** N64, PC
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ Shadows of the Empire introduced Dash Rendar - a new hero character in the mould of Kyle Katarn. The big deal about Shadows of the Empire was that Lucasfilm allowed the game to be set in-between the events of The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi, allowing LucasArts to tell the story of what happened between the two films. Naturally, Lucasfilm made a fairly big deal about this fact, and Shadows of the Empire spawned an official novel, action figures, comic books and other assorted merchandise.

Unfortunately, the game didn't quite live up to the hype. Shadows of the Empire was one of the first games for the Nintendo 64, featuring a hybrid of first-person and third-person gameplay, from shooting up Stormtroopers in the rebel base on Hoth to piloting the Outrider through an asteroid field and dogfighting with TIEs. Problems with the camera, stiff controls and frustratingly infrequent save points prevented Shadows of the Empire from being a minor classic, although the game's first level - the attack on the AT-ATs during the battle on Hoth - was a very impressive piece of 3D gaming for 1996.

## 1997
## The Downward Spiral?

### MASTERS OF TERAS KASI

**Platforms:** PSOne
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ If Shadows of the Empire was foreshadowing (forgive the pun) a trip down the dark side for LucasArts, then Masters of Teras Kasi was the full-blown warning signal that Star Wars games were to take a sudden turn for the worse. After years of almost faultless product, the next four to five years would see some of the worst Star Wars games in existence. It all started with this awful 3D fighting game featuring a cast of Star Wars characters. It seemed that instead of innovating and inventing new and exciting gameplay (X-Wing, TIE Fighter, Super Star Wars), LucasArts had started to fall guilty of simply rehashing already popular games with a fresh coat of Star Wars paint. Masters of Teras Kasi was a generic fighting game that lacked challenge, decent controls and depth. This is one that can be happily forgotten by Star Wars gamers everywhere.

### YODA STORIES

**Platforms:** PC, Game Boy Color
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ Yoda Stories is an odd little game, one of a few "desktop adventures" that LucasArts decided to release

**[far right]** The brilliant TIE Fighter **[above right]** The less than brilliant Shadows of the Empire **[right]** The "interactive entertainment" of Rebel Assault II

**Bags being an Interceptor**
X-Wing versus TIE Fighter focussed heavily on multi-player, to the detriment of the single-player missions

## X-WING ALLIANCE (1999)

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** Totally Games, LucasArts

■ X-Wing Alliance was another installment in the X-Wing series and a return to a single-player focused experience. Once again, Totally Games were responsible, but this time they surprised gamers by putting the Corellian YT-1300 freighter (the same type of spacecraft as the famous Millennium Falcon) into the spotlight. With the introduction of fancy coloured lighting effects and high resolutions, the series had never looked so good. The single player game was also complete with an enjoyable story and a nice variety of mission types. X-Wing Alliance was a real return to form for the series and was critically acclaimed in most gaming publications. Sadly, it was not successful enough to encourage LucasArts to release any expansion packs.

***Trivia:*** *A fansite still exists at* **www.xwingalliance.net.**

into the wild. It was a simplistic puzzle game, designed to be played on your coffee break at work, although it would eventually be ported to the Game Boy Color. As far as puzzle games go, Yoda Stories wasn't exactly a Tetris beater, but it was still a charming little game that was very much misunderstood. The game also came packaged with some Star Wars multimedia, such as desktop wallpaper and a clip on the making of the Star Wars Special Editions. A fun little romp.

## JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ Kyle Katarn discovers the power of the Force and sets out to become a Jedi Knight and stop the evil Dark Lord Jerec from commanding the power of a hidden Jedi burial ground. It has to be said that the story in this sequel to Dark Forces wasn't quite as exciting as the original, and it was disappointing that LucasArts decided to abandon the comic-book style cutscenes for live action FMV which didn't gel terribly well with the game itself. However, knowing that they had to follow up on the classic that was Dark Forces, LucasArts' Jedi Knight was a very successfully transition for the series into full 3D and a worthy sequel to the brilliant original, even if it wasn't quite as innovative. Level design was still epic and the game retained the strong Star Wars atmosphere that made the original Dark Forces so successful, so most fans were more than happy.

What most excited gamers at the time was the chance to wield a lightsaber in first person (although the game also featured a third person perspective). The elegant weapon was very well implemented and Jedi Knight even featured a multiplayer mode where players could face off against each other with a set of Force powers and their trusty lightsabers. A comprehensive fansite, **www.jediknight.net**, is still going strong.

**Add-ons:** The Mysteries of the Sith expansion pack gave fans the chance to play as the popular EU character, Mara Jade.

## STAR WARS MONOPOLY

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** Artech Studios

■ In the vein of Star Wars Chess, this was simply the well-known game of Monopoly adorned with Star Wars characters and sounds effects. Littered with clips from the Star Wars trilogy and some humourous

animation, Star Wars Monopoly was a nice package for gamers addicted to playing Monopoly. To the rest of us, however, it can only really be viewed as a bit of a *whistle*-worthy novelty.

### X-WING VS TIE FIGHTER

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** Totally Games, LucasArts

■ Fans of X-Wing and TIE Fighter were tickled pink to get their hands on the next game in the series, X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter (what else could it have been named after all?). The difference with this release is that the focus was more on the multiplayer aspect of pitting human players in X-Wings against human players in TIEs. The game did come with single player missions, but it lacked any strong storytelling or the polish and depth of the previous two games in the series, so some gamers were left rather disappointed. However, there were various challenging scenarios that were a true test of even the most hardcore gamer's space combat skills and the game did sport some enhanced graphics.

**Add-ons:** The Balance of Power expansion attempted to rectify the lack of story in XVT by introducing a whole new single player campaign complete with cutscenes.

## 1998
## Red 5 Reporting In

### STAR WARS: REBELLION

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** Coolhand Interactive, LucasArts

■ Rebellion was another disappointment for PC gaming Star Wars fans. Promising to be an original hardcore strategy title, it eventually turned out to be not much more than a tedious strategy game that didn't come within a hyperspace jump of the successful game it wanted to imitate, Masters of Orion.

Playing as either the Rebel Alliance or the Galactic Empire, the aim is simply to take control of the entire galaxy with your fleets of spaceships or wily use of diplomacy. The game suffered from some serious interface issues, and each game felt repetitive and lifeless. With the concept bearing little resemblance to the Star Wars universe as we know it, Rebellion just felt like a generic strategy rip-off with the Star Wars name slapped on the box.

***Trivia:*** *There is still an existing fansite at* **www.swrebellion.com**

### STAR WARS TRILOGY

**Platforms:** Arcade
**Developer:** Sega

■ Sega's Star Wars Trilogy was one of the most ambitious Star Wars games to ever hit the arcades, taking on the entire movie trilogy with an amazing variety of missions. From piloting a Snowspeeder and taking on AT-ATs to wielding a lightsaber against Darth Vader, this was a visually stunning arcade game that was guaranteed to gobble coins like nothing else before it. The gameplay, however, was plagued with some annoying controls and once you'd seen what the machine had to offer, there was little motivation to play it again. However, the presentation was so impressive, it was certainly very hard to resist this one when perusing somewhere to plunk your spare change. What we'd give to have one of these arcade cabinets in our living room...

### ROGUE SQUADRON

**Platforms:** N64, PC
**Developer:** Factor 5

■ LucasArts getting in developer Factor 5 to make a series of spaceship combat games for the consoles was an inspired decision. This first outing, Rogue Squadron, very quickly became a big hit on the Nintendo 64 with excellent mission design and some thrilling dogfighting action. The game explored the exploits of the Rogue Squadron led by Rebel heroes Luke Skywalker and Wedge Antilles during the time period between A New Hope and The Empire Strikes Back. Getting to pilot a variety of Rebel craft and fly over the surface of familiar Star Wars locations made Rogue Squadron a satisfying treat for fans. A minor classic.

***Trivia:*** *Typing BLAMEUS into the password screen will display a photo of the Factor 5 development team!*

## 1999
## Year of the Menace

### STAR WARS EPISODE I: RACER

**Platforms:** N64, PC, Mac, Dreamcast, Game Boy Color
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ If any action scene from Episode I: The Phantom Menace was to be earmarked for a videogame onslaught, it obviously had to be the pod race sequence. This was also the first ever Star Wars racing game, and it must be said that LucasArts did a pretty good job at simulating the super fast speeds

**[top]** Woohoo! Lets kill some crappy robots! The Phantom Menace strikes
**[above left]** Kyle Kartarn 'discovers' his Jedi Ability in Dark Forces II
**[above right]** Cute little Darth Vader in Episode 1: Racer

that were witnessed in the film. Track design was outlandish, the pods and their hulking engines looked excellent and some of the graphical effects made Racer stand out as quite a polished piece of software. If anything, the game was too easy and lacked any real depth or challenge. A fun blast for a quick fix of high speed thrills, though. Jake Lloyd (the young Anakin Skywalker) provided his voice for the game too.

### STAR WARS EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE

**Platforms:** PSOne, PC
**Developer:** Big Ape Productions, LucasArts

■ This videogame based on the events of the film controversially hit stores before the film hit the cinemas, giving fans the chance to get a look at characters and action scenes from what was a universally anticipated cinema event. Sadly, the Phantom Menace videogame was as patchy as the film turned out to be. Like the film, this action game had its moments, but ultimately the flaws outweighed any of the positives and it was destined for the bargain bin. Tellingly, LucasArts did not release a game based on the next film, Attack of the Clones, instead opting to concentrate on games based on specific action concepts instead. Developer, Big Ape, have most recently produced Celebrity Deathmatch and Simpsons Wrestling, which says it all really.

## 2000
## The New Millennium (Falcon)

### STAR WARS RACER ARCADE

**Platforms:** Arcade
**Developer:** Sega

■ Wow. Anyone who has played Racer at the arcades will attest to how well Sega captured the speed and excitement of the pod race from Episode I. This was essentially Episode I: Racer on some serious steroids! The deluxe sit down cabinet was designed just like Anakin's pod racer from the film, complete with the same cool throttle controls. Up to four of these could be linked up in an arcade for some seriously fun multiplayer pod racing. Graphics and sound were all exceptional – a very cool arcade game.

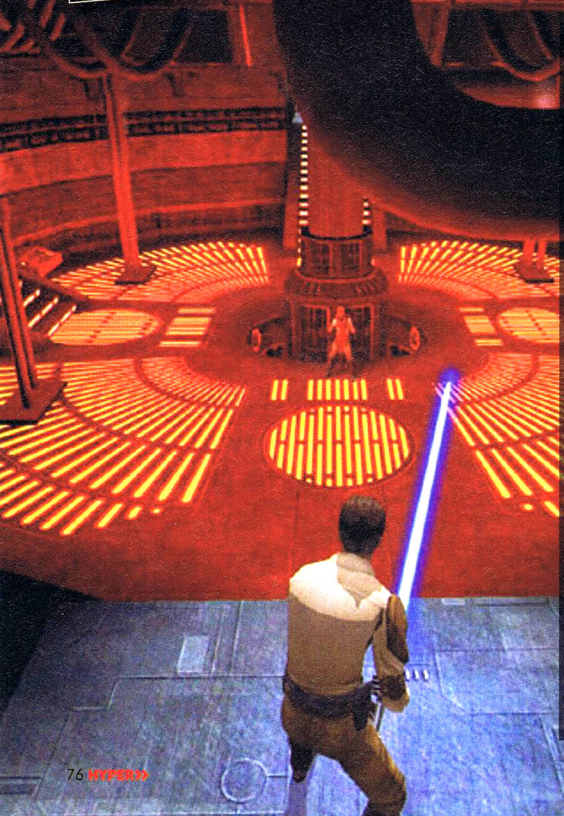
### FORCE COMMANDER

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ With 3D strategy games coming into fashion, LucasArts followed suit with this attempt at another Star Wars RTS. The concept was good, but the execution was poor. The game was mostly panned by

**"It's a trap!"**
Rogue Leader's re-creation of the assault on the second Death Star is movie-perfect



## JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST (2002)

**Platforms:** PC, Mac, GameCube, Xbox
**Developer:** Raven Software

■ The Dark Forces series had slowly been transformed into the Jedi Knight series, with Jedi Outcast being tagged as Jedi Knight II instead of Dark Forces III. Developer, Raven Software, the company behind shooters such as Soldier of Fortune and Star Trek: Elite Force, were trusted by LucasArts to take the helm here, but many fans felt that the story and level design in Jedi Outcast showed little understanding of the Star Wars universe or what made the previous two games in the series so great. The epic Star Wars feel was mimicked here, but the game lacked inventive level design or original concepts and gameplay devolved into rather dull "kill everything" set-pieces. The story also made very little sense.

Graphically, the game was quite polished (the Quake III: Team Arena 3D engine was used), and the lightsaber effects were better than ever, but it seemed that Kyle Katarn had really lost his way with this one. Were Raven Software simply the wrong company to take control of this classic series?

critics for its frustrating controls, lack of depth and various bugs and glitches. The 3D engine just didn't cut it, and LucasArts obviously thought so too, eventually going back to a more traditional 2D engine for their next attempt at the RTS genre in 2001. Still, it was fun to zoom the camera in on a column of AT-ATs and watch as they decimated a Rebel base, eh? Cheap thrills.

## STAR WARS EPISODE I: JEDI POWER BATTLES

**Platforms:** PSOne, Dreamcast, GBA
**Developer:** LucasArts

■ Jedi Power Battles was a typical platforming game with the added novelty of two players being able to play through the game co-operatively, just as Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon Jinn carved through the Battledroids at the beginning of The Phantom Menace. This was a bit of a 'love it or hate it' game, as it suffered from some terrible bugs and glitchy design, and yet the simplistic action of chopping enemies up with lightsabers was strangely compelling and fun for two players. Considering their history with Super Star Wars, Jedi Power Battles was but a shadow of LucasArts' former platforming excellence. Cool box art though.

***Trivia:*** *Darth Maul could be unlocked by playing through the game with Qui-Gon Jinn on Jedi difficulty and then pressing the Select button when Qui-Gon is highlighted in the character select screen.*

## STAR WARS: DEMOLITION

**Platforms:** PSOne, Dreamcast
**Developer:** Luxoflux, LucasArts

■ By now, gamers were seriously starting to doubt whether LucasArts had the ability to release another decent Star Wars game. After a string of flops, Demolition proved to be yet another car crash of a videogame. Essentially a carbon copy of Vigilante 8 or Twisted Metal but with Star Wars vehicles, it was typical of LucasArts at the time – just copy an already popular game and stick Star Wars stuff in it. Demolition was uninspired and buggy and received a warranted critical slating. Whilst Demolition was handled by developer Luxoflux, a question was still ringing in the ears of fans: What had happened to the LucasArts of old that was renowned for its high standards and quality?

## EPISODE I: OBI-WAN'S ADVENTURES

**Platforms:** Game Boy Color
**Developer:** Hotgen Studios

This little Game Boy title went largely unnoticed by Star Wars gamers, and you couldn't blame them. It looked and played like a fairly low budget game. Based on the same concept as Jedi Power Battles, this was a third person lightsaber hack 'n' slash game set during the events of The Phantom Menace. Move along, move along...

## 2001
## A Battle between Good and Evil

### STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

**Platforms:** PS2, Xbox, PC
**Developer:** Secret Level, LucasArts

Just when Star Wars fans were ready to give up on LucasArts, Star Wars: Starfighter debuted on the PlayStation 2 and proved that there was still some life in the old girl yet. Starfighter looked fabulous and more importantly provided some engaging dogfighting action, this time with the N1 Starfighter from Episode I. A Starfighter Special Edition was released shortly after for Xbox, sporting improved graphics and bonus gameplay features including an enhanced two-player mode. Starfighter was an indication that the future of Star Wars on the next-generation consoles was a lot brighter than previously thought.

***Trivia:*** *Using the password JAMEZ unlocks "A day in the life of a concept artist".*

### STAR WARS EPISODE I: BATTLE FOR NABOO

**Platforms:** N64, PC
**Developer:** Factor 5

Battle for Naboo was a sign that even Factor 5 were capable of putting a foot wrong. On the tails of the excellent Rogue Squadron, Battle for Naboo felt like a bit of a rehash with Episode I vehicles. Whilst still an enjoyable game, it didn't have the same quality in mission design as Rogue Squadron and left N64 gamers clamouring for a true sequel to their beloved Original Trilogy game.

Battle for Naboo was also released for PC, but in the shadow of the X-Wing series, most PC gamers dismissed it as nothing more than a weak arcade game. Luckily for Factor 5, it wouldn't take long for them to redeem their reputation in a very big way on the GameCube.

### SUPER BOMBAD RACING

**Platforms:** PS2
**Developer:** Lucas Learning

Even though they had already brought the world Episode I: Racer, another game based on pod racing was released, this time aimed at an even younger audience. Cynical gamers easily pegged Super Bombad Racing as an attempt to recreate the popularity of Super Mario Kart but with Star Wars characters – complete with the Japanese style super-deformed heads. Super Bombad Racing failed to offer the depth, track design or slick controls of other kart racing games on the market and ended up little more than a pale imitation of other better games.

### GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** LucasArts

Galactic Battlegrounds was once again an attempt by LucasArts to satisfy fans with a Star Wars themed RTS game. What better way to ensure it would work this time around but to copy an already successful title? Yes, Galactic Battlegrounds used Ensemble studio's Age of Empires engine and replaced all of its content with Star Wars stuff. Most gamers felt that this was a game LucasArts should have released many years earlier (Age of Empires was released four years earlier in 1997), and as a result it was criticised for being behind the times and all-too similar to a game that had already been played to death for a number of years. It seems that with strategy games, LucasArts just couldn't win the battle. Thanks to the solid engine, however, Galactic Battlegrounds still offered the best Star Wars strategy gaming to date.

**Add-ons:** With Episode II: Attack of the Clones around the corner, the Clone Campaigns expansion pack introduced elements from the new film.

[above] Galactic Battlegrounds ditched the 3D engine and almost came out a winner

[top] Starfighter was a welcome return to form, and pretty as a galactic princess [above] Super Bombad Racing was just stupid

### OBI-WAN

**Platform:** Xbox
**Developer:** LucasArts

LucasArts hadn't yet thrown out their Jedi Power Battle design doc. Obi-Wan, an exclusive for Xbox, played like a zoomed in third-person version of Jedi Power Battles, with more emphasis on acrobatic lightsaber fighting and Force powers. Uninspired level design and bland action let the game down, and even the inclusion of a split-screen two-player lightsaber arena mode couldn't save Obi-Wan from vanishing into obscurity, just like an old-man in the Jundland Wastes. Another weak link in the LucasArts chain of videogames.

### ROGUE LEADER: ROGUE SQUADRON II

**Platforms:** GameCube
**Developer:** Factor 5

It's with great relief that we can round off the year of 2001 with a good game. Factor 5 blessed the GameCube with one of the best-looking Star Wars games fans had ever seen. Rogue Leader was in some ways a remake of the original Star Wars arcade game, with elements of X-Wing and Rogue Squadron, all rolled into one of the most drool-worthy engines that had ever powered a Star Wars game. Never had a Star Wars game been so faithful to the look of the films, recapturing all the great space battle moments with all the detail and polish that fans should expect. Blink and you could almost mistake the game for actual scenes from the film. Nintendo proudly used Rogue Leader to promote their new GameCube console, such was its impressive graphical quality. It was easy to tell that true Star Wars fans had put their heart and soul into this one.

***Trivia:*** *Using the passcode ?INSIDER unlocks a 'making of' movie, whilst the code BLAHBLAH unlocks a commentary track!*

## 2002
## A Veritable Star Wars Bounty

### RACER REVENGE

**Platforms:** PS2
**Developer:** Rainbow Studios, LucasArts

The Star Wars games were now flying thick and fast, so it stands to reason that fans would have to take the good with the bad. Racer

IT'S GOOD TO BE BAD
Knights of the Old Republic is one of the few truly great Star Wars games in the last ten years.

Revenge was yet another revisiting of the pod racing concept, this time set during the time period of Attack of the Clones, with a grown-up Anakin Skywalker. Like Episode I: Racer, Racer Revenge was a competent enough racing game with some good high-speed thrills and pretty graphics, but the depth wasn't quite there to make it a must-play game.

### STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

**Platforms:** PS2, Xbox
**Developer:** LucasArts

Knowing they were onto a good thing with Starfighter, Jedi Starfighter introduced the cool spaceship from Attack of the Clones and thrust gamers into an all-new space combat adventure for this sequel. Jedi Starfighter played it very safe and stuck to the same style of mission design and dogfighting action as the original game, only really introducing Jedi Force powers to spice things up a bit. A blend of elements from Attack of the Clones ensured that some fans would queue up to get a peek at content from the second prequel. A solid but unremarkable action game.

***Trivia:*** *Star Wars: Starfighter and its character were also strong enough to be used in a Dark Horse comic series.*

### STAR WARS EPISODE II: ATTACK OF THE CLONES

**Platforms:** GBA
**Developer:** David A. Palmer Productions

The only game to be based on the events of the second prequel was this low-key GBA release, Attack of the Clones. A mixture of action, shoot 'em up and platforming, there's very little to celebrate about this game. Most Star Wars gamers are happy to let this one slip into the pit of Carkoon, where it will be digested for over a thousand years.

### BOUNTY HUNTER

**Platforms:** PS2, Xbox, GameCube
**Developer:** LucasArts

For years, fans had clamoured for a Star Wars game that put them in the shoes of enigmatic anti-hero, Boba Fett. Finally, in the light of the new character, Jango Fett in Attack of the Clones, LucasArts brought the world the third-person action of Bounty Hunter. For the first time in the history of Star Wars videogames, George Lucas' ILM were to have a hand in developing the cutscenes, whilst Skywalker Sound would handle the game's sound effects and music. This was to ensure some of the highest quality Star Wars

trimmings to ever grace one of LucasArts' own videogames!

Despite its quirky controls and clunky level design, Bounty Hunter was still a highly playable action game that did a pretty good job of showing off just what a Fett is capable of, from his deadly flamethrower to double blasters. Even though it didn't explore the full potential of the character and his role in the Star Wars universe, with an extra layer of polish on the in-game action, Bounty Hunter could have been a much bigger hit.

### STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS

**Platforms:** PS2, GameCube, Xbox
**Developer:** Pandemic Studios

■ Realising that the relentless CGI eye-candy of the battle on Geonosis in Attack of the Clones was perfect fodder for a videogame, LucasArts got Pandemic Studios on the case to revisit some of their earlier Battlezone II technology and cook up a balls-out action game. Reaction to the game was very mixed, with some fans dismissing it as a dismal failure, and others enjoying the variety and colourful eye-candy. Certainly, Clone Wars sported a number of flaws, from the horrendous on-foot missions to the dull split-screen multiplayer mode. A game that was more miss than hit.

### EPISODE II: THE NEW DROID ARMY

**Platforms:** GBA
**Developer:** Helixe

■ Yep, another low-budget GBA game to quietly slip under the radar of most Star Wars fans. The New Droid Army was another slash 'em up that put you in the shoes of Anakin Skywalker. Surprisingly, The New Droid Army came away as the best of the handheld Star Wars games, although that's not saying much.

## 2003
## Rise of the Old Republic

### STAR WARS: GALAXIES – AN EMPIRE DIVIDED

**Platforms:** PC
**Developer:** Sony Online Entertainment

■ If ever there was an ambitious concept for a Star Wars game, this was it. Galaxies is the online massively multiplayer Star Wars game that's dividing the fanbase as much as it is the Empire. When it first launched overseas (Galaxies has still not seen a local Australian release) fans paid their subscription fee and logged on to find a buggy and incomplete game with certain features that just didn't function as advertised. After many a huge downloaded patch later, Star Wars: Galaxies is now enjoying a fairly healthy online existence. It's certainly no slouch in the visual department, and the level of detail in the game is enough to keep any Star Wars fan occupied for a very long time indeed. As long as Sony Online and LucasArts continue to support it and streamline its features, the future for Star Wars Galaxies is quite bright.

**Add-ons:** The upcoming expansion pack, Jump to Lightspeed, promises to integrate space combat action on a massively multiplayer scale!

### JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY

**Platforms:** PC, Xbox
**Developer:** Raven Software

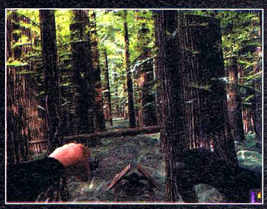
■ It pains us to describe this game as part of the Dark Forces/Jedi Knight series, so we won't. Jedi Academy puts players in the role of a generic Jedi Knight (with both third person and first person camera views) and sends them off through a series of generic shooter levels. Hordes of aliens and Stormtroopers get in your way so you can dispatch them with your endless Force powers and lightsaber moves. This is as generic and predictable as the action genre can get, and we seriously hope that LucasArts turn to someone other than Raven Software if they intend to ever produce a Jedi Knight III (or Dark Forces IV). Homogenised and bland, this was a huge disappointment and insult to fans.

### ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE

**Platforms:** GameCube
**Developer:** Factor 5

■ Factor 5 rounded off their Rogue Squadron trilogy with a misguided attempt at replicating the Star Wars action from the films one more time. Whilst the Space Combat was as thrilling as ever, the baffling decision to include awful on-foot levels was incomprehensible. Whilst the character models and environments looked relatively authentic, the gameplay, controls and camera were a dog's breakfast. Thankfully, there was still enough of the solid dogfighting action to help you forget how bad the rest of the game was. It looked pretty though – especially the first-person Speederbike chase. One big redeeming feature was the inclusion of the entire Rogue Leader as a two-player co-operative game!

***Trivia:*** *Rebel Strike is worth getting your hands on for one very simple reason. It's possible to unlock Atari's three original 80s arcade games and play them in full! Yes, the two vector shooters, Star Wars and The Empire Strikes Back, are both included, as is the raster graphics action of Return of the Jedi!*



**[top left]** Jedi Academy had plenty of lightsabres but no soul
**[top right]** Rebel Strike's speeder-bike level almost made up for the horrible on-foot levels. Almost...
**[above]** The Jump to Lightspeed expansion pack for Galaxies looks to be a good shot in the arm for the online Star Wars community

### FLIGHT OF THE FALCON

**Platforms:** GBA
**Developer:** Pocket Studios

■ As Obi-Wan Kenobi once said, "This little one's not worth the effort". It seems the handhelds were destined to get the wrong end of the Bantha when it came to Star Wars games. Flight of the Falcon is sadly one of the worst Star Wars games in existence. You'd have to be a Nerf herder to consider picking this one up.

### KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

**Platforms:** PC, Xbox
**Developer:** BioWare

■ In a startling example of what a good developer can do with good material, BioWare grabbed the Star Wars license by the tail and turned out the best Star Wars game in years. Knights of the Old Republic was also the first Star Wars role-playing game, a genre that had been strangely ignored by LucasArts and yet is seemingly perfect for bringing the Star Wars universe alive and plonking the player smack bang in the middle of it.

Knights of the Old Republic (or KOTOR, as it's affectionately known) has gone on to win countless industry awards and sell millions of copies. It's not a perfect game, but the good elements far outweigh any of its flaws, and it's worth playing through twice just to experience the light and dark sides of your character's journey through the galaxy. Knights of the Old Republic can proudly take its place alongside classics in the Star Wars catalogue such as X-Wing, Dark Forces and Super Star Wars.

Every gamer and his Dewback knows that Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords is underway, and the great news is that it's being handled by Obsidian Entertainment, a company made up of RPG veterans who've brought us classics such as Fallout and Planescape: Torment. Another classic in the making? We reckon so.

With Star Wars Episode III on the horizon, we can also surely expect another few years of wall-to-wall Star Wars videogames from LucasArts. May the Force be with each and every one of them! <<

# NOKIA 7200

RRP: $899 • URL: www.nokia.com

The Nokia 7200 is one of the most important phones Nokia has made in some time. After all, it marks their very first "clamshell" style design, and it comes at a time when they really need to bring something funky to market, to help give them get back the edge over the competition.

Fortunately, the 7200 is that phone. In terms of aesthetics especially, it's a triumph, sporting a retro kitsch design driven by flat, sleek lines and suede textile panels on both sides (that slide back to reveal the sim slot and battery respectively). Indeed, it's the textile aspect that first jumps out at you, bringing a warmth and much more tactile feel to the phone. It's a simple idea, but a very clever ploy for Nokia, and helps set their phone apart from the many other clamshells available. We're suckers for great design, and this phone has it in spades.

Open it up and it's just as funky. The number pad and LCD both have waves of white running around their edges, but it's when using the phone in dark club conditions that you'll really appreciate how slick it is. Flick it open in the dark and you'll see the phat figure eight outline around the number pad and directional pad glowing white and the main navigation keys glowing red, green and blue respectively. It's an incredibly appealing design, and the shape itself works wonderfully with the design style of the phone as a whole, keeping the feel very retro.

We even like the look of the chunky hinge, and opening it and snapping it shut feels fantastic, with just the right amount of tension in the mechanism. Unfortunately, once open the hinge is still flexible, allowing you to open it even further — all the way to 180 degrees, and this feels really strange when you're making a call. We would have preferred it to be either open or closed, without the option of "extra open".

The 7200 is quite a large phone once opened up, which makes the small screen size a huge disappointment. It's the same size as something like the 6220 at 128x128 pixels (and is considerably smaller than the N-Gage's screen and positively tiny next to something like the Sharp GX-30). The screen also isn't particularly sharp which is a shame. The number pad, on the other hand, takes full advantage of the available space, but this actually means that the buttons are just a little too large and spaced out, with too much travel time moving from button to button, meaning pro SMSers will find they have to slow down a little. The feel of the button presses isn't fantastic either, by virtue of the flat design, the tactile response isn't quite significant enough. Another thing I really dislike about a lot of Nokia models these days is how tiny and difficult to access the power button is, and the 7200 is no exception. That said, it doesn't take long to adapt to its quirks.

In terms of features, the 7200 is rather run of the mill. Features that you'd expect from a modern phone are missing — no Bluetooth, no tri-band (Dual only) and no memory expansion slot. It's also missing smaller things that every phone should have by now, such as the ability to set an alarm for every day of the week, not just the one. Still, you can set the radio as the alarm tone - although to do that you have to have the headphones plugged in... even though the sound is coming out of the speakers.

On the plus side, it supports voice tags, can take pics at 640x480 (which is only about 1/3 of a megapixel) and record video, and even has a built in voice recorder (although max record time is three minutes). Plus, there's the cute mini screen on the outside of the phone. Not a bad lineup of features, but we have to admit we were a little disappointed.

But then, this isn't a phone for technology nuts — it's a phone for the style conscious, and in that capacity it's a great success. The package comes with headphones (for the FM radio) and a nice carry pouch and wrist strap designed to go with your colour/textile combo.

Nokia have another couple of clamshells (the 6260 and 6170) due to launch in Australia later this year. We'll let you know what they're like as soon as we get test models!

**Cam Shea**

**[left]** Like something out of Star Trek. But in a good way...

# NOKIA 5140

RRP: $639 • URL: www.nokia.com

The Nokia 5140 is very much designed for the rugged, outdoors type. Unfortunately, not being rugged, or even outdoors all that often, perhaps some of the subtleties were lost on me. Then again, maybe not – this isn't a phone about subtlety. This is a phone about surviving in the wilderness – the swiss army knife of phones. Or, dare I say it, the MacGuyver of phones! Ah Richard Dean Anderson, will you ever fade away?

Let's run through the list shall we? Integrated digital compass? Check. Whistle? Check. Magnifying glass? Check. Built-in thermometer? Check. Flashlight? Check. Stop light? Neon light? Nope. Stopwatch and countdown timer? Check. Chunky rubber casing that you could probably drop off a cliff or dive underwater with in search of pirate treasure? Check. Decibel Meter? Check. Digital camera with sequential photo ability so you can (at the press of a button) take five pictures of yourself base jumping off a giant robot clown? Check. Stereo FM radio? Check. Good looks and built-in charisma chip? Erm... no, not really. The 5140 isn't ugly... but beauty obviously wasn't the foremost priority of its creators. Instead, its lines are pronounced and obvious, making it a little brick-like but not unappealing.

The bottomline of course, is that the 5140 really is meant to be a jack of all phones that you can take "out on the trail" (wherever that may be) with you. Hell, it even comes with software called "Fitness Coach" where you can plan your exercise regime and keep track of how you're going. I guess if I did exercise that might seem kind of appealing. But I don't so it doesn't.

One of the more interesting features is the new "Push to Talk" technology, which allows you to use the phone a little like a walkie talkie. Just push one button and you can talk to another person or group over GSM (GPRS). Of course, everyone else in the group must have push to talk compatible phones or devices, but it's a good idea. Mind you, whether you'd have a GPRS connection out in the bush where it would be most useful is questionable.

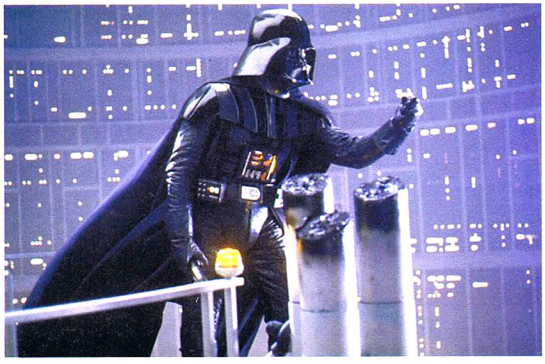
In other departments the 5140 is unremarkable. The screen is reasonable, although limited to 4096 colours (compared to 65K on the 7200), and the camera takes happy snaps at 640x480. Because of the rubbery construction, the buttons have a very good tactile response, although the buttons on the D-pad in particular are bunched way too close together, which takes some getting used to. It's not actually waterproof by the way, but the outer casing is designed to withstand bumps, dust and water splashes. We would have tested this out, but we really don't want to burn any bridges with Nokia. And outside is scary.

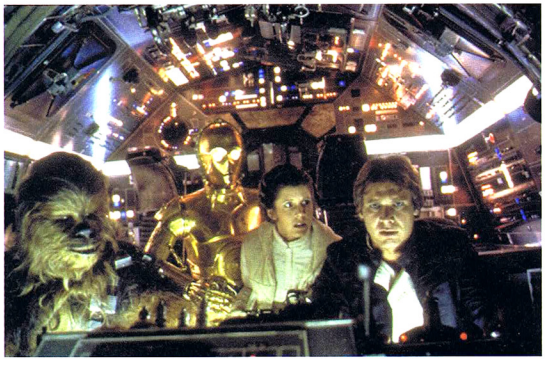
But hey, if you're the kind of guy who jumps off a mountain in his underpants for breakfast, this may be the phone for you.

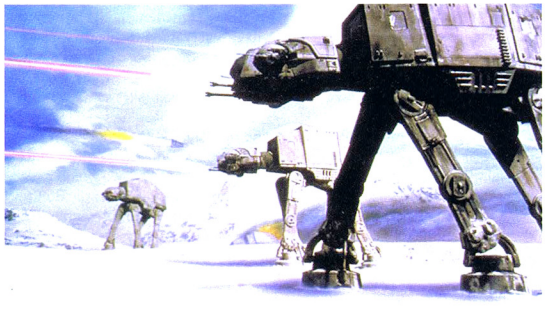
**Cam Shea**

[left] Black, like Bennett likes his men

[right] I don't climb rocks, I smoke 'em







# Star Wars

## TRILOGY BOX SET

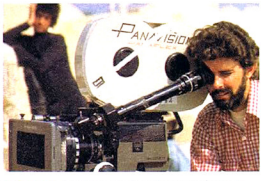
FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, PG

The coming of the Star Wars trilogy to DVD should be cause for unanimous celebration amongst fans and film aficionados alike, however there's a bitter taste to this well-packaged four-disc set from LucasFilm. Whilst the original cinema-release Star Wars movies are undeniable classics and this DVD reproduction exquisite in picture and sound quality, the three movies here are not in fact the original Star Wars movies as the world remembers them but the Special Edition versions of the films with even more new additions and alterations that awkwardly steer these original films more in line with the recent Star Wars prequels.

Whilst the bulk of Star Wars magic is still intact in *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, these films aren't as they were when originally released to cinemas, and it's sad to think that some of those classic scenes - such as Han Solo shooting first in the cantina - will forever be lost to memory. George Lucas may have ways of explaining these continual alterations, but the sad fact is that the Star Wars movies on these DVDs are getting even further from the classics they once were. Not only is this revisionism disruptive to the style of the original films, but it assumes that the world is as much enamoured with the prequels as they were the originals, which is a baffling and disrespectful decision.

However, the extras included here are both comprehensive and entertaining, giving us a look at never-before-seen behind the scenes footage mixed with insightful interviews both with the actors (such as Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill), and the talented crew (from sound designer Ben Burtt to original trilogy producer, Gary Kurtz).

There's a tonne of stuff here, from an extensive documentary on the Star Wars phenomenon entitled 'Empire



[above] Mr Beardy hard at work revising his revisions...

of Dreams', to a featurette on the lightsaber and the effects required to bring them to life, short interviews with current filmmakers (such as Peter 'Ring Lover' Jackson) on how Star Wars influenced their careers, a preview on Darth Vader as he appears in Episode III, a huge photo gallery, trailers and TV spots and even a demo of Star Wars: Battlefront and a peek at the Episode III videogame.

This is a tough one. Fans will want to see these wonderful movies in pristine DVD format, but most will find it hard to not cringe at the seemingly unecessary changes made to the films. Is it worth buying for the extras? For the ultra hardcore fans, yes. We can only hope that one day LucasFilm will see it fit to release the original unaltered Star Wars movies on DVD in the name of posterity.

**Eliot Fish**

MOVIE: 8 / EXTRAS: 9

# The Simpsons SEASON 4

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, PG

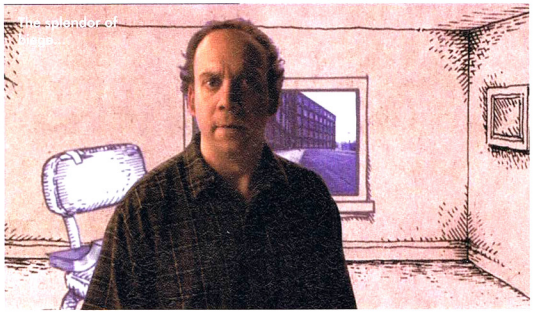
What's so good about *The Simpsons* Season 4? Suspect is hatless, repeat, hatless. Why if it isn't my old friend Mr McGreg, with a leg for an arm and an arm for a leg! Everyone who counts loves Ned Flanders! I call the big one Bitey. Hello Joe. Iron helps us play! That name again is Mr Plow. Yeah, the legend of the dog-faced woman! I can see the music! Duff Garden... hurrah! Home of pirates, drunks and whores, New Orleans! Six simple words: I'm not gay, but I'll learn. The frogurt is also cursed. I love the sexy slither of a lady snake, oh baby. He was a zombie? It's a pornography store. I was buying pornography. 'Tis no man. 'Tis a remorseless eating machine. Love that spout medley. Donuts - is there anything they can't do? Let's look at a picture book, The Big Book of British Smiles. Good ol' rock, nothing beats that! You couldn't fool your mother on the foolingest day of your life if you had an electrified fooling machine. Watch Fox and be damned for all eternity. The list goes on...

Throw in fantastic commentary with writers, directors, producers, animators and the likes of Conan O'Brien and Jon Lovitz, and a range of other decent special features and you've got a great release. There are only a couple of things holding this pack back. The picture quality (whether it's the DVD transfer or the source material) is pretty average - it would have been nice if they'd cleaned it up a bit, and the fact that you have to sit through a "warning" screen before every episode is ridiculous - they already have the same damn screen going into the DVD. Leave it there.

**Cam Shea**

MOVIE: 10 / EXTRAS: 7

[above] Do we even need to caption this one? Funniest. Picture. Ever.




# American Splendor

AV CHANNEL, M15+

Harvey Pekar is not a nice man; he's socially inept, deeply pessimistic and has obsessive compulsive tendencies, yet over the course of this slow burning film, it's very hard to avoid caring about his fate. Pekar is a career file clerk. He's also a comic book author - the pioneer of a new style, writing about the mundanity of life and the daily battles of ordinary people. He's the main character, and his life and thoughts the punchline. The comic, called American Splendor, and initially drawn by Pekar's friend Robert Crumb, becomes a success, but Pekar is still a very lonely figure, the fall guy for the likes of Letterman.

The film deals with Pekar's chemotherapy when his discovers he has testicular cancer. It borders on being a documentary, as the real life Pekar actually narrates the film, and it regularly cuts to him in the studio, being asked about events in his life. Cooler still, the various comic book versions of Pekar (he was drawn by several illustrators) also interject regularly throughout the film, commenting on the main actor and other aspects of the narrative. It's a charming approach which gives it real credibility, humour and uniqueness. The actors all turn in fantastic performances, but it's the fact that the film weaves the actual people in with the actors that makes it such a success. Also just out on DVD - *Crumb*. Get them both.

**Cam Shea**

MOVIE: 9 / EXTRAS: 6

# Starsky & Hutch

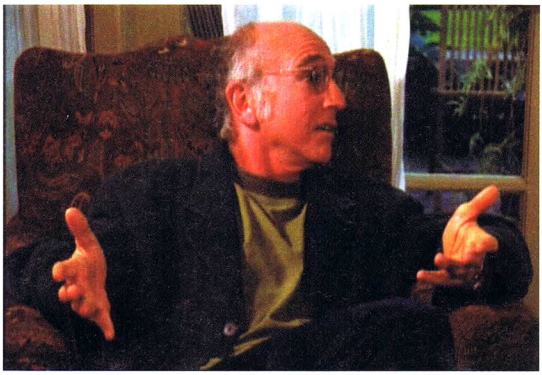
BUENA VISTA, M 15+

Usually when you pair up Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson you can be guaranteed comedy gold, but for some reason the charisma and repartee both actors have become well known for is absent for a great deal of this movie. Instead we get what can best be described as a loosely knit series of vignettes lampooning the 70s. Although many of these vignettes are only worthy of a wry smile (an all too long mine sequence being a prime example) there are a few standouts, notably an all too brief cameo by the brilliant Will Ferrell as the dragon obsessed Big Earl.

Although the stars' signature charm is mostly absent in *Starsky & Hutch* there is one perfect piece of casting - Snoop Dog is the only man worthy of stepping into Antonio Fargas' shoes as the streetwise snitch and all around fashion faux pas Huggy Bear. Once again his screen time is way too brief but when he does appear the laughs come in quick succession. Although many of the jokes in the film fall flat or stay well past their welcome the special feature on the other hand are full of charismatic humour. Snoop himself features in a look at the fashions of Huggy Bear and the outtakes are a hoot, but the undeniable star of the show is a retrospective mockumentary that hits all of the right notes.

**Daniel Wilks**

MOVIE: 6 / EXTRAS: 8



[above] It was meant to say "beloved aunt"

# Curb Your Enthusiasm
## SEASON 1

WARNER BROS, MA15+

When people think of *Seinfeld*, they invariably think of the show's titular character and co-creator Jerry Seinfeld. Very few people outside the industry and die-hard fans knew that the main creative force behind the hallmark series was Larry David - aka the real-life George Costanza. No disrespect to Jerry, but a fair portion of the *Seinfeld* moments we've come to cherish (masturbation contests, answering machine tampering, eating out of a garbage cans) were all David - literally, he pretty much did or would do all of the despicable things George did.

Having produced, written and re-written the bulk of the series, Larry David made more money than most human beings can fathom when the show finished and was sold off for syndication. So what's next for one the world's most neurotic and gifted comedians? *Curb Your Enthusiasm*; an unscripted cinema-verite styled series where Larry David plays himself, rich television producer, living in Los Angeles. As the show follows Larry, we see him struggle with basic day-to-day activities like going to the movies, parties and funerals - and although that may sound like another show about nothing, its title couldn't be further from the truth. With Murphy's Law in full effect, almost everything that could go wrong does as we see Larry David the character emerge; a bitter, sarcastic and altogether hilarious TV persona.

This is definitely the funniest television series to come along in a long while, and a great way to part with $49.95, some of which we're sure will find its way into Larry's pocket - no doubt making him that much wealthier and consequently unhappier.

**Kosta Andreadis**

MOVIE: 9 / EXTRAS: 5

# Masked and Anonymous

ROADSHOW, M 15+

There has to be some lasting scar that working on *Seinfeld* leaves on people. A Mark of pretension. Larry David went on to do *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, a very funny but undeniably ego driven show. Larry Charles on the other hand, one of the writers and producers of *Seinfeld*, went on to make *Masked and Anonymous*, undoubtedly one of the most pretentious and overwritten films of recent decades. But you know what? It's kind of fun for it.

Set in what could either by a mythical South American country or a near future America in which civil war is rampant, an enterprising promoter by the unlikely name of Uncle Sweetheart has the idea to hold a benefit concert for the poor and hopefully line his pockets on the way. When no musicians want to volunteer their services, Sweetheart bribes an aging musician named Jack Fate (Bob Dylan) out of gaol and hits the road. Cue Dylan songs, long winded, semi-improvised evangelising about every little thing and a few more Dylan songs.

Whilst the cast is all-star the vast majority of the players seems at a loss for what to do, calling into question Charles' ability as a director. The end result is something so relentlessly pretentious that it really is a lot of fun to watch, if only to cringe at the floridly overwritten dialogue, lost actors or painfully thin Dylan dressed in beat up Mao suits.

**Daniel Wilks**

MOVIE: 6 / EXTRAS: 1

# Dark Water

AV CHANNEL, M 15+

We here at Hyper have a sneaking suspicion that director Hideo Nakata has at some stage lost a daughter, or at least has a close personal friend who has. It goes a long way to explaining his films that all seem to centre on creepy little girls and a foreboding sense of loss. Riding on the success of the Ring trilogy, *Dark Water* revolves around similar themes, a young single mother with a young child and ghostly happenings but rather than coming off as a second rate follow-up to an international hit, *Dark Water* has its own distinct creepy charms and at many times comes across as the superior film.

After Yoshimi's marriage dissolves she and her young daughter are forced to find new accommodation and eventually must settle for a horrible flat in an equally horrible and run down apartment block. Soon water stains appear on the ceiling and a young child's bag starts appearing at random, triggering a slow burning cycle of foreboding.

Whilst the idea of water stains and a bag being scary may seem pretty far fetched the overall effect is amazing and, like *The Ring*, when the payoff comes you'll be rocked back in your seat and left chilled.

**Daniel Wilks**

MOVIE: 9 / EXTRAS: 2

# DJ Shadow Live!
## IN TUNE AND ON TIME

UNIVERSAL, M15+

Concert films always sound better on paper than they do in execution. With music being primarily an aural experience, marrying this with an accompanying visual element translates to undivided attention by the viewer - there'll be no listening to this while you're on the train to work or trying to write an informative yet entertaining DVD review.

The DJ concert film is an even sketchier idea, how do you transpose what is essentially a man behind some decks to be both visual as well as aural. Well being one of the world's most gifted turntablists is a good start - as *In Tune and On Time* presents concert footage from Shadow's recent "Private Press" world tour. With material from all walks of his production career, Entroducing, UNKLE, and Private Press - fans of Shadow's work will find plenty to admire in the selection and presentation of what's on offer here.

However, as a concert film the result is a mixed bag, as even though this tries amicably at selling a one man DJ-act as just as entertaining as any other live experience, the end result is quite like that with almost all concert films - strictly for the fans. In fact one of the main highlights can only be found in the extras section, an MPC mix-off with DJ Shadow, Cut Chemist and DJ Nu-Mark of J5.

As a great bonus the DVD comes bundled with a live CD so if you are a fan of DJ Shadow then there's no reason why you shouldn't snap this up.

**Kosta Andreadis**

MOVIE: 7 / EXTRAS: 9

[above] Wicky wicky wicky wild... ficky ficky ficky fressshhhh

His clothes are a disturbing act of violence in themselves

# Stoked
## THE RISE AND FALL OF GATOR

AV CHANNEL, M

Back in the days of kneepads and bright pink board shorts, skateboarding was the biggest thing ever, and a generation of innovators in the sport found themselves on the world stage. They were just kids themselves but were revered by every other kid with a board. We're talking about skaters like Tony Hawk, Steve Caballero and the subject of this documentary, Mark "Gator" Rogowski. When skateboarding exploded, the first wave of pros found themselves earning huge sums of money in sponsorship and had their images plastered throughout skate magazines and videos. They were mobbed at demos and competitions, and it seemed like the good life was here to stay. But like all professional sports, it's hard to stay on the top. New skaters were rising through the ranks and skateboarding itself was in transition, away from vert and into street skating.

Gator found making the transition next to impossible. Faced with waning fame, he became increasingly erratic, attempting to reinvent himself time and time again. His frustration eventually boiled over into a disturbing act of violence, and he's still in gaol to this day. *Stoked* is the story of his talent, charisma, ego and rise and fall from grace. It's about more than skateboarding; it's also about the fickleness of fame. Well worth watching.

**Screw Flanders**

MOVIE: 7 / EXTRAS: 6

## THE *Greatest* MOVIES YOU'VE NEVER SEEN

Jim Jarmusch's latest "Champagne and Cigarettes"

# The Singing Detective

ROADSHOW, MA 15+

Forget the recent film remake, the mid 80s television mini series is still by far the best version of the story, as well as simply being one of the best examples of how to make a TV show ever. Dennis Potter's seven-hour opus tells the story of Philip Marlowe, a detective author confined to a hospital bed due to a rare skin disease that sometimes covers him in weeping sores that are so painful he can hardly move. Doped up on medication and in hideous pain, Marlowe retreats into his imagination, becoming the hero of his stories, the titular Singing Detective, a big band front man and private eye. The deeper Marlowe delves into his fantasies the more his fiction and past collide forcing the acid tongued and rather antisocial Marlowe to face his personal demons.

Michael Gambon, probably best known as *The Thief in The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* is nothing short of perfect as Marlowe - even though the character is by and large an awful man, the audience can always feel for him and even like him for it. As the title suggests, *The Singing Detective* is a musical but don't let that throw you off - the musical number just add a surreal glaze to the detective fantasies, elevating a great story into the realm of artistic genius.

**Daniel Wilks**

MOVIE: 10 / EXTRAS: 8

From the land of the f**k-off big rising sun

# Samurai Champloo (IMPORT)

PRODUCTION STUDIO: MANGLOBE INC
GENRE: ACTION/ADVENTURE

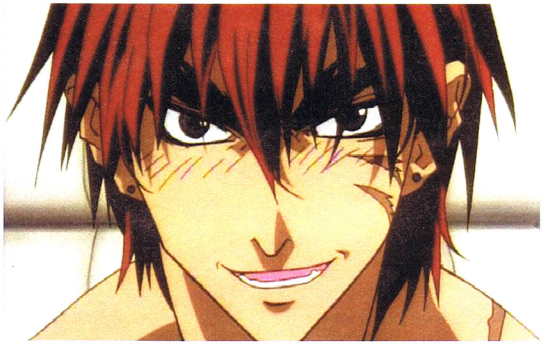
*Samurai Champloo's* intro sequence blends historical figures and imagery with a karaoke styled rap about the code of the Samurai over some jazzy hip-hop beats. The first episode begins in feudal Japan with a beautiful sunset backdrop as two samurai Mugen and Jin (the two main protagonists of the series) face execution. As their executioners raise their blades and the last ray of sunset glimmers along the cold hard steel of their weaponry, we suddenly find ourselves traveling back in time with the appropriate screen announcement "One Day Earlier!"

Unusually though, we now find ourselves in a modern Japanese metropolitan setting, and before we all let out a collective 'wtf!', the image of modern Japan gets rewound, mix-tape style (with the appropriate beat box sound effect) back to feudal Japan - one day earlier. Yes, *Samurai Champloo* unashamedly blends hip hop music and culture with that of feudal Japan and Samurai. At this point we're barely minutes into the first episode of this fantastic new anime series from Shinichiro Watanabe (*Cowboy Bebop*) and it has exerted more style than most series' could hope to achieve in an entire run. But it does so in a way that is most respectful to both of its main influences, the same way that *Cowboy Bebop* fused science fiction noir with classical jazz and bluegrass - in a complementary fashion.

But you can't coast on style forever, and thankfully *Samurai Champloo* features an impressive cast of characters and storylines that provide a great balance of drama, action and comedy. Essentially the series follows the adventures of two feuding Samurai, Mugen and Jin who decide to put aside their differences and help a feisty 15-year old girl Fuu track down the mythical "sunflower samurai." Available so far only on Japanese television, this show is definitely worth tracking down.

**Kosta Andreadis**

ANIMATION: 9 / STORY: 8
OVERALL: 9



An Argo-like space ship (anime cliche no 8)

# Outlaw Star

PRODUCTION: SUNRISE
GENRE: SPACE ACTION

You can usually judge an anime series by its opening theme song. Each of the 26 episodes of *Outlaw Star* start with a short documentary-like prologue, then suddenly the word "GO" covers the screen and Masahiko Arimatsu's "Through the Night" kicks in. It's a big, loud, catchy, air-guitar-rawk tune that wouldn't sound out of place at a Def Leppard concert. It sums up the series perfectly - fun and entertaining, but not something that will stay with you after the delicate closing theme finishes.

Gene Starwind is a cool, Onizuka Eikichi type of guy who is good with a gun and the ladies (anime cliché number 1), but a bit of an idiot, really. He and his sidekick, the savvy, high-tech hacker (anime cliché number 2) Jim Hawking, are hired as bodyguards for a mysterious client. But they soon find themselves in possession of a super-powered spaceship and pursued by magic-wielding space pirates who are after the ship and its navigator, a pretty and desperately innocent young cyborg girl (anime cliché number 3) named Melfina. Joined by a beautiful but deadly female assassin and a crazy alien cat-girl with a tendency to annoy (anime clichés numbers 4 and 5), they set off in search of adventure and the mythical Galactic Leyline.

*Outlaw Star* starts out quite well, particularly the early episode featuring the discovery of the XGP spaceship. But my interest started to wane towards the middle of the series, when our heroes have to start paying the bills and making ends meet and the main plot seems to dry up completely. It never fails to entertain though - the solid art and animation and surprisingly rich vein of humour are easy distractions when the story starts thinning out. And who couldn't like a series where the main villains (tough guy with scar and insane effeminate lad with psychotic laugh, anime clichés numbers 6 and 7) are named Ron and Harry MacDougall?

**Malcolm Campbell**

ANIMATION: 8 / STORY: 6
OVERALL: 7

# She, the Ultimate Weapon
## VOL.1 GIRLFRIEND

PRODUCTION COMPANY: TOEI
GENRE: DRAMA

A story no matter whether in animated form or acted out on stage or screen needs to be engaging whether through the characters or the plot the ability to capture the viewer's intrigue is essential to hooking a fan base. *She, The Ultimate Weapon* is an excellent example of how a simple story about the dynamics of human interaction can be brought to life through creative characters.

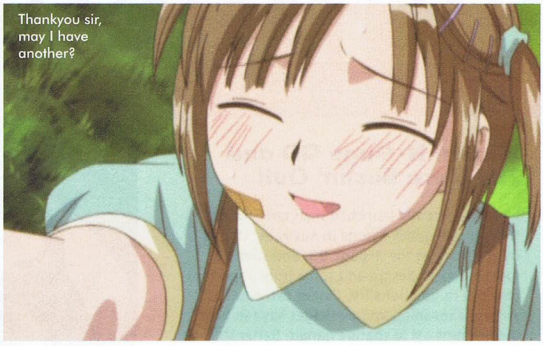
While the premise sounds akin to a parody/comedy such as *Excel Saga* or *FLCL* the real premise carries a far deeper meaning not dissimilar to *Grave of the Fireflies* in dealing with the insecurity of a young girl and her classmates amidst the backdrop of war.

Days after Chise struggles to break from her timidness and ask out awkward classmate Shuji their relationship is further complicated when Chise is transformed into the government's ultimate weapon against the invading forces. The story tends to gloss over the why and how and concentrate on the now of the situation with people coping under extreme pressure and loss. The voice of Shuji as narrator reads Chise' diary addressed to him, as she spills out thoughts and emotions as her body changes into something foreign. Common visions of war, bombings and guns, are limited with the focus being placed on the destruction of daily life and the adaptation of people.

Visually stunning, this sci fi romance is sweet and endearing, yet sad and masculine. It manages to explore what it is to feel love while avoiding unnecessary sappiness by focusing on the stories of real people struggling to find happiness. The most memorable line of the series is from Chise as she urges Shuji not to look at her is as she struggles to take control "there is no such thing as a weapon that doesn't kill".

**Vanessa Morgan**

**ANIMATION: 8 / STORY: 8**
**OVERALL: 9**



# Azumanga Daioh
## VOL.1: ENTRANCE

PRODUCTION COMPANY: GENCO
GENRE: COMEDY

The fast-talking high pitched squawking delivered by large eyed schoolgirls makes Shojo anime the most confusing genre for the Western market to understand and therefore accept, but it is one of the most culturally rich and plot driven forms available. Coming from within a society driven by cultural roles and position Shojo, from the Japanese 'girl' or 'woman', revolves around personal relationships, with over sized eyes as the most distinguishing feature, eyes being the gateway to the soul. With this in mind Chiyo-chan was born with a soul to rival the deepest ravine as the adorable 10-year old child genius steps into her first year of high school skipping five grades and drawing everyone into her sweetness.

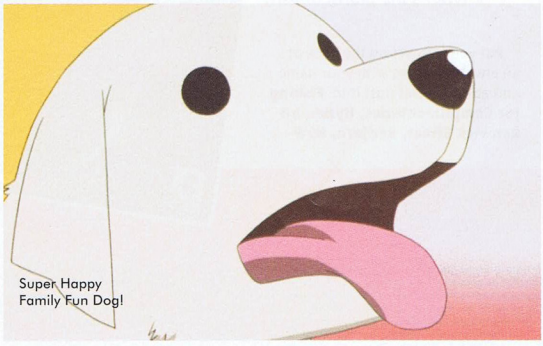
Based on a popular manga, *Azumanga Daioh* is a string of individual segments first run as four-minute fillers which have been strung together to create longer episodes and a loose sense of continuity. This structure could easily have brought about the downfall of the show but it's cleverly done with short, often crazy moments in the girls lives working as joiners, and the result is an erratic but fluid story. The series starts off rather slow but quickly builds to a staggering pace with interrelated gags creating a snowball effect with layers of ridiculousness compounding each other.

*Azumanga Daioh* is simple in its approach but witty and likely to make you laugh out loud. The scenery design for the series is basic, instead complexity is placed on the drawing of the character features, predominantly their eyes, and the comedic value derived from gestures. Quirks such as Ayuma's hiccups and Chiyo's unusual habit of making her own box lunch are draw out for maximum effect.

The DVD comes with a 12-page booklet that explains the Japanese language puns in each episode, as well as cultural references and the background of characters.

**Vanessa Morgan**

**ANIMATION: 6 / STORY: 8**
**OVERALL: 7**



# WinWinWin

## Win an N-Gage QD and The Sims: Bustin' Out!

Nokia recently launched their redesigned N-Gage gamedeck/phone in Australia. It goes by the name of the N-Gage QD, and sports a more compact design and some truly important changes to functionality. Games can now be hot swapped meaning you no longer have to turn the machine off to change games. Better still, phone calls are no longer taco flavoured, as you can answer the QD like a normal mobile. Huzzah! All in all, it's a much sexier device, and to help the launch on its way our friends at Nokia have given us one brand spanking new QD, as well as a copy of The Sims: Bustin' Out to giveaway.

To be in with a chance to win, just answer the following:

**Name two other N-Gage games**

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address, and post it to: **Phone Phreaks, Hyper, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW 2016.**

## Win Bass Master Fishing and Fishing Rod Peripheral!

There's nothing we like more here at Hyper than a zany peripheral, and this certainly fits the bill. After all, why reel in a digital fish with a boring old controller when you could be doing it with a fishing rod peripheral? Why indeed, and thanks to our friends at 4Gamers, we have five games and rods to giveaway for PlayStation 2. It won't be long until you're reeling from the fun of it all.

To be in with a chance to win, just answer the following question:

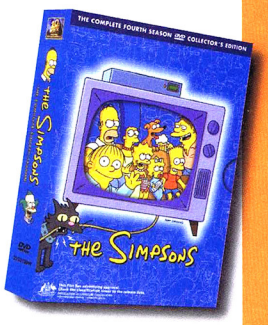
**What's the plural of fish?**

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address, and post it to: **Fishing for Complimentaries, Hyper, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW**

**5 UP FOR GRABS!**

**Terms & Conditions** 1) Entry is open to residents of Australia and New Zealand except employees and immediate families of Next Publishing Pty Ltd and its agencies associated with the promotion. 2) Only entries completed with these terms and conditions will be eligible. 3) Competition begins 9am August 31 and entries close at 6pm October 13. 4) In determining eligibility the judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 5) The winner will be drawn at 9am October 14 at Next Publishing Pty Ltd, 78 Renwick St, Redfern NSW 2016. 6) Prizes must be taken as offered and are not redeemable for cash. 7) The promoter is not responsible for misdirected or lost mail. 8) The winners will be notified by mail and results published in the December issue of Hyper on sale December 1. 9) 1 winner will receive a Nokia N-Gage QD (RRP $389). 5 winners will each receive Bass Master Fishing and fishing peripheral for PS2 (RRP $79.95). Total value of competitions is approximately $788.75. 10) The promoter is Next Publishing Pty Ltd ABN 88 002 647 645 of 78 Renwick St, Redfern NSW 2016.

# THE SIMPSONS™




## Win Seasons 1-4 on DVD

5 PACKS UP FOR GRABS!

Over the last fifteen years The Simpsons has consistently been one of the best programs on television, capturing the cultural zeitgeist with razor sharp satire and a truly enduring cast of characters. To celebrate the release of Season 4 on DVD, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment has given us five sets of Seasons 1 to 4 to give away to five lucky readers.

To be in the running to win this treasure trove of Simpsons fun, just answer the following:

**Name five celebrities who made guest appearances in Season 4.**

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address, and post it to: **Hooray For Everything, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.**

MATT GROENING The Simpsons ™ and © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

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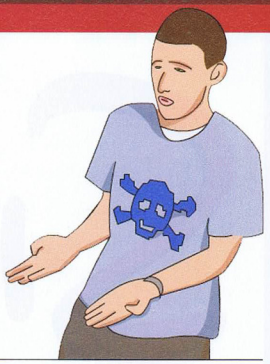
# Q. What's the best non-gaming website and why?"



It's no secret that the "interweb" was designed first and foremost for pornography, the military and academics with patches on the elbows of their tweed coats, but fortunately if you look hard enough there's also something for the non T&A, gun and knowledge loving set. This month our readers have trawled far and wide on the "electromagnetic superhigh way" to find the nuggety bits of URL goodness that are worth feasting upon. With your eyes that is.

**WARNING:** WEBSITES SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN INTERNALLY. See? Because of me now they have a warning.

## HYPER FORUM

**We all have a different opinion and the Hyper Forum is where you can get your thoughts out of your head and onto the page for all to see. Don't forget that we have a new topic every issue! The next topic of discussion...**

**? "What's the best film of all time and why"**

Responses will be printed in Hyper #134

### MAIL THE HYPER FORUM:

**POSTAL:**
78 Renwick St. Redfern,
NSW 2016 Australia

**EMAIL:**
freak@next.com.au with Hyper Forum in the subject line, and the topic of discussion at the top of your response. Please note that very long contributions may be edited.

### HOMER LOVES FLANDERS

Well, I was gonna say that **www.flancrestenterprises.com** would have to be the best website of all time but if you type that URL in you come up with **http://www.bottleblaster.com/** which is some weird product that blasts soda/beer into your mouth. Yeah, like drinking is sooo hard. Umm, so my backup fave website would have to be **www.whatbadgerseat.com** but to be honest it's not that informative and is part of some thing called "The Simpsons". Whatever that may be.

**BadgerLover54**

### ZOIDBERG RULES

I would have to say Billy West's own site. It has a trove of details about his career, his music and of course a forum, where Billy himself posts, so u can usually get an answer from him. (For those that do not know who i am talking about, Billy West is the man behind such voices as Fry, Zoidberg, Professor and 600 others from Futurama, Ren and Stimpy, George Jetson now, the Red M&M, Shaggy, Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd and a whole lot more. Check out his site,

**The Ever Cool Fluffy_the_Giant.**

### GOOGOO FOR GOOGLE

Best non-gaming website around? It's gotta be **google**. Simple, easy to use text-based layout, so it doesn't take too long to load on a slow connection, and all of the ads are kept to the side so that you don't notice them. No popups, and gets you what you want in a matter of seconds. Larry, Sergey (guys that made google), good job on making the best. site. EVER.

**Stapleface.**

### AWFULLY POSITIVE

The best site has to be **www.somethingawful.com**. Okay, so the posts tend to be pretty ranty, but there's still a rich vein of comedy running through the data pipes of this site. The regular sections are definitely the highlight - especially Photoshop Friday, where each week there's a theme and all the forum users Photoshop jokes around it. If you've never been there there's a MASSIVE archive to trawl through and you'll laugh yourself silly. Pity the Admiral Ackbar jokes are over though. Another great site is www.somethingpositive.net, which is a web comic that's been going for years and is a great mix of zanyness and commentary on life. Check 'em out.

**MankeyBoi**

### FROM CRAIG DAVID'S SON

I am an enthusiast in space travel. Ever since I first became interested in the space programmes of the world, when I was in primary school, I have always wanted to learn more about space probes and cosmonauts. The best source of this information and in my opinion, the best non-gaming website is Encyclopedia Astronautica, which can be accessed by this web address, **www.astronautix.com**. In it is enough information on the many space agencies that have pressed ahead with their conquest of the heavens. There is information on the spacecraft that took man and machine to the stars, the rockets that launched them and the scientists and astronauts that had contributed to the whole tapestry of space travel. I am in particular interested in the web pages involving Russian spacecraft, which is helping me with a book that I have been writing on and off for the past five years. So if you want to look at a good website, look no further than Encyclopedia Astronautica, which provides more information on the real life space odysseys of our world than anywhere else.

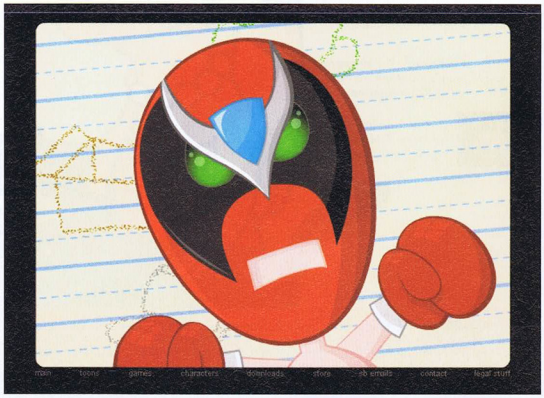
**Craig Davidson**

### SCAT FREAK

**http://www.geocities.com/coffeeinsomniachicken**

Why? First off the name: Coffee Insomnia Chicken! What's on it? MS PAINT drawings and flash cartoons. The cartoons include such titles as: "IRAQS NEW SECRET WEAPON-The Hydro Bovine", "The pope likes to ski" and "I'm brewin some sweet pertacci".

But most of all, it has a poem titled: "Ode to Scat Monkey" and the poem includes such lines as: "... Oh scat monkey of many religions, Please do not undermine my



**[above]** And the Trogdor comes in the night!!!!!

domesticated animals, They iron my shirts daily. My garments are currently expensive and under-ruined, Please do not hobo-ize them with your scat of many a colour..."

Thanks,

**Jive Monk (not an alias)**

## SO MUCH MARIO

In my opinion the best non-gaming website is www.newgrounds.com. It is the largest website for flash animations on the net with over 300 submitted each day. Whenever I come home from school I just log on to newgrounds and watch the daily top 5. It's also great because it gives animators a chance to submit their own work which will get tons of feedback, which is what I have done in the past. Basically newgrounds is the best site, it's entertaining, gives you a laugh and there's always something new. They even have a leveling up system where you gain experience for voting on movies. It's the best.

**Brent Skufca**

## NINJAS ARE HELLA COOL

Easy www.realultimatepower.net, why? Because its about Ninjas. And because it made me and my friend cry with laughter while reading it. I mean where else can u read about Ninjas with ADD popping boners to defeat pirates with lasers? Confused? Visit the site and all will become clear.

**HyperChrono**

## SIMPLETON

This one was so simple! www.homestarrunner.com of course! Why? Because of the new and innovative style of flash cartoons the best of which involve Strong Bad answering his emails. This provides many a laugh at very memorable quotes on par with The Simpsons (yes I'm serious). Who could forget when Homestar sees Strong Bad's computer: "Woah. That TV has words on it!" Or when Strong Bad's lovable lackey The Cheat inhales a helium balloon and floats off! Not to mention all the hidden easter eggs when you click on random stuff, the spin-offs from the SB emails such as playable video games and the "Teen Girl Squad" drawn by Strong Bad himself. AND no pop-up! All together now... TROG DOR!!!!

**Gurthang**

## FOOKYU? FOOKME!

FARK! It's all about the FARK! No, it's not a website about doing crow impersonations, www.fark.com is a daily compilation of all the best and most interesting links from around the world. Daily content can include breaking news, tales of people being stupid, new technology, fringe science and, or course, boobies. All hail the new republic of Farkistan!

**Matha Farker**

## GOOFY BUT NO PLUTO

There are many sites on the web but only one draws me back again and again. www.teleport-city.com is part blog, part travel diary, part music, film and book reviews and part vanity piece, all wrapped up in a brilliantly conceived retro design echoing 70's airlines. Although the site isn't updated nearly as much as I would like the writing is so good that you can go back and reread reviews and essays again and again. The depth of the film reviews is amazing - nowhere else will you find a review of a mid 80's Sho Kushogi Ninja film (like Enter the Ninja starring Kushogi and Franco Nero, a massive Italian man with the magical ability to turn into a slender Japanese man when clad in a Ninja outfit) that will actually take the time to fill in a bit of Ninja history to give some background as to why the action is so goofy. Brilliant stuff.

**Danger Diabolik**

[above] Sexy in the Teleport City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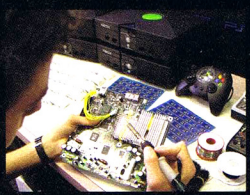


www.blade.cc

4/264 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo, Queensland 4151 07 3394 3555

# MAIL HYPER!

**POSTAL:**
78 Renwick St. Redfern,
NSW 2016 Australia

**EMAIL:**
freak@next.com.au

## ONLINE NINTENDO ACTION?

Ever since online gaming was introduced to PS2 and Xbox I've been wondering whether or not I will ever experience online gaming on my console. If you haven't realised yet I am indeed a proud owner of Nintendo GameCube. I've been searching for answers far and wide (well if you consider 5 mins on the net) and I thought I should wait until I read your E3 review but online for GCN wasn't mentioned anywhere. Whats going on? Do all of us GCN owners have any hope for online gaming?

Thanks for your time.

(P.S. your interview with Eiji Aonuma in issue 131 was great, just what all us GCN owners needed to keep some hope up for the coming year or so.)

**Harry.S**

*Hey Harry, although there is an online adapter available for the GCN in America and Japan the chances of one appearing on our hallowed shores is slim. There are also very few online games available for the Cube. Unfortunately it doesn't look as though there will be much in the way of online hope for you guys with the current console - Nintendo have spent a lot of time pushing "connectivity" between GCN and GBA over online. There is hope though - the next console that Nintendo is producing should have some very strong online games and support - fingers crossed.*

[above] David Waldie is an artistic genius! Gotta love Kusanagi

## MODIFY YOUR LIFE

Dear Hyper Legends,

In a previous issue (and don't ask which one cause I'm not going through my massive pile of past issues) your Arcade Guru Tim did a review on the Densya De GO! arcade machine in Japan. Since that issue I've been trying to get copies of the home versions. I have one for my Saturn, as well as a few on PS1 and Neo Geo Pocket Colour. I want to get the latest ones for PS2, but want to ask you guys a few Q's first:

**1)** Is there such thing these days as a "Legal" PS2 Mod Chip and if so, do you know of any reputable places that will install them (preferably in WA)?

**2)** After trawlin' the net, I haven't been able to find anywhere in Oz that will import the games (and controllers) for me, can you guys suggest somewhere?

**3)** Will I need an AV Signal converter to play Import NTSC games on an Australian PAL Television?

**4)** Off topic, are you guys looking forward to getting your hands on a Nintendo DS?

I hope in your infinite wisdom, you can answer these questions for me. Keep up the fine magazine guys!

**Austranz**

P.S. In response to your "ABC" request in the letter section in Issue 131, I ran the spell checker on this e-mail and checked all the punctuation. Hope that keeps you happy!

*Hey Austranz,*
*1) Unfortunately to our knowledge Mod chips are no longer legal in Aus.*
*2) If you want to import, there are a whole host of Australian sites that have popped up in the last couple of years. Have a flick through our last few issues and you'll see ads for a few of them. You could also try overseas sites too. Canadian sites are a good bet as the exchange rate is very similar to ours making for some nice cheap purchases. www.lik-sang.com is also a good site.*
*3) If you TV is NTSC compatible you won't but otherwise you will. Almost all TVs made in the last few years will be fine.*
*4) Hell yeah - Daniel's been putting off buying an SP so he can save up. We'll be doing some cool DS coverage very soon.*
*P.S. Yes it does.*

## GRAPHICS WHORE II

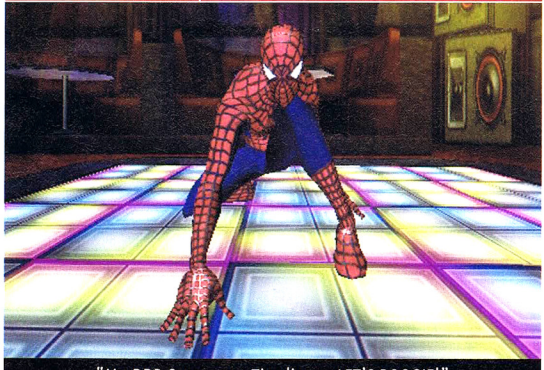
Dear Hyper,

I was talking to my friend the other day and asked him if he had the choice of a Nintendo DS and the PSP, after telling him all the features

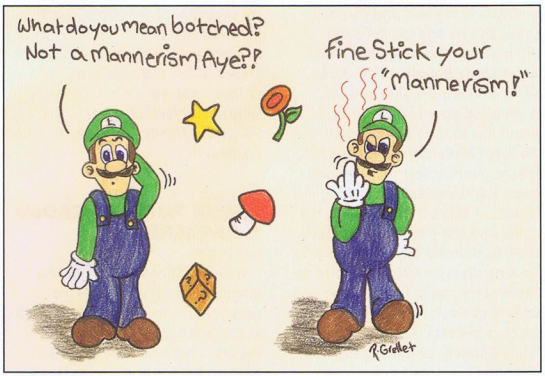
# CAPTION THIS!

**PART 57 WINNER**

**Nizmo** set our funny bones on fire this month with the following entry:



"My DDR Senses are Tingling... LET'S BOOGIE!"




[above] Robyn Grellet captures the angst of those that can't mannerism

of each, he said PSP, simply because it had BETTER GRAPHICS!!

It is true, but the Nintendo DS has way more features which can enhance the game being played compared to the PSP and that is why I chose the Nintendo DS. My friend is not the only one that keeps on rambling about GRAPHICS. It is basically everyone I speak to, friends, people that work at Electronics Boutique and other games stores. In fact, basically anyone who has anything to do with games. I mean, if it was up to me to choose between a game with terrible graphics but great game play and a game with the best graphics and barely any game play, I would pick the one with the bad graphics and lots of game play so that I can have a great time playing it. I love having fun playing games. So, could you please explain why everyone is so obsessed with GRAPHICS!!

Now I have a few questions:

1. Which one would you guys pick - Nintendo DS or PSP?
2. Can you tell me the release date of Mario Tennis for Gamecube?
3. Do you know the release date of the Nintendo DS?
4. When do you think you are going to do some reviews on Nintendo DS Games?
5. Do you know roughly how much the Nintendo DS is going to be?

Well, thanks to listening to my rambling on about people, graphics, Nintendo DS and stuff.

Love your magazine and can't wait to get it every month.

**Zach Clarke**

*Zach,*

*1) Obviously we want both of the handhelds but at the moment the DS is the front-runner for Daniel, simply because it has Nintendo goodness. Cam, on the other hand, can't wait to play games like Ridge Racer, Burnout, Wipeout on PSP! To be honest though, until we've spent time with both it's still a little too early to call.*

*2) Still no release date dude. We're hanging for it as badly as you are...*

*3) Hopefully late November in the US for the DS. Maybe Christmas or early next year for Oz.*

*4) As soon as we can get our hands on one.*

*5) It looks as though it will be around the $350 mark here but don't quote us on that.*

## MONKEY BALL BOWLING?

Your 'Employee of the Month' segment is pretty swell, but I think I speak for all your readers when I ask this burning question that stems from the picture alongside Cam's editorial rant. Who won the ten pin bowling game?

**jawsy.**

*Jawsy, it pains us to say it but the Hyper solidarity we usually show in Mashed failed us at Bowling and Dan Staines won overall. Probably because Daniel Wilks was away in NZ snowboarding. Amos had the highest score on the night though, and Cam second highest.*

## MANNERIFIC

O Hyper,

I must ask you for your advice on such daunting matters in my life. Over the past month something weird is happening to me, and I think it could be related to a disease I can only refer to as *can'tmannerism*. So, here are a few symptoms I'm coming down with.

1) I listen to Hilary Duff and I enjoy it. I've even bought her album. Next up; Guy Sebastian.

2) I don't think Final Fantasy Advent Children is going to be any good. It looks to me like a case of all flash no bang.

3) I busted out a mannerism during a school assembly, and the principal didn't like it. Did I do it wrong?

4) I've been playing Warhammer 40k and Magic the Gathering chronically lately. Even against myself.

5) I've been trying to freestyle-rap lately. My friends beat me up because of it.

Can you guys tell me if any of these symptoms have something to do with the dreaded, incurable *can'tmannerism*, or something worse, like playing Underworld for too long??

Your loyal legionnaire,

**Sie the Pie-man.**

P.S: Here is one of my raps. "I'm gonna pump you all full of blau, and then I'm going to make you say owwww!!" What do you think?

*Sie, it definitely sounds as though you are sick. We recommend that you take 60 milligrams of Mashed and 1000 milligrams of decent music, stat! Good work on symptom 3 though.*

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### SNES - GOOD FOR WHAT AILS YA!

Dear Hyper,

I'd just like to give you an example of one of the benefits of gaming. My Mother had a terrible car accident a few years ago and unfortunately she broke her neck. It was a miracle she wasn't paralysed from the neck down, but she will be in chronic pain for the rest of her life and she has lost about 30% of the movement in her limbs. For years she has been a big fan of the Mario Bros. and Sonic series, and enjoys all quality platformers, but some stupid f*cker ripped off my SNES and she just doesn't have the manual dexterity to play the recent generation of titles in the genre. But thanks to my recent purchase of a PC, and the wonders of emulation, she can now enjoy all of the classic platformers she so dearly loves and by playing these games she has regained a lot of the dexterity she lost in the accident. It's very hard for her, but every level she completes is a hard-fought battle against her injuries won, and this makes the whole family proud of her efforts and it's an added bonus that she really enjoys this unorthodox form of physiotherapy. It has also helped her ability to think laterally, and long-unused neurons are snapping and popping like there's no tomorrow. So I'd like to thank all the people behind games like Bubsy, Aladdin, Mario Bros., etc. and I'd like to thank you, Hyper, because I've been a reader since issue #1 and going through my old mags with Mum helps us decide which long-forgotten platformers to resurrect and put to good use.

With gratitude,

**Aaron Dennis.**

*Aaron, that's an incredible story dude, and we're going to track down a SNES for your mum to play! If only more people could see the benefits of games like you guys have the world of gaming may not be viewed in such a negative light. We'll be in touch!*

**You've won a Microsoft® IntelliMouse® Explorer for PC!**

**Best. Mouse. Ever.** The IntelliMouse® Explorer is an ergonomic optical mouse with five re-programmable buttons and an excellent feel for serious gaming!

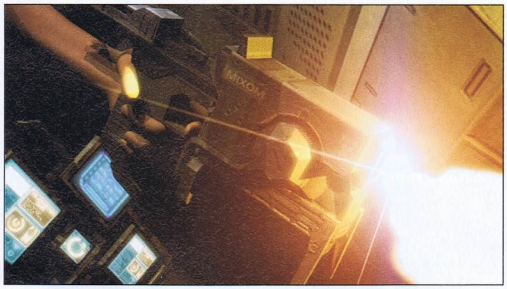
## NOAH'S ARCADE

greetings to the new lord of hyper, Cam.

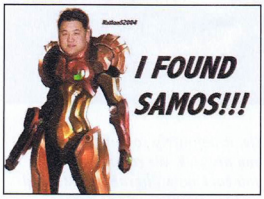
i have just heard on an AM radio news article about Christian video games. this may be a desparate attempt to get more Christians ala Christian rock, but the games they have are terrible. one game has you in a FPS, where you exorcise the demon out of these evil roman soldiers. when they're exorcised, they're in a praying position and repeating psalms of the bible. i'm not bagging out the Christian organisations, but these games are terrible and there are already games that have Christian context. for example, nearly every fictional videogame has the good verses evil

## DEPT. OF MISC. BLAU SIGHTINGS

**[above]** Michael Guy scores 9 on the Rictor scale
**[above right]** Nathan Crick wagged school to find this image



**[above]** Jake Stoll's major work for art, entitled "Blau".
You're the rockingest rock that ever rocked dude!




**[above]** Nathan Satie and a very sexy proposition

**[above]** Nick Papadakis found this one... bizarre but cool

plot, just like the bible. what about doom, where the hero takes on hell itself. devil may cry pitted the force of good against actual demons and it was so cool. they should have named dante michael- you know, st Michael who cast satan out of paradise. the Christian business community should never treat the video game market as a quick buck and method of publicising. look what happened to the Olsen empire in video games. they will crash and burn. however, it would be interesting to see the real life version of bible blaster, from the simpsons "convert the heathens!". anyway, what are your opinions on the matter?

**Vonifictuos**

*Vonifictuos, any game that serves as an advertisement for an agenda is iffy in our books. By and large we think of Christian videogames much like the current crop of US propaganda games in which you hunt down Bin Laden and his cronies. We try to avoid them if at all possible aside from casting scorn at them and busting out incredibly powerful mannerisms. On a side note, there has been a recent invention called the "capital letter". You may want to do some research into it.*

### N64 SELLOUT

Dear Hyper,

I have been out of the console gaming scene for quite a while, having sold my N64 and games about 3 years ago (something I still regret to this day), and I have just recently bought a GameCube along with Wind Waker and SSB: M. Reading your feature on E3, I would like to say I'm impressed with the list of Nintendo games due for release, namely Star Fox, Metroid Prime 2 and the realistic looking Legend of Zelda (I downloaded the trailer and it is f*%$ing awesome!!). I know its unlikely but I would like to see a multiplayer LoZ in the form of Deathmatch duels, horse racing and archery contests, etc (different to the Four Swords). As for handhelds, I will definitely be getting the NDS and I can't wait to see how Nintendo will incorporate the touch screen (scratching your Pokemon in the right spot to make it fight better???). As for the innovative control method for the new Mario Party, maybe it will be something like the Power Glove. There are also a few questions that need answering.

1. When did Nintendo Gamer cease to exist?
2. When did Satoru Iwata become president of Nintendo?
3. I remember hearing about a game called 'Young Olympians' and another about Kung Fu pirates, what's the news on them?
4. Does Kosta still call himself Pimp Daddy K?
5. Where do I buy a WaveBird controller (I can't find them anywhere)?
6. When is Custom Robo GC being released in Australia?
7. My ding-a-ling, my ding-a-ling, I want you to play with my ding-a-ling.

Thankyou for your time,

**Cameron Cook**

ps. Is 'Screw Flanders' a contributor to every issue of the magazine or just Issue 130. Flanders tried to wreck my song, his views on birth control are wrong did you know.

*Cameron,*

*1) The magazine had its final issue in August 2003.*
*2) When Hiroshi Yamauchi retired.*
*3) We can't find any recent info on Young Olympians so we can't say either way if it's still in development. The kung fu pirates games is a new one to us - could you possibly be talking about Galleon? It's a pirate game with martial arts.*
*4) Yes he does, and you better call him that too, or he'll put foot to arse.*
*5) Harvey Norman or EB are probably your best bet. Otherwise try online stores.*
*6) It's out in the states so I think we should probably have it within the next two months. But we have to warn you, the preview code we played didn't bode too well.*
*7) That's not a question. But nice Simpsons reference nonetheless.*
*P.S. Screw Flanders will be back, oh yes he will.*

### LARGE PURPLE HEADED MONSTERS

Hey Hyper

How are things at the greatest magazine in the world? So the purpose for this message is to bitch at the lack of RPG's in modern society. I remember in the olden days on the nes and snes systems when every second game was an RPG the good old RPG's like chrono trigger, secret of manner and all the original Final Fantasy's the good ones where you saved the earth by destroying incredibly large monsters and then it ended in having a slide show of happy pictures of animals drinking tea in a bright forest with lots of lovely flowers and more crap like that ie. the world returned to normal but now we have sequels to games not like ff 1, 2 and 3 oh no now we have sequels to ff games ie ff x 2. Now supposabley when fable comes out it will change the world of RPG's forever but this may not be best for the genre won't this just change the way the developers make the games, now they won't just make them they will most likely leave it to the masters e.g.. lion head and the new big blue box. so what is the future of RPG's will they last the distance or will they flitter away and be only a blurred memory to the few of us who played the long forgotten RPG genre.

**signed That Funny Guy**

P.S Oh and what do you guys think of Fable? are you looking forward to it?

*Funny Guy, RPGs will be around for the long haul - every year someone*

Max Gibson with a nice pic. No fan service though...

releases a game that promises to reinvent the genre. If they're successful then other developers up the ante - if they're not then other developers show them how it should be done. As for your second question, Fable is looking tight. We should have a review next issue. And if you want to play it you should subscribe this month!

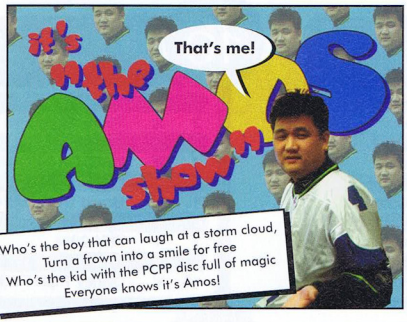
## THE AMOS SHOW

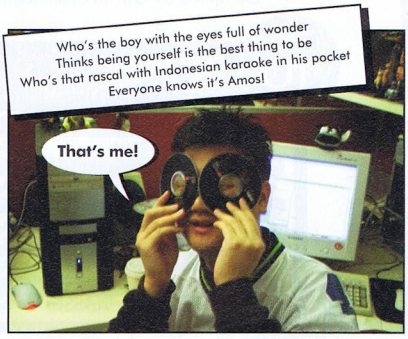
Dear Hyper

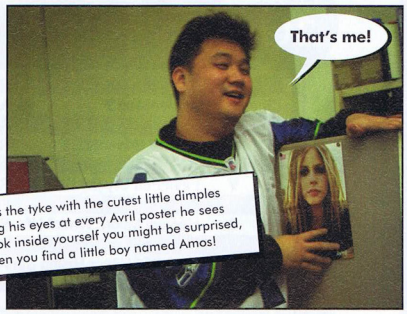
I see your employee of the month and raise you an entire Amos issue! C'mon, we want more Amos!

**Wurzel Gummage**

*Hey there Wurzey-G (if I can call you that),*
*We actually wanted to take Amos to a whole new level, and pitched a show to the Comedy Channel called "The Amos Show", but they said it was too similar to some other show they already had. I think it was called South Park. Nah, we've never heard of it either. In any case, here are some images and lyrics from the theme tune...*





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# The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by GfK in association with the IEAA

## TOP 10 PlayStation 2 Games Over $50

W/E 8 AUGUST 2004 RETAIL SALES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ▲ | Need 4 Speed: Und Ptm | Racing |
| 2 | ▲ | Athens 2004 | Sports |
| 3 | ▼ | SingStar | All Other |
| 4 | ▲ | MOH Rising Sun Ptm | Action |
| 5 | ▲ | Driv3r | Racing |
| 6 | ▼ | Spider-Man 2 | Adventure |
| 7 | ✪ | Ratchet & Clank 2 Ptm | Adventure |
| 8 | ▼ | Shrek 2 | Adventure |
| 9 | ✪ | Formula 1 2004 | Racing |
| 10 | ◆ | Harry Potter: Azkaban | Adventure |

## TOP 10 PlayStation Games Over $30

W/E 8 AUGUST 2004 RETAIL SALES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ◆ | Simpson's Wrestling | Sports |
| 2 | ▲ | Sports Superbike | Racing |
| 3 | ✪ | Volleyball | Sports |
| 4 | ▼ | Yu-Gi-Oh Forbidden Mem | Strategy |
| 5 | ◆ | Beyblade Let It Rip | Adventure |
| 6 | ▼ | Grand Theft Auto Coll Ed | Adventure |
| 8 | ▼ | HPotter Chamber Secrets | Adventure |
| 7 | ▼ | FIFA 2004 | Sports |
| 9 | ✪ | Action Triple Pack | Action |
| 10 | ▼ | Disney Triple Pack | Adventure |

## TOP 10 Game Cube Games Over $50

W/E 8 AUGUST 2004 RETAIL SALES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ◆ | Pokémon Colosseum | RPG |
| 2 | ◆ | Spider-Man 2 | Adventure |
| 3 | ▲ | Shrek 2 | Adventure |
| 4 | ▲ | Need 4 Speed: Und | Racing |
| 5 | ✪ | Splinter Cell Pandora Tom | Adventure |
| 6 | ▼ | Final Fan Crystal Chron | RPG |
| 7 | ▼ | Mario Party 5 | Family |
| 8 | ◆ | Harvest Moon: Wndrfl Life | Simulator |
| 9 | ▼ | Mario Kart Double Dash | Racing |
| 10 | ✪ | Medal Of Honor Rising Sun | Action |

## TOP 10 Xbox Games Over $50

W/E 8 AUGUST 2004 RETAIL SALES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ◆ | Need 4 Speed: Und Clsc | Racing |
| 2 | ▲ | MOH Rising Sun | Action |
| 3 | ◆ | The Chronicles Of Riddick | Adventure |
| 4 | ▼ | Spider-Man 2 | Adventure |
| 5 | ▲ | Driv3r | Racing |
| 6 | ▼ | V8 Supercars 2 | Racing |
| 7 | ▼ | Shrek 2 | Adventure |
| 8 | ▲ | GTA Twin Pack | Adventure |
| 9 | ◆ | Full Spectrum Warrior | Strategy |
| 10 | ✪ | Halo Control Pack | Action |

## TOP 10 PC Games Over $20

W/E 8 AUGUST 2004 RETAIL SALES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ✪ | Doom 3 | Action |
| 2 | ▼ | The Sims Deluxe | Strategy |
| 3 | ◆ | The Sims Unleashed | Strategy |
| 4 | ◆ | The Sims Superstar | Strategy |
| 5 | ▲ | Rise Of Nations | Strategy |
| 6 | ▲ | Age Of Mythology | Strategy |
| 7 | ▼ | The Sims Makin' Magic | Strategy |
| 8 | ▲ | Counter Strike Cond Zero | Action |
| 9 | ▼ | The Sims Vacation | Strategy |
| 10 | ✪ | Civilization 3 | Strategy |

## TOP 10 Game Boy Advance Games Over $30

W/E 8 AUGUST 2004 RETAIL SALES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ◆ | Crash Bandicoot Fusion | Adventure |
| 2 | ▲ | Shrek 2 | Adventure |
| 3 | ▲ | Pokémon Sapphire | RPG |
| 4 | ▼ | Spyro Fusion | Adventure |
| 5 | ▲ | Spider-Man 2 | Adventure |
| 6 | ✪ | Duel Masters: Sempai | Adventure |
| 7 | ▲ | Donkey Kong Country 2 | Adventure |
| 8 | ✪ | Sonic Advance 3 | Adventure |
| 9 | ✪ | Harry Potter: Azkaban | Adventure |
| 10 | ✪ | Dragonball Z: Warriors | Action |

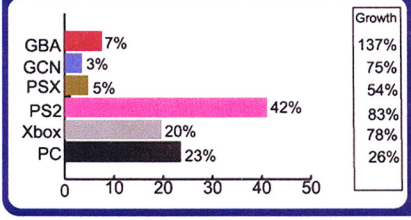
## TOP 10 All Full Priced Games

W/E 8 AUGUST 2004 RETAIL SALES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ✪ | Doom 3 | PC/MAC |
| 2 | ◆ | Need For Speed: Und Ptm | PlayStation 2 |
| 3 | ▲ | Athens 2004 | PlayStation 2 |
| 4 | ▲ | Need 4 Speed: Und Clsc | Xbox |
| 5 | ▼ | SingStar | PlayStation 2 |
| 6 | ▲ | MOH Rising Sun Ptm | PlayStation 2 |
| 7 | ▲ | Driv3r | PlayStation 2 |
| 8 | ▼ | Spider-Man 2 | PlayStation 2 |
| 9 | ✪ | The Sims Deluxe | PC/MAC |
| 10 | ✪ | Ratchet & Clank 2 Ptm | PlayStation 2 |

## MARKET WATCH All Games by Platform

JUN vs JUL RETAIL SALES




✪ New Entry
◆ Non Mover
▲ Up from last week
▼ Down from last week

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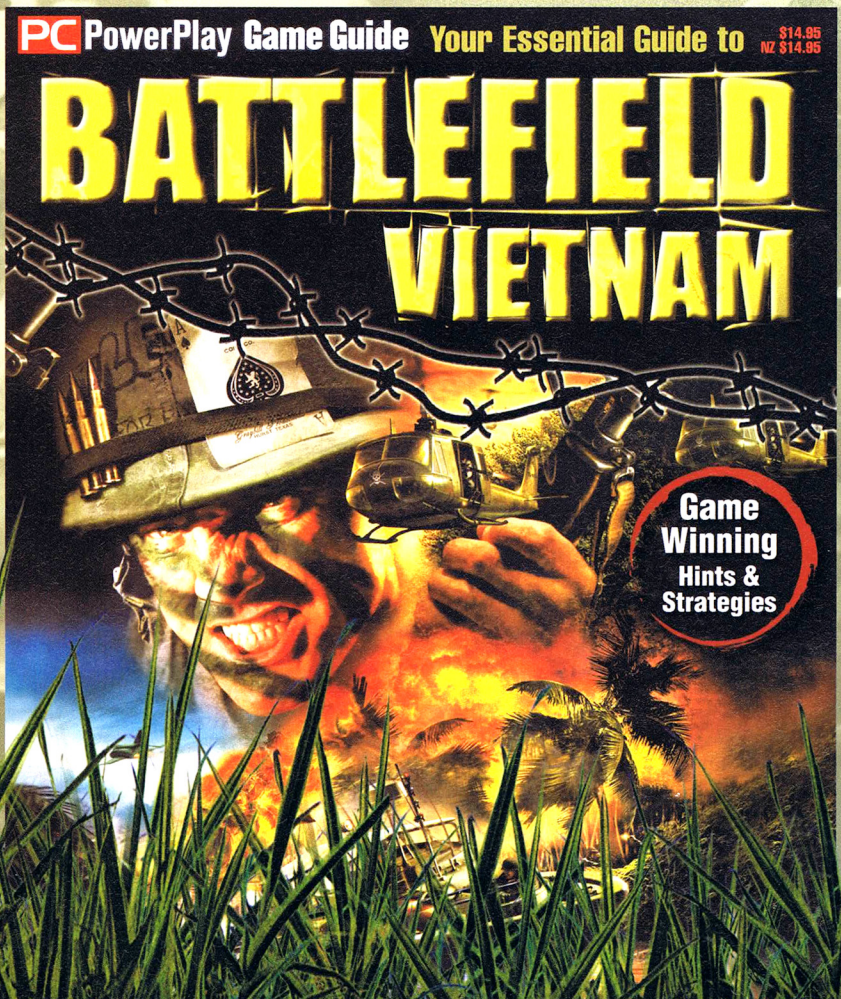


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# Next Issue:

## Outrun 2

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Our full review

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| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| THIS IS THE WORLD WE LIVE IN · Alkazar | 114321 | CALIFORNIA · Lenny Kravitz | 114373 | ON MY KNEES · The 411 | 113925 |
| POPULAR · Darren Hayes | 114328 | DAVID · GusGus | 114280 | RIDE WIT U · Joe | 113786 |
| LOLA'S THEME · Shapeshifters | 114192 | EVERYTIME · Britney Spears # | 114022 | SATELLITE OF LOVE · Lou Reed | 114340 |
| ALL DAY LONG I DREAM.. · JC Chasez | 114171 | F**KEN AWESOME · Spiderbait | 114268 | SEE IT IN A BOY'S EYES · Jamelia # | 113983 |
| BAD ASS STRIPPA · Jentina | 114196 | YOU'RE FIT BUT DON'T YOU .. · The Streets | 113880 | SEE YOU AT THE SHOW · Nickelback | 114364 |
| BAIL ME OUT · Pete Murray | 114174 | FLAWLESS · George Michael | 114197 | SHE WILL BE LOVED · Maroon 5 | 114236 |
| BLACK BETTY · Spiderbait | 113761 | FLOAT ON · Modest Mouse | 114275 | SPARE ME THE DETAILS · The Offspring | 114247 |
| BREAKING THE HABIT · Linkin Park | 113955 | I LIKE IT · Narcotic ThrusT | 113844 | SUNSHINE · Twista | 114310 |
| BROKEN · Seether and Amy Lee | 114349 | LIKE A RIVER · Kasey Chambers | 114258 | WOO HOO · The 5 6 7 8's | 114166 |
| BURN · Usher # | 113800 | MS VANITY · Rob Mills | 114209 | YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE · Maria Mena | 114140 |

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BREATHE EASY · Blue 113599
GET THE MUSIC ON · Sophie Monk 112754
MANDY · Westlife 113228
BABY I LOVE YOU · Jennifer Lopez 113353
TURN ME ON · Kevin Lyttle 113100
MAD WORLD · .. Gary JULES 113303
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| HOW COME · D12 | 114169 |
| PUSH UP · Freestylers | 114152 |
| FOUR TO THE FLOOR · Starsailor | 113568 |
| LEARN TO FLY · Shannon Noll | 114248 |
| PERFECT · Simple Plan | 113647 |
| TRICK ME · Kelis | 113804 |
| I DON'T WANT TO.. · Mario Winans# | 113805 |
| TIPSY · J-Kwon | 113648 |
| SICK AND TIRED · Anastacia | 114205 |
| F.U.R.B · Frankee | 113917 |
| ROSES · Outkast# | 113808 |
| MY HAPPY ENDING · Avril Lavigne | 114136 |

### INDIE

| | |
|---|---|
| FOOLS GOLD · stone roses | 111230 |
| FOUR TO THE FLOOR · starsailor | 113568 |
| BITTER SWEET SYMPHONY · the verve# | 111292 |
| LAURA · scissor sisters | 114017 |
| SEVEN NATION ARMY · the white stripes | 112604 |
| SOMEWHERE ONLY WE KNOW · keane | 113619 |
| WONDERWALL · oasis# | 111372 |
| STARCROSSED · ash | 114249 |

### HIP HOP

| | |
|---|---|
| ROSES · outkast # | 113808 |
| MY BAND · d12.# | 113795 |
| LETS GET IT STARTED · blk eyed peas | 113232 |
| SHE WANTS TO MOVE · n.e.r.d | 113539 |
| WHERE IS THE LOVE · blk eyed peas # | 112890 |
| HEY YA · outkast # | 113176 |
| TRICK ME · kelis | 113804 |
| INTO YOU · fabolous | 112916 |
| SHORTY DOOWOP · baby bash | 114323 |
| GANGSTERS PARADISE · coolio # | 111128 |
| THROUGH DA WIRE · kanye west | 113622 |
| P.I.M.P · 50 cent # | 112599 |

### ESSENTIAL

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|---|---|
| SATISFACTION · benny benassi # | 112751 |
| IN DA CLUB · 50 cent# | 112440 |
| HEAVEN · dj sammy# | 112229 |
| THE LOGICAL SONG · scooter# | 111965 |
| DILEMMA · nelly feat. kelly rowland# | 112221 |
| CRAZY IN LOVE · beyonce knowles# | 112707 |
| LOSE YOURSELF · emmem# | 112289 |
| BECAUSE I GOT HIGH · afroman# | 111454 |
| CASTLES IN THE SKY · ian van dahl# | 111270 |
| YOU'RE A SUPERSTAR · love inc | 112329 |
| SMOOTH CRIMINAL · alien ant farm# | 111377 |
| A LITTLE LESS CONVE.. · elvis vs jxl# | 111957 |
| CAN'T GET YOU OUT.. · kylie minogue# | 111388 |

### FOOTBALL

| | |
|---|---|
| CARLTON BLUES · club song | 114290 |
| ST KILDA SAINTS · club song | 114308 |
| WEST COAST EAGLES · club song | 114311 |
| ESSENDON BOMBERS · club song | 114291 |
| ADELAIDE CROWS · club song | 114284 |
| RICHMOND TIGERS · club song | 114295 |

### R&B

| | |
|---|---|
| BURN · usher# | 113800 |
| POP THAT BOOTY · marques houston | 114343 |
| I DON'T WANT TO KNOW · mario winans# | 113805 |
| F*** IT I DON'T WANT _ · eamon# | 113519 |
| BABY BOY · beyonce knowles ft sean paul# | 112933 |
| F.U.R.B · frankee | 113917 |
| HOTEL · cassidy feat r kelly | 113514 |
| YEAH · usher feat ludacris & lil jon# | 113546 |
| DIP IT LOW · christina milian | 113802 |
| THANK YOU · jamelia# | 113455 |
| MOVE YA BODY · nina sky feat jabba | 114218 |
| NAUGHTY GIRL · beyonce knowles _# | 113252 |
| IGNITION · r kelly# | 112588 |
| NO DIGGITY · blackstreet# | 111211 |
| BREATHE · blu cantrell feat. sean paul# | 112521 |
| I BELIEVE I CAN FLY · r kelly# | 113060 |
| BOUNCE · sarah connor | 114025 |
| TOO HOT TO HANDLE · f.y.a | 114244 |

### ROCK

| | |
|---|---|
| SWEET CHILD O MINE · guns n roses# | 111258 |
| IN THE SHADOWS · the rasmus# | 113081 |
| BLACK BETTY · spiderbait | 113761 |
| DON'T HURT YOURSELF · marillion | 114341 |
| BROKEN · seether and amy lee | 114348 |
| BAT OUT OF HELL · meat loaf# | 111286 |
| NOVEMBER RAIN · guns n roses# | 112596 |
| THIS LOVE · maroon 5# | 113842 |
| ENTER SANDMAN · metallica# | 111371 |
| LIVING ON A PRAYER · bon jovi# | 111376 |

### DANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| COME WITH ME · special d | 113678 |
| IT'S ALL VAIN · magnolia | 114362 |
| FLY ON THE WINGS OF LOVE · xtm | 112705 |
| TAKE ME TO THE CLOUDS .. · lmc vs u2 | 113456 |

### REGGAE

| | |
|---|---|
| TURN ME ON · kevin lyttle # | 113100 |
| YOUR EYES · rikrok feat shaggy | 114348 |
| I'M STILL IN LOVE · sean paul ft sasha# | 113410 |
| DUDE · beenie man feat ms thing | 113702 |
| GET BUSY · sean paul# | 112634 |
| LAST DROP · kevin lyttle | 113914 |
| GHOST TOWN · the specials | 113941 |

### URBAN

| | |
|---|---|
| YOU'RE FIT BUT DON'T .. · the streets | 113880 |
| JUS A RASCAL · dizzee rascal | 113220 |
| FIX UP LOOK SHARP · dizzee rascal | 112937 |
| I LUV YOU · dizzee rascal | 112826 |
| BABY BOY · big brovaz | 112859 |
| ON MY KNEES · the 411 | 113925 |
| HEARTLESS THEME · heartless crew | 111942 |

### THEMES

| | |
|---|---|
| MCLEODS DAUGHTERS · title music | 112653 |
| HOME AND AWAY · home and away | 111343 |
| STINGERS · main title music | 112654 |
| THE SECRET LIFE OF US · motor ace | 112639 |
| BLUEHEELERS · main title music | 112648 |
| NEIGHBOURS · theme | 112178 |
| ALWAYS GREENER · title music | 112986 |
| WHITE COLLAR BLUE · main title music | 112655 |
| MISSION IMPOSSIBLE | 111121 |
| ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES | 111369 |
| BAD BOYS · inner circle | 114319 |
| FRIENDS · I'LL BE THERE · the rembrandts# | 111152 |
| THE SIMPSONS · the simpsons | 111132 |
| BIG BROTHER · big brother | 111342 |
| DIRTY DANCING · title music | 111249 |
| ROCKY · jogging theme | 112491 |
| PHOENIX NIGHTS · title music | 112364 |
| EXORCIST · exorcist | 111871 |
| AXEL F · beverley hills cop | 111601 |
| THE A TEAM · the a team | 111115 |
| KNIGHT RIDER · knight rider | 111127 |
| GOOD BAD AND THE UGLY | 111181 |
| THE OFFICE · title music | 112363 |
| MUPPETS · muppets | 111134 |
| BENNY HILL · benny hill | 111139 |
| THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO · busted | 114239 |
| HALLOWEEN H20 · halloween h20 | 111858 |
| SEX AND THE CITY · theme | 111673 |
| PINK PANTHER · pink panther | 111133 |
| TOP GUN · top gun | 111860 |
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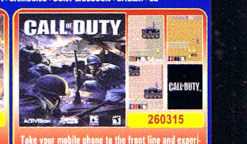


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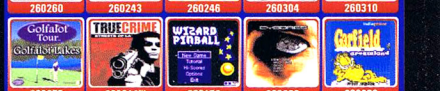

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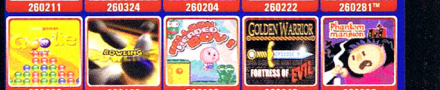


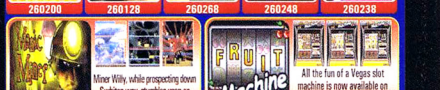


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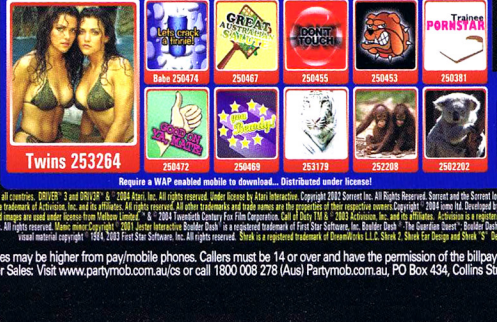


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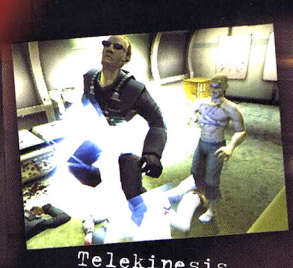
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