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PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

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> BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2007 > EVERYBODY'S TENNIS > MGS: PORTABLE OPS
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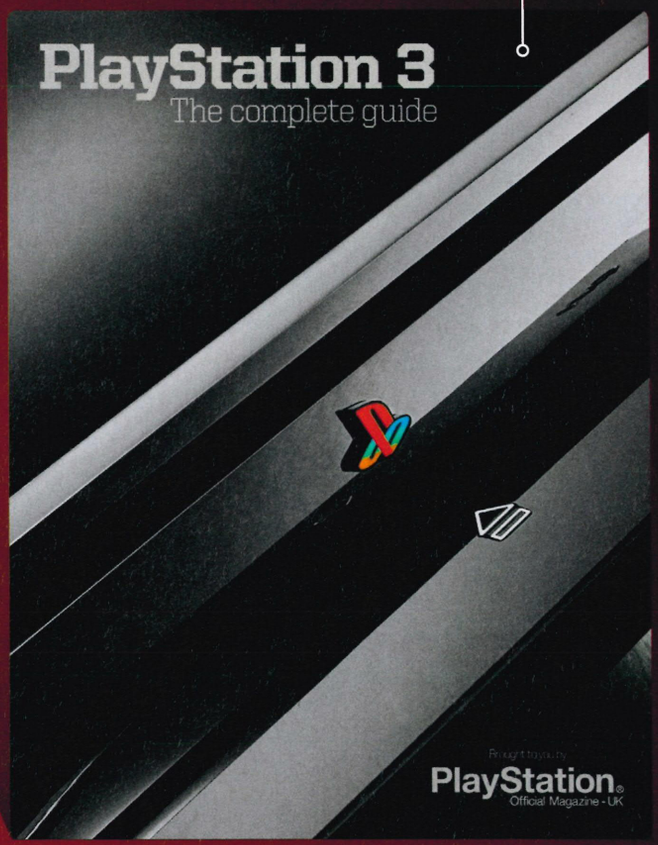

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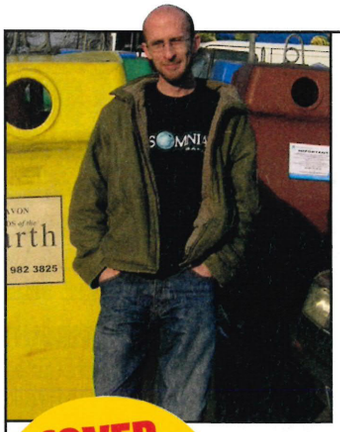
*We've got *God Of War II* on the cover, so in typically tenuous fashion we asked the OPS2 team what they'd like to be god of...



GET UR GREEK ON

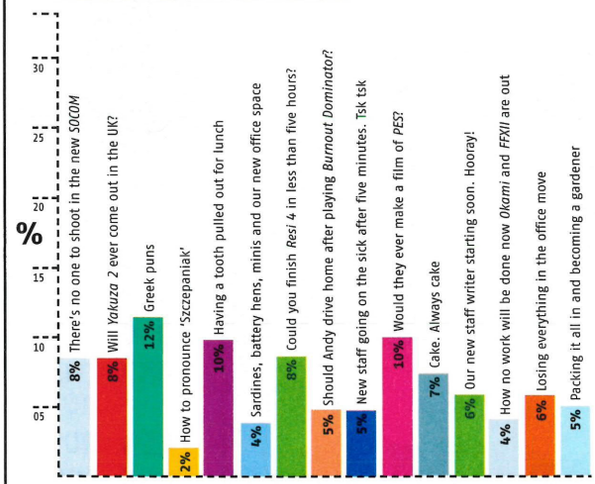
Hiya. I was going to introduce this month's mag by telling you all about how I had to have one of my wisdom teeth out, just to conjure up a bit of sympathy, but that would be insufferably dull. So lets talk about PS2 instead. What a year it's turning out to be for the console, and it's still only March. We've had one of the finest adventures of all time in *Okami*. We've had one of the finest RPGs of all time in *Final Fantasy XII*. And now we've got *God Of War II* and *Burnout Dominator*, two awesome games and shining examples of their respective genres. Naturally we've busted our balls to bring you the exclusive reviews of both titles: you'll find Kratos going beserk from p82 onwards, while *Dominator* slams into gear on p96. With the above in mind, the way I see it, PS2 already owns 2007. Sure, I'm a *little* bit biased in favour of the world's finest console, but can you show me another machine that's had four games of such outstanding quality released this year? I bet you can't (and saying that the graphics are better on said machine doesn't count). Speaking of other machines, you're probably already aware that PS3 will launch in the UK on 23 March at a price of £425 for the console and £50 a pop for the games. We've made you a handy guide to the games that will be out on launch day (p16), and also suggested some alternative – and in many cases, superior – PS2 titles. Now then, about that tooth...

COVER COMPO!
The first person to write or email saying where the quote on the spine of this issue comes from wins a game and t-shirt

Nick

NICK ELLIS,
Editor

WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT



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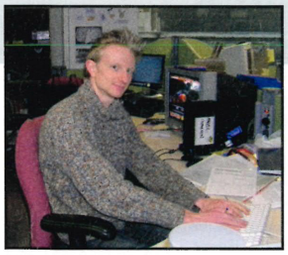
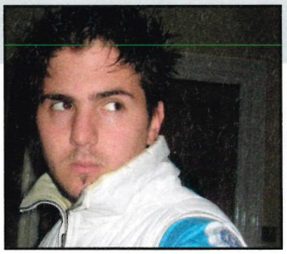


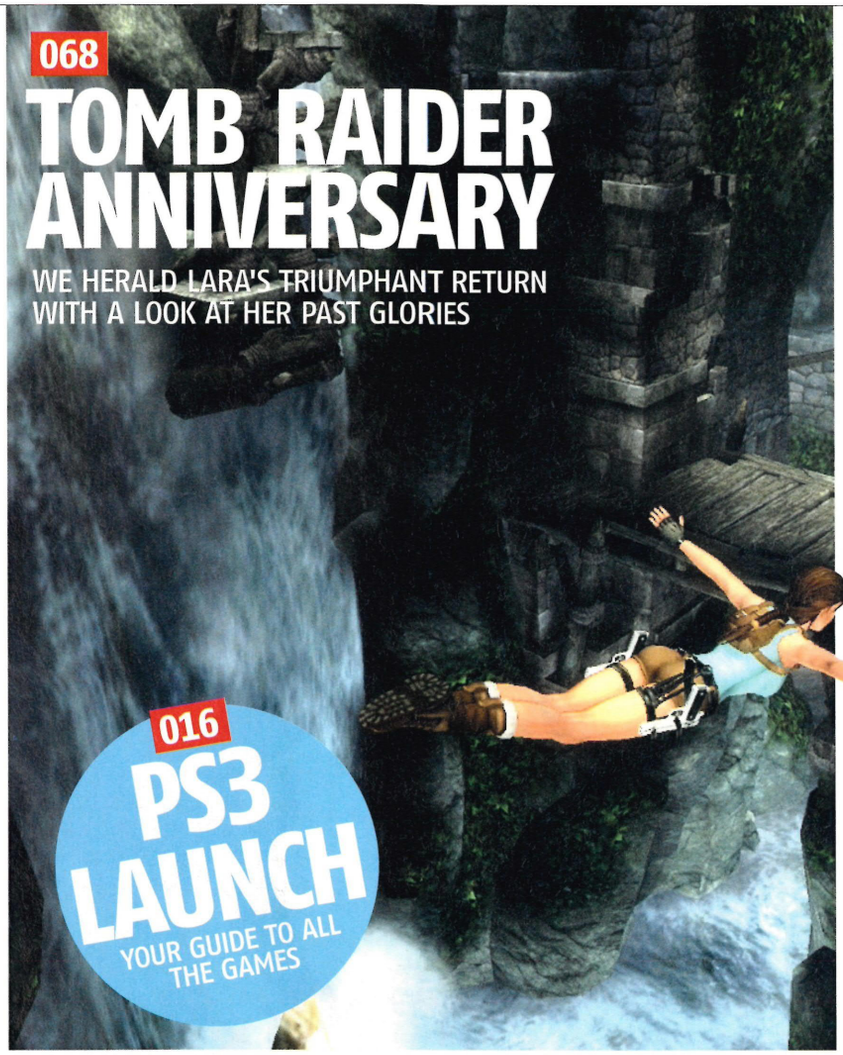
Andy Hartup
Writer, speed gaming feature (p120)
Just when we thought we'd broken him, Andy weighed in with another Herculean effort for this issue, spurred on by the facts that a) a new staff writer is starting next month and b) we threatened to cut off his spikey fringe if he moved from his desk.

Mark Mitchell
Art Editor
Say hello to the new man in charge of all things design. Well, the man in charge of all the crayons. Well, the man in charge of the only crayon. We call him the Grey Falcon, you can call him anything you like. Mark's favourite things are working late and being 40.



John Strike
Designer
Incredibly, we've got another new member of staff, an assistant for Mark. We gave John the job because his name made him sound like some kind of action hero but he failed utterly to live up to his billing, spending the entirety of his third week at home with flu.

Steve Bailey
Writer, *God Of War II* (p82)
Steve bit Nick's hand off when he was asked if he wanted to do the review of *GOW II*. Which was a little unfair, seeing as it was Andy who asked Steve, not Nick. Still, we'll forgive him because he's finished the game to bring you the definitive verdict.



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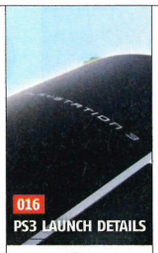

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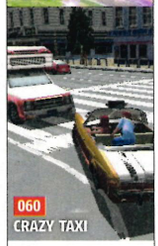

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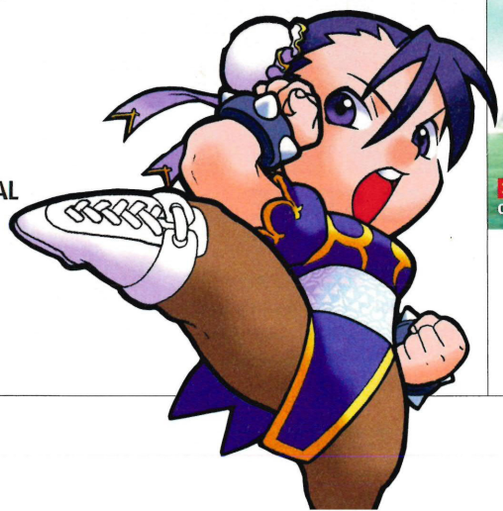

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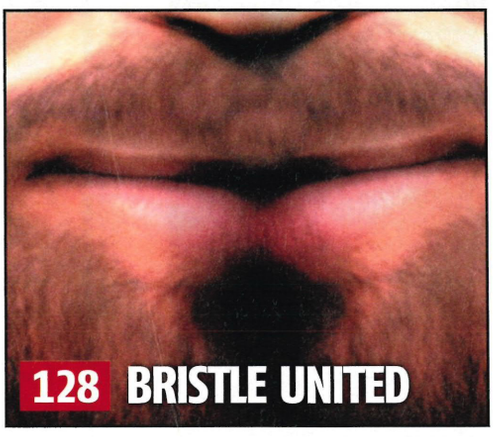

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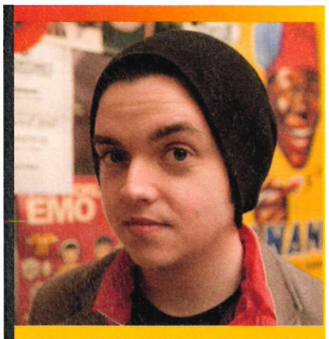
PLAY GAMES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST DEMOS!



What with the polar regions melting and all that, you'll be glad to know that here at *OPS2* we eco-warriors are saving the human race from a globally warmed fate.

How so? Well, we've loaded this month's disc with games featuring some of the most environmentally destructive vehicles in the world, hence weakening your urge to pilot them yourself in real life.

Pump missiles into unfriendly skies in the thrilling *Heatseeker*, release your inner petrol-head with *Juiced* and aggro the fuzz in *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2*. We've even included a spot of *Dancing Stage Fusion* so you can generate your own energy. *OPS2*: saving the planet, one gamer at a time.

Mike

Mike Sterry,
Staff writer in waiting

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY WON'T MY DISC WORK?

To be honest, we're not sure. But seriously, if your DVD appears not to be loading properly, first try resetting the console and loading the disc again. If that fails, we'll gladly replace it for you. Simply mail the faulty disc (no need to send the box) to *OPS2* Magazine, Disc Returns, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. If you have any further queries, email us at ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk

HOW DO I GET *MY* GAME SAVE ON THE DISC?

So you think you're a gaming legend? Then prove it to us by sending in your finished game saves for the disc. Each one we use will win its owner a free game! To enter, pop your memory card into an envelope and send it by Recorded Delivery to: 'Yes, I'm A Legend', Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, 30, Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Please include an S.A.E. *OPS2* cannot be held responsible for memory cards lost in the post.*

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DISC CHALLENGE

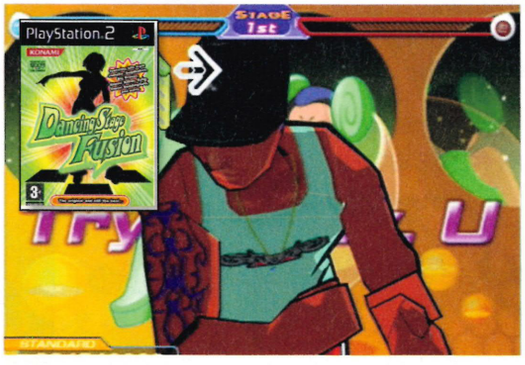
Win yourself a copy of *Heatseeker*

Not only have we bagged the first review and demo of *Heatseeker*, we've squeezed Codemasters that little bit harder to milk them for five copies of the game to give away! All you have to do to be in with a chance is send in a digital photo of you wrecking up the skies in that shiny F-22 of yours. That's right! No impossible times to beat. No massive scores to rack up – just great pics of this explosive flight game in action. We'll dish out the goods to the five entries that demonstrate the most carnage, so make sure you snap those massive explosions, kill counts and missiles streaking across the screen. Attach an MMS picture then text **CHALLENGEDISC (then a space)** followed by your name and where you live to **07738 647 177.**

The five pictures that *OPS2* judges to have the most style will each win a copy of *Heatseeker*. Texts charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 1 March 2007 to 28 March 2007. We will not advise non-winners of the result.**

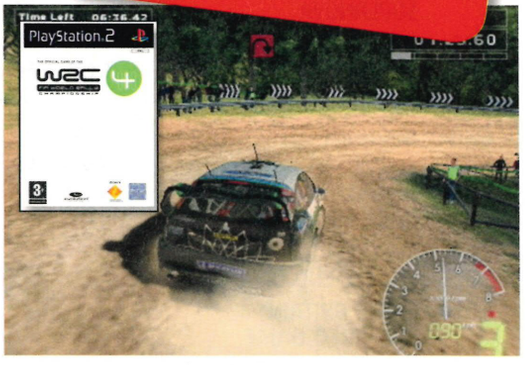
01 HEATSEEKER

What you get: Full-blown aerial war, baby! Undertake a frantic air and sea battle that's heavy on old school, white-knuckle, arcade carnage. Your mission: defend a luckless spy plane from an enemy onslaught. Your other mission: a certain luckless spy plane accidentally gave away the location of your home fleet – and they need you to defend them...



02 DANCING STAGE FUSION

What you get: Two characters, three cheesy house tracks, and a difficultly level that'll twist your limbs into a Manhattan pretzel. Close the blinds, break out the dance mat and start racking up the 'Perfects!'. Don't worry, we won't tell anybody.



03 WORLD RALLY CHALLENGE 4

What you get: A Ford Focus, a Subaru Impreza, and the services of Francois Duval and Petter Solberg to drive them, respectively. Choose to kick up dirt in France or Italy, just make sure you don't damage your gearbox in the first 20 seconds like we did.

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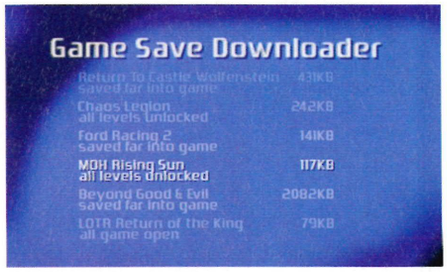
And there's more...

This month's exclusive extra DVD content

Downloader

As if all that meaty demo goodness wasn't nourishing enough, we've also included dessert: the Downloader section. It's 100% complete save-files for top titles such as *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*, *Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun* and *Silent Hill 3* plus an exclusive *TimeSplitters 2* map from Free Radical honcho David Doak himself.

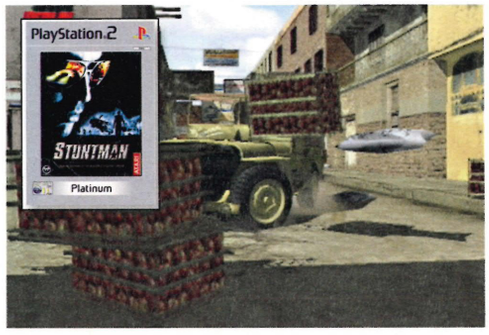


84 JUICED

What you get: With *Juiced 2* nearly ready to scream into your driveway (hands-on feature next issue!), here's another chance to play the original version of this super-speedy driving game. Earn respect and a crumpled wad of notes as you take on the city's toughest speed freaks!

85 STUNTMAN

What you get: The opportunity to live out your masochistic stuntman fantasies from the comfort of your own living room, without actually risking so much as a sprained ankle (although your thumbs might ache if you play it too much). Drive your way through the filming of *The Scarab of Lost Souls* in this explosive demo.



86 FORMULA ONE 2004

What you get: A smorgasbord of teams, drivers and both the Melbourne or San Marino Grand Prix circuits to tear around. Careful on the chicanes and you might just make it to the pit-lane.

87 FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE

What you get: Take on eight other Ferrari F355 F1s as you spin around the Autodromo Nazionale di Monza in this choice cut from the most joint-achingly realistic Ferrari sim around. And when they say 'challenge', they mean a real challenge...

88 NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

What you get: Speed through the Great Forest without getting caught by the rozzers. If you are unfortunate enough to get collared, be sure to admire the arresting officer's doughnut-gut. Glorious.

89 THE SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

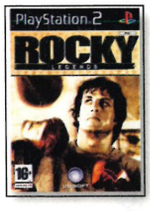
What you get: Another chance to play the best *Simpsons* game in existence. If Matt Groening had married Rockstar, this is what their twisted lovechild would undoubtedly resemble. Think *Grand Theft Auto*, only everybody's yellow and you can't murder anyone.

18 KILL.SWITCH

What you get: Maximum run'n'gun destruction. Be sure to use cover to regain your health, or you'll be visiting the Game Over screen faster than you can say: "With its Middle Eastern setting, this game is highly topical."

11 ROCKY LEGENDS

What you get:



A sprightly looking Sly Stallone in banana-yellow boxing trucks and the chance to face off against Clubber Lang from *Rocky III*. Really, how many other mags give you the chance to pound in Mr T's face repeatedly? We're too good to you, we are.

12 ZONE OF THE ENDERS

What you get: A taste of *Zone of the Enders: the Second Runner*. As demos go, this is an absolute epic. They tried to kill your friends; they've kidnapped you aboard their galactic cruiser – now it's time to make them pay. Giant robot-style.

postal

THIS MONTH: YOU BASH BORIS, PARK TRACTORS AND SELL YOUR SIBLINGS' STUFF...

Write: Postal, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, *Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Email: ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk*

WIN THIS!
This month, any letters published here will receive a copy of *Ghost Rider* courtesy of ShopTo.com. The Star Letter also wins *Digital Devil Saga 2*, *Okami* and *Test Drive Unlimited*. Only main Postal letters receive games. Letters will be edited for length and clarity.

SHOPTO.COM
SHOP LATE · PLAY TOMORROW

star letter

A LOAD OF OLD BORIS

Maybe it's my 'rotted brain' talking but Boris Johnson is spouting gibberish. First off, I (a 14-year-old schoolboy) must be better at English than Boris, because a basic rule is to give evidence when putting forward an argument, which he seemed to do very little of and should especially know, being an MP.

Secondly, I do not start 'the sobbing and the shrieking and the horrible pleading' when my parents tell me to come off my PS2. I merely ask for time to save the game so that I don't end up back where I started.

On the point of 'These machines teach them nothing', you could say the same for some of the arts for which this man was once shadow minister.

Playing videogames is a form of leisure, just like other forms of media. People can get addicted to anything; you get chocaholics, shopaholics and even workaholics. Isn't even being stuck in a good book a form of addiction in a way?

As for the games making it more difficult to 'persuade boys to read books', my bedroom is stuffed with books. Not to gloat, but I read the entire Philip Pullman *His Dark Materials* trilogy (about 1285 pages of A5) in about a week. How could I have done this if my PS2 gaming gives me a lack of literacy?
Alexander Rowley, Essex

Sorry, we couldn't read this letter: we've played so much PS2 our literacy levels have shrunk to zero. But we reckon your well-reasoned arguments deserve the prize. More Boris backlash below...

PUT YOUR JOHNSON AWAY

Boris Johnson [the MP who wrote a tirade about videogames and young, male gamers on his website] doesn't understand the joys of ripping up tarmac and smashing up cars into pieces on an online game of *Burnout Revenge*, or the explosive, detailed action of *Black*. The PS2 doesn't waste peoples lives, it enlightens them. When I get home from school all I want is an online deathmatch on *Timesplitters Future Perfect*. Boris is an idiot. End of.
Tom H, Monmouth

What a stupid moron that Boris Johnson is. He's obviously never played a videogame in his life. He probably spends all his time murdering his hair with peroxide. There are a lot of games that help people learn, such as *Buzz!* or *Brain Training* for the DS. There are also puzzle games that involve no violence and stimulate the brain: *Crush*, *Kuri Kuri Mix*, *Puyo Pop Fever*, *Chessmaster*...

And what about adult games such as *Resident Evil*? I'd like to see Boris take on a horde of plague-infested, angry Spaniards because that obviously needs no brains.
Chris Gallagher, Cheshire
In fairness, we should point out that Boris is a natural blonde, but we're with you on the Spaniards thing.

Boris Johnson clearly has no idea what he's on about. Here's the proof: I had to do an imaginative writing essay for English a while back and had no idea what to write, until I played *Resident Evil 4*. I decided to write out the plot, including all boss battles, and got an A*. Games teach us nothing? The only brainless person here is Boris, I'd say.
Grant Cadger, Bedfordshire

I hate it when people stereotype teenagers like that. I am a 17-year-old gamer, and I get great marks in all my college assignments (sorry if that sounds like I'm bragging).
Alex Harrod, email

PARENTS! STOP BEING USELESS!

I think a course should be created for useless parents. They need to understand that we live to drool over next-gen graphics and that we dream about ripping open that PS3 box, plugging it in to a cinema-sized TV and not seeing sunlight for at least a month. But all my parents do is tell me to grow up when I tell them my plans to empty my bank account for a sleek, shiny PS3. Do all teenagers feel this way?
Mark, N.Ireland
PS Great mag, it keeps me sane when my gran comes to visit.

Our parents used to tell us the exact same thing when we were teenagers, and now we make a living out of games. So what does that tell you?

PSP: DOESN'T LIKE BEER

Do you know where I can get my PSP fixed? My brother took it without me knowing and went over to his mate's and spilt beer on it, now it won't work. It comes on and then switches itself off.

I have money to pay for the repairs because I sold my brother's iPod on eBay for £140

CUT 'N' PASTE

THE EDITED HIGHLIGHTS SPILLED FROM SOME VERY STRANGE MINDS

Luke Thompson, Berkshire
I just realised that Jigsaw (the main bad guy from *Saw II*) looks an awful lot like Metrac from *Killzone Liberation*.

Thomas Bayer, Somerset
Here is a picture of all my games. By the way I think film companies should make more films based on games. I'd like to see a movie about *Metal Gear Solid*.

Michael Mair, West Lothian
Some songs I'd like to see in *Guitar Hero III* would be The Eagles' 'Hotel California', Jimi Hendrix's 'Red House' and ACDC's 'Back in Black'.

James
Moogles keep saying Kupo because they're addicted to Kupo nuts. So now you know. Bloody addicts.

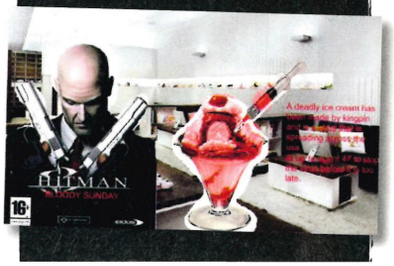
Liam Biggs, Chesterfield
I completely disagree with Momo Ushido about OPS2#80. The review section in that issue has loads of great games!

Little L
You guys are game gods! Thank the Lord for *Okami*, it rocks.

DISTRESSING DELIVERY

WHAT WE WERE REALLY TROUBLED TO FIND IN OUR SACK THIS MONTH

One Richard Dodds sent us this email: 'here is a mock up of the next hitman game hope u like it lol'. Well, Richard, no, we don't like it at all. We're not sure which is more disturbing: the thought of yummy Knickerbocker Glories being sullied with body fluids or the terrible 'Sunday/sundae' pun. Waitress!



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but he doesn't know, so if you print this I guess I gotta hide the mag.

Oh and by the way, how did *God Of War* not get in the top 50 games? And also *Guitar Hero* was definitely worthy of a top 5 spot.

Drew Thorman, Essex

You sold your brother's iPod on eBay?! Respect!* God Of War *didn't get into our Top 50 Games of 2006 because it was released in 2005. Disrespect.

LEGOD OF WAR

I was playing *God of War* and decided to make a Lego model of it. Impressed?

Greg Kelly, Surrey

MACH OFF

In the preview for *MACH* (OPS2#82) you said: "This is a first: a super-jet flight sim that's also a racing game".Sounds like a good idea, so why hasn't it been done before? Oh it has. I remember a PS1 game called *N Gen Racing*. You bought jet fighters, did them up with parts and weapons and then raced them.

And about *MACH*'s plot. What's the plot of *Burnout* again? Exactly.

Brian Cook, Gosport

Apologies. The offending writer has been ejected at 20,000 feet. Without a 'chute.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Q Is *Superman Returns* really that bad?
Jack Walsh, Burnley
A Yes

Q Will RedOctane still be making *Guitar Hero* games for PS2?
Seán McArdle, Louth, Ireland
A No, Neversoft will

Q Settle a bet, is the ◎ button orange or red?
David, Liverpool
A Red

READER FACE OFF

THINK OF IT LIKE A FIGHT BUT WITH INK SPILT INSTEAD OF BLOOD. THIS MONTH: WHICH *FINAL FANTASY* GAME IS BEST?

EIGHT IS GREAT

Why exactly is *FFVII* considered to be Squaresoft's crowning achievement? In my opinion *FFVIII* was the best in the series, yet we get sequels and spin-offs for the seventh version.

Sure, it was a fantastic game but I think it gets special treatment for being the first PlayStation version of the series.

If you think about it intelligently, it's clear that *FFVIII* was the more revolutionary and overall better game. I propose starting a petition that we could send to Squaresoft, telling them to release a sequel to *FFVIII*.

Graeme Stevenson, Belfast

VS

SEVENTH HEAVEN

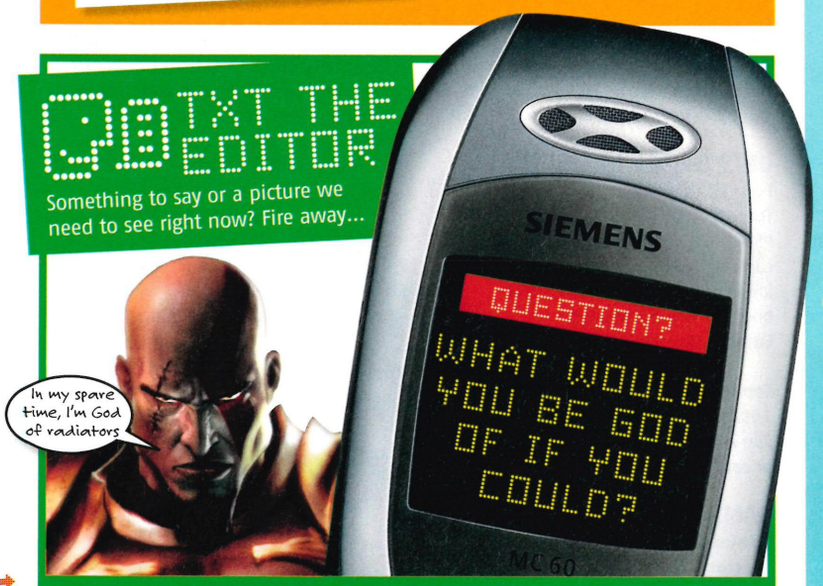
Just finished *Final Fantasy XII*, and in my opinion it's the first good game in the series since *FFVII*. Okay, the story isn't the best, but it has the first truly intuitive battle system since VII. After *VIII*'s Junction System nightmare and *X*'s spiderweb of doom, *FFXII* has been an 80-hour breath of fresh air. And thanks for your game guide, it was really helpful.

Katy Mitchell, Sheffield

IN ALL HONESTY, WE'RE NOT SO KEEN ON *VIII* EITHER. BUT THE NEW *FF* IS DEFINITELY THE BEST ONE. KATY WINS!

TXT THE EDITOR

Something to say or a picture we need to see right now? Fire away...



TXT 87103 OR SEND YOUR PICS TO 07738 647 177

Be sure to text 'TXTNICK', then a space, then your message or picture

ILL SELL YOU MY SON FOR A PS3 I KNOW HE LOOKS FUNNY BUT HE CAN MAKE CHOC MILKSHAKES ON DEMAND

FOR A PS3 I WOULD CUT OFF MY CODS, AND BOIL THEM IN THE KETTLE THEN MAKE THEM IN TO PAIR OF PAT BUTCHER EARINGS FOR YOU! M JAMES

U GUYS SUCK. U MADE ME WANT ALL 1388 GAMES IN YOUR DIRECTORY TIMMY DUDE!!! I SWEAR IN 50 YRS THERE WILL B FINAL FANTASY 100 OR SUMTHIN ALL I CAN SAY IS KEEP EM COMING

IN THE TIME IT TAKES U TO READ THIS TXT A SMALL ARMY OF JELLY BABIES WILL HAVE STOLLEN ALL UR SOX GREM

BEEN PLAYING KILLZONE THIS WEEKEND. IS IT JUST ME OR IS LUGER A MASSIVE PAIN IN THE BUM? STITCH

WHY ALL THE FUSS OVER CANIS CANEM EDIT? MOST GAMES ARE BASED ON VIOLENCE AND MURDER

CAN U RESTART THE STICKERS WITH THE MAGS. I STICK THEM ON MY PS2 BUT THERE R SPACES :< TNX GUYS! GREG

By texting the editor you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. If you do not want to receive this information, please text the word NO at the end of your message. Texts will be charged at 25p plus standard network tariff rate. Please ask permission from whoever pays the bill. Maximum letter characters per text is 160

score bores

Are you disrespecting us?

"*Okami*-10/10? What planet are u guys living on? These graphics make Mr.Benn look gen! Shame on u,poor desperate souls!"
H Mason, text

"*Okami* was gr8.I have never seen anything like it in fact can it have 11/10"
Anon (don't be shy!) text

"I'm glad they rescored *Killzone*. It never deserved 9 in the first place"
TriggerhappyTel, playstation.co.uk forums

"I think *Killzone* deserves an 8"
oFrey, playstation.co.uk forums

"I agree with OPS2 that *Black* is a lot better than *Killzone* but even so, *Black* isn't a 10/10 (they gave *Black* a 10 right?) For me *Black* is an 8, *Killzone* would be a 6 maybe pushing a 7"
50p, playstation.co.uk forums

letters

LESSON IS MORE

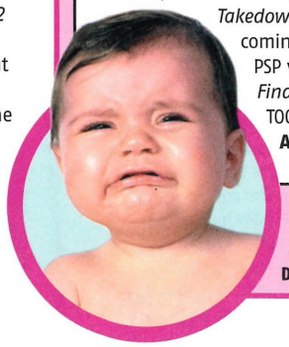
There have been a few letters recently about a gaming school and I've thought of some more lessons for it:
History: *Hogs of War*, *Age of Empires*
Business studies: *Grand Theft Auto* (learning how to deal with wiseguys is an integral part of successful business)
Food tech: the cooking parts on *Sims 2*
Sex ed: *Fahrenheit*
Care of animals (yes, this is a subject at my school): *Monster Hunter*
Biology: *Assassin's Creed* (mainly for the whole gene memory thing)
Media studies: *Ico*
Will Seal, Bromsgrove

Art: Okami. *Spanish:* Resi 4. *And so on.*

PERFECT 10

Here are my top 10 gaming moments:
1. Throwing mines on a friend in *Timesplitters Future Perfect* and watching them explode.
2. Traversing a massive pit of traps in *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones.*
3. In *Burnout Revenge*, getting more than 40 takedowns in road rage.
4. Giving wedgies to police in *Canis Canem Edit.*
5. Taking down my first colossus in *Shadow of the Colossus.*
6. Freefalling for four minutes in *Just Cause.*
7. Killing the hydra in *God of War.*
8. Taking down two people with the same speed kill in *POP:Two Thrones.*
9. Winning the master league in *Pro Evolution Soccer 6.*
10. Seeing the huge city you traversed at the end of *POP:Two Thrones.*
Greg Kelly, Surrey

FAT CRYING BABY



I'm finding it hard to juggle my busy work with the countless great games coming out every month. I mean I haven't even finished to 100% *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, *Soul Calibre III*, *Black*, *Resident Evil 4* and *Burnout Takedown*. Now there's a new *Burnout* game coming out, I'll simply have to buy the PSP version, and also being a fan of *Final Fantasy* games... IT'S JUST GETTING TOO MUCH!
A S Semana, email

GOT A GRIEVANCE BUT SECRETLY KNOW THAT NOBODY'S TO BLAME BUT YOU? FEEL LIKE WHINING ABOUT IT ANYWAY? BE CAREFUL, YOU COULD END UP IN OUR PRAM OF SHAME.

Step one: quit your job. Step two: quit whining. You're telling us you're stressed out because you're having *too much* fun? Dang, there's no pleasing some people!

LEGO, I AM YOUR FATHER

After seeing some of the other Lego game creations (which, to be honest, weren't exceptional :P), here's my version of the Jedi Temple in *Star Wars Battlefront II*.
Chris, Bradford

Right, we've had enough of just looking at your game-inspired Lego creations. Why should you lot have all the fun? We're off to buy a giant box of the stuff. Next month's issue will be made entirely from plastic bricks...

ONLY GAMER IN THE VILLAGE

I am 12 years old and live in a village. There is nothing to do. I only have my PS1 to play on. I have lots of games but can't get very far on them. Do you know where I could get a cheat book for my PS1 please?
Edward Barnes, Berkshire

Somewhere in the 1990s. Otherwise, you could try eBay or car boot fairs.

GAME OVERSIGHT

Great work on the PS2 game directory (OPS2#82). I think you missed some games because I have one called *XG3 Extreme G Racing* which is probably related to *XGRA*, but what the hell.
Keep up the good work. Even with a staffing list shorter than that of Newcastle United's list of fit players, the standard of the mag has not dropped (even if the the tree article in OPS2#81 was a bit weird).
Jack, Somewhere in Scotland
PS Andy and Clive on *FIFA 07* can't tell the difference between kicking and headering. Give me McCoist or Shearer any day.

You can have them, mate. But thanks for the kind words anyway.

FOGG BANK

After reading your *Around the world in 80 Games* feature (OPS2#82), it made me think: "Which are better, games set in the real world or games set in fictional worlds?" Take, for instance, *Okami* and *Final Fantasy XII* as two recent examples. The whole idea of the world in *Okami* is a fictional one, although with Japanese concepts used. The world has no defining landmarks to say it's Japan.
Final Fantasy XII happens in a completely fictional place and also scored 10/10. *Shadow of the Colossus* you've given the title of best game of 2006. This game is set in a fictional place as well.
The reason I think games do better if they are set in fictional lands is that with these lands the game creators can put in it basically anything they want, such as really weird weaponry/items or odd characters.
I'm not saying that games set in the real world are in any way bad: I mean, I'm a fan of *God of War*, the *Metal Gear* series and the *Burnout* games. It just seems to me that the fantasy world games seem to get a better result.
Jack Kelly, Cheshire

Hmmm, an interesting argument Jack although we're not sure we'd class* God of War *as a 'real world' game...

SCRAPHEAP CHALLENGE

I'm setting you a challenge that requires skill and patiance because I want to see how I compare to the best gamers I know about and because I'm bored. Here's the challenge: In *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, link up as many tractors as you can behind the tow truck and park it in an open space.
It's more difficult than it sounds since the tiniest error can swing the tractors off a cliff or something. My record was five tractors. Check out the photo.
Mark Jenkins

You know what, Mark, there have been times when we've thought we were bored. But we've honestly never been bored enough to do this. There may come a time, but until then, you remain the unbeaten champion of* GTA *tractor parking. Congratulations!

GAMES FOR TAT!

If your other half got you a horrid piece of soppy kitsch for Valentine's Day, post it to us and we'll send you what you really want: a game.

WE WANT...
A token of undying love

YOU GET...
A soppiness-free copy of *Call of Duty 3*

Mark the package 'Games For Tat' and send to the address on p12 (include *your* address). The first one we receive gets the swag, any others will be returned.

LUCKY YOU!

So you texted, you emailed, you sent us a bulging sack of saucy postcards in a bid to win the PS2 goodies we offered in OPS2#81's Win Our Stuff competition. If you didn't win, hey, there's always next time, but if you did, we reckon you'll want to shout about it and show your mates. So we're printing a full list of competition winners, right here.

We'll be doing the same every month for all our compos from now on. To kick it off, here are all 54 of the lucky people who Won Our Stuff, so if your name is on the list: congratulations! A prize IS in the post and you've won bragging rights over family and friends for a whole month!

FIND OUT IF YOU'VE SCOOPED SOME SWAG IN ISSUE 81'S MASSIVE WIN OUR STUFF COMPO!

PS2 GOODIE BAGS
1. **Jack Kavanagh,** Woodford Green
2. **Leigh Fuller,** Baldock
3. **Nathan Hayes,** Hoxton
4. **James Evans,** Birmingham
5. **Jessica Cappleman,** Hull
6. **O Newman,** Blackpool
7. **Colm Hunt,** Fakenham
8. **Jake Rimmer,** Milton Keynes
9. **A Owen,** Carnarfon
10. **Nick Richards,** Exeter
11. **Miss J Brown,** Bournemouth
12. **Simon Norton,** Goddmanham
13. **Graeme Stevenson,** Belfast
14. **Josh Milne,** Ormiston
15. **Marti Ahiskal,** London
16. **R Goddard,** Beaconsfield
17. **O Newman,** Blackpool
18. **J Kerins,** Guernsey
19. **A Hay,** Blackburn
20. **John Oldham,** Henley-on-Thames
21. **L Hudson,** Margate
22. **Richard Harbottle,** Northallerton
23. **N Mundie,** Fraserburgh
24. **Waynn Heppenstall,** Hertford
25. **Ben Collard,** Westerham

PSP BUNDLE
1. **Allen Darling,** Ottershaw

ROCKSTAR BUNDLE
1. **Sean Whittle,** Torpoint, Cornwall

CRASH BUNDLE
1. **Linda Jones,** Hertford

OPS2 WWE COVERS
1. **Mr S Slevin,** Lancaster
2. **Paul Wheatley,** London
3. **Sean Griffiths,** Wrexham
4. **Sam Ward,** Doncaster

TRISH STANDEE
1. **Mark James,** Hayes End

RANDOM TAT BUNDLE
1. **S Muskett,** Bognor Regis

RETRO T-SHIRTS
1. **Darren Fairhurst,** Bradford
2. **Bradley Prothero,** Caddington
3. **Joel Ivory-Orum,** Sittingbourne
4. **Katherine Stocks,** Mexborough

ZOE ART BOOK
1. **Tom Wells,** Bradwell

RANDOM PROMO COPIES
1. **Chris Davis,** Coventry
2. **Chris Burns,** Wigtownshire
3. **Ian Moreland,** South Peterlee
4. **John Beck,** Chesterfield
5. **Baron Bracken,** Knaresborough
6. **William Roxby,** Broadstone
7. **G Hanby,** Dorchester
8. **Nathan Rose,** Leeds
9. **Nurtaza Rgbal,** Reading
10. **Caspar Ash,** Reading
11. **Kyle Morgan-Williams,** Ilford
12. **Steve Whittemore,** Alfreton
13. **Claire Woodiwiss,** Birmingham
14. **Jason Ling,** Kent
15. **Darren Rogers,** Maidstone

GIVE ME MORE

Fancy your chances at winning more prizes? Check out this month's sweet compos on pages 28 and 40!

CHALLENGE WINNERS

MANY BEAT OUR CHALLENGES, BUT FEW WON THE GOODIES...

GUITAR HERO II

We managed... a rabble-rousing 151,372 for Killing In The Name on *Guitar Hero II*

Ryan Harris from Woking scored a rockin' 472,372!

SINGSTAR LEGENDS

We managed... a modest score of 7320 for Sympathy For The Devil on *Singstar Legends*

Liz Sweet from Southampton clocked up a demonic 8500!

BUZZ SPORTS

We managed... 1500 points in the single player mode of *Buzz! Sports*

Michael Mackie from Huntly, Aberdeenshire amassed a jolly sporting 12,650!

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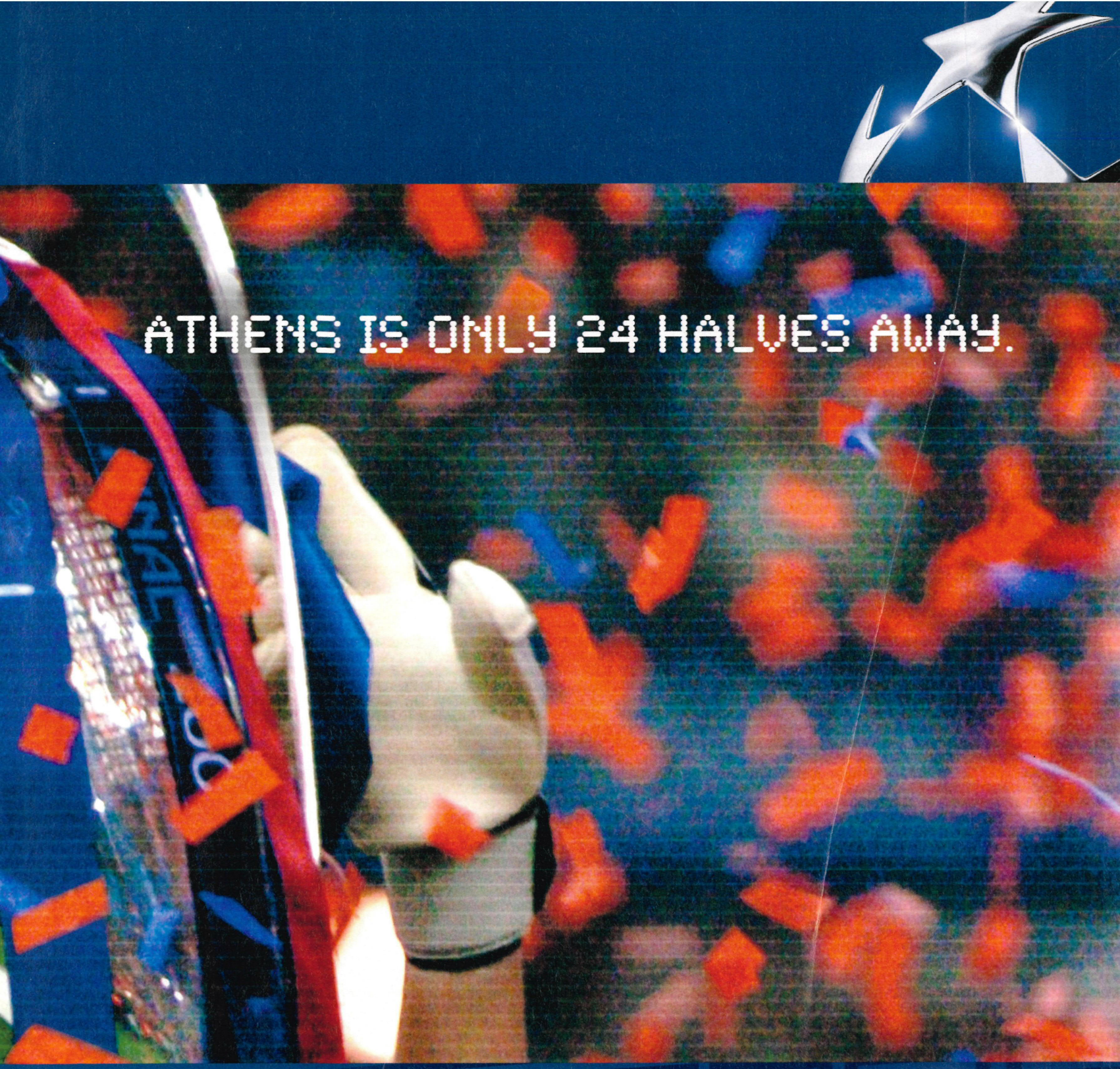

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SPY CONTRIBUTORS | ALEX COOKE, NICK ELLIS, DAVE HARRISON, ANDY HARTUP, IAN DEAN

PS3 CHEERS

THREE AT LAST

Sony finally confirms UK launch details for the **next generation of PlayStation**

On 23 March Sony is putting one million PlayStation 3s into shops in Europe, Africa, Australasia and the Middle East. UK gamers will be able to snap up the 60GB hard-drive version for £425 (assuming you're near enough to the front of the queue when the shop doors open). There will be 30 games on sale the same day.

Sceptics had been tipping the launch to slip further back into 2007 but Sony slapped the kibosh on that rumour by making a dramatic, all-encompassing announcement in late January that detailed everything there was to know about the UK launch.

Sadly, you won't have the option that the Americans and Japanese had of choosing between 20GB and 60GB versions, and if you want to run your console in high definition, you'll be forking out a further £18 on either an HDMI or Component AV cable. Oh, and not to mention the HDTV you'll need to play the games on to their full high-def potential. It all adds up to a fair whack.

Sony is still undecided about whether or not to release the 20GB 'diet PS3' in the UK, so we wouldn't advise holding out for that version even if it is more wallet-friendly. And anyway, why would you want less storage? By 23 March the PS3 Network will be up and running in the UK, offering *Tekken 5*, *Gran Turismo HD* and *GripShift* for download, and you'll need plenty of space to store those babies. Combine that with the trailers, casual games, extra features and all the other sweet stuff available from PS3's online shop and £425 will soon feel like a steal. Still reading? Good god, you could've started queuing by now!

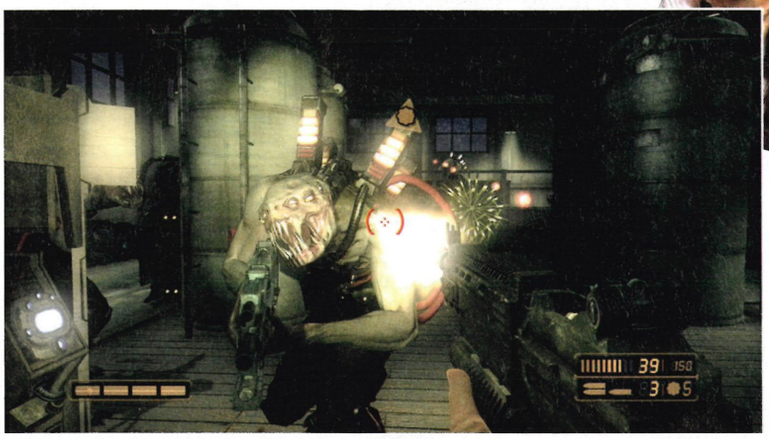
Over the next four pages we tell you what we think of all 30 PS3 launch titles. Plus, just in case you've decided to wait until the new console's price comes down or even that you can't be bothered with it altogether, we recommend some alternatives that you can play on your PS2 right now with no queuing in the rain and much less impact on your bank balance.

THE BIG THREE-OH

Your guide to **all 30 PS3 launch titles** – and the PS2 games you could play instead right now

RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

Bristol's in flames and London's been overrun by aliens. Think you've seen it all before? You're wrong. From the homing rounds of the Bullseye to the tunnelling Auger, the weapons are inventive, the English locations are familiar but ravaged and the packed battlefields are frantic. This is sci-fi that feels real.



AND ON PS2...

Black
As great as *Resistance*'s weapons are, *Black* is a love poem to guns. Fast, slick and technically, nearly equal to *Resistance*.
Our Score 10
Best Price: £9.99 (Amazon)

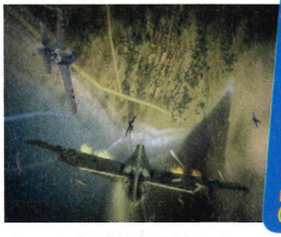
TimeSplitters 2
Fast, often very funny and breathlessly inventive.
Our Score: 10/10
Best Price: £7.99 (Amazon)

Area 51
Mildly derivative but technically probably the best FPS around.
Our Score: 9/10
Best Price: £6.99 (Amazon)

Killzone
Futuristic warfare given real weight, weaponry and a solid story.
Our Score: 9/10
Best Price: £6.99 (Amazon)

BLAZING ANGELS: SQUADRONS OF WWII

Dog-fighting japes as you pilot your Spitfire with the sixaxis. A seat-of-your pants shooter with extra planes and online multiplayer missions that are all welcome additions.



AND ON PS2...

Ace Combat: The Belkan War
Sci-fi weaponry blends with beautiful jets and genuinely ace AI rivals to form a flighter you won't want to shake.
Our Score: 8/10
Best Price: £19.99 (Amazon)

FORMULA 1 CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

Really shows off the graphical power of the PS3 with dramatic deluges, detailed backdrops and replays that could convince you that the race is straight from Silverstone, not via Sony.

AND ON PS2...

Formula One 06
Some of the names might now be behind the wrong wheels but with a great career mode and enough auto-aids to make it work as an arcade racer, this is the most fun you can have with this formula.
Our Score: 7/10
Best Price: £11.99 (Amazon)

F.E.A.R

Spooky, gory, slo-mo and heavily armed, *F.E.A.R* couldn't push more of our buttons without an electric button-pushing machine. It mixes shocks with shotgun shells, the paranormal with mind-control powers to make a stunning shooter that packs in both claustrophobia and carnage.

AND ON PS2...

Resident Evil 4
It's parasites, not the paranormal, that haunt you here, but there is something otherworldly in the way this *Resi* immaculately balances exploration, marksmanship and blind terror. This is perfection in ones and zeroes.
Our Score: 10/10
Best Price: £11.98 (DVD.co.uk)

VIRTUA TENNIS 3

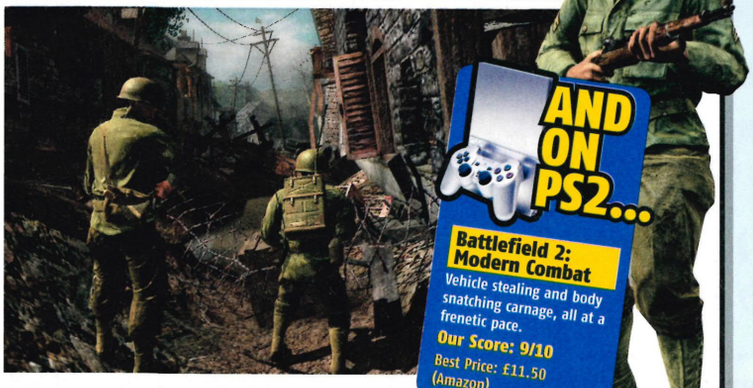
Running in incredible 1080p resolution, *Virtua 3* looks and plays like the most convincing tennis game ever. Happily, the arcadey edge that made previous versions so playable has been kept in the mini-games and challenges.

AND ON PS2...

Virtua Tennis 2
Edging out the slightly more arcadey *Smash Court Tennis 2* by finding the gap between realism and playability, *VT2*, despite its age, is easily one of the most addictive and enjoyable multiplayer games on the market.
Our Score: 8/10
Best Price: £9.99 (Amazon)

CALL OF DUTY 3

Dramatic, bombastic, brutal and very, very loud, *COD 3* is one of the most convincing war games we've ever seen on PS2 and PS3 delivers the same experience but with extra graphical shine. It doesn't divert from the familiar Nazi-blasting formula but condenses and intensifies the game into a frenetic, chaotic, visceral shooter that's as intense in single player as it is online.



AND ON PS2...

Battlefield 2: Modern Combat

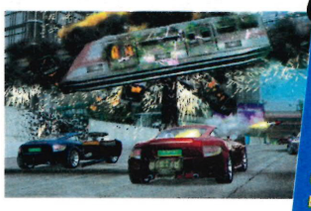
Vehicle stealing and body snatching carnage, all at a frenetic pace.

Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £11.50 (Amazon)

FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES

It's carnage on the dual carriageway and with PS3 under the bonnet, so when something explodes it breaks into a million tiny fragments, which shatter into millions more....



AND ON PS2...

Mashed: Fully Loaded

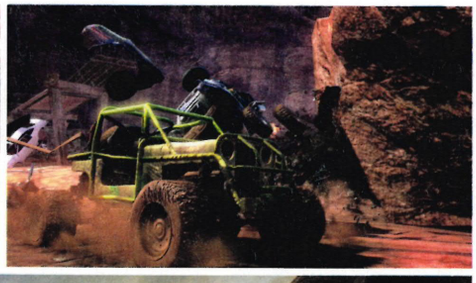
Doesn't look quite as flash but only needs a Multitap and some friends to make it a classic.

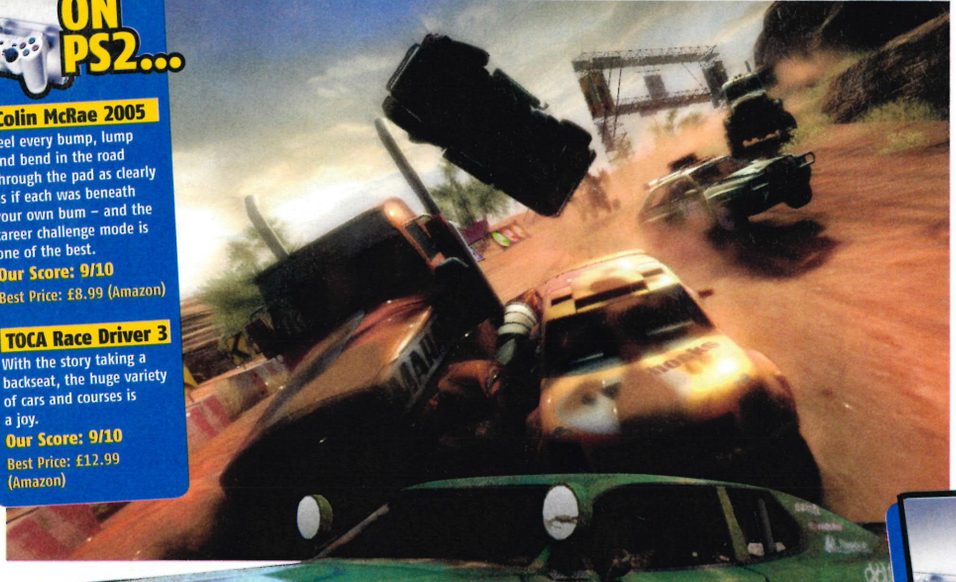
Our Score: 8/10

Best Price: £9.99 (Amazon)

MOTORSTORM

Gloriously filthy, robust and rambunctious, whether or not the subject of off-roading sparks your plugs. With an ever-changing pool of mud to wallow in, rocks to bounce across, ramps to catapult you skyward and rivals that fight truly dirty, you've got a game that shines even through the filth.





AND ON PS2...

Colin McRae 2005

Feel every bump, lump and bend in the road through the pad as clearly as if each was beneath your own bum – and the career challenge mode is one of the best.

Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £8.99 (Amazon)

TOCA Race Driver 3

With the story taking a backseat, the huge variety of cars and courses is a joy.

Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £12.99 (Amazon)

DEF JAM: ICON

AND ON PS2...

WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2007

With grapplers instead of rappers, it combines showmanship and strategy with flashy visuals.

Our Score: 8/10

Best Price: £25 (DVD.co.uk)

Hip hoppers fight it out (very slowly) with a backdrop of grime and crime ripped from their own urban rhymes. Time your blows to the beats to add power.

NBA STREET HOMECOURT

Start dribbling, because the latest in this legendary series is looking sexier than Jennifer Ellison sucking on a Cuban cigar. One for every backseat b-baller's Must Get list.

AND ON PS2...

NBA Street V3

A sizzling slam-dunk with real mass appeal.

Our Score: 8/10

Best Price: £24.99 (Amazon)

GENJI: DAYS OF THE BLADE

AND ON PS2...

Onimusha 3

Its static camera view might be aging, but slaughter of this scale and magnitude never goes out of style.

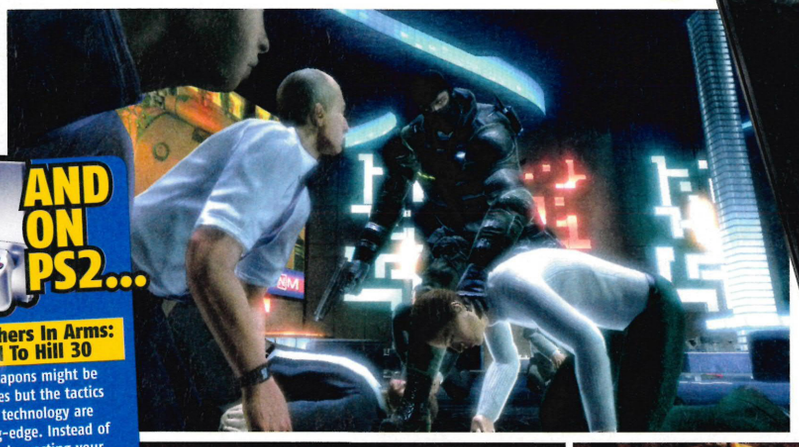
Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £10 (Blah.com)

Following on from the PS2 version, *Genji*'s fantastically fluid, almost liquid animation allows you to switch between four warriors at any time, killing and wall-running your way through ancient history.

RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

The bullets fly amid the glitz of the strip as terrorists raise the stakes and the intensity to thermonuclear levels. Clever use of cover, team-mates and new technology turns the shooting from twitch to tactical while the spectacular effects see the cartridges and coins fly amongst the casinos and craps tables. And while it looks a million dollars, online options add real value to proceedings.



AND ON PS2...

Brothers In Arms: Road To Hill 30

The weapons might be antiques but the tactics and AI technology are cutting-edge. Instead of wantonly wasting your enemies, every charge has to be considered and covered with a tide of lead.

Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £7.95 (Amazon)

SOCOM II: US Navy Seals

A covert shooter that is outstanding online.

Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £13.99 (Amazon)

VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

Desperate to reclaim *VF*'s place as the king of fighters, this beautiful brawler has upped the pace in a bid to appeal to everyone. Not only is it quicker, slicker and smoother the quest and customisation options offer depth and variety far beyond other face-mashers.

AND ON PS2...

Soul Calibur III

A perfect balance of speed and skill; one of the most gorgeous fighters on PS2.

Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £14.99 (Amazon)

Tekken 5

A balletically brilliant beat-'em-up with plenty of punch.

Our Score: 8/10

Best Price: £14.99 (Amazon)

SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

The trading of terrorist trust against the need to save innocent lives adds an extra dimension and a reason to be stealthy. Opulent detail, a much expanded online multiplayer mode and a new female spy – it's the best *Cell* yet.

AND ON PS2...

Manhunt

Brutality with a lurking serial killer.

Our Score: 9/10

Best Price: £5.49 (Amazon)

Splinter Cell Double Agent

A different game on PS2 but you'll still find Fisher on top form in and the moral choices still apply.

Our Score: 8/10

Best Price: £17 (Play.com)

SAME GAME, NEW CONSOLE

Why pay more when the game's on PS2 already?

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

A slightly stuttering framerate can't hide the free-roaming glory, the foot-shifting slo-mo precision of Nail The Trick mode or the novelty of using the sixaxis to balance on beams. But the PS2 version does the same job without the polish.

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

Blam! Ka-powie! And Sock! Hundreds of super villains in a retro RPG that smells faintly of *Gauntlet*. Explore 20 hours of side plots as you hone the powers of your own gang of lycra-clad mutants.

NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON

This has stayed largely the same in the move to PS3. Drifting racing and close canyon contests get the pulse racing but there's a noticeable lack of a 1080p resolution display.

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

A visceral and visual symphony of sprayed sweat, lost teeth and broken jaws. But it's more than just a mere spectacle because the control system means that every blow you throw demands timing and technique. The main difference between the PS2 and PS3 incarnations is that the latter includes a first-person view to get you even closer to the punches.

THE GODFATHER: THE DON'S EDITION

The family's been extended from the PS2 version and the sixaxis allows you to grapple other gansters, as you rise to the top of the scum and ultimately rule the streets of New York.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

This year's edition looks so lovely it'll make your TV bleep in gratitude. The sixaxis adds to the already nifty control system but nine greens have been lost on the way from PS2 to PS3.

MADDEN NFL 07

There's no denying the quality, quantity and sheer visual delight of *Madden* on PS3. Every move is captured in the kind of detail that makes you wince and you can use the sixaxis to make crunching tackles.

NBA 2K7

The hugely polished and utterly complete nature of this package will persuade you that basketball is your thing after all. Fantastic animation and even a decent story mode make it shinier than the court itself, bigger than Jordan's jersey and slicker than Shaq's noggin.

NHL 2K7

A slap-happy simulation of frozen hockey that really builds up the drama of each match with changing player and team rivalries. PS3 gives you cinematic camera angles, 60fps skater animation and lots of that terrible organ music that American sports fans seem to love.

WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2007

The players look slightly scarier on PS2 than on PS3 but otherwise you'd find it hard to tell much difference between this pair of potters. Every game and face you'll find on the bigger box is on PS2 too and it plays every bit as well.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

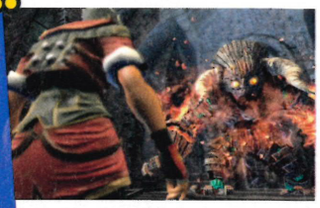
Combines light role-playing and exploration with the usual loops and high-speed launches. You can also play as Shadow, Tails and new boy Silver.

AND ON PS2...

Ratchet & Clank 3
Platforming good enough to make a certain plumber go back to laying pipe.
Our Score: 9/10
Best Price: £11.99 (Amazon)

ENCHANTED ARMS

Utterly traditional and unrelentingly camp, this Japanese RPG features consistently beautiful environments that you explore between fighting weird pizza-headed monsters.



AND ON PS2...

Final Fantasy XII
The wonderful production values have been kept, and the series has been re-invented as a more fluid adventure. Redefines the RPG genre.
Our Score: 10/10
Best Price: £30 (Blah.com)

GUNDAM - TARGET IN SIGHT

It's not the best-looking of the launch line-up but the chance to make towering robots fight to the death has made it the top-selling PS3 title in Japan.

AND ON PS2...

Zone of the Enders
Mechs, in space, with lasers, by the man who created *Metal Gear Solid*. Wonderful.
Our Score: 9/10
Best Price: £6.99 (Amazon)

UNTOLD LEGENDS: DARK KINGDOM

The hack'n'slash action and the pre-designed warriors make this top-down RPG a traditional example of the genre, but the plot is new, the spells are swooshy and the online option makes it a win.

AND ON PS2...

Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest
Varied locations, lovely animation and up to four players, on or offline.
Our Score: 7/10
Best Price: £13.50 (Amazon)

ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

Lush, lavish and fatal to your social life: whereas other games merely consume your spare time, *Oblivion* takes it all. Masterful design, meticulous character creation and massive worlds all combine to make it a classic now and for every rat-bashing, levelling-up day ahead. There is one more M word we could use now, and we will: masterpiece.

AND ON PS2...

Dark Chronicle
Don't let its vintage fool you, the quality of this real-time adventure hasn't dimmed with subsequent imitations. There's too much innovation and exploration in this beautiful, complex world to allow its glories to fade.
Our Score: 9/10
Best Price: £21.99 (Amazon)

RIDGE RACER 7

If it was in the arcades, the queues would snake past the change machine, beyond the spotty youth in the booth and out the door because *Ridge 7* is as pure an incarnation of the series as any since its first outing. Not only does it look a whole 1080p-worth of lovely but the three-stage nitro allows you to create continuous boost-chains. The school may be old, but this is the future.

AND ON PS2...

Burnout Revenge
Fast enough to spin your eyeballs, but also pretty enough to polish your corneas as they rotate.
Our Score 10/10
Best Price: £11.99 (Amazon)

Gran Turismo 4
Seriously polished and far more serious, but also sublime.
Our Score: 9/10
Best Price: £11.99 (Amazon)

Outrun 2006: Coast To Coast
A lovely, sunny, power-sliding arcade conversion.
Our Score: 8/10
Best Price: £9.99 (Amazon)

IGN.com GAME OF THE YEAR 2006 OVERALL

GOD. HERO. HUNTER. SAVIOUR.

OKAMI

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE - 10/10
"AN ABSOLUTE MASTERPIECE"

PSM2 – 92% GOLD AWARD
"OKAMI IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GAME ON PS2; A JOY TO PLAY"

GAMESMASTER 95% - GOLD AWARD
"A BLINDING JEWEL IN PS2'S CROWN... SPECTACULAR"

PLAY - 93% 'GAME OF THE MONTH' AND 'CLASSIC' AWARD
"ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND CAPTIVATING GAMES EVER MADE... CONSISTENTLY DELIGHTFUL"

EDGE - 9/10
"OKAMI IS AN EPIC... EXHILARATING... UNIQUE"

PlayStation.2

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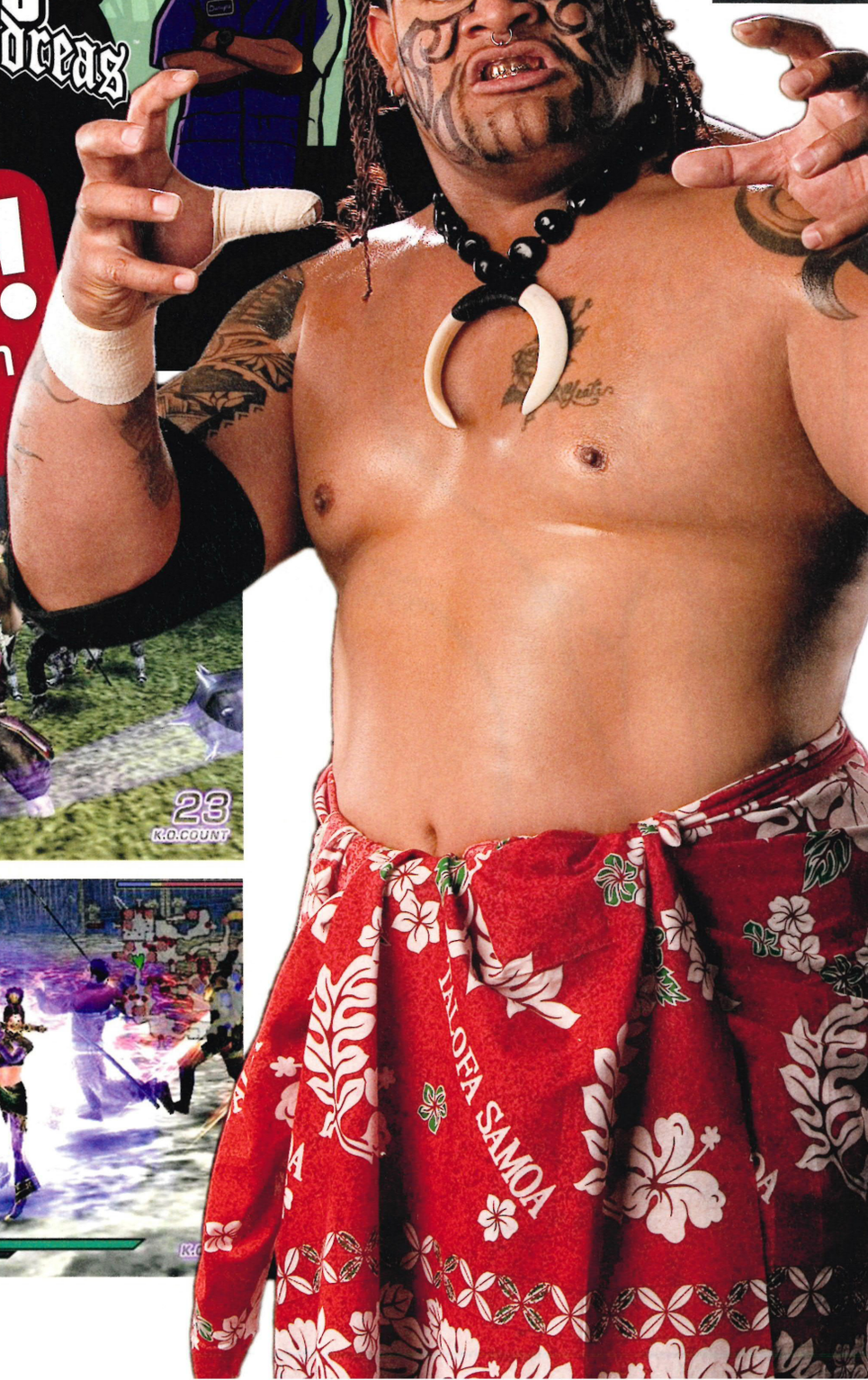
SNAPPED!

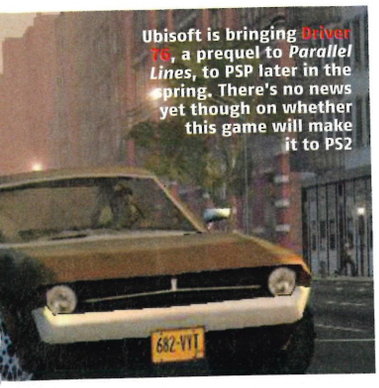
The future of PlayStation presented in pictures

GTA: San Andreas recently went on sale in Japan (and you think we had to wait ages for the latest *Final Fantasy*) and topped the charts, helping PS2 to outsell PS3 at the start of February

WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008 is heading to all three Sony platforms: good news for anyone who fancies grappling with this fella...

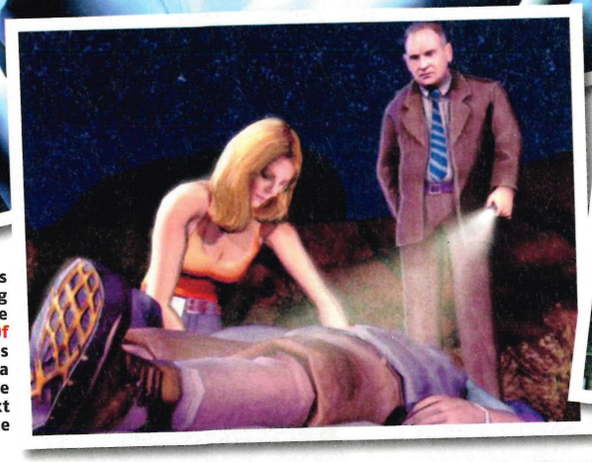


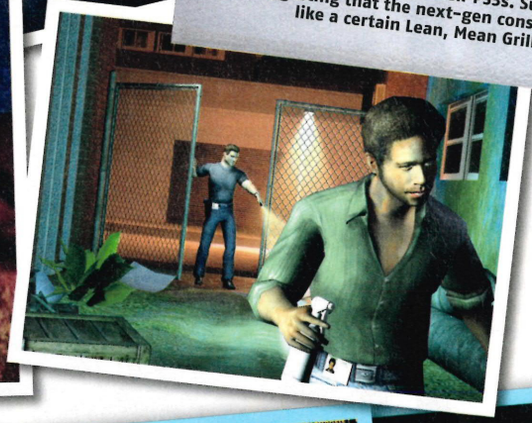
Dynasty Warriors publisher KOEI has announced – wait for it – another Japanese historical hack'n'slash for PS2. It's called **Musou Orochi**



Ubisoft is bringing **Driver 76**, a prequel to *Parallel Lines*, to PSP later in the spring. There's no news yet though on whether this game will make it to PS2

Several games retailers in Japan have started selling this **special Sony sauce** with their PS3s. Surely they couldn't be suggesting that the next-gen console looks anything like a certain Lean, Mean Grillin' Machine?





Ubisoft releases corpse-poking adventure game **CSI: Dimensions Of Murder** on PS2 this month. Expect a complete dissection next issue

This special **Shadow Of The Colossus** level was created by a Dutch PC gamer with Valve's *Half-Life 2* engine. Sadly, it's too large to be used as an actual multiplayer map

INFO NUDGE

IT'S ALL FOR CHARITY

Remember in issue 81 we mentioned the American who sold his $1700 PS3 for $1? Turns out it wasn't just a catastrophic eBay accident – he was actually offering it up as a Christmas present to a needy family. Not only that, but he donated all the dosh generated by advertising on his website to charity, too. Truly, we are ashamed of ourselves for thinking otherwise – the man's obviously a saint!

STATS ENTERTAINMENT

If you're a fan both of Sony and of big numbers then pay attention, we've got a load of both heading your way. Last year, Sony sold 4.11 million PS2s, 1.76 million PSPs and 1.84 million PS3s.

This brings the total number of PS2s sold around the world to 115.36 million, with the majority of these in America – Europe was a close second. PSP has hit the 24.7 million mark and again, America is unsurprisingly the best-selling region.

To put this in perspective, Sony announced it had sold 102.49 million PS1s before finally calling a halt on production of ol' grey last year.

DEMOS AT LAST!

After many months of being filed under W for 'Why the hell isn't this service up and running yet?' the ability to download game demos for your PSP has finally been activated on the Sony site. So, handheld owners can now bag tasters of *Killzone: Liberation*, *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror* and *SOCOM Fire Team Bravo 2* by logging onto www.us.playstation.com.

You need either a WiFi connection or an Internet-ready PC but if you don't have either, you can always start on another cave drawing with the rest of the savages.

CRIME TIME

'YOU'RE NICKED, SUNSHINE!'

PS2 recruits **Pursuit Force** to deliver some Extreme Justice

Regardless of whether or not you've heard of *Pursuit Force*, Sony's premiere cop-'em-up on PSP, you're sure to approve of any game that has the subtitle *Extreme Justice*. Insurance company-crippling car crashes, sassy lady cops and the chance to use the phrase 'shoot first and ask questions later': it's all here, there's plenty of it and it's coming to PS2 and PSP this summer.

Playing a trigger-happy, leather-clad law enforcer in a newly formed division of the police known as the Pursuit Force, it's your job to keep the streets of Capital City gang-free. And there are two ways you will achieve this.

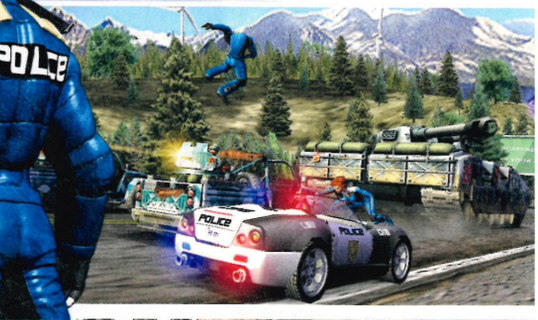
The first is by vehicle, chasing perps around the city in squad cars, bikes, helicopters and even tanks. While you're on the tail of your enemy, you'll be able to hop between vehicles on the fly, even if you're pushing the 200mph mark – think *Just Cause*, only without the safety of the parachute to back you up. And of course the great swathes of jungle. Like we said, this isn't about normal justice – it's *Extreme Justice*.

Once you've chased down the mark, you can leap out of the car and continue the action on foot. Expect to see plenty of sprinting, wild shooting and some savage slapping-on of handcuffs. And if you can't manage to keep the city safe on your own, you'll be able to play split-screen with a buddy – a feature that's exclusive to the PS2 version.

The original PSP game is considered to be an underachieving handheld classic, so we're quietly building up high hopes for this sequel. The enhancements and extra features that are being bolted onto the crime-busting formula will make it a real contender this summer, providing it doesn't turn into a *Driv3r* style bodge-up. Oh, and the rumours of a mini-game that has you serving ASBOs to gangs of kids for spitting off the top floor of shopping centres? Total nonsense... ■ AH

YOU'S THE FORCE

The Pursuit Force has grown since the original, so here's a run-down of who's who and what they do. From left to right: Gage (pursuit support), Sarah (pilot), Ash (special ops), Preach (heavy weapons) and your character, Commander.



GREAT SCI-FI

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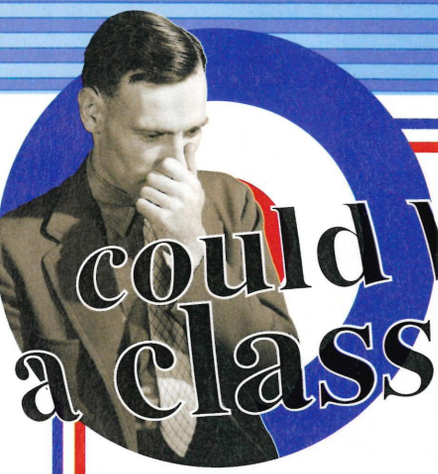
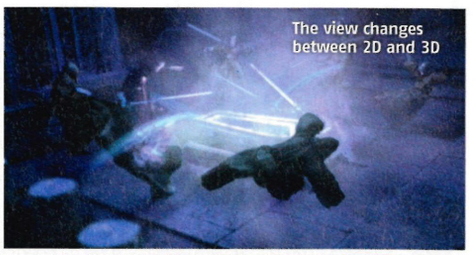


could be a classic



A REMAKE YOU CAN REALLY GET YOUR TEETH INTO

CASTLEVANIA: THE DRACULA X CHRONICLES

Format: PSP
Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Release: September

WHAT WE KNOW

The original *Dracula X: Rondo of Blood* was only ever released in Japan on NEC's PC Engine and many here in the West have never experienced its hidden depths and arcade sensibilities.

Though the story remained typical of the series (Richter Belmont, the last Belmont, goes head-to-head with Dracula himself) *Rondo of Blood* ushered in a new way to play *Castlevania*. The classic platforming was spiced up with the type of weapon development and item management that's more readily associated with role-playing games than whip-cracking vamp-slaying.

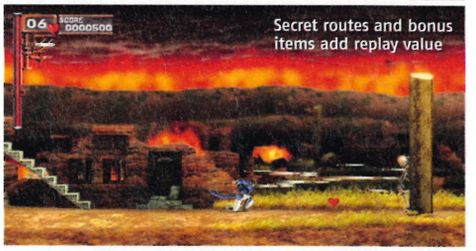
The original was a classic, that's established. But this PSP remake is adding 3D to the original gameplay. As with last year's *Ultimate Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, PSP *Rondo of Blood* will be a retro-tastic mix of side-scrolling action and 3D setpiece events. Run into a boss and the screen flips to full 3D to give you a better look at the colossal dragon or giant flytrap that's got its hungry eyes on you.

COULD BE A CLASSIC BECAUSE...

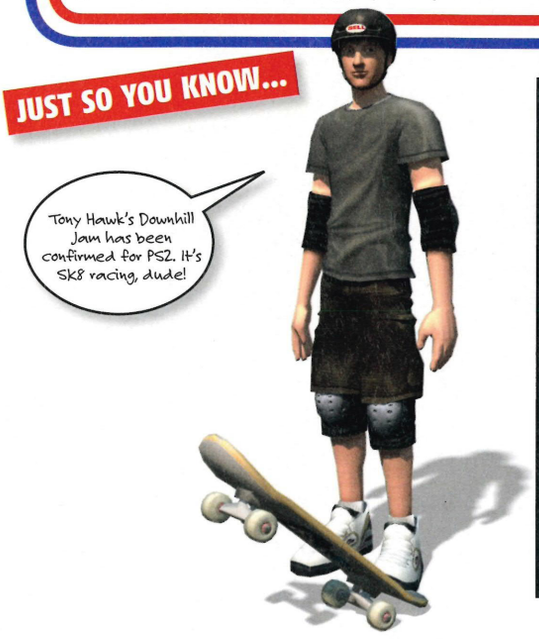
It really suits the PSP. The side-on view is ideal for the singular nub and the extra depth added by numerous secret routes, bonus items and character management is perfect for dipping in and out of.

The beauty of *Rondo of Blood* is that it demands to be replayed. Each of the six massive stages features a secret route and alternative objectives – complete these and new bonuses will be awarded, such as playing as hidden characters.

The package should get '*Vania* fans drooling even more because hidden beside the *Rondo of Blood* remake is the full version of PS1 classic *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, the true sequel to *Dracula X*. Even more so, Koji Igarashi – assistant director on *Symphony of the Night* – is overseeing the remake to ensure nothing is lost in translation to handheld. 'Could' be a classic? There's no doubt about it. ■ **ID**



JUST SO YOU KNOW...



BIG NAME GAMES

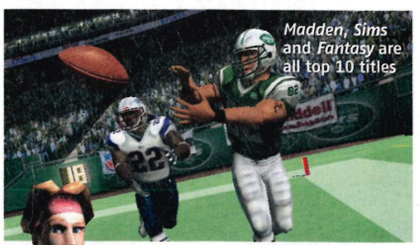
SELL OUTS

Which PS2 game is the most popular of all time?

Ever wondered which videogames are most loved? Well, now we know, and the list of best-sellers shows just how dominant PlayStation has been for the past 12 years.

Okay, the top two spots belong to Nintendo, with *Mario* selling 193 million games worldwide and *Pokémon* 155 million. But that's not surprising considering both franchises have been recycled more than the first series of *Friends* on E4.

In third place is *Final Fantasy*, the legendary PlayStation RPG series, having sold 68 million copies over 51 games. *Madden NFL* and *The Sims* came in fourth and fifth while *Grand Theft Auto* shot its way into sixth place, with 50 million sales. Sega's *Sonic* series was surprisingly low on the list in ninth, *Gran Turismo* 10th, and *Resident Evil* a respectable 14th. ■ **AH**



CEREBRAL STAND-OFF

Office mega-swot revealed in new **Buzz!** game showdown

Christmas is only a memory, but that hasn't stopped Sony announcing a fresh *Buzz!* game for PS2. *Buzz! The Mega Quiz*, due this spring, is essentially a new, eight-player version of *Big Quiz*. So we busted out the office Buzzers to see who was the biggest gee... er, smartest member of Team OPS2.

First off we chose characters. Nick went for the nerd, Andy the superhero, Sophie the buxom Valkyrie and writer Dave the mime. Then it was straight into round one: the Point Builder, where you answer questions and get points for being right. Dave won, and we headed into new mode Winner Stays On. In this, if you get a question wrong, you you drop out while everyone else keeps answering.

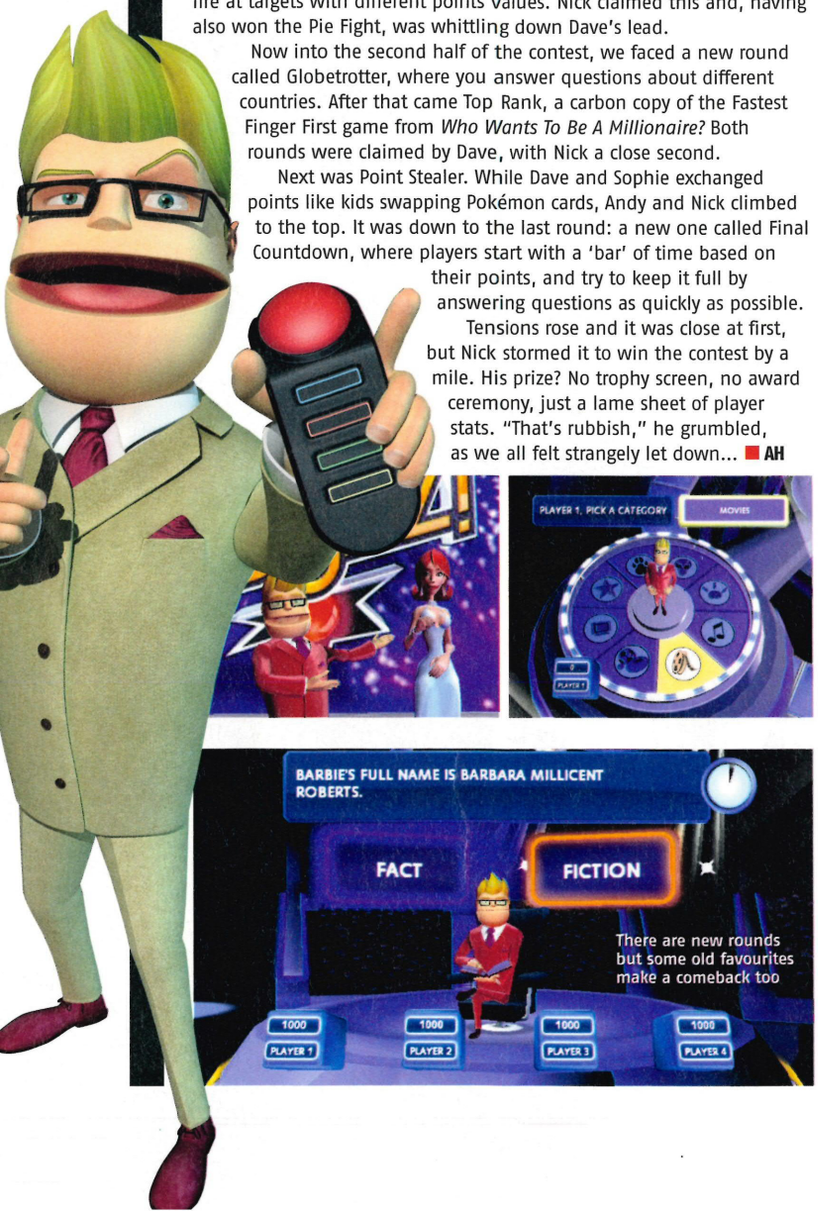
Next was the Fastest Finger round, where the quickest correct answer bags the most points. After this came Pie Fight, a more family-friendly version of the Assassination round from previous games, and then a new, reaction-based round called Mystery Challenge.

This was a duck-shooting gallery, where you hit coloured buttons to fire at targets with different points values. Nick claimed this and, having also won the Pie Fight, was whittling down Dave's lead.

Now into the second half of the contest, we faced a new round called Globetrotter, where you answer questions about different countries. After that came Top Rank, a carbon copy of the Fastest Finger First game from *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* Both rounds were claimed by Dave, with Nick a close second.

Next was Point Stealer. While Dave and Sophie exchanged points like kids swapping Pokémon cards, Andy and Nick climbed to the top. It was down to the last round: a new one called Final Countdown, where players start with a 'bar' of time based on their points, and try to keep it full by answering questions as quickly as possible.

Tensions rose and it was close at first, but Nick stormed it to win the contest by a mile. His prize? No trophy screen, no award ceremony, just a lame sheet of player stats. "That's rubbish," he grumbled, as we all felt strangely let down... ■ **AH**



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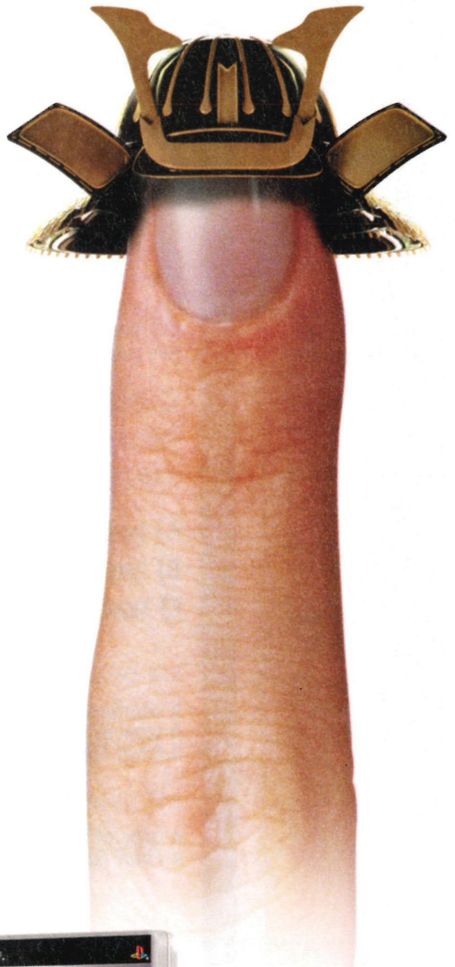
FUN FOR YOUR FINGERS



Blade Dancer

Brandish your blade and dance on the edge of destiny! Experience exciting real time battles, full 3D adventure field, in-depth item crafting and 2-4 player Wi-Fi co-op play in this truly absorbing RPG.

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Kwik Fitz

He's rumoured up to the nines, but he's only got time to write a line

CONFIRMED: Surprisingly good karaoke title *American Idol* will not be coming to the UK, and we've also heard that there are no plans to release a *Pop Idol* version of the game, either

CONFIRMED: Activision has trademarked the names 'Guitar Villain' and 'Drum Villain', meaning these games may be on their way to PS2

CONFIRMED: Square Enix has adopted Epic's *Unreal 3* game engine for use in its next-gen projects

CONFIRMED: Takeshi Miike, of *Itchi The Killer* fame, has signed up to direct the recently announced *Yakuza* movie

RUMOUR: Square Enix has hinted that its promising RPG *Dawn Of Mana* will not be released in the UK

CONFIRMED: Take 2's *Madden*-beating *NFL 2K* series is set for a comeback after it was shelved in 2003

RUMOUR: Sega may be working on a follow-up to its massively popular, Greek-themed hack'n'slash title, *Spartan Total Warrior*

ESPER-CIALLY 4 U

FINAL FANTASY FREEBIE FEST!

Bags of exclusive *FFXII* swag to be won!

Is *Final Fantasy XII* the best RPG ever created? Our perfect 10/10 from OPS2#81 suggests that it is. So, to celebrate the launch of this awesome game, we're giving away a sweet slimline PS2 and a fistful of money-can't-buy *Final Fantasy XII* gear, all lovingly wrapped up in an exclusive goodie bag.

For the overall winner there's the all-in-one *Final Fantasy* kit, which includes a copy of the game, the console to play it on, and a special Square Enix goodie bag. What's inside the bag? There's a giant *Final Fantasy* map showing all the realms of the land and – wait for it – a limited edition figurine of one of *Final Fantasy XII*'s lead characters, so you can start your own real-world Sky Pirate's Den. Five lucky runners-up will score themselves a bag and a game each, too.

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE LAND IN WHICH *FINAL FANTASY XII* IS SET?

A) Ivalice
B) Ivacold
C) Ivanahumpalot

ONE LUCKY WINNER WILL GET:

A slimline PS2
A copy of *Final Fantasy XII* on PS2
A *Final Fantasy* goodie bag

FIVE LUCKY RUNNERS-UP WILL GET:

A copy of *Final Fantasy XII* on PS2
A *Final Fantasy* goodie bag

YOU HAVE THREE WAYS TO ENTER!

BY POST
Send your answer to '*Final Fantasy* Freebie Fest', OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW

BY EMAIL
Email your answer to ps2compos@futurenet.co.uk and put '*Final Fantasy* Freebie Fest' in the subject line.

BY SMS
Text FFFREEBIES, followed by a space, then your answer (A, B, or C) to 80889

CLOSING DATE
28 March 2007

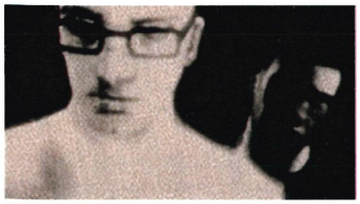
Terms and Conditions Only the first entry that OPS2 randomly draws and judges to be correct will win the PS2, game and *FFXII* merchandise. Only the next five entries that OPS2 randomly draws and judges to be correct will win the goodie bags and game. Texts will be charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 1 March to 28 March 2007 inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.*

*FINAL FANTASY FREEBIE FEST competition Terms and Conditions: By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word NO at the end of your text message. Winners will be notified within 28 days.

No employees of Future Publishing, any associated company or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise are available. Publicity may be given to any entrants and their names, addresses and/or photographs printed in OPS2. Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary.

SERIAL KILLER STRIKES AGAIN

Manhunt's back. Creepy trailer reveals first gruesome details



Despite being demonised by the tabloid press and cited as evidence that Videogames Are Evil, Rockstar has announced that *Manhunt 2* will be out this summer on PS2 and PSP.

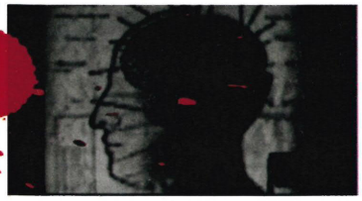
A painfully short but nonetheless revealing trailer has been released, available for viewing at www.rockstargames.com/manhunt2. In the trailer the bespectacled main character introduces himself as one Daniel Lamb, and says he lives in Hell. Snippets show some kind of medical facility, perhaps an asylum, and when you load up the website you're treated to all manner of hideous images depicting surgery of some sort. Eyeballs being poked, that kind of thing. Nice.

A FAMILY AFFAIR?

Brief flashes of X-rays, a chart showing the regions of the brain and a sinister looking white-coated doctor follow. A voice pregnant with menace mutters: "What seest thou else?" which as any Shakespeare fan will know is a quote from *The Tempest*, when Miranda begins to discover her true past. We presume it's the doc speaking, and would wager he's the new Starkweather.

Then we hear another voice saying "they made you sick, remember, Danny?" The rest of the trailer shows family photos and a tiny glimpse of a woman in a gimp mask crying: "You're scaring me, Danny."

Did Danny murder his wife and kids after being subjected to inhumane medical experiments that enabled the doc to control his mind and actions, and he's now going to escape from the facility? Don't bet against it. Oh, and judging by the blink-and-you-miss-it bit of gameplay footage showing a man about to get an axe in the back of the head, there's probably going to be some killing. Just a bit. AH



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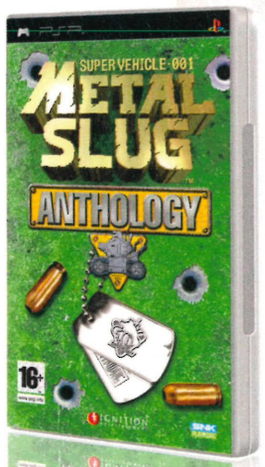

Metal Slug Anthology
Gaining a cult following since its debut, Metal Slug stands proud as the benchmark of side-scrolling purity. This anthology delivers ten years of frantic arcade action, 2 player Wi-Fi co-op, and the exclusive all new Metal Slug 6!

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THE LIGHT SIDE

GOOD GOD
It's more of the same, but when the original was such bloody brilliance, we don't mind one bit. In fact: any chance of a third helping of *God of War*, Sony?

KING OF THE CASTLE
Castlevania Dracula X has finally been unveiled for PSP and from where we're sitting, it looks like a real system-seller

REINFORCEMENTS
Finally, there are enough people on the OPS2 team to make tea *and* write the mag. We're still hoping Andy will do all the work, though

THIRD TIME LUCKY
After months of envious glances across The Pond, we're finally getting our hands on the PS3. Time to smash open the piggy bank

IN THE SABER

'BAN HUNT'
Controversial slasher *Manhunt* is back on the streets, so we're bracing ourselves for the inevitable tabloid backlash

GAMEPLAY MIA
How far *SOCOM* has fallen. In several short updates, it seems the once mighty shooter is ready for a dishonourable discharge

SILENCE OF THE YAKS
Another month, another deafening silence from Sega about whether or not *Yakuza 2* will be heading to our shores in 2007. Fingers still crossed

THE DARK SIDE

BARK IN THE DAY

DOGGY STYLE

We dig up screens of the *Okami* you never saw

Okami is undoubtedly one of the greatest games on PS2. Even though it's been out for a whole month now in the UK, we're still muzzle-deep in its brush-stroked glory.

But things could have been so very different if Capcom had followed its original plans for the game. These tiny screenshots show the way *Okami* looked when development first started back in 2004. In case you can't quite see what's going on, here are a few of the differences we've spotted:

1 Despite being beautifully rendered, it ain't stylised in any way. The world and even Amaterasu herself are straight-laced gaming fodder, making the game look like a traditional Japanese RPG.

2 Amaterasu is all-wolf. There's no hint of playfulness in her face, just the look of a man-chewing canine; no magic Frisbee, and no sign of Issun the head-riding sprite.

3 Finally, the original name of the game was *Ohkami*. Which should shut up the people who still insist on pronouncing it 'okkammy'.

So there you have it. Not only do these images illustrate the extreme changes a big-name game can undergo during development, but they also show how Capcom made the right decision in completely revamping Okami's looks.

As you scamper through the lusciously coloured, fairytale world of *Okami*, just think: it could all have been so... ordinary.

incoming

Our guide to what's coming your way

MARCH		
Burnout Dominator	Racing	EA
Championship Manager 2007	Sport	Eidos
CSI: 3 Dimensions Of Murder	Adventure	Ubisoft
Free Running	Platformer	Rebellion
Hard Rock Casino	Strategy	Oxygen
Heatseeker	Fight Sim	Codemasters
Medal Of Honor Vanguard	Action	EA
Pimp My Ride	Racing	Activision
Samurai Warriors 2: Empires	Strategy	KOEI
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Action	Ubisoft
The Red Star	Action	Take 2
UEFA Champions League 2006-2007	Sport	EA

APRIL		
Everybody's Tennis	Sport	Sony
God Of War II	Action	Sony
SOCOM Combined Assault	Shooter	Sony
SnoCross 2: Feat. Blair Morgan	Sport	Oxygen
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	Adventure	Eidos

MAY		
Buzz! The Mega Quiz	Party	Sony
King Of Clubs	God sim	Oxygen
Spider-Man 3	Adventure	Activision

2007		
Ape Escape: Million Monkeys	Platformer	Sony
Avatar: The Last Airbender	Adventure	THQ
Buzz! The School Quiz	Party	Sony
Emergency Mayhem	Action	Codemasters
Harry Potter & the Order of the Phoenix	Platformer	EA
Juiced 2	Racing	THQ
Manhunt 2	Adventure	Rockstar
Pursuit Force	Action	Sony
Ratatouille	Action	THQ
Rogue Galaxy	RPG	Sony
Stuntman 2	Racing	THQ
Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria	RPG	Square Enix
Yakuza 2	Adventure	Sega

PSP

MARCH		
Afterburner: Black Falcon	Flight Sim	Sega
Burnout Dominator	Racing	EA
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	Shooter	Activision
Driver '76	Action	Ubisoft
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	Racing	Sega
Heatseeker	Flight	Codemasters
MACH	Flight	VU Games
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	Action	Konami
Rachet & Clank: Size Matters	Action	Sony
Sid Meier's Pirates!	Adventure	Take 2
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Sport	Activision

APRIL		
Crush	Puzzle	Sega
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	Action	Ubisoft
SOCOM Fireteam Bravo 2	Shooter	Sony
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	RPG	Square Enix
Virtua Tennis 3	Sport	Sega

MAY		
Crazy Taxi	Racing	Sega
Dead Head Fred	Action/Adventure	D3
Earthworm Jim	Action	Atari
Emergency Mayhem	Action	Codemasters
Final Fantasy Tactics: The Lion War	RPG	Square Enix

spy

GTA:VCS ON PS2

VICE CITY A CERTAINTY

Rockstar finally confirms GTA Vice City Stories for PS2, following a string of bizarre game rumours...

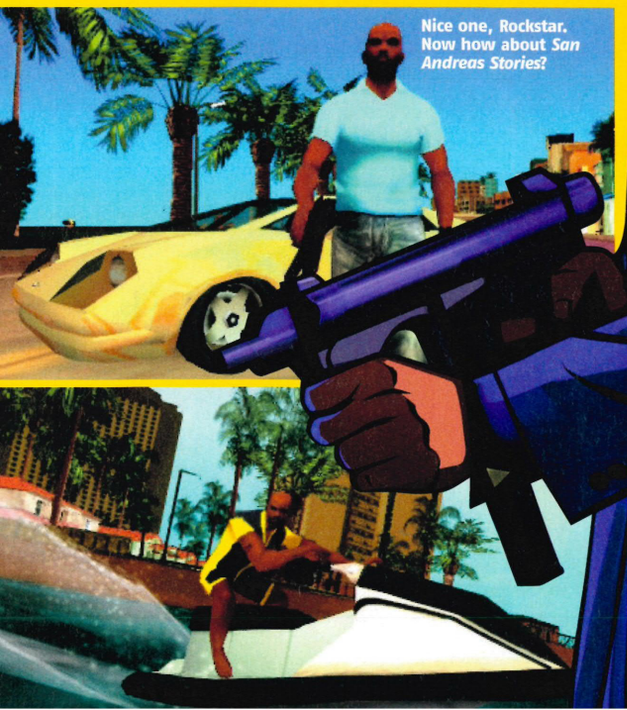
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories is set to come to PS2, despite what you might have read on rumour-starved websites who announced, speculated on and finally cancelled the game over the course of one tiny week. Confused? Let us explain...

On 24 January, a listing appeared on the website of the ESRB (the body responsible for rating games in the USA) proudly announcing that *GTA: Vice City Stories* on PS2 had received an M for Mature rating. What made this seem more than just a simple admin error is that the listing appeared alongside – and not instead of – the PSP version of the game. As you'd expect, internet speculation was wild, and many were assuming that this constituted an announcement from Rockstar.

Mere days later, on 30 January, a listing for the game appeared on the official US PlayStation website. It was hastily removed, and Rockstar issued a statement that it wouldn't comment on rumour and speculation – except, oddly, that's sort of what it was doing. Many sites took this to mean that development of *Vice City Stories* had actually been cancelled and began to bemoan the fact that we'd all have to wait until *GTA IV* to get our hands on the legendary series once more.

And now? Rockstar has confirmed that the PS2 game will definitely hit UK shelves on 9 March. Apparently it's been in development for some time, which would explain the mass of rumours that have been bouncing around.

No news yet on whether it will carry the same budget price tag as *Liberty City Stories*, but there's a good Lance-Vance-chance that it will. Expect a full review of the game in our next issue. ■ **AH**



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MORE FOR YOUR FINGERS

THE NOT-SO-ODD COUPLE?

Your PS2 will soon be able to do everything the Wii can – only better

There's a comforting irony that the PS2 is a venerable console, yet at the same time, it allows you to regress back to childhood and make a total tit of yourself. Whether it's warbling with your *SingStar* microphone, wiping windows with EyeToy, working up a sweat on your dance mat or striking rockstar poses with your *Guitar Hero* controller, PS2 delivers unfettered fun for all ages and continues to reach out to new people and add to its army of fans.

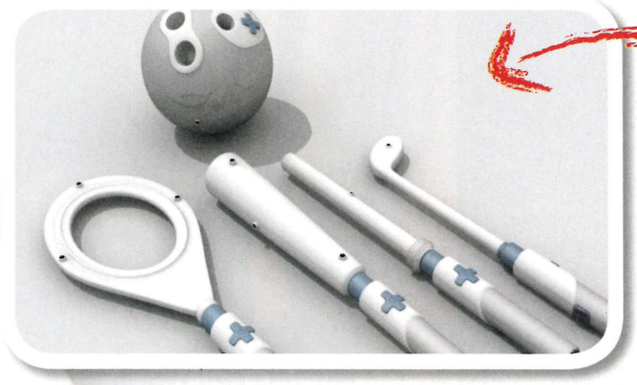
But there's a feeling in the PS2 world that more work can still be done – and plenty of people are pulling out all the stops to do it, both in terms of the games you can play and the peripheral gadgets and controllers that you use to play them.

Unless you've been locked in a box for the past year it can't have escaped your notice that rival console manufacturer Nintendo has launched a product that has 'the family experience' at the heart of its philosophy. The Wii has seemingly revolutionised the home gaming experience by ignoring traditional

They're on different consoles, but in technical terms, *Zelda*'s Link and our Lara have a lot in common

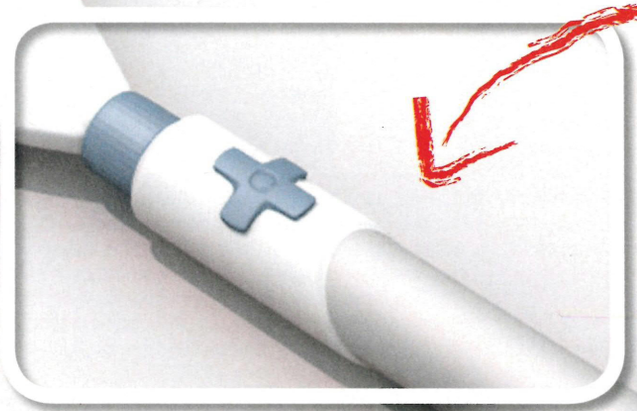
FUSION: FLIPPIN' FANTASTIC

The motion-sensing GameTrak Fusion technology is still in development and has a provisional launch date of late 2007. But we're already very excited about it: as you can see from these prototype peripherals, it's set to give PS2 game developers a good deal of freedom and flexibility. To help fire imaginations, here are a few of our ideas on how they could be used...



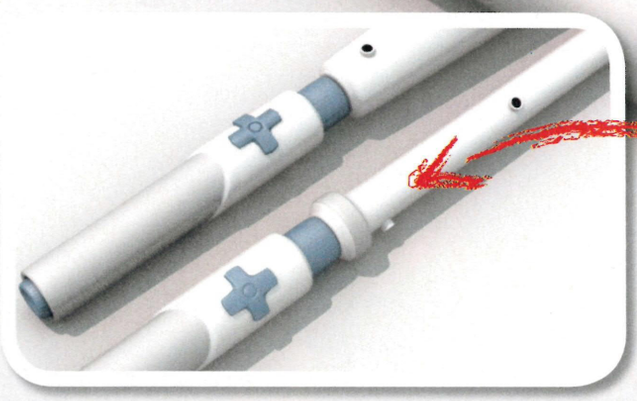
DOCTORS AND NURSES

There have already been a few medically inspired games on the market but just looking at these tools makes us think *Holby City* – or even *CSI*. Or how about a day in the life of a dental practitioner? Or, better still, a gynaecology simulator? It would certainly give a whole new meaning to the term 'letterboxing'



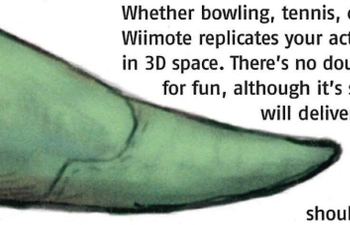
WE'RE FOREVER BLOWING BUBBLES

Though this device is clearly intended for racket-based sports we can't help feeling that it could double as the world's largest bubble-blower. Curiously, it also looks a bit like a loo seat with a handle - something that even we are not willing to explore with our flights of imaginative fancy. We'll leave that to the Japanese



LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

Lightsabers, chopsticks, knitting needles – take your pick. These cylindrical shafts could mimic any pole-based activity. However, there's never been a title dedicated to 'life' inside an abattoir. A cattle-prod would be a perfect introduction to the world of ham shanks and vegetarian-goading



controller design and putting a catch-all peripheral into the hands of gamers: the Wiimote.

Wave this wireless controller around, and your on-screen character will make the same movement. Whether bowling, tennis, cricket or sword-fighting, the Wiimote replicates your actions to your in-game avatar in 3D space. There's no doubting the Wiimote's potential for fun, although it's still too early to tell if the Wii will deliver the vast range of games we take for granted on PS2.

So, as a PS2 owner, is the Wii something you should be envious of? Recent developments in the game industry suggest not.

If the PS2 has one quality that sets it apart from other games machines, it is its Borg-like tendency to assimilate technology from all sectors. We are talking about the most successful console in history, after all.

FAT CONTROLLERS

Presently, there are vast differences between the two consoles in terms of controllers. But that's all about to change. You may remember a device called GameTrak which came bundled with a game called *Dark Wind* back in 2004. It looked like a New Age dowsing implement but it gave titles such as *Real World Golf* a much needed realistic feel through its 'haptic' (vibrating) feedback.

There were a couple of problems, though: it was fiddly to set up and you felt a bit daft using it (in the world of peripherals the line between cool and uncool is often hard to gauge). But now GameTrak is developing a much improved system that the company says will replicate anything the Wiimote can do and more. It will be called the GameTrak Fusion and from what we've seen so far, it looks very interesting, with a wide variety of controller 'concepts' to choose from (see above).

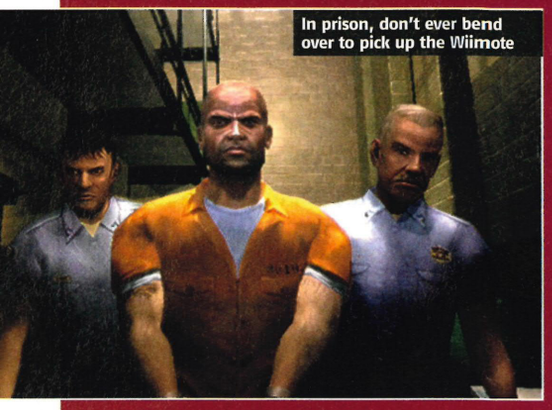
Marketing director Harry Holmwood says: "The technology not only tracks when a player swings, but also where they are on the court, the angle of the racquet as it hits the ball and the precise arc of the swing. This level of control and interaction is impossible with other technologies and will take gameplay to a whole new level."

The main difference between GameTrak Fusion and other tilt-sensing peripherals is that it uses existing technology plus an ultrasonic 3D positioning system to track the controller on three axes. The Wiimote uses infrared to track where you're pointing at the screen, but as soon as the controller moves out of range of these, there's only a tilt sensor to back it up.

TILT DEATH DO US PART

Tilt sensors, known as accelerometers, don't give you a 3D position, only information on the angle at which you're holding a device and some limited feedback on acceleration.

This gives the Wiimote some 'quirks', as anyone who's already played *Wii Sports* will attest: it's



In prison, don't ever bend over to pick up the Wiimote

possible, for instance, to put a Wiimote on the floor, kick it and still win games in *Wii Tennis*.

GameTrack Fusion is due to launch towards the end of 2007 and its greater precision is likely to spur developers into mimicking all kinds of haptic activities, from fencing to crown green bowling (yeah baby!). That's ace news for us, because it means PS2 games will be able to benefit from the clear crossover from the Wii in terms of controller design.

A DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIP

In the meantime, one trend we've noticed lately is for publishers to cross-develop games for both Wii and PS2. Think of Ubisoft's *Splinter Cell: Double Agent* and *Rayman Raving Rabbids*, EA's *Medal of Honor Vanguard* and Blitz's *SpongeBob Squarepants* series. Other developers we've spoken to, off the record, also attest to fervent activity between the two platforms.

One such game that we've been chasing like a pack of laser-guided smart bombs is *Heatseeker* (see our full review on p90). The chance to cross-develop it for Wii and PS2 was a no-brainer for Codemasters, says senior producer Andrew Wensley: "It had been a while since the last *Ace Combat* game, we all loved *Afterburner* and we wanted to make modern jet combat really action packed – like *Black* with planes. So we cracked on.

"We had a great game coming together and here [with the Wii] was an opportunity to play it in an entirely new way, so we made the proposal to the company and got approval.

"There's certainly a desire to produce more titles for the Wii and as the PS2 demographic develops further, we will still look to support it."

Double Agent saw double development on PS2 and Wii

Heatseeker is the latest title to be developed jointly for Wii and PS2

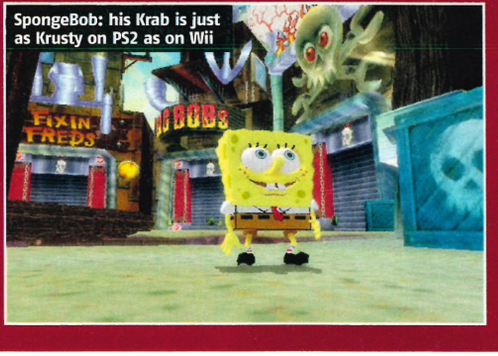
But can a Wii game translate to PS2 effectively? Yes, says *Heatseeker*'s PS2 producer, Ben Board. "The PS2 and the Wii's individual horsepowers are in the same league and we found there was a lot we could share.

"As an example, the PS2 lets us make great-looking transparent clouds really easily and we use those same techniques to produce a mist layer to make the horizon look great."

Although the two consoles are different architecturally they are very similar when it comes to graphical fidelity, which is perfect for publishers looking to maximise profits during the transition between next-generation consoles.

In fact, with peripheral manufacturers, developers and publishers all pushing the PS2 to its absolute limits you can be sure the platform is going to be around for many years yet. With incredibly low software prices and innovation in spades, PS2 is still the most versatile and all-encompassing console on the market, bar none.

Now, thanks to one of its most fierce rivals, the console's learned some new tricks. One thing is clear: if you want exuberance, self-expression and a load of laughs for your whole family, PS2 is the place to be. Not waving but clowning. ■ **MW**



SpongeBob: his Krab is just as Krusty on PS2 as on Wii

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Sony games consoles have played host to some very odd peripherals over the years. Here are some of the more peculiar examples (many of which can only be purchased from seedy hardware geeks living in the backstreets of Tokyo)

BEATMANIA DECK (1998)

One of the first titles to truly herald the age of rhythm-action, *Beatmania* asked you to 'scratch' on a 'turntable' that looked like something Tomy might sell for a five-year-old. Not one to use in front of the girlfriend, or indeed anyone else, but still loads of fun.

MINIMONI: TAMBOURINE (2002)

There's nothing like seeing a Japanese businessman waving his arms around with wild abandon to reinvigorate your passion for gaming. Sega's unusual tambourine-shaking simulator was so popular in the arcades of Tokyo that it got a release on PS2, but very few of the gadgets were ever made.

JOGCON CONTROLLER (1998)

Created by Namco for *Ridge Racer Type 4*, the JogCon controller was a bit like having the world's smallest steering wheel in the middle of a DualShock pad. It all felt a bit gimmicky although some users did attest to the device's brilliant dual purpose as an impromptu ashtray during particularly lengthy PS1 sessions.

CHAINSAW CONTROLLER (2005)

Resident Evil 4 not gory enough for you? Add an extra touch of violence with this tasteful, chainsaw-shaped PS2 controller. It does everything your normal controller does, only with a lot less emphasis on ergonomics and a lot more emphasis on blood. Yours for about a tenner on eBay – and why stop at *Resi*? It really spices up a game of *Barbie Horse Adventures*...

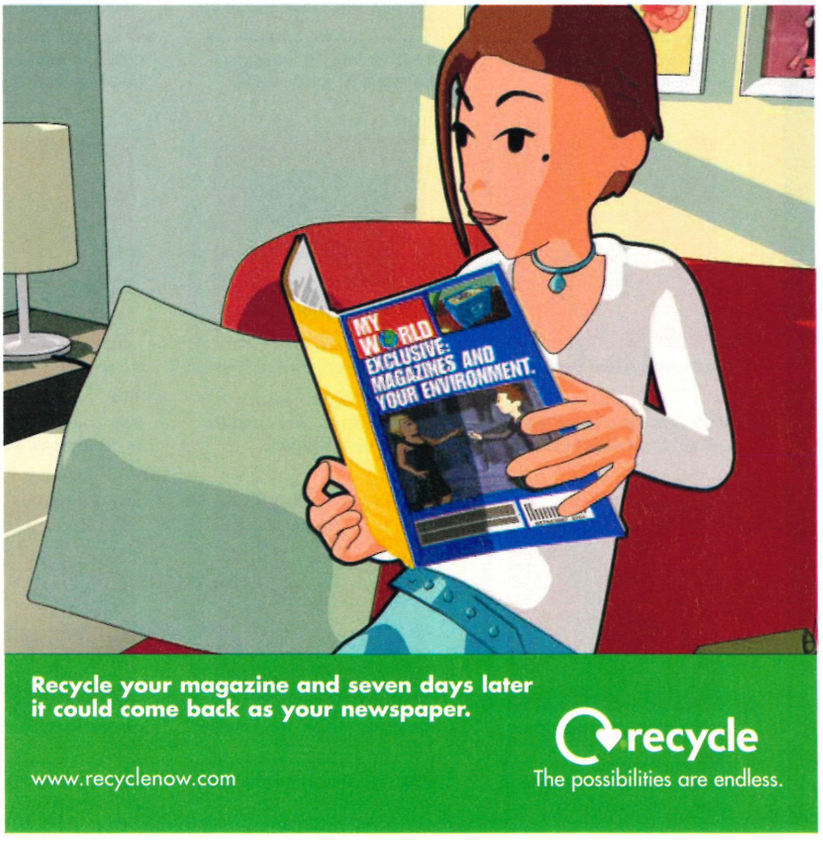
REZ TRANCE VIBRATOR (2001)

We'd like to say something amusingly smutty about this device but, well, it really is a vibrator that plugs into the USB port of your PS2. The very words 'Trance Vibrator' say it all, really: it's used to enhance the pulsating, multi-sensory appeal of cult shooter *Rez*. It was originally only sold in Japan but you can still pick one up from eBay for around £25 (we'd recommend you go for one that's 'mint in box' rather than second-hand, though).

EXERCISE BIKE (2002)

Now, we're not saying gamers are a bunch of wobble-bellied lard-cakes who need to get off the couch and go kick a ball about in the park once in a while. Nothing, we are sure, could be a less apt description of us and our dear readers. But if you *are* worried about your love handles but can't tear yourself away from *Final Fantasy XII*, you could do worse than get an exercise bike with PS2 controls built into the handles. This one, the Cyberacer, is made by Reebok and will cost you £250 new (or considerably less second-hand) but there are quite a few models on the market. Just make sure the curtains are shut.

Ubisoft developed *Raving Rabbids* for both consoles



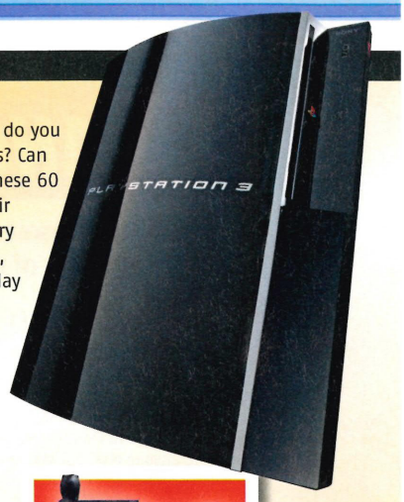
SAVE ICON MEGA QUIZ

Want to spend a day with our PS3? Then prove how well you know PS2 games!

They can be large or small, single or many, take up many blocks or a solitary space. They can be the precious spoils of a hard-fought victory or the detritus of a long forgotten adventure. They can be vital when you lose them or ignored until you need the room.

Yes,: they're save files! We've got loads of them, clogging up memory cards with boundless unlocked bonuses, final boss battles and stunning 30-yard free kicks, so we thought we'd make use of them before we accidentally delete them and have to cry.

So how well do you know your saves? Can you recognise these 60 games from their spinning memory card icons? If so, you can win a day playing games with us on our PS3 on a 70in HDTV! We'll even throw in lunch.



1

CLUE: Something slithery is on the menu in the jungle

2

CLUE: The prequels to the Holy Trilogy, rebuilt brick by brick

3

CLUE: The scariest Spanish holiday you'll ever have

4

CLUE: Marvel at this chain-wielding, leather-clad hothead

5

CLUE: It may be dark but there's nothing covert about this

6

CLUE: One furry sidekick that's lacking in knowledge

7

CLUE: The Iron Fist introduces teamwork for its PS2 debut

8

CLUE: This crime caper won't have Tony singing its praises

9

CLUE: A famous scrapper's 2006 apocalyptic inKarnation

10

CLUE: There's a clue in the pic, all you need is an initial guess

11

CLUE: Hear the call once more and get to see Paris in spring

12

CLUE: This street racer's subtitle leaves a nasty footprint

13

CLUE: Namco's fifth opportunity for some arcade powersliding

14

CLUE: Returning from the darkness better than ever

15

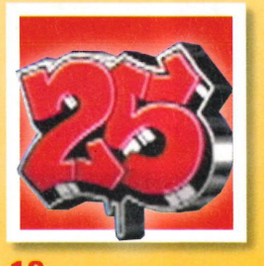
CLUE: The PS2 version of the Redfield's X-rated adventure

16

CLUE: Look, Hugh's talking to these lovely centrefolds

17

CLUE: Literal puppy love for Will Wright's creations



18

CLUE: A just sentence for this truly criminal gang game

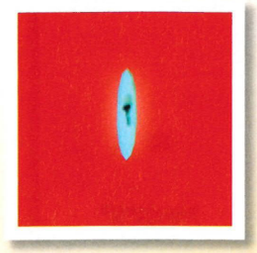
19

CLUE: Myths and monsters are defeated: Greece is the word

20

CLUE: Contemporary warfare given a body-swapping twist

spy



21
CLUE: Picture-book perfection that'll send you lupine

22
CLUE: Sony failed to make one with this Kri-ative slasher

23
CLUE: Sickly sweet All-American twins get some wheels

24
CLUE: These tooled-up brethren get paid in claret

25
CLUE: All the result of Rockstar's Californian dreaming

26
CLUE: Insomniac's double-act goes pant-less for this sequel

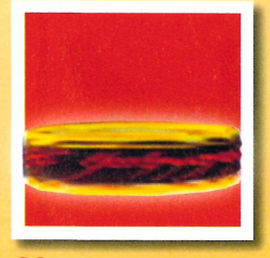
27
CLUE: Fireworks followed this very early PS2 puzzler

28
CLUE: Blood and lust raise the temperature to new heights

29
CLUE: Activision's gangs move to take a bite of the Big Apple

30
CLUE: Three letters and a whole load of handholding

31
CLUE: The first time Tony went subterranean before being wasted



32
CLUE: Elvis lives in the hobbit-forming action game

33
CLUE: Pop goes the sequel for this hidden soldier

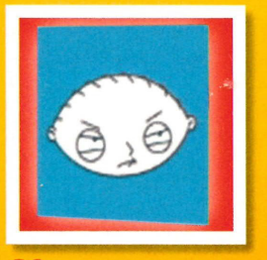
34
CLUE: The third helping of EA's nocturnal fisticuffs

35
CLUE: This bunny-baiter is annoying but arm-less

36
CLUE: Sega's envelope-pushing acey-spacey lightshow shooter

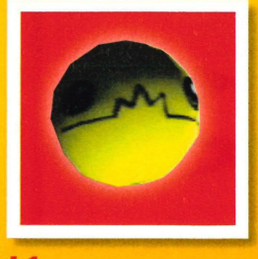
37
CLUE: The 2005 edition of the truly beautiful game

38
CLUE: The first reconvening of this night-time racing society



39
CLUE: Do you recognise Peter Griffin's talking baby?

40
CLUE: Strum your way to become a rock god



41
CLUE: This extra-terrestrial hero used to be a flash game

42
CLUE: It's the third time there's been a simian jail break

43
CLUE: The extreme sport version of peddling filth

44
CLUE: Rappers delight the Big Apple destruction

45
CLUE: The Special Edition of a very emotional satan

spy

HOW TO BE IN WITH A CHANCE TO WIN

To enter, all you have to do is stare intently at the 60 icons below and once you know the full and complete name of each game, write it in the numbered space below.

Then fill in your name, address and phone number and send your completed form to 'Save Me!', OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. But if you don't want to destroy even one precious page of OPS2, we will accept photocopies.

You can also email your entry to: PS2postal@futurenet.co.uk with the subject heading 'Save Me!'. Don't forget to include your name, address and phone number.

Name: .....

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Address:.....

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Daytime phone number:.....

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For full terms and conditions, see p28.

1..... 31.....
2..... 32.....
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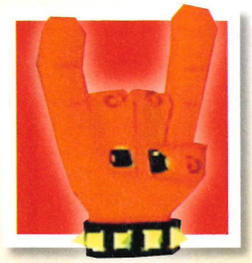
22..... 52.....
23..... 53.....
24..... 54.....
25..... 55.....
26..... 56.....
27..... 57.....
28..... 58.....
29..... 59.....
30..... 60.....

46.....
CLUE: This trip round 18 holes has joint ownership

47.....
CLUE: Mr Peck's truly terrifying stage production

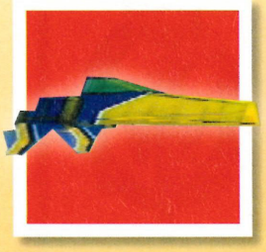


48.....
CLUE: Strum your way to become a rock god. Again

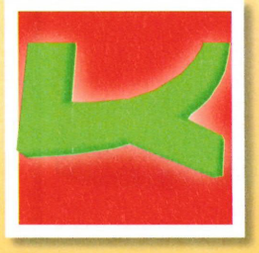
49.....
CLUE: Artic rodents with little care for personal safety

50.....
CLUE: Pandemic go to war purely for the money

51.....
CLUE: Jean Reno saves the world from the Genma army



52.....
CLUE: When F9000 anti-gravity racing floated on to the PS2



53.....
CLUE: Following in the footsteps of Mr Anderson

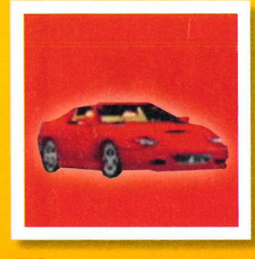
54.....
CLUE: Agrippa and Octavianus try to step out of it

55.....
CLUE: Try to square up to this rebounding beat-'em-up

56.....
CLUE: The inspiration for those Citroen dancing car ads

57.....
CLUE: The definitive version of May Parker's nephew

58.....
CLUE: The Bryant siblings and Jeffry McWild go forth



59.....
CLUE: Sega's classic arcade racer is shore thing in 2006

60.....
CLUE: Slaphead gun for hire gets paid in reddies

gamesradar.com
allaboutthegames

WIN A TRIP TO NEW YORK CITY!

Dude! Want to go to the Big Apple? We bet you do! And you're in luck, because to celebrate the launch of the new *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* game on PS2, Ubisoft and Domino's Pizza have teamed up to offer a turtly awesome prize: a trip to New York, where the game is set. It includes flights and bed and breakfast accommodation for you and a mate for a three-night stay. Cowabunga!

In case a free holiday isn't enough for you, the prize includes a copy of the new game, 500 fine English pounds to spend while you're there and a free Domino's pizza every month for a year. 10 runners up will each get a copy of the game to play, which is almost as good as actually going to New York yourself!

Domino's, the pizza delivery experts, are dedicated to delivering a fresh, made to order pizza on time, every time and with 88 million different pizza combinations to chose from, there's something from everyone. To order, simply call your local store or phone the national hotline on 087 12 12 12 12. To find your nearest store visit www.dominos.co.uk.

The winner will get:
A copy of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles for PS2*
Return flights to New York
Three nights' bed and breakfast accommodation
£500 spending money
Free pizza for a year

10 runners-up will each get a copy of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*

To enter simply answer the question below and send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and daytime telephone number to 'I want to go to NYC', OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW to arrive no later than 28 March 2007. The winner will be the first correct answer drawn after that date.*

Question:
Which of these is a famous New York landmark?

A: The Smithsonian Institute
B: The Flat Iron Building
C: The Golden Gate Bridge

10 THINGS TO DO IN NYC

1 Ride the Staten Island Ferry
Forget tourist boat trips: the best and cheapest view of Lady Liberty and the most famous harbour in the world is a round trip on the Staten Island Ferry.

2 Climb the Statue of Liberty
Think you know vertigo? Think again as you go up a winding staircase so high you can't see the floor...

3 Go shopping
Jeans, trainers, T shirts, Cds- they're all a bargain, especially with the exchange rate what it is at the moment. Head for Times Square, Greenwich Village or any branch of Gap

4 Ride the subway
Nothing smells 'New York' like the subway. But despite what you've seen in the movies, running around it with a big gun will not make you popular

5... and go back again in a yellow cab
TAX-EH!!! Yes, they really are just like on telly and the drivers really are as chatty. Shouting 'Follow that car!' as you jump in is optional

6 Have breakfast in a diner
You'll get a menu the size of your back garden but you can ignore it. Just tell the waitress how you want your eggs and don't forget your free coffee refills

7 Have lunch at a hot dog stall
You've not had a real hot dog until you've had a New York hot dog. Hold the onions, easy on the mustard but lashings of relish. Or whatever way you like it, it's your dog!

8 Watch tall men get sweaty
Even if you can't get tickets to see the Knicks at Madison Square Gardens, there are open-air b-ball courts all over the city where hoops are shot 24-7

9 Tour the hood
"The Roots of Hip Hop Multimedia Bus Tour" is a right laugh. It visits music, dance and graffiti landmarks with a booming soundtrack.

10 Go to Central Park
It's free, it's a little bit dangerous and it's the second most famous city park in the world. A must for Lennon fans and anyone who likes to watch beautiful people jogging

3 THINGS NOT TO DO IN NYC

1 Try to get into the sewers

2 Ask a rat to teach you martial arts

3 Run around on the rooftops swinging a katana

* Terms and conditions: All entrants must be at least 16 years old or have parental permission to enter. There is ONE main prize to be won plus 10 runners-up prizes. The main prize includes return economy flights from the UK to New York and three nights accommodation (including breakfast) for two people. Dates are subject to availability and will be decided between Ubisoft and the winner. The winner must be 18 or over. If the winner is under 18 then the winner must be accompanied by an adult. The prize must be booked through Ubisoft and is valid for travel until Dec 2007. The winner may choose an accompanying travel partner and both travellers must fly on the same outbound and return flights. If the winner does not choose an accompanying travel partner, the other ticket is forfeited. The winner and travel partner will be responsible for all costs associated with the journey, for example getting to and from the departure and destination airports, transfers and other expenses during their stay. If for any reason, Ubisoft is unable to provide the prize, Ubisoft will replace it with another prize of equal value. This prize is non-transferable, no cash alternative is available and it cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. No reservation changes are permitted after the tickets are issued. The prize is subject to the terms and conditions of this prize draw. It is the responsibility of the winner to ensure that all members of the party arrange, where necessary, travel insurance, passports and visas at their own expense. The winner will be awarded 12 Domino's Pizza vouchers to the value of £10. Vouchers valid until February 2008 at all Domino's stores. Vouchers not valid in conjunction with any other offers. Vouchers valid for delivery and carryout orders. Domino's Pizza operates a limited delivery area and reserves the right to refuse delivery. Winners who reside outside the delivery area may need to collect their order from the nearest store. No purchase necessary. No cash alternative available and no change given. We regret that gift certificates cannot currently be used for orders placed via the Internet or interactive TV. To order using the 087 12 12 12 12 One Number service you must be within a delivery area (UK only). Calls to 08712 121212 cost 10p per minute. Charges for calls made from mobile phones may vary. The closing date for this competition is 28 March 2007. The winner will be the first correct answer chosen at random after that date. The runners-up will be the next 10 correct answers chosen at random. Non-winners will not be advised of the result. By participating in the competition, you declare that you accept these terms and conditions unconditionally.

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monitor

THE GAMES YOU'LL BE PLAYING TOMORROW, TODAY

It was forecast to snow today. Six hours' worth of frozen powder was meant to be gently drifting onto my unfeasibly spiky hair. But it isn't. Instead, I'm being bathed in the glow of the cosy winter sun as I type, and it feels fantastic.

Why am I rambling on about the weather? Because it reminds me of this month's Monitor section. When we started planning the mag, the PS2 forecast looked bleak, as most of the big games were either getting packed into our review section, or were too far away to preview. We feared the worst.

But as the month went on, the quality games drifted in like rays from the aforementioned winter sun. *Medal Of Honor Vanguard*, *SOCOM*, *Rogue Galaxy*, *Yakuza 2* – they're all here, and they're all heading to PS2 in 2007. Makes us feel warm inside, frankly.

Andy

Andy Hartup,
News editor

044

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2006-2007

WHO WILL WALK AWAY WITH THE SILVERWARE IN EUROPE THIS SEASON? WITH ANY LUCK IT'LL BE YOU...

046 **MEDAL OF HONOR VANGUARD**
Is this the game that'll replace *MOH Airborne* on PS2? We reckon it could be

048 **EVERYBODY'S TENNIS**
The gaming masters behind *Everybody's Golf* turn their twisted gaze onto a new sport

050 **SOCOM: COMBINED ASSAULT**
One of the finest online team games on PS2 gets a long overdue makeover and comes out fighting

052 **CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2007**
Does this yearly update have any new surprises lurking in its dug-out? Read our pre-match report

054 **ROGUE GALAXY**
After last month's info-burst, here are some more facts about this classy RPG we just had to share

058 **SEGA RALLY**
Can Sega successfully drag its classic arcade game into the next generation? Looks like it

060 **CRAZY TAXI**
Just when you thought it was safe to hail a taxi, here comes a cabbie with a mad glint in his eye...

062 **HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX**
More adventures with the boy wizard and chums

064 **VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA**
A Japanese RPG inspired by Norse mythology? Anyone? At all? No, wait... come back!

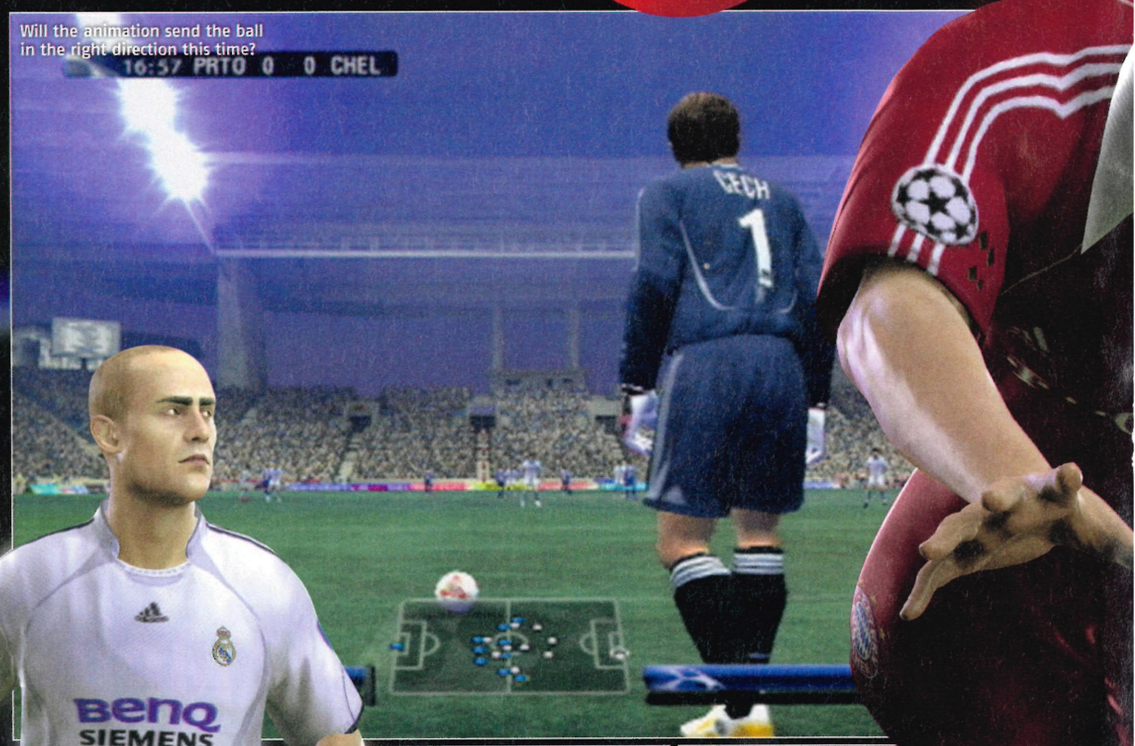
066 **YAKUZA 2**
A film and now a sequel – *Yakuza* continues its assault on our senses and we've got the latest

PUBLISHER EA | DEVELOPER EA CANADA | WEBSITE WWW.ELECTRONICARTS.CO.UK/GAMES/9843

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2006-2007

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

TAKE ON EUROPE'S FINEST AND GET YOUR HANDS ON OL' BIG EARS



Will the animation send the ball in the right direction this time?

For many the Champions League has superseded the World Cup as the most important and glamorous trophy in world football. With the heavyweights of the European game vying for the award it creates moments of drama and excitement unique in sport, so it's no surprise that EA is keen to tap into that popularity with a game that tries to replicate the action.

So *UEFA Champions League 2006-2007* is a game for people who get a shiver down the spine whenever they hear the 'Champee-yaaaans' theme tune. However, it isn't intended for those looking for a comprehensive football game: *Pro Evolution Soccer* and the *FIFA* series have little to fear from this mid-season additional.

Lacking international teams and custom league or cup modes, *UEFA Champions League* is what you might politely call 'condensed'. Choosing to concentrate on the top tier of the continent's leading leagues, it does feature teams that haven't qualified for the Champions League, so gamers can try to break the dominance of the Premiership's big four to take someone else through the highs and lows of the European campaign.

This will be extremely appealing for Spurs fans, who can see what would have happened had their players not chosen the lasagne as their pre-match meal for the last game of last season.

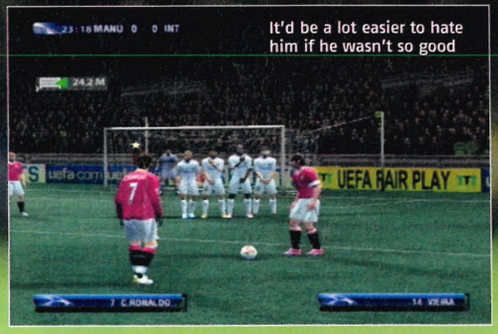
PUT THE BOOT IN

Of interest to those who know their European Cup history is the Challenge mode, which allows you to jump into games from the competition's history at key moments. So you can try to bring Liverpool back from the dead in Istanbul, recreate the drama of Man United's last-gasp win over Bayern Munich or perhaps close out a 0-0 for Inter to secure qualification in the group stages.

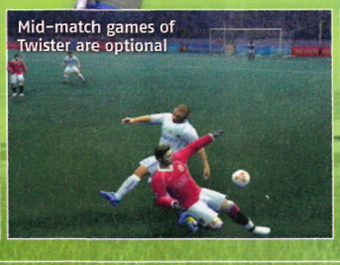
As for action, sadly there's not a lot to get excited about in terms of new features or flow. In fact, from what we've seen, it fails even to replicate the standard of the last *FIFA* game.

Of course, the game we were playing wasn't the final version of the code, but there are some curious moments when the animation doesn't fit the way the ball was struck, plus there was a significant lack of zip when it came to the passing and some curious decisions by the AI opposition.

Where the game does shine is its recreation of the televisual glitz that comes with competition: excellent commentary, emotive music and appropriate cutscenes. So perhaps all it needs for EA's game to become a big hit is some UK success come the end of May. ■ DH



It'd be a lot easier to hate him if he wasn't so good

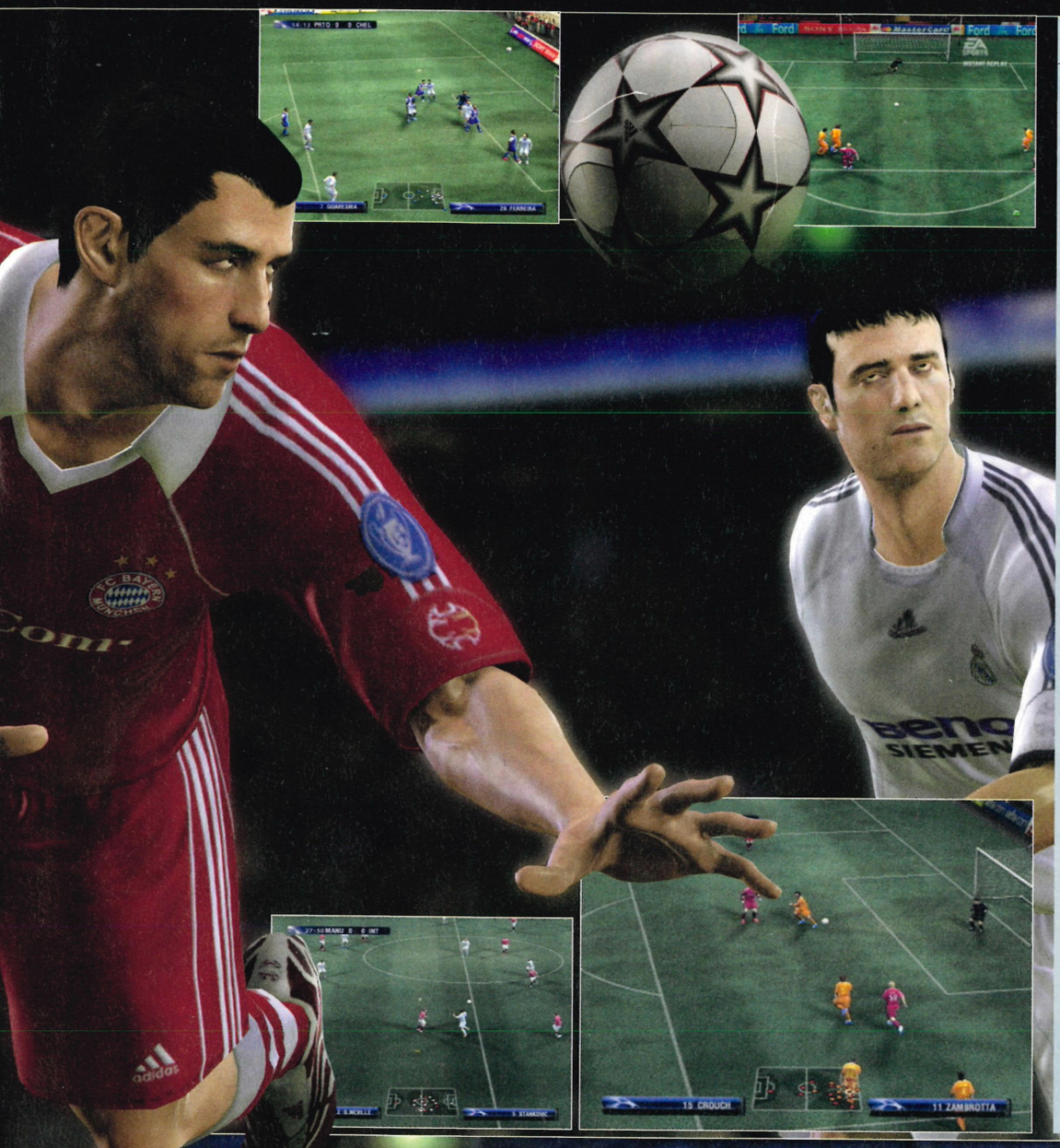

Mid-match games of Twister are optional

monitor PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

THERE'S NOT MUCH to get excited about in this package unless midweek European nights are the be-all and end-all of your world: both in terms of options and quality it looks inferior to *FIFA 2007* and *PES 6*

HOT OR NOT?

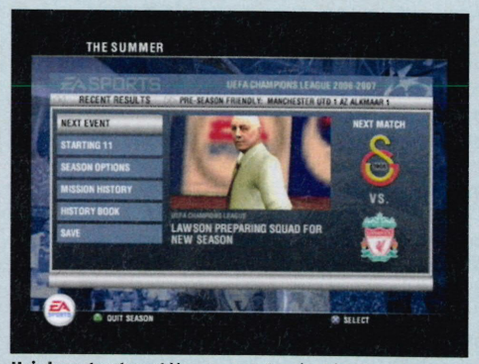
TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN



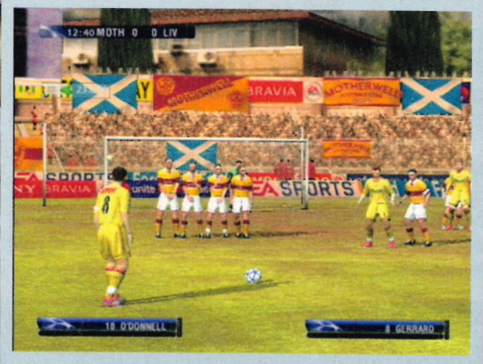
SEASON'S GREETINGS

We try the view from the dug-out

The Sweason mode in *Champions League* is a fairly straightforward idea but with some very curious aspects. The challenge is to manage your chosen team through the 2006-2007 season and so either compete in, or try to qualify for, the Champions League. The control of your team extends to transfer and tactics so it should be the complete football experience. What makes everything a bit weird, though, is that your hand is forced by the interference of the chairman. For instance, in the first week of managing Liverpool we couldn't continue through pre-season before we'd sold Peter Crouch. The fans were upset, the players were upset and so were we. Hope you're happy with yourself, Mr Chairman/EA.



Hairdryer treatment You can customise the appearance of your team manager, who shows up in cutscenes. We've gone for a 'could well take a bung' look



Pre-emptive You're even forced to go on a pre-season tour rather than getting straight into the league

Is it just us, or is there a hint of the undead about the players in these rendered shots?

PUBLISHER **EA** | DEVELOPER **EA LOS ANGELES** | WEBSITE **WWW.MOHVANGUARD.EA.COM**

MEDAL OF HONOR: VANGUARD

MORE DETAILS ON HOW THE LATEST MOH GETS IT REICH FIRST TIME

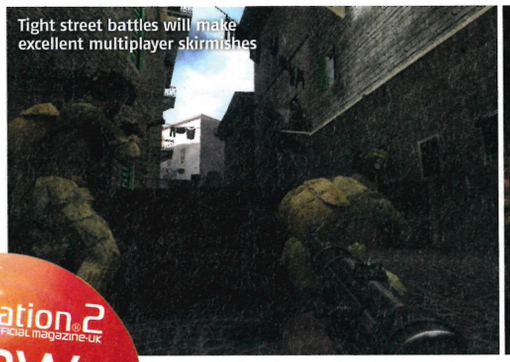
We broke rank last issue and revealed how *Medal of Honor: Vanguard* mirrors the events of EA's PS3 shooter *Medal of Honor: Airborne*. More details have now emerged as to how *Vanguard* plays, and they suggest that the game could also share many similarities with other past *MOH* titles, including its spiritual prequel *MOH: Frontline* and even the recent PSP blast, *MOH: Heroes*.

Vanguard and *Airborne* share similar campaigns as we finally near the end of the war and the Allied forces close in on Berlin. The two games follow the struggles of the US 82nd Airborne Division as they drop in to Sicily during Operation Husky before parachuting into the Netherlands for Operation Market Garden, to clear the way for the invasion proper during Operation Neptune and the push towards Germany in Operation Varsity.

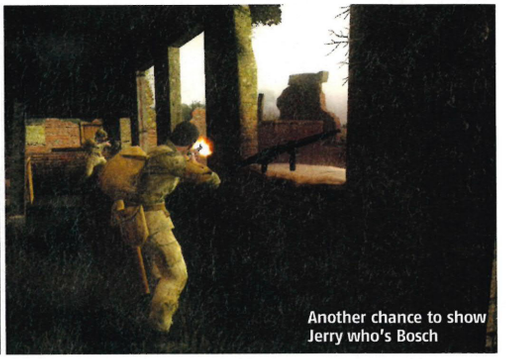
But on an obvious level *Vanguard* also touches on campaigns found in both *Frontline* and *Heroes*: you'll fight in Market Garden and the push towards the Rhine and German soil.

Plus, on a pure gameplay level, *Vanguard* aims to offer a freer, simpler World War 2 experience reminiscent of the series' origins. The battlefields will be larger, busier areas designed to enable gung-ho types and stealth players alike to find their way to those medals of honor.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK **new screens**



Tight street battles will make excellent multiplayer skirmishes



Another chance to show Jerry who's Bosch

FIRST-PERSON 'CHUTER

The first mission of the game that we saw begins with a customary epic opener, as you (in the boots of the 82nd Airborne's Frank Keegan) must leap from a burning plane into a flak-filled sky and into the fray below.

Landing with your squad outside a farm held by Germans, you meet your first set of choices. Do you follow your boys and storm the farm guns blazing? Do you separate from the lads and flank the enemy, earning major kudos for going it alone? Or do you shimmy up a nearby grain silo, at the top of which is a hidden sniper rifle ready to aim at the enemies below?

This latter hidden weapon is just one example of how *Vanguard* will encourage you to think more tactically about the mission ahead and explore the area to find the most advantageous routes. Listening to your squad mates will help: they will shout, shriek and mutter to each other and you, even suggesting tactics as the battle rolls on.

It's in this area that EA seems to be concentrating a lot of attention to detail, because your comrades feature twice as many polygons as seen in *Allied Assault* and thus more detail. They'll tire in battle, run for cover and point out enemies – generally looking and behaving like soldiers. Of course, the Germans will behave in the same way so expect to hear plenty of "Amerikaner hinter der Scheune!"

KRAUT OF THIS WORLD

Anyone who played *Heroes* on PSP will recognise the open-plan approach and abundance of secret stashes of intel and bonus weapons. However, it's in the simplicity of the combat and controls where *Vanguard* aims to replicate arguably the PS2's best game in the WW2 genre, *Frontline*. Combat is kept to the bare essentials: find the enemy, use cover and pop his tin hat off. Deeper options are available in the inclusion of *Heroes*' grenade cooking, peer over cover and sprint abilities – double tap forward to increase your run, the downside is this leaves you vulnerable to attack as you shoulder your rifle.

The *MOH* series seems to have a second wind of late: *Heroes* was an excellent step forward and *Vanguard* looks to be taking the best new additions from the PSP release and mixing in next-gen ideas to really drive the series forward. It should storm the PS2 with ease. ■ **ID**

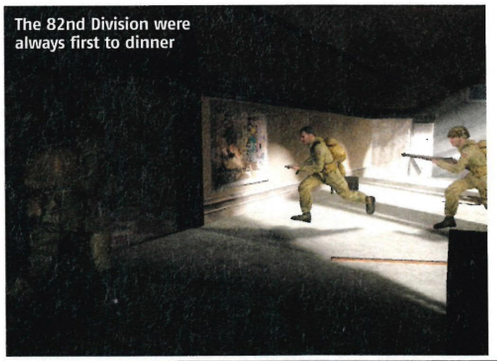
monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

MARKING *ALLIED ASSAULT* down as collateral damage and looking to the origins of the *MOH* series, EA looks to have one of the best WW2 shooters on its hands, if not the most ambitious FPS on PS2 in quite some time

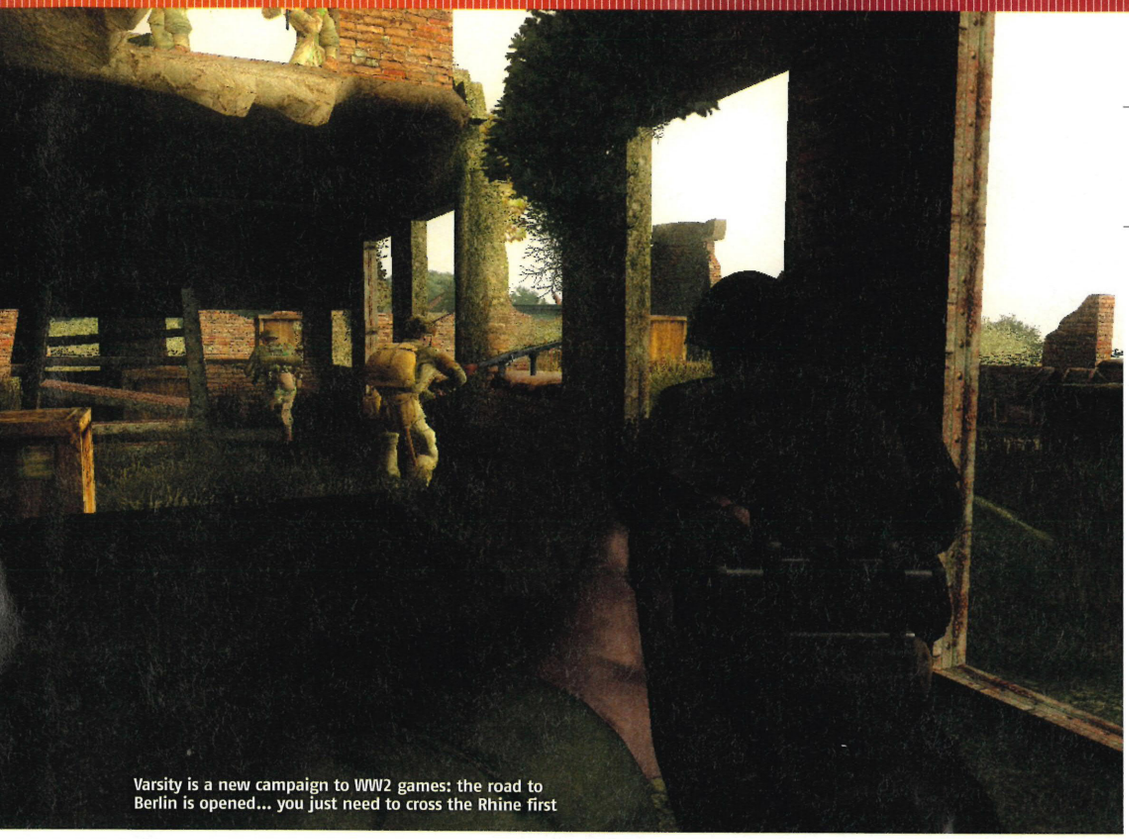
HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | **BOILING** | MELTDOWN

Yet another Nazi runs into our hero's crosshair. The humanity



The 82nd Division were always first to dinner



Varsity is a new campaign to WW2 games: the road to Berlin is opened... you just need to cross the Rhine first

You've played Operation Market Garden before but not like this

OPERATION OVERLOAD

Four campaigns have been confirmed for *Vanguard*

SICILY, 1943 The final push to end WW2 began in Sicily with Operation Husky. It was the largest combined sea and air assault of the time and this is where *Vanguard* begins, with Keegan jumping into compact street fighting in the small Sicilian villages

NETHERLANDS, 1944 The primary goal of Market Garden was to capture the bridges along the Rhine so the Allies could move into Germany, but the bridge at Arnhem was never taken, forcing the Allies to regroup and launch Varsity six months later

NORMANDY, 1944 Neptune was part of Operation Overlord and designed to land Allied reinforcements along the coast. Your role will be to move inland to Normandy and flank the Germans as Jimmy Patterson lands on Omaha Beach

GERMANY, 1945 Operation Varsity was one of the last big pushes by the Allies towards the end of the war and was the largest airborne assault of WW2. The aim was to parachute into Germany and gain a foothold on the Rhine, from there a march to Berlin

No tight shorts for young Kaito here, he's only into tennis for the chicks

You wouldn't think sand would be good for playing tennis, but there you go

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

PUBLISHER SCEE | DEVELOPER CLAP HANZ | WEBSITE UK.PLAYSTATION.COM

EVERYBODY'S TENNIS

WIMBLEDON'T BE FOOLED BY THE LOOKS, IT'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS

Let's face it: in real life, tennis isn't for everybody. There's too much running about, being forced into clingy shorts, and half the time you end up accidentally chucking your racket into a gaggle of hapless OAPs. And that's why we're intrigued that the Clap Hanz team – the developers behind the excellent *Everybody's Golf* – have turned their, um, 'hanz' to tennis.

As we've come to expect from Clap Hanz, *Everybody's Tennis* has an intuitive control scheme. The left analogue stick aims your shot at a specific area of an opponent's court, the face buttons take care of what type of shot you're going to play. Serving is simple, with one tap of ⊗ to toss the ball in the air and another to smack it across.

The key to success in *Everybody's Tennis* is timing. Hitting the ball at the perfect moment guarantees greater accuracy and control over your shots, but swing too early or too late and you may find the ball going somewhere you didn't expect, such as right back in your face.

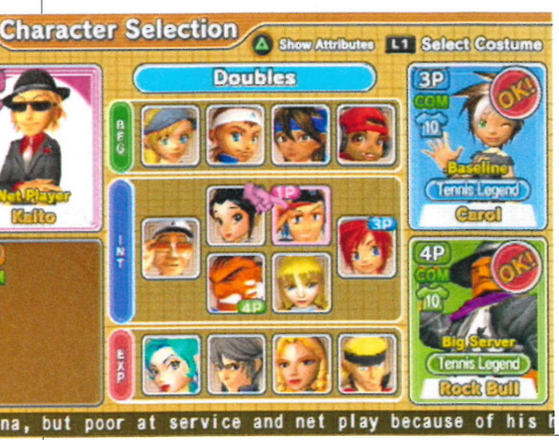
Sure, the characters may look cutesy, but *Everybody's Tennis* practically begs us to roll out that old chestnut of 'easy to learn, difficult to master' and thus ends up being more addictive than a pack of Marmite-laced cigarettes.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

From rap obsessed short-arse JJ ('a city kid who's fast on his feet', apparently) to a rough-and-tumble cowboy and a leather-clad gladiator (a Brokeback Mountain-style sub-plot between the last two couldn't be confirmed at time of going to press), each character specialises in a particular style of play.

So whether you prefer to deliver punishing volleys from the baseline or to smack your balls into your opponent's face from the net, you'll find someone to your taste. One thing's for sure, it's nothing like what you see in your local sports centre on a Sunday morning.

But whichever way you play, you can look forward to a few teeth-grittingly frustrating line decisions from the umpire, likely to inspire the kind of on-court hissy fit that would make even John McEnroe blush. ■ **MS**



This chap dresses like a cowboy or an Indian, as the mood takes him

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

IT MAY LOOK LIKE a kid's game on face value, but *Everybody's Tennis* offers up enough depth to impress, while still remaining accessible to younger players. It's, well, you know, a tennis game for everybody

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

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PUBLISHER SONY | DEVELOPER ZIPPER INTERACTIVE | WEBSITE WWW.SOCOMCOMBINEDASSAULT.COM

SOCOM: COMBINED ASSAULT

SINGLE-PLAYER SNOREFEST IS DECIDEDLY SO-SOCOM

"Man down! Man down! We've lost Specter!" screams our closest buddy as the lifeless shell of our once great Navy SEAL hardcase slides gently down the hillside. The UK release of *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Combined Assault* is looming like one of Dicky Branson Pickle's flashy hot-air balloons, so we're taking Fire Team Alpha through their paces with a damn-near-final version of the game. But, as we face yet another restart, we're not sure we've got the stomach for it.

Hardcore fans of the SOCOM series have stuck to it because of its extensive online options, and in previous instalments the single-player portion has been seen as an added extra, a bonus feature to train up raw recruits before taking the fight online. This is something developer Zipper is trying to remedy with *Combined Assault*, and to help this, each campaign mission has been made more open-ended.

Instead of being divvied up into enclosed areas and corridors, the stages are now massive open spaces in which you roam around completing objectives in any order you want – much like the maps you'd play on in the online arena. You can start by crippling the enemy's communications to keep your presence as stealthy as possible, or you can roll in with a full-on assault to crack the toughest objective first.

It's a breath of fresh air for *SOCOM*, and although the new structure doesn't offer up the same kind of freedom as say, *Mercenaries*, it does make a significant difference to the way the game's played.

Stages are now massive open spaces in which you can roam

TALKING THE TALK

Another reason why the open-ended maps work so well in *Combined Assault* is that the developer has beefed up the Crosstalk feature. What's Crosstalk? In a nutshell, it's the way *Combined Assault* on PS2 and *Fire Team Bravo 2* on PSP interact. Completing specific Crosstalk side-missions such as killing particular targets, finding documents and capturing prisoners during each scenario on PS2 will open up fresh features on *FTB2* and vice versa. The scenarios are the same on both formats, but they're viewed from different perspectives, so the handheld and home console versions of *SOCOM* make the finest military partnership since Smith and Wesson.

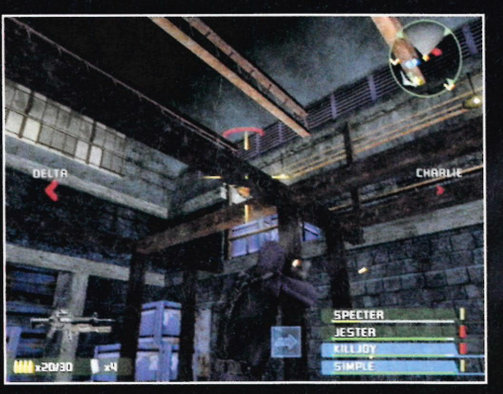
So, new maps, better Crosstalk, and all the same online features that made *SOCOM 3* such a global success story – surely this camo-clad juggernaut can't fail to impress? Well, perhaps it can.

Although all the elements are there, the online features haven't changed at all because *Combined Assault*'s multiplayer is 100% compatible with *SOCOM 3*. That's great if you don't fancy forking out for another version of the game to ensure you find full lobbies when you log in, but not so hot if you've played number three to death already. New maps will undoubtedly follow later in the year, but it's innovative game modes that keep fans signing up for more tours of duty.

SOCOM AND HAVE A GO

All this will be forgiven if the new and improved single player is indeed, a big step up from previous attempts. But right now, that's looking less likely than George Bush flying out to the Middle East and announcing: "We'll be off now. Don't worry, keep your oil." This version of *Combined Assault* trips and falls into almost every military shooter trap, and its unlikely these problems can be fixed in time for release next month.

The environments are massively dull, so trudging round them for hours is like the labours of Hercules in PS2 form. Your squad mates are a) stupid, b) cowards



MAKE LIFE EASY FOR YOURSELF

Play two ways with the new and improved Crosstalk

It's on PSP

On our PSP, Fire Team Bravo is peering over the edge of a frozen cliff at several bad guys guarding a downed chopper. It's a tough shot, but if they can pull it off, it should clear the way for Alpha team. Bravo picks off the terrorists with gusto, and then...

... over on our PS2, Team Alpha approaches the crash site to find the enemies guarding the helicopter have been dealt with. They approach the target and have no problem blowing it up to remove any technology the terrorists might have scavenged. That's teamwork.

It's on PS2

and c) the worst shots in the US army, whereas your opponents seem to have the uncanny ability to hit your exposed flesh with their AK-47s from 10 miles away.

And this brings us back to where we began. Our formerly high opinion of *SOCOM* is lying in a pool of its own innards. There is potential in *Combined Assault* waiting to be tapped, but it seems unlikely this fallen hero of military shooters will come into its own again until the developer – not the player – hits restart. ■ AH

monitor

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

***SOCOM* APPEARS TO** be down to its last clip of ammo, and unless something miraculous happens between now and April, it really should do the honourable thing and save the last bullet for itself

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

ETA 1 month
April 2007

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

PUBLISHER EIDOS | DEVELOPER GUSTO GAMES | WEBSITE WWW.CHAMPIONSHIPMANAGER.CO.UK

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2007

THE BEAUTIFUL NUMBERS GAME

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

Gusto Games is sort of a likeable version of Robbie Savage. Whereas others put in minimal effort, content to coast, relying on reputation and a few artistic flicks, this Oxfordshire-based development team are honest pros: keen, eager, intelligent and diligent. While other teams go for years signing a few new faces, updating the database and sending it off, Gusto has dived in studs-up with a wholly new interface, media management, non-league football, team talks and a match engine.

The results are impressive. Out go mountains of icons and sub-screens, in come buttons that always do the same job: START always advances time; L1 cycles through the main options; L2 does the same on the sub-menus in that section. So now you can toggle quickly and cleanly through your teams, news and tactics screens, and if you get lost SELECT always opens another route through the hefty database of clubs, players and countries.

The mid-match menus have also had a going-over. The ability to make substitutions and to bellow instructions from the bench are notable additions, and with the Subbuteo-style isometric replays you can watch the game unfold in full stick-figure-o-vision.

There are still a few pre-match preparations for these players to be put through, with rankings that swing from perfection to pathetic in seconds and 90-minute matches in which three of our midfielders scored a goal each in a 5-1 win but failed to complete, or even attempt, a single pass between them.

There are a few oddities and novelties amid the innovation, though. The bits where you get to explain your tactics and team selection to the press work well, but having to answer quiz questions for job applications and coaching badges punctures your belief in this fantasy football world almost as quickly as the transfer market that sees clubs throwing around bids likes a boozed-up eBayer.

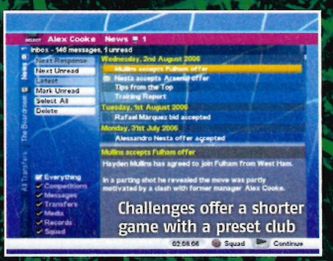
There is clearly still work to do, but at least Gusto doesn't seem to be afraid of putting in the effort. AC

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

QUICKER AND CLEANER than almost any other soccer boss sim, *CM 2007* has clearly been designed to solve many prior problems, although some new, hopefully fixable, flaws seem to have appeared

HOT OR NOT?

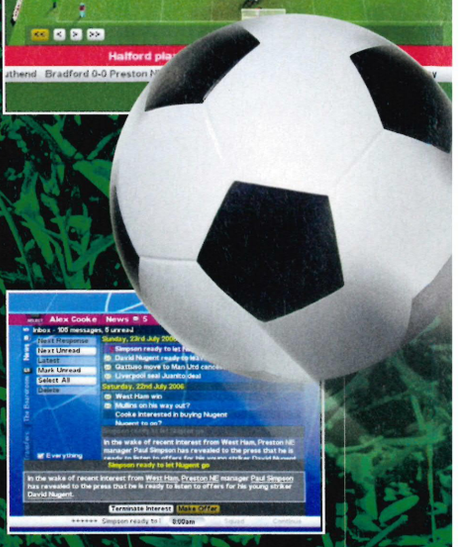
TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN



EXTRA LEAGUES
While the idea of Worksop Town v Vauxhall Motors might not excite many people, the arrival of the Conference North and South teams shows just how large a database of teams and players *CM* has now. And they will all be updated again too, once the transfer window has closed

HIGHLIGHTS
Instead of forcing you to miss crucial parts of each match or rely on the text-only commentary, you can have selected highlights shown to you at any time. So not only can you choose to watch just the goals go in or see every booking and blasted shot, but you can pick the angle from which you view

THE BENCH
Instead of pausing the game to tinker with your tactics, the Dug-out feature allows you do everything while the game continues. From making substitutions to shouting out encouragement or criticism to an individual player, the clock keeps ticking and you save precious hours of actual play



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ROGUE GALAXY

FORGET JACK SPARROW, JASTER ROGUE'S COME INTO PORT

Having been befuddled by the Japanese version then teased by a partially localised American version, we were delighted to finally get hold of a full preview build of *Rogue Galaxy*, a game we've been itching to play since it was announced two years ago.

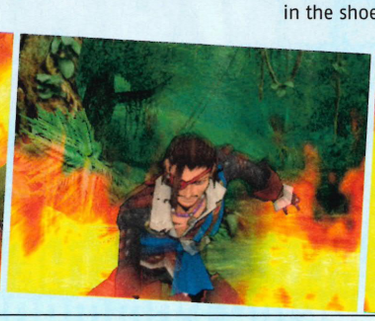
Rogue Galaxy is a sci-fi flavoured role-playing game featuring real-time combat and is developed by the studio behind the bewitching *Dark Chronicle* and the outstanding *Dragon Quest: Journey Of The Cursed King*. And in a word, it's brilliant.

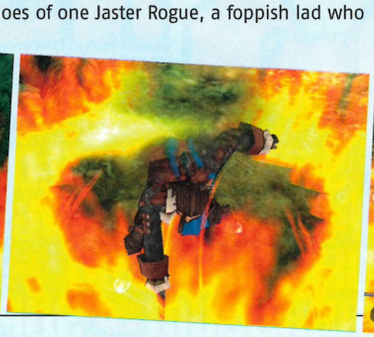
Like *Final Fantasy XIII*, the plot of *Rogue Galaxy* owes more than a slight debt to *Star Wars* auteur George Lucas. It revolves around a naïve orphan lad from a backwater desert planet, a couple of robots, a cocksure mercenary, and an evil empire - though it is a comical homage, rather than outright theft of ideas.

After all, at no point in the *Star Wars* series was C-3PO required to beat the bananas out of a mob of braying apes as *Rogue Galaxy*'s resident polite-bot Steve is more than happy to do. And R2-D2 never had a Scottish accent and a missile launcher for a weapon.

YARR WARS

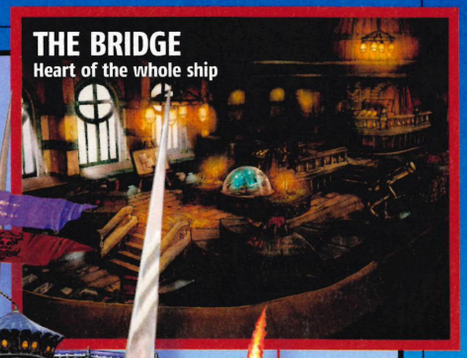
Although there are a bundle of things that make *Rogue Galaxy* a joy to play, it's this cast of well-realised oddballs that immediately grabs you. The game puts you in the shoes of one Jaster Rogue, a foppish lad who

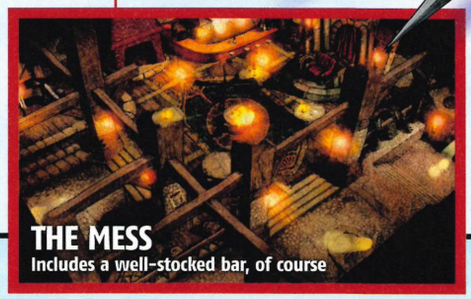


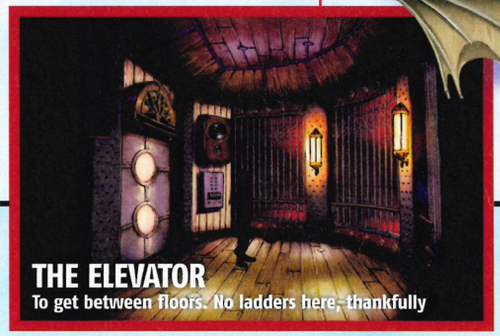


THE DORGENARK

Put the solar wind in your sails with *Rogue's* pan-galactic pirate ship







carries an impossibly large sword and who's whisked away from his home planet, Rosa, when a band of space pirates mistake him for a legendary bounty hunter.

SHIP, SHIP HOORAY

Once on board the pirates' vessel, the Dorgenark, Jaster meets some of the folk who'll accompany him on his big adventure. From Zegram Ghart, a hard-boiled mercenary who sports an eye-patch and a gruff attitude, to the hilariously camp first mate Monsha (who just happens to be a cat), *Galaxy* is full of colourful, weird characters.

The game's dialogue is often a little wooden, but it occasionally throws up some choice nuggets and is all well acted, thanks to the voice-work of the same talent responsible for breathing life into *Metal Gear Solid* and *Final Fantasy*.

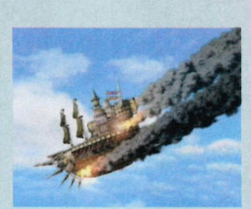
WE ARE SAILING

The cutscenes are gorgeous, especially when they feature the Dorgenark

1 Jaster sees the ship for the first time and goes aboard

2 Yikes, aren't they the Sandworms from *Dune*?

3 The Rose Nebula, seen from the ship's main deck



4 Land ahoy! The ship's going to crash on a jungle planet!

ETA 3 months
Jun 2007

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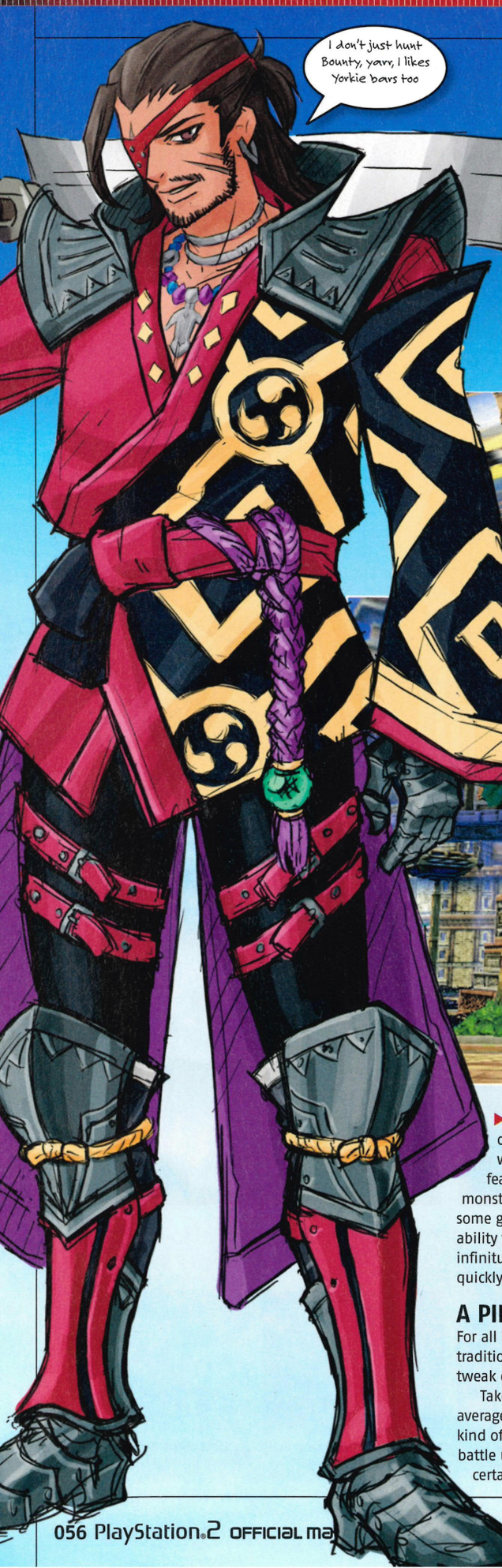

Zegram is a bounty hunter with rather flamboyant dress sense

Old and new technologies are mixed so you can buckle your swash *and* fly in space

THE SALAMANDER MARK VII BOSS

It's the first boss you'll face and it's not too tricky to defeat, but the fight tells you a lot about the game's complex battle system

1 Morning! Still, at least there are three of you to tackle him

2 The beast has armoured anklets, which you have to destroy first

3 The Monography Shot weapon builds platforms to its weak spot

4 The salamander delt with, you get bags of points and bragging rights

Surprisingly, the UK *Rogue Galaxy* isn't just a direct port of the Japanese original. We're getting what is essentially the director's cut of the game, featuring a slew of new content: costumes, monsters, and a whole new planet to visit. There are some gameplay improvements, too. These include the ability to upgrade and customise your weapons ad infinitum, in contrast to the Japanese game, where you quickly hit a ceiling.

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR RPG

For all its space-fairing pirate action, *Rogue* is a fairly traditional RPG. That's no bad thing, sure, but it does tweak enough of the standard formula to be unique.

Take the Challenge Battles for example, in which your average run-of-the-mill random battle transforms into a kind of mini-game where your party must complete the battle under a number of conditions, such as within a certain time or without using any items.

The enemies themselves throw up unique challenges, too. Some might require you to stomp on their heads first before you can attack, while others need to be shot out of the air with Jaster's trusty pistol before you can engage them. Some foes can be picked up and tossed into each other, set on fire with explosive attacks, and beaten into submission via over-the-top combo attacks that you can pull off with your shipmates.

We've barely set sail but we adore this already. **MS**

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

ANOTHER LEVEL 5 adventure that ticks all the right boxes. Gorgeous visuals, beguiling gameplay, oddball characters and a level of scale and ambition that puts other games to shame. More on *Rogue Galaxy* very soon

HOT OR NOT

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PUBLISHER **SEGA** | DEVELOPER **SEGA RACING STUDIO** | WEBSITE **WWW.RACING.SEGA.CO.UK**

SEGA RALLY

ALREADY LOOKING MUDDY WELL BRILLIANT

Fixing the unbroken, dabbling with that which should not be dabbled and rectifying that which was fine already: these are often the bane of the updated game or sequel. Developers don't seem able to resist tweaking with this, introducing that, all in the – usually vain – hope of imbuing their beloved franchise's original title with the freshness to draw in virgin punters.

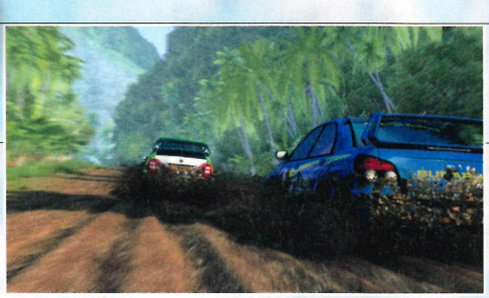
Sega, having spent years revisiting classics and systematically ruining them, is preparing redemption in rally form. And from what we've witnessed, they're doing it with style, conviction, justification and reverence. *Sega Rally* doesn't have a hipperty-hop soundtrack; it doesn't want you to take over a rural town by busting a rival rally gang's balls and it doesn't require you to smash up traffic in pornographic slow-motion. It'll be exactly what made *Sega Rally Championship 1995* a victory 12 years ago and popular to this day, but with a delicate modern twist.

ARCADE IN HEAVEN

Your co-driver still suggests: "Easy left... hard right... easy left over jump!" with no pretence that it's anything but a triggered sound sample designed to be heard echoing around sticky arcades ripe with male musk. Pompous rock music chugs you round deliciously long powerslides, drifting past rivals who no longer fasten themselves to predefined splines and now come with AI wisdom worthy of Gandalf. *Sega Rally* promises refined rallying satisfaction that glistens across your screen with pixel-lit clarity and is painted in a glorious Sega palette that provides the sort of colours that are only normally perceivable by angels.

It isn't being coded in Japan but in sunny Solihull, and will be the first *Sega Rally* to be released for a PlayStation in the UK. Sega Driving Studio was formed with the single purpose of creating *Sega Rally* for next-generation consoles and that's exactly what it's doing.

Photorealistic environments and complex engine configurations were considered, but were decided to be blasphemous to the game's key strengths. Courses constructed from GPS data be damned, pretensions to real-world authenticity go take a hike. You get eight lovingly crafted environments, each one designed for joy rather than education, and 30 cars to do the racing. Five competitors on the track, a physics engine built from scratch and graphical clarity that makes us remember what Sega used to be about before it decided to give guns to hedgehogs.



Sega Rally is going to be beautiful in all areas. And dirty: very, very dirty. Track deformation isn't new to next-gen gaming; it can be seen in, among many games, *Sega Rally 2006* on the PS2 – in a rather irrelevant way, since the deformation was purely cosmetic. But 2007's version sees the tracks getting ploughed, gouged and torn with deep grooves driven through mud that's whipped up by your wheels to pepper your paintwork.

The mud will wash off as you slam through water, but the tracks remain ravished and become increasingly more ravished after consequent laps. And with that comes one major difference to the series.

CHANGING RACES

Sega Rally was always about knowing exactly what was coming round the corner and carrying out the correct manoeuvre with a Nazi-like efficiency that took years of practice to perfect. The pleasure was in learning the motions; now it's going to be about mastery of an adaptive technique because once a dirt track's been defrocked, its very nature changes.

Deep mud is slicker than shallow. Dig it away and you'll reach drier ground that provides greater traction. The course, in a subtle yet definite way, will change and so will your lap times if you don't take this into account.

Oh, and the famous 'Game Over yeah!' line from the arcade *Rally* is still there, voiced by a member of the original development team. Aw! ■ **WJ**

Tracks are deformed by your wheels, so subsequent laps demand changing technique

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

PITCH-PERFECT CONTROLS and unashamed pride in being a videogame will help bring that now almost mythical Sega playability to the PS3, and for that we're expecting to be truly thankful

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | **BOILING** | MELTDOWN

The mud that splatters onto your car will wash off when you go through water

FROM EAST TO WEST... AND BACK AGAIN

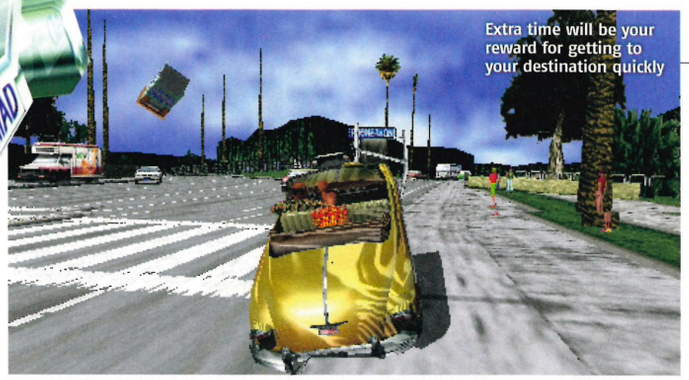
Japan gives up the racing ghost

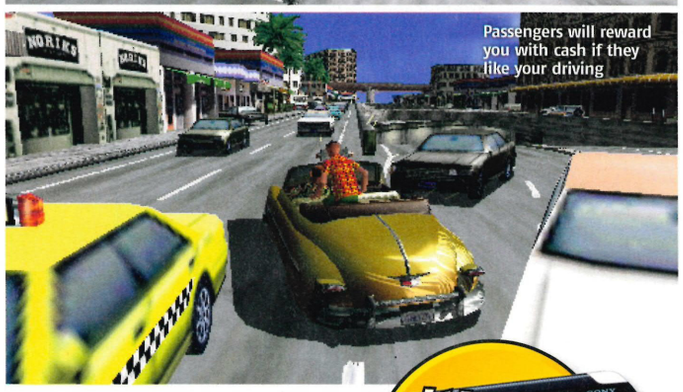
To release an iteration of a classic only in Japan is clearly insanity, but that's exactly what Sega did with *Sega Rally 2006*. Japanese PS2 owners got an arcade-perfect version of *Sega Rally Championship 2005* too, but neither would strike our shores because our shores were already heaving with Richard Burns, Colin McCrae and the V-Rally series. And that was just too much competition to bother with, reckoned the company that released *Shinobi 2* to a non-existent audience. To be honest, *Sega Rally 2006* was pretty poor, but what about *Championship*? The game's PAL Dreamcast conversion suffered from heavy black borders but it did all right. However, UK PS2 owners be damned. The AM series of developers would never get a decent stab at the European market and instead Sega Driving Studio was formed in the Midlands; UK PlayStation owners would have to wait until the third console for a taste of the good stuff that started it all.

PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk hands on

There will be a Time Attack mode, multiplayer over the internet and AI pack racing

The ultra-steep, San Francisco-style hills are still great to tear down


Extra time will be your reward for getting to your destination quickly


Passengers will reward you with cash if they like your driving

PUBLISHER **SEGA** | DEVELOPER **SNIPER STUDIOS** | WEBSITE **WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM/EN/**

CRAZY TAXI: FARE WARS

A WELCOME RETURN JOURNEY

There is something so special about Sega's cab racer, *Crazy Taxi*, that many people remember it more fondly and more vividly than the faces of their own family. Perhaps it was the azure skies, the plunging hills, the wanton destruction or simply that it was fun – and not the brain-rending, 12-buttons-to-learn type of fun that so many titles offer these days. It was pure, primary-hued, arcade-style enjoyment, ingested through the optic nerve. And that also makes it perfect fodder for the shift from treasured memory to bite-sized PSP gaming with *Fare Wars*.

MINI-CAB

To preserve that much loved past as well as embracing the present, this PSP-only edition plunders both of the first two console versions' content, while also adding and updating the original with ad-hoc multiplayer extras and a new movie-saving and sharing feature.

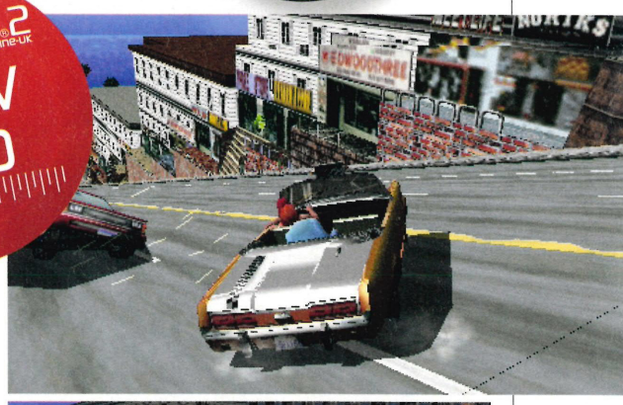
Anyone who's done 'the knowledge' before will recognise the dreamed-up version of California in the waterfront and hill climbs of the 10p-powered arcade original and Dreamcast versions. The downtown, subway and park sections, inspired by New York, and culled from *Crazy Taxi 2*, will ring a bell, too. But alongside these and the now standard time-trial and arcade modes comes a fleet of mini-games. Also taken from both previous editions, they include immense leaps, balloon-popping and bowling.

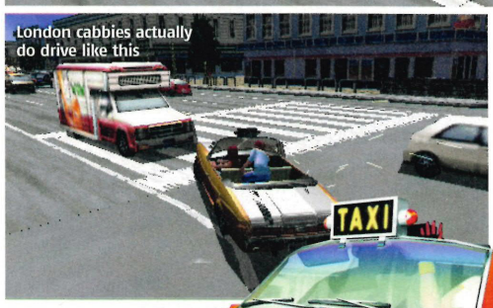
But there's more to *Fare Wars* than another hackneyed carriage racer, mainly because of what happens when another PSP player wanders into range: wireless cooperation and collisions have been added to the package. You can either help out a friend by picking up extra punters or run them off the road, stealing their passengers and their cash in the ensuing crash.

Any particularly impressive pieces of highway robbery can be saved in 80-second slices onto memory stick and watched or shared.

The newly formed Sniper Studios team has also updated many of the passengers' voices and added fresh music to the score. The names of these tunes, along with a host of currently secret extra modes will be revealed as the release date draws nearer. But we already know that once the roof light goes on again, you can be sure that we will again be flagging down *Crazy Taxi*. ■ **AC**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK new info





London cabbies actually do drive like this

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

IT MIGHT NOT power-slide far from the template tried and tested in every arcade and on every console since the Earth's crust cooled but this port is polished and improved enough to set anyone's meter ticking

HOT OR NOT?

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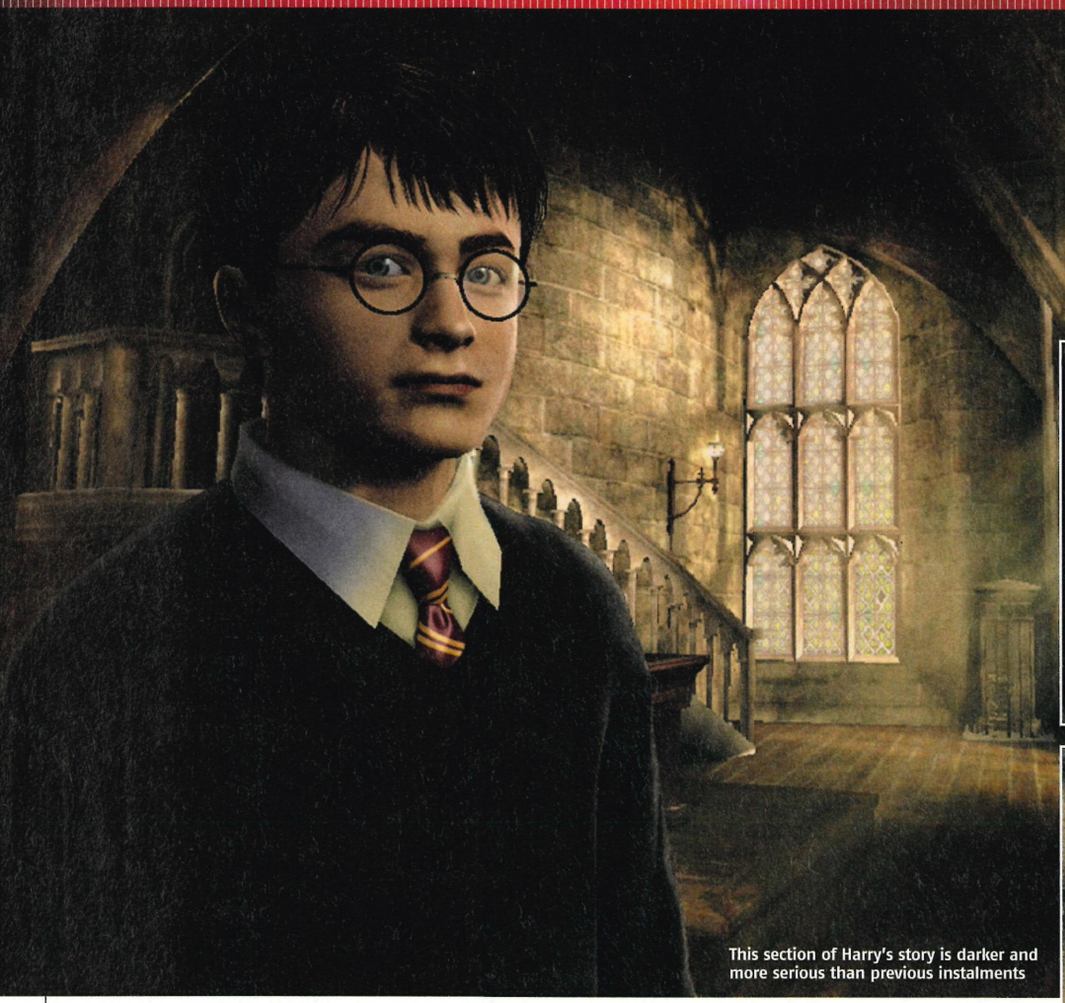
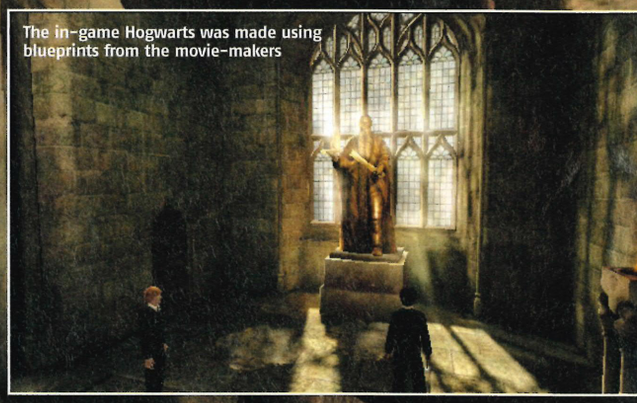
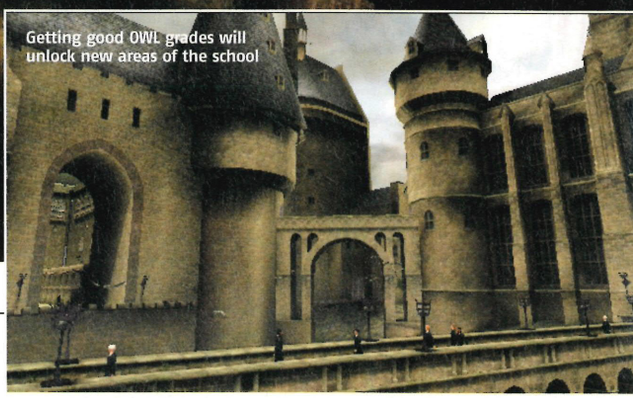


This section of Harry's story is darker and more serious than previous instalments



The in-game Hogwarts was made using blueprints from the movie-makers



Getting good OWL grades will unlock new areas of the school

PUBLISHER **EA** | DEVELOPER **EA CHERTSEY** | WEBSITE **WWW.ELECTRONICARTS.CO.UK**

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

IZZY-WHIZZY, EA IS BUSY MAKING AN INTERACTIVE HOGWARTS

You might think that making another Harry Potter game would be a no-brainer for EA: follow the next film's plot, throw in some Quidditch, scatter a few Every Flavour Beans around the place and shazzam, everyone's happy, particularly JK Rowling's accountant. But things are never that simple, especially when dealing with something as precious as Harry Potter, and *Order of the Phoenix* creates some intriguing problems for EA.

The main issue concerns the age at which the game should be aimed. The Harry Potter audience has been developing and maturing ever since the first book was published 10 years ago. The kids of 1997 have become the young adults of today, a change that has been reflected in the tone of the books and films. So surely this should come across in the game series, which is itself now six years old.

Justin Manning, producer of the EA Chertsey-developed *Phoenix*, is well aware of this and believes this change of style and content can be captured by bringing the game and movie closer together. In art terms, he says, *Order of the Phoenix* 'is the most authentic version of the Potter universe'. When it comes to content though, the PS2 version will continue to be made to 'appeal to our core audience of 8-14 year olds'.

CLASS HALF FULL

Although the level of complexity and style of content might not be changing that much, Manning has promised that EA will deliver what all Potter fans have always wanted – an interactive Hogwarts to explore.

Rather than the wizards' school being merely a backdrop for the action, players will feel more like a pupil, attending classes, meeting fellow students and playing games. Using blueprints supplied by the makers of the movies, EA is building Hogwarts as a sprawling labyrinth filled with wonder and magic – the same one that's captured the imagination of all Potter fans.

Within these magical walls you'll be able to take part in numerous mini-games that include Wizard Chess and Gobstones. You can also earn your OWLs (wizard GCSEs) in which getting good grades will unlock further areas of the building.

This is of course all extracurricular activity which you fit in between the main plot missions. In those, control switches from Harry to supporting characters such as Dumbledore, Sirius Black, Fred and George, allowing the gamer to be at the heart of every major setpiece in the plot of the book and movie.

Of course, you could put a turd in a Harry Potter wrapper and it would be a massive bestseller come July when both game and film are released. But it's comforting to know that EA is continuing to listen to Potter fans and push the game forward. ■ **DH**

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

THE FULLY INTERACTIVE Hogwarts is a very enticing idea, but it would have been interesting to see EA reflect the development of Harry as a character with a game that would appeal to a slightly older audience.

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

During the game's main storyline you play as a variety of different characters

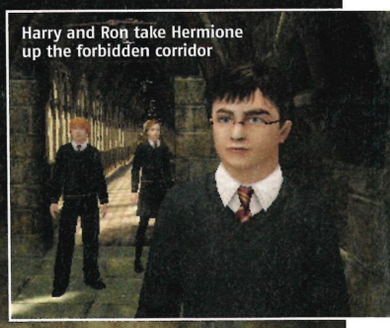
SPELLS TROUBLE

The Order of the Phoenix sees Harry start his fifth year at Hogwarts with the threat of Voldemort more real than ever. Unfortunately not everyone is as worried as Harry and Dumbledore – especially the minister for magic, Cornelius Fudge, who appoints a new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher for Hogwarts to keep tabs on the headmaster and pupils. Unfortunately the Ministry-appointed teacher leaves the pupils unprepared to defend themselves, so Harry and his pals form a group they name Dumbledore's Army to prepare themselves for the dangers that lie ahead.

The characters are getting older but the game's still aimed at kids

The game is faithful to the film and book's storyline

Harry and Ron take Hermione up the forbidden corridor



PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK new screens

OWL BY YOURSELF

The Order of Phoenix will be very different game from the *Goblet of Fire* PS2 game because this time there's no Quidditch, Eye-Toy compatiblity or co-op multiplayer. The absence of co-op and Quidditch is because EA want the game to be a close to the action of the film as possible and Quidditch doesn't feature prominently in the plot. The PSP game will allow for six-player combat in which gamers can choose to play as the usual Potter hero but also as the Inquisitorial Squad, Lucius Malfoy and even Lord Voldemort.

PUBLISHER **SQUARE ENIX** | DEVELOPER **TRI-ACE** | WEBSITE **NA.SQUARE-ENIX.COM/VALKYRIE/SITE2/**

VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA

THE RPG STEEPED IN NORSE MYTHOLOGY IS BACK, YOU LOKI DEVILS

Following up a game that's dearly loved by an army of hardcore fans is always going to be tricky. Nettles have to be grasped as to where the plot should go, how characters are to develop and how to retain the magic of the original yet offer something fresh.

Fortunately a miracle solution does exist that allows developers to reset the story, dismiss lead characters and requiring them to only capture the 'spirit' of the original: it's known as the prequel. And that's what we have with *Valkyrie Profile 2*.

The first *Profile* dealt with a valkyrie called Lenneth and her attempts to recruit fallen soldiers to fight in Norse god Odin's army of the dead. *Silmeria* is set 100 years before those events, allowing all loose plot strands to be severed and new powers to be introduced.

However, just who has replaced Lenneth as the focus of our attentions is the source of some confusion because although we have a new valkyrie by the name of Silmeria, she's not really all there.

CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY HEAD

Once a loyal servant of Odin, Silmeria's relationship with him became fractious after an 'incident' (one we won't spoil). As punishment Silmeria's spirit was imprisoned within the mortal body of Alicia, Princess of the Dipan.

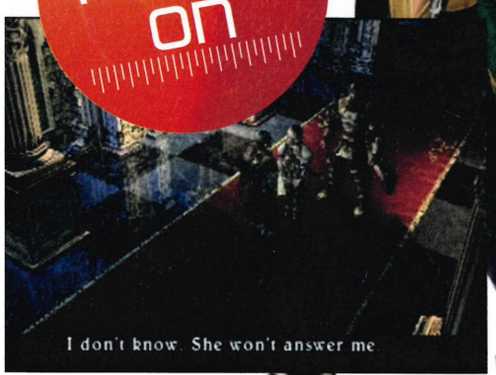
Inconveniently, instead of remaining dormant, the valkyrie's spirit has awakened and has part control of Alicia's body, leaving a *Being John Malkovich*-style conflict. Now our schizo princess must flee her kingdom on the run from Hrist, another of Odin's valkyries.

After this rather curious opening it becomes quite comfortable RPGing with townspeople to chat to, turn-based battles that break out on haunted pathways and the recruitment of a team to help fight the monstrosities you meet.

Events do depart from the expected however because Silmeria/Alicia can

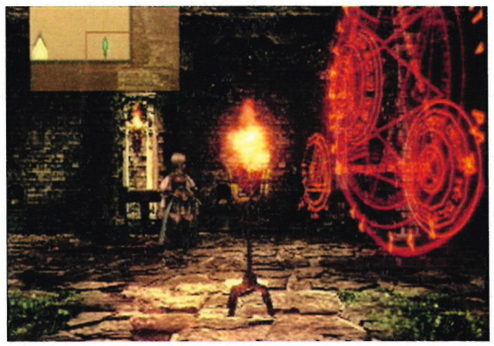
Moody lighting! Huge swords! Ah, how we love the RPG

The storyline requires no knowledge of the first game



PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK hands on

Don't worry, not all the damsels are frigid



Most of the game has a fixed camera, reflecting the 2D original

The fighting's turn-based with a challenging learning curve

fire 'photons' at approaching monsters, temporarily encasing them in a block of ice. From here you have three options: simply move past and avoid the battle; use the frozen block as a platform to leap upon; or fire another photon and swap on-screen positions.

It's simple but adds an extra dimension to the game because it can be used as a strategic and puzzle-solving tool during the map-wandering parts of the game.

NORSES FOR COURSES

Where *Profile 2* really differs from the original is the use of the spirits of dead soldiers, or einherjar as they're called. In the first game they had to be discovered, then levelled up in order to become good enough to serve Odin. This time around they already exist within Silmeria and must be developed in order for them to be set free and become human again.

It's a slightly less dynamic transformation, which makes every departure from your team quite a low-key, anti-climatic event. However this is just a small change in the emotional tone: the game as a whole has the same life and spark as the original so it will have you enchanted from the opening cutscene.

By combining clear and comprehensive tutorials with a sharp learning curve, you're tested from the first 10 minutes onwards which means it will be several hours in before there's any chance of boredom.

While all this has been designed to appease fans of the original game, there's nothing in there that precludes newcomers – another advantage of doing a prequel. So even though it might not rival the might of *Final Fantasy XII*, *Valkyrie Profile 2* is certain to enchant those who give it the time. ■ **DH**

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

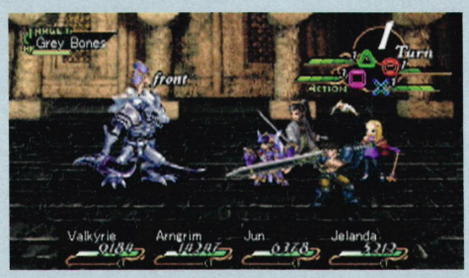
A CURIOUS BLEND of a role-playing game and platforming, but one that really works. Throw in cute visuals and an engaging story that requires no knowledge of the first game and you have an enticing proposition

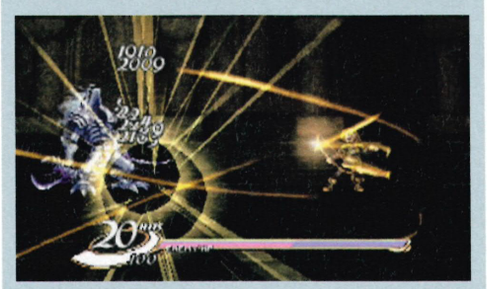
HOT OR NOT?

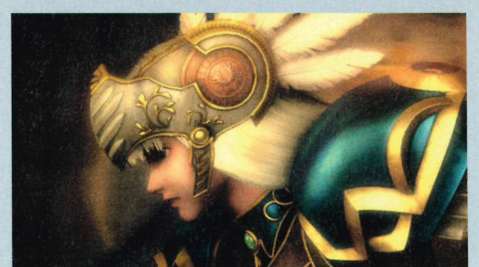
TEPID | WARM | **HOT** | BOILING | MELTDOWN

SIDE OF THE VALKYRIES

To complete the *Valkyrie* 'experience' Square is doing a port of the original *Valkyrie Profile* game for the PSP. *Valkyrie Profile* was original released for the PS1 in 1999 but only in Japan and America. It has since developed status as a lost classic because copies of the original are particularly hard to come by. The story follows the valkyrie Lenneth as she searches for the souls of fallen soldiers in order to recruit them to the Norse god Odin's army and is presented in 2D, hence the *Profile* bit of the title.







PUBLISHER SEGA | DEVELOPER AMUSEMENT VISION | WEBSITE WWW.RYU-GA-GOTOKU.COM

YAKUZA 2

A SEQUEL WORTH TOKYO-ING ABOUT

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK new screens

With half a million copies of the sequel sold in less than one month in Japan, a movie in the offing, and a third (next-generation) instalment of the series already confirmed, *Yakuza* is fast becoming a household name in the Far East.

However, here in the UK it has yet to reach the same level of gaming superstardom, which probably explains why Sega hasn't yet confirmed whether or not *Yakuza 2* will ever receive a PAL release.

Anyone who missed out on the basic plot of the original will be pleased to hear that the backstory is explained through a sequence of narrated cinematics at the start of the game (which are, thankfully, skippable).

A year later you play as Kazuma, a Yakuza big-wig who – throughout the first game – was struggling to restore his reputation and recover a fat wad of missing gang cash. Now that he's sitting pretty with the Japanese crime-lords, Kazuma has more room to operate. And from a developer's point of view, this means more opportunity to cram in extra features.

Fighting moves have been beefed up for the sequel

BISHI-BASHI SPECIAL

However, the core gameplay remains the same. As you wander through the neon-drenched streets of Toyko and Osaka, you're called on to complete missions, help locals with their various problems, and smash your fists and feet into an assortment of indigenous scallywags.

Along the way, you'll level your character up and, by assigning experience points, learn fresh skills and combat moves. Scrapping was the best part of the original game, and it's been beefed up for number two: extra finishing moves, even better animations and the ability to change the direction of attack mid-combo have all been crammed in.

近江連合の磯田会長のもとへ…

裏でどんな罠を仕掛けてるか分からねぇ…

But what about those extra features? Well, now Kazuma can take a more hands-on approach to managing his life. As well as buying and running nightclubs, you'll be able to take to the streets in the search of leggy lovelies to either entertain your punters or work behind the bar.

NOW AND YEN

Elsewhere, there are new mini-games such as the officially licensed Sega Aladdin Pachislot machine and, thanks to a money-spinning marketing deal, stacks of real-life products to see and buy. Ordinarily we wouldn't be handing out the high-fives about product placement, but in this case, it all helps to make the game world much more believable.

Combined with much-improved visuals, these touches help to paint one of the most realistic recreations of metropolitan Japan we've seen in a game.

The fact that the game is more handsome is just one point on a long list of reasons for PS2 owners to cross their fingers and hope Sega decides to bring *Yakuza 2* to Europe - a decision that's still, unfortunately, hanging in the balance.

GO WEST?

If the publisher ultimately doesn't feel *Yakuza 2* is suitable for the West, it'll be a crying shame because almost all the duff features that we bitched about in our review of the original (OPS2#76) seem to have been either sliced or ironed out.

The load times before and after fights? Gone. Wooden animations and unrealistic background effects? Tightened up – now each character in the busy Tokyo streets reacts realistically whenever you walk past. The terrible mini-games? Well, they're still there, granted, but there are a load more to choose from, so you're bound to find at least one that batters your tempura.

The only real 'issue' we have with this second instalment is that the fixed camera is still rooted to its spot high above the streets of the city, preventing any chance of panning around the level to admire the finer details, and in some cases, actually seeing where your character is going.

We certainly hope the *Yakuza* series gets a second bite of the UK's lychee. But with pages of dialogue to translate and hours of voice acting work to be done before it's ready for release into a continent that isn't fluent in Japanese, this is a big ask. Still, if you don't ask, you'll never get.... ■ AH

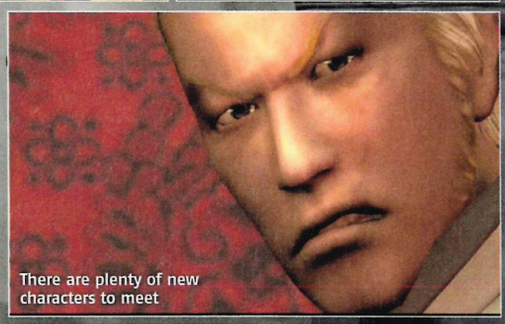
monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

WITH MANY TWEAKS and improvements to the original *Yakuza*'s promising formula, we could be staring down the barrel of a great sequel. After all, half a million Japanese gamers can't be wrong

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

The streets of Tokyo and Osaka have been faithfully recreated



There are plenty of new characters to meet

二十年以上たつのか…

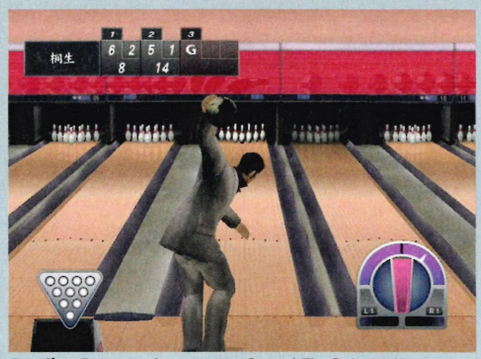
私達が掴んだ情報では…

Honestly, officer, we've only had a few ales

あなたを傷害の現行犯で逮捕します

LEISURE CRIME

After a hard day of extortion and pimping, how does the typical Japanese gang lord unwind in *Yakuza 2*?



Bowling Eat your heart out, *Grand Theft Auto*. You may have had pizza delivery missions and a rubbish disco-dancing mini-game, but could CJ nip down the local AMF and knock out some strikes? Nope

Crazy golf Golf is mad-popular in Japan, so it's no surprise to see a tee-scattering mini-game crop up in *Yakuza 2*. It's unlikely to have Tiger quaking in his Nikes, but cool nonetheless

THEN: JURASSIC LARK

The beautiful but deadly Lost World level was one of the defining moments in the original *Raider*

THEN: REX APPEAL

And the defining moment of that level was the scrap with the T-Rex. How will it fare on PS2?

BACK TO THE FUTURE

AS LARA PREPARES FOR A BLAZING COMEBACK IN A REMAKE OF THE FIRST **TOMB RAIDER**, WE UNEARTH A RELIC TO SEE IF THE OLD CROFT MAGIC CAN STAND THE TEST OF TIME

"The PlayStation needs a strong title that will become synonymous with the machine, like Mario is with the Nintendo 64." So said veteran game developer Peter Molyneux in the December 1996 issue of Official PlayStation Magazine when asked what he would 'generally like to see happening' with Sony's console, then just a year old.

This wish would be granted by the young lady gracing the cover of that very same issue. Unfeasibly large of chest, impossibly skinny of waist and tougher than the whole cast of Bad Girls put together, the lass in question was, of course, Tomb Raider's Lara Croft.

Iconic and controversial in almost equal measure, revered by some as the ultimate in Girl Power, adored by more as eye candy, the gymnastic adventuress and relic-hunter is the one PlayStation character that even non-gamers have an opinion about.

Any gamer over the age of 20 will have spent countless hours with her during the late 1990s, because she wasn't just fit, her game was damn good fun to play, too. Many will also have played her later incarnations on just about every gaming platform that isn't owned by Nintendo. And let's face it, who wouldn't rather look at Lara than at a fat plumber?

Now the First Lady of videogames is to return, with a 'reimagining' of the original Tomb Raider adventure set for release in May to mark Lara's 10th birthday. A few months ago we saw demos of certain sections of the game and there was every indication that developer Crystal Dynamics would build upon the solid foundations it laid down with the most recent Raider title, Legend.

We wanted to bring you a full hands-on report this month but sadly a playable version wasn't ready. Such is our impatience, though, that we spent an entire Saturday morning scouring local game shops for a copy of the ancient PS1 version. Six quid poorer and numerous hours later, we find our appetite for Lara's adventures quite undiminished and the prospect of this Croft conversion more enticing than ever.

GUNNING AS A FOX

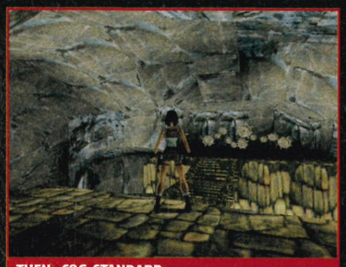
Just hearing the first few bars of that mellow, yet somehow haunting, main menu music is enough to stir up memories sweeter than a stolen kiss on a summer's day. As the opening cutscenes play out, we're feeling all nostalgic and whimsical, but then it's down to business and all that soppy stuff gets chucked out of the window.

You will doubtless recall the first corridor that you trot down once the sherpa-munching wolves have been disposed of. It's indicative of the brilliance of design that permeates the whole game.

Already a little nervous that there may be more four-legged killing machines lurking, a 'thwop' noise breaks the silence. We'd forgotten the danger signal and suddenly we're legging it along the path getting darts stuck in Lara's backside from a wall-mounted trap. Okay, it's not the most frightening of encounters but you've only been playing for 30 seconds and you're

THEN: RISING STAR

Pre-game concept art for the original Croft: that top's got to be giving her one hell of a wedgie

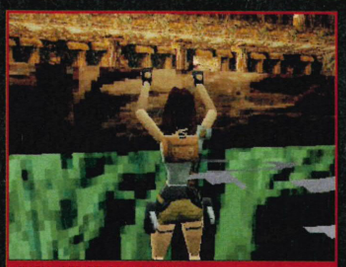


THEN: COG STANDARD

The cog puzzle in the old game only really involved seeking out the missing parts

NOW: SWITCH IN TIME

The new version of the puzzle involves a lot more thought and challenges your dexterity



THEN: LEDGE OF REASON

For the time, Lara was a great mover, but now the grid-based movement rather jars

NOW: TOMB WITH A VIEW

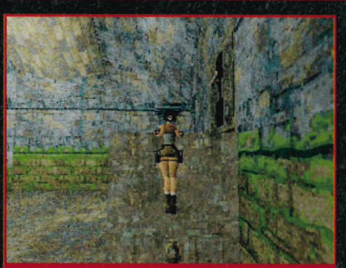
The environments are more organic and Lara's movement is more fluid and natural-looking

THEN: CURRENT AFFAIR

Fall in the river and the current swept you away and dumped you over the waterfall

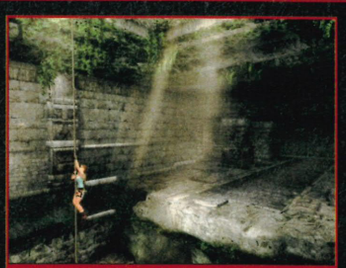
NOW: FALL OF BEAUTY

The convincing water shows how Crystal Dynamics is pushing the PS2 to its limits



THEN: HANDSTANDING ROOM ONLY

10 years on and the acrobatics are still neat to watch and the grunt she emits just as dirty



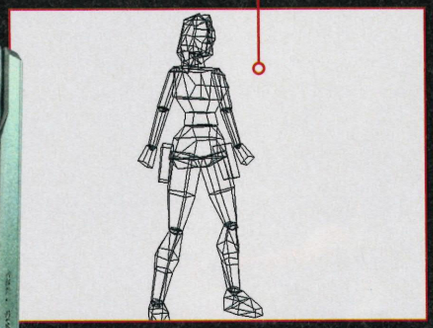
NOW: SWINGSTAR ROCKS

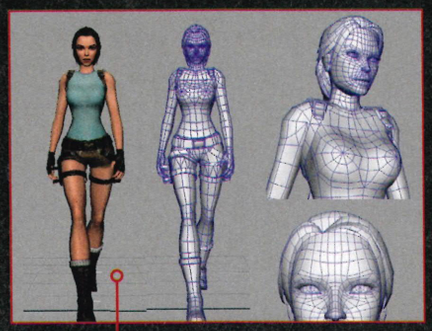
Gravity really has taken hold. Lara's ability to swing on ropes adds plenty to the gameplay

FRAME ON
A well-rounded progression

THEN: DOWN TO THE WIRES

The original in-game Lara was built using the application 3D Studio because motion capture technology was very costly to use 10 years ago





NOW: TWIST IN THE DETAIL

Although it's essentially the same technique, advances in development software allow artists to add far greater detail

NOW: GO FIGURE

The same attire, right down to the gold belt buckle, but Lara's a more well-rounded character in every sense. Just look how realistic those pistols are!

already thinking that every nook, cranny and crevice hides some infernal device. Or wolf.

Obviously we've played this game a few times before but the first time this happened it immediately made us take everything very, very cautiously, examining each and every possible pitfall from a relatively safe distance and treading very carefully indeed. Legend was a fine game in its own way, but it never created the same sense of tension in the player, mainly because your biggest concern was taking out guards and trying to tune out the chatter in your 'earpiece'. This is something that Crystal Dynamics has acknowledged, and we've every confidence that the developer will recapture the old spirit.

LADY IN DREAD

It takes more than a few darts and the odd oversized dog to make you clench your buttocks for the duration of an adventure, and Tomb Raider piled layer upon layer of reasons to make you apprehensive. The sheer scale of the game's environments was, at the time, majestic, and it still impresses today. Sure, you're playing an aristocratic adventuress extraordinaire, but the majority of the time you feel like the puny human you are: be it by the towering cliff faces that line a path, or the first waterfall you get thrown off should you fall into the river by the cog puzzle.

Married to this is the loneliness and solitude you must endure. There's no one to back you up, and this really helps to create an emotional attachment to Lara (no, not like that you filthy boy). It's just you and her, alone in this vast, untouched world, and you've got to look out for one another. "Whoa, that piece of the floor looks dodgy. Eek, it's falling away! Argh, spikes – jump! Sheesh, that was close, thank goodness you're all right."

Okay, perhaps we got a little too attached, but at the very least we challenge you to find anyone who can play Raider without talking to Lara out loud at any point, even if it's just to berate her for falling in the water and dying yet again.

MUSE YOUR ILLUSION

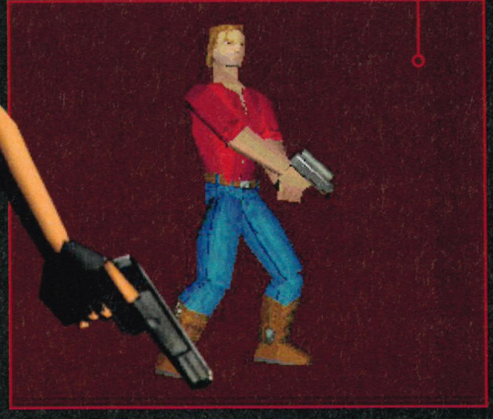
The game has many individual layers of great game design, the sum of which made Tomb Raider the legend it is today, but our single favourite dish from this

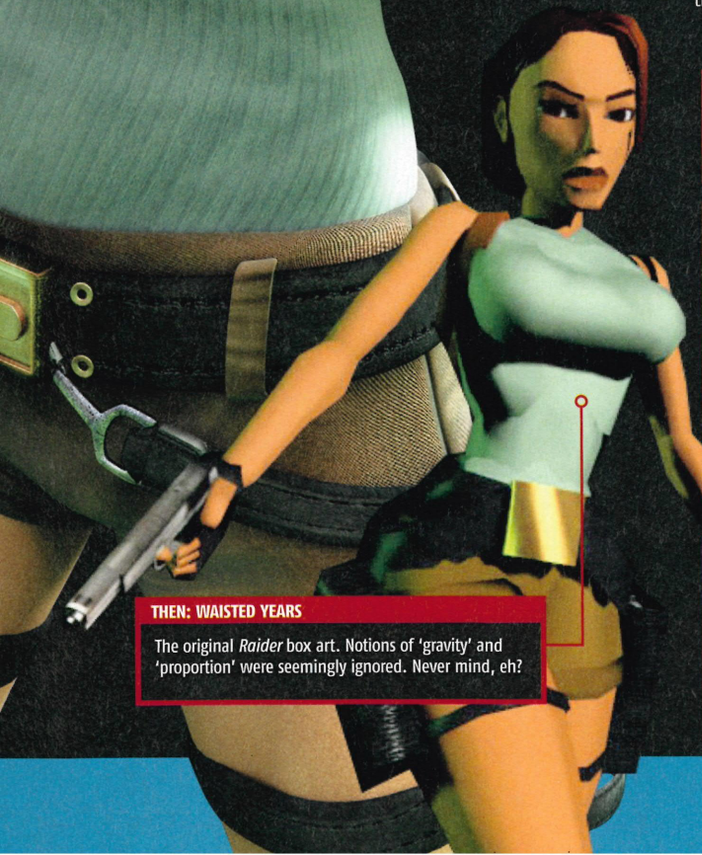
NOW: LARSON ABOUT

Unlike *Legend*, where goons were found at every turn, there are only a few human enemys to face in Tomb Raider, such as Natala's henchman Larson

THEN: BLOCK HORROR

He wasn't quite as intimidating a collection of pixels, but Larson was still in a pain in the butt in the old game. He just. Wouldn't. Die!





THEN: WAISTED YEARS

The original *Raider* box art. Notions of 'gravity' and 'proportion' were seemingly ignored. Never mind, eh?

THEN: GATE ACCOMPLI

The final frame of the opening cut-scene as Lara reaches a summit deep in the Andes. If you ventured into the darkness, your gaming life changed forever

NOW: ENTRANCING QUEEN

The detail may be more ornate but we're willing to bet there's still a pack of hungry wolves waiting behind those doors to savage your sherpa

smorgasbord has to be the music. As with the enemies you fight, the use of music is frugal to say the least. You won't encounter an angry bear or gang of street-tough alligators at every turn, so you won't hear a rousing orchestral score during every fight, puzzle or find.

For the majority of the time the caverns, corridors and tombs resonate to a deafening silence (there's that tension again), so when the music does kick in, the impact is much more palpable.

The quick-tempo 'danger' music alerts you to trouble just before it lands on your head, giving you just enough time to prepare yourself for action. The 'reward' music is even better. After a couple of hours solving a puzzle or seeking out the right key, the few bars of soothing music bring relief that you're safe for a few moments at least but more importantly that you've made progress. It's like Lara's giving you a little peck on the cheek and a wink. Or maybe that's just wishful thinking...

PS1-DER OF THE WORLD

Bah, look at us getting all misty-eyed and soppy. The important question is, has Lara's first adventure stood the test of time? More or less.

We didn't play through the entire game again – partly because we didn't want to remember every little detail before playing the remake, and partly because Lara kept getting impaled on spikes in the Tomb Of Qualopec.

Naturally the game is showing its age, but great design will always be great design. And we don't deny, of course, that there weren't problems with the original game, made all the more obvious by the 2500 or so PS1 and PS2 titles published in the intervening 10 years.

The whole game is built with blocks, and hence climbing and jumping around the place was often somewhat tedious and formulaic, even back in the day. Walk to the edge of a ledge, one backwards jump, run forward, jump, cling. Repeat and repeat. And there's no analogue control!

It's also easy to get lost in the maze of corridors and the graphics make you see openings and ledges where there are none, leading to wasted hours of exploration – although we suspect that last bit was intentional.

Our chat with the game's designer Dax Ginn in OPS2#81 suggests that all of these issues and more have been addressed for Anniversary, while the developer simultaneously tries to remain faithful to a game beloved by millions. From the images of the new and old versions that are scattered across these pages, we're confident that Crystal Dynamics will succeed in its goals.

Be sure to find out how everything is progressing in next issue's exclusive hands-on feature. ■

BEAST IN SHOW

The Darwinian evolution of your furry foes

THEN: DINO-SORE

When your first face the raptors in the Lost Valley you're armed only with your pistols, so you need to be nimble and avoid their attacks by leaping about

THEN: PEDIGREE CHUMS

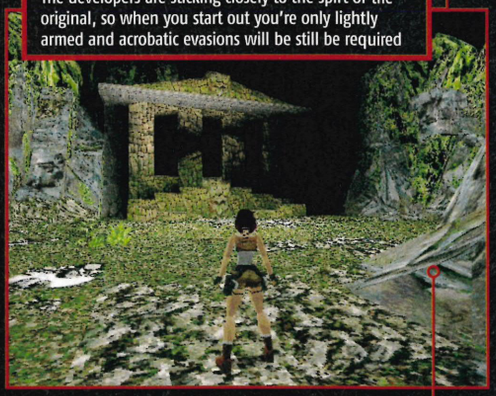
The first serious threat you faced in the original were packs of wolves, who were quick and went for the throat. Later there were bears, apes and 'gators

THEN: BAT HAIR DAY

They may have been the least threatening creatures but bats were *so* annoying. They were hard to spot and if they got close they started munching your scalp

NOW: PACK IT IN

The developers are sticking closely to the spirt of the original, so when you start out you're only lightly armed and acrobatic evasions will be still be required



THEN: GOING, GOING, POLYGON

The graphics were great for the time, but it was often hard to see where you could or couldn't go and where the clingable or climbable parts were

NOW: WOLF IT DOWN

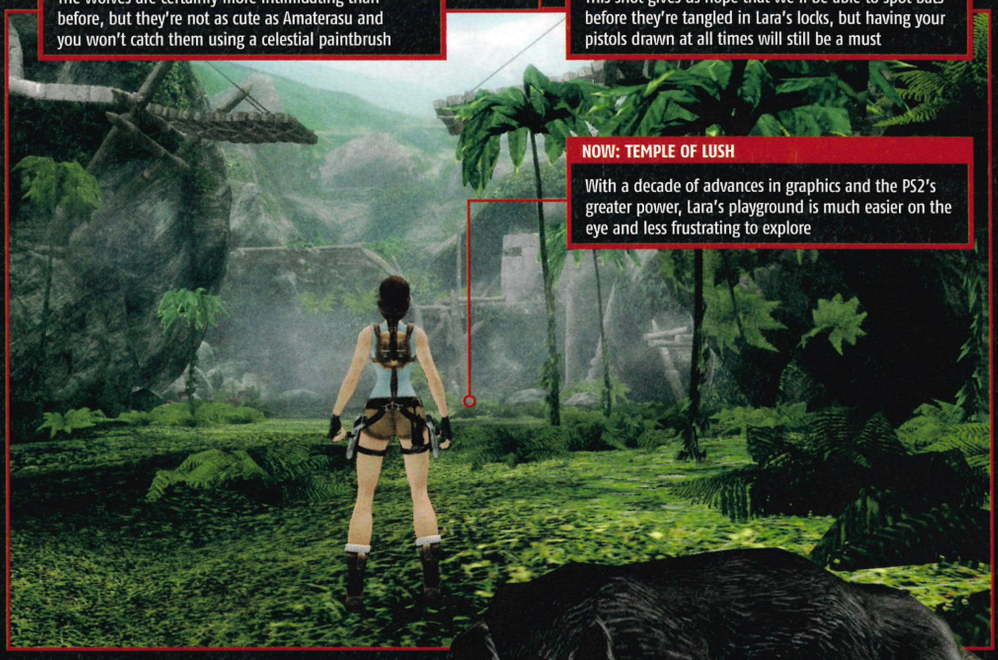
The wolves are certainly more intimidating than before, but they're not as cute as Amaterasu and you won't catch them using a celestial paintbrush

THEN: BAT'S BETTER

This shot gives us hope that we'll be able to spot bats before they're tangled in Lara's locks, but having your pistols drawn at all times will still be a must

NOW: TEMPLE OF LUSH

With a decade of advances in graphics and the PS2's greater power, Lara's playground is much easier on the eye and less frustrating to explore



NOW: BATHING BEAUTY

Lara can still hold her breath for a very long time and not only does the water look much better, analogue controls make her swimming easier to control, too

THEN: WET'N'WILD

Although the original animation of Lara swimming made most male gamers need a cold shower, it was often difficult to see what was going on underwater

In a world where cash is king and freakish abominations ravage our cinemas and our consoles, enter if you dare into the spine-chilling nightmare of what happens...

WHEN GAMES MEET MOVIES

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, movies and games probably co-existed in blissful harmony. But here in the real world, the two industries take it in turns to steal each other's ideas and, more often than not, ruin them completely.

This is what led to two million copies of the *ET* game allegedly being dumped in the New Mexico desert, Bob Hoskins becoming Mario and *The Godfather* being turned into a game where you pushed butchers' heads through windows. But despite these atrocities the two mass entertainment giants seem continually drawn to each other like ill-fated lovers or badly coordinated curtains.

Sure, there have been a few notable successes. And it seems the failures haven't discouraged anyone from trying: there are plenty of crossovers planned for 2007 and beyond.

We've put together a comprehensive guide, showing that the PS2 is the place to live out your big-screen fantasies or to find inspiration for the next Hollywood blockbuster or straight-to-video flop...

Games of films

The videogame spin-off has long been an essential part of the marketing for a new movie, but for a long time the cost of acquiring the licence often left little cash over to pay for the development of a half-decent game. Fortunately this is starting to change, with filmmakers taking a far more pro-active role in the games development and directors such as Peter '*Lord of the Rings*' Jackson and *Matrix* makers the Wachowski Brothers becoming far more hands-on. So we can look forward to the following list of movie tie-ins with *some* degree of optimism.

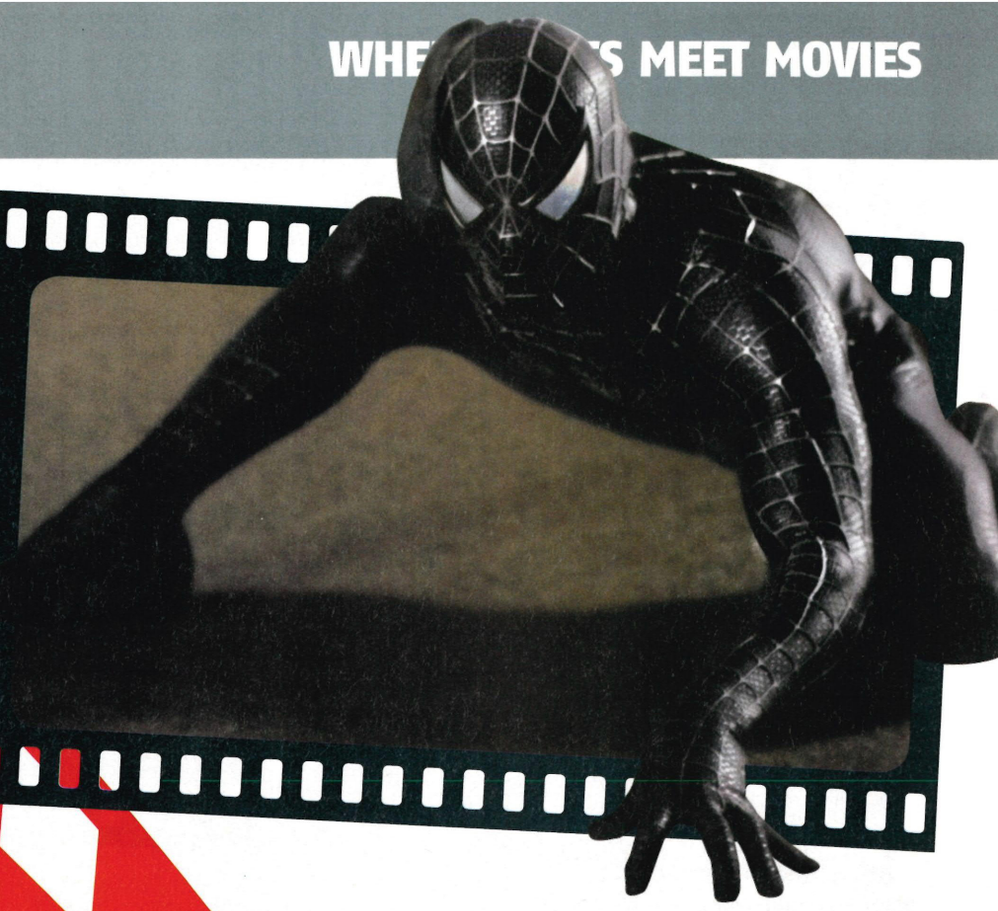
Transformers

The Film
Earth becomes the battleground for the Autobots and Decepticons as the robots in disguise get a gritty CGI makeover for 2007. Directed by Mr *Pearl Harbour*, Michael Bay (which may or may not be a good thing).

The Game
Activision has snapped up not only the licence for the *Transformers* film but also the rights to create games based on the Hasbro line of toys that anyone born in the 1970s will remember fondly. Not much is known about their plans but they will do well to better Melbourne House's *Transformers Armada: Return to Energon*.

Blockbuster potential
Huge! There's much anticipation for the film and when it comes to the game, how can you go wrong with giant, shape-shifting robots?

Spider-Man 3



The Film
Spidey wrestles with a symbiotic space suit, Sandman and his best friend in director Sam Raimi's third entry in the web-slinging series.

The Game
Activision has once again handed developing duties to Treyarch, so expect the same free-roaming action seen in *Spider-Man 2*, as well some departures from the plot of the film to flesh out the experience.

Blockbuster potential
If Treyarch manages to iron out some of the problems of the last Spider-Man game, namely the repetitive nature of the side missions, this should be a huge critical and commercial success.

Iron Man

The Film
Another Marvel superhero film adaptation, this time *Swingers* scribe Job Favreau is directing Robert Downey Jnr as Tony Stark. the disabled but very rich man behind the iron mask. Due in your local cinema some time in 2008.

The Game
Sega has secured the rights from Marvel, so the film spin-off could be the start of a series of Iron Man games. As a game, expect loads of action and, surely, an upgradable suit?

Blockbuster Potential
While Iron Man lacks the same popular appeal as Spider-Man or Batman, he is an intriguing character with a really exciting pair of strides that offer huge gaming possibilities.

The Golden Compass

The Film
Philip Pullman's book *Northern Lights* (or *The Golden Compass* as it's called in the USA) gets the big screen treatment. It relates the tale of young Lyra who finds herself at the centre of mystical conspiracy.

The Game
Sega announced last September that it will develop the game in-house, but there have been very few – in other words, no – details released since. Expect lots of armoured bears!

Blockbuster Potential
With Sega handling subject matter so rich and full of incredible ideas it would be a travesty if this ended up as Harry Potter-style blandness.

The 300: March To Glory

The Film
Following on from the success of *Sin City*, *300* is an adaptation of another Frank Miller graphic novel. This one relates the events of the Battle of Thermopylae where 300 Spartans fought to the last man against a huge Persian army.

The Game
Eidos is publishing the Collision Studio-developed PSP game in which gamers can take the role of Spartan leader King Leonidas, hacking and slashing his way to becoming a legend.

Blockbuster potential
Because it's only being released for the PSP, expect only modest success for a game that bodes to be a fairly limited scrolling beat-'em-up. Still, it should be reasonably good fun.

Pirates of the Caribbean 3: At World's End

The Film
The concluding episode of the Jack Sparrow story will be out this summer as Will and Elisabeth set out to save the pirate lush from a watery grave.

The Game
Eurocom, the developer behind the glossy *Batman Begins*, is creating a game that's based on events of both the *Dead Man's Chest* and *At World's End* films.

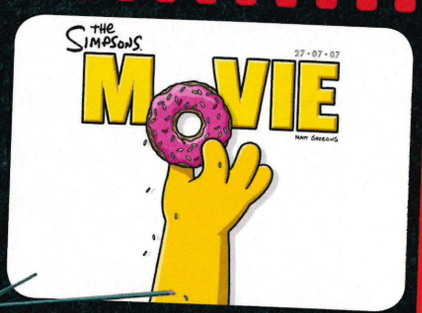
Blockbuster potential
The *Pirates of the Caribbean* films have been huge but the games have been positively low-key. With Eurocom promising a game that is far more tied in with the film's plot, however, this could well change.

The Simpsons Movie

The Film
The population of Springfield star in a feature-length adventure that series creator Matt Groening intends to be much more than just an extended episode.

The Game
EA has picked up the rights to create Simpsons games and it would be very out of character to miss an opportunity to capitalise on a summer of Simpsons madness. Whether this will be a directly connected with the action from the film remains to be seen.

Blockbuster Potential
Simpsons Hit and Run was a massive seller despite being a merely okay game so if EA could create an interactive Springfield to explore we're sure this would make a lot of gamers very happy.



Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer

The Film
Stretchy Spice, Invisible Spice, Fiery Spice and Bricky Spice all return. This time it's the presence of intergalactic dude the Silver Surfer that calls the foursome into action.

The Game
Sevenstudios, which was responsible for the gaming spin-off for the original film, is at the helm again. Expect a similar four-way split of combo-heavy action.

Blockbuster potential
The first *Fantastic Four* game was disappointing and unless there's been a serious rethink for the sequel, expect more mindless button-mashing.

007 James Bond

The Film
Daniel Craig's second outing as 007 is due out in November 2008 and it is rumoured that the story leads on directly from the events of *Casino Royale*.

The Game
Activision takes over the 007 licence from EA this September and plan a game to tie in with the new film, rather than a standalone Bond title.

Blockbuster Potential
We're hoping for a grittier action game to mirror the updated attitude of the harder-hitting Daniel Craig 007.

The Bourne Ultimatum

The Film
Matt Damon as the most sensibly dressed spy in the world. It's hard to look dangerous in a cardigan but somehow he manages it.

The Game
Tricky one this: Vivendi has secured the rights to make games based on Bourne creator Robert Ludlum's book, so it's unlikely we'll see a game using Matt Damon's likeness or scenes taken directly from the films.

Blockbuster Potential
It'll be interesting to see how much weight the Bourne brand has without any tie-in to the films. We suspect this might struggle unless the game is remarkable.

Ratatouille

The Film
Animation feature from *Toy Story* creators Pixar which tells the tale of Remy, a young Parisian rat who aspires to be great chef and sets his sights on getting a job in a top restaurant.

The Game
THQ has assigned Heavy Iron studios, the team behind the *Incredibles* game to develop Ratatouille. It will allow gamers to play as Remy and brave the perils of the kitchen in order to prepare some culinary masterpieces.

Blockbuster Potential
Games of Pixar films usually find themselves in the top 10 best-sellers, but we'll be surprised if a game about a cheffing rodent will be first choice with the hardcore.

Shrek the Third

The Film
Dreamworks' fairytale creation is back with Shrek, Fiona and the gang.

The Game
Activision has handed *Shrek* to Shaba Games who came up with the enjoyable *Shrek Superslam*. It will be an action adventure game where you get to control Donkey, Puss in Boots and the ogre himself.

Blockbuster Potential
The film will undoubtedly be an enormous hit and Activision will expect similar returns to *Madagascar*, its previous and very successful Dreamworks tie-in. Activision has signed a long-term deal granting it game rights to all Dreamworks films including *Bee Movie*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Rex Havoc* and *How to Train Your Dragon*. Frankly, we're not sure whether this is a good thing or not.

Dear movie tie-in game developer...

...thanks for *Return of the King* and *Lego Star Wars*. Can we have more of that, please? And to help you, here's some tips from us. Love, OPS2 xxx

Make characters look right
This is hugely important. The reason movie tie-ins appeal so much to gamers is that we want to become the hero, so capturing their swagger, attitude and hopefully face is a good start.

How to:

Scarface
Captured perfectly all the mannerisms that Al Pacino imbued his psychotic, coke-dealing character with, despite using an impersonator for the voice acting rather than Mr Pacino himself.

How not to:

Minority Report
Replaced the Tom Cruise character with one that's nothing like him. Never mind the lantern jaw and the white hair, he was tall, for God's sake!

Don't just pick a hit film
Just because a film is a classic doesn't necessarily mean it will make a great game. So why not save your money for the rights to film that might not be as famous but is perfect for gaming action?

How to:

The Warriors
This cult film is about a gang of thugs working their way through a city beating seven shades out of rival gangs. Perfect gaming material that even comes with a ready-made level structure.

How not to:

The Godfather
Amazing work of art: part family drama, part examination of power struggles in organised crime. But looking moody in a dark room doesn't make great gameplay.

Use the action well
Figure out which bits of the action capture the spirit of the film best and replicate them in the game so players get to feel part of the story. Easy! Or so you might think...

How to:

Jaws Unleashed
Jaws is a huge angry man-eating shark so we don't want to see him trawling the sea looking for a mate, we want him to go on a watery killing rampage through a tiny seaside resort.

How not to:

Hulk
Hulk is a huge angry monster, so we don't want to play as his weedy alter-ego avoiding searchlights, we want to smash buildings in a superhuman rage.

Give the game some love
Don't just treat the game as another part of the film's marketing. It should be an event in itself, especially because it's likely to be eight times more expensive than a cinema ticket.

How to

Enter the Matrix
Ambitious project focused on events that ran parallel with *The Matrix Reloaded* timeline, with specially filmed cutscenes featuring the film's stars. A companion to the cinema release, not just a tie-in.

How Not To

Antz Racing
Film: interesting feature examining the role of the individual in a society based on strength in numbers and uniformity. Game: mini-kart racer. Oh dear.

Get the filmmakers involved
Stress to the director how important game tie-ins can be and how becoming involved with their development is a new creative challenge befitting of those in the vanguard of the visual arts.

How to:

Peter Jackson's King Kong
Jackson really got his hands dirty on this and result was a wonderful cinematic experience capturing the film's spirit, emotion and excitement. Mixed ape combat and human adventuring well.

How not to:

The Italian Job: LA Heist
You're only supposed to make a bloody interactive robbery caper! But no. You gave us one cutscene, a couple of film stills and none of the characters.

Films of games

Cynics may suggest that the number of movie spin-off games is a sign that games makers aren't brave enough to try new ideas, but the games industry isn't some parasitic tick hanging on to the ball sack of Hollywood. The movies take just as much as they give. Films of videogames are becoming more and more popular with *Dead Or Alive*, *Silent Hill* and *BloodRayne* all getting theatrical releases in the past year alone. They were all flops but the trend continues with a number of big-screen adaptations promised for 2007 and beyond.

Coming soon to a cinema near you...

Rainbow Six
Zack Snyder, who directed *300* and *Dawn of the Dead*, is writing and directing a film based on Tom Clancy's novel about the crack anti-terrorist unit.

Hitman
Was to have starred the most famous pate in modern Hollywood, Vin Diesel, as Agent 47. But he has pulled out, presumably to avoid baldie typecasting, and is rumoured to have been replaced by Timothy Olyphant (Seth Bullock out of *Deadwood*).

Resident Evil: Extinction
Set three years after the events of *Apocalypse*, *Extinction* has Milla Jovovich's Alice on the run, with a group that includes Claire Redfield, in the world that is overrun by the T-Virus. Apparently the plot will include elements of story from *Code: Veronica*.

Mortal Kombat: Devastation
The third *MK* film is in production with Christopher Lambert back as Lord Rayden. It will be directed by a guy called mink. Yes, all lower case, no surname. He's done a Steven Seagal movie and not much else, so the jury's still out.

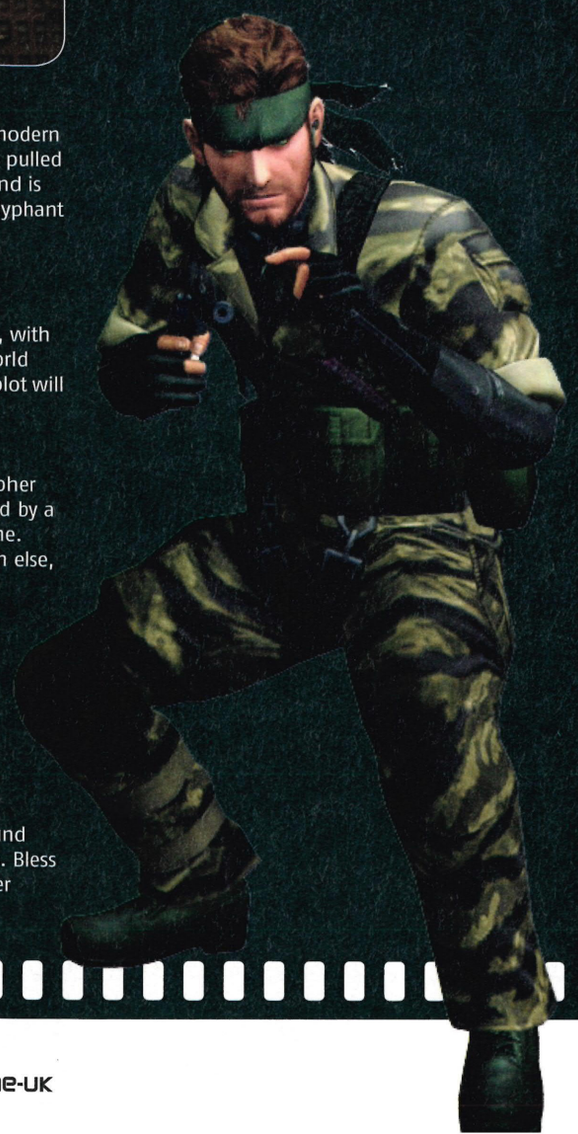
Spy Hunter: Nowhere to Run
The Rock stars as Alec Decker, former fighter pilot now at the wheel of the Interceptor super-car to save the world from terrorists.

Postal
Oo-er. The job of bringing this controversial isometric shooter to life has gone to Uwe Böll, a chap who seems to be basing his career around making not-awfully-good films of videogames. Bless your soul Uwe. Let's hope this one's a bit better than *BloodRayne* and *Alone in the Dark*.

BloodRayne II: Deliverance
Uwe Böll is also directing this sequel to his 2006 film based on the bloodsucking adventures of vampiric hero Rayne, this time played by Natassia Malthe.

In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale
Based on the *Dungeon Siege* RPGs, this sword and sorcery 'epic' is being directed by... Uwe Böll! It's got one hell of cast, though, including Jason Statham, Ray Liotta and Burt Reynolds.

Metal Gear Solid
All that's known about this project is that Hideo Kojima has confirmed he is to be executive producer of an *MGS* film and Uwe Böll won't be directing it.



Area 51
Paramount Pictures has bought the rights to make a film of this mutant alien-blaster.

Onimusha
Capcom's wonderful, supernatural samurai action game is to be directed by *Brotherhood of the Wolf* and *Silent Hill* helmsman Christophe Gans.

Halo
Microsoft's flashy shooter is in the capable hands of Peter 'hobbit' Jackson's production company WingNut but the project's been put on hold after Universal and Fox studios took the money away. Microsoft is currently looking for new studio investment.

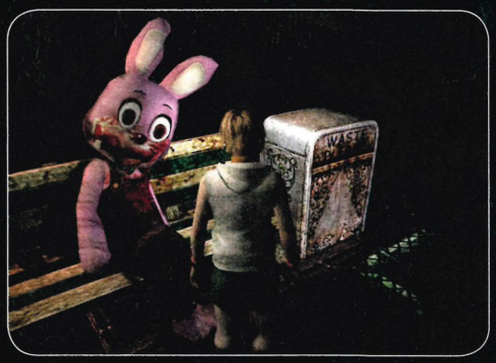
Lara Croft Tomb Raider
Paramount Pictures and Angelina Jolie have the option of making a third film; this wouldn't have been that likely after the disasters of the *Angel of Darkness* game and second *Raider* film, but with Lara now regaining popularity *TR3* could become a reality.

The Suffering
Midway has put its schlock-horror prison adventure in the hands of MTV Films but there are no details on who's going to play the monstrous lead character.

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time
Jerry Bruckheimer is putting his considerable clout behind the prancing Prince, probably hoping for another success of the same size as the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films, which he produced.

Clock Tower
The genuinely freaky survival horror game is in the hands of Chilean horror director Jorge Olguin. You know, the one who did *Black Angel*. Oh...

Fear Effect
Kung-fu film director Stanley Tong is directing this story of saucy mercenaries that shoot zombies and lez-up a bit as well.



Silent Hill 2
Work has already started on the sequel to 2006's adaptation, with director Christophe Gans likely to be involved if it he doesn't clash with his work on *Onimusha*. Small world isn't it...

Condemned: Criminal Origins
Warner Brothers is working on a film based in the 'universe' of the 360 serial killer game *Condemned*.

Hunter: The Reckoning
The supernatural RPG has had a script written for it, about a group of individuals given special powers to fight evil, but there hasn't been much movement yet in production.

Driver
Production is being continually delayed but Roger Avary, one time Quentin Tarantino collaborator and the screenplay writer of the *Silent Hill* film, has been named as director.

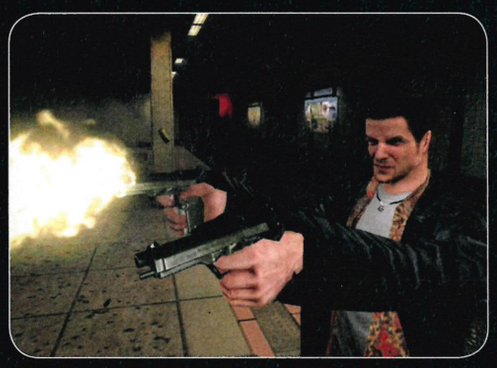
Splinter Cell
Production of this movie has moved from Paramount to Dreamworks and so has subsequently had its production delayed several times. Tom Clancy is involved in the scripting, though.

Castlevania
British director Paul WS Anderson, who was responsible for *Mortal Kombat*, *Resident Evil* and *Alien Vs Predator*, is bringing the Belmont family's long-running feud with Dracula to the big screen.

Devil May Cry
Anime studio Madhouse is working on a version of Capcom's demon-slayer.

Tekken: The Motion Picture
This will be a live action version of the Iron Fist tournament which has Heihachi inviting the hardest fighters in the world to have a crack at him. It's got to better than *Dead or Alive*. Please.

Siren
The rights to make a game based on *Forbidden Siren* have been picked up *Evil Dead* and *Spider-Man* director Sam Raimi and his production company, but few details are known about the actual project.



Max Payne
20th Century Fox owns the rights but not much is known about what it intend to do with them.

Alice
Based on Quake designer American McGee's skewed version of the Alice in Wonderful that was released in 2000 for the PC and will star Sarah Michelle Gellar.

THE LURE OF THE SILVER SCREEN
Movie companies don't like to take many risks and producing movies based on games is a pretty safe bet for a number of reasons. First off, much of the creative process has already been done: characters have been formed, plots written and design work completed. Secondly, there's already a fan base out there to be exploited, especially with big game series such as *Resident Evil*. But even games such as *BloodRayne* will interest some just because they're familiar with the concept and the name. Lastly, the hassle factor is low. Movie companies don't have to deal with stroppy authors or prickly visionaries; they are dealing with publishing houses that are keen to get more exposure for their game.

HOMAGE FRAIS
Movies have long been a huge influence on games in terms of themes, plots, style and action. For instance, where would *Max Payne* be without *The Matrix*, *GTA: San Andreas* without *Boyz n the Hood* or *Resident Evil* without *Dawn of the Dead*? Well not where they are now, that's for certain, so here's a list of some other movies that we reckon the games teams were watching just before their 'concept' meetings...

Dead Ringers *Mary-Kate and Ashley: Sweet 16 Licensed to Drive*
Weekend at Bernies *Manhunt*
Rainman *Ico*
Bonfire of the Vanities *David Beckham's Soccer*
The Defiant Ones *Whiplash*
The Queen *A Dog's Life*
Kramer vs Kramer *Spy vs Spy*
Lost in Translation *Wacky Races*

THE DOMESTIC DRAMA-'EM-UP
Here are some films that haven't got a game tie-in currently in the works, but you never know, they might just work.

Cock & Bull
The story of a woman, trapped in an unhappy marriage to an alcoholic husband and how she transforms into a man.
- Potential: *The Sims*, but with gender-bending

Blades of Glory
Ice-dancing comedy starring Will Ferrell.
- Potential: Rhythm action game with Eye-Toy compatibility.

Offside
Iranian film about girls who try to enter a World Cup game but are forbidden by law because of their gender.
- Potential: *Pro Evolution Soccer* with cleavage.

My Opposition: the Diaries of Friedrich Kellner
The story of Chief Justice Inspector Friedrich Kellner and the 10-volume secret diary he wrote during World War 2.
- Potential: *Call of Duty* text adventure.

Solitaire
Independent coming-of-age drama film.
- Potential: Sensitive reworking of the popular card game with a Carpenters soundtrack.

PSM3 is the UK's best-selling unofficial PlayStation magazine

5 reasons to buy the latest issue of PSM3...

Stranglehold reveals PS3's hidden potential: huge new images
"Get ready to blow up *everything*"
page 20

Ten things you must experience in *Okami*
"When you shrink, Issun – a tiny god – rides on your back."
page 88

GT HD *Concept* stalls on PS3 debut
"Gorgeously smooth HD looks, plus Ferrari. But just how excited should you be?"
page 80

World War III will be won in the skies, says *Frontlines*
"Drones spy on enemies or act as miniaturised air support."
page 47

Gaming on the bog is the future, maybe
"There are PSP's wired into the doors so you can play if you're on a sit-down job."
page 100

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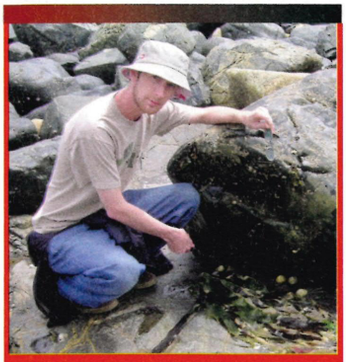
review

THE ONLY REVIEWS SECTION YOU CAN TRUST



This pic was taken last June in sunny Cornwall, when I spent a fabulous week searching for interesting bits of seaweed (this sample I classified as the genus *MGS3*). I really need another holiday, because there are so many good games to play at the moment.

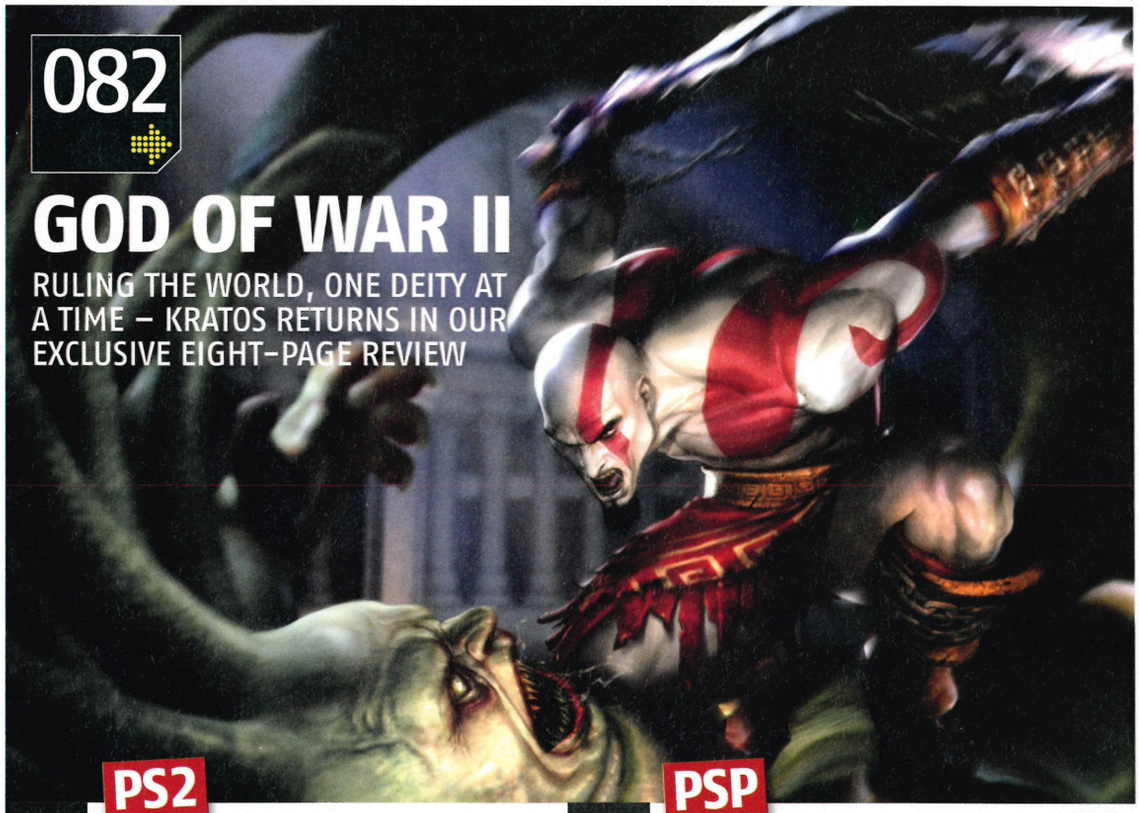
I've only just started *Okami*, *Final Fantasy XII* lies unopened on my coffee table and now along comes Kratos for another spot of myth-tastic slaughter.

Fortunately I've got a little bit of time until *God Of War II* is released, but here at OPS2 we've ensured that you get to read the very first verdict on the finished game. Sony HQ gave a man on a motorbike the master copy to deliver to my house at 7am on a Saturday morning so we could get it done in time for you.

And the great games don't stop with a very angry and very violent bald man. We've also got exclusive reviews of the new *Burnout*, supersonic shooter *Heatseeker* and *Brian Lara Cricket 2007*. Then there's, er, *Little Britain: The Video Game*. Funnily enough, no one wanted to bike that to my front door on a Saturday morning.

Nick

Nick Ellis,
Editor



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GOD OF WAR II

RULING THE WORLD, ONE DEITY AT A TIME – KRATOS RETURNS IN OUR EXCLUSIVE EIGHT-PAGE REVIEW

PS2

090 **HEATSEEKER**
Burn up the skies in this testosterone-fuelled shooter – we love it, you will too

092 **DANCING STAGE SUPERNOVA**
Flap around like a demented John Travolta to tunes that are actually quite good for a change

093 **NFL STREET 3**
Keeping it real, EA takes the NFL to the sidewalk for a third time. NFL! Three! Hut hut hut!

094 **CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION VOLUME 2**
There are some genuine classics here, we promise

096 **BURNOUT DOMINATOR**
Fast, attractive and smoother than a silkworm in a silk kimono, but that's enough about me...

102 **ALPINE SKI RACING 2007**
This could be a fine game, but we heard it's all downhill from here... Geddit? Downhill? Skiing?!

102 **AVATAR: THE LEGEND OF AANG**
Caught the show on Nickelodeon? Then you may be interested in this comic conversion

103 **LITTLE BRITAIN: THE VIDEO GAME**
'Yeah but no but, Nick asked to write about my game right, but like, everyone knows he's a slag...'

104 **BRIAN LARA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 2007**
Better than being caught in the googlies?

PSP

106 **THE WARRIORS**
Baseball bats and face paints at the ready, the gangs are ready to rumble once more

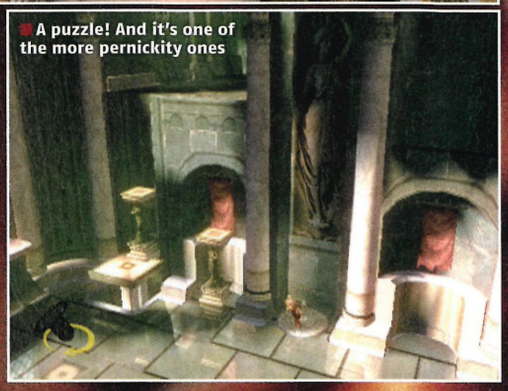
107 **METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS**
The first proper *Metal Gear Solid* game hits the PSP, but is that something to be excited about?

108 **CHILI CON CARNAGE**
A spicy serving of death, served with a side-order of pain in the restaurant of agony

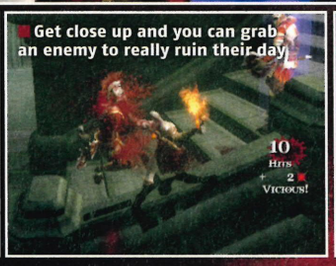
109 **HARVEST MOON: INNOCENT LIFE**
Forget the killing and mutilation and consider the pros and cons of crop rotation for a moment

109 **YU-GI-OH! GX TAG BATTLE**
Does anyone still care about this ker-ay-zee card game? Check out our review to see what we think

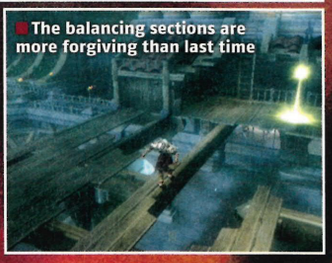
109 **CAPCOM PUZZLE WORLD**
Capcom's favourite head-scratchers, crammed onto a tiny disc for your commuting pleasure


A puzzle! And it's one of the more pernickity ones

Enjoying the view? It'll be wiped off your face soon enough

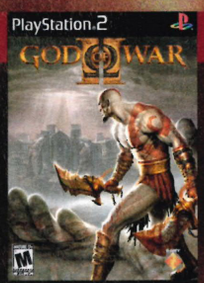


Get close up and you can grab an enemy to really ruin their day


The balancing sections are more forgiving than last time

GOD OF WAR II

He's back, he's bloody and he's very, very an-greek...



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER SONY SANTA MONICA STUDIOS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT MARCH
WEBSITE TINYURL.COM/YW6XNA
60HZ MODE TBC
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
Arch-slayer Kratos returns to continue his feud with the Greek gods. Expect abundant slaughter, glorious visuals and a mother lode of bloody battles.

The god of war is not a happy chappie. At the end of the first game, we left Kratos (a battle-hardened, tortured nutcase) sitting on his not-so-comfy throne within the peak of Mount Olympus, having defeated Ares and replaced him as god of war. Since then Kratos, haunted soul that he is, has been living up to the job description a little too well.

He's been using his Spartan army to topple cities left, right and centre – and for all this overtime, does he get a promotion? No; he gets the sack, with zero pension options. As you can perhaps understand, this gives his blood pressure a severe case of the bends.

RHODES TO HELL

With the city of Rhodes about to crumble, Kratos dives down into the wreckage to put the final boot in, only for a bunch of other deities to rally against him. They take away most of his powers (which they gave him in the first place to help him defeat Ares). Oh, and leave him at the mercy of the Colossus of Rhodes, an enormous statue brought back to life by the power of the gods.

So, with barely chance for a breath after the opening cutscenes, you're once again flung straight into the kind of epic action that made us love this growling firecracker of a hardass bastard in the first place. Every time he moves, he leaves a hole in something.

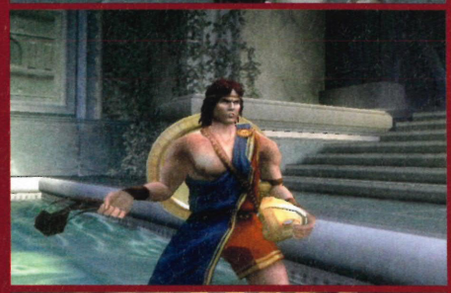
The scrap with the Colossus is monumental. The animated statue turns Rhodes into an ancient coconut shy, punching through walls and stomping out ceilings in an extended battle which sees Kratos load himself into a catapult in order to get stabby with its face.

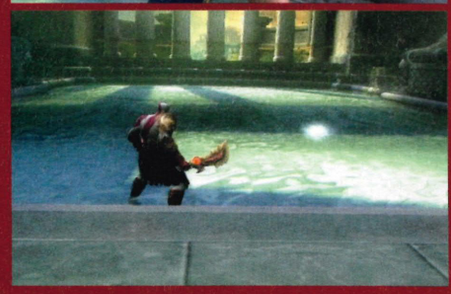
Oh, and of course he finds the time to waste a few moments in a pool full of floozies en route (that's right, the deeply unsexy sex mini-game

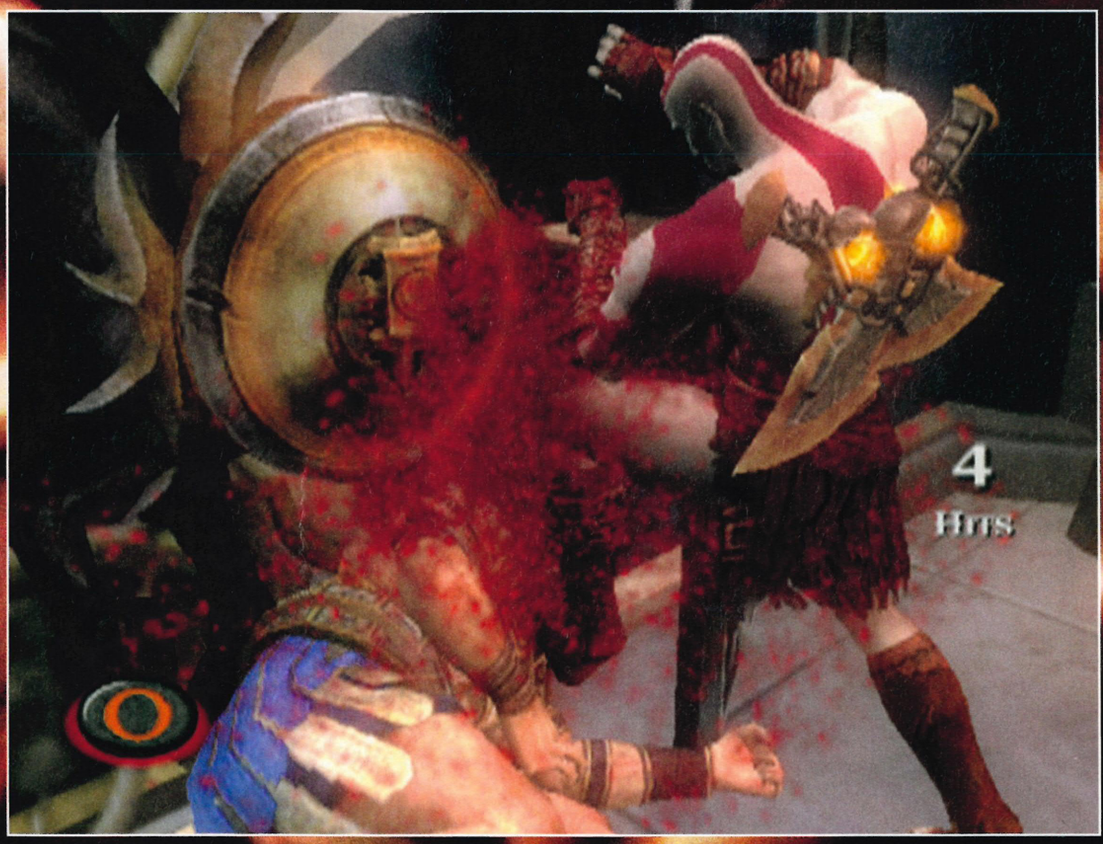
As Kratos loses his powers, the Spartans take a pummelling

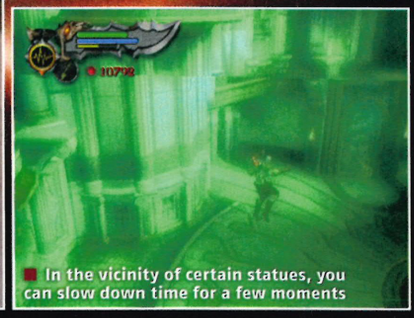
MEET AND GREEK

It's not just the Ancient Greek gods who get trawled for inspiration (by which we mean: stuff to kill). All your favourite mythological characters such as Perseus (the slayer of Medusa) also get mulched up by Kratos. And be sure not to miss the superstar of the build-your-own-wings world, Icarus, who gets splattered by Kratos via a brilliantly daft punch-up.



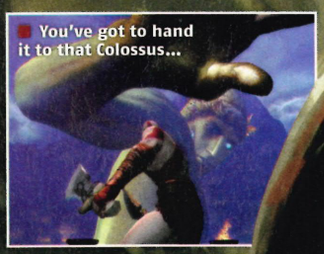


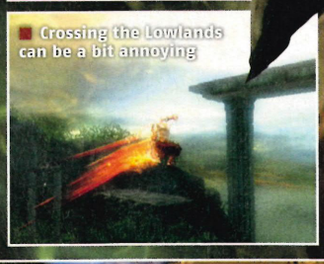


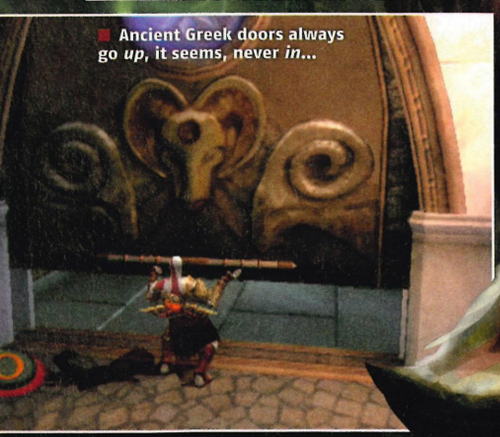


■ In the vicinity of certain statues, you can slow down time for a few moments

The special combos you can unlock are stunning to watch


You've got to hand it to that Colossus...


Crossing the Lowlands can be a bit annoying


Ancient Greek doors always go *up*, it seems, never *in*...

FLEECE ON EARTH

If you've spent anything more than the odd afternoon with an action game that doesn't have guns in, you'll have come across the gaming world's ultimate in self-defence: counters. *God of War II* rarely demands that you learn to turn an enemy's attack against them, but there's still scope for some ultra-satisfying payback, thanks to the Golden Fleece.

Holding L1 makes Kratos block, but tapping it the very moment before an attack's about to hit you results in a snazzy slow-motion moment that leaves your enemy open for retribution.

And once Kratos has the mythical fleece attached to his body, his counters get pimped. Get the timing right and you'll return fire with a massive ground blast that'll knock down all nearby enemies.

Ditto anyone firing a projectile at Kratos; block it at the final daredevil moment, and it'll be returned to sender, with bonus fiery love attached. If BBC bosses ever need to boost the viewer ratings for Wimbledon, they now know what to do.

WAR KING IN THE AIR

It may sound like a rather daft idea, but Kratos can now fly, thanks to his winged horse Pegasus. The flying sections aren't brilliant, but they do work and are far from the disaster they could have been.

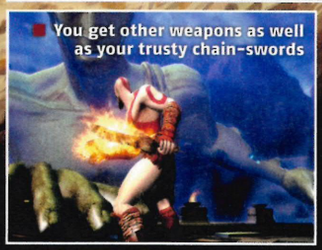
1 You can attack to the left and the right to ward off those trying to flank you

2 As for those directly in front, you can just dash straight into them with a boost

3 After you've battered them, murder the gryphons that ferry them through the air

Don't be put off by the flying sections, there are very few of them

Other games keep their most epic stuff for cutscenes. Not *GoW II*



You get other weapons as well as your trusty chain-swords

is back, although this time it's hidden). The section ends with Kratos having to sink his remaining powers into the Blade of Olympus, a sword capable of killing the Colossus (and you go *inside* the bugger to finish the job), then being left at the mercy of a rather unsympathetic Zeus.

Some bloody details later, Kratos' new quest begins. He must side with the Titans, enemies of the gods, and bring down Zeus, the very king of the heavens, in a bid to change his fate.

KRATOS EXPECTATIONS

Top marks for ambition, at least, but then *GoW II* is a game that has the imagination to put you in the kind of blockbuster set-pieces and situations that few action games can. Plus, it has a

RAGE OF EMPIRES

The gods have scratched Kratos' number out of their phone books and the Titans are his mates instead, so the Rage of the Gods power from the first game is replaced by the Rage of the Titans. Once Kratos has built up enough fury, he can go mental for a while, tearing down everything in his path like a combine harvester with PMT.

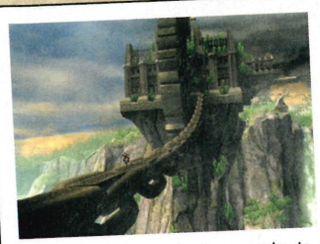
God of phwoar, not a game for girls? Ladies, look at this pic and deicide for yourselves

THE STORY SO FAR-FETCHED

Actually getting to meet the Three Sisters is as tricky a task as getting to sleep with the One Daughter of Hulk Hogan, and with just as great a fallout zone. Here are two of the many, many challenges you'll be facing in your quest to take down the ruler of the heavens...

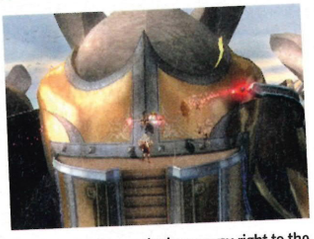
THE STEEDS OF TIME

1 Yep, that's right. A pack of horses whose hooves are the size of a motorway service station. And you've got to sprint across that big chain to get there.

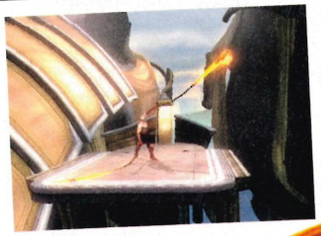


2 These gargantuan animals are your key to reaching the island where the Three Sisters reside. And they do it by pulling the island closer to you. Tractor-tastic!

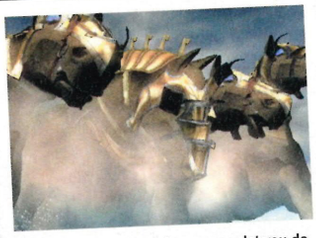
3 Before you can even think about digging your spurs in, you'll have to wrestle the key from the Gatekeeper, a powerful warrior with some nasty magic to throw down.



4 Once you've worked your way right to the front of the pack, you must wake up the Steeds by opening the four sets of blinkers that cover their eyes.



5 Then you can whip them into action, following stick-twirling prompts on the screen.



6 Success! You know how games let you do really fun things you can't do in real life? This is one of them. And don't pretend you've ever moved an island using giant horses.

TYPHON'S LAIR

1 While swooping through Typhon's lair, Kratos is swatted off Pegasus, who's now trapped beneath the hands of the imposing Titan. If only Kratos had more strength...

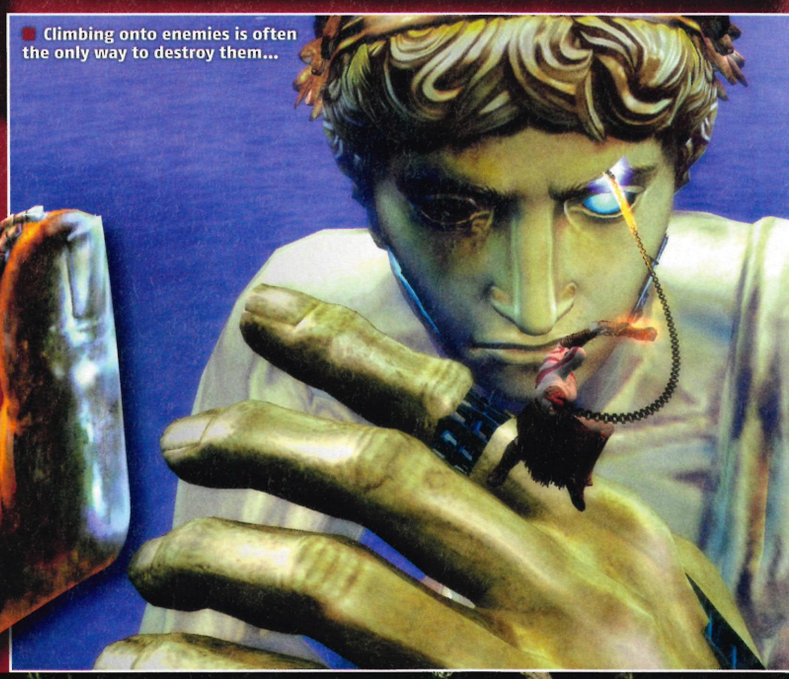
2 But, who's this? Why, it's Prometheus, the poor guy who gets his guts pecked out by a giant eagle every day as punishment for giving humanity the gift of fire.

3 If you could find a way to put him out of his misery, help could be at hand. Now that he's hanging over that pit of fire, all you need is some magic arrows.

4 Enter the heart of Typhon's Lair, and he'll do his best to sweep you into oblivion with a gust of mighty-Titan halitosis. You'll have to keep fighting while avoiding it.

5 Once you're close enough, you'll be able to pull Typhon's bow directly from his eye. Which is probably not the smartest place to keep it, really.

6 And then, with Prometheus dunked to his merciful death, the Rage of the Titans is yours and Typhon's fingers won't be staying in place for much longer.



Climbing onto enemies is often the only way to destroy them...

realisation polished enough to make everything feel so believably solid. Kratos leaves Rhodes on the back of his winged steed Pegasus – yes, there are now flying sections that still manage to pile on the grandeur – in his quest to find the Three Sisters, before taking in all kinds of mammoth-scale confrontations.

There are new weapons, including a heavyweight hammer and the sword of Olympus, which are all kinds of gratifying fun to wield. But if you can't handle sequels without oodles of innovation, *GoW II* will disappoint.

IT MAKES YOU FEEL ALMOST AS IF YOU'RE ACTUALLY TAKING ON THE GODS YOURSELF

GOD OF MORE

For all its refinements, it works on the same key principles as the original: make it loud, make it big and make you feel almost as if you're actually taking on the gods yourself. But then, few other action games manage to pull off such thunderous ferocity, so it's hardly a trudge to have more of the same: dazzlingly intense combat with hyper-aggressive enemies, broken up with slight puzzles here and there. And always with some magnificent backdrops and soaring music, as if your adrenalin wasn't pumping hard enough already.

FIGHTING DEITY

Mini-game interactions still cover a lot of the more specialised aspects of the scrapping: following button prompts to slash the wings off a gryphon, say, or drive your blades into the mouth of an

WAR-SOME POWER

What rampaging man-turned-god-turned-man would be complete without a set of spectacular magic tricks tucked away in the back of his sarong? Returning *GoW*ers will recognise some of these, but not all...

1 Poseidon's Wrath. For when you absolutely have to electrocute everyone around you

2 Typhon's Bow. Fires windy arrows for a ranged attack

3 Kronos' Thunder. Zaps and paralyses nearby enemies with blobs of lightning

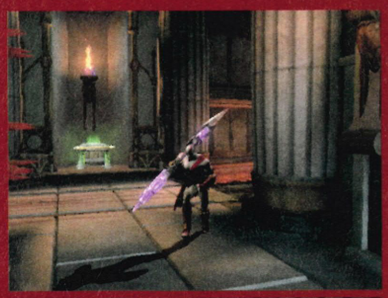
...but they don't like it much and may fight back

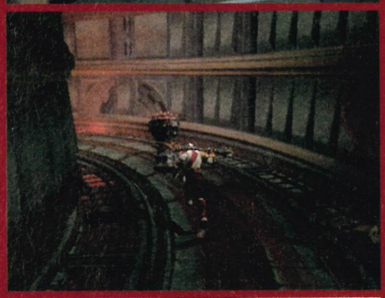
Messing about on walls and ceilings can feel sticky

Gorgon Eyes and Phoenix Feathers are back again

GBH: SLICE CITY

As well as the return of the Athena Blades (the signature chain-swords lashed to Kratos' arms) you'll get a variety of sub-weapons, including a weighty barbarian hammer, and the swirly Spear of Destiny.





axe-wielding mini-minotaur. And that's exactly why the *God of War* games are so appealing.

If you want to push your dexterity to the tendon-creaking limit, you'd best look elsewhere; there are already plenty of brainy, finely-tuned precision-action outings to be had on PS2. In *GoW II*, there's no need to memorise split-second button timings in order to have a great time, but there's still room for flashes of skill if you want to get your attack counters down pat (and make use of the great Golden Fleece while you're at it – see 'Fleece on Earth' on p84 for more on this special counter).

CLASSICAL GOOD LOOKS

This sequel's strongest suit is its visuals. It offers some utterly stunning scenes that you'll ogle miles into the distance, as you travel to them and after you leave them, such as the humungous pack of horses that are your key to reaching the Three Sisters (see p86). And all of it is continuously streamed, free from any jarring

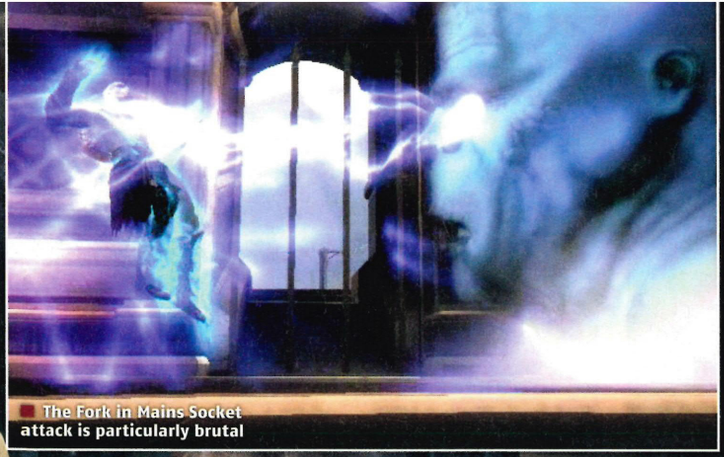
PLAY IT IN PROGRESSIVE SCAN ON A PROJECTOR AND IT'LL MAKE YOUR BALLS TINGLE

leaps as you go from location to location, really helping to ram home the abundant spectacle.

Play it in progressive scan on a projector with surround sound and it'll make your balls tingle (or whatever the same sort of rush would be for ladies). This is, after all, a macho game, the action-adventure equivalent of a boisterous

Nosy neighbours were a problem in Ancient Greece too, apparently

Get out of the way! He's going to hurl!

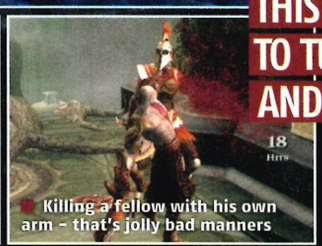


The Fork in Mains Socket attack is particularly brutal

'Great! Looks like the horse barbecue has started early'

The Poseidon's Wrath attack electrocutes everyone around you

The Sirens are back to tempt Kratos another time, poor lad...

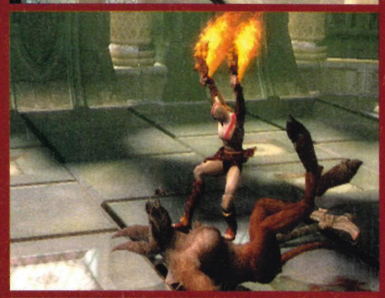


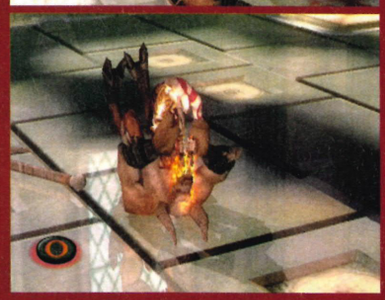
Killing a fellow with his own arm – that's jolly bad manners

Poor Colossus just wants an Action Man to play with

BUTTON CHOP

Be warned: GoW II is gory enough to make a junior doctor puke into a sock. In the QTE (Quick Time Event) sequences, following on-screen button prompts will send limbs, heads and blood flying all over the place.





night out full of heavy-handed backslapping and ending with a suicidally spicy curry.

There are things that take the sheen off, sure. Certain recurring creatures are less fun to fight than others, and later in the game you're given the ability to slow down time, but it's seriously unimpressive compared to the high points. None of the puzzles contain the vein-swelling frustration of a number of infamous moments from the original; those here can sometimes feel a little laboured, even though the scenery almost always makes up for it.

THIS IS A GAME THAT STRIVES TO TURN EVERYTHING UP TO 11 AND LARGELY SUCCEEDS

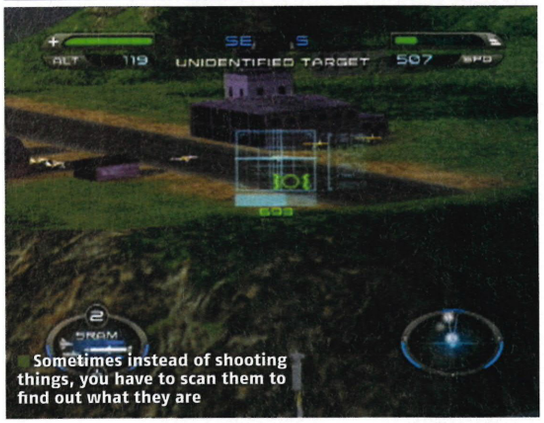
But, ultimately, this is a game that strives to turn everything up to 11 and largely succeeds. It's not quite enough for us to have to break our own rating system, but, whatever... just buy it and savour one of the PS2's greatest and latest experiences. **Steve Bailey**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	10	The very definition of epic
Sound	10	Grunt! Ka-boom! Slash! Backed by choirs!
Gameplay	08	Effectively brutal combat, wavering puzzles
Lifespan	08	At most 10 hours, but plenty of extras

Accessible, exhilarating and macho as all hell, it's another thunderous outing for PS2's angriest anti-hero. Essential

9/10

You only have to worry about landing or taking off a couple of times



Sometimes instead of shooting things, you have to scan them to find out what they are

There are 31 jets to unlock, usually by doing secondary objectives

HEATSEEKER

Airheads, come live out your jet dreams

DETAILS

PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPER IR GURUS
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 30 MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/HEATSEEKER
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Action-packed jet-fighting game that's all about big explosions and breathtaking dog-fights, not worrying about your horizon or landing gear

There's a breed of gamer so obsessed by flight simulators that they actually embark on transatlantic 747 flights in real time. That's right, real time: eight hours of autopilot tedium with perhaps a complimentary mini-bag of pretzels and a lemon-scented napkin to complete the 'experience'. Well, sorry, but we really don't get this.

Perhaps we're shallow or lack the technical knowledge to appreciate the full beauty of the 'experience', but surely once you've reached for the skies you want to do more up there than just stay at a level altitude? We have Hollywood-fuelled dreams to live out, full of daring dawn raids, low-level fly-bys and manly bonhomie.

Happily, this is the sort of stuff that new jet-fighting title *Heatseeker* is bursting with. Set in some alternative vision of Earth where global disputes are the concern of an International Council, you take on the role of a hotshot fighter pilot dispatched to tackle an evil dictator with a nuclear capability. You're supported by fellow pilots, as well as ground and naval forces who all use your callsign, 'Downtown', to nag you for assistance.

Your role usually takes the form of protecting them from enemy fighters, helicopters, speed boats or tanks, but the whens, the whos and the whys aren't important: *Heatseeker* is about shooting things and making them go boom.

This thirst for action means that the flying controls have been made very simple. There are two settings: professional, in which pitch and roll have to be considered, and arcade, where this is all done for you. The former is the most rewarding because it allows for nuttier flying patterns. Whatever you choose, winging through the air is a fairly brainless task, leaving you to concentrate on taking down enemy fighters... which in turn is a fairly brainless task.

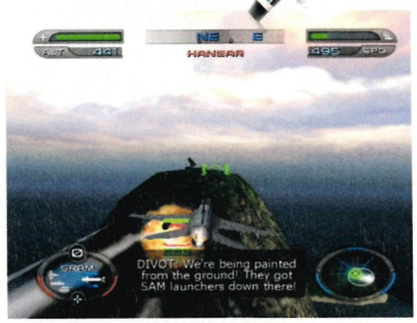
Your choice of weapons is crucial but as long you have decent heatseeking missile options you can approach any mission with confidence, because it's just a case of locking onto your target and dispensing justice. Also, with infinite ammo all you really have to worry about is your end-of-level accuracy rating.

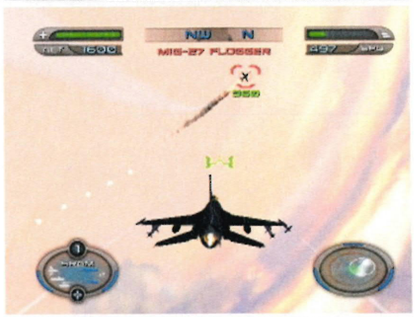
HEATS, SHOOTS AND LEAVES

You may be wondering just where the challenge is in all this. Well, it's not about what you have to do (shoot planes) but how many times you do it (loads) because often there are enough enemy fighters in the air to obscure the sun, as well as land and sea threats to worry about, too.

As the air becomes alive with vapour trails, clouds of disintegrated Migs and anti-aircraft fire, your focus is constantly tested and stretched by the number of targets that must be destroyed and objectives you have to complete.

The reason for this abundance of action is to feed a game that is obsessed with spectacle. Developer IR Gurus apparently takes the view that there's no point something happening in





Choosing the right mix of missiles is essential for success

Replay mode lets you analyse your dogfighting style

this game if it isn't captured in multi-angle slow-motion footage.

This explains the presence of the Impact Cam, which zips the camera around to display just how an enemy fighter is being dismantled by one your missiles. You also have the choice of following a rocket's path from launcher to impact just by keeping the fire button held down. And if that wasn't enough, a replay of each entire mission can be watched back after you've completed it.

SEEK AND ENJOY

Heatseeker's main problem is that all this action, however it's presented, remains much the same throughout the game. The jets and locations change but the tone and intensity do not. And that makes *Heatseeker* a rather predictable experience. Even *Ace Combat*, Namco's jet fighter, has more shade and light to it despite its arcadey stance.

IR Gurus can be applauded for delivering what it promised: a game that provides the thrill of evading missiles with last-minute acrobatics and allowing you to be more effective at clearing up random bogeys than a nursery school teacher's hanky. The thing is, if only they'd aimed slightly higher – gone 'Uptown' instead of 'Downtown' – *Heatseeker* might well have been something much more than this fire-and-forget foray through the clouds. ■ **Dave Harrison**

MISSILE IN ACTION

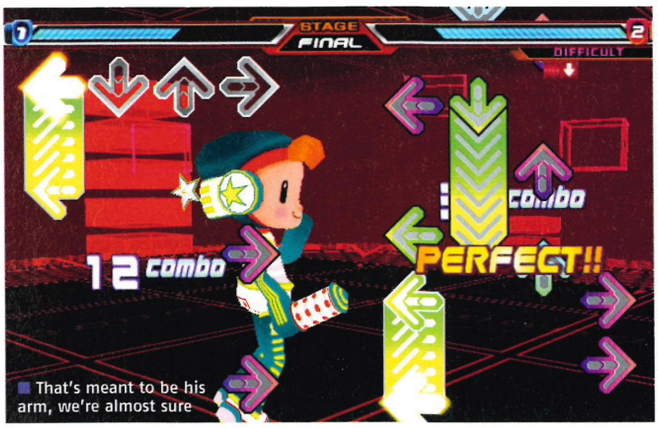
Your fighter will regularly be battered by machinegun fire, but it's the missiles that you really have to worry about. Fortunately the onboard computer system will alert you to the imminent danger and give you the option of dropping chaff or spinning the plane out of harm's way. Even better is the fact that either option is just one button-press away.

It's a test of nerve and concentration when the skies become cluttered

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Decent draw distance and use of light
Sound	06	You don't half get nagged when in the air
Gameplay	07	Undeniably fun but undeniably limited
Lifespan	06	31 fighters to unlock

Lets you live out your airborne ace fantasies but fails to really test your piloting skills or your mind for that matter

7/10

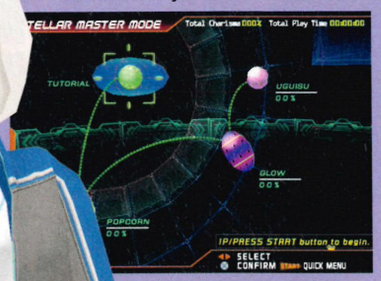


That's meant to be his arm, we're almost sure

ALL THE FUN OF THE ARCADE

In Battle mode you can build up points and use them to 'attack' your opponent. Murder on the dancefloor!

Training mode lets you practise routines without being forced to restart when you make a lot of mistakes



The (very hard) Challenge mode has a galactic theme. We're not sure why

DANCING STAGE SUPERNOVA

PlayStation 2

DETAILS

PUBLISHER KONAMI
DEVELOPER KONAMI
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Dance mat gaming grows up and blossoms into an exercise machine you'll actually get out of the cupboard more than once

Time to put your fitness DVDs on eBay

Now that pre-teenage girls are asking mum and dad to buy them *SingStar* instead, it's no surprise really that this latest version of *Dancing Stage*, the classic dancing game, blatantly targets a slightly older player. In particular, it's aimed right between the wobbling jowls of the growing number of people who use their dance mat as an exercise machine.

In the greatly expanded and very versatile Workout mode, you can work through 'courses' that include a warm-up song, a warm-down song and some faster ones in the middle. We notched up 46.45 calories on just one six-song course and that, according to the in-game calculator, is equivalent to jogging a *whopping* 0.892km! Which is actually sort of proper sport!

Getting to our goal of burning 150 calories was challenging without being exhausting and anyway, you can program your own courses or set new goals if the preset ones are too easy or too hard. Plus, it was a lot more fun than lunging around the living room while some skinny soap star on a DVD pretended to do the same moves without even breaking sweat.

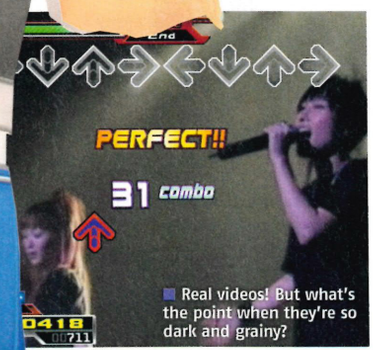
Each user can save their details and their progress so that you can see what you did on what date. This is password-protected so your mates can't see how much you weigh – a nice touch that shows how much thought's gone into this section of the game.

TRACKS OF YOUR YEARS

Most importantly of all, you won't be embarrassed by what your neighbours hear through the wall because, in another clear indication of the older age group for this game, the music has a refreshing lack of X-Factor cheese. All but one of the recognisable songs (Tatu? Why, Konami, why?) are actually quite good, including Basement Jaxx, FatBoy Slim, The Chemical Brothers and that Les Rythmes Digitales one off the advert with the robot car.

The specially-made tracks are the usual mix of high-energy trance and frighteningly fast drum'n'bass that we've come to expect from Konami's dancing games; we managed to listen to all but a few of them without wanting to pull out our own eyeballs just to use them as earplugs, but they certainly weren't any incentive to play the game over and over in order to unlock the extra tunes.

For those without fat to shed, the rest of the game adds little to the genre, though. Some tracks come with the real videos, some have cartoon dancers (a couple of whom shake their booty in ways that we really wouldn't like our daughters to copy, if we had them), but overall the graphics have a low-res, rather dated feel. There are Challenge and Battle modes, unlockables and options to use an eight-arrow mat or an EyeToy (for handclaps) and those features will all add longevity for arcade-bunnies, but they're nothing you haven't seen already. ■ **Sophie Mason**



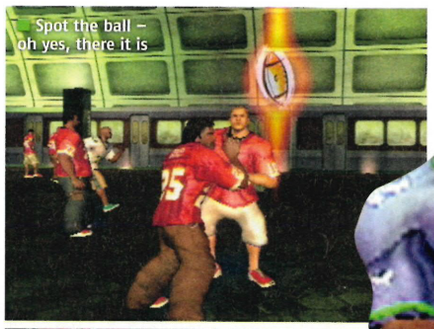
Real videos! But what's the point when they're so dark and grainy?

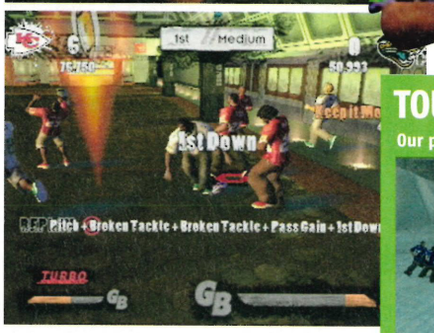
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	05	Grainy videos and blocky dancers
Sound	07	Some good tunes, but not enough
Gameplay	07	Workout mode: great. The rest: average
Lifespan	07	A fitness tool we'd actually stick with

If we needed to shed some lard, this is how we'd do it. If we needed birthday presents for the kids, we'd buy them SingStar

7/10

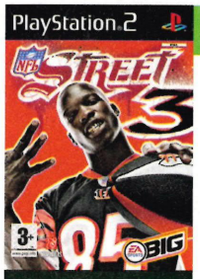
Looks like time to shout some numbers and go 'hut hut hut'


Spot the ball – oh yes, there it is



NFL STREET 3

Too many frowns, not enough touchdowns



DETAILS

PUBLISHER EA SPORTS BIG
DEVELOPER EA SPORTS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.EASPORTSBIG.COM/GAMES/NFLSTREET3
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
The Coke Zero of the American football world, back for a third quarter. No timeouts, commentators or fancy stadiums – just burly men brawling in the dirty streets

We've always loved the idea of American football. Two teams of meatheads charging at each other at full speed, lobbing length-of-the-field passes and colliding with the sort of noise that makes you curl into a ball in sympathy. But anyone who's picked up a copy of *Madden* will know that NFL sims tend to be a plodding world of menus, timeouts and commentators using the word 'winningest'. Which isn't actually a word.

The great thing about *NFL Street* is that it offers up the kind of play casual American footy fans can get behind: massive shoulder-padded violence, minus the endless pontificating. So why does the third instalment leave such a muddy stain on our virtual shirt?

READY TO FUMBLE

Our main beef is that there's far too much content that feels like it was hastily shoehorned in to try to justify a third outing. For example, the new ability to run along walls and jump off objects that are scattered around the play area is the worst kind of gimmick because it just doesn't work.

Leaping off an abandoned barrel or upturned crate won't make the blindest bit of difference to the defence, who'll wait for you to land before clobbering you with a leg-snapping tackle. Mistime the jump completely and your player will run impotently on the spot until the offending object rolls away or (more likely) he's taken out. It's an unnecessary complication.

Elsewhere, it really is business as usual for *NFL Street 3*. Play-calling is simple, action is frantic and pulling off tricks to earn points is as easy as holding down L1.

The Gamebreakers have been balanced out to make them less frustrating, because in previous games, once you (or your opponent) had built up enough juice, activating the Gamebreaker was a guaranteed touchdown.

Now all you get is either a special move (on offence) or a powerful stop (on defence), so you're unlikely to lose out in the final seconds and get the sickening feeling that the AI's cheated you.

Mini games have been sliced out completely, the Career mode has been restructured and the soundtrack is the usual assortment of 'too kool for skool' EA Trax. But despite all these changes, *NFL Street 3* is still painfully familiar gaming with a premium price tag. **Andy Hartup**

Why would anyone be outside in this weather?

Landing on the concrete makes a satisfying crunch

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	06	The athletes look mean enough
Sound	07	Metal tunes + crunching noises = great
Gameplay	05	A little too fiddly for its own good
Lifespan	06	Plenty to tackle but we miss the mini games

Another sports effort spat straight out of the EA Street mould. Perfect if you're new to the series: pointless if you've already got an NFL Street

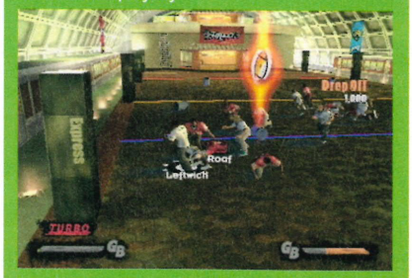
6/10

TOUR DE FARCE

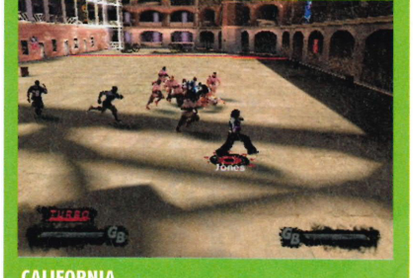
Our pick of the 'streets' in *NFL Street 3*

NEW YORK
The snow-covered streets of the Big Apple will leave your players slipping on the ice and colliding with snowploughs. Dead tramps, depressed stockbrokers and drunken Santas not included

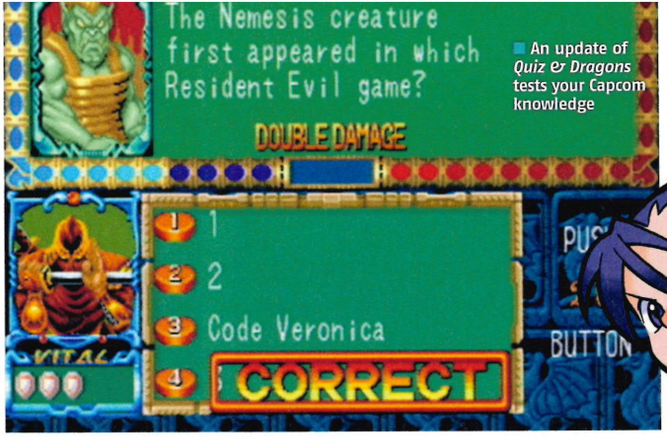
COLORADO
Welcome to the rural heart of Uncle Sam. Every inch of this pitch reminds us of the American dream, and momma's apple pie. Well, it probably would if we were American, anyway



WASHINGTON DC
We're not sure why, but this street is enclosed in a large wind-tunnel style structure, with a ticket booth at both ends. There isn't a memorial in sight, but presumably the setting means something to Americans



CALIFORNIA
You can almost feel the sunshine, smell the sea and hear Phantom Planet wailing 'Califoooornya' in this pretend amphitheatre. Well worth a visit



An update of *Quiz & Dragons* tests your Capcom knowledge

CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION VOL 2

Old rope but, on the whole, very enjoyable old rope

PlayStation 2

DETAILS

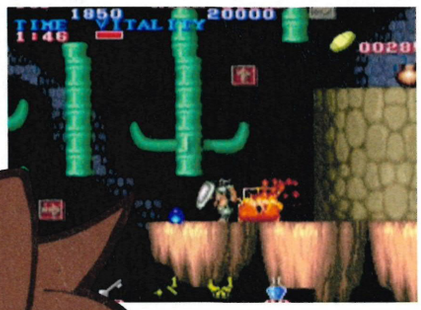
PUBLISHER CAPCOM
DEVELOPER CAPCOM
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

A collection of 19 classic games... some of them more worthy of resurrection than others

You often hear it said that there's not enough innovation in games today, that we're fed a stream of derivative dirge designed by committee to be similar to what's already selling. Well, this may be true, but playing *Capcom Classics Collection Volume 2* shows that actually, it's always been the case.

Here we have a collection of 19 titles (one of them three games in one, making a total of 21) from the late 1980s and early 1990s that, on the whole, can be classed as either scrolling shooters or scrolling fighters. The only things that distinguish them are the direction of the scrolling (upwards or sideways) and where they're set (swords and sorcery, the ghetto, space, World War 2).



But what they may lack in originality, they make up for in quality. *Black Tiger*, *Captain Commando*, *Varth* and *King of Dragons* are all very entertaining examples of their game type, tightly put together and very playable.

Elsewhere in the selection are true classics such as *Strider*, *1941: Counter Attack* and *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* – games that still stand up today. They're perhaps more suited to handheld gaming in this day and age, but they're still brilliant to play.

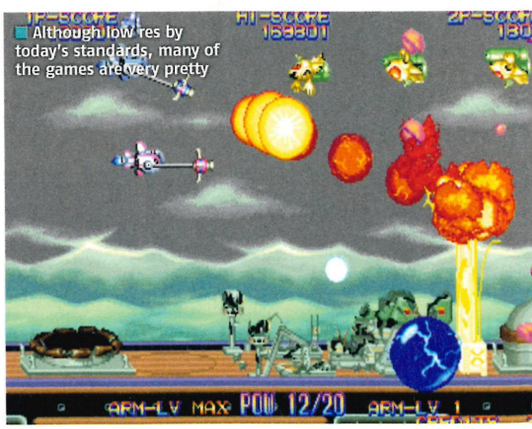
As if that wasn't enough, the presentation sparkles with the inclusion of some inspired extras such as a quiz purely about Capcom games and a brilliant *Street Fighter II* tutorial. Working through basics all the way to expert moves it covers everything from controlling space, counter attacking and suitable combos, all with a voiceover and visual prompt. This alone should make it a consideration for *SF* fans, but there's a lot else in this collection that will delight and surprise any gamer. ■ **Dave Harrison**

The *SFII* tutorial covers concepts such as 'controlling space'

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT
Graphics	07 The presentation is faithful and colourful
Sound	06 Remixes of the soundtracks are unlockable
Gameplay	07 Many of the games still dazzle
Lifespan	06 Better for a quick dip than extended use

A superb package with great games and some truly inspired extras – and a real trip down memory lane for some of us

7/10



Although low res by today's standards, many of the games are very pretty

21-UP

There's something for everyone in Capcom's box of tricks

1941: Counter Attack

TYPE SHOOTER
YEAR 1990

A classic, vertically scrolling, space invaders set-up, but it's World War 2. Lots of colourful explosions

Avengers

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1987

Use your wierdly long legs to kick sinister armies of headbutting pedestrians in this challenging and odd urban fighter

Black Tiger

TYPE PLATFORMER
YEAR 1987

It's *God of War* in 2D! Swing chains, fight fire-belching monsters and rescue people in an absorbing platformer

Block Block

TYPE PUZZLE
YEAR 1991

Hit ball with bat; break walls – like most games of this type, it's a simple idea but fiendishly addictive. Just one more level...

Captain Commando

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1991

Play one of four kicking, punching superheroes to save the world with simple combo moves

Eco Fighters

TYPE SHOOTER
YEAR 1993

Sideways-scrolling action with an eco-theme: save the world from an evil polluting corporation. By shooting them

King of Dragons

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1991

Pick up spells! Hit wizards and orcs with swords! Pick up shiny things! And do it all sideways, with two of your friends

Knights of the Round

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1991

Almost exactly like *King of Dragons*, but you can only be a knight and you get to ride horses sometimes

Mega Twins

TYPE PLATFORMER
YEAR 1990

Cute action with sword-wielding babies, evil bunnies and so on. Surprisingly fun, if only to watch cute stuff die comically

Magic Sword

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1990

More orc-killing and swords, but this time with a bit of platforming and AI sidekicks who follow you around and help out

Quiz and Dragons

TYPE QUIZ
YEAR 1992

It's a quiz, with dragons. But not many dragons. In fact, hardly any. And the quiz is really, really dull

Side Arms Hyper Dyne

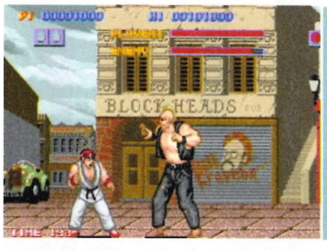
TYPE SHOOTER
YEAR 1987

One of the earliest scrollers to let you shoot both left and right. Play with two people for joint power-ups

The Speed Rumbler

TYPE SHOOTER
YEAR 1986

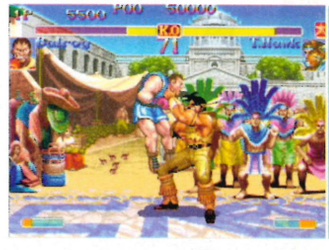
You're a tiny man with a tiny car shooting tiny bad guys with a tiny gun. Cute without meaning to be



Street Fighter

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1987

The original: every gamer should play it at least once. Simple in theory, difficult in practice, it's at its best as a two-player



Super Street Fighter II Turbo

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1992

More fighters and moves, the same knuckle-dusting concept. A true classic that still gives hours of fun

Strider

TYPE PLATFORMER
YEAR 1989

A button-bashing classic with – considering when it was made – lush graphics that take the action from mountains to cities

Midnight Wanderers

TYPE PLATFORMER
YEAR 1991

First of the *Three Wonders* collection of three games in one, this is like Hans Christian Andersen on acid

Chariot

TYPE SHOOTER
YEAR 1991

Second of the *Three Wonders*, this will see you flying goblins through pretty landscapes to zap magical meanies

Don't Full

TYPE PUZZLE
YEAR 1991

A maze puzzle with a pink bunny squashing nasties before they squash him. The last of the *Three Wonders* group of games

Tiger Road

TYPE FIGHTER
YEAR 1987

Walk from left to right in a straight line, hitting ninjas and occasionally jumping. We doubt this was fun even 20 years ago

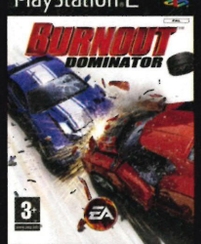
Varth

TYPE SHOOTER
YEAR 1992

Action-packed warplane shooter. Requires the kind of reaction times that only come from a childhood spent in arcades

BURNOUT DOMINATOR

PlayStation 2



Burnout hits the road again, and it's getting wreck-less

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EA
DEVELOPER CRITERION
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-4
OUT 23RD MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.ELECTRONICARTS.CO.UK/GAMES
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
The legendary smash-'em-up is back for a fifth lap. Burnout chaining is back in, traffic checking and crash junctions are out.

We don't think a medical condition called Burnout Eye has yet been documented, but after several days of retina-melting speeds and spine-smashing crashes we think we've got the very first cases. Our brains feel like mush, our hands are still shaking and there are thick red lines streaking across the whites of our eyes.

Yup, *Burnout* is as intense as ever. In fact, *Dominator* feels like the most nerve-shredding game so far in the series, and that's all down to the reintroduction of burnout chaining – the ability to keep stringing together boosts one after the other.

To start off, you charge your Burnout meter in the usual way: causing near misses, weaving through oncoming traffic, drifting around long, winding bends. Once you get a 'Supercharge Ready' message, you hit and hold L1, causing your car to rocket forwards as if it's been kicked by God's own mule. There really is a massive difference between driving at normal speeds and boosting, especially in the first few car classes, so the time spent filling up the boost bar feels sedate and – dare we say it – a bit dull. Crashing when you're boosting feels like fair play, but smash into something at regular speeds and you feel frustrated with yourself.

Your opponents are still aggressive as angry wasps

CRAZY CHAIN

To chain boosts, you need to keep driving like a maniac because all those dangerous activities such as drifting and shaving the paintwork off oncoming cars will help you refill your Supercharge meter before your boost runs out.

Nail that, and you're treated to a satisfying bass boom and a lurch forward as you enter another burnout. Fail to fill the meter, and you'll have to ease off the boost button and start filling up again.

Chaining boosts is by far and away the best feature in *Dominator* and once you learn how to keep the burnouts flowing, the game seems to

BOOSTING 101

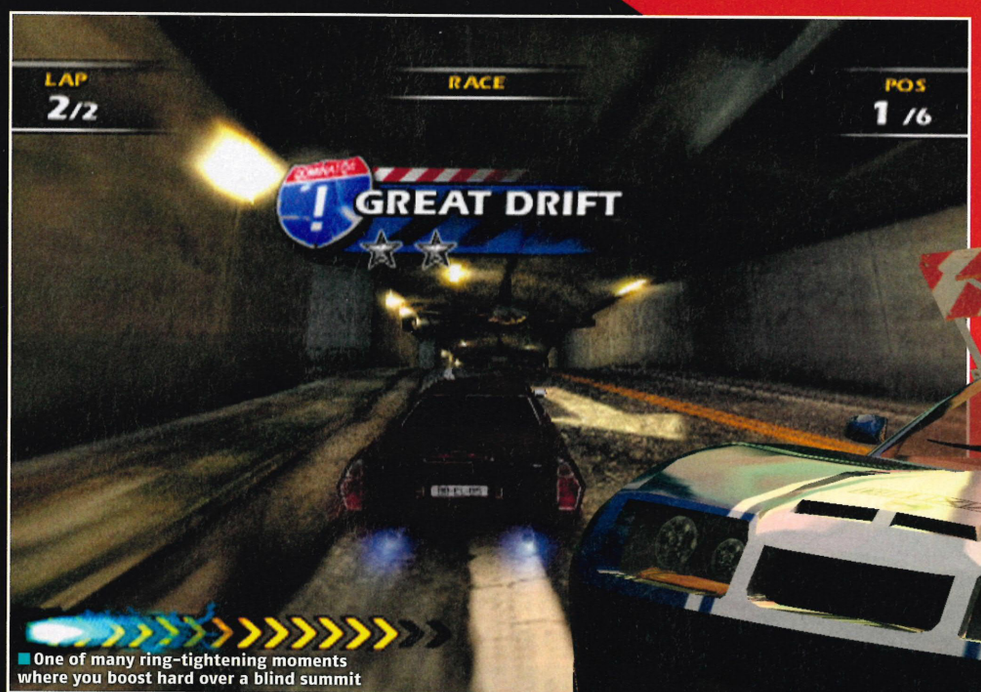
How to get a chain reaction

1 Drive dangerously
There's a real art to being a maniac on the road. Driving into oncoming traffic is always the best way to fill your boost bar, but drifting works a treat, too

2 Perform a supercharged boost
Or rather, press and hold L1. Don't let go of this button, because if you stop boosting, you'll have to start all over again

3 Drive even more recklessly
See all those arrows behind the boost bar? You need to light those up, and you do this by driving like Michael Schumacher on a sugar high to get your next burnout

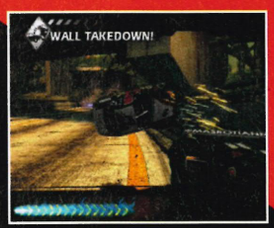
4 Rinse and repeat
There really is no limit to the number of burnouts you can chain together. Scoring a takedown automatically fills your bar, so be aggressive. Oh, and by the way, our record is 22 burnouts in a row...

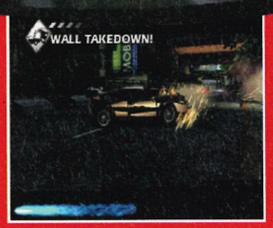


One of many ring-tightening moments where you boost hard over a blind summit

What are the chances? Two yellow, illegally super-charged sports cars on the same road!

Left or right? Make a decision or brace for impact





lurch forcefully into fifth gear. There really is nothing other racing games can offer to rival the adrenaline-soaked joy you get from screaming into your 15th straight boost while dodging mopeds and buses on a winding coastal road. Tense doesn't begin to describe it...

Sadly, all the brilliance of boost chaining is undermined by *Dominator*'s catch-up system.

OTHER RACING GAMES OFFER NOTHING TO RIVAL THIS ADRENALINE-SOAKED JOY

Even if you've nailed an almost perfect race, chained together 10 or so boosts, and avoided everything on the road, one crash on the last corner will see you relegated to fifth place as your opponents scream past in a swarm of glass and sparks.

PAIN IN THE WRECK

There is absolutely no way to leave your fellow racers behind in this game, no matter how skilful your driving, and this can get extremely annoying, especially on the 'best of three' GP events when dropping points in the last race means restarting the whole event.

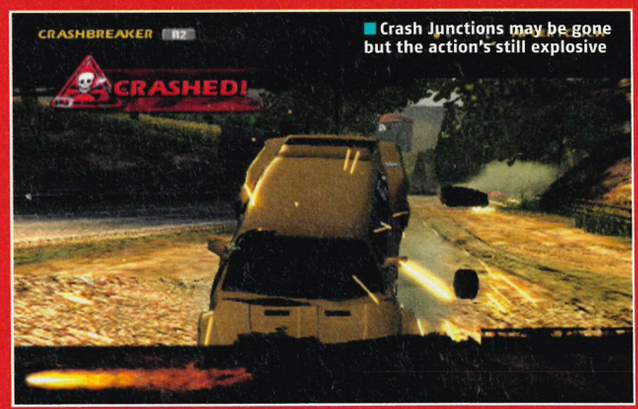
But where do you draw the line? The ability to catch up with your opponents is a necessity in games that require you to drive at stupid speeds. Without it, one crash near the start of the race would mean a world of pain trying to catch the rest of the racers.

Our beef with this system is that it feels unbalanced, and that takes away a large chunk of the chest-puffing sense of achievement you get from driving well during the bulk of a race.

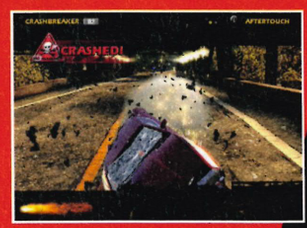
Thankfully, not all the satisfaction in this game comes from winning. Certain races have an additional challenge built into them, which allows you to unlock a new vehicle if you complete it.

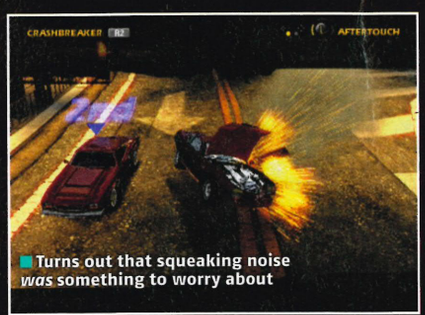
So, to get your hands on a shiny new car, you might be called on to rack up a certain number of near misses or to drift for a set distance while battling with the main aim of the race. This is a smart move from the developer, because you feel like you've earned every car in your virtual garage.

Indeed, when it gets to the later stages of the game, you really have to work to get these secondary goals and more often than not, you'll have to play through the same event a few times to snatch both the unlockable and the gold medal from it. And, as you start battling



Crash Junctions may be gone but the action's still explosive

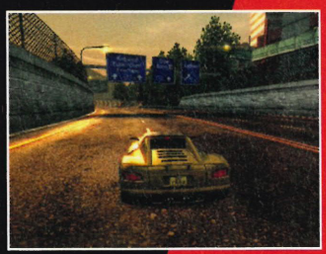




Turns out that squeaking noise *was* something to worry about

MAD WORLD

Introducing the all-new Maniac mode



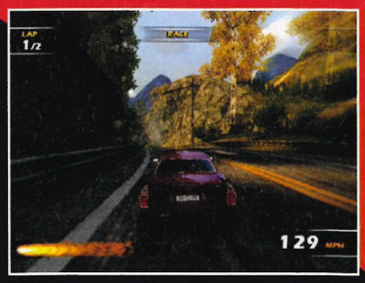
1 The ability to slam traffic has been totally removed from the game, so EA needed something to replace Traffic Attack: and thus Maniac mode was born

2 The basic idea of this new mode is to score points by driving dangerously and chaining together boosts

3 The more burnouts you pull off, the more your points are multiplied. So, if you're on your eighth consecutive burnout, every point you snatch is multiplied by eight

IF BURNOUT WAS REAL...

... you'd be in trouble with the law. Here's why



1 Any illegal modifications to your car such as unsanctioned colour-neons, exhaust flames, and tinted windows attract fines of £30 upwards

2 Driving more than 36mph over the speed limit means a fine in excess of £300 (plus £30 in costs) and a one year ban from driving

3 Driving on the wrong side of the road and weaving through traffic will net you a £2500 fine, a disqualification and 10 years in the clink

4 Detonating a car in public is an act of terrorism and that, people, means a lifetime in prison – so go easy on the Crash Breakers in your local high street

No time to stop and admire the view, sadly

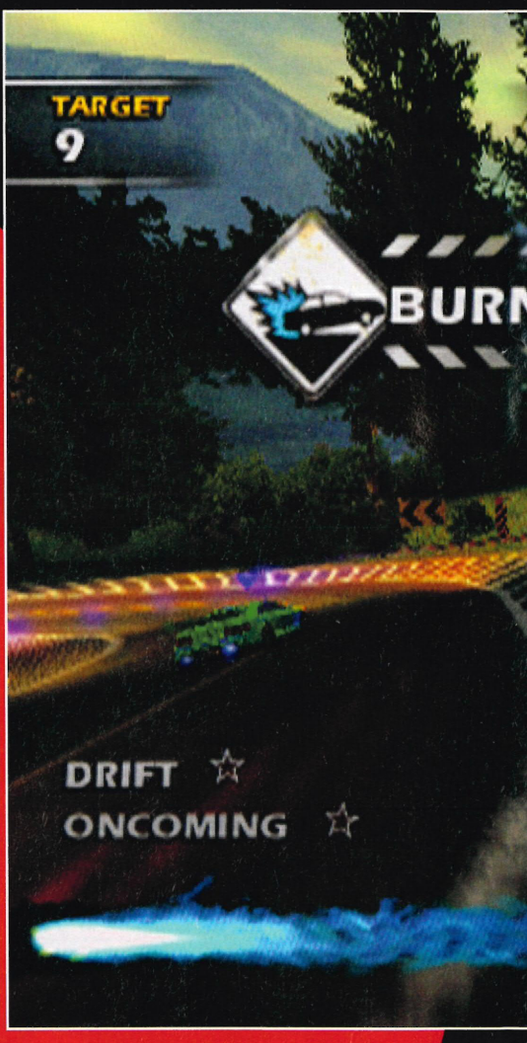
SIGNATURE SHAKE-UP

An easy way to create new shortcuts

In previous *Burnout*s the Signature Takedowns were a massive disappointment. Spend hours trying to blast your opponents off a bridge, or into a certain type of vehicle, and all you'd get was a postcard and a tick on a trophy checklist.

But in *Dominator*, pulling off a Signature Takedown opens up a shortcut, allowing you boost around certain circuits in even quicker times. They're easy to spot too. All you have to watch for is the wall of yellow barriers at the side of the road, and slam an opponent into it. Sadly, you no longer get a snapshot for your collection, but we'll take a gold medal over a photo any day.

See that blue boost bar? You are now its bitch



This sort of driving is standard practice on the Continent

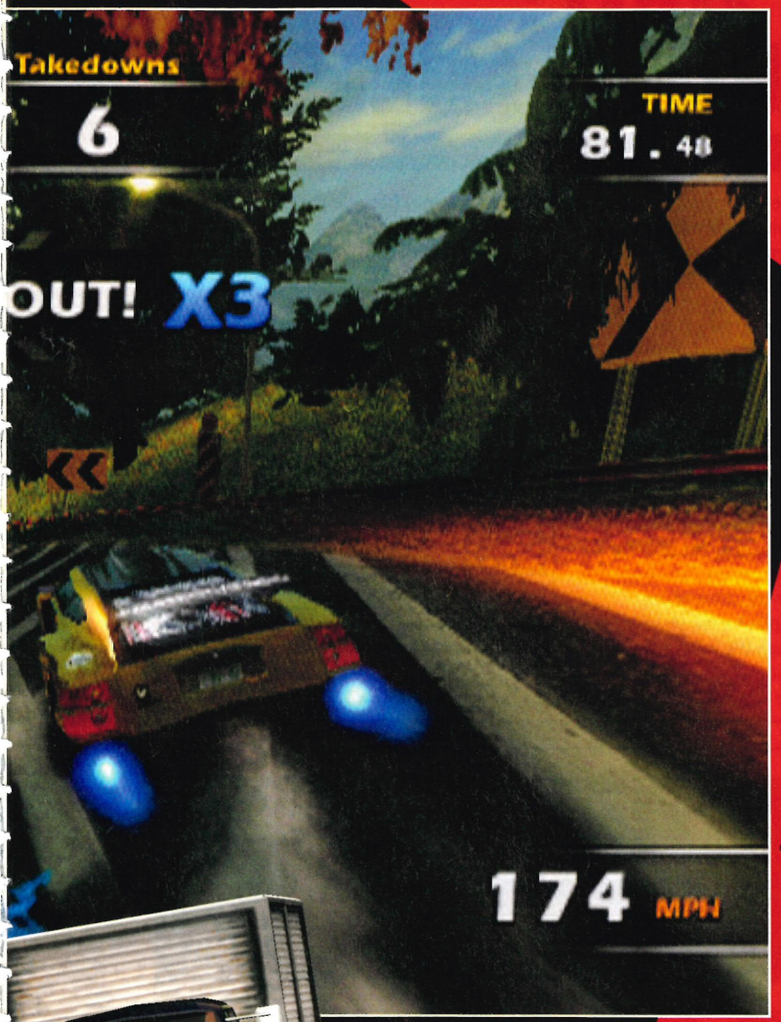
Learn to drift better than a middle-class trustafarian

TRY FOUR-PLAY

Online is out. Pad swapping is in

Although *Burnout* is an excellent single-player experience, you don't get the most out of it until you've shared with friends. EA has decided to ditch the online play this time round, but to say sorry, it has fleshed out the offline options. You can play four-player split screen, using any mode or vehicle unlocked in single-player, or for anyone with just one pad, you can play Party mode. This involves doing a single race or series of events and then passing the pad to the next player.

Hit targets in Road Rage mode to extend your time



THE FINAL FEW CLASSES ARE HARDER THAN A KANGAROO IN CONCRETE BOXING GLOVES

through the Super, Racing and Dominator categories in the final phase of the game, it all starts to get seriously tough.

Gone are the days when you could blitz through every event in the game without having to pause and catch breath. The final few car classes in this game are harder than a kangaroo with concrete boxing gloves: you're asked to drive at crazy speeds, avoid traffic and keep boosts chaining to be in with a chance of winning. And on the tight city circuits, with thick traffic and harsh 90° bends, this requires cat-like reactions and a sizeable dose of luck. But it's also these later stages that highlight another of Dominator's Achilles heels – the track design.

FLASH THE CRASH

Don't get us wrong. We love a challenge. But during the Racing Series we found sections of the urban tracks so packed with traffic, road islands and vicious turns that we couldn't drive for more than a few seconds without slamming into concrete or fibreglass. After a few restarts (which require a detour to loading town), we started to get too angry to concentrate.

Looking back at *Burnout 2* and *3*, the circuits we remember fondly are the simpler ones such as Airport Terminal 3 and Palm Bay Marina. Unfortunately, there's no equivalent of these classics in *Dominator*.

Elsewhere in the game, there's little deviation from the familiar route, though. The presentation is as slick as ever and although the map has been dropped from the World Tour mode it's still easy to navigate and use. There's the usual rogues' gallery of emo and nu-metal artists on the soundtrack and more unlockable awards and trophies than you can shake a misshapen wing-mirror at.

Dominator continues the *Burnout* tradition of constantly rewarding the player throughout the game and it holds your attention well: you're always thinking about trying 'one more race' to get the last few takedowns or the medal you need for the next unlock.

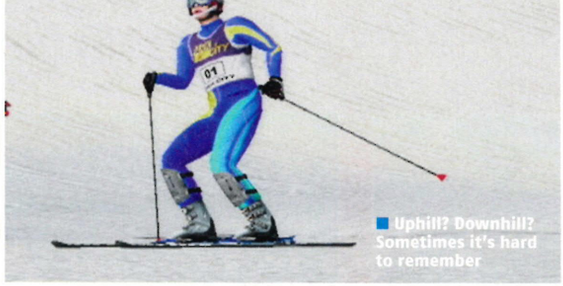
And you'll always find it tough to say no to the next race in this game, because despite its flaws, *Burnout Dominator* is still compulsive driving action. There were still times during almost every race when we physically gasped after avoiding a savage collision.

Oh, and by the way, there aren't any Crash Junctions in this game. Didn't we mention that earlier? No? That's because we barely noticed they were gone... ■ **Andy Hartup**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Looks great but is no step up from *Revenge*
Sound	09	Rock, revs and wrecking noises: yippee!
Gameplay	07	Veers between exhilarating and frustrating
Lifespan	08	You'll be playing for more than 10 hours

Another cracking* Burnout. *It isn't for the weak-hearted because of the difficulty at later levels, but when it shines, oh boy, it dazzles

8/10



Uphill? Downhill? Sometimes it's hard to remember

ALPINE SKI RACING 2007: HERMAN MAIER VS BODE MILLER

PlayStation.2

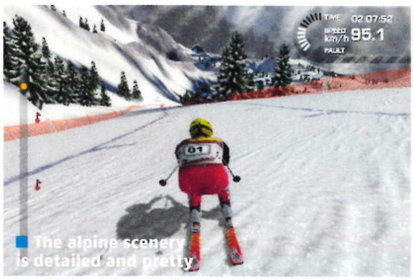
Get your fix of the white stuff

DETAILS

PUBLISHER JOWOOD
DEVELOPER 49 GAMES
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-6
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.ALPINE-SKIRACING2007.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

Even though freestylers are conquering the winter sports world with their daredevil tricks and dude-speak, there are still those who enjoy the traditional thrill of getting down a hill faster than the other guy. And that, as the title suggests, is what *Alpine Ski Racing 2007* is all about.

All four main racing styles are featured, along with the more specialist disciplines of Speed Skiing and Black Piste, the latter of which seems almost exclusively to involve dodging trees. There are three Career mode options of different leagues, along with less involved Arcade and Quickplay modes.



The alpine scenery is detailed and pretty

Plus, there's a slightly quirkier mode that allows you to recreate the careers of Herman Maier and Bode Miller (two of the top skiers in the world, in case you haven't been watching *Ski Sunday* for the past few years).

More of an EA-style simulation than SSX arcade thrills, *Alpine Racing* does a great job of capturing the nuances of skiing: not only the subtlety of movement required when barrelling down a mountain at high speed, but also the rhythm involved in slalom.

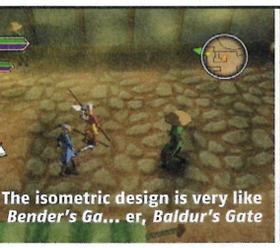
The controls are hyper-sensitive which means that you have to spend a fair bit of time perfecting your line through the various courses to get a winning time, but this only makes nailing a good one all the more satisfying. Although this may frustrate the more casual gamer, it is really the very essence of the sport because races are almost always decided by mere fractions of a second.

Our only real gripe is with the 'vs' part of the title. Yes you can play against your mates but you only race against their times. Admittedly, it's not part of the sport, but it would have been nice to have the head-to-head split-screen mode that the name implies. ■ **Joe Barnes**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Smooth animation, detailed backgrounds
Sound	05	Satisfactory, but needs more cowbell
Gameplay	07	Surprisingly in-depth and challenging
Lifespan	07	Reasonable range of courses and options

Accurately recreates the thrills of going insanely fast down a mountain but it's one for true skiing fans only

6/10

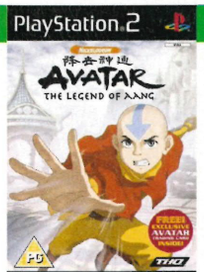


The isometric design is very like *Bender's Ga... er, Baldur's Gate*

AVATAR: THE LEGEND OF AANG

PlayStation.2

Become the biggest bender of them all



DETAILS

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER THQ AUSTRALIA
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.THQ-GAMES.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

This game isn't called *The Legend of Aang* in some countries, instead it's known as *The Last Airbender*. Aang is an Airbender because he's able to manipulate air to use it as tool and he's the last one because his tribe were destroyed by the Firebenders who are now turning their attentions to the two remaining tribes, the Earthbenders and the Waterbenders.

Lucky for them, though, Aang is the Avatar, capable of restoring peace to the world.

BEND OF THE WORLD

This of course will all be complete nonsense unless you're a fan of the cartoon on which this action-RPG is based. However, being unfamiliar with benders won't stop anyone getting to grips with what is a simple version of *Baldur's Gate*.

You take control of Aang as he sets out on his journey to become the bender of all benders, with his initial tasks including helping out villagers, levelling up and collecting items. Then as you pick up other friendly benders along the way, the experience develops to be something comparable with *X-Men: Legends*.

Unfortunately the game fails to capitalise on these firm foundations and soon the combat becomes tiresome while the RPG elements reveal themselves to be quite shallow. Also, fans of the show will be disappointed by the lack of voice acting and few exciting cutscenes.

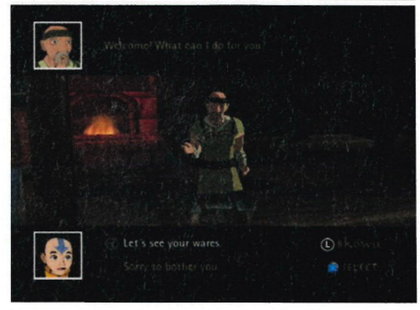
So even though it's far from being a disaster Avatar ends up being just a bunch of benders who are far too easy to forget. ■ **Dave Harrison**

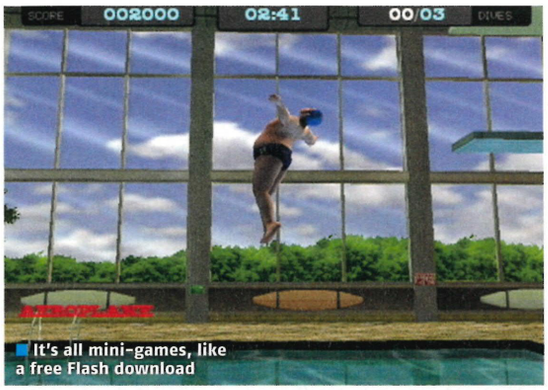
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	06	Suitably cartoony but very simple
Sound	05	Repetitive and not particularly inspired
Gameplay	06	Lacks variety and any real spark
Lifespan	05	A co-op mode would have been nice

Its simplicity is its strength when you start playing, but quickly becomes a weakness due to lack of spark and variety

5/10

See Aang bend!





It's all mini-games, like a free Flash download

PlayStation 2

LITTLE BRITAIN: THE VIDEO GAME

If this was the only game in the village, we'd be very disappointed

DETAILS

PUBLISHER BLAST!
DEVELOPER REVOLUTION
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.BLAST-GAMES.COM/EN/PRODUCT.ASP?PID=480
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
Bunch of mini-games based on the hit TV show and featuring all the main characters

This really is dreadful. And we're not unfairly panning it because it's a cynical TV cash-in; it's just bad.

Little Britain – the lowest common denominator in catchphrase comedy – is hugely popular, with books, dolls, lunchboxes and a myriad other pieces of tat filling the shelves of card shops and supermarkets across the land. So a game was inevitable.

But what we didn't expect was to see the Revolution logo on the title screen. Revolution? That's the developer who was behind the sophisticated, groundbreaking *Broken Sword* adventure series. What did Revolution contribute to this piece of rubbish?

DON'T WANT THAT ONE

It's sort of a party game. You know, a series of mini-games with high scores being your main motivation. But the hilarious twist is, they all involve characters from *Little Britain*.

So we have blabbering Bristolian Vicky Pollard wearing a bikini and rollerblading around an obstacle-laden park collecting CDs. Unconvincing tranvestite Emily Howard also makes an appearance in a penalty shootout game. Do you *see*? She's really a *man*, which means she's good at football... a *man* dressed as a *woman* playing *football*! Oh, hold our sides.

Other games include a Pac-Man-style Marjorie Dawes-inspired arcade thing, comedy homosexual Dafydd Thomas running over other men on a bicycle in Llandewi Breffi to ensure his status as 'the only gay in the village', and a game where you vomit on a vicar.

Vicky is quite difficult to control – no, really, she is

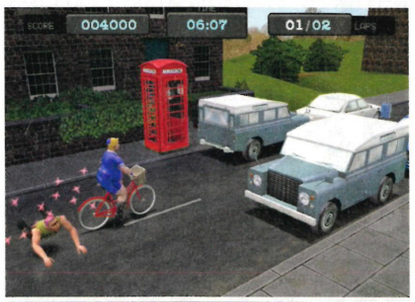
COMPUTER SAYS NO

Even if you love the series and find all of this hilarious, it's impossible to ignore the fact that it's a poorly-designed game. Lamentably poor, like the kind of particularly rubbish Flash game you'd see on a time-wasting website.

Basic, clumsy controls are its main problem; for example, trying to dodge objects as a rollerskating Vicky is difficult, not because of the obstacles' placement, but because the analogue stick movement is unbearably imprecise, and there's a mysterious delay on the jump button which almost always results on you falling on your arse.

In its favour, it does have new dialogue performed by David Walliams, Matt Lucas and Tom Baker, so it's not as if they've just recorded it off the DVDs. That would've been monumentally cheap. And some of it is sort of funny, especially the introductions to each level by the aforementioned former Time Lord.

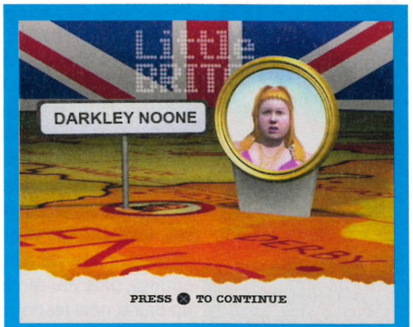
But the laughs are few, and the fun is nearly non-existent. Even if you find it for less that its £20 RRP, it's not worth your time. It has almost no merit whatsoever and, like the last series of the show, it's cheap and nasty. Not even worth swapping your baby for. ■ **Andy Kelly**



PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT
Graphics	04 Basic, but it does the job. Sort of
Sound	07 All the proper voices and music
Gameplay	02 Similarly basic, but nearly unplayable
Lifespan	02 You won't last more than an hour

No, but – just no. This is absolute drivel. Barely funny, barely playable and barely worth even a second of your time

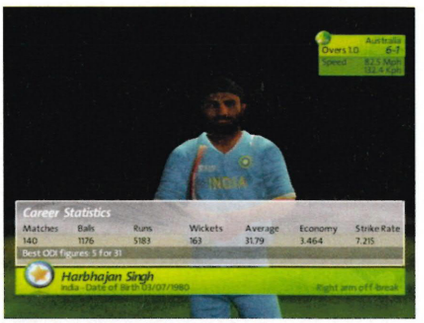
2/10

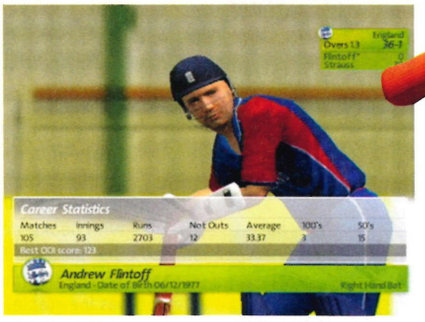


TOUR OF BRITAIN

The game's main 'Career' mode sees you travelling across the British Isles, visiting fictional locations made famous in the TV show including Pox, Slut, Darkley Noone and Sessex. As you complete mini-games you move across the map, with no particular goal other than to unlock more mini-games to play in challenge mode. Zzzzz...

Copping a quick feel on the way to bat is not guaranteed to up your average





BRIAN LARA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 2007

Finally, a World Cup that England might just win

DETAILS

PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/BRIANLARA
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

The classic cricket series returns to PS2, intent on spanking *EA Cricket* into the top tier (although a streaky edge through the slips would probably do them just as well)

This release is plainly timed to coincide with the World Cup in the West Indies, but you might argue that *Brian Lara International Cricket 2007* couldn't have arrived on UK shop shelves at a worse time. Its main rival, the solid, enjoyable *EA Cricket*, hit stores just before England touched down in Australia and thus rode a tidal wave of euphoria and expectation, but *Lara* lands at the arse-end of the largely depressing Ashes tour. For fans of the world's second greatest sport, playing this will be like a 'Nam-style, £39.99-shaped flashback.

Truth is, *Lara*'s not even out of the pavilion yet and it's having to fend off a couple of beamers. But, despite some unfortunate timing, there's a lot to like here.

The options are good, for a start. The fully licensed World Cup and Champions Trophy are both included, and both are obvious bonuses, but there's some excellent custom-made stuff, too. Tests and ODI's can be fiddled with, creating leagues or one-off matches, as can 20/20 outings, plus you can even go as far as dreaming up brand new teams and players in the game's excellent custom modes.

As you move into the games themselves, the quality remains. The commentary, largely, is great. David Gower, Jonathan Agnew, Tony Greig, Ian Bishop and the most Australian man in the world, Bill Lawry, all offer solid, if slightly tepid, punditry. It feels pretty realisitc even if it doesn't always flow as well as it should. Gower, especially, is just like he is on the telly: a bit posh, a lot knowledgable and occasionally just a little dull. There's quite a lot of repetition but the standard is high enough for us not to care.

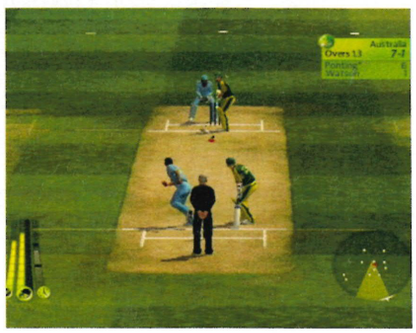
CREASED LIGHTNING

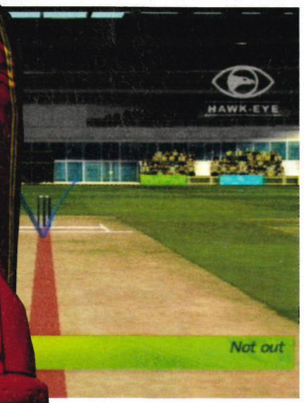
One thing you notice straight away once you're standing at the crease, or pelting in with the ball in your hand, is the animation. It really is superb. Players bowl, bat, throw and field like the real thing, plus cutaways show off some really nice little extras: bowlers use sweat to shine the ball, captains point to positions and batsmen meet in the middle.

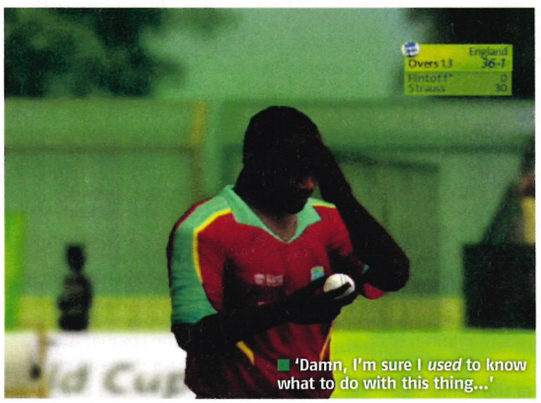
Sweeps, slogs, punches, drives, swinging balls, off-spin, googlies, doosras, they're all in there for you to find and brag about pulling off, and all look just as they should.

In terms of actual visuals, though – faces, bodies, crowds, stadiums – *Lara* gets put about 20 rows back by the slicker *EA Cricket*. In fact, to be brutally honest, graphically *Lara* can be pretty shabby stuff. Like the commentary, it never seems to flow as well as it should, which is a shame given the standard of the motion capture. Compared to EA's television-style presentation, *Lara* is amateur hour.

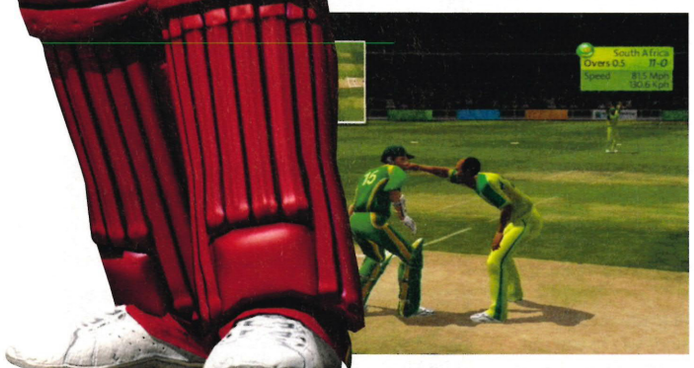
EA steal a march in terms of AI, too. In *Lara*, it veers from excellent to despairing. For every CPU-controlled bowler who has you playing and missing with a snorter, there's another who puts the same ball in roughly the same place for you to bludgeon for your third six in a row. Early difficulty settings provide little challenge, which doesn't help matters, but there are definitely some serious deficiencies in this area.

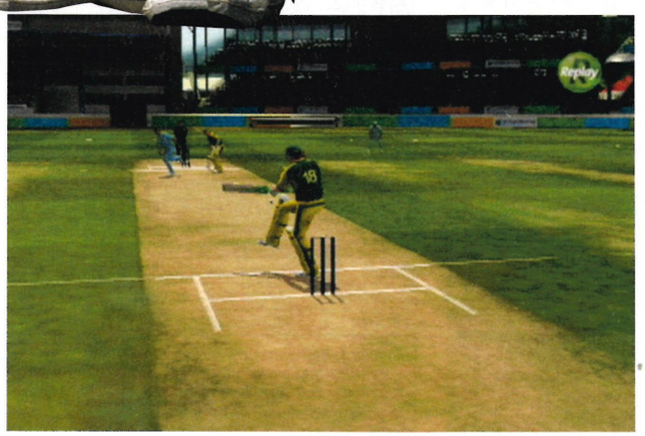






■ 'Damn, I'm sure I *used* to know what to do with this thing...'





Fielding is even worse. A twitchy power gauge determines how accurately you're throwing the ball back to the wicketkeeper, but you could hit the middle of the gauge every time and your jelly-legged no-hopers would still toss the occasional truly horrendous ball back to the stumps and chase boundary shots really s-l-o-w-l-y.

MAIDEN OVERSIGHTS

In fairness, Lara is rarely as bad in most other areas, but for a game with such a phenomenal level of detail (you can even choose between Kookaburra and Duke balls!), there are some glaring oversights. Why, for example, doesn't the scorecard come up between overs?

Despite that, it's a dependable, enjoyable cricket sim, impressing in its detail if not its aesthetics. EA's game is better looking, better thought out, better made – but in *Lara*, we managed to bowl Australia out for 77. And that counts for a lot. ■ **Tim Weaver**

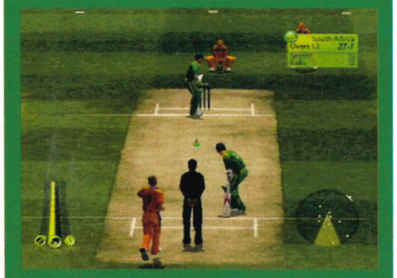
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	06	Animation is excellent. The rest is not great
Sound	07	Some good, if repetitive, commentary
Gameplay	07	Solid, satisying, but a fair few problems
Lifespan	08	A raft of competitions and tons of options

A quick-fire, enjoyable game of cricket, but* Lara *needs some serious polish before it can claim EA's much-prized wicket

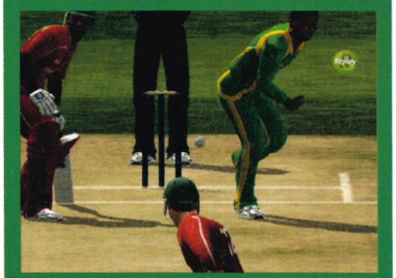
7/10

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

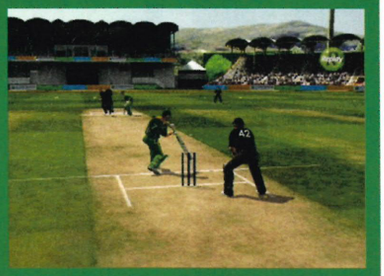
England are a bunch of no-hopers and playing as the Aussies would make us traitors to our country. So, in our bid for World Cup glory, we've chosen South Africa. Bags of talent, but can we bring out the best in them?



THE GROUP STAGES go well. Smith and Gibbs smash Holland to all parts and then Ntini, Kallis and Pollock bowl Scotland out for eight (no, seriously – *eight*). The Aussie game's a bit closer with Gilchrist twonking rookie offspinner Petersen out of the ground and into the next city. Never fear, though: Polly comes through with two quick wickets, and we win by five runs.



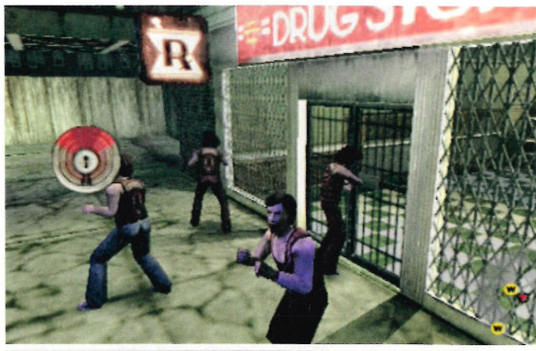
ZIMBABWE ARE UP next in the Super 8 stage. They show some fight but go nighty-night thanks to a Kallis Trademark Wonder Knock of 92. New Zealand next. Fleming gives us a lesson in coverdrives. We give him a lesson in LBW. We roll over Bangladesh and India, but then Pakistan smash us, scoring 203 off 20 overs. We still finish top, though, by hammering 334 off Canada.

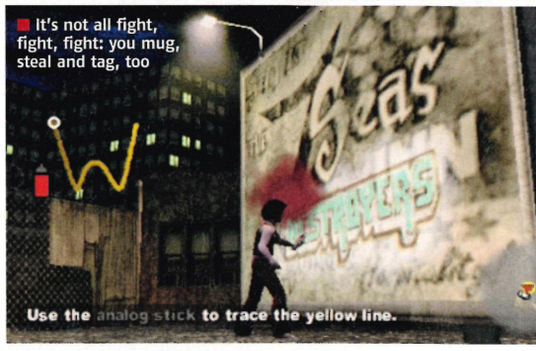


THE SEMIS ARE A BIT NERVY: New Zealand again, and this time Ntini's getting clocked all over the park. The Kiwis set us a scary total of 187 off 20 overs but after being 34-4 thanks to some diabolical runouts, Justin Kemp starts wielding willow lightsaber-style, hitting four consecutive sixes in one over. He finishes with 102. A knock so good we almost forgot the Ashes. Almost.

WELL, LOOK-EE what we have here in the final: the Australians. We win the toss and have a bowl. Ntini does the business first over and gets Hayden and Ponting too – but then Hussey asks for a pint of the usual, 'the usual' being a century. So: 265 to chase. Disaster? It looks that way as Smith, Gibbs and de Villiers go for next to nothing. But at the eleventh hour 'Hollywood' Kallis bludgeons his way to 110... and we win by two runs!

Wi-Fi multiplayer means your mate can be there shouting 'Leave him! He's not worth it!'



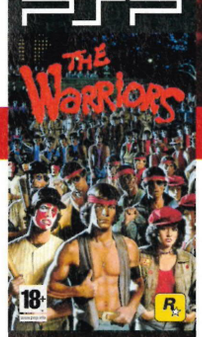


It's not all fight, fight, fight: you mug, steal and tag, too

PSP

THE WARRIORS

Packs as much punch on PSP as it did on PS2



DETAILS

PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR
DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WI-FI: YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS: NO
GAME SHARING: NO

AT A GLANCE
Portable conversion of the violent crime adventure based on a cult film. Fights, stealth, platforming – it's all in here

Even though *The Warriors* is based on the cult 1979 film of the same name, it's no *Lord of the Rings*-style retelling of that story. The majority of the game is set months before, following gang new recruit Rembrandt as he tries to earn his stripes. You also get to see how the likes of Cleon, Swan, Cowboy and Ajax started out.

So, for fans of the film it's a perfect accompaniment, and to many, a recognised prequel. After the success of the PS2 game last year, The Warriors have fought their way on to PSP and it's an absolutely perfect conversion.

In fact, to all intents and purposes, this is exactly the same as the console version. So if you've already finished it on PS2, don't expect new missions, because there aren't any.

There are, however, some new Wi-Fi multiplayer modes, including an incredibly accomplished cooperative mode that lets you and one of your mates play through the entire game together.

LOOKS COULD KILL

Not only that but, for a PSP game, it looks fantastic. We'd even go so far as to say that it looks as good as the PS2 version with rich, detailed textures and brilliantly atmospheric level design. It really captures the downbeat atmosphere of the relentlessly bleak movie.

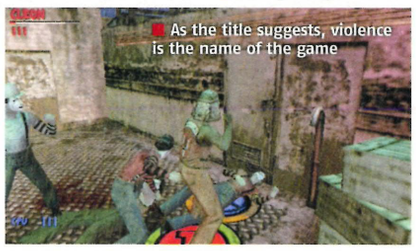
You'll spend most of your play time knocking people about. The combat is deliciously brutal and there's a beat-'em-up standard combo system that lets you grab people, tackle them to the ground and let fly with your fists.

It's really, really violent and, because most of the game revolves around massive brawls with rival gangs and the police, you'll be subjected to an almost constant barrage of screaming, yelling and broken bones. You can use weapons, too – bin lids, baseball bats, glass bottles – and there are some environmental attacks, such as slamming people against walls.

The rest of the time, you're out robbing and causing bother. Smash a shop window and you can dash inside, picking up items and earning money to buy 'flash', a health-restoring drug. You can also mug passers-by and nick car stereos, which you do by twirling the analogue stick to loosen the screws.

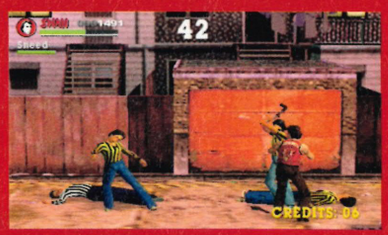
The game's episodic and made up of missions, but there are sections where you can roam free around various backstreets picking up tasks and running from the police. There are some stealth bits but it's the aforementioned scrapping that takes centre stage and it's an absolute pleasure.

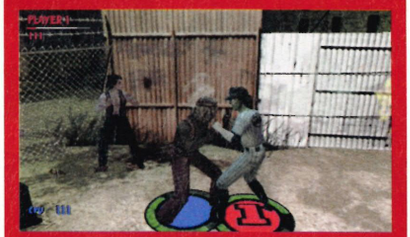
It's no *Grand Theft Auto* and the relentless fighting can get repetitive, but this is one of the best action games on PSP. ■ **Andy Kelly**


As the title suggests, violence is the name of the game

ARMIES OF THE NIGHT

Its not *Double Dragon* – honest





This side-scroller mini-game was unlockable in the PS2 version of *The Warriors*, but on PSP it's available from the start and in multiplayer. There's also a Quick Brawl mode where you can choose from a selection of gangs – The Orphans, The Baseball Furies and so on – and duke it out in a no-holds barred fight. You can work with another player, or fight directly against them.

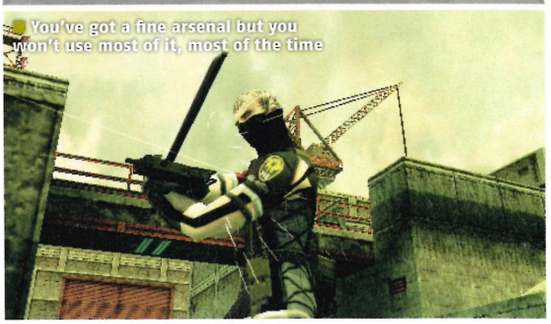
The new series of *Strictly Come Dancing*

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	An impressive conversion with sharp details
Sound	09	Superb voice acting from the original cast
Gameplay	08	Tough, meaty combat and a gripping story
Lifespan	07	Wi-Fi multiplayer if you have a keen mate

A violent, ballsy, moody, stylish adventure that oozes late-1970s street cool and stays true to the spirit of the film. We can dig it

8/10

The hotel's room service left a lot to be desired



You've got a fine arsenal but you won't use most of it, most of the time

PSP

METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS

It's portable, sure. But is it *Metal Gear Solid*?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER KONAMI

DEVELOPER KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

PRICE: £34.99

OUT APRIL

WIFI MULTIPLAYER: YES

CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS: NO

GAME SHARING: YES

AT A GLANCE

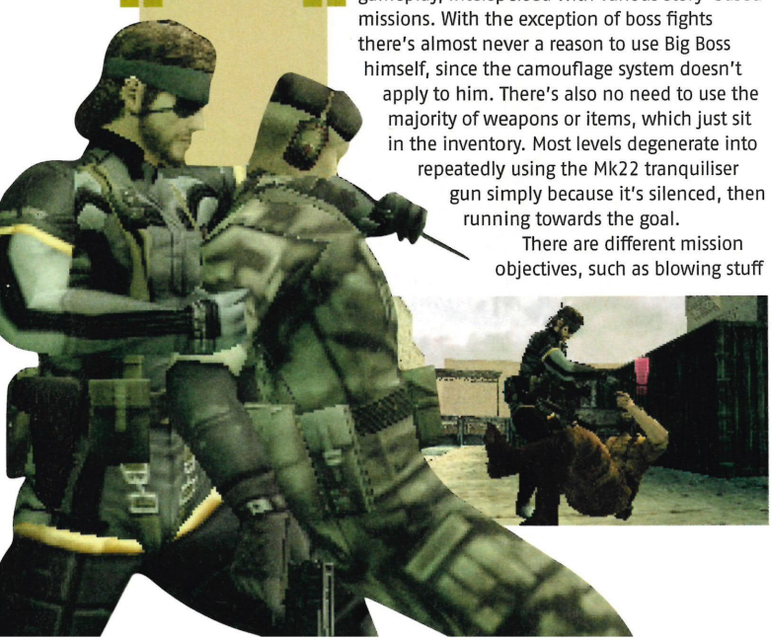
The missing link in the *MGS* series, connecting *Snake Eater* to the original 1987 title, it takes the action onto your PSP

Kojima Productions has taken a brave new direction with the latest *Metal Gear Solid*. We were promised this would be the true portable version, satisfying those disappointed with the *Ac!d* games. It's also meant to tie together the last 20 years' worth of releases (such as the retro titles available on *MGS3: Subsistence*), all of which relate a story spanning twice that length of time. So, then, not much pressure.

The problem is, it doesn't feel like previous *MGS* games. *Portable Ops* has you recruiting up to 100 enemy soldiers and deploying them in squads of four. Recruited soldiers can move around unnoticed (signified by a blue marker) so long as they don't behave suspiciously. But this only works among soldiers of the same type; putting an orange-clothed grunt in front of uniformed officers, and vice versa, will cause them to raise the alarm.

Recruitment makes up the bulk of the gameplay, interspersed with various story-based missions. With the exception of boss fights there's almost never a reason to use Big Boss himself, since the camouflage system doesn't apply to him. There's also no need to use the majority of weapons or items, which just sit in the inventory. Most levels degenerate into repeatedly using the Mk22 tranquiliser gun simply because it's silenced, then running towards the goal.

There are different mission objectives, such as blowing stuff up or rescuing prisoners, but most of them involve moving from point A to B, after which the objective completes itself – only after the Silo Complex do things require much thought, planning or even stealth for that matter; just run for the red marker.



BAD FOR YOUR STEALTH

MGS has always been about flamboyant, over-the-top stealthy action, such as fighting someone who shoots bees out of their mouth, shooting a Russian gunship on top of a building or hiding in ladies' toilets.

But by forcing you to use generic characters in sparse environments, simply running from one area to another without getting killed, *Ops* feels watered down. The bosses are also far too infrequent and fairly uninteresting.

The storyline is typically strange, and there are clever moments such as the convoluted way in which you sneak into the Silo Complex, which is genius. But where are the epic set-pieces that have so long characterised *MGS*?

Portable Ops' biggest problem is not that it's a bad game – it's actually a lot of fun in places – but rather the weight of expectation around it. Strangely, the people most likely to enjoy this are those who've never controlled Solid Snake before. Those expecting the action and pace of the previous PlayStation games will be sorely disappointed. For everyone else, it's a decent title, fun in short bursts. **John Szczepaniak**

ONLINE OPERATIONS

Despite *Portable Ops* requiring free online registration (thankfully without providing personal details) newcomers can enjoy online battles within five minutes. Interestingly, you can send a squad online and turn the system off, allowing them to encounter other groups independently. Returning later, they may have new recruits or captured prisoners. It's also possible to recruit new members via nearby wireless LAN connections – even if they're security protected! Merely detecting someone else's router will enable this, with the signal strength displayed visually – the stronger it is, the better the results. Expect to see PSP owners wandering the streets, searching for wireless hotspots.

The ol' disused factory level. Yawn

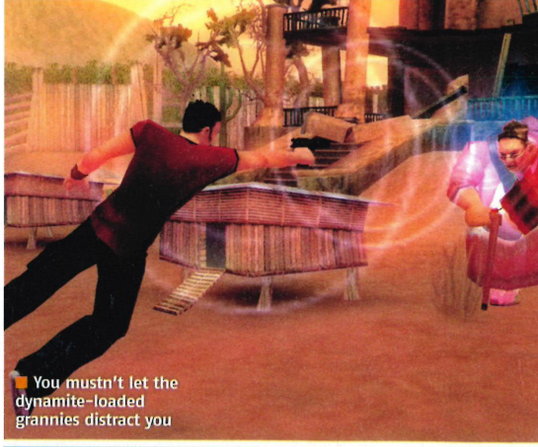
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK VERDICT

Graphics	06	Large areas that are sparse and dull
Sound	08	Excellent, adaptive music, okay voiceovers
Gameplay	06	Well suited to PSP, but not quite *MGS*
Lifespan	08	Lengthy adventure, plenty of side missions

A fun game for short sessions, suited to the system and with some clever ideas, but it's not the proper* Metal Gear Solid *title we were expecting

7/10

If this is what Mexican women look like, we're staying in Blighty



You mustn't let the dynamite-loaded grannies distract you

CHILI CON CARNAGE

PSP shooters don't come much hotter than this

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EIDOS
DEVELOPER DEADLINE GAMES
PRICE £29.99
OUT 16TH FEBRUARY 2007
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

AT A GLANCE

The most flamboyant shooter on PS2 gets a whole new adventure on PSP, packed with hours of gunning goodness.

Games where you go mental with a gun are 10-a-penny and, to be honest, we're getting tired of them. Walk into a room, drop the goons, move on to the next one. Yawn. But thankfully, although *Chili Con Carnage* largely follows this routine, it manages to make you feel as if you're constantly in That Lobby Scene from the original *Matrix* film – and it just keeps getting better and better.

What other game lets you cartwheel off walls as you pop off headshots to every stinking gringo in range? Or sees you spin 360° in slow-mo as you pump hot lead into surrounding enemies? Oh, *Chili Con Carnage* is a spicy dish indeed.

It follows on from the equally intense *Total Overdose* on PS2 and again follows the story of Ramiro Cruz. This time, though, he's tracking down and taking out his father's murderer – and anyone who gets in the way, naturally.

Every now and again you get help from Ram's crazy, tequila-swigging uncle who flies a chopper and drives a car so you can concentrate on blasting the pursuing henchmen. Handy.

However, the main crux of the fun is diving around the place like a psychedelic Max Payne and chaining together ridiculous combos.

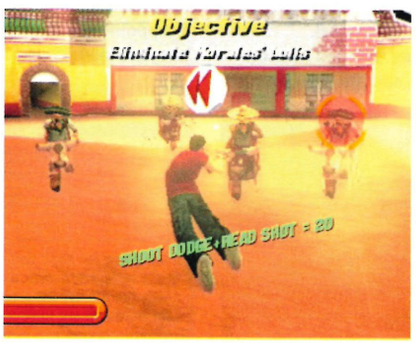
You can literally clear a whole level of scum without ever breaking your flow as you leap, dodge and generally blow everything up. Heck, you can even catch sombreros and the like from the bad guys you've felled, just to add a stylish bonus to your kills.

Chili Con Carnage doesn't just look pretty, it handles very nicely, too. You never feel you're wasting a shot because the camera tracks the action superbly and the lock-on targeting with L1 barely lets you down throughout. It definitely feels more responsive than the gunplay in *GTA: Vice City Stories*, for example.

Side challenges in which you get to blitz men dressed as chickens in different styles break up the action nicely. But otherwise, sadly, there isn't a great deal of diversity in *Chili*; it relies heavily on the run-and-gun mentality.

However, that's just one stray bullet in an otherwise deadly accurate game. You'll have buckets of fun with this and no other PSP shooter comes close to the *muy loco* gunplay on offer. ■ **Nathan Irvine**

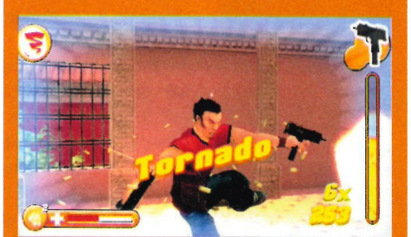
It's all about combos and doing them with style



DESPERADO TIMES

Even the toughest hombre sometimes needs help dusting off gringos. Pick up a special token, hit △ and get assistance from one of these...

GIMPO: This masked goliath hunts down your enemies and pummels them with his giant hands. Ouch.



TORNADO: Use this move to make Ram jump into the air, Uzis blazing. Anyone in the blast radius usually dies.

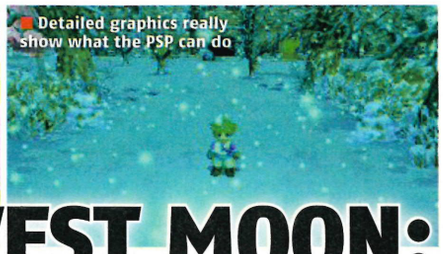
GOLDEN GUN: A one-shot-kill kit with a zoom-in effect showing your shocked foe. Genius.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	09	Beautiful characters, animation rarely slips
Sound	08	A Mariachi soundtrack moves things along
Gameplay	07	Bags of fun, but it can get rather repetitive
Lifespan	08	The story's fairly long with lots of challenges

A treat of a game that lives and dies by its simple gameplay. You'll love the intense bullet action but it is repetitive. Worth a look

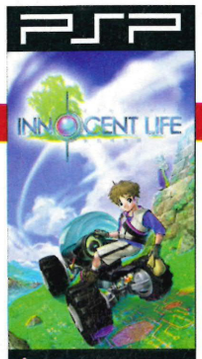
8/10


Detailed graphics really show what the PSP can do

HARVEST MOON: INNOCENT LIFE

A handheld hoe-down of futuristic farm fun

A boy needs a dog. Even a futuristic farming robot boy

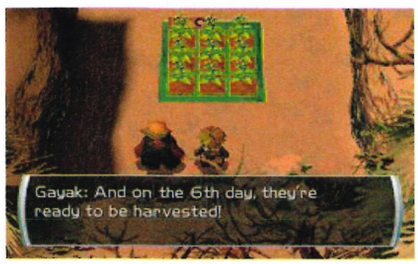


DETAILS

PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER ARTEPIAZZA
PRICE £34.99
OUT 30 MARCH
WIFI MULTIPLAYER NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

We're two hours into *Innocent Life* and we almost can't take any more. The turnips aren't ready for harvest, we've watched everything on telly and we've cooked everything we can. There's an interesting-looking town nearby but we're not allowed to go there yet. We're almost turning off the PSP in boredom – but not quite.

Some of the characters have dropped hints about something more important than fruit and veg and we want to know what's going on. Yes, this game takes just as long to get going as the rest of the notoriously slow-starting titles in the *Harvest Moon* series. But bear with it.



Your tousled-headed farmer boy is a robot, and on his cute little shoulders rests a rather big responsibility: to save the world (by farming, as you do). The detailed backplot that unfolds as you go through the game, involving magical sprites, war, the decline of traditional farming methods and the nature of humanity, makes it really rather immersive, particularly once you get chickens, flowers, wild fruit to pick and a spot of mining to do as well as your veg-watering.

It can get repetitive and, rather annoyingly, characters often tell you to do stuff you've just done. In fact, the scripting is one area that could be improved. But being PSP, you can put it down and pick it up again as the mood takes you, and only the most hard-hearted macho-men will be able to resist doing so. **Sophie Mason**

Skills such as cooking are central to the story

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK — VERDICT

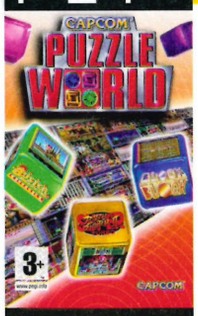
Graphics	08	Lovely colours and plenty of detail
Sound	07	Under-used, but the music doesn't annoy
Gameplay	07	Relaxing but a bit repetitive. Slow to start
Lifespan	09	Intriguing and with lots to explore

Takes time to blossom but grows into the kind of game PSP was made for. One to enjoy little and often rather than in long sessions

8/10

CAPCOM PUZZLE WORLD

The most puzzling thing is: why?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER CAPCOM
DEVELOPER CAPCOM
PRICE £19.99
OUT 16 MARCH
WIFI MULTIPLAYER 1-2
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

Oh Capcom, will your retro collection cash-grab never cease? They may have offered some bumper retro titles for the PSP in the past, but *Puzzle World* isn't one of them. With only three-ish titles, it falls way short of previous collections.

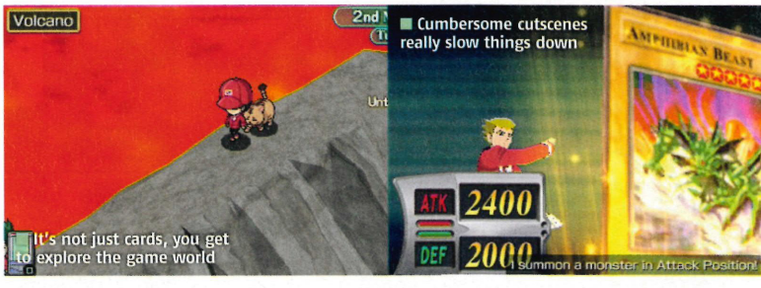
Super Puzzle Fighter II, with its super-deformed *Street Fighter* and *Darkstalkers* characters engaging in addictive Dr Mario-style puzzle battles, is the highlight. *Block Block* is familiar bat-and-ball, brick-bashing action, while the *Buster Bros Collection* is the same basic game thrice over.

Hence, despite costing nearly 20 quid, *CPW* doesn't so much resemble a world of puzzles as a piddling planetoid. Though, granted, *Capcom Puzzle Piddling Planetoid* doesn't quite have the same ring to it. **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK — VERDICT

***Super Puzzle Fighter II** may still be capable of stealing men's souls, but the rest of CPW is now no more than the stuff of freebie Flash game fodder. Approach with caution*

4/10



DETAILS

PUBLISHER KONAMI
DEVELOPER KONAMI
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS YES
GAMESHARING NO

YU-GI-OH! GX TAG FORCE

Big heads and even bigger hands

Despite being based on a card game, translated from Japanese and born from a cartoon, this sizable deck-dealer and combined RPG embraces everyone, whether *Yu-Gi*-newbie or nutter. But the price of this playability is pace.

For first-timers it's a good grounding, but fans are tested by tutorials, a structured story and mid-battle animations that drag out each fight to about half an hour. With no mid-scuffle saves, you'll need your train to be very delayed... The post-tutorial tournaments are faithful to the 'toon, but the odd silly move by the AI on both sides shows the need for full online dealing. **Alex Cooke**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK — VERDICT

A sprawling RPG/card fighter that deals out a solid cartoon-based battler, once you get beyond the tutorial. Colourful and cute, it would have made more sense on PS2

6/10

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Too Little Too Late	153546	153552	151877
Golden Skans	153677	153692	151913
I Luv You	153687	153694	151915
Proper Education	153651	153653	151905
I Wanna Love You	153698	153709	151918
A Moment Like This	153628	153629	151893
Boogie 2nite	153545	153551	151876
Patience	153491	153495	151846
Smack That	153450	153459	151839
Truly Madly Deeply	153596	153606	151888
Tell Me	153598	153608	151890
PATT	153646	153649	151903
Calm Down Dearest	153695	153696	151916
A Bad Dream	153705	153716	151925

TV and FILM

TV and FILM	REAL
The A Team Intro	157169
Banana Man	157170
Austin Powers	157158
Mission Impossible	157286
Knight Rider	152005
The Godfather	157154
Ghostbusters	157138
Highway To The Dangerzone	157156

REAL SOUNDS

REAL SOUNDS	REAL
Napoleon Dynamite - Freeking Idiot	157920
Happy Gilmore - Go Home Ball	157923
Scarface - Say Hello To My Little Friend	157924
The Shining - Heres Johnny!	157925
South Park - Suck On My Balls	157176
Stifler - Stiflers Back Baby	153610
Captain Jack Sparrow	153620
Paddy - Ding Dang Doo	153612
Noel Edmonds - Deal Or No Deal	153613
David Brent - (Office)	153615
Brent And Finchy - (Office)	153621
Andy Millman - (Extras)	153626
Alan Partridge	153627
Best Of Little Britain	153623
Bitty Bitty	153622
Darth Vader	157300
Godfather	157304
Homer Simpson	157306
Weirdo Alert	157194
Darth Vader	157300

CLASSICS

CLASSICS	TRUE	FULL MP3	POLY
All The Small Things	158549	157521	---------
Sweet Child Of Mine	158709	157706	152138
Wonderwall	158906	157784	151056
Gangstas Paradise	158617	157590	---------
Californication	158943	157827	---------
You Cant Touch This	158824	157761	151171
Ghetto Gospel	158476	157477	---------
Back In Black	158495	157492	---------
Black Betty	158212	157825	---------

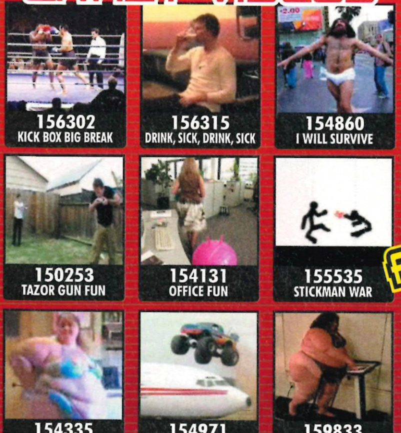
FIGHT VIDEOS

154333 NINJA VS CHAV
155269 GIRL SCRAP
155272 FRIENDLY FIGHT
155266 PARTY FIGHT
155265 MIGHTY MIDGET
155271 BIZARRE KO

SHOCKER VIDEOS

154128 SCARY SHOCKER
154339 LOOK OUT...SCARY
155076 CALM... THEN SCARY
154798 WATCH OUT... SHOCK
155517 NIGHT POLTERGUIST
154797 SCARY SCENERY

CRAZY VIDEOS



156302 KICK BOX BIG BREAK
156315 DRINK, SICK, DRINK, SICK
154860 I WILL SURVIVE
150253 TAZOR GUN FUN
154131 OFFICE FUN
155535 STICKMAN WAR
154335 SUPERSIZE MODEL
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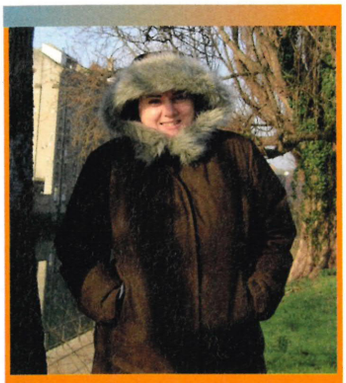
replay

THE FAST AND THE FANTASISTS



Some like it fast, some like it slow. Gaming, that is, of course. For every person who likes to spend hours exploring every inch of a game's world, collecting every golden ring, unlocking every piece of bonus artwork, there's someone who wants to rush through as fast as possible and beat the game quicker than any of their mates, just because they can.

Well, whichever type of gamer you are, we love you just the same. And that's why in this month's Replay you'll not only meet some crazy speed runners who vie to complete games like *Silent Hill 3* in a matter of minutes (yes, minutes) but you'll also find out how to squeeze even more playing hours out of *Final Fantasy XII* with our guide to the less obvious, but equally fun, bits of this huge game.

Plus, of course, there are all the latest cheats to help you on your way to speed run glory. The question is, can you read the entire section more quickly than anyone else?

Sophie Mason,
Production editor

FINAL FANTASY XII

21 TREATS YOU MUSTN'T MISS IN THE BEST RPG EVER

116

112 **CHARTS**
You won't believe the games that people have been buying! Plus this month's cartoon

113 **CHALLENGES & ONLINE**
Skate and drive your way to prizeville, then see what we think of the latest online and WiFi titles

114 **CHEATS**
Unlockables and cheats for *Final Fantasy XII*, *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops* and lots more top games

118 **THE HOT 100**
It's back! Our guide to the top 100 PS2 treasures that you really ought to hunt down, and why

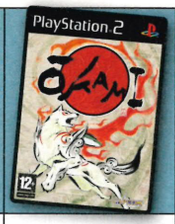
120 **FASTER THAN YOU**
Meet the guy who can finish *Silent Hill 3* in 45 minutes and his speedrunning rivals

charts

FACTS, FIGURES AND FUNNIES

WHAT THE OTHER MAGS SAID

WE READ 'EM SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO



PSM3	'The most beautiful game on PS2' 95%	'It's all a bit too monotonous' 60%	'One of the deepest games on PSP' 83%	"We suggest you avoid this" 48%
PSW	'Definitely worth a look' 7/10	NO REVIEW*	'Snake's recruitment drive works a treat' 8/10	NO REVIEW*
PLAY	'A perfect marriage of style and substance' 93%	'Reeks of a quick cash-in' 51%	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT	*'Okami* buries the opposition like a load of old bones' 10/10	'Definitely deserves a rental' 6/10	'Not the proper *MGS* title we were expecting' 8/10	'Every bit as stinking as you'd expect' 2/10

*Review not available at time of going to press

THE TOP 20 ChartTrack ELSPA

	Game Name	Publisher	Score
1.	Pro Evolution Soccer 6	Konami	10/10
2.	Need For Speed Carbon	EA Games	9/10
3.	Scarface: The World Is Yours	VU Games	8/10
4.	Lego Star Wars II	Eidos	9/10
5.	FIFA 07	EA Sports	9/10
6.	WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2007	THQ	8/10
7.	World Snooker Championship 2007	Sega	8/10
8.	Buzz! The Big Quiz	Sony	7/10
9.	Buzz! Junior Jungle Party	Sony	7/10
10.	Call Of Duty 3	Activision	8/10
11.	Guitar Hero II	Activision	8/10
12.	Happy Feet	Midway	6/10
13.	Tony Hawk's Project 8	Activision	8/10
14.	The Sims 2: Pets	EA Games	8/10
15.	Splinter Cell: Double Agent	Ubisoft	8/10
16.	Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	Eidos	5/10
17.	Eragon	VU Games	5/10
18.	Kingdom Hearts II	Square Enix	8/10
19.	Buzz! The Sports Quiz	Sony	7/10
20.	Cricket 07	EA Sports	8/10

BALLS UP

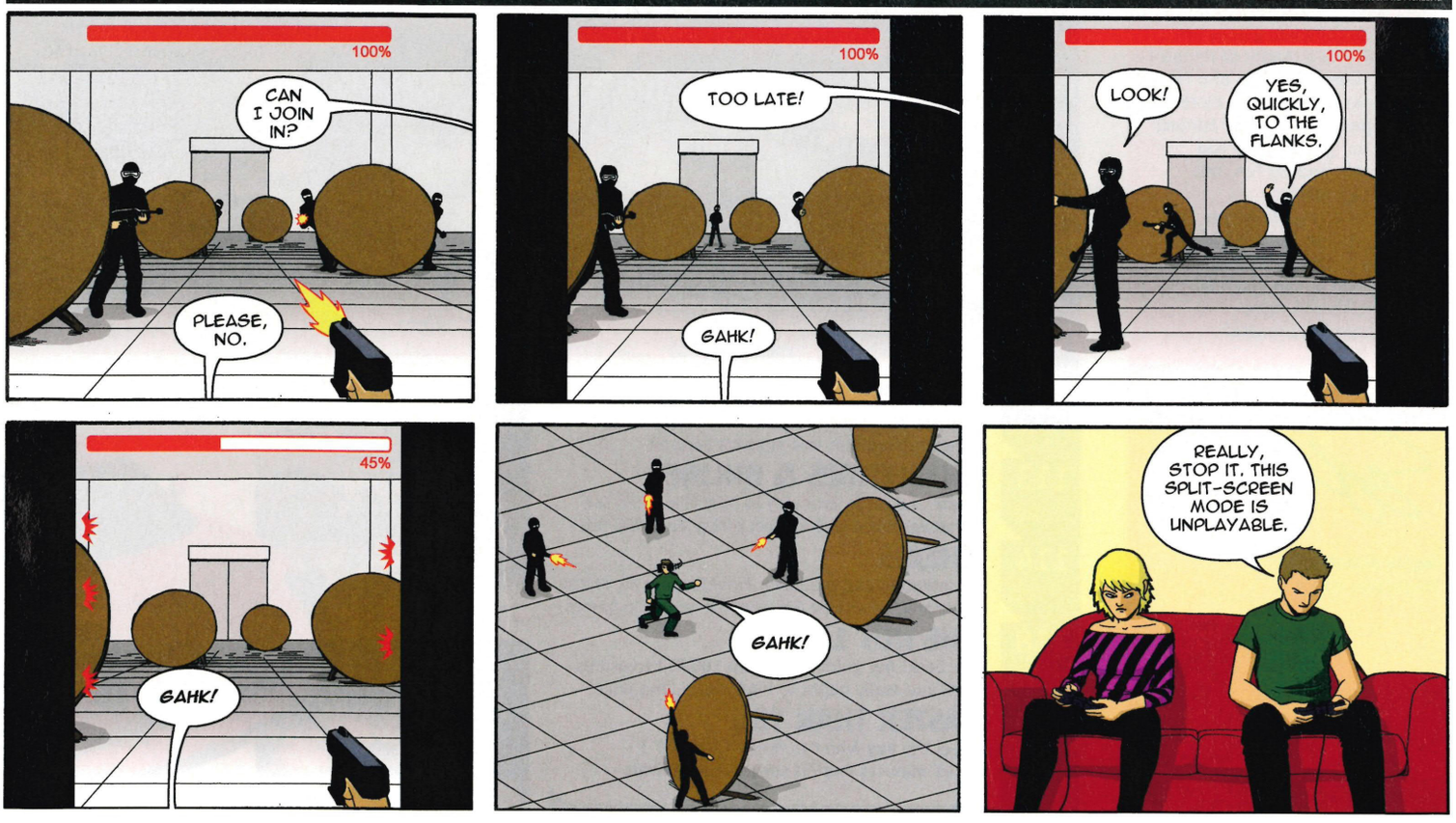
That Tony Montana - he's got some cohones. *Scarface* has surged from last month's number 13 to hit third place, beating *FIFA 07* and *Lego Star Wars II*

SWING FOR VICTORY

These cheeky monkeys are still going strong, as *Buzz! Junior* refuses to budge from the top 10. Does this mean a vine-climbing sequel is hiding in the trees?

SAVE POINT TAKING THE LESS-TRAVELLED ROUTE TO GAMING WISDOM

WORDS: KIERON GILLEN ART: JAMIE MCKELVIE



challenges

THIS MONTH: WHEELY GOOD PRIZES

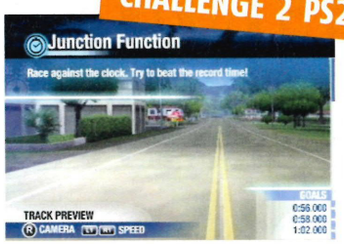
TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

CHALLENGE 1 PS2

Take a snap of your character scoring high with a single trick. Pause the game then take a clear photo. Beat our 10,580 to be in with a chance.
Best proved score gets...
A top PS2 game, a soundtrack CD, a beanie hat, baseball cap, T-shirt and a funky lanyard.

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

CHALLENGE 2 PS2



Head over to the leisurely Junction Function time trial in your Alfa Romeo GT V6 and have a stab at thrashing our time of 58.835. Best time wins a bag o' swag.
Quickest proved time gets...
Three great PS2 games and an Official PS2 Magazine T-shirt.

HOW TO ENTER

Attach your MMS picture then text either **CHALLENGE1, CHALLENGE2, or CHALLENGE3** (then a space) followed by your name and full address to **07738 647 177**

Only the entries that *OPS2* judges as the best times/score will win the respective prize. Texts will be charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 1 March to 28 March 2007 inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.*

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

CHALLENGE 3 PSP

Take a Racing Renault Clio onto the middle grid position of Castle Combe track (good weather) for two laps on 100% AI difficulty. To win, beat our time of 2.02.75 by more than anyone else.
Quickest Proved Time Gets...
Two great PSP games and an Official PS2 Magazine T-shirt.

online

IS IT WORTH GETTING BROADBAND FOR THIS GAME?

PHANTASY STAR UNIVERSE

What you get: Form a party of six players and tackle either four main story modes or a wealth of freeform missions. Once you forked out for a Guardian's licence ($9.99 per month!) you can create and store up to five playable characters to fight with.
What it's like: After recovering from the initial shock of having to sign up for roughly £5 per month, and muddling our way through the colossal amount of character and personal room creation options, we're thrust into a sparsely populated lobby.

"Hi, we're new here," we say via the text facilities, to the apparent disgust of everyone else. "Anyone fancy a game?" we try. After roughly 30 seconds of being ignored like an ASBO in The Ivy, two fellow 'adventurers' take pity on us and offered a game. So, with our cohorts MrShakes and Big12incher, we plough manfully into the 'Universe'.

Following a few scraps with some minor monsters, Big12incher disappears – either bored or lagged out – so we're down to a party of two. The rest of the game? Pretty similar to the single player, only with more camaraderie, and a vastly improved chance of the game suddenly showing you a lost connection message and forcing you to scream in frustration as you realise how much time you've just wasted. Five quid a month for this torture? We'll pass, thanks...

SHOULD I GET BROADBAND FOR THIS? ✗

PSP WIFI TEST

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6

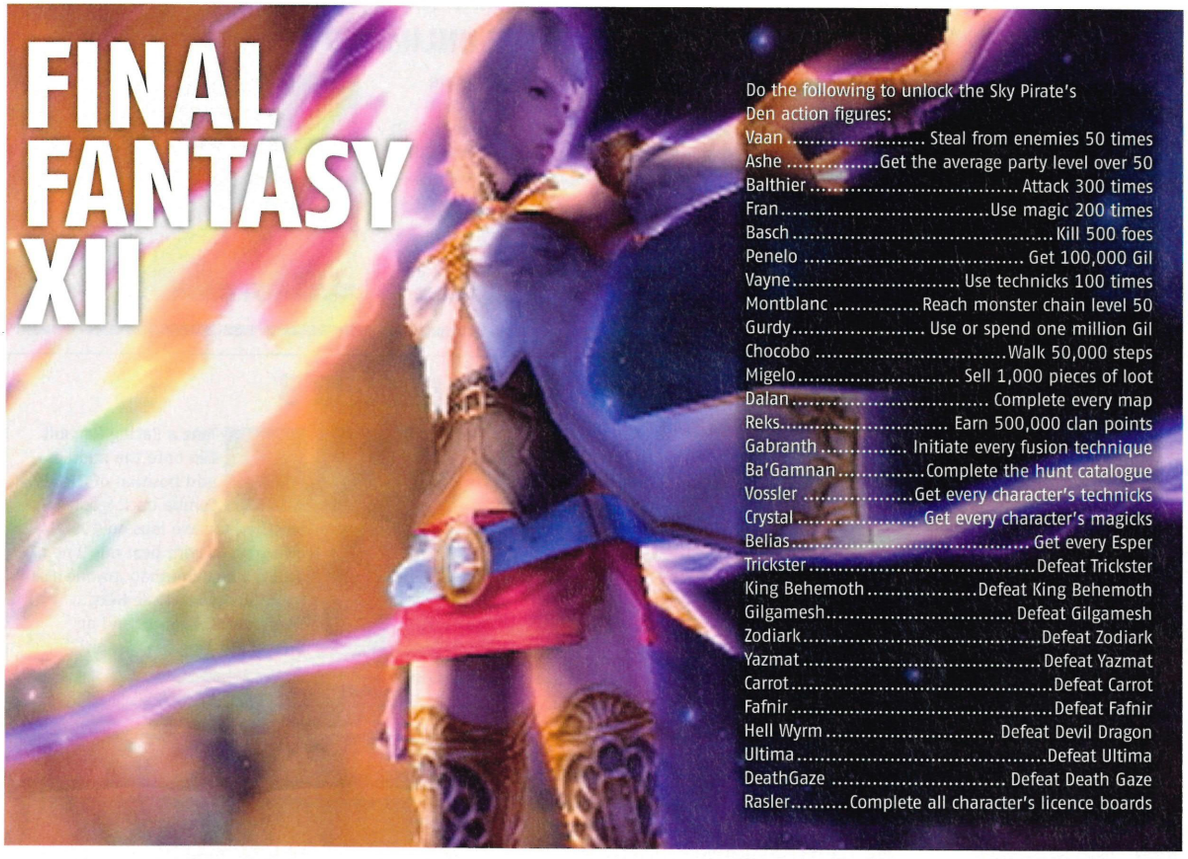
What you get: PSP *PES 6* features no online mode, so it's just ad-hoc wireless mano-a-mano matches. Saying that, wireless play is the very reason why many *PES*-heads bought PSPs in the first place.
What it's like: Wireless *PES 6* is crazy-addictive. You start by creating a profile (obscene screen names optional), to keep track of all your relevant stats. It may not exhibit *Championship Manager*-like statistical depth, but you'll be surprised just how much pride you take in your profile, particularly when you wirelessly connect to a new player and watch them gaze at your 32-2 win/loss record. Wireless *PES* is the very reason why God created eight-hour coach trips. Oh, and Konami: a few multiplayer tournament options would be great for *PES 7*, please.

SHOULD I GET MY MATES ROUND FOR THIS? ✓

*CHALLENGE COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word NO at the end of your text message. Winners will be notified within 28 days.
No employees of Future Publishing, any associated company or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Publicity may be given to any entrants and their names, addresses and/or photographs printed in OPS2. Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary. These competitions are open from 1 March to 28 March 2007 inclusive.

cheats

THE FINEST CHEATS AND UNLOCKABLES FOR THE BEST GAMES



Do the following to unlock the Sky Pirate's Den action figures:

Vaan ..... Steal from enemies 50 times
Ashe ..... Get the average party level over 50
Balthier ..... Attack 300 times
Fran ..... Use magic 200 times
Basch ..... Kill 500 foes
Penelo ..... Get 100,000 Gil
Vayne ..... Use technicks 100 times
Montblanc ..... Reach monster chain level 50
Gurdy ..... Use or spend one million Gil
Chocobo ..... Walk 50,000 steps
Migelo ..... Sell 1,000 pieces of loot
Dalan ..... Complete every map
Reks ..... Earn 500,000 clan points
Gabranth ..... Initiate every fusion technique
Ba'Gamnan ..... Complete the hunt catalogue
Vossler ..... Get every character's technicks
Crystal ..... Get every character's magicks
Belias ..... Get every Esper
Trickster ..... Defeat Trickster
King Behemoth ..... Defeat King Behemoth
Gilgamesh ..... Defeat Gilgamesh
Zodiark ..... Defeat Zodiark
Yazmat ..... Defeat Yazmat
Carrot ..... Defeat Carrot
Fafnir ..... Defeat Fafnir
Hell Wyrm ..... Defeat Devil Dragon
Ultima ..... Defeat Ultima
DeathGaze ..... Defeat Death Gaze
Rasler ..... Complete all character's licence boards

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

While playing the game, hold R2 and L2 and then press →, →, ↓, ↑, ←, ← to unlock all weapons.

BLACK

To unlock the **M249** machine gun as your default weapon, enter **FG6S-WFZG-7MDP-PZGT** (with dashes) as a profile name. The game will immediately ask you to enter another name.

CALL OF DUTY 3

At the chapter select menu, hold down SELECT and press →, →, ←, ←, ◻, ◻ to unlock all chapters and bonus features

CANIS CANEM EDIT

Bike Shorts ...Do 100km on a bike
Black Ninja Outfit..... Fill up your yearbook completely
Black Skate Shoes ..... Walk 50km
BMX Champion ....Complete one of the bike races
Boxing Outfit . Beat Prep challenge or Boxing challenge in Chapter 2
Crash Helmet..... Come first in the Kart Race at the Carnival
Dunce Cap .....Fail three classes in a row
Edna Mask..... Destroy 19/19 tombstones during Halloween
Fast Food.....Complete the Burger Joint errand found in Bullworth Vale
Firefighter's Helmet ... Pull the fire alarm 20 times
Gnome Costume ..... Smash all of the garden gnomes
Go Kart .....Beat all Go Kart races
Gold Suit ..... Buy all clothing in the game
Graduation Hat .....Beat all five levels of all of your classes
Green Ninja Outfit.... Hit stuff with projectiles (eggs, etc) 1000 times
Grotto Master Collect all G&G cards
Orderly Uniform Complete 'Finding Johnny Vincent' in Chapter 5
Pirate Hat..... Beat up pirate on island near Beach House
Prison Uniform..... Beat all the detention mini-games once
Red Ninja Outfit. During Halloween at Bullworth Academy, complete the Big Prank task
Rubber Band Ball..... Collect all 75 Rubber Bands
Running Shorts ... Run/Walk 40km
School Mascot .... Beat 'Nice Outfit' in Chapter 4
Tiny Swimsuit.....At the Beach House location, find the Preppie with a blue mission on the beach and beat his swimming time
Werewolf Mask..... Found in a school locker after picking the lock
Wrestling Uniform..Beat Gym 1 for this pretty original outfit

FIFA STREET 2

On the title menu, hold L1 and △ and enter ←, ↑, ↑, →, ↓, ↓, →, ↓ to unlock everything the game has to offer.

FLATOUT 2

To unlock everything worth having, enter **giveall** at the Cheat Code option in Extras.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS

Select Bonus Material from the main menu and enter the code **fullspectrumpwnage** at the Cheats option to unlock all the levels of the game. Access the levels from the Restart option.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

Enter the following codes during gameplay:

Big heads
↓, ↓, ↓, ◎, ◎, ⊗, L1, R1
Shiny cars
△, R1, L1, ↓, ↓, R1, R1, △
Pedestrians follow you
↓, ↓, ↓, △, △, ◎, L1, R1
Cars drive over water
◎, ⊗, ↓, ◎, ⊗, ↑, L1, L1
Tiny bike tyres
◎, →, ⊗, ↑, →, ⊗, L1, ◻
Full armour
L1, R1, ◎, L1, R1, ⊗, L1, R1
Fill health bar
L1, R1, ⊗, L1, R1, ◻, L1, R1
Get $250,000
L1, R1, △, L1, R1, ◎, L1, R1
No wanted level
L1, L1, △, R1, R1, ⊗, ◻, ◎
Get a rhino tank
L1, L1, ←, L1, L1, →, △, ◎

GUITAR HERO II

Enter these codes (coloured buttons) at the main menu:

Unlock hyper-speed mode
Y, O, B, O, Y, O, B, O

Unlock performance mode
Y, Y, O, Y, Y, B, Y, Y

Crowd have eyeball heads
Y, O, B, O, B, O, Y

Crowd have monkey heads
Y, Y, B, O, Y, Y, B, O

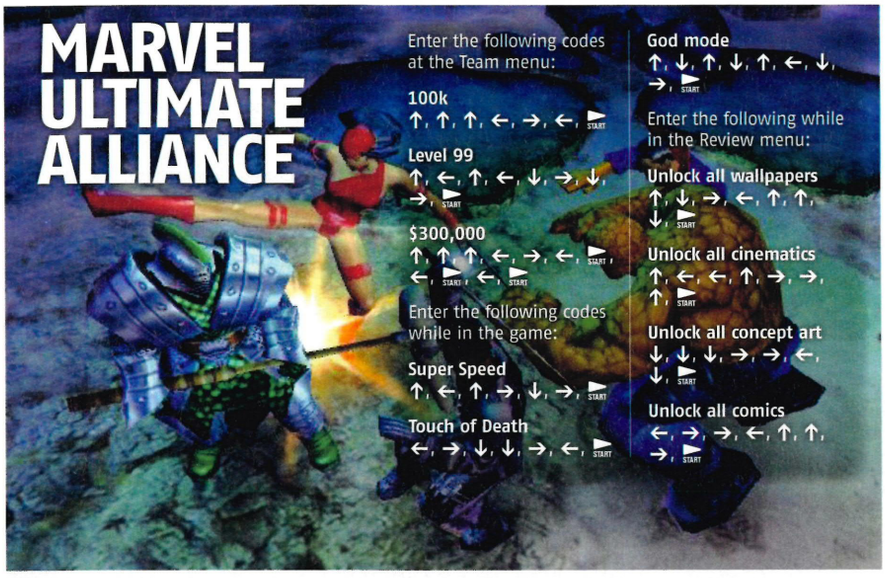
Crowd have flaming heads
Y, Y, O, Y, O, O, Y, O

Crowd have horses heads
B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O

JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES

Enter the Pause menu, then enter the following while holding down R1, R2, L1 and L2:

Unlock everything
↓, ←, ↑, →
Get unlimited energy
↓, ↓, →, →, ↑, ↑, ←, ←
Get invincibility
←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑
Max out stats
→, ↓, →, ↓
Activate one-hit kills
↑, ↑, ↓, ←, ↑, ↑, ↓, →
Get 20 shields
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓



Get 25 random boosts
←, →, ←, →

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

Enter these codes in the Mos Eisley cantina to unlock hidden characters and vehicles:

Beach Trooper **UCK868**
Ben Kenobi (Ghost) **BEN917**
Bespin Guard **VHY832**
Bib Fortuna **WTY721**
Boba Fett **HLP221**
Death Star Trooper **BNC332**
Emperor Palpatine **HHY382**
Ewok **TTT289**
Gamorrean Guard **YZF999**
Gonk Droid **NFX582**
Grand Moff Tarkin **SMG219**
Greedo **NAH118**
Han Solo (Hoth) **YWM840**
IG-88 ..... **NXL973**
Imperial Guard **MMM111**
Imperial Officer **BBV889**
Imperial Spy **CVT125**
Jawa **JAW499**
Lobot **UUB319**
Palace Guard **SGE549**
Rebel Pilot **CYG336**
Rebel Trooper (Hoth) **EKU849**
Sand Trooper **YDV451**
Skiff Guard **GBU888**
Snow Trooper **NYU989**
Stormtrooper **PTR345**
TIE Fighter **HDY739**

NFL STREET 3

To unlock AFC and NFC All-Star teams, beat the following teams in Respect the Street mode:

AFC East
Patriots, Jets, Bills, Dolphins
AFC North
Ravens, Bengals, Steelers, Browns
AFC South
Colts, Jaguars, Titans, Texans
AFC West
Chargers, Chiefs, Broncos, Raiders
NFC East
Cowboys, Giants, Eagles, Redskins
NFC North
Bears, Vikings, Packers, Lions
NFC South
Saints, Panthers, Falcons, Buccaneers
NFC West
Seahawks, 49ers, Rams, Cardinals

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE

To unlock all the hidden face paints and camouflage patterns in this stunning game, make sure that you do the following:

All national flag face paints
Complete the game on any level
Animal camouflage (increases steadiness of aim)
Defeat Ocelot by depleting his stamina
Banana camouflage (makes all food taste great)
Get the top time in every stage of Snake Vs Monkey mode
Cold War camouflage (enemies won't shoot at you)
Defeat Volgin by depleting his stamina
DPM camouflage (replenishes life gauge)
Get the top score on Special Duel mode
Fire camouflage (drops fire damage by 50%)
Defeat The Fury by depleting his stamina
Green face paint (gives you unlimited grip)
Get the top score on Normal Duel mode
Hornet stripe camouflage (tames hornets and wards off spiders)
Defeat The Pain by depleting his stamina
Infinity face paint (gives you infinite ammo)
Finish the game with a Foxhound rank
Monkey mask (no effect, but looks cool)
Finish the Snake Vs Monkey mode
Moss camouflage (slowly restores life gauge in sunlight)
'Hold up' The End
Snake camouflage (boosts camo index)
Defeat The Boss by depleting her stamina
Spider camouflage (boosts your camo index, but also drains stamina)
Defeat The Fear by depleting his stamina
Spirit camouflage (gives you silent footsteps and drains enemy stamina)
Walk to the end of the river when fighting The Sorrow

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: CREATURE FROM THE KRUSTY KRAB

Enter these codes at the Cheats screen in the Secrets menu:

ROCFISH ..... 30,000 Coins
TISSUE ..... Active Sleepy Seed Detector
GUDGEON ..... Unlock all levels for Free Play mode
GASSY ..... Get unlimited fuel on all flying levels
VIGOR ..... Get unlimited health on all platform levels
EMCSQR ..... Get unlimited time on all driving levels
LASER ..... Different colour Laser in Revenge of the Giant Plankton
HOVER ..... Different hovercar for Plankton in Hypnotic Highway
ROCKET ..... Different rocket for Patrick in Hypnotic Highway
SPONGE ... Play as Punk Spongebob in the Diesel Dreaming level
PANTS. Play as Spongebob Plankton in the Super-Size Patty level
PATRICK ..... New skin for Patrick

SUPERMAN RETURNS

Once you've completed the Warworld level, pause the game and enter these codes quickly for the following cheats:

Unlock all Power-ups
←, ◎, →, ▣, ↓, ◎, ↑, ↓, ▣, ◎, ▣
Unlimited City Health
◎, →, ◎, →, ↑, ←, →, ◎
Unlock everything
←, ↑, →, ↓, ◎, ▣, ◎, ↑, →, ▣
Play whole game as Bizarro
↑, →, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

Enter these codes into the cheats menu in Options

needaride ..... All decks unlocked and free
yougotitall .... All specials unlocked
jammypack ..... 'Special' bar always full
allthebest ..... Full stats
frontandback ..... Get perfect manual control
balancegalore ..... Get perfect rail control
shellshock ..... Get unlimited focus
birdhouse ..... Unlock Inkblot deck
newshound .... Unlock Anchorman
shescaresme .... Unlock Big Realtor
enterandwin ..... Unlock Bum
hohohosoi ..... Unlock Christian Hosoi
militarymen ..... Unlock Colonel and Security Guard
strangefellows ..... Unlock Dad and Skater Jam boy
notmono ..... Unlock Jason Lee
mixitup ..... Unlock Kevin Staab
manineedadate ..... Unlock Mascot
wearelosers ..... Unlock Nerd
themedia ..... Unlock Photography girl and film-maker
plus44 ..... Unlock Travis Barker
badverybad ..... Unlock Twin
suckstobedead ..... Unlock Zombie

PS2 CHEATS

MGS: PORTABLE OPS

Enter these codes at the Password menu to get these special characters:

JUNKER ..... Cunningham
LQ.N2 ..... Python
ERBE ..... Gene
PK +ESP ..... Ursula
THE-L ..... Elisa
E.APPLE ..... Eva
PM-EMS ..... Paramedic
DARPA-1 ..... Sigint
R.R.R. ..... Ocelot
1+2-3 ..... Zero
IVN =RV ..... Raikov
T.F-ACID ..... Teliko
MGA2VE ..... Venus
!TRAUMER ..... Ga Ko
SATURNV ..... Sokolo

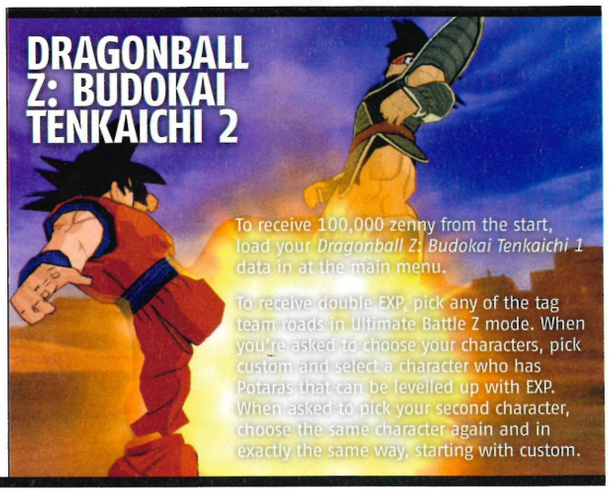
GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES

Enter these during gameplay:

Destroy all cars
L1, R1, R1, ←, →, ▣, ↓, R1
Faster gameplay
←, ←, R1, R1, ↑, △, ↓, ⊗
Slower gameplay
←, ←, ◎, ◎, ↓, ↑, △, ⊗
Rhino
↑, L1, ↓, R1, ←, L1, →, R1
Raise Wanted level
↑, →, ▣, ▣, ↓, ←, ◎, ◎
Lower Wanted level
↑, →, △, △, ↓, ←, ⊗, ⊗
Pedestrians riot
R1, L1, L1, ↓, ←, ◎, ↓, L1
Commit suicide
→, →, ◎, ◎, L1, R1, ↓, ⊗

YU-GI-OH! GX TAG BATTLE

To unlock a booster pack, go to the Card Shop interface and enter: ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ⊗, ◎



THE FANTASY CONTINUES

21 THINGS TO DO IN IVALICE...

...and the main storyline is just one. Sure, Final Fantasy XII has an epic central tale, but if you just burn through it, you'll miss lots of stuff along the way. So here are 21 highlights you really should find time for

FINAL FANTASY XII

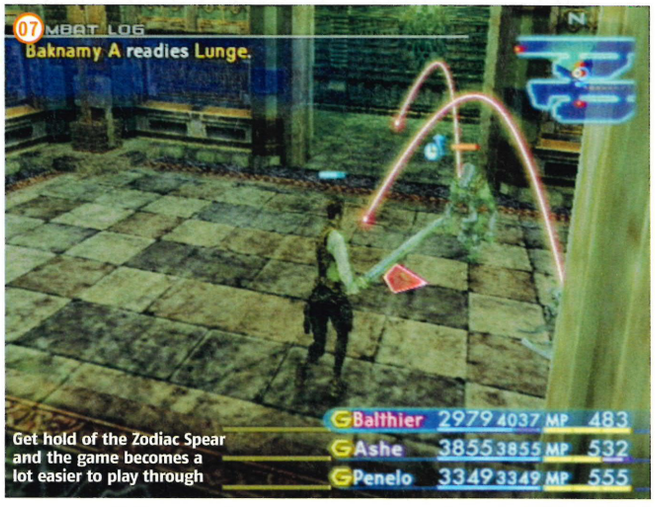
- **PLAYERS** 1
- **MEMORY CARD SPACE** 94KB
- **DIFFICULTY** FAIRLY CHALLENGING
- **COMPLETION TIME** 80+ HOURS (INCLUDING EXTRAS)
- **REVIEWED** *OPS2#81*

GRAPHICS	10
SOUND	10
GAMEPLAY	09
LIFESPAN	10

Forget the PS3 delay, the future is here on your PS2. FFXII is the apex of adventuring: gaming doesn't get any better than this

10/10

This den would look much better rammed full of action figures



Get hold of the Zodiac Spear and the game becomes a lot easier to play through

01 FILL THE SKY PIRATE'S DEN WITH BOOTY

Make sure you fill your Sky Pirate's Den with all those cute little action figures, and celebrate your many hard-earned achievements. Head to our cheats section on p114 for full information on how to get them.

02 RIDE A CHOCOBO

Hire one from a chocobo stable or lure a wild one using a Gysahl Green. Some areas can only be accessed using a chocobo, so it's a good way to explore.

03 BECOME A HERO

Everybody wants to be worshipped, so start your own following by completing the following hunts: 17 – Trouble in the Hills, 18 – Adding Insult to Injury, 24 – The Creature Collector, 25 – Dead City Watch, and 39 – A Carrot Stalk. Then head to Nalbina Fortress and talk to Jovy the Se'eq, who has now become your number one fan and will shower you with presents.

04 READ A MOOGLE DIARY

Complete the Rocktoise hunt and return to Pilika the Moogle to get your reward. Speak to her again and she'll ask you to find her diary inside the Clio's Technicks. Head there and take Pilika's Diary from the left-hand bookcase. Be a bit of a devil and read it, then return it to Pilika, who'll ask you whether or not you read it. If you 'fess up, you'll be rewarded with a Kilimweave Shirt. Say 'I've done nothing', and you'll receive a Shepherd's Bolero.

05 BECOME A BOOZE BARON

It seems that Bhujerba is full of party people, and everyone wants some of the happy juice. Dotted around the city are 14 bottles of spirits (or Madhus), but they'll only appear when you're close to them. Seek out people who'll buy them off you (only specific people will buy specific bottles), and you'll earn 1000 Gil for each one.

06 UNLOCK THE FORGOTTEN GRIMOIRES

Improve the quality and quantity of the loot that enemies drop by collecting all eight Forgotten Grimoires. Grimoires are unlocked into the Bazaar by talking to various merchants several times – then you'll have to save up the Gil to buy them.

07 GET THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

It wouldn't be *Final Fantasy* without a super hardcore weapon, and here it's the Zodiac Spear. To get it, you must *not* open any of the following chests or jars:

The 16 jars that are grouped together on Phon Coast.

The jar outside Old Dalan's place in Lowtown.

All of the treasure chests in the Confiscatory (which is the room where you get your weapons/armour back after being captured).

The two chests that you find in the south-eastern corner of the cellar in Rabanastre Palace.

Now head to the Necrohol of Nabudis and prepare yourself for a long, hard journey into the heart of this beast-riddled tomb. The room you want has four chests, and you must open the right one to get the Zodiac Spear.

08 FIGHT THE PHOENIX
Head to the Pharos of Ridorana and take the lift to the lowest floor. Go north and find a series of rooms with pedestals in them. Load them up with Black orbs and navigate your way around these unmapped rooms. Eventually you'll bump into the Phoenix, so revel in her magnificence and then kill her.

09 GO FISHIN'
First you need a fishing rod. To get one, complete the North Bank Village hostage rescue quest, then find Ruskel at the South Bank Village dock. Head to Balfonheim, find the Fishing Enthusiast and talk to him twice – only to find out he won't give you his rod. Time for a little cunning...

Head towards the Aerodrome, but don't enter. Instead, look back to where the Fishing Enthusiast was and sneak back to steal his rod. If he's still there, exit the area and try again.

Now return to Ruskel and he'll show you how to fish, and let you fish in his spot. You'll now be able to fish at several points up and down the Nebra, unlocking various treasures and secrets as you do.

10 CHECK OUT THE VIEW
One of the most amazing things about *FFXII* is the jaw-droppingly beautiful views, but perhaps the best one is the opening sequence of the Tomb of Raithwall. Breathtaking.

11 BRING A LITTLE LOVE TO IVALICE
Become a matchmaker by heading to Rabanastre and hunting down the Viera near the Southgate stables. Talk to her and she'll go to the Southern Plaza.

Speak to the Lovestruck Man by the fountain in the Southern Plaza, then track down the Viera in Yamoora's Gambits and follow her to the Sandsea. After talking to her one more time, head to either the Lovestruck Man or Lord Vain at the gambit shop to set either one of them up with the bunny lady. Finally, return to the Viera to convey the love message and return to whoever you decided to hook her up with for a reward.

12 RACE AROUND BALFONHEIM
Get fit and challenge Rikken at Balfonheim for a race around this salty pirate port. Every race you win moves you up a level and you'll get better and better prizes, too.

13 HELP JULY THE SPY
This can only happen after the Tomb of Raithwall event and before the story gets to Mosphoran Highwaste. First, head to Nalbina and find two guards blocking the entrance to the Mosphoran. Talk to the girl in front of them, and she'll tell you she's a spy on a job, who wants to get the job done and return to Archades.

Skulk up to the guards and eavesdrop on their conversation. Turns out the Junior Guard can't stand the smell of chocobos, so hire a chocobo and ride towards him – he'll scream and run away. After learning about his history, July will thank you and tell you to find her in Archades for your reward – make sure that you do.

14 DEFEAT THE HARDEST CREATURE THIS SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE
Be warned, as this is the hardest boss in the game. To find him, complete the 'Get My Stuff Back' hunt and obtain the Dragon Scale from the Viera. Then head back to the Windmills at Cerobi Steppe and talk to the Moogle at Windmill 10.

A man called the Wyrm Philosopher will then talk to you and tell you about the Hell Wyrm, before giving you an Ageworn Key that'll lead you straight to it.

Head over to Sochen Cave Palace and solve the mini puzzle to open the Ascetic's Door. We suggest that you're around level 70 before even considering facing the Hell Wyrm.

15 OBTAIN THE EIGHT HIDDEN ESPERS
If you're charging through the main storyline, you may miss out on the eight extra Espers that are hidden in the darkest depths of various tombs and dungeons.

These guys won't give up without a fight, so level up and be well prepared before you even think about taking them on.

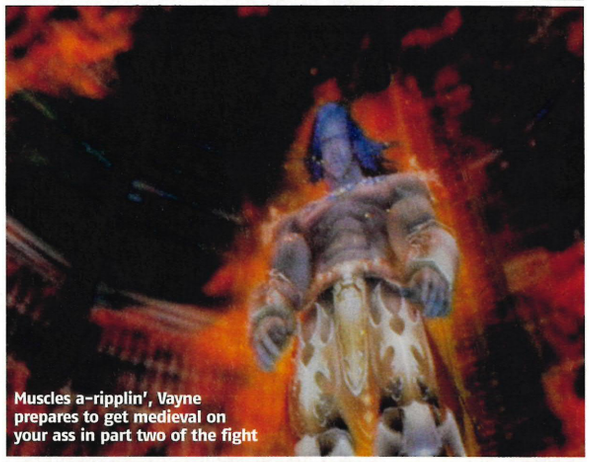
16 KTJN'S QUESTIONS
Play a little question time with Ktjn the Viera, who's skulking around Muthru Bazaar. Over the course of the game she'll ask you four questions, and depending on the answers you give, she'll reward you with one of four prizes. Find her when she's wandering around Rabanastre and you'll be rewarded further, with minor prizes such as Ethers and Hi-Potions.

17 UNLOCK EVERYONE'S LICENCE BOARDS
There's no big reward for achieving this, apart from the satisfaction. Sit back and look at all those filled boxes and feel proud that your characters can equip anything and cast every magick and technick there is.

18 BECOME A KNIGHT OF THE ROUND
Fight your way to Rank 10 of the Clan Centurio house and be respected by all your fellow mob hunters. To do this, you must kill 32 marks and earn a total of 500,000 points.

19 CHASE UP THE CLUCKTRICES
To begin this wild goose chase, you must have obtained the Feather of the Flock, defeated the Clucktrice mark and reached Archades. Head to the Village in Giza Plains during The Dry to discover that the Clucktrice flock have run away. Scour the four corners of Ivalice and convince these six loveable birds that it would be wise to return home.

The first incarnation of end boss Lord Vayne, which we like to call his 'emo' stage


Muscles a-ripplin', Vayne prepares to get medieval on your ass in part two of the fight

The can of whup-ass is now fully open. See our guide in OPS2#82 for tips on this bit

20 BECOME DAVID ATTENBOROUGH
Track down every beast and fiend there is in Ivalice and kick their butts to gain an entry in your Bestiary log. Find all of them (humanoids and bosses included) and you'll unlock enough information to host your own wildlife documentary.

21 FINISH THE GAME
This speaks for itself really, but the ending of *FFXII* is the most satisfying and epic cinematic moment ever. So sit back, enjoy and feel very proud of yourself. ■

the hot 100

JONESIN' FOR A GAME FIX? HERE'S THE REAL PURE STUFF

THIS MONTH

We've had a bit of a rejig of the Hot 100 this month after various OPS2 new bunnies protested that some of their favourite games hadn't got a spot in this elite list. Most notable of those new entries is *Okami*, which we've been banging on about for ages and which we intend to keep banging on about because it really is jaw-dropping. You'll also find the classic *Sims 2*, the intriguing *Splinter Cell Double Agent* and our office booze-up favourite *Guitar Hero II* making their first appearance in the list – not to mention *Final Fantasy XII* which, in case we haven't said it often enough yet, is one title no RPG fan should miss.

YOUR KEY TO THE TOP 100

GOLD
Reserved exclusively for games that scored the elusive 10/10

SILVER
Only awarded to games that scored a mighty 9/10

BRONZE
Lovingly given to games that scored an impressive 8/10

DVD#78
Want to try before you buy? Here's the issue where we ran a playable demo

24: THE GAME — BRONZE
A quality re-creation of the show that's fun to play.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#69/#72**

ACE COMBAT: SQUADRON LEADER — BRONZE
Great flight sim that's well worth a fly-by.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#56/#57**

AMPLITUDE — SILVER
Fun music/rhythm game with tunes adults or teens will recognise.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

AREA 51 — SILVER
Guns, aliens and conspiracies make for a top-notch shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#58/#62**

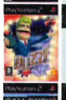
BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT — SILVER
Body-swapping war shooter full of challenges and action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#68**

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL — BRONZE
A gripping, engaging platformer from the makers of *Rayman*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#39**

BLACK — GOLD
Hollywood-style gun porn – by far the best shooter on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#69/#72/#76**

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30 — BRONZE
An addictive take both on WW2 and squad-based shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60/#62**

BURNOUT REVENGE — GOLD
The best arcade racer in existence.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#64**



BUZZ! THE BIG QUIZ — BRONZE
General knowledge quiz with USB buzzers: great family fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 08

CALL OF DUTY 3 — BRONZE
The most atmospheric and intense WW2 shooter we've played.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

CANIS CANEM EDIT — SILVER
Funny, silly yet always enjoyable school-based adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005 — SILVER
The career mode means this driving title is still loads of fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#51* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51**

CRICKET 07 — BRONZE
EA's solid, good-looking cricket sim will bowl you over.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2 — BRONZE
Globe-hopping comedy alien mayhem set in the 1960s.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08 **DVD#78**

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING — SILVER
Combat-heavy, demonic adventure with shooters and swords.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 09

DRAGON QUEST: THE JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING — SILVER
Vintage Japanese role-player: long, strong and good-looking.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#71/#73/#75**

EVERYBODY'S GOLF — BRONZE
Cartoon visuals with some seriously dazzling golfing action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#64**

EYETOY: ANTIGRAV
Unique use-your-body-as-the-controller jet-board racing game.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 07

EYETOY: PLAY 2 — BRONZE
Games collection that uses the EyeToy to full effect.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#54**

FAHRENHEIT — SILVER
Stylish, cinematic reinvention of the point-and-click adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#64/#69**

FIFA 07 — SILVER
Finally tackling *PES*'s unchallenged champion status.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3 — SILVER
Knockout boxing sim takes face-punching to the next level.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#71/#74**

FINAL FANTASY XII — GOLD
The best role-playing game PS2, or any console, has ever seen.
REVIEWED *OPS2#81* / **OVERALL** 10

FREEDOM FIGHTERS — SILVER
Tactical battling in an urban setting. Insanely addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#37* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE — BRONZE
This is the finest Bond game on PS2. Simple and enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#67**

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS — BRONZE
Tactical army sim that's accessible and truly gripping.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08

GOD OF WAR — SILVER
Heart-in-mouth joy from this frantic and bloody hack-fest.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#62/#63**

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK — GOLD
Two superb games in the same box for just £40? Grand!
REVIEWED *OPS2#41* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES — BRONZE
Budget-priced port of handheld *GTA* that's a thrill-filled joy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#75* / **OVERALL** 08

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS — GOLD
Enormous, even more so than *Vice City*, and cracking good fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#54* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAN TURISMO 4 — SILVER
Unsurpassed, automotive beauty. The best driving game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09

GUITAR HERO II — BRONZE
Slightly more challenging than the first one but just as much fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

GUN — SILVER
This *GTA*-inspired Wild West shooter is mighty fine, if a little short.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY — SILVER
Agent 47's biggest, bloodiest and best adventure yet.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#72/#73/#75**

ICO — SILVER
Beautiful, inventive, magical: *Ico* is an adventure like no other.
REVIEWED *OPS2#18 & #69* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#19/#35/#69**

JAK 3 — BRONZE
Ambitious platform adventure with oodles of varied gameplay.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#53/#58/#75**

JUST CAUSE — BRONZE
Massive parachuting fun in a '*GTA* does jungle' adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 08

THE PSP TOP FIVE

Got a PSP? Then get these

1 GTA: VICE CITY STORIES 10/10
Awesome missions, compelling storyline and ace multiplayer combine to make this top gun.

2 TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION 10/10
Handheld *Tekken* is as brutally thrilling as it is addictive – an unmissable beat-'em-up.

3 KILLZONE: LIBERATION 9/10
Perfectly targeted shooter that shines thanks to great controls and balanced gameplay.

4 DAXTER 9/10
Superb platform action as Jak's little orange sidekick gets his own fantastically varied and relentlessly enjoyable game.

5 LOCOROCO 9/10
Addictive and literally 'oddball' platformer. Simple controls create a tactile and testing challenge as you bounce around.

NEED A BACK ISSUE OF *OPS2* TO CHECK OUT THE FULL REVIEW? THEN CALL:
UK: 0870 837 4773
OVERSEAS: +44 1858 438 795

replay

KILLER 7 — BRONZE
Insane shooter with exploding zombies and multiple personalities.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08

KINGDOM HEARTS II — BRONZE
Disney roleplayer from the makers of *Final Fantasy*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08

LEGO STAR WARS II — SILVER
Hugely enjoyable and comical retelling of the original trilogy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#76/#77**

MADDEN NFL 07 — SILVER
One of the most accurate sports sims ever made.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09

MANHUNT — SILVER
A dirty, grisly, filthy but downright brilliant game experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#42* / **OVERALL** 09

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP — BRONZE
Graffiti game created by a fashion designer. Original and good.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#71**

MASHED — SILVER
Got friends? Get the brilliant party racer *Mashed*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#48* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#48/#49/#55**

MERCENARIES — SILVER
Enjoy all the fun of free-roaming warfare, and get paid for it!
REVIEWED *OPS2#55* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#55**

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY — GOLD
A must-own, tactical espionage stealth-a-thon.
REVIEWED *OPS2#17* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#17/#37**

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE — SILVER
The superb *Snake Eater* gets a new camera and an online mode.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 09

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX — BRONZE
Super-bling street racer, now with extra tunes and vehicles.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 08

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS — BRONZE
The classic beat-'em-up gets a spectacular adventure makeover.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

MOTO GP4 — BRONZE
Fast, pretty and very challenging motorbike racing.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 08

MUSIC 3000 — SILVER
A virtual recording studio for £30? Can anyone say no to that?
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09

NBA 2K7 — SILVER
Great looking, responsive basketball game that's not just for fans.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

NEED FOR SPEED CARBON — BRONZE
The latest instalment of this consistently good series.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

NHL 07 — BRONZE
New controls and great looks make for a pucking brilliant time.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

OKAMI — GOLD
A beautiful, original, magical, picture-book adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#81* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#81/#82**

ONIMUSHA 3 — SILVER
If you're looking for the best '*Musha* this is your boy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST — BRONZE
Sun-kissed retro-racer makes a blistering comeback.
REVIEWED *OPS2#70* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#72/#73/#75**

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG — SILVER
The best movie tie-in on PS2. An awesome adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES — SILVER
The best *PoP* so far.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6 — GOLD
The most realistic footie on PS2, good licences, great online stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#79**

PROJECT ZERO — BRONZE
Genuinely disturbing survival horror, dripping with menace.
REVIEWED *OPS2#24* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#23**

RAINBOW SIX 3 — BRONZE
Squad-based shooter with a realistic edge and online missions.
REVIEWED *OPS2#45* / **OVERALL** 08

RATCHET & CLANK 3 — SILVER
Weapons and flashgun-centric play make this the series' best.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51/#58**

RED DEAD REVOLVER — SILVER
Wild West shooter that's like a cool breeze in Death Valley. Yeehaw!
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 09

RESIDENT EVIL 4 — GOLD
One of the greatest games ever made. Buy it now.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 10

REZ — SILVER
Psychedelic, music-based rhythmic shoot-'em-up. Hypnotic stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#16* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#17**

SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS — BRONZE
Excellent drug-dealing film tie-in.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08

SECOND SIGHT — BRONZE
Slick, absorbing thriller touched with psychic powers.
REVIEWED *OPS2#50* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#50**

SHADOW OF ROME — BRONZE
A historic blend of bloody action and stealth set in Roman times.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS — SILVER
Original, beautiful and haunting – nothing else feels like this.
REVIEWED *OPS2#68* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#69**

SILENT HILL 3 — SILVER
Wet-the-bed scary survival horror. We dare you to play it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#34**

SINGSTAR ROCKS! — BRONZE
Party fun of the highest order, whether you can sing or not.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#74/#75/#76**

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES — SILVER
Clever, funny and essential for all platformer fans.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SMASH COURT PRO TENNIS TOURNAMENT 2 — BRONZE
A new career mode makes the top tennis seed even better.
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 08

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS — BRONZE
Move in for the commander-in-chief of online tactical shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 08

SOUL CALIBUR III — SILVER
Better than ever, this is the greatest fighting game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#65**

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR — SILVER
Mythological hack'n'slash epic.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT — BRONZE
Challenges your ethics as well as your stealthiness.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

SSX 3 — SILVER
Super-long, fast races make this an essential PS2 purchase.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#43**

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II — BRONZE
Fantastic set-pieces and brilliant space battles. Buy it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE — BRONZE
Steer monkeys in Perspex balls around courses in this arcade oddity.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60**

TEKKEN 5 — BRONZE
The original PlayStation fighter beats its way back to top form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#61/#63**

THE SIMS 2 — BRONZE
The soap opera you can play. Entertaining and addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND — BRONZE
Hardcore, ultra-bloody, action-survival horror.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 08

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006 — BRONZE
Like the man himself, this year's edition is on fine form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

TIMESPLITTERS 2 — GOLD
As vital to PS2 as your central nervous system is to your brain.
REVIEWED *OPS2#25* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#25/#31**

TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT — SILVER
Shooter with enough guns to satisfy the most trigger-happy soul.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#56**

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 — SILVER
Tones down the Story mode and ups the red-hot driving experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#68/#72**

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND — BRONZE
A spectacular return to form for the first lady of adventuring.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 08 **DVD#71/#72/#73/#74/#75**

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND
A great place to start with this skateboarding series.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 07

TOTAL OVERDOSE — BRONZE
Comedy Tex-Mex shoot-a-thon with entertaining special attacks.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE — BRONZE
Loud, brash, highly enjoyable law-and-order shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 — BRONZE
Cartoon-style action adventure with great fighting controls.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 08

WALLACE & GROMIT: COTWR — BRONZE
For once, a kid's game that doesn't treat you like a child.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#65**

WE ❤ KATAMARI — BRONZE
Very odd, very Japanese puzzler. Relaxing and enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#70/#72**

WRC RALLY EVOLVED — SILVER
Fantastic tracks with random events to test your skill.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#65**

WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006 — SILVER
With better online play and new match types, this is essential.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09

XIII — BRONZE
Gorgeous PS2 shooter based on the comic-book adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#42**

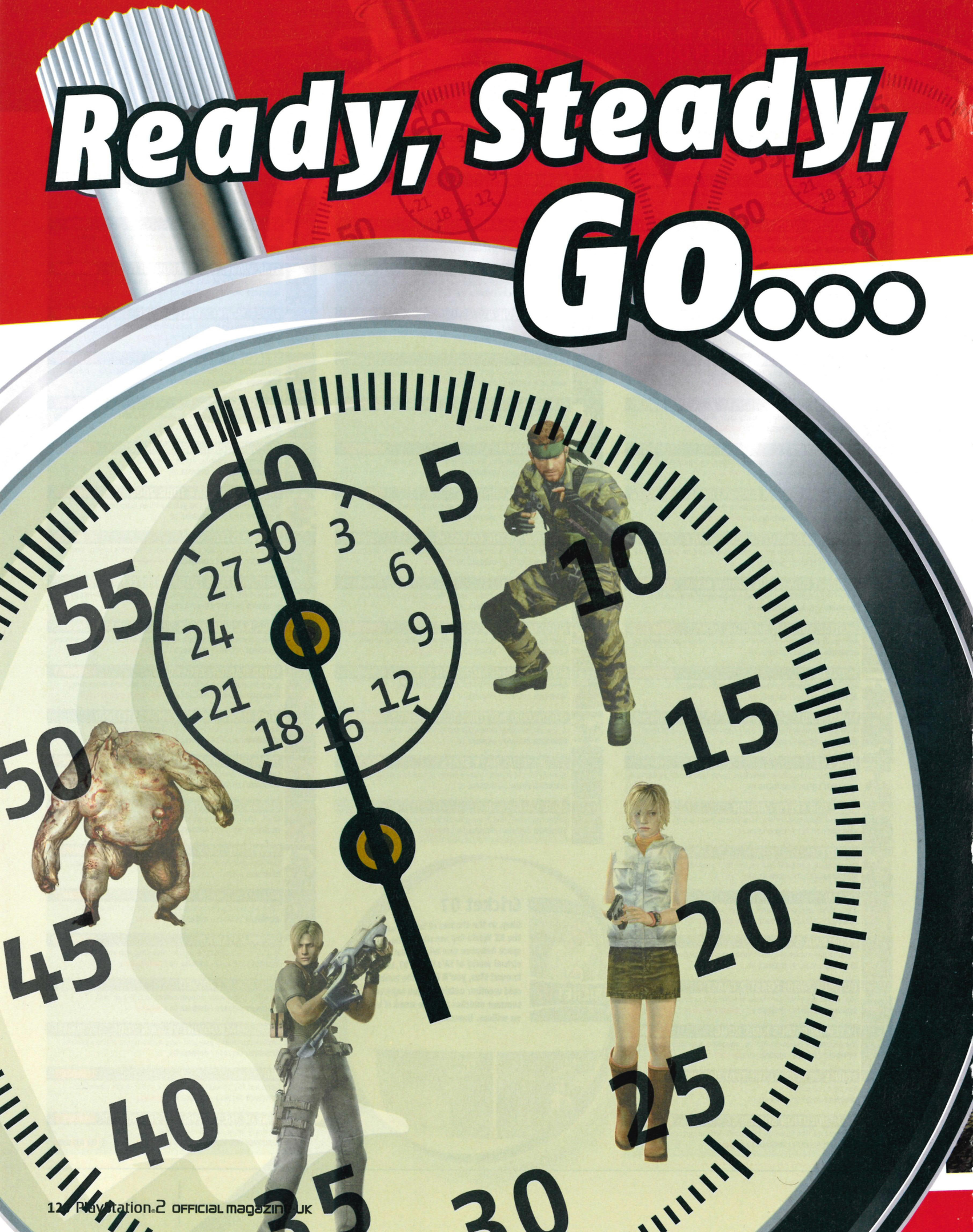
ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER — BRONZE
Strikingly impressive robo-scrapper.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#38**

ON THE DVD

Cricket 07

Okay, so the chances of England winning the ICC World Cup are slimmer than the space between two wickets. But in the virtual world of EA's Cricket 07, who knows? Plus, you'll forget the horrible cold weather outside as you enjoy balmy summer matches and the smack of leather on willow. Howzat!

Ready, Steady, Go...



Metal Gear Solid 3, Foxhound difficulty, finished in two hours, two minutes, 14 seconds?! Come with us into the crazy world of speed running...

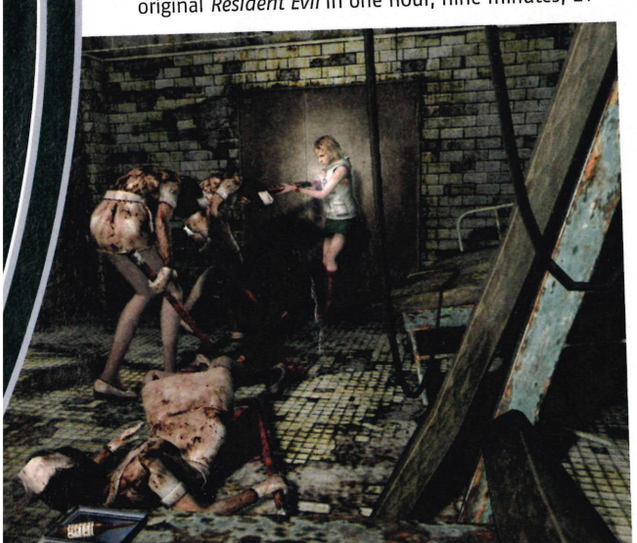
Ever thought today's games are just too short? Aside from the likes of *Final Fantasy XII* and *Okami*, the average play time of a game these days rarely touches 10 hours. Peter Jackson's *King Kong* clocked in at around five hours, *Tomb Raider: Legend* a measly six and as for *Superman*, a couple of hours should be enough for anyone.

But for a small group of players known as speed runners, games are never short enough. "A speed run is when the gamer aims solely for the quickest possible completion of a game," explains Adnan Kauser, a 20-year-old accounting student from East London who has himself finished *Metal Gear Solid 3* in two hours, two minutes and 14 seconds. And, by the way, that was on the hardest difficulty setting, Foxhound. "It's a pre-planned run through a game using a dedicated route that's rarely deviated from."

It's a chance for the hardcore few to demonstrate their total dominance over a particular game. Adnan says: "I started speed runs because they're one of the only ways to prove one's quality at a game. The competition of speed running is very strong and I wanted people to view my quality at *MGS* games."

But where does normal play end and speed running begin? Brandon Armstrong, a 22-year-old economics student from the USA who's tamed the original *Resident Evil* in one hour, nine minutes, 17 seconds as Jill Valentine (using only a knife) says: "When the focus on a game shifts from simply completing it to fully optimising every aspect of it – boss fights, pathways and so on – then you've entered the speed running realm."

'THE FOCUS ON A GAME SHIFTS FROM SIMPLY COMPLETING IT TO OPTIMISING EVERY ASPECT'



Labour of Love

You have to really love the game you're running, because for every speed run video posted on the web, there are hundreds of half-finished films rumbled by hitches and mistakes. A single run can take months of planning and countless hours of frustration.

"It only takes me about three or so plays through a game before I understand enough of it to start speed running it," says Adnan. "However, once I start it could be 50-plus runs through the game before I get a finished speed run." In other words, you need the sort of dedication that makes Paula Radcliff look like a beer-bellied couch-potato.

So are there any special tricks or techniques that speed runners use to get them through each game more quickly? Armstrong says: "Regardless of the game I tend to practise on optimising boss fights before I do anything else. I feel it makes things easier later on because once these key points in a run are mastered, you have an idea as to how much ammo/health you need to finish them all off."

However, the general feeling among speed runners is that each game is unique, and because of that, you need to develop special techniques for each one to shave off the seconds. In fact, many wait for years before trying speed runs on a game, because this lets them take advantage of all the guides, cheats and secrets that appear for it over time.

It may take countless hours of research and practice but by the end of it these guys know every inch of their chosen games. For them, not sticking to the pre-planned route, running out of ammo, or simply dying and having to restart from a checkpoint means bitter, out-on-penalties style defeat, and it's more likely to happen at the end of the game when things start to get tough.

"It can be very frustrating," says Adam Steidl, a 19-year-old American who's blasted through *Silent Hill 3* in just 45 minutes, 49 seconds. "On one attempt for my *Silent Hill 3* run, about an hour into playing it, I was in the haunted mansion running from a red light that instantly kills you. About 5ft from the last door the camera angle switched, and I ran straight into the light and died. There was a little cussing!"

Brandon says: "I'm constantly frustrated by failed attempts and bad luck while practising a speed run. You just have to get over it. If I find myself getting too exasperated, I turn it off and try again the next day."

Adnan adds: "Speed runners turn frustration into a motivation or a drive to improve. Personally I can recall only one time when I've been very frustrated, which is when I failed an attempted speed run an hour and a half into the game. Otherwise I genuinely love to keep playing and keep challenging."

Break It Up

Perhaps this is why some choose to break up their runs into sections (called a 'multiple-segment run'), and then cobble them together at the end. This

TRAINING TIPS

If you fancy tackling a speed run of your own, here are a few handy hints...

1 GO TO THE LOO FIRST
Pausing the game to nip off and empty your bladder halfway through a run is going to lose you valuable seconds. Don't do it. In fact, having a bucket on stand-by wouldn't be a bad idea...

2 HIDE THE REMOTE
The last thing you need is your girlfriend/wife/mum bursting into the room and switching the channel to watch *Cash In The Attic* when you're in the final agonising stages of a super-fast run.

3 GLUE YOUR CONSOLE TO THE FLOOR
You can't save during a speed run - it takes up valuable seconds - so when you're bitch-slapped by the last boss, wasting a whole day of practice, you're going to want to lob your PS2 through the telly. Don't.

4 GET A CAMELBACK
A what? A Camelback is an eight-litre water bottle you wear on your back like a rucksack. Ideal for keeping up your fluid levels without the inconvenience of moving, for up to four days!

5 BIN YOUR DIARY
You're going to be playing the game over and over until you reach a zen-like state of pad mastery. And that doesn't leave much time for the pub or your other half.

DO TRY THIS AT HOME

Team OPS2 try their hands at speed running some of the PS2's most beloved games. How did we get on? Let's just say you won't find the videos online...

PLAYER: Nick

GAME: *Resident Evil 4 (Round 3)*

TIME: 7 hours, 48 minutes, 6 seconds

REFLECTIONS: Armed with the infinite rocket launcher, I finally broke Saddler in a shade under eight hours. It would have been much less if I didn't get stuck on Ashley's stone tablet puzzle in the castle for the *third freakin' time.*

PLAYER: Andy

GAME: *Fight Night Round 3*

TIME: 5 hours, 56 minutes, 44 seconds

REFLECTIONS: After extensive training (which amounted to unwrapping the game and making a brew), I began. Six hours on, I never want to see a sweaty boxer again. I do feel I could have been faster: two fights went to decision instead of knockout.

PLAYER: Sophie

GAME: *Tomb Raider: Legend*

TIME: 4 hours and counting...

REFLECTIONS: Ooh, yes, well. You see I'd been playing it for a bit and then I thought I'd stop for some fuel (tea and cake) and then my mate rang to talk about her new shoes and then *America's Next Top Model* was on and then... Sorry. Failed.

'IT'S HARD NOT TO GASP WHEN YOU'RE WATCHING A RUN'

way you're only tackling one stage at a time, so if you keep failing certain sections, it doesn't mean a complete restart. You can afford to take more risks and this means quicker times.

However, other runners frown on this technique. For them, the beauty is in testing both skill and stamina by clocking the whole game in one mighty effort. It makes better viewing, too. Adam says: "I personally prefer the single-segment runs. It's hard not to gasp when you're watching a run and the player's character is near to death." But he adds that multiple-segment runs can show off more stylish risk-taking because you can re-record segments that look bad or that you're not satisfied with.

THINK YOU'RE HARD ENOUGH?

Watching it happen is tense stuff, but actually setting your own speed run time is pure nerve-shredding madness, as we found out when we tried it for ourselves (see right) – particularly if, like us, you decide to skip the practice and just pile straight in (well, it seemed like a good idea when we were in the pub...) It's certainly not for the faint-hearted or, we'd venture, those inclined to a social life, but if you do fancy a stab at carving out your own speed run, the experts have a few words of advice.

"If you're doing a long, single-segment run, have a good meal and go to the bathroom before you start, trust me!" says Adam. "Ask around the forums for advice, and to check and see how popular the game you want to run is."

"Work with other gamers to figure out the best way to complete a game before attempting the actual speed run," advises Brandon. "The worst thing you can do is spend hundreds of hours working on a game by yourself only to have someone else point out a one-minute improvement to your run after you've already released the video!"

Adnan is a little more philosophical. His advice is: "People should remember the game is first and foremost a game, and games are meant to be fun." Quite right, although in many ways, we still see *Pro Evolution Soccer* as part of our job... ■

Check out Adam, Adnan, Brandon and other speed runners in action at http//speeddemosarchive.com

next month

SPIDER-MAN 3

PARKER'S SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL!
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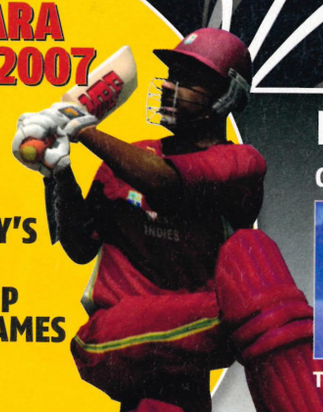

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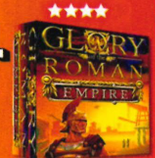
4. 

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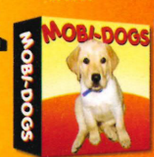
5. 

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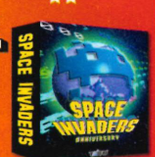
6. 

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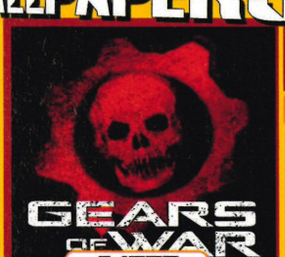

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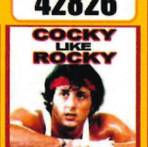

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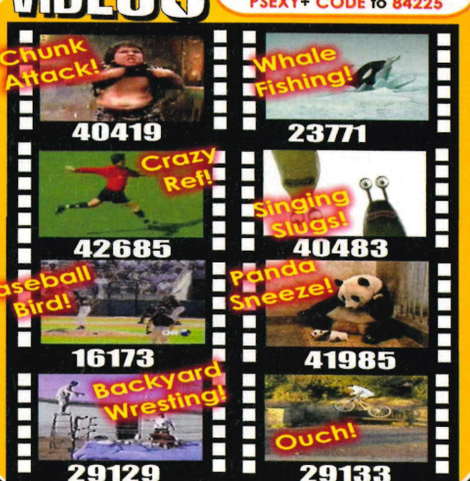

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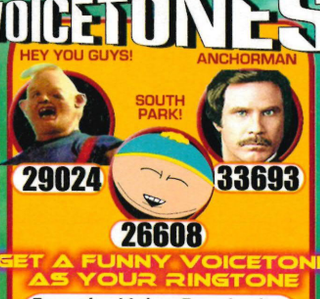

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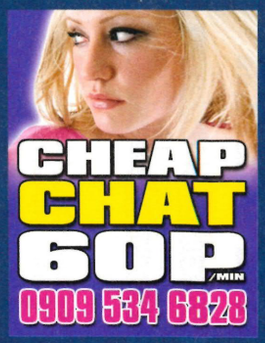

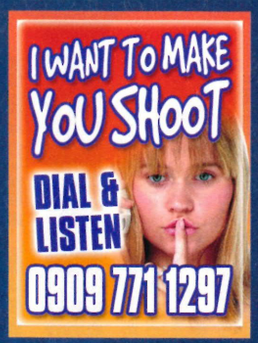

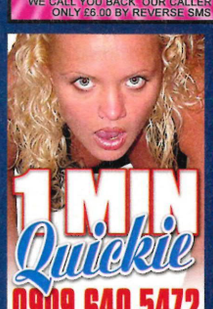

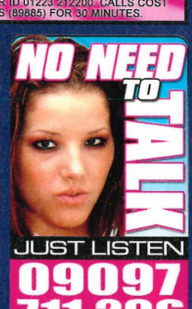

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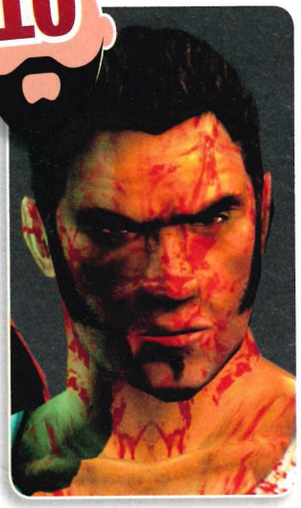
PlayStation Education Part 2

STUBBLED TIMES

The mark of a real man or a sink-clogging, sandpapery throwback to our testosterone-fuelled ancestors? Whatever! Here we bring you the top 10 finest examples of facial fungus on PlayStation

10 TORQUE



AS SEEN IN:
The Suffering
BEARD TYPE
Soul Patch or Royale

Favoured more among the bohemian and beatnik set rather than being the 'beard du jour' for a man facing the electric chair for murdering his own wife and kids, the Soul Patch requires minimal growing time, but maximum maintenance. Any slip betwixt blade and mirror can leave your head looking strangely wonky.

9 DARK JAK

AS SEEN IN:
Jak II: Renegade
BEARD TYPE
Petite Goatee

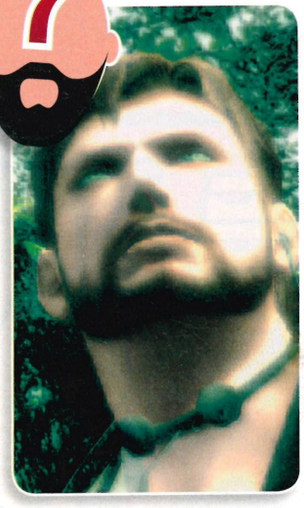
Despite barely covering enough of the face to be classed as a real beard, this chin-obscurer is a significant addition to any mug. Frequently used to indicate a character's transition to the gloomier side, growing a Petite Goatee is a sure a sign of a tourmented soul as buying a *My Chemical Romance* album and avoiding direct sunlight.

8 DOCTOR NEO CORTEX

AS SEEN IN:
Crash Bandicoot
BEARD TYPE
Tieried Goatee

He's clearly deranged, but nevertheless Dr Cortex manages to maintain a multi-length, three-stranded Goatee. The complex nature and high logistical demands imposed by this facial façade may be an attempt to distract, at least subconsciously, from the vast N on his noggin.

7 NAKED SNAKE



AS SEEN IN:
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater
BEARD TYPE
Hollywoodian

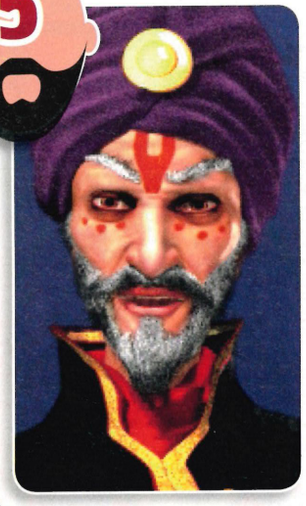
His code name may be 'Naked' Snake but the Hollywoodian is an all-encompassing jaw growth. Although it incorporates a moustache, the Hollywoodian divides itself from a full beard by keeping the sideburns distinct. Naked's seems in need of a little grooming, though.

6 PAUL PHOENIX

AS SEEN IN:
Tekken series
BEARD TYPE
Short Boxed Beard

This is the Freddie Flintoff of facial hair: good line and good length. It lacks the lush density of a more seasoned piece of facial fur, but a defined jaw line and uniform length mean that while his eyebrows and hair catch the eye, it is Paul's cheek-chaffer that wins the plaudits.

5 THE VIZIER



AS SEEN IN:
Prince Of Persia: Sands Of Time
BEARD TYPE
Van Dyke

Respectable, sleek and low maintenance, the Van Dyke is the perfect beard for the modern man on the go. While the name is often misused for a Goatee variant, the classic Van Dyke takes its name from the Flemish painter. The Vizier shown here sports a prime example but then, as an ever-living source of evil, he's had plenty of time to grow it.

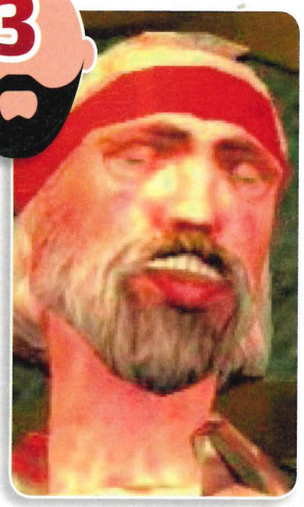
4

MATTIAS NILSSON

AS SEEN IN:
Mercenaries
BEARD TYPE
Franz-Josef and Petite Goatee

The mighty Franz-Josef spreading from Matthias' upper lip to his jaw might have pushed him into the realm of a mere moustache. But the sheer audacity of pairing it with a separate Petite Goatee is remarkable: in this day and age it takes a brave chap to sport such an ensemble.

3



THE TRUTH

AS SEEN IN:
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
BEARD TYPEW
Unruly Goatee

Shape, style and grooming all have their place in beardsmanship but pure wholehearted effort must also be applauded. The Truth may not have the time or the concentration to maintain his soup-strainer in the manner favoured by the gentleman about town, but he makes up for it by its sheer volume. Grow your own way, dude. Respect.

2

BITORES MENDEZ

AS SEEN IN:
Resident Evil 4
BEARD TYPE
Garibaldi Rampant

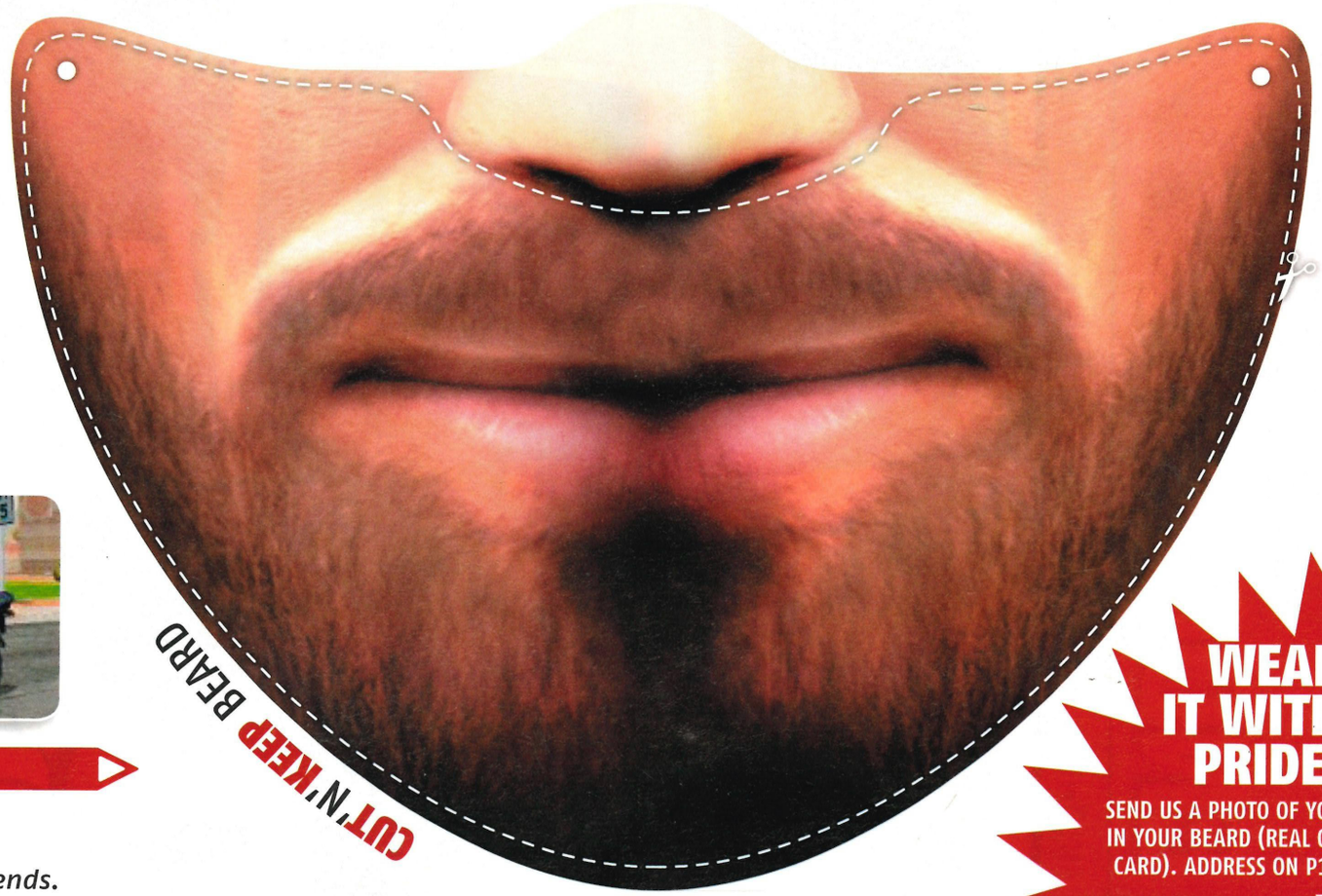
Bitores has clearly spent many years dodging the lubrastrip, allowing his own chin-warmer to cascade down in gently greying waves. Some may question the shaping but maybe Bitores' fake eye has affected his depth perception, leaving him unsure about where and when to trim?

1

JACK WADE

AS SEEN IN:
Headhunter: Redemption
BEARD TYPE
Full Beard

Simple, classic. Like the man himself, this is a beard for all seasons, for all occasions, for all faces. As unique as a snowflake, as hairy as a badger, it's neat, complete but never effete. No other chin covering says 'Don't worry, I know what I'm doing' in the same way. Men want to own it, women want to feel its burn. All hail the Full Beard.



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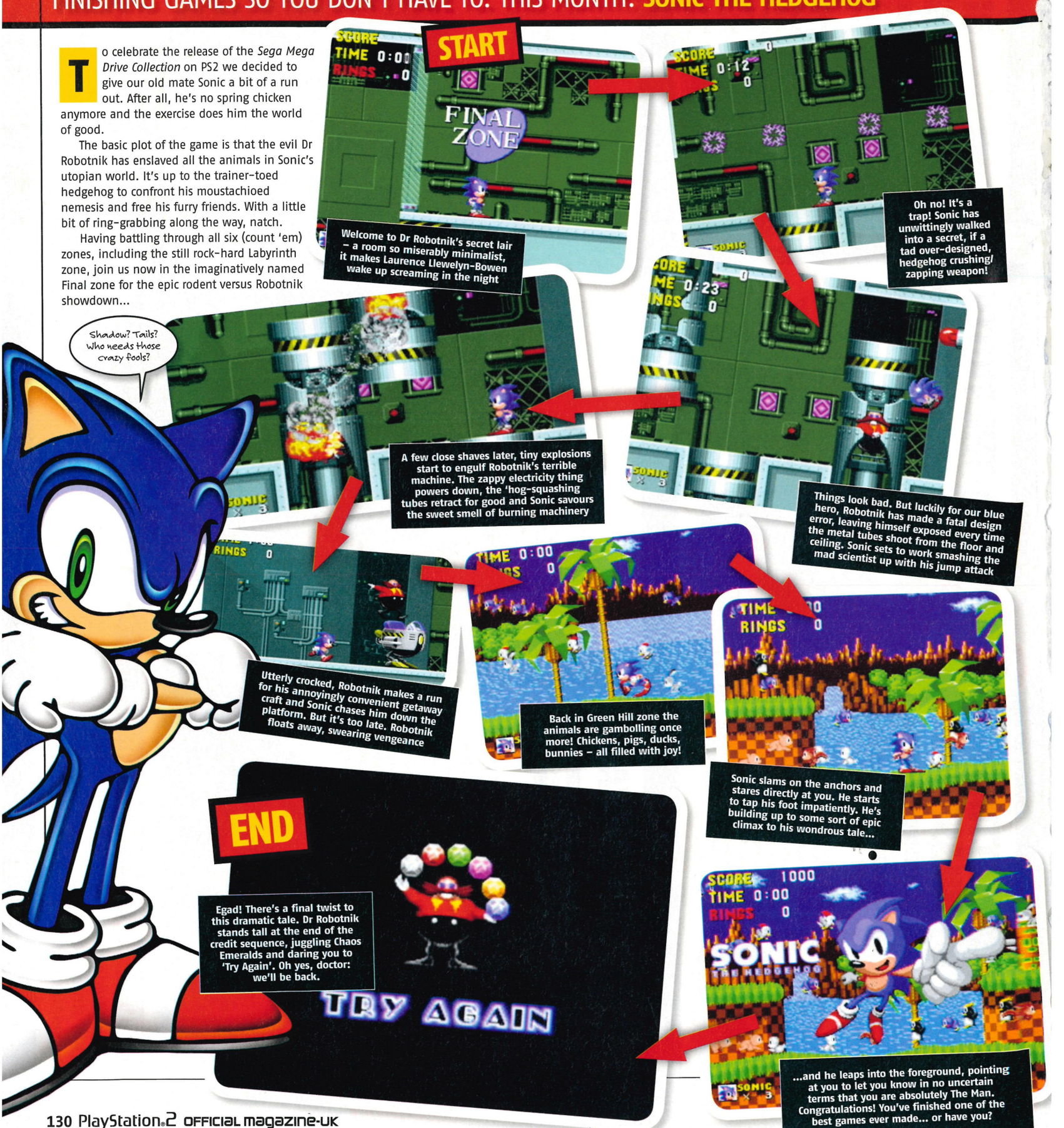
ENDGAME

FINISHING GAMES SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO. THIS MONTH: SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

To celebrate the release of the *Sega Mega Drive Collection* on PS2 we decided to give our old mate Sonic a bit of a run out. After all, he's no spring chicken anymore and the exercise does him the world of good.

The basic plot of the game is that the evil Dr Robotnik has enslaved all the animals in Sonic's utopian world. It's up to the trainer-toed hedgehog to confront his moustachioed nemesis and free his furry friends. With a little bit of ring-grabbing along the way, natch.

Having battling through all six (count 'em) zones, including the still rock-hard Labyrinth zone, join us now in the imaginatively named Final zone for the epic rodent versus Robotnik showdown...



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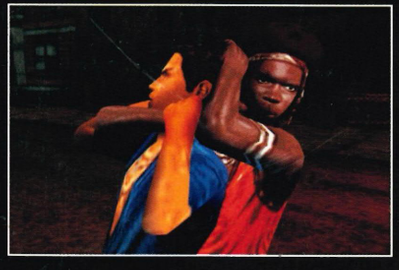
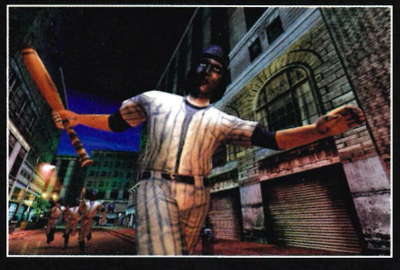
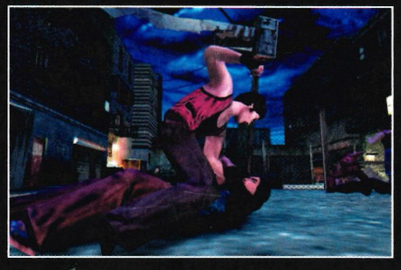

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