Lifecycle 2 Vol2 #9 09/00

www.DailyRadar.com

→ NextGen

Next Generation Magazine

TOTAL KNOCKOUT!

Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2

PLAYSTATION 2 AND DREAMCAST VERSIONS DUKE IT OUT

(We pick the winner)

Exclusive!
Episode I Starfighter
Dragon's Lair 3D
NHL 2001 PS2

Reviewed!
Jet Set Radio
Deus Ex
Diablo II

PLUS:
A prototype of the
Dolphin controller

All-new wider format!

Dreamcast ■ **Nintendo 64** ■ **PlayStation 2** ■ **PC** ■ **Xbox** ■ **Dolphin**

SEGA
SPORTS

WORLD SERIES
BASEBALL 2K1

Welcome to the Show, meat. It's all here -- detailed player profiles, full 3D ballparks, and ultra-realistic stat-based gameplay. Live it up while you can, though. Because our nastiest pitching engine yet has been designed to find your weaknesses, then hammer them mercilessly. And eventually it's going to be a certain Señor Martinez's turn in the rotation.
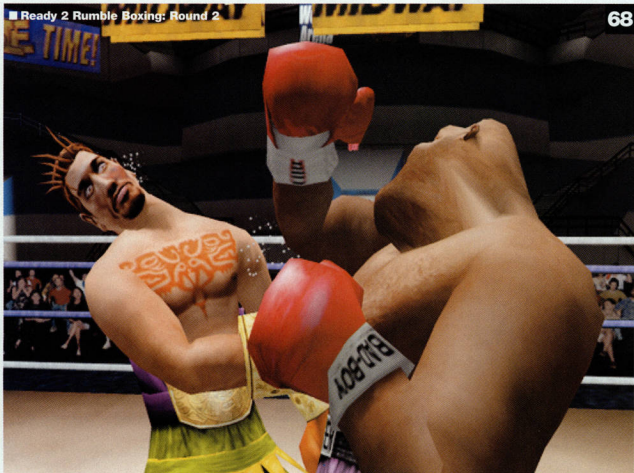
Sega Dreamcast

IT'S THINKING

PLAYERS

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

SOONER OR LATER,
PEDRO COMES FOR US ALL.

Lifecycle 2 Vol2 #9

→NextGen

Next Generation Magazine

■ Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2   68
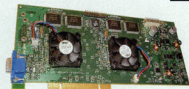

■ Sega News   06

■ Voodoo5 vs. GeForce2   08

■ AeroWings   78

■ NBA 2K   80

■ NFL Blitz 2001   88

■ Silent Scope   89

→News

If it happens, we know it

→Alphas

If you can't play it yet, we've seen it

→Special

Cover Story

09/00

NHL 2001 — 52

Episode I Starfighter — 22

Diablo II — DUNE BEAST — PALACE CELLAR 1 — 110

Dragon's Lair 3D — 34

Jet Set Radio — 101

▶Finals

If you can play them now, we've already judged them

▶Ending

If you're reading this, then we're just about done

Are casual gamers destroying our market?

We've been getting mail lately from some of you suggesting that casual gamers (you know, the ones who, right now, are out buying up all those lousy copies of *South Park Rally* for Dreamcast) are ruining the market for the rest of us, simply by purchasing all this licensed-based drivel. There's a feeling that publishers will continue to pump out quick-buck products, catering to the legion of consumers who aren't savvy enough to know what's hot and what's, well, complete crap.

So what's the solution? As a hardcore gamer, it's up to you to enlighten your casual gaming friends and neighbors. If you're at a store, and you see someone reaching for a copy of *Deer Hunter 22*, by all means shout out "YOU DON'T WANT THAT!"

And don't let them tell you they don't understand how to play "real" games either. Take a look at *Virtua Tennis* (page 105) or *Diablo II* (page 110). Anyone can play these games. With a little practice, nearly anyone can excel at them. In fact, looking over the entire available Dreamcast library (which starts on page 78), there are so many great ones, it's hard to understand why anyone would settle for *South Park Rally* when, with a little prompting, they could have *Re-Volt*, *Hydro Thunder*, or *Sega GT*.

The best marketing of all is word of mouth. So start using yours.

Tom

— *Tom Russo*
Editor-in-Chief

TENNIS WITHOUT THE UNCOMFORTABLE
LOCKER ROOM MOMENTS.

Virtua Tennis™

Virtua Tennis keeps everything you love about tennis and tosses out everything you don't. All the serves, smashes and volleys, none of the country clubs, v-neck sweaters and physical exertion. Just pure competition on a variety of courts.

Sega Dreamcast
IT'S THINKING

EVERYONE
ESRB

◎ **Dreamcast:** In the USA

1999

July 15: Hollywood Video begins rental program of Dreamcast consoles

August 11: Bernard Stolar relieved of duties as president of Sega with a reported $5-million severance package

September 9: Dreamcast debuts at $199 in the U.S., along with 18 launch titles including *NFL2K*, *Sonic Adventure*, and *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*

May 12: Dreamcast previewed at E3, with U.S. launch titles. *Soul Calibur* steals the show

August 6: Dreamcast-compatible SNK NeoGeo Pocket Color debuts

August 30: *Official Sega Dreamcast Magazine* launches

September 9: Sega co-sponsors "MTV Music Video Awards" with Pepsi

Dreamcast
Turns One in the USA

Despite the naysayers, bad news from Japan, rumors of buy-outs, and three technologically superior competitors looming on the horizon, Dreamcast has just delivered a year of great games

Can more than two million Dreamcast users be wrong? The proof is in the playing, and in the year since its release in the U.S., we'd be hard-pressed to find a letter in any of the thousands we've received from Dreamcast owners that expresses anything other than joy and contentment with their system.

From its U.S. launch on September 9, 1999, when it made its debut as the primary sponsor of the "MTV Music Video Awards," to this year, when (on September 9) the multiplayer Dreamcast online network, SegaNet, goes live, Dreamcast hasn't slowed a step. It

enjoyed what is easily the most impressive console launch in U.S. history, boasting an eminently reasonable price tag of $199 (among the lowest ever for a new system), and an initial selection of 11 titles (18 by the end of the first week), including powerhouse games like *Soul Calibur* and *NFL 2K*. It flew off the shelves and continues to sell quite well.

In fact, with a library that's just shy of 100 titles at only a year since launch, one could argue that Dreamcast has done well. Certainly, not all 100 of those are AAA games, but a check of the complete list (starting on page 78) shows that

fully two-thirds have rated three stars or better — impressive by any standard. Plus, what other system would offer unique, even risky titles like *Jet Grind Radio* or *Seaman*?

However, Sega's brass know that every day between now and the end of October is one day less the company can continue selling Dreamcasts in a market in which it has no competition from other next generation consoles. Dreamcast's continued health as a system depends largely on the public's enthusiasm for online games at a bargain entry price. The next three months will be crucial in determining whether the future will herald

Dreamcast as the system that "saved" Sega or mark it as merely an interesting footnote as the company inevitably sank from sight.

But for now, the mood at Sega is jubilant, and in fact they threw a party in late June to celebrate (among other things) the release of *Space Channel 5*. At press time, SegaNet was nearing launch, dozens of titles were being readied for year's end, and only the looming shadow of PlayStation 2 (which, one could argue, is looking overpriced and undersupported in comparison) is dripping on its parade.

Happy birthday Dreamcast. We wish you many more.

■ For the June 22 release of *Space Channel 5*, Sega held an Ulala lookalike contest in Universal City. The winner? One Forest Philbrick of Aguora Hills, CA

September 10:	September 30: Sega	November 11:	November 23:	December 31: 1.5 million
24-hour sales total $97.9 million	"Videogames of Tomorrow" display unveiled at Orlando's EPCOT Center	Sega releases NBA2K	Sega sells one-millionth Dreamcast	(and counting) Dreamcasts sold

September 29:	November 9: *Popular Science*	November 19: Dreamcast	December 12: *Business Week*
Dreamcast launches in Europe	names the Dreamcast to its "Best of What's New" list	named "Machine of the Year" by *TIME Digital* magazine	names Dreamcast one of 30 "Best Products of the Year"

■ LET'S GET IT ON!

Battle in 3D:
GeForce2 vs. Voodoo5

In the 3D card biathlon, you don't just have to be fast, you have to be good-looking too

GeForce2 GTS
Producer: nVidia, Inc.
MSRP: $299 - $350
Rating: ★★★★☆
Bottom Line: The GeForce2 outperforms all the other available cards in terms of speed, but be prepared to download a lot of new drivers until the instabilities are worked out.

→ It's that time again, when that blazing-hot 3D card you bought eight or nine months ago is reduced to being nothing more than yesterday's technology. First out of the gate are new offerings from last season's upstart champion nVidia and industry veteran 3dfx, who clearly looked out of shape last time around. How do they match up? Well, we don't want to sound wishy-washy, but the match is just about too close to call.

3dfx's entry into this year's video card wars comes in the form of a new graphics chip, the VSA-100. Touted mainly for its hardware-based Full-Scene Anti-Aliasing (FSAA), it's also capable of doing motion blur, soft shadowing and depth of field blurring. Available in four different models (Voodoo4 4500,

■ BITS FROM THE EDGE

News Bytes

→ **Whither now, Lara Croft?** Eidos, the company that kicked down the doors of the game industry in the mid-'90s with the release of *Tomb Raider*, is now trying to hang the door back on its hinges. Overspending, over-reliance on Lara Croft, and wretched excess of all kinds have led the company to the sales block. The industry grew suspicious when Eidos failed to throw its annual bacchanalia at this year's E3, but recently the company made it official: It's looking for a sale or bailout. Scuttlebutt has the lead contenders as Havas, Infogrames, and Microsoft. Infogrames has denied all charges, but England's *Financial Times* says "not so," estimating that Infogrames will purchase Eidos for more than one billion dollars. Eidos would be the second major publisher this year to get swallowed by Infogrames — the first being GT Interactive.

No matter what, though, Lara's "assets" will have a home. Hardly a secret, one of Lara Croft's big selling points has long been her exaggerated, curvaceous form. Her rather adult-leaning content could now appear on the last bastion of "good, clean fun," Nintendo 64 — Nintendo has caved to the booty call. NoA's VP of Marketing and Communications, George Harrison, has announced the company will be pursuing the 18-and-over segment of the market rather than its usual kid-friendly material because it has suddenly discovered that "half the market is under 18, and half is over." This means that every console on the market is now a safe haven for boobs — as is every console company.

Speaking of Nintendo, Nintendo is not speaking. At least, not about the Dolphin. It's highly likely that the company's new console will be called the "StarCube" because Nintendo recently registered that trademark. But Nintendo isn't commenting either way, and it isn't showing the Dolphin at its upcoming Space World exhibition in Japan. There will be plenty of Game Boy Advance though, and if you're any-

◉ Dreamcast: In the USA

2000

February 2: Sega's *Crazy Taxi* hits retail

March 7: First Internet multiplayer game *Chu-Chu Rocket* is released

April 4: Sega launches Sega.com and offers $200 rebate to past and future Dreamcast owners who sign up for a two-year subscription to the SegaNet ISP

April 7: Dreamcast games available for rental at Blockbuster

April 24: Peter Moore promoted to president of Sega

May 10: First public viewing of full Dreamcast multiplayer capabilities: rapper Ice-T and Sega President Peter Moore play NBA2K1 in Los Angeles against gamers in San Francisco

May 11: $135-million marketing budget announced at E3

Voodoo5 5500 AGP

Producer: 3dfx, Inc.
MSRP: $299
Rating: ★★★★☆
Bottom Line: Though it doesn't test as high in the benchmarks, the Voodoo5 5500's stability and image quality make it a worthy competitor in this year's crop of new cards.

Voodoo5 5000, Voodoo5 5500 and the yet to be seen Voodoo5 6000), we tested the Voodoo5 5500 AGP card.

Installation was simple enough, though this is the first card we've tested that required a direct connection to the power supply. The included software tools enable easy manipulation of the card's many features, including setting FSAA to off, 2x oversampling, and 4x oversampling. And although 4x oversampling makes the most notable improvement in image quality, it comes at a fairly heavy performance hit, slowing some games significantly, particularly at higher resolutions.

The main advantage of the new 3dfx cards is that the FSAA works with all existing software. Instead of the game needing to be written specifically for it, hardware-based FSAA is always just a click away. Also of note is the image quality; though overall the card is slightly slower than its competitors, the image quality is the best on the market, especially with the upgrade to 32-bit color display.
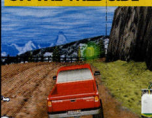
Last year's introduction of the GeForce card and its many variations floored game players and critics with blazingly fast framerates. In addition to the speed, the card also included hardware T&L (transformation and lighting) which, when programmed for, made games look and run very, very smoothly. And, we're startled to report, this year's next generation GeForce, the GeForce2 GTS, is literally about twice as fast as the original. The new card also includes a new feature called a Giga Texel Shader (the GTS in the card's moniker). Instead of using interpolation, the GTS renders each pixel individually, and when utilized it makes for beautiful image quality.

Installation of this card was easy, and while the software tools enable a lot of tweaking, some options are buried deep in the interface. However, as our extensive benchmarking proved (for the full benchmarks, see www.DailyRadar.com), this card is incredibly fast — it pretty much ate up the competition except at extremely high resolutions. The only problem we had with nVidia's latest offering was the stability of its drivers. While fine for the most part, its FSAA implementation was hit-and-miss, and new drivers seem to appear as soon as the latest ones were through downloading. Worse, some drivers seem to work better with some games — a nightmare of installing and uninstalling for the dedicated high performance enthusiast. Also, as nVidia doesn't manufacture its own cards, the price depends on which manufacturer and configuration you buy.   — Kevin Rice

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thing like us here at News Bytes, you just can't stop peeing yourself with excitement over that. Who needs a new game console when there's a new portable with 32-bits of pure pleasure on the way?

The battle of the enormous releases began in July. In the U.S., Blizzard released its far-too-anticipated *Diablo II* (four years in the making!) to first-day sales of over 130,000 units. In a "shrinking" PC market, that is a staggeringly high sell-through. The very next weekend Square reminded the world that console games are very, very big in Japan by selling 2.6 million copies of *Final Fantasy IX* on its first day. Yikes!

For Sega, July was a month of baby steps. The Dreamcast company's spin-off, Sega.com, announced that it will sell Heat.net to someone, though it will not say who or what sort of sale it might be. The company has also changed its name to Sega from Sega Enterprises. These are the kinds of bold, visionary moves that make for bold, visionary press releases in the year 2000.

Sony is still locked in mortal combat with its archrival, Connectix. Connectix, the first company to release a retail PlayStation emulator (Virtual Game Station for Mac) has been in and out of court with Sony since the product's release back in the twentieth century. In what turns out to be an amusing abuse of the power of press releases, Connectix issued a statement last June declaring that Sony had finally dropped its case against the company. As it turns out, though, Sony had only pulled one complaint in order to file an amended complaint the same day — hardly quitting the field. For once it turns out it's the little guy getting sued by the corporate behemoth that's lying through its teeth! How novel... Either way, the mortal combat continues.

Until next time... we'll be playing *Team Fortress 2*. Oh, wait...
    — Compiled by Aaron John Loeb
    Executive Producer, DailyRadar.com

June 4: Sega begins $50 rebate offer, dropping the Dreamcast's price to $149

June 23: SNK shuts down in the U.S., marking the end of the Dreamcast-compatible NeoGeo Pocket Color handheld

August 8: Sega launches virtual pet game *Seaman*

September 9: Sega plans launch of SegaNet, enabling online gaming for the Dreamcast

June 6: *Space Channel 5* launches

July 11: *World Series Baseball 2K1* ships to retail

August 29: *Quake III* debuts

→News

09/00

■ TOM RUSSO'S

In the Studio
Development news as it develops

FROM SPY HUNTER TO HEADHUNTER

→ Seventy-five unlucky souls recently received their last paychecks from Midway. No division was spared as people from product development to marketing were laid off from all four of the company's U.S. offices. Still a company spokesperson said that the company is actually staffing up for development on the next generation of consoles. Adding further insult to injury, longtime staff members were offered their choice of a complimentary copy of Rampage Through Time or Mortal Kombat: Special Forces when they left.

MIDWAY

THE SAFEST BET

→ Funcom, creators of Championship Motocross Featuring Ricky Carmichael and Speed Punks on PlayStation, has announced that its Dublin studio is foregoing PlayStation 2 development to work entirely on Microsoft's Xbox. "Transferring our long-term experience from console, PC, and Internet development into Xbox development is only a matter of small organizational adjustments," says company President Andre Backen . Of course, he's clearly noted the financial angle as well: "Exploiting the new technology reduces our development cycle by several months," he claims, "which also cuts development costs by 20 percent."

■ Championship Motocross

WAITER, THERE'S A DEVELOPER IN MY SOUP

→ With Evolva out the door, Team Producer Vince Farquharson, Lead Programmer Rick Heywood and Lead Artist Karl Wickens have left developer Computer Artworks to form a new company, Synaptic Soup. While Evolva may have taken way too long (the game was first previewed over three years ago), it's garnered above-average scores with the press and, if nothing else, looks really nice. No word on any planned titles from the fledgling studio, but we expect we'll soon see some preview materials for its 2004 releases.

■ Evolva may have been late, but it sure was pretty

TOTALLY XBOX

→ Totally Games has announced that they've been working on an Xbox title based on an original fantasy universe for more than a year. Known primarily for its work on the X-Wing series, the company is hoping to leverage some of its years of PC know-how. The team promises "compelling characters, astonishing creatures, and extraordinary flight in a unique, original fantasy world." No publisher has yet been announced, but that will be revealed later this year.

■ X-Wing Alliance

XBOX SAVAGES

→ Savage Entertainment has recently announced plans to go forward with an as-yet-unnamed project for Xbox using its proprietary Sabertooth game engine. The company, which is made up of several Activision alumni, was quietly formed in 1998 and has been developing and perfecting their DirectX-based engine since. As has become a recent tradition, the team spilled the beans when they attempted to recruit artists and programmers for the project. Damn artists.

光
速度
危険
死

Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2

悪魔達は over 100 miles of highway 上で他者の安全も省みずにレースをする。

Hundreds of opponents から逃れる事は不可能だ。 何故なら彼らもまた strong competition を持っているからだ。

💀 危険 死。

この脅迫者達は自分達を ultra-super cool だと信じて疑わない。彼らはその持てる力の限りを尽くし闘う。 Emperor of the Streets の名を手に入れる為に。

速度

路上にたむろする流浪の一団は名誉あるシンボルを create and edit logos する。彼らの忠誠心はこのシンボルしか share しない。
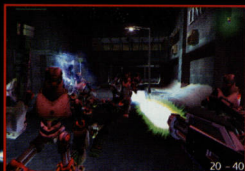
Genki

Sega Dreamcast

EVERYONE
E
ESRB

CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT

The X-philes

What's in a Name?

Xbox. It fits so nicely, doesn't it? There's no sexier letter than X. It's evocative, provocative, futuristic... even graphically, it's excellent. Seen from above, the letter could mark buried treasure or even distress. *The American Heritage Dictionary* has numerous references to this fantastic linguistic invention, noting that it has multiple meanings, including "an unknown or unnamed factor," "electricity," and "Christ," to name but three of them.

Now I don't mean to suggest that Microsoft's console is some kind of latter-day savior of the console industry, but I do think their new platform has a deliciously fancy moniker. And like any good name, it came about by accident. "Xbox" (formerly X-Box and currently — officially — XBOX) was a code name referring to both the mysterious nature of the letter X and, of course, to Microsoft's own DirectX technology. So like many a code name before it, Xbox stuck.

And quite rightly so. The press loved it. Consumers loved it, and plenty of tortilla chip-fed focus groups loved it. "It tested well," said a Microsoft spokesperson.

Code name vs. Lame name
Other code names have not fared so well. The Dreamcast ended up with a final name

You'd pretty much have to call it "Shitbox" or "Crapmaster" to ensure etymological failure

infinitely more frilly and less exciting than any of its code names. First known as "Black Belt," a U.S. team worked on the 3dfx-based console in parallel with a Japanese Power VR team whose code name was "Katana," which would have been a good final name. But that code name switched to "Dural," the androgynous end boss from *Virtua Fighter 2*. This was not such a good name. In the end, when the name "Dreamcast" was revealed with little aplomb, the swirl was met with derision and cries of "Cinnabon!" And this from a company with tough-guy fighting names like "Master System" and "MegaDrive"!

Nintendo's choice of names defies etymo-logic. "Game Boy" was an obvious take on "Walkman," since the system was ostensibly designed with the same thinking. "Famicom" and "Super Famicom" (the Japanese nomenclature for Nintendo Entertainment System and Super Nintendo Entertainment System respectively) were conjunctions of "family" and "computer." Eventually, though, Nintendo would practically abandon its computing aspirations when the company struck gold in the post-Atari 2600 console market.

Their later naming problem made better drama. First, it was the Japanese-friendly "Ultra 64," for which they even showed a logo that looked cool, dark, slick, and dangerous. Then later, for no apparent reason, this became "Nintendo 64," which was accompanied by the most childish logo of all time — an N transposed into a colorfully kiddy building block. Meanwhile, "PlayStation" became the new Nintendo, though it too was accused of resorting to a Fisher-Price marketing mentality. Just prior to that announcement, Nintendo shattered its remaining credibility with the stillborn and poorly named "Virtual Boy." Perhaps, had the company taken a leaf from Coleco's book and called it "VirtualVision," it would still be here today and not languishing in the dark corners of eBay.


■ When he's not pestering folks at Microsoft, Frank O'Connor is the Editor-in-Chief of Daily Radar Consoles

And will "Dolphin" become "StarCube"? Who cares?

Don't blame the name
So has a console launch ever failed simply because of a name? Unlikely. You'd pretty much have to call it "Shitbox" or "Crapmaster" to ensure etymological failure, but "Jaguar" — well, that was a stupid name. Why call it Jaguar? "Panther" sounded better and Atari did actually have a Panther console project. Why pick a cat from the exact middle of the big cat danger rankings? Why not "Lion" or "Tiger"? And why a cat? It simply compelled even well-regarded magazines to use the obvious "pussy" joke.

Xbox suffers no such fears. It's unquestionably masculine; indeed it sounds almost irresponsibly powerful. Only the "Vectrex" had a cooler name. However, Microsoft dodged a bullet with this one — note this interesting fact from *Websters'*: "The form and value of X are from the Latin X, which is from the Greek [Chi], which in some Greek alphabets had the value of ks, though in the one now in common use it represents an aspirated sound of k." Meaning that X is basically the bastard son of K. The KBox, or worse, K-box? Only the K-car and Kmart speak less eloquently of technology and finesse.   — *Frank O'Connor*
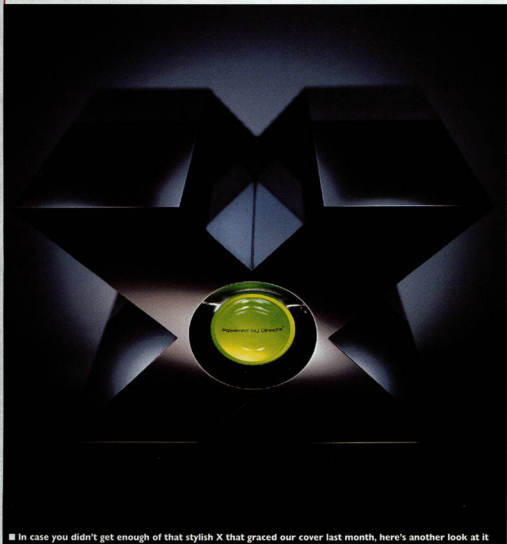
■ In case you didn't get enough of that stylish X that graced our cover last month, here's another look at it

■ SEEING IS BELIEVING

Metal Gear Solid 2 trailer released on DVD

The masterpiece comes home — or at least a little piece of it anyway

→ While the release of *MGS2* may still be a year out, Konami recently attempted to whet fans' appetites a little by releasing the E3 trailer on DVD in Japan. The DVD was only released through Konami Japan's web site at the price of ¥1575 (around $14). The disc not only features subtitled and non-subtitled versions of the E3 trailer, but a documentary on *MGS2* at E3, some of the game's conceptual artwork, and a teaser for *Zone of the Enders*, another upcoming Konami PS2 title.

What makes this DVD so great is the high quality at which the trailer is recorded. One viewing should convince the doubters that this is real gameplay footage. When we viewed it on a decent-sized TV, we were able to spot tons of tiny details in the game that we hadn't noticed before. For example, the Manhattan skyline is visible in the opening exterior shots. And, in one combat sequence, blood splatters on the wall when Snake shoots a soldier. If you're desperate to see the game in action yourself, and you have a DVD player that accomodates Japanese-region DVDs, you should be able to pick this up from your local import game dealer. — *Blake Fischer*
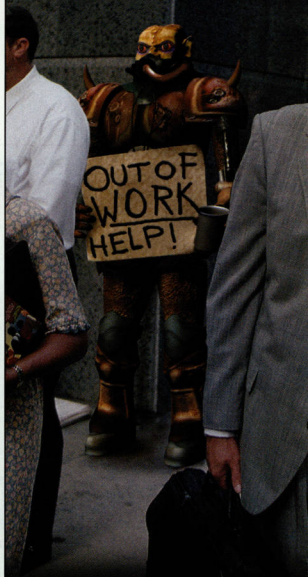

■ When you see the trailer on DVD you'll truly understand what the fuss is all about. It's that good (and everything but the brief snowstorm at the beginning is actual in-game footage)

■ While the disk probably isn't worth an exorbitant import price, it's a good deal for Japanese gamers as it'll give them something to do with their PS2s

Dolphin Watch

09/00

Our monthly inside report on Nintendo's elusive new system

→ You might be wondering what Nintendo has planned for its next-generation Dolphin system, and you're going to keep on wondering right up until the very day that the company's annual Space World show kicks off in late August. Even then, Dolphin's appearance isn't guaranteed. Another month has passed and the Big N still isn't talking, so once more must we take a trip behind-the-scenes to find whatever new information we can on Nintendo's best-kept secret.

We Don't Need No Stinkin' Kits
As of press time (late July), most second-parties were still waiting for finalized Dolphin development kit hardware and the only materials third-parties had received from Nintendo were emulation software tools. Not exactly a winning scenario if you're a developer scrambling to prepare previewable Dolphin games for a Space World unveiling. More than a few software houses **Next Generation** spoke with confided to us that they simply won't have enough time to showcase playable

demos for the show, and therefore have decided to submit only video clips of their games running in OpenGL environments and let Nintendo carry the event. So, if you had high hopes Space World would showcase Retro Studios' top-secret Dolphin first-person shooter in playable form, you should prepare yourself now for a let down.

Can Miyamoto Deliver?
Once again Nintendo is betting on its lead game designer and newly appointed board member Shigeru Miyamoto to leave a

lasting impression on Dolphin hungry Space World attendees. So what is Miyamoto working on? A "communication game" according to the man himself. We're not exactly sure what to expect from that, but considering other Nintendo efforts like the 64-bit *Hey You, Pikachu!*, in which a microphone peripheral enables gamers to deliver voice commands to everybody's favorite Pokemon, we can probably estimate the level of player interactivity Miyamoto is aiming for. The only questions are, can he ready the software in time for Space World and

■ **Matt Casamassina, the biggest Dolphin sleuth in the videogame industry, is the editor-in-chief of IGN64.com**

will it be revolutionary enough to make starved Nintendo loyalists forget about the lacking second- and third-party display? — *Matt Casamassina*

Is this Dolphin's Controller?

→ The Dolphin system's controller design is a matter of considerable importance for Nintendo, and therefore guarded roughly on par with the secrets of Area 51. However, in talking to those involved with the hardware development and design processes of Nintendo's next console, **Next Generation** has obtained enough information to provide a mock-up of the prototype controller. Note that we stress *prototype* because in all likelihood the design is still very early, and it could be radically different by the time Nintendo finally unveils the finished product. With that said, several sources have told us that the Dolphin controller will in fact feature fewer buttons than are found on the N64 controller, and as you can see from the mock-up, the layout is a little puzzling.

Built-in Rumble
Analog Stick
Satellite Buttons
Start Button
Analog Stick
Triggers (bottom)
Action Button

■ **This mockup of an early prototype Dolphin controller was built by the folks at IGN, based on information from insiders who've seen it**

➡ News

■ THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Pokemon carries game sales to new heights

Backstage Pikachu disses Sonic, Mario, and Crash

➡ Video game sales have risen for five years in a row, according to information released by the Interactive Digital Software Association. According to the IDSA numbers, game software sales have seen an annual increases of $500 million to $700 million as they steadily rose from $3.2 billion in 1995 to $6.1 billion in 1999.

Last year's $600-million-dollar increase is particularly impressive when you consider that 1999 was a transition year as the market saw the release of the first 128-bit game console. Analysts generally expect to see a dip in sales during transition years as the market becomes saturated with older systems and many consumers hold off making purchases until they upgrade to the next generation of game consoles. So what made the dif-

ference last year? Game Boy, and more specifically, *Pokemon*.

According to market-tracking figures published by the NPD Group, handheld game sales made up a modest $294 million, or six percent of the market in 1997 — the year before Nintendo convinced America's youth that they've "gotta catch'em all." When Nintendo released the *Pokemon Blue* and *Red* cartridges in September, 1998, handheld game sales jumped by 150 percent, soaring to $466 million — a full eight percent of the market.
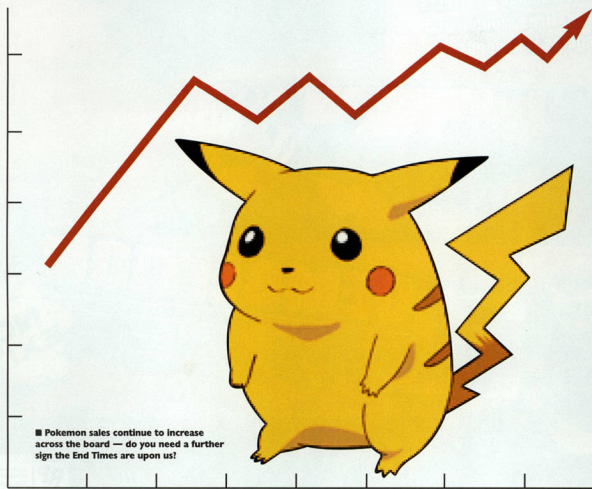
In 1999, the first full year of the *Pokemon* invasion, handheld hardware and software sales combined to reach $1.26 billion or 18 percent of the market. (And that figure does not include the 1.65 million copies of *Pokemon*

Snap that Nintendo sold for N64.)

Take away the 250-percent growth of the handheld market (a small portion of which came from NeoGeo Pocket Color), and video game sales actually dropped last year.

And what will happen this year? Despite predictions that the kids of America have lost their infatuation with *Pokemon*, Nintendo reported a 220-percent increase in *Pokemon* game sales during the first five months of 2000.

With Nintendo preparing to release *Pokemon Gold* and *Silver* cartridges for Game Boy (251 pocket monsters and still going), *Hey You Pikachu* for Nintendo 64, and *Pokemon 2000* in theaters, it looks as if *Pokemon* may lead game sales to another banner year.   — Steven Kent

■ Pokemon sales continue to increase across the board — do you need a further sign the End Times are upon us!

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Sega Dreamcast

→ News

Capcom
2000 Conference
And one company steadfastly holds on to 2D

→ It was mid-summer in Osaka, Japan, home to Capcom's corporate headquarters and site of the Capcom 2000 Business Conference, and the company's higher-ups were presenting their strategy for the coming year. First, they unveiled a batch of Dreamcast titles that all, in some way, take advantage of the modem (and SegaNet in the U.S.). The titles included *Net Tennis*, *Rival School Justice*, *Spawn*, and, oddly enough, *Super Street Fighter II* and *Darkstalkers*. The company also made formal announcement about a *Resident Evil* title for PlayStation 2 (set for release in summer 2001),

along with a multiplayer *Resident Evil Online*.

They also solidified the company's position on multi-platform releases. Going forward, the new goal is to standardize internal development so different versions of each new title will be released either simultaneously, or at least within two to three months of each other, keeping versions exactly the same from one platform to the next. And while taking advantage of a single marketing push is arguably a solid business decision, it will have the likely effect of forcing all future Capcom titles to adhere to the lowest common denominator — a Dreamcast-sized polygon count with textures limited by PlayStation 2's 4MB of video RAM, for example.

It will be interesting how well this strategy pans out over the next couple of years.
— *Christophe Kagotani/Jeff Lundrigan*

■ Among the games Capcom announced would feature online multiplayer options? The age-old 2D *Super Street Fighter II* (left) and *Darkstalkers*, as well as an online, 3D *Rival Schools* game (below)
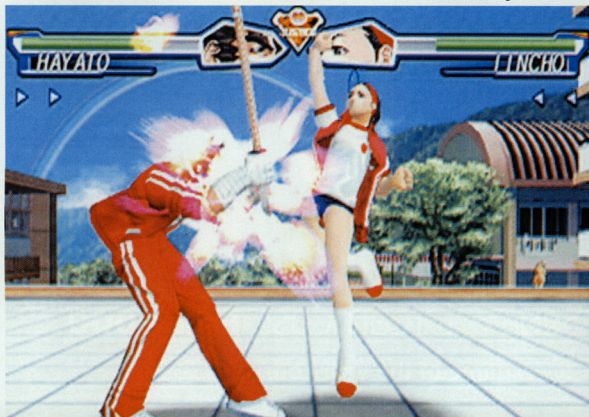
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Sega Dreamcast

→ Alphas

A small band of **Next Generation** spies have made off with the plans for the new, fully-operational battle stations of the gaming world

28 **36**
■ AlienFront Online

34
■ Dragon's Lair 3D

40
■ Motor Mayhem

52
■ NHL 2001

EPISODE I STARFIGHTER

■ Publisher: **LucasArts** ■ Developer: **LucasArts** ■ Release Date: **November** ■ Origin: **USA**

LucasArts on PS2: "Do, or do not. There is no try"

It was Spider-Man who taught us that with power comes great responsibility, and while the superhero's most important lesson may not be LucasArts official mantra (just think of the licensing nightmare that would ensue), it is representative of the company's first PlayStation 2 effort. Instead of relying on formulaic gameplay like many developers with products in the PS2 launch window, the minds behind *Episode I Starfighter* have tried to rethink the space combat genre a little in its transition to the newer, more powerful PS2 hardware.

"What we set out to do is find a middle ground between *Rogue Squadron* and *X-wing*," says project leader Daron Stinnett. "Something that would work well on a console and be a little more approachable but would also have very deep gameplay and incorporate strong story and characters."

The result is a spaceship combat game that revolves around three new characters: Rhys, a member of the Naboo forces who
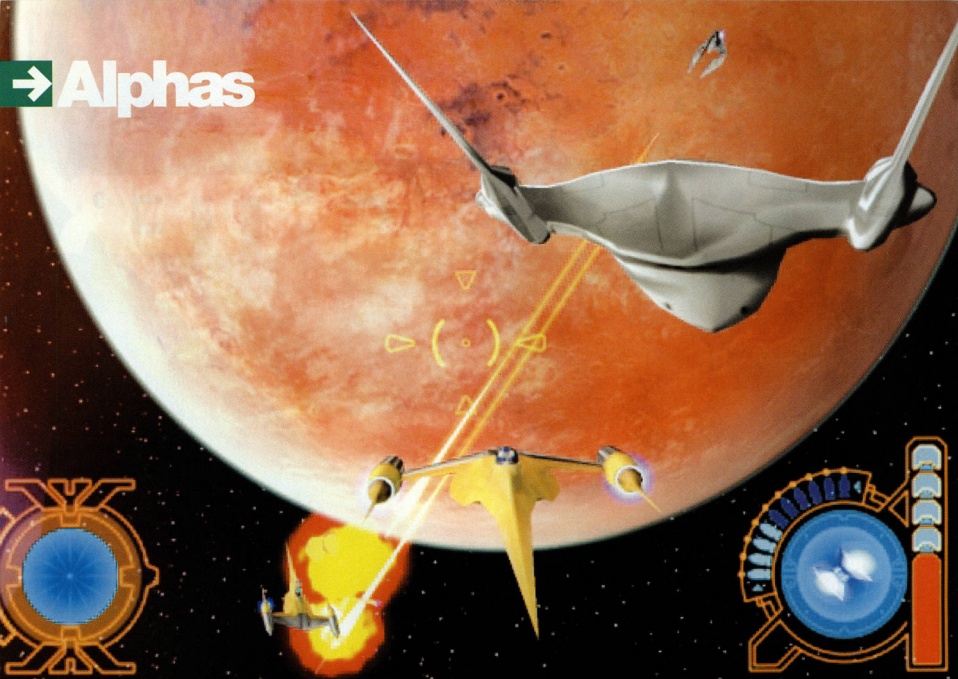
■ Rhys gets separated from his group after he escorts the princess away from Naboo – that's what brings him to Vana

> **"We have large scale massive battles with hundreds of vehicles and tons of things going on at once in huge environments"**
> — Daron Stinnett

■ While much of the game will take place away from the scenes of the *Phantom Menace*, some parts will be all too familiar

gets separated from the group; Vana, a mercenary who is in the area for fun and profit; and Nimh, a pirate under attack from the Trade Federation. The characters have their own ships, each of which encompasses a different style of gameplay: stealth (Vana), dogfighting (Rhys), and brute force (Nimh's ultra-armored bomber simply kicks Trade Federation ass). In true cinematic fashion, each of the three characters will start with their own independent objectives and will eventually meet up to fight the Trade Federation for the common good.

Stinnett explains the decision to go with original characters and story as a no-brainer: "The movie [*Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*] didn't really have epic space battles. There was only one at the very end. In order for us to do more than ten minutes of gameplay around that last space battle we had to come up with our own story."

While the three ship types help to define the way each mission will be played (you don't get to choose which character you will use) the team has also done a lot of work making

sure there's a good variety between levels.

"We have large scale massive battles with hundreds of vehicles and tons of things going on at once in huge environments," claims Stinnett. "And we have other missions that are much more adventure-like where it's more you trying to fly through smaller environments looking for something."

When Next Generation took over the controller for a test flight, we were able to witness the scope and variety of the game for ourselves. At one point we flew straight up into the atmosphere and then spun around, only to witness the entire battle below in small scale (and we could even zoom in on it and attack with the handy sniper mode). On the opposite end of the spectrum, another level had us flying through a tight, beautifully detailed canyon

■ There are 40 different vehicles in *Starfighter*, many of which have been created just for the game

"There's nothing preventing you from flying to any of the terrain you see"

— Chris Corry

toward an enemy base at the end. Even though the enemies hadn't been placed on the level yet, it was as close to realizing a Beggar's Canyon-style mission as anybody's ever attempted. All that was missing were the Wamprats.

"We made a big effort to get really dramatic environments with a lot of variety," says Stinnett, ranging from "tight small spaces where it's really dense and there's a lot of stuff going on to large expansive space missions."

Of course, none of these levels would have the impact they do if players were forced to stay within small artificial boundaries, which programmer Chris Corry was quick to point out. "There's nothing preventing you from flying to any of the terrain you see," he says. Stinnett finishes the thought: "It's [the level boundary] so far out we don't expect people to run into it unless they really try."

The absolutely stunning graphics engine completes the package, keeping the game fast and beautiful no matter what your vantage point. According to production manager Reeve Thompson, the team's focus on story has defined how the artists and programmers go about making the game look just right. Take the multiple texture passes that were being done on each ship.

"Instead of just doing the *Gran Turismo* approach and making all of the cars [or ships in this case] shiny we wanted to use this effect to a purpose," Thompson

■ At one point in the game you'll have to leave Naboo and go to another planet for a while. Don't worry though – you'll still make it back in time for the final battle with the Trade Federation

explains. "What you can see is the scrapes on the back of a ship where the shine of the metal comes through. We want things to have a battle-worn look and I think that this is a good example of where we're using the 'wow' features of the PlayStation 2 to give depth to the story instead of just doing things because we can."

And for those curious to know, we looked long and hard at the game running in S-Video on a 36" monitor, and it was an effort to spot even the most minor of jaggy edges. Apparently that anti-aliasing issue isn't really an issue anymore (see sidebar).

While *Starfighter* won't be available at PS2 launch, the November release won't keep gamers waiting long. With the *SW:TPM* soundtrack booming as ships scream by in the heat of combat, we can't help but think this is the next *Star Wars* title worthy of the legend. — *Blake Fischer*

■ Nimh's bomber not only packs a wallop, but it also has an independently aiming and firing turret on the top

THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT ANTI-ALIASING ON PS2

While many first generation games on the PS2 have had saw-toothed edges in the game, *Starfighter* manages to look clean and smooth due to a technique called scanline blending. Programmer Chris Corry explains: "Our PS2 gurus stumbled onto this solution about six months ago, long before Sony started releasing documentation about the technique, and *Starfighter* was using this technology at E3 [and in the later missions seen by Next Generation]. The 'scanline-blend' method can be very effective at reducing jaggies, but it does not completely eliminate them in the manner that a true hardware-supported FSAA-specific solution could."

■ Each ship you pilot is different. Nimh's bomber, for example, is bulky, but formidably armored

■ When aliens invade Earth, it's rarely good news, but then the aliens have never been driven by players sitting in an arcade somewhere

TEAM			ENEMY	
XENON	0		5	LAZER
BIG GUN	5		2	CRUSHER
MORFEUS	3		3	GOTCHA
CYANIDE	6		4	PARADOX
		14 KILLS	14 KILLS	

■ ARCADE, DREAMCAST

ALIENFRONT ONLINE

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Wow** ■ Release Date: **Q1 2001** ■ Origin: **Japan**

Home vs. arcade is no longer a debate — it's being settled in online play

Now here's an interesting experiment. Due out sometime early next year, *AlienFront Online* is a multiplayer, online game that will actually enable Dreamcast players at home to face off against others playing in the arcade. That's a first.

For reasons that are as yet unclear, a race of aliens known as the Triclops have taken it into

their pointed little heads that the human race should be utterly wiped out. They intend to accomplish this by having a team of four Triclops face off against a team of four humans — or at least, humans driving tanks. Taking after Namco's *Tokyo Wars*, *AFO*'s battle against the alien horde is between armor-clad warriors in a number of different urban settings around the
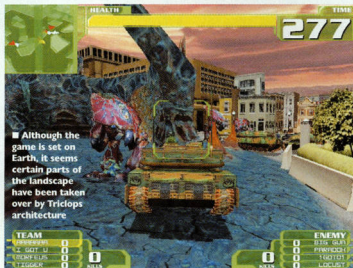
■ Although the game is set on Earth, it seems certain parts of the landscape have been taken over by Triclops architecture

> By far the most interesting feature of the game is its ability to match players over the Internet, enabling home vs. arcade battles

■ Even in this early demo level, things blow up real good

■ It will be interesting to see how well players at home will stack up against those in the arcade, and vice versa

■ Practically all the structures and items in the city can be destroyed, so wholesale destruction is a possibility — cool

globe (although only one Earth city, Washington D.C., was available for display at press time).

Each team has a different set of three vehicles to choose from. The human team can choose from the M1A1 Abrams, the Merkava, and the M-109. The Triclops team has the choice of a two-legged walker, a four-legged "spider," and a hovercraft. It should be mentioned that at this point, it actually seemed as if the Triclops had a slight edge over the human players, since the two-legged walkers, in particular, had a distinct height advantage. This, of course, enabled the aliens to see and target enemies from a much longer range. However, these balancing issues will doubtless be worked out before the game is released.

In addition, each vehicle has one main weapon — the cannon for the human team, a laser beam for the Triclops — and is capable of picking up additional power-up weapons. Humans get grenades and missiles, while Triclops get a homing missile and the "gravity ball," which lifts enemies up and slams them into the ground. Other power-ups are available, which can be discovered by blasting away at

just about everything in the environment, destroying it and revealing new items.

The most interesting feature by far, however, is the game's ability to match players over the Internet, enabling home vs. arcade battles. The *AlienFront Online* site will support "handles" for individual players, and it will offer special tournaments and the opportunity to compete for various Sega-related prizes. The game will also implement an online, in-game voice chat system for talking to members of your own team and taunting the enemies, and you can also expect that certain special bonuses can only be unlocked by playing in the arcade.

Furthermore, Sega is currently toying with the idea of making new vehicles and weapons available for download over time.

Considering no one has ever tried anything quite like this before, you can consider it a very interesting experiment on the part of Sega. There's no word yet on how the four-on-four team play will break down with respect to players in the home and the arcade — whether all members on a given team will have to be from the arcade, for example, or whether teams can be mixed and matched irrespective of where they're located. Still, this feature alone makes it a provocative title to watch.

— *Jeff Lundrigan/Christophe Kagotani*

■ All kinds of interesting power-ups are available — and if you're playing as the humans, you even get tactical nuclear weapons

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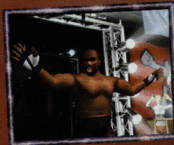
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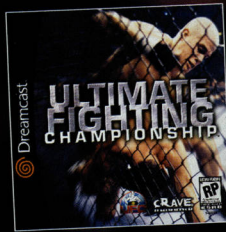
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■ While some of the creatures you come up against will be entirely new, you'll also see plenty of familiar foes like the Giddy Goons

■ PC, MAC

DRAGON'S LAIR 3D

■ Publisher: **Blue Byte** ■ Developer: **Dragonstone** ■ Release Date: **Spring 2001** ■ Origin: **USA**

Dirk, Daphne, and the Dragon are back, but this time they've brought cutting edge technology with them

■ A lot of work has gone into making sure Dirk looks and acts just like he did in the first laserdisc game

Back in 1983, not even the team that created the then revolutionary laserdisc game *Dragon's Lair*, could have predicted that 17 years later the game would still be selling — now on DVD, of course. But the franchise now looks to stage a comeback, complete with a healthy infusion of modern technology and gameplay that will once again catapult it to the forefront of the gaming world.

Dragon's Lair 3D is more of a remake than a sequel, as Dirk is still trying to make his way through the castle of Singh the Dragon to rescue the beautiful Princess Daphne. Many of the

scenarios will at first appear identical to the original, but the old-school, action-reaction gameplay has now been replaced by full 3D, realtime gameplay. A good example comes in the first scene of the game where evil tentacles attack Dirk as he is crossing the drawbridge. Instead of just hitting the "sword" button and being done with the level, players will actually have to run around, dodge the tentacle's attacks, and eventually lop them all to pieces with your sword. Only then, when you run through the door to the castle, will the gate drop and you'll hear the traditional trumpeting

> **"You've played *Dragon's Lair* but now you get to see the rest of the story. You'll see the rooms you never got to go in before and the creatures and new NPCs you never got to deal with."**
>
> –Rick Dyer
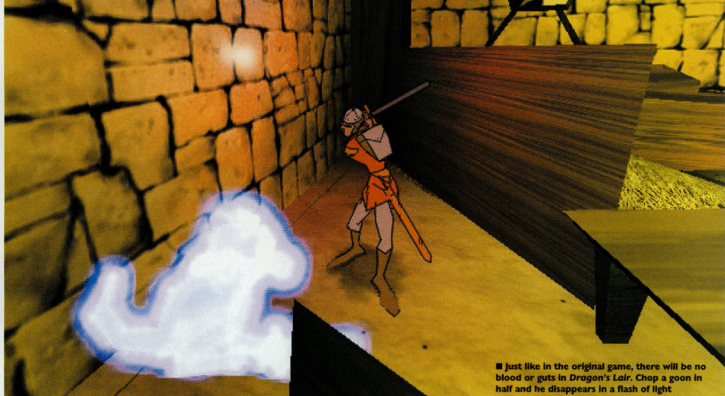
■ Just like in the original game, there will be no blood or guts in *Dragon's Lair*. Chop a goon in half and he disappears in a flash of light
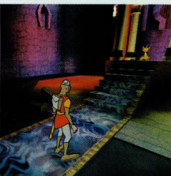
fanfare as Dirk continues on to meet his fate.

It's this absolutely brilliant merger of old and new which is going to make this game work, and the team has spent a lot of time developing a look that is absolutely faithful to the original. "We wanted to keep a cartoony feel where nothing really makes sense and hallways don't go where they're supposed to," says lead designer Wil Panganiban. "We wanted to give you a sense of adventure where everything is a possible threat or a puzzle or an obstacle." With the help of a custom-built cartoon renderer that gives characters in the game a hand-drawn look by surrounding them with thick black lines, the team has nailed the classic feel perfectly. It looks like you're playing the original cartoon, even though there's as much freedom

of movement as there is in *Zelda* or *Tomb Raider*.

No doubt much of the game will look familiar to *Dragon's Lair* savants, but there's actually an impressive amount of new content for players to discover. While the original game only offered 30 different areas to explore, this version presents 180 unique rooms. The thrill of the newest installment, according to Dragonstone Chairman and original *Dragon's Lair* co-creator Rick Dyer, is that "You've played *Dragon's Lair* but now you get to see the rest of the story. You'll see the rooms you never got to go in before and creatures, new NPCs, you never got to deal with."

From what **Next Generation** has witnessed of the first level of the game, there will be many

new challenges — although those who have played the original will also remember the chessboard-decorated hall where the first boss, the impressive black knight, awaits.

Aside from the game's new areas, Dirk himself has some new techniques at his disposal, including a projectile weapon, a medallion that will offer hints, and some new powers that will be associated with his sword.

While the team is currently working only on a PC version and Blue Byte denies any involvement with a console port, Dragonstone President Steve Parsons has said before that the game will also be coming to next generation consoles as well as PC — although the PC version will certainly lead. With an audience of hardcore fans 17 years in the waiting, the team has a sizeable audience to please. — Blake Fischer

"We wanted to give you a sense of adventure where everything is a possible threat or a puzzle or an obstacle."
—Wil Panganiban

■ The Drawbridge scene made it into the first game, but now, with your full freedom of movement, it's a completely different experience
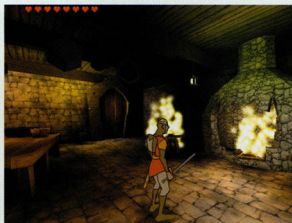
■ *Dragon's Lair 3D* will also feature a classic mode where you can play the original *Dragon's Lair* in the all-new 3D engine

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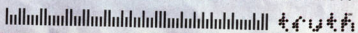
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■ The swimming event in particular looks amazing — the music is even muted when the camera switches to an underwater view

■ **PLAYSTATION 2, DREAMCAST**

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD

■ Publisher: **Konami** ■ Developer: **Konami** ■ Release Date: **October 2000 (PS2), Summer 2000 (DC)** ■ Origin: **Japan**

More button-banging madness from the masters of the form

Konami has a long history of track and field games, dating all the way back to the original *Track and Field* for the arcade in 1983. So you might expect the company to have a pretty firm grip on the genre, and having seen the latest incarnation, *ESPN International Track and Field*, we can say with some confidence that this is still the case.

The game includes a total of twelve events. Ten can be selected immediately: 100-meter dash, 100-meter hurdle, long jump, pole vault, javelin, 100-meter freestyle swimming, weightlifting, horizontal bar gymnastics, trapshooting, and rhythmic gymnastics. The final two events — high jump and the hammer throw — are hidden and can be unlocked. And yes, we know that at least five of these are neither track nor field, but what are ya gonna do?

The control for each event is quite different, although many fall into the usual "tap a couple of buttons as fast as you can, then tap some-

thing else to throw/jump/whatever." However, the gymnastic events require a surprising amount of coordination, and rhythmic gymnastics is actually played like a kind of low-end *Dance Dance Revolution*, tapping the controller buttons in time with the selected music (funny that, coming from Konami...).

As you'd expect for a next generation title, *Track and Field* sports (no pun intended) high resolution, high frame rate, high polygon, and smoothly textured graphics, especially on PlayStation 2. The motion-captured animation also appears to be topnotch, and on the whole we can't put a knock on this title anywhere. The version shown to **Next Generation** needed some tweaking, but come ship date, it should be ready to compete. — *Jeff Lundrigan*

■ Some would say that track and field events are the purest form of competition, although we don't understand how tapping buttons counts

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■ PLAYSTATION 2

■ Battlefields are dynamically lit (note the spotlights and ambient light above) and highly destructable. This arena features a jumbotron that can be brought down around your opponents' ears

MOTOR MAYHEM

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Beyond Games** ■ Release Date: **March 2001** ■ Origin: **US**

Will deeper characters revitalize a tired, twisted genre? Start your engines

→ What's wrong with vehicular combat games? They remain perennially popular, but it's widely held that the genre has barely advanced since *Twisted Metal* first exploded on the scene in '95. Beyond Games (creator of *Redline* for the PC) thinks it has the answer: cars are just too inhuman.

"Wouldn't it be cool if you weren't just playing a car, but you were actually playing a character, and that character was more than just someone you saw on the initial selection screen?" queries Beyond VP Clark Stacey. Enter *Motor Mayhem*, a car — no, make that a driver — combat title set in a futuristic universe

where the outrageous VCL (Vehicle Combat League) is more popular than NASCAR, the NFL, and Olympic curling all rolled into one. The lineup of sci-fi-influenced competitors includes Grok, a stony giant driving a steamroller, Volcana, a sexy redhead in a streamlined, six-wheeled, firetruck-type ATV, and Corvalis, a Geiger-esque soldier riding a futuristic crotch rocket.

The task of designing this all-important cast of characters fell to Creative Director Christopher Salmon, who says he knew the game needed an "X-Men-style" super-team of varied, yet complementary jalopy-jockeys. Citing the weird but coherent style of films like *Star*
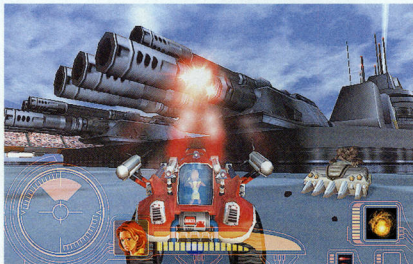
■ In the finished build, the HUD will change its appearance and color scheme depending upon which character you control. No word if you can fire this big gun, but you can bet we'll give it a shot
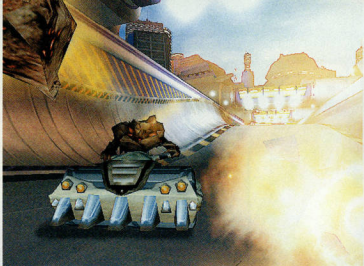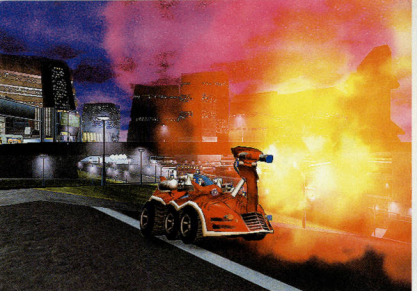
Very little optimization has been done so far, but several arenas are already up and running at 60 fps
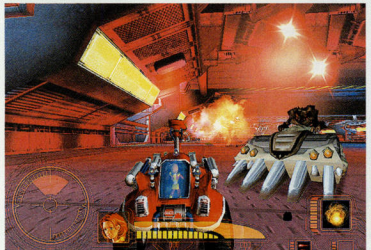
Each character has a complex history that even affects their moves. Volcana (the red car in the images above) is the last in a race of genetically-enhanced pyro-kinetic soldiers who, tragically, have all been wiped out by their own powers. She fights for their honor

Wars, Salmon utilized a more organic, cinema-style design technique in which sculptor Ryan Peterson (whose work can be seen in the gluttony victim from *Seven*, the face-stretching scene from *Men in Black*, and Universal's upcoming *The Grinch*) modeled most characters first in clay. This allowed numerous adjustments and iterations to be made before the digital modeling process even began.

In a refreshing testament to cohesive design, each competitor's visual style, color scheme, and moves are all tied to the character's rather deep personal history. For example, Corvallis boasts moves that are most effective at close range. Why? Because he's an ex-military tunnel rat and thus an expert in close quarters fighting, where his quickness and maneuverability give him an advantage. Each vehicle is also designed to give the player a clear view of the driver at all times. According to Stacey, this is absolutely crucial.

"If you're cruising along and a missile hits the back of your car, you see the car rock back on

The game's animation system is incredibly advanced. For instance, Volcana's body alone is animated using over 180 nodes (as opposed to 16 to 20 nodes for most PlayStation games). In addition to reacting to impacts, each character will have their own taunts, celebrations, and over-the-top special attacks, like Grok's Ground Pounder (below)

■ Explosions are all modelled accurately and randomly. Scraps of your enemy's rig will bounce in different directions each time, and they'll do so with the proper physics

"The closest thing to the VCL would be the WWF"

— Clark Stacey, VP Beyond Games

the shocks, and that kind of gets you into the action. But if a missile hits the back of your car and you see your character get knocked up against the inside of the cockpit, become stunned, then try to grab the wheel and recover, that's intense. That really involves you." This refocusing on larger than life, occasionally human characters is inspired by an unlikely, if wildly successful, real-world source.

"The closest comparison to the VCL would be the WWF," Stacey contends. "You have very flamboyant characters, each with their signature moves, their own music, and their own stories." Each character's unique plotline will play out

between rounds of combat, with stories and inter-character relationships that further exemplify a WWF influence. Characters will form allegiances, change from good to evil, or even drop out of the league, to be replaced by new competitors, via later iterations of the game or, according to Stacey, Sony's planned broadband network.

Combat will rage through ten creative levels, including a space station, a Mayan jungle (complete with multi-level temple), the deck of an aircraft carrier, and an undersea mine. Moreover, each arena will have at least one huge element whose destruction will change the flow of gameplay. A missile can be launched from the aircraft carrier that will blow a hole in the deck, creating access to an aircraft hangar below where combatants can stalk one another among the planes. And the Mayan Temple level will have bridges whose supports can be brought down upon unlucky adversaries.

Of course, conceptual design isn't everything. If the physics engine is wonky, or if the vehicles drive like *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* gamers won't even care about the pilots. While Beyond had only just inserted a rough driving engine at the time of our visit, President Kris Johnson assures us that the remaining development time will be used to implement "great control, fun physics... the whole package." We can only hope that his words prove prophetic when the mayhem really ensues next spring. — *Eric Bratcher*

■ While there will be special weapons that can be picked up, each driver's regular weapons can be upgraded over time, as well

■ DREAMCAST

QUARK

■ Publisher: **TBA** ■ Developer: **Quantic Dream** ■ Release Date: **Fall 2001** ■ Origin: **France**

After *Omikron* and without the help of David Bowie, can Quantic Dream deliver a better gaming experience?

■ Players will be able to communicate between the mystical world of Quark (above) and the dark industrial alleyways of London (below) through shared dreams between the two main characters

→ Quantic Dream's last ambitious effort, *Omikron*, heroically tried to redefine the action/adventure game with an epic sci-fi story and an open world for players to explore, and
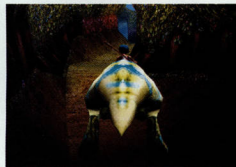
■ Knowing what every animal in the game can do will enable you to beat many puzzles. For example, Waki wants to rescue the Flump, so he tempts the Gumba into running him there with some food

while it may not have been the success the Paris-based team hoped for (see review, NG 02/00), the game taught them many valuable lessons that have directly influenced their next game, *Quark*. The most notable of these was how to approach the daunting task of telling a story via a game.

"People really enjoyed the story and the immersion of *Omikron*," says Quantic Dream's CEO David Cage. "We gave so much freedom to the player, but I personally think that the action sequences were not merged enough in the adventure."

With *Quark*, Quantic is trying to keep players immersed in a diverse and engaging story and, this time, to fix what didn't work before.

Much like the demon-run sci-fi locales of *Omikron*, *Quark* is set in a very different world

QUARKS

If you paid attention in physics class, you may remember the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, which identifies sub-subatomic particles known as "quarks." Although their existence has never been 100% confirmed, theoretically these insanely small units are held together by other theoretical particles called "gluons" to make up the known subatomic protons, neutrons, electrons, and the other particles floating around in your average atom. And if you weren't paying attention in physics class, maybe it's because you were busy playing computer games, in which case you'll remember *Space Quarks*, an enjoyable *Galaga* rip-off for the Apple II.

than our own — two very different worlds in fact. Waki, the main (male) protagonist, lives in a hugely colorful fantasy world called Quark, while his sister, Una, has been abandoned in an entirely different world — a grimy, industrial London. The two heroes stay in contact
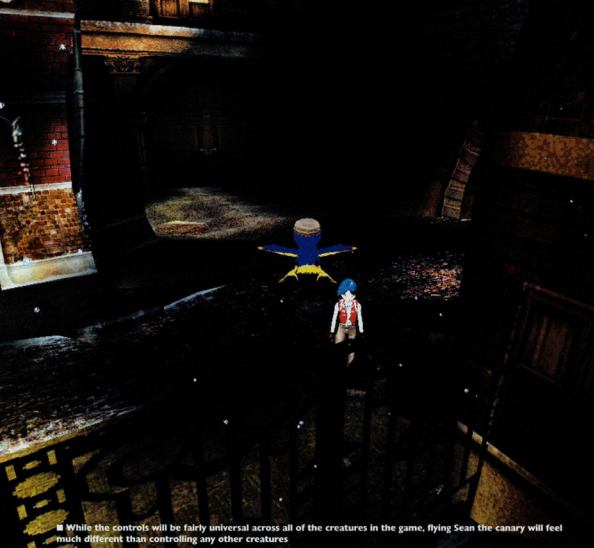
■ While the controls will be fairly universal across all of the creatures in the game, flying Sean the canary will feel much different than controlling any other creatures

■ Quantic Dreams learned a lot about telling an interactive story with *Omikron*, and they hope to use these lessons to make *Quark* more involving and playable

throughout the course of the game through their dreams, which becomes very important as the game progresses because both worlds are under attack from a chaotic force unleashed by a time-traveling madman. In typical heroic fashion, Waki and Una must both escape the villain's attempts to finish them off and bring to an end the dark force of destruction.

The gameplay itself is best described as *Zelda*-esque. While puzzle-solving, action, and combat are standard, the most interesting new twist is how players must explore both worlds via both characters in order to solve puzzles. "The whole game is about cross-overs," says Cage. "The two worlds are linked. Some sets or characters look similar in both worlds."

For example, players may discover two similar-looking spots or characters in each of the different worlds. When you solve a puzzle in one world, you may be given the vital clue you needed to solve the similar puzzle in the other.

Players might also be surprised to discover some *Banjo-Kazooie*-style action sequences, as the characters are able to take control of a menagerie of animals that accompany them on their adventures. "These animals are not just tools or vehicles that can be used and left," explains Cage. "They are living beings with their own skills and personalities. For us, finding the best controls for each one is the hardest part since they must be intuitive and as common as possible. We don't want the player to learn different controls for six animals, but you can't move Una's bird in the same way as Waki's giant rabbit."

Now that Quantic Dream has the confidence to explore its creativity freely and the experience to master complex and unexplored elements of game design, maybe we can look forward to a multi-faceted adventure in the true sense of the word. — *Colin Campbell*

> ## "The whole game is about cross-overs. The two worlds are linked. Some sets or characters look similar in both worlds."
> —David Cage

■ If you want the answer to a puzzle in one world, you may need to solve a similar puzzle in the other world. In this case, Sean the canary grabs the key from the window (left) and enables Una to open the gate in both London and Quark (right)

SEGA SPORTS

NFL 2K1

Online gameplay is here. Now you and up to three buds can get on one console and school opponents nationwide -- from pathetic Cowboys sympathizers in Tulsa to masochistic Bills fans in Schenectady. You can even exchange "pleasantries" in real time. Throw in a radically improved running game, franchise mode, and complete team-specific playbooks, and you've got yourself a full-contact chat room. Does technology rule or what?

ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER

OFFICIALLY LICENSED PRODUCT NFL

PLAYERS

segasports.com

Dreamcast

IT'S THINKING

SUDDENLY, THE WHOLE COUNTRY IS INBOUNDS.

■ The physics engine in this game is unbelievable. Note the collapsing ceilings and debris in this shot. Think there might've been Sims in there?

■ Mythos has not only implemented tons of conventional weaponry, but they have also created plenty of unique alien weapons as well

the copious amounts of UFO conspiracy stories that have been circulating for many years," explains Mythos Games co-founder Julian Gollop. "The Dreamland mythology features prominently. Dreamland is, of course, the code word for the Area 51 facility in the Nevada desert where the government is alleged to have tested alien technology."

The game starts shortly after a particularly rapacious alien race known as the Saurans conquer Earth after a few months of intense, destructive warfare. Players are faced with the

daunting responsibility of building a resistance force capable of overthrowing these alien invaders, and the keys to doing this are strategic planning and tactical expertise. "The full scope of operations is under the player's control," says Gollop, "from resource management to squad-level combat." So while players start off with only a handful of resistance fighters (consisting of scientists, pilots, and soldiers) they must win skirmishes with the enemy and build up their forces to eventually conquer the entirety of the alien threat. There are about 25 different enemy types in the game, including robots, primitive

creatures, and even carnivorous plants. While some of the enemies will be new to players, others — like the mysterious Men in Black — will be recognizable to conspiracy theorists and "X-Files" fans alike.

To fight these invaders you'll not only have to recruit new allies but also discover new weapons and technology. There are over 50 weapons in the game for players to wield, all with unique properties. The goal, according to the team, is to make players think about the tactical deployment of these weapons carefully instead of just always picking up the biggest gun.

■ *Freedom Ridge* is being designed with the PS2 and PC in mind so the interface has been deliberately kept accessible to both mouse- and controller-wielding gamers

M16A2 assault rifle

R   Stephen Green

■ The soldier is only one of the many types of characters you'll need to recruit into the resistance

■ The missile launcher may seem like a good idea, but when you launch a weapon of destruction off in an urban area you're asking for trouble – and chaos

> **"Injured characters will flinch and collapse like a rag doll when they are hit. Limbs can even be blown off and sent tumbling through the scenery."**
>
> –Julian Gollop

As mentioned before, the heart and soul of the original *X-COM* beats within *Freedom Ridge*, so strategy veterans will be familiar with the turn-based combat mechanics and strategy. The game does have a few enhancements that give it that extra level of realism, however. Your combatants will now be able to detect enemy forces by hearing, smelling, and also seeing them. The strategic part of the game also includes more complex and integrated vehicle combat (we've seen jeeps in the game, and tanks are promised as well) and base placement than previous *X-COM* titles.

The most mesmerizing aspect of the game is the groundbreaking physics model. Nothing is left to chance here; everything in the world is "live."

"We have been working closely with Havok [the physics engine] programmers to put some cool features in the game, such as 'fracturing' of objects at various points, such as the base of a tree or the legs of a table," explains Gollop. "We can also simulate water, cloth, and soft bodies. Injured characters will flinch and collapse like a rag doll when they are hit. Limbs can even be blown off and sent tumbling through the scenery."

What does this mean to the gameplay? Well, if enemies are hiding in a house, you can take out a bearing wall (with a tank, if you like) and the house will collapse in on itself. Knock a simple hole in the same wall, however, and the house remains intact. Every single object in the game has unique properties that smart players can use to their advantage. After checking out some interactions in a very early version of the game, one word comes to mind: astounding.

Freedom Ridge is definitely an ambitious title — no one has attempted tactical, squad-level, turn-based combat on such a grand scale and with such attention to detail. With both technology and gameplay on the developer's side it looks like Mythos may have another legend in the making.

— Tom Ham

■ The tactical planning stage of each operation allows players to move the camera around freely and get a good vantage point of the operation

■ There will be five levels of detail for player models, topping out at 3000 polygons per player. When the camera's close, you can see many polys have been devoted to facial expressions

■ **PLAYSTATION 2**

NHL 2001

■ Publisher: **EA Sports** ■ Developer: **EA Canada**
■ Release Date: **October 2000** ■ Origin: **Canada**

Can EA lead hockey into the next generation, or will it just skate by?

Ever since its glory days on Genesis, EA Sports' *NHL* series has been steadily evolving, with its biggest leap being the transition from 2D to 3D. On PlayStation, that leap mainly translated to blocky characters and reduced frame rates, but on Sony's new box, the seasoned developers of this franchise finally have the power to make the *NHL* experience awaken with the lifelike detail it deserves.

The first and most important difference between the PlayStation 2 game and its PlayStation ancestors is that it will run at 60 frames per second. According to Producer Kevin Wilkinson, "What 60 FPS really does for you is show off any of the flaws that you may have in your animation. But we motion-captured all of the moves at 60 FPS." The pre-alpha version we viewed didn't have the new animations in place yet, and it was running off a network, so it was neither pretty nor smooth. But if we were to use FIFA as a proof of technology demo, the animations will add such a lifelike quality that it will be hard to distinguish it from a live broadcast.

The *NHL 2001* team is meditating on the "life on the ice" mantra. And starting with the open-

■ Controls promise to be more responsive with the ability to turn tighter, go in and out of stops faster, and the possible inclusion of an analog stick shot control

ing sequence, which follows a home team down the tunnel from the locker room to the rink, the game will make use of many -- over 400 -- scripted cinematic scenes to help gamers feel what an actual NHL player feels. These scenes will manifest themselves much like the

■ The icon next to the shooter designates whether he is a power hitter or sniper scorer

OCTOPUS ON ICE — IT'S NOT JUST FOR DINNER ANYMORE

"The Octopus Toss" was started during the first round of the 1952 play-offs at the old Olympia Stadium in Detroit by brothers Jerry and Pete Cusimano. Thinking eight legs might be a good omen for the Detroit Red Wings to clinch eight straight wins (there were only two rounds in the Stanley Cup at that time), Pete threw a boiled octopus on to the ice. Although the referees weren't too excited about it, the home crowd went wild. Detroit went on to win four straight games against Toronto that year and then swept Montreal in the Stanley Cup final. During each Detroit play-off series until 1967, Pete Cusimano brought an octopus to the rink and tossed it on the ice.

■ Special effects include dynamic environmental mapping on helmets and visors and a gradient of that effect applied to goalie pads, gloves, and skates

■ The 60 FPS frame rate of NHL 2001 will really highlight the extensive amount of animation that has been put into the game

A momentum meter has been added to the game, giving you the opportunity to gain momentum by making big plays

broadcast-style "money shots" in *NFL 2K* for Dreamcast, but instead of just looking cool, here they will be contextually appropriate. For instance, you'll see shots of guys jockeying for position as they set up for a face-off, quick shots of players exhaustedly catching their breath when sent to the bench, and animations of riotous celebrations after big goals and real disappointment after big misses.

Another aspect of the "life on the ice" mantra is the mercurial nature of how an NHL team plays when it's either gaining or fighting a game's momentum. To recreate this ebb and flow, a momentum meter has been added to the game, giving you the opportunity to gain momentum by making big plays. When the momentum swings in your favor, the team's attributes are boosted for a couple minutes. Consequently, your opponent will have to deal with your team's lift, making it a bit harder for

him to stage a comeback.

Further bridging the gap from videogame hockey to real NHL play, one of the most impressive features in the game happens during one-timers. A skater receiving the puck twists his body in anticipation of the pass and the goal, adjusting his stance accordingly and shooting the puck while staying balanced. This makes for some really natural-looking movement, and when combined with players who naturally set picks by crossing each other's paths, creates a combination that gives the game a much more realistic feel than past iterations.

In the soda- and snack-filled meeting room where we got our hands on the game, a Dreamcast graced the floor. Remember, this is an EA floor. Wilkinson doesn't try to conceal the fact that Black Box's sequel to *NHL 2K* is the game to beat, and he states confidently that

> ## "There is not one thing that they (*NHL 2K1* for Dreamcast) are going to do better than us."
> —Kevin Wilkinson

■ Agile players will be able to shoot off of one foot when the situation calls for it

EA Sports' *NHL 2001* for PlayStation 2 will blow away Dreamcast hockey: "There is not one thing that they are going to do better than us." This bit of healthy competition isn't surprising, considering that Wilkinson is an ex-Radical employee, as are most of the folks over at Black Box. And while he feels his game will outdo the Dreamcast version in every category, Wilkinson says the biggest advantage is how the PlayStation 2 handles dynamic lighting and shadowing in a way that Dreamcast, in his opinion, simply can't.

Still, the very early code showed a huge gap between what Wilkinson talked about and what we saw. And with the system's launch (and hence this game's ship date) fast approaching, it'll be a feat to assemble all the pieces of the game design puzzle into a smooth, cohesive whole. We're not saying they can't pull it off, especially by October, but it will definitely be a challenge.   — *Jeffrey Adam Young*
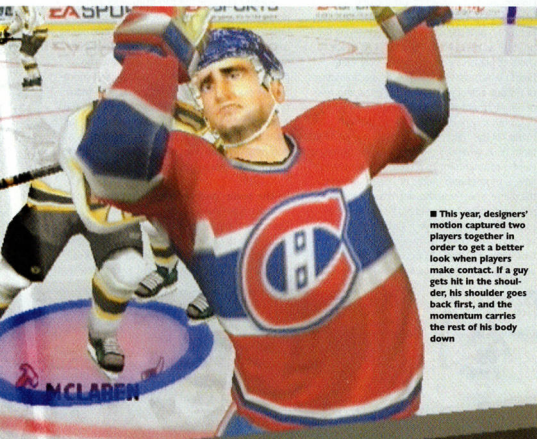
■ This year, designers' motion captured two players together in order to get a better look when players make contact. If a guy gets hit in the shoulder, his shoulder goes back first, and the momentum carries the rest of his body down

■ The player models are much more detailed this year, with a roundness that makes guys look like athletes. Also, for the first time, they're all scaled differently

~ Shenmue ~
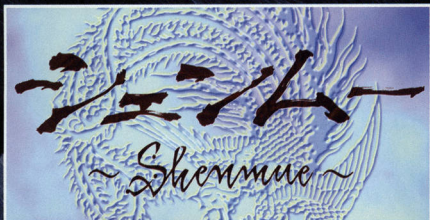
More Cracked Ribs Than A Southern Barbeque

"Gamers assume the role of Ryo Hazuki, born in Yokosuka and raised under the intense martial art training of his father, Iwao. When Ryo comes home to find his father being killed by a man demanding information, players are thrust into the challenge of unraveling the mystery of his father's murder. It's not going to be a rare thing that you'll have to use your chop-socky training to bash your way into disc two." — **DailyRadar.com**

Machine: Dreamcast **Genre:** RPG
Publisher: Sega **# of Players:** 1
Available: Fall, 2000
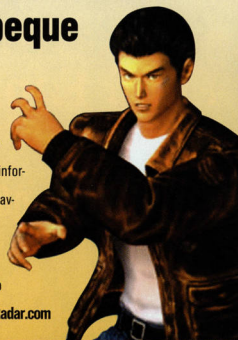
Unmatched 3D polygonal modeling.
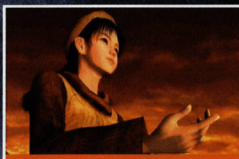
Superior shadow and lighting effects make for realistic gameplay.

Repeated sequences are shown in varying camera angles for variety.

Sega Dreamcast Visual Memory Unit by Sega. Save information from your Dreamcast and play with that data while you are away from your Dreamcast.

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on the
Prima Strategy Guide
with purchase of
SHENMUE

Talking Shrubs and Purple Fairies
(And You Haven't Even Had Your Breakfast Yet.)

THE LEGEND OF **ZELDA** Majora's Mask

"An evil-faced moon dominates the heavens. The clock tower bell echoes across the land. Minutes tick by, day turns to night, and the moon grows larger in the heavens. Trapped in a world doomed to destruction, players control Link in a tense, fast-paced race against time. More than a dozen magical masks bestow new powers upon Link, transform him into new shapes and sizes, and hold the key to the mystery of **Majora's Mask**."

— DailyRadar.com

Daily **RADAR**

Machine: N64	**Publisher:** Nintendo
Genre: RPG	**# of Players:** 1
Release date: November, 2000	

Link transforms into new characters by wearing the different masks.

Link will explore all-new worlds full of danger and wonder, making new friends and battling new enemies.

Link gains fantastic swimming abilities, and plays a mean aquatic guitar.

SAVE 20% on the **Nintendo Strategy Guide** with purchase of **Legend Of Zelda: Majora's Mask**
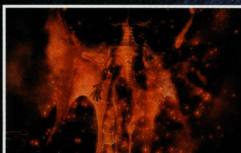
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Double your memory and boost graphic quality with the Mad Catz High-Rez Pack for N64 Systems.

gamestop!com   FuncoLand
Gamestop   Babbage's   software etc

■ The enemy and character designs show a lot of detail, and we expect no less than from ex-*Virtua Fighter* and *Fighting Vipers* team members

■ The single level on view at press time caught our attention: a brightly lit beat-'em-up! No way!

SLASHOUT

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Soft4** ■ Release Date: **Q3 2000** ■ Origin: **Japan**

Maybe we should call it *Final Vipers*?

In 1998 a decent little beat-'em-up called *Spikeout*, running on Sega's Model 3 board and developed by AM2, hit Japanese arcades. And though it never seems to have made the leap to the U.S., it did a respectable enough business to warrant a sequel, *Slashout*.

Slashout leaves its predecessor's gritty urban gang warfare behind, opting for a fantasy-based world of magic and mysticism. There are four characters to choose from (Axel, Kamui, Luna, and Slash), and, as in the original, up to four players can take part at once via four linked cabinets — which was a unique feature at the time. In fact, the cost of multiple cabinets is one reason *Spikeout* never made it to the U.S.

The control is simple, using a joystick and three buttons for attack, jump, and magic (plus a fourth for selecting the view). Gameplay follows the typical *Final Fight* style beat-'em-up structure, but there are branches, "secret" paths, and an environment that reacts differently according to your actions, so there's a bit more replay value than usual for this style of game. Naturally there are plenty of power-ups available to increase a character's spell and combat abilities, plus there's a system in place to reward a player with gems for defeating enemies — the more impressive the moves and combos you use, the more gems the enemy gives up.

Since the game runs on Sega's current Naomi board, the graphics look terrific. The final game will include eight different stages and 40 different enemies, so expect plenty of variety and flashy special effects.

The question here is not only will this sequel make it to the U.S. where the original did not, but can we possibly expect a Dreamcast version? Currently, Sega has no comment, but the ease of porting from Naomi to Dreamcast would make it a no-brainer. We'll keep you posted. — *Jeff Lundrigan/Christophe Kagotani*

■ *Slashout* is the sequel to a game you've probably never heard of, but it looks great, and might — might — make it to Dreamcast

WHO THE HECK IS SOFT4?

In case you've never heard of developer Soft4, it's made up mostly of ex-AM2 designers who split off to work on their own. This included a number of *Virtua Fighter* and *Fighting Vipers* team members, as well as nearly the entire original *Spikeout* team. In fact, *Slashout* producer Toshihiro Nagoshi (*Daytona USA*) and director Itoh Yatuka (the Saturn version of *Fighting Vipers*) both had the exact same job descriptions working on the original *Spikeout* at AM2.

THE FIRST ONLINE STRATEGY GAME AVAILABLE FOR SEGA DREAMCAST™ IS IN STORES NOW!

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NOW IN 3D

ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER

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Explore uncharted territory and stake your claim!

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GATHERING of DEVELOPERS

T2 — Take-Two Interactive

■ PC

AMERICAN MCGEE'S ALICE

■ The White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat, and Alice herself are all here. Or, at least, weird, "Mirror, Mirror"-style versions of them are. This unique, twisted character design bodes well for the game

Rogue Entertainment's warped interpreta-tion of Lewis Carroll's warped children's stories first appeared in the July issue of **Next Generation**. Since then, the game just keeps looking better and better. With creative logic puzzles, breathtaking levels designed with a definite artistic flair, and nightmarishly twisted enemies, this game should hit big when it arrives this fall. Note to EA: this is a platform game at heart, so we know you plan on porting it to at least one console. When you decide, just let us know which one.

→Milestones

FINAL FANTASY IX

サラマンダー
「足手まといは捨てる、
生き残るための鉄則だろ?」

スタイナー
「ひ、姫さまの事を
思えばこそである!
貴様のためではない!!」

■ This newest *Final Fantasy* game is reportedly more difficult than recent entries in the series, and features an all new cast of heroes, including Zidane, Vivi, Garnet, and Steiner (left)

→ Is there a more eagerly anticipated PlayStation title than Square's next magnum opus? Just out in Japan, this title eschews the series' recent steampunk style in favor of a more traditional fantasy setting. The characters are big-headed this time, bordering on super-deformed, and they're much more whimsical. So far, though, there's no official word as to when we can expect this one to make it over the pond.

MEDAL OF HONOR UNDERGROUND

→ A prequel to last year's fantastic, intelligent WWII-era first-person action/shooter from EA and DreamWorks Interactive, this title explores the history of Manon, the female French resistance fighter introduced in the first game. Out sometime this fall, the game will feature seven missions and 24 levels, and it will require the same mix of stealth, brains, and sheer firepower in order to guide Manon to her ultimate position as a veteran freedom fighter.

■ Enemies are even smarter than in the first game, and they now utitlize vehicles like tanks and motorcycles

CRASH BASH

→ It seems all the mascots are getting party games these days, and Crash is no exception. Developed by Eurocom, this title finds Crash and seven of his cohorts competing in 28 multiplayer party games. More devoted to arcade-style action than most titles in this genre, *Crash Bash* should be available sometime in November.

Some of the events resemble classic arcade games, like this *Q*Bert*-type event (right)

PLAYSTATION

FEAR EFFECT: RETRO HELIX

■ Hana is back, lending her considerable assets

■ In addition to a new character and new locations, there are some new weapons, including a silenced pistol and a flame thrower

→ Developer Kronos has retained the unique art style, tense action, and clever plotlines that made the original *Fear Effect* great. As we mentioned in our first preview of this game in our June issue, the team has added a fourth controllable character, Rain, who can be seen in these screenshots. The story is again based in Eastern mysticism, this time taking the team through eight locations, ranging from Hell's Kitchen to Penglai Shan, the Taoist home of the gods. This prequel to one of the best games of 2000 (thus far) is due sometime this fall.

PLAYSTATION

PARASITE EVE 2

HP 62 MP 26

→ Square's blessed line of RPGs (which includes *Vagrant Story* and *Chrono Cross*) marches on with this title, a survival horror "cinematic RPG" that takes place some three years after the original game. The sequel boasts much higher poly character models, as well as detailed backgrounds that animate at 60 frames per second. Aya can also run from battle now, and Square has refined the battle system, which many found unwieldy.

■ Somehow, lovely FMV's are usually followed by the attack of a giant monster. Go figure

湾岸 MIDNIGHT CLUB
STREET RACING

PlayStation 2

Sega GT

BENNY MOTO PRO RACER TIP:

CUSTOMIZE

GO KICKY FAST OKAY!

1 Famous pro speed racer Benny Moto says in life and in racing we must know how to SLOW DOWN. Benny uses carbon fiber rotors and 4 piston calipers because he says the curb tastes like defeat.

2 Are you hard core? Have this beefy spring please. It's good for you. Without a trick suspension the hairball track will shake your head up and down like one of those stupid dogs in the back window.

3 A big, 19 inch, 3 piece magnesium wheel is your fun friend in the quest for a sweeter contact patch. It's hot too.

DIAGRAM (M)

DRIVER 1
DRIVER 2
DRIVER 3
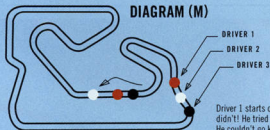
Driver 1 starts off in the lead. But did he listen to Benny? He didn't! He tried to save money on brakes. He's cheap. He's stupid. He couldn't go kicky fast through the turn. Now Driver 2 passed his ass. Wow! And look at Driver 3! He's making power. How to be the leader? Customize and drive like a freak with fiery pants.

BENNY MOTO Sega GT RACING TEAM

YOU FOLLOW MY ADVICE.
YOU CUSTOMIZE. YOU BEAT
EVERYBODY. **POW!**

Tear it up in this total competition speed trip where you can build original machines from scratch or tweak over 130 GT sports cars that reproduce exact handling and performance specs. Then use your VMU to trade machines, parts and laptimes on the net. Assuming you got anything worth trading, Grandma.

⑥ The shock absorber is often overlooked. Not here. In Benny's shop everyone concentrates on the shock. A good shock where it really counts will bring forth nimbler handling and quicker transitions.

⑤ Oh my God! Look at that engine! Yes, that's a kicky big damn motor. Benny likes the superhuge V12 for stump-pulling power. But only for the big bad bomber cars. Otherwise enjoy a V-8.
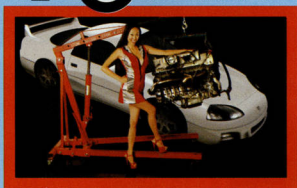
④ Oh! What a loud muffler! Loud coolie mufflers intimidate chump-ass rivals. Get a big pipe for greater flow at high rpm levels.

FACTORY
CHASSIS
ENGINE LAYOUT   FRONT ENGINE
FRONT   Engine is placed at the
MID   front of the chassis. This
REAR   design benefits from the
                 weight of the engine
                 directly over the wheels
                 that steer. But at high
                 speeds traction may
                 suffer due to the car's
                 weight shifting to the
                 rear.
EXIT   COST $3,000
championship / carrozzeria / factory
MY CAR RZ TURBO   MONEY 8,847,000

Dreamcast

IT'S THINKING

Last fall, Midway's breakout boxing franchise gave the Dreamcast launch line-up some extra punch. A year later, the sequel is almost ready, not just for Dreamcast, but for PlayStation 2 as well. **Next Generation** visited Midway's development team to find out exactly which version will become champion in...

■ **PLAYSTATION 2, DREAMCAST**

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2

■ Publisher: **Midway** ■ Developer: **Midway**
■ Release Date: **PS2 - October 29, DC - Fall** ■ Origin: **US**

PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast are both ready to rumble. So which version is better? You're about to find out

In the war between Dreamcast and PlayStation 2, the hoopla and positioning go right out the window when the same game is simultaneously released across both platforms. The proof is in the playing, and between the two next generation versions of Midway's latest boxing game, only one can be the best. So which is the better *Rumble*?

"There's more eye candy on PlayStation 2," says Lead Artist Emmanuel Valdez, "but as far as gameplay, it will be solid on both platforms."

A well-spun answer if ever one existed. Such comments are signs of the highly political nature of videogame development in a transitional market, where third-party publishers do their best not to upset either the Sony or the Sega camp. Midway has excelled at this, keeping a high level of continuity between both the Dreamcast and PlayStation 2 versions of the game. In fact, according to one programmer on the team, the games share as much as 75% of the same code.

The Dreamcast and PlayStation 2 games will feature the same roster of 24 boxers, comprising 10 returning characters and 14 new ones. Two celebrity characters, Michael Jackson and Shaq, join this year's

bizarre line-up that also includes Robox, a robot boxer that's an obvious spoof of the Ray-Leonard-endorsed Slam Man punching bag and Wild "Stubby" Cooke, a boxing cowboy who bears a bit of a likeness to *Toy Story*'s Woody.

Other characters entering the ring for the first time are relatives of some of the first game's boxers. There's Johnny Blood, brother of Jimmy Blood, Mama Tua, the monstrously large mother of Salua Tua, and Afro Thunder's just-as-flashy cousin, J.C. Thunder.

Ready to Rumble Boxing: Round 2 takes place three years after the first game, explains Valdez, who spearheads the character design for the team. "In that span of time," he says, "Afro became champion and decided to leave the sport to pursue a career in movies as an action hero. In the meantime, J.C. Thunder entered the ring and tried to fill that void created by Afro. So Afro returns to the ring to battle his cousin, who he feels is stealing his limelight. So there's a rivalry there."

In fact, arch rivalries have been created among all of the 24 boxers. These bouts, according to Valdez, will be specially billed as "bad blood match-ups."

The number of new characters is impressive
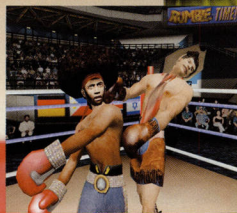
■ Here it is on PS2. Check out the new boxers, "Stubby" the cowboy (right) and Joey T Vs. Robox (far right)
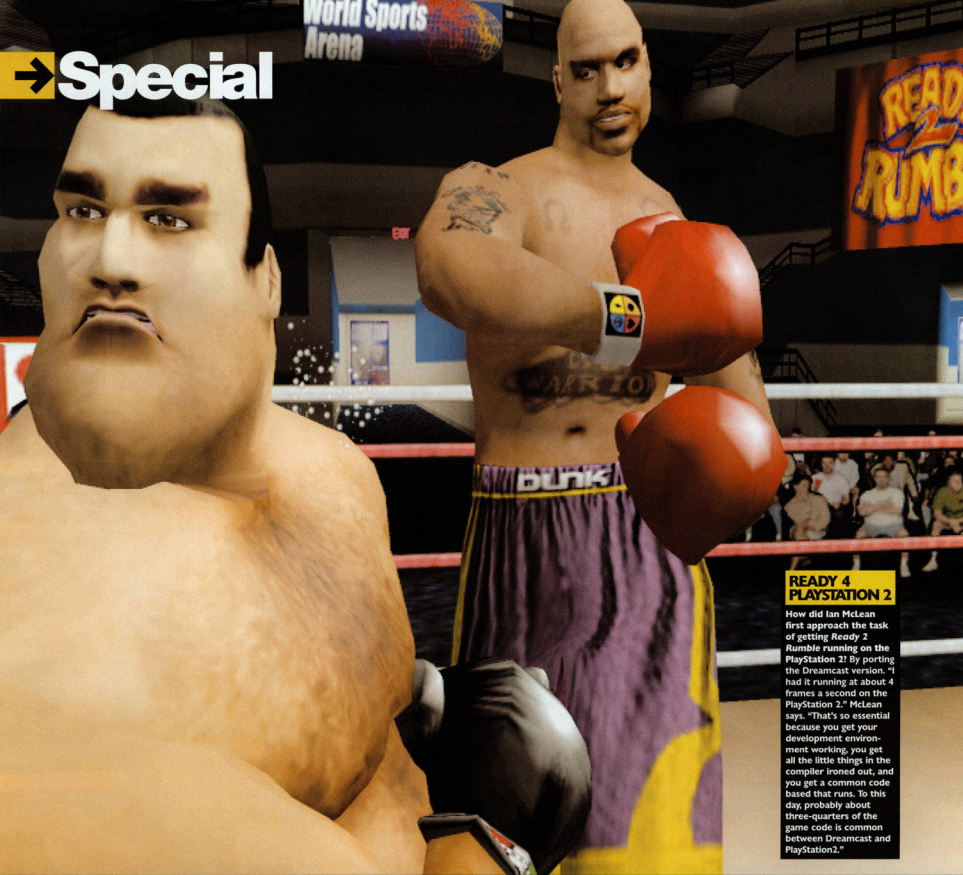
■ After the disasterous *Shaq-Fu*, it's surprising that Shaq found his way into another fighting game. Here he gives newcomer Joey T. (above) a right hook to think about

"We have different character models for the Dreamcast, because it can't handle the same polygon count as PlayStation 2"
— Senior Programmer Ian McLean

considering the team has had barely a year to work on *Round 2* after the release of the original Dreamcast version. To be ready for an almost simultaneous release for both Dreamcast and PlayStation 2, Midway made a conscientious effort to share as much code and assets where it made sense. Still, the team admits each version needs to emphasize its native platform strengths.

"We have different character models for the Dreamcast," says Senior Programmer Ian McLean, "because it can't handle the same polygon count as PlayStation 2. We can still use the same animation, motion capture, and character move lists. We can still use the same game code for AI."

And how tough was it to get the PS2 engine up and running?

"Getting started was easy," McLean says. "Finishing was hard. In fact, I went through five iterations of the engine. It's easy to get something up on the screen and get two million polygons per second out of it. But then evolving that architecture, you hit these dead ends. You have to backtrack and totally redesign."

McLean began developing on the hardware last October, and he admits that even the engine that was shown at E3 has been radically redesigned since the May tradeshow. In its final revision, he says he's added motion blur, full-screen anti-aliasing,

and better hardware supported lighting for lens flare and effects like "the litle sparkle off of Afro Thunder's tooth." McLean is also working on self-shadowing characters, but that effect is still in development and may not make it into the final game.

"There's a lot of post-processing effects you can do on PS2 you can't on Dreamcast," he says. "Dreamcast has built-in support for full-screen anti-aliasing. It doesn't oversample rendering. The PlayStation 2 can do this too, but you have to do it yourself. I've actually got full control over exactly how I want my anti-aliasing to work, exactly how that integrates with what I'm doing with motion

blur, what composition buffer effects I can do. So the PlayStation 2 gives you more flexibility along those lines, but you've got to build it yourself, which is a blessing and a curse."

While both versions of the game will feature improved graphics, the question is

■ Johnny Blood's weird mask features a new flowing cloth effect (above, right)

■ Once again, the glowing gloves indicate an incoming ass-whooping, and the brutal damage is beautifully mapped to the boxers faces in these Dreamcast screens

There are now three levels of "Rumble"... at the highest "Rumble" level, one hit instantly knocks down your opponent

this: will they play any better? The team has taken criticisms to heart that the fighting in R2R wasn't as deep as it could have been.

"The gameplay issues we didn't get to last time are now in," says Valdez. "A lot more moves, more complexity and depth. We still want to keep it simple. I think one of the draws of the game is that anybody can play it."

Each character's animations were completely revisited for Round 2, and as the team already had an engine up and running, they've been able to build in more time for fine tuning, tweaking gameplay, and creating

■ All the characters will feature a deeper roster of special moves. We wonder what Lulu's gonna do

a deeper list of character specific moves.

Once again, players who land a solid punch will be rewarded with rumble letters, and upon spelling the word "Rumble" they can activate a power-up that should enable them to severely damage or knock out their opponent. In this sequel, there are now three levels of "Rumble" and each character will have a unique rumble combo for each level. At the highest "Rumble" level, one hit instantly knocks down your opponent.

Aside from improved fighting, the game now features Tournament and Team Battle modes, as well as an improved Championship mode.

"We totally redid Championship mode," explains Lead Programmer Dave Wagner. "We hacked to get it in last time. This year there's more FMVs, and it's more of a time-based than a money-based thing."

The Championship mode still enables you to train a stable of boxers, and it features all new training games. The team is also creating a gym manager who will help you in Training mode. How about a create-your-own boxer feature? This was something the team felt they couldn't do

READY 4 WHAT'S NEXT?

According to Midway, when the team finishes with *Round 2*, it will split into two groups. One team will continue to work on *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*, (*Round 3*, we expect). And the other will begin on what Midway calls "another *Ready 2 Rumble* franchise," which will feature Tank Thrasher and Salua Tua, two of the beefier boxers the team has omitted from *Round 2* because they "are saving them for another game." So is this next franchise the much-rumored *Ready 2 Rumble Wrestling*? That question is met only with knowing smiles from the team, until someone jokingly blurts out "*Ready 2 Rumble Golf*."

■ These Dreamcast shots (above and below) feature the returning boxers, complete with new outfits and (top right) a new camera angle

with a one-year production cycle. "We're saving that," says Valdez, and we can't help but think they're saving it for next year's version that will likely appear on Xbox.

This year, the team has worked hard to bring more personality to each of the characters, including more taunts, victory speeches, and theme music for each fighter. Orpheus Soundstation (who incidentally provides the voice and likeness of Afro Thunder) has been composing interactive music for the game. According to Orpheus, when someone goes into Rumble mode,

the music will dynamically increase in tempo, heightening the drama.

Certainly the team has made some advances in technology and design, but when **Next Generation** visited Midway, many of the discussed features were only just being implemented, and quite a few boxers had not yet been put into both versions of the game. With only a one-year production cycle, there's no way the 15-member team, responsible for both versions, could produce anything more than

an evolutionary product, as opposed to a revolutionary one.

After a long discussion with the team, we finally sat down with both versions of the game. The Dreamcast felt a bit more polished, perhaps owing to the extra year's experience the team has with that controller. But the PlayStation 2 version played just as well, and with a few special effects in, it appeared to have better (though not dramatically so) lighting.

Will the game support the Dreamcast online network?

"No." Say the folks at Midway. This seems to conflict with earlier statements about maximizing the strength of each console. But not supporting the launch of Dreamcast's online network is more likely to hurt Sega than Midway. For every anticipated third-party game that ships without Internet play, Sega's network takes a step backward in the eyes of cautious consumers.

To this end, the winner of the *Ready 2 Rumble* battle between Sega and Sony goes to Sony, not because of what *Round 2* offers on PlayStation 2 but because of what it *doesn't* offer on Dreamcast. Still, in it's early playable stages *Round 2* is already as enjoyable as it was the first time around. With a few months to go before shipping, it's crucial for Midway to hit the bullseye with all the planned enhancements. If it succeeds, the company will ship a worthy sequel, if not, *Round 2* will play more like a mission pack of new boxers. Given the odds, it's likely this veteran team will go the distance.
— Tom Russo

DREAMCAST VS PLAYSTATION 2

When it comes to evaluating two versions of the same game, nothing beats a side-by-side comparison of screenshots. Can you tell the difference? The character models in both versions are nearly indistinguishable, but the PlayStation 2 version (right) has enhanced lighting and some special visual effects the Dreamcast doesn't. You'll also notice the stadium crowd has yet to be implemented on Dreamcast, but it will be similar to the one seen in the PlayStation 2 version — rows of 2D, sprite-based, digitized video characters with a limited set of animations. Both versions also feature full-scene anti-aliasing.

■ Dreamcast

PlayStation 2

StarLancer™

Survival Horror Has Entered A New Realm...
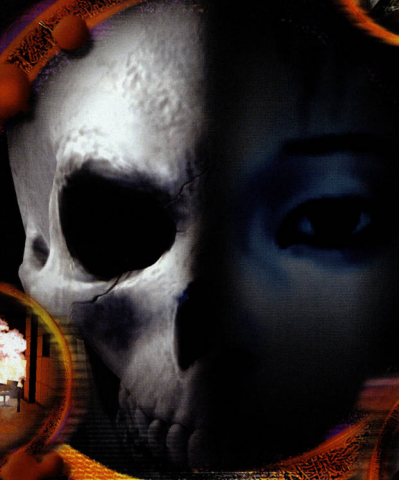
the Ring
TERROR'S REALM

Sega Dreamcast

Asmik Ace Entertainment Inc.

INFOGRAMES

Dreamcast:
The First Anniversary

A successful launch one year ago in the U.S. (September 9, 1999) has proven once more that content is king. On the following pages we give you quick reviews of every available title released in the U.S. and a glimpse into every known title in development. And if you still haven't bought into Dreamcast, we've laid out the entire library of past and future titles for you so now you can decide for yourself.

Dreamcast:
Every Game Released Reviewed

One thing you can say about Dreamcast is this: no other console ever released has boasted as large and diverse a library after just one year. Take a look over every game released for the system in the U.S., how they measure up, and watch as our peerless reviewers sort the must-haves from the must-avoids

4 Wheel Thunder
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Kalisto
■ This so-so rally racer was retrofitted to be part of Midway's *Thunder* series, which killed any game balance it may have had. Bad control, passable graphics, little fun.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 07/00)

AeroWings
Publisher: Crave
Developer: CRI
■ Boasting gorgeous environments, excellent flight physics, and precise control, this flight sim accounts itself well, but it's also unforgivably realistic and features only stunt flying, no combat. Not for everyone, perhaps.
Rating: ★★★★☆

AirForce Delta
Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
■ If there's one thing a combat flight sim should never feel, it's sluggish. Unfortunately, that's the least of this title's sins — it also looks pretty bland. Pick up a bargain copy of PlayStation's *Ace Combat* instead.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Armada
Publisher: Metro3D
Developer: Metro3D
■ An outer space shooter with vague RPG elements (which, in the end, hardly matter), *Armada* is pretty fun as a multiplayer party game — less so as a single-player experience.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 02/00)

Blue Stinger
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Climax
■ This third-person action/adventure isn't bad at all, but it isn't all that impressive either — solid graphics, flashy explosions, and a decent playing time can't offset the creaky game mechanics.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 11/99)

Carrier
Publisher: Jaleco
Developer: Jaleco
■ This *Resident Evil* clone doesn't push its genre anywhere, and at 12 to 15 hours, it doesn't last long either. Still, the graphics are good, and overall this makes an enjoyable time waster.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 04/00)

Dead or Alive 2
Publisher: Tecmo
Developer: Tecmo
■ An easy tie for the best fighting game for the system, this offers sumptuous graphics, snappy control, impressive moves, and the most self-consciously sexy lineup of fighters ever designed. Any questions?
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 04/00)

Centipede
Publisher: Hasbro
Developer: Leaping Lizard
■ A 3D update of the classic shooter, *Centipede* adds a 360° playfield, power-ups, and few other bells and whistles, but it hardly improves on the original.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 02/00)

Chef's Luv Shack
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim
■ A strange combination of trivia questions, arcade mini-games, *South Park* humor, and long load times, this game tries to please everyone and ends up pleasing no one.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 02/00)

Chu Chu Rocket
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega/Sonic Team
■ The first Dreamcast title to offer online multiplayer, this action/puzzle game is easy to learn, and painfully addictive as you herd little vibrating mice away from hungry cats.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 05/00)

Crazy Taxi
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ A wildly fun arcade port in which you taxi passengers around an impressively huge city — through parks, across rooftops, and anywhere else you can think of.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 04/00)

Deep Fighter
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Criterion
■ The main flaw in this undersea combat sim is that it's terminally boring — slow paced and lethargic, with enemies that have no AI to speak of. In fact, there's nothing here to raise even a ripple of interest.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 08/00)

Dynamite Cop 2
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ While the beat-'em-up mechanics are solid and enjoyable, this is an almost straight port of one of the last Model 2 arcade games, and the blocky characters and plain textures show it.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 09/99)

ECW: Hardcore Revolution
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim
■ A totally botched wrestling game that re-uses the already awful *WWF Warzone* engine to even worse effect. Ugly and pathetically bad, it squanders its ECW license.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆ (NG 05/00)

EGG: Elemental Gimmick Gear
Publisher: Vatical
Developer: Hudson Soft
■ An action-RPG with woefully inadequate graphics, sloppy action, and a silly storyline, this is simply (and please, we can't help ourselves) one bad egg.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

Power Stone
Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
■ The flashiest title in Dreamcast's launch lineup thumbed its nose at traditional one-on-one fighting games — yeah, it's a button-masher, but with 100% interactive environments, gloriously over-the-top special effects, and dead-on control, you can't put it down.
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 09/99)

Evolution
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Sting

■ The first RPG for Dreamcast won't win any awards for originality, but its mild lack of substance is easily made up for in style, with undeniably cute characters and a fun storyline.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 01/00)

Evolution 2
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Sting

■ A cuter, even more appealing sequel hampered only slightly by its by-the-numbers RPG mechanics. However, the even better story and characters make it a thoroughly enjoyable ride.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 07/00)

Expendable
Publisher: Rage
Developer: Rage

■ Perhaps the most aptly title game yet for Dreamcast, this vaguely 3D, isometric "shooter" features sluggish control, ugly graphics, and pointless lighting effects. It's terrible.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆ (NG 09/99)

F1 World Grand Prix
Publisher: Video System
Developer: Video System

■ While it is the most realistic racing game for the system, it's unlikely to be to everyone's taste. If, though, you crave a demanding Formula One, this one's for you.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Fighting Force 2
Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Core

■ Slow, dark, and ultimately plodding rather than exciting, this 3D beat-em-up has its moments — and is arguably better than the original — but can safely be given a pass.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Flag to Flag
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega

■ Bearing the official CART racing license, all 19 tracks and 27 drivers from 1998, and a demanding physics model, this is the most realistic racing sim for Dreamcast. It's also kinda dull.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 10/99)

Fur Fighters
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Bizarre Creations

■ A third-person shooter/platform game featuring several fuzzy animals, the snappy control and interesting level designs belie the cuddly surface. Worth a look.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 08/00)

Gauntlet Legends
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway

■ As 3D, isometric action games go, this one's pretty enjoyable, if a bit mind numbing. It combines elements from a couple of different Gauntlet titles, yet remains nearly arcade perfect.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 08/00)

Grand Theft Auto 2
Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: DMA Design

■ Although it improves somewhat on the crime spree premise of the original, GTA 2 mostly just shows why there isn't much room for a 2D, top-down action game these days.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 08/00)

Gundam: Side Story 0079
Publisher: Bandai
Developer: Bandai

■ A mech combat sim (sort of) set in the Gundam universe, the control isn't bad but the pace is slow and mission goals are sometimes unclear. Not terrible, but far from great.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

House of the Dead 2
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega

■ As shooting games go this is pretty entertaining, even if it doesn't last very long. If you do pick it up though, make sure you pick up a light gun to go with it. Otherwise, it's no fun at all.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 09/00)

Hydro Thunder
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Eurocom

■ The home version of this "SF Rush on water" is just about arcade perfect — which means it's also not terribly deep, but while it lasts, it's a blast.
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 10/99)

Incoming
Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Rage

■ It's not the most strategically challenging 3D shooter ever made — the goal is basically run around and destroy everything — but it offers a variety of combat vehicles and some nice environments. Mostly harmless.
Rating: ★★★☆☆

Industrial Spy: Operation Espionage
Publisher: UFO Interactive
Developer: Humax

■ This surprisingly compelling 3D strategy game puts you in charge of a cadre of high-tech agents. A unique effort only mildly let down by some balance and interface problems.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 05/00)

Jojo's Bizarre Adventure
Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom

■ This also includes the original Jojo's Venture, but the two are almost identical. A 2D fighting game with an adventure mode and a lot of mini games, it's also confusing and dull.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

King of Fighters Dream Match '99
Publisher: SNK
Developer: SNK

■ Despite the impressive roster of 38 characters, this isn't old-school 2D fighting, it's just plain old. Unless you're a die hard NeoGeo fan, it's not even worth a look.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 11/99)

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Crystal Dynamics

■ A textbook lesson in how to handle a Dreamcast port, Kain's already solid third-person action is enhanced by completely upgraded graphics. Fun, challenging, and gorgeous.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 05/00)

Maken X
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Atlus

■ A FPS with a creative premise — "brain jacking" enemies and taking control of their bodies and skills — is done in by bland level designs and uninspired gameplay.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 07/00)

Marvel vs. Capcom
Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom

■ Not quite the nigh-flawless presentation the sequel turned out to be — the controls desperately needed some tweaking — this is still a great 2D brawler, and one to savor.
Rating: ★★★☆☆

Resident Evil: Code Veronica
Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco

■ A strong contender for the best game yet on the system, this pushes the marquee horror adventure series to its ultimate: breathtaking graphics, tense atmosphere, a fantastic story and, for once, the voice acting is even pretty good. Simply amazing.
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 05/00)

Marvel vs. Capcom 2

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom

■ A ridiculous number of characters, ludicrous numbers of moves, and an even friendlier control scheme make this the best 2D fighting game ever to hit a home console, period.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 07/00)

MDK2
Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Bioware

■ Gorgeous graphics and interesting, varied gameplay make this 3D actioner a pure joy to play — assuming you can handle the insane level of difficulty.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 06/00)

Monaco GP
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft

■ Although this is a fairly realistic racing sim, the perfectly horrible pre-race interface makes it almost impossible to find that out. The overall blandness of the design doesn't help either.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 11/99)

Mortal Kombat Gold
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Eurocom

■ As long as nothing moves, boy, does this 3D fighter look really good. Pick up the controller and unpause the game though ... ugh. Witness the last gasp of a series that should have been "finished" years ago.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 10/99)

NBA Showtime
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway

■ Taking the NBA Jam idea for one last spin proves to be one too many. Sure, the pace is pretty fast and the control is simple, but so are the graphics, and it lacks any interesting extras.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

NFL Blitz 2000
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway

■ Although nearly arcade perfect, this NBA Jam of football loses something on console. The controls don't translate well, and the added single-player extras don't amount to much.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 11/99)

Nightmare Creatures II
Publisher: Konami
Developer: Kalisto

■ An effectively creepy atmosphere and twisted story can't save this mind-numbing third-person beat-em-up. The fights are all button mashing, and the puzzles are as brain-dead as its main character.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 07/00)

Pen Pen TriIceLon
Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: General Ent. Co.

■ Race some "wacky" characters around on ice. That's about it. It's neither especially exciting nor particularly

boring and makes a so-so multiplayer game. Yawn ... what were we saying?
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 01/99)

Plasma Sword
Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
■ The sequel to *Star Gladiator*, *Plasma Sword* offers 22 fighters, but this arcade port with no extras still manages to be about the blandest 3D fighting game in years.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Psychic Force 2012
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Taito
■ This zero-production-value brawler would have been hopeless in any case, but aping the awful mid-air fighting of the *Dragon Ball Z* series made it a crime against humanity. Avoid.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆ (NG 01/99)

Quarterback Club 2000
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim
■ We've never heard of a football title with a "catch" button before, and *QBC 2000* shows why: it's practically unplayable. Even if you ignore that game-killing gaffe, it's *still* unplayable.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Rayman 2
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
■ Possibly the best-looking 3D platformer ever made, smooth control, a near-perfect sense of pace and balance, and gentle humor make this a game with something for everyone.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 05/00)

Sega GT
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ Easily the best racing game for the system, this even challenges *Gran Turismo* as the best console racer ever. Glossy cars, tons of options, and dead-on control make this a must-have.
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 05/00)

Samba de Amigo
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ The latest in rhythm/action gameplay comes in the form of shaking two maracas to the beat of the music. Anyone can learn, only the best will master it, and everyone will love it. The ultimate party game.
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 08/00)

Ready 2 Rumble
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
■ The most enjoyable arcade-style boxing game since *Punch-Out!*, this combination of funky character designs and rock-'em-sock-'em action is guaranteed to liven up any party.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 11/99)

Re-Volt
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim Studios London
■ A surprisingly peppy little racing game featuring radio-controlled toy cars, *Re-Volt* offers an interesting collection of courses and a large, well-balanced selection of tiny vehicles.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 03/00)

Rippin' Riders
Publisher: Sega
Developer: UEP Systems
■ The first snowboarding game for Dreamcast is basically a more graphically impressive duplicate of UEP's *Cool Boarders* for PlayStation.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 01/00)

Roadsters
Publisher: Titus
Developer: Player 1
■ Although pretty, this racing game's ultimately done in by a lame physics model and the unpredictable nature of hazards on the tracks. The bullying opponent AI makes it even worse.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 07/00)

Sega Bass Fishing
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ The most hideously compulsive game for the system is a fishing title? Well, yes. Anyone can pick it up, but once you're lured in it's just about impossible to put down. Be sure you buy the fishing controller too.
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 09/99)

Sega Rally 2
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega/AM2
■ Some racing games aren't exactly intended to be fun. *Sega Rally 2* is for those who demand the ultimate challenge, then masochistically go about satisfying a need they barely understand. It's not a game, it's a mountain.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 01/00)

Sega Sports NBA 2K
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
■ Easily the best looking basketball game ever, it's also one of the best all around, blending an approachable arcade feel with a wealth of sim options. It's just a glitch shy of perfect.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 01/00)

Sega Sports NFL 2K
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
■ Hands down the best-looking football game yet, only a few minor glitches (like a poorly conceived running game) keep this from five stars. A Dreamcast must-have.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 10/99)

Sega Sports NHL 2K
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Black Box
■ Dreamcast's fledgling pro hockey game isn't bad. It plays well but was clearly rushed out the door and is simply missing too many features. Just wait'll this year.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 04/00)

Seventh Cross Evolution
Publisher: NEC
Developer: UFO Interactive
■ This odd, action/strategy title lets you harvest DNA and mutate an evolving creature in all kinds of strange ways, but the lethargic pace and eye-gouging bad graphics just spell "stay away."
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Shadowman
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Iguana UK
■ While the N64 version was awful, this 3D action game featuring a Voodoo-empowered hero is an improvement on Dreamcast, with much better graphics and tighter control. It still doesn't quite live up to its original promise, but it's definitely a whole lot better than it was.
Rating: ★★★☆☆

Slave Zero
Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Accolade
■ The controls are too complex, and the mech you pilot lumbers along with a strange rhythm, but this third-person action game is fun and addictive if you stick with it.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 01/00)

Space Channel 5
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ We can't imagine anything more unflappably hip than this '60s-retro, *PaRappa*-style, rhythm/action game. Follow the curvaceous Ulala while she dances her way through an alien infested space station.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 08/00)

Speed Devils
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
■ One of the better racers in Dreamcast's early days, this offered fine graphics and long, rally-style tracks with obstacles that changed each lap. More than worth a look.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 01/00)

Sonic Adventure
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ Hampered only slightly by moments of mild slowdown, Sonic's first real game in years is ultimately still a treat — fast, furious 3D action and a metric ton of cool mini-games.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 10/99)

Soul Fighter
Publisher: Red Orb
Developer: Toka
■ A sadly uninspired beat-'em-up that also suffers from the worst, most wildly spiraling and out-of-control camera we've ever seen. It's nausea-inducing, even if you don't get dizzy.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Star Wars Episode One: Racer
Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: LucasArts
■ Sadly, this isn't any better on Dreamcast than any other system. In fact, it's practically identical: same models, same textures, same vaguely passable action.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Criterion
■ Don't even waste your time with this cross-country motorcycle racing title. The physics engine is rudimentary, the control is static, and the paltry selection of tracks are all dull, dull, dull.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆ (NG 12/99)

Sword of the Berserk: Gut's Rage
Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Yukes
■ Some of the best (and bloodiest) graphics to yet hit the system nearly make up for standard beat-'em-up gameplay and a needlessly convoluted story. However, if you love long cut scenes, you'll love this game.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 06/00)

Tech Romancer
Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
■ Yet another Capcom brawler, this time featuring massive, anime-style mechs. As the typically goofy, over-the-top Japanese atmosphere perks it up considerably.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 06/00)

Tee Off Golf
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Bottom Up
■ Just ignore the big-headed characters and cutesy trappings. Take our word for it, this is actually a highly playable, if simple golf game and would doubtless please any fan of the "sport."
Rating: ★★★★☆

Test Drive 6
Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Accolade
■ Although it offers dozens of real cars and some mildly attractive European locations, Test Drive 6 is too aracdy for sim fans and too long and meandering for arcade racers.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Time Stalkers
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Climax
■ This pretty RPG is ultimately done in by its simplistic, randomly generated dungeons, generic storyline, and unengaging characters. Not even its "metoo" monster breeding mini-games inject any interest.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 06/00)

TNN Motorsports Hardcore Heat
Publisher: ASC
Developer: CSK
■ This lacks the one thing every racing game needs: a sense of speed. Despite a decent frame rate, this off-road racer crawls at a snail's pace, with very little to distinguish it otherwise.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 12/99)

Tokyo Extreme Racer
Publisher: Crave
Developer: Genki
■ While this hinges on a different kind of racing dynamic — street racing on the highway rather than a "sanctioned" track — the physics model is only adequate, and the one track isn't enough.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 09/00)

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six

Publisher: Majesco
Developer: Pipe Dream
■ One of the best first-person shooters/strategy games ever made arrives on Dreamcast in a seamless (though not multiplayer) port. Leading an anti-terrorist squad was never this fun — or realistic.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 08/00)

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation
Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Core
■ Lara's passable fourth outing is rendered almost unplayable in its

Dreamcast version, a sloppy port full of clipping problems, unpredictable frame rates, and ugly graphics. Yuck.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 06/00)

Toy Commander

Publisher: Sega
Developer: No Cliché
■ This totally unique action title pits you and your toy cars, boats, planes, and tanks against the evil toys that have taken over the house. It's weird, fun, and addictive.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 12/99)

TrickStyle
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Criterion
■ A rocket-powered skateboard racing

game sounds interesting, and the graphics are pretty, but ultimately the steep level of difficulty and needlessly brutal track designs make this no fun.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 11/99)

Vigilante 8: Second Offense
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Luxoflux
■ Even if you overlook the utterly sloppy control, the poor collision detection, and the bland, washed out graphics, this is still a pretty average car combat game.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Virtua Fighter 3tb

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega AM2
■ Although the three-year-old graphics are a definite letdown, VF3tb still boasts the most complex and deep 3D fighting game engine ever devised. To the dedicated fighting game purist, this remains the pinnacle of a series that plays like a dream.
Rating: ★★★★☆ (NG 12/99)

Virtua Striker 2000
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ It may look good, but a spectacularly bad, frustrating control scheme turns this soccer title into an exercise in anger management.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 04/00)

Virtual On Oratorio Tangram
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Sega
■ This amazing game of one-on-one mech combat has to be seen to be believed, but it's really only playable if

you can track down one of the rare, expensive, dual stick controllers. Unfortunately, the default Dreamcast pad is barely up to the task.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Wetrix+
Publisher: Xicat Interactive
Developer: Zed Two
■ A better-looking (and thanks to more defined 3D shadows, it's also a slightly better-playing) version of the dripping-wet puzzle game you can find for every other system.
Rating: ★★★★☆

Wild Metal
Publisher: Rockstar Games
Developer: DMA Designs
■ The graphics in this tank game aren't pretty, but the gameplay requires a bit more thought than the usual twitch-response the genre is known for. Not great, but it has its rewards.
Rating: ★★★☆☆ (NG 04/00)

Worms: Armageddon
Publisher: Hasbro
Developer: Team 17
■ If a turn-based puzzle game in which small armies of worms blow each other up sounds odd, you don't know the half of it. It's surprisingly addictive though — trust us.
Rating: ★★★★☆

WWF Attitude
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim
■ Yet another "throw a PlayStation game on Dreamcast with no improvements" port, this wrestling title is especially offensive since the PlayStation version was so lame to begin with.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆ (NG 02/00)

Zombie Revenge
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
■ There's nothing especially wrong with this undead-tinged beat-'em-up, other than it offers nothing new and only lasts a paltry four hours or so. It's arguably worth a rental, but it's just not worth a permanent spot on your shelf.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆ (NG 03/00)

Soul Calibur
Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco
■ Who would have though that a year later, this is still the most graphically impressive game around. That it also happens to be a deep, weapons-based fighting game with a ton of single-player extras (a Namco hallmark) makes it the ultimate must-have.
Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 11/99)

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
Publisher: Crave
Developer: Treyarch
■ Simply the best version of the best skateboarding game ever made — heck, one of the best games ever made, period. If you don't own a copy of this, turn in your hardcore card.

Rating: ★★★★★ (NG 08/00)

SCORE 1440 SPECIAL

SCORE 1000 SPECIAL

BS BOARDSLIDE + CROOKED GRIND 580 X2

SWITCH LANDPLANT 1008

4X4 EVO ™

Ever felt like the whole world was against you? You're about to experience déjà vu.

As if Mother Nature wasn't enough to deal with, now the number competitors you must climb over to get to the top just increased by a few million. Introducing 4x4 Evolution, the first game with internet connectivity for heavy-duty off-road competitions between Sega Dreamcast, PC, and Mac users simultaneously. The world is far from a level playing field.

These screens were taken from the PC version.
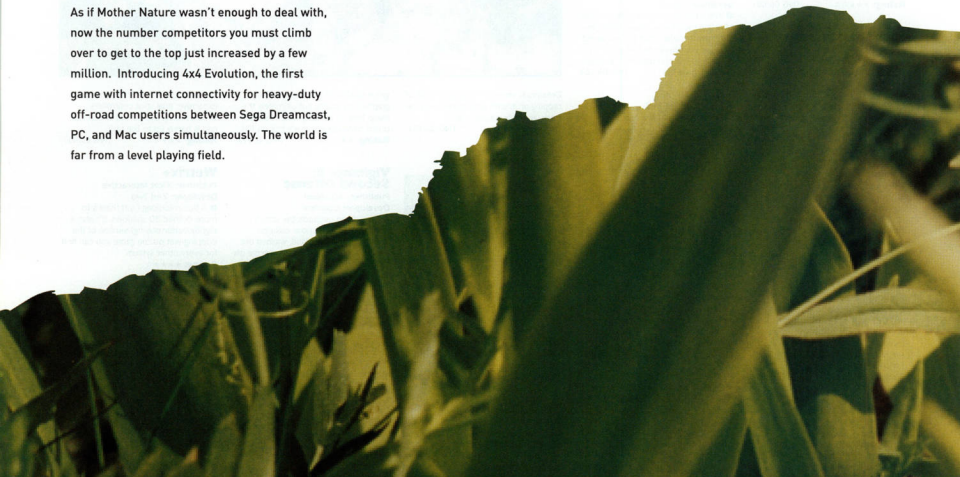
ALL THE TOP SUVS AND TRUCKS FROM LEADING MANUFACTURERS TO CUSTOMIZE • 16 MERCILESS OFF-ROAD COURSES, EACH WITH THEIR OWN ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT, MUSIC SCORE,
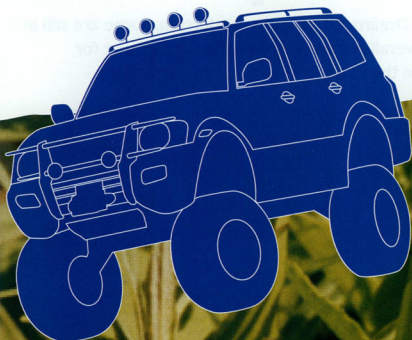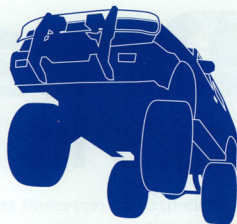
AND DIFFICULTY • GO ANYWHERE GAMEPLAY — NO PREDETERMINED TRACK • ACCURATE PHYSICS, PHOTO-REALISTIC GRAPHICS, AND UNFORGIVING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

Dreamcast: What's in Development?

The following alphabetized list represents every known Dreamcast game in production. Some are still in the planning stages, but the next eight pages paint an overall picture as to what's coming next for Dreamcast. Is it enough to keep the system alive? You be the judge

102 Dalmatians

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
Release Date: November
■ Here's one for the kids — a 3D adventure/platformer featuring Disney's ever-expanding spotted brood. Like the film, the plot will involve rescuing captive critters while avoiding Cruella Deville.
Online Component: None

18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker

Publisher: Sega
Developer: AM2
Release Date: September
■ Imagine *Crazy Taxi* with fully loaded semi-trucks. Take cargoes across the country dodging cops, traffic, and rival truck drivers while trying not to cause too much incidental damage.
Online Component: None

4x4 Evolution

Publisher: Gathering of Developers
Developer: Terminal Reality
Release Date: September
■ From the developers of Microsoft's *Monster Truck Madness 1 & 2* comes this off-road sim. At press time the frame rate was a bit clunky, but it does offer online, four-player racing.
Online Component: Racing for up to four players

Aerowings 2: Air Strike
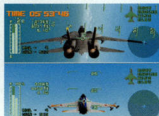
Publisher: Crave
Developer: CRI
Release Date: August
■ This flight sim's focus on realism more than any other console flight game. Now, instead of just flying stunts (like in the last game) you will be required to fly combat missions with deadly precision.
Online Component: None

Agartha

Publisher: Sega
Developer: No Cliché
Release Date: 2001
■ Unannounced as of press time, not much is known about this horror game, other than it will be brought to us by the man who did the original *Alone in the Dark*. We have high expectations for this one.
Online Component: Unknown

Age of Empires II

Publisher: Konami (PC screen)
Developer: Konami
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ One of the most epic real-time strategy games ever made arrives on Dreamcast. Take command of one of 13 civilizations over a thousand years and try to rule the planet.
Online Component: TBA

Alien Front Online

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release Date: TBA
■ This tanks vs. aliens combat game places two teams against each other in a battle to the death. The game even allows DC users to compete against players in the arcade.
Online Component: Multiplayer team play

Alien Resurrection
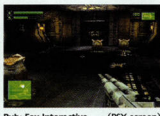
Pub: Fox Interactive (PSX screen)
Developer: Argonaut
Release Date: 2001
■ This first person shooter tries to take the *Aliens* franchise back to its dark and scary roots. You must slowly creep through the halls of a space station, constantly avoiding danger.
Online Component: None

Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare
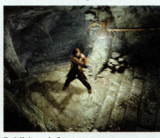
Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Darkworks
Release Date: Winter 2000
■ The original third-person, survival-horror series returns with a creative focus on the player's flashlight. It both attracts and repels enemies, and is often the only way to illuminate your path and discover important objects.
Online Component: None

Arcetera: Dark Brotherhood

Publisher: Ubi Soft (PC screen)
Developer: Westka Entertainment
Release Date: November
■ This potentially highly complex, 3D adventure title boasts a non-linear story and extremely intelligent NPCs. If it live up to its promises, it could be a groundbreaker.
Online Component: None

Armada 2

Publisher: Metro3D
Developer: Metro3D
Release Date: November
■ Like its predecessor, this top-down space shooter combines RPG aspects with fast space combat, and is similar in flavor to *Gauntlet*. Incredibly, Metro 3D promises to enable cooperative online play with players using the PS2 version.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Sapphire
Release Date: October
■ In theory, this should be a relatively straight port of the N64 version, a third-person action game in which plastic soldiers fight to control the living room.
Online Component: None

Austin Powers: Mojo Rally

Publisher: Rockstar Games
Developer: Climax
Release Date: October
■ The model above may be the only image you ever see from this decidedly non-shagadelic sounding kart racer, now on indefinite hold. Judging by the creepy little guy above, we can't help but think that's a good thing.
Online Component: TBA

Baldur's Gate

Publisher: Sega (PC screen)
Developer: Sega
Release Date: TBA
■ While this port of the PC's AD&D isometric RPG was one of the original online titles announced for Dreamcast, neither Sega or Interplay (the publisher of the original) would confirm if in fact, it is still in development. We're keeping our fingers crossed.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Bang! Gunship Elite
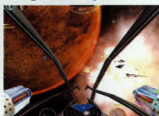
Publisher: Red Storm (PC screen)
Developer: Rayland Interactive
Release Date: Q4 2000
■ More of a straightforward space shooter than a cockpit sim, *Bang* features some of the best special effects seen in this type of game.
Online Component: TBA

Bangai-O

Publisher: Classified Games
Developer: Treasure
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ Pilot a robot in this chaotic free flying 2D blaster. It's one of the best shooters ever created — which makes sense because it's from Treasure, creators of *Radiant Silvergun* and *Gunstar Heroes* for Genesis.
Online Component: None

Black and White

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Lionhead Studios
Release date: Q1 2001
■ A god sim that places you in charge of a tribe, you must grow to defeat other gods. At your service is your avatar — a monster that you nurture from infancy to become good or evil.
Online Component: Play and chat online.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Publisher: Fox Interactive
Developer: The Collective
Release Date: 2001
■ Explore the dark corridors of Sunnydale high and stamp out the vampiric menace using a wide variety of kicks, punches, and, of course, stake stabbing.
Online Component: TBA

Caesar's Palace 2000

Publisher: Interplay
Developer: RuneCraft
Release Date: July
■ Get your Vegas fix without losing your shirt. Featuring blackjack, roulette, craps, keno, and several different varieties of poker, with odds verified by William Bertram, Ph.D.
Online Component: None

Cannon Spike

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Release Date: September
■ In this action packed shooter players use popular Capcom characters like Megaman and Cammy to blast robots from a top-down perspective.
Online Component: None

Chakan

Publisher: TBA
Developer: AndNow
Release Date: TBA
■ Control the undead swordsman of Genesis fame in 3D. While a few wily reporters have spotted this game, it still has no formal relase date and, in fact, hasn't even been announced. Sounds ominous.
Online Component: TBA

D2

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Warp
Release Date: August
■ This horror adventure game places you in the shoes of Laura, a woman who has survived a plane crash and is stranded in the mountains surrounded by aliens.
Online Component: None

Dark Angel

Publisher: Metro 3D
Developer: Metro 3D
Release Date: October
■ This action RPG places you in the role of a woman who must face down vampires and other nasties in her quest to save her village from a mysterious plague.
Online Component: None

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

Publisher: Acclaim   (PSX screen)
Developer: Z-Axis
Release Date: November
■ A two-wheeled variant on *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, this title features courses geared toward dirt, street, or vert riders, upgradeable cycles, and real, interactive corporate sponsors.
Online Component: None

Deer Avenger 3D

Pub: Simon and Schuster Interactive
Dev: Simon and Schuster Interactive
Release Date: TBA
■ Take on the role of a deer and hunt down the hunters. Oh boy, just what console need — parody games. (Who at Sega approved this one?)
Online Component: None

Demolition Racer: No Exit

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Pitbull Syndicate
Release Date: September
■ Fans of the PlayStation's *Destruction Derby* series will love this title, as it shares the former's "smash first, race later" style of gameplay. Ten of the 16 tracks are Dreamcast exclusives.
Online Component: None

Denis the Kangaroo

Publisher: Titus
Developer: X-Ray Interactive
Release Date: TBA
■ Still early, this platformer's main character is a kangaroo who, it seems, snowboards, hang glides over lava, pilots both a spaceship and a speedboat, jumps rope, and of course, punches things.
Online Component: None

Dino Crisis

Publisher: Capcom   (PC screen)
Developer: Capcom
Release Date: TBA
■ Originally done for PlayStation, this survival horror game from the creators of *Resident Evil* has you low on ammo and trapped on an island filled with bloodthirsty dinosaurs.
Online Component: None

Dinosaur

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Sandbox Studios
Release Date: December
■ A 3D action-platform game based on the Disney movie, this should be out just in time for millions of kids to scream about how much they want it in time for the holidays.
Online Component: None

Disney/Pixar's Buzz Lightyear of Star Command

Publisher: Activision   (PSX screen)
Developer: Traveller's Tale
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ Not to be confused with the *Toy Story 2* game, this one is based upon the upcoming cartoon of the same name, in which Buzz continues his struggle against the forces of Emperor Zurg.
Online Component: None

Dogs of War

Publisher: Talonsoft   (PC shot)
Developer: Silicon Dreams
Release Date: TBA
■ A sci-fi, 3D tactical action-strategy game (read: RTS) in which you command a force of up to 100 units, chosen from a selection of just over 30 different types.
Online Component: TBA

Dragonriders: Chronicles of Pern

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Release Date: September
■ Based on the novels of Anne McCaffrey, this 3D action-adventure puts you in the role of Bronze Dragonrider D'knor, searching for the reason other dragonriders are dying. Looks cool.
Online Component: None

Dronez

Publisher: TBA
Developer: Zetha
Release Date: TBA
■ This *Disks of Tron* inspired sci-fi battle game looks nice, but has yet to be announced by any domestic publishers.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Ducati

Publisher: Acclaim   (PSX screen)
Developer: ATD
Release Date: Winter 2000
■ Devoted solely to Ducati motorcycles (Europe's answer to Harley Davidson), this simulation will enable players to race, win, and buy various models from throughout the company's 50-year history.
Online Component: None

Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Appaloosa Interactive
Release Date: August
■ Maneuver Ecco through beautiful 3D underwater worlds, fighting off sharks and other deep water horrors as you try to save the world from chaos.
Online Component: None

ECW Anarchy Rulz

Publisher: Acclaim   (PSX screen)
Developer: Acclaim
Release Date: October
■ Not much is known about this upcoming title, save that it comes from the same publisher as the abysmal *ECW Hardcore Revolution*, and it needs to be a whole lot better.
Online Component: None

ESPN International Track and Field

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Release Date: TBA
■ Konami invented the arcade-style track and field game, and continues to innovate in the genre. Expect to see real Olympic athletes when the game arrives on next generation hardware.
Online Component: Worldwide ranking for all events.

ESPN NBA 2Night

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Release Date: TBA
■ Although Konami's *In the Zone* series faltered over the years, this one's from an entirely new team, and features commentary by Brent Musberger and Stuart Scott.
Online Component: None

Evil Dead: Hail to the King

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Heavy Iron
Release Date: October
■ In a new adventure based on Sam Raimi's film series, the original chainsaw-armed, boom-stick wielding, one-liner spewing bad-ass makes his first appearance in a third-person horror title. Actor Bruce Campbell even shows up for the voiceover.
Online Component: None

Evil Twin: Cyprien's Chronicles
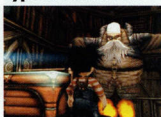
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: In Utero
Release Date: November
■ A bizarre, fully 3D action-adventure, starring Cyprien, who, trapped in a strange alternate universe, can call on the powers of his "evil twin" Super Cyprien when he gets in trouble.
Online Component: None

Extreme Sports

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release Date: TBA
■ While this sports title hasn't yet been announced for the US, what we've seen of this title is promising with events such as hang gliding and snowboarding.
Online Component: TBA

F1 Racing Championship '99

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Release Date: September
■ Don't let the title throw you — it's called "99" because it uses all the official tracks, conditions and teams from the '99 F1 season. This promises to be one of the most detailed sims of the sport available.
Online Component: None

Ferrari F355 Challenge

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Sega (AM2)
Release Date: September
■ Yu Suzuki's latest gift to arcades is actually an incredibly deep Ferrari simulation masquerading as a racing game. The home version will add vehicle tweaking elements and split-screen head to head racing.
Online Component: High-score registry

Floigan Brothers
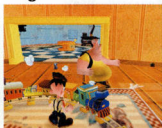
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Release Date: TBA
■ This 3D platformer features two main characters that must be used in conjunction to solve the game's many puzzles. This one was originally shown before Dreamcast launched, but has since been in hiding.
Online Component: None

Fortris
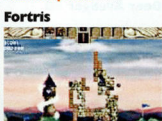
Publisher: TBA
Developer: Promethean
Release Date: TBA
■ Somewhere between *Rampart* and *Worms* lies *Fortris*, a 2D action puzzle game with a medieval setting, featuring single and multiplayer modes.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge

Publisher: Majesco
Developer: Pipe Dream Interactive
Release Date: September
■ Here's the latest 3D take on an established classic, complete with 21 levels over seven worlds, super moves, and an arch-villainous crocodile named Swampy.
Online Component: None

Galleon

Publisher: Interplay   (PC screen)
Developer: Confounding Factor
Release Date: Summer 2001
■ From the original designers of *Tomb Raider* comes this third-person action-adventure set on the high seas. After all, who doesn't want to be a pirate?
Online Component: None

Gold and Glory: The Road to El Dorado

Publisher: Ubi Soft   (PC screen)
Developer: Revolution
Release Date: November
■ A 3D adventure game based on the underwhelming DreamWorks animated movie doesn't sound too exciting, but if nothing else, the game *looks* quite pretty. We'll reserve judgement until we can play it.
Online Component: None

GorkaMorka
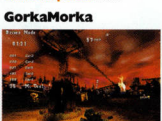
Publisher: Ripcord
Developer: Real Sports
Release Date: November
■ The post-apocalyptic vehicular combat genre gets a tweak with this title, in which the player alternately controls both the driver and a turret gunner.
Online Component: Head to head play, cooperative play

Grandia II

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Game Arts
Release Date: Q4 2000
■ Game Arts has a reputation for charming stories, and promises a larger, more mature adventure for this sequel to one of the most beloved RPGs for Saturn (yes, Saturn). We can't wait.
Online Component: None

Gunbird 2

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: PsiKyo
Release Date: August
■ This vertically scrolling shooter doesn't really promise much more than frenetic action and lots of explosions. If that's what you're looking for, this is your game.
Online Component: None

Half Life

Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Captivation
Release Date: August
■ With a whole new level to explore and improved player models and lighting, this port of the seminal sci-fi PC first person shooter could get a whole new lease on life with Dreamcast.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Headhunter

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Amuse
Release Date: TBA
■ This game is still early, (movies of both 3D action and motorcycle driving were shown privately at E3) but it looks great and should be one of the better Dreamcast titles for 2001.
Online Component: TBA

Heroes of Might and Magic III

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: 3DO
Release Date: September
■ This classic medieval strategy game, one of the best ever on PC, heads for Dreamcast. Sadly, the game will lack the much-deserved multiplayer online support.
Online Component: None

Hidden & Dangerous

Publisher: Talonsoft
Developer: Illusion Softworks
Release Date: June 31
■ Ported from the PC, this squad-based tactical combat game boasts a roster of 40 selectable soldiers, who must accomplish 23 missions set during WWII.
Online Component: None

Hoyle® Casino Games

Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Sierra
Release Date: November
■ An adaptation of the PC game, *Hoyle* for Dreamcast features eight Las Vegas Style games including Blackjack, poker, Pai-Gow Poker, Craps, Roulette, slots, and video poker.
Online Component: None

Hydrosport Racing

Publisher: TBA
Developer: Promethean
Release Date: 2001
■ This boat racing game is hoping to elevate the genre to the level of *Gran Turismo* or *Metropolis Street Racer*. The early versions look promising but it's still too early to tell.
Online Component: TBA

Hype: The Time Quest

Publisher: Ubi Soft   (PC screen)
Developer: Ubi Soft
Release Date: TBA
■ While no official announcement had been made at press time, Ubi will very likely port this simplified, *Zelda*-esque kiddie title to a Dreamcast near you.
Online Component: None
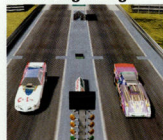
IHRA Drag racing

Publisher: Bethesda   (PC screen)
Developer: Bethesda
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ Modify your car, paint it, and take it out on the drag strip in this hard-core drag racing sim.
Online Component: None

Illbleed

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Climax
Release Date: November
■ The team behind *Blue Stinger* brings us a horror game where you have to survive a trip through a haunted house to win a million dollars. Over 1,500 terrifying "shock events" are promised inside, so it could be a scary ride.
Online Component: None

Independence War 2: The Edge of Chaos

Publisher: Infogrames   (PC screen)
Developer: Particle Systems
Release Date: Q1 2001
■ The original *Independence War* was praised for its realistic flight physics and creative mission design, so we expect great things from this story-driven space combat simulation.
Online Component: TBA

Jedi Power Battles

Publisher: LucasArts   (PSX screen)
Developer: LucasArts
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ PlayStation owners may already be familiar with this 3D, sidescrolling, beat'em-up in which players choose from five selectable Jedi and battle the Trade Federation and Sith forces. We hope this upcoming version is better.
Online Component: None

Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim
Release Date: July
■ Dirt bike enthusiasts should love this title, which features sixteen courses (eight each indoor and out), a track editor, tweakable bikes and rosters, and alternate game modes like free-riding and stunt competition.
Online Component: None

Jet Grind Radio

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release Date: October
■ This street skating game has a graphical style second-to-none and the trick-pulling, spray-painting, police avoiding gameplay is both unique and addictive. (See import review, pg. 101)
Online Component: Upload/Download tags

KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child

Publisher: Gathering of Developers
Developer: Third Law/Tremor
Release Date: August
■ If you're looking for a first-person shooter featuring the music and attitude of KISS and the twisted artwork of *Spawn's* Todd MacFarlane, well, look no further.
Online Component: Full deathmatch and co-operative play.

Legend of the Blade Masters

Publisher: Ripcord Games
Developer: Ronin Entertainment
Release Date: September 27
■ A third-person RPG that seeks to combine the look and majesty of *Zelda 64* with the action and multiplayer aspects of *Gauntlet Legends* and *Diablo*.
Online Component: Head-to-head and competitive play.

M.O.U.T. 2025

Publisher: Ripcord
Developer: Zombie/Runecraft
Release Date: November
■ A *Rainbow Six* styled first person shooter with an anti-terrorist theme, this title's slightly futuristic setting lends itself to creative weapon designs.
Online Component: Multiplayer for up to 8 players

Magic: The Gathering

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release Date: TBA
■ This faithful recreation of the popular-with-geeks trading card game will arrive on Dreamcast complete with a single player adventure, the bility to trade cards via VMU, and online head-to-head battles.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Marine Fishing

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release Date: September
■ This one takes the gameplay of *Sega Bass Fishing* to deeper ocean waters where the fish are much bigger. Expect the game to retain the same addictive quality as its predecessor.
Online Component: TBA

Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX

Publisher: Activision   (PSX screen)
Developer: Runecraft
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ This freestyle BMX stunt competition, is not unlike *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, with eight playable bikers, customizable bikes, and Hawk-like tricking arenas.
Online Component: None

Max Steel

Publisher: Mattel
Developer: Treyarch
Release Date: December
■ Based on the CG animation series, this third-person action game pits Max against the minions of DREAD, who are bent on turning the world into mindless zombies (could be a little late for that...).
Online Component: None

Messiah

Publisher: Interplay   (PC shot)
Developer: Shiny
Release Date: TBA
■ This third-person PC port isn't announced yet, but we suspect it will be soon. You know the deal: one tubby, rosy-cheeked, mind controlling cherub versus large numbers of helpless bad guys.
Online Component: TBA

Metropolis Street Racer

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Bizarre Creations
Release Date: October
■ This street racing game has been a long time coming. But if the latest screens are any indication, it will still live up to the hype of being the most realistic looking arcade racer on the market.
Online Component: None

Midway's Greatest Arcade Hits Volume 2

Pub: Midway   (Arcade screen)
Dev: Midway
Release Date: September
■ Featuring *Spy Hunter*, *Root Beer Tapper*, *Joust 2*, *Moon Patrol*, *Splat!*, and *Blaster*. No word on what's filling out the other 999.5MB on the disc.
Online Component: None

Monster Breeder

Publisher: UFO Interactive
Developer: NEC
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ The name says it all — this is a game where you breed monsters to fight. Other than that, nobody's saying anything yet.
Online Component: TBA

Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

(PC screen)

Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco
Release Date: October
■ Little miss yellow returns with over 180 mazes and "a myriad" of puzzles, plus multiplayer options like "Ghost Tag," which enables one player to be Ms. Pac-Man, while the others play ghosts.
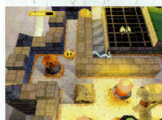**Online Component:** None

MTV Sports: Skateboarding

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Dark Black
Release Date: August
■ While Tony Hawk is nowhere in sight, this game does feature 30 other skaters, 40 levels, and some interesting play modes like Deathmatch, Time Battle, and the cryptically titled "MTV Hunt."
Online Component: None

Namco Museum

Publisher: Namco (Arcade screen)
Developer: Namco
Release Date: September
■ They don't get much more classic than this: Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, Galaga, Galaxian, Pole Position, and last but certainly not least, Dig Dug.
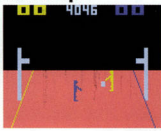**Online Component:** None

NBA 2K1

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Release Date: October
■ This sequel to the highly rated NBA 2K fantastic franchise includes improved AI, better animation and head-to-head online play via SegaNet.
Online Component: Head-to-head play

NBA Hoopz

Pub: Midway (Artist's Conception)
Developer: Midway
Release Date: January 2001
■ It's debatable whether the world needs another next generation NBA Jam, but if it's tweaked the way Blitz 2001 looks like it's going to be, it could be worth checking out.
Online Component: None

NFL 2K1

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Release Date: September
■ Sega's premiere football franchise gets updated AI, a re-vamped interface, some new moves as well and the much anticipated ability to play head-to-head online.
Online Component: Head-to-head play

NFL Blitz 2001

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Avalanche
Release Date: September
■ Arcade-style football gets a massive graphic facelift, AI tweaks (especially on offense), and a plethora of other new features in its second Dreamcast outing — which might make you forget the so-so Blitz 2000.
Online Component: None

NFL Quarterback Club 2001

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim/High Voltage
Release Date: August
■ While last year was a rough one for this franchise, Acclaim is promising sweeping improvements this year — including a solid framerate, team-specific playbooks, an improved A.I.
Online Component: None

Outrigger

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release date: Q4 2000
■ This multiplayer first and first person arena deathmatch arcade game may not have made much of a showing in the arcade, but with 4 player split screen and online play, it will rock at home.
Online Component: Multiplayer deathmatch

PBA Tour Bowling 2001

Publisher: Bethesda
Developer: Bethesda
Release Date: October
■ Grab your tri-color shoes – finally, technology exists that can create a realistic bowling game. (We know you're relieved) This one features skeletally animated bowlers, lanes that show signs of wear and tear, and accurate ball and pin physics.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Peacemakers

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: M.A.S.A.
Release Date: November
■ One of the most ambitious real-time strategy games ever devised, Peacemakers combines not only military campaigns but political manipulation as well.
Online Component: Multiplayer — number of opponents TBA

Phantasy Star Online

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sonic Team
Release Date: Early 2001
■ This online RPG enables players from around the world to group together and fight off evil together. While details are scarce, the demo shown at E3 was promising.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Picassio
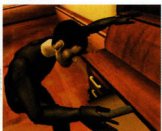
Publisher: TBA
Developer: Promethean
Release Date: Fall 2001
■ You are an elite art thief and you must race opponents through highly guarded museums in order to steal the world's most precious art treasures.
Online Component: TBA

Planet of the Apes

Publisher: Fox Interactive
Developer: Visiware Studios
Release Date: 2001
■ This third-person, action/adventure puts you in the shoes of an astronaut who has crash landed on the planet of the Apes. Expect to do a lot of sneaking as Fox says there will be an emphasis on stealthy gameplay.
Online Component: None

POD II

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft/Remark
Release Date: September
■ Racing around ten different tracks in a vehicle that slowly mutates sounds a little odd, but stranger things have been known to be fun.
Online Component: Multiplayer, number of opponents TBA

Polaris SnoCross

(N64 screen)

Publisher: Vatical Entertainment
Developer: Vicarious Visions
Release Date: TBA
■ Little is known about this snowmobile racer, but the N64 version in concurrent development features 10 courses and a variety of terrains, including powder, packed snow, mud, and slush.
Online Component: TBA

Prince of Persia: Arabian Nights

Publisher: Mattel
Developer: Avalanche Software
Release Date: November
■ A port of the PC title Prince of Persia 3D, this third-person action-adventure follows the Prince as he dodges traps, duels guards, and solves puzzles through 14 massive levels.
Online Component: None

Pro Surfing

Publisher: Mattel
Developer: Krome
Release Date: November
■ Featuring real pro surfers and 10 beaches with varying breaks, this could very well be the first surfing title since California Games to capture the essence of the sport.
Online Component: None

Q Bert

Publisher: Majesco
Developer: Pipe Dream Interactive
Release Date: October
■ A 3D update to the cube-hopping classic. Now, the environments are much bigger and more complex, but you still must change all the blocks to the correct color in order to beat the level. Damn that Coily!
Online Component: None

Quake III

Publisher: Sega
Developer: id
Release Date: September
■ The Dreamcast port of this well-known first person shooter death-match game not only looks as good as the PC-based original, but enables DC players to go up against their PC counterparts.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Quark

Publisher: TBA
Dev: Quantic Dreams
Release Date: 2001
■ An action adventure game that takes place between two worlds — one fantasy and one industrial (See preview, page 44)
Online Component: None

Railroad Tycoon 2

Publisher: Gathering Of Developers
Developer: Tremor
Release Date: August
■ One of the most interesting and deep strategy games ever devised, the premise is to build the most profitable rail company on the planet during the heyday of train construction in the 1800s. It's cooler than you'd think.
Online Component: Head-to-head competition

Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Release Date: November
■ Midway brings back its troupe of wacky pugilists. This time, with 24 boxers and three levels of "Rumble." (See cover story, page 68)
Online Component: None

Red Dog

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Argonaut
Release Date: TBA
■ Eternally in development, this title has resolved into a single/multiplayer auto combat game featuring vehicles roughly resembling the offspring of an M-1 tank and Bigfoot.
Online Component: TBA

The Ring: Terror's Realm

Publisher: Infogrames
Dev: Asmik Ace Entertainment, Inc.
Release Date: August
■ Currently in need of some optimization, this interesting third-person survival horror title chronicles one woman's efforts to combat a computer virus that is destroying the human race.
Online Component: None

Rogue Spear

Publisher: Majesco
Developer: Pipe Dream Interactive
Release Date: October
■ This sequel to the realistic Tom Clancy based FPS *Rainbow Six* features more weapons, better AI, loads of new missions and best of all – multiplayer.
Online Component: TBA

Roswell Conspiracies: Aliens Myths and Legends

Publisher: Red Storm
Developer: Climax
Release Date: November
■ This third-person action game is based on the cartoon of the same name. Hostile aliens have taken up residence on earth posing as vampires and other mythological creatures. Your job: take 'em out.
Online Component: None

Rush 2049

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway West
Release Date: November
■ This classic series just keeps getting better. With more elaborate shortcuts and an amazing sense of speed, *2049* also features a battle mode that's worth the price alone.
Online Component: None

Sanity– Aiken's Artifact

Pub: Fox Interactive   (PC screen)
Developer: Monlith
Release Date: 2001
■ In the future, humans develop Psionics and a group of malevolent mental masterminds decide to use their powers to destroy humankind. In this top-down, 3D-action game, you must use your powers for good, and destroy all that oppose you.
Online Component: TBA

Shenmue

Publisher: Sega
Developer: AM2
Release Date: November
■ This epic adventure represents the state of the art in Dreamcast visuals. You play Ryo as he searches for the man who killed his father in a quest that spans both Japan and China.
Online Component: Mini-game rankings

Sierra Sports Game Room

Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Sierra
Release Date: November
■ Pinball, Pool, Darts, Table Hockey, Shuffleboard, and Ping Pong make up this collection of casual games which can be played by both casual and hardcore gamers, against either AI opponents or over the Internet.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Silent Scope

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Release Date: October
■ All the thrill of being an anti-terrorist sniper, without actually having to shoot someone. Although the graphics are arcade perfect, it remains to be seen how well this will adapt to D-pad control.
Online Component: None

Silver
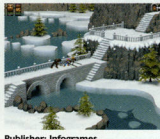
Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Spiral House
Release Date: June
■ A PC port that should be in the stores by the time you read this, *Silver* is basically a *Final Fantasy*-style RPG with an arcade-style battle engine.
Online Component: None

Skies of Arcadia

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release Date: Q4 2000
■ This is Sega's big RPG release this year. Featuring airships, pirates, romance, and strange new worlds to explore, the beautiful graphics are only the icing on what is sure to be a very deep cake.
Online Component: None

Sno-Cross Championship Racing

Publisher: Crave
Developer: UDS
Release Date: November
■ This snowmobile racing game features licensed vehicles, a realistic physics model, and an easy to use track editor for nearly infinite replayability.
Online Component: None

SNK vs. Capcom

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Release Date: Winter 2000
■ The fighting game that fans have been waiting for. Match up SNK's finest fighters against Capcom's elite warriors and see who really is the best.
Online Component: TBA

Soldier Of Fortune

Publisher: Crave   (PC screen)
Developer: RuneCraft
Release Date: November
■ This ultra violent PC first person shooter comes to Dreamcast intact. As a "Soldier of Fortune" you must take out terrorists with a wide variety of different weapons and tactics.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Sonic Adventure 2

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sonic Team
Release Date: Q1 2001
■ This title is still shrouded in secrecy except for the few screens that have been released. It is known, however, that at least part of this high-speed 3D platformer will take place in San Francisco.
Online Component: TBA

Sonic Shuffle

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sonic Team
Release Date: November
■ This *Mario Party* type game featuring Sonic and his loveable pals should appease Sega owners looking for mini-games (there are around 50) and an easy to use multiplayer game experience.
Online Component: Multiplayer

Soul Reaver 2

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
Release Date: March 2001
■ Expanding on the story and third-person action established in *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*, the sequel introduces new spells and abilities, more complex puzzles, and seven new, summonable reavers (swords).
Online Component: None

Spawn

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Release Date: October
■ Control Spawn and a host of other comic book heroes and villains and fight it out arena style. The final game will feature a four-player split screen mode, but online is still up in the air.
Online Component: TBA

Star Wars Super Bombad Racing

Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: Lucas Learning
Rel. Date: Fall 2000/Winter 2001
■ Yet another licensed kart- racer — it will likely appeal to somebody somewhere. This one offers up eight giant-headed characters, including Darth Maul.
Online Component: TBA

Stupid Invaders

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Xilam
Release Date: September
■ Don't know quite what to make of this 3D adventure, based on a cartoon called *Space Goofs*, except that it sure looks, well, goofy. Slapstick hijinks from France, where Jerry Lewis is a god. Be afraid.
Online Component: None

Test Drive Le Mans

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Melbourne House
Release Date: Winter 2000
■ Only the hardest-core racing fanatics will choose to race this 24-hour marathon in real time, but the option is there. So are compressed time modes, 10 tracks, and over 40 cars.
Online Component: None

Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2

Publisher: Crave
Developer: Genki
Release Date: September
■ Tweak out your cars and then race other drivers all over the Tokyo highways. Much like the last game, the graphics are quite detailed, and it supports split-screen racing.
Online Component: TBA

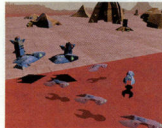## Spec Ops: Omega Squad

Publisher: Ripcord
Developer: Zombie/Runecraft
Release Date: August 27
■ A stealth-oriented, *Rainbow-Six* style tactical strategy title where you control a team of up to four Green Berets through over 30 missions.
Online Component: None

Starlancer

Publisher: Crave
Developer: Warthog
Release Date: October
■ A space sim that plays like an updated *Wing Commander* with beautiful spacescapes and a deep storyline that follows the action.
Online Component: Online Multiplay

Super Runabout: San Francisco Edition

Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Climax
Release Date: Q3 2000
■ Interplay picked up the rights to this import, which combines *SF Rush* style shortcuts with *Driver*-influenced missions and a decidedly odd sense of humor.
Online Component: None

Test Drive V-Rally

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames Sheffield
Release Date: July
■ This title is shooting for *Sega Rally 2*'s crown, boasting some 26 cars and tracks based in locales from Sweden to Australia. There's also a track editor for the creative-minded.
Online Component: None

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Treyarch
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ The sequel to the definitive skateboarding game promises more of everything. More tricks, more skaters, more play modes, and lots more parks, since you can now build your own.
Online Component: None

Speed Devils 2

Pub: Ubi Soft (*Speed Devils* screen)
Developer: Ubi Soft
Release Date: TBA
■ This sequel to last year's *Speed Devils* isn't announced yet, but you should soon be granted a second chance to avoid tornadoes, King Kong, and other natural disasters, in the name of racing.
Online Component: TBA

Street Fighter III: Third Strike

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Release Date: September
■ The latest incarnation of the *Street Fighter III* series is the most beautiful 2D fighting experience we've seen. Choose from 19 fighters this time and then battle it out all over the world.
Online Component: TBA

Sydney 2000

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: ATD
Release Date: August
■ Represent any of 32 countries in 12 Olympic events. An optional career mode enables players to guide Olympic hopefuls through training and qualifying competitions.
Online Component: None

The Grinch

Publisher: Konami (PSX screen)
Dev: Artificial Mind and Movement
Release Date: November
■ A combination of platform action, puzzles and mini-games enables you to "stop Christmas from coming." And you guessed it: this one skews kind of young.
Online Component: None

Toy Story 2

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Traveller's Tale
Release Date: September
■ It definitely skews young, but here's your chance to pilot Buzz Lightyear around Big Al's Toy Barn, Andy's bedroom, and a number of other locations from the film.
Online Component: None

Star Trek: New Worlds

Publisher: Interplay (PC screen)
Developer: Runecraft
Release Date: TBA
■ Is anyone excited over a ground-based *Star Trek* RTS title? Control Klingon, Romulan, or Federation units in your quest to destroy one another, disregarding the indigenous inhabitants. Live long and prosper.
Online Component: TBA

Stunt GP

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Team 17
Release Date: Fall 2000
■ An RC racer similar to *Re-Volt*, but with an emphasis on over-the-top stunt performance, this game will boast 24 imaginative tracks and 16 customizable vehicles.
Online Component: None

System Shock 2

Publisher: Vatical (PC screen)
Developer: Marina Games
Release Date: November
■ This sci-fi thriller places you on a space station controlled by renegade AI. By keeping the ammo low and the threat high, the developers have given this game some really scary moments.
Online Component: Multiplayer

The Mummy

Publisher: Konami
Dev: Universal Interactive/Rebellion
Release Date: October
■ A third person action-adventure title based on last summer's hit movie, *The Mummy* follows Rick O'Connell into the ancient City of the Dead to battle mummies of numerous shapes and sizes.
Online Component: None

Ultimate Fighting Championship

Publisher: Crave
Developer: Anchor
Release Date: September
■ Pick one of 22 real-life fighters or create your own for no-holds barred arena fights. *UFC* does a great job of blending many different fighting styles into a unique fighting experience.
Online Component: None

V.I.P.

(PSX screen)

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Kalisto
Release Date: November

■ A third-person action game based on Pam Anderson's TV show, your job is to act as a bodyguard while staring at Pam's butt. This could either be cheesily cool, or a complete disaster.
Online Component: None

Vanishing Point

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Clockworks, Ltd
Release Date: August

■ An eclectic collection of 32 European autos highlights this racer, which features a solid graphics engine that boasts an infinite draw distance, hence the title.
Online Component: Rankings

Virtual Pool 3

Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Celeris
Release Date: Q4 2000

■ The latest in what is arguably the most realistic pool sim series ever made, this time it features lessons and advice from WPBA star Jeanette "Black Widow" Lee.
Online Component: Tournaments, worldwide ranking ladder, leagues, spectator support

Virtua Athlete 2K

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Release Date: Fall 2000

■ In the tradition of Saturn's *Decathlete* comes this 3D sports event extravaganza. Compete alone or with three friends in seven different track and field events.
Online Component: Post scores

Walt Disney World: Magical Racing Quest

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
Release Date: July

■ If you have to have another kart racer (God help you), this one has the most nostalgic feel. Up to four Disney characters zoom around eight classic Disney attractions like Pirates of the Caribbean and Space Mountain.
Online Component: None

Who Wants To Beat Up a Millionaire?
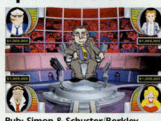
Pub: Simon & Schuster/Berkley Systems
Developer: Hypnotix, Inc.
Release Date: October 27

■ Egregious Phillin is your host in this parody of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. Up to four players can compete and there are over 750 questions. The loser earns a beating
Online Component: None

World's Scariest Police Chases

Publisher: Fox Interactive
Developer: Teeny Weeny Games
Release Date: 200I

■ Play the police and chase criminals through huge virtual cities. Since this is based on the TV special of the same name, expect lots of "TV style" extras like the use of an "eye in the sky" helicopter.
Online Component: TBA

Worms Pinball

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Team I7
Release Date: August

■ We'd make fun of this game if we weren't so damn intrigued by it. Besides recreating realistic pinball physics, Team I7 is formulating actual *missions* to enhance gameplay.
Online Component: TBA

Worms World Party

(Box Art)

Publisher: Titus
Developer: Team I7
Release Date: Winter

■ This newest addition to the worms franchise adds the obligatory new weapons and strategies as well as online play
Online Component: Head-to-head

WWF Royal Rumble

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Yukes/Sega
Release Date: August

■ There are definitely better looking games out there, and there may even be better wrestling games, but we'll forgive all that for the chance to whup some ass in a nine-man royal rumble.
Online Component: None

⊚ Dreamcast: The One Year Index

So how's Dreamcast doing after one year? Here's some quick figures compiled from our report.

Number of five star games: 8
Number of four star games: 24
Number of three star games: 28
Number of two star games: 28
Number of one star games: I0

Number of games in development: . . .I45
Number of games in development
with an online component: 35
Number of those games
directly developed by Sega: 9

Number of Dreamcast games cancelled
(listed below) in the last year: 5
   Castlevania Resurrection (Konami)
   ESPN Baseball Tonight (Konami)
   Flesh and Wire (Running With Scissors)
   Boarder Zone (Infogrames)
   Test Drive Off Road (Infogrames)
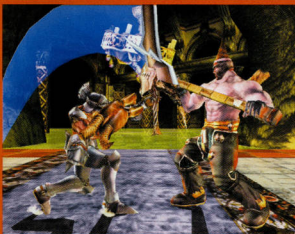
■ One Dreamcast game to die for, *Soul Calibur* (left) and *Castlevania Resurrection* (right) a game that simply died

LOOKING AHEAD:

While there's certainly a significant number of Dreamcast titles in the works for this fall, there's not too many with release dates beyond spring of 200I. We know Sega is planning to make some announcements this fall regarding 200I titles coming later in the year, but at press time, those titles remain a mystery. It remains to be seen how many companies continue to support the system after Sega stops... and more importantly, with the AAA franchises we've come to anticipate and expect. We're concerned that at this time, there has been no announcements regarding sequels to two of the best Dreamcast games thus far; *Soul Calibur* and *Resident Evil: Code Veronica*. However *Powerstone 2*, *Marine Fishing* (a pseudo-sequel to the excellent *Sega Bass Fishing*), *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Shenmue*, and the entire 2K1 sports line-up are all on the way. We only need to look to Nintendo and the N64 for proof that one company cannot output a steady stream of quality releases by depending entirely on first-party software. Going forward, Sega will need stronger third-party titles with online play components, should the company desire to keep pace with PlayStation 2, Xbox, and Dolphin.

You'll need skill, endurance and a reliable blowhole.

ecco
THE DOLPHIN™
DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE™

Stay away from jellyfish. Remember to come up for air. Don't eat bad fish. Or you could die. Of course, a shark could kill you too. On top of all that, the ocean's in a downward spiral and it's up to you to save it. Tough job, but you'll figure it out. You're the chosen one. The big fish (although you're not a fish). Too bad you can't even count on Greenpeace. The weight of the ocean rests on your dorsal fin.

IN THE USA

THE SANDMAN

TOMMY DREAMER

the blistering Brimstone Match! • Killer tracks from Dope and One Minute Silence! • 2-man commentary by Joey Styles & Joel Gertner!

Extreme Championship Wrestling.
No rules. No limits. No pity.

■ Enemies range from the otherworldly (left), to the genetically engineered (above). *Deus Ex* lumps together every paranoid conspiracy

■ You can hit this mech with EMP grenades, hack a computer and shut it down, or become invisible and sneak by — it's your choice

■ **PC**

Deus Ex

■ Publisher: **Eidos** ■ Developer: **Ion Storm**

Truly divine

→ Every once in a while a game comes along that restores the faith of even the most jaded among us. And though in some ways it runs over the territory first explored by *System Shock 1 & 2*, *Deus Ex* is exactly that kind of game.

Put simply, this is a complete package. The story is involving, the dialog smartly written (if not always well delivered), and the game world itself is fully interactive and truly feels alive, in often startling ways. There are hundreds of NPCs to interact with, and every one seems to have their own personality.

But most of all, the gameplay is every bit as smart as the world. As a cybernetically enhanced agent of UNATCO, the United Nations Anti-Terrorist Coalition, your job (at least to begin with) is to track and eliminate the forces of the National Secessionist Front. The way you go about this, however, is completely open-ended. You have a selection of eleven skills, plus nine slots for additional "nano augmentations," or augs, and depending on which skills and augs you decide to enhance, it will completely change the way you play

the game. You could, for example, choose the invisibility aug and lock-picking skills, then spend the game sneaking around. Or you could choose the targeting aug and upgrade your

■ Mistakes always have repercussions, even if it's just embarrassing and not dangerous

The Finals Rating System

Since we're living in a time when even average games are pretty good, we at **Next Generation** will continue to demand even better. Note that a three-star rating is a typical "good" game, so expect to see a lot of them.

★★★★★ **REVOLUTIONARY**
★★★★☆ **EXCELLENT**
★★★☆☆ **GOOD**
★★☆☆☆ **FAIR**
★☆☆☆☆ **BAD**
● Denotes a review of a Japanese product

WHAT'S THE STORY?

One of *Deus Ex*'s most notable features is its incredibly intricate storyline. Penned by noted eBook author Sheldon J. Pacotti, *Deus Ex* pulls together just about every conspiracy theory and secret society of the last 1200 years, from the Illuminati to the Hong Kong Triads and evil government plots at Area 51 to the heroic French Underground. What's more, it actually hangs together pretty well, and despite the reported 10,000 lines of dialog, you're never lost or overloaded. Well done.

■ Wiping out an entire squad of government troops is probably going to get you in trouble later (left), but handling strange technical puzzles requires a different set of skills (above)

gun skills to become a walking death machine. Either way is equally valid, and every single obstacle in the game has multiple ways it can be overcome. The sense of freedom this gives you is truly astounding.

And further, your actions have consequences. Although the general direction of the story is fairly linear, the details are remarkably fluid, and

■ Men in Black are not the most dangerous enemies in the game, but they have a nasty habit of exploding when they die so they won't leave behind any evidence

this is true even about apparently trivial acts. For example, entering the woman's bathroom at UNATCO headquarters means that your boss gives you a verbal reprimand later. Shoot the wrong man during a mission, and you can be sure of a follow-up investigation into your conduct. It's this kind of constant response to things you do that make the game one of the most immersive, involving experiences ever.

Deus Ex was built using the original *Unreal* engine, and for the most part it looks excellent. The character animation is a little stiff, but the environments are rock solid, and while nearly all the settings are some kind of gritty urban sprawl, there's a fair amount of variety, from the dirty New York docks to the colorful markets of Hong Kong.

But the *Unreal* engine does bring some baggage: it really only runs well if you've got a 3Dfx-based accelerator and run this under Glide. Using Direct3D results in a choppy, unpredictable frame rate (and even a few crashes). It's by no means unplayable, but be forewarned the experience is less than ideal without a Voodoo card.

That, however, is quite literally the only serious criticism you can level at *Deus Ex*. The controls and interface are smooth and highly intuitive, the world is immersive, and the game itself is huge — even if you ignore the secondary quests and goals that pop up continually, you can be assured of 30-40 hours of playtime before you hit one of three, completely different yet totally logical endings.

— *Jeff Lundrigan*

▶ **NextGen** ★★★★★

Bottom Line: This is hands-down one of the best PC games ever made. Stop reading and go get yours now.

Ragnarok, the apocalypse, is approaching. Your ultimate purpose will transcend life itself. From the creators of 'STAR OCEAN: The Second Story' comes Valkyrie Profile™ a stunningly beautiful RPG adventure with a story like none before.

Your mettle will be tested as you face tormenting decisions involving powerful issues of love, death and revenge. Destiny hinges on your choices, and your ability to recruit and train the souls of fallen warriors for a war between the gods.

Heed the call. And find out why death is only the beginning.

The battle begins when life ends.

■ Forget the rival gangs: it's the cops you have to watch out for. Their reaction to a little graffiti is a trifle excessive — we've heard of being "tough on crime," but this is *ridiculous*

■ DREAMCAST

Jet Set Radio

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Sega**

● World's scariest police — period

Say what you want about Sega, but the internal development teams there really know how to make unique games. *Jet Set Radio* (which will be called *Jet Grind Radio* when it's released here in the States — probably right around the time you read this) is based on the odd premise of carrying out an urban gang war through graffiti, which, to the best of our knowledge, hasn't ever been done before.

You do this by rollerblading through a series of unbelievably large, faithfully re-created sections of Tokyo, picking up spray cans, dodging the cops, and painting your gang's logo in prominent spots. The art direction is as unique as the premise: Although a growing number of games are using cel shading to make their 3D graphics look like hand-drawn cartoons, *Jet Set Radio* opts to capture the style of urban graffiti. Heavy outlines and stark angles dominate, and it's all very, very cool and terminally hip.

The game's single weak point is in its control and, occasionally, a confusing camera. Although you can unlock numerous characters who possess different degrees of skill, none of them are quite maneuverable enough, especially within the city's frequently tight quarters. This can lead to moments of sheer frustration, though the learning curve isn't especially steep, and most challenges can be overcome with a little patience and practice.

Fortunately, this is a small knock on an otherwise unique, utterly over-the-top game. In later levels, when the police forgo any pretense of subtlety and begin chasing you with helicopter gunships, it becomes a point of pride to keep going just to see what they'll throw at you next.   — *Jeff Lundrigan*

■ You won't believe how truly cool this game looks. Dreamcast naysayers can bite our collective butt

GRINDING FOR PLAYERS

There are a total of ten selectable characters in *Jet Set Radio*, but to get them to join your gang, you have to impress them by repeating their actions in a skills challenge. Imagine skating up a ramp, hopping to a guy wire and grinding along through the air, and then jumping at the last second through a fence in time to barely miss getting nailed by a subway train. And that's an *easy* test.

▷NextGen ★★★★☆

Bottom Line: One of the most unique and interesting console games in years. You owe it to yourself to check this one out.

■ DREAMCAST
Wacky Races

■ Publisher: Infogrames ■ Developer: Sheffield House

No toons like old toons

■ It's wacky, and they're racing. Hence *Wacky Racers*

➡ Few will likely remember the short-lived Hanna-Barbera cartoon *Wacky Races*, yet just as few will likely forget this crazy-fun video game translation.

Eleven goofy racers, plucked directly from the Saturday morning cartoon show (among them Dick Dastardly's Mean Machine and the Red Max's Crimson Haybailer) get to plow through a series of smartly designed tracks with plenty of twists, turns, and secret shortcuts. Each car has its own particular crazy inclination and can employ three madcap weapons/power-ups, such as dragon power (which enables flight), machine guns, projectile logs, rubber mines, huge bubblegum bubbles and rocket boosters.

Though the pace is a bit slow, *Wacky Races* serves up some beautiful cel-shaded 3D graphics that make everything look as if it's hand-drawn by the pens of talented, but underpaid Korean animators. Each *Wacky Race* requires equal parts skill and strategy to win; the rather slow haunted-house-on-wheels Creepy Coupe can oftentimes rocket from dead last by employing its dragon power to fly across a body of water. Adding depth to the strategy is the addition of "Wacky Coins," which you can collect during a race and then spend to deploy power-ups — meaning that good economics makes exceedingly good sense here.

Comic sound quips (some contributed by the original *Wacky Races* voice actors) play extensively throughout each race, and if the announcer who chimes in with sound bites often says things that have little to nothing to do with what's happening onscreen, this lapse can be forgiven. When the weapons are flying and cars are bouncing in all directions, it all looks very much like someone amped the wacky level all the way up to eleven.   — Greg Orlando

■ The 3D graphics are cel-shaded so they look like the cartoon

NextGen ★★★★☆

Bottom Line: Go forth, young ones, and be wacky.

Super Magnetic Neo

■ Platform: **Dreamcast** ■ Publisher: Crave ■ Developer: Genki

Someone call the Cute Police — Neo's finally on sale in the U.S.! A platformer to the nth degree, Crave's entrant into the mascot war, *Super Magnetic Neo*, follows the genre right down to the mine-cart level requirement on page 112 of the official playbook. And surprisingly, the result is satisfying enough to recommend to platforming fans.

In a fight to defend his homeland, an amusement park called Pao Pao Park, Neo must fend off the intrusions of a diabolical toddler named Pinki and her assorted goons. To do this, Neo literally uses his "head" to polarize to different magnets, enabling him to super-jump, ride fly wires, and perform other duties to progress through levels and ultimately meet up with stage bosses.

Along the way, Neo collects tokens and uncovers secret items that enable you to reach some very tricky bonus levels. The game's difficulty ramps up quite nicely thanks to the changes made by Crave during localization (the designers added more items to help gamers survive the tougher runs), and with multiple worlds composed of four stages each (not to mention the bonus levels), Neo won't be an overnight task for most gamers.

The formula — right down to the snow levels and "three-hit" bosses — is composed of all tried-and-true elements of platformer gameplay. Though this creates an addictive mix for play-

■ Ladies and gents, meet Super Magnetic Neo, the quintessential Japanese mascot

ers predisposed to this type of gaming, it fails to push *Neo* into new territory or eke out its own niche in the genre. Still, platform addicts will want to check this game out.   — Francesca Reyes

NextGen ★★★☆☆

Bottom Line: It's cute. It's addictive. But ultimately, it's been done plenty of times before.

MagForce Racing

■ Platform: **Dreamcast** ■ Publisher: Crave ■ Developer: VCC

Reviewed in **NG 01/00** as *Killer Loop* for PlayStation, this newly titled Dreamcast port isn't one lick better, other than the usual improvements — higher resolution and sharper textures — although it's worth pointing out this version does add multiplayer options, which were notably lacking in *Killer Loop*. We said it before and we'll say it again: this is a lot like playing *Wipeout*, except it isn't good.

The control is a bit slippery and the pace is slow, which makes the gameplay about as far from exciting as you can imagine. This game also has the distinction of featuring one of the most impenetrable, hard-to-use menu screens we've ever seen, and you

wouldn't believe how repetitive and bad the techno soundtrack is. While most of the track designs are OK, there are only a half dozen of them, which you race on over and over again.

Basically you pick up weapons and troll through green areas of the track to pick up turbo boosts, then cruise through gold areas of the track to pick up "magnetic force," which holds you to the track during turns and the odd loop or tube. It's competent, but pretty dull.   — Jeff Lundrigan

■ Sneak Alert: The awful *Killer Loop* is now going by the name *MagForce Racing* on Dreamcast. It's still awful

NextGen ★★☆☆☆

Bottom Line: There's nothing here you haven't seen done before and done better.

The Ring

■ Platform: **Dreamcast** ■ Publisher: Infogrames ■ Developer: Asmik Ace Entertainment

The Ring is the kind of game that looks best in the dark, with the lights turned off, the radio turned on full blast, and quite frankly, the Dreamcast turned off. It's the sort of abject failure that should make mediocre game developers feel good about themselves because they didn't make it.

The story revolves around the amazingly dull Meg, a middle-level manager at the Center for Disease Control. In what is an unintentionally hilarious premise, some of her friends have been killed by playing a video game called *The Ring*. She decides to investigate, so we're forced to poke her around two utterly boring worlds: the bland hallways of the CDC and the ugly hallways of *The Ring*.

The graphics are utterly generic, with the characters poorly modeled

and animated. For some reason — we'd guess a distinct lack of funds — there's no voice acting. Instead, you're forced to suffer through stiff models bobbing their heads to terribly translated Japanese dialogue. Even worse, the "music" is little more than a looping series of canned aural clichés that had us quickly jabbing at the mute button, as there's no way to turn down the music.

The combat is stiff and awkward, and navigating through the poorly designed menu system is so slow and tedious that you're actually better off wandering around than going through

■ Possibly the least exciting adventure game in ages, *The Ring* won't light anyone's fire

the chore of consulting the map. By the time we slogged our way to the obligatory boss monsters, we couldn't wait for it to end.   — Jim Preston

NextGen ★☆☆☆☆

Bottom Line: If it were a hamster, we would bury it in a shoebox in the backyard.

Draconus:
Cult of the Wyrm

■ Platform: **Dreamcast** ■ Publisher: Crave ■ Developer: Treyarch

Draconus pits you against the evil minions of a Dragon Lord in a typical fantasy setting. When embarking on this third-person action-adventure, you're given a choice between playing as the broad-shouldered brawler Cynric, or the pasty-faced but curvy sorceress Aeowyn. The difference between them isn't major — Aeowyn is better at casting spells, while Cynric can inflict and absorb more damage — but it's enough to require a slight shift in strategy if you feel like playing through again with the other character.

There's actually quite a bit to like here. The adventure elements are rarely confusing or too difficult to figure out. The action is well integrated, and within a level everything streams seamlessly off the disc, so there are no load times at all. The creatures all look suitably monstrous, and many act with decent AI, moving to flank you or using shields to defend themselves. Also, while the game only saves in between levels, there's a kind of "quick-save" feature that lets you set a "mark" at any time and restart

■ Though the choppy frame rate isn't so hot, *Draconus* isn't bad at all

there if (and when) you die. All in all, it ought to be an absorbing game, and if you can overlook the flaws, you'll probably enjoy it quite a bit.

The problems, however, are unavoidable. The frame rate is less than solid, there are clipping problems, and the animation is sluggish. Also, the combo system is needlessly difficult to master (especially given that combat is so integral to the game), and there are some issues with game balance — the difficulty ramps up steeply, even from the first boss, and there never seem to be quite enough healing potions around.
— *Jeff Lundrigan*

⚡**NextGen** ★★★☆☆

Bottom Line: There's a highly playable game lurking under the choppy surface, and with persistence you might still enjoy it a lot. On the other hand, it screams for another few months of playtesting and tuning.

■ The birth process of a Seaman is only slightly less disturbing than the fact that the strongest Seaman will eat the weaker ones

Seaman

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: Vivarium

Be afraid … be very afraid

➔ More a pet simulator than an actual game, *Seaman* enables you to hatch and nurture your own little slice of virtual horror. After sprouting from an egg and birthing themselves from the spasming and bleeding corpse of a mollusk, these "Seamen" then step up to cannibalism to ultimately become — well, that would be telling.

In a very strange, yet appropriate touch, actor Leonard Nimoy guides you through the experience, which plays out even when the Dreamcast is not turned on. Those seeking an action-intense experience need not apply: most of the "game" involves waiting, tending a visually bland task, raising Seaman food, and then either waiting or chatting. You can expect Seaman (a creature with the face of ex-Russian president Boris Yeltsin) to quickly pick up the English language, but he takes a rather long time to become a participant in a conversation. Using a microphone add-on that plugs into the Dreamcast's VMU slot, you can actually talk to the

creature — only to discover that, were he human, Seaman would be exactly the sort of person you'd probably go way out of your way to avoid speaking with.

However, that in itself is an achievement. This truly has not been done before. Seaman possesses excellent AI (if somewhat shaky voice recognition) and an immense vocabulary that enables

him to remember past conversations, ask you about your mother, bleat out popular catch phrases and provide clues as to its existence. The beast's detailed facial expressions add to the disconcerting experience: the creepy little bastard will turn toward you and frown — then smile condescendingly, as if caught in a crime, to throw you off-track.

It certainly is time disturbingly spent, and *Seaman* will evoke genuine bouts of excitement, terror, fascination, and unease. The only knock is that during the game's many slow periods, it unavoidably evokes a little boredom as well. Keep it to small doses.
— *Greg Orlando*

▼ Yup, it's every bit as strange and creepy as it looks

⚡**NextGen** ★★★★☆

Bottom Line: The gentle art of conversation meets *Resident Evil* — and the Dreamcast gets its most bizarre title ever.

South Park Rally

■ Platform: **Dreamcast** ■ Publisher: Acclaim ■ Developer: Tantalus

As noted in our review of the N64 version, *South Park Rally* is a fairly middle-of-the-road affair. This version is nicer to look at than the N64 one — the lines are cleaner, and the minimalist textures are crisp rather than smeary — but it's otherwise virtually identical.

To wit: this is vaguely amusing as a multiplayer game, as a single-player experience it is roundly frustrating. These aren't so much races as they are events — grabbing and holding a vial of mad cow-disease vaccine, for example, until the other drivers die. Or hanging onto a pair of Cartman's soiled underwear while racing to checkpoints representing wash, rinse, and dry. On that score, it's actually somewhat creative. If only the events themselves weren't so obscure and so frustratingly difficult to pull off.

The control is functional, although there's little sense of speed. The karts also "float" a little too easily, catching

■ In a market glutted with kart-racing games, *South Park Rally* doesn't even hit the scale

huge air at even the slightest bump, inciting more than a little anger as you wait for your car to finally settle to the ground. Each of the dozens of *South Park* characters also has his own expletive-laden responses to bumps and collisions, which is amusing for about two minutes, as is the odd collection of weapons — vomit, herpes-infected hookers, and alien anal probes. Still, it's pretty dull even for die-hard *South Park* fans. — *Jeff Lundrigan*

⚡**NextGen** ★★☆☆☆

Bottom Line: It would make an amusing rental for a party. Otherwise, steer clear.

■ Tennis is faster and rougher than you think. Sometimes you'll even have to dive into the concrete to make the shot

■ **DREAMCAST**

Virtua Tennis

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Sega**

Better than *NFL 2K*? It just might be

Despite slightly miss-stepping with *NHL 2K* and *Virtua Soccer*, Sega has done an incredible job of supporting sports enthusiasts with beautiful and highly realistic renditions of everything from football to fishing. *Virtua Tennis* is much closer to the latter in terms of underground popularity, but it still provides a spectacular experience for all gamers — not just fans of the sport.

The secret is the finely tuned control scheme that enables new players to pick the game up easily, but still lets expert players use ever more advanced techniques. Even though there are only two buttons (lob and normal) you can pull off a variety of different shots depending on your distance to the ball and timing on the button. Add in some basic aiming with the D-pad (which also moves you around the court) and you're given an incredible amount of control over the

game, despite its ease of use. After you master these controls, the real challenge awaits — you must learn how to position your player, and trust us, the AI knows when you're doing something wrong.

With two players it's a blast, and with four it's one of the best party games we've ever found. If you're alone though, it's no problem because not only is the AI absolutely wicked, but there's also a *Soul Calibur*-like World Tour mode in which you complete skill challenges

■ The graphics are so realistic you'll actually see the shadows of clouds passing overhead

and tournaments to earn money which you can use to unlock new courts, players (licensed, of course), and uniforms. All in all, while it's missing a few goodies (why are there no female players or online play?), *Virtua Tennis* is the most entertaining tennis game since the Super Nintendo days and one of the best Dreamcast games this year.

— *Blake Fischer*

MINI GAME EXTRAVAGANZA

The world tour mode in *Virtua Tennis* is unique because it forces players not only to beat some incredibly tough opponents, but also to complete a variety of strange mini games. Some of these include knocking down bowling pins with a serve (high scores required), knocking boxes out of the court, returning serves to targets, and knocking giant player-sized balls out of the court with power hits. These mini games help to break up the action, and they are addictive in their own right.

▶■**NextGen** ★★★★★

Bottom Line: The best four-player game in a long time, and an excellent single- and two-player diversion. Don't avoid this because it's not football — you'll get more playtime out of it than you think.

2694

■ This is one low gamma game. The pre-rendered backgrounds are always beautiful, but the battlefields are decidedly sparse

■ **PLAYSTATION**

Koudelka

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **SNK/Sacnoth**

We're all kinda crazy 'bout a spooky little girl like Kou…

➜ This title combines the third-person exploration of survival horror games with the turn-based battles and level-building of a strategy RPG. The resulting game could use a little more balancing, but it comes out pretty well anyway.

It's a classic gothic ghost story during which Koudelka, a young medium, and two fellow adventurers explore the decaying halls of a haunted monastery in turn-of-the-century Wales, uncovering a twisted, corrupt history and about a zillion hostile undead in various stages of decay and deformity. The plot is relayed mostly through excellent, motion-captured cut scenes that perfectly create the spooky atmosphere of the story.

Unfortunately, this atmosphere isn't well maintained by the rest of the game. Basic exploration is done from the standard third-person, fixed camera perspective, but there's rarely any ambient noise to perpetuate the mood. Battles themselves are random but turn-based, a welcome change that nonetheless often slows the

■ Puzzles are usually spelled out pretty clearly, as the game typically asks straight-out if you want to carry out a certain action

game's pace to a shambling crawl.

There are other problems, most of which are missing bits of polish. There's no analog control, weapons break far too easily, and the voice acting, while adequate, hardly reflects the characters' supposed ages. The map is hard to read, and you're rarely told when a door is actually unlocked by solving a puzzle or defeating an enemy, which leads to a lot of aimless wandering. Disc one, in particular, is marred by inconveniently located save points and the fact that characters' hit points fluctuate wildly depending upon which weapon is currently selected. Though these flaws are numerous, it's likely that few players will feel the negatives outweigh the positive aspects of the game. — *Eric Bratcher*

UNSOLVED MONASTERIES

It goes without saying that the monastery in which *Koudelka* takes place is not your typical house of holy men. But what is? Actually, it varies. Most major religions, including Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, offer some form of monastic life, which typically includes vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity (The profession's appeal to gamers should be obvious — there isn't any.) In spite of this, monasteries continue to flourish from Tibet to California. Though one young monk received critical accolades for his acting in the Brad Pitt clunker *Seven Years in Tibet*, the modernization award must surely go to Kopan Monastery in Nepal — you can actually sponsor a monk of your own through their website.

▶ **NextGen ★★★☆☆**

Bottom Line: A solid horror title that could have become a great game with more suspense and a few tweaks. Still, its unique feel makes it worth a look.

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Threads of Fate

■ Publisher: Square EA ■ Developer: Square

Action woven into an RPG

■ *Threads of Fate* is an action-RPG from Square — what else do you need to know? Go on, go play

With *Threads of Fate*, Square has finally given PlayStation owners an action-RPG capable of standing toe-to-toe with Nintendo's *Zelda* series. With two interwoven storylines, flawless graphics and endless hours of variety-packed gameplay, this is as close to Link-esque perfection as PlayStation owners have seen.

Threads follows the ever-crossing paths of two adventurers — the tortured, shape-changing Rue, seeking vengeance for the death of a friend; and Mint, a pugnacious princess with the wholly altruistic goal of world domination — as they search for an enchanted prism across a whimsical fantasyscape. The simple narrative assumes a surprisingly epic scope as our heroes unravel the threads

of an exceptionally nasty conspiracy, leading to an equally unpleasant villain. All of this drama is played out through some beautifully realized in-game cut scenes, the real-time nature of which ensures that you're never distanced from the unfolding storyline.

The gameplay combines action-packed 3D dungeon exploration reminiscent of *Zelda*, with character interaction, some tough platform challenges and a number of amusing mini-games. As the level of difficulty is somewhat high, those seeking a more measured, thoughtful quest should probably look elsewhere. Fortunately, the extremely tight analog control is near-perfect, providing an exceptionally natural feel. Perhaps the only downside is the rather linear nature of the game, which dampens the replay value a little. However, with two parallel storylines and hours upon hours of gameplay, it'll take the average player quite a while to exhaust all of *Thread's* possibilities.
— *Samuel Bass*

➡ NextGen ★★★★☆

Bottom Line: Gorgeous, engaging and a whole lot of fun, but perhaps a little too action-oriented for more cerebral RPG fans.

Mr. Driller

■ Platform: **PlayStation** ■ Publisher: Namco ■ Developer: Namco

Giant colored blocks are attacking the city and only Mr. Driller can stop them! Hey, it *could* happen. Oh right, but you bought the zombies in *Resident Evil* …

OK, we confess, it doesn't make much sense to us either, but while it may not be the most complex or believable storyline, the plot is irrelevant anyway. *Mr. Driller* is nothing more than a charming little puzzle game that will latch the tendrils of addiction deep into your psyche before you even know they're there.

Scared? You should be, because the moment you start using Driller to carve your way down through the

blocks, stopping for air while calculating complex falling patterns to make the ones above you fall away before they crush you (four of the same color and crunch!), you'll be hooked. Like all good puzzle games, this one is deceptively simple when you pick it up, yet deviously complex as you learn its intricacies. Not a bad way to spend an evening, or two, or three …
— *Blake Fischer*

■ Like all puzzle games, *Mr. Driller* doesn't look like much, but the gameplay is highly addictive

➡ NextGen ★★★★☆

Bottom Line: Tired of *Puzzle Fighter*? *Mr. Driller* is just what you need. With its deep strategy, simple controls, and disturbingly cute exterior, we guarantee you'll be hooked!

N.GEN Racing

■ Platform: **PlayStation** ■ Publisher: Infogrames ■ Developer: Curly Monsters

At its heart, *N.GEN Racing* tries to be *Gran Turismo* with wings. The same rough structure is here: you earn permits to compete in competitions, then use the winnings to upgrade various aspects of your vehicles, which in this case happen to be planes (so upgrades include things like aerodynamics, afterburner power, etc.). If you're not interested in the long term, there's also an arcade mode so you can dive right in, and both arcade-style and true aeronautical handling schemes are available.

It's not a bad idea, but there are some issues. You get a fleet of different aircraft to choose from, but while each one has different attributes of speed and maneuverability, they all carry the same limited amount of ordinance and have roughly the same hull strength. So what ought to be a

slower but appreciably tougher craft like the A-10 Warthog winds up having no chance against a speedy (but realistically quite fragile) MiG 28 — indeed, they shouldn't even be in the same division. This makes several of the selectable fighters completely useless. Perhaps the biggest problem *N.GEN* suffers from, though, is the tiny size of the other aircraft. "Blind Pass" takes on new meaning in this title: you can watch other planes' position indicators jump wildly without ever seeing them on the screen.

The aeronautical racing makes an interesting challenge, however, as the closer the planes get to the ground

■ *N.GEN Racing* isn't perfect, but it's pretty fast and can get exciting

the faster they fly; and the controls and frame rate are up to the task. Trying to stay low while navigating over hills, through canyons, between buildings and under bridges is fun enough to warrant a closer look.
— *Doug Trueman*

➡ NextGen ★★★☆☆

Bottom Line: Not bad, but not what it could have been. And forget about seeing other planes while you're airborne.

Armorines: Project Swarm

■ Platform: **PlayStation** ■ Publisher: Acclaim ■ Developer: Distinctive Developments

Armorines is a first-person shooter that seems to be a cross between *Starship Troopers* and *Duke Nukem*. Easily recognizable features of both are present (giant bugs and adrenaline packs), and the basic gameplay is similar to a zillion other FPSs: run around killing anything that moves.

The "good stuff" ends there, however, as this title fails on just about every level you can imagine. The graphics are bland and grainy. It's impossible to see over ledges and tell whether they're fatal drops. The frame rate chugs noticeably even when viewing the most barren landscapes. And the weapons' visual and aural effects are about as exciting as the game's frequent load times — which occur even in mid-battle.

The enemy AI is horrible: The

beasties run straight toward you making no effort to dodge, as if begging to be euthanized. The night vision and lock-on mode combination is useless and detracts from the gameplay because instead of giving you the ability to zoom in and pick off a distant enemy, your weapon simply aims itself. Making matters worse is that your titular Armorine can't move while wearing the goggles, so naturally, looking for something in the dark is next to impossible. Worst of all, each level's mission objectives seem to be fulfilled almost at random. There's usually no indication as to what you've
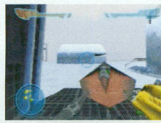
■ *Armorines*, a crap N64 title, turns up as an even worse PlayStation title — and yes, that *is* possible

done wrong when you reach the end of the level, just an "Abort, Retry" screen. While they were at it, they may as well have included "Fail."
— *Doug Trueman*

➡ NextGen ★☆☆☆☆

Bottom Line: Like the plot of so many science-fiction horror flicks, this was a good idea gone horribly wrong.

→Finals

■ It looks pretty familiar, but this sequel expands and improves on the original in simply amazing ways

YOUR SKILLS AND YOU

Every time you go up a level in *Diablo II*, you're given five points to distribute to your four primary attributes — and, even cooler, you're given one point to add to a skill. Each of the five characters has 30 skills, and each skill can run 20 points deep, so you're going to want to specialize. Here's an example of a level 22 necromancer, so you can get a flavor for the skill tree.

■ PC

Diablo II

■ Publisher: **Blizzard**   ■ Developer: **Blizzard North**

A bat out of Hell

→ First, go buy a copy of this game. We'll wait. Just as it was with the original, you don't really need to read a review to know how good *Diablo II* is. Of course, some of you skeptics may still require convincing.
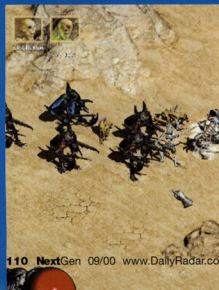
In the first game you defeated Diablo and absorbed his soul stone. In an interesting twist, your character from the first game, now known as The Wanderer, is apparently much worse for having done so. In fact, The Wanderer has become the main villain in the sequel.

■ All these skeletons are the necromancer's minions, raised from the remains of the dead with some help from several summoning-related skills

■ All members of the Wraith family (like the specter shown here) drain mana. Don't forget to bring mana potions with you!

■ A paladin and barbarian adventuring together — with electrifying results

So this time around there are a total of five classes from which to start a new character, ranging from a hulking barbarian to a ghoulishly cool necromancer. Each character type plays differently, and each has its own skill sets in which to specialize as you level up. These are broken into different skill trees, enabling you to choose which types of skills to focus on, so that even within a given class characters are customizable. Further, weapons and armor are now upgradable by adding magic gems to sockets in the items. Also, the interface — which was easy to use to begin with — has been expanded with additional features.

As if that weren't enough, you also get a world that's about four times larger than the original, so bet on around 30 to 40 hours of role-playing from start to finish. Plus, you can play with as many as seven of your friends on Battle.net or over a LAN. As we go to press, Battle.net is going through some serious growing pains, but our guess is that it'll be much more stable by the time you read this review. Despite this, since you can play your "open" multiplayer character in single-player mode if the servers are ever down, you'll still be able to build up your character off-line.

— Greg Vederman

→**NextGen** ★★★★★

Bottom Line: *Diablo II* is a must-have PC title. That's all there is to it.

■ The explosions look great from any angle

→ MDK2

■ **Platform: PC** ■ **Publisher: Interplay** ■ **Developer: BioWare**

Trying to describe *MDK2* is like trying to describe a Salvador Dali painting to a blind person — words will not do it justice. Part Saturday-morning cartoon, part comic book and wholly surreal, *MDK2* is in a class of its own.

Practically identical to the Dreamcast version (**NG 08/00**), you take control of three unique characters: Kurt, the human with sniping and floating abilities; Max, the six-legged Schwarzenegger dog; and Dr. Hawkins, a MacGyver among nutty professors. Each character's levels offer unique and interesting challenges, using the critter's unique abilities to the fullest. A thorough mix of platform gaming and action-adventure exploration, *MDK2* has you jumping, shooting and thinking every second of the way. Sometimes the puzzles are a little too weird (mixing a cord and some pipes to make a ladder — huh?), but in general, that's a small annoyance.

Graphically, *MDK2* is a tour de force. This game is why you bought a 3D accelerator and environmental sound card. Vivid colors, indoor and outdoor environments, and downright

■ **If you've got decent hardware, *MDK2* looks even better on PC**

bizarre character and monster designs show a huge creative effort. The sound is equally impressive — the voice acting is wonderful and the soundtrack sounds as if a Danny Elfman bomb exploded on the sheet music. Did we mention this game is hilarious, too? Dancing and singing aliens, characters embarrassed in their underwear, dogs playing poker takeoffs — *MDK2* leaves few comedy stones unturned.

BioWare has taken what was originally a bizarre concept and made it mass-marketable. *MDK2* is a grand example of a sequel done absolutely right. With the exception of a few head-scratching puzzles, this is not a game to be missed.   — Kevin Rice

→ NextGen ★★★★☆

Bottom Line: Not revolutionary, but a near-perfect example of excellent design and control coupled with psychedelic creativity. Superb.

PC
Ground Control

■ **Publisher: Sierra Studios** ■ **Developer: Massive Entertainment**

For those who thought real-time strategy games were just a little slow …

→ The central problem with real-time strategy games making the shift into 3D has always been what to do with the camera. Swedish developer Massive Entertainment has effectively solved the problem with a camera and control system that's so intuitive, we wouldn't be surprised if it becomes the norm for next-generation 3D strategy games.

Just as impressive as the controls are the amazing visuals. The desert, forest and polar landscapes are stunning, as are *Ground Control's* detailed vehicles and troops. The zoom feature enables desktop Pattons to hover hundred of yards above the action, or swing down and see minute details such as the individual shells flying out of the marines' guns.

Unfortunately, the kind of attention given to the graphics engine wasn't extended to the story. The clichéd plot of the capitalists versus the religious fanatics is never particularly interesting through the game's 30 single-player missions. And *Ground Control's*

■ **You can zoom in so close that you can even see the decals on the tanks**

heavy emphasis on action — there's no resource management at all — means that "strategy" consists mainly of owning the high ground.

Still, the game's only serious flaw is the lack of save options. *Ground Control* auto-saves your progress after each mission, but

once you're about 45 minutes into a massive assault, you'd better be ready to sit there for the long haul, because there's no way to take a break, save your progress and return later. It's a glaring error in an otherwise polished title.   — Jim Preston

→ NextGen ★★★☆☆

Bottom Line: Gorgeous, intuitive and simple, it's an RTS for the action fan.

Motocross Madness 2

■ **Platform: PC** ■ **Publisher: Microsoft** ■ **Developer: Rainbow Multimedia**

The original *Motocross Madness* was so beautiful and fun, even non-racing fans wanted to take a turn at the hilarious, crotch-crunching accidents. Two years later, Rainbow Multimedia has delivered a sequel with better graphics, new stunts, and more joy from hyperextended knees. In some modes, *Motocross Madness 2* tries to be a racing sim, but with its loose physics and emphasis on stunts, it's much closer to being an action game.

It's also one of the most gorgeous racing games on any platform. *MM2* is nearly photographic in its depiction of buzzing power lines, lumbering dump trucks and gorgeous vistas. With a fast enough computer and video card, you'll be able to wipe out over some of the most beautiful high-res terrain seen on a monitor.

The new Enduro race pits riders against each other through vast and interesting terrain. And the career mode lets you race for points and cash as you upgrade through the list of real cycles and gear. However, the racing

■ **The scenery in *Motocross Madness 2* looks fantastic, even from flat on your back**

isn't as easy as it should be, as the goosed-up physics will put you in the air more than on the ground, and when you do hit the ground, more often than not it's without your bike beneath you.

Those who tire of the single-player action can log on to The Zone and play a revved-up version of Tag to see who can hold on to a beach ball the longest. It's a bit of a gimmick to inject some multiplayer life into a game that's really about good looks and crazy stunts — but sometimes, that's all a game needs. — Jim Preston

→ NextGen ★★★★☆

Bottom Line: Flying spread-eagle into a cactus never looked so good.

I was a little shocked to see the statement: "XBox: Microsoft's Playstation 2 Killer" on the cover of your latest issue. PS2 hasn't even come out yet and already you are reasoning that XBox is better, which is yet further away from hitting the shelves. I think XBox will be better than PS2, naturally, because it will be superior technology, just like today's PC won't compare to PCs 10 years from now, or even two years from now. But I think it is prema-ture and uncalled-for to spec-ulate about products that aren't released yet. I don't know if you see my point but I think it is fair to say you have overstepped your journalistic duties. When I saw that cover I immediately thought PS2 was garbage and it hasn't even arrived yet. It's not fair to anyone. I think sys-tems should be evaluated as they are released without any references to future systems being better than systems that are out today, much less systems that aren't out at all.
Toddisit@aol.com

Well Todd, we hate to burst your bubble, but the console business is highly competi-tive, and if any technology company in the world knows how to compete, it's Microsoft. There is no ques-tion that Microsoft knew the PS2 was the machine to beat, and they designed a machine with superior archi-tecture to this end. Does this mean they've already killed PlayStation 2? Absolutely not, but already the company poses a major threat to Sony's profitability in the videogame space. If you read the entire story and not just the cover line, you might have surmised this. We did not overstep our editorial duties, though we feel you may have understepped yours. We agree that systems should be evaluated as they are released, and PlayStation 2 has already been available in Japan for nearly six months. We've spent plenty of time playing finished import PS2 games and PS2 games in development as well. And to be perfectly honest, at this point the PlayStation 2 is far from an unbeatable machine. Look for a full review of the U.S. PS2 in coming issues, as well as more information on the development of Xbox.

→ The entire line of *Dynasty Warrior* games is well known to be based on a chapter of Chinese history, yet on page 58 of your July issue your writers wrote that it's based in feudal Japan. And your editors allowed this?! By doing so you have presented yourselves as igno-rant and racist people who may as well have mistaken the Scottish for the Germans. Of course it's your prerogative whether or not to take this issue seriously. However, I for one will buy EGM instead from now on and can only imagine how many Asian American readers you have, or had.
Mike Chen

We've had a few letters complaining about this, and by all means, we'd like to extend our apologies to any-one we may have offended with this inaccuracy. It was corrected in our August issue in our four-page story on the game (page 22, **NG 08/00**) and in no way was it meant to slander our Chinese readers or lump all Asians into a particular bracket. If that was how it appeared, we're very sorry. We occasionally make factu-al errors, and although this one certainly stands out as a major faux pas, we in no way consider ourselves racist. If this upset you enough that you'd prefer to read EGM instead, you're certainly doing yourself the greater disservice. However, we'd like to reassure all our read-ers that such an error will not happen again.

→ *Metal Gear Solid* is without a doubt my favorite game on PlayStation. That's not even in question. However, at the end of **NG 06/00**, you said that Square's *The Bouncer* would be fea-tured in the next issue. I was looking forward to the article — ever since the early PlayStation 2 screens were released I've been eager to learn what *Bouncer* was all about. And yet, I get my issue and I see *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* as the feature. That's great — I heard the game went over extremely well at E3 and wanted to check it out, and I really enjoyed the article. Then it hit me: where's *Bouncer*? If I missed it in the issue, please tell me where. Otherwise, when do you expect you'll be doing the feature?
Lee Philip

As often happens in this industry, what seems to be a sure thing turned out to be otherwise. We'd agreed with Square to do a *Bouncer* story, and it seemed pretty locked up. However, after **NG 06/00** went to press they decided the game wasn't

MORE *METAL GEAR* MADNESS

The *Metal Gear 2* article, in your July issue, said that Liquid Snake would be in the game. What's up with that? The man was totally killed several times in the course of the game. How could he possibly be alive? Also, where is Meryl? It will be kind of dis-appointing without Meryl by Snake's side.
Michael Blandenburg

As Kojima is still being secretive about a great deal of the plot details, we don't know how Liquid survived after his final run-in with Solid Snake at the end of *Metal Gear Solid*, though we're sure that it will be explained a la Gray Fox's mysterious reappearance in *MGS*. And, while Kojima dodged our direct question about whether or not Meryl is in *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*, we'd be willing to bet that she'll at least makes a cameo appearance.

■ METAL GEAR SOLID 2

ready for that kind of large-scale coverage, and we weren't about to cheat our readers and put the game on the cover with the small amount of concept art and what few screens were available. So we tabled it. It's still on the radar, perhaps only an issue or two down the road. It just depends on when Square is comfortable showing off the game.

➤ Looks like Francesca Reyes needs to do a little more research. I just read the *Legend of Mana* review in **NG 07/00**, and while I agree the game blows, it's not the third in a series. It's the fourth. *Seiken Densetsu*, the first in the series, was released in the U.S. as *Final Fantasy Adventure* for Game Boy. *SD2* was *Secret of Mana*, *SD3* was never released here (although you can download an emulator and 100% translated version of it for the PC), and *SD4* is *Legend of Mana*. Be more careful next time.

"Fnkydrnknmnky"

Well, considering we at **Next Gen** put Game Boy on roughly the same level as playing with rocks and sticks (unless we're traveling, of course), it's hardly surprising that this small error slipped in under the radar. However, since *Final Fantasy Adventure* included the infamous "infinity" puzzle to open the Cave of Medusa, we probably just blocked it out of memory.

➤ As with most people, I'm anxious to get my PlayStation 2, but before I spend approximately $399 [Canadian dollars] for one, I was wondering if you can answer a question? We all know PlayStation 2 will play DVD movies and CD music, but will it be able to decode MP3s and play Video CDs (V-CD) like the regular DVD players that Sony makes?

Bill Andonov

Sorry, but the Japanese version of PlayStation 2 doesn't play anything but DVDs and CDs, and in all probability the North American version won't either. Actually, fea-

tures like MP3, VC-D, Photo CD, and so on aren't that difficult (or particularly expensive) to include in a unit that already plays DVDs, so it's remotely possible Sony might tack it on. But we're not holding our breath.

➤ Is piracy bad for the industry? If you ask this question to anyone in Nintendo, Sega, or Sony, they'll promptly answer "Yes" and state a litany of reasons. "It's bad for profit," "it drives prices up," "it leads to customer dissatisfaction," and a few others. However, piracy is what makes the industry good. It drives technology forward, drives prices down and keeps companies on their toes. In the 20 years since music CDs were introduced, the price has remained artificially high despite the fact that it's cheaper to produce than cassette (60 cents). It wasn't until recently that the media became highly copyable with the proliferation of CD burners and MP3. Now record companies are re-evaluating their distribution method, because the fear of losing profits forces them to cater to the consumer, and a litany of new recording media have come out. Sony introduced the Super CD or SACD and the DVD music media is also poised to come out.

So now you're wondering what does this have to do with videogames? As you all know, PlayStation games are easily copied. When PlayStation was first released and consumers had no way of getting pirated media, Sony was free to charge between $45 and $60 a game, a far cry from the $10 it costs them to produce the game. Now, Sony has greatly reduced the price to $20 to $40.

There are other examples, but I'm sure you all are tired of reading my editorial. I just felt that it was necessary to point out that all piracy is not evil. It's an opposite force kind of like yin and yang. I'm not recommending that you go out and buy only pirated games, but remember that they are the ones that keep the industry in check.

"Mr Man"

I am only a simple gamer from Hungary, but I would like to ask you if you know something about the release date of *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee*? The previous game (*Abe's Oddysee*) is my brother's favorite, and we are now awaiting the new one. If you have some info about this, please let us know! Thank you in advance.

"Akoska" in Budapest

Very modestly put. Although it was originally supposed to be a launch title for PlayStation 2 in the U.S., the team at Oddworld has been fairly outspoken in the difficulties they've had wrestling with the hardware. At present, *Munch's Oddysee* is slated for a Spring 2001 release, although a more realistic timetable is "when it's finished."

■ **MUNCH'S ODDYSEE**

Are you totally deranged? The idea that piracy actually drives down prices is about the most idiotic notion we've ever heard. Your grasp of cause and effect, even in the examples you cite, is amazingly faulty and has only the most tenuous grip on either economic or technological reality. People have made copies of CDs ever since they were invented — it's called "taping," a much more widespread phenomenon than MP3s, and one that's been around a lot longer. MP3s, Super CDs, and DVD music are technical advances that would have come along regardless. Sony reduced prices because the number of PlayStation titles exploded, while mass production worked the "magic" of the economy of scale — simple supply and demand.

Not to mention that the true cost of a CD (or DVD, or whatever) has less to do with the medium it's stored on than how much it costs to produce the software. And whether we're talking about *Metal Gear Solid* or the latest N'Sync album, that could be in the tens of millions of dollars after not only development cost, but advertising, distribution, marketing, etc. Does this mean media companies aren't overcharging? Well, no. But that does not justify the outright theft of intellectual property, and to say that piracy somehow halts inflated prices is insane.

➤ **Next Generation Letters,**
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Note: email is vastly, vastly preferred

→Retroview

September 1983
The beginning of the end, and the birth of a legend

→ January's Winter CES show in Las Vegas set the tone for what was to be a desolate year for console gaming. Atari and Mattel had both suffered through poor fourth quarters in 1982, and rumors ran rampant, predicting the bottom

■ Dragon's Lair may have been ported to more systems than any other game. Today, you can even get it on DVD.

was about to fall out of the industry.

The answer appeared to be diversification. Every major manufacturer announced a plethora of enhancement devices, computers, and computer add-ons. Even the lowly Vectrex had a computer peripheral. Few of these announced products actually saw a release date, but those that did served only to dilute and confuse the hardware market. This, combined with a glut of substandard bargain software, would indeed lead to a console crash later in the year.

Arcades, however, felt

none of this tension, thanks in no small part to the world's first animated laserdisc game, *Dragon's Lair*. Animated by a team led by Don Bluth, the game introduced Dirk the Daring, a noble knight questing to rescue the lovely Princess Daphne from the clutches of the evil dragon Singe. Though gameplay was linear to the extreme, the movie-style animation, technical novelty, and sheer character of the game would make it an all-time classic that continues to sell to this day.

What we were playing
Consoles crashed, arcades innovated, and computers emerged

■ BEACH HEAD
■ System: Commodore 64
■ Publisher: Access

■ SINISTAR
■ System: Arcade
■ Publisher: Williams

■ JOURNEY
■ System: Arcade
■ Publisher: Bally/Midway

■ PLANETFALL
■ System: Multiple
■ Publisher: Infocom
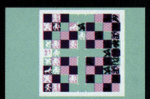
■ ARCHON
■ System: Atari 800
■ Publisher: Electronic Arts

Top grossing
movies of 1983

Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi	309,125,409
Terms of Endearment	108,400,000
Flashdance	94,900,000
Trading Places	90,400,000
WarGames	79,568,000

...and in the real world

■ The U.S. invades tiny Grenada in response to a violent government takeover by Marxist forces. Most of the fighting is over within a week, though the conflict would last a bit longer on paper. Ironically, more American soldiers are awarded medals as a result of this action than during the entire Vietnam War.

■ Coleco introduces Cabbage Patch Kids, a line of chubby-cheeked dolls that each comes with its own birth certificate and unique name. The resulting frenzy makes for a combative holiday season and results in the creation of the term "this year's Cabbage Patch."

■ The U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut is devastated by a vehicular bomb that kills 241 U.S. military

personnel and wounds 80. This comes less than a week after another bomb destroys the U.S. Embassy, killing 63 occupants.

■ High tech enthusiasts are treated to the mass-market introduction of two new devices, the camcorder and the compact disc.

■ The final episode of "M.A.S.H." airs, ending an 11-year run. Higher-than-Super-Bowl advertising rates prove to be justified when the show is watched by a staggering 60.2% of American households, becoming the most watched television program of any kind.

■ "Just say no" is introduced as an anti-drug slogan, Karen Carpenter dies of anorexia at age 32, and fake Hitler diaries surface.

→NextGen

Next Generation magazine

BackwardsCompatible

Forget calling the Cute Police. Tip off the DEA to whoever designed these characters. And what's the deal with the color palette? Page 103. **We're not going to play this game. You see, we have a magazine to create, and if we start to play this game, nothing will get done … What's that? My copy's here? So install it already! Magazine, schmagazine! Page 110.** For your convenience, alien invasions will soon be available in turn-based and non-turn-based varieties. Pages 48 & 28. **The only review ever to feature relevant references to Salvador Dali, MacGyver, Danny Elfman, and Arnold Schwarzenegger. How's that for pop culture? Page 112.** Why is it that there's all kinds of crazy monsters wandering around a haunted monastery, and all we can think is "Seriously, who thought up this chick's name?" Page 106. **If Dig Dug had a son, he would definitely be this little guy. Page 108.** Two games about long-legged blondes packing serious ordinance. Who says the original PlayStation doesn't have much to offer anymore? Page 65. **115, 116, 117, (phone rings in background), 118, 119, (person runs by desk), 191, 192 … Oh, son of a…! (sigh) One, Two, Three … Page 84.** See what Jeff has been doing for the past year. Page 78. **Did you know the Girl Scouts are a secret society, and their cookie sales are a century-old method of passive warfare between the Thin Mints Alliance and the upstart Clan Peanut Butter Do-Si-Do? If this doesn't sound crazy, we've got the game for you. Page 96.** "Are you ready to go to the game?" "Yeah." "Did you bring your octopus?" "Be right back…" Page 52. **If a magician pulls a white rabbit out of a top hat, does a white rabbit pull out David Copperfield? And if so, do David's ears hurt? Page 63.** Somewhere in Hollywood, the owners of Mom & Pop's Pink Wig Store just closed up early after their best sales day in years. Page 7. **Is it creepy that one of our editors is pleased he'll finally get a good look at Princess Daphne in full 3D? Page 34.**

→NextMonth Zone of the Enders

■ GIANT ROBOT ACTION FROM THE PEOPLE THAT BROUGHT YOU METAL GEAR SOLID

NextGen 10/00 on sale September 19, 2000
Smart readers have already subscribed. To find out how you can save money and guarantee your copy, turn to the subscription card insert

I will not mate outside my species. I will not mate outside my species. I will not mate outside my species. I will not mate outside my species. my species. I will not mate outside my species.

Tough as it is, you must resist. Otherwise, you could end up with something like Seaman on your hands. Oh sure, treat him nicely and he's your buddy. Slack off, though, and he becomes just another verbally abusive mutant. Remember that the next time you feel the urge to fiddle with Mother Nature.

SEAMAN ON LOVE:
"Don't make me vomit."

SEAMAN ON THE 'F' WORD:
"I'm too polite to use that word, so I'll just say,
'Bite me, you baboon-faced ass-scratcher.'"

SEAMAN ON HIS ASTROLOGICAL SIGN:
"I need a middle finger to show you."

CAUTION SEAMAN

Sega Dreamcast

IT'S THINKING

meetseaman.com

RP
ESRB