ISSUE 136 JANUARY 2004

NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

GAME BOY ADVANCE™

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

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Groudon's 3D GameCube apocalypse

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- Mario Party 5
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ISSUE 136 JANUARY 2004
POKéMON COLOSSEUM

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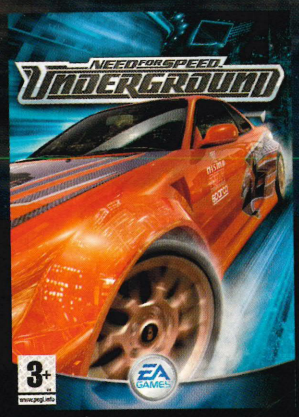

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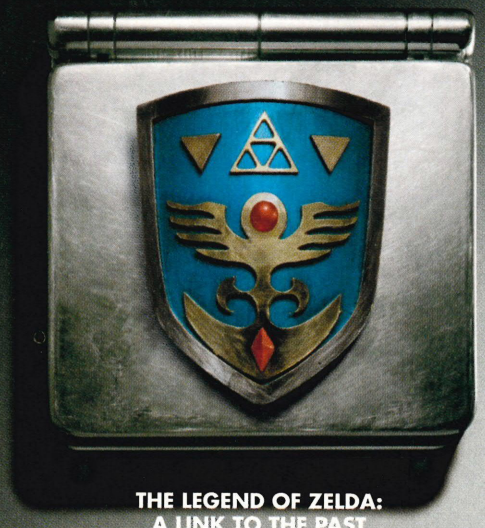
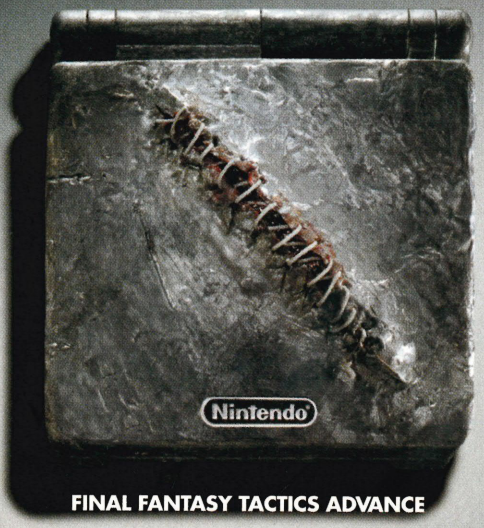


THE LEGEND OF ZELDA:
A LINK TO THE PAST



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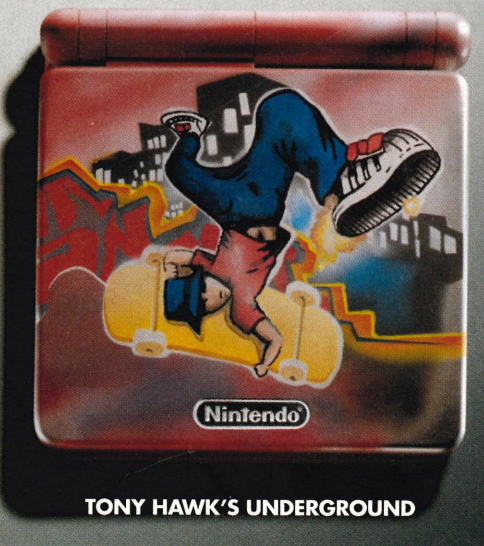

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

OVER 400 GAMES AVAILABLE

Please note: Game Boy Advance SP is not available in any of the special designs featured above.

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GAME BOY ADVANCE SP™

YOU'VE MOSTLY BEEN BUYING...

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!

As if it could be anything else sitting proudly atop the charts this month. GameCube seems to be undergoing a racing revival with *Double Dash* removing the excellent *F-Zero GX* from on high.

Mike and Tim are still doggedly battling each other, determined to settle the score once and for all. That's what *Mario Kart* does to people, that's what Nintendo does to people. Does PS2 have *Mario Kart*. Does Xbox? Didn't think so. And with GameCube sales going through the roof, more and more people are coming round to our way of thinking.

GAMECUBE SALES CHART

Last month's number one, *F-Zero GX*, slips down to eighth, crushed under the weight of the Christmas bandwagon.

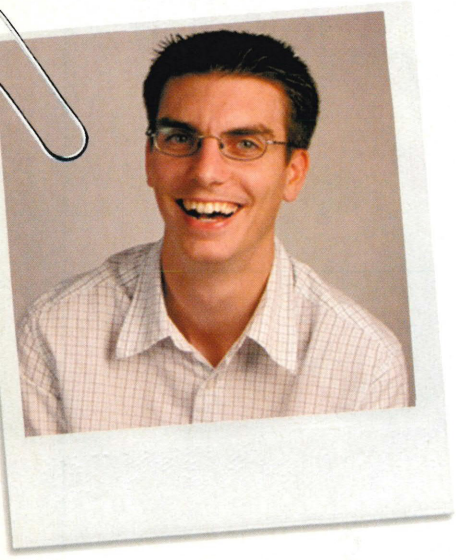
	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1	*Mario Kart: Double Dash!!*	Nintendo
2	*LOTR: The Return of the King*	EA
3	*True Crime: Streets of LA*	Activision
4	*Star Wars: Rebel Strike*	Activision
5	*Need For Speed: Underground*	EA
6	*Tony Hawk's Underground*	Activision
7	*FIFA 2004*	EA
8	*F-Zero GX*	Nintendo
9	*The Simpsons Hit and Run*	Vivendi
10	*Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg*	Sega

GAME BOY ADVANCE SALES CHART

There are too many mediocre games in here. *Monsters, Inc.*? *MONSTERS, INC.*?! What the hell are you lot thinking?

	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1	*Finding Nemo*	THQ
2	*Pokémon Ruby*	Nintendo
3	*Pokémon Sapphire*	Nintendo
4	*Spyro Attack of the Rhynocs*	Vivendi
5	*Monsters, Inc.*	THQ
6	*Super Mario Advance 4*	Nintendo
7	*Sonic Advance 2*	Sega
8	*Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem*	THQ
9	*Yu-Gi-Oh! Worldwide Edition*	Konami
10	*Yu-Gi-Oh! Dungeondice Monsters*	Konami

Welcome to NOM UK



A year ago Link was in dock and the brand-new karts were locked-up in Mario's garage...

We'd only just seen the first few shots of *Viewtiful Joe*, too. We didn't know what to expect. It always looked cool, but now we know it's one of the freshest games to arrive in ages.

Chill out, followers of the Nintendo faith. We've gained loads more allies since the GameCube price cut, GBA is still flying off the shelves and *Pokémon* is as popular as ever. There were loads of killer games in 2003, but 2004's got *Metal Gear*, *Final Fantasy*, *Killer 7* and tons more cool titles. Twelve months is a long time in games and next year will be sweet.

Enjoy the mag!

Tim Street

***Tim Street*, Editor**

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(and what they want from Santa this year)

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ANSWERS TO THE ROCK-HARD QUIZ, p33

1) Charizard; 2) Totodile; 3) Kyogre; 4) Latias; 5) Celebi; 6) Groudon; 7) Absol; 8) Pikachu; 9) Igglybuff; 10) Nidoking; 11) Blaziken; 12) Suicune; 13) Koffing; 14) Teddiursa; 15) Vigorth; 16) Aggron; 17) Mew

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KERRANG!
LIFE IS LOUD

JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED.

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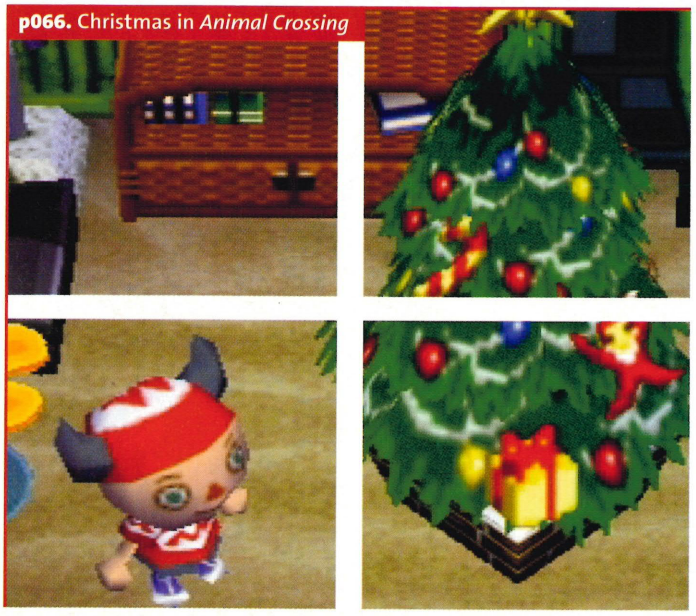

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p071. Rare hardware special

p076. *Mario & Luigi*

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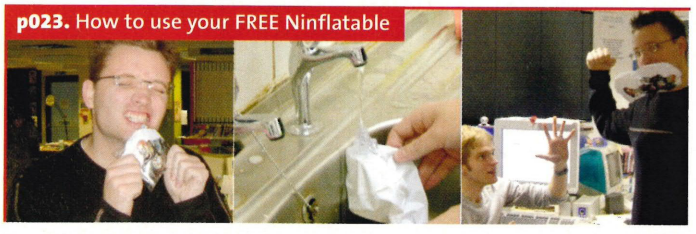
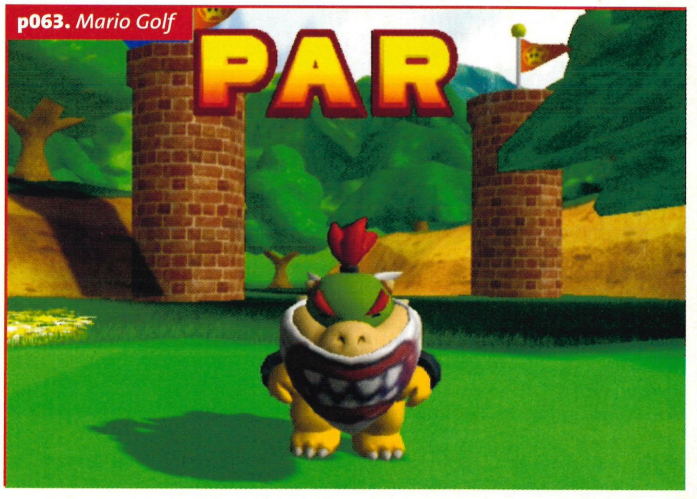
p023. How to use your FREE Ninflatable



p063. *Mario Golf*



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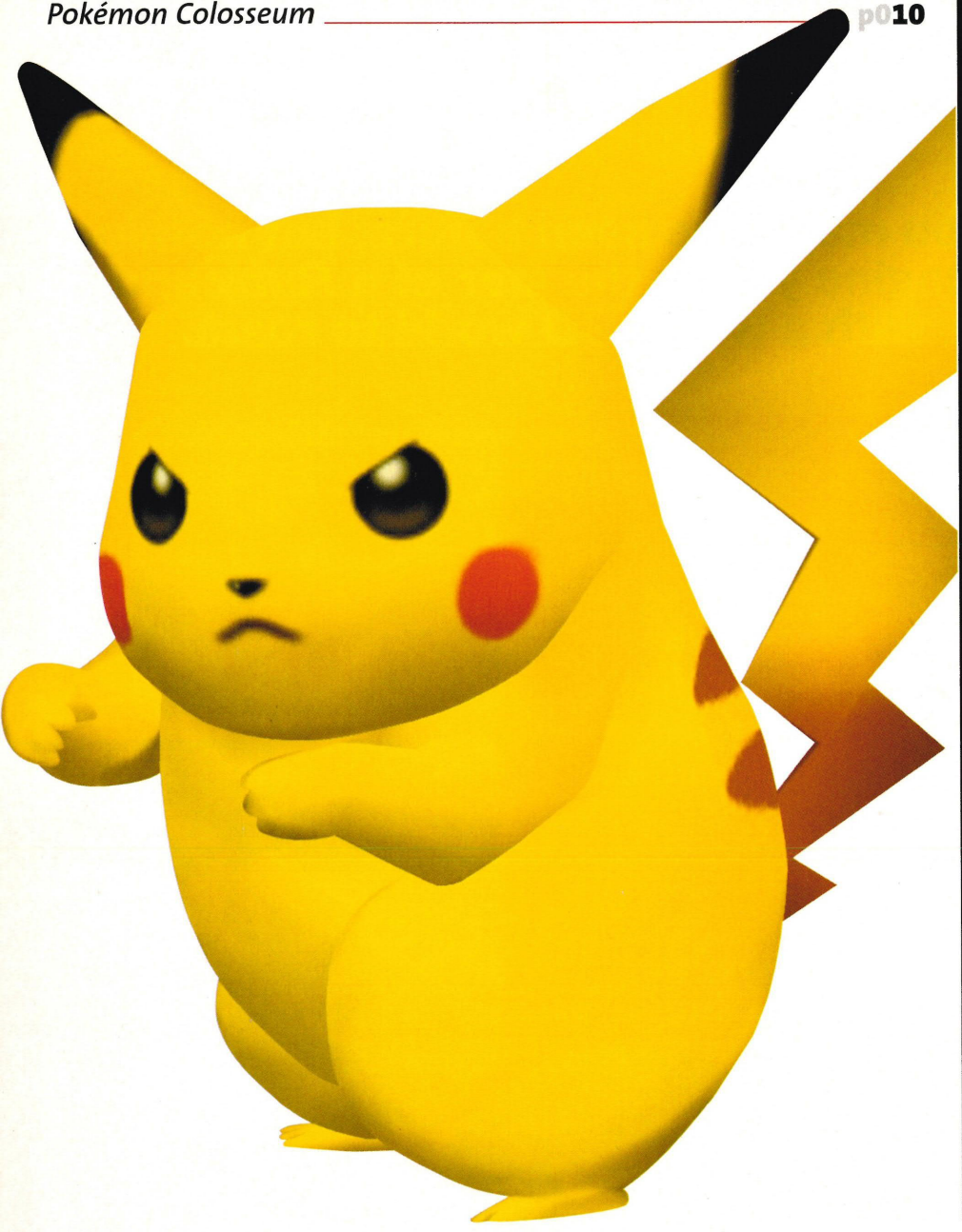
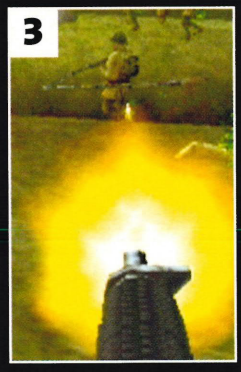
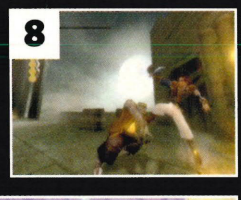


10 Things we didn't know last month...

1 RPGs can be hilarious (*Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga*, p76) **2** We were right! (*True Crime: Streets of LA*, p86) **3** War can be tedious (*Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*, p82) **4** You'd send us dirty laundry (Your Mail, p126) **5** A game would escape the software house before it had been started, let alone finished (*Hugo Bukkazoom!*, p102) **6** Groudon would look this scary in 3D (*Pokémon Colosseum*, p10) **7** Pac-Man would still be THE MAN (*Pac-Man vs.*, p62) **8** Dean would don parachute pants and play with royalty all night (*Prince of Persia*, p48) **9** There were 19 better games than *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004* this year (The Best Games of 2003) **10** Mike would know the Mushroom Kingdom like a London cabbie knows the Square Mile (*Double Dash* short cuts, p106)





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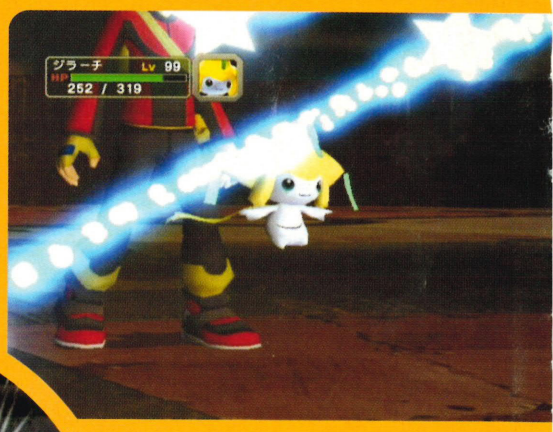
Pokémon Col

Pokémon in 3D you may have seen before, but nothing as cool as this. Imagine you're the star of a _Ruby_ and _Sapphire_ cartoon, with a whole 3D world to roam.

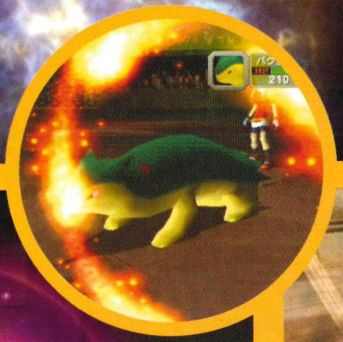
Turn your mind back. Go on, beyond that jam doughnut you've just eaten, past the last episode of *The Simpsons* you watched the other day. In fact, go right back to August 2000 when GameCube and GBA were first unveiled. What a day; bladders bursting all over the place as eyes clamped on *Luigi's Mansion*, *Metroid* and *Zelda*. Okay, so Link changed a lot, but do you remember seeing Meowth's Party with all your favourite Pokémon shakin' their booty to the riffs on his guitar – and all in lush 3D? How cool did that look?

Fast-forward three and a half years and for the first time *Ruby* and *Sapphire* Pokémon are in 3D on GameCube, but the monster mashing isn't just confined to the battle arena. We may have been sceptical when we first saw this at E3, but it's certainly changed this time around.



osseum

ピカチュウ♂ Lv 99
HP
198 / 198



ブラッキー♂ Lv 40
HP
129 / 129
EXP

カイオーガ Lv 100
HP
336 / 336

ジラーチは 体力を
回復した！

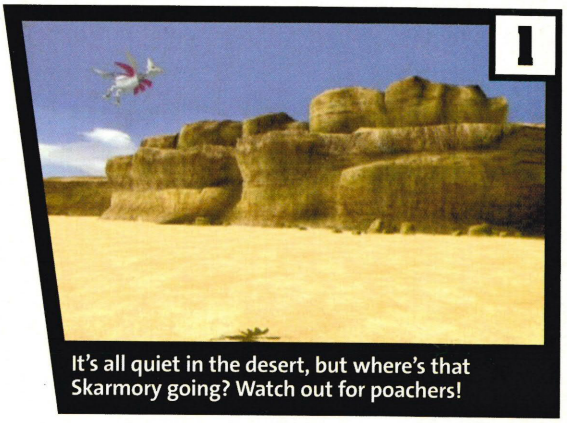
The full story

New teams, new enemies...

Teams Aqua and Magma are nothing compared to the conniving opponents you've got to confront in *Colosseum*. The main enemy in the game is Team Shadow, a band of mercenaries who turn Pokémon Dark by using special machines in the headquarters of Team Snatch. As their name suggests these guys love to nick stuff, taking Pokémon back to their HQ in Ekuro Canyon.

And surprise, surprise, you've got to stop their master plan to create the ultimate Dark Pokémon by defeating their Trainers using the help of Mirei – a female Trainer who senses the darkness in Pokémon.

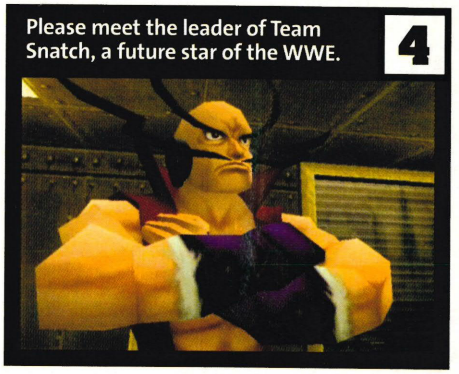
The Scenario mode kicks off as you plant a bomb at Team Snatch's hideout, leap onto your Speeder Bike and power across the desert, Snatch Machine in hand. Can you save all the Dark Pokémon? Well? CAN YOU?!

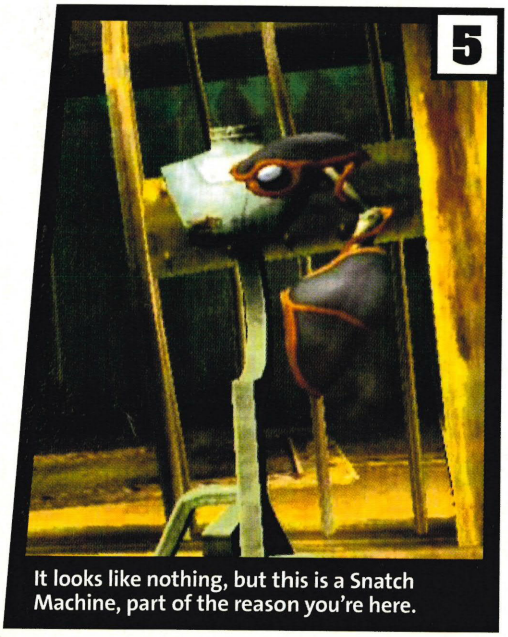


It's all quiet in the desert, but where's that Skarmory going? Watch out for poachers!

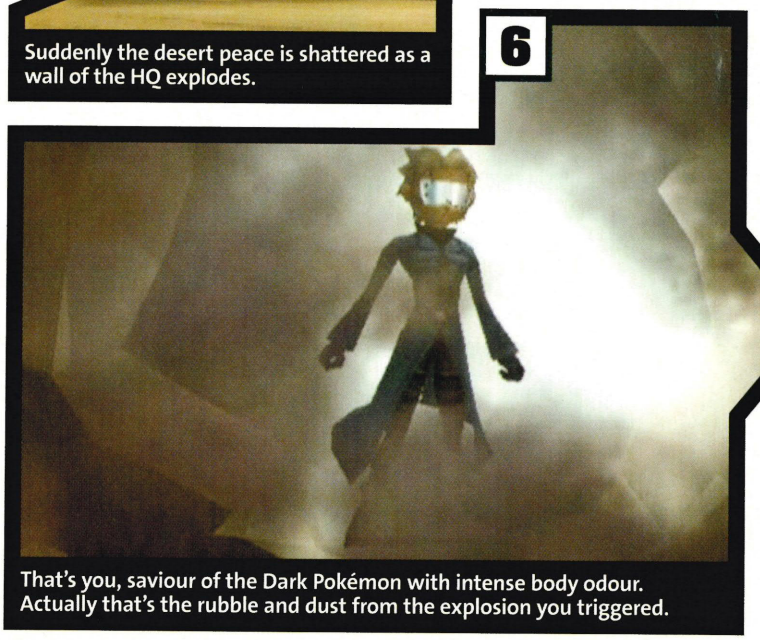
He's heading for this hideout. Check out the headquarters of Team Snatch.

Suddenly the desert peace is shattered as a wall of the HQ explodes.





It looks like nothing, but this is a Snatch Machine, part of the reason you're here.



That's you, saviour of the Dark Pokémon with intense body odour. Actually that's the rubble and dust from the explosion you triggered.

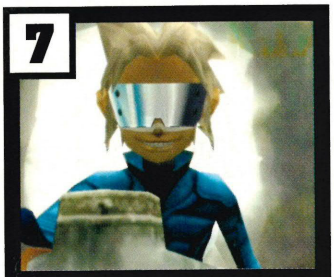
Unlike the previous N64 *Stadium* games the action now lets you roam a complete 3D world, the all-new Oore region, where *Ruby* and *Sapphire* monsters and 67 *Gold* and *Silver* creatures appear en route. You'll kick off with just two, Umbreon and Espeon, but you'll soon be hot on the heels of Metagross, Heracross and those infamous mutts, the Legendary Dogs. Even Celebi pops his onion-shaped head out of retirement for a blast at the 3D big time.

Developed by new Nintendo collaborators, Genius Sonority, you'll get to travel across the region, finding different towns complete with Poké Marts and Poké Centres all in glorious 3D. You'll get to see your team re-energised at the Poké Centres and see tons of awesome items, including Poké Balls ready for sale. Trainer battles aren't restricted to indoor arenas though as you'll be unleashing your Pokémon out in the wilderness, in training schools and even on building sites. You can even try chatting to Pokémon who fly, run or crawl alongside their Trainer and listen to their cries.

Your goal is to find the Dark Pokémon, a breed of creature that's had its heart sealed. You've got to capture them and set about healing the poor little fellas. Dark Pokémon have five health bars, the more they have, the darker they are. At its darkest the creature only has one attack, Dark Rush, but by healing it the Pokémon gains more moves. To heal the poor mite you've got to use an all-new command, Call Out, to calm it down. This replaces the old Run command and pulls your Pokémon out of its Hyper State that makes it

"Poké Marts and Poké Centres – both in full 3D on your Cube."

7



Being the star you need shades. It's in the contract.

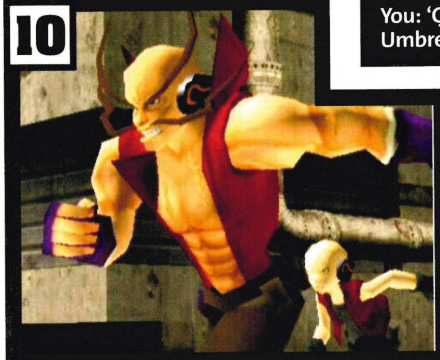
8

You: 'Quick Umbreon, before anyone spots us!' Umbreon: 'I'm right with you boss'.

9

Being a Psychic, she obviously knew you were coming, so Espeon got the double seat quick.

10



'Why you little...!' Team Snatch try catching you before you escape.

11 Getaway vehicles look so much smarter in Oore region

12

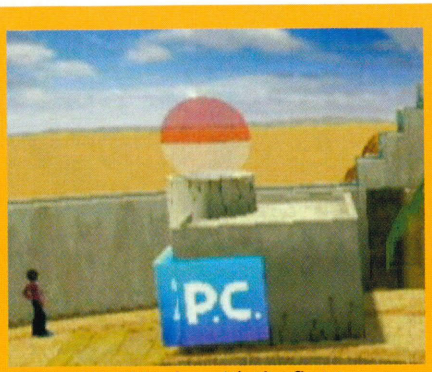
Mike used to have a bike like this except it had stabilisers and a little pink horn.

14 You'd better not stand there chaps.

Detonator in hand, 60mph on the clock, you're safe to blow this place sky high.

15

Cue close-up of Pokémon Trainer with his stereotypical huge spam, spiky hair and massive eyes. No wonder you need huge shades, pal.



Remember this place, it's the first town you come to in the game. Look there's even a Poké Centre in 3D!

God wasn't happy with Umbreon after it peed behind the couch during *EastEnders*. Take this bolt of lightning, mutt!

Dark. They'll also get better if you keep them in your team or put them in a Day Care Centre.

Travelling Oore is an awesome experience and a 3D *Pokémon* world is just what we've been waiting for. Movement is restricted though, you can't just head out into the unknown whenever you want. Specific places are marked on your map for you to travel between so there's no true sense of adventure as seen in the handheld quests. Some areas also look a little too bland in places and characters love to glide over the surface as if places like the Oore desert are made of ice.

Those looking forward to some inventive mini-games like those in *Pokémon Stadium* will be disappointed, too. But when a game puts you in the middle of an adventure that gives you a real feeling of the classic cartoons you'll forget all

Somewhere out there...

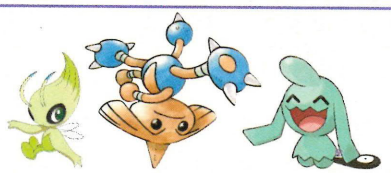
The region of Oore where the game takes place has tons of areas to explore and Trainers you'll meet along the way.

Once you've escaped from Team Snatch's hideout you arrive at your bolt-hole, a post-apocalyptic scene if ever there was one, where a ruined train lies sunken in the desert sand. Inside you'll find a TV where reports are coming through of a police bust on Team Snatch's HQ. It's now your mission to get to the nearby city and find an ally so you can start hunting down those elusive Dark Pokémon. Here are just a few of the places you'll see on your travels.

Ageto Village

This is where the best Poké Trainers go when they're old and can't control their bladders. Mirei's grandparents live here and you'll learn about the power to cure Dark Pokémon, too.

Pokémon Watch:
- Celebi
- Hitmontop
- Wynaut



Paira Town

Visit the cops and the town's colosseum. Someone's nicked the machine that powers the stadium and it's your job to go and find it. Once done, you can enter the competition.

Pokémon Watch:
- Psyduck
- Zubat
- Flaffy
- Igglybuff

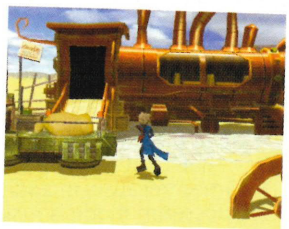
Battle Mountain

Deal with the nine Pokémon Trainers on the mountain and you'll receive the Flute of Time. Using this instrument you'll be able to summon Celebi in the Sacred Forest.

Pokémon Watch:
- Sandshrew
- Graveler
- Kadabra
- Larvitar

Your hideout

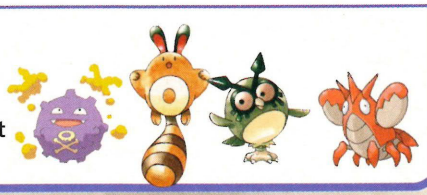
This train is your first port of call. Check out the TV inside and watch out for Willy who will come at you with his two Zigzagoons just as soon as you step outside.



Fenas City

Here you'll rescue Mirei and spot the first-ever Poké Mart and Poké Centre in 3D. Expect to fight Team Snatch with their Koffing and Corphish and save your first Dark Pokémon.

Pokémon Watch:
- Koffing
- Sentret
- Hoothoot
- Corphish

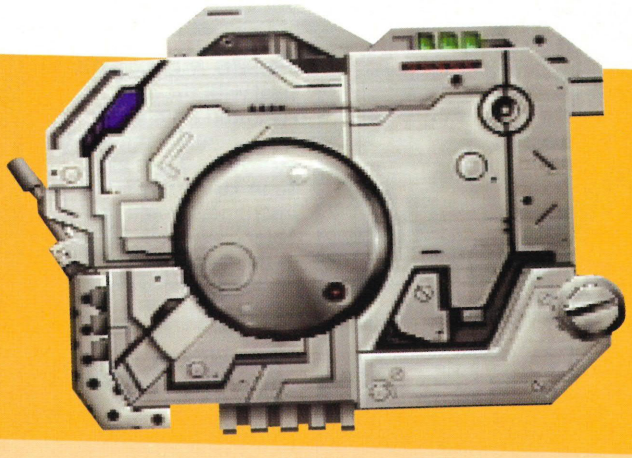


Get organised

Part mobile, part PC, check out the new breed of Poké Gear.

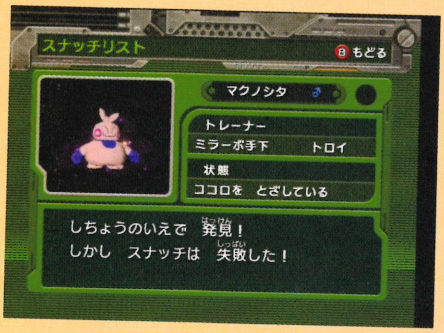
We've had the Pokédex, Poké Gear and Pokénav – all very useful – but in *Pokémon Colosseum* you've got something even better to play with – the Pokémon Digital Assistant, or PDA for those without the time to use long words.

This device is a cross between a mobile phone and the old Pokédex so you can swot up on your Pokémon knowledge and view the ones you've caught – all in sweet 3D.



Snatch list

This menu is just like a Pokédex and will give you loads of information about its original Trainer and if they are still Dark.

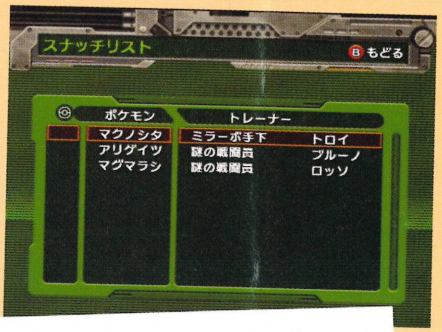


Memo list

Here you can see all the Pokémon you've found and battled as well as hearing their cry. You can also zoom-in and rotate them.

Email

You're not alone travelling Oore – regular updates will offer hints on what to do next. Keep an eye on this for sure.



"It's a totally new direction; the wishes of *Pokémon* fans have finally been answered."

about the old games like tumbling Togepi and gutsy Golbat.

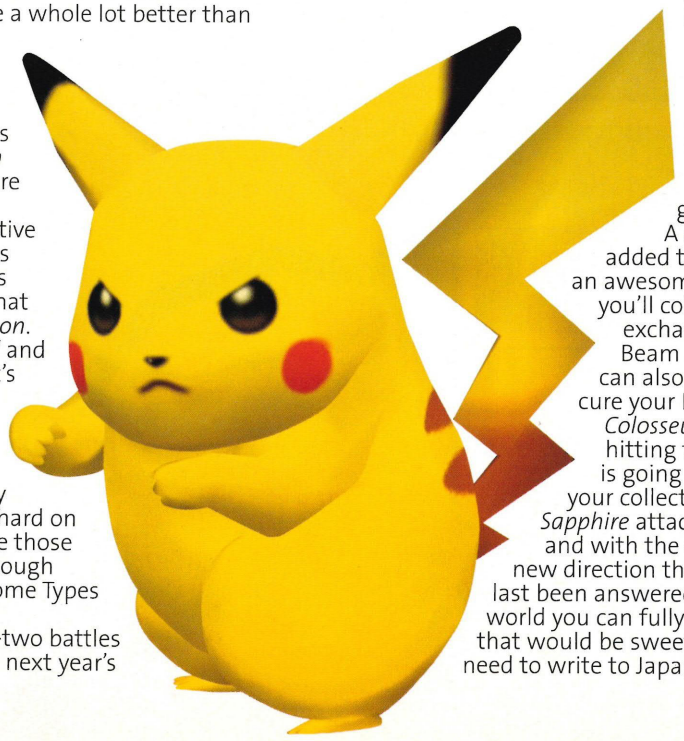
That's not to say the GC version doesn't nod to the N64 games because, in addition to Scenario mode, the Colosseum mode is just like the battles you saw in *Stadium*, with a few next-gen adjustments thrown in.

As battle animations go they are a whole lot better than *Stadium* from the moment your Poké Balls are hurtling towards a rival and your Pokémon burst out to confront the enemy. Throw in some pretty cheesy battle anthems to turn up the heat and *Colosseum* will certainly satisfy all you hardcore Pokémaniacs out there.

The attack animations are inventive and seeing the new attacks such as Groudon's Earthquake and Kyogre's Water Pulse in full-on 3D is just what you want if you're into your *Pokémon*. Remember when you first saw *Red* and *Blue* creature attacks in 3D? Well it's that feeling all over again, but this time with GC power.

Now there are no Cups to win, but each of the six colosseums has specific rules of Pokémon entry so you'd better have trained them hard on your GBA. If not you can always use those you've captured on your travels through Oore or the computer will select some Types at random for you.

As in *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, two-on-two battles are now in 3D as well and, just like next year's *Crystal Chronicles*, up to four of you can battle together at the same time, but three will need GBAs and a copy of *Ruby* or *Sapphire* to select commands from the menus.



The Pokémon action doesn't end there though. Now there's Battle Mountain – a kind of Royal Rumble for Pokémon (thankfully without the sweaty spandex-wearing juggernauts). Here you can take on 100 Trainers as they get progressively harder, so you'll need some exceptional Pokémon with some killer moves if you're going to go all the way to the top.

A cheeky incentive has also been added to this mode to help you become an awesome Trainer. By winning battles you'll collect Poké Coupons which can be exchanged for old favourites like Ice Beam and Psychic TMs. Various Herbs can also be bought, which all add up to cure your Dark Pokémon.

Colosseum is a few months away from hitting the UK, but for Pokémon fans this is going to be another title worthy of your collection. Seeing the new *Ruby* and *Sapphire* attacks in 3D makes all the difference and with the developers heading in a totally new direction the wishes of *Pokémon* fans have at last been answered. It's easy to do, now let's see a world you can fully roam around just like in Hyrule – that would be sweet. Pass me some paper, Dean, I need to write to Japan... ***Tim Street***

Pokémon stuff you *can* get

Pokémon Colosseum won't be out for a few months yet, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy loads of *Pokémon* games this Christmas.

As we exclusively revealed last month, two new *Pokémon* Super Paks are already on the high street begging to be bought – especially if you haven't got a copy of *Ruby* or *Sapphire*. These Paks contain a copy of the game, Pokémon carry case and best of all a red or blue GBA SP complete with Kyogre or Groudon varnished on the top.

In addition to *Ruby* and *Sapphire* there's more handheld magic with *Pokémon Pinball Ruby & Sapphire*. It's similar to the original, with a new Pokédex to fill as you travel across Hoenn on the two tables and evolve your creatures.

Cool new *Pokémon* games and kit for Xmas

Somebody's been feeding Croconaw something a little special. Just look at its eyes

Check out that dude's hair – it even looks like a Poké Ball. And take a look at his Power Ranger sidekicks!

Essentials

The developer: Genius Sonority
What it's done: This is their first GameCube game, but some of the team are ex-Dragon Quest developers.
Multiplayer: 1-4 players
Connectivity: Hell yeah, baby. This is the game connectivity was invented for – you can see all your captured Pokémon in 3D, but make sure you keep training those beasts hard
The publisher: Nintendo
Release: TBC
Review: sometime next year, we reckon

Predicted score
Nintendo has worked hard to offer something new and that must be applauded. It's looking like the best GC Pokémon game of next year.

***NOM UK* Predicts 80%+**

Some of the original Pokémon like Pikachu are in the game, does that mean I can transfer my Pokémon collection from *Red* and *Blue*?
That's a no-go, my friend. *Colosseum* will only allow you to transfer your Pokémon from either *Gold*, *Silver*, *Ruby* or *Sapphire* versions of the game. The soon-to-be-released *Pokémon Fire Red* and *Green Leaf* (enhanced GBA versions of *Red* and *Blue*) will also work, but these aren't even out in Japan until the end of January.

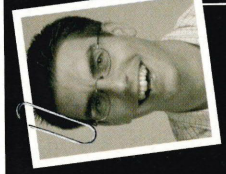
Can I play my Game Boy Advance adventure in high speed?
Sorry to be the bearer of bad news yet again, but you won't be able to do this either. That's 'cos there's the GB Player in the shops that lets you play GBA games on your TV. If they also did this in *Colosseum* there'd be no reason to buy the GB Player, silly!

I know they aren't out here at the moment, but I remember seeing *Pokémon* e-Reader games in *NOM* ages ago. Do they work with this?
A new set of 24 Battle e-Cards are out on Christmas Day in Japan, offering four new arenas and 20 Trainers to fight. There's still no word on an official UK release date for the e-Cards, but rest assured you'll hear about them first in *NOM UK* when we get the news.

I've heard that there's a bonus disc in Japan for *Colosseum*. What's all that about, eh?
Well, Nintendo haven't stopped with the two *Zelda* collector's discs and have released a bonus disc that you'll pick up if you've ordered a Japanese copy of *Colosseum*. This disc will give you extras you can use in the game, including Pikachu with a Light Ball attached, a Master Ball to get the meanest of Pokémon, one PP Max and the chance to get Celebi if you get further into the game.

So c'mon, what's the best bit so far?
Seeing the relative sizes of Pokémon on GBA is hard, but on 'Cube they look blinding. Just seeing the huge ass of Wailord dwarfing tiny Pikachu in 3D makes for some memorable moments.

And what's dodgy?
Scenario mode is wicked, but after a few hours we were already quite a way into it. Either take a break and play Battle Mountain or you could have this licked after a few plays.



Trust me, I've played it

Having played the first two *Stadium* games I was sceptical about this. Just what could be different from the previous games? Well I've been pleasantly surprised so far with the new ideas. *Pokémon* fans will love it and there's enough here to give *Stadium* veterans an enjoyable quest.

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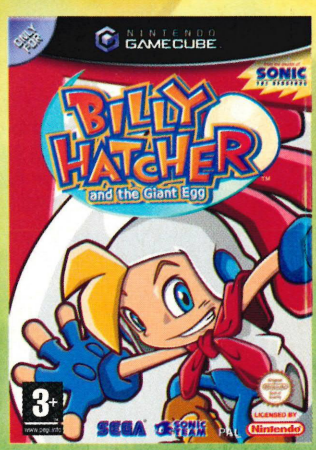
WAKE UP TO A NEW BREED OF SUPERHERO



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What We Know

All the Nintendo news you need

New machine on the way!

Nintendo drops a bombshell on your Christmas turkey: new hardware will be unveiled at E3.

Is this what Nintendo are teasing us with?

Nintendo has confirmed it will unveil a brand-new games console in 2004. The venue for this momentous event will be the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) which takes place at the end of May in Los Angeles. E3 is the biggest games show in the world, so it's the perfect event for Nintendo to flex its muscles and make the gaming competition cringe like scolded children.

Intriguingly though, nobody outside of Nintendo Japan knows what this new machine is all about. But it's what the machine ISN'T that's causing the real shockwaves through gaming circles.

"The nature of the product has not been announced", a Nintendo spokesperson told *NOM UK*, "but we can confirm it is not the successor to GameCube or Game Boy Advance."

Sorry? What was that? NOT the successor to GBA or GameCube?! Then what the hell is this thing? Clearly Nintendo thinks that there's room in the average Nintendo fan's life for a third machine. Fascinatingly, the Japanese announcement refers to "a conglomeration of hardware and software". That got our minds a-buzz.

In Japan and all over Asia, TV games are booming. For the unfamiliar, we're referring to joypads with built-in games that plug straight into your TV – in anyone's language, the very definition of "a conglomeration of hardware and software". Let's roll this on, shall we?

Nintendo has just shipped its iQue device in China (basically it's an N64 TV game), so it has the expertise. Of course, there'd need to be a big new game on the thing to make it worthwhile. And what big new game have Nintendo gone awfully quiet on of late? That's right – the next Mario game.

It's fun to speculate, isn't it kids? But the second any more cold, hard facts (or juicy rumours) surface, you'll read them here first. Because nobody is closer to Nintendo than *NOM UK*.

Virtua Fighter RPG

First-ever pics of Cyber Generation. Oh yes!

"Here's our *Virtua Fighter* RPG!" said Sega Japan, before showing us a game that wasn't what we were expecting. You see, Sega's Yu Suzuki has previously confirmed that a GameCube-exclusive big-head RPG called *Virtua Fighter Quest* was in the works. This is called *Virtua Fighter: Cyber Generation*.

But yes, it is the same game. The *Virtua Fighter* characters appear only to play a fleeting role in the game, as the star is your standard weedy RPG hero. It has also now been confirmed for PS2 as well, but we know you'll want a peek at these cool pics anyway.

WIN the Famicom SP

We got one and one of you lot gets to have it!

Look at the picture. For most of you, that's the closest you'll ever get to the super-ultra-mega-limited-edition Famicom SP. There are only 3,000 of these babies in the world and only REALLY stupid money on eBay is ever going to buy you one.

That's why you need to win it. It's an extraordinary prize, so there'll be no obvious question here. Nope, we want to make sure it goes to the person that wants it the most. You've got thirty words to convince us that's you. We'll start you off with "Give ME that SP, because..." and the rest is up to you. Thirty words. Any more and you're disqualified. Shut up – we won't listen.

We'll print the ten best entries and the winner, right here in the mag. Entertain us, make us cry, disgust us, whatever you feel will swing the benevolent gaze of *NOM UK* your way. It's a prize well worth humiliating yourself for.

FREE Zelda game

Okay, okay, so it's not that free really...

If you think back, ooh, about six months you'll remember our E3 issue. Specifically, the unveiling of TWO new GameCube *Zelda* games: *Four Swords* and *Tetra's Trackers*. Well, for two now read one as Nintendo is going to issue both games on a single disc of love.

That's good because *Tetra's Trackers*' sports-like competitive gameplay may not have been worth the asking price on its own. With a Japanese release now slipping to February, it's looking like the UK will get it in the Summer. We know you're dying for another proper episode in the *Zelda* series, but believe us: this is one of the only games we've seen so far that makes connectivity seem worthwhile.

***Four Swords* – a great way to make and break friendships**

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

PLAY ON, KIRBY

Okay guys, you can drop the Kirby threat level back to Def Con 3. When HAL Labs guru, Masahiro Sakurai, quit the company in August, his pink creation looked in serious jeopardy. Speaking to *Nintendo Dream* magazine in Japan, HAL Labs confirmed that a new Kirby game was in the works. GameCube? GBA? Well, that's unknown as yet. But take comfort that the pinkest guy in games lives on.

PHAN CLUB

At the present time, it stands as GameCube's sole venture into the brave new world of online gaming. *Phantasy Star Online* has popped up on a few other consoles as well and the overall user numbers point at a rosy future for the RPG. Sega claims it has had more than 600,000 paying visitors to the online world of Ragol, which is a pretty staggering number.

GAMECUBE BACK IN PRODUCTION

Hey, we told you not to worry. GameCubes are once again rolling off the production line at Nintendo, after the manufacturing was halted in February to clear stock. Many idiots saw this initial move as the death knell for our beloved Cube, but they're eating their words now as a sales spike has seen Nintendo consolidate second place in the European console market.

***METROID* MASTERY**

We love *Metroid Prime*. And we're good at it, or at least we thought we were. But there's a guy who calls himself 'Radix' that makes us look extremely lame. He can plough through the whole game on Normal getting 100% of the items in a staggering one hour and thirty seven minutes. Of course he's well rehearsed and you need to be to get time from the average first-time clock time of around 14 hours. You can watch him do it here: www.planetquake.com/sda/mp

BEST NES GAME EVER?

It's *Dragon Quest III*, according to a poll carried out by Tokyo's Metropolitan Museum of Photography. In fact, four *Dragon Quest* games showed up in the top 10. Second was *Super Mario Bros.*, third was the original *Mario Bros.* and *Legend of Zelda* came fourth. The big shock was *Super Mario Bros. 3*, languishing in 12th spot.

IBM ONBOARD FOR N5

American computer giant IBM has announced that it's going to provide the processing grunt for the next generation Nintendo machine. IBM makes the 'Gekko' chip that powers GameCube and is reportedly working on an application of its PowerPC technology for that machine's successor.

FREE Zelda games!

Nintendo gets its bonus disc to the hardcore in a hurry!

Last month, we talked about the *Legend of Zelda* bonus disc that was in the new *Mario Kart: Double Dash* hardware bundle. And yes, we boo-hooed a bit that established Nintendo gamers were missing out on a seriously collectable disc. We speculated it'd show up in the Stars catalogue and did it ever. As quickly as December 1st, in fact.

The 4,500 points required to bag it was a big ask. Our own Mike Jackson went from jubiliation to despair, dropping all his points on the OLD bonus disc before the new one came up. As expected, the new disc flew out of there in a couple of hours. A thousand went up just after 2pm and a little over two hours later they were all gone. The wise among you would have been on the spot, as we gave you the date on our website: www.nintendomagazine.co.uk Don't fret though, because Nintendo says there will more up soon.

We've been hammering the bonus disc here at *NOM UK* and some of these games we haven't laid eyes on in literally years. A word of warning, though: the disc only runs on 60hz mode. Here are some thoughts on what you'll get.

LEGEND OF ZELDA (NES)

We recognised loads of creatures in this one and the dungeon layout set a blueprint for the series that still thrills today.

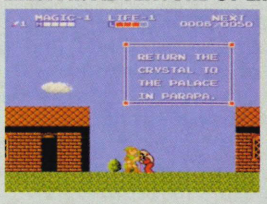
OCARINA OF TIME (N64)

Your fave-ever game, reprised here as it was in the limited-edition *Wind Waker* package. Too awesome to give away? No!

WIND WAKER DEMO

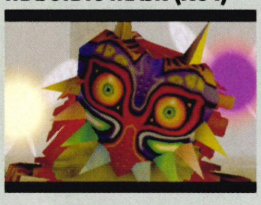
You get a peek at the Stealth, Dungeon and Island sections. It'd make you want *Wind Waker* BADLY if you didn't have it.

ZELDA II: ADVENTURE OF LINK (NES)



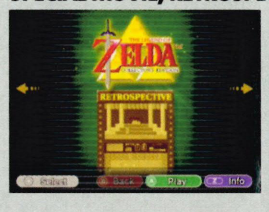
Feels more like an RPG than any other 2D *Zelda*, and a lot like a Mario game, but it's still the black sheep of the family.

MAJORA'S MASK (N64)



Despite dodgy sound, this is a revelation. After *OoT*, many wrote this off as cheap, but it's the darkest *Zelda* of all. Essential.

SPECIAL MOVIE/RETROSPECTIVE

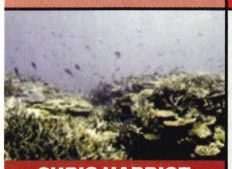
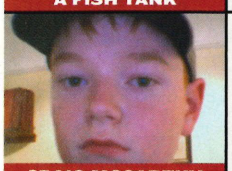
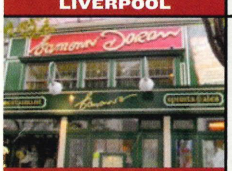


Basically a *Zelda* trailer. Dull. The Retrospective gives a glimpse of all the *Zelda* games, including the cool GBC *Oracle* titles.

Feedback Team

Instant reaction to this month's hot topics from people like you.

Want to have a go? Send your name, address, phone number and email address to *NOM UK*'s Feedback Team, *Nintendo Official Magazine UK*, Emap Active, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 5UW. And please include a half-decent photo.

1 HAS IT BEEN A GOOD YEAR FOR NINTENDO?	2 WHAT SHOULD BE NINTENDO'S PRIORITY NEXT YEAR?	3 WHAT WILL BE NEXT YEAR'S BIG GAME?	4 WHAT DO JAPANESE GAMERS HAVE THAT YOU WANT?	5 WHAT'S BEEN YOUR BIGGEST GRIPE OF 2003?
 CHRIS HARRIOT, A FISH TANK	Yes, very good!	It sould be bringing out more games from the crazy mind of Mr. Miyamoto.	Next year's big game will be *Pikmin 2*.	Japanese gamers get all the best technology first – it sucks!	The biggest disappointment of 2003 was the fact that *Pikmin 2* got pushed back so far so suddenly.
 CRAIG MCCARTHY, LIVERPOOL	Overall I'd say okay. It could've been better and it could have been worse. A few more sales would have been good, though.	To try and get a grip on the market and get more ads on the TV.	Any *Zelda* game that comes out. I personally love all *Zelda* games.	The cool RPGs. They're much better than anything we get.	Lack of online games. PS2 and Xbox owners can play online, why can't we?
 JAMIE DORAN, LIVES IN A BIN	Yes and no. Quality games have been produced and sold, but they ain't sold too many!	Make another GBA! Nokia and Sony are applying the pressure big time now!	*Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes*. What could be bigger than that?	*Winning Eleven 6*. Grrrr!	*The Wind Waker*. It's way too easy and boring.

WIN three GBAs
with *Pokémon Pinball Ruby & Sapphire**

Another competition and even more Nintendo goodies. This time we've got three GBAs, each with a copy of *Pokémon Pinball* to hand out to lucky winners who can answer the question below correctly. *Pokémon Pinball* was reviewed last month and scored a sweet 83%, so no *Pokémon* fan should be without it.

Q. In our review last month, we revealed how many tables are in *Pokémon Pinball Ruby & Sapphire*. How many would that be? a. *10* **b.** *6* **c.** *2*

By text: **'nomcomp PINBALL' plus the letter of your answer**
By phone: **0905 053 1102**
By post: ***Pokémon* comp, *NOM UK*, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW**

*For more comps and further entry details turn to p32

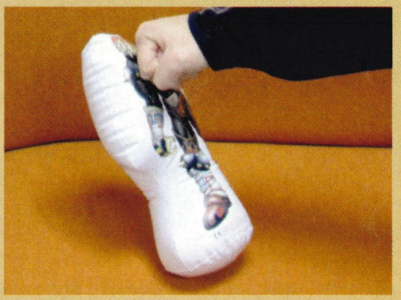
Ninflatable instructions

We're not being patronising, you might not know...

1 Remove Ninflatable from magazine. Liberate it from the polythene prison and notice there are two valves on its person.

2 The valve on the base is a cheeky one. Fill that with water, so your Ninflatable springs back after you chin it. Do that first.

3 The valve on the character's body, that's easy. Fill that with air expelled from your lungs. Blow hard. Erect your enemy.



4 And there he is, all inflated and ready for a pounding. Now hit him. Hit him in the face. That feels good doesn't it?

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

ONE CART LEGEND

The best GBA link-up games are the ones that only need one copy of the game. And now you can add *F-Zero: Falcon Legend* to that pretty short list. Just released in Japan, *Falcon Legend* allows head-to-head racing with just the one kart. We imagine the range of craft and courses increases with a two-cart link-up, but at least you get something for nothing. Smart.

TRADEMARK FRENZY

It seems Nintendo has been busy at the Japanese trademarks office. As well as renewing its 'Famicom' name and logo (possibly hinting at some rebirth for the machine we know as the NES) it's also trademarked 'origin of our TV games'. That might be for an ad campaign, or it may refer to Nintendo's next piece of hardware having some historical significance. Hmmm...

NAMCO KONGAS ON

It's not even out in Japan at the time of writing, but Namco has gone on the record to say that the *Donkey Konga* games will keep on coming. This is hardly surprising, since Namco's taiko drumming game *Taiko no Tatsujin* has seen three different PS2 iterations as well as six coin-op variants. It's an awesome game and we'll know soon if *Donkey Konga* can top it.

MORE MONEY THAN SENSE?

Don't you just hate commoners? It's bad enough that they allow people without yachts to buy the sleek GBA SP, but they insist on just carrying it around in their pockets. As if the very design of the thing was enough to protect the screen from scratches. Well, the rich can prove they are better now. Leather specialist Mulberry is selling a sleek SP carry case for a mere £49. The commoners would probably rather buy two new games. Pah!

MIZUGUCHI SPILLS BRAINS

When Tetsuya Mizuguchi left Sega recently, hardcore gamers everywhere gulped. He's never made a GameCube game, but, with the likes of *Sega Rally*, *Space Channel 5* and *Rez* on his CV, he's clearly a genius. Well, now he's between jobs and writing a weblog at http://mizuguchi.net. Run it through Babel Fish (http://world.altavista.com) and see what the crazy genius has on his mind.

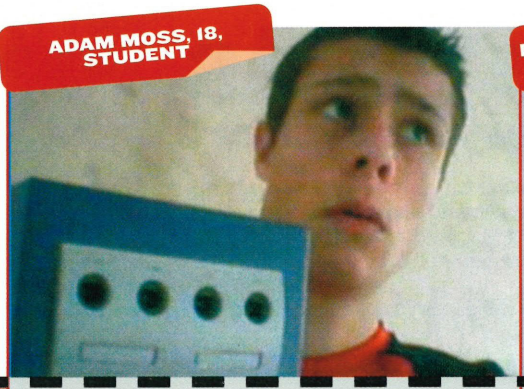
HOT OR NOT

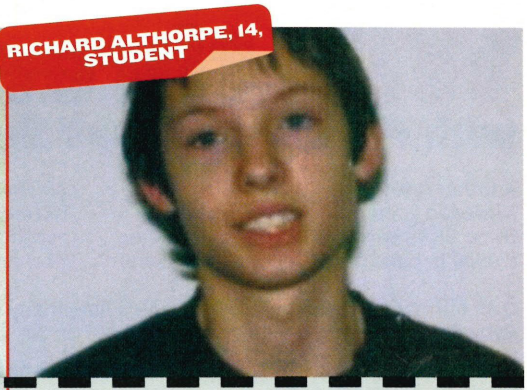
Are you Britain's Sexiest Gamer? What a crap award to win. We'd rather be ugly and GOOD AT GAMES, thanks all the same. Farcically, there has been a competition. Tall northern TV man Vernon Kaye hosted the ceremony on December 11th. At press time, we didn't know who had won, but you can still check out the badly-ripped-off-from-Am-I-Hot-Or-Not site at www.sexiestgamer.com.

Nintendo®

Know-it-all

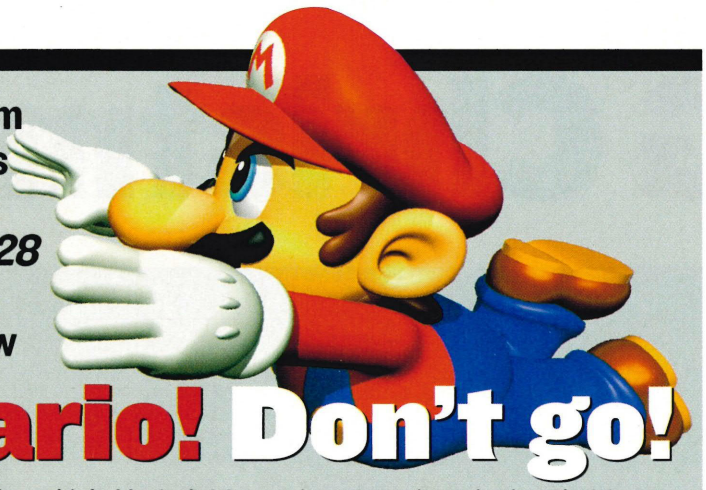
The developers cheated, so we kicked them out!





	ADAM MOSS, 18, STUDENT	RICHARD ALTHORPE, 14, STUDENT
WHAT DID THE *F-ZERO* EXPANSION DISC, RELEASED ON 64DD IN JAPAN, LET YOU DO?	**"Umm, it let you have extra ships?" (0)** Moss, that's hardly a turbo start is it? It let you make your own tracks, man.	**"Umm... er. Play against more characters and add more tracks?" (1)** We were looking for 'track editor'. But you were closer than Moss.
WHICH *SUPER MARIO KART* CHARACTER HAS TO BE UNLOCKED IN *DOUBLE DASH*?	**"Toad." (1)** Yes. Imagine if it was Mario? Many children would surely have cried.	**"Toad." (1)** Well, it looks like everyone's bought *Double Dash* already. What's Santa gonna bring now, eh?
***MARIO & LUIGI* IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES. NAME THE OTHER TWO.**	**"Umm. *Super Mario World* and the first one... *Super Mario Bros.*" (0)** What are you a student of? Certainly not Nintendo. Not even close.	***"Super Mario World, Super Mario 64."* (0)** You as well? No, that's not right. Anyone remember *Paper Mario*? Hello?
WHAT'S THE FINAL MASK YOU GET TO USE IN *MAJORA'S MASK*?	**"Oh no. Umm, the Mask of Majora? I've got that game as well!" (0)** Sometimes the obvious answer is the right one. But not in this instance.	**"Is it the... I know the... Deity mask?" (1)** It is. Do you think we should give away an actual Fierce Deity Mask as a cover gift?
HOW DOES THE US SUPER NES CONTROLLER DIFFER FROM THE UK ONE?	**"Was is larger? No, it had more buttons. No, the buttons were a different colour!" (1)** Make up your mind, Moss! You got there in the end.	**"The buttons were different colours." (1)** Yes. All dirty greys and purples. It makes us glad we're not American.
WHAT EFFECT DOES COLLECTING ALL 120 STARS HAVE ON THE PENGUIN IN *MARIO 64*?	**"I don't know." (0)** So you never got all the Stars? SHAME ON YOU. You missed a fat penguin.	**"Is it.. umm... repeat the question. Does he disappear out of the game?" (0)** Your stalling tactics are no good here, Althorpe. And that's a bad guess.
WHICH GAME SERIES FEATURES MAGNITES, FLOORMASTERS AND BUZZ BLOBS?	**"Can I guess? *The Legend of Zelda*?" (1)** Yep. You'd know them if you saw them. Especially the dirty Floormaster.	***"Metroid?" (0)*** You've risked it and it's backfired. It's a shame, but it happens. To people like you, anyway...
HOW MANY DIFFERENT FIGHTERS ARE THERE IN *SSBM*, INCLUDING THE HIDDEN ONES?	**"Something like 20?" (0)** Yes. Something like 20. Twenty-six in fact, so your 'something' was a bit too vague.	**"Umm... 25, I think." (1)** It's 26, but we'll give it to you. The last one takes AGES to unlock.
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PLAYING IN ETERNAL MODE ON *ETERNAL DARKNESS*?	**"It's easier. Or harder." (0)** Oh my God, Moss. That's the most pathetic answer ever.	**"I haven't played it. I'll guess the cameras are different or something." (0)** Well, BUY IT. You can get it for as little as £15 now. The answer is unlimited health, magic and sanity.
FOR WHICH CONSOLE WAS THE VERY FIRST *WAVE RACE* GAME RELEASED?	**"That's N64." (0)** That's wrong. It was originally a Game Boy game. We know, because we are powerful.	**"Umm, the Super NES?" (0)** Nope, but well done for not guessing N64. It's the Game Boy.
FINAL SCORE	**3** It's upsetting when a CHILD defeats an ADULT. You must be gutted that your extra years counted for nought.	**5** He claimed to have revised for the quiz and it paid off. Even with our super-hard questions, he triumphs.

Want to have a go? Email ***dean.scott@emap.com*** *with your name and telephone number!*



Slip from US boss hints at *Mario 128* 'Cube no-show

Mario! Don't go!

It's absolutely unthinkable, isn't it? *Mario 128* skipping this hardware generation and instead showing up as a launch game on the next home machine, currently codenamed N5. Don't blame us, though. This dark thought was uttered by Nintendo of America's top man, George Harrison, who told CNN that *Mario 128* was "definitely not certain to appear on GameCube".

Obviously, we went screaming to a bemused Nintendo of Europe for clarification. "We have no information on this", they told us. Which actually put our minds at rest. This is the game – let's not forget – that Nintendo took a late decision to not show at E3 2003 for fear of competitors leeching ideas from its genius. It's now nine months further down the line and still no news.

We'll obviously keep you posted with the latest developments, but the message for now is Don't Panic. Mario is never far from Nintendo's mind, as it reiterated to *Nintendo Dream* magazine in Japan. The idea of a new horizontally scrolling Mario game for GBA was mooted and representatives admitted that they were constantly kicking around new ideas for Mario games – witness the awesomeness of *Mario & Luigi*.

Defensive Tactics

Final Fantasy Tactics Advance creators defend their battle system, exclusively in *NOM UK*.

We raved about *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance* in our review in *NOM UK* 135, but hardcore fans soon got in touch to complain. These established *FFT* heads didn't appreciate the changes to the battle system and the random rules it threw up.

Final Fantasy Tactics fans seemed not to enjoy the changes made to the battle system – specifically, the battle judge that would enforce arbitrary and often random rules during battles. Why make these changes to the system? We put this very question to the guys at Product Development Division-4 of Square-Enix. And they answered.

"As a handheld game, we wanted to avoid players having to follow a long scenario and playing for long periods. We aimed to create a game in which players could enjoy themselves with relatively short battles and scenarios whenever they have some time to do so.

"Also, we decided to create a game with a brighter note than the previous games in which we had dealt with heavier concepts such as war, and life and death of people. Each battle was organised not as a real war situation, but more like a sports game.

"During the game, the judge raises a card for a penalty, which should remind you of a soccer match. That's the 'Judgement System'. In a real war situation, you win only if you are stronger than the opponent. In the game, however, you have to change your strategies in accordance with the changes in other relevant elements. You can also select the contents of the judgement rules so that the difficulty level can go down significantly. We wanted players to enjoy the variation of the game play."

Future five

It changes every month. The games we want most of all

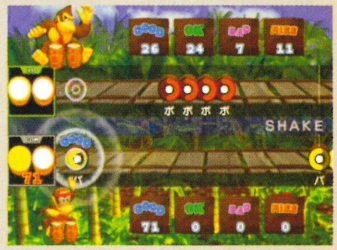
5 *ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS*

Seven people work on the magazine you're holding. Only four of us can play the new *Zelda* game when it arrives. That's bad maths. We're already holding preliminaries to see who gets selected. This month: the caber toss.

4 *POKÉMON FIRE RED* GBA

Yes, yes, yes. We know. More *Pokémon*. But more importantly, those natty little wireless multiplayer adaptors are coming, too. We're total slags for gadgets and tangled wires can have tragic consequences. Do the words R.I.P. Dave McComb ring any bells?

3 *DONKEY KONGA*

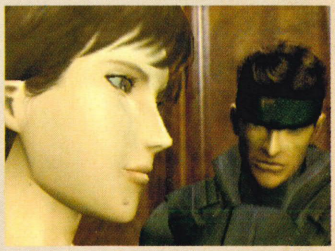


We want to play the bongos with gaming's most instantly recognisable monkey. We want to pat, clap and slap to the rhythm in an entirely non-self-conscious way. And with *Donkey Konga* we will. Just you watch us.

2 *METROID PRIME 2*

You'll see this right here every month until it drops into our filthy mitts. Or until Retro Studios give up game making and retire to the priesthood. If it's half as good as *Metroid Prime*, it's going to KICK ARSE from here to Tallon IV.

1 *METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES*



It's going to the same as the PSone game? Don't make us laugh. The über-geniuses behind *Eternal Darkness* are reshaping this into a modern classic and it looks better than any supermodel pyjama party you care to mention.

The BIG Christmas

THE TV

Are you in the mood for a spot of footy? Bet you don't fancy running about in shorts – it's bloody freezing outside. Instead, you could hook your GameCube up to this awesome 20-inch LCD flat-screen TV, load up *FIFA 2004* and enjoy the game in the warmth and comfort of your home. This super-thin screen displays vibrant colours and a picture of the crispest quality. Question: how sweet would it look in your bedroom? Answer: sweet.

THE DVD PLAYER

Maybe you've already got a DVD player – most people have – but can your one record from the TV straight onto a hard drive? No? Ha! With a 60Gbyte internal hard disk (that's a lot of memory), this can. It can also play and record DVD-Rs, as well as play VCD, CD, CD-R and CD-RW. If you don't know what all that means, we'll translate for you – it's the nuts!

Compo

Christmas is here again. It's a time of giving (or for begging for cool pressies). Your parents are in good spirit, but no matter how generous they seem, if you asked them for an LCD TV and a DVD RAM recorder – over £1,600 worth of kit – would they get it for you? If yes, you're spoilt, but most of us aren't that lucky. However, thanks to Electronic Arts you could win all of this stuff AND six of EA's latest GameCube games, including *FIFA 2004*, by answering a simple question. Regain your calm, then read on...

THE GAMES

As well as all that cool hardware, the main prize winner will get six of EA's latest GameCube games. This includes *LOTR: Return of the King*, *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*, *The Sims Bustin' Out*, *SSX 3*, *Need for Speed Underground* and *FIFA 2004*. Get. Your. Game. On.

THE RUNNERS-UP

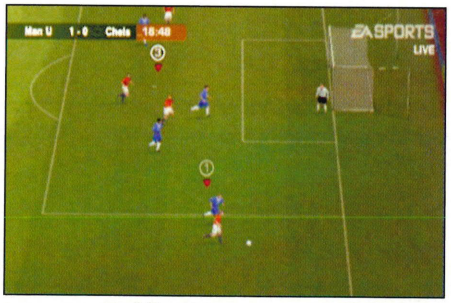
If you don't win the main prize, don't despair – there's still a chance to score, because four runners-up will get a copy of the six games included in the main prize. Okay, so you won't get a high-tech DVD or a swanky TV to play them on, but you'll have enough games to keep you busy well into 2004.

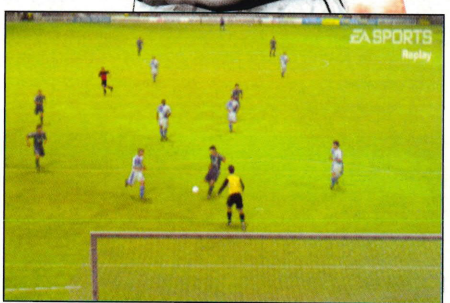
HOW TO WIN

All you need to do is answer this question:

Q: *FIFA 2004* is this year's sequel to which popular football game?

a. *FIFA Millennium*
b. *FIFA 1998*
c. *FIFA 2003*





Just think, you could soon be playing *FIFA 2004* on your new Toshiba LCD TV – you could even record yourself on the DVD.

HOW TO ENTER

By phone
Dial 0905 053 1104, answer the question and leave your name, address and telephone number.

By post
Write your answer clearly on an envelope or postcard and send it to: BIG Christmas Compo, *NOM UK*, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 5UW.

By text message
Text the words nomcomp 'XMAS' and the letter of your answer to 83149. Unfortunately, this service is not available for users of the Virgin network.

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ! All entries for these competitions must be received by 15/1/2004 to qualify.

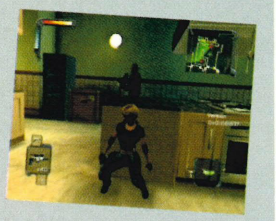
GAME BLITZ

What's incoming on Nintendo...

12/12/2003
- *The Sims Bustin' Out* (GC)
- *Medal of Honor: Infiltrator* (GBA)

19/12/2003
- *The Sims Bustin' Out* (GBA)
- *Need for Speed: Underground* (GBA)

30/1/2004
- *NFL Street* (GC)



6/2/2004
- *Rogue Ops* (GC)

13/2/2004
- *Sonic Heroes* (GC)

20/2/2004
- *Harvest Moon* (GC, GBA)

FEBRUARY 2004
- *Beyond Good & Evil* (GC)
- *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* (GC)
- *World Championship Pool* (GC)
- *Puyo Pop* (GC)

MARCH 2004
- *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* (GC)
- *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (GC)
- *Beyond Good & Evil* (GC)
- *Pitfall Harry* (GC, GBA)
- *Tak and the Power of JuJu* (GC)
- *Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy* (GC)
- *R: Racing Evolution* (GC)

Hardw

Games are software. Here you'll find all

★ CRAP ★★ NOT AS CRAP ★★★ AVERAGE ★★★★ WICKED ★★★★★ THE NUTS

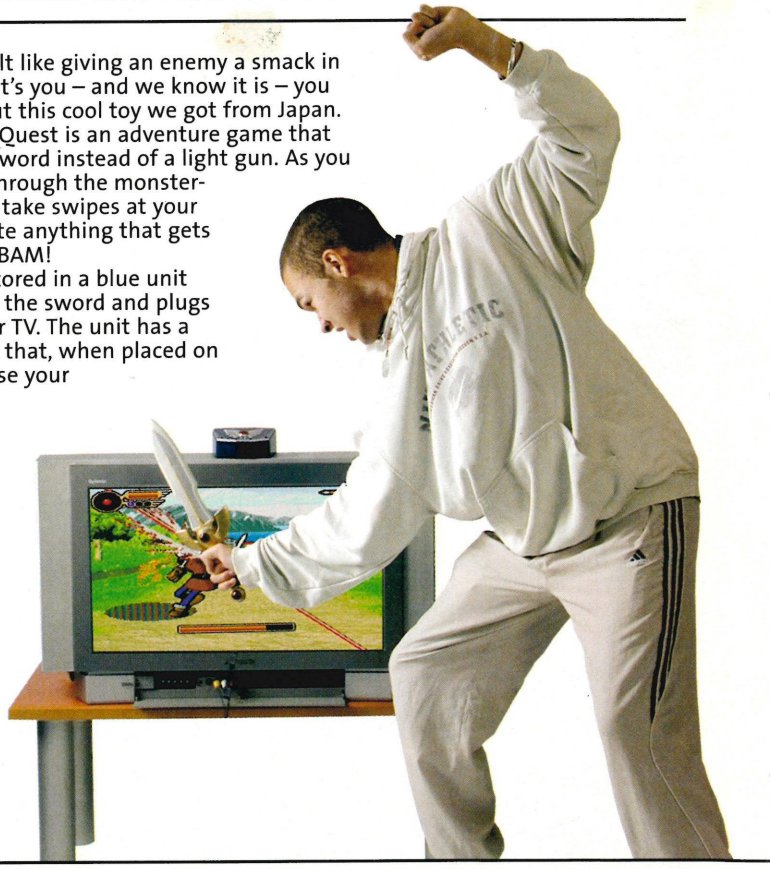
Slice 'n' dice, baby

Pads? Who needs 'em? Hack 'n' slash enemies on TV for real!

Have you ever felt like giving an enemy a smack in the chops? If that's you – and we know it is – you need to check out this cool toy we got from Japan. Kenshin Dragon Quest is an adventure game that uses a wireless sword instead of a light gun. As you work your way through the monster-filled world, you take swipes at your telly to decapitate anything that gets in your way. BLABAM!

The game is stored in a blue unit that comes with the sword and plugs directly into your TV. The unit has a little sensor in it that, when placed on your TV, will sense your movements and relay them to the on-screen action. You can even defend and cast spells. We need these sorts of gadgets in the UK because this is seriously cool. For a rundown of how it works, move your eyes over there...

★★★★☆



COLLECTOR'S CORNER

THIS MONTH: MAKE A MINT ON MONKEYS

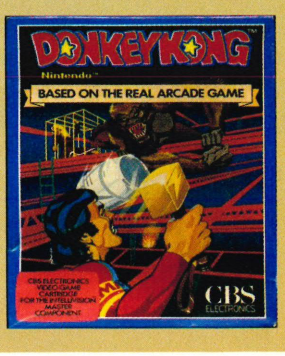
Chris Kohler identifies the things that'll make you rich in years to come

Donkey Kong Vintage Plush
Etone, 1982
Current asking price: around £10

That's right, before DK got a red tie and a snappy attitude, he was a goofy, fuzzy bedtime toy. These DK plush toys – in three different sizes – may have been sold in stores, but were mostly found in grab-a-toy machines and for winning those rigged carnival games. Ah, memories...

Intellivision Donkey Kong
CBS, 1982
Current asking price: around £8

DK played like crap on the Intellivision and allegedly to make up for that CBS ruined the box art. Donkey Kong looks like a hideous alien; a far cry from Miyamoto's cuddly, loveable ape. But LOOK AT MAZZA! Rippled muscles, no hat and a shiny mullet – disgusting!



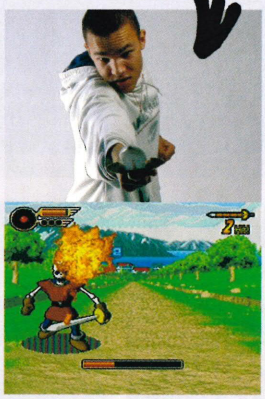
vare

the stuff that isn't.

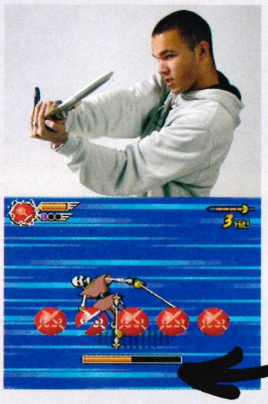
1 Mike holds the sword forward to make his adventurer stride boldly into a dark, dank dungeon. Ahh! Nasty, evil, blue floating things! Slice them to death!

2 This flame-throwing, wizard dude wants some. Mike holds the sword sideways to repel his fiery attacks, then sees him off with a fierce He-Man style forward-slash.

3 Mike escapes, only to be attacked by a skeleton warrior. Chopping him isn't working. Mike summons magic and guides the flames with his blade of power.



4 Time to finish him off. Mike goes irate in front of the telly, swiping through each red globe to activate a killer five-hit combo in a ninja style. Eat sharp metal!



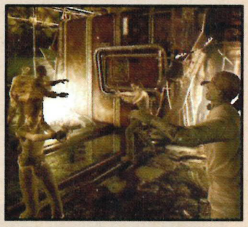
DOM'S DEALS

This month's killer gaming bargains.

GAMECUBE

NBA Courtside £4.99
(www.simplygames.com)

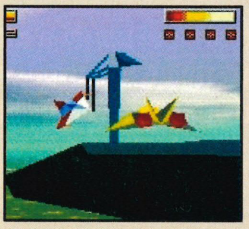
Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II £9.99
(www.woolworths.co.uk)

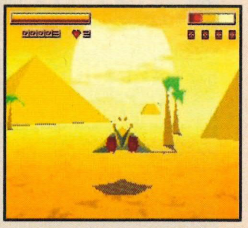


Resident Evil Zero £16.99
(www.play.com)

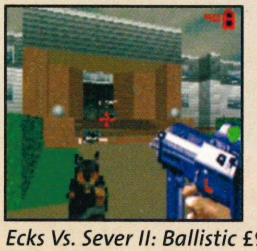
GAME BOY ADVANCE

Turok Evolution £12.99
(www.woolworths.co.uk)





Star X £7.99
(www.play.com)



Ecks Vs. Sever II: Ballistic £9.99
(www.game.uk.com)

USA SPECIAL REPORT

The fans' E3

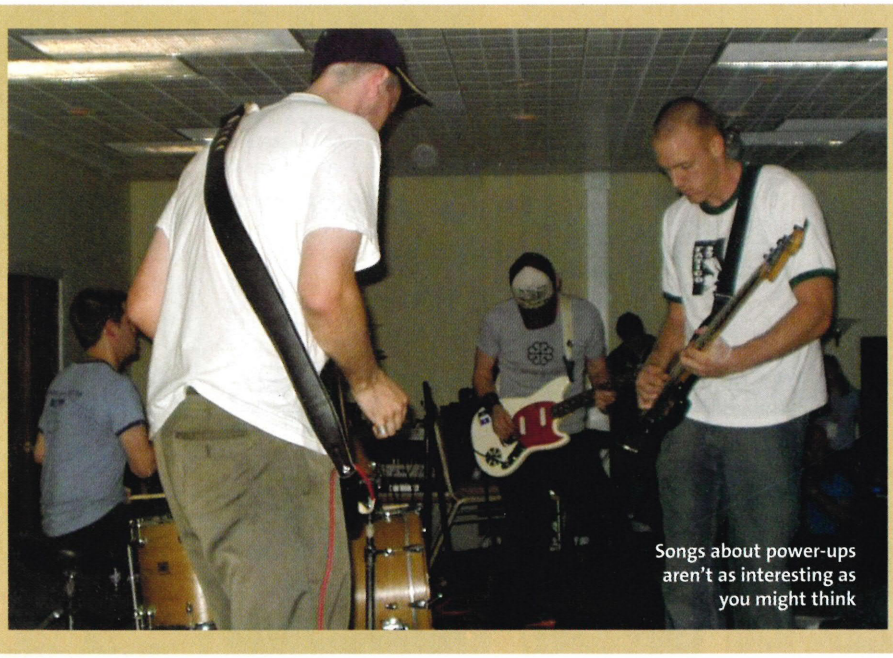
US gamers come together in the backwoods...

This past Halloween, Yankee gamers from up and down the East Coast emerged from the darkness of their parents' basements and converged on the Hotel Clarion in the historic colonial town of Williamsburg, Virginia, which was playing host to the second annual Mid-Atlantic Gamers' Festival, or MAGFest. Following in the grand traditions of Japanese anime conventions and Trekkie gatherings, MAGFest featured panel discussions, vendors selling everything from game music CDs to *Dance Dance Revolution* pads, a video room showing old *Super Mario* cartoons, an auction featuring classic high-priced collectibles, and trivia contests with cash prizes.

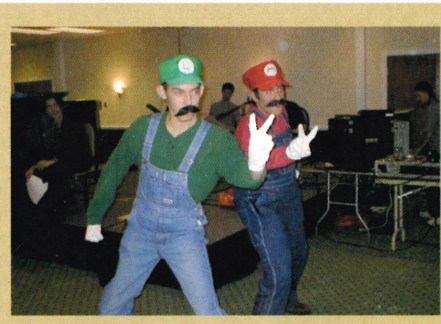
Nintendo junkies turned out in droves and at the end of the first night came the costume contest. Notable prize-winning entrants included a smashing set of *Super Mario Bros.* (as pictured below), a slightly-too-accurate Link, Viewtiful Joe and Maximillian Roivas from *Eternal Darkness*. It's a pity no-one turned up as Alex Roivas – that would've made our day.

Of course, what the kids really showed up for was the live concert on Saturday night. The set kicked off with the game-influenced rapping of DJ Potatoe, followed by performers Virt and Wave Theory, who blasted out some retro NES tunes. Of course, the stars of the night were the legendary Minibosses (www.minibosses.com), whose guitar arrangements of classic tunes like *Mega Man 2*, *Castlevania III* and *Punch-Out* brought down what was left of the house.

Check out www.magfest.org for more pics of the event and loads of information on the next show, scheduled for October 15th-17th 2004.



Songs about power-ups aren't as interesting as you might think



THE NOM SURVEY

Nintendo's done alright

POLL RESULT
YES 58%
NO 42%

We asked: there are certainly a lot of big titles about this Christmas, but has this been a good year overall for Ninte

■ In terms of games, this year couldn't have been bet In terms of sales, Nintendo has its work cut out.
ADAM MARABLE

■ Yes, because there was *Zelda*, the GBA SP, *F-Zero GX* forgetting the almighty *Mario Kart: Double Dash*.
KYLE MARSH

■ This has been a good year for Nintendo. Most of th franchises saw a release and *Pokémon* stormed to the charts yet again.
DOM WALKER

This month we ask:
• Is Nintendo still perceived as being for kids?

Email YES or NO and a brief comment to: michael.jackson@emap.com – don't forget t

Unsung Heroes

Penguin Mother, *Super Mario 64*

You breezed by, but did you ever stop to think about THE TURMOIL

Stuff

Toys... and everything else we can find!

BOARD BEATS! *SSX3* soundtrack available now

Music. It's the food of love. It's also part of the reason, along with sound effects and the noise of controllers hitting the wall, that video gaming isn't a completely silent pastime. Electronic Arts was so pleased with its new *SSX3* soundtrack, that you can now buy it on CD, should you wish to wiggle to the tunes without the distraction of having to slide down a mountain.

It's the kind of music that sounds really annoying if someone's playing it loud next door. All you'd hear is a dull thumping bass noise. Round at theirs though, they'll be grooving to Chemical Brothers, Fatboy Slim and beatier remixes of N*E*R*D and Placebo. It's available, funnily enough, in record shops.

POKÉMON SILVER! Tim's American adventure reaps treasure

Sometimes, the big boss man gets to go to America and you don't. That's a hard fact of life and it happens to us all sooner or later. But while Tim was in the US, he grabbed this beauty – a box of the brand-new *Pokémon-e* Trading Cards. They're like the old cards, but can be swiped through an e-Reader to unlock new Trainers to battle in the GBA's *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*.

The latest from Nintendo on an e-Reader is that "we have no final confirmation as to when this will be launching". But given that e-Reader cards don't require localising, you could well see these Pokémon beauties rolled out next year.

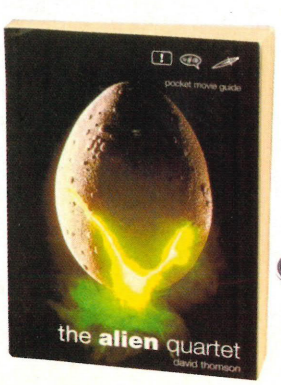
WIN five copies of the Alien Quadrilogy DVD Box set

This box set, out now, contains NINE discs! That's the four movies, plus all the bonus features you'll ever need. We've got five, each with an *Alien* book, thanks to our chums at Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. Please note, this competition is only open to applicants aged 18 or above – we will be checking...

Q. What is the name of the space ship in the first movie?

a. *Nostromo* **b.** *Sulaco* **c.** *Auriga*

By text: **'ALIEN'**
By phone: **0905 053 1103***



*For more details on how to enter, turn to p32

BOBBY TOKYO

Japan inside

Only two complaints so far. It's going well for Bobby!

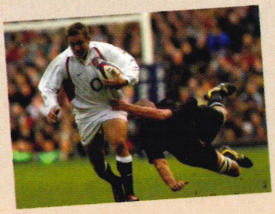
★ Hello to Japan! Is Christmas time, when Jesus is bring the presents and we are eat reindeer for meal! But what is big tree for? Bobby like to be Doshin and pick up Christmas tree and throw at people. But the police are not come in the game. In Tokyo, Bobby get hit in knees with great power truncheon.

★ Have you saw special *Zelda* collector's disc? It have old *Zelda* games on it. In Japan, is so hard to earn. Bobby have to walk 400 METERS to game shop, say "Can I have, please" and man is hand it over. For God's sake, it should be more easy. It take Bobby over ELEVEN MINUTE to be home with disc playing *Zelda* first one. The graphic is AMAZING. Is like even more cel-shading.

★ Bobby has seen new Nintendo machine! Is hardware and software together! Weird, but was in second-hand shop. But has very great NEW MARIO GAME called *Mario Cement Factory*. Graphics processor is so advanced, there is no animation. Only coloured blocks that flick on and off. Music is just go BEEP BEEP BEEP. Me think it made by Pharrell and the Neptunes.

★ Is a disgrace about how *Pokémon Fire Red* is not come in shops until 2004. Bobby Tokyo have needs to catch small creature. Me tried to spray paint a chihauha yellow like the Pikachu, but the paint is get into the dog eyes. He is can't see and keep running into walls. Is not a satisfying pursuit. When me try and squash him inside Poké Ball made from noodle container he barks with much scary power.

★ You not have heard of the rugby sport in Englandish, but me tell you Japan is winning the WORLD CUP this month! Tokyo-boy Jonny Wilkin-SAN is kick winner points against Austria in the last game final! Bobby Tokyo is so excited, he went around kicking over every bins there was! But none of bins had a roast chicken inside like in the video games. One of bins had a dead yellow dog inside, but me put that in there. Sayonara!



DISCLAIMER: The views of Bobby Tokyo may differ from those of *NOM UK*. We in no way endorse the spray painting of small dogs.

WIN Double Dash GC bundles

Just look at the box. It's all colourful and *Mario Kart*-y, and has a *Zelda* Bonus Disc inside. Admit it, even if you already own a GameCube, this is one desirable package. Thanks to Nintendo, we've got two to hand out, as well as a copy of the game for four runners-up. We can see the wave of postcards rushing our way already.

By text: 'DASH'
By phone: 0905 053 1101

Q. Which of these *Zelda* games is NOT included on the *Zelda* bonus disc that comes bundled with the *MK:DD* Pak?

a. *Zelda II: The Adventures of Link*
b. *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask*
c. *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*

ISSUE 134 WINNERS

Competition 1
- James Whyman, *Worksop*
- Katy Jarvis, *Doncaster*
- Sandra Woods, *Stalham*
- Louisa Coates, *Scarborough*
- Wayne Howell, *Hounslow*

Competition 2
- David Douglas, *Carlisle*
- Ryan Chambers, *Gorleston*
- Miss C. Lam, *Slough*
- Ms A Porteous, *Edinburgh*
- M. Higginbotham, *Maulesfield*

Competition 3
Main Prize
- David Kennedy, *Preston*

Runners-up
- Trish O'Gorman, *Surrey*
- David MacDonald, *Roslin*
- David Houldsworth, *Calderwood*
- Mike Cass, *Thatcham*
- Francesca White, *Abingdon*

MARIOKART Double Dash!!

HOW TO ENTER

By phone
Dial 0905 053 110, then add the number of the competition on the end. So, if you're entering the *Mario Kart* competition dial 0905 053 1101 , answer the question and leave your name, address and telephone number.

By post
Write your answer and the competition name clearly at the top of the envelope or postcard. So, for the *Mario Kart* comp, write to: *Double Dash* comp, *NOM UK*, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5UW.

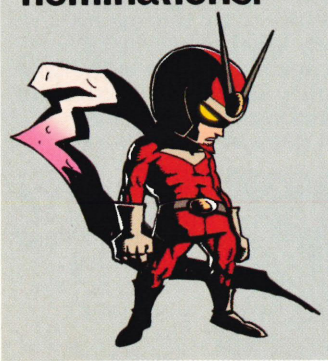
By text message*
Text the words 'nomcomp <keyword>' and then the letter of your answer to 83149. So, if you're entering the *Double Dash* comp and you think the answer is b, type 'nomcomp DASH b'. Our other competitions have their keywords alongside the prize information.

*Unfortunately, this service is not available for users of the Virgin network.

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ! All entries for these competitions must be received by 15/1/2004 to qualify.

Sam and Joe show

Viewtiful and *Prime* notch a hat-trick of nominations.



Usually the BAFTAs are where Hopkins and Winslet go for their annual pat on the back. But of late it seems they're also home to people who know their games – nominees for the inaugural BAFTA Games Awards have just been announced, with *Viewtiful Joe* and *Metroid Prime* scoring three nods each.

Other Nintendo-exclusive titles singled out for acclaim include *The Wind Waker*, *Advance Wars 2* and *Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire* – each getting two nominations. Looking for surprises on the list? *Disney Sports Football* and *Wallace & Gromit* both show in the Children's list and the wholly forgettable *Big Mutha Truckers* appears in 'Animation or Intro'.

The awards ceremony takes place in February 2004.

THE NOM SURVEY

No price cut – we're all rich!

POLL RESULT
YES: 40%
NO: 60%

We asked: with GameCube's price dropping to £79.99, should Nintendo also lower the price of the original GBA?

■ No-one has complained about the price and GBAs are selling more than any other console, so why lower the price?
DOM WALKER

■ No, I think at £60 the Game Boy Advance is great value. However, I do think the SP costs too much.
MIKE AUSTIN

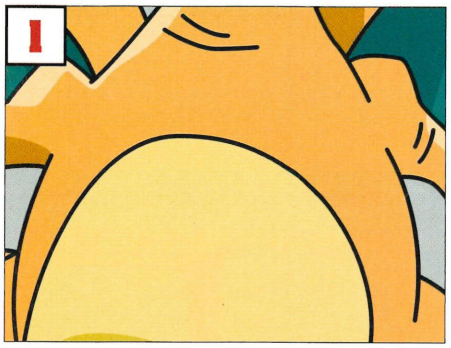
■ I say lower it – no-one is going to buy one if they can get a brand-new GBA SP for only about £25 more, are they?
JAMES STOCK

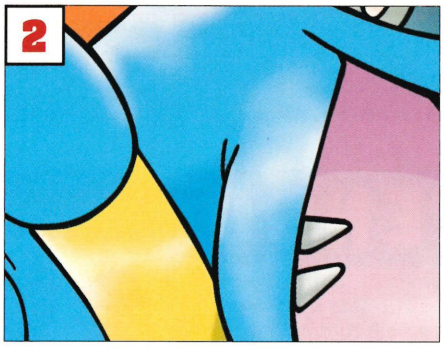
This month we ask:
• Should Nintendo bring the release of its next home console forward to 2004?

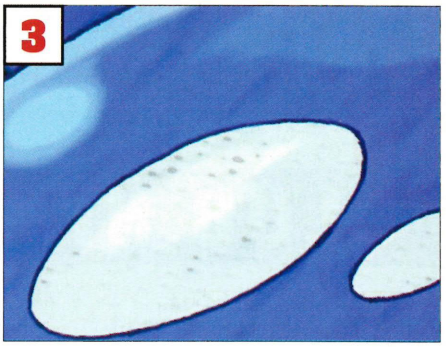
Email YES or NO and a brief comment to: michael.jackson@emap.com – don't forget to include your name!

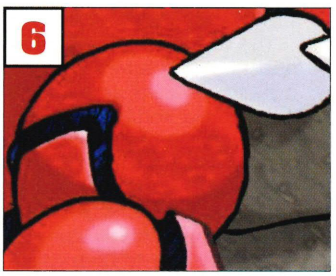
The ROCK-HARD Quiz

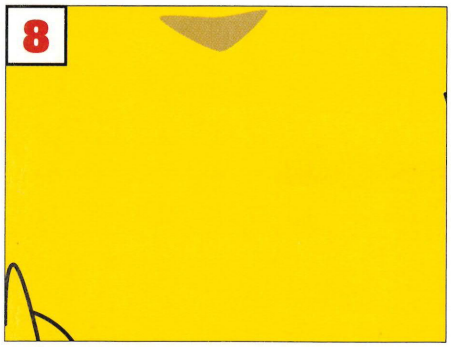
We're squeezing your brain for more answers this month and asking you to name all 17 Pokémon from these crazy close-ups. You can't win anything – just our undying respect.

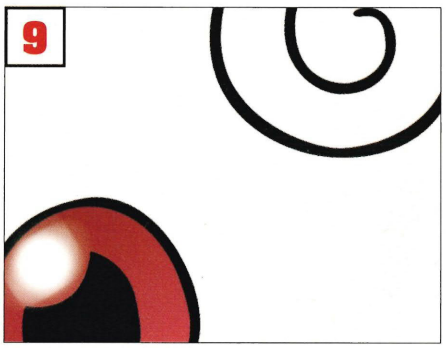


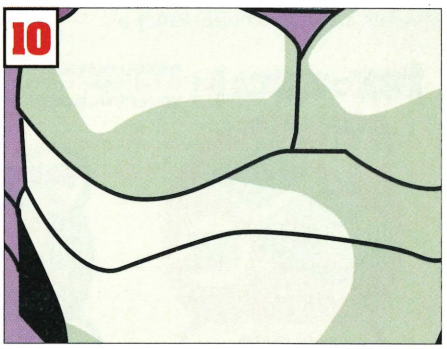


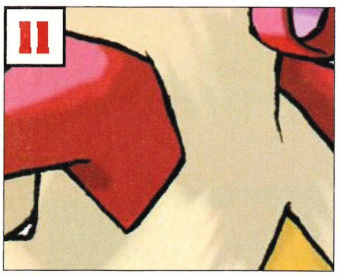


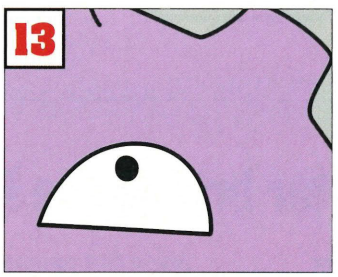


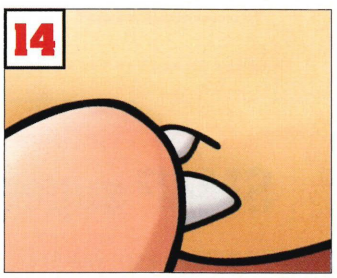


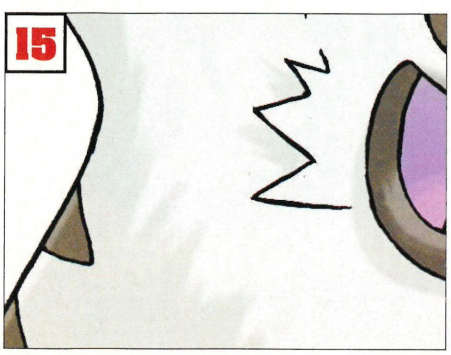


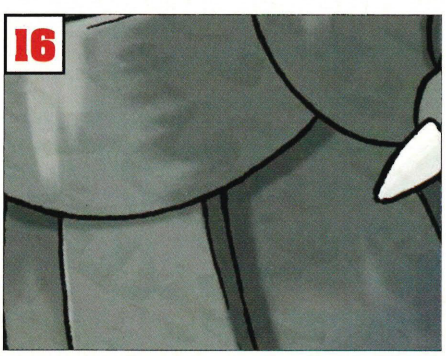


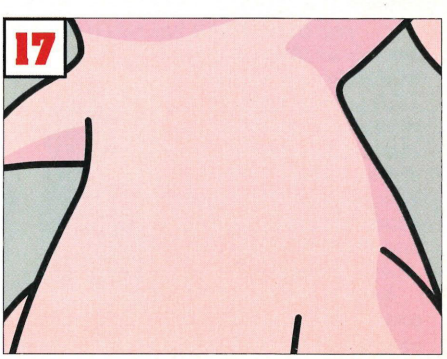






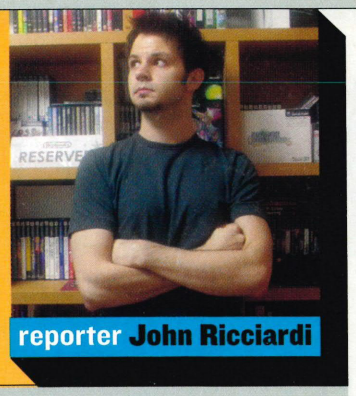






*If your Poké-spotting skills aren't up to the challenge, the answers are on p6

Blip Japan



reporter **John Ricciardi**

● NINTENDO GIVEAWAYS ● POP-STARS DRESSING UP ● AKIHABARA

CLUB NINTENDO

The big N's much-hyped Club Nintendo points service kicked off this past month in Japan and if first impressions are anything to go by, it's going to be a huge success. The way it works is simple: members are awarded points for every first-party Nintendo game they purchase and, in turn, the points can be used to purchase exclusive goods direct from Nintendo themselves. Added incentives abound — for example, if you buy a game within four weeks of launch, you'll get double the usual points. And the bonus benefits are really choice. Fancy a free copy of *Pac-Man vs.*? Simply sign up as a Club Nintendo member before the end of the year. It's as simple as that.

The first batch of redeemable prizes is a bit tame, though, including T-shirts, posters, soundtracks and the like, but Nintendo is promising much more exciting gear in the future, including exclusive game demos and special versions of titles that won't be available in stores.

We'll be sure to keep you updated on the growing selection as the months go by...

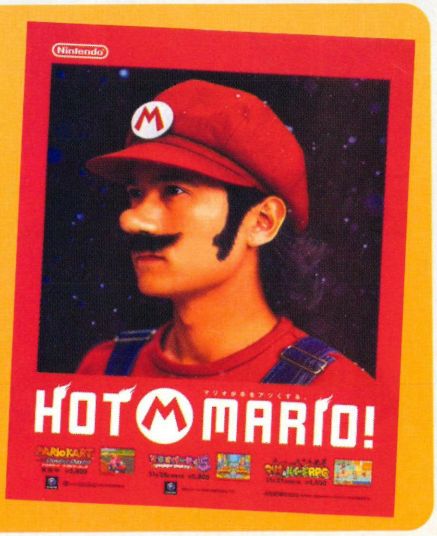
Look what they get! LOOK WHAT THEY GET!

SMAP superstar brings the Mario heat

Goro Inagaki, one fifth of the stupidly popular all-male Japanese pop band, SMAP, has taken on the role of Mario in Nintendo's big winter sales push in Japan, promoting the three Mario titles due out before the end of the year, *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!*, *Mario Party 5* and *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga*.

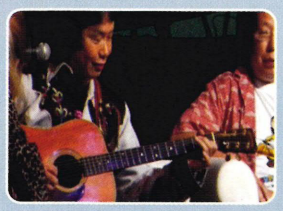
Adverts like the one pictured have been spotted all over Tokyo and there's even a *Mario Kart* commercial where Goro, dressed as Mario, goes through a fast-food drive-thru in a go-kart and orders a copy of the game.

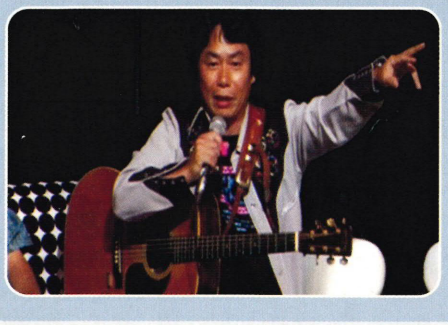
Nintendo couldn't have chosen a more fitting spokesperson; just last year, Inagaki was arrested for a hit-and-run fiasco where he nearly ran over a policewoman in Shibuya while trying to get away from being issued a parking ticket. Poor guy... if it were us, we would've whacked her with a Red Shell and hauled ass outta there.



AXE LORD MIYAMOTO

These new photos prove that Shigsy's the coolest. If you aren't already kneeling, please do now.





KILLER FREEBIES

More cool stuff for them

Japanese games magazine *Nintendo Dream* had two straight months of killer giveaways to celebrate its 100th issue in early November. Issue 100 came bundled with a *Phantasy Star Online* music CD with ten tracks from both *Episode I & II* and the forthcoming *Episode III*, while Issue 101 offered up a stellar DVD video of the recent Mario & Zelda Big Band Live concert held in Tokyo. Where else can you see Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto jamming away on stage with comic artist Benimaru Itoh and a host of famous Nintendo creators and musicians? Nowhere, that's where!

Sure some cool gifts come with Japanese Nintendo mags, but they've got funny squiggles all over them, too – stick with *NOM UK*, kids

Akihabara Watch

Back because you demanded it, more shots from the streets of Akihabara, Japan's gaming mecca! This month: mammoth slimes invaded game shops everywhere to celebrate the release of Square Enix's *Dragon Quest* spin-off for GBA, *Slime Morimori Dragon Quest* (1); while *Mario Kart* mania took to the streets as this year's most anticipated GameCube game landed in Japanese stores (2). Next month: look out for giant apes terrorising Akihabara's nerd population as *Donkey Konga* barrels its way onto the scene. Or maybe not.

1

2

JAPAN TOP TEN

the current best-selling games on Nintendo platforms

1	*Mario Kart: Double Dash!!*	(Nintendo, GC)
2	*Slime Morimori Dragon Quest*	(Square Enix, GBA)
3	*Atsumare!! Made in Wario*	(Nintendo, GC)
4	*Pokémon Ruby/Pokémon Sapphire*	(Nintendo, GBA)
5	*Legendary Starfy 2*	(Nintendo, GBA)
6	*Super Mario Advance 4*	(Nintendo, GBA)
7	*Pokémon Pinball: Ruby & Sapphire*	(Nintendo, GBA)
8	*Kirby's Air Ride*	(Nintendo, GC)
9	*Wario Ware, Inc.: Minigame Mania*	(Nintendo, GBA)
10	*Oriental Blue: Ao no Tengai*	(Nintendo, GBA)

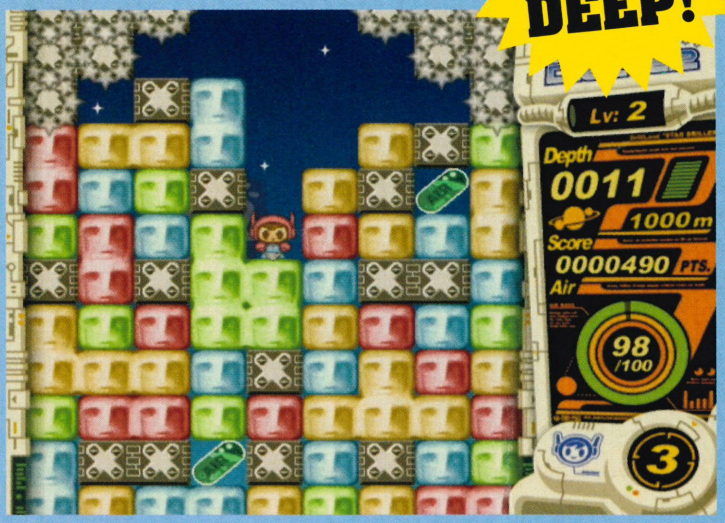
Mr Driller Drill Land

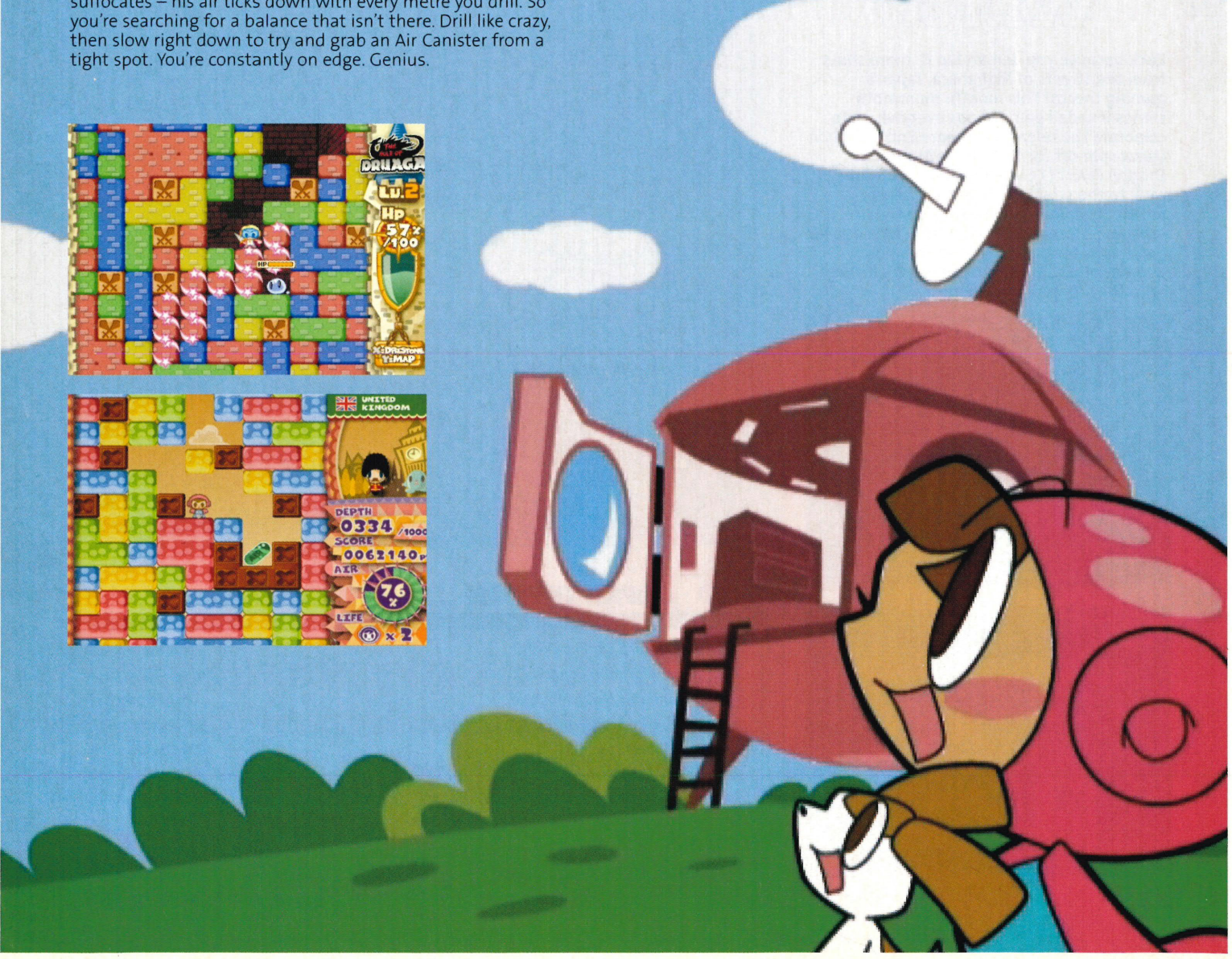
There's this guy and he's called Mr Driller. He drills. That's what he does. He doesn't muck about with other, non-drill-related things. He drops into a deep well filled with blocks which look like sweets and he drills. Down and down he goes, until he reaches the bottom or is crushed from above by falling blocks. The end.

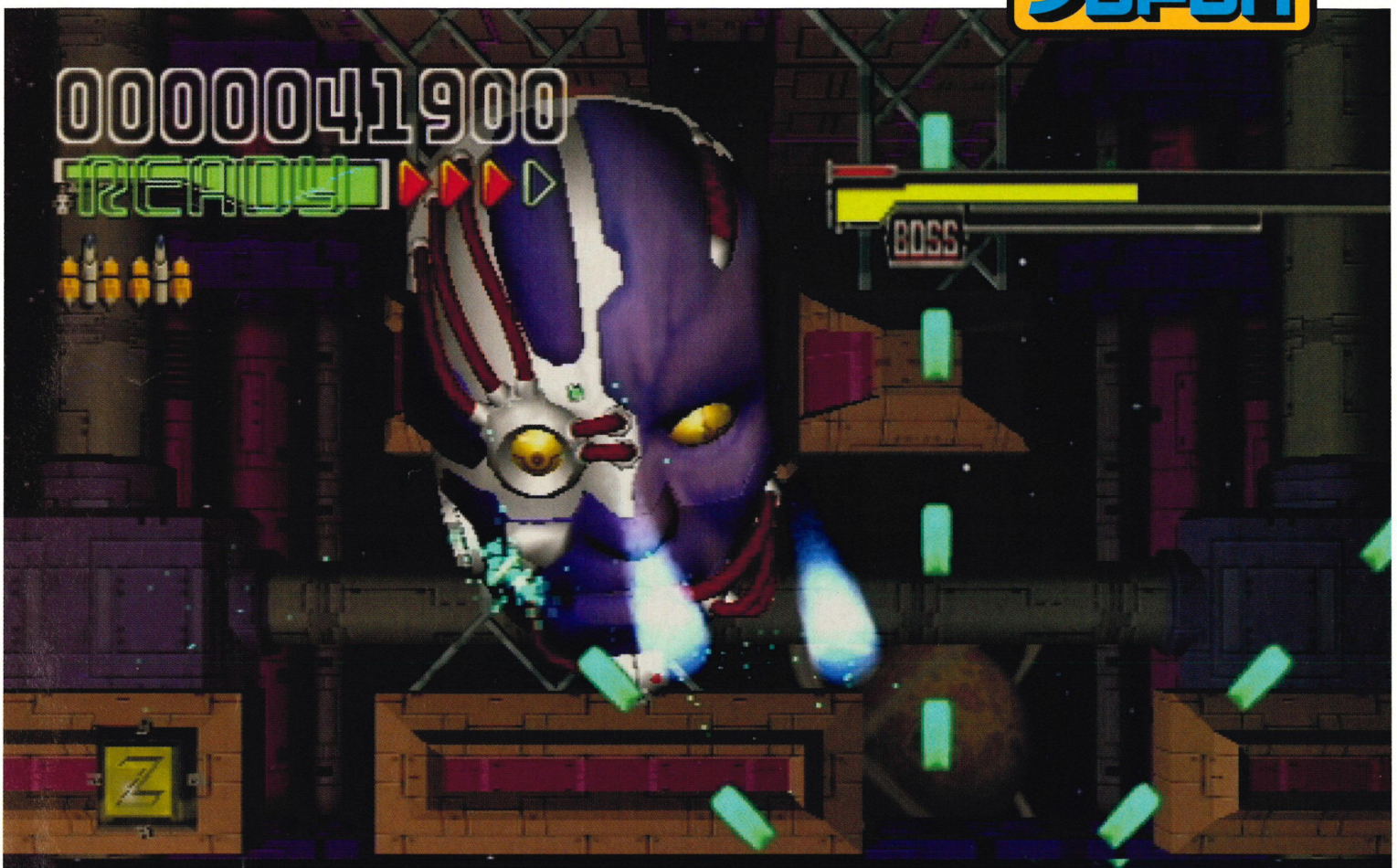
Drill Land is a hypnotic game. It's as easy to play as drilling and dodging, but it hooks you in. You drop into a calm, meditative, trance-like state. You cease to be aware of the world around you. All you can hear is the pop, pop, pop as Mr. Driller goes deeper and deeper. You focus. You tap A and rhythmically excavate. You stare beyond the screen. You're in the *Driller* place.

Mr. Driller's appeared on Game Boy before, but the GameCube version expands a simple action game into deeper territory. From the theme park hub, you can head off into five different games: *Drindy Adventure* has Driller in a fedora, mimicking Indiana Jones, avoiding rolling boulders and grabbing gold idols; *The Hole of Druaga* is mining crossed with an action RPG; then there's *Star Driller*; *Horror Night House;* and the classic *Driller* of old, reprised as *Driller World Tour*.

It's gameplay boiled down to pure reaction and instinct. There's no comfort zone. You drill fast and your recklessness might cause a fatal landslide. You go slow and Driller suffocates – his air ticks down with every metre you drill. So you're searching for a balance that isn't there. Drill like crazy, then slow right down to try and grab an Air Canister from a tight spot. You're constantly on edge. Genius.







Star Soldier

BLOW YOUR MIND!

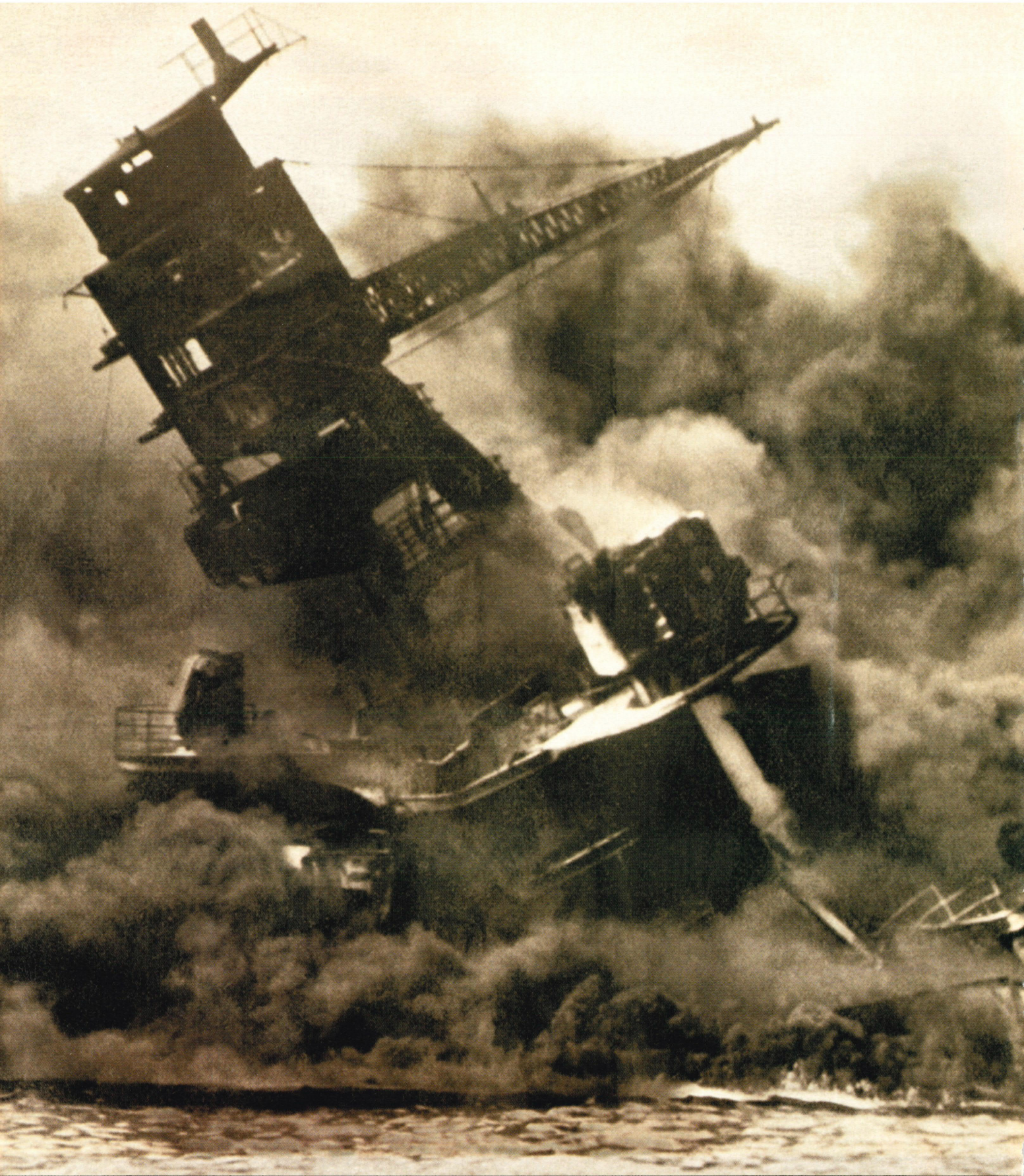
The death of the shoot-'em-up is a global phenomenon. It's not just here where bullet storms are out of fashion, Japan only gets its action on a sporadic basis, too. Even a gem like *Star Soldier* gets snuck into the shops at a budget price (¥3,000 – that's about sixteen quid in non-mental money).

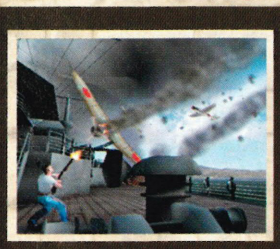
The big question is why? *Star Soldier* is everything a video game needs to be. You're in a small spaceship that fires almost nothing. Enemies swarm into view and you waste them. You get power-ups that let you fire bullets in all kinds of silly directions. You feel power. You are their daddy. With righteous vengeance coursing through your veins, you start obliterating their resistance. Then from nowhere comes a bullet your cocky mind didn't track. Death. Back to the basic pea-shooter gun. Arsebiscuits!

At the dawn of video games, this is what video games were. Shooting. Reactions. Short blasts of high adrenaline. By the time you've blazed through the first two levels, most modern games are still cracking their knuckles with their warm-up intro movie. This is action. No messing about.

It's quite old skool. The graphics are polygonal, but it's all fairly basic shapes. Before shooters slipped into a coma, the trend was to have a ship already shooting frightening amounts of hot plasma as you twitched your way through a blizzard of return fire. This is more traditional, building up slowly with waves of cannon fodder sweeping into view. You play for ten minutes. You get further each time. It fits into your life.

We like the two- and five-minute modes that let you set a high score against a set wave of enemies. It's perfect pass-the-pad fodder. *NOM UK* still loves this kind of thing, because *NOM UK* is RIGHT and the world is WRONG. Stay tuned for *Shikigami No Shiro II* next month. We're keeping the dream alive.





NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

Nintendo Connectivity

GAME BOY ADVANCE™

Connect the Game Boy Advance™ to the NINTENDO GAMECUBE™ for an interactive strategy guide to game levels ahead.

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Pearl Harbor. Sunday December 7, 1941.

Welcome to paradise, soldier.
Fight for your life from the bowels of the USS California to the machine gun mount on a PT boat as Battleship Row burns around you. If you survive, embark on an island-hopping string of nightmares, which will continue across the Pacific – from Guadalcanal to the River Kwai and the Philippines.

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Hammer Brother

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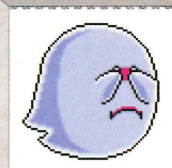
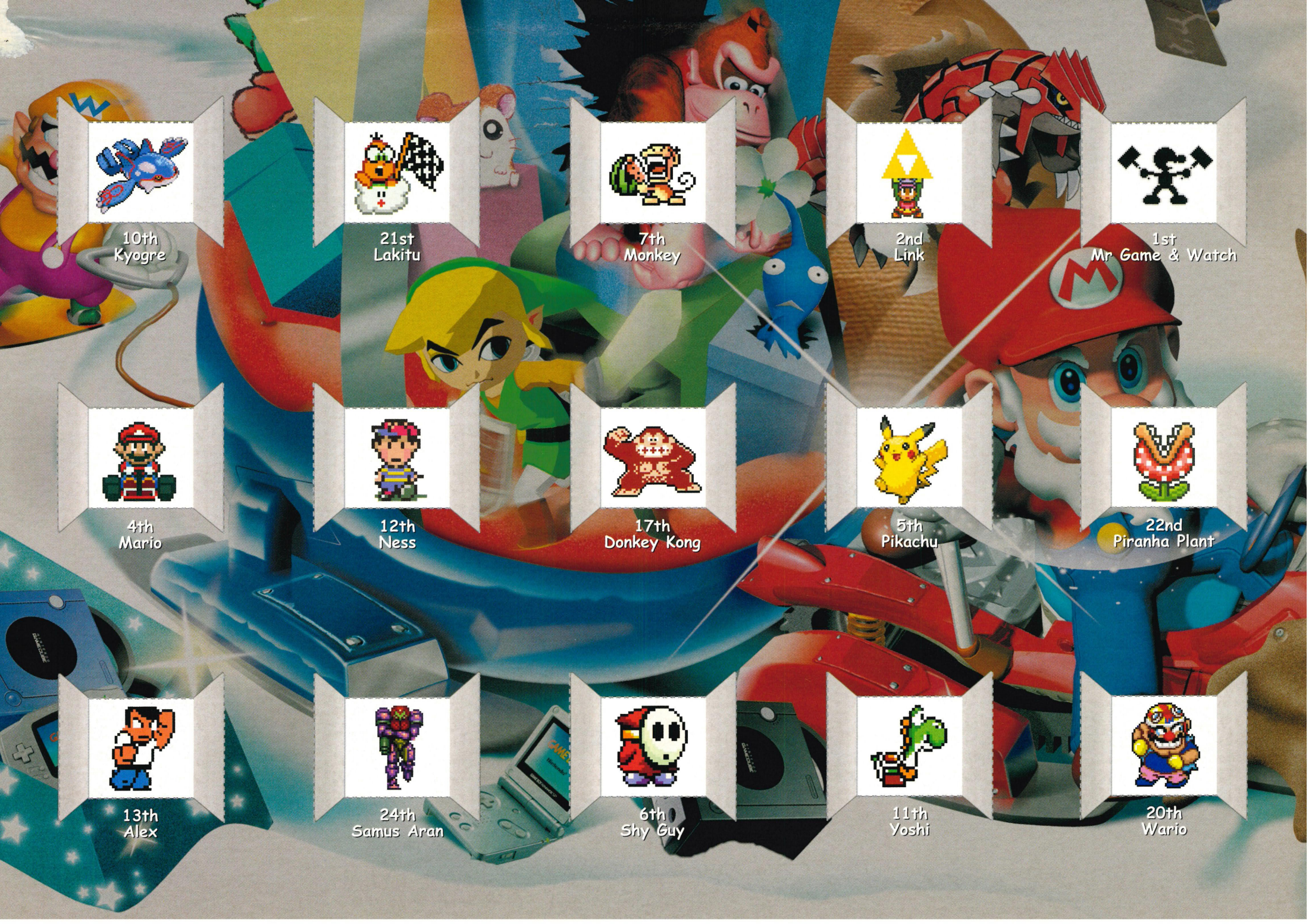
Groudon



23rd
King Boo

16th
Kirby


10th
Kyogre
21st
Lakitu
7th
Monkey
2nd
Link
1st
Mr Game & Watch
4th
Mario
12th
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17th
Donkey Kong
5th
Pikachu
22nd
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Alex
24th
Samus Aran
6th
Shy Guy
11th
Yoshi
20th
Wario

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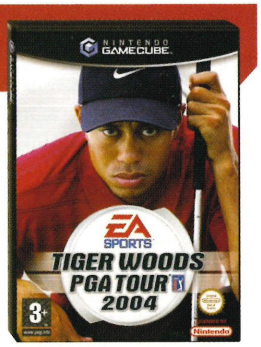
presents...

THE BEST GAMES OF 2003

20 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004

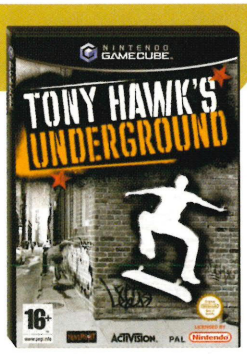


■ The greatest golf game ever created should be perfect chill-out fodder, but it gets pretty heated around here. We never blame the controls though, because they're perfect. We blame God.

19 Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising

■ Proving that lightning can strike twice, Nintendo's second palm conflict was just as compelling as the first. We used new units, we learned new strategies and we were triumphant. Eat that.

18 Tony Hawk's Underground



■ Just when you think Tony's getting too old for those baggy skate pants he ollies the halfpipe in the sky and grinds all over your half-baked preconceptions. Inventive, addictive and totally awesome.

17 Ikaruga

■ Appearing like a ghost from another time, *Ikaruga* bathed our souls in napalm and then slipped away. A stark and ingenious reminder of why shoot-'em-ups cannot be allowed to die out.

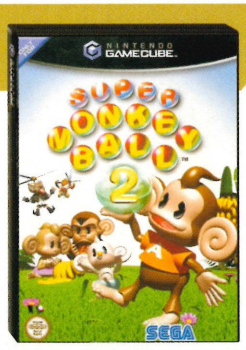
16 Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3

■ We'd explored this part of the Mushroom Kingdom twice before, but it's still a slice of platforming perfection. New to it? You can dress Mario in a frog suit. That's all you need to know.

15 Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow

■ Konami's latest gothic adventure is an absolute killer. Explore, leap and brutally smash creepy beasts with your whip. Once it sucks you in, that's it. You won't touch your GameCube 'til it's all over and done.

14 Super Monkey Ball 2



■ There's room for AiAi in any top 20. Timeless single-player action combined with a ton of multiplayer fun mean this monkey's magic. It's the reason analogue was invented.

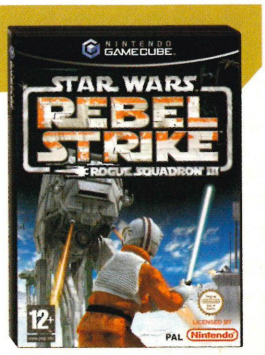
13 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

■ *Splinter Cell* invented proper video game stealth. Your arse will flutter as you stand in the shadows, praying you've got enough cover for that deadly guard not to spot you. Tense and magnificent.

12 Golden Sun: The Lost Age

■ Huge, brilliant and unashamedly niche, *The Lost Age* takes its broad sword and spreads RPG goodness an inch thick all over your GBA. Book a month off work/school/prison – you'll need it.

11 Star Wars: Rebel Strike



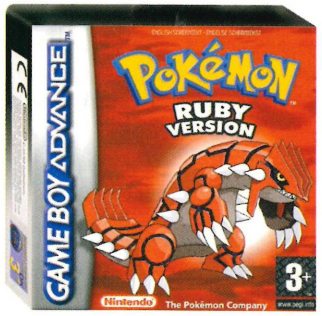
■ You've played *Star Wars* games before, but this IS *Star Wars*. They took the best bits from all the movies (except the rubbish ones) and dropped you into some of the most intense space battles ever.

10 Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga

■ We were just packing up our games-of-the-year ballot boxes when *Mario & Luigi* turned up with a blend of RPG and platforming action that's second to none. Damn you guys, but thank you, guys.

09 Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire

■ On July 25th, the world stopped turning. Groudon stomped around on just about every GBA in the country and a new wave of Pokémania began. A new world to explore and new beasts to hunt.

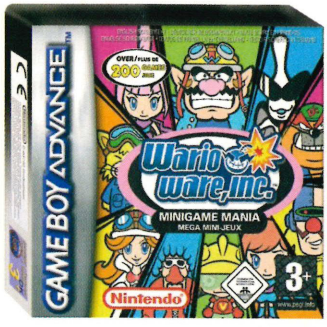


08 Soul Calibur II

■ The fighting game Nintendo gamers have waited half their lives for. It looks fantastic, moves spectacularly and hits harder than a speeding bullet-train. And who's this bonus character? It's Link. Perfect.

07 Wario Ware Inc. Minigame Mania

■ Nintendo's schizophrenic history lesson serves up gaming magic in three-second servings. But the servings keep coming. And coming. So much fun your brain might just give up.

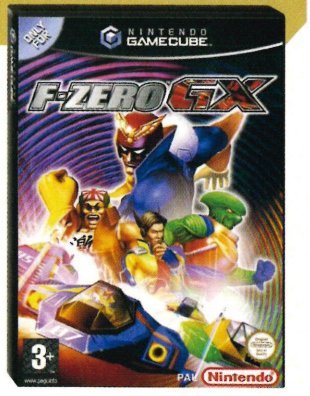


06 The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

■ This sets the bar for Super NES remakes by throwing in the fantastic multiplayer madness of *Four Swords* on top of the finest 2D action RPG of all time. It's still absolutely magical, even if you've saved Zelda before.

04 F-Zero GX

There has never been a racing game as fast as this. And winning is 100% about skill. There are no cheap weapons to bail you out, just your own ability. It's hard as hell, but completely awesome.

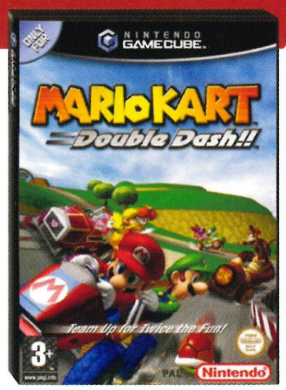


05 Viewtiful Joe

Capcom's best game in years is a special effects-laden masterpiece. With classic 2D gameplay reinvented for the modern age, it's fun, funky and kicks your ass into outer space.

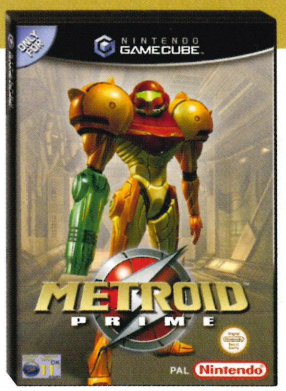
03 Mario Kart: Double Dash!!

The most eagerly anticipated multiplayer game of all time totally rose to the occasion. The kart handling harked back to the Super NES days, giving master players the chance to shine on the twisty Rainbow Road. It is not possible to have more fun with your mates than on four-player *Mario Kart*. That's a fact.



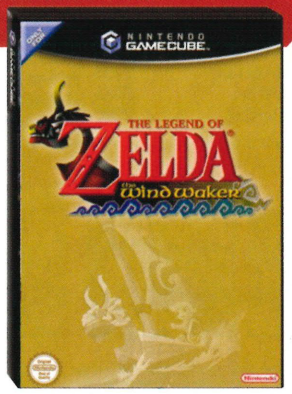
02 Metroid Prime

Prime is staggering. It took a 2D adventure game series and reinvented it as a compulsive 3D bug hunt. The gameplay was unmistakably *Metroid*, the Morph Ball was integrated brilliantly and the atmosphere remains unsurpassed. If you don't have it, it's the best £20 you'll ever spend. Get it today.



01 The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

The high points of *The Wind Waker* are the best times you'll ever have playing a video game. And those graphics? Hell, has any game ever looked sweeter than this? Forget realism, we want escapism. This whisks you off to an amazing place for a breathtaking, action-packed adventure. This is why you are into video games.



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Alex Parks - What It Takes	143301
Busted - Crashed the Wedding	126070
Lemar - 50:50	126008
Britney/Madonna-Againt..Music	126014
Kevin Lyttle - Turn Me On	125307
Outkast - Hey Ya!	126010
Fatman Scoop - Be Faithful	126022
Pet Shop Boys - Miracles	143302
Enrique Iglesias - Addicted	126720
Kylie Minogue - Slow	125939
Mis-teeq - Style	126727
Blazin' Squad - Flip Reverse	126009
Radiohead - 2+2=5	126719
Missy Elliott - Pass That Dutch	126080
Black Eyed Ps - Where is the Love	121454
Pink - Trouble	125943
Jamelia - Superstar	125020
Chili Peppers - Fortune Faded	126073

FOOTBALL

Arsenal - Amazing Reds	122963
Villa - Holteenders In The Sky	122965
Chelsea - Blue Is The Colour	122985
Everton - You Are My Everton	122993
Leeds - We Had Joy	122999
Liverpool - We All Live In A Red..	123009
Man City - Blue Moon	123013
Man United - Our Trophy Back	123017
Newcastle Utd - Blaydon Races	123027
Newcastle Utd - 1 Alan Shearer	123029
Southampton - When The Saints	123037
Spurs - We Are Tottenham	123041
Wolves - King Kenny Miller	123043
Wolves -Hey Jones 'E'	123045
We've Got That Double Feeling	123053
If You Know Your History	120601
The Liquidator	120616
Here We Go - Football Anthem	120495
Celtic – Fields of A'Ray	108273
Notts Forest – Land of Hope	108447

R n B

Never Leave You - Lumidee	120905
Frontin - Pharrell Williams	121675
Snake - R Kelly Feat Tigger	120020
Crazy In Love - Beyonce	120012
21 Questions - 50 Cent	120009
No Letting Go - Wayne Wonder	120017
Hot In Herre - Nelly	108203
Cant Nobody - Kelly Rowland	116460
Mesmerize - Ja Rule & Ashanti	111684
Christina Aguilera - Dirrty	107809
Craig David- What's Your Flava	107825
Kelly Rowland- Stole	107862
Nelly & Kelly Rowland- Dilemma	108310

CHRISTMAS

All I Want For Christmas	126061
Xmas War Is Over- Lennon	109668
Christmas Every Day - Wizard	108777
Driving..For Xmas - Chris Rea	126550
Fairytale Of New York-Pogues	126551
Frosty The Snowman	107803
Jingle Bells	108687
Lonely This Christmas - Mudd	126553
Last Christmas -Wham	108689
Merry Christmas - Slade	108784
Merry Little Christmas	125287
Rockin Around The Xmas Tree	125289
Rudolf	108414
Santa Is Coming To Town	108699

ROCK MUSIC

Silence Is Easy - Starsailor	124527
Wildest Dreams - Iron Maiden	124528
Maps - Yeah Yeahs	124624
Secret Kiss - The Coral	124627
The New Hit - Marilyn Manson	124629
Someday - Nickelback	124645
No Letting Go - Wayne Wonder	120017
Loneliness - Tomcraft	116463
Bring Me To Life - Evanescence	111603
Living On A Prayer - Guns N Roses	107012
Final Countdown - Bon Jovi	112307

TOP SELLERS

Wheres The Love-Black Eyed Ps	121454
Thing Called Love -Darkness	123071
Fatman Scoop - Be Faithful	126022
50 Cent - In Da Club	111140
Pimp - 50 Cent	121418
Only Fools And Horses	108315
Celtic - Fields Of Athenry	108273
Pretty Green Eyes -Ultrabeat	121713
Phoenix Nights	107872
The Great Escape	107003
Superstar - Jamelia	125020
The Simpsons	107052
Italian Job	107026
Rocky - Eye Of The Tiger	108299

THEMES

Axel F- Beverly Hills Cop	108195
Great Escape	107003
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James Bond	107023
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Lemar - 50:50	126494
Britney/Madonna-Against..Music	126400
Kevin Lyttle - Turn Me On	125306
Outkast - Hey Ya!	125601
Fatman Scoop - Be Faithful	124986
Pet Shop Boys - Miracles	143297
Enrique Iglesias - Addicted	143298
Kylie Minogue - Slow	126392
Mis-teeq - Style	143299
Blazin' Squad - Flip Reverse	126499
Radiohead - 2+2=5	143300
Missy Elliott - Pass That Dutch	126409
Black Eyed Ps - Wheres the Love	120393
Pink - Trouble	125565
Jamelia - Superstar	124982
Chili Peppers - Fortune Faded	126500

Top Sellers

Black Eyed Ps -Wheres the Love	120393
Breathe - Blu Cantrell	120539
Xtm & Dj Chucky -On The Wings	116215
Crazy In Love - Beyonce	120398
Pretty Green Eyes - Ultrabeat	122445
Italian Job Theme	100691
Ready For Love - Elton John	121732
Never Leave You - Lumidee	120369
Bring Me To Life - Evanescence	110559
Great Escape Theme	100382
The Simpsons Theme	102191
Eye Of The Tiger - Rocky Theme	100687
Benny Benassi - Satisfaction	121514
Ignition - R Kelly	116955
A Team Theme	100682
Something Beautiful - R Williams	108150
In Da Club - 50 Cent	110993
Scandalous - Mis-teeq	111173
Charlies Angels TV Theme	100502
Misfit - Amy Studt	116906
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Come on Eileen - Dexys	100875
Monty Python Theme	100055
Favourite Things - Big Brovaz	116213
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Forever & Always - Shania Twain	116898
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The Power Of Bhangra - Snap	122538
Mr Vain Recall - Culture Beat	122554
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Santa Cruz - The Thrills	122401
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Yogi Beware - Punjabi MC	122263
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Creatures - 311	122494
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Brimful Of Asha - Cornershop	122545
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Stop - Black Rebel Mcycle Club	122616
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Kim - Eminem	122463
Under The Influence - Eminem	122490
Forgot About Dre - Dr Dre	122497
Fix Up Look Sharp - Dizee Rascal	122613

Boy Bands

Westlife - Tonight	110582
Love On The Line - Blazin Squad	108003
The Hardest Word - Blue	108012
Unbreakable - Westlife	102743
Get Down - Back Street Boys	100041
What Makes A Man - Westlife	100410
Uptown Girl - Westlife	100435

Rock

Sweet Child O Mine-Guns N Roses	101084
Letters To You - Finch	112713
Homesick - The Vines	112699
Faint - Linkin Park	112692
Rollin – Limp Bizkit	100389

Football Chants

Arsenal - Vi-erra	122961
Arsenal - Amazing Reds	122963
Aston Villa - Holteenders In The Sky	122964
Aston Villa – My Old Man	110617
Aston Villa - Roll Along	122966
Blackburn – Wild Rover	100803
Bolton – Run Run	111004
Celtic – Fields of A'Ray	100381
Chelsea - Blue Is The Colour	122984
Chelsea - Super Franky Lampard	122986
Chelsea - We are the famous CFC	122988
Everton - He was Just 17 (Rooney)	122990
Everton - You Are My Everton	122992
Leeds - We Had Joy	122998
Liverpool - You'll Never Walk Alone	123006
Liverpool - We All Live In A Red..	123008
Man City - Blue Moon	123012
Man United - Our Trophy Back	123016
Man United - The Great Escape	123018
Middlesborough - Boro Till I Die	123024
Newcastle Utd - Blaydon Races	123026
Newcastle Utd - 1 Alan Shearer	123028
Southampton - Mr Eriksson	123034
Southampton - When The Saints	123036
Glory Glory	123038
Spurs - We Are Tottenham	123040
Wolves - King Kenny Miller	123042
Wolves -Hey Jones 'E'	123044
There's Only One....	123048
We've Got That Double Feeling	123052
Here We Go	123056
Match Of The Day	123058

Dance

Feel The Beat - Darude	100337
Silence - Delerium	100338
We Will Survive - Warp Brothers	100412
Right Here - Fatboy Slim	100276
Tocas Miracle - Fragma	100302
Thong Song- Sisqo	100303
Better Of Alone - Alice Deejay	100192
Something - Lasgo	101019
Clubbed To Death - Rob Dougan	102103
They Dont Know - So Solid Crew	101260
Lazy - X Press Feat David Byrne	101729
Addicted To Bass - Puretone	101576
Star Guitar - Chemical Brothers	101617
U Girls Look So Sexy - Nush	102676
Nessaja - Scooter	102651

Christmas Tones

Christmas Everyday - Wizzard	101195
Jingle Bells	100052
Merry Christmas-Slade	101196
Merry Little Christmas	101204
Rocking Aroung The Xmas Tree	101191
Rudolf	100079
Santa Is Coming To Town	100325
We Wish You A Merry Xmas	100098
We Three Kings	101211

TV Themes

Transformers	120885
Spooks	120553
Trigger Happy TV	102693
Jackass	102708
Malcolm In The Middle	102709
The Osbournes	102712
Phoenix Nights	102796
Futurama	102794
Charmed	108106
South Park Theme	108112
Itchy And Scratchy	102190
The Simpsons	102191
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	100681
Scooby Doo	102302

Movie Themes

Beetlejuice	120811
Matrix	120822
Matrix Reloaded	116230
Ghosthusters	100665
Eye Of The Tiger - Rocky	100687
Italian Job	100691
Lord Of The Rings	101158
Austin Powers	101077
Terminator 2	101086
Halloween	100048
James Bond	100016
Beverly Hills Cop	100010

Hot R N B

Put Him Out - Ms Dynamite	108007
Work It - Missy Elliott	107981
Girlfriend - Alicia Keys	107993
Dilemma - Nelly &Kelly	107901
Thug Lovin - Ja Rule	108072
You've Got It Bad - Usher	101046
Hot In Herre - Nelly	102133
A Womens Worth - Alicia Keys	101880
Kiss Kiss - Holly Valance	102006
Get This Party Started - Pink	101517

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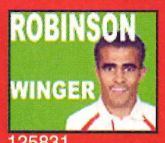

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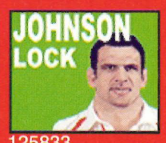

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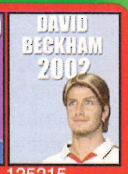

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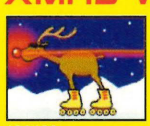
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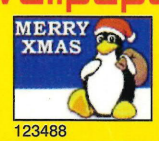

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Motorola - T720 / C330 / C350 **Sharp** - GX10
Ericsson - P800 / T300 Siemens - A55 / C55 / S55 / SL55
Samsung - T100 / S100/ N600 / N620 / A400/ A800 / V200
Panasonic - GD87/E/ GD96 **Sony** - T300

MONO RINGTONES

Nokia - all models except 5110 / 3650 / 7650 **Siemens** - 45, 50 & 55 series
Samsung - T100 / V200 **Ericsson** - T29/39/65/66/68i

Bigger. Better. Smarter.

Previews

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058 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

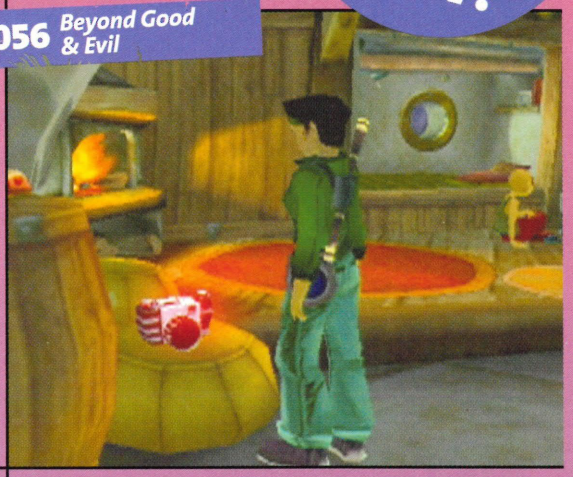
054 Fire Emblem

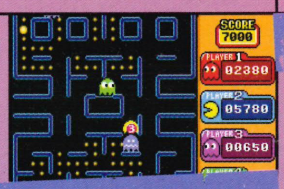
063 Mario Golf Toadstool Tour

060 Yu-Gi-Oh! The Falsebound Kingdom

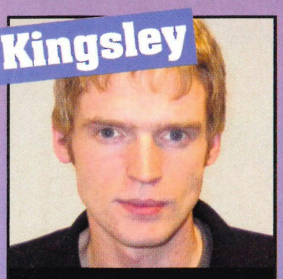
READ IT FIRST! READ IT NOW!

WHAT'S GOING TO ROCK IN 2004?





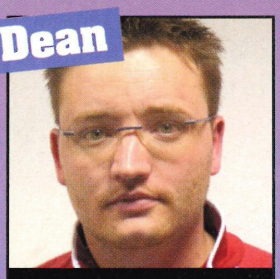
Kingsley



This month I've been playing...

- Mario & Luigi
- Fire Emblem
- F-Zero GX
- Judge Dredd

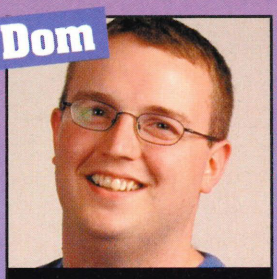
Dean



This month I've been playing...

- Prince of Persia
- Castlevania Aria of Sorrow
- Mario & Luigi

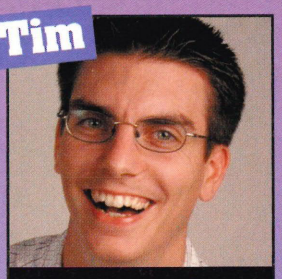
Dom



This month I've been playing...

- True Crime
- Beyond Good & Evil
- Tiger Woods 2004

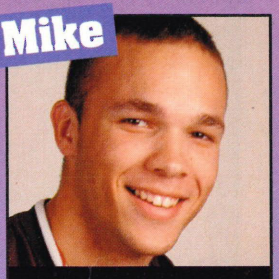
Tim



This month I've been playing...

- Mario Kart
- Viewtiful Joe
- Metroid Fusion
- Pokémon Pinball

Mike

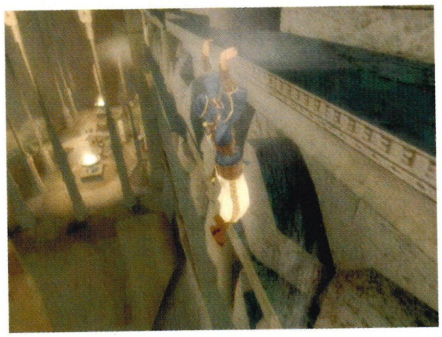


This month I've been playing...

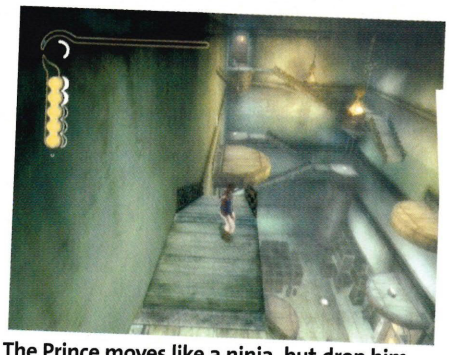
- Metroid Prime
- Shikigami no Shiro II
- Mario Advance 4

Prince Charming

Made in Canada, published by the French. It's pure video game genius and Japan had nothing to do with it.



Don't look down! One of the great triumphs of the game is the feeling of height. Scary



The Prince moves like a ninja, but drop him off here and his bones smash into tiny bits

Finish off vanquished foes with a stab of the Dagger of Time to suck in more rewind power

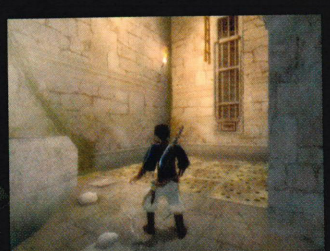
PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

It's the preview they didn't want you to read. We're not kidding – it really is. Thanks to an exclusivity deal, *Prince of Persia* discs will only see the inside of a PS2 in 2003 and we're supposed to pretend this doesn't exist. Tell you what, Ubisoft, you sign your pact with the devil and we'll just buy a US copy. How does that sound? Look away from the magazine.

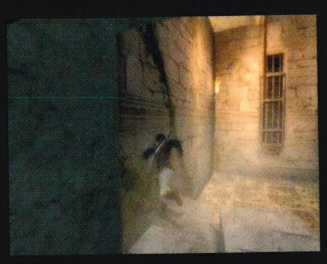
We can't hide a game like this from you. It'd be like us ignoring *Mario 128* code sat on our desk (we haven't got any by the way, so don't bother writing in). *Prince of Persia* is a must-have game for 2004 on GameCube and you need to know about it. Unless something goes drastically, horribly wrong between this US English-language version and our proper-speaking English-language version (it won't), you're looking at one of the very best games of next year.

Prince of Persia is exciting. Even when you're standing still in an empty room, your brain is buzzing. It's got that *Indiana Jones* adventure feeling flowing through it like a river and some of the most fluid controls ever. You see, the Prince is an agile chap. He does the sort

A Tight Spot Get it right, or you're dead

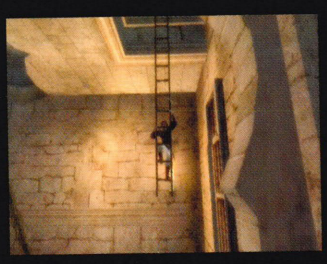


Righto. I need that ladder up there. But if I make any sudden moves on those perforated tiles, spikes will shoot up and ruin my feet



Tried tiptoeing and then jumping up. Didn't make it. Got impaled. So this is Plan B in action

Sprint along the wall, then, using my ninja skills, kick away from the surface at exactly the right time to catch onto the ladder



And there you go. Once the idea was there, it always looked possible. Hope I don't need to get back down...

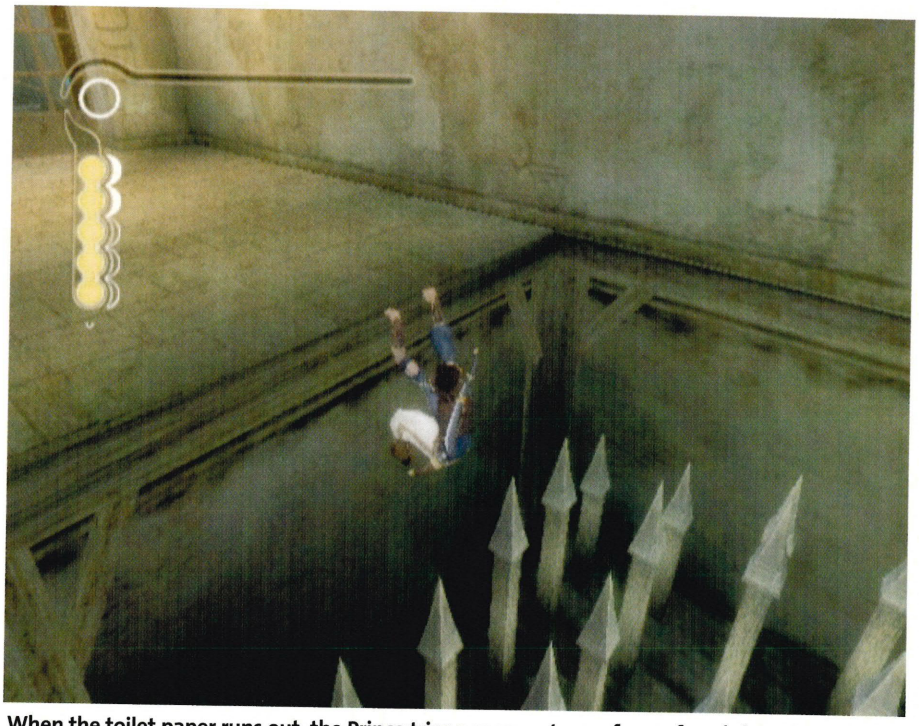
It's like the Olympic parallel bars, only a hundred feet higher up above a spike pit

of stupid stuff Neo from *The Matrix* has to flip into slow motion to manage. Running along walls, fantastic feats of gymnastics, oh, and kicking eight people's asses at the same time. You're going to love it.

The first thing you notice is how it looks. There aren't many GameCube games that can match it, actually. The crumbling palace interiors are sumptuous and every precipice you find yourself on the edge of makes for a staggering view. The man himself moves incredibly naturally, tumbling, flipping and leaping over a massive gap only to cheat death by clinging onto the target by his fingertips. The boring fact is that the lead character has over 700 different animations. This translates into him looking absolutely convincing in everything he does, which is a less boring fact.

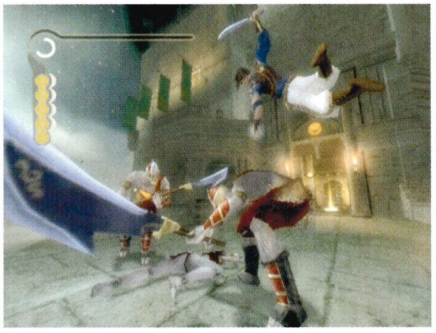
Nothing is straightforward. Massive gaps in shattered walkways can only be traversed by running along the wall beside them. You'll often find yourself sprinting along a wall, before springing off and landing on a platform behind you. All fairly complex feats of agility, but made simple thanks to some genius

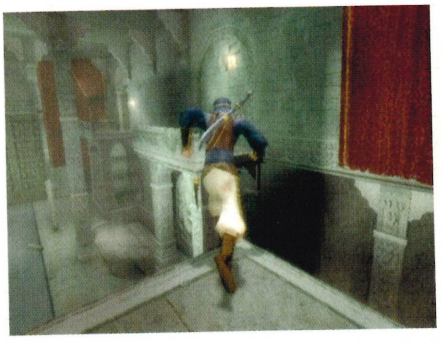
Sprint through here against the clock, dodging the spiky logs and spikier traps



When the toilet paper runs out, the Prince tries a more extreme form of anal cleansing

"You're looking at one of the very best games of next year."





controls. You always feel in complete control. It allows you to think exciting thoughts. "I'll run up the wall there, spring back onto that pillar, leap onto that bar, and swing and flip up to that top platform". The inspiration you have to spot such an opportunity is the 'skill'. The controls let you live it out. Sometimes you die, but that's okay. You always know it's doable. Compare this with the stiff controls in the *Tomb Raider* games which strangled the thrill out of even the most simple jump.

So there you are, pinging about on the palace roof like a ninja squirrel. You can just about cope with barbed logs, knives and deadly spike pits doing their best to distract you. And then a bunch of bad guys appear out of thin air to punch your face in.

Well, luckily and somewhat inevitably, the boy is handy in a fight, too. Strike with the B button, evade with A. As you take on three guys, tumbling past their spear lunges and vaulting over their backs, your mates will think you're some sort of gaming grand master. It looks brilliant, but then you need to be to triumph when heavily outnumbered in a fight. Again, it's intuitive. The only frustration is enemies constantly respawning, giving no clue as to when the fighting will end.

Sometimes, inevitably, you do get it wrong. You lose concentration in a fight and get butchered. Your route across a vicious spike pit isn't quite as perfect as you thought. That's where the Sands of Time come into it. As Prince plunges down to a grim spiky death, you squeeze L. He pauses in the air and starts flying back up on the exact trajectory you sent him down. He lands on the spot you jumped from and starts back-pedalling. You've rewound time. It's as cool as hell.

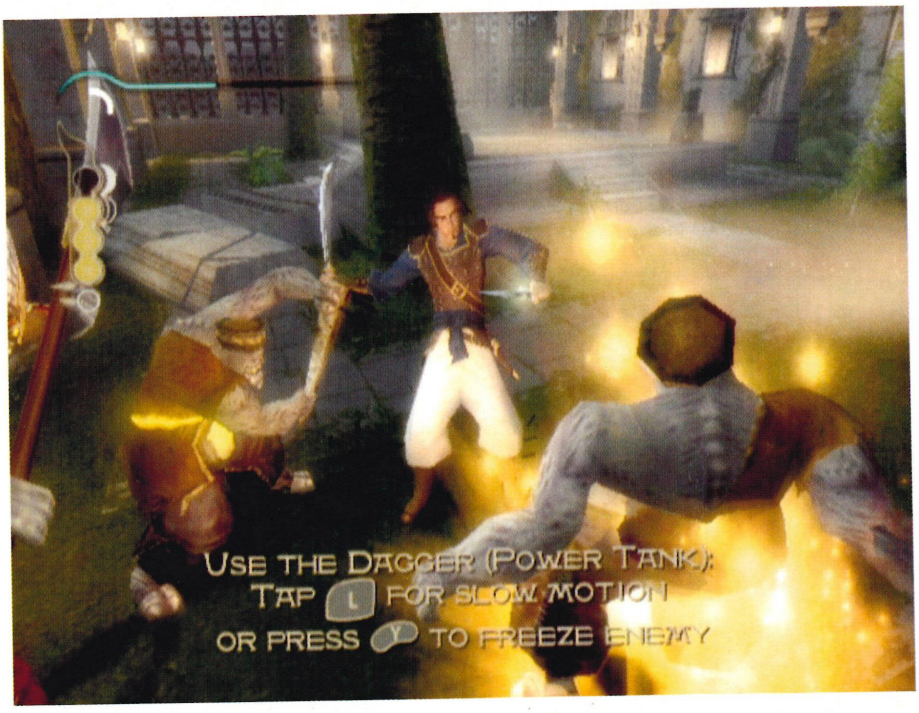
But it's not a fail-safe against dying, because you can only use it a limited number of times. The power comes from the magic dagger that's the

centrepiece of the game's plot and you can only replenish its power by using it to suck the sand out of the zombie minions that populate the game. It's like a finishing move, basically. And as you progress, the dagger gives you even more power.

But the time-rewind doesn't feel like a cheap cop-out. That's the genius of the implementation. Other games might force you to restart and retread old ground, but this keeps you focused on the present, the job in hand. Not the spinning saw blades in the wall around the corner that you already ninja'd past (skillz) but solving this problem.

As well as doing dramatic sword combat and Mario-worrying platform agility, *Prince of Persia* also tortures your brain with its puzzles. Whole rooms full of rotating discs, gears and switches. Stuff that you genuinely have to scratch your head to figure out. The action relents and there's a calm – and usually a locked door. You're guaranteed to feel like a genius when you figure it all out. But getting down from a ledge is like a mini-puzzle in this game. Dropping down onto ledges, seeing them crumble away, spinning the camera to try and find a route through. Tapping the d-pad zooms out to a long shot, showing you the surroundings. It's a seamless pan and zoom. Trust us, it's very impressive indeed.

"It's got that *Indiana Jones* feeling flowing through it."



Always a way

You're not stuck, genius hasn't struck yet...

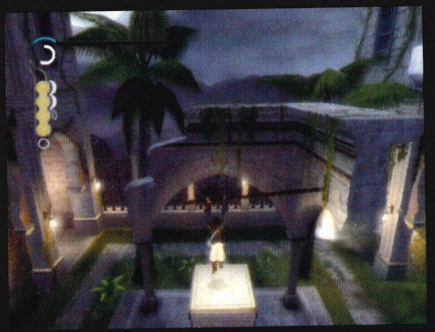
Some of the most thrilling moments in the game are when you don't know what you're meant to do next. You know it's not the kind of game to cheat you, so it's a case of thinking hard and releasing your inner games genius.

That pole must be there for a damn good reason – swingage (game logic, rule #87)

What's that glowing thing? I must need to interact with it

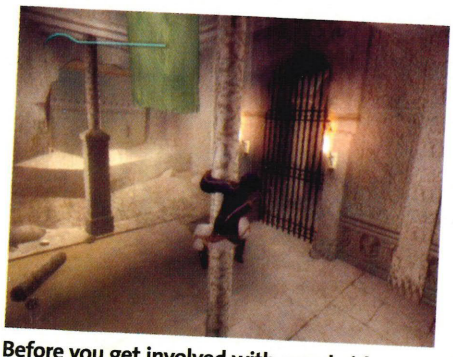
So if I run up the wall and back-flip, something might happen <CLUNK!>

And a giant column shoots up from the floor. Is that a ticking noise?



Run up the column and vault onto the bar before it disappears. Skillz

Flip up and off the bar and discover a walkway above. We love this game



Before you get involved with a real girl, practice your moves on an inanimate object

The water gives you health. Drink a load of it and try not to leave any gross floaters

If this doesn't make you think of *Indiana Jones*, you're banned from reading this magazine

Speaking of cameras, the one here does sometimes throw a bit of a fit. You're on a tight little ledge and the game decides it'd be fun if you couldn't see the edge. We also have a problem with the way the saved games work. You have to purchase a special magic carpet memory card that costs £4,000. Actually, that's not it. Another benefit of the Dagger is that it lets you see into the future after you hit a save point. You get a quick cut-scene of some of the key points in the next section. It's designed so you don't get frustrated because you can't find a way to go, but we think it wrecks the joy of discovery a bit. But you can skip them, so we do.

It's not going to be the longest of games, either. In one amazing afternoon's play, we'd seen a good quarter of the game. We'd started to get a bit hacked off with battering rooms full of zombie guys as well. We just wanted to be back outside springing off ledges and exploring, It doesn't even have to be anywhere relevant, just give us some ledges, a few hanging bars and an excuse to somersault – we'd be right there. Just pinging about aimlessly like a hamster in a cage. Those boys are living the dream FOR REAL. I'm pretending to be someone who can swing off bars, but hamsters can actually do it. We wonder if – from the confines of their metal prisons where they pee in their beds and never get to eat KFC – they realise just how lucky they are.

Essentials

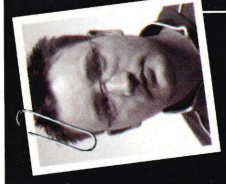
The developer: Ubisoft Montreal
What it's done: The equally awesome *Splinter Cell*, and some slightly crap F1 games
Multiplayer: Sadly not, but a head-to-head obstacle race would RULE
Connectivity: Hell yeah. There are some wicked GBA bonuses
The publisher: Ubisoft
Release: March 12
Review: Two issues from now

Predicted score

Like the Prince at a save point, I'm having a future vision... the reviewer is going wild! Ninety-odd percent!

***NOM UK* Predicts 90%+**

Trust me, I've played it



I'm going to let you in on a bit of the magic of magazine making here. With three days left until the print presses had to roll, our copy of *Prince of Persia* was in Toronto, Canada. There was no way it was getting here in time. Kingsley was weeping and Tim was preparing a written warning. "Where's our lead preview, SCOTT?!" It was worth risking. No other game would do. DHL delivered the game with one day to go and I did an all-nighter.

■ **What, are you some kind of *Prince of Persia* stalker or something?**
Hey, I did love the original side-on 2D adventure from way back in 1990. Tiptoeing through razor gates, creeping through spikes and taking risky jumps. This stunning new version stretches those gameplay values over a 3D framework with the same sort of genius *Metroid Prime* managed.

■ **That's lovely for you, but it might as well be Prince of Wales for all I care.**
Pretty soon, you'll be wishing you had Sands of Time so you could rewind time and take that statement back. This plays so perfectly, it's impossible not to fall in love. It does that whole widescreen *Tomb Raider* adventure deal – only with a control system it's actually possible to succeed with.

■ **What's the story?**
Umm, dunno really. It's not important. At least, it wasn't to me. Every second I spent listening to a geezer in a turban banging on about mystical artefacts was a second where I wasn't swinging off flagpoles. It's something about a dagger that's so powerful it breaks everything. Or something. You don't need the plot anyway, because the game design is absolute genius. There are always subtle 'signposts' for the game-savvy to react to.

■ **That dagger... that's the 'rewinding time' thing?**
Yeah. You can also flip on a bit of cheeky slow-mo (not Bullet Time, this is ancient Arabia, man) and some other special effects that we'll discuss another time.

■ **What's the best moment, fanboy?**
You get absolute control over probably the most agile games character ever. The levels are brilliantly engineered for you to have risky fun in. Even the most basic wall running manoeuvre is still thrilling after you've done it a hundred times. Seriously, you can imagine Miyamoto sitting down with this and thinking "Man, that's awesome!"

■ **... and the worst bit?**
Some of the brawls here degenerate into learned patterns of rolling dodges and button bashing strikes. It's at odds with the considered genius of the rest.

GOTCHA FORCE

Nuclear war in miniature

Got an insatiable desire for awesome explosions, death and destruction? Go get *Gotcha Force*!

You don't know it, but there are secret battles raging on every street of your hometown. In every supermarket car park, playground and sand pit, epic battles of good versus evil play out right under your nose. Itty-bitty robots rain thunderous firepower down upon their sworn enemies and the victors take their place in the annals of miniaturised mech-fighting history.

Or at least that's what Capcom wants you to think with *Gotcha Force*, a game full to its diminutive brim with pocket-sized punch. It's up to you to battle and collect palm-sized robotic buddies called Gotcha Borgs. The more Borgs you collect the better equipped you'll be when putting together your mighty army of Borg minions to fight the invading meanies known as Death Force. You can also select robots from your stable – and choose from many combinations of their parts – to take into multiplayer battles with you.

The basics of play are simple; take to a series of arenas and unleash the big guns to pummel your foe before they pummel you. Sometimes you'll be fighting one-on-one, while other bouts are team-based affairs, but regardless of the type of scrap one thing's certain: the action will blow a robot-shaped hole in your head.

Your TV will be in danger of cracking right down the middle as your Borg runs, jumps and blasts its way to victory. Control is simple and, depending on the upgrades you've strapped on to your shiny metal ass, attacks range from simple melee combos to ranged weapons that need to recharge between volleys and the awesome 100-round rapid fire chain gun. Ka-pow!

What's most awesome is the speed of the action and the simple-yet-effective devastation kicking off all over the game area. It's easy to forget these bots are only supposed to be wee and that the on-screen supernovas are really only the size of watermelons, it's THAT explosive. Your reward for sending your enemies crashing to the ground in a mushroom cloud of pain is progress to the next arena and loads of juicy points that you

Borgs come in all shapes – check that nurse!

Use simple combos to bitch-slap Death Force

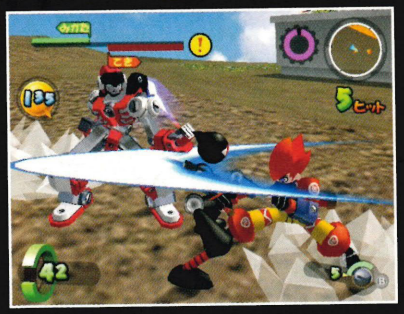
The stage is set for epic, pastel-coloured battles

It's not what you've got...

... it's what you do with it!

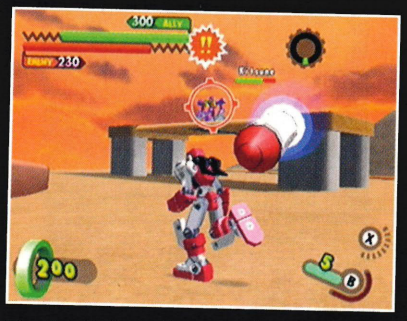
Picture the attitude of Hollywood hooligan Vinnie Jones crossed with the awesome robotic weaponry of *Transformers* and you're close to understanding what *Gotcha Force* is like to play. The butt-kicking arsenal at your disposal is enough to take out a small country.

We've already picked out our favourite weapons and you'll soon find your best ones too as you earn more and more upgrades and unlock new, powerful Borgs.



G-Red brings up the rear, but your ally has got the enemy covered. Bosh!

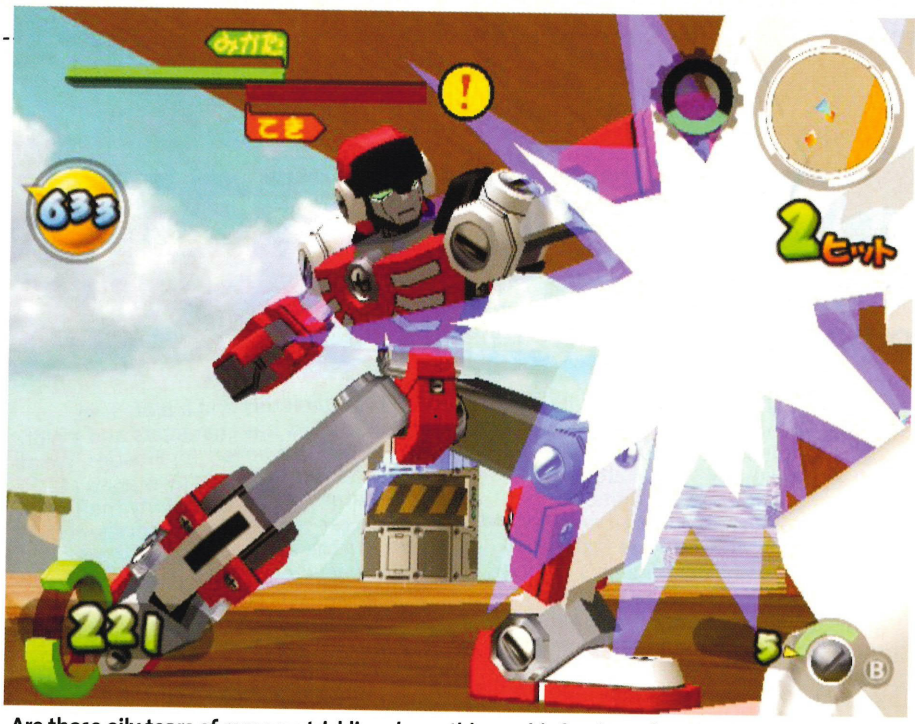
Chain gun attack! You'd have to be mental not to covet this gorgeous gun



The Death Force Borgs pack some pretty meaty weaponry too so watch out

"It's the definition of what great action games should deliver."

It's so fast your puny eyes will have trouble keeping up



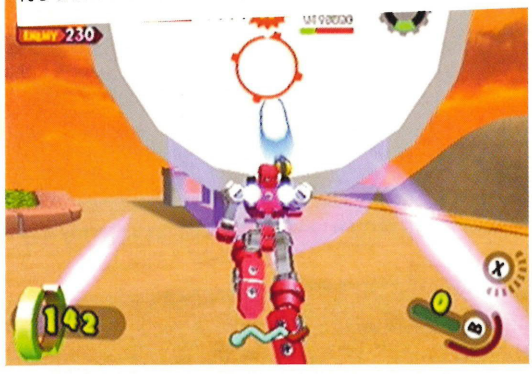
Are those oily tears of remorse trickling down this mech's face? We fear that's unlikely...

can splash on upgrades and recruiting brand-new Borgs to the cause.

These upgrades and new Borgs prove most effective in multiplayer games and you can save your own personalised toys of mass destruction to a memory card and challenge mates' Borgs in intense split-screen deathmatches. Modes include head-to-head play and two-on-two team battles, and with personalised robots taking part, the action can be incredible. Plus, because you've fought and trained your Borg over a series of matches, you feel a lot more connected to your multiplayer on-screen alter egos than in other deathmatch games.

With such fast-paced action on offer it's a shame that the game is let down by some almost offensively simplistic background graphics. There are also some iffy camera-related moments, but there's plenty of time for these to be well and truly tweaked before the game's February 2004 release.

It's also interesting to note Capcom's stance in pitching this as a title for the younger end of the games market. It's simplistic for sure, but only in the same way that any form of mass destruction with rapid-fire weapons is. And the adrenaline rush from playing is the very definition of what great action games should deliver. Time will tell if it can stand up in the long term, but first impressions rock as hard as the joypad vibrations you get from the metal-shredding mechanised carnage when you blast away at this baby.



Essentials

The developer: Capcom
What it's done: *Resident Evil, Resident Evil 0, MegaMan Network Transmission, Capcom Vs. SNK EO*
Multiplayer: 1-4 players
Connectivity: No
The publisher: Capcom
Release: February 6th
Review: Check out issue 137 of *NOM UK*

Predicted score

This is fast and furious action that asks you to put your brain on hold and rely purely on your instincts. It could look nicer and it may prove repetitive in the long term but early signs are red hot.

NOM UK Predicts **70%+**

Trust me, I've played it

I'd rather play a console multiplayer game where you can hear the whoops and cries of your mates as you thrash them than sit in front of a dull old PC shooter, sniping across an anonymous internet connection. *Gotcha Force* takes a bit of an adjustment from classic multiplayer games like *TimeSplitters* 2, but it's rewarding in its own mad-as-a-bag-of-snakes way.

■ **This looks like a kids' game, so am I going to get beaten up in the street for admitting to liking it?**
Well maybe you'd get beaten up anyway just for being you. But yeah, okay it may not LOOK like the coolest game and Capcom is billing it as a bit of a kids' title, but the action is absolutely intense and the real depth should be found in the multiple upgrades and all the new Borgs to win and tinker with.

■ **What are the different robots like? Are they cooler than Transformers?**
They're cool, but also a bit weird. Like the nurse dolly with the giant syringe (clearly a current Capcom obsession as a very similar character appears in the PS2 title *Gregory Horror Show*). Also, we're prepared to put money on a whole host of previous Capcom games stars appearing in Borg form as rewards for your *Gotcha Force* exploits.

■ **How many multiplayer modes are there in the game and are they tacked on or a real part of the fun?**
There are two main multiplayer modes and the game as a whole is pretty much a 50-50 split between single-player and multiplayer modes. In single-player mode you unlock new Borg parts and play through a particularly quirky story line. You can also get all Frankenstein and create new Borgs in the garage. Multiplayer is where put your creations to the test against your mates. For me, both parts work equally well.

■ **Okay, so what's the best thing about the game?**
Undoubtedly the pure and total destruction that you can wreak everywhere as your robot stomps its tiny manga feet. It really is spectacular. Even if the background visuals aren't particularly ground-breaking it's still quite an achievement.

■ **... and the worst bit?**
At present, the camera really needs some work, especially when you launch into the air for battles in the sky. This can easily be fixed though as there's loads of time between now and February. Unless of course the developers want time off at Christmas. Only time will tell, but we'll keep an eye on the camera when we review it.

Out of the frying pan...

You've finished *Advance Wars* and *FFTA*. You think your life is back to normal. Think again...

FIRE EMBLEM

At 9.30am, a packet arrives at *NOM UK*. At 9.31am a crowd gathers. It's tense. No-one knows what game's in there, but everyone wants the first go. [Rip] It's *Fire Emblem* for GBA! Suddenly Dom looks ill; he can't play it, he's got thumb cramps from *Tiger Woods*. Tim needs to go home; he's forgotten to feed his monkey. Mike pretends his GBA has caught fire and Dean fakes an aneurysm. That leaves Kingsley – but it's okay, he likes *Advance Wars*. It's also okay, because *Fire Emblem* comes from the same team that designed the GBA's war game of choice.

Fire Emblem is essentially very similar to *Advance Wars*. It's a turn-based strategy game with all the regular movement and combat systems you might expect: you have knights on horseback or flying on wyverns instead of tanks and helicopters; thieves prowl around in place of reconnaissance units; spell-casters and archers are your artillery and anti-air units; horses move faster than foot soldiers, but not when it's raining; and you'll be better protected when attacking from a forest. There are also the typical 'weapon triangles'; swords beat axes, axes beat lances, lances beat swords. This works for magic, too. So, it's just *Advance Wars* with swords, right? Well no, not really.

Fire Emblem's main difference will either make or break the game for you – it's got characters and a plot. Sure, *Advance Wars* has characters and a plot, but so does an advert for Frosties. We all know *Advance Wars*' Andy is good at fixing stuff; we all know Tony the Tiger likes sugar-coated pieces of flattened corn. It's the same thing. But in *Fire Emblem* you're so much more connected to your characters – it's them that do the fighting, not hordes of faceless units ready to die for some half-baked cause. There's a reason for every battle, other than, "the Black Hole army is invading again... because it can".

What's more, your progress is auto-saved after each turn, so if a character dies, that's it. They're out of the game. You can't just churn another one out of a base. Of course, if you've got an old saved game you don't mind nipping back to, you can rectify matters, but

Arrows and different coloured squares. Who among you can fail to be thrilled by all this?

"The RPG elements make it a much richer experience."

We told him, but he wouldn't listen – never, ever, carry a long metal pole on a stormy day

Oh, did you now? And what were we doing before I blacked out?

Saga school

Newsflash: the world of video games did not begin with you, alright?

Fire Emblem has been around for yonks. It first appeared way back in 1990 in Japan on the Famicom (NES), but despite its home-grown popularity, only the latest (seventh) edition has officially made it further than a Japanese dock worker's back pocket. And that's a real shame, because the games are cool. What's more, *Fire Emblem* gave birth to two *Super Smash Bros. Melee* characters, Marth (*Fire Emblem: Ankokuryu to Hikari no Tsurugi*, NES, 1990) and Roy (*Fire Emblem: Fuuin no Tsurugi*, GBA, 2002). So now you know.

that's basically cheating. If you want to play a role-playing game properly you have to deal with the consequences of your in-game actions, not restart every time something goes pear shaped.

You'll also miss out on all the emotion. If a favourite character croaks, you really feel the pain – especially if some bunch of ogres have just duffed up the Paladin you've spent ages levelling-up. We'd be gutted if someone drove a tank over *Advance Wars*' Nell, but that isn't going to happen, is it? She'd just retreat, flash her stockings at a few thousand hapless recruits and have them charging back into the napalm in a flutter of her mascara-soaked eyelashes. She's a cold, cruel lady.

Other RPG elements like side-quests, magic items, new, sharper weapons and reams and reams of dramatic text serve to muddy the water, but this is more a strategy game with a story than a true RPG. Still, the RPG elements do make it a richer experience all the same. Put it this way, while you can boot-up *Advance Wars* for a ten-minute tea break, this is more of a two-hour train journey game.

Just like *Advance Wars* though, there's also about three hours of training chapters that'll give you a more intensive education than most GCSEs. Which is fine if, like us, all you want to do is play handheld strategy games for a living. We'll be seeing you down the Job Centre, guys.

I've always liked you, purple-hair man. I've always thought you had the right attitude...

"If a favourite character croaks, you really feel the pain."

Essentials

The developer: Intelligent Systems (formerly Nintendo R&D1)
What it's done: Some of the best stuff ever, including the *Fire Emblem* series, the *Advance Wars* series, *Metroid Fusion* (GBA), *Super Metroid* (Super NES) and *Mario Kart Super Circuit* (GBA). Wow!
Multiplayer: Oh, yes
Connectivity: Possibly – there's a GameCube version coming soon
The publisher: Nintendo
Release: 2004
Review: sooner rather than later, we hope

Predicted score

More limited in its appeal than *Advance Wars*, but possibly more griping once you get going, this should be a thing of beauty.

***NOM UK* Predicts 90%+**

Trust me, I've played it

I loved both *Advance Wars* games and I'm a big fan of stuff like *Golden Sun*, too, so I was always going to love this. What's more, it does what the GBA is best at – keeping things graphically simple, but incredibly addictive. *Fire Emblem* should be a winner.

■ **I like the look of it, but I'm worried. Do I have to be a sad loner to play this?**
It's true I love *Advance Wars* – but that was okay because it had tanks and guns in it. With *Fire Emblem* you're on slightly more questionable ground, but only if you give a damn what other people think. Miss out on this because it looks like something they'd sell in Games Workshop and you'd be a fool. Still, if you're really worried, you could always tape a picture of *Mortal Kombat* over the screen and flip it down when someone's looking. Yeah, that'd make you look the coolest.

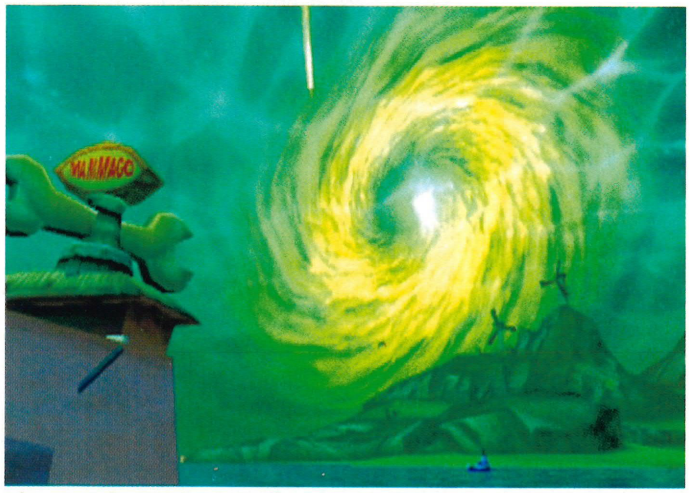
■ **You say it's the seventh in the series? How come I've never heard of it?**
Because this is the first one to be released in the West, gaijin dog. It's actually a prequel to the sixth in the series, *Fire Emblem: Fuuin no Tsurugi* (also on GBA), so hopefully that may reach Blighty if this one does well. Clearly the Japanese think we only want to play games where you murder people on the street, punt an air-filled leather sack around or go toe-to-toe with some sweaty bloke in small pants.

■ **Can I skip the dialogue and get straight to the frenzied blood-letting?**
Yes, but you'll be missing out on a cracking yarn. If you can be bothered to read through the five minutes of dialogue about marquises and lords before each battle, it's well worth it and will bring you closer to the characters. If you want to cut straight to the action, the *Advance Wars* games may be a better bet.

■ **How do the characters level-up? Is it all XPs and junk?**
How did you guess? You must have played an RPG-type game before! But as well as Experience Points gained in battle you can pick up items that'll enhance your skills and swap character classes when you reach a certain level.

■ **What's the best bit of the game?**
Probably stuff like finding new weapons and levelling-up – the things that were missing from *Advance Wars*. The battle animations are cool, especially the really hard characters.

■ **... and the worst bit?**
There's not a whole lot of expression in the character's faces – even when they're giving you bad news they seem to be smiling. They seem to have all come from the Liz Hurley acting school.



Planetary destruction by catherine wheel – prettier, but you still kark it

With no nibbles, no Twister and no dance mat it wasn't surprising only Jade and Pey'j had turned up to the robot's birthday bash

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

Smile for the camera

You'll need to check in your sense of reality before you continue, things are going to get weird. Got your ticket? Let's go beyond...

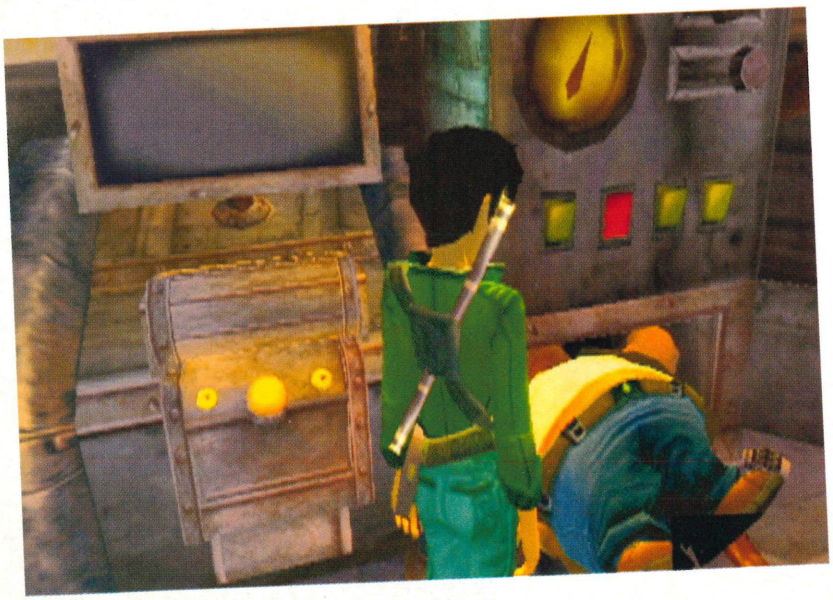
Last time we showed you *Beyond Good & Evil* (in *NOM* 129) there were still leaves on the trees. We'd just got our hands on *F-Zero GX* for the first time and *Double Dash* was but a blip on the horizon. Back then we said *BG&E* would stand out and now we've got our hands on a finished US version we can say with authority that we were right. We said that about *F-Zero*. We said that about *Mario Kart*, too. Translation? You can trust in *NOM UK*.

Beyond Good & Evil is based in the fantasy world of Hyllis. You play Jade, a freelance photographer and all round good egg. Some crazy things are happening on this planet. Strange creatures, known as Domz, are attacking at will. The people fear for their lives. Protecting them from the attacks is the mysterious and aloof Alpha Section, an elite fighting force. But there are those who believe that Alpha Section aren't all they appear and that they're actually in league with the evil Domz.

Jade and her piggy sidekick Pey'j, are hired by an underground organisation to try and uncover the secrets surrounding the Domz and Alpha Section. And that's where you come in. The twist in *Beyond Good & Evil* comes with the camera. In order to accumulate money Jade must collect photographs of all the living creatures on Hyllis. These can then be catalogued. The rarer the beast, the more money you'll receive. Of course this means that even when faced by a boss or mini-boss you should whip out the camera and start snapping.

But the camera's not just good for pics of small furry animals. As you delve deeper into the seedy world of Alpha Section you can use it to take snaps of top-secret stuff to send back to your colleagues, creating a file on the wrongdoings and proving their case.

The majority of the gameplay is viewed in the third person. The controls are intuitive and the game is generally fun to play. Jade has plenty of abilities; climb, run, forward roll, crouch, etc. She also has help from other characters, Pey'j being the main one. A lot of the puzzles involve teaming up with a sidekick to achieve your goal. Dual switches, blocked entries and jump pads all pop up



"The camera is like *Metroid's* Scan Visor."

It's an emergency! But hopefully Jade will be in time to save the burning croissants and pain au chocolat

It's a gamer's game, too

_BG&E_'s not all running around taking pictures like some crazy paparazzo – check these cool mini-games...

If you fancy a break from all of the investigative journalism then there are plenty of things you can do to entertain yourself, if you know where to look. The centre of Hyllis is home to a couple of hovercraft racetracks which are good for a laugh – not quite up to *Double Dash* standards, but fun nonetheless.

If you head into the Pedestrian District then you can find a couple of other things to entertain you. A game not unlike air hockey and a find-the-marble event are all here, and everyone's up for sticking a bet on, so there's always the opportunity to increase your wealth.

If you fancy it, hovercraft racing can be found in the centre of Hyllis

Air hockey is cool, but this is a French game – we wanted some babi-foot

"Hyllis looks beautiful – even the ugly bits – and there are superb lighting effects."

Jade: "I'll go on ahead, you stay here and guard the truffles and swill."
Pey'j: "Piece of cake <BURP>."

throughout the levels meaning you have to call on your pals to help out.

But Jade isn't confined to running around, you also have the use of a hovercraft that gets you from place to place and you can enter the hovercraft into races to win extra cash and give you a break from the intense story line.

BG&E's main plus is its presentation. Hyllis looks beautiful – even the ugly bits – and there are superb lighting effects making this almost dreamlike in places. The creatures in the Abandoned Mine, near the game's beginning, are stunning and vibrant. This quality is extended through to the animation with realistic movements and idiosyncrasies given to almost every different character you come across. In places it reminded us of the classic LucasArts point-and-click adventures like *Monkey Island*. And that's no mean feat.

Essentials

The developer: Ubi Soft
What it's done: *XIII* (issue 135, 89%), *Rayman 3 Hoodlum Havoc* (issue 126, 87%), *Rayman Advance* (issue 106, 90%)
Multiplayer: not here
Connectivity: nothing
The publisher: Ubi Soft
Release: February 2004
Review: hopefully in the very next issue

Predicted score

It's a wonderful title that manages to cram in great action, top characters and a smart story line without becoming dull. As long as the PAL conversion goes well, we'll be loving this long time.

NOM UK Predicts **80%+**

Trust me, I've played it

I enjoyed it six months ago and I'm liking it even more now. There's so much to see and do, and so much to take in. It's some achievement.

You mentioned LucasArts adventures – it's got a sense of humour then?
Certainly. It's not laugh-out-loud funny, but there are certain elements that managed to bring a smile to the lips of even this cynical old gamer. What's more, the characters are quite likable – even the bit-part players.

The camera's just a gimmick, isn't it?
Not at all. It's your main source of income and also a handy tool, a bit like the Scan Visor in *Metroid Prime*. After you receive the Digital Zoom upgrade you'll be using it to scope out places from afar without being seen. Getting perfect snaps of all the creatures you come across – even the enemies – soon becomes addictive.

But surely it's not your only weapon!
Of course not. Jade's main weapon is a staff, a bit like the one in *Star Fox Adventures*. This can be used to swipe at enemies, perform a super attack and can be used in conjunction with Pey'j's super jump to solve puzzles and open passages. We also managed to get our hands on a Gyro Disc Launcher, which is excellent for taking out targets in the distance.

Is the hovercraft tooled up as well?
It comes with a simple blaster as standard, but through the collection of Pearls you can upgrade the craft to make it much more useful. Just take it to Mammago's Garage (run by three huge Rhinos) and purchase the goodies they have on offer.

What about the secret organisations?
I don't want to say too much as it may spoil the game for you, but your first mission turns out to be an initiation test given by a group called IRIS. They firmly believe that there is more to the Alpha Section than meets the eye and they're intent on unravelling the mystery. You'll need to solve a few puzzles before you get inside their secret hideout.

What was your favourite part?
I really enjoyed using the camera, especially after getting the Digital Zoom feature. It's almost like a game in itself. Every time you enter a new area you start looking for interesting creatures to snap. It's very satisfying when you get paid the big bucks for getting a shot of a really rare animal.

... and your least favourite bit?
There's a certain element of trial and error in some of the areas, especially when confronted by enemies. I didn't really appreciate being jumped by a gang of aliens out of the blue.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Turtle power

The fighting foursome put two-toed foot to ass on GameCube.

Ninjas are cool. Whether they're mutant green turtles, giant sewer rats or crazy-ass Japanese ninjas that dress all in black, they're damn cool. They meet force with force. Pick a fight with one and you'll get a foot in the mouth. And if a ninja can't be bothered to fight, he'll lob a few spiky throwing stars instead. Sensible.

Unless you're good pals with Mr Miyagi, the closest you're likely to have got to being a ninja was when you used to pretend to be one of the Heroes In A Half-Shell, back when the Turtles were first big in the 80s. You'd run around with a bandanna tied round your eyes, screaming COWABUNGA and battering your brother with a big wooden stick. You did used to do that too, right?

After years of lying dormant, the mutant fighters are back. And with the release of the stylish animated series comes a fresh run of video games. We've already rated the GBA game, scoring a reasonable 72%, but it lost marks for being overly basic and too short.

Now we've got the GameCube version, and it looks to be mostly the same. Take on the Foot Clan with your favourite turtle or team up with a mate in the co-operative mode. A two-player Versus mode allows you to go head-to-head with another player, although we wonder why on Earth there are no four-player options when, to state the obvious, there are four Turtles.

Performance wise, all four reptiles are practically the same. They have their own combo moves and use their weapons in slightly different ways, but all perform the same function. And everything has been

"No matter what foe you're taking on, don't worry about strategy."

Somewhere on this screen is the sound of the bad guy's glass jaw breaking. Can you spot it?

Raphael, the budding archaeologist, speaks

Deal out reptile vengeance with a large stick that probably has a cool Japanese name, too

SMEZZ-ACK!!!

***TMNT* continues the 'SOK!' and 'THWACK!' comeback...**

Just as in *XIII*, the hard-hitting action has been beefed up by comic-style CRASH and POW words each time you land a merciless blow on one of your enemies' chins.

Sprint up to a gang of unsuspecting villains and launch a super-killer spinning kick – the screen will erupt everywhere with brightly coloured THOK and BASH words. Not only does it look pretty damn cool, it's almost as satisfying as it would be punching their noses and ears off.

There's no denying this looks every bit as cool as it should – fork you, robo-dogs-things!

Leonardo finally noticed all the murdering

Those fine-tuned ninja senses are slipping

kept extremely basic – all kicking and punching is done with single buttons that you simply batter to deal out the pain.

The environments contain breakable scenery that you can use to help you kick ass, like kicking cars until they explode, throwing shurikens at explosive barrels or smashing fire hydrants that'll knock goons to the floor with jets of water.

You'll start off tackling street mobs and move on to tougher gangs and the Foot in later levels. But no matter what foe you take on, you don't have to worry about strategy. They all fight in exactly the same way, so you can just run in smashing the buttons. More moves can be unlocked as you progress through the game, but it all still seems a bit too basic.

Making your way through the levels is just like a classic scrolling beat-'em-up – you take on waves of enemy fighters until they're all defeated in that area. An arrow will flash up on the screen, signalling you to move on to the next area where more fighting awaits.

Fans will be glad to see clips of cartoon footage to kick off levels and brief cut-scenes that unravel the action of the stage ahead. You'll start off fighting in the sewers and streets, and later move onto warehouses and Foot Clan bases – areas you may have seen in the cartoon. But none are very exciting.

Just like on GBA, everything is basic. Anyone can pick up the pad and have a good ruck without the need for gaming skill. That's great for really young fans of the cartoon series, but for hardcore Nintendo gamers like yourself, we're not so sure.

Essentials

The developer: Konami
What it's done: *Disney Sports Basketball* (issue 129, 38%), *Disney Sports Football* (issue 123, 73%), *Disney Sports Skateboarding* (issue 128, 40%)
Multiplayer: 1-2 players
Connectivity: Disconnected
The publisher: Konami
Release: February 2004
Review: Issue 139 or so...

Predicted score

We all wanted to like this game because it's the *Turtles*, but we haven't seen anything yet to make this good. It's not bad, but we doubt it'll have *Turtles* fans busting veins in anticipation.

NOM UK Predicts 65%+

Trust me, I've played it

Yes, I like the *Turtles*. Yes, I know it's childish, but I don't care. They're kick-ass ninjas and their new 'meaner' look in the cartoon rocks. As for the game, I was hoping for something a little more thrilling, action-packed and in-depth. I was having fun at first, but soon realised that was because I wanted to be having fun. After a while I got bored of the repetitive gameplay.

■ **Is there anything more interesting than punching and kicking in the gameplay?**
Err... there's some variety, but only if jumping onto other platforms now and then is your thing. Mostly it's a pretty dull string of button bashing. You'll gain new moves as you go, which improves your fighting techniques and you'll also have to fight bigger, more skilful enemies, but that's as varied as the gameplay gets.

■ **When fighting a pack of enemies, do they all get stuck in to the riot or stand there like pansies and wait their turn?**
The enemies are a bit strange. First of all, they sometimes just appear out of nowhere, like they've been beamed in from the Starship Enterprise. When you first spot a gang in the distance, they won't actually react to your presence. They'll just stand there and look at you, as if they were paralysed until you run up to them. Once they actually engage you, it's not too bad, as they'll try to surround you and throw in a boot from behind. But often, you won't need to worry about this because if you do it right, you can simply charge into a pack and smash them all down like a bowling ball hitting pins.

■ **What about the Versus mode? Does the fighting system suit two-players?**
What system? There is no system. You both just charge in to each other hitting the attack button, or any other moves that you've been taught in the one-player mode and hope for the best. There's no block, no holds, nothing. It's the same basic button mashing gameplay as in the single-player adventure.

■ **What's the best bit?**
Some of the graphical effects are nice, like the POWs and CRASHs that appear when you lay the smack down. It's just like the comic-book effect that was used in *XIII*. All of the 3D models in the game, including characters and scenery, have a nice cartoony look.

■ **... and the worst bit?**
Being smashed to the floor by an attacking opponent and not being able to do a thing about it. There's no block button, so if one of the goons charges at you swinging a metal pole like a psycho, there's little you can do but run.

Play your cards right

Freed from its card-playing roots, *Yu-Gi-Oh!* comes to GameCube dressed in RPG clothes.

YU-GI-OH! THE FALSEBOUND KINGDOM

For a game that's built its reputation on avidly collecting and scrutinising a deck of cards, *Yu-Gi-Oh! The Falsebound Kingdom* does a pretty decent job of disguising that fact altogether. What we have here is a turn-based role-playing game mixed with the strategic elements of *Advance Wars*.

Being the all-round deck don that he is, Yugi has received an invitation to SCI Laboratories to try out some new Duel Monsters software that's being developed. And being the spiky-haired good guy that we all know and love, the little chap's brought all of his friends along to take a look as well.

SCI are in the process of developing a piece of virtual reality equipment that allows you to enter the Duel Monsters world and join a rebellion against an evil empire, battling the oppressors with a small army of sympathetic monsters that have rallied to your cause.

Of course, when the machine is turned on and Yugi and his mates take up their positions, they are magically warped into the world where they actually become leaders of the various rebellion groups and must fight their way out of the game. You can choose to play as either Yugi or Seto Kaiba. Both characters have much the same experience in the virtual world so the choice is really down to your personal preference. We opted for Yugi.

Your initial forays into the battle are guided by Shimon, a member of the rebellion. He explains the basics of the game to you, from selecting your squad to taking over weak and abandoned sites on the map in order to give your team extra assistance as you battle through the levels.

This is where the *Advance Wars* side of things kicks in. Your initial task is usually to find a weak or empty base and take it over in order to gain a foothold in the arena. Then you can use any gold that you have accumulated to fortify your site, building air and ground defences, healing centres and more.

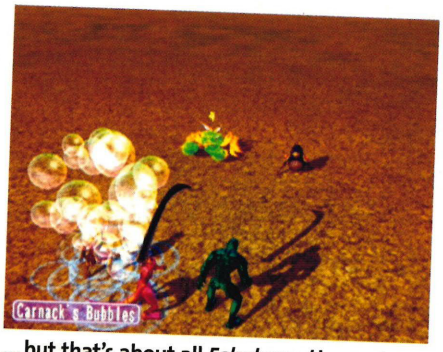
Once you've taken out the weaker opponents you then have to take out the boss, win the area and move on to the next. Sadly the battles are dull. Each Marshal controls three monsters chosen before the map is activated and then takes turns to unleash the various attacks possessed by your creatures. For the most part your monsters only have one attack, so the system boils down to hitting two buttons and watching the not-so-spectacular animations unfold on screen.

Rather than being a fight to the death, you only have a set number of turns in which to defeat your opponents. The winner in each scenario is the player

"There's little to satisfy hardcore *Yu-Gi-Oh!* fans or RPG addicts."

With big monsters and flashing lights, who needs decent gameplay underneath? YOU DO!

It's great seeing all your monsters in full 3D...



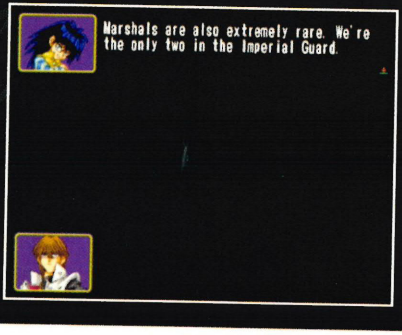
... but that's about all *Falsebound* has got

Blah, blah, blah

If you were hoping to see some cool *Yu-Gi-Oh!* cut-scenes then you'll be sorely disappointed here, friends.

We could cut *The Falsebound Kingdom* a little slack if there were some sweet animated sequences in there, even some 2D comic strip type things. But what do we get? Text, text and more text.

Usually there's a static image illustrating the conversation, but is that enough for slavering *Yu-Gi-Oh!* fans? We don't think so. In fact, we reckon it whiffs of 'cash in'. Sort it out Konami, there's so much source material to borrow from and yet we have to make do with a GameCube comic – and not a very exciting one at that.



who's done the most damage to their opponent. Once the turns have ended you return to the map screen where you have to be quick to stop your Marshal re-entering the battle. You then have the chance to get your character back to full health or send in another Marshal.

The Falsebound Kingdom feels lazy, it looks dated and there seems to be very little in here to satisfy either hardcore *Yu-Gi-Oh!* fans or obsessive RPG addicts. Hopefully things will be tweaked and extras bunged in for the European release, otherwise this has 'cash in' written all over it.

Look at the many different stats and icons. Laugh as grown men weep in confusion

Essentials

The developer: Konami
What it's done: *ZOE: The Fist of Mars* (GBA, issue 116, 82%), *Yu-Gi-Oh! Dark Duel Stories* (GBC, issue 124, 64%), *Yu-Gi-Oh! Stairway to the Destined Duel* (GBA, issue 129, 71%)
Multiplayer: No
Connectivity: Not on your nelly, mate
The publisher: Konami
Release: TBC
Review: Sometime next year

Predicted score

No doubt *The Falsebound Kingdom* will be snapped up by *Yu-Gi-Oh!* fans the minute it hits shops, but unless you live and breathe Yugi, we reckon this'll disappoint. It needs more of the depth and excitement we'd expect from a big franchise.

NOM UK Predicts 40%+

Trust me, I've played it

What a disappointment. This bears little resemblance to the cartoon series or the card game. It feels rushed, as if very little time has been spent getting anything right. For all the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* fans out there we hope this gets a lot better before it's released in Europe.

■ ***Yu-Gi-Oh!* Is the best thing in the world, you won't convince me that this is rubbish.**
That's what Konami are betting on. If this had been produced as some original RPG with characters called Zog and Pritgip then everybody would be quick to dismiss it. Slap on the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* name and you've got yourself an instant hit.

■ ***Yu-Gi-Oh!* is the worst thing in the world, but I really want a 'Cube RPG.**
Look away now and hope with all your heart that something like *Tales of Symphonia* is released this side of the globe. *The Falsebound Kingdom* just doesn't have the depth that's expected from both hardcore *Yu-Gi-Oh!* fans and die-hard RPG players.

■ **It looks a little uninspiring.**
Everyone in the office agrees that it's part N64, part PSone and part GBA. The graphics are particularly lacklustre to say the least with uninspiring terrain and no real detail in any area of the presentation.

■ **But it must have some cool *Yu-Gi-Oh!* stuff though, right?**
You'd think so wouldn't you, but the sad fact is that all interaction in between the battles is conducted through reams of text and static pictures of the characters. The closest you get to animation or emotion is an exclamation mark!

■ **It can't all be bad though.**
No it can't and this is certainly the closest that GameCube has come to an *Advance Wars*-type game, which is good to see. But it's a real shame that the licence hasn't been used to the full and the game engine is basic at best. This is not using GameCube's power at all, it could all be done on GBA.

■ **Can you find a best bit?**
Over time, you can accumulate an army of beasts and it's always nice to get an idea of the size and scale of some of the monsters, just like in *Pokémon Stadium* or *Colosseum*.

■ **... and a worst bit?**
It's lazy, dated and cheap. Things move along at a snail's pace breaking up the action and prolonging the agony. The graphics are poor, there are no animated cut-scenes, the music doesn't seem to fit the action and the game lacks depth. Take off the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* name and this goes straight in the bin.

PAC-MAN VS.

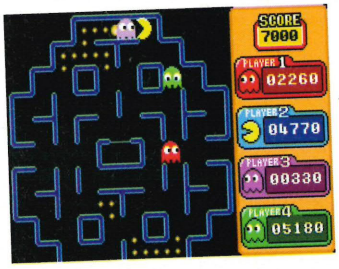
It's party time! Bring a four Pac

It's four-player *Pac-Man* with GBA connectivity. And it's probably gonna be free. Be calm, people.

Nintendo's E3 2003 press conference featured a ground-breaking event in video game history. Shigeru Miyamoto announced that he had something special to show off – and it wasn't *Mario 128*. He introduced *Pac-Man* creator Toru Iwatani and announced that they had worked together to design *Pac-Man vs.* for GameCube. This was amazing since it was the first game Iwatani had worked on for over 20 years – he'd quit designing in protest after Namco awarded him a piddling £2,000 bonus after his creation made them millions.

Miyamoto, meanwhile, had always thought of Toru Iwatani the way most people think of, well, Shigeru Miyamoto – Iwatani was his personal industry idol, the creator of his favourite game. Miyamoto loved *Pac-Man* so much that when he began to experiment with GBA connectivity, he fashioned a multiplayer *Pac-Man* game on his own, bringing the prototype to Iwatani at Namco and asking him to help out.

What's it like? Well, for the one guy holding the GBA, *Pac-Man vs.* looks exactly like a standard game of *Pac-Man*: yellow circle with a mouth, dots, fruit, ghosts and four tempting Power Pellets. But the ghosts aren't being controlled by the computer. They're being moved around by something much more devious – the people sat next to you.



The three ghosts play on the TV, unable to see exactly where Pac-Man is, but working together in the hunt

Yes, while you're staring at the GBA, your three friends are watching the TV screen, where they can only see their ghosts and about a five-dot radius around them. To eat your little Pac-Man before he clears the board, they'll have to co-ordinate their efforts by yelling out where you are and trying to trap you. It's actually more of a competition between the ghosts, however, as only the ghost that catches Pac-Man gets a share of his points. Then the GBA passes over to that player and they're Pac-Man for the next round. Play continues until somebody reaches a predetermined number of points.

The controller-passing between rounds can get slightly confusing, but the game always knows who has got which controller. That doesn't keep the wires from getting tangled, though. One solution would have been support for four GBAs, but that's not in there. You can already see that the fun is potentially limited, which is why the game will likely be given away FREE with Namco's *R-Racing Evolution*.

This is what you see on the GBA

Miyamoto meets Toru Iwatani, shortly before receiving a signed pair of the latter's pants

Essentials

The developers: Namco and Nintendo
What they've done: *Super Mario Bros.*, *Pac-Man*, all the awesome stuff.
Multiplayer: 2-4 players
Connectivity: IS THE WHOLE POINT, YOU FOOL
The publisher: Namco
Release: TBC
Review: TBC

Predicted score

It's a mini-game that won't even be sold separately, but it's way more fun than *Pac-Man World 2*, not to mention almost every other party game you could mention.

NOM UK Predicts **80%+**

Second round

We've unlocked the lot, just for you. Come take a peek...

If you sit in a Tiger Woods tower, worshipping at the altar of the greatest golfer of the modern era then be warned; you just aren't going to get this at all. Now that we've dug as deep as we can into *Mario Golf Toadstool Tour* we're absolutely certain that this is the sort of game you'll either love or hate.

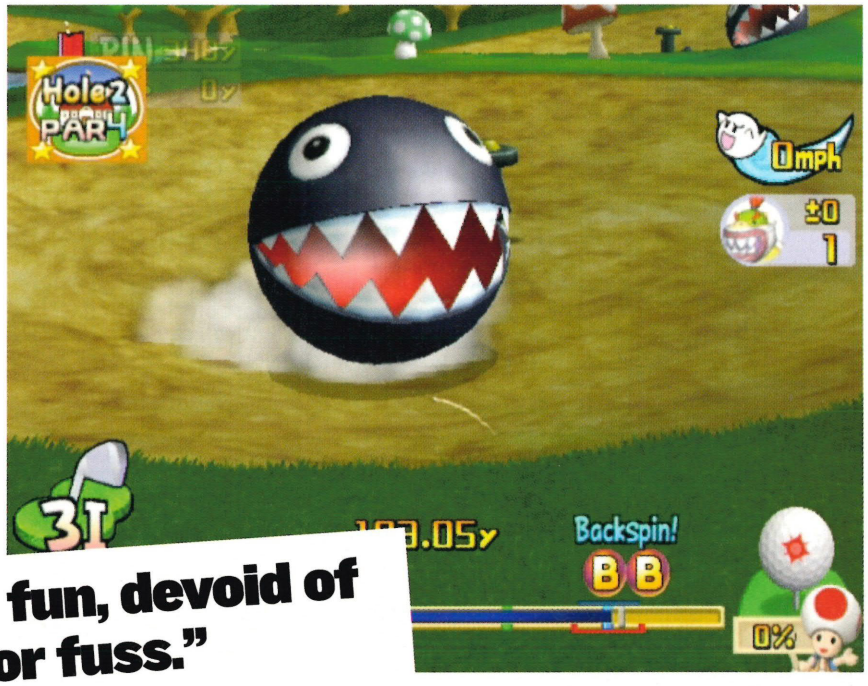
In its favour, *Mario Golf* is pure fun, devoid of any complications or fuss. You don't have to worry about the clubs in your bag, winning a sponsorship deal from Callaway or desperately trying to make the cut on a four-day PGA Tour round. It's a safe, self-contained version of the sport. There's variety in the players' skills, but it boils down to getting out onto the course and having a bit of a laugh.

On the downside, it feels old-fashioned. Since the invention of the analogue swing system in most new golf titles, the button-pushing approach feels like a backwards step. A bit like a Game Boy Advance game. But if you've cut your teeth on the N64 and Game Boy Color versions of *Mario Golf* then you'll easily adapt.

What's undeniably cool though – cooler than all the Retief Goosens and Colin Montgomerys you'd care to mention – is the cast list. We were reasonably happy with Mario, Yoshi and Donkey Kong, but dig a little deeper – and play a little better and you'll get your hands on such luminaries as Boo and Petey Piranha.

And as is the fashion, the best is saved until last. Bowser's Badlands is a truly fiendish course filled to bursting with lava pits and Bullet Bills. This is Nintendo escapism at its very best. But for many, this is just going to be too much of an acquired taste.

MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR



"*Mario Golf* is pure fun, devoid of any complications or fuss."

This has gone beyond a joke. It's time to sack the gardener

Look at all the characters we've unlocked – it was tough, but we did it for you

Essentials

The developer: Camelot
What it's done: *Golden Sun: The Lost Age* (GBA, issue 132, 89%), *Golden Sun* (GBA, issue 114, 93%), *Mario Golf* (N64, issue 85, 90%)
Multiplayer: 1-4 players, taking turns
Connectivity: yes, but we still haven't tried it yet
The publisher: Nintendo
Release: TBC
Review: with any luck it'll be in a few issues' time

Predicted score

If old-skool golf is your thing and you think the analogue swing is the work of the devil, then this is going to be right up your street. But if Tiger's your man then this is going to feel too light to be any real fun.

NOM UK Predicts 70%+

F-Zero GX gets smaller

New and improved, *F-Zero: Falcon Legend* will give you finger blisters and a brain ache.

F-ZERO: FALCON LEGEND

Watch someone when they're playing the hardest Cup in an *F-Zero* game – their eyes are wide open and glued to the TV as their brain struggles to absorb the supersonic action on screen. Their pupils twitch psychotically and their head moves, ducking left and right slightly as they guide their ship around one rapid bend after another, scraping walls at 1,400km/h.

It's like mental punishment. Forget burning eyes, you'll walk away from playing the Diamond Cup in *F-Zero GX* with a brain meltdown. No game can do this to a gamer like *F-Zero* and the GBA will be getting its second serving of cranium-aching action with the sequel to *Maximum Velocity*.

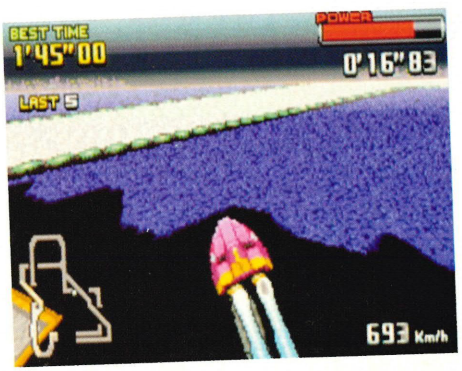
Visually, you'd need a keen eye to tell the difference between *Falcon Legend* and its portable predecessor, but there have been some huge changes to the gameplay. Now, everything from game modes and ship set-up to the race grid line-up and boosting method is more like the N64 and GameCube versions rather than the Super NES original.

The Super NES version and *Maximum Velocity* gave players one boost per lap. This limiting system has been replaced by the improved GameCube-style power/boost bar. Boosting takes away health, but you can boost as much as you like, providing you keep your Power topped up.

The ship-select screen has been updated, so there are now 30 players to choose from – a massive increase on *Maximum Velocity* and each can be set up for speed or acceleration in the same way as in *GX*. So you'll now have to toy around with your ship settings to get the best result out on the track.

There are also 30 competitors in an Arcade race, not four. But don't expect the same crowded racing conditions as *F-Zero GX* – the other ships race at a distance from each other and you'll just compete with the pack closest to you. This means you won't ever have more than about five racers on-screen at once. This is a bit of a downer, but at least they're there. More is generally better than less. Unless you're talking about more copies of *Universal Studios* for Christmas.

When animation takes liberties with physics: just how are those glasses meant to stay on?

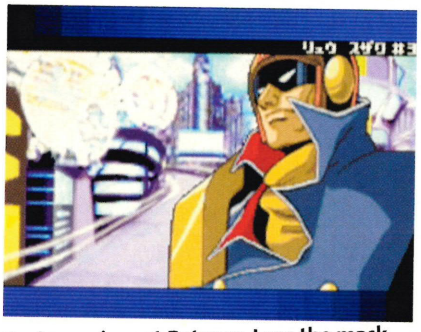


The new and the old

As well as all the familiar tracks like Mute City and Big Blue, *Falcon Legend* also has neat 2D versions of some of the tracks that were new in *GX*. The most impressive is the Lightning course. The track is made of a red mesh and you can see through it as you pelt along – and there's even cracks of lightning, too. Impressive for a 2D racer. Now all we need is a straight port of *Super Mario Kart* on GBA...

"If it were any faster, we doubt you'd be able to see the corners."

Driving along the edge of a licorice allsort



Dude, you're not Batman. Lose the mask

But best of all the additions is Story mode. Again, in a similar way to *GX*, you are placed in various scenarios in story-driven races. As well as Captain Falcon, there are seven other racers that can be chosen, each with their own story lines. Unfortunately, Japanese text denies us the opportunity of understanding what's going on, but this is likely to be where the game ties in with the cartoon. It seems to be ultra sweet, though.

Basic but cool action sequences set the scene for the race before you're given an objective and dumped on the racetrack. The challenges are neat – you'll be asked to catch up and beat a fast opponent to the finish line, win a race on a tight course without boosting, or even get to the end of a course without being overtaken by your rival. They're inventive to say the least.

Our only problem with *F-Zero Falcon Legend* is it seems a little on the easy side. Either that, or the many hours we spent rocketing round in *GX* have give us the reactions of a super-fly, because we stormed through most of the Story mode missions on our first try and we destroyed the Gold Cup on Expert mode without too many problems either. We expect there'll be a tougher difficulty setting to unlock, which should be more of a challenge, but all will be told in our review when the game arrives on UK shores.

Essentials

The developer: Nintendo
What it's done: *F-Zero GX* (issue 133, 92%), *F-Zero Maximum Velocity* (issue 106, 91%)
Multiplayer: 1-4 players, single and multi-cart
Connectivity: nothing revealed... yet. But keep your fingers crossed
The publisher: Nintendo
Release: TBC
Review: make it English, Nintendo... HURRY!

Predicted score

More *F-Zero*? Our eyes can't take much more. But then, with all the neat updates in this, we won't be complaining. Bring it!

NOM UK Predicts **85%+**

Trust me, I've played it

I've played too much *F-Zero* already. In 60 years time you'll be able to look at the OAPs and tell which of them played it when they were young. They'll have a permanent twitch in their eyes, thumbs that look like leather and the reactions of a Shaolin warrior on steroids.

■ **It's the question that's got to be asked – does *Falcon Legend* feel as insanely fast as *GX*?**
No, but then is that really possible? The 2D scenery nips past at a very hasty rate and it's more than quick enough to give you the same wide-eyed glare of concentration while you play it. But you must remember, it's only in 2D. It couldn't possibly compete with the hyper-advanced graphics of the GameCube racing god. And with those simple but effective Mode 7 graphics, if it were to go any faster we doubt you'd be able to see the corners in time to negotiate them.

■ **Does that mean that without loops and corkscrews, the tracks are boring?**
Not at all. The tracks may be flat, but they are far from boring. Most of them have many alternative routes that you'll need to experiment with to find the quickest way. *Falcon Legend* also has the biggest jumps you've ever seen in a 2D racing game and some of the courses have no barrier either, not to mention ice and mud patches, explosive mines and fog. We've also read an internet rumour that all of the tracks from the Super NES original are unlockable too. We can't confirm that now, but you'll know as soon as we do.

■ **The other thing that's always noted about *F-Zero* games is their rocking soundtracks. Always new, but still familiar to fans. Is this the same?**
There are a few funky new tunes in there that you won't recognise, but the majority are exactly the same as the N64 version. That may disappoint some people, but not me. Being a Nintendo nut, I loved *F-Zero X* so for me, it was a great nostalgic treat to hear those bad boys again. Anyway, even if you've only ever played *F-Zero GX*, most of the tunes will be quite familiar and we know you'll rock to them, if you like that sort of thing.

■ **What's the best bit?**
The addition of all the more up-to-date features in the *F-Zero* series. We would have been really disappointed if this was just another Super NES-type *F-Zero* sequel, but the new boosting and ship set-up sits well in the portable racer.

■ **... and the worst bit?**
Unfortunately, *Falcon Legend* seemed a bit easier than we expected. Once we unlock all of the (possible) extra difficulty settings and courses, we'll know more, but what we've played so far won't be too much of a challenge for *F-Zero* veterans.

Animal

Get some seasonal cheer and check out our Christmas greetings from *Animal Crossing*...

Dec 23rd. It's Toy Day in my town. I hope I get a copy of Double Dash!!

Damn! I'll try and put a brave face on it. Look at my cool Master Sword.

DID YOU KNOW?
When travelling to another town, you may meet Blanca, a faceless cat who'll ask you to draw her a new one.

Time to get the Christmas shopping in at Tom Nook's.

See that bling-bling tree? You know I'm having that bad boy.

Snowflakes

DID YOU KNOW?
Connect your GBA to the 'Cube and go to the pier, you'll see Kapp'n who will take you to a tropical island.

Weird, there's still fruit on the trees - must be the local nuclear plant.

Maddie

You are SO going to lose all of your friends if you keep acting like such a complete steakhead.

I guess the Christmas spirit just comes harder for some people...

Christmas Eve. I forgot the Twiglets, so it's back to Tom... ah, crap! Closed!

DID YOU KNOW?
Fruit other than that which originally grew in your town is worth 500 Bells a piece. Get that fruit and bury it!

Never mind, I'll cheer myself up by nicking the lights off Maddie's tree.

Amazing - the Post Office is still open. I bet I get a warm welcome...

Hey, Santa! Drop the sack or it's spade meets face time for you.

DID YOU KNOW?
Animal Crossing has feng shui. Arrange your furniture correctly to increase your good luck and fortune.

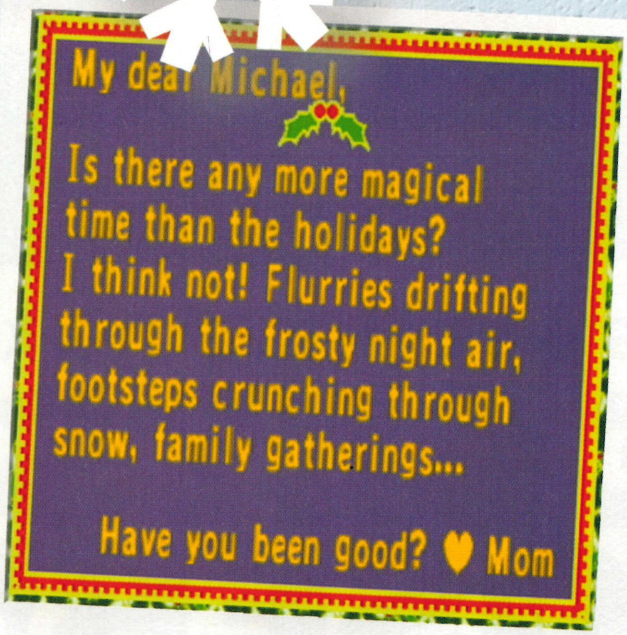
Come on, Jingle old son, play the game. Less talk more presents.

DID YOU KNOW?
The game runs in real-time. Switch off without saving and a mole called Mr Resetti will tear you off a strip.

You're just not going to quit are you? Anyone for some tasty venison?

It's Christmas Day! And, ah, what a nice message from the GameCube.

Hey, if I make this snowball big enough maybe it'll crush Maddie.



If family gatherings are so great how come you never visit? [sob]

DID YOU KNOW?
Occasionally, a dodgy dealer called Redd will set up a black market in town, offering some super-rare items.

Now I'm just gonna stand right here like David Blaine, waiting for Easter.

DID YOU KNOW?
One day, a flashy giraffe called Gracie turned up and asked us to clean her car. We told her to scram.

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What the Hell is that!?

A *NOM UK* special: the Nintendo hardware you've never even heard of...

By Chris Kohler

ELE-CONGA (¥9,800; 1972)

Donkey Konga might seem like unexplored territory for Ninty, but its conga roots go back over 30 years to a hip-shakin' invention of Gunpei Yokoi's. The ingenious engineer who had designed Nintendo's first electronic toys, the Beam Gun games, now turned his attention to the samba music craze that was sweeping Japan.

Ele-Conga sounds and looks like a toy, but it seems to have been designed as a serious musical instrument. Five buttons atop the drum's face make high-quality beats, which output through a standard line out jack on the side of the high-quality barrel. For the less-than-musically inclined, an optional ¥1,200 attachment played drum beats automatically using a paper disc reader.

Color TV Game 6/ Color TV Game 15 (¥9,800 and ¥15,000; 1977)

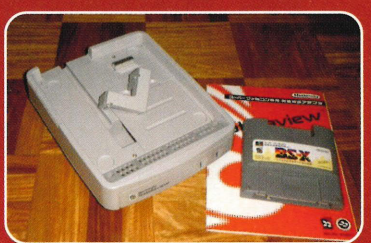
In an unpublished segment of our exclusive interview with Shigeru Miyamoto two months ago, the grand master had one thing to say about Nintendo's first attempts at designing game hardware: "They were bad!" The machines' insides were licensed from the American company Magnavox and played simple *Pong*-like games. The colour graphics were a key selling point since none of the Japanese machines at the time had them and the price was cheaper as well. The machines were a huge hit, selling a combined million units and placing Nintendo firmly into the video game business.

Family Computer Robot (R.O.B) (1985)

Robotic Operating Buddy – or R.O.B. for short – is destined to live on in the hearts and minds of American children of the 80s. After the video game industry crash of 1983, no toy store manager in his right mind would stock anything called a 'video game'. But a robot game, now that was something different! And so Nintendo took the Family Computer Robot – a gimmick toy that 'read' on-screen commands and moved around like molasses in January – and packed him in with the NES in 1985. He was loved for a brief period of time until kids realised there were only two R.O.B. games – *Gyromite* and *Stack-Up* – and that they stunk compared to good ol' *Super Mario*, even though Mario used the outdated 'joystick' controllers. R.O.B. remains an icon of 80s nostalgia, however, even making a guest appearance in *F-Zero GX*.

Satellaview (1995)

By the time it released its 16-bit Super Famicom in 1990, Nintendo was rather averse to any experimental hardware. Still, it wasn't quite ready to give up on online, or some form of it anyway. Partnering with long-time buddies Bandai, Nintendo released the Satellaview, an add-on that attached to the bottom of the Super Famicom and received data from the popular BS satellite television network (satellite, not cable, had caught on in Japan). There were downloadable games that featured online competitive play like *Mario Excitebike*, and exclusive one-player games that could be downloaded and saved to a blank cartridge – like the little-known *Radical Dreamers*, the sequel to *Chrono Trigger*.

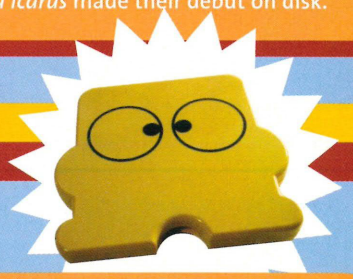


Racing 112 and Blockbuster
(¥12,500 and ¥13,500; 1978 and 1979)

Miyamoto's very first job at Nintendo was to design the outer hardware casings for these two systems. Racing 112 played a variety of driving games and Miyamoto was adamant that it should have a life-size steering wheel and gear shift. Two-player games were controlled with identical paddles that extended from the system and were stored in the back when not in use. You can see more Miyamoto design genius in the casing for Blockbuster, which played variants of the classic arcade game *Breakout*. First, note that the switches are labelled with intuitive pictures rather than text. And furthermore, Miyamoto designed this system to be playable by either right-handed or left-handed players, simply by turning it around.

Famicom and Disk System
(¥14,800 and ¥15,000; 1983 and 1986)

Nintendo stayed out of the home video game market for the next four years, mostly because it was doing such brisk business with the portable Game & Watch series and arcade games like *Donkey Kong*. But when it decided to bring those hits back home, its solution was a gem. We don't have to tell you what a landmark system the Famicom was (or point out how much cooler the Japanese design is). But did you know that most of Nintendo's major franchises began their life on a different piece of hardware altogether? We're referring, of course, to the Famicom Disk System, which ran Famicom games on little yellow floppy disks. The disks were rewriteable, which means that when you got tired of a game you could have a new one written onto the disk for as little as ¥500! Nintendo and pals withdrew support for the Disk System within a year – mostly because cartridge sizes soon outgrew the 1Mbit disks – but in that year, classics like *Zelda*, *Super Mario 2*, *Metroid* and *Kid Icarus* made their debut on disk.



Virtual Boy (¥15,000; 1995)

Unless you're a serious Nintendo fanatic, all that gear above probably didn't get your heart rate up. Indeed, with the possible exception of the Disk System, none of those systems are that much fun today. But the Virtual Boy is and we'll admit to having a little bright-red spot in our hearts for this much-maligned hardware.

The final Nintendo hardware created by Yokoi, the Virtual Boy tapped into the mid-90s virtual-reality craze by creating a pseudo-3D display screen, in red LED lights, inside of a nifty little visor. Games like *Mario's Tennis* and *Wario Land* showed that the 3D imagery was more like a graphical trick than a real addition to the gameplay, but the effect was just as intriguing as those Magic Eye drawings. Not to mention the fact that many of the games were fun and the hardware design is still eye-catching. Virtual Boy, we salute you!

64DD (¥30,000; 1999)

The 64DD. Whoops. Perhaps the most impressive thing about this magnetic-disk add-on to the N64 is that Nintendo actually released it. Most of the people who bought the 64DD did so through Randnet, a Nintendo-backed online service. Yes, that's right – the N64 was online too, but not for long. There was even an ultra-rare N64 keyboard. The 64DD is notable for the few cult classic games that were released for it. Most of the projects were either bumped back to the N64 or forward to the GameCube, including *Doshin the Giant*, *Mario Artist* (parts of which will be used in *Stage Debut*), and *Zelda: Ocarina of Time Master Quest*. 64DDs currently sell for about £200.

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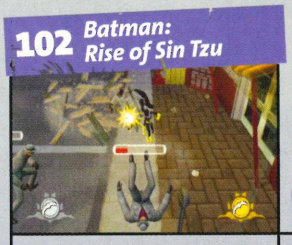
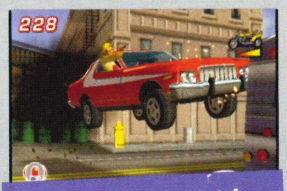
Scores and Awards

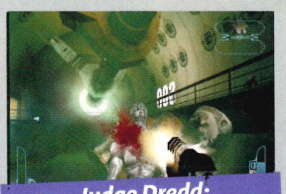
90+	A Nintendo classic
85-89	Exceptional in its class
80-84	Great fun, but not ground-breaking
70-79	Some nice ideas, but lacks Nintendo magic
60-69	Few classic moments, for die-hards only
50-59	Been there, seen it, played it. Yawn!
40-49	No ideas, no gameplay, no way
30-39	Not worth buying
0-29	Not worth stealing

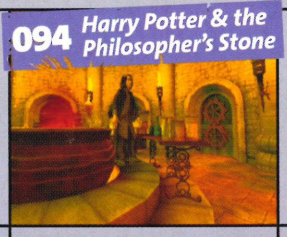
POISON
A real minger that might give you a bad disease just by touching it. Like *Universal Studios.*

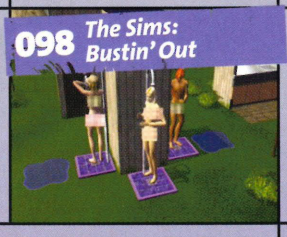
SUPERSTAR
We'll dish these out each issue to the best games, regardless of whether they're on GameCube or GBA.

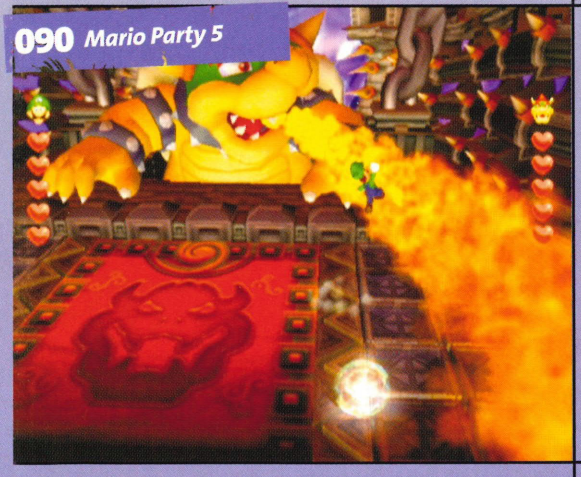


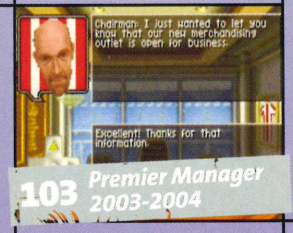


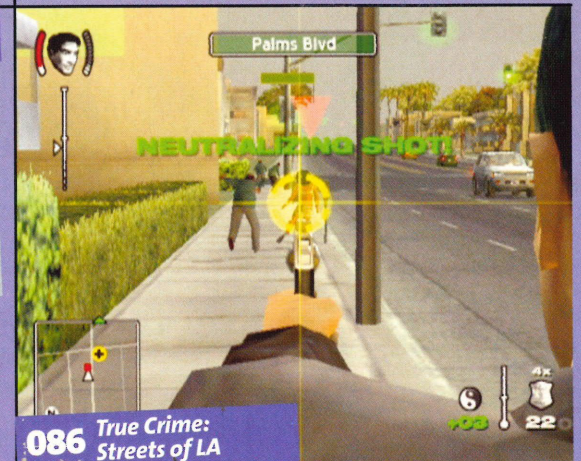


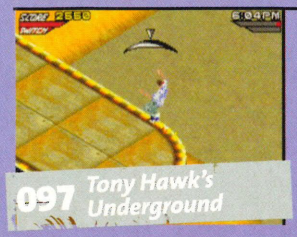


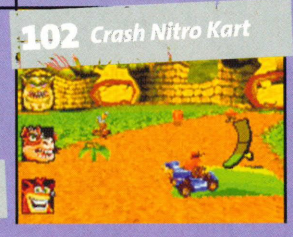








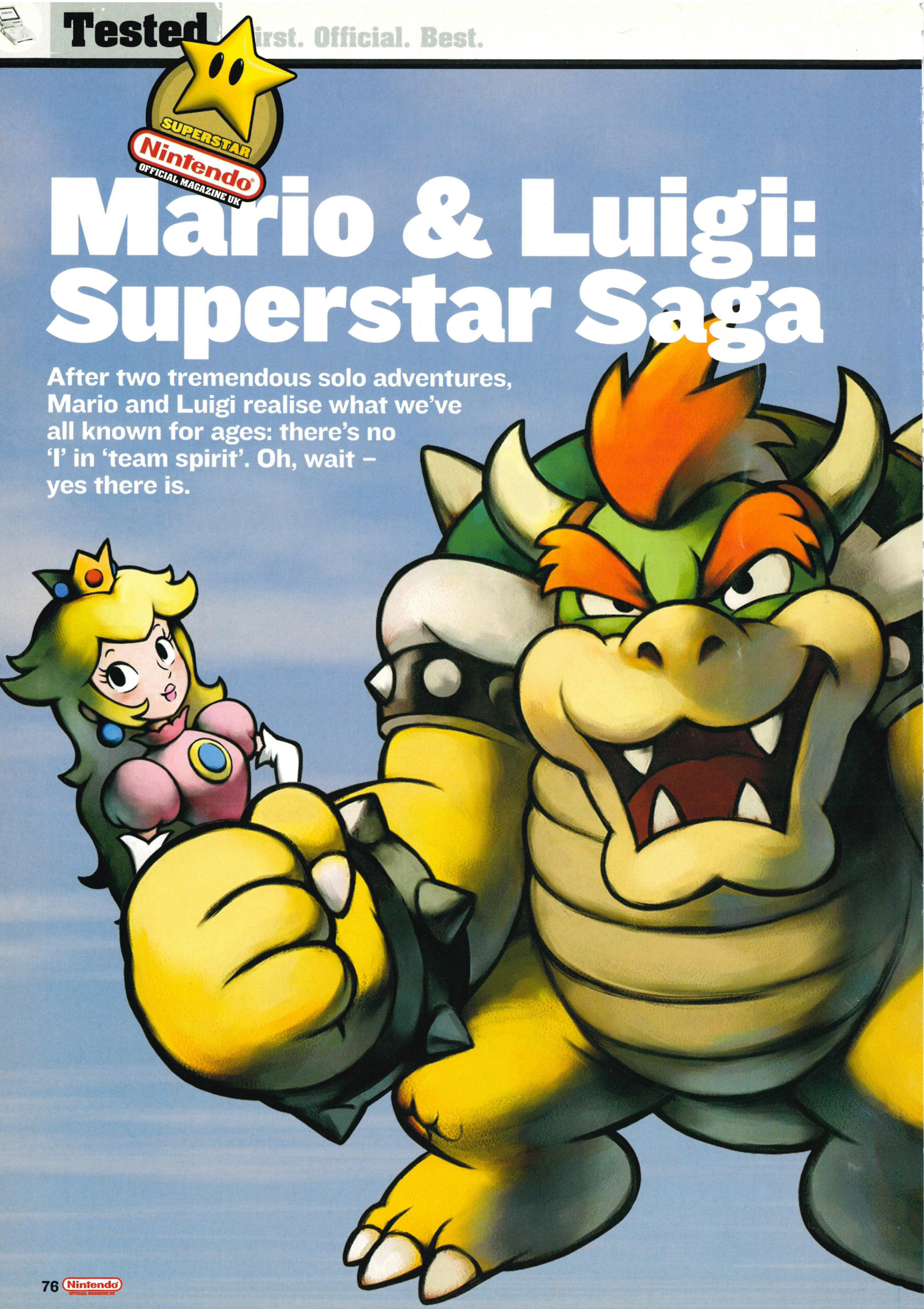


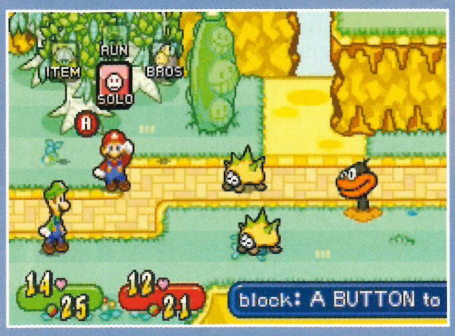


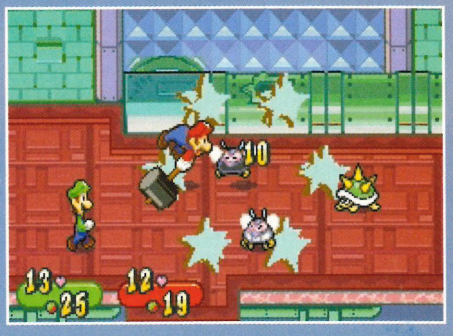
SUPERSTAR Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga

After two tremendous solo adventures, Mario and Luigi realise what we've all known for ages: there's no 'I' in 'team spirit'. Oh, wait – yes there is.







Game info

Out Now

Price: **£29.99**
Publisher: **Nintendo**
Web: **www.nintendo.co.uk**
Players: **1-2**

Brothers are a strange breed. They spend their entire childhood fighting over trivial things, yet this somehow manages to strengthen their relationship as adults. Best friends and girlfriends come and go, but brothers are for life. Well, until Luigi's solo mission in the mansion. And Mario's lone ramble on Isle Delfino. It's okay though, the team is back. And the brothers are gonna work it out.

The wise among you will remember the N64's awesome *Paper Mario* and may well have heard

TURN OVER! >>
For shots and info

of its NTSC-only Super NES predecessor, *Super Mario RPG*. Both were satisfyingly crunchy twists on the standard RPG formula – in addition to puzzle-solving, number-crunching, stat-juggling brain power, you needed action gameplay skills. Remember in our interview with Miyamoto back in *NOM UK* 133, where he confessed a "fundamental dislike of the RPG system"? *Super Mario RPG*, developed in conjunction with Squaresoft, featured a battle system that required timed hits for big damage and maps that featured platform-jumping fun. *Paper Mario* on the N64 put more emphasis on the timing aspect, but what both games most sorely lacked was more input from a green-hatted bloke named Luigi.

No more. Not only is Luigi a playable character in *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga*, he's vital to the mission at hand. Whereas most RPGs just have you moving your characters up, down, left and right on static, 2D maps, Mario and Luigi must jump, spin and swim their way around the Beanbean Kingdom, a land on the outskirts of Mushroom country. As things get started, all you need to do is use the A and B buttons to make Mario and Luigi jump. You can switch who walks in front with the ST button. Soon you'll learn to combine your jumping powers – put Luigi in the back and press L and he'll switch to the High Jump. Press B and he'll hop on top of Mario and bounce them both up to higher levels. Do the same thing with Mario and he'll do a *Sunshine*-styled Spin Jump that will carry them across great distances.

But it doesn't stop there, oh no. You'll learn to toss fireballs – Mario can use them to start fires or toss them onto Luigi, causing them both to run at full speed in the opposite direction. Not to be outdone, Luigi gets the power of thunder, which of course causes critical hits on water-dwelling enemies. Later you'll get Hammers, which you can not only use to crack rocks or stun enemies, but also crack your brother on the head with them. If Mario bashes Luigi on the noggin with the Hammer, he pounds him into the ground where he can walk underneath grates and dig up special items.

As you collect these powers, they apply to battles as well. In fact, judicious use of your moves on the map screen will give you an advantage before you even enter battle. You can see all the enemies moving about on the map and if you can jump on them, they'll start the battle with damage. If you whap them with a Hammer on the map screen, they'll start the battle stunned. Once you get in there you can make the Bros. jump

"It should have a warning that says, 'Boredom not included. Contains awesomeness'."

■ Heaven only knows what Toad saw in the shower room...

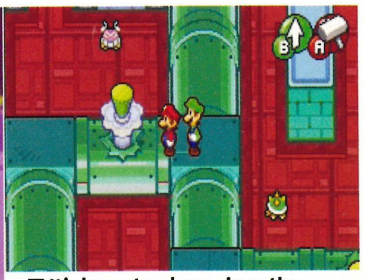
■ Eeurrgghh! Clearly Mario had no time to shave his back fat

■ Mushrooms grow on poo. Mario picks them up. No wonder peach never lets him cop a feel

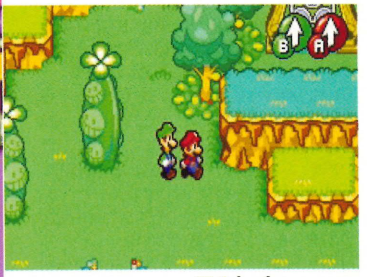
■ What is this? An issue of *Woman's Weekly*?! Let's get on with the jumping on reptiles!

■ "Noooo!" Toad tries to end the madness

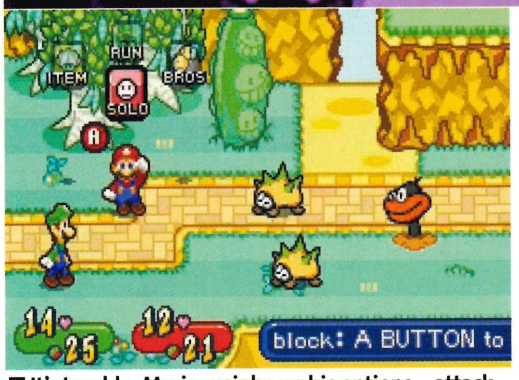
■ We didn't know which fat green fiend to bash first



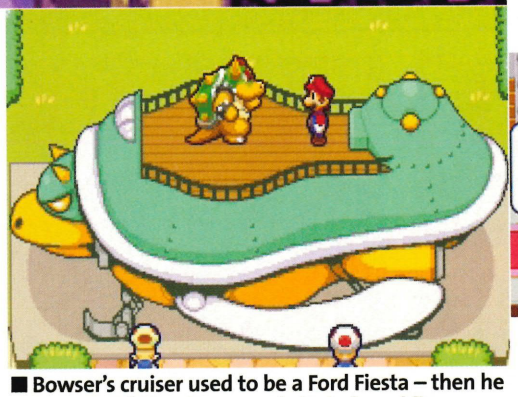
■ It's been too long since the Bros. did any actual plumbing



■ It looks sparse, but Mario fans will love the graphics



■ It's trouble. Mario weighs up his options – attack the spiky things or do it the Italian way and scarper



■ Bowser's cruiser used to be a Ford Fiesta – then he got a copy of *Max Power* and started modding

■ "Are you talking about the time my dinosaur ate your mum?"

What's the story?

What's occurring at Mushroom Castle...

■ A long time ago, in a kingdom far, far away, an unexpected guest arrives at the gates of Mushroom Castle. She claims to bring gifts from the heir of the Beanbean Kingdom, but turns out to be an evil, green-faced witch-monster who steals poor Princess Toadstool's lovely voice and swaps her dulcet tones for crazy explosive curse words. They're cool, but it still bites for Peach.

Mario and Luigi hop on Bowser's ship as the three temporarily team up to save her poor vocal cords... anyway, that's just the prologue and like all great RPG stories, *Mario & Luigi Superstar Saga* takes lots of unexpected twists and turns before it's all over. What's more, you'll laugh your head off at some of the developments.

■ It's all gone wrong for Peach, but the Toads are still smiling. Bless

■ But now it becomes clear – that nasty old bag is trouble

■ ... but those exploding words are too cool! Dammit!

at any time using A and B again – with proper timing, you can dodge enemy attacks and take no damage. Of course, if you can jump on your enemies instead of over them, you can do more damage via a counterattack. And if you jump on an attacking Koopa Troopa, you can kick the Shell at other enemies on the screen.

On the attack, Mario and Luigi can either fight separately (again, hitting the button with perfect timing to do double damage) or use a Bros. attack. The first time you use one of these special power moves, you'll want to set it to Level 1. On Level 1 the action will slow down so you can learn the button-press timing. With Level 2 there's no slowdown, but the attack does more damage.

The attacks do even more damage on Level 3 and cost more Bros. Points to cast, but must be performed entirely from memory. The difference is huge, though – Mario's Fire Bros. attack does about seven times more damage on Level 3 with perfect timing.

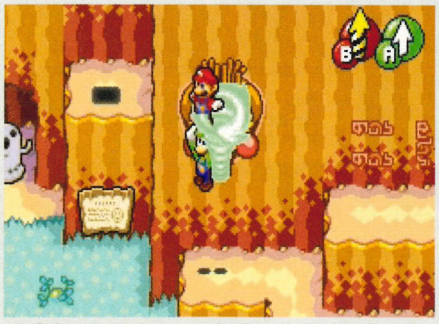
Oh, and what happens when Mario gets hit with the Hammer? If Mario gets hit, he'll shrink down to tiny Mario, who can walk through miniature doors – and whose jumping sounds just like mini-Mario's jumps from *Super Mario Bros. 1*. In fact, those kind of references to past Mario games are what makes *Superstar Saga* such a treat for lifelong fans of the red-capped hero. From the very first scene to the final climactic showdown with you-know-who, you'll be pointing your fingers (and smudging up the GBA screen) every time you see something that's clearly a sly reference to a past adventure. Kudos to developers Alpha Dream for being such Mario fans and equal credit to the translators for making sure nothing got lost in, well, translation.

Speaking of the English translation, *Superstar Saga* might very well be the funniest (intentionally funny, not bad-funny) RPG we've ever played. Picture this: Mario and Luigi enter a coffee shop in the castle town and trade in some beans to brew a special blend. The shop's owner shows up, and it's Professor E.Gadd from *Luigi's Mansion*! He drinks the coffee and has a terrible reaction, desperately needing to use the bathroom, but the Koopa Troopa working the counter reminds his boss that he was too cheap to build toilets in the place. So Luigi runs and gets his trusty ghost vacuum, which he points at the old man's ass. Fade out.

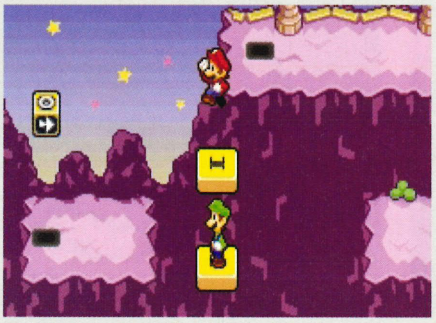
Add to scenes like this a bevy of humourous asides and goofy facial expressions, and *Mario & Luigi* might just be the first Game Boy Advance game to have you laughing out loud and snorting Diet Coke out of your nose in the most inappropriate of places. The guy sitting next to you on the tube will think you've lost it. The little girl on the park bench in front of you will run away screaming. And your friends will say, "I thought you said you were playing an RPG?" And you ARE playing an RPG, through and through... but *Mario & Luigi* is so much more. ***Chris Kohler***

Like peas and carrots

Mario and Luigi go together like ramalamalama ka dingididingdidong



■ If they spin into a whirlpool the Bros. can fly off further and longer

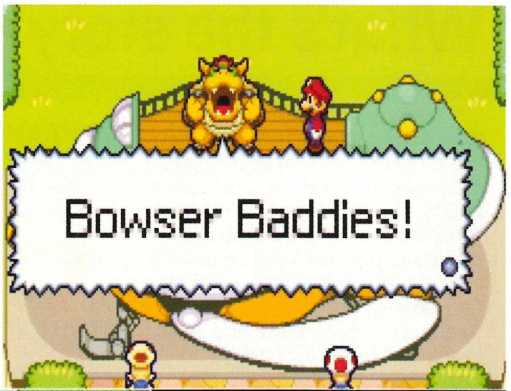


■ If they hop on Bike Blocks like these they can pedal all the way to victory

■ And if they... uh... what the hell? Get a room, guys – that's disgusting

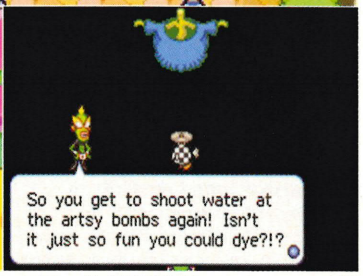
"*Mario & Luigi* might be the first GBA game to have you laughing out loud."

■ Clearly Mario can carry off a hammer, but Luigi always looks camp

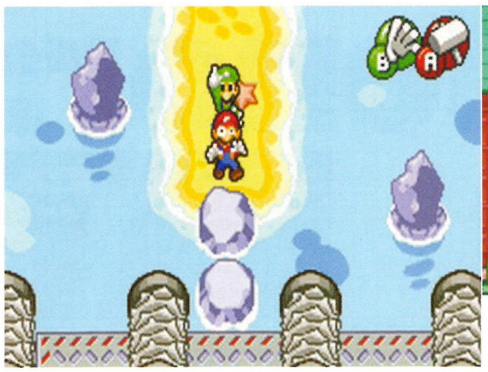


■ Shut your fat trap, snake breath

■ It's not right taking advantage of a cripple. Go get 'im boys!



■ 'Dye'? 'DYE'?! Oh, yeah, we get it! There are loads of cool mini-games



■ Bosh in your eye! Luigi lays into another truly fearsome beast

■ Hanging around in the park? Is this a tramp RPG?

■ You'd have thought Mazza would be ready for that one by now...

Mini-games galore

There's more to this than levelling-up, kiddo

■ Here are just two of the dozens of addictive mini-games you'll encounter in *Superstar Saga*. Left: before you can leave the Mushroom Kingdom, the Hammer Bros. border patrol challenges you to a deadly game of jump-rope. Right: an old bean (literally, he really is a bean) teaches Mario and Luigi how to navigate these dual mine carts and collect diamonds.

■ Jumping over this rope seems simple, but you'll learn to control the boys better

■ Just like the monkey rule, all truly great games also feature mine carts

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You like RPGs... or you would if they weren't so slow-paced.

No if...

You prefer your RPGs to be entirely free of action sequences.

You'll love it if you like...

Paper Mario, comedy and sly, knowing references to past Mario adventures.

GRAPHICS 8

Very stylish, evoking a cel-shaded feel, but the GBA can do better.

SOUND 8

A mix of new tunes and updated classics – some that you might not expect.

GAMEPLAY 10

Every time you think they've run out of ideas, they surprise you again.

LIFE SPAN 20 HOURS

More if you're new to RPGs, but less if you don't bother with the mini-games.

VERDICT

> It's a game made just for Mario fans. It's not exactly *Super Mario 128*, but the hilarious dialogue and unique gameplay design make it the next best thing. Go on, you won't be disappointed.

BEST BIT: From start to finish, it rewards you for being a Mario fanatic.

WORST BIT: You don't get *Super Mario RPG* thrown in for free. Yes, that's all...

SECOND OPINION

> I'd rather blow my brains out than play an RPG, but this is cracking. It should come with a warning that says, 'Boredom not included. Contains awesomeness'. ***Dean Scott***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"EXCEPTIONAL"

92%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Medal of Honor: Rising Sun

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£39.99**
Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Web: **www.uk.ea.com**
Players: **1-4**
Memory: **8 blocks**

No medals for this one. Just a severe court martial and six months' potato-peeling duty.

Listen, Mr Japanese Man. When I shoot you in the face, I expect you to die. When I finally smash two rounds from my incredibly crap and slow-to-reload rifle into your mouth, I want your head to break apart like a melon. I want to be covered in your guts, Mr Japanese Man. I want to be covered in dirty guts like a god damn newborn baby.

But Mr Japanese Man, you're not dying. I've switched to my pistol and I'm pumping rounds into your body. I'm running backwards and I keep tagging you in the chest. Mr Japanese Man, you should be spinning through the air right now. You should be performing a fantastic, gymnastic death throe for my amusement. But you aren't. You're hitting me with a sword and now I'm the one who's dead.

Do you know how cocking annoying that is? To be punished for doing absolutely nothing wrong? It doesn't help that this Guadalcanal jungle looks like absolute crap either. Remember the jungle level on *GoldenEye 007*? This looks as bad as that. And it's nigh on pitch black, so you can see precisely sod all. The darkness doesn't affect the legion of Mr Japanese Men though. They can shoot you, even when you're so surrounded by flora that all you can see on the screen are big jagged leaves.

We don't expect total realism, of course. When I walk over an apple, I'm quite happy for that to magically heal the gaping gunshot wound in my chest. That's okay by us. But why don't my fellow marines do, like, anything useful?

Mr Japanese Man comes running out of some bushes and instead of SHOOTING THE LITTLE SOD, my 'mates' let him run right into hand-to-hand range and bayonet them. Which is cool since they're INVINCIBLE, but I have a health bar. I could do with some cocking support, guys.

Invincible marines, eh? Well clearly they don't need my help then. I'll head back to base and read Playboy and they can take on those Japanese supermen by themselves. Because they can't die, America can't lose. Brilliant. If they could die, I'd have killed tons of them. What's that brown blob over there? A tree? An enemy? It's all so indistinct. I'll kill it anyway. Whoops, sorry Hank. I'll make sure I tell your momma you did your best.

That's the fourth stage of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*, Where you get dropped into a jungle that's nigh on impossible to navigate, with gameplay guaranteed to have you chucking pads around and swearing at the dog. Seriously, we're down to four working controllers now. And we started with about 60. Somehow bouncing my one off the radiator knackered the C-Stick and on the rebound it knocked a cup of water over the DVD player. Skillz.

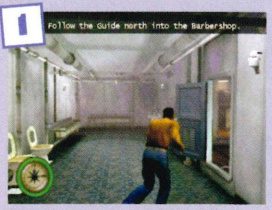
But you don't see this coming after the first few stages. Because, as with *Frontline* before it, the opening levels are like a playable Hollywood war movie. It's a cruel trick to play on an unsuspecting gamer. Stage one gives you an impression of the scale and horror of the Pearl Harbor attacks that's about 100 times more affecting than some crappy Ben Affleck movie.

"As with *Frontline* before it, the opening levels are like a playable Hollywood war movie."

Pearl Harbor

War is hell. Look, we're not kidding. Ten minutes into *Rising Sun*'s Pearl Harbor stage is enough to convince you that being paid to shoot guns is a mug's game. Here's how the drama unfolds:

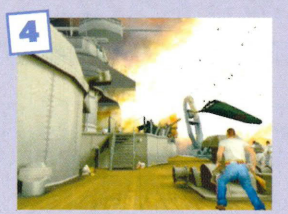
When games get gritty.



■ Wake up call, courtesy of a Japanese torpedo. Time to get a move on.

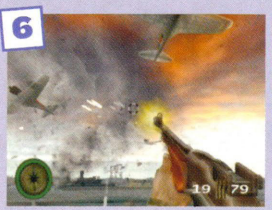
■ The lower decks of the ship are ablaze. Put out fires on your way up.

■ That's the hatch. Deep breath, get up there and hope for the best.



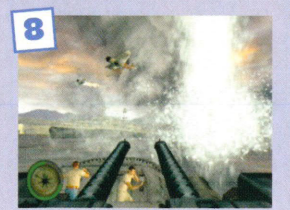
■ Round about this time, your mouth says words like "Holy cock!"

■ No time for that though. Jump on the AA gun and blaze away.



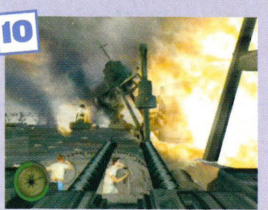
■ Soldier, no! Don't be a hero. Put your stupid gun down!

■ Back on the cannon. Give those Zeros hell, you brave American boy.

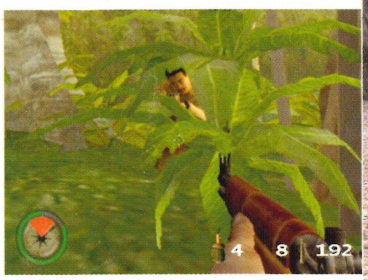


■ Now it's time to zip around the harbour in a speedboat, shooting.

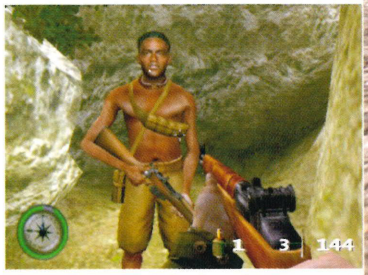
■ That's a close call. Try shooting them before they get that near.



■ Look at the mess! That's pretty hardcore. Even if it was Americans.



■ "Grrr... don't shoot me, I'm a tiger". They'll try anything...



■ You're not at the beach now, son, get some clothes on

■ As usual, explosive barrels are commonplace

■ Mr Japanese Man checks for change below the hut

■ The worst part was when they started firing huge metal forks at me

■ My gawd, those bushes are moving! Open fire on the triffids!

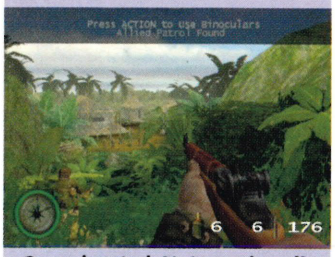
Before the nob American voice-over spoils it with some tacky, patriotic twaddle, you might genuinely feel a lump in your throat. Like, because of the emotion, not because you suddenly remembered you had a sweet in your mouth.

You're in bed. A bang rocks the room and the Japanese assault is in full swing. You've got to get up onto deck, avoiding fires and crackling electric cables. Up top, it really is mouth-wide-open time. Japanese Zero fighters fill the air. The harbour is thick with dense black plumes of smoke. The noise is deafening. The panic is palpable. You get yourself onto an anti-aircraft gun and start resisting. Now, at this point it's clear the 'Cube is pushing itself a little bit too hard. As you move the gun's cross hairs, the movement is sluggish. There's clearly a bit too much going on as the Zeros chug by, but it's so incredibly epic it's easy to forgive. We're not sure it's possible to die,

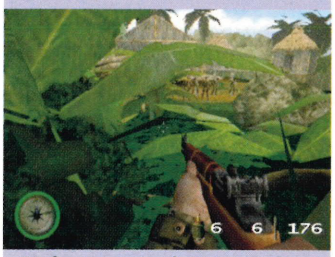
Predator too

It's a rumble in the jungle alright.

■ Remember in *Predator* when Arnie stormed the jungle base? There's a section just like that in *Rising Sun*. Well, there's no invisible space warrior ripping people's spines out, but that's to be expected.



Camp located. Not convinced? Break out the binoculars then!



Make your way into a good assault position... quietly.

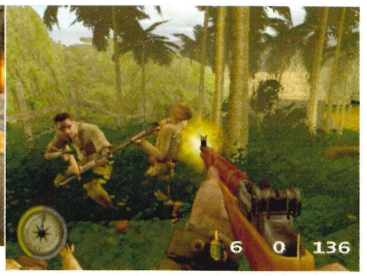
Wait for the signal, then kick off. Bullet in your head!

Storm into the village and kill everybody. Do that now.

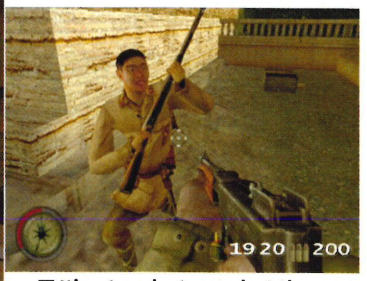
Free the chaps tied to the posts. You're the big winner!

■ Blind soldiers make poor guards

■ Watch out for that... oh dear



■ Don't worry about saving your privates, Ryan – they can't die



■ It's a tough stance, but the eyes are screaming, "Oh crap, I'm about to eat lead"

"It's a lack of inspiration and terminal frustration that suffocate *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*."

though – we tried to fail and it didn't make a lot of difference.

The second chapter of this onslaught is you strafing aircraft from a boat, zipping around the stricken ships in the harbour. Once again, it makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. It looks amazing. What you don't know at this stage, is that a disproportionate amount of time has been spent making these levels knock your socks off. You're expecting an absolute classic, but that's not what you're getting. No way, soldier. Sorry, go home.

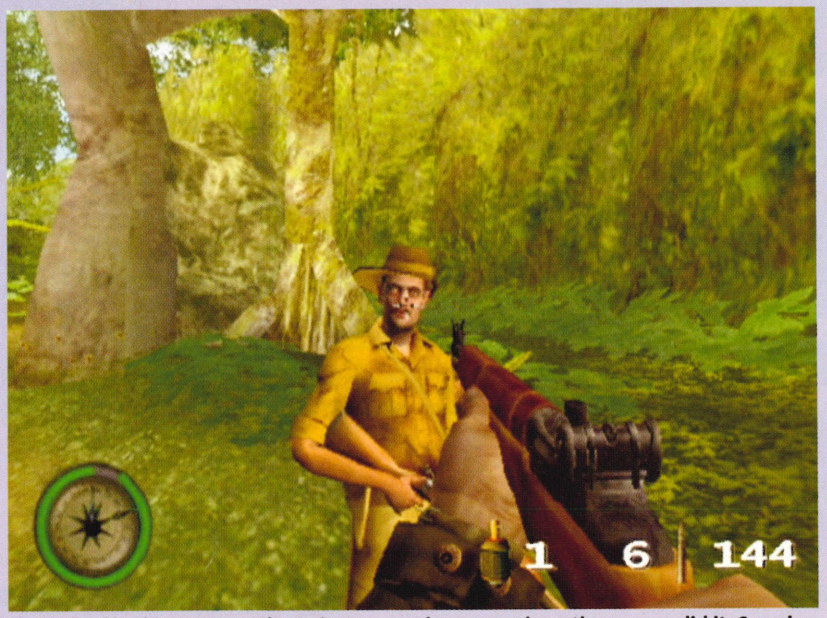
It's a game of peaks and troughs, but none of the peaks hit the heights of the opening stages. The mission to take down an artillery emplacement in the jungle is cracking stuff, but it's quite easy to get lost and wander around getting bored... or shot. The game only gives you an encouraging squirt of dramatic music should you blunder in the right direction. And why is it that whenever you find yourself behind a heavy machine gun, a shed-load of Japanese appear from nowhere just so you can mow them down. It's quite dumb really.

Actually, let's talk some more about artificial intelligence. The enemy soldiers run at you in a zigzag patterns a lot of the time, so they're harder to kill. But if you had a bucket full of bananas and a lot of spare time, you could easily train a monkey to do that. Real intelligence – and we're still not talking Einstein stuff here – would see soldiers react to gunfire. Like, when you blast a soldier off a roof with a noisy machine gun, the other two guys up there next to him make some effort to not be the next ones to die. Here, they stand oblivious; you kill their mate, they don't react. That's called stupidity.

It's all pretty disappointing after *Medal of Honor: Frontline*. The excuse that time was that the GameCube version was pretty much an afterthought. This time, it's a lack of inspiration and terminal frustration that suffocate this. If *Rising Sun* was a POW, we'd probably leave him in the jungle to starve, while we sat at home, hitting *TimeSplitters 2* hard to remind us how it should be done. ***Dean Scott***

In the face. Point-blank range

Your friends won't die. They just won't.

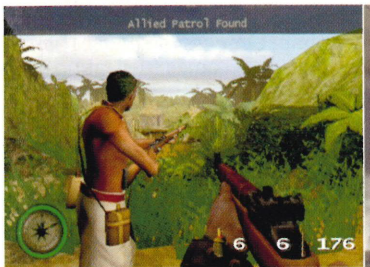


I'm sick of looking at you. I'm going to murder you and say the enemy did it. Sorry!

BANG! POINT BLANK RANGE IN YOUR EYE! How does that feel, Chad?

I shoot you RIGHT IN THE FACE and your hat comes off? Tough guy, eh?

"You're expecting an absolute classic, but that's not what you're getting."



■ Even here in the steaming jungles carpets must be sold

■ Smoke, death, muck, bullets... when's shore leave?

■ Basic training. This is a rifle. It fires bullets. They hurt

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You're desperate for a shooter this Christmas and think *XIII* looks bent.

No if...

You want a consistently thrilling FPS. This is up and down like an acrobat's yo-yo.

You'll love it if you like...

Japanese sneak attacks and rifles that take half an hour to reload.

GRAPHICS 7

At times, it pushes the GameCube to its limits. Other times, it's N64 quality.

SOUND 7

Rousing war scores boom out in THX. The sound effects are merely okay.

GAMEPLAY 6

Frustrating and fenced-in. And can't these old guns reload a bit quicker?

LIFE SPAN 1 MONTH

There are secrets, but it's quite linear. And not the longest of games either.

VERDICT

> Before we had a go, we'd provisionally put this on our Games of 2003 short list. We were expecting great things, but the opening sets a stellar standard that the rest of the game can't live up to.

BEST BIT: *Pearl Harbor.* Have that in your face, Benny Affleck.

WORST BIT: It feels very on-rails and will frustrate the hell out of you.

SECOND OPINION

> At the end of the day it's just scripted rubbish. You can't go anywhere and explore, and it was far too easy in places. The enemy soldiers are just plain stupid. ***Dan Payne***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"MEDIC!"

68%

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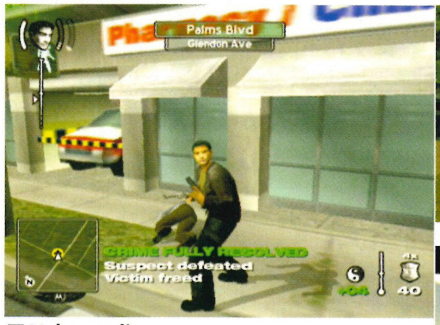
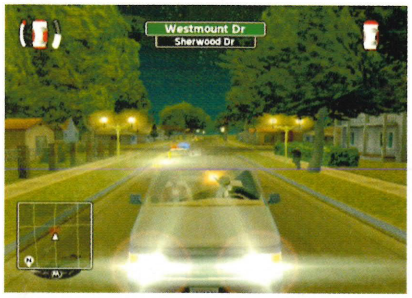
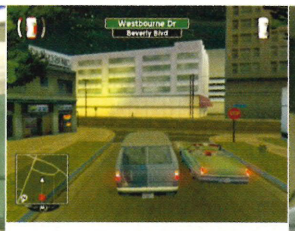
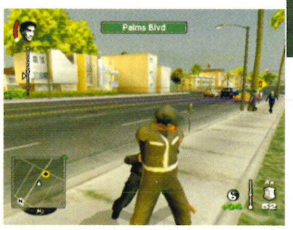


■ He's crawling away – shoot his legs off, quick







■ Wheel out the hand cannon when you need to vapourise a truck

True Crime: Streets of LA

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£39.99**
Publisher: **Activision**
Web: **www.truecrimela.com**
Players: **1**
Memory: **5 blocks**

Well we did warn you. Activision's crime thriller promises so much, but like some dodgy suitcase trader, the end product isn't kosher.

***True Crime* is the gaming equivalent of buying a massive bag of crisps only to find that half the packet is filled with fresh air. There's still plenty to enjoy, but not nearly as much as there should be and you end up feeling a bit cheated.**

There are things to like about this game though; the driving is fast and slick with decent controls. When you get your hands on a sports car it's terrific fun cruising around the city streets. The skill upgrade system is also enjoyable and an integral part of the game. And the city of Los Angeles, or a big chunk of it, is fabulously realised (albeit without many real shops) giving you a vast and intricate area in which to carry out your investigations.

As Nick Kang it's your job to find the truth behind some big deal that's going down in La La Land. You're a typical maverick cop with all the usual wisecracks and after a while you get very annoying. At the beginning of the game Nick is pretty ineffective against all but the most basic of crimes. You can't really fight, you can't shoot straight and your driving is fast but sloppy.

The way around this is to solve day-to-day crimes that appear on your radar as you drive from one mission to the next. By successfully resolving these misdemeanours, some of which are quite amusing, you gain Shield Points which can then be spent at the 24/7 driving, shooting and fighting centres around the city. At first, these upgrades seem like an add on, but as you delve deeper into the adventure you realise that they are essential, thus adding a new dimension to the gameplay.

You must also consider the Good Cop/Bad Cop meter. Think of it as cop-karma. Resolving crimes is good and earns you a Good Cop point; killing civilians or needlessly shooting unarmed criminals is bad and loses you a Good Cop point. And being a good or a bad cop affects the final outcome of the game.

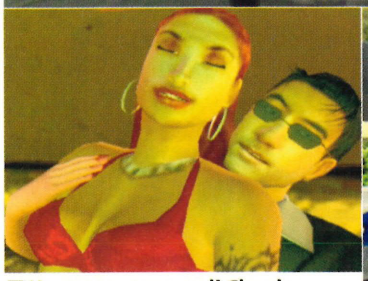
The sad thing is that with all these good systems in place and all this good intention *True Crime* still feels rushed and unfinished. As you walk down the street it's not uncommon to see six or seven people who all look the same. We've even attended street fights where both brawlers look exactly alike. And the same goes for the vehicles.

"All the good elements are spoiled by the dodgy camera and controls, making this a chore."

The controls, except for the driving, are generally sloppy. Nick can never decide if he wants to walk or run, not good when you're chasing down an escaping armed robber. Aiming is awkward, even after you've earned upgrades and can lead to unnecessary civilian casualties. To fire into the air you hold Z and press R, but this only works when your guns are holstered. Try it with them drawn and you'll spray hot lead into an innocent crowd. The fighting is also clumsy and makes certain areas of the game almost impossible to get past. It quickly becomes frustrating and you feel that a game of this scale deserves better.

We wanted to like *True Crime*, it seemed like the sort of game that 'Cube owners had been desperate for since the *GTA* explosion. In small doses it's fun and there's so much to see that driving around LA is enjoyable. But all the good elements are spoiled by the dodgy camera and controls, making this more of a chore than a fun game. We'll stick to crisps. ***Dominic Wint***

■ What kind of game IS this?



■ Kang you saucy sod! Clearly they're having more fun than us

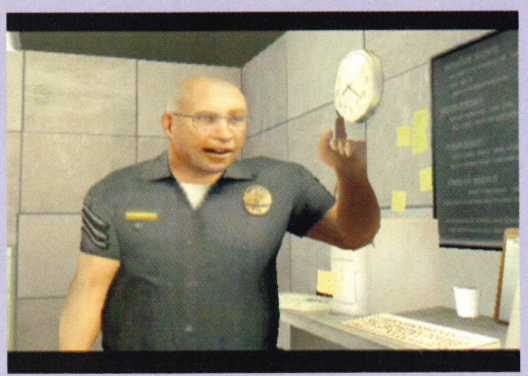
■ Urgh, Nick! When we said hit the gas, that's not what we meant

Truly a crime

You have the coolest, weirdest actor known to man and what do you do with him?

■ There's a wealth of voice talent in *True Crime*; Whoopi Goldberg, Michael Madsen, Gary Oldman. Real class. But what we were most excited about was the prospect of the dark lord of dead pan himself; Christopher Walken.

The opening sequence (and most of the game) has a superb Walken voice-over. But seeing the guy that this king of acting lends his tonsils to is heart breaking. He's a big old fat beat cop with thick glasses. [sob!]



"Sometimes... I just wanna... look like a bald, fat guy"

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You're desperate for GTA, but refuse to sell out to the dark side.

No if...

You're expecting the sprawling, epic cop story that we'd been promised all along.

You'll love it if you like...

Enter the Matrix. That wasn't really finished properly either.

GRAPHICS 7

Very good in places, but the city feels a bit lifeless and dull.

SOUND 7

The average sound effects are improved by a decent hip-hop soundtrack.

GAMEPLAY 6

It should be good, but it's not – sections of this game are zero fun to play.

LIFE SPAN 2 WEEKS

You can replay all the missions to get the best endings if you want to.

VERDICT

> It sounded brilliant, with limitless possibilities. Sadly when it comes to the crunch this doesn't have the polish required for a game of its scale. There's still fun to be had, but it comes in small doses.

BEST BIT: Driving around LA is great fun. You could do this all day.

WORST BIT: The controls let it down. Every task becomes a chore.

SECOND OPINION

> It's always sad when a promising youngster goes off the rails – the *GTA*-beater of six months ago has gone bad. Not bad in a good way, bad in a bad way. ***Tim***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"DISAPPOINTING"

71%

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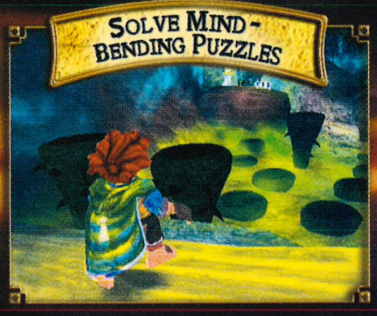
LIFETIME BECKONS

Long ago, the Lonely Mountain trembled as the Dragon Smaug destroyed the dwarf-kingdom in fire and rage. Now, the Dwarves set out upon an epic quest to reclaim their stolen treasures. And I, Gandalf the wizard, send with them the most unlikely of heroes: you, Bilbo Baggins of The Shire.



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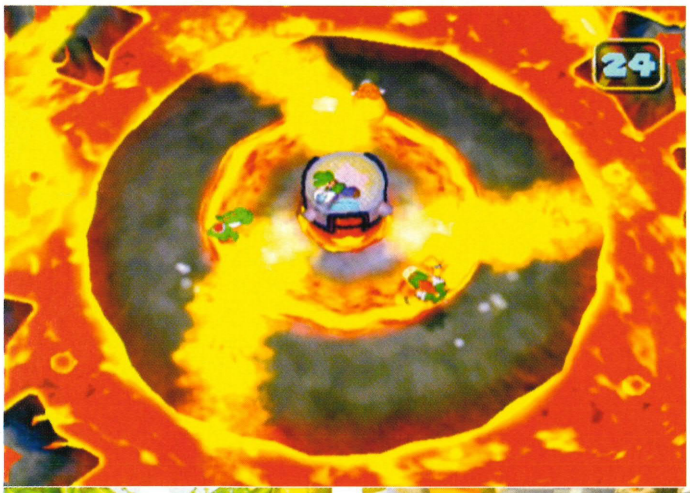
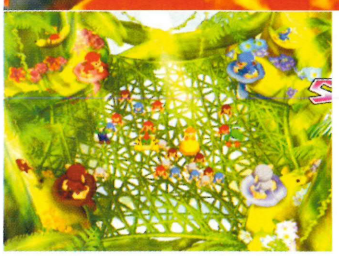


■ Chance the spinning wheel of flame-death

■ Mash-up the robo-Bowserites and wipe that smile off the big bad lizard's face



■ We've said it before, we'll say it again – every good game needs a few monkeys

■ That's the Princess' castle! If only the game had more Mario features like this it would rule

Mario Party 5

The best of the best in board game action returns for the fourth time, with four-player thrills in smaller-than-usual portions.

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£39.99**
Publisher: **Nintendo**
Web: **www.nintendo.co.uk**
Players: **1-4**
Memory: **5 blocks**

Would Bowser really play a friendly board game with Mario? Be serious. He's a gangsta, lady-napping hustler. While Mario concentrates on rolling a ten on the die, Bowser would be thinking of a way to get the plumber's woman back to his gaff. We always wondered what Peach and the dirty lizard got up to when... what's that? They're not real? Such lies!

Nevertheless, the four-player, mini-game party title has reached its fifth instalment and all the gang are back for more board game antics... yes, Bowser included. By now everyone should know what it's about. Move your characters around a playing board, triggering events and playing crazy mini-games with the ultimate aim of collecting more Stars than your opponents.

All of that, as you'd expect, remains the same, with a few tweaks here and there. The item system has changed, with a new dispenser that gives you random items for free, instead of choosing which item to buy from a shop. This is one of a few minor tweaks, but if you've already got *Mario Party 4* that's not a good enough reason to buy this one.

The biggest new feature is the special one-player Story mode, in which you go up against Bowser and his mini-Bowser trio to stop them turning dreams into nightmares. Yes, it sounds a bit cheesy to us too, but what it boils down to is a series of board games where you have to steal all of the Coins from each of the three mini-Bowsers. Beat them on each board and you'll be treated to an awesome boss fight, which is not another board game, but an actual ruck like you'd expect to see at the end of Mario's 3D adventures. We won't spoil it for you, but the battle is all-out action and may be the best part of the game.

Everything else is best played – as always – with four players and in those modes, it's all about the mini-games. There are more than 70 new ones and while most are a laugh, like Dodge Bomb (a deathmatch game where you take out opponents with bombs) there are a few that are not quite so entertaining. A game called Get a Rope springs to mind, where two players choose a rope, then pull it. After a brief wait one player gets squashed. It's all luck and compared to the other games, it's dull.

The last thing you need, after having waited ages for everyone to roll the dice and move, is to be disappointed by the mini-games. The amount of time you spend waiting is the biggest downfall of *Mario Party 5*. it feels like for every 20 seconds of fun, you've got a five-minute wait.

Everyone has to have their turn – that's unavoidable – but every task and event takes far too long, simply for the benefit of presentation. It's a treat to see Nintendo characters stroll on-screen for events, like when DK appears to give you some Coins, but it takes ten to 15 seconds to do that alone and after a while it's just annoying. The menus are the same, with stars whooshing around each time you select something. It all takes time. A few seconds here and there turns into minutes – that's how long it takes to get going.

We reckon the most fun to be had is in Mini-Game mode where you'll be able to play all the mini-games that you have already played in the other modes. The Mini-Game mode takes out the slow board game bits and hits you with non-stop thrills – you can even set up tournaments, too. This is where the action's at. It may not be as crazy as *Wario Ware*, but it's still entertaining with four-players. ***Mike Jackson***

"The amount of time you spend waiting is the biggest downfall of *Mario Party 5*."

Piece out, dude

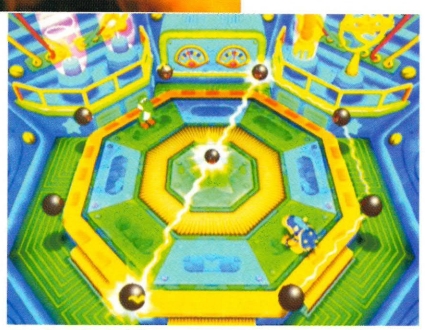
One of the most basic games is the most fun

One of our favourite mini-games is Piece Out. Different sized blocks appear on the screen on a conveyor belt and you have to grab them up and use them to fill in your field. You don't have to line them up by colours, altough you will get a bonus for making the effort. It's a mad scramble to grab the best blocks before your opponent and fitting them in the right spaces requires quick thinking and good control.

Daisy's going for all blues. She's after a cheaky bonus

■ Another plumber to incinerate... we wish we had Bowser's job

■ It's taken so long to role the die, that Star's facial hair has gone out of fashion



■ Bzzzakt! Either way, lizard-kind will lose an icon. Anyone for a Bowser burger?

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You have the patience of a saint and don't own any other *Mario Party* games.

No if...

You think all board games are for losers and can't stand having to wait your turn.

You'll love it if you like...

Quick, two-minute games and enjoy a good yell with mates in front of the telly.

GRAPHICS 7

Bright and colourful, but lacking in detail – and they're not very Mario-ish.

SOUND 7

It would be cooler with more sound and music from Mario's adventures.

GAMEPLAY 8

Some mini-games are great, some aren't. The board play is way too slow.

LIFE SPAN 1 MONTH

Not a game you'll play for years, unless you and your friends have a major rivalry.

VERDICT

> Gaming friends or siblings are essential – this is nothing without the multiplayer. Party games have to be nutty and this is fun, but long, tiresome waiting times hinder its ability to thrill the average gamer.

BEST BIT: Mini-Game mode is the best place for uninterrupted mayhem.

WORST BIT: Waiting for AGES for the others to have their turn.

SECOND OPINION

> If your idea of multiplayer gaming fun is throwing grenades into a friend's mouth this is not for you. Buy it on Christmas Eve and take it back on Boxing Day. *Kingsley*

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS... "ENTERTAINING" 78%

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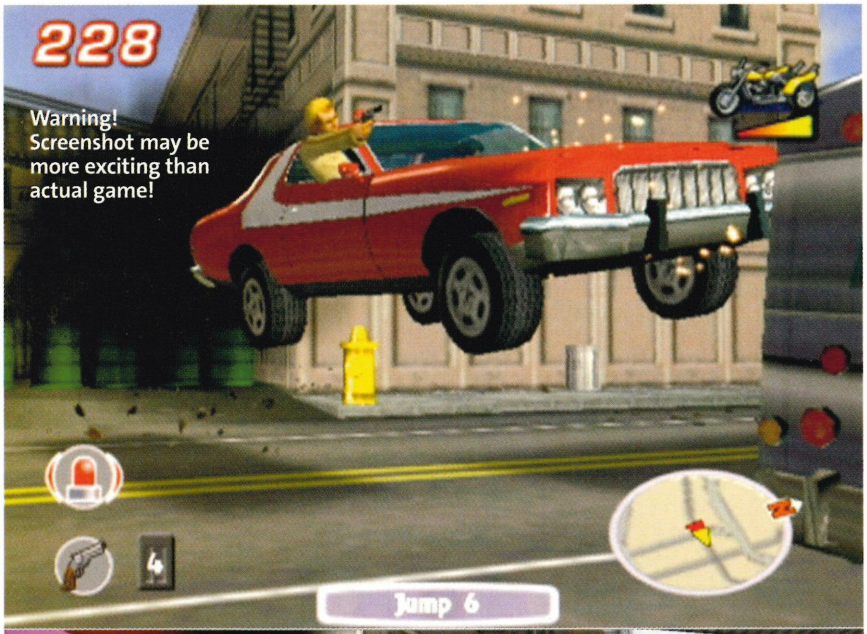
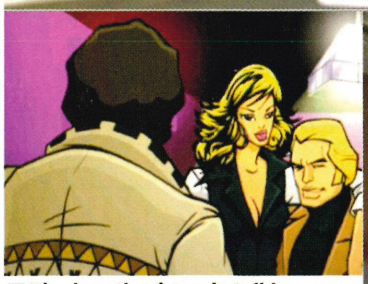




■ It's okay, they're only talking about sideburns and cardigans

Starsky & Hutch

Cardigans at the ready, it's time to go back to the 70s with the classic crime-fighting team.

Game info — Out Now

Price: **£24.99**
Publisher: **Empire Interactive**
Web: **www.starsky-and-hutch.com**
Players: **1-2**
Memory: **2 blocks**

Starsky's the driver, Hutch is the passenger with a pistol. Together they form the hippest and funkiest crime-fighting duo the world has ever seen. But, oh no! Their game isn't cool at all. Their game is glitchy and funless and it looks like a hangover from the N64.

The gameplay apes *Driver* on PSone with you in control of the famous red and white Ford Gran Torino. The twist is that you are controlling both characters. Whilst Starsky keeps the pedal to the metal, Hutch must hang out of the window shooting at power-ups, special icons and the enemies. The trick is to keep viewer figures high by performing crazy stunts and doing the most damage to the perps. If the viewers turn off it's Game Over.

It takes a while to adapt to the idea, which sees you aiming the car in the direction of the target and waiting for the reticle to appear. In most of the missions it works, a little bit clumsily perhaps, but the best you could expect. The problem comes in the 'protect' missions where enemies do all they can to take out your charge whilst you try and run the bad guys off the road. The trouble is that as the enemies weave about in front of you, you just can't help hitting the good guys. Pretty soon it's all gone wrong.

One way around this is to grab a mate and try the two-player game. Here one of you gets to be the driver, one the shooter. We managed to have a bit of a laugh pretending to be the police, but this set-up made the game too easy.

The presentation could be a lot better, too. The high point is the 70s-style soundtrack, but the dialogue grows stale very quickly and the graphics are laughably clumsy. This just doesn't do justice to the TV show. ***Dominic Wint***

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You like big cardigans, you changed your name to David Soul and own a Gran Torino.

No if...

You want an enjoyable cops and robbers title that looks smart and plays well.

You'll love it if you like...

Having a laugh for five minutes before growing bored and going out to play footy.

GRAPHICS 5

This just doesn't look like a 'Cube title – it's dated and rough around the edges.

SOUND 6

Cool music and decent sound effects, but the voices are poor (except Huggy).

GAMEPLAY 6

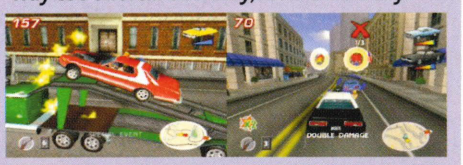
Occasional high points are sullied by repetitive missions and awkward aiming.

LIFE SPAN 5 HOURS

In that time you'll have either finished it or grown tired and moved on.

VERDICT

> The first few missions are fun, then you realise the remaining challenges are just variations on a theme. It looks out of date, the driving and aiming is unpredictable, it's way too short... basically, it's a bit smelly.



BEST BIT: It feels a lot like the classic TV show and the music's pretty good.

WORST BIT: Driving and aiming can get frustrating and awkward.

SECOND OPINION

> Take a great TV show and turn it into a great game. It sounds plausible, so why can't anyone do it? Okay, for £1 million, I'll sell you my *Fawlty Towers* game. ***Kingsley Singleton***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"SMELLY"

48%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Yu-Gi-Oh! Dungeon Dice Monsters

Another game of the cartoon that not even Yu-Gi would shout about.

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£29.99**
Publisher: **Konami**
Web: **www.konami-europe.com**
Players: **1-2**

It's not about the cards, it's about the heart. At least that's what Yu-Gi always says in the cartoon series. So where's the heart in this? Where's the heart in a game that requires you to study the manual like a school book for a day before you can even think about playing it?

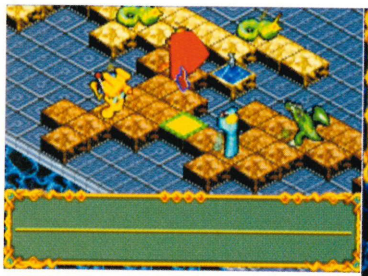
This game is not based on the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* card game, but on another game that's played in an episode of the series, called (surprisingly) *Dungeon Dice Monsters*. This is a very in-depth and complicated game of luck and strategy that players of the card game will not be familiar with, yet, there's no tutorial mode.

You roll dice to get points in different areas, attack, defence, magic, movement and the like, which allow you to summon monsters and perform your chosen tasks out on the field. Your ultimate task is to eliminate the three points from the opposing Die Master's stand. If we were to try and explain the rules any further, this one-page review would become a four-pager, and you still wouldn't understand – and if you did, you'd be a geek.

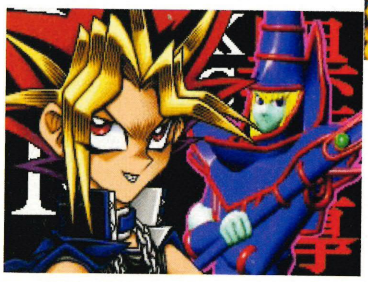
So, after being completely puzzled by the manual, you turn the game on and spend two, maybe three hours trying to figure out what the hell's going on – a task requiring an elite level of patience.

Once you're over that hurdle, you'll discover that the strategy system is actually very well put together and the more you understand *DDM*, the more tactics you'll be stringing together.

Unfortunately, all the one-on-one battles in the game are just that – battles. Even in the Tournament mode, there's not even so much as a hint of a story line. Fans of the cartoon will be deeply disappointed and anyone else will get bored in next to no time. ***Mike Jackson***

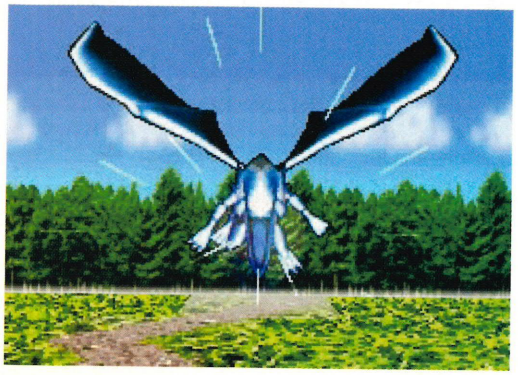


■ All we wanted was a game of Monopoly, then this lot turned up



■ Sorry, we forgot the rules again

■ Is that supposed to be scary? It looks broken



Playing it on the go

Connectivity... ✗
Nothing at all. Zilch. Nowt. Not a sausage.

Better Back Lit... ✗
Nothing moves fast enough.

Multiplayer... ✓
Swap cards and battle with mates.

Save... ✓
Only one save slot – that's stingy.

Extras... ✗
Not unless you count being friendless.

Where we played it...

In our Arwing that Miyamoto gave us, flying through space in another universe. Or maybe in the *NOM UK* offices. Dunno.

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You love to study stats and numbers for hours on end, with no desire for a social life.

No if...

You have a social life, you hate the cartoon series or your favourite card game is Snap.

You'll love it if you like...

Games like *Virtual Chess 64*, or if the mere thought of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* makes you crazy.

GRAPHICS 6

The battle arena looks dark and dull, and the fight scenes are nothing special.

SOUND 4

From the sound alone, we'd think this was a GBC game. Volume down, please.

GAMEPLAY 7

It mixes luck with strategy. Clever, but it takes a year to learn and understand.

LIFE SPAN 10 HOURS+

That's if you can be arsed to figure out the game in the first place...

VERDICT

> A good strategy game with fatal flaws – no tutorial, no plot and very poor sound. It's a half-finished product. A bit more effort and this would have been much cooler. We might have even liked it.

BEST BIT: Socking your opponent in the kisser. That wins every time.

WORST BIT: It's all so confusing and there's no Tutorial mode.

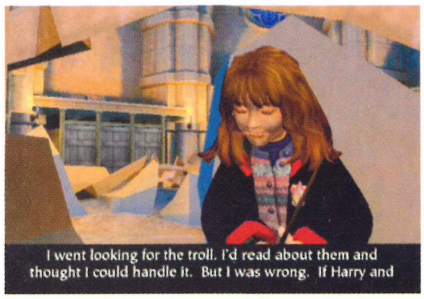
SECOND OPINION

> Tactically sound and true to the real thing, but too much time passes simply rolling the dice and waiting for something to happen. It gets boring very quickly. ***Dominic Wint***

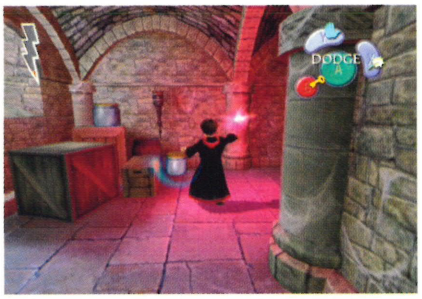
Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"HALF FINISHED"
58%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

■ Alan Rickman suddenly realised his slow, droning voice had made everyone disappear



■ Smarty pants Granger is annoying in any form; book, game or film



■ Potter got all defensive when the kids started making fun of his 'pink wand'

Harry Potter

and the Philosopher's Stone

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£39.99**
Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Web: **www.uk.ea.com**
Players: **1**
Memory: **9 blocks**

An old game, a new look. This has got 'from Grandma' written all over it.

You've seen this before on PSone a couple of years ago. It looks nicer now though, more like last year's *Chamber of Secrets*. It's a good fun game aimed at the younger end of the market. Think of it as *Zelda*-lite and you won't go far wrong.

The story sticks rigidly to that of the book. It's Harry's first year at Hogwart's and that means learning the basics and finding your way around the building, as well as defeating the evil Lord Voldemort.

There's nothing special about this game, but that doesn't make it bad. The graphics are nice, the sound is nice, the story line is, well, nice. Everything moves along at a gentle pace, giving you the chance to soak in the atmosphere and imagine yourself as The Boy Who Lived.

The best element is the way that Harry learns new skills. You enter each classroom and your teacher will tell you what spell you are about to learn. You must then overcome a series of obstacles and puzzles involving the spell and emerge from the challenge unscathed to add the power to your arsenal. This is definitely for *Potter* fans and younger gamers only. ***Dominic Wint***

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You loved the GBA, GBC or PSone versions and you need the graphical upgrade.

No if...

You've finished *Zelda* and you're looking for the next challenge. This is very basic stuff.

You'll love it if you like...

Harry Potter – everything he does and says, every move he makes.

GRAPHICS 7

Polished and pretty. Not particularly ground-breaking, just nice.

SOUND 6

A little uninspiring. The music is good, but the speech soon grates.

GAMEPLAY 7

There's no getting away from the fact that it's for kids, but it's still good.

LIFE SPAN 1 WEEK

The main quest is relatively simple, but there's a little bit of replay value.

VERDICT

> Yes it's childish, yes it's simple and yes it's relatively short. But there's certainly fun to be found in Harry's first year at Hogwart's especially if you're a big *Potter* fan. If you're after a challenge, go for *The Wind Waker*.

BEST BIT: Learning new skills by undertaking classroom tests.

WORST BIT: The kids' voices get really annoying after a while.

SECOND OPINION

> I hate *Potter*, unless it's Brian Potter from *Phoenix Nights*, ergo I hate this game. I know it's popular and kiddie, but it doesn't have to be this simple. ***Dean Scott***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"REFRESHED"

72%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Quidditch World Cup

Imagine if footy games lasted until the ref decided one team was good enough to win.

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£39.99**
Publisher: **EA**
Web: **www.uk.ea.com**
Players: **1-2**
Memory: **3 blocks**

Quidditch works in a book because J.K. Rowling can make the matches sound as exciting as possible. She can weave an elaborate tale of brave moves, daring tackles and an incredibly close game won only by some unbelievable broomstick manoeuvres from Potter and Co. ending in the catching of the Golden Snitch.

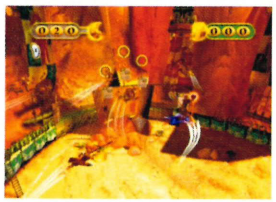
The game takes the thrills and spills of Quidditch and weaves them into a crap jumper with one sleeve longer than the other and a picture of a turd on the front.

First you learn the skills you'll need for all areas of the game and then apply them out on the field as you cruise to the House Cup at Hogwart's.

Then you get to choose a national side and battle for the World Cup. You play an ordinary game of Quidditch where you get the Quaffle through the scoring rings and rack up points. A Snitch meter between the scores measures how stylishly you are playing and the halves of the Snitch move closer together, or further apart, until the pieces join and the race for the Snitch is on.

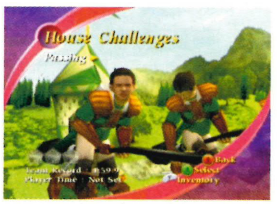
But such a subjective scoring system leads to scoring goal after goal until you have so many points that it's impossible for the opposition to win.

This should have been an unlockable game in the *Harry Potter* adventure titles, or a budget release. It's just not worth full price as it gets repetitive and annoying far too quickly. ***Dominic Wint***



■ **The Australian pitch seems to be burrowed into Ayer's Rock**

■ **Hogwart's traffic lights confused even the most careful of drivers**



■ **Slytherin (boo!) players have a really bad attitude. And poor dental hygiene**

The Americans race back to goal, hoping to stop the Nordic team

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You're absolutely mad on *Potter* and you wish that you could play Quidditch.

No if...

You're expecting a new take on sport. This is pretty heavy going.

You'll love it if you like...

Games that don't appear to have an end, like the game of life, perhaps.

GRAPHICS 8

Of course it looks nice – EA made it. There are some neat touches, too.

SOUND 6

There's a stirring musical score, but the commentary is far too poash!

GAMEPLAY 5

Score a goal, tackle, score a goal. Repeat ad infinitum. And no, that's not a spell.

LIFE SPAN 15 HOURS

You'll finish it, give it to a younger relative and forget all about it.

VERDICT

> Quidditch should have stayed on the pages of the *Harry Potter* stories where it's action-packed and exciting. Here it tries so hard to be authentic that it ends up being dull, slow and boring.

BEST BIT: Linking Combos to build up a cache of special moves.

WORST BIT: Scoring over and over again until the Snitch is sighted.

SECOND OPINION

> Initially intriguing, but ultimately rubbish, *Quidditch World Cup* lacks any real depth, excitement or skill. This is purely for *Harry Potter* nuts and nobody else. ***Dean Scott***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"REPETITIVE"

51%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

XGRA

Game info

Out Now

Price: £39.99
Publisher: Acclaim
Web: www.extremeg.com
Players: 1-4
Memory: 20 blocks

It stands for *Extreme G*... oh, who cares. *F-Zero GX* fanclub meeting in session!

Once per hardware generation, Nintendo drops a future racing game that sets your eyes on fire. Each and every *F-Zero* game has been a gem, but they only blast by every four years or so. That leaves an awful lot of space for a rival roller coaster space racer. And here's *XGRA*, a mere couple of months after *F-Zero GX*. Umm... whoops.

It's not crap. It's resolutely un-crap. But it's nowhere near as good as the latest blistering *F-Zero* instalment. It's fast, but not *as fast*. It's pretty, but not *as pretty*. It's got guns, but there's a reason *F-Zero* doesn't: it's a game of skill – there's no getting zapped – the fastest wins. The more we think about it, the more we love *F-Zero GX*. It's hardcore and awesome, and you should buy it now. And once you have it, you won't need this. Sorry, *XGRA*.

The narrative of the game was supposed to set this apart, but it basically manifests itself as robots and squid men bitching at you mid-race. You work your way up to bigger contracts with better teams, get jazzier bikes and carry out cool little vendettas on the other riders. It's slow to get into though, unlike *F-Zero GX* which SHOUTS JOY INTO YOUR FACE FROM THE SECOND YOU SWITCH IT ON.

The handling is pretty good – twitchy, but responsive – which is exactly what you need when you're doing 500mph down a hill and the road suddenly forks. The weapons really light up the screen, but it detracts from the racing when you're trying to get a lock-on cursor for heat seeking rockets. The tracks? Pretty good. The developers clearly understand the rush of thrashing up a steep incline before gasping at – and then dropping into – the yawning chasm below. ***Dean Scott***

■ The race is on – first one to the finish can swap *XGRA* for a copy of *F-Zero GX*

■ Strangely quiet, like the streets of Surrey when Man Utd are playing at home...

We're not sure what that advert's for, but it looks dangerous

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

The only kind of games you buy are future racers and *F-Zero GX* has sold out.

No if...

You want the absolute best a niche genre has to offer – that's *F-Zero GX*, dumbass.

You'll love it if you like...

Driving around the Nemesis at Alton Towers on a nuclear-powered super-bike.

GRAPHICS 7

Futuristic, but occasionally bland and lacking in inspiration.

SOUND 8

Pounding beats by artists you actually know. It truly trumps *F-Zero* here.

GAMEPLAY 7

The speed's not quite there and the weapons are a bit hit and miss.

LIFE SPAN 10 HOURS

The Career mode doesn't take long to crack. Multiplayer too, obviously.

VERDICT

> Six months from now when this turns up for under a score, it might be worth a punt. Right now it has arrived spluttering into *F-Zero GX*'s napalm exhaust-fume wake, had a little cough and fallen over.

BEST BIT: It looks cool. The bike and track design is nice and futuristic.

WORST BIT: Sadly, *F-Zero GX* already exists and makes this look rubbish.

SECOND OPINION

> In *F-Zero GX*, there are THIRTY cars in each race. In this, the most you can have is eight. Which, by the power of maths, makes it 73.4% less fun. ***Dominic Wint***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"FIRST LOSER"

70%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

■ The shrunken graphics can't hide a truly awful shirt

■ It's amazing how many skateboard-friendly objects there are around these days

■ The Balance-Bar-come-hovering-waxed-moustache is back again. Very *Mario Bros.*...

Playing it on the go

Connectivity... ✗
Sadly no. A GameCube link would be cool.

Better Back Lit... ✓
It's quite dark. SP or bright light required.

Multiplayer... ✓
Take turns or link-up, it's your choice.

Save... ✓
There's a cart save point for each stage.

Extras... ✗
New moves to unlock and skill upgrades.

Where we played it...

Sitting in a shopping centre watching the world go by and thinking about Grinding.

Tony Hawk's Underground

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£29.99**
Publisher: **Activision**
Web: **www.thugonline.com**
Players: **1-2**
Memory: **Cart save**

It'll tie your fingers in knots and have you swearing like a navvy, but fun is guaranteed.

If you turn this game on and leave it running to see the Demo mode you'll see skateboarders falling off. It's something you need to get used to, but once you do you'll be rewarded with a tough, challenging game that's totally different to the GameCube version.

The basic principal is the same as ever. You play an up-and-coming skater hungry for success. To get recognition you'll need to show your mates – and the wider world – that you've got the skillz. This is obviously a pared-down version of the GameCube game which makes it more of a 'go there, do this' proposition than a free-roaming skate-fest.

The biggest obstacle to overcome is the isometric view, just like the ones used in past GBA *Tony* games. It takes ages to get used to and only a few will master it, making this more difficult than it needs to be. And because of the smaller screen, some of the challenges are very tough.

That said, this is a good game with tight controls and a nice soundtrack. Graphically there's little improvement over past incarnations, but *Tony* veterans are well catered for with a wealth of tasks to complete. The best part is learning new skills which, like in the GameCube version, relies on you performing a required amount of tricks, scoring a big combo or holding a Grind for a specified time. Each new skill is rewarded with a new move and it's fun whiling away the hours just trying to learn a new Grab or Flip. ***Dominic Wint***

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You're a veteran of previous GBA *Tony* games and you're after the next challenge.

No if...

You're expecting a shrunken version of the 'Cube game. This is a different proposition.

You'll love it if you like...

The past four incarnations of the GBA game. But now you can get off your board.

GRAPHICS 7

Detailed, but dark in places and some of the levels seem overly cluttered.

SOUND 7

Everything in its right place, but the skater's cry of anguish is rubbish.

GAMEPLAY 8

It's tough, but there's a great sense of reward when you complete a task.

LIFE SPAN 1 MONTH

Too intense to finish in one or two sittings – you'll be dipping in and out.

VERDICT

> More niggly than the GC version and less accessible. If you're prepared to give it some attention you'll be rewarded with a deep and challenging experience. If you want an easier *Tony Hawk* game try the GameCube ones.

BEST BIT: The tough and imaginative challenges that you're faced with.

WORST BIT: The view is mostly good, but it can be very awkward at times.

SECOND OPINION

> Just as Hideo Kojima gets 3D motion sickness, isometric views give me a terrible pain in the ass. But once the morphine kicks in this is good fun. ***Kingsley Singleton***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"HARD WORK"
78%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

The Sims: Bustin' Out

Game info

Out Now

Price: **£39.99**
Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Web: **www.uk.ea.com**
Players: **1-4**
Memory: **161 blocks**

Whether budding Kray brother or wannabe Russell Crowe, bust out with *The Sims* to fulfil your fantasies without leaving the house.

> *The Sims* rules. Where else can you bring obnoxious gym freaks to justice by starving them to death or condemn millionaire stars to a life of wretched incontinence? Not in the spirit of the game? So what? Just like real life, we all get our jollies in different ways. Happily, *Bustin' Out* adds loads more chances to destroy the lives of your on-screen freaks in more spectacular ways than ever before.

Played through in a series of missions, *Bustin' Out* gives you seven unique career paths to choose, from bling-heavy gangsta type to mad scientist. To win at each you need to be successful enough to work your way up through each career's ten ranks of promotion.

Let's say you want your name up in lights and your Sim-prints set in concrete on Hollywood Blvd. You need to work your way up through the ranks, from kids' entertainer in a funny suit to understudy, bit-part actor and so on. Follow the bespectacled path of the nerd and you'll have to be lab assistant before you can start creating Frankenstein-style experiments of your own.

How successful you are at your chosen career is determined by your Sim's innate personality and how good you are at enriching all aspects of its life, from bladder control to its political debating skills. This is where *Bustin' Out* vastly improves upon last year's *Sims* game. Not only do you create a unique look for your Sim from hundreds of combinations of body shapes, clothes and saucy nurse outfits (oh yes!), you also have almost complete control over shaping their personality.

For instance, create an over-confident US sports star-style character and you'll blitz through the more active and sociable lifestyles, but give him a test tube and a Bunsen burner and he'll be weeping into his jockstrap. Design an aggressive, violent and ambitious Sim and he'll be lord of his gangster's manor, but useless at fighting the power of the fascist government in the 'counter-culture' career path. Naturally these traits determine how your Sim interacts with others and what's especially cool is that Sims will even hold themselves in appropriate postures according to how outgoing they are.

Earn the right to travel around town and you get to meet the inhabitants of locations like the spooky mansion and science lab. This will help your Sim learn and it's up to you to provide the necessary guidance to get them climbing the promotional ladder. What skills you decide to enhance and where you eventually chose to shack up all determine the career path for your Sim. It's a slow process of trial and error, but a fun one if you've got the patience.

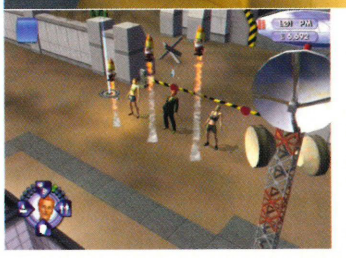
The Sims' appeal has always been found in its simplicity and while the basic principle of *Bustin' Out* is the same as always, you feel as if there's much more of a point to what you're doing, as well as having a lot more control over your dude.

Given the slow pace and the amount of trial and error involved in getting your Sim fit for human interaction, *Bustin' Out* still isn't quite the simulation game to win over those who prefer an instant gaming fix. But if you don't mind investing a bit of time, this could well be the one *Sims* title where you have as much fun actually playing properly as you do trying to kill off your heroes. ***Darren Fox***

"*Bustin' Out* offers unique career paths to choose, from gangstas to mad scientists."

■ Nice wheels, mate. Earn cash so you don't have to ride this pink abomination

■ Squint as hard as you like, you can't see through that dress



Trolly dash

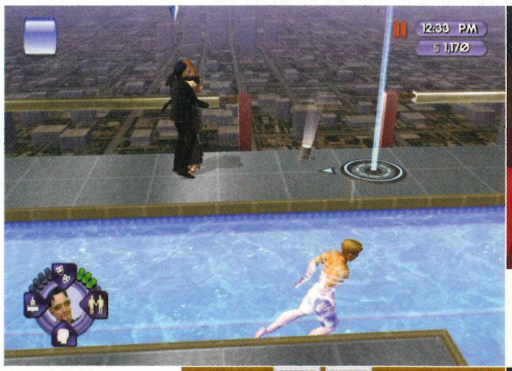
You'll get every chance to splash the cash in *Bustin' Out*

As well as winning the right to buy new vehicles to travel around in (from the sad pink scooter to the awesome dune buggy), *The Sims: Bustin' Out* has got more cool items to reward your character than your local shopping mall. From state-of-the-art widescreen TVs and holographic video games machines to DJ decks and gnome rockets (please don't ask), this is surely every shopaholic's dream game. And you get to buy it before you can play, too!

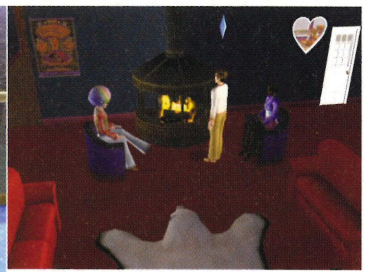
Who said science is all tissue cultures?

Welcome in a new era of holographic gaming. Expect a UK release in around 2013

"You can condemn millionaire movie stars to a life of wretched incontinence."



■ Without social skills even the most athletic Sim will lose the girl



■ Mixing with other character types increases your social skills

■ Playing games makes your Sims happy but tired

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You enjoy slower-paced simulations and tweaking character stats to reap big rewards.

No if...

You think there's nothing sadder than playing a game that simulates real life.

You'll love it if you like...

The first *Sims* GC game, or classic 'fun' sims like *Theme Park World* and *Theme Hospital*.

GRAPHICS 7

Strangely dull colours, but there's lots of detail in the objects and Sims on screen.

SOUND 7

Their babble will irritate, but the unique music for each area is nice enough.

GAMEPLAY 8

It's slow but rewarding and deep, despite the simplicity of the basic idea.

LIFE SPAN 2 MONTHS +

Seven career paths and promotions in each make for a time-consuming game.

VERDICT

> In no way a giant leap forward for the *Sims* franchise, but there are enough new additions to make this exciting in its own right. You'll hate it if you think games should be all about guns n' guts.

BEST BIT: Trying to ogle your lady Sim through the pixel effect. We're pervs.

WORST BIT: The slow pace will really put some people off.

SECOND OPINION

> As good as *Bustin' Out* is, I prefer spending time with REAL mini-people. But sometimes visiting day at the dwarf centre is stressful, so I throw this on to relax. ***Dean Scott***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"REWARDING"

82%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Judge Dredd: Dredd vs Death

Borag thungg, earthlets. Didn't get that? Then you may as well stop reading now.

Game info

Out Now

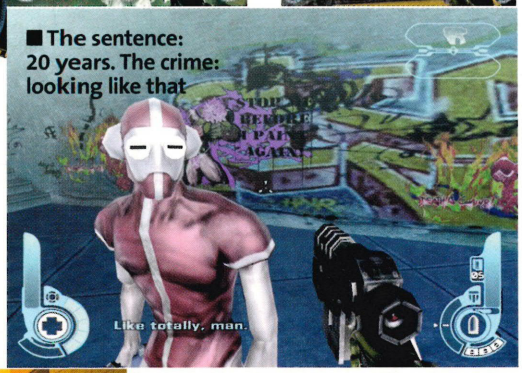
Price: **£39.99**
Publisher: **Vivendi Universal**
Web: **www.dreddvsdeath.com**
Players: **1-4**
Memory: **2 blocks**

In 1977, Pat Mills and John Wagner invented the future cop comic strip *Judge Dredd* as a comment on the increasingly right-wing nature of Western society. Almost nobody got the joke and Dredd became an icon to millions in the pages of *2000AD*. Now there's a new *Dredd* game and it's debatable whether anyone will get this either, but for different reasons.

If you're unfamiliar with *Dredd* there's no point explaining it all here – the only reason you'd want to get this game is if you're into the comics already. If not, spug off, pinky! Get back on the Pedway. Not that you need to know Mega City One like the back of your hand to appreciate some hidden depth here, it's just that it's a much worse game if you don't. *Dredd* fans will enjoy looking around the levels and laughing at the in-jokes – the rest of you will see this for what it is, a bog-standard FPS.

Graphically it's nothing special, despite some nice lighting and a cool ragdoll effect when you drop a perp, and the levels, including Smokatoriums and the Resyk recycling plant look okay, if a bit boxy. The soundtrack is pretty good though and the dialogue is a laugh, but again only if you're a *Dredd* fan.

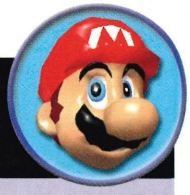
It's no *TimeSplitters 2*, it's no *XIII*, it's certainly no *Metroid Prime*, even though it nicks bits and pieces from all three. What you have here is something you might get AFTER you've bought those games. *Judge Dredd*'s only distinguishing feature, other than the backdrop provided by 25 years of *2000AD*, is the Law Meter. This gadget assesses your performance as a Judge, meaning you can't just run up to a Flabbie and cap them – you have to try and arrest them. This is cool because you can scare perps into submission, or shoot them in the knees and have them throw down their weapons. And in Mega City One everyone's guilty of something, from illegally keeping a hamster to smoking in public. That's the future, by Grud – and I am the law. ***Kingsley Singleton***



■ The sentence: 20 years. The crime: looking like that

■ The sentence: 40 years. The crime: kneeling in public

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You like *Dredd* and can't wait for a better version, or you love FPSs, no matter what.

No if...

It's a first-class FPS you're after – there are a few titles you should check out before this.

You'll love it if you like...

Hmm... themed First Person Shooters, maybe? Or dodgy movie tie-in games?

GRAPHICS 7

Some nice effects don't hide the blocky levels. Not as pretty as *2000AD*.

SOUND 8

The voices and soundtrack are good, and Dredd's one-liners never get annoying.

GAMEPLAY 6

Offers very little in the way of new thrills, just middle-of-the-road FPS antics.

LIFE SPAN 2 WEEKS

Story mode, Co-op Story mode, Arcade mode, multiplayer, unlockables. Not bad.

VERDICT

> A mindless blaster, that'll hold most appeal for fans of the comics. It's definitely worth a rental, but in the long run this is less likely to be spinning in your GameCube than rotting in an Iso-Cube.

BEST BIT: The setting. *Judge Dredd*'s a great comic, full of cool stuff.

WORST BIT: There's not much in the way of FPS innovation here.

SECOND OPINION

> Sure, Kingsley thought it was alright, but he grew up with the comics – for the rest of you this is gonna be like playing the bits that fell off *TimeSplitters2*. ***Dean Scott***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...

"MOSTLY MUNCE"

67%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

TG Rally

Game info

Price: £29.99
Publisher: Kemco
Web: www.kemcogames.com
Players: 1-2

Out Now

Proof positive that the only licence you need for a decent rally game is a licence to drive... fast.

No real cars, no real courses, no real commentators, but none of it matters because *TG Rally* is great fun. Each course gives you loads of opportunity to slide the arse out of super-fast cars, all the while knowing that you are in complete control of the beasts. The handling is what makes this a winner. Slidy enough so you feel like you're actually driving a rally car yet with enough control to stop you spinning off the course at every corner.

And the number of different stages is almost staggering. Everything from snow to dust is covered in the multitude of courses you have to face. The graphics are also nice and bright, allowing you a great view of the upcoming twists and turns.

In Championship mode there are three difficulty settings for you to get stuck into. Each mode is pretty large with massive variation in the levels. Cars can be selected at the beginning of each section and you can also adjust the settings of your chariot to suit the surroundings.

This is racing at its most stripped down and yet at its most enjoyable. The pace notes are basic to say the least with only about four co-driver instructions per race. It's not quite as accomplished as *V-Rally 3*, nor as deep, but it's great for a five-minute blast. ***Dominic Wint***

Playing it on the go

Connectivity... ✗
Nothing doing here, friend. It's trapped!

Better Back Lit... ✓
Only slightly. Bright and colourful.

Multiplayer... ✓
Two players, but you'll both need a copy.

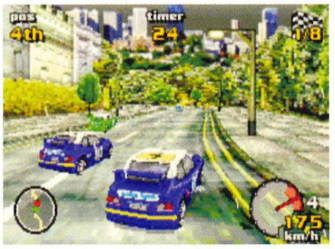
Save... ✓
Cart save and there are three slots.

Extras... ✗
Not unless you count unlocking new cars.

Where we played it...
On a wet Sunday in Wales, watching Petter Solberg win the WRC title.

■ It's Cameroon's first rally. Follow the arrows, guys

■ Would you drive a car that looked like this?



■ Hey, that bloke's nicked your motor... hang on, that's not right

So, should you buy it?

Yes if...

You're looking for an accessible and instantly enjoyable rally game with no pointless frills.

No if...

You're the kind of person who agonises over suspension settings and ride height.

You'll love it if you like...

Dipping in and out of games. *TG Rally* is one of those you can pick up anytime, anywhere.

GRAPHICS 8
Colourful, detailed and a decent draw distance, but the cars are a bit blocky.

SOUND 5
Pretty sparse. No music, average car noises and predictable pace notes.

GAMEPLAY 8
Great handling and huge variety in the courses is what makes this a good game.

LIFE SPAN 2 WEEKS
It's going to take a while to get through all three Championship modes.

VERDICT

> You'll have a good time with *TG Rally*. This is no-frills racing at its best. The modifying options are there if you want them, but all you need to do is select the right tyres and get going. A real pick-up-and-play belter.

BEST BIT: The handling is near perfect. Just what you need.

WORST BIT: The voice-over. It's so muffled you'll have to trust us.

SECOND OPINION

> This is great. It leaves all the stupid car-tweaking stuff to GameCube games and concentrates on handling. It's the best drive of all the GBA rally games. ***Dean Scott***

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"FULL THROTTLE"
81%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Smaller reviews. For

Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu

Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
Release date: **Out now**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-2**
Game Save: **2 blocks**

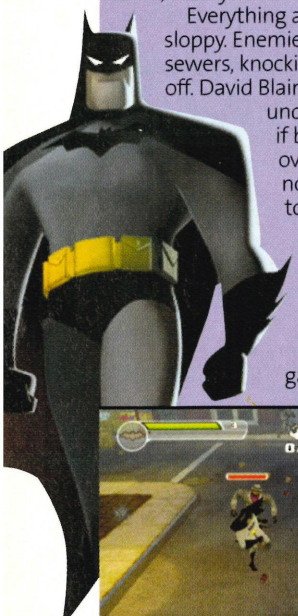
Take a look at the *Batman* cartoon. A group of thugs are up to no good. What happens? Batman bursts from the shadows, throwing Baterangs at their heads and slaps them into submission in a proper ninja style. It's very cool.

What doesn't happen? Batman runs up to one of the many thugs and throws three slow-paced kicks in his direction whilst getting battered from behind by the others with sticks and poles in a proper idiot style. That's very crap.

Where's the similarity there? Batman isn't at all like this. The responsiveness is very poor. Batman is an agile fighter in the cartoon. Hit an attack button a few times here and your character won't do anything you want until he's finished his sluggish combo. You can't avoid attacks. You get battered every time, then you die.

Everything about this game is sloppy. Enemies bust out of the sewers, knocking the manhole cover off. David Blaine must be the man under the mask because, as if by magic, Batman walks over the big hole like it's not even there. Attention to detail? What's that?

Viewtiful Joe may only be 2D, but compared to Joe's skills, Batman in *Rise of Sin Tzu* fights like a three-legged donkey. But this is a fighting game. Whoops.



Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"BAT-TURD-RANG"
36%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Crash Nitro Kart

Publisher: **Vivendi**
Release date: **Out now**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-4**
Game Save: **Cart save**

When enough effort is put in, the GBA is capable of running 3D graphics at a smooth, acceptable rate, as demonstrated brilliantly by games like *V-Rally* and *Doom*. But where those titles succeeded, *Crash Nitro Kart* fails miserably.

This would be a hugely entertaining cartoon racer if it wasn't for one fatal flaw – the appaling slowdown. At any point when there's more than a couple of 3D objects on screen – like a row of item boxes or any of the other racers – the whole game slows down to a snail's pace.

It's awful. And being as the opposition are pretty competitive and the item boxes are spread out all over the track, the slowdown is almost constant. What a terrible shame.

If it wasn't for this awful frame-rate, we'd be telling you all about being able to race as any of the star characters from the *Bandicoot* series in a cool Adventure mode where you must win races to save Earth from an evil villain named Velo. And we'd say how nice the tracks look and how cool the music and sound effects are. But none of that really matters now, because it moves like your grandad on a cold December morning. A spoiled gem.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"A WRITE OFF"
50%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

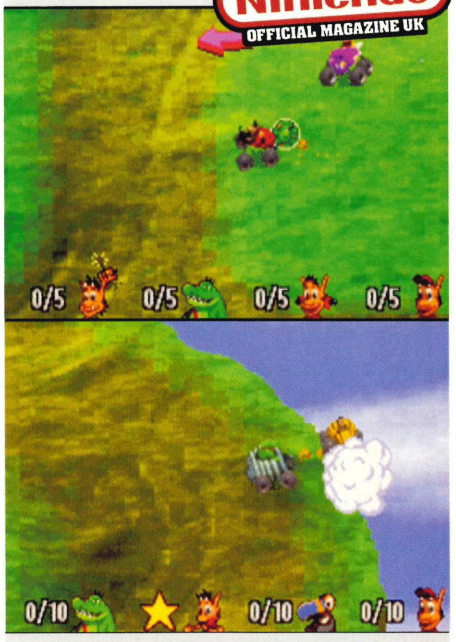
Hugo Bukkazoom!

Publisher: **ITE Media**
Release date: **Out now**
Price: **£19.99**
Players: **1-2**
Game Save: **None**

Not many games make you scream with anguish, but *Hugo Bukkazoom!* has this skill. Hugo's been shrunk to the size of a small insect along with a gang of his mates. Instead of trying to get big again, the merry gang decide to invest in some mini-carts and have a race around the tiny tracks.

Bukkazoom!'s main failing lies in the stodgy controls. The game has many different modes that all require a degree of precision; from driving through checkpoints to knocking greenfly into holes. But the carts' turning circles are wider than a combine harvester's – miss a checkpoint or target and you're scuppered. There's also no real depth as you select the length of each championship rather than being supplied with *Mario Kart*-style cups.

With loads of more-accomplished kart-racing games on GBA there's no reason for this game to exist. It's slow, tiresome and at times painful. Twenty quid or not, this does not belong in your GBA.



Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"OH LORD, NO!"
14%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

your eyes to savour.

Crash Nitro Kart

Publisher: **Vivendi Universal**
Release date: **Out now**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-4**
Memory Card: **3 blocks**

It's a real shame that *Crash Nitro Kart* is out about the same time as Mario's latest four-wheeled adventure, because the old Italian Stallion makes this marsupial pretender look a lot worse than it actually is.

Crash Nitro Kart is certainly no stinker, there are loads of races to take part in and the opponents are tough enough to keep you coming back for a second and third attempt. There's also a nice set of challenge levels that you can unlock as you battle your way through the main game. These range from time trial-type events to collect-a-thons. Again, nothing sensational, but decent fun all the same.

The problem with *Crash Nitro Kart* is that it feels ordinary. There's no great sense of speed, the power-ups are nothing new, the courses are unimaginative, although they look okay. There's nothing in here that would make you go "wow".

What there is is a solid, mildly enjoyable kart-racing game that we've all seen before. If you're a serious *Crash Bandicoot* fan, you should probably see a psychiatrist, but you'll probably love *Nitro Kart*. If GameCube kart racing's your thing then *Double Dash* is the obvious choice.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"GO FOR MARIO"
70%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

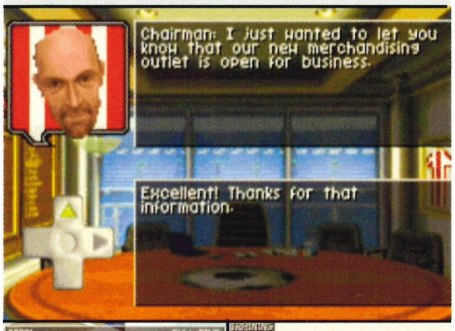
Premier Manager 2003-2004

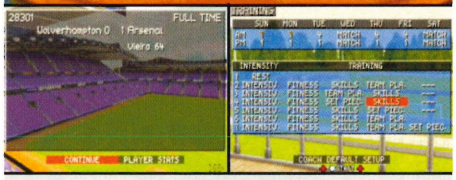
Publisher: **Zoo Digital**
Release date: **Out now**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Game Save: **Cart save**

Spent all week in training tinkering with tactics? Set up a website like the rest of the corporate whores? Just seen some bunch of scuffers nick it 1-0 on the Saturday? It's time to throw a teacup... or maybe your GBA.

In an age when football ranks above not catching fire in many people's list of priorities, a management game on GBA should be a sure-fire winner. *Premier Manager* certainly gives you a powerful thrill when your team's score changes from 0 to 1 on the teletext-style interface, but what's less certain is whether this is as good as it could be. The *Championship Manager* series on the PC has created many a bleary eyed hermit, but that's a far more expansive game than this. What you get here is footy management stripped right down to its jockstrap – there doesn't seem to be enough depth to stop you feeling the results are ultimately random.

The menus are fine, but take time to navigate and you can choose your level of involvement in the day-to-day running of the club. The range of teams means you can have a go at getting the likes of Napoli back into Serie A, but it comes at a cost – the loss of the lower English leagues – so, there'll be no glory days for Bristol Rovers here. There's no coverage of the Scottish leagues either, but that's pretty much the only good news left to tell you.





Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"HAMSTRUNG"
64%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Spyro: Attack of the Rhynocs

Publisher: **Vivendi Universal**
Release date: **Out now**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Game Save: **Cart save**

This is the third *Spyro* game for the GBA. All have been quite good, but none have been ground-breaking. And nothing has changed this time.

The adventurous reptile has got to deal with a bad dude called Ripto, in the usual evil-plot-foiling sort of adventure, which basically amounts to having to collect a whole load of items. A bit like *Banjo Kazooie* really.

You'll be collecting gems, new powers and different types of breath (just like *Seasons of Ice*) for Spyro, as well as other specific pick-ups for each individual level.

If Spyro takes too many hits and is 'killed', instead of losing a life, he'll just be sent back to the previous checkpoint. There is no limit to the amount of tries you can have at completing a section either so you can simply keep on it. This may sound too easy, but it cuts out the frustration of dying and having to do the entire level again.

The same graphical style from previous *Spyro* games has returned, with slight tweaks, making for a generally nice looking platformer. If only the repetitive background music wasn't so annoying.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK SAYS...
"NOT QUITE"
72%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

"No! Like this!"

You've bought them, now tell us how you'd change 'em.

What's your verdict?

F-Zero GX

It's back, but there's still some engine trouble...

■ Why weren't tracks incorporated from other games? Rainbow Road in *F-Zero X* was a great idea. Nintendo has got such a long history – it should dig deep into its archives.
Joe Coleman, Woking

■ *F-Zero GX* looks great as the graphics are interesting, but the game is too short and way too repetitive. I want some more originality in my games! Come on Nintendo you are usually the kings at this!
Dave Kateley, Rayleigh

■ In *F-Zero GX* the racers are sometimes too bunched up, meaning one mistake can take you from first to 30th in a blink. There are too few levels available at the beginning, too, and most of them are just plain dull.
Erol Sabadosh, London

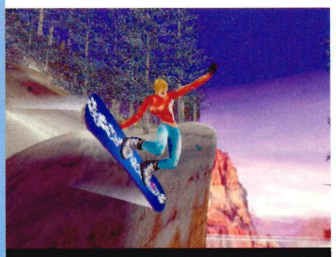
Zelda: The Wind Waker

Are you lot STILL not down with the cel-shading?

■ I have to say, *The Wind Waker* rules, but I still think it looks like a little kids' cartoon when it comes to the graphics. Let's have a proper warrior Link in the next game, rather than an infant.
Anon, Surrey

■ *The Wind Waker* has Nintendo magic, but it's a mini-game compared to *Ocarina*. The bosses were not really challenging enough and the cel-shading made it look like a kids' game. Sort it next time!
Anon, via email

"They say a million monkeys sat at a million typewriters for a million years could write the works of Shakespeare. *Resi Evil Zero* was a ten-minute, five-monkey job." Ben Paddon, via email



■ ***SSX Tricky***
It's really addictive, but later courses are too bendy which gets annoying. It's also extremely slow when you just want to go fast.
Phoenix Griffiths, Port Talbot

■ ***Soul Calibur II***
It's GameCube's best fighter, but it could have done with a much clearer story line as it gets confusing too often.
Craig Anderson, via email

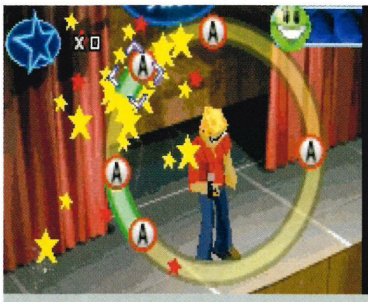
■ ***Super Mario Sunshine***
It needs more levels and more kicking of Bowser's ass. Wiggler and Piranha bosses are cool, but Bowser's top.
Danny Marston, via email

■ ***Metroid Prime***
A perfect game ruined by cheesy American voice-overs. They completely wrecked it!
Adam Marable, via email

■ ***FIFA 2004***
The new Off The Ball control is so hard to use that golden chances go begging every time. Keep it simple for the next one, EA. That's what *Winning Eleven* does best.
James Francis, via email

■ ***Viewtiful Joe***
Why do all the bosses have to come back for another go? I killed them once; I don't want to do it again!
Erol Sabadosh, London

Email your improvements to the latest GameCube games to **tim.street@emap.com**
Remember, thumbs up or down doesn't cut it. We want to know how you'd make them better.



■ *Pop Idol*
I disagreed with your review, even though I finished *Pop Idol* pretty quickly. I thought the songs were really good and Simon Cowell was okay. There should be more games like this on GBA. I think they work well.
R. Downey, Lancaster

■ *Sim City 2000*
I can't believe you gave this game such a low score. Okay, it's no classic, but this kind of game is perfect for GBA and I'd like to see more of them. The only trouble is it's so addictive I keep missing my bus stop.
Dave Green, Milton Keynes

Final Fantasy Tactics Advance

■ At last, something to rival the supreme *Advance Wars*! *FFTA* is truly brilliant, hugely addictive and looks fantastic. I was worried that it'd be dull, but the whole game is set up brilliantly, leading you gently into the action before grabbing you.
Jon Abbott, Wrexham

■ You said it was like *Advance Wars*. It's not. It's tedious and dull and it just looks murky and dark. I got seriously bored pretty quickly and went back to my copy of *AW* right away.
Alan Riddings, Wycombe

■ While everybody's waiting for a proper *FF* game on 'Cube, those in the know are playing this gem. No doubt it won't be top of everyone's Christmas list, but it ought to be. Best 30 quid I've spent in ages.
Rob Stanford, via e-mail

"I could play *Advance Wars 2* forever. There's so much to do and so much replay value."
Evan Thompson, London

"Amazing. I thought *Final Fantasy Tactics* was superb, like *Advance Wars* on dry land. Strategy fans should get it."
Peter Brant, Barnsley

Tiger Woods 2004

■ I was impressed that Electronic Arts put the analogue-style swing into this handheld version and I think that overall it's a brilliant game to play. It's well hard though (unlike the GameCube version) which is a good and a bad thing.
Wayne Armstrong, Middlesex

■ I absolutely love the GameCube version, but I think that this is pretty bad. The swing is really tricky to get right because of the GBA's D-pad and Putting is a real chore. I think a more arcade-style golf game would have been much better on the small screen.
Dave Watts, Preston

FIFA 2004

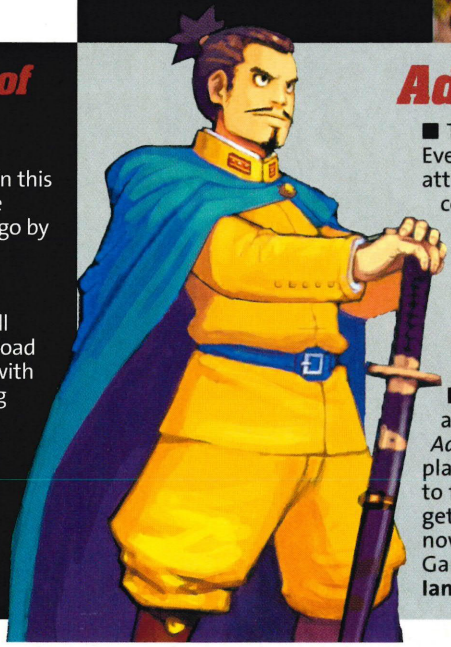
■ It's too easy to score goals, but it's incredibly addictive. The action is also a little bit slow, but for some reason I just can't put this down.
F. Tomlinson, Dorset

■ *FIFA 2004* is a great game to pick up and play. I love having a quick match on the bus to college. I usually win because it's a bit easy, but when you're tired of winning you're probably tired of life. Definitely one of the best sports games on GBA.
Chris Addison, Norfolk

LOTR: Return of the King

■ I love all the official stuff in this game, I can't wait to see the movie. If this is anything to go by it should be amazing.
M. Copper, Maidstone

■ I can't believe they can sell games like this by the truckload because of the association with the movies. This has nothing to do with the cinematic masterpieces that we know and love. It's repetitive and boring and it made my fingers hurt like a Balrog had trodden on them. Do it some justice!
Will Anderson, Cheshire



Advance Wars 2

■ This game is almost perfect! Even though it can take many attempts at a mission to complete it, it just brings you back for another go. It would be even more awesome if each character had exclusive machines to use.
Dom Walker, via e-mail

■ The new CO powers add another dimension to the *Advance Wars* saga. I loved playing this game from start to finish. I don't think it can get any better. All we need now is a bigger, bolder GameCube version.
Ian Smith, Truro

■ There's so much replay value it's untrue. I think that Nintendo has really found a gold mine with the *Advance Wars* series as it's just so addictive, deep and fun to play. My favourite bit is seeing the new COs and their powers.
Andy Macintosh, Ripley

■ I can see what they've tried to do, but for me it just doesn't work. I really enjoyed the first game and was expecting something a bit more from this sequel – sadly it's pretty much the same. I took it back after a few days and swapped it for *Mario Advance 4*.
David Dean, Tamworth

Email your improvements to the latest GBA releases to Dom at dominic.wint@emap.com
Remember, thumbs up or down doesn't cut it. We want to know how you'd make them better.

Masterclass

Busting the hardest parts

How to...

Find the sneakiest short cuts and rudest routes in Double Dash!!

If you find yourself trundling in last over and over again then you definitely need some help from the kart kings at *NOM UK*.

1 Luigi Circuit

GET STUFF AND MISS THE MONSTER

Where... Look for a road to the right after the first straight. It takes you around the bomb monster and leads to the edge of the big curve, allowing you to easily get onto the upper flat section. This does not appear on the 50cc version.

Advantage... You can pick up a double item bonus here before you reach the curve, giving you an edge over your opponents. Using this route will also help you avoid the monster.

Disadvantage... It's not really a short cut. The monster is more likely to get in your way should you decide to go this way. It might save you a fraction of a second at best, but not really enough to make any difference to the race.

2 Luigi Circuit

GET A DOUBLE BONUS

Where... Just before the last bend there's a short track leading off to the right. Look for it as you go up the slope. This is similar to the first short cut. It does not appear in the 50cc version of the track.
Advantage... You can pick up a double item and easily get on to the upper part of the final bend. Two items could help you knock out the leader and allow you to catch up just before the finish line, very handy for last-minute recoveries.
Disadvantage... This is not a short cut and does not save any time. It's difficult to spot and usually by the time you see the road it will be too late to turn into it.

3 Peach Beach

GET THE HEAVY FIREPOWER

Where... Shortly after the start you should turn left into a green pipe. It will then fling you back out through the air.
Advantage... It chucks you out through a double item bonus that always gives you some of the best stuff. If you get a Triple Mushroom Boost this will allow you to catch up any time you lose and the second item is usually something juicy to help you knock out the other karters.
Disadvantage... Using this green pipe will slow you down as it takes you well out of your way. The worst-case scenario is that you don't get any useful items and all you've done is wasted your time and fallen behind the pack.

4 Peach Beach

MISS THE SAND CREATURES **ITEM REQUIRED: Mushroom Boost**

Where... A ramp on the beach to the left as soon as you pass the first corner.
Advantage... You get a double item bonus for going this way. It also bypasses the first set of sand creatures.
Disadvantage... It's slower to go this way and you only have a thin patch of shallow water to drive through so it's easy to fall off. Only use it if you really need items. Otherwise, stick to the main route and get on the speedier paved section to the right.

5 Mushroom Bridge

GAIN VALUABLE SECONDS

Where... After coming out of the first tunnel section there's a gravel path leading over the hill on the right.
Advantage... This short cut will shave a few precious micro seconds off your lap time.
Disadvantage... If you take the short cut then it sends you back on course at the wrong angle so you need to turn sharply to the right. If you make a mess of it you can easily lose the time you gained by going this way.

6 Mushroom Bridge

HIT THE BOOST PADS

Where... Drive up the sides of the massive bridge after the second tunnel section.
Advantage... There are boost pads all the way up, allowing you to gain lots of speed.
Disadvantage... It's very narrow. Most of the time you'll fall off. If you go off into the water on harder difficulties you may lose yourself any chance of winning the race. This is for skilled drivers only.

7 Mushroom Bridge

GET A DOUBLE ITEM

Where... Immediately after crossing the big bridge and pretty much in line with the start. There is a short road that leads you down to a green pipe on the right-hand side.
Advantage... Going through the green pipe will boost you back onto the track with a double item bonus.
Disadvantage... This road will not save you any time worth bothering with and the tight angle of the corner means you have to slow down or risk crashing into the barriers. The tube also produces bomb vehicles that explode if you get too near them.

8 Daisy Cruiser

GET ITEMS AND HIT TOP SPEED

Where... After the dining hall there's a huge hole in the track. You can't miss it.
Advantage... You get a double item bonus in the depths below and the fan tube blows you back up to the top at high speed.
Disadvantage... This alternative route won't save you any time worth mentioning. Also if you speed into the hole it can slow you down if you bang the side as you enter the hole.

9 Mushroom City

AVOID THE TIGHT TURNS

Where... At the first fork, go straight and look for a pink path on the right.
Advantage... This cuts between the two different routes, allowing you to avoid making the tight right-angle turns. It also brings you out at a nice angle to take the following right-hand bend at speed.
Disadvantage... The route is narrow and bendy. If you make a mistake you'll bump into the walls and lose time. Only go this way if your driving skills would make an F1 driver blush.

10 Mushroom City

GET AN EDGE AT THE END

Where... The thin left-hand route when you are on the overpass bridge right before the finish line.
Advantage... Taking this strip will shave a few precious micro seconds from your time right before the finish line.
Disadvantage... The piece of track is extremely thin and it's very easy to fall into the hole on the left or bump into the wall on the right – and that would end your race real quick, wouldn't it?

11 Yoshi Circuit

GET AHEAD OF THE PACK

ITEM REQUIRED: Mushroom Boost

Where... After the first few bends there's a rock arch where the track bends left. Use a Mushroom just before the water hole to jump it.
Advantage... This will cut seconds off your time and boost you ahead of any nearby competitors. You'll completely avoid the bend on the left and should come out ahead of the pack
Disadvantage... You must use a Mushroom Boost just before the gap. If you mess up you'll fall in and lose time.

12 Yoshi Circuit

GET ITEMS AND A BOOST

ITEM REQUIRED: Mushroom Boost

Where... After the tunnel there's a gap in the barriers. Look for a small hump of grass and drive directly over it using a Mushroom Boost. Aim slightly to the right as you go over and you'll land in a secret tunnel.
Advantage... It'll save you seconds and there's a double item bonus in the tunnel. It also lets you avoid a tricky part of the course.
Disadvantage... It's hard to get into. If you're at the wrong angle or travelling too slow you'll end up in the water.

13 Dino Dino Jungle

BEAT THE REST UP THE HILL

Where... Dodge the giant dino's feet and go through into the tunnel. Head to the right straight afterwards and drive onto the thin strip of planking.
Advantage... The boost pad will speed you along nicely while the other drivers are chugging slowly up the hill. If you get round to the top you should have gained a fraction of a second.
Disadvantage... It's very narrow and, as the boost makes you go very fast, there's a good chance you'll fall off. If you take this route you will also miss some handy double item bonuses on the left route.

14 Dino Dino Jungle

AVOID THE OBSTACLES

ITEM REQUIRED: Mushroom Boost

Where... Go right after the second tunnel into the cavern. There's a broken bridge that you can jump over using a Mushroom.
Advantage... If you have the Mushroom and successfully make the jump you will gain seconds and completely avoid a difficult obstacle-laden part of the track.
Disadvantage... You have to remember to save a Mushroom Boost from earlier in the race, especially if you took the first short cut and missed the double bonus earlier. Without a Boost your kart will trundle over the bridge and fall into the crevasse.

15 Bowser Castle

SKIP THE TIGHT BEND

Where... When you reach the section where the giant Bowser statue spits fireballs at you, look for a gap in the barrier and drive over to avoid the bend on the right.
Advantage... This sneaky short jump completely avoids a tight bend and will save you a few seconds.
Disadvantage... To make this leap you need to drive straight at the Bowser statue, so you need to dodge giant fireballs for longer than otherwise necessary. If you go too fast when you make the jump you risk driving off the other side when landing.

HOW TO...
leave Eric crying like a small baby

Become a true skate pro

T.H.U.G. **is filled to bursting with some of the toughest tasks yet seen in the skate series. Here we show you how to beat the six hardest.**

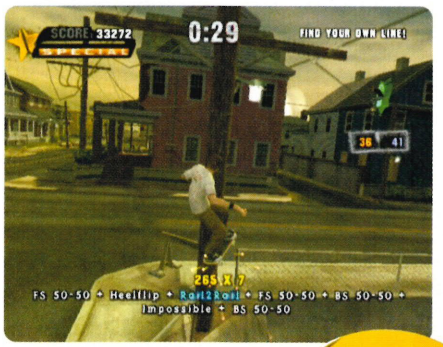
1 Winning Lines

At the end of the game, Eric races off into the distance and you have to follow him all the way around New Jersey. You don't have to do it all in one combo, but you must collect all of the hand icons that he drops. If you make a mistake it's best to start again as you'll have it all on to continue if you bail. These are the four main problem areas that you have to overcome.

Follow Eric across the bridge and watch out for his little molotovs. Once you've gone around the bend at the bottom and you're heading back towards town, Eric will leap up onto the electricity pylons. You can follow him if you hit the ramp at the correct angle – straight-on is best. You don't need to jump again until you've made it over the bridge.

Leap the gap between the two sections of the bridge. Then ride the rail until the very last second before jumping across to another set of electricity wires. Eric will then drop to the floor and continue on an easier route for a while.

You'll need to hit another ramp to get back onto those wires again, then drop to the street below and jump onto the railings surrounding the little playground. Next, transfer on to the climbing frame on the right-hand side to switch to the other side of the playground.



Once you're back on the fence you'll need to time it just right so that you can get the height from the break in the railings and get up to the final set of electrical wires. Fall to the pavement and collect the last few markers.

DID YOU KNOW?
You can now create your own tricks in the Trick Editor menu

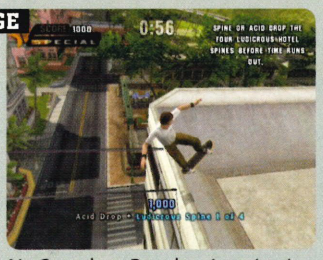
Congratulations! You've bitch-slapped Eric to within an inch of his life and saved the day. Now it's on to the insanely hard Sick difficulty setting, which should see you battering the board until this time next year. Trust us, it's tough enough to keep you playing for ages.

2 Making the ultimate tape

You guys are no slouches on a skateboard and we reckon you're all good enough to work your way through the main game without us holding your hand. But if you want a quick route to the grand finalé then you'll find it in the 20 easy-to-follow steps below. Once you've assembled Stacey Peralta's dream skate team, these are the five easiest challenges for you to try.

HAWAII HUGE SPINE CHALLENGE

Jump just before the end of the ramp and hold L and R to Acid Drop to the ramp below.



No Comply or Boneless to get extra height off the next ramp. Then Spine Transfer into the higher bowl.

Make sure you're central and heading straight forward as you exit the bowl to land on the ramp.

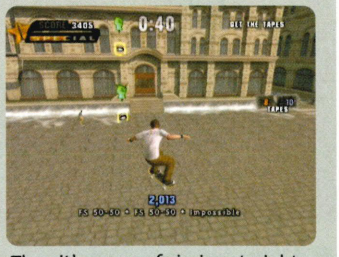
By now you should have all the time in the world to do a Spine Transfer over the final ramp.

MOSCOW'S LOST TAPE

Your first task is to Transfer from the lower to the higher wall, then Grind until you get the second tape.

After you collect the fifth tape, jump and Grind to hit the Xmas lights. Ride these to the end.

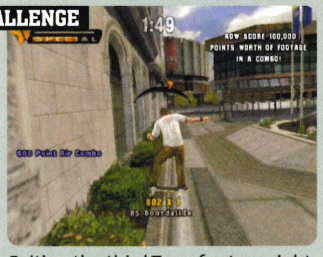
Jump off the lights and aim for the next tape on top of the building in front. Miss and you'll have to retry.



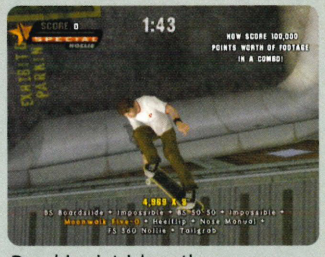
Then it's a case of aiming straight at the last two tapes, making sure you hit the ramp at the right angle.

VANCOUVER SPINE TRANSFER CHALLENGE

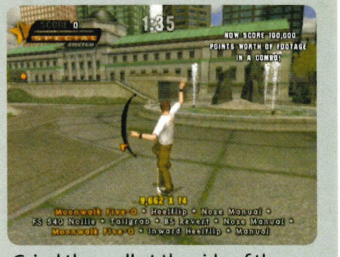
Hitting the three Spine Transfers is easy, just make sure you keep your boarder heading straight.



Exiting the third Transfer, turn right and Grind the wall at the front of the hotel to start your Combo.

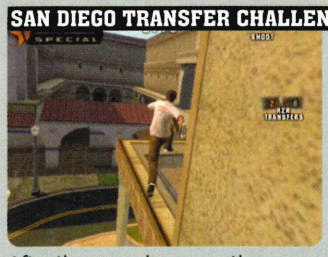


Do a big air trick on the ramps outside Slam City, Revert to Manual and head to the right again.



Grind the wall at the side of the hotel. Manual your way to the big fountain and do a massive Grind.

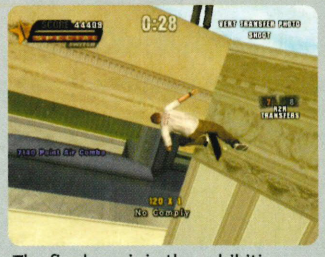
SAN DIEGO TRANSFER CHALLENGE



After the second one, use the ramp to climb to the top of the building and move around to the left.

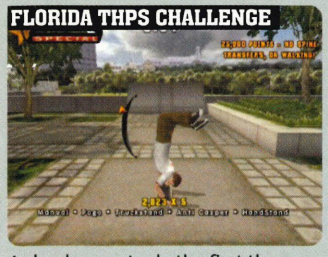
The fifth Transfer is over the Out of Bounds gate at the far end. It looks big, but it's pretty easy to make it.

Transfers six and seven are over the stair sets in front of the comps area – get a shallow take-off angle.



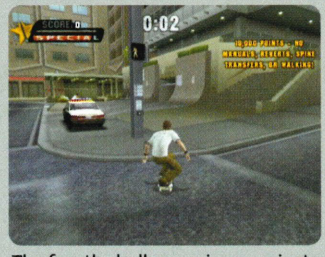
The final one is in the exhibition area. Jump over the photographer's head and onto the higher ramp.

FLORIDA THPS CHALLENGE

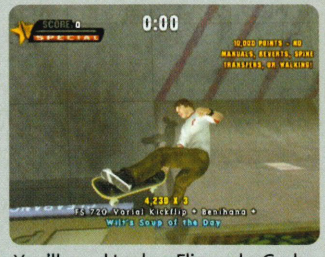


A cheeky way to do the first three tasks in this is to try some Flatland tricks. Start with a Manual and go from there.

Keep an eye on the multiplier as well as the balance bar to make sure your score's getting close to the target. Always Flip out of Manuals.



The fourth challenge gives you just enough time to head for the ramps behind the police car that's in front of the hospital.



You'll need to do a Flip and a Grab to get the points, but the Wilt's Soup of the Day Transfer should add the extra you need to succeed.

Time saver

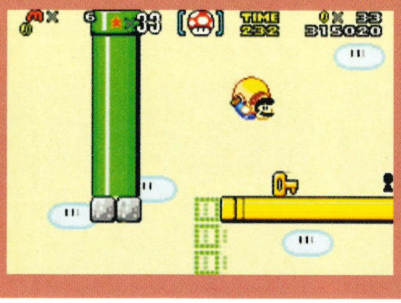
HOW TO... beat the game in 30 minutes

Sneak your way through the awesome *Super Mario World 2* with this time-saving guide...

Okay, this has to count as one of the best short cuts in a game. It takes you from Donut Plains Level 1, all the way to Bowser's Castle in eight levels, rather than the 50 it would normally take.

Donut Plains Level 1

Get Cape Mario and go right to the end gate, but don't finish. Kill the enemies, sprint left and fly up on the right side of the green block outlines. Land on the yellow pipe.

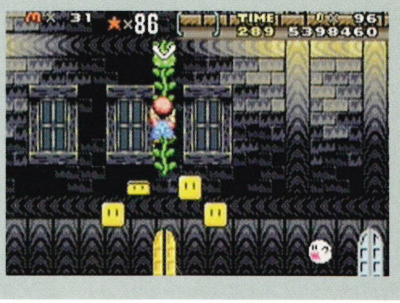


Donut Plains Secret 1

Once you've been through the purple and orange pipes, look out for a POW switch up ahead. Hit it and hurry to the right, then hit the block left of the keyhole.

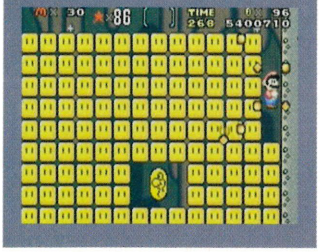
Secret Donut House

In the second area, hit the POW switch – the secret door will appear. Reveal the centre from the middle question block. This leads to Big Boo. Hit him with three purple blocks.



Star Road 1

At the start of the level, go all the way to the right. Now Spin Jump down to the right to find another Key. As before, use it to unlock the nearby door to take you to Star Road 2.

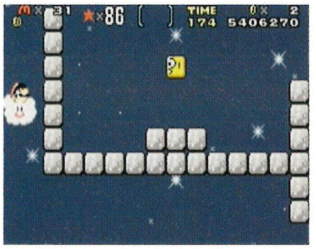


Star Road 2

Swim to the end, but instead of entering the pipe there, swim down to the gap on the bottom right of the screen. Carry on swimming until you reach the Key.

Star Road 3

Take a blue block and lob it at Lakitu. Next, jump onto the cloud and travel upwards. You'll find the key in the question block on the left and the keyhole on the right.

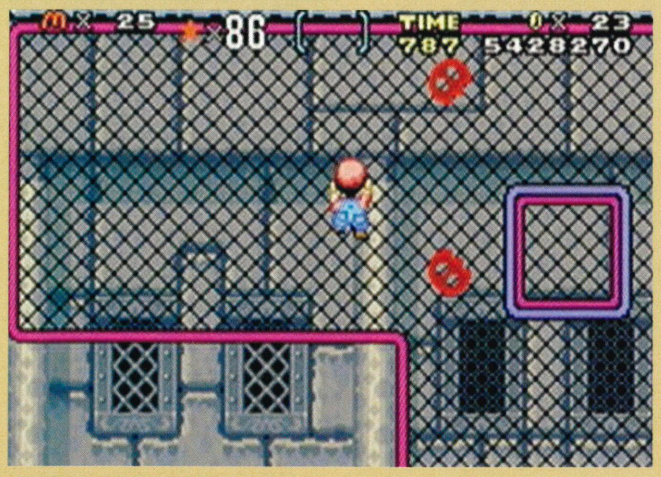


Star Road 4

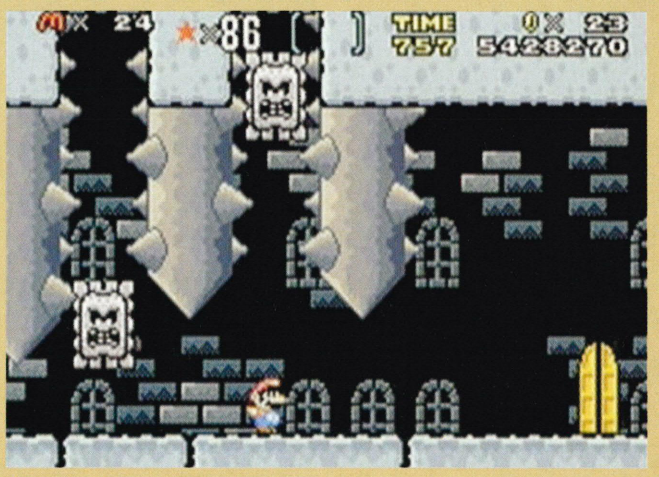
Go to the first green platform after the platform made of grey blocks. With Cape Mario, walk off the right-hand edge of the platform and float left to the Key.

Bowser's Castle

Here you'll find eight rooms, each of which contains a challenge. Luckily, we know our way around this part of the game, so you can go straight to the easy tasks.



CHALLENGE ONE – ROOM TWO
This is the second room in the first corridor and all you have to do is navigate the wire fence and avoid the enemies.



CHALLENGE TWO – ROOM FIVE
This is the first room in the second corridor. All you have do is run all the way to end of the room before the spikes hit you.

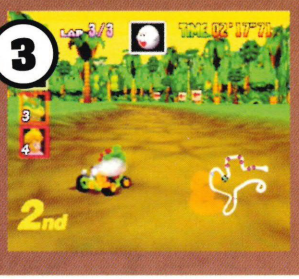
The art of power sliding

If you want to be the best at *Mario Kart 64* and *Super Circuit*, master these power sliding techniques and shave seconds off your lap times.

HOW TO... skid better than Colin Mcrae

Mario Kart 64

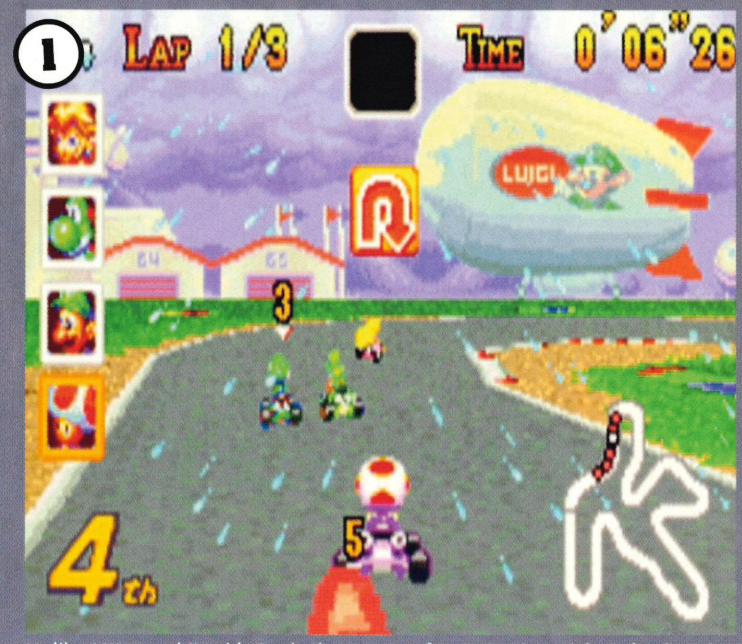
As you approach a bend, begin your power slide early and immediately push the 3D Stick in the opposite direction while still holding down R to lighten your turning circle.



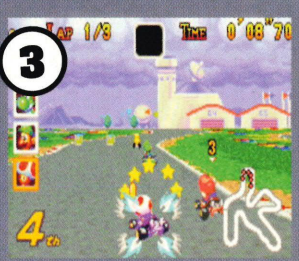
Now you're into the bend, keep R pressed and flick the Stick in the opposite direction to the bend, then back out. The smoke will change colour.

Wait a second, then shift the Stick back into the bend. The smoke will change again. Release R for a boost.

Mario Kart Super Circuit



Unlike *MK64* and *Double Dash*, there are no fancy steering tricks to be done in *Super Circuit*. However, getting a speed boost from a power slide still has special requirements.



First, it only works on long, steep bends and U-turns because you'll need to have been sliding for about a second or more and you must not veer off.

When you exit the bend, straighten up with R still held. Do it right and you'll be off in a burst of smoke.

Nintendo® Official Cheats

Humiliated by a pesky boss? Can't be bothered to play to the end just to unlock a new character? Use these, baby.

STAR WARS REBEL STRIKE

Blast your way through this lot

The first few cheats for *Rebel Strike* have trickled out. No doubt there'll be plenty more to come and when they do, you'll find them all here.

UNLOCK	HOW
Freeplay code	Enter the passcode FREEPLAY
Unlock credits	Enter 'LOOKNOM' at the Passcodes screen
Documentary	Enter 'THEDUDES' at the Passcodes screen
Jedi Starfighter	Earn Silver Medals on all missions and bonus missions
Naboo Starfighter	Complete Tatooine training at all four times of the day
Slave 1	Earn Bronze Medals on all missions
TIE Hunter	Earn Gold Medals on each mission

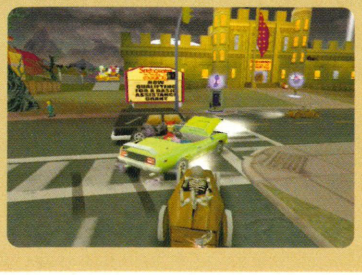
Warning: using these cheats may cause you to turn to the dark side

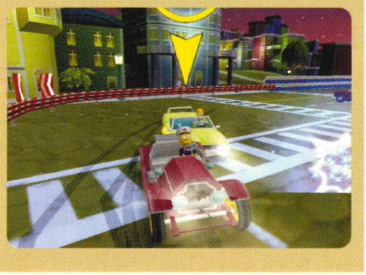
THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

Get yourself a new motor

With these cheats, Homer will be burning around Springfield like a boy racer. These cheats MUST be entered on the Options screen.

UNLOCK	HOW
Faster cars	Hold down L + R and press X, X, X, X
Even faster cars	Hold down L + R then press Y, Y, Y, Y
Itchy & Scratchy cartoon	Collect all the Cards on every level
Red brick car	Hold down L + R then press B, B, Y, X





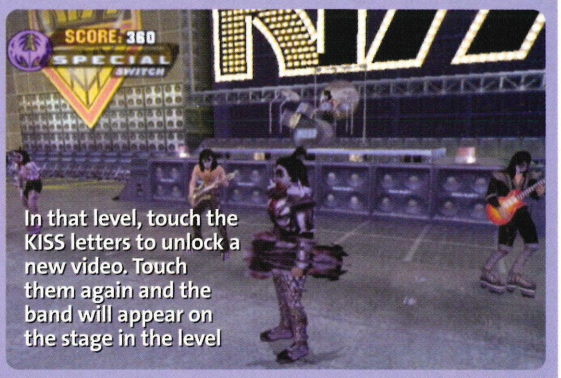
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Unlock a secret level

Are you feeling the pain? Not up to mastering the board? Enter these codes on the Cheats menu.

CHEAT	ENTER
Perfect Balance	LETITSLIDE
Perfect Manual	KEEPITSTEADY
Unlock all videos	DIGIVID

On Normal, complete Story mode and you'll unlock Gene Simmons from KISS and the Hotter Than Hell level



In that level, touch the KISS letters to unlock a new video. Touch them again and the band will appear on the stage in the level

Complete Story mode and you'll unlock Marvel's Iron Man as a skater. Nice

SONIC ADVENTURE DX DIRECTOR'S CUT

Mini-game level-select cheats

If you've managed to grab enough Sonic Emblems to unlock the awesome retro Sonic titles, then these cool level-select codes will come in very handy.

CHEAT	HOW
Stage select in *Sonic 2*	Hold ▼, ◀, A and B on the *Sonic 2* title screen and hit ST when Tales' eyes are closed on his second blink
Stage select in *Sonic Chaos*	On the *Sonic Chaos* title screen, hit these buttons: ▲, ▲, ▲, ▲, ▶, ◀, ▶, ◀, ST
Stage select *Sonic Labyrinths*	Press ▲ twice, ▶ three times, ▼ six times and ◀ nine times on the *Sonic Labyrinth* title screen.
Stage select *Sonic Spinball*	On the *Sonic Spinball* sound test, play the track numbers 0, 2, 1, 5, 6 and 6 in that order

NEW WAYS TO PLAY

..... HOW TO GET THE MOST FUN OUT OF YOUR GAMES .....

HIT 'N' RUN, *MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!*

The settings

2 Players: use Grand Prix mode, so you can only play up to two players. Any more and GP mode will not be an option.
GP mode, 100cc. choose any cc you want, but we found 50cc too easy and 150cc tough enough without an assassin on your back.
Any Cup: it doesn't matter which Cup you choose, but it's most fun when both players are equally familiar with the tracks.

The rules

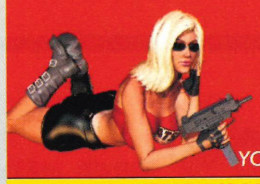
Player One has to try and do as well as he can in the races while Player Two tries their best to make Player One lose, using any means possible – firing weapons or bumping them off course. Write down Player One's score, then swap roles and see if Player Two can get a higher overall score.

The last time we played

Who played: Mike and Tim
What happened: Tim's the boss so he takes control as Player One and chooses the simple Mushroom Cup. With Bowser in his cart, Mike fires off giant shells a plenty, but can't stop Tim from winning the first two races. He takes a beating in the third and final stage though, leaving Mike with a score of 26 to beat. Mike has the power sliding skills, but not even they can get him away from the Red Shells shot by Tim's Koopa and Paratroopa duo. It's 18 points to Mike. Not this time, son.

Get involved!

Do you have any wacky ways of getting more out of a game? Let us know. Tell us your idea in the same way as above, and send it into New Ways to Play at the usual address, with your mug shot, too. C'mon, don't be shy.



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GAMECUBE

A = 01
Ace Golf
Aggressive Inline
American Pro Trucker
Animal Crossing
B = 02
Back to Baghdad
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
Barbarian
Batman: Dark Tomorrow
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu*
Battle for Atlantis
Battle Houshin
Battle, Sonic Adventure 2
Battlecry, Robotech
Beach Bandits Rocket Power
Beach Spikers
Big Air Freestyle
Big Mutha Truckers
Billy Hatcher and Giant Egg
Black and Bruised
Blood Omen 2
BloodRayne
Blue Storm, Wave Race
BMX XXX
Bomberman Generation
Bond 007: Agent Under Fire
Bond 007: Nightfire
Bounty Hunter, Star Wars
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Bulletproof Monk*
Burnout
Burnout 2 Point of Impact
Bust a Move 2
C = 03
Cel Damage
Celebrity Deathmatch
Conflict: Desert Storm
Crash Bandicoot
Crush Hour, WWE
D = 04
Dakar 2
Darkened Skye
Dead to Rights
Def Jam Vendetta
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dinosaur Planet
Doshin the Giant
E = 05
Enter the Matrix
ESPN Int. Winter Sports '02
Eternal Darkness
F = 06
F1 2002
FIFA 2002
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004
Finding Nemo
Fox McCloud in StarFox Adv.
Freedom Fighters
Freekstyle
F-Zero GX
G = 07
Ghost Recon
Gladius*
Godzilla: Destroy all Monst.
H = 08
Harry Potter & Ch.of Secrets
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hot Wheels: Velocity X
Hulk
Hunter: The Reckoning
J = 10
James Bond 007: Nightfire
Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death
L = 12
L.A. Heist, The Italian Job
Leg. of Kain: Blood Omen 2
Leg. of Zelda: Master Quest
Leg. of Zelda: Ocarina of T.
Leg. of Zelda: Wind Waker
Legends of Wrestling
Legends of Wrestling 2
Lord of the Rings: F. of Ring
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Lord of the Rings: T. Towers
Lost Kingdoms
Lost Kingdoms II: Rune
Luigi's Mansion
M = 13
Magical Mirror
Mario Party 4
Mario Sunshine
Matrix, Enter the
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun*
Mega Man Network Tran.
Metroid Prime
Minority Report
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch
MX Superfly
Mystic Heroes
N = 14
NASCAR Thunder 2004
Need for Speed: H.Pursuit 2
Need for Speed: U'grnd.*
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Nightfire
O = 15
007 Nightfire
P = 16
PN 03
Pac-Man World 2
Phantasy Star Online
Prince of Persia: S. of Time*
R = 18
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Red Faction 2
Reign Of Fire
Resident Evil
Resident Evil 2
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Resident Evil Zero
Return of the King*
Rev. of the Flying Dutchman
Robotech: Battlecry
Rocky
Rogue Leader
Rune: Lost Kingdoms
Rune: Lost Kingdoms 2
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Shrek: Extra Large
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Simpsons: Road Rage
Sims
Skies of Arcadia Legends
Smugglers Run 2: Warzone
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
Sonic Adventure DX
Sonic Mega Collection
Soul Calibur 2
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
SpongeBob Sq.Flying Dutch.
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly
SSX 3
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter
Star Wars: Clone Wars
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Star Wars: R. Squadron 3
Star Wars: Rogue Leader
Starfox Adventures
Streets of L.A: True Crime
Super Mario Sunshine
Super Monkey Ball 2
Super Smash Bros Melee
T = 20
Teenage Mut. Ninja Turtles
The Hobbit*
The Hulk
The Return of the King
The Simpsons: Hit & Run
The Sims
Tiger Woods Golf 2003
Tiger Woods Golf 2004
Time Splitters 2
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Tony Hawk's Underground*
Top Gun: Combat Zones
True Crime: Streets of LA
Turok, Evolution
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W = 23
Wolverine's Revenge
Worms Blast
Wreckless: Yakuza Mission
WWE Crush Hour
WWE Wrestlemania X8
WWE Wrestlemania XIX
X = 24
XGRA*
XIII*
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
X-Men: Next Dimension
Z = 26
Zelda: Master Quest
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Zelda: The Wind Waker
0-9 = 27
007 Nightfire
Plus Many More...

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

Advance Wars
Advance Wars 2
Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Rev.
Broken Sword
Dragonball Z: L. of Goku 2
Final Fantasy Tactics
Golden Sun
Golden Sun 2
Leg. of Zelda: Link to Past
Lord of the Rings: T. Towers
Megaman Zero
Metroid Fusion
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Pinball: Ruby & S.
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Pokemon Silver
Rayman 3
Robot Wars: Extr.Destruction
Robotech: Macross Saga
Ruby & Sapphire (P. Pinball)
Ruby Pokemon
Sapphire & Ruby (P. Pinball)
Sapphire Pokemon
Sonic Advance 2
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
Super Mario Advance 2
Super Mario Advance 4
Tales of Tohunga
Teenage Mut. Ninja Turtles
Tekken Advance
The Fellowship of the Ring
The Incredible Hulk
The L. of Zelda: Link to Past
The Land Before Time
The Lion King
The Scorpion King
The Simpsons: Road Rage
The Two Towers
Tiny Toons: Busters Bad Dr.
Tom & Jerry: The Magic Ring
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
Tomb Raider: Prophecy
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Top Gear Rally
Top Gun: Combat Zones
Top Gun: Firestorm Advance
Treasure Planet
Triple X
Turok, Evolution
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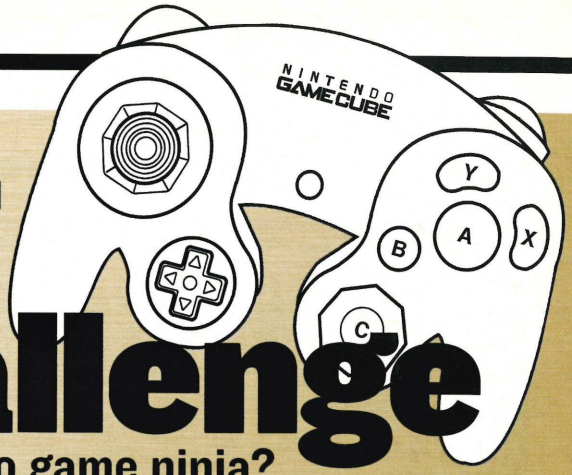
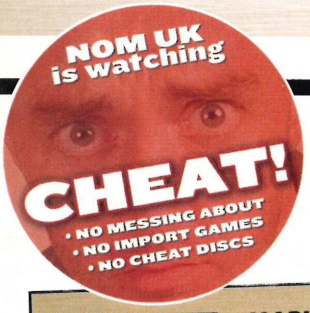
The Great Nintendo® Challenge



Have you got what it takes to be a Nintendo game ninja?



He's back. After a few months squatting in the gaming wilderness and sharpening his claws, Dave Every has returned, leaner, meaner and hopefully cleaner than before. He's certainly put those young pretenders to the sword, seeing off the combined might of the Cubemasters and topping the pile in SIX different challenges this month. If we were allowed, we'd name this part of the magazine, Dave Every Dishes Out The Evil Game-Slaps To Your Face. But we're not.

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!

Name: Dave Every
Score: 1:55:088 (Waluigi Stadium; 3 laps)
What happened? It must be a fun Christmas at the Every household as Dave invites the aged relatives to join him at the televisio-gram for a few relaxing circuits of *Double Dash*. Little do the aged aunts and uncles know, they'll soon be ground under the heel of Dave's fearsome, Captain Falcon-style game-jackboots and running, screaming as Every pursues them around the house, whipping them with a controller cable and screeching "loser!"

Of course, we can't be sure whether that's ever actually happened. But what we can be sure of is the closeness of this month's best-contested challenge. In fact, Every won by just under three tenths of a second, sending last month's top-dog John Zeepvat (1:55:331) and Mark Puddifoot (1:57:528) spinning with a well aimed Red Shell.

It's nice to see such good-natured competition, but when Dave said he'd eat the soul of anyone who beat his score we felt the gentle, cartoon racing spirit of *Mario Kart* had been lost. Also, apologies to Dave for losing the photo he sent us a few months back – we hope we've done you justice.

NEW CHALLENGE!

F-ZERO GX

Name: Jonathan Williams
Score: 2,455km/h
What happened? We didn't get around to setting an *F-Zero GX* challenge last month, but thankfully Jonathan Williams was arrogant enough to submit his score anyway. Jonathan didn't mention whether or not he was wearing a skin-tight blue jumpsuit and shoulder pads when playing, but he did claim that his score was "unbeatable". That ought to be enough to get the rest of you going – come on, he's laughing at all of you!

PIKMIN

Name: Mark Puddifoot
Score: 240
What happened? Those tiny, delicious plant monsters, the Pikmin, may have slipped from the gaming menu of most Nintendoids, but they're alive and kicking here. Mark spent literally minutes practising before he destroyed Dave Every's previous top score of 232. The key, Mark says, is to "get the Pellets to the right coloured Onions". Ah, if only the rest of you had thought of that as well. Think next time... think!

Make sure to get your entries in by December 23rd if you want to be in next month's *NOM UK*

BEAT THIS!

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, Time Trial, Waluigi Stadium, 3 laps: D. Every; 1:55:088

Super Smash Bros. Melee, Home Run Contest, Jack Thompson; 3,332.6m

Burnout, three laps of the Interstate course. Nathan Cass; 6:33.133

Super Monkey Ball, Monkey Target, ten-round match. Arman Faghihi; 13,240

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Campus level, single combo. Sean Robertson; 15,906,033

NEW CHALLENGE!

F-Zero GX, Sapphire Cup, Port Town, Long Pipe, best lap time. Dom; 0:57.891

Super Monkey Ball, score on Advanced level. Roberto Buono; 740,926

Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader, Battle of Hoth. Dave Every; 3:15

Tiger Woods 2004, Scenarios mode, SZ Challenge 1 (targets). Dave Every; 87,900

Star Wars Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike, Raid at Bakura. Adam Raine; 6:09

NEW CHALLENGE!

F-Zero GX, top speed at Aeropolis Multiplex. Jonathan Williams; 2,455km/h

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, Time Trial, Peach Beach, 3 laps. Dave Every; 1:19:830

Pikmin, grow the most Pikmin, Challenge mode, Impact Site. Mark Puddifoot; 240

Wind Waker, mail-sorting. Dave Every, John Zeepvat and Dean Hailstone; 33 letters

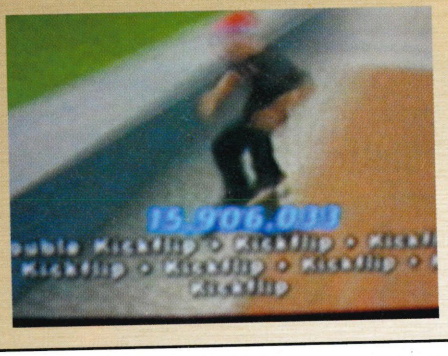
Soul Calibur II, quickest time on Arcade mode, Easy setting. Dave Every; 0'58"86

BURNOUT

Name: Nathan Cass

Score: 6:33:133

Got some advice? Nathan works at a Go-Kart track – probably oiling Peach's wagon and putting Bananas on the track – so it comes as no surprise that he aced this one, using the Muscle car and Manual gears. Just look at his race face – that'd even scare Bowser.

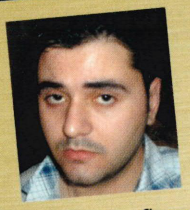


TONY HAWK'S 4

Name: Sean Robertson

Score: 15,905,033

Tell us about it: "I pulled off big grinds and Manuals in spurts to multiply my score and used Steve Caballero – he's my best character." We say Steve Caballero kicks ducks.



SUPER MONKEY BALL

Name: Roberto Buono

Score: 740,926

Tell us all: Roberto has fanned the flames of monkey war this month, rubbing Puddifoot's simian nose in the mud and tweaking his monkey ears: "This score destroys any previous efforts. The gauntlet is with Mr Puddifoot!"

SOUL CALIBUR II

Name: Dave Every

Score: 0'58"86

Any info? Just 'cos we didn't specify a number of rounds you lot thought you were all big and clever. Biggest and cleverest was Dave Every, beating off fellow laughing boys John Zeepvat and Steve Dunlop.

What to do now...

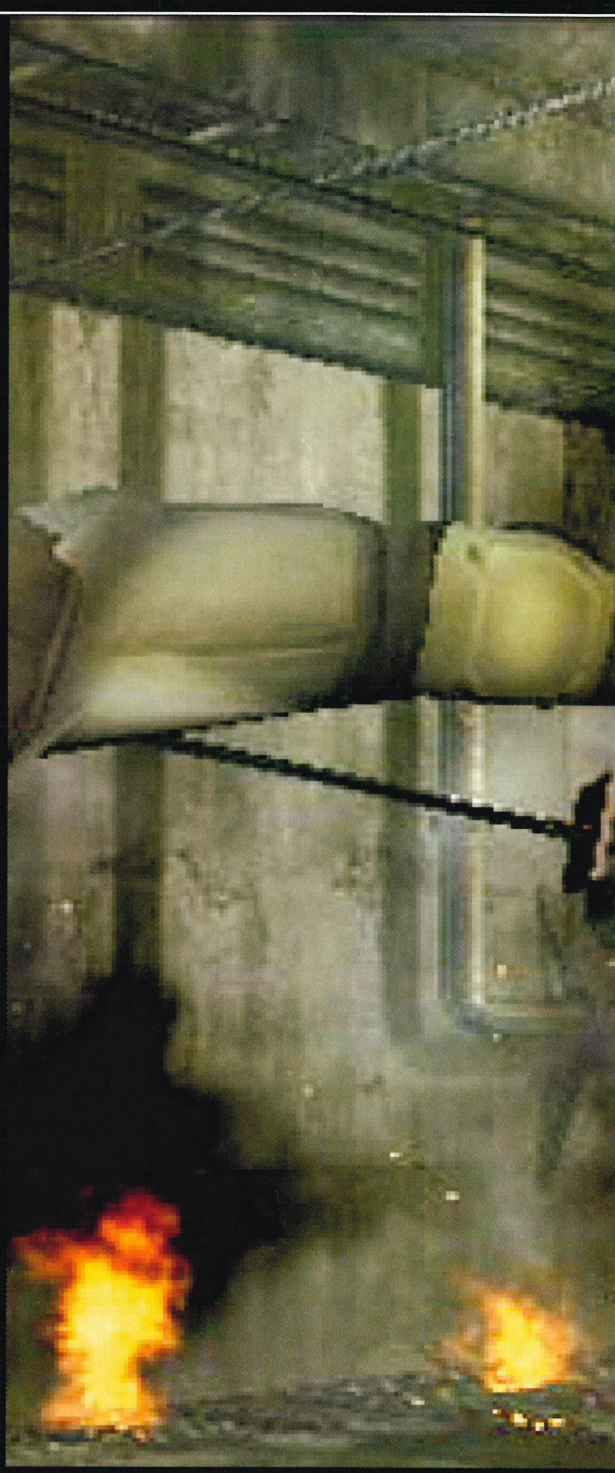
If you've bettered one of the scores on our leader board we want to hear all about it – but you'll need to get some evidence of your score (a photo of your TV is best) and send it along to us if you want to get famous.

But that's not all – we want to find out where you did it, when you did it and how you did it. Make sure it's interesting, because if you've top-scored you'll be featured here, so you'll want to include a good quality photo of yourself as well (if it's a digital pic, please provide a fairly hi-res version). And if you think there's a game that deserves to be in our list, just drop us a line at the usual address.

Send your top scores to The Great Nintendo Challenge, *Nintendo Official Magazine UK*, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5UW or email them to kingsley.singleton@emap.com and he'll reply with a nice email telling you he's got your high score. From there it gets fed into *NOM UK*'s Mother Brain and churned out as the lovely pages you see before you. Well that's what Kingsley hopes, anyway.

We Can't Wait

NEW PICS!

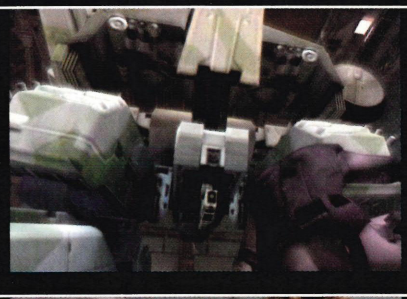


For These...

MORE NEXT MONTH!

MGS: The Twin Snakes

Usually we reserve this space for the game that's going to be rocking your world next month. But rules, like necks, are made to be broken. Especially when we sneak out of Konami with a whole batch of new *Metal Gear* screens. Don't hate us, we're just doing our jobs, man. Here, we can introduce you to a few fresh faces. The lady with the sniper bead trained on Snake's back is Sniper Wolf. The guy in the gun turret with the bird on his shoulder is Vulcan Raven. You've got Meryl being given a hard time by Psycho Mantis and Solid Snake mashing up Liquid Snake. We know it's cinematics, but *Metal Gear*'s that kind of game and we're not giving much away – it's not like someone saying Bruce Willis is actually a ghost in *The Sixth Sense*.

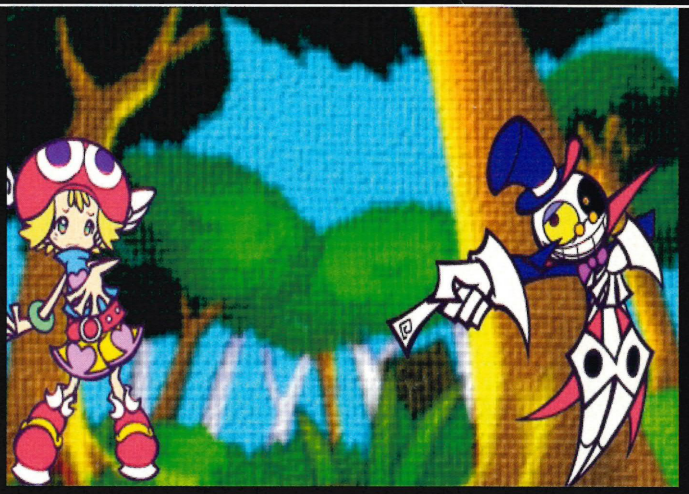


FF: Crystal Chronicles

Next issue, the *Fantasy* will explode onto the pages of *NOM UK*. Little men with improbable hair will be sent spinning through the air and when they hit the ground little numbers will rise from their bodies to indicate damage. It'll be well into 2004 before you get to buy it, but that means you can tear *Mario Kart*'s 150cc Special Cup a new asshole before relaxing with this. Rock it.

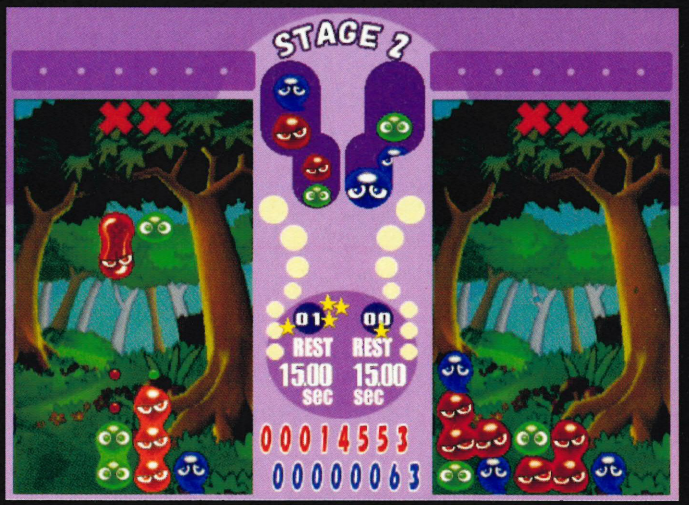
Metroid: Zero Mission (GBA)

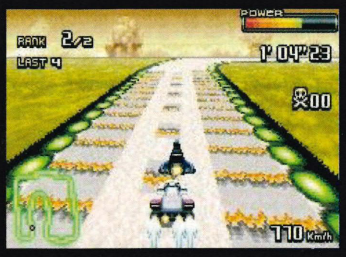
Proof that the world is full of idiots: hardly anyone bought *Metroid Fusion*. If you're part of the problem, ask yourself why you passed up one of the finest adventure games ever? You don't have an answer, do you? Well, just don't miss *Zero Mission*. We'll bet money that this will turn out to be amazing. If you want us to take YOUR money, email us.

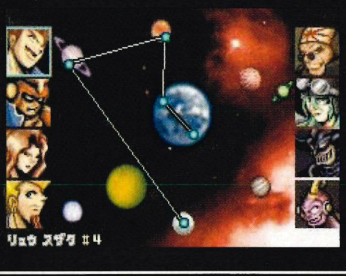


Puyo Pop

When we first saw this, we were all like: 'Cool! GBA needs a decent new puzzler'. When the Sega man told us it was for 'Cube, we laughed. Not because it's funny, we just did. GBA, GC – it's all the same to us. How does it play? Well, little blobs drop into a well and you link colours to make them disappear. Yeah, you're laughing now, but it's addictive as hell.





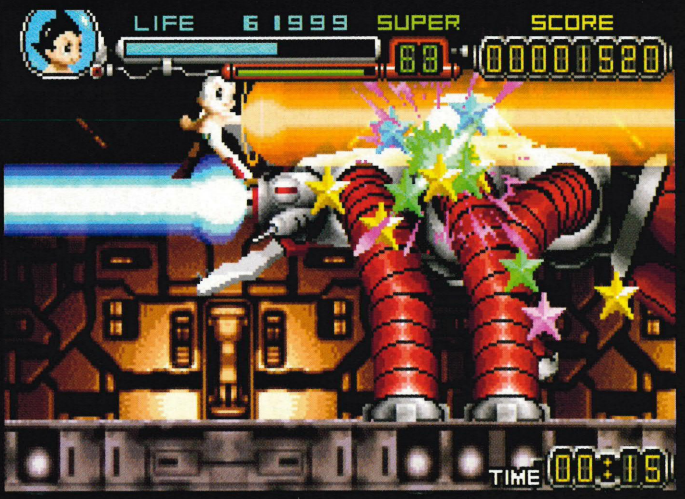


F-Zero: Falcon Legend (GBA)

Captain Falcon may have had a cruel joke played on him at the hero costume shop, but that's not slowing him down any time soon. To celebrate his new cartoon now airing in lucky old Japan, a new game's on the way based on his new-found animated world. It looks very much like there's a more significant story in the new game and the racers drive hollowed-out cows instead of space cars. Part of that last statement was intentionally misleading. Look at these screens though. Can you feel the speed? Oh, yeah, they're static. But you get the idea.

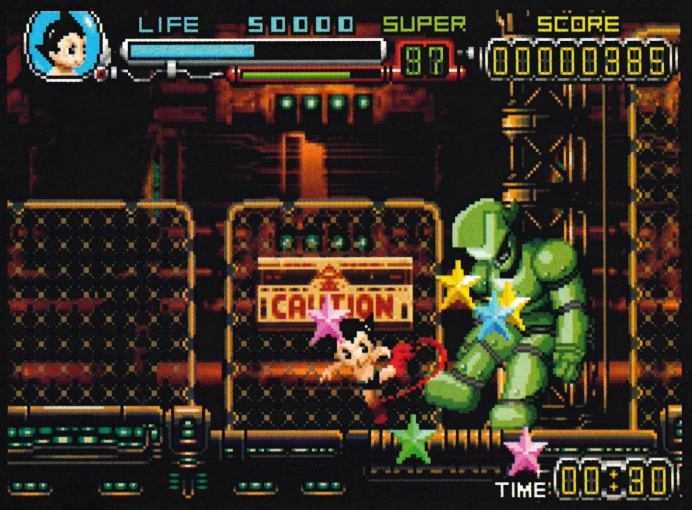
Zelda: Four Swords GC

That *Zelda* disc in the *Mario Kart* GameCube bundle, eh? What a prize! If you've got the Stars to pay for it, that is. Still, there's more *Zelda* on the way with Nintendo's 2D meets 3D spectacular, *Four Swords*.
There's no release date yet, so allow us to speculate while you ogle the pics. When has Nintendo ever released a game that you can only play in multiplayer? It doesn't make commercial sense. Some people stink too much to have friends, so we're expecting a cheeky one-player mode in this as well.



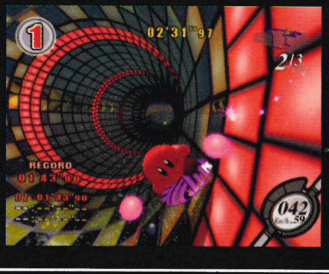
Astro Boy (GBA)

We like this already. First, it's called *Astro Boy* – a name cheekily walking the fine line between cool-as-hell and hilariously lame. Second, the guys behind *Ikaruga* are coding it and they've got a pedigree for 2D platform action games. So, to recap: running, shooting and jumping done awesomely.



Kirby's Air Ride

Kirby, Kirby. Where are you? The pink one's single-button racing game has built up quite a following in Japan and the crazy internet kids have even worked out a way to get it online for pulse-racing multiplayer action. All we need now is for Nintendo to work out a way of getting it into UK shops. News just in: they've cracked it. They're going to use a new invention called 'trucks' and it'll be shaking its pink ass for your coins in a couple of months' time. Thank God for that, eh?
If you don't really know what to expect, it's like a girls' version of *F-Zero GX*. We don't mean that in a bad way – it's still great fun, like.



Metal Slug Advance (GBA)

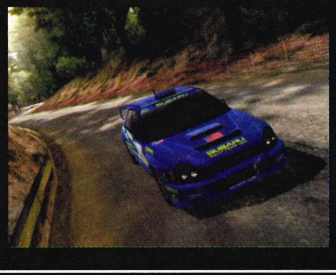
The *Metal Slug* series rocks. Basically, you get dropped into a warzone and have to kill a lot of people. Left to right scrolling, awesome weapons, in you go. The dodging and killing is thrilling enough, but the animation is traditionally hilarious. At first, it's just dying soldiers. Fine. But later on you're looking at zombies, aliens, all sorts. Oh, and you get to drive mad tanks. And the bosses are really massive. And... well, just you wait and see.

Pool Paradise

At some point, you'll realise you need a pool table. At this point a female usually crushes these dreams, be it a mother, spouse or whatever. *Pool Paradise* might be your saviour though. Out in March 2004, it transplants pool tables out of pubs and into exotic locations like those shown.

R-Racing Revolution

Just published in Japan as we went to press, consider this a heads-up for the full *R-Racing* expose next month. Basically it's *Ridge Racer* plus *Gran Turismo*, which on our calculator equals CRIKEY CHARLIE. If you like power slides, we'll meet you back here next issue. Bring a helmet, guy.



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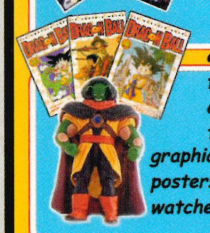

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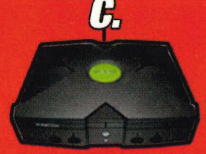

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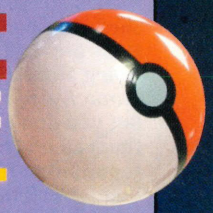

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Your Mail

Once the exclusive preserve of movie stars and the better looking members of manufactured pop groups, the KFC Variety Bucket is here to be won and eaten by you just for sending in a good letter. Chicken – it's what top gamers eat.

Be better

I'm a big fan of *Resident Evil* games although I feel that *Resident Evil* is far too hard. It's not as if I can't play them, because I love *Resident Evil Zero* and it is by far the best game for GameCube so far. Back to the point: sometimes it takes about nine handgun bullets and two shotgun shells to kill one zombie. And there are hardly any clips laying around the mansion!
Aaron Tweed, Portglenone
But you don't have to kill them all do you? You're supposed to run past a lot of them. You'll never have enough bullets to kill 'em all.

Easily pleased

I've just got a chain of 36 consecutive Burnouts on *Burnout 2* and you really wouldn't believe how happy that's made me. This is because I'm very bad at games and *Burnout 2* is one of the few I'm any good at. No doubt a lot of people have got a much better score than that, but I don't care! I did it on Big Surf Shores with the Supercar. It's amazing that I didn't crash into a wall – my hands were sweating that much. I had to stop playing because the adrenaline rush was too big!
Kate Griffiths. Via e-mail
If you're happy with it, that's all that matters. Thirty-six is pretty good going though.

RUNNER-UP

Steady your ship, sir

I wouldn't call myself an astronomer, but sail at night to a nice, calm spot in the Great Sea and equip your Telescope. Somewhere you will find famous star constellations like 'The Plough' and 'Orion'. Was there a planet known to such a person? Does this mean that there was such a place as Hyrule, Outset, Windfall and Dragon Roost islands? Was there an evil king like Ganondorf, a hero of time called Link and a Princess known as Zelda? Are there races known as Gerudos, Hylians and Koroks? Or is it just a coincidence? In one of your previous issues there was a picture of a Triforce in Japan. Did Shigeru Miyamoto make this up or not? Please answer my question!
Joshua Bliszko
How about Hyrule and everything else in the games is made up and the constellations in the night sky are simply 'borrowed' from the real world. We like your idea better, but you do need to think about these things.

The Things You Send I

Lurking in the drawer of one Dean Pesani was this strange little device from the Big N. Shaped like a Game Boy Pocket, there's a viewing hole on the back. When you look through you can see images from *Mario Kart 64*. Push the button on the bottom and the pictures rotate. And it's in Japanese! Double cool. Thanks, Dean.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

RUNNER-UP

The Things You Send II

We asked for anything and we expected many weird and wonderful items from the world of Nintendo. Frankly, we did not expect to be sent underwear. But that's what we got. A crusty old pair of Nintendo socks with images of Mario, Luigi and Toad on fetching green, blue and red stripes. Thanks to Muirean Dee from Dundrum for this... unusual item.

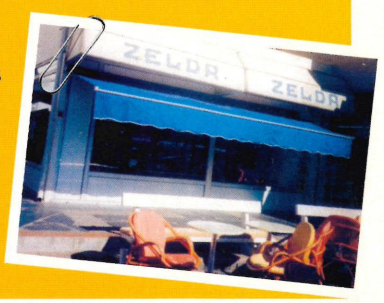
Spotted!

RUNNER-UP

Hugely unpopular with Nintendo gamers, but obviously a firm favourite with town planners, the pink ball of love rolls up again this month to lend his name to another street, this time in sun-drenched Woking. Good work Max Bittleston of Surrey.

RUNNER-UP

On my trip to the south of France I found this shop on the sea front. As you can see it's called Zelda. It might be a coincidence, but how many other people do you know called Zelda? None! The shop even sold a crappy sword like the one Link starts off with!
Sid Goddard, Wistaston
Sabrina the Teenage Witch has an Aunt Zelda. And we reckon you're fibbing about the sword. It's a cool shop though. Do you think they accept Rupees?



How to get in touch
> Write to: Your Mail, *Nintendo Official Magazine UK*, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambs PE2 5UW
> email: nintendoletters@emap.com
> SMS: Send 'Txt', add a space and your message. Send to 84070

If only we knew
I dusted off my old Super NES and started playing *Super Mario World*. I noticed at the beginning of the game it says: "Princess Toadstool has gone missing again." But on *Super Smash Bros. Melee* she is called Princess Peach. Why did Nintendo change the name of Bowser's favourite Princess?
Kenneth Sheraton, Cleveland
Maybe she just fancied a change, or maybe she was in some elaborate witness-relocation programme.

Hmm...
Last issue you stated that the GameCube had dropped in price to £79.99. You described it as 'the biggest bargain since, well, ever.' This is untrue, because GameCube can be bought in Europe for about £60. This 'bargain' is in fact just another example of rip off Britain.
Peter Curtis, Tonbridge
No it's not. Damn simpletons.

It happens all the time
Have any of you at the *NOM UK* office ever waited for a game to come out for months and when it finally does you find it's rubbish?
Craig Anderson, via e-mail
We wish we had a pound for every such occasion. We could retire to Delfino Island.

Slim and none
In issue 134 of *NOM UK* you put "the Cast of *Super Mario World*" in and one of the Koopas is called Roy Koopa. This made me think that Coronation Street's Roy Cropper has copied the name of this. Do you guys think this too, or is it just me?
Billy Beswick, via e-mail
Frankly, Billy, the odds are fairly heavily stacked against that being true.

Hearts and minds
When I first got GameCube I knew I was right, but a year on it seems totally different. Where are all the killer titles? Sure we have *MK:DD*, but PS2 has *Manhunt* and *GTA*. Unless Nintendo stops developers leaving and gets some belting third-party games, N5 could be their last console.
Daniel Potter, Bristol
We want to hold your hand and tell you it'll be alright, Daniel, we really do. The Big N's class will show in the end.

TEXT THE EDITOR

You can let us know how you feel about the world of Nintendo on a text! Tap in 'Txt', leave a space, add your message and send it to 84070. You must get permission from the bill payer before texting us as each text costs 25p to send. Every text sent to us can be viewed at www.clubnom.com and here's just a small selection:

■ I'LL DIE before i see a sequel 2 CARMAGEDDON.

■ Last sunday the time went back one hour, but Pokémon ruby didn't. What do i do!?

■ shame on you ninty For delaying Mario 128 again!

■ is there ever going to be a pokémon adventure on gamecube?

■ i reckon metroid prime is the best game ever. anyone who doesn't get it should be shot!

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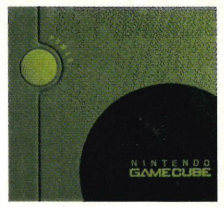

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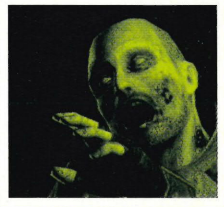

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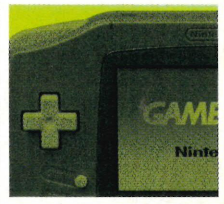

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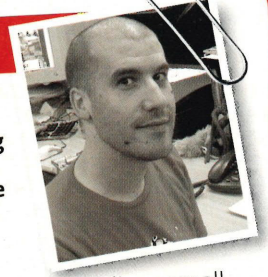
#1 Super Mario 64



Veteran games journalist, Paul Davies started his career on *Mean Machines* in 1992. In 1993, that mag spawned *Nintendo Magazine System* (forerunner of *NOM UK*) and Paul was Deputy Editor by 1994. Since then, he has edited websites, *CVG* magazine and worked in games development.

"Playing with *Super Mario 64* was, for the first time, like controlling a puppet on your TV in a huge magical world. Other games developers were still struggling to get their 2D characters to behave in an entertaining way, but here was Mario in 3D performing stunts that looked wicked and had cool uses, but were all very easy to perform. You felt like you were in the game with Mario when you were sliding down a helter-skelter, or running up the side of a mountain avoiding the tumbling boulders.

You got a sense of discovery all the way through some of the worlds – the flying ships, that underground lake, the pyramid – it just took your breath away. It was also really cool how the new special effects in the game were linked with Mario's in-game abilities – becoming transparent or metallic. And, of course, to top it all off *Super Mario 64* had THAT battle with Bowser at the end – which must rank in the top three of anyone's all-time, most-memorable gaming moments."

Next Month

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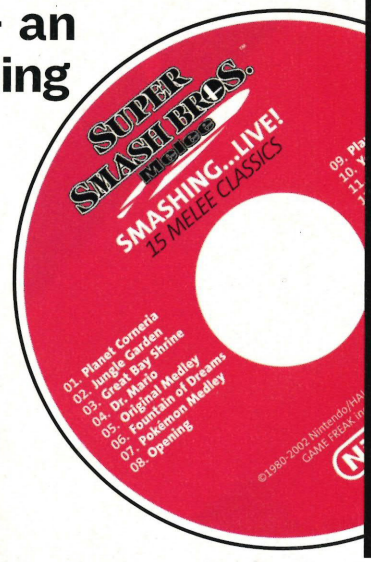

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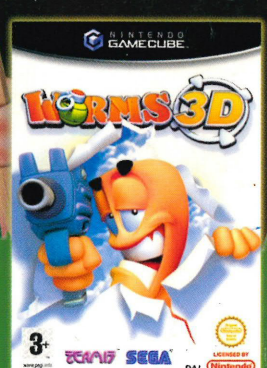

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