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PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

ISSUE 075 • AUGUST 2006 • £5.99 WITH DVD
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CALL OF DUTY 3

Has the PS3 shooter war already been won?

PLUS

> HAZE > RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN > RESERVOIR DOGS > FINAL FANTASY XIII
> LEGO STAR WARS II > JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES > WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007
> DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2 > AND... WE MEET THE *REAL* MERCENARIES

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PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

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*To celebrate our *Call Of Duty 3* feature we asked everyone "What's your weapon of choice?"

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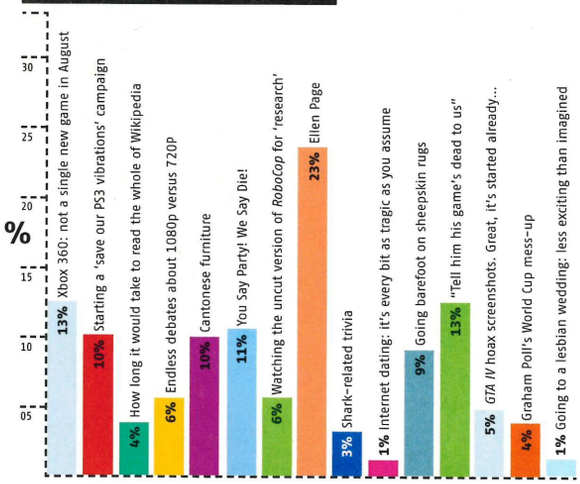
MORAL MINEFIELD

One of the first things I wrote after joining *OPS2* (when I was a considerably angrier young man) was an opinion piece debating the morality of WW2 games. I'll spare you the details, but the gist was that if you went back in time to June 1944, and told a terrified soldier with his face pressed into the sand of Omaha beach that in two generations' time people would be recreating his experience for kicks... well, he'd probably be *slightly* annoyed. I also took issue with the fact that most shooters treated German soldiers as no better than zombies or aliens – just walking targets. The editor at the time decided not to run the piece, but the idea stuck with me. About a year later I was interviewing *Medal Of Honor*'s producer and put the same line of questioning to him. His inevitable line of defence was that movies and books use real life war as rich source material, so why shouldn't games? (Although you don't get to pull the trigger yourself in a movie.) We ended up agreeing that the question would only really become relevant in the next round of hardware, when near-photorealistic graphics would make the morality of shooters much more thorny. Which brings us to now, and our *Call Of Duty 3* cover. Visually, it's an astonishing game – but what's most interesting, as Leon Hurley points out in his excellent feature (p54), is how the increased graphical fidelity changes the way you feel about your own actions. Watching a German soldier's face shift from confidence to terror as he realises what you're about to do is particularly chilling. Remember Sony's talk about 'fourth dimensional gaming' on PS3? Perhaps, on next-gen, it will be all about the moral dimension.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT



TIM CLARK, editor

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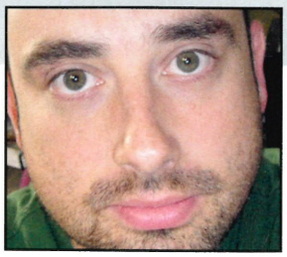


Paul 'Der Fitzenstein' Fitzpatrick

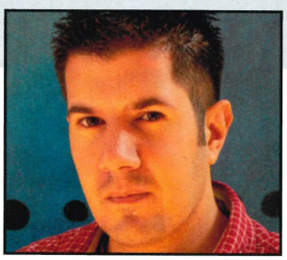
Production

Three things Fitzy brings to the *OPS2* office each month...
1) All-pervading sense of calm
2) Enormous bag of semi-colons
3) Foul smelling fish-based produce
4) Love

Simon Middleweek

Art Editor, PS3 feature (p72)

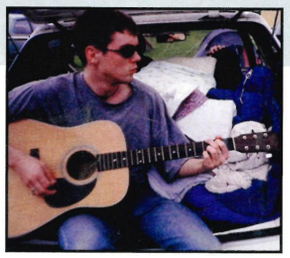
"I'm not staying past eight tonight," announced Simon. When pressed as to exactly why, he said "I just don't want to." A quick blast from the Taser and he was back at his desk, happily cutting around the hair of *Final Fantasy* characters in Photoshop.



Philip Sen

Writer, 'Guns For Hire' feature (p126)

Reasoning that we couldn't afford to lose *another* staff writer this year, we asked Phil – who's previously worked on military mags – to get in contact with some actual mercenaries. He said fine, provided we could pay him in uncut diamonds. Will Euros be okay?



Leon Hurley

Writer, Call Of Duty feature (p54)

Leo had a bit of a sulk this month after being told he had to go to the Americas on his own. "You're all going to have a night out in Bristol and meet girls without me, aren't you." No Leon, we'd never do that. Well, 'never' is probably the wrong word...

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OPS2 SHOOTER SPECIAL!

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Call Of Duty 3

BLOODY *AND* BEAUTIFUL. FIRST SCREENS AND INFO ON THE ESSENTIAL PS3 LAUNCH TITLE

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This month: *NFS Carbon, Guitar Hero II, Hot PXL, Resistance: Fall Of Man* plus tons of other PS2, PSP and PS3 footage...

Password: 33doobidoo73

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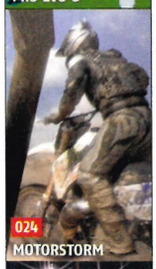

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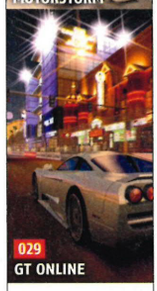

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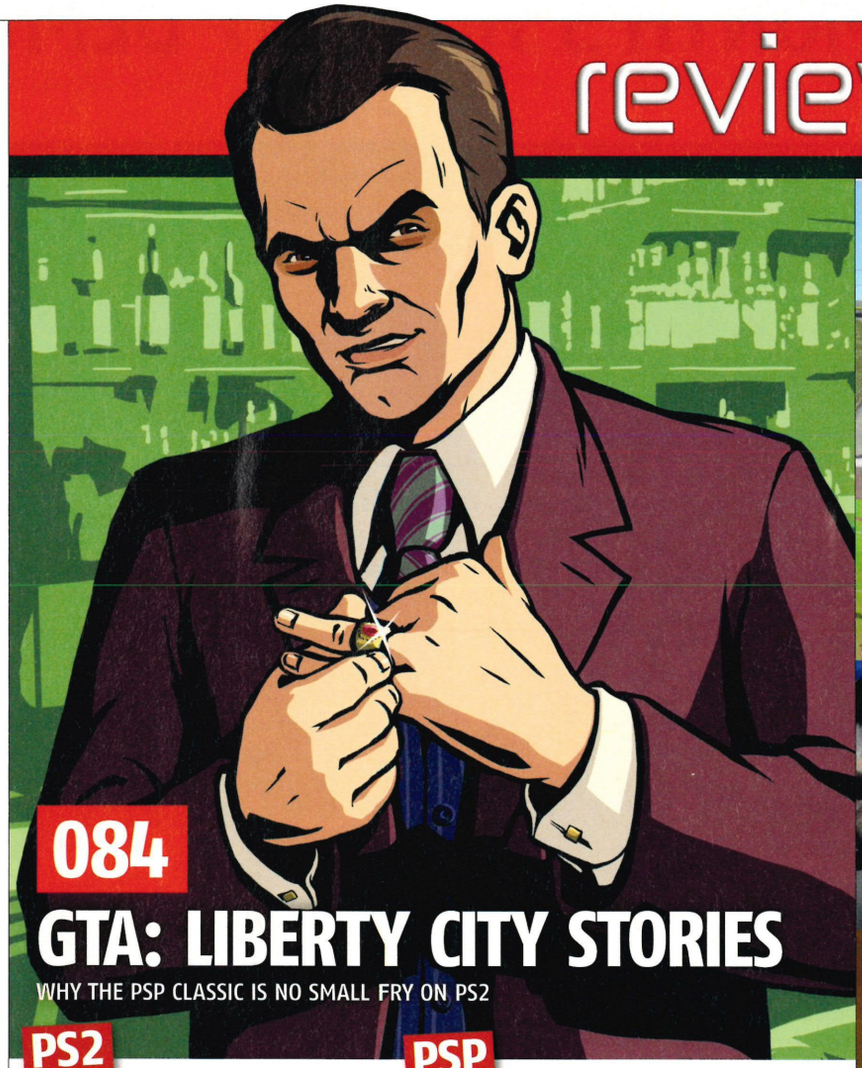

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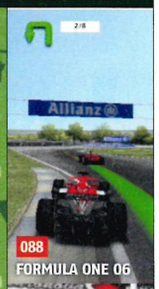

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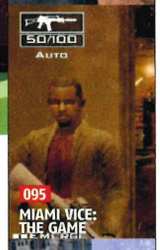

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HELPING YOU GET THE MOST FROM YOUR GAMES

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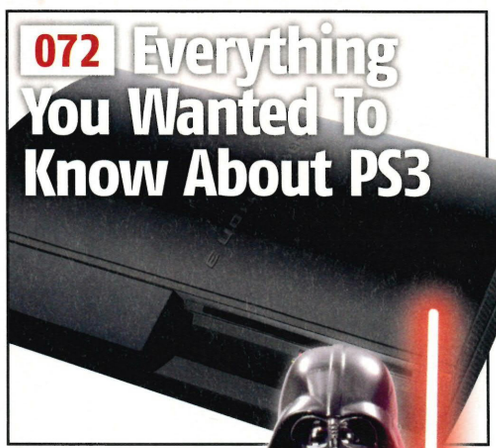

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PLAY GAMES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST DEMOS!

These days, it's difficult for any game to be truly original. So I'm hugely proud that this month we've been able to snag the world exclusive playable demo of *B-Boy*. Dance games aren't a new thing, but this particular one is certainly different to anything we've ever seen before. Beat-'em-up meets street ballet, it's had the hip-hop contingent of *OPS2* toprocking round the office ever since we got the demo in. But don't take my word for it, unroll some lino and throw down some moves.

George

George Walter,
Disc editor

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT WON'T MY DISC WORK?
To be honest, we're not sure. But seriously, if your DVD appears not to be loading properly, first try resetting the console and loading the disc again. If that fails, we'll gladly replace it for you. Simply mail the faulty disc (no need to send the box) to *OPS2* Magazine, Disc Returns, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. If you have any further queries, email us at ps2disc@futurenet.co.uk.

01 B-BOY

What you get: The first ever playable demo of Sony's new breakdancing game, a full two months before its release. You play as fleet-footed wideboy DSub against a cocky opponent known as Physicx. The four face buttons are used to switch between move types, so break out the combos and see what killer moves you can come up with.

02 DRAGON QUEST: THE JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING

What you get: One of the biggest demos ever featured on an *OPS2* demo disc: a massive two hours of play in this gargantuan, brilliant RPG adventure that scored 9/10 in our review. This trial version is split across two modes – story or battle. See you in 120...

DISC CHALLENGE

Win a copy of *B-Boy*!

CHALLENGE DETAILS

Think you've got the whole breakdancing thing down to a fine art? Then you deserve some reward. The first five readers who gain all five gold medals on this month's *B-Boy* demo and send us a photo as proof will each win a copy of the game. The medals you've gained are shown on-screen at the very end of the throwdown. If you're awarded gold in each of the five disciplines then take a snapshot of the screen and text it to us. The first five we receive will win the sender a copy of *B-Boy* for PS2 once it's released in September.

Attach your MMS picture then text **CHALLENGEDISC** (then a space) followed by your name and where you live to **07738 647 177**

Only the first five entries that *OPS2* judges to have earned all five gold medals on this month's *B-Boy* demo will each win a copy of the game for PS2. Texts will be charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 13 July to 09 August inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.*

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NOW!

And there's more...

THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE EXTRA DVD CONTENT

04 HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

What you get: See first-hand why we gave this 9/10 and proclaimed it the finest *Hitman* yet, by playing through the opening level: Death Of A Showman.

03 TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

What you get: The first level of Lara's latest adventure. Explore lush Bolivian mountains and discover our favourite grave-robber's latest moves.

Videos

Platinum Promo

Got a spare 20 nicker burning a hole in your pocket? Then here's a look at some of the best games available as part of the Platinum range. Just remember to put six quid aside for next month's *OPS2* before you going splashing your cash.

02 SINGSTAR ROCKS!

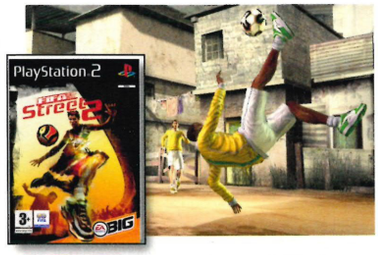
What you get: Four tracks on which to demonstrate your ear-turning karaoke skills. Choose from hits by Blur, The Killers, Gwen Stefani, or the Rolling Stones.

05 OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

What you get: A relatively leisurely cruise through the early sun-drenched stages of this cannily updated, addictive arcade racer.

07 RATCHET: GLADIATOR

What you get: Clank's gone, but the frantic arena-based split-screen action here ensures you won't be mourning for long. 1-4 players.



08 MICRO MACHINES V4

What you get: Three courses' worth of miniature-motored madness to dominate: Chicken Coop, Rooftop and Kitchen. Tear them up on your tod against the computer or get one of your mates involved.

09 FIFA STREET 2

What you get: Play as mighty England against artful, showboating Brazil on EA's more 'urban' football game. Our pre-match advice to you: remember that those Samba lads don't like it up 'em. Now go and secure victory for our boys.

10 SONIC RIDERS

What you get: Choose between eight characters from the blue wonder-hog's extended family and take part in a breakneck hoverboard race across Metal City. Oh, and don't forget to grab every last one of those rings!

11 JAK 3

What you get: Three separate challenges from the final episode in the *Jak* trilogy. Try some arse-rattling vehicular combat in the desert, explore peril-stuffed mines, or take on a tricky, against-the-clock shooting mission.

postal

THIS MONTH: SHREDDING *OPS2*, TRACY BEAKER AND WHEN LOVE TURNS BAD

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

WIN THIS!
This month, any letters published here will receive a lovely copy of *Urban Chaos: Riot Response* courtesy of Gamestation.co.uk. The Star Letter also wins *Rogue Trooper*, *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers* and *Tomb Raider: Legend*. Only main Postal letters receive games. Letters will be edited for length and clarity.
gamestation

star letter

PRESS ⊗ TO MISSREAD MAP

I was recently visited by a friend who was eager to try *Conflict: Desert Storm*'s two-player co-op mode. The experience was less than adrenaline pumping as the game began with my character trapped in a cell awaiting rescue. My mate was not the most skilled of players so I spent quite some time, pacing my cell, as my friend died with alarming regularity. It did get me thinking though – how could you extend this sort of passive experience to other games? For example, imagine *Gran Turismo: Girlfriend Edition*, where, on the second player's pad, ◎ changes the CD without asking, Ⓐ lowers the sun visor to check make-up, ▣ fiddles annoyingly with the heater controls and ⊗ opens and searches the glove box for clues of infidelity. Any other ideas for interesting but totally passive two-player games?
Mudrick, Hastings

Quick, while the women are busy forming a lynch mob. (Burning torches, pitchforks, Prada bags.) Yes, we've wanted developers to explore new ways to play co-op for a while – and Army Of Two *from EA looks like doing just that. GT: Girlfriend edition, though? For once, the lack of damage would be a blessing.*

MEDDLING KIDS

I was rather distressed when I came home from school one day and found my PS2 was covered in Tracy Beaker stickers. I soon found out that it was the work of my little sister. As a punishment I banned her from playing the *Ape Escape* demo on your disc. That will teach her.
Richard Higgs, Wilts

You 'found out' it was your little sister? How many potential suspects were there? Or is everyone else in your family a massive Beaker fan? Anyway, think yourself lucky. One of our sisters (deliberately) wiped our memory card, including an 80% complete San Andreas *save. No jury would've convicted.*

"If *Pro Evo*'s not in the tray, there'll be *real* trouble"

CUT 'N' PASTE

THE EDITED HIGHLIGHTS OF SOME VERY STRANGE THOUGHTS INDEED

David Lewis, Sussex
If you put a shoe on your hand and then hit someone with it, are you kicking them? A few days a go I did it and on my detention form it said I kicked another pupil. It's Not fair.

Rashaad, Brockley
I would like to apologise for my inability to write a letter. I can't remember how to do it and probably never will.

Thomas Costello, email
Of course I'm lying. Am I bothered?

Ravi Dosanjh, Midlands
If you put Britney Spears on while playing a shoot-'em-up it does make you play better, but it also makes you angry.

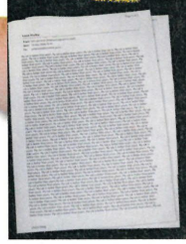
Adam Parton, email
I love you all, yes, even the men, but in a manly way, obviously.

DISTRESSING DELIVERY

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

1. The amount of Milky Joes we received in Games For Tat

2. Crudely Photoshopped *Tomb Raider* 'jokes'



An entire page of A4 covered with the phrase "My cat is better than yours". Look at it too long and your eyes break.

TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY

I was going through your magazine one day when I found a letter from my ex, talking about me stealing 'his' PSP. But this is what really happened... My ex *did* get me into games, that much is true. When it came to getting the PSP, I put the deposit down and we were supposed to go halves on it. But it turns out that on that fateful day he forgot his wallet. So I decided to buy it and let him pay his share off in instalments. On the drive home I began playing with my PSP. I played it at home as well – in fact I played it everywhere I could. My ex eventually got annoyed, threw a stinking tantrum and said to hand over the PSP or get out of the flat. I chose to leave.
Lucinda, Leytonstone

Wow. You totally sound like our kind of girl. Strong-willed, into games, financially independent and almost certainly out of our league :(

BUSTED

After reading your article about busking with *Guitar Hero* I was inspired. I dared my friend to do it but he would only try it if I went with him so we slyly set up outside Primark and borrowed one of their

plugs. It went well to start with. The crowd loved us and we had a big group of chavs watching, although I think they were only there to try and steal my PS2. It was all going well until two policemen came over. They gave us a verbal warning, confiscated our guitar and made us give the £5.86 we made to the manager of the shop because we took the electricity without asking.
Sam Mason, Hants

Well the police are cracking down on electricity crimes these days. But what were you doing outside Primark? You should have been outside Marks & Sparks, that's where the real money is.

GOING TO PIECES

I was in my music lesson the other day and got really bored, so I got out my copy of your magazine and started to read it. The lesson just went on and on. Finally the class was over, except I was asked to stay behind. I thought, 'Okay, the teacher's going to yell at me a bit' but I didn't expect it would be anything major. But to my surprise she took my copy of *OPS2*, walked over to the paper shredder and destroyed it piece by piece!
Conor Phillips, Brighton

School is a place of learning Conor, and your teacher was only trying to teach you a very valuable lesson: if you're going to read a gaming periodical in class, keep it under the desk and out of sight.

GOLDFISH OF WAR

In issue #73 there was a letter from somebody who had called their dog Katamari. Well I have a goldfish called Kratos. I called him this because I got it at the same time as I got the amazing *God Of War*. And because he's white (possibly because he's covered in the ashes of a deceased haddock that he once loved). I have yet to see him spinning any Blades Of Chaos – I suspect he does that when everyone's asleep.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Q I bet you don't know who Nightcrawler's mum is...
Felix, Devon
A *Mystique*

Q How do you defeat The Sorrow in *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*?
Derek Gray, Aberchirder
A *Lie down to drown Snake*

Q Does games for tat work?
Jonathan McEvoy, London
A *Oh yes*

Q What's your favourite PS3 game so far?
Luke Ritter, Stevenage
A *Assassin's Creed*

READER FACE OFF

THINK OF IT LIKE A FIGHT BUT WITH INK SPILT INSTEAD OF BLOOD
THIS MONTH: OUR BACK PAGE, ENDGAME. DO YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW?

TELL ME MORE
I've got some suggestions for your Endgame thing. *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* for one, or how about *From Russia With Love*? As much as I love games I only really play them for as long as it's fun and after that I move on to something else. I hardly ever finish anything. But I do like to know how they end. And thanks to you I've seen what happened in *Killer 7* and *Fahrenheit*. Both games I enjoyed but couldn't really be arsed to play all the way through. Oh, and could you do *GTA: San Andreas* as well – I never even came close to completing that but the story was ace.
Michael, email

VS

SHUT UP
Well thanks a bunch. First it was *The Matrix: Path Of Neo*, *Killer 7* and now it's *Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure*. What am I talking about? Your f-ing back page where you show game endings. I work as a security guard which means long shifts so I don't get to play games as often as I like. Because of this it takes me ages to finish them. But in the case of these three, there's no point now – you've already blown them for me.
Warren, Surrey

HERE'S A THOUGHT, WARREN: WHY NOT SKIP ENDGAME ENTIRELY. IT'S ON THE LAST PAGE. EVERY. SINGLE MONTH. MICHAEL WINS.

TXT THE EDITOR

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

TXT 87103
or send your picture messages to 07738 647 177
Be sure to text 'TXTTIM', then a space, then your message. Thanks

WHY IS SO MUCH TIME AND SPACE TAKEN UP WITH CUT-SCENES IN GAMES? NOT NEEDED. ANDY

TOMB RAIDER LEGEND *IS EASY*. MY 11 YEAR OLD SIS COMPLETED IT. RICHIE

FINAL FANTASY IS CRAP. IT'S BLOODY RUBBISH THAT ALL RPGS HAVE TO BE COMPARED TO SUCH AN OUT-DATED TITLE. THAT IS ALL. JAMIE R

HEY IF U WANT A BLACKBURN ROVERS SHIRT WITH DA SPONSOR RIPPED OFF THEN I'LL GIVE IT 2 U AND THROW A COPY OF RUGBY 06 IN 2. CHEERS. WRIGHTY

WHY IS *OUTRUN* AN 8/10? IS THAT THE AGE RATING? REALLY POOR. ANON

LEON DO YOU FANCY PLAYING A TRACK ON YOUR PLASTIC AXE TOMORROW AT OUR GIG IN BATH? G

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

score bores

Are you disrespecting us?

You gave *GUN* a 9/10 and said it was "mighty fine if a little short". I completed in a couple of game-playing sessions. It deserves a score closer to 6/10.
Felix Parrack, London

Why on Earth did you only give *PoPoLoCrois* 5/10? Have you gone mad? And you call yourself RPG fans – it's easily deserving of an 8/10 minimum.
Danny Butler, email

I was saddened and slightly enraged to see your 6/10 rating for *The Godfather*. It's such a great *GTA*-style game because you can take over businesses, warehouses, and it lets you rob banks. It should be 8/10.
Shami Sansi, Walthamstow

How could you only give *Rogue Trooper* 7/10. It's definitely worth an 8/10 at least and it doesn't matter if you're a *2000AD* fan or not. It's still a brilliant sci-fi shooter.
Neil, Barnsley

I might get a red goldfish called Ares though, that would be interesting. **Jack Grocott,** Staffordshire

Okay, enough of the pets with game names. We want to see some children with PS2-related monickers. And nothing easy like Heather from Silent Hill 3 *or CJ from* San Andreas. *We want to see names like Zasalamel from* Soul Calibur III *or MeeMee from* Super Monkey Ball. *Pictures of the sprog and photocopied birth certificates to the usual address.*

WORD TO YOUR MOTHER

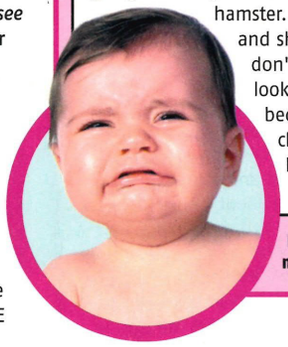
You seem to hold some deep-seated prejudice against hip-hop fans. Do you believe we are all Special Brew-drinking, Burberry-wearing, football match-fighting morons? This is not the case. You even go so far as calling WWE star John Cena a chav for being white and wanting to rap. I have a particular grievance with this as I too am white and yet make intelligent hip-hop music. Although I do agree that Cena is not a good representative of the culture. Yet you would believe that I am the type of idiot to go out and by *50 Cent: Bulletproof* and all the other hip-hop games. This is not the case as I am an avid gamer who enjoys intelligent adventures like *Dragon Quest* and *Resident Evil 4*. Other than this minor disagreement I enjoy your magazine, just stop the hip-hop prejudice. Peace. **Adam Kirkland,** email

We never said all hip-hop fans are chavs. In fact, we listen to it near-constantly, thanks to our deputy art ed, 'Gangsta' Al. He breathes UK hip-hop, and when we're on deadline we make him do his 'angry dancing' to boost the team's flagging morale. Fo' real yo.

FAT CRYING BABY

INFANT MAKES IDLE THREATS

You guys all suck for putting me in the Name And Shame section. You just lost me a £10 bet you damn retards. I'm going to hunt you down and feed your little toes to my hamster. Tom Roberts who you also named and shamed is pissed off as well but I don't really care about him. I hope you look over your shoulders from now on because I'm going to piss on your chips, if you know what I mean. I hope a fat man sits on you. Good day sir. **Jarad Adams,** email



Don't like us putting you in the magazine? Stop writing letters.

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

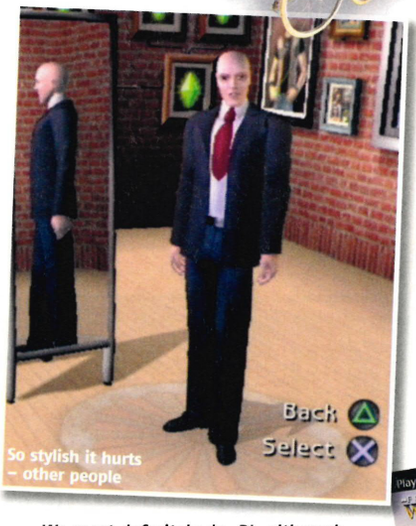
CHILD'S PLAY

I worship your magazine but why are you writing about games like *Sonic Riders*, *Dragon Quest: The Journey Of The Cursed King* and *We ❤ Katamari*? Don't you think these games are babyish? I played all of these games on your demo disc and I nearly fell asleep they were so boring. Why don't you just write about good games like *Tomb Raider* and *24: The Game*. **Rowan Smith,** Dyfed

Thankfully, there's enough room on Planet PlayStation for a diverse range of game genres. Dragon Quest *and* Katamari *might not be your cup of Lapsang Souchong, but imagine how dull it would be if people only made first-person shooters, set in the near-future and starring space marines with metal shoulder pads. Oh. Right.*

HITSIM

Here's my version of *Hitman*'s Agent 47 as created in *The Sims 2*. I hope you like him. **PJ Tierney,** email



We most definitely do, PJ, although the tie looks a little too fat. And it's a goddamned shame that there are no cheats to let him brutally garotte all the other housemates and hide their stiffening corpses in the freezer. Because, maybe it's just us, but slowly starving Sims to death in a room with no windows is starting to get really old. ■

GAMES FOR TAT!

We want stuff, you want games. The first person to send us these oddities gets the related gamery. Simple as that

WE WANT...
Sweat bands (unused) – the coolest one wins the prize

YOU GET...
A copy of *God Of War*

WE WANT...
A Togo International football team shirt (any size)

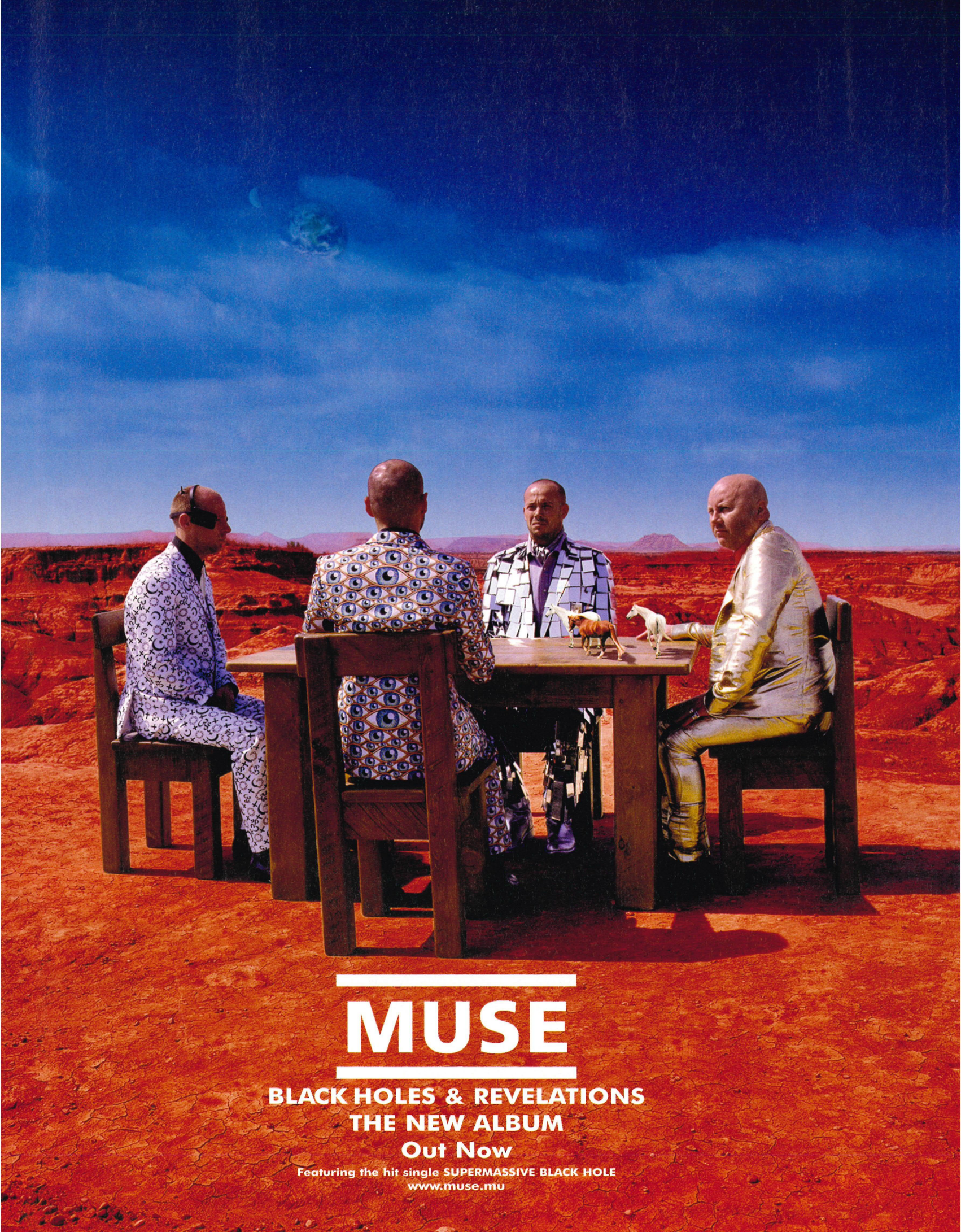
YOU GET...
Full Spectrum Warrior, and *Worms 4 Mayhem*

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

Name and Shame

This Month's Postal Pest

Name: Sam Mason
Offence: Trying to pass off the Lego *Metal Gear Solid* figures found at www.saber-scorpion.com/lego_mgs3_characters.htm as his own work. What, did you really think we wouldn't check?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spy

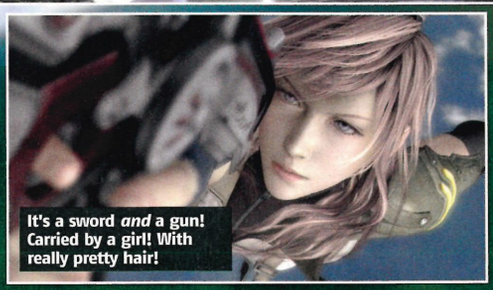
SPY CONTRIBUTORS | TIM CLARK, ALEX DALE, ANDY HARTUP, LEON HURLEY, BEN WILSON, HELEN WOODEY

LUCKY NUMBER XIII

Exclusive shots of Square's magical PS3 role-player

You never forget your first *Final Fantasy*. With each hardware generation Square Enix somehow manages to wow gamers with something truly special. In 1997, *Final Fantasy VII* blew away PSone owners with stunning FMV and a gorgeous, vast world. The sequence when Cloud and friends first leave Midgar, revealing the sheer scale of the game world, remains one of *the* defining moments of PlayStation. A generation on, and *Final Fantasy X* smacked PlayStation 2 upside the mind with a double whammy of gorgeous, 3D visuals and full-spoken dialogue. Since then the series has become synonymous with technical excellence, making its next-gen debut the perfect showcase for the PS3's power. In these exclusive shots, you can see that Square isn't bullshitting when it claims that you won't

It simply wouldn't be *Final Fantasy* without a giant space dog



It's a sword *and* a gun! Carried by a girl! With really pretty hair!

be able to tell the in-game footage from the pre-rendered cut-scenes. The trailer, showing a mysterious female character blasting and stabbing her way through a hostile fantasy world, demonstrates the sort of quality we can expect to see from start to finish in *FFXIII*, and if that doesn't have you salivating like a rabid dog that's just swallowed a salt shaker, just wait until you hear what other changes the veteran development team is making to the series.

HP SAUCE

Directed by *Final Fantasy X-2* bossman, Motomu Toriyama, *Final Fantasy XIII*'s combat is an evolution of the radical changes introduced by *XII*. It's neither real-time combat nor turn-based combat, but a slick combination of the two. *XIII* operates using the Active Time Battle (ATB) system, meaning your characters have to recharge their batteries after making a move before they can strike again. Warriors with a full ATB bar can be moved freely around the field using the left analogue stick, but the tactical depth goes much further than simply hot-footing it away from Renault Espace-sized fireballs. You've really got to think about the relative position of yourself and your enemies, as that's what will determine how much damage you deal. Then there's your weapon range to consider. The teaser footage revealed that the heroine's (if indeed she even is the main character) sword doubles as a shooter, and according to Square Enix that's an idea that runs through the whole game – with plenty of weapons taking multiple forms. It's all about range, so in this

SO WHAT THE HELL IS *FINAL FANTASY VERSUS XIII* THEN?

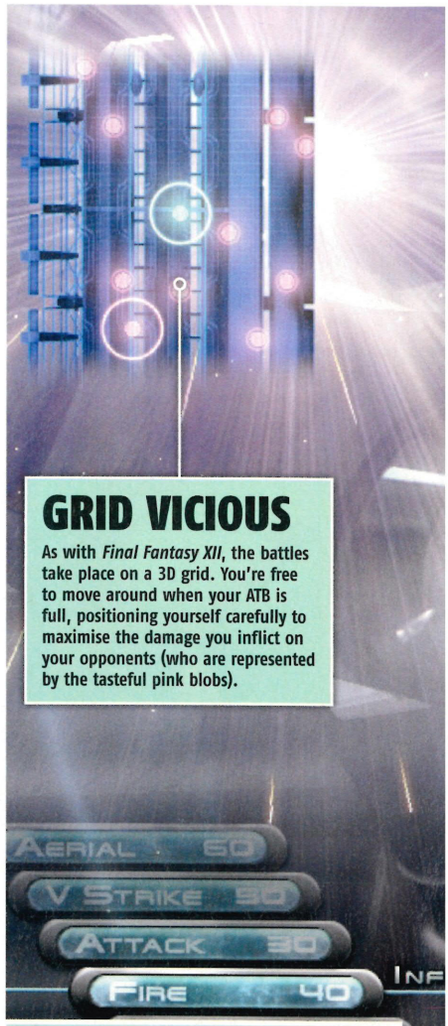
We're glad you asked. The *XIII* games – there are several on the way, including the less than thrilling mobile phone version *Agito XIII* – all come under the *Fabula Nova Crystallis* umbrella. *Versus XIII* is an altogether darker retelling of the universe, starring a young chap (he's royalty, apparently) with (almost inevitably) blue hair. We're told it won't be an online counterpart to *XIII*, but an extension of the universe in the form of a more action-based RPG. Don't panic, though. There's a good chance it won't be a *Dirge Of Cerberus*-style mess-up, because development is being done by the *Kingdom Hearts* team, and although we're told it will play differently to the Disney-based RPGs, they've got the talent and invention to pull this kind of caper off.

instance you'll attack with the blade when up close, but further away it automatically transforms into a finely crafted space rifle – which should make for the most fluid *Final Fantasy* combat yet.

POWER DRESSING

The trailer also hints at innovation in terms of character development. Note the insignia on the woman's shoulder. These markings represent your active character's social status. In a move away from linear storytelling, the social standing of your party will directly affect the way NPCs react and talk to them. Since the nature of the combat seems to lend itself best to *Final Fantasy IX*'s method of powering-up (by allocating a limited number of power points to various different character attributes), we think certain variables that affect the character's prestige will be mixed into the system. This introduces a dangerous balancing act to the stat management – do you invest in strength and agility, or do you concentrate on witty repartee and a winning smile in order to charm the locals' skirts off.

Post-*Dragon Quest*, Square Enix is absolutely bang in form – and its next PS2 outing, *Final Fantasy XII*, is shaping up to be the best game in the series. Now, with that incredible trailer and these accompanying shots, *Final Fantasy XIII* has recaptured the 'wow' factor that made the series so massive in the first place. And it's a PS3 exclusive. In fact, the only downer is that by the time it arrives here, cats will have evolved into moogles. ■ **AD**

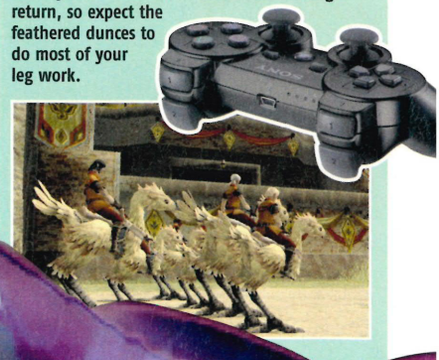


GRID VICIOUS

As with *Final Fantasy XII*, the battles take place on a 3D grid. You're free to move around when your ATB is full, positioning yourself carefully to maximise the damage you inflict on your opponents (who are represented by the tasteful pink blobs).

DO THE CHOCO-MOTION

Square has publicly stated that it's looking into using the new controller's motion-sensing technology. One interesting implementation would be dodging attacks, but the most likely use is controlling vehicles. Which vehicles? Well, an airship is almost a given, so piloting the craft using the tilt sensor seems like a logical idea. Whether or not vehicles will feature heavily outside of mini-games is debatable, but it's already confirmed that chocobos are making a return, so expect the feathered dunces to do most of your leg work.



TAKE IT SLOW

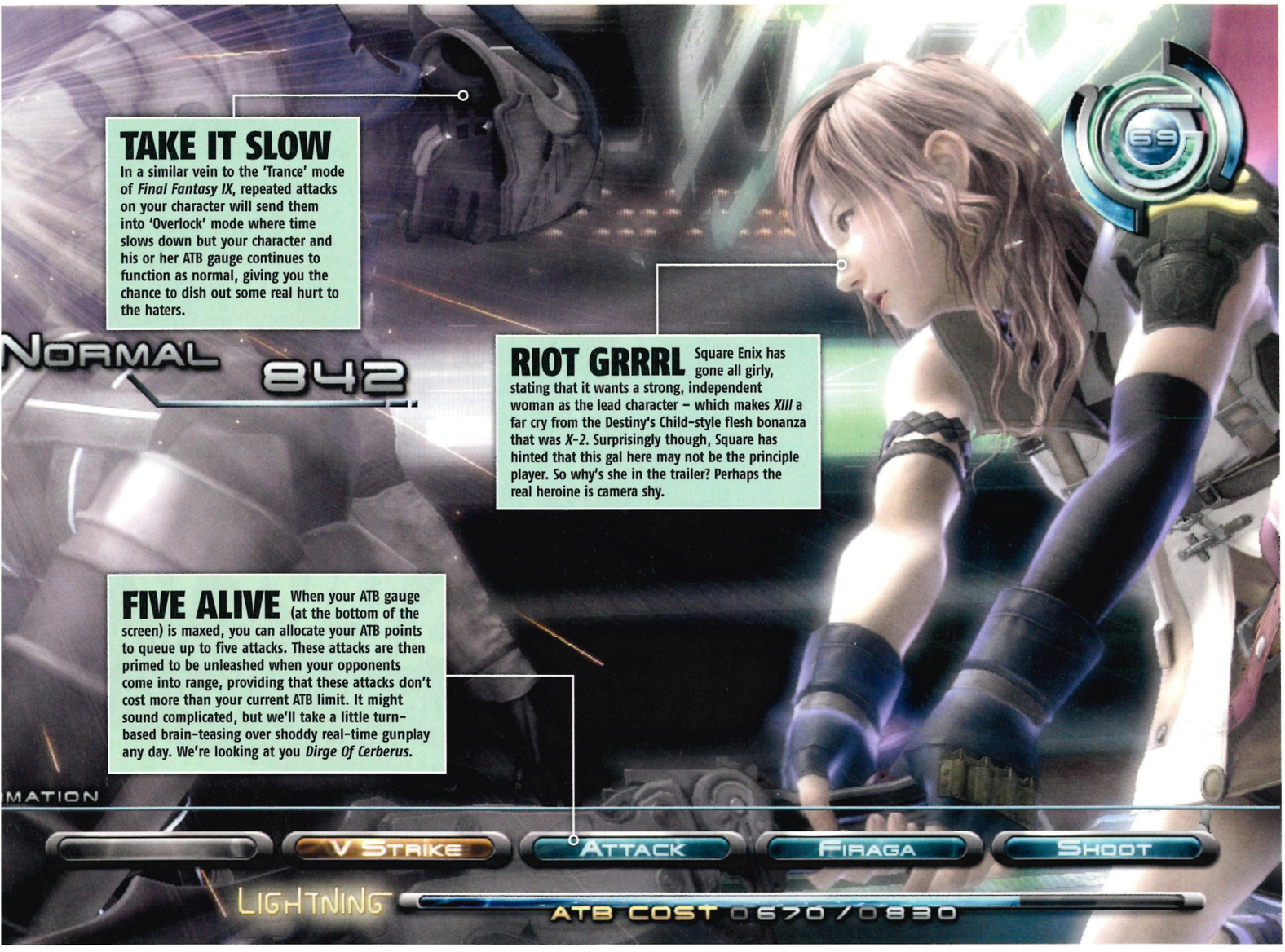
In a similar vein to the 'Trance' mode of *Final Fantasy IX*, repeated attacks on your character will send them into 'Overlock' mode where time slows down but your character and his or her ATB gauge continues to function as normal, giving you the chance to dish out some real hurt to the haters.

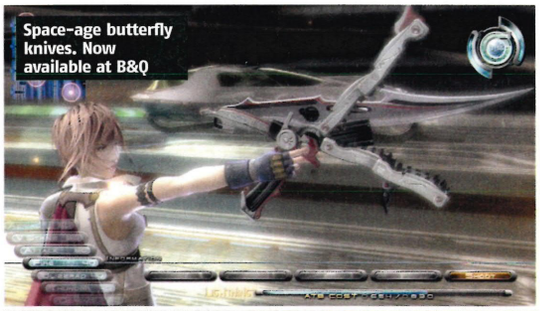
RIOT GRRRL

Square Enix has gone all girly, stating that it wants a strong, independent woman as the lead character – which makes *XIII* a far cry from the Destiny's Child-style flesh bonanza that was *X-2*. Surprisingly though, Square has hinted that this gal here may not be the principle player. So why's she in the trailer? Perhaps the real heroine is camera shy.

FIVE ALIVE

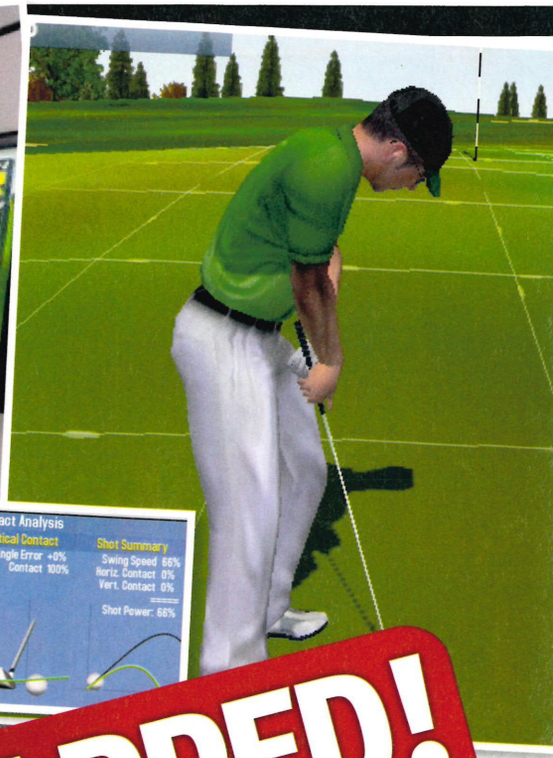
When your ATB gauge (at the bottom of the screen) is maxed, you can allocate your ATB points to queue up to five attacks. These attacks are then primed to be unleashed when your opponents come into range, providing that these attacks don't cost more than your current ATB limit. It might sound complicated, but we'll take a little turn-based brain-teasing over shoddy real-time gunplay any day. We're looking at you *Dirge Of Cerberus*.

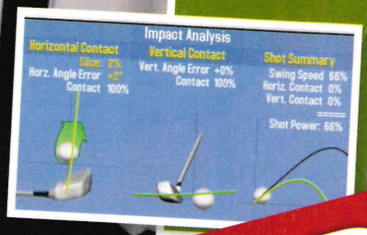



Space-age butterfly knives. Now available at B&Q

Will enemies still form an orderly queue to have their teeth kicked out?

Dust off your Gametrak, the motion-sensitive **Real World Golf 2007** is due in shops on 25 August





SNAPPED!

The future of PlayStation presented in pictures

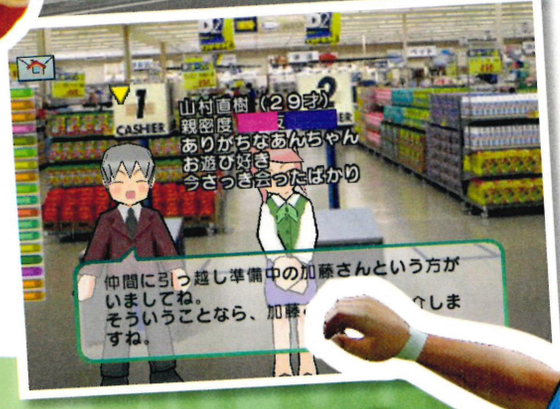
You can now buy PSPs from special Sony **vending machines** installed in selected US shopping malls

spy

EMPICS

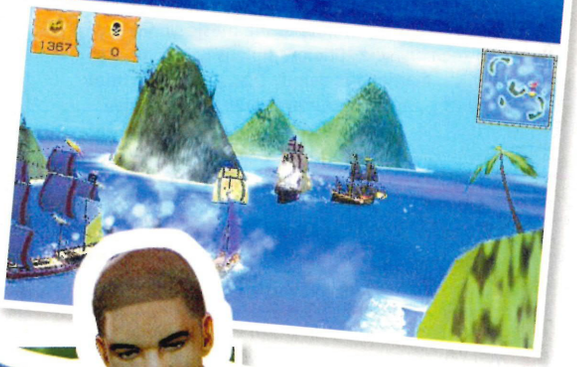
EA has confirmed that **NBA Live 07** will be a launch game for PS3

Town Planner a new Japan-only game has you lobbying local MPs to improve your living conditions



Angsty skeletal teen **Death Jnr** is set to star in his own graphic novel

Shiver me timbers it's new shots of the multiplayer mode in PSP's **Pirates Of The Caribbean**



EA is bringing animated apester **Curious George** to PS2 this October

Brazilian striker Adriano has been chosen as the cover star of **Pro Evo 6**

could be a classic

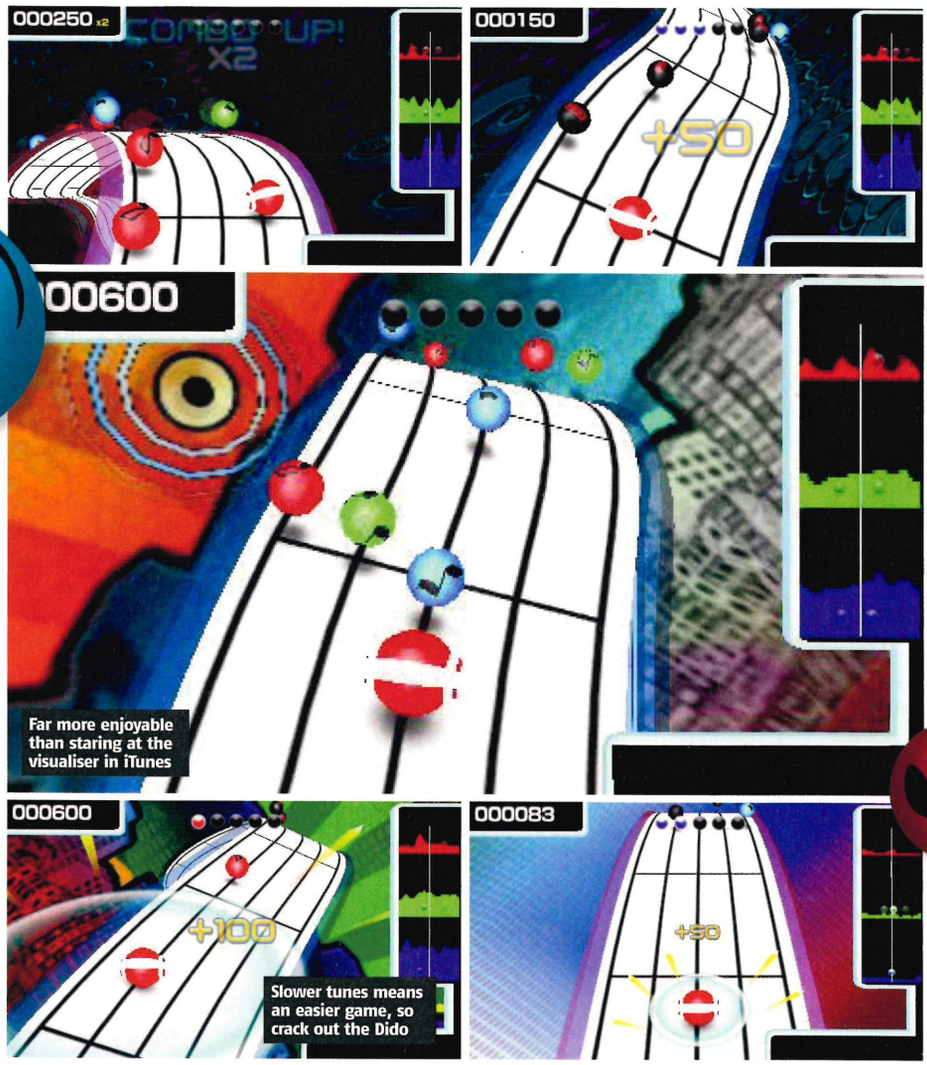
PLAY YOUR OWN SONGS: LITERALLY

TRAXION

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Kuju
Release: Autumn

WHAT WE KNOW

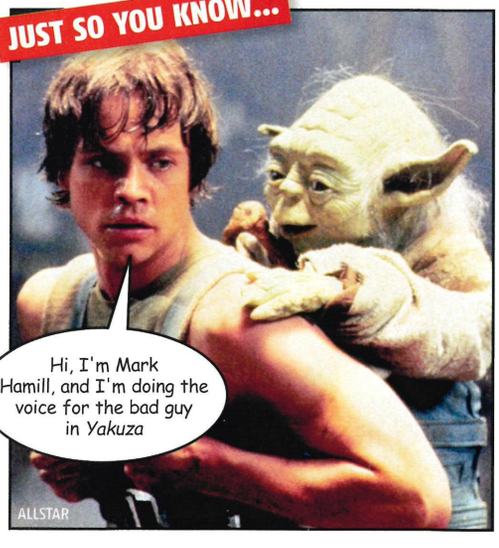
Traxion isn't what we'd call a traditional game. There's no lead character, running theme, or overall goal. Instead, *Traxion* offers open-minded PSP owners a collection of 20 rhythm action mini-games that play in time to the music stored on your memory stick. One example is Karate-oke, a martial arts parody that sees you fighting against your own MP3s using simple high, medium or low attack/defence moves. The quicker and heavier the beats, the harder and faster you'll be attacked. This means that setting high scores depends on both your skill and taste in music. You're more likely to rack up bigger numbers with an Aphex Twin onslaught than a meandering Katie Melua ballad. Anyone with eclectic taste will be pleased to hear you can change game whenever you want, without stopping the music or quitting to any menus. Just tap a button, and instead of throwing punches at your songs, you could be building blocks or rolling balls in time to the beat.



COULD BE A CLASSIC BECAUSE

Far more engaging than staring at pointless music visualisers, which offer nothing more than bunch of swirling shapes, or a slideshow of your holiday snaps from last summer in Brighton; *Traxion* is an effortless way to waste time with your handheld. If you don't fancy actually playing it, the game comes with a decent archiving system that makes locating individual bands and tunes much easier than the awkward folder method built into the portable's firmware. Useful and enjoyable? Looks like *Traxion* is singing our song. ■ **AH**

JUST SO YOU KNOW...



PSPOOKY

WE'RE MYSTING UP

...because the 'housewife's favourite' point-and-click adventure is coming to PSP

You're on your own with this one: literally. Most adventure games like to hold your hand and gently walk you through a lengthy tutorial, but not *Myst*, out for PSP in October. This portable version of the 11-year-old PC title – stay with us here – plonks you on a beautiful, yet uninhabited island with no explanation of what you're supposed to be doing there. It all sounds a bit *Lost* to us, and although your character is on his own, there are a number of striking similarities between the two. *Myst*'s plot starts off sane enough but quickly turns supernatural, and it's got more twists than a king-sized bag of curly fries. The puzzle-based gameplay is unlikely to have changed from the decade-old original. Good news for housewives, less so for hardcore PlayStation heads. ■ **AH**

Screen images are simulated. ©2006 Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd

imagine compact but powerful

Like the stag beetle, the ultra slim, sliding Samsung E370 is deceptively powerful in comparison to its miniature proportions. With a 1.3 Megapixel camera, video recording, music player, Bluetooth, a 40MB internal memory and a large TFT LCD screen, it's hard to imagine it only weighs 85g. **samsungmobile.co.uk**

Samsung **E370**

SAMSUNG

INFO NUDGE

ENCORE FOR *SINGSTAR*

Start warming up your three octave range, karaoke fans, because Sony's announced the next instalment of *SingStar*. It's called *Anthems*, and features a mixture of yesteryear and modern camp classics. Highlights (and we use that word in its loosest possible sense) include Queen's *Radio Ga Ga*, Take That's *Relight My Fire*, and the recent Pussycat Dolls (above) hit *Don't Cha*. The game will be in shops on 4 August for the usual price of £19.99 on its own, or £39.99 plus mics.

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO QUIT?

Hollywood has delivered another swift kick to the groin of gaming by releasing *Stay Alive*, a film based on a fictional game that kills its players in the same way that their characters die on screen. According to the trailer there are over 100 million gamers in America, and one in four are addicted. Yes, that's probably true. And the other three are busy posting how much your film sucks on forums. Oh, and *Stay Alive*'s tag line? 'The Only Thing You'll Lose In The Game is YOUR LIFE'. Two thumbs down.

PS3 GETS FLASHY

According to a job posting on the website of a downloadable game developer, the PS3's online service will feature an option for users to download Flash and retro games to their Hard Drive for a small fee. One of the first titles is *Flow*, which sees you taking charge of a glowing fishy blob that swims around the screen eating other glowing fishy blobs. See it at intihuatani.usc.edu/cloud/flowing

TELLY TAKEAWAY

REX FEATURES

TV TO GO

Sony's Location Free TV device is the answer to all your viewing strife

Location Free telly? What's that then?
Location Free lets you broadcast media from your home to either a PSP or a laptop. This means you'll be able to watch live TV, DVDs, or listen to your music anywhere in the world.

Even on Mount Everest or on a tropical island?
Erm, well if there's a WiFi access point there, then yes. Most cities in the UK and the rest of the world are covered these days. They even have them up North.

Sounds easy enough. So how does it work?
The Location Free Base Station sits in your living room attached to a TV, and either a DVD player, a Freeview box, a Sky Digital box, or an HDD recorder. If you're within range, the Base Station will transmit to your PSP via a local wireless connection – so you can catch up on *Lost* in your bedroom while your significant other is watching yet another episode of *Deal Or No Deal* on the main telly.

What if I'm away from home and want to catch up on *Match Of The Day*?
The Base Station will use its broadband connection to stream media directly to your PSP. There's no loss of signal or stuttering because the Base Station automatically detects the strength of the bandwidth where you are and adjusts the quality of the signal it's broadcasting. So, if you're in a busy WiFi area – with loads of users leeching the broadband juice – the picture quality will be lower, but (theoretically) it won't stutter.

I can live with that, but how do I change channel or skip scenes on the DVD when I'm not in the house?
The Location Free software on your PSP (or laptop) comes with a virtual remote that lets you do all the things you'd be able to at home. If you've got a DVD recorder or Sky Plus hooked up, you can use the PSP to tell the other device to record off the TV – handy if you've forgotten to set it before you leave the house.

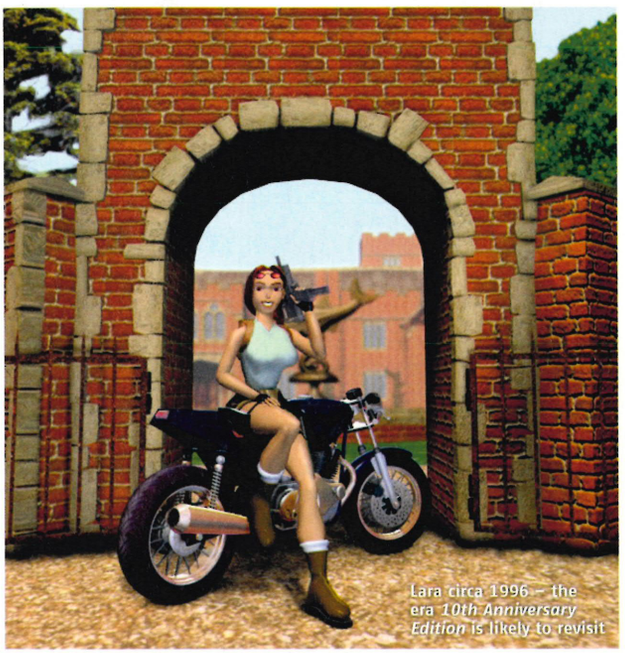
Okay, I'm sold. How much does it cost?
You can pick up the Sony Location Free Base Station transmitter now for the reasonable sum of £229, as further incentive it can also be used to stream TV to your PC. **AH**

HONEY, I'M HOME

RAIDING RAIDER

Classic Croft gets remade for PSP and PS2

This is a bit confusing, so bear with us. Up until recently, Core Design, developer of *Tomb Raider* on PSone, had been working on a remake of the original *Tomb Raider* for PSP. Last month a video of this project was leaked onto the Net showing a graphically enhanced version of the first game with new animations and character models. Great, we thought. But swiftly after, it was revealed this game had been canned – leaving the leaked footage as the only evidence of its existence. Then, in a strange twist, a few days later, Eidos announced *Tomb Raider 10th Anniversary Edition*, which is being developed by Crystal Dynamics, the US firm that just did *Tomb Raider: Legend*. Confused? We were. No shots yet, but the game will appear on both PS2 and PSP this year, and will almost certainly be a prettified remake of Lara's debut. That's that sorted. **AH**



Lara circa 1996 – the era *10th Anniversary Edition* is likely to revisit

KERR-CHING

Readers hit gaming gold...

THIS MONTH: Congratulations to Josh from Ascot who snapped up *Mercenaries* and *WipEout Pure*, new, for £21.98

Found a really cheap game? Let us know. Send the receipt to **Kerr-ching, *OPS2*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.**

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NEXT-GEN NUGGETS

PS3 WATCH

New info on big games. It's that simple

Another one for the goblin haters

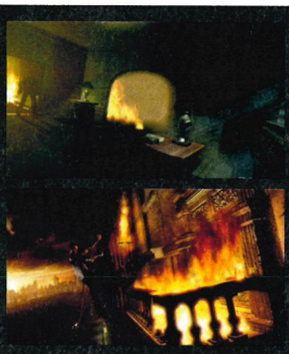
OUT IN NOVEMBER

UNTOLD LEGENDS: DARK KINGDOM

The latest on Sony Online Entertainment's RPG is that the developer is thinking about using PS3's tilt controller for dodging and puzzle solving, although it has stressed that using the motion sensing isn't going to be compulsory – you'll be able to switch it off. Also on the cards is the ability to download episodic content, such as extra missions and weapons, from Sony's new network service. Expect to see these chunks of additional adventuring appearing a couple of months after launch.

ALONE IN THE DARK

Finally confirmed as a PS3 game, Atari's harrowing survival horror has gone episodic. Entirely set in New York's Central Park area the action will be split into 30-40 minute chunks of gameplay, each with its own cliff-hanger ending. Taking the TV series' style structure further, the on-screen display will be totally stat-free like recent blockbuster outing *Peter Jackson's King Kong*, and each time you load a new episode, you'll be treated to a quick cinematic describing 'the story so far'. The game has been confirmed for a November release, meaning we can add it to the growing launch lineup.

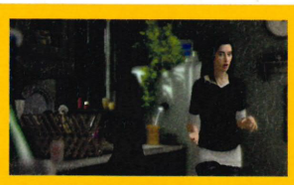


Quite possibly the most generic horror shot ever

OUT IN NOVEMBER

Aurelie gives us her finest Gallic shrug

OUT IN AUTUMN 2008



HEAVY RAIN

Last month we gave you a sneak preview of this intriguing new game from the boys behind *Fahrenheit*. The technical demo showed the mood swings of an insanely life-like femme fatale character in a casting call for a role in the game. The real actress who posed for the motion capture is relatively unknown French actress Aurelie Bancilhon, and she'll be in the final game. She won't be on her own either – much like *Fahrenheit*, there will be multiple playable characters, who will be able to take different routes through the story. Sounds great. Roll on, er, late 2008.

MOTORSTORM

MotorStorm is shaping up to be a cracking next-gen racer. It's all about getting dirty, both literally and tactically. Set at the fictional MotorStorm Festival, which takes place in the massively muddy Monument Valley, USA, it involves 35 different vehicles scrapping it out in a no-rules race to the finish. Don't even think about playing fair, because the game's aggressive AI won't go any easier on you. Side-swiping, slamming into bumpers, and even riding *over* your opponents – it's all fair game for trophy hopefuls. More next month.

Imagine this without rumble. Sort it Sony

OUT IN WINTER 2006

AXE MURDERER

STAGE INVASION!

75,000 metallers, one stage, a girl and *Guitar Hero*

Did we ever tell you about the night that mega rock stars Tool supported us at Download Festival? No? Well, it was the Friday of this year's annual metal mosh-up, and the sweaty crowds were making their way back to their tents after watching headliners, Tool. As they shuffled past the Gibson MySpace stage they were struck by the sound of *Smoke On The Water* beaming from a *Guitar Hero* into their boozed-up ears, and they swarmed towards it like a pack of wee-soaked zombies. It may have been 11pm at the end of a rock-packed day, but the masses were hungry for more.

Not wanting to disappoint the fans, *OPS2*'s resident *Guitar Hero* expert 'little Helen' took to the stage, plastic axe in hand. The crowd roared at the opening riff of Ozzy Osbourne's *Bark At the Moon*, and a dagger of fear stabbed at her lady-heart as she prayed no one would start lobbing bottles of urine. They didn't. They loved it. The night was a blur of red, yellow, blue, green and orange, but the next day one thing was clear: we'd gone to Download 2006, followed Tool and set the stage for Metallica, Guns N' Roses... [Helen bangs on about her imminent superstardom for another 1,000 words]. ■ **HW**

Official *OPS2* mascot Helen shows the long-hairs how to rock

Kwik Fitz

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

CONFIRMED: The E3 demo of *Gran Turismo HD* took a mere three weeks to create

RUMOURED: A PSP version of *International Cricket Captain 2006* is in the works

CONFIRMED: *Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening* is coming to the UK in September after all

CONFIRMED: EA will release *The Fast And The Furious: Tokyo Drift* on PS2 later this summer

RUMOURED: Namco is about to release a mystery PSP game called *Warhammer: WarCry* in the US

CONFIRMED: The wait is over: *Noddy And The Magic Book* comes out on PS2 this September

CONFIRMED: Namco Bandai is working on *Soul Calibur IV*

SHOT IN THE DARK

No screenshots? No problem!
This month's secret game: **Siren 3**

Our brains are still throbbing uncomfortably from living through the time-jumping weirdness of *Siren 2*, so it's tough to imagine how the madness could be upped for a third outing. Still, it's going to happen, because *Siren 3* is on its (shambling) way. Much like being in the game itself, we're fumbling around in the inky blackness looking for specific gameplay details. We know Sony's Japanese studio is beavering away on it right now, with an eye to releasing it in the East during 2007. Sight-jacking is almost certain to return, and we're keeping fingers crossed for some sort of PSP functionality – like using the portable as a tool for tuning into the deranged vision of the twisted Shibito zombies. ■ **AH**

Turn the brightness up on your mag to reveal the hideous zombie

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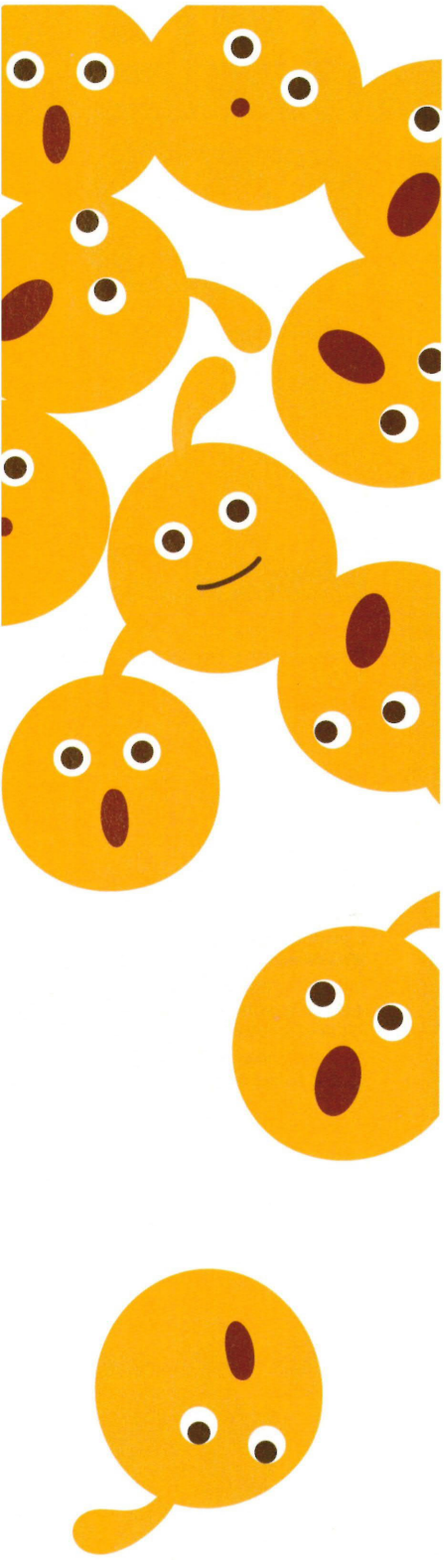


RED HERRING?

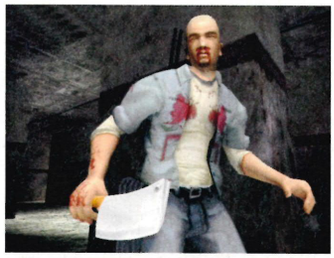
MINI MYSTERY

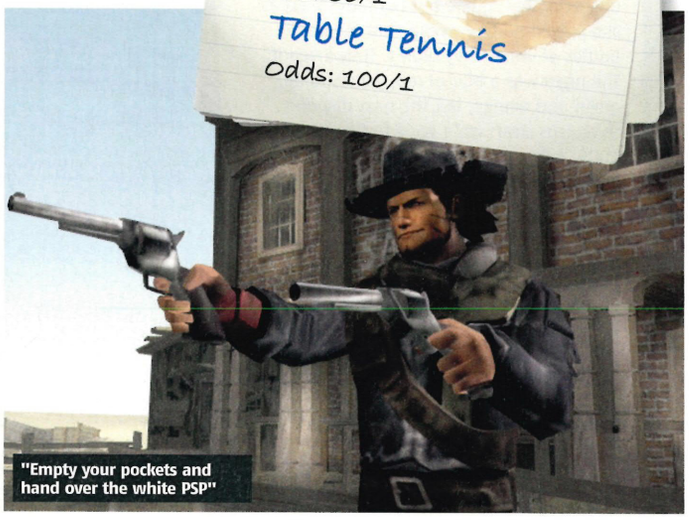
There's a **fresh Rockstar title** in the works for PSP – but what is it?

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories is a dead cert for PSP – it was announced last month – but according to a Take Two financial report, its not the only handheld game in development under the company's Rockstar label.

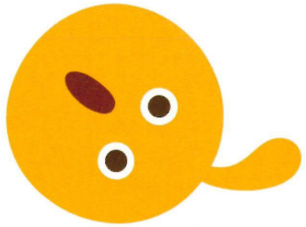
The unidentified title is based on 'another premier [Rockstar] brand', which means it could be one of six potential games. Rumours about a sequel to the Wild West themed *Red Dead Revolver* have been circulating all year, so that has to be the firm favourite. Noir shooter series *Max Payne* has traditionally done well for Rockstar, as has mod-car racer *Midnight Club*, so it wouldn't come as a shock to see either of these shrunk to the small screen. We'd be surprised (but pleasantly so) to see a PSP outing for *Manhunt* after its continual media mauling, although it has become one of the company's biggest brands. So that leaves recent Xbox 360 sports title *Table Tennis*, which we don't see working with only one analogue stick, and *The Warriors*, whose inherently niche appeal makes it an obvious outsider.

Whatever it turns out to be, expect a top quality portable game with a pinch of controversy. More next month, including a first look at *Vice City Stories* on PSP. ■ **AH**





"Empty your pockets and hand over the white PSP"

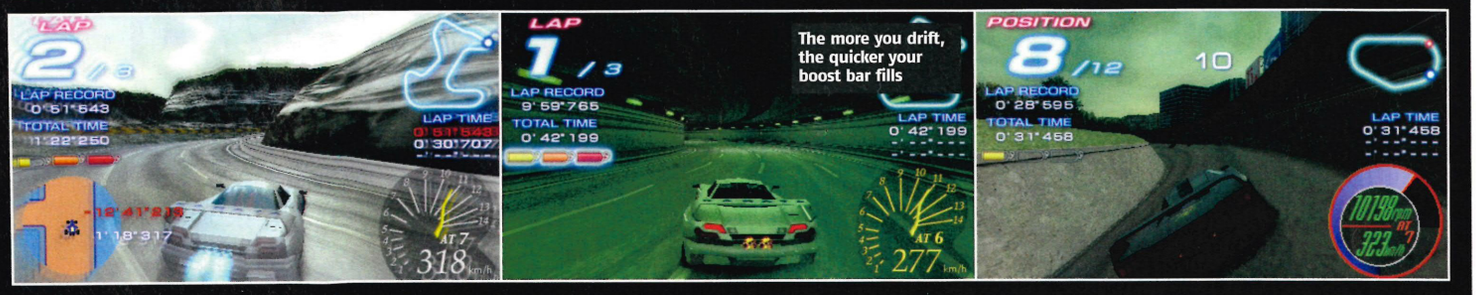


It's all gone LocoRoco

3+

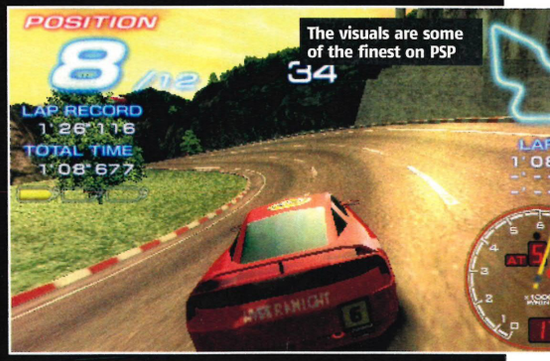
PlayStation®Portable

SLIDING AWAY



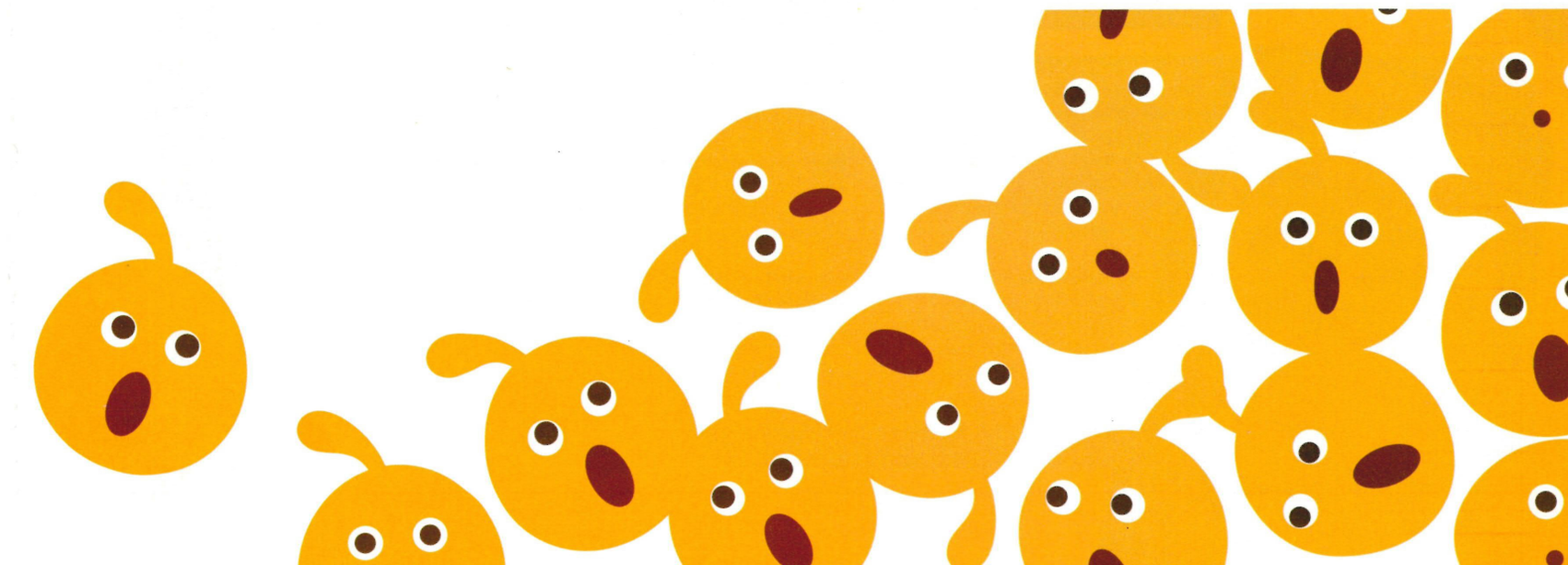
BACK ON TRACK

Ridge Racer 2 drifts onto handheld



Ridge Racer is like that childhood best mate who you're always glad to see, even though you've both moved on and it's all a bit awkward. This much is clear: we're going to be seeing a lot more of Namco's drift racing series with the arrival of a new PSP game.

Ridge Racer 2 is going to be a whopper – over three times the size of its predecessor. No word on specific content, but the original was the pick of the PSP's launch line-up, so we're expecting big things. The release date is pencilled in for the end of the year (around the same time as the PS3 launch) and it's almost certain that the game will have some sort of cross-compatibility with its recently announced next-gen counterpart (*RR7*). Hopefully it won't be another rear-view gimmick like the one Sony showed off for *Formula One 06*. Instead, we want unified multiplayer options that will let handheld owners compete against PS3 players across a WiFi network. Okay, 'please'. ■ **AH**



INFO NUDGE

GAFFER ON THE GO

Unsympathetic about the vast portions of spare time loyal fans have thrown into the social life incinerator that is *Football Manager 2006* on PSP, Sega has announced *FM2007* will be hitting Sony's portable before the end of the year. New leagues, slightly tweaked controls, and – for the first time ever – WiFi multiplayer are all confirmed for what promises to be the series' most comprehensive outing to date.

PLIABLE PORTABLE

Internet vultures scouring the US Patent records have discovered that Sony has recently registered a trademark for a gel-like technology that hardens when electrical current is passed through it. So what? (You rightly ask.) Well, this technology could be used in future versions of the PSP. Imagine a portable with its casing and screen made of silicon gel that you can fold up when you're not using it. Sounds great in principle, although we're slightly worried carrying around a console that looks like a fake breast.

CONSOLE CONTROVERSY

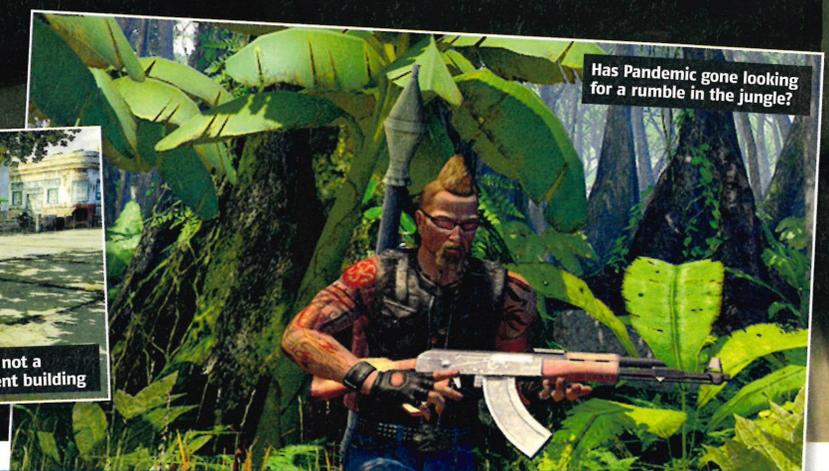
MERCS 2 PAVES THE WAY FOR REAL LIFE INVASION

...so say Venezuelan politicians, who are less than keen to see their country turned into a PS3 war zone

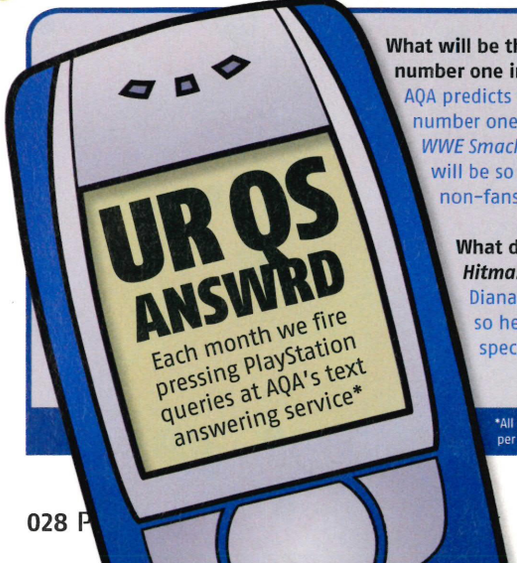
Everyone loves America, right? Cheeseburgers! Springsteen! Crushing foreign countries in the nebulous pursuit of freedom! No, no they don't – and Venezuela is the latest country to take the US of A off its Christmas list, thanks to *Mercenaries 2: World In Flames*. The game, due on PS3 next year, has you working for a private military company (natch) and playing off oil companies against local factions. However, said locals don't see the game as harmless fun. In fact, they take the view that the game is a piece of propaganda designed to prepare the ground for an actual attack. "I think the US government knows how to prepare campaigns of psychological terror," said Venezuelan congressman Ismael Garcia, "so they can make things happen later." Lawmaker Gabriela Ramirez echoed the view, saying "It's a justification for an imperialist aggression."

Responding, the makers of the game denied any political motive for setting the game in Venezuela. Pandemic's spokesperson explained that the team is influenced by current events, but the plot is entirely fictional. However, he did agree that "although a conflict doesn't necessarily have to be happening, it's realistic enough to believe that it could eventually happen." Note to game developers: Wales is still available as a location for your next jingoistic action epic. ■ TC

Hopefully not a government building



Has Pandemic gone looking for a rumble in the jungle?



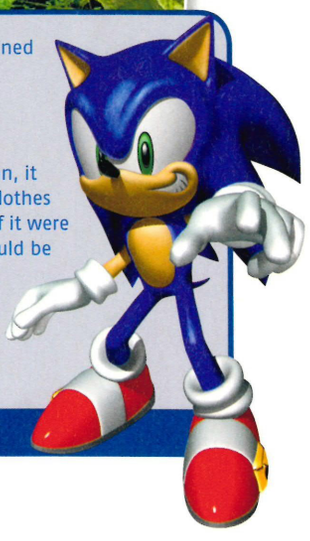
What will be the 2006 Christmas number one in the PS2 charts?
AQA predicts that the Christmas number one in the PS2 charts will be *WWE SmackDown Vs RAW 2007*. It will be so good, it will appeal to non-fans too

What does Diana from the *Hitman* series look like?
Diana is an unseen character, so her appearance is pure speculation. AQA thinks she is 5ft 8in, has dark shoulder-length hair, and is a power dresser

How tall is Sonic The Hedgehog?
Sonic The Hedgehog is 100 centimetres (3ft 3in) tall, and weighs 35 kilograms (77 pounds). His birthday is June 23

Why don't the *Super Monkey Ball* monkeys ever run out of air?
Perhaps *Monkey Ball* monkeys don't run out of air because they are specially trained to make the most of what little oxygen is contained within the balls

What are you wearing?
AQA is not human, it does not wear clothes unfortunately. If it were human, AQA would be wearing a pink woolly hat and a big brown duffel coat



*All answers obtained are printed as they appeared from AQA. To have a go yourself, send your questions to 63336. All texts to AQA cost £1 per message. If your question spans more than one text message (160 characters) you will incur an additional £1 for each text message.

CAR WARS

"WHAT YOU DRIVING THESE DAYS, DAVE?"

Gran Turismo takes surprising approach to online play

Cars, football and the doomed pursuit of pretty girls. It's the holy trinity of male conversation topics, and although Polyphony Digital is probably *most* interested in the first one, we expect to be rapping about all three once *Gran Turismo* eventually goes online. The network functionality is currently being tested using an enhanced version of *GT4*, although Sony won't be drawn on whether it plans to release an online-enabled game for PS2 or if it's just preparing the ground for PS3. What is clear, though, is that this is a vibrant gaming community waiting to happen. Racing works largely as you'd expect, with up to six-player controlled cars and the full roster of tracks. Barring some occasional lag, players report that it's very much the full *GT* experience – made even better by the inclusion of chat, either using preset phrases, a USB keyboard or voice headset. ('Yo momma drive so slow...')

The real juice, though, is in the lobby. Here, like-minded horseless carriage fans can check out each other's profiles, shooting the breeze about spark plugs and gear ratio setups. Up to 100 people can enter a chatroom, and there's also password protection so you can keep undesirables out of your 'Cortina fans only' area. The presence of a 'friends list' feature obviously points to PS3, and you can opt to switch voice chat off entirely, should you tire of yo momma being dissed. Meanwhile, there's still no news on the fate of *GT HD* – the high-def version of *GT4* that Sony used to demonstrate the PS3's graphical prowess – although rumours have emerged that it might end up pre-installed on the hard drive. We're taking that with a fistful of salt for now, though. Rest assured, we'll have the full scoop as it happens. ■ TC

Calling all GT nuts!

What do you want to see next from the *Gran Turismo* series. Just tick a box and send it to the usual address

- ☐ Polyphony should release an online-enabled version of *GT4* for PS2. Tomorrow, ideally
- ☐ Polyphony should pre-load *GT HD* onto the PS3 hard drive
- ☐ Polyphony should stop fannying around with *GT HD* and crack on with an all-new PS3 game
- ☐ This is the one with all the cars, yeah?

WTF IS HE THINKING?

Best caption gets a top PS2 prize

Who is the handsome chap in blue? Why, it's Wayne Gould – the man responsible for importing Sudoku into the UK. Thanks Wayne. Last month he donned a pre-school hardhat and posed manfully for the Japanese paparazzi to help promote Sony's own PSP number-puzzler. Why the head gear? That's anyone's guess. Let us know what you think by filling out Wayne's thought bubble and sending it to the usual address. The entry that raises the most smiles from team *OPS2* (and we'll be honest, this month's crop was weak as) will score its writer a copy of *Rogue Trooper*. And for the worst caption? One fresh copy of *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku*.

Did you remember the flea powder?

Congratulations to Brodie Childs of Edinburgh. Your caption was the least worst. A 'prize' is in the post.

THE LIGHT SIDE

■ ***FINAL FANTASY XIII***
Baby, RPGs are back, back, back! And this is the prettiest thing on PS3

■ **"GOOD EVENING, DONNINGTON!"**
Hels plays *Guitar Hero* to braying mob at Download Festival. No one throws bottled urine. Success!

■ ***WINNING ELEVEN 10***
The keepers suck balls, but otherwise it's genius. Again.

■ **HD HEAVEN**
Team *OPS2* visit Clark mansion to admire Sky HD. Look at the beautiful crabs!

IN THE SABER

■ **BUSTING BLOCKS**
Jaws Unleashed gets us all nostalgic for a time when the big summer movies were, you know, good

■ **THE NOT-SO-BEAUTIFUL GAME**
Modern *Sensi* makes us wish they'd just re-released the old Mega Drive version

■ **£**
We've bought a piggy bank to start saving for a PS3. Current contents: one Euro

■ **SPY HUNTER**
Inept ragdoll physics leave bodies twitching furiously in mid-air. Andy has only just stopped laughing.

THE DARK SIDE

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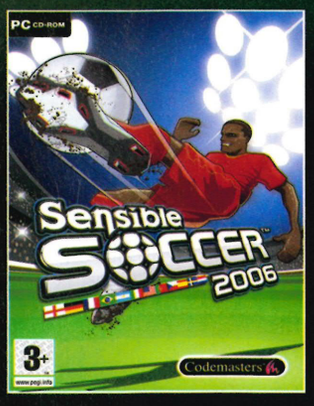

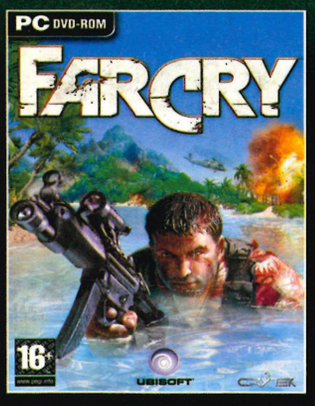

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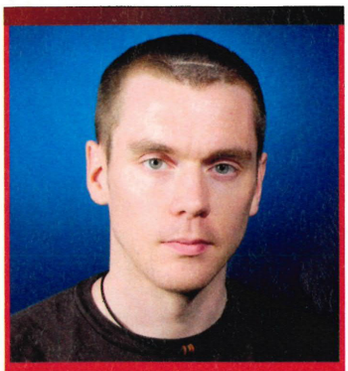
monitor

LICKING THE FUTURE AND TELLING YOU HOW IT TASTES



Those worrying that PS3's imminent arrival spells instant death for PS2 need look no further than this month's boisterous Monitor section. *Destroy All Humans! 2*, *Splinter Cell Double Agent*, *Lego Star Wars II* and *Justice League Heroes* are all shaping up to be exciting additions to the still-bustling PlayStation 2 release schedule. But, that said, we're not about to ignore the impending sexiness of Sony's new baby. This month we check out *Rainbow Six: Vegas* and *SmackDown Vs RAW 2007* in all their next-generational glory. *And* we've got the demented brilliance of *Hot PXL*'s party game mix and the musical madness of *Gitaroo Man Lives!*, both on PSP. Three formats, no filler... that's just how we roll.

Leon

Leon Hurley,
Staff writer

RESERVOIR DOGS

REMEMBER ALL THOSE BULLET TIME SHOOTOUTS AND CAR STUNTS IN THE FILM? US NEITHER

032

034 **GITAROO MAN LIVES!**
Cult PS2 musical battler makes comeback tour on PSP

036 **LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY**
The good ones get the Swedish brick treatment

038 **EVERY EXTEND EXTRA**
Zingy-fresh musical puzzler from the good people who brought you *Lumines*

040 **SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT**
New screens plus info on some of the tough calls you have to make. "Hmmm, tea *or* coffee?"

042 **DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2**
We still hope they're going to use 'Kill all hippies!' as the subtitle

044 **JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES**
New action RPG starring Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman. Repeat: Wonder Woman

046 **RAINBOW SIX VEGAS**
Tom Clancy's anti-terrorist squad go loud on PS3. New shots and info

048 **WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007**
Most. Realistic. Sweat. Ever. We nervously enter the ring with the next-gen version

050 **HOT PXL**
Make girls moan and take rude snaps in the perviest game on PSP

052 **GOD HAND**
Beat-'em-up with tongue in cheek and fist in face

PLUS

037 **SUPERBIKES: RIDING CHALLENGE**
043 **THRILLVILLE**
047 **BATTLEZONE**
049 **SUPERMAN RETURNS**

PUBLISHER EIDOS | DEVELOPER VOLATILE GAMES | WEBSITE WWW.VOLATILEGAMES.COM

RESERVOIR DOGS

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK new info

IT'S GOT THE 'OLD DOG' SMELL

Getting lost sucks. Stupid London Underground. But going several stops the wrong way around the Circle line on the way to see *Reservoir Dogs* only gave us extra time to think. How the hell would it work as a game? The film was a dialogue-heavy tale dealing with the fallout of a botched robbery. Ear-cutting aside, all the action takes place in flashbacks or off-screen. It's hardly loaded with prime cuts of gaming meat.

You can threaten hostages to control cops – handy when making an escape

Car sections are loosely based on events from the movie

DON'T STRUGGLE, IT'LL HURT LESS

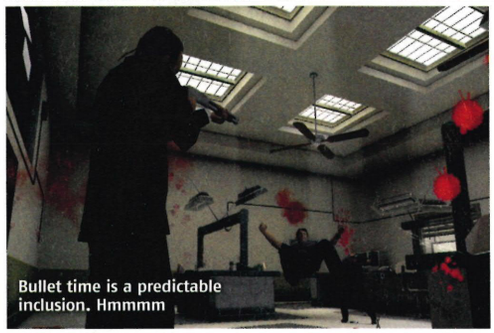
It's probably because we were expecting so little that we ended up *relatively* impressed. We particularly like the fact that taking hostages and controlling crowds form an important part of the gameplay. By targeting civilians and pressing L2 to shout at them, you can scare them into becoming 'compliant'. In this state they'll do *anything*. In one level, set in the immediate aftermath of the pivotal jewellery heist, Mr Blue walked a hostage at gunpoint to a door, forming a human barrier against police bullets. Another instance had Mr Blonde forcing a cleaner to kneel in a corner to prevent her triggering an alarm. It's an easy control system – submissive characters simply follow your crosshairs. Hostages can also be used as leverage. If cops don't do what you want then you can smack your captive about a bit to 'persuade' John Q Law. The ultimate aim being to force them to drop their weapons. There's a balance to it though: beat your prisoner too much and they'll pass out.

You're ranked according to the frequency with which you talk or shoot your way out of trouble. Play it cool by taking hostages and negotiating and you'll get a 'Professional' rating. Think of Harvey Keitel's Mr White character. But shoot the place up, murdering all and sundry and you'll get a Mr Blonde-like 'Psycho' rank instead. Your behaviour also affects progress. Kill too many cops and you'll get tougher opponents, like SWAT teams, hunting you down as opposed to the lard-assed, easily dominated patrolmen you start off against.

OH NO, SLOW MO

While the hostage-taking is an inspired idea that works extremely well, as is the way police react to your actions, the *Max Payne*-style bullet time is much harder to stomach. The ability to shoot several cops in bloody slow-mo just doesn't fit in with the film at all. Worse still, there are *special moves* for each character. Mr Blonde cuts his hostage's ear off while Mr White lops off a finger as an alternative. The effect is to make everyone instantly obey you but it's a painfully laboured way of working film content into the game.

The majority of missions (15 in all, split between on-foot and driving) build on events talked about in the film but never seen. Like a mission where Mr Pink has to retrieve the stolen diamonds, or Mr Blue's death during a shootout. Another level shows Mr Blonde kidnapping Marvin the cop, leading to a vehicle level where you have to drive to the hideout with Marvin in the trunk. The twist being that if you stop for too long Marvin jumps out and escapes. Other driving scenarios include getting to the robbery on time and driving a wounded Mr Orange to the hideout.


Bullet time is a predictable inclusion. Hmmmm

The entire film's soundtrack, plus ten new songs, are available on the car radio

The key problem with what we've seen is that ideas like hostage-taking – which promises a certain amount of strategy and depth – could be cancelled out by the repetitive shooting. Things like characters wearing spare weapons slung over their backs, or Mr Blue, a character supposedly in his 60s, somersaulting around like an academy-fresh marine jar horribly with the film. As does the fact that things all too often dissolve into a bloody cavalcade of military-grade slaughter, which is far from the ultra-hip vibe of the source material. The lack of proper likenesses is another hitch. Michael Madsen is the only person to sign his mug over, leaving the rest of the cast replaced by potato-headed stand-ins that look exactly *nothing* like the originals. (Tim Roth's replacement is ginger.) It makes the cut-scenes – re-enacting classic moments from the movie – seem bizarre and amateurish. Still, at least there isn't a rhythm action game with Mr Blonde dancing around to Steelers Wheel. Yet. ■ **LH**

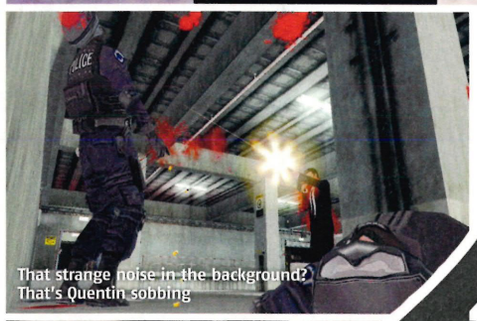
monitor PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

THE IDEA STILL SEEMS LUDICROUS to us, and despite some clever touches – like threatening the hostages – *Reservoir Dogs* is a small-time crook with a 'born to lose' tattoo on his arm

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

ETA 2 months
Sep 2006

SWAT teams turn up if (when) you go totally postal



That strange noise in the background? That's Quentin sobbing

This is what *Hitman* would look like if 47 got a weave

Look, I'm just as annoyed about not having a face

ETA 2 months
Sep 2006

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

It's on PSP

Down two cans of Lucozade and this is how the world looks

The Gitaroo-Man controls work well on PSP

Mojo King Bee's song is a particularly odd highlight

Not weird at all. In fact, in Tokyo they call this 'Thursday'

PUBLISHER KOEI | DEVELOPER KOEI | WEBSITE WWW.GAMECITY.NE.JP/PSP/GITAROO

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK hands on

GITAROO-MAN LIVES!

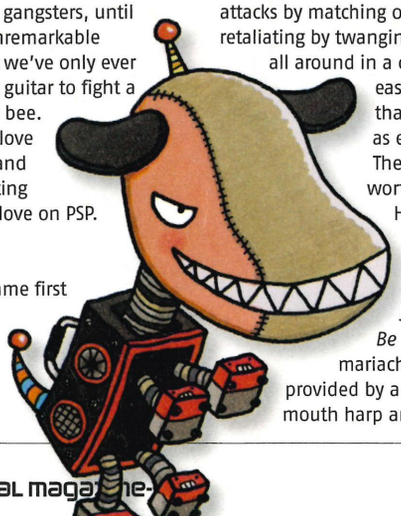
SAVING THE WORLD ONE SOLO AT A TIME

We've played literally hundreds of games, and after a while the Nazis blend into the zombies who get confused with the gangsters, until all you're left with is a queue of unremarkable 'enemies' waiting to be killed. But we've only ever played *one* where you use a magic guitar to fight a trumpet-playing man dressed as a bee. *That's* why we still remember and love the original *Gitaroo-Man* on PS2, and why we're so excited that he's getting another chance to strum up some love on PSP.

MUSIC TO OUR EARS

For anyone who didn't play this game first time around – okay, all of you – it's the inspirational tale of a bullied child who discovers he's a legendary superhero. The twist being that Gitaroo-Man inherits a super-powered guitar. But this isn't your typical rhythm-action game. It alternates between dodging enemy attacks by matching on-screen button prompts and then retaliating by twanging and 'bending' notes up, down, or all around in a circle with the analogue stick. It's easy to learn, tricky to master and – thanks to a bit of auto-centreing – just as easy to pull off on the PSP's nub.

The thing that makes *Gitaroo-Man* worth playing, though, is the music. Hopping from synth to drum 'n' bass to reggae to thrash metal, every song's an aural pick 'n' mix, most by super-obscure guitar band Coil. Just by way of an example, *Born To Be Bone* sees Gitaroo-Man dropping mariachi-style plucking over beats provided by a gang of xylophone skeletons... with mouth harp and bin lids thrown in for sonic variety. In another level, our hero ditches his superhero guise to serenade a lady with a simple six-string acoustic – succeed, and she'll fall asleep on your shoulder in a superbly emotional bit of gameplay. Cute, colourful, and now featuring co-op WiFi duets, *Gitaroo-Man*'s ripe for a PSP revival. Oh, and there's a bit where you team up with a cymbal-playing baby in a panda costume to repel a flying saucer invasion. Get involved. ■ JS



monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

THIS ISN'T STARTLINGLY NEW but it is a superb opportunity for PSP owners to rediscover a genuine classic. An entrancing mix of testing gameplay and brilliantly deranged music

HOT OR NOT?

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

YOU DIE IN THE GAME - YOU DIE FOR REAL.

STAY ALIVE

15 Contains sustained moderate horror

PLAY IT TO DEATH.

HOLLYWOOD PICTURES SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT AND ENDGAME ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A WONDERLAND SOUND AND VISION PRODUCTION A BARBER/BIRNBAUM PRODUCTION "STAY ALIVE" JON FOSTER SAMAIRE ARMSTRONG FRANKIE MUNIZ JIMMI SIMPSON MILO VENTIMIGLIA WITH SOPHIA BUSH AND ADAM GOLDBERG CASTING BY MARK BENNETT MUSIC BY JOHN FRIZZELL EDITED BY HARVEY ROSENSTOCK PRODUCTION DESIGNER BRUTON JONES DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ALEJANDRO MARTINEZ EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS GARY BARBER ROGER BIRNBAUM JONATHAN GLICKMAN DOUGLAS E. HANSEN BECKY TRUJILLO ADAM DEL DEO

PRODUCED BY MoG PETER SCHLESSEL JAMES STERN MATTHEW PETERMAN WRITTEN BY WILLIAM BRENT BELL & MATTHEW PETERMAN DIRECTED BY WILLIAM BRENT BELL

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AT CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM 28TH JULY

CHECK LISTING FOR DETAILS

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK hands on

Even the less iconic movie moments are perfectly recreated

Their plastic faces are superbly expressive now

With gunfire everywhere the pilot was bricking it

PUBLISHER **ACTIVISION** | DEVELOPER **TRAVELLER'S TALES** | WEBSITE **WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/GAMES/LEGOSTARWARSII**

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

I SENSE A DISTURBANCE IN THE TOY SHOP

We've seen the classic "These aren't the droids you're looking for" scene from the first *Star Wars* movie *hundreds* of times. But this is the first time we've watched the storm trooper's stupefied head gently revolve as Obi-Wan Kenobi hypnotises him. Not laugh-out-loud funny, maybe, but we did *actually* smile. And with our cold, empty hearts, that's not bad. Also funny is Princess Leia's mêlée attack – a cheek-stinging slap. Racing around Mos Eisley in Luke's land speeder is great fun, too. The animation is even better this time (Han Solo's swagger is unmistakable) and the winks and exaggerated expressions on their little plastic faces make the key scenes from the movies properly funny. Another new feature is the ability for all non-droid characters to build items out of Lego bricks – something only Jedis could do before. At one point we even had to build an AT-ST from a discarded pile of blocks in order to blast through a door.

There are 18 levels of this block-filled lunacy on PS2 and PSP, and if you've still got a memory save from the original game you can access 100 *Star Wars* characters on PS2 (50 from the first game, 50 in this one, and with additional exclusives on PSP). If that's still not enough, you can even make your own: the character creation mode lets you mix any combination of body parts and accessories. At last, we get to see what Chewie would look like in Leia's gold bikini. No? Okay, just us then. ■ LH

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

THIS IS BRILLIANTLY ADDICTIVE platform action, and is actually based on the *good* films this time. *The Original Trilogy* could be another classic in the making for the plastic fantastics

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

TEST YOUR STAR WARS KNOWLEDGE

Do not fail me, Admiral

Match the quotes to the famous movie scenes

A) "He doesn't like you."

B) "Gold Five to Red leader, I Lost Tiree, Lost Dutch. They came from... behind!"

C) "Uh, we had a slight weapons malfunction, but uh... everything's perfectly all right now. We're fine. We're all fine here now, thank you. How are you?"

D) "An elegant weapon, for a more civilized age."

E) "Darth Vader. Only you could be so bold."

F) "I've just about had enough of you. Go that way. You'll be malfunctioning within a day, you near-sighted scrap pile."

G) "Move along, move along."

Answers: 1F, 2E, 3B, 4C, 5D, 6G, 7A

ALSO 2 MONTHS AWAY...

PUBLISHER **BLACK BEAN** | DEVELOPER **MILESTONE**
WEBSITE **WWW.BLACKBEANGAMES.COM**

SUPERBIKES: RIDING CHALLENGE

POSSIBLY THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

"I don't like it, dad, I'm getting off!"

Three laps into *SuperBikes* and we're hit by a sudden realisation. Not only is our rider managing to stay on his bike now, but we're actually enjoying sending him screeching around the circuit. Even with the driving aids turned off.

On paper it's the sort of realistic racer that causes eyes to glaze over and brains to shut down entirely, but hands-on, *SuperBikes* is both technically sound and easy to pick up. Learning how to transfer weight and pull the appropriate brake at the right time is the key to any biking sim, and so far *Riding Challenge* seems to have the difficulty curve spot on. You can switch on the virtual stabilisers and tear around the circuits with relative ease, but even at this stage the game is balanced enough to make the full-fat simulation racing accessible to everyone. Is this enough to snatch the two-wheeler crown from the hardcore biker's choice *Tourist Trophy*? From what we've seen, we fancy *SuperBikes'* chances. ■ **AH**

Ever get the feeling you're being followed?

HOT OR NOT?

An accessible bike sim that's a surprisingly good ride

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

ETA 2 month
Sep 2006

0 1 2 3 4 5 9 10 11 12

It's on PSP

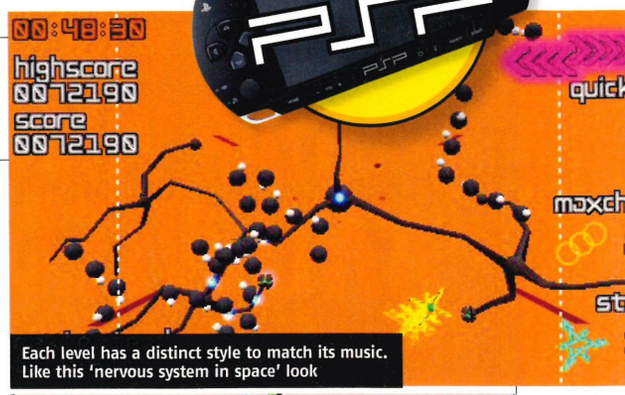
PUBLISHER **BUENA VISTA GAMES** | DEVELOPER **Q ENTERTAINMENT** | WEBSITE **HTTP://E3-GAME.COM**

EVERY EXTEND EXTRA

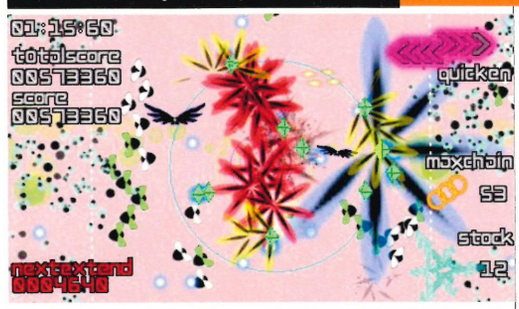
LUMINES GOES TO WAR

Every Extend Extra comes from the fizzing brain of the man that gave us *Lumines* and *Rez*. So driving trance music is a given, as is innovative gameplay. But here you don't stack objects – you blow yourself, and them, up. The idea behind *EEE* (a none too subtle drug reference?) is that your suicidal detonations create shockwaves which, in turn, blow up anything else they hit. Destroyed objects create their own blasts, and so the explosive ripple spreads.

Nuking yourself in just the right spot causes the screen to fill with a cascading wash of swelling, musical eruptions. Satisfying *and* destructive. Chain enough carnage together and you'll earn the crucial 'extend' from the title, replenishing your supply of flying bombs. The twist is that you need to create bigger chains each time to receive your extra life. All the while a timer counts down. No 'extend' before it hits zero? Game over, no matter how many bombs you have left. It's a simple concept that makes for incredibly tense gameplay. You're constantly torn between dodging the on-screen clutter while trying to judge the best moment to self-destruct. It's murder on your trigger finger, spasming over the fire button as you evade increasingly dense clouds of enemies while edgy electro builds until... BANG! The screen lights up with a massive fountain of fire. And seriously, who doesn't like a massive fountain of fire? ■ **LH**



Each level has a distinct style to match its music. Like this 'nervous system in space' look

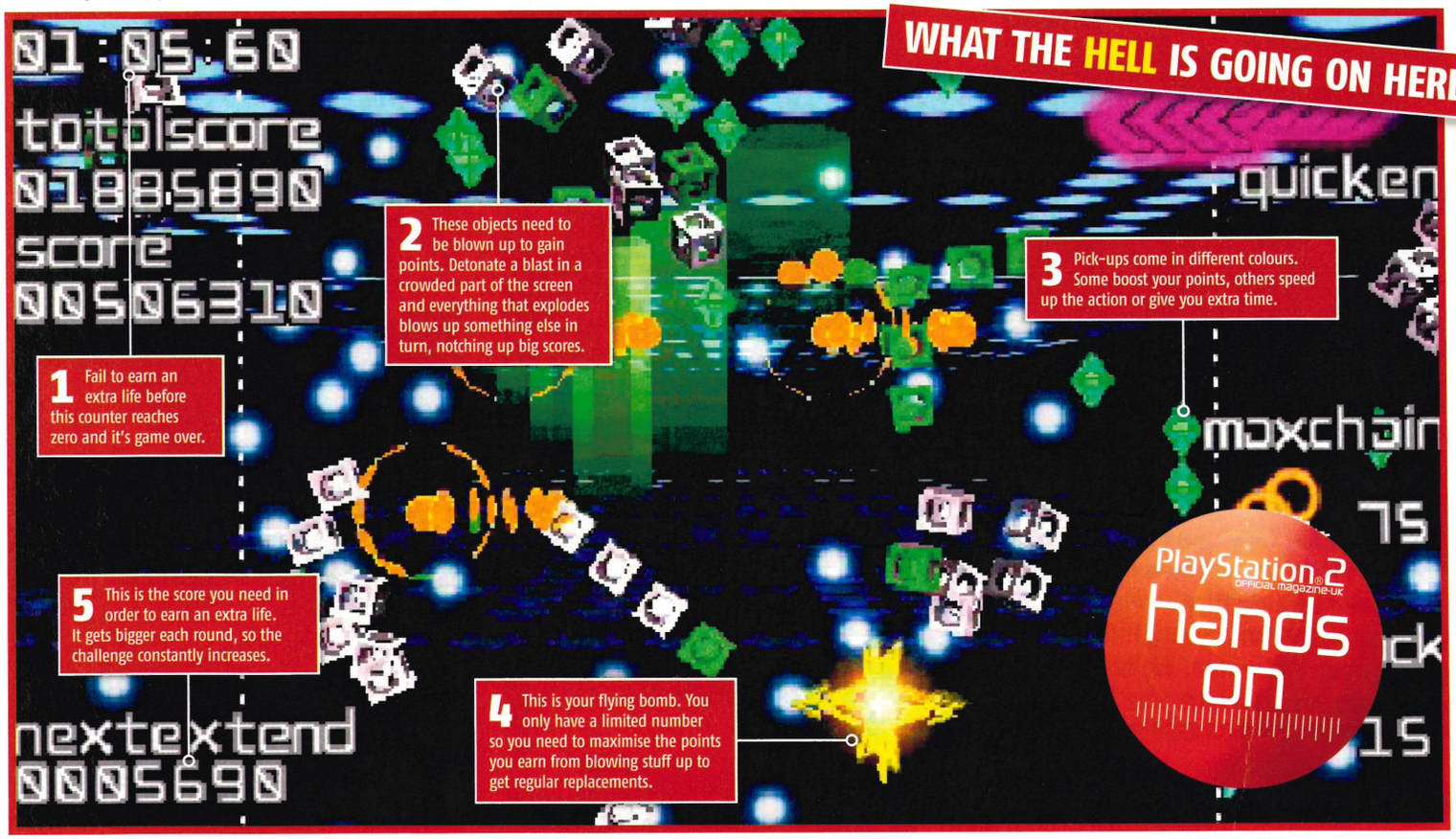


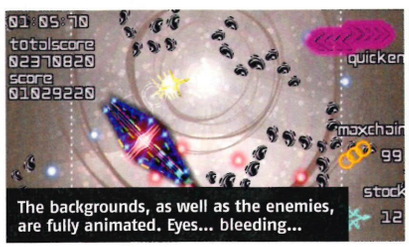
monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

A SIMPLE IDEA with a mesmeric blend of glowing visuals, strong beats and twitchy gameplay, there's every reason to think this, like its predecessor *Lumines*, will be a minor classic

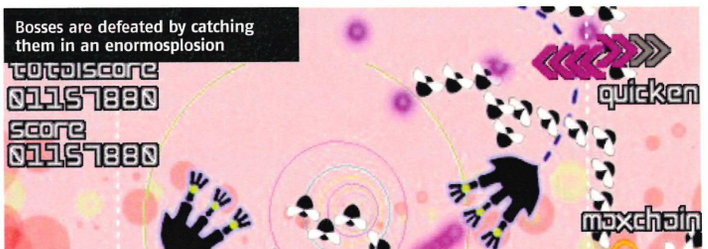
HOT OR NOT?

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





The backgrounds, as well as the enemies, are fully animated. Eyes... bleeding...



Bosses are defeated by catching them in an enormosplosion

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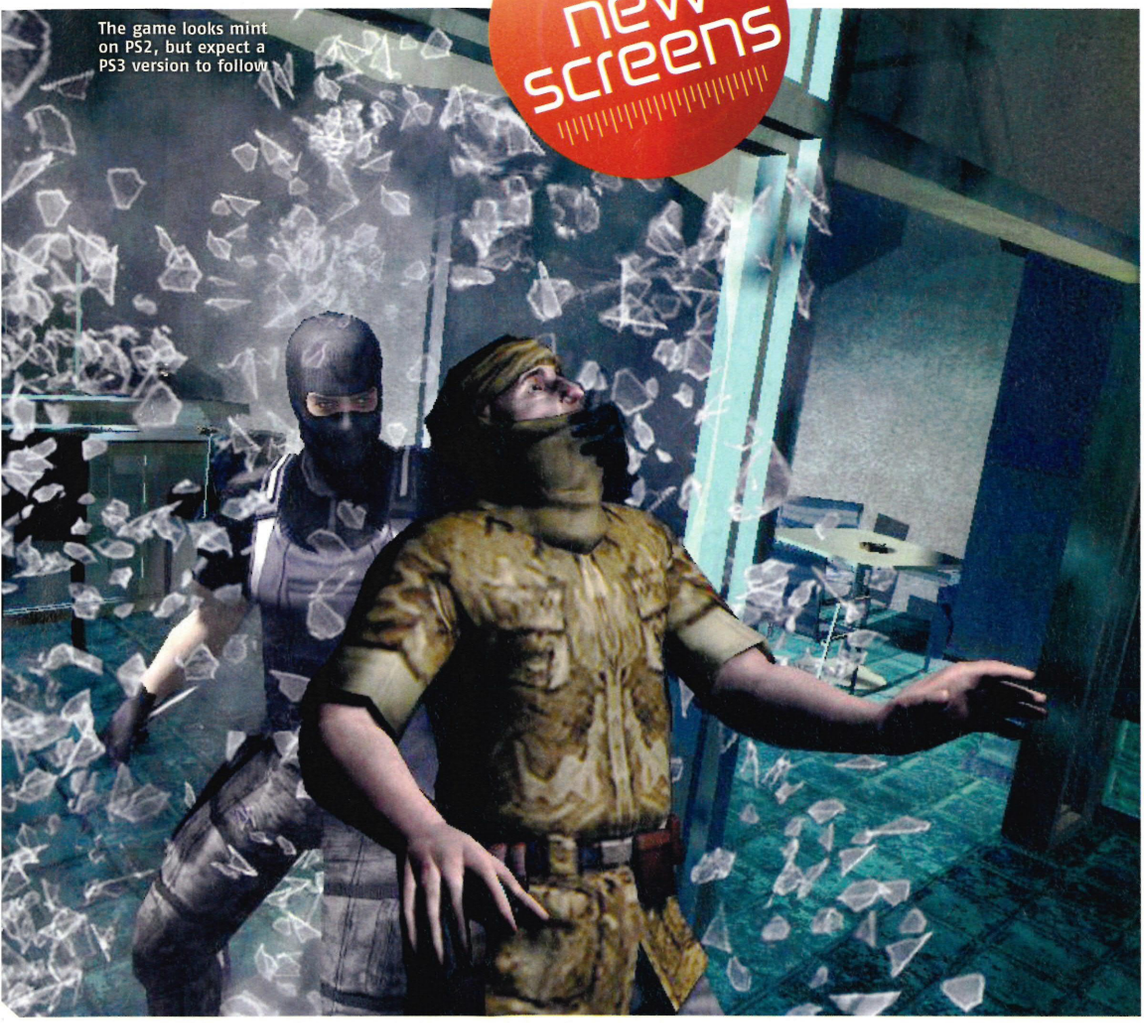
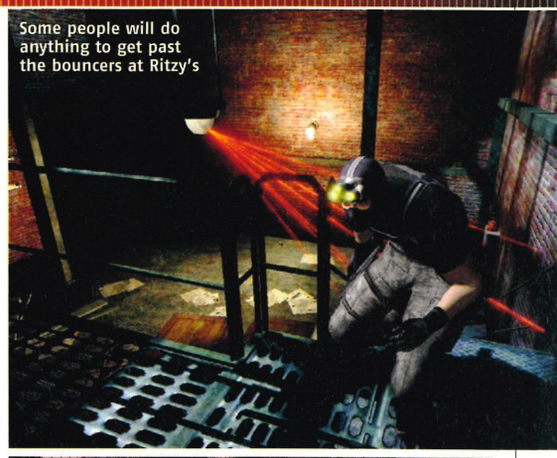
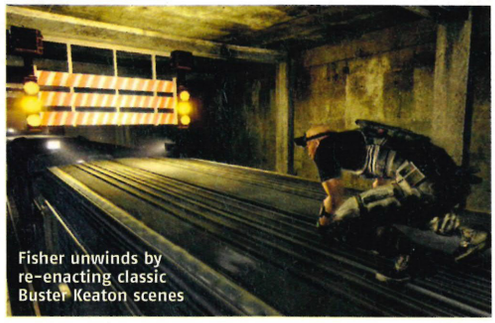
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK
new screens


The game looks mint on PS2, but expect a PS3 version to follow


Some people will do anything to get past the bouncers at Ritzy's

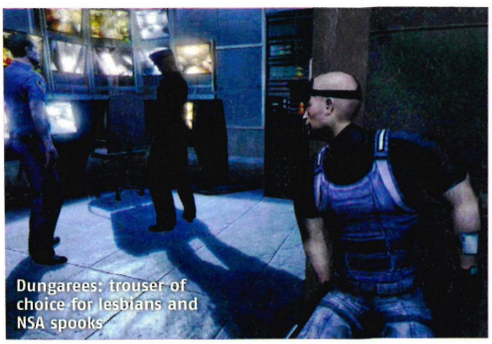

Fisher unwinds by re-enacting classic Buster Keaton scenes

PUBLISHER **UBISOFT** | DEVELOPER **UBISOFT SHANGHAI** | WEBSITE **WWW.BEWARESAMFISHER.COM**

SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

"HANG ON, WHICH SIDE AM I *ACTUALLY* ON AGAIN?"

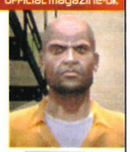
For our money, the standout moment in the Splinter Cell series so far occurs midway through Pandora Tomorrow's Jerusalem mission. Things are progressing smoothly (in the sense that you've coshed a lot of skulls smoothly) when Fisher gets a call from Lambert, ordering him to assassinate Dahlia Tal, an apparently friendly Israeli agent who you've been liaising with. No explanation's given and there's no time to think. You're just ordered to cap her there and then. And whether or not to obey is entirely your decision. There's a corresponding impact on the ending, but there isn't necessarily a right answer. In an otherwise by-the-numbers sequel, it was a thrilling experiment with moral choice. So it was particularly weird when the subsequent game, Chaos Theory, rather than building on the idea, ditched it entirely.


Dungarees: trouser of choice for lesbians and NSA spooks

Now the idea is back in a big way. Moral quandaries are absolutely key to Double Agent. (The clue's in the title.) Fisher has infiltrated a group of terrorists, and in order to maintain his cover, innocent blood will have to be shed. And as anyone who's already played through Essentials on PSP will know, possibly some very familiar blood. The game will use numerous 'directed moments', where you'll be forced to make snap decisions – do you kill an unarmed man to prove your terrorist credentials? – the result of which will make the storyline branch in different directions.

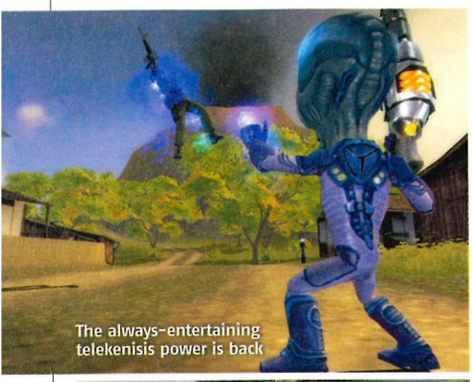
Staying with the subject of choice, the levels are all being designed with multiple paths. There's also extensive, but subtle, use of scripted events – say a traffic accident, or a sniper attack – to add drama. The plot, which has Fisher chronically depressed after the death of his daughter and deliberately banged up in order to win the terrorists' trust, also seems refreshingly free of bullshit about nano-viruses and suchlike. Our one concern is that Ubisoft seems reluctant to let anyone play or indeed even see the PS2 version in action, choosing instead to demo the next-gen version and send us these shots separately. Given the quality of the last couple of games we probably needn't be worried, but in the counter-espionage game it always pays to be a bit paranoid. ■ **TC**

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK



DOUBLE AGENT looks like being a welcome change of direction for the *Splinter Cell* series. The core gameplay isn't in question, but much will depend on how deep the moral choice system actually runs

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


The always-entertaining telekenisis power is back

Crypto always parks the saucer in the disabled bay

Crypto, not a huge fan of 'ello 'elloing British bobbies

PUBLISHER **THQ** | DEVELOPER **PANDEMIC** | WEBSITE **WWW.DESTROYALLHUMANSGAME.COM**

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK **hands on**

TURN ON, TUNE IN, ANAL PROBE

Stepping back into the moon-boots of Crypto, the human-hating, perma-pissed off alien is a joy. Using telekinesis to drop cars on bystanders' heads is still funny; tossing policemen into rivers is still a great way to stick it to The Man, and if it all gets too much, there's always the kickass flying saucer sections, which let you vent some steam lasering human scum.

However, it's been a while since the little grey man rose to become President of the USA in the first game. The world has changed and it's now the swinging '60s. The streets are filled with drug-guzzling hippies and the Cold War is well under way: a fact that's made all too clear to Crypto when the Russians obliterate his mothership with a nuclear warhead. To make matters worse, the angry alien is losing his control over the planet as Earth's inhabitants shake off their brainwashing, thanks to Woodstock-levels of drug consumption. So, it's time for our anti-hero to strap on the jetpack, dust off the Zap-O-Matic and show everyone that he's still the daddy.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

During the decade in-between this game and the original *DAH!*, Crypto has picked up a few new tricks. He can now physically jump inside a human and wear their body like a suit, and use his mind to 'transmogrify' solid objects like cars and skips into ammo for his weapons. Good job too, as the alien's arsenal has been expanded. Now he's packing a displacer weapon, which is a distraction tool that makes targets randomly bounce around, and a meteor strike rifle – line up a target by holding down the trigger, then let go to unleash a devastating rain of flaming space-rock on your enemies.

For total overkill, why not call in a meteor strike

We climbed inside the body of this ginger hippy. Gross!

Although we only had the chance to test a single level, it's obvious that this is a big improvement. Problems and niggles from the original game are smoothing out nicely (the Flying Saucer can now change altitude, for example) and the dialogue is generally sharper and wittier. *Destroy All Humans! 2* doesn't revolutionise the formula, but it is a confident step forward for the series – and given how good the original was, that's no small praise. ■ **AH**

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

RIGHT NOW THIS FEELS more like *Destroy All Humans! 1.5* than a true sequel, but the original was such a blast, we can't help but be excited. Roll on autumn, so we can crash the Summer Of Love

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

The Hippies want peace, but don't let that stop you anal probing them

ALSO 3 MONTHS AWAY...

PUBLISHER **ATARI** | DEVELOPER **FRONTIER**
WEBSITE **WWW.ATARI.COM**

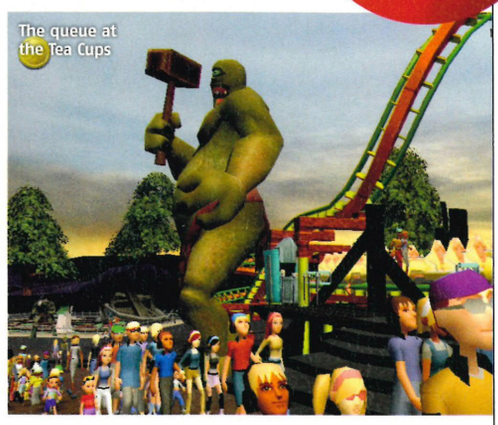
THRILLVILLE

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY *MIGHT* COME

Remember *Theme Park*? Of course you do. As the title suggests, it was a game that enabled you to create your own amusement park and charge the Earth for people to enter. (10/10 for realism on that front.) *Thrillville* works along similar lines, with a spot of PC sim *Rollercoaster Tycoon* (also developed by Frontier) thrown in. You create and manage a park made up of different themed areas, each populated by 1,000 ride-thirsty maniacs who you can chat to and, in a particularly enjoyable way of abusing your power, flirt with. Once you've got the first 1,000 people sufficiently happy, you move on to the next area of the park and work your magic there. With five parks in total and three themed areas to each, there's plenty of work to be done.

It's not all hard graft though. Each of the 100 attractions is playable once you've built it, so you can spend hours assembling various types of rollercoaster (25 in all) and then award yourself the first ride on each. Remote-control cars, Old West shootouts, bumper cars and arcades are some of the other attractions you can construct and play. The mini golf and go kart features sound especially promising: for each you can design the entire course yourself. ■ **BW**

PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk hands on


The queue at the Tea Cups

HOT OR NOT?

Shaping up to be a surprise hit on both PS2 and PSP

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

ETA 4 months
Nov 2006

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

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

PUBLISHER EIDOS | DEVELOPER SNOWBLIND STUDIOS | WEBSITE HTTP://JUSTICELEAGUEHEROS.WARNERBROS.COM

JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES

STILL HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO? HERE'S SIX OF 'EM

Maybe it's just us, but the whole 'action RPG' genre doesn't feel particularly superheroic. Taking its cue from the *X-Men: Legends* series, this is a top-down trawl and brawl, in which your team of do-gooders gradually level-up and learn new abilities. The characters here come from the DC Comics universe rather than Marvel, so that means you get to try on the tights of Superman, Batman, The Green Lantern, Flash, Martian Manhunter and Wonder Woman. And while characters like Manhunter and The Green Lantern aren't exactly A-listers, there's a great mix of powers to make up for it. Our favourite has to be a female magician called Zatanna. Okay, so we've never heard of her, but her penchant for Vegas-style spangly outfits and ability to turn villains into bunny rabbits puts her high on our list of gaming women we'd be too scared to talk to in a bar.

Aaaaaaanyway, the controls are almost identical to *X-Men: Legends* – which is no bad thing. L2 brings up your super powers, mapped onto the D-pad, enabling you to select special moves such as Supe's heat vision or Wonder Woman's lasso. You can also rip up chunks of scenery to throw around as well as the odd opponent.

It's classic comic-book Batman rather than the film version

The Green Lantern conjures up some help

Always with the robot armies!

It's simple to control and messing about with the various powers proves surprisingly addictive, especially if you're playing in the two-player co-op mode. The role-playing elements are also easy to get to grips with. Hammering the crap out of enemies slowly boosts your stats, and there's reasonable scope for tinkering with the different abilities, such as health recovery and projectile attacks.

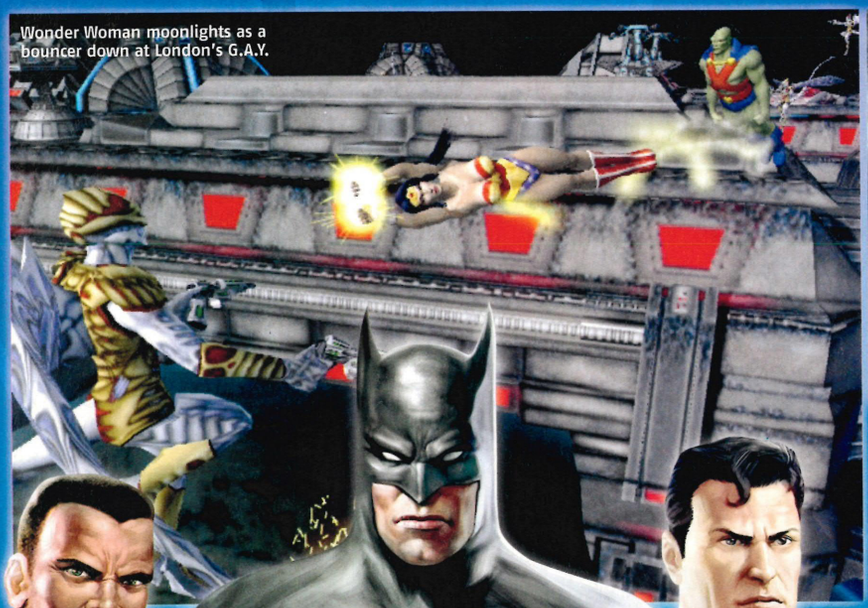
Problem is, right now it's all a bit *too* simple. The levels we played were basic dungeon hunts (albeit set in New York, space and an anonymous extra dimension) with progress relying on killing everything in your path. It's fun in short bursts and playing with a mate is a bonus, but will such simple pleasures hold our interest over a whole game? Particularly seeing as *Spider-Man 2* has already proved that superheroes are best-suited to *GTA*-style sandbox gaming. **LH**

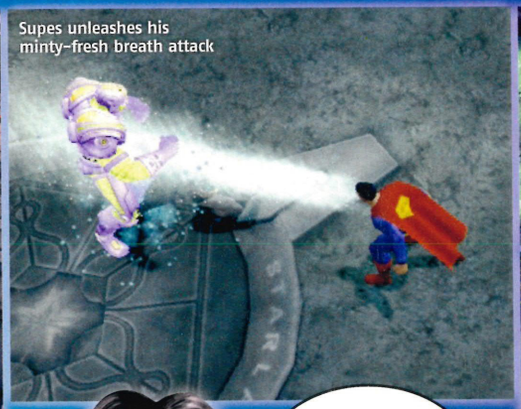
monitor PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

THIS IS AN ENJOYABLE, IF BASIC, superhero-themed RPG. We need to see more variety in the action before we start making our costumes though

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

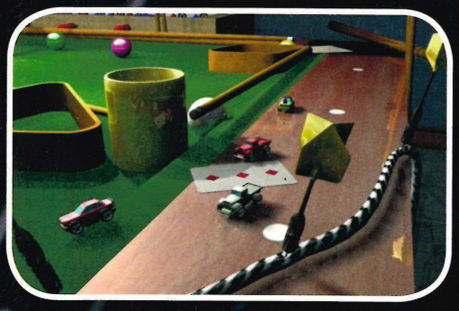

Wonder Woman moonlights as a bouncer down at London's G.A.Y.


Supes unleashes his minty-fresh breath attack

Micro Machines V4

BABY BRANDS HATCH?

GRAB SOME FRIENDS, START YOUR MICRO ENGINES AND PREPARE FOR THE CRAZIEST AND MOST ADDICTIVE MULTI-PLAYER MAYHEM EVER. WITH FIENDISH TRACKS AND HUNDREDS OF CARS TO COLLECT, IT'S THE MOST FUN YOU'LL HAVE THIS SUMMER!



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PlayStation 2

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www.brandshatch.co.uk

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It's on PS3

Take out frustration by hosing the slot machines

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK new info

PUBLISHER UBISOFT | DEVELOPER UBISOFT MONTREAL | WEBSITE WWW.RAINBOWSIXGAME.COM

RAINBOW SIX: VEGAS

REPEAT: THE CHIPS ARE DOWN. SHOOT THEM! SHOOT THE CHIPS!

Next-gen *Rainbow Six* will offer up tactical choices that have only been paid lip-service in the previous games. The action is now broken down into three main stages: observation, planning and assault. Before bursting into a room whistling the *Star Spangled Banner*, your Kevlar-clad boys need to scout it out first. In the observation stage you'll have Team Rainbow pushing snake-cams under doors, peering through windows, and even watching from across the street through the scope of a high-calibre sniper rifle.

Next comes the planning phase, in which you'll position the team for an attack on a terrorist-infested area. This is where the game really wants you to get creative. The classic option – to hammer the door down – is still there, but now you're free to pull off some incredible Hollywood-style entrances, such as fast-rappelling a man off the roof and in through a window. This brings us inevitably to the assault phase, where you finally get to storm in and hose the bad guys – ideally without notching up too many civilian casualties. (Keep it to single figures and you'll sleep fine.)

CRY FOR HELP

Preventing the casino punters from getting drilled is a major part of the *Rainbow Six Vegas* experience. The hostages are now much more than just anonymous sacks of pixels – not only do they look eerily lifelike, but they act like they're genuinely terrified of dying. They'll squirm in their captors' grasp, cry and even plead for the terrorists to spare their lives. Cap one by accident, or lose them in the crossfire, and not only will you fail the mission, but you'll feel like you've let everyone down. No need to cancel that high-fiving session just yet though – Team Rainbow's quartermaster has been working late to make sure you're kitted out better than the democracy-haters. *Vegas* features an eye-camera (similar to the Cross-com feature debuted in *Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter*) which feeds either spy-cam footage or intelligence briefings into your goggles.

Another new item is a riot-shield like the one in *Urban Chaos*. So, if your mind wandered during the planning stages of the mission, there's always the option to hide behind the shield as you charge through the fruit machines. Guns-blazing lunacy or surgically executed precision. Of such decisions men are made. ■ AH

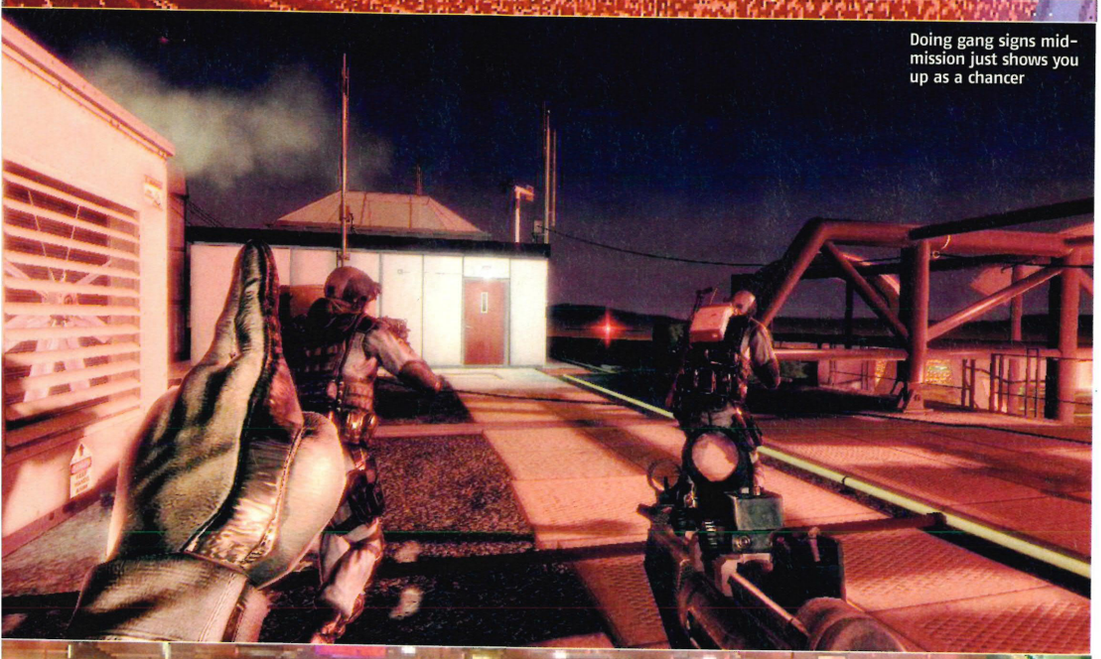
Patience, patience... oh screw it, LET'S GO!

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

***RAINBOW SIX* HAS** been rebuilt for the next-generation, and although the series was never a serious wallet-opener on PS2, we're tipping this to be a highlight in the PS3 launch line-up

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN



ALSO 4 MONTHS AWAY...

PUBLISHER **ATARI** | DEVELOPER **PARADIGM**
WEBSITE **WWW.ATARI.COM**

BATTLEZONE

TANKS, BUT NO THANKS...

25 years ago, *Battlezone* was encased in a faux-mahogany cabinet, cost 50p a go, and took pride of place in the spectacularly lo-fi surroundings (by today's standards) of a 1980s arcade. The premise was achingly simple: you controlled a tank and had to blow up everything that moved. A later version of the game upped the stakes with dual-joystick control for extra 'realism'. Decades later, *someone* has decided it's time for a re-imagining of the series on PSP. Stupid *someone*.

The result is a mass of stuttering blue, purple, grey and brown shapes (the tanks, apparently) which float about in levels so clichéd, we're too embarrassed to describe them. The monotonous 'drive around in circles, shoot tank, get shot, respawn, repeat' is like a pounding headache. The controls are overly complex for what's supposed to be a fast-paced arena-based deathmatch experience, and the weapons uninspiring. The concept of the hover tank, too, is flawed – a 'tank', which is heavy, but flies 20ft into the air when you hit a bump. It feels very wrong. WiFi multiplayer modes are in place to save what is from the outset a terrible single-player prospect, but in all honesty, who cares? ■ **GW**

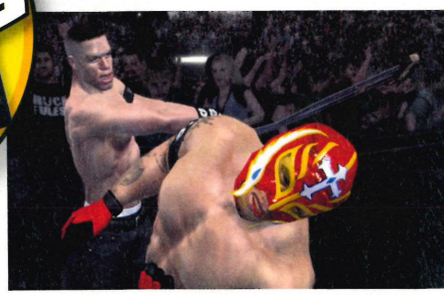
PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk hands on

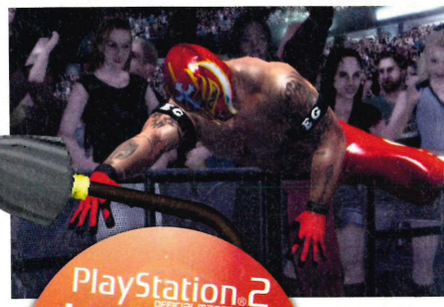
HOT OR NOT?

Pointless exhumation of another yesteryear 'classic'

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

Ah, the trusty umbrella. Weapon of choice for commuters everywhere





PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

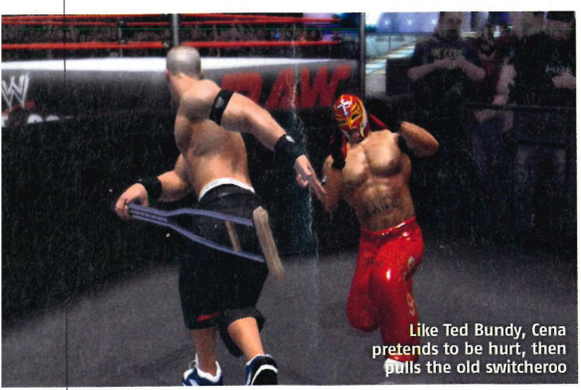
PUBLISHER THQ | DEVELOPER YUKES | WEBSITE WWW.THQ-GAMES.COM

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007

ALL CHANGE ON NEXT-GEN, BUT IS IT FOR THE BETTER?

Forget 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. *WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2007* sees huge changes across the board as the series gears up for arrival on PS3. The most notable revision is that the traditional control system – where moves were triggered by pressing the D-pad in tandem with ⊗ for strikes or ◎ for grapples – has gone. Instead, nigh-on everything has been moved over to the right analogue stick. Performing a standard grapple move like a hiptoss is now as simple as getting near your opponent and tapping the right stick in any direction. Each direction – ↑, ↓, →, or ← – then performs a different move.

This moveset is expanded by 'strong grapple' moves. These are pulled off by pressing any direction on the right analogue while holding R1, and have a heavier impact on your opponent but are generally easier to reverse.

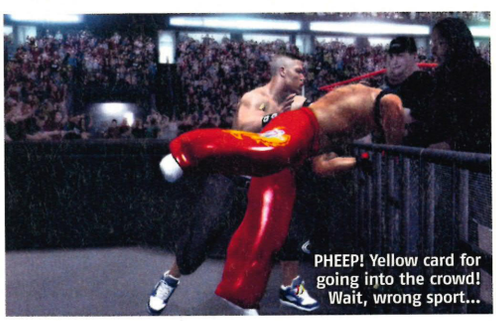


Like Ted Bundy, Cena pretends to be hurt, then pulls the old switcheroo

The other new type of grapple type is context-sensitive and initiated by pressing R3. Take a suplex as an example. Pressing ↑ on the right analogue stick lifts your opponent into the air. Keeping ↑ held down keeps him upright, while moving ↓ slams him to the canvas. Alternatively, you can tip-toe towards the ropes and then guillotine him on the top strand.

FEEL THE PAIN

It's a pleasant touch, but it's too early to say whether this will have a major impact on the overall gameplay. In contrast, the environmental hotspots we encountered were a great laugh. Drag an opponent towards the steps and you can repeatedly slam his head on the steel by moving the right stick up and down. Doing this drains your stamina, but it's hilarious, and looks exactly like the real (choreographed) thing. Similarly, a small section of the arena is cordoned off specifically for you and your opponent to ram each other into tables, speakers, and metal barriers. Best of all, you can 'rest' your opponent on a table before ascending a handily placed piece of scaffolding and leaping off with a death-defying moonsault or elbow drop.



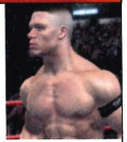
PHEEP! Yellow card for going into the crowd! Wait, wrong sport...

The downside is that, on first play, the new control system seems less natural than the old one. Yukes has introduced it in an attempt to attract new fans to the series, but the knock-on effect is that *SmackDown* veterans will find it difficult to get their heads round at first. At the moment, we're concerned that this might be change for the sake of change, but thankfully there's still plenty of time for the system to be tweaked and improved before the PS3 launch.

As you can see from these new screens, the game looks incredible. So good, in fact, that even these sumptuous shots don't do it justice. John Cena and Triple H's facial expressions throughout matches are frighteningly lifelike. (Triple H joins Kurt Angle and Rey Mysterio as the superstars confirmed so far.) Last word, though, has to go to the you-can-almost-smell-it sweat effects. We haven't seen perspiration like that since Sven's forehead when L'il Mickey's knee got knacked. ■ **BW**

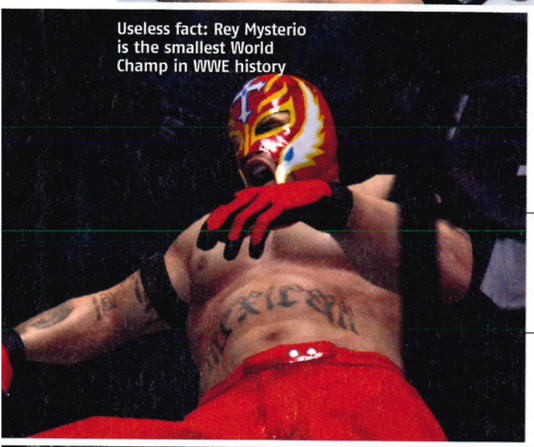
monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

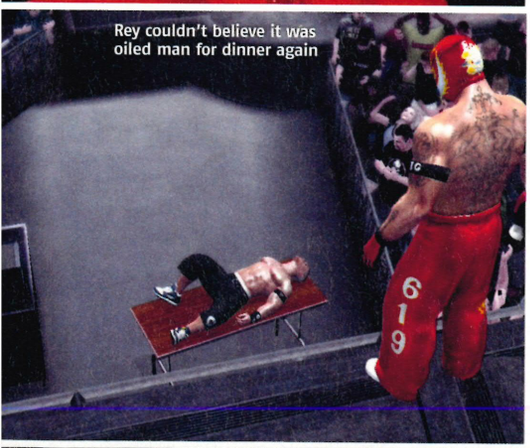
SHAPING UP TO BE one of the PS3's finest looking games, and guaranteed to be authentic – but right now we're struggling to adapt to the new control system, and that's a concern

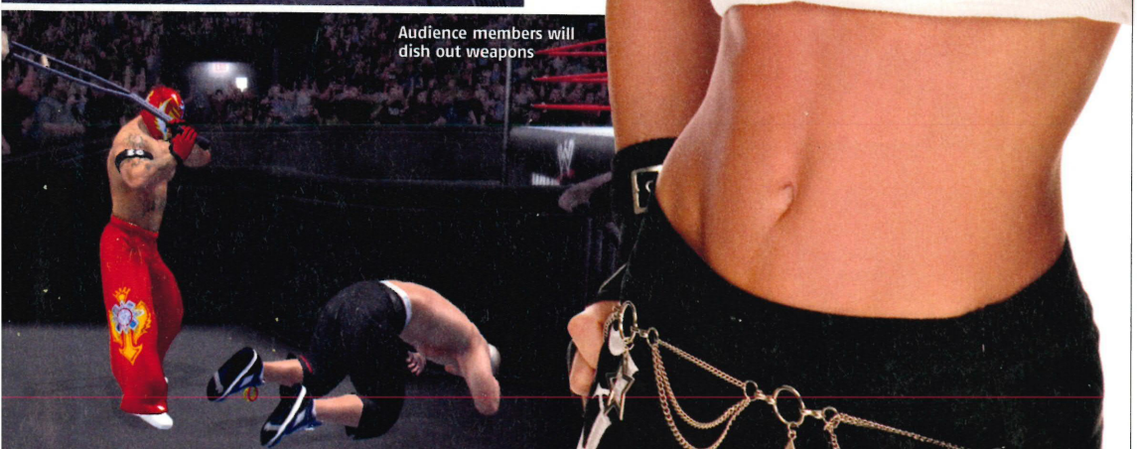


TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

New ECW addition Kurt Angle gives John Cena one in the 'bread basket'


Useless fact: Rey Mysterio is the smallest World Champ in WWE history


Rey couldn't believe it was oiled man for dinner again


Audience members will dish out weapons

ALSO 4 MONTHS AWAY...

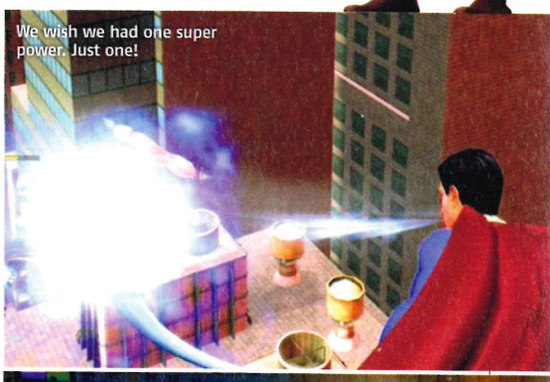
PUBLISHER **ELECTRONIC ARTS** | DEVELOPER **EA TIBURON**
WEBSITE **WWW.EA.COM/SUPERMAN_RETURNS**

SUPERMAN RETURNS

IT'S NOT LIKE THE MAN OF STEEL TO BE SO LATE

Superman delayed? What, couldn't he just, like, reverse time by flying around the world *really* fast? Pah! At least the new trailer shows promise. In it, Supes rips the globe off the *Daily Planet*'s roof, flies down to street level and uses his super breath to turn it into a bowling ball. His breath's so powerful that cars flip over and fly down the street like big metal leaves in a storm.

We've also seen Supes flying through the city at top speed, buildings flashing by in a blur as his cape billows behind him. While the freedom reminds us of *Spider-Man*, it's the sheer velocity that really impresses, with *Burnout* the very obvious influence. The fighting looks pacey, if a little predictable, but a boss battle with an opponent ten times Superman's size is much more eye-catching. The only method of attack is to pick up a building and lob it at his stomach. It's always the way. ■ **BW**


We wish we had one super power. Just one!

Cars provide a convenient projectile. Mind that child!

HOT OR NOT?

You've guessed right – it's still looking super, man

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

ETA 4 months
Nov 2006

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK hands on

PUBLISHER **ATARI** | DEVELOPER **Z-SLIDE** | WEBSITE **WWW.HOTPXL.COM**

HOT PXL

HYPERACTIVE MINI-GAMING MAKES FUN FOR IDLE HANDS

Ideal for a generation whose attention span is measured in picoseconds, *Hot PXL* is one of the first PSP titles to really grasp what works on handheld. It's a parade of quick-burst mini-games thrown at you with minimal instructions and a rapidly diminishing time limit in which to beat them – a formula pioneered by Nintendo's *Wario Ware* series, and *Bishi Bashi* before it. *Hot PXL* does enough to differentiate itself with the occasional dollop of sauciness and a graphical style that's heavily influenced by skate culture. In fact, most of the games look like MTV idents created by Scandinavian design 'collectives'. Here's a run through ten of them, which amounts to about, ooh, 50 seconds of gameplay. ■ **GW**

1 TRAFFIC FIGHT

Whack ⊗ so the fist pumps the on-screen traffic-crossing button. This makes the green and red men have a fight. We win with relative ease. We are, after all, just hitting a button.

2 CHASE THE DECK

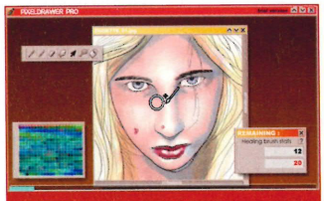
Straight forward, but hard. It's Chase The Lady but with skateboards. Unlike playing with an East End grifter, you can actually guess the right one if you're clever. That's another life lost, then.

3 SPACE CAKES

Eh, bloody hell... has it started? Yes. It has. And we completely don't understand what to do. There's a man with a rocket-powered shopping trolley and he scoops up the things on-screen. But we don't know which buttons to use.

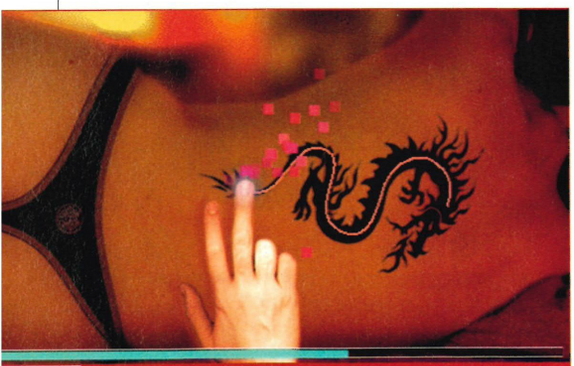
4 SKATER DROP

Very odd. Move a half-pipe from side-to-side to position it for a skater being dropped out of a helicopter. Joyously basic blood effect noted as skater hits sharp edge of ramp.



5 SPOTTY GIRL

Very clever. Using an image manipulation program (like they use to shave a bit of flab off Abi Titmuss) remove the model's unsightly pimples. Requires far more dexterity than we can summon in the five-second time limit.

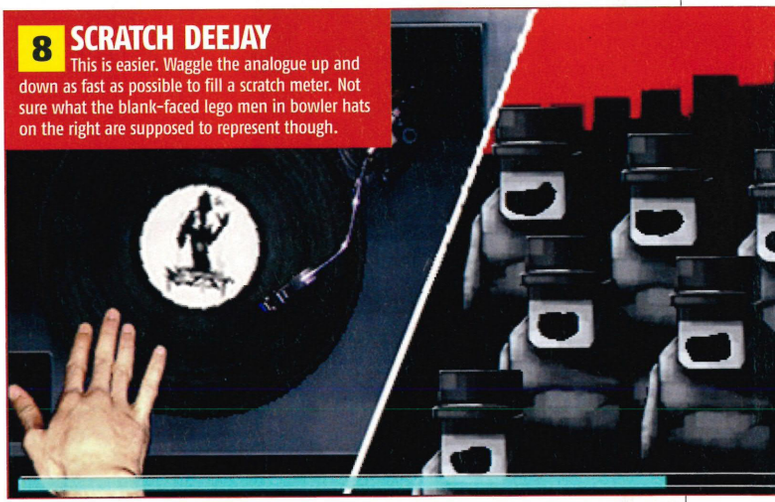


6 ORGASMIC TATTOO

Trace a line down the lady's back (following her tattoo) to hear a badly faked female orgasm sound. We had to do this about 300 times before we got it right. And, like we said, it was faked.

7 DIRTY VOYEUR

Odd and slightly disturbing. Aim a camera zoom lens over a window to catch a voyeuristic candid cam shot of a woman with her arse out. A blatant rip-off of the *Silent Scope* extra-life power-up.

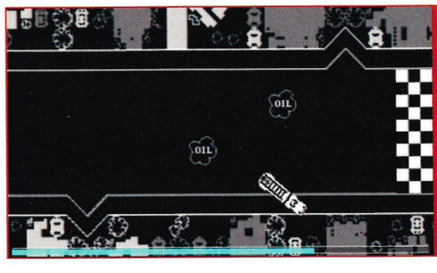


8 SCRATCH DEEJAY

This is easier. Waggle the analogue up and down as fast as possible to fill a scratch meter. Not sure what the blank-faced lego men in bowler hats on the right are supposed to represent though.

9 OLD MAN'S HANDS

More confusion as we fail to grasp the simple concept of moving the old man's shaky hands over a telephone keypad, dialling the number written on his hand. Again, our lack of skill with the sensitive analogue loses yet another life as we inaccurately mash at the buttons.



10 TRUCK DRIVER

A retro-inspired black and white top-down truck-driving challenge – steer the lorry round some oil to the finish line. Not into the wall. Which causes us to fail. And it's game over. 50-second gaming – it's the future!

monitor PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

IT'S OBVIOUSLY 'BORROWED' from Nintendo's equally twitchy *Wario Ware*, but who cares when the fun is this deranged. *Hot PXL* is a great addition to PSP, and great for on-the-move gaming

HOT OR NOT?

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

NSPCC
Don't hide it. FULL STOP.
Registered charity number 216401
If you've been sexually abused, you don't have to hide it any more.
Angry? Scared? Lonely? There's no need to put on a brave face. When you're ready, there are now several ways to contact someone who cares, will believe you and can help make it stop. Visit donthideit.com or text ADVICE to 60022 or call ChildLine.
ChildLine
0800 1111

The special moves are ludicrous but entertaining

PUBLISHER **CAPCOM** | DEVELOPER **CLOVER STUDIO** | WEBSITE **WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM**

GOD HAND

NO, NOT MARADONA'S... THE OTHER ONE

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK **hands on**

After some consideration, the consensus is that we'd be willing to have our right hands chopped off on the proviso that we'd immediately have it replaced by the hand of god, with accompanying powers. Water into wine, healing the sick, tricking Stormtroopers and so on. In Capcom's latest, you play Gene, a traveller who has his right arm forcibly removed by a mercenary while attempting to rescue a damsel in distress. (These have-a-go heroes never learn!) Bizarrely, he immediately gets a replacement limb imbued with all manner of secret powers. The trouble is that every nutter in existence wants the all-powerful arm, so your mission is to keep it intact. Oh, and save the planet. Natch.

The opening level is standard beat-'em-up stuff. Immediately swamped by baddies, your instinct is to randomly smash ◎ and ⊗ and hope for the best. And it's a good instinct – when used against the dumb goons found early on. However, you need to approach boss battles with a little more finesse. You can customise which punches and kicks will form your combo attacks. The pause menu enables you to assign a different move to each face button. We had most success with the Pimp Smack – basically, an effeminate but effective slap to the chops – and the superbly named Fist Of Justice. This is little more than a knuckle sandwich delivered to the eye from close range, but it does the job handsomely.

SMASH, HIT

As you unleash combos on enemies, a purple gauge slowly fills. This is your God Hand meter, and once it's full you're able to unleash special moves with your magic digits. For instance, the Divine Smash sees the screen crackle with lightning as you drive your glowing fist into an enemy's midriff and send them flying. To activate these moves you hold R1 and then have a few of seconds to select an attack from the on-screen menu. It takes some getting used to, but the end result is often spectacular.

As well as laying the smack down on the local toughs, you're also able to smash the scenery into tiny pieces. Windows can be shattered, while tables and chairs can be easily slammed into opponents. We also found a lead pipe, which slammed into enemy skulls with a particularly satisfying 'thunk'.

The tide of face-punching is relentless though, and there's a real danger of it becoming routine very quickly. Discovering new moves helps, but it's going to be a big ask for the developer to keep this up once the initial excitement of having a magical fist has worn off. Clover's plan is to infuse the game with self-effacing humour wherever possible. For example, at the end of the first level Gene rocks up to a pot-bellied, bling-decorated lardbucket and exclaims, "Finally, a boss battle." This nod to the game's linear path raises a smile, as do some of the hammy moves on offer like WWE-style headlocks and DDTs.

We can't say the same about the game's music. The tune on the opening level sounds like a second-rate Beach Boys tribute act performing the soundtrack to *From Dusk Till Dawn*. Badly. Still, we've survived the new Keane album on the office stereo, so we can live with a few lame cowboy tunes. After all, if the soundtrack turns out to be *God Hand*'s only major flaw, this will be a strong addition to PS2's beat-'em-up ranks. ■ **BW**

The Lord's arm is easily identifiable thanks to its permanent golden glow

monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

GIVEN DEVELOPER CLOVER'S track record on *Viewtiful Joe* and *Okami*, we expected this to be ace. And *God Hand* is a laugh, but right now a question mark dangles over its ability to provide lasting appeal

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

Smashing opponents into walls is a real thrill

Gene goes in chav-style

Today's lesson: being smacked with wood hurts

It's the Wild West meets WWE in the mind of a Japanese madman

Sometimes even a divine arm is no substitute for a swift kick in the stones

WORDS: LEON HURLEY ILLUSTRATIONS: PMA MARKETING LTD

Is this the sexiest sh on

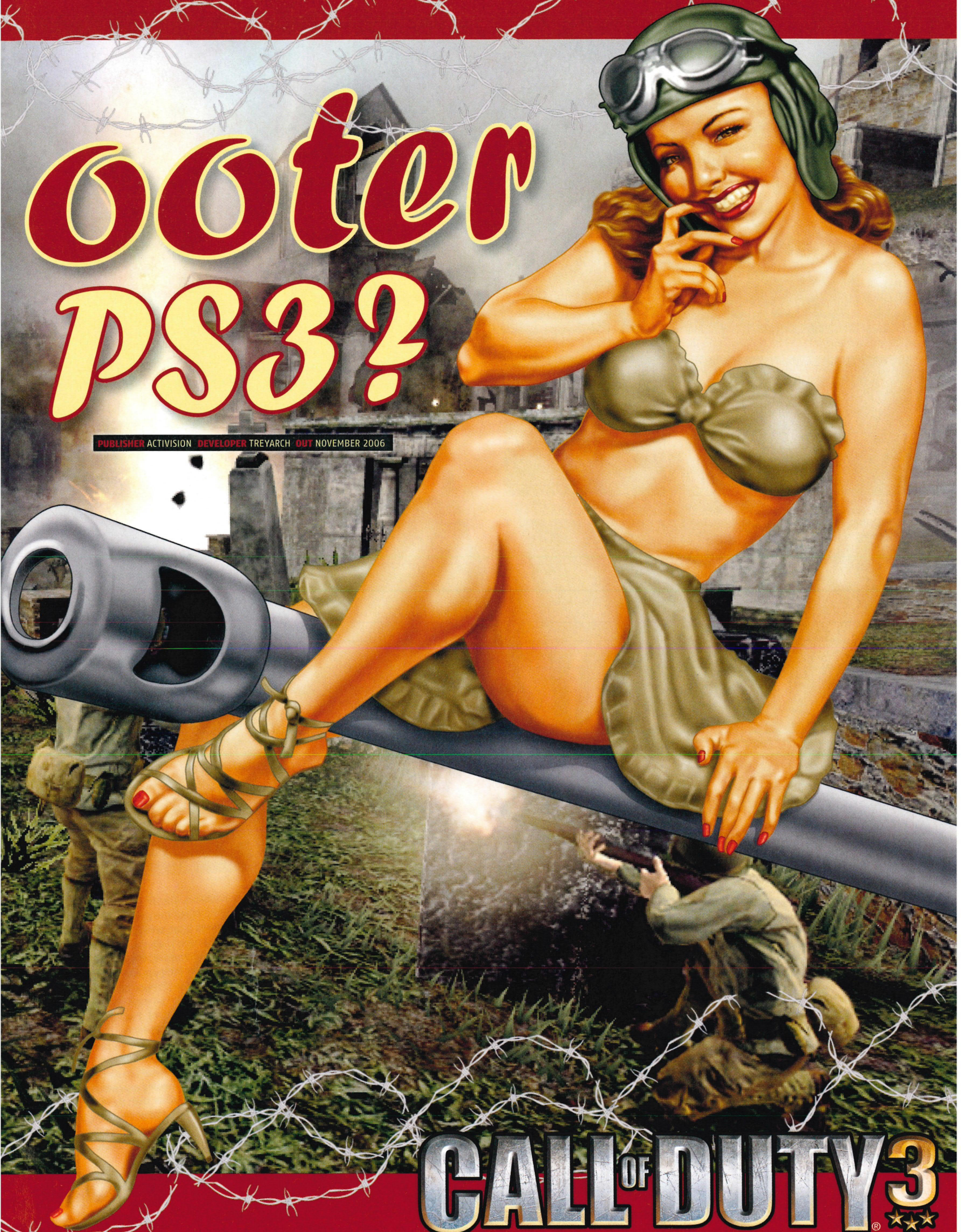
Aaaa-ten-shun! Call Of Duty 3 sets the next-gen standard

We try to maintain a certain level of decorum when we visit videogame developers. It's all about playing your cards close to your chest, not appearing too keen and looking like an experienced journalist. What you most definitely do not want to do is shout "HOLY SHIT! DID YOU *SEE* THAT?!" at the top of your voice because you got over excited. Yup, *real* professional.

But we weren't screeching like a child at a fireworks display because we don't get out enough. No sir. If fact, we get out plenty, and we see enough games to know 'spectacular' when we see it.

Call Of Duty 3 is the future of shooters. Not for reinventing the wheel, because it doesn't. There's a very familiar formula on display here (enemies x shooting ÷ objectives = mission). But everything else – from the visuals, to the AI, effects, and even the sound – has a depth of detail and resounding impact far beyond anything we've experienced before.

OPS2 SHOOTER SPECIAL!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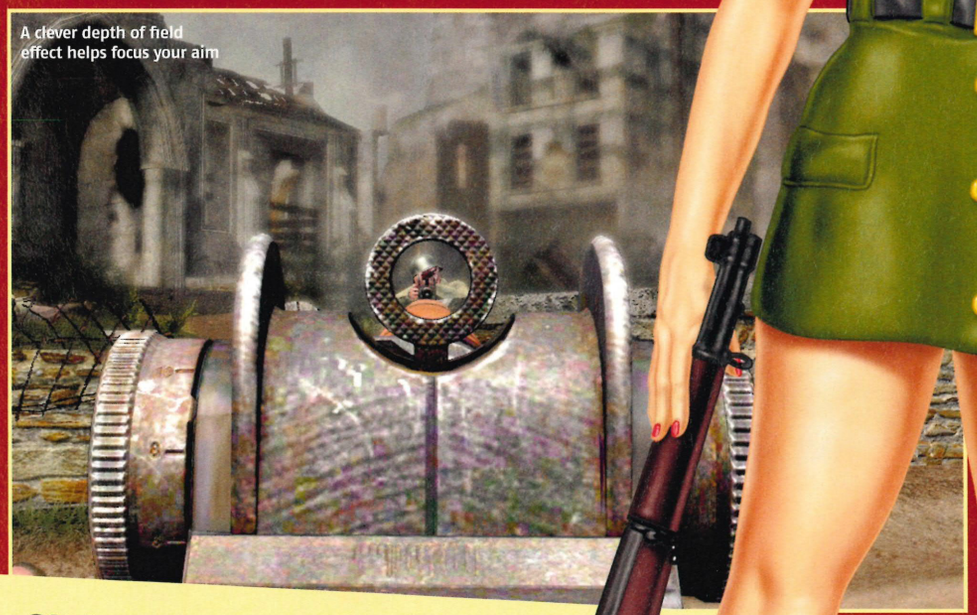
PS3?
PUBLISHER ACTIVISION DEVELOPER TREYARCH OUT NOVEMBER 2006
CALL OF DUTY 3

You'll have to make every shot count if you want to see your sweetheart again



A clever depth of field effect helps focus your aim

3

GOD'S ARMY

Take our first experience of battle. It's a fight to capture a small town in France called Saint-Lô from the Germans. The mission begins a short distance from a small rural church and we're immediately struck by the number of people surrounding us. Around 25 US troops are gathered for the attack. As the signal to charge goes up, it's instant chaos. Everyone starts running towards a wall surrounding a graveyard. At first it's not clear exactly what's meant to be happening as soldiers gather at the perimeter. But then one of the other GIs beckons us over. He steadies himself against the wall, locks his hands into a brace position and with a button press we're boosted upwards to scramble over the wall.

Once inside the church grounds we get a real taste of what next-gen warfare really means. Soldiers are everywhere, swarming between the scant cover of the tombs and gravestones. The air is filled with the crackle and thump of gunfire and distant explosions. It makes *Black* seem like a lullaby by comparison. The screen is alive with motion. Even the *grass* is impressive: it's flattened into trails by our squad's progress and shudders violently in answer to grenade blasts (disturbed vegetation can even give away a hidden enemy's position). People are shouting, pointing, planes roar through the sky and artillery fire churns the open ground ahead. And this isn't just confined to occasional set-pieces – things are happening everywhere, constantly. Rather than the hero being the centre of attention, a one-man army against the Hun; he's just a small,

CALL OF DUTY 3

WISH YOU WERE HERE?

France is lovely this time of... HIT THE DIRT!

1 Expect to see 70+ soldiers on-screen, creating the biggest, most chaotic battles you've ever seen. The advanced AI means they'll communicate with each other, as well as react to the enemy. Tactical awareness takes into account enemy *and* friendly positions, as well as destructible cover.

2 The explosions are terrifying. There's a visible heat wave with the initial blast and the resulting clouds of smoke pick up the light from the flames around them. Huge amounts of the environment are destructible, including the buildings and terrain.

3 The Battle Chatter system – where people shout for covering fire or indicate enemy positions – has been overhauled. Not only is there a *lot* more yelling this time, your squad will also use hand signals to communicate visually across the battlefield

4 Grass and other vegetation can be crushed under foot, leaving a visible trail as you move though it. Each individual leaf blows in the wind and rocks visibly when there's an explosion near by.

insignificant part of a massive battle, raging in every direction. It's a bewildering and genuinely startling sensory barrage. Honestly, if we had the remote for the enormo-screen all this is unfolding on, we'd be turning it down right now.

FEEL THE POWER

What's absolutely unmistakeable is how next-gen everything looks. The environments are rendered in incredibly lush, organic detail. Even for a warzone. There isn't a trace of the straight lines or sharp corners that usually scream 'videogame'. A lot of the detail, however, isn't initially obvious, as Jason Blundel, Treyarch's next-gen producer explains, "Things are subtle, but the eye picks them out, creating a greater sense of realism. Materials reflect light in different ways, for example, a metal helmet, skin or cloth. Characters even cast shadows on their own bodies." He goes on to explain "Other things are more obvious. The PS3's power allows us to fill up the screen so we can get more people in view, more

THERE'S ISN'T A TRACE OF THE STRAIGHT LINES OR CORNERS THAT SCREAM 'VIDEOGAME'

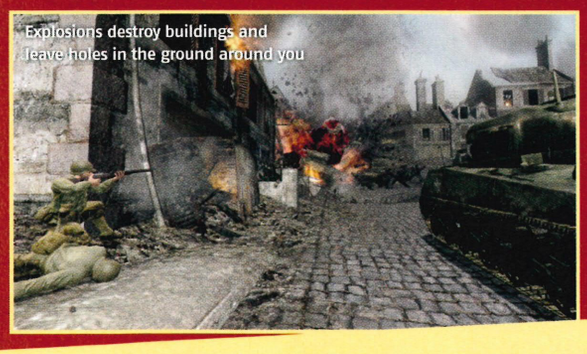
animation. You're not just having a battle with one guy; your periphery is filled with all this action." The result is 70 or more characters running around at any one time, all without sacrificing any of the glorious detail and animation.

The graphical muscle is arguably most evident when something big goes bang. Okay, it is geeky to get excited about explosions (what next, water effects?) but that's what caused us to drop our normally Bond-like cool. During the battle, an RPG is fired at a house occupied by the Nazis. The resulting blast is *phenomenal*. Rather than crudely overlaid smoke effect, the explosion is a tangible, physical entity. Black clouds and heat haze jet out, shattering the windows and tearing the roof apart. After the initial shock – and it *is* a shock – you start noticing how the smoke even reflects the light around it. At first glowing orange from the flames, before fading into a greasy, impenetrable black. As the fumes continue to pour out of the holes punched into the broken building, the smoke is lit up one final time – as two burning Nazis clamber screaming from the windows. It's an uncomfortable moment that manages to convey the repercussions of war far more harshly than any of the gunplay.

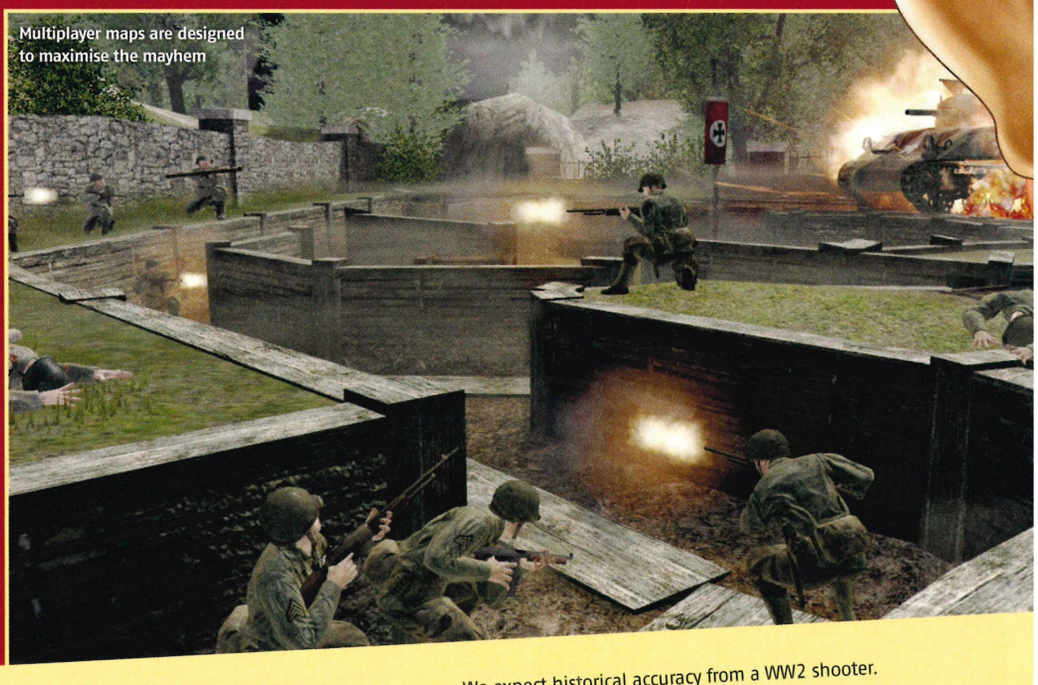
NORMANDY'S HISTORY

Google 'The Falaise Pocket' and you'll discover an encounter that makes D-Day look like a breeze. It was a push from the French coast to surround thousands of Hitler's best troops, forcing them to surrender. It's this offensive that forms the backbone of *Call Of Duty 3*'s campaign, and not only did it happen *after* D-Day, but it managed to rack up ten times the death toll.

"Well I don't care what you say, it didn't look like this in the brochure"



Explosions destroy buildings and leave holes in the ground around you



Multiplayer maps are designed to maximise the mayhem

D-DAY IS HISTORY

In a relatively radical move for a Second World War shooter the events in *COD3* are actually set *after* the D-Day beach landings. Which – hallelujah – means no more beach levels. Instead, the thrust of the campaign concentrates on the Normandy Breakout. This was the allies' attempt to push out from the coast and into occupied France. From a gameplay point of view this does two things. It introduces playable Polish and Canadians forces (joining the English and Americans) for the first time. It also provides a coherent, flowing narrative. One of the more confusing elements from previous games was the way the story hopped from one country to another. You unquestionably got some great missions, but there was little connection between different stages. Stalingrad shootouts one minute, tanks across Africa the next. This time all the various battles, objectives and nationalities are focused on the same goal: defeating the Nazis at an area called Falaise. As a result there's far greater cohesion to the plot with the outcome of one mission linking directly into the progress of another. We're particularly looking forward to an SAS mission in which you rendezvous with the French Resistance and disrupt the Nazi supply lines, weakening them for a later attack.

EVENTS IN *COD3* ARE ACTUALLY SET *AFTER* THE D-DAY LANDINGS

We expect historical accuracy from a WW2 shooter. And in *COD3*'s case that includes interviewing surviving soldiers – collecting their stories to develop missions, rather than just basing them on records – and shipping one of the last fully working Sherman tanks to a firing range near Mexico to record the sound of its 75mm cannon. Bringing all this together is what lead designer Jeremy Luyties calls "cinematic intensity". He explains, "One thing that's always got in the way is the break between levels. So there's no loading bar anymore. Now, in-between missions, you get a cinematic story-telling element. This ties up the end of the last mission using the in-game engine, tells the story of what's happening overall with the war, and then leads to an intro sequence to the next mission. During which time the level has been loading in the background. Moving

CALL OF DUTY 3

THE BEST BIT

Here's the *exact* moment we spilt our tea

What you're missing out on is the sound of the church bell clanging off the sides of the tower as it falls, before thudding to the ground as dust and debris fly out the door.

from one story to the next is seamless."

When we experience one of these mission intros it starts innocently enough. A group of marines are being rattled around in the back of a truck, talking as the road rolls away in the background. It's strikingly realistic. An effect achieved by motion capturing the sequence in real time, with the entire cast in a truck being shaken on a sound stage. The soldiers' conversation turns to laughter as another squad member appears on the road, running to catch up. His friends shout encouragement and hold out helping hands as the pursuing soldier sprints along, ramming his helmet firmly on his head with a free hand. The first explosion comes as a complete surprise. We've just enough time to register the latecomer's broken body flying through the air as the road erupts with mortar fire. Laughter turns to panicked shouting as the truck veers wildly across the road. There's one last violent swerve and it rolls over.

The next thing we see is the sky as two soldiers drag our injured body across the road. There's a volley of 'thwip' noises and a metallic clang. One of the rescuers jerks suddenly and he falls from sight, a spray of blood bursting from his helmet. The camera twists around to show the crashed truck, lying on its side. Some soldiers are picking themselves up while others lie motionless. Suddenly a survivor runs up to the screen, thrusts a rifle towards the camera and the level begins. Okay, it's very *Private Ryan* – but there's no doubting the drama.

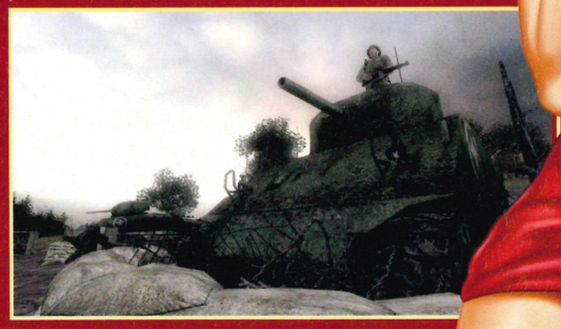
FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT

These movie-quality cut-scenes aren't just passive elements top and tailing a level either. There are dramatic, interactive episodes throughout, referred to as 'Battle Actions'. With an obvious nod to *Resident Evil 4* and *Fahrenheit* these require button-pushing sequences to achieve certain goals. For example, in previous *Call Of Duty* games planting a charge on an enemy tank just consisted of standing next to it and holding ⊗. Now it's a much more theatrical, animated experience as you hit buttons in response to prompts. The on-screen events then match the real life process of creating the bomb – shaping the charge, preparing a fuse and so on

IN YOUR FACE!

When a Nazi surprises you there's a vicious scuffle as you wrestle each other for the right to live. At the moment it's a match-the-button minigame – but we reckon this is the perfect chance to use the PS3 pad's motion sensor.

Tanks are a welcome addition to the multiplayer matches



And it has to be achieved in the thunderous confusion of the battlefield.

The most impressive Battle Action, however, has to be the new mêlée combat system. We encounter this while creeping through an abandoned house. Without warning, a Nazi leaps into view, his scowling face filling the screen as he fights to steal our rifle. It's an intense struggle as we bounce off of the walls and roll across the floor. By hammering the shoulder buttons he's slowly overpowered, punched to the ground and shot before he can draw his pistol. Like the burning building previously, it's an oddly uncomfortable victory. What makes it stand out though is the quality of the 'acting'.

NO MAN DIES ALONE

During the scuffle the Nazi's face is full of determination and anger to begin with, gradually moving through panic and finally fear as he realises he's losing. What's exceptionally chilling is that the performance is so persuasive that we can pinpoint the *exact* moment that doubt flickers across his eyes. There's almost a feeling of empathy before the instinct for survival pulls the trigger. When we ask about the possibility of using of the PS3 controller's motion-sensing technology to physically wrestle with the enemy we're greeted with broad smiles and told to "hang in there."

IT'S CHILLING – WE CAN PINPOINT THE EXACT MOMENT THAT DOUBT FLICKERS ACROSS OUR ENEMY'S EYES

Of course, any shooter worth its salt needs a great multiplayer option. And *Call Of Duty 3* is no exception. There's just as much intensity to be found playing with friends as you'd

CALL OF DUTY 3

HAVE YOU GOT IT IN LARGE?

This is what Activision does with NASA technology in *COD3*

These must be the most accurate uniforms in a game *ever*. To guarantee authenticity, developer Treyarch dressed up life-size mannequins in real WW2 costumes and then scanned them straight into the PS3 using the same sort of laser technology NASA has to check the space shuttle for holes. The process is shown to the right.

1) The whole outfit is scanned like a 3D photocopy, before 2) being turned in to a game model by adding details and a head. Then 3) the colours and skin are added to create the finished soldier.

IT'S ON PS2 AS WELL!

Call Of Duty 3 is also looking very strong on PS2 – the visuals have simply been scaled down (less people on screen, for example). So whatever format you play, you'll still be getting an kickass WW2 experience.

get in the impressive single-player campaign. 24 people can go head-to-head on a variety of maps ranging from claustrophobic buildings to wide-open spaces scarred with trenches. And in a first for the series there'll be vehicles to commandeer in multiplayer. Tanks and jeeps are in there, but our favourite has to be the motorbike with a sidecar – fast, manoeuvrable and capable of 180° handbrake turns. The bikes, like all the rides, take multiple passengers, so we predict more than a few arguments over the headset about who gets to drive.

NEW SKILLS, NEW KILLS

There are also some new soldier classes for the career minded. Armour-busting support gunners and scouts, capable of calling in air strikes, are among some of the new skills to get to grips with. And there's a new game mode, called, rather fittingly, 'War'. Here, teams have to work together to capture strategically important areas on the map, with victory achieved by forcing your opponents out of their base.

It's hard to get across just how stunning *Call Of Duty 3* looks in action with only screenshots to look at. Treyarch's aim, to create "a living battlefield", has been beautifully achieved, with an incredible range of expression and subtlety to the environment. From bushes that sway gently in the breeze, to threads of smoke curling around the remains of shattered buildings. Similarly, the characters within this world are eerily realistic. Combining motion capture and convincing facial animations to create a cast that you actually believe in. It's by far one of the best examples of next-gen production values we seen so far. Add to this *COD3*'s unquestioned shooter credentials and you have an amazingly tantalising prospect for PlayStation 3. November can't come quick enough. ■

WORDS: TIM CLARK

JOIN UP NOW

Haze *is the first PS3 shooter from the creators of TimeSplitters, Free Radical Design. It's set in a world where war is business, and business is booming...*

OPS2 SHOOTER SPECIAL!

Haze is a riddle, wrapped in an enigma, stuffed down the sofa of confusion. Not that you'd know from looking at it. Judged purely on the visuals, *Haze* looks like another one of several PS3 shooters set in the near future and featuring a (now seemingly ubiquitous) private military company. In this case it's the Mantel Corporation, a vast multinational business involved in all kinds of commerce, including running its own high-tech army-for-hire. But trying to simplify *Haze* does it a disservice. There's a lot more going on than initially meets the eye. And when you scratch the (admittedly very pretty) surface, things quickly start to get strange.

The game is developed by Free Radical Design, the Nottingham-based studio responsible for the *TimeSplitters* trilogy. Choosing to do a shooter as their first next-gen project might seem obvious, but it's not quite so simple. When we spoke to co-founder David Doak a few issues ago*, he told us how much he'd love to make a sequel to *Second Sight*, the psychic actioner that used fractured chronology to tell its twisty story. Although *Haze* is a brand new property, we reckon it shares the same, sinister spirit. You play Jake Carpenter, a new Mantel recruit. (His initials are JC, his last name is Carpenter... an obvious Christ-like figure perhaps, or have we gone conspiracy mad?) In the demo we saw, Carpenter's squad of supersoldiers are dropped into an impossibly sharp-looking South American jungle, and proceed to cut a swathe through the rebel forces they've been sent to suppress. The demo ends as you gun down an unarmed rebel mid-surrender, followed by a garbled warning from your superiors as the screen warps and bleaches. Curious.

WORKING FOR THE MAN

Aside from the playable demo created to showcase the game, Free Radical also made a spoof promotional film for Mantel. It's all shit-eating smiles, sharp suits and promises of a better tomorrow. It's also clearly inspired by the satirical adverts peppered through Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi movies, and the implication has to be that, like *Robocop*'s Omni Consumer Products, Mantel's obsession with profiteering means it's not to be trusted. Hoping to discover the truth, we contacted scriptwriter Rob Yescombe and creative director Derek Littlewood.

"Corporations exist purely to facilitate the making of money," says Yescombe. "According to Western law, corporations are defined as people. And if a corporation were a person it would fit all the World Health Organisation's criteria for psychopaths, including reckless disregard for others, repeated lying and inability to question themselves. Imagine that kind of mind in charge of an army." He goes on to point out that Mantel isn't *necessarily* a psychopathic kind of firm because it has a strong code of ethics, pays its troops well, and does a lot for charidee. But we aren't buying it...

PUBLISHER UBISOFT
DEVELOPER FREE RADICAL DESIGN
OUT MARCH 2007

*Doaky is our favourite 'man of games'. Unfortunately, during our *TimeSplitters* retrospective feature we attributed a quote about the multiplayer in *Future Perfect* being slightly weak to him when it was, in fact, our opinion. Sorry Dave. Still mates?

HAZE

Remember – 'near future' means big, bad-ass toys

THE WORLD

Graphical cock-waving used to be all about who could make the fanciest water effect. These days, the jungle's where it's at for next-gen show-offs. In *Haze*, the fancy foliage has gameplay implications too – with intelligent enemies using the long grass and dense trees to outflank your men.

THE GUNS

Mantel Corp equips its men with the finest weapons ever made. The game is set 25 years into the future, so the guns are still ballistic-based – which is good news, because we'll take big dirty bangs over pastel lasers any day.

Particularly as it transpires that Mantel keeps its soldiers drugged off their tits. "In our daily lives, we take all sorts of grim stimulants," says Yescombe. "E-numbers, caffeine, sweeteners, colouring, sugar... The Mantel soldiers are fed a super-healthy diet, and instead of all the crap we cram into ourselves to stay perky, the soldiers are given Nectar. It's basically Coffee Mark II." The next question is, 'Where can we get some?' but Littlewood's too busy explaining Nectar's effects. "It will make the soldiers stronger, more accurate and more aware, turning them into first-class fighters. The great thing is, this helps minimise the timescale and death toll of any conflict they are involved in – proof of Mantel's ongoing efforts to improve the world we live in." Yeah, one bullet at a time.

FANCY COMING IN FOR A COFFEE?

Nectar is an all-purpose combat enhancement, and it's set to play a huge part, both in terms of gameplay and plot. Using the stimulant your men will be able to access several special abilities (please, *please* don't let one of them be glorified bullet time) and we also reckon it'll turn out that the drug has some sinister side-effects (after all, it's almost certainly made from crushed babies). "It isn't some sort of gimmicky, tacked-on feature, says Littlewood, and although he can't yet reveal exactly how Nectar works, he did tell us that the team carefully examined what makes first-person shooters cool, and reckons the drug will have a fundamental impact on how you play.

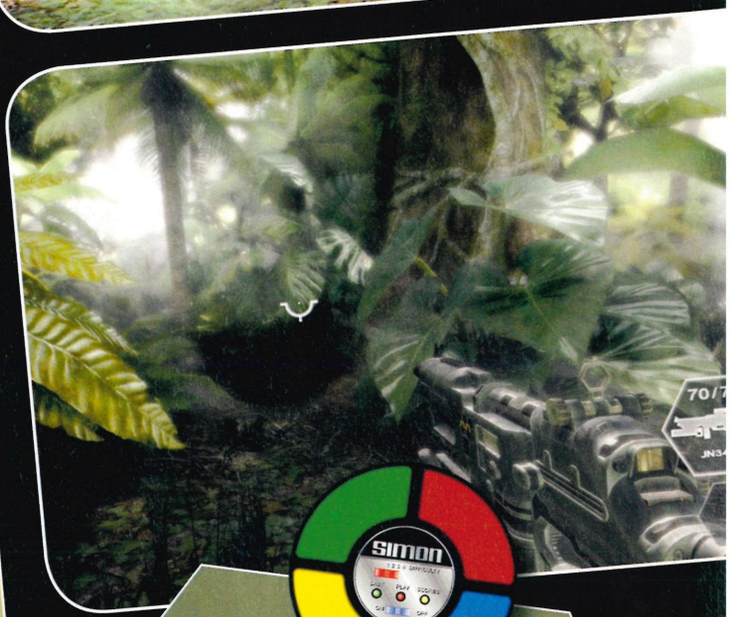
NECTAR IS AN ALL-PURPOSE COMBAT ENHANCEMENT, AND IS SET TO PLAY A HUGE PART

Having revealed *Haze* to the world, Free Radical is determined it doesn't get pigeon-holed. "I can't stress this enough," says Yescombe. "We are not just a jungle shooter! Yes, there is a jungle in it, and dare I say it looks pretty awesome – but you

THE ENEMY

This is one of the South American rebels you've been sent to quell. (And by 'quell', we mean 'shoot in the face.') The group calls itself 'The Promise Hand', but its exact agenda is unclear. Remember though, one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter and, in *Haze*, looks can be deceiving.

Innocent civilian or decoy for an attack on your flank?

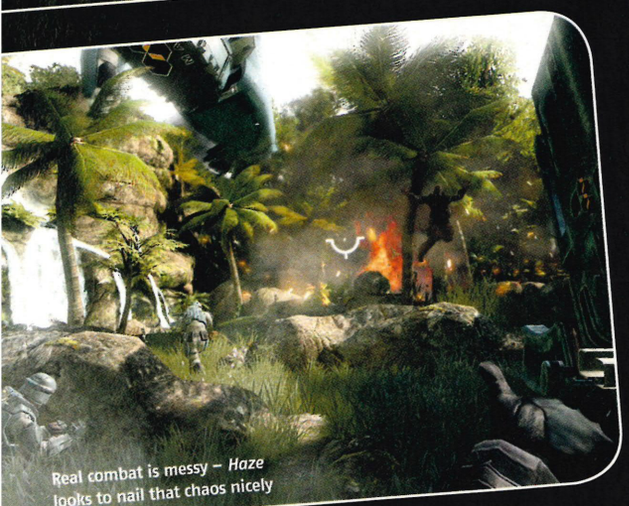


SIMON SAYS...

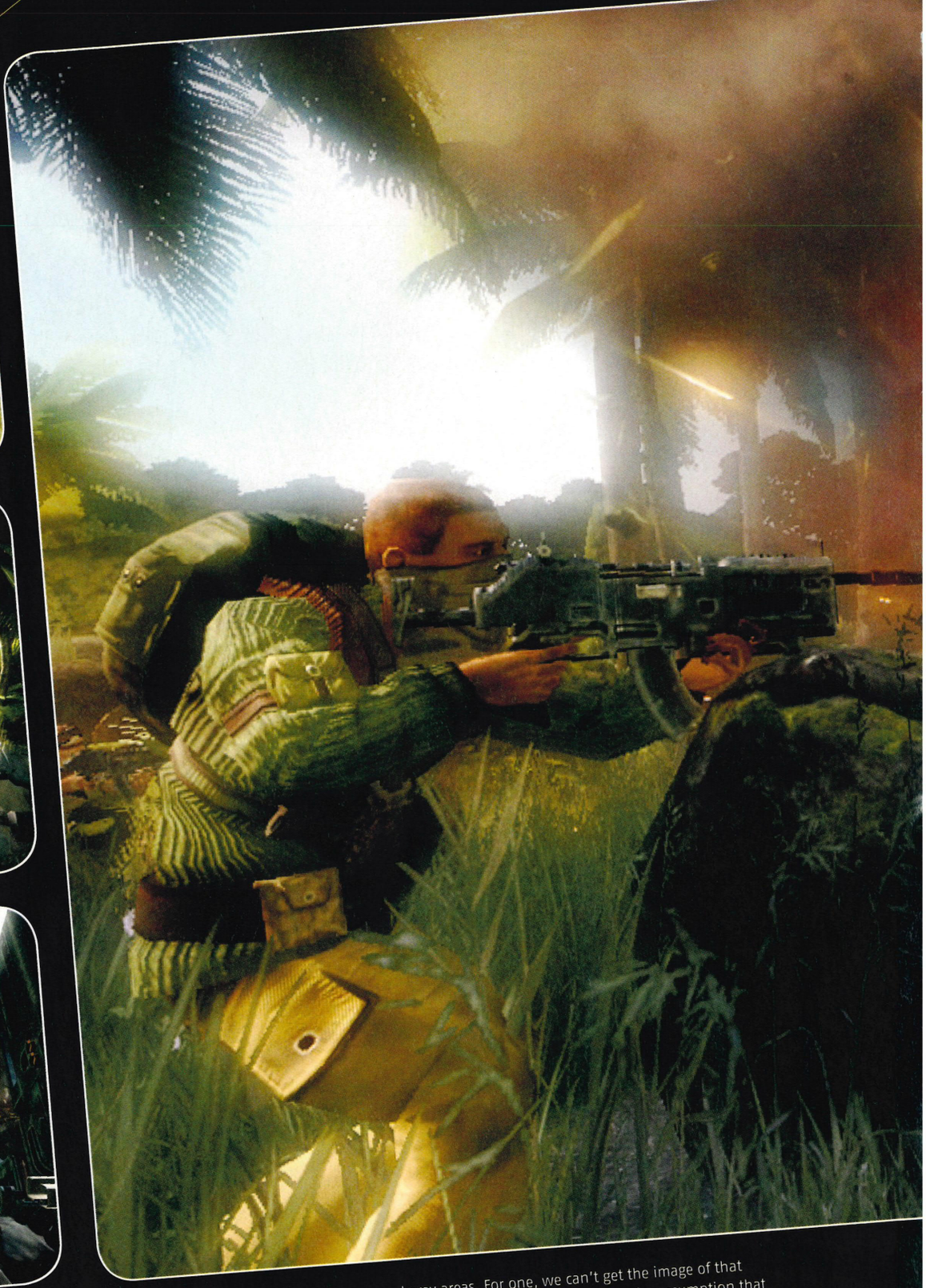
'Kill them all.' And thanks to the baby-simple ordering system, it couldn't be easier

Everyone knows that ordering around your colleagues in squad-based shooters usually ends up being a bit of a ball-ache. But *Haze* has got one of the best (read: simplest) systems we've seen. The orders are largely as expected – 'on me', 'suppress' and so on – but change according to context. What's really cool is the flexibility. Using a colour-coded system (and a menu overlaid on the screen) you can either instruct individual soldiers or issue one order to the entire squad. It's like a hybrid of *Freedom Fighters* and *Rainbow Six*, and should enable you to mow down hostiles with consummate ease. *Should.*

Looks lush and peaceful, doesn't it? Just you wait...



Real combat is messy – *Haze* looks to nail that chaos nicely



know how important variety is to us from *TimeSplitters*, so you can expect a good range of environments." The game's South American setting and compact time frame (the events occur over a two-day period) mean you aren't going to get a chocolate box of wildly different art design – but *Haze* is billed as a war 'road movie', and over its course you'll explore coastal regions, mountain-tops, industrial areas and shanty towns. Variety? Plenty.

Given our well-documented love for Free Radical's output, it pains us to admit that when *Haze* was first announced we felt a slight twang of sadness. This was caused by the near-future setting, and our worry that PS3 is in danger of being overrun by macho men in metal shoulder pads. Littlewood is quick to counter: "It's the *fact* of it being such a clichéd setting that drew us to it," he says. "I've noticed some people asking why Free Radical has discarded the unique nature of *TimeSplitters* in favour of a 'generic' setting and the answer is: we haven't! As we reveal more about the game I think you'll see just how unique it is."

We're hoping that uniqueness specifically refers to the storyline, and the chance to explore some moral grey areas. For one, we can't get the image of that pleading rebel out of our heads. But Yescombe cautions against the assumption that killing him was a brutal act of murder. "War is a stressful place to be," he explains, not unreasonably, "and soldiers have to act quickly to avoid disaster on a minute-to-minute basis. What might seem like a gratuitous act to you could very well be self-defence in a combat situation. Mantel soldiers are trained to think one step ahead of their enemies. In this case, it could just be a smart soldier, acting on instinct. The 'prisoner' he shot could well have been armed with a grenade. He probably saved his teammates' lives." That's *Haze* all over. Believe nothing. Trust nobody.. ■

YOU'LL EXPLORE COASTAL REGIONS, MOUNTAIN-TOPS, INDUSTRIAL AREAS AND SHANTY TOWNS

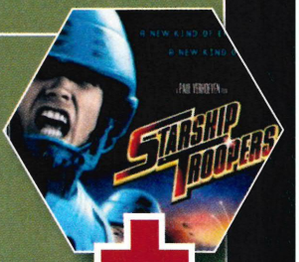
JAKE'S LADDER

Deciphering plot clues from *Haze*'s ultra-stylish trailer

"A chance to become a hero, a chance to be invincible..." That's the promise made by the man from Mantel Corp in *Haze*'s trailer, which ends with the line "Join us, and fight the good fight." But elsewhere the trailer suggests the fight is anything but good. Towards the end, the soldier tears at his armour, ripping off what we presume is his Nectar regulator. The world around him seems to flicker, perhaps as he comes out of the drug-induced dream, and in the closing seconds he blasts the TV showing the advert before gun-butting the camera filming him. Our guess is that Nectar is a psychotropic drug, which in addition to enhancing the soldiers' abilities, also tricks them into thinking they're doing moral, humanitarian work – when the truth is, in fact, far darker.

MAKE YOUR OWN *HAZE*

...with these simple ingredients



STARSHIP TROOPERS

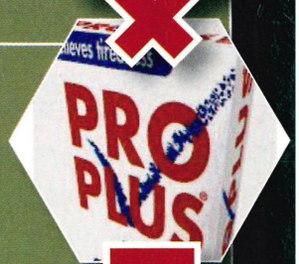
Neo-fascist uniforms and questionable motives in Paul Verhoeven's bug-blasting sci-fi satire.

FAR CRY

Kick-started the whole 'jungle is the new urban' trend with its tropical locations, and also published by Ubisoft.

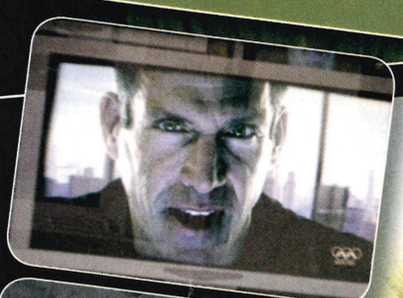
THE CORPORATION

Documentary which sticks it to The Man by suggesting that if companies really were people, most would be certifiable psychos.



PRO PLUS

Over-the-counter drug of choice for students who've neglected to complete vital coursework due to being out playing 'pub golf' and having causal sex. That's it, we're re-enrolling.



It may just be the Nectar-induced paranoia, but is that butterfly mooning us?

OPS2 SHOOTER SPECIAL!

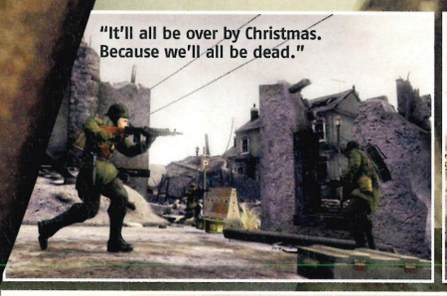
PUBLISHER SONY **DEVELOPER** INSOMNIAC **OUT** NOVEMBER 2006

THE GOOD NEWS: WORLD WAR 2 NEVER HAPPENED

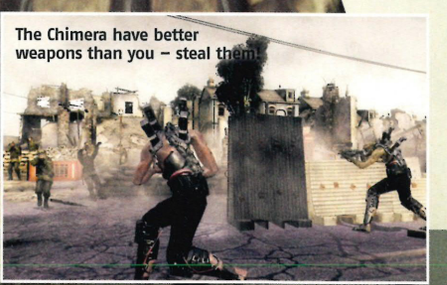
WORDS: GEORGE WALTER

THE BAD NEWS: WE GOT INVADED BY SABRE-TOOTHED ALIENS...

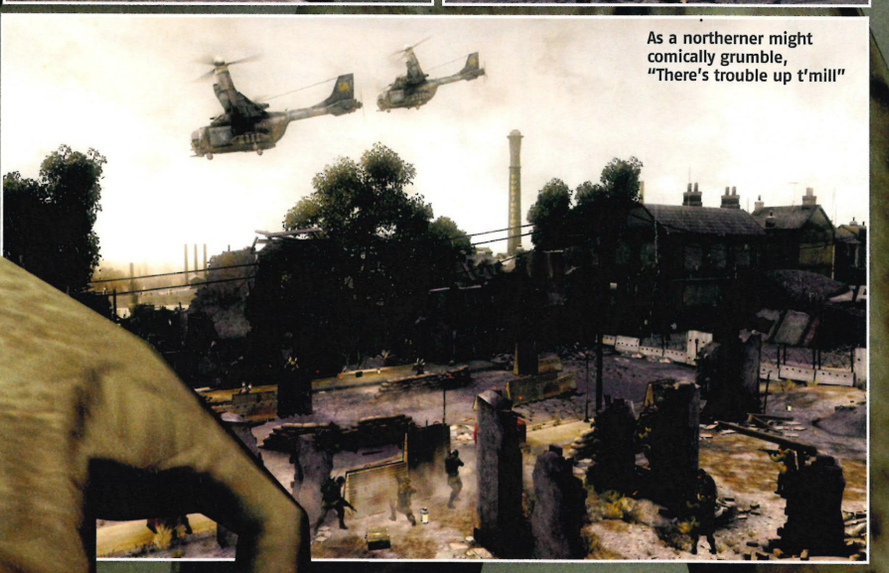
How Resistance: Fall Of Man is rewriting the history books with a shooter set in Britain during the 1950s



"It'll all be over by Christmas. Because we'll all be dead."



The Chimera have better weapons than you – steal them!

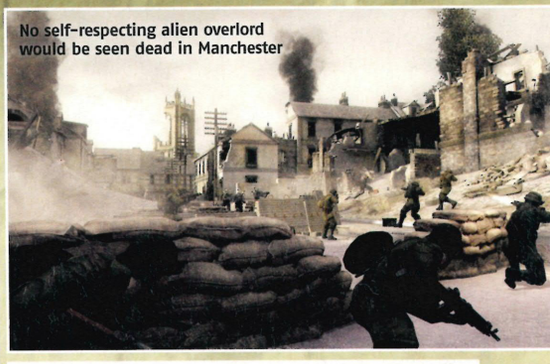


As a northerner might comically grumble, "There's trouble up t'mill"

As this month's cover game proves, World War 2 is still the hot historical time frame when it comes to making first-person shooters. On the face of it, this obsession with reliving some of the most harrowing moments of the 20th Century seems morbidly bizarre. War is depressing – you watch your friends die, you get shot at. But the sales figures for *Medal Of Honor* (266,000 for *European Assault*), *Call Of Duty* (346,000 for *Big Red One*) and *Brothers In Arms* (72,000 for *Earned In Blood*) are proof that we still want to fight The Hun 60 years on. So it's refreshing (and somewhat controversial) that *Resistance: Fall Of Man* exists in a world where World War 2 never actually happened, "There are only so many times you can storm the beaches of Normandy and kick some Nazi ass," jokes Ted Price, CEO and founder of Insomniac games. Instead of sticking with a cartoony sci-fi vision, well practised in their *Ratchet & Clank* series, *Resistance* opts for an alternate history: "We didn't want to create an uber-futuristic sci-fi

RESISTANCE
FALL OF MAN

What with this being a FIRST-PERSON shooter, we're guessing you won't play the game from this view



No self-respecting alien overlord would be seen dead in Manchester

"I NEED A HERO"

It's not enough to just create a rock-solid shooter these days. Like *Call Of Duty 3*'s 'battle actions' *Resistance*'s 'hero moments' add another edge to the experience. They offer a moral dilemma: at key moments you're given the chance to step in and save a comrade from Chimeran attack or watch his gory demise from close quarters, gleefully admiring the 'proprietary animation system'. Insomniac's CEO Ted Price gives it a different spin: "We thought that being able to periodically save your comrades in a firefight would enhance a battle's sense of realism." Yeah, and it's cool to see heads being squashed.

experience that took you to a galaxy far, far away," Price explains, "Instead we wanted to establish a unique universe based on a familiar reality... We found the 1950s appealing because when people think of that period in history they generally think of the sense of serenity, optimism and prosperity following World War 2. It's a setting that has open-ended possibilities because we're not recreating what we've read in history books."

This lack of constraints has led to the creation of a surreal world that is familiar, yet simultaneously alien. Check out the screenshots – the location is an archetypal street in Manchester, but the enemy is far from human (they're called the Chimera) and the UK is on the verge of total invasion. To help us out, the US Army has been flown in to fight alongside a small band of plucky Brits with the lead character, Sergeant Nathan Hale, hailing from the States. It is being made in America, afterall.

RESISTANCE
FALL OF MAN

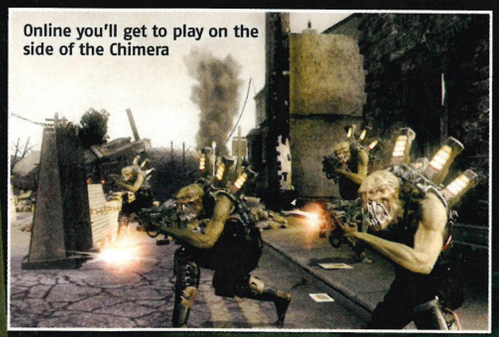
A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Resistance takes place entirely in England, but it's not all as recognisable as the Victorian two-up, two-downs seen in the screens. "Major cities with recognisable landmarks will be overtaken by Chimeran architecture," Price elaborates, "And buildings that were destroyed during WW2 bombings are intact, because the war has never happened according to *Resistance*." More recognisable will be the rural countryside settings, villages, fish canning factories in Grimsby and military bases that make up the fabric of 1950s Blighty. As a bonus, Price confirms that, "There are *no* jungles in this game." Well, that's a relief.

So who are the Chimera? Although Price won't be drawn on the origin and intentions of the sabre-toothed enemies (their origin obviously being key to the plot) as well as bringing some pretty sweet weapons to the party, they propagate a virus that turns other life-forms into Chimera. Interestingly, the Chimera won't be the only enemy in the game. Price explains, "There's also a shadowy group of humans who somehow co-exist with the Chimera. They practice ritualistic and violent acts against other humans and are rumoured to have been of Russian origin." However, these mysterious brutes won't appear in the single-player experience, instead their existence is hinted at during the course of *Resistance*, to flesh out the backstory. Like the Chimera, they'll be playable characters in the multiplayer games.

As well as the game's setting and enemies, the alternative history brush has also had a profound effect on the design of the weapons. While guns in the 1950s were still relatively lo-fi by today's standards, Chimeran technology is positively high-tech – and you get to play with it. "We're using our proprietary physics system [the thing that makes objects fly around the screen] and incorporating our experience with *Ratchet & Clank* to create weapons that are far from traditional FPS fare," reveals Price. Recent demos of these weapons have shown guns with intelligent bullets that follow an enemy once they've been tagged and grenades that hover in mid-air spraying darts in every direction when they explode. Despite their *R&C* influence it seems unlikely we'll see anything like the Sheepinator in *Resistance*: "These weapons are pretty serious and are designed to do serious damage. Though it would be nice to throw in some donkeys. Or maybe pigs."

The Chimera come in a number of forms – these ones are bottom of the chain



Online you'll get to play on the side of the Chimera

NO PLACE TO HIDE

One weapon that will undoubtedly cause problems for even the most intelligent enemy is the Bullseye, a Chimeran assault rifle. "It features three fire modes that enable players to erase an advantage of cover via 'smart ammo'," Price boasts. What this means in practice is firing a flurry of tracer bullets that bunch up in a group, hover and then at the player's prompt re-direct themselves at targets round the battlefield. To steal a line from *Metal Gear Solid* maestro Hideo Kojima, in *Resistance* there's "no place to hide". The Chimera can try, though – one area where PS3 processing power really aids the FPS is in artificial intelligence. "If an enemy is using a tall cabinet for cover and it's moved or knocked over, the enemy can adjust appropriately and begin crouching or abandon his position altogether," says Price. Still, not much use if you've got a Bullseye with a full clip on hand.

While *Resistance* has already proved itself as more than just a list of features with a fully fledged playable demo, does it have the edge on other, more established PS3 shooters? Price is confident, "We're trying to create one of the most entertaining and deepest *launch* titles in console history. We're offering a set of features that typically get reserved for a game's second generation." His argument is strong – regardless of its reception, *Resistance* will certainly be the most *original* first-person shooter to buy on 17 November. How can you resist? ■

THE HIGH-DEF QUESTION

As a Sony launch title, you'd imagine *Resistance* would set the benchmark for PS3's maximum video output. In fact, it's only been demoed in 720p, the current standard for the bulk of HD-ready TVs. Price's thoughts on the matter? "We're discussing the consequences of running at 1080p from a processing standpoint. Once we conclude that analysis we'll make a final decision." Watch this space...

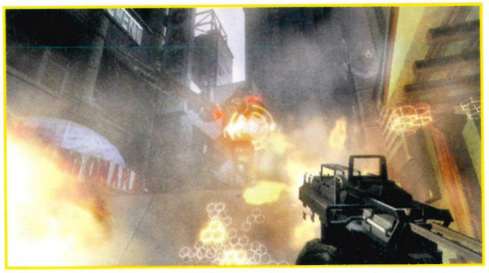
OPS2 SHOOTER SPECIAL! ROUND-UP

THE DIRTY DOZEN

A quick look at the other shooters aiming at PS3's skull

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2007

The latest on Epic's legendary shooter is that it could be using the PS3's pad as a futuristic steering wheel. Vehicles play a large part in the game – both in single and multiplayer – so it would make sense for the developer to take advantage of the new controller's capabilities.



CODED ARMS: ASSAULT

Set in a nightmarish near-future where people spend their lives jacked *Matrix*-style into the Internet, this PS3-exclusive shooter is shaping up to be the sci-fi enthusiast's game of choice in 2007. Konami recently announced that you'll be able to play through the story mode co-operatively both on and offline.

THE DARKNESS

Another month and this PS3 launch shooter crawls ever closer. Although unconfirmed, the latest rumour is that *The Darkness* will come with an online multiplayer mode, which will see players assaulting each other with gangs of Darklings – half-pint Hell-spawns with a penchant for sawing off human heads.

TUROK

This *looks* like another generic jungle blaster, but it's not. The concept is as trite as they come – you play a marine betrayed by his mentor and seeking vengeance – but the actual action, involving men scrapping with some of the most frighteningly realistic prehistoric beasts we've seen, is refreshingly brutal.

INTERSTELLAR MARINES

This deep-space shooter is still without a publisher, but we're sure that won't be the case for much longer. Based on the 'first-contact' concept, when mankind meets a race of ravenous shark-like aliens, this shooter will feature a single-player campaign, multiplayer co-op, and online play. Expect it in 2007.

BROTHERS IN ARMS: HELL'S HIGHWAY

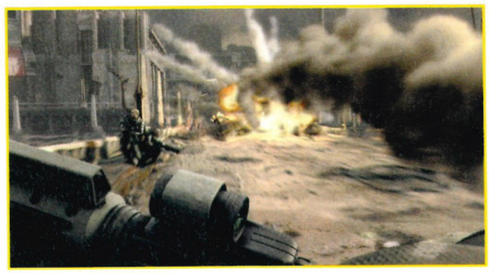
Bad news for WW2 fans looking for a next-gen fix. *Brothers In Arms: HH* has been pushed back to 2007, and is now tentatively pencilled in for a March release. Although we're disappointed about its absence from the PS3's day-one line-up, it'll come as a welcome boost during the inevitable post-launch games lull.

HALF-LIFE 2

Still no official announcement on the PS3 conversion of Valve's FPS masterpiece, but it's only a matter of time... Meanwhile, the developer has confirmed a third add-on pack for the PC version, and should *Half-Life 2* appear on Sony's next-gen machine, you can bet your worldly goods that this will be part of the package.

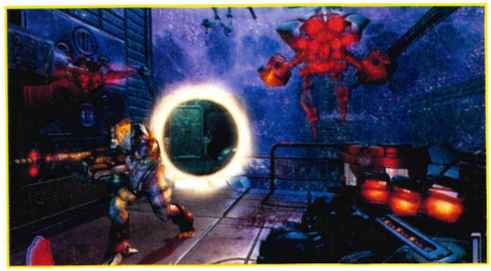
TERRA: FORMATIONS

This ambitious PS3 shooter goes beyond simple man-on-man bullet exchanges. How? By offering up Real Time Strategy and RPG elements that sit alongside the actual shooting. Will it work? We'll have to wait until well into next year before anyone finds out.



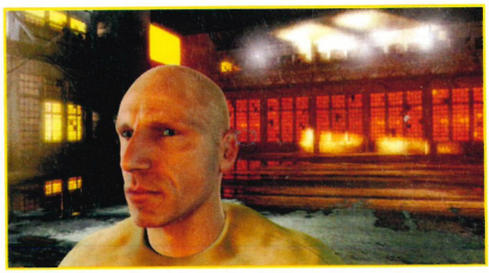
KILLZONE

When *Killzone* failed to appear at the E3 Games Show in May we demanded to know where it was. Vice pres of Sony Worldwide Studios, Phil Harrison, had this to say: "[*Killzone*] was never intended to be a launch title, and we'll show it when it's ready. I wish I could show it, because it looks good enough to eat."



PREY

Prey messes with your head. No other shooter lets you stand on ceilings and shoot at the enemies below, or jump through dimension-spanning portals hidden in cardboard boxes. It may already be twisting Xbox 360 and PC owner's minds, but we've been assured that *Prey* is still a possibility for PS3.



REDWOOD FALLS

It's all gone eerily quiet on the *Redwood Falls* front. Kuju is keeping tight-lipped about the revolutionary gore effects and creepy regeneration animations it's packing into this PS3 shooter, so for now you'll just have to use your imagination. Expect a first look towards the end of the year.

MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE

In its never-ending quest to bring authenticity to the series, EA has buddied up with auto-manufacturer Jeep to make sure its classic military vehicles are as accurate as possible. A fully approved recreation of the Willys-Overland (stop sniggering) Jeep is already up and running in early versions of the game.

Everything you wanted to know about PS3*

but were afraid to ask

PLAYSTATION 3

Even for committed gentlemen of games such as ourselves, it's easy to get confused by the sheer amount of NASA-grade technology that Sony has packed into the PlayStation 3. Let's say you're in a social situation, discussing the console's diverse merits, when suddenly you realise you've mistakenly been talking about the RSX 'Reality Synthesizer', when in fact you meant the Cell Chip. It's an easy mistake, certainly, but the crowd has already started moving away. Don't panic! With our help, that nightmare need never become reality.

This month we bring you the complete guide to PS3 hardware, from why you *need* the built-in Blu-ray player through to the digital witchcraft that is the new gyroscopic 'look-mum-no-wires' pad. By the time we're done you'll be answering questions about HDMI, 1080p and IEEE 802.11 with total confidence. What you'll also realise – and this is the important bit – is that the PS3 is a ludicrously powerful piece of kit. It isn't simply a gaming monster – it's a multimedia hub, a focal point for all your domestic entertainment needs. Ignore the haters, the future starts right here...

What are all those bits for?

Get to know Sony's sexy console – inside and out

What does the Cell Processor actually do?

If the PS3 were a living being, the Cell would be its brain. Basically, this powerful custom chip is split into two parts. One half runs the games, whereas the other handles heavy-duty processing tasks like special visual effects.

"It's very well suited to certain tasks, such as animation, physics, audio and graphical effects – in other words, all the stuff you need to make a game!"

Alex Weighell, senior engine programmer at Free Radical Design (working on *Haze*)

What is Bluetooth 2.0?

This is how the new wireless pads will beam info to the PS3. The technology is already used heavily in mobile phones and PDAs, so, in theory, you'll be able to hook them up too – enabling you to transfer pictures, MP3s and other data from your mobile devices to the PS3 through the air. The *air*, people!

What is HDMI (High Definition Multimedia Interface)?

This is the next-gen port that will connect your PS3 to any HD-ready TV. It carries both the visual and digital audio output from the console, so there's no need for separate wires, and it's designed to output in true HD – 1080p.

What does this Ethernet Port do?

If you don't have wireless broadband, you can still get your PS3 online by running a cable from either a router or PC into this socket. The benefits of a wired connection is that it's slightly quicker, and more reliable – so there's less chance of being disconnected from a game of *Gran Turismo* when you're virtual inches from the finish line.

What is the Hard Disk Drive (HDD)?

The PS3 has a built-in 60GB Hard Disk, which you can use to store downloaded content, game saves, photos and music tracks. 60GB is a decent size as Hard Disks go, although if you need more storage space, the PS3 will have slots for PSP-style Flash Memory cards. Sony has also indicated it will be possible for users to upgrade their PS3s way beyond 60GB by installing a new ATA Hard Disk Drive.

"More information in game saves will mean that games can have more convincing, persistent worlds."

Alex Weighell, senior engine programmer at Free Radical Design (working on *Haze*)

What is Digital Out?

Got a surround sound system without an HDMI input? Use an optical lead to connect your PS3 to the amp for ear-ripping 5.1 audio.

What is AV Multi Out?

The alternative to using HDMI, the PS3's AV Multi Out port will connect – via the appropriate lead – to TVs with component, SCART and composite inputs. In other words: PS3 will be able to connect to any TV in the UK. Recently Sony caused a stir in the audio visual industry by removing a piece of software from its Blu-ray technology called ICT (Image Constraint Token), which prevented component cables from carrying a true, 1080p, High Definition signal. So yes, this means that even the cheaper PS3 – with no HDMI – will be able to take full advantage of Blu-ray.

What is a Blu-ray disc drive?

So called because it uses a more narrowly focused blue laser to read the disc, Blu-ray enables you to watch movies and play games in retina-cauterizing High Definition. Blu-ray discs have a staggering 50GB capacity – compared to 8.5GB with current DVDs (which it will also play) – meaning they can store vast amounts of data. Among the advantages Blu-ray brings to games are shorter load times, and much, *much* bigger worlds to explore.

"Blu-ray enables us to store content in the higher resolutions required for High Definition games. Although a bit faster than a conventional DVD, its main advantage is a big increase in storage capacity."

Alex Weighell, senior engine programmer at Free Radical (working on *Haze*)

Is the PS3 tough to develop for?

It always takes a while for developers to get to grips with any new technology, but so far, folks working on the PS3 are doing just fine.

"The PS3 is a lot easier to handle than the PS2 was, so the first games will already use the hardware efficiently."

Gilles Berguet, lead programmer at Ubisoft Montreal (working on *Assassin's Creed*)

What is an RSX Chip?

Essentially, this is the little slab of silicon that will be responsible for making all the PS3's pretty pictures. Fluffier clouds, wetter water and smokier smoke... graphics whores rejoice!

"This is the top of the top of what NVIDIA [who manufacture the chip] can make. And that means a lot. The graphic rendering effects we are only just starting to see on the PC – like high dynamic range and parallax mapping for instance – will be the standard on the PS3."

Gilles Berguet, lead programmer at Ubisoft Montreal (working on *Assassin's Creed*)

What is USB 2.0?

You'll find these Universal Serial Bus ports on all modern computers, as they're the best way to connect external gadgets like digital cameras, iPods, keyboards, mug warmers etc, to the main unit. The 2.0 bit refers to the fact that these are second-generation ports, which means they can transfer data quicker, and recharge whatever item is plugged into them (including your wireless pads). The PS3 has four slots which, you'll agree, is enough for any man.

What is a Wireless Network Adaptor?

IEEE 802.11b/g... to its mates

Built into the console, this device lets you connect to a wireless broadband router. What can you do after that? See page 78 for the lowdown on the PS3's online features. Oh, and the name? Number nerds, this one's for you – the 802.11b/g refers to the frequency of the signal. It's an industry standard used by most wireless product manufacturers to help everyone synchronise their products. Now you know, let's never speak of it again.

What is High Definition? HD ready

Impress strangers with our quick guide to the tech behind High Def

The future of viewing, High Def (or HD) refers to the resolution of your display. The displays of HD-ready TVs are *at least* twice as detailed as those of bog-standard boxes. So what's the damage? You can scrimp and settle for a 15" set for as little as £299, but we'd say 26" has to be the best entry level size to really take advantage of the incredible visuals. If you're feeling flush like a two-time lottery winner, the newest, most expensive sets are 100" in size, and although they're not available in the UK right now, we're predicting a bankruptcy-beckoning £35k-40k price tag. Whatever you buy, always make sure it has the HD-ready logo on the box – or you might be buying a regular TV.

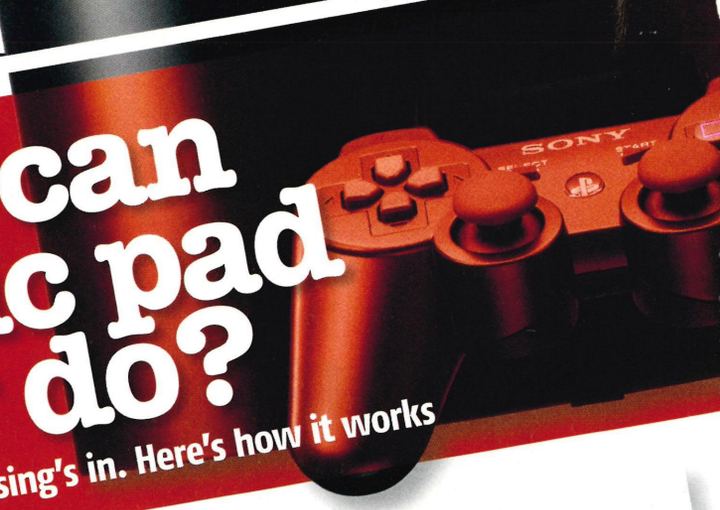
What does this have to do with 720p, 1080i, and 1080p?

You've probably come across these strange numbers already, but this is what they actually mean. Displays are broken down into horizontal and vertical lines of tiny squares that change colour to form the big overall picture you see on your telly. A high definition display is defined as one that is capable of producing a picture with 1280 horizontal by 720 vertical lines or more, while a select few high-end sets are capable of doing the full 1920 x 1080 needed to display 1080p. Non-HD TV sets in the UK display a picture at 768 x 576 pixels, so this means HD games and films will be twice as detailed because they have roughly double the number of lines combining to display the overall picture.

So what about the 'i's and the 'p's? They stand for Interlaced (i) and Progressive Scan (p). An interlaced TV picture refreshes half its lines at a time then links them together to show movement in the picture. This means a drop in image quality as only half the image is being refreshed at any single instant, *plus* a certain amount of flickering. Progressive Scan updates all the lines at once, making the picture quality smoother and sharper. The beauty of Blu-ray is that it's capable of updating 1080 vertical lines at once – creating a laser-sharp picture. All PS3 developers are required to create games that run at a minimum of 720p. So far, only a handful of games (*Vision GT* and *WarDevil*) run at range-topping, rapturous 1080p.

So, what can the magic pad actually do?

Rumble's out. Six-way motion sensing's in. Here's how it works



Pitch

Pitch is the action of both pushing and tipping your pad forwards, or pulling it backwards – mimicking the controls in a plane to climb or dive. Great for flight sims, obviously, but also ideal for casting a line in fishing games... It's going to happen.

Back and Forwards

The pad will detect backwards and forwards movements. This motion will be used in flight sims like *Warhawk* to control bursts of speed and sudden braking – we think it'd also be ideal for dive celebrations in *Pro Evo*.

Side to Side

The controller picks up horizontal motion as well as vertical, so the most likely use for it will be looking around from a first-person view – when we used it, the pad was very responsive, reacting to even small positional shifts, so it could also be used for *Monkey Ball*-style puzzles.

Up and Down

Hoist the pad upwards or plunge it towards the floor, and the motion sensors in the controller will pick it up. Should be useful for platformers – the upwards motion could make your character jump higher.

How are games going to use the new pad?

...the good news is 'not just for flying', as these high-profile developers spill their brains on possible uses for the PS3's motion-sensing voodoo

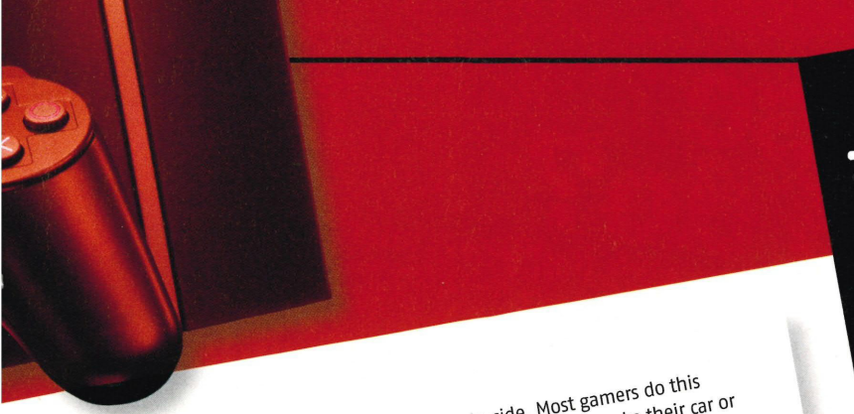
What else is new?

A quick summary of the other features crammed into Sony's new controller

First off, the other massive new feature of the PS3's new controller is that it's totally wireless. It communicates with the main console via a Bluetooth connection, and players will be able to hook up four wireless pads at a time. If you look at the back of the controller you'll see that there are four small lights. When you connect wirelessly one of the lights on the pad will illuminate. This tells you what number player you are – essential when your mates start picking up random pads for a quick game of split-screen *Resistance*. Next to the lights sits a small port that lets you run a wire between the pad and one of the console's USB inputs – something you'll need to do every now and again to recharge its batteries.

It might look identical to the regular DualShock, but Sony has made a few cosmetic changes to the pad. There's a Home button, which you'll be able to press at any time to either view your player profile or return to the main dashboard. In addition to that, the L2 and R2 buttons have been extended and made deeper, making them feel more like fully fledged triggers than a second set of shoulder buttons – ideal for the console's extensive line-up of shooters.

The analogue sticks have been tinkered with too, and now have a larger movement range, making them more sensitive in the centre. This means that the pad detects more subtle pushes on each stick, giving you a far greater feeling of control. The only downer, of course, is the surprising absence of vibration feedback. Sony says it interferes with the motion-sensing tech, but Immersion, the company that pioneered 'rumble' reckons that's not so. Many pundits have pointed instead to a legal wrangle between the two firms as a more likely reason why the feature has been excluded from PS3 pads. Our advice: write to your MP. Playing *Black 2* just won't be the same without the pad bucking like an angry horse.



Roll

This is the action of tipping your pad from side to side. Most gamers do this subconsciously while they're playing driving games to try and make their car or bike corner more tightly. Expect roll to feature heavily in flight sims and bike racing, but we also like the idea of using it to lean around corners in stealth games.

Yaw

This is where you push one side of the pad forwards and pull the other back in a twisting motion. We expect to see it used for attacks or dodges in first-person fighting games like *Fight Night*.

Home button

USB charger socket

Wireless player indicator

Improved stick sensitivity

Deeper triggers

Burnout

Criterion's creative director, Alex Ward, reckons it's obvious how *Burnout* will exploit the new pad. "Just think about the Road Rage mode," he told us. The clear implication being that post-crash, you'll be able to steer your shattered write-off through the air and towards rival racers by tilting the pad (as opposed to using the stick for 'aftertouch' as was the case in previous versions).

Pro Evo 7

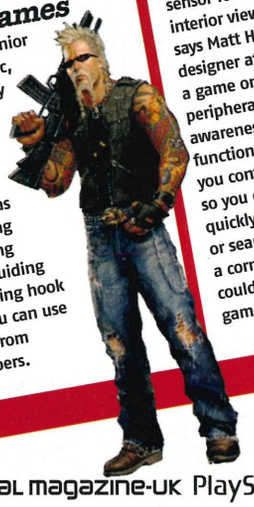
According to *Pro Evo*'s gaffer, Shingo 'Seabass' Takatsuka, the pad could finally sort out *Pro Evo*'s perennially rubbish throw-ins. You would use a strong forward-tilt motion for a Gary Neville-style launch, and a softer one to throw it to a player's feet. We think you should be able to control the keepers at pens, too.

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots

Hideo Kojima was responsible for the most memorable use of the DualShock's vibration function with the Psycho Mantis encounter in *Metal Gear Solid*, in which he asked you to place the pad on the floor and then made it 'move' with his mind. So it's no surprise that Kojima's brain is already whirring with ideas for the new pad. One of which is forcing an inert guard to drop items by grabbing him and then shaking the controller. Another is his idea for using the motion sensing to control Snake's first-person view.

Mercenaries 2: World In Flames

Jonathan Zamkoff, senior producer at Pandemic, says they're currently considering a number of different uses for the motion-sensing tech. Ideas include controlling vehicles, throwing grenades and guiding the new grappling hook gadget that you can use to hitch a lift from passing choppers.



TOCA/Colin McRae

"Having the option to use the tilt sensor for camera movement in interior views could be very useful," says Matt Horsman, senior games designer at Codemasters. "Playing a game on a TV robs us of our peripheral vision and spatial awareness. The six-axis sensing functionality will enable us to give you control over the driver's eyeballs, so you can move the camera to quickly look in the wing mirrors or search for that vital apex on a corner." He also suggests the pad could be used to create simple drivin games for the under-fives.

What else can PS3 do?

Get online and manage your media with PS3's flashy new interface

The best news is that PS3 will be ready for online gaming straight out of the box. No subscriptions, just connect through your router and you're good to start pwning people the world over. The console itself has a built-in wireless receiver, so there's no need to streak fat Ethernet cables across your living room floor. Developers will be able to run their own servers though, so while the service will be free, individual games might charge (most likely the MMORPG affairs, which already require a monthly subscription on PC). You won't just be playing games – there's also web browsing, messaging plus audio and video chat, new game content, and you could even be downloading old PSone and PS2 games direct to your HDD. Sony also wants to include TV, movies and music, making the PS3 a real multimedia hub.

Photos

A quick and simple way to display all your photos, which you can download from your digital camera through the USB ports. You can start a slideshow with ▶ Start or use the shoulder buttons to flick through them manually and rotate them 90° at a time.

Video

From here you can watch Blu-ray films, DVDs and the videos you've downloaded. Sony's is planning to provide TV shows, films and other content like game trailers to watch.

Friends

Ah, we remember these. With PS3 you can chat, send pictures and video or tell Dave to stop watching *Brokeback Mountain* and join you for a macho *Call Of Duty 3* session. Here you can manage all your contacts, see what they're doing, and send multi-format messages.

Network

Here you'll find Sony's in-house browser to connect to the worldwide webulator. If you don't have a keyboard and mouse you can always use the joypad option to navigate and enter text. You can open up to eight windows at a time and move easily between them for simple, rapid browsing.

Games

This is where you'll load up your games, check your saves and play downloadable demos. It'll also be where you manage your downloaded PSone and PS2 titles.

Users

Several people can use a PS3 and save their choices for things like inverting Y-axis or analogue stick sensitivity. So you won't have to keep changing all the settings every time your little brother has a go. You'll be able to access Users at any time – even mid-game.

Settings

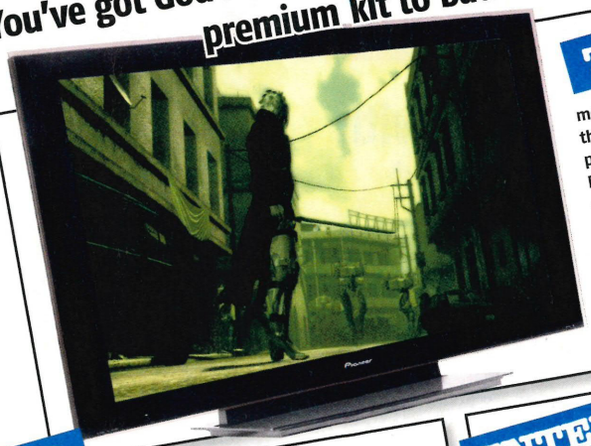
This contains all the technical bits, such as checking for PS3 updates (similar to PSP firmware upgrades), changing display settings, setting the clock or configuring your router. The most interesting option though is for 'Keyboard And Mouse Settings'. You can connect through any of the USB ports to make Internet browsing easier. The question is, will we see games taking advantage of mouse support?

Music

At the moment PS3 supports MP3 and Sony's own ATRAC formats for music. We'll more than likely see new formats arrive in network updates (according to demand), just like on PSP. You can even plug in your iPod.

Dream setup

You've got God's own games machine and now you need the premium kit to back it up... No expense spared!



TV — PDP-5000EX

Costs: £6,000

To take advantage of Blu-ray movies and play the (for now) few games that support 1080p we're going to need a pretty special TV – in the shape of the Pioneer PDP-5000EX. It's the only TV currently available that gives true 1080p HD on a flat-screen plasma (expect more to become available later in the year). Of course, until you actually get your PS3 it's a bit of a white elephant – what with there being no 1080p content to watch on it. A big, sexy, black, white elephant.

SOUND — B&W MT-20 (speakers), Yamaha RX-V2600 (receiver)

Costs: £980, £900

Right. Now we need something really floor-shaking to show off PS3's Dolby 5.1 surround sound. These sleek aluminium-finish speakers are rated by our sister gadget mag *T3* as the best available. We've paired it up with the Yamaha RX-V2600, a digital receiver that has two HDMI inputs and an HDMI out. Yes it might be excessive, but money is no object here in our fantasy kingdom.

INTERCONNECTS — HDMI Cable: IXOS XHT458-300 (3 meters) x 2

Costs: £180

There's no way to sexify these interconnects, which to all but the staunchest of AV-geeks are coloured wires. But you can be assured these provide the crispest image and audio in the most compact of guises. The most obvious indicator being their ludicrous price. *But it's only a wire!* Perhaps, but if you've forked out thousands for the rest of the kit, you don't want to scrimp on this.

CHAIR — La-Z-Boy Cool Chair

Costs: £899

The king of games needs a throne, and the La-Z-Boy Cool Chair is the ultimate in bachelor pad bling. Not only is it obscenely comfortable, but it massages your back at the flick of a switch, has a built-in telephone and one of the arms flips up to reveal a fridge to keep drinks cool. On the downside it looks like the sort of chair Thora Hird used to advertise.

GAME BUTLER — Game Butler

Costs: £300

With all that sitting down you're going to have to pay a person to do the standing up, fetching drinks and cooking up chili and chips. Enter the Game Butler! Respected valet service Randolphs offer butlers for hire at £30 an hour to do all the heavy work. We'd hire him for at least ten, so that's £300. He might even help you plug all your kit together and explain how to play *FFXIII*.

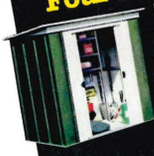
Where to buy PDP-5000EX www.avland.co.uk B&W MT-20 www.mikemanningaudio.com Yamaha RX-V2600 www.avland.co.uk IXOS XHT458-300 www.futureshop.co.uk La-Z-Boy Cool Chair www.drinkstuff.com Butler service www.randolphs.uk.com

How to spend £425

That's how much a 60GB PS3 will set you back, but what else would it buy you?

5kg Wagyu beef

The cow's diet of beer and regular massaging (read: being hit with bats) produces a delicate, tender beef with perfect fat distribution. (From www.discerningfood.co.uk)



Four sheds

If you're prepared to go with a modern-looking metal shed, you can order four from Argos (£99.99 each) and still have £25 to spare for copies of *Mayfair* to paper the walls. (From www.argos.co.uk)

14 monkeys

£420 quid will buy you the adoption papers to 14 monkeys at £30 a head plus free entry to the Monkey World Centre in Wareham, so you can visit them whenever you need a laugh. (From www.monkeyworld.co.uk)

A hive of bees

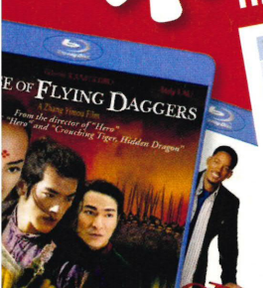
As long as you've got the space for it, Norfolk Honey can sell you a hive, complete with queen bees for £350 leaving you with change to buy more bees at £90 a box. (From www.norfolkhoney.co.uk)

Second-hand parachute

You don't want a new one, you want one that *someone else* has tested. 400 times. Approx £400 from various private sellers at www.dirtdive.co.uk.

What will I be able to watch?

The movies currently pencilled in for Blu-ray's summer debut in the US*



50 First Dates	Legends Of The Fall	The Punisher
The Fifth Element	Stealth	Saw
Hitch	S.W.A.T.	Terminator 2: Judgement Day
House Of Flying Daggers	Flightplan	The Devil's Rejects
A Knight's Tale	Kill Bill: Volumes 1 & 2	Reservoir Dogs
Resident Evil: Apocalypse	Armageddon	Total Recall
xXx	Pirates Of The Caribbean	Stargate
Underworld: Evolution	Chicken Little	Frank Herbert's Dune
Ultraviolet	Crash	Rambo: First Blood
Kung Fu Hustle	Lord Of War	See No Evil

*The UK launch date is currently TBC but it should shadow the US one closely

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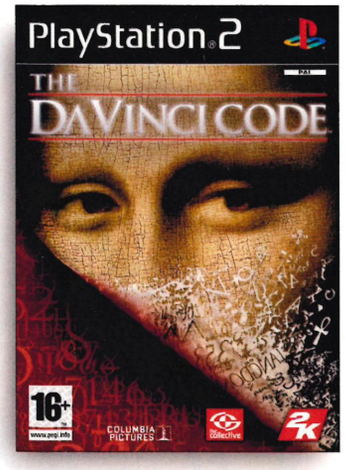

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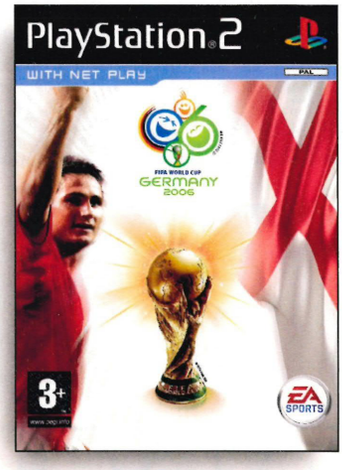

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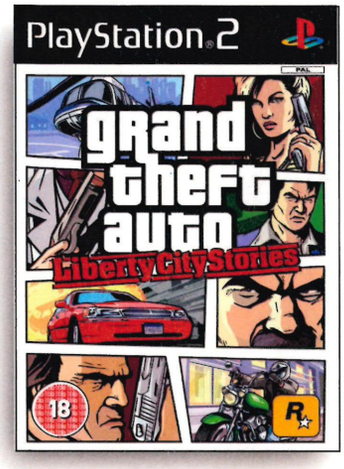

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Have you cracked *Devil May Cry 3* on 'Dante Must Die' mode? Did you demolish *God Of War* in a single sitting? Good. Well done. You're officially a gaming legend, and it's time you were rewarded for your efforts. We're offering the best gamers out there a spot among the immortals, by sharing their perfect game saves with the world. If you want to prove that you've found absolutely every secret on *Liberty City Stories* or that you're nails at *Hitman: Blood Money*, this is your chance. Simply send us your finished save and we'll feature the best ones on the *OPS2* demo disc each month.

Once you've finished a game, pop the memory card containing the completed save in an envelope (along with an SAE so we can return it to you safely) and send it to the address below. Every save featured on the *OPS2* disc will win its owner a game. We recommend sending your memory card using Recorded Delivery – *OPS2* cannot be held responsible for any memory cards lost in the post. ■

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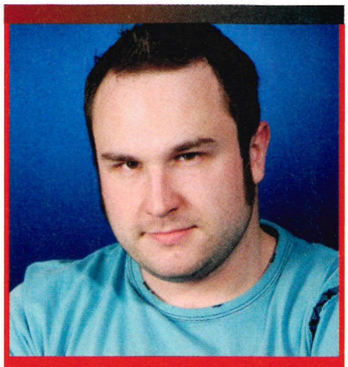
review

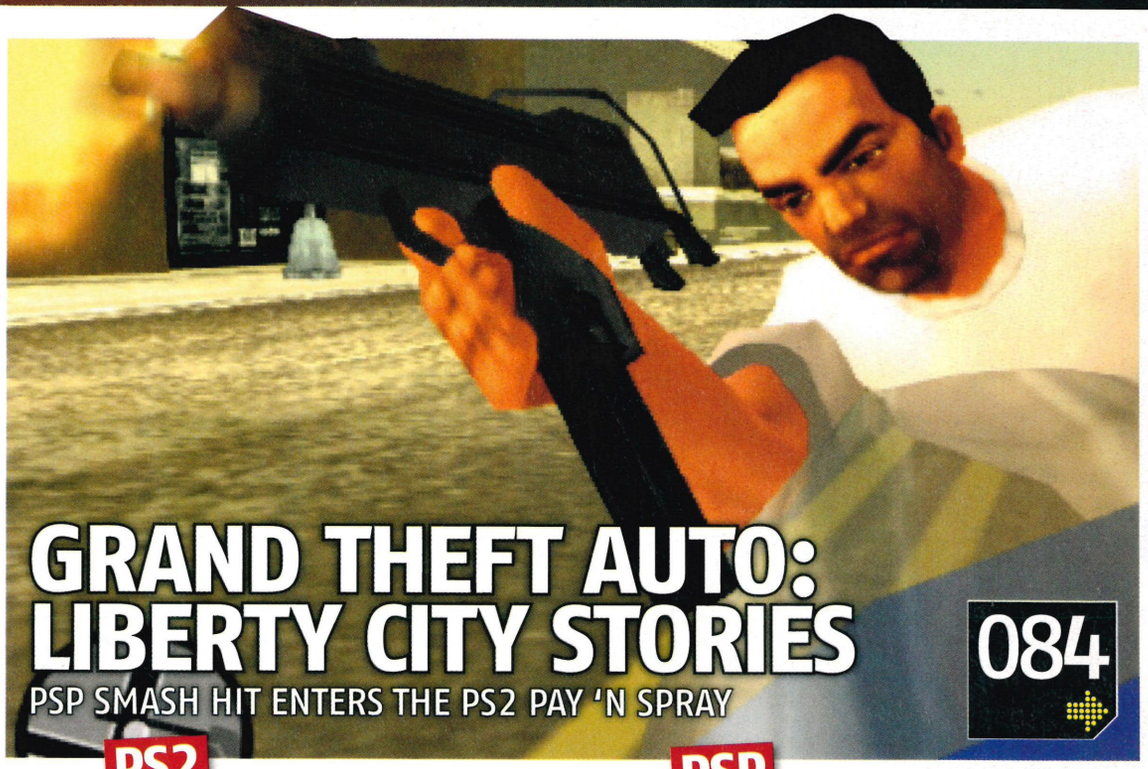
THE ONLY REVIEWS SECTION YOU CAN TRUST – AND THAT'S OFFICIAL



As the first game to be ported from PSP to PS2, *Liberty City Stories* was always going to be a landmark title. Rockstar is no stranger to breaking records with its *GTA* series, but with no real innovation to speak of, do you really need to own this version? Get the definitive verdict over the page.

It's also a big month on PSP as we cast our ever-critical eyes over no fewer than eight exclusive-to-handheld efforts. Can *World Tour Soccer 2* stand up to rivals *2006 FIFA World Cup* and *Pro Evo 5*? Is *Field Commander* best left to die on the battlefield? Should you wash your hands of *Infected* at the first available opportunity? And is this the best picture of me yet, or what?

Ben Wilson,
Games editor



GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

PSP SMASH HIT ENTERS THE PS2 PAY 'N SPRAY

084

PS2

088 **FORMULA ONE 06**
Totally up to date, but can you tell the difference in a Pepsi challenge with last year's game?

089 **SENSIBLE SOCCER 2006**
The 16-bit superstar gets dragged out of its grave for a PS2 run out.

090 **JAWS UNLEASHED**
Worthy of the Spielberg classic or a steaming pile of seal innards like *Jaws: The Revenge*?

092 **SOCCER LIFE 2**
Who knew the life of a pro footballer could be quite so tedious?

097 **AND 1 STREETBALL**
More urban b-balling. Like *NBA Street* but, crucially, without the NBA. Plenty of streets, mind

101 **OVER THE HEDGE**
Syrupy kids flick gets equally sick-inducing spin-off

PLUS

093 SHINOBIDO: WAY OF THE NINJA
093 THE ULTIMATE WORLD CUP QUIZ
093 SUPER DRAGON BALL Z
099 10,000 BULLETS
101 LEADERBOARD GOLF
101 DAEMON SUMMONER
101 WWII: TANK BATTLES
101 STOCK CAR CRASH
101 ARMORED CORE: NEXUS

PSP

094 **TENCHU: TIME OF THE ASSASSINS**
Time this series was stabbed in the kidneys with a rusty blade

095 **MIAMI VICE: THE GAME**
It's a prequel to the forthcoming movie, and a whole lot less rubbish than you assume

096 **FIELD COMMANDER**
"You there – increase the potato yield!" What? Oh, not *that* kind of field commander...

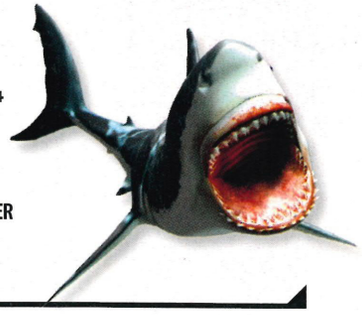
097 **WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2**
Sony's surprisingly non-balls footy game gets a second outing

098 **DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY: THE TAKEOVER**
More hip-hop fisticuffs. And Carmen Electra.

100 **INFECTED**
Destroy waves of zombies with bullets made of your own blood. High concept, low rent

PLUS

089 ASTONISHIA STORY
097 MICRO MACHINES V4
099 SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE
099 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: THE YELLOW AVENGER



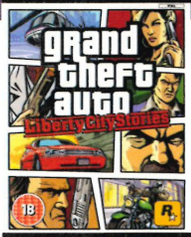
Don't let rain get in the way of a car-jacking

Tour the streets of Liberty City on a PCJ-600 for the first time

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

PlayStation 2

Small-time crook hits the big time... sound familiar?



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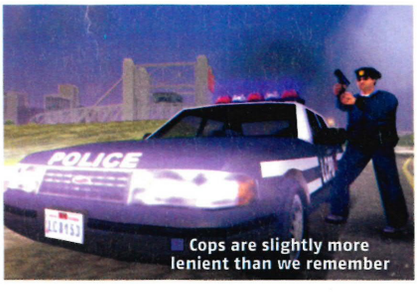
AT A GLANCE

The first PSP *GTA* gets ported back to the PS2 while Rockstar North decides how to make the series work on PS3. *Vice City Stories* will follow in November for PSP.

GTA: Liberty City Stories is a first – an episode that has no pretensions to raise the bar for the series. Downscaled for PSP, then ported back to PS2, it's not only a chance to revisit Liberty City, but also the chance for players to return to the characters and play mechanics of what's arguably the most influential game of its generation. On PSP, *LCS* was seen as a technical marvel – Rockstar's success in recreating the entire *GTA III* landscape for a handheld was enough to obscure the very obvious sacrifices made to shoehorn it all in. Back on PS2, however, it's an incongruous addition to the franchise, a backward step that *must* be inferior to the colossal *San Andreas* and the iconic *Vice City*.

So why release *LCS* on PS2? Because *GTA* sells. And it sells because gamers have fully bought into the *GTA* universe. Any new outing, even one that takes such obvious steps back, is worth having. Just see it as the *GTA III* mission pack that never was. Another reason? In case you hadn't noticed, not *everyone* has a PSP, and for them, this is brand new *GTA* for just £20. Consider that it involves at least 15 hours of game (*without* including Liberty City's multitudinous diversions) and it's likely to make a hell of a lot of sense to a lot of people.



Cops are slightly more lenient than we remember

SHRUNK TO FIT

But to remind you, this is not the *GTA* of *San Andreas*. The more exotic modes of transport (most notably planes and choppers) are out.

NOT EVERYONE HAS A PSP, AND FOR THEM THIS IS BRAND NEW *GTA* FOR £20

The vast patchwork of environments – urban, desert, forest, seaside – is ditched in favour of a familiar self-contained city and suburbs. Gone too is the ability to make your character fat or ripped and key developments in character movement like swimming and climbing over walls are no more. You can't even eat burgers. Make no mistake: this is very much no-frills *GTA*.

You might think that, with less flab to worry about, Rockstar Games might have corrected some of the perennial 'issues' that have plagued *GTA* from the off. Like the fact that regardless of its stylish art direction, it's graphically inept – the world made up of hard angular lines. And that the lock-on function is at best *average*, (read: a bit broken). But they haven't. Plus, in a finished version of the game we encountered at least four serious bugs that affected the outcome of missions. The draw distance too, though improved from PSP, still has entire blocks of Liberty City materialising out of thin air, especially in more heavily populated areas.

Why haven't they done anything about it? Well, we've got an inkling. *LCS* is the first part (*Vice City Stories* will be next) of a last-ditch effort to wring every bit of mileage out of the PS2 series before reinventing the entire thing for PS3. But, most crucially, it's because it *doesn't really matter*. *Liberty City Stories* is still hugely enjoyable, glitches and all. A trip back to a simpler time, approached with a knowing grin and a dogged determination to work around that bastard lock-on system.

SEX *IS* THE CITY

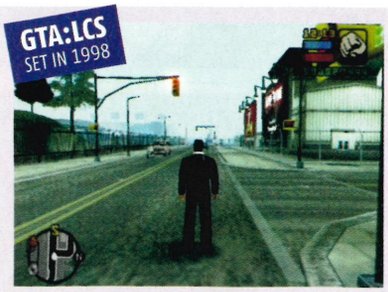
As a location, *Liberty City* is a design classic. Big enough to give an impressive sense of scale, yet compact enough to facilitate easy navigation in the heat of the chase. Set just two years earlier than the events of *GTA III*, it's not changed that much – only this time you begin as a member of an organised crime syndicate rather than a faceless journeyman crook. As mobster Toni Cipriani, you return to Liberty City after a stint in hiding following the murder of a made man. The fairly linear story follows Toni's rise as he and mafia boss Salvatore Leone deal with the business of running the Mob in the late '90s.

In a straight comparison to the PSP game,

THE LIVING CITY

A lot's changed in the three years between *GTA:LCS* and *GTA III*

GTA:LCS
SET IN 1998

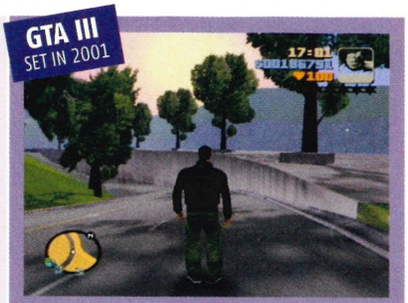


The old ferry terminal, threatened with closure...

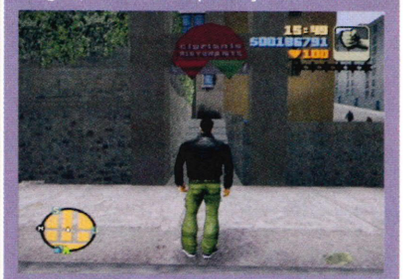
Toni's mum's house is just another St Mark's residence...

The construction site near the Portland Pay 'N' Spray...

GTA III
SET IN 2001



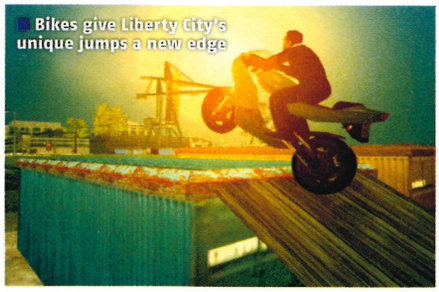
...is gone, and in 2001 is replaced by the Porter tunnel



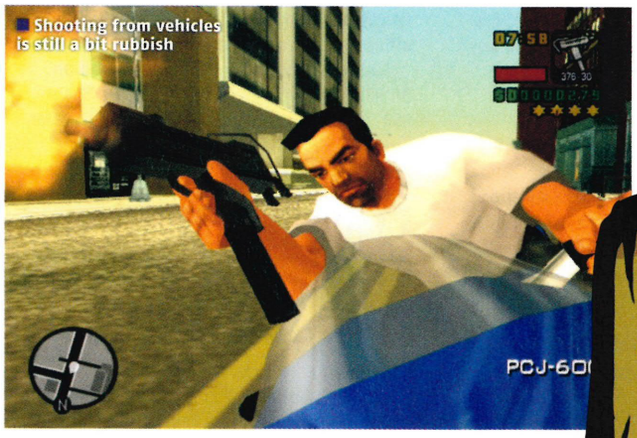
...but two years later it's a popular Mafia-run restaurant

...is now an ugly high-rise apartment block

The first thing we did was enter the weapon cheats



Bikes give Liberty City's unique jumps a new edge

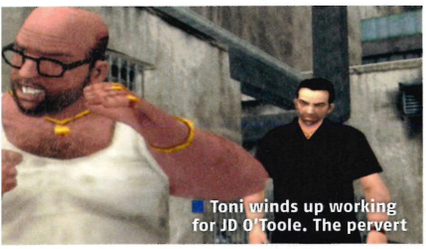


Shooting from vehicles is still a bit rubbish

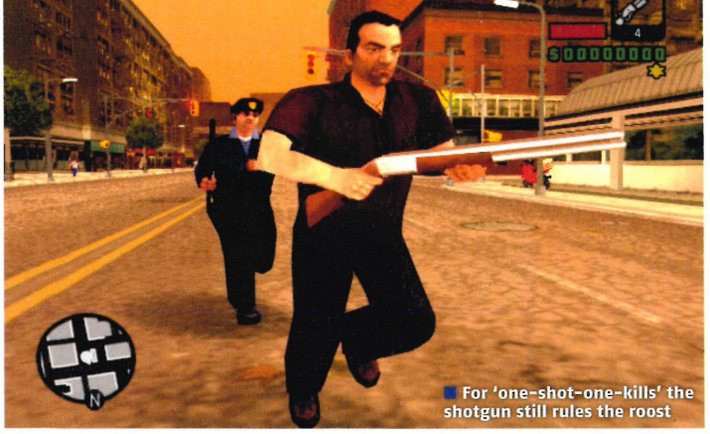
the most notable improvement is the control mechanism. The lack of a right analogue and secondary shoulder trigger meant you had to relearn the buttons, so having played the portable version with a degree of difficulty, the return to DualShock is a relief – particularly with regards to moving the camera and switching between weapons. The shift to a big screen, too, has its benefits. *LCS* suffered heavily from problems with the PSP screen's refresh rate, leading to a migraine-inducing ghosting effect and limited draw distance. If anything, these 'fixes' just go to show the limitations of trying to make a PS2 game work on PSP.

When you consider that *LCS*'s missions were devised to work on a handheld, it's surprising how elaborate many of them are. Although none are up to the epic scale of some of *San Andreas*'s escapades, there's a good deal of variety – especially in light of the reduced palette of vehicles and character abilities the level designers had to play with. The mission Calm Before The Storm – in which Toni has to tail a helicopter before engaging in a tactical gun battle with the Triads, and Biker Heat – a chopper-based chase and shootout with bike gang leader Wayne, are examples of perfectly balanced missions with equal measures of driving and hosing. Later on, near-*Hitman* levels of murderous strategy are brought into play when Toni is tasked with whacking the local mayor, jogging round the park with his bodyguards. Do you take him out from range with the rifle or get in close and use the chisel? The freedom *GTA* offers and encourages remains infectious.

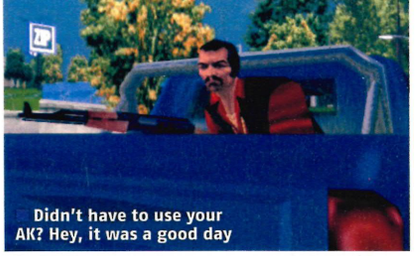
However, there are a few frustrating missions – Portland Chainsaw Masquerade, ➡



Toni winds up working for JD O'Toole. The pervert



For 'one-shot-one-kills' the shotgun still rules the roost



Didn't have to use your AK? Hey, it was a good day

Helicopters still feature but you can't fly them – not officially anyway*

being one. Played in a top-down view, it pits Toni against an onslaught of identical chainsaw-wielding gangsters in the hull of a ship. It's supposed to mimic a retro shoot-'em-up, but it ends up sullying the normally engaging *GTA* world. It's unlikely you'll play it just once either, given that it catches you totally unaware with its difficulty level.

Meanwhile, Caught In The Act – a rare marine excursion – just reminds us how frustrating and restrictive on-rails shooting segments can be. It's a miserable glance back to *Vice City*'s Phnom Pehn '86 and *San Andreas*'s monstrous Just Business.

LIBERTY FOR ALL

It might sound like we're a little down on *Liberty City Stories*, but in truth, playing through the missions is a total blast. What's more, it's still endlessly amusing to just run amok causing bizarre traffic accidents, to quietly observe brawling pedestrians and admire those occasional moments of morbid genius, like the blood trail left on the road after you run over a jaywalker. And we've said it before, but there's nothing quite like the in-game radio station's ability to blend with the on-screen action at exactly the right time – like Josh Wink's *Higher States Of Consciousness* kicking in just as you take off on a breakneck pursuit.

Our main issue here is lack of ambition. On PSP? It's an impressive achievement. On PS2, it's *GTA* at a stroll. Furthermore, Rockstar neglecting to include the riotous multiplayer mode will doubtless piss off a few people. But most notably, regardless of whether you've played it before, there's a distinct lack of surprise. No mansion to take control of, no flying school to discover, no jetpack, no base-jumping, no Apache helicopter, no sudden trip to another city... *God*, we really can't wait to see what they do on PS3. ■ **George Walter**

IT'S STILL ENDLESSLY AMUSING TO JUST RUN AMOK CAUSING BIZARRE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

VI THINGS THE PS3 *GRAND THEFT AUTO IV* MUST DO

I FIX THE LOCK-ON!
It's bizarre that *Manhunt*, a game from the same developer, had a superior lock-on that was never implemented in *GTA*. Now's the chance to start afresh.

II PUT IN A 'RESTART MISSION' BUTTON
Then we won't have to drive all the way back to the marker to re-attempt a failed mission. At least make it an *option*. Please.

III SOUNDTRACK CUSTOMISATION
We love the radio stations as they are, but it would be great to add our own music.

IV AVOID ONLINE DISTRACTIONS
Don't spoil the single-player experience by trying to introduce an intrusive online element. *GTA Online* should be just an option, not the main thrust of the game.

V REMEMBER SIZE ISN'T EVERYTHING
Blu-ray discs hold massive amounts of data. Please use it wisely! We'd rather have a *Vice City* where we can go into every building than something five times bigger than *San Andreas* that takes five hours to walk across.

VI GIVE THE LEAD CHARACTER AN IPOD
Then we can listen to music all the time. It kind of breaks the mood when there's a great track playing and you have to get out of the car.

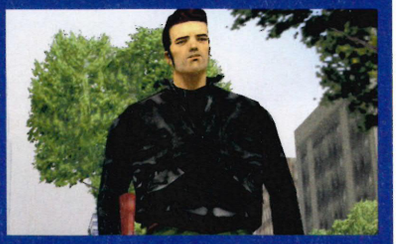
PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	07 Dated and rough around the edges
Sound	09 The best audio anywhere
Gameplay	09 You simply can't duplicate it
Lifespan	08 Short-ish on extras, but decent

You still can't beat a dose of GTA, and even though this is a strange backward step on PS2, the £19.99 price point softens the blow

8/10

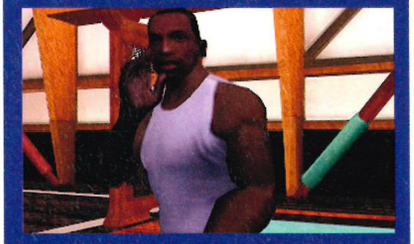
MEN AT WORK

Toni Cipriani is the fourth leading man in the *GTA* series – here's how they stack up



Name: Claude (*GTA III*)
Occupation: Have-a-go bad-ass
Cool factor: Understated, mysterious, criminal chic
Best line: He never speaks
Heinous crime: Killing his ex-girlfriend Catalina
Weapon of choice: 9mm
Criminal rating: The Original Gangster, but lacks the swimming and climbing skills of later stars (7/10)

Name: Tommy Vercetti (*GTA: Vice City*)
Occupation: Mobster
Cool factor: The Hawaiian shirt could only work in 1986
Best line: "I just wanted to piss you off before I kill you"
Heinous crime: Killing his boss Sonny Forelli
Weapon of choice: The chainsaw
Criminal rating: '80s glam crossed with an edge of lunacy makes Vercetti our number one crim (9/10)



Name: Carl Johnson (*GTA: San Andreas*)
Occupation: Gang banger
Cool factor: 50 Cent crossed with Eddie Murphy
Best line: "I don't know what he just said, but it's on!"
Heinous crime: Shoots former friend Big Smoke
Weapon of choice: AK-47
Criminal rating: Talks a gangster's game but is a bit of a softy at heart. He *cries* for God's sake (7/10)

Name: Toni Cipriani (*GTA: Liberty City Stories*)
Occupation: Mobster
Cool factor: Good with the ladies, Armani suits
Best line: "A little too much sideways, not enough up?"
Heinous crime: Whacking a made man
Weapon of choice: Meat cleaver
Criminal rating: Archetypal mafioso with a liberal dose of gallows humour. Slightly unhinged (8/10)

*To find out how to fly a helicopter see issue 67 of *OPS2* or check www.gamefaqs.com

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PlayStation 2

FORMULA ONE 06

F1 06

It's better than last year's version! Slightly!

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER STUDIO LIVERPOOL
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.UK.PLAYSTATION.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE YES

AT A GLANCE

The ever-faithful official *Formula One* game returns, updated to the start of the 2006 season. Play through the full campaign or sample a single Grand Prix weekend.

This is the tenth anniversary edition of Sony's *F1* series. Does that make this game ten times better than the original PSone game? No it does not. This is another annual update where the emphasis is on minor tweaks and cosmetic changes. And you're probably as sick of reading that as we are of writing it.

That's not to downplay the fact that it delivers the usual array of officially licensed drivers and teams, meaning you can drive for MF1 Racing (formerly Jordan) or Super Aguri, or as Championship newbies Scott Speed or Nico Rosberg, for the first time. And other important changes, like the late removal of the Belgian GP from the F1 calendar, have also been faithfully included. But that's the very least we've come to expect from the official *Formula One* game.

HAPPY LAPPING

Out on the track, two minor changes have improved the overall racing feel. Cars handle more smoothly than in last year's version, and while it's a tiny tweak, the end result is a far more user-friendly driving experience. Tied into that, the intermittent jerkiness which cropped up last time out has been eliminated completely. There's still a feeling of it being caught halfway between full-on sim and arcade racer, but it's an enjoyable if simple drive nonetheless.

PRESENTATION IS THE MOST CRISP IT'S EVER BEEN IN AN *F1* GAME

More good news is that last year's functional-yet-dull aesthetics have been tidied up, with presentation the most crisp it's ever been in an *F1* game both on and off the track.

And there's now serious scope for fine-tuning not only your car, but the game itself. A total of 33 in-race options are available to toy with, from camera angles and commentary, to the depth of assistance provided for gear changes, steering, braking and all your other driving needs. Few of them are new to the series, but the way they've been laid out here is notably more accessible than in previous instalments.

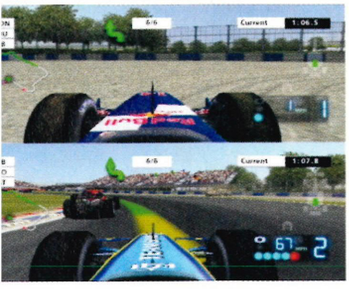
It's a bit too 'pick up and play' for those who like a tough driving challenge, and in that respect this can't be considered superior to *TOCA 3* or *GT4*. But if you've lived without *Formula One* for the last few years, this is a good reason to get involved again. ■ **Ben Wilson**

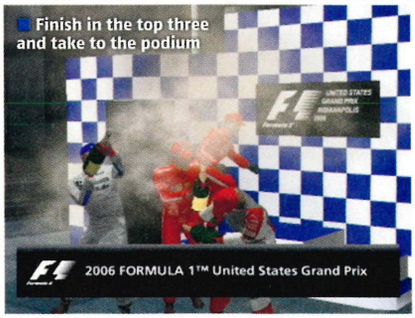
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	07	Plain visuals but tidy presentation
Sound	06	Loud engines, predictable commentary
Gameplay	08	You'll be driving like a champ in minutes
Lifespan	07	Always worth a quick five-lap spin

Likeable licensed racer that boasts excellent presentation, a wealth of options, and an idiot-simple (yet well designed) set of controls

7/10





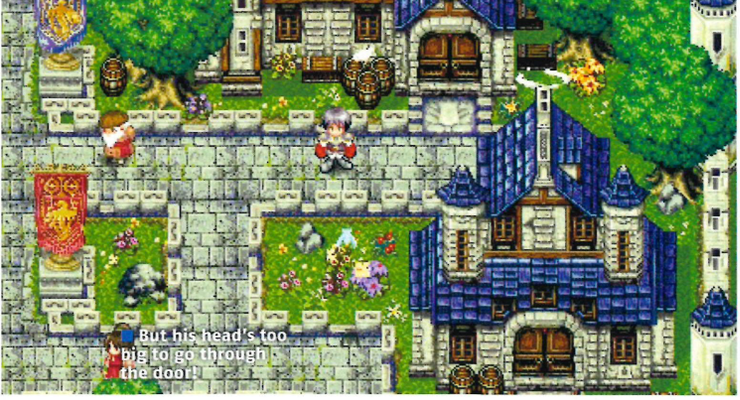
SCHU'S A NAUGHTY BOY!

Recreating the Fatherland's favourite son's moment of shame

Michael Schumacher's antics at Monaco, when he stopped in the middle of the track during qualifying while in line for pole position, were seriously dangerous. More importantly, they were hilarious. But how would *Formula One 06* react to a spot of in-game copycat cheating?

Like Schuey, we drove the fastest lap, then parked up at the La Rascasse hairpin. A six-car traffic jam soon built up. The officials quickly whipped out a yellow flag, warning of 'danger ahead'. But despite sitting still for five minutes, the expected black flag denoting disqualification never arrived.

In real life, the naughty German was demoted to 22nd on the grid for the race proper as punishment. On the game, our fastest time stood, meaning we started the GP in pole position, despite our blatant disregard for the rules. Achtung! It turns out that cheats *do* prosper.


But his head's too big to go through the door!

Seriously, your PSP isn't even breaking a sweat

Love complex, richly nuanced RPGs? Steer clear

ASTONISHIA STORY

Barely interesting, let alone astonishing

In Korea, the RPG is sacred. They take role-playing as seriously as we take football. But when it comes to *developing* them... well, they still have a lot to learn. *Astonishia Story* is a traditional top-down adventure that, visually, borrows heavily from *Secret Of Mana*, the ancient (but still much better than this) SNES role-player. The story is the usual cocktail of swords, dragons and beards – and manages to nail being both deathly boring *and* highly unimaginative. Basically, everything an RPG plot shouldn't be.

Combat-wise, the clichés continue. Random battles give way to incredibly simple turn-based fights, much like those in *Final Fantasy*. Physical attacks, magical powers and every option you'd expect from a game like this are at your disposal. By the end, you'll have control of eight party members – but the battles take *forever*. They take up to 20 minutes sometimes – which is hardly handheld-friendly now, is it? Furthermore, bog standard field enemies seem infinitely stronger than the bosses, who can be toppled almost effortlessly.

In short, *Astonishia* is outdated. The visuals, structure, story – *everything* – stink of the early '90s. If you're a sucker for pixels and retro then you'll probably enjoy this regardless of its quality, but for the rest of us it's a mangy old dog that needs putting down. ■ **Andy Kelly**

To relax, the kids would go into the woods and burn bears

Lo-fi visuals *and* gameplay

DETAILS

PUBLISHER	UBISOFT
DEVELOPER	SONNORI
PRICE	£29.99
OUT	NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER	NO
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT	NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS	NO

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK VERDICT

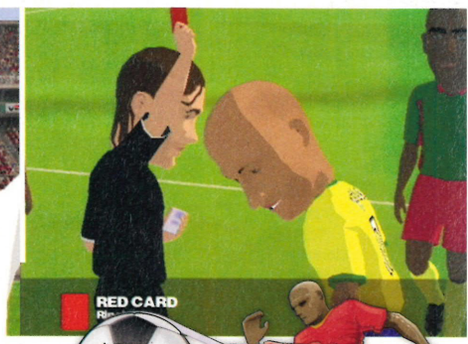
Graphics	03	Looks like a hoary old 8-bit relic
Sound	02	Dated. Doesn't use PSP to its full potential
Gameplay	06	Basic, unexciting and, yes, dated
Lifespan	04	15 hours to finish – it'll feel like 1,500

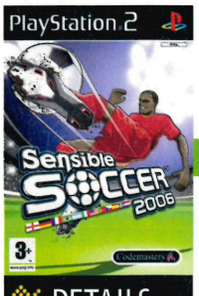
A basic RPG with no redeeming qualities, this is a relic from the past that's inexplicably managed to find its way onto PSP

3/10

The lurching camera makes us feel sicky

At least Joe Cole's head must be the right size





SENSIBLE SOCCER 2006

An unwelcome reminder of life before *PES*

DETAILS

PUBLISHER	CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPER	KUJU ENTERTAINMENT
PRICE	£24.99
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
WEBSITE	WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/GAMES/?GAMEID=1846
60HZ MODE	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
ONLINE	NO

The greatest football game of the '90s, *Sensi* was the *Pro Evolution Soccer* of its day. Its simplistic yet incredibly addictive brand of fast, fluid 2D footy was an absolute joy. And we stress the word *was*.

The main problem with *Sensible Soccer 2006* isn't some kind of loss of innocence that prevents retro games from being enjoyable. The problem is simpler than that: *2006* is just a lot less fun than the original (we know, we went back and played *Sensible World Of Soccer* on our decrepit Amiga). Even for previous *Sensi* true believers, this is embarrassing. *2006* plays like one of those free Internet games you can access through http://sport.guardian.co.uk/thegear. Okay for a few minutes' play – not so appealing when you're paying £40 for the pleasure.

The most offensive thing about it is how little effort has gone into doing justice to such a legendary brand. From the terrible remix of its old theme song to the massive-headed players, the presentation is diabolical. Yes, it was probably a good idea to keep the original, top-down view, but how come when you're attacking, the camera zooms so far out you can barely tell what's going on? Why does the crowd sound like a swarm of hornets with sore throats? Why does the ref dish out a card for every slide tackle? In general, *why?*

The lack of any licences is another disappointment – although, to be fair, there's a decent number of club and international teams and tournaments available to you. However, given the tired 'tackle-pass-shoot' pinball nature of the football, it's debatable whether you'd persevere beyond a few friendlies.

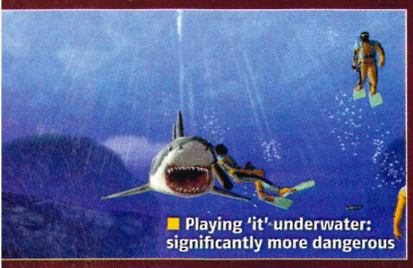
It seems almost too obvious, but if you want proper football it's always got to be *PES*. If you want a daft kickabout there's *FIFA Street*. Don't, whatever you do, buy *Sensible Soccer 2006*. It'll only take the shine off of those golden memories. ■ **Lee Hart**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

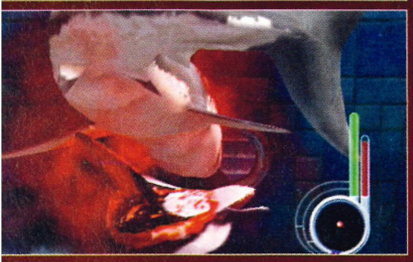
Graphics	03	Slightly 3D-ified and bigger heads
Sound	03	Less atmosphere than Highbury
Gameplay	04	Fun for no more than 30 minutes
Lifespan	05	Plenty of tournaments to endure

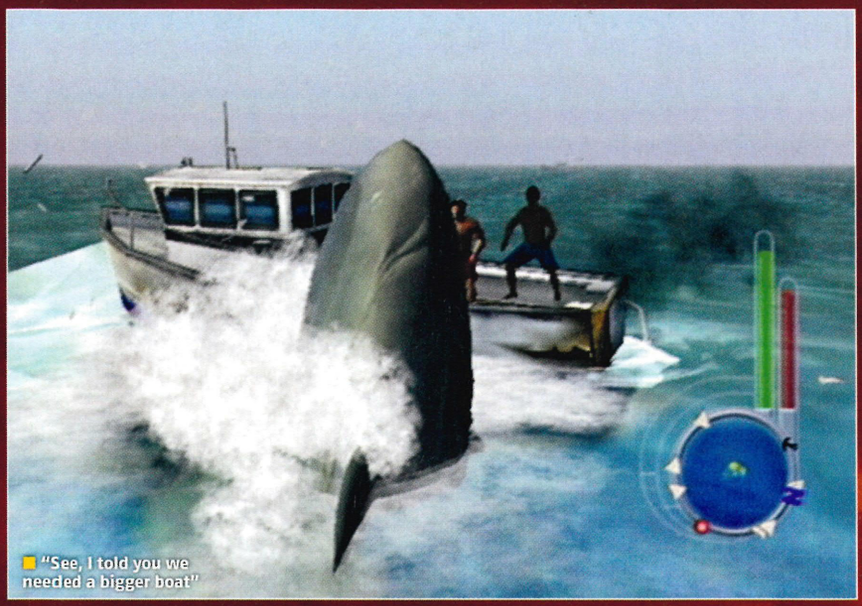
A needless, exploitative 'update' of a fondly remembered classic. Compared to PES or even FIFA Street, this is an embarrassment

4/10

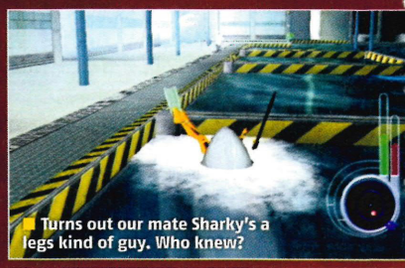


Playing 'it' underwater: significantly more dangerous

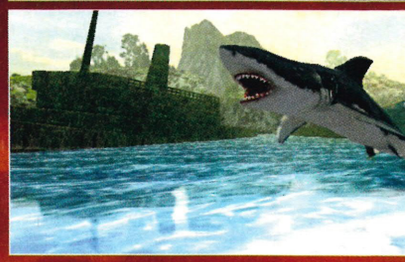


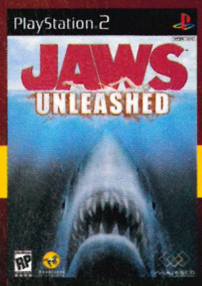


"See, I told you we needed a bigger boat"



Turns out our mate Sharky's a legs kind of guy. Who knew?





JAWS UNLEASHED

Big fish bites off more than it can chew?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER APPALOOSA INTERACTIVE
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 21 JULY
WEBSITE WWW.JAWSTHEGAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Developer of popular Mega Drive 'underwater hippies' game *Ecco The Dolphin* returns with something more meaty – a game based loosely on the *Jaws* movies.

There's something unexpectedly therapeutic about chewing an attractive lady into small pieces until only her puny, fleshless ankles remain intact, then casually gliding out into the ocean for a swim. Not your ideal day at the seaside? Then you'll want to avoid *Jaws Unleashed* (and reading *The Daily Mail* for the next month or two, as Lord knows what they'll make of this). But for gamers in search of a fresh experience, this is a surprisingly satisfying buffet.

CRUNCH TIME

Jaws Unleashed is set in and around Amity Island, the fictional community terrorised by our great white buddies from the *Jaws* movies (see 'Sharks On Film'). Once more, the plot revolves around a member of the Brody family. Mike wants Jaws captured for a spot of scientific experimentation, while the rest of the town just want him served up in a big sarnie with extra Tartare sauce. He has, after all, just gulped down the mayor's son for breakfast.

Rather than playing as the hunter, you control carcharodon carcharias himself, with the majority of the game spent encircling Amity Island tackling storyline missions, or playing mini-games in order to increase your fishy skills. These are split into five categories: accuracy, power, speed, hunger and health. Completing tasks like eating a certain number of lifeguards before they can reach the shore boosts your mammal's attributes.

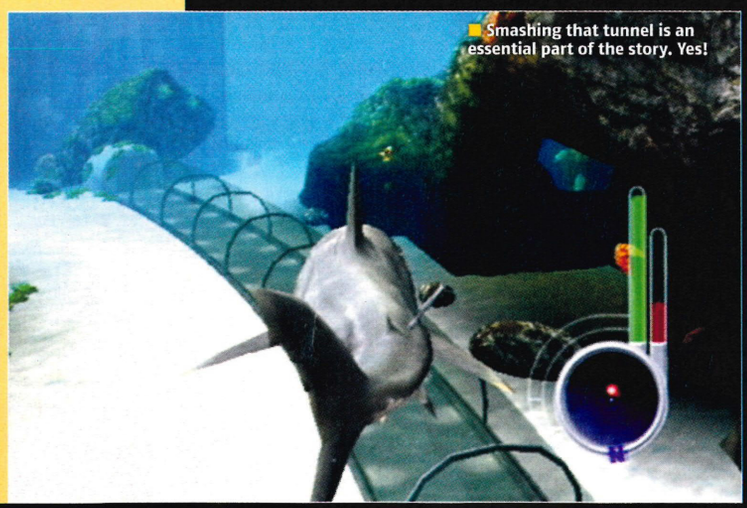
They also provide some light relief from the occasionally frustrating storyline missions. While there are only ten, progressing through them can require superhuman patience. Old chompy chops glides through the water effortlessly 90% of the time, but also has a habit of getting boxed into enclosed places. The camera goes haywire when this happens. Sometimes it'll zoom in too close, or it'll jump above the water even though the shark is still submerged, enabling the gang of harpoon-wielding divers who are usually on your case to give you a right kebabing.

That said, the story is well paced, if a little short. Your key skills are introduced at the outset and then put to the test as you escape from the aquarium where Brody Jr has you captive. From ramming glass walls to create huge tidal waves, and chomping on baby dolphins and even a young Orca, to learning the various methods of feeding on humans, the basics are easy to pick up. New tricks, like being able to jump out of the water and snatch your prey in one swift movement, become available as you advance.

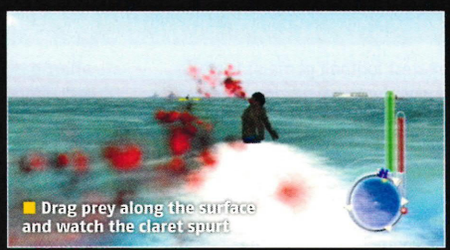
RED AND DEAD

Eating people is undoubtedly the game's highlight. Like silently assassinating a rival gang member on the beach in *San Andreas*, enthusiastically dismembering some poor jetskiier just for the joy of it raises a smile, even when you've done it 300 times. There are three different methods of chowing down. The first is simply to swim up to them and hit R1 to begin biting. Alternatively, you can approach while underwater, then tap R2 to drag the unsuspecting fool down into the depths. (Or along the surface as blood sprays in every direction.) Then there's the unrivalled choice of every good seafaring predator: targeting a specific body part.

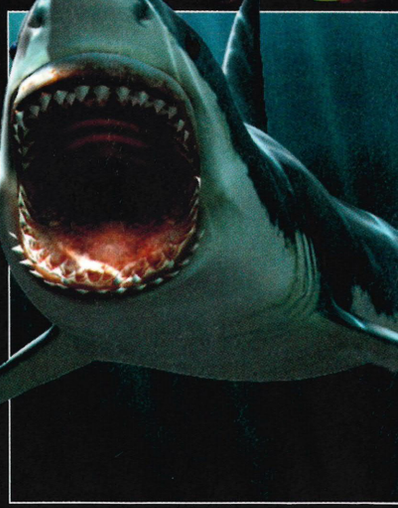
To do this you hold ◎ as you approach, then tap the D-pad up or down to cycle through particular limbs, head, or torso. It's then simply a case of tapping R1 for a quick nibble on that apendage, or repeatedly pressing it for a full-on feast. Limbs, sockets, entrails and gallons of blood dirty up the ocean every time you dine, and once you've finished, any



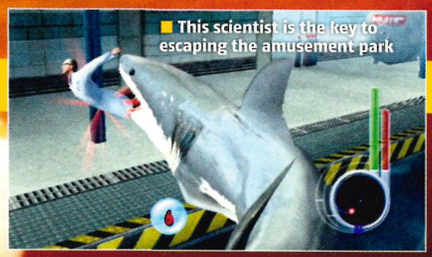
Smashing that tunnel is an essential part of the story. Yes!



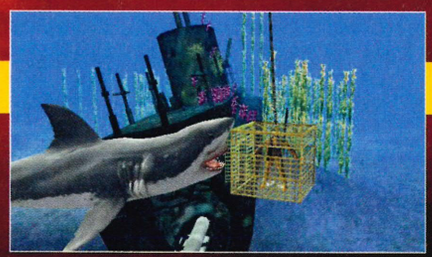
Drag prey along the surface and watch the claret spurt

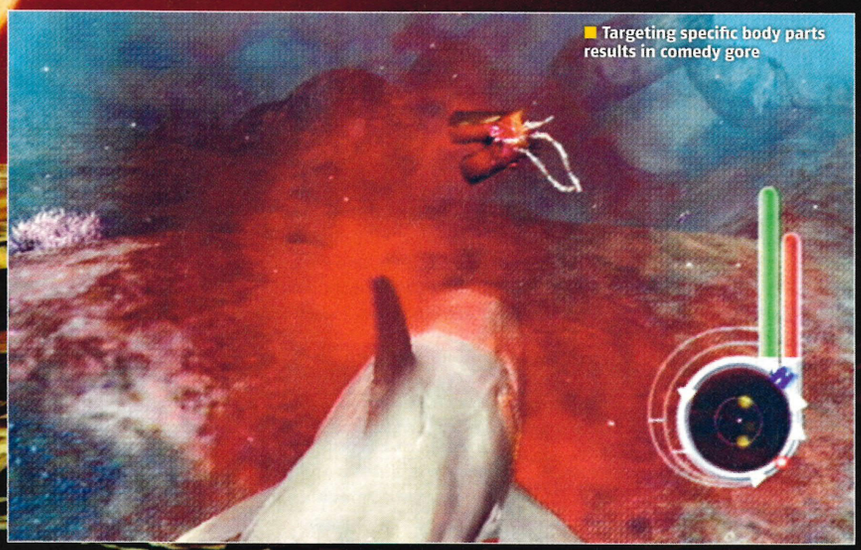


Guess who's about to become lunch? (small clue: not the massive grey fish)

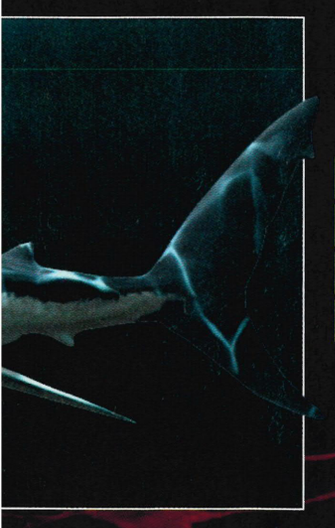


This scientist is the key to escaping the amusement park





Targeting specific body parts results in comedy gore



remains will float towards the surface, sometimes in two or three different places if you've homed in on their torso. Is it wrong that we couldn't help imagining how much gore a possible PS3 sequel would be able to pump out?

USE THE D-PAD TO CYCLE THROUGH LIMBS, HEAD, OR TORSO. THEN TAP R1 FOR A QUICK NIBBLE

LIGHTER BITES

Jaws Unleashed offers plenty of other positives. Its soundtrack, while repetitive, is close enough to the score of the original movie to set the scene throughout, and when the camera behaves it's good looking too, though the humans lack detail. The selection of movie trivia that appears during loading screens is also a welcome touch.

To successfully recreate the feel of a 300-stone monster thundering through the ocean is a huge ask, but developer Appaloosa has pulled it off in style. Only the sea-sick camera system and a too-brief storyline mar this enjoyable romp through the open water. ■ **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK **VERDICT**

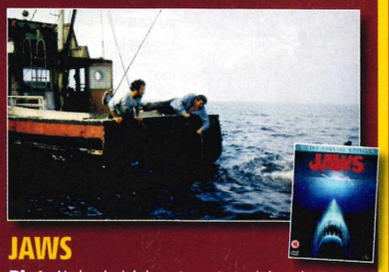
Graphics	07	Shark is impressive, camera glitches aren't
Sound	07	Orchestral score conveys drama and tension
Gameplay	07	People-munching is always a laugh
Lifespan	06	Storyline missions are good but few

Jaws is genuinely witty, outrageously violent and top fun but – wait for it – slightly lacking in depth

7/10

SHARKS ON FILM

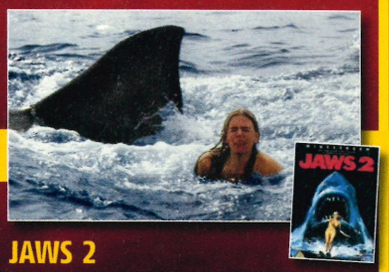
Need a recap on those four *Jaws* movies? Then try these plankton-sized summaries



JAWS

Plot: Naked chick gets eaten. Island community goes barmy. Mad hunter gets munched after rousing sing-song. Shark destroys boat. Chief destroys shark. *Fin.*

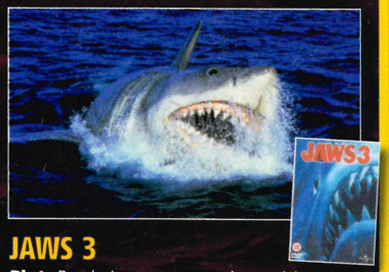
Sharky's end: Mr White is blown to shreds when a Brody bullet impacts the oxygen cylinder he's using as a toothpick.



JAWS 2

Plot: Brody is sacked (blub!). Great White tries to eat helicopter (tssk!). Ex-chief sets out to spear fish and clear name (yeah!).

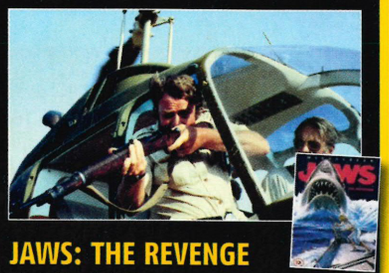
Sharky's end: Silly Jaws is fed a power line by his nemesis and proceeds to zap himself stupid. Brody 2, Carcharodon 0.



JAWS 3

Plot: Brody Jr opens aquarium with broken undersea doors. Doh! Cue big momma shark eating Brody Jr's pals.

Sharky's end: Trapped in the control room, Big Whitey takes a pole in the gob before swallowing a grenade and finding peace. (In amoeba-sized pieces.)



JAWS: THE REVENGE

Plot: Brody Jr II gets eaten. Family move to Bahamas. Shark follows (!). Michael Caine makes odd noises at Wife Of Brody.

Sharky's end: The fish roars like a lion before being shot in the side and blowing up. Yes, *blowing up*. Stupid. STUPID!

ALLSTAR

2004/05 line-ups mean West Brom are still in the top flight

PlayStation.2

SOCCER LIFE 2

Live the life of a football pro. Tweedy not included

505

DETAILS

PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER CAVIA
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.505GAMESTREET.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Manage the life of one or more fictional footballers from youth team to international level, and watch the virtual money (and ladies) roll in as they progress towards the top.

Overpaid, underworked, duty bound to make sex with members of Girls Aloud, and forced to train for a whole two hours before sauntering off to the golf course. Assuming you can avoid tabloid stings and Keeley's boyfriend, who wouldn't want the life of a football pro? We'd happily give up everything for a £50-a-week contract with Scunthorpe United. Even Maidenhead United. But given our lack of any ability whatsoever, our best (okay, only) hope is *Soccer Life 2*, a game that 'lets you live like a professional'.

DODGY TRAINER

The reality is that this does scratch the surface of living like a footballer, but only in a lazy, Rio Ferdinand-esque way. (And sadly without the option to eat Jaffa Cakes for every meal.) You begin by controlling one young player and attempting to get him signed by a club. Unlike Sven, most sides don't like gambling on untried teenagers, so the first season is a two-hour-long wade through menu screens. To enliven this experience, you're given a 'test pro' so you can discover how the big boys live. But you can't do anything with this guy other than train and watch him in matches, meaning this also turns into a futile exercise of ⊗ tapping.

Finally, at the beginning of season two, the game proper begins. If you have enough cash, you can buy more players to control. For each, you get to choose a squad number and peruse contract offers from other clubs. That's right: if you fancy buggering off for more wonga at the first available opportunity then you can. At least *that* part is realistic.

Development of your player comes down to his performance during training and matches, but you only control the former. You're presented with a screen from which you can select which facets of your player's game to improve, such as mobility and 'long feed'. Sadly, the latter isn't a mini-game where you chuck burgers at Wayne Rooney from a distance. The drills require nothing more than a couple of correctly timed button presses, and quickly become tedious. And as you can't actually do anything on match days, it doesn't take long to feel that your role in a player's advancement is minimal.

Make it through to the end of season two and you're given the opportunity to break the tedium by getting a girlfriend, buying a car and setting up business ventures. This part of the game is the most fun, and if you play for long enough, you can even have kids and train *them* to be footballers. But the fact that it can take three hours of doing next to nothing just to reach this point is inexcusable, and means only those with superhuman patience should consider signing these pro forms. ■ **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	03 Unsexy menu screens, matches look nasty
Sound	03 Mute button ahoy – the music is horrid
Gameplay	06 Some intriguing elements do pop up...
Lifespan	05 ...if you can survive the initial hard slog

A unique football game with some innovative stuff contained within – but one that has its priorities all wrong

5/10

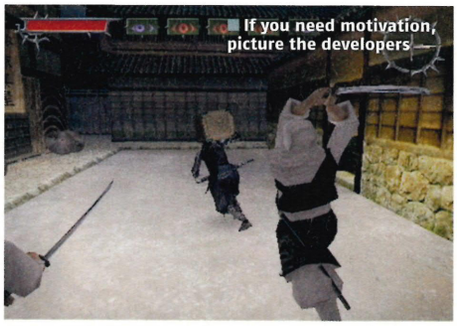
Manchester United vs Chelsea, *Soccer Life 2*-style. Oh dear

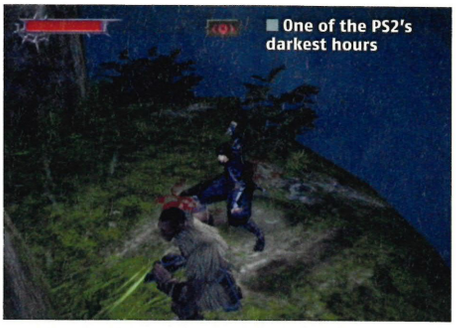
SOCCER WIFE

A variety of damsels looking for a soccer star boyfriend pop up as you progress. And like every good pro, you can date a load of 'em at once. Among the available hot spots on offer are a beach, park, or city centre (tasteful choice, Romeo) and you're also able to buy gifts for ladyfriends to boost your 'love rate'. Just don't take any potential missus shopping – they'll make like Colleen with your credit card *and* expect you to carry armfuls of Gucci bags back to the car.

With action like this, no wonder the crowd stayed at home

"Just a little off the top please..."


If you need motivation, picture the developers


One of the PS2's darkest hours

SHINOBIDO: WAY OF THE NINJA

We'd rather commit Seppuku than play it again

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER SPIKE
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.SHINOBIDO.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

This is the sort of soulless, mechanical sneak-'em-up that makes you realise just how brilliant *Hitman: Blood Money* actually is. Agent 47's adventures provide stylish kills in levels that build into finely crafted, utterly absorbing set-pieces. By comparison, this is one big clumpy mess, full of boring sneaking through tedious missions. It looks cheap, feels shoddy and the only real entertainment comes from seeing just how bad things can actually get.

The stealth, for example, is extremely basic and repetitive. Stay out of sight, press ⓐ near an enemy and watch the same awkwardly pre-animated kill animation repeated. Like the bodies you leave in your wake, it's entirely lifeless. Get caught though, and it gets even worse, because the one-button combat system can barely handle single opponents. So, find yourself facing off against several guards simultaneously and you'll be left desperately hammering buttons while your sponge-brained ninja lurches around the screen.

And the missions are as horribly deflating as the fighting, with a few limited objectives constantly recycled. 'Assassination' and 'transporting secret documents' are recurring themes, with the latter basically requiring you to carry a box from A to B like a stealthy Dominos pizza delivery boy. The enemy AI is also *hilarious*. They run into walls, walk repeatedly into the same trap and, in one spectacular example, an entire level's worth of bad guys threw themselves down a bottomless gorge while we hung from a ledge. After which we just dangled there for a while, considering letting go. Anything to end this pain. ■ **Leon Hurley**

This game gives merciless killers a bad name

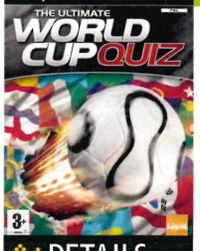
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK		VERDICT
Graphics	05	PSone-standard, a rhapsody in grey
Sound	04	Bad acting and bizarre jazz-fusion score
Gameplay	03	Unrewarding, uninspired and frustrating
Lifespan	05	There's a level editor if you can be bothered

Archaic, leaden stealth that mixes bland, unchallenging environments and clunky controls to plumb new gaming lows

3/10

THE ULTIMATE WORLD CUP QUIZ

Makes you glad it's four years away...



DETAILS

PUBLISHER LIQUID GAMES
DEVELOPER LIQUID GAMES
PRICE £9.99
PLAYERS 1-4
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.LIQUIDGAMES.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

How much do you know about your home team's World Cup history? Like who scored England's first goal against Columbia in the 1998 Group stages? If you answered Beckham, you're wrong. The point being, most people aren't as clued up on World Cup trivia as they think. The World Cup is supposed to be about jingoism, strong booze and crushed hope. So this ugly text-based quiz on obscure World Cup facts will please no one. Not even die-hard stattos. It was Darren Anderton, by the way. ■ **GW**

■ Bonus question: Who cares?

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT
Get on Google and make up your own football quiz parlour game with paper and pens. Easier, cheaper, and more fun	**2/10**

SUPER DRAGON BALL Z

If only 'Super' read 'No More'

DETAILS

PUBLISHER ATARI
DEVELOPER CRAFTS & MASTER
PRICE £24.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.DBZ-VIDEOGAMES.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

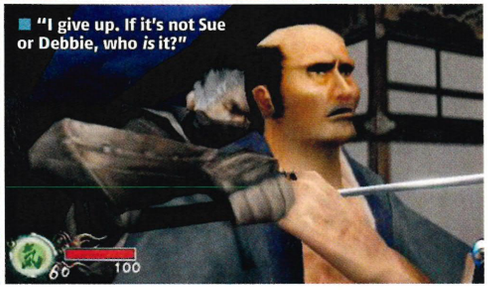
Most kiddie mega-crazes burn out just as quickly as they burst into the public conscience. But for some reason the *Dragon Ball Z* crew just refuses to fade into obscurity. This mediocre beat-'em-up series does nothing to justify their continued existence, either. Pick a character, fight in a series of timed rounds, throw down a few combos, and unlock bonus characters for completing challenges. Only the destructible scenery provides a thin sliver of interest.

Even if you do persevere, the presence of just three fighting modes means there's little lasting appeal. *Street Fighter II* was doing this kind of thing better more than a decade ago. *Dragon Ball* doesn't deserve to be mentioned in the same breath as *Soul Calibur III* or *Tekken 5*. ■ **MT**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT
Its colourful looks may appeal to younger gamers, but Super DBZ is too limited in every department to attract interest from anyone else	**5/10**

■ Cel-shading? Didn't we outlaw it?

Damagingly for a stealth game, sneaking around is really fiddly


"I give up. If it's not Sue or Debbie, who *is* it?"

ASSASSINS' REGISTER

PSP *Tenchu* features some familiar ninja faces...

RIKIMARU
Recognise him by: The nasty scar above his right eye.
Answers to Lord Ghoma as head of the Azuma clan. Sacrificed himself in the original *Tenchu*, only to re-appear in third outing *Wrath Of Heaven*. Neat trick.

AYAME
Recognise her by: Her always-exposed and slinky midriff.
Member of the Azuma clan since childhood. Weapon of choice is a pair of short swords. She's pals with Lord Ghoma's daughter, and a bit mouthy.

RIN
Recognise her by: Her close-cropped tomboy hair – don't.
Made her series debut in *Fatal Shadows*, where she initially believed that Ayame had murdered her kin. So handy with her fists that she prefers unarmed combat.

TEESHU
Recognise him by: His just-been-stung-in-the-nads-by-a-wasp frown.
Doctor by day, assassin by night – this mercenary works for an underground organisation that only kills when there's a justifiable reason. Rubbish bedside manner.

TENCHU: TIME OF THE ASSASSINS

Heavy on the swords, less so on the subtlety

DETAILS

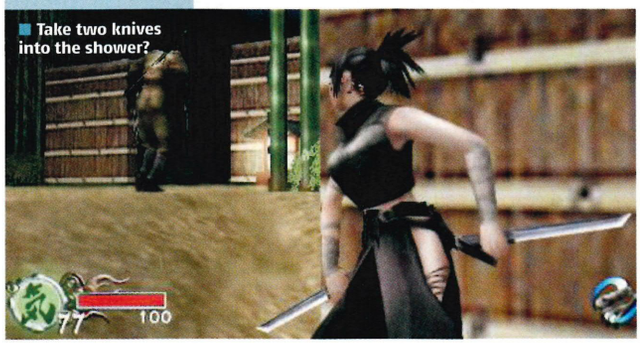
PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER FROMSOFTWARE
PRICE £34.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

AT A GLANCE

The popular ninja stealth series set in feudal Japan arrives on PSP, with individual storylines for each character and ad-hoc connectivity for co-op and head-to-head battles.

Ste*lth is a dirty word around here. Done right – *Hitman*, *Metal Gear*, *Manhunt*, *Splinter Cell* – it's tense and thrilling. Done wrong – everything else – it's the most ball-achingly frustrating genre out there. Still, our love of ninjas knows no bounds, so we're willing to give *Tenchu* a chance. Having gone AWOL for the last game (the mediocre *Fatal Shadows*) veteran assassin Rikimaru and murderous Doctor Teeshu return for the PSP debut, and vicious martial artistes Ayame and Rin also make the cut.

That classic *Tenchu* line-up may sound promising, but there's disappointingly little to differentiate between the four playable characters once the slaying kicks off. Rikimaru is slightly more powerful than the others, and the two girls mildly quicker, but not enough to make each feel unique. If you're unfamiliar with their back stories it probably won't bother you too much (see 'Assassins' Register' to get up to speed), but long-term *Tenchu* fans will bemoan it immediately.


Take two knives into the shower?

There is one cool way of distinguishing between the main characters, however. Each has his or her own storyline made up of a series of small missions. All are generally well designed and serve up a decent spread of skewering opportunities. Some are just a couple of minutes long, others can take a quarter of an hour, but they're all brief enough to be played in quick bursts, which suits on-the-go PSP play.

As cleverly structured as the missions are, *Time Of The Assassins* too often slips into mindless button-bashing territory. It's impossible to progress using only stealth and skill. The chief issue is the camera, which has a knack of veering off during battle. A quick tap of L1 returns it to the default third-person perspective, but enemies regularly get a couple of blows in before you've had a chance to adjust. This is especially galling when you're fighting several angry swordsmen at once.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO PROGRESS USING ONLY STEALTH AND SKILL

FIGHTING BLIND

This wonky viewpoint also affects your tactical approach to missions. It's easy to accidentally wander into an enemy's backside, alerting him to your presence before you've had a chance to introduce your sword or fist to his gullet. The startlingly short draw distance exacerbates this problem and means that rather than creeping or hugging walls to sneak up behind opponents, it's often best to forget stealth entirely, and instead wade into battle swinging fists and cold steel indiscriminately.

Rikimaru was sensitive about his paper-thin elbows

Time Of The Assassins certainly isn't a bad game, and the bite-sized mission structure and WiFi capabilities provide some artery-slicing fun. A smart mission editor also adds longevity. But the ninja stealth that we expect from the series just doesn't come off – and given *Tenchu*'s previous excellence in that department, this can only be considered a letdown. ■ **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	05	Poor draw distance and bland characters
Sound	05	Standard fight effects and oriental music
Gameplay	05	A stealth game with little need for stealth
Lifespan	07	Lots of missions and a strong editor too

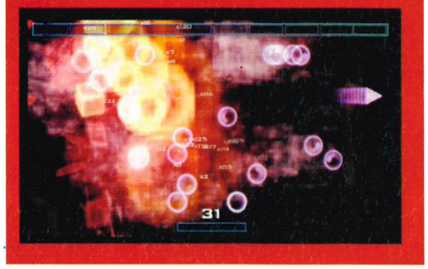
As a bloody beat-'em-up this is fine, but as the stealth-driven outing it wants to be, it's a long way off top form

6/10

One false move and you'll be rinsing guts out of your espadrilles

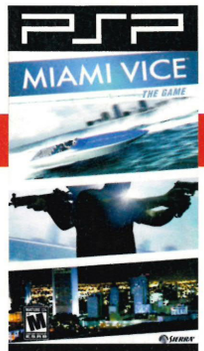
HACK THE SYSTEM

Being Crockett and Tubbs is pretty cool, but the real highlight comes in the form of an *Asteroids*-style mini-game found at the police station. Completing it means you've successfully hacked the police system and can enjoy the benefits that go with it. We're talking new guns, upgrades, and even a cheats *suit*. Does it come in a fetching shade of peach, you ask? That would be telling...



MIAMI VICE: THE GAME

Crockett and Tubbs' comeback is a surprise for the right reasons



DETAILS

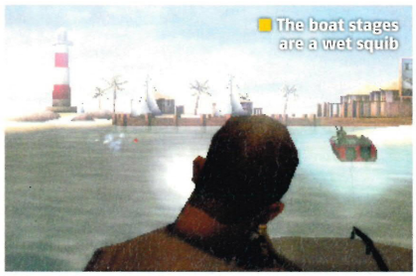
PUBLISHER VIVENDI
DEVELOPER REBELLION
PRICE £34.99
OUT 28 JULY
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

AT A GLANCE

Control narcotics officers James Crockett and Ricardo Tubbs in their war against Miami's sharpest-dressed cartels, in this officially licensed prequel to the upcoming movie.

The failing of many handheld games lies with the controls. The PSP is less than a year old and yet we've already lost count of the number of games that make the easiest of tasks a chore. Sometimes just walking in a straight line can leave your thumb feeling like a dry twig. As for targeting, don't even bother – best practice usually involves taking a 'kill 'em all and let God decide' attitude.

This is where *Miami Vice: The Game* trumps nearly every other shooter released on PSP. Nabbing its targeting method from *Resident Evil 4*, *Miami Vice* enables you to manually aim at enemies using an over-the-shoulder view and the analogue nub. This means you can't move while prepping the shot, but it doesn't matter because the game takes its other key idea from forgotten PS2 classic *kill.switch*. Like that Namco gem, all the action in *Miami Vice* is built around the need to use cover. Context-sensitive buttons mean you can dive over tables, hug walls and crouch behind cars with ease. From these bullet-riddled safety zones you can pop out and pick off your enemies. If you're running low on health or need a better vantage point to pop a


The boat stages are a wet squib

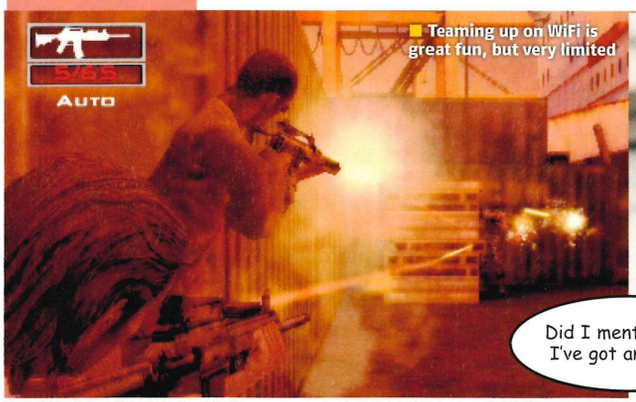
villain, you can even push over objects in the scenery, such as cabinets and statues, to make new cover positions.

Of course, it's not as simple as it sounds. Many of the objects you'll hunker down behind will quickly crumble away during a heated exchange of fire, forcing you to leg it to new cover. Get hit and Crockett and Tubbs will stagger and stumble, slowing them down and making them even more vulnerable. Plus the AI enemies are clever enough to hunt you down, and will run for cover themselves when outgunned.

It all sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? You love *Resi 4*, you may well have heard that *kill.switch* was a great shooter, and *Miami Vice* oozes character, so why the good-but-not-*that*-good score? Simply put: there's just not enough on offer over the long haul. Bolstering the 12 missions is a clutch of boat-chase stages, which, though fun in co-op mode, are sparse and uninteresting in single-player.

Though it handles well and drips with the sweaty gloss of the movie, *Miami Vice: The Game* won't hold your attention beyond the couple of days it'll take to finish it. Despite the decent co-op mode, there's just not enough substance here to complement the style. It's one vice that isn't quite addictive enough. **Ian Dean**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Colourful visuals do the movie justice
Sound	06	Standard '80s synth-rock remixed
Gameplay	08	Intuitive control system is refreshing
Lifespan	06	Too brief to offer lasting appeal
What could have been a great game is hurt by a lack of depth and variety, but this is still one of the best PSP shooters out there	7 /10	



Teaming up on WiFi is great fun, but very limited

We suspect this war *won't* be over by Christmas

MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER

Field Commander **makes a surgical strike on WiFi boredom**

PLAY BY EMAIL

Field Commander's Transmission mode enables you to email moves to a mate. Their copy of the game then downloads the data, plays out the moves, and then lets them reply in their own time.

HOT SWAP AT HOME

If you can bear to share command, we recommend checking out this game's hot-swapping mode, which allows four players to take turns at mobilising a single army against *Field Commander*'s AI.

SHARE YOUR CUSTOM CAMPAIGNS

Create a mission, modify the map, place enemy troops in sneaky locations then upload the file for everyone else in the world to download.

The other tanks decided to hang back and see what happened

It's probably a little too late to retreat now

FIELD COMMANDER

Something for the megalomaniac on the move

DETAILS

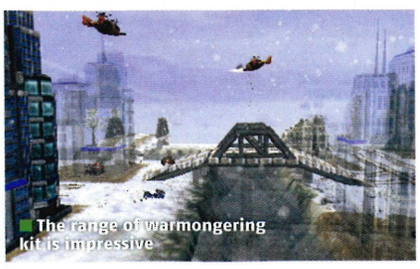
PUBLISHER UBISOFT
DEVELOPER SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT
PRICE £34.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

AT A GLANCE

You're the General with an army at your disposal in this turn-based battlefield tactics game that borrows heavily from the legendary *Command & Conquer* series.

This is the best box art ever! It might as well come endorsed by the Republican party and play the *Star-Spangled Banner* when you open the case. The premise behind this portable strategy sim is also very familiar. Like a good little military superpower you're fighting to keep a fictional realm free of terrorists, arms dealers and black-market traders. This involves taking part in a stack of turn-based battles where you deploy land, sea and air units against your opponent.

Low on gloss but high on stat-crunching simulation, *Field Commander* isn't the sort of title you'd turn to for a five-minute fiddle. Although the control is simple point 'n' press stuff – move the cursor with the D-pad, bring up the options menu with ⊗ – there's a pleasing amount of depth here. Learning about the strengths and weaknesses of each unit is just the start, as, during the later stages of the game, you not only have to know your enemy, but also how to employ advanced military tactics to outsmart them. Thankfully the finer points of commanding a modern army are explained throughout the training and first few missions of the campaign mode, so you're given the chance to get to grips with how pretend war works.



The range of warmongering kit is impressive

THE BORE WAR IS OVER

With everything geared towards out-thinking and out-manoeuvring the opposition, it's a shame that, tactically, missions tend to boil down to 'how quickly can I kill everything on the map?'. Once past the tipping point when you know you're likely to win, the campaign battles can become a grinding exercise in 'mopping up' the remaining enemy units – and it's this that may leave hardened military tacticians cold like a Russian winter. Fortunately for everyone else there are plenty of options to keep the warring interesting. You can create custom missions with unusual objectives like holding a strategic building, or clearing a jungle to allow a convoy to pass through. And there's an incredible amount of online modes (both ad-hoc and global) for anyone who wants to take the campaign further.

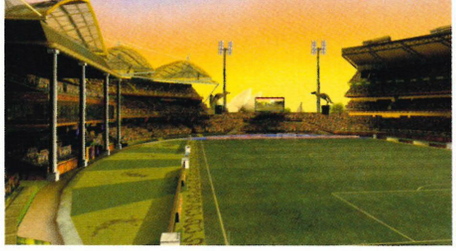
Field Commander is unlike any other game on PSP. It may not have the same thrills as the more hands-on combat titles such as *Syphon Filter* and *SOCOM*, but it's cerebral gameplay and considered pace make it perfectly suited to portable play. ■ **Andy Hartup**

Win or lose, waging war is a pricey business

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	06 Basic, but with some neat effects
Sound	06 Unlikely to trigger any 'Nam flashbacks
Gameplay	08 Turn-based combat done well
Lifespan	09 Tactical depth and lots of multiplayer modes

***Field Commander** taxes the brain more than the trigger finger, so it's ideal for anyone hankering after a tactical time waster*

8/10



Fat Frank lines up an Exocet into the bottom left

WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2

Like Altrincham beating Manyoo, a pleasant surprise

Kits aren't licensed, but still look authentic – from a distance

Nooooooo... the World Cup's over! (Did we win? Oh.) Now there's another four years until the next one. *And* it's still over a month until the domestic season kicks off. Which is literally balls. Especially as playing *FIFA World Cup 2006* on PSP only reminds us of what we're missing.

So consider *World Tour Soccer 2*, the follow-up to Sony's first non-cack footy game in yonks, albeit one that sacrifices simulation in favour of stupidly fast, end-to-end arcade action. Lurking in last year's edition was an excellent challenge mode, and, recognising a good thing, the developers have expanded it considerably this time around.

Medal mode is an enjoyable extension of the challenge ethos. You don't *just* have to beat teams to progress – you also earn points for successful passes, tackles, and shots on goal. New to this edition are extra challenges like Shot Clock, an idea clearly 'borrowed' from basketball, where you have a set time to shoot once you get possession. The World Tour option sees you globe-trotting to unlock further challenges, but they're effectively the same ones as in Medal mode, just in a more random order. Still, both are a positive development for the series.

Out on the pitch the game plays almost identically to the original, with the ball pinging around at supersonic pace. You won't see much Milan-style intricate build-up play here. (In fact you won't see any, as club sides have, annoyingly, been ditched.) Even so, there's plenty to like. *PES* addicts will require some adjustment time to fully appreciate it, but *World Tour Soccer 2* will tide you over nicely until the Prem kicks off. And probably a little bit beyond too. ■ **Benjamin Green**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	07 Beautifully presented, if a little simple
Sound	07 Peter Drury is as excitable as ever
Gameplay	07 A bit sharp, but you'll soon adjust
Lifespan	07 Lots of challenges but little else

A likeable addition to the PSP's footy ranks that successfully offers something very different to the latest FIFA and PES

7/10

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER SONY LONDON
PRICE £34.99
OUT NOW
WIFI YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

MICRO MACHINES V4

Like *Need For Speed* for fleas

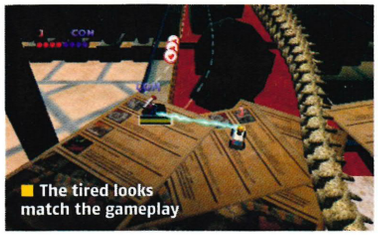
Back in the days before *Mashed*, *Micro Machines* ruled the top-down driving arena. Its tiny-car-on-a-big-landscape gimmick was inspired. Its physics weren't bad. Its flaws – get too far ahead and you can't see where you're going, so you either need to memorise every course or play *very* tactically – all seemed like part of the fun. And while the PS2 version of *v4* remains true to these traits of 'classic' *Micro Machines*, this PSP incarnation is just annoying.

Why can't knocked-out players in a four-way do anything? Why's the course design so uninspired? Why's it virtually impossible to take anyone out with a weapon? And, seriously, why have they made the camera craziness more migraine-inducing than ever? Sorry *MM*, but it's too late for answers. The love affair is over. ■ **JS**

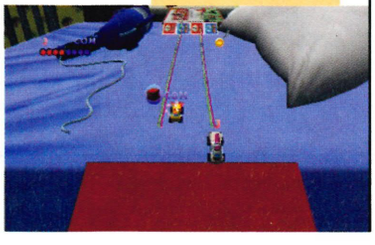
DETAILS

PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPER SUPERSONIC SOFTWARE
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK	VERDICT
Hollow in comparison to the mighty, beautifully designed Mashed and the superior PS2 version of this game. An opportunity badly missed	**5/10**

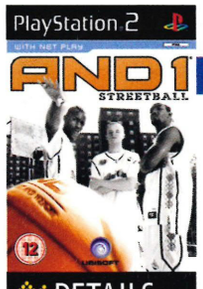


The tired looks match the gameplay



Next month: And 1 Croquet reviewed

PlayStation 2



AND 1 STREETBALL

Wish you were a *lot* taller?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER UBISOFT
DEVELOPER BLACK OPS
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE HTTP://AND1STREETBALLGAME.UK.UBI.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE YES

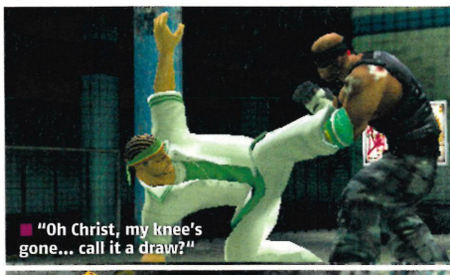
Ignore the stupid title. The AND 1 brand doesn't mean much outside of the US, but thankfully decent b-ball action doesn't need a translator and *AND 1* makes a decent fist of the game.

Out on the court everything feels extremely familiar. There's a heavy emphasis on flashy skills first, and getting points second. Tricks are mapped onto both thumbsticks, basics are assigned to face buttons, and special abilities like alley-ooping are controlled by the shoulder buttons. Once you're familiar with the layout, even the most advanced moves are easy to access.

The opposition is court-savvy, without being invincible, and this makes *AND 1* feel extremely even-handed – a safe, yet solid entry into the saturated, street-sports genre. Which, sadly, also means it's hard to recommend it over other hoop sims out there. ■ **ND**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK	VERDICT
AND 1 borrows from the best hoop sims the PS2 has to offer, and the result is a playable, yet unexceptional, sports title. There are better b-ball games out there though	**7/10**

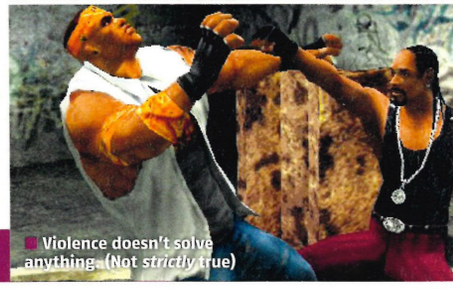
If only the blood effects matched the detailed hairstyles



"Oh Christ, my knee's gone... call it a draw?"

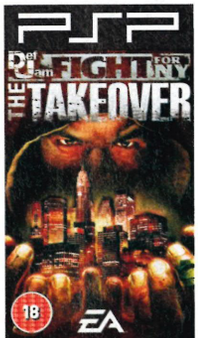
DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY: THE TAKEOVER

bronze
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK



Violence doesn't solve anything. (Not *strictly* true)

Handheld hip-hoppers decrease the peace



DETAILS

PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER AKI CORPORATION
PRICE £34.99
OUT 21 JULY
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

AT A GLANCE

Innovative hip-hop heavy fighting game arrives on handheld, with some of rap's biggest names attached. Create a fighter and take over all five New York 'hoods.

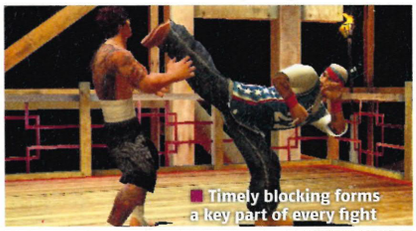
When *Def Jam Fight For New York* arrived on PS2 back in October 2004 we gushed about its incredible visuals, going so far as to say that it might be the best-looking game ever seen on Sony's beautiful baby. It's been surpassed since, but that hasn't stopped the knuckle-dusting, hippity-hopping half of Team *OPS2* getting all kinds of excited over this PSP spin off. After all, *Fight For New York*'s appeal was about much more than its handsome visuals. It also happened to be a supremely versatile brawler with style to spare.

Takeover can't quite live up to its console daddy graphically, but it holds its own in every other department. Blending wrestling, kickboxing, martial arts and numerous other disciplines into one large bundle of punchy fun means no two fights feel the same, and makes the ad-hoc multiplayer mode particularly addictive. The big hip-hop names like Snoop Dogg, Busta Rhymes and Ice T all return. Carmen Electra's back, too, so it's nice to know she's still 'getting work.'

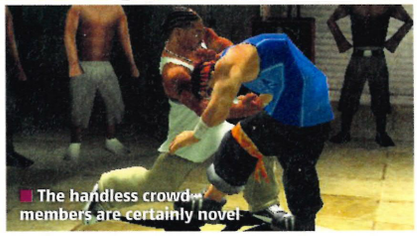
DROWNING IN SPAM

Story mode provides the crux of the game, and it's pleasantly simple this time out. Your mission is to take over five different areas of New York, recruiting a crew of allies along the way. Because you can move between the five 'hoods at will, one criticism levied at previous titles in this series – that of the main mode being too linear – is gone. There are still limitations to this structure, like the unrelenting wave of emails which clog up your inbox yet never feel like they make a genuine difference to the storyline, but there's still plenty of depth to it.

Where *Def Jam* is well ahead of its rivals is in its ability to transmit the ferocity of every blow you strike. *WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw 2006* puts on a good wrestling match, but playing it doesn't give you the impression that there's much real bone-breakage happening [Ben, seriously, you know it's not real yeah? – Ed]. The opposite is true here. A glorious thwack accompanies any well-timed meeting of knuckles and teeth. Slam your opponent face-first into the floor and the meaty crunch will make you smile every time. In terms of sheer impact, it easily packs the most punch in the PSP's fighting game roster.



Timely blocking forms a key part of every fight



The handless crowd members are certainly novel

BIG FIGHT TACTICS

New to this edition are extra dirty attacks like kidney punches. While they're a welcome addition, we're glad that they don't become the focus of every fight. Timing your combos is a far more effective path to victory than resorting to underhand tactics. Similarly, firing off a volley of punches to the face and stomach is more satisfying than cracking an enemy over the head with a bottle – although there's a time and a place for both. Finding the right balance between playing fair and sneaking in a crafty low blow every so often is one of *The Takeover*'s most satisfying challenges.

With *SmackDown!*, *Fight Night Round 3*, and *Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max* already out, PSP isn't lacking in decent fighters, but this takes all three and mercilessly smashes them to a pulp. Tape up your wrists and prepare to come out swinging, son. **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Grimy arenas and chunky man-beasts
Sound	09	Top quality hip-hop track list
Gameplay	08	Brilliant mix of wrestling and fighting
Lifespan	08	Loads to unlock and come back to

A versatile and immersive fighter packed with individual characters, top tunes, and bone-breaking aplenty **8/10**

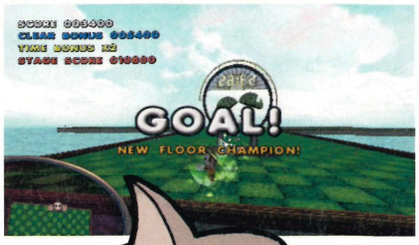
PROPER BROKE

You will be if you cross these boys...

BO
Prefers to do his thing while rocking the whole 'Michael Jackson in public' look, which in our book makes him seriously dangerous.

TRICK
He looks like hip-hop's answer to *Street Fighter*'s M Bison, but this guy throws a killer haymaker. Take one on the jaw and it's a long way back.

DAVID BANNER
A heaving mass of muscle and aggression held together by sinews of steel, and powered by a short temper. His arms are bigger than our thighs.



SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

PSP version also far from being the Monkey's nuts

Simplicity is the beauty of *Monkey Ball*. No *MGS*-style plot twists, no complicated tactics, just a cheery chimp in a sphere, squealing in terror as you roll him across an obstacle course. It's lovely. It works. So why does Sega keep trying to change it?

First they crowbarred in a plot for *Super Monkey Ball Deluxe*. Now they've come up with *Adventure*, where puzzling takes a back seat – we're talking a piffling 50 maps (in comparison to the 304 in *MB Deluxe*), many not terribly well designed – to rolling around and chatting to other monkeys. This is platform-style stuff, and the sheer amount of exploration isn't helped by the fact that the analogue nub doesn't suit the precision control required of top-flight 'balling.

The upside comes in the form of six new mini-games – including the excellent new Monkey Tag – but even they suit the pass-the-pad nature of big-screen PS2 fun better than the PSP. Take things slowly and you'll minimise the amount of times you drown your little monkey in the sea, but that's not really the point, is it? Shame. ■ **Joel Snape**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT
Graphics	06 Still a Sega design classic
Sound	05 Hyper monkey voices and bleepy tunes
Gameplay	07 Puzzles, yes! Platforming, no!
Lifespan	06 Plenty here, but only for the purists

Like the PS2 version, this is a needlessly complex and frustrating barrel of monkey malarkey. Only the mini-games rescue it

6/10

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER TRAVELLER'S TALES
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

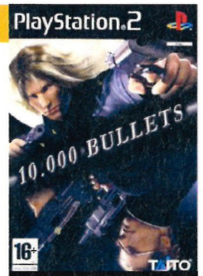
10,000 BULLETS

Of which not a single one hits the mark

This cheaply assembled *Max Payne* wannabe sees you as a professional hitman carrying out dirty work for a large Italian crime syndicate. It's as clichéd as they come, but that's a comparatively minor problem. The game switches between what are optimistically called 'Adventure' and 'Action' modes. The former consists of wading through interminable dialogue, the latter of killing everything in sight using the cack-handed combat system. Both are indescribably dull.

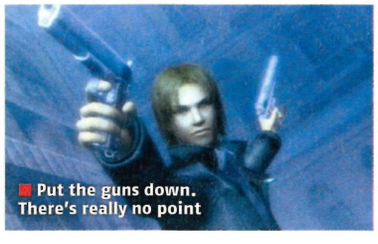
Everything feels half finished: the story is filled with baffling jumps in logic, with poor animation and lazy level design prominent throughout. Unless you're carrying out a study on how many tiresome clichés one game can recycle, there's no justification whatsoever for bothering with this disjointed mess. ■ **MT**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
Dull action-adventure which combines sub-standard bullet-time combat, badly synched cut-scenes, and a waif-like plot. Not even hardcore masochists should touch it	**2/10**



DETAILS

PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER TAITO
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.505GAMESTREET.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO



SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: THE YELLOW AVENGER

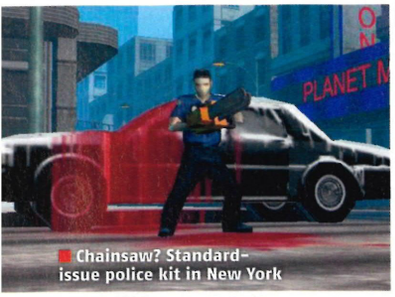
The 'Bob deserves better

SpongeBob the show has a catchy theme tune, hangover-soothing colours, and a character who lives in a pineapple. It's great. This kid-friendly platform/adventure, however, has little life in it at all. Tasks include setting SpongeBob's alarm clock and doing his maths homework. If that doesn't sound thrilling, try trekking back and forth across Bikini Bottom to do endless favours for his ungrateful neighbours. Or doing some of the most numbingly boring 'puzzles' in the world, like finding the Krusty Krab's phone number (hint: it's in the fridge) or tracking down the superpowers you need to do special missions (hint: they're always next to the object you need to use them on). Even by a five-year-old's standards, this is tame stuff. ■ **JS**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
You can't condense cartoon genius like the 'Pants into a 2.5D platformer – especially if you don't even bother with voice acting. Pretty, but dull	**4/10**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER TANTALUS
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO


Chainsaw? Standard-issue police kit in New York

Infected's fun comes from linking zombie-death combos

"You have the right to remain dismembered"

DEATH JAM

Forget everything Hollywood B-movies taught you – here's how to *really* persuade the coffin dodgers to stay dead

1 Your zombie-nixing blood gun can't penetrate skin, so you'll need to soften up the shambling meat sacks with a few standard bullets before it'll take effect.

2 When they turn red and begin to glow like they're full of Ready brek, you'll be ready to administer some corpuscle-assisted justice. Woo!

3 Get one or more zombies 'in the red' and they'll form a chain. Shoot just one of the chained undead and they'll all explode, giving you cash 'n' guts galore!

PSP

INFECTED

Quick, someone give this a booster jab

DETAILS

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER PLANET MOON
PRICE £29.99
OUT 21 JULY
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

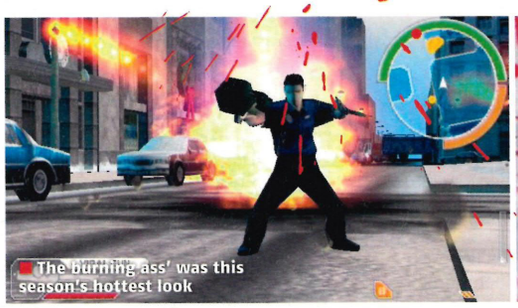
AT A GLANCE
Uncomplicated, explosion-heavy third-person shooter in which you try to save survivors of a zombie apocalypse in a series of tight, against-the-clock missions.

When it comes to coherent plotting, *Infected* spits in the face of logic before ploughing bravely on in the direction marked 'total insanity'. You play a rookie cop on duty when a zombifying mutant virus sweeps NYC. For reasons that are never explained, you're the only person immune to the disease's charms. Lucky you? Hardly. The high toxicity of your blood means that touching the zombuses causes them to ignite, so the authorities have wired a gun up to a vein in your arm, and your task is to go around toasting the restless dead using bullets made from of your own blood. Presumably until you get woozy and have to lie down in a dark room.

STRANGE DEADFELLOWS

Barely-there storyline aside, *Infected* starts off as a straightforward if curiously unimaginative third-person shooter. The opening levels are as appealing as flossing your teeth with rusty cheese wire – terribly designed, tedious, and featuring excruciatingly stupid opponents. We get that they're zombies, but do they *all* have to be quite so dumb? It takes substantial time and effort to discover that, beneath the often cretinous AI, a clever little high-score game is struggling to get out.

On the plus side *Infected* never forgets its portability. The action is split into short chunks – usually no more than three minutes in length, in which time you must achieve a variety of goals. These are often as obvious as blowing waves of zombies away, but sometimes they require a bit more brain work – such as escorting survivors to a heli-pad before they become infected. Later on, things become particularly tricky, throwing up levels where you have nowhere to offload your fellow survivors. Here, just keeping them alive when the shuffling rotbags come in for the kill will have your head spinning like a reel in a fruit machine.


'The burning ass' was this season's hottest look

"Nothing to see here. Move along please..."

Infected has another spark of ingenuity – it's impossible to earn the gold medals on offer by picking off the waves of undead individually. For that you have to learn how to chain your kills together. You do this by linking up zombies using a thick 'targeting' line, then simply tapping the fire button and watching them fry (see 'Death Jam'). Chaining a screen full of zombies and blowing them away with one deadly bang like this is one of the biggest thrills we've had on PSP, so it's a shame that *Infected* exhibits such a dearth of imagination elsewhere. It's too much of a mixed-bag to really recommend. The blasting offers sporadic entertainment, but not enough to absolve the general shabbiness. **Alex Dale**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	05	Blocky characters and average effects
Sound	06	Slipknot? Wrong decade, we reckon
Gameplay	06	Too basic to be engaging
Lifespan	06	Only the chain kills will drag you back

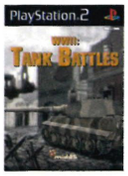
An uninspired but likeable-in-places arcade shooter whose few good ideas are hamstrung by shoddy design and weak AI

6/10

WWII: TANK BATTLES

Let the bad times roll

PUBLISHER MIDAS **DEVELOPER** INTERACTIVE VISION
PRICE £14.99 **PLAYERS** 1 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO
WIDESCREEN NO **SURROUND SOUND** NO

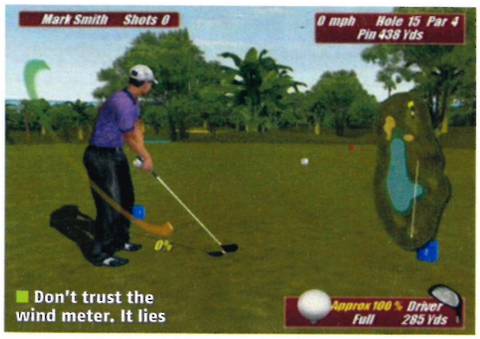


Momma *OPS2* always told us it was wrong to mock the afflicted. But on this occasion, we can't help it. *WWII: Tank Battles* is so inept, that it's actually quite a laugh to play – purely to see what idiocy it will serve up next. Our favourite comedy moments are those when you're driving along doing nowt when suddenly a 'Mission Accomplished' screen pops up. Eh? It's baffling. Tanks handle like crippled race cars and blowing up enemies involves nothing more than frantically pressing R1. As an exercise in trying to destroy your index finger, it's unmatched. As a game, it's almost uniquely awful, and for that it will always have a place in our hearts. ■ **BW**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

You could offer us 15 quid to play this again and we'd still flatly refuse, but it does score an extra point for being so unintentionally hilarious

2/10



Don't trust the wind meter. It lies

LEADERBOARD GOLF

A fairway down our shopping list

PUBLISHER MIDAS **DEVELOPER** AQUA PACIFIC
PRICE £14.99 **PLAYERS** 1-4 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO
WIDESCREEN YES **SURROUND SOUND** NO

With a wealth of decent putting rivals out there, *Leaderboard* is up against it from the tee-off. And you soon discover that being able to tune your swing to the precise percentage point of force required is naff, and that sinking putts on pancake-flat greens is just dull.

With just three courses, there's no hope of this lasting until next week, let alone an entire summer of sun-dappled thwacking. If you want a serious sim, choose *Tiger*; if you want a quirky 18 holes, go for *Everybody's Golf*. And if you knock this into the rough along the way, we won't judge you for it. ■ **LH**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Shouting 'world's most lavish golfing challenge' on the box might dupe granny when she's rummaging through the Tesco bargain bin, but not us

4/10

OVER THE HEDGE

PUBLISHER ACTIVISION **DEVELOPER** EDGE OF REALITY
PRICE £39.99 **PLAYERS** 1 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO

The people behind this tame movie tie-in obviously weren't expecting much from their pre-teen market. You can't control the camera for one thing – obviously beyond the capabilities of little fingers. Instead you're lumbered with an automatic view which is as irritating as it is unhelpful. The majority of the game consists of sub-par stealth – avoid spotlights, jump over laser tripwires – while whacking relentless waves of cloned enemies. *Over The Hedge* isn't a title, it's the best place to lob this. ■ **GW**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Repetitive platform action. It's playable, just, but staggeringly uninventive, uninspiring and instantly forgettable

5/10

DAEMON SUMMONER

PUBLISHER MIDAS **DEVELOPER** ATOMIC PLANET
PRICE £14.99 **PLAYERS** 1 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO

We instinctively mistrust any game that uses the 'ye olde' spelling of demon. From the first moment the appallingly acted lead character opens his virtual mush to speak, this first-person zombie-masher screams 'amateur' a lot louder than it does 'horror'. Looks-wise it's not disastrous, while the ludicrous but endurable plot casts you as a Victorian Clint Eastwood look-a-like on the trail of his vampire wife. But at its black heart this is nothing more than a rotten game in which you purposelessly glide around, waiting an age for your crossbow to reload before you're mauled and forced to restart. Again. ■ **LH**

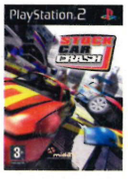
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Sometimes you fire at enemies from point-blank range and do no damage at all. That's how much this horror sucks

3/10

STOCK CAR CRASH

PUBLISHER MIDAS **DEVELOPER** MIDAS
PRICE £14.99 **PLAYERS** 1-2 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO



You'd think any game with stock cars smashing into one another as part of a 'Carnage Mode' couldn't go wrong. Nuh-uh. This game takes that theory and smashes it to confetti. Driving near or into other cars increases an on-screen boost meter, yet activating it when full has no noticeable effect – you simply amble on at the same velocity (halfway between 'dog with two legs' and 'dog with no legs') despite your speedometer claiming otherwise. Coupled with tame collisions, there's little to like here. Carnage? No, just a mess. ■ **BW**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Uninspired tracks and clunky physics make this one to avoid. Burnout on Platinum renders the existence of this totally pointless

3/10

ARMORED CORE: NEXUS

What, no unlockable Crouch?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER NOBILIS
DEVELOPER FROMSOFTWARE
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE HTTP://ARMOREDCORE.AGETEC.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

Is it really to much to expect the designers or mech-based games to be able to come up with more exciting objectives than 'kill six enemies' or 'smash some crates'? Apparently so. And that's why, even with 150 missions on offer, *Nexus* is on a losing battle.

You're hired to walk your mech straight into trouble in a host of new missions, plus a stack of 'classic' scenarios from the many *Armored Cores* of the past. And by 'classic' you may want to read 'lazily recycled'. That said, it's not all scrap. The customisation-for-credits system offers limited enjoyment, and the straight arena battles against up to 40 enemies make the repetitive 'destroy, protect, destroy some more' routine a little less tedious.

Where *Nexus* trips over its own enormous shiny feet is its failure to convey the power of the mechs. Play is sluggish and weak effects dull your weapons' impact. Before long, you'll be reaching, not for your opponent's tin throat, but for the off switch. ■ **LH**

A tense canyon mission. No, wait, it's indigestion

One down, 149 missions to go (sob)

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

An Armored Core *nut's wet dream, if such a deranged breed exists. Otherwise a dull mech-'em-up that lacks thrills and originality*

5/10

next month

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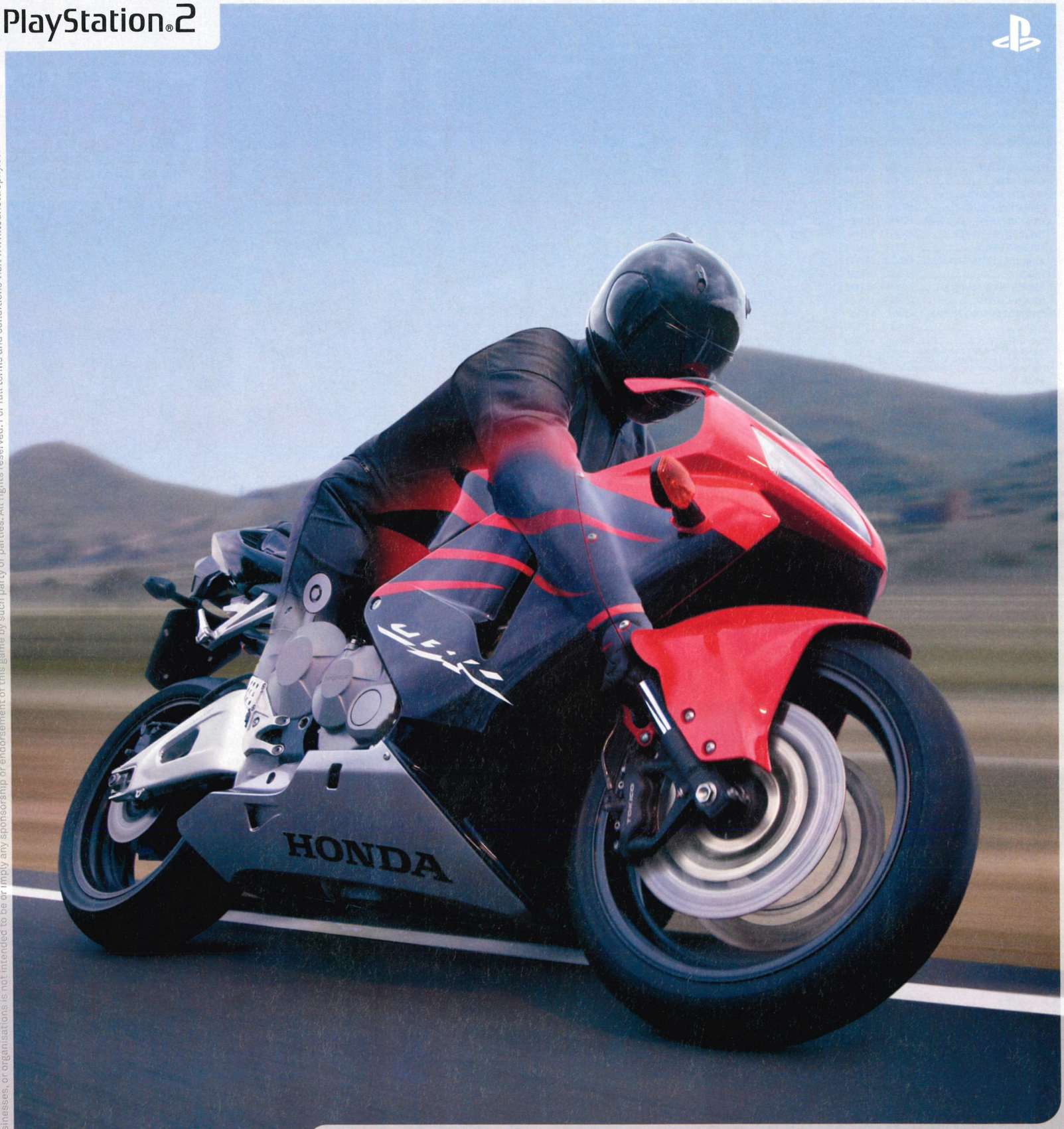

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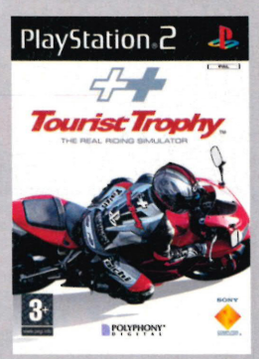

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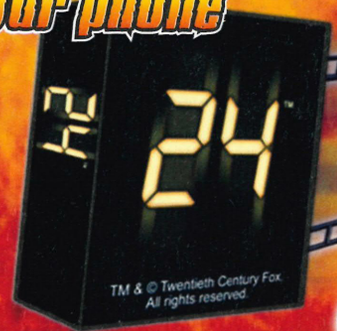

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF STAR WARS

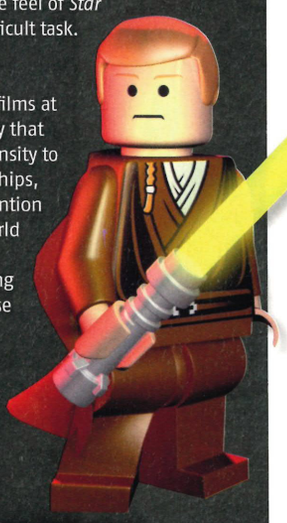
WORDS: NATHAN DITUM

That's no moon... it's a PlayStation. Or, rather, it's every *Star Wars* game made for PSone and PS2, and we're heading right for it. Grab your saber and venture with us into one of the longest running game franchises ever

However you feel about *Star Wars* head honcho George Lucas – after the prequel trilogy, we're guessing pretty sore – there's no denying that back in the day, ol' George was something of a visionary. Way back in 1982 the beard in the lumberjack shirt saw potential in videogames that most of Hollywood couldn't, and established his own development company, LucasArts, to make licensed adaptations of his film properties – *Labyrinth*, *Indiana Jones* and, of course, *Star Wars*. After several hits for Nintendo consoles and PC, the first *Star Wars* titles arrived on PlayStation in the mid '90s, but had difficulty replicating their success on Sony's system. Perhaps the PlayStation wasn't cut out for flight sims and shooters, or maybe the *Star Wars* well was simply running dry (the trilogy was nearly 20 years old, after all). Whatever the reason, capturing the feel of *Star Wars* on PlayStation was proving to be a difficult task.

A NEW HOPE

The announcement of three new *Star Wars* films at the end of the '90s – and the cultural frenzy that accompanied it – added a new level of intensity to proceedings. There were new heroes, new ships, and new storylines to draw from, not to mention perhaps the biggest marketing push the world has ever seen. The result was a rash of new games – a few on PSone, but most appearing on PS2. This burst of activity was both a curse and a blessing. The post-prequel crop was patchy, with many accusing LucasArts of having issues balancing quantity and quality. But when a *Star Wars* game *does* work, it's something truly special. Adventure? Excitement? A Jedi craves not these things. But we do. And here's how LucasArts set out to give them to us...



PSONE KENOBI

Before PS2, *Star Wars* on PSone was already a Force to be reckoned with

Title – *Rebel Assault II: The Hidden Empire*
Release – April 1997
Platform – PSone

A Long Time Ago...
Immediately after the destruction of the first Death Star in *A New Hope*, the Empire develops a dangerous, cloaked TIE Fighter which threatens the Rebel Alliance.

The Way Of The Jedi
The whole game was an on-rails shooter with pre-rendered video, so the 'action' basically consisted of fixed flight plans and a set of crosshairs.

Whose Presence Is Present?
Darth Vader made a brief appearance, but you played Rookie One, a Skywalker-esque farm boy from Tatooine.

Strong With The Force?
Great music and video for the time, but the gameplay was too restrictive.

Title – *Dark Forces*
Release – May 1997
Platform – PSone

A Long Time Ago...
Set during and after *A Newv Hope*, the Alliance discover and destroy a new, advanced form of Stormtrooper called a Dark Trooper.

The Way Of The Jedi
Cashing in on the success of *Doom*, *Dark Forces* took on a first-person perspective for laser shootage.

Whose Presence Is Present?
A few cameos (Jabba, Vader, Boba Fett) but you played as ex-Imperial-agent-turned-mercenary Kyle Katarn.

Strong With The Force?
Yes – the first FPS to feature that blaster sound every time you fired. Enough said.

Title – *Masters Of Teräs Käsi*
Release – March 1998
Platform – PSone

A Long Time Ago...
Again set in-between *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. This time the Emperor has sent an assassin to take revenge on Luke Skywalker.

The Way Of The Jedi
Teräs Käsi is a 3D one-on-one fighting game in the style of *Tekken* ('teräs käsi' means 'steel hand' in Finnish – very similar to *Tekken*'s 'Iron Fist').

Whose Presence Is Present?
All the big guns – Luke, Han, Darth, Leia, Boba Fett, plus new assassin Arden Lyn.

Strong With The Force?
Nope. Since when did a blow to the head with a lightsaber inflict non-lethal bruising? Surely it'd slice your face off?

Title – *Episode I: The Phantom Menace*
Release – August 1999
Platform – PSone

A Long Time Ago...
...in a galaxy far, far away, some trade federation guys did some bad stuff. Direct adaptation of the first of the prequel trilogy, introducing Anakin Skywalker.

The Way Of The Jedi
A scrolling 3D slash-'em-up with some fiddly platforming bits which required the use of various Force powers (like jumping really high).

Whose Presence Is Present?
All the major players from the film, but focuses on Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon Jinn.

Strong With The Force?
An accomplished game that basically copied the mistakes of the film – this was playable, smooth and largely soulless.

Title – *Episode I: Jedi Power Battles*
Release – April 2000
Platform – PSone

A Long Time Ago...
Another take on the plot of *The Phantom Menace*, this time from the perspective of various Jedi knights.

The Way Of The Jedi
The game played very much like the previous *Episode I* game, but with an exaggerated feel and a new emphasis on power moves and combos.

Whose Presence Is Present?
Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon again, plus Mace Windu, the lesser-known Adi Gallia and the comically named Plo Koon.

Strong With The Force?
Not even slightly – a barrel-scraping retread of an average story with some all-too-obvious gameplay tweaks.

Title – *Demolition*
Release – November 2000
Platform – PSone

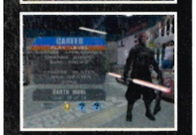
A Long Time Ago...
Set during the original trilogy. The Empire has outlawed pod racing on Tatooine, so Jabba The Hutt devises a violent underground automobile contest.

The Way Of The Jedi
A range of *Star Wars* universe vehicles decked out with various weapons do battle in arenas from across the galaxy.

Whose Presence Is Present?
Lando Calrissian and Boba Fett featured as the best-known playables, alongside a resurrected unlockable Darth Maul.

Strong With The Force?
Kinda – it was a bizarre mix of ideas, but the game itself was a laugh.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STAR WARS



THE CAMEO IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE

There are tons of *Star Wars* references in other games – check out the 'Do or do not' billboard in *WipEout 2097*, or the characters Wedge and Biggs (named after Luke's Death Star assault wingmen) from the *Final Fantasy* series. Better yet, sometimes *Star Wars* cast members make unexpected appearances in unrelated titles – like, say, Han Solo's guest spot in LucasArts' *Mercenaries* alongside his look-a-like Indiana Jones. More bizarre, though, is Darth Maul's secret appearance in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* as a playable skater. To be fair, the dude's got some moves, but we're not sure it's safe to hit the half pipe with his double lightsaber extended like that...

STARFIGHTER

RELEASE March 2001 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...

Weaving in and out of the main narrative of *The Phantom Menace*, *Starfighter* begins immediately before the Battle of Naboo and zeroes in on each of the space battles from the film, as well as presenting new missions that parallel the movie plot.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI

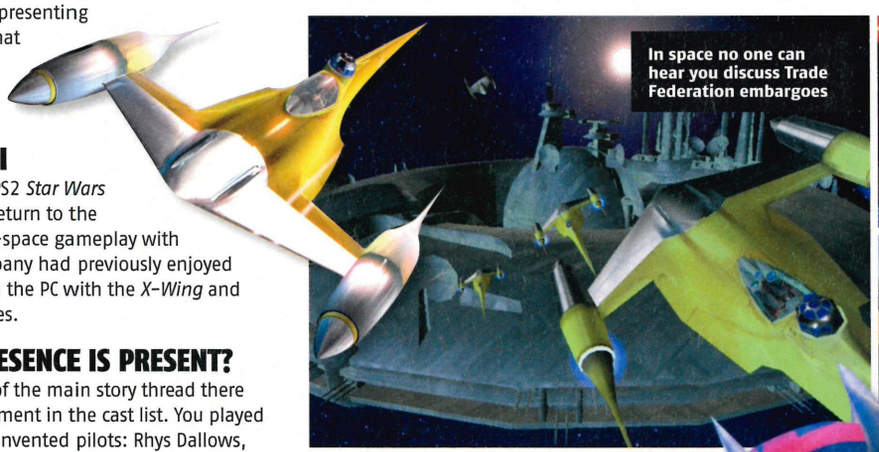
LucasArt's first PS2 *Star Wars* title marked a return to the dogfighting-in-space gameplay with which the company had previously enjoyed great success on the PC with the *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* games.

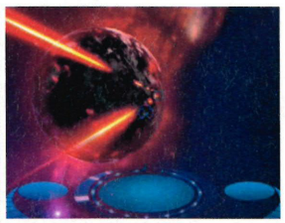
WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?

As an offshoot of the main story thread there was little excitement in the cast list. You played as three newly invented pilots: Rhys Dallows, Vana Sage, and Nym. Plus, as most of the action took place in the dark, unforgiving vacuum of space, there was no room for any high-profile cameos, either.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?

There are few pleasures in this world equal to engaging enemy starfighters just as John Williams' classic *Star Wars* score reaches a crescendo. Even so, it's a little deflating that you were taking on Trade Federation ships rather than the classic trilogy's insanely cool TIE fighters.





SUPER BOMBAD RACING

RELEASE May 2001 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...

Super Bombad Racing isn't really set in any given time or space in the *Star Wars* narrative. Although it features cast from *The Phantom Menace*, it's really more of a free-floating aside, with no plot to speak of.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI

Reusing the successful formula laid down by SNES classic *Super Mario Kart* (and later used by *Crash Nitro Kart*), *Bombad* was all about split-screen kart racing and exaggerated physics.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?

Like we said, most of *The Phantom Menace* cast-list showed up – Anakin, Obi-Wan, Queen Amidala, Jar Jar, Darth Maul – only, in-keeping with the kartoon-kart theme, they had outsized heads on tiny bodies.

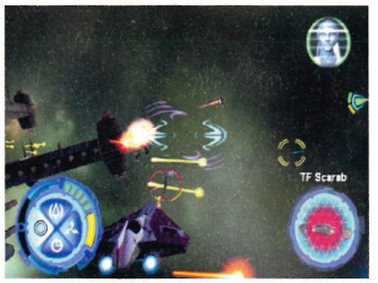
STRONG WITH THE FORCE?

Reasonable as karting games go, but making a racing game is the laziest option when it comes to tie-ins, and the *Star Wars* setting could hardly feel more tacked on.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STAR WARS

Once again, John Williams' iconic score gave proceedings some class

Episode II's locations were padded with new worlds



JEDI STARFIGHTER

RELEASE March 2002 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...
A direct sequel to *Starfighter*, *Jedi Starfighter* was released to coincide with the appearance of *Attack Of The Clones* and wove in and out of the film's plot just like its predecessor.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI
Barely any changes were made to the gameplay mechanics. If anything, things were slightly simpler as the number of craft you piloted was reduced from three to two, but the basic 'fly about and shoot stuff' directive remained very much in place.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?
Smuggler Nym returned from *Starfighter*, alongside Adi Gallia – the Jedi of the title. There were appearances from Mace Windu, Count Dooku and Jango Fett, but easily recognisable faces were scarce.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?
The dull political machinations of the prequel trilogy's plot weighed heavy on the action (thwart the Trade Federation! Do we have to?) but the addition of Jedi Force powers to supplement your conventional onboard weaponry was a welcome innovation.

RACER REVENGE

RELEASE March 2002 **PLATFORM** PS2

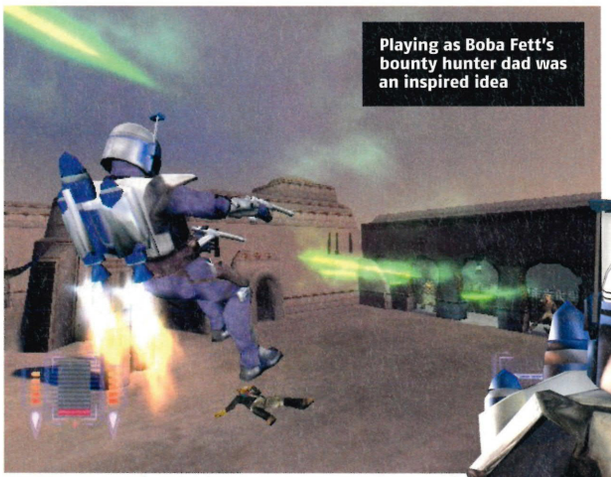
A LONG TIME AGO...
PlayStation missed out on the original *Episode I Racer* (released on N64 and Dreamcast in 1999) but caught up with this improved sequel. Like *Bombad*, there's no plot as such, although Anakin is a little older and appears as he does in *Episode II: Attack Of The Clones*.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI
It was a futuristic racer along the same lines as the *WipEout* series, with the pod racers from *The Phantom Menace* swooping and swerving through the Tatooine terrain.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?
Anakin Skywalker we've already mentioned – although what this older version was doing on Tatooine racing pods when he should be learning Jedi stuff goes unexplained, and the rest are familiar from Anakin's younger days – Sebulba, Watto, and Jabba The Hutt are the most recognisable of these.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?
Thin on the ground as far as plot and *Star Wars* mystique go, although the game itself was a decent racer. Failure to integrate itself with the films' plot arc means that *Racer Revenge* couldn't help but feel a little inconsequential.

"Okay, who forgot to design the wings?"


Playing as Boba Fett's bounty hunter dad was an inspired idea

BOUNTY HUNTER

RELEASE December 2002 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...
Set between *Menace* and *Clones*, *Bounty Hunter* sees you as Jango Fett, sent to eliminate rogue Jedi group Bando Gora. It fills in the plot gaps around Fett's role as 'father' of the clone army.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI
A return to third-person action. It differed from the *Episode I* games because, of course, Fett isn't a Jedi and has no lightsaber. What he did have was a massive array of weaponry and gadgets, including twin blasters, flamethrower, missile launcher and the brilliant 'look mum, I'm flying!' rocket pack.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?
Fett's obviously the main character, and was shadowed through the game by rival bounty hunters, principally Montross and Zam Wesell. The dark Jedi you took out were all unknowns, although Dooku and Jabba had cameos.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?
Boba Fett's a fan favourite, so giving his genetic twin a game should have rocked. But, while the game had its moments, it never quite nailed Jango's icy charisma.

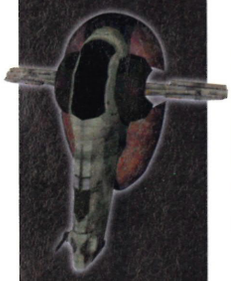
THE WHOLE *GALAXIES* COULD HAVE BEEN OURS
One of the games not appearing in the main list is *Star Wars Galaxies*. Set in the 'classic' period, in-between *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Galaxies* is a massively multiplayer online RPG, in which players nurture a character from scratch. Currently available for PC, *Galaxies* was due for a PS2 release (it was developed by Sony Online) before technical issues nixed that. A genuine shame – it's hard to think of another game capable of conveying the richness and depth of the *Star Wars* universe like *Galaxies*. Maybe on PS3, eh?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STAR WARS

PIMP MY TIE

Spacecraft are crucial to most of the *Star Wars* games on PlayStation, and the new storylines mix up classics with some sharp-looking new arrivals. Here's our top three vehicles from the series (not including the X-Wing, TIE Fighter or Millennium Falcon, which would make the whole thing pointless).

Ship – Slave One
Appears in – *Bounty Hunter*
Cool because – Boba Fett's the main man, and his small patrol craft – equipped to carry live prisoners – has long been a fan favourite.



Ship – Arc Hammer
Appears in – *Dark Forces*
Cool because – Star destroyers are basically the daddy, and this one's been modified to carry a factory that produces Dark Troopers.

Ship – Delta 7 Interceptor
Appears in – *Jedi Starfighter*
Cool because – Better known simply as the Jedi Starfighter, the Delta 7 is the quick, ultra-manoeuvrable attack fighter that almost made us forget about the X-Wing.

Clone Wars looked the part, but the gameplay was tired

THE CLONE WARS

RELEASE February 2003 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...

Set during the Clone Wars (between *Episode II* and *Episode III*) the plot follows the Jedi attempt on behalf of the Galactic Republic to prevent Count Dooku and his Separatists from gaining control of an ancient and powerful weapon known as Dark Reaper.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI

Played from either first or third-person, *The Clone Wars* was a primarily vehicle-based shooter with clumsy on-foot elements.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?

Representing an interesting story missed out entirely by the films, the *Clone Wars*' cast was pretty good. Obi-Wan, Anakin, and Mace Windu starred with Count Dooku as the villain.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?

Not really. Along with *Jedi Starfighter* and *Bounty Hunter*, this was the third game in a year to draw from the *Ep II* storyline, featuring Count Dooku. With a lack of inspirational gameplay to compensate for the repetition, we'd had enough already.

Now that's what we're talking about – playing the best film of the classic trilogy

BATTLEFRONT

RELEASE September 2004 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...

Spanning the entire narrative of both trilogies, *Battlefront* offers control of four *Star Wars* factions (Galactic Republic, Separatists, Galactic Empire, Rebel Alliance) as they tussle for control of the galaxy.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI

Territorial battles were fought over huge (and brilliantly familiar) *Star Wars* environments, with you playing as one of five specialist troop variants (sniper, heavy weapons and so on). Each time you died, you respawned at base camp until you ran out of troops. The emphasis was on multiplayer, and *Battlefront* really came into its own online.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?

Each faction had a 'hero' – Luke, Vader, Dooku, Windu – but these weren't ordinarily playable. The tactical scope and sheer variety of forces meant you didn't miss them, though.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?

Oh yes. The battles were truly epic, and the environments were fantastic. The full effect – the music, the battlefields, the chaos – was delirious, and akin to quaffing neat *Star Wars*.

EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH

RELEASE May 2005 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...

Sticks fairly rigidly to the plot of *Episode III*, in which Obi-Wan and Anakin close in on the secret identity of the Sith Lord Darth Sidious, before Anakin himself succumbs to the dark side. Who knew, eh?

THE WAY OF THE JEDI

Like the direct adaptation of *The Phantom Menace*, this was another unspectacular third-person hack 'n' slash thumb-botherer.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?

Loyal to the film's story, the game had you playing both good and evil, slaughtering Jedi initiates as Anakin one moment and protecting the innocent as Obi-Wan the next.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?

No. The only cool thing about it was the alternative ending in which, as Anakin, you could reverse the film's finale and take control of the galaxy. Bad. Ass.

The best *Star Wars* game ever? Could be...

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STAR WARS

LEGO STAR WARS

RELEASE April 2005 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...

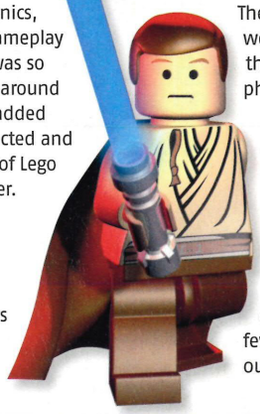
Lego Star Wars covers the story arc of the entire prequel trilogy (rather spoiler-ific at the time of release, a month ahead of *Episode III*'s debut in cinemas). In a genius, irony-soaked twist (*Star Wars* having pioneered film merchandising back in the '70s) all the lead characters are represented by tiny Lego toys. As Vader would say: "Now the circle is complete".

THE WAY OF THE JEDI

Your chunky plastic heroes fought evil in yet another third-person battler. In total contrast to *Revenge Of The Sith*'s tired mechanics, though, here the Lego-infused gameplay was an absolute joy. Movement was so pleasingly rendered that running around was a laugh all by itself, but the added Force powers that literally constructed and destructed items around you out of Lego blocks made this a massive winner.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?

It'd be quicker to ask 'who isn't present?' There were 56 characters in total, taken from the new trilogy, and all of them playable.



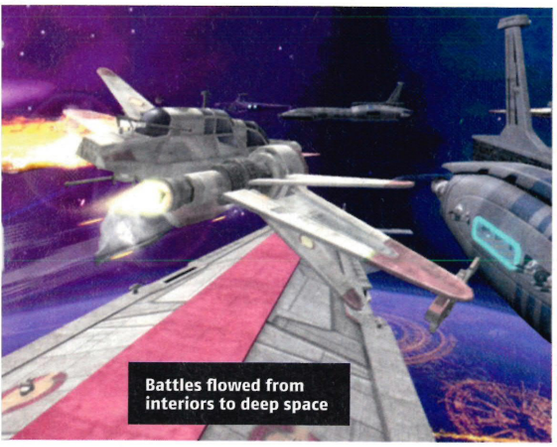
The real coup, though, was how they were animated – perfect recreations of the *Star Wars* Lego line with adorable physical mannerisms.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?

Maybe the strongest. *Lego Star Wars* came up with a hugely refreshing new perspective, full of all the quirks and humour the films simply didn't have. Tellingly, this UK-developed title was also one of the few *Star Wars* projects to originate outside of LucasArts.

BE MINDFUL OF THE FUTURE

We tried using our Force vision to see what lay ahead for the *Star Wars* series on PS2, but we drew a big fat blank so we decided to look it up on the Internet instead. While we're eager for *Lego Star Wars 2*, and intrigued by the PSP's *Shadow Strike*, the burning question is what direction the games are going to take now the films are finally done with? We reckon it's good news – the games that stuck closest to the prequel trilogy formula were the least successful. Which is why we're excited about the live-action TV series set to debut next summer in the US. With the story planned to bridge the gap between the two trilogies, there's bound to be plenty of new characters, settings and vehicles to choose from – here's hoping LucasArts makes more imaginative use of its source material next time round.



Battles flowed from interiors to deep space

Battlefront II delivered some great online fragging

BATTLEFRONT II

RELEASE October 2005 **PLATFORM** PS2

A LONG TIME AGO...

Like last time out, *Battlefront II* spans the entire *Star Wars* story arc, but – hooray! – this time there's an actual plot involved. This sees the player take control of the elite 501st legion (initially Clonetroopers, renamed Stormtroopers with the coming of the Empire) and fight campaigns against the Separatists, rebelling Clone units and the Rebel Alliance.

THE WAY OF THE JEDI

Like *Battlefront I*, only more so. The same pitched battles and breathtaking scale dominated *Battlefront II*, but there were also extra tactical options available with the addition of new troop unit variants, the ability to play as a 'hero' character and the inclusion of starship dogfighting.

WHOSE PRESENCE IS PRESENT?

The now-playable hero characters were map-specific, and included Vader, Obi-Wan, Leia, Boba and Jango Fett and General Grievous. Still, the emphasis was on densely-populated battles, so you were spending more time with the various grunt units, which now included shotgun-wielding engineers in the place of pilots. Good choice.

STRONG WITH THE FORCE?

Yes. The thrill of the fray was as strong as ever, and the inclusion of a unified story thread – which lead you through the intricate political manoeuvrings of the two trilogies as you shifted roles from defender of the Republic to enforcer of the Empire – made the action even more satisfying. ■

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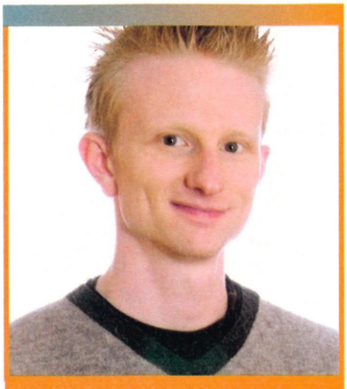
replay

SENDING IN GAMING REINFORCEMENTS



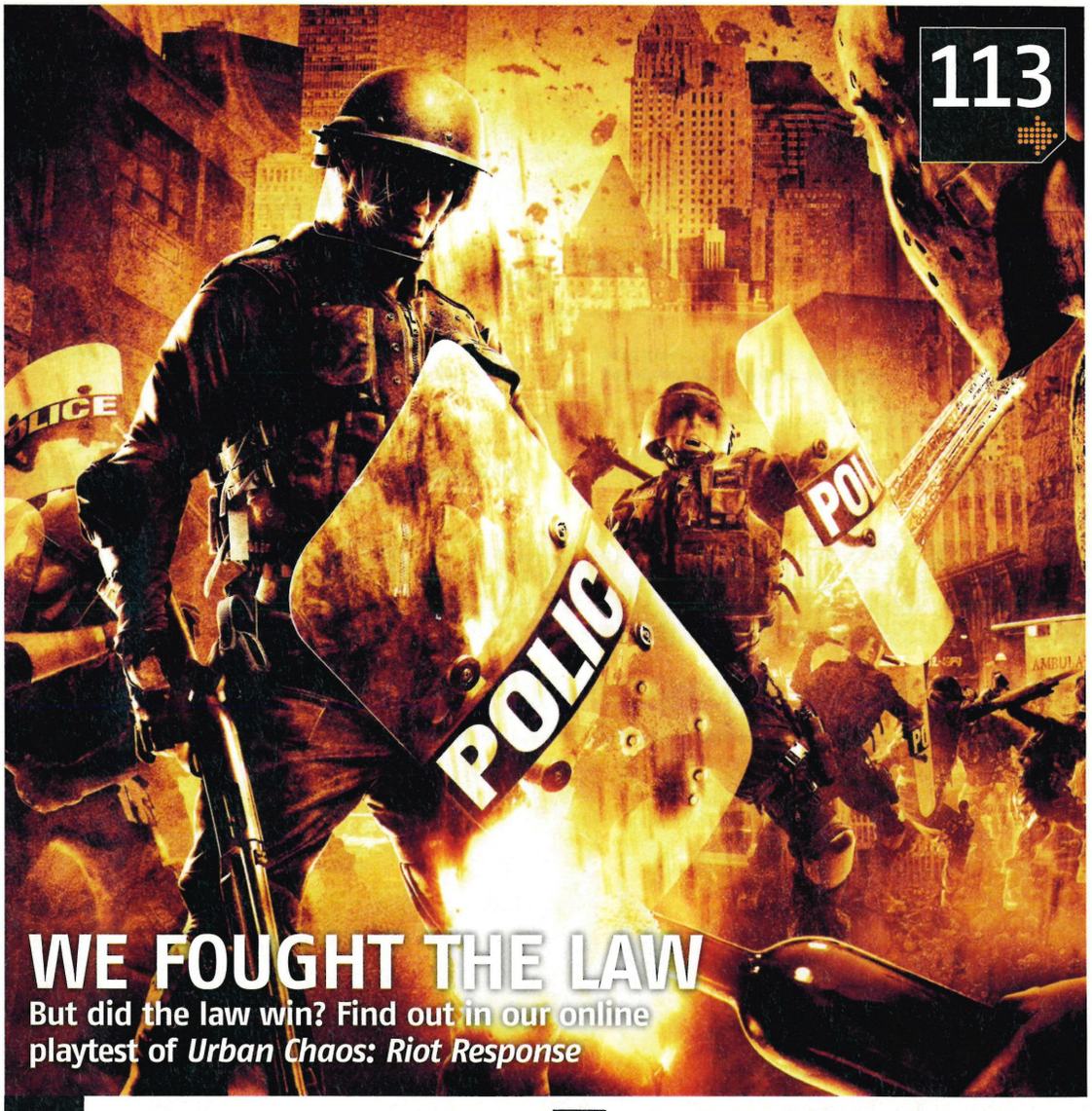
There's a carnival atmosphere in Replay land this month. Why? Because this is the only part of the mag that's giving you the chance to win your very own monkey.

Believe it. We've partnered up with the monkey-nuts at Sega to offer one lucky reader the chance to adopt a banana-chomping, faeces-flinging monkey. Not only that, but we're also throwing in a season ticket to Monkey World in Dorset so you can visit your hairy baby *every day*. Flick to page 113 to discover what our *Super Monkey Ball Adventure* challenge entails.

The only problem is, we can't work out how to top this prize for next month's Challenges. We did send Leon to Los Angeles to capture a tame West Coast rapper, but all he came back with was a bag of beef jerky and a sunburn. Hope you like leathery meat products...

Andy

Andy Hartup,
News editor



WE FOUGHT THE LAW

But did the law win? Find out in our online playtest of *Urban Chaos: Riot Response*

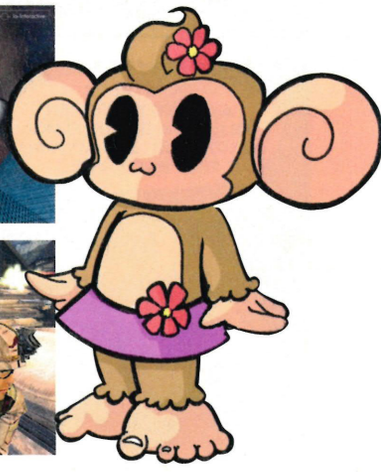
112 **CHARTS**
Hitman and *FIFA* scrap for the top spot. We're backing the professional killer

113 **CHALLENGES**
Have you got the skills to bag a baboon in our *Super Monkey Ball Adventure* target challenge?

113 **ONLINE**
We chum up with blue soldiers, lob Molotovs, and save democracy in our online reviews

114 **CHEATS**
Rogue Trooper, Guitar Hero, Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers – want codes? We got 'em

116 **HOT 100**
A ton of scorching reasons to shun the suncream and stay inside with your PS2 this summer

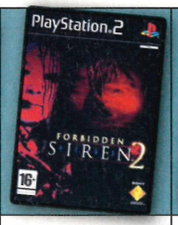


charts

FACTS, FIGURES AND FUNNIES

WHAT THE OTHER MAGS SAID

WE READ 'EM, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO



PSM2	NO REVIEW*	"Dogged by repetitive action" 70%	"One of the creepiest games on PS2" 81%	"...dull puzzles and infuriating combat" 68%
PSW	"Charming but hugely frustrating" 6/10	"...a very solid mutant romp" 7/10	NO REVIEW*	"A proper brain-bashing mystery" 7/10
PLAY	NO REVIEW*	"Don't buy it. Don't rent it" 32%	NO REVIEW*	"None of it's any good" 40%
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT	"A po-faced chore to trudge through" 6/10	"Uninspired action and laughable cinematics" 3/10	"...an engrossing, terrifying ghost story" 7/10	"A poor game hung on the shoulders of a high-profile licence" 5/10

*Review not available at time of going to press

THE TOP 20 ChartTrack elspa

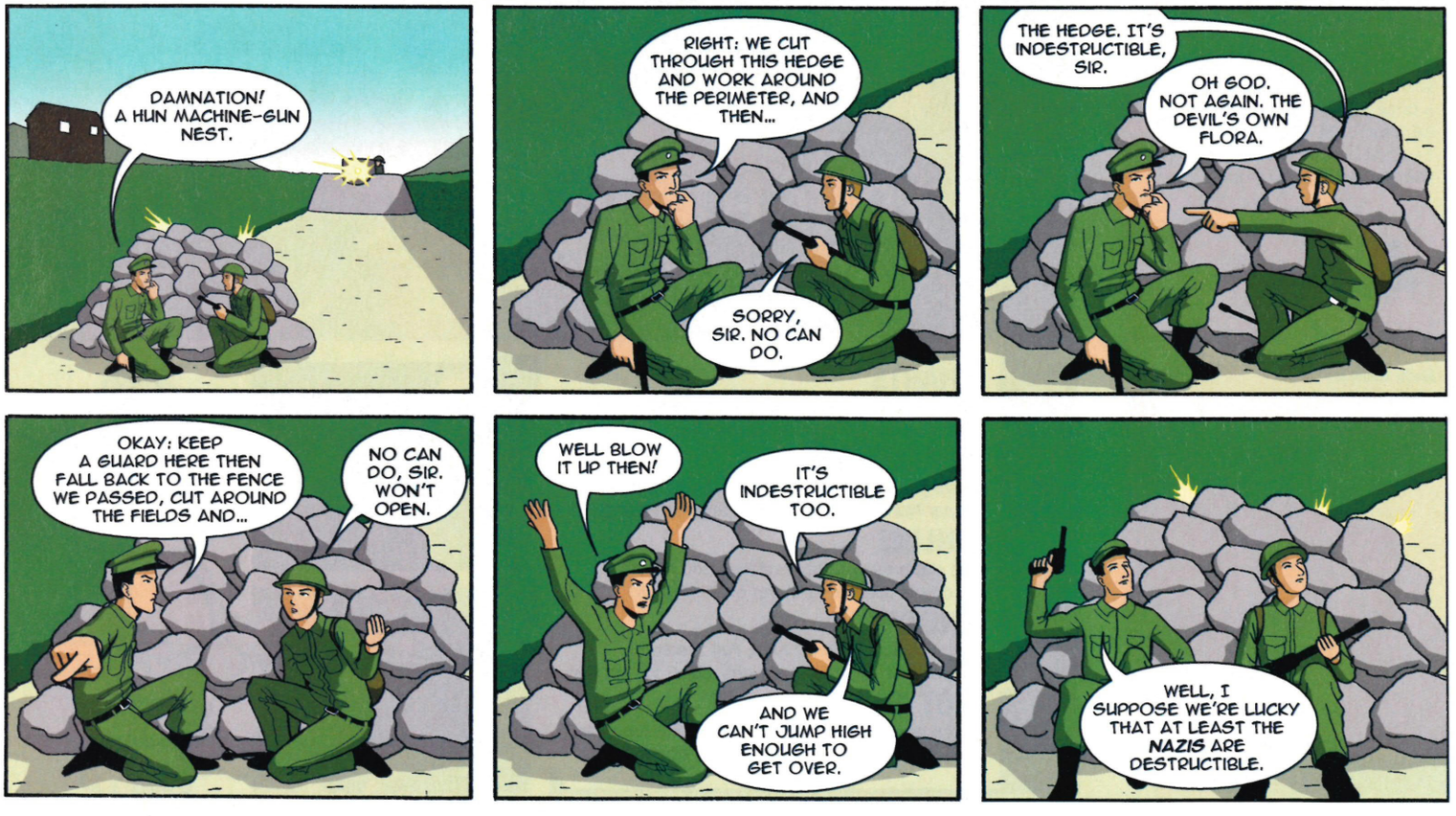
	Game Name	Publisher	Score
1	2006 FIFA WORLD CUP	EA	8/10
2	HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY	EIDOS	9/10
3	SENSIBLE SOCCER 2006	CODEMASTERS	4/10
4	TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND	EIDOS	8/10
5	TOURIST TROPHY	SONY	7/10
6	BUZZ! THE BIG QUIZ	SONY	8/10
7	X-MEN: THE OFFICIAL GAME	ACTIVISION	3/10
8	THE GODFATHER	EA	6/10
9	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006	EIDOS	5/10
10	NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED	EA	8/10
11	FIFA STREET 2	EA	6/10
12	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	VIVENDI	5/10
13	URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE	EIDOS	8/10
14	THE DA VINCI CODE	TAKE TWO	5/10
15	DRIVER PARALLEL LINES	ATARI	7/10
16	GUITAR HERO	REDOCTANE	9/10
17	BLACK	EA	10/10
18	WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006	THQ	9/10
19	FIFA 06	EA	7/10
20	EVOLUTION GT	BLACK BEAN	7/10

WHAT A BELTER
SmackDown! Vs RAW 2006 shows plenty of stamina, unexpectedly jumping back into the charts and whacking the other games with a steel chair

MISSED THE TARGET
Close, but no corpse. *Hitman* is held from the top spot by the mighty *2006 FIFA World Cup*. A rare case of bad timing for the usually meticulous contract killer?

SAVE POINT TAKING THE LESS TRAVELLED ROUTE TO GAMING WISDOM

WORDS: KIERON GILLEN ART: JAMIE MCKELVIE



challenges

MAKE A MONKEY OF OUR SCORES AND WIN SOME EXCLUSIVE SWAG

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

CHALLENGE 1 PS2

Strap on your wings, and choose the Monkey Target mini-game for this challenge. Select the first stage, and attempt to beat our total score of 2,530 over eight rounds.

Best proved score gets... A family ticket (for four) to the Monkey World sanctuary in Dorset, and a monkey adoption pack containing a picture of your chosen ape!

HOW TO ENTER

Beat our record and take a picture with your phone for proof. Then text **CHALLENGE1** or **CHALLENGE2** or **CHALLENGE3** (then a space) followed by your name and full address to **07738 647 177**

Only the winner *OPS2* judges to have the best score wins a prize. Only winners will be notified. Text messages will cost you 50p including VAT per text received, plus your usual text message cost. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 12 July to 09 August inclusive.*

FLATOUT 2

CHALLENGE 2 PS2

Head over to the single stunts menu and select the Ski Jump option. Beat our respectable combined distance of 602.98 metres (plus all the other readers' entries) to snaffle the goodies.

Best proved distance gets... A selection of PS2 games and an *OPS2* T-shirt.

SENSIBLE SOCCER 2006

CHALLENGE 3 PS2

Recreate England's World Cup rivalry with Sweden over a five-minute friendly. Select McClaren's boys and score more than three goals. The five highest scores win the prizes.

Five best proved scores get... A new PS2 game and an exclusive *Sensible Soccer* T-shirt.

online

IS IT WORTH GETTING BROADBAND FOR THESE GAMES?

ROGUE TROOPER

What you get: Four-player co-op, spread over three standard missions, and two 'defend the fortress' objectives.

What it's like: Providing you can find a decent bunch of blue-soldiers willing to play co-operatively and not lob grenades at your head when your back is turned, *Rogue Trooper* is excellent online.

SHOULD I GET BROADBAND FOR THIS? ✓

SOCOM 3: US NAVY SEALS

What you get: Up to a massive 32 players per session, seven game types (including new modes Control and Convoy), plus the chance to fight in vehicles.

What it's like: Easily the best military combat to be had online, *SOCOM 3* lets a staggering amount of men train crosshairs on each other at once. Some slowdown, but the 16-on-16 firefights make up for it.

SHOULD I GET BROADBAND FOR THIS? ✓

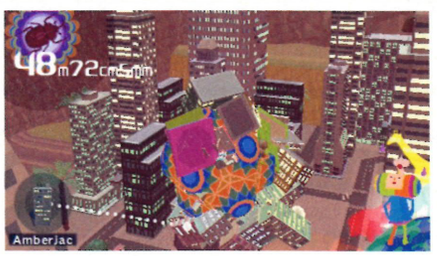
URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE

What you get: Cops vs gangs-themed deathmatch skirmishes set over nine maps.

What it's like: Mercifully free of complex military options and team tactics you can never hope to understand, *Urban Chaos*' simplicity makes it a breath of fresh online air. Blasting your mates with the game's meaty weapons is very satisfying, and crisping them with the Taser is genius.

SHOULD I GET BROADBAND FOR THIS? ✓

PSP WIFI TEST



ME AND MY KATAMARI

What you get: Up to four-player roll-offs via a local WiFi connection, and a chance to check out local leaderboard scores.

What it's like: We don't have any serious gripes with the WiFi multiplayer elements of *Me & My Katamari* – but it quickly gets repetitive, even more so than the single-player experience.

SHOULD I GET MY MATES ROUND FOR THIS? ✗

FANCY A GOOD FRAGGING?

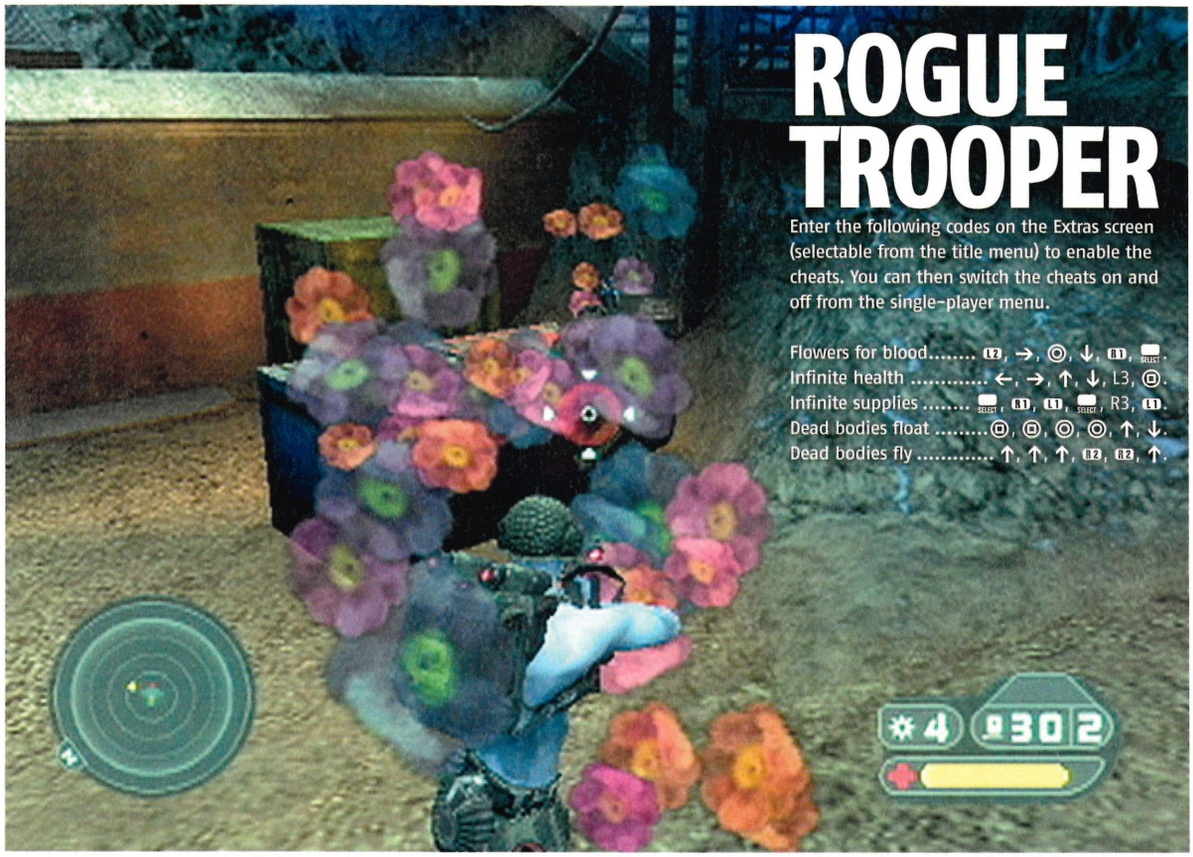
We're setting up our own multiplayer games over the forthcoming weeks. Get online with the right game between 5pm and 6pm on the following Fridays and look for the 'OPS2Online' match.

14 July	Urban Chaos: Riot Response
21 July	SOCOM 3: US Navy SEALs
28 July	Pro Evolution Soccer 5

***CHALLENGE COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS** By entering this competition you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word NO at the end of your text message. All entries must be received before the closing date of 09 August. *OPS2*'s choice of prize is final and the winner will be notified within 28 days. In the instance of a draw, the winner will be judged on a first come first serve basis. No employees of Future Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this competition or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives cash or otherwise are available. Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won except by its negligence. Publicity may be given to any competition winners and/or entrants and their names, addresses and/or photographs printed in *OPS2*. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary. A list of winners is available by written request from *OPS2*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

cheats

THIS MONTH'S COOLEST, NASTIEST AND STUPIDEST CHEATS



ROGUE TROOPER

Enter the following codes on the Extras screen (selectable from the title menu) to enable the cheats. You can then switch the cheats on and off from the single-player menu.

Flowers for blood..... L2, →, ◎, ↓, R1, SELECT.
Infinite health ..... ←, →, ↑, ↓, L3, ▣.
Infinite supplies ..... SELECT, R1, L1, SELECT, R3, L1.
Dead bodies float .....▣, ▣, ◎, ◎, ↑, ↓.
Dead bodies fly ..... ↑, ↑, ↑, R2, R2, ↑.

24: THE GAME

On the main menu screen hold R1, L1, R2, and L2 until a Security Clearance menu appears (this should take about ten seconds). To enter the following codes use the D-pad to move around and then hold down ⊗ to change letter by pressing left and right. Once all the letters have been changed hit ▣ and the code should turn orange. Exit the screen with △. Select 'Previously On *24*', then select missions and load your save file to access the cheats.

PASSWORD..... **EFFECT**
ALMEIDA062 .... Get infinite ammo
BAUER066..... Get invulnerability
DESSLER072.... Unlock all missions
PALMER054 ..... Unlock all bonuses

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

While playing the game, hold R2 and L2 and then press →, →, ↓, ↑, ←, ← to unlock all weapons.

BLACK

To unlock the **M249** machine gun as your default weapon, enter the following code (including dashes) as a profile name:
FG6S-WFZG-7MDP-PZGT
If you've got it right, the game will immediately ask you to enter another name.

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

Start by pausing the game, and then hold down L2 while entering the following codes:
Reset alert meter: R2, →, R2, R1, ▣, →.
Invulnerability: ▣, ◎, ←, ←, ◎, ▣.
Infinite ammo: ←, ◎, R2, →, R1, ▣.
Infinite mind power: R1, R2, ◎, →, L1, ◎.

FIFA STREET 2

On the title menu hold L1 and △ and enter ←, ↑, ↑, →, ↓, ↓, →, ↓ to unlock everything.

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Go to the Create Champ mode, type in **NEWVIEW** as a first name and hit Enter before quitting out to the title screen. All the venues will now be unlocked.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

Enter these cheats while playing:
Get jetpack: ←, →, L1, L2, R1, R2, ↑, ↓, ←, →.
Super punch (destroys everything): L1, L2, L2, ↑, ↓, ↓, ↑, R1, R2, R2.
Full health, armour and $250,000: R1, R2, L1, ⊗, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑.

GUITAR HERO

At the title screen enter the following codes using the guitar controller. A message will let you know if you're successful:
Give the crowd skull heads: Orange, yellow, blue, blue, orange, yellow, blue, blue.
Give the crowd monkey heads: Blue, orange, yellow, yellow, yellow, blue, orange.
Character plays an air guitar: Orange, orange, blue, yellow, orange.
Rock Meter stays permanently green: Yellow, blue, orange, orange, blue, blue, yellow, orange.
Play in an invisible venue: Blue, yellow, orange, blue, yellow, orange.
Unlock everything: Yellow, orange, blue, blue, orange, yellow, yellow.

KING KONG

At the main menu, hold L1 and R1 and press ↓, ◎, ↑, ▣, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑ to activate the cheats menu, where you can then enter these codes:
Unlock all levels: **KKst0ry**
999 ammo: **KK 999 mun**
Unlock all bonuses: **KKmuseum**
God mode: **8wonder**
Start with a machine gun: **KKcapone**
Start with a revolver: **KKtigun**
Start with a shotgun: **KKsh0tgun**
Start with a sniper rifle: **KKsn1per**
Have infinite spears: **lance 1nf**
Get one-hit kills: **GrosBras**

LA RUSH

Enter these codes during play:
$5,000: ↑, ↓, ←, →, ◎, ←, R2, ↑.
All cars in garage pimped: ↑, ↓, ←, →, ◎, ▣, R2, R1, ↑, ↓, ←, →.
Disable police: ↓, ←, →, R2, ▣, →, R1, ←.
Fast traffic: ↑, ↓, ←, →, ▣, →, ◎, ←.
Unlimited nitro: ↑, ↓, ←, →, ▣, ↑, ↓, ◎, ↑.

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE

In the options menu, use these codes to unlock the following (re-enter the codes to switch them off):
Unlock all the levels: **IPULATOR**
Unlock all the movies: **DEXTERCROWLEY**
Unlock the gallery: **SIRULLY**
Unlock all the skills: **DOGTAGS**
Unlock your Black Book: **SHARDSOFGLASS**
Unlock all the characters: **STATEYOURNAME**
Maximum health:

AEON FLUX

Enter the following 'unlock' codes in the Extras menu accessed from the title screen:

CODE ..... UNLOCKS
White ..... Mrs Goodchild outfit
Arms ..... Revelation outfits
Bayou ..... All replay episodes
Blur ..... War outfits
Clothes ... Una, Freya, Judy outfits
Gray ..... Fame outfit
Movie ..... Seed outfit
Pixes ..... All slideshows
Urban ..... Seed outfits

Enter the following 'effect' codes at the in-game pause menu:

CODE ..... EFFECT
Buckfst ..... One-hit kills
Clone ..... Unlimited health
FUG ..... Unlimited ammo
Healme ..... Replenish health
Lcvg ..... Unlimited power strikes
Trirox ..... Invulnerability

BABYLONTRUST
Infinite health:
MARCUSECKOS
Infinite skills:
FLIPTHESCRIPT
Unlock the iPod:
GRANDMACELIA
Unlock all the legends:
NINESIX
Unlock all the Beat Down arenas:
WORKBITCH

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX

Enter the following in 'Cheat Codes' selected from the options menu:
Indestructible cars:
ontheroad
Unlock every location in arcade:
crosscountry
Unlock Atlanta and Detroit:
mode roadtrip

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

On the Press Start screen input:
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, →
– to unlock the Burger King challenge race.
←, →, ←, →, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓
– to unlock the Ford GT Castrol SYNTEC car.
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ↑, ↓
– to unlock an extra marker to use in the One Stop Shop backroom.

ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS

From the main menu select 'Special' and enter the following codes to unlock new, *Street Fighter*-themed outfits:
Cammy outfit for Jubei:
□, L1, R1, R3, ←, △, R1, □, △, L2.
Chun-Li outfit for Ohatsu:
L2, L2, L3, △, ←, →, →, L1, L2, □.
Guile outfit for Roberto:
←, R3, →, ←, R3, L1, L2, R1, →, R3.
Ryu outfit for Soki:
R1, □, R1, ←, △, R2, R3, →, ←, L2.
Ken outfit for Tenkai:
L2, R2, ←, →, R3, ←, L1, ○, □, △.

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

Select a licence, edit it and type in **MILESANDMILES**. Hit 'done' and then 'quit' to receive 1,000,000.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

Enter the following codes at the pause screen:
Get a chainsaw:
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ○, □, ○, □.
Get a toy hammer:
←, ←, →, →, ○, □, ○, □, ↑, ↓.
Get a telephone:
→, ←, →, ←, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ○, □, ○, ○, □, □.
Get a swordfish:
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ○, □, ○, □.

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES

While flying the plane, pause the game and enter R1, R1, →, ↓, ↓, →. Unpause the game and you'll now be flying the Toonami Plane.

SSX ON TOUR

Go to the Extras menu, select Cheats, then enter the passwords:

FLYTHREADS – All clothing
THEBIGPICTURE – All movies
ZOOMJUICE – Infinite boost
POWERPLAY – Stat boost
JACKALOPESTYLE – Monster tricks
LETSPARTY – Snowball fight

STATE OF EMERGENCY 2

Enter ↑, ←, →, ↓, △, □, ○, ⊗, L1, R2 on the 'Press Start' screen to activate the cheats options in the main menu.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 3: MUTANT NIGHTMARE

Enter these in the passwords section of the Options menu:
MDLDSSLR ..... Get invincibility
RRDMLSDL ..... Max out the turtles' Ougi power
SLLMRSLD ..... Turn all healing items into sushi
LLMSRDMS ... Remove all shurikens
MSRLSMML ..... Make enemies twice as powerful
LDMSLRDD ..... One hit will kill the turtles
SLRMLSSM .... Make enemies twice as hard to kill
DMLDMRLD ..... Remove all healing items

THE GODFATHER

Pause the game and enter the following codes as quickly as possible – you'll hear a noise confirming successful code entry.
Get $5000:
□, ○, □, □, ○, L3.
Full ammo:
○, ←, ○, →, □, R3.
Full health:
←, □, →, ○, →, L3.

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND

While playing the game, hold down R1 + L1 + ⊗ and enter the following codes:
Maximum evil: ←, ↓, ←, ↓, ←, ↓, R2.
Psychedelic mode: ←, ←, R2, →, →, R2, ↑, ↑, R2, ↓, ↓, R2.
All weapons: ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, R2, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑, →, ↓, ←, R2, ↓, ↓, ↓, R2, R2.
Full health: ←, R2, R2, R2, →, ←, →, ←, ↑, R2, R2, R2, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, R2.
Invincibility: ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑.

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

Go into the Options menu and select Cheat Codes to unlock these:
Mat Hoffman ..... the_condor
Jason Ellis ..... Sirius-DJ
Perfect grind balance ... grindXpert
Perfect manual balance .. 2wheels!
Perfect skitch balance .. h!tchar!de

URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE

At the main menu press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ○, ↓, ↑, ○ to open the cheats menu and activate the following cheats:
ULTIMATE POWER – Unlock the Mk.3 assault rifle with infinite ammo
ZEROTOLERANCE – Unlock the Mk.4 pistol
MINIFUN – Unlock a mini-gun
FRYINGTIME – Get a long-range stun gun
KEYTOTHECITY – Unlock all levels/emergencies
BURNERSREVENGE – Activate the terror mode
DANCINGFEET – Activate the disco mode
ISEEYOU – Get a new thermal effect
WHATWASTHAT – Turn on squeaky voices
BURNINGBULLET –Bullets sets fire to enemies
KEEPYOURHEAD – No heads

PS2 CHEATS

METAL GEAR ACID 2

Enter these passwords at the password screen to unlock the following cards:
Dcy – Get Decoy Octopus card
SONOFSULLY – Get Jack card
Konami – Get Reaction Block card
Snake – Get Solid Snake card (*MGS4*)
NEXTGEN – Get *MGS4* card
thespaniard – Get possessed arm card
ntm – Get Natsume Sano card and Solid Eye video
Jehuty – Get Jehuty card
Otacon – Get Otacon card (*MGS4*)
Sigint – Get Mr Sigint card

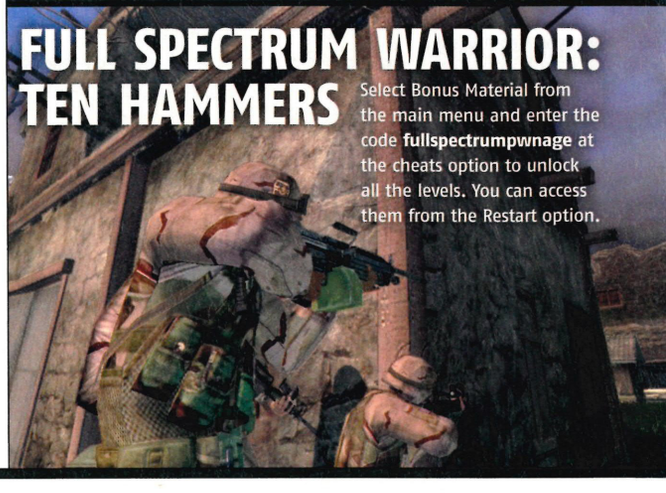
MX VS ATV UNLEASHED: ON THE EDGE

Enter the following codes in the Cheats option of the title menu:
TOOLAZY
Unlock everything
BROKEASAJOKE
Get 1,000,000 points to spend in the shop
MINIMOTO
Unlock the 50cc bikes
LEADFOOT
Unlock every machine
HUCKIT
Unlock all the freestyle tracks

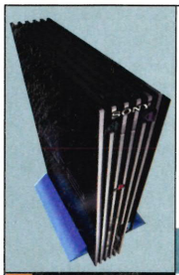
SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS

Input these codes in the Bonus Missions option to unlock them:
Hold SELECT and press L+R together three times to unlock the Heroin Refinery Mission.
Hold SELECT and press L+R together three times to unlock the Television Free Indonesia mission.
Hold SELECT and press L+R 12 times to unlock the Paris-Nice mission.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS



Select Bonus Material from the main menu and enter the code **fullspectrumpwnage** at the cheats option to unlock all the levels. You can access them from the Restart option.



the hot 100

A TON OF MUST-PLAY GAMES, AND SO LITTLE TIME TO PLAY 'EM

THIS MONTH

Only the daft but brilliant *LocoRoco* makes it into our hallowed hundred this month. Even though *Flatout 2* and *Forbidden Siren 2* (in particular) lit up the reviews section last month, they fail to gain entry into our essential list because 'good' just isn't good enough. Only the very *best* games make the grade. Remember: you can trust the Hot 100. Not to babysit, though. Not after last time.

YOUR KEY TO THE TOP 100

GOLD
Reserved exclusively for games that scored the elusive 10/10

SILVER
Only awarded to games that scored a mighty 9/10

BRONZE
Lovingly given to games that scored an impressive 8/10

DVD#74
Want to try before you buy? Here's the issue where we ran a playable demo

2006 FIFA WORLD CUP — BRONZE
Great presentation and slick football make this the best *FIFA* ever.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 08

24: THE GAME — BRONZE
The hit TV show arrives on PS2 in fine style.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#69/#72**

ACE COMBAT: SQUADRON LEADER — BRONZE
Top flight sim that will take your breath away.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#56/#57**

AMPLITUDE — SILVER
Music/rhythm game with loads of top artists and online options.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

AREA 51 — SILVER
Guns, aliens and conspiracies make for a top-notch shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#58/#62**

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT — SILVER
Genius body-swapping war shooter full of challenges and action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#68**

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL — BRONZE
Not quite *Jak II* but still an engaging platformer.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#39**

BLACK — GOLD
Hollywood-style gun porn – by far the best shooter on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#69/#72**

BRIAN LARA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 2005 — BRONZE
Quite simply the best cricket game yet.
REVIEWED *OPS2#62* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#63**

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30 — BRONZE
An addictive take on both WW2 and squad-based shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60/#62**

BURNOUT REVENGE — GOLD
Faster-than-light and the best racer in existence.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#64**

BUZZ! THE BIG QUIZ — BRONZE
General knowledge quiz with USB buzzers – great family fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 08

CALL OF DUTY: BIG RED ONE — SILVER
Stunning looking WW2 shooter with atmosphere to spare.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005 — SILVER
Looks great, and the new career mode makes for massive fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#51* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51**

DARKWATCH — BRONZE
Atmospheric, vein-ripping vampires vs cowboys shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#65**

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! — SILVER
Alien invasion B-movie style as you zap, crush and fry mankind.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#61/#62**

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING — SILVER
Combat-heavy adventure with shooters and swords.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 09

DRAGON QUEST: THE JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING — SILVER
Vintage Japanese role-player: long, strong and good-looking.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#71/#73** / ON THE DVD

ESPN NHL 2K5 — BRONZE
More fun and fewer broken bones than real ice hockey.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08

EVERYBODY'S GOLF — BRONZE
Addictive cartoon golf that laughs in the face of realism.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#64**

EYETOY: ANTIGRAV
Unique use-your-body-as-the-controller jet-board racing game.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 07

EYETOY: PLAY 2 — BRONZE
This more creative follow-up shows off the EyeToy to full effect.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#54**

FAHRENHEIT — SILVER
Stylish, cinematic reinvention of the point and click adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#64/#69**

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3 — SILVER
Knockout boxing sim takes face-punching to the next level.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#71/#74**

FINAL FANTASY X-2 — SILVER
FF meets *Charlie's Angels* for a narcotic dose of the familiar RPG.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 09

FREEDOM FIGHTERS — SILVER
Tactical battling in Russkie New York. Insanely addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#37* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE — BRONZE
This is the finest Bond game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#67**

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS — BRONZE
Tactical army sim that's accessible and truly gripping.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08

GOD OF WAR — SILVER
Heart-in-mouth joy from this frantic and bloody hack fest.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#62/#63**

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK — GOLD
Two superb games in the same box for just £40!
REVIEWED *OPS2#41* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS — GOLD
Massively expansive, even over *Vice City*. The biggest game ever.
REVIEWED *OPS2#54* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAN TURISMO 4 — SILVER
Unsurpassed, automotive beauty. The best driving game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09

GUITAR HERO — SILVER
Swap your PS2 controller for the plastic 'axe' and nail those solos.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09

GUN — SILVER
This *GTA*-inspired Wild West shooter is mighty fine, if a little short.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY — SILVER
Agent 47's biggest, bloodiest and best adventure yet.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#72/73** / ON THE DVD

ICO — SILVER
Beautiful, inventive... *Ico* is an adventure unlike any other.
REVIEWED *OPS2#18 & #69* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#19/#35/#69**

JAK 3 — BRONZE
Sublime platform adventure and oodles of varied gameplay.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#53/#58** / ON THE DVD

JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING — SILVER
Bond finally gets the game he deserves. SPECTRE-tacular stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#40/#44**

THE PSP TOP FIVE

Got a PSP? Then you need these

1 GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES 9/10
Rockstar goes back to Liberty City where new missions and multiplayer make for an explosive package.

2 SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR 9/10
PSone shooter series gets new lease of life on PSP, with deathmatch and 'Rogue Agent' modes providing endless WiFi joy.

3 DAXTER 9/10
Superb platform action as Jak's little orange sidekick gets his own fantastically varied and relentlessly enjoyable game.

4 LUMINES 9/10
A simplistic mix of block puzzler and music mixer that will suck up hours of your life and never give them back. An absolute classic.

5 LOCOROCO NEW ENTRY 9/10
Addictive and literally 'oddball' platformer. Beautifully simple controls create a tactile and testing challenge as you bounce around.

NEED A BACK ISSUE OF *OPS2* TO CHECK OUT THE FULL REVIEW? THEN CALL:
UK: 0870 837 4773
OVERSEAS: +44 1858 438 795

replay

KILLER 7 — BRONZE
Insane shooter with exploding zombies and schizophrenic killers.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08

KILLZONE — SILVER
Visually amazing FPS that'll rock your game world every time.
REVIEWED *OPS2#51* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#52/#55/#59

KINGDOM HEARTS — BRONZE
Disney partners with Square for the ultra-cute RPG crossover.
REVIEWED *OPS2#27* / **OVERALL** 08

LEGO STAR WARS — BRONZE
One of the best *Star Wars* games yet, despite the cutesy looks.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#59/#62

MADDEN NFL 06 — SILVER
Deep and technically flawless recreation of American football.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09

MANHUNT — SILVER
A dirty, grisly, filthy but *brilliant* game experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#42* / **OVERALL** 09

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE
Graffiti game created by a fashion designer. Original and good.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#71

MASHED — SILVER
Got friends? Get the brilliant party racer *Mashed*. No excuses.
REVIEWED *OPS2#48* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#48/#49/#55

MERCENARIES — SILVER
Enjoy all the fun of free-roaming warfare. And get paid for it!
REVIEWED *OPS2#55* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#55

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY — GOLD
A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage stealth-a-thon.
REVIEWED *OPS2#17* / **OVERALL** 10 / DVD#17/#37

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER — SILVER
Cinematic stealth adventure that devours the competition.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#57

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX — BRONZE
Super-bling street racer, now with extra tunes and vehicles.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 08

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS — BRONZE
The classic beat-'em-up gets a spectacular adventure makeover.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

MOTO GP4 — BRONZE
The fastest, prettiest and bestest motorbike racing money can buy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 08

MUSIC 3000 — SILVER
A virtual recording studio for £30? Can anyone say no to that?
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09

NBA STREET V3 — SILVER
The definitive basketball game. Shoot hoops to build your rep.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED — BRONZE
Throwing cops into the mix gives the *NFS* series a turbo boost.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 08

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2 — BRONZE
Vast racer with tons of mod-tastic freedom of expression.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#53

ONIMUSHA 3 — SILVER
Saving the best till last, this is near faultless adventure gaming.
REVIEWED *OPS2#48* / **OVERALL** 09

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST — BRONZE
Sun-kissed, retro-racer makes blistering comeback.
REVIEWED *OPS2#70* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#72/#73 — ON THE DVD

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG — SILVER
The best movie tie-in on PS2. An awesome adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#66

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES — SILVER
Only slight tweaks to the formula, but it's the best *POP* so far.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5 — GOLD
Like playing real football, but with your hands. Utterly beautiful.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 10 / DVD#65

PROJECT ZERO — BRONZE
Genuinely disturbing survival horror, dripping with menace.
REVIEWED *OPS2#24* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#23

RAINBOW SIX 3 — BRONZE
Squad-based shooter with a realistic edge and online missions.
REVIEWED *OPS2#45* / **OVERALL** 08

RATCHET & CLANK 3 — SILVER
Weapons and flash gun-centric play make this the series' best.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#51/#58

RED DEAD REVOLVER — SILVER
Wild West shooter that's like a cool breeze in Death Valley. Yeehaw!
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 09

RESIDENT EVIL 4 — GOLD
Simply one of the greatest games ever made. Buy it. Now.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 10

REZ — SILVER
Psychedelic, music-based rhythmic shoot-'em-up. Hypnotic stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#16* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#17

SECOND SIGHT — BRONZE
Slick thriller touched with psychic powers from the *'Splitters* boys.
REVIEWED *OPS2#50* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#50

SHADOW OF ROME — BRONZE
A historic blend of bloody action and stealth set in Roman times.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS — SILVER
Original, beautiful and haunting – nothing else feels like this.
REVIEWED *OPS2#68* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#69

SILENT HILL 3 — SILVER
Wet-the-bed scary survival horror. We dare you to play it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#34

SINGSTAR ROCKS! — BRONZE
Party fun of the highest order, whether you can sing or not.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#74 — ON THE DVD

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES — SILVER
Clever, inventive and funny, this is the best platformer around.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#66

SMASH COURT PRO TENNIS TOURNAMENT 2 — BRONZE
A new career mode makes the top tennis seed even better.
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 08

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS — BRONZE
Move in for the commander-in-chief of online tactical shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 08

SOUL CALIBUR III — SILVER
Better than ever, this is the greatest fighting game ever made.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#65

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR — SILVER
Mythological hack and slash epic.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#66

SPIDER-MAN 2 — BRONZE
Free-roaming, superhero adventure fun with loads to see and do.
REVIEWED *OPS2#49* / **OVERALL** 08

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY — SILVER
Top stealth adventure, travelling the world to surprise terrorists.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 09

SSX 3 — SILVER
Super-long, fast races make this an essential PS2 purchase.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#43

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II — BRONZE
Fantastic set-pieces and brilliant space battles. Buy it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE — BRONZE
Steer monkeys in Perspex balls around courses in this arcade oddity.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#60

TEKKEN 5 — BRONZE
The original PlayStation fighter beats its way back to top form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#61/#63

TLOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING — BRONZE
Well-crafted version of the film, with huge battles and great extras.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND — BRONZE
Hardcore, ultra-bloody action-survival horror.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 08

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006 — BRONZE
Like the man himself, this year's edition is on fine form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

TIMESPLITTERS 2 — GOLD
As vital to PS2 as your central nervous system is to your brain.
REVIEWED *OPS2#25* / **OVERALL** 10 / DVD#25/#31

TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT — SILVER
Shooter with enough guns to satisfy the most trigger-happy soul.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#56

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 — SILVER
Tones down the story mode and ups the red-hot driving experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#68/#72

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND — ON THE DVD — BRONZE
A spectacular return to form from the first lady of adventuring.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 08 DVD#71/#72/#73/#74

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND
Tony's looking tired, but this is still a great place to start.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 07

TOTAL OVERDOSE — BRONZE
Comedy Tex-Mex shoot-a-thon with entertaining special attacks.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE — BRONZE
Loud, brash, highly enjoyable law-and-order shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08 /

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 — BRONZE
Cartoon-style action adventure with great fighting controls.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 08

WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT — BRONZE
For once, a kid's game that doesn't treat you like a child.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#65

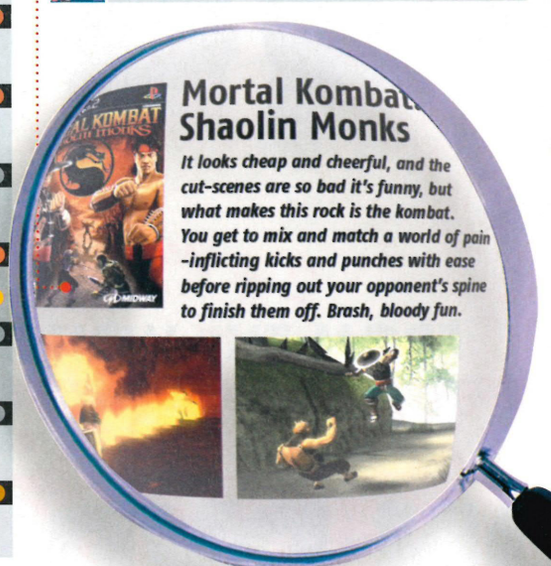
WE ❤ KATAMARI — BRONZE
Deeply odd and very Japanese but also hugely enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#70/#72

WRC RALLY EVOLVED — SILVER
Fantastic tracks with random events to test your skill.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / DVD#65

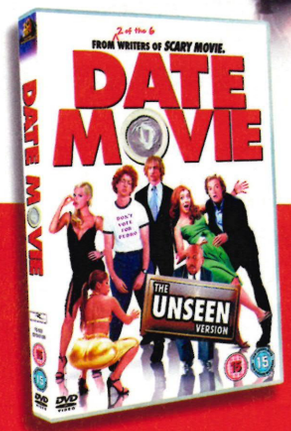
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006 — SILVER
With better online play and new match types, this is essential.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09

XIII — BRONZE
Gorgeous PS2 version of the comic-book hero. Play this now.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#42

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER — BRONZE
The strikingly impressive robo scrapper returns. Awesome.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 08 / DVD#38



WISH YOU HAD A BIGGER PACKAGE? WELL...HERE IT IS!



2 of the 6

FROM ~~THE~~ WRITERS OF 'SCARY MOVIE'

NOW MORE OUTRAGEOUS

ON DVD JULY 17

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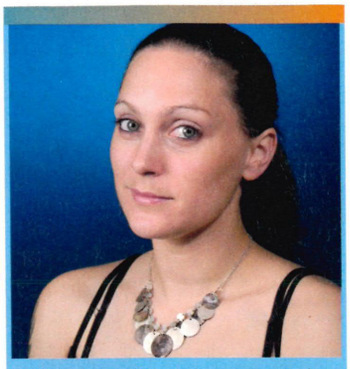
comedown

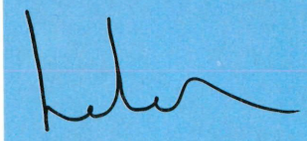
THE REST OF YOUR PS2 AND PSP LIFE IN ONE HANDY SECTION



When I was little I always wanted to grow up to be a mercenary. Cool shades, big guns, fast Jeep, bald head, big beard. This month, Comedown's 'Guns For Hire' feature takes a look at what it's like to be a real life soldier of fortune. It's everything I always wished it would be – except for the 'dying young' bit – and the money's great!

Another highlight in Comedown is one of the weirdest things we've seen on PSP this month – Dog Years. It's all about a dog and his sore bottom. Brilliant.

And on that note, I must leave you now because I'm going on holiday tomorrow and I've been making this magazine all week instead of packing. Which is what I'm off to do now. Adios!



Helen Woodey,
Operations editor

film

music

incoming

feature

120

This is the look Portman would have on her face if she met us for a blind date

120 **FILM REVIEWS**
V For Vendetta, *Lucky Number Slevin*, *Syriana* and *Two For The Money* are ripe for DVD-viewage. We watch 'em and rate 'em

121 **HOW TO GET MOVIES ON YOUR PSP**
Use our straightforward, technophobe-friendly guide to preparing and transferring video files from desk-bound PC to portable PSP

121 **THIS MONTH'S WEIRDEST PSP THINGS**
A dog contemplates his swollen anus, you're invited to play ye olde skoole texte adventure and Dubya feels a song coming on

122 **MUSIC REVIEWS**
Thom Yorke, Lily Allen, Peaches and The Sleepy Jackson have new albums. We've listened to them, but should you?

122 **PSP KIT REVIEW**
Minimalist UMD storage and brushed aluminium speaker systems – *OPS2* goes high-end design with this month's PSP peripherals

123 **HOW TO STREAM ITUNES MUSIC TO PSP**
Follow our guide to having your entire iTunes music collection on tap and playable through your PSP wherever there's a WiFi hotspot

124 **INCOMING**
Having a job juggling your PSP, PS2 and PS3 wishlists? Have no fear – we've got the lot arranged in one enorm-o-grid. Job done

126 **GUNS FOR HIRE**
With *Mercenaries 2: World In Flames* on the way, we meet the real-life mercs who make a killing in the diciest locations on the globe

Thom spends 40 days and nights in the desert. Comes back with bleepy album

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122

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
PLAY.COM
MOVIES MUSIC GAMES

V FOR VENDETTA

NATALIE PORTMAN SHAVES HEAD, STICKS IT TO THE MAN

DIRECTOR
James McTeigue
STARRING
Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving, Stephen Rea
DISTRIBUTOR
Warner Home Video
OUT
31 July
PRICE
£19.99 (DVD)

FILM: *V For Vendetta* is based on a 20-year-old graphic novel, but the material proves remarkably suited to the world today. In the original, V is waging a terror campaign against a facist British establishment intended to echo Thatcher's '80s government. The movie works because it feels just as relevant today, providing a sharp look at contemporary attitudes (tellingly, its cinematic release was postponed after the London tube bombings).

If we sound in danger of over-thinking a big-budget action flick, it's worth remembering that *V* is all about the politics. V's campaign of violence is a gripping and erudite battle against censorship, inhumanity and state-sponsored dumbing down. He revels in the classics and hordes cultural artefacts. Weaving's V is smart, brazen, and kicks ass. Less successful is his relationship with Evey, the young woman he mentors. Portman's wonky cockney drone is distracting, and her journey from naïve waif to shaven-headed anarchist fails to convince. Aside from this, and a sentimental ending at odds with the rest of the film, *V* is tough, timely and thoughtful. **7/10**

EXTRAS: Behind the scenes, four featurettes, music video. **5/10**

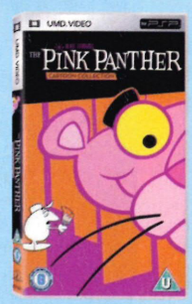
VERDICT: Lavishly produced and, for the most part, gripping. Some odd plot twists and casting mar an otherwise decent film. ■ **ND**

Also out on UMD

The pick of this month's releases

OUT NOW
- *Drowning Mona*
- *Animal Farm*
- *Demons*
- *Red Dwarf: The Smeg Ups*
- *Spider-Man: The New Animated Series*

17 JULY
- *Blackadder Series One*
- *Heathers*
- *Hellraiser 2: Hellbound*
- *Hellraiser 3: Hell On Earth*
- *The Pink Panther*
- *R-Point*



LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN

Director *Paul McGuigan* / Starring *Josh Hartnett, Bruce Willis* / Distributor *Entertainment In Video* / Out Now / Price *£19.99 (DVD)*

FILM: A twisting, trigger-happy crime flick, whose style and sharp dialogue harks back to the likes of *Pulp Fiction* and *The Usual Suspects*. Off-hand flashbacks, a soul-fused soundtrack and quick-to-quip hitmen light up the Tarantin-o-meter, as Josh Hartnett's easy-going Slevin gets drawn into a decades-old feud between rival underworld bosses. Mistaken for a friend with heavy gambling debts, Slevin's told he can work off the dues or take up permanent residence in the outfit's freezer. And so he ends up with three days to kill a man, shadowed the whole time by Bruce Willis' mysterious gunman... **8/10**

EXTRAS: Commentary, making of, deleted scenes, trailer. **6/10**

VERDICT: Sharp, funny and on the money, if a little too hung up on QT's style. Well worth a watch. ■ **ND**

SYRIANA

Director *Stephen Gaghan* / Starring *George Clooney, Matt Damon* / Distributor *Warner Home Video* / Out *Now* / Price *£19.99 (DVD)*

FILM: Like its larded-up George Clooney – playing a pudgy CIA vet interfering in Middle Eastern affairs – *Syriana* is a slow, serious heavy hitter. With no plot as such, loosely associated fragments of lives disrupted and directed by the global oil business are shown in sequence. And so, Clooney's operative is juxtaposed with economics analysts, Arab emirs, and trainee terrorists, all orbiting the labyrinthine core of the fuel industry. Like we said, it's heavy, and what's more it inches towards what proves to be a minimally dramatic conclusion. Still, it's undeniably thought-provoking, and sets up its intricately balanced web with a rare intelligence. **7/10**

EXTRAS: George Clooney interview, deleted scenes, featurette. **6/10**

VERDICT: Heavy going, but nevertheless sharp and insightful. ■ **ND**

TWO FOR THE MONEY

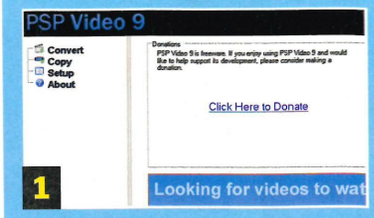
Director *DJ Caruso* / Starring *Al Pacino, Matthew McConaughey* / Distributor *Universal Pictures Video* / Out *17 July* / Price *£15.99 (DVD)*

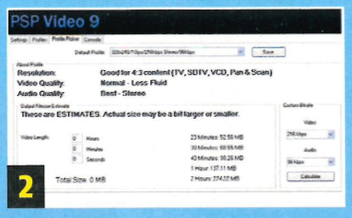
FILM: A glitz-and-bitch, rise-and-fall gambling drama with smooth-talking McConaughey as near-miss football pro turned betting guru Brandon Lang. His uncanny talent is spotted by Pacino's Walter Abrams, head of a bookkeeping enterprise, who invites Lang to join his team. The problem is that, for a film reliant on the tension generated by the thrilling uncertainty of gambling, its whole schtick is too predictable. Abrams and Lang establish a familiar father-son dynamic, with Abrams' old addictions and insecurities laid bare by the battles with his protégé, while Lang deals with his loss of innocence. **6/10**

EXTRAS: Commentaries, making of, interview, deleted scenes. **8/10**

VERDICT: Even with Pacino on decent form, *Two For The Money* has long-odds for a thrilling night in. ■ **ND**

Step by step guide to... getting movies on your PSP





Got video files you want to watch on the go? Follow our guide...

PSP only plays certain types of video file – MP4, AVC – so you need to convert your movie file first. The easiest way to do this is by using a program like *PSP Video 9* **1** available at www.pspvideo9.com. It's free and easy to use, and transfers the finished files to PSP automatically.

Download the program and choose your video settings in the 'Setup' tab **2** Tinker with the resolution, framerate and so on until you've found the balance between video quality and file size that suits you (you may want to use the 'Profile Picker' with automatic settings and descriptions of the quality level).

Now click the 'Convert' tab, select 'Convert New Video' and find the file you want to copy from the menu. Once converted, *PSP Video 9* automatically prepares the file so that your PSP can find it **3** Plug your PSP into your PC's USB port, click the 'Copy' tab and you're away **4**

THE WEIRDEST THINGS WE'VE SEEN ON PSP THIS MONTH

A FRESH DELIVERY OF ODDITIES TRAWLED FROM THE NET'S DARKEST DEPTHS

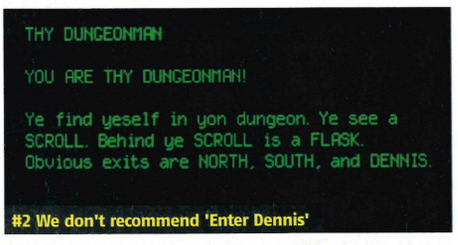
#3 DOG YEARS 2

Bizarre dog's-eye-view of a trip to the vet. Soothing northern tones – belonging to Ben, the dog in question – play over hazy home video footage of a walk in the park at dusk. The effect is a warm, fuzzy and glowing feeling, quite at odds with the subject... Ben's inflamed anal gland and the time the vet squeezed it. Available at **www.atomfilms.com/af/togo**

#3 Pain in the ass

#2 DUNGEONMAN

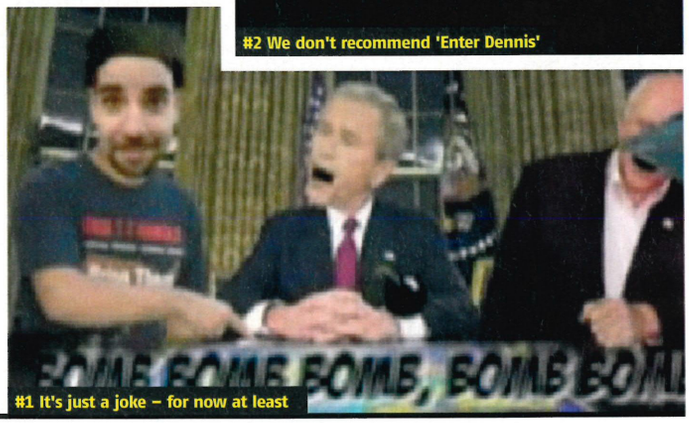
Short flash game which recreates the terrible faux-Shakespearean vocabulary and general rubbishness of old text-based adventures. In fact, it does it so well that it's not even rubbish any more. Play it, ye travellers, at **www.homestarrunner.com/dungeonman.html**



#2 We don't recommend 'Enter Dennis'

#1 LET'S BOMB IRAN

Crudely animated but damn funny song and dance about America's itchy trigger finger. Okay, so satirising George Dubya isn't much of a comedic stretch – nonetheless, these lyrics bite hard. Search for 'Let's Bomb Iran' at **www.video.google.com**



#1 It's just a joke – for now at least

trailer park

Download trailers for hot new films to view on your PSP

FAST AND FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT

Bow Wow (the rapper, no longer 'little') stars in this fast-cars-and-stupid-men sequel, now relocated to Japan. Looks predictable like the slow grind of evolution. www.movie-list.com

OVER THE HEDGE

Another animated animal movie, this time featuring city-shy critters being targeted by travelling racoon con artist RJ, played by Bruce Willis. www.planetmg.com

DISTRICT B13

Paris in the future is a chaotic sprawl. Sent to clean it up are two cops from the free-running and kung fu division. Looks ace. www.29hdnetwork.com/pspdirect/districtb13.html

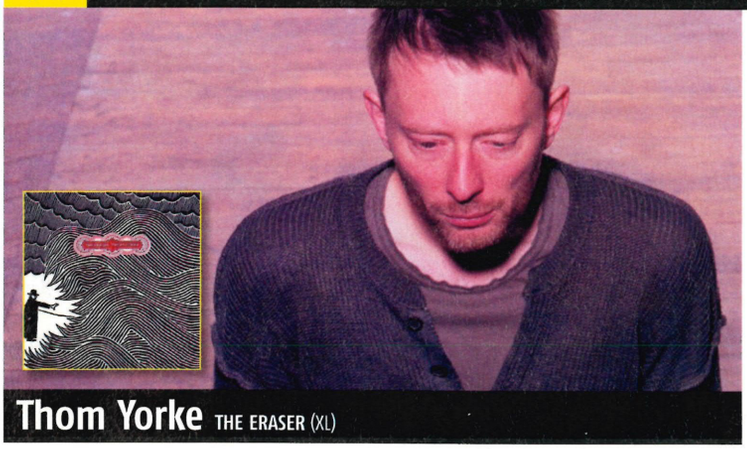
GHOST RIDER

New, expanded trailer for the Marvel adaptation. Nic Cage is a burning, raging literal Hell's Angel. CGI looks okaaaay. www.apple.com/trailers/sony_pictures/ghostrider/internationalteaser

KILLZONE

Refresh your mind with the now near-mythical *Killzone* PS3 trailer. Can it ever look like this? Who knows, but our hearts ache for it. Search for *Killzone* and PS3 at www.video.google.com

music THE TUNES CURRENTLY ROCKING OUR WORLD



Thom Yorke THE ERASER (XL)

WHO? Hedgehog-haired grump behind Oxford gloom-rockers Radiohead strikes out alone – but don't dare call it 'a solo album', because it's not. Oh no.
HIGHLIGHTS: *The Clock* – Thom singing "you throw coins in a wishing well" over skittering, arachnid percussion and echoing folk guitar.
LOWLIGHTS: They are few, but *Skip Divided* feels a bit like a demo that never quite came together.
VERDICT: At first listen, a bit insubstantial, but give it time – *The Eraser* will haunt you like no Radiohead album ever could. **8/10**

LILY ALLEN
ALRIGHT STILL (Regal)
WHO? The daughter of sweary Brit actor Keith Allen, making her debut as lairy council-estate pop queen.
HIGHLIGHTS: *Knock 'Em Out*, a guide to getting shot of that troll-faced weirdo chatting you up at the bar.
LOWLIGHTS: *Alfie* – a song about Lily's little brother – is a bit novelty.
VERDICT: Bouncy, irresistible, ska-pop. It's kind of like The Streets with added lady bits. **8/10**

PEACHES
IMPEACH MY BUSH (XL)
WHO? Potty-mouthed Canadian electro strumpet's third full-lengther (oo-er) of lewd tunes and dirty techno beats.
HIGHLIGHTS: Scuzzy, squealing electro-rock shout-along *You Love It*.
LOWLIGHTS: The frankly embarrassing *Tent In Your Pants*.
VERDICT: PVC-clad punk-pop that should make you blush and body-pop in equal measure. **7/10**

THE SLEEPY JACKSON
PERSONALITY (Virgin)
WHO? Eccentric Australian indie-rock outfit that's essentially the mouthpiece for Jesus-lovin' pop maestro Luke Steele.
HIGHLIGHTS: God-fearing choral symphony *Higher Than Hell*.
LOWLIGHTS: *Play A Little Bit For Love*, an ill-advised attempt at getting all electronic.
VERDICT: Some heavenly melodies, but there's enough filler to remind you the devil has better tunes. **6/10**

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH
The Divine Comedy Victory For The Comic Muse (Parlophone)/**Tapes 'n Tapes** – The Loon (XL)/**Bugz In The Attic** – Back In The Dog House (V2)

ON THE *OPS2* STEREO
Delta The Losstralian (K Boro)/**We Are Scientists** With Love And Squalor (Virgin)/**Final Fantasy** Has A Good Home (Tomlab)/**Rodan** Rusty (Quarterstick)

PSP tunes
Cool music downloads for your handheld

Venetian Snares
DONUT (PLANET MU)
Canadian man-mountain makes music to break your brain to
Buy from Bleep.com

Germlin
Tooot Mountain (MP3)
Mental electronic splurge made on bits of old Nintendo consoles
Download free from MySpace.com/germlin

Alex Gopher
BIG IS BETTER (DIFFERENT)
Pumping electro-disco made not by a gopher, but by a Frenchman
Buy from Playlouder.com

Boards Of Canada
SKYLINER (WARP)
Soothing new tunes from the Scottish lairds of atmospheric electronica
Buy from Bleep.com

Embrace
WORLD AT YOUR FEET (INDEPENDIENTE)
Only-very-tangentially-about-football footy anthem
Buy from Playlouder.com

Vetiver
BEEN SO LONG (FAT CAT)
Hippy-haired psychedelic rock featuring famed folkie Devendra Banhart
Buy from Bleep.com

Armand Van Helden and Tara McDonald
BIG IS BETTER (SOUTHERN FRIED)
Superstar DJ meets former Basement Jaxx singer for clubland stomper
Buy from Playlouder.com

Mojave 3
BREAKING THE ICE (4AD)
Straw-chewing countrified wonder from slo-mo rockin' Brits
Buy from Playlouder.com

Klass A
MILLY (MP3)
Tight UK rap from Dizzee Rascal's new Leicester protégées
Download free from MySpace.com/klassa

PSP KIT REVIEW

THE BEST BITS 'N' BOBS FOR YOUR PSP

This month we take a look at two movie-related PSP accessories from Nyko. Nyko are a class outfit, and their products don't just offer convenience and functionality – they're downright lush as bits of design eye candy.

Take the Magna Case (£5.95 from www.essentialhandheld.co.uk), for example. While most UMD carriers have you simply clip your discs into place, the Magna Case holds and protects up to four games or movies with magnetic hubs. Anti-static rubber strips prevent dust and debris from entering the disc casing through the underside opening, and the case folds into a compact, closed position. Marvellous stuff.

Even better – albeit pricier – is Nyko's all-in-one PSP cinema solution, the Theater Experience (£49.95 from www.essentialhandheld.co.uk). Firstly, it's a hardy PSP carry-case, with an appropriately black (not to mention durable and stylish) brushed-aluminium exterior. This case opens up to reveal embedded stereo speakers behind an angled stand that holds the PSP screen in the optimum movie-viewing position. Dual headphone jacks and a charging socket allow for full connectivity on the move, but the real winner is the integrated seven-hour back-up battery, which feeds the PSP when its own supply runs dry. Genius.

1 Nyko Magna Case
2 Nyko Theater Experience

HOW TO...

STREAM YOUR ITUNES MUSIC TO YOUR PSP

USE A PSP TO ACCESS YOUR MUSIC LIBRARY ON THE MOVE WITH OUR HANDY GUIDE

If you've got a woefully small memory stick or you can't be bothered with copying all the music on your PC over to your PSP, there's a relatively simple way to listen to your iTunes music library on your handheld using the wireless Internet function. In order to do this you'll need the following things: a PSP upgraded to at least v2.6 (the version that adds an RSS option to the Network menu), a PC running Windows XP with iTunes v6.0.4 with music stored on it and crucially, a wireless network router connected to the Internet. Got that? Then let's begin.

STEP 1 Download the iTunes PSP Server application to your PC using this link www.skattertech.com/wp-content/uploads/2006/04/iTunes-PSP-Server.exe and save it to the desktop.

STEP 2 Next, start up iTunes then double-click the iTunes-PSP-Server. It launches a black window with some text in it. Don't close it down – this is your server.

STEP 3 Open up your web browser (we recommend using Firefox) and, in the address bar, type http://localhost:8080. Press enter and you should get an iTunes RSS server web page that displays all your iTunes playlists. Clever, no?

STEP 4 Before you proceed, you need to get your IP address. The easiest way to do this is by clicking on the Network Connections setting in your PC's Control Panel. Double-click your network card and then under the 'setup tab' you'll see your IP address listed. It's a number that will look something like this: 192.168.1 followed by a few more digits. Make a note of it.

STEP 5 Get your PSP, fire it up and get your Internet browser up and running. Then painstakingly type this lot into the address entry field: http:// then your IP address (you just wrote it down, remember?) followed by :8080. The end result will look something like this: http://192.168.x.x:8080. Load it and you'll see the page that's displaying on your PC. Choose the playlist you want to listen to by clicking the orange icon next to it. You may want to bookmark this.

STEP 6 Last thing to do is close the Internet browser, then go to RSS Channel in the Network menu and choose the playlist you just selected. Your music will be listed and you just have to click it to listen. Alternatively, you can press the △ button and choose 'save' to transfer it to your memory stick. In our test we found it was pretty good at streaming the tracks, although it did stutter a bit sometimes. This is down to the quality of the broadband connection. ■

THE ALTERNATIVE OPTION

The option described left is completely free, but unless you're Johnny Technology getting it to work outside the confines of your home is tricky. In order to enable your PSP to access your PC from a wireless access point anywhere in the world, your best bet is to stump up for Dot Tunes (approx £12) which you can buy from www.dottunes.net. This has the added advantage of working on both PC and Mac (it was originally written for Macs). Install this clever application and you can access your iTunes library from any WiFi access point on the globe. It goes without saying, you should never use this software to share music you don't own the copyright to.

ILLUSTRATION: WWW.MAGICTORCH.COM

incoming

Our guide to what's coming your way

PS2

SEPTEMBER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War	Flight Sim	Sony
America's Army: Rise Of A Soldier	Action	Ubisoft
B-Boy	Breakdancing	Sony
Buzz! The Sports Quiz	Quiz	Sony
Devil May Cry 3: Special Edition	Action	Capcom
Just Cause	Action	Eidos
Kingdom Hearts II	RPG	Square Enix
Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy	Platformer	Activision
LMA Manager 2007	Sports	Codemasters
Lumines Plus	Puzzle	Buena Vista
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence	Action	Konami
Noddy And The Magic Book	Platformer	The Game Factory
Open Season	Platformer	Ubisoft
Playwize - Poker And Casino	Poker	505 Game Street
Radiata Stories	RPG	Square Enix
Reservoir Dogs	Action	Eidos
Rule Of Rose	Horror	505 Game Street
Splinter Cell Double Agent	Stealth	Ubisoft
Spy Hunter: Nowhere To Run	Action	Midway
Steambot Chronicles	Puzzles/ RPG	505 Game Street
Suikoden V	RPG	Konami
Super-Bikes Riding Challenge	Racing	Black Bean
Test Drive Unlimited	Racing	Atari
World Snooker Championship 2007	Sports	Sega
World War II: Combat Elite	Shooter	Deep Silver

OCTOBER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Barnyard: The Original Party Animals	Adventure	THQ
Bratz 2: Forever Diamonds	Adventure	THQ
Capcom Classics Collection Vol 2	Retro	Capcom
Cartoon Network Grand Prix	Racing	The Game Factory
Curious George	Platformer	Electronic Arts
Destroy All Humans! 2	Action/Adventure	THQ
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2	Fighter	Atari
Family Guy	Adventure	Take Two
Impossible Mission	Adventure	Play It
Legend Of The Dragon	Action/Adventure	The Game Factory
Lemmings	EyeToy	Sony
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	Action	Activision
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	Beat-'em-up	Midway
NBA 2K7	Sports	Take Two
NHL 2K7	Sports	Take Two
Play With Fire	Puzzle	Midas Interactive
Pro Evolution Soccer 6	Sports	Konami
Scarface: The World Is Yours	Action/Adventure	Vivendi
The Legend Of Spyro: A New Beginning	Platformer	Vivendi

WINTER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Arthur And The Minimoys	Adventure	Atari
Bionicle Heroes	Adventure	Eidos
Bully	Adventure	Rockstar Games
Buzz! Junior: Jungle Party	Quiz	Sony
Call Of Cthulhu: Destiny's End	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft
Call Of Duty 3	Shooter	Activision
Dirge Of Cerberus: Final Fantasy VII	Action	Square Enix
Eragon	Action/Adventure	Vivendi
EyeToy: Kinetic Combat	EyeToy	Sony
EyeToy: Play Sports	EyeToy	Sony
Gangsters Ride	Action	GMX
Guitar Hero II	Party	Activision
Happy Feet	Party	Midway

RADAR

Only the big games bleep really loudly

OUT NOW

LOCOROCO

Super-simple but addictive platform puzzler where you just use L1 and R1 to roll a globule through colourful environments loaded with hazards

OUT SOON

B-BOY

Like a non-contact beat-'em-up set to a hip-hop soundtrack. Start practising those Insane Corkscrews

MILES OFF

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Can our spiky pal finally get to grips with racing around in 3D? We've been burned so many times...

Justice League Heroes	Action/Adventure	Eidos
Marvel Legends	RPG	Activision
Okami	Adventure	Capcom
Phantasy Star Universe	RPG	Sega
SpongeBob Squarepants: Creature From The Krusty Krab	Platform	Blitz
Superman Returns	Action	Electronic Arts
The Ant Bully	Action/Adventure	Midway
Thrillville	Theme Park Sim	Atari
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Skateboarding	Activision
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2007	Wrestling	THQ
Xioalin Showdown	Adventure	Konami

2007	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Ape Escape: Million Monkeys	Platformer	Sony
Dancing Stage SuperNOVA	Dance	Konami
Final Fantasy XII	RPG	Square Enix
Flushed Away	Platformer	D3PE
Ghost Rider	Racing	Take Two
God Hand	Action	Capcom
God Of War II	Action	Sony
Lost	Adventure	Ubisoft
Rogue Galaxy	RPG	Sony
Spider-Man 3	Action	Activision
The Sopranos	Action	THQ
TNA Impact!	Wrestling	Midway
Transformers: The Movie	Action	Activision
World Pool Championship 2007	Sports	Sega

TBC	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
ATV Offroad Fury 4	Racing	Sony
Battlestations Midway	Strategy	Eidos
Code Age Commanders	RPG	Square Enix
Dawn Of Mana	RPG	Square Enix
Grandia III	RPG	Square Enix
Jackass: The Game	Action	TBC
Larry Boy And The Bad Apple	Adventure	TBC
Metal Slug Collection	Retro	TBC
Pac-Man World Rally	Racing	TBC
Samurai Champloo: Sidetracked	Fighter	Namco Bandai
SOS: The Final Escape 2	Action/Adventure	TBC
The King Of Fighters 2006	Fighter	Ignition
Tokobot Plus: Mysteries Of The Katakuri	Platformer	TBC
Truth Or Dare	EyeToy	TBC
Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria	RPG	Square Enix
Wild Arms 4	RPG	TBC

PSP

SEPTEMBER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
50 Cent: Bulletproof G Unit Edition	Action	Vivendi
Ape Academy 2	Platformer	Sony
B-Boy	Breakdancing	Sony
Bomberman	Puzzle	Komani
Death Jr 2: Root Of Evil	Platformer	Konami
Every Extend Extra	Puzzle	Buena Vista
Gangs Of London	Action	Sony
Gitaroo Man Lives!	Music	KOEI
Gradius Collection	Retro	Konami
Guilty Gear Judgment	Fighter	THQ
James Pond Codename Robocod	Platformer	Play It
Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy	Platformer	Activision
Lumines II	Puzzle	Buena Vista
Marvel Trading Card Game	Strategy	Konami
Mercury Meltdown	Puzzle	Ignition
Moto GP	Racing	Sony
Online Chess Kingdoms	Chess	Konami
Open Season	Platformer	Ubisoft
Pocket Racers	Racing	Konami
Rengoku 2	Action	Konami
Rush	Racing	Midway
Sonic Rivals	Racing	Sega
Steel Horizon	Strategy	Konami
Street Supremacy	Racing	Konami
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	Fighter	Sony

KEY

PS2 GAMES

PSP GAMES

PS3 GAMES

Leon (staff writer) wants...

SUPERMAN RETURNS

"Superman's only weakness is Kryptonite. My equivalent would be indie girls with jaunty fringes - which leave me similarly incapacitated."

Ben (games ed) wants...

TRANSFORMERS: THE MOVIE

"As a child, I prayed that I'd grow up to be Optimus Prime. This now looks like the closest I'll ever get to that dream."

comedown

Winx Club: Join The Club	Adventure	Konami
World Snooker Championship 2007	Sports	Sega
Xyanide Resurrection	Shooter	Playlogic
Yu-Gi-Oh! GX	Strategy	Konami

OCTOBER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Ace Combat X: Skies Of Deception	Flight Sim	Sony
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	RPG	Take Two
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories	Action	Rockstar
Legend Of The Dragon	Action/Adventure	The Game Factory
Pro Evolution Soccer 6	Sports	Konami
Test Drive Unlimited	Racing	Atari
Traxion	Music	LucasArts

WINTER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Battlezone	Retro	Atari
Beatmania	Music	Konami
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	Retro	Capcom
Capcom Puzzle World	Puzzles	Capcom
Chess Battle	Chess	Konami
Dungeon Siege: Throne of Agony	Strategy	Take Two
Eragon	Action/Adventure	Vivendi
Gun Showdown	Action	Activision
Hot PXL	Party	Atari
Killzone: Liberation	Shooter	Sony
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	Action	Activision
Myst	Adventure	Midway
Power Stone Collection	Fighter	Capcom
Sid Meier's Pirates	Action	Take Two
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo 2	Shooter/Strategy	Sony
Superman Returns	Action	Electronic Arts
Thrillville	Theme Park Sim	Atari
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Skateboarding	Activision
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2007	Wrestling	THQ
Xioalin Showdown	Adventure	Konami

2007	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
300: March To Glory	Action	Eidos
Coded Arms Contagion	Shooter	Konami
Codename: Panzers	Strategy	10tacle
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge	Sports	TBC
Dead Head Fred	Action	D3PE
Ghost Rider	Racing	Take Two
Hellboy	Action/Adventure	Konami
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	Action	Konami
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	Platformer	Sony
Silent Hill Origins	Adventure	Konami
Spider-Man 3	Action	Activision
Transformers: The Movie	Action	Activision
World Pool Challenge 2007	Sports	Sega

TBC	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII	RPG	Square Enix
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge	Sports	TBC
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	Strategy	Atari
Pac-Man World Rally	Racing	TBC
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Strategy	TBC
The Dog - Happy Life	Breeding sim	TBC
WTF	Party	Sony

PS3

WINTER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Alone In The Dark	Adventure	Atari
Call Of Duty 3	Shooter	Activision
Eye Of Judgment	Puzzle	Sony
Formula One 06	Racing	Sony
Killzone	Shooter	Sony
Madden NFL 07	Sports	EA Sports
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	Action	Activision
MotorStorm	Racing	Sony
NBA 2K7	Sports	Take Two
NBA Live 07	Sports	EA Sports
NHL 2K7	Sports	Take Two

Tim (ed) wants...
DEVIL MAY CRY 4
"I like a challenge, and given that the third Dante instalment was difficult like sitting through a Lars von Trier movie, this should be strong."

George (disc ed) wants...
SID MEIER'S PIRATES
"Dressing up in full-on pirate garb is one of my more private hobbies, so this will suit me like a yellow eye patch with pink polka dots."

Andy (news ed) wants...
SINGSTAR
"At long last I'll be able to entertain both mates and neighbours with my stirring rendition of Kajagoogoo's '80s smash *Too Shy*."

Rainbow Six Vegas	Shooter	Ubisoft
Rayman Raving Rabbids	Platformer	Ubisoft
Resistance: Fall Of Man	Shooter	Sony
Ridge Racer 7	Racing	Namco Bandai
Sonic The Hedgehog	Platformer	Sega
Stranglehold	Action	Midway
The Darkness	Action/Adventure	Take Two
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Skateboarding	Activision
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	Action/RPG	Sony
World Snooker Championship 2007	Sports	Sega
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2007	Wrestling	THQ

2007	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Armored Core 4	Action	TBC
Army Of Two	Strategy/Shooter	Electronic Arts
Assassin's Creed	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years War	Action	KOEI
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Strategy/Shooter	Ubisoft
Coded Arms Assault	Shooter	Konami
Codename: Panzers	Strategy	10tacle
Colin McRae Rally 2007	Racing	Codemasters
Devil May Cry 4	Action	Capcom
Dirty Harry	Action	Warner Bros
Eight Days	Action	Sony
Elveon	Action	10tacle
Fatal Inertia	Racing	KOEI
Final Fantasy XIII	RPG	Square Enix
Final Fantasy Versus XIII	RPG	Square Enix
Frontlines: Fuel Of War	Shooter	THQ
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	Racing	Sega
Genji 2	Action	Sony
Ghost Rider	Racing	Take Two
Golden Axe	Beat'-em-up	Sega
Grand Theft Auto IV	Action	Rockstar
Haze	Action	Ubisoft
Heat	Action	TBC
Heavenly Sword	Action/Adventure	Sony
Heavy Rain	Adventure	TBC
Hellboy	Action/Adventure	Konami
Indiana Jones 2007	Action/Adventure	LucasArts
Lair	Action	Sony
Lost	Adventure	Ubisoft
Medal Of Honor: Airborne	Action	Electronic Arts
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	Shooter	TBC
Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots	Action	Konami
Monster Madness	Action	South Peak
Need For Speed Carbon	Racing	Electronic Arts
Project Gray Company	RPG	Electronic Arts
Rengoku: The End Of The Century	Action	TBC
Romance Of The Three Kingdoms	Strategy	KOEI
Sega Rally Revo	Racing	Sega
SingStar	Party	Sony
Spider-Man 3	Action/Adventure	Activision
Stuntman 2	Racing	THQ
Tekken 6	Fighter	Namco
Terra: Formations	Action	TBC
The Club	Action	Sega
The Outsider	Action	Frontier
TNA Impact!	Wrestling	Midway
Turok	Action	Buena Vista
Unreal Tournament 2007	Shooter	Midway
Virtua Fighter 5	Fighter	Sega
Virtua Tennis 3	Sports	Sega
Warhammer: Age Of Reckoning	RPG	TBC
Warhawk	Action/Adventure	Sony

WHICH UPCOMING GAMES ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

Send us your choice and comment to ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk, with Most Wanted in the subject line. Every month we'll be counting down the top five, complete with your opinions. Keep it clean.

READERS' MOST WANTED CHART

THE GAMES YOU'RE CROSSING YOUR LEGS FOR...

1

METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS (PS3)
"I know Kojima has threatened to kill Snake off before, but this time I believe him... *MGS4* on PS3 will be the perfect swan song."
■ *Dave H, Somerset*

2

ASSASSIN'S CREED (PS3)
"Never thought I'd want to play a game set during the Crusades, but after last month's feature I can't wait for this. The screenshots looked mint!"
■ *Bendy Joe, email*

3

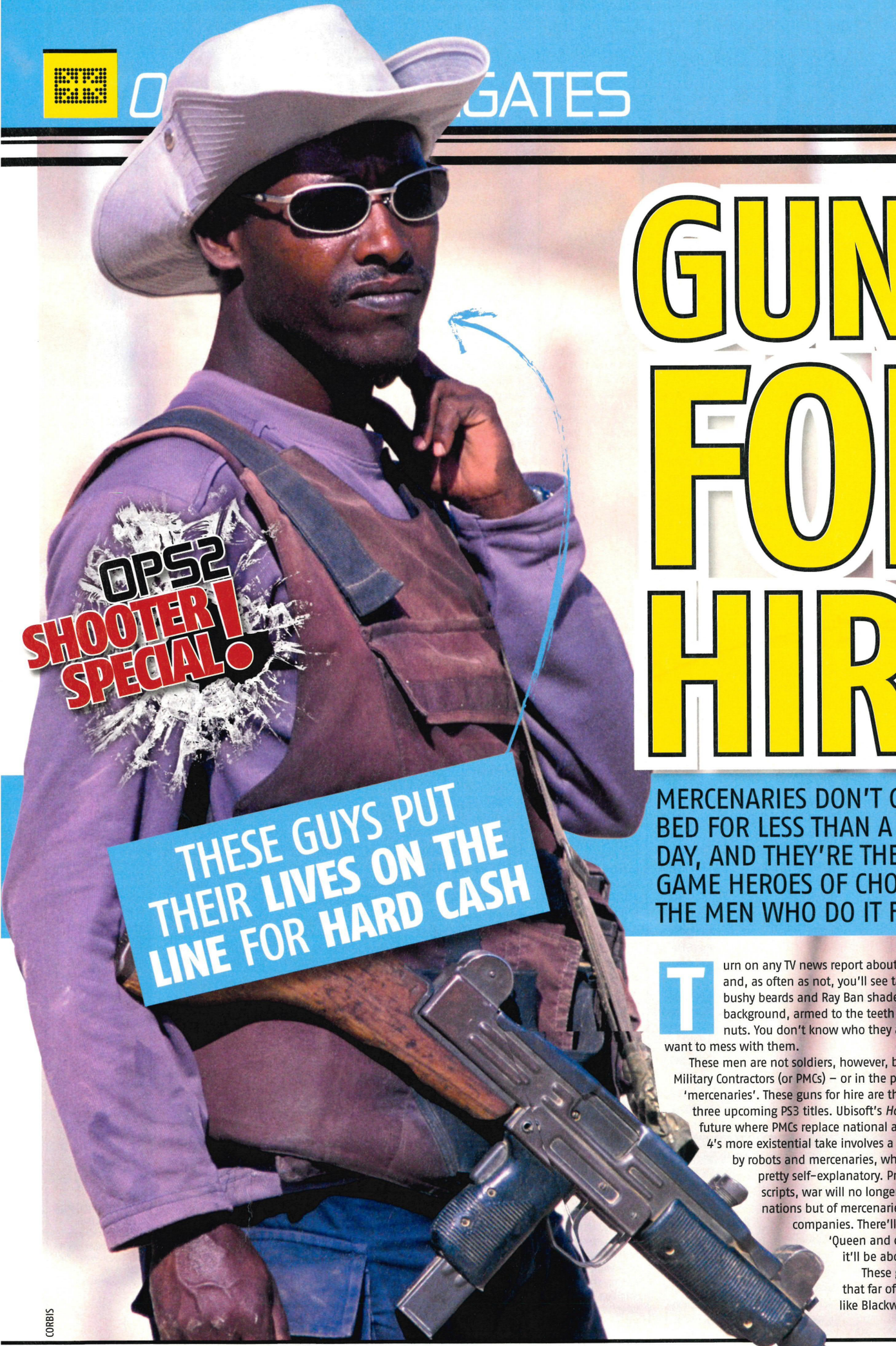
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6 (PS2, PSP)
"I like the idea of a touchline reporter but if it's Garth Crooks then I might have to start looking for the nearest cliff."
■ *Paul Field, email*

4

NEED FOR SPEED CARBON (PS3)
"Always preferred this to *GT* or *TOCA*, so glad to hear it's in development for PS3. Shame I'm totally skint!"
■ *Sally, Bolton*

5

SUPERMAN RETURNS (PS2, PSP)
"Let's face it: the PSP version will be a letdown. But as long as the PS2 one works, I'll be pleased."
■ *Super Steve, email*



CORBIS

OPS2 SHOOTER SPECIAL!

THESE GUYS PUT THEIR **LIVES ON THE LINE** FOR **HARD CASH**

WORDS: PHILIP SEN

GUNS FOR HIRE

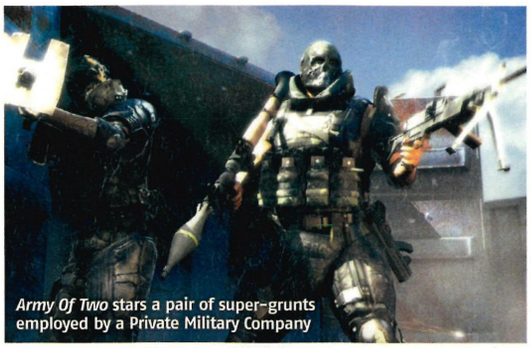
MERCENARIES DON'T GET OUT OF BED FOR LESS THAN A GRAND A DAY, AND THEY'RE THE NEW GAME HEROES OF CHOICE. MEET THE MEN WHO DO IT FOR REAL...

Turn on any TV news report about Iraq or Afghanistan and, as often as not, you'll see tall figures with their bushy beards and Ray Ban shades loitering in the background, armed to the teeth and looking hard as nuts. You don't know who they are – but you don't want to mess with them.

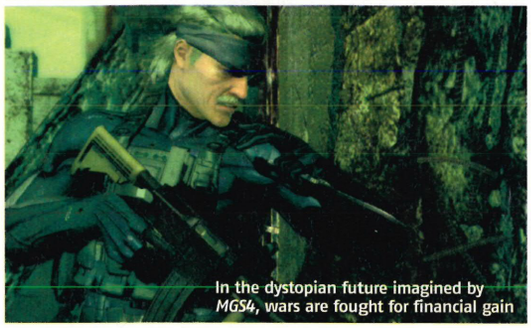
These men are not soldiers, however, but the faces of Private Military Contractors (or PMCs) – or in the parlance of games, 'mercenaries'. These guns for hire are the focus of at least three upcoming PS3 titles. Ubisoft's *Haze* imagines a near-future where PMCs replace national armies, *Metal Gear Solid 4*'s more existential take involves a persistent war fought by robots and mercenaries, while *Mercenaries 2* is pretty self-explanatory. Pretty soon, go the scripts, war will no longer be the domain of nations but of mercenaries and the private companies. There'll be no such thing as 'Queen and country' any more – it'll be about the highest bidder.

These gritty scenarios are not that far off at all. PMC companies like Blackwater USA, Titan Corp or

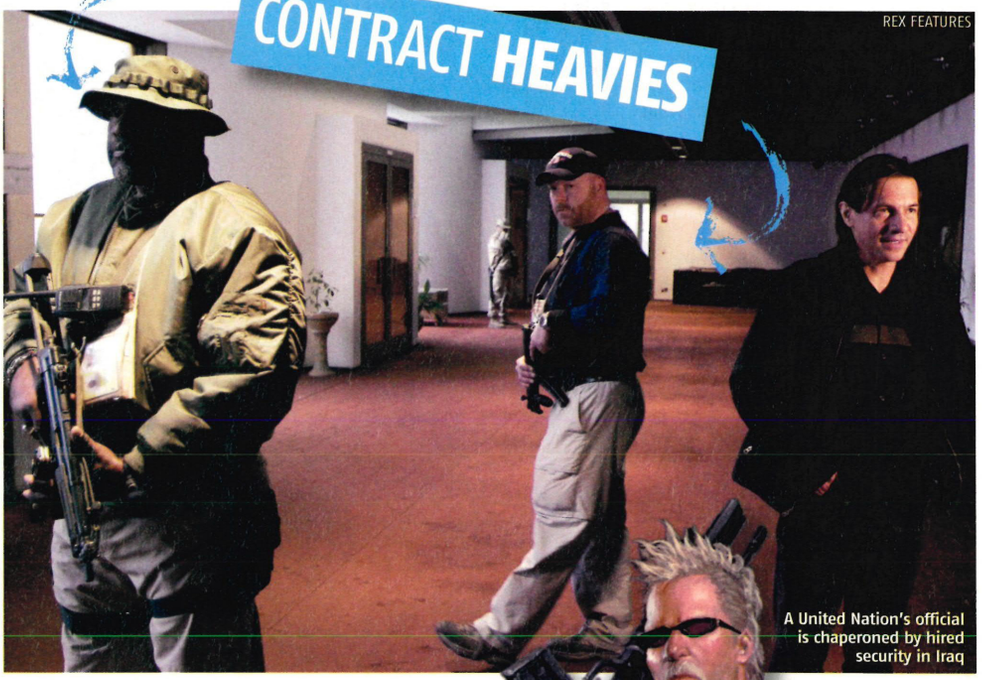
CONTRACT HEAVIES



Army Of Two stars a pair of super-grunts employed by a Private Military Company



In the dystopian future imagined by *MGS4*, wars are fought for financial gain



REX FEATURES

A United Nation's official is chaperoned by hired security in Iraq

Mercenaries was made under supervision of a real-life mercenary named 'Mookie'

THE MOTIVE BEHIND *MERCENARIES 2*

Why do mercs make such good game heroes?

"The idea for *Mercenaries* was a spin-off from an action helicopter title we were working on a few years ago, when we realised that getting out of the helicopter added a lot of depth to the game.

"We felt like the idea of being a mercenary – basically a gun for hire motivated by personal gain, money, and not playing by the rules – was a great fantasy for gamers, and delivering on exciting fantasies is what our games are all about." ***Stephen Zamkoff, senior producer on* Mercenaries 2**

Britain's very own AEGIS Specialist Risk Management are already cashing in on the small dirty wars of the 21st Century in a big way, and their men can be found everywhere from Kosovo to East Timor. It's nothing to do with loyalty anymore: anyone who works for them is in it for the money.

And lots of it. Daily pay for the most basic of real-life PMC staff – Private Security Details or PSDs – starts at £300 and during the Iraq War ground attack some mercs were earning upwards of a grand a day. For a six-month contract, a PMC man would be

"GLAMOUR SEEKERS END UP DEAD OR IN PRISON"

disappointed to bring home less than £50,000. "You ask why we do it?" says one. "The money's good. Real good." "I don't even answer the phone for less than £1,000," sniffs another.

But they're not happy with the term 'mercenary'. "There's a big difference between a merc and someone who works for a PMC," says 'Frank', a former Special Forces medic with experience of Iraq and Afghanistan. "A PMC is a corporation that provides services to the government, or a government that is friendly to it. A mercenary is an individual who provides services to any country or group, regardless of political affiliations."

So what do they actually do? The answer is simple: stuff the military doesn't want to do. That can include anything from forcing people out of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to stopping Mexicans getting in across the American border. But most of all it's war zone 'security'. It's getting the bad guys out of the way so the client doesn't have to, guarding pipelines, and being ready for the unexpected.

'Carlos', who has worked for clients from South American dictators to American governors in Iraq, gives an example. "What I do is 'open up the landscape'," he says. "Say the ambassador needs to go to the airport. I have to make sure he gets there in one piece. We check out the route, five or six routes in fact, a couple of days beforehand with patrols of ten vehicles or so and we make them safe. Then we accompany the ambassador to the plane. If we see more terrorists or known 'bad guys', we clear them out of the way. And we're not restricted by rules on when to shoot or not like the UN. In these situations, sometimes you shoot or you die."

Being in a PMC is all about clinical professionalism. "Glamour seekers end up in dead or in prison,' cautions 'Jack', an

intelligence specialist. "They'd be better off staying as a mall security guard." This isn't to say that the gung-ho contract soldiers of games like *Mercs 2* don't exist. There's reputed to be 5,000 South Africans in Iraq doing "Lord knows what" – and that's according to the South African government. But it's not work any aspiring Chuck Norris can get after a couple of days in the gym and lots of practise with a DualShock. Almost invariably veterans of their country's special forces – SAS, Green Berets, Delta Force and the like – these PMC guys often have ten years' military experience under their belt. It's rare to find one much younger than 30 years old and without a scar or two from his past life.

"If someone wanted to start this kind of job," says 'Andrei', a Russian who previously served with Spetsnaz and the French Foreign Legion, "I'd say think hard. Sure, it's cool to have desert boots, camouflage pants, wraparound sunglasses and short haircuts. It's cool to drive a car with sign that reads 'STAY BACK 100 METRES OR YOU WILL BE SHOT'. Nobody questions who you are. But after all this – you can get killed. You made your choice and it's all or nothing. If you're smart, you get back home with loads of money. If not, you get killed. But the Middle East is a magnet for soldiers of fortune, bounty hunters fed up with low-paid grunt work. If you're ready to put your life on the line, do it."

Yet for the men of the PMCs, the future is bright. "I believe that as the military is drawn down, they'll become more and more reliant on PMCs," says Frank. Andrei is equally upbeat. "This business is as old as the world itself," he says. "Mercenaries were around even in medieval times and it'll carry on. If not, we're unemployed." "As the needs of governments change, they'll continue to grow and diversify even more than in the last five years," adds Jack.

He's right: PMCs are becoming ever more powerful and ambitious. In March 2006 the vice chairman of Blackwater USA, one of the biggest PMC companies around, stated that if asked he could provide a brigade-sized team of mercenaries for peace-keeping somewhere like Darfur in Sudan. It would be a small step from that to joining the combat in low-intensity conflicts. "I believe there is a contribution to be made by a small force," the vice chairman told a delegation of politicians and arms dealers. "The issue is who's going to let us play on their team?" Switch 'Blackwater' for the fictional 'Mantel Corp' and that's not far off the scenario of Haze.

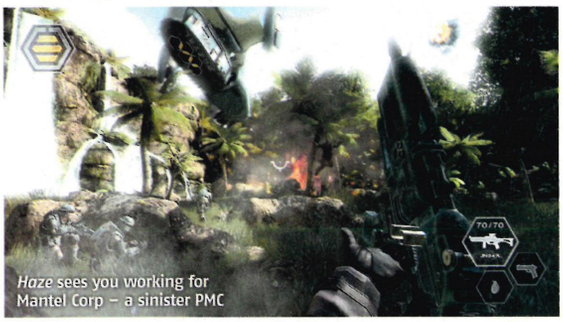
"War has changed," begins the trailer for *Metal Gear Solid 4*. It certainly has, though the gloomy scenario of PMCs in the "rational, well oiled business transactions" of battle is yet to come. But that future may not be as far away as you think. As PMCs and their highly-trained, highly-motivated and highly-paid personnel take an increasing role in today's battlefield, the days of the conventional soldier are numbered. ■

REX FEATURES

Private Security details shadow government officials at Baghdad Airport

MAX AND PADDY THIS AIN'T...

THE DAYS OF THE CONVENTIONAL SOLDIER ARE NUMBERED



Haze sees you working for Mantel Corp – a sinister PMC

REAL-LIFE STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE

'Frank' ***(Served in Iraq and Afghanistan):*** "My team and I were protecting a bomb disposal unit at a remote outpost. We were attacked at night by at least three vehicles with heavy weapons. We fired back, and ended up calling up the military on the Sat phone for a Predator drone and Apache helicopter gunships."

'Andrei' ***(formerly of Spetsnaz, Russia's elite special forces):*** "Once I was in a convoy and got shot at by friendly forces – US Marines! Then on the way back we were hit with a road-side bomb and an hour later a mortar attack. All this in one day. Pretty exciting, huh?"

'Carlos' ***(Worked in South America and Iraq):*** "In Baghdad, terrorists are everywhere detonating bombs by cable. They know my guns are better, so normally they attack from behind. And you trust no one. Two of my guys were talking to kids, giving them water, sweets... a boy let off a hand-grenade and killed them both."

In the real world, *Mercenaries* can call in air support – but can't spawn jeeps from mid-air

PRIVATE ARMOURY

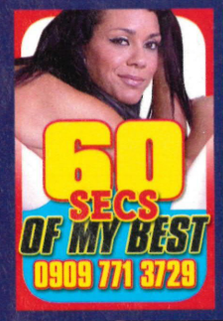
Tools: A merc's best friend

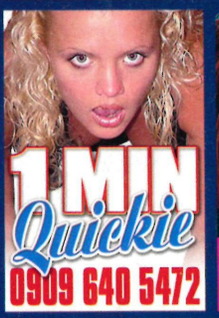
Firepower is a matter of personal choice, and since his life depends on it, a modern merc goes for the best he can get. That doesn't necessarily mean the most expensive. When it comes to simplicity and reliability, you can't beat Russian engineering, and many ex-Special Forces go for familiarity in the AK-47 Kalashnikov – a weapon that won't let them down in a crisis (the designers of *Mercenaries 2* knew where they were at with this one). Old-skool Russian machine guns like the PKM are also popular. Backing them up will be one of the more rugged 9mm pistols, such as the Glock 19 or SIG Sauer P226 – just what you need when your back's to the wall.

HANDGUNS
Glock 19, SIG Sauer P226

MACHINE GUNS
GPMG (FN-MAG), PKM, M249 Minimi

ASSAULT RIFLES
M4 Carbine, AK-47 Kalashnikov





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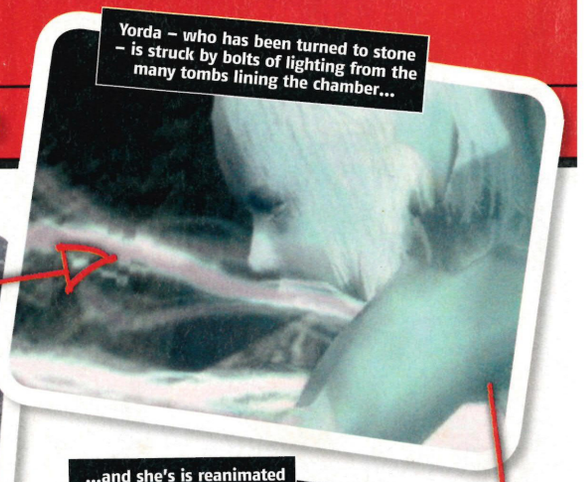
ENDGAME

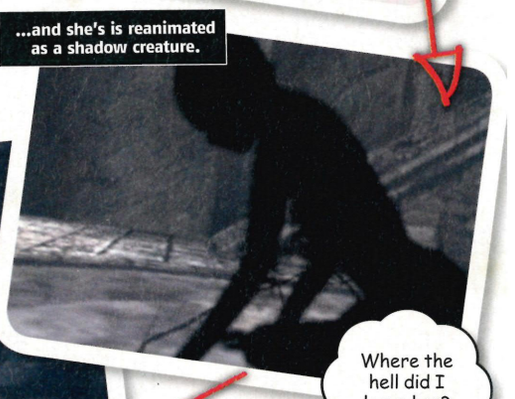
FINISHING GAMES SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO. THIS MONTH: ICO

As strange as it is beautiful, this cult classic sees you playing as Ico, a horned child trapped in a decaying castle that's home to an evil witch. To escape you had to guide your female companion, the ethereal Yorda, through the twisted architecture. Helpless by herself, Yorda needed to be led around by hand as you lowered platforms for her and beat back attacking shadow spirits. After Ico defeats a legion of doppelganger shadow creatures – one for each tomb in the castle, suggesting he's not the first horned boy confined within its walls – he finally stabs the aging witch through the heart...

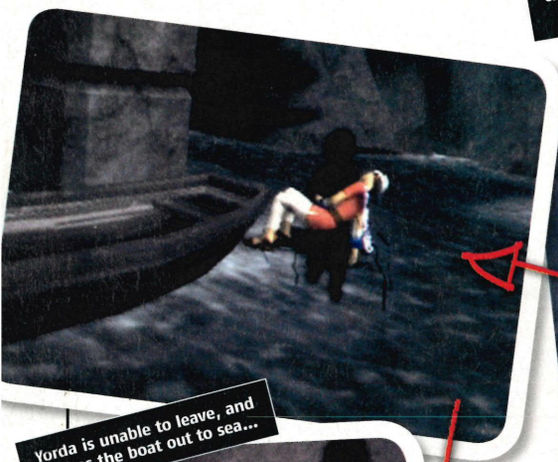
As the queen dies, she tells Ico that Yorda was meant to be her new body and can never leave the castle. The queen then explodes, knocking Ico senseless.



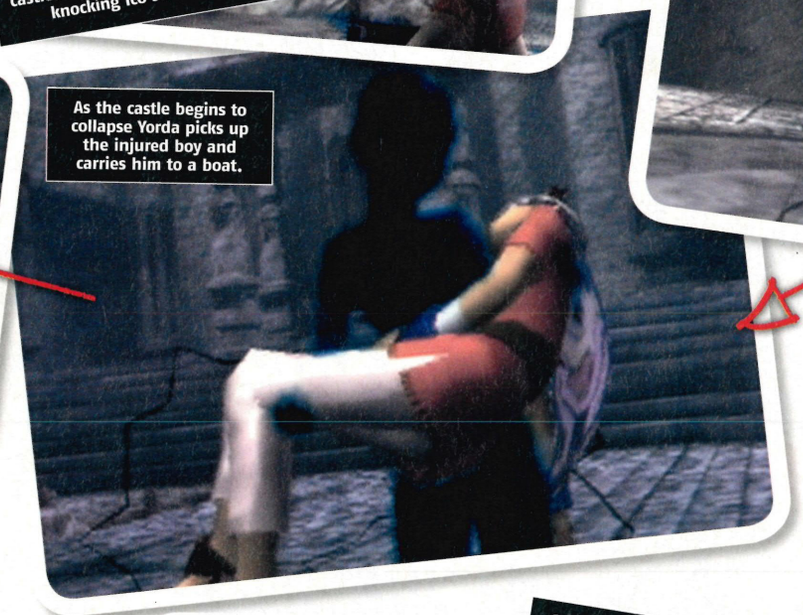
Yorda – who has been turned to stone – is struck by bolts of lighting from the many tombs lining the chamber...



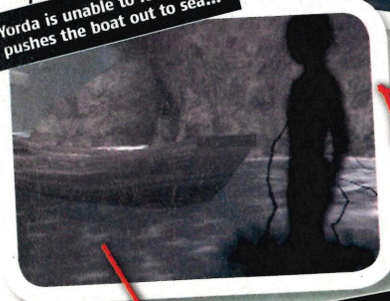
...and she's is reanimated as a shadow creature.



Yorda is unable to leave, and pushes the boat out to sea...



As the castle begins to collapse Yorda picks up the injured boy and carries him to a boat.



...as the whole island collapses into the water.

Seemingly dead, he drifts away as the credits roll.

However, after the credits finish, there's one last twist.

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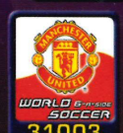

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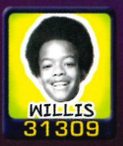

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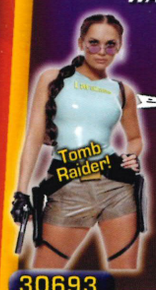

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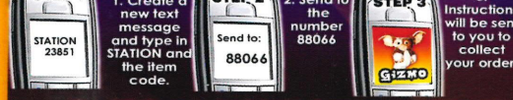

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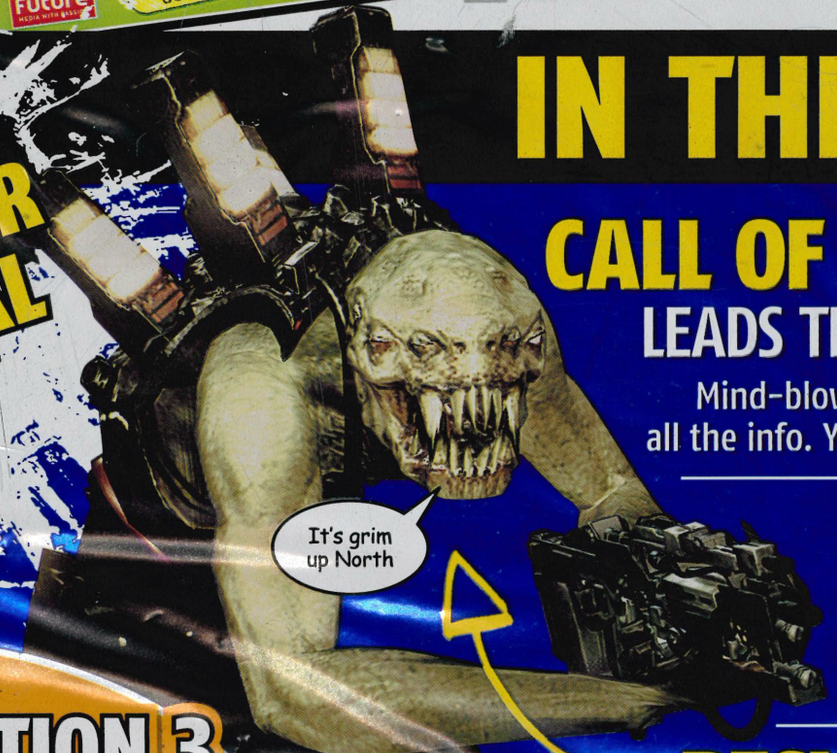

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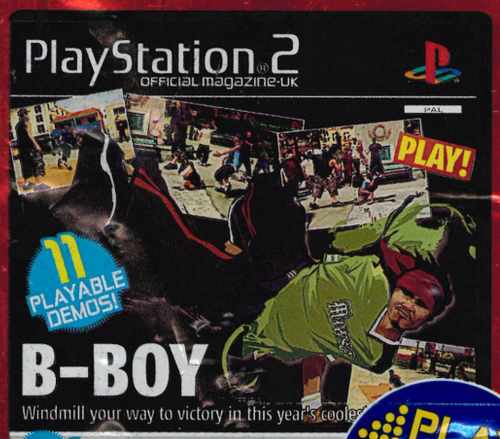

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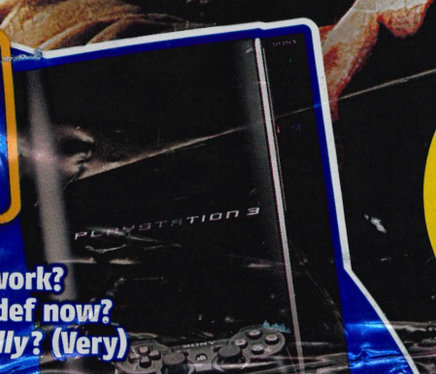

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