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0870 837 4773 (UK queries and back issues)
+44 1858 438794 (Overseas new orders and renewals)
+44 1858 438795 (Overseas queries and back issues)
Distributed through the UK Newstrade by Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 5th Floor, Low Rise Building, Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS
Tel: 020 7633 3300
Overseas distribution by Future Publishing Ltd
Tel: 01225 442244
If you had any problems finding this issue of OPS2, please call Russell Hughes on 01225 442244
Printed in the UK by Southernprint

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*With such an impressively tattooed arm grazing our cover this month we asked: 'What tattoo would you get?'.

COVER COMPO!
The first person to write or email telling where the quote on the spine comes from and why we used it wins a game and T-shirt

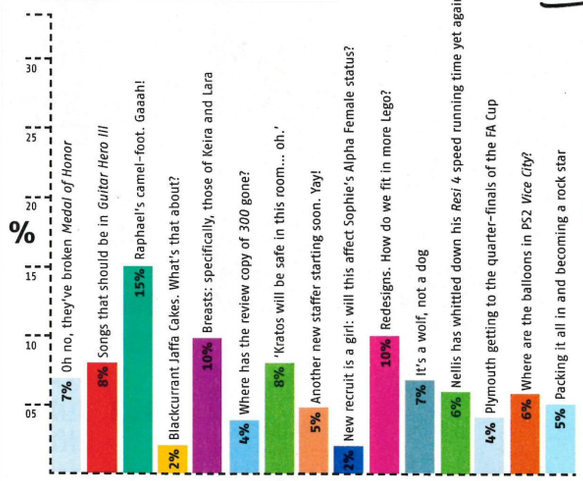
EVERYBODY PLAYS

What's your price? Me, I'd settle for a bar of that posh chocolate with cherries in it and a device for cleaning out all the muck from the little grooves on the DualShock 2. Our *Mercenaries 2* cover star, Mattias Nilsson, charges a little bit more than that, as anyone who sampled the excellent original game will know. We had feared that Nilsson and the rest of the *Mercs* crew had deserted PS2 for next-gen pastures, so when EA suddenly coughed up news that our fears were unfounded, we were delighted. And, of course, immediately went about getting the development team to tell us all about the PS2 version so we could share the good stuff with you lot (p16 is where you need to head for that). But the top-drawer PS2 previews don't stop there. We've got exclusive shots and info for *Spider-Man 3*, *Tomb Raider Anniversary*, *Manhunt 2*, *Painkiller*, *Pirates Of The Carribean 3*, *Juiced 2*... loads of stuff! I keep hearing people going on about how the PS2 is on its last legs now that PS3 is out. Fools! You and me, we know different, right? Right. With that in mind, can I point you to page 26? There you'll find a story about how we're going to freshen up the mag in the coming months. Please drop me a line at ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk, or via old-fashioned snail mail to the usual address if you prefer, and let me know what you think.

Nick

NICK ELLIS,
Editor

WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT



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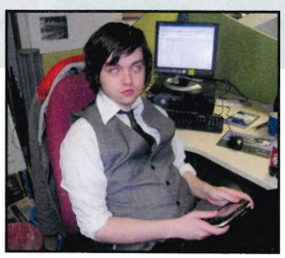
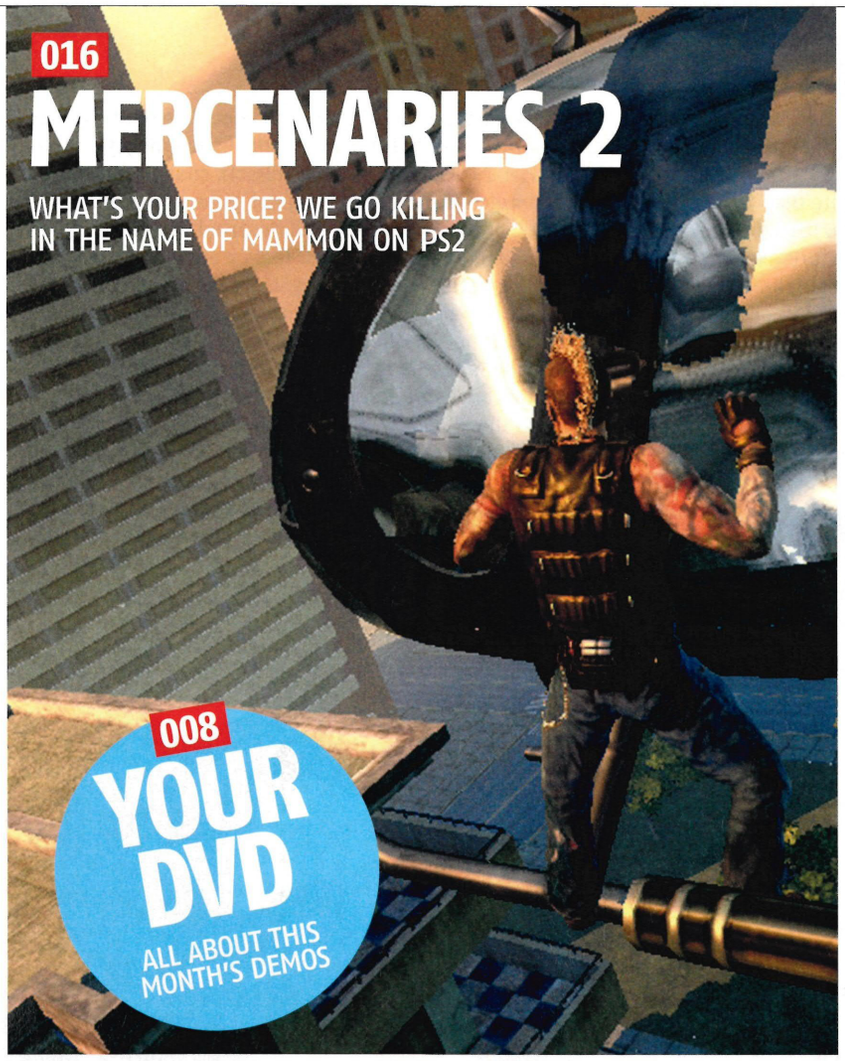
Andy Hartup
Writer, *God of War II* guide (p108)
We are starting to worry that Andy may be a closet psychopath after he got a little too excited about stabbing people in the head in *GOW II*. He also seems to have an unnaturally tidy desk. Perhaps his recent haircut is not keeping his brain warm enough?



Mike Sterry
Staff writer
Champion ligger Mike was welcomed into Team OPS2 by being called an emo and forced to play *Little Britain The Videogame* for this issue's Challenges. Oddly, he came back to work the next day. Now spends most of his time on the phone to record companies.

Sophie Mason
Writer, *Zendoku* review (p99)
'Panda! Sumo! Flower! You b******!' It took us a while to realise that the muttering coming from our resident grammar monkey's desk was the sound of her playing *Zendoku*, to which she is now addicted, and not just her usual stream of bile-laden expletives.

Dave Harrison
Writer, *Tomb Raider* preview (p38)
Dave claims the bruise on his nose this month is due to 'running into a member of my own team while playing football' and nothing to do with a secret life as a relic hunter. And he brings us brownies, so we'll believe him... for now.



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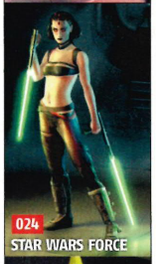

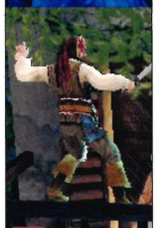

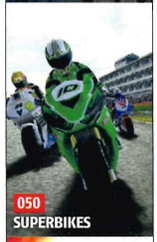

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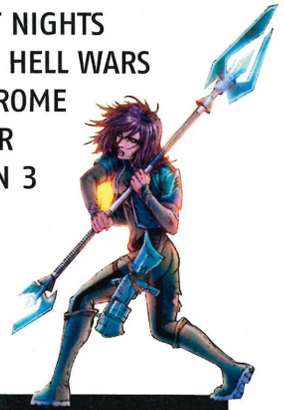

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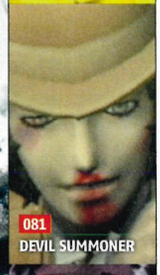
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HELPING YOU GET THE MOST FROM YOUR GAMES

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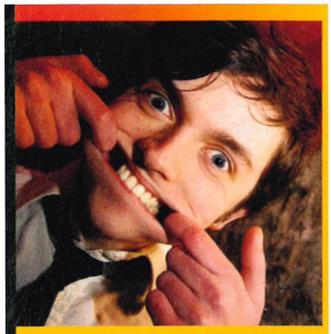
PLAY GAMES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST DEMOS!



I know nothing about cricket. And when Big Boss Nick caught wind of this, not long into my first week as cabin boy on the good ship OPS2, he promptly slapped me round the face and sat me in front of our demo of *Brian Lara International Cricket 2007*, just in time for the cricket World Cup.

After several hours of play, I can happily report that I now know what a 'crease' is. But if you still can't tell your bails from your balls, we've also got choice samples from two of the greatest PS2 games of all time, *ICO* and *God of War*, tucked in among many other gaming delights on this month's disc.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a test match to finish....

Mike

Mike Sterry,
Staff writer

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY WON'T MY DISC WORK?

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

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

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

***GAME SAVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS** Memory cards are sent to OPS2 at sender's risk and OPS2 cannot be held responsible for the non-receipt of memory cards. Readers whose saves are used on the OPS2 disc will win a game of the editor's choice. There's no prize for saves that are not used on OPS2's disc. All memory cards will be returned by Recorded Delivery as soon as possible. We reserve the right to amend the prize offered at any time. The editor's decision is final.

01 BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2007

What you get: England, Australia, and a set of surly umpires, not to mention a taste of the game's 2007 improvements, including noticeable depth added to batting and fielding. Howzat for generosity?

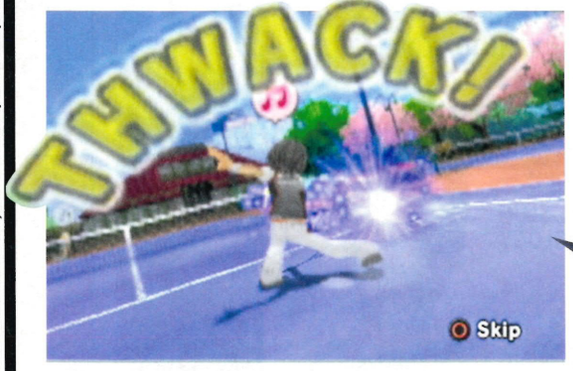
DISC CHALLENGE

Win yourself a copy of *Cricket 2007*

Do you still cry yourself to sleep every night over England's Ashes defeat? Have you been sending Andrew Flintoff threatening letters for the past few months? Wouldn't you like to win a copy of *Brian Lara International Cricket 2007* and get your own back on the pitch? The rules are dead simple: play the *Brian Lara Cricket* demo and restore some sliver of English dignity by racking up as many runs as possible. The first five entries with the highest number of runs gets a copy.

Attach an MMS picture then text **CHALLENGEDISC (then a space)** followed by your name and where you live to **07738 647177**.

The five entrants whom OPS2 judges to have the highest scores (or to be the first five entries with equally high scores) will each win a copy of *Brian Lara Cricket 2007*. Texts charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 29 March 2007 to 25 April 2007. We will not advise non-winners of the result.**



02 EVERYBODY'S TENNIS

What you get: Select one of three cheery players of varying skill and either play a doubles or singles match with friends, or go solo in a mini-tournament. Cutesy? Yes. Wickedly difficult to master and brilliant to boot? Very yes.

****DISC CHALLENGE COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS** By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word NO at the end of your text message. Winners will be notified within 28 days. No employees of Future Publishing, any associated company or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise are available. Publicity may be given to any entrants and their names, addresses and/or photographs printed in OPS2. Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary.

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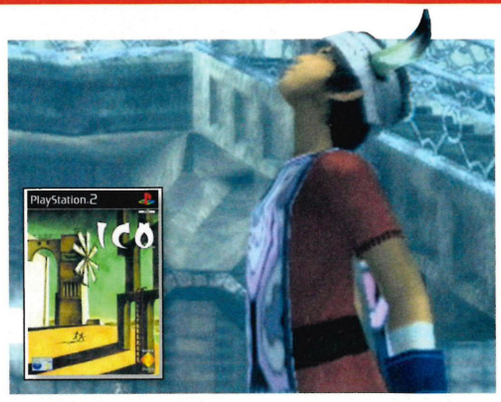


03 ICO

What you get: The chance to revisit *ICO*'s lush environs in this generous half-hour taster. Help the horny little fella rescue Princess Yorda, pound shadow beasts with a plank of wood and scamper up a decapitated windmill. Just don't look down.

04 JET LI: RISE TO HONOUR

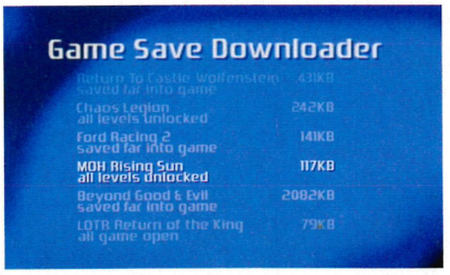
What you get: Take control of Jet Li for some hard-boiled, two-fisted brawling in this lengthy demo. It sees our titular hero take on an army of goons, dabble in a spot of free running, and engage in some John Woo-style gunplay.

And there's more...

This month's exclusive extra DVD content

Downloader

Played all the demos and *still* want more? Well, lucky for you there's also the Downloader section. It's 100% complete save-files for top titles such as *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*, *Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun* and *Silent Hill 3* plus an exclusive *TimeSplitters 2* map designed by Free Radical's David Doak.



05 SOUL CALIBUR III

What you get: Guide staff-wielding Kilik through three progressively difficult bouts as he hunts down the Soul Edge, or alternatively jump into the Create a Character mode, fashion your own pink-skinned ninja/clown freak and take him or her into battle.

06 MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN

What you get: Meteors are dropping from the sky, spewing out all sorts of mechanical nasties on your village. What are you going to do? Run away like a little girly-man? Hide in the corner? No indeed. Time to kick the living tin out of them!

07 GOD OF WAR

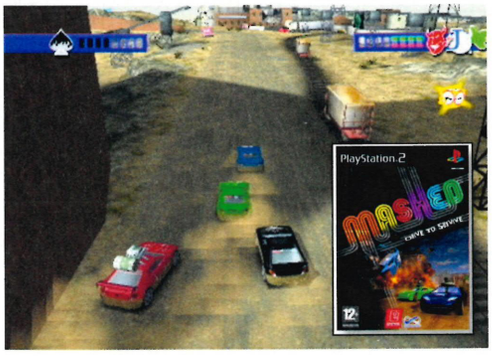
What you get: With *God of War II* now in stores, we thought we'd remind everyone where it all began with the opening level from the incredible first game. Get stuck into a spot of frenzied hydra-slaying with Kratos, who remains as cheesed-off as ever.

08 CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

What you get: A solid half hour of classic monster-pounding, *Castlevania*-style, because if you can't have a laugh swinging a ludicrously-sized axe into the faces of gurning lizardmen, you're practically dead inside.

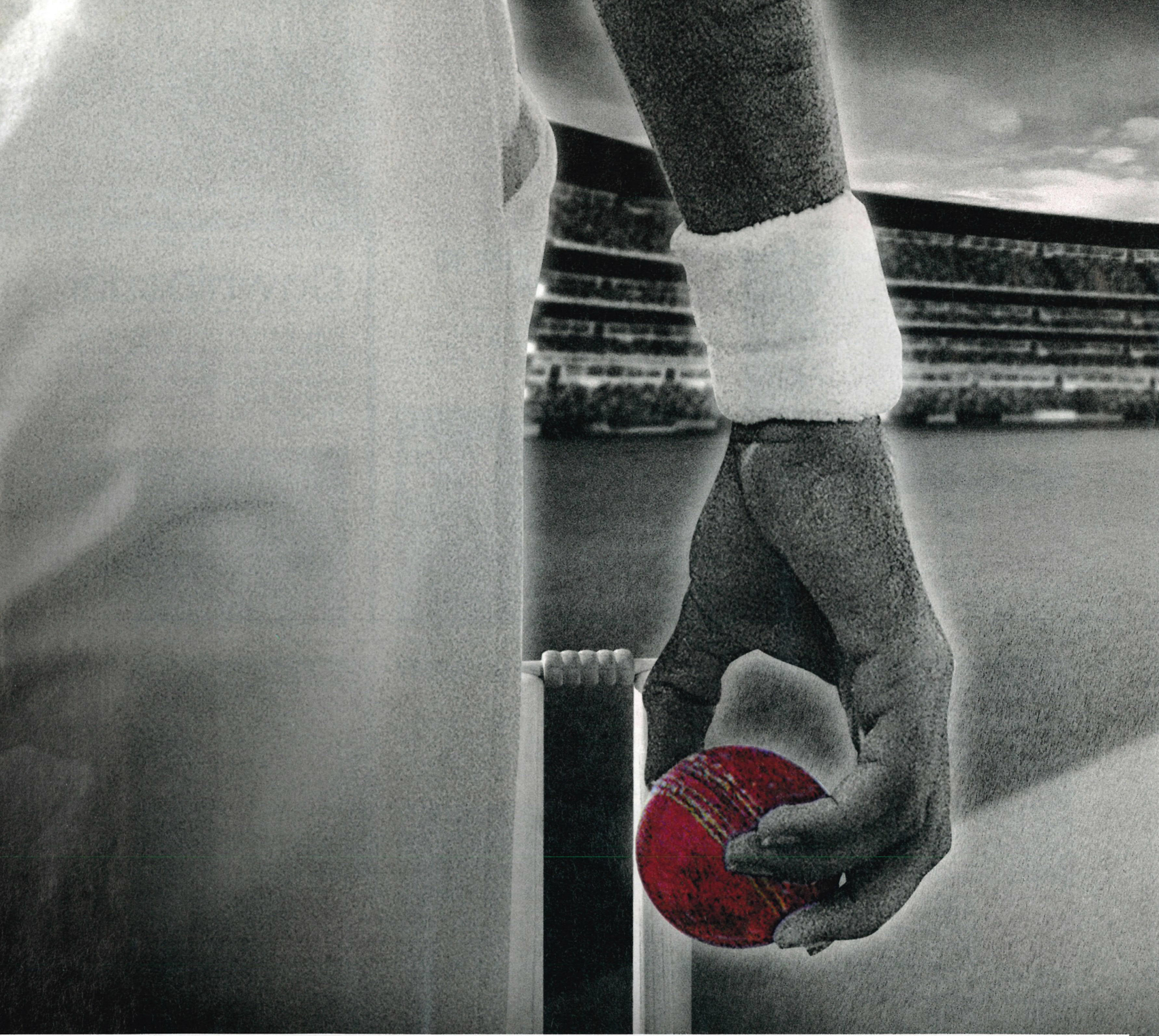
09 MASHED

What you get: When you were young, playing with that remote-controlled car granny bought you, did you you wish it could fire missiles and explode dramatically when it crashed? Now you can make that dream come true.



10 VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION

What you get: Choose from a handful of fighters and then beat up a Japanese schoolgirl and a drunken old codger. Hey, nobody said fighting games had to be fair. Or even tasteful. After that, why not try your hand at one of *VF4:E*'s brutal Mission bouts?



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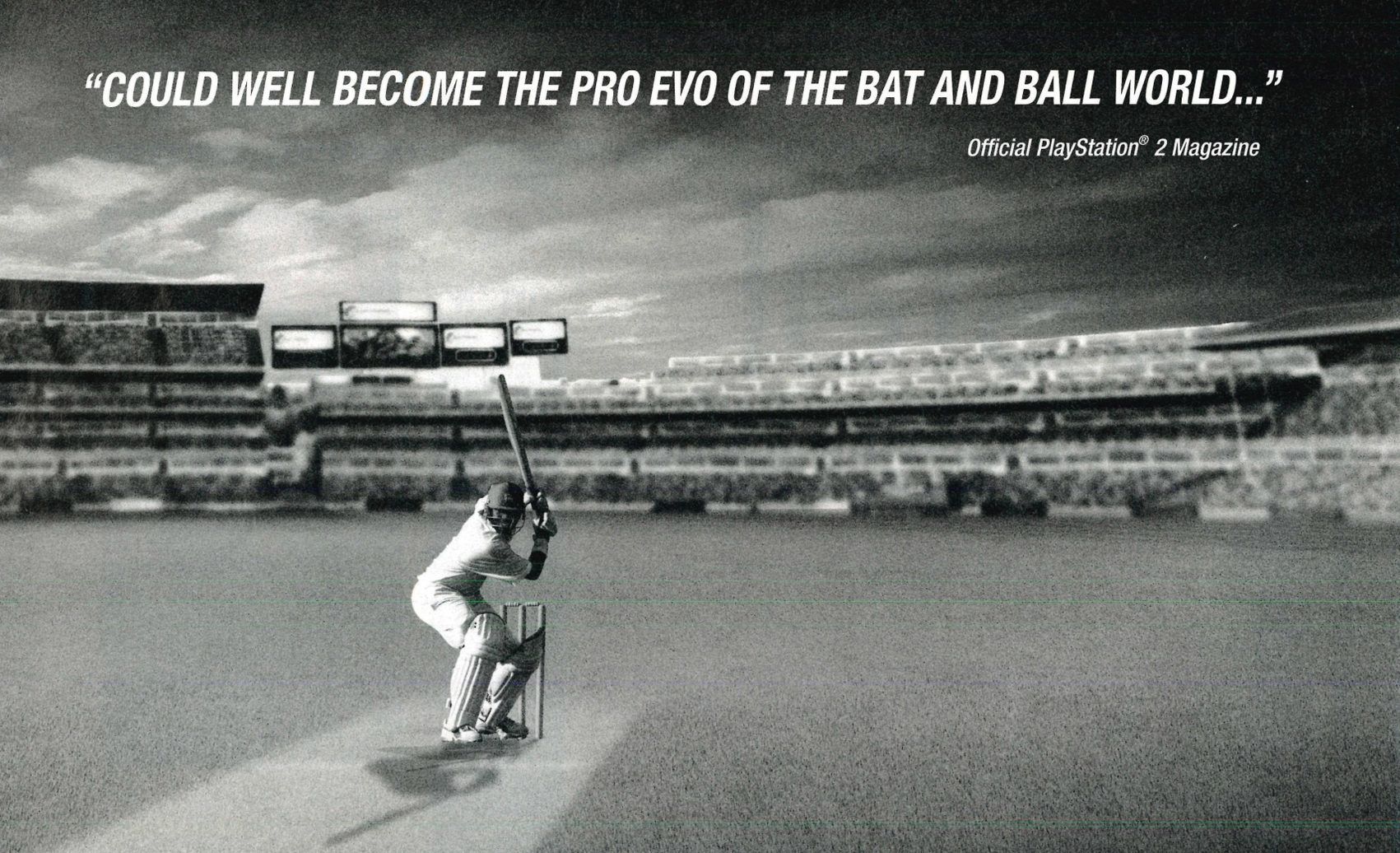

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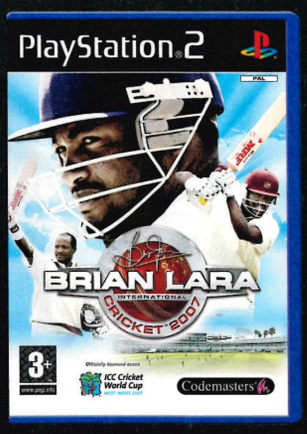

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postal

THIS MONTH: UNEMPLOYMENT, THE OPS2 A-Z AND, YOU GUESSED IT, LEGO...

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

WIN THIS!
This month, any letters published here will receive a copy of *Final Fantasy XII* courtesy of ShopTo.com. The Star Letter also wins *God of War II*, *Burnout Dominator* and *Heatseeker*. Only main Postal letters receive games. Letters will be edited for length and clarity.

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star letter

DOLE MODELS

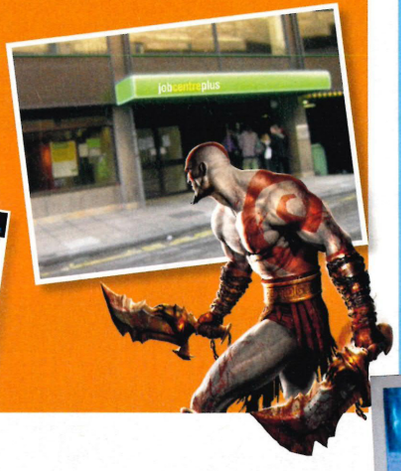
Recently I've been thinking about the plot of *Splinter Cell: Double Agent* and how in it, Sam Fisher pretends to have retired from his job as a neck-snapping super-spy. It got me thinking: what would game characters do if they lost their jobs?

For example I can't really imagine Agent 47 coping well in the outside world if he was no longer an assassin. Could you see him as a shop assistant at Tesco? Would Kratos cut it as a barber, or would he be to prone to making it too close a shave? I reckon the Prince of Persia would be okay, though; he could be an Olympic gymnast with all those acrobatic skills, and if he failed to win he could just rewind time and have another go.

There are endless possibilities but personally I'm glad they're all still in the jobs they should be in. Unless you fancy *Metal Gear Solid 5: Snake's Desk Job...*

Josh Janvier, Liverpool

Or Lara Croft as manicurist? We've enjoyed your musings, Josh, perhaps we'll look into more possibilities...



AMP IT UP

I can't stop playing *Guitar Hero*. It is the best PlayStation game in existence by far. However I can't help thinking that it could still be better still!

Sure, more tracks would be welcome, but I was thinking about peripherals.

Why not have actual speakers in the guitar controller that sound the notes so it feels like you really are playing an actual guitar?

Also, a connector to an amp would be brilliant so that all us budding guitarists can change how the music will actually sound through a distortion pedal or similar.

What do you think?

Chris Smith, Cheltenham

We think we like your ideas, Chris. The official controller may well include upgrades like this but at the moment the best chance you've got is modding the guitar yourself.

Somehow! We'll get our friend Chuck at Toolmonger.com (Postal #83) to look into it and report back.

PARTY CRIME

I'm reading 'Around the World in 80 Games' (OPS2#82) and I think on number 23 where it says *Hitman: Blood Money*, Brazil, it's supposed to be the Mardi Gras party in New Orleans.

I can't check to make sure, because my *Hitman* game is in Latvia (where I come from). Anyway, I wish you all the best!

Vladimir A Borecky

CUT 'N' PASTE

Ruairt Flynn
I know your trick, David Johnston, ('*TimeSplitters* Kills' photo, OPS#82). Select Team Deathmatch and pit yourself against some non-robot characters with nothing but flame throwers, turn on character abilities and one-shot kills, then let the carnage begin.

Isaac Kirby, Beckingham
So many people are worried about *Metal Gear Solid 4* being ruined by a lack of vibration. These people need to think about what designer Hideo Kojima can do. He is a genius after all.

Matteo, London
I've been ill but wearing the beard that came with the last issue helped me feel better. Thanks!

Jack Graham, Christchuch
I have just completed *Okami* and I must say it was amazing, although the digging and fishing mini-games annoyed me.

DISTRESSING DELIVERY

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

"I love my football games," wrote Ty Lander in an email. "Wouldn't it be great to have a football game that only had female players? Imagine girls running around on your game getting all muddy for your entertainment. It would also get more girls into gaming, which I think is a plus because you won't have your wife nagging you to help with the housework when she could be playing with you. It would also make female football leagues more popular."

And the women should presumably wear really tight kits, just like FIFA president Sepp Blatter suggested, right? Ty, take it from us: the ladies are not going to like this.

PS I just want to give a shout out to all Russians from Latvia!

Oops. Yes, someone clearly failed their Geography GCSE. And that someone was Nick.

SCOTCH MISSED?

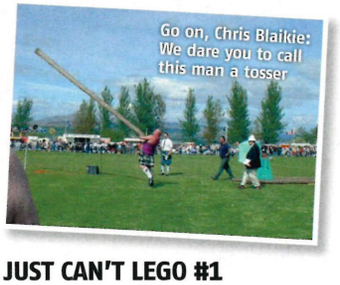
I was reading your 'Around the World in 80 Games' feature and it got me thinking: why hasn't Scotland, the home of fresh Highland air and ginger cows, made more appearances in games?

The only ones I remember are the course in *Tiger Woods* and the Edinburgh track in *London Racer II* (which was a load of rubbish). Don't get me wrong, I like driving through the streets of London in *The Getaway* or gunning down mental Spaniards in *Resident Evil 4* but I would love to see Scotland represented.

How about a terrorist attack in Glasgow or a zombie outbreak in the Highlands. Zombie Highlanders! Brilliant!

Chris Blaikie, Scotland

Surely a Highland Games sim from EA would go down well. Or a Braveheart scrapper?



JUST CAN'T LEGO #1

I suppose you're bored of everyone sending in pictures of Lego models of game characters but I seem to have too much time on my hands, so I thought I'd

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give it a crack. Here's *Dark Chronicle*, with Monica, Max (in his explorer outfit) and the Ridepod fighting a mimic.
Peter Shorley-Smith, email

***We're certainly not bored, especially if it's* Dark Chronicle.**

JUST CAN'T LEGO #2

Since OPS2#79 I've been thinking about doing a great PS2 game (so many to choose from!) in blocky format. Now, I've finally got my act together and combined one of my all-time favourite games with the great bricks of Lego. This is the result!
Rory Steabler, Helston

We've received a fair few Just Cause ones but this is clearly the best!

THE SHORT ANSWER

Q Will there be a *Lego Star Wars* version of the *Clone Wars* cartoon?
Aaron Leslie, Langley
A No, but *Clone Wars* will be on PSP

Q What happened to the UK release of the videogame version of the TV show *The Shield*?
Jonathan McEvoy, Friern Barnet
A They decided not to release it here

Q Are there any new *Hitman* games coming out soon on PS2, PSP or PS3?
Peter, email
A None have been announced yet, but it's a cert

Q I want to try to beat Nick's *Resident Evil 4* time from the speed running feature last issue. What difficulty was he playing on?
Chris Blaikie, Scotland
A Normal

READER FACE OFF

THINK OF IT LIKE A FIGHT BUT WITH INK SPILT INSTEAD OF BLOOD. THIS MONTH: GAMES OF MOVIES – SHOULD THEY OR SHOULDN'T THEY?

HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD

Your games/films article last issue was wicked. I didn't realise so many cool tie-ins were coming up and I can't wait for the *Prince of Persia* and *Golden Compass* films, especially as the *Golden Compass* will be a game too and I love Philip Pullman so I can't wait to play as Lyra (the new Lara?). I know there have been some duff games of films but these days studios are starting to think of the game and the film together during development and we end up with many games that are, in effect, interactive movies.
Corbyn House, email

VS

LEAVE GAMES ALONE

I'm sick of seeing games of films and films of games. Why can't anyone seem to come up with a new idea these days? Especially when you get a game of the film of a film, like with *The Italian Job*. Crap remake, crap game. We are being fed rubbish by cynical studios and developers more interested in profit than quality. Stanley Kubrick must be spinning in his grave.
Max Mason, Somerset

AND THE WINNER IS... CORBYN. YES, WE WOULDN'T MIND A FEW MORE NEW IDEAS. BUT THE STANDARD IS DEFINITELY ON THE UP

TXT THE EDITOR

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

TXT 87103 OR SEND YOUR PICS TO 87738 647177

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

NICK U LEGEND! NICE TO SEE PLYMOUTH ARGYLE IN THE MAG! UP THE GREENS!!! JAKE

COMPLTD DVL MAY CRY IN 5HRS 37MINS IS THAT GUD?

MANHUNT 2! YIPPEE! ASBO

WHY DONT GAMES MAKERS SELL GAMES IN BOX SETS? IT WOULD MAKE XMAS ETC ALOT EASIER.IF THEY CAN DO IT WIV DVDS & VIDEOS THEY CAN WIV GAMES!

GIVING BIRTH TO CLOUD'S BABIES WOULD HURT! SPIKEY HAIR OW OW OW!!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT BEAUTIFUL MODEL WHO USED TO APPEAR IN FEATURES, BRING HER BACK ASAP! PS GEORGE, MISSING YOU ALREADY

I GOT 583 KILLS IN A 6 MINUTE DEATHRACE ON JAK X

I PLAYED FINAL FANTASY XII FOR 3 DAYS STRAIGHT, AND NOW I HAVE NO FRIENDS. SENIOR CHOCOBO

I WOULD B THE GOD OF BEANS! FROM H FOR A PS3 I WOULD CUT OFF MY CODS, AND BOIL THEM IN THE KETTLE

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score bores

Are you disrespecting us?

"I can't believe you put *Killzone* to 7 out of 10 in OPS2#82. It's so much better than *Black*. *Killzone* is too short and it's too easy but still it should be a 9 or 10."
Peter Kavanagh, email

"I was reading your issue 82 *Ghost Rider* mag and I was appalled that you gave *Kingdom Hearts* an 8 out of 10. It's way better than the first."
Matthew Potter, Norwich

"I can't believe you gave *Test Drive Unlimited* 7/10!!! It is a copy of *Gran Turismo 4* and *Project Gotham Racing* and not as good as either of them."
Anon

"How odd that I think 9 is a bad score for *God of War II*, and I haven't even played it."
oFrey, uk.playstation.com forums

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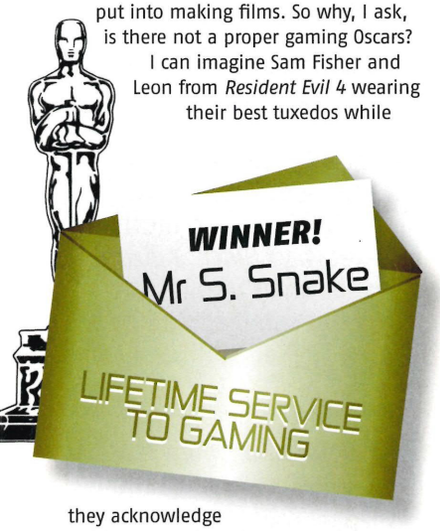
AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

Dan Stanford has made an interesting point (Postal, OPS2#81). He was talking bout how the BAFTA games awards were just a big p*ss up.

Let's face it, gaming is big everywhere in the world and nearly everyone I know has a games console. So much work is put into developing aces games like *Okami* it can be compared to the work put into making films. So why, I ask, is there not a proper gaming Oscars?

I can imagine Sam Fisher and Leon from *Resident Evil 4* wearing their best tuxedos while they acknowledge Solid Snake as he comes up to the stand to accept his lifetime achievement award for saving the world so many times!

Barry Larkin, Co Galway

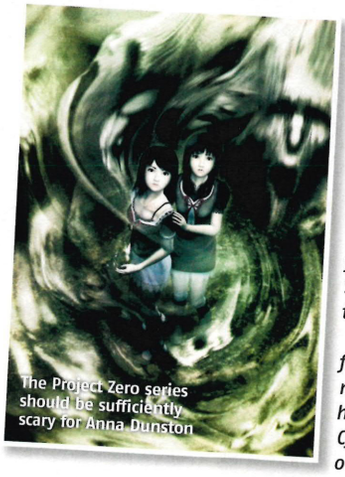


This would be held in the virtual world, we presume?

MOST HAUNTED

I really liked the game *Haunting Ground*; It gave me such a fright and scared me in every way you can think of. I've often hoped that there would be a sequel but it seems not, and I was looking forward to *Rule Of Rose* but they banned it. Could you recommend anything similar?

Anna Dunston, Pembrokeshire



If you want scares and psychological horror without the shotguns and severed zombie heads then you can't go far wrong with the excellent Project Zero *games. In fact, we'll send you one as your prize.*

FOXED

I noticed that *Metal Gear Solid 2* was one of Andy's Top 5 games (OPS2#82) but to my surprise the screenshot showed Grey Fox (aka Cyborg Ninja from *MGS1*) instead of ladyboy Raiden! How do you play as Grey Fox, and are there any other characters that I could unlock?

Dan Gibbons, Shropshire

Andy says: "That image was a screen from MGS 2: Substance, *the expanded version of the game released a year after the original. In* Substance *you get to play a VR mode and Mission mode – a collection of 500 mini-missions set in locations from the main game. In Mission mode you can play as either Snake or Raiden, but that's not all!*

You can unlock outfits for the pair to wear in this mode, one of which happens to be the Ninja Cyborg suit from the original Metal Gear Solid.*"*

GAMES: GOOD FOR YOU

We all know how much fun the PS2 is. But it can be therapeutic too.

I suffer from manic depression, which means there are times when I'm lying around in a bad mood waiting for my various medications to work. At these times, I can't concentrate enough to read and I don't want an unsecured personal loan so there's no point in watching daytime TV. It's really just the PS2 that keeps me going.

Sometimes, the DualShock 2 seems to represent the only control I have over my life. When there seems to be no point getting out of bed, I remember I've gone up a reputation level in *Scarface*, and suddenly there's something I want to do. When I feel like I've got nothing to look forward to, I remember I've ordered something old, cheap but good online and it's on its way.

Getting a new badge in *Psychonauts*, a new planet in *Ratchet and Clank* or a new cutscene in *Resi 4* often gives me a sense of achievement I'm not getting anywhere else in my life at the time.

The philosopher Voltaire said that 'medicine consists of amusing the patient while Nature cures the disease'. Based on my experience of the healing power of the PS2, we should get them on the NHS. You'd probably get a PS3 if you had BUPA.

Andrew Barber, Swindon

Thanks for your letter Andrew, not least because it contains the very first mention of Voltaire in the magazine (and doubtless the last!). We are sure that come the glorious revolution, consoles will be available to all on the social.

REVIEW DIRECTORY REVIEWED A to Z

We got plenty of responses telling us that you loved/ hated the A-Z, and a few misstakes were spoted two...

I thought your 28-page A-Z ultimate review directory was a great idea, but you missed out *Yu-Gi-Oh! Duellists Of The Roses* and *America's Ten Most Wanted*. Maybe it's because they weren't very good games, or perhaps you just forgot.

D McDermott, Torquay

Oops. Sorry about Yu-Gi-Oh! *We don't think* Ten Most Wanted *was ever reviewed, though.*

In your 'Top 5 sexiest game characters' you put Ada Wong from *Resident Evil 5* as number one. But she's from *Resi* 4, surely? Apart from that mistake, good work.

Er, perhaps. But she's bound to be in Resi 5 *too, we reckon.*

That A-Z you did – the editor complained that it was really difficult to put together but the old *Official PlayStation 1 Magazine* did it every month. To top it off you stole that idea from them in the first place. I find it diabolical that a magazine trusted to be original at all times has stolen an idea.

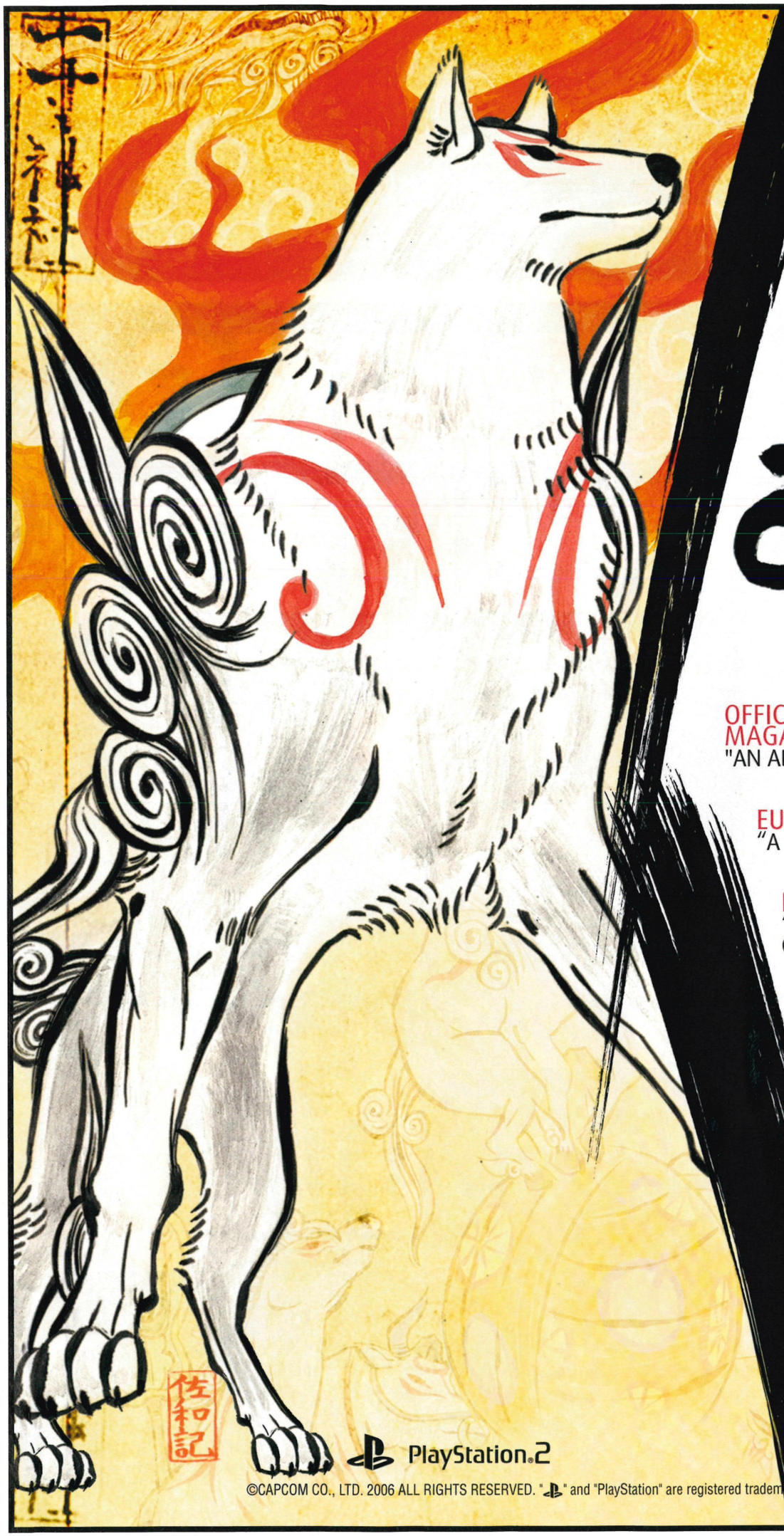
Adam Fitzpatrick, Isle Of Lewis

It just so happens that your whinging editor worked on the old OPM, *and guess whose idea it was to do the A-Z in that magazine? You can't steal your own idea, can you? Or can you...*

Wow! You guys are like a PlayStation dictionary! But you missed out *Black*.

Ruairt Fynn

Thanks. But we didn't miss out Black. *Look.*



ign.com GAME OF THE YEAR 2006 OVERALL

GOD. HERO. HUNTER. SAVIOUR.

OKAMI

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

EUROGAMER - 10/10
"A WORK OF ART"

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

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

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

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

PlayStation.2

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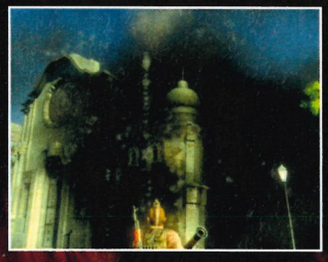
SPY CONTRIBUTORS | NICK ELLIS, JON HAMBLIN, DAVE HARRISON, ANDY HARTUP, MIKE STERRY

OIL BE BACK

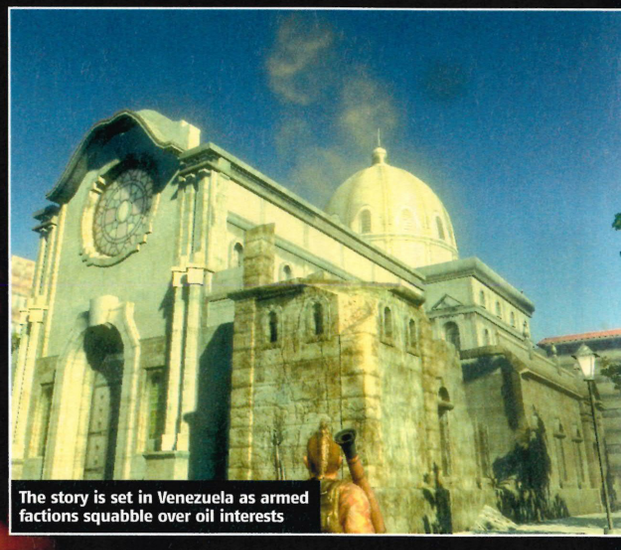
BURNING AMBITION

PS2 hires **Mercenaries 2: World In Flames** to blow you away this autumn



The original *Mercenaries* truly had it all: the free-roaming 'sandbox' blueprint; the awesome military hardware; the open-ended, multi-threaded mission structure; the remarkable visuals.... As its sub-title claimed, it was indeed a *Playground Of Destruction*, and a superbly designed one at that.

So we were thrilled when developer Pandemic announced a next-gen sequel was in the works. Lucky old PS3, eh. But what the studio didn't tell us then was



The story is set in Venezuela as armed factions squabble over oil interests

At times like these, there's no peaceful solution. That's where you come in

that a PS2 version was on its way too. Pandemic dropped that bombshell this month, along with the news that EA has signed up publishing rights for the game.

So naturally we boarded the first helicopter gunship out of town to investigate.

TYRANT AND RAVE

The sequel moves the action from war-ravaged North Korea to Venezuela, South America, but much remains familiar. "The plot involves a ruthless, power-hungry tyrant who skilfully organises a coup of the Venezuelan government and sends the country into chaos – the perfect kind of environment for a mercenary," explains lead designer Scott Warner.

"You work with factions who provide you with the firepower and information necessary to fight through the tyrant's subordinates and claim the massive bounty on his head."

So it's a similar dynamic to the 'deck of cards' missions in the first game, although the 'cards' theme itself has been ditched for *Mercs 2*. There, you captured the associates of chief bad guy General Soong by collecting intel from a variety of factions involved in fighting his forces, then hunting down each one.

Like many modern conflicts the coup is based around oil interests and oil becomes something of an

Our pics are a mix of actual in-game PS2 screens, 'target footage' and PS3

SHOOT TO THRILL

Four of the many reasons why the original *Mercenaries* rocked our world

FACTION HEROES

Keeping all the factions sweet in *Mercenaries* is the key to success. So, if you have to blow up a Chinese outpost, it's best to find them a few national treasures to say sorry.

AIR HELLO

Running low on ammo? Need a jeep in a hurry? Just lob a flare into the ground and wait for a passing plane to drop your order at your feet. Sadly, this doesn't work in real life

CHOPPER THE CLASS

Mercenaries is a vast game and travelling on terra firma can be a drag. Thankfully, you can 'borrow' helicopters from the various factions to zip around in super-quick time

HAN SOLO (YES, REALLY)

You can devote hours of your life to finding the hidden crates in *Mercenaries*, trying to unlock new characters. Finding the Han Solo skin makes it all worthwhile

in-game currency, which you'll get as reward for success in missions and can then use to trade for things you need.

You'll have already twigged from this issue's cover that Scandinavian hardnut Matthias Nilsson returns as a playable character, now with elaborately tattooed arms. You'll be able to play as other members of PMC (Private Military Contractor) IntelCorps' employees, too: top British bird Jennifer Mui and yankee Chris Jacobs.

"A couple of the other key characters from the original game will show up in Venezuela as part of the story," Scott reveals. Interesting. Burford, the CIA operative, perhaps? Maybe not. He never struck us as the type to get his hands dirty when someone else (you) would get the job done for a quick buck.

CONTRACT THRILLER

Unlike the first game, though, you're not alone on the battlefield. "In *Mercs 2* you recruit several mercenaries who will join your PMC and open up various services and support options for you to choose from," says Warner. "For example, one mercenary opens up the option to collect (in other words, steal) fuel, money and support resources for free and bring them back to your PMC for you to use when you want.

"Another mercenary allows you to call in high-powered air strikes flown by jets that enable you to avoid most of the pesky anti-air defences below."

Another few life-risking missions and Matthias will have enough money to buy a PS3

HIRED HELP

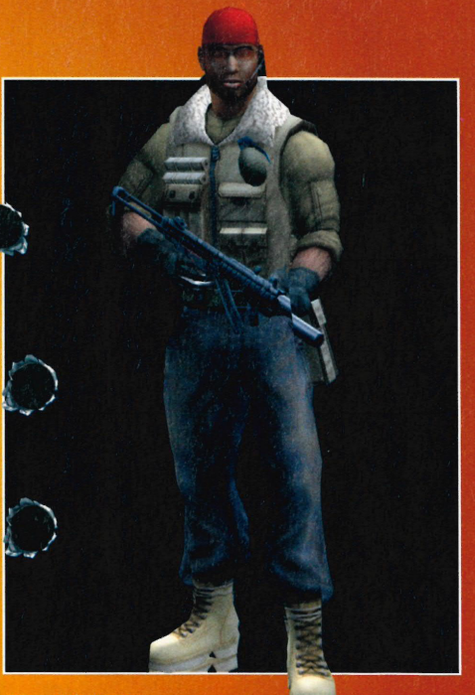
Meet the team

Who: Matthias Nilsson

What's he like? This war-loving Swede is the poster boy for *Mercs 2*. In the original, he had fewer tats and could move quicker than the other mercenaries. The downside to playing as Matthias, however, was that his blonde mohawk barnet meant he was easily spotted on the battlefield

Who: Jennifer Mui

What's she like? The British contribution to the Mercenaries trio, Mui was a solid character to play as well. Fast, stealthy and able to chuck grenades further than her chums, her only downside was that she was a little shorter than the guys, making it difficult to see or climb over certain obstacles

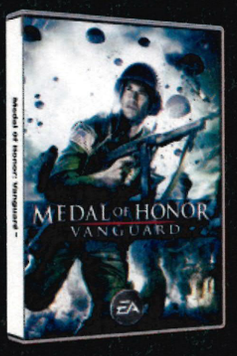


Who: Chris Jacobs

What's he like? Jacobs is your sterotypical brash Yank, and he's got the bulk to back it up. Although he was the slowest character in the first game, this was more than compensated for by his ability to absorb more bullets than his buddies. A good choice if you can't shoot for toffee

MEDAL OF HONOR VANGUARD™

Out 30th March



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PlayStation 2 Wii

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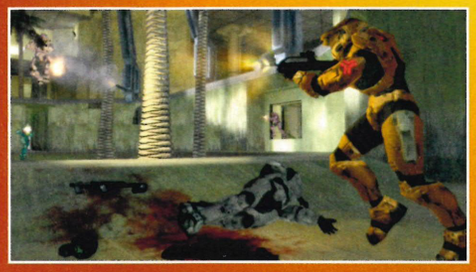
THE BEST LITTLE SECRET IN TEXAS

Pi Studios is one of the most underappreciated studios in the business, but it's the one Pandemic chose to work with to bring *Mercenaries 2* to PS2. Founded in 2002, Pi has had its finger in some impressive gaming pies over the last few years. Here are some highlights from the studio's short but sweet career to date:

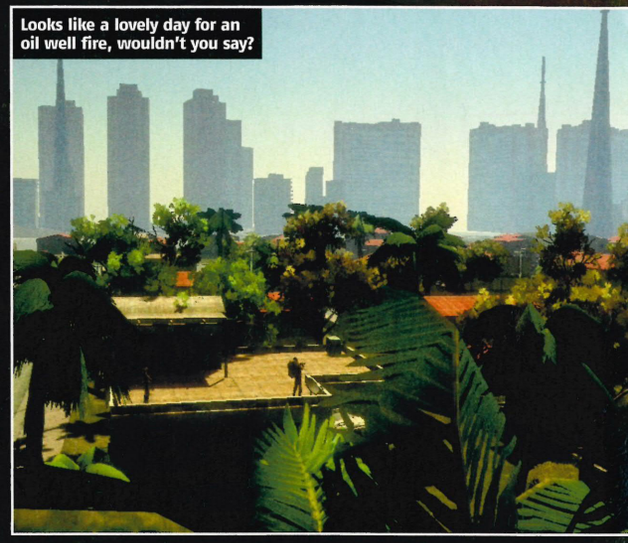
Call Of Duty 2: Big Red One (PS2)

Call Of Duty 3 (PS2)



Halo 2 Vista (PC)

Mercenaries 2: World In Flames (PS2)



Looks like a lovely day for an oil well fire, wouldn't you say?

Mercs 2 will make it even tougher to hijack helicopters

One thing this new mechanic won't be able to provide, though, is true cooperative play. Although the PS3 version of *Mercenaries 2: World In Flames* will have some form of buddy system for two players to take advantage of, the PS2 incarnation won't.

The chaps at co-developer Pi Studios explain that this is because *Mercs 2* is built on the same game engine as the original and that instead of integrating a co-op mode, the developer has concentrated on enhancing the engine in a different way: the way of destruction.

Not content with allowing you to bring down whole towns, wipe out armies and call up earth-shaking air-strikes, the team has been working hard to up the explosive ante for the sequel. Good, good.

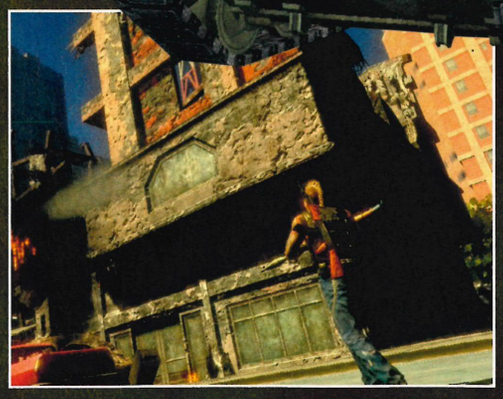
Marc Domowicz, assistant producer at Pandemic, says: "There will be ways to creatively destroy the environment in *Mercenaries 2* that have not yet been seen on the PS2".

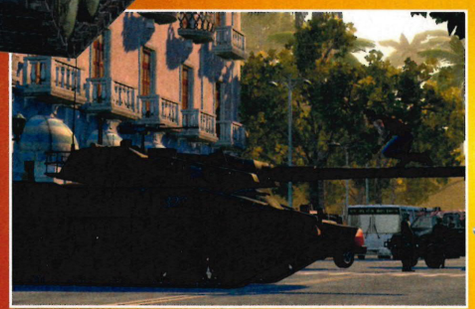
Nukes? Electromagnetic Pulse charges? Massive oil fires? Frustratingly, he won't spill the beans, but we're willing to bet a stack of contract cash that the game's subtitle *World In Flames* is a clue.

CRUDE NOT TO

Whatever this new level of destruction turns out to be, it's bound to be a great reflection of the sizeable amount of grunt that top developers are managing to squeeze out of the PS2 in 2007.

We've seen what Sony Santa Monica managed with *God Of War II* and what Crystal Dynamics have done for *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*, so we're expecting big things





TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

If there was one criticism we'd level at the original *Mercenaries* it was that snatching a vehicle off your enemy was too easy. At the press of a button, your hired gun would perform an inhuman feat of gymnastics and end up at the helm of some of the world's most advanced killing machines. In *Mercs 2*, things are different. To grab a vehicle in this game you'll have to complete a series of button presses, matching the shapes shown on the screen, to take the prize. The better the machine you're trying to commandeer, the more complex the sequence of presses, so keep those fingers in shape.

VENEZ WAHEY-LA!

Where in the world?

SIX INTERESTING FACTS...

1. The national language is Spanish, but there are 31 other indigenous languages

2. Venezuela declared independence in 1831, but was not formally recognised as a country until 1845

3. Venezuela's land mass measures 916,445 km², making it the world's 33rd largest country

4. On 23 May, 1951, Venezuela decided that the orchid would be its national flower

5. The most popular sport in the country is baseball, followed by good old footie

6. Venezuela's politicians hate the fact that *Mercs 2* is set in their country

CONSOLE CONTROVERSY

MERCS 2 PAVES THE WAY FOR REAL LIFE INVASION

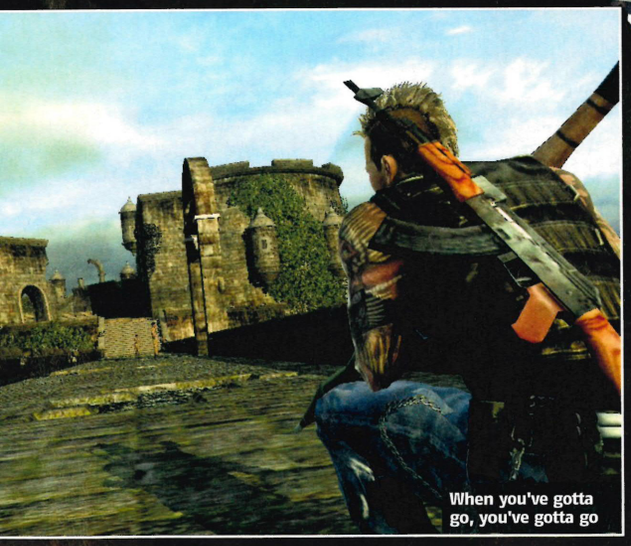
...so say Venezuelan politicians, who are less than keen to see their country turned into a PS3 war zone

Everyone loves America, right? Cheeseburgers! Springsteen! Crushing foreign countries in the name of fabulous pursuit of freedom! No, no they don't – and Venezuela is the latest country to take the QE of it 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 global 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.

Hopefully not a government building

Hat Pendent, gone looking for a rumble in the jungle?



When you've gotta go, you've gotta go

What's that? Wrong house, you say? Oops...

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HIRED GUN

We asked the guys from Pi to walk us through a typical mission in *World In Flames*. Here's what they said:

Consider Your Options

'One of the first missions you'll play in *Mercenaries 2* involves the destruction of a massive, heavily guarded island fortress near the northern end of Lake Maracaibo. Now, the basic, high-level gameplay of receiving objectives to destroy cool set pieces any way you'd like hasn't changed from the original *Mercenaries* but the options available for you to complete those objectives have been enhanced greatly.'

Get there

'First off, you have to get to 'an island' which of course implies that one of your options is travelling on the water. In *Mercs 2*, water isn't deadly to the touch: powerboats, jetskis and even the option to swim are available to you. However, the island is clearly on the other side of the map! Don't you hate it when you have to travel across the game map for each mission you want to take in open-world games? Fortunately, right before you started this mission you captured a landing zone very close to the fortress and that'll allow you to travel instantly to that point on the map and get right into the action.'

Tool up

'But are you prepared for this battle? The mission briefing mentioned that this island was armed with lots of enemy units, vehicles and anti-air defences. Your clients are offering you a couple of free artillery strikes but... will that be enough? Good thing you've met a contact with a local faction who will sell you C4 and bombs if you just kill a couple of mooks on the way over to the island. In *Mercs 2*, there are tons of simple jobs you can take at any time that will provide you with the money, fuel and support you need to be prepared for big battles and wage them the way you want to.'

Strike hard

'So now that you're there you can see that the fortress is indeed heavily guarded. Fortunately, the enemy have stationed some of their key frontal defences on top of and under a giant stone bridge. Using your rocket-propelled grenade launcher, you fire off a well-placed rocket right in the center of the bridge, breaking it into massive chunks that send the enemies above hurtling to the ground and crushing the ones positioned below. This time around, building destruction isn't just pretty to look at, you can use it as a weapon!'

Clean up

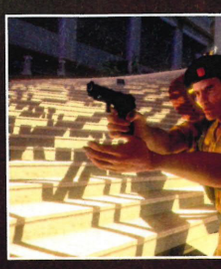
'Just before you're ready to call in some of those free artillery strikes you notice something next to one of the walls on the outside section of the fortress: a pile of bombing munitions. These bombs provide you with two options that are brand new to *Mercs 2*: you can either steal them by getting close to the bombs, tagging them and having them extracted back to your base to add to your support stockpile, or try to destroy them at a distance, setting off a high powered explosion that would definitely put a huge hole in the middle of that fortress.'

from Pi. And the developer is confident of delivering a game that won't be a poor relation when it's sat next to the PS3 version on shop shelves.

"The next-generation version of *Mercenaries 2* targets a more realistic scale and ultra-high level of detail," says Domowicz. "Buildings are much taller, cities are much larger, and many of the outlying areas, such as jungles, are densely packed with objects. With *Mercenaries 2* on PS2, we are achieving similar results."

Quite a claim, especially when you consider the fact that *Mercs 2* will be the same colossal size as the original. Added to that, you'll be able to take to the water too, using either boats or breast stroke to travel to islands or across narrow stretches of sea.

In fact, with more vehicles, extra characters, a stack of fresh weapons and a new set of factions thrown in, this sequel is set to be the most epic, explosive action game PS2 has ever had: and that's no mean feat. ■ **AH**



Fans of *Final Fantasy XII*'s new combat system will be sad to hear that the action in PS3-exclusive **FFXIII** is being steered by Toshiro Tsuchida, the chap responsible for the long-winded scraps in *FFX*

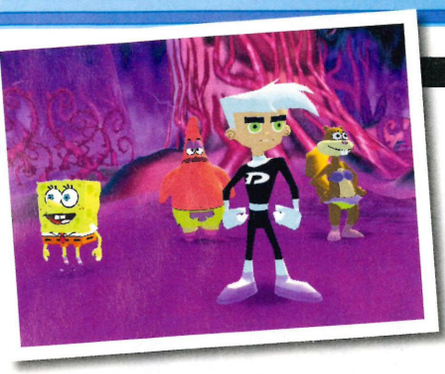
All hail the new **Pro Evolution Soccer** arcade machine: look out for it on trial in an arcade near you

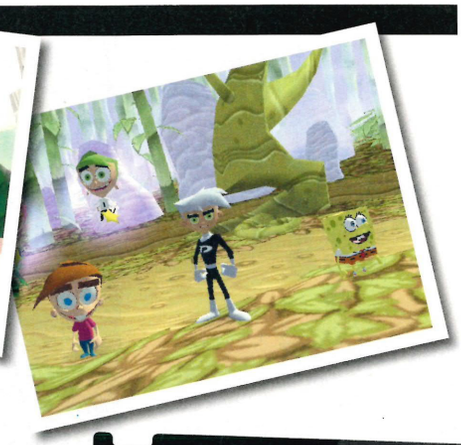
To the surprise of no one but the delight of everyone, Sony has announced that **God of War** is coming to PSP at the end of 2007

SNAPPED!

The future of PlayStation presented in pictures

Got a PS3 already? Good for you. Did you know you could download **Gran Turismo HD Concept** from the Network store for absolutely nothing? No? You do now





NICKELODEON

SpongeBob squarepants

AND FRIENDS

Battle for

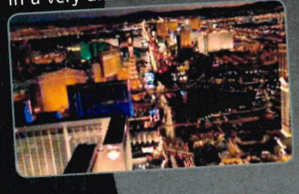
VOLCANO ISLAND

Fans of angular-underwear clad Porifera SpongeBob Squarepants will be chuffed that his latest adventure, Battle For Volcano Island, is set to erupt onto PS2 this coming June

Resident Evil Extinction

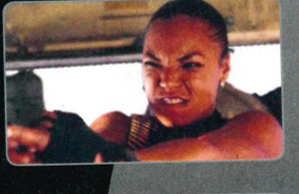
The trailer for the latest *Resident Evil* flick is now online, so we've downloaded it, ogled it a few hundred times and picked out the juicy bits for you.

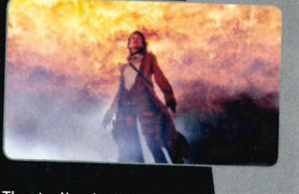
It starts off, in traditional *Resi* trailer style, as a glitzy commercial advertising the bright lights and gold-paved streets of Las Vegas. But then the advert starts to stutter. Turns out it's being played on a massive TV in a very different Sin City...



The camera snaps right into the air and out into space, where we see an Umbrella satellite watching the Earth. We're then sped back to Earth, and get a close-up of Milla Jovovich as Alice. Then, the action starts...

We're treated to several extreme close-ups of Alice's fantastically short skirt, some knife-wielding action, a brief shot of a zombie and a few snippets of the other cast members. The action is almost as frantic as the editing.





The trailer builds up to an explosive climax, with Alice seriously busting some undead heads. We're left with a parting shot of Alice standing under a sky of fire, then we see the film's logo slowly emerging from the sand.

The film hits UK cinemas on 21 September. See the trailer for yourself at sonypictures.com/movies/residentevilextinction.

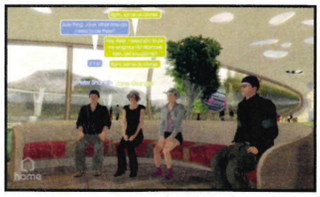
INFO NUDGE

BOLL LUCKS OUT

Uwe Boll (the German film director infamous for making terrible movies out of game licences) must have had his lucky star shining on him at the 27th Annual Raspberry Awards. The bash celebrates the worst in film-making and works as a foil for the Academy Awards. With six nominations for *Bloodrayne* many expected Uwe to clean up. But the plucky German dodged every Razzie thrown at him and walked away without a single award.

PS3 GOES HOME

Sony has revealed the centrepiece of the PS3 online experience, which makes Xbox Live look primitive and Wii's Miis seem childish. Called Home, it's a network of public and private spaces populated by avatars that look realistically human. Here PS3 gamers can interact with each other, view the latest trailers in a public space and invite people to look at their trophy room. Then each user will have their own realistic apartment that can be personalised with furniture and media imported from the PS3's hard drive. It's a visually stunning and hugely ambitious project but one that could very well give Sony the edge in the online market.



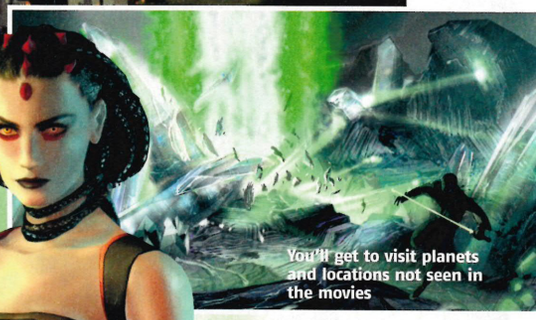
PHANTASY STAR SEQUEL

Sega will release the latest in its *Phantasy Star* sci-fi roleplaying series this year. Titled *Phantasy Star Universe: Illuminas no Yabou*, it will be a full sequel to last year's *Phantasy Star Universe* game with fresh weapons and new monsters to combat, while incorporating some elements and environments last seen in the Dreamcast's *Phantasy Star Universe*. It will support both off- and online play and Sega promises an exhaustive network trial mode to combat some of the server issues that marred the previous game's Japanese launch.

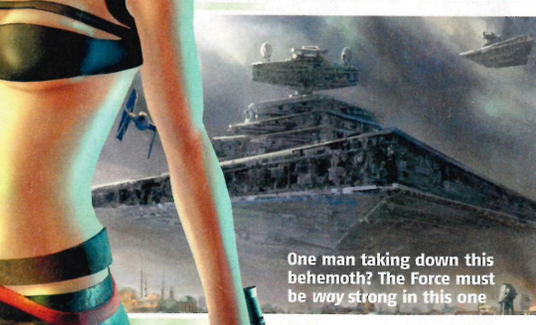
FEEL THE FORCE

BRING DOWN A STAR DESTROYER

...and five other things you'll be able to do in PS2's latest *Star Wars* adventure, *The Force Unleashed*



You'll get to visit planets and locations not seen in the movies



One man taking down this behemoth? The Force must be *way* strong in this one

1. Slaughter Jedis

In *The Force Unleashed* you're a bad guy, and as such, your job is to hunt down and perforate the remaining light-sided Jedis with your lightsaber. Remember the scenes at the end of *Revenge Of The Sith* where all the good guys are getting offed by Palpatine's stooges? You'll be performing similar tasks in – judging by the look of this artwork – some of the same places.

2. Use Force Lightning

One of the perks of being on the dark side of the Force is that you get to wield the lightning attack that only really evil blokes like the Emperor and Count Dooku can use. It's not clear whether or not you'll start with the ability, but even if you don't it'll definitely be something worth working up to.

3. Throw Your Enemies Through Walls

It's not just lightning you'll be lobbing around – it's people too. Your character will have four primary Force powers, and as well as shooting electricity from his digits, he'll be able to push, grip and repulse his enemies. Not only that, you'll be able to combine the powers seamlessly. So, instead of just zapping an enemy, why not push them through a wall, lob them into the air, and blast them with a bolt of the blue-stuff on the way down?

4. Hang Out With Darth Vader

In the game you play as Anakin's secret padawan, a promising young Jedi who has been kept under the radar by the shiny-helmeted lord. As such, you'll probably be meeting with Vader on a regular basis as the game fills in the gaps between the last prequel *Revenge Of The Sith* and the original movie *A New Hope*.

5. Rule The Galaxy With Mince Pies And Mulled Wine

The Force Unleashed is due for release on PS3, PS2 and PSP in November. Although the PS3 version will be the most handsome and physics-heavy version, Lucas Arts has promised that the core gameplay will be the same on PS2 and PSP. As an added bonus the developer has also stated that the PS2 instalment will have a bunch of exclusive features to boot..

SEE YOU IN COURT

WIN TWO TICKETS FOR *SMACKDOWN!*

...AND MEET ONE OF THE STARS TOO!

The WWE *SmackDown* circus rolls into London this month and to celebrate the launch of its new WWE publishing range, we've teamed up with Pedigree Books to give you the chance to win two tickets to the show at Earls Court on Tuesday 24 April! The event sold out months ago, and tickets are going on eBay for £100s, but of course none of those tickets let you chat with one of the wrestling superstars... that's right, included in our incredible prize is the chance to meet one of the wrestlers!

At the time of going to press 'King' Booker, Kane, Finlay, Boogeyman, Matt Hardy and Ashley are all set to appear alongside a host of other famous names. Our lucky winner will also walk away with a complete set of Pedigree's new range of WWE titles. Four runners-up will win the range of six books.

Because the show takes place while this issue of OPS2 is still on sale, you're going to have to hurry to be in with a chance of winning. We'll be closing the competition on Monday 16th of April, so don't delay, send your entry in today. Luckily, having your shot at this grapple-tastic giveaway couldn't be simpler. Just look at the question below and get your answer to us via email, text or letter. ■ **NE**

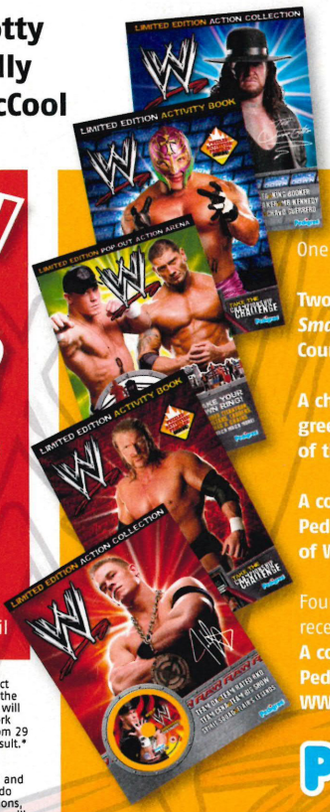
Question:
Which of these is *not* a WWE *SmackDown* superstar?

A: Scotty 2 Hotty
B: Willy 2 Chilly
C: Michelle McCool

HOW TO ENTER

By Post:
Send your answer to 'Smack That', OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
By Email:
Email your answer to ps2compos@futurenet.co.uk and put 'Smack That' in the subject line.
By SMS:
Text SMACKTHAT, followed by a space, then your answer (A, B, or C) to 84383

Closing Date 16 April



PRIZES

One winner will receive:

Two tickets for *SmackDown* at Earls Court on 24 April 2007

A chaperoned meet and greet session with one of the WWE stars

A complete set of Pedigree's new range of WWE books (six titles)

Four runners-up will receive:
A complete set of Pedigree's new range of WWE books (six titles)

Pedigree

Pedigree has just released six brand new WWE titles and they are available in shops now. The titles include the ever-popular *WWE Activity Annual*, WWE Activity Books for both Raw and *SmackDown*, a 'Pop-Out' WWE Action Arena book and two photostory books chronicling this years Survivor Series PPV which come with a limited edition DVD featuring all of your favourite WWE Superstars. This is the first in a collectable series that is a must have for any WWE fan...

Only the first entry that OPS2 randomly draws and judges to be correct will win the WWE tickets and the books and will meet the star. Only the next four entries that OPS2 randomly draws and judges to be correct will win the books. Texts will be charged at £1 plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 29 March to 16 April inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.*

*SMACK THAT COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word NO at the end of your text message. Winners will be notified within 28 days.

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

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SPARE SOME CHANGE?

OPS2 NEEDS YOU!

Tell us your thoughts, we give you games

Official PS2 Magazine is changing. We're a new team, we're sprucing up the magazine and we want you to be involved. After all, we don't make this mag for anyone else.

What do you love about OPS2? What can't you stand? Is there anything you think is outdated, or something you think the magazine can't live without? What games should we cover and what blasts from the past should we revisit?

We want your opinions, big or small, so why not write in and tell us about it? To sweeten the deal, we'll throw in a PS2 game *of your choice* and print your name and idea in the mag if we decide to use it.

So send us a letter to the usual address (p12) marking it 'All New Official 2'. If you're talking about a specific part of the magazine, why not cut out the page and send it in with your letter?

Oh, and don't forget to include your name and address so we can send you your prize and big you up in the mag. ■ **NE**

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MATERIALS GIRL

THE LIGHTS FANTASTIC

The Golden Compass points to a Christmas release

If the title *The Golden Compass* means nothing to you, blame the Americans. You may know it better by its original title, *Northern Lights*, the first book in Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. It's getting the Hollywood treatment and with New Line Cinema keen to milk their latest epic for all its worth, they've turned to the PS2 for a spin-off.

Scant details are available about what will doubtless be the first of many titles in the soon-to-be-massive *His Dark Materials* franchise. But we're happy to tell you that Shiny Entertainment, responsible for *Enter the Matrix* and cult PS1 game *MDK*, are seemingly not content to churn out the kind of licensed bilge that many studios foist on gamers (can you say '*Eragon*'?).

They hope to adapt the books' iconic elements into hard gameplay. So expect mini-games based on Lyra's titular truth-scrying golden compass, the alethiometer, riding sequences atop the armoured bear Iorek Byrnison and collaborative puzzle-solving with Lyra's shape-shifting familiar Pantalaimon. We're also promised environments and scenes not featured in the film.

Also, lady gamers can rejoice: this will be Daniel Craig's first digitised appearance. See, you're excited already. ■ **MS**

could be a classic

THIS ONE HAS REALLY WEATHERED THE STORM

RAW DANGER

Format: PS2
Publisher: 505 Gamestreet
Developer: IREM
Release: Friday 13 April (unlucky for some...)

WHAT WE KNOW

Contrary to what most videogames imply, it's unlikely that you'll ever have to fend off a pack of ravenous zombies or murder members of the Ancient Greek pantheon in real life. No, what we real folk need to worry about are taxes, petty crime and natural disasters. So the skills you learn from playing *Raw Danger* may come in handy one day.

In Japan, it was called *Disaster Report 2*. Then it was rechristened as *SOS: The Final Escape 2*. Now it's simply known as *Raw Danger*, a game that throws you against the might of Mother Nature.

In the original, she tried to off you with a series of earthquakes. This time around, she's chucking tidal waves and flash floods at you. Not only that, but a freakishly un-PC marketing decision means all the game's playable characters have been westernised – horribly transmogrified from kindly Japanese citizens into sandy-haired hunks with names like 'Joshua Harwell'.

COULD BE A CLASSIC BECAUSE...

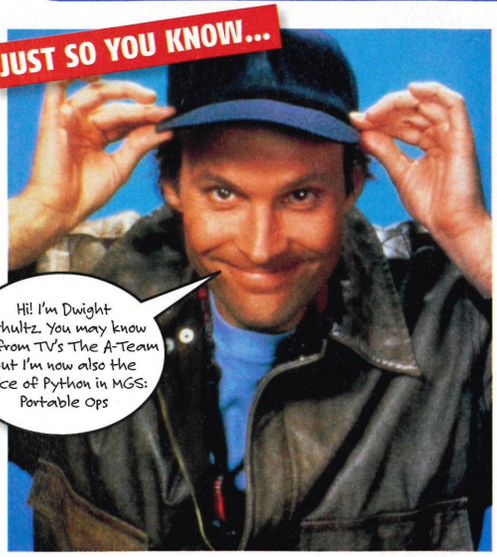
No other game has had the sheer naked cojones to cast the Pacific Ocean in the role of chief baddie. To play, *Raw Danger* is actually a bit like *ICO*, only with more water, sputtering power lines, and visuals that you'd be embarrassed to show to your granny.

One thing your esteemed grandmother would approve of, however, is the game's 'Dry off or you'll catch your death!' survival mechanic. Put simply, you're going spend a lot of your time waist-deep in freezing water trying to save your fellow citizens.

If you fail to change into dry clothes or find a convenient space heater, your character will start to suffer visibly. Leave Josh Harwell, or whoever, to their misery for too long and they'll eventually be claimed by the clammy hand of a cold, wet death.

Metal Gear Solid, eat your heart out: when it comes to pure, instinctive, human survival, *Raw Danger* reigns supreme. ■ **MS**

JUST SO YOU KNOW...



PRINCE GLIMPSE

PRINCE OF HOLLYWOOD

First images of **Prince Of Persia** film swing in

On paper, it's a disaster waiting to happen. With the heavy hand of Jerry 'speedboat chase' Bruckheimer steering *Prince Of Persia* into cinemas in 2008, plus Hollywood's long tradition of liberally urinating over film tie-in games, many fear the worst.

But Disney has now released the first concept images from the film and they seem to capture the look and feel of the game rather well. Another promising sign is that the logo has been designed, too, and from what we've seen it's got a definite whiff of *Pirates Of The Caribbean*.

Is Disney planning to make *PoP* its next fantasy blockbuster trilogy? It certainly looks that way, although we're slightly concerned that relative unknown Charlie Clausen has been confirmed to play the Prince. ■ **AH**

PATHFINDER
TWO WORLDS. ONE WAR. THE ULTIMATE BATTLE BEGINS.
15 CONTAINS STRONG BLOODY VIOLENCE
TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX PRESENTS A PHOENIX PICTURES PRODUCTION A MARCUS NISPEL FILM "PATHFINDER" KARL URBAN MOON BLOODGOOD RUSSELL MEANS RALF MOELLER AND CLANCY BROWN MUSIC BY JONATHAN ELIAS COSTUME DESIGNER RENÉE APRIL EDITED BY JAY FRIEDKIN GLEN SCANTLEBURY PRODUCTION DESIGNER GREG BLAIR DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DANIEL C. PEARL, ASC CO-PRODUCERS VINCENT OSTER BARBARA KELLY LOUIS PHILLIPS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BRADLEY J. FISCHER LEE NELSON JOHN M. JACOBSEN PRODUCED BY MIKE MEDAVOY ARNOLD W. MESSER MARCUS NISPEL SCREENPLAY BY LAETA KALOGRIDIS DIRECTED BY MARCUS NISPEL
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IN CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM APRIL 20

Kwik Fitz

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

CONFIRMED: Sony has taken more than 1 million pre-orders for *God of War II*...

RUMOUR: ...and having finished the game, we can safely bet that there will be a third *God of War* although nothing official has been said as yet

CONFIRMED: Square Enix has revealed that *Final Fantasy XII* sold more than 1 million copies in its first weekend on sale in Europe

RUMOUR: The latest version of the PSP firmware (3.10) may include compatibility with peer-to-peer communications software Skype

CONFIRMED: *Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools Of Destruction* is the name of Insomniac's second PS3 project

RUMOUR: A game of the soon-to-be-released animated TV show, *Star Wars: Clone Wars*, may be heading to PSP

RUMOUR: Sony's second *Buzz! Junior* title will called *RoboJam*

CONFIRMED: Konami is shutting down the online servers for *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence* in the USA on 2 April, with European servers to follow suit later in the year

SEW WHAT?

MOOGLE MADNESS!

We go cosplay crazy at **Final Fantasy XII**'s UK launch

We're in HMV's flagship London store on Oxford Street, talking to Stephanie Dodd. Stephanie is telling us why she's dressed up as a giant cat. "I've come as Cait Sith," she says solemnly. "He's a fairy cat who sits on the back of a giant moogle, shouting through a megaphone." She adjusts her tiny gold crown, to stop it falling off. "He appears in *Final Fantasy VII*," she adds helpfully.

Yes, it's the launch of *Final Fantasy XII*, the world-beating role-playing game. Punters were encouraged to turn up to the event dressed as characters from the long-running series in the hope of winning prizes. They call it 'cosplay'; we call it 'chicks in skimpy outfits'. A jolly good wheeze all round, then...

11.20am – "Can the guy dressed as a... er... pirate move away from the unloading doors please?" yells a bull-necked security guard. Aha. This must be right place.

Dressed to kill
Lina (as Lulu from FFX), Leil (as Kadaj from FF Advent Children) and Laura (as Lightning from FFXIII)

11.35am – We ask Akitoshi Kawazu and Hiroshi Minagawa, executive producer and director of the game, how they feel about the queues outside that stretch round the block. "We're thankful that players have accepted the game," says Akitoshi. "We were scared of their reactions to the radical changes that we've made."

Exactly as they imagined
Square Enix's Akitoshi Kawazu and Hiroshi Minagawa see their game's characters brought to life by cosplay winners (L-R) Emma, Rachel and Holly

11.45am – The three winners of the cosplay competition are brought before the crowd. They pose happily while answering questions about their hobby. For the uninitiated, cosplay is like the militant wing of fancy dress and this trio have already had some success in converting followers: "Plenty of boys have asked me to teach them how to sew," says Rachel, resplendent in a giant-thighed Montblanc bunny get-up. Emma, in an intricate Penelo costume, says she's having a great time. Holly, whose ace Ashe outfit makes her look like Billie Piper on a 'forgotten to put a skirt on' day, talks lots as well, but we forget to write down what she's saying because we're too busy gawping at her and Emma.

12.00pm – The signing starts. Everyone cheers. The host, Gill, wants to find someone who owns every *FF* game. He fails, but does succeed in making the fans feel like rubbishy noobs. Nice one, fella! Do you do weddings?

12.20pm – We get interviewed for the telly, annoying the crew by repeatedly stopping mid-answer to run off and take snaps of the awesome costumes going by (on one occasion forgetting that we're miked up to the camera and almost dragging the whole lot with us).

12.40pm – Answer questions from disbelieving fans about our review of *FFXII*. Yes, we really did play it through to the end in a week. Yes, it was very tiring. And yes, it is an *amazing* game.

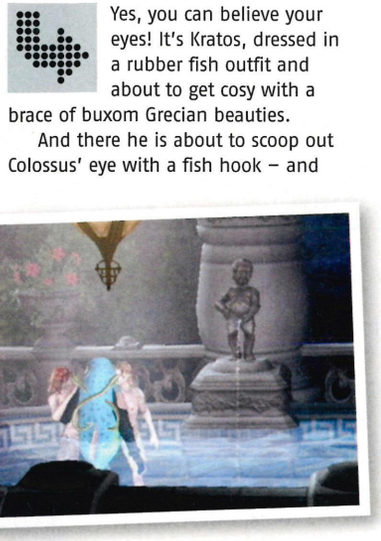
12.55pm – The store is still blasting out the *Final Fantasy* soundtrack. It's incredibly hot, especially for all the people dressed as moogles. There are six people dressed up as Cloud. And a giant cactus. Everything starts to get a bit surreal. We decide to make a break for the nearest Save crystal. But we can't find the Flee command on the Fighting menu. Or the Fighting menu. Argh! *Final Fantasy XII*: you've warped our fragile little minds. ■ **JH**

Furry nuff
Priscilla (as Carbuncle from FFXI) and Stephanie (as Cait Sith from FFVII)

BATTERED!

OH MY COD...

There's something fishy about *God of War II*



Yes, you can believe your eyes! It's Kratos, dressed in a rubber fish outfit and about to get cosy with a brace of buxom Grecian beauties.

And there he is about to scoop out Colossus' eye with a fish hook – and grappling an unfortunate roe, sorry, foe, with a Brutal Kill. What the halibut is happening here?

Well, these are just some of the comedy secrets Sony has crammed into its awesome Greek-quel, *God of War II*.

This particularly stylish 'Cod of War' outfit (the fish hooks have replaced Athena's Blades to match the scaley get-up) is unlocked by finishing the game on any difficulty, but there are plenty more trinkets to be found by anyone hardcore enough to delve back into the game on the harder modes.

Want to play through the whole game as foxy goddess Athena? You'll have to work for it by polishing off the game on Titan difficulty. Want to unlock the classic armour from the first game? Get a God ranking in the Challenge Mode and you're there. ■ **AH**

incoming

Our guide to what's coming your way

APRIL		
Capcom Classics Collection Volume 2	Retro	Capcom
Everybody's Tennis	Sport	Sony
God Of War II	Action	Sony
Pimp My Ride	Racing	Activision
SingStar Pop Hits	Party	Sony
SOCOM Combined Assault	Shooter	Sony
SnoCross 2: Feat. Blair Morgan	Sport	Oxygen
The Red Star	Action	Take 2
World Championship Poker 2	Gambling	Oxygen

MAY		
Buzz! The Mega Quiz	Party	Sony
CSI: 3 Dimensions Of Murder	Adventure	Ubisoft
Spider-Man 3	Adventure	Activision
SBK 07 Super Bikes World Championship	Racing	Black Bean
Tomb Raider Anniversary	Adventure	Eidos

JUNE		
King Of Clubs	God sim	Oxygen
Manhunt 2	Adventure	Rockstar
Pirates Of The Caribbean: At World's End	Adventure	Disney
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	Action	Sony
Rogue Galaxy	RPG	Sony
Spongebob: Battle For Volcano Island	Adventure	THQ
Transformers	Action	Activision
Top Trumps: Horror And Predators	Puzzle	Ubisoft

2007		
Ape Escape: Million Monkeys	Platformer	Sony
Buzz! The Schools Quiz	Party	Sony
Harry Potter and the Order Of The Phoenix	Platformer	EA
Indiana Jones 2007	Adventure	Activision
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	Racing	THQ
Mercenaries 2: World in Flames	Action	EA
Painkiller: Hell Wars	Shooter	TBC
Ratatouille	Action	THQ
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Action	Activision
Stuntman: Ignition	Racing	THQ
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Racing	Activision
Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria	RPG	Square Enix
Yakuza 2	Adventure	Sega

PSP

APRIL		
300: March To Glory	Action	Eidos
Coded Arms Contagion	Shooter	Konami
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	Action	Konami
SOCOM Fireteam Bravo 2	Shooter	Sony
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	RPG	Square Enix
World Championship Poker 2	Gambling	Oxygen

MAY		
Dead Head Fred	Action/Adventure	D3
Earthworm Jim	Action	Atari

JUNE		
Alien Syndrome	RPG	Sega
Crush	Puzzle	Sega
Elder Scrolls Travels: Oblivion	RPG	Ubisoft
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	Action	Ubisoft
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	Action	Sony
Manhunt 2	Adventure	Rockstar

2007		
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	Adventure	Konami
Crazy Taxi: Fare Wars	Racing	Sega
Final Fantasy Tactics: The Lion War	RPG	Square Enix

THE LIGHT SIDE

SEQUEL BONANZA

Mercenaries 2 and *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* are both confirmed for PS2 and have been put on our Christmas lists (no, it isn't too soon to start making Christmas lists)

GRAPPLE TURNOVER

Having secured two tickets to give away for WWE SmackDown! in London (see p25), we can confirm that our blagging skills are still scalpel-sharp

WEB WINNER

Its good to see Spidey back on PS2, and with the film looking hot too, we're ready for a summer of Peter Parker appreciation

CRUSH HOUR

Sega's new PSP puzzler *Crush* proved a real winner with the OPS2 team when we went hands-on this month

IN THE SABER

EMERGENCY GLOOM

Promising driving game *Emergency Mayhem* has been binned for PS2 following a rethink by the developer

JACK OFF

He's in trouble with the Florida Bar Association, but that hasn't stopped game-hating lawyer Jack Thompson campaigning against *Manhunt 2* and *Grand Theft Auto IV*

COLD WINTER

When dull cartoon spin-off *Avatar: The Legend Of Aang* shoots straight to the top of the PS2 charts, as it did in February, you know there's a dearth of quality games on the shelves

THE DARK SIDE

WOLF HARRIS

WIN THE WOLF!

Exclusive Okami artwork goodies to be won

We've teased you with a demo, surprised you with a perfect review score and nagged you to buy *Okami* for the best part of two years. Now its time to reward you for listening to our raving about Capcom's wonderful wolf-'em-up.

Visually, the game is a beautiful example of what the PS2 is capable of. So to celebrate that, we've got a perfect prize for artistic *Okami* fans.

One lucky winner will get their ink-covered hands on a rare, highly collectable, *Okami* art book featuring concept and hand-drawn art used in the creation of the game. Believe us: it's a real stunner. This book is not, and will never be, available to buy here in the UK, which makes it all the more special.

As an added treat the winner will also bag a fluffy Amaterasu toy and a paw-full of other *Okami* goodies. Four runners-up will each get a copy of the game and a T-shirt.

PRIZES

The best entry, as judged by the OPS2 team, will win:

- **A rare Okami Art Book imported from Japan**
- **A plush Amaterasu toy**
- **A lucky Okami charm**
- **An Okami T-shirt**
- **A copy of the game**

Four runners-up will win:

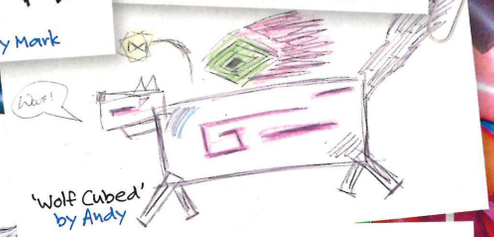
- **An Okami T-shirt**
- **A copy of the game**

BEAT THIS!

To inspire you, Team OPS2 try their hands at artwork, *Okami*-style...

'Morning After' by Mark

'Stitch'n Canine' by Sophie



'Wolf Cubed' by Andy

'Rough Rough!' by John

'The Trolling Guardsman with Lobsters and Dappled Fire Dusters and the Throatspoon Twirling the Crimson Windmill to Look for Skeletal Lightning, Number 8' by Mike

HOW TO ENTER

We're not asking you to answer any taxing questions, or decipher any hidden codes. All we want you to do is show us how much you appreciate the art of *Okami* by creating your own work of art inspired by the game. It could be a collage of a Japanese scene, a painting of Amaterasu, an etching of a blossom tree, an embroidered orange – anything, just as long as it's related to *Okami*.

Send your artistic efforts to this address:

I've Drawn Okami
Official PS2 Magazine
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW

Closing date 25 April 2007

Only the entry that OPS2 judges to be the best art will win the Art Book and soft toy pack. Only the four runners-up that OPS2 judges to be the next best will win the game and T-shirts. The competition is open from 29 March to 25 April inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.*

*WIN THE WOLF competition Terms and conditions By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. Winners will be notified within 28 days.

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

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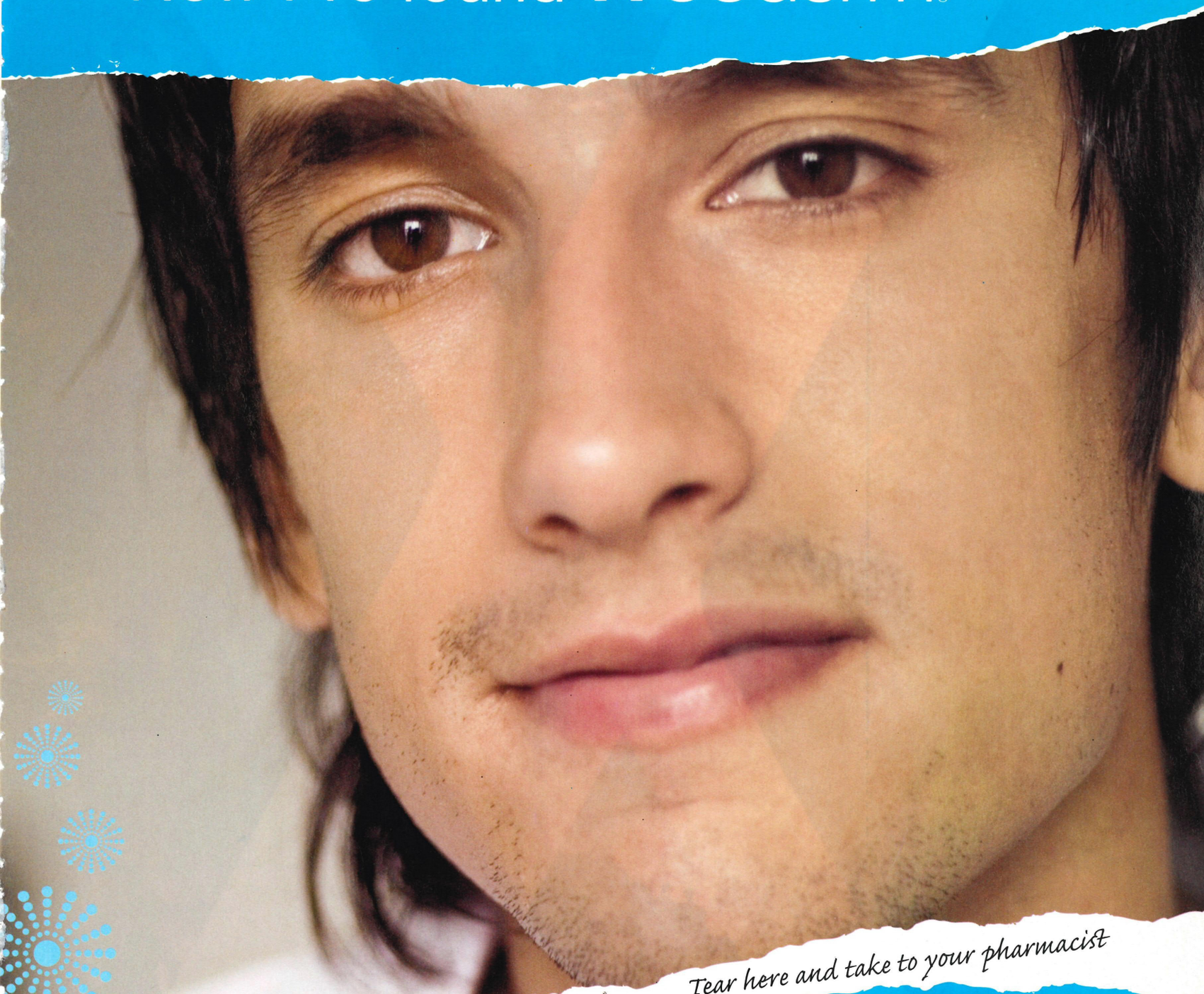

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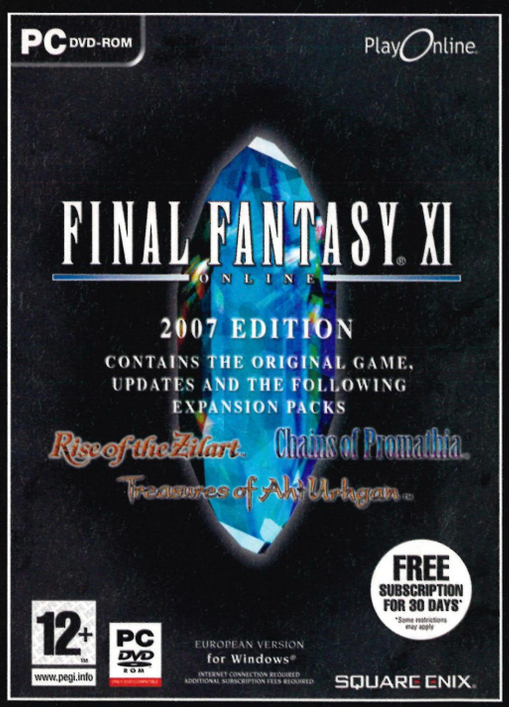

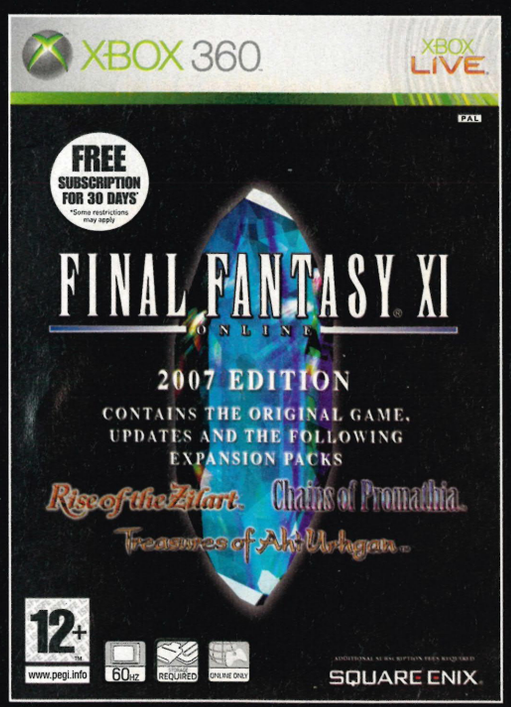

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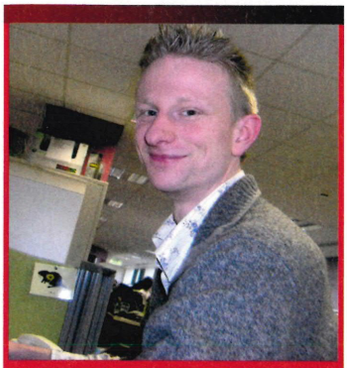
monitor

TOMORROW'S GAMES, TODAY



If you could invite anyone from this month's Monitor section to dinner, who would it be?

Okay, maybe that's a silly question because you've probably already looked across at Lara at least six times since you started reading this column.

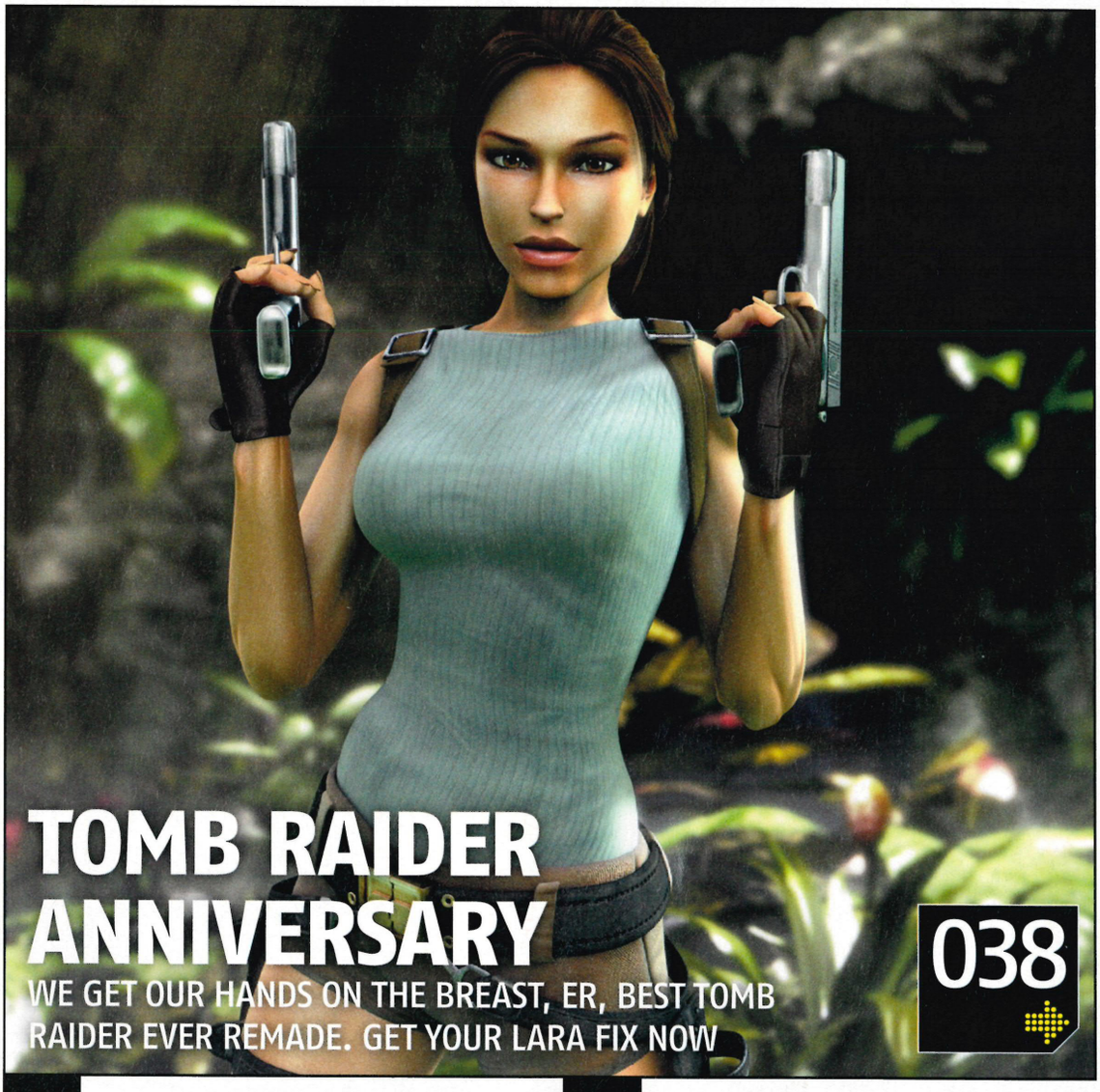
But it does make you think about all the big personalities vying for your attention (and cash) on PS2 in 2007.

As well as the new *Tomb Raider*, which we all already know will be stupendous, we've got first looks at *Pirates Of The Caribbean 3*, *Manhunt 2*, and the surprisingly solid *Painkiller: Hell Wars* – all of which have strong lead characters and an interesting tale to tell.

In fact, we'd quite happily have Will Turner and Jack Sparrow round for dinner, although we'd probably draw the line at inviting Manhunt's Daniel Lamb. He really shouldn't be around sharp objects like knives, forks and our incredible wit...

Andy

Andy Hartup,
News editor



TOMB RAIDER ANNIVERSARY

WE GET OUR HANDS ON THE BREAST, ER, BEST TOMB RAIDER EVER REMADE. GET YOUR LARA FIX NOW

038

044 **PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3**
Pieces of great! Check out our first look at the game of this summer's most blockbusting film

046 **MANHUNT 2**
Hold the headlines! Rockstar gives us exclusive access to their bloody brilliant sequel

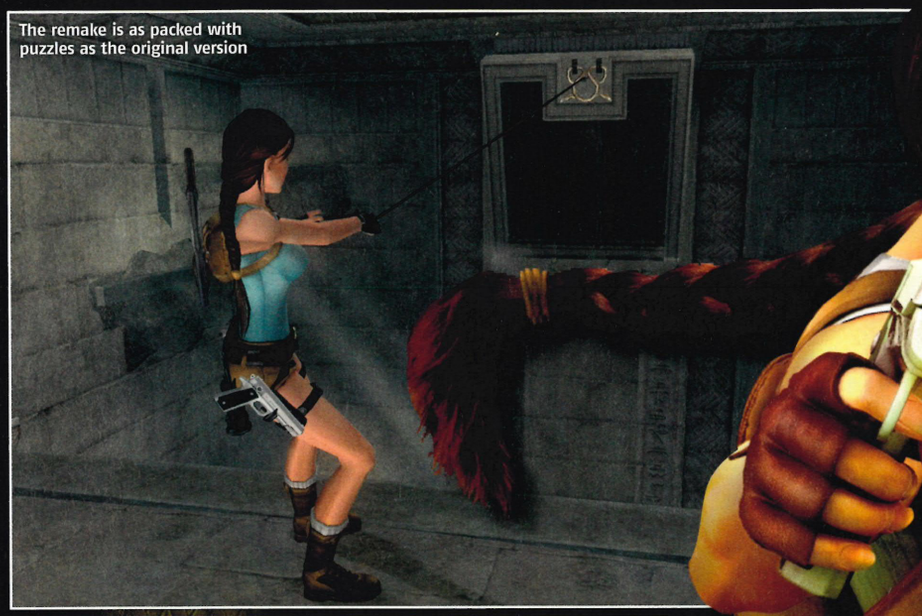
050 **SBK-07 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP**
Two wheels better than four? Find out right here

052 **JUICED 2: HOT IMPORT NIGHTS**
It's car-mageddon as *Juiced 2* aims straight at *Need For Speed*'s street-racing crown

058 **PAINKILLER: HELL WARS**
Get ready to split some demon skulls wide open in this devilishly good first-person shooter

061 **ALIEN SYNDROME**
No, it's not a disease spread by Martians, it's a potentially great roleplayer from SEGA's PSP stable

062 **DARK SECTOR**
We get busy lopping off heads and setting monsters on fire in this brutal PS3 actioner


The remake is as packed with puzzles as the original version

Once you start playing Lara you can't lever alone

Insert pussy joke here

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TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

10 YEARS ON, LARA'S CLASSIC GAME IS EVEN BETTER

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

Internet forums aren't usually the best places to visit when looking for pertinent and reasoned opinions on, well, anything really. But sometimes, if you pick your way through the 'pwnd's, unbridled abuse and gurning emoticons you can find some sense.

Take the recent thread on www.tombraider.com asking members to name the elements responsible for creating the unique feel of *Tomb Raider*, the game that first brought us PlayStation icon Lara Croft and which celebrates its 10-year birthday next month.

There were the obvious suggestions such as the need to explore and have Lara wearing shorts. But it was a more obscure element that curried the most favour: a sense of isolation, or as one person put it, 'I want to get lost'. Well, we've now played *Tomb Raider: Anniversary* extensively and we can confirm that this remake of that classic is most definitely a game you can get lost in.

LONE DANGER

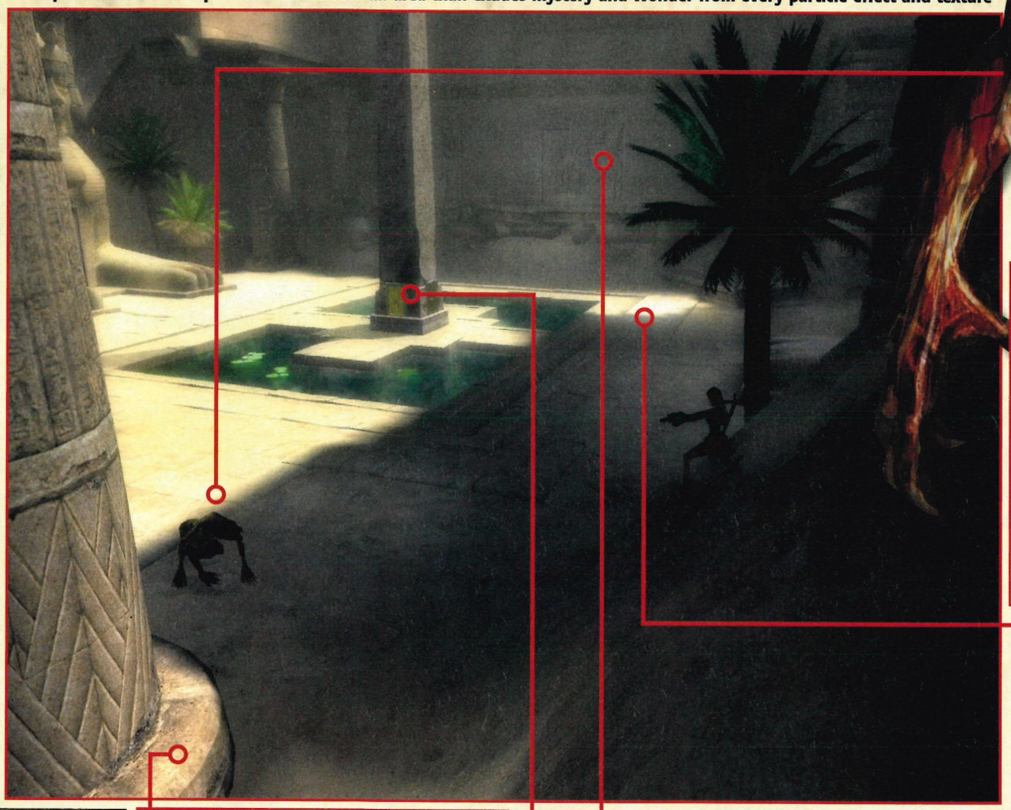
Dropping into the action in the murky caves of Peru, it's immediately obvious that *Anniversary* is a different animal to *Legend*, the most recent *Tomb Raider* title. That's mainly due to that feeling of being really alone, generated by what you can, or rather can't, hear.

In *Legend* Lara was constantly chatting to a back-up team, who gave suggestions on how to progress. But in *Anniversary*, as in the original *Raider*, it's just you, Crofty and a cave network fraught with danger.

One of the first major puzzles you discover is that old favourite, the waterfall-and-cog combo. It requires you to collect three cogs to get the waterfall mechanism in ▶

DO YOU BELIEVE IN PHARAOHS?

When original *Tomb Raider* designer Toby Gard decided to set the game's finale in Egypt, he had visions of backing sand and dusty tombs, littered with elegant ancient artefacts. While this was created to the best of the developer's ability, the limitations of the PS1 meant it ended up a bit yellow. The PS2 remake has provided the opportunity to revisit the spiritual home of exploration and create an area than exudes mystery and wonder from every particle effect and texture



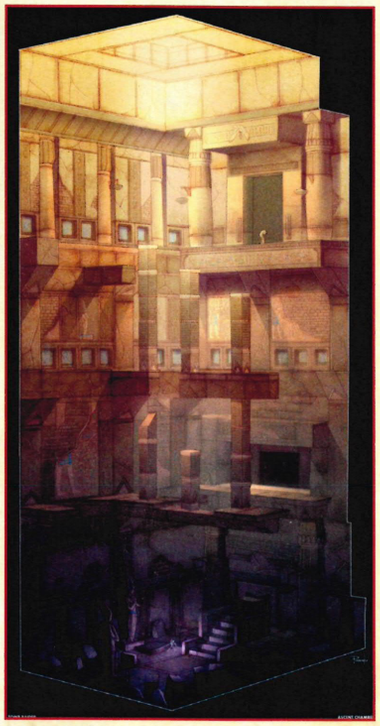
Yummy mummies In Egypt, *Tomb Raider* enters the realms of science fiction: the indigenous threats are no longer cats, bats and bears (nor indeed hawkers trying to sell you stuffed sphinxes, which would be truly realistic) but fireball-throwing, saber-toothed mummies. Lara has to be at her gymnastic best to defeat them

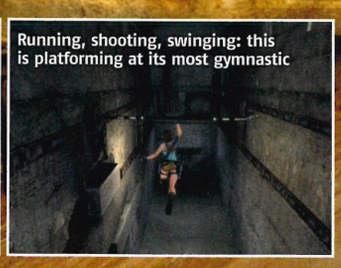
Sun-dried Unfortunately, the PS2 can't significantly raise the temperature of your living room, but it does manage to make the Egyptian levels in *Anniversary* feel hot. The sand and sun give the exposed area a luminous glare, then subtle particle effects add a dusty, dry feel to the air. It's a stark contrast to the damp, misty Peruvian bits

Organically grown The design work of the levels is such that nothing looks too contrived. Every platform is suitably weathered and worn to make it look like a true part of the overall environment rather than another rung on a specifically built Crofty-climbing frame

Monumental scale Fittingly for such a rich ancient civilisation, each tomb in Egypt is epic in scale, featuring huge monuments that are often completely intact. The size and scale of this generates an endless stream of 'wow' moments, guaranteeing a shiver down your spine every time you open up a new area

Explore more The remake retains puzzles and objectives similar to the original game but Lara's increased dexterity on PS2 means every inch can be filled with ledges to clamber on and jumps to challenge you

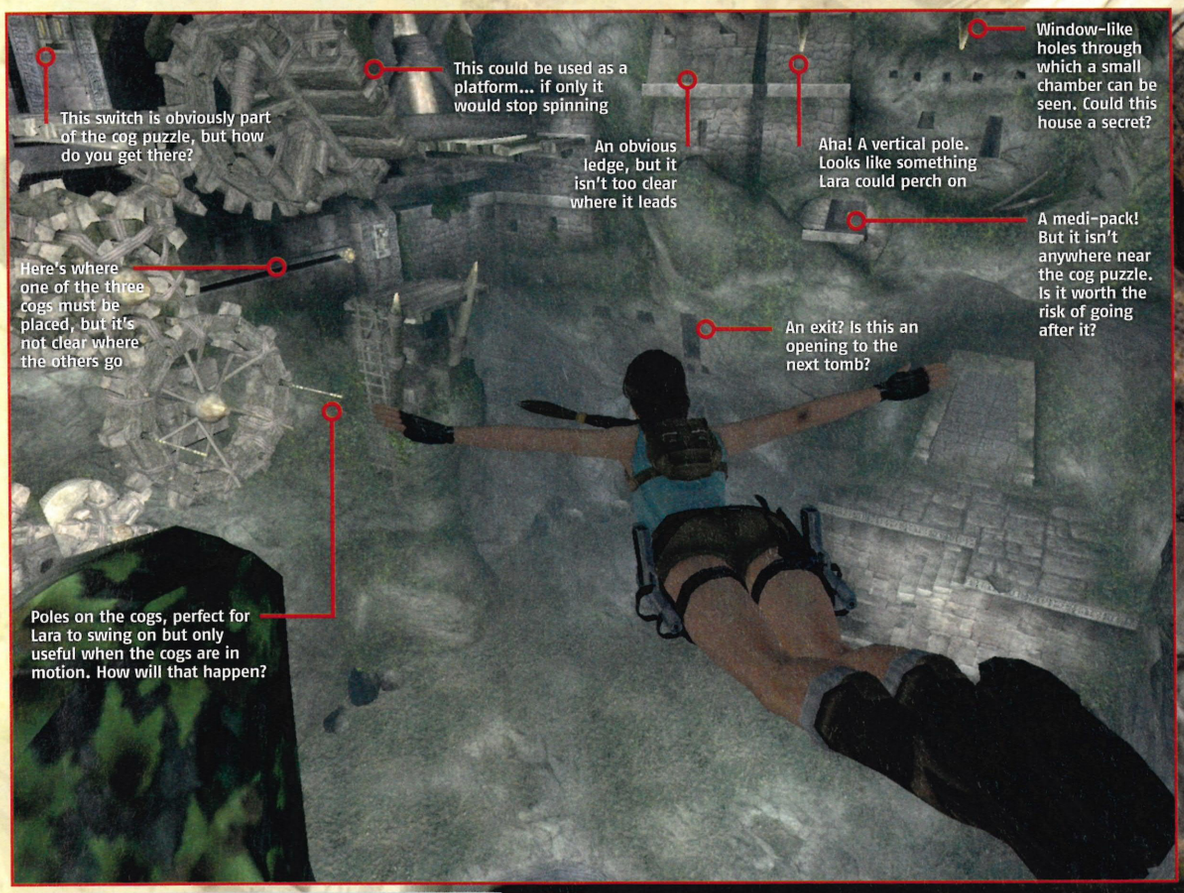




Running, shooting, swinging: this is platforming at its most gymnastic

THE ANATOMY OF A TOMB

The levels and puzzles in *Anniversary* are the richest yet for the *Tomb Raider* series. Not only are you presented with a comparatively obvious route to your destination, along with a few obscure ones, you're continually tempted by other exits and ledges. And because each route is often hidden within the vines and darkness they're only going to be travelled by those who experiment and explore every inch.

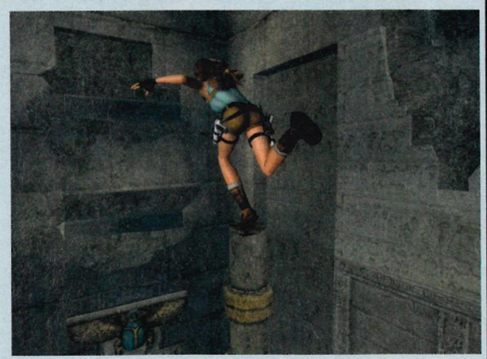


This is the awe inspiring and very puzzling St Francis Folly

You can choose to make manual grabs, so leaps are even scarier

PERCH TO GLORY

Lara's learned to poledance



One of the new moves introduced to the game is the 'perch'. It epitomises the clever games design used by Crystal Dynamics. The move involves Lara jumping on the top of a pole, enabling her to use the top of a row of shafts as stepping stones to travel. It's as simple to execute as a normal jump, but when you watch it, it seems like an incredible act of daring because Lara awkwardly corrects her balance while on top, making it abundantly clear that's she in a vulnerable position. So, even though it's a relatively safe move for you to undertake, the animation provokes an contrasting emotional response, leaving you with your heart in your mouth.

motion. The first cog is a 'gimme' – lying at your feet at the tomb entrance – but after that it's a challenge of platforming dexterity and careful thinking in which Lara must explore every inch of the cavern.

To make things more difficult, levels have a real organic feel to them. Every ledge and platform blends in with the background, making it that much tougher to spot the route you need. It also puts an element of doubt into the mind every time you make a move, forcing you to catch your breath mid-jump in fear that you've mistaken a fat layer of moss as a firm foothold.

Then there are the many situations in which you're spoilt for choice as to which direction you should go. Take for example the St Francis Folly part of Greece, where you're presented with a large descent down a column littered with apparatus to swing on and cling to.

You glimpse multiple paths, get fleeting glances of treats and secrets, but discovering just how to get to them takes a keen eye and the ability to bounce back from a few shattered bones.

RAID TO MEASURE

During all this time there's hardly any sound. Perhaps you'll hear the odd phrase of music, some environmental sounds, but otherwise, it's silence. Lara's alone, isolated and lost, and that's exactly where she wants to be.

The result is an experience that brings memories of the original *Raider* flooding back: of spending ages staring at the scenery, willing a ledge to appear; of trying one jump again and again before finally admitting it's impossible; of trying to figure out if that really is a rope or just a trick of the light. Perhaps, to those who haven't played the original, that sounds dull, but when a game convinces and draws you in as much *Tomb Raider*, it's these moments of deep contemplation and calculated experimentation that enrich the experience.

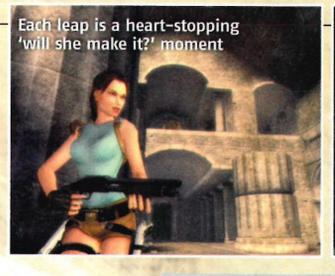
SECRETS SQUIRRELLED

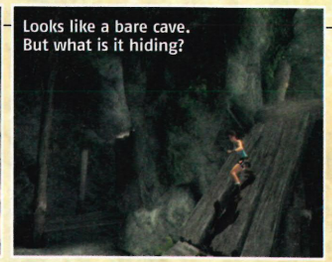
All the time, of course, you know your efforts will ultimately be rewarded, because each level is riddled with secrets and hidden items. Even if the fruit of your scrambling around is just a small medi-pack, there's a sense of satisfaction gained from accessing parts of the level you feel are reserved for true explorers rather than the workaday gamer intent only on completion.

Then there are the actual puzzles, which go way beyond merely pulling a lever and seeing what happens. Branching off from the St Francis Folly are some severe tests of your cunning that will only be solved with careful planning and a touch of trial and error. They include figuring out why it will be useful to clamber up a falling giant hammer, dancing across a sheet-metal floor while avoiding lightning bolts and an intriguing water puzzle that doesn't make sense until the final moments.

The latter involves blocking off water sources to partially fill and empty a tall chamber. You do it without really knowing why until a wooden platform bobs to surface and you realise the point of all that meddling.

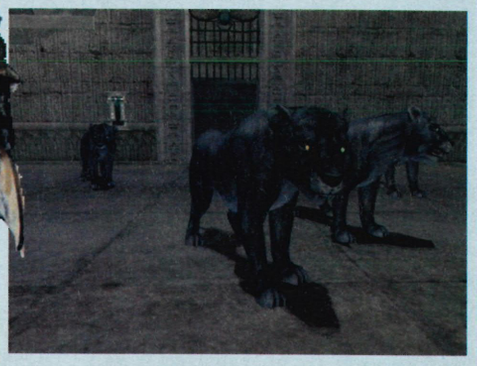
These puzzles are difficult, occasionally obscure and often frustrating. This might have some gamers ▶


Each leap is a heart-stopping 'will she make it?' moment

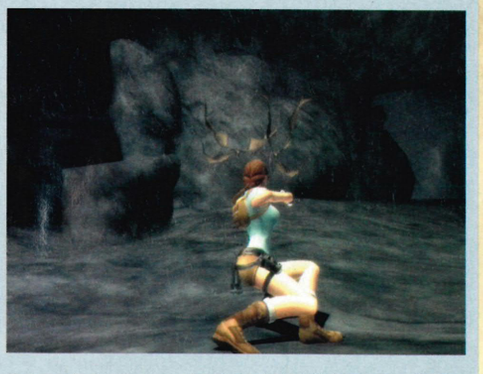

Looks like a bare cave. But what is it hiding?

CAT'S ALL, FOLKS

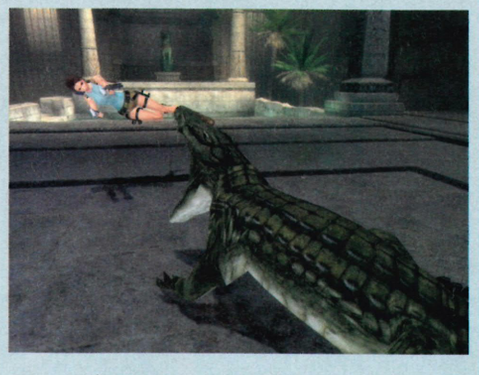
Tomb Raider: Legend **was a bit of a departure for Lara because instead of blasting furry animals she was responsible for the annihilation of a private army of significant numbers. For** ***Anniversary*****, though, and suitably for the remote places she's visiting, it's only the wildlife she has to worry about for the majority of the game – just like in the original.**



Wolves and panthers have little effect on their own but because they attack in packs, Lara must use all her nimbleness to avoid taking damage

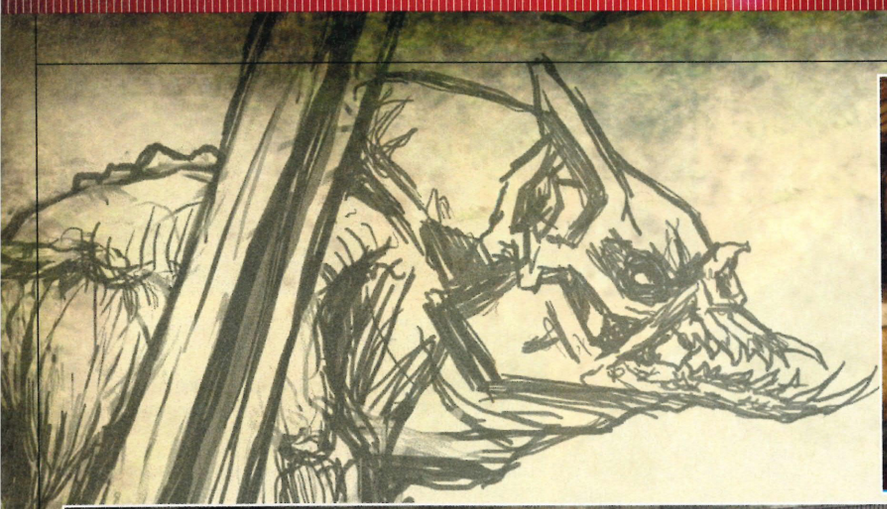


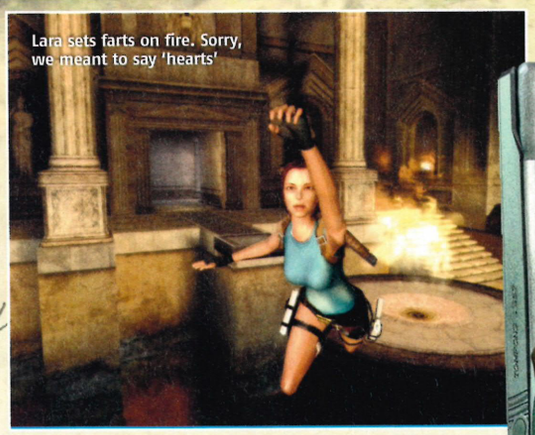
Bats only take a couple of shots to kill but annoyingly, often attack you on extremely high platforms, or worst of all in the middle of a gravity-defying leap

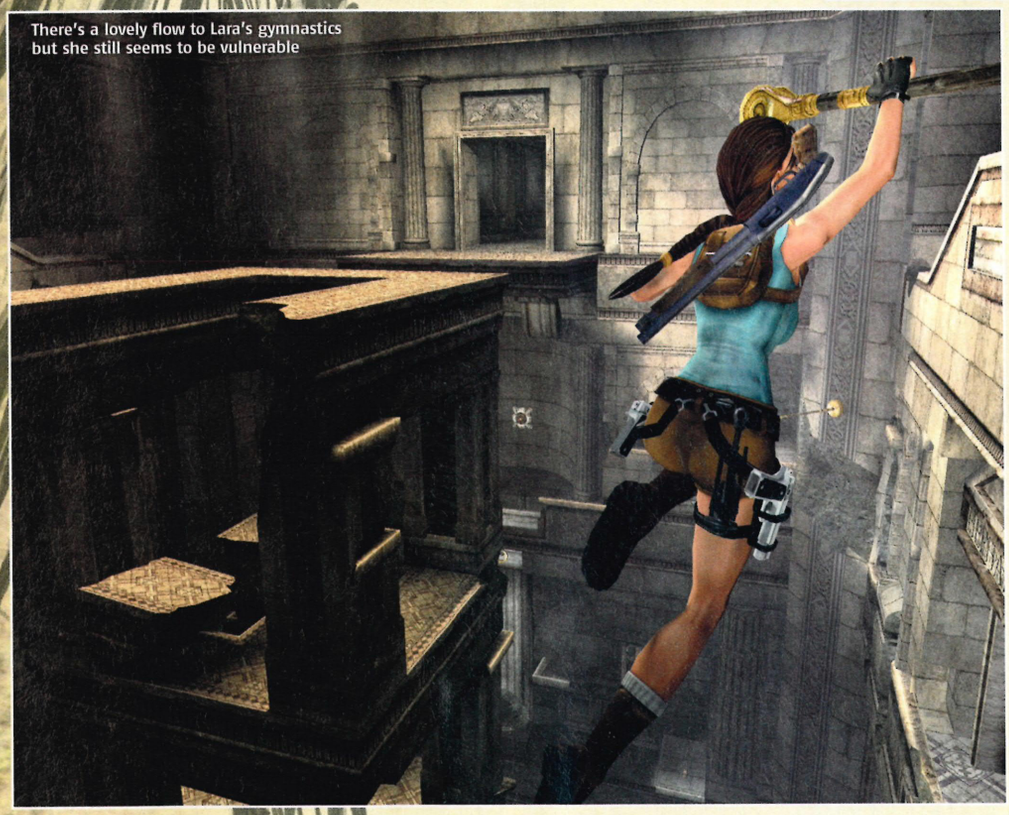


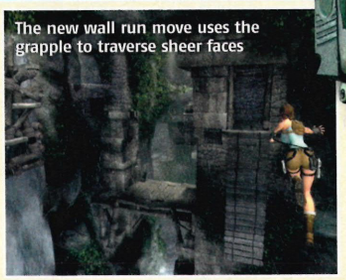
Larger animals such as crocs and bears are extremely dangerous and these are the creatures for whom you should save your shotgun shells

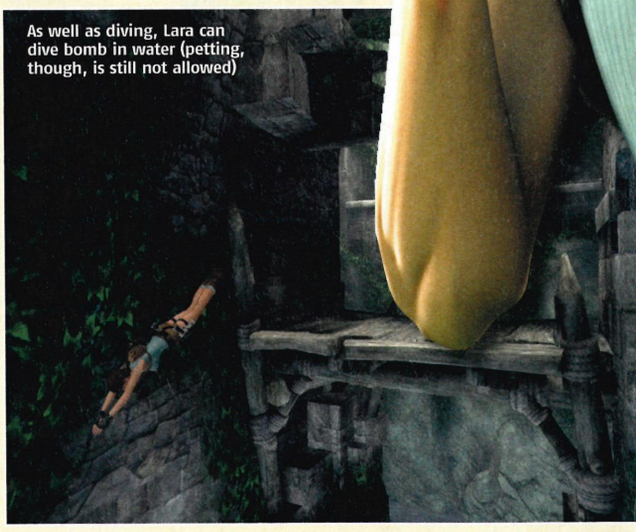
The greater graphics power of the PS2 means more immersive environments




Lara sets farts on fire. Sorry, we meant to say 'hearts'


There's a lovely flow to Lara's gymnastics but she still seems to be vulnerable


The new wall run move uses the grapple to traverse sheer faces


As well as diving, Lara can dive bomb in water (petting, though, is still not allowed)

FOR YOUR PERU-SAL

From the very start, it's obvious how *Anniversary*'s gameplay differs to that of the original as you arrive outside a giant door in the mountains of Peru. First time around, all it took for Lara to gain entry was a cutscene; now she must combine clambering and rope work to prise open that first tomb.

The first problem to solve is getting up to same level as the gate after the rope bridge inconveniently breaks

The opening mechanism can just be seen just above the metal hook, but how are you going to get up there?

reaching for their walkthroughs, but the game isn't designed to satisfy those types. Its aim is to bewitch and torment those who 'want to get lost'.

That's a bold move by developer Crystal Dynamics. Many games these days lead you through, glaring hint by glaring hint, to ensure completion. In fact, this criticism was levelled at *Legend*, Crystal's first *Raider* effort, but if that was a children's playground, *Anniversary* is like an Escher-drawn world of optical illusion and possibility.

QUALIFIED FIRST RAIDER

The reason for this change in approach is that *Anniversary* is not only a remake in terms of location and plot, it's a remake in terms of attitude and style, too. The first *Raider* was an incredibly tough game but also so engaging that you just didn't begrudge putting in 30 hours of punishing effort to finish it.

Well, *Anniversary* is just like that but, thanks to a sublime control system and accommodating checkpoints, it's still in tune with what today's gamers expect from an action adventure.

INVISIBLE SUPPORT

On close inspection this initially unassuming pillar actually has a crumbling section that can be pulled out

At first glance, this just looks like a worn pillar that can't be climbed

The scenery looks naturally formed rather than contrived

Eidos and Crystal Dynamics have tended to talk about *Anniversary* as a one-off, a special edition, but we believe it's much more than that: we think it's their way of testing the water to see if there's enough demand for a pure, hardcore *Raider* experience. It's to see if the original vision of a Boy's Own Adventure with a mysterious female lead is still popular with gamers. If not, they can go back to doing *Legend*, and no harm done.

Having played *Anniversary* though, it's immediately captured our imagination, and we're certain it will be popular with other fans, too. Whether it has that mass appeal remains to be seen, but if someone suggests you go and get lost, take them up on the offer. ■ **DH**

monitor PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

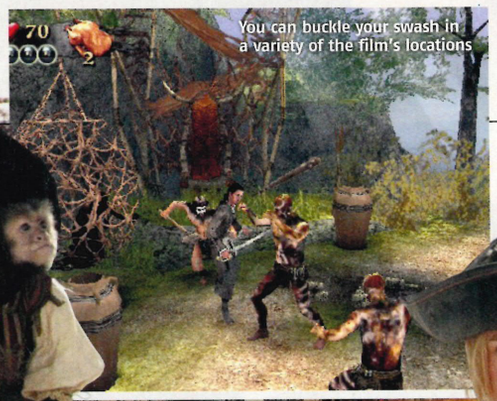
INTELLIGENT, EXCITING, BEAUTIFUL to look at and to play, *Anniversary* has all the elements in place to be the most complete *Tomb Raider* experience yet. It looks like the future is bright for Ms Croft

HOT OR NOT

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

PUBLISHER **DISNEY INTERACTIVE** | DEVELOPER **EUROCOM** | WEBSITE **WWW.DISNEY.GO.COM/DISNEYPICTURES/PIRATES/**

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END



You can buckle your swash in a variety of the film's locations

SO FAR WE PI-RATE IT HIGHLY

At World's End has some big britches to fill. Not only is it a fully licensed game of two of the highest grossing movies ever, it follows in the wake of the best sea-faring game ever committed to console: *Sid Meier's Pirates!*, which docked on PSP in March after making a huge splash on PC and Xbox.

To make things even more difficult for itself, developer Eurocom has decided to make Everyone's Favourite Swashbuckler™, Jack Sparrow, the main playable character. Johnny Depp's lively, unpredictable on-screen shenanigans are one of the main reasons for the film's successes, but capturing this acting magic in a game is challenging, to say the least.

It's no secret that videogame heroes tend to be more wooden than an Ikea-furnished log cabin. But Eurocom is hoping to overcome this by building Jack's unique character traits into the action, so expect to see over the top swordplay and plenty of crazy acrobatic sequences, topped off with a sprinkling of Sparrow-flavoured wit.

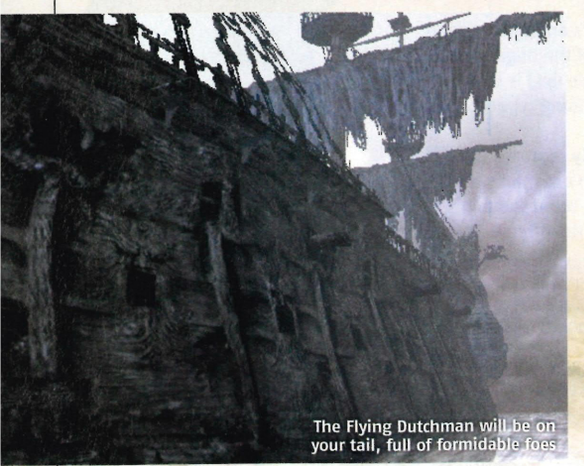
X MARKS THE PLOT

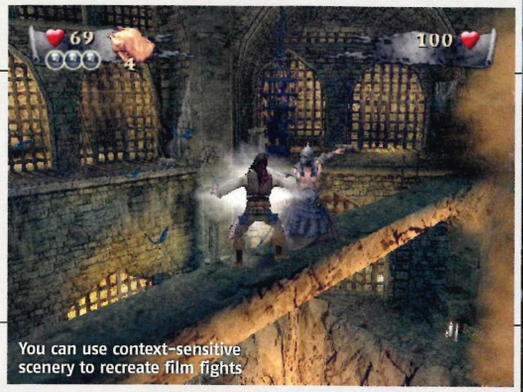
In terms of storyline, the game will stick closely to both this summer's sure-to-be-massive film, *At World's End*, and last year's *Dead Man's Chest*.

Everyone's Favourite Swashbuckler™ Jack Sparrow has been scoffed by the Kraken and to bring him back from the dead, fey Englishman Will Turner and posh bint Lizzie Swann are forced to team up with arch enemy Capitan Barbosa, mysteriously resurrected from the grave in *Dead Man's Chest*.

They're off to the end of the earth, via Singapore, where they must confront kung-fu pirate Sao Feng. To make matters worse, the ghostly Flying Dutchman and dastardly members of the East India Trading Company are at full sail on the high seas searching for the pirates.

Every location from the movie will feature in the game in some capacity, so expect the visuals to be varied


The Flying Dutchman will be on your tail, full of formidable foes



You can use context-sensitive scenery to recreate film fights

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK
new screens

When we said 'fencing', this wasn't quite what we meant

and colourful as our sea-bound heroes trek across the luscious Caribbean to the exotic shores of South China.

As you progress through the game, your notoriety increases depending on the choices you make. So if you play the first half of the game as ruthlessly as possible, pirates in later levels will show fear when you encounter them. They might even run away. Play a little more friendly-like and fellow swashbucklers will admire you.

SWORD LOSERS

However, there are some folks you'll never be able to impress. Undead crew members of the Flying Dutchman and later on, soldiers of the East India Company all need to feel the bite of your trusty sword and pistols.

As well as basic swipes and slashes, Jack can take full advantage of context-sensitive points in the scenery when scrapping it out. You can take the fight onto narrow roof beams, ship masts and rickety old bridges – aping some of the memorable scenes from the films.

As an added bonus for PS2 owners, Eurocom is building in a special Challenge mode that lets you hone your pirating skills either against the AI or a friend. Combat, combos - and, intriguingly – looting, can all be practised in it, so you can try out a new weapon or move without risking your neck in the main story.

And Disney has promised that there will be plenty of hidden content to dig up, including fresh locations and secret characters. We'd be willing to wager a bounty that favourite characters such as Norrington, Bootstrap Bill and Ragetti can be unlocked and used. So far, it looks like a treasure trove of fan-pleasing fun. ■ AH

A bridge too far for Sparrow and his mates? Of course not!

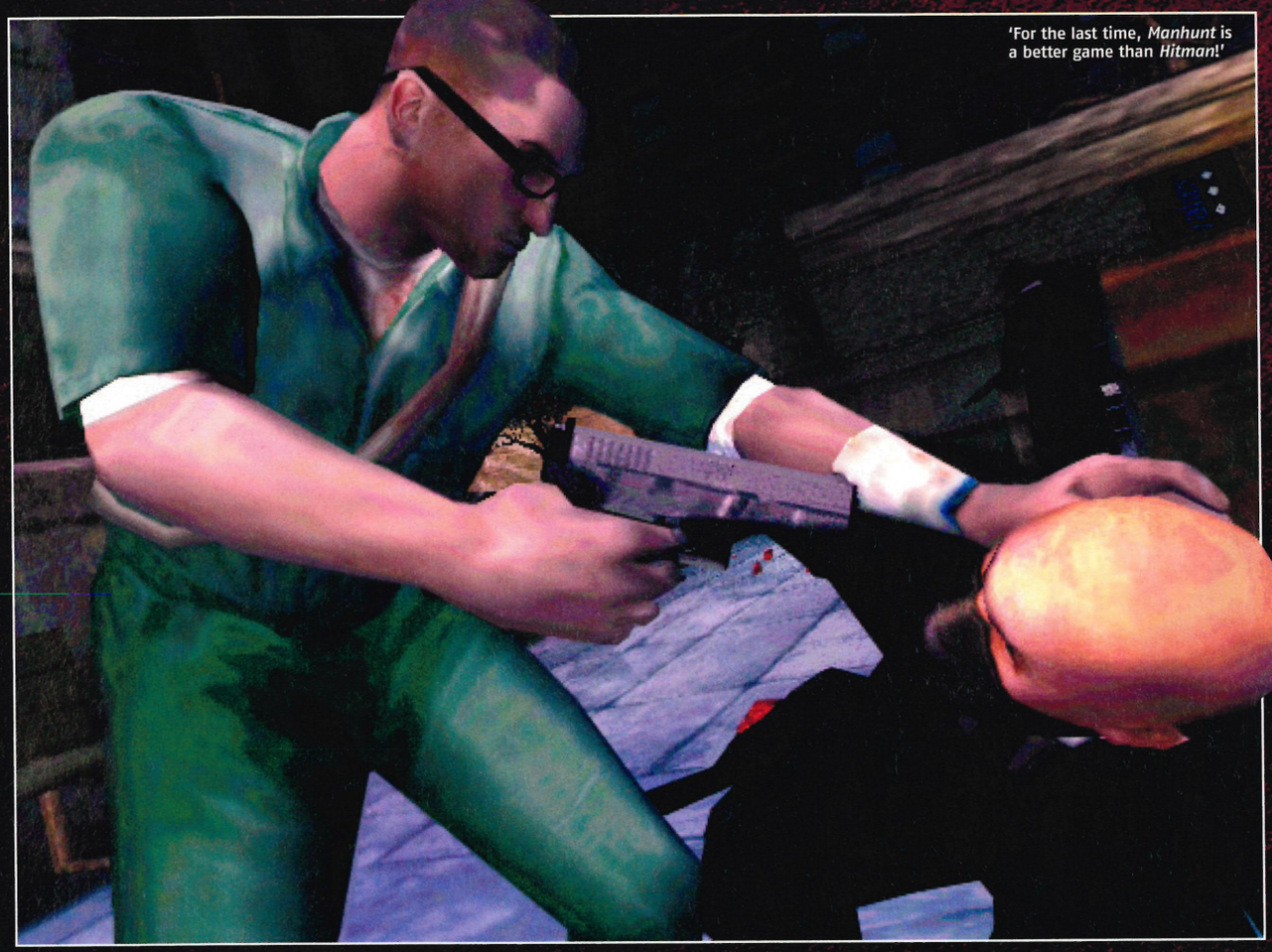
Quickly, Keira! To the makeup trailer!

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

WITH ALL THE LICENSED CONTENT on board plus a sword-swinging system that sounds mighty promising, *At World's End* is looking sexier than Keira Knightley wearing nothing but a tricorn hat and a smile

HOT OR NOT?

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



'For the last time, *Manhunt* is a better game than *Hitman*!'

PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES | DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR LONDON | WEBSITE WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/MANHUNT2/

MANHUNT 2

ROCKSTAR'S SEMINAL PYSCHO THRILLER RETURNS

The thing about *Manhunt* is that there are no other PS2 games like it. It's now three years since Rockstar North unleashed its oft-misunderstood marathon of relentless brutality, so capable of dragging a bonesaw across your nerve endings and so vilified in the press as the epitome of Games As The New Evil.

Since then, we've had the blockbuster horror of *Resident Evil 4*, the excessively violent 'interrogations' of *The Punisher* and the harrowing fight-or-flight terror of *Forbidden Siren 2*, but none have surpassed the suffocating atmosphere and remorseless viciousness of *Manhunt*. Only its own upcoming sequel has any chance of challenging *Manhunt*'s position.

The follow-up has little to do with the original's story but everything to do with its tension, presentation and mind games. And if you hated the original, we'll save you some time here: you are, very probably, going to hate this.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK new screens

DON'T WORRY, I'M A DOCTOR

Dr Daniel Lamb has spent the past six years in Dixmore Hospital for the Criminally Insane, a result of his involvement with the Pickman Project (named after its founding professor), a somewhat demented experiment for which Lamb put himself forward, only to be spat out at the other end into a nuthouse.

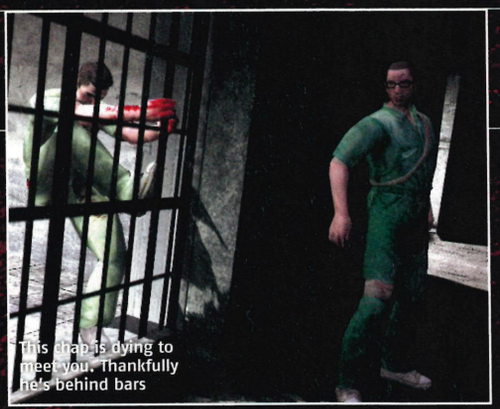
One night, an electrical storm takes the lid off the loony bin, an opportunity for escape that he greedily grabs – not that he has much choice, given the chaos kicking off between the thuggish orderlies and the brain-whisked patients.

SHOOT AND NUT

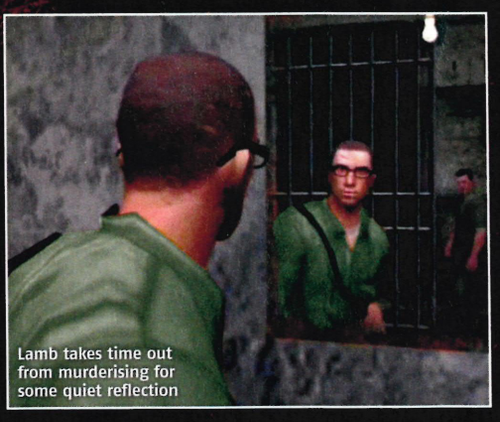
With fellow inmate Leo on hand to offer tutorial-style advice, it's here that *Manhunt 2* opens. You are thrust once more into a nightmarish, jagged world filled with some of the filthiest dregs to be found under humanity's toilet seat.

Just who is Leo, anyway? And what's Lamb been up to in the past six years? Why isn't he caked in his own dribble and excretions, like the rest of Dixmore's inmates? The developer isn't telling, but there's a wealth of room here for the plot to set up all kinds of psychological bear traps around your feet.

As in the original, there's one key rule for surviving *Manhunt 2* – never get comfortable. In fact, within



This chap is dying to meet you. Thankfully he's behind bars

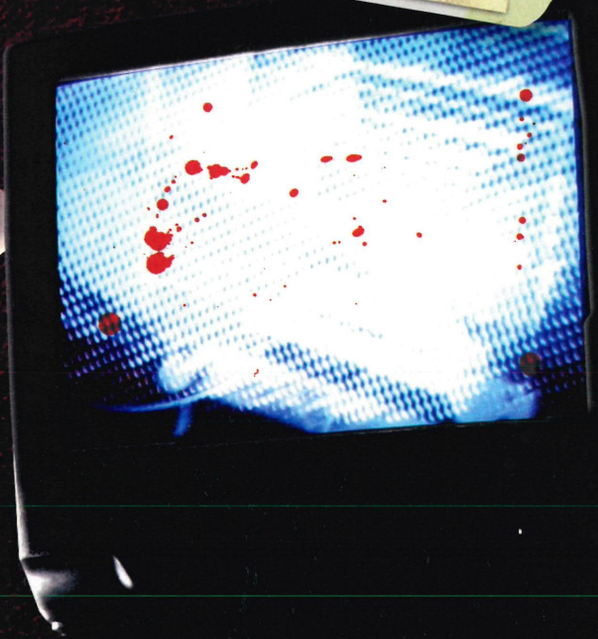


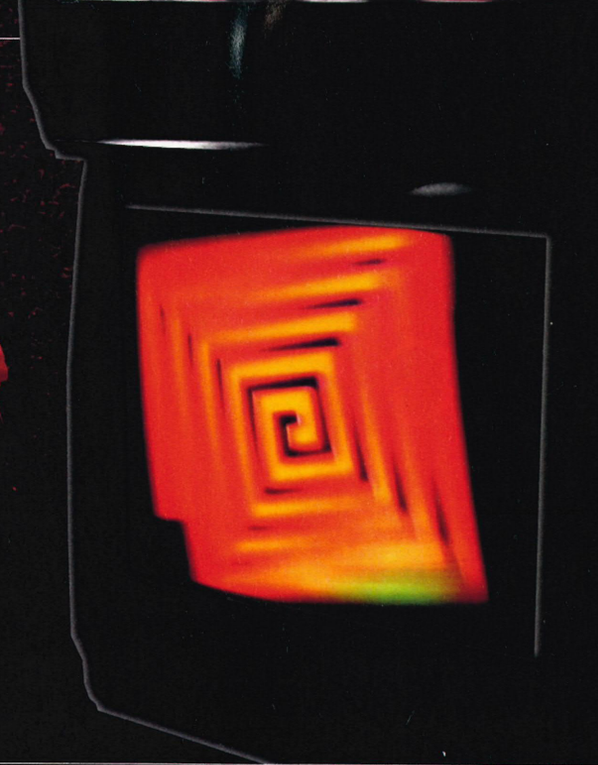
Lamb takes time out from murderising for some quiet reflection

manhunt 2

PATIENT: LAMB, DANIEL
MALE DOB: 05/29/63
PREJDO

Dealing with members of the sinister Project is a major part of play





HEAVY WEAPONS

Well, there's no mystery as to just how much blood you can let with a sledgehammer or a shotgun. Plus having the latter does, of course, completely change the pace of the game, into a panicked, breathless series of shootouts.

OTHER

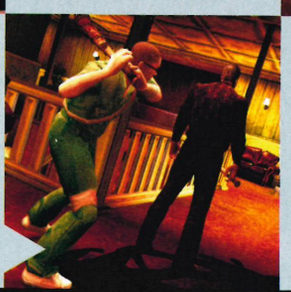
Some weapons have other uses, such as the wire cutters that'll allow you access to this ventilation shaft in the brothel. The functionality doesn't stop there, however – get a Gruesome kill with this one, and you'll snip the balls off your victim before clipping out some vertebrae. Bleurgh

TOOLS OF THE AFRAID

You carry multiple weapons, accessed by a menu that pauses the action when you go to it. Heavy weapons are kept on Lamb's back, Medium on his hip and Light held in his hand, with room for a few other other bits and bobs...

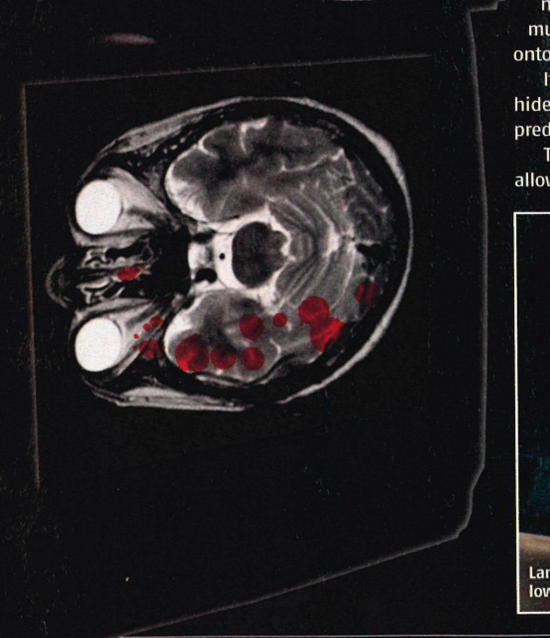
MEDIUM WEAPONS

Strictly speaking, there's nothing 'medium' about any of Manhunt's weapons. In Lamb's inexplicably psychotic hands, a baseball bat covered in barbed wire packs as much punch as an elephant coughing up a cannonball

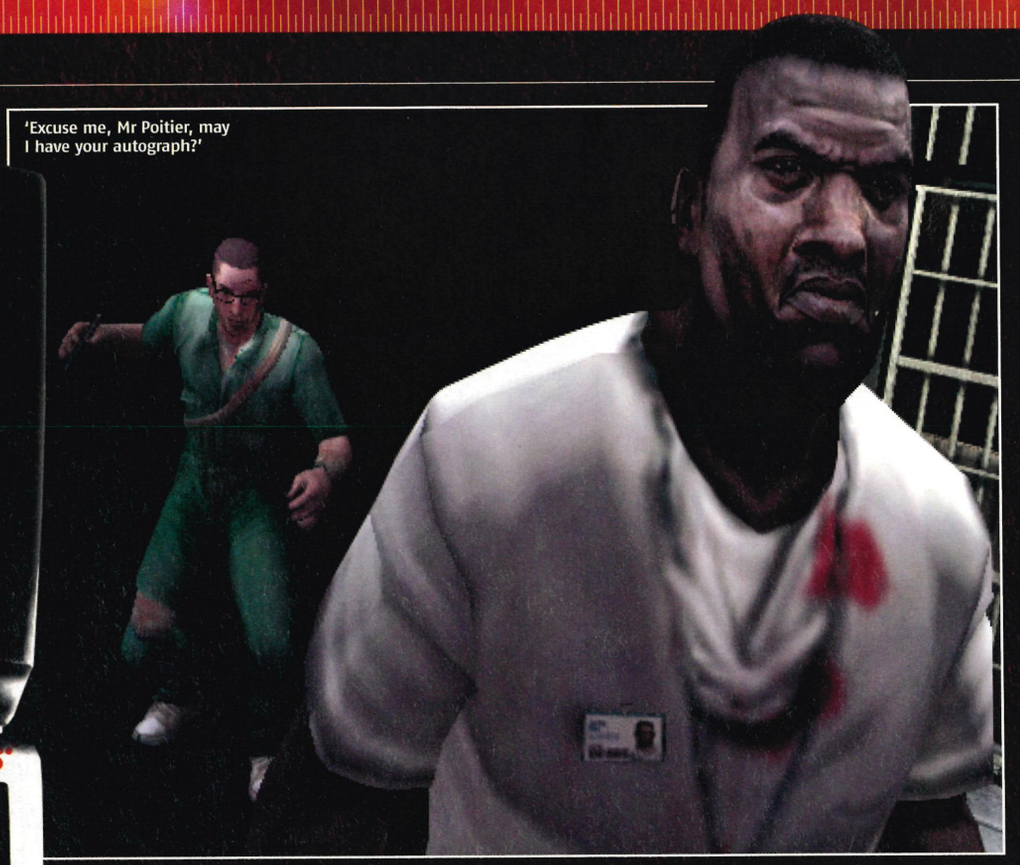


SMALL WEAPONS

Take your pick – a biro, shard of glass, a syringe or that trademark plastic bag? The latter two are one-use deals, but the syringe will be your very first weapon in the opening stage; if you don't take out this guard here, he'll see you on the monitors later



'Excuse me, Mr Poitier, may I have your autograph?'



▶ the first 30 seconds of play, you'll probably get widdled on, thanks to one of the wackos loitering in the cells that you must creep past while getting the hang of stealth.

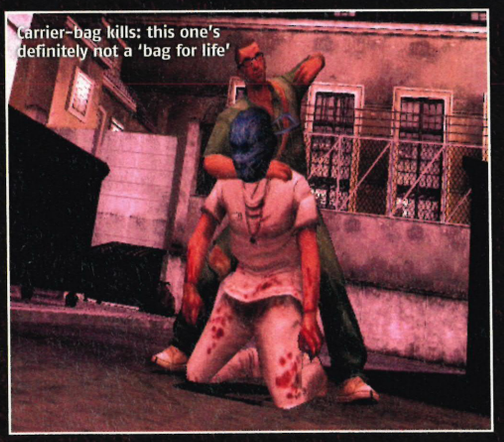
The basics haven't changed: your energy bar turns dark blue when you're out of sight and a radar on the bottom left of the screen tracks nearby threats, their state of alert and just how much noise you're making.

INCREDIBLE SKULK

There's one major enhancement, though, albeit a cruel one. Remember how smug you felt loitering in the shadows in *Manhunt*, cosy in the knowledge that no-one could see you? Kiss that safety blanket goodbye. Any enemies looking in your direction will now randomly activate a micro-game, in which you must match the button prompt that suddenly flicks onto the screen, or they'll spot you.

It's an added shock in an already tense game of hide-and-seek. And enemies don't walk in such predictable patterns patrols this time around, either.

The notorious 'execution' kills make their return, allowing you instantly to snuff any unwary enemy by locking on to them and trailing them from the rear; the longer you hold the lock, the more barbaric the kill, progressing from Hasty, through Violent to Gruesome.

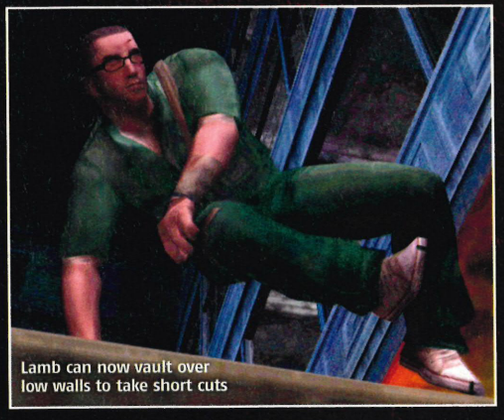


Carrier-bag kills: this one's definitely not a 'bag for life'

And we're not even going to attempt to describe what happens when you Gruesome kill someone with a ballpoint pen, the second weapon you'll get a chance to use after the syringe that you start with.

But if the weapons are new, the methods aren't – although a fresh take is now offered via Environmental Executions (*Hitman*-style setups involving a telephone, say, or a fuse box) and Gun Executions.

Yes, the guns are back. You'll be seeing them in later stages, upping the pace from ultra-painstaking precision assassination to heart-popping sprints and ambushes.



Lamb can now vault over low walls to take short cuts

RED LIGHT DISTRESS

Later in the game, Lamb visits a brothel known as The Honey Pot. Inside, he's hoping to find Judy, a technician from Dixmore who seems to know plenty that she's not telling, a hopeful lead in unravelling the horrendous mess that he's in.

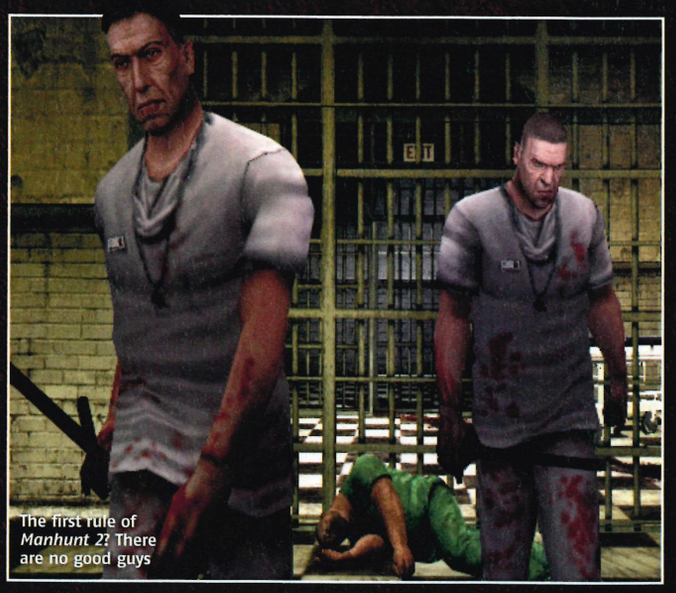
But inside, the first thing you'll find is an angry doorman with a baseball bat wrapped in barbed wire,

These men in black are goons who work for the Project

along with dozens of gun-toting goons from the Project. Not to mention a whore going to work on a 'client' – although that's no bad thing because their dirty groans allow you to cover up the noise of smashing a window in the next room, if you time it right.

By the end of it, Lamb's womanhunt goes awry and Judy ends up dead just as he stumbles across her, without a single one of his questions answered. Oops.

But that's *Manhunt* for you. It's one of the most remorseless game experiences you could ever hope to survive, and *Manhunt 2* isn't looking to change that. Thankfully. ■ **SB**



The first rule of *Manhunt 2*? There are no good guys

MADHOUSE PARTY

The thing about asylums, is that they're full of people whose brains have turned into silly string. And the thing about asylum orderlies is that they have to work with those folk; you can imagine how the Christmas parties go. Since this is a *Manhunt* game, Dixmore Asylum is full of both nuts and nutcrackers. Here's a whistle-stop tour of what to expect as Lamb tries to creep his way out of Dixmore without being fed his own spleen

LEO
We've no idea of Leo's true identity or history, but he will be your 'pal' for the time being. But, this being a *Manhunt* game, we suspect that term should be used very, very loosely

GUARD CASES
Lamb doesn't want to kill, but he's got little choice, especially not when the patrolling orderlies would rather turn his head into a meat feast pizza than talk out their differences

HANGERS-ON
Just as you approach this particular cell, you'll see the footstool used for this hasty suicide being kicked out, and scraping its way across your path. Yup, that's the *Manhunt* we love

MAD PROPS
Rusty wheelchairs, crap-caked walls, flickering light fittings: an estate agent would probably say it was 'characterful, cosy and close to local amenities'. We'll settle for 'stain-of-death hellhole'

monitor

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

SURE, it shares plenty of its core ideas with the original, but that doesn't mean that this suitably uncompromising sequel feels devoid of originality, especially when it's looking to be even more volatile and violent.

HOT OR NOT

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

PUBLISHER **BLACK BEAN GAMES** | DEVELOPER **MILESTONE** | WEBSITE **WWW.MILESTONE.IT**

SBK-07 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

IT'S GOTTA LOTTA THROTTLE

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

Using your ride as an offesive weapon isn't recommended

Not to sound like your granny or anything, but Superbike racing is dangerous. Like, 'statistically five times as likely to be fatal as car racing' type of dangerous. With bikes costing a team around £2-3m simply to lease out, it has always appeared to be a rather extravagant form of suicide.

That's why we're rather glad Milestone has decided to update its Superbike series (now operating with an official licence), because it means our desire to go round and round very fast with huge, sexy machines between our thighs can be sated with no actual risk of permanent brain damage.

Like any modern racing sim worth its salt, *SBK-07* effectively presents two different levels of gameplay: Simulation and Arcade. Between them, they cater for both the stat-crunching bikehound and the simple civilian who wants a quick race after work.

That said, *SBK-07* is decidedly less arcadey than last year's *Superbikes Riding Challenge*, which featured such interesting twists as a rider morale system. No such perks here; *SBK-07* is dead serious about its racing. But whichever way you choose to play, it stumps up an impressive amount of race modes: from the short, sharp fix of a Quick Race to the long-term commitment required by the dozen or so championships that are on offer.

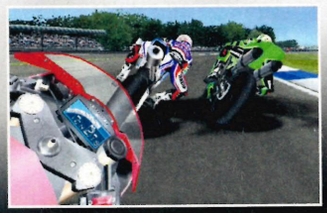
Once you've tired of beating your chest from atop the winner's podium, you can attempt some of the game's punishing challenges, which variously see you trying to complete a race with a damaged bike or popping wheelies and stoppies for a given distance.

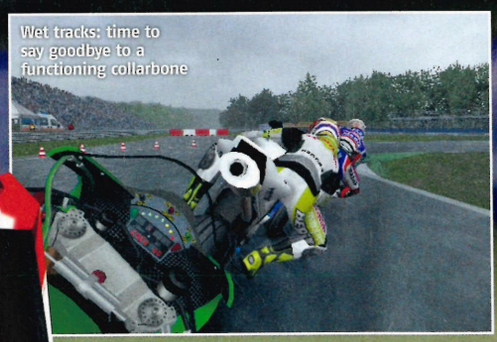
WHEN SKULLS COLLIDE

On the build we played, the control scheme suffered from a few debilitating kinks, most notably the way in which acceleration, braking and the camera are all mapped to the right analogue stick. Such thrifty use of one nubbin may sound laudable but actually it makes things mighty frustrating for those of us without a cybernetically enhanced robo-thumb because one imperfect transition from accelerating to braking will tend to send the camera towards, say, the sky. Hardly ideal when you're bombing down a wet track at 200mph between four other riders.

But apart from that niggle (undoubtedly fixable once the custom control scheme is in place), the twin-analogue control scheme works a treat: as realistic a simulation as you can get without grafting a set of handlebars to your PS2 and crashing it into a big pile of tyres.

Pulling off wheelies is one of the challenges





Wet tracks: time to say goodbye to a functioning collarbone

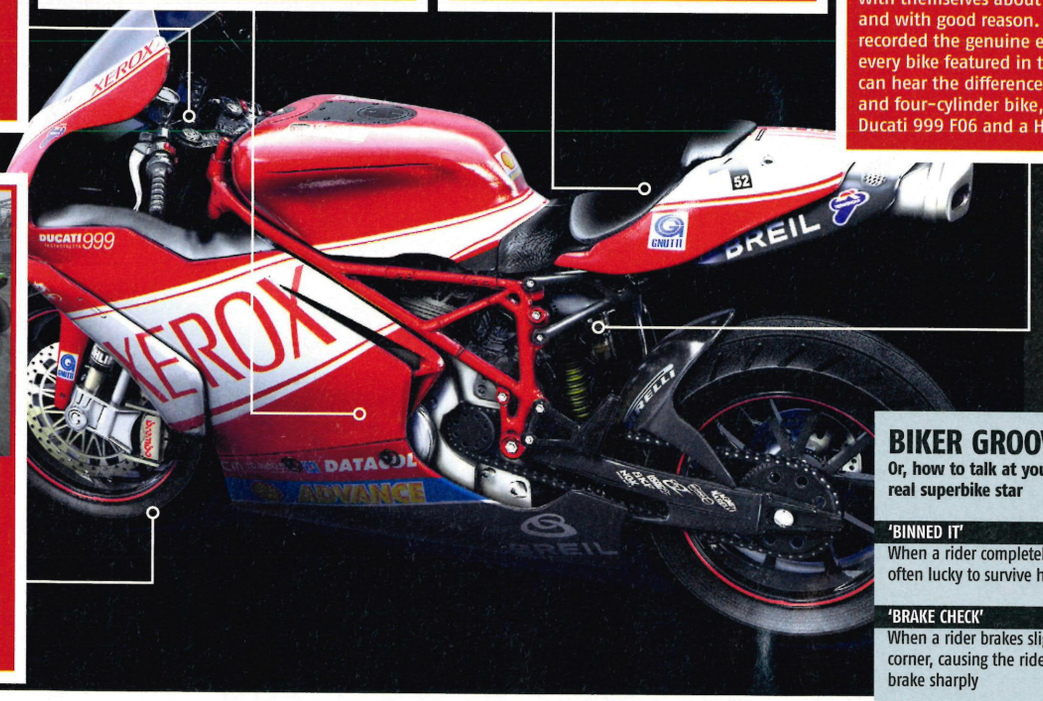
HEART-BRAKER
Despite some bugs that can be ironed out with custom control settings, *SBK-07* controls like a dream. If you fancy some true simulation you can switch off the various brake options, traction control, tyre wear and tear and whether your rider's weight-shifting is manual or not

FAMILIAR FACES
Thanks to Milestone's acquisition of the Official World Superbike licence, *SBK-07* offers the full complement of teams, riders, livery and bikes. Also, as you progress through the game you can unlock real race footage, some nice snaps of events trackside and even an 'umbrella girl' photo album

RIDERS ON THE FORM
The game claims to model the unique riding personality of all the Superbike racers so you can expect to up your game when facing the pros on the Simulation setting. We even caught some of them brake-checking on corners, forcing us to brake hard to avoid an accident, only for them to zoom off. Referee!

VROOMIN' MARVELLOUS
The team at Milestone are pretty pleased with themselves about the game's audio, and with good reason. They painstakingly recorded the genuine engine sounds of every bike featured in the game, so you can hear the difference between a two and four-cylinder bike, or between a Ducati 999 F06 and a Honda CBR

WET'N'WILD
SBK-07 offers four types of weather, all of which have drastic effects on the actual race. Wet weather, naturally, requires some careful driving, and there are some particularly lovely rain splatter effects when racing in first-person view. Just don't let them distract you when you're angling around a slick corner



BIKER GROOVE

Or, how to talk at your mates like a real superbike star

'BINNED IT'
When a rider completely totals his bike, often lucky to survive himself

'BRAKE CHECK'
When a rider brakes slightly during a corner, causing the rider behind him brake sharply

'BUS STOP'
A corner that has to be taken slowly

'CHICANE'
A series of back-to-back turns designed to reduce a rider's speed

'PUCKS'
The kneepad element of a rider's body armour, which stops the road from tearing off his or her kneecaps during corners

'SLUG'
A derogatory designation for a slow motorcycle and/or rider

'SQUID'
Can refer to either a bad ride or one who is simply inexperienced

'SWAPPING PAINT'
The term for when two riders' bikes touch during a race

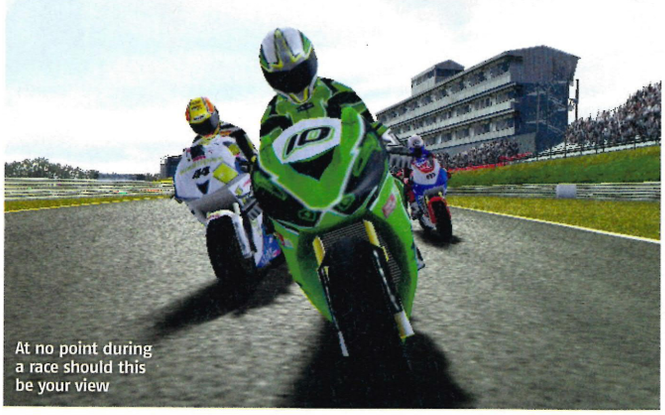
'SWEEPER'
A wide turn taken at high speed

'WASH OUT'
A crash. A bad crash

Which brings us neatly to the spectacular crashes produced by the game's beefy physics engine, which make Richard Hammond's high-speed *Top Gear* misadventure look like a village green fender-bender.

If you're the type of hardcore racer who thrives off the threat of mangled metal and flesh, you'll be pleased to know you can turn on the option of rider's health, so that crashes that look like they would end in a broken spine, pelvis and ego, actually *do* – promptly ending the race and your rider's career. Hence, trying to 'swap paint' (see 'Biker Groove', right) with fellow riders is discouraged, though the tumbling riders are wonderfully animated.

So whether you're a Superbikes aficionado or simply enjoy watching men fall off overpowered motorcycles, there seems to be plenty to love about *SBK-07*. ■ **MS**



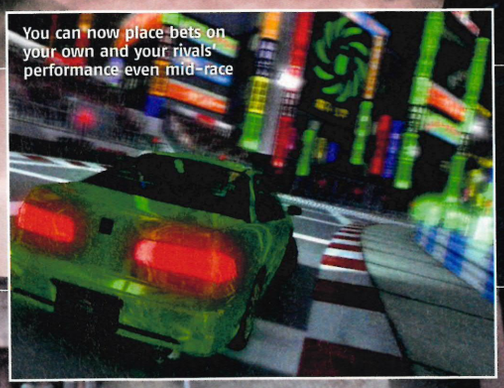
At no point during a race should this be your view

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

OFFICIAL LICENCE notwithstanding, *SBK-07* isn't a radical reinvention of the *Superbike* series, but still remains gripping, high-octane fun for fan and novice alike

HOT OR NOT?

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



You can now place bets on your own and your rivals' performance even mid-race

PUBLISHER THQ | DEVELOPER JUICE GAMES | WEBSITE WWW.JUICEGAMES.COM

JUICED 2: HOT IMPORT NIGHTS

PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK hands on

TURNING UP THE HEAT IN THE BATTLE FOR THE STREETS

If you're a prude, this isn't the game for you. It's not that *Juiced 2* is gratuitously violent or anything like that, more that it screams 'testosterone' from every pore.

Girls, gambling, hip hop, modding, driving at illegal nitro boost-assisted speeds – it's like Juice Games have distilled the essence of 21st-century bloke and poured the resulting toxic concoction directly into their game. The only things missing are booze and football.

It's the follow up to the decent but flawed *Juiced*, THQ's bid to crack the racing/modding genre back in 2005. The main problem with that game was that it lacked focus: the *Need For Speed* series had the modding scene covered and the *Burnout* games had cornered the market for pure racing thrills, but *Juiced* just sort of sat somewhere in between. In short, it didn't have its own hook.

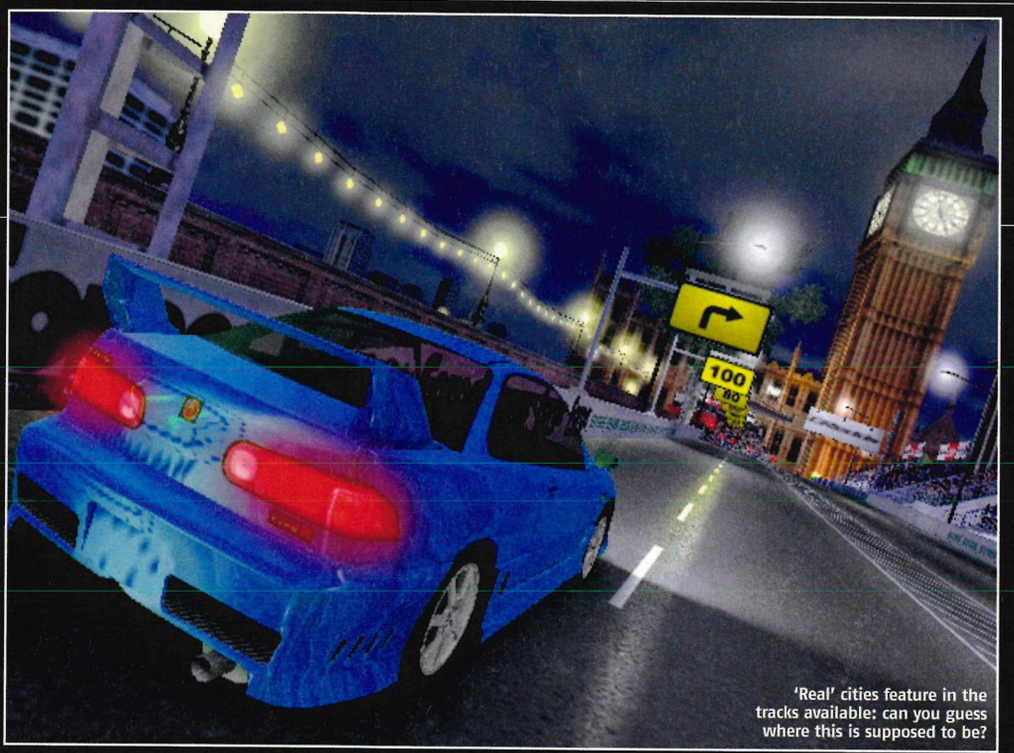
Trying to put matters right, *Juiced 2* has bolted itself onto a popular racing scene in the USA called Hot Import Nights (imagine a fusion between *Top Gear*, MTV and a Latino brothel). Whether it's racing, tuning, decals or just showing off your new Davin Spinners, the Hot Import Nights scene is the place to be if you like fast cars and women who don't know what 'knee-length' means.

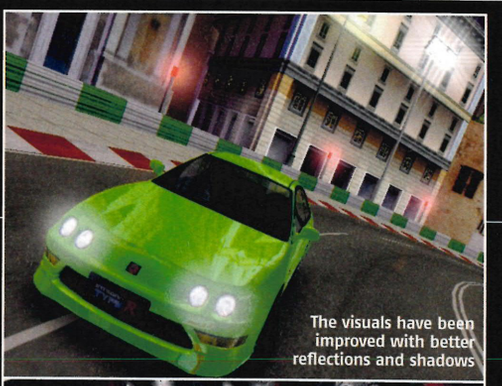
"*Need For Speed* is clearly the industry number one," admits *Juiced 2*'s project lead, Richard Badger. "But this time we're trying to position ourselves better and give *Juiced 2* a clear identity.

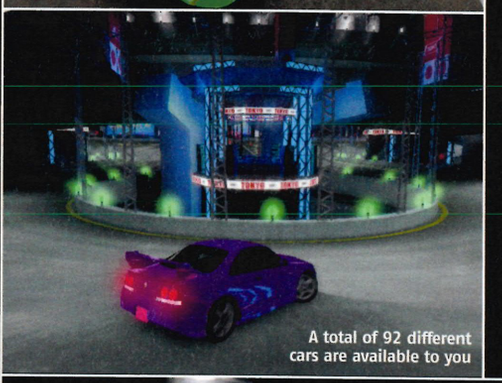
"*Juiced* suffered from not knowing what it was. But *Hot Imports Nights* allows us to focus from a developer perspective – the DJs, the cars, the chicks. We've given *Juiced 2* a clear identity so people get it straight away."

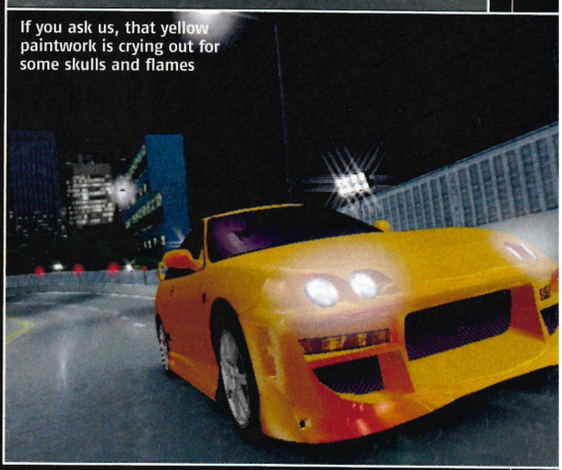
STAKE AND CHIPS

One of the strongest features of the original game was the ability to place wagers on your own racing ability. This could be anything from a small flutter on your


'Real' cities feature in the tracks available: can you guess where this is supposed to be?


The visuals have been improved with better reflections and shadows


A total of 92 different cars are available to you


If you ask us, that yellow paintwork is crying out for some skulls and flames

performance in the next race to an all-or-nothing 'pink slip' wager which might see you losing your vehicle.

CASH TEAM RACING

But for some people, *Juiced* mimicked life a little too closely, plunging you into a spiral of gambling misery that was hard to recover from. Losing most of your cash in one or two races meant you scraped around to get back to winning ways. The career calendar was also structured in such a way that you often ended up missing crucial races until you built up funds again.

Thankfully, *Juiced 2* dispenses with the annoying career calendar and goes for a more streamlined approach. Gambling is still a big part of the game but you won't miss any major event if you need to build up your bankroll.

"Putting on a side bet really worked for us," says Badger. "It added a layer to that race. But what happened in *Juiced* was that you placed the bet before the track loaded – but by that time it was out of your mind a bit.

"This time you can make your bet on the starting grid and the crowd will react to the size of your wager. We've made a spectacle of it. Also, with spectator betting you can bet in the race and watch the odds changing in real time. You can even bet on someone else mid-race."

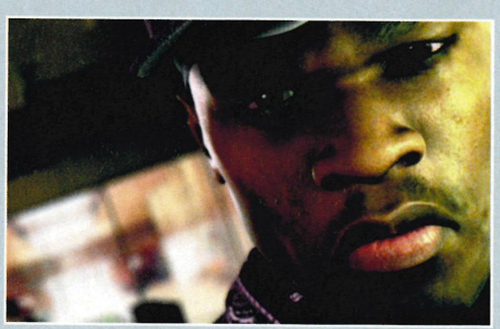
DNA PROFILE

If these tweaks to the games structure and extra gambling options aren't enough to take *Juiced 2* to the front of your starting grid, there's one other feature that should have you revving your engine in anticipation. It ▶

OH! WHAT A NIGHT

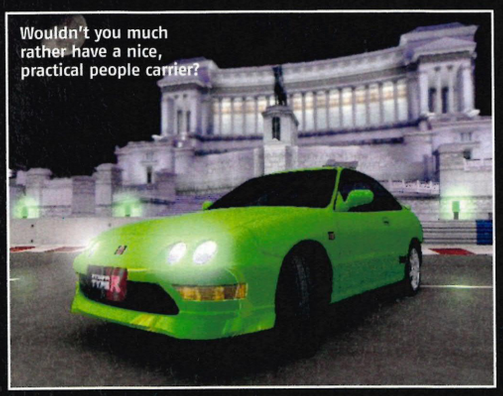
***Hot Import Nights* is an auto show that originated in California and now tours major American cities including Chicago, Miami, Dallas and Boston. The events are truly democratic because anyone can enter a vehicle for a price of around $50. But don't show up with an Austin Allegro unless you enjoy extreme personal ridicule**

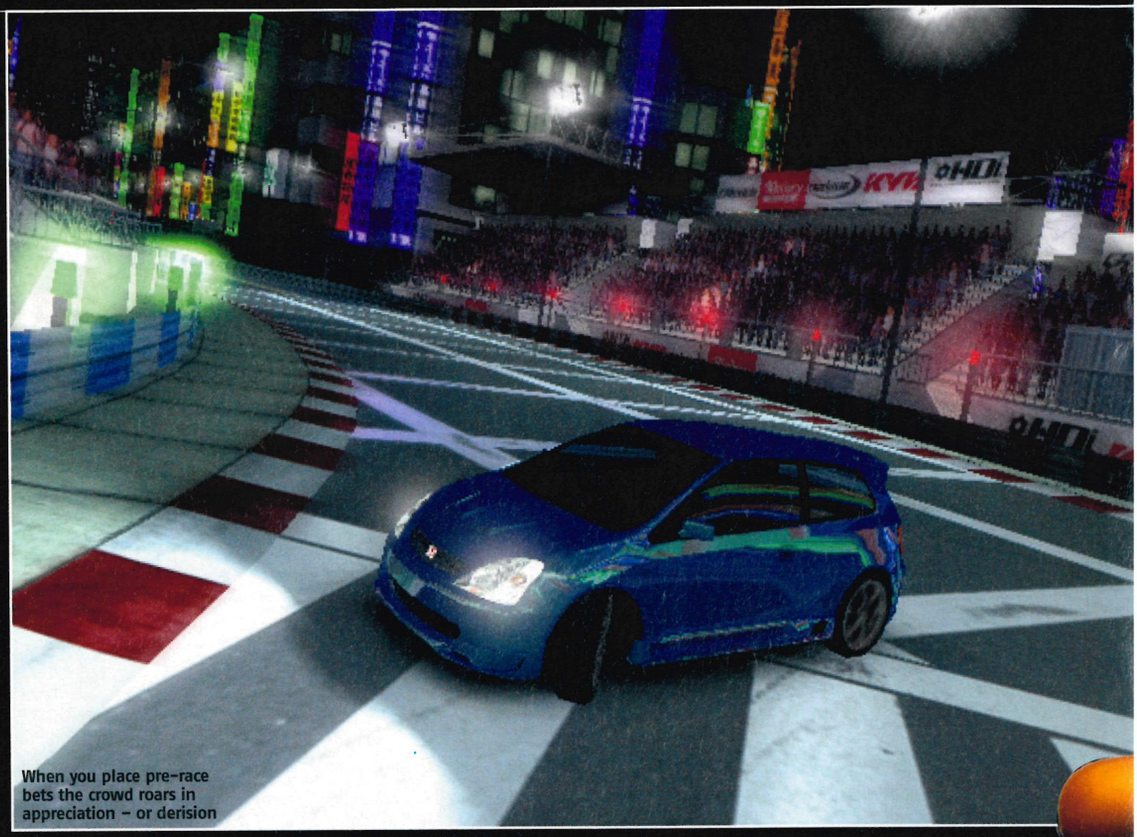
The Girls: To attract sponsorship and larger audiences, female models are paid to give the event a touch of 'glamour'. Now, the totty has become just as important as the vehicles on show. You can even vote for your favourite 'Hottie' on www.hincity.com which provides Top Trumps-style information for each lass



The Music: The car modding scene wouldn't be the same without gangsta rap and a boot full of speakers. Rappers provide the tunes and give Hot Import Nights an underground, er, 'flava'. Rumours that a UK event is to feature Keane singing 'We're Jolly Nice Public Schoolboys Who Love Our Mums' are as yet unconfirmed

The Cars: If you're mad about modding then check out the *Hot Import Nights* website (www.hincity.com) where you can enter photographs of vehicles and get them rated by members. Cars are placed in manufacturer classes and if your motor's voted top you can win an iPod – to plug into your bitchin' in-car stereo, natch


Wouldn't you much rather have a nice, practical people carrier?


When you place pre-race bets the crowd roars in appreciation – or derision

involves building up information about your driving ability as you play the game in what's called your 'DNA'. It's like a fingerprint of your particular driving style, which is recorded and can then be passed on to other players via a memory card or through the PSP version of the game.

There are three main DNA categories: Circuit, Drifting and Gambling. Each has sub-sections relating to how you go about anything from cornering to overtaking. Look at another driver's DNA and you'll be able to see if they're a reckless risk-taker or a clinical perfectionist.

Even if DNA data were used as mere reference material it would be useful but, brilliantly, you can also use it for simulated races either between friends or against AI opponents.

You can also generate a crew of drivers, each with DNA profiles you have made and built up yourself or transferred from a friend's memory card or PSP. Potentially it gives the game a competitive edge and dynamic never before seen on PS2.

SEXY LOOKS

Sequels are usually about 'bigger, better, more' and *Juiced 2* is no different. Visually the game is a step up from the previous iteration with improvements to shadows, reflections, tracks and cars.

The number of licensed vehicles has been almost doubled from the original game to 92, including the magnificent Pagani Zonda, only available to the incredibly committed.

Meanwhile the races take place in more exotic locations this time around, with events in 11 real world cities such as San Francisco, Rome, London, Sydney and Paris. There's a stunning alpine track, too, on which you reach phenomenal speeds while climbing and dropping as much as 1000ft during a single circuit.

Two racing mechanics have also been overhauled to improve the game's competitive dynamic: a 'Spook' meter and a new-style nitrous boost.

The former is triggered whenever you're chasing hard on a rival's tail, harrying their exhaust pipe and looking to squeeze through an opening. Pile enough pressure on, as indicated by the Spook meter, and they're apt to make a mistake and spin out.

The nitrous boost has been significantly enhanced, after feedback from *Juiced* players, to benefit the canny, strategic driver. Before the race starts you can assess the track and set the burn rate of your boost. You see, when you engage your nitrous in *Juiced 2* there's no going back, so it's not something to enter into lightly when you're approaching a corner. More flamboyant drivers will also be pleased to hear that they can regain nitrous by expertly drifting around bends.

CATCHING THE DRIFT

"Our main focus this time was the driving model," says Badger. "We wanted to give the vehicles in *Juiced 2* character, like the driving model in *Sega Rally* for instance. The emphasis is on racing against the human element, not tin boxes going around a track."

To prove this, he let us play a circuit from the new Drift mode, which amply demonstrated the fantastic feedback derived from vehicles as you powerslide your way around a twisty, turny circuit.

"Drifing is a popular sport in Japan," explains Badger. "In *Sega Rally* you could become a great driver quickly and we wanted to have that feel. Drifting is relatively easy to pick up, but to become a master takes practice."

As if to prove this, we quickly racked up a fantastic drift multiplier by screeching around several corners – then lost it with one awkward clank as the back end of our car spun out. On this evidence, Drift mode is going to be insanely addictive.

Juiced 2 already looks like delivering a more focused and exciting experience than its predecessor. We'd wager it's going to be right up there with the best of the new breed of racers on PS2. ■ MW

MINI DRIVER

Juiced 2 on PSP is aiming to be more than a match for its PS2 co-driver

The PSP version of *Juiced 2* will contain all the PS2 cars, tracks and assets but in addition will come with an exclusive Ad-hoc mode and data sharing feature. Cleverly, you'll be able to utilise the PSP version as a 'DNA' capturing device enabling you to transfer driver information to PS2.

Also, Juice Games are aware that their previous title on PSP, *Eliminator*, was tough to drive so they have focused on the handling model early on. With the same number of decals, brands and vehicles as the PS2 iteration this is likely to be the most comprehensive driving game on PSP to date. Oh, and gamers who like breaks as much as brakes will be glad to know that Adam Freeland, whose previous soundtrack work includes music for classic psychedelic shooter Rez, will provide tunes for both versions.

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

***JUICED* NEVER GOT** the exposure it deserved but some hot MTV styling, a revamp to the engine and some cracking new gameplay features all mean this sequel is sure to 'spook' the competition

HOT OR NOT

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

WE ARE THE MODS

What would a street racer be without the chance to get all Tim Westwood and pimp your ride?

DECALS
The developers promise hundreds of pre-designed decal packs ranging from simple shapes and stripes to skulls, aliens and badges. This means you can create your own unique designs by layering on decals and forming your own images

TUNING
There are more than 300 parts, clothing and brand licences enabling you to create a monster vehicle to your own specifications. Cleverly, any new auto part you buy shows up in a 3D X-ray image of your car with info on how it all works. Educational as well as fun!

DAMAGE
Unlike the first game, you won't have to pay for damage incurred during a race: that system was too punitive and encouraged safe, unexciting driving. In *Juiced 2* you may cringe at the nasty prangs and bodywork deformation during a race but it'll be fixed for free

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PlayStation 2

GOD OF WAR II

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PAINKILLER: HELL WARS

TAKE ONE BEFORE BED, AND ONE BEFORE YOU GO TO HELL

It sucks to be Daniel Garner, the lead character of *Painkiller*. Having recently passed away, Dan finds himself stuck in a nightmarish limbo between heaven and hell. And there's an army of wrong-headed demons stood between him and the purification of his soul (necessary to find peace and ascend to the pearly gates of St Peter).

Not only that, but the powers that be are relying on him to prevent a holy war between the forces of heaven and hell that may well destroy the world as we know it. No pressure, then.

Painkiller originally appeared on PC back in 2004 and, being a fast-paced horror shooter, it was well received by the mouse and keyboard community.

Developer People Can Fly built and finished an Xbox version, but that console died its swift and sudden death so the game was never released.

However, thanks to the staying power of PS2, the developers decided it wasn't too late to give Sony's console a dose of *Painkiller*. "The overall install base for the PS2 is larger than it has ever been," explains Byron Gaum from publisher Dreamcatcher Games. "*Painkiller* fans have been clamouring for a PS2 version for a few years now and we're finally ready to deliver!"

It looks like it'll be worth the wait. People Can Fly have been busy optimising the game for the console, enhancing its visuals and cramming in as much extra content as possible.

SPLAT OUT OF HELL

In his quest to rid hell of all its demons in the most vicious way possible, Garner is joined by a friendly demon called Belial. This means you get to tackle certain sections of the main campaign as either man or demon, and this will have an effect on the story.

You'll be able to play with some new

What a pleasant woodland scene. Surely there can be no evil here?

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

new screens

weapons too. And while ordinarily, a batch of fresh firearms wouldn't have us furiously popping the champagne corks and giving each other jockish high-fives, the weaponry in *Painkiller* is rather special.

As well as plain old pistols and shotguns, Daniel packs a variety of unearthly weapons. Our favourite is the Stakegun, with which you pin adversaries to the wall before finishing them off with another weapon.

Belial's Screamer weapon also sounds intriguing. Essentially, it's the living head of a demon on a stick. Whenever he wants to attack with it, Belial rakes his nails across the face to unleash either a flesh-scorching beam of flame, or a devastating sonic attack that destroys anything in its path.

What makes the weapons in *Painkiller* truly sweet, though, is the fact that you're called on to use them *all the time*. There isn't a whole lot of puzzle-solving, backtracking or sprinting around in this game: the focus is very much on obliterating the seemingly endless hordes of hell in a variety of violent ways.

Enemies come thick and fast, making it feel more like an arena combat game such as *Quake 3* or *Unreal Tournament* than a traditional first-person shooter in the manner of, say, *Killzone*.

CREATURE DISCOMFORTS

As you can see from these pages, your adversaries are far from average. The twisted forms you'll be gunning

MONSTER BUNCH

Meet the residents of Painkiller

The Villager: A twist on the classic undead formula: Villagers will attack you with pitchforks, but if you back away they'll lob their own body parts at you

The Scarecrow: Nothing more than an old coat and hat, populated by a load of crows. Held together by hellish magic, it attacks you with a scythe until you manage to blow it apart

The Cow Butcher: This charming chappie is a side of beef with a butcher's head on a pole, and it comes after you with meat hooks and cleavers. Even if you're vegetarian

ETA 5 months
Sep 2007

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PAINKILLER CAPSULE

Little devils are just as horrifying

One thing that really made us sit up and pay attention to *Painkiller* was the way it looked on PSP. Even the early footage managed to stick a hefty stake through the heart of almost every other shooter on handheld, and it can only get better between now and its autumn release. Providing the controls are easy to manage, this has the potential to be a miniature crowd pleaser.

down include 25 new creatures that have been designed exclusively for PS2.

Where else can you fight monsters called Snow Giants and Cow Butchers, or bad guys with holes in their chests and buzz-saws for heads? We all love sinking a sweet headshot into a particularly ugly villain, but what happens when your enemies don't have anything resembling a head to aim for?

MEDI-SIN

We've seen the game running on PS2 and it's looking just as smooth and savage as the PC version. Byron reckons "*Painkiller* does an excellent job of immersing players into its horrifying, gruesome and distorted universe" and from what we've seen of the console version, that's no idle boast.

The developers are expertly squeezing power from the PS2 to keep the game as fast and furious as possible, so unless they hit some kind of technical brick wall between now and September, the single-player portion of *Painkiller* should make for some sweet shooting.

The only area that concerns us right now is the multiplayer. *Painkiller*'s versus mode was a fan favourite on PC, largely because it supported 32 players and offered the kind of mad, twitchy shooting action that suits mouse-and-keyboard players down to their RSI-tingling fingertips. *Hell Wars* on PS2 won't have an online mode, though, just split-screen gaming.

Okay, it works well in *TimeSplitters*, but that game is the split-screen exception, not the rule. We'll reserve judgement, though, until we've had a chance to put *Hell Wars* through its paces in the coming months.

In fact, we can't wait to get *Painkiller* into our PS2. It's been a while since the console bagged a truly show-stopping shooter, and we're gagging to get back behind the crosshairs. Bring on the demons. ■ **AH**

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

GORE, HORROR, MASSIVE WEAPONS and a weighty plot: *Painkiller* ticks all the right boxes and, providing the gameplay is as smooth as it looks, *Hell Wars* is all set to be a stonking PS2 shooter

HOT OR NOT

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

PUBLISHER **SEGA** | DEVELOPER **TOTALLY GAMES** | WEBSITE **WWW.TOTALLYGAMES.COM**

ALIEN SYNDROME

BURSTING OUT OF YOUR PSP VERY SOON

PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK hands on

Sega love PSP. And the feeling's mutual. Few publishers understand the handheld as well as Sega or are better suited to delivering quality hits of on-the-go arcade goodness, a welcome relief for handheld gamers who've had their fill of PS2 hand-me-downs.

Hot on the heels of *After Burner: Black Falcon* and the *Sega Mega Drive Collection* comes *Alien Syndrome*, another revival from Sega's dusty vaults that were sealed back in the late 1980s.

Developer Totally Games has taken the shoot-'em-up gameplay from the original 1987 coin-op and welded a load of modern patches all over the rusty formula. So what was once a basic, *Gauntlet*-inspired maze shooter is now a deep, light-roleplaying, dungeon-crawler.

That's right: the new *Alien Syndrome* has depth. Over the course of the game you develop your skittish space-marine into a flame-throwing, Ellen Ripley-type badass.

As with any RPG, you select a character class at the start. Each one boasts specific attribute set-ups and abilities, so you can plump for the type that best suits your style of play: melée fighter or medic, for example.

HOMEGROWN HARDWARE

You can create your own weapons, armour and items from the materials dropped by aliens after you've torn them in half. These raw materials can either be used straight off to heal your broken body or bolster your assigned weapon, or saved up and used at tool benches scattered around the overrun terraforming station.

The graphics are updated but maintain a retro feel

Learning to craft your own weapons and items is an essential skill if you intend to tackle some of the later, larger bugs. Either that, or you can call in a mate to play the game cooperatively.

BUGS, BOMBS AND BUTTONS

Although *Alien Syndrome* now has RPG elements running through its veins, at heart this is a blood-pumping shooter. The action still takes place in the top-down perspective and controls have been mapped well to the PSP's limited button layout. Basic movement is controlled by the nubbin and strafing is achieved by holding down R1. Health, bombs and weapon hot swaps can be accessed instantly on the D-pad.

Though not as refined in terms of controls or visuals as, say, *Killzone* and *Syphon Filter*, *Alien Syndrome* does manage to work a lovable style of its own.

The comic-inspired story segments offer a refreshing retro feel and in-game, *Syndrome* is prepared to push the hardware to create some of the most colourful, detailed shootouts we've seen on a small screen. ■ ID

The top-down viewpoint gives a clear perspective

You zap aliens in a variety of ways depending on your chosen class

You can build weapons from foraged components

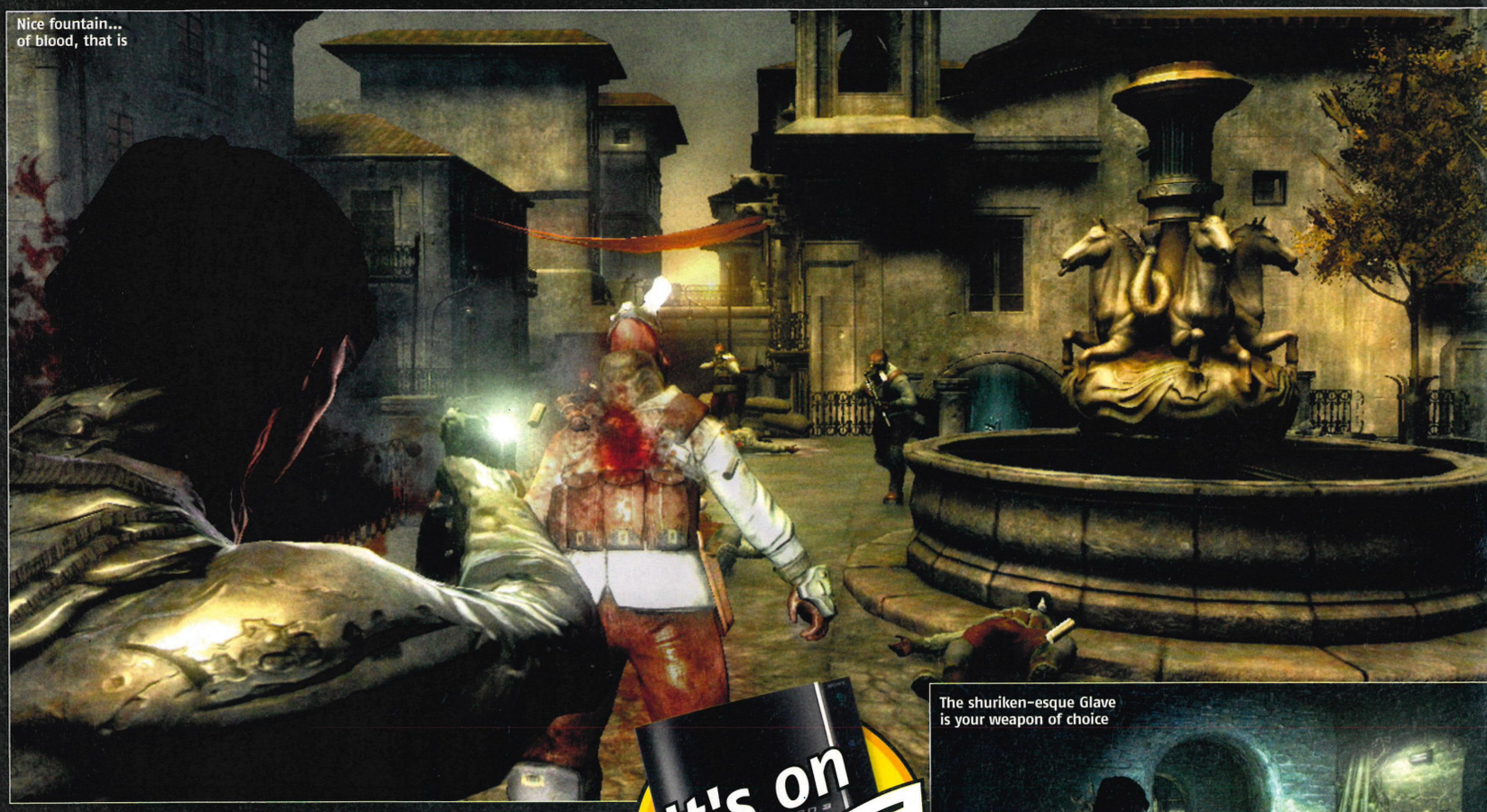
It's on PSP

monitor PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK

ALIEN SYNDROME is a deceptively deep reworking of a much-loved coin-op classic that suits the handheld format down to the fingertips. Sega could have yet another PSP hit on its hands – and in ours

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN



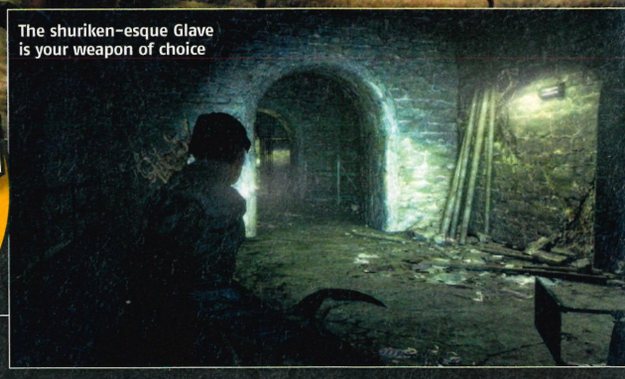
Nice fountain... of blood, that is

PUBLISHER D3 PUBLISHER | DEVELOPER DIGITAL EXTREMES | WEBSITE WWW.DARKSECTOR.COM

DARK SECTOR

It's on PS3

HOW ARE YOU WITH HIGH-DEFINITION BLOOD?



The shuriken-esque Glave is your weapon of choice

After only a couple of minutes in the murky world of *Dark Sector* we've already witnessed one man being sliced clean in half, another being set on fire, and a third receiving a salvo of bullets to the knee before having his head brutally twisted 180° – cleanly breaking his vertebrae with a loud crack. We can almost see the bold, red 18 rating sitting pretty on the box.

But *Dark Sector* is much more than a blood-drenched collection of brutalities. Digital Extremes' first foray onto PS3 is, in terms of look and play, a mongrel breed that's part *Splinter Cell* and part *Unreal Tournament*, with just a hint of *Killzone*. But its developer regards it as a superhero story.

THIS WON'T HURT A BIT...

Players control Hayden Tenno, a young CIA operative who is accidentally exposed to a man-made virus known as Technocyte. Aside from ruining his roguish good looks, it removes his ability to feel pain.

As the game develops, the virus takes a greater hold over Tenno, causing his abilities and attributes to evolve. The developer is keeping understandably schtum about what this actually means in terms of gameplay beyond making Tenno quicker and more resilient to damage, but we wouldn't be surprised to see a fistful of superhuman special abilities creeping in towards the later levels.

In fact, the Technocyte virus and the way it interacts with the people of Planet Earth is at the heart of *Dark Sector*'s plot. At the start of the game you'll be scrapping it out with bog-standard soldiers, but later on there'll be Technocyte monsters waiting to tear a few chunks from your fleshy frame.

These beasts are regular folks who have been completely taken over and twisted by the virus, so not only are they unable to feel pain, they're very ticked off.

BEYOND THE GLAVE

Good job, then, that our Hayden has a badass weapon with which to put all those poor people out of their misery. In addition to the kind of high-tech shooters that would make Tom Clancy froth uncontrollably from the mouth, he carries a device called the Glave.

It's like a ninja star, only with super-sharp blades on the side: all the better for efficiently separating flesh and bone. Lob it at one or more enemies and it'll cut through them and return neatly to your hand, dripping with claret but ready to be dispatched again in an instant.

It's a neat weapon, but not just because it cuts up bad guys. The Glave is a tool for solving some of *Dark Sector*'s surprisingly complex puzzles, thanks to its ability to absorb the power of elements such as fire and electricity. Lob your Glave through a blazing car-wreck and it'll set alight for a brief time, letting you burn your way through a wall of wooden crates, for example.

SO MUCH SLICIER

As you fight through the game you'll learn to harness more elements and solve trickier puzzles. This adds an element of much-needed depth to *Dark Sector*, which should help it break into the already crowded sci-fi action genre on PS3.

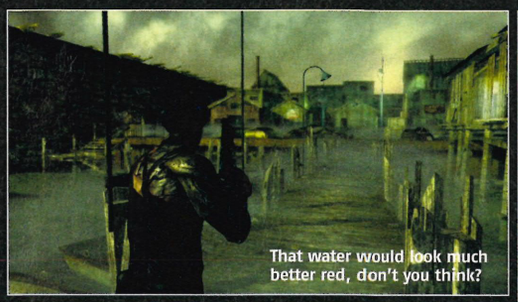
Dark Sector is easy on the eyes and tough on the constitution. If you're not too squeamish about seeing near-photo realistic men being graphically decapitated, keep your eyes on this one. **AH**

monitor — PlayStation 2 official magazine UK

SHAPING UP to be a solid halfway house between stealth puzzling and full-on blood-spilling action. The version we saw needs more polish than a brass statue, but Digital Extremes look to be onto a winner

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN



That water would look much better red, don't you think?

LOOK MUM, NO HUD!
Dark Sector is mercifully free of screen furniture. No health bars or ammo gauges, just the sound of your heartbeat, a greying of your vision when you're close to death and a little flashing light on your weapon to indicate that you're in need of a reload

PICTURE PERFECT
It's impossible to talk about a PS3 game without raving about the visuals. *Dark Sector* is a handsome game indeed, particularly when your firey Glave is casting a fantastic orange glow on the walls and floor around your character and reflecting on his clothes

VIDEO NASTY
Feel a bit 'funny' when you graze your knee? Then this is not the game for you because right from the start, the brutality is cranked up to 11. Dismemberment, maiming, heads rolling around on the floor – it's all here in extreme high-res, next-gen glory

Flooding toilets are the least of your worries

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK
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PLAYSTATION 3

THE AMAZING... SPIDER-MAN

Swinging across the Manhattan skyline, fighting crime and battling with his own demons, Spidey's back in his greatest adventure yet!

Hey there! Peter Park... uhhh Smith here, but you may know me better as your friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man! On 4 May *Spider-Man 3*, the latest movie starring yours truly, will be web-slinging its way onto every cinema screen in the country. And excellently enough there's a game coming out too. Whaddya say we take it for a spin?

MANHATTAN HAS BEEN SUPER-SIZED AND IS WAY BIGGER THAN IN PREVIOUS *SPIDEY* GAMES

SPIN THE MOOD

New York City. The world's greatest metropolis. As you can see, we're swinging smoothly through the city blocks at a phenomenal pace. Notice anything different? That's right, Manhattan has been super-sized!

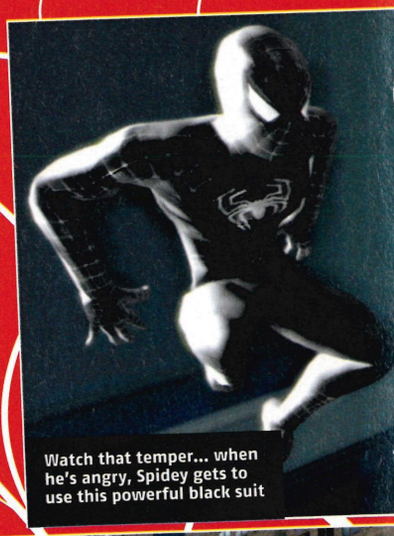
It's now way bigger than in any previous *Spider-Man* game – that's so you can spend more time spinning around! The game makers are proud of what they accomplished with the *Spider-Man 2* movie tie-in and want to maintain the wonderful web-slinging sensation that you enjoyed in the first game.

They're also keeping the open city vibe so, as before, you can go anywhere and do anything at any time. But wait! Down there! It looks like that little old lady's in trouble. Let's swing by...

As in the previous two games, your swinging is smooth and slick

SPIDER WITH POSEY

Let go of her! You can see as I pound these creeps into the sidewalk that my moves have got a lot slicker since last time. There are ➡



Watch that temper... when he's angry, Spidey gets to use this powerful black suit

Citizens don't recognise the man in black so they are afraid of him...

...and although the suit makes him faster and stronger...
...Spidey has his own issues with the suit, too. Is he using it or is it using him?

While wearing the black suit Spidey has far-reaching powers

way more options for fisticuffs, and aerial combat has been hugely expanded. So as I smack this guy off his feet like... hnng... this... I can now fight him in the air, either by juggling him with repeated kicks or by using my webs to keep him flying around!

The developers are keen to get a lot more use out of web-related attacks in this game; they want to do for combat what they did for swinging last time – make it a ton of fun!

BLACK WIDOW

My spider sense is tingling – an attack from behind! You don't creep up on Spider-Man that easily, doofus!

This guy's from the Fireball gang, one of three different crews that roam the city. And he... just... won't... go... down! It's making me really angry – I can feel my blood raging and... something else...

One of the major plotlines in the new movie is my acquisition of a black suit, although to be honest it's less of a suit and more of a symbiotic being from another planet that binds with me like a second skin.

In the movie it hitches a ride to Earth with astronaut John Jameson (yeah, that's right, J Jonah Jameson's son, as if that family hasn't caused me enough trouble already).

Later, when I get rid of the suit, it'll become the entity known as Venom, one of my most famous enemies. But for now, we're together. And when my rage bar rises to a certain level, the black suit takes over, giving me more strength, more speed and crazier attacks.

You build rage by getting high combo strings, getting beaten up badly, or just by hammering the shoulder buttons to build your frustration. Here it comes... arrrrrrrgh!

Don't worry, I'm fine. No, I'm great. In fact I've never felt this good – the power is intoxicating as the suit takes over my body. When I'm in Black Spidey mode I can really let rip. It's perfect for taking on large numbers of gang members and, as luck would have it, here come a few of buddies of that punk from the Fireballs.

WHEN SPIDEY'S RAGE RISES THE BLACK SUIT TAKES OVER, GIVING HIM CRAZIER ATTACKS

With all this extra force I can knock them down in one kick – see? Ooof, sorry fellas, that looked painful. Or I can punch, say, this guy even though he's an entire block away! Get ready to enjoy your one-way flight, sir – you'll be travelling Fist Class!

When I transform I have a whole new set of devastating attacks and it feels great to really lay into the scumbags who plague this city. But sometimes I worry that I'm starting to love the black suit a little bit too much, that it brings out a darker, meaner side of me. Every time I remove the suit I have to play a mini-game, and each time it's just that little bit harder to get it off.

I better give this lady back her purse. Oh, dear, and that's the other problem with this suit: the people in the city don't recognise me as their friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man and they just don't trust this get-up. It is pretty scary-looking after all.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

Well, that's another hoodlum hoodwinked. Keeping the different neighbourhoods of New York happy and crime free is a big part of my adventures in *Spider-Man 3*. And what with it being so big, it's lucky I've got a map.

When you look at the map, certain areas are in red, showing that there's a lot of crime going on in that district. You can choose to help or not, but failing to take action will cause your Citizen Satisfaction Index to drop, which means people will be a less inclined to call on you.

If you do decide to fight crime, you can rule with Black Spidey's iron fist, but that will just scare people as we saw with that old lady back there. It's all about balance.

ROGUES' GALLERY

Plenty of classic Marvel villains show their faces in the new* Spider-Man *game

SANDMAN
Alias: Flint Marko
History: While Flint was hiding on a beach near an experimental reactor, it exploded, showering him in sand and massive doses of radiation, causing Flint and the sand to bond genetically
Abilities: Can transform his body into sand, moulding to any shape

GREEN GOBLIN II
Alias: Harry Osborn
History: The son of Norman Osborn, the original Green Goblin, Harry blames Spider-Man for his father's death and craves revenge
Abilities: Thanks to his father's arms company, Harry has access to many deadly weapons along with all the existing Green Goblin gear

VENOM
Alias: Eddie Brock
History: When Spidey rejects the symbiotic black suit the parasitic alien finds a new host in Eddie Brock. Together they become an entity know as Venom
Abilities: Venom can mimic most of Spider-Man's abilities and has even greater power

THE SCORPION
Alias: Mac Gargan
History: Mac was hired by J Jonah Jameson to undergo a radical experiment in animal mutation. He became part scorpion and lost his mind in the process
Abilities: Enhanced strength, and a poisonous tail that can be used as a weapon

MORBIUS
Alias: Dr Michael Morbius
History: Realising he was dying, Dr Morbius tried to create a cure using fluids taken from bats. It did cure his illness but as a side-effect it turned him into a vampire
Abilities: Has sharp claws and fangs, can fly for short periods of time and has heightened strength

SHRIEK
Alias: Frances Louise Barrison
History: The product of a broken home, Frances ended up on the streets dealing drugs. It is unclear how her powers developed, although she may be a mutant
Abilities: Can manipulate sound, as well as people's fears. Can also fly and levitate objects

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ARACHNID

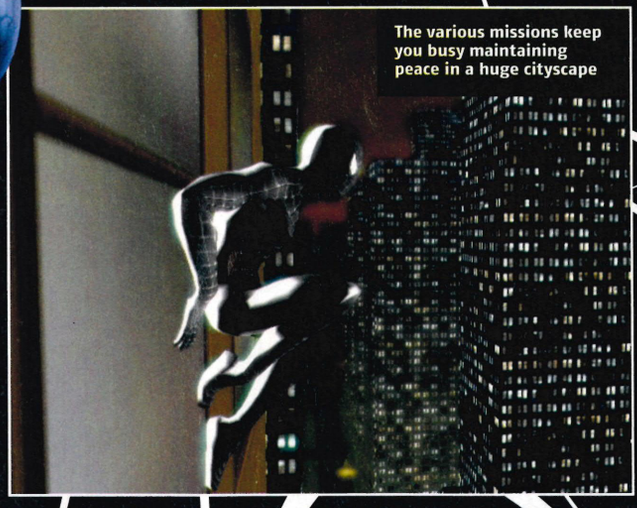
Want to know what to expect from the *Spider-Man 3* movie (showing in all good cinemas from May 4)? Here's the lowdown...

Sam Raimi is back in the director's chair for the third (and possibly last to feature with the current talent) *Spider-Man* movie. *Spider-Man 2* ended with Peter and Mary-Jane very much in love, and as the new movie opens they'll still be running through fields of daisies together. But dark clouds are also on the horizon.

Small-time thug Flint Marko has become a big-time criminal (thanks to an accident that enables him to turn any part of his body into sand), and Harry Osborn has taken up the mantle of the Green Goblin, the villain created by his father. Osborn thinks Spider-Man murdered his father, he's out for revenge, and after finding out Spidey's secret identity in the last movie it spells major trouble for the wall-crawler and his mild-mannered alter ego.

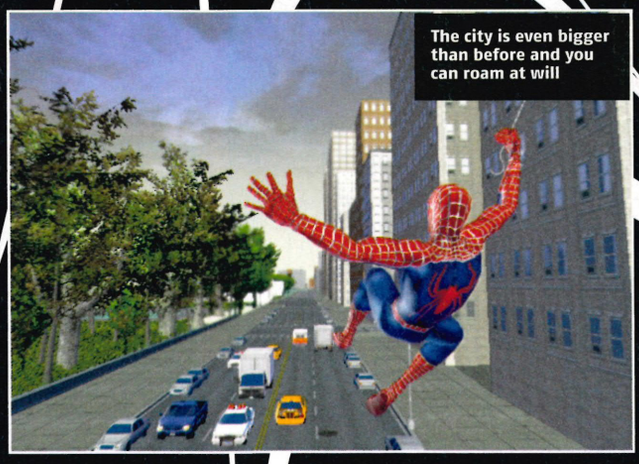
It looks like Spidey will have his webs full then, but luckily he's got a spanking new black suit that makes him feel strangely powerful. "It's a much darker movie," says Sam Raimi. "This third *Spider-Man* takes us on a journey inside Peter.

"The first picture was an external journey: he's bitten by the spider, his uncle is killed. In the second picture he began to make choices. But this time he's going to be tempted by a dark side, a dark side of himself. And this one's really a struggle to see if he can get rid of that darkness and this temptation in his heart."



The various missions keep you busy maintaining peace in a huge cityscape

The new game takes you into the sewers as well as the skyline



The city is even bigger than before and you can roam at will

BACK IN BLACK

If you want to read up on the history of Spidey's black suit in the comics, these are the issues you need...

SECRET WARS #8 (DEC 1984)
The symbiote's debut. Spidey comes across the suit in an otherworldly vending machine

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #258 (NOV 1984)
With the assistance of Mr Fantastic, Spider-Man discovers the suit is alive

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #1 (APRIL 1985)
Parker removes the black costume and it slithers away to find a new host

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #18 (SEP 1986)
Venom's first cameo, as Spider-Man is attacked by a mysterious assailant

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #299 (MAY 1988)
Venom makes his first full appearance

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #300 (JUNE 1988)
Venom reveals his origin in a backstory

The game follows the plot of the new movie pretty closely, but there's also plenty of original material. There are several different story threads, you see.

The developers aren't yet revealing exactly how many story threads there will be, but there will definitely be at least six and possibly as many as 10.

If you get stuck on one storyline, you can switch to another. Not only will this stop you getting frustrated, you'll also build up your stats by completing other missions, making it easier to go back and beat the one you were stuck on.

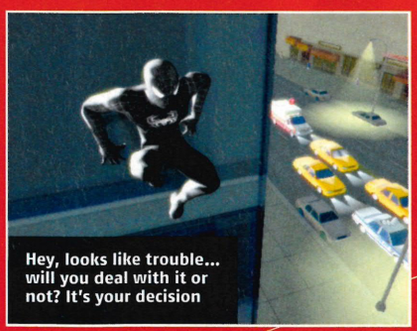
The Marvel cosplay convention was marred by violent outbursts

MANDIBLE ON A MISSION

Movie plotlines will feature my arch-enemies Sandman, The Green Goblin and Venom, but other Marvel super-villains will make an appearance, too. You can definitely expect some trouble from my old foes the Scorpion, Morbius the Living Vampire and Shriek – well, what else would they be doing but getting up to no-good nefarious nonsense?

EXPECT MILES OF WEB SLINGING AND TRIPS ABOVE AND BELOW THE CITY STREETS

The missions themselves will be more exciting than ever. They'll be stuffed with 'cineractives', my name for *God of War*-style sequences where you must match your button presses to the on-screen icons that appear. This enables cutscenes to be playable but still awesomely dramatic. You'll get to see me battling Harry Osborn over Central Park, but I'm not wearing my mask in the fight, so keep my secret identity to yourself, okay?


Hey, looks like trouble... will you deal with it or not? It's your decision

Right, time to head home to Queens, where Aunt May lives. I guess this is where I leave you, and I hope I'll be leaving you good and excited about my new game.

In short, you can expect miles and miles of web slinging, trips above and below the city streets (boy, am I looking forward to cleaning up the dirty deeds in those sewers!) and more challenges and bonus races than there are eggs in a spider's nest. This thing is deep, people.

But remember to be careful: the black suit is extremely powerful, and as we all know, with great power comes great responsibility.
Until next time, folks! ■

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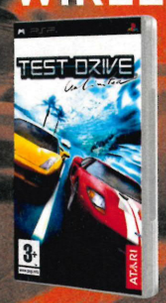

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Will this game define PS3?

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review

THE ONLY REVIEWS SECTION YOU CAN TRUST

With Mike, our new staff writer, starting this month, we've felt compelled to put him through our hallowed OPS2 initiation rites.

There was the naked run to the canteen to pick up coffee for the team, for example.

Then there was the time we put him in a coffin, placed two dozen constantly vibrating control pads inside, and shut the lid for an hour. Worst of all, we had him play *Little Britain: The Video Game*.

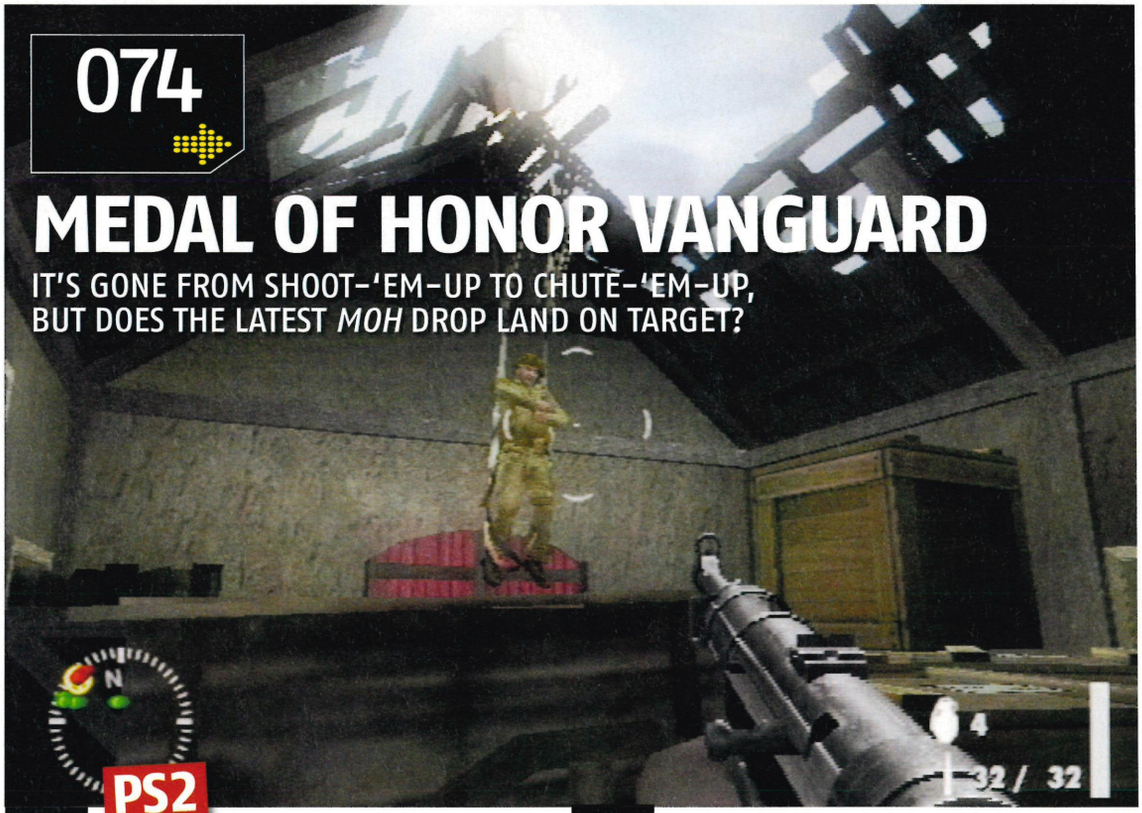
There is an upside to all this semi-legal torture, however: our Mike is surrounded by incredible PS2 games all day, every day.

This month, he's ploughed through *SOCOM: Combined Assault*, looked longingly over Andy's shoulder at *Medal of Honor: Vanguard* and nubbin-ed his way through the bumper pack of PSP titles we chucked at him: *300: March to Glory*, *Metal Slug Anthology* and *Virtua Tennis 3* to name just three.

And after that massive reviewing binge, Mike is now a valued member of the new-look Team OPS2.

Nick

Nick Ellis,
Editor



074

MEDAL OF HONOR VANGUARD

IT'S GONE FROM SHOOT-'EM-UP TO CHUTE-'EM-UP, BUT DOES THE LATEST *MOH* DROP LAND ON TARGET?

PS2

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From Russia with blood. How does this old-school top-down shooter fare on PS2?

078 **UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2006-7**
Is this mid-season *FIFA* clone worth 40 of your finest pounds? Depends how much you love footy

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Throw on your mac and climb back into the virtual dugout for some serious stat-management

081 **SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DEVIL SUMMONER**
Summon demons. Cross dress. Keep cats

082 **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES**
Amphibi-awesome or turtley shellish? Check out our in-depth review to find out

085 **FAST & THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT**
Game titles should tell the full story, we reckon. *The Plodding and the Fussy: Tokyo Drag*, anyone?

086 **SINGSTAR POP HITS**
A *SingStar* game featuring Lemar, Sugababes and Pink? Smell the cheese and do it anyway

088 **SOCOM: COMBINED ASSAULT**
What's Navy, grey, brown, and occasionally splattered in crimson? Why, it's the latest *SOCOM*!

090 **BUZZ! THE MEGA QUIZ**
Is it a) fantastic family fun b) piddling post-pub pastime, or c) trivia tat?

091 **SAMURAI WARRIORS 2: EMPIRES**
Another month, another tedious *Samurai Warriors* game to hack your way through

091 **FREAK OUT - EXTREME FREERIDE**
Gnarly mountain sports invade PS2, but we're getting real 'board' of these *SSX* wannabes

092 **GTA: VICE CITY STORIES**
Step back into the 1980s and take another trip to *Vice City* for the PS2 version of this portable hit

PSP

094 **AFTER BURNER: BLACK FALCON**
Own the skies in this remake of the classic Sega arcade franchise. You can be our wingman

095 **300: MARCH TO GLORY**
Is that an army of Spartans in your pocket or are you just pleased to see us?

095 **VIRTUA TENNIS 3**

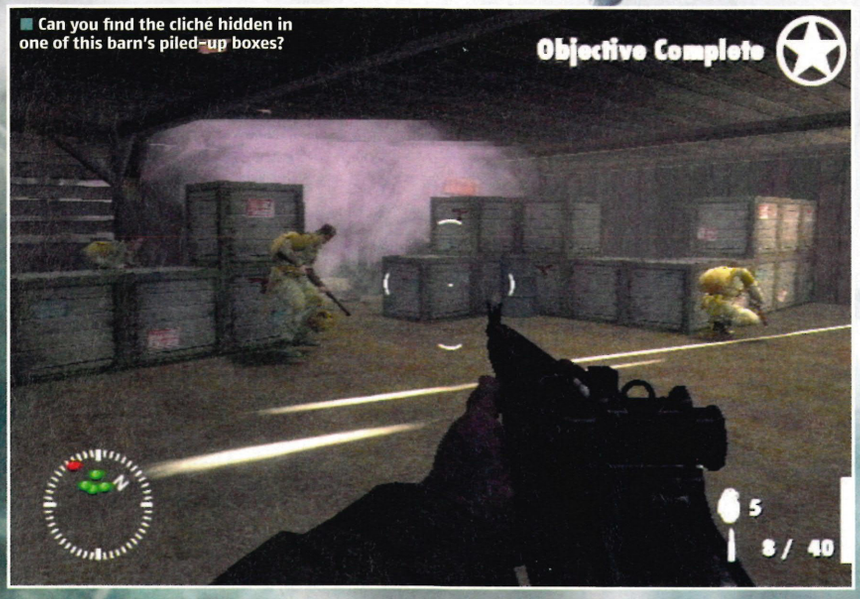
097 **MACH**

098 **SID MEIER'S PIRATES!**

099 **METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY**

099 **GUNPEY**

099 **ZENDOKU**



Can you find the cliché hidden in one of this barn's piled-up boxes?

MEDAL OF HONOR VANGUARD

More likely to receive a dishonourable discharge than a Victoria Cross

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EA
DEVELOPER EA LOS ANGELES
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-8
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.EA.COM/MEDALOFHONORVANGUARD
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Drop into some of the most influential battles of WW2 as American paratrooper Frank Keegan, and kill as many Germans as possible

War is hell. Fight the good fight. Make Uncle Sam proud, son. We thought we'd kick off this review with a few tired war clichés, because *Medal Of Honor Vanguard* is the largest collection of predictable, overused World War 2 gimmicks we've ever played. If it's been done 100 times before, you'll find it in here.

That's right, we're sorry to say that it all seems to have gone wrong for the plucky Nazi blaster we learned to love back on PS1.

Not too long ago, the *Medal Of Honor* name was a guarantee that the game inside the box contained some quality Boche-blasting action, but since the disappointing Rising Sun appeared in 2003, games such as *Call Of Duty* and *Brothers In Arms* have come along and done World War 2 with more panache, style and brutality, and now this series looks like a desperate imitator.

Health packs are out; a *Call Of Duty 2*-style rest-and-recover-damage system is in. Down-the-sight aiming, as made popular by *Brothers In Arms*, is now the only way to kill Gerry with any efficiency. And the combat zones are now filled with *Call Of Duty 3*-esque battle chatter. In fact, the in-game dialogue is almost identical.

CROSS HERRS

Medal Of Honor is looking tired, too. Once the handsome child of PS2, the series seems to have grown up ugly. We had no idea so many shades of brown existed until we'd spent a couple of hours in the company of Frank Keegan and his identikit squad mates, battling it out in the most uninspiring locations virtual Europe has to offer.

To make matters worse, the usual explosive EA-style presentation has been left out of *Vanguard* entirely, so there's very little to hold your attention as you trudge through the dimly lit game. No neat cutscenes or savage, *Saving Private Ryan*-style set pieces; just blocky-headed men yelling at each other in Americanglish. To say it's uninspiring is an understatement.

IF THE SHOOT FRITZ...

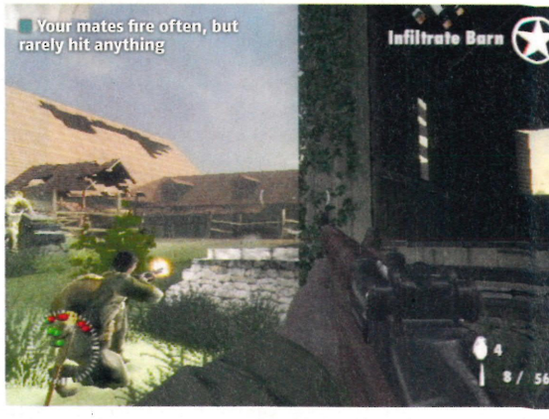
All this could be forgiven if the core gameplay was gripping but *Vanguard* fails to deliver in this respect, too.

Aiming and shooting is mostly executed with precision, but peripheral features such as animations and squad AI have been implemented in the most cack-handed way.

Fire at an enemy from a distance and there's a noticeable pause between the bullet hitting him and the start of his hammed-up death animation. This bursts any sense of atmosphere and immersion like a Claymore stabbing a balloon: war at its most unintentionally funny.

AI too, has become a massive problem for the series, and *Vanguard*'s supposedly friendly forces are no exception to this. In fact there were

You'll need to Herr on the side of caution



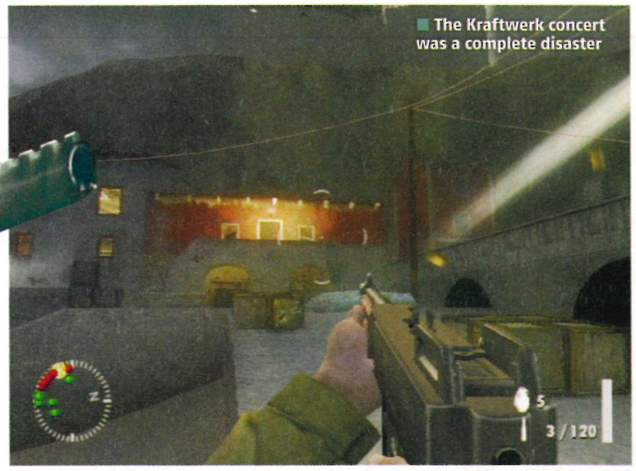
Your mates fire often, but rarely hit anything

times when we were playing that their stupidity bordered on malicious.

Line up a shot from behind cover and one of your so-called 'buddies' is likely to stick his fat head in front of your crosshairs at the critical moment and completely block the bullet. Even more disturbingly, whenever you rush ahead of the squad to clear out a building with your close-quarter weapons, your 'mates' lob a salvo of grenades through the windows, seemingly oblivious to the fact that they're more likely to kill you than the Germans who've already taken cover behind tables and cupboards.

Oh, and the new grenade warning meter (just like the one in *Call Of Duty*, in case you were wondering) is all but useless.

It's perhaps a small mercy that the game is extremely short. There are four main campaigns, with each one split into around two to three missions. If you know your way around an M1


The Kraftwerk concert was a complete disaster

See German, shoot German. It's that simple

Oops, on the wrong page

NOW WITH MEDALS!

But still, sadly, lacking 'honor'

Much like *MOH Heroes* on PSP, *Vanguard* offers you the chance to earn real (well, on screen, anyway) *Medals of Honor*. You'll be awarded them for stuff like finishing missions without dying, pulling off a set number of headshots or using all the weapons on the level. And they're not just for show, they come with stat boosts to help you through later levels of the game. It may not be any sort of substitute for swanky visuals, or original gameplay, but it does add an element of replayability to each campaign. If you've got the stomach for it.

Look, he's getting ready to block your shot at the crucial moment

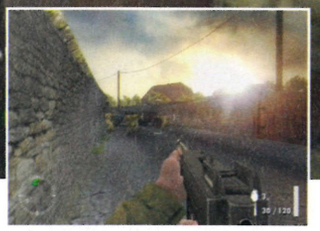
Let's play count the shades of grey in this picture. 1, 2, 3...

Garand, you won't get much of a challenge until the final (frustrating) couple of missions, which are disproportionately more difficult than any of the other levels.

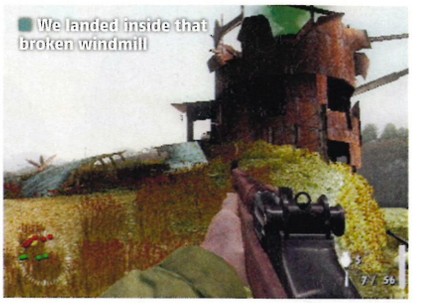
HERR CUT

Having cruised through the rest of the game, we spent hours replaying the same part of one such later mission because our enemies just kept on respawning and respawning. That's not challenging gameplay: it's a cheap way to artificially lengthen an otherwise brief game.

That's right, old bean. That's *exactly* where you need to stand



Bringing new meaning to the phrase 'barn-stormer'


We landed inside that broken windmill

The only real saving grace for this package is the multiplayer mode, which supports a mighty eight players via a split-screen format. The selection of maps and game modes is extremely impressive, and although an online mode would have been a welcome bonus, there is plenty of friend-fragging enjoyment to be squeezed from the offline game.

Why? Well, you'll notice much fewer of the game's shortcomings in multiplayer. The strange difficulty curve, the rubbish animations, the woeful AI – they're all thankfully absent from *Vanguard*'s Deathmatch modes. The only real problem is finding a large-enough telly to cater for the split-screen.

ENTRENCHED

Judging by this effort, it's obvious that *MOH* needs a complete rethink. Although the *Vanguard* team seems to have finally nailed the multiplayer side of things (an area in which *MOH* has traditionally struggled more than a kidnap victim) the main campaign appears to be stuck in the mud, just waiting to be picked off by an eagle-eyed marksman.

On a console filled with young, hungry war heroes such as *Call Of Duty* and *Brothers In Arms*, *MOH* has become the one-eyed old veteran who hangs around in the officer's mess supping whisky and reminiscing about the good old days.

We could almost smell the stale urine while we were playing. All joking aside, though, *MOH* sorely needs to recruit some new ideas, double-quick time. ■ **Andy Hartup**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK VERDICT

Graphics	05	Bland, brown and very boring
Sound	07	Sounds like clichéd war to us
Gameplay	05	Too similar to *Call of Duty 3*
Lifespan	05	Long in multiplayer, short in single player

Shoddy, dull, and filled with recycled WW2 content we tired of years ago. The weakest MOH on PS2: nothing more than a poor man's Call Of Duty

5/10

JUMP FOR JOY

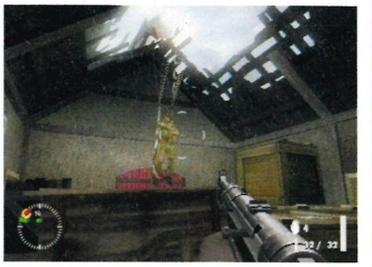
Parachuting into a war zone, for dummies

LAST MINUTE DOT BOMB

If WW2 games have taught us anything about parachuting, it's that leaving the plane should always been done at the very last minute, preferably when both engines are on fire and the tail is missing

LEAP OF FAITH

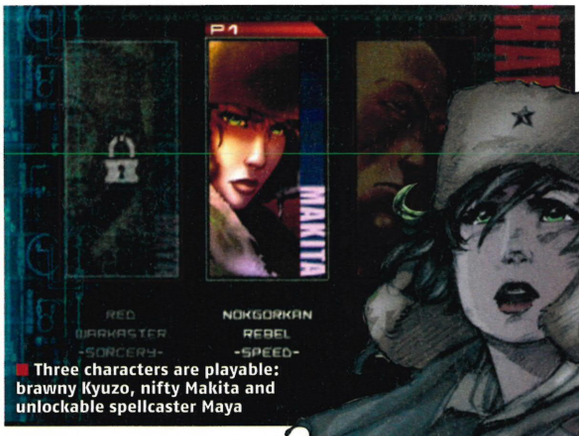
Another thing we've learned from games is that paratroopers always miss their targets. Well, if they were to hit their marks perfectly, you'd miss out on all those levels where you have to regroup with your buddies behind enemy lines



HANGING OUT

Although you yourself will never get stuck in trees and half-destroyed buildings, your buddies will. You're guaranteed to find one of them hanging around, just waiting to be cut down. Is that why they call it the Airborne Division?

You face a stream of old-school, arcade-style fights, interspersed with bosses



Three characters are playable: brawny Kyuzo, nifty Makita and unlockable spellcaster Maya

RED STAR

Arcade-style shooters can be a Ruskie business

DETAILS

PUBLISHER TAKE 2
DEVELOPER ACCLAIM/XS GAMES
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 6 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.REDSTARGAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Fast-paced guns 'n' melee hybrid, featuring wave upon wave of enemies broken up by bosses dotted throughout each stage, presented from top-down and side-on views

More long-standing OPS2 readers may be feeling a sense of deja vu here. Yes, *Red Star*, due to be published by Acclaim a few years back before the company went under, has returned.

So get that arcade stick elbow fired up. The game was snapped up by Take 2 and developed by XS Games, and is now set to hit the shelves with a soft, budget-price plop.

Red Star is spun off from a comic of the same name, set in a post-WW2 version of Soviet Russia that's rife with magic, bullets and folklore. In game terms, that translates into a neat little mix of gunplay (with some great movement and lock-on options) and up-close combat (centred on some flashy and gratifying combos).

Your weapons can be powered up using credits from completing stages

The view changes between side-on and top-down as you go

It features hulking mechanical bosses that spit out beautiful patterns of lasers and missiles, broken up with streams of enemies that need only slightly different strategies to defeat.

That will be a problem for some – this is classic old-school stuff indeed, even to the annoying extent of having to restart a stage every single time you die.

RED OR DEAD AGAIN

There's imagination in there, but not the kind of variety you'll be used to in the best PS2 games of recent years; and, while it has some stylish touches and a strong art direction, the visuals do look like they're getting on a bit.

If you bought your PS2 to have *God of War II* punch your guts out of your ears or *Grand Theft Auto* steal your life for a month, then *Red Star* isn't for you. But if you love the thought of a two-dimensional halfway-house between *Gungrave* and *Blood Will Tell*, you'll do fine, especially with another player in tow.

But if you don't know or care for either of those last two games, approach *Red Star* with caution as much as curiosity. **Steven Bailey**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	06	Ageing, but some classy touches
Sound	06	Good atmospherics, but not weighty
Gameplay	07	Slick and nippy, but no grand depth
Lifespan	06	Few will find replay truly rewarding

A decent, short-term hack'n'blast that's best with two players who like old-school games, but a far cry from today's big action titles

6/10

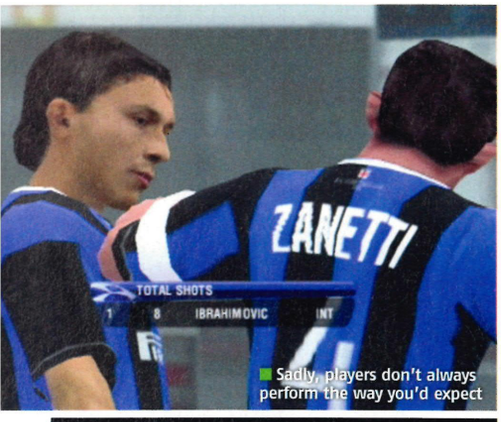
SICKLE WHITE FEMALE

There are three basic approaches to combat, each illustrated here by Makita, *Red Star's* speedy, sickle-wielding lady killer

Gunplay is easy to grasp, offering strafe and standstill controls that both work well. Enemy bullets can be very pretty indeed, but your shield won't stop them

In melée combat you can stitch together combos of dashes and mid-air juggles. Your (limited) shield can protect against enemy thumps, too

Duff up enough enemies with melée hits, and your Protocol power will activate, useful as a smart-bomb style super-attack or for recovering from a string of attacks



Sadly, players don't always perform the way you'd expect

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 06/07

PlayStation 2

Got FIFA 07? Turn the page now. Everyone else? Smile like Ronaldinho

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EA SPORTS
DEVELOPER EA SPORTS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.UEFACHAMPIONSLEAGUE0607.EA.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE YES

AT A GLANCE
FIFA-style attempt to recreate the excitement and glitz of the European Champions' League on your PS2

Wayne Bridge might have claimed that Chelsea winning the Carling Cup Final was all about "getting the three points", but even he wouldn't fail to see the irony at work in EA's latest football game. Because, while everyone's supposed to be shifting to the greener grass of next-gen, the fact is that the PS2 still has the best version of *FIFA* on the market.

We say *FIFA* because even EA aren't bothering to dream up imaginative press releases to explain this one away. It's *FIFA* in all areas except two: the name and the fact that you can only play as club teams in the qualifying, group and knock-out stages of Europe's elite trophy.

NIGGLE IT

Let's get the problems out of the way first. For starters, it's a less comprehensive version of *FIFA*. That's obvious. You can access all the teams in this game in the copy of *FIFA 07* you've got on your shelves, plus a whole lot more, *and* countries. That's not to say there isn't a hefty choice of sides to choose from in UEFA. There is.

But if, like OPS2's esteemed editor, you like your slab of Beautiful Game a little more down-to-earth (and it doesn't get any more down-to-earth than Nellis' love for Plymouth Argyle), there's going to be a gaping hole marked 'Your Team In Here'.

Secondly, as if to emphasise that this is, for all intents and purposes, a cash-in, all the niggles that chipped away at you in *FIFA 07* are still present and correct.

So, you've got turning circles that aren't quite perfect enough to allow you to fool opposition defenders with a quick drop of the shoulder and a direction change. You've got through balls that work, but not as well as they should – diagonal through balls, for some reason, are much more difficult than through balls into the middle.

Plus there still doesn't seem to be a massive difference between genuine world-class players and the second-string pros. We played a qualifying tie, as Arsenal, against Monaco, in which Adebayor and Hleb were sensational while Henry seemed sluggish and unresponsive, and every single one of Cesc Fabregas' passes ended up at the opposition's feet.

TEAM ME UP

Fortunately, because the game sticks so very, very close to the *FIFA 07* template, it doesn't matter as much as it might have. Sure, the lack of teams is an insurmountable problem, making this a purchase only for players who either haven't got the last *FIFA* and/or just have to have the official Champions League game, theme tune and all. But everything else is superb.

Games are end-to-end, smooth and responsive, with a great tempo. The solid AI mostly shifts players into the positions you want them, making for intelligent, natural-feeling attacking and defending. Animations are easily as good as anything on next-gen (albeit at a lower resolution, natch) with the typical EA attention to detail such as cutaways, goal celebrations and camera angles.

Oh, and we have to mention the commentary. Clive Tyldsley isn't everyone's cup of tea with his 'that night in Barcelona' schtick, but within your PS2 disc he single-handedly brings games to life. The commentary here is a lesson for all other sports games: excitable, opinionated, annoying, seamless. It's a joy. The only shame of it is that he's supported by Andy Townsend, and only seems to have recorded about 50 lines.

This may be a less comprehensive version of *FIFA 07* in all but name and it may still lack the refinement and correct 'feel' of *Pro Evolution Soccer* but *UEFA Champions League* continues EA's rich vein of form. And the best version's here on PS2. ■ **Tim Weaver**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK VERDICT

Graphics	08	Terrific animations – very, very tidy.
Sound	08	Great commentary but it repeats too soon
Gameplay	08	Great goals, feels right. All round good
Lifespan	07	Plenty of modes, just not as many as FIFA

Blatantly a cash-in, on the back of the knockout stages of the Champions' League. But still a formidable football game

7/10

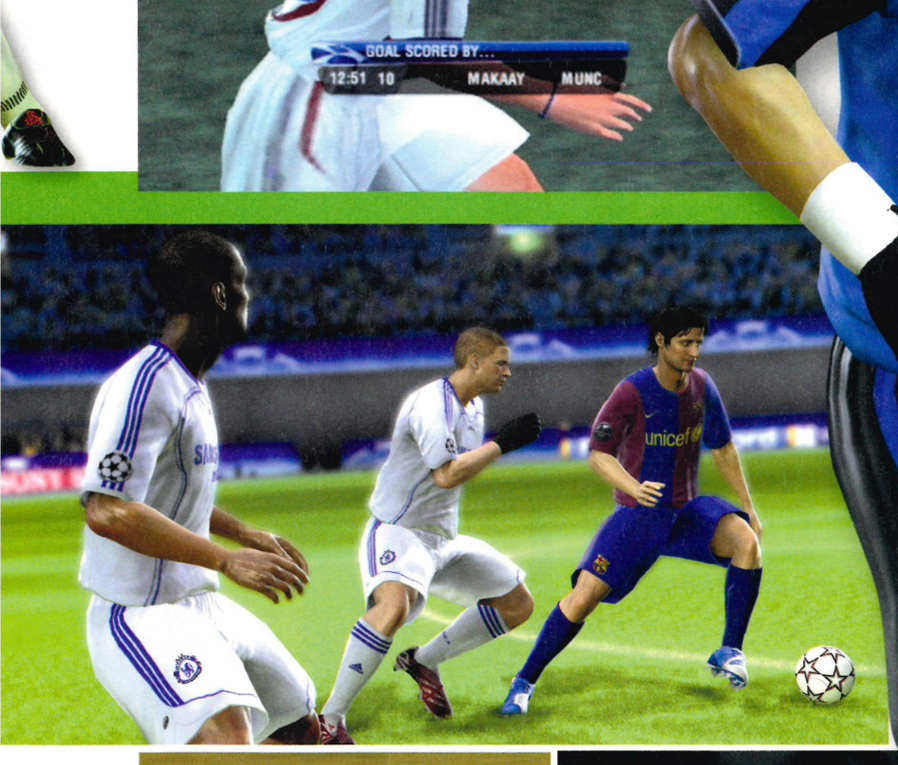
Responsive AI makes for smooth-flowing matches

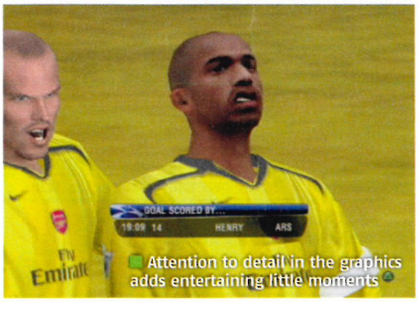
TREBLE ALLIANCE

New for this year's Champions League: er, the treble...

Taking a leaf out of *Madden* and *NFL*'s Dynasty mode, the Treble is basically *UEFA*'s answer to a 'regular' game's Story mode. As a new manager, you join a team of your choice, and after the chairman tells you his totally unrealistic expectations for the season, you have to attack the Champions League, League title and FA Cup on all fronts and pray you end up with the Treble.

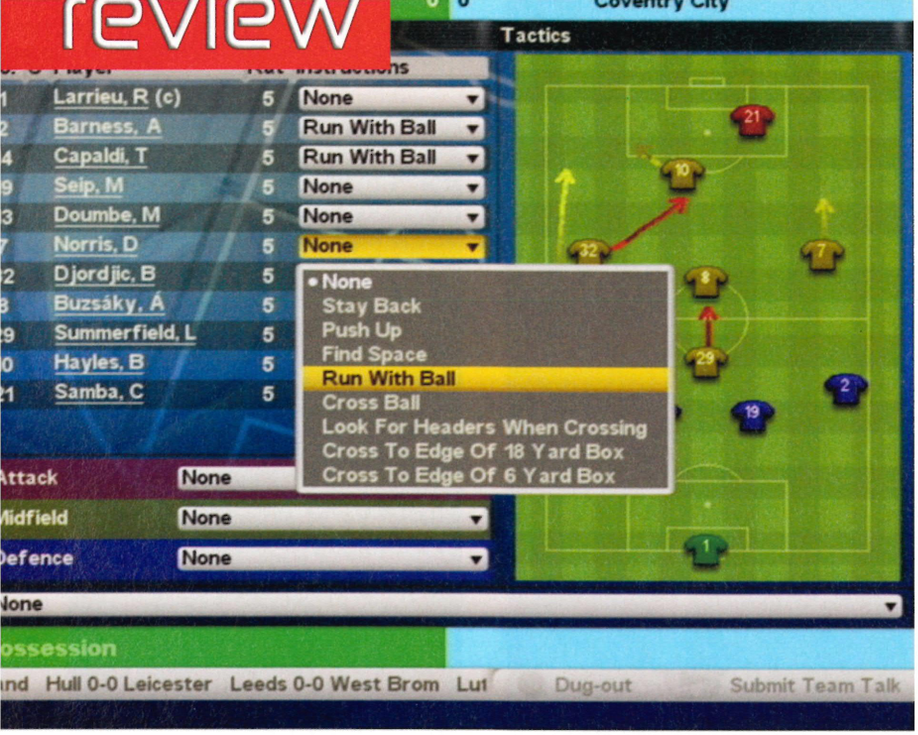
It's actually quite fun. As you play games, all sorts of scenarios turn up: brilliant surprises in the youth team; senior players not performing; transfers; injuries; the board getting antsy. Of course, unlike *Football Manager* on PSP, being the gaffer feels about as realistic as *Footballers' Wives* – but as a way to smooth over the lack of teams and competitions here, it succeeds.

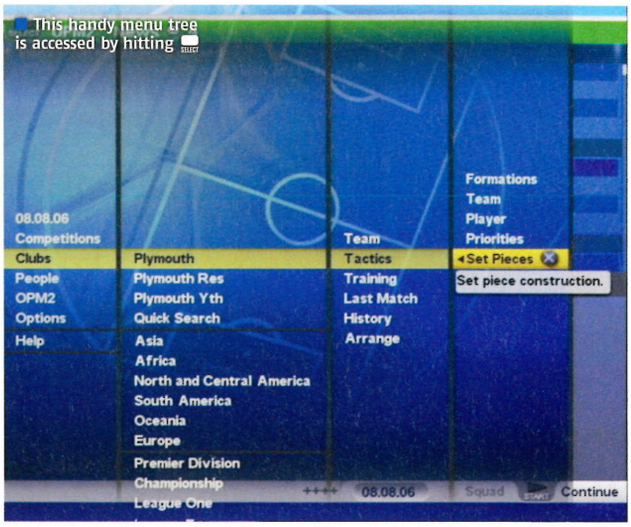




Attention to detail in the graphics adds entertaining little moments

review





CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2007

Fails to live up to its early-season promise

PlayStation 2

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EIDOS
DEVELOPER GUSTO GAMES
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.CHAMPIONSHIPMANAGER.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
Latest edition of the hulking football management that features a set piece construction option and improved menu navigation

There's something that troubles us about *Championship Manager 2007*. In the grand scheme of gaming niggles it isn't a big thing, but it is, as Uma Thurman says on that advert, a thing. You can't find out the height of any players.

It's easy to find how quick and strong they are or even get some breakdown of their playing mentality. But when it comes to knowing if they are big enough to get on the scarier rides at Alton Towers, you're screwed.

Gusto has created a game engine that isn't dependent on feet and inches, but management sims are all about details and frayed edges like these are apt to unsettle. Suddenly you find yourself picking at loose ends which can lead to everything unravelling.

STATS YOUR LOT

At first this *2007* version of *Champ Man* oozes authority and solidity, brimming with options and statistics. Its solves the perennial problem that many PS2 sims have of providing an adequate way of picking a way through this information by a huge menu tree that appears when you hit SELECT.

Within it, you have easy access to everything from scouting to dealings with the board. From then on, your shoulder buttons locate sub-sections, creating a navigation system that is effective even if it takes a little getting used to.

The football database is equally impressive, with a multitude of leagues crammed in. Only those with a pedant's knowledge of youth teams will be able to catch it out.

Another strength of the game is that there's always lots to occupy the mind between matches, from the obvious tweaking of tactics to geeing up players with praise or criticism in the press. Then there's intriguing transfer sagas where a target flirts with several clubs like Lucas Neill in a short skirt. All together there's nothing, initially, to suspend the disbelief that you're part of the footballing world.

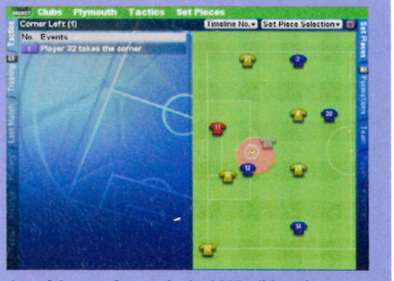
CHAMP IT UP

But then the loose threads start to appear: the height thing, some curious transfers and a match engine that fails to convince.

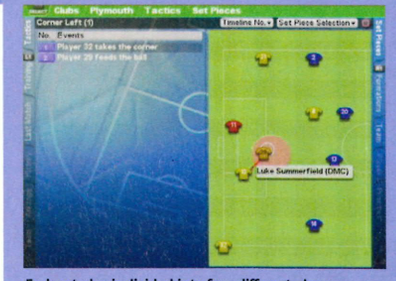
Possession switches so often that it's hard to spot patterns of play, so it's impossible to see how effective tactics are. Substitutions are awkward. Defenders regularly concede corners from the halfway line or score own goals and keepers are rooted to the spot at the most inopportune moments. Eventually, suspension of disbelief just becomes disbelief.

Even as the football-mad gamers the game was intended for, Champ Man 2007 never got close to having us hooked. There's too much that keeps you at arm's length. ■ **Dave Harrison**

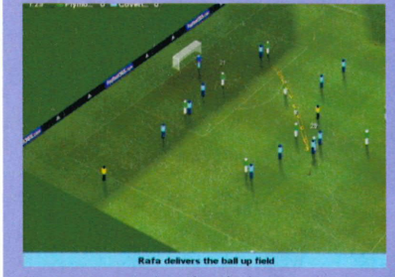
DEAD BALL SPECIALIST



One of the new features in the 2007 edition of *Championship Manager* is the set-piece designer, which allows you to orchestrate players' movement and deliver at dead-ball situations



Each set play is divided into four different phases, allowing you to assign different runs and passes depending on the whereabouts of the ball



You can store several set pieces in the games memory and build up an arsenal of training ground routines... and then watch as they fail, come match day

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	05	The match engine is scrappy and confusing
Sound	04	Bad music and weird grunting
Gameplay	06	Promises much but fails to deliver
Lifespan	08	Management sims last as long you want

For all its good intentions and fine qualities it lacks the magic to make it the life-consuming experience it so wants to be

7/10

Swift follow-up kick to the gonads not pictured

This demon loves red wine, believe it or not

The pre-rendered settings are gorgeous, if a trifle static

SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DEVIL SUMMONER

Summon 'ave a go if you think you're hard enough

DETAILS

PUBLISHER KOEI
DEVELOPER ATLUS
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 27 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.ATLUS.COM/DEVILSUMMONER
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
The latest in the Shin Megami Tensei series, this is the tale of a lone detective-cum-demon-summoner and his wise-cracking cat sidekick

Discovering that the world in which we live is home to thousands of invisible flesh-eating demons is our second least favourite nightmare (you don't want to know what the first one is). But as luck would have it, this happens to be the very plot of (deep breath) *Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner – Raidou Kuzunoha vs the Soulless Army*.

Set in 1920s Japan, *Devil Summoner* is effectively a reboot of a role-playing veteran. You take on the mantle of dashing devil summoner Raidou Kuzunoha, ordered by the gods to protect the paper-thin barrier between our world and that of the demons.

TO DETECT AND TO SERVE

In order to do this, Raidou works undercover as a junior detective at a detective agency, where he unravels a plot involving a missing girl, demonic possession, a robotically-augmented Rasputin, and the Japanese Imperial Army.

With all that in mind – and oh yeah, your best pal is a talking cat – the game requires a fair bit of suspension of disbelief. The all-too frequent random battles with unruly demons often occur in crowded city streets, so it's anyone's guess why nobody arrests a man waving a sword around and firing guns at demons no one else can see.

In combat, Raidou's move-set offers only a three-stroke combo, a lunge, and a spin attack. And that's your lot till the end of the game.

That said, there is a meaty, Pokémon-like mini game in which you must manage a demonic cohort, and this prevents the game from becoming unforgivably dull. Barring bosses, every enemy in the game can be captured, levelled up and 'bred' with other demons. Obsessive-compulsives rejoice: there are around 100 of the buggers, in seven categories and all with unique personalities.

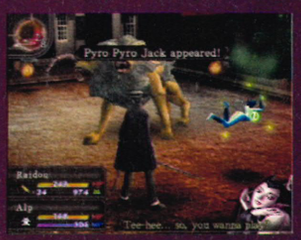
The aim of the game is to play off your enemies' weaknesses with a demon of your own. Initially, Raidou only packs enough 'capture tubes' to house six demons, but given a bit of work that can rise to a respectable 12.

PERSONAL DEMONS

Not only are demons essential in combat but they can aid Raidou in the game's fairly linear 'detective' sections too, with each order of demon sporting its own unique investigative skill. For example, force-order demons are good for roughing up tight-lipped informants.

Sadly for anything not made by Square Enix, role-playing games are always measured against the glimmering juggernaut that is the *Final Fantasy* series. But *Devil Summoner* is still a worthy RPG in its own right, and packs in enough style and depth to pique the interests of neophyte and RPG connoisseur alike. When you're done with Ivalice, the demons will be waiting for you. **Mike Sterry**

GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL
The art of demon entrapment



Aha, a new demon! Mean-lookin' sonofabitch, too. Time to add him to the collection

He's a flame-order demon, so ice-ensorcelled bullets are the order of the day

He's stunned! A battle of wills ensues! Or rather, you just keep hammering ◎ until he stops resisting

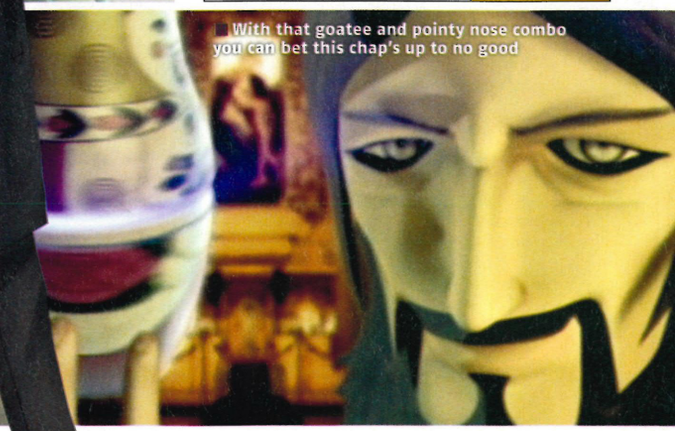
The demon's yours! Yield to your new master, beast! Get me a beer from the fridge!

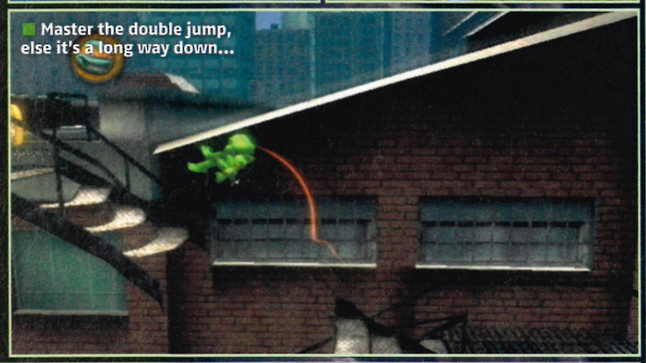
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK VERDICT

Graphics	08	Well-presented characters and locales
Sound	05	Like the soundtrack to a 1970s porno
Gameplay	07	Repetitive, saved by summoning system
Lifespan	08	Plenty of hidden depth to keep you busy

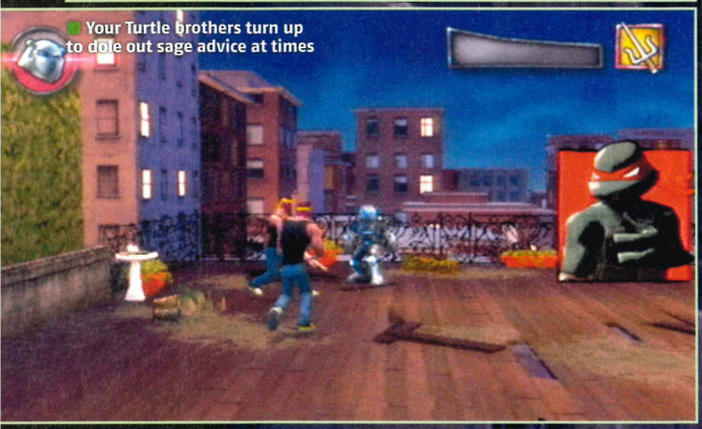
A fairly average RPG, rescued from mediocrity by some unique mechanics, an oddball plot and the dozens of demons at your disposal

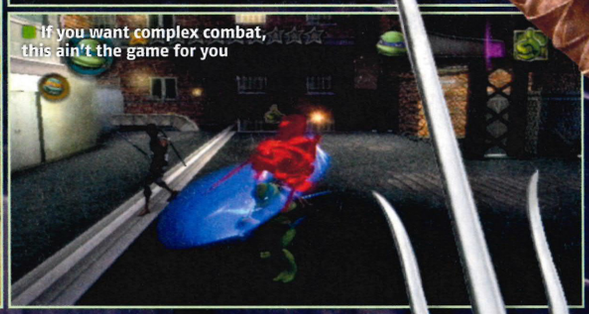
7/10


With that goatee and pointy nose combo you can bet this chap's up to no good


Master the double jump, else it's a long way down...

Chuck who? Michelangelo demonstrates his ninja style


Your Turtle brothers turn up to dole out sage advice at times


If you want complex combat, this ain't the game for you

PlayStation 2

TMNT

Another pizza the action from the Ninja Turtles

DETAILS

PUBLISHER UBISOFT
DEVELOPER UBISOFT MONTREAL
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.TMNTGAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
A new movie tie-in for the Turtles, but this old-school platformer is darker than you'd expect

Escapee aliens from dead planets, blokes who've been bitten by radioactive insects and mentalists with animal fixations. Yep, superheroes are an odd bunch. But there's odd, and then there's the certifiably hatstand. And abandoned mutant pets who've been trained as ninjas by a giant talking rat definitely fall into the latter category.

Preposterous they may be, but the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are back. Again. Not only is their new movie showing in cinemas, they've got a spin-off game to boot.

TMNT the game closely mirrors the plot of the film, which sees the far-flung TMNT family reuniting to fight an ancient evil and prevent strange, otherworldly creatures (yes, even stranger than pizza-eating, katana-wielding reptiles) from running amok on Earth.

But it does expand a little on the film's plot and mostly tells the story using comic book-style cutscenes, rather than CGI direct from the movie.

BO IN PEACE

The game kicks off with solo missions for each Turtle because, as we mentioned, they've all gone their separate ways.

Leonardo is deep in the South American jungle battling guerrilla forces. Raphael is moonlighting as a vigilante nutjob called the Night Watcher. Donatello's got a computer business that sees him encountering weird creatures in the sewers of New York City. And Michelangelo is on the run from kids' parties where he's been working as an entertainer called Cowabunga Carl (is it just us, or is that last one a tad disturbing?).

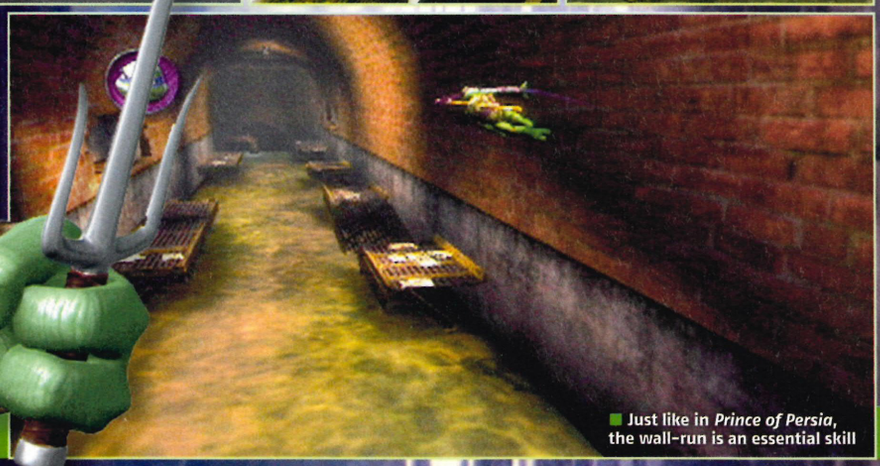
These Turtles go where usually only eagles (and pigeons) dare

Once you've played as each, on most of the remaining missions you can play all four, cycling between them with ⊡. And using the right hero in a half-shell for the job in hand is

Yes, that's Mike dressed in a Turtle suit – go figure

WOT NO SHREDDER?

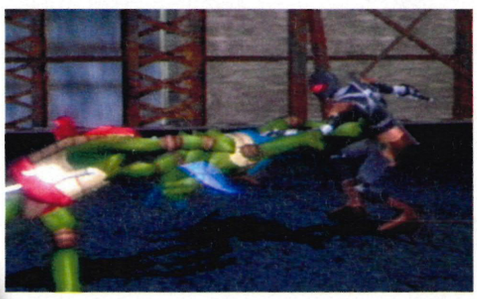
Astonishingly, in this game the Turtles' most dastardly enemy is nowhere be seen. This time around the crew face a clan of cursed ancient generals who are a little bit peeved because they've been turned to stone. So they're intent on unleashing an army of beasts that will destroy the planet. Fear not, though, Shredder fans, because there are a few less-than-subtle hints that he may return to battle the Turtles again very soon...



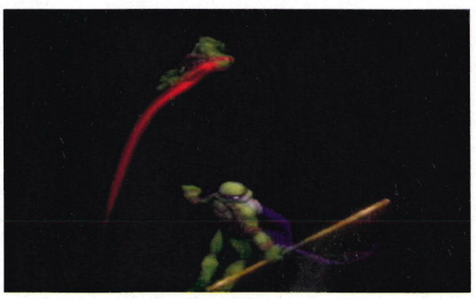
Just like in *Prince of Persia*, the wall-run is an essential skill

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

If things are looking tough in a scrap, or that rooftop leap is looking like a bridge too far, fear not: your mutant brothers are on hand to assist you with special moves that combine the Turtle you're playing with an AI pal



Hold ◎ to summon another Turtle and a pull off a special move



Hit ◎ after jumping to use a tag-team move that flings you further

essential to progress in certain areas because each has different abilities.

The game uses the same engine as *Prince of Persia*, so there are plenty of acrobatics at your disposal. Each Turtle can somersault-jump, wall-run, swing on poles and pipes or crawl along tiny edges – well, they are ninjas, you know.

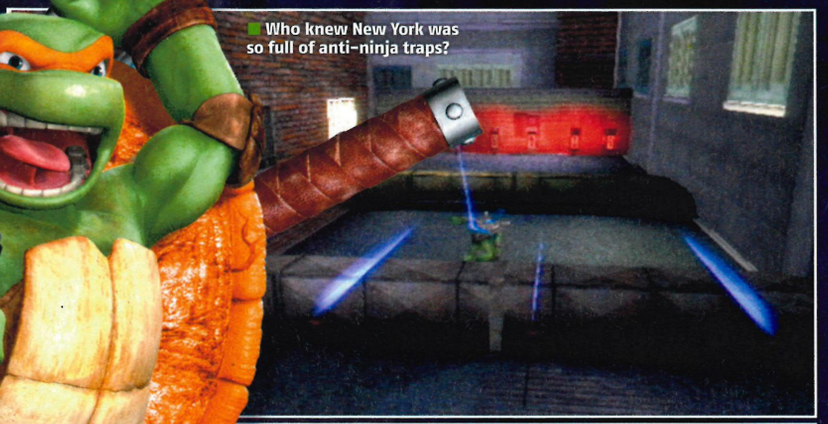
Legging it thusly around the rooftops and sewers of New York makes up three-quarters of the game, the rest of it taking place in defined fighting arenas, dotted throughout each level.

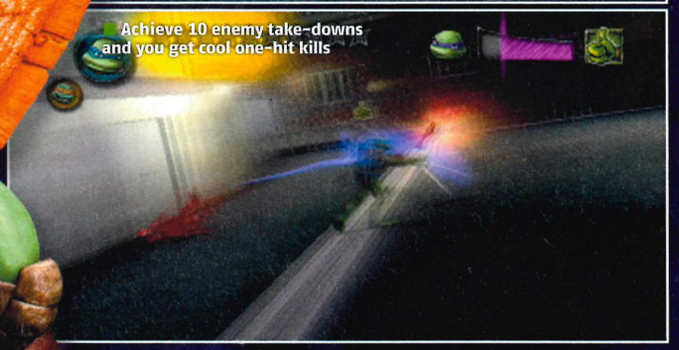
LEATHERBACK IN ACTION

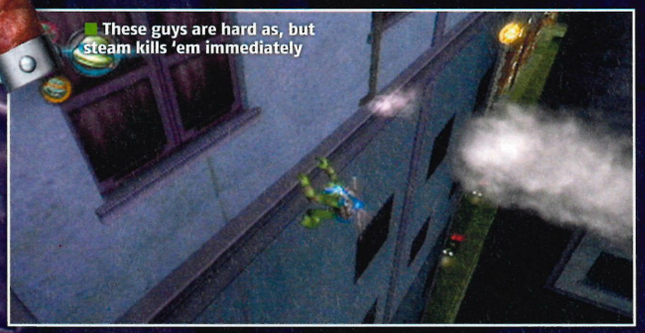
Whether you're duking it out against the Purple Dragons, the Foot Clan or the Turtles' latest movie-born enemies, the combat sections are pretty simplistic. Most of the fighting amounts to simple button-bashing.

As we mentioned, each Turtle has his own skills: Leo does a spinning attack with his twin swords, Raph has powerful sai punches, Don's bo staff allows him to pull off long-range attacks and Mike can attack with a breakdance shell-spin.

If you notch up 10 kills without taking a hit, you'll be able to dish out one-hit kills in slow motion. But, in line with the film's themes of togetherness, the Turtles' most powerful moves are tag team attacks where the Turtle you're


Who knew New York was so full of anti-ninja traps?


Achieve 10 enemy take-downs and you get cool one-hit kills


These guys are hard as, but steam kills 'em immediately

controlling is helped out by his AI brothers. These smart bomb-style attacks can take out multiple enemies at once. Each Turtle has his own tag-team attack and it can't be used again until you've given it time to recharge.

COWA-BUNGLES

The *TMNT* movie is aimed at 15 to 35-year-olds and as a result the Turtles in it are much truer to their gritty comic book roots than the knockabout fun you'll remember from the TV series, and the issues explored are much darker.

This edgy side of the nouveaux Ninjas isn't really reflected so much in the game, but the film's dark visual style is very much in evidence. A doom-laden classical soundtrack serves to ramp up the gritty feel.

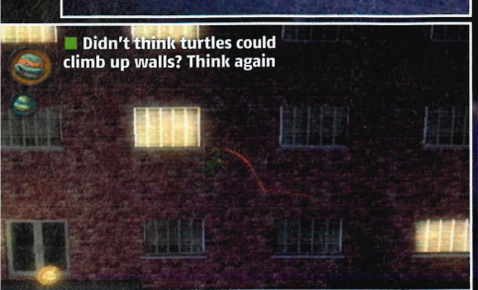
Although these bleak environments are well put together and provide atmosphere by the pizza-box-load, they also make it difficult to see what's going on at times. This is made worse when the camera pulls back for a long shot and your Turtle becomes a tiny on-screen figure.

Pulling off accurate jumps and leaps is tricky enough, and it's made all the harder when you fail to spot a ledge or pipe mid-leap because you're trying to peer through a computer-generated gloom. You'll find yourself falling to your death and restarting at the last checkpoint many times over when pinpoint jumping is required. Fortunately, checkpoints are liberally scattered throughout.

THE BLEAK ENVIRONMENTS ARE WELL PUT TOGETHER, BUT AT TIMES IT'S DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON

Despite its gritty look and feel, given its reptilian stars the game may appeal more to younger gamers. Be warned, however, that they may struggle with the Dual Shock thumb acrobatics required for success.

So it can be a frustrating experience at times, but for the most part *TMNT* provides a solid dose of platforming fun, with combat that breaks up the large levels well. ■ **Richard Owen**


Didn't think turtles could climb up walls? Think again

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK **VERDICT**

Graphics	07	Slick but far too murky at times
Sound	08	Decent movie-esque score and effects
Gameplay	07	Prince of Persia-lite for the most part
Lifespan	07	Big levels and lots of them

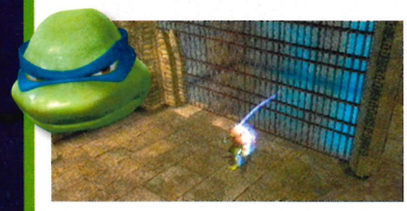
A sprawling platform brawler with a few frustrating sections, but there's plenty of fun to be had with your little green pals

7/10

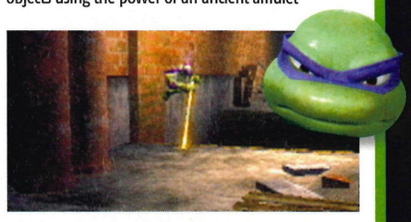
GIVE 'EM SHELL!

Each Turtle has his own set of special skills and abilities, most of them based around their different weapons

MICHELANGELO
His nunchuks allow him to cross large gaps because he whirls them above his head like helicopter blades



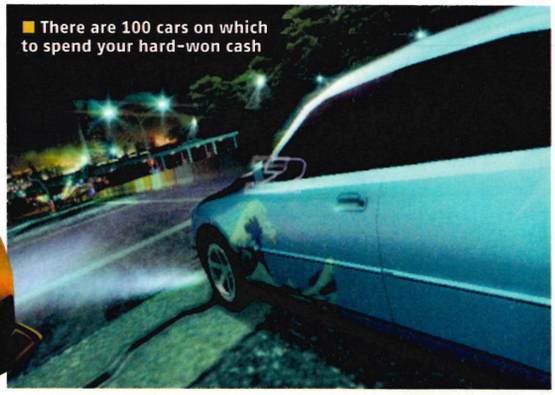
LEONARDO
The blue-masked Turtle can pass through certain solid objects using the power of an ancient amulet



DONATELLO
With his bo staff, Donnie can pole-vault across big gaps where jumping alone would be impossible

RAPHAEL
Using his twin sai knives, he can climb up certain sheer surfaces to reach otherwise inaccessible places

Each Turtle has his own special attacks


There are 100 cars on which to spend your hard-won cash

THE FAST & THE FURIOUS

PlayStation 2

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EA
DEVELOPER EUTECHNYX
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.EA.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE YES

A snoozy rider destined to drift into obscurity

The Fast and The Furious films are guilty pleasures. The insanely expensive cars and barely clothed women are blatantly there to compensate for the utter lack of a decent script, credible characters or an interesting plot. Sadly the game, arriving in the UK well in the slipstream of the *Tokyo Drift* film (from which it draws its setting and inspiration) fails to capture the crass glamour or visceral action of the testosterone-fuelled flicks.

In a crowded market dominated by *Need For Speed* and *Midnight Club*, *The Fast and The Furious* tries to find a niche by focusing on drift racing. Sadly, *NFS: Carbon* pipped it to the post last November. To this end it introduces specific techniques that'll have you kansai-drifting and clutch-kicking around the streets of Tokyo.

These moves are introduced with a series of tutorials that bang on about power and weight distribution, producing mechanics that are more sophisticated and realistic than in rival games.

But all that fancy talk is undermined by the game's scoring system, which doesn't penalise spinning out or encourage you to link tricks together in combos. Thus it undermines the simulation aspect of the core drifting and fails to reward consistent style – in other words, it makes you work harder for less.

AT A GLANCE

A street racing game based loosely on the films of the same name – race against other crews, win cash, buy and modify cars

TYRED OUT

'Normal' races are included, apparently out of obligation. You get a couple of variations on the point-to-point race, roll-up races where you can challenge other boy-racers to cruise around Tokyo and a sprint where the result is mostly dictated by the size of your engine and nitrous.

But, content-wise, you can't argue with the sheer amount of stuff to do here. There are 100 shiny motors to splash out on, myriad modding options, and 120 rival crew members to race.

BLAND OF THE RISING SUN

But even with this car-nucopia of options *The Fast and The Furious* feels stripped-down. It's an unyielding process of taking part in dull races to earn cash, which you then use to buy ugly cars or add parts to existing models: just like every *NFS*, only without the glitz to keep it bearable.

The streets don't help. You race exclusively at night and while the environments are impressively detailed, they lack the exaggerated neon aggression of *NFS: Carbon*. So, despite an impressive amount of tarmac to tear up, the routes soon feel like they're merging into one, whether you're hammering through urban areas or sliding round the mountain roads.

In fact, the further you progress, the more monotonous the game becomes. Even the exhaustive customisation options fail to realise their potential on the boxy in-game car models.

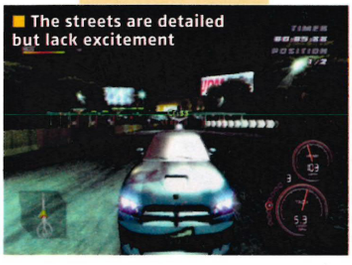
The Fast and the Furious isn't the worst street racer we've ever seen. But it fails to capitalise on what ought to be a perfect licence for this sort of game. **Pete Webber**

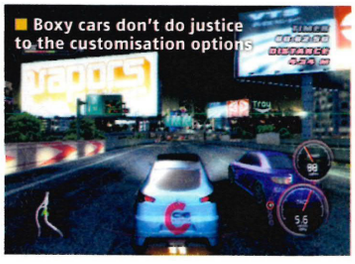
CAR-MIKAZE RACING

Japanese drivers do it on the right

Point-to-point races and top-speed challenges are duked out in Hotspots, set in the Wangan – the Tokyo freeway system, where the traffic is nonexistent and long straights batter your will to live

Drift races are based in Touges – a derivation of the Japanese for 'pass' – which refers to twisty, winding mountain roads designed for driving down sideways


The streets are detailed but lack excitement

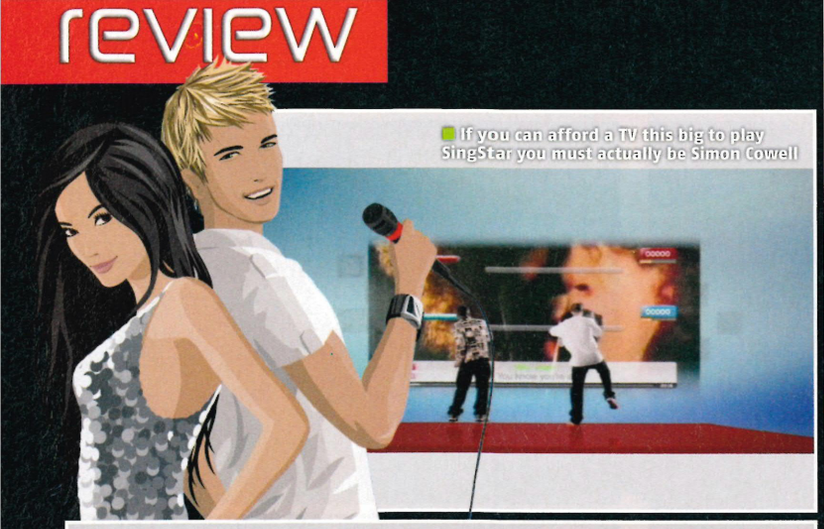

Boxy cars don't do justice to the customisation options

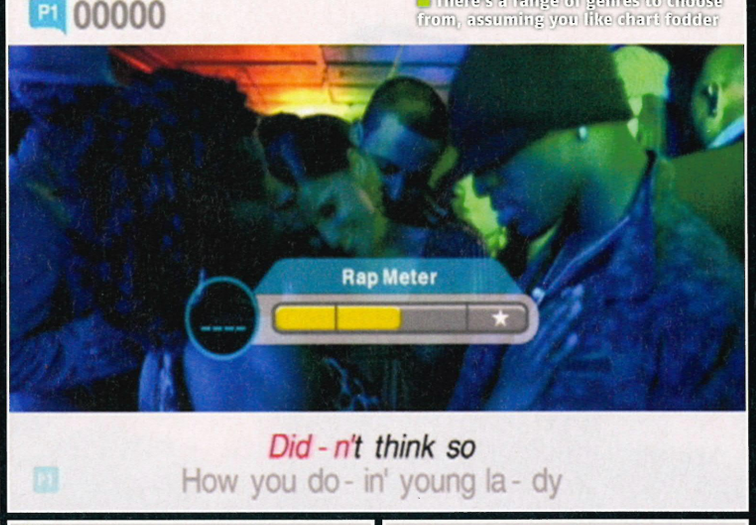
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK VERDICT

Graphics	06	Impressive cityscapes but dull car models
Sound	05	Repetitive and annoying
Gameplay	06	Solid but drab, exactly what it shouldn't be
Lifespan	05	Too boring to play to its full extent

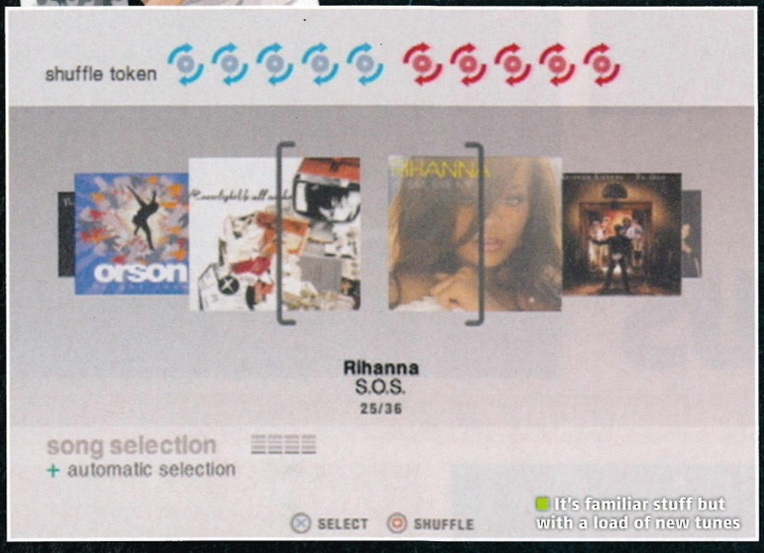
A competent but characterless racer that rolls, rather than roars over the finish line. Not so much a Maserati as a Mondeo

5/10

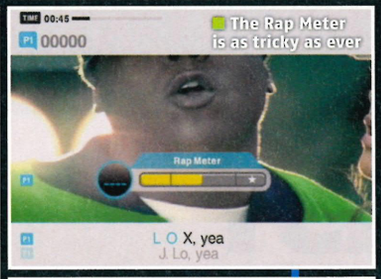

If you can afford a TV this big to play SingStar you must actually be Simon Cowell



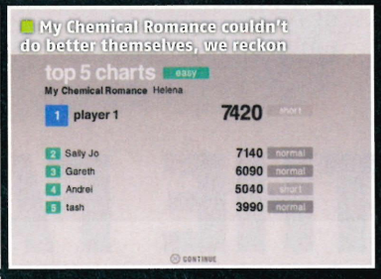
There's a range of genres to choose from, assuming you like chart fodder



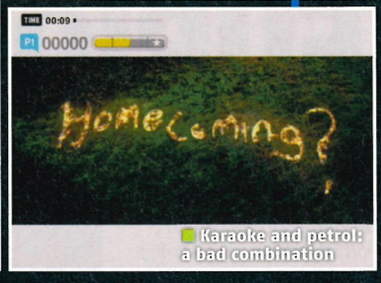
It's familiar stuff but with a load of new tunes



The Rap Meter is as tricky as ever



My Chemical Romance couldn't do better themselves, we reckon



Karaoke and petrol: a bad combination

SINGSTAR POP HITS

bronze
PlayStation.2 official magazine-UK

PlayStation.2

It's karaoke, baby, one more time

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SCEE
DEVELOPER SCEE
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-8
OUT 27 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.SINGSTARGAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

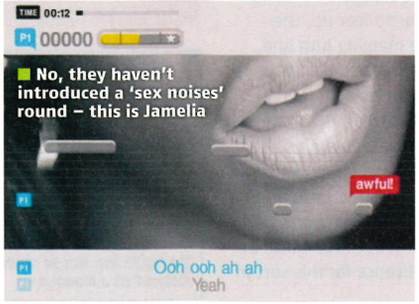
The world's greatest karaoke sim gets a UK Top 20 makeover in an attempt to please everyone

To look at this, the most recent entry into the *SingStar* ranks, you might think that Sony's London Studio has seriously dropped the ball; that they had been doing so well until now, releasing targeted titles themed to the tastes of a specific demographic, and avoiding Top 40 grab-bags such as this.

Au contraire. For some people, particularly those who can't yet legally buy alcohol or pocket knives, Top 40 *is* a genre all of its own.

There exists, hard as it is for some of us to believe, a strain of humanity who are content with three annual purchases of *Now That's What I Call The Ultimate Best Songs In The World Ever!*. It is to them that *Pop Hits* addresses itself.

For anyone unfamiliar with the *SingStar* brand, the premise is simple. There are 30 music videos. You choose one. You sing (hopefully into one of the microphone peripherals supplied with the game). You can do so alone or with friends and you can record your efforts via mic and Eyetoy for future embarrassment.



No, they haven't introduced a 'sex noises' round – this is Jamelia

LIVING ROOM IDOL

Can't hold a tune? Not a problem. Although the game may chide you for being 'tone deaf' should you submit a particularly miserable score, in actuality, you're never penalised for being, like many of Team OPS2, laryngially disabled.

NO MATTER HOW TUNE-STUPID YOU ARE, YOU WILL BE REWARDED WITH WAVE AFTER WAVE OF POINTS

You can belt out Britney's 'One More Time' like a Mongolian throat singer or casually hum along with 'Jenny From The Block' and still be on target. Oddly, though, when trying to match the screamo growl of My Chemical Romance's 'Gerard Way', we found ourselves being punished for what we thought was a competent imitation. Once we switched to the vocal stylings of a six-year-old girl, however, the points rolled in.

Bizarre as it may seem, this has always been *SingStar*'s strength. Within seconds of starting a song, anyone, no matter how tune-stupid, will invariably be rewarded with wave after wave of often ill-deserved points.

There are no weapon upgrades, no puzzles to solve; *SingStar* is more karaoke sim than game, and for kids or drunken singalongs, that's ideal.

Given that the series so far has been the best take-home karaoke experience that money can buy, *SingStar Pop Hits* can only really be reviewed on the strength of its tunes, and we at OPS2 are not about to dictate what music you should enjoy.

Fall Out Boy, Lemar, Lily Allen: it's for you to decide whether they merit a PS2 appearance. But in gameplay terms, *SingStar*'s hold on the karaoke crown continues. **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation.2 official magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	08 Sharp layout and high-quality video
Sound	?? It's entirely up to you
Gameplay	09 Tons of turn-off-your-brain entertainment
Lifespan	09 Longer than All Saints' career

Providing you have a taste for the Top 20, or are a pre-adolescent girl, Pop Hits delivers another welcome helping of tacky karaoke goodness

8/10

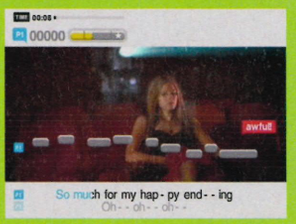
IN PRAISE OF SONGS

SingStar Pop Hits' track-listing in full

AKON
Lonely
Released: May 2005
Highest Chart Position: 1

ALL SAINTS
Black Coffee
Released: October 2000
Highest Chart Position: 1

ASHLEE SIMPSON
Boyfriend
Released: Feb 2006
Highest Chart Position: 12

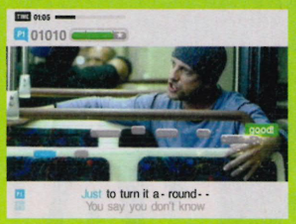


AVRIL LAVIGNE
My Happy Ending
Released: July 2004
Highest Chart Position: 5

BRITNEY SPEARS
Baby One More Time
Released: February 2000
Highest Chart Position: 1

CASCADA
Everytime We Touch
Released: June 2006
Highest Chart Position: 2

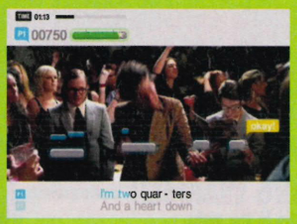
CORINNE BAILEY RAE
Put Your Records On
Released: February 2006
Highest Chart Position: 2



DANIEL POWTER
Bay Day
Released: January 2005
Highest Chart Position: 2

DANNII MINOGUE
I Begin To Wonder
Released: March 2003
Highest Chart Position: 2

EVANESCENCE
Bring Me To Life
Released: June 2003
Highest Chart Position: 1

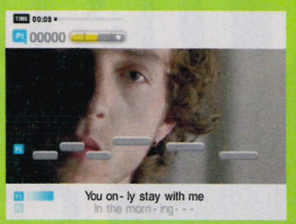


FALL OUT BOY
Dance Dance
Released: April 2006
Highest Chart Position: 8

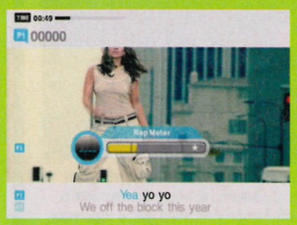
GIRLS ALOUD
No Good Advice
Released: May 2003
Highest Chart Position: 2

GOLDFRAPP
Oh La La
Released: August 2005
Highest Chart Position: 4

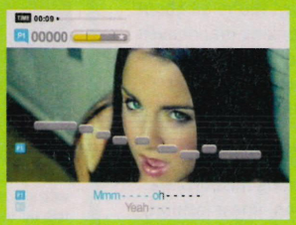
JAMELIA
Beware Of The Dog
Released: December 2006
Highest Chart Position: 10



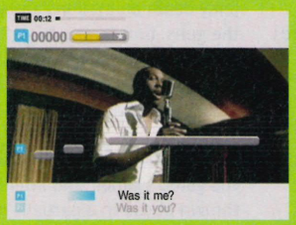
JAMES MORRISON
You Give Me Something
Released: July 2006
Highest Chart Position: 5



JENNIFER LOPEZ
Jenny From The Block
Released: November 2002
Highest Chart Position: 3

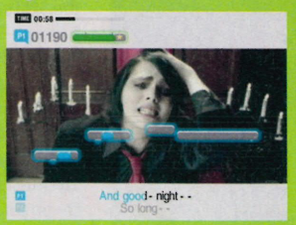


JOJO
Leave (Get Out)
Released: March 2004
Highest Chart Position: 2

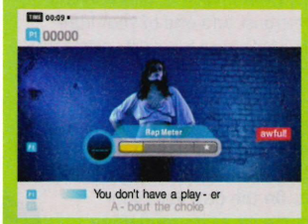


LEMAR
It's Not That Easy
Released: September 2006
Highest Chart Position: 7

LILY ALLEN
Littlest Things
Released: December 2006
Highest Chart Position: 21

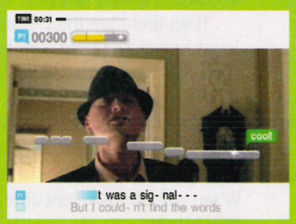


MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE
Helena
Released: March 2005
Highest Chart Position: 20

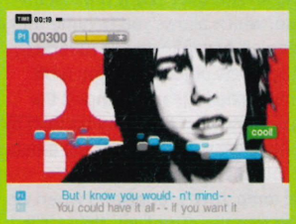


NELLY FURTADO
Promiscuous
Released: September 2006
Highest Chart Position: 3

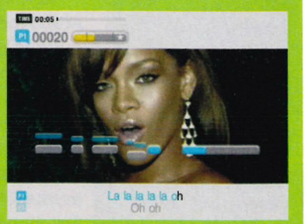
NORAH JONES
Don't Know Why
Released: May 2002
Highest Chart Position: 59



ORSON
Bright Idea
Released: May 2006
Highest Chart Position: 11



RAZORLIGHT
Golden Touch
Released: June 2004
Highest Chart Position: 9

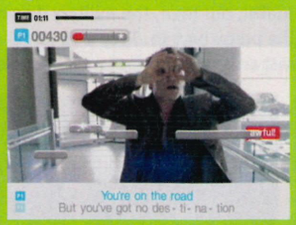


RIHANNA
SOS (Rescue Me)
Released: April 2006
Highest Chart Position: 2

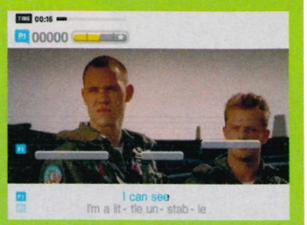
SCISSOR SISTERS
I Don't Feel Like Dancing
Released: September 2006
Highest Chart Position: 1

SUGABABES
Push The Button
Released: September 2005
Highest Chart Position: 1

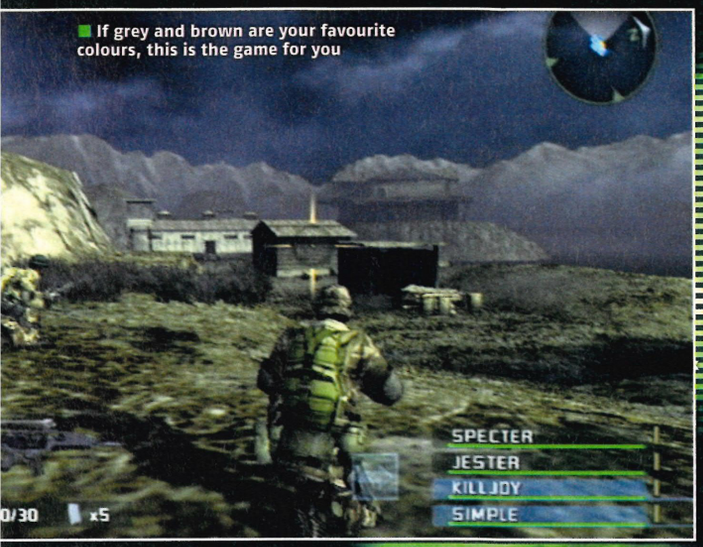
TRAVIS
Sing
Released: May 2001
Highest Chart Position: 3



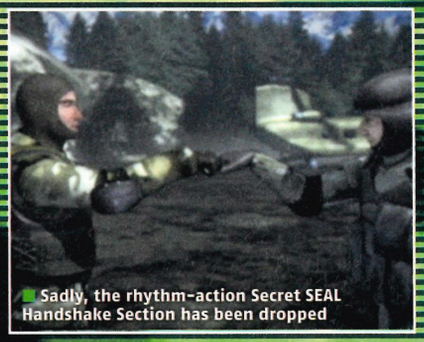
U2
Beautiful Day
Released: October 2000
Highest Chart Position: 1

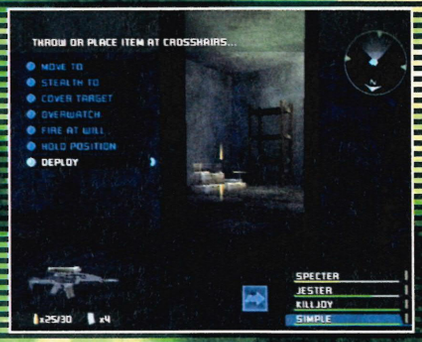


WILL YOUNG
Switch It On
Released: November 2005
Highest Chart Position: 5



If grey and brown are your favourite colours, this is the game for you


Sadly, the rhythm-action Secret SEAL Handshake Section has been dropped



SOCOM US NAVY SEALS: COMBINED ASSAULT

War's an ugly thing. Here's the proof

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER ZIPPER INTERACTIVE
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 27 APRIL
WEBSITE US.PLAYSTATION.COM/SOCOMCOMBINEDASSAULT/
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE YES

AT A GLANCE
Semi-sequel to seminal four-man tactical shooter series in which cheeky terrorists threaten the peace of a fictional country

South Korea was good enough for *Mercenaries*. *Mercenaries 2* is doing it in Venezuela. So why has Sony insisted on setting this game in the fictional country of 'Adjikistan'? Who are they trying to kid? With the SEALs sent in to tackle some darned freedom-hatin' terrorists (of course) it all sounds remarkably like George Walker Bush's drawled idea of a Middle Eastern hotspot after one too many White House Mint Juleps.

New setting aside, *Combined Assault* is effectively a revamping of *SOCOM 3*, with a fresh, 18-mission campaign, the option of online co-op for said campaign, 10 new multiplayer maps (in addition to being able to play with all of *SOCOM 3*'s maps) and a number of other welcome tweaks.

One long-awaited feature is the Instant Action mode, which allows you to jump into a quick mission on any map you've unlocked, setting entirely new objectives if you wish.

The game's extensive maps impart the feeling that you're deep in enemy territory rather well; our only gripe would be that the palette is a tad drab. But then, we were hardly expecting a psychedelic romp across Candyland when we first plunged into the campaign. No, war is brown, war is grey, and *Combined Assault* does suitable justice to the unsightly earth tones of military action.

It's no looker, but then, the military doesn't just allow the pretty boys in. They look for fellas who can twist an enemy combatant's neck clean off and fashion it into an emergency canteen. And appropriately, *Combined Assault* has more than enough muscle to make up for its fugliness.

If you're an extreme military fetishist, you'll probably not care about muddy textures and jerky death animations anyway. You're all about the guns, time-consuming flanking manoeuvers and big, heart-warming explosions. You'll be happy to know, then, that *Combined Assault* doesn't disappoint in any of these categories.

MISSION IN ACTION

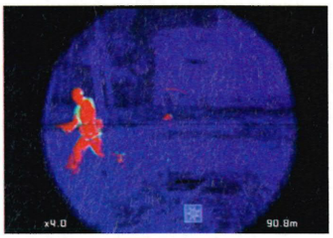
The game's varied and interesting missions are thrown at you in a partially non-linear fashion, allowing you to complete them in any order you choose. Of course, this has no actual impact on the game itself, so deciding which mission to do and when simply gives the illusion of choice.

Then there are the Crosstalk objectives which, in an interesting twist, can be sync'd with the PSP's *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo 2*. In one mission, for example, you're warned that an enemy chopper has been dispatched to exterminate your comrades in *Fireteam Bravo*. If your PS2 team fails to destroy it, it'll turn up when you play the concurrent mission on the PSP. Spooky.

There are plenty of murderous goodies and additional weapon sets to unlock as you play through, not to mention a slew of medals that are only awarded to the most military-minded players. Oh, and should you choose to, you can locate a hidden sausage on every mission. We're not really sure why.

Another novel feature is that, rather than having to wade through a series of submenus, a quick tap of L2 will issue context-sensitive commands to your squad (you can still issue voice commands over a headset should you wish). Point your reticule at a door, and your squad will breach it; aim it over a surrendered terrorist and one of your little helpers will lovingly bind his wrists with cable ties. And so on.

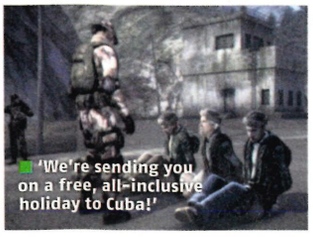
GETTING WARMER
Death comes in the night

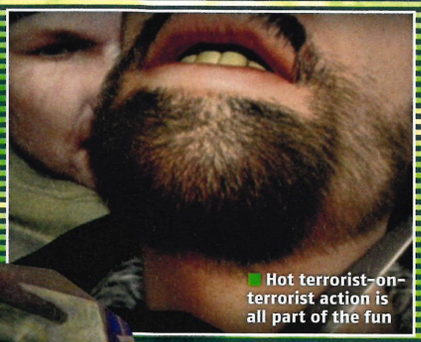


Before starting a mission, you can arm your squad with all sorts of advanced kill-toys. Our favourite is this, the thermal scope. Combined with a suppressor, it made us feel like the Angel of Death.

NAVY BLUES

The bad news is that the infamous Achilles heel of the SOCOM series, its feeble AI, has seen little improvement. On the occasions your team-mates manage to do something right, such as actually dispatching the terrorist who's about to rifle-butt you into


'We're sending you on a free, all-inclusive holiday to Cuba!'


Hot terrorist-on-terrorist action is all part of the fun

SEAL'S THE DEAL

Our favourite non-*SOCOM* seals

Three-hit wonder Seal taught us: 'We're never gonna survive unless/We get a little crazy'. Not in *SOCOM*, mate

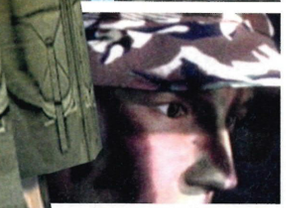
Steven *'Under Siege'* Seagal is 'a diverse talent and a giving human being', according to his official website

A friend of Mighty Mouse, Silly Seal gets our seal of approval because a) he's a seal and b) he's silly

40% Ex-Navy SEAL + 40% professional wrestler + 20% governor of Minnesota = 100% Jesse 'The Body' Ventura

unconsciousness, you'll likely find tears streaming down your face as you paw at the screen to give them a hug.

The sad fact is that apart from lugging mission-important materials such as rocket-propelled grenades and sniper rifles, your squad is about as useful as a trampoline at a quadriplegic convention.



RAW INTELLIGENCE

While we're on the topic of sniper rifles, you'll also discover that your sniper, codenamed Simple, is exactly that. Often, you'll politely ask him to dispatch an enemy that falls outside your weapon's range only for him to state flatly: "I can't do that, commander."

So if you want the advantage of a long-range wet worker on your side, you'll need to be the one packing the telescopic boomstick. However, this has its own set of problems – namely, that it would require your team to protect you from close-range assault. And that will never happen.

Working around the AI's fallibility almost becomes a game in itself. In fact at times, your squadmates' dire AI actually makes them seem like the kooky, loveable characters that their irritating in-game chatter suggests they were meant to be.

The rhythm of 10 minutes of measured stealth followed by a seven-second firefight isn't for everyone, nor is dealing with the game's dunderheaded AI. But providing you're willing to pay for what simply amounts to an upgrade on *SOCOM 3*, hardcore fans of the series will find plenty here to keep them busy. ■ **Mike Sterry**

As a SEAL, tight-fitting wetsuits are not just for parties

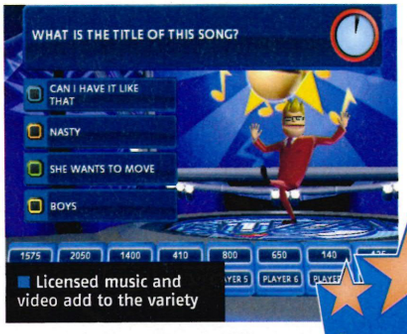
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	05	Ugly to some, beautiful to others
Sound	05	A chest-beating, jingoistic score. Ick
Gameplay	07	Measured warfare, no more, no less
Lifespan	08	Possibly years, if you're the online type

Stomach-churning graphics and bad AI undermine an otherwise solid tactical shooter. Has 'For Hardcore Fans Only' written all over it

7/10

Hard cash? Ha! This is your only reward in *Buzz!*

With age comes wisdom, apparently



Licensed music and video add to the variety

BUZZ! THE MEGA QUIZ

bronze
PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk

Another great quiz game – fact or fiction?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SCEE
DEVELOPER RELENTLESS SOFTWARE
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-8
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.RELENTLESSSOFTWARE.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

The king of quiz gaming returns with more questions, more characters, and more game modes

We've always had a soft spot for the *Buzz!* series. Unlike the neon-lit Saturday night shows presented by cantankerous, contestant-baiting TV has-beens, with which Britain seems to be obsessed, *Buzz!* brings us a game show format where the stink of human greed isn't an issue.

It's how quizzes should be: a group of mates or a family gathered round the TV, exchanging banter; where your general knowledge will net you nothing but a handful of temporary points and the admiration of your peers.

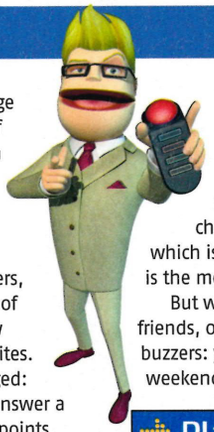
POINTS THE WAY

The newest iteration of the game supports a super-sociable eight players, with different avatars, a wider range of 'buzzer' sound effects and some new rounds to supplement the old favourites.

But basically, little else has changed: you hit your buzzer peripheral; you answer a multiple-choice question; you score points.

The challenge rarely lifts above the level you'd expect from a £32,000 *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* question, though the variety of game modes does much to level the playing field between the true trivia geeks and those of us thumb warriors who're a little light on raw grey matter (or who are merely younger).

One of the strangest additions is Quizmaster mode, where one player assumes the role of presenter via the analogue controller, making up their own questions and awarding in-game points as they see fit. If you can't live your quiz-life without the aid of on-screen characters and zany sound effects – which is actually, let's face it, a bit sad – this is the mode for you.



But whoever you are, call your family and friends, order that pizza and untangle those buzzers: you've found something do this weekend. ■ **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Sharp and suitably cartoony
Sound	06	Repetitive catchphrases
Gameplay	07	It's a quiz, innit?
Lifespan	09	So long as your friends draw breath

Not as educational as the upcoming* Buzz! Schools, *but* Mega *is a packet of guaranteed rainy-day entertainment

8/10

ROUND AND ROUND

A new *Buzz!* means new types of fun. Here they are:

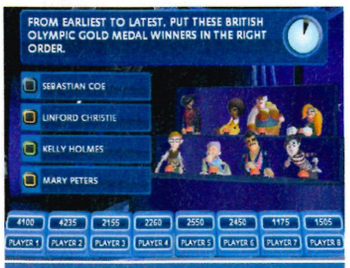
Point Picker
Choose a question from several categories. Notable for featuring footage of water-skiing capuchin monkeys

Winner Stays On
An elimination-style picture round. As to the correct answer in this example, we're torn

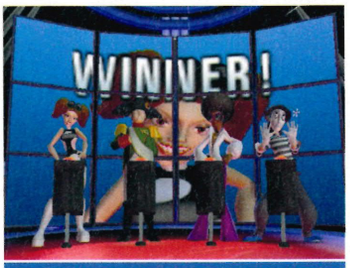
Faster Finger
The fastest player to answer correctly gets more points than the others. We really want to see those fingers

Pie Fight
A more PC version of the Hitman round from previous games, featuring peaceful pastry pastings

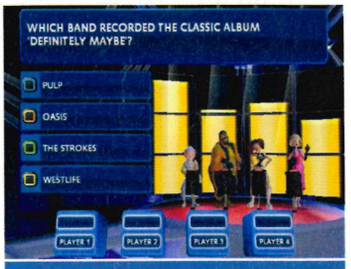
Globetrotter
Travel the globe, answering region-relevant questions, then choose the location for your next challenge



Top Rank
Put simply, it's the same idea as the Fastest Finger contestant selection on *Who Want to Be a Millionaire?*



Point Stealer
Punish the nerds and nick their points with some fast finger work: games are won and lost in this round!



Final
Answer correctly and your quickly-diminishing time in the game gets boosted: the last one standing wins

On lower difficulty settings, combat is ridiculously easy

SAMURAI WARRORS 2: EMPIRES

PlayStation.2

Quasi-historical crowd-combat. Yet again

Dynasty Warriors 5, *Dynasty Warriors 5 Xtreme Legends*, *Samurai Warriors 2* and now, *Samurai Warriors 2: Empires*. We're having trouble keeping up too. Or, in fact, seeing why we'd want to.

For the uninitiated, *Samurai Warriors* is the Japanese-history counterpart to the Chinese-themed *Dynasty Warriors* series. *Empires* is a cheeky expansion on last September's *Samurai Warriors 2*, and while it can in no way be deemed a sequel, it shoves in enough new content to justify itself.

Like *Dynasty Warriors 5: Empires* before it, what distinguishes *SW2:E* from its parent game is the strategy game that overlays the Campaign mode. In practice, it works a bit like cult SNES favourite *Actraiser*: build farms and recruit troops during the none-too-taxing strategy phase, then massacre legions of imbecilic foot-soldiers during the combat phase.

Battle is merely a matter of wading into the nearest crowd of underlings (or targeting a leader) and button-bashing until there's nothing left but a fast-fading pile of polygons.

SAFE FROM ARMY

It's pretty dull, but mildly addictive thanks to the gleaming glut of RPG-style character upgrades you receive after battle.

Still, unless you crank the game up to the suitably-named Chaos difficulty, the enemy army is mostly content to stand around, waiting to be cleaved in twain.

There's a ridiculous amount of content in Campaign mode and a well-realised Create a General editor. But it plays like an interactive History Channel special. ■ **Mike Sterry**

DETAILS

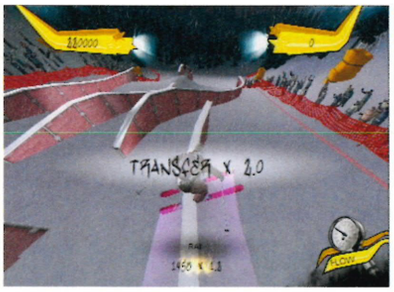
PUBLISHER KOEI
DEVELOPER OMEGA FORCE
PRICE £24.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.KOEI.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

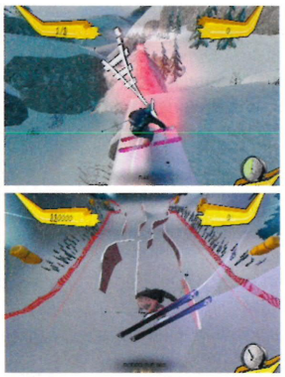
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine UK VERDICT

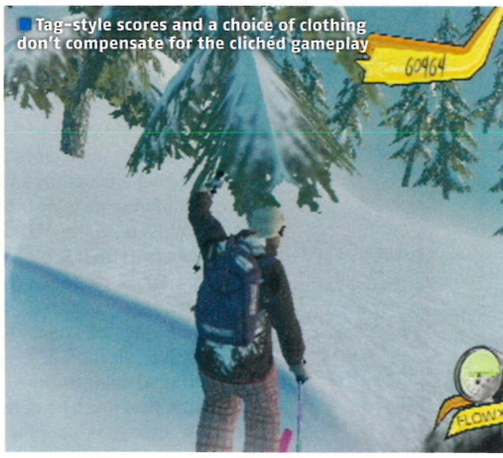
Graphics	06	Dull battlefields, the rest sufficient
Sound	05	Voice actors evidently hired off the streets
Gameplay	06	Monotonous yet strangely addictive
Lifespan	07	Plenty for fans, if you can stay awake

With its veneer of strategy, Empires improves on Samurai Warriors 2, but crowd combat should be more fun than this

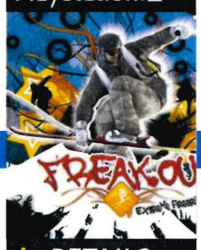
6/10







PlayStation.2



FREAK OUT: EXTREME FREERIDE

Rides on a tired bandwagon of extreme sports blandity

For skiers, freeriding is all about leaving behind the nice, safe pistes and finding spectacular, steep, and downright dangerous powder swathed terrain to chuck yourself down in as stylish and aesthetically pleasing a manner as possible.

Contrary to what you might think, though, this particular strain of skier doesn't have a deathwish, it's about freedom and expression.

So, we've got an extreme sport, a collection of gnarly dudes to partake of it and goals and competitions for them to complete which are dotted around various mountain locales. Sound familiar? Anyone?

Here at OPS2 there's nothing we love more in a game than originality, so it was with happy hearts that we realised that we were once again looking at a retread of the formula made popular by, yes you've guessed it, *Tony Hawk's Pro* sodding *Skater*.

When *THPS* hit the big time, a slew of imitators followed in its concrete wake. But the *Hawk* series itself has evolved, and the basic extreme sport formula that we now see before us in *Freak Out: Extreme Freeride* was outmoded by its originators, ooh, about four years ago.

EXTREME BOREDOM

And that's really the main problem. To be fair, what *Freak Out* does, it doesn't do all that badly.

The physics of skiing in powder are nicely reproduced, as are the various tricks. You've got a choice of six skiers with different attributes, four mountains, 16 jumps and customisable gear that changes the way your character skis. The music's fine if your taste is for US punk.

But there's no getting away from the fact that we've seen it all before and seen it all done with more personality and imagination. Plus, as snowboard series *SSX* showed us, it is possible to have a hit extreme sports sim that isn't a pale imitation of *THPS*. Sorry, skiers, this is just a lazy rehash of a tired formula. ■ **Joe Barnes**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER JOWOOD PRODUCTIONS
DEVELOPER COLDWOOD INTERACTIVE
PRICE 19.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.FREAKOUT-GAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine UK VERDICT

Graphics	05	Passable, but blocky in places
Sound	05	Swooshy ski effects and punk tunes
Gameplay	04	Okay, but not immensely challenging
Lifespan	04	Very little once all the goals are done

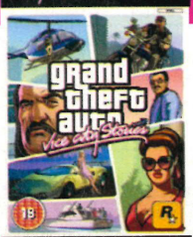
Boarding's twin-planked brethren may get some kicks out of it; the rest of you should look elsewhere to get your sofa-adrenaline rush

4/10

GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY STORIES

PlayStation 2

Is this PSP hit an Easy Lover on PS2?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES
DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR NORTH/LEEDS
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/VICECITYSTORIES
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Basically the same game that came out on PSP last October, minus the multiplayer modes. It's another chance to take over the fictional Miami, in a slightly earlier setting

There's no point beating around the bush: this is a game that was out last year on PSP, released for PS2 in a virtually identical form. So if you don't own a PSP, now's your chance to play this instalment of the perenially popular *Grand Theft Auto* series.

Vice City Stories follows the criminal life of Vic Vance, who fits into the *GTA* family tree as Lance Vance's brother (Lance, you may remember, teams up with Tommy Vercetti in the original *Vice City*). It's 1984, so this game acts a prequel, and as such you'll recognise a few characters including Phil Cassidy and Ricardo Diaz.

Unfortunately, Vic is probably our least favourite of all the *GTA* anti-heroes. A cross between CJ from *San Andreas* and the Silent Guy from *GTA III*, he's been given some oddly contradictory personality traits.

So while he's happy to live a life of crime, running jobs for racists, wife-beaters, dealers and gang-bangers, he's constantly bitching about how much he hates criminals. Vic's descent from upstanding soldier to felon isn't entirely convincing either, founded in a family obligation to fund his sick brother's medical bills. Could he not have just got a job?

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

If you already own *VCS* on PSP, you'd be mad to consider buying it on PS2 as well. Price aside, you can count the reasons for doing so on Homer Simpson's fingers. The key plus points to playing *VCS* (or any *GTA* game, for that matter) on a PS2 are that you're holding a Dual Shock controller with two analogue sticks and your screen is bigger than 4in wide. On a TV, it's much easier to see what's going on in those moments of villainous chaos when all manner of explosions and gun battles are kicking off.

ON PS2, VICE CITY STORIES IS EASIER TO PLAY AND THEREFORE SLIGHTLY MORE ENJOYABLE

In terms of control, it's easier to perform drive-bys (which are, in fact, impossible on PSP), you can adjust the camera manually if need be and the lock-on is easier to grapple with.

THE VICE IS RIGHT

So in essence, on PS2, *Vice City Stories* is a more familiar beast, easier to play and therefore slightly more enjoyable. The thing is, we're almost certain we said the same thing about *Liberty City Stories* on PS2 – so if you didn't take our advice first time round then hopefully you'll take it this time.

There are some improvements to the game structure, instituted for PSP, that benefit the PS2 version. A Trip Skip option, which takes you straight back to the marker point of a mission you've just failed instead of forcing you to make your own way there, is a welcome addition and a returning feature that was only used in a few missions in *San Andreas*. It's used more frequently here but, for some reason, not in every mission – including one early quad bike race which we failed twice.

Also, when you end up in hospital or in the cop shop you're given the option to buy your weapons back with a police bribe, saving you the time of visiting the Ammu-Nation store. Mind you, you could just use a cheat code, like most people do.

SPLASH AND GRAB

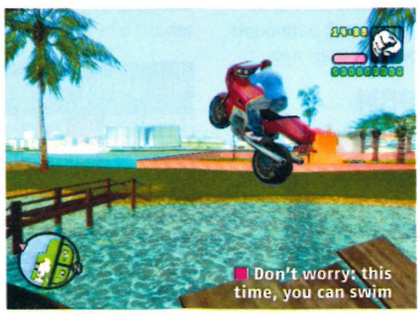
Vic has borrowed the ability to swim from *San Andreas*, so it's no longer 'Game Over' should you drive into the sea (quite a common problem, what with all the water surrounding Vice City).

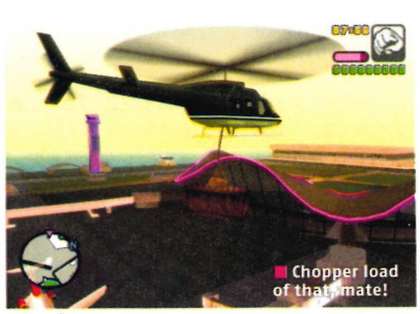
Unfortunately, CJ's ability to climb over things, which proved so liberating in *San Andreas*, is notably absent – especially when you're on the run from the rozzers or a rival and find yourself faced with a chain-link fence or brick wall.

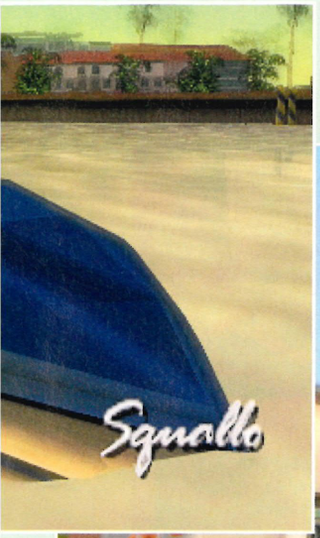
When you consider that this move was at our disposal on PS2 at least two years ago, it can only be perceived as a backwards step for the gameplay that climbing doesn't feature in *Vice City Stories*. Also, the missions here certainly aren't as inventive as the ones in *San Andreas*.

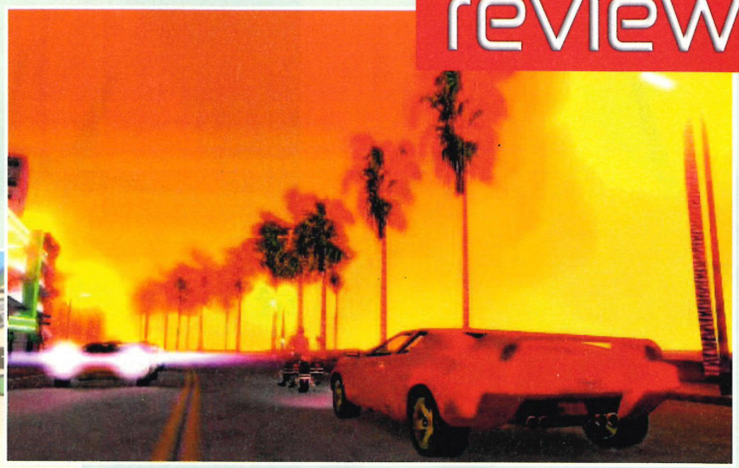
One area *VCS* does build on from *San Andreas* is gang recruitment and asset management (which is a lot more fun than it sounds on paper).

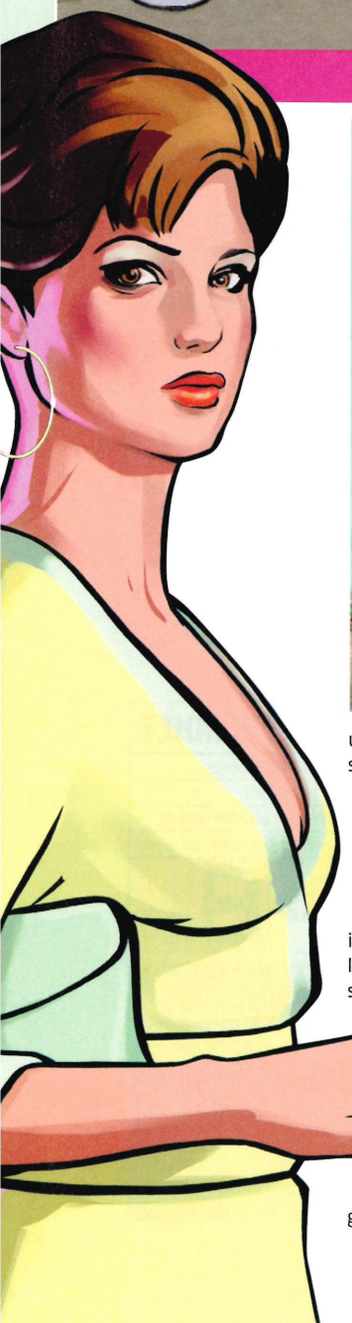
On completing the first chapter of *Vice City Stories*, Vic takes over a gang and a business from which he earns a regular income. An illusion of depth is added by giving the player the opportunity to

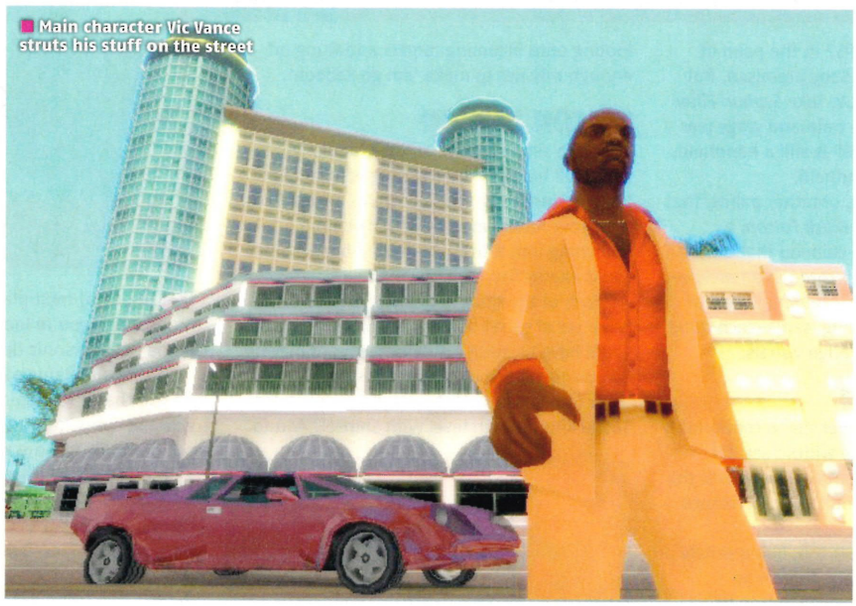

Don't worry: this time, you can swim


Chopper load of that mate!









Main character Vic Vance struts his stuff on the street

upgrade these businesses and repair them, should they get damaged by a rival crew.

Attached to these assets are Empire missions – typically collection or delivery tasks, which tend to be quite repetitive and boring. Surely Vic's in a position to get someone else to do these errand boy jobs for him?

Overall, the Empire missions give the impression of increased content but can be largely ignored while playing through the main story mode without missing much.

We don't want to sound overly negative, mind you. At the risk of repeating ourselves (yes, it's that *Liberty City Stories* review again) if you aren't lucky enough to have *VCS* on PSP it is entirely worth forking out to get it for your PS2, that is as long as you're prepared to make concessions to the fact that you're buying what is basically a five-year-old game with a few nips and tucks.

Even surprises that were eye-opening on PSP, such as a jetski and the ability to pilot helicopters, feel insignificant on PS2. You could, after all, fly a harrier jump jet in *San Andreas*.

SPRAWLING RETROPOLIS

But what *Vice City Stories* has over other *GTA* titles is the best game world. It's the same as that of *Vice City*, so it's the perfect size, there's brilliant variation in terrain, strikingly iconic 1980s-style art direction and absolutely blinding music (featuring the likes of Kiss, Scorpions, Hall & Oates, New Order and the mighty Phil Collins, who appears as a character in the game).

That's all still in place and that's why we're happy to step into Vic Vance's shoes for another home console car-jacking. ■ **George Walter**

THE PHIL COLLINS QUIZ

1980s pop star Phil Collins famously makes a cameo appearance in the later levels of *Vice City Stories*. But how much do you know about him? Take our simple quiz to find out...

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. HE DUMPED HIS WIFE BY FAX

2. *IN THE AIR TONIGHT* IS ABOUT A MAN WHO REFUSED TO HELP A FRIEND OF PHIL'S WHO DROWNED

3. HE ONCE AUTOGRAPHED A LOAD OF CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS

4. PHIL IS 3FT6IN TALL AND HAS TO STAND ON A BOX TO REACH THE PIANO PEDALS

5. HE SUPPORTS TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

6. PHIL'S DANCING ON THE *EASY LOVER* VIDEO HAS BEEN VOTED BEST 'DAD AT WEDDING DANCING' OF ALL TIME

ANSWERS
1: False (Although he did conduct some of his divorce settlement via fax)
2: False (This is one of the most enduring Collins urban myths)
3: True (He did it in support of PETA's anti-KFC campaign)
4: False (He's a bit taller than that)
5: True
6: False (But it should be)

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Better than the original: vibrant and sunny
Sound	09	Retrotastic tunes, mostly brilliant
Gameplay	08	Fundamentally classic criminal fun
Lifespan	09	Finishing story mode is just 40% of it

If you don't own VCS on PSP there's nothing stopping you from enjoying this. Never played the original Vice City? Buy that as well!

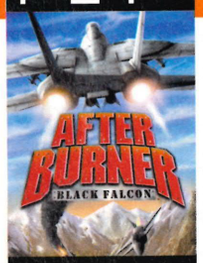
8/10

AFTER BURNER: BLACK FALCON

bronze
PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk

A hunk of burnin' love

PSP



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER PLANET MOON
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.PLANETMOON.COM
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACK NO
GAMESHARING NO

AT A GLANCE
A remake of the coin-op aerial shooter that keeps the arcade feel but also gets a whole lot of PSP love

Your PSP really is a PS2 in the palm of your hand, just as Sony promised. But although it's great to take *Syphon Filter* and *Tekken* on the train and wage war on your friends via WiFi, PSP is still a handheld, albeit a very powerful handheld.

So it's with open arms, or rather palms, that we embrace *After Burner: Black Falcon*, a remake of the classic Sega coin-op that takes all that power and squeezes it through an arcade-shaped sieve. The result is a sublime blend of old-fashioned points chasing, same-each-time attack waves and cutting-edge visuals.

BURNING BRIGHT

It also helps that *After Burner* sits so comfortably on PSP. The action suits the widescreen TFT perfectly: graphics are bright and brash and the music a smile-inducing combo of retro bleeps and soft-rocking guitars.

The controls suit the PSP, too, being simple enough to grab immediately. There's no fumbling for the weapons-cycle button or puzzling over missed mission objectives.

Simple shooting is the order of the day. Just like the old coin-op, the core gameplay involves locking onto incoming targets and firing off enough missiles to make 'em go kaboom.

FALCON AND ON

Although simple, it's beautifully addictive. In the small hours of the morning you'll still be learning incoming attack patterns and how to time your rocket volleys perfectly before launching into a belly-bothering barrel roll to avoid enemy fire.

Each of the three characters at your control has a set of secret objectives, too, which means you'll have to master different ways of playing. Do you speed through for the fastest time as Sonic (no really, that's his name), or push for 100% kills on each level with Shinsei? Add to that plenty of multiplayer versus and co-op modes, and you're looking at more than 15+ hours of supersonic dog-fighting.

There are plenty of quality PS2-style games on PSP that throw epic gaming worlds, super-charged sports cars and Nazi-death your way, but painfully few are so well suited to handheld gaming as *After Burner*.

This is a shooter that takes all that PSP power and uses it to create a sharp, immediate dose of fun. ■ **Ian Dean**

PIMP MY GLIDE

Supersonic jet-grey is *so* last season. In *After Burner*, you can give your fleet that custom look to make it truly individual

First off, unlock some of the better-looking jets. There's no point spending cash on tarting up cheap planes

You can start by giving them subtle decals and minor performance upgrades to make them stand out

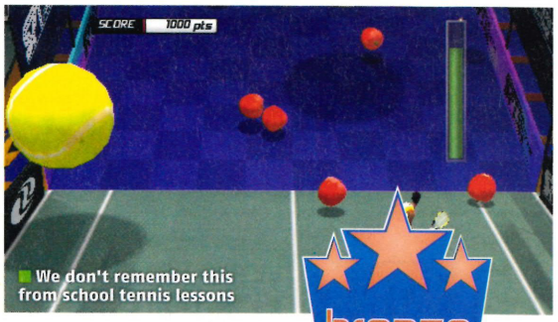
And when you've saved enough cash, you'll be able to create more 'experimental' paint jobs. Mmm, tiger print

PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk	VERDICT
Graphics	08 Colourful, vibrant arcade worlds
Sound	09 The old tunes are remixed
Gameplay	09 Simple but incredibly addictive blasting
Lifespan	08 Fun multiplayer and 'one-more-go' appeal

So it's not an epic free-roaming adventure, but After Burner *is finely formed arcade shooting: a perfectly proportioned aerial shooter*

8/10

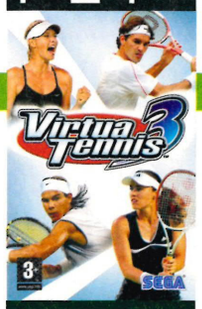
Sharapova: No matter how badly you beat her, she still won't scream



We don't remember this from school tennis lessons

bronze
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

VIRTUA TENNIS 3



It's cheaper than a racket and a set of new balls

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER SUMO DIGITAL
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

There are many questions that keep us awake at night, but only one of them is tennis-related. It is this: after finishing a hard-fought Grand Slam tournament, do real-life tennis pros choose to sprawl out on the settee with a Long Island iced tea and a PlayStation for a quick game of *Virtua Tennis*?

Contractual endorsement appearances aside, we suspect they don't. And heaven knows, anyway, what they'd make of the *Virtua Tennis* series, whose mangled sense of realism – although seriously fun – is hardly a genuine representation of the sport itself.

For instance, we suspect that Maria Sharapova would, like us, be sorely disappointed to discover her trademark orgasmic shriek is nowhere to be found. And we'd love to hear John McEnroe's opinion on the game's numerous training mini games, the most bizarre of which is Avalanche, where you scramble to avoid ten-ton tennis balls while collecting fruit in order to level up your player's skills.

ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

But there is real meat in the game. In World Tour mode you create a bottom-seeded newbie whom you must advance through the ranks via a combination of training, amusing mini games and tournament participation.

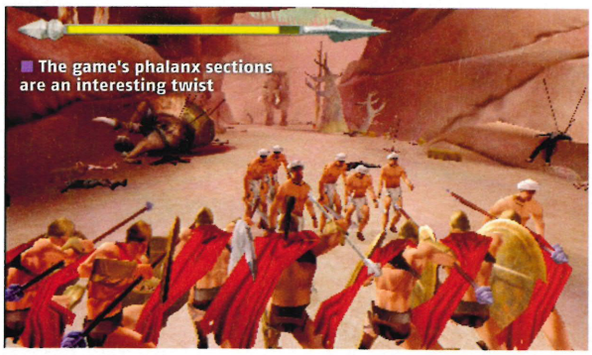
Sadly, no matter how much you tweak his or her appearance, your player is guaranteed to end up resembling – like all the game's player models – an unsettling, dead-eyed mannequin. But apart from that minor gripe, *Virtua Tennis 3* is visually impressive, not to mention a real joy to play.

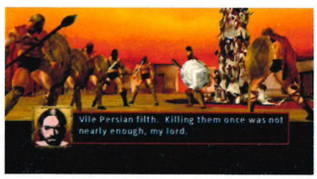
With its idiot-proof learning curve and friendly controls, it swings between mildly amusing and seriously addictive in short order. You have been warned. ■ **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Pretty courts, scary player models
Sound	07	No 'Sharapova Shriek'. Sigh
Gameplay	09	Wiimote? What's a Wiimote?
Lifespan	08	World Tour mode. Enough said

A lack of realism does nothing to dampen the sheer fun and depth of play behind* Virtua Tennis 3. *It's, ahem, ace

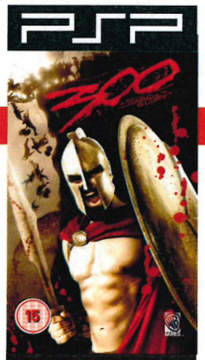
8/10


The game's phalanx sections are an interesting twist



bronze
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

300: MARCH TO GLORY



Much better than the other 299

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EIDOS
DEVELOPER COLLISION STUDIOS
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

You're a lucky person, you are. Why? Because as you read this, you'll already have had a chance to see Zack Snyder's film adaptation of Frank '*Sin City*' Miller's classic graphic novel, *300*, on which this game is based.

We're not so lucky, because the dictates of our publishing schedule mean that we're writing this review a month before the film's released. However, we're pretty confident that it'll make Russell Crowe in *Gladiator* look like Ant McPartlin in a leather miniskirt.

The question is, on what equivalent sacred cow of the gaming world does *300: March to Glory* train its sights? None other than the daddy of the Greek-'em-up, *God of War*. And it sets about this daunting task by using many of the same ideas that are seen in *GOW*.

The slaughter of Persians and their bestial host don't yield red orbs, but there's a system called 'Kleos' (that's Greek for 'renown') in place that works in the same way as Kratos' weapon/magic upgrade mechanic.

You know that bit of slow-mo when Kratos blocks and counters an enemy's attack? *300* does that, too. Context-sensitive finishing moves? Yup. Intimidating (well, for the PSP, anyway) boss fights? Oh yes. Selection of spells accessed via the D-pad? You betcha.

MARCH-ENEMIES

However, *300* is also packed with interesting features in its own right, such as having to shield-tuck when the sky darkens with Persian arrows, or forming a phalanx with your men to take on larger foes.

Plus, thanks to the kind of cash only movie studios can give, the presentation is decidedly slick: the story is beautifully told via pages lifted from the original graphic novel and there's some expensive-sounding narration drizzled on top.

To conclude: until *God of War* comes out on PSP, this is the next best thing. ■ **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Slightly blocky but very stylish
Sound	09	Excellent score and quality voice acting
Gameplay	08	*God of War*-style hack'n'slash
Lifespan	07	Unlockables beg another play-through

Anyone who's played* God of War *will recognise lots here, but* 300 *sets itself apart with some unique ideas and set-pieces

8/10

[EXCLUSIVE REVIEW]

Burnout Dominator

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Coded Arms: Contagion
Crazy Taxi: Fare Wars
Virtua Tennis 3

FREE

Ultimate PSP games guide + Peanut M&Ms*

*Sweets not available in all territories

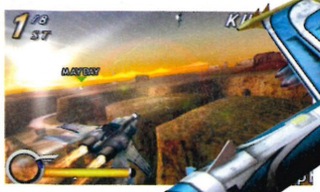
196 REVIEWS INSIDE!

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

Wind flapping around your cheeks, 'saucy' logo on your wing: what more do you need for an eight-way dogfight? The ability to shoot by tapping R1? Okay!

Cover is sparse and tends to be down low, and you'll need to take risks to keep your fuselage in one piece. But special weapons can be found down there, too

The good thing about dogfighting is that there's almost always someone ready to explode. Those in trouble are indicated with red markers



PSP

MACH

A lack of sky's the limit

DETAILS

PUBLISHER VIVENDI
DEVELOPER KUJU ENTERTAINMENT
PRICE £24.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS YES
GAMESHARING YES

AT A GLANCE

In a future where all aircraft are flown by robots, a band of disgruntled ex-pilots buy up some manual jets and tear up the countryside

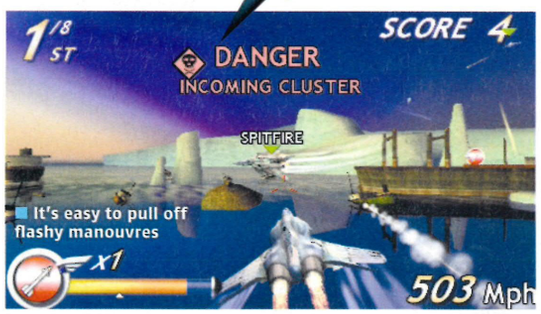
Modified Air Combat Heroes, as its full title suggests, wants to be the *Burnout* of the skies. And, just like this earthbound role model, *MACH* is a flatterer. A jet racer, it makes the showiest of moves and the tightest of manoeuvres all an absolute cinch to pull off.

Got a missile on your six? Just tap ◎ and your craft will do a gut-churning loop-the-loop sequence. Spy a 90° angle up ahead? Hold down ▣ and you'll be able to powerglide around the tightest of tight angles.

But in case that sounds all a bit too easy, you should know that *MACH* has also aped *Burnout*'s risk/reward dynamic. Flying close to the ground will (somehow) charge up your fuel meter, allowing you brief speed boosts (by tapping ⊗).

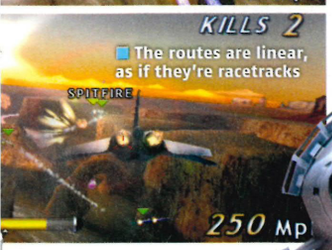
And don't forget to leave some charge in reserve because it'll be needed to activate those loop-the-loop spins we mentioned.

That's our favourite thing about *MACH*: it's the first weapon-packed racer where you feel as though your fate is completely in your hands.



AIR LINES

On the downside, races can be very claustrophobic. You're funnelled down linear routes in the same way you would be if you were travelling by wheel, and the forgiving nature of the collisions means that it never quite evolves into the edge-of-your-seat experience you might expect. This is alleviated, though, by the eight-way dogfights that are interspersed into the grand prix schedules.



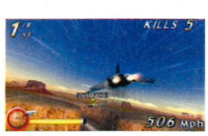
IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

These are tremendous fun, even if the artificial nature of the battle area's boundaries can be confusing. The sky just peters out, making it easy to become disorientated and lose the edge. But we should point out that the game supports eight-way WiFi dogfighting, too.

MACH is never less than entertaining, but since it doesn't feel as free as *After Burner* or as fast as *WipEout* you may find yourself wondering if you can stomach yet another above-average PSP racer.

It's a poser compounded by the game's lack of any real content. Although there are quite a few races and vehicles to unlock, *MACH* has very few 'tracks'. The ones that are there are well-designed, but fatigue is likely to set in rather quickly.

Purpose-built for PSP, *MACH* is an enjoyable addition to the handheld's burgeoning list of strong racing titles but its lack of character clips its wings. ■ **Alex Dale**



PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK VERDICT

Graphics	08	Crisp, vibrant and never confusing
Sound	02	Recorded at a horrific playground accident
Gameplay	07	Immediately engaging but lacks character
Lifespan	05	Plenty to unlock, but it's plenty of nothing

There's not enough to it, and what there is of it, there's too much of, if you follow us. Good, but in an over-saturated market it needs more

6/10

SID MEIER'S PIRATES!

PSP

Is it a pirate's strife or gleaming booty?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER TAKE 2
DEVELOPER FULL FAT
PRICE £34.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

AT A GLANCE
Swashbuckle your way around the high seas on a treasure-hunting, lass-grabbing, ship-sinking, rollicking good adventure

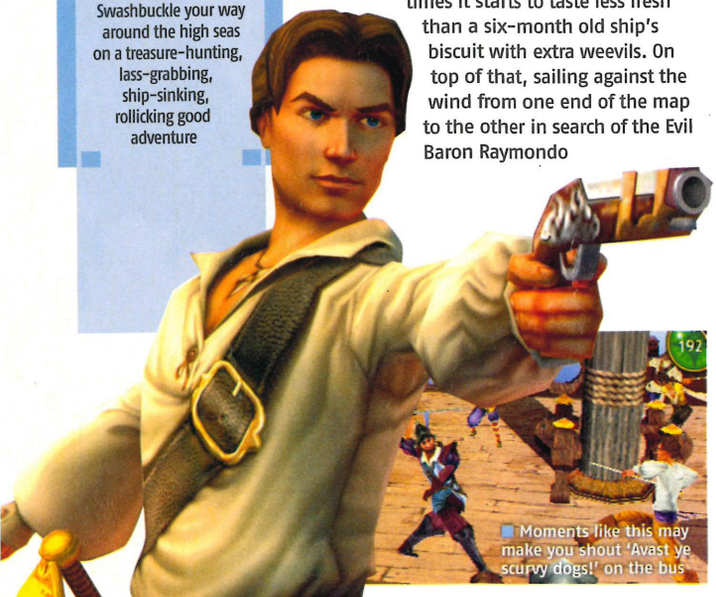
Sweet rides, bling, guns, and buxom latino ladies: *Sid Meier's Pirates!* is *Grand Theft Auto* circa 16th century. Oh yes, and it's also easily one of the finest games to swagger onto PSP this year.

The story follows your character's quest for revenge against the dastardly Marquis de Montalban, who's kidnapped four of your relatives and scattered them in various locations around the Caribbean.

How you fulfil your quest for vengeance is entirely up to you. You can plough through the various missions in the main storyline or you can cruise around sinking ships, hunting for treasure and wooing governors' daughters.

Sounds great, right? Well, to start with, it is. The wealth of options and stats is impressive, and the size of the sea you can sail is substantial. However, after a couple of hours it all starts to feel a little samey.

Buckling swash with Spanish frigate captains is all well and good, but once you've tapped your way through the same mini-game 50 times it starts to taste less fresh than a six-month old ship's biscuit with extra weevils. On top of that, sailing against the wind from one end of the map to the other in search of the Evil Baron Raymondo (he's the one with the info on your kidnapped relatives), gets mighty tedious after a while.



PS-PIECES OF EIGHT

Yet we love *Pirates!* like a shoulder-perching parrot. Despite being a collection of undemanding mini-games, monotonous sailing sections, and repetitive lines of dialogue, we can't help casting off for 'another five minutes' of nautical adventuring. Why? Because *Pirates!* has more charm and character in one dance with the governor's daughter, in one swift swordfight on the deck of a burning galleon, than almost every other game on PSP.

It makes you feel great about playing as a sea-bound rogue. It occupies the doldrums in between puzzling and a full-fat adventure gaming, and because of that, it's a lesson in simplicity for other developers of PSP games.

On top of all that, it's handsome to look at and cheeky enough to make you blurt out random sniggers on the bus like a Care In The Community case. If you're looking for something light-hearted but deep, this is where you should be spending your doubloons. ■ **AH**

PlayStation 2 official magazine UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	That sea looks cool enough to swim in
Sound	08	A fine collection of 'Yaaaar!'s and 'Yo ho!'s
Gameplay	07	Repetitive, but strangely relaxing
Lifespan	09	Plenty of sea-faring to be had here

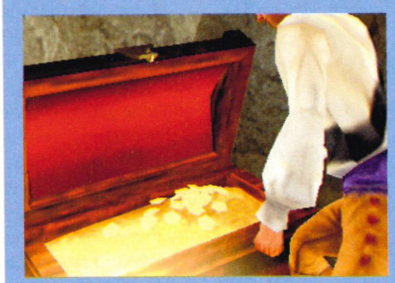
The charming rogue of handheld gaming,* Pirates! *is a blast to begin with, but it can get tiresome if you're with it for too long

8/10

WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA

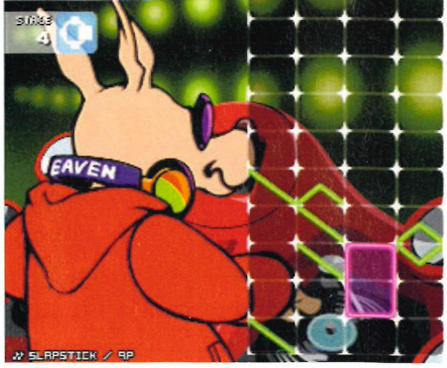
Three deeds you can only do in *Pirates!*

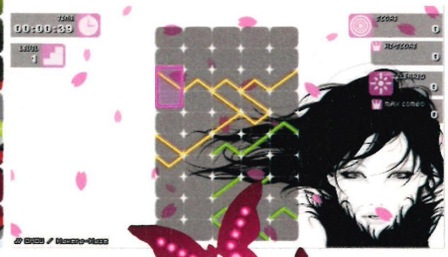
BALLROOM DANCING
Forget the disco in *GTA San Andreas*, take to the floor and start pirouetting. Win the heart of a lady, and you'll get the chance to take her up the isle

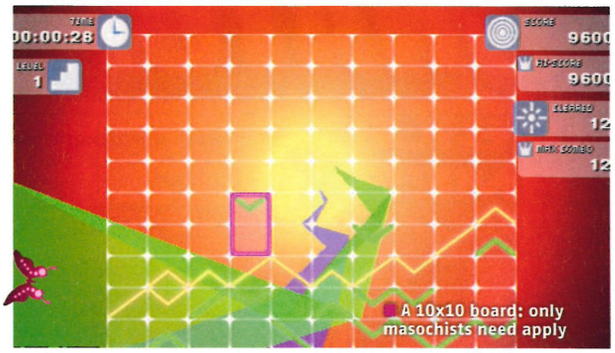


DIGGING FOR TREASURE
Sure, you've found coins before, but have you ever landed on an island, dodged a pack of human-hungry pumas and dug up a chest brimming with gold booty?

FOUR-WAY BOAT BATTLES
Pirates! has a four-player WiFi mode that lets you duke it out with your real-life shipmates in a fierce, quadruple-ended galleon scrap. It's rather good, too







A 10x10 board: only masochists need apply

GUNPEY

The last work of a gaming master turns out masterfully mediocre

DETAILS

PUBLISHER ATARI
DEVELOPER Q ENTERTAINMENT
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

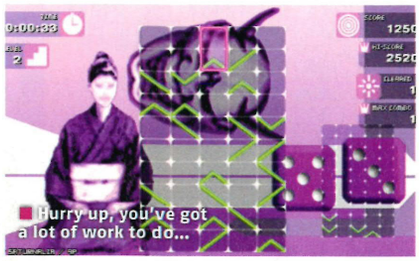
For such a colourful puzzler, *Gunpey* has a sad history, because it's effectively the final work of Gunpei 'Father of the Game Boy' Yokoi before his fatal car accident. But as gaming memorials go, it's probably best to remember Yokoi for *Metroid* because *Gunpey*'s repetitive puzzle action is unlikely to yield the kind of success that will lay his spirit to rest.

Like its older, more dynamic brother *Lumines*, *Gunpey* uses a series of achingly hip background/music combos dubbed 'skins' to vary the simple gameplay. That itself requires you to rearrange a series of blocks, each containing one of four different line shapes, in order to create a complete line stretching from the left to the right of the grid.

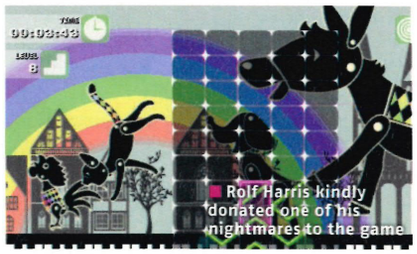
When you do so, the line vanishes, and all the blocks above sink down. Think *Tetris*, only instead of only having to worry about falling bricks, you have to be paying attention to what every single line is doing.

If the normal game isn't brain-taxing enough, you can enlarge the grid to double its horizontal width, or play in Double Skin mode, which has you to managing two Gunpey boards simultaneously. It's a bit like wandering from one room in a club to another. And back again. Very quickly. While carrying 10 drinks.

Granted, it's no *Lumines*, but *Gunpey* has its moments, and is fully capable of invading your dreams should you let it. ■ **Mike Sterry**



Hurry up, you've got a lot of work to do...



Rolf Harris kindly donated one of his nightmares to the game

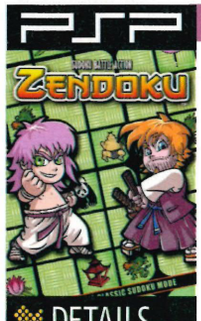
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Pretty to the point of distraction
Sound	08	Ace, if you like trance
Gameplay	06	Frenetic and monotonous in equal measure
Lifespan	05	Weeks, not months

A decent enough puzzler, but at a wallet-punching £30 you'd do better to get yourself a copy of Lumines on the cheap instead

6/10

ZENDOKU

Sudoku gets badass



DETAILS

PUBLISHER EIDOS
DEVELOPER ZOONAMI
PRICE £34.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

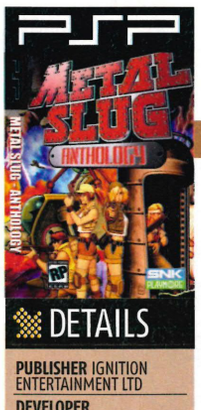
Sudoku with fighting? Yes, when we first heard about Zendoku we thought it was a crazy idea, too. But it works. Usually the only competitive element to the commuters' favourite numbers-and-squares game is racing to complete a grid in the fastest time (and indeed you can do just that here, in the plain Sudoku mode).

But in Zendoku, you and an opponent (real or AI) work on the same grid and every time you fill a line or square, you 'attack' them with a mini-game that they must win before they can carry on – while you roar ahead. It adds a fun extra element to the game. And even if you can't find a friend who owns the title to play against, the built-in characters are reasonably challenging. ■ **Sophie Mason**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
For sudoku addicts the competitive element breathes new life into the game and forces you to up the ante, but without a real-life opponent the lifespan may be limited	**6/10**

War: what *Metal Slug* is absolutely good for

Over-the-top boss battles are par for the course, natch



METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY

A ton of run n' gun fun? Done!

DETAILS

PUBLISHER IGNITION ENTERTAINMENT LTD
DEVELOPER SNK PLAYMORE
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER 1-2
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

Side-strolling shooters have never been more riotously fun, explode-y and chuckle-out-loud ludicrous than cult favourite *Metal Slug*. The *Anthology* packs in seven games, including the previously unreleased pride of the series, *Metal Slug 6*. Sure, the series is now a decade old, but at £4.48 per game, *Anthology* is a freakin' steal.

It isn't the complete twitch-gamer's heaven it could have been. It offers two flavours of slowdown, in-game (preserved from the arcade original) and UMD – the latter of which is unfortunately more prevalent. Still, that won't stop us frittering our lunch hours on it. ■ **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
Still as fun as it was in the arcades years ago; although it has minor technical niggles, all of those are forgivable if you've got the 'Slug in your blood	**8/10**

SNATCH

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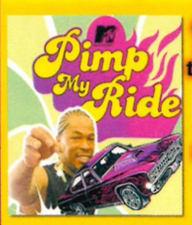

Get ready to tune 4 rides in a stack of mini-games that take you from Rookie to Master. Earn respect and pile on points in bonus rounds as you make your machine into a thing of beauty. Y'all!

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VIVID BIG BOOBS POKER
43934

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24523 Lusty Leilani!
23275 Bored Housewives!
40418 Blond Sexy Twins!

41169

28780

BESTSELLERS!!!

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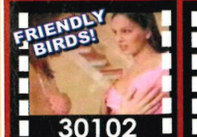

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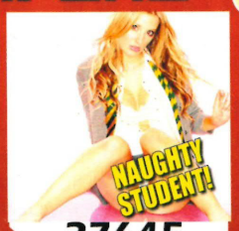

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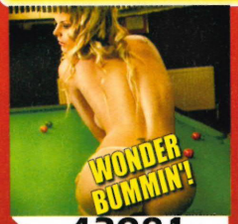

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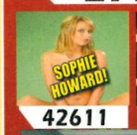

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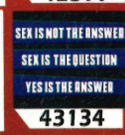

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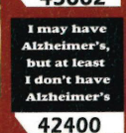

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24737 HOT GIRL
24738 Abi Titmuss!

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replay

PLAYING IT AGAIN SO SAM DOESN'T HAVE TO

We know what you're thinking*. You're thinking: "They can't possibly have played *God of War II* all the way through already!".

Well, that's where you're wrong, bucko. For we've been playing that very game so hard all month that the leopard-print cocktail lounge which we like to call 'the OPS2 office' has resounded with the 'schwang' of Athena's Blades, the 'hrrrnggh' of Kratos straining to open doors and the screams of dying men (actually, that last one is fairly common as deadline approaches, but we digress).

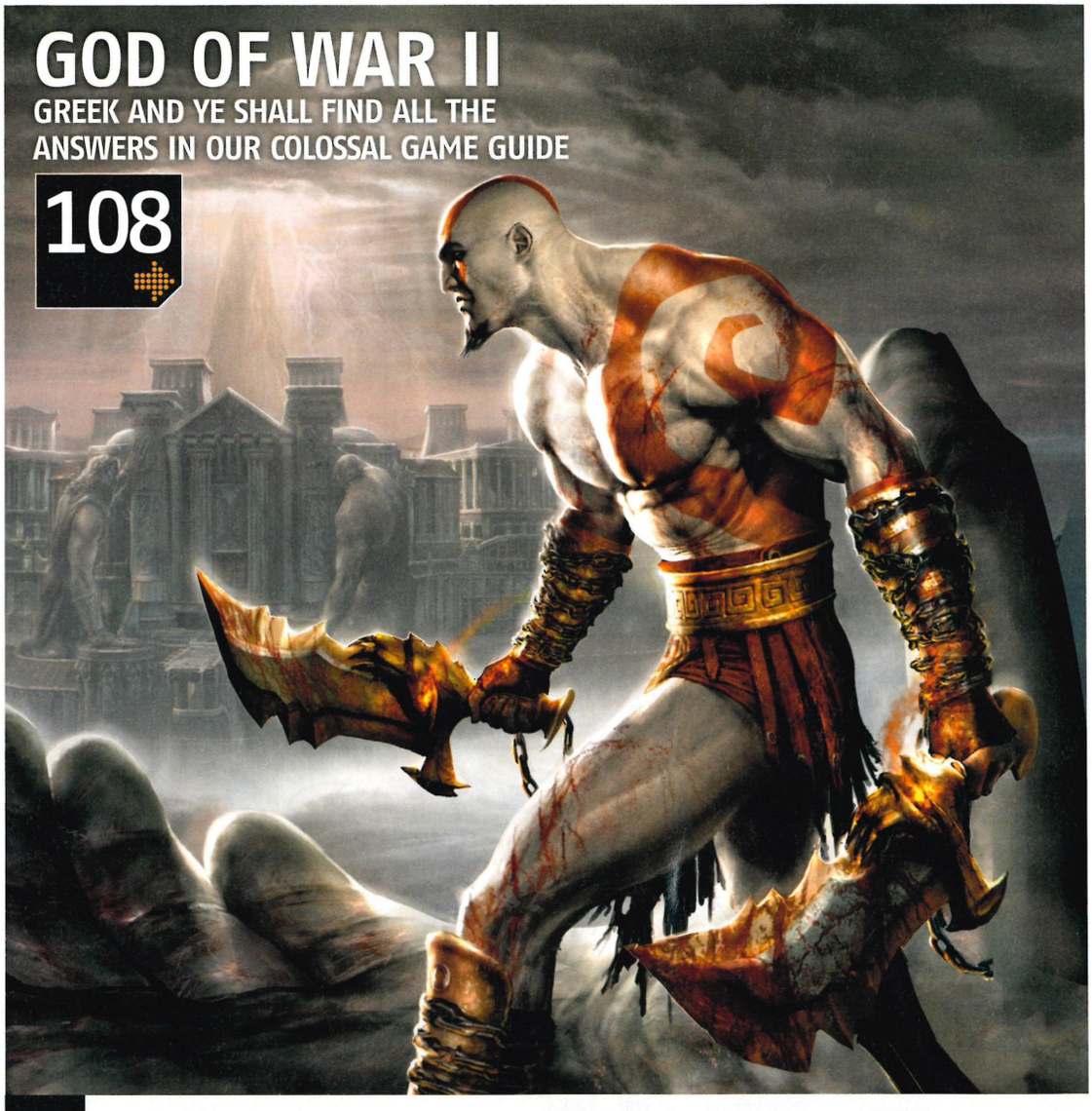
And not only that, we've written it all down for you in minute detail. So if you get stuck on a puzzle or can't find a Phoenix Feather, we've got the answers in our incredible in-depth guide.

Not enough for you? Well, how about this, then: your Replay section this month also includes a special guide to all the unlockables and hidden stuff in the new PS2 version of *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories*.

Plus there are all the regular charts, challenges and whatnot and a look at our furry friends in PlayStation Education. It's godly.

Sophie Mason,
Production editor

(* Apart from: "Good Lord! Look at the size of that cat!")



GOD OF WAR II

GREEK AND YE SHALL FIND ALL THE ANSWERS IN OUR COLOSSAL GAME GUIDE

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102 **CHARTS**
You'll never guess what's number one. Go on, see if you can. Clue: rhymes with Eyenal Antasy

103 **CHALLENGES & ONLINE**
Free stuff for you to win plus our verdict on two games that make broadband worth the money

104 **CHEATS**
Don't raise your blood pressure, take the easy way to success with these stress-reducing tricks

120 **KEYS TO THE VICE CITY**
Whether you're new to *Vice City Stories* or an old hand, you need these tips for the PS2 version

128 **DOGGONE CRAZY!**
Man's best friend or man's worst enemy, we look at all styles of doggy on PlayStation

charts

FACTS, FIGURES AND FUNNIES

WHAT THE OTHER MAGS SAID

WE READ 'EM SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

PSM3	"Another totally forgettable licensed game" 58%	"Fun enough for most people to 'get'" 82%	"*The Warriors* retains its inherent coolness" 77%	"Avoid at all costs" 18%
PSW	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*
PLAY	"Could have been one of the great PS2 games" 79%	"You really have to admire *God Hand*" 89%	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT	"Bursting with superhero energy and verve" 7/10	"A solid and enjoyable scrapper" 7/10	"One of the best action games on PSP" 8/10	"No, but - just no. This is absolute drivel" 2/10

*Review not available at time of going to press

THE TOP 20 ChartTrack elspa

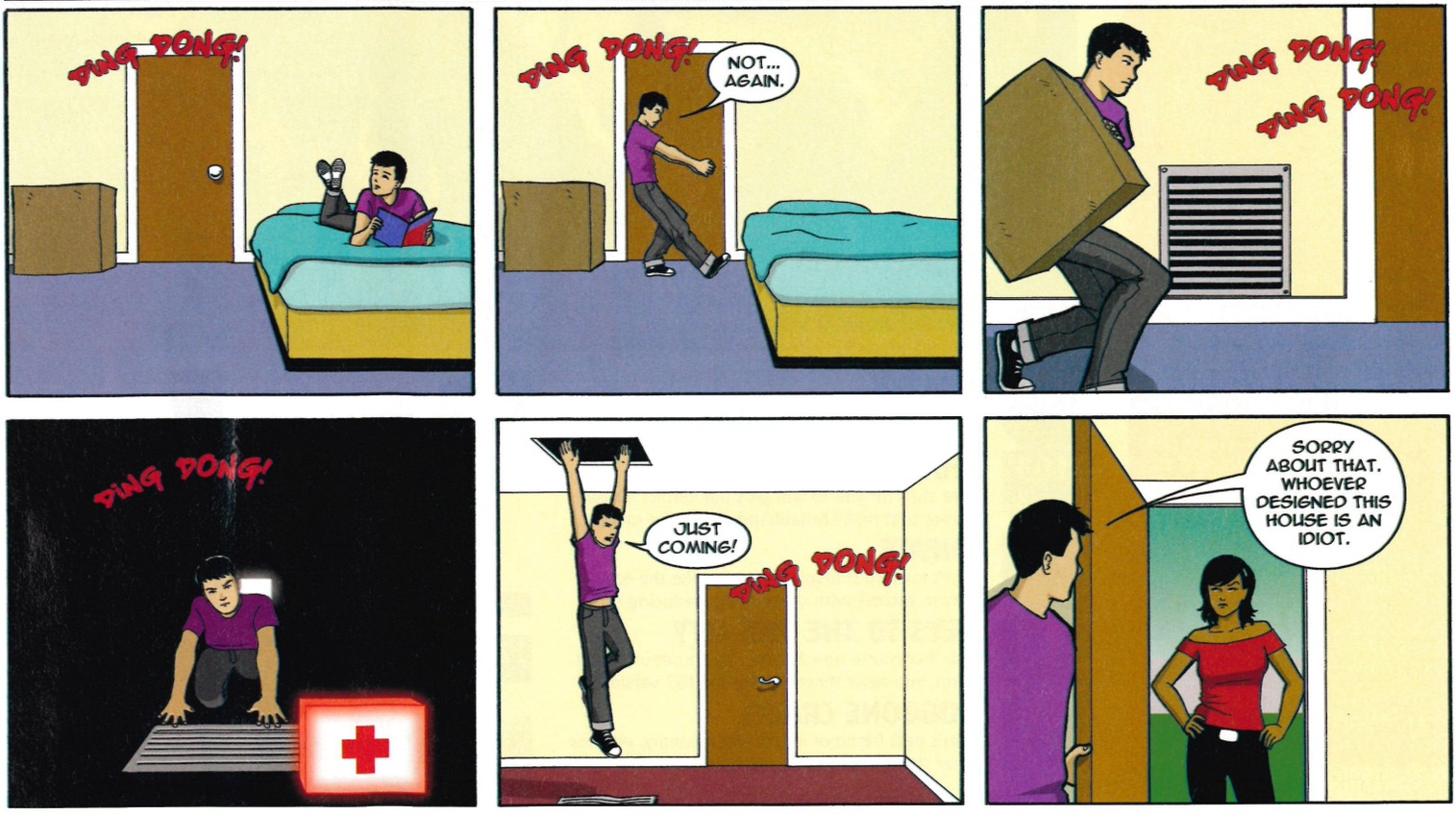
	Game Name	Publisher	Score
1.	Final Fantasy XII	Square Enix	10/10
2.	FIFA 07	EA Sports	9/10
3.	Ghost Rider	Take 2	7/10
4.	Need For Speed Carbon	EA Games	9/10
5.	Pro Evolution Soccer 6	Konami	10/10
6.	Avatar: The Legend Of Aang	THQ	5/10
7.	Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy	Eidos	9/10
8.	Call Of Duty 3	Activision	8/10
9.	WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2007	THQ	8/10
10.	Buzz! The Big Quiz	Sony	7/10
11.	Scarface: The World Is Yours	VU Games	8/10
12.	Guitar Hero II	Activision	8/10
13.	The Sims 2: Pets	EA Games	8/10
14.	World Snooker Championship 2007	Sega	8/10
15.	Okami	Capcom	10/10
16.	PDC World Championship Darts	Oxygen	5/10
17.	Buzz! The Music Quiz	Sony	7/10
18.	Naruto Ultimate Ninja	Atari	7/10
19.	Happy Feet	Midway	6/10
20.	Tony Hawk's Project 8	Activision	8/10

GHOST WITH THE MOST
Hot on the heals of the mediocre film, it seems *Ghost Rider* the game has ridden into the top three. Not bad for an 'homage' to *Devil May Cry*, eh?

WOLF IT DOWN
We're officially never speaking to you lot ever again. Why is *Okami* languishing so low in the charts? Sort it out, and buy this splendid game!

SAVE POINT TAKING THE LESS TRAVELLED ROUTE TO GAMING WISDOM

WORDS: KIERON GILLEN ART: JAMIE MCKELVIE

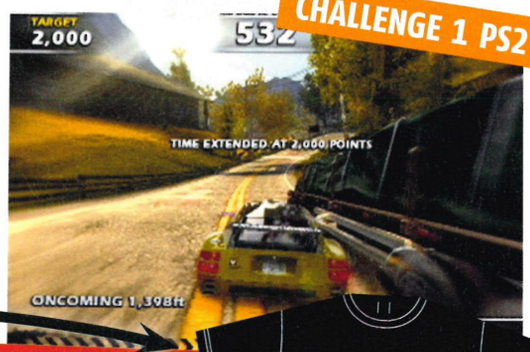


challenges

DOMINATE. COMMUNICATE. ACCUMULATE.

BURNOUT DOMINATOR

CHALLENGE 1 PS2



Mode: Record Breaker. Event: Maniac. Track: Autobahn Loop (Forward). Class: Tuned. Ride: Custom Coupe Ultimate. You: beat 25,500 points and send us the proof. Us: give you a bootload of fabulous prizes.

Best Proved Break Gets...

HOW TO ENTER

Attach your MMS picture then text either **CHALLENGE1, CHALLENGE2, or CHALLENGE3** (then a space) followed by your name and full address to **07738 647 177**

Only the entries that OPS2 judges as the best score / time will win the respective prize. Texts will be charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 28 March to 25 April inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.*

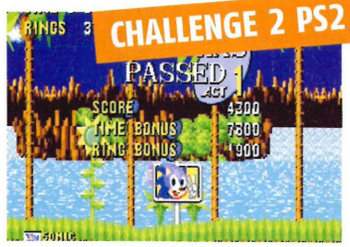
SEGA MEGA DRIVE COLLECTION

CHALLENGE 2 PS2

Jump into the original Sonic the Hedgehog and try to beat our ring-grabbing time of 35 seconds in Green Hill Zone Act 1. Send us a pic of your achievement; the best time wins.

Best Proved Time Gets...

Three great PS2 games and an Official PS2 Magazine T-shirt



LITTLE BRITAIN

CHALLENGE 3 PS2

You bought it? Oh, we feel sorry for you, so beat our pathetic 45,400 points score in Vicky Pollard's roller-derby mini-game (Easy mode) and we'll give you some far superior games.

Highest Proved Score Gets...

A pair of great PS2 games and an Official PS2 Magazine T-shirt

PSP WIFI TEST 1

METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS

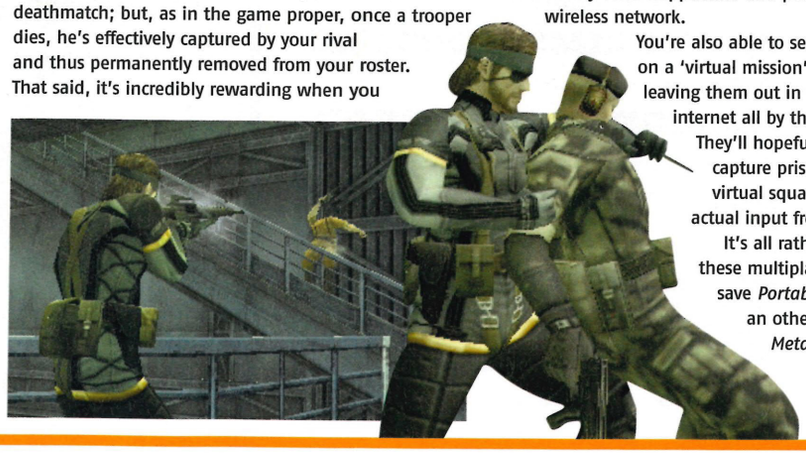
What you get: Hot, engrossing, pick-up-and-play wireless action that's available within minutes after the painless online registration. And the online action isn't entirely divorced from the singleplayer game, with multiplayer matches having real consequences for Snake's offline guerrilla army.

What it's like: Terrifying. Pit your hard-bitten squad against an online foe's team in a squad-based deathmatch; but, as in the game proper, once a trooper dies, he's effectively captured by your rival and thus permanently removed from your roster. That said, it's incredibly rewarding when you take down another player's prized trooper and subsequently pressgang him into your burgeoning militia.

Play-wise, *Portable Ops* isn't radically different from the online mode in *MGS3: Subsistence*, although you have the chance to recruit new squad members by simply scanning around for available wireless networks. Why, we picked up a fairly competent trooper by simply wandering into Starbucks for a skinny venti frappuccino and peeping the caff's wireless network.

You're also able to send a squad out on a 'virtual mission', essentially leaving them out in the wilds of the internet all by their lonesome. They'll hopefully gain rank and capture prisoners from other virtual squads without any actual input from you.

It's all rather good and these multiplayer capabilities save *Portable Ops* from being an otherwise mediocre *Metal Gear* title.



SHOULD I GET MY MATES ROUND FOR THIS? ✓

PSP WIFI TEST 2

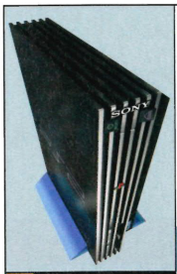
THE WARRIORS

What you get: As well as being an excellent port of the PS2 original, *The Warriors* on PSP packs in a slew of multiplayer modes, some of them more diverting than others.

What it's like: About as perfect as a PSP multiplayer beat-'em-up can get, apart from the fact that you'll need two copies. There's a cooperative mode (which, unlike the PS2 version, doesn't allow the second player to drop in and out as they choose), which asks you and a chum to plough your way through the story mode. But it's the spanking-new extra PSP modes that make multiplayer. You can challenge a mate to a few levels of the old-school Armies of the Night mini-game, slug it out a few rounds in King of the Hill, or challenge someone to the delightfully misogynistic Capture the Girl game.

SHOULD I GET MY MATES ROUND FOR THIS? ✓

***CHALLENGE COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS** By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word NO at the end of your text message. Winners will be notified within 28 days. No employees of Future Publishing, any associated company or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Publicity may be given to any entrants and their names, addresses and/or photographs printed in OPS2. Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary. These competitions are open from 28 March to 25 April inclusive.



the hot 100

FOR THE CASH THAT'S BURNING A HOLE IN YOUR POCKET

THIS MONTH

Easter is fast becoming a 'second Christmas' for gamers, and not only because it's the only other day of the year when you're allowed to eat chocolate for breakfast. There are boatloads of games in time to satisfy Santa, and after that there's a dry spell until the Easter rush is upon us. We're now right at the start of that rush so we've got two solid entries into the Hot 100 – *God of War II* and *Burnout Dominator*. Both games are hotter than magma burritos, just like everything else in this list of the 100 best games you really ought to play.

YOUR KEY TO THE TOP 100

GOLD
Reserved exclusively for games that scored the elusive 10/10

SILVER
Only awarded to games that scored a mighty 9/10

BRONZE
Lovingly given to games that scored an impressive 8/10

DVD#78
Want to try before you buy? Here's the issue where we ran a playable demo

24: THE GAME — BRONZE
A quality re-creation of the show that's fun to play.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#69/#72**

ACE COMBAT: SQUADRON LEADER — BRONZE
Great flight sim that's well worth a fly-by.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#56/#57**

AMPLITUDE — SILVER
Fun music/rhythm game with tunes adults or teens will recognise.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

AREA 51 — SILVER
Guns, aliens and conspiracies make for a top-notch shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#58/#62**

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT — SILVER
Body-swapping war shooter full of challenges and action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#68**

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL — BRONZE
A gripping, engaging platformer from the makers of *Rayman*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#39**

BLACK — GOLD
Hollywood-style gun porn – by far the best shooter on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#69/#72/#76**

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30 — BRONZE
An addictive take both on WW2 and squad-based shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60/#62**

BURNOUT DOMINATOR — BRONZE
Another cracking *Burnout*. When it shines, oh boy, it dazzles.
REVIEWED *OPS2#83* / **OVERALL** 08

BURNOUT REVENGE — GOLD
The best arcade racer in existence.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#64**

BUZZ! THE BIG QUIZ — BRONZE
General knowledge quiz with USB buzzers: great family fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 08

CALL OF DUTY 3 — BRONZE
The most atmospheric and intense WW2 shooter we've played.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

CANIS CANEM EDIT — SILVER
Funny, silly yet always enjoyable school-based adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005 — SILVER
The career mode means this driving title is still loads of fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#51* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51**

CRICKET 07 — BRONZE
EA's solid, good-looking cricket sim will bowl you over.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2 — BRONZE
Globe-hopping comedy alien mayhem set in the 1960s.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08 **DVD#78**

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING — SILVER
Combat-heavy, demonic adventure with shooters and swords.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 09

DRAGON QUEST: THE JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING — SILVER
Vintage Japanese role-player: long, strong and good-looking.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#71/#73/#75**

EVERYBODY'S GOLF — BRONZE
Cartoon visuals with some seriously dazzling golfing action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#64**

EYETOY: PLAY 2 — BRONZE
Games collection that uses the EyeToy to full effect.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#54**

FAHRENHEIT — SILVER
Stylish, cinematic reinvention of the point-and-click adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#64/#69**

FIFA 07 — SILVER
Finally tackling *PES*'s unchallenged champion status.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3 — SILVER
Knockout boxing sim takes face-punching to the next level.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#71/#74**

FINAL FANTASY XII — GOLD
The best role-playing game PS2, or any console, has ever seen.
REVIEWED *OPS2#81* / **OVERALL** 10

FREEDOM FIGHTERS — SILVER
Tactical battling in an urban setting. Insanely addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#37* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE — BRONZE
This is the finest Bond game on PS2. Simple and enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#67**

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS — BRONZE
Tactical army sim that's accessible and truly gripping.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08

GOD OF WAR — SILVER
Heart-in-mouth joy from this frantic and bloody hack-fest.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#62/#63** ON THE DVD

GOD OF WAR II — SILVER
Accesible, exhilarating and macho as hell.
REVIEWED *OPS2#83* / **OVERALL** 09

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK — GOLD
Two superb games in the same box for just £40? Grand!
REVIEWED *OPS2#41* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES — BRONZE
Budget-priced port of handheld *GTA* that's a thrill-filled joy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#75* / **OVERALL** 08

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS — GOLD
Enormous, even more so than *Vice City*, and cracking good fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#54* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAN TURISMO 4 — SILVER
Unsurpassed, automotive beauty. The best driving game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09

GUITAR HERO II — BRONZE
Slightly more challenging than the first one but just as much fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

GUN — SILVER
This *GTA*-inspired Wild West shooter is mighty fine, if a little short.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY — SILVER
Agent 47's biggest, bloodiest and best adventure yet.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#72/#73/#75**

ICO — SILVER
Beautiful, inventive, magical: *Ico* is an adventure like no other.
REVIEWED *OPS2#18 & #69* / **OVERALL** 09 ON THE DVD

JAK 3 — BRONZE
Ambitious platform adventure with oodles of varied gameplay.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#53/#58/#75**

READER TOP 5

THIS MONTHS TOP 5 COMES FROM MARK EVERETT OF DARTFORD

1 MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE 9/10
Hits Mark's top spot because of its action-packed storyline and slick playablility. Good reasons, Mark!

2 CANIS CANEM EDIT 9/10
"Fun, yet educational", according to Mark. We feel sorry for your school chums, mate...

3 THE GODFATHER 8/10
Not everyone enjoyed this take on the classic gangster movie trilogy, but Mark describes it as a "great shoot 'em up". Each to their own.

4 BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT 9/10
A great shooter. Mark, we salute your choice on this one.

5 NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 9/10
This racer made Mark's list because to him it is "unique".

DISAGREE? LET US KNOW ABOUT IT

NEED A BACK ISSUE OF *OPS2* TO CHECK OUT THE FULL REVIEW? THEN CALL:
UK: 0870 837 4773
OVERSEAS: +44 1858 438 795

replay

JUST CAUSE — BRONZE
Massive parachuting fun in a '*GTA* does jungle' adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 08

KILLER 7 — BRONZE
Insane shooter with exploding zombies and multiple personalities.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08

KINGDOM HEARTS II — BRONZE
Disney roleplayer from the makers of *Final Fantasy*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08

LEGO STAR WARS II — SILVER
Hugely enjoyable and comical retelling of the original trilogy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#76/#77**

MADDEN NFL 07 — SILVER
One of the most accurate sports sims ever made.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09

MANHUNT — SILVER
A dirty, grisly, filthy but downright brilliant game experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#42* / **OVERALL** 09

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE — BRONZE
Graffiti game created by a fashion designer. Original and good.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#71**

MASHED — SILVER
Got friends? Get the brilliant party racer *Mashed*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#48* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#48/#49/#55** ON THE DVD

MERCENARIES — SILVER
Enjoy all the fun of free-roaming warfare, and get paid for it!
REVIEWED *OPS2#55* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#55**

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY — GOLD
A must-own, tactical espionage stealth-a-thon.
REVIEWED *OPS2#17* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#17/#37**

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE — SILVER
The superb *Snake Eater* gets a new camera and an online mode.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 09

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX — BRONZE
Super-bling street racer, now with extra tunes and vehicles.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 08

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS — BRONZE
The classic beat-'em-up gets a spectacular adventure makeover.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

MOTO GP4 — BRONZE
Fast, pretty and very challenging motorbike racing.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 08

MUSIC 3000 — SILVER
A virtual recording studio for £30? Can anyone say no to that?
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09

NBA 2K7 — SILVER
Great looking, responsive basketball game that's not just for fans.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

NEED FOR SPEED CARBON — BRONZET
The latest instalment of this consistently good series.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

NHL 07 — BRONZE
New controls and great looks make for a pucking brilliant time.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

OKAMI — GOLD
A beautiful, original, magical, picture-book adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#81* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#81/#82**

ONIMUSHA 3 — SILVER
If you're looking for the best '*Musha* this is your boy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST — BRONZE
Sun-kissed retro-racer makes a blistering comeback.
REVIEWED *OPS2#70* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#72/#73/#75**

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG — SILVER
The best movie tie-in on PS2. An awesome adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES — SILVER
The best *PoP* so far.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6 — GOLD
The most realistic footie on PS2, good licences, great online stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#79**

PROJECT ZERO — BRONZE
Genuinely disturbing survival horror, dripping with menace.
REVIEWED *OPS2#24* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#23**

RAINBOW SIX 3 — BRONZE
Squad-based shooter with a realistic edge and online missions.
REVIEWED *OPS2#45* / **OVERALL** 08

RATCHET & CLANK 3 — SILVER
Weapons and flashgun-centric play make this the series' best.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51/#58**

RED DEAD REVOLVER — SILVER
Wild West shooter that's like a cool breeze in Death Valley. Yeehaw!
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 09

RESIDENT EVIL 4 — GOLD
One of the greatest games ever made. Buy it now.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 10

REZ — SILVER
Psychedelic, music-based rhythmic shoot-'em-up. Hypnotic stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#16* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#17**

SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS — BRONZE
Excellent drug-dealing film tie-in.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08

SECOND SIGHT — BRONZE
Slick, absorbing thriller touched with psychic powers.
REVIEWED *OPS2#50* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#50**

SHADOW OF ROME — BRONZE
A historic blend of bloody action and stealth set in Roman times.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS — SILVER
Original, beautiful and haunting – nothing else feels like this.
REVIEWED *OPS2#68* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#69**

SILENT HILL 3 — SILVER
Wet-the-bed scary survival horror. We dare you to play it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#34**

SINGSTAR ROCKS! — BRONZE
Party fun of the highest order, whether you can sing or not.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#74/#75/#76**

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES — SILVER
Clever, funny and essential for all platformer fans.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SMASH COURT PRO TENNIS TOURNAMENT 2 — BRONZE
A new career mode makes the top tennis seed even better.
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 08

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS — BRONZE
Move in for the commander-in-chief of online tactical shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 08

SOUL CALIBUR III — SILVER
Better than ever, this is the greatest fighting game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#65** ON THE DVD

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR — SILVER
Mythological hack'n'slash epic.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT — BRONZE
Challenges your ethics as well as your stealthiness.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

SSX 3 — SILVER
Super-long, fast races make this an essential PS2 purchase.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#43**

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II — BRONZE
Fantastic set-pieces and brilliant space battles. Buy it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE — BRONZE
Steer monkeys in Perspex balls around courses in this arcade oddity.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60**

TEKKEN 5 — BRONZE
The original PlayStation fighter beats its way back to top form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#61/#63**

THE SIMS 2 — BRONZE
The soap opera you can play. Entertaining and addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND — BRONZE
Hardcore, ultra-bloody, action-survival horror.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 08

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006 — BRONZE
Like the man himself, this year's edition is on fine form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

TIMESPLITTERS 2 — GOLD
As vital to PS2 as your central nervous system is to your brain.
REVIEWED *OPS2#25* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#25/#31**

TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT — SILVER
Shooter with enough guns to satisfy the most trigger-happy soul.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#56**

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 — SILVER
Tones down the Story mode and ups the red-hot driving experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#68/#72**

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND — BRONZE
A spectacular return to form for the first lady of adventuring.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 08 **DVD#71/#72/#73/#74/#75**

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
For once, a kid's game that doesn't treat you like a child.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#65**

WE ❤ KATAMARI — BRONZE
Very odd, very Japanese puzzler. Relaxing and enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#70/#72**

WRC RALLY EVOLVED — SILVER
Fantastic tracks with random events to test your skill.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#65**

WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006 — SILVER
With better online play and new match types, this is essential.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09

XIII — BRONZE
Gorgeous PS2 shooter based on the comic-book adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#42**

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER — BRONZE
Strikingly impressive robo-scrapper.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#38**

cheats

CHEATS AND UNLOCKABLES FOR YOUR FAVOURITE GAMES

After choosing *Street Fighter Zero* at the Main menu, go to the Random box, hold down START and enter these codes to get special characters:
Vega ..... ↓, ↓, ←, ←, ↓, ←, LP+HP
Dan ..... LK, MK, HK, HP, MP
Gouki ..... ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ←, ←, LP+HP

After choosing *Street Fighter Zero 2* at the Main menu do the following to get special characters:
Shin Gouki..... Hold START for five seconds on Gouki
Extra Chun-Li..Hold START for five seconds on Chun-Li

To get special characters in *Street Fighter Zero 3*, first unlock Arrange mode by beating the game. Hold SELECT on *Street Fighter Zero 3* in the Main menu to get to Arrange mode, then do the following:
Shin Gouki..Hold START on Gouki and press any button
Shin Vega ..... Choose Vega, then press ↓ four times and press any button

To get special characters in *Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold*, do the following:
Cammy.....go to Bison (Vega) at the character selection screen and press START twice
SSF2 versions of **Chun-Li, Ken, Ryu, Bison, Dhalsim, Sagat and Zangief**..... press START on the character then select him or her
Shin Akuma ..highlight him and press START five times

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

While playing the game, hold R2 and L2 and then press →, →, ↓, ↑, ←, ← to unlock all weapons.

BLACK

To unlock the **M249** machine gun as your default weapon, enter **FG6S-WFZG-7MDP-PZGT** (with dashes) as a profile name. The game will immediately ask you to enter another name.

CALL OF DUTY 3

At the chapter select menu, hold down SELECT and press →, →, ←, ←, ○, ○ to unlock all chapters and bonus features

DRAGONBALL Z: BUDOKAI TENKAICHI 2

To receive 100,000 zenny from the start, load your *Dragonball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 1* data in at the main menu.

To receive double EXP, pick any of the tag team roads in Ultimate Battle Z mode. When you're asked to choose your characters, pick custom and select a character who has Potaras that can be levelled up with EXP. When asked to pick your second character, choose the same character again and in exactly the same way, starting with custom.

FIFA STREET 2

On the title menu, hold L1 and △ and enter ←, ↑, ↑, →, ↓, ↓, →, ↓ to unlock everything the game has to offer.

FINAL FANTASY XII

Do the following to unlock Sky Pirate's Den action figures:
Ashe ..... Get the average party level over 50
Ba'Gamnan.....Complete the hunt catalogue
Balthier.....Attack 300 times
Basch..... Kill 500 foes
Belias .....Get every Esper
Carrot ..... Defeat Carrot
Chocobo ..... Walk 50,000 steps
Crystal..... Get every character's magicks
Dalan.....Complete every map
Death Gaze.....Defeat Death Gaze
Fafnir..... Defeat Fafnir
Fran.....Use magic 200 times
Gabranth..... Initiate every fusion technique
Gilgamesh .....Defeat Gilgamesh
Gurdy.....Use or spend 1 million Gil
Hell Wyrm..... Defeat Devil Dragon
King Behemoth .....Defeat King Behemoth
Migelo .....Sell 1000 pieces of loot
Montblanc... Reach monster chain level 50
Penelo .....Get 100,000 Gil
Reks ..... Earn 500,000 clan points
Rasler ..... Complete all characters' licence boards
Trickster ..... Defeat Trickster
Ultima..... Defeat Ultima
Vaan.....Steal from enemies 50 times
Vayne.....Use technicks 100 times
Vossler ..... Get every character's technicks
Yazmat..... Defeat Yazmat
Zodiark ..... Defeat Zodiark

FLATOUT 2

To unlock everything worth having, enter **giveall** at the Cheat Code option in Extras.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

Enter the following codes during gameplay:
Big heads
↓, ↓, ↓, ○, ○, ⊗, L1, R1
Shiny cars
△, R1, L1, ↓, ↓, R1, R1, △
Pedestrians follow you
↓, ↓, ↓, △, △, ○, L1, R1
Cars drive over water
○, ⊗, ↓, ○, ⊗, ↑, L1, L1
Tiny bike tyres
○, →, ⊗, ↑, →, ⊗, L1, □
Full armour
L1, R1, ○, L1, R1, ⊗, L1, R1
Fill health bar
L1, R1, ⊗, L1, R1, □, L1, R1
Get $250,000
L1, R1, △, L1, R1, ○, L1, R1
No wanted level
L1, L1, △, R1, R1, ⊗, □, ○
Get a rhino tank
L1, L1, ←, L1, L1, →, △, ○

GUITAR HERO II

Enter these codes (which refer to the controller's coloured buttons) at the main menu:
Unlock hyper-speed mode
Y, O, B, O, Y, O, B, O
Unlock performance mode
Y, Y, O, Y, Y, B, Y, Y
Crowd have eyeball heads
Y, O, B, O, B, O, Y
Crowd have monkey heads
Y, Y, B, O, Y, Y, B, O
Crowd have flaming heads
Y, Y, O, Y, O, O, Y, O
Crowd have horses' heads
B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O

JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES

Enter the Pause menu, then enter the following while holding down R1, R2, L1 and L2:
Unlock everything
↓, ←, ↑, →
Get unlimited energy
↓, ↓, →, →, ↑, ↑, ←, ←
Get invincibility
←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑
Max out stats
→, ↓, →, ↓
Activate one-hit kills
↑, ↑, ↓, ←, ↑, ↑, ↓, →
Get 20 shields
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓

NBA 2K7

At the main menu, select Extras, then Codes, then enter the following codes:

zw9idla ..... Wizards golden jerseys
zjb3lau ..... Jazz blue jerseys
bcb8sta ..... Bobcats navy jerseys
nrd4esj ..... Nets red jerseys
syt6cii ..... 2007 All-Star uniforms
vdr5lya ..... New Orleans Hornets (Valentine's Day)
rta1spe ..... unlock Superstar team
bestsim ..... unlock NBA 2K team
tns9roi ..... unlock International All-Star team

At the Codes screen in Features, enter these passwords:

ironman ..... Maximum durability (lasts one game)
norest ..... Unlimited stamina (lasts one game)
payrespect ..... ABA ball
getstops ..... Defensive awareness
inthezone ..... Offensive awareness
topps2ksports ..... Topps 2K Sports All-Stars

Get 25 random boosts
←, →, ←, →

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

Enter the following codes while in the Mos Eisley cantina to unlock hidden characters and vehicles:

Beach Trooper **UCK868**
Ben Kenobi (Ghost) **BEN917**
Bespin Guard **VHY832**
Bib Fortuna **WTY721**
Boba Fett **HLP221**
Death Star Trooper **BNC332**
Emperor Palpatine **HHY382**
Ewok **TTT289**
Gamorrean Guard **YZF999**
Gonk Droid **NFX582**
Grand Moff Tarkin **SMG219**
Greedo **NAH118**
Han Solo (Hoth) **YWM840**
IG-88 ..... **NXL973**
Imperial Guard **MMM111**
Imperial Officer **BBV889**
Imperial Spy **CVT125**
Jawa **JAW499**
Lobot **UUB319**
Palace Guard **SGE549**
Rebel Pilot **CYG336**
Rebel Trooper (Hoth) **EKU849**
Sand Trooper **YDV451**
Skiff Guard **GBU888**
Snow Trooper **NYU989**
Stormtrooper **PTR345**
TIE Fighter **HDY739**

NFL STREET 3

To unlock AFC and NFC All-Star teams, beat the following teams in Respect the Street mode:

AFC East
Patriots, Jets, Bills, Dolphins
AFC North
Ravens, Bengals, Steelers, Browns
AFC South
Colts, Jaguars, Titans, Texans
AFC West
Chargers, Chiefs, Broncos, Raiders
NFC East
Cowboys, Giants, Eagles, Redskins
NFC North
Bears, Vikings, Packers, Lions
NFC South
Saints, Panthers, Falcons, Buccaneers
NFC West
Seahawks, 49ers, Rams, Cardinals

MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

Enter the following codes at the Team menu, then press START:

100k
↑, ↑, ↑, ←, →, ←
Level 99
↑, ←, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↓, →
$300,000
↑, ↑, ↑, ←, →, ←, START, ←, START, ←

Enter the following codes while in the game, then press START:

Super Speed
↑, ←, ↑, →, ↓, →
Touch of Death
←, →, ↓, ↓, →, ←
God mode
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, ←, ↓, →

Enter the following codes while in the Review menu, then press START:

Unlock all wallpapers
↑, ↓, →, ←, ↑, ↑, ↓
Unlock all cinematics
↑, ←, ←, ↑, →, →, ↑
Unlock all concept art
↓, ↓, ↓, →, →, ←, ↓
Unlock all comics
←, →, →, ←, ↑, ↑, →

Enter the following codes in the Start menu or Hero Management menu, then press START:

Unlock all costumes
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ↑, ↓
Unlock all powers
←, →, ←, →, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE

To unlock all the hidden face paints and camouflage patterns in this stunning game, make sure that you do the following:

All national flag face paints
Complete the game on any level
Animal camouflage (increases steadiness of aim)
Defeat Ocelot by depleting his stamina
Banana camouflage (makes all food taste great)
Get the top time in every stage of Snake Vs Monkey mode
Cold War camouflage (enemies won't shoot at you)
Defeat Volgin by depleting his stamina
DPM camouflage (replenishes life gauge)
Get the top score on Special Duel mode
Fire camouflage (drops fire damage by 50%)
Defeat The Fury by depleting his stamina
Green face paint (gives you unlimited grip)
Get the top score on Normal Duel mode
Hornet stripe camouflage (tames hornets and wards off spiders)
Defeat The Pain by depleting his stamina
Infinity face paint (infinite ammo)
Finish the game on Foxhound rank
Monkey mask (no effect, but looks cool)
Finish the Snake Vs Monkey mode
Moss camouflage (slowly restores life gauge in sunlight)
'Hold up' The End
Snake camouflage (boosts camo index)
Defeat The Boss by depleting her stamina
Spider camouflage (boosts your camo index, but also drains stamina)
Defeat The Fear by depleting his stamina
Spirit camouflage (gives you silent footsteps and drains enemy stamina)
Walk to the end of the river when fighting The Sorrowz

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

Enter these codes into the cheats menu in Options

needaride ..... All decks unlocked and free
yougotitall .... All specials unlocked
jammypack ..... 'Special' bar always full
allthebest ..... Full stats
frontandback ..... Get perfect manual control
balancegalore ..... Get perfect rail control
shellshock ..... Get unlimited focus
birdhouse ..... Unlock Inkblot deck
newshound .... Unlock Anchorman
shescaresme .... Unlock Big Realtor
enterandwin ..... Unlock Bum
hohohosoi ..... Unlock Christian Hosoi
militarymen ..... Unlock Colonel and Security Guard
strangefellows ..... Unlock Dad and Skater Jam boy
notmono ..... Unlock Jason Lee
mixitup ..... Unlock Kevin Staab
manineedadate ..... Unlock Mascot
wearelosers ..... Unlock Nerd
themedia ..... Unlock Photography girl and film-maker
plus44 ..... Unlock Travis Barker
badverybad ..... Unlock Twin
suckstobedead ..... Unlock Zombie

PS2 CHEATS

MGS: PORTABLE OPS

Enter these codes at the Password menu to get these special characters:

JUNKER ..... Cunningham
LQ.N2 ..... Python
ERBE ..... Gene
PK +ESP ..... Ursula
THE-L ..... Elisa
E.APPLE ..... Eva
PM-EMS ..... Paramedic
DARPA-1 ..... Sigint
R.R.R. ..... Ocelot
1+2-3 ..... Zero
IVN =RV ..... Raikov
T.F-ACID ..... Teliko
MGA2VE ..... Venus
!TRAUMER ..... Ga Ko
SATURNV ..... Sokolo
HUNTER-N ..... Null

CAPCOM PUZZLE WORLD

For extra hidden characters go to the player select screen, highlight one of the following characters and press ↓:

Hsien-Ko ..... unlocks Akuma
Donovan ..... unlocks Dan
Morrigan ..... unlocks Devilot

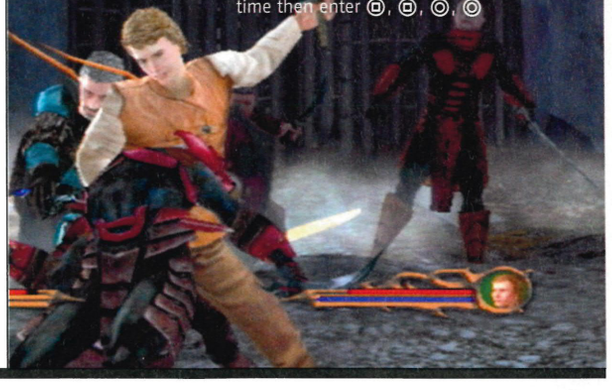
To unlock extra characters in *Puzzle Fighter*, hold down L1+R1 and select one of the following characters:

Hsien-Ko ..... play as Hsien-Ko's Talisman/Sister's spirit
Donovan ..... play as Anita
Morrigan ..... play as a bat

YU-GI-OH! GX TAG BATTLE

To unlock a booster pack, go to the Card Shop interface and enter: ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ⊗, ◎

ERAGON



To unlock Fury mode, go to the Pause menu and do the following:

Hold L1, L2, R1 and R2 all at the same time then enter ◎, ◎, ◎, ◎

GOD OF WAR II

BE A GREEK LEGEND WITH OUR MASSIVE GUIDE TO PUZZLES, BATTLES AND SECRETS

RHODES

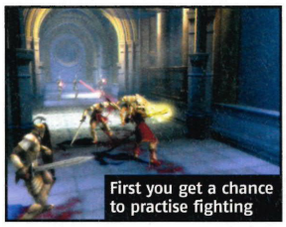
After a dramatic fall from power, Kratos is left to face the wrath of the Colossus of Rhodes. In the first room, you have a chance to dust off your rusty combat skills, so get familiar with the combos and take your time killing off the enemies. **Open the door** and move through the next room.

Fight through these enemies, **wait for Colossus to punch through the wall**, and head into the gap. Climb the ladder and jump into the next area.

BOSS FIGHT: COLOSSUS 1

Wait for Colossus to **slam his arm down** and whack at it with your blades. He'll withdraw it, and throw some men at you. Repeat the process until **he slumps forward**. Climb to the left and **fire the rock in the catapult** at him, before loading yourself into the device and launching onto his face.

Now there's a 'quicktime' sequence (in which you follow prompts to perform actions with the controller) to take out one of Colossus' eyes.


First you get a chance to practise fighting

RHODES 2

You've been flung from Colossus and now you're in a diving pool. **Swim to the surface and smash open the screen to your right.** Welcome to the 'sexy' *God Of War II* mini game! Follow the quicktime sequence to satisfy the bevy of beauties and you'll be rewarded with plenty of **red orbs**.

Now get back into the pool and **swim through** to the next area, where you'll be able to climb a ladder to a platform and **save**.

Pull the nearby lever, activate the grapple point and swing across. Climb the ledges and **open the door** to the next area, where there are more men to kill. Climb the ladder in here and **Colossus will stamp on you**, so **hammer ◎ to throw him off**. Now head left and grab the **red orbs** in the chest, and climb the wall on the left. Drop down and grab more **red orbs**, then **get back on the wall and move up to the top.**

BOSS FIGHT: COLOSSUS 2

Here Colossus will throw all sorts of arm attacks at you, so practise your dodge move. **Wait for him to rest his arm** on the side then **attack it with magic** to cause maximum damage. **After the third attack**, he'll rest his arm on the side and you'll be able to **climb it by pressing ◎**.

Next, **grapple to the platform on the right and repeat** the process. If you succeed, **Colossus will try to crush you**, so **press R1 and L1 alternately to escape** and get yourself thrown free.

RHODES 3

If you need to, recover some **blue orbs**, then jump up and **open the door**. Run along the corridor and **save**. Fight the next wave of enemies, and kill the two archers in the next room. **Grab the block to your left** and move it onto the pressure plate by the door, to open it. Now **kick the block under the door** and onto the second pressure plate, opening the gate beyond. Stand Kratos on the first plate and **roll forwards** – this should get you through the door before it closes.

Run to the left and kill the enemies, then **get onto the lift** and pull the lever to take yourself upwards. You'll see Colossus' eye peering through the window, so **smash it and get sucked out.**

Jump up the ledges to your right, then fight your way along the walkway to the other end. **Bash down the door** and then **break the window** to reveal the balancing section. You may find it easier to just drop down and kill the enemies and archers before attempting the beams.

Halfway across, **jump right** to **grab the chests** containing **red orbs**. Walk all the way across, **save**, then **climb the ladder** and **shimmy down the chain** to meet Colossus for the last time.

BOSS FIGHT: COLOSSUS 3

Showdown. First off, **ignore the sword** and **head straight for the**

WEAPONS

ATHENA'S BLADES

Your primary weapon. They give you strength both up close and from a distance, which is worth bearing in mind when fighting larger creatures. □ performs a quick attack, △ a hard hit. Hold down △ to flip your enemies up in the air to continue your combos. You should upgrade Athena's Blades to the maximum as soon as possible.

BARBARIAN HAMMER

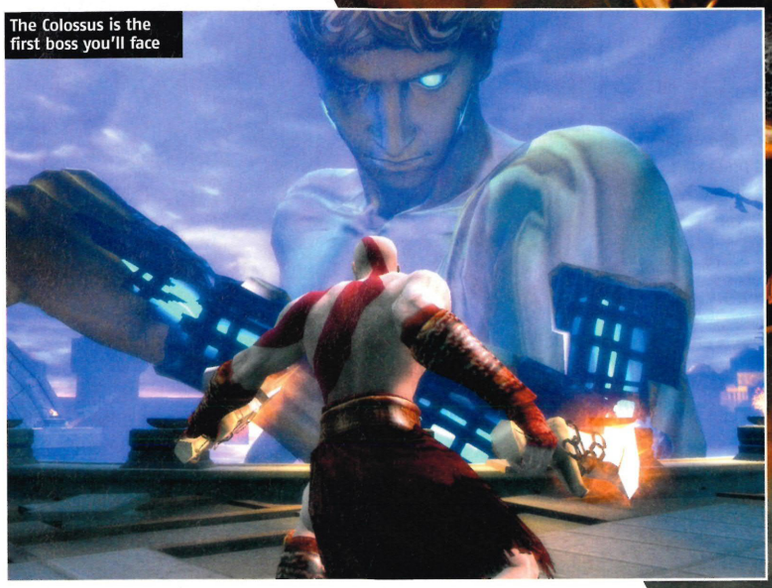
Taken from the Barbarian Leader mid-way through the game, this hammer handles as you'd expect. It's powerful but quite slow, and that makes it tough to pull off combos with. Unless you really love the weapon, we wouldn't recommend spending many of your upgrade points on it until the second time you're playing through of the game.

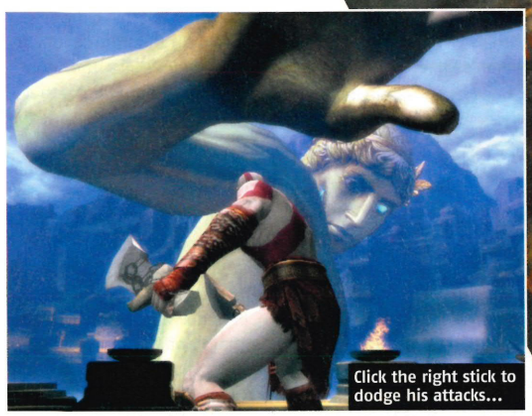
SPEAR OF DESTINY

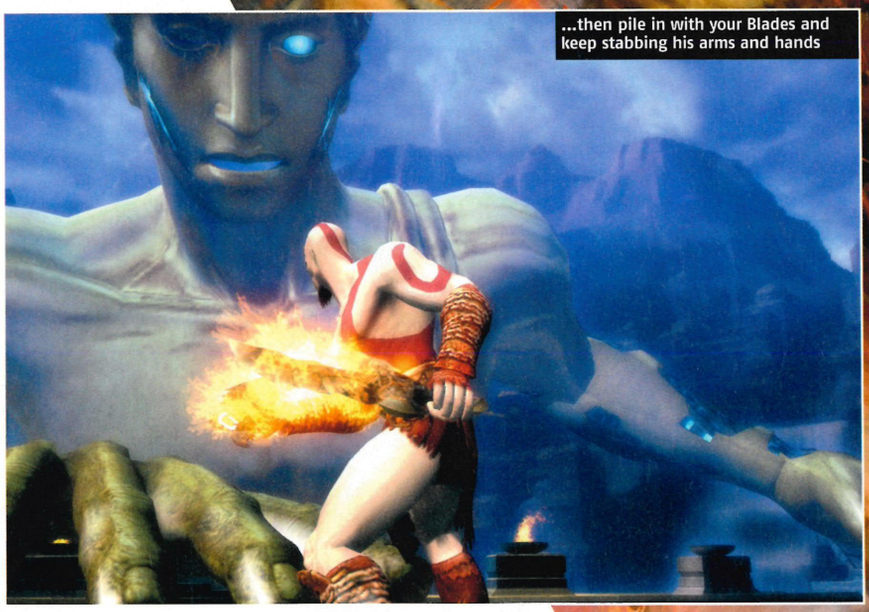
Another secondary weapon that you pick up near the end of the game, the Spear Of Destiny has potential if you stick with it. Attacks from the spear are quick and damaging, but because you pick it up late on, you won't get much chance to upgrade it. But it is an ideal way to vary the *God Of War II* experience if you use it on a second play through.

BLADE OF OLYMPUS

Defeat Zeus at the end of the game and you'll get this sword which, in our opinion, is a little overrated. It may be quick, but pulling off meaty combos is a fiddly process and because of that it isn't as satisfying to use as the Spear Of Destiny. Still, it's well worth a look if you're looking for some variety on your second romp though the game.


The Colossus is the first boss you'll face


Click the right stick to dodge his attacks...


...then pile in with your Blades and keep stabbing his arms and hands

hand. Bash it up, and press R1 to fling it at Colossus. **Once he is stunned**, go to the sword and hold R1, letting it drain your orbs.

After that, **Colossus wakes up**. Run next to him and use your magic to inflict damage until he slumps again. **Approach the sword** and let it drain you again. Now **hit Colossus until he's stunned and return to the sword**. It'll drain half your health. **Repeat**, and you'll finally get the sword.

Get up close and batter at Colossus' arm until he's weak enough to ◎ attack.

You can now **head inside the beast** where it's simply a case of climbing the stairs, killing the enemies as they appear, and **jamming your sword into the blue beams** where prompted.

If you think you should be able to tap R1 to smash him up with your sword, there may be **chains concealing the slot**. Break them off and you'll be able to continue. Once you reach the top, there's a puzzle to solve.

PUZZLE FOCUS

In this guide we'll walk you through all the puzzles, and this is the first one. Head up the ladder and lower the pendulum. Drop back down, and hit the pendulum to start it up. Now return to the top and get to the other side of the rope, using the pendulum to shield you from the beams. Now you'll be able to take Colossus down, upon which you'll be thrown into an arena of Spartans and a confrontation with Zeus. ▶

UNDERWORLD

You're down but not out, clinging to the walls of the Earth's crust. **Use sideways hacks and throws to clear the hands**, and make your way to the surface.

PEGASUS

Now you're on your flying horse, but there's gryphon-shaped turbulence ahead. **Attack enemies by slamming them with your steed** (L1 and R1), or by using ◎ and △. It's easier to use Kratos' attacks, and then jump aboard using ◎ and take them down with a quicktime sequence.

LAIR OF THE TITAN

Once the enemies stop coming you'll fly into Typhon's Cave. **Wait for Pegasus to get trapped**, and you'll jump off. You'll be attacked by a few bats, so kill them and **jump down to the right**. Here you'll find **chests containing red orbs** and a **Gorgon Eye**.

Climb back up and **head left**, bashing the giant fingers aside as you go. Go up and round the wall, killing the enemies as you go, and **jump down**. **Save** before heading into the cave.

When you get to the first chasm, **break the box** on the chain and use it to slide down. You'll head outside, where some archers and minotaurs will ambush you. Kill them and **climb the cliff face** to another chain. **Slide down**.

You'll see **Prometheus** being mauled by a giant bird. Go up to ➡

him and chat, break his chains and slide down next to him.

He's hovering over the fire, but don't worry about him for the moment. Run to the next climbable wall and shimmy down. You'll be attacked; after that, **save** again. There's a chest with a **Gorgon Eye** here, so grab it and then **head up the nearby wall** to end up in another cave where you'll encounter **three gorgons**.

To kill them, keep moving and avoid their stares because if you're hit when you're petrified you'll die instantly.

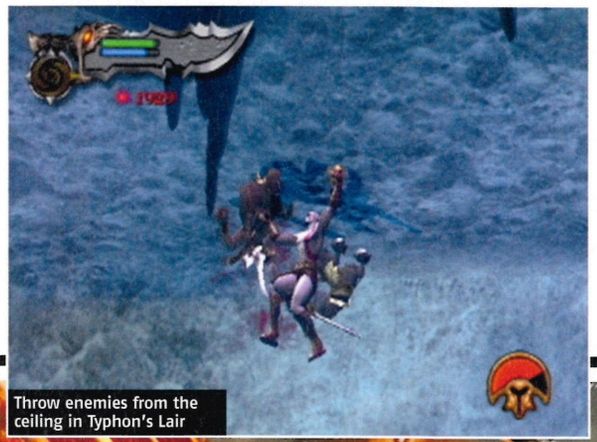
TYPHON'S CAVERN

Head through the cave and you'll meet **Typhon**, a grumpy titan. Quickly **run past his face** and hide behind the rocks, because he'll start blowing air at you. Get caught in these blasts and you'll fall off the edge, so time your runs to cover carefully.

At the top of the shelf, there's a **rock bridge**: bash it and you'll be able to attack Typhon's face. Run up close and **press** R1 to **leap onto his eye** and rip out **Typhon's Bane** – a rather useful bow.

Run back down the bridge and you'll be attacked by archers. Keep blasting away with the bow (your magic won't go down in this area) until everyone is dead. Now **head left** and **up the small ramp**.

At the top you'll find **a fire set behind four frozen crates**, and you'll be attacked by soldiers. Use your ◎ attack, followed by ▢ to fling them into the flames and stoke the fire. When you've burned enough, **the ice around the crates will melt**. Open them to snag three lots of **red orbs** and a **Phoenix Feather**. Now **retrace your footsteps** to where you tested Typhon's Bane.



Throw enemies from the ceiling in Typhon's Lair

Nobble gryphons by ripping off their wings

Head left to the grapple point. Kill the archers before you swing across, then go out of the cave, **saving** on the way. Run all the way back to where you left Prometheus dangling, and **shoot him down** to kill him. You'll be bestowed with the **Rage Of The Titans**, which is activated by pressing both thumbsticks down at the same time. Test it out on the soldiers and minotaurs that conveniently appear to attack you!

Climb up the wall to your right but **don't go over the chain bridge yet**. Head up the wall next to it, and you'll come across **three crates**, two containing **red orbs** and a third with a **Phoenix Feather** in it.

Drop down and **climb across the chain bridge**. You'll end up in front of a **locked door**, which you can **break down using Rage Of The Titans**. Now run back to the start of the level, **saving** along the way. **Bash Typhon's fingers** until your rage meter is full, then use it to slash at the fingers again.

Eventually, **Typhon's hand will move**, freeing Pegasus for your escape. Climb on and fly out.

PEGASUS 2

More of the same. **Keep attacking the gryphons** until you reach the last one: a soldier on a raven. To beat him, you'll need to nail a tricky quicktime sequence, and afterwards you'll find yourself **plummeting towards the ground** fast. **Don't panic**: press ⊗ when prompted to **pull yourself onto the side of the cliff**.

TEMPLE OF LAHKESES 1

Climb up to the top (it takes a while!). Once you **reach the first ledge**, **head left** and open the **chests** for a **Phoenix Feather** and **red orbs**. Climb up again, and you'll be confronted by some soldiers. Carry on up to the next level and **you'll arrive in an open area** with corpses hanging from the ceiling. A big **pack of dogs will attack** you; **use wide attacks** for economical hound-hammering.

Now run to the **far side of the room** and **knock down the dead body** from the chain. Pick it up and **carry it back to the left**, where you'll **find a lift**. Put the body down, **pull the lever** and travel down. Now, pick up the body and **put it on the pressure plate** to keep the first gate open.

TEMPLE OF LAHKESES 2

Walk forwards and **pull back the lever** as far as it will go, then **sprint through the two gates** into the next room. **Approach the drawbridge** in this area and kick it down. **Turn around** and **head right** along the side of the cliff to

Rage Of The Titans will help you slap away Typhon's giant hand

grab the **Gorgon Eye**. Now **head left** and **jump off the broken ledge** when you're close to the end. Fall into the next room and you'll encounter the first **Cerberus monster**. Hammer him with **combos**, and **if you get very low on health, use your Rage**.

Once he's dead, **destroy the statues** in the room and you'll get a **block to move**. Grab it and **use it as a leg-up to climb into the next area** where you'll be given a chance to **save**.

Next **go left** and **drop down underneath the drawbridge**. There are dogs and archers in this area, so kill them, then **climb onto the wall**. Travel **across the underside of the area** and **up the left-hand side**. Once you're up, you'll be attacked by more men, so **be ready for a fight**.

Once they're dead, move forwards and **pull the lever** to **activate the lift**. You're now in a **circular arena** with some **sirens**. Soften them up and **use ◎ to finish them** off until **their screams break the wall**, making an exit.

THE STEEDS OF TIME

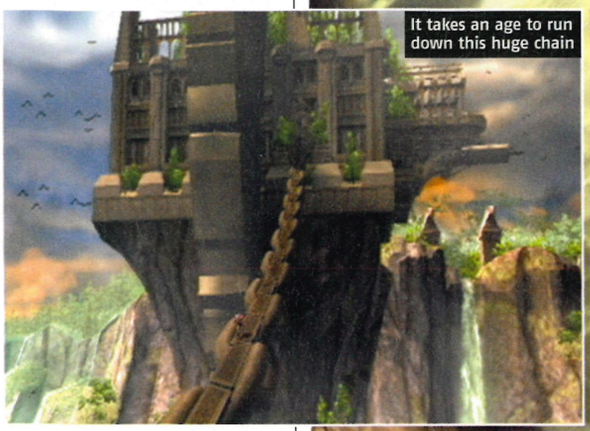
Run along the large chain and **climb the side of the middle steed**. Head to the **far left** of this first area and you'll find a lever. **Pull it**, and **head back right** to jump on the rope and **slide onto the second horse**. Now you'll face the Horse Keeper.

BOSS BATTLE: HORSE KEEPER

This guy is one of the toughest bosses in the game. To start, he'll come at you with some basic three-hit combos and impale you on his spear. **Keep your distance** as much as possible, and **be ready to rotate your thumbstick** if you get speared.

Soften him up until he starts **casting holes in the ground**, then wade in with your **Rage attack**. **He'll scramble up the side of the doorway** and start **casting spells** and **summoning minotaurs**. Alternate between **shooting him with your bow** and **killing the creatures to restore health and magic**. Eventually, he'll fall and you can finish him off.

The Horse Keeper's head is smashed in quicktime



It takes an age to run down this huge chain

THE STEEDS OF TIME 2

Leave the corpse of the Horse Keeper in the doorway and **head into the circular room**. **Head right** out of here and grab the **chest** with the **red orbs**.

Climb up the platform, and slide down the chain onto the **middle horse** where you started. Head to the **main entrance** and **use the key** to gain access to Cronos' chamber. You'll be granted **Cronos' Rage**, a magic ability. Soldiers will appear from the floor; to kill them all you need to do is **run around hammering** L2 (your magic won't drain in this room).

Once they're dead, leave the room by **the right-hand exit**, and grab the **Phoenix Feather**. Climb up the platform in the middle to grab the **red orbs**, then **go to the left of the horse** until you reach a set of levers: your next puzzle.

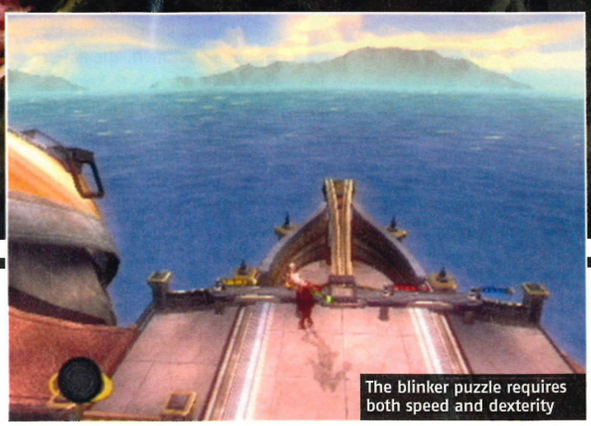
PUZZLE FOCUS

There are four levers in front of you. First pull the green lever and run left. Climb the wall and jump up the stairs to reach the fuse box. Quickly tap ○ to punch the box and release the first steed's blinker. Instead of heading back to the levers, run down the horse's nose as far as you can to find a **Gorgon Eye**.

Go back and pull the red lever; run right to find this box. Activate the blue lever, run right again and use the grapple to reach the blue box.

Finally, pull the yellow lever, go left to release the final blinker. Run back to the levers and press ○ in the middle to release the device.

Complete the quicktime sequence to whip the horses into motion. And with that done, the puzzle is complete.▶



The blinker puzzle requires both speed and dexterity

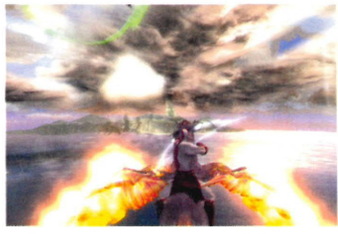
THE TEMPLE OF LAHKESES 3

Run back to where you entered the Steeds Of Time area, and you'll be attacked by groups of men and minotaurs. Kill them and then **go back along the chain** to the Temple of Lahkeses.

You'll end up in a room with a waterfall in it. **Bash the wall** at the base to reveal a **chest** of **red orbs**, then **climb the waterfall**.

Outside, you'll be able to climb a wall. **Go to the bottom** of it and then **turn left** to find a **chamber** with a **Phoenix Feather** in it. Afterwards **go up to the top of the wall** to find a ledge with a **Gorgon Eye** and two **red orb chests**. Now **head into the middle chamber**, where you'll see a **statue with raised hands**.

Now you face another puzzle which will give you an important reward: turn the page for an in-depth guide to completing it. ➡



Butcher the Barbarian Leader's horse as soon as you are able

PUZZLE FOCUS

Drop off the walkway and move left. At the end of the room there's a lever: pull it and the gate to your right will half-open. Now move into the middle of the room and pull the fountain towards the back of the room until it locks, revealing a dive pool. Jump in and swim through to the other side of the gate.

Rip the Jewel of Fate from the statue. You've now got the ability to slow time whenever you see a Statue of the Fates (you can spot them because they glow green). Press L1 and R1 at the same time to use this ability.

Swim back through the pool and go to the back of the main room. The two chests here contain a **Phoenix Feather** and a **Gorgon Eye**.

Stand on the pressure plate and immediately freeze time. Now climb up the pillars before they fall down again. Head to the back of the walkway and face the statue.

Stand on the pressure plate, freeze time, and run towards the statue. Jump onto the hands and let them transport you upwards. Wait for the head to finish chattering away, decapitate it, then jump off. The chests here yield a **Phoenix Feather** and **red orbs**.

Drop into the courtyard and fight the four wraiths that appear. Slow time to make the fight easier. Break the statue's head fully and drop into the next area. ▼

DESTINY'S ATRIUM

Head forward and **save**, then **move right** and open the **chest** containing a **Gorgon Eye**. Travel left and **climb down the ladder** into the lower atrium, where you'll be attacked by four ogres and a load of wild boars. **Grab the pigs** and **lob them at the ogres**; otherwise, the ogres will throw them at you.

Move to the **back** of the **atrium** and **climb the ladder on the left**. At the top, **go left** and **grab the statue**. **Pull it right** until it **blocks the statue's eye beam**.

Now **run right**, where you'll find **another statue**. Push it **onto the lift**, and pull the lever to raise the lift. **Climb up**, **position the statue on the edge**, and **kick it off** as hard as you can, after which you can use it to **block the second eye beam**. Jump down into the lower atrium and **save**.

BOSS BATTLE: BARBARIAN LEADER

Once you've gone through the **opening quicktime sequence**, you'll be given all your **health** back. Now you're facing off against a massive bloke on a horse. At the start, it's tough to get up close and personal with him, so **use your bow** until you get a chance to **slice up his horse**.

During the second phase of the fight he'll start to **resurrect long-dead barbarians**. **Use your ◎** attack to **kill them in one blow** and **recharge your magic**. Keep **firing your bow** at the Barbarian until he weakens, when you'll enter the end section of the fight.

Use Chronos' Rage to inflict as much damage as you can, then **plug away with your blades and bow** until you can finish him off with a quicktime sequence. You'll be rewarded with the **Barbarian's Hammer** as a usable weapon. You can change between the hammer and your Athena's Blades at any time by pressing R2.

TEMPLE OF EURYALE

On arrival at Euryale's temple, you won't be able to get in through the main door. So **run round to the right** and **jump over the gap**.

You'll see a Spartan being attacked, and in front of you will be a **corpse**, which you can **search** to get the **temple key**.

Now you'll be attacked by a group of goat men. The easiest way to kill them is to **keep tapping ◎**. Then **run back** to the **front of the temple** where you'll be attacked by skeletons. Kill them, then **head left** and kill some more, before **using the key** to **enter the temple area**.

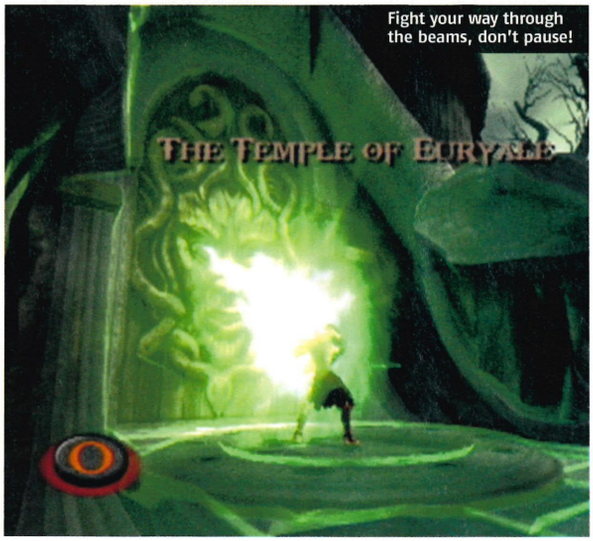
Here you'll fight your first **cyclops**. Start by pressing ◎ to **bring down the rider**, whom you should **kill as quickly as possible**, as the riders make the cyclops more aggressive. Then finish off the beast using a quicktime sequence. Another will appear, so repeat the process.

When you're done, head into the temple area and **pull out the block** to **reveal the door** to the **inner temple** area. Go through and **run left** to get **red** and **blue orbs**, then **run left** to continue to a **pit with a stalagmite** in it.

You'll be attacked by three wraiths and they're pretty tough; **be patient**, **keep dodging**, and **use your Rage** if you want. **Smash the stalagmite** and it'll reveal a **grapple point** you can use to **swing up to the next ledge**.

In the next area **climb up right** and take the **rope bridge** across the gap to reach chests with a **Gorgon Eye** and **red orbs**. Jump **across the swamp** and **destroy the three pillars** at the end to bring down the archers that have been shooting at you.

Topple the middle pillar by tapping L1 and R1 and **climb up** the resulting **stone stump**. At the top, there are **red orbs** to be had on your left.



Fight your way through the beams, don't pause!

PUZZLE FOCUS

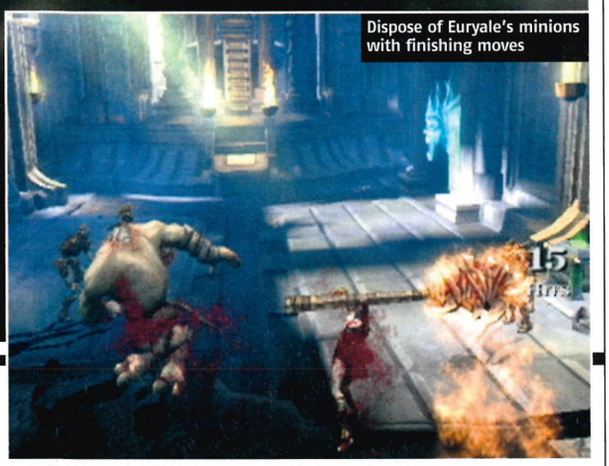
You'll now head into a circular room with two crates above you on the right. Use your bow to reveal the grapple point above the crates, then use it to jump up and grab a **Gorgon Eye** and **red orbs**. Jump back down and pull the lever in the right of the room to open the right gate. Run in, smash the broken wall and kill the archers inside.

Pick up the corpse and drop it into the stream, where it'll float round to the left. Go into the left chamber, break the wall, kill the archers and pick up the corpse when it comes around. Use it to weigh down the pressure plate while you run through into the next area, where you can save. ▼

TEMPLE OF EURYALE 2

You're now outside again, and ahead of you are **three wheels** in the swamp. Brace yourself – this part is irritating. **Jump onto the**

Once you've lopped Euryale's head off, use it as a weapon


Dispose of Euryale's minions with finishing moves

first wheel and **rotate the crank** to move it closer to the second wheel. You'll rotate it more quickly if you match your thumbstick movement with Kratos' on-screen movements: when he's pushing left, push left with him; when he's moving up, push up.

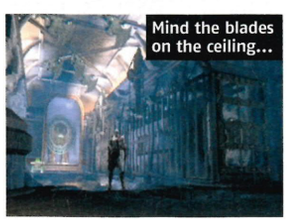
When you're halfway across, **soldiers will jump onto the wheel and attack you**. You have to l**et go of the crank** to kill them, so you'll start to slip backwards. The best tactic is to **wait until the last minute to attack them**, and use your ◎ attack followed by ▣ to fling one soldier onto the other . If you're lucky, you'll knock them both off the wheel.

Once close enough, **jump onto the second wheel** and repeat the process to reach the third. Now head **under the arch** and into the next area. **Approach the rocks**; they'll turn into a creature. **Quickly dodge away** and wait for its opening attack animation to finish before getting stuck in. Destroy it with a quicktime attack.

Next, **head across the rope bridge** and kill the soldiers that were attacking your mate. **Lift the door** that's set into the wall to reveal a **Statue of Fate**, and use it to slow time so you can **jump onto the wheel** and run across.

Run onto the conveyor belt and fight your way through the **Medusa's gaze beams** to reach the end. It's best to just run for it, because if you try to kill your enemies, you'll fall back towards the grinder. **Destroy the wall** at the end and quickly **grapple across the gap**. In this area, **wreck the statues** and **push the block through the hole** it's sitting in.

You'll now find yourself back in the temple area. **Push both blocks** to the far side of the enclosed area and the whole room will tip, revealing a loose edge for you to grab and use to **push the temple into the swamp**.


Mind the blades on the ceiling...

You can now use it to cross the goo and **grab onto the far wall**. **Climb round** (destroying the tree) and drop down the other side. In the next temple area you'll find a half-dead Spartan. Leave him for now, **head through the grinder** and grab the red orbs and **Phoenix Feather** from the chests.

Now go back, pick up the Spartan and **feed him to the grinder**, breaking the contraption in the process. **Smash it up**, and run into the next room where you'll find a tough Cerberus creature that has just eaten the **Golden Fleece**.

BOSS FIGHT: CERBERUS

There are no special tactics that work against this chappie, so just spank him. **Use your bow and Rage Of The Titans** to supplement your main attacks and this should be a straightforward fight.

Hooray! You've now got the **Golden Fleece**, which you can use to deflect enemy attacks. Take the time to **learn how to use the Fleece**, because you won't finish the game without it.

Escape the area by **using the Fleece to deflect the fireball** spat out by the statue. You'll be attacked by four gorgons, and this is a good time to practise using your Fleece against them. **Run back out of the temple** to the main entrance, where you'll now be able to use the Golden Fleece to **return the door's stare** and gain access to Euryale's chamber.

EURYALE'S CHAMBER

Don't take the health right away. **Fight the soldiers**, then **go back for it** before climbing down into the elaborately decorated hall. Here you'll have to fight two minotaurs and a stack of soldiers, so **concentrate on killing the big stuff first** before picking off the smaller creatures.

From here you come across a **lift**. On the other side of the lift you see **a man stealing the crank** – how annoying! Move your half of the lift down, but **don't go all the way to the bottom**.

Just move down far enough to **squeeze Kratos under the gate** and dodge through. There is a **chest** under your lift containing a **Gorgon Eye** and a **chest** behind the glass window set into the wall containing a **Phoenix Feather**.

Now **jump onto the other lift**, and leap up the ledges on the side of the wall to get to the top. Fight the undead soldier and **save your progress** before continuing because there's a **puzzle** to deal with next.

PUZZLE FOCUS

Head left and jump up the ladder/wall. You can climb up the back wall and across the ceiling, but there are blades slicing across the ceiling. The easiest way to tackle this is to keep moving along as quickly as possible and drop down on the other side. Don't forget you can press ⊗ to make quick moves.

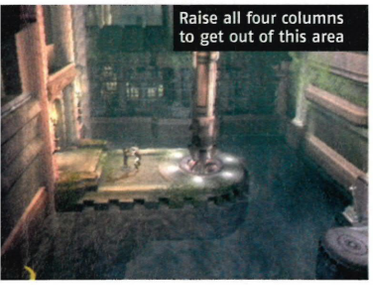
When down, rotate the crank to draw the spiked wall back until it sticks. Sprint into the tunnel and run two-thirds of the way down to pull the lever on your left. Do it quickly, then run to the door and yank it open – you should make it before the spikes crush you. Jump down into Euryale's chamber.

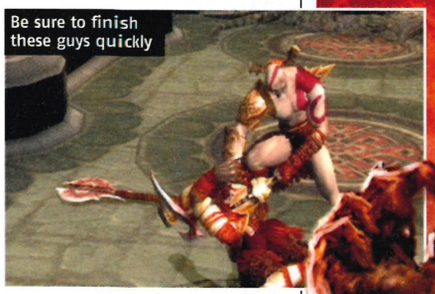
BOSS BATTLE: EURYALE

Euryale's quite an easy fight. **Bash away at her** with your blades, and **use your dodge** to avoid her tail swipes. **Deflect her stares** using the Golden Fleece and she'll soon **slither off to the set of pillars** for the second phase of the fight. Try to **avoid using magic** at this stage because you'll need it a little later.

In stage two she'll **throw bolts at you from her eyes**, which you need to deflect to cause damage, and she'll **send waves along the floor**. Don't try and jump these. If they catch you in mid-air, you'll fall and break. Just shake them off, because they won't hurt you.

Now **use the bow and the Fleece** to weaken Euryale, **pull her off the pillar**, and repeat. Finally, you'll end up with a quicktime sequence to finish her off. You now have **Euryale's Head**, a magic weapon you can use to turn


Raise all four columns to get out of this area


Be sure to finish these guys quickly

enemies to stone. Have a practice with it, then move on to the puzzle in the next area when you've got the knack.

PUZZLE FOCUS

You are faced with a square puzzle. You need to raise four columns labelled blue, green, red and yellow. Raise the first one, then pull the lever to your right. Freeze time and dive into the water to swim under the gate. Pull the lever on your right (underwater) to keep that gate open.

Surface, and raise the second column. Dive back underwater and there's another lever to pull, which opens two gates leading to the next area. There isn't time to swim straight under both, so get right under the first gate and power up a dash. If you don't make it, swim round to the left and start again.

In the third column area there's a loose wall, so break it and get the **Gorgon Eye** from the chest before raising the third column. Go back underwater and break the door into the fourth column area. Raise the final column and pull the nearby lever to lower a ladder in the first column area.

Run through the archway and climb the ladder. Collect **red orbs** from the chests at the top and head back down.

Take the corridor to your right. In here there's a fifth column to raise, but you'll be attacked by three soldiers and plenty of archers. The Golden Fleece parry is your pal here.

Once they're dead, use the crank to lift the fifth column, freeze time, and sprint up the ladder outside. At the top freeze time and grapple round. There are chests to the right on the final column you grapple on: they contain a **Phoenix Feather** and some **red orbs.** ▶

AFTER EURYALE

Move down the corridor to a **lift**. **Pull the lever** and it'll start rising. Dogs will appear. Kill them quickly, because at the top the **lift doesn't stop**, so you need to **tap ◎ to avoid being crushed**. Repeat a couple of times and **a gap will appear**, letting you through.

Now you're in a giant cavern, and there's a rock creature blocking your way. You'll be harried by bats, so **use your bow**. Once he's dead, **swing across the gap and save** your game. Fight through the skeletons and run up the stairs. **Pull the lever** and you'll be able to return to the surface.

COURTYARD OF ATROPOS

Use the Golden Fleece to pass through the flame-guarded wall to your left (shimmy along the wall). Take the **health** and **blue orbs**, then **go down** the ladder.

Outside you'll be attacked by a soldier and some archers. Kill them, then **grapple past the waterfall and drop** onto the first platform. **Climb the wall** to find **chests** with a **Gorgon Eye** and **red orbs**. **Jump back down** and grapple to the other side, where you'll be attacked again.

Climb the ladder and you're in an area with a 'statue shooting beams out of its eyes' puzzle. You'll be attacked by four wraiths.

When they're dead, **save** your game and go through the nearby door. Grab **health** and **blue orbs**, then go into the adjoining room. Here you'll meet conjurers who summon minotaurs. **Kill the guys first**, worry about their beasts later – a good way is to grapple them with ◎ a few times.

PUZZLE FOCUS

Push one of the statues onto the lift. Grab the other one and get it as close as possible, then crank the lift to the top. Quickly run and push the statue under the lift to stop it coming down, allowing you to climb to the top. ▶

THE EDGE OF CREATION

Grab the **red orbs** and **climb the ladder to your left**. Now **head down the stairs** on the right and kill the bad guys. You'll now be in a circular room with two scythe-waving goat monsters.

Deal with them appropriately, then **push the block through the wall** and follow it down. You can now move it round to access the ladder in front of the eyes.

Climb up and **move left**. Here you'll find a **chest** with a **Phoenix Feather** and a door leading back into the temple. **Go through the door** and you'll be attacked by two more monsters, this time with maces. Once they're dead, **climb outside**, **save**, and **grapple** across the gap.

You'll see a pressure plate ahead of you: that's right, it's puzzle time again.

Kill Perseus, then take his shield

PUZZLE FOCUS

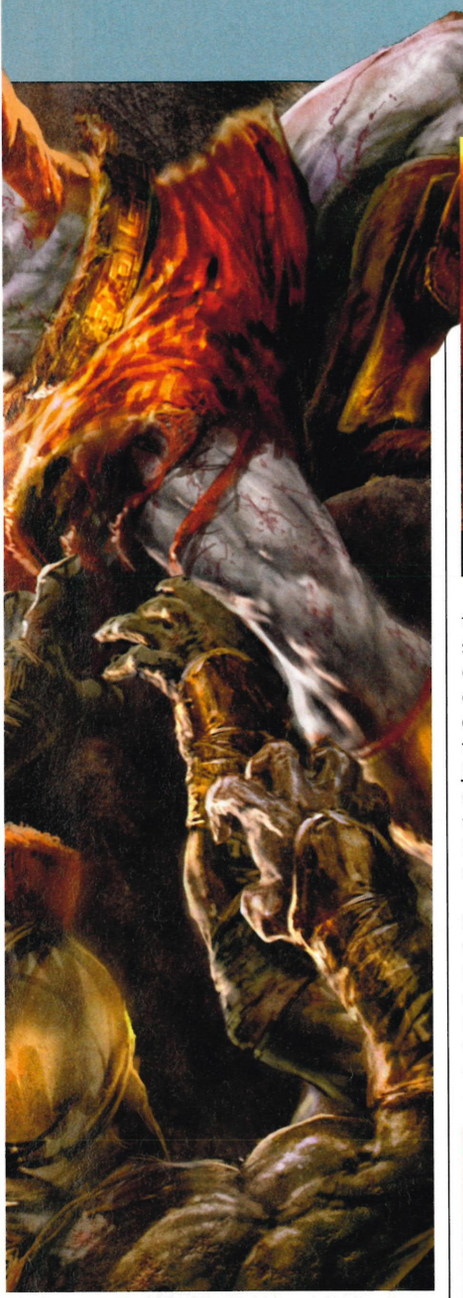
Stand on the plate, freeze time and run to the middle platform. Fall down between the trees and grab the **Phoenix Feather**, then jump back up and go back to where you started. Repeat, but instead of going for the chest, run left onto the next platform. Fight the enemies, press the plate and run to the next platform. Repeat until you're inside again. Stock up on **health** and **blue orbs**, then open the door that's in front of you. ▶

BOSS BATTLE: PERSEUS

He might look like a wimp, but this boy has a trick up his sleeve: he can turn invisible. **Watch for his footsteps in the water** and repeatedly whack him with your L1 + ◎ attack. If you lose track of him, **keep dodging and attacking until you find him again**.

The first time Perseus weakens, **Kratos will pull off his helmet**, making him visible. Then you can just lay into him with combos until **Kratos breaks his knife.** That signifies that you've reached the final phase of the fight.

Unleash your Rage and batter him until he weakens again and you get a quicktime sequence.



Kill the bats before attempting the next jump

COURTYARD OF ATROPOS

Slide down the chain and head back up the ladder. This time, go right, and **place the shield of Perseus into the statue**, before kicking it off the edge. **Drop down** and move it onto the platform.

Crank the statue up to eye level so that it's deflecting the beam, then quickly **jump up the ladder and use your Golden Fleece** on the other eye. That'll open the way for you to carry on.

At the top is a T-junction. **Go right**, kill the archers and **swing across the gap**. Carry on round until you can run up a ramp into a circular area. Here you'll be able to rip the **Spear Of Destiny** from the **downed gryphon**, and use it against the men who attack you.

Once they're dead, **grab the Statue of the Fates** and put it on the rotating floor. **Crank it round** so it's facing the path you came in on, then **drag it back the way you came** as far as you can. Get to **the other side of the water** and **freeze time**. Run back to the **T-junction** and **go left**, across the sprung floor and into the room with **three chests**. One holds a **Phoenix Feather**, one has a **Gorgon Eye**, the other an **Urn**.

Now **return to the statue**, take it back to the **rotating block**, and turn it so it can look out over the broken bridge. **Put it into the corner** and run down to the **broken bridge** area. **Jump onto the first section of bridge** and **freeze time**, giving you chance to reach the next sections. **Save** here.

PUZZLE FOCUS

Now you must cross the lowlands. Just keep tapping ○. Once across, you're in another cave network. ▼

CROSSING THE LOWLANDS

In **the first room** you get to, you'll fight four sirens and a couple of ogres. Next up is a pair of ogres and four goat-horned warriors, which are quite a challenge.

Don't be afraid to **use up your magic**; there are **health** and **blue orbs** in the next area. Now **head outside** and **jump across the gap**, where you'll meet Icarus.

BOSS BATTLE – ICARUS

This one's not so much a boss fight as an extended quicktime event. Start pressing the right buttons, but **don't worry about falling off the ledge** – this is meant to happen. In between button sequences **pummel him with your attacks**, and **be ready to twirl your thumbstick** to avoid the obstacles he throws you into. Eventually, you'll finish him off and float down onto Atlas' face, having stolen his **Icarus Wings**.

ATLAS

Run left along Atlas' face and **save** your game. Then **go back to his nose** and climb up the wall there. Once you reach the top, **run to the left**, jump over the gaps, and launch yourself to the **first hanging platform. Keep moving along these platforms** until you land inside Atlas' body.

There are bats and goat warriors in here, so kill them, then **drag the section of spine bone back** and leave it under the ledge on the left. Climb onto it, and you'll be able to reach the **chests** above containing a **Phoenix Feather** and some **red orbs**.

Drop back down, and **pull the spine bone back** through the gap. You can now **jump up to the higher ledge**.

Next you come to a cavern with a platform below. Float onto it, and you'll **awaken another rock monster**. Bash away at him as normal, but when he starts to slide into the lava, you'll need to **jump onto the wall** on the left. Jump around on this wall to **avoid the rocks he throws at you**, until you're allowed back onto the platform to finish him off.

Once you've beaten him, **push his rock body to the edge** of the lava plate and use it to jump out of the area. In the next area, **save** your game and **release the rock** next to the save point. When it stops, **jump onto it**, destroy the rock it's resting against and use it to grapple across the gap.

Use your Icarus Wings on the updraft to get into the next room. Here you'll keep getting attacked by firefly creatures until you've **destroyed all their nests** (on the walls) so do that first. Then **climb onto the ledge near the entrance** and move round the wall. **Drop down** onto the first ledge, grab **blue orbs** and **health**, then **jump across to the opposite wall** to reach the exit.

In the next room, **climb onto the ceiling** (above the lava) and go up **through the first gap** to find an **Urn** and some **red orbs**.

Move to **the second gap** in the ceiling and jump down on the spike. **Back onto the wall and ceiling** now, and move until you reach the two stalagtites hanging from the roof. **Chop them down** and you'll activate an airflow. Move round to the save point and **save**, before **using the updraft to exit the cavern**.

There's more platforming ahead now. **Jump onto the middle platform** and fight the enemies that appear (this is a great place to **use Euryale's head**), before **cranking the platform upwards**, and **jumping across** the remainder of the **cogs**.

Now it's a straight dash up the wall. **Get to the side of the loose rock before you cut it down**, or it'll hit you and drain health. **Grapple round the next part**, and you'll eventually arrive on a **ledge** with **two rocks and a wall** that's too high to climb. **Pull one rock to the top of the mini-slope**, then **pull the other underneath it**. Now **push the top one onto the lower rock**, and you'll have a stack of two rocks. **Drag it to the ledge**, jump up, and pull it towards the high wall. You can now use it to get over the wall.

Before you proceed, **jump onto the climbable wall** on the rock face to your **left**, move round it, and you'll find a **chest** with a **Gorgon Eye**. Now carry on the way you were heading and you'll get to yet another climbable wall.

PUZZLE FOCUS

This requires patience more than skill. Rocks fall alternately down either side of the wall, so you must time your ascent. Jump up once, then jump across, then up, then across and so on. You can negotiate the whole section using this technique, but if you rush, you'll lose health. At the top, smash the loose chain and watch the cutscene. There's a quicktime sequence here, so don't put down the pad! You'll receive the **Atlas Quake** magic and get a chance to test it out... ▶

PALACE OF THE FATES

Save your game, then **jump across** to the Palace of the Fates. **Pull the lever under the bridge** and you'll be attacked by three cyclopses and riders, plus respawning archers. It's a tough fight, so **use your magic** if you need to.

When it's done, **pull the lever on the right** as far across as possible and keep on doing this until an opening appears at the main entrance.

PUZZLE FOCUS

You're now in a chamber with holes in the floor. Hmmm. First of all, head right and get the **red orbs**, but unless you really need it, ignore the **health** for now. Next, pull the lever and spikes will start to appear in patterns around the area. You must grab the crank from the left-hand chamber and pull the block out of the central one, but apart from that, getting the rest of the chests is optional. ▼

PALACE OF THE FATES: OUTSIDE

Head right, grab the **red orbs**, and you'll find yourself in the centre of the Palace Of The Fates. **Go up the ladder** on the far side of the area and **put the crank into the lever**. Twist it until the flames to your left stop. **Freeze time** and **jump across** the gap to the first platform. **Head right**, grab the **Phoenix Feather** then **jump into the next room**.

Run along this corridor until you find the **grate with the updraft**. Now move forwards and **pull the lever at the end** to lower the gate, then **sprint back and use the updraft to float** over through the gap before the gate closes. If you don't nail it first time, keep trying.

Kill the dogs and soldiers who attack you on arrival, and **open the door**. Here there's some scaffold and a rock suspended in the air. **Break the scaffold** to release the rock, and stock up on **health** and **blue orbs** because there's a tricky puzzle coming up.

PUZZLE FOCUS

Drag the block through and to the right where the Translator is waiting. Put the block on the pressure plate to keep the door open, then pick up the Translator and run out with him. Now you'll be attacked, and you must keep your new buddy alive, so pop him down as far away as possible while you fight. The Cyclone of Chaos move works well here.

Carry the Translator to the next area where there's another fight. Atlas Quake is useful here, but save lots of magic for the next part.

Take the Translator back to the book and he'll run to it and cower as you're assailed by a load of enemies. Kill the Summoners first because they'll raise even more creatures, then sort out the rest. Keep an eye on the Translator, because if he dies, it's back to the beginning.

When done, force the Translator to read the book by pressing ◎ when he resists.

Rip the Ram Head key out of the door and go back to the other side of the main Palace area to unlock the Ram door. Stock up on **health** and **blue orbs** and run into the semi-circular corridor. You'll be attacked and the walls will roll in; stay central, and when your attackers are dead the spikes will withdraw. ▼

GARDEN OF THE GODS

Grab the **red orbs**, then head into the circular room dotted with statues. In here, there's a **Phoenix Feather** and more **red orbs**. **Break the weakened wall** and **jump through the gap in the gate**.

Shimmy along the wall and when you get to **the second section**, drop down, climb the ladder and get the **red orbs** and **Gorgon Eye chests**. Jump back onto the ledge and carry on round, then **save** your game.

You're now in a chamber with a **lever** on either side. The left-hand one activates the flames on the right and vice versa. You'll be attacked by sirens and you'll need to **finish them with fire** to open the door. To do so, **beat them up until they're ready** (a ◎ will appear above them) **then roast them with the lever**. Three is enough to open the door.

Press ◎ to make the Translator do his job

PUZZLE FOCUS

Jump into the bloody pool and swim through to the next area. You'll emerge into a circular room with a frozen phoenix statue in the centre.

First off, look behind you and grab the two **red orb** chests. Then climb up the wall onto the ceiling and bring down the frozen stalactites. Drop down into the middle and use the phoenix statue to defrost the first door.

To do this, jump up, grab the mirror and position it under the light shaft coming down into the higher part of the room. Use the three levers to align all the symbols on the wall correctly, making sure the bronze shield is directly in front of the phoenix statue. If you got it right, the light will beam from the mirror onto the shield, and melt the ice round the statue. You can now move it to open up all the other frozen doors.

There's a **Phoenix Feather**, three sets of **red orbs**, two minotaurs, and a **blue orb** chest. Now open the door. ▼

PALACE OF THE FATES 2

Through the door is another lift with a crank. **Don't bother trying to raise it** because there are firefly nests pumping out beasties. **Climb the walls**, destroy all three, then **crank the lift up**. A grapple point lowers, so grab it, and **ride it to the next level**. There are **blue orbs** and **health** here. The next area is tricky so stock up on both.

You're in a room with two **Cerberus** creatures, and they spit out puppies. **Kill the pups as fast as possible**, because if you leave them, they turn into fully-fledged Cerberus creatures. **Use your Atlas Quake** to keep their numbers down. Towards the end of the fight, **two ogres appear**, but your priority should be the dogs.

After killing them, head up the ladder on the left, **save** your game, and **jump across** to the other side, where you'll get two lots of **red orbs** and a **Gorgon Eye**.

Always try and tackle the big guys first

Drop in between the two gates, and there's another couple of **red orb** chests. You'll need to **jump off the walls** to get back up from here. Now head past the save point, **open the door** and slide down the ladder.

PUZZLE FOCUS

Now you must bag the second Translator, and he won't come easily. You'll see him through the gate leaping off the cliff.

Open the gate with the pressure plate and prop it open with the statue of fate from the corridor. Now run through the mirror on the left hand side of the room to jump back in time. Quickly freeze time, and you'll be able to run and grab the Translator. Force him to read the book. You'll be rewarded with the Skull you need to open the second door in the courtyard.

Now, as a bonus, run through the mirror again and freeze time straight away. Head back down the corridor and you'll be able to open that chest on the right to get a special **health** boost.

Head through the door you took the Skull from, and you'll find a vent with an updraft coming through it. Crank the handle to power the draft, then float to the first platform. Quickly pull the lever, then drop down and crank the bottom vent again. Now float all the way to the ceiling. It's a tricky one, and it may take a few attempts.

There's a chest with **red orbs** on the way, so pick it up before you leave the area.

Now crank the lift down and jump back into the main courtyard area. Use the Skull on the Skull door (well, once you've killed four trolls). ▶

The Icarus Wings help you avoid obstacles

PUZZLE FOCUS

Ahead is a lift – one of the toughest bits of the game. Start cranking the lever to move the lift down. The ceiling will start to drop, so crank quickly. Skeletons will appear and attack you in waves. Kill them quickly with your blades and Atlas Quake, and keep cranking. Once you reach the bottom, get the door open as fast as possible. There's a **Phoenix Feather** and **red orbs** for your efforts when you exit the lift. ▶

RAISING THE PHOENIX

Climb onto the rope bridge and start going across the lava pool. **The rope will break halfway**, leaving you to jump up and deal with the archers. But wait! More monsters will appear, including four gorgons, so **use your Golden Fleece** deflection often.

Jump onto the platform in the **middle of the lava**, and **climb the wall and ceiling** to the other side. Drop down quickly and deal with the soldiers that appear. In the next area, **use your Icarus wings** to glide round the **spinning blades**, and watch out for the lava bubbling up to burn your wings.

THE PHOENIX CHAMBER

Now to deal with the ashes of the Phoenix. Head forwards, **read the book**, then jump right and **save**.

Head left, kill your enemies, and walk into the spike room. **Pull the lever**, lower the spikes, and **break the wall** to the front and left of you. Two warriors will come out, but one will probably be killed by the spikes. Fight the other one, and return to the lever.

Pull it and grab the **Hail Of Boreas** from the dead soldier in front of you. There are two **red orb** chests to get, too, but **only grab one at a time**. **Pull the lever**, **freeze time**, and **start turning the crank**. After one rotation, **freeze time again**, and **jump through the door** on your left. Run down the corridor and fill up with **health** and **blue orbs**.

PUZZLE FOCUS

Ahead of you is a room with the Phoenix ashes at the end of it. To your left is a statue. Push it into the room as far as possible, and it'll keep you safe from the fireballs as you fight the bats and warriors. The fire pushes the statue away, so move it into a place where it will come to a stop.

Pull the lever at the end, then move the statue onto one of the pressure plates and keep hold of it until you can stand on the other plate. Use your grapple to swing into the cage with the ashes.

Push the urn forwards and the lift will go down, letting you slot it into place. Now head for the lever ahead of you, and fight the enemies that appear. Save your game, and pull the lever.

You can now use the updraft to get onto the spiral staircase ahead of you. Run up the stairs, and grab the two chests with **red orbs** at the top before pulling the lever and returning to the surface. When you get up there, shove the Hail Of Boreas into the door's mouth.

Use the door, and head left to claim a **Gorgon Eye**. Jump up the chain and get off at the next level. Save and take the **health** and **blue orbs** that are here. Blow the horn and release the Phoenix.

Drop down and use the pillars to get to the room that is upwards and left of you. ▶

Break the far wall to uncover a Statue Of Fate

PUZZLE FOCUS

Now it's straight into another puzzle. First off, pull the lever and raise the lift on your left. Use its climbable side to move up the wall and onto the ceiling. Break the chains over the doors and jump down.

Grab the red orbs from the chests and pull out the pillar from the right-hand gap. Pull the lever again to bring the lift back down, and push the pillar halfway into the lift.

Return to the lever and pull it. If you positioned the pillar right, it'll jam the lift, letting you climb in. Pull the pillar towards you and the lift will go up. Now jump onto the pillar and use it to break the chain above the door.

Use the next lever to raise the pillars outside, then go into the next circular room and move the gates to reveal a **red orb** chest to your right and the exit in front of you. ▼

BOSS BATTLE: THE MYSTERIOUS WARRIOR

This takes place in 2D, and all you can really do is **fight and block**. If you get backed into a corner, jump over your opponent and attack from the other side. You'll eventually get the chance to **shove him through the glass**.

BOSS BATTLE: KRAKEN

The first thing to do is **head to her left tentacle** and attack it until it raises. Go to the middle, **pick up your fallen buddy**, and **plonk him on the button** to activate the fan. **You can now attack the creature's face**, so float up and combo it.

Repeat the process until the Kraken **slams her tentacle into the fan**. When she does, climb up the side and slice it off. **Repeat with the other tentacle**.

Now the Kraken is hanging on for dear life. **Put in a couple of combos on one tentacle**, then move to the other to soften them up. Return to the first tentacle and beat it until **the Kraken lets go of one pillar**, then **sprint to the other side**, and dislodge the other tentacle. Now **run to the middle**, pull the lever, and **send the bridge through the Kraken's face**.

TAMING THE PHOENIX

Take the **Gorgon Eye** and **Phoenix Feather** from the **chests**. Press ◎ next to the Phoenix and go through the quicktime event – be careful, because if you miss a press you'll lose health.

PUZZLE FOCUS

You've arrived in the Temple of the Fates to be greeted by another puzzle. Swim up to the middle platform and press R1 to grapple up. Drop down and smash the gem to return the room to normality.

You can now ring the bells to smash the giant face in front of you. Firstly, go to the right-hand bell and use R1 and L1 to ring it. Freeze time, and leap onto the centre platform. Use L1 to kick the ringer into the left-hand bell.

Repeat this once, then drop into the water. Dive under the centre platform and pull the lever to lock the platform into place. You can now use the crank on the surface to turn the bell ringer towards the giant face, then hop back up and use the ringer to smash the face. ▶

TEMPLE OF THE FATES

Head through when you're ready. There are some **crates** behind and to the left of the central platform, which you can **reach by grappling up and gliding**, although they're tricky to get to.

BOSS BATTLE: THE THRONE OF LAHKESIS, SISTER OF FATE 1

This is a toughie. She'll come at you with spear attacks to start with, and some blasts from her staff. **Alternate between slicing her with your blades and deflecting her blasts**. Eventually, **she'll start floating higher up**, forcing you to change tactics.

She'll blast you with her staff, slam herself down and electrify the floor. To avoid all these, you need to **keep jumping**, and when she takes the floor out of action, **use your grapple** to swing above it. She'll fire at you in mid-air too, so **keep moving** between grapples to avoid her shots. The best way to bring her down is with your bow and by deflecting her shots.

Finally, **she'll hang in mid-air**, ready to finish. **Grapple up and swing into her while pressing ◎** and you'll get the quicktime event to finish her off.

BOSS BATTLE: SISTER OF FATE 2

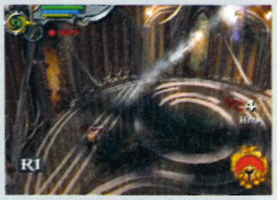
This one is much easier. **Use Cyclone of Chaos** on the grunts that appear, and whenever you get time, **fire arrows** at the Sister. Repeat until **she slumps onto the sword**, letting you finish her with a quicktime sequence.

BOSS BATTLE: THE TWO SISTERS OF FATE

This fight is the same as the first one, only with a twist: the **second Sister** appears to have a pop at you every now and then, so you need to be quicker on the dodge.

You'll fight the first Sister of Fate twice

ATTACKS



TYPHON'S BANE

This is your bow, and its main use is shooting down targets from a distance. Equip it by pressing → and fire it by holding down L2 and tapping ◎.

There are plenty of situations in this game that call on you to make use of Typhon's Bane so it's a good idea to get familiar with it and you should level it up a few times, too.

CHRONOS' RAGE

A weaker version of the lightning attack from the last game, this can be used to zap multiple enemies at once by tapping L2. Select it by pressing ←. However, bear in mind that this magic ability isn't that useful unless you're surrounded by plenty of weaker enemies – and even then, there are usually better ways of dispatching them.

EURYALE'S HEAD

This is like the Medusa's Head from the original game (Euryale is Medusa's sister, you see). Select it by pressing ↑, hold L2 to lock a target and press ◎ to fire. It turns enemies to stone for a short time, so it's useful when you're being pounded by larger enemies. It can freeze multiple targets, so try and get lots of foes in its beam. Worth upgrading.

ATLAS QUAKE

Perhaps the best magic in the game, this will get you out of a scrape fast. Select it by pressing ↓ and tap L2 to activate. Kratos will stomp his feet and fling rocks around the screen that devastate your enemies.

Levelled up, it's stupendous. Two or three stomps will kill any low to mid-level creatures and seriously weaken the rest.

The first Sister should be your primary target, so focus your attention on her. Once she goes down, **freeze time** and **smash the mirror** that has the second Sister behind it.

Once you've broken the two at the side, **hack away some more** and you'll finally get a quicktime sequence to finish them both.

BEFORE THE LOOM

Run into the next circular room and **climb the column** in front of you. You can **use the ceiling** to get onto the platform on the far side, and there are **chests** to the right and left (which you get to by gliding off the platform).

Run to the end of the next corridor, **smash the wall** to your right and run through. You're now on a **ramp** down to the **Loom Chamber**. Here you will face four main swarms of enemies.

First, mace-wielding ogres and soldiers. Second, gorgons and sirens. Third, minotaurs and finally, some cyclopses. Keep your health topped up at all times and if in doubt, use either

your **Rage** or your **Quake** attack to beat the groups. It's very tough, so make sure you plan ahead.

Once you reach the bottom, **save**, then **slap the hands on the door** to reveal the locks. Open the locks and step through the door.

THE LOOM CHAMBER 1

Sprint past the swinging blades and into the first area. You'll see two areas to your right and left containing **broken stairs** and **chubby little arms** sprouting out.

First, **head left. Batter the arm until it limps down** and then use the **lever** to open the **grille above your head**. Run back to the stairs, jump off, and you'll get to a chamber with a **chest** in it.

Open it up, then climb the wall and work your way round to the right-hand side, and **clear the corpses off the grille**. Drop down and repeat the process with the **lever**. You can now **rope up** and head up to the next part of the level.

PUZZLE FOCUS

When you emerge you are greeted with a puzzle that looks complex, but don't worry, it's actually easy.

Run left (avoiding the arms) until you reach the lever that opens the trap door. Pull it, then bash the nearest arm until it dangles down into the trap. Shut the trap. Now move to the next arm, which should be by a raised platform with a lever on it. Batter the arm, climb the rope and activate the lever.

Go back to where you disabled the first arm, and start to drag the device along the side. When you reach the slot before the final arm, leave it there, cripple the arm, then quickly drag it past until you get to the final slot. You'll see a brief cutscene.

Drag the device back a notch and batter the final arm until it gets speared. You can now climb the rope into the top level of the Loom Chamber. ▶

Pull up the thread and get ready to run

THE LOOM CHAMBER 2

You're now looking the hideous third Sister in the eye. **Slow down time** and **batter both her arms** until they're useless. **Activate the two levels** by the edge of the arena, and it'll bring up a **couple of corpses**.

Head to the right-hand side and **climb the wall** by the door, until you spot **another couple of corpses** hanging on the railing. Clear them, then drop down and **hack at Fate's arms** again.

Now **move the level** across the edge of the platform until it lines up with the chain in the middle. Yank up the blade. **Fate will probably regain use of her arms**, so return to them and make them limp once more.

Now **return to the blade, rotate it to face the creature**, then get behind it and **pull it back**. Let go, and you'll enter a quicktime sequence in which you ram the blade through her head. Effective *and* tasteful!

PUZZLE FOCUS

Run around until you get to the balcony above the Sister with a large mirror on the wall. Pull the lever to bring up the threads of fate and save your game. Run back down and pull up the thread by pressing ◎. Run round a little and freeze time before going back up to the large mirror and jumping through it. ▼

BOSS BATTLE: ZEUS

Okay, this is it: the big one. First off, **Zeus grows massive** and starts lobbing **furies** at you. **Killing them is the key to victory** and a great tactic is to either **juggle them into the air** (helping you avoid most of the secondary attacks Zeus throws at you), or use **Atlas Quake**.

When you've killed a handful of them Zeus will **reel back and slam his hand into the ground**. Bash his fingers and **he'll pull his hand back**, letting you **climb up his body** and go into a quicktime sequence that **shrinks him**.

This part is the toughest, so be ready. Zeus comes at you with a sword and with lightning attacks. **Use the Golden Fleece** to throw his bolts back at him, and you'll get a **health** boost. **Use Quake and Rage** to take his health down. Don't worry about running out of health yourself because once you reach the next part, you'll recover most of it. **Once ◎ appears** above his head tap the button and then hammer it quickly to **wrest the sword from his grasp**.

Now you have the sword. Watch out for his lightning bolts (deflect them where possible), and **get stuck in with combos, Rage and Quake**. Eventually, you'll get a quicktime event that lets you **smash him against a pillar**. Once he's down, **pick up the pillar** and break it over his skull.

He'll get back up again, so keep fighting. **He'll take the sword back** (don't worry – it's meant to happen), so **repeat the process** once more. You'll finally **fling him into another pillar**, and get the chance to drop a whole block of rock onto him.

After that, he grows large again, and attacks you with **a sheet of lightning. Hammer ◎ to stay alive** and you'll go into a cutscene, then another quicktime sequence. Once you've nailed his hands to the rocks, **you'll need to press ◎ quickly**, so have your fastest finger ready. After this, you're treated to a cinematic. Looks like you've won!

LOOM CHAMBER REDUX

...or have you? You're back in the Loom Chamber. **Save the game**, then **repeat the time-travelling sequence**. Now you've really reached the end. Congratulations! Here 'The End Begins'.

A quicktime sequence shrinks Zeus to a more manageable size

HIDDEN VICES

VICE CITY STORIES

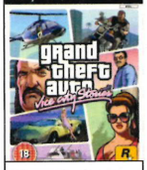
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories is full of secrets and unlockables. Here's where to find them in the new PS2 version of the game

GTA: VCS (PS2)

- **PLAYERS** 1
- **MEMORY CARD SPACE** 330KB
- **DIFFICULTY** MODERATE
- **COMPLETION TIME** 30-40 HOURS (INCLUDING EXTRAS)
- **REVIEWED** *P92*

GRAPHICS	08
SOUND	09
GAMEPLAY	08
LIFESPAN	09

PlayStation.2



If you don't own GTA: VCS on PSP already, there's nothing to stop you enjoying this

8/10

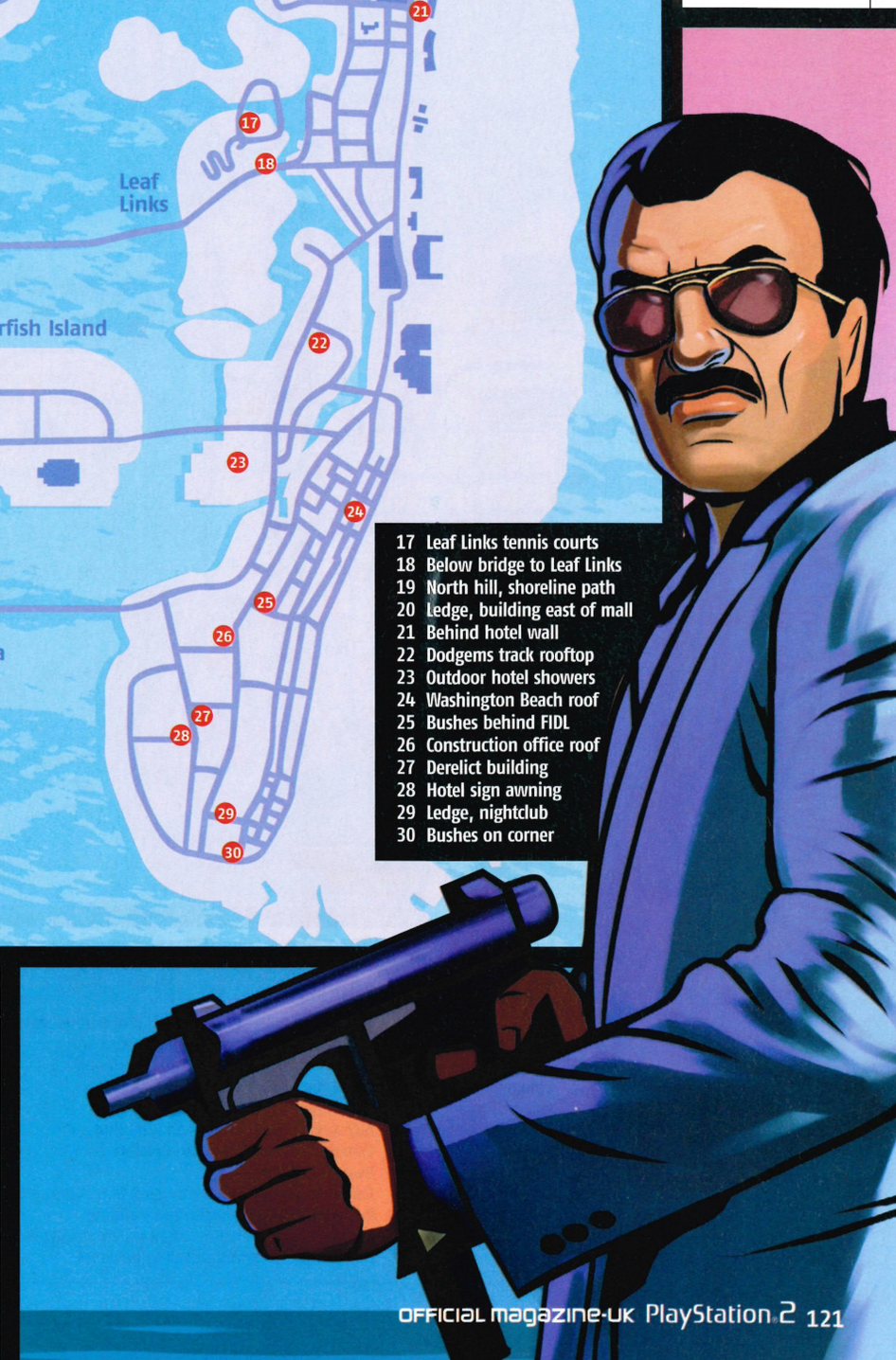
HIDDEN BALLOONS

FIND AND POP THE HIDDEN BALLOONS TO UNLOCK EXTRA WEAPONS

10 balloons	Pistol
20 balloons	Scorpion (SMG)
30 balloons	Stubby Shotgun
40 Balloons	Molotov Cocktails
50 Balloons	AK-47
60 Balloons	Armor
70 balloons	Flamethrower
80 balloons	Equalizer (pistol with scope)
90 balloons	Sniper Rifle
99 balloons	M249 machine gun

RAMPAGES

WHERE TO FIND ALL THE RAMPAGE ICONS



DISCOUNTS AT AMMU-NATION STORES

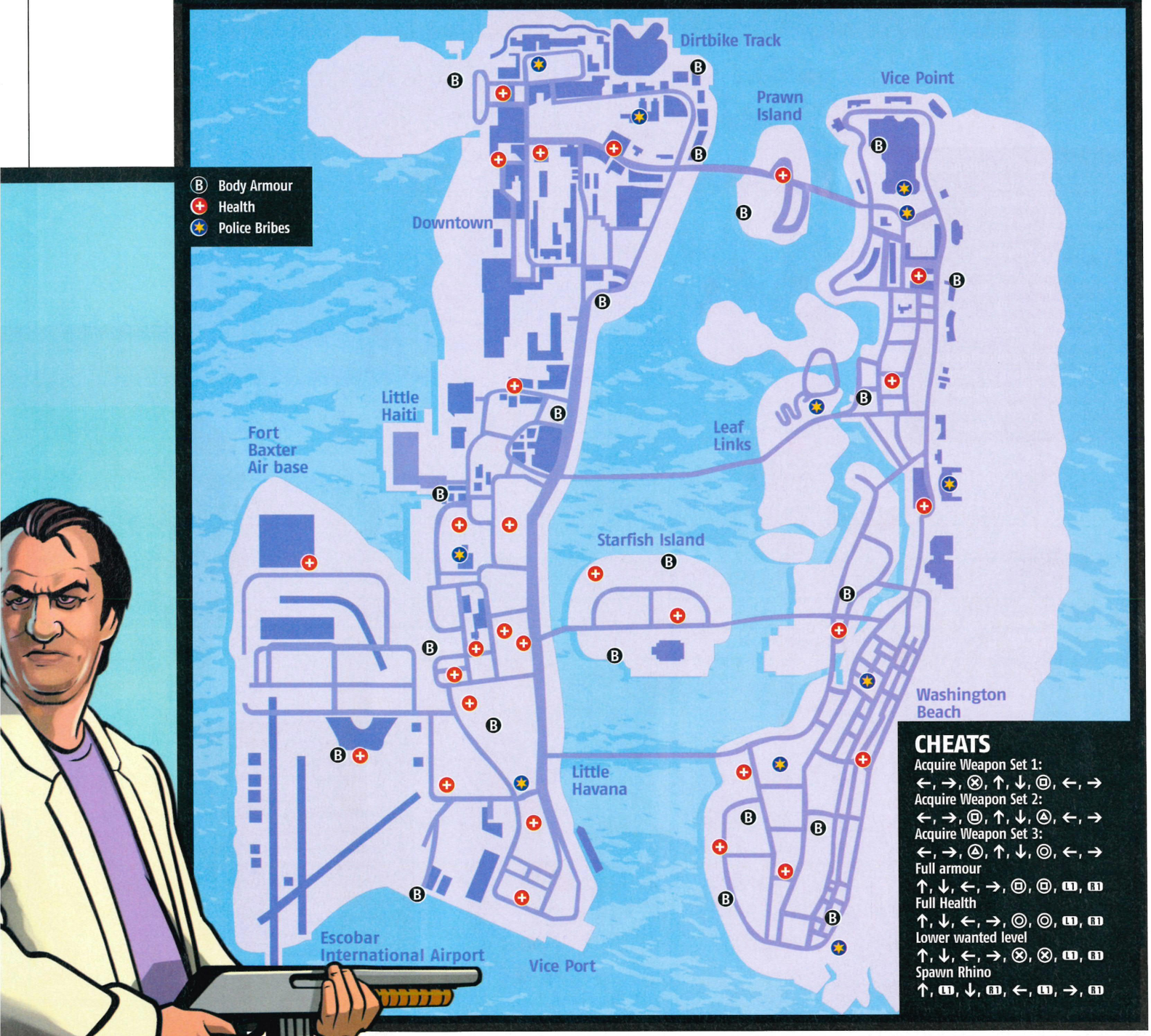
To get discount prices at Ammu-Nation gun shops, complete the shooting range challenges at the Vice City Docks, outside Phil's place.

COMPLETION UNLOCKABLES

On 100% completion of the game, you will unlock infinite ammo and be able to watch mission cutscenes in The Clymenus Suite. ▶

ITEMS

INJURED? EXPOSED? NEED TO GREASE A PALM? HERE'S WHERE TO GO



CHEATS

Acquire Weapon Set 1:
←, →, ⊗, ↑, ↓, ◎, ←, →

Acquire Weapon Set 2:
←, →, ◎, ↑, ↓, △, ←, →

Acquire Weapon Set 3:
←, →, △, ↑, ↓, ◎, ←, →

Full armour
↑, ↓, ←, →, ◎, ◎, L1, R1

Full Health
↑, ↓, ←, →, ◎, ◎, L1, R1

Lower wanted level
↑, ↓, ←, →, ⊗, ⊗, L1, R1

Spawn Rhino
↑, L1, ↓, R1, ←, L1, →, R1

UNLOCKABLE OUTFITS

TO GET...	YOU MUST...
Hired muscle clothes	Buy a High Roller Protection Racket Empire State
Cuban-style clothes	Finish the Umberto mission strand
Casual clothes	Finish the Conduct Unbecoming mission
Smuggler clothes	Buy a High Roller smuggling building
Hood clothes	Buy a High Roller robbery building
Mr Repo clothes	Buy a High Roller loan shark building
Trailer trash clothes	Complete the D.I.V.O.R.C.E. mission
Fatigues, winner's suit	Beat Last Stand
Wetsuit	Complete eight jetski races using film studio jetski
Leisure outfit	Buy a High Roller prostitution building
Smart suit	Complete every mission for all six empire types
Tracksuit	Buy a High Roller drug dealing business

SIDE MISSION UNLOCKABLES

UNLOCKABLE	HOW TO GET IT
Never get tired while swimming	Complete 15 levels of beach patrol
Maximum health increase	Complete 15 levels in air ambulance
Be fireproof	Do 15 levels in fire engine firefighter missions
Infinite sprint	Do 15 levels in ambulance paramedic missions
Extra armour	Do 15 Levels of vigilante missions
Free use of Pay'N'Spray	Deliver 32 cars to the Civil Asset Forfeiture Impound Yard
Bulletproof business vehicles	Conquer all 30 businesses
Taxi jump	Complete 50 fares or earn $5000 in cab fares

next month

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY?

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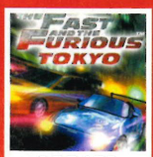

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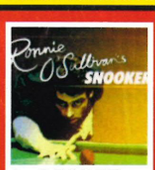

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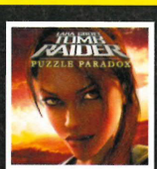

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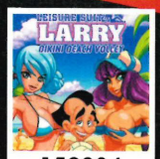

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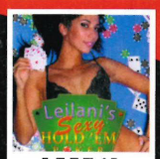

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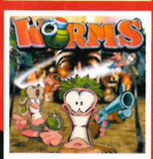

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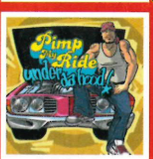

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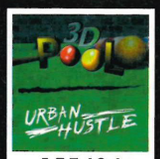

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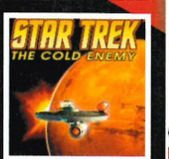

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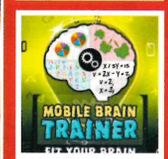

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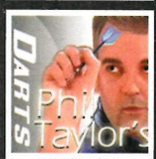

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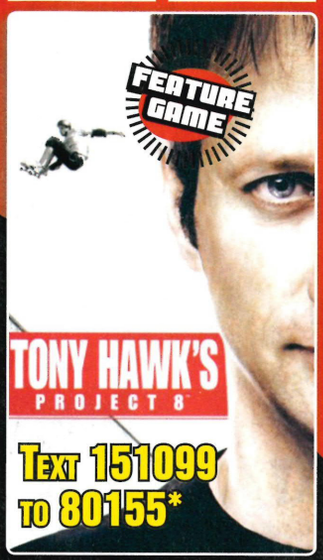


RINGTONES

CHART	TRUE	MP3	POLY
Ruby	153780	153253	151781
Grace Kelly	153673	153688	151909
Lil Star	153765	153779	151937
I Wanna Love You	153698	153709	151918
How To Save A Life	153701	153712	151921
Starz In Their Eyes	153674	153689	151910
Sweet Escape	153239	153772	151941
Catch You	153377	153265	151894
This Ain't A Scene Its An Arms Race	153750	153755	151929
Shine	153763	153764	151936
What Goes Around Comes Around	153202	153773	151942
Perfect Exceeder	153697	153708	151917
Standing In The Way Of Control	153782	153784	151686

FAVOURITES	TRUE	MP3	POLY
Sweet Child Of Mine	158709	157706	152138
Wonderwall	158906	157784	151056
Gangstas Paradise	158617	157590	
Californication	158943	157827	
You Cant Touch This	158824	157761	151171
My Neck My Back	158769	157743	151141
Simply The Best	157216	153104	
Summer Of 69	158175	157559	152124
Ghetto Gospel	158476	157477	
All The Small Things	158549	157521	
Gold Digger	158318	157918	151378
Drop It Like Its Hot	158998	157995	
Bet You Look Good On The Dance Floor	158292	157499	151427

TALKING TONES	TRUE
Scarface - Say Hello To My Little Friend	157924
The Shining - Heres Johnny!	157925
Stifler - Stiflers Back Baby	153610
Paddy - Ding Dang Doo	153612
Alan Partridge	153627
Best Of Little Britain	153623
Godfather	157304
Donald Duck Getting A BJ (Hilarious)	158056
Police - 'Come Out With Your Hands Up'	158118
Gun Shots	158107

CRAZY VIDEOS

156301 Dirty Monkey

151342 Air Bag Stunt

151344 Imploding Building

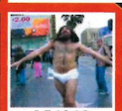
151346 Giant Slingshot

154130 Bike Tree Crunch

151006 Bull Dozed

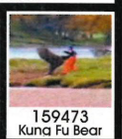
151007 Tricycle Terror

154341 Face Vs A**


154860 I will Survive

150209 Soldier Vs Ram

154197 Batman Vs Wardrobe


159473 Kung Fu Bear

154131 Office Fun

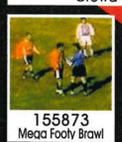
154333 Ninja Vs Chav

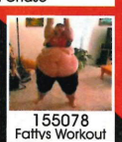
151002 Crowd Chase

155266 Bitch Fight

155703 Bike Calamities

155532 Rollercoaster Horror


155873 Mega Footy Brawl


155078 Fattys Workout

SHOCKER VIDS

155296 Spider Vs Reptile

154128 Watch Out... Scary

154339 Scary Shock

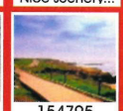
154799 Nice scenery...

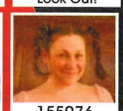
154798 Look Out!

155516 Train Spook

155514 Ghostliness

155517 CCTV spirit


154795 Nice... Until!


155076 Nice Girl Turns Nasty

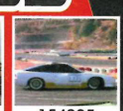
COOL CAR VIDS

154680 Tractor Boy-Racer

150764 Super Ferrari 360

154368 Nova Smash

155030 R32 Rips up Road

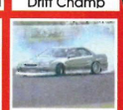

154095 Drift Champ

159675 McLaren Vs Supra

159673 Evo Crash

159846 MX Stunt

150761 Pimped Skyline


155029 Drift Action

COOL WALLPAPERS

155983

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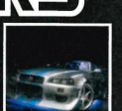
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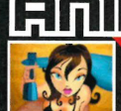
ANIMATIONS


150147 Sexy Screen Cleaner

156009 Jordan Flash

150117 Hooligan Headbutt

150096 Del Boy & Uncle

150149 Gangster Kid

150155 The Ring

155689 Scary Clown

155686 Put Em' Up

155685 Boob Juggler

155683 Scarface Kitty

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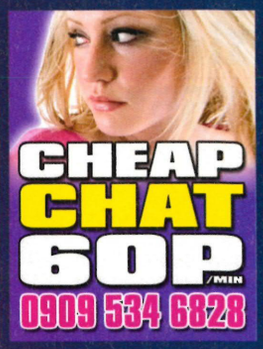

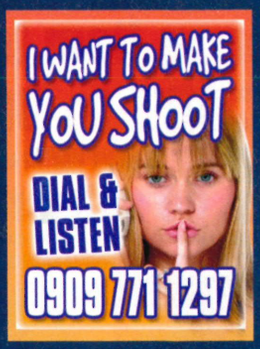

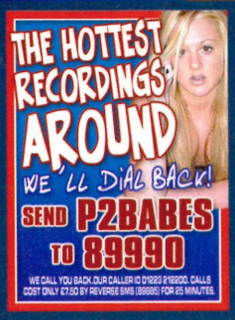

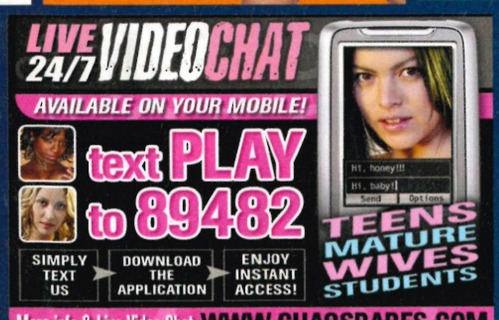

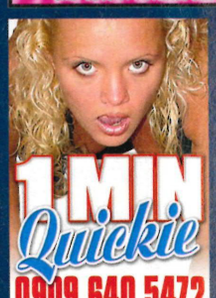

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NEW REVIEWED GAMES

PN85899 — Miami Vice
9/10
"Just like GTA. Classic. Seriously fun and majorly addictive"

PN85859 — LMA Manager 2007
9.5/10
"The best mobile manager game around! You can even watch the games being played!"

PN85913 — Tony Hawk's Project 8
9.5/10
"Fast paced intense skateboarding game gauranteed to keep you entertained"

PN85848 — Poker The Masters: Texas Hold'em Poker
10/10
"Finally... poker on your mobile. Involves all the challenges of texas hold'em, and you wont lose any real money!"

LATEST

PN85037 — Solitaire Classic 2
PN85631 — Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude
PN85920 — Sexy Soccer
PN85915 — Sexy Fruit: Jana Cova
PN85618 — Extreme Rally
PN85788 — Sexy Pool
PN85775 — Crash Bandicoot (new!)
PN85897 — Zero 36 Video Poker

PREMIUM

PN85906 — Star Marine
PN85890 — Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude
PN85198 — Slot (new!)
PN85617 — Kamasutra: Girl on Girl
PN85916 — Pub Fight
PN85805 — 3D The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo
PN85905 — Hitman: Blood Money
PN85898 — Jordan Unc0vered (new!)
PN85914 — RBS Nations Rugby
PN85638 — Roulette
PN85119 — Baywatch
PN85867 — Mobile Brain Trainer: Fit Your Brain

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PlayStation Education Part 3

SHAGGY DOG GLORIES

More barking wall chart fun. This month: PlayStation's top dogs*

1 DOG

AS SEEN IN *Half-Life 2 (PS3)*

BREED City 17 Retriever

Sure, it might be bipedal, unable to bark and built from ten tonnes of titanium, but Dog is the closest thing to the classic Lassie template you'll find on this list: a life-savin' wonderdog.

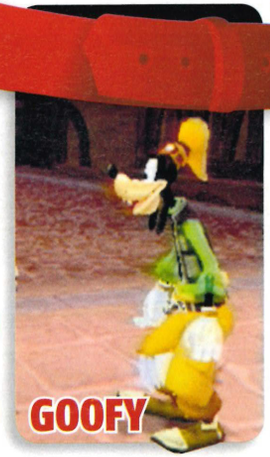
2 ZOMBIE DOG AKA CERBERUS

AS SEEN IN *Resident Evil (PS1/PS2)*

BREED Dobermann

Rotting and home to many a maggot, *Resi*'s zombie mutts are likely the first dogs you'll have encountered on PS1. Still didn't stop us riddling them with bullets, mind.

3 GOOFY

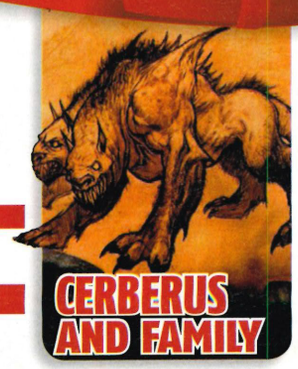


AS SEEN IN *Kingdom Hearts II (PS2)*

BREED Dippy Dawg

We've never been a fan of Disney's bumbler, so we were quite pleased when he got twatted on the head with a boulder in *Kingdom Hearts II* and was left for dead. Sadly, he recovered.

4 CERBERUS AND FAMILY



AS SEEN IN *God of War (PS2)*

BREED Greek Hadeshound

Constantly puking out 'puppies' that grow into adult cerberi awful quick, *GoW*'s three-headed dogbeasts deliver an important lesson: a demon-dog isn't just for Christmas, it's for life.

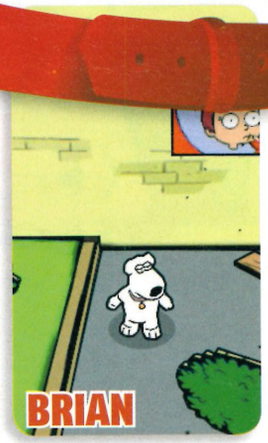
5 INTERCEPTOR

AS SEEN IN *Final Fantasy VI (PS1)*

BREED Dobermann

He might only be 30 pixels tall, but Interceptor is integral to revealing one of *FFVI*'s big mysteries: offering clues to the relationship between his ninja master and a certain prodigal painter.

6 BRIAN



AS SEEN IN *Family Guy (PS2)*

BREED Mongrel

Compared with the other dogs here, Brian exhibits an entirely different set of compulsions; namely mojitos, Ernest Hemingway, and the shapely thigh of a human female.

7 PARAPPA

AS SEEN IN *PaRappa the Rapper (PS1)*

BREED Paper Thin Border Terrier

Big up to PlayStation's hippest hound. PaRappa is a rapping, body-popping, 2D dog in a bright red beanie who shouts, "I gotta believe!" a lot. If you think that's odd, play the game.

8 RUSH

AS SEEN IN *Mega Man Collection (PS2)*

BREED Canis Lupus Mechanus

A submarine, a jetpack, a motorcycle; Mega Man's faithful robo-dog would be the most utilitarian mutt on this list were it not for the steaming piles of silicon he leaves everywhere.

*NB. *Okami* star Amaterasu doesn't count – she's a wolf

9

AS SEEN IN
Dog's Life (PS2)
BREED
Beagle / English Cocker Spaniel

Normally, we applaud realism in games. The subtle changes in light as you pass through a forest. Expressive, lifelike facial animation. Making a dog poop? No thanks.

10

AS SEEN IN
Dead to Rights 2 (PS2)
BREED
Husky

Dead to Rights could have been a touching tale of a man and his dog, if only he hadn't trained his dog to tear the faces off drug-dealers and retrieve their bloodied weapons.

11

AS SEEN IN
Rule of Rose (PS2)
BREED
Labrador

About as exciting as his name, Brown's chief role in *Rule of Rose* is to hunt out food for Jennifer. Now, would you eat something a dog had held in its mouth? No wonder they banned it.

12

AS SEEN IN
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked (PS2)
BREED
Great Dane

It's bad enough Hanna-Barbara decided to saddle ol' Scoob with a destructive addiction to snacks, but on top of that, they thought it'd be funny if he had a speech impediment too.

TRADING PAGES

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE LET OTHER MAGS PLAY ON OUR PS2...

THIS MONTH: METAL HAMMER AND CLASSIC ROCK TELL US WHICH TRACKS MUST FEATURE IN GUITAR HERO III

Jamie Hibbard, editor

Machine Head
'Ten Ton Hammer'

Mastodon
'Wolf is Loose'

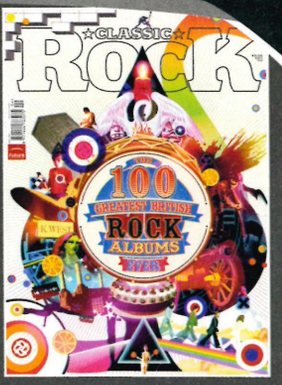
Lamb of God
'Redneck'

Sian Llewellyn, editor

AC/DC
'Back in Black'

Led Zeppelin
'Rock and Roll'

Heart
'Barracuda'



Alexander Milas, features editor

Yngwie Malmsteem
'Fury'

Napalm Death
'You Suffer' (Which is just 1.3 seconds long! Arf arf!)

Cannibal Corpse
'Butchered at Birth'

Tommy Udo, news editor

Billy Cobham
'Quadrant 4'

Mastodon
'March of the Fire Ants'

Death
'Baptized in Blood'

Kim Tarry, designer

Metallica
'Enter Sandman'

Marilyn Manson
'Beautiful People'

Iron Maiden
'The Number of the Beast'

Paul Henderson, production editor

Sugar
'The Act We Act'

Jeff Beck
'Cause We've Ended As Lovers'

Live
'Iris'

Brad Merrett, art editor

Children of Bodom
'Trashed, Lost and Strung Out'

Alter Bridge
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2.....

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43254	43247	TAKE THAT	Shine
42760	42758	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE	...Comes Around
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43739	43738	GOSSIP	Standing In The Way...
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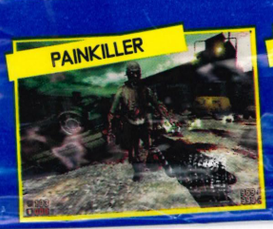

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