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COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

D2

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**KENJI END BRINGS
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 AND HORROR TO
 THE DREAMCAST**

**EXCLUSIVE U.S. PREVIEW:
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WHOOPEE CAMP'S AMAZING SEQUEL
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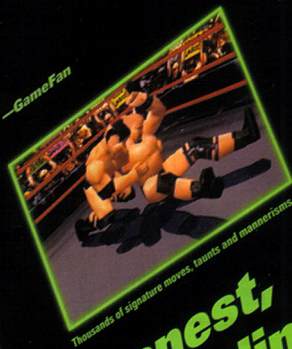
BIGGER WORLDS. BIGGER BOSSES.
BIGGER.



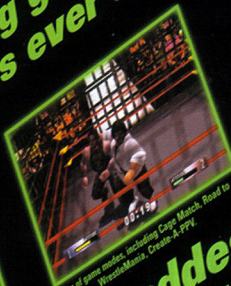
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WrestleMania XII
Heartbreak Kid Shawn Michaels wins a 60 minute Iron Man match for the title

WrestleMania X
Shawn Michaels and Rance Dumas vendetta for the IC Strap in an original Hardcore classic

WrestleMania VIII
Shawn Michaels and The Undertaker continue their rise to the top with a win

WrestleMania VI
The title turns as both Mega Powers lose in the same night

WrestleMania IV
Pays host to the first WrestleMania Heavy weight title tournament

WrestleMania I
First Wrestling Federation event in a new age of wrestling popularity

WrestleMania III
Breaks low attendance records with a capacity crowd

WrestleMania V
Shawn Michaels vs. The Rockers

WrestleMania VII
The Undertaker scores a decisive victory in his WrestleMania debut

WrestleMania IX
Federation Championship changes hands twice in one night

WrestleMania XI
X-Pac and Rance Dugg make their WrestleMania debut as a surprise support for Jeff Jarrett and Rance Ranson

WrestleMania 13
The Undertaker begins his second Federation Championship reign with a main event victory



Entrances complete with Titantron™ and theme music.

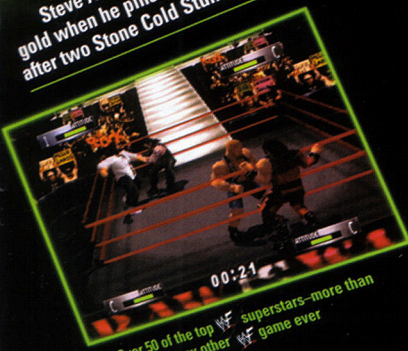
TEEN

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MILD LANGUAGE
SUGGESTIVE THEMES

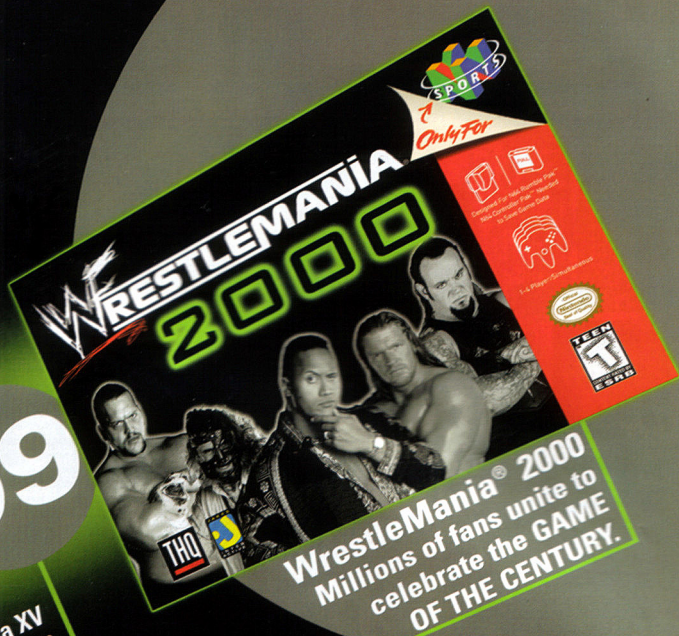
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NOVEMBER 1999



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Number of earthquakes that just missed us this month: 1

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Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

Don't cross the streams...

So much has been said recently about the impending main-stream status of gaming. Magazines are changing gears, ad agencies are exploring new realms for advertising, and crossover between the movies, toys, games, sports, and music is more rampant than ever. All of this will either be the beginning of a thriving gaming culture similar to Japan's, or the spell end for gaming as we know it. Let us pray.

So far it's all been for the better. Action figures, hockey movie spin-offs, and endorsements have lead to bigger budgets for better games. The future, however, is in question. With the PS2, Dreamcast, Dolphin and X-Box fighting to become the hub of the household, things could get dicey. For the

industry to embrace mainstream America and provide them a steady diet of alternative games, companies will have to bolster their current staffs, not inflict stricter deadlines on existing teams or put off making better versions of the games that got us here in the first place. Let's hope they do the former. If the industry can rise to the occasion, expansion should benefit us all, with bigger budgets all around. Of course, after X-Files Interactive and other such user-friendly wares, newbies will likely want to graduate to the Tomb Raiders and Marios of the world, so I guess we're safe for now. When I got started playing games, we didn't have alternative software like, say, Parappa to familiarize us with the concept of gaming: holding a controller, using the buttons, etc. So I think this explosion could be a good thing. In the long run it could lead to movie-sized budgets for games similar to Sega's \$40 million Shenmue, or Square's Final Fantasy series.

Of course, here at the Republic, we intend to keep the home fires burning. Sure, you'll see the occasional Pokemon bit or celebrity interview, but we'll never relinquish the hard-core gaming status that we've so diligently fought to preserve. None of this could have happened without the support of gaming enthusiasts everywhere who've endured the likes of the Sega CD, Jaguar, 32X, TurboGrafx, the fighting craze, the corridor craze, the death of 2D, and all of the joy and/or pain that they all imposed. We deserve and will continue to demand the best from an industry that has helped shape our lives. I guess this means no wrestling on the cover.



DECEMBER 1999

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GR

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GR VOL. 2, ISSUE # 7

GAMERS' REPUBLIC

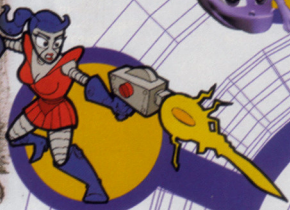
TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE 

A MILLENNIUM PROJECT



MESSIAH .34

Steal bodies, torture people, and cause nuclear meltdowns to bring about humanity's salvation. Shiny never did have a gentle sense of humor. They do, however, have a legacy of innovative design and gameplay. Messiah is proof that they've still got it.



CRASH TEAM RACING .58

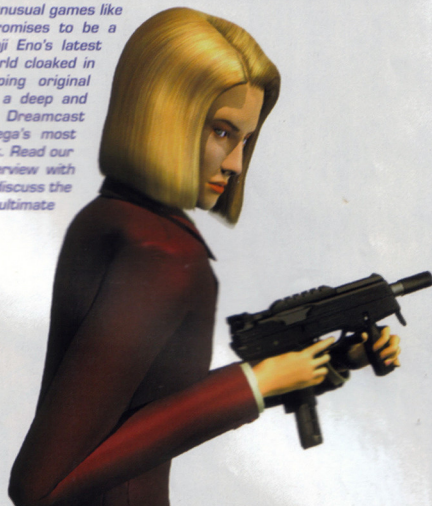
Naughty Dog's kart racer may be the most technically impressive entry the genre has ever seen. The classic Crash cast takes to a vast array of tracks, drawn by one of the most advanced 3D engines on the PlayStation, and powerslide their way to the cup. If you thought there was nothing new to be done with 2-strokes and cartoon characters, read our full review and think again.



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D2 .20

Warp's latest creation, after strikingly unusual games like *Real Sound*, *D*, and *Enemy Zero*, promises to be a triumph of setting and mood. Kenji Eno's latest cinematic adventure creates a world cloaked in white, accented by an enveloping original soundtrack, that plays host to a deep and involving story spanning four Dreamcast discs. This may be one of Sega's most important titles on any continent. Read our full preview, as well as an interview with Eno-san himself, in which we discuss the history, influences, and ultimate goal of the *D2* project.



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LET THE EVOLUTION



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ENTERTAINMENT

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ST/NG

Sega © Dreamcast

BEGIN.

"Evolution is a shining example of Dreamcast's power."

-SegaDreamcast.net

"The Dreamcast handles Evolution's beautiful 3D world with ease, providing visual splendor that...puts Final Fantasy VIII's otherwise amazing aesthetics to shame."

-EGM

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frontlines

311 STEPS UP WITH THE 411 ON DREAMCAST

BEING THAT THE GUYS FROM 311 ARE AVID GAMERS, GAMERS' REPUBLIC WAS GRANTED AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE BAND TO DISCUSS THEIR REACTION TO THE NEW SEGA DREAMCAST. P-NUT (311'S BASS PLAYER), CLEARLY THE MOST HARDCORE GAMER OF THE GROUP, HAD THIS TO SAY...

GR: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING VIDEO GAMES?

311: Probably since I had the coordination to do so. Probably right around six or seven. I think my first system was an Atari.

GR: WHAT ELEMENTS DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A GAME AND WHAT GENRE OF GAMES DO YOU PREFER? WHAT MAKES A GAME AN A TITLE?

311: I like lots of different types of games. I like fighting games. We're literally playing the shit out of Soul Calibur right now. In the front lounge and in the back lounge, with a heavy rotation of players... it's so great! And I like individual games. I'm into solving big puzzles and going through large maps. I like it all.

GR: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DREAMCAST TITLE SO FAR?

311: I guess I'd have to say Soul Calibur. And it's such a great way to kill time.

GR: WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION OF THE NEW SEGA DREAMCAST CONSOLE? WHAT ARE YOUR LIKES AND DISLIKES?

311: It's great. The tight size, it's just a little bit bigger than my hand. It's fantastic. The controls are weighted really nicely. I like the memory card with its visual display. I like all of it. It plays really well and loads incredibly fast for a CD. It's got it goin' on.

We did have load problems with Ready 2 Rumble. It didn't load up properly, so we've never been able to play that one, which is kind of disappointing. Tokyo Xtreme Racer was also pretty difficult to play. I'm sure it gets better and we'd get more out of it if we played it a little bit more, but it's a little bit frustrating on the first try. TNN Motorsports Hardcore Heat is really cool; I like that one a lot. It plays really nice and doesn't make it too hard on the first try... it's more encouraging to play.

GR: WHAT ELEMENTS ARE YOU MOST IMPRESSED WITH (GRAPHICS, CONTROLS, ETC.)?

311: The graphics are amazing.

GR: WE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE MORE MAINSTREAM MUSIC AND SONGS BY POPULAR BANDS USED ON VIDEO GAME SOUNDTRACKS. IS THIS SOMETHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FUTURE?

311: I don't know... Of course, it would have to be the right game. We'd have to be in the project pretty much all the way through. We couldn't just throw something in at the end because someone told us it was cool. We'd have to really know about it. We like using our name in a good way. We'd don't really like throwing it around too much. I'd like to see the game be made from the ground up and I think the rest of the guys would be interested in seeing something like that happen if we were going to be a part of it. It would be a challenge and it'd be fun to do. We've heard so much video game music I know we could write some.

GR: WHAT DO YOU FOR RECREATIONAL FUN BESIDES PLAYING VIDEO GAMES?

311: Most of us—excluding Nick, who's had one for a while—just got DVD players. We're having a lot of fun with that form of entertainment. We just got done watching the making of *Jacob's Ladder* today on the way over here. Watching movies on DVD is great, especially if it's a movie you love, because you can pick it apart and watch the documentary of the making of it.

It's very cool.

GR: BEING MUSICIANS, DOES THAT MAKE FOR EXCELLENT HAND-EYE COORDINATION?

311: I guarantee it... And I promise it makes all of us better drivers too...

GR: CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE INCEPTION OF 311 AND WHEN YOU BEGAN PLAYING TOGETHER?

311: The inception of "311" started with an incident when a friend of mine was skinny-dipping in an Omaha, Nebraska pool hall during the off season. It was probably around this time of the year, and he got sent home naked and handcuffed with a police ticket with the code "311" on it meaning "indecent exposure." When I first proposed it to Nicolas, he asked what we were working with, and I said, "311," and he said, "I love it." It just sounded good, he didn't need to hear the story. But when he did, he liked it. But you know it's not like we're nudists or anything. "311" is just a nice nondescript number that doesn't really say anything about the band. But if you listen to our albums, you'll equate some meaning to it just because we chose it as our number.

GR: WHO ARE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES? FAVORITE BANDS?

311: I'm a big Curtis Mayfield and Parliament fan. I'm a big Tom Waits fan, a big Ween fan. I like all the hits, basically.

GR: IN TERMS OF MUSICAL STYLE, WHERE DO YOU SEE 311 HEADED IN THE FUTURE? DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COME UP WITH NEW MATERIAL?

311: That's something that comes very natural to us, since we've never really been pigeonholed into one particular sound. Whereas we can reinvent ourselves within one album, all the songs are different. It's a very natural thing for us to do because that's the point of the band—to keep the musicians excited about what's going on and the fans feed off of that.

GR: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON MP3? DO YOU WELCOME OR LOATHE THAT INTERNET USERS CAN DOWNLOAD MUSIC, AND HOW DO YOU FEEL THAT THIS WILL AFFECT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

311: I don't know if I could say how it's going to affect it. I can only just guess and I'm sure that's what you meant, but I welcome it. I think it's great. It's just going to make it easier for people all over the world to hear our music. There's a monetary concern coming from the record companies and not really the bands, because the more people that listen to your art and your music the better. It will all come back to you in the end, even if you're not getting a dollar each time someone downloads it. It's not that big a deal. I think record companies are scared because there's competition now for exposure, and they can get to just as many people in the future perhaps than a regular record label can, and with a lot less money. It's all up to the listener, and there's no hype involved. You just sit at home, pay a dollar and instantly download it. It's really handy; it's going to be a cool thing.





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THE AMOA SHOW... YEAH, THEY STILL DO IT...



A

September 23-25, Las Vegas lit up with even more winky-blinky lights than usual, as the Amusement and Music Operators Association showcased the latest in arcade games. Despite arcades' recent economic decline, the technical innovation on display was better than ever.

Sega's F355 Challenge (A) is heading Stateside. Yu Suzuki's three-monitor three-Naomi uber-racer just might be worth the effort it'll take to find; it's the most immersive virtual driving experience ever created. Upcoming Naomi sports titles also look great: Virtual Tennis and World Series '99 both field amazing graphics and tight arcade control. However, we would like to know who came up with Jambol Safari (B), in which your task is to capture big game for research purposes. Sounds just a little disturbing...

Along with a new Beatmania and the mighty Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Mix, Konami displayed Silent Scope (C), an innovative new gun game. Instead of destroying waves of enemies with your trusty handgun, you carefully whack targets with a sniper rifle. Namco (E) continued their light-gun streak with Crisis Zone (F), a higher-caliber followup to Time Crisis, and followed the trend in oddball racers with



B



D



F



C



E



G

Rolling Extreme (D), a land-luge simulation. Capcom continues to find their 3D legs. Their four-player Spawn fighting game (G), reminiscent of Power Stone, features amazing graphics, huge arenas, and cooperative or versus fighting. Nearest to our heart, however, is SNK's Neo Geo shooter Prehistoric Isle 2, half Choplifter and half Cyberlip. Perhaps nothing will top the old favorites... Except perhaps new versions of the old favorites, like Tecmo's DoA 2 (H).

GR HAULS IN THE BIG ONE!



Last month, as part of a contingent of gaming press, Gamers' Republic won the grand prize trophy at a crazy virtual fishing competition weekend sponsored by Agetec/ASCII. The event was held to promote their new PlayStation game Bass Landing and their customized, fishing rod-like controller. The calm and quiet of Northern California's Snug Harbor on the Sacramento Delta was disturbed as Pooch represented GR to the fullest by easily trouncing the group of gaming magazine editors by hauling in a 9.76-lb. bass on his first cast of the hour-long tournament. As part of the winnings, in addition to taking home a three-and-a-half foot tall virtual bass fishing trophy, Pooch was announced as the winner and walked with his prize at the city of Rio Vista's 52nd Annual Parade.



G



H

TH*Q CATCHES AIR, THEN GOES TO THE MATTE...

This October, THQ was Title Sponsor of the Fox Racing U.S. Open motocross circuit to help support their newly released Championship Motocross Featuring Ricky Carmichael game. The indoor event involved a lot of partying, and unfortunately, inhaling mass quantities of two-stroke motorcycle exhaust. Trying to gamble after prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide led to some bad decision making, but hey, it was on them!

During the afternoon hours, after an intel session on THQ's plans for Q4 '99 and 2000, we had an opportunity to talk with the president of Yukes, Mr. Taniguchi. Yukes developed the highly acclaimed Toukon Retsuden wrestling series in Japan and the only Mario-style platformer for the PS, Hermie Hopperhead. Yukes is currently working on WWF Smackdown for T*HQ, and the game will sport a fluid fighting engine and feature hand-drawn animations. The most intriguing aspect of the game is that it will contain adventure/RPG elements in an effort to re-create the backstage mayhem that ensues at the sitcom-like event every week. This one will be huge.

The second announcement, a peculiar one, especially after they dropped Shao Lin, was that the company is developing an Evil Dead game. In fact, a series of Evil Dead games! With the exclusive rights to the classic horror films and full support from Robert Tapert, Sam Raimi and Bruce Campbell, Heavy Iron Studio will produce a survival horror game like no other. Members of the design group include former members of the Parasite Eve team. The first installment, Evil Dead: Ashes 2 Ashes, will use pre-rendered streaming backgrounds together with real-time characters. The trailer and real-time character models look true to the series, although the game isn't due till Q3 2000. Currently slated for PS and PC, a Dreamcast version isn't out of the question. Surprisingly, no Dreamcast title was announced. T*HQ seems to be breaking new ground though, so you never know.



SAKURA PROJECT 2000

After rumor briefly swirled around something called "Sakura Project 2000," Sega has announced all the details, which may mean a much-needed shot in the arm for the Dreamcast in Japan. Sakura Taisen 3, the sequel to Red and Sega's blockbusting Saturn strategy-RPGs, is due to come out on DC in fall 2000, packed onto three GD-ROMs. It will be preceded by enhanced versions of the Saturn Sakura games; Sakura Taisen will come out in the spring (on two discs), and Sakura Taisen 2 in the summer (on three discs). By "enhanced," we mean updated graphics, Jump Pack support, and online data exchange, among other things. The gameplay will also be modified. For example, the Return command from Sakura 2 will be integrated into the original.

These are guaranteed hits in Japan, but this is especially good news for American gamers, since it means another chance at an American release for the first two games, which never made it over here. Sega of America, all eyes are now resting on you. Unfortunately, this news broke just before press time, meaning we couldn't discuss it in detail in our Red Company interview. It explains why they were so cagey about the subject, though.



POKÉMON EXPOSED!

Pokemon responsible for child gambling ring!

A group of concerned parents have organized a class action lawsuit against those child abusers (that's a joke) at Wizards of the Coast, makers of Pokémon trading cards, claiming that the cards promote illegal gambling. Yep, that's the problem with America today, Pokémon Cards! We can all relax now. Their argument is that only by chance can players acquire premium cards that are randomly inserted in packs; therefore, it's obviously gambling. Supposedly (according to the wrapping on the packs) the odds of finding one in a pack are 1 in 33. Is it just us or do all of these people need to get lives? Kyoto, Japan-based Nintendo said that the plaintiff's attorneys have filed similar lawsuits against makers of sports trading cards. "To our knowledge none of these cases has been successful in asserting that collecting trading cards is a form of illegal gambling," Richard Flamm, general counsel at Nintendo's U.S. unit, said in a statement. "We see no reason to expect a different result in this case." For what it's worth Richard we couldn't agree more. Why report such a flagrant story? Hey, it's Pokémon: I got a ton of cash riding on the little critters!





THEY PLAY HARD...

Sega's Mobile Assault tour continues to gain steam as they truck around the country behind the Family Values Tour, which features such notable wailers as Limp Bizkit, Filter and Primus. The night before we closed the issue Filter and Primus played up in San Francisco. Word has it that Filter rocked the house complete with blinding pyrotechnics, but Primus gave a pretty lackluster performance: Wymona's Big Brown Beaver never saw the light of day. Pictured on the right, the Bizkits have at a Dreamcast... hmmm... it's a four player game... We're thinkin' NFL 2K? The crossover between rock and gaming is now in full effect. I wonder if they tell the bus driver to take it slow?



NO SHENMUE FOR YOU!

In a devastating announcement, Sega confirmed that Yu Suzuki's much delayed Shenmue has received yet another setback, with current plans calling for a release next year. Sega is citing bugs and other fixes, but they are naturally reticent to release more specific details. There is even talk of Sega intentionally holding back the release to give them some ammunition with which to combat PS2. Chapter 1 of Shenmue was originally scheduled to ship in October (after a previous delay bumped it from August) and now it seems as if the Japanese launch may occur around the release date for the PS2 (March 4). With a \$40 million budget, you can bet that Sega is anxious to get this thing out on the streets and making money as soon as humanly possible. But if the rumors of an intentional delay are true, then this is a very dangerous game for Sega to be playing.

DC CONQUERS EUROPE

Following in the footsteps of the unexpectedly strong American Dreamcast launch (500,000 units and climbing), over 100,000 DCs were sold during the first 24 hours of the official European release on October 14. This figure was well above the initial numbers for the PS and N64 launches, racking up an estimated \$80 million in sales. Roughly 350,000 pieces of software were sold along with the systems, with Sonic Adventure and Sega Rally 2 topping the list. Though it could never be proven, perhaps the European DC launch was helped along by Sega's rather obtuse jabs at the PlayStation. Ads read "PlayStation: Ads read 14-10-99" (Europeans like to put the day before the month, for those wondering).



MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

Knowing full well that DK 64 is going to sell faster than Coors Beer at a gun show, Nintendo has assembled a special DK edition system/game package deal. You get the wondrous green, glowing N64 and controller, and the DK 64 game, which already comes with a Ram Pak for the low, low price of \$129.99! Where the green comes in, we do not know. Perhaps it's to signify the jungle atmosphere. We were kind of hoping for banana yellow, but that would be fruity. They were going to have DK actually drive the delivery truck, but had to cancel when they discovered he's eaten so many bananas he could no longer fit in the cab.



VISITING THE PRINCESS

Recently, we had an opportunity to attend a roundtable interview with members of the American cast and creative staff of Princess Mononoke, the magnum opus of Japanese master of animation, Hayao Miyazaki, due to hit theatres late this month courtesy of Miramax Films. In attendance were Minnie Driver (Circle of Friends, Tarzan), the voice of Lady Eboshi, Billy Crudup (Without Limits), the voice of hero Prince Ashitaka, and author Neil Gaiman (Sandman), who adapted the translated screenplay.



A frequently-mentioned topic was the film's content, as it's rated PG-13 for some scenes of fairly intense violence. When asked what audience the film was being aimed at, however, Gaiman tartly replied "bipeds." Aside discussions included Driver's rumored engagement (the official line: just a rumor) and the lasagna at Chapel Hill, NC's Ramshead Rathskellar; Crudup (a UNC graduate) concurs that it's some of the most powerful pasta ever created by man. All agreed that Mononoke is a landmark, perhaps the most mature and intelligent animated film yet seen in America, and its translation has been performed with exceptional skill and care.

We'd like to thank Ms. Driver, Mr. Crudup, Mr. Gaiman, and Miramax for giving us an opportunity to hang with the Hollywood cognoscenti. The rest of you out there are commanded to meet Princess Mononoke at your earliest convenience; if you need to be told why, check out our full review in Anime Republic. It opens October 29.

COLOR ME DREAMCAST

So many fantastic colors...are filling the wonderland...

Here is a photograph of the new multi-colored skeleton controllers for the Dreamcast. Each color will be limited to 150,000 units, and will be sold in December for the price of ¥2,500 (about \$23). The color variations are as follows: Aqua-smoke, Aquapink, Aqua-blue, and Aqualime. Aqua-orange will be sold as part of a Limited Edition Package of Sonic Team's upcoming puzzle game, Chu-Chu Rocket.



DAY OF THE DOLPHIN...

On October 18, Japanese electronics giant NEC announced that it had received a ¥300 billion (U.S. \$2.86 billion) order from Nintendo Co., Ltd. to supply graphics chips for the next-generation Dolphin console. NEC will fill the order through a new, ¥60 billion facility in Kyushu, which will begin operations in August 2000 and produce 10,000 eight inch chip wafers a month.

The NEC chips, based on a custom design by AtRx, will be printed on silicon developed using a new 0.13-micron process. Between this and PlayStation 2's Toshiba chips, the games industry appears to be at the center of leading-edge semiconductor development. This news also helps confirm the time frame of Dolphin's release; if NEC will be manufacturing chips next August (around the time of the system's slated Space World debut), finished consoles must follow soon thereafter.

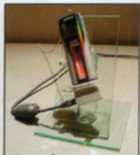
PS2=SET TOP BOX?

As you may know, Sony's next-generation console, PS2, offers formidable power at a fairly reasonable price. But besides its awesome specs, one should realize that the announcement of the PS2 was just the overture for a new form of entertainment being planned by Sony for the new millennium. PS2 is not only for great gameplay, but also for use as a totally integrated home entertainment system connected to a high-speed network.

After the release of PS2 in March next year, Sony will engage in a business called "bit distribution" in 2001. This business will include game and movie distribution and online shopping. All the distribution and transactions are to be done via PS2.

Since the beginning of the year, Sony has been working vigorously on setting up the communication infrastructure by allying themselves with other major companies such as Tokyo Electric Power, Soft Bank, and Microsoft Japan. This move is designed to reduce the expensive communication cost now being manipulated by Nippon Telegraph and Telecommunication. In Japan, there is still no fixed rate for Internet connection because of NTT, and the less the cost of network connection, the more the potential market expansion.

Also, Sony announced that it would begin distributing MP3 music and has licensed its Memory Stick media to six major electronics companies. The data storage device is currently used for saving data from digital video cameras and notebook PCs, but will soon be used as a carrier medium for the upcoming release of a Memory Stick Walkman (right) that will be designed for listening to MP3s. The PS2 can be used to download and store MP3s for transfer to Memory Stick.



DC GAUNTLET LEGENDS

Midway has announced that their 3D hack-and-slash adventure, which has become a powerfully addictive hit in arcades and on other home consoles, will be brought to the Sega Dreamcast sometime in the latter half of next year. The port has been rumored for some time, and indeed many were puzzled by the lack of an announcement, considering Midway's many other ports from their 3DFX-powered arcade hardware to the DC. However, the delay now appears to have been explained. The Dreamcast version of Legends will apparently include new features from a potential arcade sequel, making it a sort of bridge between the two. When asked about a DC version of Legends some time ago, Midway representatives also strongly hinted at the possibility of network options being included. Sega's online strategy has floundered somewhat since then, but there's always hope. Multiplayer Gauntlet online would potentially be serious fun.



SONY CO-FOUNDER DIES

Sony Corporation co-founder and Honorary Chairman Akio Morita died on the morning of October 3, 1999 at the Tokyo Saisei Central Hospital from complications arising from pneumonia. He was 78.

Along with his partner, Masaru Ibuka, Akio Morita started the Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo KK (The Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corporation) in an abandoned department store 1946. Even with their limited resources, they created Japan's first tape recorder. It was a big and bulky thing not really fit for consumption, and it wasn't until the duo received a license from Bell Labs to build transistors that the company began to take off. This development led to Ibuka's idea to sell small transistorized radios in the U.S. market. Obviously, they knew they couldn't sell a product in the States under a name like Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo, so in 1958, they adopted the name "Sony," which was a combination of the Latin root for sound "sonnus" and "Sonny," a friendly sounding American word. The rest as they say, was history.

Sony quickly grew as a company, and it was Akio Morita himself who came up with the idea for a high quality portable cassette player, allowing people for the first time to listen to music while being active and away from the home. This device, of course, was the Walkman, and it would be Sony's single most successful product until the launch of the PlayStation.

Akio Morita became somewhat of a legendary figure in Japan, known for his highly developed sense of communication and love of innovation. It was said that he had a large room in his home that was actually the inside chamber of a massive speaker, a giant woofer forming the ceiling. He was a creative, visionary man, and his influence on the consumer electronics industry will be felt far into the next century.

Sony Corporation president and CEO Nobuyuki Idei released this statement: "I feel a great sense of sorrow and grief at the passing away of Akio Morita. Having been reared by Mr. Ibuka and Mr. Morita ever since joining Sony, I always viewed Morita-san as my hero. In addition, he considered it his life's work to promote a better mutual understanding between Japan and the rest of the world. He strove for the realization of a fair society for companies to compete in. It is not an exaggeration to say that he was the 'face of Japan.'" And let's not forget: Without Mr. Morita, there would have been no PlayStation.





MONTHLY CHARTS PROVIDED BY
NPD DATA TRACKING SERVICES

database

YOUR NUMBER ONE SOURCE FOR TOP SELLING CONSOLE AND COMPUTER GAME STATISTICS



top ten selling playstation titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1999



- | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. FINAL FANTASY VIII | SQUARE EA | 6. SPYRO THE DRAGON | SONY |
| 2. MADDEN NFL 2000 | EA | 7. WWF ATTITUDE | ACCLAIM |
| 3. GRAN TURISMO | SONY | 8. CRASH BANDICOOT WARPED | SONY |
| 4. DRIVER | GT INTERACTIVE | 9. SW: The Phantom Menace | LUCASARTS |
| 5. NFL GAMEDAY 2000 | 989 | 10. FINAL FANTASY VII | SONY |

top ten selling nintendo64 titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1999

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| 1. POKEMON SNAP | NINTENDO | 6. MARIO GOLF | NINTENDO |
| 2. WWF ATTITUDE | ACCLAIM | 7. NFL BLITZ 2000 | EA |
| 3. MADDEN NFL 2000 | EA | 8. GOLDENEYE 007 | NINTENDO |
| 4. SUPER SMASH BROS | NINTENDO | 9. WCW MAYHEM | EA |
| 5. ZELDA: OoT | NINTENDO | 10. SUPER MARIO 64 | NINTENDO |



top ten selling dreamcast titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1999



- | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|---------------------|------------|
| 1. NFL 2K | SEGA | 6. BLUE STINGER | ACTIVISION |
| 2. SONIC ADVENTURE | SEGA | 7. HYDRO THUNDER | MIDWAY |
| 3. SOUL CALIBUR | NAMCO | 8. NFL BLITZ 2000 | MIDWAY |
| 4. READY 2 RUMBLE | MIDWAY | 9. POWER STONE | CAPCOM |
| 5. HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | SEGA | 10. AIR FORCE DELTA | KONAMI |

top ten selling pc titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1999

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. C&C: Tiberian Sun | WESTWOOD | 6. AGE OF EMPIRES 2 | MICROSOFT |
| 2. MADDEN NFL 2000 | EA | 7. HALF-LIFE | SIERRA |
| 3. RAINBOW 6: Rogue Spear | RED STORM | 8. BIG GAME HUNTER 2 | HEADGAMES |
| 4. RAINBOW 6: Gold Pack | RED STORM | 9. SIMCITY 3000 | MAXIS |
| 5. ROLLER COASTER TYCOON | HASBRO | 10. NEED FOR SPEED 3 | EA |



top ten overall console

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1999

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------|
| 1. FINAL FANTASY VIII-PS | SQUARE EA | 6. SONIC ADVENTURE-DC | SEGA |
| 2. MADDEN NFL 2000-PS | EA | 7. POKEMON PINBALL-GB | NINTENDO |
| 3. POKEMON RED-GB | NINTENDO | 8. GRAN TURISMO-PS | SONY |
| 4. POKEMON BLUE-GB | NINTENDO | 9. SOUL CALIBUR-DC | NAMCO |
| 5. NFL 2K-DC | SEGA | 10. POKEMON SNAP-N64 | NINTENDO |



world republic top ten games



japan

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. DERBY STALLION '99 PS | 7. WORLD SOCCER Jikkyou Winning Eleven 4 PS |
| 2. BIOHAZARD 3: Last Escape PS | 8. DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION 2nd Remix PS |
| 3. LET'S MAKE A J-LEAGUE PRO SOCCER CLUB DC | 9. SUPER ROBOT TAISEN LINK BATTLE DC |
| 4. DRAGON QUEST 1 & 2 GB | 10. ACCOMP. ANYWHERE PS |
| 5. BLACK MATRIX A/D DC | |
| 6. DRAGON QUEST CHARS.: Toruneko's Big Adventure 2 PS | |

* FROM SEP 28 - OCT 23 1999

united kingdom

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. SW EP 1: Phan. Menace PS/PC | 6. POKÉMON RED GB |
| 2. LMA MANAGER PS | 7. SOUTH PARK PS/N64/PC |
| 3. T HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING PS | 8. QUAKE II PS/N64/PC |
| 4. POKÉMON BLUE GB | 9. C&C: Tiberian Sun PC |
| 5. DRIVER PS | 10. TEKKEN 3 PS |

*WEEK OF 10/9/99

gamers' republic top ten games

* BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH OCTOBER 17, 1999



d. halverson



1. JET FORCE GEMINI N64
2. TOMBA! 2 PS
3. DONKEY KONG 64 N64
4. DEWPRISM PS
5. EARTHWORM JIM 3D N64
6. SUZUKI ALSTARE DC
7. SUPERCROSS CIRCUIT PS
8. ROBBIT MON DIEU PS
9. CLIMAX LANDERS DC
10. EVOLUTION DC



b. siechter



1. RESIDENT EVIL 3 PS
2. SPYRO 2 PS
3. CRASH TEAM RACING PS
4. DONKEY KONG 64 N64
5. VANDAL HEARTS 2 PS
6. TOY COMMANDER DC
7. NBA SHOWTIME DC
8. LOADED PS
9. LOMAX PS
10. STREET FIGHTER Zero 3 DC



m. hobbs



1. DEWPRISM import PS
2. JET FORCE GEMINI N64
3. BIOHAZARD 3 import PS
4. BANGAIO import N64
5. ROBBIT MON DIEU import PS
6. MARIO GOLF GBC
7. KLONOA WONDERSWAN
8. D2 DC
9. BALLISTIC PS
10. SPACE ACE DVD



t. stratton



1. MAJOR HAVOC ARCADE
2. NFL 2K DC
3. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER PS
4. GRAN TURISMO PS
5. JEOPARDY NES
6. CASTLE OF ILLUSION SG
7. MARIO GOLF N64
8. FIFA 2000 PS
9. SILENT HILL PS
10. TEN PIN ALLEY PS



pooch



1. ROCKET N64
2. JET FORCE GEMINI N64
3. NFL 2K DC
4. T HAWK PRO SKATER PS
5. SUPER METROID SNES
6. WARIOLAND 2 GBC
7. GOLDENEYE 007 N64
8. MARIO GOLF N64
9. LoZ: Link's Awakening GBC
10. C&C: Tib. Sun PC



e. sear



1. POKÉMON BLUE GBC
2. BIOMOTOR UNITRON NGPC
3. MARIO GOLF GBC
4. NEO TURF MASTERS NGPC
5. CRASH TEAM RACING PS
6. QUAKE 3 MAC
7. X-FILES PS
8. GRAN TURISMO PS
9. DONKEY KONG LAND 2 GB
10. DONKEY KONG 64 N64



j. r. haugen



1. JET FORCE GEMINI N64
2. FINAL FANTASY VIII PS
3. DONKEY KONG 64 N64
4. S STATION SILICON VALLEY N64
5. BANJO-KAZOOIE N64
6. AGE OF EMPIRES 2 PC
7. APE ESCAPE PS
8. PITBALL PS
9. BEETLE ADV. RACING N64
10. ESCAPE FROM DEVIL'S DOOM LCD HANDHELD



d. smith



1. GRAN TURISMO 2 PS
2. QUAKE 3 PC
3. DANCE DANCE REV 2 rm PS
4. DEAD OR ALIVE 2 ARCADE
5. SOUL CALIBUR DC
6. TOP SKATER ARCADE
7. FF ANTHOLOGY PS
8. CRAZY TAXI ARCADE
9. MIDWAY ARCADE PAK PS
10. HIDDENWORLDS MERC DIKU MUD ONLINE

A Closer Look at the PlayStation 2

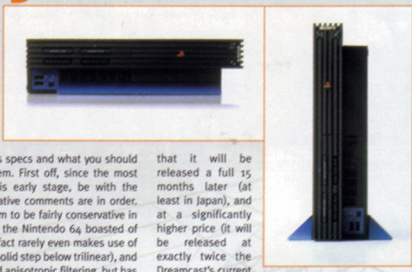
Now that the price and date of the PlayStation 2 have been announced, and some of its games have been shown at the Fall Tokyo Game Show, it only makes sense to go into a little more depth on its specs and what you should actually expect from them. First off, since the most comparisons will, at this early stage, be with the Dreamcast, a few qualitative comments are in order. Sony's official specs seem to be fairly conservative in terms of features. While the Nintendo 64 boasted of trilinear filtering, and in fact rarely even makes use of mipmapping (which is a solid step below trilinear), and the Dreamcast advertised anisotropic filtering, but has rarely (if ever) even used trilinear filtering thus far, Sony seems to be content with a less ambitious list of graphical effects. The only ones likely to raise any eyebrows at all are anti-aliasing and bump mapping, two other features which were also listed for the Dreamcast but have been extremely elusive. The optimistic interpretation of this is that the PlayStation 2 specs only include effects we'll end up really seeing a lot of; the cynical interpretation is that it will end up employing fewer graphical effects than the Dreamcast. As past experience has shown too clearly, only time and look-

ing at will be released a full 15 months later (at least in Japan), and at a significantly higher price (it will be released at exactly twice the Dreamcast's current price, and around \$300 more than its original price). From a market perspective (which I try to avoid thinking about whenever possible), there's no question that the PlayStation 2 will be viewed as much superior hardware, and the Dreamcast will have to build its market through its much earlier availability, lower price, and Sega-exclusive games.

But enough with the meaningless comparisons. Let's talk about what the PlayStation 2 has to offer. The first feature I'd like to focus on, which ties in with the polygon features, and should make for some incredi-

less of whether it's up close or far away; you could imagine that a face might need 1000 polygons to look good up close, but then when that person is far away, all that detail wouldn't be visible at all. One way around this is to store different versions of each model at different detail levels (and indeed various Dreamcast games, including NFL2K and Tekno Xtreme Racer, make good use of this). However, this is far from perfect, and can take up a lot of memory to do well. A well-implemented curved-surface engine could always generate exactly the right number of polygons depending on how close an object is, so that at least in theory, 16 million polygons generated on the fly can look a lot better than 25 million drawn from fixed models. The main problem is how much CPU power this takes up, and only time will tell whether PS2 developers will find it worthwhile to use curved surfaces in games.

Another major feature of the PlayStation 2 is its backwards compatibility. How much of an effect it will have on the consumer end remains controversial, but from a technical standpoint, it's very straightforward. Basically, the PlayStation hardware has been included as part of the PlayStation 2 (more precisely, as its I/O processor, the part which handles all data coming in and going out). This means that it can run PlayStation games just like a regular PlayStation: pop in a PlayStation CD and play. The downside is that you don't get any benefits from playing it on the PlayStation 2, as the graphics won't take advantage of any of the additional horsepower in the rest of the system. Loosely speaking, this is the downside of not doing emulation, which is when one system's code is translated into a different system's code (for instance, to play PlayStation games on the PC). In emulation, there is the option of introducing improvements like texture filtering when the commands are translated from one system to another. However, when you simply copy the original hardware, this isn't an option, and you're stuck with all the flaws of the older hardware. This is why the value of the



TECHFRONT

BY BRIAN OBERMAN

ing at final products can settle this question.

However, in terms of sheer numbers, the PlayStation 2 looks set to blow away existing consoles, boasting of 25 million polygons per second with full effects (as compared to about 3 million for the Dreamcast). While this may sound like a huge difference, and indeed should make for great graphics, it will not necessarily be the miraculous leap that it may sound. How big a difference it will make will depend a lot on how developers choose to use it, but one probably shouldn't expect the same jump between the Dreamcast and PlayStation 2 as there was between the PlayStation and Dreamcast (each does about 10 times as many polygons as the previous one, but the Dreamcast was adding high resolution, texture filtering, and perspective correction, while the PlayStation 2 has to rely on more polygons alone). I don't want to give the wrong impression here: there's no doubt that the graphics will be great, and a really solid improvement over the Dreamcast's; in fact, this is only to be expected, given

bly smooth models, is curved surface rendering. Although there are lots of different ways this can be done, the PlayStation 2's use of it will be particularly sensible, given its architecture. The CPU (the Emotion Engine) takes curved models, breaks them up into polygons, and sends them to the graphics processor to be drawn normally. You may have noticed that it can only handle 16 million polygons per second when rendering curved surfaces, and wondered why anyone would want to do that, since the entire point is to make the graphics smoother. Theoretically, the answer is a very elegant one: when using standard polygon models, you waste a lot of polygons, because each model has the same amount of detail regard-

backwards compatibility is a little controversial; if it offered enhanced PlayStation compatibility, with high resolution and texture filtering (like the PC-based PlayStation emulator bleem! does), everyone would immediately agree that it would be a big motivating factor in buying a PlayStation 2. But as it is, it really just gives current PlayStation owners the luxury of having one less TV connection; how much this matters to them remains to be seen. While we're on the subject of

the I/O processor, the PlayStation 2 incorporates an unprecedented selection of ports, most notably a USB port and an IEEE 1394 (FireWire) port. These can provide extremely high speed port connections that are quickly becoming more and more common. Sony trumpets that they can be used for connecting to VCRs, digital cameras, printers, and other peripherals, and it is certainly true

CONTINUED ON PAGE 140 •



THE KING OF FIGHTERS

DREAM MATCH 1999



In Your Dreams!

The arcade fighting legends are here on King of Fighters Dream Match 1999 for the SEGA Dreamcast™ System. 38 of your favorite fighters on 6 different game modes come together for the battle royale. Link up with the NEOGEO Pocket Color to upload and download information. The game that kings dream of.



Sega
Dreamcast

SNK



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Welcome to the bleak existence of D2, Warp's world of cinematic adventure and horror

It's Christmas, 1999, and Laura, the timid young lady first seen in the PlayStation and Saturn cult hit *D*, is on a jet plane flying over the Canadian border. In the front of the plane, a mysterious figure chants intensely over a glowing orb. In the seat in front of Laura, a playful little girl peaks her head out, clutching a teddy bear and warmly smiling. As a steward passes by Laura, a gruff-looking man pulls out an automatic weapon and sends a bullet through the back of steward's skull. He crumples to the ground, blood oozing from the exit wound.

The shrouded figure continues to chant.

The chaos continues, and outside, a meteor rockets towards the earth, sending shock waves that pierce the plane and send it plummeting into the mountains below.

Blackness.

Laura awakens in a cabin. A fellow survivor from the crash sits next to a burning fireplace.

So ends the intriguing CG setup to *D2*, a cinematic horror game from the mind of Warp's Kenji Eno, creator of the atmospheric *D*, *Real Sound* and *Enemy Zero*. Because *D2* is largely focused on story and discovery, the opening sequence is not simply an extraneous embellishment; it lays a necessary foundation to the start of the game.

But this only the beginning. Questions soon intensify as the scene in the cabin segues to real-time, focusing on one of the

terrorists from the plane who has wandered in from the frigid cold. The stranger grasps his throat, convulsing as tentacles protrude from his body, and his chest bursts as a pod explodes outward. One of the tentacles violently wraps around Laura's companion, moving up to her face and thrusting down her throat. Eventually the monster flees, bending its tentacles into legs, crawling across the ceiling and out into the snow. It's a graphic moment, but certainly one of creative energy; the game wants you fully in its dark grasp.

All the monsters in *D2* are of human origin, grossly mutated into some aberrant form. There is a variety of enemies, which are derived from four basic types: the two-legged, which walk upright; four-legged, which move with the quickness of an animal; the miners, which emerge from the ground; and winged, which, of course, can fly. When not popping up during major events in the story, the monsters are randomly encountered, placing Laura in a first-person battle perspective, where a cross hairs pops up with which to target



Dの食卓2

D2 ©1999 WARP
1010 1010 1010





00100 empty

00101 T 123

00102 T 602

00103 B 120

now it has awakened

00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14

something abominable stirs beneath the frozen canadian land...





Step into Kenji Eno's vision of blanketed whiteness. The cosmos, the Earth, the inner human being - the space of D2

the enemy. Normally attacking in packs, the enemies are intended to draw a measured level of strategy from your attack patterns, and most enemies also have soft spots to take advantage of. While Laura begins the adventure with only a pistol, she'll eventually locate an Uzi, assault rifle, shotgun and grenades, and the skill with which she uses her weapons and the damage she can take will increase with experience points.

While the game has

its share of action, D2 is heavily driven by story, with over three hours of real-time cinematics that unfold events and introduce the game's 25 distinct characters—each offering some answer to the mysteries shrouding the game. When you meet someone new or engage in conversation, simply watching the camera capture the moment is enjoyable in itself. Warp is intent on charging D2 with an involving visual dynamic by framing even simple movements, like walking into a room, from several angles. And during the cinema scenes, the camera is nearly always in motion, building an exceptionally strong visual style.

The emphasis on atmosphere in D2 is imperative to its effect. The game is able to build an encompassing sense of cold and bleakness, both inside shelter and out in the elements. An exceptional attention to detail feeds the mood.

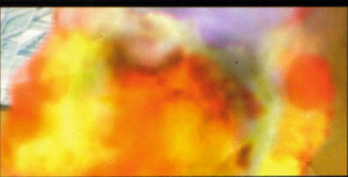
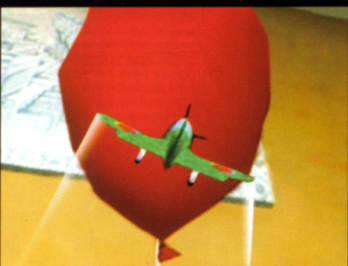
For example, in the outside, sheets of snow blow across the frozen ground; icicles hang from the roofs; snow-covered branches move in the wind. Inside a cabin, ash floats out of a fireplace; frost has formed on windowpanes; kettles, pots and pans are strewn about; the wood looks amazingly real, with knots and varying shades of texture. With the support of Kenji Eno's spare and unusually extensive score, you feel like you're actually deep in the Canadian wilderness, stranded, separated from civilization.

It's important to appreciate the ambience of the D2 experience, in order to fully enjoy the game. The presence of a flock of birds moving in the far off or a rabbit hopping behind a tree may seem slight, but even the most minute details complete an experience. Kenji Eno and the team at Warp have embraced this attitude. If Warp's sense for strong story and gameplay is as keen as its grasp of cinematics, D2 will undoubtedly be the one game the Dreamcast desperately needs. ☼



something abominable stirs beneath





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An interview with the creator of D2, Kenji Eno

HOW WOULD YOU CATEGORIZE D2? IS IT ACTION, HORROR, ADVENTURE?

The game consists of action [elements] with gun shooting as a battle game, an action type movement, and also puzzle solving. You can ride a snow mobile, too! So it is hard to describe this game in one word. Maybe the atmosphere is action/adventure. Each of these factors is connected in a large-scale D2 universe.

HOW LONG AGO DID PRODUCTION BEGIN? DIDN'T YOU ORIGINALLY PLAN TO HAVE THE GAME ON THE M2?

We've been working on this for about two years. D2 for M2 and D2 for Dreamcast are totally different. In the initial stage of Dreamcast development, since we aimed to release simultaneously with the Dreamcast launch, it was the same as the M2 version. But I just changed my mind to create a different game. I have changed the setting and game contents too. Also, the final version of D2 is different from what we first had planned; I am very glad that with the Dreamcast's capabilities, D2 turned out to be like this.

IS THE GAME A DIRECT CONTINUATION OF D? WHAT SORT OF TIES DOES THE GAME HAVE TO THE ORIGINAL?

No, it has no relationship. I named the game D2 to bring myself back to how I felt when I created D. But most of the reasons come from the game's atmosphere. I thought that if I named it D2, it would maintain the flavor of the original. Also, the same programmer who worked on D was part of the D2 team. There are other reasons. But the story is not related.

IS YOUR INTENTION TO STRIKE FEAR INTO THE PLAYER?

Evoking fear is one of the means to eventually communicate my message. I am just using this expression to generate "live" and "faithful" effects. Violence occurs everyday, everywhere. People bleed when they are cut. We bleed when we fight and punch each other. Women bleed when they deliver, and I see fish bleed when I cut them in my breakfast. Lives, death, love, pain, happiness, bliss, anger...I just want to express these things. If the blood is necessary to express them, I do use it.

YOU'RE COMPOSING THE MUSIC FOR THE GAME, CORRECT?

Yes. The last composition I made in this large scale game was "D's Dining Table." I have decided to do it myself since the previous composer should also do the music for the sequel to D. In D2, there are computer-oriented sounds such as techno and house, and there is also orchestrated music. I haven't tried orchestra for a while, so it was really difficult to remember the know-how of composing.

WHAT SORT OF MOOD DO YOU WANT TO CREATE?

The main concept is to make player feel as if they were in the snowy mountains. I hope that they will think, I was really in a snowy mountain, or I want to go back to that universe. Also, it will be great if they can feel the history of Earth and mankind.

HOW DO YOU PREPARE YOURSELF TO EVOKE THE PROPER MOOD WHEN COMPOSING THE GAME'S MUSIC?

I listen to my favorite music at the studio, so that I can feel a good vibration for about half an hour. If I am in the studio, I listen to them at high volume. This makes me shift from being a game creator to a musician. Also, I bring a new machine once or twice, and I always take a Starbucks coffee with me.

DO YOU CONSIDER THE GAME A CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE? IS ATMOSPHERE AS IMPORTANT AS GAMEPLAY?

It depends. But I think the atmosphere is really important. Especially recently, the graphic performance is improved and it becomes possible to realize real sounds. Being real is important, but the atmosphere will also become important as well. The same thing can be said for art, music, photographs and movies.

THE GAME SEEMS INFLUENCED BY JOHN CARPENTER'S THE THING. ARE YOU INSPIRED BY AMERICAN MOVIES?

Some people told me that, and then I realized, I like Carpenter, so I'm glad to hear that. Maybe, yes, I am influenced by this movie. But I question this assertion if you simply say, "Since there are monsters in the snowy mountains, D2 resembles 'The

Dの食卓2

D2 ©1999 WARP

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CLIMAX LANDERS

BY DAVE HALVERSON

The first RPG from Sega in the Dreamcast arsenal... Climax has brought a few friends along...

Climax, the celebrated Sega developer responsible for such shining memories as *Shining in the Darkness*, *Shining the Holy Ark* and the *Shining Force* series, will soon bestow upon the U.S. Dreamcast the first RPG to feature their celebrated character designs and special touches. Those familiar with Climax' brand of role playing are no doubt thrilled that *Landers* is headed our way Q1 2000, and while I'm not here to rain on anyone's parade, I do have a little bad news. In the first place, *Landers* is a random dungeon RPG, so right off, you can expect repetitive textures throughout each dungeon along with little to no shifts in the terrain. Not the worst thing that's ever happened, random dungeon games can be very good, and this one certainly has many good points. The music for one thing is fantastic and the battle scenarios are carried out in a simplistic but very satisfying way. On the negative side, however, some of the models in *Landers* are inexcusably simplistic looking. While the main characters look okay, the inhabitants of the mysterious floating land look like they were yanked right out of *FFVII*. Perhaps *Landers* got underway so early that Climax just didn't have the right tools for

the job, or maybe they view these characters as having little importance in the grand scheme of things. The game does after all revolve around the Climax universe. You begin as *Sword*, but beyond the introductions and first two dungeons you begin to meet and play as all of your favorite Climax characters. This is where Climax *Landers* begins to shine. Rao and Ryle join the adventure early on, and Marion and Marlon aren't far behind. What will ultimately save this game will be the dialogue, soundtrack, and way in which the game evolves. I've only cleared a few dungeons, and am already very impressed with the enemy AI, bosses, and the way the environments expand as you progress in the story. I'm not thrilled that attributes gained in each dungeon are stripped away at their conclusion, but I trust Climax has a grand plan for the game's overall appeal. Of course no final judgement can be made on *Climax Landers* until the localized version has been played all the way through, which hopefully Sega is hard at work perfecting. With *Shenmue* delayed, they certainly need to get *Landers* out the door ASAP to quench the thirst of what is surely a large Dreamcast RPG demographic. **f**



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DETONATOR GEAR

BY RYAN LOCHART



At first glance one has to wonder why Working Designs is even bothering to bring out *Detonator Gear*. It has pretty simplistic graphics, music that harks back to the 16-bit days, strikingly average gameplay, and most importantly, this title seemingly lacks the charm associated with most Working Designs releases. That is, of course, until you get into the storyline.

With both *Vastel* and *Dragon Force* under their belt, Working Designs certainly aren't strangers to strategy RPGs, but none of their titles have quite the impact *Detonator Gear* has, at least in the storyline department. Let's face it, a game that looks this out of date better have a good tale to back it up, which is something *Detonator Gear* has in spades.

Taking the role of a young boy traveling through a war-torn land, you and your mech-wielding friends must reunite a scattered kingdom to face a powerful (and quite evil) general bent on world conquest. Throw in some nice plot twists, strong character development, and the always cool "technology and mythology combined" backdrop, and you've got a mundane-looking title wrapped around a killer tale.

With gameplay similar to what you'd find in *Final Fantasy Tactics* or the *Shining Force* series, *Detonator Gear* has you moving single characters around a rotatable 3D map in a turn-based fashion. You pick your move, the enemy makes his, and so on and so forth until you meet, and then fight. The camera zooms in once combat begins, giving you an up-close look at two mechs punching each other (think of *Xenogears* the strategy game), then pulls back out for the movement phase. You'll battle through over 60 missions, fight against over 30 different types of mechs, and upon completion enjoy at least one of five different endings—impressive stats for any strategy game.

We'll give *Detonator Gear* a full playout for next month's review; hopefully the storyline will keep strong throughout the experience. If it does, Working Designs could have another winner in their lineup. **B**

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RPG of 1999

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So, if you think that passing on the "Ghaleon Experience" has something to do with floating Spanish doo-dads, you're definitely missing the boat. In that case, about all we can offer you by way of consolation is "Ignorance is Bliss. Keep your damned tainted burger-emporium-earned money, you freaking spaz. You're not worthy. And don't count on your momma savin' your sorry butt with her awesome foresight, 'cuz she already spent the family dough on wunder bread and kool-aid. Bon Appetit!"

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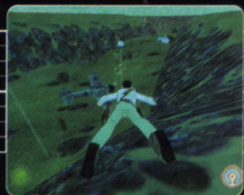


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INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

BY J. R. HAUGEN



The original tomb raider returns in an epic action adventure, attempting to save the Western world from Communist domination

A third-person action-adventure with a tough-as-nails protagonist, a bevy of exotic locations, and a bountiful arsenal, all in search of a mysterious ancient artifact—must be another installment of Tomb Raider, right? Nope, this guy's got a whip and fedora, and probably taught Lara Croft all her moves. The king of action-adventure is about to reclaim his throne. He may not be back in theaters just yet, but very soon Indiana Jones will swashbuckle his way onto your PC.

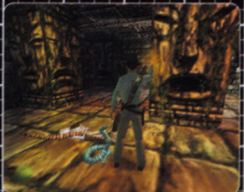
Unlike most great Indiana Jones adventures, however, this time he takes on not the diabolic machinations of the Nazi regime, but instead post-World War II Communist Russia. Set in 1947, the Cold War is in its infancy and the Soviets, led by the sinister-sounding Genadi Volodnikov, are hunting for the legendary Tower of Babel, whose secrets will supposedly open a gate to an alternate dimension called the Aetherium. Far be it from our favorite archaeologist to let this one slip by, so Indy's off to the ends of the earth to stop them.

Naturally, the pieces to this so-called infernal machine are scattered all around the world, and it is Indy's task to track them down before the bad guys do. The game will take you from such scenic locales as the ruins of Babylon to the Tian Shan mountains in Kazakhstan to the ancient Aztec pyramids in Teotihuacan, all in 3D-accelerated splendor.

The gameplay will be quite familiar to Tomb Raider veterans, as it focuses on exploring vast temples and

dungeons, solving puzzles and, of course, shooting dead whatever happens to get in the way. There are also several vehicle sequences putting you in control of rafts and jeeps, as well as the fan-favorite mine-car ride. As expected, you'll be cracking Indy's trusty whip, as well as playing with big guns and explosives, along with the token repertoire of running, jumping, swimming, and swinging. The game will also feature multiplayer modes, but we are still unclear as to how that's going to work.

Welcome the triumphant return of the first classic action hero this winter. ☺



Short Round may not have made it into this game, but it looks like it will capture the essence of the classic trilogy nonetheless.



MESSIAH

BY DAN JEVONS

In a dystopian society, the only savior is an angel named Bob. Not your typical messenger from God, he enjoys possessing people and sending them to a sadistic end

A long, long time ago—March '97—I paid a visit to Shiny to take a look at Messiah, the second PC project (after MDK) from the impossibly tall Dave Perry and his partners in code. The game concept was typically cool for a Shiny game, but what really interested me was the technology. Messiah was to use an innovative level of detail system called RT-DAT (Real Time Deformation and Tessellation) that dynamically added and subtracted polygons from a character model seamlessly per frame—not to mention a portal system designed to eliminate loading between the game's many levels by constantly streaming data off the hard drive. Messiah was technically years ahead of its time, and I awaited its release with baited breath.

That was close to three years ago. Since then, not only has the basic concept been done by other games (i.e. Requiem: Avenging Angel), but so has the technology. Dynamic level of detail, single skin textures, skeletal animation, portal systems—all watchwords of today's prolific PC engines. Worse still, Shiny's only significant release in the past two years was the disappointing Wild 9, another game that took too damn long to come out and missed its window of opportunity. I have to admit that when I sat down

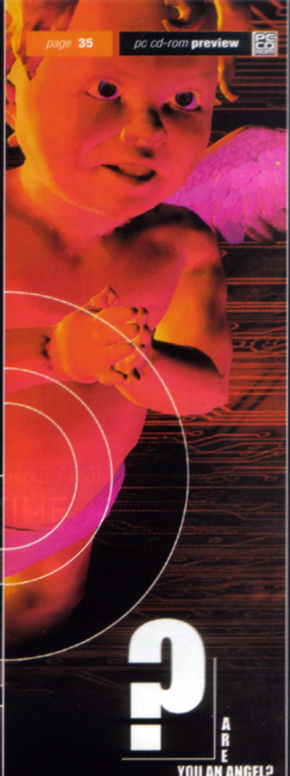




to play this preview version of Messiah I prepared for the worst. Within minutes my pessimistic preconceived notions were shattered.

First of all, Messiah still looks good. The Saxis-engine (named after lead programmer Michael "Saxis" Persson) may not be the holy grail of game development that Shiny would have us believe, but it definitely gets the job done. There are numerous flaws to RT-DAT, such as the bubbling effect on character's skin caused by frame-to-frame poly count fluctuations, and the game gets very choppy as you cross through portals (something Shiny claims will be fixed in the final). However, overall the engine succeeds admirably in rendering a diverse range of dystopian futuristic environments populated by a freak show of detailed and well-animated characters, all running at a (mostly) consistent frame rate. Messiah may not be the visual extravaganza that it was three years ago (watch out for the cheesiest blood effect since *Mortal Kombat*), but it still looks reasonably impressive.

Thankfully, the premise is as cool as ever. Most of you are probably familiar with the story



YOU AN ANGEL?

already, so I'll make this quick: It's the future, and Earth is going to hell in a hand basket, literally. The police force is fascistic and corrupt, crime is rampant and hope among the everyday population is dying. God is none too pleased with the direction the planet is taking and sends his toughest and smartest angel, a chubby cherub named Bob, down to earth to right some wrongs. On Earth Bob is mortal, and the only divine power he retains (aside from a weak pair of wings) is the ability to possess other humans by leaping into their backs. Now it's up to you to control Bob as he hops between humans on a mission from God to prevent a premature apocalypse.

On the surface Messiah plays a lot like MDK. Control is very similar (right down to the optional first-person sniper mode), and the game retains the same streamlined console sensibilities that Shiny brought to MDK. The real innovation here is the possession mechanic. In his natural angelic form, most NPCs take a spectacularly fatal disliking to Bob, and since Bob cannot use any weapons himself, it's often necessary to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 141 •



MDK 2

BY DAVE HALVERSON

With Shenmue delayed for quite some time, and as a result, only one first-party Dreamcast game on the horizon for us to really sink our teeth into, D2, MDK 2 has become a game of vast importance. With Rayman 2, Furballs, and Shadowman all slated for 2000, aside from the usual arcade fare, only MDK 2 and Toy Commander stand between here and Christmas in terms of games of vast depth for the new console. Under the care of BioWare, the team responsible for last year's PC RPG of the year, Baldur's Gate, MDK 2 is an original sequel being designed exclusively for the Dreamcast and PC. 1998's console model, a high powered PC game shoehorned into the PlayStation, had its share of miscues, most notably a lack of connectivity between Kurt's animation (or lack of it) and the environments he so vehemently sniped on. Early reports from the front lines have it that not only are those flaws distant memories, but that MDK 2 looks absolutely stunning, standing as one of the best-looking Dreamcast games in development. With the addition of Dr. Fluke Hawkins and one of his sick creations, Max (a six-legged dog that packs an Uzi) as playable characters, one thing's for sure, MDK 2 is definitely not going to be a rehash.



Any dog that can fire four weapons and smoke a cigar at the same time is okay in my book. Combined with an even higher level of stealth gameplay, featuring limited control to dodge attacks while in stealth mode, plus all the twisted humor and stellar AI that made Shiny's PC original such a grand event, MDK 2 is in position to rank among the year's best action/adventure games. A tall order in the wake of Jet Force, TR 4, and RE 3 for sure, but with the Dreamcast's added horsepower, BioWare has definitely got a leg up on the competition. Hell, if you count the dog, they've got some extras left over. f





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NBA 2K

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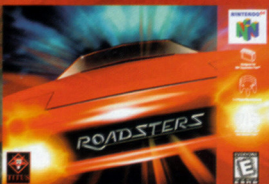


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TOMBA! 2

BY DAVE HALVERSON



Whoopee Camp's pink-haired pig-tossin' wild man goes polygonal. All new for 2000, Tomba! is ready for his curtain call

Traditionally, and for obvious reasons, the best games for a given console have always surfaced within the hardware's last two years of viability, providing closure while cementing our love affair and lasting memories of the era gone by. One of 2000's early arrivals, Tomba! 2 The Evil Swine Return, will surely fall into this lofty category as one of the best ever for the console, joining Medevil 2 and the rest of the class of 2000.

The original Tomba! fought feverishly to escape its own marketing miscues and was received well, but never hit big as a result of the campaign, which promoted the game as an action game for kids. Brought to us by the ex-Capcom mastermind responsible for Mega Man

Breath of Fire and Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Tomba! was anything but a kiddie game; Tomba! 2 is even less so. A hybrid containing equal parts platforming, puzzle solving, role playing, and deep exploration, Tomba! 2 would be played by kids 6-11 until they're 14. Bad campaign. Tomba! and Tomba! 2, like all of Mizaki's games, were created for serious gamers of all ages, and hopefully, Sony will get that message across with this amazing sequel and land this franchise the respect it deserves.

Now 100 percent polygonal, Tomba! 2 is a sight to behold. The huge, exquisitely detailed polygonal environments are second to none on the console, and the gameplay is wholly engrossing. Where Tomba! featured 100 mind benders to solve, Tomba! 2 takes that concept to perplexing new heights, and where Tomba! incorporated a small amount of actual action/platform gameplay, Tomba! 2 packs in lethal doses from the outset. Part two also incorporates actual voice, although in a very children's storybook kind of way. Anyone over eight will want to switch it off and just have at the superb game at hand. The loading that plagued the original is gone as well, along with the clunky weapon interface, which is now manipulated by simply toggling a shoulder button. In a word, Tomba! has been perfected. This new Tomba! should propel the swine tossing caveboy into super stardom. Only Sony themselves can stand in his way. **f**



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ZOMBIE REVENGE

BY DAVE HALVERSON

Now that arcade-perfect games have finally landed in our domiciles, I think it's time to ask ourselves, "Should we have really asked for them?" Wait, maybe I'm beginning this preview on too harsh a note. As you can see, *Zombie Revenge* is a spectacular-looking game, and honestly as far as arcade games go, it's one of the best I've played in the action category. There are multiple weapons with which to wail upon your undead foe—including the hyper-cool dual guitar cases of death from *Desperado*—a handful of play mechanics, like running, blocking, pseudo-combos and special attacks, and the cinematics that hook it all together are only sort of hokey. The game also features some truly diabolical bosses. Sega is to be commended for ZR's spook factor.





*It's open season on zombies once again...
There'll be no resting in peace on this day, I can tell you*



Of course, along with all of this sweet candy one would hope for a fluid, easy-to-control game, and it is here where the game unhinges somewhat. Arcade games are designed for one thing—to suck quarters—so designers need for you to die. They make sure this is going to happen in several ways, like

prolonged stuns, overwhelming amounts of enemies and cumbersome controls. Worst of all, though, ZR features my single most despised trait a game can carry: it's timed. Each area features a ticking timer, giving you in the neighborhood of a minute to advance. So, all those wonderful graphics go to waste. Forget about hanging around exploring all the polygonal goodness. Even if you splatter all the zombies in the allotted time, the clock still runs out, leading to game over and you restarting the level. Of course, this wouldn't be complete without an annoying voice to let you know "There's no time." Argh! I'd like to meet that guy at Fight Club. When all is said and done, I think when a game like this is

ported, it needs to be tweaked for console users, because like those Cyberlips of old, *Zombie Revenge* is simply over way too soon. To counter this Sega has added a vs. fighting feature where you can duke it out street-style, using a bank of characters from the game. A cool idea lifted from the annals of *Streets of Rage*, this does give the game some legs but, as with most side games, it is not a fully realized fighting game, so it wears thin after a short while.

In all fairness this is a preview, and the end product may play a whole lot better. Perhaps they'll take out the unlimited continues that helped me mow through the game. Problem is, if they did, and left the control as-is few would ever see the best bits of the game. So I guess we'll have to wait and see how Sega handles the tweaking stages. They certainly win style points for the game's inspired character designs and locales. If there's a contingent out there that loves the arcade experience, playing games of this nature over and over until they get them dialed, well, then they should be very excited about *Zombie Revenge*. Me, I'm looking to sink my teeth into something more innovative. The Dzs, MD's and Furballs of the world are starting to look mighty tasty. Hey, at least Sega's got something for everybody. f





DRAGON VALOR

• developer/publisher: namco • available: tba



Namco's Tales of Destiny showed a different side of the developer. Its classic 2D graphics were a sharp visual contrast to their cutting-edge 3D fighters and racers, although its gameplay was just as refined. Dragon Valor, Namco's next original RPG effort, an action-tinted title slated for release some time next year, should strike something of a balance between those classic and modern presentations.

Dragon Valor was first displayed in an assessable form at the fall Tokyo Game Show, where it turned heads with intense, fast-moving combat in fully 3D environments with detailed background textures. Particularly impressive were



boss fights against

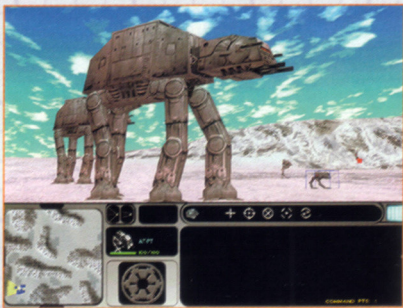
massive fire-breathing dragons. If any of you old-timers feel a nagging reminiscence about some of the characters or settings, it might be because you remember Dragon Buster, an ancient 8-bit Namco arcade title (it was on Museum 2), which was the loose inspiration for Valor. The classic's modern successor will feature a much more complex story, however, spanning multiple generations; your decisions in one scenario will affect the next, where you'll play as the previous characters' descendants. ☹

STAR WARS FORCE COMMANDER

• developer: lucas arts • publisher: lucas arts • available: fall



For all those who have wanted to jump into their General Veers action figures to take control of the Battle of Hoth, and for the 100 percent of the population who haven't, Lucasarts is blessing us with another glimpse into the Star Wars universe, this time in a fully rendered 3D real-time strategy format. You get to play the roles of a Rebel leader and Imperial commander as you plot strategies in full-scale ground combat from jungle planets like Yavin-4 to wretched hives of scum and villainy like Tatooine. The game spans the time between Episodes IV and VI, and puts you in command of both new and familiar characters and vehicles. The gameplay is token RTS: take your ragtag assemblage of soldiers, set up and fortify a base, then go forth and pillage everything in your path. But this time, you do it in a Star Wars kind of way. Although you may need one of those Force-powered 3D cards to fully enjoy it, this game will no doubt be magnificent. ☹



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SOUTH PARK RALLY

• developer: tantalus • publisher: occulain • available: december

A certain sleepy little podunk, white-bread, Colorado town is about to receive a whole lotta' skid marks as a host of super-sweet vehicles piloted by the diaramatic cast of South Park light 'em up. Respect Cartman's authority as he blows by you on his hot police trike! Better hold onto your chocolate balls! Tracks on the menu include Big Gay AI's Big Gay Animal Sanctuary, Downtown South Park, South Park Forest, and many more. As for weapons of demented goodness, fire off a few chocolate salty balls, or how about a Mexican staring frog—that's gotta hurt. Of course, Matt and Trey have made sure you'll be aurally entertained as well. Do you need any more Cart racing than this, folks? I mean, c'mon. Look for SPR sometime before Christmas on the N64, PS, and PC. This game is rated M, by the way, so kids, get a homeless guy to buy it for you! f



FORMULA 1 '99

• developer: studio 33 • publisher: psygnosis • available: nov



The tumultuous '99 Formula One season will have drawn to a close by the time you read this, and Psygnosis' fantastic F1 '99 should serve as a more than worthy substitute for the real thing. Developed by Studio 33, this latest is by far the best looking, best playing version yet. Unbelievable draw distance, beautifully modeled courses and cars, and enough options for the both hardcore and casual F1 fans should make this an absolute keeper come November. >=



GALERIANS

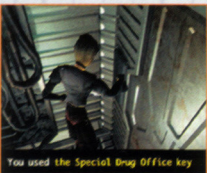
• developer: polygon magic • publisher: crave • available: winter



In the bleak, anime-inspired Galerians, you begin the game trapped in the sterile walls of what appears to be a research facility. You aren't aware of your identity or how you've gotten here; finding the answers is what drives the game.

Galerians is billed as a "psychological thriller." Emphasis is placed on story and atmosphere, with over 70 minutes of hi-res movies propelling the events. Instead of finding weapons, the main character harnesses powers of the mind, allowing him to project his mental energy into a weapon. If an enemy gets too close, they may burst into flame or die from their heads exploding. The deaths are gruesome, made even more effectively unsettling when a nearby foe cowers in fear after witnessing a colleague's demise.

Galerians originated in Japan, and its unique sci-fi style seems to be its greatest asset. With prerendered backgrounds that are anemic compared to the game's obvious inspiration, Resident Evil, a good story and interesting puzzles will be needed to give the game legs. >=



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- Game design rewards covert strategy instead of mindless punching and kicking.



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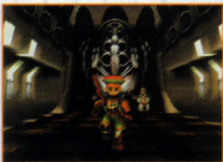


DEWPRISM

• developer: square • publisher: square en • available: q1 '00



This is a magical action RPG, and it's coming stateside early next year. Square's Dewprism combines a marvelous, hi-res 60 frames engine with wonderful character design and slick control worthy of an action game. Two different characters are available for play at the outset of the game, and each offers up a unique adventure and vastly different abilities. Rue, the male lead, can transform into defeated enemies, and the female Mint can cast projectiles. The gameplay is a mixture of real-time combat, platforming, and puzzle solving, and it's a wonderful combination. But it's in the look of the game that Dewprism immediately pulls one in. The environments are fairly small (a trade-off for the res and fps), but the high-quality textures, which give the game an at-times hand-drawn ambience, really make it look special. ★



CRAZY TAXI

• developer: sega am3 • publisher: sega • available: q1 '00



Crazy Taxi, with its bright yellow speed machines and absolutely unfettered driving, was a great concept for an arcade racer. Your humble narrator has spent many a quarter (as well as an entire morning at E3's free-play machines) sailing up and down the hills of San Francisco, from the church to the heliport to the Kentucky Fried Chicken, terrifying pedestrians all the way. Most would probably agree, though, that a straight arcade-to-home port would be a bit difficult to swallow, given that the arcade version had only one level, expansive though it was. Luckily, that also seems to be Sega's way of thinking. As you can see from the accompanying screens, they've added new console-exclusive levels to the upcoming Dreamcast version of Crazy Taxi. There's a downtown area with narrow streets and towering skyscrapers, what looks like a freeway with elevated on and off-ramps, and another where you can cruise along the beach (does that taxi have four-wheel drive, I wonder?). Sega's still being a bit tight-lipped about exactly how much new reckless-driving goodness will be packed into the home version, though. I say again; more than four songs on the soundtrack, please, and let one of them be "Entropy" ...



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adventure"
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armed Boss
Characters and
"smart" enemies
- ✦ Rumble Pak
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SPACE CHANNEL 5

• developer/publisher: sega • available: december

This is the sort of thing Peter Gabriel envisions in his sleep after one egg roll too many. The rhythm genre seems to be inextricably bound to bizarre character design (perhaps to keep the simple gameplay from getting repetitive), and Sega's upcoming Space Channel No. 5 is no exception. Taking on the role of the fetching pink-haired young woman in the bright orange halter-miniskirt combo, your task is to lead a corps of brightly colored aliens in "Beat It"-esque dance numbers.

The previewer scratches his head when faced with material of this sort; before an actual playtest, there's not much in the way of useful commentary to provide on the game. Space Channel is already great fun to look at, though; the design sense is as happily demented as classics like Toe Jam and Earl. It's also known that the gameplay will be relatively simple, using just the four directional buttons and one face button in a game of Simon (see the pattern, remember it, repeat it).

The Japanese market eats this stuff up with a spoon these days. Sega is also gambling that it will play in Peoria: The December release in Japan will be followed by an American localization sometime in the first half of next year or so.



WORMS: ARMAGEDDON

• developer: infogrames • publisher: infogrames • available: winter



You have to concede that a game featuring exploding old ladies merits at least a little respect. Worms returns, this time on the Nintendo 64, in all its outlandish glory. While the game is passable for a single player, it is in the multiplayer mode that Armageddon truly shines. Up to 16 people can get in on the mindless destruction of worms, but four make it a lot cozier. Each player controls a team of four cartoony worms, who take turns navigating a bizarre environment, using weapons like cluster bombs, super sheep, and ninja ropes to annihilate their fellow nematodes. It's packed with options, including over thirty preset landscapes, multiple training levels to

hone your skills, a mission-based single-player mode, and a random deathmatch generator. Add in an arsenal of over thirty weapons, and Worms: Armageddon will be sure to be a party hit, provided you have the patience. It's about time N64 players got a taste of Worms.



GEKIDO

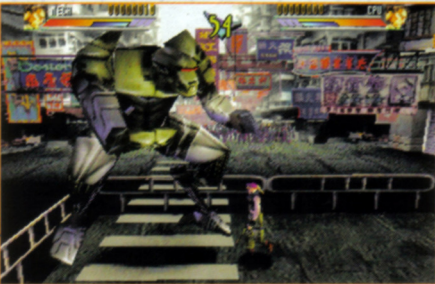
• developer: gremlin • publisher: interplay • available: spring



Apparently back story does matter in games where the primary requirement is to beat the crap out of people and watch pretty explosions, so Gekido has a doozy: the military has sent out a group of bad asses to eradicate a computer program which has evolved into humanoid, sentient form. Any four of the operatives can be chosen to battle through the 15 stages, and depending on whom you chose, different paths and boss encounters lie ahead.

The large range of attacks and special moves expand as experience is accrued, and guns and various types of explosives can be used to augment your arsenal. Once you've mastered the game, finding its many secrets and six hidden characters, the Arena mode vies to hold your attention. Here you can confront up to three other fighters in a confined area.

Gekido is inspired by the classics Double Dragon and Streets of Rage, so it's definitely on the right track. Looks like about the only thing that can derail this beat 'em up is gameplay of the Fighting Force kind.



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AN interview with RED COMPANY



They've brought millions joy throughout the years creating such epics as Bonk, Sakura Taisen, Tempo, and recently Thousand Arms. Meet Red

Okay, so Tempo wasn't epic in terms of sales. To the few who braved the 32X and later gorgeous Saturn game shown below, it was certainly something special. Although we aimed our questions for RED Company squarely on their new breakthrough RPG Thousand Arms (out now in high style from Atlus), we respect them on many levels. As we put this issue to bed, shots of their all-new Sakura Taisen for the Dreamcast surfaced—more reason to celebrate them. Red has continually delivered high-quality games, from the days of the TurboGrafx to the here and now. Here's what they had to say about their latest.

Q. Initially, how did you come up with the unique concept for Thousand Arms?

A. Today's society is full of senseless consumption and has forgotten the ideals of compassion and charity. This encouraged us to build a game based around the concepts of caring for your fellow man, and the objects around us. We also wanted a system to upgrade existing weapons, instead of replacing them with new ones. Unlike other RPGs where the player interacts with other characters solely to receive information, we wanted to make the characters get involved with each other, in order to reach their goals. Taking all of these things into consideration, we came up with the idea that spirits exist in all objects, and these spirits were key to increasing your weapon's abilities. As a twist, only girls can communicate with them. So, in order to draw power from the spirits, a girl's assistance is necessary.

Q. How difficult was it to realize your vision on the PlayStation?

A. Our most difficult task was creating the seamless method that we used to transition between gameplay, animation, and FMV. During the initial brainstorming stage, we spent long hours working out exactly how this seamless method would look in the game. During development, we encountered challenges caused by the limitations of VRAM inherent in the PlayStation, and with timing animations. Thankfully, we were able to overcome these obstacles by the hard work of our talented staff.

Q. How long and how many people/affiliates did it take to complete the project?

A. The game concept was brought to us by Takehiko Ito, and from then we spent two and a half years. The team consisted of 10 programmers, 41 graphic artists, 37 animators, 5 producers, 3 sound designers, 1 character designer and 1 monster designer that were involved in the realization of Thousand Arms.



Q. How many teams does Red Company have in house?

A. How many teams... that's confidential...[Laugh] One thing we can say is that unlike many other software companies, we are a multimedia-based company. We deal not just with games, but with anime, novels, toys, manga and many other types of media as well.

Q. The polygonal environments in TA are some of the best I have ever seen on the PlayStation. Will you use this amazing engine again?

A. Thank you for the compliment. We put a lot of effort into rendering Mr. Ito's design into polygons, taking special care not to spoil his work. We will continue to work at making even better engines than Thousand Arms, because we want to continue to surprise our customers.

Q. Did you have to create any proprietary technology to meld the anime and polygonal elements?

A. We didn't have to create any proprietary technology to accomplish this, but we did end up doing something similar to what Disney did for Beauty and the Beast. First, our 3D team created FMV based on the original hand-drawn concept art, and placed dummy polygonal figures in it. Then, our 2D team created animations based on this figure. Finally, the dummy figure in the FMV was replaced with this new 2D animated figure. This is really over-simplifying a very complex task. Needless to say, it took the skill and teamwork of many talented people to accomplish this.

Q. When you design a game do you think about the Western market as well as your own, right from the start?

A. When we work on a game design, we do not initially have foreign markets in mind. However, we do try to make a game that will be enjoyed by as many people as possible.

Q. How did the game do in Japan? It is certainly going to do well in the U.S. The buzz is very good.

A. Thank you very much, the game was very well received in Japan.



Q. Will you build on this success and do a sequel for one of the new consoles? The game certainly seems to warrant many sequels.

A. Sorry, but we can't comment on this at this time.

Q. Okay. Might we see an anime based on the escapades of Meis Triumph?

A. At this time, we do not have any plans to make anime based on Thousand Arms.

Q. Alright, how about Tempo? We are huge Tempo (the Saturn version was awesome) and Bonk fans here at Gamers' Republic. Any chance we'll see either again? Bonk certainly deserves a go on 128-bits.

A. Sorry, but we can't comment on this at this time.

Q. Okay, that's three strikes! We're out! Your silence at least gives us hope. Thank you for your time and all of the great games you have provided us through the years. Before we go is there anything you'd like to say to U.S. gamers?

A. We want to thank them for their wonderful support. We will continue to produce entertainment that will satisfy not just Japanese gamers, but gamers around the world.



Okay, attention game developers. It's called 2D, and as you can see, it looks a far cry better than polygons. Please make games like this. Thank you. -The Management



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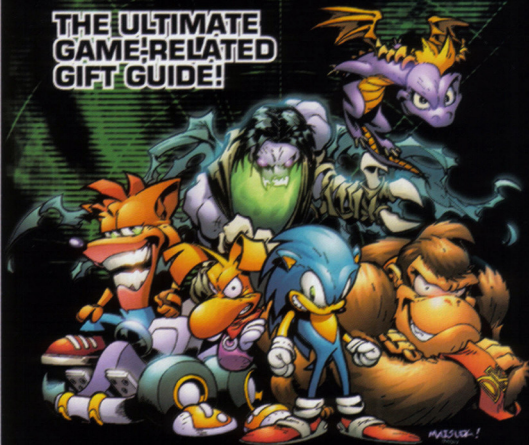
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GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEWS



GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

DOMESTIC REVIEWS

BALLISTIC	B
BOOMBOTS	C+
CASH TEAM RACING	A
DONKEY KONG 64	A-
EARTHBOUND (in 3D)	A-
KILLER LOOP	C+
MIDWAY ARCADE PARTY PAK	B
PAPERBOY	C+
QUAKE 2	B
READY 2 RUMBLE N64	C+
RESIDENT EVIL 2	B-
RIPPIN' RIDERS	A-
ROCKET	A-
SPEED DEVILS	B-
SPYRO 2	A-
SUZUKI ALSTARE	B
TOY COMMANDER	B-
WORLD KARTING 2	B+
X-FILES GAME	C+
989 SUPERCROSS CIRCUIT	B

IMPORT REVIEWS

ROBBIT MON DUE	B+
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SPORTS REVIEWS

CYBERTIGER	B-
FOOT 2000	B+
INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD	C
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2000	C
NBA SHOWTIME	C+
NHL FACEOFF 2000	D+

GAME BY COLOR REVIEWS

BALLISTIC	B
BOOMBOTS	B+
GR	B+

GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEW SYSTEM

- [A+ to A]** Games in this bracket are the best of the best. They feature the highest quality visual presentation, and are excellent in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, worthy of every gamer's undivided attention. Example: Dino Crisis
- [A- to B]** Excellent, solid, and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Slight frame rate problems, a marginally disappointing ending or any number of small quirks may take an otherwise exalted release down a notch. Example: Shadow Man
- [B- to C]** Games in this bracket are generally very good, but may have one or more flaws. A game receiving a B- may be a great game that's just too short or has irritating music, while a C may have these same problems plus a couple more. Very good to average entertainment. Example: Ready 2 Rumble
- [C- to D]** Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the final stages of design. Example: Jet Moto 3
- [D- to F]** Very rarely will you come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. Example: Mortal Kombat Gold

- Games marked in **RED** are highly recommended for your gaming collection.
- Games marked in **YELLOW** should be avoided completely.

[Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a B or higher is a great way to spend your day. Games scoring a low D or F should be microwaved for three seconds and returned.]



BOOMBOTS

BY MIKE HOBBS



WHOEVER DESIGNED THESE CHARACTERS WAS EITHER HITTING THE PIPE, OR THEY HAVE ASBESTOS CEILINGS AT THE NEVERHOOD.



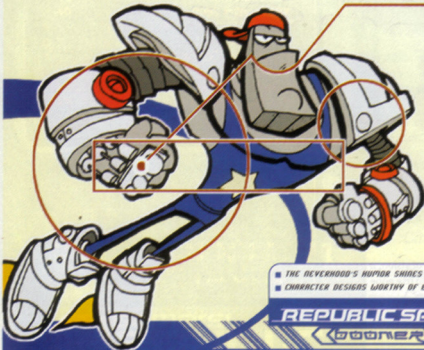
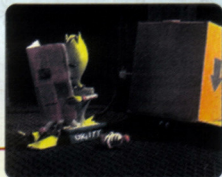
The Neverhood have delivered their first real-time 3D game, and like Treasure before them, they've made an open-arena fighter. Playing a little bit like Koel's overlooked Destrega, Boombots is a simple, briefly entertaining two-player game given a boost by The Neverhood's hilarious use of claymation during the between-battle cut scenes, and a cast of very funny characters.

The setup for this fighter is suitably off-the-wall. Set in the year 15 billion, an evil race of cat aliens has taken it upon itself to kidnap the world's house cats. This doesn't have much bearing on the basic fighting action, but it does give The Neverhood a good excuse to flaunt their twisted sense of humor, like the aliens' use of kitty litter toilets.

Boombots is a small free-roaming 3D fighter, not as deep and complex as the game it most closely resembles, Destrega. Each character has a machine gun, homing missile, and player-directed guided missiles as forms of attack. Power pellets, constantly falling into each arena, increase the power of your weapon meter, and with three full meters, characters become momentarily supercharged and can unleash devastating attacks. But

whereas Destrega offered depth through its attack combination system, unique weapons for each character and sprawling arenas, Boombots' characters all have the same basic capabilities, varying really only in speed, and smallish arenas that don't promote much strategy. It certainly gives the game an easy-to-digest learning curve, but it curtails any long-term strategy discovery, and one quickly realizes that every battle can be won by simple use of the homing missiles.

Like other games from The Neverhood, Boombots is solid and well designed, but in this case, the gameplay just misses the mark. This is a new genre for the company, and it shows a bit: they were stronger when doing their interpretation of classic 2D gameplay in Skull Monkeys. ❧



■ THE NEVERHOOD'S HUMOR SHINES THROUGH IN THE CUTSCENES
■ CHARACTER DESIGNS WORTHY OF TAJI CREATOR

■ EASY TO PICK UP AND PLAY, BUT...
■ DOES NOT OFFER ENOUGH LONG-TERM DEPTH OR STRATEGY

REPUBLIC SAYS...

(DOOMER)

THIS GAME IS A KICK IN THE PANTS TO WATCH, AND IT'S PRETTY FUN TO PLAY AT FIRST, BUT THERE'S SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH TO DISCOVER IN THE GAMEPLAY OVER TIME.

C+

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NINTENDO 64



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CRASH TEAM RACING

BY BRADY FIECHTER



If it were aspiring to be little more than a Mario Kart clone, Crash Team Racing would succeed as a familiar, lively, enjoyable racing/combat game. But the true greatness of this game is that it reaches beyond the ordinary, fusing little inventions with durable ideas to achieve an end product that is infectiously fresh and new.

If one aspect of the game is to be commended, it is the superb invention of the turbo system. Instead of collecting random charges on the tracks, racers must boost their turbo meter by activating a powerslide or jumping at the apex of a bump, ramp, or incline on the track. By monitoring the color of their kart's exhaust or the height of the turbo meter, racers can activate a turbo up to three times for a wheelie-inducing super charge. Only when the turbo system has been mastered can the competition be dominated; without skillful technique, victory becomes elusive.

The adventure arena of Crash Team Racing is the centerpiece of the game, where groups of courses must be won before unlocking boss encounters. After the basic trophy race, the real challenge of the game begins to emerge when you go back through the courses to collect coins to spell CTR, and race to beat the clock by collecting time crates that shave seconds off your time.

Drawing from the rich vein of the Crash Bandicoot universe, Naughty Dog has invested the racing environments with bright and buoyant scenery highlighted in vibrant color schemes, and the result is a game as entertaining to look at as it is to play.

No doubt the game succeeds because it is so pleasantly served by the world of Crash, but when you look at how clever the track design is, how skilled the opponent can be, and how hopelessly addicting the battle mode becomes, it's not a stretch to look at Crash Team Racing as a PlayStation classic.



■ THE CRASH UNIVERSE, IN A KART RACING GAME
■ GREAT PERSONALITY AND AMAZING GRAPHICS

■ RULES-OF-POPE MULTIPAYER RACING, BATTLE MODE RACES
■ ADVENTURE MODE BRINGS MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS TO THE RACING

REPUBLIC SAYS...

CRASH TEAM RACING IS A PLAYSTATION CLASSIC. IN SOME WAYS IT SURPASSES THE ALMIGHTY MARIO KART.



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任天堂

DK 64

BY BRADY FIECHTER

Rare worked wonders on the SNES with its Donkey Kong Country series. It may have taken a while, but Donkey Kong is finally back

Donkey Kong 64 was fashioned by the exceptional talents behind Donkey Kong Country on the SNES. This doesn't surprise me; many of the qualities of the classic 16-bit series have been superbly preserved in this colossal adventure.

The game begins where it naturally should, in the thick of the jungle, which is teeming with stupendous sights and sounds—a mere teaser of the increasingly impressive landscapes to come. Rare fosters the proper tone from the start, setting the opening area to remixed music from Donkey Kong Country. The use of classic music is a clever way to evoke an instant affection for the game, and its many virtues only continue to surface once you

start climbing the trees, grabbing bananas and swinging on vines.

Donkey Kong is the first character you meet in the game, but you'll soon find that his island world is shared by four other immensely likable friends: the squirrely Diddy Kong, who can strap on a jet pack and soar to the peak of a level; the nimble Tiny, who squeezes through small crevices; the brute Chunky, who has the strength of two gorillas, enabling him to bash through walls and pick up large objects; and rubbery Lanky, the hilariously animated orangutan who can walk up steep inclines with his arms tucked under his torso. Imprisoned in cages located in the first four areas of the game, the Kongs must be rescued, and only then can the levels be properly explored.

The core idea behind Donkey Kong 64 is team work. Scattered across every level is a collection of regular bananas, which grant access to bosses; golden bananas, which offer payment for deeper access into the island; and coins, which buy special abilities from Cranky. To collect all the necessary items, each of the distinct characters must be fully utilized in most parts of the level, and you'll find yourself constantly shifting from one Kong to the next. This tag-team approach to the game is one of its more unique qualities.



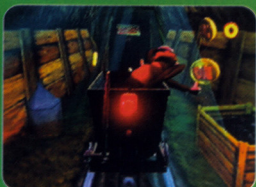


01.64 02.64 03.64 04.64 05.64 06.64 07.64

09.64



DONKEY KONG 64



Donkey Kong 64 is both exhausting and rewarding, trying and wildly ambitious. Rare never lets up, and the result is one of the best games on the N64

When a boss has been opened, only a certain Kong will be able to go into battle—some of the most intense confrontations I've had in a 3D game of this type. Consider the level four boss, a giant spiked puffer fish that shoots energy beams into the water. Lanky is the hapless kong thrust into this particular confrontation, and he must skillfully steer a scaled-out boat through check-points on rough waters, in order to activate an energy field that fries the boss. You're up against the clock, the boss, his weapon, the elements; it's the kind of visceral encounter that seems to have been abandoned in modern 3D game design.

Beating a boss is one thing; getting to it is another. These levels are dauntingly enormous, requiring

hours of exploration, plenty of backtracking, and a keen sense of direction and memory to fend off disorientation. There is an extraordinary abundance of play mechanics. The Kongs fire weapons, toss explosive oranges, engage in typical close-range combat, and call on a number of platforming skills. Mini games are everywhere, requiring you to solve puzzles, shoot from barrels, ride mine carts, and perform countless other tasks, all of which play a part in reaching the game's end, all of which elevate the enjoyment of the game.

If Donkey Kong 64 doesn't have the striking impact it might have, it's because Rare overextended itself and made a game that can be overwhelming in its size and requirement. The game is both exhausting and rewarding, trying and wildly ambitious. And above all else, it's just flat out fun to play. ☼

■ THE ISLAND SETTING TAKES THE 64+ TO ITS BREAKING POINT
■ GREAT BOSSES, AND CHARACTERS ARE SUPERBLY POOLED

■ ENDLESS AREA TO EXPLORE, SO MUCH TO DO AND SEE
■ FUNNY, TOO MUCH. THE GAME IS TO BE ENJOYED IN BURSTS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

THE BREADTH OF DK 64 IS REMARKABLE. WITH DK 64, RARE SHOWS ITS PERCENT FOR GIVING YOU MORE GAME THAN YOU COULD EVER ASK FOR. THE GAME IS QUART FUN.

A-





EWJ 3D

BY DAVE HALVERSON

*Lights, camera...action! JIM! Watch out! Mooooo...
CLUNK! Jim... Jim? Hamburgers anyone?*

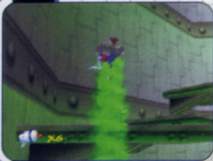
The lights have dimmed... the stage, closed. His Genesis and SNES stints, along with his hit animated TV show, are distant memories. Earthworm Jim's career seemed headed for that big dirt mound in the sky. The lone worm sought out a starring role on the Nintendo 64, PC, and PlayStation back in 1997, but only now has the first new game-o-Jim come to fruition. The PS and PC versions now lying on the scrap heap, this game, on its own, will have to serve the worm. It will either spark his comeback or seal his fate as fish bait. I'm here to tell you why the latter (that would be the "spark the comeback" choice) is about to happen.

In Earth Worm Jim 3D, Jim, aided by his longtime friend, the extremely short-tempered Peter Puppy, and a little snot, must escape the clutches of his own twisted mind. During a movie shoot Jim is struck on the noggin' by a falling cow and loses his marbles. In an effort to recollect them, Jim's ego will enter portals of his own sick brain, from the cheesy effects of the "Tex-Mex that time forgot" to the spooky digs of fear and the crazy days of disco. Jim will traverse a plethora of unforgettable 3D environments. Using an array of funky guns, his pliable head, and a whole lotta' wit, he must out-smart and exterminate the



EARTH WORM
JIM 3





evil villains that occupy his psyche. Sound easy? It's not. Sound fun? Maybe even funny? It is! The game that once sent me running for the commode at E3 '98 actually turned out awesome. If not for the stubborn Irish lads that insisted on re-tooling the entire game after the first take obviously flopped with critics, we'd no doubt have burned this cart a year or so ago. But they drove the PR and marketing folks nuts (so nuts that Interplay handed the game off to Rockstar and said "Here, you get 'em to finish it")

and eventually delivered something they can be proud of. Rockstar will surely laugh all the way to the bank. Although that trip may be a long one, as Jim will probably sell better after Jet Force and DK 64 have run their course, it's one I'm sure they'll make because this, my friends, is a really (pardon the cliché) groovy game. Graphically, it's on par with those from Nintendo's most elite developers like NCL, Ubi Soft, and Rare.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 141 >



■ IT'S FURRY... REALLY. IT IS!
■ AMAZING GRAPHICS SAYS RAY PARKER MURPHY

■ FORTY-FITTING LEVEL-SPECIFIC TUNES ARE SWEET, LIKE LEROY
■ BIG FAT COOL BOSS LEVELS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

AFTER THREE PLUS YEARS EW3D IS FINALLY HERE AND IT'S A QUALITY ROMP FROM START TO FINISH. A MUST-OWN NINTENDO 64 EXCLUSIVE!

A-



RESIDENT EVIL 3

BY BRADY FIECHTER

*The best game in the series is one of the year's finest.
Become part of a compelling world of dread*



Is there something a bit disgusting and unsettling about an undead human attempting to appease an insatiable urge for flesh by mauling another human? Yup, and that's why Resident Evil 3 is such wicked fun. There is something perversely seducing about indulging in a game that delights in portraying scenes of a zombie apocalypse.

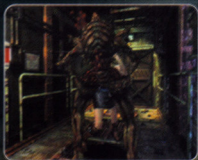
The zombies in resident evil infest the game like an implacable disease, plodding in the shadows of nearly every room, alleyway and street in the city. They attack in packs of up to six, always aggressive and inexplicably quick when you get too close. Some times they just like to keep to themselves and nibble on a crumpled corpse lying in a dark corner.

Zombies are joined in the attack by other creepy creatures, like the familiar giant spiders and emaciated hounds, and the newest creation of horror, an H. R. Giger-inspired monstrosity, which uses its butcher-knife claws to scurry up walls and across ceilings. What all these enemies have in common is the uncommon ability to strike fear into you, to evoke a genuine tide of unease that washes over every unexplored area—zombies spill into elevators, hide behind corners, crawl out of graves, ignite themselves in raging fires, crash through doors and window. Most video games form a detachment to the action; Resident Evil 3 throws you directly into it, and you become a part of its world.

Mood and atmosphere are a key player in Resident Evil's effect.

Everything looks mysterious and haunting. The superbly crafted and fastidiously detailed city is saturated in darkness and shadow, and the invaluable use of lighting creates a gloomy, haunting glow of a nightmare.

The events in Resident Evil 3 take place right



TEIL R

EVI HR E

3 RH IV3 V3 12 R 3 RH IV

SIDE TEIL R

RESIDENT EVIL

SIDE TEIL R

EVI HR E

RESIDENT EVIL 3

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RESIDENT EVIL

SIDE TEIL R

RESIDENT EVIL



around the chaos that ensued in Resident Evil 2. The conflict with the zombies has left the city in a pestilent state of ruin: fires burn, bodies lay in the crumbling mess. Early on, you'll find yourself back in the Raccoon police station, and eventually you'll move toward the outskirts of the city, ending up in the perfect setting—a stately mansion, decorated in deep browns and golds and lavished with elegant furniture and glowing candles on the walls.

There's a story behind Resident Evil 3, but it is an inanity that serves as little more than a loose chain to link the game's events. Experiments have gone wrong, people have shown their evil side, zombies have eaten people, and the malevolent Neme-



sis has been unleashed. Nemesis is a persistent threat, chasing you throughout the game, showing up for a direct confrontation now and again. Your choice of fight or retreat will have an impact on the final outcome of the game.

Resident Evil 3 has many riches, but the most compelling for me is its fluency in the cinematic language—the way that it stages main events with extraordinary cut scenes, the way that the action is framed, the overwhelming gravity of its dark imagery. And then there are the puzzles, which are not overly difficult but always involving, always an interesting part of the events. And, of course, there are the zombies and other spooky creations, which are always terminated with explosive carnage. All of this completes what is the best game in the series. Resident Evil 3 is game making of a remarkable order.



RESIDENT EVIL

SIDE T E I L R

RESIDENT EVIL

R S I E N E V I H R E

3 A H I V E N I 2 1 2 1

SIDE T E I L R

R S I E N E V I H R E

SIDE T E I L R

■ SUPERB GRASP OF CINEMATIC PRESENTATION
■ RENDER QUALITY UNPARALLELED, NO KIDNASSING WORLD

■ CREPES ARE AWESOME, ALWAYS A RUSH TO FIGHT
■ BODGE PROVE HAS BEEN ADDED

REPUBLIC SAYS...

THE BEST GAME IN THE SERIES, RE3 IS A WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE OF EMOTIONAL GAME PLAYING. IT EVOKES A COMPELLING MOOD FEW GAMES CAN MATCH.





ROCKET

BY MIKE PUCCINI

First-time developers Sucker Punch nail the N64 hardware by combining innovative gameplay with their own unique character

At first look, Rocket: The Robot on Wheels might seem to be targeted towards a younger player. But looks can be deceiving. Because behind its cute, colorful exterior lies a fun, inventive, and brilliantly challenging platform game with superb control and loads of innovation. On more than a few occasions, the gameplay made me think back to my days playing Super Mario 64.

The story and overall theme of Rocket is about a wildly eccentric intergalactic amusement park. It's the day prior to the park's opening and Rocket has been put in charge of guarding the ride's tickets and tokens. But a jealous raccoon, Jojo, has knocked Rocket out, stolen his tickets and tokens, and is sabotaging the park's rides. Thus, in addition to finding all of the missing parts to the rides, Rocket needs to complete a multitude of mini-games, puzzles, and mazes in order to obtain all of the amusement park items scattered throughout the overworld and six sub-worlds.

To accomplish these tasks, Rocket will need to utilize his

given abilities to their fullest, which is tough, because Rocket is a limbless, torso-less (okay, there's a tiny torso) robot on a wheel. A brilliant and innovative design idea, Rocket uses his head-mounted tractor beam for a variety of uses. The unit emits a light beam that has several functions. It serves as a grappling hook to ascend heights, grab and throw items, and has a freeze setting (Rocket's only defense against enemies) to make ice blocks for traversing water. In each of the six playful, extremely vast, beautifully colored sub-worlds, there are "vehicles" to hop into and control, such as a dolphin, a magic carpet, a paintball cannon and the unique SpiderRider—a tadpole-like creature ridden through a monster's brain.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 141 •



■ A TRULY INNOVATIVE GAME
■ DORRY I LET THE CUTE GRAPHICS FOOB YOU, IT'S DEEP!
■ LOADED WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF GAMEPLAY
■ GREAT USE OF COLOR AS GAMEPLAY ELEMENTS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

ROCKET: THE ROBOT ON WHEELS PAYS HOMAGE TO THE GREATNESS OF SUPER MARIO 64 WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CREATING ITS OWN PLACE IN THE PLATFORMING HALL OF FAME

A-



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SPYRO

RIPTO'S RAGE

BY BRADY FIECHTER

Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage is a game in which great care was obviously taken every step of the way in its creation. I said the same thing about the first Spyro game, and believe it even more in this sequel. Insomniac has caught magic in this wonderful update, expanding its original ideas into a much fuller experience.

The cheerful fairy-tale world in Spyro 2 is brilliantly alive. It's a place where little wizards dart through castles, windmills turn in the breeze, and delightful creatures roam the rolling hills. The architecture of Avalar is dominated by lots of stone and castle-like structures and the clunky machinery that moves and grinds around them. At one point in the game, you'll find yourself standing on top of the tallest of towers in the land, overlooking the remarkably expansive overworld; the music is surreal, and there's an intense sound of whipping wind. It's a great scene.

Determined to bring peace to this enchanting world (don't play it for the story) is the winsome purple dragon Spyro. Like in the first game, Spyro can't fly without the aid of a power-up, so he must navigate the many ledges and platforms in the game by jumping and gliding. A breath of fire and head charge remain the primary methods of offense, and combined with a funda-

mental grasp of platforming mechanics, the task of finding the



end of a level and acquiring a talisman places the game in familiar Spyro 1 territory. But make no mistake: Spyro 2 has the sense to dig much deeper, and the game reaches its higher ground with the mechanics involved in finding orbs. Every level has at least two tasks that must be completed to acquire the orbs, which, combined with the gems that are scattered across the landscape, will open deeper levels in the game.

The inhabitants of each level will always have you accomplishing something unique and entertaining. You'll ride a mine cart; play hide and go seek behind trees with a dimwitted giant; spit rocks at obnoxious flagmen perched on towers; clear a path so that a robotic farmer can move his tractor; collect a pile of bones to reanimate a skeleton. I never expected so much from Spyro 2. It's the surprise treasure of the year. ✱



■ SPYRO OF THE BEST CARTOON CHARACTERS SEEN IN A GAME
■ REVOLUTION 3D ENGINE

■ AN ABUNDANCE OF UNIQUE TASKS AND OBJECTIVES
■ 6000+ SENSE OF HUMOR

REPUBLIC SAYS...

SPYRO 2 IS EASILY MY FAVORITE FREE-ROAMING ACTION/PLATFORMER ON PS. IT RETAINS ALL THE QUALITIES OF THE ORIGINAL, AND EXPANDS THEM.

A.

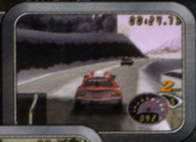
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SUZUKI ALSTARE RACING

BY DAVE HALVERSON

So far in the Dreamcast's short but productive life span, it can be said that the software lineup has been dreadfully lopsided. Upon the release of this game and Sega Rally 2, altogether there will be a whopping nine racing titles on the shelves this Christmas. I know Americans like racing, but c'mon, nine? Of those nine, three belong to Ubi Soft—Speed Devils, Monaco GP, and this eye candy supreme, Suzuki Alstare Racing (formerly known as Redline Racer). It was a "C" game at best before Ubi got a hold of it, but they have pulled off quite a feat turning it into a formidable arcade racer. While it's light on bells and whistles, it does pack a hefty dose of speed thrills, awe-inspiring graphics, and has a palatable techno score.

While traversing the game's initial courses, what seems like a peg-the-throttle-and-aim-no-brainer racer steadily (and thankfully) becomes an exercise in precision control and memorization. Where Redline was a walk in the park, Alstare requires substantial prowess to beat all nine sessions, which cover 12-plus gorgeous tracks. The courses, a collection of refurbished multi-terrain twistlers, cover all of the traditional arcade bases, including beach, snow, tropical, factory, mountain, GP, canyon, coastal, city and more. A more diverse array of locales you'll not find; a more realistic one, you will. Some of these tracks are downright out of place for GP bikes. Riding in the dirt, for instance, is strictly prohibited on such machines, unless you plan on taking it apart and living next to a solvent tank for the next few days. So don't look at the Suzuki license and think you're in for a GP simulation. What the Suzuki license does deliver are factory team attire and the use of six GSX model racers—three configurations of the 600 and three of the 750. The result is a game that Redline owners would barely recognize—high on pure racing fun but light on sim aspects. If this sounds good to you, then you'd better buy a helmet, 'cause you've got a lot of racing to do. That said, I think we have enough racing games now, everyone. Time to break some new ground. **f**



■ COURSE DESIGN IS DIVERSE AND KICK-ASS

■ THINGS FLOW NICELY AND ACTUALLY CHALLENGE THE KNUCKE

■ STUNT IN PROVIDES A LUXURIOUS CHALLENGE

■ COLLISION IS STILL A BIT KICKY

REPUBLIC SAYS...

JOINING EIGHT OTHER DREAMCAST RACERS FOR A STUNT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, ALSTARE'S THE FIRST ON TWO WHEELS, AND IT'S A JOONER.

B

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- Proprietary track generation system retains optimum level of track detail and highest frame rate.
- 3 difficulty levels - Beginner, Intermediate, and Expert.
- 2 physical variations on each track - Road Curves and Hills geometries will be completely new.
- Controller Pak Compatible
- Expansion Pak Compatible
- Rumble Pak Compatible
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Player Modes:

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- Single Race (Arcade) mode. Player enjoys to p speed racing solo with friends on the tracks (and weather conditions) previously opened.
- Time Attack Mode with Ghost Bike. Player is to beat their own best time (saved on the Controller Pak).
- Stunt Mode. Player pulls off as many radical stunts as possible to accumulate points while racing around the dirt track.




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TOY COMMANDER

BY BRADY FIECHTER

A child's toy collection comes to life in this wonderfully inventive effort from No Cliche.



Toy commander is a feast for the imagination. It offers such an uncommon, absorbing place to explore that I wanted to forgive it of its faults and simply delight in what I was seeing.

That's not to say that Toy Commander is a great game. It's more of a collection of ideas that are scattered around.

The game transports us into the meticulously detailed space of a young boy's house, where a childhood fantasy comes to life: toys are deployed into battle, and we are the commanding officer. Comprised of eight main quarters—living room and greenhouse, parent's and children's bedroom, basement, attic, tool shed and garage, kitchen and dining room, and the hallway and mezzanine—the enormous house becomes a battle ground of inventive missions—

based scenarios, which range from saving an ally trapped in a castle to transporting papier-mâché pigeons through a hunting ground in the hallway. Some of the missions are more deliberately paced and require patience and exploration, others are heavy on action and combat, emphasizing offense and survival. Occasionally, the objective is a land- or air-based race through an obstacle course.

When the missions work, Toy Commander is giant fun. I especially enjoyed corraling troops in my jeep as I ascended into the rafters of the attic; looking out over the giant expanse of the room was delightful. And I liked taking a helicopter into enemy ground to rescue imprisoned firemen, returning them to extinguish the fire that is burning down the miniature town in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 141



- APPEARING: ATTENTION TO DETAIL
- NO INVENTIVE, FULLY REALIZED WORLD TO EXPLORE

- TIME LAPSIS FOR THE LEVELS A BAD IDEA
- THE GAME IS A SERIES OF PRESSINGS, NOT A FULL EXPERIENCE

REPUBLIC SAYS...

TOY COMMANDER HAD MOMENTS OF MAJOR FUN, BUT THE GAME ULTIMATELY WAS LOST IN ITS INABILITY TO PULL ALL ITS BIG IDEAS INTO A COHESIVE EXPERIENCE.

B-

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DREAMWORKS
INTERACTIVE

Naughty
Dog



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INTERACTIVE

With a unique battle engine that innovates and challenges, Konami's latest steps ahead of its predecessor

VANDAL HEARTS II

BY RYAN LOCHHART

I almost loved the original Vandal Hearts. The dark storyline was engrossing and its battle engine, while not exactly ground breaking in design, was solid and fun to play. On the other hand, the incredibly short quest, ridiculously easy last battle, confusingly mediocre music, and that damn rotating brick background soured the overall experience (didn't the characters notice huge bricks in the sky?). With these obvious faults in mind, Konami went back to the drawing board for Vandal Hearts' second installment, resulting in a great sequel to a good game. It's got a cleaner look, new battle gameplay, a longer quest, an even darker storyline—and yes, thank God, the rotating bricks are gone.

The most apparent update in Vandal Hearts II is its unique battle engine. Where the first game was more of a "me too" strategy title—offering nothing really new to the genre—the sequel really sets itself apart with its new real-time movement. You select your move, the screen splits in two, and the enemy makes his move at the exact same time.

At first this struck me as more of an annoyance. The fighting seemed awkward: you'd select your character to move to a certain space trying to nail the nearby foe, but as you moved to attack him, he'd move to attack where you used to be, and the result would be both of you missing. But, the more I played, the more I enjoyed this new take on the classic genre. You've got to think ahead, guess what your enemy's strategy will be, and then counter it—hopefully giving your opponent a good slash in the back in the meantime.

I wish I had more space to talk about Vandal Hearts II; the updates it makes upon the original are many. Put it this way, if you enjoyed the first Vandal Hearts, you'll love this game. If you enjoy titles like Final Fantasy Tactics, you'll love this game. If you just enjoy a great and delightfully mature story, you'll love this game. Vandal Hearts II isn't a perfect title (the new style of gameplay won't be for everybody), but compared to the first, it's a definite move in the right direction.



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REPUBLIC SAYS...

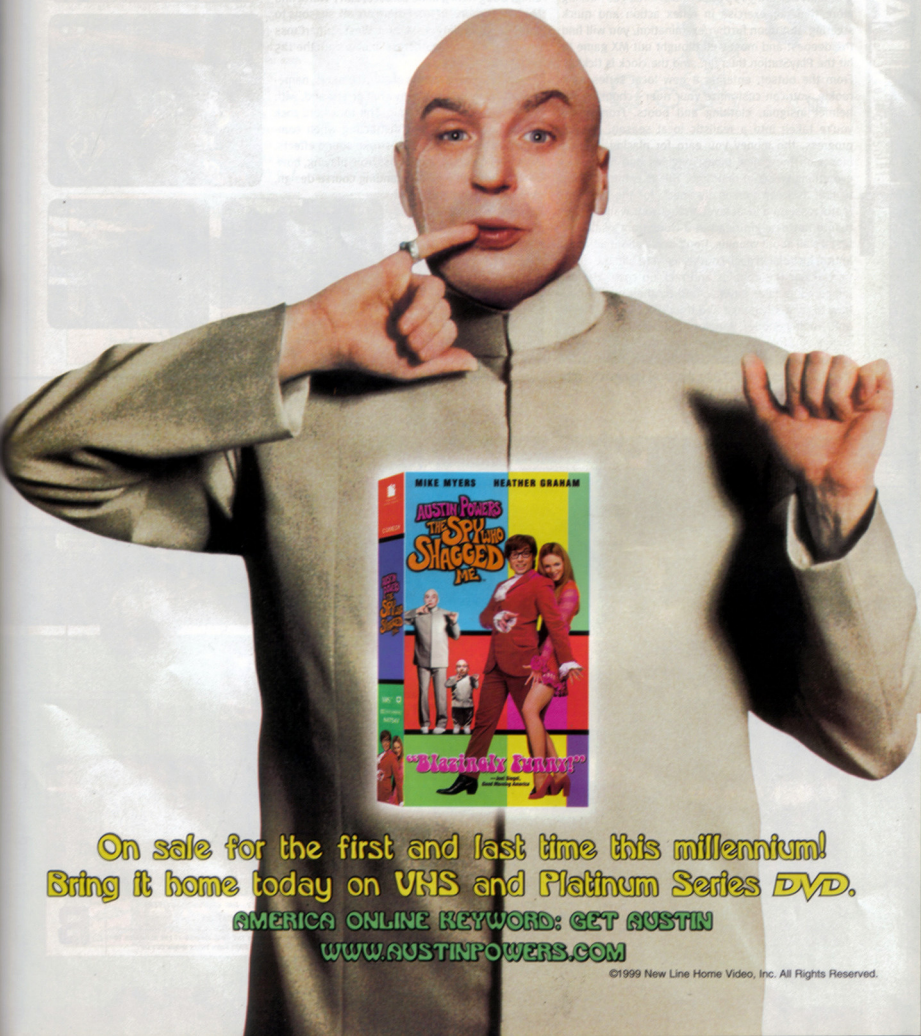
THE ORIGINAL VANDAL HEARTS WAS A GOOD BUT FLAWED OFFERING. ITS SEQUEL IMPROVED UPON THE FIRST IN EVERY WAY

A-

VANDAL HEARTS TWO

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SUPER CROSS CIRCUIT

BY DAVE HALVERSON

Jumping feet first into a single race, one might mistakenly discard 989's SuperCross Circuit as nothing more than an exercise in reflex action and quick steering. But upon further examination, you will find the deepest and most well thought out MX game to hit the PlayStation thus far...and the clock is ticking. From the outset, entering a new local series as a rookie, you can customize your rider—choosing his helmet insignia, clothing and boots. From there you're taken into a realistic local season. As you progress, the money you earn for placing will get blown on tires, new pipes, engines and brakes as everything wears in real time. This is extremely true to life, as I can personally vouch for the fact that Motocross, on a local level, drains your wallet faster than a hot new girlfriend at a Nordstrom's sale. At first it's all about winning. Don't worry about airborne antics, just dial in each course, learn to blip the throttle to clear the doubles and rack up cash. The big jumps come later anyway, and by then you'll know how to take advantage and then revel in the freezeable replay mode. Winning, among other things, scores you free-rides (where you enter the straightforward track editor and have at it) as well as cash for the challenges ahead. From the local venue it's on to

the pro circuit where 17 superstars await, like Jeff Emig, Doug Henry, Mike Lorocco, Larry Ward, and Michael Pichon. In total there are six seasons to conquer, including East and West SuperCross challenges, and a motocross final in both the 125 and 250cc divisions.

SC does have a couple of shortcomings, namely that things can get somewhat erratic and, with the music on, overly manic. The rock-hard rock soundtrack is good but distracting when combined with the perfect two-stroke sound effects. All of this excellent motocross/role playing, however, combined with outstanding course design, real-time rooster tails, and the best intro to this side of a hay bail, makes SuperCross Circuit the motocross game to beat going in to the '99 holiday season. **f**



■ BEHIND THE ARMS CAM PUTS YOU IN THE ACTION

■ EXCELLENT COURSE DESIGN, HADDOGS AND OUT

■ ALTHOUGH A LITTLE PIXELLY, THE GRAPHICS DELIVER

■ ALL THE PROS ARE HERE TO ROOST ON

REPUBLIC SAYS...

SUPERCROSS CIRCUIT REALLY CAME TOGETHER IN THE END, MAKING IT THE MX GAME TO BEAT GOING INTO CHRISTMAS. MCGRAH AND SC 2000 HAVE THEIR WORK CUT OUT.

B



PAPERBOY

• developer: high voltage • publisher: midway • available: now

Quirky and cool are the two words to best describe this unique slice of vintage gaming. Another fine modern-day translation on the heels of the excellent Gauntlet for the Nintendo 64, Midway has updated Paperboy with an emphasis on style and fresh gameplay. Taking on a distinct '80s retro look, like the flared fenders on an old Ford, Paperboy leaps off the screen with some very clever use of polygonal geometry, and the gameplay has evolved along with the graphics. Besides delivering papers to needy subscribers while avoiding a wealth of obstacles, from bikini-clad babes to mad scientists and their offspring, the game goes from being on tracks in the beginner stages to free-roaming 3D madness in the intermediate and advanced levels. There are also now boss rooms where your paperboy (or girl: it's all about being politically correct) must duke it out, BMX-style, with an area guardian. Bonus stages for each level and a variety of radical maneuvers to perform, like no handers, 360° spins and other extreme tricks, add to the already sweet pot. To keep you pedaling in style, the music and sound effects are first-rate as well. Paperboy has a nasal Macaulay Culkin-like voice and the soundtrack features a spirited array of nicely arranged level-specific jingles. This is a fun little game that retro fans and newcomers alike should relish. **F**



READY TO RUMBLE

• developer: point of view • publisher: midway • available: now

Following on the heels of its Dreamcast brother, probably the one thing that this version of Ready 2 Rumble has over its DC counterpart is that load times are nonexistent. Other than that, element by element R2R for Nintendo 64 doesn't quite stack up to the DC game. But it does come close and, aside from the comparison, the N64 version offers up a decent fighting game for N64 owners. Also to its advantage, the game adequately fills the void in the genre of fighting games on the N64 which, excluding wrestling games, is huge.

Upon first playing, the punch response times seem slow, but after spending some quality time with the game, the skill of boxing comes into play, as you learn when and where to punch and block. The frantic button mashing of typical fighting games doesn't really apply here. This becomes evident especially after taking a boxer through the Championship mode, where he/she goes through various training methods, a slew of prize fights for cash, and several title fights to achieve higher rankings. It was funny to see that the similarity to real boxing is somewhat evident in that the beginning prize fights are fought in hotel conference rooms with only a few people watching from tables spread around the ring.

Graphically, the boxer models are all clean and when viewed in the first-person perspective, the real-time facial bruises on the opponent are evident and sweat goes flying. And of course there's the polygonal Michael Buffer along with his trademark slogan (nope, I'm not going to say it). **F**





KILLER LOOP

• developer: **vcc** • publisher: **Infogrames** • available: **now**

There isn't a glut of futuristic racers on the PlayStation, which raises Killer Loop's fortunes just a bit, but the game is still miles away dynamically from the cream of the crop, Psygnosis' Wipeout series. It's not for a lack of trying on VCC's part: Killer Loop has a solid electronic soundtrack, a fast and very well designed interface, and some amazing-looking courses.

It's a pity then that the actual racing action isn't all that engaging. The wild, roller coaster-like tracks, which allow you to race up walls and even on the ceiling and feature absolutely hair-raising drops, are not really at fault, but the uninspired weapons and control ultimately let the game down. Whereas Wipeout gives a great sense of exhilaration as you fly through the courses, Killer Loop, with its planted tripod racers, feels artificial and forced, with little satisfaction to be had from racing. And the weapons, consisting of a ricochet missile, pulse blasts, and mines, aren't much fun to use. This is a technically solid effort lacking the elusive subjective qualities of a great combat racer like Wipeout. *



RIPPIN' RIDERS

• developer/publisher: **UEP systems/Sega** • available: **now**

With Rippin' Riders, the first snowboarding game for the Dreamcast, what we get is a pretty vanilla snowboarding game that besides its rich visuals, offers little to no innovations in terms of gameplay in the one-player venue. In the two-player mode, however, Rippin' Riders offers a wealth of innovative play choices, allowing head-to-head competition based on both time and tricks. The one-player game, which pits you against the clock and five treacherous courses riddled with obstacles and pitfalls, is predominantly a skills game. To advance, you'll need to first find the right board/player combo and then wire each slope until your time and trick points combined give you enough points to advance. All five tracks take a couple of hours in total to master, and then it's the ending slope for you, followed by the ceremonial unlocking of secret characters, outfits and the like. If this was all RR had to offer, I'd score the game around the C to C+ range. On the two-player front, however, having received my first dose of downhill split-screen with little to no degradation, I must say this is where the Dreamcast's extra oomph really pays off. Playing among some of the more challenging locales against a formidable foe can be quite a rush. Although soho® (Miyamoto's N64 snowboarding game) is still resonating in my brain, this portion of RR definitely took its memory down a notch. The rider-specific musical accompaniment, which runs the gamut from hard-core rock to drum and bass, helps keep you in the flow, while the visual IV drip sustains the wow factor. As huge environments effortlessly whisk by without a trace of warping or breaking up, you suddenly realize that you can never play a downhill racer on your PS or N64 again. It's a shame the player models themselves aren't more detailed and animated, but overall for a first effort, I'd have to that Rippin' Riders succeeds on at least one level. If nothing else, it provides us a window into the future as we ponder the possibilities of winter games to come. †



BALLISTIC

• developer: mitchells publisher: infogrames • available: now

This deceptively simple puzzle game from Mitchell Corporation of Japan at first glance looks like a clever riff on Bust a Move, and at second glance, it looks like that too, but that doesn't stop it from succeeding quite admirably as a puzzle game. The concept can be grasped immediately, and extended play reveals enough strategy and gameplay enhancements to give Ballistic some legs.

Basically, the idea behind Ballistic is to keep the string of balls from making their way to the center of the spiral, from which you are shooting out balls of differing color, attempting to match up three of like color and instigate chain reactions. In Stage mode, the idea is to clear the field of balls, while in the Tetris-like Panic mode, you just keep going for as long as you can. As you progress, new challenges such as double ended spirals and tornadoes (which bounce fired balls away) make Ballistic even more intense, as does an addictive two-player mode. **B-**



SPEED DEVILS

• developer: ubi soft montreal publisher: ubi soft • available: now

Dreamcast: the system of choice for racing-game fans. If you would have talked to me six months ago, that statement would have been the last thing I thought would define the system going into the holiday system. But it's a fact, thanks in large part to Ubi Soft and its third PC-to-Dreamcast racing game, Speed Devils.

Speed Devils shares with all Dreamcast racing games the inflated ability to make you want to love it for the graphics alone. The impressive settings, which range from the hills and studio sets of Hollywood to the mountainous countryside of Canada, are bursting with fine details like convincing skies and nicely represented changes in the elements.

After the sharp look of the game begins to lose its initial edge, Speed Devils relies on the depth of the Championship mode for its longevity. There is a vast array of cars and upgrades to purchase as you score cash from winning the progressively more difficult tournaments. One of the more involving aspects of the game is the ability to add to your winnings by achieving the best lap time, highest speed, most time spent in the lead, or a faster speed than the posted radar detectors. When you make your way back into the garage area, bets can also be made against your opponents, to be settled on the course.

As you compete for points to move up classes, different courses are opened and several variations provide new sets of challenges. A bevy of unusual obstacles and track-side hazards are constantly impeding your progress, like a flaming dinosaur in Hollywood and a violent tornado in Louisiana. It keeps crowded company, but at least Speed Devils is unique. **B-**





MIDWAY ARCADE PARTY PAK

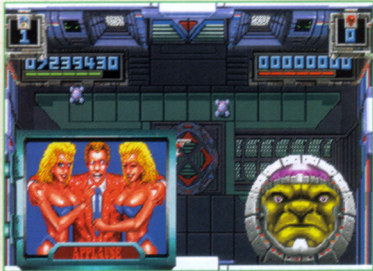
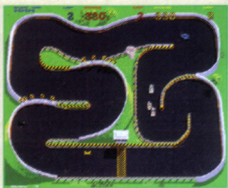
• developer: digital eclipse • publisher: midway • available: now



Alright, this is retro gaming, 2600 and Intellivision and 4-bit-what-have-you comps are all well and good, but ten will get you twenty that what most gamers want to relive aren't games they played at home, but the classics of the arcade that never quite made it to consoles. Most all of the games on the Midway Arcade Party Pak have never gotten a perfect home conversion, 720° was cut down for the NES, as were Rampage and Toobin'.

The ports are well-written, and some of them take advantage of the PlayStation's analog control, which is an excellent move on Midway's part. Smash TV controls just as it was meant to with the dual sticks, and Super Sprint isn't half bad either. 720° still feels weird, but I never could get the hang of that one.

Along with the games (Toobin', Klax, Smash TV, Rampage, 720°, and Super Sprint), there are also FMV interviews with members of the games' creative teams about the history involved with them. Learn, for example, why Super Sprint was a three-player game (a question pondered by gamers since time immemorial). The games and the history snippets form a pretty classy package; it would be nice if more retro packs offered this much (Capcom, I'm looking squarely in your direction). If you, like me, could never beat Smash TV, or even figure out how to play 720°, pick this one up and relive your lost youth. ☺



QUAKE II

• developer: hammerhead • publisher: activision • available: now



It's easy for hardcore PC gamers to scoff at this PlayStation version of Quake II. The PS' comparatively minuscule RAM is but one of the bottlenecks that the graphics must squeeze through, and the lack of true independent multiplayer support seems to rob the game of its real reason for being. But developers Hammerhead have delivered a respectable version of this classic FPS, doing their best within the limitations of the hardware to retain the essence of the one-player game.

In order to make Quake II work on the PS, the levels have been somewhat scaled down from the PC game, quite unlike the N64 version, which took a freer license with level design. So in that sense, this version is truer to the PC original, and that extends to a unique control method for the PS which uses the mouse peripheral to look around in conjunction with the digital pad for movement. It works pretty well, as does the standard Dual Shock method of using the left stick to mouse-look and the action buttons for movement.

Quake II for the PlayStation captures enough of the atmosphere, architecture and action of its PC counterpart to be worthwhile as a one-player game, and also boasts decent two- and four-player deathmatch modes. But of course, playing a game like this on a split screen is nothing like the "real" Quake II, and if you've never been exposed to that, then this is about as good a version as could be achieved on PS. *



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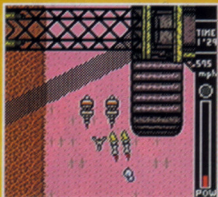
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star wars episode one racer dev: lucasarts pub: nintendo avail: q4

Jump into Anakin's podrace in this one-on-one overhead racer! There are 20 opponents to race against, and 20 different tracks to challenge them on, as well as a link-up mode for a head-to-head battle against your friends. This game will use Nintendo's rumble cartridge, and should be out in time for the holidays. **A+**



snk vs. capcom—battle of the strongest fighters dev/pub: snk avail: q4

This much-anticipated game is due out in December, featuring characters from classic SNK and Capcom titles (King of Fighters, Samurai Shodown, Fatal Fury, Street Fighter, and Darkstalkers), game modes familiar to devotees of both camps (two-man tag team, three-man elimination mode, survival mode, etc.), as well as link cable support for battle against other NGPCs, as well as a Dreamcast link-up, most likely similar to SNK's KoF-R2, where you can transfer fighters to and from each system for ultimate handheld or console battles. **A+**



biomotor unitron dev: yumekobo pub: snk avail: now

Is Biomotor Unitron SNK's sci-fi answer to Pokémon? Minus the critter collecting, side quests, and a huge franchise, they're both handheld games featuring iconic battles in which you increase experience, gather gold and resources, and in the end gain notoriety as the master of your discipline. In BU, you control a war machine called a Unitron, and you begin the game as a novice with a basic junker and an engineer who maintains the Unitron behind the scenes. Your main character gains experience through battle, and the engineer gains experience by developing parts you've found, won, or bought into better, stronger parts.

Most of the game is presented with 2D backgrounds and static



character drawings popped in, and the text dialogue appears in a box at the bottom of the screen. While this isn't very state of the art, once you're involved in the story, it works just fine.

However, you'll spend much of your time either battling in the arena, trying to attain the next title, or wandering through one of the four randomly generated dungeons, battling creatures, finding gold and items, and trying to reach the boss in the seventh level of each dungeon. These bosses guard secret items that are difficult to get to, but well worth the effort. But if you can't make it to at least the fifth level unscathed, you have no chance coming anywhere near the final treasure, so keep leveling up and upgrading the Unitron!

The battle system is similar to other games in this genre, using Hit Point (HP) and Energy Point (EP) levels, and a variety of attack types or items. In BU, however, your EP level is fully restored between battles, and you may even take a battle turn to recharge EP.

What Biomotor Unitron doesn't have—collecting, side quests, and a huge license—it makes up for in strategy, playability, and story. SNK definitely does things their own way, and once again their way results in a game well worth getting. **B+**



neo turf masters dev/pub: snk avail: q4

NTM is a very arcade-like take on golf, with six players and only three courses to choose from. The game will always start each shot with the ball aimed square at the pin (not factoring in wind and terrain), even on fairways that require shots in other directions to get the best approach, and this results in more shots bouncing off the pin than you'll find in most golf games. And while on the surface this results in a fairly simplistic game in which the biggest decision is how much power to put behind the shot at hand, the vs. mode and tournament modes are verifiably addictive. And because the tournament mode takes a fair amount of time (playing twice through each course), the inclusion of a "save anywhere" feature is a life-saver to those of us trying to get in a couple of holes while going for the championship. Winning the tournament and vs. games awards you special use-once clubs that boost certain attributes in your next game. Overall, this is a game that will suck up much of your free time. **B+**



ballistic dev: mitchell systems pub: infogrames avail: now

If you pine for the good ol' days of Tetris and Bust A Move, here's your next challenge. In Ballistic, the icon-filled bubbles appear on the right side of the screen and move down the Dreamcast logo—I mean, the spiral—to close in on your fortress in the center. Your defense? Shoot icon-filled bubbles at the line, and any three-in-a-row disappears, giving you a little breathing space. Additionally, a Checkmate puzzle mode



is included, which consists of 50 patterns of immobile balls already in place. They only move forward one space with each shot you make, but you've got a limited amount of ammo. The music can be a little annoying, but the gameplay is a new twist on the puzzle genre. **B**

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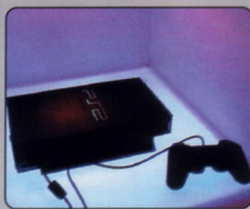
★ TGS '99 AUTUMN

Tokyo was a hot and humid host for this year's autumn TGS, as the Makuhari Messe convention center saw more than 163,866 showgoers and members of the press swarming through its cavernous halls from September 17 to 19. The lure of the PS2 spiked attendance levels, and many turned out to see Sega's counter move as they enthusiastically and desperately endeavor to grow their user base in Japan. The second and third days, which were open to the public, saw the convention center literally overflowing, with the morning queue (upper left) being absolute insanity. Thankfully, everyone survived, taking with them a great first look at Sony's second attempt to dominate the gaming market. With over 70 exhibitors, we couldn't cover everything, but we think these are the highlights.



★ SONY PLAYSTATION 2 DRAWS RECORD CROWD TO AUTUMN TGS

Well aware of the significance and rabid interest in their new PlayStation hardware, Sony's booth exuded an almost cold confidence with its dark lighting and smoke-filled PS2 video presentation. Rolling demos and a handful of



playable games certainly proved the might of the somber and serious-looking DVD-capable and backward-compatible system. An optical output, USB and Firewire ports, DTS ability and a linear skate drive make this the most high-end console ever conceived, a fact reflected in its nearly \$400 price tag.

And as an idea of how far technology to cost ratios have advanced, think of the original \$700 price tag of the lame duck 3DO and the \$399 that the Saturn cost when it was first launched. With the full support of practically all major third parties, expect a steady stream of development for the PS2 as well, although it is rumored to be a fairly difficult system to maximize graphically, potentially leaving leaner developers out to dry.



PLAYSTATION 2 SPECS:

CPU: 128 Bit Emotion Engine
System Clock Frequency: 294.912 MHz
Main Memory Direct: RDRAM
Memory Size: 32MB

Graphics: Graphics Synthesizer
Clock Frequency: 147.456MHz
Embedded Cache: VRAM 4MB

Sound: SPU2
Number of Voices: 48ch plus software
Sound Memory: 2MB

Disc Device: CD-ROM and DVD-ROM
Device Speed: CD-ROM 24 times speed,
DVD-ROM 4 times speed



★★
TOKYO
GAME
SHOW



★ THE BOUNCER.....



Dream Factory's first game since their hardware-defining Tobal 2 was incredible to see on video, as the playable game set up for showgoers only allowed for camera and lighting control during a canned flight scene. In this cinematic, free-roaming brawler, Matrix-like mid-air freeze frames punctuated battles taking place on multiple levels and through cavernous environments, including an intricately constructed train terminal. A cut scene featuring a



fiery train wreck almost looked like a live-action pyrotechnic stunt. And throughout the demonstration, Dream Factory's supreme skill in character movement and collision could be witnessed in the very solid-looking fighting action. Due at launch.



★ GRAN TURISMO 2000.....

One of the first games we headed for at the PS2 booth was Gran Turismo 2000. Though no Mario, this game will be a strong hardware pusher at the launch, so there's indeed a lot riding on it. In its playable form however, we have to say that it was not immediately impressive. The cars looked artificial (far too reflective) and it appeared as if the anti-aliasing was still off, giving the game a shimmer, lo-res look. Obviously, expectations were very high for what

this system was capable of—perhaps unnaturally so—and there was certainly some next-generation stuff going on. A brilliant, if slightly overdone, sun flare effect shone off the slightly shiny tarmac with stunning realism and the polygonal complexity of the cars and tracks was beyond Dreamcast. There must have been a mad scramble to get a track working for the demo, and the game will no doubt improve.



★ DARK CLOUD.....

Sony's so-called "Georama RPG" Dark Cloud didn't show off any mad battle scenes or cinematic cut scenes, but rather displayed the PS2's effortless handling of water effects and fast calculation ability. From a simple overhead map, you create environments in DC, forming streams, buildings, and are then able to zoom immediately into the just-created world and begin moving around within it. How this will pan out as a viable gameplay concept remains to be seen.



★ POPOLCROIS 3

Using the PS2's rendering power to create a new kind of real-time character aesthetic, Popolocrois III featured characters that look like hand-drawn cels in still pictures, complete with ink outlines and simple one-color shading, but move in proper 3D. This third entry in the series (the first two were on PS) was a visual delight.



★ **TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT**

Namco's only playable PS2 game was Tekken Tag Tournament, and it looked amazing. TTT had the characters and backgrounds to eclipse their own Soul Caliber on Dreamcast (as expected), the current high-water mark. For instance, instead of a detailed texture over a flat plane, the floors featured subtle three-dimensional detailing with realistic highlights and shadows. Backgrounds featured great depth and convincing effects, from multiple jets of very good looking fire spewing forth from statue heads to dense foliage moving convincingly on the ground. The characters were stunning, with convincing muscle tone and eerily realistic eyes, complete with proper movement. What's more, the tag-team feature brought an exciting new style of play to the series, with multi-character throws and combos. For instance, you can begin a combo with one character, launching him or her into the air, and then call in the second character to finish them off. It made for some chaotic fun, and TTT should sell plenty of PS2s.

★ **NEW RIDGE RACER**

Sadly, New Ridge Racer (tentative title) was being shown on tape only, but Namco once again proved their worth by showcasing a game that looked classier and more realistic than Gran Turismo 2000. NRR impressed in every area that a next-generation racing game should. The car models were amazingly rendered, with the lead car getting massive polygonal detail, right down to visible brake calipers and working pop-up lights. And there was a great sense of the wheels reacting to the road surface and g-forces as they moved about in the wheel wells. Trackside, things were even better, as we finally seemed to get trees that were more substantial than two paper thin wafers and sprawling detail extending out in every direction, most impressively to the sides of the course. This gave the game environment a volume and scope greater than any other home racing game.

★ **DENSEN**

Easily the most peculiar of the Sony games, DenSen explored the novel concept of zipping about, suspended beneath power lines. The game didn't seem to make much use of the PS2 hardware in its demo reel, but made up for with its oddity, including a scene where the player is circling a giant mother figure featuring the text "Mama is playing a dance." The point of this? No one knows.

★ **STREET FIGHTER EX ...**

Arika's 3D Street Fighter series made an appearance on PS2, and while not quite the graphical showcase that Tekken was, it's aiming for a flashier, more cartoony appearance, and at that, it succeeded wonderfully. Typically solid control, big impact sparks and tag team play brought excitement to this awesome series.

★ **UNISON ...**

Shown as a rolling demo only, Tecmo's Unison is their attempt to enter the popular dancing/music genre with this rather cute endeavor.

★ **KESSEN**

A huge leap beyond Koei's solid but dry console entries, over a hundred real time characters clash on screen in massive battles.



★★
**TOKYO
GAME
SHOW**

★ SEGA DC VS PS2 FIGHT! ★



In contrast to Sony's dark and serious area, Sega's booth was brimming with color and light as gamers crowded around Virtual On and Space Channel 5. Sadly, Shenmue was nowhere to be seen in playable form, only a video demo and brief presentation by Yu Suzuki. But at least Sonic Team was represented, and the maraca shaking of Samba de Amigo had crowds in stitches, though that and the simple internet game Chu Chu Rocket were no



★ SPACE CHANNEL 5 ★



Boosted by the sexy dancer decked out in orange gear, Sega's Space Channel 5 (from the Rally team) had both men and women in its kitschy futuristic grasp. This new wave dancing/music game fea-

tured a cast of bizarre aliens (being handed out in miniature balloon form) and a scantily clad female leading the dance. With its simple controls and catchy music, Space Channel 5 had broad appeal.

★ VIRTUAL ON 2 ★

Sega had a basically perfect conversion of the Model 3 Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram and running, as well as a two-stick controller to go along with it. All the speed and high-resolution graphics were kept dutifully intact, and were a huge draw at the DC booth. In a Dreamcast first, Virtual On will allow for two-player competition between two directly linked DCs (just like the PS link mode), in addition to full network modem play. This speedy mech fighter should ignite DC sales this December in Japan.



★ ZOMBIE REVENGE ★

This action-based offshoot of The House of the Dead was looking good, being a practically perfect Naomi port. Zombies have certainly come on strong as one of the Japanese's foe of choice, and this mix of Dynamite Cop and House of the Dead offered up plenty of mindless action and great-looking graphics. ZR featured arcade and original modes and complete two-player play. Along for the ride was the same deadpan voice acting found in HOTD—always good for a laugh.



★ CRAZY TAXI

Another perfect looking Naomi port, Crazy Taxi gave the DC yet another action booster shot with its wild driving gameplay and solid graphics. In CT, you've got to get passengers to their destination in the quickest and most exciting manner possible, jumping from parking structures and careening through traffic.



★ TYPING OF THE DEAD

This thing certainly is not going to sell machines for Sega, but Typing of the Dead was an oddly entertaining experiment. Taking the shooting action of The House of the Dead and replacing the gunshots with keystrokes is an idea that no one saw coming, but as a gameplay concept, it works. As the zombies and other creatures appear on screen, a small plaque comes up in front of them with a word that must be quickly banged out on the keyboard. Each keystroke is like a shot, and smaller enemies like the slugs each get a single unique letter.



★ GODZILLA

The original Godzilla DC game was generally considered to be terrible, scraping by on its status as a launch title, but this latest Godzilla, Generations, is looking much better. Instead of the ponderous and awkward gameplay of the first, GG features shooting elements with a lock-on system like Panzer Dragoon (no complaints there) and vastly improved graphics.



★ DEE DEE PLANET

This beautifully simple multiplayer game is like a Japanese version of Lobotomy's frighteningly addictive Deathtank Zwei. Easily one of the most unique-looking games to grace a console, this simple affair designed for online play could be a freakish delight.



★ D2

This month's cover story was not playable at the fall TGS, but Warp got the crowds in with its sexy European models and frequent D2 trailer screenings. Kenji Eno took the Dreamcast stage to demonstrate the game's addictive hunting feature, drawing a response of pity from the female hostess when Kenji revealed that even the little bunnies hopping about could be taken down. Kenji was silent on the matter.



TOKYO GAME SHOW

★ **SONIC TEAM**

Sonic Team is going multiplayer crazy. From Phantasy Star Online to Chu Chu Rocket, network gaming is obviously high on their list. But as delightful as Samba de Amigo was and as exciting as the prospect of a new Phantasy Star game seems to be, it was disappointing not to see a new NIGHTS game or at least something more substantial to play than Chu Chu Rocket. Still, Yuji Naka delivered two very fun games for TGS, and who knows what the future holds.

★ **CHU CHU ROCKET**

Due to the often nebulous and unreliable time frames of big, ambitious titles such as Shenmue, Sonic Team wanted to produce a simple, cheap multiplayer game, and Chu Chu Rocket is the result. One of the few four player games on DC, CCR, the first of Sega's Simple Network series, also features the same number of players over a network in this literal game of cat and mouse. The object of the game is to guide the little mice into the rockets before the cat catches up to them, and the player with the most mice at the end of the round wins. CCR is tricky because the little arrows used to guide the mice also guide the cat, so you've got to be very clever in how you coax the little fellows into the rockets. Simple and addictive fun.

★ **PHANTASY STAR ONLINE**

The most potentially exciting game to come out of the newly splintered Sonic Team was also the one most shrouded in mystery. No actual gameplay footage was shown, merely a video clip of some

environments and enemies. It looked stunning, but just how this new Phantasy Star will play online and what the story and characters will be is currently unknown.

★ **SAMBA DE AMIGO**

On display in arcade form, but coming soon to DC, Samba de Amigo is Sonic Team's take on the music genre, and it was a freakish delight. Instead of picking at a guitar beating on drum pads, this one centered around shaking maracas in certain points in space corresponding to high, middle, and low prompts on screen. It will be interesting to see the arcade version's colorful maracas get turned into grey/white rubbery things for the DC version. As for the game, swirling psychedelic backgrounds dazzled the eyes, while a crazed monkey danced and shook about. Great fun.

★ ETERNAL ARCADIA

Once known mysteriously as Project Ares, this new game from the original Phantasy Star creators certainly piqued more than a few gamer's interest when it was announced. Now known as Eternal Arcadia, further details emerged at this year's TGS. Following a brief presentation from the game's producers, a rolling demo of Eternal Arcadia played on the big screen and looked fantastic. Appealing character design and an inspired world featuring great air ships and sprawling environments bode well for this highly anticipated game. And it better be good, for the PS2 will be sitting right next to it on store shelves.



★ SHENMUE

Curiously not playable, Sega still promoted Shenmue quite heavily, obviously already aware that the game was going to be delayed till next year. As one of the most expensive games of all time, Shenmue could save the DC or bring Sega to their knees. There's a lot riding on this one.



★ EVOLUTION

Evolution was a fun little random dungeon RPG, and Sting is seeing that the fantastic character design of that game is not going to waste in Evolution 2. Looking to be a bigger and better game than the first, E2 will feature fixed dungeons (in addition to the random type), which should lend it a more traditional, truer RPG feeling. We don't know that many gamers that cotton to the whole random dungeon notion, so E2 should prove more popular.



★ DEAD OR ALIVE 2

The game that could unseat Soul Calibur in the realm of fighting game graphics was still not being displayed on Dreamcast hardware.

Arcade machines were the only playables, and if Tecmo can manage the massive arenas in the Dreamcast version, we'll be suitably amazed.



★ BANGAID

Treasure's first Dreamcast entry is not the much-delayed Gunbeat, but a new version of their great side scrolling N64 shooter Bangaio. Featuring more detailed graphics and new levels, it's great to see Treasure releasing something on DC, especially in a genre that will remain pretty sparse.



TOKYO GAME SHOW

★ **SONY GT2 & GTA RACE ON**

Obviously, the big excitement at the Sony booth was PS2, but with the hugely anticipated Gran Turismo 2 and the surprisingly popular Crash Bandicoot and Crash Team Racing on display, the five year old PS was still drawing crowds.

★ **GRAN TURISIMO 2**

With 400 cars, including a far greater selection of European and American vehicles, a rally racing mode, and an improved graphics engine, this guaranteed multi-million seller was looking better than ever. The GT2 kiosks featured these overgrown headphones which went around the neck for that special intimacy between player and machine. And there were plenty of people waiting to experience this, as rumors of possible delay made the hands-on play that much more special.

★ **LEGEND OF DRAGON**

Sony's ultra-ambitious RPG certainly has talent behind it, being staffed by members of the original Super Mario RPG, Final Fantasy VI, and Omega Boost. Stunning CG scenes rivaling the work of Square and solid real time battles made Dragon look promising, but as always, the proof will be in the play. This four CD game is due in December in Japan.

★ **TYO**

This small Tokyo-based developer drew the crowds with their customized big rig on display, there to help promote their new game Artkamion. In this oddball racing game, you get to create custom rigs.

★ **ENIX**

It's amazing that Japanese gamers have not grown weary of waiting for Dragon Quest VII, and if anything, they're more rabid than ever. The queue to get into the Enix booth for a sampling of the game was massive and ever-present. And Enix drew even more attention with their other high-profile game Valkyrie Profile, from the makers of Star Ocean. VP was notable for a unique combat system wherein different characters could be assigned to different buttons on the control pad, facilitating interesting combo situations. Rounding out the Enix juggernaut were new Game Boy Color versions of Dragon Quest I and II, bringing the series to a new generation.

★ **POCKETSTATION**

There was another big PocketStation push with a series of original games called PocketTan. Apart from the massive PocketStation on display (a match for the giant PS controller used for Parappa the Rapper from shows past), little dioramas were set up displaying some of the game's characters in everyday situations. Now all we need is a giant PlayStation to stick that thing into.



★ CAPCOM

Biohazard 3 was Capcom's big game of the TGS, even though its Japanese release was but days away from the show. Still, gamers crowded into the B3 theatre for a peek at the latest survival horror opus. Capcom also presented Gun Survivor, a light gun title where players blast zombies, kind of like that other zombie blasting game. Without the benefit of 128-bit hardware, however, Gun Survivor lacked visual appeal, although it was made worthwhile by the fact that unlike other light gun games, players could actually control their movement. And for the explosive wireless phone market, Capcom's Melody kiosks allowed users to download custom ringing chimes. True Capcom fans could also pick up some great memorabilia at Capcom's goods booth.



★ NAMCO

Namco's big doings were on PS2 (New Ridge Racer and Tekken Tag Tournament), but the PS was well represented with the action/RPG Dragon Valor and Rescue Shot. A highlight at the Namco booth was the bestowing of the Pacman 20th Anniversary Award to Billy Mitchell, Jr. from Hollywood, Florida. He's the first human ever to achieve a perfect score of 3,333,360 on July 3, 1999. As part of celebrating the game for its 20th birthday, Namco president Nakamura presented the award to Billy at this year's TGS.



★ SQUARE

Square's TGS PS booth was predictable, but solid and suitably crowded nonetheless. Joining the familiar Vagrant Story, Dewprism, and Chrono Cross were Parasite Eve 2 and Chocobo Stallion. Also present was a PS version of the original Chrono Trigger (A,E) featuring a new animated ending sequence which will tie the game more closely to Chrono Cross. Parasite Eve 2 (B,C) featured more straightforward gameplay with a simplified battle system and better quality renders, while Chocobo Stallion (F) attempted to meld the popularity of horse racing games and Square's famous beast of burden. High-quality resin models from Chrono Cross (D).

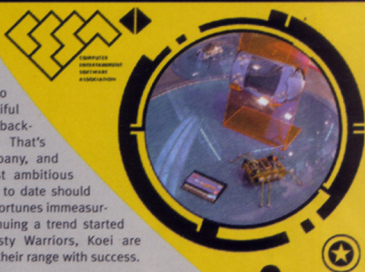


★★
TOKYO
GAME
SHOW

KOEI



While Koei was wowing crowds with their video of Kessen, their first PS2 game, they were equally proud of their long-awaited PlayStation title, Zill O'll. Koei's fantasy-based RPG has been compared heavily with Square's Final Fantasy series, from the look of the battles to



the beautiful rendered back-grounds. That's good company, and Koei's most ambitious PS offering to date should raise their fortunes immeasurably. Continuing a trend started with Dynasty Warriors, Koei are expanding their range with success.

SNK



model, certainly one of the best portable system designs ever. There wasn't that much action the gaming front, just SNK vs. Capcom Card Battle and Densha de Go 2. On PS, their gothic horror RPG Koudelka continued to impress with its gorgeous character design and brilliant atmosphere.

BANDAI

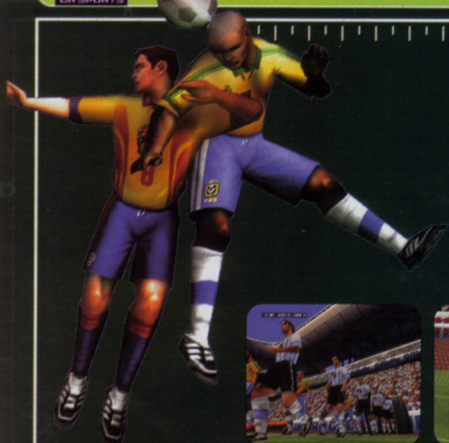
The little portable that could asserted its second place status behind the mega-selling Game Boy by offering up a great selection of fun games and truly interesting gimmicks. Capcom's Pocket Fighter was a treat on

Wonderswan, as was their little version of Rockman & Forte (based on the recent Super Famicom game) and classic Rockman. But the star of the Wonderswan display for us was the Wonderborg. This little mechanical spider (resembling a miniaturized version of the deadly machines plaguing Tom Sellek and his bad haircut in the film Runaway) could be programmed through a simple interface on the Wonderswan. Then with a wireless transmitter device which clipped onto the side of the WS, the program could then be beamed into the little machine, giving it a purpose in its non-sentient life. With two Wonderborgs, players can program little duels or just make the little fellows explore their surroundings, emulating the Japanese obsession with bugs.





GAMERS' REPUBLIC    
SPORTS 99



Rage is on a streak with their shooting titles. Granted, the first two titles don't have the tradition or rivalry of their latest endeavor, but only a war sim could top this battle of wills. The game is soccer and the excitement and heartbreak felt during an actual game seems to be replicated in this title. This opinion is made based on the preview status the game is in. Considering that the developers are English—whose homeland is a place where soccer, better known as football, reigns paramount—one would hope their exposure to the game will reflect well into their current project.

The front-end is a bit awkward and seems unfinished, though there is no lack of options. You are able to tweak and modify your team until you are completely happy with the starters and team formation. You can select any one of the UEFA teams along with

a number of world league teams. The most compelling quality found in Striker Pro is the procession of one-player objectives to open up new play modes. Very cool.

You can practice on the field and become certified for each skill that you are able to refine. During these drills you will test dribbling, lead passing, shooting and takeaway attempts. Each of these objectives will have ten drills for you to try and complete. Depending on your success percentage, you will become certified in that skill. For each certification, you will unlock new game modes, including classic matches.

Visual integrity is strong, but there are a lot of subtle and ambient animations and effects that could send this game into stellar status. The field and stadium are well-proportioned, casting nice shadows and crowd animations are incredible, as each section of people sway like a calm sea. Player models also sport some great animation, just nothing unfamiliar. If more intense lighting effects and niche player animations are added to this mix, Striker Pro will become a classic.

Already there is some interesting AI design, which makes wanting to play Striker more alluring. Players will not always pick up on a pass and not all of the players are well adjusted at trapping the ball. Combine these two attributes with play mechanics that are fairly standard and you find a much more involved strategy to controlling the ball and scoring without confusing or frustrating the user.

While saying that this could be the greatest soccer game to date would sound cheeky; it definitely holds enough merits to be considered great.



gamers republic sports '99

UEFA STRIKER PRO 2000

developer: rage publisher: infogrames available: jao



Here is what you'll find if you decide to purchase NBA ShowTime: NBA on NBC: great player likenesses, awesome animation routines and, of course, the ability to dunk with absolutely anyone—the game's main draw. What you won't find is evolving AI or a reason to go on with an extended one-player outing. So the question becomes, "Who wants to deliver a series of humiliating dunks without a friend to talk smack to?"

The whole package is tailored for unadulterated arcade antics and the presentation mimics an NBC basketball broadcast. The game runs on a nice swing camera and the new commentary

is fresh: no more "Boom-shak-a-laka!" Although I'm still trying to decide if I miss that or not.

Multiplayer is the only way to go with this one, folks, as the banter in ShowTime induces trash talking that makes Thanksgiving dinner with the family look tame. In the end, ShowTime is crazy fun, but the lack of depth in the single-player game does pull it down. When is Midway going to learn that all these arcade conversions need are some cool one player objectives to provide long-term value?



gamers republic sports '99

NBA SHOWTIME

developer: midway inc. publisher: midway available: now



Being used to the tried-and-true formula of EA golf games, Cyber Tiger struck me as bold and exciting. Not the way, say, Bull's Eye bar-b-q sauce claims to be, but in the sense that after a tradition of trying to mimic the game of golf, EA returns to focusing on the basics—fun, challenge and playability.

Initially some, like me, will be turned off by the exaggerated look of all of the characters, even though everything else looks and plays as it should. Thankfully, as you become more skilled, your on-screen persona matures in appearance, lending to the belief you are involved in a serious game of skins and not miniature golf.

The standard three-club swing is present and for those of you with analog controllers a very cool cock-and-snap swing is available. Both swing styles have about a 15- to 30-

minute learning curve, but once you dial them in, it's sweet sassy molassey, especially when using the analog swing.

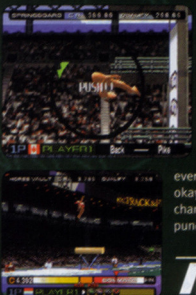
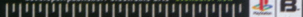
To use it, you pull back on either analog stick, then, when the percentage meter reaches your desired strength, snap the stick forward. Hitting a 30-yard chip with this method could cause you to jump around the room uncontrollably. Suffice it say, EA has created a unique and entertaining golf game.



gamers republic sports '99

CYBERTIGER

developer/publisher: electronic arts available: now



I am still confused. Konami has pioneered a series of Bemani games, each built to be used with a specialized controller. They have simulated a DJ turntable, a guitar and even a dance pad to turn you footloose. So then why haven't they developed a very simple pad for furious button mashing? It would make me want to play this game (and the one before it) so much more.

As it stands, Track & Field 2000 excels in every way over the original PlayStation title. Well okay, maybe not in play mechanics. Nothing has changed in that department. You are still forced to punch two buttons in sequence as quickly as pos-

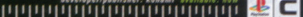
sible, then tap a release button. Be careful, because a long session with this game could leave you crippled temporarily.

Visually, in presentation and player models, the game is gorgeous. The motion capturing is top notch and the new events are well represented. I especially like the vault event, great camera logic and a smooth frame rate kept me returning for the chance to break the world record. If Konami can recreate better, more interactive play mechanics in the future, the series will find much success. For 2000 they have only given more of the same. Not good, but not bad either.

gamers republic sports '99

INT. TRACK & FIELD 2000

developer/publisher: konami available: now





GAMERS' REPUBLIC SPORTS '99

It has taken more time than EA is willing to admit, but they have finally re-discovered that same involving gameplay that made the 3DO FIFA so much fun to sit down with. The game is completely remodeled and rewritten and the balance between the size of the player models, the field and the crowd is nearly flawless. Aside from this immediate visual attraction, I found that the AI is almighty too.

You really need to understand soccer strategy to push the ball downfield and for peak scoring conditions; like in the real game of soccer, you are going to need to volley the ball over the middle. There are some amazing animation routines and cut scenes to drive

home the emotion and physical drama during a game of futbol. It all moves at a speedy frame rate and is captured with stunning camera work.

Just when I about gave up on EA



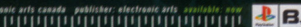
and their ability to innovate and inspire, I'm hit with FIFA 2000 and all respect is restored. My favorite feature has to be the over 40 classic teams, like Holland 1974 and Brazil 1958; each team sports authentic looks and play tactics.



gamers republic sports '99

FIFA 2000

developer: electronic arts canada publisher: electronic arts available: now



From the opening sequence, Knockout Kings 2000 fosters the feeling of a Don King production. Lots of incomprehensible noise, ludicrous drama and fantabulous action the likes of two crazed ferrets in heat. This presentation provides a good laugh; it is just too bad the game doesn't follow the Don Mecca flavor when playing. After the entertaining intro, the only sense of personality or arrogance the boxers display is when they enter the arena as they strut or look around the crowd like they just committed a felony.

Control inside the ring is lacking immediate response and it translates to furious button mashing and labored routing. The game tries to replicate boxing skills, by leading and baiting, but



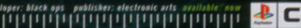
when you or a friend are hell-bent on pounding the coherency out of each other, you never get to discover the loose strategy.

Camera logic has been taken in the right direction, leaving only slight hiccups, but some claustrophobic instances lead to strained and frustrating moments. If these situations were limited to pinning the fighter against the ropes, it would help deliver some authentic tension. I believe most of these shortcomings could have been repaired if the self-praising commercials and poor-production rap video had been removed to leave disc space for refined gameplay scripts.

gamers republic sports '99

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2000

developer: black ops publisher: electronic arts available: now



This game is definitely built to cater to the cromagnon attitude of the fraternity elite. I mean, why else would these player models look like a bunch of orangutans? And being one of only two college basketball games for the PlayStation I was hoping for better. Alas, once again, I fear 989's attempt at dorm room supremacy will remain 2nd string.

I make the snide remark that the players in this game look like orangutans because when standing erect these guys could still scratch their knees. This coupled with all of the broken animations

found in the game adds to the prehistoric look of the whole package. So even though the surrounding visuals on and off the court look miles beyond last year's game, focusing on the action steals from the games thunder.

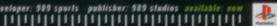
Admittedly, the courtside crowd softens the monkey business happening on the hardwood with respectable animations and localized chants, feeding to an authentic experience. Same with the color commentary which will without a doubt stem to social gatherings with quotes like, "tickle the tassels."

Still absent is the Dynasty mode and without this feature, single-player enjoyment is extinct. Unless this is implemented in the final code or you are sharing dorm space with a basketball nut, this game will end up as a shell warmer.

gamers republic sports '99

NCAA FINAL FOUR 2000

developer: 989 sports publisher: 989 studios available: now



Let's see. What can EA implement in this year's NBA Live game that will set precedence above and beyond any basketball game on the PlayStation? Apparently, a whole lot. The most impressive feature can be summed up with one very special name, Michael Jordan. That's right, the Bruce Lee of basketball is part of the game, ready to dish, fake and dunk in a blur of handles.

What makes this addition even more magnetic is the ability to draft Jordan to a team of your choice. You must take him to the bricks on a street court and school him in a game of one-on-one.



Good luck.

Once you start an actual game on the hardwoods, you'll see very personalized look all of the players. Faces have been mapped onto the models and each reacts to the situation at hand. In its preview state, the only glaring problem is the slight drop in frame rate when everyone is huddled under or around the basket. If EA is able to solve this problem, you can sell all the rest of your basketball games and buy this one.



gamers republic sports '99

NBA LIVE 2000

developer: nulu publisher: electronic arts available: now



The Konami sports department has had a very checkered past. Some of their lineup is exceptional, while others barely scrape by being adequate. With Blades of Steel 2000, I am still debating whether it is a game that will last or fall into mediocrity.

The stats tracker the game uses is awesome. It has the usual season's leader records, goal tending, scoring and also keeps track of minutes spent inside the penalty box. Good for picking out your star player.

I am going to wait for the final code before I go on record, but the game is looking really good. Currently, the player models are running a 60 fps, and watching these Neanderthals wave around their thunder sticks is freakin' awesome. Now if comparable AI schemes, fluid camera logic and signature moves are implemented, this game will be a solid effort.

gamers republic sports '99

BLADES OF STEEL 2000

developer/publisher: konami available: now



When I was exposed to this game for the first time, I had a promising preview copy with a fact sheet that touted some very exciting features. Now that I have a final copy of the game, I'm wondering what happened to all the fodder I was promised.

The presentation is intense. But sadly, that's about all that is noteworthy in FaceOff 2000. The animation is choppy, almost first-generation, and the frame rate is a joke—two aspects promised to be at all-time highs on that dubious old fact sheet.

None of the players use signature moves to shake defenders or fake goalies. Again, according to the fact sheet there were to be over 150 new animations. I'm starting to think that the

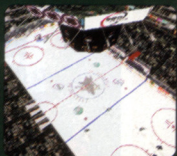
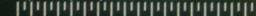
fact sheet should have read, "Subtracted 150 old animations." As well, their new hip Intelligence Comprehension Execution AI (I.C.E. AI; I wonder how long it took the marketing people to think that one up) is a complete debacle. Every team reacts in the same manner when rushing the goalie. They skate in a circle. Not good.

989 had a promising series going with FaceOff. Their third attempt comes up uninspired and embarrassing.

gamers republic sports '99

NHL FACEOFF 2000

developer: 989 sports publisher: 989 studios available: now



world republic

[i] Our new Japanese contingent is on the job both here and in Tokyo and as you can see, the World Republic is back on track in a big way. And we're just getting started. This month has been a great one. Enjoy the coverage and we'll see you back here next month with lots more from our favorite place on Earth.

World Republic Review • developer: **sugar & rockets** • publisher: **sony** • available in japan now

robbit mon dieu



The infectious charm of Jumping Flash makes its way back to the PlayStation in this great sequel.

Jumping Flash is a great series, and I was delighted with this third entry, Robbit Mon Dieu. It's certainly not a huge technical or conceptual leap beyond JF2, but the series' unique charms and affectations are on full display here. There's that same delight in looking at an entire stage through the game's fish-eyed perspective and that wonderful, airy sensation of looking down from the heights of a jump.

Perhaps the biggest shift in this first-person platform/shooter over the previous games is in the nature of the levels; they're now more objective-driven, requiring you to complete tasks such as jumping on a number of platforms within a time limit or protecting a little fellow's carrots from burrowing moles. The action still feels just like the first two games, it's just their framework that has been changed around a bit.

Everything about this series, from the sound and music to the highly appealing, simply rendered characters and environments is charming, and this third entry as much as any other. Well worth checking out. -R



World Republic says "Jumping Flash makes a welcome return to the PS in Robbit Mon Dieu. The action has been tweaked a bit, but the series' unique style and play is intact."

B+

robbit mon dieu © sugar & rockets/sony 1999.



World Republic
Monthly Import Game Reviews
ワールド リパブリック



電気製品

World Republic Preview • developer/publisher yukes • available Japan q1 2000

berserk



From chillin' with Hermie Hopperhead to the bloodiest video game ever devised, Yukes continue to show us their true colors.

Berserk is a brutal, third-person adventure fighting game based on a popular comic series created by Kentaro Miura. The series has appeared in the *Young Animal* manga anthology (published by Hakusensha) and also as a TV animation series.

The story of Berserk begins like many others: In a barren region where famine and war ran rampant, people lived in fear of bandits and the oppression from the Army of the Lord. Those in power misused their positions, and consequently, those below them suffered. One day, a strange disease called Mandragora engulfed the region. Those that came down with this horrible illness would become spiritless yet violent whenever hatred or animosity was directed toward them. People were afraid, and despised those who had contracted the disease and even persecuted them.

Although the game title is the same as the comic series, Miura has rewritten the scenario a little for the game for those who have not seen or read any of the Berserk series. But those who know Berserk will find a secret linkage to the original comic.

One of the attractive parts of the series is that the main character, Guts, who

is a soul reliever, slashes away at eerie enemies possessed with evil, and this element is rendered beautifully on Dreamcast.

Most of the time, you will be facing many enemies and you cannot just do away with them one by one using a single slash: you must use combinations to put them down, not only using a sword, but also other weapons such as blowguns and cannons. Utilizing the combo system, you will witness exhilarating scenes of extreme violence while eliminating evil.

However, the game director and creator seems to give us a more profound meaning to the game by saying, "The theme of Berserk centers around spirituality, which reflects upon the movement of the character and sword. The game does not have to look cool. Rather, it has to include deep attachment to life, a feeling of fear, wrath, and a murderous impulse. Although it is easy to express or re-create this using the effect of splashing blood, as in the comic series, the most difficult task is how we can interpret the spirituality into the virtual world." Berserk is due some time next year.



Los Angeles
ロサンゼルス

Tokyo
東京



World Republic Review • developer success • publisher sega • available december / japan

rainbow cotton



Cotton fans raise a glass! Success' hungry little witch flies again...on the Dreamcast!

Rainbow Cotton will be Success' first Dreamcast title, and the second 3D showing of their flagship character, Cotton. From its debut in 1991 to present day, the Cotton series has consisted almost entirely of side-scrolling shooters, which have been favorites of serious shooting enthusiasts throughout Japan and even in America. Rainbow Cotton will obviously be the first game on which our broom-riding witch will be rendered entirely in real-time polygons, although the obscure but legendary Panorama Cotton on the Genesis was also in 3D, made up of scaling sprites. Another first will be the use of digital animation, which replaces the hand-drawn variety in the anime-style cute cutscenes.

If you're not a follower of the series (which you probably aren't; the only Cotton game to reach American shores was for the ill-fated Turbografx-CD), here's a primer on the characters and story. Cotton is a cute young witch with an uncontrollable addiction to "willow," an imaginary candy. Her sidekick Silk is a fairy, formerly an aide to the Queen of Firamento until she fell in with Cotton. In the game proper, she works a little like the options in Konami's Gradius series, adding to your firepower, although she also aids you in other ways, like Sonic's Tails. In this particular adventure, monsters have invaded Cotton's homeland, seeking to make off with the Legendary Willow, which grants great magical powers. Silk and the queen of Firamento, Berbet, have

to save the Willow from the monsters, and although Cotton might eat it as well (she can't be trusted to act sensibly around her beloved Willow), they decide to enlist her aid. If Tsuweed, the king of the monsters, eats the Willow, their bright and charming world will be plunged into darkness. Cut, print.

Rainbow Cotton normally plays like a railled 3D shooter (such as Panzer Dragoon), until you meet a stage boss, where you move freely in a large arena, with a life bar to track your damage. New to the Dreamcast version, Cotton now has two gauges, one for Cotton and one for her broom. While your broom still has energy, you can fly, but if it runs out, you have to run along the ground. And in stages high in the sky, Silk will carry Cotton once her conveyance breaks down. Also new, each stage diverges into different paths (Darius-style) along the way to the bosses. There are five stages, Moon Town, Cloud Town, Bubble Town, Flower Town, and Lasha Castle, and after clearing the castle, you'll take on the final boss, Tsuweed. It's all coming our way this December in Japan. A U.S. release is doubtful. - JS



While early (these shots don't exhibit fully populated worlds) we can already get a sense of the connection between Panorama Cotton and Rainbow Cotton. Those who know what that means are likely ecstatic; those who don't probably think we're nuts.



World Republic Preview • developer climax • publisher climax • available November / japan



runabout 2

One of '97's most impressive games on wheels, Climax' Runabout, is finally making a comeback.

The sequel to Climax' popular driving game Runabout (Felony 11-79 in the States), in which players can freely drive around in real time, is going to be released for PlayStation (in Japan) on November 18. Last month we introduced Super Runabout for DC, which is scheduled for release this winter. It should be noted that this is a completely different game than the PS version, with a separate staff handling the development.

In this game, you are commissioned to bring cargo to a specific place, or retrieve a certain item by utilizing numerous cars suited for each mission. What is intriguing about the game is that players can drive in any way they see fit to clear each mission. You can drive on the sidewalk or smash into (or through) walls. The game is manic and action-packed, as was its predecessor, where shoving or hitting rival cars or running into a house to find special item or short cut is all part of the fun.

The most intriguing aspect of Runabout 2 is that during a level, you often must hop into other cars. At the start, you can use four different types of cars, and if you fulfill certain conditions, you can have up to 31 cars at your disposal. Much of the time it will take several vehicles to accomplish your goal. By completing objectives, you of course get more customers and orders and are rewarded as a result. So R2 is no ordinary driving game, where you just drive for the speed and fun; it is a strategy driving game where you constantly need to use your brain. Accordingly, the courses are not laid out like a racetrack; if you take a public road, for example, there is a chance of hitting a traffic jam, which will hinder your mission time. Sometimes, you can choose from one of several missions, and depending on the mission you select, the story of the game changes, which means that you can play the game over and over and experience a different plot each time. There's no word yet on whether R2 will cross the pond, but if it plays anywhere near as the original Runabout, I think it's a safe bet that it will. - JS

Los Angeles
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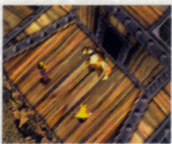
World Republic Preview • developer centroll • publisher amey • available winter/japan

alundra 2



Can a polygonal Alundra satisfy the game's faithful old-school following?

Uh, Houston, we may have a problem. What was and remains a legendary top-down hand-drawn action RPG with stunning character design by none other than Camelot, has evolved into a wholly polygonal sequel. Yes, Alundra fans, the sequel you've been waiting for bears no resemblance to the proud original that laid your brains to waste while captivating your adventurous soul. One would hope that the complex puzzle elements have been retained, although judging from the TGS demo version we acquired, this would not seem the case, as solve-the-riddle seems to have been replaced by flip-the-switch. Of course, to judge a game based on a demo would be plain wrong, so the jury remains out at this time. After all, Activision has seen their way clear to picking Alundra 2 up, so we imagine there must be some power lurking within its polygonal exterior. With a little luck we'll be bringing you a localized preview in a short while.



World Republic Preview • developer graphic research • publisher tomy ent. • available in japan new

ganbare nippon challenge



Yes, a yachting sim. No really, keep reading...

Only in Japan would a game like this ever be conceived, let alone financed for release. In fact, in the States this title wouldn't even make it to paper—which is a shame. None the less, the simulated re-creation of managing a boat crew in this game is presented brilliantly. You will manage all six members of a Yacht racing team, keeping them in constant communication with each other and instructing them in premeditated sequence to carry out orders to keep a consistent nautical speed and the lead during the race.

The tactician and navigator are your key to staying one step ahead of mother nature and recognizing changes in wind direction, while the winch man, fore deck crew and sail trimmer all reconfigure the sails to accommodate the gusty winds available. This unique play-style tethered with awesome wind and weather conditions make for compelling gameplay.

You will not always have the winds you need to get to your destination. So to help you, just off of the boat is an arrow depicting wind direction. When presented with a down-wind, you and the crew will need to pivot away from your target to capture the available element, then swing back, repeating the act until you have reached your goal. Learning the strategy of reading the arrow and calling the correct order of commands is a fresh and addicting experience.

Visual prowess and a smooth FPS aren't main ingredients with Ganbare Nippon Challenge. In fact, the FPS is really choppy, but it doesn't matter. The screen is cluttered with maps, icons and a compass too, leaving little to see through the instrument displays. The camera floats loosely around the boat, shifting from port to starboard, catching the race from a constantly different angle.

During typical sailing conditions you will see smaller vessels off in the distance watching the race, while porpoises draft off the wake your ship creates. At times you will race during an electrical storm, making all of your navigational equipment useless, and at night the coastal cities provide a great romantic scene. All of these ambient and actual events are translated favorably. Ganbare Nippon Challenge is reminiscent of an Amiga or Commodore 64 game, providing great atmosphere and deep simulated gameplay.



TILT FORCE CONTROLLER

As it stands, the Tilt Force 2 is pretty cool if you're looking for a gimmick controller to add a little spark to your racing game.

Reviewing the stock features, the D-pad isn't quite up to snuff, but the analog works surprisingly well. Of course the main attraction is the "Tilt Force," which after some assimilation works nicely. Tested with games like Gran Turismo and R4, it felt better than we expected, but it's still no substitute for dual shock analog action in our opinion. The controller has a great design, solid feel and besides the suspect shoulder buttons seems to be made very well.

DREAM BLASTER

If you're looking to pack a Dreamcast pistol—and you should be—we can offer no better solution than the MadCatZ Dream Blaster. With three arcade modes to choose from, including the ever-useful Auto Fire, and Reload mode for those extra manic shooters like House of the Dead, this is the gun to own. The B button used for manual reloads (so you don't have to click off screen) is within thumb's reach and the design is much more user-friendly than more cumbersome guns. Definitely the gun of choice. And remember kids, guns don't kill zombies, people kill zombies.

4Q/NXT SPEAKER SYSTEM

If you're in the market for a soundsystem that's not only compact but equipped with the latest flat panel speaker technology, look no further. Available at electronic superstores and larger computer chains, 4Q has licensed NXT's flat panel speaker technology and assembled this amazing compact unit. By simply jacking into the headphone jack on your monitor or TV, you'll experience very respectable bass and clear crisp sound out of NXT's paper-thin, super light speakers. The approximately 8 inch high Super Woofer tucks away nicely and looks great; the whole unit scores major style points. As far as game sound systems go, this one is the clear winner. Look for it.

Aside from the stock unit, MadCatZ Dream Pad is our second favorite DC controller. And if

you're looking for a programmable pad, this one's the best out there. Although of our two test units one had a bad spot in the analog, we're hoping this was due to it being a "test" unit. The other worked very well. Since no one here has ever actually programmed a pad before (does anybody actually use this feature) we deem the pad's best feature its cool no-slip rubber grips and buttons. Thankfully, MadCatZ stuck with the stock Sega formula on the shoulder buttons.

DREAM PAD BY MADCATZ

QUANTUM FIGHTER PAD

Now here's a pad you plain want to stay away from. Besides the horrible feel of the analog, it has small nondescript buttons, budget shoulder buttons with way too much free-play, and big reflector-like start buttons that looks like school bus tail-light lens. Sure it's programmable, but what's the point if it's a step down in quality. Hopefully Interact will rethink it's DC pad for 2000.

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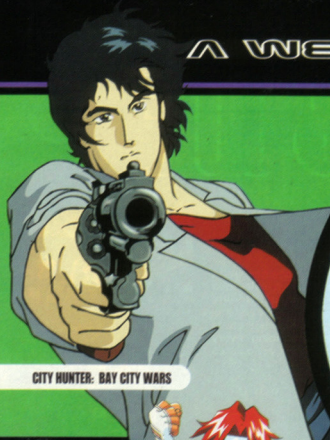
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MARTIAN SUCCESSOR NADESICO

•1996 XEBEC/•1999 ADV FILMS
90 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by dave smith



Translation: This goes first. Buy Martian Successor Nadesico, by all means. If you buy the dub, however, your name will go down, and when the revolution comes you will be beaten savagely by the righteous fist of the UNC Kendo Club. There are many, many things wrong; mispronounced names, voices that ruin certain characters, and the list could go on if one wished to get into specifics. It depresses me greatly that people will buy it anyway, and have the experience of a wonderful show spoiled.

Story: Okay, rant mode off, rave mode on. Nadesico refers to the ND-001 Mobile Battleship Nadesico, sent by Nergal Heavy Industries with a civilian crew to liberate Mars from alien invaders. It sounds like a cliché, which it is, actually, to some degree. What makes Nadesico special is its cast, a mixed bag of geniuses, headcases, and other cheerfully weird types. There's our hero, a robot pilot who'd rather be a cook. There's also the lead pilot, a deranged fan of 1970s mecha anime. Foremost among all is computer operator Hoshino Ruri (OUR GREAT LEADER—I), a genetically engineered twelve-year-old with a devastating intelligence and a firm belief in the total idiocy of all mankind. And there's also Blazing Robo Gekiganger III, about which I'll say no more, lest I spoil the surprise.

Highlight: "Baka."

Animation: This is the show where Xebec became an outfit to watch. The animation is quite nice, especially in the first two episodes (naturally).

Character Design: Wonderful designs by Kia Asamiya (Silent Mobius).

Final Analysis: Get the subtitled edition of Nadesico and you'll never regret it. It combines romantic comedy, parody, mecha action and a dash of serious drama to excellent effect. Lest you be tempted to save five bucks, though, remember you were warned.



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Raising Anime To The Next Level

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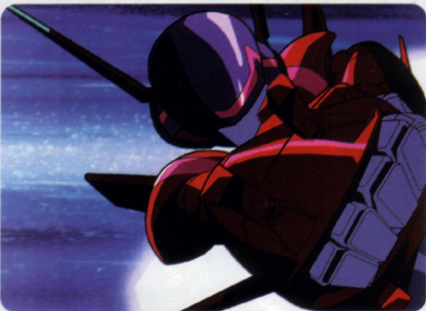


BUBBLEGUM CRISIS TOKYO 2040 VOLUME 2

©1999 AIC/ADV FILMS
90 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by dave halverson

★★★★½

Story: Along with the de rigueur confrontations with the AD Police and rogue boomers, some very nice character interaction and development is going on here. There are interesting flashbacks to Sylla's childhood, insights into the hilariously diseased brain of Brian Meison, Priss and Linna hanging about (I approve of Priss' taste in condiments, speaking of which), and the return of an old face from the OVA series. Mackie isn't half the lech he used to be, though...



Animation: Still smooth, although there's a little more flat shading and panning over still frames in the action-heavy bits.

Soundtrack: Along with the stuff recycled from previous episodes, there's some new noise in evidence, and it's quite good. God bless the distortion pedal.

Dubbing: Still okay. Wong and Leon are actually funny. Nene is cute, nobody does flustered like Spike Spencer, and, gott in himmel, Priss' musical numbers don't send me hammering on the mute button. Some weird lines here and there, though. "I've grown into an adult female"? Maybe the rumors are true.

Final Analysis: Get past the inexplicably cheap conclusion to last volume's cliffhanger (the animation and dubbing in the fight in the restaurant are awful, Bob knows why) and this is good stuff. Not quite the gob-smack-overload of the first volume, but enough to keep me interested in the series.



SUPER HYPER ACTION



COWBOY BEBOP VOLUME 2

©1999 BANDAI VISUAL/ANIME VILLAGE
50 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by dave smith

★★★★½

Story: The second volume of *Cowboy Bebop* sees the introduction of yet another reason to dearly love this show. Faye Valentine...I'm not sure it's possible to properly laud her in a family magazine. She's like the second coming of Mine Fujiko, with looks to kill (or maim at the very least) and the beautiful voice of Megumi Hayashibara. And she's not even the only amazing vision on the tape; not even the only one in episode three. Macross-esque deep space combat, wicked Ganyem'd environmental activists, the guys from the bar in episode one (I sense a running joke) and the coolest aesthetic use of rotational gravity ever devised all grace the screen. Stringing together all the ideas, though, is continuously fine scriptwriting, with witty dialogue (although it's hampered by the translation at times) and tight plotting.



Animation: Still in the realm of good OVA quality; drink in the wondrous missile contrail action and the orbital CG goodness.

Soundtrack: Continuing the *Lupin III* motif, we have more vicious wicked jazz courtesy of Yoko Kanno and SEAT BELTS, to whom we pledge our immortal souls. In particular, we hail guitarist Tsunao Imaori, who'll be unleashed on this country solo in less than six months time.

Design: This is as well-crafted a vision of the future as you'll ever find in prose or film. It's completely believable, without the bother of excessive exposition to introduce this and that. It feels familiar, lived-in, the way things are probably going to turn out.

Final Analysis: If it were not in the same issue as *Princess Mononoke*, this would be a five-star show. Everything about it knocks me dead.



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WILD 7: BIKER KNIGHTS

•1999 URBAN VISION
50 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by dave halverson

★★★ 1/2



Story: Can you say Mod Squad? The Wild 7 are a covert Police motorcycle force made up of ex-criminals. They were formed to operate within the law but outside of the system, free to bring the worst criminals to justice by whatever means necessary. Things get a little dicey, however, when a criminal organization operating inside political circles takes over a TV network by killing its president, and then commence on torturing his celebrity daughter until she agrees to become a TV wrestling queen! Wrestling? Murder? Intrigue? What's this, UPN? Their ultimate plan is to build up their own seven masked riders, headed by the nasty big-breasted she-male, Shelly, and then, through a new show, portray them as defenders of all that is good. Warriors of the people! After the group gains the public trust, they'll run them for office and take over local government. Celebrities running for office? Who would ever think of such a thing? Scary thing is, I think this already happened!

Animation: Originally produced in 1994, the animation is average OVA quality for the time. The emphasis is placed on key closeups and when the action heats up.

Dubbing: A mixed bag really. Most of the characters are voiced well, but a few seem pretty out of place. Not UV's best, but suitable.

Character Design: In the vein of Lupin or Cutey Honey, pretty standard old-school style. While the look is dated (the motorcycles have dual spring-loaded shocks) the characters are diverse and very expressive.

Fight Scenes: No big explosions or pyrotechnics here, but they're done well within the context of the story.

Highlight: The big "Seven on Seven" duel towards the end makes its way into the subway where Shelly gets wild and crazy...right before she buys it, that is.

Soundtrack: The music varies from scene to scene nicely and fits the production well. You won't be hunting down the soundtrack, but it gets the job done.

Final Analysis: The story runs fairly deep and even though it's predictable, adds up to 50 minutes of pretty entertaining anime. Wild 7 emits a cheesy '70s TV show odor. Luckily for Urban Vision, retro is in.



TENCHI FOREVER THE MOVIE

•1999 AIC/PIONEER
95 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by christina alexander

★★★★

Story: One more girl is added to the legendary Tenchi harem when he's stolen by the spirit of a woman whose soul inhabits a Camellia tree. Ayeka and Ryoko are sent into the future to find him, since he's nowhere to be found in their own time. After they find him living with a strange woman, they discover that the world he's been taken to isn't real, and he doesn't recognize them. With Washu's help they have to find a way to show Tenchi that he's living in a dream world.

If you haven't seen much Tenchi, you're at a disadvantage; there's no introduction of the characters, or their situation. Good for veterans, bad for newbies.

Character Design: The characters have great original designs and excellent costumes. It looks a lot like El-Hazard.

Animation: The animation is excellent; lots of

ambient animation that sets the mood and helps you understand what the characters are thinking. Don't ignore the awesome backgrounds.

Dubbing: The same as the rest of the series. Nothing spectacular.

Soundtrack: Melodramatic, but nicely done.

Final Analysis: This is one of the few anime I've watched that didn't have a fight scene, but didn't bore me to suicidal intentions. Halfway in, I really wanted to see Haru-uran on the business end of a baseball bat. It's refreshing to see a drama not set in high school...it's refreshing to see anything not set in high school. If you can't survive without mecha in your bloodstream, pass, but this is a must-see for Tenchi Muyo fans.



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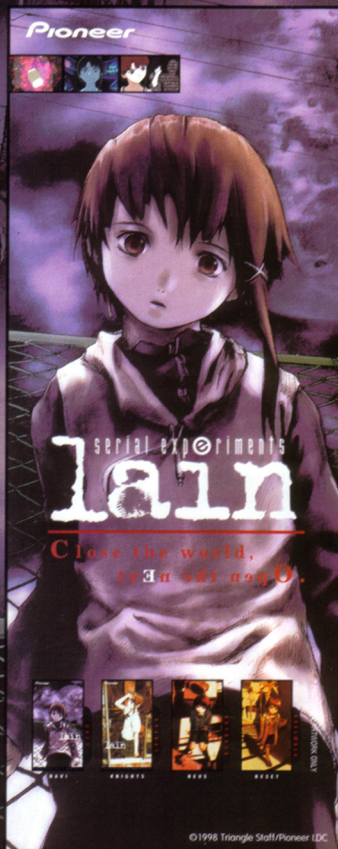
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"Lain" received the EXCELLENCE PRIZE of the 1998 MEDIA ART FESTIVAL by the AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS in Japan. "This work follows a Junior High School girl, Lain, as she explores the often fuzzy borders between the wired and the real worlds. We were impressed with its willingness to question the meaning of contemporary life as it depicted the development of the computer and the ways in which real people live. Much of the content is very down-to-earth school 'Mendokage' and family relations - but the questions this work asks are extremely philosophical and deep."

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MASTER OF MOSQUITO THE VAMPIRE: BLOOD TIES

•1999 ADV FILMS
60 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by dave halverson



1/2, suggested for viewers 15 and up

Story: Hell hath no fury like an undead bride left alone for 300 years! When Inaho, Mosquiton, Yuri, and Hori set sail on a titanic cruise ship, Inaho soon discovers that the O-Part (her key to immortality, and an eternity with Mosquiton) is on the moon. Just as we're wondering how on earth old Mosky's going to get her up there, they meet up with Camille, Mosquiton's vampiric bride! It's been 300 long years since he reluctantly turned her, and so, as one can imagine, she's got one thing on her mind...and it ain't suckin' blood. These two episodes deal predominantly with this precarious situation, although Rasputin and Count Sangermaine, his loyal servant, are still close behind and, of course, still bent on world domination.

Animation: Picking up where the first installment (Resurrection) left off, Blood Ties is packed with crisp visuals. While the animation isn't the greatest, it certainly has many shining moments. Most notably, the episodes have a clean modern look about them, with generous flickering light, vivid color, and superb shading.

Dubbing: Heather Bryson's Inaho has bitching down pat and Gull Lunde handles both of Mosquiton's personae skillfully. A lot of purists regard any dub as a mortal sin, and when they're botched, so do I. But in this case and so many others these days, localized versions tend to take on a new life in English.

Character Design: Inaho looks as good as ever, as does Mosquiton, and Camille's definitely a hotty. We finally get a good look at Rasputin as well, and he looks like a formidable foe. A fusion of old and new styles, the result is very appealing.

Fight Scenes: Comical. Mosquiton dies twice (ha, ha), and Inaho goes ballistic more than a few times.

Highlight: When Inaho discovers her beloved Mosky, shall we say, impaling Camille, the resulting tizzy is not to be missed.

Soundtrack: The music varies from scene to scene nicely and fits the production well. You won't be hunting down the soundtrack, but it gets the job done.

Final Analysis: These two episodes don't incorporate as much adventure as the first two, which is somewhat of a drag, but something tells me they're headed back in that direction. As diversions go however I'd have to say that Blood Ties is ultimately a success. It further defines the relationship between Inaho and Mosquiton, and we get to see quite a bit of boobs to boot.



SERIAL EXPERIMENTS LAIN DVD VOLUME 2

•1999 TRIANGLE STAFF/BANDAI VISUAL/PIIONEER
90 MINUTES • DUAL LANGUAGE
reviewed by dave smith



Story: If you pay close attention, you'll notice that there's a plot developing here, various threads gradually spinning themselves together. That may or may not be the point. Well, I suppose it's half of it. This is a whole-brain show. Your left brain gets to puzzle apart the clues and innuendoes and odds and ends and try to figure out what's going on; your right brain gets to immerse itself in the wonderful atmosphere and mood.



Lain remains a wraithlike personality, just outside the mind's ability to grasp. She means something very important, but God knows exactly what, God evidently being an entity residing out there in the Wired somewhere. Somehow he (He?) is bound up with the fate of all those suicidal children, and the strange merging of reality and the Wired that continues to loom in the distance.

Animation: It's still striking how much better anime looks on DVD. Both the flat cel animation and the CG segments look as sharp as possible. Speaking of DVD, though, the sub font could use just an eensy bit more outlining.



Highlight: The camera's first journey into the Gigerian nightmare of Lain's bedroom. No, there are no mistakes in the previous sentence.

Final Analysis: I wish this show was on prime-time TV over here. Show it an hour at a time with a 30-minute conclusion and you have a killer miniseries. Along with its fine visuals and suspense, Serial Experiments Lain has some genuinely intelligent questions to ask and ideas to share.

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PRINCESS MONONOKE
 •1999 STUDIO GHIBLI/MIRAMAX FILMS
 135 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
 reviewed by Dave Kirsch
 ★★★★★ currently in theatres (PG-13)

Story: It irritates me greatly to stuff a review of a creation this great into a small space and a bastardized format. This is the kind of Epic Film that has died a sad, quiet death in Hollywood. Like his countryman Akira Kurosawa, Hayao Miyazaki has the knack for creating thunderous action that still doesn't obscure the ideals the film is built around. Echoing the environmental themes of his earlier *Nausicaä*, *Princess Mononoke* portrays a conflict between the forces of progress, embodied by a town of ironworkers, and the old order of nature, the great animal gods of the forest. The neat thing is, even if it may remind you of *Pocahontas* (hocch! ptui!) this isn't the Manichean kind of conflict Disney has built their legendary kid appeal on. *Mononoke* is painted in as many shades of gray as you could imagine.

Animation: That's in the figurative sense. Literally, *Mononoke* is one of the most colorful animated films ever created. Studio Ghibli's cel animation is, as always, unmatched, and the small amounts of CG used here and there are seamlessly integrated to create fearsome visual wonders.

Dubbing: Off the top of my head, the best dub I've ever seen. Fellow Rat denizen Billy Crudup voices the lead, Prince Ashitaka, with strong, unvarnished heroism. Gillian Anderson (yes, from *The X-Files*) invests the

great wolf-god Moro with wisdom and age, aided by Neil Gaiman's excellent script adaptation (the gods, whose lines required less attention to lip movements, have perhaps the truest and best-crafted dialogue).

Final Analysis: Because of an error on the part of the Japanese producers and the mind-bending stupidity of the Academy, *Princess Mononoke* is not eligible for Oscar contention. I believe it was Neil Gaiman who said the rest of the field should be grateful. This is one of the greatest animated films ever created, and easily one of the best films of 1999.

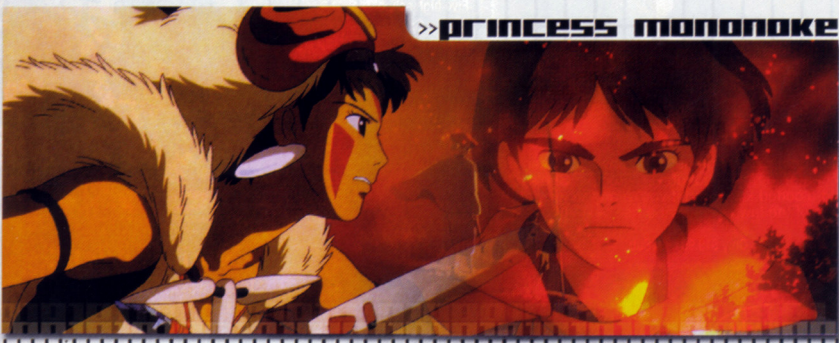


HAYAO MIYAZAKI: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

a brief filmography

Princess Mononoke, while the first of his films to gain wide release in America, is only the latest in the illustrious career of Hayao Miyazaki, who has been a legend in Japan and among international film buffs for over twenty years. Other available works worthy of perusal include *Castle of Cagliostro*, the best of the *Lupin III* series, due out soon from Manga Video; *My Neighbor Totoro*, which received a limited theatrical release from Troma of all people and was released on video by Buena Vista; and the beautiful *Kiki's Delivery*

Service, available in a fine subtitled widescreen edition, also from Buena Vista. With luck, now that Disney has acquired the entire Studio Ghibli catalogue in their purchase of Tokuma Shoten, American anime fans will have a chance to see other classics, such as *Porco Rosso* (the reviewer's personal favorite), *Laputa*, and of course, the epic *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*. For more information on Miyazaki, check out *Nausicaä.net*, located at the obvious URL; it's an excellent website devoted to Studio Ghibli and Miyazaki's other work.



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GAMERS' REPUBLIC EDITORS' TOP 5

D. Halverson

1. Blue Submarine No. 6 **bandai**
2. Cowboy Bebop **bandai**
3. Outlaw Star **ADV**
4. Bubblegum Crisis 2040 **ADV**
5. Perfect Blue **manga**

C. Alexander

1. Princess Monoke **miramax**
2. Runruni Keshinn **sony**
3. Escaflowne **bandai**
4. Combustible **guardress**
5. Bastard **pioneer**

D. Smith

1. Princess Mononoke **miramax**
2. Cowboy BeBop **bandai**
3. Trigun **pioneer**
4. Utena **soft. sculptors**
5. Serial Experiments Lain **pioneer**

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2. Outlaw Star **bandai**
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5. Bubblegum Crisis 2040 **ADV films**



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GR SYNTHETIX

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There are two ways to obtain this assortment of FFB figures: Travel to Japan and master the art of the UFO catcher (which ain't easy), or check out Banzai Anime at banzai-anime.com. It's safe to say that these are quite rare and therefore highly collectible. At \$9.99 each, this set is hard to resist.

CRAFTSMANSHIP KOTOBUKIYA

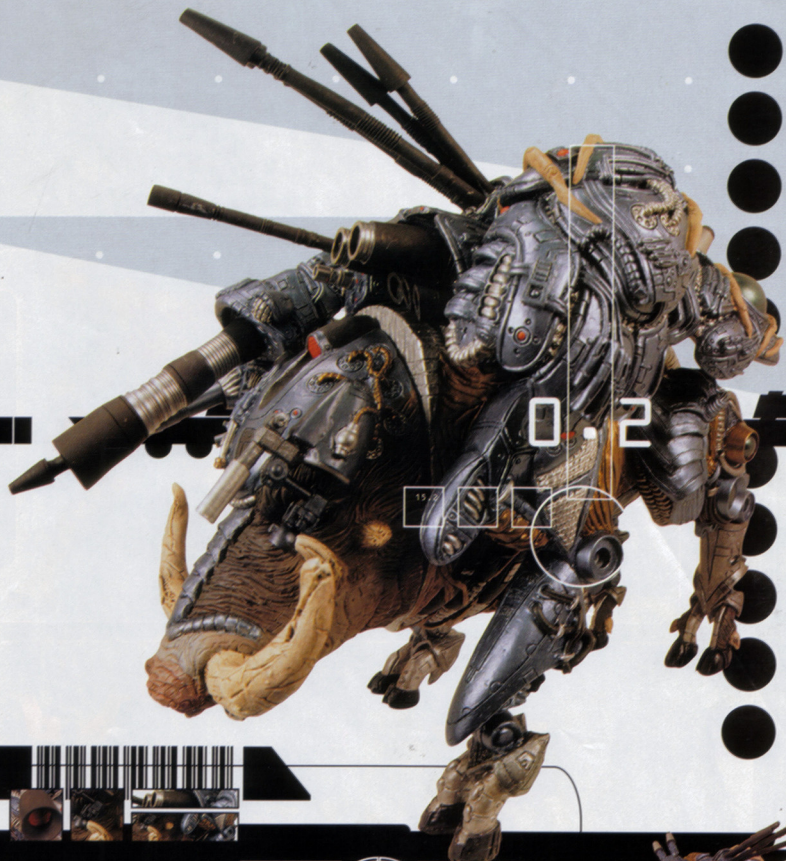


Beginning to see a pattern here? Palisades-Banzai-Palisades-Banzai. It's like Christmas in Japan! Based on original designs by Koshitaka Amano, the character designer for Final Fantasy, these beautiful figures were sculpted by Takeya, a household name to all collectors of such lovely items.

At \$250 each, they're not cheap, but these are lifelong keepsakes that you will forever cherish. May we suggest a little "Quake Hold" with that?



00.18 00.19 00.20 00.21 00.22 00.23 00.24 00.25 00.26 00.27 00.28 00.29 00.30 00.31 00.32 00.33 00.34



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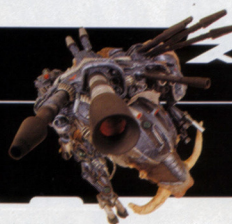
10_99



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www.spawn.com



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Resurrection of Monstress

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GR SYNTHETIX

RESURRECTION OF MONSTRESS • MORTAL KOMBAT
MAZINGER-Z • FUTURE NINJA • INTRON DEPOT 2



More resilient than a '70s sitcom, Mortal Kombat just keeps bleeding along. From cheesy TV shows to cheesier movies, Goro and company show no signs of retiring. Look for Series 1 of the Palisades figure line around May 2000. Bases are included and they hook together! Yeah, do they bleed?



Feast on Toycom's latest! From the left, Future Ninja action figures (from Keita Amamiya, creator of Zeiram), Crossbow from Masamune Shirow's artwork Intron Depot 2: Blades (\$159.99 and worth every penny), and Mazinger Z, 12-inch robotic figure (from Go Nagai, creator of Devilman) are all coming your way Q1 2000! Toycom is doing the honors. Look for them at finer comic book stores and high-end hobby shops.



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DANCE OF DEATH

CRASH CINEMA • VHS WIDESCREEN

Not just another "You killed my master" flick, this export from China has equal parts action, comedy, and pure cinematic cheese. First off, the dialogue is old Mandarin—tough to listen to at first—and the white subtitles on mostly light-colored backgrounds don't help much.

And what is going on? Fei-fei, our hero, is a teenaged orphan who happens upon a pair of wandering drunks who meet each year in the countryside to settle whose form of martial arts is best; problem is, they are equals. So both take on Fei-fei as a student, teaching their form of fighting in the hopes that their young charge can finally determine whose style is better.

Unbeknownst to them, Fei-fei had begun training with another, but that master was killed by kung-fu master Lo Kuan-tien after our hero fled for his life. As he gains fighting skills, he seeks out Kuan-tien's minions and humiliates them one by one, each time using an equal number of moves from his new teachers.

In the final battle, not only does Fei-fei show off fighting styles learned from his late master, but he begins to develop new moves never seen before. But even with these skills, it takes the combined talents of the student and his two masters to bring down their arch-nemesis.

There are overtones of *The Three Stooges* here—the long slap across three faces, and plenty of bad guys falling all over themselves—as well as a comedic look into where the many forms of kung-fu have come from. But I kept waiting for someone to point out that the main character is a girl! That is a girl, isn't it? Pretending to be a boy? That question is never answered, but no matter. While this won't be winning any overseas Oscars, it is a fun romp through the Chinese countryside of yore, and martial arts fans won't be disappointed.

Unrated; mild kung-fu violence, suitable for all ages; available now

THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

STAR WARS: THE SONY MENACE: According to Japanese press, Sony has plans to release interactive movies for the upcoming PS2, and has already contacted a number of Hollywood names, including George Lucas, to direct or produce such projects.

• IF YOU WANNA BE MY POKÉMON: Emma "Baby Spice" will be contributing a song to the Pokémon feature film *Mewtwo Strikes Back*, due out next year. Will it be the Bulbasaur theme song? Stay tuned...

• JUST THE GOOD OL' BOYS: Production has started on a new *Dukes of Hazzard* movie for CBS, and Bo, Luke, and Daisy are all signed on. What else are they up to, since the DoH PC game doesn't use motion capture? • GET YER GUNS AN' GO: A movie adaptation of Interplay's *Redneck Rampage* is underway through Sony and Tall Trees Productions, and is said to involve two brothers from Arkansas, a prize-winning pig, and aliens. What's so weird about that?



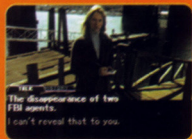
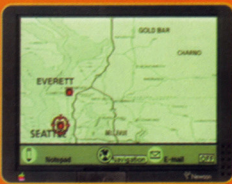
THE X-FILES GAME

FOX INTERACTIVE • PS • C+

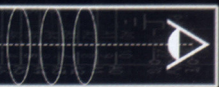
Graphical adventures are such easy games to do badly, and such difficult games to do well. To give Fox Interactive credit, their X-Files game lands in-between. With superb video compression and Fox's moviemaking resources, they've created an adventure that looks great and features decent acting. It's a faithful re-creation of the TV show, which is why it's in "Cinematrix" this month; in part, it should be judged by the same criteria as film. It is still a game, though, and that is where it fails. The fine visuals and story aren't accompanied by gameplay that justifies actually making this a game; nobody since Infocom, except perhaps Hideo Kojima, has really had the knack for that.

Mulder and Scully get supporting roles; you're an agent sent to find them when they go missing. The game mechanics are traditional: the key to victory is picking up everything not nailed down, and don't forget to check for loose nails and boards. You have to fool around with the FBI computer and analyze evidence in the crime lab, but most of the puzzles just involve examining everything and applying the right objects.

The X-Files game should appeal to the show's followers, even though it's a little dated (circa season three). There's a ton of in-jokes to find if you enjoyed paging through a copy of Jose Chung's "From Outer Space", and Mulder and Scully do join in late in the story, when things really get interesting. However, it doesn't have the depth of game-play to grab the serious gamer or a non-fan.



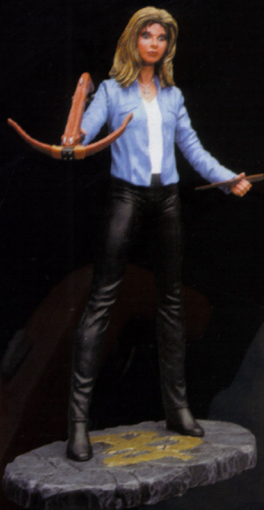
cinematrix
THE GAMER'S GUIDE TO FILM



edited by eddy fear

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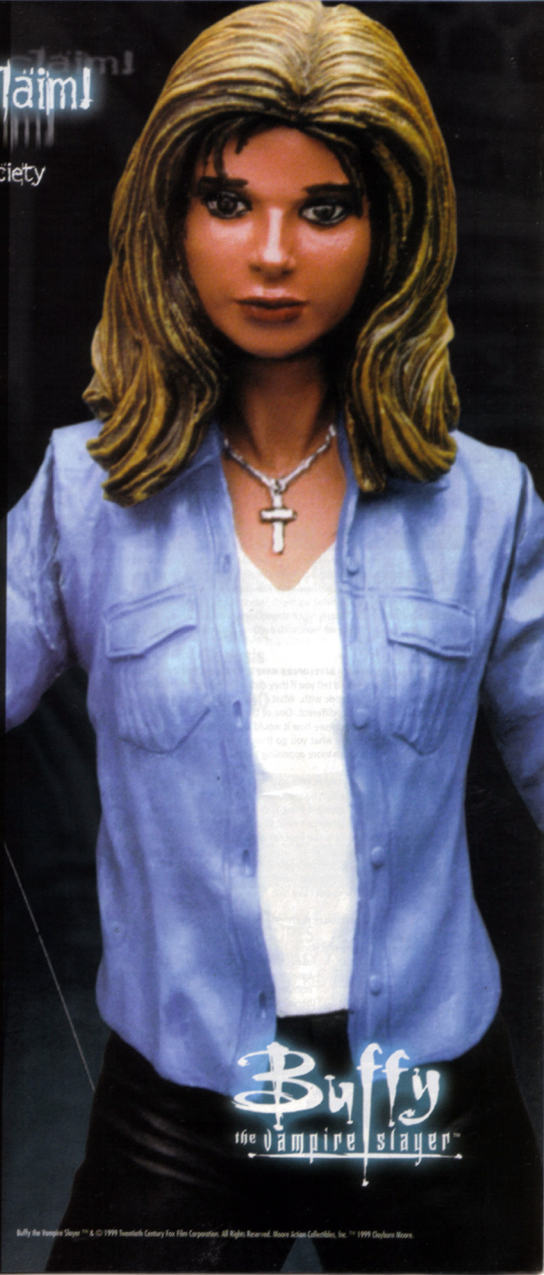
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DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO EIDOS INTERACTIVE, LEGENDARY GUITAR PLAYER AND BOWIE COLLABORATOR REEVES GABRIELS TOOK THE TIME TO CHAT WITH GAMERS' REPUBLIC ABOUT HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE UPCOMING PROJECT OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL. HE AND DAVID BOWIE WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE GAME'S DEVELOPERS TO CREATE ORIGINAL MUSIC FOR THE GAME, INCLUDING EIGHT NEW SONGS. GABRIELS AND BASSIST GAIL ANN DORSEY APPEAR IN THE GAME ALONG WITH BOWIE IN A VIRTUAL BAND, WHICH PERFORMS CONCERTS IN THE CITY OF OMIKRON.

GR: HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU STARTED PLAYING GUITAR? WHO WERE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES AND WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PLAY?

RG: Well, I was one of those kids whose mom sat them in front of the TV. So I would have to say Carl Stalling, who did all the Bugs Bunny music; that was a really big thing for me. And in the '60s there was this typing song they would show on kids' shows where a bunch of people would type in a rhythm. My mother would be in the other room typing and it confused the hell out of me because I thought, Now is she typing, or is that music? Between that and Bugs Bunny, I think it pointed me down a certain path. And my father only listened to blues and country & western when I was growing up, so my first musical experiences were a combination of that. But I was a big Jeff Beck and Leslie West fan. The music that I like as far as guitar player music was pretty classic rock-oriented in that regard. Now I find that I'm influenced more by industrial environmental sounds around me. I used to do stuff with a vibrator—really anything with a variable speed—and run it through a pitch-correct harmonizer. I did that with Tim Machine because we didn't use any synthesizers, so that was a way to create an alternative texture behind the verse and so on.

GR: HOW DID YOU ADJUST OR CHANGE YOUR WRITING STYLE TO CAPTIVATE THE LISTENER WITHIN A GAME ENVIRONMENT RATHER THAN A SHORT SONG?

RG: With the songs that David and I wrote, we felt like the natural way would be to go more industrial. For the songs with vocals, we decided to take a more romantic, almost acoustic guitar-based approach, as if we were the voice of the underground. As for the instrumental music, I wasn't thinking so much industrial as I was thinking more rhythmic, more like techno-trance. I pretty much stayed away from electric guitar unless it was a shooting scene, in which case we went with a more spaghetti-western sound because of the gunfire aspect.

GR: WHAT ROLE DID OMIKRON'S DEVELOPERS HAVE IN CREATING THE GAME'S MUSIC?

RG: They were great. They would tell you if they didn't like something. They were a complete and total pleasure to work with. What I learned from doing film soundtracks applied to this, but it was also different. One of the interesting things was having the opportunity to lay the music and see how it would be put into the game, because it's a different process from normally what you go through with a film. And the speed with which you can do things is much more appealing to me.

GR: DID YOU WATCH A LEVEL BEING PLAYED AND SCULPT THE MUSIC FROM THERE?

RG: They were sending me .wav files back and forth and sometimes just videos. You have to be open-minded and the important thing is that you ultimately achieve the emotion that needs to be in a scene. Sometimes what you think is right can be wrong. You have to trust that the unbiased party is the best set of ears, and I think that requires a little ego adjustment for some people.

Besides the stuff with vocals, I wrote about three hours worth of music for the game. Some of it is ambient and loopable and some of it is action-driven. A lot of music was written in a short period of time, but I like that.

GR: SO, YOU'VE NOW BEEN OFFICIALLY TEXTURE-MAPPED. DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE AND CHARACTER IN THE GAME.

RG: In the game, they use my real name. I'm in the scenes where the vocal songs are used. It's David, myself and Gail Ann Dorsey, the bass player. They created this really interesting instrument that wraps around me. It's halfway between a recording studio, a guitar, and a keyboard: it has horn coming out of the back, almost like a horn. They used concert footage and picked up on a couple of subtle



things I do when I play and they nailed me pretty good. On David they used motion capture because there was so much movement for his figure.

On some of the early stuff I saw there was a wanted poster with our names on it, and that's kind of weird to see that you're "wanted" for crimes against the state.

GR: DO YOU PLAY PC OR CONSOLE VIDEO GAMES?

RG: I usually play PlayStation games. Generally I use a Mac for all the music stuff I do, and a lot of the games aren't available on Macs. PlayStation is also a little more mindless. When you're spending 12 hours in front of a computer working on music, the last thing you want to do is sit in front of a computer playing video games. MCS was the last game I had a chance to play and I still mess around with Tomb Raider. The unfortunate thing is that there isn't enough time in a day, and the other thing is that just purely playing guitar for me takes the place of most games.

GR: DO YOU WELCOME OR LOATHE THAT INTERNET USERS CAN DOWNLOAD MUSIC, AND HOW DO YOU FEEL THIS AFFECTS THE CURRENT MUSIC INDUSTRY?

RG: Well, that's the way my new album is coming out. What I think will probably happen is that the music industry will look at all these different companies as the "plumbing" and as the way to get their stuff out there, and eventually they will become the retail wing. There will still be people who want to go to stores, so I don't think that it will go away entirely, but the Internet will become equal to or greater than what is already there.

GR: MIGHT DAVID AND YOURSELF EVER CONSIDER DESIGNING A VIDEO GAME?

RG: I don't know about that... I mean, David is so busy with real-world internet stuff that I don't think he'd be into dedicating the time to writing a game itself. And I'm just happy doing the music.

GR: DO YOU THINK THAT TECHNOLOGY (I.E. MIDI, PRO-TOOLS, DIGITAL RECORDING EQUIPMENT AND SEQUENCERS, SAMPLERS) HAVE TAKEN AWAY FROM THE RAW EDGE THAT LIVE INSTRUMENTS ONCE BROUGHT TO MUSIC AND EARLY ROCK AND ROLL?

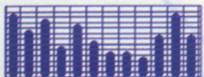
RG: No, quite the opposite, because what you can do now is go in and jam and assemble pieces without having to spend days trying to recapture something cool that happened. Back in the '80s we all thought it was going to steal our souls, but it's done just the opposite.

GR: WHAT KIND OF APPROACH DID YOU TAKE ON THIS NEW ALBUM SINCE YOU CO-PRODUCED IT? DID YOU USE ANALOG MULTITRACKS OR DID YOU USE DIGITAL?

RG: Some of it started out on a KORG D8 8-track hard drive, and then we went to multi-track and I threw a lot of that back into the computer, but at the end of the day we threw everything into one format, which was 48-track Sony. When you're mixing something you have to have some sort of consistency. An incredible amount of stuff was done right inside the computer.

GR: YOU SEEM TO HAVE HAD QUITE AN IMPACT ON BOWIE'S SOUND, PERHAPS MORE SO THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE MUSICIAN HAS. TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THIS?

RG: Well, I don't know about that, but if that's true I think it's just because I've been around longer than anybody else, for a greater number of consecutive years. Also, we've written something like 65 songs together. I think it's a matter of longevity. We find humor in a lot of the same things and have a lot of the same interests. It's like the yin-yang; any good friendship or working relationship is like that.



Pokemon Gold & Silver(import)
WWF Wrestlemania 2000
WCW Mayhem
Street Fighter Alpha
Starwars Episode 1 Racer
Knockout Kings
Game & Watch Gallery 3
magical Tetris Challenge
Rugrats Time Machine
Grand Theft Auto
Mr. Nutz
Godzilla the Series
Ghosts N' Goblins
Pokemon Yellow
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CGBy Gameboy

Ripin'Riders
Toy Commander
Worms Armageddon
Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator
Virtua Fighter 3tb
Street FighterAlpha 3
Slave Zero
Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing
Evolution World of Sacred Device
NBA Showtime
Centipede
Vigilante 8 Second Offense
Speed Devils
Armada
Soul Fighter
King of Fighters Dream Match
Marvel vs. Capcom

Sega Dreamcast

Tomorrow Never Dies
Toy Story 2
Vandal Hearts 2
Resident Evil 3 Nemesis
Ready to Rumble Boxing
Wu-Tang Clan
Tomb Raider 4
Road Rash Unchained
Danger Girl
Detonator Gauntlet
Granturismo 2
Cool Boarders 4
Die Hard Trilogy 2
Fighting Force 2
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Twisted Metal 4
Mission Impossible
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Shao Lin
Test Drive 6

Playstation

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Resident Evil 2
Perfect Dark
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Donkey Kong 64
monopoly 64
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ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES



It seems that no game can be complete without a huge list of codes or passwords to help you get through or access new features. Army Men: Sarge's Heroes is no different. Enter the following passwords to get their corresponding results.

All Weapons:	NSRLS
Maximum Ammo:	MMLVSRM
Test Information:	THDST
Mini Mode:	DRVLLVSM
Play as Tin Soldier:	TNSLDRS
Play as Vikki:	GRNGRLRX
Play as Plastro:	PLSTRLVSG

AND THE FOLLOWING ARE FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS.

Attack	LNLGRMM
Spy Blue	TRGHTR
Bathroom	DBWL
Rift Mission	MSTRMN
Forest	TLTRTS
Hoover Mission	SCRDCY
Thick Mission	STPDMN
Snow Mission	BLZZRD
Shrap Mission	SFRPNK
Fort Plastro	GNRLMN
Scorch Mission:	HTTTT
Showdown:	ZBTSRL
Sandbox:	HTKTTN
Kitchen:	PTSPNS
Living Rooms:	HXMSTR
The Way Home:	VRCLN



Snatching people's souls has never been so fun, and thanks to these codes, so easy. Each code is to be entered at the pause screen, while holding L1 or R1. You'll know if you did it right when you hear a clinky sound, so resume play and enjoy.

ALL ABILITIES:	Up, Up, Down, Right, Right, Left, Circle, Right, Left, Down
HEALTH REFILL:	Down, Circle, Up, Left, Up, Left
HEALTH UPGRADE:	Right, X, Left, Triangle, Up, Down
MAXIMUM HEALTH:	Right, Circle, Down, Up, Down, Up
HURT SELF:	Left, Circle, Up, Up, Down
MAGIC REFILL:	Right, Right, Left, Triangle, Right, Down
MAXIMUM MAGIC:	Triangle, Right, Down, Right, Up, Triangle, Left
PASS THROUGH BARRIERS:	Down, Circle, Circle, Left, Right, Triangle, Up
SOUL REAVER:	Down, Triangle, L2, Right, Right, Down, Down, Left, Triangle, Down, Right
CLIMB WALLS:	Triangle, Down, L2, Right, Up, Down
FORCE:	Left, Right, Circle, Left, Right, Left
CONSTRUCT:	Down, Up, Right, Right, Circle, Up, Up, Down
FIRE REAVER:	Down, Up, Right, Up, Down, Left, Circle, Right, Down
MAKE FIRE REAVER:	Triangle, Right, Down, Circle, Up
AERIAL REAVER:	X, Right, Up, Up, Triangle, Left, Left, Right, Up
KAIN REAVER:	X, Circle, Right, Triangle, Left, Left, Right, Up
FORCE GLYPH:	Down, Left, Triangle, Down, Up
STONE GLYPH:	Down, Circle, Up, Left, Down, Right, Right
SOUND GLYPH:	Right, Right, Down, Circle, Up, Up, Down
WATER GLYPH:	Down, Circle, Up, Down, Right
FIRE GLYPH:	Up, Up, Right, Up, Triangle, L2, Right
SUNLIGHT GLYPH:	Left, Circle, Left, Right, Right, Up, Up, Left
SHIFT WHENEVER:	Up, Up, Down, Right, Right, Left, Circle, Right, Left, Down



LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

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Fossil



Rocket



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Pokemon Yellow \$29.99

Japanese Pokemon Trading Cards Theme Packs (64 cards) \$25.99



Starter



Red



Green



Yellow



Purple

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UNLIMITED EXPLOSIVE BULLETS

The first thing you have to do for this code is take a deep breath and let it sink in. How very fortunate you are to live in a day and age where a glorious game like *Ape Escape* can be made. Next, recommend it to all your friends. Third, get out a barrel of snacks and assorted beverages because you know you'll be playing this game for hours on end. Finally, pick up your analog controller and get ready to enter some code. Assuming you have at least some explosive bullets, go to any level and pause the game, then press **2**, **Down**, **L**, **Up**, **Right**, **Down**, **Right**, **Left**. You can get up to 99 of those puppies. So fire away, but be gentle with the apes, please.

APE ESCAPE

TURBO SPEED

In case the game's normal speed setting is too slow for your lightning reflexes, this code kicks it up a notch. On the options screen, go to the Codes section, and enter the word **TURBO**. It should now be a selectable option under Game Speed.

SLO-MO SPEED

And of course, in case your reflexes are about as sharp as your uncle's bald head, try this one on for size to go super-slow. Do the same as above, except enter the word DEDMAN instead in the Codes screen.

ALL-SEGA TEAM

Here's another team to play with, which happens to be composed of the games developers. You also get a new stadium in San Rafael, CA. Enter **SUPERSTARS** on the Codes screen to unlock it.

REALLY PHAT PLAYERS

Sure many linemen in the NFL are a bit hefty, but now you can make them all look like that. They actually turn out looking quite bulbous, but it's entertaining nonetheless. On the Codes screen, enter LARD.

STAR WARS EPISODE 1
THE PHANTOM MENACE

DEBUG MODE

DEBUG MODE

This code will get you about as close to the Force as you've ever been. This code will get you about everything: level select, sound test, going to get it. Does it just about everything: level select, sound test, FMV select, and invulnerability. Sorry, it doesn't get the title screen, but enter the code, highlight the Options option on the little screen, but don't go into it. Press Triangle, Circle, Left, L1, R2 = Square, Circle, Left, and you'll hear a tick. The top will appear to let you select all your saying "Test Droid" for the level select; just pick the level, exit the cheat menu, options. For the level select; just pick the level, exit the cheat menu, options. For the level select; just pick the level, exit the cheat menu, options and start a new game. Hold L1 + Select + Triangle to summon the menu anytime thereafter.



NFL 2K



NFL GAMEDAY 2000



Are the Eagles just not getting it done for you? Does your running back fumble the ball every time you go for a two-point conversion even though you're up 24-0? Are your stars holding out for new contracts and you just don't know what to do? Well, here's a bounty of codes that should help you get through these tough times. To activate them, enter the Easter Egg menu and enter any of the following codes to get the appropriate result.

of the following coaches	
989 Studios Players	989 SPORTS
Better Running Back	BETTIS
Bigger Football	BIG BALLS
Harder Tackles	BIG HITS
Increased Speed	COFFEE BREAK
View the Credits	CREDITS
Speedy Running Back	DAVIS
All Players Equal	SMACKDOWN
Longer Jumps	SPRONG
Run Faster	NO2
Points For Defense	FRAPLAPRO
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FALLOUT

Should you wish to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), please write to:
 Fallout, Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 215,
 Westlake Village, CA 91361 USA (editorial@gamersrepublic.com).

Dear GR,

Just received my copies of PSM and EGM today and was saddened by the news that Namco is dropping all Dreamcast development. Is this really true? If so, making such a decision before the Dreamcast launched in the USA shows precious little respect for the American market and American game-buying customer.

Of course, it could just be that Sony sweetened the pot too much for Namco to resist sending Tekken Tag the PS2 route. Since Sony's been racing to get that machine launched in Japan by March, one supposes that a real PS2 effort from Namco (like, say, Tekken 4) was less wanted than something already in the can. And there's the fact that Tecmo's Dead or Alive 2 threatened to make TTT look kind of old hat on the DC right off the bat. DOA2 is still slated for the Dreamcast, is it not?

The Tekken team at Namco must still be stinging a bit that the Soul Edge developers got to a next-gen console first. Even if the Japanese game-buying public is too sated to appreciate Soul Calibur.

It really is too bad that the PS2 will not be in American until almost 2001; that's too far away, and I hope third-party developers know this. I say it's too bad, because a lot of the titles (even fighting titles) slated for PS2 look absolutely great. And if Sony can get this machine to US buyers at under \$350 or \$300, there'll be no reason for any kind of real enthusiasm not to have at least two next-gen consoles, if he or she can afford them.

Please keep up the DC advocacy, because with Namco wimping out it appears a bum rush is forming across the lake to put Sega under, and that would be bad for business everywhere. Good luck to you!

Reverend speaks:

Statement of policy: we're not system advocates here, unless our minds are warped under the influence of Soul Calibur or New Ridge Racer. I like to say I'm biased only against bad games. In that spirit, I would agree that a two-system market is vastly preferable to Sony planting a stiletto heel in the small of the consumer's back.

As far as Namco goes, I just got off the phone. They have a cool voice-mail message, but that's all I can say for sure. It's looking like their tent is pitched in Sony's camp, though. One way or another, Namco will always produce great games, so I wouldn't be too worried about their choice of hardware, whatever it may be. If you're worried about the DC fighting line-up, though, don't be: DOA2 is coming home, and lucky members of our staff have already

had a chance to play it on test cabinets. Survey says: impressive...

Dear GR:

I have to question the sanity of the powers that be at Sony. They have made a decision to deny PlayStation owners the opportunity to play PlayStation games.

In 1996 I bought my PS, when they still cost \$299. A month later I had a mod chip installed so that I would be able to play Japanese games. Since there was already a long history of games for Sega and Nintendo that originated in Japan and never reached the US, this was a great idea. So for \$90, I could play Dragon Ball Z to my heart's content (okay, bad example). For the next three years, I bought US games, Japanese games, and even traded in the Japanese games for credit towards the US versions whenever they came.

Last week I bought Dino Crisis, and now I see Sony for the madmen they truly must be.

After realizing that they can't defeat piracy using a hardware solution, Sony decides to try a software solution. A good idea certainly, but here's where it all goes north. Instead of creating a subroutine that makes PlayStation software in the PCs used to make copies, they create a program that makes PlayStation software unusable in the very system it was designed for. How counterproductive is that? It's like curing the disease by killing the patient. And the biggest irony about all this (what leads me to believe Sony is insane) is that Sony is all but forcing PlayStation owners to buy bootleg copies of PS games. Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't PS emulators like bleem! legal?

It's really a shame, because I was really looking forward to Dino Crisis, Resident Evil 3, FF8, and Gran Turismo 2. But now I can't buy them, because Sony doesn't want me to play them. I guess I'll just be buying more Dreamcast and N64 games this year.

Geoff LeBaron
 Mission Viejo, CA

Reverend speaks:

Lighthearted opener: You paid money for DBZ? A mark of shame upon your house.

Serious bit: It would be nice if there were a neat solution to the chip/import/CDR situation. Sony wants to receive the profits they've earned, and decent gamers just want to play imports in peace; these are both perfectly decent aims. It's too bad that bootlegging has become prevalent enough to much up everybody's plans, such that the only real winners are interact and HK pirate engineers.

Factual odds and ends: The American FF8, last I checked, actually doesn't have the anti-

mod skullduggery programmed into it, so I think you can go ahead and play that one. Since you can go to the software store and buy a copy of bleem!, I guess it's legal for now, pending the next round of court challenges (I have a feeling they'll lose in the end, because it stands to reason that they must have employed some sort of infringing means of replicating the proprietary PS video compression. But whenever I try to play the tech-head, my foot winds up in my small bowel, so who can say?).

Hey!

My name is Suneet Shah, and I am a really big Sonic fan. I have my own large Sonic site, and I get anywhere from 6-800 hits a day. Pretty decent, huh? I even got in the first issue of the Official Dreamcast Magazine.

Anyway, this is the purpose of my e-mail. I really don't think you can comprehend how much of a nut I am. I have over \$300 worth of just Japanese Sonic plush dolls (excluding my American ones). I'm a collector of everything Sonic; I have another \$100 worth of Sonic music CDs.

Now, I picked up the latest issue of Gamers' Republic, and I see those Sonic plushes that you have. Well, I already have all of them, except for one: Knuckles. I've been searching for a Knuckles plush for a very long time!

I was wondering if you guys would sell it to me? Do you have multiple Knuckles plushes? I want to buy them all, I'll pay you whatever.

I'm also writing to other magazines. I know ODCM has pictures in their first issue of the same dolls. I have yet to write to them; I thought I would write to you first.

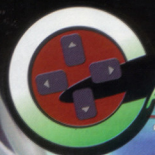
Please get back to me, even if your answer is no; I'm really desperate for a Knuckles plush.

PS: If you're a Sonic fan, be sure to visit www.suneet.com/soniczone.

Reverend speaks:

Regrettably, I have sad news. We have only one Knuckles doll, which resides in the personal collection of our immortal leader, Generalissimo Halverson. He gets this weird light in his eyes when we even come near his toys, so I would probably be unwise to try buying it from him.

Sorry we couldn't be of help, because it really is a cool toy (Knuckles is my second-favorite of the series, behind Big). If I knew a place to buy it, I'd give a recommendation, but we got our set in the dealer's room at Anime Expo from God-knows-who. Actually, though, anime cons, particularly the big ones, aren't a bad place to go for weird Japanese plush; at the just-past Anime Weekend Atlanta, I managed to snag my treasured FISHBOY-I for a mere US\$15.



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» TECHFRONT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

that if properly implemented, they could make a wide range of computer peripherals compatible with the PlayStation 2 as well.

I'll finish up with a few notes on some technical terms that have been used a lot in the context of the PlayStation 2, namely bandwidth and fill rate. Although originally used in a more specific context, bandwidth is now simply used to measure how much data can be sent from one place to another in a given amount of time. This is very important for things like internet access and loading off of a CD, where what you do is generally limited by the speed of your connection. It can even be a factor internally in a system, particularly if the system is a PC where all the parts were designed separately, and some may be older than others. In this situation, it would be possible that a low bandwidth could limit the system's performance. However, when we're talking about a console system, which is designed from the ground up to play games, the bandwidth will almost certainly simply be whatever is necessary to keep up with the various processors. That is to say, a very high bandwidth in and of itself doesn't make it go any faster, if the CPU can't generate polygons fast enough to keep up, or the graphics processor can't draw all the data as fast as it's getting it. Which brings us to fill rate, a measure of how fast the graphics processor can actually draw the polygons it's getting (note that it takes longer to draw a larger polygon than a small one; fill rate is therefore measured in pixels per second and not polygons per second). Fill rate is in many ways similar to bandwidth, in that it will probably be whatever is needed to keep up with the polygons being supplied each second, and isn't generally a big factor. However, there are exceptions to this: there are a number of special effects that take a higher fill rate without substantially changing what the CPU has to do. The most notable is super-sampling anti-aliasing, where the picture is essentially rendered at a much higher resolution (typically quadruple the number of pixels), and then averaged down. This can be done completely on the graphics processor end, with no involvement from the CPU, but since four times as many pixels have to be drawn, it takes quadruple the fill rate to do it, so only a system where the fill rate is designed to be very high can handle it. One should also keep in mind that this sort of statistics vary a huge amount depending on what sort of system is being used, and what effects are turned on, so comparing bandwidth and fillrate between systems is even less reliable on the whole than comparing polygons per second.

I hope this gives you a better perspective on what to expect from the PlayStation 2 on a hardware level. Of course, nothing beats seeing what the games actually look like, and now that real footage is starting to be released, in the future I'll be able to shift from focusing on theoretical discussion of what the specs should mean, to talking about the ins and outs of what you're actually seeing on your screens.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR SUGGESTIONS FOR TOPICS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE COVERED, PLEASE EMAIL TECHFRONT@GAMERSREPUBLIC.COM.

► MESSIAH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

take refuge inside the soul of a human. Possessing mortals introduces a Tenchu-style stealth aspect to the proceedings, as Bob must sneak up behind his target and hop into their back to take control of them. Once the mark is possessed, they are yours to command as you wish. Each of the 40 different possessable characters in Messiah has specific abilities, and there are plenty of puzzles based around possessing the right character for the right task. Need to pass a security check? Possess a cop. Need to fix a faulty elevator? Possess a construction worker.

The freedom of possession also leads to some of the game's darker moments (what would a Shiny game be without a little sadism?). While in possession of another character, Bob cannot take any damage. When the possessed character dies, Bob simply flips out of him/her/it. Beginning to see the possibilities? Force a cop to jump off of a 40-foot ledge and then de-possess him just before he hits the ground. Snap. Both his legs are broken. Then possess another character and return to finish him off at your leisure. Or if you are feeling really nasty, simply re-possess the cop and force him to crawl around on his broken legs; the sound effect is simply horrific. Of course, you don't have to be this sadistic to succeed, but even if you choose to play benevolently, this is still not a game for the easily offended. Messiah is chock full of violence, profanity and all kinds of blasphemy; don't expect to see an N64 version any time soon.

I'm pleased to say that after taking this preview version for a spin, I'm really looking forward to Messiah again. Even though there are a lot of irritating bugs in the current build (the NPC AI is particularly dubious), the combination of stealth, platform hopping, puzzle solving, and out-and-out blasting makes for some diverse and entertaining gameplay. The technology may not be cutting-edge anymore, but I have a feeling a lot of people are going to be pleasantly surprised when Messiah hits stores this November. It is this November, right Shiny? ☛



► ROCKET, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66

Each of the worlds in Rocket is inventive in its design and concept, and includes some of the most unique and challenging mini-games I've played in a while. The platforming aspects themselves are wonderful and the use of colors as gameplay elements is quite impressive. In one particular level, aptly titled Paint Misbehavior, a paintball cannon is used in a variety of entertaining mini-games.

The inventive gameplay goes hand in hand with the brilliant and deep level designs. There are literally hundreds of things to do, including climbing mountains of candy; dropping down wind tunnels; building and riding a roller-coaster; feeding candy to a grue-some troll; traversing lakes of lava; riding mine carts; maneuvering up, down and around mechanical gears; controlling a magic carpet through a cloud-based city; jumping into pools of paint; taking part in a variety of races; and throwing bombs at targets.

Games like Rocket: The Robot on Wheels only come along once in a while, so enjoy it wholeheartedly. ☛

► EARTHWORM JIM 3D, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63

And the gameplay, snipe-tastic run 'n' gun, puzzle-laden 3D exploration, platforming, and boss fighting is enthralling, fun, and funny. Jim expels propulsion farts, revels in the art of shooting, controls with ease and precision and just genuinely does cool-ass stuff you won't see anywhere else. Even the music is outstanding—from disco madness to trailer park country and a spooky Addam's Family-like diddle, it's all good. From the get go (your first chat is with The Sacred Cow of Contemplation, complete with twangy eastern melody), you know you're in for a classic gaming experience. As Jim pushes on he must collect Golden Udders which allow him access to higher levels of his brain, and marbles, which allow entry into the boss zones, including bouts with Pscrow and Professor Monkey For a Head, among others. As you conquer worlds, your intelligence seeps towards reality and Jim gets smarter and that much closer to awakening from his coma-like state. These levels of intelligence, including such scholarly titles as "smart as a fur covered trout," are genuinely funny, as are many of the conversations Jim embarks on as he meets the strange inhabitants of his mutated worm brain. Technically, finding any fault at all with EWJ-3D is hard to do. The camera work is second to none, the control scheme is accurate and diverse, and the level design itself borders on either criminally insane and/or brilliant—I'm not sure which. Probably both. The only elements left to chance are the themes themselves and the difficulty. Some might find tracking down Fatty Roswell in a food world guarded by hired alien guns, or whipping fat Elvis in the ass to propel him over chasms (and those are comparatively tame references) just too darn strange. And the game is loaded with platforming nuances like timing maneuvers, fatal leaps, and uber-coordination stunts. The bosses are no walk in the park either. Otherwise it doesn't get much better, this side of a Miyamoto or Rare venture. Having been the first person to ever play Earthworm Jim (the moment the original was finished I got to sit at Shiny and play it in front of the whole company—back in '94) I'm admittedly biased when it comes to the character (I just love the little guy). But I'd never lead you astray in terms of gameplay dare I say—fun factor. Do go out and buy this game. I can't believe I said fun factor. ☛



► TOY COMMANDER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 72

middle of the room. There is an abundance of rich possibilities flowing through Toy Commander, but too often No Cliché's ideas outrun its ability, leaving pockets of flawed design to loom over the game: disparate mission-based setup makes the game feel fractured; levels are too constricting; the game is artificially lengthened by bosses that can only be accessed when a level is completed in a certain amount of time. If No Cliché would have been able to match their creative vision with a more cohesive structure, Toy Commander could have been something truly special. ☛

COMING NEXT MONTH

EVOLUTION



JANUARY 2000

As fate would have it, we received a localized version of *Evolution* from Ubi Soft just as the December issue went to bed. The first RPG for the Dreamcast, *Sting's* impressive random dungeon adventure is a game of vast importance to the Dreamcast faithful who are no doubt hungry to get a taste of the next level in role-playing. It's safe to say that in the January issue we'll bring you the coverage you desire, in GR style. The January issue will also mark the beginning of a new Millennium (hey, that's us!) and so, as you can imagine, we'll be loading it up with something extra special to usher in the beginning of the next century.

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EARTHWORM JIMTM 3D

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BLAST VISOR & HELMET

Protective gear for highspeeds and hazards—explosions, lava, rodelides, high voltage attacks and more.

VISION SYSTEM

Hi-resolution 3D vision. Detects the finest details in full color. Perfect for painting, precision hurling and targeting.

GYRO ORBS

Advanced dual-orb balance. Superior guidance in high, narrow, even teetering places.

RUBBERENE WHEEL

A rugged go-anywhere tire. Fits snugly into rollercoaster carts, robotic dolphins, paintball chariots and more.

CPU

1.3 GHz positroni chipset. Problem solves on the fly. Even designs and rides rollercoasters.

TRACTOR BEAM

Fully functional beam—grab, swing, toss, freeze and crush small and large objects. Even toss sheep. Precision target and hurl feature.

POWER SUPPLY

On-board Frigid Fusion Reactor. No refueling or recharging necessary.

STRAUTS & ROCKETS

Titanium reinforced struts with liquid hydrogen booster rockets. Can handle a wide range of leaps, jumps & landings.

**IF YOU THINK HE IS FULLY LOADED
WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THE AMUSEMENT PARK.**



Rocket is the most advanced amusement park robot ever made. He's ready for anything. Well, almost. Now all the tickets are stolen, the walrus is gone, a raccoon is dismantling everything, and the greatest park in the universe must open tomorrow! Fasten your seat belts! It's gonna be the ride of your life.



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