OXM 52

REVIEWS: FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS, TOCA RACE DRIVER 3, CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS GUIDE: PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

XBOX

Official Xbox Magazine

Official XBOX Magazine

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR TEN HAMMERS

World-exclusive review and playable demo of the stunning tactical squad-based shooter!

OFFICIAL PLAYABLE FIRST

BLACK

Exclusive shots of new levels!

4 Games To Play!

PLAY TRIAL VERSIONS OF...

- Half-Life 2
- FSW: Ten Hammers
- Painkiller: Hell Wars
- Gene Troopers

Plus XBOX 360 Exclusive news and previews

15

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ISSUE 52 FEB 2006 £5.99

Future

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XBOX 360

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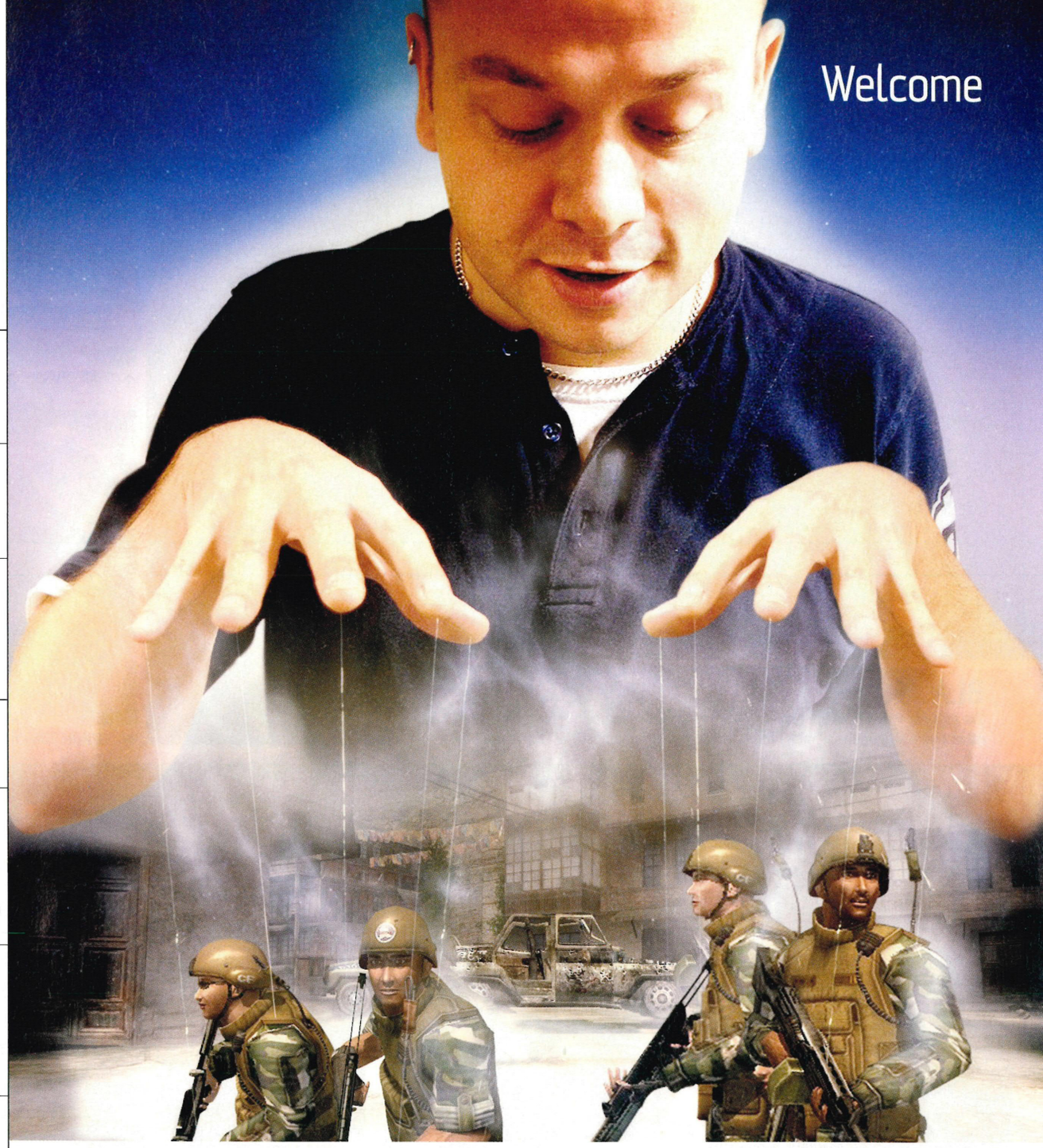
XBOX 360™



Official Xbox Magazine

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FIRST
NEWS, PREVIEWS & REVIEWS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

What's in it for you

OFFICIAL Xbox Magazine **is written by experienced gamers who've spent their lives playing games. We believe that games are the most exciting form of entertainment and the magazine will reflect that at all times.**

BEING THE *OFFICIAL Xbox Magazine* means we're in the best position to give impartial, honest reviews and scores to base your buying decisions on. We don't do deals for access to finished games.

MICROSOFT HAS no access to, or influence over *Official Xbox Magazine*. Its involvement ends once it provides the magazine materials we need and it only reads our reviews when you do.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE we are the *Official Xbox Magazine*, we have unprecedented access to the newest Xbox games in development and the people who are making them.

WE HAVE A HUGE global network of games journalists visiting games developers wherever they are and reporting exclusively for the *Official Xbox Magazine* World Network.

WE BELIEVE that the readers of *Official Xbox Magazine* are one of our most important assets. We want to be a place where your opinions and expertise can be shared with the Xbox community.

www.officialxboxmagazine.co.uk

Hanging on a Rope

WELCOME TO 2006 and the UK's only dedicated Xbox magazine. And what better way to kick off a brand new year than with the exclusive review and playable demo of THQ's ultra-realistic, tactical war sim, *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers*. If you missed the original, do your brain a favour and try our demo out - it's far from being a mindless war shooter. Read the review and play it for yourself!

January might be depressing, but it's always a good time to shout about the lineup of games preparing to grace Xbox throughout the year. We've packed 2006's biggest titles into this issue so you can begin planning your 2006 games budget right now. As you'll see from page 052 onwards, it's going to be a very busy year for Xbox, with *Black*, *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter*, *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend* and *The Godfather* all set, to name but a few.

Play:More is packed with all the usual hints, cheats, walkthroughs and challenges as ever. But we'll be giving the section an overhaul in the coming months, so if there's anything you want to see, let us know. It's not just about cheating in games - it's about getting the most out of the games you've already bought. So have a think and get back to us. But if cheating is your thing, then you'll no doubt have noticed the free 100-page tips book hidden inside the bag. According to the powers that be, we'll be doing more of them over the next few months. Which is good news for you but a load of extra work for us...

GAVIN OGDEN
EDITOR, *OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE*

IN THIS ISSUE

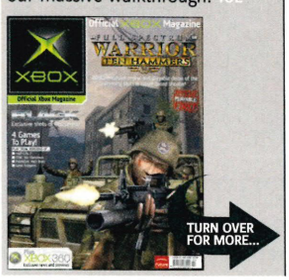
2006: The Ones to Watch
Get the scoop on every must-have Xbox game this year! 052

GR Advanced Warfighter
We talk exclusively to the *Ghost Recon* development team 041

Xbox 360 Access
With new stock hitting shelves you need to read this now! 060

FSW: Ten Hammers
Read the review and play the demo of the hit wargame 068

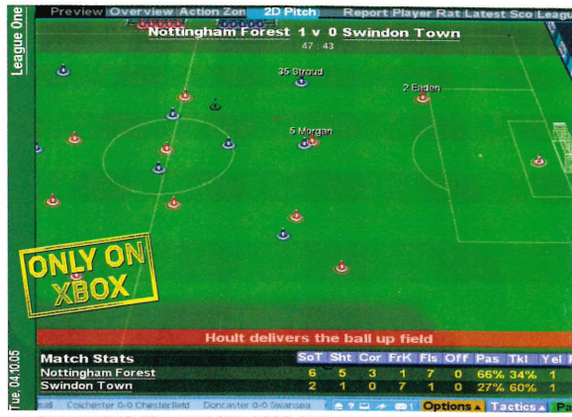
King Kong Guide
Tear the giant monkey apart with our massive walkthrough! 102



BLACK

We gun our way through brand new levels of the awesome shooter before any other magazine on the planet. Find out why you simply must own this game!

044



↑ CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006 016

↑ OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST 014

Contents52

2006: THE ONES TO WATCH

Take a look at the biggest Xbox games due for release this year. If it's worth your cold, hard cash, you can bet it's here. With exclusive screens and info to boot!

052

Play:More On the Disc 52

On The Disc: Playable

Half-Life 2, Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers, Gene Troopers and Painkiller: Hell Wars

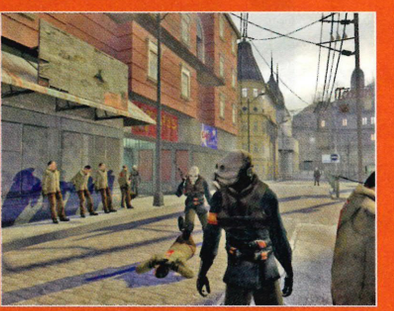
Xbox Movies:

Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure, Need For Speed Most Wanted, Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows and Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers (see how it's done)

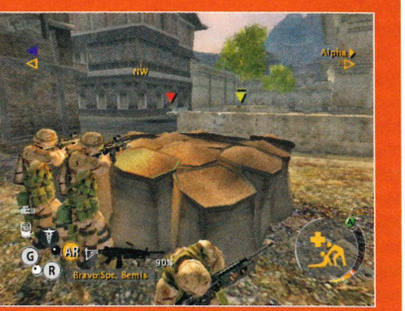
Xbox 360 Movies:

The latest footage from Xbox 360, including action from stunners like Kameo: Elements of Power, TimeShift, Amped 3, Perfect Dark Zero, Dead Rising and Monster Madness

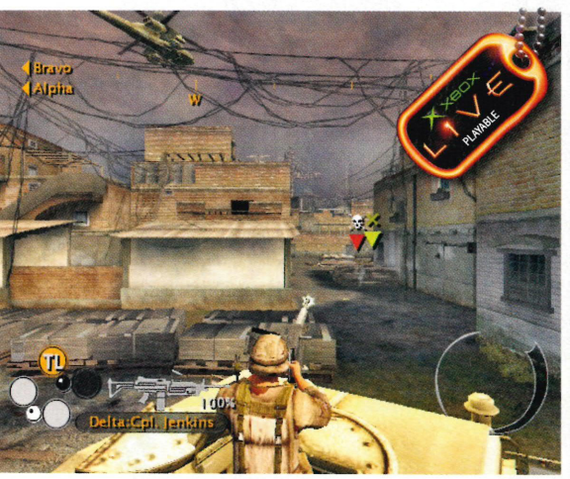
YOUR DISC GUIDE STARTS ON PAGE 090



↑ HALF-LIFE 2 091



↑ FSW: TEN HAMMERS 091



↑ FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS 068

↑ TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 076

XBOX 360 ACCESS

Got one yet? Us neither. What better way to look forward to getting one than to check out our exclusive Xbox 360 section. You'll know it all by the time you get one! 060

GAME INDEX

A-Z listings of every featured game

50 Cent: Bulletproof (please don't buy this game)	98
Amped 3	93
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	96
Battlestations: Midway	53
Black	44
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	22
Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood	96
Cabela's Big Game Hunter: 2005 Adventures	99
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	97
Castlevania: Curse of Darkness	82
Championship Manager 2006	16
Commandos Strike Force	32
Crash Tag Team Racing	98
Dead Rising	93
Dreamfall: The Longest Journey	20
Driver Parallel Lines	23
Fear & Respect	52
Fight Night Round 3	21
Ford Street Racing	10
Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers	68
Gene Troopers	93
Ghost Rider	27
Gun	99
Half-Life 2	91
Hitman: Blood Money	53
Just Cause	53
Kameo: Elements of Power	93
King of Fighters 2003	80
Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend	56
Medal of Honor: Airborne	27
Metal Slug 5	81
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	93
Monster Madness	93
NASCAR 06	98
NBA 2K6	60
Need For Speed Most Wanted	92
NHL 2K6	61
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	14
Painkiller: Hell Wars	92
Panzer Elite: Action	24
Perfect Dark Zero	92
Peter Jackson's King Kong	20, 102
Prince of Persia The Two Thrones	98
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	93
Psychonauts	98
Reservoir Dogs	56
Resident Evil 5	22
Return to Castle Wolfenstein	23
Rugby 06	12
Scarface: The World is Yours	54
Serious Sam 2	93
Sonic Riders	25
Splinter Cell: Double Agent	23
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, PANTS!	98
StarCraft: Ghost	57
Starship Troopers	56
Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse	22
Superman Returns	57
Syberia 2	99
The Call of Juarez	27
The Chronicles of Narnia	52
The Darkness	27
The Godfather	28, 52
The Movies	53
TimeShift	57
TOCA Race Driver 3	76
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	41
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2	23
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2: Summit Strike	23
Torino 2006	84
True Crime: New York City	92, 98
Urban Chaos: Riot Response	55
X3: Reunion	25, 54
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	99

To subscribe to *OXM*, saving yourself a wedge of cash and getting it delivered to your door, turn to page 050 now. There you'll also find details of our back issues service, in case you've missed a vital review, great trial version or essential guide.

First Look

010 Ford Street Racing
012 Rugby 2006
014 OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast
016 Championship Manager 2006

News

018 Xbox 360 is go!

↑ SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT 023

020 Kong's creator speaks games, Dreamfall screens and info
021 Ding ding! Get ready for Fight Night Round 3...
022 Blazing Angels goes Live
023 Splinter Cell: Double Agent's new Live mode revealed
024 Gallery: Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse, Panzer Elite: Action
025 Gallery: Sonic Riders, X3: Reunion
025 Agent X, and a new undead racing game revealed...

Previews

028 The Godfather
032 Commandos Strike Force

↑ THE GODFATHER 028

Features

041 Exclusive Access: Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter Interview
044 Exclusive Access: Black
052 2006: The Ones to Watch

↑ PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG 102

Reviews

068 Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers
076 TOCA Race Driver 3
080 King of Fighters 2003
081 Metal Slug 5
082 Castlevania: Curse of Darkness
084 Torino 2006
085 Samurai Shodown V

Play:More

091 On The Disc: Half-Life 2, FSW: Ten Hammers
092 On The Disc: Painkiller: Hell Wars, Gene Troopers
094 Xbox Events Calendar
095 Gamertag Network
096 Live Reviews: Battlefield 2: Modern Combat, Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood
097 Live Reviews: Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, NFS Most Wanted
098 Hints & Cheats
100 Your Shout
102 Masterclass: Peter Jackson's King Kong

↑ GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 041

Regulars

034 Charts and Release Schedule
036 Inbox
050 Back Issues and Subscriptions
088 Reviews Directory
101 Classifieds
111 Skive With Live
112 Next Month

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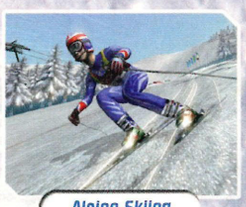
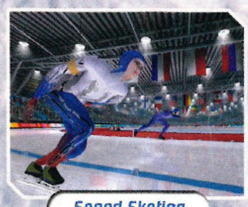
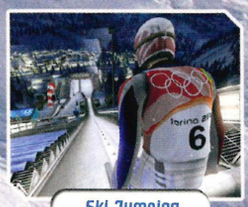

Alpine Skiing


Speed Skating

Bobsleigh

Biathlon

Luge


Ski Jumping

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PlayStation 2 XBOX PC CD

Developed By 49GAMES

Published By 2K SPORTS

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First Look

World-exclusive scoops of the newest Xbox games in development...

- FORD STREET RACING P010
  It's right before your very eyes!
- RUGBY 06 P012
  First shots of EA's brand new scrum 'em up.
- OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST P014
  More classic Sega racing to make your eyes water!
- CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006 P016
  Stat-twiddling heaven for soccer nuts

Official Xbox Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

↑ A total of 18 Ford beasts will be on hand to run into the ground.

Ford Street Racing

Bargin-bin team racing from Ford

Dev: Razorworks | Pub: Xplosiv
Release: February 06 | Live: None
Players: 1-2

IF THERE'S SUCH a thing as a Ford fanboy, then this is the game they've been waiting for. Forget Lambos, Ferraris and Porsches - this is all about Fiestas, Focuses and Mondeos sitting in rush-hour traffic with kids screaming "Are we nearly there yet?" as Mum drives home to put the tea on before *Eastenders*. Or maybe that's just the image we conjure up when we hear the word Ford.

Joking aside, the US motoring giant is also known for turning out the odd hotrod or two. And you can bet those six points on your driving licence that a few of them have made the cut here. The drab racing courses of the past have also been dumped in favour of the concrete jungle that is Los Angeles. Don't worry though - as far as we can tell this is as 'urban' as things get. There'll be no racing for 'rispec' or challenging rival 'crus' to a street-duel via TXT MSG. A word of warning, though: Xplosiv describes the 24 street courses of LA as 'dangerous' but we don't know if that means gangs trying to steal your stereo and car battery while you race, or just dumb Americans driving massive trucks badly.

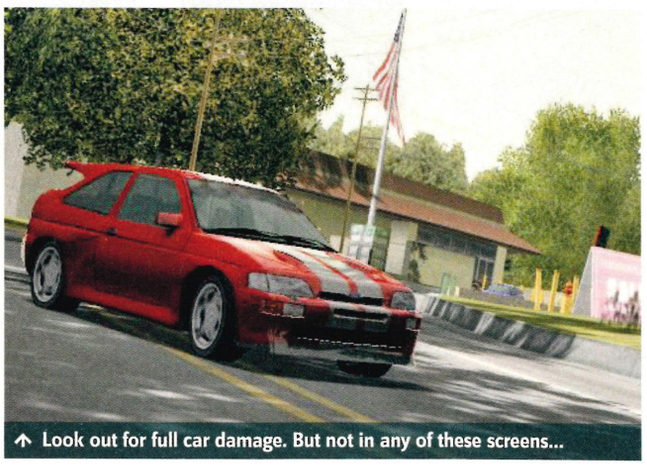
More importantly than where or what you drive is the fact that all the cars are - and fair play to the suits at Ford here - TOTALLY DESTRUCTIBLE! Yes, Ford is going to let us smash their cars up.

We're promised, "beautifully realistic car models including a full damage system". Whether that means the incredible Terminal Damage realism of *TOCA Race Driver 3*, or just a few token fender-benders remains to be seen, but the cars will show damage in some form - a must-have feature in today's racing games.

The most impressive feature of *Ford Street Racing*, however, is a unique 'team' feature that basically puts you in control of your own Ford racing team (see Driven By You). Developers have attempted this feature before, most notably in *Juiced* (Issue 33, 8.0), but it's never really fulfilled its potential yet in our opinion. During a race you'll be able to switch between the drivers in your team, which means that if you're rubbish at games, you can constantly be leading your racing pack thanks to the cheat button.

While multiplayer options only cater for two players - how Xbox Live has been missed out is beyond us -- the single-player game features the usual set of challenges, competitions and leagues. If the team racing feature is as good as Xplosiv is saying it is, then this really should have been released over Xbox Live - the perfect environment for this kind of action. During each race you'll need to win cash in order to repair your existing cars and purchase faster ones. In total there are three groups of performance cars to crash and burn. Look for the full review of Ford's latest budget racer in the next issue of *OXM*, on sale 16 February.

↑ This must be one of those dangerous bits of LA they've told us about.



↑ Look out for full car damage. But not in any of these screens...

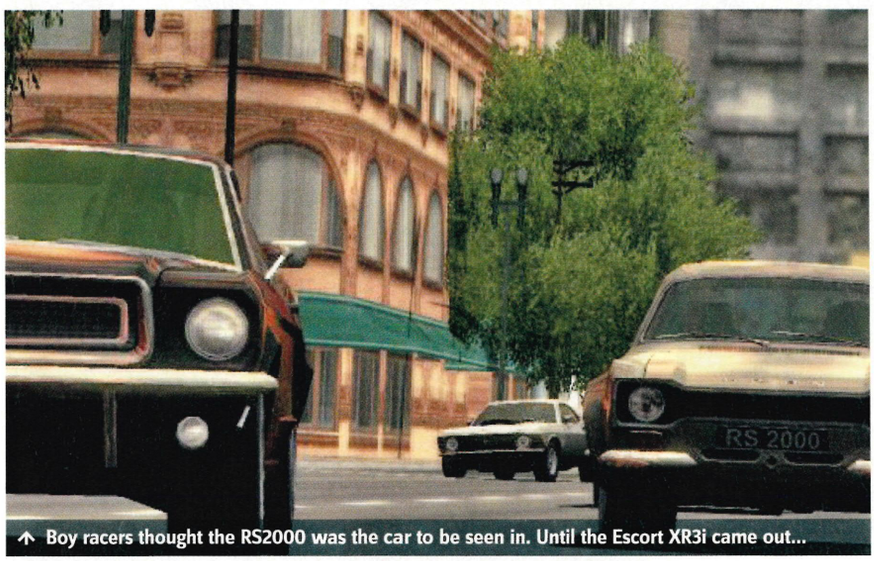
↑ Mustang GT vs Your Mum's Focus - Your Mum's Focus WINS!

Bonus info

AT THE CAR WASH

The Vehicles

1968 Mustang GT
1969 Mustang Boss 302
1970 Capri Mk I RS2600
1970 Mustang Boss 429
1973 Escort RS2000
1975 Torino Sport
1985 RS200
1987 Sierra RS500
1992 Escort RS Cosworth
1995 GT90 Concept
2000 Ford SVT Cobra R
2002 Focus RS
2004 Fiesta ST
2004 Mustang GT-R Concept
2004 SVT F-150 Lightning
2006 Ford GT
2006 Mustang GT
2007 Shelby GT500 (US)



↑ Boy racers thought the RS2000 was the car to be seen in. Until the Escort XR3i came out...

↑ Still no sign of that damage you've promised, Xplosiv!

DRIVEN BY YOU Team racing in the palm of your hands

You won't be alone as you race through your career, with a team of three AI controlled drivers at your disposal. Not only can you make tactical calls to your team-mates, telling them to block rivals or hang back in their slipstream, you'll also be able to jump in and out of every car in your team during a race. This is either going to work amazingly or terribly. But we won't know which until review, which should be next issue. Fingers crossed...

↑ Beauty and the beast run red and tear up the streets of LA.

DRIVING SALES: TO DATE, THE BUDGET FORD RACING SERIES HAS NOTCHED UP AROUND ONE MILLION UNITS

↑ There's no lovelier smell than two-week-old festering rugby kit.

Rugby 06

Your chance to play with Jonny, Brian and Gavin. Get in!

Dev: EA	Pub: EA
Release: TBA 2006	Live: 2 players
Players: 1-4	

WHO CARES IF cricket is the new rugby is the new football? We're still riding high from Mr Wilkinson's last-minute winning drop-kick again the Aussies back in the 2003 Rugby World Cup final. As good as Freddie 'Andrew' Flintoff is, he didn't steal victory from under the noses of a 15-man death squad with seconds to the whistle in quite such spectacular style, did he?

Well, Electronic Arts, distinguished purveyor of the annual sports update, has been busy ferreting away, putting the *FIFA* and *NHL* teams hard at work to produce this little effort, possibly the finest looking rugby game we've seen yet. And boy oh boy, what a chock-full little baby it's shaping up to be as well.

The Six Nations, Lion's Tour, Tri Nations, Guinness Premiership and Super 14 competitions will form the backbone of the gameplay, allowing you to take part in just about every major event in the rugby calendar. But EA has been learning a few lessons, so it seems. As well as cramming *Rugby 06* with the usual licensed names, players, sponsors and tournaments, the fundamental gameplay mechanic has had an overhaul.

↑ Jonny's latest stand-in prepares to miss.

EA is proudly boasting that *Rugby 06* 'mirrors the real thing', and has introduced all manner of previously unseen and untested fancy-pants rugby tactics. You can now use the off-load pass to get rid of a ball when set upon by impenetrable walls of opponents, just as you can take quick line-outs to keep the momentum of the game going. We remember a few really rubbish rugby games on PSOne that were notorious for stop-starting every few yards for line-outs, but *Rugby 06* is about keeping the game alive, and keeping it on its toes. If you like your games slow, tedious and full of hundreds of incomprehensible by-laws, you're probably a statistics-obsessed American and will be wanting some sort of dull NFL game.

Penalty-taking has now been streamlined too in an attempt to keep the game 'momentum-driven', and also to encourage plenty of attacking. Another new feature, something EA is calling 'Impact Play', will enable you to cherry-pick from a selection of players and dictate precisely what strengths the squad should have. This, EA hopes, will enable you to consistently keep any rival player on his toes, as you shift from being a forward-

↑ Proper real-time mud effects are crucial for any decent rugby game.

↑ "Come on Wales!" said Ben T (has never been to Wales, is really English).

↑ Martin Johnson's England squad all died of exhaustion after winning the World Cup in 2003. The new lot aren't even allowed in pubs yet.

Bonus info

A RIGHT BALLS-UP

Mark met England's Ben Cohen once. "He gave me a signed rugby ball and I had my photo taken. He's the biggest person I have ever met - the photo looked like I was a small child standing next to his father," he said. Mark also asked Mr Cohen to dedicate the ball to his girlfriend. He wouldn't write "love from" though, because it sounded "too familiar". What a gent!

driven, attacking squad to a more defensive one, depending on your opponent.

You'll also be able to take all these great new features and tournaments and put them to use in the settings of just about every major ground in the world. 'Fortress' Twickenham, Cardiff's Millennium Stadium, grubby old Lansdowne Road and the imposing 1970s car park of Murrayfield are all in so far, while rugger pundits Ian Robertson and Grant Fox do the honours behind the mic. All we need is a post-match bath simulator for the ladies and a Gameface mode powerful enough to recreate Shane Byrne's horrible teeth, and we reckon this could be the best rugby game seen on Xbox.

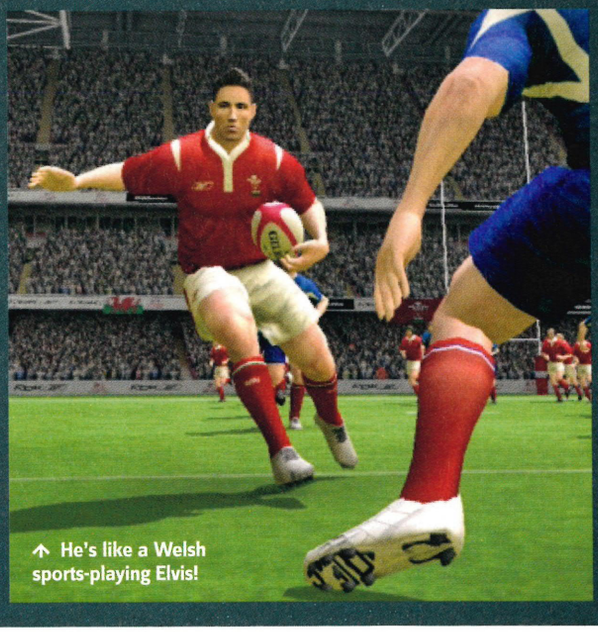
↑ Sweaty tackling has never looked better.

↑ The team spent months working on Brian O'Driscoll's hair and Shane Byrne's face.

Church on Xbox

Mr Charlotte Church is in Rugby 2006!

Even though he wasn't actually selected for the Welsh national side following a squabble with the selectors, EA has even seen fit to give Miss Church's Nike-advertising beefcake a mention. Playing (gasp), for Wales, you'll be able to control the neatly quaffed Gavin Henson as he prances around the pitch trying not to get any mud on his hairstyle or clothes. He is truly rugby's David Beckham - which makes Charlotte its Posh Spice.

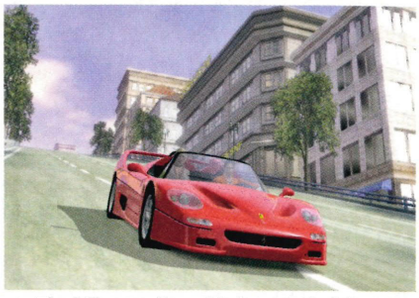


↑ He's like a Welsh sports-playing Elvis!

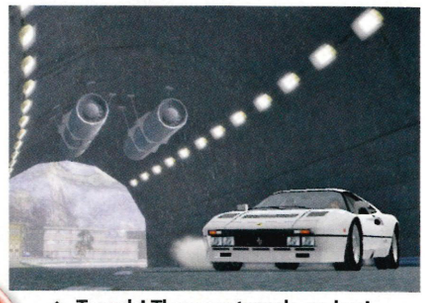
THE ORIGINAL RUGGER BUGGER: RUGBY WAS INVENTED MANY YEARS AGO WHEN BORED SCHOOLBOY WILLIAM WEBB ELLIS (OF RUGBY SCHOOL) PICKED UP THE BALL AND RAN WITH IT DURING A GAME OF FOOTBALL. HE WAS IMMEDIATELY CANED AND GIVEN SATURDAY DETENTION FOR AN ENTIRE MONTH

↑ Specially modded Xbox-only vehicles will join the cast of dozens of new Ferraris – all given the nod by the company itself.

↑ Classic Ferraris will be playable too. Joy!



↑ The hills are alive with the sound of these!



↑ Tunnels! There are tunnels, no less!

OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast

Official XBOX Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

Official XBOX Magazine PLAYED IT

Like a big melting pot of arcade racing goodness all mixed together. And then some...

Dev: Sega	Pub: Sega
Release: Spring 2006	Live/S.link: 2-6 players
Players: 1-4 Split	

BEN GUNSTONE, producer of *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast*, tells us he had to make a personal plea to Microsoft to allow him to have more than the usual quota of leaderboards. He wanted, he tells us, "about 240 different ones". That's how big *Coast 2 Coast* is. Seeing the potential in the game, Microsoft has given him precisely that, a whooping 240 of the blighters.

Having drooled like fanboys over the last instalment, we were mightily impressed at what *Coast 2 Coast* is doing with the series. It takes *OutRun 2* (Issue 34, 8.5) and mashes it up with the arcade game *OutRun 2: SP Special Tour*, creating a game that can be tackled as a collection of separate titles, or – more impressively – as the best bits of the *OutRun* games squashed into one race.

Mission modes such as the Heart Attack races, where you have to please your demanding lady-friend with your driving skills, have blended the best of the previous games. One minute you're on a course from *OutRun 2*, the next it's seamlessly morphed into one from the arcade version.

It's a similar story with the vehicles. Purists will know that the handling of the cars in the arcade and on Xbox were quite different, but now you can use arcade cars on the Xbox-only tracks and vice versa. Old tracks can be replayed with a stack of new cars, and old cars can be raced on a stack of new tracks. It's pick 'n' mix racing at its finest.

Gunstone also tells us his team has been staggeringly busy creating and modding a whole series of Xbox-exclusive cars. The garage of Ferraris that make up the stock of vehicles in the game each have their own 'modded' version – all of which have been fully approved by Ferrari itself, and all of which can be unlocked by collecting *OutRun* Miles, a task that Gunstone tells us even the testers are having difficulty completing in less than two days solid. And that's with them working unbroken shifts while chained to their consoles, too.

Much of the new gameplay that sucks up all those delicious gaming hours comes in the form of the 'Flagman's Challenges'. Remember the guy from *OutRun 2* who'd wave you off? Well, he's become something of a challenge-setter this time, offering up various races in the classic *OutRun* 'branch' format. The thing is, each segment of the branch is now made up of anything up to five separate races, as opposed to just the usual one. Sometimes you'll have to complete five races just to be given the option of moving onto another branch of the game. There'll be a vast combination of potential races to play. It's going to be a monster game, and a huge, huge challenge. "We're not ashamed to admit we're total fanboys", Gunstone says.

Joining the remixed *OutRun 2* and *OutRun 2: SP* are mirrored tracks of every course, multiplayer modes which involve races, time trials, and Heart Attack events, plus, of course, the faithful bog-standard single-player mode. It's little wonder that Gunstone requested 240 Live leaderboards, and we come away with the sense that this isn't just *OutRun 2* with added features, this is almost like Sega has hacked its own code and given us every variation of every *OutRun* track we could think of with every *OutRun* car we could drive on it. It's safe to say *Coast 2 Coast* is going to be BIG.

↑ From the USA to the hills of the Mayan empire, welcome to *OutRun*!

↑ Grand Canyon – complete with blonde passenger and no prying eyes!

↑ Stop and enjoy the view if you like – it'll only cost you the race and a slap in the face from your stroppy, impossible-to-please girlfriend.

Bonus info

MUSIC MAYHEM

The music from the original *OutRun* is included as an unlockable bonus, as are the special European mixes, plus a clutch of new tunes written by the composer of the original material. You'll be able to unlock them all with the *OutRun* Miles you earn throughout the game.

OLD-SKOOL CHOONZ

To make sure you know precisely what songs you're downloading to play as a soundtrack, Sega's also created exclusive album artwork for each track. The songs from the original '86 version have a retro cover, complete with 80s artwork. Needless to say, the development team are a bunch of seriously hardcore fanboys.

Around The World In 80 Ways

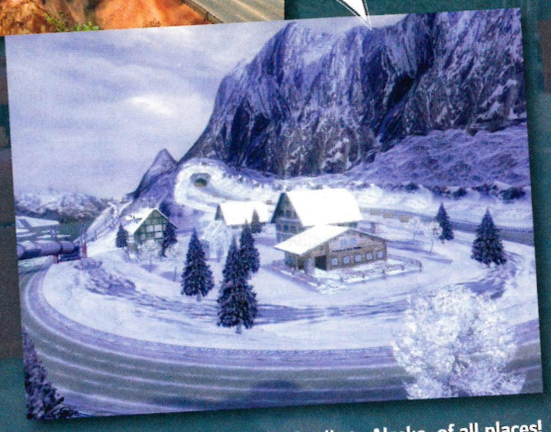
Coast 2 Coast unlocks some classic OutRun tracks and shakes them up a bit...

Coast 2 Coast? Well, yes actually. This version of the classic game uses every *OutRun* level you can think of. Whether it's old, new, borrowed or blue you'll race seamlessly from one classic track to another, with a few surprises along the way.

↑ Ah, the old beach level from *OutRun 2*. Then on to...

←...a ride through the Grand Canyon...

↑...the Golden Gate Bridge from *OutRun 2: SP*, followed by...



↑ ...and finally to Alaska, of all places!

OUTRUN SUPERSTAR: YOUNG BEN L WAS SO GOOD AT OUTRUN AT HIS LOCAL SWIMMING POOL THAT HE USED TO PLAY IT INSTEAD OF ACTUALLY SWIMMING

Championship Manager 2006

Hands up who wants to be a football manager?

Dev: Beautiful Game | Pub: Eidos
Release: March 2006 | Live: None
Players: 1-4

IT'S BACK, but not as you know it. After a few gap years Xbox is being primed for the return of footy stat 'em up *Championship Manager*. And if you've played it before, you'll already know your social life is about to go out the window, as well as any relationship you might be in and any responsibilities you may have, such as school or work (or both). It's a funny old game.

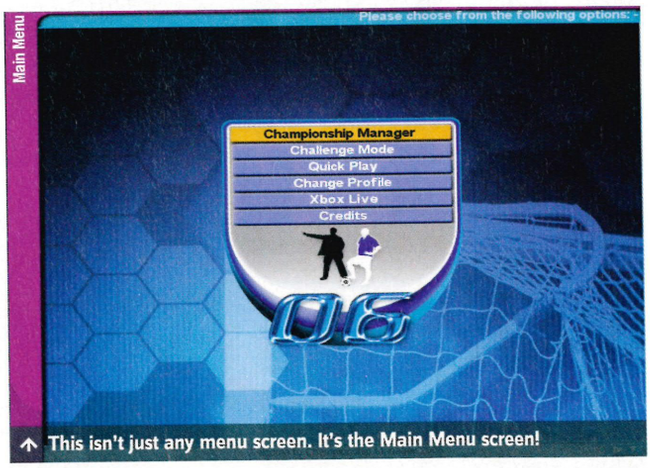
The once-massive *Championship Manager* brand took a knock a few years back when the original developer fell out with publisher Eidos. While this might sound like a lost episode of *Footballers' Wives*, it traumatised the *CM* community. Original developer Sports Interactive took its technology and experience and released *Football Manager 2006* - the *Champ Man* brand was retained by Eidos, who farmed out coding honours to London-based Beautiful Game Studios.

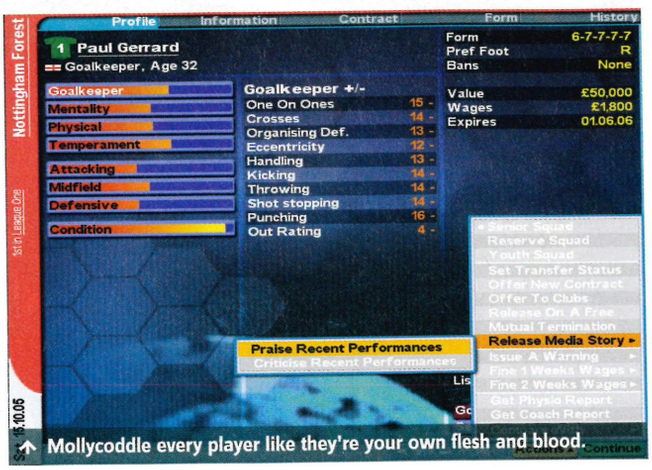
A lot of *Championship Manager*'s original fan base went off to follow *Football Manager* (insert your own glory seeking gag here), but you can bet every one of them will have kept an eye open for its return. Can Eidos truly produce a management sim to rival all the *Football Manager*s and *LMA*s already out there? Or is the company pinning its hopes on the power of the *Championship Manager* name to lure gamers back into their dugout? We're not that far from finding out...

Claiming that the 2006 instalment "is the most realistic version to date" is hardly enough, but Eidos has released an initial batch of info to back it up. The game boasts a brand new Gameplan 3D match engine. This basically allows aspiring Wengers to watch each match unfold in the same way you'd see it on the telly. The bonus here is that you'll have the ability to adjust tactics, player positions or formations on the fly. If you don't fancy sitting on the sidelines watching tiddlywinks playing football on-screen, you can use the Highlight Filter to select the moments that interest you, which will mainly be goal-scoring. It has to be said that a similar highlight-editing feature was also present in *Football Manager 2006*.

A football management game wouldn't be worth a thing if it didn't have some deep scouting options. You can often turn the fortune of your chosen club around with some well-considered purchases of the right players for the right positions - just ask Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho. Thanks to a 'Simulate World' option, you'll be able to view authentic players' performance stats outside the nation managed. And to get the most from those players with ludicrous monthly salaries, there are all manner of accurate fitness regimes devised by Mervyn Day, first team coach at Charlton Athletic.

From what we've seen it's all coming together nicely, and there are still a few months of tinkering before launch. We're big fans of Codemasters' *LMA* series, but we're always on the watch for the next big signing. Look out for an in-depth feature on the making of *CM 2006* in a forthcoming issue.





Bonus info

KEEPING FORM

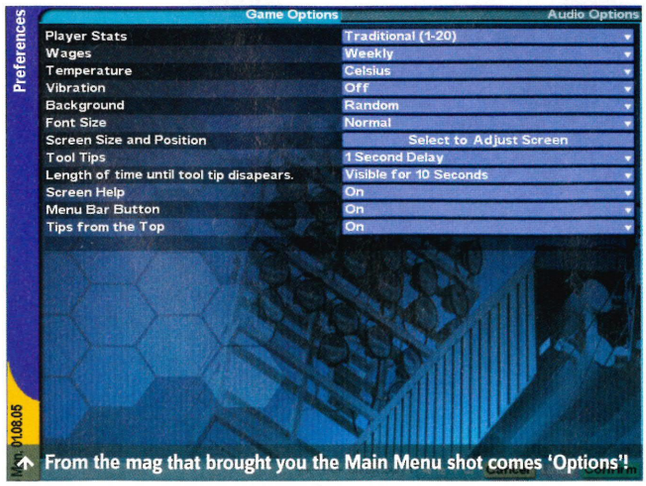
It's always a good idea to study your opposition's current form through 'parallel match processing' and watch their previous matches through the Gameplan engine. If you did this for every team you played in a season, we reckon just one season would last the length of the real thing.

COULD BE YOU

If you're heading for mid-table mediocrity you can choose a wealthy Club Benefactor for an instant cash injection. But with more money comes more demands and a greater need for immediate success. Isn't that right Mr Mourinho?

STATO

Just in case you were wondering, *Championship Manager 2006* WILL allow to manage your club to glory, dealing with everything from tactics and training to transfers - everything you get in real-life football.



Anger Management

Different strokes for different folks

A vital aspect to the successful running of any team is getting them to perform to the best of their ability (*And come in on time - Ed*). *Champ Man 2006* lets you interact with your squad by speaking to your players for the first time. You'll be able to make promises to individual players in an attempt to improve their mood or form (*Do it or you're fired - Ed*). But, just as in real life, if promises are broken, trust is lost and there are consequences (*Deadlines missed - Ed*). But with the new player status screen, you'll be able to monitor the mood and form of every single player (*Where can I get one? - Ed*).

KILLING TIME: GAV TOOK A LAPTOP HOME TO PLAY FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006, WHICH SAW HIS OTHER HALF GOING TO BED TWICE IN TWO DAYS. HE COULDN'T STOP PLAYING...

Incoming

All the essential news, exclusive previews and latest screenshots from the wonderful world of Xbox

P20 KONG'S CREATOR SPEAKS GAMES
Peter Jackson prefers games to movies!

P20 FAHRENHEIT BEATER?
New screens of the creepy *Dreamfall* emerge...

P21 LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE
Fight Night Round 3 prepares to SMASH YOUR FACE IN.

P22 BADDABADDABADDABADDA!
Ubisoft's *Blazing Angels* sets the Live skies alight.

P23 DON'T MAKE A SOUND
Double Agent's deadly new Live mode revealed...

P24 IT'S GREEN AND IT SNEEZES...
Another hero makes it to Sonic's new *Riders* game.

Enter The 360

A new dawn of gaming emerges. Gamers officially go mad

IT'S HERE... the biggest gaming phenomenon of 2005, and quite possibly 2006. The dream became a reality at the stroke of midnight 02 December for hundreds of people queued up and down the length of the country, eager to snap up the first elusive Xbox 360s.

Although the launch across the globe was pretty much simultaneous, it was a foolish man indeed who made the assumption that there would be an abundance of spare Xbox 360s knocking about come daybreak.

Those waiting outside Game in London's Oxford Street who had had the foresight to preorder all walked away satisfied – a good job too considering that some of them, such as 33-year-old Kevin Sage, had been waiting since 3pm that afternoon. It paid off as well, with Kevin becoming the first person in the UK to own the console, telling us the first thing he would do when he got home would be to play is straight away (as you'd expect). For all we know, he still hasn't been to bed, much like the hundreds of other proud Xbox 360 owners.

For the less fortunate, though, the wait continues, as demand for the next generation seems to have caught everyone by storm. But Microsoft has some good news regarding the next wave of consoles.

"The demand for Xbox 360 has been incredible and we are well aware that many gamers are disappointed to have not got their Xbox 360 on day one," Neil Thompson, Xbox senior european regional director told us. "We are working around the clock to manufacture as many Xbox 360s as we can, and are replenishing retail stores. We remain committed to delivering up to three million consoles to consumers worldwide in our first 90 days alone. Consumers should check back with their retailers frequently."

So that's what we did. A spokesperson for Game told us that small deliveries were being made "little and often", and the store was working around the clock to bring preordered consoles to customers. However, it said that 'free stock' was incredibly unlikely at the moment, but did advise that people phone their local store in case preorder customers cancelled or any free Xbox 360s popped up. When we asked just how long it would take for free stock to become readily available, allowing us to walk in and pick one from the shelf, Game couldn't answer. Pitching the word 'months?' at them they still couldn't quite guarantee that Xbox 360s would be available, saying they simply didn't know how many units Microsoft would ship, and how many would find themselves in store. The best answer, as frustrating as it seems, is to just keep badgering away for now, and trying your local videogame store every day in case a preorder hasn't been picked up. Until then, Microsoft assures us it is doing everything in its power to get Xbox 360s to us – and if its any consolation, playing one will taste that much sweeter when the day finally arrives.

↑ Kevin Sage, 33, first UK owner of Xbox 360. He really ought to go to bed now.

P25 IT'S GREEN AND IT EATS BRAINS...
Freshly unearthed new screens from *Stubbs*.

P27 BOO HOO BALLMER
You're not the only one still waiting for Xbox 360.

P27 DEAD EASY RIDER
Whispers of a new undead racing game abound!

P28 MAKING US AN OFFER...
We get down with the Family in EA's *Godfather* adaptation.

P32 SNOOPING THROUGH GERMANY
Commandos returns in first person. Is it any good?

P34 NEW YEAR'S BLOWOUT
What games should you be buying with your Xmas money?

P41 CONTACTING THE GHOSTS
The *Ghost Recon* team confesses all in our interrogation.

P44 BACK IN BLACK
We get a world-exclusive hands on with *Black*. It rocks!

P52 THE YEAR AHEAD... GAMES OF 2006
A whole heap of delicious Xbox titles to look out for.

↑ The unusually civilised Xbox 360 launch at Game Oxford Street. No one was stabbed or anything!

THE INSIDE VIEW

LISA MORGAN
UK MANAGING DIRECTOR, GAME

"Xbox 360 console sale numbers have been tremendous over the launch weekend. At GAME stores across the country, we have sold out of almost all of our initial allocation over the weekend alone, and have seen great sales on games and accessories for the console as well. We will be getting more stock in over the next few weeks, so don't worry if you have yet to get yourself an Xbox 360 console. We fully expect similar levels of support from consumers as more consoles roll out, and expect the exceptional levels of demand for the Xbox 360 to continue well into the new year."

THE EXPERT VIEW

KEVIN SAGE
FIRST UK OWNER OF AN XBOX 360

"This is amazing! I've met so many people I can hook up with now. I've got their Gamertags and I've been exchanging them all day long with people in the queue! People might have been unlucky not getting their console but I'm going to hook up with them when they do get them. It feels surreal. This machine is absolutely brilliant, and this launch is really, really good, they've put so much work into it. I've got to say thanks to Bill Gates, thank you! Good old Bill, good old Uncle Bill! I feel like I've won Big Brother or something. I can't wait to get home and play. I will remember this for the rest of my life!"

OUR VIEW

OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE
CUTTING TO THE CHASE AND TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

"It doesn't come as much of a surprise that most Xbox 360s have already been snapped up, or that demand, as ever, outstripped supply. It's always the way when consoles launch - regardless of how many there are, there will always be a few people who have to wait a bit longer. But the sheer weight of punters eager to embrace Xbox 360 is such a huge step up from when Xbox launched under a cloud of suspicion. The Xbox has proven itself as the console of discerning gamers, who are queuing up to switch on the power under that sleek white hood. With 360 now leading the way, it's forcing other console makers to play catch-up."

EMERGENCY 360! TRY EBAY IF YOU JUST CAN'T WAIT - WE FOUND SOME GOING FOR JUST £750! ERM...

News Wire.....

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

Hack Free Sixty?

Those cheeky hackers! This month news emerged that a group calling themselves Team PI Coder had cracked the first level of security protecting the Xbox 360 from being hacked. Talking to the BBC, the group said, "We hope this encourages all hackers, coders and crackers out there to take up the challenge." Microsoft hit back, saying the console was well protected against such attacks. But let's face it - has there ever been a hack-proof console?

Ebay To Blame?

Want to point a big gnarly finger of blame at someone for the lack of Xbox 360s currently out there? Well, according to a research centre called Terapeak, online market place Ebay is the place to find a hefty lump of them. At one point Ebay saw one Xbox 360 sold every 13 seconds, for anything between $250 and a staggering $1,500, with the average selling price at just a nudge over $700 a pop. It explains why people would want to do it, but by Christ doesn't it make us want to punch a wall.

Xbox 360: A New Ferrari?

Xbox chief financial officer Bryan Lee told the UBS Global Media Conference that he thought Xbox 360 would be more powerful than the PS3. "There are a couple of categories where they outdo us", he told the conference "and there are several categories where we outdo them. On balance I think most people who study the space will tell you our system is slightly more powerful than theirs from a hardware standpoint. But for the purposes of this discussion, I think it's fair to say they're both Ferraris".

Halo 3 Date Set?

More viral campaign oddness

OKAY, SO WE'RE pretty used to Microsoft viral campaigns by now but the latest over at www.hex168.com has had a few *Halo* fans up in arms. Having decoded a series of bizarre messages posted by the mysterious Dr Lutz, someone discovered a chain of binary numbers. Having then decoded them, a date emerged - 8/1/2006, the American way of writing 01 August. Why fanboys should think of this as a date for *Halo 3* in particular revolves around strange '*Halo*-style' drawings also found on the site. If you fancy the monumental task of deciphering the code, head to www.hex168.com and give it a go. Good luck, and let us know how you get on.

Jackson Talks Games

Kong director believes games could change cinema

THE MOVIE-GAME tie-in is hardly a new concept, but as the technology behind games gets better (and cheaper), *King Kong* director Peter Jackson is envisioning big changes. "It's a hugely exciting time for videogames," he told *Total Film* magazine. "And not just because I'm executive-producing the *Halo* movie! You definitely need to know about the movie-game blend that could change cinema..."

"I realised with *Halo 2* that I often look forward to the release of new games more than I do new films now. I see videogames as a natural cousin to films and I also see a time, in a few years, when games and films could merge together, so you get everything a movie gives you in terms of an exciting storyline that you can sit and watch, but you'll be able to grab your controller and involve yourself and play one of the characters in the film. We're very much in the pioneering days of this technology." He even went as far as saying this could become a 'whole new entertainment form'.

Steven Spielberg recently signed a three-game deal with Electronic Arts, in which he hopes to drive games in a new direction. "He wants to make sure each of these games has at least one really meaningful innovation," revealed EA's general manager Neil Young. "He wants to do things nobody has seen before." Is it good news for movies though? Not according to *The Island* producer Michael Bay. "I think videogames have taken a lot of business away from films," he complained. The latest issue of *Total Film* is on sale now.

↑ Kong does some DIY dentistry on a T-Rex. Is it the movie or the game?

↑ He's lost FIVE STONE! Must have been a pie shortage in New Zealand.

Midway has closed its $7m Australian operation a mere two months after opening. Ouch. Imagine all the cakes that could have bought

Sweet Dreams

Stunning Fahrenheit-style thriller headed our way this spring

DEVELOPER FUNCOM told us this month that it was bang on schedule to bring its mysterious adventure game *Dreamfall: The Longest Journey* to Xbox in the spring. We'd seen brief glimpses of the intriguing third-person adventure in early 2005, after which it appeared to slip off the radar entirely. Encouragingly, now it's back on course, and preparing to outdo *Fahrenheit* in the adventure-thriller market.

Featuring three characters from different worlds, *Dreamfall* will essentially be three separate games rolled into one, taking place in a futuristic Casablanca, a bizarre sea-world, a magical kingdom called Arcadia, and a rotten necropolis where winter reigns eternal. The storylines of all three characters will be intertwined, and as each embarks on their own journey we'll soon see what effect they have on the others. And that's as much as a tightly-smiling Funcom was prepared to tell us.

However, following a brief hands-on a short while back we were amazed at the degree of level design which has gone into *Dreamfall*, and the intuitive nature of the control system, which enables characters to seamlessly move from combat (of which there is a lot, we're pleased to announce) and puzzle-solving (of which there seems to be even more). With the popularity of last year's *Fahrenheit* proving that gamers actually have fairly broad tastes, the spring release of *Dreamfall* will surely capitalise on the interest in puzzle and adventure titles. We'll have a full hands-on preview soon.

↑ He probably only wants a hug.

↑ Trans-dimensional puzzle weirdness is practically guaranteed.

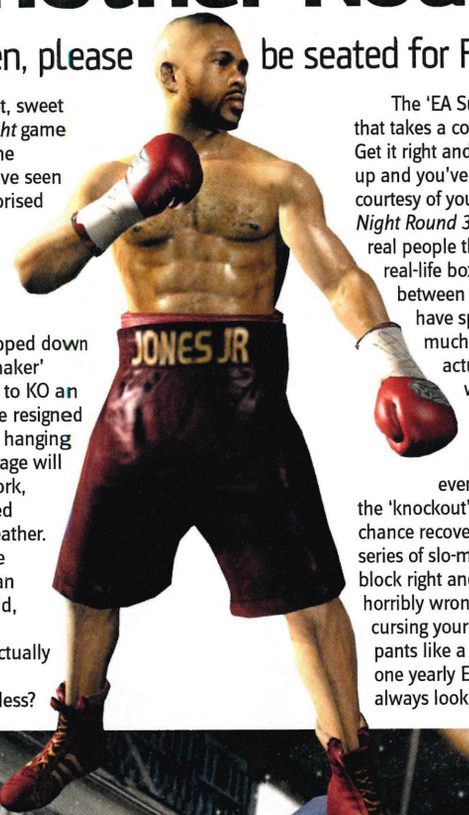
EA's Face Smasher Goes Another Round

Official Xbox Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

Laydees and gentlemen, please be seated for Fight Night Round 3!

FEAST YOUR EYES on these sweet, sweet screens from EA's third *Fight Night* game (predictable titled *Round 3*). Featuring the prettiest pre-smashed face mapping we've seen in a long while, we were pleasantly surprised when we were told *Round 3* would be current-gen as well as for Xbox 360.

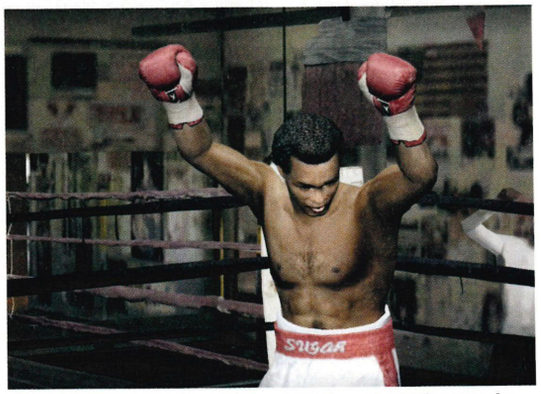
Quite a few things have changed since last year's instalment of *Fight Night*. Thankfully the analogue-based control system remains, but EA has stripped down the strength of the much-debated 'haymaker' punch, a move pretty much guaranteed to KO an opponent. Instead, the haymaker will be resigned to knocking flat boxers who are already hanging off the ropes, but getting them to that stage will now require a lot more leg- and arm-work, forcing the use of sly punches and skilled combat rather than just going hell for leather. You'll ultimately have to learn to change techniques and push yourself rather than just rely on powerful pot-shots. That said, EA has introduced a punch even more powerful than the haymaker. And it's actually called the 'EA Super Punch'. Could the marketing guys be any more McShameless?



The 'EA Super Punch' is a slow, heavy attack that takes a considerable amount of time to pull off. Get it right and your opponent is floored - screw it up and you've set yourself up for a proper shoeing courtesy of your grinning rival. And, with *Fight Night Round 3*, there's every chance rivals will be real people thanks to the new Rival mode. Classic real-life boxing grudges, such as that held between Mohammed Ali and Joe Frazier, now have special dedicated bouts. It's not so much a gameplay mechanic, as little actually changes, but the rivalry mode will add a new story element to the game, something that EA is keen on playing up. And if you're suffering a serious amount of damage, there's every likelihood your boxer will shift into the 'knockout' mini-game. This is basically a last-chance recovery feature where you have to block a series of slo-mo punches with your gloves. Time the block right and you live to fight another day - get it horribly wrong, and you're sprawled on the floor cursing your bleeding thumbs and pissing your pants like a swollen baby. This is undoubtedly one yearly EA sports update we can safely say we always look forward to. More soon!

↑ We're anticipating 'face-kicking' to be *Fight Night Round 4*'s massively overhyped single new feature.

↑ Replay the classic boxing grudge matches of old!



↑ Add your own custom championship belt graphic! Maybe.

News Wire.....

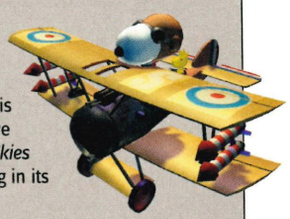
Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

Mistress Chief

Bungie has been busy giving its *DOA4* Spartan a little bit of back-story. Apparently Spartan 458 (otherwise known as Nicole before she joined the corps) was "born in the year 2531 in the city of New Legaspi on Mars. At a young age she was abducted by the Office of Naval Intelligence and enrolled in the Spartan II program, a military product to augment and hone the perfect soldier." All of that, for sure, will help us become better *DOA* players.

Snoopy Loopy

This is what we need - a flying game starring a mute dog! It seems the death of creator Charles Schultz has done nothing to stop the *Peanuts* brand being shamelessly exploited, so we'll see *Snoopy vs The Red Baron* sometime later this year. Somehow we reckon *Crimson Skies* won't be shivering in its boots just yet.



Show Me The Monkey

Oops. It looks as though Ubisoft had a bit of a boo-boo this month with its Xbox 360 version of *King Kong*. Ubisoft boss Yves Guillemot told the BBC that the 360 game is too dark on standard TVs, making it hard to play. "I'm a bit disappointed that we didn't see it when we were developing the game," he told the BBC News website. "We have a problem on the 360. The screen is dark on some TVs and it totally changes the experience. When it's dark, you don't see where you have to go." He did say that he'd be mending it for us, though.

Halo goes 2D...

...but don't tell Bungie about it, whatever you do

THRASHED BOTH *Halos*? Gagging for more grunt-killing and rocket launcher action? Not too bothered if it looks a bit like *Wonder Boy*? Then lookie here! If you head over to www.halozero.new.fr you can play a wonderful home-made tribute to *Halo* known as *Halo Zero*. Starring a pixellated Master Chief complete with Warthog, plasma sword and rocket launcher, this 2D side-scroller is a perfect way to while away the afternoon. We're not too sure how legitimate it actually is, though, so keep it hush hush, eh?

↑ We'd rather pay £20 for *Metal Slug 5*! Umm.

HOME-MADE HALO: IT'S REALLY OLD NOW, BUT WE'RE STILL BIG FANS OF RED VS BLUE. THE INTERNET HALO SITCOM STARRING A BUNCH OF BORED SPARTANS. CHECK OUT EPISODE 68 ON WWW.REDVSBLUE.COM

Quotes of the month...

"Hopefully it won't suck."

Peter Jackson admits that videogame movies, as a rule of thumb, are crap - so he's coming out all guns blazing for his producing job on the *Halo* movie.

"We want to grow the *Resident Evil* series into a multi-platform franchise, so we hope to release it simultaneously... But since we don't know the launch period for the PS3 yet, it's hard to say."

Capcom research and development chief Keiji Inafune tells us the bad news. We never thought we'd say this but hurry up and launch the damned breadbin, Sony!

"To my mind, this is more than just another platform game or graf simulator. This is something that keeps breathing long after the console is turned off. Hopefully afterwards you'll step outside, notice that piece way up on some building, and realise that sometimes there's a deeper truth waiting to be discovered behind that simple message."

And what's that then, Marc Ecko? That we shouldn't be going round spraying cans of noxious crap all over our cities?

"The specifics of the torture with which Thompson was threatened are so grotesque that they cannot be properly placed in a news release."

Crusading anti videogame lawyer Jack Thompson gets himself a death threat!

"We sold 16 bundles in 30 minutes. Customers got a console, *Perfect Dark Zero*, and *PGR3* for £700. I know it was a bit cheeky but business is business. We are out to make money after all."

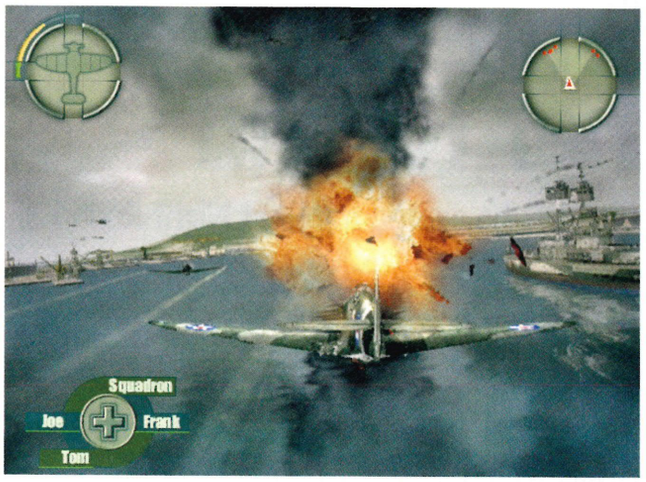
One independent retailer tells trade paper *MCV* precisely what the Xbox 360 shortage has meant for him. A bumper Christmas by the sounds of it.

"I bought *Perfect Dark Zero* because it's the Xbox 360 game that's most similar to *Halo*."

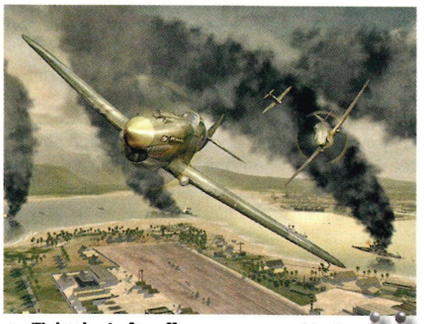
Proud new Xbox 360 owner Jose Garces says the best thing about the Xbox 360 is that it does games a bit like Xbox.

"Microsoft had to start out strong and it failed to do that. I feel sorry for them since they had put a lot of effort into promoting Xbox 360 in Japan."

Deutsche Securities analyst Takashi Oya tells the Reuters news agency the bad news as the Xbox 360 sells less than half its stock in Japan. Whoops.



↑ *Blazing Angels* is set to make war fun again!


↑ Fight the Luftwaffe menace over Live!

Angels Of Death

Live goodness roars from the gaming skies!

NEW DETAILS on Ubisoft's wartime cloudbuster *Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII* emerged this month. It looks as though the vicious dogfight-packed thrill-a-thon will outdo other classic aeronautical ace *Crimson Skies: High Road To Revenge*. We knew Ubisoft was aiming to bring us a large multiplayer experience, but according to the team, ten-a-side squadrons will now be able to face off with each other.

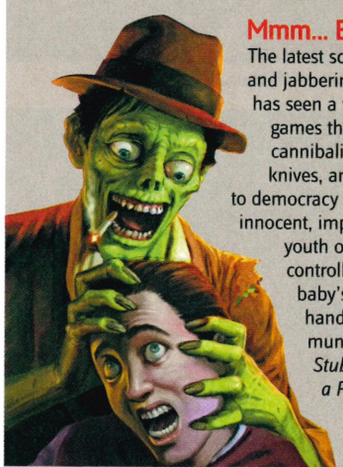
The usual deathmatch and last-man-flying rules apply, but Ubisoft has designed ten brand new *Blazing Angels* levels specifically to be played online. One of these, we were pleased to hear, is a dogfight high above London, with Big Ben proving a landmark to dive behind for cover from enemy fire. Let's hope you can blow it up too!

The other nine levels will take place across the globe, from water-filled missions in and around tropical ports to desert battles high above endless dunes, each one designed to put the idea of teamwork to the limit. You'll have to work very tightly to stay in formation (formation guides will be included once you select a squad, which is handy) - the more you work as a team, the more chance you have of success online - something we like seeing when it comes to Live-enabled games. We'll have more news soon as well as the full review in the next couple of issues!

↑ The greatest hits of World War II air battles in one place.

There are rumours afoot that Destroy All Humans! is getting a sequel - with an underground human resistance movement in it, no less!

BIZARRE Weird goings-on from the world of Xbox


↑ Brains: a delicacy in many countries.

Mmm... Braaains, And So On

The latest scaremongering to run screaming and jabbering from the Land of the Free™ has seen a warning list drawn up against games that might incite people to cannibalism. Yeah, forget about guns, knives, and drive-bys - the real threat to democracy this week is the fear that the innocent, impressionable, and heavily armed youth of America will put down their controllers and go sniffing out the baby's head with a salt shaker in hand. Topping the list of brain munching games to be avoided? *Stubbs The Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse*, the touching story of a corpse who drives a shit-mobile through a futuristic dome-world inhabited by robots.

Xbox 360 Goes Gold

What do you buy the person in your life who has everything? How about one of the things they already have, except made from gold? Such as this lovely Xbox 360 faceplate crafted from 24 carats of the yellow stuff! Yup, that's exactly what's been on sale this month on eBay for a cool $36,000. Which works out as $1,000 per single degree of three-sixtiness! It looks like a normal faceplate sprayed gold, if you ask us. But we'd love to hear from anyone who buys one - and then become their new best friend!

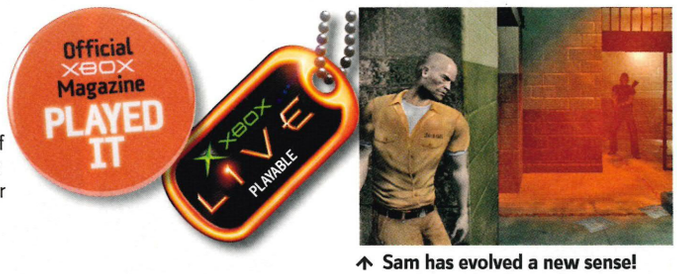
↑ Not as good as our diamond one.

Splinter Cell Cranks It Up

Brand new Live mode enables you to 'see sounds'

Now even breathing could kill you on *Splinter Cell* Live, as Ubisoft announces that Sam Fisher will have a new mode of offing the enemy. The 'Wave Vision' feature, which will sit alongside the already familiar night-vision and thermal imaging, will pick up sound waves given off by enemies in nearby spaces. Looks like the guys at Ubisoft couldn't quite let go of the fancy gadgetry for *Double Agent* after all!

Integrated into the main Story mode, and also forming part of the multiplayer function, the Wave Vision will send ripples of sound to a sensor from the direction of the enemy who made it. So, if you think you can quietly slide from one part of the map to the next over the head of an enemy, think again. All that sliding along the rope will send out circles of sound. If you reload this time, you'll have to make sure you do it away from any rivals because the click of a reload mechanism is enough to give you away. The Wave Vision mode will even be sensitive enough to pick up the sounds of a glass cutter. You may think making a hole through a window would be a silent affair, but it's likely to leave you with your trousers down if someone nearby is in what we like to think of as 'moth mode'. Depending on your style of play, the default for multiplayer tallies together scores from previous multiplayer games and automatically matches you with the best equipment and most suitable weaponry for the job. One question begs to be answered, though - with no one able to move without fear of being seen, heard, and shot, how the hell are we supposed to actually play *Splinter Cell: Double Agent* online?



↑ Sam has evolved a new sense!

↑ Don't worry - *Splinter Cell* hasn't turned into an urban crime game.

Nissan has created a concept car called the 'Urge'. It comes with Xbox 360s built into the seats. We want, we want!

Driver Is Live

But is it too late for the fumbling franchise?

WE CAN NOW officially let you know that *Driver Parallel Lines* WILL be set in 1978 and 2006, having already 'let slip' about the dates last month. Whoops. New details have emerged this month, all of which are strangely positive.

The game is divided between these two time periods, with a satisfying 85 per cent of gameplay taking place behind the wheel. You'll also be able to drive every car you see. We're promised over 80 different vehicles, from super-swishy unlicensed sports cars and motorbikes, through to the more obscure modes of transport such as trucks, bulldozers, hotrods, and, yes, tanks. The team is even incorporating mini-games in an attempt to make it more like *GTA*. Sorry, we mean more about driving wherever you like. You can run people over, go on rampages, and take part in randomly occurring circuit races too. A few sacrifices have been made to accommodate the freer feel of *Parallel Lines*, namely the dropping of Director mode, but in its place we're assured more cars on screen at any one time (somewhere in the region of 80, apparently). We're also promised Live play in which to challenge rivals to races, survivor modes, and time trials, while the physics of each car has been ramped up, giving each it's own weight and feel - something distinctly lacking in *Driv3r*. Good to see our man's back behind the wheel where he belongs. More soon.

↑ More shiny cars - that you can now drive!

↑ More cars with more polygons than EVER BEFORE. Or something.

News Wire.....

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

And, action!

What's with Hollywood and the naff videogame-to-movie conversion obsession lately? This month we discovered that two more games - *Marc Ecko* and *Wolfenstein* - are both up for the old silver screen treatment. Can we recommend Hollywood stop hiring Uwe Boll to do everything and use Peter Jackson instead? Then we'll be happy!

Japan Not So Easy

Oh dear, it seems the Japanese Xbox 360 launch has suffered a slight hiccup, as reports flooded in that on its opening weekend, less than 30 per cent of the Asia stock of nearly 160,000 had been sold. Microsoft had been hoping to finally crack the market and has been frantically hiring Japanese developers, but the delay of *DOA4* and the lack of Japan-centric titles has been blamed. Still, at least it sold over 300,000 units in the US over the same period eh?

HD-DVD Xbox 360?

Microsoft has been busy this month rubbishing rumours from a Japanese website that an HD-DVD version of Xbox 360 would be released later this year. Microsoft has toyed with the idea from day one, but gave a suitably ambiguous 'we have no plans at the moment' response. It would make sense, seeing as Sony is going down the Blu-Ray avenue. We'll have to wait and see.

Clancy's Class Act

All the Clancy games you can eat on 360!

REMEMBER IN last month's issue we announced that the original *Ghost Recon* and *Rainbow Six 3* would be compatible with Xbox 360? Well, this month it looks as though King Clancy has 'had words', because a further six games have been added, including *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2*, *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2: Summit Strike*, *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Black Arrow*, *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*, *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory*, and *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*. And that's a whole lot of Clancy.

EVEN MORE CLANCY: THE TOM CLANCY GAME WE REALLY WANT TO PLAY IS TOM CLANCY'S TOM CLANCY, IN WHICH YOU GET TO PLAY AS THE TITULAR AUTHOR, IN A FIRST-PERSON ADVENTURE OF STEALTH, HECTIC BOOK WRITING, MORE STEALTH AND LICENCE NEGOTIATION. IT'S A SURE-FIRE WINNER!

Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse

DEV: **WIDELOAD GAMES** PUB: **THQ** RELEASE: **MARCH 2006**

↑ The streets are alive with the sound of groaning. The more heads you rip off, the more your undead army grows!

↑ New bad guys emerge for Stubbs to tackle, including this inbred chainsaw-wielding lunatic. He-ey you guys!

↑ The city of Punchbowl is home to many scientists holed up in secret bases. Here we make it slightly less secret.

Panzer Elite: Action

DEVELOPER: **ZOOTFLY** PUBLISHER: **DEEP SILVER** RELEASE DATE: **FEBRUARY 2006**

↑ Storm through encampments, run down enemy troops and blow away watchtowers, to hinder enemy intelligence.

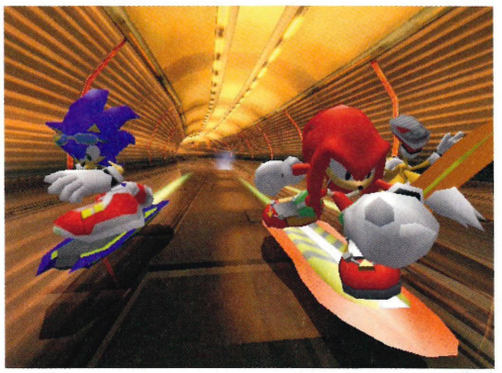
↑ All manner of environments will appear, but try to stay hidden in your big green tank in frozen wastelands, alright?

↑ Convoys of trucks are easy pickings. Just make sure they're enemy trucks before you start using them for target practice.

Sonic Riders

DEVELOPER: **SEGA** PUBLISHER: **SEGA** RELEASE: **FEBRUARY 2006**

↑ Well, that's at least five players we can see, and we're loving the *Mario Kart*-style go-faster arrows. It's looking good.



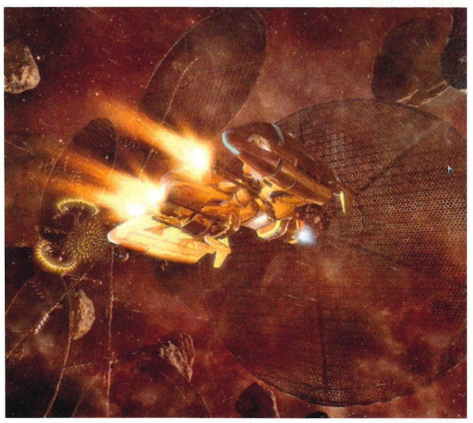
↑ Tails, Knuckles, Amy and the rest of the Sonic 'cru' are back, as well as a few characters we haven't met before...

↑ ...Like this green duck-monster, complete with sneeze-attack. Will there be guns and fighting too? Wait and see...

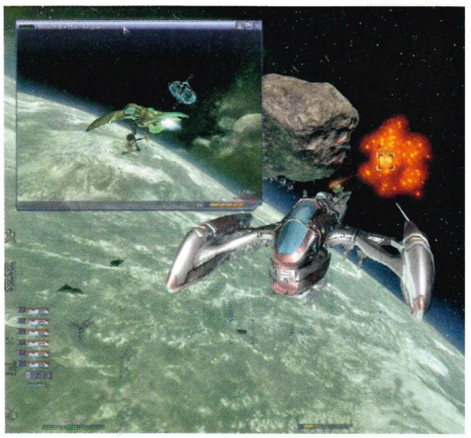
X3: Reunion

DEVELOPER: **EGOSOFT** PUBLISHER: **DEEP SILVER** RELEASE DATE: **MAY 2006**

↑ Build a galaxy-spanning corporate empire and get filthy rich, or just become an evil space pirate. You can do ANYTHING!



↑ It's so big, you'll need to use huge solar sails to get from one side of the galaxy to the other.



↑ Gripping space combat and engrossing, free-roaming gameplay – we can't wait for this.

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DivX/MPEG4 Compatible

The time has come to get yourself a DVD recorder and, as you'd expect from MAX TV, this is no ordinary DVD Recorder. The main features that set it apart are its USB Socket and its DivX/MPEG4 compatibility. Both of these unusual features make this DVD Recorder the perfect choice for you if you have a large library of video files on your PC. It means you no longer have to sit at a desk to watch some of your favourite movies any more.

Order Code: MAX461

Only £129.00 +p&p

This DVD Player can play them from disc (CD-R or DVD-R depending on file size) or even directly from a USB Flash Drive. And it's not just video, it even recognises MP3 music and Picture CDs! All this is in addition to the ability to record up to 6 hours of TV per DVD+R(W) disc.

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The CD Scratch Repairer Kit is one such piece of equipment. It comes with pads and repair fluid, which will be good for repairing up to 50 CDs, plus a bonus spare set which are good for 50 more.

The process is very simple. First put the sand pads in with your disc, set it going for three minutes, and they sand down the surface of the disc by a tiny, tiny fraction. Next, pop in the repair pads with a couple of drops of fluid, three more minutes while your disc is cleaned and resurfaced. And that's it!

FREE INCLUDES **BONUS** refill kit

Order Code: MAX467

Only £19.99 +p&p

Spy Cam

Spy Cam is a tiny camera with a micro lens and discreet microphone, which can be placed pretty much anywhere.

It's powered by an ordinary 9v battery and wirelessly transmits a high-quality signal to its receiver at a distance of up to 100 metres. The receiver can then be hooked up to a TV, a VHS recorder, a PC with capture card, a full-size camcorder or even a DVD recorder. It's great for surveillance, practical jokes or even just obtaining footage that wouldn't be possible with an ordinary camera. Simple to use - just insert the battery tune in the receiver and you're away!

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AGENT X

Delving into enemy territory to bring you all the gossip from the world of games

RIDE 'EM COWBOY!

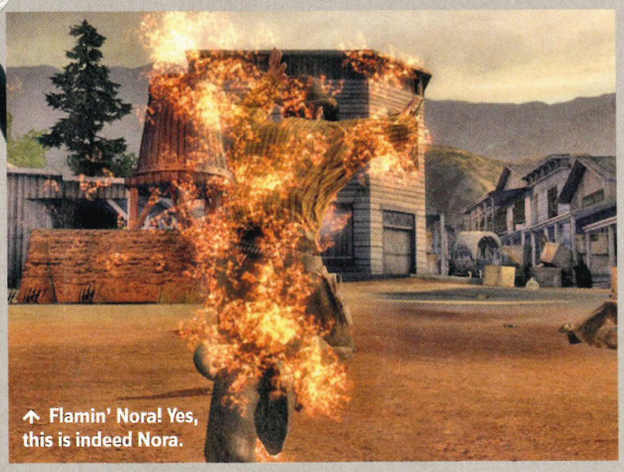
With *Gun* having done good things on Xbox, I hear word in the tumbleweed that another cowboy shooter is on its way. *The Call of Juarez* is an FPS set in a backwards, lawless city that desperately needs a clean-up. Like London, but without the unlicensed mini-cabs.

RIDE 'EM HALO-BOY!

Disguised as a small plate of hors d'oeuvre in a restaurant recently, I overheard a conversation between two bearded Hollywood types regarding the new *Halo* movie. Apparently Peter Jackson is keen on getting *Hellboy* director Gorilla del Toro to helm the flick (*It's Guillermo, you moron - Ed*). Presumably because his first name has something to do with apes! Or something. Remember, you heard it here first, suckas!

RIDE 'EM GHOST-BOY!

US developer Majesco has been forced to sell some of its titles this month because of a few money worries. It's good news for Xbox owners though, because if my large-eared spy-ants are anything to go by, two titles - *Ghost Rider* and *The Darkness* (nothing to do with Justin Hawkins' comedy Queen tribute band) - will now be coming to Xbox rather than just new-fangled next-gen machines. Hurrah, etc!



↑ Flamin' Nora! Yes, this is indeed Nora.

↑ *Medal of Honor* takes to the skies?

RIDE 'EM, ERM, AIR-BOY!

The word on a rather slippery grapevine suggests that the *Medal of Honor* franchise is taking a crazy new direction, in the form of *Medal of Honor: Airborne*. Let's hope there are no 'helicopters' in there, eh EA? You know who you are, history-meddling heathens!

↑ *The Darkness*. Coming soon!

50 Cent has been quoted as saying he turned the volume down on his game to stop his kid being offended by the swearing. How moral!

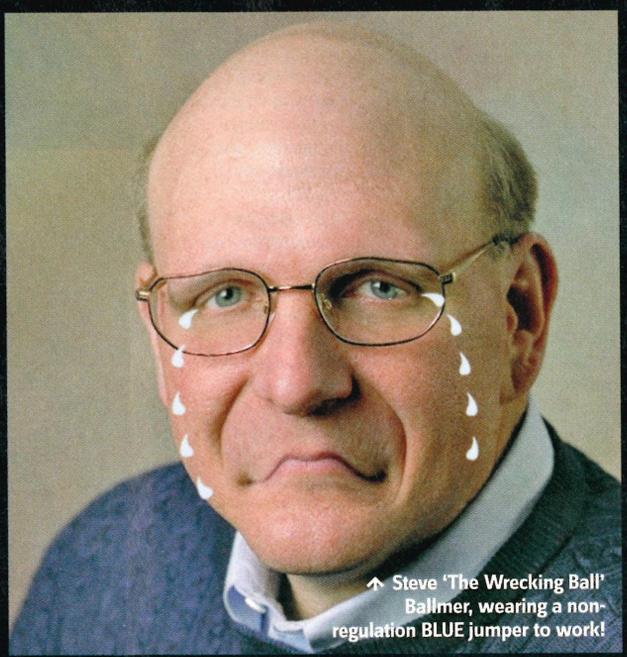
AND FINALLY...

Ballmer Bawls His Eyes Out

"Even I can't buy an Xbox 360!" complains CEO of Microsoft

AW, DIDDUMS! Seems even the top dogs at Microsoft are 'down with da kids' as they join the global queues to snaffle up the much-sought-after console. Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO, head honcho, boss man, big daddy, the guy in charge when Bill's 'gone fishin', can't get one. Yes, even a man who probably has space lasers in his hallway and wipes his bum with gold leaf has been quoted as saying: "The Ballmer children do not have their Xbox 360 yet. I'm in the same boat as many of you." And this is coming from a man who knew when it would ship. Was he really that busy to preorder, or is he just playing dumb, pretending that he's like the rest of us? We wouldn't be surprised if he is, in actual fact, using spare Xbox 360s as novelty clown shoes, scooping out their insides and clomping about his platinum mansion with them on his feet shouting "I'M HENRY THE EIGHTH I AM I AM, AND ALSO THE KING OF SPAIN."

He shouldn't worry too much though, as there is a happy ending to this tale of misery and woe. This month GAME told us it was continually receiving fresh shipments of Xbox 360s, and if we try hard enough, there's every chance we'll get one! Or we could just cry like a big baby until Bill takes pity and gives us one of his spare ones.



↑ Steve 'The Wrecking Ball' Ballmer, wearing a non-regulation BLUE jumper to work!

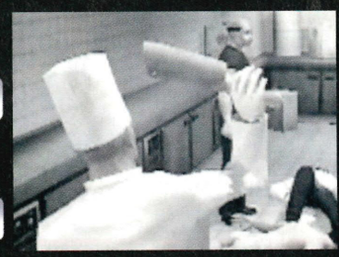
Freeze Frame

Old Bald Head is back in Hitman: Blood Money...

Agent 47 gets all grumpy on his victims again, but who's that lurking in the shadows watching him? Watch the full trailer at www.gametrailers.com.

Ah, an improved sniper scope. The zoom on this is so enormous we could almost be in another country here.

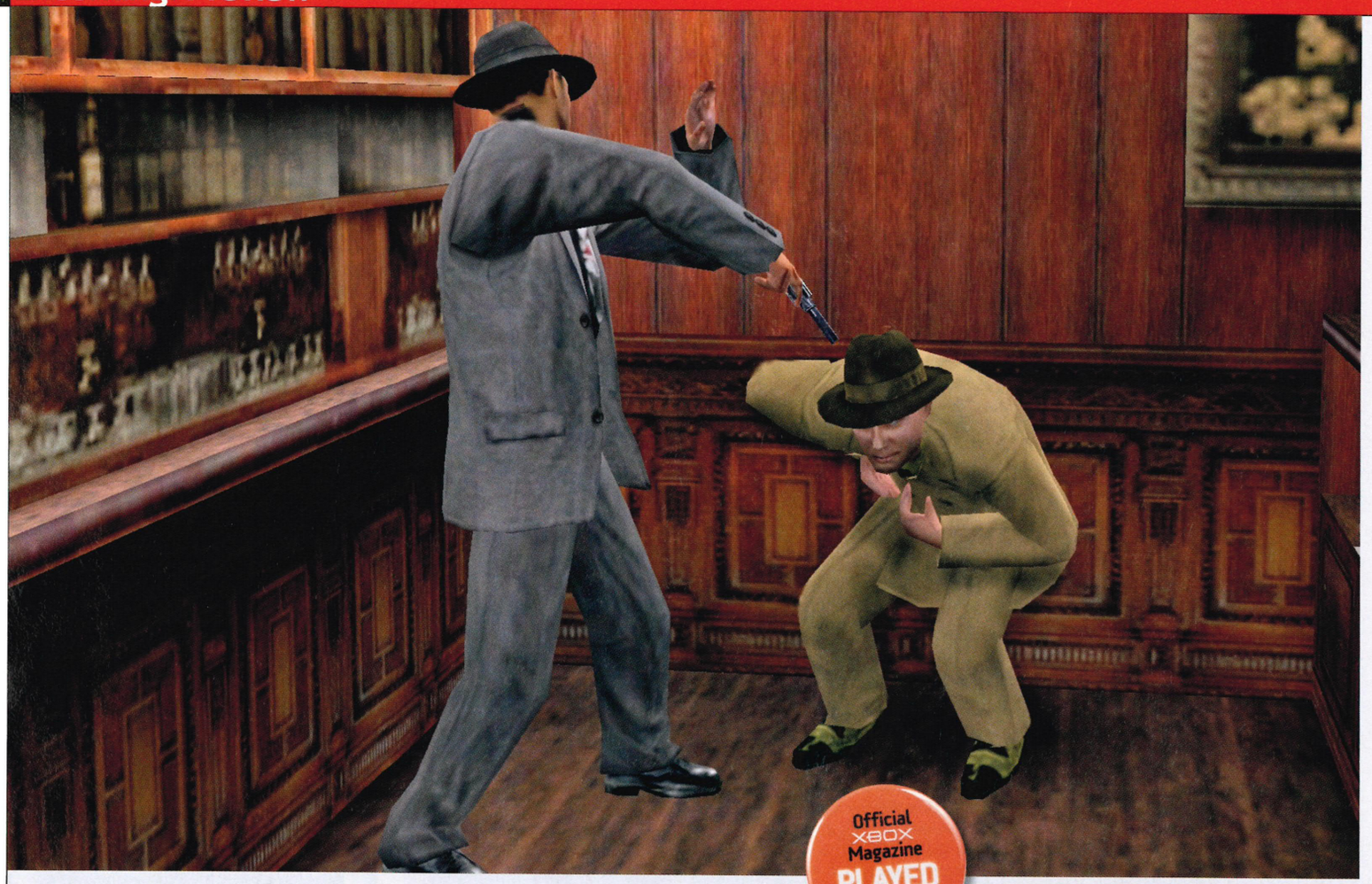
↑ But who's this? In the trailer he's seen kicking Mr 47's butt. Could our man have finally met his match?



↑ Here's 47 dressed up as Gordon Ramsay, telling a sous chef not to "smudge my f*%$ing plates again!"

↑ The costumes are becoming more interesting. We hope 47 can steal and wear this sexy duct tape outfit.

↑ But then we see the same girl later on talking to 47. Who is she? A robot made of cornflake boxes and feathers?



Official Xbox Magazine PLAYED IT

The Godfather

EA sprinkles its Mafioso magic over Coppola's masterpiece

Dev: EA	Pub: EA
Release: February	Live: None
Players: 1	
0 Percentage Complete 80	

"WELL, IT'S BASICALLY *GTA* in Homburg hats, innit? With tommy guns and that?"

Err, actually no. Despite looking like a 1940s version of the modern-day crime-glorifying mega-hit, *The Godfather* is a far subtler, far cleverer game than anything served up by CJ or Tommy Vercetti. Having played through several key scenes for ourselves, we're confident EA has made something that will pleasantly surprise *Godfather* fanatics who might otherwise have been expecting a movie tie-in disaster. Not wishing to name names, but we're still seething over the whole *From Russia With Love* (Issue 49, 5.0) fiasco.

For a start, *The Godfather* sensibly steers clear from simply being a straight port of the film. Not only does this avoid the pitfall of upsetting a deeply loyal fanbase, but as a film *The Godfather* hardly makes for riveting game material anyway - just a lengthy collection of tastefully shot dialogue scenes. Instead, EA has created a totally new story set within the *Godfather* world, drawing deeply on both the film and the original Mario Puzo novel to help flesh out and create a totally believable post-war New York City. Fans needn't be too concerned - you'll still bump into key scenes from the movie as you progress, and you'll even be able to take part in some of them to a limited extent, but for all intents and purposes this is an expansion, rather than a straight retelling, of the *Godfather* myth.

Better still, EA's version is far more than your average story-driven action game. If anything, it's a real-time strategy game with action-driven elements. Real-time strategy because your ultimate aim is to take control of the city piece by piece, grabbing every business going (legal or otherwise) while sabotaging rival families as they attempt to do the same, and action-driven because the way you go about intimidating shop owners into handing over their profits is all down to some very clever use of the joypad's twin analogue sticks.

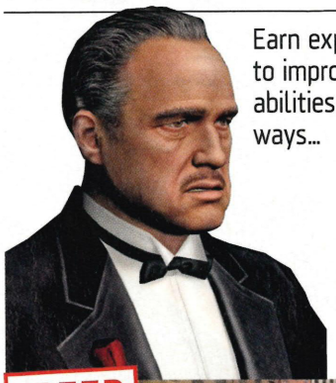
So how does it work? Picture the scene: you're a young Italian American who, at the request of Don Corleone, has begun learning the Mafia ropes under the expert tutelage of Luca Brasi (who you may remember from the movie). You're standing across the street from a butcher's when Luca tells you to go in and 'have a word'. You stroll across, chat to him, and when he refuses to cough up any protection money you get angry. You start shouting, you pull him about, you smash his head into the counter and then you throw the cash register through the window. Not enough brutality to actually kill him, but enough to have the poor guy break down in a puddle of tears and apologies.

It's a very dynamic scene, and one that's controlled entirely via tweaks of the analogue sticks thanks to a system that originally began life as the combat controls from EA's *Fight Night* boxing games. In essence, you need to use real physical

↑ These people didn't pay their +100 Respect to the Don (via TXT MSG).

↑ "...and when Luca Brasi don't like your olives, I don't like your olives!"

BECOMING A MADE MAN



Earn experience to improve your abilities five ways...

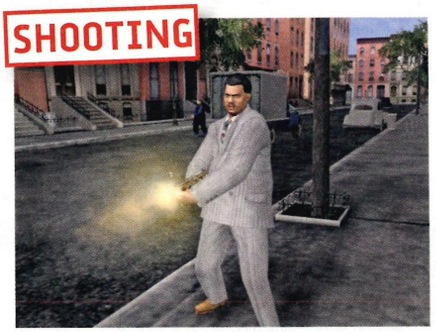
FIGHTING

It's a rough world out there. If you want to get ahead in New York City, you need to use your fists as well as your brains. Local brothel owner not co-operating with your protection racket? Make him eat signet ring. Capisce?

SPEED

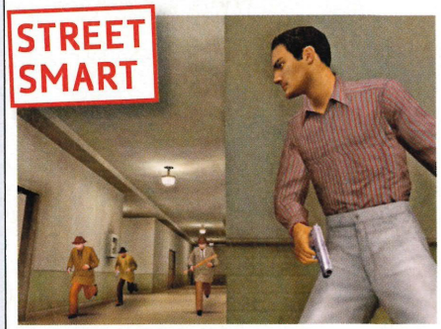
Despite being set over a ten-year time period, getting things done quickly in *The Godfather* is paramount. Not only must you leg it when the police turn up, but you'll need to display some swift driving skills at certain points too.

SHOOTING



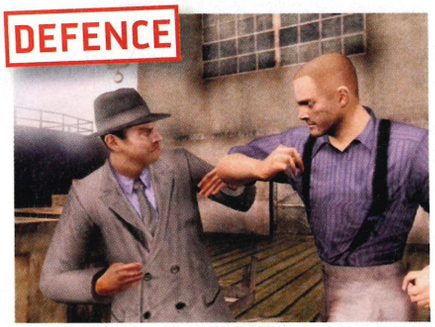
When you're illegally running girls for a living, you need to know your merchandise. The shooting system is actually borrowed from EA's James Bond effort *Everything or Nothing*, obscure game fact fans.

STREET SMART

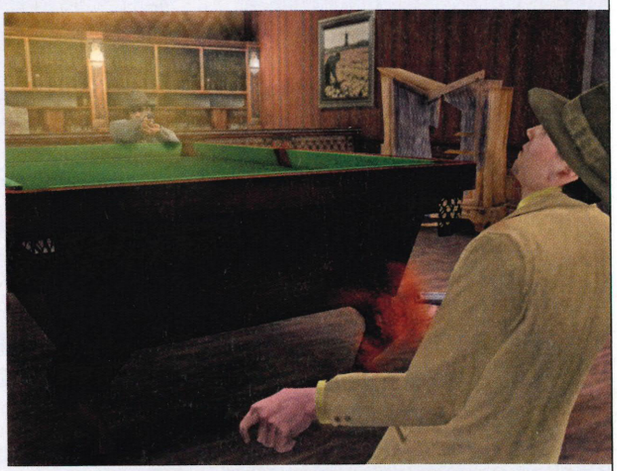


What's the most important thing about being a Mafioso? Being a wise guy, that's what. Knowing all the ins and outs of the street, the best after-hours liquor joints and the most easily bribable police officers is half the battle.

DEFENCE



Unfortunately, some people won't take their beatings like a good boy and will try hitting back. Sometimes you're forced into taking a few lashings yourself. Beef yourself up, lest you end up in the harbour wearing a concrete overcoat.



↑ "I HAD TWO POUNDS DOWN, YOU STINKING IRISH PEEG."

↑ They have made Don Corleone very, very sad. Very sad indeed. Sniff.

↑ *GTA*-style urban crime meatballs, just like Mama used to make.

↑ It's not all beating people up then murdering them. More soon...

MOB FANCY: OUR FAVOURITE GANGSTER FILMS - GAV: THE GODFATHER PART II, MICHAEL: GOODFELLAS, MARK: MARRIED TO THE MOB, DAN: CASINO, PHIL: BUGSY MALONE, ADAM: DONNIE BRASCO, BEN: MICKEY BLUE EYES (PREDICTABLY)

"It's a subtler, cleverer game than anything featuring Tommy Vercetti"

force on the sticks to pressure the mild-mannered butcher into handing over not only his earnings, but the keys to his secret gambling den upstairs as well. The philosophy is that everybody has their breaking point, and it's your task to take them right up to it without pushing them into an unnecessarily messy death-splat beyond. After all, a dead butcher isn't going to earn you as much as a live one, right?

Naturally, the more businesses you start to take over across New York's five districts, the more notorious you'll become, the more money you'll earn and the higher up the Mafia echelons you'll ascend. It's here *The Godfather* morphs from pure action romp and empire-building strategy belch to its third form, that of fully-fledged RPG. Completing tasks throughout New York earns you experience, which in turn can be used to improve your characteristics in five key areas: Fighting, Shooting, Defence, Speed and Street Smart. Develop these, along with your bank balance (and predictably with this being an EA game, your wardrobe), and you'll start to see a change in not only your appearance, but the way other people treat you as well.

While the main thrust of *The Godfather* is still to follow its torturously windy ten-year story through to its end, it's the more open-ended aspects of the game that interest us. According to EA, there are dozens of hours of play to be gleaned simply from travelling around taking over businesses - and with over 150 unique establishments dotted about it's not hard to see how. Clearly this is a game that develops according to how you choose to play it.

Certainly not the game we might have been expecting, but one with plenty to offer both the hardened fan and the complete Corleone virgin. With a unique blend of styles and control systems, *The Godfather* has real potential to be the 'Don' of crowd-pleasing movie spin-offs.

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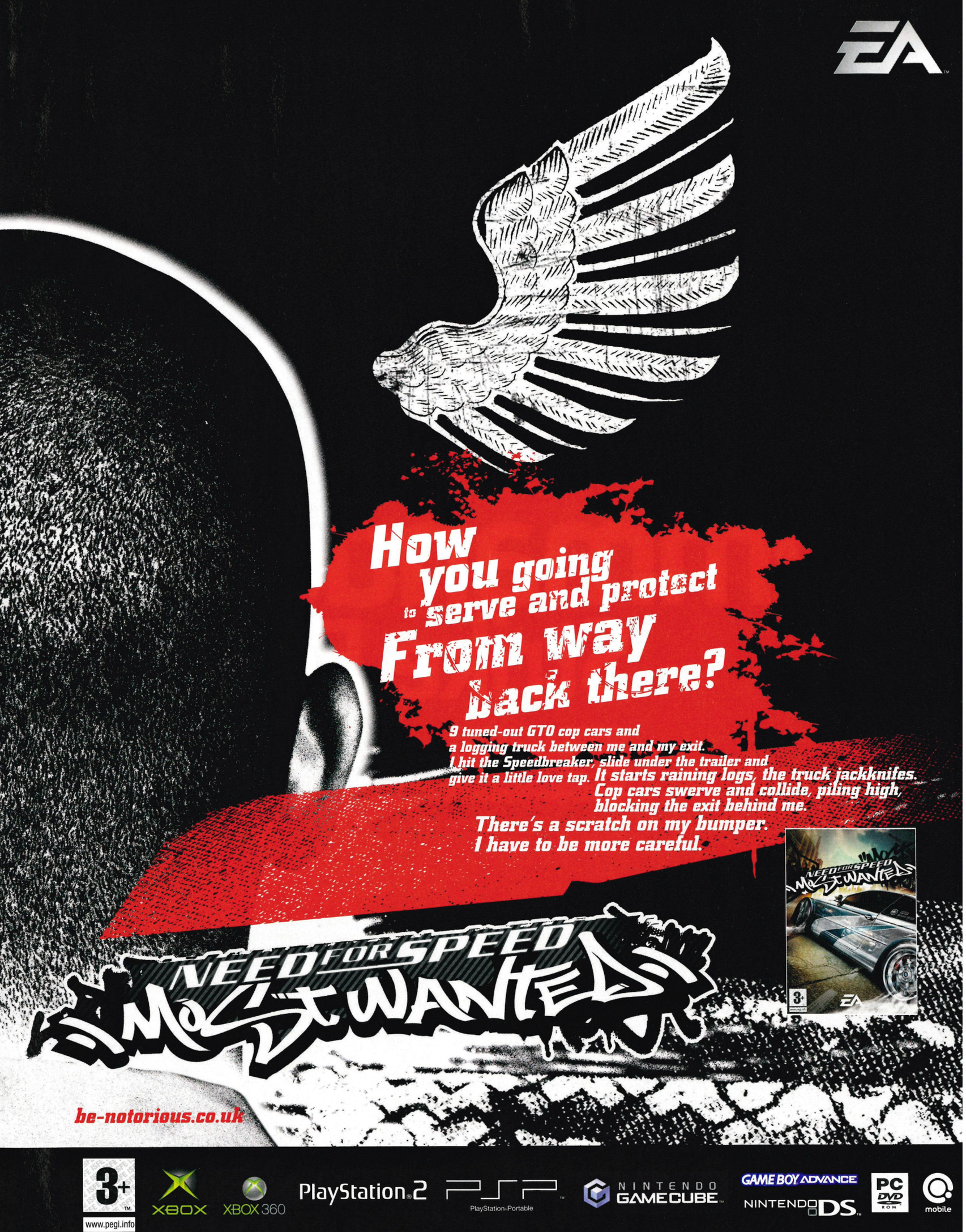

How you going to serve and protect From way back there?
9 tuned-out GTO cop cars and a logging truck between me and my exit. I hit the Speedbreaker, slide under the trailer and give it a little love tap. It starts raining logs, the truck jackknifes. Cop cars swerve and collide, piling high, blocking the exit behind me.
There's a scratch on my bumper. I have to be more careful.
NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED
be-notorious.co.uk
3+
www.pegi.info
XBOX
XBOX 360
PlayStation 2
PlayStation Portable
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
GAME BOY ADVANCE
NINTENDO DS
PC DVD ROM
mobile

Commandos Strike Force

Dev: Pyro Studios	Pub: Eidos
Release: Spring 2006	Live: 2-8 players
Players: 2-8	

0 Percentage Complete 80 100

Will replacing brains with brawn really make a better wargame? Let's see...

JUST HOW EASY is it to take an intricately planned, beautifully rendered death-trap of a strategy game and turn it into an FPS with all the same elements? We're huge fans of *Commandos 2*, (Isssue 5, 7.9), and loved the way it approached the subject of WWII from such a fresh perspective. It was also bastard hard, mind you.

Scoot forward a couple of years and the next instalment has given up the compelling top-down puzzling and snooping, replacing it with a rather more familiar first-person mode. When we first found out we were gutted, but having played it, are we now a little less sceptical? Well, not quite.

Going first-person takes away the beauty of the series. All that isometric scenery was one of the selling points for us. It felt real, it felt unique, and it felt very much part of the whole *Commandos* mythology. Whereas so many first-person WWII shooters are churned out these days that it often takes a trained eye to spot the differences between games. That said, we get the feeling *Commandos Strike Force* is holding true to the originals.

We found ourselves swapping between men at will, enabling us to position each in such a way that our squad worked efficiently, and we could engage in the odd spot of costume-swapping with strangled Nazis, but whereas the emphasis used to be on the lack of combat, these days a game just ain't a game unless you're filling someone's ass with lead. You can even dual-wield, for pity's sake. That said, it's still vital to use stealth and forward-thinking to solve a level. Nazis are red-hot when it comes to spotting you, and you have to use all manner of tricks to throw them off the scent. The sniper may have to shoot out torches, or the Green Beret will have to toss a stone to distract them before going in with the garrotte. You also have to plant mines on specific stretches of road to get rid of pesky tanks, or roll gas grenades under the doors of enemy radio posts. It's all very snoopy-snoopy, but we still managed to clear a farmyard of Nazis with little more than a full-frontal attack and a throwing knife. Sure, it was an early level, but that kind of behaviour would have wiped us off the map in the previous titles.

We're certainly looking forward to the return of *Commandos*, but having played it a little, we're yet to be convinced, especially when *Brothers in Arms* has pretty much got the whole 'stealth/strategy FPS' thing sewn up. Perhaps later levels will revisit those classic moments creeping through half-lit corridors, and we'll experience the same cold terror as a soldier walks past. Until then we'll just keep hoping Whiskey makes an appearance. No *Commandos* game would be complete without him.

Make him salute you like the scum he is, then wring his scrawny neck. Then try on his pants.

With the moon in his face he'll not see you creep up on him.

Keep the sniper active to stop searchlights illuminating everything.

Mounted guns are a great, if noisy, way of clearing away enemies.

It's amazing what you can do with little more than a length of wire.

Missing In Action Where the hell is the rest of the Commandos team?

The Green Beret, Sniper, and Spy now single-handedly provide all the heroism. We take a look at the other *Commandos* members in the hope they'll pop up in the game.

DRIVER
Ideal for moving trucks in front of danger to give the other guys shelter from bullets, the Driver now looks to be replaced by the all-rounder, the Green Beret.

SNIPER
This guy returns, thank goodness. He's vital for picking off approaching enemies and shooting out the giant spotlights that illuminate your heroic squad.

THIEF
This chap and his mate Whiskey the dog are no more. Instead, their tasks of pickpocketing and key-stealing has been assumed by the spy. Whiskey's in the dog's home.

GREEN BERET
The all-rounder. He's hard as nails and very much the man you need when caught up in all these new 'FPS' skirmishes. Dual-wields too, which is a bit odd.

SPY
Returning to the war zone, the Spy is now much more combat-savvy. He's less like a 1940s grocer and a bit more handy with the weapons this time. A silent, lethal killer.

SAPPER
The guy who plants mines and tosses grenades is probably holed up in a POW camp, so his road-blowing duties now fall, as does everything else, to the Green Beret.

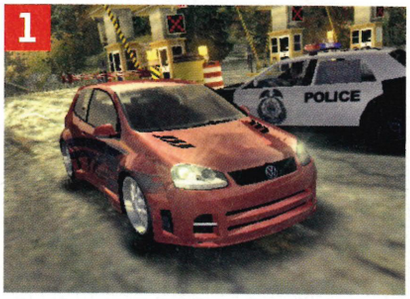
NATASHA
The temptress! Her diversion-making knockers have, apparently, retired. Whether the spy now dresses up in drag and slaps on some lippy has yet to be confirmed.

DIVER
Whereas once you needed this guy to cut mines loose from their mooring to allow you to dock, now it seems all you need is some big guns. It's 2006 after all. Sigh...

SILENCE IS THE KEY: REMEMBER. UNLIKE OTHER NAZIS, THIS LOT ARE ACTUALLY QUITE INTELLIGENT. WALKING THROUGH BUSHES OR ON GRAVEL PATHS MAKES NOISE - ALWAYS STICK TO THE GRASS IF YOU CAN HELP IT

Charts

The ten best-selling games in the UK



1 NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED
Dev: **EA** Pub: **EA**
What a surprise! *Need For Speed* makes Christmas number one. Again! True, it's better than the *Underground* games, but come on people – there are better street-racing titles than this out there.

2 CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE
Dev: **Treyarch/Grey Matter** Pub: **Activision**
A late surge from the excellent *Big Red One* proves nothing says Christmas cheer like a little bit of World War II. Makes you proud to be British.

3 PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG
Dev: **Ubisoft** Pub: **Ubisoft**
Given how well it's gone down at the flicks, *King Kong* was a dead cert to do well over the Christmas and New Year period.

4 STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II
Dev: **Pandemic** Pub: **Activision**
A huge hit with young and old gamers alike, the latest *Star Wars* shooter has kept the masses twiddling their lightsabres.

5 GUN
Dev: **Neversoft** Pub: **Activision**
Three Activision titles in the top five! Yes, and with great, original titles like *Gun* in its catalogue it's not hard to see why.

6 50 CENT: BULLETPROOF
Dev: **Genuine Games** Pub: **Vivendi**
Proof that the phantom-bullet-taking rap star's mug will sell anything, *50 Cent: Bulletproof* hits number six in the charts.

7 FIFA 06
Dev: **EA** Pub: **EA**
A late Christmas surge from panic-buying parents nudges *FIFA* ahead of *Pro Evolution Soccer 5* for the first time in weeks.

8 SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG
Dev: **Sega** Pub: **Sega**
The *Sonic* legacy and a huge TV marketing campaign means that *Shadow* squeezes into the bottom end of the top ten.

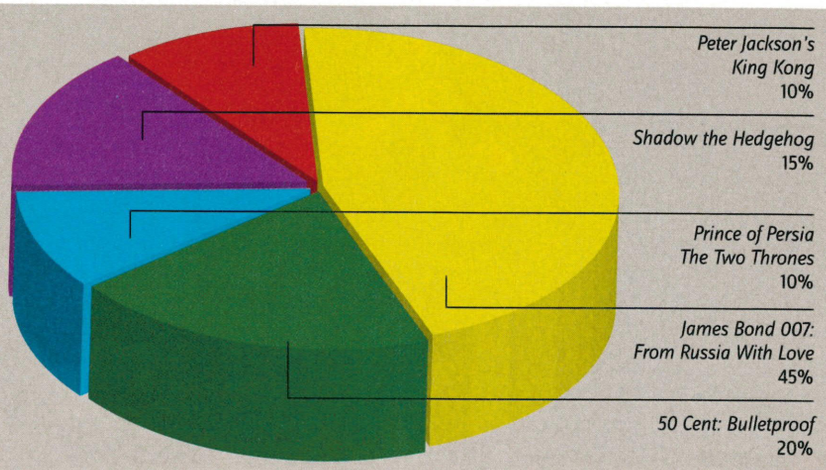
9 FORZA MOTORSPORT
Dev: **Microsoft** Pub: **Microsoft**
How's this for a blast from the past? Could people have been buying this on the cheap as a Christmas stocking-filler?

10 POP THE TWO THRONES
Dev: **Ubisoft** Pub: **Ubisoft**
The time-bending trilogy has concluded and the Ubisoft coffers are filling accordingly. We expected a higher entry, though.

Virgin megastores Virgin Megastores sponsors the charts.

The hot topic You answer the burning question...

Of all the big Christmas releases, which do you feel was the biggest letdown?



For every star present there's always a turkey. Which big Christmas games failed to make the grade? Throw in your own two cents by logging onto our forums at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk

Your most wanted

THIS CHART IS composed entirely from the entries you send in and shows the upcoming games you're most excited by. We can then fill the mag with the news, previews and features you most want to see!

↑ TO VOTE FOR your favourite upcoming game, text 'MW: Game Name' to 80889 (see page 038 for details), or email us at staff@futurenet.co.uk with the subject line 'MW'.

← It's the loudest, brashest, gun-powderiest shooter ever created so no wonder you lot want it bad. Keep an eye out for next month's issue when we'll be bringing you the exclusive review and demo!

1 BLACK
Dev: Criterion **Pub:** EA **Release:** February 2006

2 TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT
Dev: Ubisoft **Pub:** Ubisoft **Release:** March 2006

3 LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND
Dev: Crystal Dynamics **Pub:** Eidos **Release:** March 2006

4 TOCA RACE DRIVER 3
Dev: Codemasters **Pub:** Codemasters **Release:** February 2006

5 FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS
Dev: Pandemic **Pub:** THQ **Release:** February 2006

6 TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER
Dev: Ubisoft **Pub:** Ubisoft **Release:** March 2006

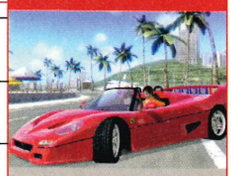
7 HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY
Dev: Io Interactive **Pub:** Eidos **Release:** March 2006

8 OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST
Dev: Sumo Digital **Pub:** Sega **Release:** March 2006

9 DRIVER PARALLEL LINES
Dev: Reflections Interactive **Pub:** Atari **Release:** March 2006

10 PAINKILLER: HELL WARS
Dev: People Can Fly **Pub:** DreamCatcher **Release:** March 2006

OUR SHOUT



Yes! *OutRun* is back and we can't wait... After the so-so *Shadow the Hedgehog* it's nice to see Sega doing what it does best: making games about open-top Ferraris driving down wide roads with sunny blue skies. We're over-excited already! Let's just hope this one sells the millions of copies it deserves to (unlike the last one).

Xbox Game Releases

Detailing every Xbox game from now until eternity

DATE	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	ISSUE
JANUARY	Rugby Challenge 2006	Swordfish Studios	Ubisoft	52
	Torino 2006 Winter Olympics	TBA	Take 2	52
	World Poker Tour	Core Soft	Take 2	50
	Zathura	High Voltage	Take 2	N/A
FEBRUARY	Advent Rising	GlyphX	THQ	41
	Black	Criterion	EA	52
	BloodRayne 2	Terminal Reality	THQ	42
	Bully	Rockstar	Rockstar	45
	Castlevania: Curse of Darkness	Konami	Konami	52
	Chicken Little	Buena Vista Games	Buena Vista Games	N/A
	Extreme 4x4	Hog Studios	GMX Media	N/A
	Frankie Dettori Racing	Sidhe Interactive	Player One	N/A
	Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers	Pandemic	THQ	52
	Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows	Midway	Midway	52
	Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	WXP Inc.	Activision	N/A
	Jacked	Explosiv	Sproing	50
	King of Fighters 2003	SNK Playmore	Ignition	52
	Marc Ecko's Getting Up: CUP	The Collective	Atari	52
	Metal Slug 5	SNK Playmore	Ignition	52
	Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	Namco	EA	N/A
	Pac-Man World 3	Namco	EA	N/A
	Panzer Elite Action	Zootfly	JoWood	52
	Raze's Hell	Artech	THQ	N/A
	Samurai Showdown 5	SNK Playmore	Ignition	52
	Seaworld Adventure Parks: SDSA	Activision	Activision	N/A
	Stubbs the Zombie in RWAP	Wideload Games	THQ	52
	Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	Avalanche Software	THQ	N/A
	The Godfather	EA	EA	52
	TOCA Race Driver 3	Codemasters	Codemasters	52
	World Series of Poker	Activision	Activision	N/A
MARCH	America's Army: Rise of a Soldier	Secret Level	Ubisoft	41
	And 1 Streetball	Ubisoft	Black Ops	N/A
	Blazing Angels: Squadrons of World War 2	Ubisoft	Ubisoft	52
	Commandos Strike Force	Pyro Studios	Eidos	52
	Dancing Stage Unleashed 3	Konami	Konami	N/A
	Driver: Parallel Lines	Reflections Int.	Atari	52
	FIFA Street 2	EA	EA	50
	Fight Night Round 3	EA	EA	52
	Final Fight: Streetwise	Capcom	Capcom	44
	Ford Street Racing	Eutechnyx	Xplosiv	52
	Hitman: Blood Money	Io Interactive	Eidos	52
	OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	Sega	Sumo Interactive	52
	Painkiller: Hell Wars	People Can Fly	DreamCatcher	52
	Splinter Cell Double Agent	Ubisoft	Ubisoft	51
	StarCraft: Ghost	Swingin' Ape Studios	Vivendi	52
	Tom Clancy's GR Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft	Ubisoft	52
	Tomb Raider: Legend	Crystal Dynamics	Eidos	51
	UFO: Aftershock	Altar Interactive	Ascaron	N/A
	Winback 2: Project Poseiden	Omega Force	Koei	N/A
APRIL	6GUN	BattleBorne Ent.	TBA	42
	Championship Manager 06	Gusto Games	Eidos	52
	Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Battleborne	Deep Silver	52
	Just Cause	Avalanche	Eidos	52
	Rugby 06	EA	EA	52
	Sensible Soccer	Kuju Entertainment	Codemasters	51
	The Chronicles of Narnia	Traveller's Tales	Buena Vista Games	52
SPRING 2006 AND BEYOND				
	25 to Life	Avalanche	Eidos	N/A
	American McGee Presents Bad Day LA	Enlight Software	TBA	N/A
	Battlestations: Midway	Mithis	Eidos	52
	Beijing 2008 Olympic Games	TBA	Sega	N/A
	Call of Cthulhu: Destiny's End	Headfirst	Hip Interactive	N/A
	City of the Dead	Kuju Entertainment	TBA	45
	Close Combat: Red Phoenix	Destineer	Take 2	N/A
	Conan	TBA	THQ	N/A
	Dreamfall: The Longest Journey	Funcom	TBA	52
	Family Guy	TBA	Take 2	N/A
	Fear & Respect	Midway	Midway	52
	FlatOut 2	Bugbear Ent.	Empire	N/A
	Highlander	Eidos	Eidos	N/A
	Interview With A Made Man	SilverBack Studios	TBA	30
	Johnny Whatever	Warthog	TBA	N/A
	Justice League of America	TBA	Warner Bros. Int.	N/A
	Pac-Man World Rally	Namco	TBA	N/A
	Pirates of the Caribbean: TLOJS	7 Studios	Buena Vista Games	N/A
	Pro Evolution Soccer 6	Konami	Konami	N/A
	Punisher 2	Volition	THQ	N/A
	Reservoir Dogs	Eidos	Eidos	52
	Rogue Trooper	Rebellion	Eidos	39
	Scarface: The World is Yours	Radical Ent.	Vivendi	52
	Shuriken School	Zinkia Entertainment	TBA	N/A
	Snoopy Vs The Red Baron	Namco	Namco	52
	Snow	Frog City Software	Take 2	N/A
	Sonic Riders	Sega	Sega	52
	Spy Hunter 3	TBA	Midway	N/A
	Stacked With Daniel Negreanu	TBA	5000ft	N/A
	Stargate SG1: The Alliance	Perception	TBA	43
	Superman Returns	EA Tiburon	EA	50
	Taito Legends 2	Taito	Xplosiv	N/A
	Taxi Driver	Papaya Studios	TBA	N/A
	The Da Vinci Code	The Collective	Take 2	N/A
	The Movies	Lionhead Studios	Activision	16
	TimeShift	Saber Interactive	Atari	52
	TNA Wrestling	Midway	Midway	N/A
	Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: NOTQ	Krome Studios	Activision	N/A
	World Tour Golf	Gusto Games	Oxygen Interactive	N/A
	X3: Reunion	Egosoft	Deep Silver	52
	Xyanide	Playlogic	Playlogic	N/A
	Urban Chaos: Riot Response	Rocksteady Studios	Eidos	52
	Zombies	Krysalide	TBA	41

THE WISH LIST

OFFICIAL XBOX Magazine may provide the most comprehensive release list on the planet, but as we all know, game release dates can change quicker than a catwalk model backstage at a fashion show. Why not drop us a line and tell us what you're waiting for? Send your top five to staff@futurenet.co.uk

WE'VE ALL fought in a virtual Second World War before, but usually on the ground as infantry with grenades and tanks and stuff. Time for a change, we feel... *Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII* will take us to do battle in the skies, and it's looking ace.

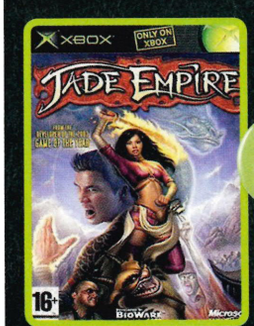
LARA CROFT Tomb Raider: Legend looks stunning. Okay, so the trailer probably isn't Xbox footage, but it clearly shows her exploring a dark cave. A welcome return to tradition for Lara fans.

THE GODFATHER

COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE

XBOX CLASSICS

The latest and best of the £19.99 value range

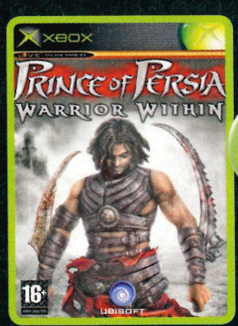


Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

Jade Empire
Issue 41
Score 9.3

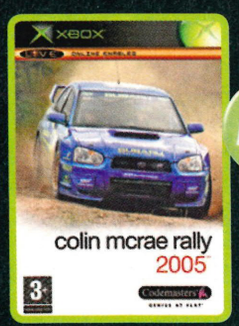
Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

Halo 2
Issue 36
Score 10.0



Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

Prince of Persia: Warrior Within
Issue 37
Score 9.0



Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

Colin McRae Rally 2005
Issue 34
Score 8.5

THE 360 REVOLUTION CONTINUES! FOR ALL THE LATEST XBOX 360 NEWS AND GOSSIP MAKE SURE YOU TURN TO PAGE 060. THAT'S A BIT LIKE 360, ONLY WITH THE 3 REPLACED BY A 0. CLEVER, HUH?

Inbox

Letters 52 Editor

BEN LAWRENCE
NOW PLAYING: **PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG**

Naff Christmas? Seeing the year through goggles of depression and apathy? Then have three pages guaranteed to push you over the edge. Go on, end it now! It'll save you having to read the usual semi-literate drivel on here!

YOUR OPINIONS COUNT! Your input here has a direct effect on the content of your *Official Xbox Magazine*, so let us know which games you like or don't like, what you want to see more of or less of in the mag, or just rant by text, mail, forum or email!

TEXT US! Send questions and comments on 80889* (standard network rates) or picture message us on 07921 889345*

WRITE TO US at *Official Xbox Magazine*, 1 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NA

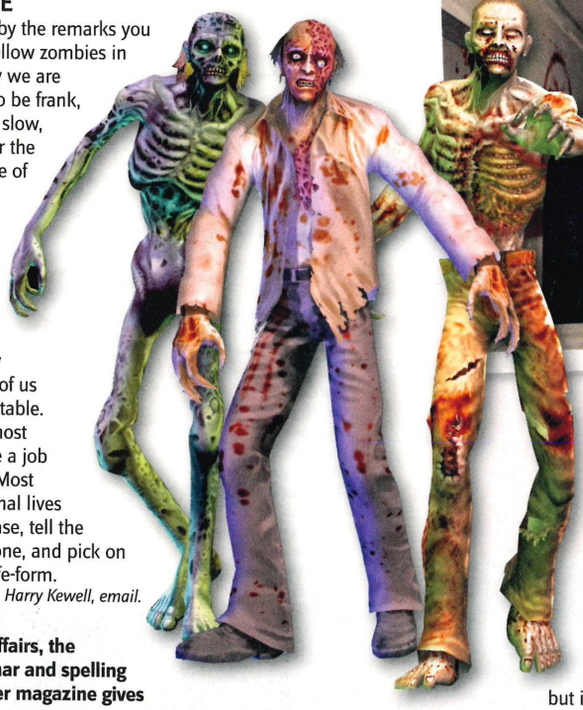
POST ON THE FORUM! Get it off your chest at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk. Be nice, now!

EMAIL US WITH your rants, hopes and opinions at staff@futurenet.co.uk

DISGRUNTLED FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

Mr Lawrence: I am disgusted by the remarks you made about myself and my fellow zombies in your *Stubbs* preview. The way we are misrepresented in games is, to be frank, quite insulting. We are not all slow, lumbering undead, looking for the next piece of fresh meat. Some of us have real jobs in the real world, working on the boards of Sony and Nintendo or as American anti-videogame lawyers. I can assure you that these people are far from slow, and have not risen to their positions of respect by eating their colleagues. Some of us are very kind, polite and charitable. I am one of the slowest and most braindead zombies and I have a job playing professional football. Most zombies just want to live normal lives and integrate into society. Please, tell the games industry to leave us alone, and pick on some other, more deserving life-form.

Harry Kewell, email.



↑ **"Spare some change for a cup of BRRAAAIINNNNNNNNNNNSSSSSS?"**

Ooh, cutting satire, current affairs, the undead and passable grammar and spelling in the same letter! What other magazine gives you all this? It's like *Have I Got News For You* but with corpses instead of presenters and zombified rambling instead of imaginative, informative writing! Hang on...

PRO FIFALUTION!

Everybody knows that *Pro Evo 5* is the more dominant footy sim on the Xbox console, but it doesn't look as slick as the new and improved *FIFA 06*. *FIFA 06* has official teams and stadiums and now plays a bit like *Pro Evo 5*. Obviously *Pro Evo 5* is the best because its a more flowing game and doesn't have any slow-down. So why don't Konami and EA come together to make the ultimate football game? It would be the best game ever made for a console. With the slick movement of the game from Konami and then all the licences from EA with official teams and stadiums. I think you have to agree with me that it would be a rather fantastic footy sim.

Bobby Jones, Essex

☆STAR LETTER☆ Sponsored by Simply Games www.simplygames.com

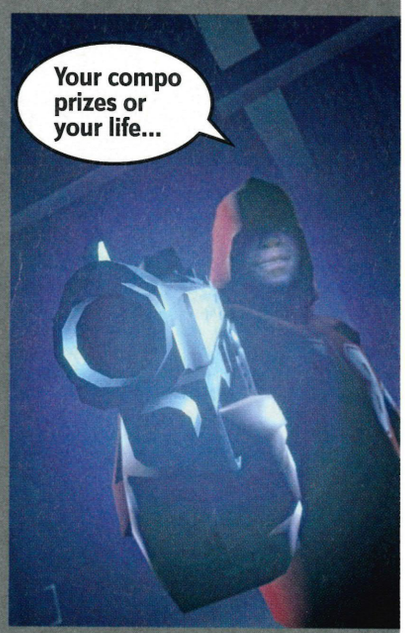
THE WRITER of the Star Letter gets a whopping £100 to spend at internet games store Simply Games. Simply Games makes online shopping easy. As well as the most competitive prices and exclusive special offers for Simply Games customers, there's free delivery to your door and no hidden admin costs. For cost-effective software, hardware and accessories, go to www.simplygames.com

ALL A BIG SWINDLE?

Why don't you ever print the winners of you competitions that you run? I've noticed over the last few months you lot have run a good lot of compos but not once have I seen a winner mentioned. Why is this? I'm asking because I've entered a few of them myself, and the one I was most interested to find out about was the Gameulator you were giving away - nothing's been mentioned of it since. I thought my idea for it was a brilliant one and just wondered what happened? It's much like sending away a job application and not hearing anything back, very frustrating. Fair enough if I didn't win, I'd just like to know is all. I notice you have no such problems with the Play:More section in naming winners and the like, so what's the deal? Plus if we're going to be spending 50p to enter your recent text competitions, then maybe you should be letting us know instead of just sat here thinking "Con artists taking our money, I bet no one ever wins anything!" Well? What's the story then?

Steven Rutherford, email

Fair point Steven, we can see where you're coming from. We don't publish names of winners because generally there are better things to fill the mag with than lists of names and addresses. Without wanting to get into any borning legal mumbo jumbo, the Code of Advertising Practice, paragraph 35.9e states that the name of the winners should be available "if you really want them". But then that would cost money on stamps and envelopes, we'd have to chop down trees to make more paper, the ecosystem would be deprived of oxygen, and the world would end. And that would be bad. But to prove we're genuine (and not because you sent us the best letter or anything) we're going to give you £100 of games vouchers! Then you can write in and tell us you received it! Now that's more than fair...



SEND US YOUR PICS!

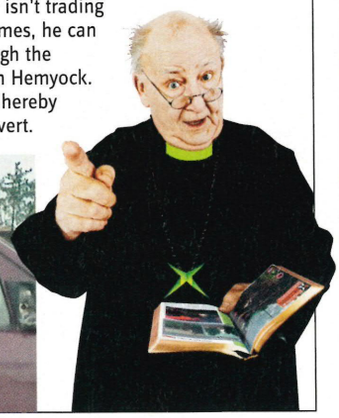
This month's entry is from 'Dave fae scottyland'. Eh? Anyway, Dave has emblazoned his Xbox in his national colours, and very nice they are too. Dave wins a random game once he sends us his address! Want one? Text your pics to 07921 889345. And we don't want any more pictures of your 'little man', okay? You know who you are.

The Church of Xbox

Join the Xbox evangelists!

The Lord doth move in mysterious and disturbing ways! This month's winner of a beloved Xbox game is Sparky, a bull terrier. When Sparky isn't trading in his mother's jewellery for Xbox games, he can be found driving a maroon 4x4 through the streets of Lickham Bottom (snigger) in Hemyock. For that reason alone, the Rev Green hereby announceth Sparky this month's convert.

↓ **"Not all dogs go to heaven - but this one will!"**



↑ Quick! Someone inform Esther Rantzen!

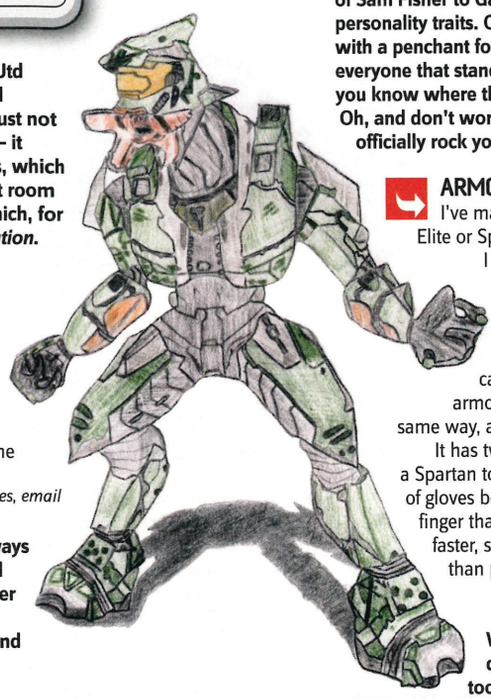
See, that's like asking why Manchester Utd don't just team up with Real Madrid and become an unbeatable über-team? It's just not going to happen. But look at it this way - it keeps both Konami and EA on their toes, which is just the way we like it. We've only got room for one football game in our hearts - which, for the foreseeable future, will be *Pro Evolution*.

MASHED POTATO

I got dumped the other day. I thought I wouldn't be laughing for a good few days, until I opened my copy of *OXM* and read "Everybody knows Badger loves MASHED POTATO", right out of nowhere. I'm still laughing from it almost three days later. Keep sending in the random, irrelevant bollocks fellow geeks!

James, email

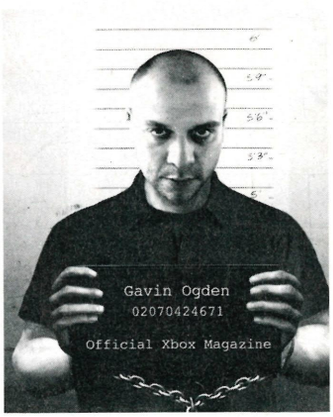
Ah yes, *Bodger and Badger* - in many ways the very pinnacle of inept puppetry. And didn't Bodger look like Michael York after one too many ciders? Glad it made you chuckle James - just keep on laughing and laughing and the pain will go away!

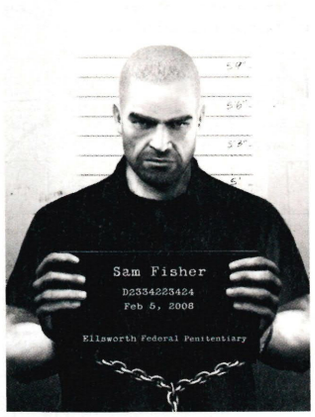


GAVIN FISHER

What's up with Sam's new bald look? Was it an attempt to make himself look more tough? Must have been playing too much *Hitman: Contracts*. And what's up with the tattoo? Does Sam think he's a 52-year-old gangster? And the screenshots for *Splinter Cell 4* in issue 50 were disgraceful! PS, Tell Gavin that he should wear a suit more often. It makes him look a bit more respectable.

Abs, Reading





↑ **Gav's always getting put in jail - the judges think he "looks at them funny".**

Funny how you deftly switched from the subject of Sam Fisher to Gav, for the pair do share a few personality traits. One is a psychotic skinhead with a penchant for strangling his enemies and everyone that stands in his way, the other... well, you know where this joke is going, don't you? Oh, and don't worry about *Double Agent* - it will officially rock your socks off.

ARMOURED CORE

I've made a new battle armour for an Elite or Spartan, after weeks of drawing! I did this by combining the Elite's armour from the Forerunners and the Spartan Mjolnir Battle Armour. I call it the Fore-Mjolnir II Battle Armour. It can do anything the Mjolnir armour can, would be made in the same way, and can do very similar things. It has two helmets for either an Elite or a Spartan to wear. It also has different types of gloves because an Elite has one less finger than a Spartan. The armour is faster, stronger, and more advanced than previous armour types.

Abduallah Al-Tayeawe, Gloucester

We like the way the Elite looks quite chuffed with his new togs too, like he's about to hit the town and seek out some lady Elites in his swishy new togs. If anyone else wants to redesign bits of *Halo* and send us the results, please do. We'll then collect it all together in some kind of bastard nativity scene and send it to Bungie. Who knows, one lucky reader might have their idea chosen for *Halo 3*™! (*Please see disclaimer - Legal Dept.*)

ATTACK OF THE GEEKS

I've just read your review of *Star Wars Battlefront II* in Issue 49 and noticed the bonus info boxout, in which it asks how can Ben Kenobi recognise Anakin in his Darth Vader armour. Well, the answer is simple - the Force! Just as Vader senses Kenobi's presence when he first comes on board the Death Star, so too can old Ben sense the presence of his former Padawan. Have you guys ever actually watched any of the films? Okay, that's it, rant over, I think that your mag is great anyway!

Glenn Barkell, Norwich

Oh, the shame. I shall go rub myself in fresh Wampa dung and jump in a carbon freezing chamber. Thanks Glenn, and the other few thousand of you who pointed out our mistake. Now, just one more question... why was Princess Leia a Princess? Her Mum was no longer the queen and her adoptive parents were just senators. Explain that one! »

The OXM team

It's us saying a little personal hello!

PHOTOS: PHIL MADGE

GAVIN OGDEN //
EDITOR

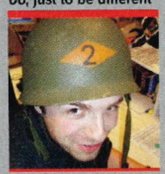
AS YOU can see, something went wrong with Gav's teeth this month. Ben now has to chew his food for him like he was a baby sparrow. This week it's been fish brains in chocolate and Monster Munch sauce. Mmm!

NOW PLAYING: Some sort of noisy gun game

MARK ROBINS //
DEPUTY EDITOR

MARK'S GOT a bit of explaining to do after trying to scam the insurance into paying for a nicer house. "I was having a fag near the fuel depot, then suddenly it was all on fire!" You might have seen it in the news.

NOW PLAYING: *FIFA 06*, just to be different



DAN GEARY //
PRODUCTION EDITOR

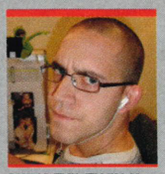
NOBODY really knows what Dan does on the mag, but you'd be surprised how much of it he ends up writing. The amusing captions on page 080? It took months of meetings and transatlantic conference calls to make those happen.

NOW PLAYING: *Pang*

M JACKSON //
REVIEWS EDITOR

HOW embarrassing. We found out Mike's full name is Micky Mike Michael Michelle Mikhail Jackson XVI, which means we've been calling him by his third name for the past two months. Yoo-hoo!

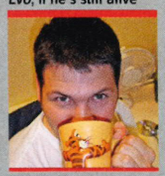
NOW PLAYING: Pixelly 1990s fighting games



PHIL'S EVIL TWIN //
ART EDITOR

PHIL'S BEEN replaced by some weird-faced impostor! "Who eez zeez Feel you spik euv? I know not Feel!" said Phil's Evil Twin in a bad French accent. And what's that funny smell coming from the stationery cupboard?

NOW PLAYING: *Pro Evo*, if he's still alive



BEN LAWRENCE //
MEAT EATER

A RECENT mung bean and falafel shortage led ex vegetable-liker Ben to resort to eating CHICKEN GUTS. It was a bit like that scene in *Alive* where the guy admits that he quite likes the taste of human flesh after all.

NOW PLAYING: *Big Game Hunter 2005*

ADAM KULESZA //
DEPUTY ART DE NIRO

THE LIST of 'things Adam doesn't know about' extended to 'Robert De Niro' this month. "Who's this De Niro wiseguy already?" he said in a Brooklyn drawl while scratching the imaginary mole on his cheek.

NOW PLAYING: PSP *Pro Evo* (on the toilet)

ULTRAPHONE 3000 //
SPEAKING DEVICE

FEATURING more buttons than the flight deck of the Space Shuttle and a brain bigger than Gavin and Phil's combined, the phones are our lifeline to the outside world, and also enable Gav to taunt Ben without having to walk to the other side of the office.

*"BUT SERIOUSLY, DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP. WE MEAN, WHAT ARE THE CHANCES? YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO BE HIT BY A METEOR MADE OF CHEESE

Shorts

sms TEXT US questions and comment on 80889* (standard network rates)

WRITE TO US at *Official Xbox Magazine*, 1 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NA

www POST ON THE FORUM You can find it at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk. Be nice, now!

@ EMAIL US WITH your rants, hopes and opinions at staff@futurenet.co.uk

sms Wot happened to the red star? The demo was cool!

Anon, Text

Yeah, it was kinda sweet Mr Anon, but unfortunately the plug was pulled on the developer so it bubbled under. The chances of it actually resurfacing are slim too. It's survival of the fittest!

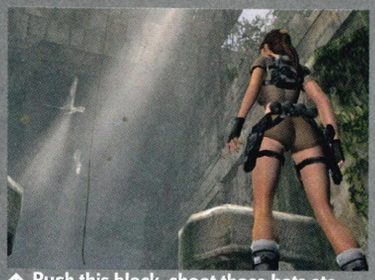
www If you ever want to find out about Jesus, this is a fairly good site so try it out! www.rejesus.co.uk

YYRJ, forum.

Why thanks YYRJ. We now know where to go for all our Jesus-y needs.

@ This week I am mostly hating Net speak. Or Geekspeak. Or indeed, cretin. When last I checked, the purpose of the written and spoken word was to communicate thoughts and ideas to others. "I8r u 2" "n e 1 waz my phat lewt" We have a perfectly good language, for the love of all that is green and good, use it! The Americans do a perfectly good job of mutilating the English language without ENGLISH people getting in on the action!

Ballistichimp, email.



↑ **Push this block, shoot those bats etc...**

Weez 8ing it 2. It is teh sux0rrrz LOLOLOLOLROFL!!!1!

sms Shadow The Hedgehog does drive-bys on a bike? Does he also have a car with hydraulics full of homies?

Chris, text.

Wait until you see his massive gold rings! Now then now then!

You lot are the best looking video game magazine team I think I've seen. Katherine Brice from Gamesmaster is pretty hot but you lot are like some sort of boy band.

Rich, via letter.

We're actually thinking of reforming The Jackson Five. We've already got a lead singer, and Phil has a glove. Shamone!

www I don't want an Xbox 360. It looks like a Dell Computer and I can't customise it can I?

JediBingoWings, forum

Well, if you're talking about sticking all kinds of illegal resistors and diodes and LEDs inside it, then no, you can't. But don't worry, you can do all sorts of groovy stuff with the interchangeable face plates. Does that count?

sms Is Tomb Raider really going to be that good? I still think of Lara Croft as the thickest game character in town. I don't reckon she'll change.

JB45, text.

We used to feel the same way until we actually played it. Imagine a free-roaming *Prince of Persia* with nicer breasts and you're in the right ball park.

@ Phil Madge looks like a football hooligan.

Getsup82, forum

That's because he is. And he knows where you live, too.

Is Microsoft going to buy Nintendo if the Revolution goes tits up?

Xboxray-Eyes, Letter.

Well, Bill Gates has always said that whenever Nintendo wants to call him up and talk about selling he'd personally answer the phone, but don't count your chickens mate. There are still three very strong contenders in the next gen race, and we're not talking about Gizmondo or N-Gage either.

↑ **"THIS IS THE VOICE OF THE MYSTERONS."**

WATCH THE SKIES

After reading the letter entitled Gates of Heaven in your last issue I thought I'd let you know that Bill Gates' new ad campaign has now reached Bristol. It seems to be a lot stronger than it was in Middlesex too. My photograph was taken about two weeks ago and the image lasted about 15 minutes.

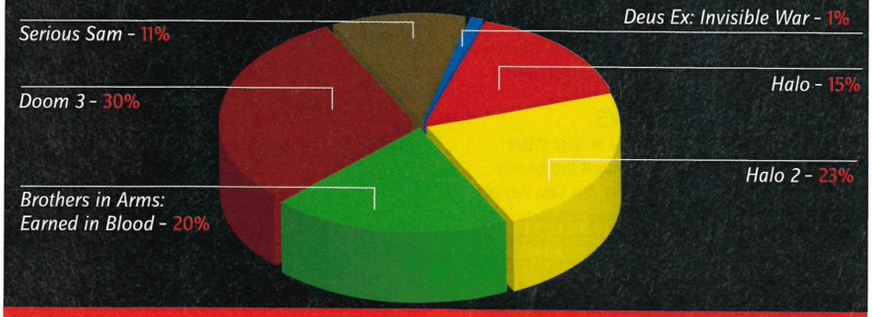
Martin Purcell, Bristol.

Is Bill shining X-shaped lights onto the side of buildings in a bizarre viral marketing stunt? Or is something more sinister going on? Let us know if you've seen anything! It's like an episode of *The X-Files* where we're Scully, you're the screaming alien and Gav is the grumpy FBI man who keeps trying to shut the X-Files down. Or something.

YOU DECIDE

Find more online polls on our forum at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk

What single-player first-person shooter is supreme on Xbox?



>> **GET ON THE FORUM NOW!** To join the discussions on the forums, just head for our great website, found at **http://xbox.oxm.co.uk** and click on Discussion Forums. Give yourself a name and a password, and then you can take part. Simple.

Win Our Stuff!

Could you give a loving home to unwanted games tat?

WIN ALL THIS!

We've upped sticks and moved to a swanky new office! It's clean, has air-conditioning and the toilets don't smell of poo! Which means we had to have the mother of all office clear outs. Among the gaming novelties we chucked out were Master Chief's codpiece, a couple of spare Xbox 360s we had lying around and an anatomically correct, life-sized 'poseable' model of *Dead or Alive*'s Hitomi.

Still, we've kept the good stuff for you lot, including a SpongeBob SquarePants toy and T-shirt, a *DOA* mousemat (again), another *PES5* rucksack, a very rare 2004 *True Fantasy Live Online* calendar (got to be worth a grand on Ebay, possibly), and a collection of freebies from a recent Atari event including a T-shirt, USB hub and a tiny torch that charges off your USB port. Very handy.

To win it all simply tell us what you would have done with our Hitomi model in ten words or less.

Text the word OXMSTUFF followed by a space, then UR answer to 80889* by 16 February. The funniest and least disturbed-sounding entry wins.

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS By texting the Editor or entering the competition you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd, if you do not want to receive this information please text the word STOP to 80889. Texts will be charged at 50p plus standard network tariff rate. Please ask permission from whoever pays the bill. Competition winners will be drawn at random from all entries that answer the questions correctly after the closing date. Postal entries should be sent to OXM, 1 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NA. Mag choice of prize is final. Only UK residents aged 16 and over may enter. No employees of Future Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this competition, or any member of their close family may enter. No photocopies will be accepted for postal entries. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives cash or otherwise are available. Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won except by it's negligence. Publicity may be given to any competition winners and/or entrants and their names and/or photographs printed in *Official Xbox Magazine*. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Future Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. All entries must be received by the closing date. Copies of competition entry forms and winners list are available by written request from Games Marketing, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

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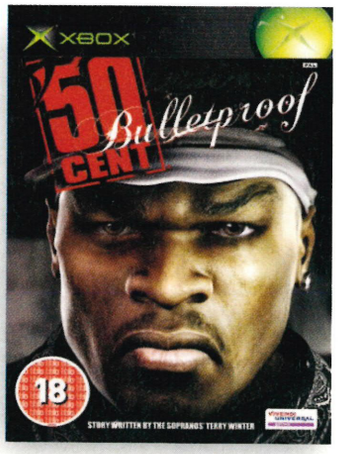

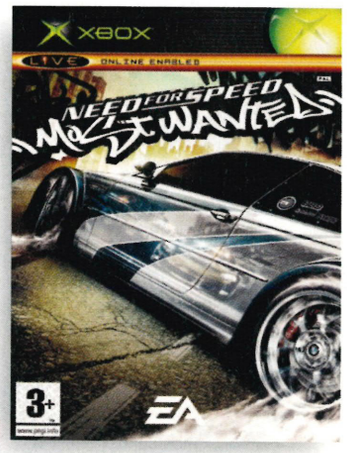

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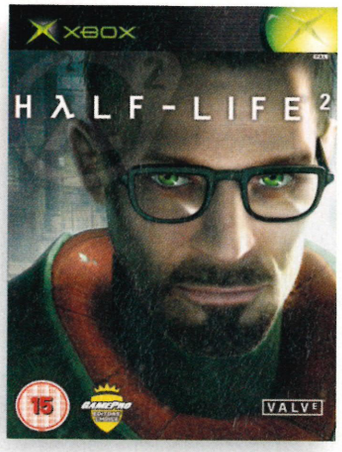

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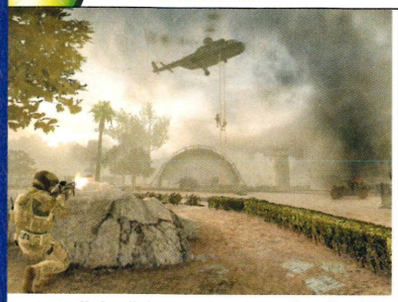
The Future of Combat

Real prototype firepower, awesome technology, advanced AI and graphics that'll leave you shell-shocked. We need this game like we need oxygen

Words: Mike Jackson

NOTHING PREPARED us for how amazing the latest instalment of the *Ghost Recon* franchise, *Advanced Warfighter*, really looks. The atmosphere and levels of detail are to a level you wouldn't have thought possible on your Xbox. But there's so much more to the game than its good looks, as we found out when we sat down with game designer Craig Leagh. "It's 2013 and the US president is in Mexico City on a diplomatic visit to sign a controversial joint security agreement with the leaders of Mexico and Canada. A group of dissident Mexican generals and forces loyal to them takes the presidents hostage, along with the US president's nuclear football." From then on in, it's down to the Ghosts to avert a global catastrophe... »

Exclusive Access: Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter Interview



↑ Call the flyboys when things get heavy.

↑ Get up on the roof with new *GR*.

↑ The (slightly fat) army of the future!

↑ You may be harder than Robocop now, but you'll still need to use your brain.

» US ARMY CAPTAIN Scott Mitchell and his team are the first responders to the scene. They have 48 hours to recover the president and the deadly nuke-launching football, put an end to the insurgency, and destroy its source. With most urban wargames usually taking place somewhere in the middle east, Mexico is an unusual choice of location.

"Mexico City has an intriguing mix of sleek skyscrapers, centuries-old buildings and part-shanty town slums – all of which presents a rich basis for creating diverse settings in the game," says Leagh. "We want the player to be able to take down tanks in a plaza, feel the tension of a close-quarters battle through narrow alleyways in slums, and snipe from across the map in outdoor terrain, all in the context of a continuous battlefield experience.

"One of the other great things about Mexico City is its sense of overwhelming heat," continues Leagh. "It's uncomfortable, and the atmosphere that results is a sense of uneasy, urgent danger around every corner. We've spent a lot of time on this heat feeling, with heatwaves and other effects, to provide the right atmosphere."

It sounds manic, and believe us, it is. Watching in-game footage of the game in action, we witnessed absolute carnage in the sweltering urban environment. There were cars bursting into flames, soldiers running everywhere with their guns spewing bullets, and office block-sized explosions shaking the earth. Compare this to the super-calm sneaking and sniping action of the first *Ghost Recon* title (Issue 11, 8.9), and it's surprising that they're even part of the same series.

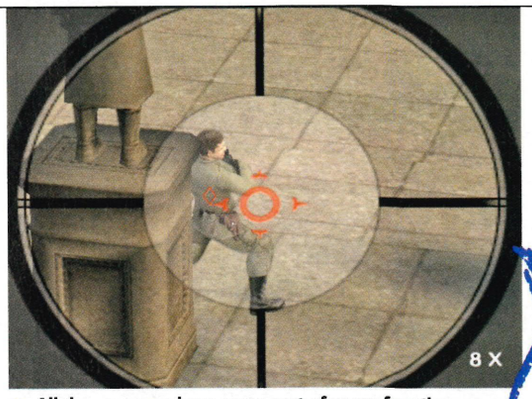
"*Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter* brings the series back to its first-person shooter roots, but is less theoretical than the earlier iterations of the series. We've done away with the waypoint system, and focused the action closer to you with the contextual commands for your team-mates."

> "There were cars bursting into flames, and office block-sized explosions shaking the earth"

The *Ghost Recon* experience has always been a reasonably complicated one, best suited to the really hardcore strategy fan. But it's clear the series is going in a completely different direction, thanks partly to input from you, the all-important fans. "We listened to the majority of the fans and kept the immersion factor higher by making everything context-based," says Leagh. "Squad control has been made much easier to handle. Issuing a command is never more than two button presses away."

This means you can look forward to a much more accessible experience than in any previous *Ghost Recon* game. And with AI playing a bigger part in the actions of your soldiers, it is extremely important that they behave in a realistic way and adapt to different situations in a battle. Ubisoft seems to have pulled this off to an amazing degree. "If your squad mate is near a fixed gun, he'll man it. If you point at an enemy and issue an order, your team-mate will automatically use the most appropriate munitions, and even alter his rate of fire to a single-aimed shot if the enemy is at a distance."

But what is truly impressive is the way your guys proceed cautiously through the



All the weapons have some sort of zoom function.

We're liking the washed-out Mexican setting too.

Your boys aren't dumb suicide robots - they take cover and make intelligent use of equipment and surroundings.

It's easy to forget and start thinking your an indestructible robot from the future. Don't.

environment. They're not robots - they don't want to die, so they won't just run around like mindless idiots. "If you point to the distance and order your squad mate to head out there, he'll do it taking the nearest available cover, scouting out the situation, and spotting enemies for you. Depending on the rules of engagement you set him on, he'll either start firing at will, or will hold until fired on," explains Leagh.

Along with much-improved AI, Ubisoft has enhanced the gameplay by giving players the ability to climb up ladders to the rooftops of many of the structures. "Adding rooftops into the mix brings more variety and realism. You'll still be able to manoeuvre your squad mate around, and support him from above. You'll be able to get the drop on enemies from much further away. It works both ways though - you'll have to be more cautious when rounding bends, as enemies will also take to the rooftops to gain an edge over you!"

As the title of the game suggests, *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter* is all about the technology, and Ubisoft has packed the game with some of the coolest gear you'll have ever seen. As well as unmanned remote-controlled drones you can use to scope an area before you rush in, there's a satellite system that gives you all the battle info you need. Leagh tells us how it works: "We're calling it the CROSS-COM system. It is based on the US Army's Integrated Warfighter System. It'll identify and track friendlies, enemies and objectives and feed that to units on the ground in real time. They show up as differently coloured and shaped icons superimposed on soldiers' personal displays."

That's not all either. Check out the little visor in the top left of some of these screens. It's a brilliant feature that gives you the ability to see your team-mates' views in real time. As well as being able to see what your squad members are seeing at all times, Craig reveals that players will be able to "easily trigger powerful support elements, such as Apache gunships and M1AI Abrams tanks."

Ubisoft has gone all out with the shooters, too. Instead of the typical assault rifles and shotguns you usually see, *Advanced Warfighter* will kit you out with exciting new 21st century weaponry, such as the Crye assault rifle. "The Crye assault rifle is a prototype rifle currently in submission to the US military. It uses caseless ammunition propelled by a compact chemical charge that completely burns away - the ammunition is lighter, which means every clip is able to hold more rounds."

You get that? REAL prototype weapons! Get in. With more gun talk than *50 Cent: Bulletproof*, Craig continues: "We've also included a new anti-armour grenade delivery system - the M-109. This bad boy is based on an existing weapon, and fires armour-piercing grenades from a mile away. Although intended for anti-armour usage, you can still get a kick out of blowing up enemy infantry with it - it really highlights the rag-doll system, another *Ghost Recon* first." Craig's starting to worry us now.

As cool as all this stuff sounds, you may think it seems like you'll almost be too powerful. *Ghost Recon* games of past have been known for their notorious difficulty - so will all this awesome new equipment making players harder than the Terminator, will it end up making the game too easy? Ubisoft aren't prepared to let that happen.

"You might be able to see the enemy before they see you, but by no means are they going to be stupid sitting ducks. Enemies are much smarter than before - they don't run blindly at you. They'll use available cover, attack in groups, and will react differently depending on how much combat experience they have, how battle-hardened they are. The ability to see enemies before they see you and alter your tactics accordingly has always been one of the key things the *Ghost Recon* games have offered. It's what separates the franchise from other run-'n'-gun shooters out there."

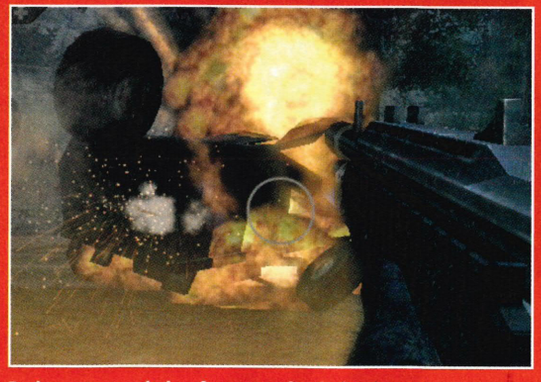
It's pretty obvious *Advanced Warfighter* is anything but an average run-'n'-gun shooter. Everything about this game sounds fantastic, and with the option to play through the entire campaign co-operatively with a friend over Xbox Live, System Link or split-screen, we've no doubt this game is going to rock hard. We can't wait for the March release.

BLACK

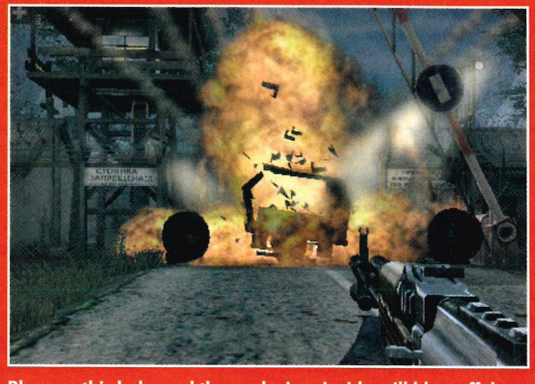
See the big illustration down there? Every man-made object on it can be destroyed. Observe...

Words: Ben Lawrence

This building has two floors. Throw a grenade through an upstairs window and sometimes the entire upper floor collapses, killing everyone inside. Hurrah!



Bad guys try to shelter from your fire behind armoured cars. You know what to do. Just pull out a pineapple and let it roll...



Blow up this baby and the explosives inside will blast off the main gate. An explosive entrance if ever there was one.

A grenade through the window of this building will see the entire place collapse from the inside. Not realistic in anyway, just pure Hollywood!

Ammo rooms go up like a doozy. Either take out a single box inside and watch the fireworks spread, or toss a grenade in through a smashed window.

These bad boys can see for miles. A well-placed grenade will send the lookout guards scattering. Failing that, just send up volleys of bullets.

Official XBOX Magazine PLAYED IT

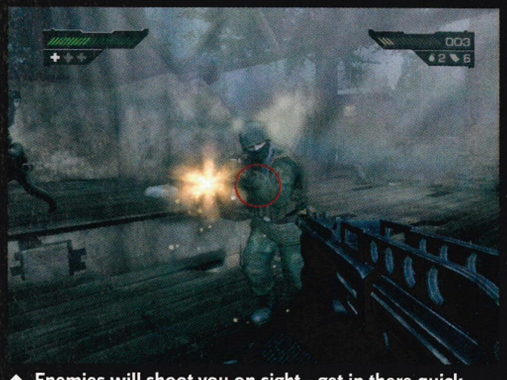
Official XBOX Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

- Dev: Criterion
- Pub: EA
- Players: 1
- Live: None
- Release: April 2006
- www.eagames.com

WHAT CAN YOU tell an Xbox fan about a first-person shooter that they haven't heard before? Shooters come and go, we've seen the good, the bad, and the eastern European, yet still people gush on about *Halo* this and *Halo* that. Lately we've seen Gordon Freeman stick his crowbar in for a slice of the action, but it seemed that between them Bungie and Valve's babies had the whole FPS genre in the bag. Well, that's all about to change.

Apparently *Black* has been the dream of the Criterion team for quite some time now, at least four years if our source over there is anything to go by. You may have heard of Criterion. They had a little racing number out a while back by the name of *Burnout*. Know it? Kinda crashy, kinda fast. The game that reinvented a tired, withering genre in one explosive sweep of invention. And what better withering genre to get its teeth into now than that of the FPS. »»

↑ Look out for petrol tanks with a reddish hue to them. They can be destroyed to blow open areas of the level, and are pretty handy for killing enemy soldiers too.



↑ Enemies will shoot you on sight - get in there quick.

↑ With a spray of your gun you'll have him nailed.

↑ Check out the bullet casings. Sweet.

» We're not quite sure where to start when describing *Black* because every time we think of suitable adjectives they're just replaced by 'hubbahubba', or the sound of drool slopping from our mouths. It brings out the caveman in us. Must kill, must slaughterise, must stop giggling like a loon while doing it.

The secret with *Black*, as is so obvious from playing it, is that this truly is a first-person shooter. It's not a first-person shooter with added tactical bits, nor is it a first-person shooter with extra night vision thrown in free. It's 100 per cent shooting, and when a game is all about the guns - and we mean all about the guns - what's not to like?

Our world-exclusive play-through of a *Black* level takes us to a silent forest somewhere inside the old Soviet Bloc. It's midnight and we've got to cross a bridge and get over the border into Uzbekistan. This is the first non-urban environment we've played in *Black* so it's going to be interesting. Will the much-hyped 'destroy everything' ethic translate to a place where there are only squirrels and trees? Hardly thrilling. If it backfires anywhere, surely the whole 'we don't need the FPS rulebook' is going to backfire here.

To get over the border into Uzbekistan we've got to pass through an army base. Although, we say 'pass through', we sort of mean 'destroy'. And when we say 'army base' we actually mean a highly-fortified, triple-A combat facility packed with every kind of high explosive, elite soldier, and watchtower imaginable. Just because we're not given SOCOM and other gadgets doesn't mean

↑ We can't tell you how much fun it is to pummel goons with hot shards of lead.

ANATOMY OF A LEVEL The four highlights of just a tiny snippet of Black

We've entered the woods, and we need to cross the border. Four juicy moments to savour along the way...

↑ THE FIRST ENCOUNTER
1 min 35 secs
An encampment on a hill. It's heavily armed but holds a wealth of ammo and health pick-ups. Lob a grenade in and clean it out.

↑ THE FLAMING TRUCK
5 mins 02 secs
Want to make an explosive entrance no one will forget? Fire a few rounds at the petrol tank and soon the whole camp will know you've arrived.

↑ UPPER GROUND
6 mins 44 secs
Once you're up high, rain down grenades on the trucks and ammo dumps in the compound. The whole lot will go up!

↑ KA-BOOM!
8 mins 32 secs
Lob a grenade into the main compound building then sit back and watch as it disintegrates from within. Then warm your hands on the flames. Sweet.

↑ Look at that explosion. It's the level of detail that has us kneeling down in worship.

↑ Who needs grenades or stealth when an SMG can do the job from a distance?

↑ Want to make an entrance? Blow someone's truck up with a shotgun.

"Buildings collapse and enemies die in a million different ways"

Black is going to take it easy on us, as we soon discover.

First things first - we've got to get across the bridge and shift that idling truck blocking the entrance. Thankfully, *Black*'s levels have been designed in such a way that there always seems to be any number of routes and multiple ways to complete your objectives. If it's variety you're after, Criterion is being careful to provide it. Whether it's over the top of a hill or through a network of caves, every level can be tackled more or less however the hell you like. If a gun can blast open a pathway, you can tread it. We found a total of four roots to the main gate, each one harbouring alternate weapons (we'll get to those in a bit), and each rich with the kind of challenge you'd find in the finer levels of *Half-Life 2*'s shoot-outs against the Combine soldiers. We take out that truck by silently peppering the petrol tank with bullets the first time we try the level. On the next attempt, having discovered a grenade in a cave, we roll the pineapple under its chassis and watch the whole damned shebang go skywards.

Lighting and sound effects are integral to *Black*, for when things do explode, they go up in such a dazzling show of pyrotechnics it makes that little incident recently in Hemel Hempstead look like a Roman candle. Criterion has prioritised the skills of its programmers. If dedicated teams aren't solely trying to animate reload animations, they're out running shotgun sounds through filters and programs that end up making your bones sting. The sound of shattered glass, exploding canisters, and the muffled 'whoomph' from inside buildings as they collapse from within are, even at this stage, the best we've ever heard in a game.

Thankfully, every part of the forest section we're trudging through is ruled by physics, as is the rest of *Black*. A building can collapse in a thousand different ways, and enemies can die a million deaths. Don't pump a shotgun into a man's chest and send him through a hole in the floor, just stand underneath him and shoot through the floor. It starts raining bodies.

Criterion is obviously lavishing attention on the core components of »

↑ Some guns are so powerful they'll knock enemies clean off their feet.

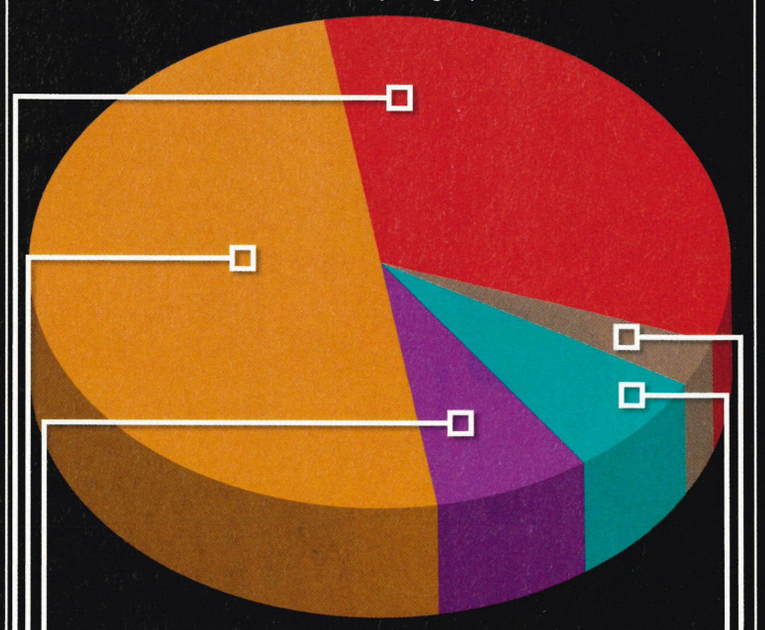
↑ The closer you are, the more likely you are to score an instant, bloody kill.

↑ Silenced pistol to the head. He goes down in a shower of sparks and brains.

↑ Don't fancy fighting these two head-on? Just stand below and fire up through the hole.

NONE MORE BLACK

See precisely what *Black* is made of in easy-to-digest pie-chart form!



7% MERCENARIES Because EVERYTHING gets blown up.
50% ARNIE Or any other generic 80s action hero, for that matter.
33% OPERATION WOLF Minus the multiplayer option, of course.
7% PREDATOR Those woodland levels have enemies screaming in fear.
3% SEX It's that good, Criterion must have put a little something 'extra' in there.

» what it believes an FPS should contain, and nowhere is this more apparent than with the guns themselves. We find, in just a short area of woodland, a pistol (silenced and regular varieties), an AK-47 and a shotgun, all of which are viable weapons. The entire game will boast at least a dozen more, but just because an AK-47 comes along doesn't mean the pistol is put away for good, for every weapon is possessed of a kind of 'superhero' ability – you have near-infinite ammo and you feel like some kind of god of war when you're using them. Every bullet spent has its own casing which will be seen spitting from the chamber, just as every bullet will actually find its mark and cause its own area of damage in the world. You can spell your name with bullets on a wall – if you keep at it long enough, chances are you'll go right through the wall itself.

Criterion told us it wants to ensure that every section of *Black* plays like a movie, and that we're sucked in to its entirely believable world. It is a single player's dream, a lone shoot 'em up, with no worrying about other gamers or teamwork. But this, as Criterion is perversely proud

Exclusive review and playable demo next month! See page 114 for more

↑ Bad guys have a wonderful habit of dropping their weapons for you. Be sure to stock up on ammo - you'll need it.

↑ Lob in a grenade and smoke them out. Then kill 'em!

↑ The physics makes this fence bend in explosions.

↑ When the destruction ends very little is left standing.

about, means no multiplayer mode - not offline, not online, not anywhere.

Part of rewriting what it means to play an FPS is, according to the development team, getting gamers away from the notion that every FPS has to support Live, or that even has to involve other gamers. It seems to be something of a risk (one that saw the brilliant *Half-Life 2* scoring our second-highest score ever of 9.8), but a move Criterion hopes will reignite our passions for simple, unadulterated game play.

It's too early to draw conclusions about whether no Live is such a wise idea, especially as a game such as *Black* would be stonking in deathmatch. But we're erring on the side of caution. What we've seen doesn't need Live to make it any more enjoyable, and the replay value of a single slice of a single level is incredible. Will it be enough? We're just not sure.

Of course, as with the likes of Criterion's other genre-buster, the *Burnout* franchise, there is going to be enough replay factor to keep you coming back above and beyond simply finding new routes through levels. Managing a level on head-shots alone, or making kills with nothing but a silenced pistol will reap rich rewards for gamers, but Criterion is remaining tight-lipped about the precise details of what those extra goodies will actually be. One thing we know for a fact, though, is it will never get boring trying to unlock whatever is it Criterion has in store for us - nor will it ever be easy, either...

"It's like an 80s action movie, except with you in control!"

We're now inside the compound. We've either blown the truck up or gone in through a hole in the fence courtesy of a blown-out oil drum. Around us are burning buildings, dead bodies, and burned out cars. We've been throwing grenades out of upstairs windows, you see. It's incredible fun. During one attempt we discovered that the shotgun can open up sealed doors, and from within a warehouse, ablaze with blue flame and shimmering heat, we took pot-shots at petrol canisters left lying around. You should watch the merry dance bad guys do when they're on fire too. When everything fell silent and the whizzing of bullets past our eyes subsided, we were left stood there, panting and sweating, a stupid grin spread across our chops. It was like an old 80s action movie, like Rambo or Arnie doing what they did best, except with you in control! Sure, we died (oh boy, did we die and then some) but getting right back into it, discovering a new way to kill enemies, a new route into the base, or a new weapon on a fallen foe all made that death worth suffering.

We've played a considerable number of shooters over the years. Some become classics, some never even see the light of day, but some, every now and then, burn themselves into our consciousness. One of those is *Halo*, the other is *Half-Life 2*. And if the funny little feeling we're getting inside is anything to go by, we could be looking at the third. *Black* is coming, people - get ready.

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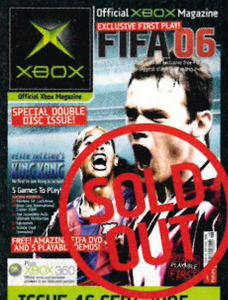

ISSUE 46 SEPT 2005

Demos: Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown, The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, Fahrenheit, Brian Lara International Cricket, Scooby-Doo! Unmasked
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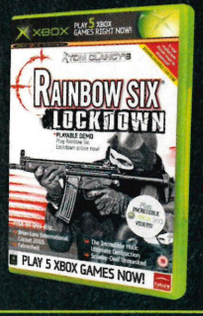

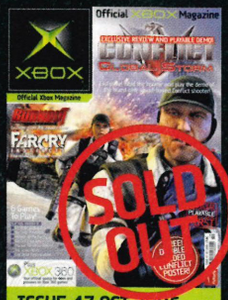

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Demos: Conflict: Global Storm, Burnout: Revenge, Heroes of the Pacific, Far Cry Instincts, Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects, Evil Dead Regeneration
Xbox 360 Movies: Top Spin 2, Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter, Huxley, Amped 3, NFS Most Wanted, Demonik

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Demos: Battlefield 2: Modern Combat, Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood, Cold War, LA Rush, Without Warning, Evil Dead Regeneration
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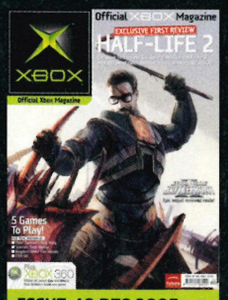

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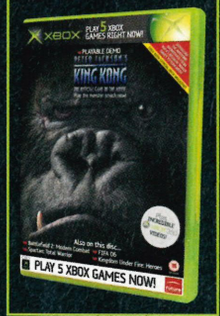

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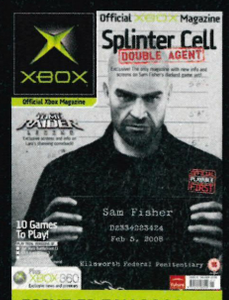
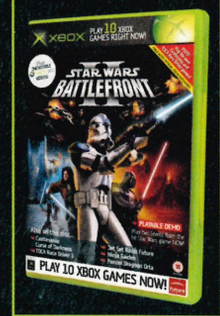


ISSUE 51 JAN 2006

Demos: Star Wars Battlefront II, TOCA Race Driver 3, Castlevania: Curse of Darkness, Shenmue II
Xbox 360 Movies: Perfect Dark Zero, Alone in the Dark, Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend
PLUS! Seven classic demos from the *OXM* archives to play



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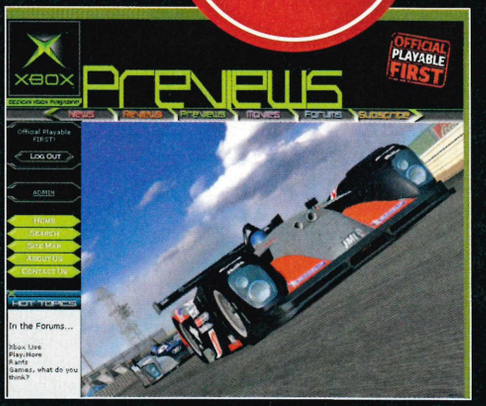

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2006 THE ONES TO WATCH

So you thought the last four years were amazing? They were NOTHING compared to the brain-melting thrill-ride that will be the Games of 2006...

Words: Dan Whitehead

CAST YOUR mind back to the first time you played *Halo*. Remember how amazed you were at its fluid, perfectly pitched deathmatches and its gripping single-player story? Yes?

Better get ready to toss your old best games casually aside like shabby, shop-worn tat then, because the ones you'll be playing in the next 12 months will make them seem distant, slightly embarrassing memories. As 2006 hoves into view, Xbox is reaching maximum warp factor, hitting its prime as developers draw on over four years experience of squeezing the best out of the beefy hardware. You can trust us when we say that the best games are yet to come.

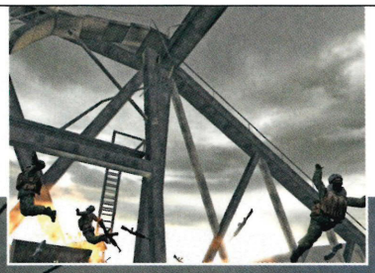
From the blistering assault of *Black* to the epic sweep of *The Godfather*, from the fender-bending mayhem of *TOCA 3* to the wide-eyed wonder of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the return of the legendary *Tomb Raider* and *Splinter Cell*, 2006 is set to be a benchmark year for Xbox gaming.

Of course, we'd have to give you some sort of road map of gaming greatness to guide you through the heady days ahead, so with that in mind here's our selection of the titles to crave over the next year...

18
Kill

BLACK

DEV » **Criterion** | PUB » **EA** | RELEASE » **MARCH 2006**



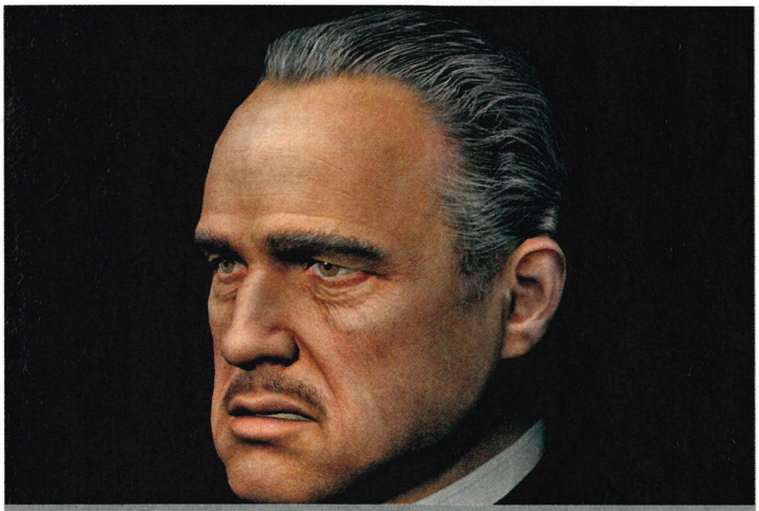
WHY? BECAUSE THE creators of *Burnout* are going to make you forget *Halo 2* even exists. Bold words? Sure, but everyone who's been lucky enough to get hands-on with Criterion's back-to-basics first-person blaster has come away a gibbering, drooling convert. 'Gun porn' is one phrase that crops up fairly often when they talk about the ruthless focus on relentless mayhem that *Black* provides. "Oh my God, I can't feel my fingers any more!" is another.

Stripping the overstocked FPS genre back to its primal roots, and then polishing the result to the very pinnacle of what the mighty Xbox can accomplish, all the clutter that we automatically expect in a shooter these days has been ruthlessly shot away with an enormous gun. No convoluted plots. No pointlessly complex weapons systems. No almost-controllable vehicles. No multiplayer mode, even.

Black is about old fashioned gaming adrenaline, pure and simple, and the maniacal developers at Criterion have stretched their Renderware engine to bursting point to ensure that simply squeezing the trigger in an empty room is as much fun as the numerous frenetic gun battles. Just think of the eye-popping vehicular damage from *Burnout Revenge*, and then imagine being able to unleash that sort of destruction in a first-person shooter. That's *Black*. Are you excited yet?

WOW!

Many games have boasted destructible terrain and realistic physics, but only *Black* lets you actually damage your enemies with the shrapnel and debris from every bullet fired...



THE GODFATHER

DEV » **EA** | PUB » **EA** | RELEASE » **SUMMER 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE IT'S *The Godfather*, and with the popularity of urban crime games showing no sign of abating, only a schmuck would deny Don Corleone the chance to bring a little style to the genre.

That's not to say *The Godfather* will merely be *Grand Theft Brando*. It'll be far less linear, with you working your way up the ranks of the mob in your own way via racketeering, extortion and robbery, and enforcing your will through fair means or very violent ones. Set in an authentic 1940s/50s New York, with a storyline that crosses over with the movie rather than retreads it, there's no reason to think this will be anything less than an immersive, impeccably presented experience.

WOW!

The game uses Mobface, a revised version of the character creation system from *Tiger Woods*, to enable you to design your own gangster right down to the size of his nose.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

DEV » **Traveller's Tales**
PUB » **Buena Vista**
RELEASE » **MARCH 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE IT'S the new *Lord of the Rings*! Okay, that may sound like facetious marketing speak, but you'd have to be a pretty cold-hearted soul not to be intrigued as to how the blockbuster movie adaptation of C.S. Lewis's darkly whimsical wardrobe-based children's adventure will fare as an epic action game. We're looking forward to this.

WOW!

***Narnia* has been developed by Traveller's Tales, the good folk who brought us the quite wonderful *Lego Star Wars*, a game that appealed to both adults and children with impressive ease.**

FEAR & RESPECT

DEV » **Midway**
PUB » **Midway**
RELEASE » **SPRING 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE IT'S more than just another urban *GTA* wannabe. Yes, the current slew of third-person crime games is a mite tedious, but that's because most are made by people whose closest brush with the mean streets of LA is waiting to get into an E3 party. *Fear & Respect* is different – it's got gen-u-wine authenticity.

WOW!

This interactive tale of a young man's struggle to stay alive during a sweltering South Central summer is being overseen by none other than John Singleton, director of *Boyz N The Hood*.

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

DEV » **Codemasters** | PUB » **Codemasters** | RELEASE » **FEBRUARY 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE BEHIND the all-out destruction of *Burnout* and the super-slick dream machines of *Project Gotham Racing* lurks this somewhat unsung star of the driving genre. Delivering tantalisingly powerful vehicles and fist-clenchingly brutal races, the *TOCA* series is one that offers the best of both worlds.

This third entry in the *Race Driver* series seems determined to swamp the speed-loving gamer in more options than is strictly healthy. Codemasters has retained the championship career mode, complete with a sage-like mechanic who offers advice between races, but everything else has been pumped up to mind-boggling proportions. From classic 1930s roadsters to US muscle cars to off-roaders to frickin' lawnmowers - if you can drive it, this game has a tournament dedicated to it.

For fans concerned that things may have been dumbed down to attract the mainstream racer, fear not. The handling of the cars and AI is still some of the most challenging around. This is a game for people who actually want to drive, not just hit the gas and careen around a track. And, of course, the whole thing is wrapped up in the smart, stylish presentation Codemasters is justifiably famous for. What's not to love?

WOW!

Buckle up! The Terminal Damage Engine used to generate the realistic bone-crunching collisions in the previous *TOCA* games now delivers 100 times more explosive real-time damage.

THE MOVIES

DEV » **Lionhead** | PUB » **Activision** | RELEASE » **TBA 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE WHEN you combine the freedom of a sandbox simulation with the glamour of making movies, then slowly bake under the watchful eye of Lionhead Studios, you get a game that balances wish-fulfilment and creative gratification in one sexy package. Whether you're directing your own mini-blockbusters, or grooming the fragile egos of your megastar cast, you can manage your own Hollywood studio from the silent era up to the present day, expanding your repertoire of sets, stars, special effects and props as you go. Play it as a linear challenge, or just muck about - the instant appeal of the concept is impossible to deny.

WOW!

You'll actually be able to create your own movies using an infinite number of potential actors, 7,000 scenes, 45 interchangeable sets, and thousands of costume combinations.

BATTLESTATIONS: MIDWAY

DEV » **Eidos**
PUB » **Eidos**
RELEASE » **SUMMER 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE IT boasts more than 60 authentic vehicles to control - including submarines - and this action-strategy extravaganza promises to do for WWII vehicle combat what *Call of Duty: Big Red One* did for first-person shooters. Why risk storming the beaches of Normandy over and over again, when you can command an entire aircraft carrier?

WOW!

Battlestations: Midway boasts 11 interlinked story missions, 12 bonus challenge missions plus massive online eight-player battles over Xbox Live. Big enough for you?

JUST CAUSE

DEV » **Avalanche**
PUB » **Eidos**
RELEASE » **SPRING 2006**

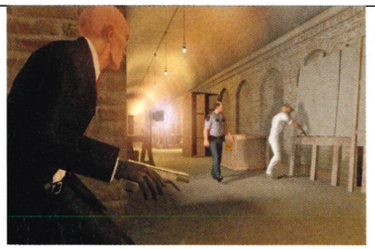
WHY? BECAUSE YOU must use your cunning to destabilise a WMD-building South American regime through fair means and foul. Think of the mayhem of *Mercenaries* crossed with the combat tactics of *Far Cry Instincts*, played across 1,225 square miles of free-roaming mountain, jungle, beach and urban terrain that can be explored by land, sea or air by your covert CIA agent and you're there. It's *GTA: San Andreas* with brains.

WOW!

Just Cause comes from promising new Swedish studio Avalanche, whose members previously worked on the rather spanky *Chronicles of Riddick*, plus the *Headhunter* and *Battlefield* series.

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

DEV » **IO Interactive** | PUB » **Eidos** | RELEASE » **MARCH 2006**

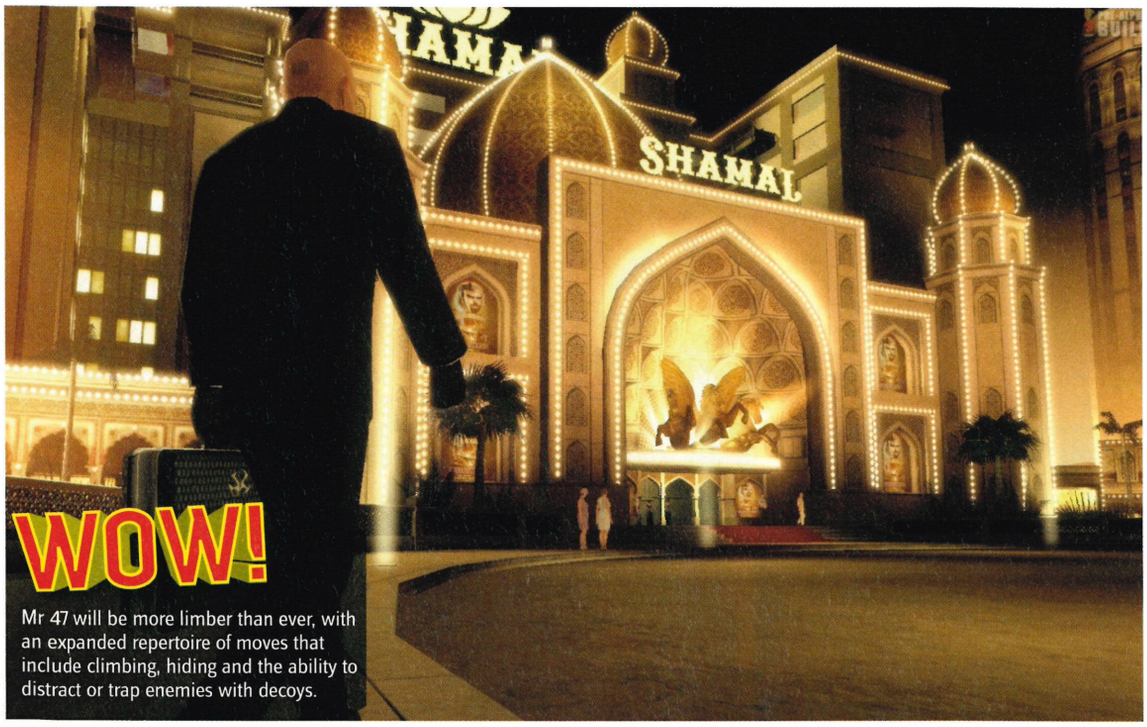


WHY? BECAUSE FOR all the shock-horror murder games that have inflamed the passions of the tabloid press (yes *Manhunt*, we're looking at you), there's still nothing quite like the original shiny-domed king of quiet kills. With its focus on patience and lateral thinking, the *Hitman* series has made a few waves on the Xbox but never really created the big splash it deserves. That should all change with *Blood Money*.

The plot finds Agent 47 cut adrift from his handlers, as mysterious forces work their way through the world of contract killing, taking down the world's best assassins. Naturally, you're on the list and must get to the bottom of the plot while plying your deadly trade as a freelancer.

Complete your assignments with the minimum of fuss and you'll be paid a higher bounty. This bloodstained lucre can then be used to purchase specialist equipment and weaponry, or to tease out information from your underworld contacts. You'll also be able to upgrade your weapons, improving accuracy and damage.

Eidos is promising that how you spend your ill-gotten gains will change the path you take through the game, so hopes are high for an open-ended adventure in mercenary mayhem.



WOW!

Mr 47 will be more limber than ever, with an expanded repertoire of moves that include climbing, hiding and the ability to distract or trap enemies with decoys.

SCARFACE

DEV » **Radical** | PUB » **Vivendi** | RELEASE » **SUMMER 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE WHICH other game lets you play as Al "Hoo-HA!" Pacino? Destined to go up against EA's *The Godfather* for the honour of being the coolest post-*Grand Theft Auto* crime romp, *Scarface* certainly has the edge as far as cocksure swagger goes.

Picking up after the bloodbath at the end of the classic 1983 movie (in the game you don't die, assuming you manage to survive the opening sequence), you've got to rebuild Tony Montana's drugs empire by working the sun-kissed streets of Miami and the deadly underworld of the Caribbean. Will you be barking "Say hello to my leetle friend!" at your TV as you carve your way back to the top? Please. Of course you will.

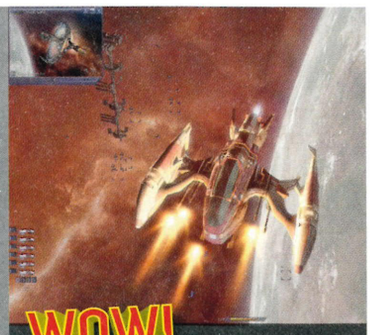
WOW!

Al Pacino has agreed for his face to be used in the game, and the voice cast includes the grizzled likes of Robert Loggia, James Woods and Robert Davi.

X3: REUNION

DEV » **Egosoft**
PUB » **Deep Silver**
RELEASE » **APRIL 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE YOU still want to be Han Solo, and because this game lets you live the dream. It's an open-ended space combat and trading game in which you weave your way through vast interstellar wars and corporate skulduggery to make your fortune. *Elite IV* won't be coming out any time soon - but those elderly enough to remember playing the original space-trading classic should be stiffening in anticipation of this already.



WOW!

If zipping around in one of 200 available ships doesn't appeal to you, you'll also be able to build your own factory complexes, or take command of entire fleets of warships.

STUBBS THE ZOMBIE

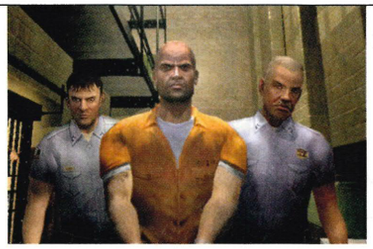
DEV » **Wideload Games**
PUB » **THQ**
RELEASE » **FEBRUARY 2006**

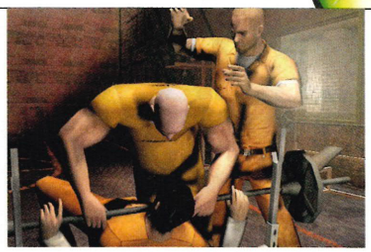
WHY? BECAUSE YOU'VE blasted more than enough zombies over the years, and now it's time to see things from their misunderstood perspective for once. Already a cult hit in the US, this gleefully gory romp where you play as the undead is best described as the game *Destroy All Humans!* should've been.

WOW!

The blood-soaked town of Punchbowl USA is brought to life using the *Halo* engine, while the soundtrack features the likes of The Flaming Lips covering 1950s rock 'n' roll classics.

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT



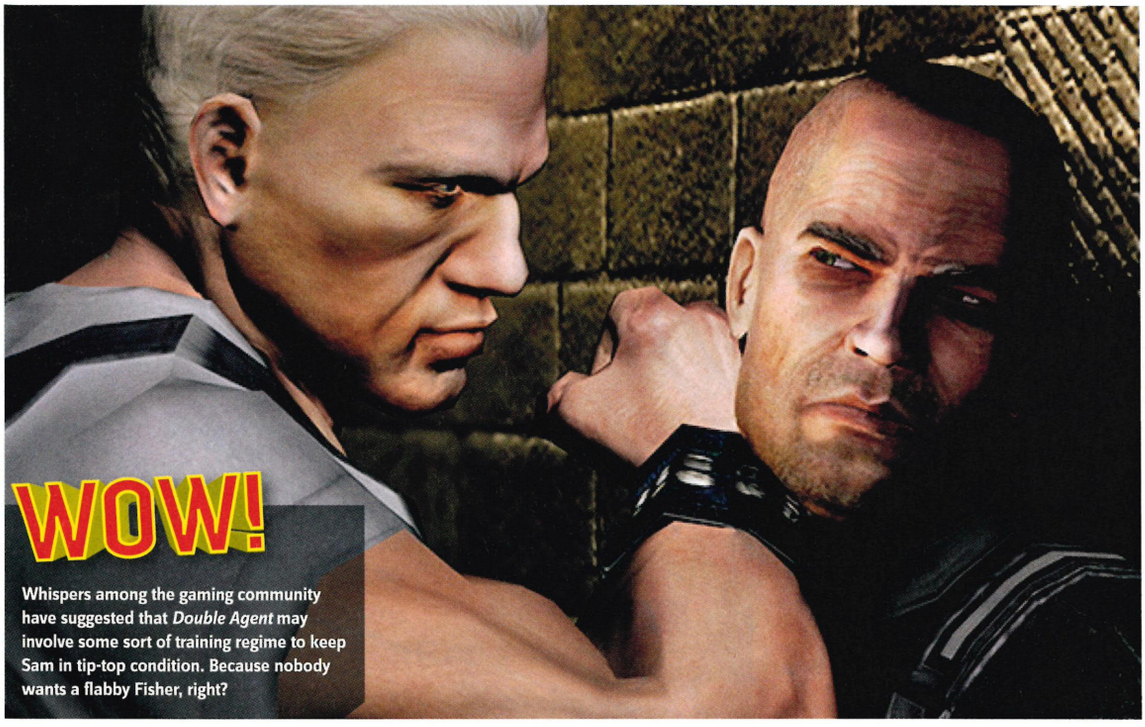


DEV » **Ubisoft** | PUB » **Ubisoft** | RELEASE » **MARCH 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE THE world's finest stealth game is coming back, and those who thought *Chaos Theory* was as good as it could get are in for a shock.

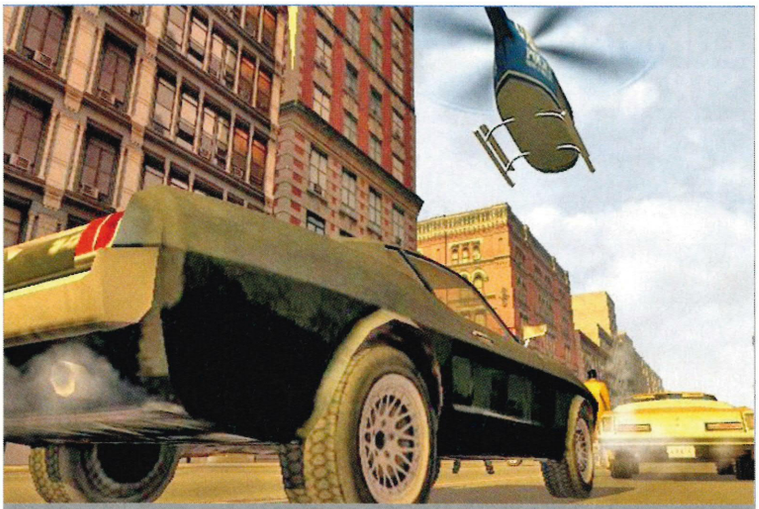
We revealed full details on Sam's fourth excursion into night-time neck-snapping in last month's issue, but here's a quick recap. Fisher is banged up in jail and his daughter is dead. Obviously Sam's not a happy man and he quite rightly goes on a rip-roaring rampage of revenge. Or does he? Certainly, all is not as it would first seem in this new *Splinter Cell* - and we're not just talking the new, dark direction in the storyline. Sam's working deep-cover for the CIA now, y'see, breaking out with a member of (and then joining) evil terrorist group the John Brown's Army to bring them down... from the inside!

Of course, now he's a rogue element there's no voice in his ear telling him what to do, so how missions pan out is down to you. The dual-path structure of the game, where Sam has to pursue the objectives of his CIA bosses without blowing his cover injects a new, more mature element of unpredictability and danger to the series. Does Fisher whack the captured Navy SEALS guy to prove his allegiance, or let him live and arouse the suspicion of the terrorists? We'll have the exclusive demo very soon...



WOW!

Whispers among the gaming community have suggested that *Double Agent* may involve some sort of training regime to keep Sam in tip-top condition. Because nobody wants a flabby Fisher, right?



DRIVER PARALLEL LINES

DEV » **Reflections** | PUB » **Atari** | RELEASE » **SUMMER 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE, DESPITE the huge disappointment that was *Driv3r* (Issue 32, 6.9), this is a series that still understands the appeal of an old-fashioned car chase. The series is going back to its roots - more vehicular mayhem, less shoot-outs and on-foot dullness. Rather than the linearity of previous games, there's now an open mission structure revolving around an ongoing storyline. You can guarantee this will be as slick as a greased python. And better than the last one.

WOW!

Always wanted to play cops and robbers with your mates? *Parallel Lines* will be the first game in its genre to feature online play.

URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE

DEV » **Rocksteady Studios**
PUB » **Eidos**
RELEASE » **TBA 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE IT'S the first FPS to place equal importance on saving lives as well as ending them. As leader of a special police unit in a near-future city overrun by gangs, you'll have to command and protect paramedics and firefighters, as well as take down the bad guys.

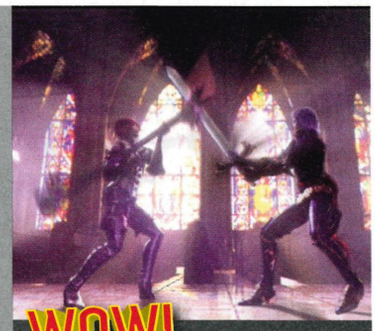
WOW!

If you run out of ammo, don't panic - you can simply grab broken bottles, knives, cleavers or other scattered items, and use those instead. Handy.

CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

DEV » **Konami**
PUB » **Konami**
RELEASE » **SPRING 2006**

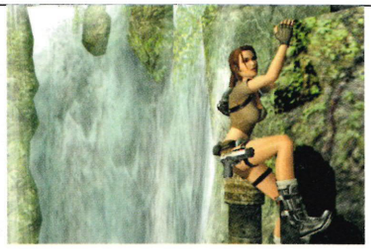
WHY? SOMETIMES you need to go old school and just leather the crap out of hordes of monsters. This latest entry has a new lead character, but with creator Koji Igarashi still at the helm fans can be confident the series will be unsullied.



WOW!

Beat *Curse of Darkness* and you'll be treated to an operatic end theme, 'True to Your Dreams', sung by proper posh singing bloke Russell Watson. Classy!

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND



DEV » **Crystal Dynamics** | PUB » **Eidos** | RELEASE » **MARCH 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE, WHILE her crown may be tarnished, Lara Croft is still one of the truly bona-fide icons of gaming and she's long overdue an adventure that matches her cultural status with some quality gameplay.

If *Angel of Darkness* left you feeling that Ms Croft was ready to join Sonic and Crash Bandicoot in the Gaming Retirement Village then this may just change your mind. Much like Steve Austin, Lara has been rebuilt to become better... stronger... faster than before. Original developer Core Design was given the elbow, and the task of redefining Lara for the next-generation era has been handed to Crystal Dynamics, the folk responsible for well-received titles such as *Soul Reaver* and *Project Snowblind*.

Not only has the world's poshest gaming icon been given a visual polish (no more triangular boobies!), they've also overhauled the control system and the style of play to eradicate those lingering throwbacks to the days of the PSOne. No more sudden death moments. No more circle-strafing around brain-dead enemies. No more bumping into walls. With gameplay in the more acrobatic vein of *Prince of Persia*, 2006 could well be the year that Lara becomes cool again. Yeah, we were surprised as well.

WOW!

Say goodbye to block-pushing puzzles. The new physics engine means Lara can finally interact with her environment in a realistic way, opening up multiple ways to proceed.

STARSHIP TROOPERS

DEV » **Strangelight** | PUB » **Empire** | RELEASE » **TBA 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE YOU'VE wanted to play this game ever since you emerged from the cinema in 1997, pumped up with adrenaline by Paul Verhoeven's blood-soaked bug-blasting war movie. We're still waiting for official confirmation of the Xbox version, but we're expecting it soon.

The game picks up the story from the end of the movie, putting you in the combat boots of an Elite Marauder and pitting you against 19 varieties of arachnid scum across 12 vast single-player missions. Casper Van Dien even takes time out from starring in blockbusters such as *Dracula 3000* to return as Johnny Rico, the grunt from the movie and now the general issuing your orders. Join the Mobile Infantry and save the Galaxy!

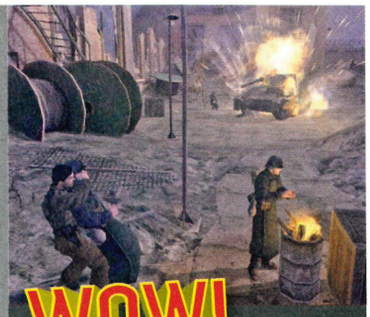
WOW!

Thanks to the SWARM engine, the game will be able to throw up to 300 bugs at you at a time. What's the matter, soldier? You wanna live forever?

COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE

DEV » **Eidos**
PUB » **Pyro**
RELEASE » **MARCH 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE THE World War II first-person shooter genre is in desperate need of some innovation, and this spin-off from the acclaimed strategy franchise might just offer it. Like in the original games, you control three commandos - a green beret, a sniper and a spy - except this time in first-person. You can switch between them at any time to attack from all sides.



WOW!

Strike Force promises non-linear play with multiple ways to approach missions and different ways to play - including kidnapping, assassination, sabotage or just good old blowing stuff up.

RESERVOIR DOGS

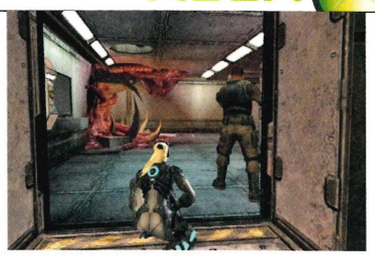
DEV » **Eidos**
PUB » **Eidos**
RELEASE » **TBA 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE IT'S Tarantino. On your Xbox. If that doesn't intrigue you then you may well be clinically devoid of cool. The game, in top-secret development since 2003, will finally reveal what went down in the disastrous heist, and allow you to play as all of the colour-coded crims, as well as the cops.

WOW!

The word on the street from Nice Guy Eddie is that the game will not only include getaway driving sections, but also a blood-soaked multiplayer mode.

STARCRAFT: GHOST



DEV » **Blizzard** | PUB » **Vivendi** | RELEASE » **TBA 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE THE *StarCraft* universe is one of the more fully fleshed-out sci-fi settings in games, and Xbox owners will finally get to see what all the fuss is about.

A third-person action spin-off from the enormously popular series of real-time strategy games on the PC, and the space-based cousin to the even more successful *WarCraft* franchise, *StarCraft* already appeals to the kind of people who painstakingly paint small lead figures of space marines. With this new stealthy console direction, it should now also appeal to those of us who've actually kissed real girls. On the mouth and everything.

You play as Nova, a lethal Ghost Operative, the stealthy science fiction offspring of Sam Fisher and Lara Croft. A lithe sort of lass, she can climb, shimmy, lurk, take control of vehicles and call down air strikes. She also comes equipped with an arsenal of cyber-powers, including the ability to move at supersonic speeds, cloak herself from enemies and even interface with electronic devices to muck them up good and proper.

And, yes, as well as an in-depth single-player story mode, tying into the larger *StarCraft* mythology, you can also expect Xbox Live multiplayer mayhem.

WOW!

StarCraft has sold over nine million copies to date, and earned over 20 game of the year awards. And that was just as a boring old PC strategy game.

SUPERMAN RETURNS

DEV » **EA Tiburon** | PUB » **EA** | RELEASE » **MAY 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE HE'S Superman, the daddy of all superheroes. While the Man of Steel hasn't exactly been well served by previous game adaptations (and that's being generous), he's now landed at EA, the preferred gaming home of most beefy Hollywood franchises. Based on Bryan Singer's upcoming blockbuster movie, the game follows Superman's return to Metropolis after a pilgrimage to the ruins of Krypton to learn about his past. As well as incorporating the movie storyline, developer Tiburon (better known for the *Madden NFL* series) has dipped into 60 years of DC Comics stories for inspiration, so you can expect to battle everything from Lex Luthor's criminal plots to rampaging giant robots.

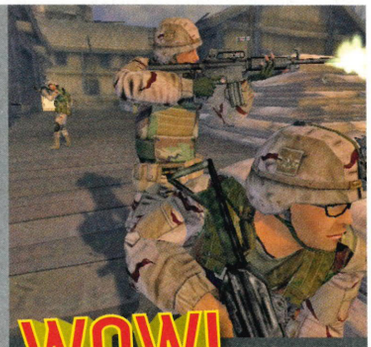
WOW!

The game has been developed in conjunction with director Bryan Singer, and will feature a painstakingly detailed life-size Metropolis made up of nine distinct districts.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS

DEV » **Pandemic**
PUB » **THQ**
RELEASE » **FEBRUARY 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE *FSW* rescued combat strategy from the clutches of top-down *Command & Conquer* clones by dragging you to street level and shoving your face in the blood and grime of urban warfare. A sequel wasn't only expected, it's essential. Check out this month's EXCLUSIVE demo!



WOW!

Tantalising new features include the ability to board and use vehicles, call in air strikes or helicopter support, and enter buildings to set up sniper points.

TIMESHIFT

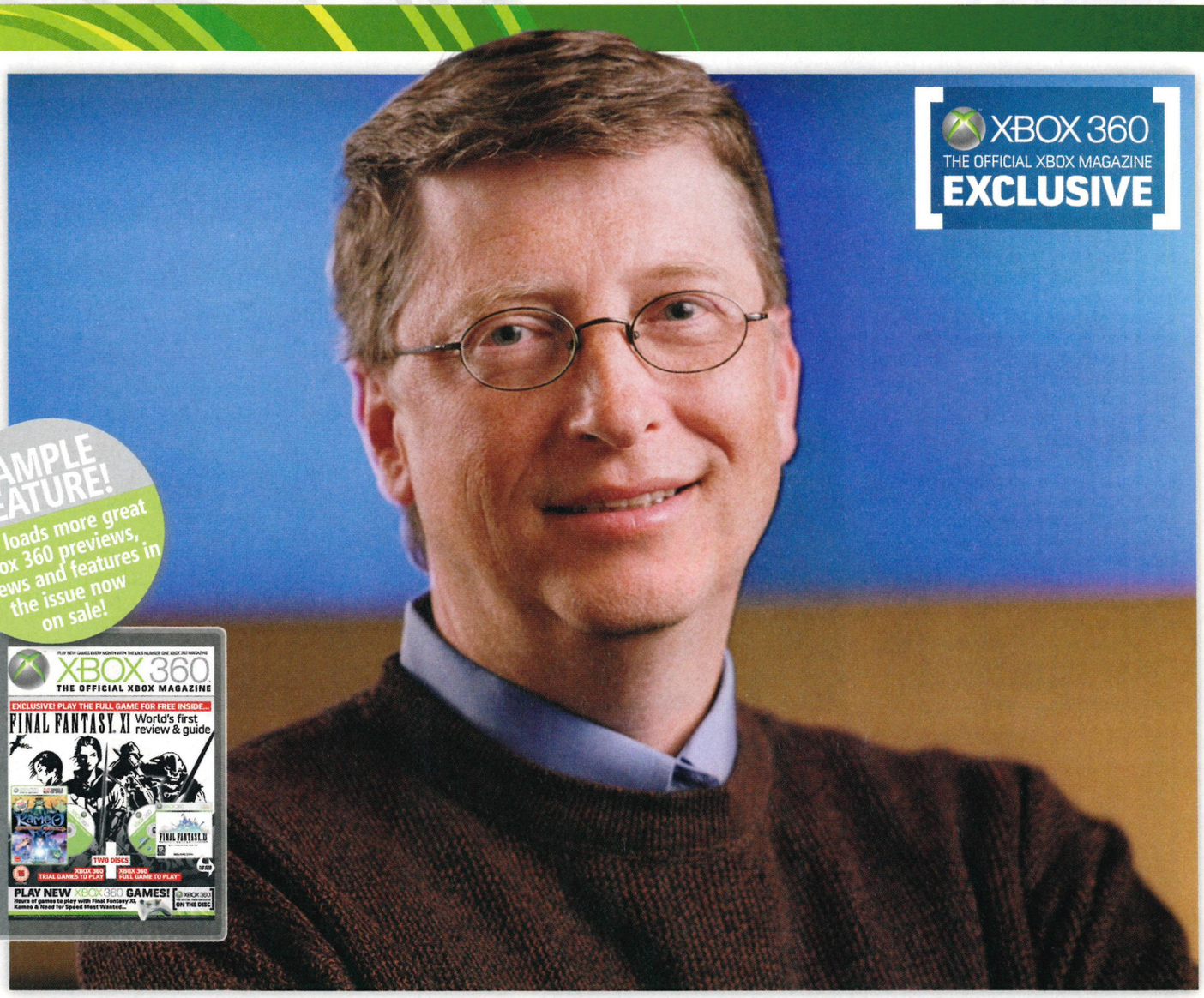
DEV » **Atari**
PUB » **Saber Interactive**
RELEASE » **APRIL 2006**

WHY? BECAUSE TIME-TRAVELLING first-person shooting games are always good for a giggle, and this one promises even more temporal hijinks, with the ability to slow, stop and rewind time itself during gameplay, perfect if you're an FPS klutz with a tendency to screw up. Need an easy soundbite? It's *Blinx the Cat* meets *TimeSplitters* meets *Prince of Persia*. Don't tell us you're not even a little bit intrigued.

WOW!

TimeShift is the first console project from hotly-tipped Russian developer Saber Interactive, who brought us the gleefully destructive PC shooter *Will Rock*.

PLAY XBOX 360 GAMES EVERY MONTH



CELEBRITY ACCESS

WE CHAT WITH BILL GATES

The Microsoft founder talks Xbox 360, telling us his plans for the machine – and the future of gaming

OXM: Microsoft made a huge investment in the original Xbox console, which didn't exactly make money. What are the expectations in this generation, both from a mindshare and content standpoint, and also from the position of shareholders who are wanting to see a profitable entertainment business?

Bill Gates: Whenever you enter into a new business, you expect to make a significant initial investment – Xbox has always been a long-term strategy for us. And in just four years, Microsoft has become the world's second-biggest player in the console industry. At the same time, we've managed to establish a core audience that is incredibly enthusiastic about the cutting-edge technology and amazing games that will make up the whole Xbox 360 experience. So we're confident that we already have the foundation for an extremely strong growth business for Microsoft.

OXM: *Forbes* recently revealed that Xbox cost Microsoft around $4billion. Was this the 'worst-case scenario' in all the possible business outcomes for getting into the console market? How fiscally important is the Xbox business to Microsoft's bottom line?

Bill Gates: We never enter a new business unless it has a good chance of

»I can't emphasise this enough – we're in this for the long term

PLAY NEW GAMES EVERY MONTH WITH THE UK'S NUMBER ONE XBOX 360 MAGAZINE
XBOX 360 THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE

becoming a commercial success for us – and in the technology industry that can take time. So we've always viewed Xbox as an investment for the long term. And in the space of four years, we've proven our value to the industry and consumers in more than just sales. I have no doubt this investment in innovation will pay off for us.

OXM: If PS3 wins the next round, will there be a third Xbox console?
Bill Gates: I can't emphasise this enough – we're in this for the long term, and we're confident that our constantly advancing technology will win millions more customers around the world. Right now, we're driving one of the biggest console launches in gaming history. We're delivering Xbox 360 to millions of people around the world in the first ever truly global console launch. Imagine the possibilities when kids from Japan are challenging kids from New York to a race of *PGR3*, or a *PDZ* team from Osaka challenges a team from San Francisco. This really is the dawn of a new era of advanced gaming.

OXM: You were famously quoted in *Time* magazine, saying *Halo 3* would be released to match the PS3 launch date, but others at Microsoft and Bungie have subsequently backed away from that. Can you clarify that statement?
Bill Gates: Well, the last thing I want to do is steal *Halo 3*'s thunder [smiles].

»We've 'future-proofed' this console, so it will be integral for years to come

OXM: With the refocus on winning the Xbox battle in Japan, Microsoft is taking on Sony on its own turf. What are the chances of taking on Sony in other areas, like consumer electronics? And what's the key to turning the tide in Japan?
Bill Gates: We're the world's second-biggest console maker right now, but we know that we can never be number one without winning the hearts of Japanese gamers. That's why we enlisted the talents of Hers in Osaka and Astro in San Francisco to develop a console that has truly global appeal. It's why we secured the best talents in Japanese game development – including Okamoto-san, Itagaki-san, Sakaguchi-san, and Mizuguchi-san – to create unique content for Xbox 360.

OXM: Is there anything about the original Xbox that you wish Microsoft had done differently – design, marketing, hardware? Was there a specific key lesson that was learned and then applied to Xbox 360?
Bill Gates: With the first Xbox, we were definitely learning on the job. With Xbox 360, we've been able to create a console that draws heavily on those four years of experience – one that is both stunningly designed and technologically capable of powering the digital entertainment lifestyle. We've also ensured that we've 'future-proofed' this console, which will make it an integral part of home entertainment centres for years to come.

OXM: Xbox 360 appears to be a definite step towards your vision of the digital entertainment home and lifestyle. Any hints on what we can expect in our digital entertainment future?
Bill Gates: Xbox 360 is the fusion of raw technological power and elegant design at an affordable price. There's a lot of talk about killer apps, but as far as I'm concerned, Xbox 360 is *the* killer app for any HDTV setup.

OXM: What single feature of the Xbox 360 hardware excites you most?
Bill Gates: I'm really excited about the three processor cores that IBM has developed for Xbox 360. It enables game developers to create amazing, sweeping environments, lifelike AI, realistic physics, richer game worlds and stunning visual clarity. Then there's Xbox Live, which is more than just about games – it's about all the people who power new and exciting gameplay experiences.

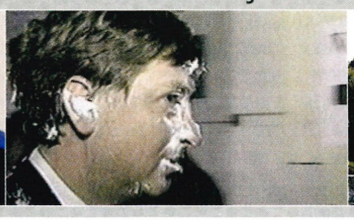
OXM: If you could design your own game for the Xbox 360, what would you make? What does Bill Gates want to play?
Bill Gates: Xbox 360 is designed with every gamer in mind. So in that respect, the system is designed as much for me as for other gamers. What do I want to play? I want to play *Kameo* and *Perfect Dark Zero*. I want to play *PGR3*.

FACTS ABOUT BILL!

FACT 1: Bill Gates is currently worth – give or take a few billion – 30 billion pounds. He could buy 30,000,000,000 cans of lager for that, or 36,000,000,000 if using a local shop's 'six cans for a fiver' deal. If he drank all that beer he would die – he is only human, after all!

FACT 2: Bill Gates used to be young! When he was 19 years old he caused trouble, most notably by getting arrested for reckless driving *and* not even having a driving licence. If he was arrested now he could easily afford to bribe his way out of anything, probably even murder!

FACT 3: Bill Gates like cakes! He likes cakes so much that he gets his army of obsessive fans to throw them at his face when he attends public meetings and events, allowing the Microsoft bigwig to virtually constantly eat cake wherever he goes. Pictured here is a lemon meringue.



FACT 4: He's got a big house. It cost $97m to build. No one's seen much of what's inside it, but it's rumoured to feature an incredible three bathrooms, four bedrooms and a garage. There are also lots of plug sockets for his collection of 28,000 computers. Bet the kitchen's nice.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON THIS? TELL US AT WWW.OXM.CO.UK

FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.OXM.CO.UK

GREEN LIGHT

REVEALING THE HOTTEST NEW GAMES GREEN LIT FOR DEVELOPMENT!

PUB: CAPCOM | **PLAYERS:** TBC
DEV: CAPCOM | **XBOX LIVE:** TBC

RELEASE: JAN 2006

NEW GAME!

LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION

It's down the back of the sofa. Or did you leave it in your other trousers?

HA! NOT A game based on the exploits of Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen as you may imagine (er, okay – Ed), Lost Planet is a sci-fi action-adventure title from the minds that created *Onimusha* and *Devil May Cry*.

Players take control of the protagonist who must battle against his fellow humans in their mechs and deserted cities, as well as the monstrous indigenous creatures and a race of invading aliens. Moreover, the hostile world you inhabit is snow-locked, full of treacherous terrain and vast empty expanses where vehicles are a must. Snowstorms whip across the tundra, creating mountains of ice and vast snowfields to traverse. Add some weird technology that's been implanted in your arm, a beautiful sidekick and a mysterious older man, and you, worrying about the chances of mankind surviving the war.

Support for Xbox Live has been promised as well, thankfully, with a variety of online battles including co-op play. The choice of weapons depends on whether you're on foot or in a mech, and ranges from a simple machine-gun to twin Gatling guns and rocket launchers. Throw in drivable vehicles as well, and this could challenge *Halo 3* offline and online.

Lost Planet looks to be an epic in the traditions of *Halo*, with astounding areas to explore, gorgeous animation (see the video on www.oxm.co.uk), knock-out detail, unique enemies and a backstory that'll keep you playing until hell freezes over. Which, on the evidence of this game, probably won't be too long.

SELECT SCREENSHOT...

1. **FUN, FUN, FUN:** Are these the invading aliens or the original lifeforms of the planet? Hard to tell, considering we're on an inhospitable alien world anyway. One thing to notice though, is that their markings are hardly camouflage...
2. **IT'S COLD OUTSIDE:** An early image of the game seems to show you fighting alongside and against giant stompy robots. We quite like the air-temperature gauge in the top left – minus 52 is quite cold whatever temperature scale you're using.
3. **NO KIND OF ATMOSPHERE:** If we're not mistaken, this is a hero. You can tell he's a hero because he's got floppy hair and he's played by some famous Korean actor. Also, the gas mask gives it away.
4. **ALL ALONE, MORE OR LESS:** A giant robot! Or it could be a mech, which might mean it's on your side. Or not, considering you're not just battling indigenous beasties, but some creepy race of invading aliens and other humans. Trust no one!
5. **FAR AWAY FROM HERE:** This is one of your human counterparts, ankle-deep in the snow that covers the ice-world where the game is set. Due to the extreme cold, he appears to have a glowing electric codpiece. Goodness.

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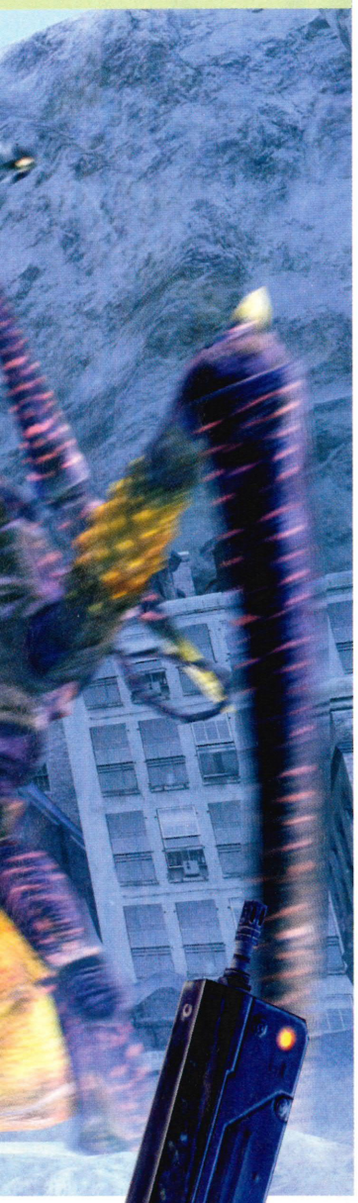


KILLER FEATURES

THE DEVELOPER

From Keiji Inafune, who created *Megaman* and *Onimusha*, and the creators of *Devil May Cry*, this seems unlikely to fail. And if it does, it's unlikely it'll ever be released – how much of a guarantee of gaming goodness is that?

YETIS

You've not seen any in the screenshots, right? Daultrey, the official *OXM* yeti-guru, assures us that's because they're elusive! We're betting they're in there, and perhaps Nessie as well.

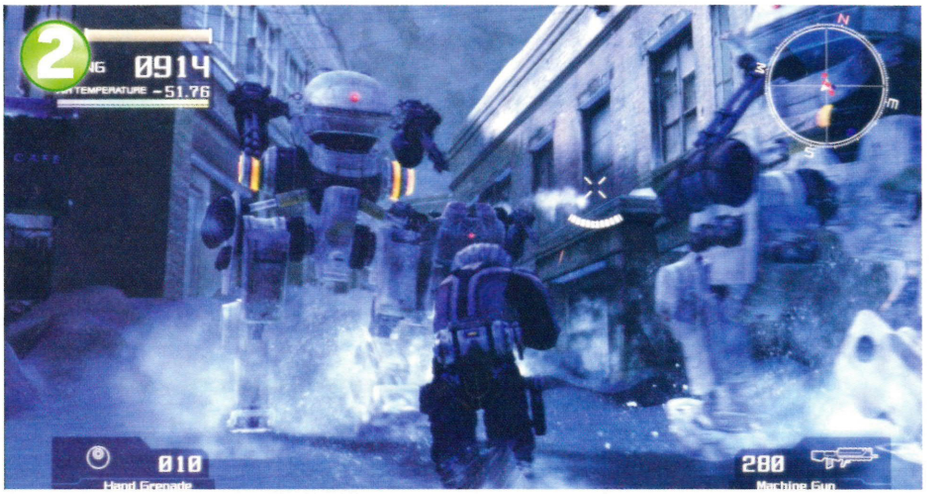
ICE ICE BABY

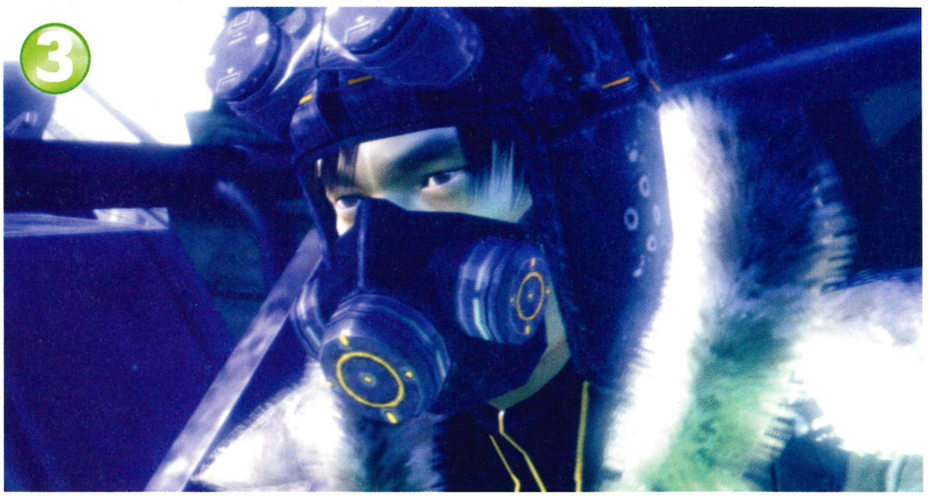
Ooh, cold and frigid round here, just like the ex. What a challenging planet this'll be, especially when it tries to split the record collection.

REAL WEATHER

Horrific storms, Arctic winds and deadly low temperatures mean you're battling the elements as well as your enemies. You won't get any help from the Government with your heating bills, either.

This heroic character is you, outside your mech. Lifting a massive gun in an improbable way.





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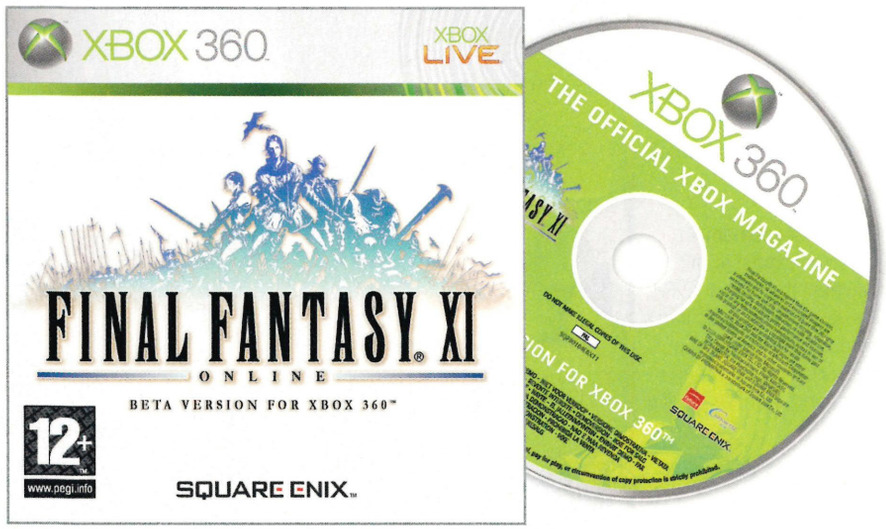
XBOX 360™

THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE



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**Final Fantasy XI Online* Beta Version for Xbox 360 is playable until closed by Square-Enix, and requires an Xbox Live Gold account, Xbox 360 Hard Drive and a broadband connection.

XBOX 360 RIP-OFFS ENRAGE COUNTRY!

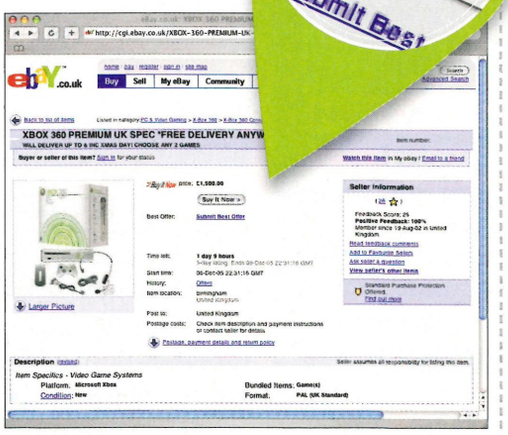
Shameless crooks profit as Xbox 360 sells out

COULDN'T GET AN XBOX 360? It's no surprise – the hottest item this Christmas has been swarmed by profit-making hawks, with greedy game-hating slime clamouring to get a console and sell it on at a profit – without even playing it.

"I was told Microsoft sold out of the machine to people that preordered – my only hope of getting a Premium pack is to buy one from someone," complained *OXM* reader Jeremy O'Brien, with thousands of other disappointed and empty-handed Xbox 360 fans left seething at the profiteering.

It's the preordering system that's to blame – people who had no desire to play Xbox 360 could sign up to get a machine on launch day, leaving genuine gamers stuck without the hot machine.

"We are well aware that many gamers are disappointed not to have got their Xbox 360 on day one," said Neil Thompson, senior European regional director, home and entertainment division. Going on to explain the disastrous stock shortages he added, "We are working around the clock to manufacture as many Xbox 360s as we can, and are replenishing retail stores in Europe in the weeks coming up to Christmas." Good news, but his final advice that "Consumers should check back with their retailers frequently," doesn't exactly fill us with confidence or tell us that he actually believes what he's saying. Check our website for the latest stock news direct from Microsoft and the high street – or visit www.oxm.co.uk and post your anger at the situation.



CASH-IN SHAME

MAN'S 30-CONSOLE SHAME

Birmingham newspaper *The Sunday Mercury* reported that Chris Bourne from West Bromwich ordered 30 Xbox 360s from online retailer Amazon – solely to sell on eBay. He received all 30 machines and listed them the next day. He is a disgrace. He needs to take a good look at himself in the mirror (if he can still see his mirror, what with his house being so full of unwanted Xbox 360s), and think about what he's done.

LAUNCH PARTY EMBARRASSMENT

Microsoft held a posh launch party on the night of 01 December. At the event, 'goodie bags' were given away to attendees containing a copy of *Perfect Dark Zero* and a custom faceplate – currently around 20 of these are for sale on eBay. Some people don't deserve nice things.

Chris Bourne needs to take a good look at himself in the mirror (if he can still see his mirror with his house being so full of unwanted Xbox 360s)

AMERICAN DISGRACE

eBay president and CEO Meg Whitman announced that 40,000 Xbox 360s changed hands on the online trading site in its first weeks on sale, with prices for the Premium pack topping £600. Contrary to what are claimed to be the principles of eBay, this is not fair selling – it's disgraceful the way people can rip other people off for a quick profit. eBay ought to do something about it – it ought to stop it.

»I was told Microsoft sold out of machines to people that preordered – my only hope of getting a Premium pack is to buy one from someone"

HAVE YOU BEEN RIPPED OFF? HAVE YOU RIPPED SOMEONE ELSE OFF?

If so let us know! We'll be going a bit 'Watchdog' over this in forthcoming issues.

Select Input

SEND US YOUR FACEPLATE PICS:

FORUM	EMAIL	PHONE CAM*
www.oxm.co.uk	oxm@futurenet.co.uk	Text OXMINPUT, Gamertag and pix to 07921 885345

WHAT YOUR FACEPLATE SAYS ABOUT YOU

No.3: ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS

This faceplate says two things: either you were at the Xbox 360 launch party where they were handed out to guests, or you bought one on eBay from someone who was at the party and is now shamefully cashing in. Only 600 of these were made, created when artist collective Zombie Flesh Eaters and creative team Beat 13 graffitied a wall built from blank faceplates. The wall was then broken up, making each faceplate unique – and therefore worth quite a bit. We despair sometimes, we really do. Our Zombie Flesh Eaters faceplate is staying in the office. We will not be selling it on eBay like some thief flogging a nicked mobile.

LET US REVIEW YOUR FACEPLATES!

If you've 'maxed out the originality' and modded your Xbox 360 with a new faceplate, send us a photo and we'll tell everyone what it says about you next month.

Select Input

SEND US YOUR FACEPLATE PICS:

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www.oxm.co.uk	oxm@futurenet.co.uk	Text OXMINPUT, Gamertag and pix to 07921 885345

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WALLPAPERS

176983

176022

176563

176569

176911

179767

176552

176554

179190

179408

179857

179103

179203

179072

179889

174184

179389

179636

176565

174010

174005

176562

VIDEOS

174123
BOOGIE NIGHTS

179834
REAREND FIREBALL

176312
F1 FIREBALL

176315
DRUNKEN FOOL

179468
MCLAREN V'S SKYLINE

176307
DARING SKATER

179833
TREADMILL BREAKER

179471
SHOVEL HEAD SMASHER

179449
NECK BREAKER

179831
CRAZY SNOWBOARDER

176317
REDNECK TRUCK SURFER

176303
COCKY FAT DIVER

176305
POLE VAULT SNAP

179845
TRANSFORMER DANCE

179847
OVER THE BARS

174128
LOOK OUT!

174129
BICYCLE CALAMITY

174130
TREE CRASHER

174093
GTO DOUGHNUTS

174131
SPACEHOPPER FUN

179473
BEAR FIGHT

174094
PORSCHE DONUTS

174117
CRAZY MONKEY

176301
DIRTY MONKEY

179466
CORVETTE CRASH

174118
SWINGING MONKEY

174133
ROLLING BUS

174110
CRAZY DINO

174119
KABOOM MOBILE

174091
200MPH SUPRA

174111
DRAGONS EYE

174120
TAKE THE STRAIN

174092
LOONY EVO CRASH

MORE COOL PICS

176926

176564

176577

176575

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179626

179900

179774

174183

176201

176204

176151

176141

174182

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179955

179887

179865

179876

179770

176998

176134

ANIMATION

174039
MONKEY SPLAT

176961
CROW ANIMATION

179312
CURRY SQUIRTS

176015
R2D2

179469
ELECTRIC SHOCKS

176370
SEXY SIGN

179470
MATRIX CODE

179310
BART MOONS

176011
ALIENS

176365
LIGHTNING

176018
STONED COLD KILLER

176223
BIG BOOBS ANIME

174038
CRAZY DINO

176007
LOVE HEART

176010
SPIDEY DANCE

TONES

POLY LATEST

171485 THE STROKES - JUICEBOX
171476 SEAN PAUL - EVER BLAZIN
171462 50 CENT - WINDOW SHOPPER
171460 GORILLAZ - DIRTY HARRY
171451 THE WHITE STRIPS - THE DENIAL TWIST
171448 SIMON WEBBE - NO WORRIES
171447 SON OF DORK - TICKET OUTTA LOSERVILLE
171435 BLACK EYED PEAS - MY HUMPS
171436 GIRLS ALOUD - BIOLOGY
171437 WILL YOUNG - SWITCH IT ON
171440 PHARRELL - CAN I HAVE IT LIKE THAT
171411 KANYE WEST - HEAR EM SAY
171412 MADONNA - HUNG UP
171439 THE DARKNESS - ONE WAY TICKET...
171407 GREEN DAY - JESUS OF SUBURBIA
171477 PUSSYCAT DOLLS - STICKWITU
171475 OASIS - LET THERE BE LOVE
171352 KELLY CLARKSON - BECAUSE OF YOU

TRUE CHART

178317 BLACK EYED PEAS - MY HUMPS
178319 THE PUSSYCAT DOLLS - DON'T CHA
178322 RIHANNA - PON DE REPLAY
178323 SUGABABES - PUSH THE BUTTON
178292 ARCTIC MONKEYS - I BET YOU LOOK GOOD ...
178332 PHARRELL - CAN I HAVE IT LIKE THAT
178340 GORILLAZ - DARE
178312 SON OF DORK - TICKET OUTTA LOSERVILLE
178342 50 CENT - OUTTA CONTROL
178356 THE STROKES - JUICEBOX
178287 SIMON WEBB - NO WORRIES
178276 WILL YOUNG - SWITCH IT ON
178286 MADONNA - HUNG UP
178310 SEAN PAUL - EVER BLAZIN
178314 KANYE WEST - HEAR EM SAY
178345 ROBBIE WILLIAMS – TRIPPIN

REAL SOUNDS

178135 DUKES OF HAZZARD - GENERAL LEE
178138 FULL METAL JACKET - DRILL SARGEANT "DO YOU SUCK...?"
178124 FULL METAL JACKET - "YOU'RE SO UGLY"
178061 AUSTIN POWERS - YOU'VE GOT MAIL BABY
178056 DONALD DUCK GETTING A BJ (HILARIOUS)
178051 PULP FICTION - THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN
178047 BO SELECTA MICHAEL JACKSON - SHAAMONE
178045 BACK TO THE FUTURE - SERIOUS S***
178080 MONKEY GOING NUTS
178066 STAR WARS - JABBA'S LAUGH
178063 FRIENDS - JOEY - HOW YOU DOIN'?

GAMES

COMPATIBILITY:
A: NOKIA B: MOTOROLA C: SAGEM D: SAMSUNG E: SHARP F: SIEMENS G: SONY ERICSSON

TOP GAME

CONFLICT VIETNAM

ABCDEFG 176505

LIMIT TEXAS HOLD'EM

ABDFG 176816

SUPER YUM YUM

ACDEFG 176805

SENSIBLE SOCCER

ABCEG 176514

BABEWATCH

ABDFG 176492

PREDATOR

ABCDEG 176513

DOUGIE LAMPKIN

A 176812

MORE GAMES

CODE - TITLE	COMPATIBILITY
176811 - CITY KNIGHTS 2	A,B,G
176455 - BLACKJACK	A,B,D,F
176502 - BUFFY	A,B,C,D,E,G
176504 - DESERT STORM	A,B,C,D,E,F,G
176500 - BILL AND TED	A,B,C,D,E,G
176512 - MR BEAN MINI RACER	A,B,C,D,E,F
176517 - SON OF THE MASK	A,B,C,D,G
176515 - SHREK 2 ADVENTURE	A,B,E,G
176818 - POOL CHALLENGE	A
176516 - SHREK 2 - PUSS IN BOOTS	A,B,C,D,E,F,G

SON OF THE MASK

ABCDG 176517

JUDGE DREDD

ABCEG 176508

BRUCE LEE

ABCDEG 176501

TEXAS HOLD'EM

ABG 176808

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EG: 176812 TO 80155

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Reviews

Written by gamers who live and love games

ARE YOU READY for war? *Ten Hammers*, the sequel to spectacular strategy title *Full Spectrum Warrior*, has arrived and it rocks hard. Everything you need to know is splashed all over the next six pages.

We pick up the pace from there with a massive review of the latest tyre-screeching racer from the clever-clogs at Codemasters, *TOCA Race Driver 3*. Would you believe a racing game could possibly be the biggest title on Xbox? You'd better.

There's plenty for retro-heads too this month, with reviews of classic re-releases including *Metal Slug 5*, *King of Fighters 2003* and *Samurai Shodown V*. Yes, that IS the correct spelling. The latest in the *Castlevania* series is in there, too. You've got a lot to get through, readers. POWER ON.

Our Badges explained

XBOX ELITE
Any game scoring a whopping 8.5 or more.

GAME OF THE MONTH
Our favourite of the Elite games reviewed this month.

XBOX LIVE
Downloadable content, online play, or both.

ONLY ON XBOX
An Xbox-exclusive game for at least three months.

ON THE DISC
A playable trial or movie of the game is on our disc.

Score Key

8.5-10.0
THE XBOX ELITE - ONE OF THE VERY BEST AVAILABLE

7.5-8.4
A TOP-QUALITY RELEASE THAT'S WELL WORTH HAVING

6.5-7.4
STILL WELL WORTH CONSIDERING, BUT HAS SOME FLAWS

5.0-6.4
AN AVERAGE TITLE WITH NOTHING OUTSTANDING TO OFFER

2.5-4.9
A BAD GAME, AND ONE YOU SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH

0.0-2.4
CALLING SUCH A RANCID STINKER A 'GAME' IS LIBELLOUS

FSW: Ten Hammers 068
Read the review, then play the demo of this awesome wargame.

TOCA Race Driver 3 076
The racer that will keep you busy for months on end.

King of Fighters 2003 080
With 3D backgrounds that were probably amazing back in '03.

Metal Slug 5 081
The nuttiest 2D shooter in existence hits the Xbox.

Castlevania: Curse of Darkness 082
We played it for ages and didn't see a single vampire.

Torino 2006 084
A new-age Track & Field with snow. Have spare pads ready.

Samurai Shodown V 085
Swing blades and watch the blood fly in this arcade classic.

Hardware 087
This month! A full-page review of some sort of steering wheel.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR™ TEN HAMMERS

Official Xbox Magazine GAME OF THE MONTH

The innovative strategy shooter is back with more wartime action than your fingers can handle. Get your helmet on...

Words: Mike Jackson

Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

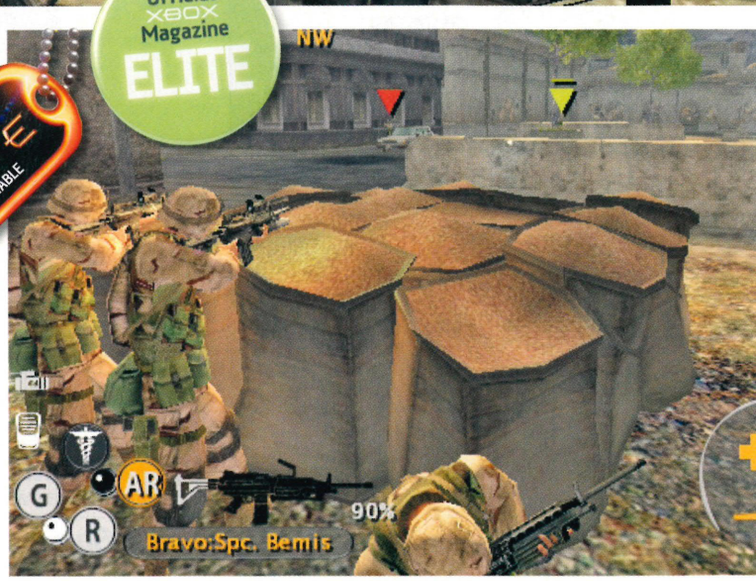
XBOX LIVE PLAYABLE

Dev: Pandemic	Pub: THQ
Players: 1-2 S.Link	Live: 2-8 players
Release: February 2006	Price: £40
www.fullspectrumwarrior.com	

THERE ARE no health bars or medipacks that magically heal your wounds in real life. There aren't any in *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers* either. This is a videogame that forces you to face up to the harsh realities of war – if you get shot, you die. Or it at least makes a bit of a mess. Either way, you won't be shrugging it off and running along. So deal with it people, because that's the way it is.

There's no room for error at all – you've got to think on your feet, all the time. It makes you sit back and observe what's going on around you before you venture out from cover. The threat to your soldiers' lives is intense and immersive. Bullets whizz past your head and you feel real fear. As your men bolt across a dangerous opening, under fire from distant hostiles, you feel stressed. There aren't many games like this. It's not just a game, it's an experience, and you've got to play it to understand why it's so good.

If you've never played a *Full Spectrum Warrior* game before, it's important you understand that *Ten Hammers* doesn't give you direct control over the soldiers. In a similar way to a top-down strategy game, you click where you want your guys to go



↑ All those concrete walls and they hide behind bags of sugar. Amateurs.

↑ The bloke in the 'Technical' has a bigger gun than you. If only you had a bazooka...

↑ Think. Don't drink and drive. Especially tanks.

↑ It's dark and he's wearing sunglasses?

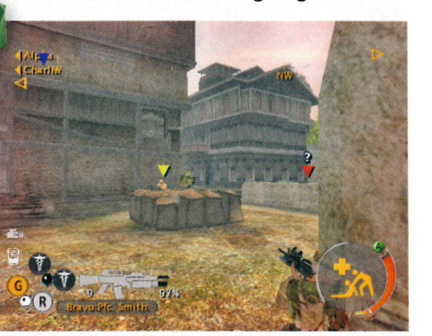
"Face up to the harsh reality of war - if you get shot, you die"

and they'll go there. You tell them who you want shot at and they'll shoot at him.

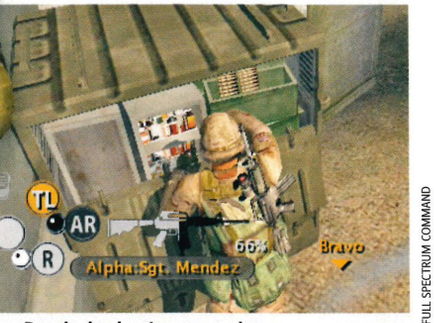
Even if you're usually one to favour the more instantaneous nature of a first-person wargame, don't brush this aside. It's a point-and-click-style game that manages to avoid the usual geeky pointing and clicking tediousness. Simple controls and fast AI makes this just as accessible and rewarding as a first-person shooter. In fact, it's even *more* gratifying when you finally bag a hostile that's had you pinned down for ages, regardless of the fact that it wasn't your finger that pulled the trigger. You took ages to devise a strategy and that corpse is the fruit of your efforts. Twisted? Us? No way.

There was no other game like this when the original *Full Spectrum Warrior* (Issue 30, 9.2) hit shelves back in July 2004, and there still isn't. The sequel comes with a few additions to enhance the gameplay, too. The previous game took place entirely in the streets, but now there are numerous interiors you can bust into during your missions (especially handy when the weather's as chilly as it is now). There's a whole heap of places where you can kick down the door and make yourself at home, ranging from huge indoor halls to small townhouses. Residents cower in fear as you send your guys storming through their living room and upstairs, to scope out a good sniping position through a high window. There still aren't many civilians running around the streets, but the addition of building interiors fills out the *FSW* world, and makes it feel even more real.

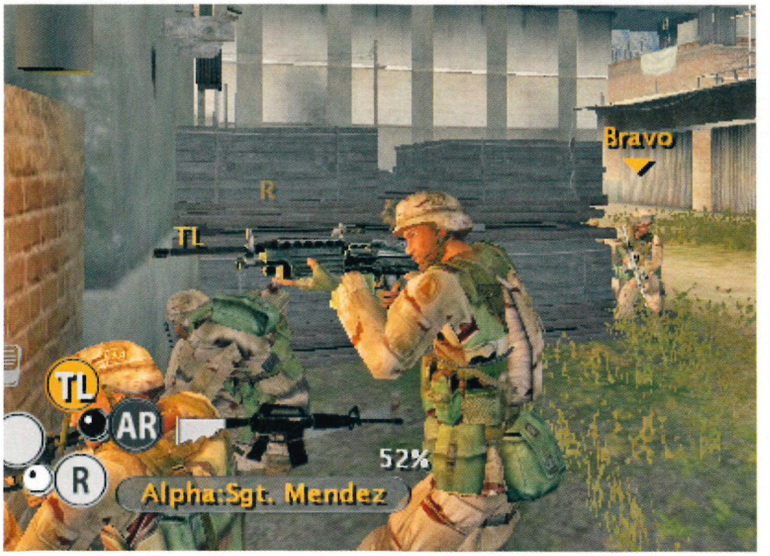
You can also control military vehicles in *Ten Hammers*. After having to tiptoe through a level on foot, it feels great to get your hands on a tank. Large groups of hostiles that would otherwise cause you major grief become like pathetic tiny ants waiting to be squashed. One shot of your hefty cannon will finish them all, and put a smile on your face in the process. And even if the cannon is a little clunky to move around, who cares when it's so satisfying? It's equally as pleasing when you mow down foes with the rapid-fire turret on the back of a Humvee. However, you won't just be able to blast through entire levels with the heavy weaponry. Use is »»



↑ It's slow and really hard. Like real war, then.



↑ Reach checkpoints to stock up on ammo.



↑ Developers Pandemic didn't hold back on the graphics. Check the detail.

↑ It may look safe but you can't go rushing in. You could be ambushed.

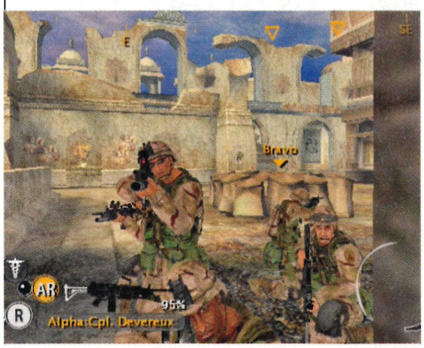
CLASSIFIED INFO: FSW WAS DERIVED FROM A US ARMY TRAINING SIMULATION FOR HIGH-RANKING OFFICERS CALLED FULL SPECTRUM COMMAND

↑ The ability to explore building interiors is new to *FSW*. Just watch out for civilians.

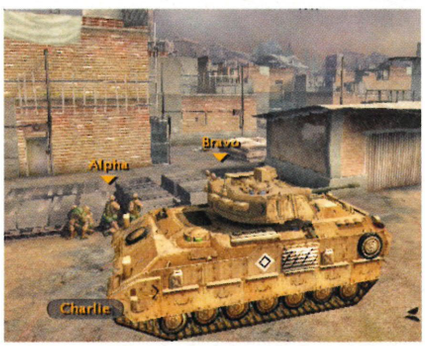
Bonus info

BE IN CONTROL
A new action display on the lower right of the screen shows the formation in which your men will stand when you deploy them with an advancing order. This helps make it easier to position them in the exact location you intend.

SPREADING OUT
Not only does *Ten Hammers* give you control over two teams of four soldiers, a new feature allows you to split each team in half, sending the soldiers off in pairs. This means that even with one team, you still have flanking tactics open to you.



↑ "Ancient palace... wrecked? Nope, wasn't us."



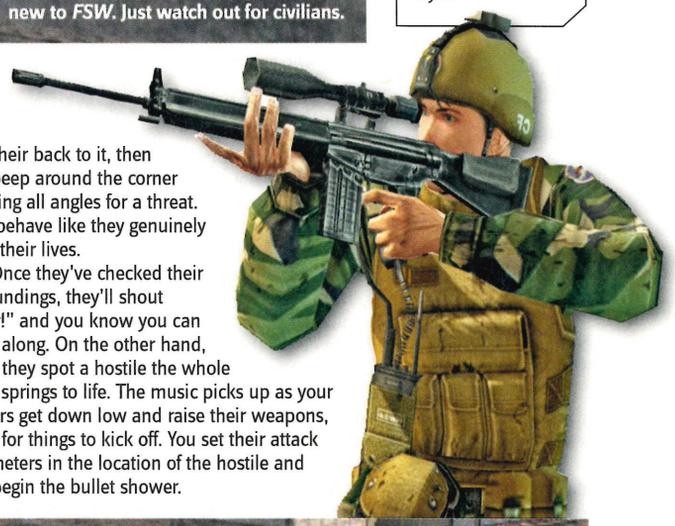
↑ With tank support, nothing comes near you.

↑ Smoke grenades are for blinding the ENEMY!

»» restricted to small areas, which is good because it prevents it from ruining the slow and cautious nature of the original game.

Essentially, *Ten Hammers* is a more refined version of the same fantastic gameplay we loved in the original. In a nutshell, you are given an objective indicated by a blue arrow that keeps you heading in the correct direction. You spend most of your time ducking from cover to cover on the way, engaging in strategic gun battles as you proceed to your objective.

Your soldiers do what you tell them, but they're not robots. They are smart and act with initiative. When you click the marker near a car, wall or any other significant piece of scenery, they automatically position themselves alongside it, taking cover and watching each others' backs. If you send them near the corner of a wall they first stand with their back to it, then they peep around the corner checking all angles for a threat. They behave like they genuinely value their lives.



Once they've checked their surroundings, they'll shout "Clear!" and you know you can move along. On the other hand, when they spot a hostile the whole game springs to life. The music picks up as your soldiers get down low and raise their weapons, ready for things to kick off. You set their attack parameters in the location of the hostile and they begin the bullet shower.

↑ "He always gets to ride on the truck. It's not fair!"

FLANKING THE ENEMY You can't just barge in pretending to be Rambo

Your soldiers may have huge guns and lethal explosives, but if they run into every battle head-on they'll end up with a bullet in the forehead. You will need to use clever tactics, making both Alpha and Bravo teams work in co-operation. So slow down, take your time, and treat every situation like it's a very special lady...

A truck with a huge turret on the back has our lads pinned down. You can't fight him by charging in.

We try slipping round the other side of the building but these two enemies are blocking our way.

While the goons are distracted with battling team Alpha, we order team Bravo to slip round to the side.

Our sneaky flanking manoeuvre worked a treat. It's left both enemies completely exposed and easy to kill.

With both targets out of the way, we can concentrate on the truck, sending both teams in from different angles.

He can see the Alpha team, but Bravo are completely undiscovered. This geezer's going home in a box.

↑ You won't hit targets that far away. This is where flanking comes in.

↑ This is a safe zone where you drop off your injured and grab ammo.

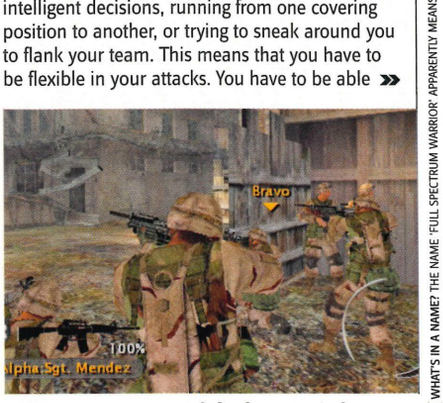
From that moment on, you don't have to worry about them sticking their heads out and getting killed, or anything like that. As long as they aren't ambushed from a different angle, you could leave them there and they'll just continue to battle that enemy for ages. The soldiers won't fulfill your objectives for you, but they will strive to preserve their lives. This is great because it gives you time to think about how you're going to win the battle. The game never breaks down into a random scramble. You feel totally in control at all times.

This is even the case when you have two teams positioned in two entirely different locations. You don't need to pay constant attention to a team so you are perfectly able to flick between both, issuing an order or two each time with relative ease. Strategy games can often be overly complex - you need to study them for ages to get even a competent grasp of the commands. That's not the case with *Ten Hammers*. If you're half a gamer you will have no trouble getting your brain around the controls within half an hour. After about an hour's play you'll be flicking from one soldier to another, deploying teams in different directions and issuing multiple orders without giving the controls a second thought.

Despite its highly accessible gameplay and intelligent AI, this is not an easy game to defeat. The enemies are just as smart as your soldiers. They take cover as much as they can. They retreat if overpowered, and frequently change positions to get a better angle on you. They don't give you a second to recover from a bad move either - put a foot wrong and they'll make holes in your chest that God really never intended to be there.

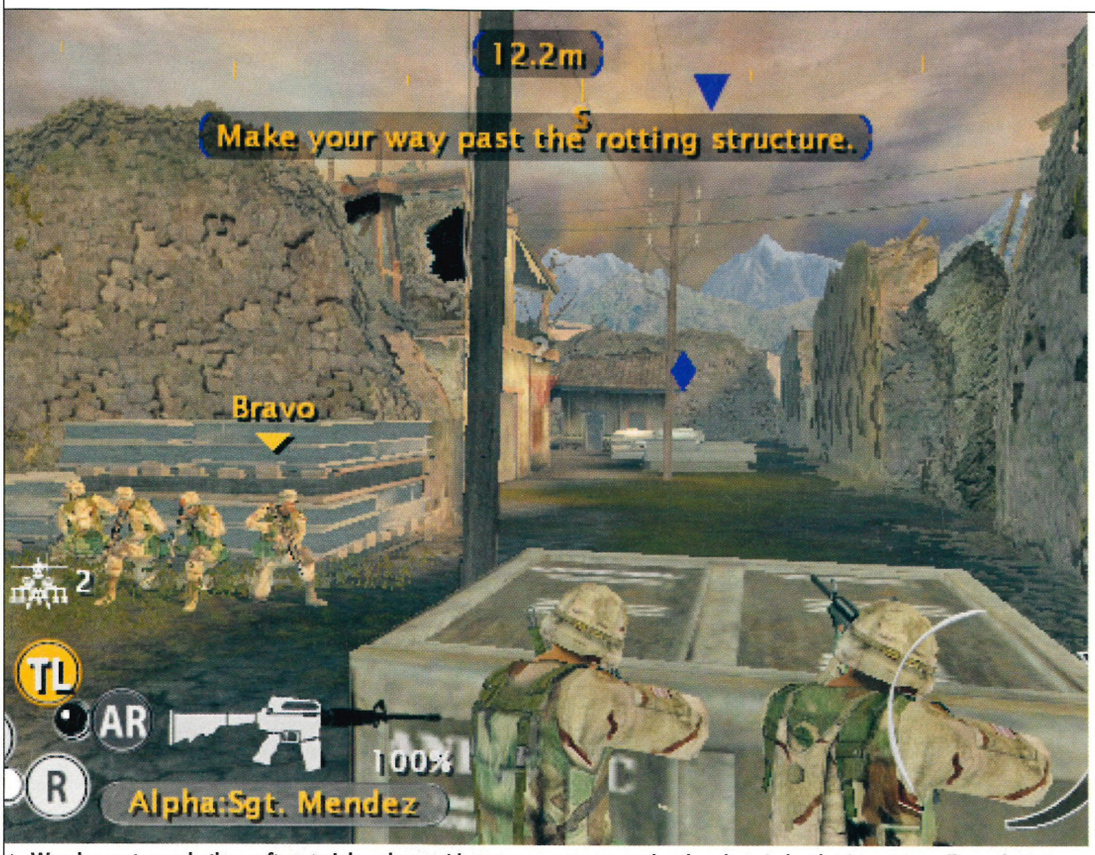
The great thing is, just like in real life, you can never totally predict what is going to happen or what the enemies are going to do. You'll find enemies working in co-operation to take you down. They sometimes appear to be making intelligent decisions, running from one covering position to another, or trying to sneak around you to flank your team. This means that you have to be flexible in your attacks. You have to be able »»

↑ Fortunately for him, dead guys don't fart.



↑ Now you must watch for foes at windows.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? THE NAME 'FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR' APPARENTLY MEANS A US SOLDIER WHO HAS BEEN TRAINED TO BE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE IN BATTLE SITUATIONS



↑ Wooden crates and other soft materials only provide temporary cover, as they break up in battle. Concrete walls are better.

"The harsh consequences of small mistakes forces you to think like a military commander"

↑ "What? The wounded go home? Look, I've twisted my ankle, Corporal!"

↑ "No soldier, check out my *other* gun."

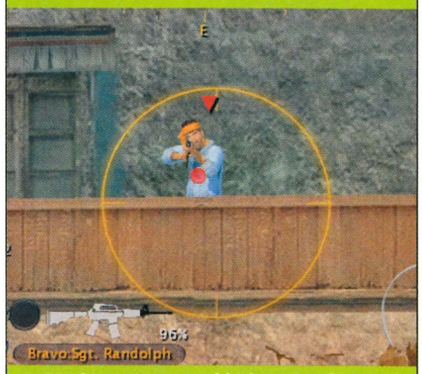
» to adapt to what the enemy does, be quick with the commands and think intelligently. This may be a strategy game but it has some serious pace.

But with the intensity of the gun battles comes the slowness and caution of pushing forwards through enemy territory. This is not a game for people without patience. Carefully checking every last corner of an environment can take ages. You will find yourself restarting at checkpoints over and over as you struggle to win a particular battle. And if any one of your team members gets shot, things get even slower as you need to haul their wounded ass to the next checkpoint for first aid. The carrier can't run too fast and can't shoot, so gun battles are even tougher. Believe us when we say you will hate it when one of your men gets shot.

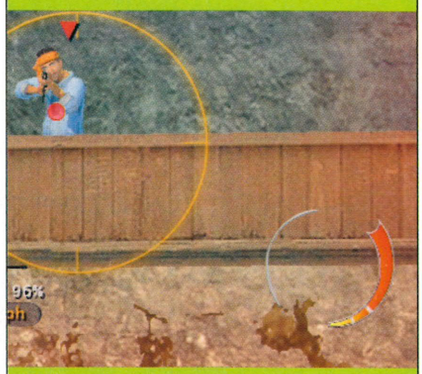
The harsh consequences of such small mistakes force you to think like a real military commander. You will begin to see things differently in the realistic world of *Ten Hammers*. You will be constantly assessing how effective cars, walls,

Lethal Weapons

Each one of the four members of a platoon has their own special weapons. Select the soldier you need with the D-pad, then hold the Right trigger and aim to unleash their unique attack.



↑ Machine guns are rubbish against foes with moderate cover. The sniper is effective, but you must aim quickly before you get whacked.



↑ Fire rounds in bursts towards the enemy. This forces them to keep their heads down while your men shuffle to a better position.

↑ When bullets aren't doing the job, you need to bust out the explosives. The Grenadier can fire explosive shots that liquify tricky punks.

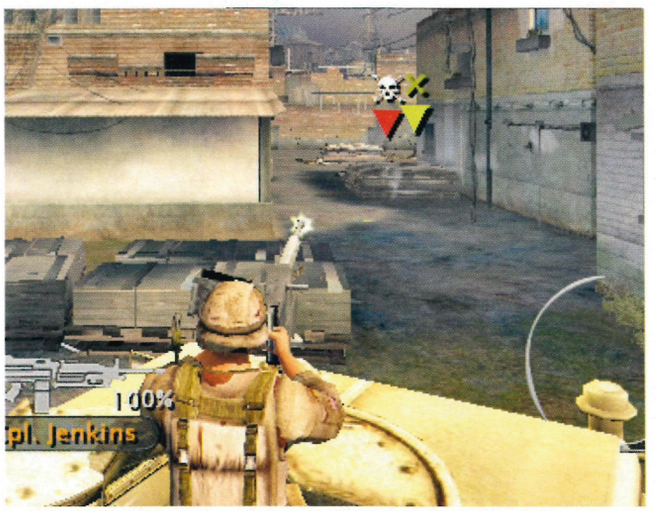
↑ The team leader also provides suppressive fire, and for some missions he can call for an Apache helicopter to strike a target.

Bonus info

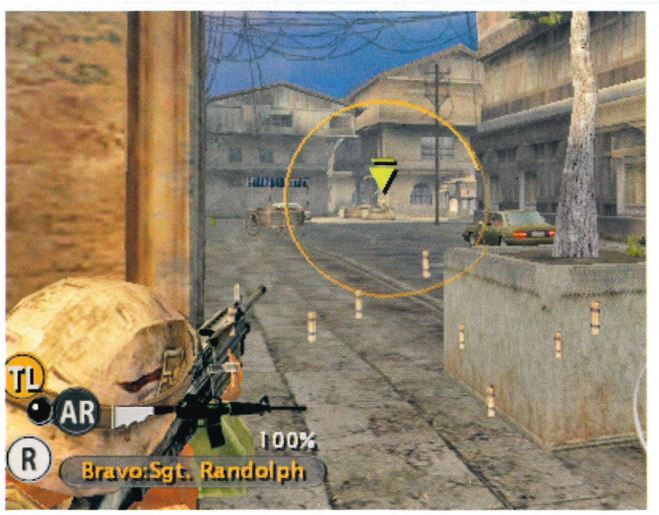
WHO'S WELL 'ARD?
Above the heads of all the villains you fight will be a small triangular icon. This shows the level of threat they pose. Red is maximum threat - they'll shoot you if you step out of line. But lay on the suppressive fire and the icon will turn yellow, lessening your chances of being shot if exposed.

MUSICAL WARFARE
The dynamic music reflects the pace of the action on screen. As you snoop around a level the music goes silent and you can only hear the patter of your soldiers' feet. But when it all kicks off, the music erupts with the guns and really gets your heart pumping.

↑ This is what happens when petrol prices reach 95.9 pence per litre. People get a little frustrated.



↑ When the other dude comes out he'll have a skull sign of his own.



↑ Use the circle marker to command an attack, then wait for the sweet kill.

↑ *Dirty Sanchez* fans shoot their feet for a laugh.

↑ "My thumb's cut, too. Please can I go home?"

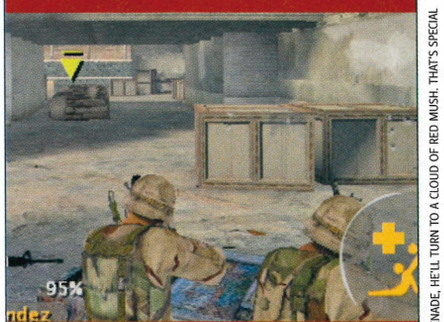
crates, bins and everything else will serve as cover. Cars are good but are usually placed out in the open. And you'll soon learn that being out in the open is not a good thing.

That's the huge reward with playing *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers*. Its intuitive, yet realistically harsh gameplay makes you feel like you could actually be a good soldier in the same way that *Colin McRae Rally 2005* (Issue 34, 8.5) made you feel like you could probably drive a rally car. It may not be hugely different from the original but it's one of the most challenging, intelligent and immersive wargames on Xbox, and even if you've played the first game, it's worth buying. Never found where the ten hammers were, though.

On The Disc: Playable

TRY ME, YOU'LL LIKE ME

Full Spectrum Warrior's unique gameplay is not something you can easily understand without playing it for yourself. So slip this month's Game Disc into your console, and get to grips with one of the best wargames soon to be released on Xbox. You won't be sorry.



↑ If you don't get stuck here, you're a master.

The Summary

FSW: TEN HAMMERS THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ An intuitive control system that's easy to learn and allows you to concentrate on strategy rather than studying complex commands.
- ✔ A truly immersive experience considering you're not in direct control of the soldiers. Intense battles with have you ducking in your seat.
- ✔ Realistic gameplay without health bars or magic healing items. You will care for the lives of your soldiers like you do your own.
- ✔ The addition of vehicles and building interiors enhances the gameplay beautifully, adding appeal for fans of the original.
- ✘ Some of the vehicles, particularly the tanks, are awkward to move around tighter spaces - infuriating when you're being shot at.

The Verdict

Though not hugely different to the original, this is intelligent, challenging and accessible, and we love it.

9.0//10

PREVIOUSLY: First Look - Issue 44, Preview - Issue 49, Preview - Issue 51
COMING SOON: Masterclass - Issue 53, Live Review - Issue 54

BLOOD AND GUTS: IT'S GREAT SEEING AN ENEMY GO DOWN, BUT IF YOU HIT A GUY SQUARE IN THE CHEST WITH A GRENADE, HE'LL TURN TO A CLOUD OF RED MUSH. THAT'S SPECIAL

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ice-spear-hurling,
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You are Kameo. Morph into 10 different formidable elemental warriors at will. Explore enchanted lands. Then crush, clobber, char, freeze, elude, ensnare, and destroy the evil boss Thorn and his minions. Only you have the power to restore peace to the kingdom. Make that, several powers... xbox.com
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XBOX 360™

↓ Leave the nerds to their telemetry information and get racing!

Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

TOCA Race Driver 3

The kind of four-wheel action that'd cause an even bigger bulge in Jeremy Clarkson's ill-fitting jeans

Words: Jonathan Todd

- Dev: Codemasters
- Pub: Codemasters
- Players: 1-2 S.Link 2-12
- Live: 2-12 players
- Release: 24 February
- Price: £40
- www.codemasters.co.uk/tocaracedriver3

IN GOES THE disc, up pops the game and a few seconds into our *TOCA Race Driver 3* experience we've already managed to unlock a bonus track, courtesy of a *TOCA Race Driver 2* (Issue 29, 9.1) save being detected. It's indicative of a game that's so rich in content and features that unlocking everything there is on offer would take an insomniac weeks of solid play – and after that, your insomniac will never get bored of things to do. This is no mere stopgap by any means, nor one last half-hearted money-spinner before the series moves onto Xbox 360.

'Rich' actually isn't a strong enough word of praise. Obese, a word normally associated with guests on *The Jerry Springer Show*, or that picture of Michelle McManus waddling along a beach in a swimsuit is the only appropriate description for a game that manages to cram in this amazing number of cars, tracks and types of racing. If you hadn't worked it out by now, *TOCA Race Driver 3* is a bit of a whopper.

So let's get those all-important numbers out of the way: over 35 motorsports; over 120 championships; over 70 real-world cars; over 80 international racing circuits; 150 miles of courses; 43 locations; 13 countries. Even off the top off our head it would be fair to estimate that there's around double the amount of content than there was in the last game. The only problem might be deciding where to start. The Simulation option is where you'll find Free Race, Time Trial and all the multiplayer modes, but there's little point in putting in the practice without unlocking tracks and events by playing the other main modes first.

So your first port of call ought to be the Pro Tour mode, which is split into six racing disciplines: Classics, GT, Oval, Touring Car, Off Road and Open Wheel. Setting the tone for the rest of the game, only the first competition in each category is unlocked to begin with, and you'll have to drive pretty well to open up more. Every race features full rules and flags too, so smashing through the opposition to get to the front only results in a time penalty and a drive through the pits to end it. It isn't for the faint-hearted, but it does get you

↑ A below par twelfth isn't going to please your grumpy old manager.

↑ It's very easy to lock wheels with a rival in the single seaters.

Bonus info

SLICK RICK
Watch the gruff Scotsman in action and marvel at the incredible lip-synching and motion capture. He never seems to change his overalls though. Smelly git.

GOING LIVE
Up to 12 players can battle it out in either a normal race or the tense Eliminator mode. One tiny mistake can send you to the back of the pack – if you're still there by the end of the lap you'll get booted out of the race.

↑ Fighting your way through the field is tough in this behemoth.

↑ The spectators have never seen such reckless driving before.

accustomed to the different cars and driving techniques you'll need later.

What you find out pretty sharpish is how each racing discipline requires a different sort of skill and temperament. Oval racing is all about maintaining a solid line throughout the constant left-hand turns and keeping your impatience in check until an opening appears for you to overtake. Compare this with the Off Road events, where using the uneven surface, wider tracks and banked turns to your advantage is just as important as keeping control of the vehicle. Open Wheel racing requires great technical ability to stick to the ideal racing line and protect your fragile car from damage. Touring Car is different still, a more dog-eat-dog style of racing where you need to nudge through tightly packed groups of cars without getting bogged down in personal battles or losing control altogether.

Mastering these nuances often means the difference between trailing in last, finishing among the stragglers or popping the champagne on the podium. Whichever of the eight events you prefer, the basic principles of maintaining a smooth line through corners, exiting them at speed and getting back in the racing line after you overtake apply to them all.

Further enhancing the game's qualities as a 'proper' racing simulation is the in-depth tuning system. It isn't a necessary feature to look at before each race (and probably only results in a few seconds being shaved off the »»

DAMAGE CONTROL
Best damage effects ever!

1

↑ It's a pristine Racing Renault Clio for now, but give it a few minutes and it'll be totally unrecognisable.

2

↑ A few smashes into the barrier later and you can see how the metal has crumpled at the rear and along the side.

3

↑ The driver's door is the next to go, and it won't be long before the glass in every window goes by the look of it.

4

↑ The innards of the car are beginning to show through the stripped-away paint, and the driver now has little protection.

5

↑ Smoke begins to billow from the engine obscuring your view. It isn't looking good...

SIX OF THE BEST Half a dozen racing disciplines in one jam-packed game!

↑ **CLASSICS** Home to various vintage Grand Prixs from the 1930s to the 1960s, plus a rally event, a rallycross championship and 1970s US muscle cars.

↑ **GT** The place to come to for sports car racing. Some races feature two classes of machine, meaning you'll need to either give way or overtake a lot.

OVAL American racing is at the fore, with prominent events such as the Indy Racing League forcing you to drive around in circles for hours.

↑ **TOURING CAR** Highly aggressive pack races such as the DTM and V8 Supercars series bring out your angry side. Not for those who like to give way.

↑ **OFF ROAD** For those who like to get down and dirty in a range of buggies and rally cars. Also home to the super monster trucks!

↑ **OPEN WHEEL** You begin by driving go-karts but eventually you'll end up behind the wheel of an F1 monster. The most technically difficult discipline.

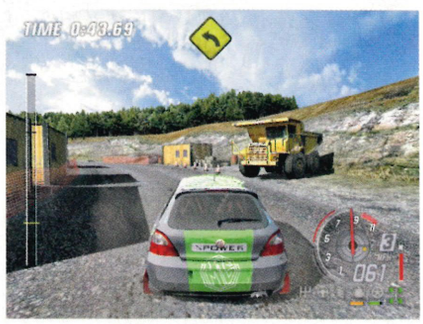
Bonus info

TURBO BOOST ENGAGED!
Register your game with Codemasters' CodeM website and you'll get two free cheats, one of which gives you the ability to jump over cars using a turbo boost! The other unlocks all the game's cut-scenes.

WHEELS COME OFF
Damage your car too much and the race is automatically over. Rick will notify you if you've got engine trouble or problems with your steering, but the most likely cause of

seeing the dreaded 'Terminal Damage' message appear is a wheel flying off.

↑ No way through? You can always 'create' one.



↑ You get to drive through some stunningly beautiful locations. Like this building site!

»» clock if you set up your car exactly right), but *Top Gear* fans will no doubt love indulging their little petrol-heads in boring technical jiggery-pokery such as anti-roll and toe and camber settings. Everyone else won't touch either this, or the Telemetry option either.

As fine as the Pro Tour option is and as much as there is to unlock, it's the World Tour mode where you'll spend most of your time. Irritable Scotsman Rick is your guide throughout, relaying info during races and occasionally popping up in

↑ You can only get away with this kind of thing in the World Tour mode.

↑ Once the windscreen wipers get damaged you'll be buggered.

Bonus info

GIVE US A WAVE
If you're playing the Pro Tour mode you'll need to know your flags. The most common are the black flag to signal a timed or pit penalty, the yellow flag to warn of an accident ahead, and the black and white flag for unsportsmanlike behaviour.

ON THE TELE
Complete a qualifying session or test drive and you can view the telemetry data. This hardcore option shows your speed at each part of the track as well as when you were applying the brakes. Compare it with a previous attempt to see where you can improve (if you like).

↑ He's angry about something, but then what's new?

↑ The rally events are just as good as in *McRae*!

↑ Slow down for the corner? Not likely.

cut-scenes beforehand with advice if the racing style is particularly demanding or unique.

The World Tour is arranged into a very well thought-out and flexible tier system, beginning with the choice to race in either the Autosport Clio Cup or the Global GT Lights. After this, each tier consists of three race options until you reach the final two, where you'll be competing in WilliamsF1 challenges. The great thing about the system is that it only takes one win in one tier to open up all three options in the next, so there's always plenty of choice even when you're stuck on one particular race.

As if the incredible variety in the single-player game wasn't enough, Xbox Live races give you yet another reason never to take the disc out of your console. Apart from normal races there's only one race type, called Eliminator - and one that's been seen before in recent racing games such as *Burnout: Revenge* (Issue 47, 8.9) and *Mashed* (Issue 31, 8.6) - but its rule that the last-placed driver after each lap gets knocked out is perfect multiplayer fodder. You can also set such parameters as whether you want race rules, flags and damage.

In fact it's only a few things that let the game down. The occasional cut-scene of an opponent storming into your garage to have a go at you for either cutting them up or beating them never really goes anywhere. We hate to say it, but we were

"It's a brilliant racer that's right up there with the best of them"

longing for the rivalry aspect of the original *TOCA Race Driver* (Issue 15, 8.5), however clichéd and soapy its *Days of Thunder*-esque story might have been. The surnames above certain cars in a race to indicate who your rivals are also indicates that there may be repercussions when you overtake them or buffer them, but since they tend to hug the racing line no matter what this just isn't the case.

Pit-stops are a let-down too, simply taking the form of a load of text that you have to click through before your race position is recalculated, instead of the sight of mechanics hurriedly attending to your vehicle. And if we're being really picky then one or two of the lighter vehicles, especially the off-road cars, can feel a bit floaty.

These are small quibbles, however, in an otherwise brilliant racer that's right up there with *Forza Motorsport* (Issue 41, 9.4) as the best game of its type. In many ways *TOCA Race Driver 3* surpasses it, boasting an unrivalled amount of variety, plenty of challenges and even more gorgeous graphics. You can't help but be impressed by both its breadth and depth.

The Summary

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ Easily packs in the most content out of the three *TOCA Race Driver* games, offering every kind of four-wheel racing imaginable.
- ✔ The Pro Tour mode is the perfect stop for the more hardcore racing fan - there are full rules and flags and everything!
- ✔ The extremely flexible World Tour mode lets you pick and choose which kind of racing you want to compete in.
- ✔ The six racing disciplines aren't just for show. You'll need to master a different driving style for each one.
- ✘ The 'young hotshot works his way to the top' storyline isn't the most thrilling or original one. And just like the last *TOCA*.

The Verdict

An exhaustive amount of motorsports is matched by superb handling, incredible detail and lovely graphics. Unmissable.

9.2//10

PREVIOUSLY: Preview - Issue 51
COMING SOON: Hints & Cheats - Issue 53

OUR SURVEY SAYS: A GEOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE MOUNT PANORAMA (BATHURST) TRACK WAS SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED FOR THE GAME

King of Fighters 2003

Has the king of fighters become the prince of past-it brawlers?

Words: Mark Robins

- Dev: SNK Playmore
- Pub: Ignition
- Players: 1-2
- Live: 2 players
- Release: February
- Price: £20
- www.ignitionent.com/kof02-03

LOOK, WE THOUGHT we'd made ourselves perfectly clear the last time we reviewed a *King of Fighters* game – *King of Fighters 2002* (Issue 45, 5.4), to be precise. It's not that we have a problem with 2D fighters (in fact, many's the long night we spent struggling with Chun Li's powerful thighs in an extended bout of *Street Fighter* abuse), but there's a time and place for these things, and making us pay for it on Xbox in this day and age isn't that acceptable.

So before we start pounding into *King of Fighters 2003* with our size 16 boots, laying into the proverbial goolies of yet another game that looks like it's come about three console generations too late, here are the facts that matter: it's a one-on-one beat 'em up, featuring over 30 different characters and more special moves than John Travolta's all-star disco-dancing team. It's got full Live play, a couple of bonus survival modes and the kind of indecipherable storyline that only Japanese developers on 100 per cent proof sake can come up with.

And, providing you enjoy this type of game and you still have the manual dexterity required to get the most out of the brain-searingly complex combination moves, it's pretty good at what it does. *King of Fighters 2002* might be considered the purest fighter of the series, but we actually prefer the way *2003* lets you constantly switch mid-bout between your team's three fighters. It adds variety and somehow makes it more accessible.

But let's face it, is this really what you want to be playing on Xbox, especially when we've got games like the delicious-looking *Black* (see page 044) running on the same hardware? Again, this isn't an attack on the reputation of SNK or its venerable fighting games, but this really should have been released as part of a retrospective compilation pack. Releasing it like this, as a standalone game, seems as sensible to us as a cheese-wire thong.

Let's put it another way: the *King of Fighters* series is 12 years old now. TWELVE YEARS! And in that time, bar the odd flurry of new characters and general tweaks to the fighting mechanics themselves, the technology behind the game has come about as far the clockwork tin-opener. The name might say 2003, but this is pure old-school gaming, 1994 style. For a technical fight fan it's great, but for the other 99 per cent of society – those brought up on a diet of super-realistic third-person action-adventures – it's 20 hard-earned quids for an antiquated gaming curio. Twenty hard-earned quid, needless to say, that could just as easily be shelled out on the not-antiquated-at-all *Ninja Gaiden Black* (Issue 49, 9.4) or *Fable: The Lost Chapters* (Issue 50, 9.4) instead.

Bonus info

DOUBLE TEAM
One of the nicest features in *King of Fighters 2003* is the ability to start an attack with one of your fighters, switch fighters mid-combo and finish up with a blow from the second character. It's ludicrously difficult, of course, but it looks the business when you pull it off.

↑ When videogame breasts were just a pixel next to another pixel.

↑ "HEY LOOK, I FOUND A POUND."

↑ 2003? Was SNK imprisoned by aliens for three years?

The Summary

KING OF FIGHTERS 2003 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ It does what it's supposed to perfectly. A truly arcade-perfect conversion of a (once) massively popular beat 'em up.
- ✔ An amazing amount of depth for the truly committed fight fan. Thirty-plus characters and thousands of moves and combos.
- ✘ Twenty quid's a big ask for an old arcade game these days. After some great Capcom and Taito compilations, why not an SNK one?
- ✘ Unless you've grown up with fighting games and can do fireball moves in your sleep, you'll never pick up the archaic joypad moves.
- ✘ A slight graphical improvement on *KOF 02*, but it's hardly a looker. Not with pixels the size of breeze blocks everywhere.

The Verdict

Deep and definitely more accessible than the last one, but as Indiana Jones said, "This game belongs in a museum."

5.6//10

PREVIOUSLY: Unbelievably, a 2006 *OXM* debut for *King of Fighters 2003*
COMING SOON: Hints & Tips, Issue 53

↑ Just three more and they'll have beaten the *Police Academy* movies.

Metal Slug 5

Another bite-sized chunk of Metal Slug madness

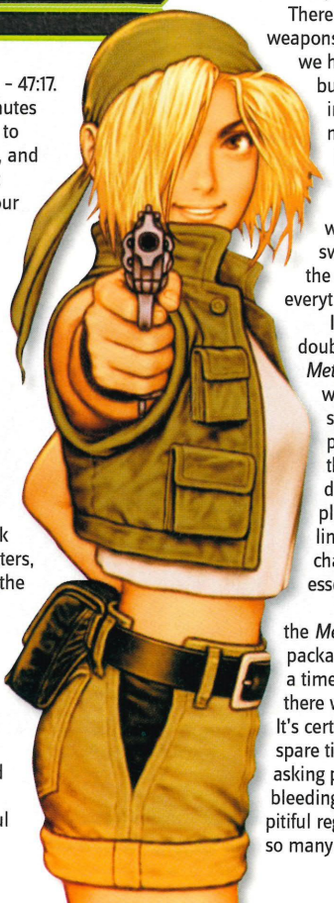
Words: Ben Lawrence

- Dev: SNK Playmore
- Pub: Ignition
- Players: 1-2
- Live: Scoreboards
- Release: Out Now
- Price: £20
- www.snkplaymore.jp

TAKE NOTE OF the time - 47:17. That's how long in minutes and seconds it took us to complete *Metal Slug 5*, and that included at least one toilet break, and a quick perusal of our emails to check out a highly inappropriate comedy mpeg involving a kangaroo and an electric fence.

See, the thing is with the *Metal Slug* series is that together they'd form a perfect big lump of a retro collection, but as standalone releases at a few notes a pop it doesn't half seem cheeky.

So, what of *Metal Slug 5* as a whole, then? Well, there's that finish-it-in-your-lunch-break lifespan to worry about for starters, and the infinite continues turn the experience into something of a no-brainer, but the real stickler is the fact that many of the levels seem to be ripped straight out of *Metal Slug 3*, mini-subs, jet-packs, and tanks included. There's just no surprises, and certainly no kind of challenge, regardless of however explodey and colourful it may appear.



Another strange omission is the novelty zombification mode, where you could get turned into a zombie and hurl stinking zombie vomit at your enemies until you got hit again and died. In this instalment, however, the zombies are nowhere to be seen. Tsk, and so on.

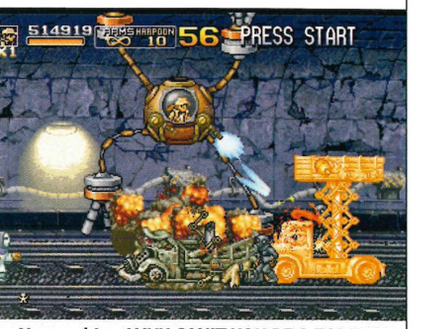
There's your usual kooky arsenal of weapons too, but not exactly anything we haven't seen before. Firing off gut-busting rounds of rockets, lasers, incendiary devices, and bouncing mines all seems a little less impressive as it did, oh, about five games ago. One new device (at least we think it's new) is the wind-up clockwork mouse bomb, a sweet touch that's overshadowed by the redundant feeling of just about everything else in the game.

In an arcade cabinet we've no doubt we'd fall head over heels for *Metal Slug 5*'s batty retro charm, and we know for certain we'd have spent more than £20 on ten pee pieces getting to the end. But on the Xbox? No, we're afraid it just doesn't wash. What's the point in playing a game with such a fatally limited lifespan, and where any challenge is removed by what are essentially built-in infinite lives?

If SNK even dares to release all the *Metal Slug* games as a complete package after asking us to fork out £20 a time for each one, we're going over there with a hammer and a blowtorch. It's certainly worth 45 minutes of your spare time, but it isn't worth the inflated asking price. It's fun, its daft, but it's bleeding us dry and feels like an oh-so pitiful regurgitation of what we've seen so many times before in this series.

Bonus info

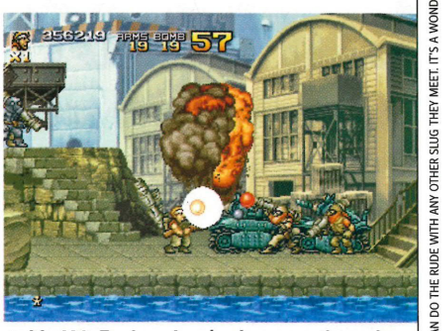
SLUGGING ANIMALS
We're not sure if the RSPCA has collared SNK for the mistreatment of animals in the *Metal Slug* games, but every vehicle in this one is fully mechanised. The closest you get to rocket-powered elephants is the robot squid you trample about in near the end.



↑ No zombies. WHY CAN'T YOU BE A ZOMBIE?

↑ Twenty quid ÷ 45 minutes = 44p per minute!

↑ We're a bit bored now. Bored, bored, bored.



↑ It's £20. For Jesus's sake, buy something else.

The Summary

METAL SLUG 5 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ Well, it's certainly pretty, it's certainly colourful, and that 'cock-rock' soundtrack, well, does the job. So to speak.
- ✘ Haven't we seen this all before in the previous game? We never thought jumping in a jet-plane could get as tedious as it does here.
- ✘ Why can't you turn into a zombie? Sure, it was part of *MS3*'s story, but we at least expected something to be added, not taken away.
- ✘ It's waaaaay too short, and with a Live play option still nowhere to be seen, we almost feel cheated from our money.
- ✔ Is it, as far as we know, the last *Metal Slug* game to appear on Xbox, which means no more getting ripped off £20 at a time.

The Verdict

There are only so many ways to do an inventive side-scrolling shoot 'em up. Five times is too many, we're afraid.

3.9//10

PREVIOUSLY: *Metal Slug 4* got 5.7 in Issue 49
COMING SOON: Hints & Cheats, Issue 53

SLUG LOVE: DID YOU KNOW SLUGS ARE BISEXUAL? EVERY SLUG HAS A SET OF LADY BITS AND BLOKEY BITS SO THEY CAN DO THE RUDE WITH ANY OTHER SLUG THEY MEET. IT'S A WONDER THEY EVEN LEAVE THE HOUSE

↑ We would punch him on the nose but he doesn't have one.

Castlevania: Curse of Darkness

The franchise that never dies shambles back for more...

Words: Mike Jackson

Dev: Konami	Pub: Konami
Players: 1	Live: None
Release: 16 February	Price: £40
www.konami.com/gs/officialsites/castlevania/	

THE 2D *CASTLEVANIA* games are always mind-blowing. The 3D ones are always crap. That's pretty much an indisputable fact, and after playing *Castlevania: Curse of Darkness* we were forced to accept that it's still a fact.

Curse of Darkness seems to try to clone the principle gameplay from the 2D games, adding nothing more to the equation than polygons. Unfortunately, that's never really going to work, is it? It's okay to run from corridor to corridor battering various monsters in the 2D games because 2D gameplay is faster and more spontaneous, and locations are more tightly packed and with more monsters. Doing the same in 3D just seems like a slower more monotonous ordeal.

There just seems to be so little effort put into any aspect of this game. The enemies are uninspired, and most of them can be defeated with simple button-mashing, slashing away continuously until they die. There's very little skill involved. Other, larger beasts might force you to block now and then, but it's hardly testing. What it is is a chore. Even the option of running past the dull enemies is taken away from you - you're forced to fight them because you need the experience points.

The same old levelling-up system is back too, only this time you can make your own weapons and upgrades by combining materials that you find over the course of the game. Some enemies will drop particular useful materials when killed. Gather them up and you're able to combine them with each other to create new items with which to upgrade your stats.

Thankfully, it's pretty simple to do. You won't have to mess about trying to combine random materials to see what happens - a Combine menu on the pause screen will tell you when you're able to great a new item and what ingredients are needed. If you don't have enough of everything, you can look in a directory of all the enemies you've defeated to find out which enemy drops the material you need.

Even though the enemies aren't particularly challenging, it still feels great when you upgrade to a new weapon. We made an axe and chuckled in excitement as we wrecked armoured soldiers with a single combo. Combos are basic until you get yourself an Innocent Devil, though.

The ability to conjure Innocent Devils is your character Hector's special power. As you explore the caves, dungeons and castles you will acquire these helpful companions, each with their own unique abilities. Some reinforce your defensive measures, using magic to make small safe zones for you to rest in. Some have healing properties and can provide you with a much-needed boost of health just when you need it most.

Bonus info

POINTING THE WAY
Castlevania games are very open-ended and it's always been easy to miss those all-important save points. *Curse of Darkness* helps you out by putting an arrow icon at your feet when you're passing a door that leads to a save spot. Handy.

↑ What, zombie dude - had too much to drink?

↑ The cloaked guys can shoot magic at you.

↑ You have to kill these guys to unlock the door.

↑ It looks tough. It isn't. Hit A until he dies.

↑ That's one of our favourite Innocent Devils. He punches anything alive.

↑ Spin attacks are great when outnumbered.

↑ These wolves will be dog food soon.

↑ They may be ghosts but they still feel it when you push a fat blade through their chest. Look, 16s all over the place.

Then there are the bad boys. The ones that refuse to stand around watching vicious wolves and brutal wizards try to smash your face in. They roll their sleeves up and jump into the ruckus, throwing head-shattering blows and casting spells that wreck entire groups of enemies. Sometimes you don't even need to do anything - you can just sit back and watch as they wreck the joint.

Innocent Devils also act as lookouts, highlighting anything of importance. For example, we were in what appeared to be a dead-end room when our Innocent Devil brought to our attention a weakened stone pillar. With a few swings of our hefty axe, we smashed the pillar, taking out half the wall with it. Game on.

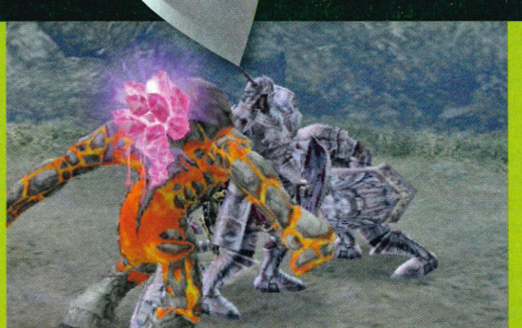
Unfortunately, the environments don't get much more interactive than that. Just take a look at the screenshots to see for yourself. Yes, the worlds are every bit as dull as they look. For a game in a series that proudly comprised some of the most detailed 2D games ever, this 3D incarnation looks shockingly bad. There's no life in these worlds at all. The environments are so square you can almost count the polygons. Apart from small fire torches and the occasional little waterfall, there's hardly any animation at all. The textures are blurry and the character models aren't much better. Your Xbox will be yawning from the lack of pressure put on its poly-chomping brain because this game would look more at home on the PSone back in 1996.

The sound is just as dull as the in-game graphics. If you turn off the background music (which you will as it quickly becomes extremely droning and tedious anyway), you hear nothing but Hector's footsteps and the slashing of his sword. Where's the ambience? There isn't any. You might hear the odd gust of wind from outside, but that's it. Which is a shame, because the universe that the 2D games create have the potential to be converted into amazingly immersive, epic 3D quests. Unfortunately, all we've got with *Curse of Darkness* is a half-baked, stat-based slash 'em up that's less attractive than Jade Goody in drag.

DEVILS WITH ATTITUDE

Co-operative attacks of killer devastation

If you have an Innocent Devil that's up for a scuff, you can perform Chain attacks that will make mincemeat of even the toughest of enemies. First you have to perform a combo and look out for the 'Chain' sign to appear.



When the sign appears you will have a split-second window in which to hit the attack button. Do it right and your Innocent Devil will teleport in front of you and finish off your combo with a flurry of devastating blows. EAT IT!

The Summary

CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ The Innocent Devils add an extra layer to the otherwise disappointingly basic gameplay.
- ✔ Making a new and more powerful weapon is as satisfying as it's always been as you ruin enemies with ease.
- ✘ Lacking any life or atmosphere, these have to be some of the worst graphics you'll see on your Xbox.
- ✘ The repetitive, droning music will grate on your brain after half an hour of play time. Turn it down.
- ✘ Slow and uninspired gameplay has you hacking your way through corridors you can hardly tell apart.

The Verdict

Fails to live up to its heritage. With dire graphics and flat, uninspired gameplay we struggled to keep our eyes open.

4.5//10

PREVIOUSLY: Preview - Issue 48
COMING SOON: Hints & Cheats - Issue 53

BACK TO ROOTS: CASTLEVANIA WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED DEMON CASTLE DRACULA, BUT WASN'T A HIT UNTIL ITS RE-RELEASE AS CASTLEVANIA IN 1987. EVEN THAT HAD BETTER GRAPHICS THAN THIS

↓ The alpine skiing is fun – the rest is all about mashing the buttons a lot.

Torino 2006

No crazy physics or fireworks in this plain vanilla sports sim

Words: Mike Jackson

Dev: 49Games	Pub: 2K Sports
Players: 1-4	Live: None
Release: Out Now	Price: £40
www.2ksports.com	

SKIING AND ALL those other crazy snow sports look like a lot of fun, but we're crap on skis and outright refuse to cram our units into those weird skin-tight outfits. So if you're anything like us, *Torino 2006* will probably be the closest you're getting to a snow-covered mountain this winter.

At first glance, it would seem that *Torino 2006* wants to be an all-out sports simulator. The first event we had a go at was the alpine skiing, which sends you hurtling down the side of a mountain, steering desperately to stay on course and get through the gates. The feeling of speed is great and the skis cut into the snow satisfyingly as you glide from left to right.

But that's the most direct control you'll have over the game, because the other events ask little more than that you manipulate a series of power bars. So, rather than pushing your athlete round the course in the speed skating event, you instead get to have fun tapping the A and B buttons in a rhythm indicated by two power bars. The better your action, the faster your skater goes. But you spend so much time staring at the two charging bars that what's happening in the background is just a pretty illustration of what you're supposedly doing. It's like a game of pretend.

At least the speed skating LOOKS exciting, though. The cross-country skiing (that's the hard, boring version that takes place on a flat surface), however, is far less thrilling. You do little more than maintain the correct levels on – you guessed it – another exciting power bar, while a dude in the background hobbles along a course that's as flat as Norfolk like an OAP with a bad knee.

We were beginning to despair at this point. Surely the ski-jumping would be a little more spectacular? It certainly looked that way once we sorted through the screenshots that we had captured. We had no idea what it looked like while we were playing the game, because it demands that you concentrate on your old friends the power bars so intensely that you don't even get the chance to admire what's happening on the rest of the screen. So while your athlete is flicking himself off of a giant ramp, flying through the air at some crazy speed and touching down at the bottom like a human plane, all you see is a little white strip that turns to red if you don't move the analogue stick properly.

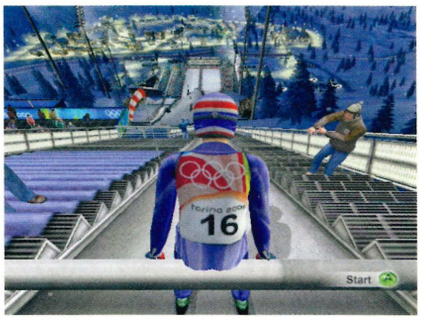
The bobsleigh is pointless even before you start. The course is barely wider than your sleigh, and it'll get round the bends with or without you in the driver's seat. You just make slight adjustments with the analogue stick to save scraping off the glossy paintwork and losing a few fractions of a second. The risk of having the top of your skull scraped off makes the sport exciting in real life. Behind the safety of your Xbox controller, it makes for a rubbish videogame.

We like the adrenaline rush of the fast alpine skiing events, but that's as good as it gets. The appeal of button-bashing power bar games wore off when we put *International Track & Field* to rest years ago. *Torino 2006* looks nice but we can't see you lasting long before slamming the pad down at the difficulty of the speed skating or nodding off from the monotony of the cross-country hobble. You want snow? Stay cool with *SSX*.

Bonus info

IN THE KNOW
The commentators don't say much, but they do occasionally come out with facts about real-life historical events in the sport. It makes a nice change to get some actual info from these guys rather than the usual banter about how crap you are at speed skating.

↑ The bobsleigh is a bit like *Burnout: Revenge.*



↑ Fingers ready! Prepare to mash...

↑ MASH THE BUTTONS TO WIN.

↑ Mash the buttons in a slightly different way!

The Summary

TORINO 2006 THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

✓	With direct controls and a brilliant illusion of speed, the alpine skiing events are great fun to play.
✓	Snowy scenery that stretches far into the distance and solid animation makes for a nice-looking game.
✗	You won't actually get to see the nice visuals during play because you'll be too focused on the damn power bars.
✗	The all-important power bars limit gameplay to just one button and the analogue stick in some cases.
✗	The slow-paced cross-country skiing must be one of the dullest sports ever simulated in videogames. Zzz...

The Verdict

A thrill on the alpine slopes. A complete bore everywhere else. The power bar gaming destroys the experience.

4.9//10

PREVIOUSLY: Those bloody cross-country skiers took this long to get here
COMING SOON: Hints & Cheats – Issue 53

↑ BLEUGGH! They don't make them like they used to.

Samurai Shodown V

Another classic beat 'em up with a ludicrous price tag

Words: Mike Jackson

Dev: SNK	Pub: Ignition
Players: 1-2	Live: 2 players
Release: February 2006	Price: £20
www.ignitionent.com/ssv	

IN THIS DAY and age, with games that let you murder hookers and punch grannies in the face, *Samurai Shodown*'s pixellated face-chopping action is about as shocking as an episode of *Teletubbies*.

Its once-impressive pixel scaling has also lost its impact, and with characters' movements consisting of less than five frames of animation, *Samurai Shodown V* is no treat for the eyes, either. But these retro re-releases obviously aren't about eye-melting graphics – they're all about old-skool gameplay and nostalgic appeal.

Let's face it – unless you're already a huge fan of the series there really isn't much reason to get this. But anyone who loved the originals in their prime will remember *Samurai Shodown* as one of the most stylised fighters around. Everything from the weird oriental music and animated background environments to the fighters' moves and nutty victory celebrations are imbued with a genuine sense of character and individuality.

↑ Kusare Gedo is about to puke. The dirty git.

Even though the button commands barely differ from one character to the next, it's their brilliant, unique personalities that truly distinguish them. Ukyo is a sleek-looking samurai who coughs every now and then. It turns out that he's actually slowly dying from a nasty case of tuberculosis. He demonstrates how fast his super sword combo is by throwing a little ball a few feet into the air before he launches his attack. He gets several blows in before the ball hits the floor. Genius.

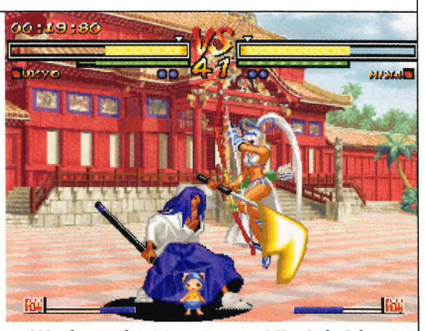
Kusare Gedo is a huge, nasty monster who simply wants to eat a little girl. During fights he summons zombie hands to grab his opponent by slapping the floor with a hysterical grin on his face. He even pukes on his foes, and celebrates victories by biting a chunk of flesh out of his own arm. This game is off its head, and totally cool.

But if you've played it in the arcades, you'll have seen it all before, so what's the point in getting the Xbox version? As well as adding nine new fighters, the crazy guys at SNK have thrown in Xbox Live support to coax you into snapping up this re-release, which allows you to challenge players from around the world and enter online tournaments. If you liked to show off your ninja skills on the arcade version, now you can show the world, which is nice.

There's no doubt that *Samurai Shodown V* is a solid old-skool beat 'em up, with simple moves and great characters. But, as with most of the titles in the flood of retro re-releases we've seen lately, it's hard to justify dropping £20 on it. For that price we'd expect a compilation of the entire series to be in there, at least. For what it is, we'd be perfectly happy paying a cheeky fiver – but dropping a score on this is about as appealing as biting chunks of flesh from our own arms.

Bonus info

BUTTER FINGERS
Getting hit or landing blows during a battle charges your fighter's Rage bar. Reach maximum Rage and you can pull off a special that will knock your opponents weapon clean out of his hands. You can't pick it up unfortunately, but it does weaken their attacks.



↑ We do our best to cut away Mina's knickers.

↑ Setting yourself on fire isn't usually clever.

↑ SWORD TO FACE! Who needs a nose anyway?

↑ Gaara tries it on, and gets an arrow in the eye.

The Summary

SAMURAI SHODOWN V THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

✔	Nice large sprites that nearly fill the entire screen when the camera is zoomed in on the fight.
✘	Disappointingly poor animation, with most movements consisting of fewer than five frames. Eye pain.
✔	Even after all this time, the whole game still oozes character. The characters actually make us laugh aloud.
✔	Most of these classic re-releases are released without change. This hits Xbox with Live support and new characters.
✘	Even with the extras, the £20 price tag is too high. We'd want a free KFC Bargain Bucket thrown in for that.

The Verdict

A great fighter but not worth the £20 asking price. It's a really old game, and even with the new extras, disastrous value.

5.0//10

PREVIOUSLY: Its true destiny was to first appear in this issue...
COMING SOON: Hints & Cheats, Issue 53

BRING ON THE CHOPPERS: THE SAMURAI SHODOWN WAS ACTUALLY THE FIRST 2D WEAPONS-BASED BEAT 'EM UP

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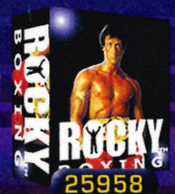

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RINGTONES

GET A REALTONE TO HAVE A REAL VOICE & BACKING TRACK AS YOUR RINGTONE!

REAL	POLY		
25976	25174	DEPECHE MODE	A Pain That Im...
25973	25146	NIZLOPI	The Jcb Song
25140	24982	THE STROKES	Juicebox
25051	24727	FRANZ FERDINAND	Walk Away
25048	24634	PUSSYCAT DOLLS	stickwitu
25054	24728	OASIS	let there be love
25219	25035	DHT	Listen To Your Heart
25547	24284	RIHANNA	if its lovin that...
25052	24635	SEAN PAUL	ever blazin
25398	25396	BABYSHAMBLES	albion
25314	24637	STEREOPHONICS	Rewind
25233	25029	THE WHITE STRIPES	The Denial Twist
24964	24726	THE DARKNESS	One way ticket...
24472	24280	KAISER CHIEFS	Modern Way
25315	24341	50 CENT	Window Shopper
24368	24362	ARCTIC MONKEYS	I Bet You Look
24474	24545	GREEN DAY	Jesus Of Suburbia
23856	23124	KANYE WEST	Gold Digger
24432	24367	PHARRELL	Can I Have It Like
22735	22728	COLDPLAY	Fix you

WALLPAPERS

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24051

25607

16638

25640

25153

25156

25305

25086

25610

25404

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14491

25813

24457

25306

23851

23071

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25010

24051

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16034

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SOUND FX

GET A CRAZY SOUND AS YOUR RINGTONE!

CODE		CODE	
11234	Crazy Chicken	12495	Explosion
12247	Sizzling Fart	12538	Gun Shot
13120	Blow Raspberry	15983	Wolf Whistle
14082	SouthP Fart Song	15984	Old Phone
12532	Evil Laugh	11760	Hey Big Boy

TV TONES

GET A TV TONE OR THEME TUNE AS YOUR RINGTONE!

CODE		CODE	
22697	Homer 32 Dohs	23465	Shreck
23662	Little Britain	22362	Chelsea Chant
22633	Darth Vader	22366	Liverpool Chant
22638	Scooby Doo	20203	Willy Wonka
23739	Napoleon Dyna...	19036	Lou and Andy

ANIMATIONS

WATCH SEXY BABES & FUNNY CARTOONS MOVE ON YOUR PHONE!

24050

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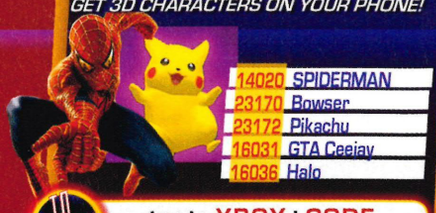
3D CHARACTERS

GET 3D CHARACTERS ON YOUR PHONE!



14020	SPIDERMAN
23170	Bowser
23172	Pikachu
16031	GTA Ceejay
16036	Halo

MOVIES

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Hardware Reviews

Proving there's still plenty of new stuff to plug into your Xbox

Nitro Tri-Force Racing Wheel

Co: JOYTECH | Cost: £70
Release: January | Tel: 0800 389 9647
www.joytech.net

JUST WHEN YOU thought you'd seen everything the world of console steering wheels had to offer, something sparkly and new comes careering onto the Xbox driving scene. Created by those internationally renowned peripheral-philes over at JOYTECH, the Nitro Tri-Force Racing Wheel promises to be THE last word when it comes to lateral rotational gaming devices (that's steering wheels to you and me).

The wheel itself isn't all that new – it's actually uses much of the technology from JOYTECH's excellent WilliamsF1 Team Racing wheel. It has the same solid, responsive steering wheel, the same easily reachable collection of four paddle switches behind the wheel and the same satisfyingly clicky ShifTronic gearstick to the side. The difference here is the super slick, ultra-sexy redesign. Gone is the jarring blue and white plastic shell of the WilliamsF1 wheel, replaced by a far more bachelor-friendly vision of black and silver and wonderfully tactile rubber wheel grips.

What's really special about this wheel is the beefed up force-feedback it pumps out – sorry, force feedback EMULATION (apparently something to do with Xbox not technically supporting force feedback). Whatever the technicalities, there's enough rattle and roll in the Nitro Tri-Force to whip your arms out your sockets – we literally had to FIGHT the wheel on occasions.

Other nice features are the four sensitivity settings you can adjust the wheel to, making it ideal for more simulation-based driving games such as *Forza*, *Toca Race Driver 3* and *PGR2* – although we found it struggled with arcade racers like *Need For Speed Most Wanted*, which have primarily been designed with digital steering monkeys in mind – and the mid-mounted pedals, which make them incredibly responsive, even if they are too close together for people with bigger than average feet. There's even an Xbox memory card slot built in too.

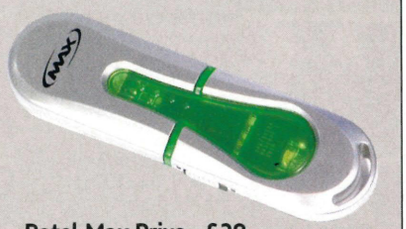
The only thing we're slightly wary of is the price. At £70, it's a full 30 quid more expensive than the WilliamsF1 wheel. Not so much because of the redesign or the improved force feedback, but because the wheel supports both PS2 and PC as well (hence 'Tri-Force'). You're basically paying the extra for the increased platform support. If you own a PS2 and PC as well then the Nitro Tri-Force is an absolute bargain. But if all you play on is your Xbox (and this wheel isn't Xbox 360 compatible if you're thinking of upgrading soon), you may be better off getting the cheaper, yet equally good WilliamsF1 effort. A classy, if pricey, product.

The Verdict 4//5

Recommended Kit

Essential pieces of kit to get more out of your games

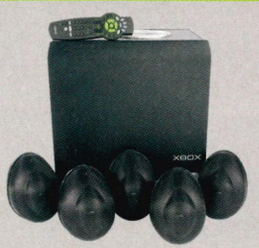
Logic 3 Top Drive GTX £40
Feels lovely, with a nice rubber finish 4//5



Datel Max Drive £20
Transfer saves to PC and email your mates 5//5

Wireless Neo S Controller £30
Quality small pad with no wires to trip over 5//5

Logic 3 Super VGA Box £60
A magic box to bring apparatus together 4//5



Xbox 5.1 Surround Sound £300
Features crystal OMNIPOLAR™ technology 5//5

Logic 3 Assault Rifle £40
Loads of firing options and a meaty feel 4//5

ULTIMATE GADGETS: IS THERE AN XBOX ADD-ON YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT? ARE YOU MAD FOR WIRELESS NETWORKING OR JOYPADS? MENTAL FOR YOUR DANCEMAT? WRITE IN AND LET US KNOW

Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

Elite Directory

The best Xbox games that scored 8.5 and more!

AMPED 2
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Extreme sports
"Stunning graphics. Dead easy to pick up and play but furiously addictive"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★★

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: FPS
"Thrilling, tactical and easy to play. A great multiplayer FPS"
SCORE 9.0

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL
REVIEWED: Issue 26
TYPE: Adventure
"Diverse and delicious. This isn't about violence, but about story, subterfuge and character"
SCORE 8.9

BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Adventure
"A detective game that will stick with you after you've finished"
SCORE 9.0

BROTHERS IN ARMS: EARNED IN BLOOD
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: Squad shooter
"A gripping, even harder follow-up to a great title"
SCORE 8.9

BROTHERS IN ARMS ROAD TO HILL 30
REVIEWED: Issue 41
TYPE: Squad shooter
"A compelling, well-designed title. Depth *MOH* dreams of"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★

BURNOUT: REVENGE
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: Racing/Action
"Sensational speed, great looks and superbly aggressive racing - recommended"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★

CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: "Amazing sound and visuals. The ultimate on-rails WWII shooter!"
SCORE: 9.0

COLIN McRAE RALLY 2005
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: Driving
"Every bit as good as *04* with the added extra of online play"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★

CONFLICT: VIETNAM
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: Squad-based shooter
"Bigger and tougher than its *Desert Storm* siblings. It'll suck you in and love you long time"
SCORE 8.5

CONKER: LIVE AND RELOADED
REVIEWED: Issue 44
TYPE: "Rare delivers a game worthy of its pedigree. Funny, crude and hugely playable"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★★★

CRIMSON SKIES
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Action
"A great package that's been playtested to death - and it looks gorgeous"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★★★

DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE
REVIEWED: Issue 39
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"A beautiful, balanced fighter; a wealth of multiplayer options"
SCORE 8.8 XBL: ★★★★★

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"Thoughtful, well-constructed. As fun as it is violent. Rated 18"
SCORE 8.5

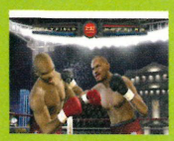
DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR
REVIEWED: Issue 26
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Mind-blowing, expertly crafted experience. Don't miss it"
SCORE 9.0

DOOM 3
REVIEWED: Issue 40
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Not the genre-defining FPS that we expected but still extremely polished and entertaining"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★

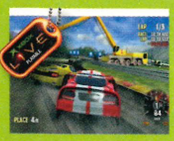
FAHRENHEIT
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: Adventure/Puzzle
"A truly captivating, dark, and grown-up adventure title. Xbox needs more games like this"
SCORE: 8.9

FAR CRY INSTINCTS
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: FPS
"Shoot guns in a free-roaming island paradise! At times stupid, at times wildly brilliant"
SCORE: 9.1 XBL: ★★★★

FIFA 06
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: Sports
"Your annual update of football fodder is served. The *Pro Evo*-est *FIFA* yet!"
SCORE: 8.5 XBL: ★★★★



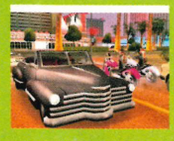
FIGHT NIGHT 2004
REVIEWED: Issue 29
TYPE: Sports
"Absorbing, sweat-drenched title. Dazzling graphics and a groundbreaking control system"
SCORE 8.5



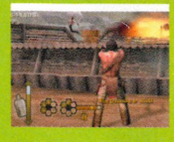
FORZA MOTORSPORT
REVIEWED: Issue 42
TYPE: Racing
"All the thrills of *Gotham*, plus mods galore and phenomenal online options"
SCORE 9.4 XBL: ★★★★

GRABBED BY THE GHOULIES
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Action adventure
"Very polished. Top animation. A sure-fire crowd-pleaser"
SCORE 8.9

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK
REVIEWED: Issue 25
TYPE: Driving/Action
"PS2 port, but a benchmark of crime titles yet to be beaten"
SCORE 8.9



GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS
REVIEWED: Issue 44
TYPE: Driving/Action
"Tons of new features - the biggest, most polished *GTA* yet"
SCORE 9.6



GUN
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Action Adventure
Cracking western action. Dusty horseback *GTA*-style epic from the House of Hawk"
SCORE 9.0

HALF-LIFE 2
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: FPS
"The finest single-player shooter made gets squeezed into the big black box"
SCORE 9.8

HALO 2 MULTIPLAYER MAP PACK
REVIEWED: Issue 45
TYPE: FPS
"This great collection of maps is stunning value for money"
SCORE 9.0

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION
REVIEWED: Issue 46
TYPE: Action
"Destroy everything you see in the Xbox smash spectacular!"
SCORE 8.5

INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB
REVIEWED: Issue 14
TYPE: Action adventure
"One of the best single-player adventures on Xbox. Brilliant"
SCORE 9.0

JET SET RADIO FUTURE
REVIEWED: Issue 02
TYPE: Platformer/ Extreme sports
"Supremely playable and very stylish. Huge, intricate levels"
SCORE 8.9

KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: HEROES
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Strategy
"Give the orders, then get stuck in yourself! The best *KUF* yet..."
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★

LMA MANAGER 2006
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Sports
"Chewing gum and sheepskin coats at the ready - *LMA* gets a great(ish) new look!"
SCORE 8.5

MADDEN 2005
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: US sports
"Incredible visuals, great commentary, brilliant play. You'll be busy for months"
SCORE 8.5

THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Action Adventure
"The Matrix game we should have had in 2003"
SCORE 8.5

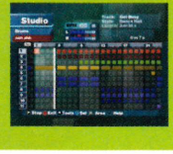
MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE
REVIEWED: Issue 25
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Definitive blockbuster action title bursting with new ideas"
SCORE 9.2

MERCENARIES
REVIEWED: Issue 39
TYPE: Third-person shooter
"Amazing effort. More plot and fewer explosions would have shaken *GTA*'s grip considerably"
SCORE 8.5

METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Gorgeous graphics, engaging characters, stacks of variety"
SCORE 9.0

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"Eye-wateringly good. A new beginning for the *MK* franchise"
SCORE: 8.6

MOTOGP: URT 3
REVIEWED: Issue 46
TYPE: Racing
"Thrilling tracks and the best graphics on Xbox - you need this more than any other racer"
SCORE 9.5 XBL: ★★★★★



MTV MUSIC GEN. 3
REVIEWED: Issue 30
TYPE: Music
"Essential for anyone with aspirations of headlining at Ministry. Playable and friendly"
SCORE 8.5

NHL 2005
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: US sports
"The standard annual update, but with an improved roster of dummy shots and tricks"
SCORE 8.9

OTOGI 2: IMMORTAL WARRIORS
REVIEWED: Issue 39
TYPE: Adventure
"An absolutely stunning, deceptively deep actioner"
SCORE 8.6

OUTRUN 2
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: Driving
"Top presentation and brilliant controls. Fast and furious racer that'll please old and new fans"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★

PANZER DRAGOON ORTA
REVIEWED: Issue 15
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Cutting-edge looks and classic blasting. Gorgeous"
SCORE 8.8

PARIAH
REVIEWED: Issue 42
TYPE: FPS
"Absorbing, tightly paced, ace mapmaker, incredible physics, innovative weapons system"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★★★

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: FPS/Action
"Beat your chest with joy! This is the true king of the jungle..."
SCORE 8.7

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP. I & II
REVIEWED: Issue 17
TYPE: MMORPG
"This should be the most addictive online game ever"
SCORE N/A XBL: ★★★★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME
REVIEWED: Issue 26
TYPE: Adventure
"The Prince is the new king of platformers. Truly outstanding."
SCORE 9.0

PRINCE OF PERSIA THE TWO THRONES
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Action/Platformer
"Easily the best *Prince of Persia* game to date"
SCORE 9.1

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Sports
"Proving that *Pro Evo* is still the greatest sports game ever"
SCORE 9.5 XBL: ★★★★

PSI-OPS: TMC
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: Third-person shooter
"Inventive powers offer hours of fun. Outstanding AI compensates for poor story"
SCORE 8.6

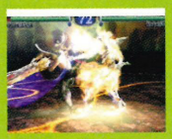
PSYCHONAUTS
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Adventure
"Platforming adventuring inside the mind itself! A beautifully warped experience"
SCORE 8.5

RED DEAD REVOLVER
REVIEWED: Issue 30
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Frantic, fun and reasonably demanding. Highly polished arcade entertainment"
SCORE 8.5

ROCKY LEGENDS
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: Sports
"Excellent visuals and gameplay. Controlling Creed, Lang and Drago is a big plus"
SCORE 8.6

SERIOUS SAM II
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: FPS
"Bonkers, balls-out blaster. All first-person shooters should be this much fun"
SCORE: 8.5 XBL: ★★

THE SIMS 2
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: World builder
"The little people are back, this time with proper console controls. Hurrah!"
SCORE: 8.5



SOUL CALIBUR II
REVIEWED: Issue 21
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"The most fluid fighter ever. Easy to pick up, tough to master, graphically superb"
SCORE 9.1

SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY
REVIEWED: Issue 41
TYPE: Action adventure
"Elegant, engaging, electrifying. The best *Splinter Cell* yet"
SCORE 9.4 XBL: ★★★★★

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: MMOFPS
"Top notch *Battlefront* action made even more accessible"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★

STAR WARS KOTOR II: THE SITH LORDS
REVIEWED: Issue 37
TYPE: RPG
"All that was good from *KOTOR*, in a far more oppressive place"
SCORE 9.3

STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO
REVIEWED: Issue 40
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Amalgamation of every quality shooter - it's great fun to play"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★

SUDEKI
REVIEWED: Issue 32
TYPE: RPG
"One of the best-looking games on Xbox. A brilliant, vibrant adventure romp with great AI"
SCORE 8.7

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE
REVIEWED: Issue 41
TYPE: Party
"The gameplay is simple but so addictive. A huge challenge too"
SCORE 8.6

THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS
REVIEWED: Issue 31
TYPE: Stealth
"Captivating, atmospheric, with massive replayability"
SCORE 8.9

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: Sports
"The Tiger-man finally gets a Live mode for his golf game!"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★★

TOCA RACE DRIVER 2
REVIEWED: Issue 29
TYPE: Racing
"The most realistic, detailed racer ever. Gorgeous graphics, incredible variety and handling"
SCORE 9.1 XBL: ★★★★

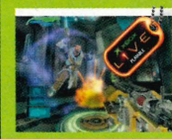
TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER
REVIEWED: Issue 21
TYPE: Squad-based shooter
"Atmospheric with online play"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3: LOCKDOWN
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: First-person shooter
"The most accessible one yet"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Extreme sports
"Hawk on Xbox Live! It's ace!
SCORE: 8.8 XBL: ★★★★

TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2005
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: Sports
"The guvnor of Xbox managerial titles. Works with *FIFA 2005*"
SCORE 8.7

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: ACTION
"Spidey versus Venom! Make a big mess of New York in this comic-book grudge match"
SCORE: 8.5



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2: THE LIANDRI CONFLICT
REVIEWED: Issue 40
TYPE: Shooter
"First-person blasting and frantic third-person action. Superb"
SCORE 9.2 XBL: ★★★★★

WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED FEAT. SHAUN MURRAY
REVIEWED: Issue 17
TYPE: Extreme sports
"Outrageous arcade action"
SCORE 8.6

WORLD CHAMP. SNOOKER 2004
REVIEWED: Issue 31
TYPE: Sports
"Tension-filled fun for anyone remotely interested in snooker"
SCORE 8.8 XBL: ★★★

XIII
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Unique, stylish and captivating. You can't afford to miss this superb FPS"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★

X-MEN LEGENDS II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Adventure/RPG
"Super-detailed comic adventuring goodness"
SCORE: 8.5 XBL: ★★★

ELITE CLASSICS

All of these Elite-scoring games are now available for the incredible price of £19.99 in the Xbox Classics range...

BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER
REVIEWED: Issue 09 TYPE: Platformer
"Inventive, intriguing and unique. *Blinx* looks superb and has loads of genuine replay value. Essential"
SCORE: 9.3

BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN
REVIEWED: Issue 34 TYPE: Driving
"Essential arcade racer, brimming with deliciousness. The *Burnout* franchise comes of age"
SCORE: 9.4 XBL: ★★

COLIN McRAE RALLY 04
REVIEWED: Issue 21 TYPE: Driving
"Rallying at its grandest, prettiest and most absorbing. The rock-hard Expert mode and Xbox Live leaderboards make for a long lifespan. Handles brilliantly"
SCORE: 9.1

DEAD OR ALIVE 3
REVIEWED: Issue 01 TYPE: Beat 'em up
"Accessible, slick and satisfying. Simple to pick up; instantly enjoyable. A visual benchmark - striking, breathtaking levels populated with superbly animated fighters"
SCORE: 8.5

FABLE: THE LOST CHAPTERS
REVIEWED: Issue 50 TYPE: Action/RPG
"Confident, flashy, beautifully polished update of the seminal RPG for only 20 quid. Buy it now!"
SCORE: 9.4

FIFA FOOTBALL 2005
REVIEWED: Issue 35 TYPE: Sports
"Significantly improved gameplay, massively deep career modes and Live play"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★★

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR
REVIEWED: Issue 30 TYPE: Strategy
"Fantastic and innovative strategy title that captures the visceral atmosphere of modern-day warfare. Punishing learning curve, but huge missions and ace lighting"
SCORE: 9.2 XBL: ★★★★

HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED
REVIEWED: Issue 01 TYPE: First-person shooter
"A masterpiece; without question one of the best games ever. The pitch of the missions is so perfect that you're rarely frustrated. Brilliant story, unmatched level design"
SCORE: 9.7

HALO 2
REVIEWED: Issue 36 TYPE: FPS
"The Chief is back and ready to kick yet more Covenant ass in his biggest, most ass-kickingest adventure yet! You won't find a better single-player and multiplayer game on the current generation of consoles."
SCORE: 10.0 XBL: ★★★★★

JADE EMPIRE
REVIEWED: Issue 41 TYPE: Action/RPG
"Imaginative, accessible, beautiful and inventive RPG. The BioWare boffins outdo themselves once again"
SCORE: 9.3

MOTOGP: ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY
REVIEWED: Issue 04 TYPE: Bike racing
"Hotly contested bike racing combined with a perfect control method. Sumptuous visuals and ace presentation make this an essential title"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★★★★

NINJA GAIDEN BLACK
REVIEWED: Issue 49 TYPE: Action
"Calling all ninjas - it's now EVEN HARDER! Twice the ninja goodness for half the price"
SCORE: 9.4

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4
REVIEWED: Issue 35 TYPE: Sports
"The most accurate and fun console footy sim. Superb"
SCORE: 9.4 XBL: ★★★★

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Driving
"The definitive, best-looking driving experience available. Hefty single-player and limitless enjoyment on Live"
SCORE: 9.3 XBL: ★★★★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN
REVIEWED: Issue 37 TYPE: Adventure
"The Prince is back - grittier, enhanced combat and a darker storyline set the tone for the sequel. This is ass-kicking adventuring at its best"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2
REVIEWED: Issue 30 TYPE: Driving
"Edge-of-your-seat racer that doesn't overload on technical details. Equally fun for a quick blast or becoming absorbed in Career mode. Looks great, with brilliant Live multiplayer"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★★★

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR
REVIEWED: Issue 16 TYPE: First-person shooter
"A cracking action shooter that is superb in single-player and provides outstanding team play experiences on Live. An epic, gripping, cinematic adventure from start to finish."
SCORE: 9.2 XBL: ★★★★★

SPIDER-MAN 2
REVIEWED: Issue 32 TYPE: Action
"Fun tutorial, simple combat, and a huge environment to explore - you'll be smashing and swinging your way around the streets of New York in no time"
SCORE: 8.6

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT
REVIEWED: Issue 35 TYPE: Action shooter
"A breathtaking game that's a real joy to play from start to finish, every time"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★★★

STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC
REVIEWED: Issue 20 TYPE: RPG
"A whole universe with a thousand paths to explore. One of the most compelling games on any console ever"
SCORE: 9.5

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: First-person shooter
"A textbook example of how to do movie/game tie-ins. Intuitive controls, stylish, atmospheric and violent"
SCORE: 9.0

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Action
"Recreates the film beautifully. You'll be ripped out of your chair and launched into Middle-Earth. You won't look back. A blockbuster action game"
SCORE: 8.5

TIMESPLITTERS 2
REVIEWED: Issue 09 TYPE: First-person shooter
"Polished, frantic, hyper-paced action. There'll be a McDonalds on Mars before you can exhaust all the deathmatch variations"
SCORE: 9.3

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON
REVIEWED: Issue 11 TYPE: Squad-based shooter
"Suspense and excitement by the bucketload. Hugely playable - easy command interface and intuitive controls make *Ghost Recon* the strategy/action benchmark"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★★★

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: First-person shooter
"A great variety of missions, excellent multiplayer. Looks fantastic, sounds incredible and the action is relentless. The ultimate package for fans of ultra-serious realistic shooters"
SCORE: 9.4 XBL: ★★★★★

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Action adventure
"Amazingly good-looking, exciting adventure that's so addictive it should carry a Government Stealth Warning. Superbly tense with lots of cool gadgets."
SCORE: 9.0

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
REVIEWED: Issue 11 TYPE: Extreme sports
"Silky trick system. User-friendly structure and loads of new ideas. Levels aren't quite as interesting as *THPS3*'s though"
SCORE: 8.6

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
REVIEWED: Issue 24 TYPE: Extreme sports
"The slight change in direction is refreshing. Story mode is impressive, but still no Live play. Hop off and explore!"
SCORE: 8.6

TOP SPIN
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Sports
"Incredible. This is the best tennis game in the world. Even if you don't like tennis you'll soon be hooked. Massive single-player game and awesome with friends"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★★★

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP
REVIEWED: Issue 10 TYPE: First-person shooter
"Frantic action will have you playing for hours at a time. Fast yet easily controllable and limitless fun on Xbox Live"
SCORE: 9.2 XBL: ★★★★

Full Interactive Reviews Directory

The ultimate buyer's guide! Scroll through more than 650 Xbox games on the disc. Press the A button on your controller to read the full reviews!

Official Xbox Magazine ON THE DISC

Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

GAMES OF DISTINCTION: LOOK OUT FOR FUTURE ISSUES, WHERE WE'LL BE RUNNING FEATURES SHOWING YOU HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF GAMES FROM THE XBOX CLASSICS RANGE...

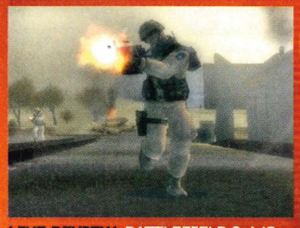
Play:More

PLAY:MORE is about getting more from your games. From tips and cheats to in-depth Masterclasses, you'll find everything, explore everywhere and beat everyone.

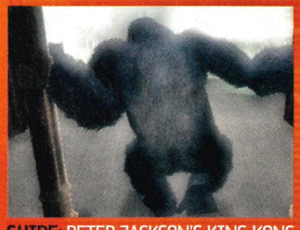
It's about playing games until the disc wears out. It's about demonstrating your expertise, proving you're the best and taking your place among our elite community of Xbox gamers. It's about winning stuff, beating the challenges and earning respect from your fellow gamers.

Play:More is where you make *Official Xbox Magazine* your magazine.

DEMO: PAINKILLER: HELL WARS



LIVE REVIEW: BATTLEFIELD 2: MC

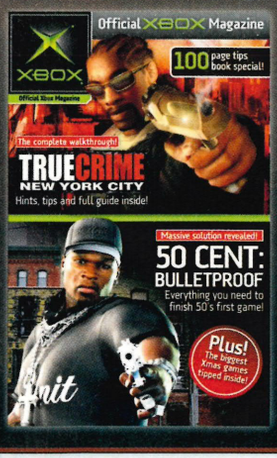


GUIDE: PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

Contents

Playable Demos	091
Xbox 360 Videos	092
Play:More On The Disc	093
Xbox Events Calendar	094
Gamertag Network	095
Live Reviews: Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	096
Live Reviews: Brothers in Arms: EIB	096
Live Reviews: Need For Speed Most Wanted	097
Live Reviews: Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	097
Hints & Cheats	098
Your Shout	100
Peter Jackson's King Kong Masterclass	104

Don't Forget Your Free Tips Book

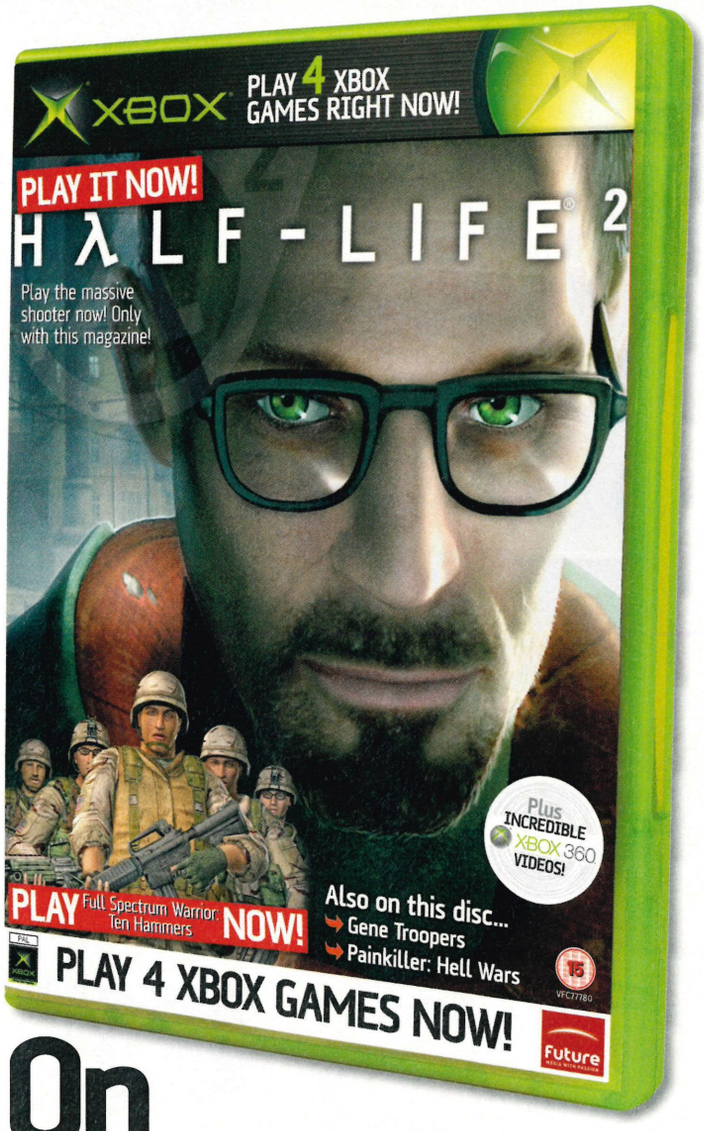


Hey! What's that bonus book that's come bundled with your magazine and Games Disc? Why, it's our special New Year's gift: a bumper free tips guide to help you blast your way through all your favourite Christmas present games!

Featuring:

- A massive walkthrough for *True Crime: New York City*. We show you how to rip up the Big Apple as both a good and bad cop!
- The complete solution to 50 Cent's massive crime caper, *Bulletproof*. Fo' real!
- All the best hints and cheats to the biggest games released over Christmas!

So get stuck in and rip your games to SHREDS!



On Your Disc...

WELCOME TO THE first Games Disc of 2006 and already it's a frontrunner for Disc of the Year. After all, it's not every day we give away a massive (and we mean h-u-u-u-g-e!), exclusive demo of *Half-Life 2*, easily one of the best games of ALL TIME - together with an equally bulging and exclusive demo of *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers*, our killer cover game.

Plus, we have fully playable demos of *Painkiller: Hell Wars* and *Gene Troopers*, brand new movies from the hottest Xbox games around, and all-new video demos of Xbox 360's biggest forthcoming titles. A far better way to start the year than a stinking hangover and a half-hearted promise to go to the gym every day for a month.

Half-Life 2

Reviewed: Issue 49 | Score: 9.8
Players: 1

WE DON'T WANT to get overexcited here, but we reckon this is the best demo we've ever had on *OXM*. EVER! It's a huge level from the brilliant *Half-Life 2*, and not just any old level either! No, this is the awesome Ravenholm mission, in which Gordon Freeman is forced to pick his way through a sinister ghost town inhabited by mutant human-zombie things.

And the reason we love this level so much? Because there's simply masses to see and do. Armed with your trusty gravity gun, Ravenholm suddenly becomes a virtual nightmare funland full of the most amazing physics the FPS bandwagon has ever seen.

We don't want to give too much away – it's best just to get stuck in and start using the gravity gun to fire flaming barrels at everything – but may we recommend luring the zombie types into the spinning blades for some messy mutilation action? Remember to stay crouched, though! There are plenty of puzzles to solve as well, so thinking caps on. (If you get really stuck, try looking for levers or ladders to higher walkways.)

↑ Feel the power of the grav gun!

↑ If it looks like this shoot it. Twice. In the head.

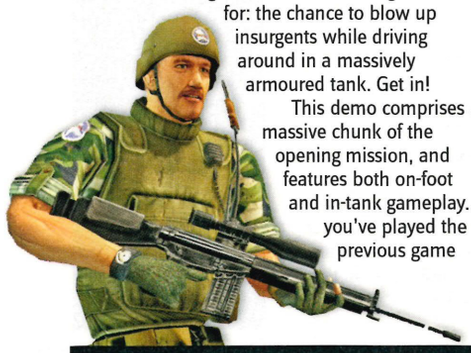
Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers

Reviewed: Issue 52 | Score: 9.0
Players: 1

IT'S OUR COVER game and we love it. Not only is it the sequel to one of the most innovative strategy games ever made, but THQ has beefed it up with new tactics, a slicker targeting system and the one thing we've all been asking for: the chance to blow up insurgents while driving around in a massively armoured tank. Get in!

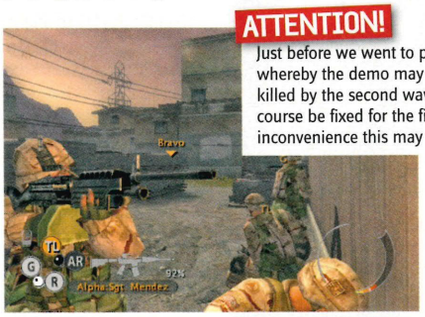
This demo comprises a massive chunk of the opening mission, and features both on-foot and in-tank gameplay. If you've played the previous game you should feel right at home with the *FSW* movement and targeting systems, but if you're completely new to the series, don't worry – there's a tutorial on hand to guide you through the most common strategies.

Don't forget itchy-trigger fans – this is all about tactics, so don't rush in and shoot everybody. Move slowly, stick to the cover and do your best to out-think, outflank and outgun the enemy!



ATTENTION!

Just before we went to press we discovered an issue whereby the demo may crash if all your team are killed by the second wave of enemies. This will of course be fixed for the final game. Apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.



↑ "Charlie team! Lay down fire, whiskey delta!"

Replay

TURN ONE of these gas canisters on, look for the ignition switch, and you've got an instant zombie barbeque – like this poor chap in the cage here.

Challenges

WELCOME TO THE section of the magazine where we ask you to polish your trumpet and blow it louder than anybody else. In a games-player sense, of course. Think of it as your chance to become a gaming celebrity! Look out for challenges based on both the Game Disc demos and full-price titles. Some are for prizes, others just for glory. Check it out!

NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED
Game Disc 50
THE CHALLENGE: Get the fastest time possible in the sprint race

NAME	LOCATION	TIME
GLYN HORSLEY	KIRKBY	1:09.65
JAMES ANDERSON	CAMBRIDGE	1:11.72
GORDON CULLEN	SCOTLAND	1:11.31
GRANT SMITH	BLETCHLEY	1:17.20
TIM TOLSON	SOMERSET	1:23.19
CLIVE ROLLINSON	KINGSTON	1:25.58
DAVID LEDGER	DERBY	1:26.11
JAMES CHANDLER	CAMBRIDGESHIRE	1:30.00
HARRY WOOD	POOLE	1:31.24
MAHESH SINGH	LEICESTER	1:31.78

And it's the Horsleynator again, by just a nose ahead of other regular winner James Anderson. If you've got room Glyn, JOYTECH will post out another two joypads to you just as soon as they possibly can.

Issue 52 Challenges

Dear *Official Xbox Magazine*
Here is my Demo Challenge score:

PAINKILLER: HELL WARS
My best time for the Town level is:

Name
Address

Email Address
Telephone number

Fill out the form and send it to Game Disc 52 Demo Challenge, *OXM*, 1 Balcombe Street, London, NW1 6NA by 16 February.

GRAVITY DEFYING: YOU CAN PICK UP JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING WITH YOUR GRAVITY GUN IN THE HALF-LIFE 2 DEMO! TRY HURLING SOME WARDROBES AROUND FOR THAT FURNITURE-DELIVERY-MAN BUZZ!

Reviews Directory

WE'RE TAKING a break from Content Download for the time being, but in the meantime, don't forget that we've still got our massive interactive reviews database, containing every single Xbox game review we've ever written. This huge guide is indispensable, whether you're new to the Xbox scene, or just as a handy reference when you're buying a game.

Xbox 360 Videos

Don't forget to check the special Xbox 360 section of the disc for awesome footage from some of tomorrow's hottest next-generation games.

TimeShift
See some amazing new footage from the shooter that lets you slow, stop and rewind time mid-firefight. It's a Bullet Time explosion of, umm, Bullet Time stuff.

↑ **"Nice threads. They from Robert Dyas?"**

Amped 3
The latest evolution of the top snowboarding series shows off a more light-hearted style and a game absolutely loaded with an avalanche of snowy content.

Kameo: Elements of Power
Even more new footage from Rare's Xbox 360 launch title demonstrates it was obviously money well spent by Microsoft acquiring the Brit codeshop.

Perfect Dark Zero
Still not got your Xbox 360 yet? Watch this and get a glimpse of all the next-generation style and fun you're missing. You'll be saving your pennies double-quick.

Monster Madness
Harking back to the arcade halcyon days of *Gauntlet* and *Smash TV* comes this action blaster full of huge explosions, wacky characters and shuffling corpses. Rock on!

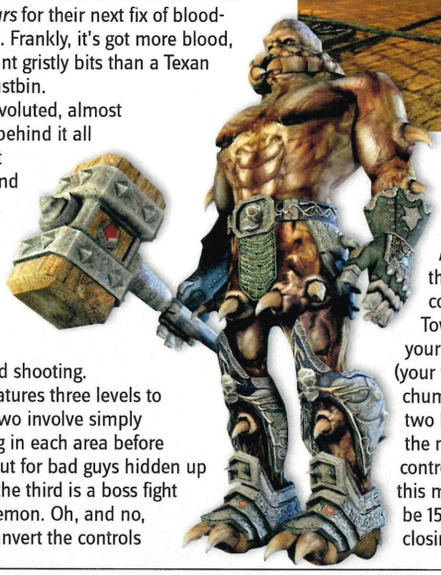
Dead Rising
Another chance to check Capcom's zombie thriller. Think of it as a cross between *Resident Evil* and a trip to Debenhams.

Painkiller: Hell Wars

Reviewed: TBA | Score: TBA | Players: 1

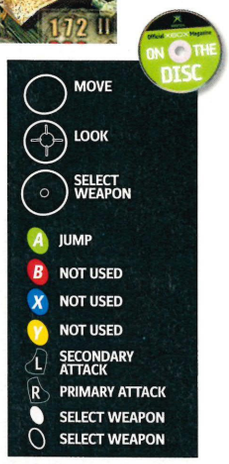
FANS OF BLAST-FIRST, blast-later shooters in the vein of *Serious Sam 2* need look no further than *Painkiller: Hell Wars* for their next fix of blood-drenched violence. Frankly, it's got more blood, guts and unpleasant gristly bits than a Texan slaughterhouse dustbin.

There's a convoluted, almost biblical-style plot behind it all - something about heaven and hell and some kind of war going on in limbo in between. Very nice we're sure, but let's face it - it's basically padding for some good old-fashioned shooting.



This demo features three levels to sample. The first two involve simply blasting everything in each area before continuing (look out for bad guys hidden up on ledges), while the third is a boss fight against a HUGE demon. Oh, and no, there's no way to invert the controls either - sorry. Blame the developer on that one.

Prize Challenge
A pretty straightforward challenge this month: we want you to complete the first demo level, Town, as quickly as possible. If yours is the fastest time we receive (your time is given at the end), our top chums over at JOYTECH will send you two Neo S Wireless controllers, by far the most fabulous third-party controllers on the market today! As this month's disc is rated 15, you must be 15 years or older to enter. The closing date is 16 February.



↑ **Kill for that DNA. You can't get it on the NHS.**

↑ **Looks like you just doubled your money.**

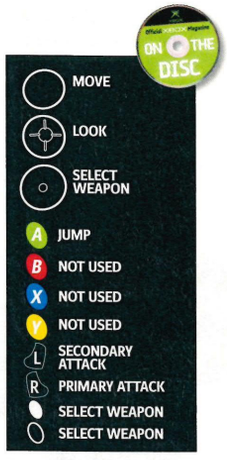
Gene Troopers

Reviewed: 48 | Score: 4.9 | Players: 1

THERE'S A LOT of aliens in this one. This three-level demo of Playlogic's science-fiction shooter takes you from the depths of a rain-battered jungle (surrounded by aliens) to a futuristic space hangar (surrounded by more aliens), before finally dropping you off in a bleak, extraterrestrial industrial plant (this time absolutely crawling with aliens - you won't be able to bloody move for them).

But before you start fretting about the unfairness of it all, don't worry: the makers of *Gene Troopers* have been kind enough to tool you up with an assortment of ultra-hard-looking weaponry. Look out for the rather special double chain gun in the third level. By holding down the secondary fire you can keep the barrels spinning, so you're always able to squeeze off a few rounds the millisecond you hit fire.

Keep an eye out for the purple DNA the aliens leave when they die - not only does it restore your energy, it lets you perform special powers that are selected using the White button (hold it down then move the D-pad to switch between abilities). Good luck, space cadet!



Replay

Painkiller: Hell Wars is a seriously meaty game. Just look at this chap: one good shot and he's a fountain of greasy giblets. Now that really is fast food.

GOAL OF THE MONTH!

DON'T FORGET! From next month we'll be devoting part of our Game Disc to your greatest *Pro Evolution Soccer 5* top-corner screamers. We'll be showcasing the best goals from around the country and if yours is voted the sweetest goal of the month, you could land yourself a top prize.

Simply get your goals on a memory card and send it to us at *PES5* Goal of the Month, *OXM*, 1 Balcombe Street, London, NW1 6NA. Don't forget to include your address so we can send your card back! As an example of the kind of thing we're after, here's a (lucky) strike from our very own art ed Phil. You'll be able to see and vote on it for yourself next month.

Kaka picks it up midway inside the Italian half...

He lays it off to Juninho...

...who then runs towards goal...

...then hits a blistering top-corner curler!

Play:More On The Disc

EARN A PLACE in Xbox history and appear in your section of the Game Disc! Play:More brings you the maddest tricks, and we love to show Xbox Live clans causing mayhem.

Complete and cut out this coupon and attach it to the front of your VHS tape or DVD. Entries must be less than ten minutes long and rewound to the correct starting position. Please don't have custom soundtracks playing.

Josh Richards brings us a selection of clips from popular RPG *Morrowind*, including duffing up a giant Kogouti and finding Luke Skywalker's lightsaber!

Check out the most audacious chipped shots ever in Thomas McWhinnie's collection of *PES4* wonder-goals. Scoring from the kick-off? Yes!

Humans (and bovines) beware! Daniel Williams is doing all sorts of bewildering and funny stuff in this collection of *Destroy All Humans!* madness.

More *Driv3r* action with this no-nonsense police chase from David Cawthorn. See how the invincible Tanner eats cop bullets for breakfast! And spits 'em out!

Hooray for Hollywood! Daniel Williams' second clip is strangely satisfying as he trashes the Hollywood sign in *LA Rush*. Bye-bye, celebrity town centre.

Play:More On The Disc

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

Description of my Top Play _____

❑ I have made sure that custom soundtracks are turned off.

Replay

Foolish earthling – feel the power of Crypto's Destructo-Ray! Mwa-haha! Regeneration is impossible! (And other assorted B-movie ramblings.)

Challenges

ANOTHER TOP challenge league for you. If you want to suggest a new challenge, or have some results from an event you've organised, send them to the usual address and we'll do our best to get them mentioned in the magazine.

↑ Sam's serious, but are you?

SERIOUS SAM II

Game Disc 50
THE CHALLENGE: Get the highest score possible

NAME	LOCATION	TIME
STUART CULLEN	SCOTLAND	447,480
STEPHEN RITCHIE	OXFORD	439,148
JASON BROWN	NORTHAMPTON	430,142
MARK WALLACE	HARLOW	419,231
DOUGLAS FOLEY	MIDDLESBROUGH	341,012
ANDREW HEALEY	EAST KILBRIDE	310,211
AUDLEY SMITH	BRISTOL	256,247
JOE RALL	LEEDS	198,334
DAVID BROUGHTON	STOKE	103,443
JAMES CHANDLER	CAMBRIDGESHIRE	58,987

A seriously meaty demo like this needed some seriously meaty scores, and that's what we got, with the mildly psychotic Stuart Cullen taking the seriously cool JOYTECH joypads as his prize. Well done Stuart, we bet all your friends must be in awe of your serious skills.

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

Full Game Challenge
THE CHALLENGE: Fastest time on El Cortez Dash

NAME	TIME
JAMES GREEHALGH	19:10
NICK BLACK	20:44
CLIVE SIMMS	21:78
ANDREW SHARIAT	25:27
ANDY PATTEN	27:41
AUSTEN MAGUIRE	28:22
PAUL BELL	36:36
JONATHON BRYANT	37:95
BEN DUGUID	38:61
YUKIKO GOTO	39:74

With only a few new entries, we're calling time on our *Midnight Club 3* challenge so congrats to James Greehalgh for his awesome skills. Our next challenge is to find the *OXM* reader who currently holds the online record for destroying helicopters in *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat*. Send in your kill counts to the usual address, or email mark.robins@futurenet.co.uk.

DRIVERLESS PLAY:MORE: NOW THE NEW DRIVER GAME, PARALLEL LINES, HAS DITCHED THE DIRECTOR MODE. HOW ARE WE GOING TO FILL UP THE PLAY:MORE SECTION? THERE'LL BE NO MORE TANNER MINI-MOVIES TO LOOK FORWARD TO ANYMORE

EventsCalendar

Your official guide to this month's hot releases, events and Live gaming sessions. If it's online and happening, it's happening on here

THUR 19 JANUARY 06

Halo 2 Combat Night
It's every man for himself in a huge bout of Oddball madness.
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/h/halo2/

FRI 20 JANUARY 06

Practice Night
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat
Prepare yourself for a weekend of online competition
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/b/battlefield2moderncombat/

SAT 21 JANUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat
Hit Xbox Live tonight for a chance of winning an awesome Samsung X50 laptop
www.xbox.com

SUN 22 JANUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat
Another chance to win a Samsung X50 laptop
www.xbox.com

MON 23 JANUARY 06

Skive With Live
Get involved in our mega new Skive with Live *Burnout: Revenge* challenge! Turn to page 111 now for more details!

TUE 24 JANUARY 06

Mystery Gamer
Play him (or her!) tonight at *Battlefield 2: MC*
www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/calendar/mysterygamer/

WED 25 JANUARY 06

Race Aces Street Night
A night dedicated to driving addicts. Featured games are *Burnout Revenge* and *Project Gotham Racing 2*
www.xbox.com

THUR 26 JANUARY 06

Halo 2 Combat Night
It's team night all the way with Double Team, Territories the choice mode of play
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/h/halo2/

FRI 27 JANUARY 06

Featured Game
Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood
Get some tactical WWII action going in Ubisoft's cracking strategy blast
www.xbox.com

SAT 28 JANUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
Star Wars Battlefront II
Play online now for a chance to win an awesome Samsung X50 laptop!
www.xbox.com

SUN 29 JANUARY 06

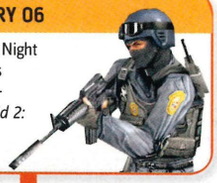
True Playerz *Halo 2* Charity Tournament
Take part in the monthly Sunday gaming event. Visit the website for more details
www.joystickjunkies.com/trueplayerz

MON 30 JANUARY 06

Featured Game
Need for Speed Most Wanted
Play it online tonight!
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/n/needforspeedmostwanted/

TUE 31 JANUARY 06

Tactical Operations Night
The featured games tonight are *Counter-Strike* and *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat*
www.xbox.com



WED 01 FEBRUARY 06

OXM Lunchtime Madness!
Gav will be playing *Halo 2* on Live between 1 and 2pm today (Gamertag: OXM PLAYMORE). Come and join him if you reckon you're hard enough...
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/h/halo2/

THUR 02 FEBRUARY 06

Race Aces Street Night
A night of *Project Gotham Racing 2* for car addicts everywhere
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/p/projectgotham2/

FRI 03 FEBRUARY 06

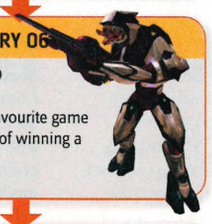
Firepower Frenzy!
Get on Live tonight for some online gun loving on *Far Cry Instincts*
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/f/farcryinstinct/

SAT 04 FEBRUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
Halo 2
Get on Xbox Live's favourite game tonight for a chance of winning a top prize!
www.xbox.com

SUN 05 FEBRUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
Halo 2
Get on Xbox Live's favourite game tonight for a chance of winning a top prize!
www.xbox.com



MON 06 FEBRUARY 06

Firepower Frenzy!
Shoot people in the back for fun in Ubisoft's brilliant *Far Cry Instincts*!
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/f/farcryinstinct/

TUE 07 FEBRUARY 06

Race Aces Street Night
Yep, more *Project Gotham Racing 2* fun for the petrolheads
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/p/projectgotham2/

WED 08 FEBRUARY 06

Fansite event
Halo 2 Fragfest tournament
Registration begins in the next few days at www.news0r.com. The action kicks off 20 February
www.news0r.com

THUR 09 FEBRUARY 06

Halo 2 Combat Night
Another night of team games, including King of the Hill and Capture the Flag. Log in and join the carnage
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/h/halo2/

FRI 10 FEBRUARY 06

Girls' Night In
Come and test your *Halo 2* powers against the PMS girls. Just send a Friends request to PMS Misletoe and PMS Rinny
www.pmsclan.com/uk/

SAT 11 FEBRUARY 06

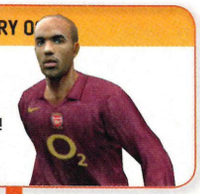
WINNING WEEKEND
Dead or Alive Ultimate
Play on Live tonight for a chance of winning a fantastic prize
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/d/deadoraliveultimate/

SUN 12 FEBRUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
Dead or Alive Ultimate
Play on Live tonight for a chance of winning a fantastic prize
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/d/deadoraliveultimate/

MON 13 FEBRUARY 0

Sports Arena Night
Get on Live for some *PES5* and *FIFA 06* action. Back of the net!
www.xbox.com



TUE 14 FEBRUARY 06

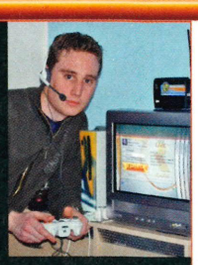
Valentine's Day Race Aces Street Night
Share the love with a giant online game of *PGR2*!
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/p/projectgotham2/

WED 15 FEBRUARY 06

Look out for the new issue of *Official Xbox Magazine* with an exclusive review and playable demo of *Black*, on sale tomorrow!

All dates and events subject to change due to reasons beyond our control. For up to date Xbox Live event news visit www.xbox.com/en-gb/community/calendar

Game Star of the Month



Name: Phil Collins
Age: 29
Gamertag: Father Fil
Home town: Poole, Dorset

THIS ISSUE'S star gamer/ex-Genesis drummer is Phil Collins, AKA Father Fil, a chap best known for being the host of game site www.vagusnet.com's extremely popular weekly podcast. Phil has been an active member of the Xbox Live community for the past two years and enjoys taking part in all kinds of multiplayer mayhem!

Phil's proudest (although perhaps least patriotic) Xbox achievement was "convincing a bunch of Americans I was from Texas while ribbing the other 'British' players!" When not at the microphone or pretending to be American, Phil enjoys tearing up the streets in favourite game *Midtown Madness 3* or, predictably, shooting the breeze in *Halo 2*.

We asked Father Fil for his take on next-gen consoles, and he told us this: "Take away Xbox Live and the next-gen competition may have been a close thing, but in my opinion Live is by far the biggest jewel in Microsoft's crown. There really is nothing to beat its simplicity and ease of use." We couldn't have put it better.

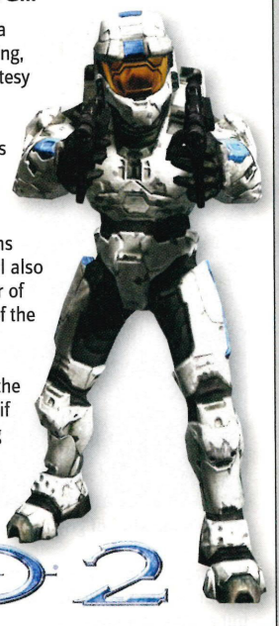
Get Ready To Rumble

Can there ever be too many Halo 2 tournaments? Not in this life...

XBOX 360 or not, everybody still loves a spot of competitive *Halo 2* deathmatching, and News0r.com is set to provide plenty courtesy of its popular February *Halo 2* Fragfest tournament. With some of the biggest *Halo 2* clans in Europe already signed up, it promises to be a highly competitive bash.

Interested? Then pop along to www.news0r.com for the latest information on the tournament, including a list of prizes and clans competing. The winner of the tournament will also be conferred with the slightly dubious honour of being named *Official Xbox Magazine*'s clan of the month, with the best performing individual claiming Game Star of the Month.

Registration opens on 10 February, with the tournament kicking off 20 February 2006, so if you want to be in with the chance of winning yourself some top prizes and the jealousy of gamers all over the continent, head over to www.news0r.com and check it out.



The X-Word

With Luke 'Duke' Newcombe, community expert

THIS MONTH I've been out and about in my fuel-injected modified Warthog, checking out the Xbox titles heading your way in the coming months. In fact, I've endured the relentless hordes of demons in *Painkiller: Hell Wars* and battled the Nazi menace of *Commandos Strike Force* to deliver this month's X-Word!

More than anything else though, I'm looking forward to the release of the highly anticipated first-person shooter *Black*. It's awesome. Another title that comes to mind is *America's Army: Rise of a Soldier*, which is looking pretty sweet so far.

The other thing myself and a few industry insiders have been busy with this month is the launch of our new dedicated Xbox fan resource website, www.totally360.com. It's going to be special because we want you have a direct say in its development, so drop me a line at luke.newcombe@totally360.com to let me know what you think. And keep your suggestions for tournaments, compos and LAN events coming in - I'll always check them out!

↑ ***Black*: Luke the Duke says, "OMG! This is going to be totally AWESOME!"**

Clans Reunited

Victory to these guys is everything

FIGHTING FOR THEIR pride this month is 'H1V Positive', a clan that competes on Xbox Live for nothing short of the ultimate goal. No, not the off-chance of bumping into a Fragdoll during a late-night bout of online *Dancing Stage*. We're talking about the sweet, slightly smouldering smell of victory here. That said, these boys still know how to have fun. Although founded by a bunch of Xbox Live gamers who all share above-average skills in *Halo 2* (it says here), Positive still retains a sense of humour with its clan motto, "Would you like fries with that, Sticky?"

Unlike the majority of Xbox Live clans these days, Positive's members - zFury, TMC Azure, PerryUK, Spindryer, SacredUK, IcemanGaskin and xx ub3r xx - aren't permanently installed on *Halo 2* all the time. These gamers often like to stretch their legs and kick some virtual booty on other shooting games, such as *Counter-Strike* and *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat* - although *Halo 2* remains by far their favourite stomping ground.

Refreshingly, Positive likes to keep a, um, positive attitude when it comes to joining its illustrious ranks and quite happily offers the chance for anyone who thinks they have what it takes to join its motley crew. As if you need any incentive to request a trial, Positive claims its finest moment was "winning the MatchBox360.co.uk *Halo 2* league". So if you reckon you're good enough, and you don't mind having your butt whipped, give the guys a shout on Xbox Live - they'll be happy to give you a good pasting.

↑ **Spindryer must be the leader - he's the only one who's actually been outside.**

Challenges

MOTOGP 3
Skive with Live challenge
The Challenge: Get the fastest lap time on the Estoril track.

Look! We had to print the top ten scores just to show how good you lot are. Mega-congratulations to Pitkin31, whose second best time in THE WORLD wins him the prize. All-new Skive with Live is on page 111.

FREE ADVERTISING: GOT AN XBOX LIVE EVENT YOU WANT TO PROMOTE COMING UP? LET US KNOW AT THE USUAL ADDRESS AND WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO...

LiveReviews

We take a look at recently reviewed Xbox Live-enabled games

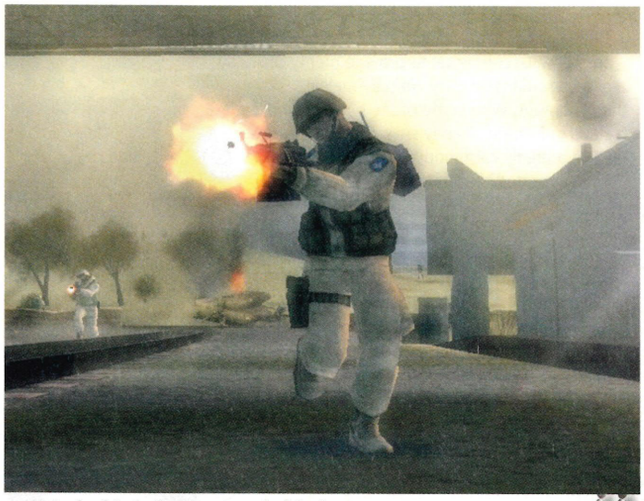
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat

A popular number online

Reviewed: Issue 48 | Score: 9.0
Players: 1 | Live: 2-24 players

AFTER OUR sister mag in the US ran the demo back in April, and the game topped the most played Live titles list for the same month, we knew EA was onto a winner. Sure, they gave it a great single-player game too, but *Battlefield 2* was always going to be about clans working together over Xbox Live. If you're new to the game, it might take a while to figure out what you're doing. It's not just straight deathmatch, either - you have to control and dominate certain points on the map in order to win.

A points system keeps you coming back for more and working harder to get the right results, regardless of whether your side wins the game or not. There are plenty of stats to rack up through killing, repairing vehicles and taking flags throughout each match. It looks great and some of the map designs are pure genius (our current favourite is the oil rig level), ensuring nothing but a fun experience.



↑ He's the kind of guy you probably don't want to annoy.

Being able to choose different character classes before you spawn keeps things fun and interesting. If there's a sniper out there spoiling your fun, just switch to being a sniper and go and hunt him down yourself. If you feel like blowing stuff up, be a heavy weapons specialist. Fancy snooping about launching surprise attacks? Special ops is where it's at. Expect clans to have preassigned classes and be so organised that every team member has a specific job. But if you're not that tactically minded, you can always do a Rambo - provided you're good enough.

↑ Online in a tank's like being Neo in *The Matrix*.

The Verdict

If any game has the potential to distract *Halo 2* clans, it's *Modern Combat*. Fun no matter how many times you play it.

5//5

Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood

Very tactical and very tense - the brothers take to Live

Reviewed: Issue 48 | Score: 8.9
Players: 1 | Live: 2-4 players

BROTHER IN ARMS is so much more than just another WWII shooter - it demands that you think first and shoot later, unlike most other FPS games. Instead of being a fast-paced frag-fest like *Halo 2* on Live, *Earned in Blood* is tougher and more tense than Gavin on deadline day.

Gameplay is objective-based, with either the Americans or ze Germans having to destroy a designated object or defend it. Each match is timed which means the pressure's on to get moving right from the start. If you're playing a one-on-one you only have one team each to command. Four players means that each individual has a single team under their belts and have to really work together across the battlefield.

There's a surprisingly good selection of maps on offer (each with different objectives), so fans of the single-player game won't get bored quickly. But if you're new to the whole *Brothers in Arms* thing then you might want to hone your skills in the single-player campaign before taking them online. It can be frustratingly difficult playing a seasoned vet online who knows exactly what he's doing. Take your time, use the situational awareness viewpoint and plan your movement accordingly. It's a bit like mirrors, signal, manoeuvre in that your life well could depend on it.

↓ Who did diarrhoea on our telly?

↑ It's all about staying low to stay out of sight.

↑ A single game can take a long while.

The Verdict

Very immersive, tactical fun, so long as you've got the patience to see a game through to the end.

4//5

Need For Speed Most Wanted

Terms and conditions apply

Reviewed: Issue 50 | Score: 8.0
Players: 1-2 | Live: 2-4 players

DARE WE SAY it? It looks like EA's servers are beginning to sort themselves out, finally. They've hampered past instalments of classics like the *Burnout* series, but *Most Wanted* seems to be bang on the money (aside from a bit of lag here and there), at least during the sessions we joined.

Once you've read and agreed to EA's terms and conditions you can jump into a quick race or tune your options. Sprint, drag and circuit races are what you're playing for online, and it's one of those games that require a lot of time and effort on your part in single-player to unlock the fastest cars.

Being the crazy cats we are, we thought it would be a good idea to jump into a quick race with the crappy default car. Needless to say, we were left crawling round the track after the first corner. We'd have thought everyone else had quit if it wasn't for the communicator. We'd also like to apologise to Mark Track for trying to ram him off the road to gain a headstart. It didn't work.

If you're after a light-hearted, fast racer without the seriousness of *Forza* then you're probably already playing *Most Wanted* right now. If you've got Live give it a whirl. But only after playing the single-player game to death to get some good cars. You won't stand a chance otherwise.

↑ A Golf? We drive those in real life. Pah!

↑ Orange is the crappest colour for a Golf, ever.

↑ Don't let mouthy Americans call you a n00b.

The Verdict

Solid, light-hearted, if slightly laggy racer that will appeal to the boy racer in everyone. The best *NFS* yet, too.

4//5

Call of Duty 2: Big Red One

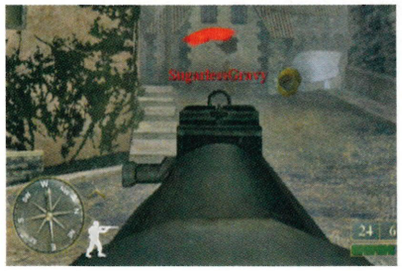
As good online as it is offline

Reviewed: Issue 50 | Score: 9.0
Players: 1 | Live: 2-16 players

BIG RED ONE rewrote the WWII war game rules and the awesome single-player game has successfully taken the fight to Xbox Live. Up to 16 players can cause mindless carnage in a variety of single and multiplayer game modes.

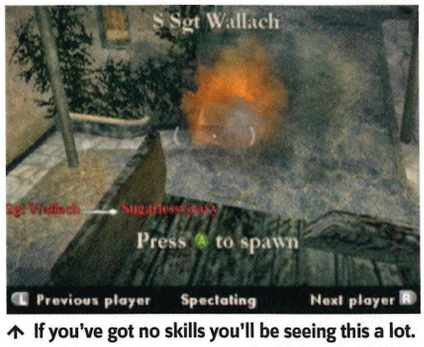
Over ten maps are on offer, all well designed and large enough to cater for the maximum number of players. The pace does slow if you find yourself in a game with only three or four players, as each map is filled with endless nooks and crannies to hide in. There's a tense *Enemy at the Gates* feel to some of the combat, as snipers hide in the smouldering ruins waiting patiently for someone to wander into their line of sight. It's a completely different story with 16 players, though...

The game modes and options all work fine, but finding a game can be a chore. Not because there's no one playing, but because the match-finding technology is lagging. Using the Quickmatch option to locate the action brings up several games. But more often than not you get a "Session no longer exists" message, only to search again and find the same non-existent game. It's far from *Halo 2*'s benchmark matchmaking. Still worth the wait though, as it looks and plays beautifully.



↑ Check the size of my barrel. It's MASSIVE!

↑ Whoa... is that meant to come off?



↑ If you've got no skills you'll be seeing this a lot.

The Verdict

Easily the best WWII action game to grace Xbox - both online and off. You need this in your collection. It's that simple!

4//5

NOT BITTER: AS GAVIN TYPES THIS STRAIGHT ONTO THE PAGE, THE ENTIRE TEAM (APART FROM DAN AND MIKE) ARE IN BATH FOR THE COMPANY'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Hints&Cheats

Unlimited lives? Super-health? Characters with enormous comedy heads? Don't get stuck on games - get with the only cheats listings page you'll ever need, right over here!

CHEATS IN MOTION

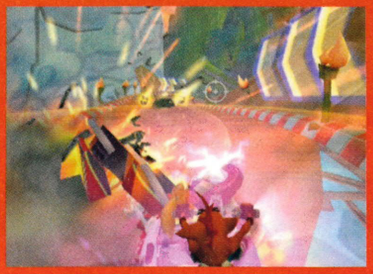
CRASH TAG TEAM RACING
Issue 50, 4.9

Enter all the following cheats at the title screen.

↑ Munchkin Crash: Hold L and R and press X, B, X, B

↑ Chicken Heads: Hold L and R and press A, B, B, X

↑ Toy block cars in multiplayer: Hold L and R and press B, B, Y, X



↑ Remove HUD: Hold L and R and press A, X, Y, B

TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY
Issue 51, 8.0

PUMA SHOES OUTFIT
Collect all ten pairs of Puma shoes then visit the Puma Shoe Shop to get the outfit.

REDMAN GONE WILD MINI-GAME
Once you complete 100 per cent of the game you'll get a call from Redman. Go to his location to unlock his mini-game on the main menu.

CHEAT CODES
Go into the CompStat/Map screen then hold down the shoulder triggers and enter the following codes:

All music: B,X,B,X
Double Damage: A, A, X, A, A, A
$1,000,000: X, X, Y, X, Y, X
New Puma outfit in Puma Store: Y, A, B, X
Super Cop: Y, A, Y, A, Y, Y
Ultra Easy mode: B, X, A, A, Y, B
Unlimited ammo: B, X, A, X, X, Y
Unlimited endurance: B, X, A, X, A, B
Unlock Redman Gone Wild mini-game: Y, A, A, X, A, X

PRINCE OF PERSIA THE TWO THRONES
Issue 50, 9.2

WEAPON UNLOCKS
Pause the game and enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding weapon:

Secret Chainsaw: Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Y, X, Y, X.
Secret King Sword: Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Y, X, Y, X.
Secret Baby Rattle: Successfully complete the game on the Easy difficulty setting then press Left, Left, Right, Right, Y, X, X, Y, Up, Down.
Secret Telephone: Successfully complete the game on the Normal difficulty setting. Then press Right, Left, Right, Left, Down, Down, Up, Up, Y, X, Y, Y, X, X.
Secret Swordfish: Successfully complete the game on the Hard difficulty setting. Then press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Y, X, Y, X.

↑ You vs everyone! If anyone's cheating, it's them!

↑ Beat the cheating criminals by CHEATING YOURSELF in *True Crime NYC*.

PSYCHONAUTS
Issue 50, 8.5

BUTTON CODES
Hold down the L and R triggers while playing the game and enter the following codes. A voice saying "You cheated!" will confirm correct code entry.

All items: B, White, White, click Left thumbstick, Y
All Psi powers: B, B, Y, White, click Left thumbstick, Y
Full ammunition: Click Right thumbstick, A, click Left thumbstick twice, then quickly press Y, B
Full arrowheads: A, click Right thumbstick twice, White, Y, X
Maximum rank and all Psi powers: Click Left thumbstick, Right thumbstick, Left thumbstick, White, B, White
Weird text: White, A, click Left thumbstick, White, White, B

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF
Issue 51, 4.0

CHEAT CODES
Press pause, select Options then Cheats from the menu, then enter the following codes:

Action 26: orangejuice
Always get a perfect shot: #1stunna
Bulletproof (invincibility): ny'sfinestyo
Empty n' Clips counter-kill: workout
Unlock My Buddy video: sayhellotomylittlefriend
Unlock So Seductive track: killa1
More powerful weapons: the hub is broken
Unlock Tony Yayo So Seductive video: yayoshome

NASCAR 06
Issue 48, 8.0

Codes
Go to the Edit Driver screen in Fight To The Top mode and enter the following codes as your first and last names (case-sensitive).

Unlock Dale Jarett in the UPS Big Brown Truck: Race TheTruck

CABELA'S BIG GAME HUNTER: 2005 ADVENTURES
Issue 51, 5.9

UNLIMITED ENERGY
Enter Black, Black, L, Black, X, Y, B, A at any time during normal gameplay (not when you're in a menu screen) for Unlimited Energy mode.

↑ A weeny spear versus a monster the size of a bus? Hmm. It's time to BRING OUT THE CHEATS.

↑ Even SUPERHEROES need cheats sometimes.

$10,000,000: Walmart Money
Max Fan Level: Super Star
Max Prestige: MeMyself AndI
Max team prestige: All ForOne
Unlock all chase plates: Gimme Gimme
Unlocks Dale Senior: The Intimidator
Walmart Raceway, Walmart cars, and Walmart sponsorship for custom car: Walmart Exclusive

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

Issue 50, 8.0

CHEAT CODES
Enter the following codes at the title screen. Correct entry will be confirmed by a message.

Unlock Castrol SYNTEC Ford GT: Left, Right, Left, Right, Up, Down, Up, Down
Unlock Junkman Engine: Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Up, Down
Unlock the Burger King Challenge: Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: LIGHTS, CAMERA, PANTS!

Issue 50, 5.6

UNLOCKABLES
Enter these codes at the Rewards screen:

All action figures: 486739
Hook, Line and Cheddar: 893634
Silver Story mode challenges: 486739

SHREK SUPERSLAM

Issue 50, 7.5

CHALLENGE UNLOCK
To unlock all the challenges enter Y, Y, Y, B, B, B, Y, X, B, X, X, X, Up, Down, Left, Right, L, R at the title screen.

CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

Issue 50, 4.9

AMUSING NOISES
Press A during loading screens for some really funny burping sounds. Make sure you keep the volume turned up!

X-MEN II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE

Issue 49, 8.5

CHEAT CODES
Enter the following codes at the Review menu to activate the corresponding effect:

Unlock All Comics: Right, Left, Left, Right, Up, Up, Right, Start
Unlock the game cinematics: Left, Right, Right, Left, Down, Down, Left, Start

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

Issue 49, 8.6

CHEAT MODE
To activate cheat mode, go to the main menu, hold L + R and press Down, X, Up, Y, Down, Down, Up, Up, then release L + R. If you do it properly a Cheat option will appear. Select it then enter the following case-sensitive codes:

God mode: 8wonder
Level select: KKst0ry
One-hit kills: GrosBras
999 ammunition: KK 999
Bonuses completed: KKmuseum
Unlimited spears: lance 1nf
Machine gun: KKcapone
Revolver: KKtigun
Shotgun: KKsh0tgun
Sniper rifle: KKsn1per

↑ This needs a cheat to MAKE ANY SENSE.

THE GAMES MECHANIC

Shoving his greasy spanner right into your games-related problems

Dear Games Mechanic,
I don't know if you remember *Syberia 2*, but how do you get the lemming round the hole to get the berries? I've used the cork, fish bone and the bird, but there's something missing. I have an empty flask and have spent hours going round and round the same places doing the same thing. I am starting to think there's a glitch in the game. Help!
Anthony, via email

Why does everyone think it's a glitch when they're stuck on a game? It's not a glitch – it's personal stupidity! Anyway. You need to fill your flask with water first – this is done in the room you found the flask in: put it in the holder on top of the machine, turn the crank and it'll fill. You'll need to use the cork again in the hole, then fill the shaft the lemming jumps to with the water.

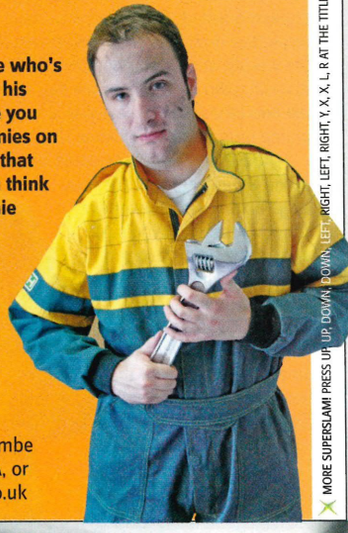
Dear Games Mechanic,
I need some help on *Half-Life 2*, at the bit where you get chased by the helicopter in the Water Hazard levels. It's always blowing me up. Please help – I'm dying a lot!
Lee Emmott, via email

Unfortunately, Lee, there's little advice here other than 'be better at games'. The important thing to remember is to keep moving and swerving left and right to avoid the mines. Practice, practice, practice and all that. Apparently if you hit Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A at any point during the game it'll spawn a health pack, but blow me if I can get it to work. Sorry I couldn't be more help, especially since I've still got to charge you for the time.

Yo Games Mechanic,
I'm proper stuck on *Gun*. I'm fighting that Dutchie bloke on the train, but I'm having a right tough time of it. Any tips, oh greasy one?
Gerard Clemence, Norwich

It's not so much Dutchie who's the problem here as all his little friends. Make sure you quick-draw all the enemies on the train and the riders that appear first. Don't even think about starting on Dutchie until its just the two of you. Then concentrate on getting headshots with the Ferguson zoom. There should be plenty of cover about to help you out.

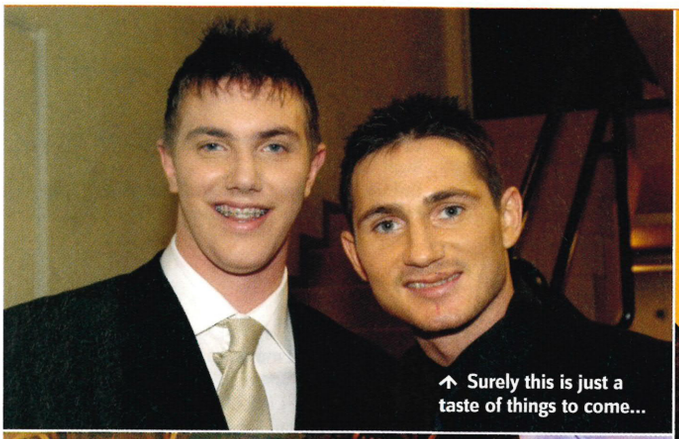
WRITE to The Games Mechanic, *OXM*, 1 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NA, or email staff@futurenet.co.uk



MORE SUPERSLAM! PRESS UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, Y, X, X, L, R AT THE TITLE SCREEN FOR SLAMMAGEDDON MODE

YourShout

Reader events
England wins the 2005 FIFA Interactive World Cup!



↑ Surely this is just a taste of things to come...

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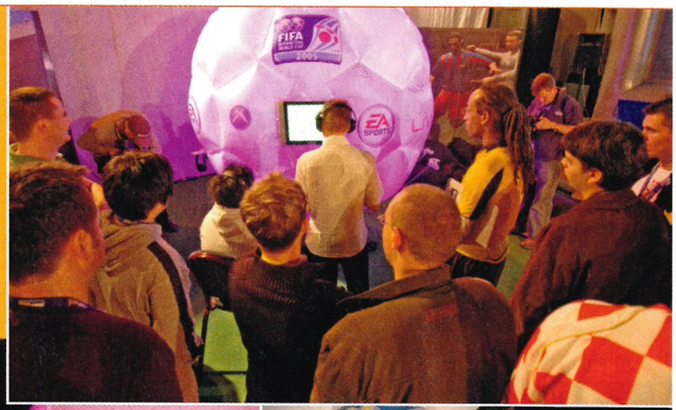
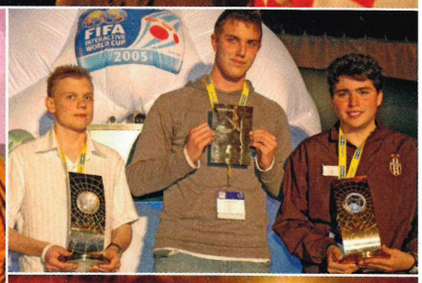




YES! FINALLY! 1966 is no longer a one-off! England wins the World Cup once again! Okay, we're talking about the FIFA Interactive World Cup here as opposed to the actual World Cup, but it is FIFA endorsed and it was England wot BLOODY WON IT!

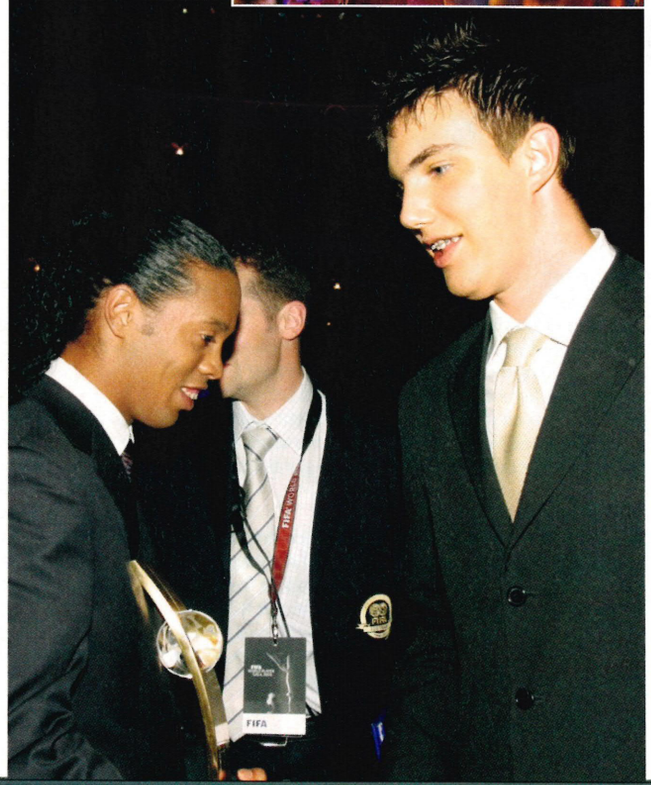
You might recall that English representative Paul Gordon crashed out miserably of the inaugural 2004 tournament after failing to win a single match, but this year it was all change as England had not one but TWO representatives in the final stages: 16-year-old Michael Barrett from Watford, who qualified as one of the eight regional finalists (each of whom had won their respective qualifiers at special events around the world), and 18-year-old Chris Bullard of Ipswich, who qualified on the day as one of the two best *FIFA 06* players in a special online tournament over Xbox Live.

Admittedly both boys could boast home advantage, with the final stage held at The Brewery in London, but when you're up against the best players in the world these things often count for nothing. The competition (held the week before Christmas) was amazingly tense, with the ten finalists split into two groups of five that were then whittled down to four semi-finalists. Unfortunately Michael failed to make the cut, but Chris, playing as England (we almost want to CRY we're so proud), sailed through, summarily dispatching his semi-final opponent Ruben Morales from Mexico with the classic England victory scoreline: 4-2.

Chris then found himself up against Hungarian Gabor Mokos in the final, in what must surely be a premonition of this year's actual World Cup final: England (Chris) vs Brazil (Gabor). Of course, being England, Chris had to throw a spanner in the works by having Lampard red-carded in the 20th minute. But despite that handicap, Chris went in at half-time 2-1 up thanks to the awesome shooting power of Rooney. Gabor equalised soon into the second half, but Chris was too good, scoring three more courtesy of Rooney and Owen to win 5-2. The final whistle went, and amid wild scenes of celebration England were once again world champions.

"I'm absolutely amazed, stunned and delighted," a thrilled Chris said at the end of the day – his prize not only comprised an Xbox 360 and tickets to the World Cup final, but a place alongside Ronaldinho and Frank Lampard at the 2005 FIFA World Player Gala. Not bad considering over 7,000 players from more than 25 countries took part. Let's hope this amazing turnaround in English form holds out until the summer...

↘ Better skills (and teeth) than Ronaldinho!



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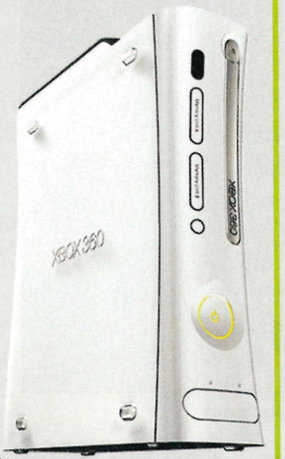

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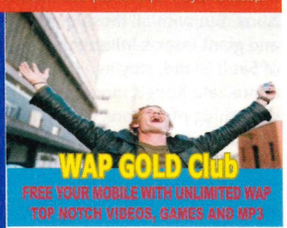
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Masterclass: Peter Jackson's King Kong

Is Peter Jackson's latest foray into the world of Xbox giving you a Kong-sized headache? Keep getting bitten in half by angry T-Rexes? We're here to help - no monkeying around

With Peter Jackson's latest cinematic masterpiece *King Kong* still doing the business in movie houses up and down the country, it's no surprise that Ubisoft's superbly crafted game of the monster flick has been an equally big hit for Xbox. But with all those unpleasant monsters and giant insects inhabiting every square inch of Skull Island, staying alive long enough to appreciate Kong's magnificence can be something of a chore. Which is why we've created this: an exhaustive adventurer's guide to surviving the night in a rain-lashed jungle full of mutant centipedes. If this doesn't help you get back to New York, nothing will.

THE VENTURE

After watching the intro movie, where you'll meet some of the main characters (movie mogul Carl Denham, film starlet Ann Darrow and strapping scriptwriter Jack Driscoll), you'll find yourself onboard the Venture, just off the coast of Skull Island. There's not really much to do in this level, apart from just holding on tight as your rowboat makes its way to shore.

SKULL ISLAND

Once you're woken up by the lovely Ann you'll find yourself on Skull Island proper. Follow your friends up the rock staircase until you get to the cave entrance. Hayes will offer you his gun. Press A to take it then shoot your way past the crabs. Smash your way through the wooden fence (hit the R button for this) and head on to the big spooky gate. Hayes will ask you to grab the right column nearby. Do so and start pushing to begin opening the gate. Halfway through you'll be attacked by a giant crab (and its babies). Stop to finish them off - don't forget to pick up the spears and sharpened bones to save on ammo - then continue opening the gate.

Once you're through carry on until you reach the area with the ammo case. Shoot or smash it down to receive a shotgun, then continue past the next wooden gate and set of crabs. Pick up the door lever on the floor (use R to pick up items), then use it on the empty column to the left. Twist it round and you'll be able to move on.

NECROPOLIS

As you start the level you'll see Engelhorn in his boat - wave hello if you like! Don't forget to pick up the gun in the ammo case nearby as well. Continue until your path is blocked by the chasm. Pick up a nearby spear then use R to poke it in the fire and set it alight. You can now use your flaming spear to burn the bushes and reveal a new path. Get used to this as you'll be doing it A LOT. The new path will lead to a crypt where Carl will start to film. After a short while you'll be attacked by a few waves of centipedes. Fend them off (try to use the spears as much as possible) until they're all dead, at which point you'll be able to follow a new tunnel. Watch out - there are more centipedes here as well.

↑ Hayes will give you your first gun.

↑ Use fire to burn away bushes and reveal new paths

You'll reach a new open area with another chasm. Carefully make your way across using the plank bridge - if you fall off you'll die, so do it slowly - stopping both to pick up the ammo and protect Ann as she climbs across the cliff face on the other side. It helps if you click the right analogue stick for a zoomed-in aiming view.

Clear the next area of beasties and use the flame to remove the bushes. Ann will then climb the gate to unlock it, so make sure you cover her from anything that might attack. Once you're through, use a spear to stab a nearby grub (this is 'bait' - another concept you'll be getting used to), and throw it at the spiders to distract them long enough for you to rush by.

SCORPIONS

Follow Ann - killing the pesky bats along the way - until you come to an area choked by bushes. This time it's Ann's job to clear them, meaning you're on cover duty as she climbs up to grab the spear, set light to it and chuck it back down at the overgrowth. Once through you'll have to wade through a swamp full of random beasties. Don't worry - Ann will protect you and drag you out, affording you a cheeky glimpse of her cleavage.

The next area consists of a windy path through some bushes in which you'll find some scorpions and a couple of centipedes. You can plough through shooting and killing, or, more subtly, you can spear some bait (there are a few dragonflies buzzing about) and use that to entice the enemy into the bushes. You can then use the fire from the bowl at the centre to burn the bushes, killing anything that happens to be in them. This is a simple trick that will work for a lot of the enemies on Skull Island.

CALLING OUT

Look at a friendly character and hit A and you'll grab their attention. If they're holding a weapon, hit A again and they'll throw it to you. This is worth remembering when you're unarmed or running low on bullets and need something lethal in a hurry.

↑ You'll be saving their lives quite a lot...

Once you've burned a path up the hill and followed it (you can also burn away some bushes to reveal some ammo), you'll come to another dead end of bushes. Look up on the wall and you'll see a small metal pot. Shoot or hit this with a spear and it'll drop on the bushes, burning them away.

Once you're through, you'll meet up with Carl and Hayes. Call Hayes using the A-button to borrow his sniper rifle, then take out the centipedes that come at you. Once you've taken care of them Carl will then open the gate to let you proceed.

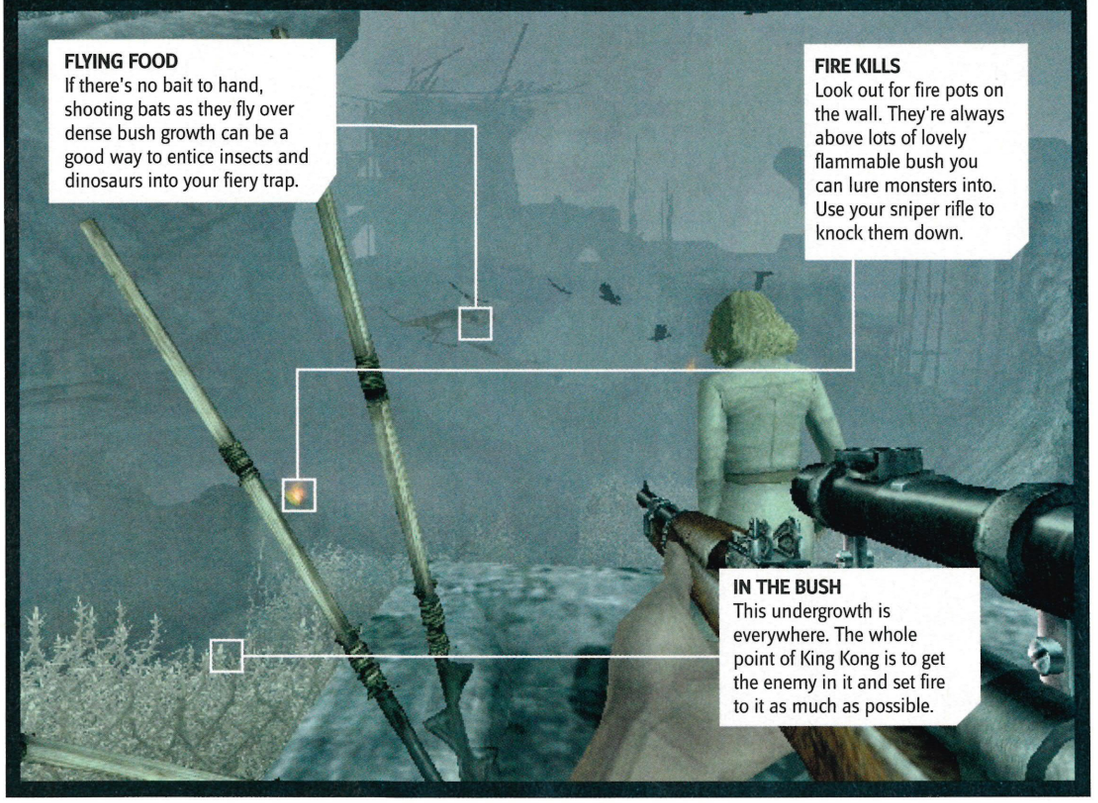
THE WALL

Smash the door open and shoot the centipede that jumps out. When you're done, move over to the outcrop on the right. From here you'll look down at a large area of bushes filled with scorpions. Rather than jump down and attack, use the bait nearby, or snipe the bats to attract the scorpions into the bushes then shoot/snipe the fire pots on the wall to catch them in the flames. If you must head down, watch out for scorpions darting out from the undergrowth - they're hard to spot.

Clear this area (look out for the sniper ammo) and follow the path back and forth across the chasm. You'll come to another large area. Again, use the bait and the flying bats together with the flame pots on the wall to get rid of the bulk of giant

↑ Pretty much everything on Skull Island wants to eat you.

SKULL ISLAND 101 How to kill using fire and bait



insects before mopping up the rest. When you're done, climb up the hill and follow the path - you'll come to another gate that Ann will disappear off to open. Jump into the water and wait by the next gate and you're finished.

SACRIFICE

For the first part of this level all you need to do is sit and watch. When Carl turns up he'll set you free. Follow him, but do it quickly and try not to stand still as you'll be pelted with flaming spears from the natives as you make your escape. You're now on the trail of Kong. Follow the path to a thoroughfare that shows signs of Kong's recent passage. Duck through the hole in the wall on the left.

You'll arrive in a large open area: head over to right to see a huge wooden gate. You'll be attacked by a raptor and centipede in turn. Use the spears and bones lying around to attack them - look out for opportunities to use the flame pots on the walls as well. You'll also find small areas of shelter - covered passages that are too small for the raptor to enter. Again, learn to make use of these as you'll find them all over Skull Island.

↑ Camps mark the start and end of most levels.

SAVE AMMO
Ammunition is a rare commodity on Skull Island, so you'll need to use alternatives as much as possible. Luckily there are plenty of native spears and sharp animal bones to pick up. These can either be thrown at the enemy (hold L to aim) or used as stabbing spears at close range. Be careful though - if you use them for stabbing enemies, they'll snap after three or four decent hits.

When you're done, head to the far corner of the arena and use the flame pot on the wall to burn away the bushes. You'll then be able to grab the handle for the gate. Use this on the handle-less column and work with Carl to open the gate. Once you're through head on to the checkpoint.

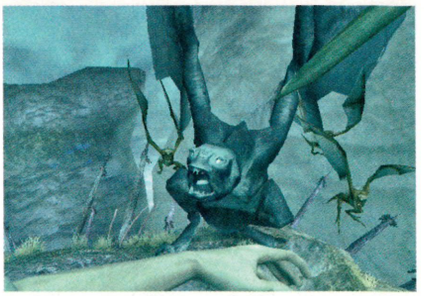
ON KONG'S TRACKS

Simply follow Carl through the start of the level - he seems to know where Kong's going and will stop now and again to grab some footage. Eventually you'll reach a ravine. Carl will stop to film again, at which point a giant bat appear and carries him off. Don't worry too much, Carl won't die at this point, but be prepared to grab some spears as you'll be attacked by some smaller bats.

Turn right and follow the ravine until you get to a fork: take the left path down past the waterfall. Smash through the door at the bottom and carry on chasing Carl, using spears to take out the little dinosaurs on the way.

You'll eventually reach a plateau with lots of bats flying around. Take these out using spears and bones (you may need to head back to restock), then head up and to the right to find a rickety wooden bridge. Cross this carefully then take out the bats that attack immediately afterwards. Continue on through the passage to the peak. Grab the shotgun (watching out for yet another wave of bats), then head across the wooden bridge to reach Carl and the giant bat.

You'll now face a tough fight against several bats, including the daddy bat. Fight them all off (there are plenty of bones to hand and some spare ammo up there) until it's just you and Carl left standing. When you're done, head back the way you came (you'll come across a few more bats and dinos), back past the waterfall and turn left. Open the gate with Carl and head on to the base camp.



↑ Take out the giant bat to save Carl!

↑ They're a lot easier to deal with as Kong.

HAYES

Follow Carl until you reach a large open area in which you'll see a couple of raptors eating a carcass and a bat flying around overhead. There are several ways to clear this area, but the best method is to creep across to the other side (there's some ammo on the way) to the safe area (the small covered section the raptors can't get into), then use a combination of bait and the flames to trap the raptors in the long grass and set fire to it.

When the area is clear you'll need to look for the handles to open the gate. One is in a safe area filled with bushes (remove them with the fire), another is back towards the start of the level protected by spiders (use the bait in the larger area to draw them away).

Past the gate you'll enter a cave and river complex. Follow it through, shooting the caterpillars that appear and remembering to protect Carl as he wades through behind you. You'll reach another large area with Hayes standing across on the other side. You'll need to work your way round to the left to get to the platform opposite Hayes. However, you'll have to go through a large area filled with raptors. Use a combination of the safe areas and bait (you can spear small fish in the water you have to wade across) to get across without damage. Don't worry about killing the raptor too much - Hayes should be your first priority.

As soon as you reach him call him to grab his tommy gun, and use the flames to burn the bushes blocking his escape. Do it quickly or he'll get eaten by yet another raptor. Once he's safe you'll need to head back to the large area and clear it of the raptors you left behind. The tommy gun doesn't have much ammo, so use the spears and safe areas as much as possible.

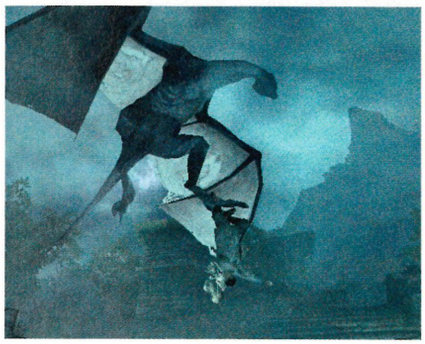
When Hayes and Carl wade across look for the door handle in the corner of the open area and use it to open the wooden gate with Hayes. Follow the path beyond to the base camp.

V-REX

Follow the path from the base camp (grabbing the ammo) and you'll come to an area with a bridge. Once the V-Rex turns up turn and run through the stone arch to a large open area beyond. Your task now is to keep the V-Rex occupied while Hayes »

KONG EVOLVES: PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG IS THE THIRD MOVIE TO BE MADE ABOUT THE GIANT MONKEY, AFTER THE 1933 ORIGINAL AND THE DERIDED 1976 REMAKE, STARRING JEFF BRIDGES AND CHARLES GRODIN

↑ Keep him occupied while Carl opens the gate.



↑ Look after your mates or it's game over, man.

↑ Hit B at any point to scoop up Ann in your hands.

» and Carl open the gate. Shooting the bat will keep him occupied (mmm, dinner), but you can also chuck spears at him to distract him. Hit him in the mouth if you want to slow him up. Keep moving though – if you stop you're dead, literally.

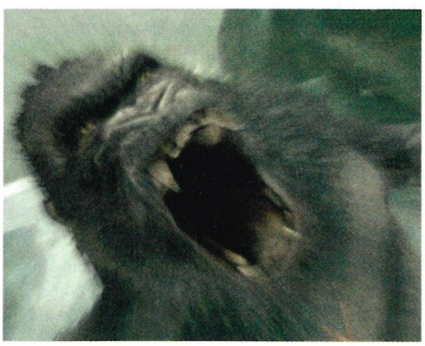
Hayes will shout when the gate is open so peg it through to the stone structure at the end. Hide here while Mr Rex does his stuff. Eventually he'll leave and you can exit. Head via the new opening to the left back the way you came – you should spot another door handle along the way that needs grabbing. Head back across the open area (look out for the V-Rex to the left) to the spot where your friends were attacked and use the door handle to open the gate. Follow the path beyond across the wooden bridge – don't panic, it's meant to break – to the exit.

ANN

The first area you come to (past the ammo for the tommy gun) is a large, open grassy area filled with annoying little dinosaurs. They're easy to kill, but in large numbers can be dangerous, especially since they hide in the grass. A handy tip is to find the raised area and use the bait there to get them to swarm to one easily visible spot.

When you're done here you'll eventually meet with Ann. However, you can't quite reach her. Run with her along the cliff, using your gun to protect her from the endless dinosaurs that attack. Eventually she'll climb up an outcropping. Continue to protect her while at the same time fending off the dinos and bats that attack you (you'll find some more ammo to help). Don't forget to hit Y to reload when you have a chance.

After fending off this wave Ann will carry on into a cloud of bats. Do your best to fend them off, but eventually she'll be scooped up by a giant daddy bat. At this point the level ends.



↑ GRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGGGHH!

PROTECT YOUR FRIENDS

If one of your fellow travellers gets attacked, don't just stand there laughing – help them out! Your friends aren't invincible, and if they take too much damage they'll die which is game over time, baby. Keep an eye on them and move quickly if needs be.

KONG

Your first task as Kong is to pelt it after the big bat. Keep following the path, pressing X each time you reach a gap to jump forward. You also need to press X to jump from trunk to trunk, or grab hold of the vines you can run along – these can be spotted as paler coloured walls.

Eventually the giant bat will stop on a high platform. You'll need to climb up a wall of vines to get to it, but make sure you slap away the smaller bats first or they'll drag you back down. When you do climb up, the big bat will take to the air again and you must continue chasing.

This next section requires a bit more jumping with a few more smaller bats to swat away as you go. Get past this and you'll finally catch the big bat. He'll drop Ann and square up for a fight. The best tips we can give here (and for all Kong's major fights) are to hold down X whenever you can to allow Kong to move quickly and dodge, and tap Y as quickly as possible to enter Kong's super-powerful rage mode. It'll take a few goes, but once you've caught the daddy bat with a few jaw-shuddering blows you should be able to grab him and rip his wings off.

With the bats safely dead, tap B rapidly to shift the giant pillar and smash through the wooden gate. Again, follow the path and vines, jumping when needs be, to catch up with Ann. Smack the raptors out the way as you continue to chase Ann (you'll need to use some hard-to-spot vines at points) until you reach an area where Ann will continue to run away from you. Hit B when you're close enough to scoop her up and you're done.

THE CANYON

Back to being Jack, your first task is to make your way along a deep ravine. Pick up the ammo and make your way across the rickety bridge while shooting the bats that attack (you can use some bait in the small cave near the ammo to distract them while you cross the bridge if you like).

Once across, follow the path to the left. You'll reach another bridge, but instead of crossing, skirt round to the right to find a hidden sniper rifle. Return to the bridge and use the rifle to take out all the bats before making your way across. Once over, follow the long path and you'll arrive at the bottom of the ravine (ooh, brontosaurus stampede!). Wade through to the end and you'll reach an area blocked by bushes. Burn them away using a combination of the nearby spears and fire.

Head on, up the ravine edge and across the bridge (grab the ammo) and into a cave area filled with centipedes. Clear each little area out one by one, breaking the wooden fence to move on to the next. You'll then have to wade through some water (more centipedes) before arriving in a larger underground area. This is home to some scorpions and bats which can be easily fought off.

Keep going until you come to a bridge covered in spiders. Use bait to get rid of them then cross (watch out for one last centipede) to finish the level.

MILLIPEDES

Smash through the wooden gate and grab the sniper rifle. You'll see Hayes and Carl across the ravine, but don't stop to wave this time – they'll be attacked by centipedes. Quickly whip out your rifle

↑ It's an obvious tip, but don't let these things stamp on you.

and protect them via the power of the sniper scope. When they've moved on, up sticks and continue along the ravine until you reach the bridge. Stop to take out the bats first (try to snipe them before they wake up, or use the bait in the small room by the bridge to distract them), then cross the bridge to pick up the ammo and reload.

Again, you'll have to protect Hayes and Carl with the rifle, this time from a combination of crabs and centipedes. When they're safe again, continue across the last bridge into the tunnel beyond.

This leads to a large room filled with bats and centipedes. Providing you stay at the top of the stairs and you have some rifle ammo left you should be able to clear it out without too much trouble. When you're done, look up at the ceiling and you should spot a flame pot. Shoot this down and you'll start a fire in the small bowl. Light a spear from this, then throw the flaming spear through the window into the room beyond the waterfall. The trick here is to light the second bowl visible through the window, thereby moving fire from one place to another without having your flame go out by walking through the waterfall. This is a common *King Kong* puzzle and it won't be the last time you'll come across it.

Work your way past the waterfall room (you'll need to smash past a few wooden fences and centipedes) and you'll arrive in another large cave where you'll have to protect Carl and Hayes from centipedes again, while at the same time fending off a crab attack. Before you can finally regroup with your friends, use the flame you cunningly moved earlier to burn away the bushes to reveal a door handle. Grab this and use it to open the door allowing all three of you to exit the level.

BRONTOSAURUS

The first thing to note here is that you'll be running through the legs of some pretty big dinosaurs, so do your best not to get squashed. Follow Carl and Hayes across the ravine – avoiding those massive feet – and you'll reach an impenetrable barrier of bushes. You need some fire, but unfortunately it's located at the other end of the ravine.

Turn round and head down the ravine in the direction the brontos are heading. Along the way you'll find a shotgun, several raptors (who can also be crushed under the huge brontosaurus feet) and a small safe area you can shelter in. When your way is barred by bushes, head up the steps to the right and across the bridge. Keep going to the very end (more raptors), then head to the right, go through the waterfall and you'll reach the fire.

Set light to a spear and chuck it at the fire bowl and bushes opposite, thus getting the fire past the waterfall. You should now be able to turn round and head back towards Hayes and Carl with a flaming spear. There'll be more raptors, but now you have the benefit of flame to burn the long grass they love hiding in. You'll also find plenty of flame bowls dotted around the ravine which you should always light – it saves you going all the way back to grab some flame if you drop it.

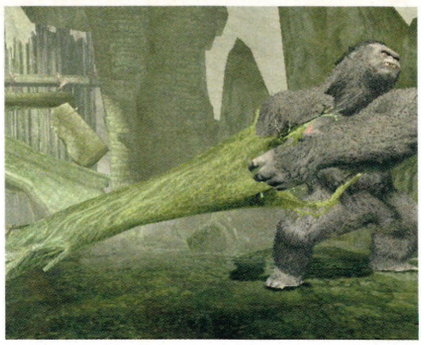
By the time you reach the safe area you'll notice the brontos have started going berserk. Carry on and you'll see the reason why – a big T-Rex. Quickly duck into where Hayes and Carl are waiting and burn the bushes away. By the time old Rexy bashes down the stone arch to get to you the bushes will be burned and you'll be away.

JIMMY

Follow Carl and Hayes (grab the rifle along the way) until you come to a large area full of tall grass. You'll have to face off against a horde of bats and smaller dinosaurs here. This should be easy stuff by now – just don't forget to keep a protective eye on your companions and look out for opportunities to use dead bats as bait whenever possible.

SPIDERS

Perhaps the world's most unpleasant creatures, if you see a swarm of these stay clear and certainly don't waste any ammo on them. The only way to get by them is to lure them away using some live bait. Look around, you'll always find something nearby you can stab with a spear and chuck to the spiders.



↑ Tree trunks are very good for smacking dinos.

Carry on following Jimmy's cries. Eventually you'll reach the poor lad – quickly use the rifle to shoot the dinos attacking him (you'll find some more ammo nearby), then help Hayes fend off the second wave of attackers. When it's all clear Jimmy will punt off down the river – follow him, cutting right into the swamp (look out for the natives hidden on the banks). Keep going and you'll come to a large area with a gate at one end.

At this point the way behind you will shut, catching you in a native trap. You'll be attacked by waves of smaller dinosaurs and finally a much larger one. Stay at the bottom and let them come to you. That way you'll have more time to take them out one at a time.

Keep heading up the hill. You'll now be attacked by flaming spears so keep moving. Get past the burning bush and you'll reach the river again. Say hello to Jimmy then veer to the left. Use a flame (there are plenty being thrown at you) to clear a path through the bushes (it's easier to throw it at the bushes than walk right up into the hail of spears). This will allow you to get on the log and cross the river. Avoid the last of the spears, shoot the dinos and hop onto Jimmy's raft.

ON THE RAFT

This is an on-rails level. To start with you'll be attacked by a bunch of centipedes. Wipe them out, not forgetting to check that Hayes and Carl are okay. You'll then be attacked by a succession of natives. The easiest and quickest way to deal with these is to use a spear or bone from your raft with the torch (never waste bullets on them) and then go for the bushes that are always near the natives. This should burn the natives to death and collapse their structures. Do it quickly, though, or you'll end up full of burning spears yourself.

After burning a few bridges you'll reach a bend – look out for a few more bats and centipedes – followed by some rapids and one last huge native bridge (again, go for the bushes asap). Get past this and you're done.

RAPIDS

Another rails level, but utterly more frantic. As soon as you start check the right bank. Another T-Rex will appear. Keep shooting him in the throat when he opens his mouth to slow him down. Look out for the bat that appears too – you can shoot him to slow down the Rex.

The next section is a bit easier if you face backwards as you'll be able to keep an eye on both the Tyrannosaurs chasing you. Take out the bats while at the same time shooting back the T-Rex twins whenever they get close enough to bite (easier said than done). It helps if you chuck a flaming spear onto the grassy bank – this will set light to the grass that in turn holds up the dinosaurs. Once you enter the cave that's the level done. »

HEAR HIM ROAR! KONG'S ROAR IN THE ORIGINAL MOVIE WAS A RECORDING OF A LION'S AND A TIGER'S ROAR COMBINED AND PLAYED BACKWARDS

↑ Don't let yourself get caught between a pair of hungry T-Rexes.

» FIGHT

Back to Kong. The first thing you need to do is put Ann down (B). Then use punches and grabs (and your rage mode - see above) to pummel the T-Rex. After a few good throws, you'll pick him up for a finishing move (tap the buttons to complete). When he's dead, quickly shift the pillar blocking the door and bash your way through.

Jump your way along the path until you reach an area full of raptors. Batter their puny bodies then bash through the door to continue. A few more jumps and leaps and you'll land between two T-Rexes. Fighting two at once requires a bit more thought: don't get caught between them or they'll shred you. The best method is to try and get some space between you and them (an easy way is to grab one and throw him at the other) to give you time to activate your rage mode. Be careful though, if the Rexes aren't after you, they're after Ann so keep an eye out for her. When you've killed them both you're done.

SWAMPS

From base camp grab the weapons - either the pistol or, behind some flammable bushes, preferably the sniper rifle - and follow your friends forward. Kill the swampcrawler (look out for the telltale splashes in the water) in the first bit of swamp you wade through. When you come to the second larger swamp area, stand on the bank and cover Hayes and co as they wade across, then let them do the same for you as you cross.

Keep going and you'll come to an even larger area of swamp. Wade through this, working in tandem with Hayes to clear all the swampcrawlers and bats. Once you're through you'll find some much-needed rifle ammunition.

Continue onwards past the bats and you'll reach a large open area clogged with bushes. See that podium with the fire on? Use the narrow ramp to climb onto it then use the spears and flame to burn away the bushes. Stay on the podium (you'll have a few bats to polish off) and use it as a vantage point to snipe off any swampcrawlers that attack you friends below. Once they're safely to the other side of the swamp, jump down and cross yourself (don't worry, Hayes will cover you). Climb the stairs to finish the level.

CHASED BY V-REX

Feel the raw Kong power! Use the tree trunk to fight off the raptors (it's worth remembering that, as Kong, you should always try and grab these ultra-damaging trunks when possible). When they're dead, dump the trunk and grab Ann. Climb the pillar to the right and drop Ann at the top. She'll set light to the bushes, blocking Kong's route at the top of the vines.

Jump back down and fight off the raptors and bats before climbing the vines. When you reach the top, chase Ann along the stream, smashing the raptors as you go. Pick up Ann at the bottom of the waterfall and carry on along the vines. Keep heading forwards until you reach the next open area. Kill the bats, smash open the boarded section on the left to reveal a fire then climb the pillar to the right and drop Ann off again.

Ann will grab a spear then run back to Kong. Pick her up, jump back down and drop her by the flame (you'll have a few bats to fight off on the way). Ann will set light to her spear, but she'll be attacked by a gang of raptors. Fight these off as well as yet more bloody bats before delivering Ann to the top of the column again. Wait for her to burn the bushes then head up the vines to the top of the cliff.

Keep chasing Ann until the Rex appears. Jump forwards and you'll land on a plateau. Fight off the raptors and the second Rex that appears (grab the trunk to help out), but do it quickly - as you can see in the background Ann is fending off the other Rex with only spear. When you're done, quickly move the pillar and smash through the door.

THE LOG

You don't need any help here - just move along the log and wait for the inevitable. When you wake up, follow the river to meet up with your friends, then turn right to follow Ann's screams.

THE SKULL ISLANDERS

The first thing you need to do is kill the natives throwing spears at you. The best way is to throw something at them - either the trunk, the masonry or, ideally, the raptors that leap out and attack Ann. When the area is clear, move the pillar, smash the door then grab Ann to continue.

Follow the path (smashing your way through a native village - great fun), doing the usual Kong jumps until you reach an open area. Drop Ann and she'll start climbing the scaffolding; protect her from the natives while she's working her way up (don't worry about the bat, she can handle it herself). It's helpful if you pick up the trunk for this.

When the fire has done its job, climb the vines and pick Ann up, then it's one final bit of jumping (enjoy smashing the native huts along the way) before you wind up at a sealed door. Drop Ann, shift the column then... oops, weren't expecting that, were you?

TO SAVE ANN

Run forwards and you'll see Ann being chased by the T-Rex. She'll fall into the river, so follow the path to the left to give chase. This will lead down to the river. Jump in and wade downstream through the T-Rex's legs! As soon as you can, get out on the bank to the right, grab a spear and chuck it at the Rex. This will distract his attention from Ann to you, allowing Ann to escape.

Turn round and carry on downstream. The Rex is chasing you now, so don't dawdle. You'll pass through a stone arch into a large open area. The Rex will now go back to chasing Ann, so throw a spear again to divert his attention back to you once more.

You now need to buy Ann enough time to open the gate. Unfortunately, that means leading Rex on a merry old chase. The best way to do this and stay safe is to keep the stone structures between you and him for as long as possible. Use the spears to

BONUS POINTS

If you're replaying levels for bonus points it's worth bearing in mind that's its more often the points you lose than you score that matter. Injuries and deaths are huge score-sappers, so try not to get hit (or die). You'll also lose points for every shot or spear you fire, so be accurate (although you'll lose a lot more points for gunshots than spear throws - another reason to save on ammo).

↑ Don't drop the blonde, Kong!

↑ Drop Ann off so she can burn open a path for Kong.

↑ Keep these structures between you and Rex to slow him down.

the throat technique to slow him up and get his attention back the moment he wanders over to Ann.

If you can survive for long enough, Ann will eventually open the gate. Peg it through and head for the opening in the wall. Run up the cliff path through the long grass as quickly as you can to grab Ann. When you're safe, follow the path up to rendezvous with Hayes and Jimmy.

THE CAVE

Another story level. Just follow your companions through the cave. You won't face any danger.

VENATOSAURUS

From the start run up the stairs to the small shrine at the top. Here you'll find two boxes of ammo (we suggest you grab the shotgun for the next bit) and plenty of spears. From here you'll have to make a stand against several dinosaurs. This is one of the hardest fights in the game, and it's made all the more awkward now that you've three companions to keep an eye on as well. To be honest, the only real advice we can give here is to stay in the middle and keep reloading. You'll face off against a few waves of raptors before eventually being attacked by a venatosaurus (basically a big ugly raptor).

ONLINE CODE SHOP

To open up all the bonus extras in the game you'll need to visit www.kingkonggame.com and register your score on the website (the game will give you a long, complicated code to do this). In return the website will dish up the secret codes you need to unlock those last few extra features.

When you've killed all the dinosaurs you'll need to find some fire and a door handle. Follow Ann down the hill into the side passage. Smash through the gate in the small room and carry on down the stairs. You'll have to wade through some water in the next two chambers (look out for the centipedes). Keep going and you'll come to a large cave with a fire bowl at its centre. Jump down into the water and collect the flame on a spear (you'll be attacked by some crabs, although they're fairly easy to deal with).

Throw the fire back up at the scrub to light the bowl at the top of the steps. Head back the way you came, lighting the bowls along the way - you'll be attacked by crabs and centipedes as you go. When you return to Hayes and Jimmy burn away the bushes then follow Ann to the other side of the cave through the waterfall.

Take out the raptor and centipedes and continue. In the next room you'll see a couple of centipedes and raptors in long grass just asking to be set on fire. Burn or shoot them to death then drop down and grab the door handle by the gate. Turn round and head back to the others. Slot the door handle home, open the gate and you're away.

IN THE MUD

Grab the ammo in the first area and dispatch the dinos that come running in. Grab a spear and stab some bait then head on past the bushes to the spiders. Use the bait on the spiders then nip past

↑ Always put Ann down before a fight if you want to live.

↑ Keep your spear lit whenever you can.

↑ Bats are annoying, but make good dino-bait.

quickly to the fire bowl. Grab some fire then go back past the spiders before they lose interest in your bait and burn the bushes.

Head on until you reach the swamp. While the others wade through stand on the wooden platform and take out the swampcrawlers. When they're safe, work your own way across. Follow the path on until you reach the stone temple structure. As you climb to the top you'll be attacked by a bunch of bats headed up by a big daddy bat. Use the spears to take them out.

When they're dead, make your way back down the other side into the swamp. Press on quickly, taking out any bats or dinos with spears until you reach the rifle ammo. Grab it, then quickly turn round to protect your friends from the swampcrawlers that start chasing.

The swamp then leads to an underwater temple. This is a maze of chambers separated by destructible gates. Work your way through, chamber by chamber, stopping to clear the swampcrawlers out as you go. Hayes will help you out if you let him. If you get lost, just follow Hayes and he'll put you back on track. As soon as you escape out the other side the level is done.

CALL KONG

Follow your friends out onto the lake and you'll see Engelhorn land his seaplane... for all of ten seconds. Once the T-Rex appears, turn left and peg it up the hill. The route up is quite bendy so it's best if you follow one of your companions. The Rex will give chase and you'll need to spin round and fire him a warning shot or chuck a spear at him at least once to stop him from catching up.

Keep running to the top of the hill and through the gap into the arena beyond. Rather than hang around with the others talking, make a beeline for the rifle ammo at the centre. Eventually Ann will suggest trying to signal Kong. When the T-Rex reappears, follow your companions to the shelter. It's at this point, with Rex stomping around, that Ann decides to do a runner. Again, it's up to you to keep Rex occupied while she does her thing. Shoot the bats to keep him busy and never let his attention wander towards Ann. Once Ann reaches »

↑ Unfortunately, you have to save Jamie Bell.

NO MORE PIES FOR YOU: PETER JACKSON COULD HAVE PLAYED THE GIANT MONKEY HIMSELF - UNTIL THE ACTUAL SHOOT OF KING KONG, DURING WHICH HE LOST 70LBS. THAT'S FIVE STONE!

↑ It's Ann in her undies! Even dressed like this she's still better in a fight than Carl Denham.

» the top, make sure you shoot any bats that might attack her using the rifle's scope. If you both survive long enough, Ann will light the brazier and scream for Kong.

KONG TO THE RESCUE

Once you've defeated the T-Rex, Ann will be captured. You're now under an extremely strict time limit - dawdle and Ann will die. Quickly move the column and smash through the door. Chase the daddy bat, pausing briefly to beat off the other smaller bats as you go.

Keep chasing the big bat (there's a very tricky section in a ravine where you have to jump from one wall to another while you're attacked by bats - try not to let them hit you or you'll lose your grip, fall and die) and you'll eventually catch it on a small plateau. Activate rage mode as soon as you can and keep reactivating it throughout the scrap - this is a tricky fight against two big bats, and you'll need all the help you can get (such as the conveniently placed tree trunk).

When you've killed all the bats, climb the vines and smash through the door at the top. Grab Ann and follow the path onwards. When you get to the lava area, jump onto the column then straight over to the wall on the other side. Do it quickly as the column starts to sink into the lava.

Keep going and you'll reach a waterfall area where you'll find three T-Rexes. Drop Ann as soon as you can and prepare yourself for the toughest fight in the game. Again, try to give yourself enough space and time to activate rage mode, then take out the Rexes one by one. Grab Ann from the tree when they're all dead, then head upstream through the big door at the end.

TO THE PLANE

As soon as Jimmy's finished crying, a pair of raptors will attack. Take them both out. Follow Jimmy up the steps and open the gate with him. Once you're through, you need to head back down the hill, only now it's full of dinosaurs. Quickly head down to the safe area on the right and smash your way in through the wooden gate (you can shoot the bat to keep the raptors occupied). If you're lucky, Jimmy will make it too - if you're unlucky, you'll likely have to save him from the raptors yourself.

Either way, you'll need to fight your way down. Once you've killed the two raptors at the top you'll need to wade through the long grass to get to the middle section of the hill. Don't waste time looking out for Jimmy, just run to the safe area on the right and grab some fire. Use this to set light to as much brush on the hill as possible - this is easily the quickest way to kill most of the dinosaurs. Get across to the safe area opposite for a tommy gun. You should now be able to mop up the rest of the enemies using a combination of gunshots and fire (there are plenty of flammable bushes you can chuck some enticing bait into).

If you haven't done so already, burn the bushes blocking the seaplane. Jimmy will board for safety, leaving you to follow the path to Kong's mountain.

TO THE LAIR

Follow the path, making sure you grab the rifle ammo, then head over the river to begin your ascent up to Kong's lair. The whole mountain is crowded with bats so use your rifle's scope to take out as many as you can before they physically move to attack you. There are actually more bats than you have ammo, so try to use spears and bones whenever you can.

Eventually you'll come to a broken staircase - turn left and you'll find a wooden gate. Bust through it and you'll come to big chamber inside the mountain. Use the spears and bait near the far steps to lure the dinosaur into the middle. This should give you a free run to the wooden gate on the right-hand side. Smash through this and head up the stairs. Grab the rifle ammo then use this to kill the bats. While the big dinosaur munches on these, peg it across to the other side of the chamber where the fire is.

Again, smash your way through the gate and head up the stairs, watching out for the bats that attack. Grab a spear and set it alight, then throw it at the dinosaur. He should run towards the bushes in pain, set them alight and catch himself in his own fiery death trap (if it doesn't work, just chuck a flaming spear into the bushes yourself).

GRAVITY GUN

If you're throwing spears and bones, remember they're affected by gravity. Always aim well above where you're trying to hit to account for the amount of drop they'll have in their flight.

↑ It's alright. He's not dead. Well, not yet at least.

With the bushes clear run up the staircase to the left (careful, the big dinosaur may still be alive). You'll see the door handle, but it's protected by spiders. Use the nearby bait to shift them, then quickly grab the handle and make your way back across the chamber as soon as you can. Use the handle to open the gate, step through then smash the grille on the right to exit.

KONG'S LAIR

Follow the passage to the wooden fence, smash through it and step back outside. Grab the rifle on your left. It's now the final ascent. As before, make your way up the steps, picking off the bats using the rifle scope as you go.

When you reach the top enter through the huge stone arch. Follow the steps down and the passage round to the right - this will lead into Kong's lair. Swim over to Kong and Ann then call out to get her attention. Swim over to meet her and you're done.

FIGHT IN THE LAIR

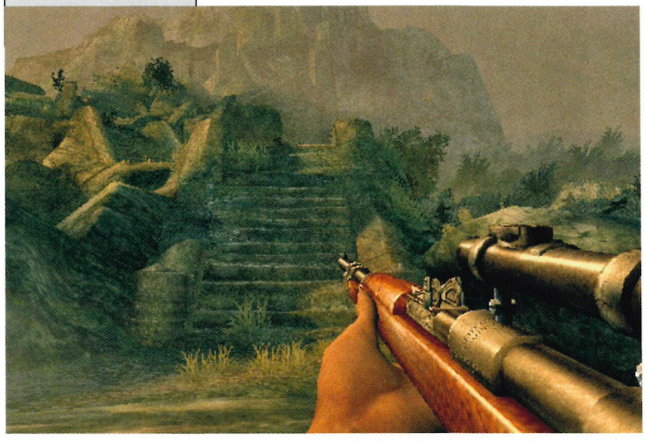
This is a pretty straightforward fight against three large snakes in a circular arena. Again, follow the same Kong routine - make yourself some space and keep reactivating rage mode and you'll defeat the snakes, easy-peasy. If you're having trouble, don't forget to use the X-button to run-dodge.

FREE

Just follow Ann off the cliff into the river. Swim towards the raft and you'll float downstream to the next level.

CHASED BY KONG

Keep following Ann until you reach the open area filled with fighting dinosaurs. Recognise it? You were



↑ Kong's mountain - and you've got to climb to the very top of it.

KONG SECRETS What they are and how to unlock them

↓ Get everything and the happy ending is yours!

Once you've completed the game you'll be able to replay every level, only this time for points. As you build up your score, more and more secrets become unlocked until you reach the ultimate prize: the alternate ending where Kong doesn't die!

WHAT YOU NEED	WHAT YOU GET
5% Completion	Art: Environments 1
15% Completion	Old Movie filter
25% Completion/Internet Code 1	Art: Environments 2
50% Completion	Art: Creatures
75% Completion	Art: Kong 1
100% Completion:	High Contrast filter
100% Completion/Internet Code 2	Horizontal Flip
20,000 Points	Art: Kong 2
50,000 Points	Art: Environments 3
75,000 Points	Peter Jackson interview
100,000 Points	Art: Kong 3
150,000 Points	Art: Kong 4
200,000 Points/Internet Code 3	Philippa Boyens interview
250,000 Points	Alternate ending

here much earlier in the game. Ann will head off to the safe area to the right - rather than follow her, head to the left to the other safe area, trying not to attract the dinos' attention. You're after the fire that's inside. Like before, you can use it to burn the grass the dinosaurs are standing in (use some bait if necessary). When the threat is gone, take a flaming spear over to the other side of the arena where you'll find some bushes to burn.

Head along the newly revealed path and keep going (you'll be able to hear Kong above you). Laugh at his big hairy arm as it reaches out for you then head on to the base camp at the end.

HEADING BACK

Continue to follow Ann. Use the spears lying around to take out the raptors that leap across the ravine at you. The path ends in a wall of bushes, but you'll find a fire pot on the wall to knock down onto them. Once the flames die down carry on and you'll be attacked by another gang of dinosaurs. Take them all out using the spears lying around.

When you reach the rubble at the end, turn right and head through the hole in the wall. Keep following Ann. Soon after you pass Kong you'll reach a large grassy open area. Some natives will appear and set it alight with their flame spears. Hang back until the flames go out, then quickly follow Ann until you reach base camp.

YOU'RE ALL WRONG!

Our guide not quite matching up to your game? It's not that we're wrong, it's basically that *King Kong* has adaptive difficulty that alters certain game factors according to how you're doing. It's quite possible you might encounter more or fewer enemies than detailed here. Our advice is to keep your eyes open and your wits about you.

BACK TO THE VILLAGE

Follow the path and you'll reach an area cluttered with bushes. Knock down the fire pots on the wall to clear the ground. You'll hear centipedes, but don't worry, you won't be attacked by any.

The way out is a hole in the wall in the far left-hand corner. Burn the weeds surrounding it then follow the path beyond. There's really only one route you can follow from here to the wall. Once you reach the wall, wait for Ann to climb across the wooden gangway.

KONG'S CAPTURE

This is easily the best level - it's basically just a native-smacking rollercoaster. Jump across the gap to smash your way into the native's village. Once you're in you can smash and pillage to your heart's content. The aim is to get through the door at the far side, but you won't be able to shift the column until you've taken out the surrounding natives.

Work your way around the village, jumping and swinging when needed, until you're satisfied all the natives are dead. When you're done, smash your way through the exit door then head down, past yet another set of hapless natives and through another destructible door.

Once you're through, jump across the lava and grab Ann. Follow the path to the column, climb up it then drop Ann off so she can burn away the bushes on the cliff. Pick her up again when she's done then climb the vines to the top. Now follow the path to the beach. You can attack the sailors, but eventually you'll succumb to the green smoke.

↑ Hammer the buttons to break free!

↑ Grab cars to throw at the spotlights.

KONG STRUCK DOWN

Simply wander around Kong while Carl gloats. There's nothing else to do but listen.

IN THE STREETS OF NEW YORK

Once the curtains are open wiggle the stick and mash the buttons to free yourself. You're now ready to terrorise New York!

The first thing to do is to smash all the spotlights you can. The easiest way to do this is to grab a car and throw it once the perspective shifts to behind the spotlight. Smash your way through the gate, then follow the street round. Smash through another gate, then jump across the gap in the road.

Beyond you'll find several streets filled with tiny people running around in a general state of panic. Have fun smashing up the stupid New Yorkers. You'll come across a large-calibre gun on the back of a truck at one point. You can't run straight at this - it'll kill you every time - but you can throw cars at it to blow it up.

The area you're heading for is a big destructible gate with a bus parked across it. Smash the two searchlights on either side of the street then lift the bus out of the way (this takes some button-tapping!) and bash your way through the gate. Head straight down the street ignoring the side roads - don't bother trying to get past the big guns; you can't - and you'll meet the lovely Ann.

Start climbing the Empire State Building on the left (use X to start). Keep going up when you reach the second tier. If you find yourself slipping down, move to the inside corners and try climbing there.

THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

Keep climbing up until you reach the very top. When you're there simply keep swatting away at the planes as they fly past. Not that it will do you any good as the outcome is pretty inevitable...

KONG'S DEATH

That's it: the end. All you need do now is sit and watch with the smug sense of satisfaction rolling off you in waves. Shame about that cheesy last line though...

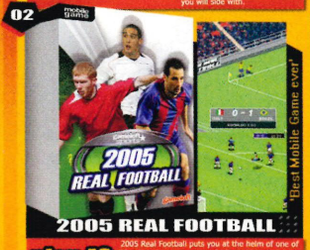
↑ Kong dies, no matter how hard you swat.

X LAST WORDS THE FILM'S FAMOUS LAST LINE ("OH NO, IT WASN'T THE AIRPLANES - IT WAS BEAUTY KILLED THE BEAST") WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO BE SPOKEN BY THE LATE FAY WRAY, WHO PLAYED ANN DARROW IN THE 1933 ORIGINAL

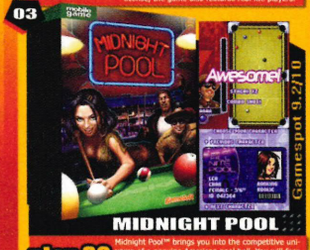
Mobile Games

01

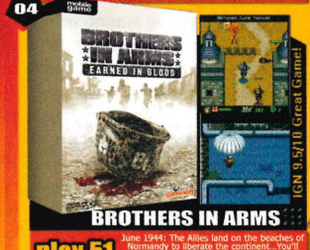
MEDIEVAL COMBAT
play 49
Medieval Combat: Age of Glory plunges you into the heart of fantastical medieval mythology. Demons or humans, it is up to you to choose which of the five initial combatants you will side with.

02


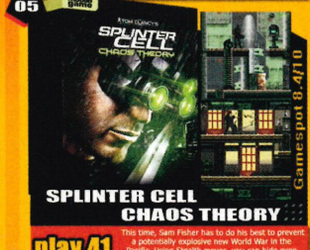
2005 REAL FOOTBALL
play 43
2005 Real Football puts you at the helm of one of 32 national teams or one of 16 prestigious clubs in 5 varied game modes (Quickplay, Exhibition, Cup, League and Training). Thanks to the FIFPRO license, the game also features real-life players.

03


MIDNIGHT POOL
play 39
Midnight Pool™ brings you into the competitive universe of a genuine American pool hall. You will face 8 original players, none of whom are ever at a loss for words! Choose from 3 available characters, then unlock the others in Tournament mode.

04


BROTHERS IN ARMS
play 51
June 1944: The Allies land on the beaches of Normandy to liberate the continent...You'll have to show your brothers in arms how to face the terrible ordeals that await you so that they will follow you on the road to liberty...

05


SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY
play 41
This time, Sam Fisher has to do his best to prevent a potentially explosive new World War in the Pacific. Using Stealth moves, you can hide even closer to your enemies, grab guards to cut their throats and kill them even more silently.

06

ASPHALT URBAN GT2
play 53
You are taken out on 8 tracks inspired by genuine places. Each track is part of a specific graphic universe and includes different tunnels and elevations that enable you to perform impressive jumps,among other things ...

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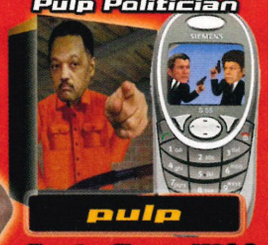

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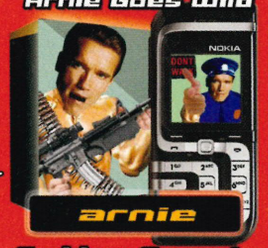

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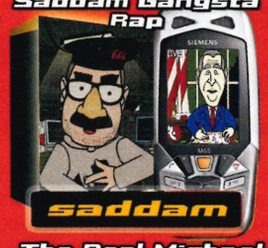

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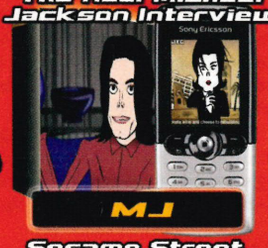

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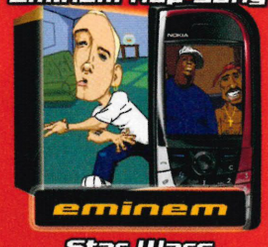

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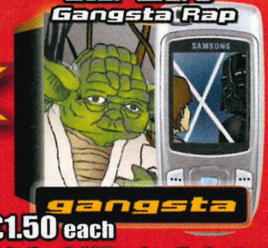

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Skive With LIVE

Win BIG* with our awesome monthly Xbox Live challenge

*And by 'big' we actually mean 'something relatively easy to slip into a lady's handbag'.

TEXT US YOUR GAMERTAG

New Year, New Skive

First it was cars (*Forza Motorsport*), then it was motorbikes (*MotoGP3*) and now it's cars again - only this time, instead of asking you to bunk off school/work in an effort to grind this country to a halt while you show us your vehicle-handling expertise, we're asking you to cause the biggest online pile-up in history. Yep, it's an all new Skive with Live and it's coming at you with broken wing mirrors and exploding fuel tanks courtesy of EA's *Burnout Revenge*.

THE CHALLENGE

Isn't it obvious? We want you to go insurance claim crazy in the 'Drain Damage' Crash Junction (Rank 4, Angel Valley). Just give us the most apocalyptic, highest collateral damage crash you can. Our best is a fairly decent $15,002,250.

WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO

Just text OXMTAG (one word) followed by a space and then your Gamertag to 80889* (please make sure you enter it correctly and double check you've got space on your Friends list first) and we'll send you a Friends request. Please be patient - this may take a few days! Race like a demon, and the person with the best time as of 5pm on 16 February will be declared the winner.

WHAT YOU WIN

Apart from the respect of your fellow gamers, get the fastest time and we'll send you the Xbox game of your choice. Plus we'll get all the best Skivers back for a Special Champion of Champions competition, with an amazing prize up for grabs. So get texting and start skiving!

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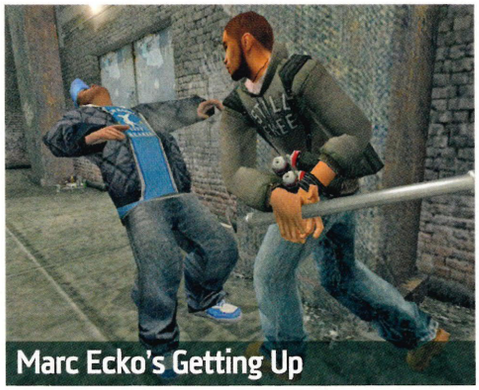
Next Month

Official XBOX Magazine

Reviews Exclusive reviews before every other magazine!

Fight Night Round 3

EA re-enters the ring with all new fight dynamics, boxers, and the biggest pair of cauliflower ears seen in video game history.

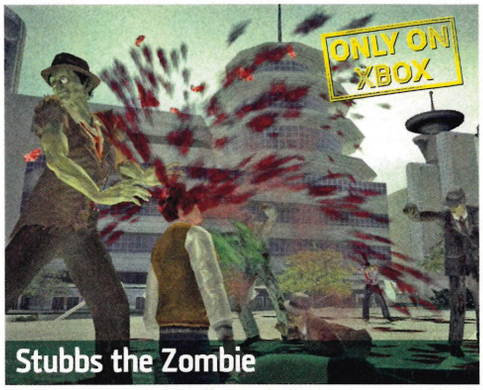


Marc Ecko's Getting Up

It's *Prince of Persia* set in a modern urban environment. Will a new genre be launched here, or merely die a swift, horrible death?

FIFA Street 2

Will it be better than the previous effort? EA's promising so. We fire a few shots at it to test the water. Full verdict next month!



Stubbs the Zombie

Is this shuffling slice of 50s nonsense as good as the *Halo* engine powering it? We grab a spoon and dig deep inside its brains...

Painkiller: Hell Wars

The descent into madness begins! Find out what it's really like to fight in a war between heaven and hell. Who will win? It's all here...

Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows

Gauntlet gets yet another revamp - but will it be third time lucky for the slash 'em up legend? Read our full verdict!

Previews See the Xbox games of tomorrow first!

Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter

Every time we see this it looks better. And we've finally had the chance to play the Xbox version. Find out what we think!

Splinter Cell Double Agent

Sam's unarmed, unloved and he's lost all his gadgets! We've got all the goss on the most exciting *Splinter Cell* yet...

Championship Manager 06

Stat-juggling to the MAX! Eidos reinvents what it means to be a football manager. Eriksson, pay attention at the back!

OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast

Hands-on with Sega's ultimate *OutRun* title. Will the blend of arcade action and Xbox-only content merge perfectly together?

Scarface: The World is Yours

It's been rather quiet on the *Scarface* front for a bit too long now. We pay a 'little visit' to the developer to find out why...

BLACK

Criterion's explosive masterpiece is unleashed! We explore all that is Black - we'll let you know all about it... if we survive! It's set to be a scorcher

Exclusive review and playable demo next month!

ON SALE FEB 16

Hitman: Blood Money

Agent 47 returns, but this time there's a new cold-blooded killer in town. Has old bald-head finally met his match? Find out next month...

Don't Miss Out

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NEXT MONTH Official XBOX Magazine

Official XBOX Magazine ON THE DISC

STUBBS THE ZOMBIE

Turn people into undead groupies and eat as many brains as you can before the rozzers get you! And even if they do, they won't be able to kill you... you're dead already!

BLACK

One of the most intensely beautiful shooters we've seen on Xbox. See what all the fuss is about as you play through the most delicious sliver of *Black* action.

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

Get online for a few laps of Codemasters' stunning racer. There's almost nothing you can't drive! Although we'd probably draw the line at lawnmowers. Oh, hang on...

KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE 2

Swing massive swords about and turn enemy goons into dog food. Got what it takes to be a knight of the crusades? Can you handle a wench as well as a mace? Find out!

THE GODFATHER

You don't want to mess with this family! Watch in horror as disrespectful local businesspeople receive an offer they can't refuse (getting their faces smashed in).

COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE

It's midnight, and the evil Nazis have taken over a barn and stuffed it full of hostages. Watch the daring rescue attempt and see how the series has finally evolved.

XBOX 360 VIDEOS

Full Auto

The streets are burning as rival gangs take to their cars and blow the merry hell out of everything in town. Will this make you want to buy a copy of the game or take your old Escort to *Scrapheap Challenge* for a little 'modification'?

NBA 2K6

Watch tall Americans run up and down a basketball court sweating like real-time pigs. It's so realistic it'll make you want to whip out your own meatball for a few classy slam-dunks. As you do.

NHL 2K6

Those ice effects get ever more impressive. As this exclusive demo shows, the boundaries of sports games are pushed to the limits. On ice, no less!

Amped 3

The mountains get bigger and the snowboarders get crazier. We take a bomb from the top of the slopes down to the very bottom as *Amped 3* shows off its eye-stinging wares. Sweet.

OVER 650 REVIEWS NOW ON THE DISC!

MOVIES

Black

Watch as a developer takes you through the game, step by glorious step. You might want to cover your ears though – it can get pretty noisy at times. Let us know if you find any alternate routes through the level too – rumour has it there are quiet a few.

TOCA Race Driver 3

Watch as cars slam into each other and your driver makes enemies in the pits afterwards. It's not a pretty sight, but being a top-class rubber-burning stud can put a few people's noses out of joint.

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D = 0 4
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Dead or Alive Ultimate
Dead or Alive Volleyball
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Desert Storm
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Deus Ex: Invisible War
Doom III
DRIV3R
Dynasty Warriors 4

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F = 0 6
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Full Spectrum Warrior

G = 0 7
Galleon
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Ghost Recon
Ghost Recon 2
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Halo 2
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I = 0 9
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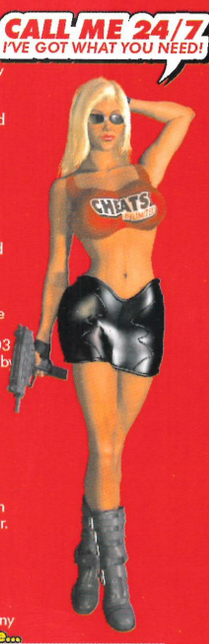

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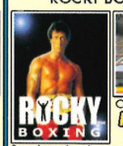
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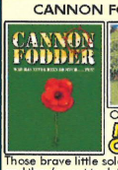
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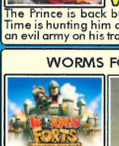
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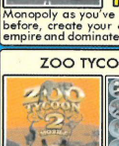
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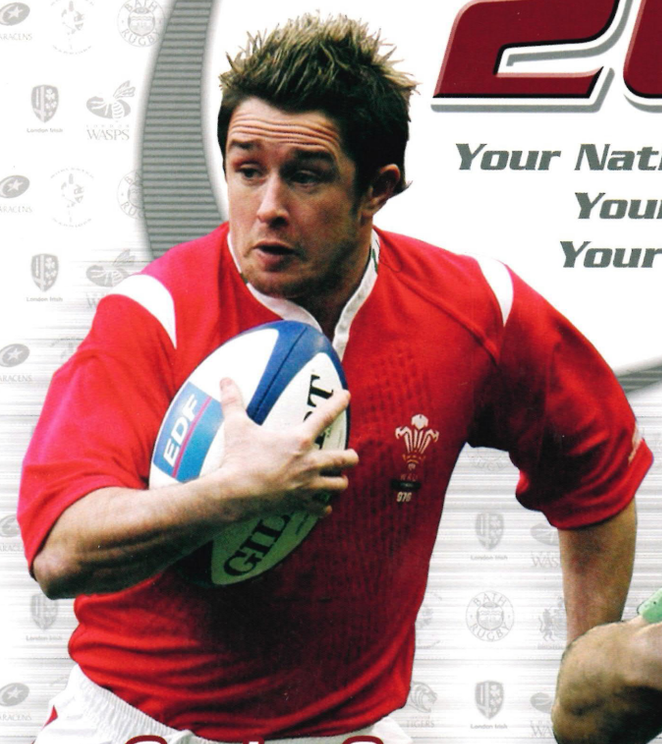

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Commentary by Dewi Morris & John Inverdale

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