

BACK FROM FF1:
AERIS LIVES!
see pg. 62

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REVIEWED:

- Virtua Fighter 4 (PS2)
- James Bond (Xbox)
- Soccer Slam (GameCube)
- Hooters Road Trip (PS1)



PREVIEWED:

- Dragon Ball Z (GBA)
- Robotech (Xbox)
- Godzilla (GameCube)
- Spyro the Dragon (PS2)

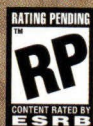
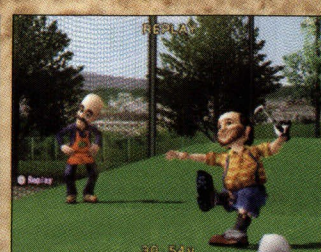
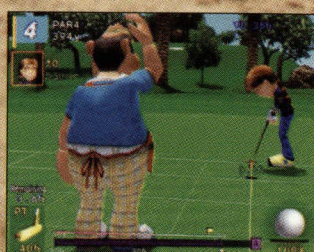
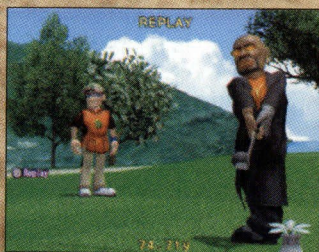
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The background of the cover features a large, stylized image of a gun barrel, with the silhouettes of a man (James Bond) and a woman (Bond girl) visible through the barrel's opening. The man is holding a handgun, and the woman is also holding a handgun. The scene is set against a dramatic, orange and yellow sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. Various action elements are depicted around the central image: a woman in a camouflage jacket holding a large machine gun on the left; a helicopter in flight on the right; a classic Aston Martin DB5 driving on a road in the bottom left; and a fighter jet in the bottom left corner. The title "007 Agent Under Fire" is prominently displayed in the center, with "007" in a large, stylized font and "Agent Under Fire" in a smaller, bold font below it.

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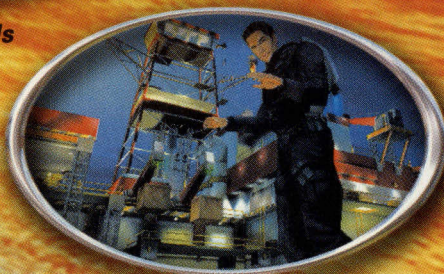
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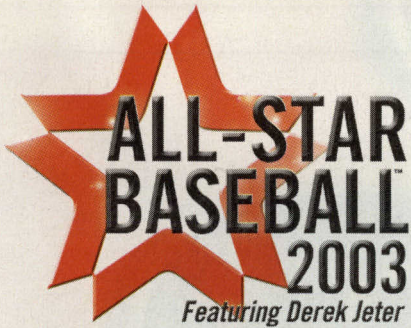


PlayStation®2





THE GAME



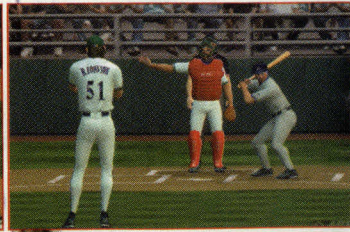
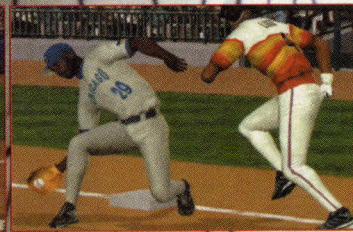
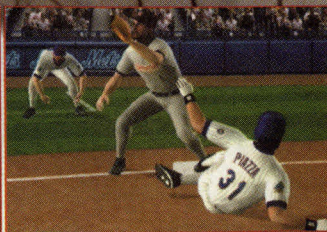
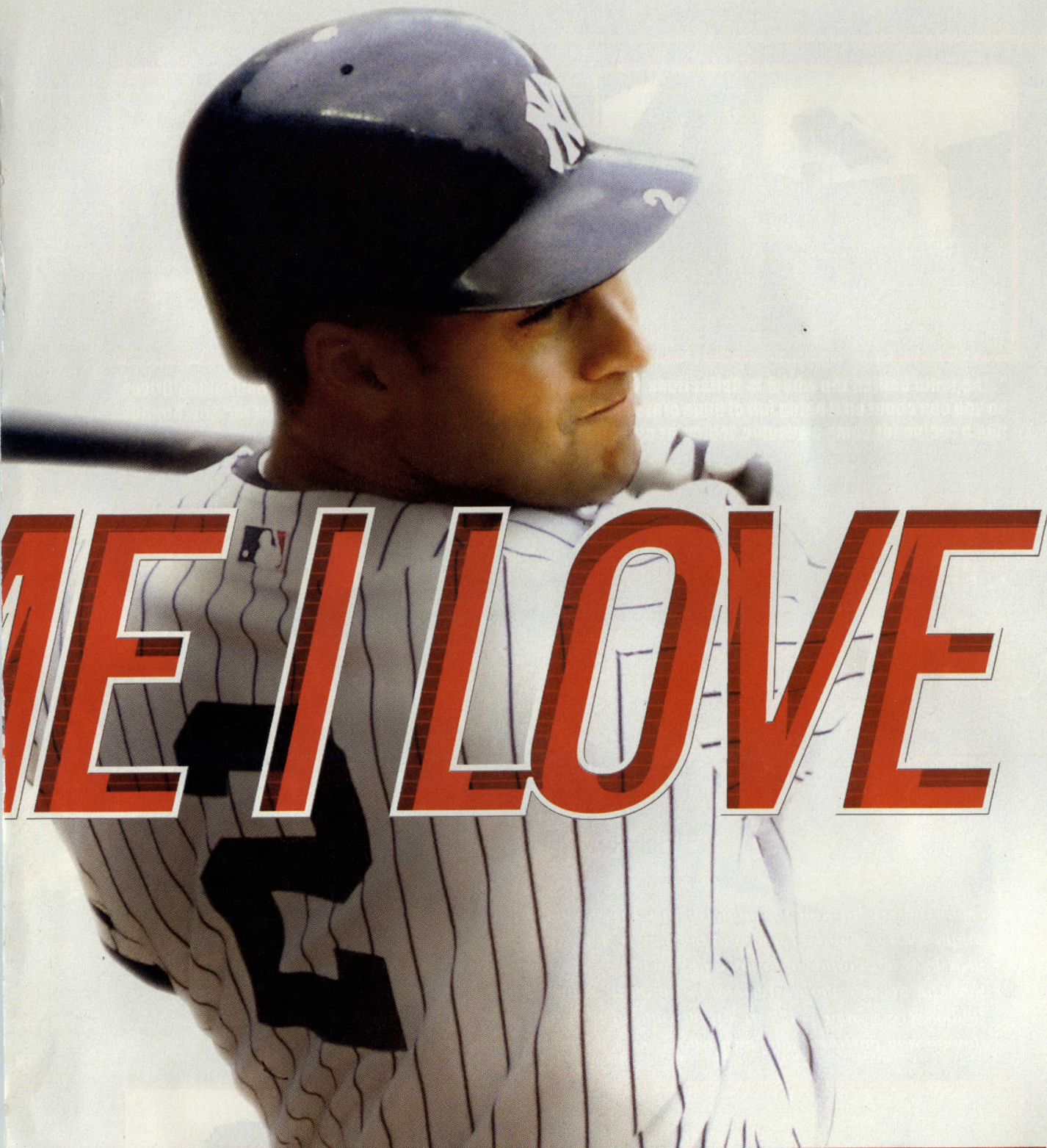
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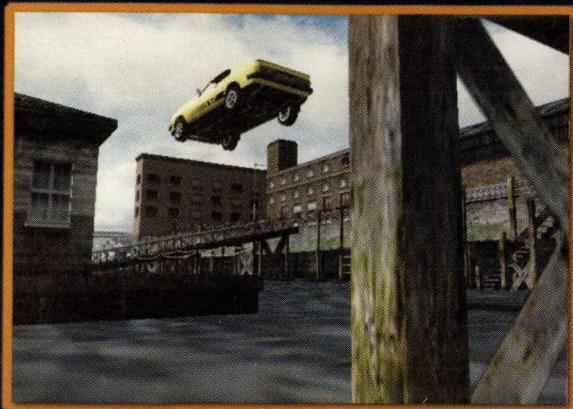


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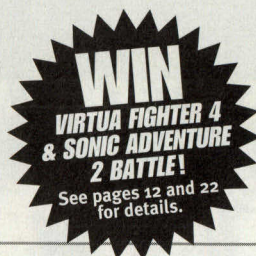


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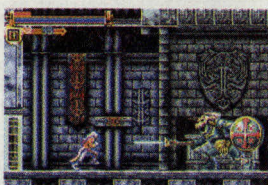


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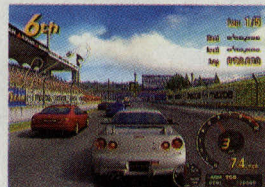
The GameCube grows up with its remake of the original **Resident Evil**.

Find out why Capcom decided to revisit their old graveyard stomping grounds, and what makes this installment fancier than your run-of-the-mill redux. The secrets we reveal are more shocking than you think. The scares start on **page 95**.



If you need a few reasons to pull that **Game Boy** out of your pocket, take a look at **Advance Notice** on **page 44**. We'll show you what games you should be on the lookout for now and in the future—such as *Castlevania: White Night Concerto*, above. Also, find out about five quirky things you had no idea your Game Boy could do.

One of our most revered cartoons may finally get a game worthy of its legacy. See why we can't wait to climb into the cockpit of this **Robotech** game in our eye-popping *EGM* exclusive preview on **page 82**.



Want to race your *GT3* Skyline against a redneck in Texas? Soon you will if **Sony's online plans** are of any indication. Get the scoop on **page 40**.



A lot of good PS2 fighting games have come and gone, but there haven't been a great one—yet. Turn to **page 110** to see if **Virtua Fighter 4** fits the bill.

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See new screenshots of Nintendo's dynamic GameCube duo, *Mario Sunshine* and *Metroid Prime*. Plus, find out about the Xbox launch and Sony's online plans in Japan. Top it all off with our *Maximo* Afterthoughts and a fine glass of Brandy.

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It's comic-book heaven this month. Check out *Spider-Man* for PS2 and *Superman* for both PS2 and Xbox. Then feast upon monstrous games that include *Spyro*, *Godzilla* and the scariest beast of them all: Mike Tyson

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We put on our sweats for an action-sports review-a-thon that includes *NFL Blitz 20-02* for PS2, *Tony Hawk 3* for Game Boy Advance, in addition to *Soccer Slam* and *NBA Street* for GameCube. Also: See how *Mr. Mosquito* sucks on PS2.

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Hey cheaters! Check out our latest installment of *Super Smash Bros. Academy* to go with our awesome slate of tricks for ultra-violent PS2 games, *State of Emergency* and *NFL Blitz 20-02*.

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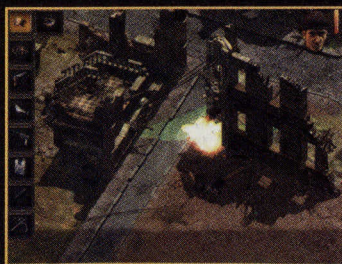
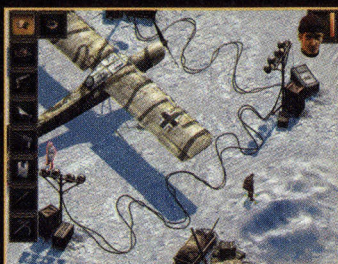
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EDITORIAL

The Same Old Story

I was debating whether to write this or not. Does the world really need another editorial on video-game violence? Seems that way. Some law-making types in Georgia are trying to push through a bill that would outlaw selling violent video games to minors.

You may be surprised to hear me say this, but I don't think it's that bad an idea. Really. I don't think kids should be playing *Grand Theft Auto III* or *Blood and Guts V*, and if America's parents are too stupid to monitor what their children are doing/reading/seeing/playing, then some stricter rules won't hurt.

But then, what about those lackadaisical movie theaters that let unchaperoned kids in to see bullet-riddled R-rated films like *Black Hawk Down*? How about book stores that allow a blood-soaked Clive Barker novel to get into the hands of an impressionable reader who's all too young

By Dan "Shoe" Hsu • shoe@ziffdavis.com



to handle the gore?

It seems strange that politicians are specifically picking on the video games when media in general is dishing out the violence. But that's not even the point. Gun-shootin', head-loppin', blood-squirtin' games don't make kids do bad things. Loose screws and scrambled noodles do. Seriously...just how messed up do you have to be to do what those Columbine jerks did?

Lawmakers are simply looking for the closest, easiest target for their finger-pointing. It'll never happen, but I really wish they could direct their energies elsewhere—perhaps toward those parents who couldn't properly raise a child if their lineage depended on it. Or how about figuring out a way to keep those 12-gauges out of the hands of unstable teenagers who have the accountability of a cockroach (with brains to match)? What a novel idea!

Shoe

Contributors



Tim Ponting

Previously the group publisher of *PC Zone* and the *Official Dreamcast Magazine* in England, Tim is now one of our "men in the U.K." who hunt down exclusives for us.



John Davison

When he can lift his head up from his *Virtua Fighter 4* obsession, John remembers to do some stuff relating to his job as editorial director of the Ziff Davis Game Group.



Shane Bettenhausen

When he's not playing RPGs or *Soul Calibur*, Shane lends EGM a hand with previews and reviews. His wit also overflows into *GameNow* and *Pocket Games*.



Chris Baker

Official U.S. *PS Magazine's* previews editor expects to get lynched by hardcore PS2 fans when they discover he's contributed a *Superman* (Xbox) preview to EGM.



Leonard Herman

The author of *Phoenix: The Fall and Rise of Videogames*, Leonard's like a game-history encyclopedia. He spills his knowledge on Game Boy Advance gadgetry this ish.



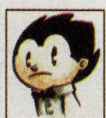
Christian Nutt

Although RPGs are his forte, Christian enjoys helping EGM out with previews and reviews. You can also find his work in *Pocket Games* and at *animejump.com*.



Gary Steinman

Because *OPM's* managing editor lost to the Canadian Sensation in a heated leg-wrestling match, we punished him by forcing him to review *King's Field* in this issue.



Jeremy "Norm" Scott

Norm draws cartoons (specifically, he draws *Hsu* and *Chan* for EGM). Without cartoons, he is nothing. Nothing, dear lord, nothing. Donations are accepted.

Eat My Shorts!

Look around this issue for quotes from *The Simpsons* or a famous movie. Find one, e-mail it (and your mailing address) to us at EGM@ziffdavis.com (subject: *Eat My Shorts—EGM #154*), and you may be one of five lucky winners (chosen at random) who will win a copy of this month's *Game of the Month*.

Just a few of the quotes from issue #153:

- "I am God here." (*Lawnmower Man*, pg. 143)
- "...so that we may blow our enemies to tiny bits, in His mercy..." (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, pg. 135)
- "...avosion (it's a word, look it up)..." (*The Simpsons*, pg. 110)
- "How do ya like ya ribs?" (*Action Jackson*, pg. 108)

Issue #152's winners of *Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2* (Game Boy Advance):

- Eduardo Martin—Allen Park, MI
- Andy Galuska—Everett, WA
- Steve Streza—Strongsville, OH
- Kenneth King—San Francisco, CA
- Mark Peterson—Louisville, KY



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Steve Harris

A full-page photograph of Rob Dyrdek in a crouched, dynamic pose next to a dark-colored car with its trunk open. He is wearing a black beanie, a red and black jacket, black pants, and brown and white sneakers. He is making a hand gesture with his right hand. To his left, a large grey wolf is standing and looking towards the camera. The background is a dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise.

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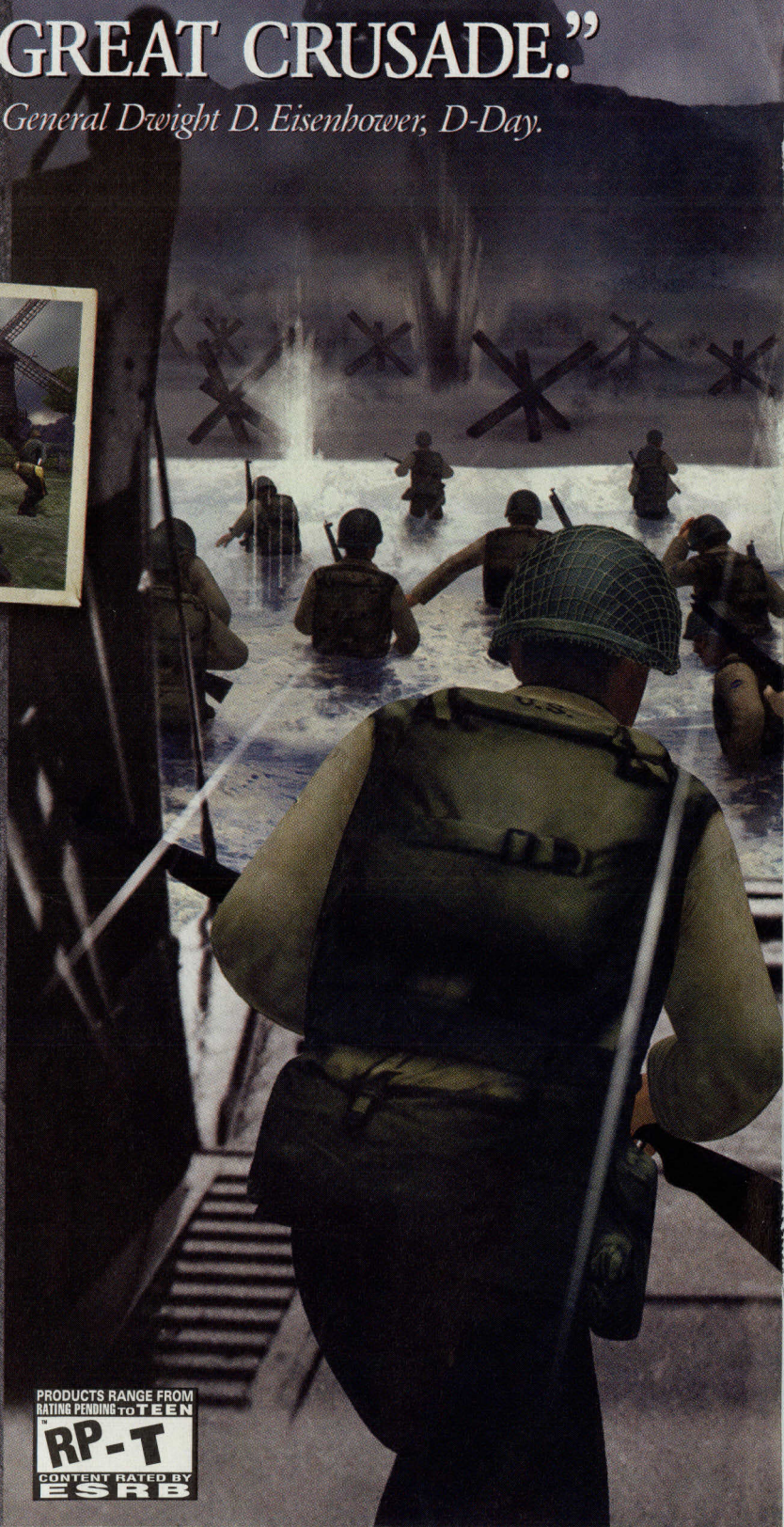
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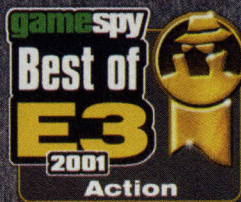
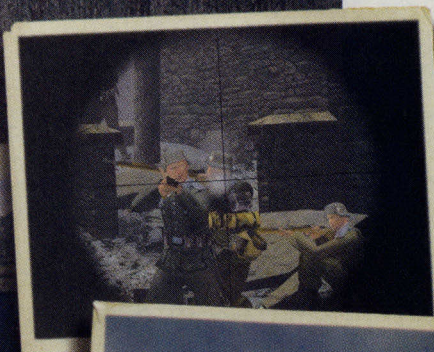


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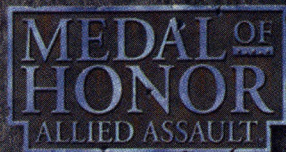




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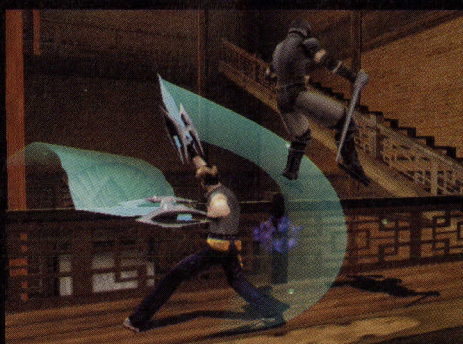
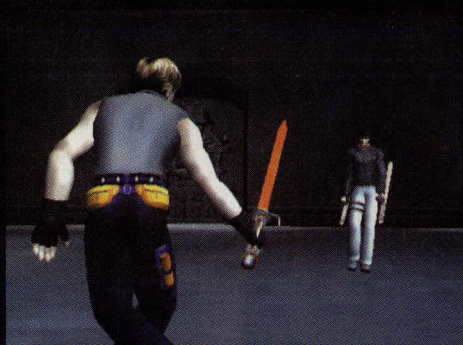
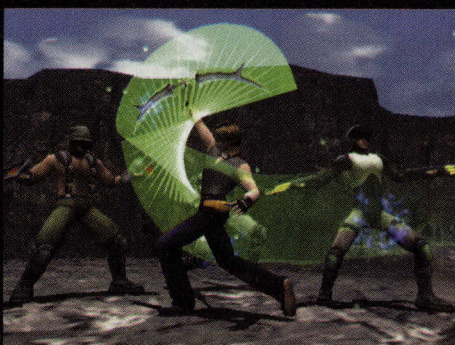
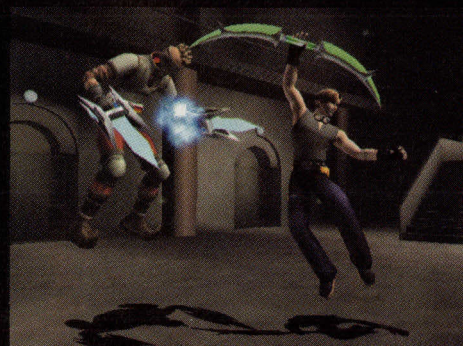
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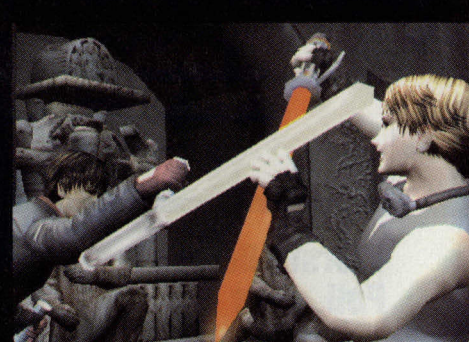
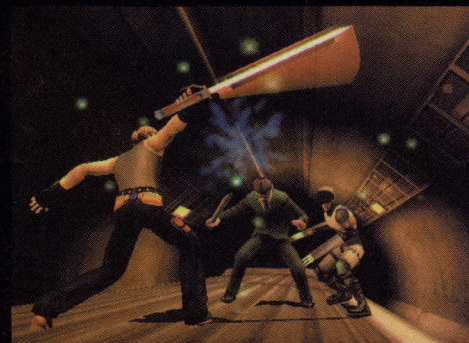
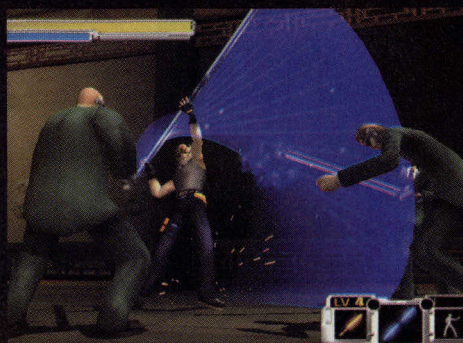
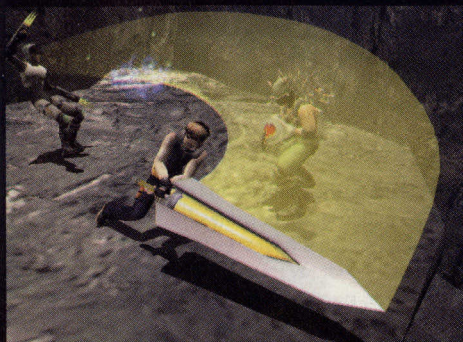


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Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Cheaters Always Win

I consider myself a cheat freak; I have used cheats and codes for almost all the games I have played since I started gaming on the Super Nintendo. I'm not ashamed of it. Lots of games are too difficult for me to beat without 'em. But sometimes I just get tired of using cheats all the time. Since I had finished some games before without using any codes (some of the *Mario* games, *Metal Gear Solid* and a *Tomb Raider* game or two), I made a New Year's resolution to stop using cheats and have been doing pretty well so far. I was just curious if you think I'm getting more out of games by playing them without cheats, or am I missing things that are in there (but hidden) by not using them?

Godsun514@aol.com

To get the absolute most out of a game, we would recommend you first play through it without using any codes, tricks or older siblings (if possible). That way you get a feel for

the game as the developer intended it—you appreciate the difficulty and have a greater sense of accomplishment when you overcome tough spots. It's also rewarding to find secret areas, tricks, unlockable items or characters, etc. on your own, so give that a shot. Once you've done all you can do alone, then it's totally fine to try out some of the codes the game's makers give out. It's one of the best ways to add some replay value to that \$50 piece of software.

Lately, though, developers have been telling us that they're trying to limit the number of cheats and tricks built into modern games. They're worried that gamers will use them as a crutch instead of playing (and appreciating) the game as it was initially designed. Looks like their concerns are valid, eh Godsun? Well, we haven't seen a GameCube or Xbox GameShark yet. Could cheats be on the way out altogether? We'd tell you, but that'd be...cheating.

Congratulations
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@aol.com.

You win an
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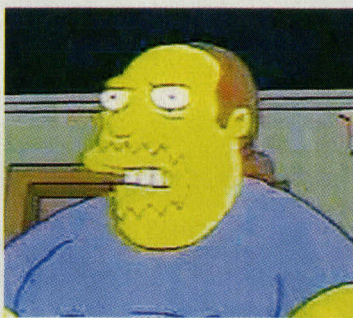


Worst...Reader Poll...Ever

On the bottom of the previews intro page in issue #153, you displayed a poll from gamers.com that asked people to vote on who would win in a fight "at the bike rack after school." To my surprise, people voted for Solid Snake over the Master Chief from *Halo*. I would have to disagree and say that the Master Chief could take Solid Snake in a fight any day.

If anyone who voted in favor of Snake had read the recently released *Halo* novel, *Halo: The Fall of Reach*, they would know that Spartans wear armor that makes them virtually invincible. It also gives them other cool traits like improved vision, increased bone strength and faster reflexes. There's no way Solid Snake could stand up against the Master Chief with that kind of advantage. Just thought I should clear that up.

Outtrigger@webtv.net



Mm hmm. Ah, yes, *The Fall of Reach*. Sheer folly of the readers to overlook its wisdom. Tell us more.

The Truth About Moogles

Apparently the moogles from *Final Fantasy* are actually junkies. Granted, this is the definition of a "muggle" (not a moogle) I got from *High Times*, a magazine my friend reads about weed: "1930s and '40s slang for pot." But I figured it was pretty close.

LETTER FACTS

- Letters sent to News Editor Chris Johnston ALONE about the *Smash Bros.* "trick": 309 (seriously)
- Valentines: one envelope, but he sent enough for the whole staff. Thanks Aldric Saucier from NYC!

Besides, the moogles in the game can do magic, and fire comes from their hands. Is that how they light up? That's what my dad told me; he's a pastor. He also says that I can't play *Final Fantasy* anymore.

ruffryderhockey
@hotmail.com



Illustration by Shawn Smith

Ah...your friend, right.... Just like that "friend" of Executive Editor Mark MacDonald's with the painful urination problem.... The diligent journalists over at the *Times* were right about the word "muggle," (which means that *Harry Potter* author gal's got some explaining to do). But as for "Moogles," their fancy footwork is the source of their power, at least in *FF3*. Then again, who knows what went on with all those inactive party members lounging around on the airship.

Gamer Purchases Piece of Mario

For my 21st birthday, I received some Nintendo stock instead of the usual socks and underwear. After reading your editorial from issue #152 about Nintendo's refusal to supply debug kits to the press, I am quite concerned and frustrated. Considering I own a small fraction of the company now, I feel it's my duty to personally contact the higher-ups at Nintendo about it, and I won't take "we're working on it" for an answer! Maybe that'll help. Probably not.

everclear107@hotmail.com

SHORTS

Scraps from the EGM inbox.

I have a problem. My mom and dad are offering me an Xbox (I have a PS2 and 'Cube), but the only games I want are *Halo*, *DOA3* and *Jet Set Radio Future*. Do I get an Xbox for three games, even if my parents will be mad at me for making them spend so much?
beckyhal@coam.net

Sorry, this is Earth. You apparently meant to send your letter to the parallel dimension in which this is an actual problem.



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LETTERS

MORE SHORTS

Why does Dracula from *Castlevania: Circle of the Moon* look like Rob Zombie? This makes me almost not want to play the game.

PHASiNthng@aol.com



Dracula



Dragula

We never really thought about it before, but you're right. Eh, ya seen one dark prince, ya seen 'em all.

In other magazines I read, there is always a man giving notes named Ed. I notice you do not do this. Why do other magazines have a guy named Ed, but you don't?

joesxy6@hotmail.com

Ed used to work for us a long time ago. But instead of pulling full-time duty on *EGM*, he's been doing freelance work for all the other magazines of the world. See? We told you working on *EGM* is a big job.

That's real neighborly of ya, ever-clear. It's nice to see you haven't forgotten about all us little people now that you're a big Nintendo exec. We're still working on a way to get all the GC coverage we should be getting, so hang in there. But if you do get through to anyone up there at Nintendo, see if you can find out how *Zelda's* really coming along. We could do with an update around here.

Buy Buy

I'm getting a ton of money back from taxes this year. Can you guys help me spend it? I have some ideas about what I should do with the money, but I'm too torn to pick just one. Can you help me? Here's what I've got so far:

1. Get a ton of PS2 games.
2. Trade in my PS2 for an Xbox and a ton of games.
3. Get a GBA with a ton of games.
4. Take it all to the casino.
5. Go to wrestling school to become the next Rock.

Joe Simpson
Niles, MI

Well, if you can afford to do #1 or #2, you can probably afford to buy an Xbox without having to trade in your PS2 with a little more saving. Selling or trading away a game system should be a last resort. Lots of exclusive properties are still coming to each console, and you won't forgive yourself if some killer game lands on the platform you just sold away. Or you can go the pro wrestler way and forget the whole gaming thing. It's up to you.

April Fool!



All right you guys, you almost had me this year! I just opened up my newest

Post Office

If you haven't visited the *EGM* message boards online yet, your negativity is slowly killing the environment. Seriously. So head over and contribute at egm.gamers.com (look for the link that says, "Talk to the *EGM* editors online now!"). Your post could be in the next *EGM*!

POSTMASTER
★★★★★
GENERAL

Solid_Snake's: "Tag Lines for *EGM*"

A cool thread idea that spawned tons of fun responses, Solid_Snake's post brought us suggestions like, "*EGM*: Sponsored by the Umbrella Corp., *EGM*: Birthplace of the *HALO* drinking game, and *EGM*: The only people to show up at the Dreamcast's funeral." And those were just from Solid himself. Some of our other favorites:

EGM: We got us a readin', writin' Canadian! —Dante555

EGM: We like Nintendo even when they're "working on it." —swOHman

EGM: The cause of, and solution to, most of society's problems. —Kris_P

Best Response to Postmaster's Thread: Rageaholic

Rageaholic captured our demographic (old dudes and middle-age women) perfectly with this custom signature.



Question of the Moment

How do you feel about remakes of old games for today's consoles?

I never got to experience the joy of classic gaming, so I'm looking forward to the remakes.

brockdn@yahoo.com

I don't really like remakes of old games for newer consoles. Newer systems need unique characters to love and base games on.

great_ice_penguin@hotmail.com

Remakes are a good thing, especially for those of us who were too young to enjoy the games the first time around. When I was in first grade, I had neither the reading ability nor the attention span to complete a *Final Fantasy*. The newer collection discs let me see what I've been missing.

lunarangel@fushigiyugi.com

I love seeing old games being remade for newer systems. I would be thrilled to have remakes of games like *Contra* and *R-Type*.

Babineaux14@aol.com

Forget the old—bring in the new!

DarkMage369@cs.com

As long as game companies realize that all remakes don't have to be done in 3D!

mistertwistr@aol.com

Maximo is totally addictive. Now where's the new *Bonk's Adventure*??

MAL@bala.com

Let me put it to you guys this way: *Mortal Kombat Advance*.

xbox669@hotmail.com

Remakes are cool if the people making them are actually fans of the original games. Most of the time they seem to be totally out of touch with what the original was like, or they try to create some new "3D experience." Look how they ruined *Contra*!

TeKDELOREAN@aol.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

What do you think is the best *EGM* April Fools' joke of all time?

Send your short but sweet responses to: EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject heading:

Fools!

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MIDWAY

nice rack, dude!



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LETTERS

copy of *EGM* to find the cheat I had been waiting for since the day *Super Smash Bros. Melee* came out: How to play as Sonic and Tails. I won't lie—you had me going until I realized that it was the April issue. I liked the way you put the date "4/1/2002" on the screen-shot. I couldn't think of a better joke! Keep up the good work!

Matt Harlan
MHarlan100@hotmail.com

Well, Matt...you got us. And since you were the first to write in calling us on our bluff, you win: absolutely nothing. But you do have the satisfaction of knowing that you were the first of the faithless.

The rest of the Letters section is devoted to our favorite notes on the subject. Many were painful for us to read, knowing that the dream would never be realized for, well, all of these people. But to those who tried in vain to unlock the elusive duo, we say this: Your dedication will not go unrecognized. See the blue box below for a special contest you're bound to succeed in!

Get Us Back!

So you spent weeks trying to unlock Sonic and Tails in *Super Smash Bros. Melee* with no results. We feel bad about it—we really (snicker) do. How about a copy of *Sonic Adventure 2: Battle* (GC) to make it up to you? Here's what you'd need to do:

Hook your GameCube's A/V cables up to your VCR's input, then run the VCR output to the TV. Pop in a tape and hit record, then turn on your GC and bust out the best Cruel Melee match you can. Label the tape with the number of kills and mail it to:

EGM Smash Bros. Contest
800 Jorie Blvd., Suite #110
Oak Brook, IL 60523

We'll pick 10 of the best KO records ABOVE 20 (please don't submit tapes with fewer than 20 KO's) and send their owners a free copy of *Sonic Adventure 2: Battle*! Enter as often as you like; entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2002. Tapes must start at system boot-up and run uninterrupted until the end of the Cruel Melee match.

You can write EGM at:

EGM Letters
P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL
60522-3338
E-mail: EGM@ziffdavis.com

Please note: We reserve the right to edit any correspondence for space purposes. If you don't want your name, city/state or e-mail address printed, tell us so (but please include your phone number, mailing address and system preference for Letter of the Month prize consideration).

Also note: Although we can't respond to every letter, as far as you know, we do read them all. Also, everything you send us is ours to keep!

I racked up 20 KO's in Cruel Melee, but Sonic and Tails never challenged me! I tried it several times, but no Sonic and Tails! Is there a typo in the magazine, or do you think I did something wrong? Can you please help me with this?

Zord9@aol.com

Yes, you're right—there was a typo. It should have read, "200 kills."

In issue #153's *Smash Bros. Academy*, you said that by getting 20 Cruel Melee KO's I could unlock Sonic and Tails. I tried it 748 times (yes, I counted) and still no luck. Which character is best to use to successfully unlock the two?

OllieDaMagicBum3@cs.com

Um...Fox. No, wait...Ice Climbers. Yeah, them.

I'm a *Smash Bros.* maniac and am currently attempting to unlock Sonic and Tails. I have 18 KO's on Cruel Melee and will play nonstop this weekend 'til I get 20. You are my heroes for finding this—just wanted to let you know.

dlewis@parktutor.pvt.k12.in.us

NICE TRY

This fella thought he had it all figured out and really let us have it for tricking him. FFXI indeed!

I caught the April Fool. I saw the article on p. 43 about a possible sequel to *Final Fantasy X*. I was so excited about this "fact" and started thinking about a possible storyline. But when I calmed down and looked at the cover, I saw the "April" and got so mad! Shame on you for preying on the souls of FF fans across America!

gtrftbl@hotmail.com

We wager that after a long weekend, dlewis found himself a new hero.

If this *Smash Bros.* trick is an April Fools' Day joke, how come we're reading it in February?

lots of confused/new readers

The short answer: tradition. The long answer: Since EGM is a monthly mag and April 1 is just one day, the only way we can be sure folks will be looking out for a joke is if we put it in the April issue. The magazine just happens to come out a tad early. OK, really damn early.

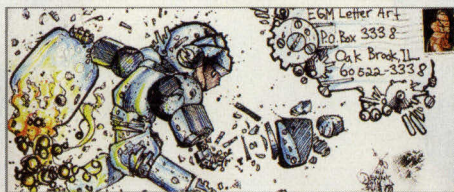
Oops

In our *WWF Wrestlemania X8* preview from issue #153, we said that the fastest *Wrestlemania* match ever was Diesel vs. Bob Backlund in six seconds. Truth is, that wasn't actually a *Wrestlemania* match. The fastest bout under that classification, King Kong Bundy over S.D. Jones at *Wrestlemania 1*, lasted slightly longer, eating up a whole nine seconds.

LETTER ART: THE WORLD'S CHEAPEST CANVAS

Letter Art of the Month WINNER

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Congratulations, Dennis Baraba! Now we know how Mega Man comes apart. Your prize is on the way—an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 or Game Boy Color.



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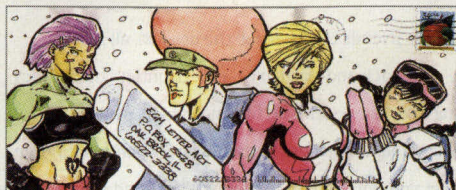
Be sure to include a mailing address, and tell us what system you'd like your prize for. All entries become the property of Ziff Davis Media Inc., and will be shredded once we've had our way with 'em.

Not quite Sharkworthy...

Our silver and bronze medalists. Better luck next time.



Bernie Visel
Santa Cruz, CA



Josh Shaffer
Muncie, IN

For Letter of the Month and Letter Art of the Month contests, no purchase is necessary. If you want to read the complete contest legal rules, please visit egm.gamers.com or write us at: EGM Contests-Legal Rules Request, P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338. While you're at it, why don't you write McDonald's and ask them for the official rules for that Monopoly game. It always seemed kind shady to us. Oh, and don't forget to give us your address and tell us what system you'd like your prize for.

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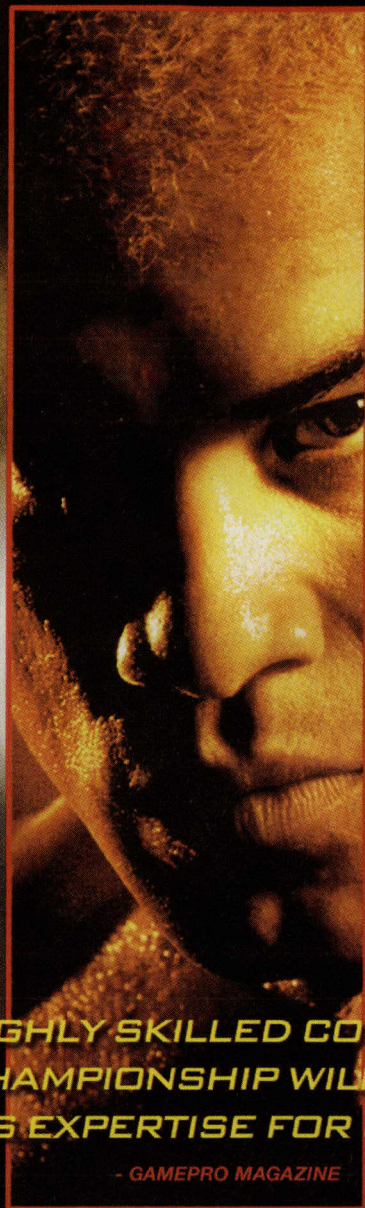
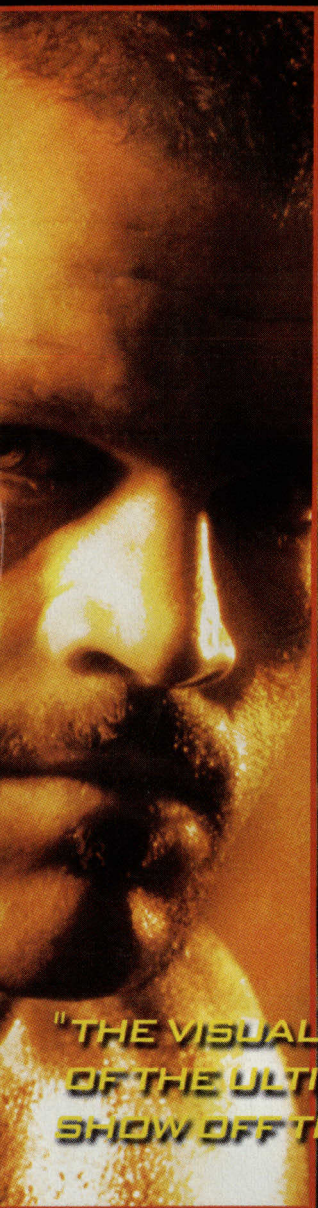


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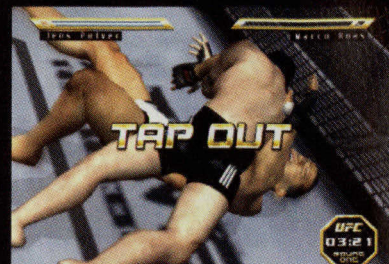
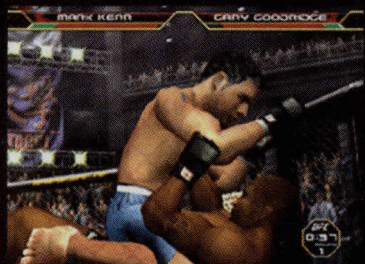
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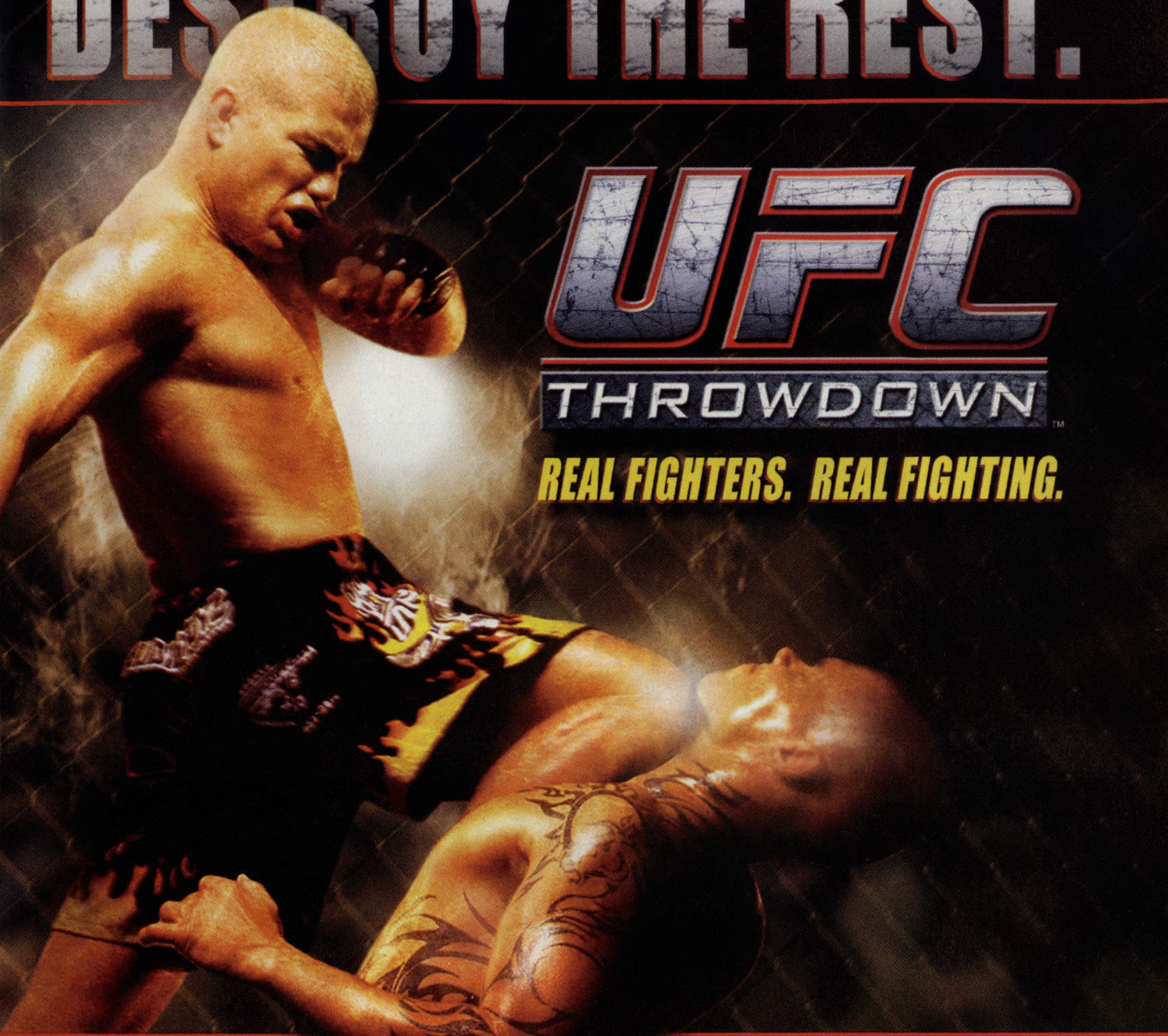
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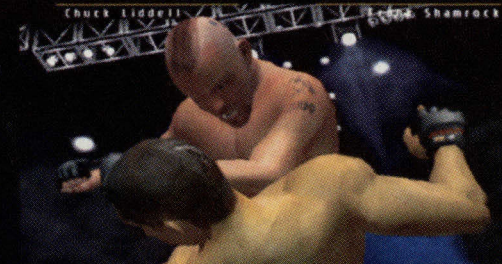
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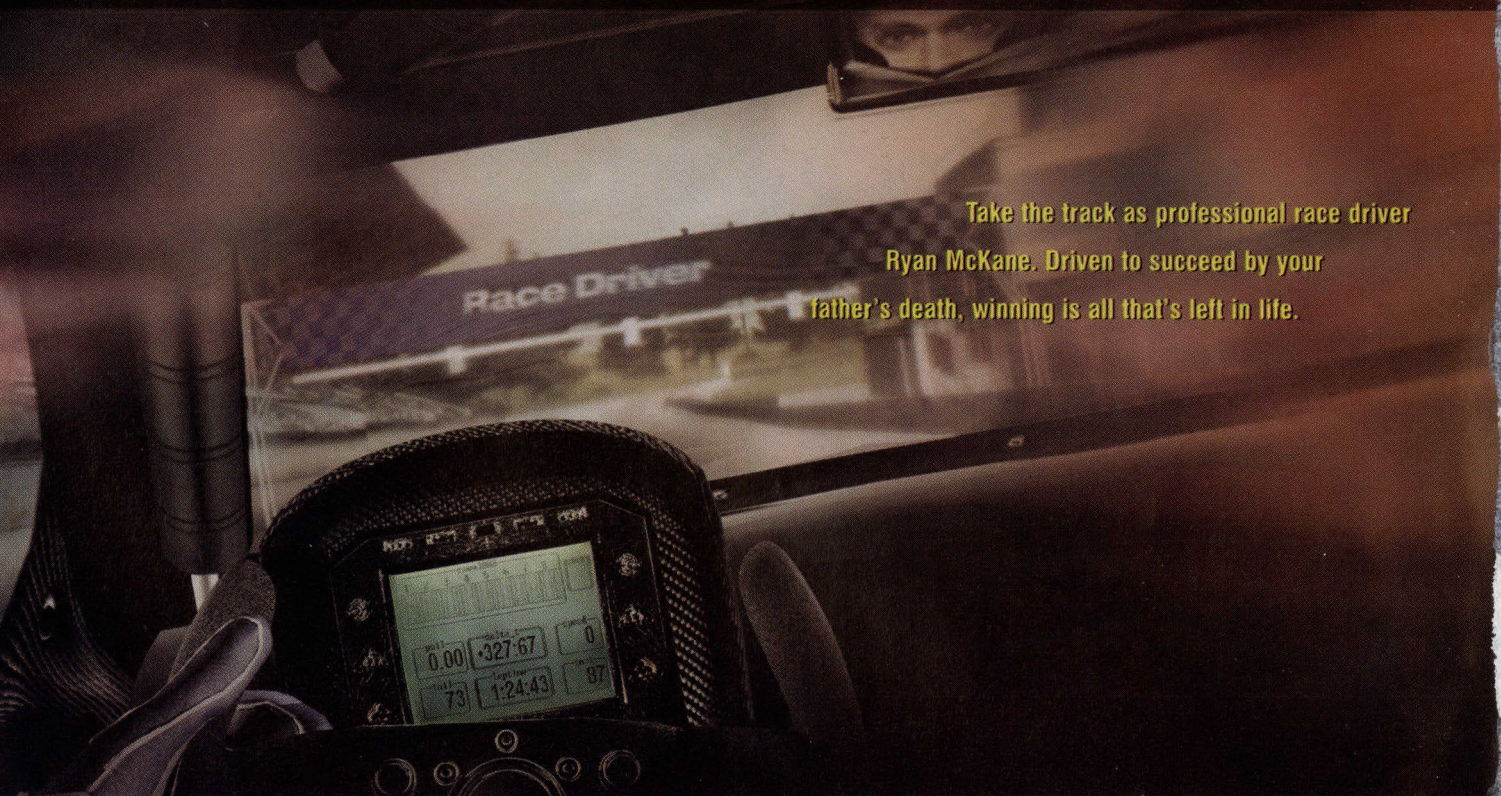
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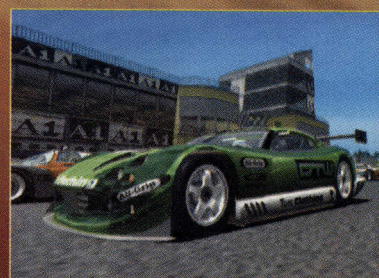
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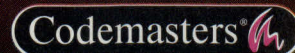


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Screen shots taken from PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system game play.

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By Chris Johnston chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com
& Kraig Kujawa kraig_kujawa@ziffdavis.com

Press Start

The **Hottest Gaming News** on the Planet

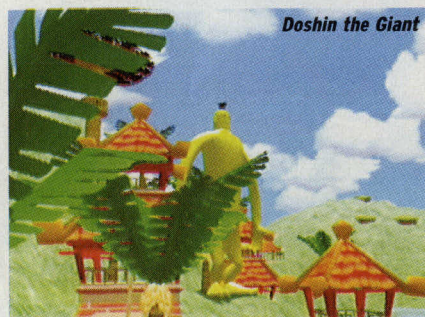
Mario is Back!

Nintendo gives GameCube owners hope for 2002

Where are all the GameCube games?" It's the question all GameCube owners are asking themselves, each other and us. After a strong launch lineup with *Rogue Leader*, *Pikmin* and *Super Monkey Ball*, carried through Christmas by the blockbuster *Super Smash Bros. Melee*, everything suddenly went quiet for the system. 'Cube gamers had only a trickle of titles to feed their new system, while plenty of new games continued to pour out for PS2 and even Xbox. So when we recently sat down with Nintendo's Director of Corporate Planning Satoru Iwata, that was our first question—what can you tell all the GameCube owners out there starving for new games?

"Please have faith in Nintendo," replied Iwata. Sure, easy for him to say. But then we saw the latest video footage of *Mario Sunshine* and *Metroid Prime*, and suddenly it was as if we had fallen prey to a Jedi mind trick. We did have faith. Everything was going to be all right. The GameCube *does* have some killer games on the way; it will just take some time. We will wait. We must wait. These aren't the droids we're looking for. Was it nostalgia that clouded our judgement? Look over the new screens and our impressions on the following pages and judge for yourself.

But wait a second—Nintendo has lead us on before. There's no denying they make the most popular games in the world, but what about the release-date delays the company is also famous for? "We do not expect any delays on these titles [*Mario*, *Metroid* and *Zelda*]," Iwata countered. "This fall is key to the future of the GameCube, so it is important that all of these titles make it out this year." And although solid release dates won't be set until the E3 video-game expo May 22-24 (where all three games will be displayed to the press in playable form), Iwata gave us his own rough guesses on when we might expect the games to hit the U.S.: ***Mario Sunshine* in September, *Metroid Prime* in October and *Zelda* in November.** Three of the biggest names in all of video games, all with new



games within three months? Somebody pinch us. "Frankly, we are concerned," says Iwata with a chuckle, "that people won't have enough time to play them all."

In the meantime, other recent announcements further bolster hopes for uncovering our dusty GameCubes: due dates for this month's cover star ***Resident Evil* (April 30), plus *Star Fox Adventures* (June 10) and *Eternal***



Darkness* (June 24).** Also, we learned that Nintendo is currently evaluating the strange evolution game ***Doubutsu Banchō (Animal Leader) and the critically acclaimed god-simulator ***Doshin the Giant*** for release in the U.S. Iwata tells us much more is on the way as well. "There are many more games in the works that we can't talk about yet but will be announced before E3." Until then, have faith.



The Triforce: Little, purple, different.

TRIFORCE

In other exciting GameCube news, Nintendo, Sega and Namco have announced they will join forces on a new arcade board based on the GC hardware named Triforce (if you don't get the *Zelda* reference, go stand in the corner). What does this mean for gamers? Quick and easy home conversions of Sega and Namco arcade titles, or any other developers (several are interested, including Capcom) who use the board. It could also mean the return of Nintendo to the arcades, although currently the company has no definite plans to do so.

Miyamoto Sheds Some Light on Mario Sunshine

The Italian stallion returns in this bright, colorful platforming adventure. Graphically, *Sunshine* hardly looks like it's pushing the GameCube, but then we didn't play *Mario 64* for a month straight because of its graphics. Here's what Shigeru Miyamoto, Mario's creator and all-around game-design god, had to say about it:

EGM: Why has it taken so long for us to see a sequel to *Mario 64*?

Shigeru Miyamoto: We always wait until there is some kind of new idea, a fresh take before we do a new *Mario* game.

EGM: So what is the "fresh take" for this game? How is it different from *Mario 64*?

SM: Well, I can't talk much about the game until E3, but as you can see, Mario has a new device on his back, and he can use it in many different ways. But this game is sort of a refinement, or evolution, from *Mario 64*. The jump between it and *Mario 64* will be like the jump between *Mario 3* on the [8-bit] Nintendo and *Super Mario World* on the Super Nintendo. Because the GameCube is not completely different from the N64, but much more powerful.

EGM: Why the name *Mario Sunshine*?

SM: One reason is to reflect the tropical theme. You heard the [calypso-style] music and everything. It's very sunny, and you can see a beach. The other reason is that we hope to release it in the summer [in Japan].

EGM: Does the entire game take place in or near the big town we've seen in all the screens and movies so far?

SM: No. What you have seen so far is only one part. That town is just the level that you start in. There are many other very different areas, just like in past *Mario* games.

EGM: Can you tell us something you haven't told anyone yet about *Mario Sunshine*?



Mario uses his backpack to wash away these metallic puddles of goo that fall from the sky; is this the overall goal of the game? Notice the giant, unfriendly venus flytraps, straight out of *Yoshi's Island*.

SM: (laughs) Well, I really am not supposed to. It will be playable at E3 so....

EGM: Please don't make us beg! We will beg if we have to!

SM: Hmm...well...maybe the water tank isn't the only device Mario puts on. (smiles)



Besides balancing on this tightrope, Mario can use his backpack to attach to the wire and spin.





PRESS
START

Miyamoto Gets Primed for Metroid

Yes, we saw 20 glorious seconds of *Metroid Prime*. The game looked fantastic—fast, smooth and most importantly, like *Metroid*.

EGM: Why make *Metroid Prime* a first-person shooter (FPS)?

Shigeru Miyamoto: We looked at the *Metroid* gameplay—shooting things in narrow passageways—and decided that a first-person view would be the best way to handle it. But I don't think it's a typical PC FPS.

EGM: How is it not like typical PC FPSes?

SM: Well, actually, I don't really play PC FPSes ever, so maybe I shouldn't say that. (laughs) Since I don't really know what they are like, if it turns out like a PC FPS, I am sorry. (laughs)

EGM: Well, in the typical PC FPS you mostly just kill lots of stuff. Mostly shooting.

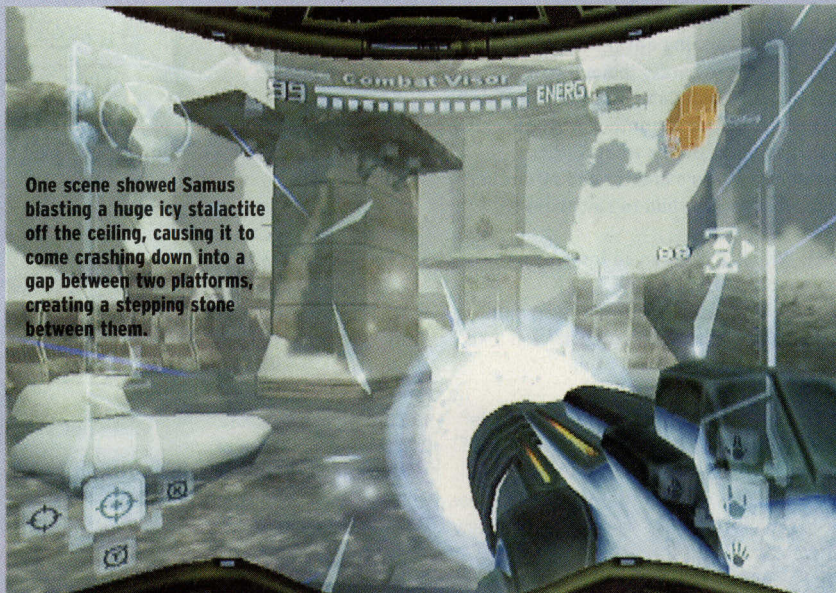
SM: No, it's not like that. As you can see in the video, there are many items and moves from *Metroid*, like the grapple beam. There's also a lot of exploration like the other *Metroid* games.

EGM: How has it been working with U.S.-based Retro Studios?

SM: It's going very well. We have meetings on the phone often [between Nintendo and Retro]. The game is looking very good. Retro has some very talented artists.

EGM: Does the old *Metroid* team in Japan have any say in the game?

SM: Actually, they did the music that you heard in the movie. I think they will be doing a lot of the music for the game.




One scene showed Samus blasting a huge icy stalactite off the ceiling, causing it to come crashing down into a gap between two platforms, creating a stepping stone between them.

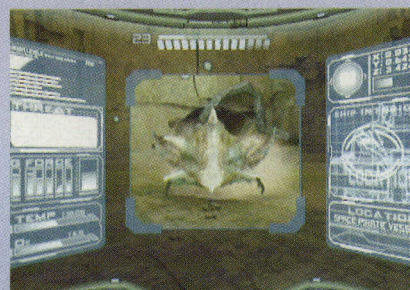
EGM: That's awesome news! But is (*Super Metroid* director Yoshio) Sakamoto, for example, working on the game?

SM: Wow, you know a lot. (laughs) The old *Metroid* team isn't directly working on the game. They are working on *Metroid IV* (GBA) right now.

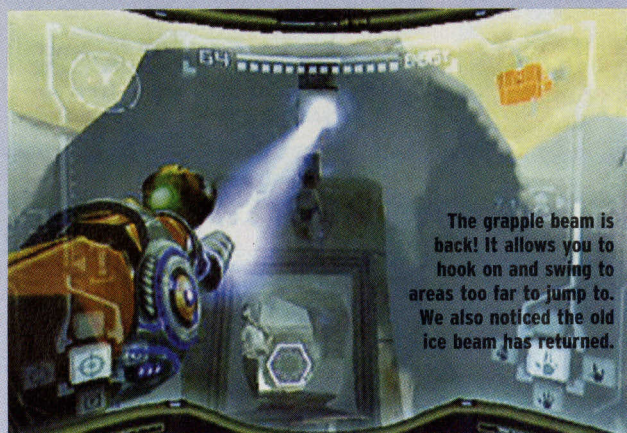
EGM: Any chance *Metroid Prime* and *Metroid IV* will hook up via the GBA/GC link cable?

SM: There is no definite plan, but if we can I'd like to include little bonus extras like that. 

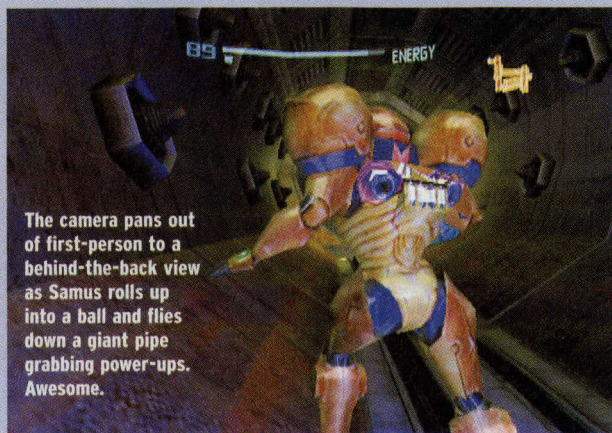
—Mark MacDonald



Looks like Samus is inside some ship or vehicle targeting this bad bug, hence all the extra heads-up display info.



The grapple beam is back! It allows you to hook on and swing to areas too far to jump to. We also noticed the old ice beam has returned.



The camera pans out of first-person to a behind-the-back view as Samus rolls up into a ball and flies down a giant pipe grabbing power-ups. Awesome.

Get down and dirty in the hardcore, "wheel to wheel" action of Rallycross and Ice Racing. Soar to the clouds in a Hill Climb or slide your way to glory in traditional Rally stages. Tear up 48 tracks in four different Rally event types. Choose from 29 vehicles to drive and smash into, including outlawed Group "B" cars like the Audi Quattro S1 and the MG Metro 6R4. And humiliate up to three other players at a time in multiplayer mode.

Where the rubber leaves the road.

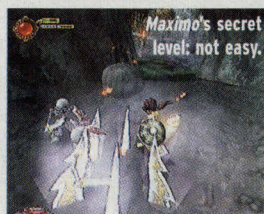


WWW.XBOX.COM

[illegible]



PRESS
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MASTERING MAXIMO

If you wanna access *Maximo's* enemy-crammed secret stage, you gotta beat the game with 100-percent mastery. That means for each level (except hubs) you'll need to open every chest (even the hidden ones), kill every enemy, collect all koins and diamonds, destroy all the spirit containers, bash the torches, and pick up every potion. Got all that? Of course, you gotta topple every boss and beat the game, too.

Afterthoughts: Maximo

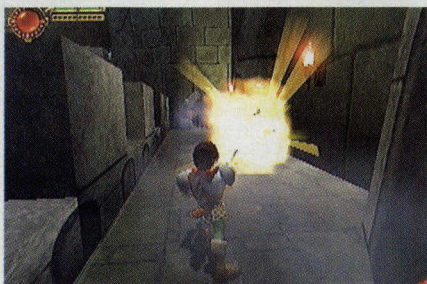
By now you're probably on your way to achieving 100-percent mastery in *Maximo*, Capcom Digital Studios' homage to the *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* series. But we beseech you to lay down your sword and see what David Siller, the studios' director of R&D, and Senior Game Designer Bill Anderson have to say about their hit game now that it's in gamers' hands....

EGM: *Maximo* is a highly polished title, but the *EGM* reviewers all agree that the camera system could've been tweaked a bit—specifically, we wish we could swing the camera behind *Maximo* on the fly instead of having to bring him to a stop first. Did you guys see that as a problem?

Bill Anderson: Yes, and the ability to align the camera on the fly is something that will be implemented in the sequel. We kind of realized that [problem] was there during development, but we didn't realize how much it would be talked about. We believe our camera is very, very solid overall, and we thought that was a minor irritant to the product in general.

EGM: Some players have also griped that the game's on the hard side.

David Siller: People are spoiled by cheat devices and hint books. People are getting lazy. If you're a lazy game player, don't play *Maximo*. Play it if you really want to feel alive. It's the kind of game where when you play it, you'll walk away fully awake, because it keeps you on the edge of your seat with very intense action. There's no Nazi design in this game.



"It's just so satisfying when you launch that fireball across the screen with the Flaming Sword and see the skeleton disintegrate on the other side," says Designer Bill Anderson, describing the game's best power-up.



We don't do anything that's a cheap shot. There are no cheap jumps. If there's a risky jump over here, then there's a safer jump over there. Don't go the trickier way to collect something if you're afraid. That's only for if you got the right stuff. That's classic design.

EGM: What about when you're surrounded?

DS: This is not a game you race through. It's a game where you approach each enemy and you take him on one at a time. People who try to sidestep enemies, they'll come to a place where they're cornered by pursuing enemies, then yeah, they're gonna get clobbered. And another thing is the jumps. I don't think a lot of people realize that they can double jump whenever they want. It's not like some games where you can only do the second jump at the apex of your first leap. In our game, as long as you haven't hit the ground, you can do that second jump. So you can jump a long way easily in this game if you learn to jump it right.

EGM: Why didn't you just use good ol' King Arthur from the original *G'nG* series as the hero instead of creating a new character?

BA: The whole tie-in with *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* kinda came later in development. Our initial design was for a realistic kind of game, more like *Onimusha*. Basically, Capcom Japan stepped in and said since they were doing realistic products like *Dino Crisis*, *Resident*

"Some people thought [Maximo] sounded like some porn star."

—Maximo creator David Siller

Evil, *Onimusha* and so on, they'd keep that kind of stuff in Japan and we'd focus on mass-appeal products.

EGM: Did that shift in design bug you guys?

BA: No. Our whole staff has come out of doing those kind of games. So it was second nature to focus in that direction. It came about a year after a lot of design material was already done. Then David and I started going, "You know, we have *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* out there. Why not tie it to that." But even though we're part of Capcom, we're not Capcom Japan—we can't arbitrarily say we're going to do *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* without going through a big, long negotiation with Japan on what that entails—the rights and so on. We and Capcom Japan thought it would just be easier for somebody to design a whole new character set for it.

Cont. on page 34

The Bandicoot's running with a whole new crowd.



Mild Violence



Crash. Maxed.
crashbandicoot.com

Here comes Crash, in the biggest character-based game to hit Xbox. The Wrath of Cortex. Lightning-fast load times. Super-enhanced graphics. Fully detailed environments. He's really going all out for this one.

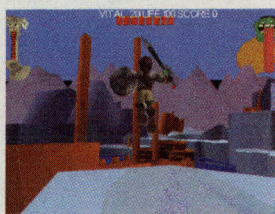
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PRESS
START



Early *Maximo*. Check those status gauges!



MAXIMO FOR PC?

Yep, *Maximo* actually began life on the PC, but don't bother trying to buy a copy. The CDS team started it that way simply because they wanted a headstart on making the game engine while waiting for a PS2 dev kit. "It gave us a chance to see what worked and what didn't," says Designer Bill Anderson, "but it got to the point where the PC version was unplayable. It was pushing too much and was too slow."

Cont. from page 32



DS: We also wanted to control our own destiny. When we did *Final Fight Revenge* [for the Japanese Saturn], the art had to be approved by Capcom Japan every step of the way. With *Maximo*, even though it was [Japanese illustrator Susumu] Matsushita creating the art, we really designed the characters. We spec'ed out what we wanted.

EGM: Was there a lot of back and forth between you and Matsushita over the character designs?

BA: Oh yes. *Maximo* originally had a very long cape, but we realized that wouldn't work very well with gameplay because it covered up most of his back and character model when he ran, so we discarded that. Matsushita is a brilliant artist, but he's not a game designer. He doesn't know how his designs will affect play, so he really relies on us to provide honest feedback like, "That works, that doesn't, that color bleeds too much, etc." Same thing with the sword. Originally it was much smaller, and we had to go, "It needs a longer reach. The sword isn't visible enough—make it thicker."

DS: I'm proud of him as a character. I named him. I was criticized by everyone in the beginning, because I wanted him to be called *Maximo*. Even Japan fought it. Some people



thought it sounded like some porn star. But frankly, at the end of the project, they thought the name was a perfect fit.

EGM: We love the little side-scrolling *Maximo* animation that plays during the ending credits. Did you plan to put a 2D minigame like that in the game?

DS: Well, in the sequel there will be a little sideview 2D game. We're planning to create that as one of the things to unlock as one of the incentives for mastering the game.

EGM: Ever consider adding the original *Ghosts 'n Goblins/Ghouls 'n Ghosts* games as an unlockable secret in *Maximo*?

DS: Absolutely. It was always something I wanted to do, but Japan said no.

EGM: Why?

DS: I don't know if it's because they owe royalties back to [original creator Tokuro] Fujiwara, who's no longer with Capcom, or because it was a distancing factor, or if it was just because we would have to pay a bigger license to Capcom Japan. Somebody above us said no. They didn't give an explanation really. It's one of those things.

EGM: Any plans to port the first game or take its sequel to any system besides PS2?

DS: We've never said we're on any other platform at this point. It would be nice if we were a Sony-exclusive, but Sony would have

More Nuggets On *Maximo 2*

Although *Maximo* came out in February, the developers actually began dreaming up ideas for a sequel way back in September 2001. They've told us that the Grim Reaper will play a much bigger role in *Maximo 2*, and Matsushita will again be designing the characters. As far as the gameplay goes, expect a number of "action events," Designer Bill Anderson says, "kind of like rides and things that will break up the monotony of the hop, skip and slash gameplay."

Er, what kind of rides? "A 4x4 truck," says Capcom's David Siller. "Isn't there something like that in *Jak and Daxter*? And Crash has one in his new game, so why not a 4x4? I'm kidding, but you should print that: *Maximo* will have a 4x4 [laughs]."

to make it worth our while. Otherwise we're denying ourselves potential profits for the company and bonuses for the team if we don't go on another platform. [Taking the series to other systems] is still under consideration, but [the higher-ups] don't tell us anything and the news comes to us very slow. 🎮

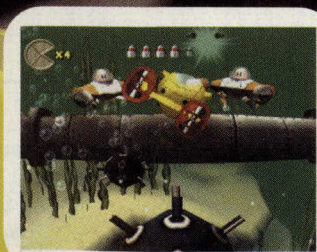
Computer System Support	Tadahiko Kurachi Masaya Kawasaki
Production Assistant	Ai Kikuchi
Casting Manager	Kazuhiya Sano
Music	Tamayo Kawamoto
Music Director	Munehiro Nakanishi DUTCHMAMA STUDIO
Recording/Mixing Engineer	Akihito Kawakami TASKMASTER
Sound Effect	Yuji Tan
Sound Mixer	Hiroyuki Nagata
Studio Engineer	Ken Nagano

The li'l 2D *Maximo* movie that runs during the game's end credits had us all excited—could this be a secret minigame? Alas, no, but it's planned for the sequel.



Pac-Man's back, and everybody's feeling it.

Who can blame them? It's Pac-Man's most incredible adventure yet — with over 20 treacherous levels of Free Roaming landscapes to fight through. And with dozens of new enemies lurking around, Pac-Land isn't just a Ghost town anymore. But no worries. Using a few old tricks — and some new ones — you'll be feeling Pac-Man's influence for a long time to come.



The Man's got talent! He ice skates, inline skates and even pilots a sub!

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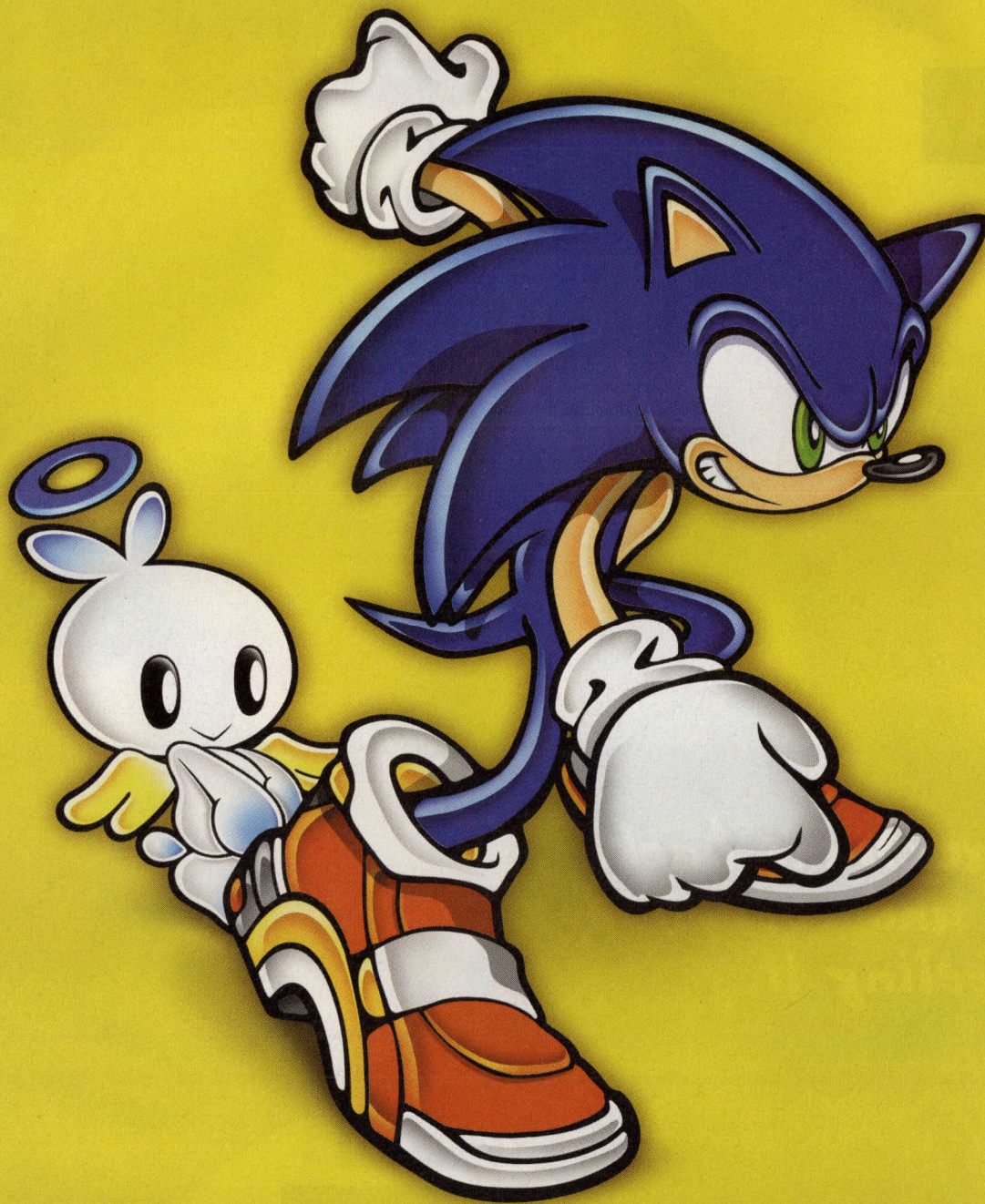
With Sonic Adventure 2:Battle connect your Game Boy® Advance to your Nintendo GameCube™ and take your Chao on the road.



*Link cable sold separately.



SEGA.COM/SA2BATTLE



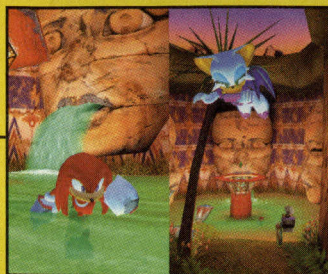
HEAD TO HEAD



Battle it out in head to head competition.



HEDGEHOGS!



Violence
Mild Lyrics

Introducing four all new 2 Player VS modes.



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DID THEY THINK OF EVERYTHING?

Yes. Microsoft was so concerned with Japanese gamers being able to haul their video-game booty home unscathed, they made special bags with reinforced straps to support the weight of the Xbox. Since the train is the most common method of transportation in Tokyo, we're sure everyone got a workout lugging the mammoth system around on launch day. Sure beats those flimsy Best Buy bags we got over here, doesn't it?

Xbox Launch Shakes Up Japan



Bill Gates surprised Asian game buyers at the Xbox launch party when one by one, he crushed their hands with his strong, manly embrace.

At 7:00 a.m. on the morning of Feb. 22, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates handed over Japan's first Xbox system to 22-year-old Atsushi Ishizaka, an avid gamer who stood in line for 12 hours to be among the first in Japan to take home Microsoft's black box. His purchase marked the start of a major uphill battle for MS in the notoriously outsider-unfriendly Japanese market, where hometown rivals Sony and Nintendo already command the majority of the video-game pie.

Nine hours earlier, Gates spoke to the gaming media at a private press conference, singing the praises of the Xbox and explaining their feelings on Japan. "Microsoft is extremely committed to the Japanese market, and you've seen that in many ways," said Gates. "With the partnerships, the special design work...and now you see it with the titles at launch. The Japanese market is one that particularly appreciates high quality...."

But as Mr. Bill no doubt understands, making it in Japan is far easier said than done. Many have tried to break into the Japanese market in the past, only to meet failure (3DO and the Atari Jaguar were the most recent casualties). Microsoft, however, has the money to make a much bigger push. In the weeks leading up to Feb. 22, practically

every game shop in Japan was littered with Xbox promotional materials, including posters, flags and demo units. This aggressive marketing no doubt paved the way for the hundreds of gamers who turned out to wait in line for the launch. But Microsoft needed a few hundred more.

Bloomberg reported that only half of the initial 250,000 shipment was sold in the first three days. Although those numbers are below reported PS2 and GameCube launch sales, they are strong enough to show that Japan is taking the Xbox somewhat seriously. Maybe all Microsoft needs are a few choice dating simulators and Ultraman titles to go with the likes of Tecmo's *Dead or Alive 3* to push the system to the top. —John Ricciardi



The Launch Lineup

The Xbox landed in Japan with a dozen launch titles, many of which had already been released in the U.S. Noticeably absent from the list was *Halo*, which will see an April 25 release. Traditionally, first-person shooters haven't met with much success in Japan, which could be the reason for *Halo*'s delay. U.S. names in red.

Air Force Delta II, Konami

Dead or Alive 3, Tecmo

Double-S.T.E.A.L (aka *Wreckless*), Bunkasha Games

ESPN Winter X-Games Snowboarding 2002, Konami

Genma Onimusha, Capcom

Hyper Sports 2002 Winter, Konami

Jet Set Radio Future, Sega

Nezumix (aka *Sneakers*), Microsoft

Nobunaga's Ambition: Chronicles of Chaos, Koei

Project Gotham: World Street Racer, Microsoft

Silent Hill 2: Saigo no Uta, Konami

Tenku: Freestyle Snowboarding (aka *Amped*), Microsoft

Xbox on the Street

Don't take our word on what the Japanese think of the Xbox. We jumped from behind an underwear vending machine to interview a startled gamer who grabbed one on launch day. Here's what 45-year-old Abe had to say:

Q: Why are you buying an Xbox?

A: I own every major game console. It's natural for me to buy the newest system.

Q: What games are you excited about?

A: *Dead or Alive 3*.

Q: Do you have any thoughts on the fact that the system comes from America?

A: It's from Microsoft, so I thought it would be a high-quality system.

Q: What do you think of its size?

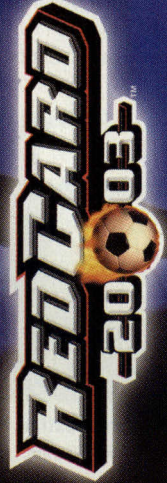
A: I was hoping they'd make it smaller than this.



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Different Game. Different Rules.

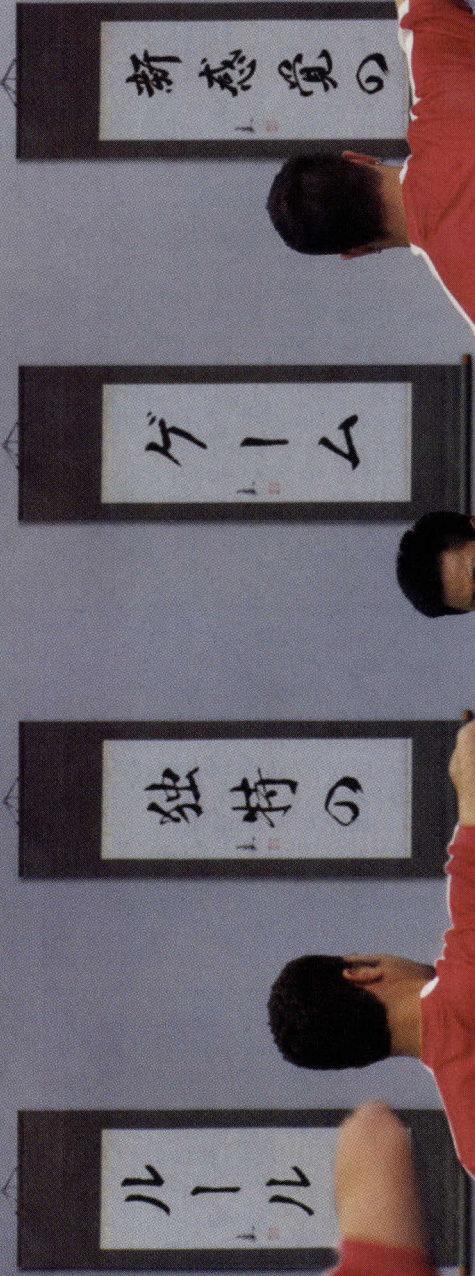
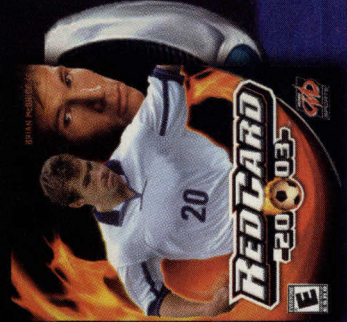


PlayStation 2



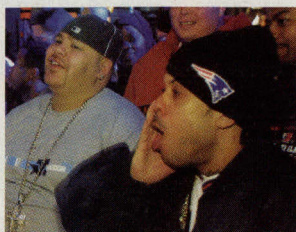
Calling all soccer hooligans. Finally, a videogame that understands soccer really is a contact sport! RedCard Soccer's unique adrenaline-style game play lets you kick, tackle and fight with 32 international teams all vying for the Cup Championship. Soccer Moms, cover your eyes. Different game. Different rules.

Game details at www.redcard.midway.com





PRESS
START



B-BOYS, B-BALL

Hip-hop stars and courts go together like Mike Tyson and felony charges. No surprise, then, that notables including Fat Joe and Benzino (left) joined professional athletes for Sega Sports' *NBA 2K2* All-Star Celebrity Challenge on Feb. 8 at Philadelphia's Electric Factory. Rawkus recording artist Mad Skillz ultimately swung the charity tournament, proving that like Mack 10 he can bang and ball.

—Scott Steinberg

PS2 Goes Online in Japan

Resident Evil, Gran Turismo to be among first titles

You might think the announcements made at Sony's PlayStation Meeting 2002 were just meant to take the wind out of Microsoft's Japanese Xbox launch about a week later, if not for the fact that it's an annual event always held in mid-February. This year the big news was the unveiling of Sony's PS2 online plans, and while similar announcements have yet to be made stateside, it gives us a preview of the kinds of things U.S. gamers can expect.

PlayStation BB

The first of the announcements is that Sony's teamed with four of the biggest ISPs in Japan to launch the PlayStation BB (Broadband) service in April. Users will have access to all the usual features associated with Net access (like browsing the Web or sending E-mail) and be able to watch movies, listen to music, view webcasts, and read digital publications inside the PS2's Broadband Navigator software.

Pricing varies depending on which of the four providers users decide to go with. Want to play some games? The Broadband Navigator includes a PS/PS2 "emulator" application that lets you play software (for an additional fee) that you've downloaded to your PS2's hard drive just as if you had the production game in your system. Other plans include allowing the system to work as a TiVo-like real-time video recorder and an "extended DVD player."

Network Games

Just to prove that they're not simply dipping their toes into the online pool, Sony and its PS2 licensees announced more than two dozen games with online network components (see sidebar for the complete list). The only



Download and play PS1 or PS2 games via the PS2's stylish Broadband Navigator software.

downside is that the majority of the online games won't see the light of day until later in the year (except *Final Fantasy XI*, which comes out in Japan this summer).

Sony has five titles in development in-house, including the oft-rumored *Gran Turismo* and *Hot Shots Golf Online*. And apart from Square's *FFXI*, Capcom's *Resident Evil Network* is the highest-profile third-party title. (Don't worry—official entries in the *RE* series will still be GameCube-exclusive. This doesn't count since it's an offshoot where you must escape a zombie-infested Raccoon City.)

An announcement regarding Sony's U.S. online plans is expected shortly. Sony CEA recently recruited beta testers to test our version of PlayStation BB. And the first U.S. online title, *SOCOM: Navy Seals*, is scheduled for release in late summer.



Now you can ridicule your friends' putting skills from a distance in *Hot Shots Golf Online*.

PS2 Online Games

The following are specific titles recently announced to be compatible with Sony's PlayStation BB network in Japan. None had firm release dates at the time we went to press:

Massively multiplayer online RPG (untitled), Atlus

The Dungeon of Doruaga, Arika

Auto Modellista, Capcom

Resident Evil Network (tentative), Capcom

Armored Core Sigma, From Software

Tokyo Xtreme Racing Online, Genki

Bomberman Online (tentative), Hudson

Nobunaga's Ambition online RPG

(tentative), Koei

Clockwork Online (tentative), Namco

Action-adventure game (untitled), Namco

3D flight-shooting game (untitled),

Namco [ed. note: Gee, wonder if this could be Ace Combat-related?]

Namco online sports game (tentative), Namco

Guru Guru Onsen PS2 (tentative), Sega

Hundred Swords, Sega

Simulation game (untitled), Sega

Racing game (untitled), Sega

Arc the Lad Online (tentative), Sony

Kuma-uta (tentative), Sony

Gran Turismo Online (tentative), Sony

Hot Shots Golf Online (tentative), Sony

Modiv Ribbon (tentative), Sony

Final Fantasy XI, Square

Network-compatible board game

(untitled), Takara

Massively multiplayer online action-

adventure game (untitled), Tecmo

Get the Greatest PS2 Games Cheap!

For just \$24.99, to be exact. Sony has extended their Greatest Hits series to the PlayStation 2. It kicks off with four games: *Twisted Metal: Black*, *Gran Turismo 3*, *Dark Cloud* and *ATV Offroad Fury*. Expect more titles to follow, including some from third-party licensees. Each of the titles in the Greatest Hits series has reached sales of over 400,000 copies. In related bargain-gaming news, Sony also quietly announced plans to offer a line of PS1 three-in-one compilation packs at bargain pricing. Finally—a way to catch up on all those *Army Men* games you missed out on!



Clockwise from top left: *Dark Cloud*, *GT3*, *Twisted Metal: Black* and *ATV Offroad Fury*.

NFL GAMES TOP CHARTS

You like football, you really do. The National Football League recently announced that NFL-licensed video games account for over \$300 million in sales, more than the MLB, NBA and NHL titles combined. Seven of the top 100 best-selling video games of 2001 had the NFL license. Not surprisingly, six of the seven were *Madden NFL 2001* and 2002, with *NFL Fever 2002* squeezing in via the top Xbox game sales category. Noticeably absent is Sony's once-mighty *GameDay* franchise.

TIDBITS

Dragon's Lair 3D Comes Home

Dirk the Daring finally gets his medieval pants filled out when *Dragon's Lair 3D*, Encore Software's adaptation of the classic arcade laserdisc game, arrives on PS2 and GameCube this fall. If you're a fan of the original relic, then you'll probably be happy to know they plan on keeping the hand-drawn graphics and clichéd damsel-in-distress story intact. It will feature new animation done specially for the game by Don Bluth & Co.



Novalogic Hits PS1

Novalogic, a long-time war-game maker for the PC, is returning to the console software market. Their latest entry will be *Delta Force: Urban Warfare*, coming in May 2002 for PS1. Its titles for the next-gen systems will follow this fall, including *Comanche* for the Xbox and *Delta Force* for the PS2.

Futurama-rama

While *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening's TV show *Futurama* teeters dangerously close to being cancelled (go to www.gotfuturama.com for more details), it's coming to an Xbox, GC and PS2 near you by the end of the year. The games are being developed by Swedish designer Unique Development Studios, but a U.S. publisher has not been announced.



The Great Game-Movie Oscar Swindle

The Academy Awards are here again, and *Final Fantasy* is up for the Best Animated Film Oscar. Great, but what about all the other game-based masterpieces the Academy snubbed in the past? Here are the Oscars they *shoulda* won....



MK Annihilation: awesome



Street Fighter—Best Costumes

Country-clubbin' Academy voters clearly didn't realize that when you fight on the street, your life depends on the durability and comfort only thrift-store cammo duds, spandex tube tops and faux-leather tunics can provide.



Tomb Raider—Best Documentary

Screw musty textbooks. Would-be archeologists can learn way more about the study of ancient cultures from this two-hour look at a real-life Indiana Jane. We'd try archeology, too, if we could fit into the mandatory short-shorts.



Double Dragon—Best Supporting Actor

If the job of any actor playing a bad guy is to make the audience hate him, then Robert Patrick—whose whiny villain in *Double Dragon* had us seeing red—is by far the best actor of his generation. Except maybe Pauly Shore.



Mortal Kombat: Annihilation—Best Screenplay

MKA's epic tale of a buncha guys beating up a bunch of other guys is rife with classic lines like, "On the seventh day, man will rest...in peace!" and "I'll take my mom." Hey, Academy—you think dialog like that writes itself?

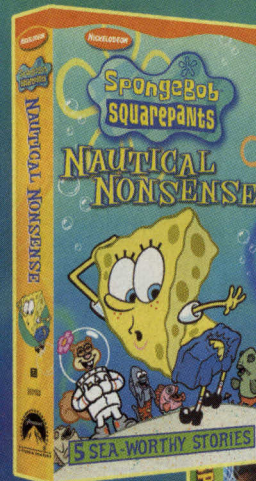


Super Mario Bros.—Best Foreign Film

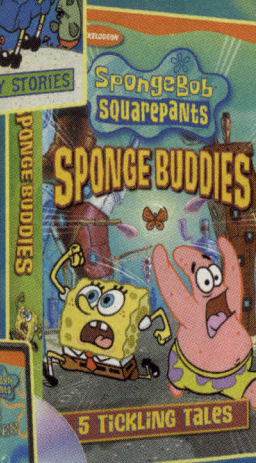
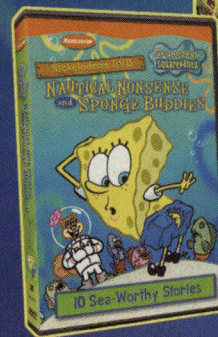
Don't be fooled by its English dialog or American cast: *Super Mario Bros.*, with its improbable plot involving a duo of Italian plumbers, dino-evolution and mountains of snot, has *got* to be foreign, possibly French or Turkish.



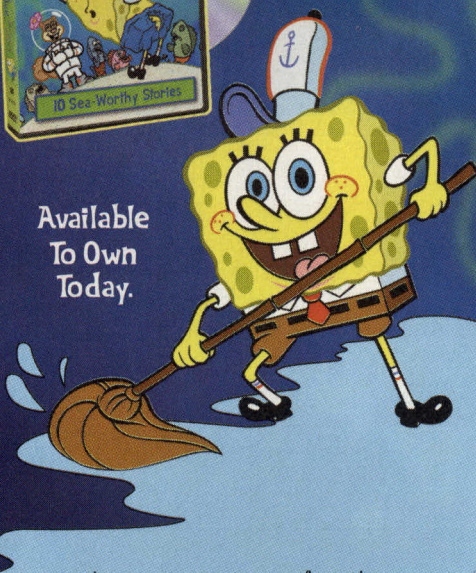
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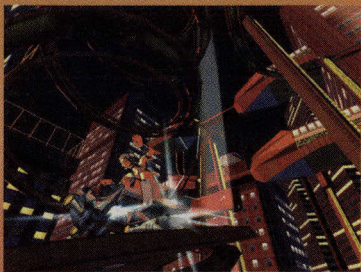
Created by Stephen Hillenburg. TM, © &

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EXPRESS YOURSELF



With ground-breaking cel-shaded graphics, incredible stunts and all-new tricks and attacks, JSRF is a totally hip action-adventure way ahead of its time.

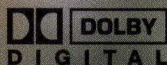
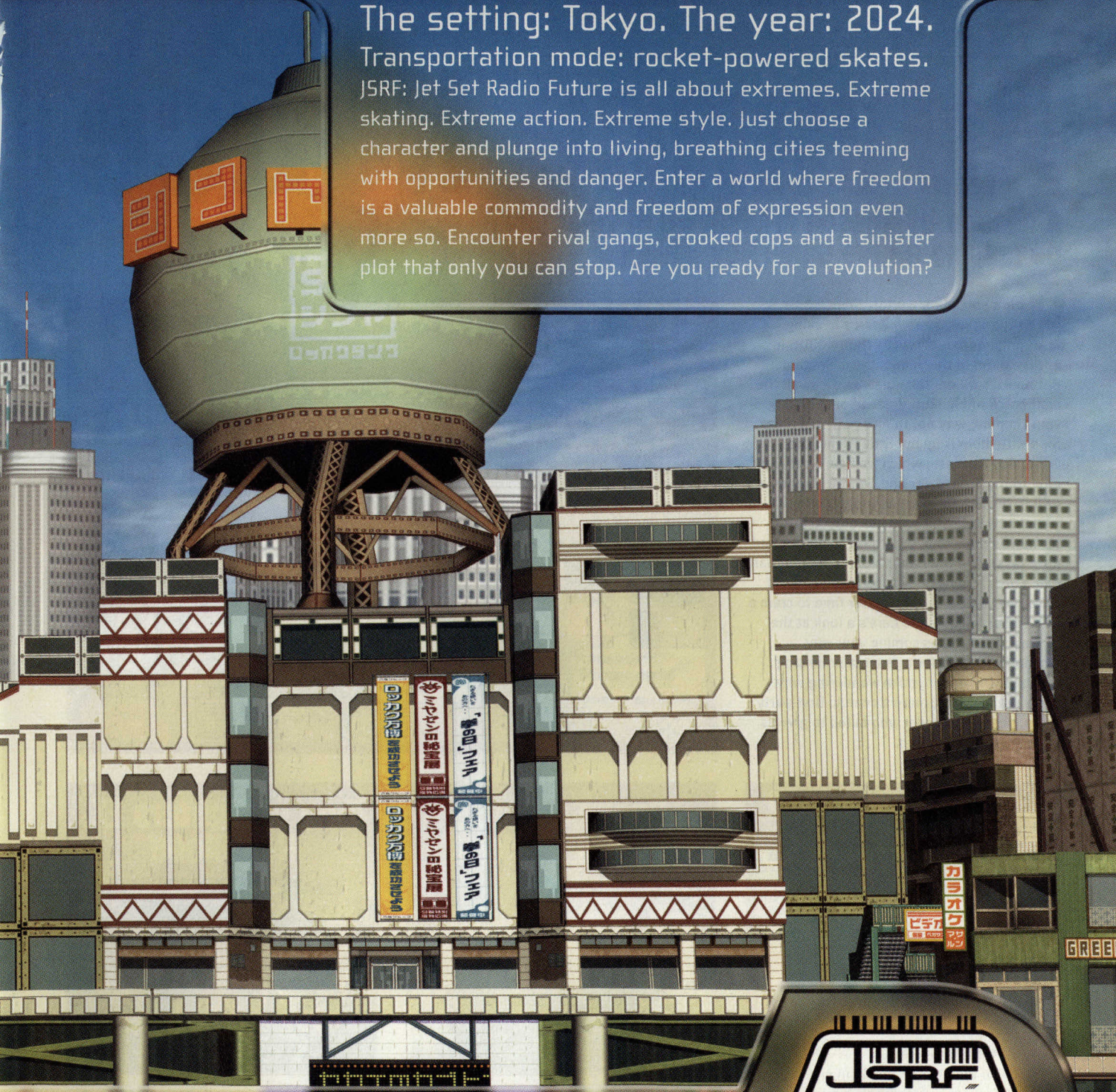
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TO THE EXTREME IN THE ROLLING REVOLUTION

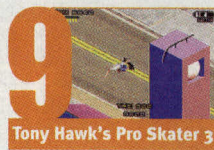


The setting: Tokyo. The year: 2024. Transportation mode: rocket-powered skates. JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future is all about extremes. Extreme skating. Extreme action. Extreme style. Just choose a character and plunge into living, breathing cities teeming with opportunities and danger. Enter a world where freedom is a valuable commodity and freedom of expression even more so. Encounter rival gangs, crooked cops and a sinister plot that only you can stop. Are you ready for a revolution?



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TOP 10 Must-Own GBA Games



Advance Notice

A season-by-season breakdown of what you'll be playing on the Game Boy Advance



Halo's sprawling worlds, *Smash Bros.*'s superstars, *Stretch Panic*'s heaving polyboobs—everyone thought BIG in 2001, making it the year of the megagame. But now it's quiet...too quiet, as we await the next batch of big stuff. Instead of twiddling your thumbs, why not think small? It's time for a little help from our little friend, the Game Boy Advance, which we figure sits right next to the Eurosealer and George Foreman's grill in the annals of great gadgeteering.

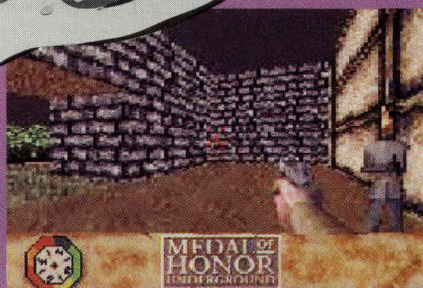
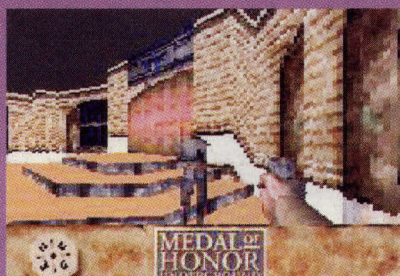
And now that Nintendo has dipped the portable's price to \$79 (although you can find it for less), and the handheld's had more than half a year to amass an assortment of solid titles, we can't think of a better time to cram a GBA in our britches. So here's a look at the biggest little games coming your way, starting with this spring's most promising releases. Oh, and if you're wondering why we're not featuring more Nintendo first-party titles, blame Nintendo, who failed to give us any new screens or info.

Medal of Honor

April ■ Destination Software



Doom and *Ecks vs. Sever* on GBA got us used to playing handheld first-person shooters. But *MOH* (which Destination licensed from Electronic Arts) still took us by surprise. Graphically, it's on par with GBA *Doom*, except now the gameplay packs missions and your first big chance to off Nazis while on the bus.



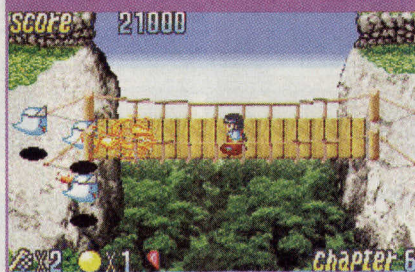
Bomberman Max 2

April ■ Majesco



Hey! Who got *Pokémon* in my *Bomberman*? Hudson's bizzigity bomb hero used to merely blow stuff up, but now he collects and breeds cuddly critters too. Thankfully, the classic action/puzzle gameplay remains intact. Both the Red and Blue versions offer over 80 stages of blasting action, collectible creatures and, of course, thrilling multiplayer battles.

Pocky & Rocky with Becky



To paraphrase the Beatles: Now somewhere in the black mountain hills of Dakota, there lived a young boy named Rocky Raccoon. And one day his woman ran off with the Evil Hydra. So Rocky called up his friends Pocky and Becky, and they ventured through seven stages of shooter action to kick this Hydra into the dirt.

King of Fighters EX: Neo Blood



SNK (as we knew it) has passed on to the giant arcade in the sky. Luckily, franchises which started on the big, bad 24-bit Neo-Geo console still carry on, like this portable brawler by Marvelous Entertainment. These guys squeezed *KOF '99* into the confines of the GBA with surprising success. Kicks, punches and bouncy boobs abound.



Sonic the Hedgehog Advance



Super Mario Advance



Golden Sun



Advance Wars



Super Mario Advance 2



Castlevania: CotM



Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2

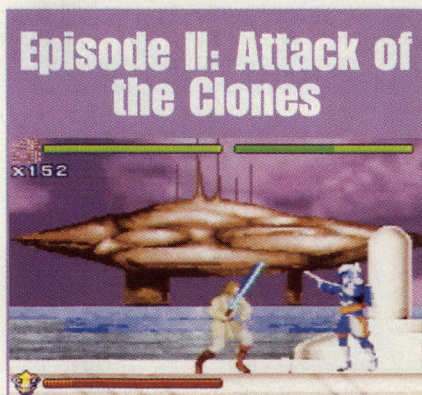
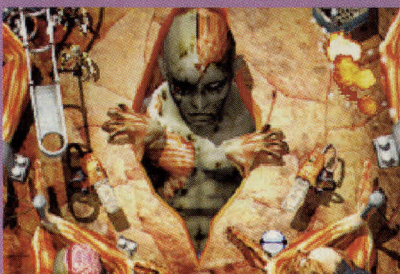
FRONT MANUAL

All you BMX bandits out there can finally stop playing with your ridiculous finger-bikes. We know those tech-boarders got a sweet version of *Tony Hawk* as a launch game on the GBA. Now Activision's looking to do you right by bringing all of Mat's bunnyhops, powerslides, grinds and aeri-als to his own portable trickfest.

Pinball of the Dead

May ■ THQ

Man, pinball is so dead...it's practically undead. Sega's WOW Entertainment is banking on that with this macabre mesh of its *House of the Dead* series with old-fashioned flipper-tiltin' madness. Multi-screen playfields packed with targets and floating heads guarantee a challenge.



Episode II: Attack of the Clones

Episode II promises to be a serious, romance-laden and potentially Jar-Jar-free movie. Sound enticing? Well then, rile up your midichlorians with *Eps. II* on the GBA, as you guide Anakin Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi and Mace Windu through a variety of stages based on the film. Remember, on the GBA, there's no such thing as bad acting.



Sega Smash Pack

May ■ THQ

When Sega first announced the *Smash Pack* for GBA, we had hot-'n-heavy fantasies about playing *Altered Beast* and *Phantasy Star II* on the go. Well, the final lineup doesn't feature those classics, but it does sport *Golden Axe*, *Ecco the Dolphin* and *Sonic Spinball*, three games that showcase Sega's innovative spirit. Hopefully, more retro collections will follow, damnit.



Guilty Gear X Advance Edition

Ah, *Guilty Gear*, the fighting game whose title makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. More importantly though, a portable version of this cult-favorite weapons-based fighter means we'll get at least 14 playable characters and maybe even a couple of bosses too. New to the series, however, is the three-man tag-team action.

When Play Time's Over...

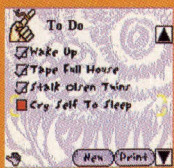
Rise to any challenge with these odd-job Game Boy apps

All play and no work would make for the perfect life, right? But wake up, Jack—this is the real world—so we've rounded up a few Game Boy applications that'll help you take care of business.

To organize your life...

■ Mary-Kate and Ashley Pocket Planner ■ E.T. Digital Companion

Don't laugh. Buried within the kid-friendly trimmings of these carts lie the best personal organizers for the Game Boy. The two programs offer similar features (both were developed by Powerhead Games) such as monthly, weekly and daily calendars that have most holidays programmed in. You also get the ever-useful address book and to-do list, plus a stop watch, clock and phone dialer. If you're too manly to buy something with Olsen twins or E.T.s on the box, you can always scrounge around for Innovation's *Pocket Organizer*, which comes with a calendar, a world clock, an address book and a list of telephone country codes.





PRESS
START

4.8 Million

The number of Game Boy Advances sold in the U.S. in 2001.



BRIGHT IDEAS

Rescue Your GBA From Dark Ages With These Light Solutions

Gamester's Flood Light • \$15

We took this mini-florescent-light attachment on a long and debauched road trip and found it to be the very best of the snap-on GBA light contraptions. The tradeoff is that this thing's a juice sucker—it eats three AA batteries in about seven hours (meaning you'll shell out about \$10 for batteries just to get through the average game). Still, Flood Light is the easiest (and cheapest) way of brightening up those dark corners in ol' Drac's castle.



The GBA Internal light • \$35

Tech-head entrepreneur Adam Curtis at www.portablemonopoly.com has spent the past seven months figuring out how to fit an internal light into the GBA, and he's finally come up with a solution. By the time you read this, his site should be taking pre-orders for the light kit, which will sell for \$35 and ship in April. You'll need a soldering iron to install the light—which runs off the GBA's own AAs and cuts battery life by 35 percent—but Curtis



says the modification procedure ain't too prickly. "On a scale of one to 10, where

one is putting two LEGO blocks together and 10 is building a car engine from scratch, we'd put this somewhere around a four," he says. Web site www.portablemonopoly.net (it's unrelated to portablemonopoly.com) will install Curtis' light for \$20 if you're afraid of getting your hands dirty.

GBA TV Adapter • \$80

This gizmo, which also goes by the name TV de Advance (depending on where you order it), lets you jack your GBA into the TV and play games on the big screen. Sure, you lose portability, but at least you can see what you're doing. Before you go buying the thing (you'll find it online at www.gamegizmo.com and www.upstategames.com) some words of caution: As with the internal light, you'll need to take apart your GBA with the included tools to attach the adapter, thus voiding your warranty. And a few butterfingered EGM staffers who've tried the operation accidentally broke the brittle ribbon cable you need to snap between your GBA and the device.



Boeing 777 Commercial Jet • \$150 million

We've travelled far and wide and found that nothing tops the dazzling overhead lighting of a passenger plane as the ultimate on-the-go light source. Sure, the sticker price here is a bit much, but hey—if you're a billionaire playboy, stewardess or the president of the United States, why not treat yourself? You deserve it.



Mega Man Zero

June ■ Capcom



How popular is Mega Man? So popular that his spin-offs have spin-offs. *MMZ* continues the storyline of the *Mega Man X* titles, focusing on Zero, the flaxen-haired "replid." Capcom promises that this will be the hardest Mega Man title ever. Bad news for some, but expert players can now use the new "Admiration System" to brag about their game stats among friends.

Car Battler Joe

June ■ Natsume



Back—way back—in the 1980s, we played this paper-and-dice RPG called *Car Wars*. Eventually, someone got wise and made *Car Wars* into a computer game called *Autoduel*. Now, in a bizarre twist of fate, we'll be playing a GBA approximation of the same game this summer. *CBJ* combines arcade action with an in-depth RPG system for the ultimate *Mad Max* experience.

To kick out the jams...

■ Nanoloop Music Sequencer

Think of this cart as a primitive *MTV Music Generator* for your GBA. *Nanoloop* lets you edit tunes using a four-by-four grid that pumps out four custom-made techno tracks simultaneously. The interface is clunky, but persevere and you'll be powering your next rave with your GBA. You can order the \$50 cart—and listen to some sample tunes—www.nanoloop.com.



To travel the globe...

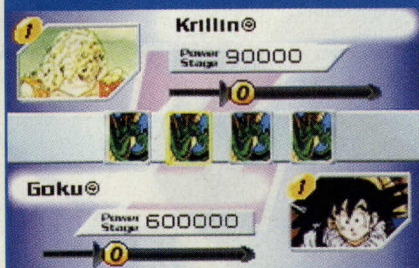
■ InfoGenius French Language Translator ■ InfoGenius Frommer's Travel Guide

Yeah, we don't like France either, but at least we can tell those crooked-judging bread-luggers to kiss our American derrieres in their native tongue with this cinch-to-use program. Just input English words and the program searches its built-in Berlitz dictionary for the translation, or type in French to learn what dirty names the locals are calling you. A Spanish edition is also available. Si, El Camino es muy guapo. *Frommer's Travel Guide*, meanwhile, lists all the on-the-go info you'd need—hotels, stores and sites—for 10 U.S. cities, including New York, L.A. and Chicago. Unfortunately, the info here is a bit dated; you're better off just buying one of Frommer's newer books.





Dragon Ball Z: Card Game



Hey kids, you know all those DBZ packs you keep wasting \$3.29 for, with the hope that you'll get a mega-rare holo-foil card? It's a scam. Do yourselves a favor and get this GBA game instead. You'll get all the cards, mint condition, in digital form. And if you're looking for that other DBZ GBA game, head to page 92.

Robotech

September ■ TDK Mediactive



Despite *Robotech's* enduring popularity, no game based on the classic series has ever made it out in the U.S. Finally, TDK breaks the cycle of abuse with this 2D shooter. Assume the role of heroic Rick Hunter, geeky Max Sterling, the ill-fated Roy Fokker or the sultry Miriya in a non-stop bullet barrage. This shooter supports link modes for up to four players.

The Lord of the Rings, Part One

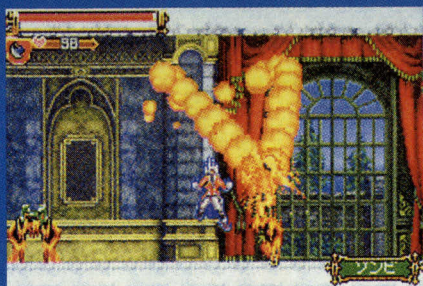
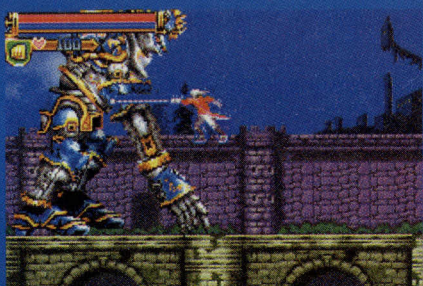


By fall, the squeal of *Episode II* will have long dissipated from your mind, to be replaced by the deafening buzz of *The Two Towers*, part deux of the *LOTR* movie trilogy. In this RPG-lite, control all nine members of the fellowship in turn-based combat against Sauron's evil forces. Hey, we're just happy it isn't a *LOTR* beat-'em-up.

Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance

July ■ Konami

Castlevania: Circle of the Moon was EGM's favorite GBA game of 2001. Hell, our eyes still hurt from all the squintin'. Looks like it's time to get some new glasses because Konami is aiming for a surprise repeat performance with a new chapter in the series. Not really a *Circle* sequel, *Harmony of Dissonance* takes place in 1740, between the times of Richter (TurboGrafx-16 CD title *Dracula X*) and Simon Belmont (*Castlevania 1-2*). You play as Jeust Belmont, the heir of both the Belmont and Belnades clans. The graphics appear to be a notch above those in the last title, sporting better animation and—best of all—a brighter overall look. Maybe you won't need those new glasses after all.



THAT AIN'T ALL...

More Pocket-Size Thrills

Still on the horizon is a shipload of must-play titles. Our most wanted: *Metroid IV*, an old-school sequel to one of the best games ever made. Nintendo's given no new info, but we do know that power-gal Samus merges with *Metroid* to wield new powers. Another Big-N game we're jazzed about is *Kirby's Tilt'n Tumble 2*, which links up with its GameCube counterpart. Then come the SNES remakes *Super Mario Bros. 3* and *Yoshi's Island*, due in the latter half of 2002. Rare keeps up the pace with *Diddy Kong Pilot* and platformers *Sabre Wulf* and *Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge*. If that ain't enough, Destination does a triple-hit combo with *GTA III*, *Road Rash: Jailbreak* and *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, all due by year's end.

To avoid looking stoopid...

■ InfoGenius Spell Checker

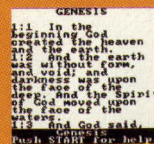
We'd dust off our musty Dan Quale "potatoes" jokes here but we figure we oughta just get to the point. This cart packs a built-in American Heritage dictionary that's easy to search, although it coughs up a wide range of words sometimes. For instance, when we entered a simple misspelling like "frend," the program displayed "friend" along with 37 other listings ranging from "fared" to "vend."



To become holier than thou...

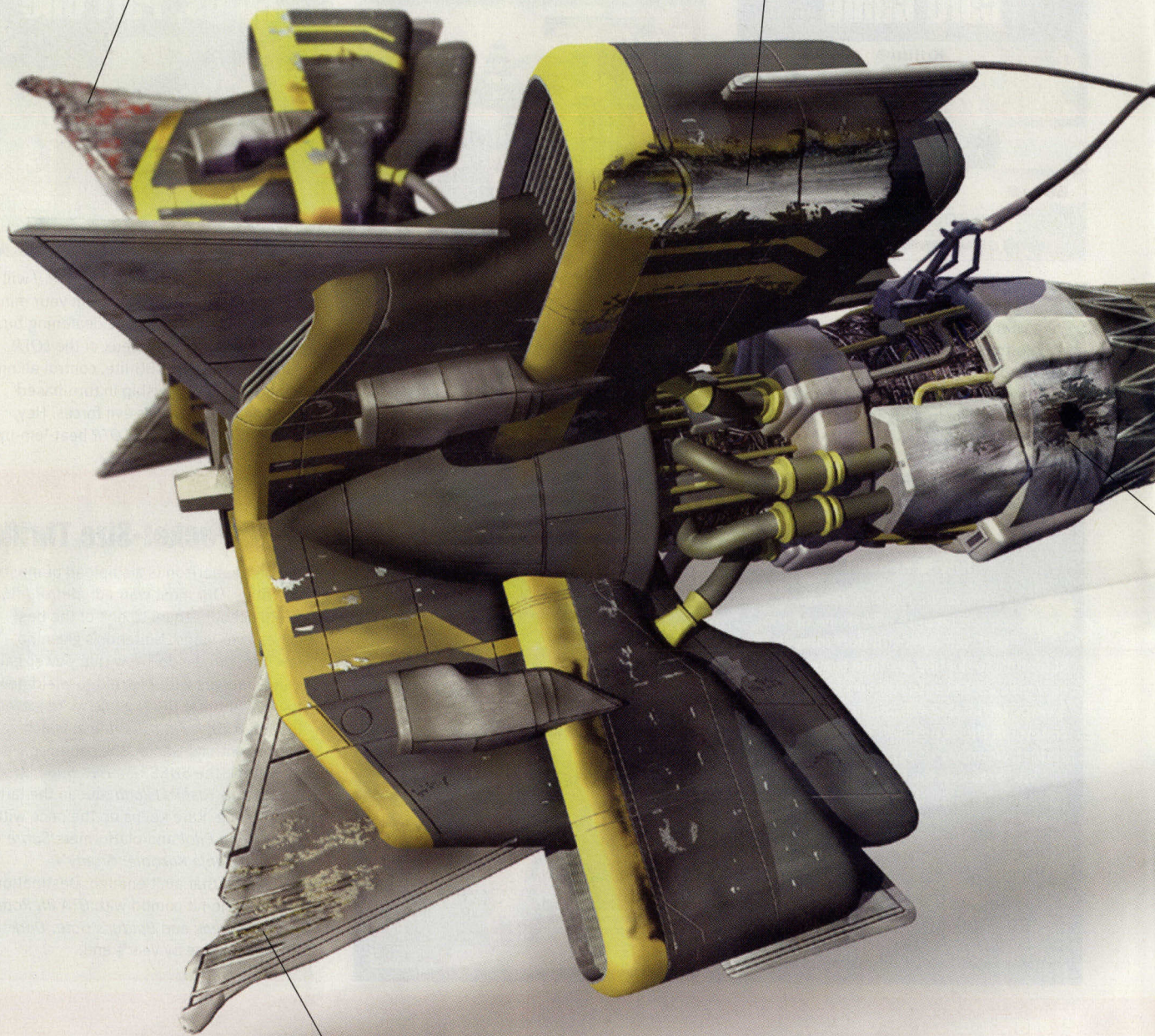
■ King James Bible

God-fearing developer Wisdom Tree has finally given gamers a real miracle: a valid excuse to take the GBA to church. They've crammed the entire King James Bible into this cart and made it easy to search for particular chapters and key words. Don't expect holy-moly graphics, though—the program is entirely text-based, although you can fire up Biblical versions of Hangman and Concentration. We'd call these minigames lame, but we don't wanna get struck by lightning.



Shrapnel impact at 600+mph.
Mon Calamari.

Swapping paint with Skywalker,
Tatooine.



Turbo-boost slice between canyon wall and Oud Bolt,
Sullust.

PlayStation 2

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THE ANATOMY OF SPEED.

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600MPH. GO HEAD-TO-HEAD AGAINST
18 OF THE GALAXY'S MOST AGGRESSIVE
PODRACERS. WITH 14 HARROWING
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Mild Violence





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START

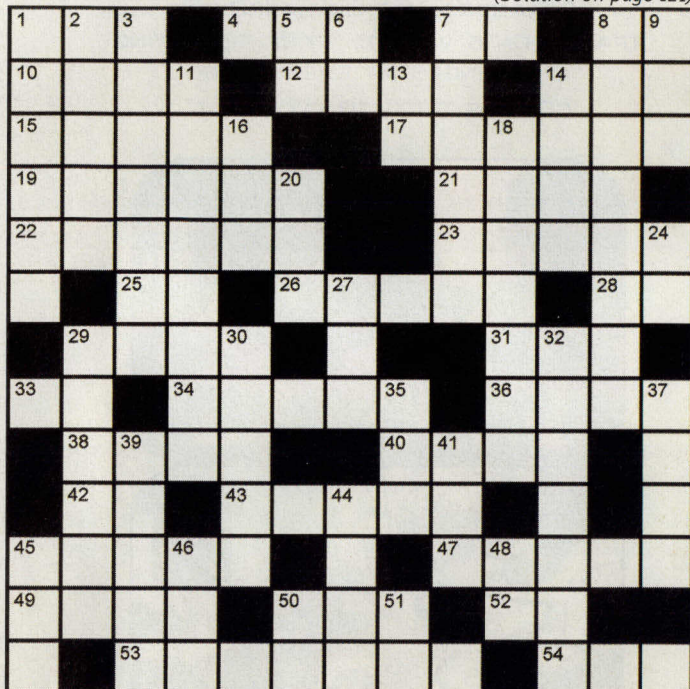


BIG-SCREEN EMERGENCY

Big-name game releases have not escaped the attention of Hollywood, eager to snap up licenses that could be the next *Tomb Raider*. Games like *Crazy Taxi*, *The House of the Dead* and *Duke Nukem* are already being developed into feature films (*HotD* begins shooting in May). Now you can add one more name to that list. New Line Cinema recently acquired the film rights to Rockstar's recent PS2 release *State of Emergency*. No word on a release date yet, but you can bet that the gratuitous violence will be included.

Fighter Megamix

(Solution on page 121)



ACROSS

1. PS2 car-combat fave
4. Line-drawn PS1 import _ *Ribbon*
7. Milestone fighter *Capcom* _ *SNK*
8. Unit of engine size in *MX 2002*
10. Klonoa's distinguishing feature
12. Pointy-head kid from *Final Fantasy IX*
14. Like the *Silent Hill 2* ending, possibly
15. *EGM* editor Kujawa
17. Arcade game *Battle Chopper* in Japan
19. Ninjas sometimes do it to presidents
21. Xbox giveaway-partner eatery _ *Bell*
22. Join the Red Faction?
23. Sasquatch of *Final Fantasy III*
25. There are four in Pokémon #133
26. Square's two-part 3D fighter
28. Brought *Doom* to us all
29. Made up of eight little bits
31. Star of *Parasite Eve*?
33. Usually marks the end of a round
34. *Burgertime*'s Peter Pepper wears one
36. "... your might!" (*Mortal Kombat*)
38. Shang Tsung's four-armed protector
40. Yoshi, for short?
42. What an *MGS2* guard carries
43. Saucy Brit of *Street Fighter II*
45. _ Bandicoot
47. What a *Resident Evil* Licker does
49. *Panzer Dragoon Saga* hero
50. Capcom's take on an SNK character
52. *Wipeout* _ (PS1)
53. *Lunar*: _ *Blue* (Sega CD)

54. "Red _ needs food, badly" (*Gauntlet*)

DOWN

1. *Virtua Fighter* competition
2. Stoner who voice-acted Sir George in *Blazing Dragons* (Saturn)
3. NES game publisher Milton _
5. Last *Phantasy Star* on the Genesis
6. *MGS2* Vamp's "orientation"?
7. Yu Suzuki's no-nonsense *Fighter*
8. *Fast Food* (Atari 2600) is full of 'em
9. Defunct Phillips gaming system
11. Vintage arcade space shooter
13. _ Labs, responsible for the Nuon
14. *Gran Turismo 3* track Laguna _
16. By-product of Shrek
18. RPG towns
20. Acronym atop Solid Snake's codec
24. Play too much *Dr. Mario*?
27. One-armed Street Fighter
29. *Fatal Fury*'s Terry or Andy
30. *Chrono Trigger* time machine
32. The Warthog in *Halo*, for one
35. *Star Wars*: *Starfighter* pilot
37. Gives up, in *UFC*
39. Shadow king of PS2 RPG fame
41. *Popeye*'s Olive's maiden name
44. *Resident Evil* zombie talk
45. Sony's publisher suffix
46. At least six games of *Tennis 2K2*
48. The final PS1 *Final Fantasy*
50. Wily or Robotnik
51. This region's games work in the U.S.

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Welcome back, kiddies, to another thrilling installment of The Q's rumor and gossip column. Step right up, 'cuz I've tapped into the inner sanctums of the biggest names in gamedom for this month's installment. On with the show!

...Let's start with **Square**. Do the titles *Chrono Break* and *Unlimited SaGa* mean anything to you? They will soon enough. These are the rumored titles for the next installments in the *Chrono* and *SaGa* series. Expect an announcement on these two titles coming out of Japan very soon....



...Much of **Microsoft**'s first-party Xbox plans remain under wraps, but your friendly neighborhood rumor-slinger (aka yours truly) has found out about two titles you'll want to keep an eye out for: *Knights of Decayden* and *Quantum Redshift*.... Other news on the Xbox front, **id Software**'s hotly anticipated *Doom III* may lead on the system with the PC version following later (kinda like *Halo* did). Additionally, **Microsoft** is trying to sew up rights that'd make *Quake IV* Xbox-exclusive. It'd make a good online title, wouldn't it? And as if that isn't enough, The Q hears that **LucasArts**' massively multiplayer *Star Wars* online RPG *Star Wars Galaxies* may be Xbox-bound too. Not enough? OK, how about *Virtua Fighter 4.1*? Ah-ha!...

...New details on **Sega**'s upcoming *Panzer Dragoon for Xbox* are scant at best, but I've been able to uncover a new nugget of information. The new installment will ditch the RPG elements found in *PD Saga* in favor of gameplay similar to the first two. Just for fun, The Q dragged his Sega Saturn out of retirement for a *PD* Appreciation Weekend. Let me encourage you to do the same, Q-friends. The majestic beauty found in those games only whets the appetite for more. Please Sega, don't make us wait any longer!...

...Two newsbites on the **Capcom** front: The first is word of a new PS2 title developed by fellow Americans **Angel Studios** called *Red Dead Revolver*. Think of it as an Old West-style first-person shootin' match. The second bit is that *Onimusha 2* may be headed for multiple systems after its debut on PS2, a la the recent *Genma Onimusha* (Xbox)....

...Here are a few tidbits before I gotta call it quits for this month: **Rockstar**'s next title to capitalize on the public's fascination with gratuitous violence will be *Celebrity Deathmatch*. Two words: Pam Anderson. Let's hope she's in there.... After they finish *Stuntman*, the boys over at **Reflections** will set their sights on *Driver 3*.... And speaking of threes, **Ubi Soft** is putting the final layer of spackle on *Rayman 3* so they can show it off at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in May. Sweet....

On that note, I must bid you adieu for now. If ya want, E-mail me at quartermann@ziffdavis.com. Ciao! — The Q



HOT PRICE!

\$19⁹⁹

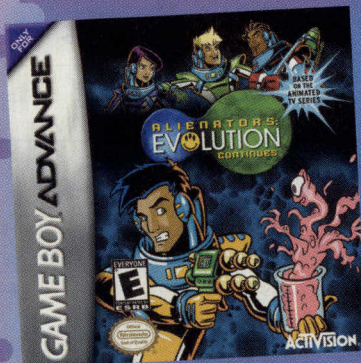
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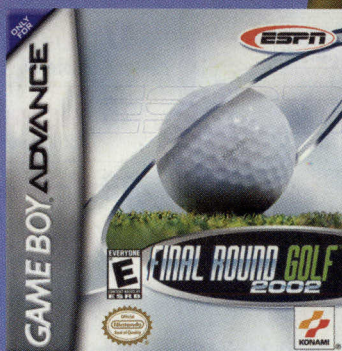
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#205352-8**



**FROGGER'S ADVENTURES:
TEMPLE OF THE FROG,
#205382-5**



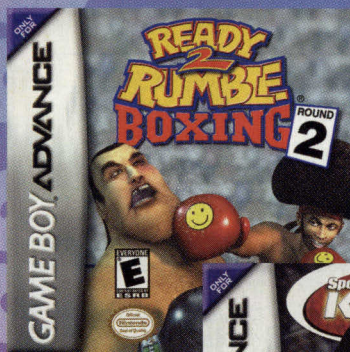
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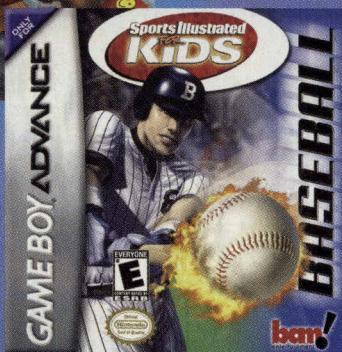
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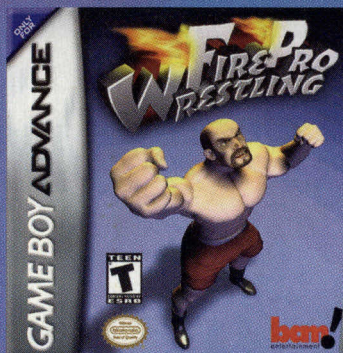
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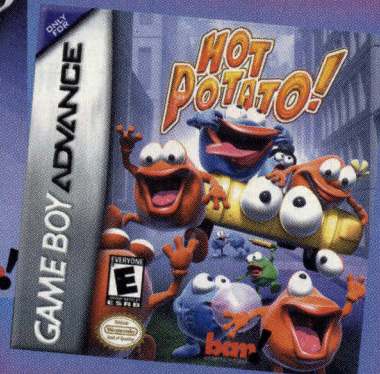
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PRESS
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The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of 2001

This month's chart is a bit different. Instead of the monthly Top 20, this is the combined chart for all of last year. The big winner was Rockstar's free-roaming, do-whatever-you-please mob simulator **Grand Theft Auto III**, beating out other high-profile titles like **MGS2** and **GT3** for top honors. **Nintendo** had the most titles on the list with eight games (half of which are **Pokémon**-related). And the system with the biggest representation? **PlayStation 2**, with six entries. It's interesting to note that all of the PS2 games that charted were released in the second half of the year.

1	Grand Theft Auto III Rockstar	9.0 Crispin	9.0 Greg	10 Milkman	PS2	EGM GOLD	
2	Madden NFL 2002 Electronic Arts	9.5 Dan L	9.5 Dean	9.0 Kraig	PS2	EGM GOLD	
3	Pokémon Crystal Nintendo	7.0 Chris	7.5 Jeanne	3.5 Mark	GAME BOY COLOR	EGM SILVER	
4	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty Konami	9.5 Che	9.5 Jonathan	9.5 Mark	PS2	EGM GOLD	
5	Super Mario Advance Nintendo	9.0 Chris	8.0 Mark	8.0 Shoe	GAME BOY ADVANCE	EGM SILVER	
6	Gran Turismo 3 A-spec Sony CEA	10 Che	10 Greg	10 Jonathan	PS2	EGM PLATINUM	
7	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision	9.5 Che	9.5 Dean	9.5 Gary M	PS2	EGM GOLD	
8	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision	10 Crispin	10 Dean	10 Greg	PS2	EGM PLATINUM	
9	Pokémon Silver Nintendo	9.0 Chris	8.5 Crispin	8.5 Mark	GAME BOY COLOR	EGM SILVER	
10	Driver 2 Infogrames	7.5 Milkman	8.0 John D	7.5 Ryan	PS2		

11	Pokémon Gold Nintendo	EGM SILVER	GAME BOY COLOR
12	Pokémon Stadium 2 Nintendo		N64
13	Gran Turismo 2 Sony CEA	EGM PLATINUM	PS2
14	Halo Microsoft	EGM PLATINUM	XBOX
15	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Electronic Arts		PS2
16	Final Fantasy X Square Electronic Arts	EGM GOLD	PS2
17	Mario Kart: Super Circuit Nintendo	EGM SILVER	GAME BOY ADVANCE
18	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision		PS2
19	Super Smash Bros. Melee Nintendo	EGM GOLD	GAME BOY ADVANCE
20	The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages Nintendo	EGM GOLD	GAME BOY COLOR

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Kristin Barnett-von Korff at (516) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list. Chart description written by EGM staff. Betcha didn't notice that the GBA illustration in our Advance Notice news story is losing power through the seasons? (Hint: Look at its power light, ladies.)

JAPAN TOP 10

1	Samurai Spike	PS2	
2	Virtua Fighter 4 Sega	PS2	
3	Grandia Xtreme Enix	PS2	
4	Mysterious Dungeon: Story of Aska Sega		
5	Hoshigami Max Five	PS2	
6	Final Fantasy X International Square	PS2	
7	Three Kingdoms VIII Koei	PS2	
8	Animal Forest + Nintendo		
9	Smash Court Pro Tournament Namco	PS2	
10	Super Mario Advance 2: SMW Nintendo	GAME BOY ADVANCE	

Virtua Fighter 4

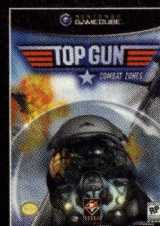
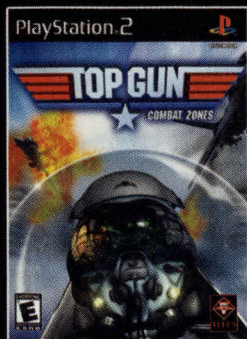
Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 2/10/2002

Enemies have a lock on your tail,
you barrel roll at mach 2 and let 'em have it...
ARE YOU READY FOR THIS KIND OF ACTION?



TOP GUN

COMBAT ZONES



Rating Pending

Coming Soon on:



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PlayStation®2



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PRESS
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Coming Soon

April

PlayStation 2	
Army Men RTS—3DO	Strategy
Barbarian—Titus	Fighting
FIFA World Cup 2002—EA Sports	Sports
Hidden Invasion—Conspiracy	Action
MLB 2003—989 Sports	Sports
No One Lives Forever—Sierra	Action
Slugfest—Midway	Sports
Top Angler—Infogrames	Sports
Trophy Bass—Sierra	Sports
Virtua Tennis 2K2—Sega Sports	Sports
GameCube	
Burnout—Acclaim	Racing
ESPN MLS ExtraTime 2002—Konami	Sports
NBA 2K2—Sega Sports	Sports
Xbox	
Burnout—Acclaim	Racing
Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind—Bethesda	RPG
FIFA World Cup 2002—EA Sports	Sports
World Series Baseball 2K3—Sega Sports	Sports
Game Boy Advance	
Ice Age—Ubi Soft	Action
Motocross Maniacs Advance—Konami	Racing
NASCAR Heat—Infogrames	Racing
Power Pro Tennis—Konami	Sports
Robocop—Titus	Action
Street Fighter Alpha 3—Capcom	Fighting
Three Stooges—Metro3D	Action

May

PlayStation 2	
Britney's Dance Beat—THQ	Music
Chris Edwards Aggressive Inline—Acclaim	Sports
Conflict Zone—Ubi Soft	Strategy
Evil Twin—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Freestyle—EA Sports Big	Sports
Gravity Games BMX—Midway	Sports
Hitman 2: Silent Assassins—Eidos	Action
Monster Truck Madness—Ubi Soft	Racing
Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius—THQ	Action
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur—Midway	Strategy
Looney Tunes Space Race—Infogrames	Racing
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2—Electronic Arts	Racing
Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
RLH: Run Like Hell—Interplay	Action
Skies of Arcadia—Sega	RPG
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Test Drive—Infogrames	Racing
UFC Throwdown—Crave	Fighting
GameCube	
Gravity Games BMX—Midway	Sports
Legends Of Wrestling—Acclaim	Wrestling
Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
Red Card Soccer—Midway	Sports
Slugfest—Midway	Sports
Virtua Striker 3—Sega Sports	Sports

Xbox	
Ballistic—Infogrames	Puzzle
Buffy the Vampire Slayer—Electronic Arts	Action
Crash—Majesco	Racing
Gravity Games BMX—Midway	Sports
Hitman 2: Silent Assassins—Eidos	Action
Legends Of Wrestling—Acclaim	Wrestling
MotoGP: Ultimate Racing Tech.—THQ	Racing
Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
Red Card Soccer—Midway	Sports
Sega GT 2002—Sega	Racing
Slugfest—Midway	Sports
Smashing Drive—Namco	Action
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Test Drive—Infogrames	Racing
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon—Ubi Soft	Action
Worms Blast—Ubi Soft	Puzzle

Game Boy Advance	
Defender of the Crown—Metro3D	Action
Disney's Jungle Book—Ubi Soft	Action
Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku—Infogrames	Action
Pinball of the Dead—THQ	Pinball
Smash Pack—THQ	Action
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Wings—Metro3D	Action

June

PlayStation 2	
Commandos 2: Men of Courage—Eidos	Strategy
H2Overdrive—Crave	Racing
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2—Activision O2	Sports
Medal of Honor: Frontline—Electronic Arts	Action
MX Superfly—THQ	Racing
Simpsons Skateboarding—Electronic Arts	Action
Stuntman—Infogrames	Action
Terminator: Dawn of Fate—Infogrames	Action
Return to Castle Wolfenstein—Activision	Action
GameCube	
BMX Racing—THQ	Racing
Eternal Darkness—Nintendo	Adventure
Phantasy Star Online—Sega	RPG
Star Fox Adventures—Nintendo	Adventure
WWF Wrestlemania X8—THQ	Wrestling

Xbox	
Crazy Taxi Next—Sega	Racing
House of the Dead 3—Sega	Action
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2—Activision O2	Sports
Pro Race Driver—Codemasters	Racing
Terminator: Dawn of Fate—Infogrames	Action
Toxic Grind—THQ	Action

Game Boy Advance	
Aero the AcroBat—Metro3D	Action
Disney's Lilo and Stitch—Disney Interactive	Action
Dragon Ball Z: Card Game—Infogrames	Misc.
Dual Blades—Metro3D	Action
Fire Pro Wrestling 2—bam! Entertainment	Action
Mega Man Battle Network 2—Capcom	Adventure
Minority Report—Activision	Action
Spy Hunter—Midway	Racing

IMPORT CALENDAR

Klonoa Beach Volleyball



Import Pick of the Month: Let's face it, if you play Japanese games, chances are that you dug the original *Klonoa* and its PS2 sequel. And by that theory, you're going to want to pick up *Klonoa Beach Volleyball* for PS1 (and you better—it's not coming to America), a cartoony take on the popular seaside sport. The premise is as it sounds: Join Klonoa and his fellow Phantomilans in a friendly game in the sand (or in other exotic locales). Up to four players can compete and if you don't have a Multi-tap, no problem. The control's set up so that two players can share a Dual Shock. Vanquishing evil is as easy as bump, set, spike!

PlayStation 2

- 3/28 *Tekken 4*, Namco (Fighting)
- 3/28 *Kingdom Hearts*, Square (RPG)
- March *Alpine Racer 3*, Namco (Sports)
- March *Suikoden III*, Konami (RPG)
- 4/4 *Amored Core 3*, From Software (Action)
- April *Galerians: Ash*, Enterbrain (Action)
- 6/20 *Popolocrois: New Beginnings*, Sony CEI (RPG)

PlayStation

- 4/25 *Klonoa Beach Volleyball*, Namco (Action Sports)

Game Boy Advance

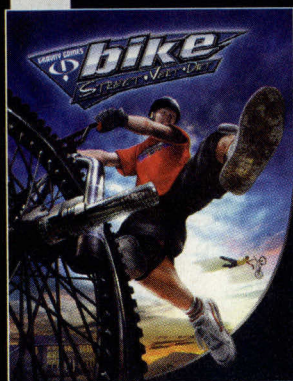
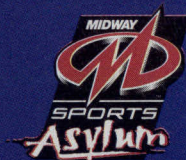
- 3/28 *Shining Soul*, Sega (RPG)
- 3/29 *Fire Emblem*, Nintendo (RPG)
- 4/2 *Lunar Legend*, Media Ring (RPG)

GameCube

- 3/22 *Biohazard (Resident Evil)*, Capcom (Survival Horror)
- April *Rune*, From Software (RPG)
- May *Kirby's Tilt n' Tumble 2*, Nintendo (Action)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import-game store for the latest release info. Go on, give Die Maus a big hug!

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COMING SOON.

sneak preview at www.gravitygamesbike.midway.com

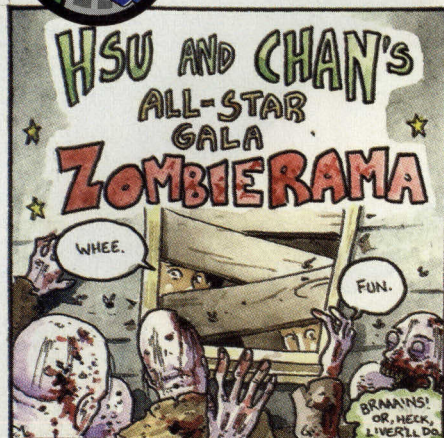


PlayStation®2





PRESS
START



HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M HSU TANAKA, THAT'S MY BROTHER CHAN, AND WE'D LIKE TO WELCOME YOU TO ANOTHER FINE EPISODE OF "HSU AND CHAN: GAME DESIGNERS," BUT IT'S JUST NOT IN THE BUDGET, FRANKLY, CHAN?

SAD BUT TRUE! THE SORRY STATE OF THE NATION'S ECONOMY WEARS EVEN ON THE MOST STOUT-HEARTED CAPITALISTS.

HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT MEANS LOWERED CONSUMER SPENDING, AND THEN THERE'RE ALL THOSE KIDS GOING OUTSIDE TO PLAY...

TRAITORS!
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!

QUITE! THE FACT IS, IT'S GETTING TOUGH TO SELL A GAME NOWADAYS!

LOOK AT THESE SALES REPORTS! OUR TOP RPG, "FIST OF WRATH OF TWINKLEFEATHER," IS MOVING MARGINALLY, AT BEST!

PRE-ORDERS FOR "4ETI ACCOUNTANT ROUND-UP" ARE IN THE CRAPPER!

NEEDLESS TO SAY, OUR MASSIVE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN FOR "SLUG ADVENTURES" WAS A BIT OF A WASTE, AS WELL!

THE SITUATION IS DARK!

NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WHEN THE FAITH OF THE PUBLIC IS WAVERING, WE MUST RELY ON OUR POWERS OF IMAGINATION AND INNOVATION TO DELIVER US!



UNFORTUNATELY, WE'RE KINDA TAPPED OUT AT THE MOMENT. BIG SHINDIG LAST NIGHT. GOT OUTTA HAND.

THUS, WE MUST MOVE ALONG TO THOSE OLD, BELOVED, WILL-SELL-EVEN-IF-THEY'RE-CRAP STAPLES OF THE GAMING INDUSTRY: SEQUELS, REMAKES AND KNOCKOFFS!

AND WHAT GAME SERIES HAS HAD MORE OF EACH THAN...

... RESIDENT EVIL!

YES, THE PREEMINENT ZOMBIE-WHACKING GAME OF OUR GENERATION IS OUR MODEL IN THIS ENDEAVOR. INDEED, AS CAPCOM HAS PLEDGED THE ENTIRE FRANCHISE TO THE GAMECUBE FROM THIS POINT FORTH, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO COME OUT WITH A BLATANT RIP-OFF THEREOF!

HSU?

OUR GAME WILL BE MARKETED WORLDWIDE UNDER THE TITLE "ZOMBIES BITE," EXCEPT, OF COURSE, IN FRANCE, WHERE IT WILL BE CALLED "SACRE BLEU! LES ZOMBIS ME MANGENT!" IT'S THE STORY OF A SPECIAL-FORCES TEAM CALLED OUT TO INVESTIGATE STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT A MYSTERIOUS MANSION! ONE MIGHT ACCUSE US OF PREMISE-SWIPING, BUT, THEN, WITH THE AMOUNT OF PAGES CAPCOM'S "BORROWED" FROM GEORGE ROMERO'S BOOK, I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY LITIGATION WILL BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM.

WINK, WINK, CAPCOM?

* "DRAT! THE ZOMBIES ARE EATING ME!"

NOW, WHAT'S THE FIRST ELEMENT IN CREATING A BEST-SELLING GAME?

A COMPETENT GAME ENGINE!

HA HA! SERIOUSLY, NOW, CHAN.

SNAPPY ADVERTISING SLOGANS!

EXACTLY!

IN THIS CASE, WE LOOK TO THE ORIGINAL-- THE ONE WORD THAT BEST SUMS UP THE RESIDENT EVIL SERIES ENTIRE--

FEAR.

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN... "WHAT DANGER LURKS AROUND THE NEXT CORNER?" "WILL THE KEY I NEED FOR THE NEXT DOOR STILL BE IN THE LAST ITEM CRATE, A HALF-MILE BACK?" "WILL I END UP PAYING ANOTHER 50 DOLLARS FOR A NEAR-IDENTICAL VERSION OF THIS GAME IN SIX MONTHS JUST FOR DUAL SHOCK SUPPORT?"

OH, AND THERE'S ZOMBIES TOO.

ENTER OUR PUBLICITY STUNT! HOW BETTER TO SPREAD THE FEAR, WITHOUT GREAT EXPENDITURE OF CASH, THAN BY UNLEASHING OUR VERY OWN PLAGUE OF THE UNDEAD UPON THE WORLD? VOILÀ!

THE KICKER? THEY'RE REAL! THAT'S RIGHT, NO TEENAGED COUNTRY-FAIR-SPOOKHOUSE REJECTS IN MAKE-UP HERE-- WE'VE ACTUALLY REACTIVATED THE BRAINS OF HUMAN CORPSES!

LIKE I SAID, THINGS GOT OUTTA HAND LAST NIGHT.

LET'S WATCH THE LITTLE NIPPERS!

BRAINS!

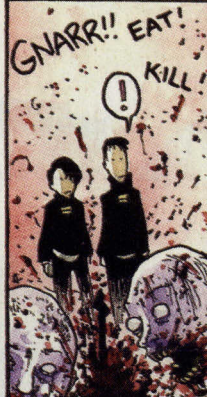
BRAINS!

BRAINS!

PARKAY!

UM, CHAN, IT LOOKS LIKE SOME OF OUR LITTLE NIPPERS ARE TRYING TO-- UM... "NIP" A COW.

HOW'S THAT?



YOU KNOW, IT MAY BE THAT WE DIDN'T REALLY THINK THIS ALL THE WAY THROUGH.

BRAAINSE

MOOOOOO

ALL RIGHT, RESOLVED: FREE-RANGE ZOMBIES AREN'T GONNA WORK. HOW DID THEY SOLVE THINGS IN "DAWN OF THE DEAD?"

UM... COMPLETE SOCIETAL BREAKDOWN, HUMAN ISOLATION, DYING OFF ONE BY ONE AS OUR OWN FEARS AND EMOTIONS LEAD US TO OUR DOOM.

I DON'T THINK WE CAN USE THAT, CHAN.

WELL, IT WORKED OUT FAIR FOR THE ZOMBIES.

... I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD THINK OF SOMETHING, THOUGH. FIGURE IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY FIGURE OUT THE AUTOMATIC DOORS.

HEY! QUIT GREASIN' UP THE WINDOWS! DUMB ROTTING KIDS!

BONK! BONK!

I'LL GET THE STUFF.

OKEE-DOKE, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO ABORT OUR PROMO STUNT, BUT WE FIGURE WE CAN AT LEAST GET ENOUGH FOOTAGE TO CUT A BEST-SELLING BLOOPERS REEL HACKING THE LITTLE BLIGHTERS APART!

MIGHT WANNA PUT THE LITTLE ONES TO BED, BY THE WAY.

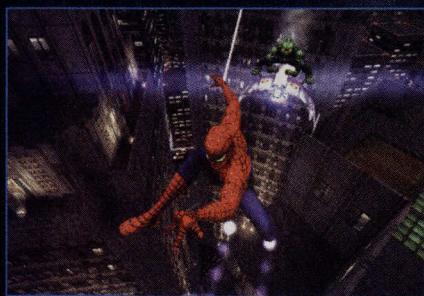
NOT A BAD IDEA. IN FACT, THIS'LL PROBABLY TAKE A WHILE, SO YOU SHOULD REALLY JUST SIT THIS ONE OUT YOURSELVES, VIDEO GAMERS...

...AND WE'LL MEET YOU BACK HERE IN THIRTY DAYS. ALIVE, PRESUMABLY. LET US ROCK.

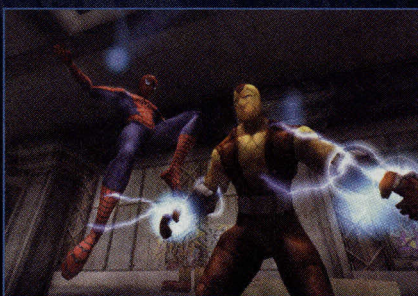
END?



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Fight through stunning movie scenes and unique new locations, with all-new aerial combat and in-air features.



Battle the world's toughest villains, including Shocker, Vulture and the Green Goblin.



Screenshots taken from PC gameplay.

Master web-slinging as you bank around corners, cut web-lines for sudden drops, and zip-line to adjacent buildings.

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PlayStation 2



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BLOOD AND GORE
VIOLENCE



EIDOS
INTERACTIVE



Previews

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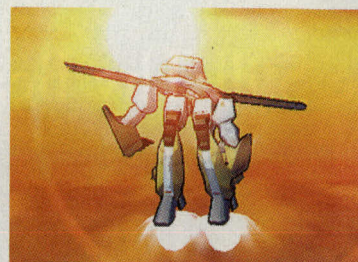


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The whole idea behind using a movie or TV license as the basis for a video game used to be to make a quick buck off the mainstream success of the latest blockbuster. Generally, that meant crappy games that were slapped together in the hopes of hitting the market in time to ride the wave of hype surrounding the current hit film or show.


Now things are changing. Instead of simply trying to cash in on the latest hit (*Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* notwithstanding), publishers are snapping up licenses with fanatical cult followings—the kind that can and will find every single flaw and discrepancy in any game based on their favorite series.

But the developers of said games realize this. From the people we've talked to on three projects in particular—*Godzilla* (p. 72), *Robotech* (p. 80) and *Dragon Ball Z* (p. 94)—pleasing said fanatical fans is the highest priority (outside of making a great game, of course). Trust me, the



EGM's got the very first hands-on preview of TDK Mediactive's new *Robotech* game on page 80. Captain Gloval would be proud.

guys and gals working on these titles are just as hardcore about their respective licenses as you are, and it's really showing in what we've seen so far. All three of these games have the potential to be big hits.

It's nice to see this industry evolving in such a way. It almost feels like we're to the point where slapping a big name on a crappy game just isn't cricket anymore. Jolly good. 

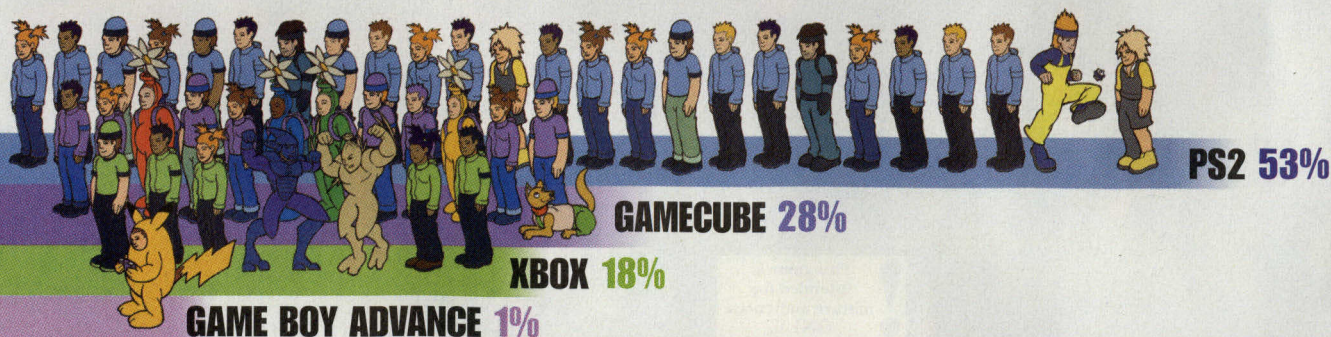
—Greg Sewart, Previews Editor

TOP 5 Preview Picks

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Robotech | Xbox, September 2002 |
| 2. Kingdom Hearts | PlayStation 2, Fall 2002 |
| 3. Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee | GameCube, Winter 2002 |
| 4. Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 | PlayStation 2, August 2002 |
| 5. Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku | Game Boy Advance, May 2002 |

Whose Line Is It?

We posed the question: Which system's games would have you lining up in front of the local Joe's Game Shack in 2002? The answer was a resounding "PS2!"



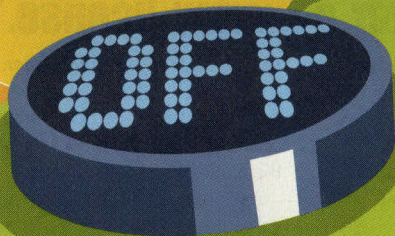
PlayStation®2



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PRODUCTS RANGE FROM
EVERYONE TO **TEN**

E-T
CONTENT RATED BY
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Kingdom Hearts

Publisher:	Square EA
Developer:	Squaresoft
Players:	1
Genre:	Action-RPG
% Done:	75%
Release:	Fall 2002
Web Address:	www.squaresoft.com
The Good:	The biggest force in animation partners with the biggest force in RPGs.
The Bad:	Hardcore gamers might find this too cutesy...losers.
And The Ugly:	Donald in his half-duck/half-octopus form.

SQUARE ROOTS

Aeris Lives!

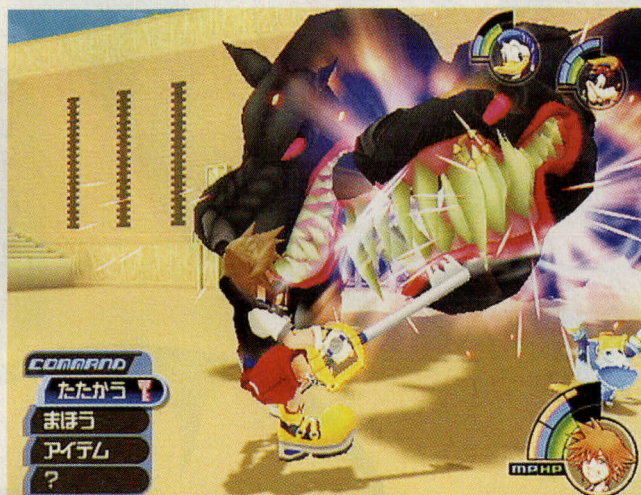
Besides the approximately 100 Disney characters in *Kingdom Hearts*, various, younger versions of *Final Fantasy* personalities make cameos. While you'll see people like Wakka, Tidus and Selphie, the most high-profile of them all is—drumroll please—Aeris from *Final Fantasy VII*!



Wakka from *Final Fantasy X*



Selphie from *Final Fantasy VIII*



We haven't seen a combination this potent since Mr. Reese got chocolate in his peanut butter. Disney, probably the most recognizable name in the world when it comes to animation, and Square, the most successful RPG publisher on the planet, working together on a video game is like a dream come true for a lot of gamers. And the track record of these two powerhouse companies makes it hard to believe that *Kingdom Hearts* will be anything short of spectacular.

But games based on Disney properties are nothing new. In fact, they're commonplace. So you

You will get to travel through and interact with a bunch of different Disney worlds. Swing vine-to-vine with Tarzan, fly through Neverland with Peter Pan, hunt for honey with Pooh, and even visit Halloween Town with Jack Skellington—you'll see over 100 characters in all. And as you go from one setting to another, your questing companions Goofy and Donald will actually morph to better adapt to their surroundings—one example is Donald's transition to a half-duck/half-octopus hybrid in the Little Mermaid's domain. Normally anyone taking such creative license with one of Disney's characters would get a love letter from the big-D's legal

"Square's been given a surprising amount of creative freedom for a Disney license."

—Stephanie Yoshimoto, Marketing Manager, Disney Interactive

might be asking yourself why you should care about this particular title.

We'll tell you why. This is the first Disney game that's not limited to a specific setting or movie.

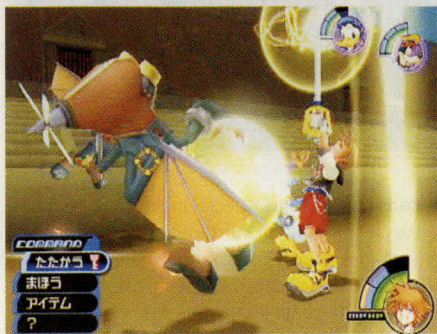
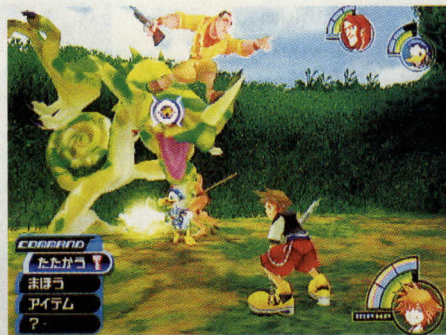


department. But the house that Mickey built seems content to let Square take liberties here and there in the name of good gameplay.

As Sora—one of the four original characters in the game designed by Tetsuya Nomura (*Final Fantasy VII*, *VIII* and *X*)—you team up with Donald and Goofy on a quest to find your two friends Riku and Kairi after a freak storm separates the three of you. On



Queen Minnie and the Duchess of Duck send Goofy and Donald on a quest to locate the missing King Mickey.



top of your personal crisis, King Mickey has gone missing, and chances are it has something to do with the Heartless. These little buggers are going around to each world and recruiting the local villains (think characters like *Aladdin's* Jafar or *Hercules'* Hades) to help them steal people's hearts and ultimately plunge the land into darkness.



Kingdom Hearts is an action-RPG, so you won't find any turn-based, random battles here. Well...you will find random battles, but you'll need to depend on your reflexes and computer-controlled companions for victory rather than a lot of strategy. Elemental summons, however, will play a part in the battle system. As you progress through the game, you'll be able to call on characters like Dumbo, Bambi, *The Lion King's* Simba and *Mulan's* Mushu in order to dish out some extra hurt (note Sora riding Dumbo in the screen to the left). We figure Bambi will simply sicken his enemies with his cuteness.

Square and Disney are counting on a good reception for *Kingdom Hearts*. In fact, Disney's so into this game that they may parlay any success it enjoys into a movie or television show. Square-created characters like Sora and the Heartless could become household names one day. In the meantime, we just wanna play. —Greg Sewart

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CHILD'S PLAY

The proposed *Kingdom Hearts* toy line reveals a few characters no one knew were in the game—particularly Jack Skellington.



Spider-Man

Publisher:	Activision
Developer:	Treyarch
Players:	1
Genre:	Action
% Done:	80%
Release:	April 2002
Also On:	Xbox, GameCube, PC
Web Address:	www.activision.com
The Good:	Great movie-like graphics and original voice work by Tobey Maguire and Willem Dafoe.
The Bad:	Camera could use some tweaking.
And The Ugly:	Death by Pumpkin Bomb. How humiliating.



BAD TV



If you've ever wondered about the popularity of Spider-Man on the other side of the world, get this: Back in 1978, a Japanese company called Toei produced a series of 41 television shows—even a full-length movie—starring ol' Webhead. But not the same friendly neighborhood Spider-Man we know and love. Rather, this Spidey (alter ego: Yamashiro Takuya) attained his powers from a magic bracelet given to him by the last survivor of Planet Spider. From that day on, he fought giant Ultra-man/Power Rangers-like monsters, often zooming to the scene in his supercar or taking the occasional rest in his air fortress, the Marvel-ler. And you thought American TV was weird.

If you've felt your spider-senses tingling lately, it's not hard to figure out why. Not only does Spider-Man make his big-screen debut on May 3, but Activision's next game starring the webbed one hits shelves on multiple systems shortly before. Better yet, this game stands a good chance of being the best web-slinging title yet.

As you might imagine, *Spider-Man's* story takes its primary basis from the upcoming movie. In order to make for a longer gaming experience, however, Treyarch has thrown other supervillains into the mix.


Although the story strays a bit from what you see in the film, extra steps were taken to maintain an identical feel to the game's cinematic counterpart. The costumes, scenery and overall ambience stay true to the flick, even adding a sort of Hollywood touch to the guest villains. To further the authenticity, the movie's stars, Tobey Maguire (Spider-Man) and Willem Dafoe (Green Goblin), contributed original dialogue to the game's narrative.

Fans of the PS1 releases should recognize the core gameplay right off the bat, with plenty of punching, kicking and web-slinging going on. The basic web moves serve the same purpose, too. You can also

pick up icons to add some special moves not seen before, like clearing out all surrounding enemies with a punch-kick-punch combo. And though the option for the "classic" control scheme exists, Treyarch has made some improvements, most notably by reserving the D-pad for use with web attacks. You no longer have to worry about a slight timing mishap with the analog sticks, moving you somewhere you didn't mean to go.

Missions in *Spider-Man* in some instances resemble those of the past, but at other times offer something completely new. For instance, you might remember saving hostages before—but this time you actually have to pick them up and swing them to safety. Or maybe they're in danger of getting the crap beat out of them; you have to take their oppressors out of commission before it's too late.

The real highlight of the new additions, though, is the aerial combat, as found in boss fights against the Vulture and the Green Goblin. As you control Spidey swinging through the NYC skyline—streets alive with activity hundreds of feet below—don't be surprised if you tense up a bit when he freefalls in an attempt to deliver a mid-air kick to the noggin.

We're hoping that *Spider-Man's* occasional camera imperfections improve by release. But even if they aren't, a solid web-slinging experience awaits. 

—Chris Baker



In addition to the Green Goblin (far left), Treyarch faces supervillains not in the movie, like Scorpion (left), Shocker and the Vulture.



IN ANCIENT EGYPT THERE EXISTED A FORCE SO POWERFUL,
IT HAD TO BE LOCKED AWAY FOR A MILLENNIA.
NOW ONE BOY HAS RELEASED THAT POWER!

Yu-Gi-Oh!

FORBIDDEN MEMORIES



Violence



Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Rainbow Studios
Players: 1-2
Genre: Sports (Action)
% Done: 60%
Release: August 2002
Also On: Xbox

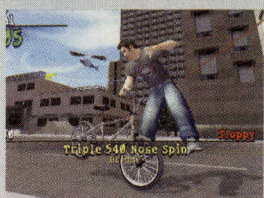
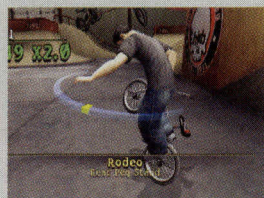
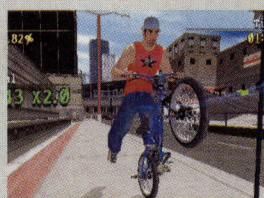
The Good: It's still early, but the game plays well. Rainbow Studios has a great reputation for making exciting extreme games.

The Bad: A recent study revealed excessive concussions spell trouble in the golden years.

And the Ugly: Mat has had over 50 concussions so far—yikes.

FLATLAND TRICKS

Flatland tricks add variety to the mix, plus bring the game a step closer to the familiar *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* format.



Multiplayer lets you go up against your buddy in a game called Push. As you do better, the other guy's screen gets progressively smaller.

Tweak a trick by spinning the bars or sticking a leg out (to put it simply). Doing so increases the library of moves two-fold.




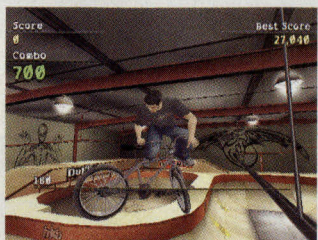
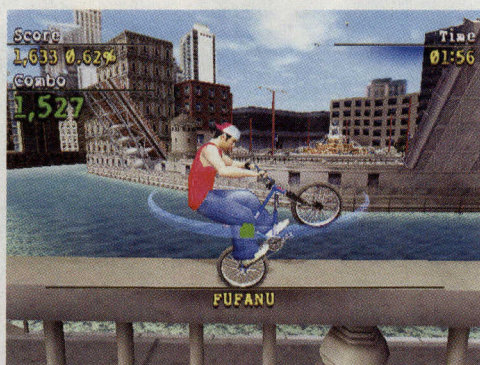
Air time, air time and more air time. If a BMX game ain't got that, it ain't got crap. Lucky for Mat Hoffman (and all of us), Activision signed up Rainbow Studios to develop this game. Their previous titles—*ATV Offroad Fury* and *Splashdown*—are a testament to their successful vehicles-plus-jumps-equal-giant-air-time formula. As you can see by the pictures, they didn't hold back for *MHPB2*.

But tasty air is just one piece of the pie; a few other things pop out, too. The first is the way you progress through the game. As Mat, or one of the other 10 riders, you tour from city to city performing for the locals. Each course has a set of objectives to meet, including snatching cans of gas for the tour

bus, building a picture scrapbook of your flashiest moves, and of course, achieving the highest score. In addition, as you close down levels, you're treated to real-life footage of Mat's ESPN tour from last summer.

Flatland tricking is the second standout feature. Thanks to them, players can perform circus-like maneuvers without ever leaving the ground. Basically, you scale your rolling bike like a squirrel scampering up a big oak—it's a sight to see. It's also key for trick-linking and big scoring.

Judging by the size of its levels, the competent physics and the new flatland tricks, it'll take a supreme act of stupidity to screw up this game before its August release.  —Dean Hager





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PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY

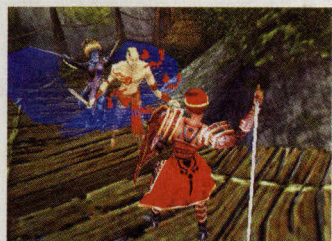
Grandia Xtreme

Grandia Xtreme, the first fruits of last year's announced partnership between **Enix** and **Game Arts**, is coming to the U.S. **later this year** courtesy of Enix America. But why not just call it *Grandia III*? Turns out GX is a spin-off to the main *Grandia* series, with a heavy emphasis on dungeon exploration and level building. Early impressions are good, but those looking for a traditional *Grandia* game may be in for a surprise.



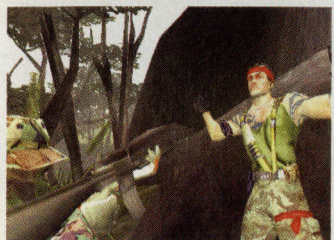
Summoner 2

Red Faction developer **Volition** and **THQ** have dropped the PC-RPG feel of the first *Summoner* for this adventure-inspired **fall** sequel. The familiar party system remains intact, leaving you control over three of the eight playable characters at a time, but summons are now manifested through full character transformations. An alternate universe also gives the game a sci-fi feel as players switch between two unique realities. Trippy.



SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs

These crafty Navy SEALs have been lurking in the shadows ever since this game's playable debut last May, but **Sony CEA's** first online title should finally storm the PS2 this **summer**. You can command a squad of elite soldiers through 17 missions in four real-world locations. The best part? You can spray the jungle with bullets alongside your buddies via a LAN or over the Internet.



Crash is going small in a huge way.



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EXTREME SOCCER

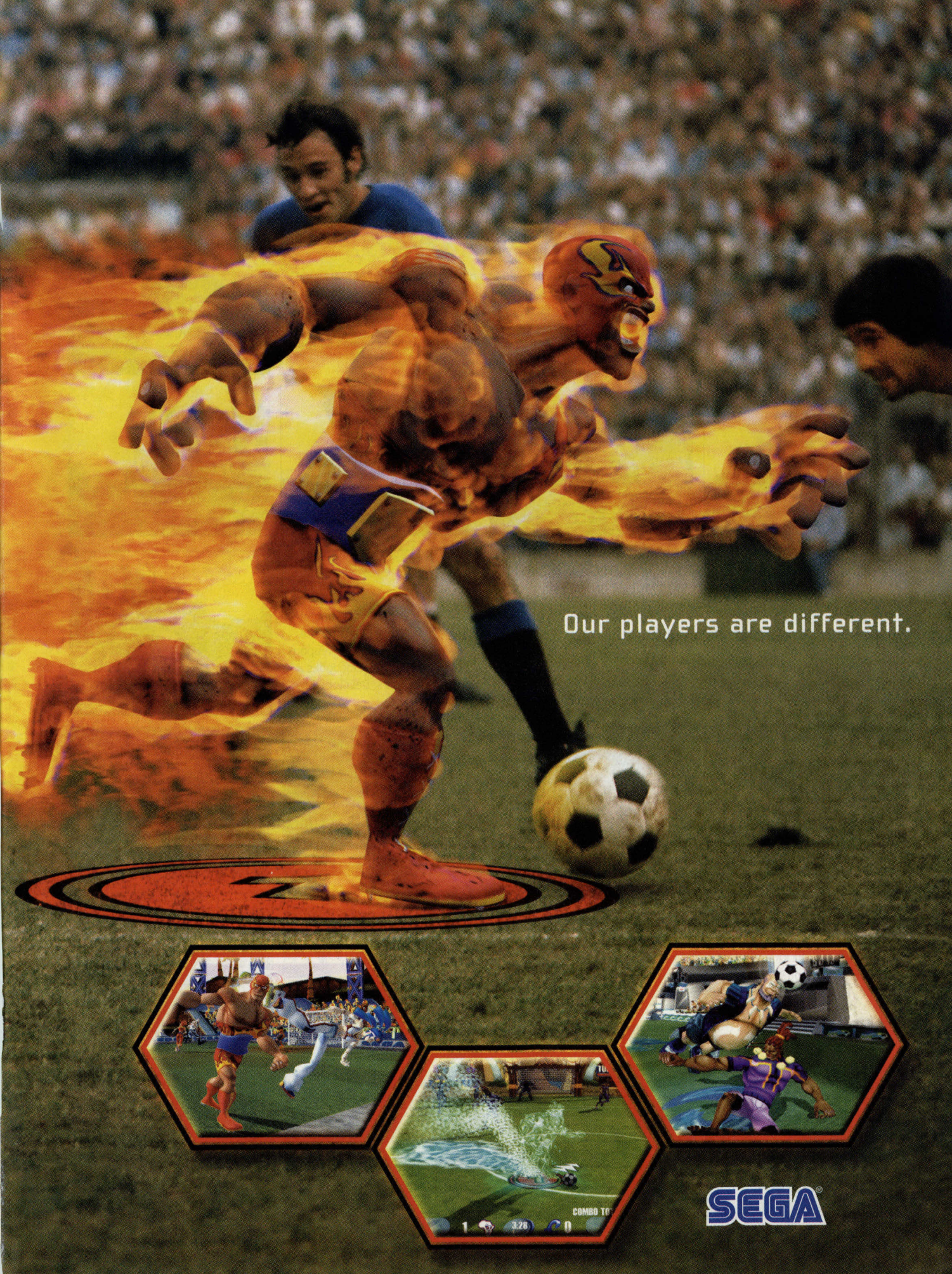


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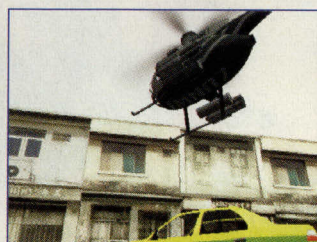


LITERARY KRYPTONITE

The original *Superman* (Nintendo 64) was the lowest-scoring game ever in *EGM* until Shue gave *Mortal Kombat Advance* a 0.0 in the March 2002 issue. The new *Superman* games can't fare much worse...we hope.

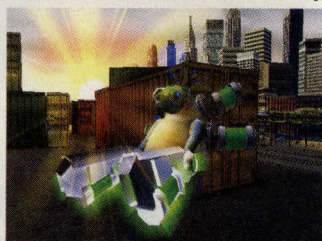
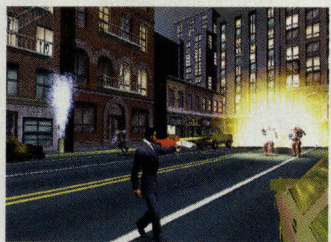
Stuntman

Fans of *Driver* should be looking forward to **Reflections'** *Stuntman*, due to hit the PS2 in **May**. At least, that's what publisher **Infogrames** is counting on. Take on the role of a rookie stunt-car driver motoring through six gruelling movie sets based on a variety of genres: *Indiana Jones* style, English gangster movie, spy blockbuster, political thriller—even the *Dukes of Hazzard* gets a nod! Of course, your cars change with each situation, too. The new physics engine seems likely to set the standard for future PS2 driving games as you skid, roll and fly your way through the film sets, gaining marks for finesse along the way.



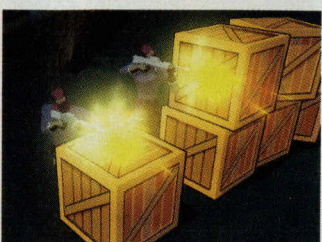
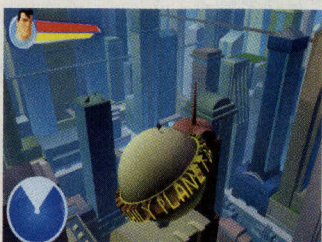
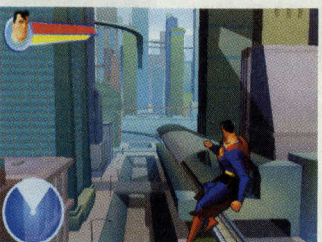
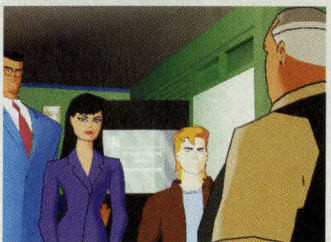
Men In Black II: Alien Escape

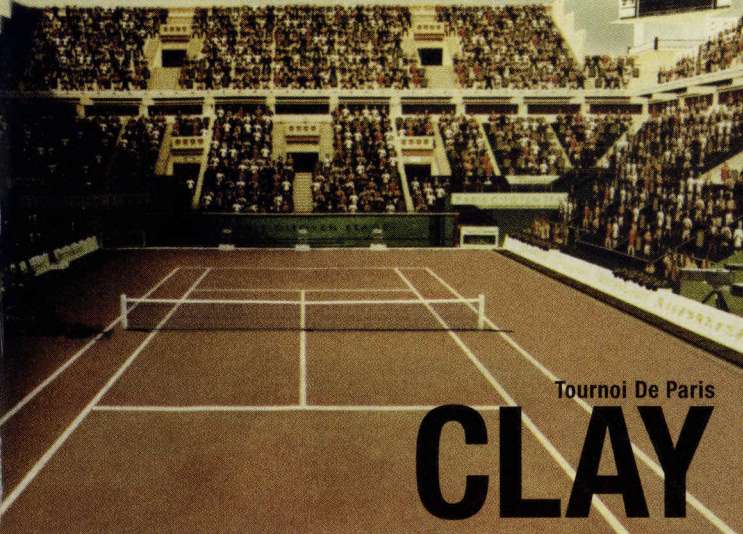
Set to coincide with the release of *Men In Black II* (the movie), *MIBII: Alien Escape* (the game) is a 3D shooter that lets you play as either Agent J or K—loudmouth Agent J moves quickly while veteran Agent K packs more power. The game features appearances by all the popular aliens from the first movie, a different set of weapons for each agent, and a shoot/lock-on control scheme similar to Sega's *Rez*. Although some of the game looks a bit *Resident Evil*-y, *MIBII* is all action, with very little in the way of problem-solving conundrums. Developed by **Melbourne House** and published by **Infogrames**, *Alien Escape* is set for a **July** 2002 release.



Superman: Shadow of Apokolips

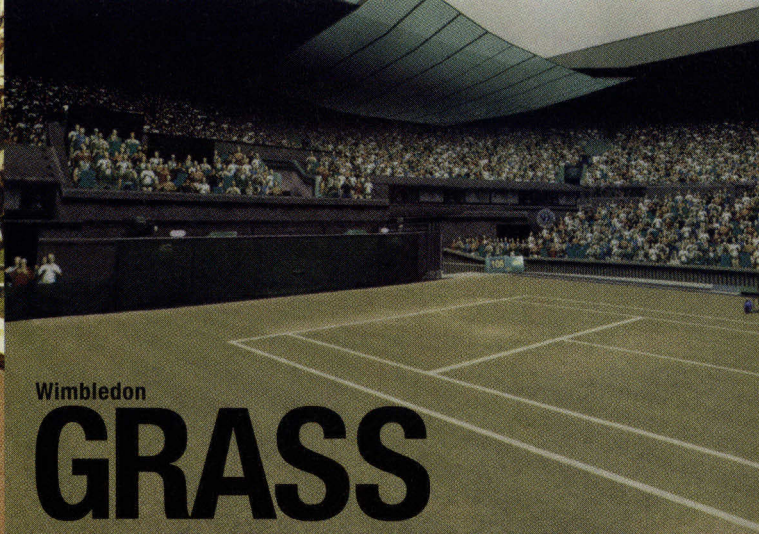
Based on the former Kids WB! animated series featuring the Man of Steel, *Shadow of Apokolips* places Superman on a Sony system for the first time. The multifaceted story pits Supes against the likes of Metallo, Livewire, Parasite and Lex Luthor, whom Darkseid has granted his planet Apokolips' advanced weapons technology. **Infogrames** lets you fight for truth, justice and the American way this **fall**.





Tournoi De Paris

CLAY

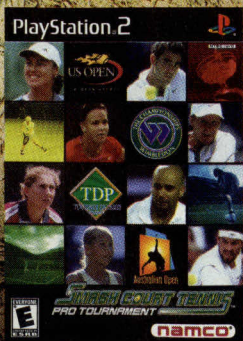


Wimbledon

GRASS

PLUSH

470 Murray Lane



SMASH COURT TENNIS

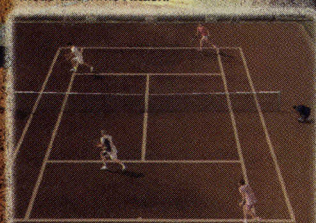
PRO TOURNAMENT

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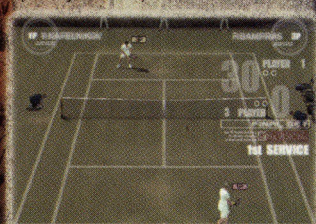
Okay, let's face it. You're never going to feel the grass of Wimbledon under your feet. But you can do the next best thing by firing up Smashcourt Tennis and feeling the shag of your living room carpet. Same pros. Same big-time tournaments. But watch out for rug burn.



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PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

STICKIN' IT TO THE MAN

Japanese controller company Hori is planning to release a commemorative joystick alongside *Tekken 4* when the game releases in Japan. The joystick features six buttons and a group shot of the characters. Unfortunately, Hori doesn't distribute in the U.S. Better check online.

Tekken 4

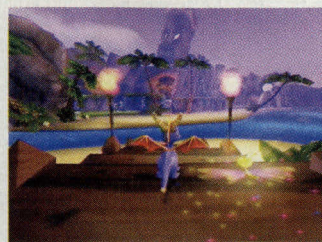
This month we sat down with a playable version of **Namco's** *Tekken 4* for PS2. While certain features weren't available for us to play, like Tekken Force Assault mode (revealed last issue), we still got to see what sort of strides *Tekken* has made since *T3* and *Tekken Tag Tournament*. A nearly perfect port of the recently released arcade version, *Tekken 4*'s main enhancement over previous installments is the addition of interactive environments. Get your opponent up against the wall, then drive his head into it.

The fighters look great and the control is tight, but getting used to the severe character tweaking was the hard part. Bryan Fury, for example, has been totally neutered, with his once-formidable cannon punches and wicked sidestep attacks now nearly nonexistent. One of the new guys, Craig Marduk, is so tall, it seems like all he's good for is taking shots in the groin. Thankfully some of the new characters like Steve Fox (the boxer) and Christie (Eddy Gordo clone) add energy and variety to *T4*. That's the good news. The bad news is that *Tekken 4* won't hit the U.S. 'til about **September** or so. So break out *Tekken Tag* and practice!

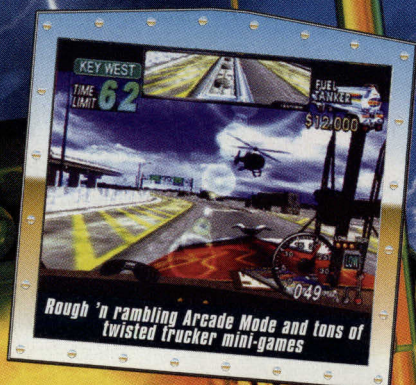
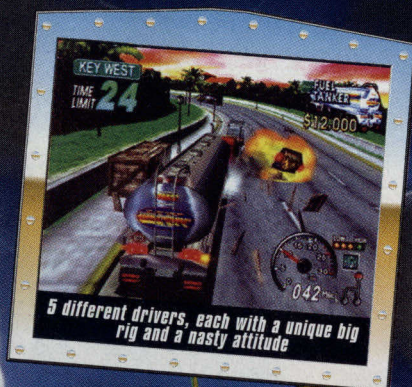


Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly

Technically, **winter 2002** falls within the Year of the Horse, but paste wings on Mr. Ed and cram a flamethrower in his mouth, and you've got yourself a decent Spyro mock-up. **Universal's** premiere PS2 project with the purple powerhouse wins Spyro new breath modifiers (fire, ice, electricity and...bubbles?) to defeat puzzles and combat the opposition, and gives the series a subset of minigames, as is the style of the day.



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VIOLENCE



PREVIEW

Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee

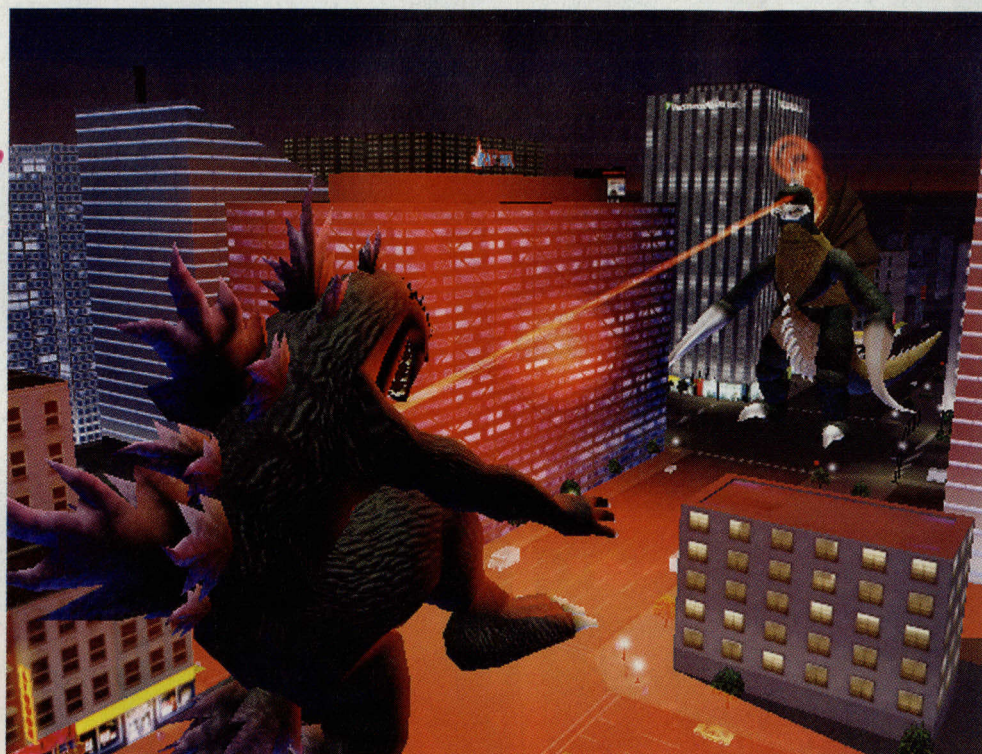
Publisher:	Infogrames
Developer:	Pipeworks Software
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Fighting
% Done:	50%
Release:	Winter 2002
Web Address:	www.infogrames.com
Godzilla Needs:	Altoids
The Good:	Big-lizard lovers will be in rubber-suit heaven for sure.
The Bad:	Godzilla's bratty kid, Minya, is nowhere to be found.
And The Ugly:	A 5,000 kilo-ton belch-athon between two monsters.

M.I.A.

Jet Jaguar



This remote-controlled android, who goes by the name of Jet Jaguar, first came to life in the 1976 (U.S.) classic *Godzilla vs. Megalon*. Designed to defend the Earth from evil giant monsters (and as a way to cash-in on the sentai craze of the time), Jet Jaguar becomes sentient halfway through the movie and helps Godzilla defeat the bad guys, Megalon and Gigan. However, due to an uncanny likeness to Tsuburaya Production's *Ultraman* characters, Jet Jaguar and any subsequent JJ licensing have been indefinitely grounded. Which means he is not hidden in the game. **Crap!**



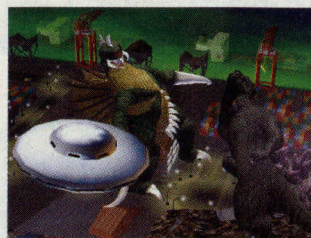
Exhibiting staying power greater than that of Stallone or Schwarzenegger, cinema's biggest star (literally) is nearing his 50th year as the monster-movie world's leading...er...lizard.

How fitting, then, that Infogrames is bringing the jurassic classic back to the land of video-game consoles (his last major U.S. appearance was 1993's *Super Godzilla* for the SNES) in the grand form of *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee*. Despite being developed in the U.S. (as opposed to Japan), *Melee*, unlike most games of this nature, looks like it will do the franchise justice. But first—a little history.

Originally conceived as a monster movie with a distinct anti-war/anti-atomic bomb vibe, *Godzilla*

(released in Japan as *Gojira*) first appeared on the silver screen in 1954. Released in post-WWII Japan, *Godzilla* symbolized the fruit of man's destructive potential and was originally portrayed as the “bad guy,” being destroyed by film's end. But the fire-breathing bastard child of dinosaur DNA and atomic-testing proved too popular with the kids, and was resurrected in short order. Now, after nearly five decades and 22 movies of kicking Tokyo in the teeth, *Godzilla* has assembled a considerable number of friends and foes with which to do battle, and that's where Infogrames comes in.

Developed by Pipeworks Software (the folks responsible for the amazing butterfly/ping-pong ball/mouse-trap tech demos for the Xbox), *Godzilla* is a fighting game that supports up to four players (in a variety of single-player and multiplayer modes) and lets the combatants trash a variety of world-



UFOs aren't just for breakfast anymore. Now they drop power-up items like energy-bar recharges or life-bar replenishments.



THE SAURUS

So what's next for the King of the Monsters? Well, Toho (G-Zilla's licensor) has new movies lined up for both 2002 and 2003, so it looks like the dinosaur who walks like a man in a rubber suit won't be out of work just yet.



famous cities. Anything is fair game as skyscrapers, bridges and landmarks in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo, Osaka and even Monster Island make for a monster's playground. Each city is divided into three stages and can be played during the day or evening. The environments are

(for dazzling dragon breath) and Rage. When the Rage meter fills up, you have unlimited energy, and your attacks do more damage and are unblockable. Additional power-ups (like extra health) can be found hidden in hospitals, or whenever a UFO swoops by and drops one on the ground.


"I actually hate just calling it a fighting game because it contains so much more."

—Kirby Fong, producer of *Godzilla*

completely destructible, with gratuitous (but thoroughly enjoyable) amounts of *Rampage*-style elements like boxcars, 18-wheelers, military vehicles and debris, all of which can be picked up and used as projectile weapons.

The combat, on the other hand, isn't *Virtua Fighter 4*-quality, but it's no slouch either. To draw a simple comparison, you could say *Godzilla* plays a lot like a typical WWF wrestling game (punch, kick, throw, etc.) but with a zesty rubber-suit flavor. Each monster has three meters: Health, Energy

Choose from *Godzilla '90*, *Godzilla 2000*, Mecha *Godzilla* (who moves a lot like *Gun Jack of Tekken*), King Ghidora, Gigan, Anguirus and more. Fan favorites like Mothra and Rodan make appearances, but only as special "summon" attacks for specific monsters, and at least five other monsters (*Godzilla '54?*) will be hidden as unlockable characters.

From the looks of things, giant-monster fans are in for a value-packed treat this winter. 

—James "Milkman" Mielke

TACTICS OGRE

Pitching Woo

As in all *Godzilla* movies, the military stands by waiting to pump the monsters full of lasers and missiles. During the game, they will fire at whoever destroys the most real estate. One great way to make your foes the enemy of the state is to pick them up and throw them into any nearby skyscraper. Despite being victimized like a beachball, your opponent will look like the menace and find himself on the receiving end of a volley of missiles. Using the environment to your advantage is the key to V!





PREVIEW GALLERY



Last seen in *Super Smash Bros. Melee*

WHERE'S FALCO?

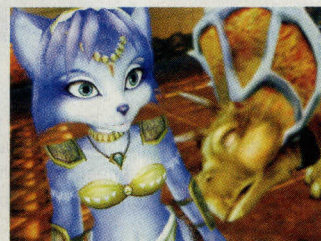
You've got your Slippy, Peppy, Fox McCloud, Falco...uh, where's Falco? As developer Rare tells it, shortly after the events of *Star Fox 64*, he left to pursue a solo career. And since *SFA* takes place eight years after the end of that game, he's no longer with the team. But you never know—he might come back to help 'em out if they're in a jam.

Star Fox Adventures

It's been five years since *Star Fox 64*—the last time we saw Fox McCloud and his crew in action. But on **June 10**, Rare brings them back for a new *Adventure*.

Our story begins as the Star Fox team lands on Dinosaur Planet, a once-peaceful world now under the rule of the tyrannical General Scales. Armed with a transformable spear, you (as Fox McCloud) set out to help return peace to the planet. Helping you along the way are new characters Krystal, a blue female fox with ties to a mysterious race of ghost-like beings called the Krazoa, and Prince Tricky, a wise-crackin' Triceratops.

Basic gameplay is reminiscent of Nintendo's N64 *Zelda*s. You auto-lock (no button required) onto enemies for easier 3D movement in battle, find keys to get inside locked doors, etc. Fox's staff is used for unlocking gates, throwing switches, or giving the scaly army of evil dinos and bosses a healthy beat-down. But you don't always have to use hand-to-hand combat. Occasionally you'll ride a jet-powered bike or pilot your Arwing (that's the *Star Fox* version of an X-wing) for flying missions.

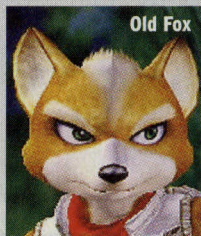


RARE ADDS HAIR, GIVES FOX FLAIR

Chia Fox

You may have noticed a slight difference between these screenshots and those you've seen previously. Something's very different about Fox

McCloud. His hair is thicker, fuller...more vibrant. But it's not his shampoo. Rare gave the furry creatures of *SFA* a makeover, and now they all have a more natural, hairy appearance (though Fox is the most noticeable). Will it stay? In a recent post on their Web site, Rare's answer man Uncle Tusk says that the look still isn't finalized but "we think the fur looks damn fine too."



Old Fox



New Fox



"Buy this one now."

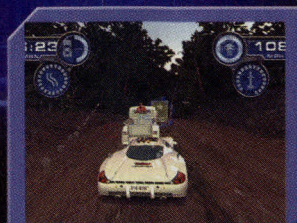
-Electronic Gaming Monthly

MIDWAY

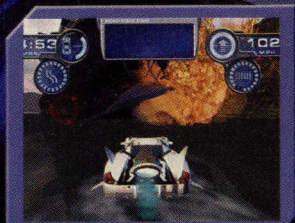
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MPH



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Violence

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PREVIEW
GALLERY



NOT HUMAN ENOUGH

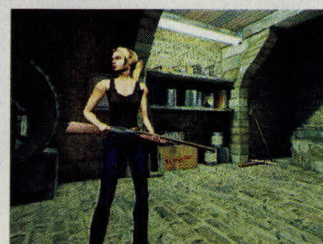
Before *Eternal Darkness*, developer Silicon Knights worked on a game called *Too Human* for PlayStation that was never released. The game was going to be an epic cyberpunk RPG. Nintendo snapped up the developer and put them to work on *ED*, and the rest is history.

Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem

Since when did **Nintendo** get into the *Resident Evil* market? After all, this is the same company that handles graphic gore like it's anthrax. Somehow, developer **Silicon Knights** has overcome that taboo to deliver something even more improbable this **April**: survival horror without B-movie cheese. Or so they say.

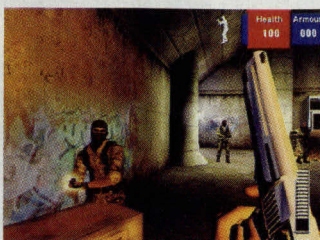
The game's serious tone is highlighted by a psychological twist that makes the game harder as your characters get more spooked. You'll have to keep an eye on a "sanity meter" that measures how freaked out your knight, wizard, gun-toting heroine or other playable characters are.

Too many teeth-chattering experiences will send them over the edge, making them unable to see their inventory, or worse yet, hallucinate that their body is falling to pieces. The best way to calm your hero's nerves is to hack and blast with abandon. But if your aim is bad, maybe you'll just have to resort to a big case of Valium.



Die Hard: Vendetta

Bits Studios is bringing the chaotic terrorist-fighting action of *Die Hard* to the GameCube in **late 2002**. Those of you hoping for a Samuel L. Jackson appearance, sorry—*Die Hard* has a new, original story set in L.A.. It's a first-person shooter, but **Sierra** promises lots of character and object interaction (like draggin' dudes around *MGS2*-style) to break up all the gunplay.





CONCEPTUAL EVOLUTION

Evolution as a concept has graced many systems. Super NES had *E.V.O.* from Enix. Dreamcast got a dud called *Seventh Cross: Evolution*. And of course, there's Ubi Soft's *Evolution*, which had nothing to do with evolution at all.



PREVIEW
GALLERY

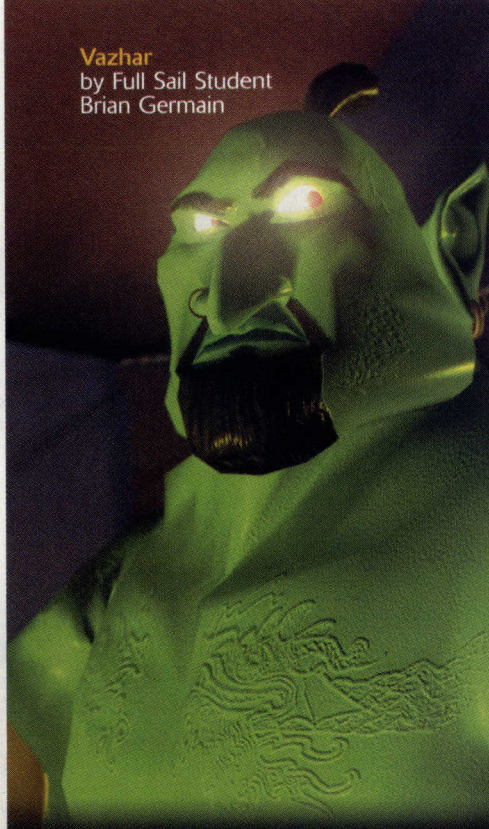
Top Gun: Combat Zones

The PS2 *Top Gun* may not have done much more than get EB employees to serenade tired holiday shoppers with "Highway to the Danger Zone," but **Titus** is porting it to the GameCube anyway. The PS2 game had a lot of missions against a variety of targets—land, sea and air—but fans of the movie complained there wasn't enough connection to the film. Expect the GC version to debut this **summer**.



Kameo: Elements of Power

If you can imagine a cross between *Pokémon* and *Final Fantasy*, then you have an idea of what to expect from this new **Nintendo** game, due **sometime this year**. Kameo must capture and nurture creatures that will help her on the quest to find six elemental children. Over 60 monsters, large and small, can be bred to fight her battles (real-time or turn-based), read enemies' minds, and even do the laundry.



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PREVIEW

Robotech



Publisher: TDK Mediactive
Developer: Vicious Cycle
Players: 1-2
Genre: Action
% Done: 50%
Release: September 2002
Also On: PS2, GameCube
Web Address: tdk-mediactive.com
 www.robotech.com

The Good: Just look at those screens. You gotta agree this baby looks freakin' cool.

The Bad: This game doesn't span all three *Robotech* series.

And The Ugly: A dead Zentraedi warrior clutching a Minmei doll.

MACROSS SAGA

Genesis



Macross is the story that started it all and the setting for the first *Robotech* game. This saga is basically a soap opera—just like the rest of the *Robotech* series—set against the backdrop of a galactic struggle between the giant, warlike Zentraedi and the human race. Don't let the term "soap opera" scare you, though. It's cool to watch this show because despite all the lovey-dovey crap, the series is bursting at the seams with giant robots and lots of stuff getting blown up. At one point those damned, dirty aliens nearly destroy the human race when they literally fry the surface of the Earth. The *Robotech* game is set in the time period right after this catastrophe.



Nope, you haven't stumbled into the kick-off installment of an *EGM* anime section, although Vicious Cycle President Eric Peterson won't mind if you think you did. "We all agreed right from the start that our game had to look like you're playing in the show," says Peterson, whose company is crafting *Robotech*, a spectacular-looking Xbox/PlayStation 2/GameCube game based on the late-'80s cult-hit cartoon that meshed mech action with sappy drama (check the sidebars for a crash course if you're in proto-culture shock). "Most games make mecha look all mechanical and shiny, but that doesn't look like *Robotech*." So, to achieve as-seen-on-after-school-TV visuals, the team resorted to the cartoony rendering style of cel-shading and pulled off a few other nifty tricks. "Even the skies look hand-painted, just like you would see in the real series," says Lead Designer Adam Cogan.

But if you don't know Lynn Minmei from Liza Minnelli—or are just too young to remember the show—we figure these spectacular world-exclusive Xbox screens have locked your interest on this game anyway. *Robotech* is a mech-combat title that puts you in the cockpit of a transformable Veritech fighter (see the sidebar on page 85 for info on each mode) and sends you on missions against the Zentraedi, a race of warriors four stories tall. While you do mix it up in space battles, expect to log the majority of your fight time on Earth. "We felt that keeping the game in space would have done a disservice to the license," Cogan elaborates. "You're able to change into a big robot, but there's not much difference between being a robot in space and being a jet in space. You're still just sort of floating there."

It's a point we grasped as soon as we grabbed the Xbox controller at Vicious' Raleigh, N.C., studio. Your

TWELVE DEGREES OF MACROSS



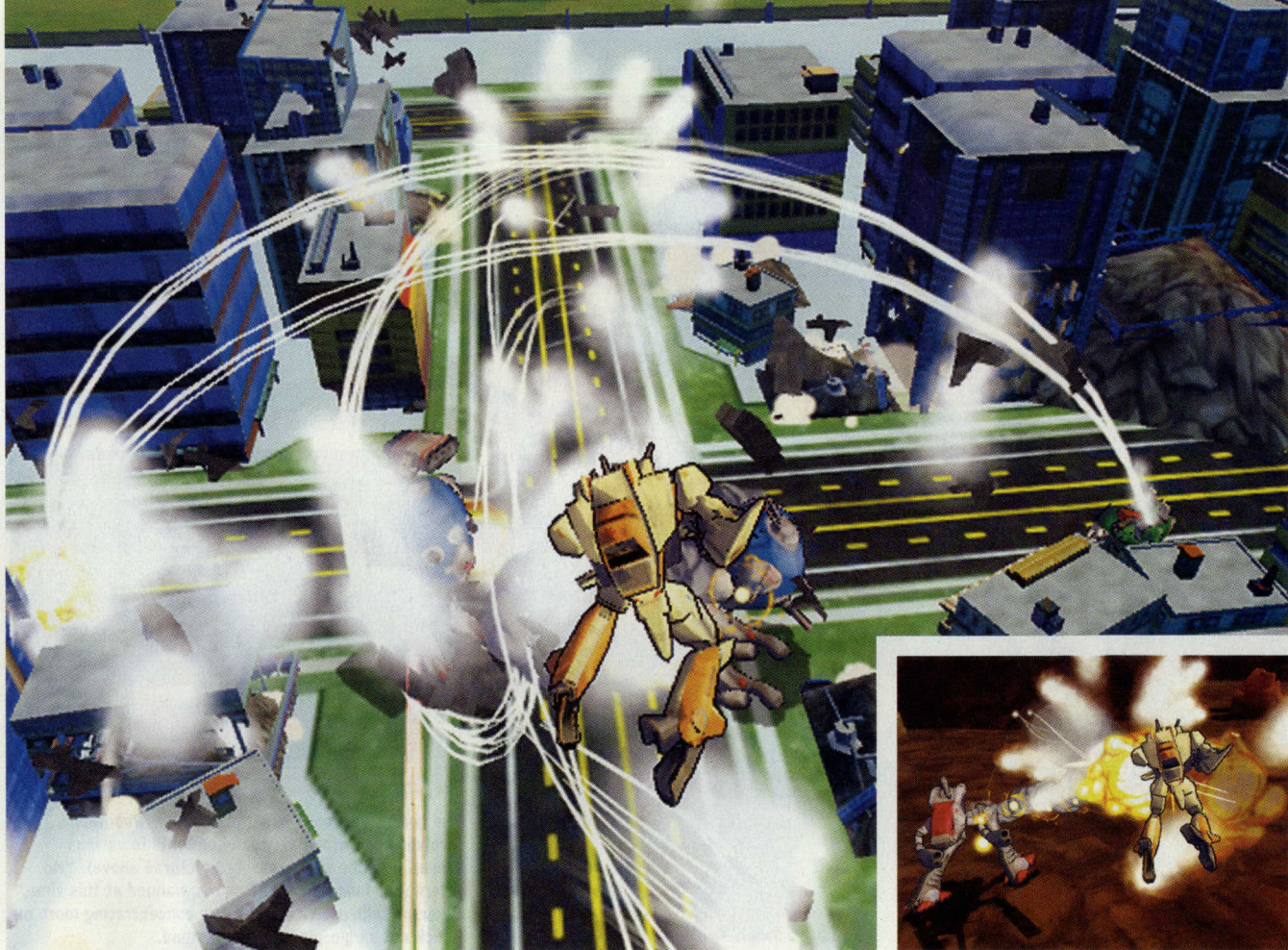
LISA HAYES begins the series as a hardened SDF-1 bridge officer, but eventually falls in love with...



RICK HUNTER, the chronically depressed hero of the series. He's torn between his love for Lisa and his feelings for...



LYNN MINMEI, the bratty pop star whose music turns Zentraedi into pacifists. She's got something going on with...



three Veritech configurations—Fighter jet, Guardian and Battloid robot—come with their own unique gameplay quirks that are best appreciated when you battle in gravity. Switching between any of the three forms is a snap; you just jab the digital pad in one of three directions and [imitate a transformation sound effect with your mouth here]. “We debated a lot

Battloid robot mode and strafe left, firing your gun. As you pass in front of a building, all the windows on the fifth floor shatter from your barrage of gunfire. Sensing that you’re being flanked, you transform to Guardian, levitate above the rooftops, then blast the Battlesuits with a streaming volley of missiles. But as the smoke clears, you see nothing

“The mecha designs have held up surprisingly well over the last 15 years...”

—Adam Cogan, Lead Designer

about letting the players transform whenever they wanted to,” says Peterson. “In the end we decided it was a [must] to give them that freedom. If you lock gamers into Battloid for certain missions and Guardian for others, they’ll just get all pissed off. If you can’t transform, [the game’s] not worth owning.”

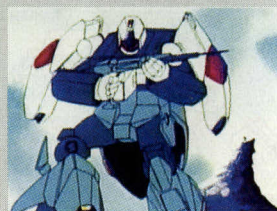
Even niftier is that just about everything in the game world can be demolished. Picture patrolling the streets of a city on Earth and being set upon by five or six Zentraedi Battlesuits. You switch to

but a pile of rubble where that city block used to be. Being the battle-hardened flyboy you are, you convert to Fighter mode and jet skyward, eagle eyes scanning for the next skirmish. While none of *Robotech’s* missions have been finalized yet, expect to do everything from search-and-rescue to escorting recon planes to good-ol’ dogfighting. And Vicious Cycle guarantees some major bosses.

Still, from what we’ve experienced during our early test drive of the game, we have to say that

THE MASTERS

Second War



Dana Sterling (daughter of Miriya and Max) takes the lead role as the Zentraedi’s creators, the Robotech Masters, come to Earth themselves to retrieve the now-destroyed SDF-1. As in the first series, love and music are both very strong themes throughout the story. And instead of transforming planes, Dana and crew pilot transforming Hovertanks into battle.

The second *Robotech* war is considered the most forgettable by fans, as neither the mech designs nor the story lived up to the standards set in *Macross*. Plus, Dana was really annoying.



LYNN KYLE, her cousin and a violent drunk. He hates Rick with a passion, even after Rick saves him and Minmei from...

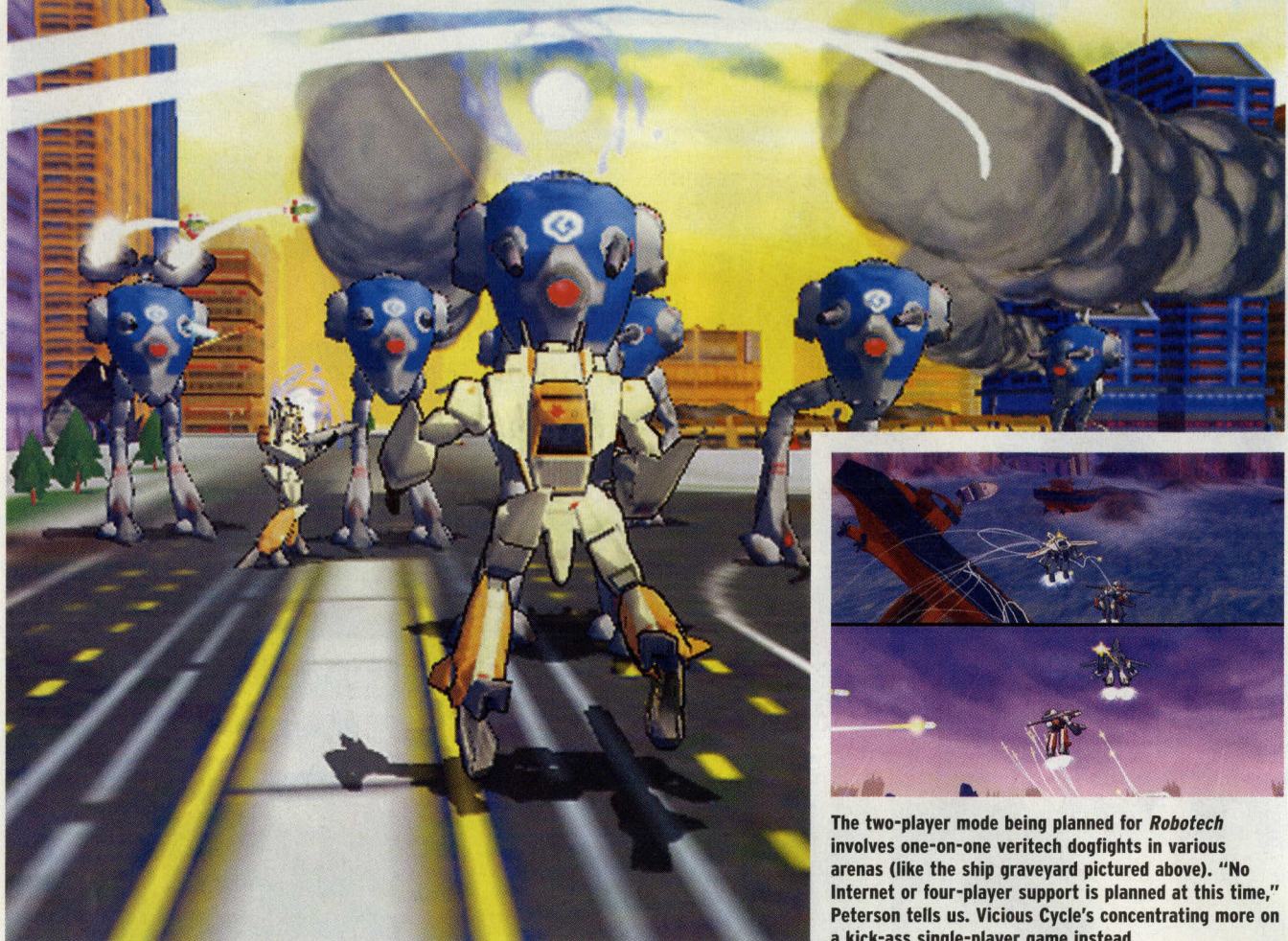


KHYRON. This Zentraedi warlord goes insane after being stranded on Earth. He also falls in love with...



AZONIA, who’s stranded along with Khyron. Before all that happens, though, she’s the commanding officer of...

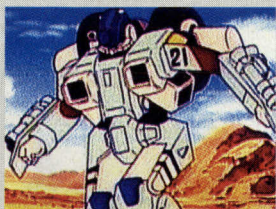
Cont. on page 84



The two-player mode being planned for *Robotech* involves one-on-one veritech dogfights in various arenas (like the ship graveyard pictured above). "No Internet or four-player support is planned at this time," Peterson tells us. Vicious Cycle's concentrating more on a kick-ass single-player game instead.

NEW GENERATION

Finale



Scott Bernard returns from Rick Hunter's deep-space mission to liberate the enslaved Earth from a new alien threat—the Invid. After he crash-lands on Earth, Scott and a band of ragtag freedom fighters attempt to destroy the Invid queen, Regis, and save the world before Admiral Hunter's return.

While there were transforming fighters in the third war, the main mecha of choice for Scott and his troop were Cyclone cycles. These super-cool bikes would break up and reform around the rider's body as a type of *Robotech* armor.

Peterson is delivering on the promise he made at the start of this preview: While playing, you really do feel like you're in an episode of the classic cartoon. Much of that feeling comes from what's whizzing through the air: hundreds of missiles, fired by both you and the enemies, tracing the sky with spaghetti-strand contrails. It's a visual effect that defined the

or book. All the models are done." That means you'll see Officer Battlepods, Destroids, armored and super Veritechs and Dropships. (But you won't see Hover tanks, Cyclone 'cycles or any other stuff from the second or third *Robotech* series; TDK has yet to talk plans for games based on those sagas.)

Of course, the real danger when working with a

"*Robotech's* cool because it's a niche game that has the potential of becoming a little less niche."

—Wayne Harvey, Director of Engineering

animated series' battles. "The missiles are a huge part of the game," says Cogan. "So we worked hard on getting the volleys to act just right."

Die-hard details applied to all the mecha models up the authenticity. You're not stuck piloting a single type of Veritech against a ho-hum armada of cloned Battlepods. Vicious Cycle is made up of raging *Robotech* fans, and Peterson assures us that "we built everything that was ever in any *Robotech* show

niche license like *Robotech* is trying too hard to please the die-hard fans—the guys who, say, can spout the *Robotech Role-Playing Game* specs of the mecha models we just told you about. "When you design with only the hardcore fans in mind, you're only going to sell to hardcore fans in the end," says Peterson. So while Vicious Cycle is doing everything possible to please the *Robo*-heads with the look and sounds of this title, they're aiming squarely at the

TWELVE DEGREES OF MACROSS CONT.



MIRIYA, the Zentraedi's best pilot. After a number of defeats, she boards the SDF-1 in order to find and kill...



MAX STERLING. One knife-fight later, however, he and Miriya are married. But that's not before her fighters shoot down...



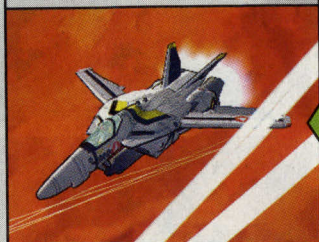
ROY FOKKER, killing him. As the most decorated pilot on the SDF-1, Roy's death is hard on everyone. Especially...

Transforming 101

VC plans to make transforming easy with this simple control setup. Each Veritech form is one D-pad push away. And, yes, these are real game screens.

FIGHTER MODE

You're basically flying an F-14. Machine guns, missiles and decoys are at your disposal.

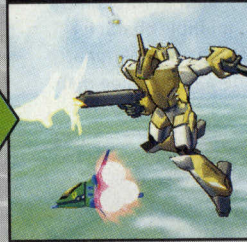


GUARDIAN MODE



Think F-14 with arms and legs. Vertical take-off and landing is now possible, along with the ability to pick things up with your robo-hands. This mode is ideal for search-and-rescue missions.

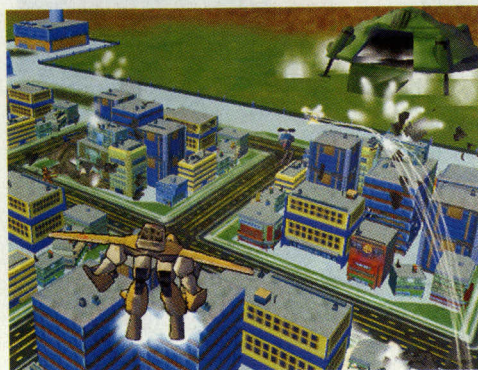
BATTLROID MODE



As a giant robot you get to run, jump, hover and strafe. You can also turn on a dime (something the Fighter can't manage). While you can't fire missiles in Battlroid mode, it's possible to snipe enemies (above) from miles away. Plus, you just look bad-ass tromping around in this mode.

mainstream player when it comes to gameplay.

That's not to say the series' story won't work its way into the game (exact details such as who you play as have yet to be settled). The nefarious Khyron is likely to cause some big problems for our hero. And the SDF-1—the humans' capital ship and the focus of the Zentraedi's constant invasions—is in here, too. In the version we played, it was possible to fly circles around the huge ship in space, and it looked great. The guys at Vicious, however, haven't finalized the exact role of the battle fortress yet. "Very large objects in the ground-based levels make it tough," Cogan says. "If you want a size comparison, the SDF-1 is roughly six times bigger than the grounded Star Destroyer in *Rogue Leader* [GC]. It's an issue we're still dealing with."



Robotech might seem an odd license to base a game on now, 15 years after the show first aired. Games tied to the Japanese version of the series have been plentiful in Japan, although none have been stellar. And a once-planned Nintendo 64

"Everybody loves giant, transforming robots."

—Marc Racine, Director of Production

Robotech title from GameTek died in development. (Vicious Cycle's game is unrelated.) But it's these very issues that have Peterson optimistic. "I don't think anyone's ever done the series justice," he says. "Everybody's been waiting forever for this...so the sooner this gets to market, the better." Bottom line: Regardless of how niche the license, *Robotech* looks well on its way to becoming a standout title. Point your browser to egm.gamers.com on April 5 to download game footage and see for yourself.

—Greg Sewart



Switching your Veritech to Fighter mode gives you access to missile decoys. Trust us, with all that ordinance filling the skies, you're sure to need them.

CASTING CALL

Voices Carry

Robotech is a character-driven license, so we asked Vicious Cycle if we'd hear any of the original cast in their game. "We're working on it," Peterson says. "We'd definitely like to use a few of them in game. But if we can't, I'd imagine we'll end up using sound-alikes or something."

And Minmei's infamous songs? Peterson groans. "I hope not. It seems like everyone likes to bash the Minmei songs, and I personally don't like them. They make my ears bleed."



CLAUDIA GRANT, his longtime girlfriend and a bridge officer. During Khyron's final attack, she dies along with...



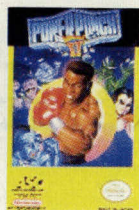
CAPTAIN GLOVAL. Seconds before his own death, though, he and Claudia manage to save one life on the SDF-1. That life is...



LISA HAYES. Lisa goes on to marry Rick Hunter, much to the chagrin of the whiny Minmei. Oh well, stuff happens.



PREVIEW GALLERY

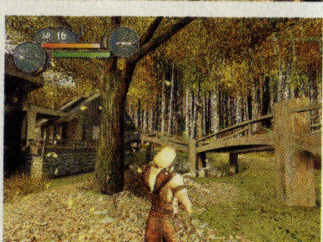
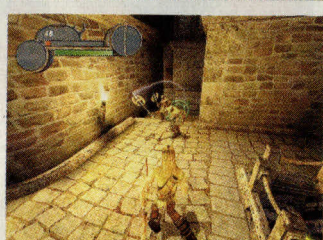
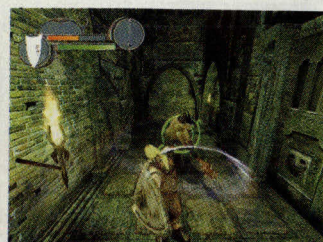


MIKE IS MISSING

After the success of *Punch-Out!!*, Iron Mike was slated to star in a second NES game back in the day. *Mike Tyson's Inter-galactic Power Punch* featured the champ in a battle against aliens. After that nasty rape conviction, though, Mikey was deleted, and the game was released simply as *Power Punch II*. Note the "I'm not Mike Tyson—honest!" cover art.

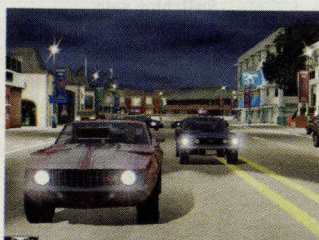
Enclave

Conspiracy's first Xbox title might provide a medieval after-dinner mint for legions of satisfied *Halo* fans this **spring**. The Swedish gaming chefs at **Starbreeze Studios** are stuffing this fantasy-themed third-person shooter with two unique single-player scenarios, multiple character classes and a plethora of weapons. Multiplayer co-op and deathmatch modes across each of the game's 25 levels provide a hearty side dish.



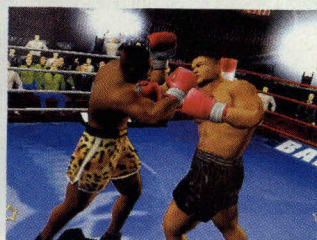
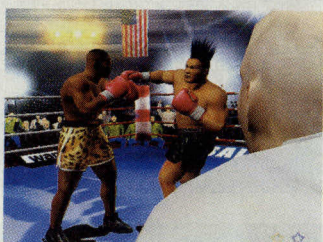
Test Drive

The long-running *Test Drive* franchise looks to kiss its lackluster forbears goodbye as **Infogrames** unleashes it onto Xbox and PlayStation 2 in **April**. The cars feature *Gran Turismo 3*-style real-time environmental reflections and look stunning as you guide driver Dennis Black through a plot-driven series of street races set in locations like San Francisco and London. No dents allowed, though, due to licensing restrictions—boo-hoo!



Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing

Fortunately for **Codemasters**, a virtual boxing ring is one of the few bad boy Mike Tyson can still fight in. The playable version of the **April** release we knocked around this month is still a little wet behind the notched ears. But if *MTHB's* boxing engine (which demands strategy, not just speed and power) can get as smooth as the game's graphics, it could be a contendah.



UNBREAKABLE

MT 2

MIX TAPE 2 THE ZOO YORK VIDEO

REGISTERED OPERATIVES:

DANNY SUPA . ANTHONY CORREA . JESSE FRITSCH . TODD JORDAN
BRIAN BROWN . BURTON SMITH . AKIRA . ADAM GRAHAM . HAROLD HUNTER
JEFFERSON PANG . ZERED BASSETT . AND THE ZOO YORK CREW

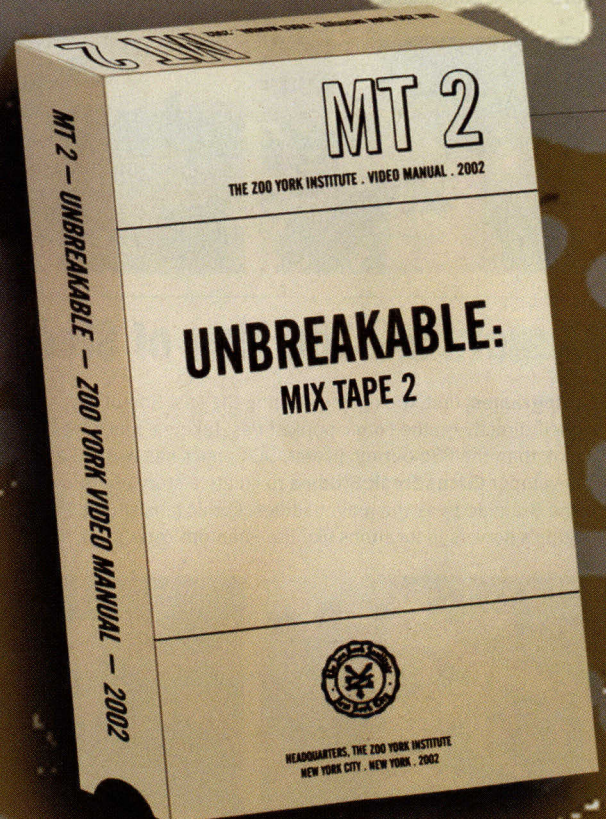
SPECIAL JOINT OPERATIONS BY:

TRAGEDY . JERU THE DAMAJA . SHABAAM SHADEEQ . PERCEE P
LIL' DAP . GRAND PRIX . THE ALLIES . DJ A TRAK
DJ CRAZE . HAROLD HUNTER . THE MUSICAL WIZARDRY OF DJ ANI AND ENOCH

FIG. 1:
(NOT ACTUAL SIZE)
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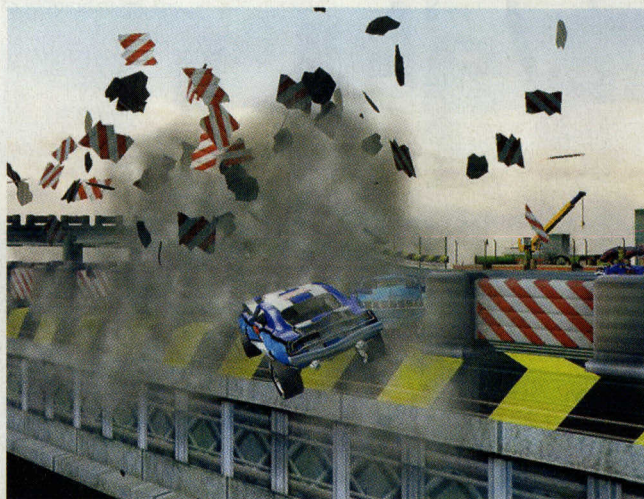




PREVIEW GALLERY

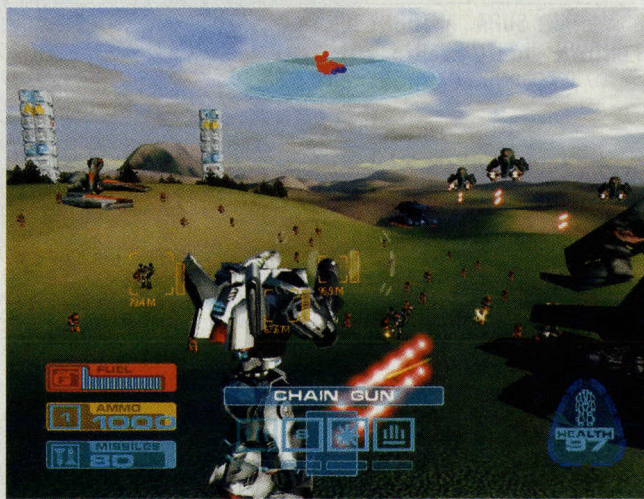
Crash

From the makers of *Wild Wild Racing* (PS2) comes a different kind of driving game where the sole object is to climb into a hot rod and smash the crap out of your opponents. If this sounds like the old PS1 *Destruction Derby* games, that's because it is—sans the system-chugging slowdown, muddy graphics and repetitive gameplay. Find out for yourself when **Majesco** brings it home this **June**.



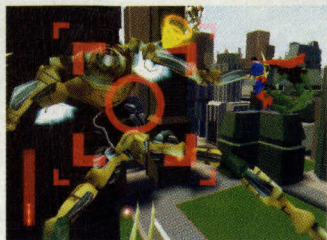
Gun Metal

Like the language of music and film, mankind's love of giant robots is universal. What better way to tap into that collective subconscious this **summer** than with **Rage Software's** *GM*, an action-packed testament to the beauty of stuff blowing up real good. Transform at will from a massive mech to a high-flyin' jet fighter, and if you happen to knock over some buildings and trample some troops, well...that's half the fun!



Superman: The Man of Steel

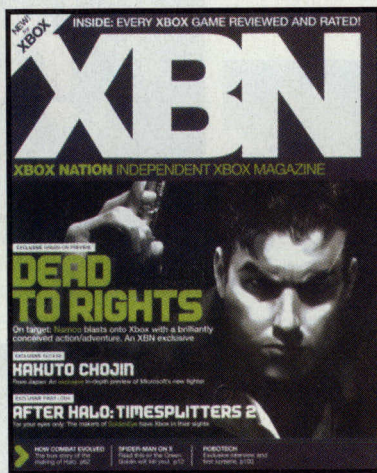
Infogrames' first Xbox game starring the Last Son of Krypton bases itself directly on the comic-book series, taking a much less "animated" look than the PS2 outing. In fact, DC Comics has worked alongside developer **Circus Freak Studios** to create a story featuring Lex Luthor and Brainiac 13 as the main baddies. Comic fans should love using Supe's powers in locations like the Phantom Zone. Look for it this **fall**.



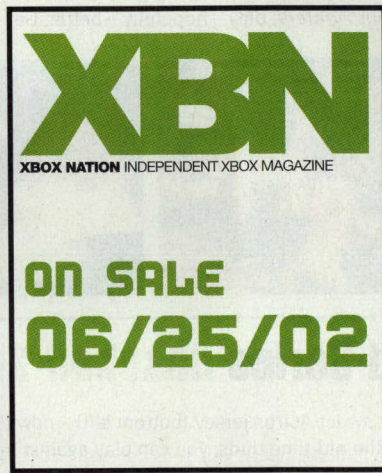
Things usually come in threes.



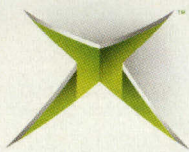
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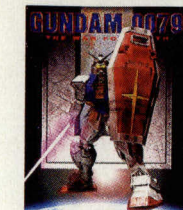
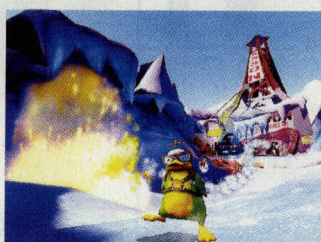
XBN #3
WATCH FOR IT!



PREVIEW GALLERY

Whacked!

Whoever was in charge didn't have to think too hard to come up with the title of **Microsoft's** way-out-there third-person shooter. *Whacked!* pretty much says it all. Picture a violent freakshow cast who'll use rubber-duddy grenades, shish-ke-bobs, giant staplers and more to wreak havoc in at least six different gameplay modes. Sounds like Acclaim's *Fur Fighters*, only—hopefully—better. Get it on this **October**.



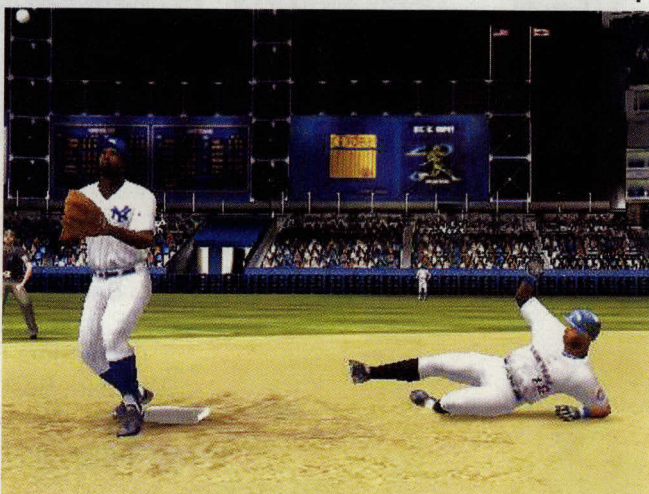
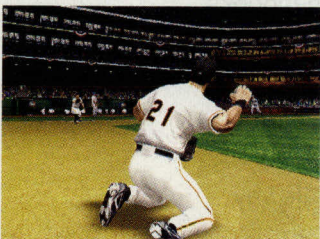
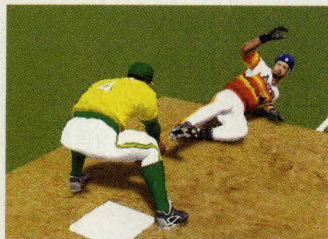
GUNDAM'S BACK

The developer of *Whacked!*, Presto Studios, actually released a *Gundam* PC game in the U.S. back before the current *Gundam* craze hit. *Gundam 0079: The War For Earth* featured American actors portraying the animated characters from the classic series. It was also released on the PlayStation in Japan.



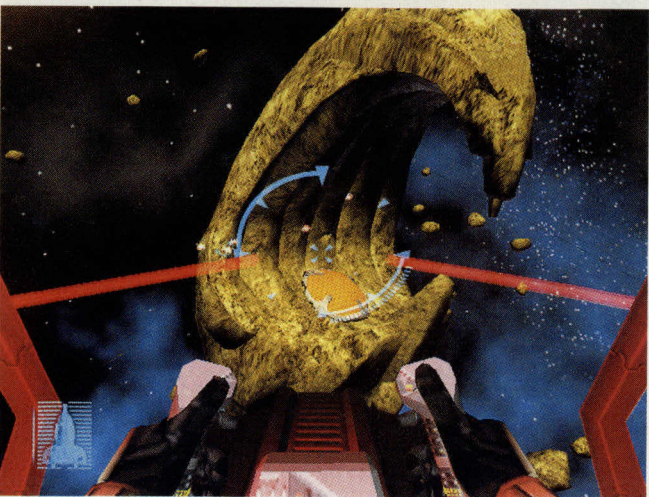
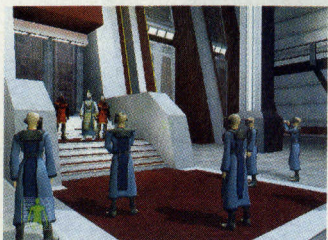
World Series Baseball 2K3

Look at that sweet Astros jersey (bottom left)—now that's cool. In addition to the old-time duds, you can play against 25 of Cooperstown's best (Jackson, Banks, etc.). Other tweaks include a deeper Franchise mode (with fantasy draft), more animation, and the option to create up to 25 custom players. On paper, this **May** release sounds great, but we've been burned before. Hopefully **Sega** won't disappoint this time.



Mace Griffon: Bounty Hunter

Never screw with an ex-Ranger. Period. Let alone an insurgent ready to unleash an arsenal of weapons and bloody vengeance on those who stand in his way. Labeled by **Crave** as the "leap forward that gamers have been anticipating," this new shooter ships in the **fall** and touts seamless land-to-space combat transitions and vast levels. We hope the *Halo*-meets-*Wing Commander* formula works.



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Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku

Publisher:	Infogrames
Developer:	Webfoot Technologies
Players:	1
Genre:	Action-RPG
% Done:	90%
Release:	May 2002
Kakarot:	Goku's real name
Web Address:	www.infogrames.com www.dragonballz.com

The Good: Finally, another *Dragon Ball* game comes to the U.S.

The Bad: Sacrificing your life to save your son, Gohan. Bummer.

And The Ugly: Master Roushi's plans for those lewd magazines.

FLICK TO PICK

Live-Action DB



It's got bad special effects, horrible dubbing and ridiculous situations, and that's what makes *Dragon Ball: The Magic Begins* a laugh riot. This unofficial, cheaply produced Hong Kong import was released in the U.S. by Tai Seng last year (www.taiseng.com) on DVD and VHS. And even if you're not a *DB* fan, it's worth watching just for laughs.

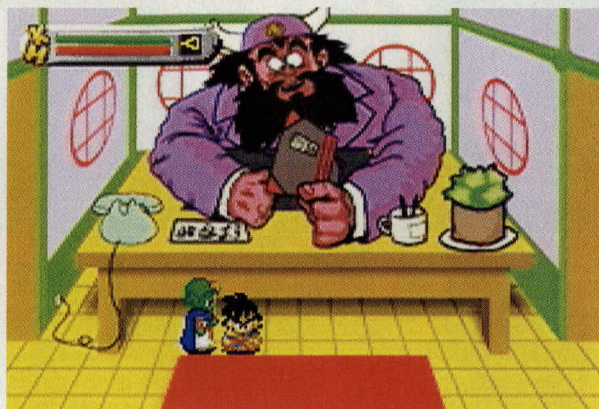


Master Roushi gets his freak on.



Goku's got a variety of attacks: punches, kicks and projectiles like the Solar Flare and Kamehameha Wave.

A visit to King Yemma can mean only one thing—you died trying to save Gohan. Do you have what it takes to return to life?




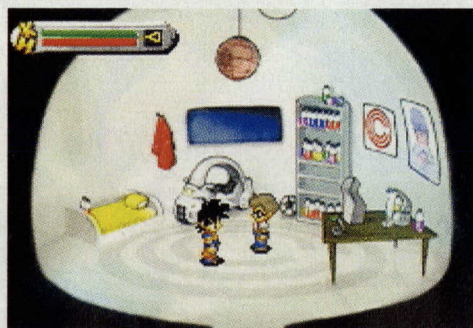
Fans have been clamoring for a *Dragon Ball* game ever since the show started airing on U.S. television in the mid '90s. But the heyday of good *DBZ* games out of Japan died with the 16-Bit Super Nintendo, and the one game that did make it to our shores—*Dragon Ball GT: Final Bout*—was largely recognized as crap. Infogrames hopes to do the license justice with a new round of *DB* titles.

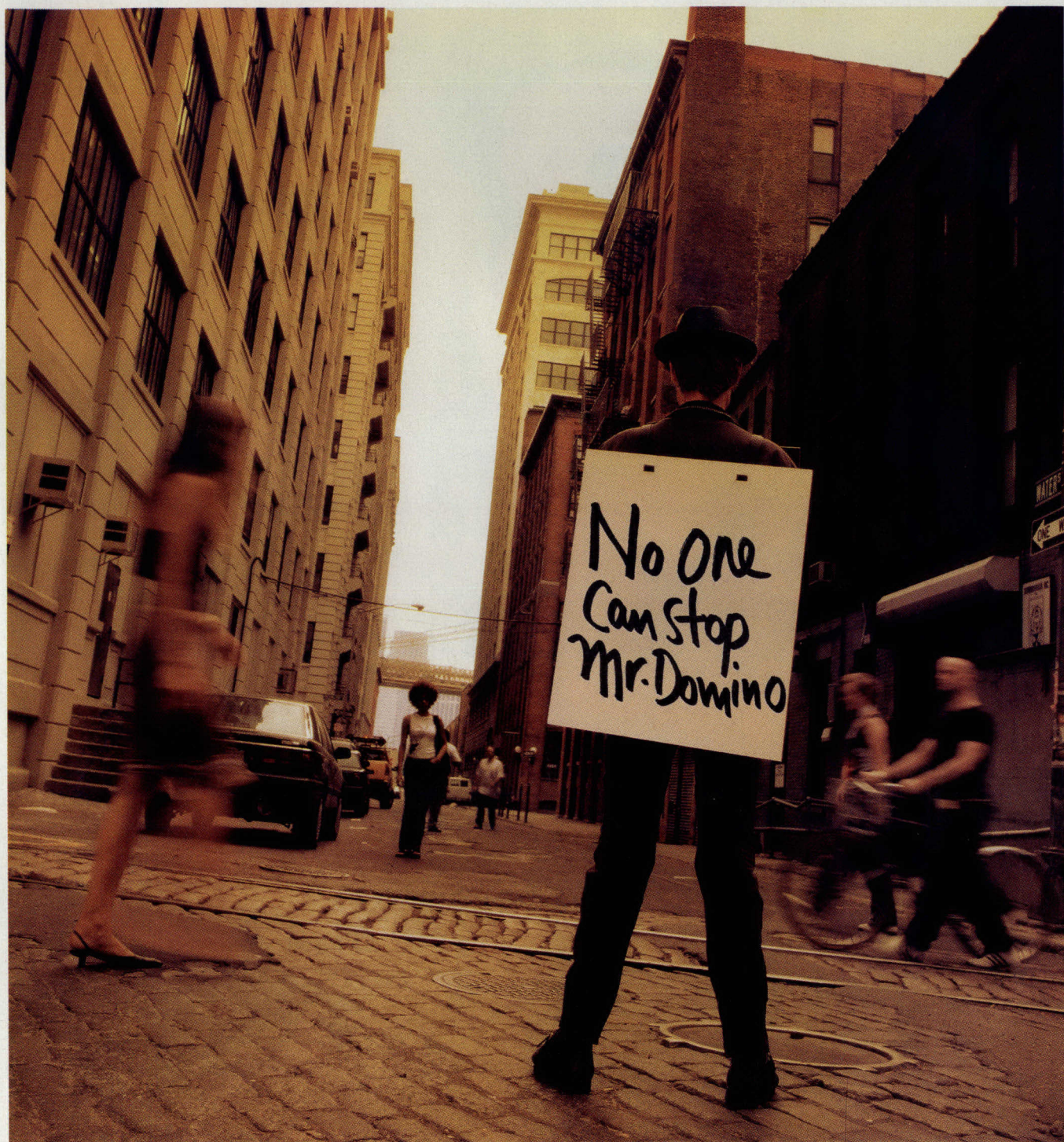
The first of these is the Action-RPG *The Legacy of Goku*, developed by Webfoot Technologies. You play as Goku through the first few *DBZ* story arcs, namely the Saiyan, Namek and Frieza sagas (sorry Trunks fans). The tale begins as your son, Gohan, is kidnapped by your Saiyan bro' Raditz.

Legacy plays and looks similar to an old-school *Zelda*, but with a traditional RPG system of leveling-

up. You gain experience by completing side-quests (usually involving taking an item to another character) and defeating enemies. Sometimes you'll even nab points by chatting with other characters. As you progress, you'll have access to more attacks and be able to fly for longer periods of time.

All your favorite characters—from Bubbles to Yamcha—make appearances and quick cameos (see some of the lineup below). Webfoot President Dana Dominiak told *EGM* that the team went to great lengths to add references specifically for the *DBZ* hardcore—things that fans who've watched the original Japanese series would get, such as Master Roushi's weakness for dirty magazines. Hopefully that attention to detail will translate into a game that fans will enjoy.  —Chris Johnston





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THINK YOU KNOW RESIDENT EVIL?

What's behind that door? Could be some health, a niftier weapon or more ammo. But that's not what you're thinking. You're thinking what else it could be...what it probably is...what makes more ammo and weapons necessary: a rotting zombie just waiting to tear a chunk out of your neck. Or a pack of ravenous mutant dogs, who look at you and see one big, fleshy Milkbone. Or an acid-spitting spider the size of a Volkswagen. Or a hulking, skinless gorilla with 3-inch teeth and claws that could take your head off in one bloody swipe. Or something even worse. Something you haven't seen yet....

That's the essence of what made Capcom's original *Resident Evil* so exciting when it debuted six years ago on the PlayStation, and it's what makes the GameCube remake due April 30 even more intense: No matter what you think you know, no matter what precautions you take, you're still in for a...

Scary

Resident Evil is gonna scare
the hell out of you, and your
little GameCube too.

Be afraid. Be very afraid.

By Mark MacDonald

Shocked? Frightened? You will be. "It's much scarier than the [PlayStation] original," says Capcom producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi. And he should know—in 1995 Kobayashi worked on that first version of *Resident Evil* (RE) for Sony's system, and he's gone on to play a part in just about every Capcom survival-horror title since, including RE2 and 3, *Code: Veronica*, *Dino Crisis* and *Devil May Cry*. But we don't have to take his word for it—we had a chance to get behind the GameCube controller and pee for ourselves (in our pants, that is) the new level of fear this remake'll fill you with. If playing the PlayStation RE felt like the first time you saw *Night of the Living Dead*, the GameCube remake is like sweating through the zombie-filled nightmare you had once you went to sleep: Its eerily realistic graphics, vivid sounds and sneaky surprises pump up the intensity to teeth-chattering levels. This is definitely not the same old game.

"Our basic strategy was to keep the bare bones of the PlayStation game intact and redo everything else," Kobayashi says. "We changed the game in terms of volume and quality." That means new rooms, puzzles, monsters, and completely revamped graphics and sounds. "There's nothing from the old game that went untouched," he says.

Cover Story

RISE!





RE-VOLUTIONARY GRAPHICS

In most cases, good graphics only serve as the icing on the cake. But in *Resident Evil*, the visuals are a vital ingredient in cookin' up the game's tastiest feature: its spooky atmosphere. Sure, all the characters and enemies look fantastic (as you can see), but in motion it's the countless little details that make you feel like you're really there: the flickering fluorescent light of a musty basement kitchen, with flies buzzing around abandoned rotting meats; dark hallways suddenly bleached in a flash of lightning

(was that a shape you saw silhouetted in the window...?); the dust coating attic floorboards that kicks up in puffs as you wander through; dank caverns with drips of water raining into puddles; a soupy fog slowly rolling through a graveyard; trees and overgrown weeds swaying in the wind.... Every scene adds to the dingy, haunting atmosphere, thanks to new backgrounds composed of animating movies instead of static paintings. "That's the part we exploited the most—so many things move by this method," says Kobayashi. "We added many things to take advantage of it, like windows and candles. One room has a moving chandelier to show the light and shadow effects."

But if realism was the ultimate goal, why not go fully 3D like in *RE Code: Veronica*? "We can do 3D, so let's do 3D...that's not our style," responds Kobayashi. "What are the best techniques we can use to make the game look its best? That's our style. This is a horror game. [RE Director and creator Shinji] Mikami is always saying that *Resident Evil* is about enjoying the atmosphere. If you mate-

rialize 'enjoying the atmosphere,' you can do it better in 2D." No one will argue with the results; this game sets a new standard in realistic graphics no other game, GameCube or not, comes close to.

RE-MARKABLE SOUND

But sometimes what's even more frightening than what you can see in *Resident Evil* is what you can't see. What you can only hear. The squishy limp of rotting feet sliding along



The cutscene dialogue is no longer so laughably bad in the remake, for better or for worse (we can't help but miss the old "master of unlocking" and "Jill sandwich" lines).



Ever see a snake eat a mouse? It's pretty cool...unless you're the mouse.

the floor. Moans of the undead lusting for fresh brains. The methodic ticking of a grandfather clock—or a sudden clap of thunder that makes you jump out of your seat. Capcom completely redid the sound effects and music to take full advantage of the GameCube hardware, bringing the game's audio up to par with its incredible visuals. You'll notice how crisp and disturbingly real everything sounds right from the first dog attack in the opening cinema (which has also been redone in computer graphics—no more overacting from badly costumed actors here). And remember the old trademark zombie moan, the one that sounded like your grand-

pa falling asleep after a few beers? Wait until you hear their new freaked-out cries. You may start sleeping with the night-light on.

RE-VAMP' OR RE-MAKE?

At first, all this visual and aural tweaking was as far as Capcom planned to take the GameCube version of *Resident Evil*. But as Kobayashi explains, the team wasn't satisfied. "It wasn't fun enough," he says, "because it's still just (the same) *Resident Evil*. We wanted to add more excitement. So we came up with ideas for adding rooms, items and new zombies."

In the end, only the controls and basic storyline survived without radical changes. The result is a much more polished, coherent experience, as Capcom used this second chance to rethink every part of *Resident Evil*. "Mikami told us how and why he did everything for the original game so we could figure out if it should be left intact or changed," says Kobayashi. "And some of the team members were just gamers when the original came out. They also inspired the develop-



ment from the gamer's point of view."

So with a giant checklist of what to change and what to keep, the team started to rebuild *RE* from the ground up. They created, moved, or altered rooms and entire areas. They scrapped almost all the puzzles (a few tasks do remain the same) and replaced them with more clever challenges. And for the die-hard fans who must unlock everything, they added two new endings (for a whopping total of 10), two entirely new game modes and, of course, new outfits for the main characters.

The great thing about all these changes is





Besides the dagger (right) which both characters can use, the other defensive weapons are gender-specific. Only Jill wields the stun gun (above) while Chris gets the grenades.

not only do they improve *Resident Evil* for those new to the series, but they also provide a great reason—beyond the fresh coat of paint—for *RE* veterans to play again. In fact, it took us just as long to play through the GameCube remake as it did the original game—about 14 hours—despite our familiarity with the PS version. And remember, that's just with one of the two available characters.

RE-BORN ENEMIES

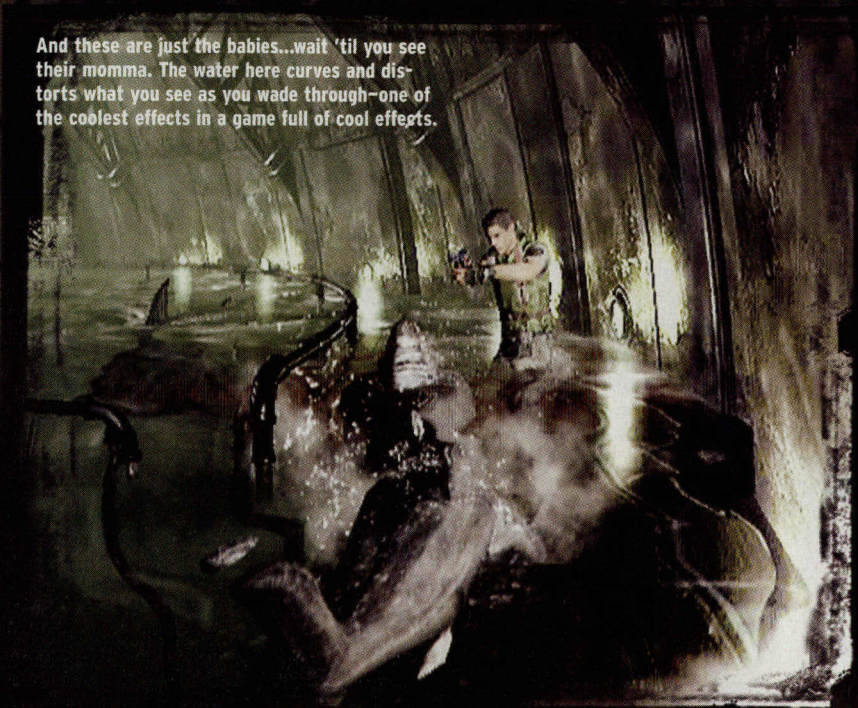
So if you think you know exactly where and when that dog is going to come crashing through the window, think again. "The people who played the original game know when enemies attack you," Kobayashi says, "so we changed them. You expect something to happen where you saw enemies in the original, but now it might not happen at all. On the other hand, something might happen where



there was nothing in the original game."

And it's not just their locations—some of the enemies themselves that have changed. Take the humble zombie, the most common monster in the game and a staple of the *RE* series. Empty your pistol into one of these living corpses and he will go down, yes, but eventually (maybe an hour or two later) he will get back up, and he will be pissed. This new breed of un-dead, called Crimson Heads because of their bloody tint, don't play by the same rules regular law-abiding

zombies do. For example, most zombies plod along slowly in your general direction. Crimson Heads run straight at you. Fast. And while most zombies only take one bite before backing off and waiting to be shot, these guys ain't so polite. They get right up in your face and slash with their claws (did we mention they have claws?) until one of you is dead. You won't be walking past these guys, or slowly picking them off for target practice. When you hear the rapid footsteps of a Crimson Head trotting your way or its blood-



And these are just the babies...wait 'til you see their momma. The water here curves and distorts what you see as you wade through—one of the coolest effects in a game full of cool effects.



curdling shriek (we're talkin' nails-on-the-chalkboard disturbing), it's hard to resist the urge to turn around and head right back through the door you just entered. You have a couple of methods at your disposal to truly kill these guys and prevent their resurrection, but we promised to keep them secret (zombie-movie buffs probably have a couple good guesses, though).

RE-VENGE ON THE ENEMIES

Luckily the bad guys aren't the only ones with some new tricks up their sleeves; defensive items have been added to help you even the odds. Used to be that once a monster got

ahold of you, you were gonna get hurt, no two ways about it. Now when an enemy gets too close for comfort, as long as you find and equip a special secondary weapon, you can get that rotting monkey off your back and teach it a little lesson at the same time: Fry him with a stun gun, shove a dagger in its face, or pop a grenade in its mouth and pull the pin. You can set these defensive attacks to go off automatically whenever you get attacked, or manually trigger them with the L button. And if you feel any pangs of guilt as you back off to watch a zombie's head explode, remember: It's a zombie. It's evil. It had it coming.

CONTROLS RE-TURN

But other than that one new move, the controls in this remake are virtually unchanged. If you don't know what that means, don't worry. *Resident Evil's* control scheme has become the de-facto standard for adventure games, so even if you've never touched an *RE* game before, you'll recognize the setup: Pivot left and right, then walk forward or back, with a button to run, all from your character's perspective. Not the easiest way to get around, especially in narrow hallways

Don't be distracted by his stylish sweater-vest—this Crimson Head is death on wheels.



PREPARE YOUR RESIDENCE FOR EVIL

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR *RE* EXPERIENCE BY FOLLOWING THESE FOUR EASY STEPS:



1. TURN OFF THE LIGHTS: All of them. Yes, your Hello Kitty night-light too. If your eyes start to hurt after a few hours, that's perfect.



2. CRANK UP THE SOUND: Tell your neighbors you're throwing a party. A three-day-long party. Oh, and they may hear some screaming and moaning. And some gunshots. You know, the usual stuff.



3. PLAY AT NIGHT: Along with turning off all the lights, this one is crucial for creating the right mood. When dawn comes, it's time to quit playing and start thinking of excuses to sleep through work or school.



4. PLAY ALONE: Wait 'til your parents, siblings or significant other go to bed. Pets are OK.



filled with acid-vomiting zombies and leaping undead canines. But, as Kobayashi told us, there's a reason for that. "If you could get away from the zombies too easily, it wouldn't be scary," he says. "If you could move like *Devil May Cry* [push in any direction and you move that way], it wouldn't be scary at all." Other buttons aim your weapon, switch between targets, do a quick 180° turn, access a map, and bring up a menu to check your health and manage inventory.

That last point is a big deal in *RE*—since

you can't drop items anywhere, and because you need an open slot (of a total of six or eight slots) to pick up any new item, key or weapon, what you bring along and what you leave behind (in storage boxes peppered throughout the game) becomes very important. And while item management in a horror game may seem about as desirable as an accounting minigame in a first-person shooter, Kobayashi explains that it's all part of *RE*'s pacing. "It's not like you can open fire frantically and have fun here," he says. "You


have to think a lot. Chris can only carry six items and Jill eight, just like the old game, so you really have to think about whether or not you should bring that ammo or healing item, stuff like that." Basically, as annoying as it may be to backtrack through a series of enemy-infested rooms to get to a storage box, just so you can run all the way back and

"It's not like you can open fire frantically and have fun here. You have to think a lot."

pick up a tiny key, it's that very prospect that scares you into carefully weighing every move you make in the game, even down to what you choose to carry.

RE-MAIN IN YOUR SEATS

You might survive this game, but you still won't be able to escape *Resident Evil* in the next few months. *RE2*, 3 and *Code: Veronica* (all straight ports, unfortunately, and not souped-up remakes) are due by the end of the year for GameCube, and Capcom is already working on the all-new *RE Zero* and *RE4* for the system. Meanwhile, *RE Gaiden* will be out soon for the Game Boy Color, *RE Online* is in the works for the PlayStation 2 (see our news story), and of course the *RE* feature film just hit theaters.

So you can run and hide, or you can open that next creaking door and see what other surprises the series has in store. Because if we learned anything from the work that went into this spectacular GameCube remake, it's that sometimes the known can be just as scary as the unknown. 

LEARN TO FORGET

FEELS LIKE THE FIRST TIME, FEELS LIKE THE VERY FIRST TIME

Sure there's plenty of new stuff in the GameCube version of *Resident Evil*, but the overall plot is unfortunately the same as the six-year-old original. How can you forget all those great memories and experience *RE* again, for the very first time? A few suggestions:



NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT: Concentrate on a single memory from the first game, then you get the whip. Repeat until the mere thought of the first game causes you pain.

PROS: May turn you on.

CONS: Hard to explain giant raised lesions to friends and family. Bactine stings.

CRYOGENIC FREEZING: Thaw out in the distant future, when technology will allow scientists at Recall Inc. to wipe out the part of your brain that remembers the original game.

PROS: Chance to save Mars and colony of hideous mutants, meet three-breasted hookers.

CONS: May have to kill lots of people, including your wife, who isn't really your wife. And pull a big homing thing out of your nose. Ouch.



HYPNOSIS: Pay Madam Zelda to make you forget...foooooor-geeeet....

PROS: Visit with dead pets while on the other side.

CONS: May end up believing you are a chicken...

ANOTHER PRO: ...but you'd be a chicken with no memories of the original *Resident Evil*.



TONY ROBBINS: Freakishly large self-help guru with very white teeth and powers we human beings do not yet understand.

PROS: Unlock the power within. Newfound self-satisfaction, and that results in higher sales.

CONS: Somewhat expensive and time-consuming. May be called on to film embarrassing testimonial for late-night infomercial, serve in Tony's secret army of hypnotized slaves.



BOOZE, SWEET BOOZE: Grab a couple bottles and drink yourself stupid.

PROS: Cheap, yet all too effective. Available in stores now.

CONS: Have to be 21. Cannot operate heavy machinery. Lying in pool of own piss and vomit makes it difficult to hold GC pad.

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Review Crew

Our Philosophy

EGM rates games based on how they compare with other titles on the same system. The highest score we'll give a game is a 10. When a game receives a 10, you can rest assured it's one of the best games ever made—a revolutionary title that truly stands above everything else in its genre for

its time. At the other end of the spectrum sits the lowest score a game can receive: a 0.0. This is the kind of game you want to avoid at all costs. It's pure crap. In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We repeat: 5.0 IS AVERAGE. Simple, ain't it?

Our Awards



Platinum Awards go to games that get all 10's, the best and rarest review a game can get.



Gold Awards go to games whose average score equals 9.0 or higher.



Games that average at least an 8.0 (but lower than 9.0) receive **Silver Awards**.

The Crew



Crispin Boyer Features Editor

Cris's face contorted like this after... A) He heard talent scouts were looking for the next *Max Payne* facial model. B) He tripped and fell on his Game Boy while running. Or C) He just read Che's and Kraig's bios.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure

Current Faves: *Tactics Ogre*, *Hot Shots Golf 3*



Dan "Shoe" Hsu Final Boss

Shoe's competitive spirit has taken control of his apparently weak-willed brain. He's now stalking the staffers, waiting for them to take a break so they can play him at *Tetris Attack*, *Soul Calibur* and more.

Favorite Genres: Pretty much everything

Current Faves: *Tony Hawk 3*, *Tetris Attack* (SNES)



Dan Leahy Editor in Chief, GameNOW

Ever since he went to New Orleans for the Super Bowl, Dan thinks every day is a "festivus maximus." Yep, he says life's just one big 24-hour street party after another. Sounds good to us.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Fighting, Action

Current Faves: *NHL 2K2*, *High Heat 2003*



Che Chou West Coast Editor

Back in the windy city, Che devastated Dudlak's self-esteem by whipping him in *VF4*. Here, in a victory pose, Che proudly displays an award-winning snapshot he took of Crispin's grandma in mid-embrace.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Racing, RPG

Current Faves: *VF4*, *Tactics Ogre*, *C-Strike* (PC)



Chris Johnston News Editor

After rediscovering *Pokémon Puzzle League*, making a pilgrimage to the NYC Pokémon Center, and buying another Pokémon GBA, it's official: CJ's got the Pokéforever again. Some of us will just never understand.

Favorite Genres: Adventure, Puzzle, Music

Current Faves: *Pokémon Puzzle Lge.* (N64), *Ico*



Mark MacDonald Executive Editor

Sure, Mark probably believes his own story about the night he traveled back in time to stop *Mortal Kombat Advance* from being made, but we bet he just got drunk and forgot he was at Medieval Times.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG

Current Faves: *Resident Evil*, *Virtua Fighter 4*



Jonathan Dudlak Reviews Editor

Inspired by *RalliSport Challenge*, Jon picked up a sweet 400hp machine and is taking it around to local tracks. It's a little slow off the line, but it handles great in the snow and the chicks dig it.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Action, Racing

Current Faves: *VF4*, *RalliSport Challenge*



Jeanne Kim Associate Editor/Art Director

"Getting back to the basics" was Jeanne's mantra this month since doing so is very important in a growing gamer's life. Problem is, fish ain't so easy to catch with a flimsy magnetic pole! Darn fishies!

Favorite Genres: RPG, Shooters, Adventure

Current Faves: *No One Lives Forever*, *Socc. Slam*



James Mielke West Coast Editor/Webmaster

Milky has spent so much time mastering *VF4*'s Pai (usually at the expense of freelancer Shane Chickenhausen) that he reckons *Crouching Tiger* hottie Zhang Ziyi should play her in a VF movie. Yup!

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Role-playing, Action

Current Faves: *VF4*, *Sky Gunner*, *Kingdom Hearts*



Dean Hager Managing Editor

Dean couldn't come up with any silly ideas for his picture this month. That's fine—his face alone is silly enough. Other than that, he spent most of his time playing *Pro BMX 2* and *Sled Storm 2*.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Racing

Current Faves: *RalliSport Challenge*



Kraig Kujawa Senior Associate Editor

Inspired by Che's band, Kraig grew out his locks and started a hair band of his own that plays at truck stops everywhere. His favorite fan? Crispin's grandmother, of course. He calls her "Nanny."

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy

Current Faves: *NFL Blitz 20-02*, *NBA 2K2*

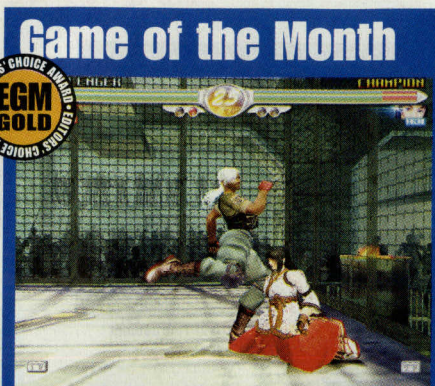


Greg Sewart Previews Editor

Sewart still won't shut up about the Canadian hockey team winning the gold in Salt Lake. We keep finding maple leaves all over the office. He even showed us the one tattooed on his ass. Much eye-gouging ensued.

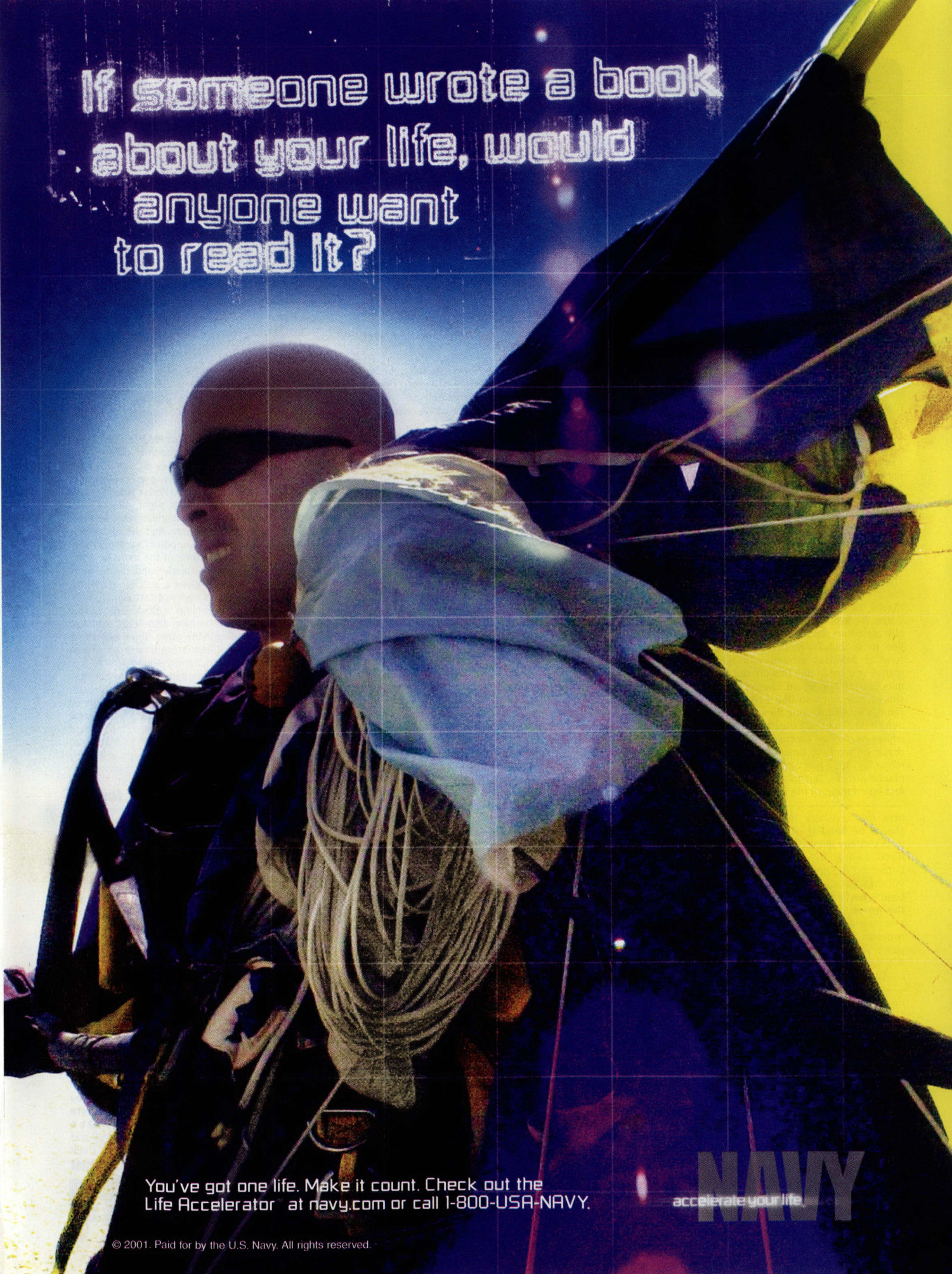
Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Adventure

Current Faves: *RalliSport Challenge*, *Robotech*



Virtua Fighter 4 pg.110

Like *Phantasy Star* long before it, Sega's *Virtua Fighter* bounces back from a lackluster "III" to ring-out any who dare challenge its genius. Countless battles raged at EGM this month, mostly over who had the next game. *VF4*'s a hardcore fighter's dream and a button masher's nightmare. Folks here just call it God for short.



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Army Men: RTS



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: Pandemic Studios
Featured In: EGM #153
Players: 1
Also Try: *Dark Reign* PC (Shoe & Craig's fave)
Best Feature: Easy to play
Worst Feature: Easy to win
Web Site: www.3do.com

PS2

For a game with the word "strategy" in its title, *Army Men: RTS* is remarkably brain-dead. Developer Pandemic Studios (*Dark Reign*, *BattleZone II*) is known for its innovative PC real-time strategy games, but here they took a breather and made RTS simpler than the seven-year-old *WarCraft II*. The decent 3D graphics and humorous introductions make it fresher than that PC classic, but it isn't nearly as fun. After a few levels I found that **it's harder to stop dribbling at the urinal than it is to destroy the opposition.** The Tan Army (you're the Green Army) is just idiotic. They're rarely aggressive and seem to subscribe to the cliché orders "only attack when fired upon." Maybe I'm unknowingly attacking the Tan Peace Corps. A couple missions were so relaxing that I literally ate a ham sandwich while I waited for my armor fleet to be built. I'm well aware that if you build a glut-tony of defenses around your base in most RTS games you could pull this off, but this only took five minutes and two Guard Towers! Offense is equally as simple—so much so that I routinely toyed with the Tannies by surrounding their H.Q. with loads of units before blowing open their base. It was nearly as satisfying as stuffing firecrackers in ant hills. Eventually that thrill wore off, and I went to try the two-player mode so I could play against a smarter opponent (like maybe a rock). But to my surprise, it doesn't exist. And here I thought the Tan Army was dumb. **Kraig**

Now *this* is where the console *Army Men* series should be heading—the plastic material is perfect for a strategy game. But is *Army Men: RTS* any good? If you're not an RTS general who's lived and breathed *Command & Conquer* through *Empire Earth* on the PC, then I'd tell you this one ain't that bad. It's very basic—**perfect for younger gamers or those new to the genre.** The designers even made the controls and interface super friendly, so even if console-RTS war was hell for you with titles like PS1 C&C, this game should be very easy to manage. *Army Men: RTS* has simple gameplay, plenty of units and lots of missions; just don't expect a ton of depth. **Shoe**

Hey, you, get back here! Yeah, I know it's an *Army Men* review, but this game's actually good! Console strategy titles are typically an interface nightmare, but the developers played it safe and went the route of "simple but controllable" rather than "complex and frustrating." The tradeoff is a loss of micro-managing ability—I really hated not being able to quickly select a group of snipers and pull 'em out of the green gaggle under fire, or set up attack formations. **RTS isn't so much a strategy title as it is an action game with resource management** and a humorous *Heart of Darkness* plot. Unless you're very hardcore about war sims, you'll dig it. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	4	6

Eve of Extinction



Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Yuke's
Featured In: EGM #146
Players: 1
Feels Like: *Soul Calibur* meets *The Bouncer*
Best Feature: A good variety of weapon combos
Worst Feature: 3D camera from hell
Web Site: www.eidosinteractive.com

PS2

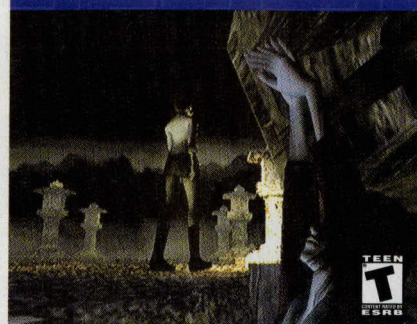
Anybody remember that anime-inspired 3D beat-'em-up called *Oni*? And if so, do you remember how much it sucked? While *Eve of Extinction* has its *Oni*-esque traits, it fares better in the gameplay department. Its combination of bash-and-mash action with 3D platform elements, however, produces mixed results. As a single-player brawler, *EOE* has a number of combat techniques to set it apart from its peers (like *The Bouncer*), but in the end, the fighting system still feels random and chaotic. Each of the numerous *Soul Calibur*-inspired weapons you get start off at level one, restricting you to two-hit combos. But every time you score a kill with that weapon, it gathers experience points and eventually levels up, allowing you to do bigger and better things. Instead of mashing buttons, switching weapons in the middle of a combo lands you a special attack. This could have opened up a world of depth, were it not for the awkward way you cycle through your weapons with the shoulder buttons. Still, I appreciate Yuke's attempt to bring something new to the platform fighter arena. Where **EOE falls flat on its face is during the non-combat, exploratory bits**, when you're running around flipping switches and opening doors. It's tedious, boring and uninspired. Throw in one of the worst 3D cameras in recent memory, and *EOE* quickly loses its appeal, in spite of an otherwise decent fighting engine. **Che**

With its bleak environments, surreal plot and button-mashin' gameplay, *Eve of Extinction* is one big mess. But halfway into this oddball 3D brawler—right about when I found the pink crossbow and started blasting the enemies with ping-pong-paddle hands—I decided it was at least an intriguing mess. I wanted to keep playing just to see how much weirder it could get. (Answer: a lot.) *EOE* tries to outdo typical beat-'em-ups by mixing platform jumping in with the combat, but the clumsy controls make for many leaps of faith. And even *EOE*'s niftiest feature—its multi-weapon combo system—**loses its luster after your 50th finger-blistering fight.** Blah. **Crispin**

Either Eidos wanted to build a better *Bouncer* or they didn't get the memo that Square's sluggish brawler kind of bit. *EOE* expands nicely on the aging *Final Fight* concept, turning predictable three-hit combos into slightly less stale weapon-based attacks. Starting a string of strikes with an energy staff and finishing up with a broad axe works out better than you might think. But an **overly ambitious mix of fighting and platforming elements dilute EOE's gameplay focus.** Instead of a solid fighter, we've got another amorphous action platformer whose mediocrity rivals early PS2 weirdness like *Orphen* and *Evergrace*. It's a rental at best. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	4	4	4

Fatal Frame



Publisher: Tecmo
Developer: Tecmo
Featured In: EGM #152
Players: 1
Also Try: *Silent Hill 2*, *Resident Evil Code: VX*
Best Feature: Novel gameplay ideas
Worst Feature: Cheesy sound effects
Web Site: www.fatalframe.com

PS2

Taking a cue from the *Blair Witch Project*, *Fatal Frame* puts you in the shoes of a shaky teen whose only protection from predatory specters is an old-fashioned camera. Most would probably prefer a gun or *Ghostbusters* proton pack over a Kodak when zapping paranormal entities, but Miku's slight, almost helpless disposition is critical to instilling the sense of nakedness one feels in the game. And although *Frame* risks players not taking this mode of gameplay seriously, especially against some of the more heinous-looking ghosts, keeping a steady hand can be quite challenging during the game's scariest moments. Piecemeal storytelling through note scraps, journals, audio tapes and news clippings scattered throughout an exquisite Japanese mansion also helps establish an ominous foreboding in the game. Some weaknesses, though, will keep it from being on the top of your horror hit list. Overused, campy sound effects that tend to say "Halloween haunted house," rather than "survival horror," and anime-influenced character designs act as constant reminders that *FF* is indeed just a game. Despite its best intentions, **Fatal Frame is definitely a "diet" fright game.** It's perfect if you're just looking for something with an eerie plot and offbeat gameplay to tool around with. But those who find pleasure in scaring themselves pointless will have better luck watching Richard Simmons *Forewell to Fat* infomercials at 3 a.m. instead. **Jeanne**

Play with the sound up and the lights off ('natch) and **Fatal Frame will freak you out, Silent Hill-style.** Its dark but sharp graphics, excellent sound effects (used both to scare you and as unique audio clues) and sudden surprises create a wonderfully dreadful overall mood right from the start. Unfortunately, the puzzles are pretty generic, and I never could get into the photo-combat despite the different options and abilities. I'm sure it works for gamers in Japan, where TV shows are dedicated to "oooh"-ing over ghost-like images accidentally caught on film, but it's not my idea of exciting action or spooky fun. Still, a great late-night rental if you have the patience. **Mark**

"Mommy!" That's what I would whimper every time I turned around to find a ghoul standing silently over my shoulder, or when a pack of undead infants would materialize and creep toward me on the floor. An unheralded entry into the survival-horror genre, *Fatal Frame* performs admirably, with a unique premise, solid control and excellent *Sezen*-esque presentation. Sure, taking pictures of the dead to destroy them is kind of goofy, but **powering up your camera with various enhancements makes you feel like a photographic badass.** The enemies are tougher and more frequent in the brutal second half, but I still enjoyed every thrilling moment. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	8	7	4

Herdy Gerdy



Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Core Design
Featured In: EGM #151
Players: 1
Also Try: Sheep Raider
Best Feature: Nice mix of puzzle and platform play
Worst Feature: Too difficult for most young-uns
Web Site: www.eidosinteractive.com

For most folks, herding creatures probably sounds as stimulating as watching a 24-hour ski-ballet marathon on ESPN2. Who would have thought an entire game devoted to herding could actually be entertaining? Entertaining for some, anyway. At its core, *Herdy Gerdy*'s a puzzle-solving platform game for kids in the 8-to-12-age zone. In addition to its Disney-cartoon look, it contains very G-rated dialogue, a kid-friendly story, and stays far away from violent themes. With that in mind, **HG definitely has a place in some households, but certainly not all.** The most difficult parts of the game are navigating vast, maze-like levels and completing quests for key characters to advance the story. This is where younger minds, and anyone who isn't used to puzzle-based adventure games, may run into problems. Some of *HG*'s levels are almost labyrinthine, making it too easy to get lost, and the confusing map hinders more than it helps. Also, you're only given one chance to absorb pertinent info given by non-playable characters. If you don't, you're forced to run around every nook and cranny of the level to find out what's been opened up. Sticky camera angles make for frustrating gameplay when it comes to platforming actions like trapping Gromps (*HG*'s monsters) and traversing areas requiring delicate balance. For what it is, *HG*'s a well-designed game, albeit mainly for precocious gamer kids.

Jeanne

Novel herd-the-critters gameplay, slick puzzles, lush environments, unruly waterfowl—all the ingredients for a good time are rounded up in *Herdy Gerdy*. It's too bad **so many important details slipped under the fence.** Gamers prone to motion sickness might upchuck from the choppy visuals and squirrely camera, which flits around with a mind of its own. And levels get too large and puzzling too quickly; I wasted a lot of time wandering between maps trying to find needed items. The game's at its best in the small stages, when you're figuring how to herd multiple species simultaneously. If it had more focused fun like that, *Gerdy* would've captured me.

Crispin

It's difficult to believe just how much fun *Herdy Gerdy* isn't. No matter how long I spent running through its convoluted levels, the gameplay just wasn't happening. **Herding creatures, be they Doops, Bleeps or anything else, is a tedious chore** thanks to general choppy and a confused, haphazard camera. I've lost count of all the brown ledges, brown rocks and brown trees I've seen instead of Gerdy. It's also a struggle to figure out what to do; the game lacks direction, and its technical and aesthetic flaws emphasize that. This isn't *Jak & Daxter* and it sure isn't *Pikmin*, though it tries to be a bit of both. It will frustrate kids and irritate adults.

Christian

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	6	7	3

King's Field: The Ancient City



Publisher: Agetec
Developer: From Software
Featured In: EGM #138
Players: 1
Cures: Insomnia
Best Feature: Spooktacular ambiance
Worst Feature: Slow, dull combat
Web Site: www.kingsfield.agetec.com

I haven't played many games that seemed to be unlikeable on purpose, but *King's Field: TAC* seems positively misanthropic. Dungeon crawls aren't exactly crowd pleasers, but this game suffers from particularly nasty issues that keep it from succeeding. **Problem #1: King's Field is too hard.** After an introductory cinema, I was thrust into a cruel world teeming with beasts. Gallantly, I attacked the first crawling insect, but somehow, the bug killed me...on my first five attempts. Eventually, I mastered the run-in/fall-back tactics required to get deep into the game. But even so, the game is supremely difficult. For example, shops can run out of healing items, leaving you totally herb-less. This cataclysmic challenge is compounded by **problem #2: King's Field is too slow.** Sure, the developers wanted to simulate actual walking speed, but Prince Devian walks so sluggishly that I renamed him Prince Valium. Holding down the Run button helps only marginally. **Problem #3: King's Field is too ugly.** In a game where you'll be slowly traversing dimly lit caverns, choppy turning and blurry stone walls don't offer much inspiration. What's really shocking about this game is that despite all of its myriad problems, it remains oddly alluring. Maybe it's the ambient soundtrack or the thrill of running past skeletons in a dank cavern, but something kept me masochistically coming back for more. Worth a rental if you're brave.

Shane

Rather than start off with everything that's wrong in the latest *King's Field* game (and believe me, there's plenty to talk about), I'll tell you what it gets right. Ancient City has an undeniable atmosphere, a richly realized collection of misty, murky, immersive caves and castles that can draw you in...if you give 'em a chance. But that's a mighty big "if." **The gameplay in this series hasn't evolved one bit since the original King's Field.** And while it might have been OK in the early PS1 days (since it was arguably innovative back then), it's just not good enough today. Combat is a dreary chore, the geriatric pacing is numbing, and the whole thing is just a slog to get through.

Gary S.

I don't understand how this series survives. From its inception back in the mid-'90s, *King's Field* has been among the slowest, ugliest, most tedious games around. Over six years have passed, and despite dramatically more powerful hardware on which to foist From Software's wretched adventures, *KF:TAC* is yet another groggy, aimless dungeon-trudge. Unlike Shane, who seems to think that a dreary, miserable game (whose enemies move as if underwater) is only a smidgen below average, I find the series practically offensive in its refusal to evolve. Life is short, gang; considering how many good games are out there, you needn't play this one.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	5	2	1

Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future



Publisher: PS2
Acclaim
Developer: Appaloosa/Sega
Featured In: EGM #152
Players: 1
Human-safe? Yes
Web Site: www.acclaim.com

Best Feature: Ever see a dolphin tail-walk? You will
Worst Feature: Ecco really likes to get stuck in crevices

Nuts to saving the world. Ecco's got a gorgeous coral-reef home with no humans, boats or six-pack plastic rings as far as the eye can see. Plus, once he gets his little bottle nose into his first few brutally difficult missions, no one will blame him for washing up. *Ecco PS2* is indiscernible from the Dreamcast beauty, save for some marginal color and lighting improvements. It sure hasn't gotten any easier, though. Between the unstable camera, goopy controls and fundamentally tough objectives, **finishing Ecco is definitely a labor of love.** You'll want to keep it up just to see some of the beautiful sea life later in the game. I know that sounds lame, but it's actually really neat for anyone who's ever gotten into a Cousteau special. Marine biologists could learn a thing or two from Ecco's in-game model; his movement and appearance are so well-done. It's too bad the developers didn't take some time to work on the collision flaws—it's frighteningly easy to get wedged under a rock pile or inside a tight cave. This could have been a sweet remake of a very cool game.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	3	3

Mad Maestro



Publisher: PS2
Fresh Games/Eidos
Developer: Desert Planning
Featured In: EGM #153
Players: 1
Powdered Wig: Not Included
Web Site: www.playfresh.com

Best Feature: Loads of famous classical pieces
Worst Feature: The aching thumb after playing

Classical is probably the last genre I would think would make a rockin' music game. But once I got used to the orchestral score, *Mad Maestro* was surprisingly enjoyable, long and difficult (which isn't exactly the norm in the genre). Its absurd-but-charming storyline has you saving the town's concert hall and its citizens with the best of baroque music. You conduct your orchestra by pressing the analog buttons to the beat with varying strengths indicated by different colors on the screen. It's a simple premise that's difficult to master, and after a few hours of play, my conducting thumb was getting plenty sore. The music is an impressive collection of 34 popular ditties, from "Finale from Carnival of the Animals" to the "William Tell Overture." To hear all the selections, you have to complete not only the regular game, but also Medley Mode (achieved when you do really well on a song) and the wacky bonus minigames. **It's got so much to do, even the most skilled music gamer won't breeze through.** If you like classical or enjoy music games, *MM* is definitely worth a try.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	9	8	7

Monsters, Inc.



Best Feature: Loads of clips and stills from the movie to unlock
Worst Feature: Bad camera

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Kodak Studios
Special Features: Movie clips, trailer, production art, behind the scenes
Players: 1
Web Site: www.scea.com

While the movie *Monsters, Inc.* had plenty to offer audiences of all ages, the game is definitely aimed at younger players. It's as **simplistic a platformer as you can get**. The game hands you unlimited lives, plenty of hints, and doesn't make you face a tough enemy or boss until the end; it's super easy. Most of the game is spent trying to find Boo (the angelic little tyke who wanders into the world of monsters in the movie) by mundanely jumping across platforms and scaring switches to open new paths. Even the final showdown with Watnoose only involves hitting a few switches and dodging the slow-moving fireballs he shoots (not the most exciting end boss). The biggest problem is the camera, though—it's easy to miss platforms because some areas force you to look at them at a specific angle. About the only thing that makes *Monsters, Inc.* special is the boatload of movie extras: interviews with the crew, a behind-the-scenes look at Pixar, almost two dozen clips from the film and a bunch of concept sketches. But that doesn't make up for the monotonous gameplay. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	7	2	3

Mr. Mosquito



Best Feature: Truly unique and often hilarious
Worst Feature: Lame, dated graphics

Publisher: Fresh Games/Eidos
Developer: Zoom
Featured In: EGM #153
Players: 1
Also Try: *Incredible Crisis* (PS)
Web Site: www.playfresh.com

It's true, *Mr. Mosquito* is an ugly little fella—the blocky, drab graphics look more like one of the weaker PS2 launch games than most newer titles. And for what basically amounts to a flight simulator (just on a much different scale), controls are a bit stiff. It's tough to turn and quickly move where you want, with sloppy glitches like annoying invisible walls often getting in the way. But consider this: How many games involve you stalking an innocent Japanese family, all from the point of view of a nasty lil' insect? That's what makes this *Mr. Mosquito* worthwhile... for some of us, anyway: the sheer novelty and, well, just the weirdness of it all. And make no mistake, this game **taps that bizarro vein and sucks it dry**, with funny (intentionally and otherwise) voice acting and quirky characters. The Yamada family was weird to begin with, but as the summer wears on, your constant, itchy attacks slowly drive them to madness. *Mr. Mosquito* is definitely flawed, but if you were curious enough to read this whole review, chances are the concept alone is worth a bite. **Mark**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	5	9	5

NFL Blitz 20-02



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-4
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Awesome multiplayer game
Worst Feature: The rosters are too inaccurate
Web Site: www.midway.com

Who the hell does Midway think they are, tinkering with my biological sports clock by bringing out a football game this late? At least *Blitz* makes it painless to get back in the pigskin mood; it's so easy to jump into and score. *Blitz*'s enhancements, however, reward football knowledge more than previous editions. The wider field and additional player (eight-on-eight) on either side of the ball make this feel more like the NFL and less like Arena football, especially with the fat playbook that would look right at home in *Madden*. Other refinements, like being able to give your best player orders (kill the QB, play safety, etc.) before the snap let you get funky on defense. Don't worry, though. These new bells and whistles don't bog this game down in unwanted strategy. I think it just makes you feel smarter when you knock the crap out of dudes. And oh, man, do players get f'ed up. The player animations are the best I've seen—just priceless. **Once, my receiver grabbed his groin after being nailed in the jewels** by an errant pass—a first in football video games. Now that's the kind of high comedy I need after a long season. Come to think of it, I've changed my mind about the timing of this game's release—it's perfect. Pounding the players who dismantled my team in real life is remarkably therapeutic. In fact, I highly recommend that Rams fans pick it up to blow off some steam. Bludgeoning the Patriots sure beats kicking the dog. **Kraig**

The *Blitz* formula is meant to be a brainless and very accessible one, so if you understand the basic concepts of "get first down within four plays...try to get the ball into the endzone...don't let the opponent do the same," you can enjoy the games. In this edition, however, the developers had to complicate things by adding tons of new plays and options. Can't blame 'em...how else do you update such a simple and arcadey experience? But the nice thing is, **unless the sport is and always will be a completely foreign concept to you, this game is still an easy, pick-up-and-play good time**—the new features shouldn't intimidate anyone at all. **Shoe**

Playing this revitalized title makes me think Midway could do a decent, realistic football sim some day. But then again, *Blitz* is more than enough for now. This is by far the best *Blitz* yet; the extra players make all the difference. The additional teammate makes for extra strategy and some big play possibilities. The thicker play book doesn't hurt either. Midway did an excellent job of retaining the old *Blitz* flair and trademark never-say-die-gameplay while introducing more players, tons of killer animation and funnier commentary. For old fans who may have lost interest from lack of innovation in the series, **it's time to hop back on the Blitz train**. **Dean**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	4	9

No One Lives Forever



Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Monolith
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1
Bring: Something to read during load times
Best Feature: Excellent '60s camp ambience
Worst Feature: Lacks a quick save function
Web Site: www.sierra.com

I've learned one thing from reviewing *Half-Life* and *NOLF* on the PS2: PC mega-hits tend to lose a lot of their luster on their trek over to console land. Fortunately, qualities such as art direction, level design and perverse satire, which made *NOLF* so unique on the PC, survive the PS2 conversion unscathed. The game takes place during a light-hearted Cold War-era in the 1960s. You play as Cate Archer, an agent in the British secret service who must foil the insidious organization H.A.R.M. As you might suspect, nothing is subtle nor sacred when it comes to *NOLF*'s spoofing of those spy flicks. **It's like an Austin Powers game without Austin Powers**, but with plenty of less risqué punchlines. All this humor works well in *NOLF*'s multifaceted mission objectives. One minute you're scrambling from window to window, protecting an ambassador while sniping assassins. The next minute you're plummeting out of a plane, trying to yank the parachute out from the guy below you. What hurts the PS2 version, however, is not being able to quick save/quick-load. Without a way to save or load during the action, especially on stealth missions where one false move triggers an alarm, the game becomes a tiresome exercise in trial-and-error. One screw-up and you're staring at the "now loading" screen for another 30 seconds. If you can overlook *NOLF*'s dated graphics and hideous load times, it's a worthwhile trip. **Che**

Damn, that British accent is sexy. Especially when it's coming from a red-headed super agent in a bright-orange catsuit. Meow! *NOLF*'s hunky mix of stealthy gameplay, frenzied firefights and spy drama dashed with witty humor guarantees a mouthful of pleasure that'll satisfy action-hungry bellies. Now if it wasn't for the blasted controls! No matter what sensitivity you pick, slipshod analog sticks make aiming a huge problem. Plus, the auto-aim magnetizes your reticle to targets you're not even trying to hit, making **shooting clunky** and unlike the rest of *NOLF*. The game's worth a go, but you may want to invest in a pair of super-precise robotic hands first. **Jeanne**

It was odd playing this game right after *Agent Under Fire* (Xbox), because in many ways *NOLF* out-Bonds Bond: the catchy theme song, the snappy dialogue, the clever gadgets and twisty plot. It's all right out of a good Sean Connery-era oof flick, with a little refreshing *Austin Powers* humor and gonzo '60s design tossed into the mix. Technical problems like blocky graphics, awkward weapon switching, rare save opportunities and bad load times (a nasty combo) keep it from greatness. But if a solid first-person shooter with style and some clever missions—including sniping, stealth and skydiving—sounds good, *NOLF* is your game. **Mark**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	8	6	5

Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Westwood Studios
Players: 1-2
Also Try: A nice fish dinner at Long John Silver's
Best Feature: Awesome naval battles
Worst Feature: Occasionally chuggy animation
Web Site: www.westwood.ea.com

I would like to start this review by noting that until a month ago, I was completely unaware of *Pirates'* existence. But after spending some time with this mysterious game I feel like I've stumbled upon an absolute gem. How Westwood, the folks best known for the *Command & Conquer* series, could create a third-person adventure game that succeeds on nearly every level is beyond me. Whether you're running around on foot searching for the game's hidden treasures or engaging in heated naval battles on the salty brine, *Pirates* always entertains. OK, so the character design (including the main pirate babe, Katarina) tends to fall into the pit of clichés, but the gameplay makes up for it. Katarina controls like a nimble little dancer (albeit a nimble little dancer with wicked swordplay combos and a host of magical attacks), and the enemies she meets are diverse in both looks and their offensive and defensive strategies. Still, let's not kid ourselves. **The coolest moments in the game occur when you take to the high seas and kick battleship ass.** While you start the game with a barely effective sailboat and a couple of cannons, by game's end you upgrade that dinghy to a massive man-o'-war complete with the game's finest arsenal. Blowing ships up and knocking down massive land-based battlements rank among the best times I've had in a video game. But enough talk—time to sink me some ships.

Milkman

For a game so short on looks and character, *Black Kat* is surprisingly engaging. Sure, the pirate dialogue is ridiculous and cheesy, but I enjoyed combing island after island for secrets and treasure. Kat's combat revolves around a single four-hit combo, but tedium isn't an issue thanks to the number of enemies you'll be up against. **The ship battles are what really bring atmosphere to the game;** with the moon reflecting in the crystalline waters, *Black Kat's* mood just clicks. You feel like your boat is really your boat, and you really have to scrimp and save to upgrade it. Don't take *BK* too seriously, and as an action-RPG lark, it's among the best on the PS2.

Christian

Avast ye mates, hoist the sails! 'Tis a pirate game off the starboard bow. But is the young lass seaworthy? Arr, I regret to inform ye that she's taking on water. Ya see, despite her beautiful graphics, the repeated hack-and-slash gameplay gets tiresome quickly. Sure, the island environments and enemies may look unique, but **every time you step off the boat, the action's always the same.** Enemies are scattered all about, but not a single house or village can be found. Strange.... Ship-to-ship battles on the high seas provide some excitement at first, but even those shortly become just another annoyance. *Pirates* is simply an average game in pretty packaging.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	7	6

Sled Storm



Publisher: EA Sports Big
Developer: EA Canada
Featured In: EGM #152
Players: 1-2
Silly Like SSX? Yes
Best Feature: Slick-looking sleds
Worst Feature: Almost too chaotic for its own good
Web Site: www.easports.com

The original *Sled Storm* (PS1) won our hearts with rock-solid gameplay, great track designs and a square emphasis on racing. It may have been tame compared to this neo *SledStorm*, but the formula worked really well. I have to say I'm disappointed EA didn't stay with the proven *SS* plan. This bad boy is, without a doubt, an *SSX* disciple. Everything from the gigantic free-fall drops, to the familiar red arrows that line the curves scream *SSX*. I'm not saying that's bad; in fact, it's probably a smart move by EA since more people played *SSX* than the original *Sled Storm*. But before you blab to your pals that this is just *SSX* with snowmobiles, let me tell you if it lives up to that. Lots of *SS's* gameplay mechanics don't really work; it gets too fast and chaotic at times, leaving you disoriented, out of control, and bouncing off objects like a pinball. I would gladly sacrifice some speed for a smoother framerate and more control. The tracks are peppered with precarious cliffs, oddly placed poles and other objects to fall from or collide with—they're very frustrating. At its heart, though, *SledStorm* is good, basic fun—not *SSX* fun, but fun just the same. You won't stop playing until you've unlocked every hot-rod sled and track you can—**it's tough, but addicting.** Two-player is also decent for a lighthearted laugh. Think of *SS* as *SSX's* spastic and somewhat dim-witted cousin. He means well, but doesn't quite live up to family standards.

Dean

Bearing almost no resemblance to its more realistic PS1 forerunner, the new *SledStorm* borrows heavily from *SSX's* mix of extreme characters, radical tricks and glitzy razzmatazz. However, it's not just a clone—the fundamental gameplay beneath all that pink snow is decidedly different...but different isn't always good. An overly complex control scheme (have fun using eight buttons at once, sucker!), frustrating A.I. and a small repertoire of tricks constitute some serious bummers. Also, the difficulty skyrockets after the third race. Slick presentation and bountiful replayability help to balance out the bad, but truly, **I'd rather be playing SSX.**

Shane

Oh goody, yet another *SSX* clone. And much to everyone's surprise, just like *Jonny Moseley* before it, *SledStorm* doesn't quite meet any of the standards set by its snowboarding precursor. The tracks aren't as cool or impressive-looking. The tricks aren't nearly as varied or easy to pull off thanks to the new element of having a throttle and brake to deal with. And the huge turning radius (even using the "sharp turn" button), unreadable jumps and blind curves you encounter while you're careening down these uninspired courses **don't scream "must play" to me.** I suggest simply running through *SSX Tricky* again instead.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	4	6

Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter



Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: LucasArts
Featured In: EGM #153
Players: 1-2
Best Feature: Cooperative multiplayer modes
Best Power: Force Lightning
Worst Feature: Brain-dead bad guys
Web Site: www.lucasarts.com

Maybe a better name for this thing would be *Star Wars: Occasionally a Jedi Starfighter*. You only spend half the game as a Force-wielding pilot, and even then you get a measly four powers to fiddle with. But when you do get sick of Jedi tricks, you're still left with a worthy sequel that LucasArts souped up in all the right areas. Well, nearly all of them. As in the first game, **enemy A.I. here might as well stand for "Artificial Idiocy";** many bogies mosey in a straight line while you strip away their hull. It's like, "Hello? Is anyone in there?" To make up for its lack of smarts, the game's evil empire strikes back with sheer numbers: You get into many thrilling, white-knuckle battles with ships swarming everywhere. Several of the 16 missions tie into *Episode II*, although I had a tough time figuring out what was going on because much of the plot unfolds during the heat of battle. In fact, a couple of missions were just plain confusing, forcing me to madly cycle through my targets to find a primary objective. The final mission doesn't deliver the frantic, enemies-everywhere finale of the first game, either. But *Jedi Starfighter* comes back strong with slick two-player cooperative options. You can play any mission with a pal in split-screen. In some you'll fly separate ships (fun); in others you'll fly in the same craft, except one player mans a turret (more fun). If you know another space jockey in your ZIP code, Co-op mode is the way to play. **Crispin**

I'm not completely convinced by the whole Force power thing goin' on here. It strikes me as a nice idea that ended up not quite working out how it was supposed to. Maybe it's just me, and I'm not trying to geek-out here, but isn't the Force supposed to be a very intimate thing? The idea of using it in space kinda detracts from the concept, and **there's no sense of connection with the stuff that you're messing with.** Still, that's not to say that it spoils the game, which is otherwise solid and competent, if not particularly spectacular. Like the original, it gets a big thumbs up from me for adequately rewarding diligent players.

John D.

LucasArts' ads tout this game as being "Force Powered," and after playing it, I've figured out those are codewords for "same ol' s***." How many times do we need to dogfight brainless enemy ships in the same tired way? I hoped the new Force Powers would spice things up, but it's hard to get excited over another trite *Matrix* time freeze or erecting a shield. If that's what Yoda taught Luke, we'd fall asleep in the theater. At least the weapons on non-Jedi ships are flashier, and co-op play makes the ho-hum missions better. **It's not enough to justify buying this rehash,** but if you own a Darth Vader helmet or X-Wing model, maybe it's worth a rental.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	8	3	6



Virtua Fighter 4



Publisher: Sega
Developer: AM2
Featured In: EGM #153
Players: 1-2
Requires: Patience, young grasshopper
Best Feature: Deep and intuitive gameplay
Worst Feature: Incredibly addictive
Web Site: www.sega.com

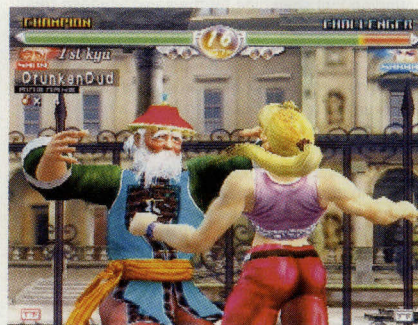
PS2

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a winner. *Virtua Fighter 4* is right now, undisputedly, the greatest fighting game of the new millennium. The total package of goods here vaults AM2's latest 3D pummel-fest onto the same pedestal as EGM's oft-worshipped (and oft-played) *Soul Calibur* (DC). Yet, we're worried you're gonna let this gem slip through your fingers, because if history repeats itself, *VF4* will lap up all sorts of critical praise and yet somehow miss the commercial gravy train. So if our reviews here come off as a little evangelical, well, can ya blame us? A game

this good needs to get its dues.

For many of you diehard PlayStation fans, *VF4* will probably be your introduction to the series. As the saying goes, better late than never. But don't go storming the mat in *VF4* expecting it to play like *Tekken*, because you will get kicked to the curb. Sure, both *Tekken* and *VF* put you in a 3D melee, but that's pretty much where the similarities end. With only three buttons—punch, kick and guard—to pull off each character's lengthy list of attacks, it's damn near impossible to win in *VF4* simply by wiggling the stick and mashing on buttons.

With that said, most of *VF4*'s moves are relatively simple to execute, provided you know what you're doing. It's really more about timing and knowing when to dish 'em out. The game also moves incredibly fast. A true *VF* master needs to input combo commands in a second's time or less, without batting an eye.



Yeah, it sounds daunting. But the good news is, you don't have to be a hardcore greaseball just to serve up a knuckle sandwich. Once you get the basics down, *VF4* is guaranteed to monopolize all your male (or female) bonding hours. Think you've got what it takes to take down our "Invincible Four" below? Bring it!

MEET EGM'S "INVINCIBLE FOUR"



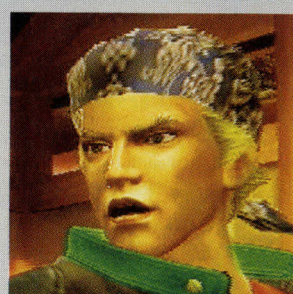
Player: Che Chou
Character: Lion Rafale
Fighting Style: Mantis Fist
Likes to: Peck your crotch



Player: James Mielke
Character: Pai Chan
Fighting Style: Crane Fist
Likes to: Throw controllers



Player: Jonathan Dudlak
Character: Shun Di
Fighting Style: Drunken Boxing
Likes to: Drink the hooch



Player: Shane Bettenhausen
Character: Jacky Bryant
Fighting Style: Jeet Kune Do
Likes to: Run and hide

WORDS OF VIRTUA WISDOM

The Hand That Hits Also Blocks



Your road to *VF4* mastery begins with its very comprehensive training feature, which comes in three helpful flavors. In Command mode, you cycle through a list of on-screen moves and practice your timing. Free mode discards winning or losing to let you discover combos. It's also a handy way to blow off steam against computer enemies without ever getting K.O.'ed. Finally, Trial mode teaches you basic and advanced strategies by putting you through a series of challenges. Great for beginners.

Know Yourself, Know Your Enemies



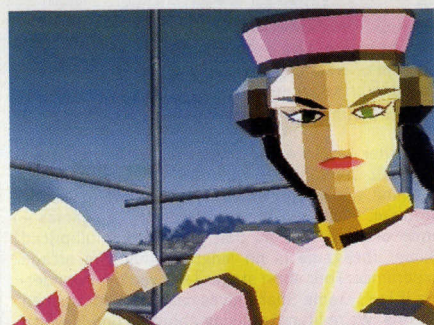
VF4 ups the ante on artificial intelligence by letting you to take on a disciple who learns to fight like you. Custom A.I. starts off as a blank slate. As you spar with it, the computer will imitate and pick up on the subtleties of your ways. So why would ya want to fight against your own A.I.? Well, you probably wouldn't. But your friend could dump his finely honed player onto your memory card for you to abuse later. Likewise, you could also send us your own A.I. to see how it stacks up against our very best.

Martial Arts, Not a Sport



So you've blazed through the Arcade mode with all the characters. Now what? *VF4* puts your mettle to the test with its tournament-style single-player Kumite mode. Everybody starts Kumite with the official rank of 10th "Kyu." After five consecutive wins, you score the chance to raise your title in a ranking match. After clearing 10 Kyu positions, you graduate to the expert "Dan" league. As you struggle bitterly to clear 22 official rankings, *VF4* keeps track of your every move and victory. Hard-freaking-core.

No, we didn't just Photoshop old-school Pai onto a *VF4* background. Aside from all the cool accessories you can collect in Kumite mode, those who rise to the rank of 1st "Dan" will unlock these nostalgic *VF1* models. How's that for heritage?



It's time to bust out that old bandanna, karate gi or whatever ceremonial crap you need to get back into the mindset, because with *VF4*, we jaded finger combatants finally have reason to train again. And train you must. If you're anything like me (i.e., play too much *Soul Calibur*), you may need to start your *Virtua* schooling from ground zero. Enter *VF4*'s boot camp, where you learn basic survival skills such as 3D movement, reversals, counters and timing. The amount of interaction you have in the Training mode, and the length to which *VF4* actually eases you into its deep-as-hell gameplay, is something unprecedented. In fact, *VF4*'s many features (see sidebar) are **so innovative, anything less from future console fighters will be disappointing.** As you grow in expertise, the game grows with you and rewards you with items to customize your own warriors. It even gives you an official ranking system so you know how bad-ass you really are. Get good enough to achieve *VF4* nirvana and you no longer think about inputting moves at all—everything becomes totally instinctive. Since the fighting styles are fully fleshed-out and carefully balanced against each other, battles in *VF4* boil down to a pure representation of skill. With such untarnished gameplay, *VF4*'s sugary-sweet graphics and beautiful backgrounds actually take a backseat to the action. This is, without a doubt, a true kung-fu-fighter masterpiece.

Che

Che took me down pretty handily when we played *VF4*—I'll admit it. But I feel like I really had to fight for my 3-13 record, and I was happy that I didn't get my scant wins through flailing at the controls or cruddy game physics turned in my favor. *VF4* will leave you more helpless than a newborn slug in a salt shaker if you try to mash buttons, and I absolutely love it for that. But it will also reward you endlessly for learning your fighter's subtleties and using his full arsenal of moves in every match. *VF4* is a meticulously balanced fighter's fighter—no cyborgs or polar bears or laser beams. **It's simplicity perfected.** And you'd be surprised how complex that can get. **Jonathan**

Dear *Soul Calibur*,

I'm sorry it had to be like this, but I've met someone else. What you and I had will always be special, but I need some room to grow and find myself. **The new love of my life gives me joy in so many ways.** She lets me realize my potential in Kumite mode, which is the most fun I've had by myself since I was 13. She also reminds me a lot of myself. That's how cool her A.I. is. Call me shallow, but she (despite her jaggedness) is as beautiful as the sun on the morning dew. I think the thing I like best about her, though, is that she's deep. Really deep. Her name is *Virtua Fighter 4*, and I'm afraid she's irresistible. Cya! **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	9	10

18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker



Publisher:
Acclaim
Developer:
Acclaim/AM2
Featured In:
EGM #138 (DC)
Players:
1-2
Also Try:
Crazy Taxi
Web Site:
www.acclaim.com

Best Feature: Live your dream of cruising the open road in an 18 wheeler...
Worst Feature: ...for 20 mins.

The other day, I went to an arcade, put four quarters (actually, six Canadian quarters) in the 18 Wheeler machine, and got my money's worth. Therein lies the problem. Even with the smattering of minigames—none of which are all that great—your full-priced GameCube game is no lengthier than the arcade experience. Four short stages later you'll be wondering if Joe's Game Shack gives cash back for opened returns. We're literally talking about an hour's worth of gameplay here. It doesn't matter how neat the concept is, 60 minutes just ain't enough. Driving across America and battling obstacles like overzealous rivals and a twister in order to reach your final destination sound stupid, but work well in the context of an arcade racer. It's just that the deluxe arcade cabinet (complete with huge novelty steering wheel) and buck-a-play mechanics are so integral to the experience that it doesn't work as a home game. So do yourself a favor and head down to your local arcade if you want to play some 18 Wheeler. Besides, I hear they could use the business.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	7	3	3

Dark Summit



Publisher:
THQ
Developer:
Radical
Featured In:
EGM #149 (Xbox)
Players:
1-2
Also Try:
SSX Tricky
Web Site:
www.darksummit.net

Best Feature: More interesting than your typical score-big-combos game
Worst Feature: Slow-paced

As long as the money keeps rolling in, action-sports games will continue to flood the market. Thank God some developers are trying out new things, even if the results aren't top-notch. Dark Summit is way more interesting than its brethren—instead of just straightforward races or combo-fests to rack up the highest score possible, this game gives you a cheesy storyline with a variety of objectives to complete. That's right, I said "cheesy," but at least it's something different. So if you're a little extreme-gamed out, you may want to give Summit a ride. The snowboarding action, though, may disappoint you if you're into sheer speed. DS is very sluggish compared to the likes of SSX Tricky, even when you've upgraded to the best board. It's not until you've beaten the game and unlocked the secret characters that you really start to move (but by then, you're probably ready to return this sucker to Blockbuster). At the same time, I think Dark Summit's controls, slightly edge out those of Tricky, with easier-to-pull-off stunts and a useful grind button.

Shoe

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	7	5

Jeremy McGrath Supercross World



Publisher:
Acclaim Max
Sports
Developer:
Acclaim
Beaten With:
Ugly, lame sticks
Players:
1-2
Web Site:
www.acclaimmax-sports.com

Best Feature: The freestyle levels aren't bad
Worst Feature: Buggier than a roach motel

While mud, motorbikes and mullets may be a good time in real life, they become significantly less "super" in crossing over to consoles with titles like this. Motorbike and ATV games have been done well in the past, but Supercross is just too troubled to even bother renting. Unless, of course, you can actually pass through boulders and get knocked out of the sky by invisible walls in real supercross (I'll admit, I'm no expert). It controls pretty well, but the aerial trick list and soundtrack are similarly limited, so you'll run out of reasons to keep playing right quick. The freestyle game had me briefly hooked, but the strict advancement requirements and incredibly bland tracks in the Career mode just made me want to retire. Granted, this is just about the nicest-looking N64 game I've seen in a while. I wish I'd known they were going to put it on a GameCube disc. I would have asked them to burn some MP3s in the extra space that's normally taken up by in-game trifles like textures and objects.... Oh, it's a GC game after all? Um...yikes.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
2	3	3	4

NBA 2K2



Publisher:
Sega Sports
Developer:
Visual Concepts
Featured In:
EGM #149
Players:
1-4
Check Out:
Moochie Norris' fro
Web Site:
www.segasports.com

Best Feature: Superb computer intelligence
Worst Feature: Menus are hard to navigate

Normally, I would go insane if I had to review the same game on three different platforms, but NBA 2K2 is so fun that I haven't slipped on the straitjacket yet. At press time, I'm 3-5 in matches against Dan Leahy, after opening a 2-0 lead in our series. The reason for the slide is my run-and-gun offense that ran out of ammo. The Rockets' front court has less talent than a McDonald's checkout counter, so Dan Leahy adjusted by telling the computer to play Houston's dynamic guard duo tightly and double-teamed them for good measure. My only counter was to run plays that would wedge them open. Doing that instead of jitterbugging with the ball to get open shots led me to victory—hopefully the streak will continue. No matter the team, you'll have to learn the pick-n-roll, the iso and the izzay to consistently score. This is a thinking-man's hoops game that looks (the lay-ups and fadeaways are sweet) and plays better than any other. And if using your noggin to win scares you, don't worry: NBA 2K2 has a Street Arcade mode to satisfy the Dennis Rodman in you.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	8	7	9

NBA Street



Publisher:
EA Sports Big
Developer:
NuFx
Featured In:
EGM #152
Players:
1-2
MJ?
Yes
Best Feature: Gamebreakers
Worst Feature: Lacks a four-player mode!
Web Site:
www.ea.com

As the second biggest jewel (next to SSX) in the EA Big crown, NBA Street is a worthy addition to the GameCube lineup. Street takes NBA Jam-style basketball to new heights by implementing a unique tricks/combo system. Once mastered, these moves offer a risk vs. reward gameplay mechanic that runs deeper than you would expect. The defense doesn't have any fancy tricks, but it does have the freedom to block any and all shots. Shaq and some of the league's better defenders will jump out of the gym to swat your trash if need be. Blocking shots gets really addicting, if you can master the timing required to do it. There are a couple of notable drawbacks to the GameCube version, though. First off, I can't believe EA didn't give this game four-player support. That's inexcusable. Plus, the only real additions to the game nearly a year after its PS2 debut are two new court environments. Pinch me, I must be dreaming! (End sarcasm.) Keep in mind, those two complaints are from a guy who had the PS2 version running nonstop for the better part of two months. It's that fun, especially in multiplayer. This one will have you punching your friend's arm as he's trying to get a Gamebreaker in. As a single-player affair, it's engaging enough, with boss characters and super teams standing between you and a bevy of unlockables. And yes, Michael's in here, and you get to see him in his new Washington Wizards garb.

Dan L.

This is the first 'Cube game I've played that actually turned out better than its PS2 version. Not only is it sharper graphically, but it sports a couple new courts and the option to use Jordan the entire time, rather than only facing him in the final stages. That does it for me—I'm hooked. Seriously, though, it's the great gameplay and intense, "Harlem Globetrotter" action that really keep NBA Street trucking (no offense to MJ). You never feel like you're out of a contest. Just pull off a succession of special moves, hit a few long-range shots, block like a madman, and you're right back in it. I can't find a reason why you shouldn't buy this killer game.

Dean

When the PS2 version of this streetballer arrived, it's all I played for a month. The endless, unlockable bonuses and my unwavering desire to build a super-freak team of werewolves, rock men and Michael Jordan kept me coming back to the court. And no matter how well I trounced the competition, I always felt I could do better ("I know I can sink four Gamebreakers!"). This version is every bit as addictive and a little improved, too, but not as much as I hoped. EA threw in two new courts and tweaked the graphics, yet ignored Street's major shortcomings. With over half a year to do this port, they could have at least added four-player support.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	6	9

Sega Soccer Slam



Publisher: Sega
Developer: BlackBox
Featured In: EGM #153
Players: 1-4
Good For Kids? Oh yes
Best Feature: Good multiplayer action
Worst Feature: Belly-button physics are WAY off
Web Site: www.sega.com



If I were 9 years old (or I were Greg Sewart), I could appreciate a soccer game that features a bare-chested, fat guy with the biggest outty belly-button I've ever seen. Holy crap, that sucker sticks out like a turgid snake fish. As a grown-up, however, *Soccer Slam*'s goofy characters don't do anything for me. I'm also a little miffed about the slow-paced players, as most of the action takes place as follows: Take control of the man nearest to the ball. Hold down turbo for maximum closing speed. Cringe when your player doesn't appear to run any faster. Finally reach wayward ball a step behind your opponent. Smack him to the turf with a forearm chop to the skull (that never gets old). Steal the ball and scamper downfield, doing your best to stay ahead of your opponents with the turbo trigger pinned, and so on. Obviously, you spend a lot of time running in *Soccer Slam*, so the less-than-speedy characters can be frustrating. Despite an option to build up a player's strength and speed abilities, most still feel anemic to me. Barring that, it's a swell time. A decent variety of offensive and defensive counter moves keeps you glued to the set, as does the cool multiplayer action. I rarely do this, but **I'm giving it an extra half point, because I'm sure kids (5-10 years old) will love this game.** The older crowd may want to rent it first to test their tolerance for cartoon hijinks and giant, protruding bulbs of skin.

Dean

Throw a party for a bunch of girls and both casual and hardcore gameboys, and you'll probably scratch your head down to the scalp deciding how to entertain 'em all. Well, you could show off those *Breakin'* moves, but why not try *SSS* first (before you hurt yourself)? Its addictive, arcadey gameplay requires no sports know-how, and each hyper-paced match almost always comes down to a single, exciting goal. Keeping tabs on your teammates is difficult thanks to the overzealous computer that controls 'em, but between its gripping multiplayer and single-player modes and simple play-mechanics, *SSS* ensures a **quick, pick-me-up rush of fun.**

Jeanne

If Nintendo's *Ice Hockey* mated with *NBA Jam*, they'd produce *Soccer Slam*. It has all the crazy shots of *Jam* and the big, powerful guy vs. small, fast guy play mechanics of *Ice Hockey*. The combination makes for a lot of fun—especially in multiplayer. The controls are so easy to get used to that you'll be a scoring threat the second you start playing, and the balanced gameplay almost always guarantees a close contest (not to mention a lot of trash talk). ***Soccer Slam* is just a blast to play;** it's one of the best party games on the GC. Now if BlackBox had only included more single-player options, *SSS* would be a great solo game, as well.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	6	7

Pac-Man World 2



Best Feature: Short load times
Worst Feature: The camera during boss battles

Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco
Players: 1
Also Try: *Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness* (PS/DC/N64)
Web Site: www.namco.com



The only noticeable difference between this and the PS2 version of *PMW2* is that the load time has been reduced significantly. On the GC, it's so quick you hardly get the chance to read the level titles. Otherwise, this is the same solid game that mixes classic flavor with run-of-the-mill 3D action-platform gameplay. Ol' Pac stomps baddies in some pretty typical environments: forests, volcanoes, underwater and the biggest gaming cliché: a level where you're running toward the screen, away from an avalanche. One of the cooler bits is a ride down a snowy mountain and through caves on ice skates. Even though some stages are derivative and don't offer any real surprises, the **classic Pac-Man touches make the game stand out.** From unlockable Pac arcade games to 3D mazes worked into the levels, the throwback accents fit nicely. My only major complaint is that the camera (which is normally fine) becomes your worst enemy during boss battles and underwater. If you can stand a few obstructed views, though, *PMW2* is a solid 3D platformer.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	5	5

Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex



Best Feature: Thank God the load times are gone!
Worst Feature: Same ol' gameplay

Publisher: Universal
Developer: Traveler's Tales
Players: 1
Same As: Every other Crash
Also Try: *Jak & Daxter* (PS2)
Web Site: crashbandicoot.com



When I loaded up *Wrath of Cortex* for Xbox, I thought back to the miserable time I had with the PS2 version: the long load times, lackluster graphics and been-there, done-that gameplay. Thankfully, two of those issues have been fixed on Xbox. The inexcusably long load times are gone (woo-hoo!), and the graphics have been given an extra layer of polish. Crash now has fur, and the improved lighting and water effects give his coat some extra shine. I'll be the first to admit this is the best *Crash* has ever looked. But save for a few additions to *WOC*, like some cool hamster-ball levels, **it's almost identical to its predecessors.** The tunnel-chase style pioneered by the original in '96 has since been overused; the series is still trying to pull new rabbits from the same old hat—collect fruits, avoid Nitro boxes, run away from pursuing objects. Other platform games like *Sonic* and *Mario* have evolved over time, why can't *Crash*? At this point in his illustrious career, the Bandicoot needs to go in a completely different direction or be put to sleep for good.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	5	2	4

James Bond 007 In... Agent Under Fire



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts
Featured In: EGM #153 (GameCube)
Players: 1
Also On: PS2, GameCube
Best Feature: Hot, digital Bond chicks
Worst Feature: Poor collision detection
Web Site: www.eagames.com



Tsk, tsk what a shame. ***Bond* had the potential to be so much better.** Sure, all the innuendo and items scream "007," but where are all the true spy missions? Go ahead, slap the Powerpuff Girls in there. Would the gameplay change much? Frankly, *no*. First off, missions are designed singularly for arcade-style shooting. Stealth, or more appropriately, spy-like gameplay, is surprisingly absent, throwing any prospects for immersion right out the window. The collision detection is so poor, objects feel like they're 10 times bigger and more obstructive than they should be—navigating a small room with something as insignificant as a table in it is exceptionally difficult. These are the kinds of problems that get really aggravating in a first-person shooter because they break up the natural flow of the game. On to *Bond*'s other savory bits.... Although one garners a variety of weapons (none of which are very original; the golden gun is so played-out), even the most hardcore-looking ones use twice as many shots to kill as one would expect. Oh, and there's no auto weapon change, no auto reload and a painfully inefficient weapon/item menu system. At least the Xbox version looks better than the PS2's, and multiplayer lacks the choppiness that made the PS2 game virtually unplayable. But with tiny levels and four lame modes, multiplayer is really an afterthought. Bond freaks: Go nuts. Everyone else: Pass it up.

Jeanne

This game's got more Bond than it knows what to do with. You're constantly being pelted with quips from the movies, sexual innuendo and Q's useless gadgetry. It's ridiculous. Gameplay is **average first-person shooter fare bogged down by a convoluted control scheme**—switching weapons on the fly is its biggest problem. Too often I'd be stuck in a hail of gunfire trying to switch weapons and accidentally flip to one of the gadgets. I think I selected them by accident more times than I had to use them on purpose. But the biggest disappointment is the multiplayer mode, which has been sabotaged by tiny arenas and limited game styles.

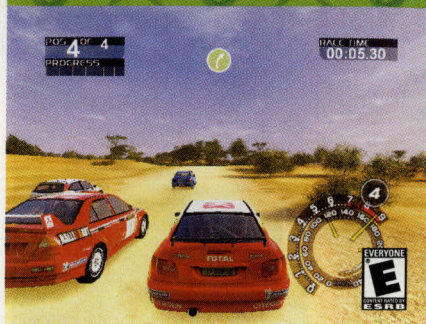
Chris

Agent Under Fire does a good job of mimicking recent Bond films, for better and for worse: It's simple and often predictable, but with **a few standout moments.** The game holds your hand through all of the first-person shooting (FPS) levels, which are already small and uninspired in appearance and design. Other stages break out of the mold—running down a van in your *Spy Hunter*-ed out BMW, flying through a city in a tank, shredding enemy limos and 'copters with a giant chaingun—but (unlike James) the game can't keep it up for long. Bond and FPS fans should treat it like 007 does his women: Find it, play with it for a night or two, and leave it.

Mark

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	4	4

RalliSport Challenge



Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Digital Illusions
Featured In: EGM #152
Players: 1-4
Supports: Custom soundtrack
Best Feature: Gorgeous graphics
Worst Feature: Gets too hard near the end
Web Site: www.xbox.com



Considering how unpopular rally racing is in North America, I'm surprised Microsoft is releasing *RalliSport* here at all. Of course, rally games aren't entirely alien to this part of the world, but most of them tend to be fairly easy, arcadey titles. Not *RalliSport*. While it starts out all user-friendly by letting you win a lot, it quickly becomes a hardcore driving simulation which had me screaming words that Shoe says I'm not allowed to write in the magazine. So if you're not one who likes to work for his wins, I suggest you play something like *Project Gotham Racing* instead, you little girly man. Those of you who live for a serious racing game that sucks you in, challenges you to better your time by fractions of a second, and generally forces you to learn every bump and curve in the road, you've come to the right place. I guess that explains the word "challenge" in the title. Luckily the game controls like a dream. You always need to be aware of the weight transfer and drive-train of your car, so learning to feather the gas when making a turn is a must. You also need to pay attention to whether you're driving on sand, tarmac or ice, and change your driving style accordingly. But once you get into the right mindset for this baby, you're sure to see those times drop rapidly. And I have to say this: The Xbox controller is perfect for racing games. The analog triggers make acceleration and braking easy and intuitive.

Greg

After hitting the dirt with the Rally mode in *Gran Turismo 3*, I didn't think anything could even come close—well, at least not until *GT4*. So imagine my surprise when *RC*, a racer that handles like no rally game I've ever played, delivered the same harrowing realism of the *GT* series. *RC*'s controls are quick and responsive, yet subtle and unforgiving. This is an unapologetic, balls-out sim that requires a serious time investment from the player. Let your guard down for even a second and you'll fishtail off the track, into ditches, up embankments or flip off the side of mountains. This freedom of chaos is ultimately what elevates *RC* to greatness.

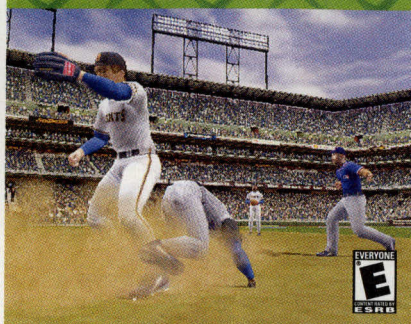
Che

Rally racing is to America what Euro Disney is to Europe. To most folks on this side of the pond, it's about as popular as a French-speaking duck in a sailor suit. But if you're looking to broaden your racing horizons, start with *RalliSport*. It's one of the first games that really uses the Xbox's graphical power—take a screenshot of certain tracks and you might convince friends you've recently been to Europe. It's almost too clean and tight for my tastes, actually; I wanted more flying dirt and a visibly looser suspension on the cars. But if you can suspend your disbelief and handle the difficulty curve, it's much more fun than any theme park.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	6	7

Triple Play Baseball 2002



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: Pandemic Studios
Featured In: EGM #152
Players: 1-2
Best Feature: Effective camera angles
Worst Feature: Fewer home runs, but not enough triples and doubles
Web Site: www.easports.com



Baseball games fall into two categories: the painfully realistic type that your grandpa would dig (if he actually played games) and those that your little brother loves because he can hit cannon-shot home runs with his eyes closed. The *Triple Play* series fits into the second category like a key in a lock. But honestly, I don't mind; in fact, I've been waving the *Triple Play* love flag for several years now. This edition, however, is testing my allegiance. For starters, I expect Xbox titles to look one click shy of magnificent, or at least better than a PS2 game. In this slugger, some of the stadiums—like Wrigley Field—look OK, but the players are out of proportion (big legs, small torso, big head). They all look like they came from the same warped model. While that's not terribly distracting, the choppy framerate is. The throwing animations in particular are chop, chop, choppy. My final gripe: Compared to last year's PS2 version, the frequency of home runs has been scaled back, but the variety of hits is still flat. Singles flow like wine, yet triples and doubles are as rare as the North American Tree Sloth (OK, maybe not that rare). On the up side, it's relatively bug free, and the towering home runs and dynamic cameras that show them are still top-notch (the best in the genre). If you can stomach the so-so graphics, big cursors and limited hit variety...go for it. Me, I'll stick with last year's sharper, home run-happy PS2 edition.

Dean

I knew this was bad news the minute I heard the Bob Costas introduction. Does this guy have to be everywhere? OK—go to the preferences, switch commentary off, no problem. But I can't do anything about the gaudy batting crosshair that looks like it was taken out of *Flash Gordon*'s opening credits. And that's just the start of the laughs. Wait 'til you get a load of the big-headed, man-child players. I bet those huge craniums sapped the Xbox's processors. It's the only explanation for the choppy animations that make this so difficult to play. And it doesn't just happen on rare occasions; this game can't even show a bunt without a glitchy flaw or two.

Kraig

I've always appreciated *Triple Play* for being an unabashedly arcadey baseball game. It never apologized and just kept upping the ante in terms of gratuitous cannon sound effects, gargantuan home runs and triple-digit radar-gun readings. Well, these wild feats have been toned down, and there's no excitement left. The series has stumbled dramatically in terms of basic mechanics. The camera doesn't follow the action too well, hitting feels choppy and disjointed, and fielding is a chore. Also, the pace of play is much too slow to support the level of hyper-excitement EA is going for. This one is for true *Triple Play* faithful only.

Dan L.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	7	4	4

NHL 2K2



Publisher: Sega Sports
Developer: Treyarch
Players: 1-4
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Awesome puck physics
Worst Feature: Poor sound and commentary makes each goal a non-event
Web Site: www.segasports.com



This is what hockey would sound like if you played it in a cemetery. I've never been less excited to score a goal, simply because the crowd's reaction is so indifferent—I swear I heard one of them snoring once. That is an example of my biggest *NHL 2K2* irritation: The presentation just doesn't come close to EA's *NHL 2002*. (OK, so that game's not on the DC, but it's still the industry standard.) The color commentary in particular feels canned and awkward, not to mention it never follows the action. When Hasek makes a big save, I don't wanna listen to how the Canadiens aren't known for drafting Europeans. I know this sounds picky, but it's an important part of a solid hockey game. Outside of that, *2K2* is a pretty competent sim. The way the puck reacts to redirection, blocks and shots is great. It's the most realistic I've seen. It bounces around like it should; you won't find any questionable "player-magnet" physics in this game. Because of that, rebounds actually do happen, making for a lot more frenzied play around the net. On the other hand, stripping the puck from other players is so easy now that you can't really get any momentum going before you're chasing someone else up the ice and playing defense. It gets old after a while. Obviously, if the DC is your only system, then this is the hockey game to get. But if you can wait another year for Sega to refine this promising franchise on other consoles, I'd say do it.

Greg

NHL 2K2 is a quantum leap forward over its predecessor. It's also a huge beacon of hope for sports gamers who prefer their games served "simulation style." Simulation can mean a number of things (statistical accuracy, authenticity of scoring chances, speed), but I primarily want one thing: Players and teams that reflect their real-life counterparts. To that end, *NHL 2K2* succeeds admirably. Mario's got the hands, Bure has wheels, McInnis has a rocket, and so

advanced control scheme, the game's a blast to play. If you own a DC and are inclined toward sports at all, this one's a no-brainer.

Dan L.

Honestly, when it comes to hockey, I'd rather play a thriller like *NHL Hitz* than a bona-fide simulation. But oddly enough, *NHL 2K2* has bridged the gap for me. Its top game speed, Lightning (yes, that's what they call it), keeps the action firing at an intense clip without sacrificing skater physics. In other words, it's slippery fast, but not in a cheesy, pretend way. That's key for me, since I don't like pokey-paced sims. Beyond that, I like the way the advanced control breaks down a player's moves and assigns each one to a button (it's more precise that way). I've also never had so much fun intercepting passes in a hockey game—it's a blast.

Dean

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	5	5	9

Hooters Road Trip



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Chicks Like: Guys with nice cars
Players: 1

Supports: Implants, tube tops
Web Site: www.hooters.com

Best Feature: Blurry Hooters babes aplenty!
Worst Feature: You get what you pay for.

"Tacky. Yet unrefined." Ironically, Hooters' (yes, the restaurant chain) self-deprecating slogan describes this sub-standard game just as well. *Hooters Road Trip* is a simple, low-tech racing game that sends the unfortunate gamer zooming from one Hooters eatery to the next. The gameplay is strictly fundamental—weave through light traffic, try to come in first, duh. Depending on how well you finish, a different Hooters girl(s) will be waiting to congratulate you (by parading various assets in your face) on your success. For lots of gamers that's gotta count for something. **Amazingly, for a game that costs 10 bucks, HRT is not the horrific tragedy it could have been.** With games like *The Dukes of Hazzard* littering the racing landscape, *HRT* is practically a success. That's not to say that it's actually good. The car models are extremely simple, the environments are graintastic, and the control ranges from bearable to erratic. But, as a novelty gift, a cheap present for your horny college buddy, or just 'cause you're curious, *HRT* is worth every dollar.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	3	2	6

Baseball Advance



Publisher: THQ
Developer: Smilebit/Sega
Good For: Ballin' on the bus
Players: 1

Supports: Free-agency
Web Site: www.thq.com

Best Feature: Awesome batter/pitcher interface
Worst Feature: Only four stadiums to play in

Since fans of baseball games tend to know their stuff, let me first rattle off a list of pros and cons for *Baseball Advance*. **Pros:** a full MLB team selection. The batters look realistic, have unique stances, and animate fluidly. Batter control is sensitive enough that you can check swings, lay down bunts, and adjust swing position with ease. Pitchers nod in approval or shake you off depending on your pitch selection, and the batting/pitching interface is user-friendly. Fielding (auto or manual) is a snap, and random errors occur realistically. **Cons:** Pitchers can't move around on the mound, nor can batters move around in the box. *BA* recycles stale 2001 rosters and not the 2002-03 team lineups. Limited stat tracking, no link-cable support and only four stadiums also limit *BA*'s appeal. But in the end, ***BA's* batter/pitcher duel is one of the best on any system,** making the game a blast to play. Combined with smart auto-fielding, this is probably the best handheld baseball game around, if you don't mind a relatively shallow features list.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	7	8

Breath of Fire II



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Also Try: *Breath of Fire*
Players: 1

Supports: Link Cable
Web Site: www.capcom.com

Best Feature: Tons of Fusion character combos
Worst Feature: Sloppy dialog causes headaches

Capcom's second Super Nintendo-to-GBA RPG port sports all the enhancements as the first *BOF*—new character art, a faster walking speed, two-player item trading and a nifty quicksave feature for shutting it down on the go. In several aspects, **this sequel out-classes its predecessor as a quality role-playing experience.** *BOF2* boasts a larger quest, an engaging fishing minigame and prettier battle backgrounds. The fighting engine blazes, so it's easy to level up your characters by speeding through random encounters. Like big parties? An astounding nine playable characters join the team, and the Fusion system allows you to combine them to form powerful super-fighters. I gleefully wasted oodles of time experimenting with this genetic experiment gone awry. However, one element mires this otherwise great game—a clunky translation. Confusing dialog and incorrect grammar taint the plot. I was often unsure of where to go next because the townsfolk's advice was so poorly written. My advice? Grab a walk-through and tackle this quality quest.

Shane

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	3	1

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Vicarious Vision
Featured In: *EGM #152*
Players: 1-4

Best Horse Word: Turdeat
Web Site: www.activision.com

Best Feature: That classic Tony Hawk gameplay
Worst Feature: The top-down perspective can make reading the terrain tricky

This game's prequel proved that Tony could be made tiny and still pull off the same sick gameplay as his big-console brothers. So this sequel packs little wow-factor—we've seen this done before. But that doesn't mean it's any less fun. The six levels here, all sorta based on those of the PS2/Xbox/GC versions, are slickly designed and make for endless combos—thanks to the vert-trick-linking revert move. Level goals are more creative this time around, too. You'll need to, say, clobber five roaming crooks or grind obstacles in a sequence. (One gripe: Two objectives in the L.A. level stymied me.) The game doesn't nearly duplicate the big version's teeming, dynamic environments—you only see a few pedestrians and level layouts barely shift or expand—but what you get is still darn good for the GBA. And ***Tony 3* fills in all the prequel's MIA features,** such as the custom skater options and multiplayer modes via a link cable (each player needs a cart, except for Horse). Ultimately, though, you'll get plenty of quick-fun fixes from just free-skating around and linking tricks.

Crispin

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	6	9

Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis



Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Quest
Featured In: *EGM #151*
Players: 1-2
Supports: Link Cable

Best Feature: Hands down, the deepest strategy RPG on any handheld system
Worst Feature: Not being able to skip combat animations makes battles drag on a bit
Web Site: www.atlus.com

So you've beaten *Golden Sun* and are jonesing for something that'll chew your waking hours and give you dull cramps in your hands. Well, look no further than *Tactics Ogre* for all your masochistic needs. Like most strategy-RPGs, *TO* eschews narrative and exploration to focus exclusively on fighting battles. It's probably for the best because the plot here is marred by spotty localization and peppered with holes. To make matters worse, *TO*'s heady list of exotic names and places makes it a chore to keep up with the storyline. The good news is, you don't really have to understand every twist and turn of the tale to enjoy the game's deep strategy battles. Veterans of the original *TO* or its remote cousin *Final Fantasy Tactics* (both PS1) should know that this is an overall easier game mostly because you can save mid-battle, anytime, anywhere. And similar to the job system in *FFT*, characters live and die in *TO* by the nature of their class. Everybody begins as a generic soldier, but can graduate into a knight, ninja, wizard or any of the 14 other classes in the game. Combine these class variations with painstaking tactical details like different weapon techniques, terrain modifiers or random weather effects, and ***TO* is a strategy junkie's dream come true.** Frosting on the cake comes in the form of the game's excellent Versus mode, where you play head-to-head against a friend. It's an incredibly hardcore game for such a tiny little system.

Che

Strategy-RPGs are a rare breed. Chess-like in their depth, linear in storytelling and incomprehensible to many, they're enjoyed by an even rarer breed of gamer. The latest *Tactics Ogre* sustains that notion. If you're a fan of the series, or if games like *Final Fantasy Tactics* lured you into the genre, you'll enjoy *TO*'s rich, layered gameplay. This sort of game requires a steep level of commitment though, as **mastering the multiple job classes, keeping up with the labyrinthine plot, and surviving the hours-long battles are not tasks for less-determined gamers.** But for those cut from the right cloth, *TO* remains an uncompromising joy.

Milkman

***Tactics* is everything a fantasy strategy-RPG should be and more.** It has a mythical storyline (with a few too many names of people and places to keep track of). It has lots of very cool character classes with different abilities to master—this is what turns it from a plain-ol' strategy game into an addicting drug. You can't put it down because you don't want to stop leveling up your party members (*Final Fantasy Tactics* fans know what I mean). It has amazing graphics. But because *Tactics* is so full of detail, chock-full of little icons, stats, menus, numbers, etc., it's a little bit too much game for the small screen. Play it with a magnifying glass.

Shoe

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	8	6



Tricks of the Trade

By Peter Felonk

April showers bring May flowers...and new tricks for your Xbox, PlayStation 2 and GameCube. Pete blows away the competition with these latest codes to keep you on your gaming toes. Have fun!

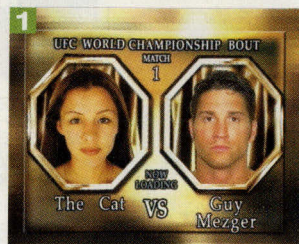
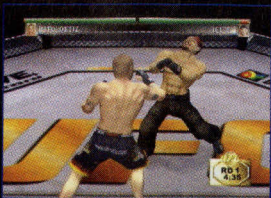
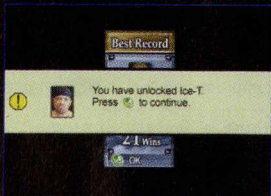
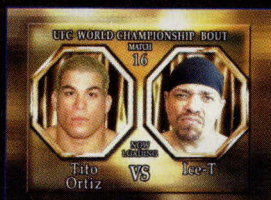
TRICK OF THE MONTH

UFC Tapout

PS2

GET YOUR FILL OF SOME ICE-T

Win 16 or more consecutive matches in the Arcade mode using the default settings. After completing this, Ice-T will be a playable character in your roster of fighters. Wow, can Ice-T fight! Who would have thought he was more than a rapper?



UFC Tapout

TOO SWEET TO BE TRUE

Bruce Buffer

Win UFC mode with all characters.

John McCarthy

Win UFC mode with Bruce Buffer.

Mario Yamasaki

Win UFC mode with John McCarthy.

1 The Cat

Win four consecutive matches in Arcade mode.

Femme Fatale

Win eight consecutive matches in Arcade mode.

Mask

Win 32 consecutive matches in Arcade mode.

NBA Inside Drive 2002

BUST OUT SOME COOL EXTRAS TO PLAY WITH

At the Options menu, pick Codes and enter one of the following listed below. Codes that change the basketball cannot be used together. The last one entered will be the code that takes effect.

2 USA Basketball

OLDSCHOOL

WNBA Basketball

GOTGAME

Chicago Sky Court

WINDYCITY

Xbox Ball

BACHMAN

Soccer Ball

HOOLIGAN



Little Players
SMALLSHOES



NFL Blitz 20-02

GIVE ME SOME SKIN

Earn new skins for your team by entering the following character names and pin numbers in the Exhibition mode. Note: Names are entered separately from pin numbers.

Cowboys

COWBOY 1996

Indians

INDIAN 1992

Silver Robots

ROBOTS 1970

Red Robots

RobotR 1974

1 Clowns

CLOWN 1974

Dolphins

DOLPHIN 1972

Big Players

RBL-DBN 9669

Vikings

VIKING 1977

Bears

BEAR 1985

Eagles

EAGLE 1981

Horses

HORSE 1999

Lions

LION 1963

Pinto

PINTO 1966

2 Pirates

PIRATE 2001

Rams

RAM 2000

Tigers

TIGER 1977

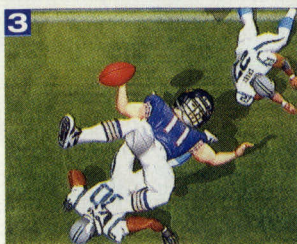
Clown

MADISON 1220

CODES, CODES, EVERYWHERE CODES

Enter the following codes at the Versus screen.





See Farther

0, 2, 1, Right

Big Heads

2, 0, 0, Right

Huge Heads

1, 4, 5, Left

3 Team Big Heads

2, 0, 3, Right

Big Feetz

0-2-5 Left

Big Shoulders

0-2-5 Right

Always Receiver

2, 2, 2, Right

Hidden Audibles

4, 5, 0, Right

Crunch Mode

4, 0, 3, Right

No Fumbles

5, 2, 3, Down

No Target on Receiver

3, 2, 1, Down

Ground Fog

2, 3, 2, Down

Extra Plays for Offense

3, 3, 3, Down

No CPU Assists

0, 1, 2, Down

Smart CPU Teammates

3, 1, 4, Down

Tournament Mode 2-Player

1, 1, 1, Down

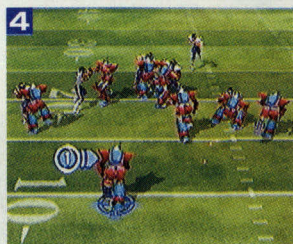
Chimp Mode

0-2-5 Up

Classic Blitz Ball

0-3-0 Left

Fast Running Speed



0-3-2 Left

Super Blitzing

0-5-4 Up

Super Field Goals

1-2-3 Left

Allow Out of Bounds

2-1-1 Left

More Time for Codes

2-1-2 Right

Fast Passes

2-4-0 Left

Cowboys Team

1-3-5 Left

4 Armageddon Team

5, 4, 3, Right

Rollos Team

2, 5, 4, Up

Midway Team

2-5-3 Right

Bilders Team

3-1-0 Up

No First Downs

2-1-0 Up

Indians Team

0-4-5 Left

Brew Dawgs Team

4, 3, 2, Down

Neo Tokyo Team

3, 4, 4, Down

Gsmers Team

5-0-1 Up

Showtime Mode

3-5-1 Right

No Interceptions

3-5-5 Up

Power-up Offense

4-1-2 Up



Unlimited Turbo

4-1-5 Up

Power-up Defense

4-2-1 Up

Power-up Linemen

5-2-1 Up

No Replays

5-5-4 Right

Rain

5, 5, 5, Right

Clear

1, 2, 3, Right

State of Emergency

ARE YOU TOUGH ENOUGH?

At anytime during the game, input one or more of these codes. A text message will appear to confirm proper entry.

Note: Buttons need to be pressed quickly.

5 Invincibility

L1, L2, R1, R2, X

Unlimited Time

L1, L2, R1, R2, Circle

Unlimited Ammunition

L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle

Punches Decapitate

L1, L2, R1, R2, Square

Note: You must not be holding a weapon for this to work when you attack.

Little Character

R1, R2, L1, L2, X

6 Big Player

R1, R2, L1, L2, Triangle

Normal Player

Press R1, R2, L1, L2, Circle

Additional Looting

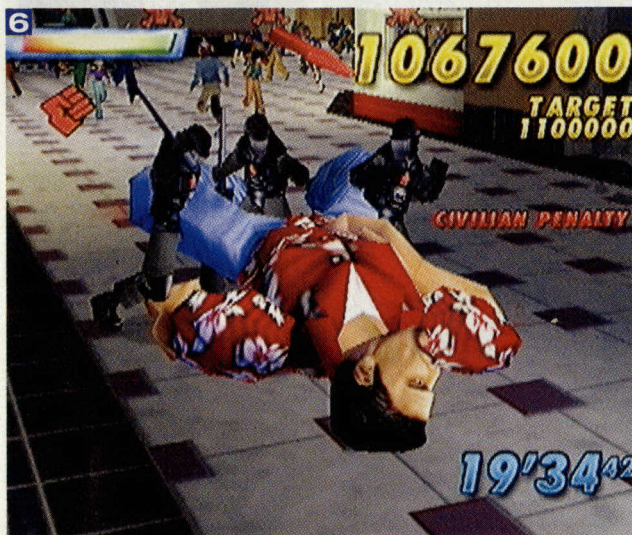
Press R1, L1, R2, L2, Triangle

GAMECUBE

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

DROP ME SOME FREEBIES

Choose the Cheats selection from the Options menu and enter the following case-sensitive passwords. If entered correctly, you will hear the sound of



TOP 5 TRICKS

The top 5 games of the last month for your tricked-out pleasure:

1. Soldier of Fortune: Gold Edition

Codes to Live and Die By

At anytime during gameplay, hit the select button to bring up the Objective screen. Then enter the following button combinations. Note: These codes do not work on Unfair or Hard difficulties.

Unlimited Ammo

Hold R1 + Square and press Left on the D-pad.

Invincibility

Hold R1 + L1 + L2 + R2 + Square and press Left on the D-pad.

Super Weapons

Hold R2+L2+Square and press Left on the D-pad.

2. NFL Fever 2002

Use Us Wisely

Create a profile with each of the following case-sensitive names to unlock each item. Note: You'll need multiple profiles if you wish to enable all of these codes.

The Commandos

Camo

The Gladiators

BigBacks

The Crocks

Crikey

The Hackers

Axemen

The Skeletons

Stone

The Monks

Robes

The Pansies

Viola

The Samurai

Slasher

The Wildcats

Kitty

The War Elephants

Horns

Millennium Stadium

Odyssey

Roman Stadium

LionPit

New Seattle Stadium

SeaTown

3. 4x4 Evolution 2

Nice Cheats

At the Press Start screen enter the following button combos.

More money

Y, X, White, Y, X, White, X, X, Y, White, X, Y

Increase reputation

Y, Y, White, X, X, White, Y, Y, Y, X, X, X



TRICKS

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

4. Splashdown PS2

The Go Ahead Code

Enter the following codes in the Options screen to open a cheat password screen. Press and hold R2 and press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Square, Circle, Square, Circle. Enter the following case-sensitive cheats:

Tougher computer players

AllOutAI

Unlock all FMVs

Festival

Unlock all characters

AllChar

5. Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder

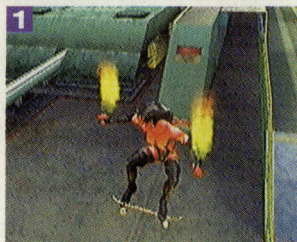
GAMEBOY
ADVANCE

Unlock SP's Staff

Enter either password:

FR5RNR?M?KLHJ

QFJ7MP9N?5CM4



money being collected.

Open Cheat Menu

MARKEDCARDS (Pause the game to bring up a menu and select the Cheats option. Enable those cheats you wish to use.)

Super Stats

MAXMEOUT

1 Unlock All Characters

FREAKSHOW

The Simpsons Road Rage

OH, SMITHERS

While in the Options menu, hold the L and R shoulder buttons. Then, press the following button combinations to unlock a bunch of Simpsons surprises that you may not have known about.



Red Soapbox Car

B, B, Y, X

Smithers in Mr. Burns's car

B, B, Y, Y

Nuclear Bus

B, B, Y, A

Extra Money

Y, Y, Y, Y

Stop Time

X, B, Y, A (You can press R-Shoulder to start, stop, and reset the timer.)

Extra Camera Views

B, B, B, B

Overhead View

X, X, X, Y

Nighttime Mode

A, A, A, A

Slow-motion Mode

A, X, B, Y

2 Flat Characters

X, X, X, X.

Show Collision Lines

B, B, A, A

Smash Bros. Academy



By Chris "CJ" Johnston

MORE MELEE MYSTERIES AND SECRETS

***Trophy weirdness:** Closely inspect the trophy for the Barrel Cannon and you'll see a secret message—"2L84ME." And even stranger, zoom in on the back of Princess Daisy's head so that you can see under her hair. You'll see that she has another eye back there. Spooky. (Thanks to Freddy Lambes for pointing these out.)



Have you inspected your trophy collection closely?

***Japanese surroundings:** If you change the language setting to Japanese, you'll notice a few changes in your trophy dis-

play. Most notably, all the American systems have been replaced by their Japanese counterparts, like the original 8-bit Famicom (Nintendo Entertainment System), the Virtual Boy and the Super Famicom pictured above (Super NES in the States).



***Random select:** Move your chip to this blank square and press A and you'll choose a random fighter.



Send your Super Smash Bros. Melee tricks, secrets or cool stuff to egm@ziffdavis.com (subject: Smash Academy).

CUSTOM MATCH FUN

Hazard Melee

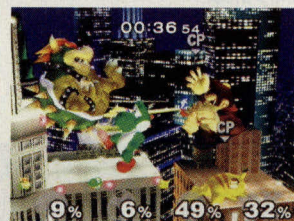
The setup:

• Turn off all items except Warp Stars, Red Shells, Bob-ombs, Motion-sensor bombs and Flippers, then set them to Very High. Play on Final Destination.

The result:

• There's no escape from the carnage as the items dropped help create massive combos of carnage. Set to Super Sudden Death for an even crazier battle.

—submitted by Darryl Fabia



Rampage Redux

The setup:

• Turn off all items except mushrooms and health replenishments (heart containers, food, etc.), and start a Giant Melee on the city levels—Fourside or Onett. To make it even more like Midway's classic game Rampage, pick Bowser and DK as your characters.

The result:

• A match that should remind old-school gamers of Rampage.

—submitted by Tony Houdyshell



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Fighting Games...Thanks For The Memories

Dean: All the talk about *Virtua Fighter 4* has got me thinking about my early fighting-game memories. I played the hell outta *Double Dragon* when it first arrived at my local arcade. It was a nice break from all the racing games I was hooked on. Soon, however, full-fledged brawlers like *Street Fighter II* took over my little coin-op palace, and I couldn't find a steering wheel-laden game to save my life. After that, I started hanging out in front of the drug store.

Che: Dean, I hear ya buddy. But I started chillin' with my yellow fellows at Drug Barn for a totally different reason: They had a *Street Fighter II* with joysticks that were actually worth a damn. But even as I stared, hypnotized, at Chun Li's massive thighs, I missed those huge, pressure-sensitive, punching-bag buttons from back in the *SF1* days. Christ, now *that* was a fighting game.

James: My fighting career started out with daily rumbles down on the lower field at North Main elementary school. But if we're talking about video games (and when do we not?), this is a run-down of the most significant fighting games that I've touched, and have touched me, over the years: *Karateka*, *Yie Ar Kung-Fu*, *Street Fighter II*, the first *Mortal Kombat*, *Samurai Shodown 2*, *Virtua Fighter 2*, *Zero Divide*, *Dead or Alive*, *X-Men: Children of the Atom*, *Tobal 2*, *Fighting Vipers*, *Street Fighter III: Third Strike*, *Soul Calibur*, *Mark of the Wolves* and finally, *Virtua Fighter 4*. That's all I have to say about that.

Kraig: Way to take up the whole page, talky. I remember good 'ol *Urban Champion*, the only fighting game I played until I finally got into *Street Fighter*. All of the ridiculous sequels to that game turned me off, and I never picked up a brawling game again until I saw Voldo on *Soul Calibur*. What a snazzy fellow.

Chris: I got totally addicted to *Street Fighter II* when it came out for the Super Nintendo. I never played it much in the arcade. The home versions were where it's at. My fixation was so strong that I developed the dreaded "Nintendo Thumb." It got so bad I had to go get it checked out—my thumb kept cracking. The doctor gave me an ultimatum: Stop playing or lose the thumb. Of course, I ain't one to listen to no doctor. Tell me to cut down my game playin'—pshaw, what did he know. Now I got me a robotic thumb!

Jeanne: Dude, all I gotta say is *Street Fighter II* was the first game my big brother didn't whoop my booty at. Definitely a turning point in my life.

Jon: *Street Fighter II* and blue raspberry Slurpees pretty much defined my after-school (and sometimes during-school) days. Once it hit the only arcade within five miles of school, though, we'd bike up there in 20-degree weather to get a quarter up on the machine. Naturally, that led to a *Mortal Kombat 1* and 2 infatuation with occasional breaks for *Virtua Fighter* and laughing at the poor deluded saps playing *Tekken*. It was all about arcades if you wanted to play any decent fighting game back then.

Greg: It was all *Virtua Fighter* for me. That was the first arcade fighting game I ever got into. Of course...the only other arcade game you could find in my neck of the woods was the 1943 sit-down at the local Pizza Hut. Ah, memories.

Crispin: You guys are forgetting about good ol' *Karate Champ*, Data East's early-'80s coin-op that kicked off the kung-fu fighting-game craze. It had two sticks you had to wiggle in different directions to unleash special kicks and chops at your opponent's 'nads. I think I learned some real karate from that game—I remember owning a tiger-striped ninja costume at the time, anyway.

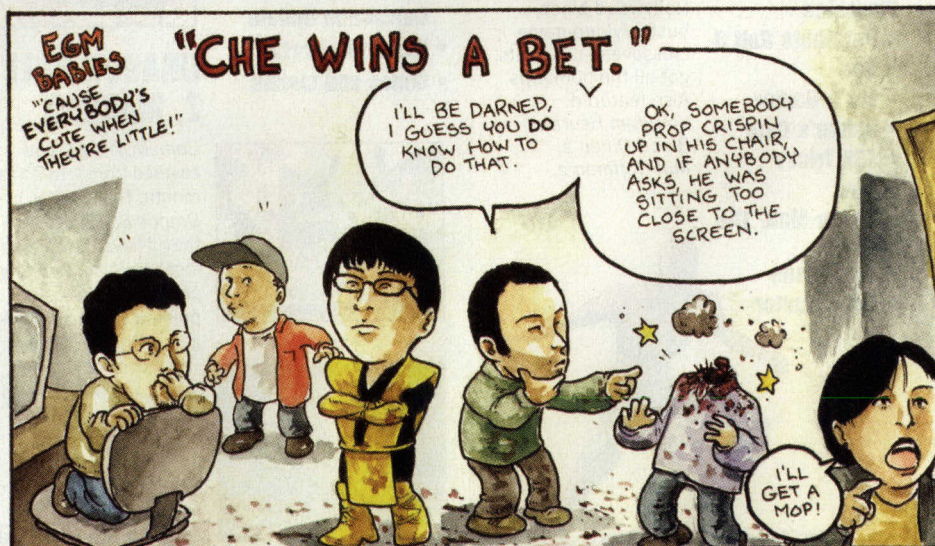


Illustration by Jeremy "Norm" Scott



NEXT MONTH

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

June 2002 (Issue #155)

On sale May 7

SOCOM: Storm Online With Your PS2

You've been hearing a lot of talk from Sony about how they're going to bring online gaming to the masses with the PS2 network. Well, the time is nigh, gentle readers. Next month, we hold Sony to their word and take *SOCOM*, their first-person team-based online shooter, for a spin and give you all the dirty details. Will *SOCOM* be the killer-app for PS2's online armada? Elsewhere in the mag, we take a good look at the games of *Episode II*, including *Knights of the Old Republic* (Xbox) and *Clone Wars* (GC). Movie madness continues with more coverage of *Spider-Man* (GC and Xbox). Last, but certainly not least, we've got an exclusive hands-on report on the latest *Castlevania* for the GBA.



Reviewed Next Month:

- **Blood Omen 2** (PS2)
- **Savage Skies** (PS2)
- **Home Run King** (GC)
- **Virtua Striker** (GC)
- **Pocky & Rocky 3** (GBA)
- **Deus Ex: The Conspiracy** (PS2)

Previewed Next Month:

- **Medal of Honor: Frontline** (PS2)
- **Star Fox Adventures** (GC)
- **Eternal Darkness** (GC)
- **Spider-Man** (GC)
- **Dave Mirra's Freestyle BMX 3** (PS2)

*All editorial content is subject to change.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

May 2002
On sale April 9

**SPIDER-MAN,
SPIDER-MAN!**

Demo Disc Playables

- Hot Shots Golf 3
- Rez
- Jak & Daxter
- Baldur's Gate
- SSX Tricky

Videos

- Spider-Man: The Movie
- Barbarians
- Jak & Daxter

Leave it to *OPM* to get the best scoop on the latest Hollywood block-buster/video-game crossover. Those cats got all the hook-ups. Also featured: *Kingdom Hearts*, *Blood Omen 2*, *Mat Hoffman 2*.



GAMENOW

May 2002
On sale April 16

- Resident Evil Update
- Dreamcast's Final GameCube Update
- Kingdom Hearts
- Codes and cheats



DRAGON BALL Z, MAXIMO

GameNOW's got you covered from A to Z next month. That's a Z as in *Dragon Ball Z*, which they'll have the complete story on. Also: Don't miss an updated hands-on preview of the *Spider-Man* game for PlayStation 2. The movie looks awesome, and the game could be one of the early contenders for 2002 honors. On the strategy side: a *Maximo* guide to keep your fingers busy. It's gonna be awesome, baby!



COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

May 2002
On sale April 2

SIMCITY 4

After dazzling the world with *The Sims*, Wil Wright and Maxis are now returning to their original, beloved franchise, and it's more than just a sequel—it's a complete reimagining of the game. Also featured: hands-on previews of some of the hottest games of 2002, including *WarCraft III*, *Dungeon Siege*, *Hitman 2*, *Freelancer* and *Shadowbane*.



Reviews

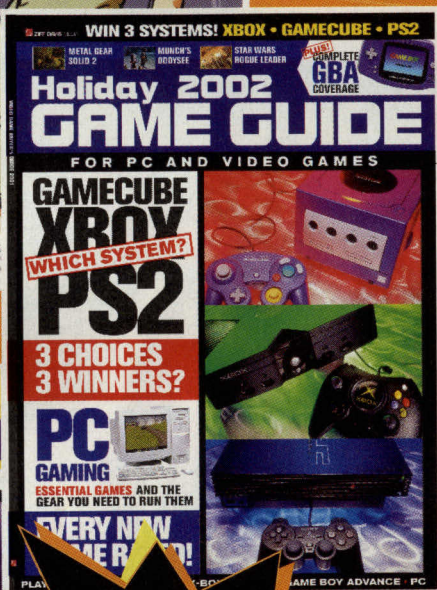
- C&C: Renegade
- Black & White: Creature Isle
- Grandia II

Demo Disc

- Sid Meier's Sim Golf
- Warlords Battlecry II
- Disciples II
- Star Wars Starfighter
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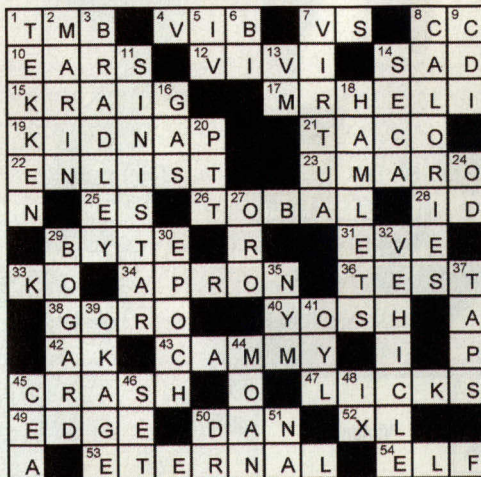
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Answers to crossword puzzle on p. 50

JAK AND DAXTER

the
PRECURSOR LEGACY™

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A NEW LEGACY IS BORN. IN THE HERO COMMUNITY YOU HAVE TWO TYPES: THOSE THAT FIGHT EVIL AND THOSE THAT HAPPEN TO BE AROUND WHILE OTHERS ARE DOING THE FIGHTING. INTRODUCING JAK (THE FIGHTER) AND DAXTER (UMM, THE OTHER GUY). JOIN THEM AS THEY VOYAGE TO DEFY THE FORCES OF EVIL ON AN ADVENTURE MANY DREAM ABOUT...BUT FEW DARE ATTEMPT. TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THEIR LEGENDARY QUEST, CHECK OUT WWW.JAKANDDAXTER.COM

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

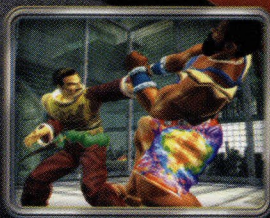
NAUGHTY DOG

PlayStation.2





Meet your new instructor.



VF4 is revolutionizing the fighting genre with ground-breaking graphics, an all-new strategic attack and defense system, and a sophisticated training mode that enables you to become a champion martial arts warrior. Get the ultimate in hand-to-hand combat on a next generation gaming system.

Virtua Fighter 4

PREPARE FOR A BEATING.



Violence



PlayStation 2



SEGA