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360Zine

Issue 10 | October 2007

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

THE FINAL PREVIEW

HALO 3

Everything you need to know ahead of launch!



STUNTMAN: IGNITION
FATAL INERTIA

MASSIVE REVIEW!
BIOSHOCK

One of the best games. Ever!

PLUS!
TEST DRIVE
UNLIMITED
EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW WITH
AHMED BOUKHELIFA



REVIEWED!



1 BLUE DRAGON
Microsoft's shiny new RPG



2 MOTOGP 07
Top two-wheeled action



3 XBLA
All the new games inside

PLUS LOADS MORE!



Welcome to 360Zine



With the 'summer' mopped up, it comes as no surprise to see one deluge follow another with a veritable glut of new titles coming to 360. This month sees a dozen new games hitting the reviews pages of 360Zine, but one above all others demands your immediate attention. Having seen the title develop we knew we were in for a treat with BioShock, but even we were slightly taken aback by just how good a game it is. Don't miss Kieron's review on p.23.

The other must-read feature concerns a little known game that goes by the name of Halo 3. We thought it only right to bring you one last preview before we busy ourselves with 360Zine's Halo 3 Special Edition. Out on launch day (that's September 26th if you didn't already know), you can sign up for it on page 47! Don't miss it!

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

**READER
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
the new issue!

Don't miss! This month's top highlights



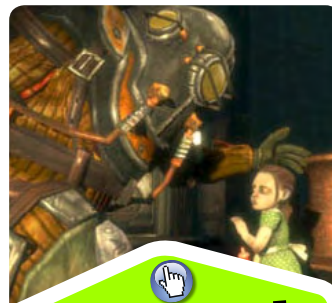
Halo 3
THE FINAL COUNTDOWN
PAGE 10



**Stuntman:
Ignition**
PAGE 27



MotoGP 07
PAGE 39



BioShock
MUST READ REVIEW
PAGE 10



**Test Drive
Unlimited**
EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW
PAGE 20



Fatal Inertia
Top-notch racing action
PAGE 31

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Clive Barker's Jericho
Stranglehold
Blacksite
Warriors Orochi
Beautiful Katamari
Dynasty Warriors Gundam
Bladestorm
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men
Halo 3
Skate
Test Drive Unlimited
BioShock
Stuntman: Ignition
Fatal Inertia
Blue Dragon
MotoGP 07
XBLA

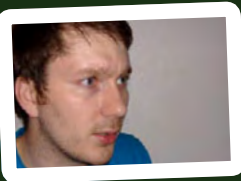
MEET THE TEAM

Probably the
best games
writers on the
planet



Kieron Gillen

Kieron gives his verdict on BioShock and Stuntman: Ignition.



Lee Hall

Lee can't wait to play Halo 3. Suffice to say he's written this month's preview.



Ian Morris

This month Ian has mostly been busy with Blue Dragon.



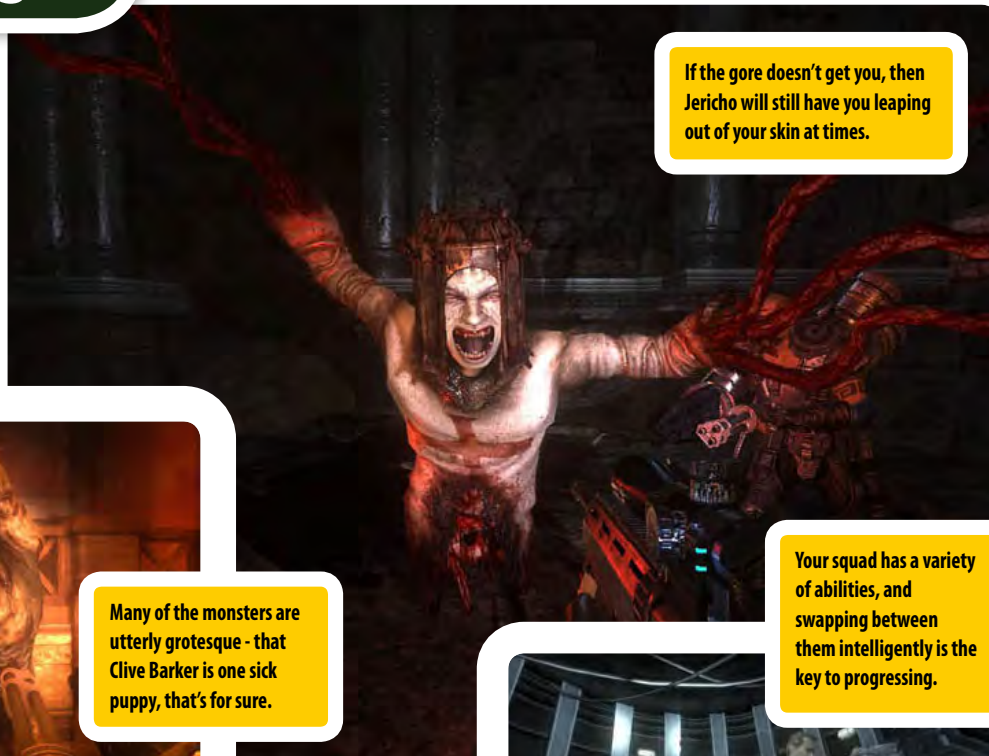
Chris Schilling

MotoGP 07 and a fistful of 360 previews has kept Chris out of trouble.



*****
JERICHO

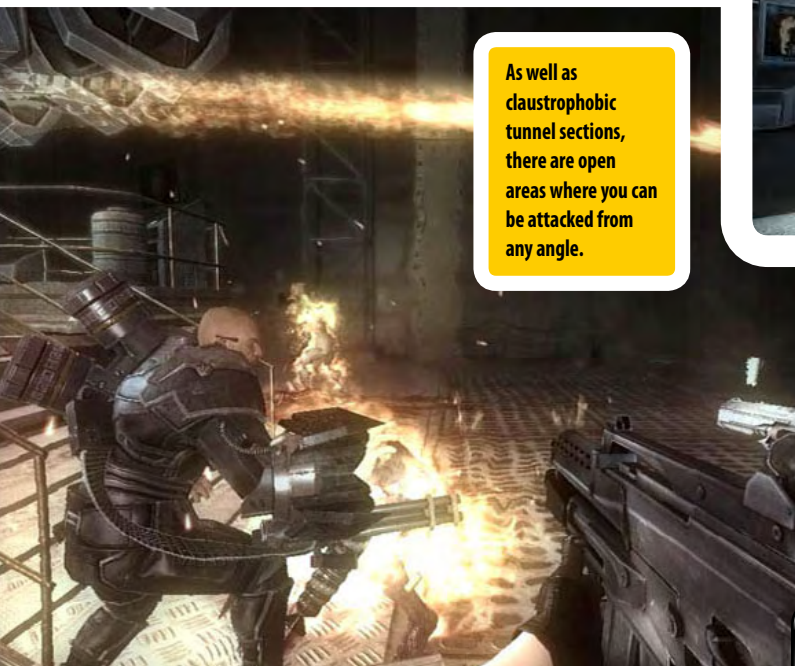
Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Mercury Steam
Heritage: Scrapland
Link: www.codemasters.com/jericho
ETA: 26th October



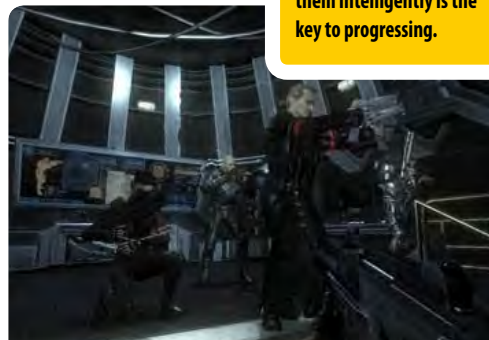
If the gore doesn't get you, then Jericho will still have you leaping out of your skin at times.



Many of the monsters are utterly grotesque - that Clive Barker is one sick puppy, that's for sure.



As well as claustrophobic tunnel sections, there are open areas where you can be attacked from any angle.



Your squad has a variety of abilities, and swapping between them intelligently is the key to progressing.

The rivers of blood and frequent gore - not to mention the intense horror scenes - mean Jericho is definitely for over-18s only.



FIRST LOOK

Clive Barker's Jericho

The horror master's collaboration with Codemasters is looking spook-tacular

What's the story?

A seven-man team of elite soldiers visits the city of Al-Khali, to investigate a paranormal threat. As they progress, they travel back in time - every layer of the city they explore represents a different era. Oh, and bad stuff happens. Lots of bad stuff. This is a Clive Barker production, after all.

What do we know?

The Jericho Team comprises six soldiers and one spirit, who can possess each character, allowing you to switch between the half-dozen humans on the fly. Each squad member has their own particular powers, with an alchemist, an exorcist and a clairvoyant among those you control. So, the team's astral projectionist can see otherwise invisible ghostly enemies, while the female sniper can use telekinesis to alter the flight of bullets.

We also know that the graphics are pretty damn special, with some stunning lighting effects, and plenty of terrifying monsters and demons to blast, designed by the creator of Hellraiser himself. As you'd expect, they're quite repulsive - it's good to see that the banning of Manhunt 2 hasn't led Codies to tone this down any. It's about as adult as they come.

When do we get more?

It's due around October time. Fingers crossed it won't get lost in the Christmas rush.

Anything else to declare?

Sadly, despite looking perfect for a bit of co-operative play, it seems like it's single-player only. Still, hopefully that'll mean that, like the stunning Bioshock, an expertly-crafted solo mode is in store for anyone brave enough to take the plunge.

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Jericho!



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Microsoft
game studios

OUT OCTOBER 12

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Jump in.





STRANGLEHOLD

Publisher: Midway

Developer: Midway

Heritage: Space Invaders,

Mortal Kombat, Psi Ops

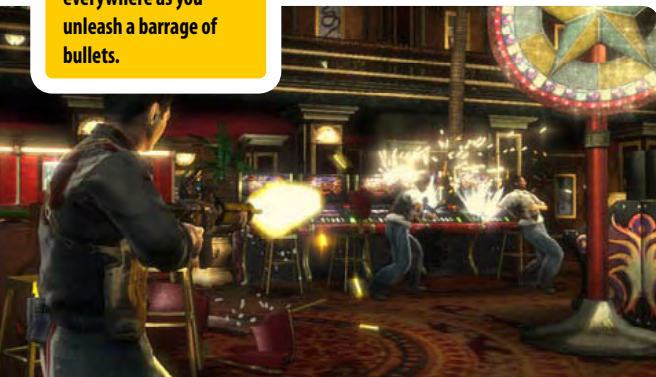
Link: www.strangleholdgame.com

ETA: 10th September

It's a genuine thrill to see particles flying everywhere as you unleash a barrage of bullets.



Certain confrontations can lead to a bullet-dodging standoff, with Tequila facing several opponents at once.



Things get explosively hectic in places, but despite all the debris, slowdown isn't an issue.

We're not sure about the sepia tone that kicks in when you're in 'Tequila Time' - just a blurring effect around the screen edges would have been nice.

"There's plenty of the slo-mo gunplay that has become the director's trademark"



FIRST LOOK

Stranglehold

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of Stranglehold!

Doves, dives and dynamic duels in John Woo's thrilling \$30m actioner

What's the story?

An amazingly realistic-looking Chow Yun-Fat stars as Inspector 'Tequila' Yuen - from Woo movie *Hard Boiled* - in this exciting third-person shooter. Tequila is out for revenge against a crime lord - basically an excuse for plenty of slo-mo gunplay that has become the director's trademark.

What do we know?

It's an absolute bucketload of fun. While it's difficult to see where all that money's gone (evidently Chow Yun-Fat doesn't come cheap these days), there's some impressive physics on display, with environmental destruction on a scale never seen before. Basically, if you see it, you can destroy it - it's a real thrill to pinpoint a ledge or rock you can collapse onto an enemy's head. Sliding along tables and diving headlong with twin pistols trained on a couple of nearby foes looks fantastic. Indeed stylish kills are rewarded - you can boost your health if you're struggling, or activate a precision shot, with a camera following the bullet from gun to bloody impact. It can look silly at times, leaping and skidding all over the place, but it's undeniably enjoyable.

When do we get more?

Full review next month.

Anything else to declare?

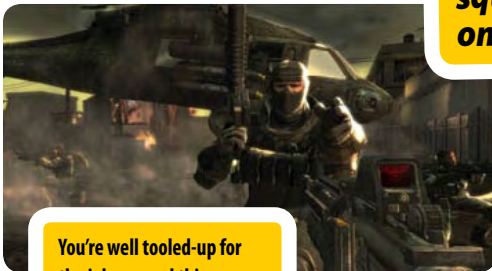
There's a multiplayer mode which will have you reliving the Matrix train station shoot-out with your mates, as you dive towards each other, pistols blazing. And later levels promise even more chaos, with gigantic glass windows blasted into tiny shards as you try to down a chopper. Ace.





While the story promises to be a bit more cerebral, there's plenty of alien-zapping for action junkies.

"Could this overtake GRAW as the best squad-based shooter on 360?"



You're well tooled-up for the job - a good thing as these aliens take some damage before they fall.

FIRST LOOK

Blacksite

An alien resurrection for Midway's FPS

What's the story?

A small American town is suddenly teeming with alien life. It's up to you, as agent Aeran Pierce (no, not that one, 24 fans) to return from duty in Iraq to eliminate the extra terrestrials.

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of *Blacksite*!

What do we know?

While it might sound like standard FPS hokum, the plot promises plenty of emotional pull and political intrigue - the trailer's opening anti-war sentiment suggests Midway aren't afraid of tackling themes a little deeper than your average shooter. Yet, when all's said and done, the gameplay basically revolves around shooting a bunch of bug-eyed, multi-tentacled critters. It looks very GRAW in feel, with the squad mechanic and on-rails chopper sections, but your foes are very different beasts indeed. One screen-filling 'boss' alien looks particularly impressive. The original was a reasonable FPS, but we've got high hopes for this -

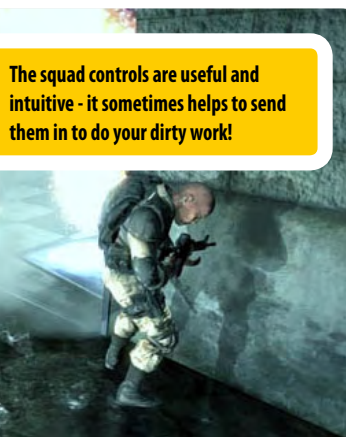
Midway's assertions that Pierce will have to choose between his personal ethics and his orders have got us all intrigued...

When do we get more?

An extended demo is due to hit the Marketplace any time now. The game itself will reach store shelves in late October.

Anything else to declare?

A host of varied multiplayer modes to bolster the solo adventure. Could this overtake GRAW as the best squad-based shooter on 360? Tune in to 360Zine over the next couple of months to find out!



The squad controls are useful and intuitive - it sometimes helps to send them in to do your dirty work!

Blacksite uses the same modified Unreal engine as Stranglehold, so it certainly looks good.





REPLAY THIS VIDEO

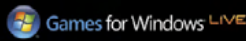
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PLAYSTATION 3



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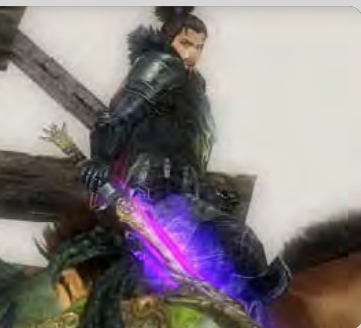
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INCOMING

A fistful of top new titles coming to 360...



Warriors Orochi

Publisher: Koei | **ETA:** 21st September

This spin-off from Dynasty Warriors is looking very impressive indeed. It builds on the PS2 version for more spectacular battlefield brawls. With several different characters to choose from, each with their own story, there's plenty of replay value, too. Ideal for fans of hack-and-slash action.



Dynasty Warriors Gundam

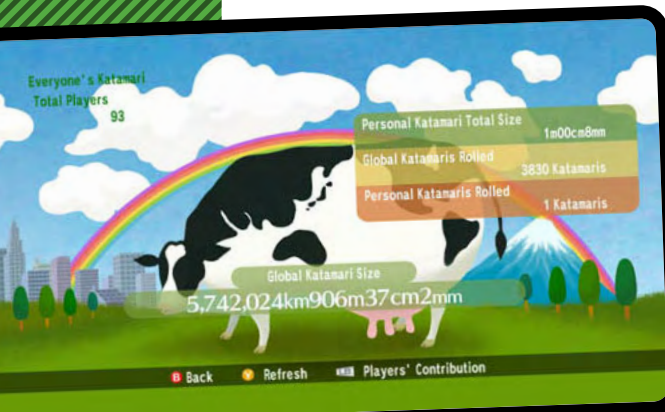
Publisher: Koei | **ETA:** 9th November

Three Warriors spin-offs in the space of two months? Koei are really spoiling us! This one's our personal favourite, simply because Dynasty Warriors, but with massive robots can never be a bad thing. Should challenge Armored Core for Best Mech-Stomping Game on 360.

Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War

Publisher: Koei | **ETA:** 2nd November

The Japanese version of this garnered impressive review scores and it's looking good, with some impressively chaotic scenes of vicious warfare. It's clearly been influenced by the Warriors series, though this has real-time strategy elements to give it a more cerebral feel.



Beautiful Katamari

Publisher: Namco-Bandai Games | **ETA:** November

New info on this suggests that series creator Keita Takahashi's departure won't affect the fun factor any. A four-player online versus mode is promised, along with online leaderboards for single-player achievements, and a planet representing the combined size of every player's Katamari put together. In the form of a giant cow, obviously.



Kane & Lynch: Dead Men

Publisher: Eidos | **ETA:** 16th November

We couldn't be more excited about this if we tried. First, it's from the amazing IO Interactive, the folks behind Hitman. Second, it's got two anti-hero leads who hate each other, but have to work together - expect plenty of entertaining bickering. Third, it's a story-led crime drama with a blistering co-op mode. We. Can't. Wait.

UPCOMING

AUTUMN 2007

- Mass Effect
- Assassin's Creed

- PES 2008
- Halo 3

WINTER 2007

- Fable 2
- Frontlines: Fuel Of War

- Just Cause 2

SPRING 2008

- Universe At War: Earth Assault
- Burnout 5
- Saints Row 2

SUMMER 2008

- Rise Of The Argonauts
- Condemned 2

ONE OF HISTORY'S MOST BRUTAL CONFLICTS
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BLADESTORM

The Hundred Years' War

12+

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PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360

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READY FOR BATTLE NOVEMBER 2

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HALO 3

SPECIAL REPORT

Halo 3

Update your calendar. Christmas has been moved to September 25

It's like being a quivering rebel troop before Lord Vader's stormtroopers melt your doors in. Can you feel the anticipation? That sense of, 'let's get on with it', the nagging fear that things are about to go horribly wrong...

Don't you feel it too? The concern that Halo 3 is in real danger of living up to the hype, and then some. Surely it's

too good to be true, all this brilliant multiplayer action and mouth-watering single-player joy?

We're looking for reasons to lower our expectations, to safeguard against building up the third and final Halo (of this story arc) to be the game of the year on any format. In truth, there's no reason to believe Halo 3 will be

Four-play promises to be exhilarating in Halo 3



There's death in the skies. And on sea and land, for that matter.

"Bungie have got the essentials absolutely spot on"



anything short of pure genius.

The only gripe that's emerged during development is a few sniffs about the multiplayer graphics. Sure, they're understandably less polished than in the single player game, but we'd expect nothing less from a development team that prioritises the gamers' experience over senselessly over-demanding graphics.

Elsewhere Bungie have got the essentials absolutely spot on.

Their checklist of weapons runs from dual-wieldable spikers to a formidable mobile missile pod, capable of delivering eight consecutive payloads. It's complemented by tactical kit

FIVE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT BUNGIE...





>Halo 3 continued

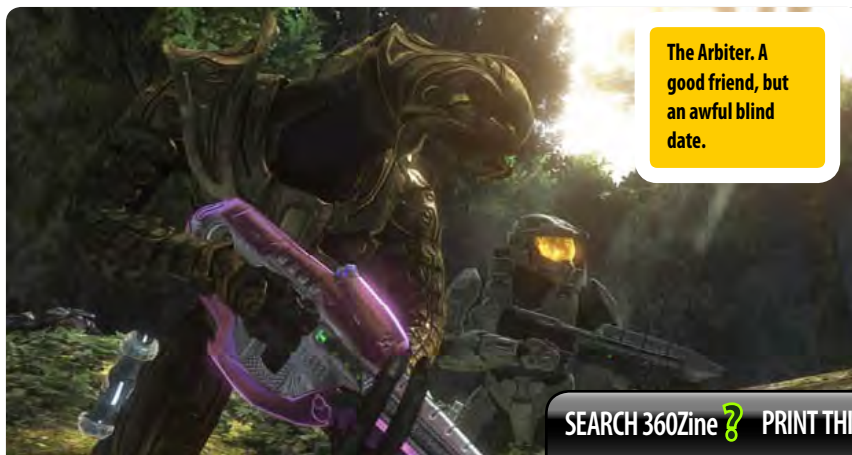
such as the life-saving bubble shield which will protect you from sniping foes, if not Halo's trademark nose-smashing melee attacks.

There's a range of eminently more driveable vehicles to get your armoured gloves on too – from the standard issue Warthogs and surface-skimming Ghosts of old to the Covenant Scarab, a spider-like plasma-

spitter rumoured to be deliciously controllable for the first time.

The pick of the new vehicles in Halo 3 is the recently uncovered Elephant. This hulking mobile base can carry 12 troops, and will house your flag on some capture-the-flag maps, as well as providing a super-protected metallic haven of a respawn point.

Halo 3 is an embodiment of Bungie's hurt pride as they try to put right Halo 2's ills as well as give you a mountain >



HALO, THE HIGHS SO FAR...

Here's what made Halo 3's older brothers so great

HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED



DELICIOUS MENU

From the word go we knew Halo was something a bit special. That mesmerising, almost monastic music, the iconic arc of the mysterious ring world... Within seconds you'd blotted the rest of existence out and it was just you, your telly and your ludicrously cumbersome joypad. Pure heaven.



GREAT CAMPAIGN

An engaging plot and a large, engrossing single-player mode made Halo one of the most rewarding shooters of all time. Let's not forget that the game dangled the carrot of genuine choice in campaign mode, enabling you to attack enemies from tactical vantage points. Such luxuries are taken for granted these days.



FINAL FIGHT

Halo's unforgettable final level – the Maw – makes Ray Mears' worst nightmare look like a week in Vegas on company expenses. As Master Chief, and plunked in a Warthog, it's foot down to leg it off the Halo that you've just turned in a disintegrating space mess. Ah, you'll have no problem with that jump... will you?

HALO 2



FRIENDLY FIRE

Halo 2 was undoubtedly a shorter single-player game than its forebear, and one that ended far too abruptly to boot. But this ultimately under-rated sequel added internet multiplayer, only previously possible by hooking Xboxes together in a decidedly fatty heath Robinson-stylee. The result is a game of endless skirmish, of constantly developing skills against the most formidable foes around – humanfolk.



DUAL WIELD

Ok, so it's not the most original gaming concept, but dual-wielding in Halo raises the bar for the game's bodycount hungry, non-stop action sequences. Who needs an assault rifle when you can blast alien scum with two barrels of hot death? And the best news for you ambidextrous maniacs? Halo 3 will take dual wielding to new heights, with individual reloading and a vast range of twinnable shooters.



SKULL-DUGGERY

Without doubt the coolest easter eggs in Halo 2 were the skulls. These well-hidden power-ups sent the game totally spaced out. Their effects ranged from the fairly mundane – such as making enemies fire more rapidly – to the downright insane, with effects such as rendering objects nigh-on weightless. Oh how we longed to collect 'em all. And collect 'em we did. When we sneaked a peek at a Halo 2 walkthrough.



Battle for the best parking space on High Ground.



OK, so the bubble shield wasn't much use...

Missiles, rocket launchers and killer laser beams... but still we love that pistol.



"The multiplayer game is a no-go zone for annoying twerps"

Welcome back your old pal the assault rifle.

>Halo 3 continued

of new toys to play with.

For starters, the multiplayer game is a no-go zone for annoying twerps barking at you down your voice communicator – just hit the silence button and get on battling.

And among a raft of other improvements, the Forge mode – which lets you fly through a level, positioning objects such as weapons and vehicles – is an intuitive map editor that will enhance an already vast online experience.

For all the multiplayer goodness, it's the single-player game and plotline which look to have been given the most dramatic overhaul.

Halo 3 promises to be longer than it's fore-runner (ahem), and it won't end

in the same abrupt 'roll-credits-buy-the-sequel' fashion that left us feeling a little hacked off in Halo 2.

We're assured the vast majority of our questions will be answered as all loose plotlines are tied. But will Master Chief survive? And will we get to see his face? Who cares? Pass us the joypad...

MEDAL OF HONOR
AIRBORNE

HEROES JUMP.
ENEMIES FALL.



 REPLAY THIS VIDEO



OWN IT SEPT 7TH



PLAYSTATION 3
Coming Soon

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>Halo 3 continued

The game opens with the jungle level Sierra 117, a name which echoes that of our faceless hero Spartan Master Chief – John 117. It's a pretty darned obvious clue that Halo 3 intertwines the battle to finish off the Earth-ruining Covenant with a personal journey for John 117 himself.

Halo 3's nine levels culminate with Return, a battle that takes place on an unidentified Halo ring, but will encompass urban environments, desert wastelands and, of course, a trip to New Mombassa.

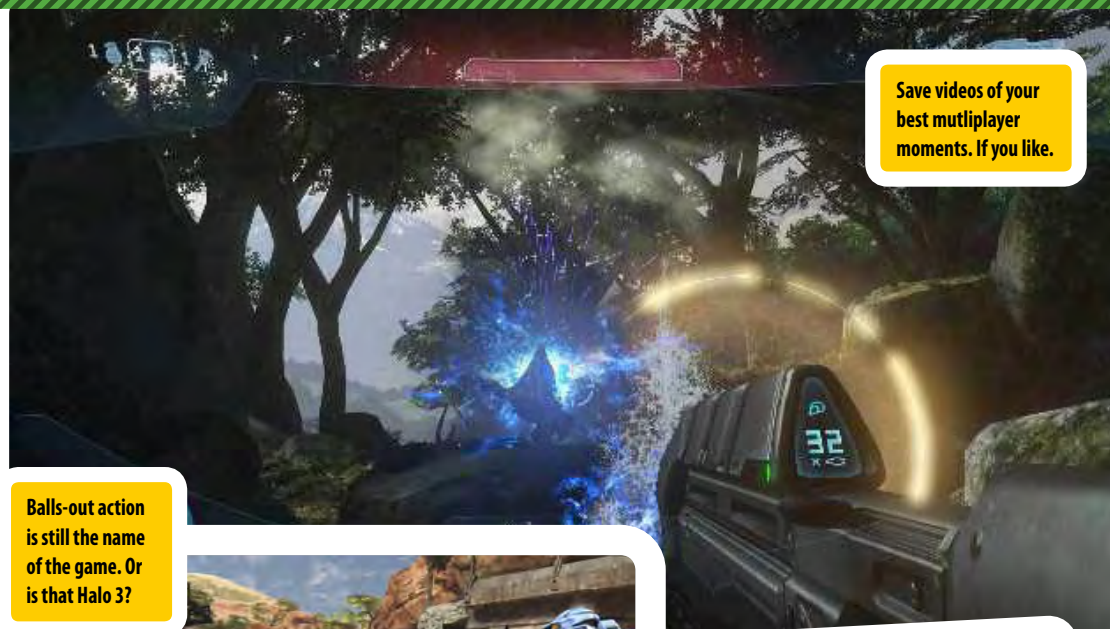
OK, we're starting to feel guilty about those of you guzzling Halo info but unwilling to be told of every twist

and turn in the storyline now... no more plot talk, we promise.

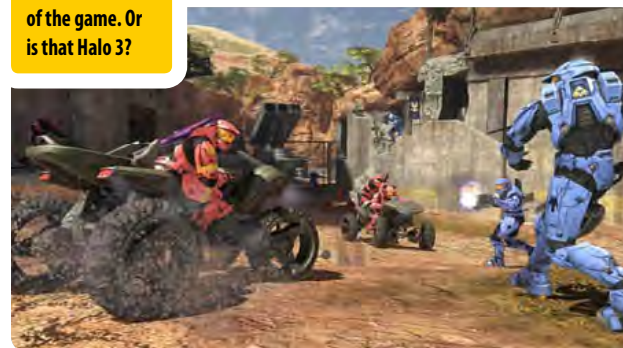
Of course you don't have to concern yourself with the story too much at all. Halo 3's single player experience will be bolstered with a meta-game. This is a system of rewarding exemplary performance that requires much more than avoiding death.

Achieve a whopping score and you'll land ten of the 1000 coveted gamerpoints on offer, then you can turn your attention to 48 other achievements that will require single- and multiplayer performances par excellence.

And if you need another excuse to replay the game, you can always team-up with friends for a mouth-watering



Balls-out action is still the name of the game. Or is that Halo 3?



"Halo 3's nine levels culminate with Return"

Like the look of that mounted machinegun? Take it with you...





>Halo 3 continued

four-player co-op mode. In this sociable blast through the campaign, players take the guise of Master Chief, the Arbiter and N'thro 'Sraom and Usze Taham – a pair of Elites.

While killer features like four-player co-op play will wow you, it's Bungie's customary attention to detail that will have you grinning with glee.

Whether you're fishing with a machine gun in a sea full of bizarre marine life, or hunting for easter eggs – from references to previous Bungie games to physics altering secret artefacts – this trilogy-ending sequel looks set to be endlessly giving.

And we're quite happy to endlessly take. ●

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Halo3!



They leap like salmon, but
hit the deck like a bag of
butchered puppies.

**"Bungie's attention to
detail that will have
you grinning with glee"**

Stealth is rarely an option in a
game of awesome weaponry.



Nick the flag, then give out
a mischievous "tee-hee".



HALO 3
FIRST REVIEW:
360Zine Halo 3
Special Edition
25th Sep

360Zine

HALO 3

HOW COMPLETE?

100%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

93%

The Halo series' crowning glory. And it's almost here...

BLACKSITE



REPLAY THIS VIDEO

SOME SECRETS CANNOT BE KEPT



“The fluid controls and epic level shattering set pieces are what excites us the most”

PSM3 MAGAZINE



“Looking like yet another top quality Xbox 360™ shooter”

OXM MAGAZINE

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Games for Windows

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360 LIVE

MIDWAY
www.midway.com



Publisher: EA

Developer: EA Black Box

Heritage: It's their first game!

Link: www.ea.com/skate/

ETA: 21st September

HANDS ON

SKATE

Board of Tony Hawk? EA have the answer...

EA Black Box, developers of Skate, certainly have some balls. Think of a skateboarding game, and the name Tony Hawk immediately springs to mind. Neversoft's evergreen franchise is a colossus - it's remained popular almost since its inception, and is still bought by hundreds of thousands of fans, even as the incremental differences between each version become less noticeable. With the recent Project 8, the series finally had something of a revamp, and it was a hugely successful one. So to take on a genre master in his own backyard... as we say, it requires some huge cojones.

Yet it's not as if Black Box are happy with just churning out a similar game to the Tony Hawk titles, and riding its coat-tails to success. Instead, they've opted for something much more ambitious - a huge, open-world

There's a mode where you can compete in the X Games, so it's not all street 'boarding throughout.

"The left analogue stick controls your skater, with the right manoeuvring the board"

Screenshots really don't do the fluidity of the game any justice - you have to see it in motion.

environment and a control scheme quite different from what hardened Pro Skaters will be accustomed to.

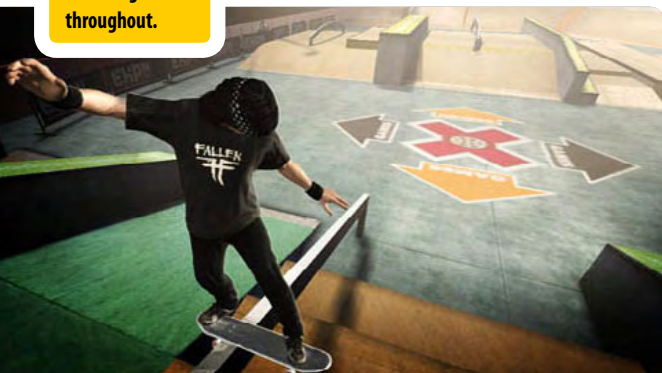
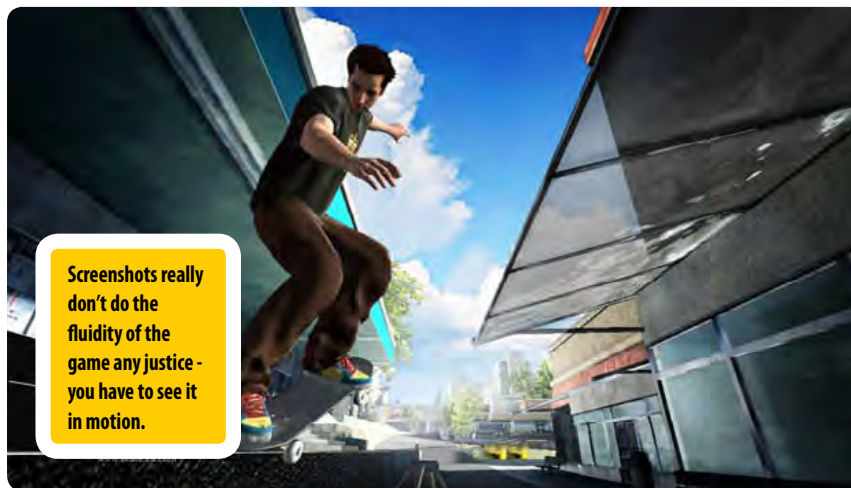
The first big change is that Skate isn't split into fairly small, enclosed

environments - it's far more of a living, breathing city - there are areas particularly suited to more outlandish boarding, but they're interlinked by areas where you'll spend time grinding

kerbs and performing simple kick-flips to increase your score. It's much more of a sim than the free-flowing show-offish approach of Neversoft's series, and one which some players will need to make significant adjustments to get used to. Propulsion is not automatic - you have to push a button to kick with your free foot to move through the world, while the trigger buttons allow grabs with the corresponding hand.

Which brings us onto the second major innovation - the controls. Simply, the left analogue stick controls your skater, with the right manoeuvring the board. Yet the difference that makes belies such a rudimentary description. With the flexibility of the analogue allowing for a more experimental approach to tricks than simple memorising of button presses, it

The board physics are astonishingly complex, and there's a noticeable difference to how your deck handles on each surface - no problem if you're airborne, though!





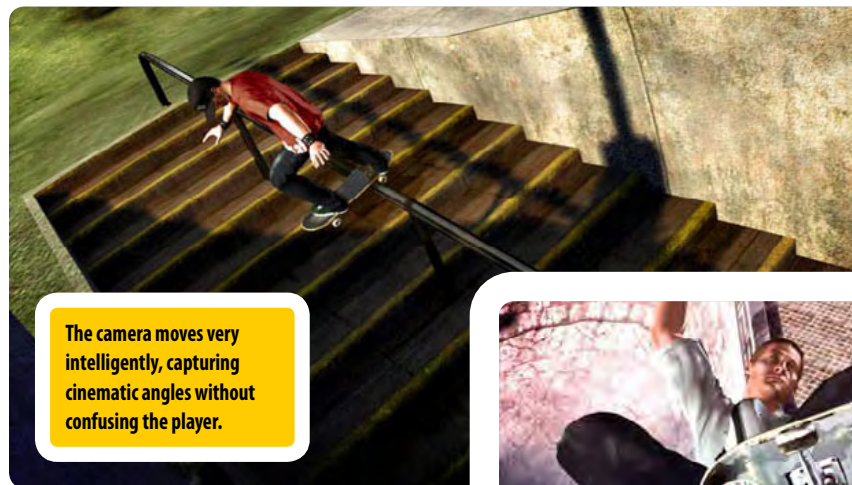
>SKATE continued

gives a grittier and more realistic (if less flashy) feel. That realism is enhanced by the low-slung camera - positioned behind your boarder at just above ground level, it focuses the attention on your decks rather than the person controlling them. It's reminiscent of an enthusiast video, with an almost home-made, lo-fi feel, and we mean this as a compliment - with the animation so impressive and the environments so lifelike, if you squint hard enough you could believe you actually were watching some raw footage.

"Impressive visuals backed up by an eclectic soundtrack ranging from Nirvana to Bowie"

There are plenty of real-life skateboarders featured in the game, like Pat Duffy here.

With such impressive visuals backed up by an eclectic soundtrack ranging from Nirvana to Bowie, Skate has a professional sheen behind the rough, organic gameplay. But it's that very different approach that's so refreshing about the game - it's the kind of title which will have hardcore players improvising, creating and linking tricks, and showing them off in internet videos. Black Box have even ensured that audience is catered for with an incredibly flexible mode which will allow users not only to upload their best footage to Xbox Live, but also to the game's official site to share with other players. It's just one of many fine additions which make Skate a worthy



The camera moves very intelligently, capturing cinematic angles without confusing the player.

contender to the Birdman's crown as top console skateboarder. Be sure to check out our full review in the next issue of 360Zine. ●



A spectacular shot of the outrageously talented Danny Way, another big name boarder



360Zine

HOW COMPLETE?

90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

91%

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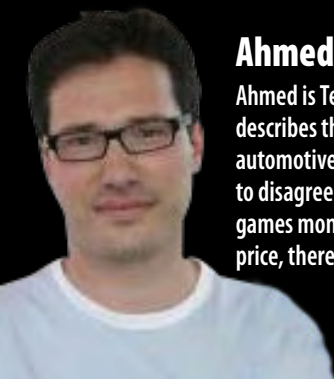
Wii

NINTENDO DS

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TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

As 360's best online racer gets a new price point, we talk sun, supercars and success with the game's producer.



Ahmed Boukhelifa

Ahmed is Test Drive Unlimited's producer, and describes the game as "a communitarian luxurious automotive experience", which we'd be hard pushed to disagree with. It's one of the very best online games money can buy, and now it's at a cheaper price, there's no excuse for car fans not to own it.



Screaming around a corner in your Dodge Charger - the game has a nice mix of older cars and brand new models.

Test Drive Unlimited is one of the best games on 360 - with a revelatory online experience that's almost without parallel in videogaming. With its imminent release under the Classics label - thus putting it at a tasty £24.99 price point - we caught up with producer Ahmed Boukhelifa from Eden Games to ask him about the story behind this fantastic racer.

Test Drive Unlimited offers a very different experience from the previous games in the series - what was the thinking behind the change?

Our goal was indeed to innovate, but also to go back to the roots of the series. Driving at full speed through traffic in supercars and escaping from the cops - that was the Test Drive of old we wanted to give a new birth.

And we tried to expand this experience into our perfect modern fantasy, i.e. do it in a huge (and I mean

HUGE) place to explore online with your friends.

It's a gorgeous-looking game - was the tropical setting of Oahu Island used purely for visual purposes, or were there other reasons for the environment?


From our huge list of potential places to recreate, Oahu made it quickly to the top of the list for many reasons: of course, the gorgeous setting was perfect to show off in with your supercars. Size was perfect: huge but not too huge as it wouldn't fit on a DVD, just pack it up to the max. And last but not least, it offered all the kinds of roads we could dream of, from highways to narrow mountain roads, scenic coastal roads or dense suburbs - totalling over 1600 km of roads to explore.

It is a massive game - were you ever concerned that it might be almost TOO big?


We've always been a bit geeky about cars and driving, so the more roads we got, the more excited we became. But freedom to explore is not everything, so a great part of the design work after that was dedicated to craft the game progression to provide players with keys to discover the island at their own pace. The question is not so much if it can be too big, but if it is too big to fill with compelling things to do. That's what we tried to address both offline and online.

It's said that people who have visited the island will clearly recognise the environment from the stunning level of detail it's been rendered in. How long did it take to map out the island in such startling clarity?

We had 2 sources for the data. First, some of the artists went to the island (poor guys :-)) to explore - their hands filled with camcorders to record everything they saw from buildings to ➤



It's brilliant just to be able to build up your collection of cars and put them on display.



There's been several packs of downloadable content, including bikes like the Kawasaki Ninja here.

"The gorgeous setting is perfect to show off in"

> Interview continued

roads and landscapes. Second, we managed to get access to detailed 3D data on the actual island elevation, as well as detailed 2D data (like you can access in a GPS). We made some simplifications to the road network and kept the 1600 km - that did make sense for the game. Once all the accurate data was retrieved came the bigger part: create a Worldbuilder tool to generate the whole island automatically based on the data. This was the most difficult part, which took over 2 years, but the result is a very believable recreation of the island.

The single-player mode is enjoyable enough, but it's the M.O.O.R. component that really makes the game - how difficult was it to set-up such an advanced online system?

Beyond the usual issues you face in game development, online development brings additional risk and uncertainty - especially at the scale we were targeting. QA and testing is the key to a successful game release.

We're used to doing it for offline games, and as well for online PC games with beta testing. But how do you beta

test a massive online game on X360 at the same time? It was just not possible, and it did bring a few white hairs to our heads. We had therefore to be very reactive once the game was shipped and welcomed tens of thousands of players online.

We managed to fix most issues within a few days with a major upscale and redeployment of our servers. Some issues unfortunately had to wait for another patch (E-trade for example had to be disabled for some time).

The game has been a huge critical and commercial success - winning the Edge Award for Best Online Experience, and the Develop award for Best Use Of Online. How gratifying is it to get such recognition?

Our biggest reward is still to launch the game, drive out of the house and meet new online players having fun in freeride. It's a bit weird, but I'm still amazed how this simple pleasure of driving with total strangers and chat while doing so can be so rewarding.

That, and of course the awards and the commercial success :-). We always try to innovate and make great games, but until they're done and out you never know how people will welcome them. When it turns out some people like your creation, it's indeed a great reward and pleasure.

One of our favourite facets of the online experience is the ability to create your own custom challenges, and upload them for other drivers to try. What are your personal favourite aspects of the game, and do you have a particular favourite vehicle?

Freeriding with friends (especially when new vehicles are released) remains one of my favourites. And when talking cars, it's hard to pick - but I definitely love cruising with old muscle cars like the Camaro Z28.

Finally, with Test Drive Unlimited being such a tough act to follow, where do you see the series going next?

To me, TDU's just the beginning. We managed indeed to bring a refreshing way to envision driving and racing, but there's so much more to do - you'll have to wait a bit until some details can be unveiled! ●



Developer: Eden Games
Publisher: Atari
Players: 1-8
Heritage: V-Rally series
ETA: 28th September



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Publisher: 2k

Developer: 2k Boston/
AustraliaHeritage: System Shock 2,
Freedom Force, SWAT 4Link: www.BioShockgame.com
OUT NOW

BioShock

Be prepared. Rapture is coming.

Have you ever been in love? Or, more relevantly, do you remember /falling/ in love? You may recall a moment when everything's going brilliantly, and you're having a great time in the presence of this other person. Everything's cool. And then they turn to you and, with something as small as a flash of the eyes, tell you that this is only the beginning of what you can expect, Tiger. And then they show you exactly how good good gets... There's a bit about four levels into BioShock that's just like that, and BioShock casually

Flame burns realistically in BioShock. Notice an oil-slick and a burst of fire can set it alight, acting as a handy trap.

steps from being "just" being one of the best games on the 360 this year into being one of the best games ever.

BioShock, as its developers stress constantly, is just a first-person shooter. And they're right. It's a game that's as accessible as Doom, and if you've pointed a gun in Halo, you can step into the boots of its nameless protagonist and step into BioShock's ramshackle art-deco corridors. But it's also more than that. Where most FPS

go for the spectacle of scale ("Wow! See that explosion!"), BioShock goes for the spectacle of /place/ ("Wow! Where the hell am I?"). So, sure, while it's as technically impressive as anything short of Gears of War, what really catches in the mind is the atmosphere.

Set in a 1940s city at the bottom of the ocean called Rapture, created by a Howard-Hughes style genius to live away from the parasitic powers of Government, every inch has been lovingly detailed. Banners ("Altruism is the source of all wickedness!") and adverts (A femme fatale demonstrates how the pyrokinetic powers can light cigarettes) so flawlessly conceived you presume they were beamed in from another universe rather than designed. It's so coherent that, if someone asks you where you were last night, you may answer "Oh – I was in Rapture". It's as vividly rendered place as we've seen in videogames.

But it's not just the atmosphere and the story (Which we're not telling anything about, other than its excellence is another reason to not just play the game, but to play it as soon as possible – as, ideally, you'll

You can tell Big Daddy's emotional state depending on what colour their light is glowing. Red is a trifle annoyed, normally with you.



HOUSE OF JEALOUS LOVERS

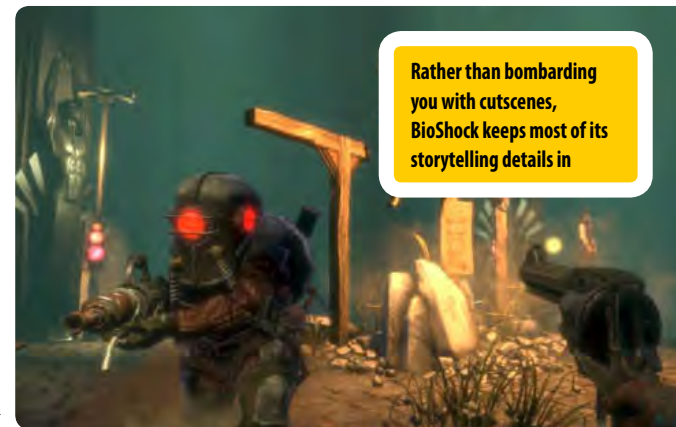
Big Daddys don't like you tangling with their little sisters.

**Sisters****Daddys****Dilemmas**

Sisters

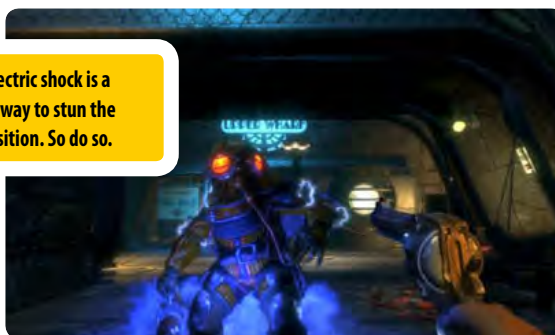
It's the key relationship in the game. Little Sisters gather up genetic material from corpses and process it internally into ADAM. This material acts like the currency in the game. Bad guys need it to live and you need it to buy new powers.

Rather than bombarding you with cutscenes, BioShock keeps most of its storytelling details in





An electric shock is a good way to stun the opposition. So do so.



Ignore the big metal bloke. See behind him, on the wall? That's a healing device. What makes it interesting is that the enemies will try and use them too. So don't let them.

"BioShock casually steps into being one of the best games ever"



How many more times do we have to say this? Buy this game now!

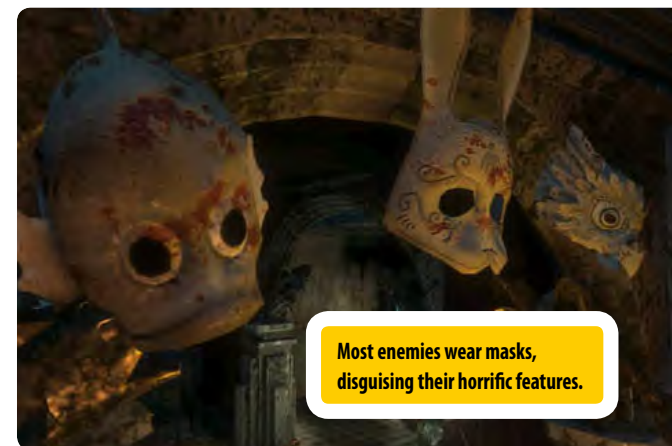
> BioShock continued

want to do so before someone's ruined some of the twists for you) – it's about the actual game mechanics. Rather than following the majority of the first-person shooter into team combats, this is a game which thrives on isolation. However, this doesn't mean you're weak – throughout the game you can collect a genetic mutagen called ADAM which allows you to purchase "Plasmids" and "Tonics", a limited number of which can be equipped at

any time at a "Gene Bank". These, fundamentally, give you powers, and radically customise your experience. Some Tonics will grant you stealth abilities, or let you hit harder with weapons, or even make you electrocute anyone who hits you. Plasmids are even more effective, acting aggressively – throw electrobolts, immolate the opposition, drive one mad to attack the other are among the options. And all rendered in lovely 1950s-horror-vision.

The theme of freedom runs all the

way through the game (even expanding to the story – freedom versus control is absolutely its central theme). Step past the central choice of whether you want to slaughter the iconic cover-featured Big Daddys and then kill (or save) the Little Sisters (And for more on them, cast your eyes towards the box-outs). Once you're past the opening sequences, levels are freeform places, allowing you to explore according to your whims rather than being pushed down a narrow restrictive corridor. In fact, in many



Most enemies wear masks, disguising their horrific features.

INTO RAPTURE

Here's a timetable for your journey into the city at the bottom of the sea. See the sights! Shoot at them!



ARRIVING IN RAPTURE: 5MINUTES
The initial drop into the depths in your trusty Bathosphere gives you great views of the city.



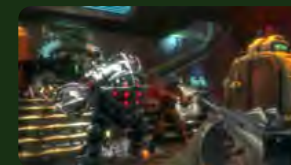
WELCOME TO RAPTURE: 30-1 HOUR
It's not too long in Rapture until you see your first Big Daddy and Little Sister.



NEPTUNE'S BOUNTY: 2-3 HOURS
This industrial area starts to give you clues about the war that tore Rapture apart.



ARCADIA: 4 HOURS
The forest-at-the-bottom-of-the-sea is hardly tranquil. It's here where the game starts to excel.



FORT FROLIC: 6 HOURS
And from here on in, the game's in its prime. Bar a merely end-of-game boss, it's a golden ten hours or so.



Setting things on fire is rarely a bad idea in BioShock. Unless you're standing in an oil slick.

"Art Deco designs, retro adverts, monsters and firearms. BioShock has it all"



Note the valves on this shotgun, meaning it's been upgraded for added abilities.



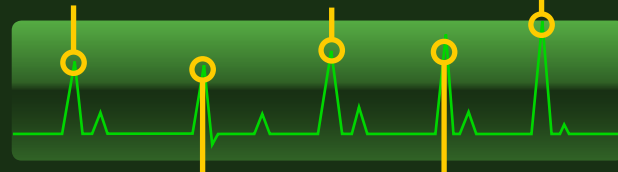
The best way to take on a Big Daddy is careful planning and not just shooting them, like so.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Why am I smoking... oh no! Airplane Crash!

Getting stuck into splicers. Ooh – big Baddy.

Reaching Fort Frolic. Hell, yes.



Ooh, pretty city. Why is there a whale?

Reaching Arcadia. Really, this is really good.

> BioShock continued

cases, there's areas of the level which are purely optional, and up to you whether you investigate or not, normally offering you rewards in terms of wealth or narrative nuggets. It goes on and on. You can research enemies by taking photos of them, gaining a variety of bonuses and special powers. You can upgrade your weapons in

hidden machines. You can swap different ammo types in all your weapons, depending on who you're fighting. You can lay traps and hack hostile security systems over to your side. You can collect detritus and then manufacture them into new equipment. You can really do /a lot/.

Which is lucky, as it highlights what may be the game's main weakness – the lack of any multiplayer. That said,

BioShock is good evidence why it's better to concentrate your efforts and create something sublime, rather than spread them and result in another by-the-numbers Deathmatch/Solo-shooter combination.

You've /never/ fallen in love? Play BioShock. If you have a heart then you'll soon be head-over-heals. ●

Kieron Gillen

360Zine Verdict *Progressive, exhilarating shooter. Leaves you delirious.*

- Deeply Atmospheric
- Oceanic Depths
- No multiplayer

95%



360Zine

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BUNGIE



Stuntman: Ignition

Developer: Paradigm

Entertainment

Publisher: THQ

Heritage: Terminator 3:

The Redemption,
Pilotwings 64

Link: www.stuntmanignition.com

OUT NOW

Just doing Bunny-hops will impress no-one.

No matter how strong a believer you are in on the job training, you wouldn't think that "Movie Stuntman" was a career where you were meant to just learn as you go along. But no sooner than you've arrived at the movie set, you're thrown in a car, pointed in a rough direction and told to go. Oh yeah – mind the lava, yeah?

And then, clearly, you drive straight into the lava.

Stuntman Ignition is the sequel to the original PS2 Stuntman, and keeps the same core concept. Crashing into

"Follow the Director's directions, hitting the required stunts"

things a lot and having to replay a level. Or, more fairly, being the eponymous Stuntman. In each section you have to follow the demanding Director's (er) Directions, hitting the required stunts. Each of the six films which you work through is a pitch-perfect parody of a popular film, from the seventies-

Much like Burnout, collisions are to be desired rather than avoided.

exploitation cop thriller Overdrive, to the B-movie Militarism of Strike Force Omega, and made up of scenes where you drive everything from traditional bikes and cars, up to enormous trucks dragging nuclear missiles behind them. Manage to slide, jump and crash things correctly, and you go onto the next level. Easy.

Except not. While the difficulty has >

It's not all things with wheels - the James Bond levels give you something a little more hovey.

THE BOX SET

A rough guide to where you'll be doing your rough cuts. Here's four of the game's six movies...



AFTERSHOCK
TIME: 0-30 MINUTES.

Aftershock is a disaster movie, featuring a lot of insta-kill lava and rocks falling from the heaven. How mean.



WHOOPIIN AND A HOLLERIN' II
TIME: 1-2 HOURS

Those Good ol' boys are back. This is a hillbilly comedy ala Dukes of Hazard, so lots of monster trucks and muscle cars



OVERDRIVE
TIME: 2-3 HOURS

The 70s movie features great orchestral funk soundtracks for a cop who is OUT OF CONTROL. Much like his lapels.



NEVER KILL ME AGAIN
TIME: 5 HOURS

You'll probably have to had replayed quite a few levels before you unlock this James Bond inspired thriller.



Inevitably, one level is set in hilly San Francisco. You'd miss it if it wasn't.



"To get a five star rating you have to start chaining stunts"

The monster wheel truck leads to a whole lot of crushing. Get in touch with your inner hill-billy.

CUNNING STUNTS

When there's something trickier than putting pedal to the metal, the game does introduce them. Here's some of the main ones.



Two wheels



Corkscrew jump



One wheel



Two wheels

The whole two wheeling thing requires a half ramp which you just hit at a constant speed, which you have to maintain while using the steering to keep yourself balanced. Inevitably, you won't.

> Stuntman continued

been toned down from the original game, with you being able to miss five tricks before you have to reshoot, and the lack of lengthy load sequences makes the enormous amounts of replaying a hell of a lot bearable... it's still a case of memorising the vast majority of the course. While everything is signposted and the director will be shouting out what he needs next, it's not always signposted well enough and the direction can be a

little late. Taking a wrong turn off the set when you didn't have a clue where to go is enormously frustrating. Missing a trick – like a jump – which causes you to miss three more tricks, losing all your lives is... enormously frustrating. Having instant-replay lava in the game's very first level is... enormously frustrating.

The pay off of all this enormous frustration is the massive exhilaration when you actually manage to pull it off. Sitting back and watching a replay when you've done a decent run is a real

pleasure. Hell, if you mess up in a particularly hilarious way, a replay can be a pleasure too. Also, the further you play into the game, the more you realise the game has hidden subtleties. To get a five star rating you have to start chaining stunts. You do this by doing something fancy – which can be as small as hitting some crates, or a small slide – every couple of seconds, requiring constant concentration. There's even an easy mode to try and make it more accessible, which is little more than a gesture as you're required



Each sequence tends to end with a choreographed smash. Ones where you fly through the air and hit a helicopter are especially cool.

> Stuntman continued

to get high scores to unlock new movies, and in practice is of more use when learning tracks.

Unlocking is especially important for the games' other two modes, giving new vehicles and bits and bobbins to play with. The first is the freeform stunt-creation section, where you can either just arrange courses to your heart's content (and share) or actually try and complete pre-designed puzzles by laying down the required bits of course needed to activate them. For example, if there's a checkpoint you have to drive through in the air, a ramp positioned correctly makes it possible. While novel, this mode is a little fiddly, and activating some of the symbols seems a little too much like trial and error.

Far more compelling is the

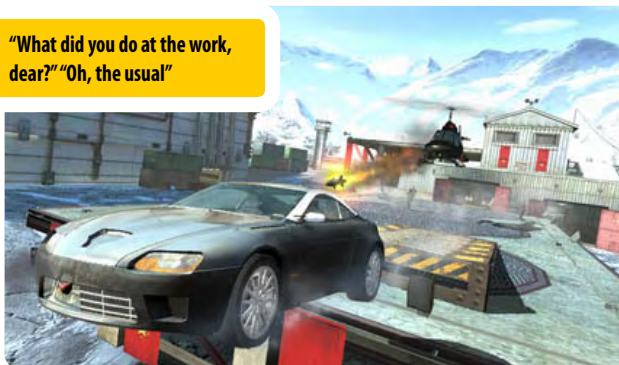
multiplayer, which is playable on Live, System Link or split-screen. While modes where you compete either in racing or performing the most impressive stunts are expected, the best mode is the one which combines both, with car's hurtling around, paying equal attention to coming first, doing impressive jumps /and/ ramming the opposition – the latter allows you to steal their stunt multiplier, which is always amusing.

There's much to like about Stuntman: Ignition. It's originality goes a long way, it's got a real sense of humour in its presentation and some of the stunt-sequences are so ludicrous they have to be applauded.

However, if there's any history of high-blood pressure and heart-attacks in your family, it's one to be avoided. Being a challenge is one thing. It being a challenge not throwing your 360 out the window in rage is quite another. ●

Kieron Gillen

"What did you do at the work, dear?" "Oh, the usual"



"The stunt-sequences are so ludicrous they have to be applauded"

Gentlemen wear suits when going biking. Be a gentleman.

Get ready for action - ignite the screen!



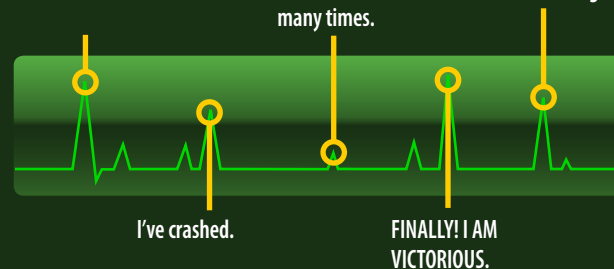
They don't actually have Dukes in Hazard. They're not a monarchy.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

OH MY LAVA!

I've crashed many times.

More crashing



360Zine Verdict Fun, but brick-wall difficulty makes it clear why being a Stuntman is a pro's job.

Still Original Concept

Often Spectacular

Enormously, enormously frustrating

75%

PCGZine

MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE
Drop in for our review of EA's latest

BIOSHOCK REVIEW
As good on the PC as on the Xbox 360?

FALLOUT 3
The Oblivion developer returns

MMORPG SPECIAL
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Issue 9 | Oct 2007

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Take to the skies with EA's latest WWII FPS

REVIEWED!

BIOSHOCK

In-depth and up-to-date review of the game

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Post-Apocalyptic RPG from the Oblivion team

MYTHOS
Free MMO from the brains behind WoW and Hellgate: London

RAGE
Quake meets Mad-Max in id's astonishing new game

ZOOM IN ZOOM OUT TOGGLE

**Developer:** Koei**Publisher:** Koei**Heritage:** Wipeout,
Quantum Redshift**Link:** www.koei.co.uk
OUT NOW

Fatal Inertia

What would a console be without a high-velocity sci-fi racing game, eh?

The futuristic racer is a genre dominated by a single franchise: Wipeout. The developers of Fatal Inertia know this and they're keen to draw other comparisons. While the high-speed hovercraft of Fatal Inertia are powerfully reminiscent of the arch-Uncle of the genre, Koei are talking about games like MarioKart when they explain how they want their game to be seen. They want people to think about the fun, the competition and the sneaky flying, and not just the velocity and slick graphics.

The next millennium

You can see what they're talking about too. The craft come in shapes that suggest a chromed banana, or flying camper van, or an airway hogging hot-rod from a thousand years in the future.



Beefy nose-cones are part of the fun.

"The craft come in shapes that suggest a chromed banana, or flying camper van"

further. Meanwhile the weapons, such as they are, have plenty of wacky effects. Some attach rockets to your foe, or slow them in time distortions, or fire heavy, magnetic blobs onto your opponent, temporarily reducing their agility. All this means that this is a game

that feels less cruel than games like Wipeout or Quantum Redshift and the focus is firmly on canny racing, rather than simply being able to blast them off the track. It's reasonably entertaining to do that.

However, you could say that Koei



We think this is the bungee in action.

A fat yellow racing machine, yesterday.

TRACK TASTIC
It's back to the future...



LOST CANYON

The opening race is on this lovely desert track. Mesas tower overhead, while sparks fly.



DEEPWOODS PASS

Misty swamps abound in this heavily vegetative track. It's a bit murky down there.



PARADISE ISLAND

Long curving beaches and typically tropical rock formations make sure this track lives to its name.



GLACIER BAY

Obligatory snow level comes in the form of glacier bay. The ice looks all shiny, of course.



DEVIL'S PEAK

Yikes, it's a bit grim up and Devil's Peak. You'd never have guessed it from the name though, eh?





Snow levels. They're everywhere.

"The control system allows for smooth, aggressive, stunt-filled flying"



The hovercraft can change altitude slightly.



The environments are stunning.

WANNA GET TO KNOW YOUR HOVER?

They're a lot less bover...



Hover Craft

Rocket Ships

Camper Van

Hover Craft

One of the most pleasing things about Fatal Inertia is the the design of the hover-vehicles themselves. Rather than take the current 'industrial' vogue in sci-fi as their motif they're all shiny sleek pods from an earlier era of imagining.

> Fatal Inertia continued

are kidding themselves if they think this game is comparable with MarioKart. There's nothing, not even 'spirit of play' to compare these two games, aside from folks trying to twist their marketing away from their biggest competitors. In reality Fatal Inertia is firmly placed within the futuristic racer genre and, luckily for Koei (and for us), it does a pretty good job in there.

Feel good factor

At a purely mechanical level the game is excellent. Initially you'll be annoyed by missing the checkpoints or clipping too much of the scenery, but the control system ultimately allows for smooth, aggressive, stunt-filled flying. Anyone familiar with these kind of games will pick it up after a couple of tracks, while complete beginners might find the first hour frustrating. The difficulty curve through numerous tracks is excellent too, although the tracks themselves are consistently too



short, despite being well designed and routinely lavish with visual effects. There should be more to go on, more to explore, and the various routes round the tracks provide some of that, but it's never quite enough.

What's best, however, is the feel of the races themselves. The sense of speed is excellent and the capacity to control that speed (with an interesting air-brake booster) means you can

regularly pull off manoeuvres and overtaking stunts that really feel competitive and thrilling. Even more compelling is that the game makes each race feel just about competitive enough. You'll usually win easily, but that doesn't mean there won't be action throughout the race. The AI keeps up, and keeps you under just enough pressure. It also knows how to give you a good game in each of the game



See if you can identify the species of moss.



The woodland level is one of the most intense.

"It's friendly, relaxing, and exquisitely pretty throughout"



The finishing line is pure neon.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

First race: miss checkpoints, bang into rocks.

Courses seem too short to begin with.

Find shortcuts, win championships with ease.



Master those controls and start to win.

Master those clever weapon systems.

Race across multiple tracks in different vehicles.



> Fatal Inertia continued

modes - some of which focus on pure racing, while others focus on battle. Nevertheless the single player career mode gets tiresome within a few hours. Fortunately there are some good quick-race options and a superb split screen multiplayer to make up for any shortfall in longevity for the game. It's a game you will want to drop into for a quick session. There's definitely a kick to beating real people, especially as beginners don't take too long to grasp the control system, so they compete pretty quickly. There's things to learn about the courses, and there's enough of them that you'll take a while to struggle your way through them all.

Ultimately there's not much new here, and folks who want truly brain-searing white-knuckle racing should look elsewhere. The mixed up presentation and general lack of distinct character (generic corporate future sci-fi twaddle despite ace car design) mean that the overall game lacks charm, and a game of this ilk needs as much of that as it can get

hold of. Still, if you're a sci-fi junkie like us you're bound to get a great deal of fun from whizzing round the lushly bedecked areas in your spare hours. It's friendly, relaxing, and exquisitely pretty throughout. Not an out and out recommended purchase as such, but certainly one we can't see many gamers regretting. ● **Jim Rossignol**

360Zine Verdict

Futuristic and a great deal of fun. This one really does have plenty of inertia.



It's easy to pick up and play



It's slick, fun, and very pretty



There's not a great deal of life to it

80%

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Issue 6 | September 2007

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THE BEST PLAYSTATION 3 GAMES

EXCLUSIVE! WWE SmackDown vs RAW 2008 interview and preview

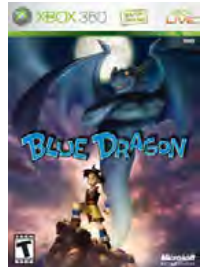
The 50 Most Wanted PS3 games

PLUS: Unreal Tournament 3

LittleBigPlanet Metal Gear Solid

The Darkness Lair





Blue Dragon

The Dragon from the east torches the 360, but it's not quite the legendary experience it wants to be.

Developer: Artoon/
Mistwalker
Publisher: Microsoft
Games Studios
Heritage: Vampire Rain,
Blinx
Link: www.xbox.com
OUT NOW

Playing through Blue Dragon is certainly an experience if you've never played an RPG with French dubbing before. And it isn't because Microsoft have done something stupid either, like not including an English track on the disk. Oh no, it's because of something far worse. The developers have gone and given the main character the single most annoying voice of any game – ever.



Marumar is one of the best characters.

"Your character's shadow is one of the coolest parts of Blue Dragon"

Making your lead character sound like the kind of American dweeb you'd like to slap if you ever met him is not the best of design decisions, and somewhat sadly, this is pretty indicative of Blue Dragon's overall character design. The majority of the main cast are absolutely awful. Each of the characters is meant to be around

sixteen years old, yet they look like the bastard child of a Bratz doll and Noddy, while somehow managing to display even less emotion than that of their plastic pals. What's worse, this manages to make Blue Dragon's already limp storyline even weaker, because as all the terrible things happen (you know, villages getting destroyed, that kind



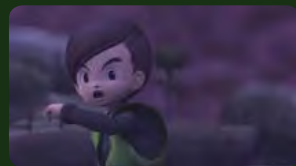
This is as much emotion as you're likely to see on the face of any character in Blue Dragon. Note the dead pan looks on all but one of their faces.



She may look like a pirate, but she's actually just a helpful mercenary with a crush on a small orange rat type thing.

THE LONG HAUL

Welcome to the first 24 hours of Blue Dragon...



30 SECONDS - Right at the beginning of the game, your village is swamped with a mysterious purple fog.



15 MINUTES - Not long after that, everything goes horribly wrong, and your heroes learn to use their shadows.



3-15 HOURS - From there on, you basically just move from dungeon to dungeon, and not much else happens.



16 HOURS - When you finally come across the King of Jibral, the story's just beginning to get interesting, but it's sixteen hours in!



20-24 HOURS - Now, with your party finally established, and the story beginning to get interesting, the adventure can begin properly.

This guy's a prince, yet he looks about twelve.



The gameplay's broken up by a number of button bashing mini-games.



Let's do the Deeve dance of reviewing!

TRUE BLUE

Inside the dragon's lair...



Beach

Feecal

Circle

Beachcombing

The environments in Blue Dragon are interactive in the most literal sense of the word, and there are loads of things you can prod, poke or change. Most interestingly, the majority of objects you see lying around, from air vents to diamonds can be searched, often rewarding you with gold, items, or even experience points!

> Blue Dragon continued

of thing), everyone just stands around, looking exactly the same as they do when they're elated.

If you came looking for a dramatic experience of the calibre of something like Final Fantasy, the chances are you'll be disappointed, but thankfully, the rest of the game is a lot, lot better.

Under attack

The storyline in Blue Dragon is typically generic stuff. You play as Shu, an incredibly annoying 16 year old, whose village finds itself under attack every few years by a rampaging land shark. The only forewarning the villagers ever get of an attack is the mysterious purple fog that descends upon them minutes before. As you may have already guessed, other areas of the world have been experiencing similar sorts of attacks, and there's an evil villain behind it all who you and your friends, after discovering your hidden power, must band together to stop. We did warn you it was hackneyed...

The "hidden power" is actually your

Nene's right hand man/machine is this strange robot thing. He reminds us of Dr.Robotnik



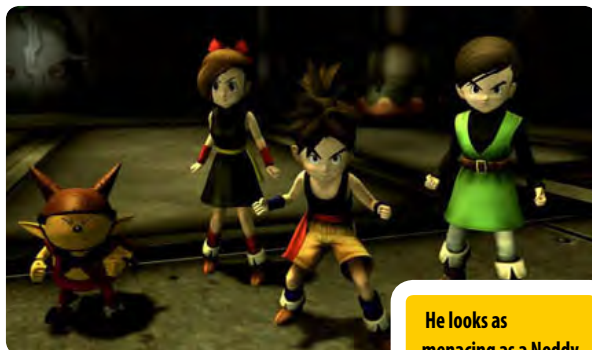
"The battles make Blue Dragon a lot of fun"

character's shadow, and this is, surprisingly, one of the coolest parts of Blue Dragon. Each of your characters has their own special shadow beast, and when you get into a battle, these shadows do the fighting for you, granting you access to all sorts of fancy magical powers.

The battles make Blue Dragon a lot

more fun than it really has any right to be, and almost seem to take precedence to the storyline. Thankfully, the developers decided to stick with turn-based battles rather than turning real-time as most RPGs have been as of late, and this makes each encounter a lot more strategic. The battles utilise an almost grid-based system where

The game's endless battles are punctuated by numerous cutscenes and un-skippable text sequences.



He looks as menacing as a Noddy look-alike can get.

"The best aspect of Blue Dragon is the levelling system"

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

The soundtrack gets us stirred up and ready to play.

And why has Jiro got a head the size of a small planet?

But it could be some time before the story gets as interesting.



But does he really sound that annoying?

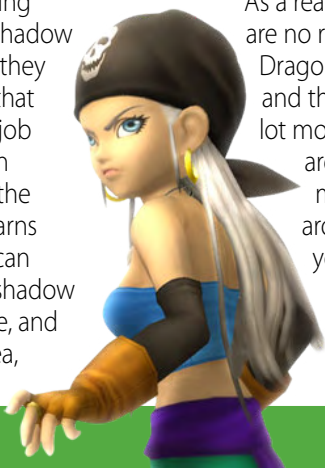
Well, at least the battles are good.

> Blue Dragon continued

enemies are arranged in rows, and you have spells that either damage one, all, or a single row of enemies.

On the level

However, by far the best aspect of Blue Dragon is the levelling system, which gives the game a surprising amount of depth. Each shadow has a certain job, and as they level up, they gain skills that are associated with that job (for example, the assassin learns how to steal, and the black magic specialist learns how to cast spells). You can change the job of each shadow when you're not in battle, and level up in a different area,



letting you choose to either build up a well-rounded shadow, or a master of one technique. Brilliantly, each of the skills your shadow learns are not forgotten when you change its job, letting you assign your character skills from many different classes.

As a real breath of fresh air, there are no random battles in Blue Dragon, even on the world map, and this makes the game feel a lot more natural. Instead, in each area you explore, there are monsters wondering around, which will pursue you for a set length of time once they spot you. Sneak up behind the monsters, however, and you can

pull off a "back attack", which lets you begin the battle with your enemies facing away. It's a very nice touch, and one that really helps to draw you into the game's world, making it seem like a living, breathing place.

While it's certainly not without its flaws, Blue Dragon is a solid RPG, and the battles, at the very least, should spark some interest in anyone who's ever played an RPG. Although it's arguably the best traditional RPG on 360, when held in comparison to the Final Fantasies, and even Skies of Arcadias of this world, it doesn't seem likely that many people will be holding Blue Dragon in the same high regard in years to come. ●

Ian Morris

The best Japanese RPG to grace our shores. So far.



360Zine Verdict

The best J-RPG on 360 so far, but we bet it won't stay that way.

👍 HUGE adventure

👍 Turn-based battles

👎 Awful characters

81%

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MotoGP 07

Can THQ's all-conquering bike racer lap the competition once more?

There's an important question to ask yourself before you consider buying MotoGP 07, and it's this: do I own MotoGP 06? If the answer's yes, then move along - there's really not an awful lot new to see here. Certainly not enough to spend between forty and fifty notes, especially with so many other wonderful slices of gaming goodness to hit the 360 in the next few months. If the answer's no, then you've got another question: do I have the patience to get into a game that appears - from the first few hours of play at least - to actually hate me?

You see, not for nothing is the

Replays look great, and you can save the entire race to the hard drive, and view it from several angles. There's a shaky-cam view which is particularly headache-inducing.

It looks a little cloudy, but rain is only available on certain tracks.

"Not for nothing is the MotoGP series hailed as Gran Turismo with bikes"

MotoGP series hailed as 'Gran Turismo with bikes'. While it's not quite as technologically obsessive as GT, it's just as tough - if not more so - to get into.

It's quite a different mentality from most racers - even your first race on Rookie Mode, on the easiest track, can see you spinning off hopelessly several times per lap. What MotoGP players already know - and many frustrated newbies fail to grasp - is that braking is in many ways far more important than accelerating. With four wheels, approaching a turn at too high a speed doesn't always mean disaster - if you're skilled enough with the wheel, and gently brake as you're skidding, a failed turn can be rectified. Not so here - the slightest misjudgement sends you careering off your bike, usually onto the gravel, and you watch in horror as half the field or more overtakes you. Probably laughing as they go, too.

We're not really selling this too well, are we? Yet despite this steep difficulty

The official licence means you'll be facing off against the likes of Valentino Rossi and Casey Stoner - adding further to the intense pressure.



ROAD TRIP

A guide to your Grand Prix weekend



On your marks

Get set

Go!

On your marks

The attempts to add a bit of razzmatazz to this year's version are a little half-hearted to say the least, with some poor character models, and a weak post-race podium celebration scene. Still, they're skippable at least.



> Moto GP continued

curve, MotoGP isn't the pinnacle of bike racing games without a reason. Once you realise that taking a sharp corner requires a significant reduction of speed (not just taking a few kilometres per hour off and hoping for the best), things start to fall into place. You're only falling off your bike twice a race, and managing to recreate that thrill of

cutting inside a rider that's taken a bend that little bit too wide. You start to get more daring, making your biker's knees graze the tarmac as you accelerate out of a hairpin at a near-horizontal angle, and weaving in and out of traffic down the long straights. Soon, you're moving onto Pro difficulty, and testing your newly-developed skills against tougher opponents, and achieving a second place in a grand

prix on Shanghai in the rain suddenly becomes the greatest gaming high you've had for a while. And all too quickly those initial problems - and the other early niggles, like the overly clinical presentation, and the hopelessly generic dance/alt-punk soundtrack - fade into the background, leaving just you, your bike and the track ahead as the only factors that matter.

Alongside the traditional Grand >

THINK BIKE

Four wheels good, two wheels better



10 MINUTES - Falling off. A lot. Don't worry, it gets much better than this.



1 HOUR - You're starting to master the controls, and finishing in the top four or five.



4 HOURS - Taking to the streets in Extreme road, and pimping your ride



8 HOURS - Risking it all online in pink slip races - high risk but high reward



15 HOURS+ - Career mode will last a long time, particularly when you reach Legend difficulty



Experienced players will be able to adjust their rider's position on the bike to optimise turning - lean forward and back with the left analogue.

There's a simple but useful telemetry function that shows a simple overview of your performance post-race.



PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Too. Damn. Hard.

No it's not!

Wait a minute...

Online pink-slip races are the ultimate risk



If you're particularly quick on the accelerator, you can pull off the occasional wheelie to show off.

> Moto GP continued

Prix mode, there are a number of Extreme races, where the handling does seem a little less sim-like, though your opponents seem tougher to counter that. These street races offer an entertaining mix of tracks, with the lengthy straights of Autobahn rubbing shoulders with the curves of Monterey. The Grand Prix tracks are similarly varied - you'll reach incredible speeds down the long stretches of Mugello and Estoril, while Shanghai will have you nervously squeezing the brake throughout. One slight niggle is that the warnings for the upcoming turns can come that little bit too late, but that just means it pays to learn the

"Your biker's knees graze the tarmac as you accelerate out of a hairpin"

courses before you race - exactly as it should be in a serious racer like this.

Hardcore

As for improvements, the added glitz of the race day doesn't add up to an awful lot, with some poorly-produced mini-cutscenes, though thankfully the frame-rate is a lot steadier than before. You can now customise your Extreme bikes, and take them online in pink-slip races, with the loser forced to give away their ride. And, a couple of

additional Live tournaments aside, that's about it. The supposed 'more intense and dynamic' handling seems remarkably similar to last year's game, while the training modes hardly make the game any more accessible.

MotoGP 07 isn't likely to win over any new fans, and it doesn't really offer enough for bike-heads who picked up the previous title twelve months ago. But it's still a terrific game which offers plentiful rewards to those who have the patience to master it. If you're up for a real hardcore challenge, MotoGP 07 will keep you going for quite some time. The last question to ask yourself: is that me? If so, this is a must-buy. ●

Chris Schilling

360Zine Verdict

Still the best motorcycle racer ever made



A wealth of content



The bikes look great



Harder than Mike Tyson

86%



Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up

Like what you see? Then download your games of choice today...



Hexic 2

Publisher: Microsoft Games Studios **Developer:** Carbonated Games **Price:** 800 MP

Nearly seven quid for something that was bundled free with the 360? Practically. Although it's not exactly the same, Hexic 2 does contain all the same modes, and the same basic style of gameplay, with a few extras bolted on for good measure. You can now perform a new combo, by arranging five hexagons in a line, and there's also an entirely new battle mode, which sees you face off against the computer, or a local or Live opponent, as you rush to destroy

more hexagons than they can. Other than that, the rest of this game is exactly the same as what you've got sitting on your 360's hard drive already, and for £6.80, this really isn't worth your money.

- Local multiplay is alright
- Already got Hexic
- Too expensive

Too much for too little **54%**

Track & Field

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Price:** 400 MP

Originally surfacing in 1983, Track and Field has become something of a gaming icon. Taking part in six different sporting events, ranging from the hundred meter sprint, to the javelin, and even shot putting, this is an addictive collection of button mashing mini-games that's perfectly suited to parties. On your own, it almost goes without saying that the games will get boring pretty quickly, but with four friends crammed around a TV, or even over Xbox Live, this is easily one of the most enjoyable games on the XBLA.



- Addictive
- Pick up and Play
- Broken Controllers

Ultimate party fun **89%**



Street Trace NYC

Publisher: Gaia Industries **Developer:** Gaia Industries **Price:** 800 MP

With a cast of "urban" characters, and a selection of equally uninspired locales, Street Trace NYC has you racing around the courses or arenas, either shooting your opponents in a straight out deathmatch, capturing flags, or racing around a track in the fastest time. The only problem is, the gameplay is downright awful, and is plagued by unresponsive controls, a camera that likes getting stuck inside objects, and some generally poor modes. Avoid.

- Awful controls
- Awful design
- Awful game

Rubbish, innit? **35%**

Ecco the Dolphin

Publisher: SEGA **Developer:** Backbone Entertainment **Price:** 400 MP

Ecco the Dolphin is another blast from the past in the SEGA Vintage Collection, but sadly, this one isn't quite as good as we'd been expecting. In the simplest of terms, Ecco is an underwater platformer, where you have to swim around various underwater environments, avoiding enemies (at least until you get the "Death Sonar") and stopping for regular breathers. However, while back in the day this may have been a lot of fun, now, it just seems boring.



- Nice and Cheap
- Retro
- Confusing level design

Not as vintage as hoped **61%**

> Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up continued

Space Giraffe

Publisher: Llamasoft **Developer:** Llamasoft **Price:** 400 MP

If you've ever heard of Jeff Minter, or played any of his games, you may want to add 10% or so onto this score, as you're likely to appreciate this retro action more than most. From the guy who brought us classics such as Llamatron and Tempest 2000, Space Giraffe is a basic shooter that tries desperately hard to appear retro. With some psychedelic backgrounds doing their best to put you off the action, all you have to do is move your ship left and right, as the craft automatically fires, in a vain attempt to destroy whatever comes towards you. Not really the game we were hoping for.



- 👍 OK for a bit
- 👎 Too simplistic
- 👎 Not enough Llamas

Not quite Minted

66%

Streets of Rage 2

Publisher: SEGA **Developer:** Backbone Entertainment **Price:** 400 MP

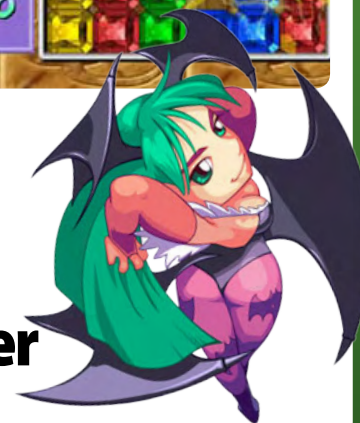
Another month, another old school beat-'em-up, but, like Ecco the Dolphin, this latest Sega release isn't quite up to the standard of last month's offerings. Based on the arcade version of Streets of Rage, this retro side-scroller features some solid gameplay mechanics, both local and Xbox Live co-op play, and a wide range of special moves and weapons you can use to plough your way through the streams of enemies. The graphics are nice enough (in a retro kind of way), and the two-player co-op mode is as fun as ever, but ultimately, Streets of Rage is missing that intangible quality that made Golden Axe so much fun. Still, it's cheaper than on the Wii, so at least that's something...



- 👍 Good co-op
- 👍 Weapons
- 👎 Not as good as Golden Axe

Cheap thrills

71%



Super Puzzle Fighter

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Backbone Entertainment **Price:** 800 MP

With a swish graphical overhaul in tow, and a brand new Xbox Live multiplayer mode, Super Puzzle Fighter is one of the better puzzle games on the XBLA. The object of the game is quite simple – connect groups of three or four gems, either horizontally, diagonally, or vertically (depending on the mode) and the gems will be destroyed. The more gems you can clear, the bigger the combo you can create, which drops gems onto your opponents side, and

also makes your character perform a move on the other guy in the middle of the screen. It's very cutesy, and very Japanese, but that just makes it better in our eyes – but do be warned, the difficulty level is sky high...

- 👍 Great graphical overhaul
- 👍 Pure puzzling
- 👎 VERY Difficult

Hadouken!

80%





Welcome...

In preparation for Halo 3, Simon has been hitting the lobbies of Halo 2 to hone his skills. But he still gets his arse spanked time and time again.

'alo 'alo 'alo

It's raining games!

We've just experienced the wettest summer since records began, but it's not been enough to dampen our spirits in anticipation of the downpour of games expected between now and Christmas. The release of the Xbox 360 Elite has come just at the right time, because we've now got enough space on our

hard drive to cope with the strain of the imminent releases. It's the time of year when fans of sports' games get their kicks from the likes of FIFA and Pro Evo, but there's one game that's at the top of our most wanted list this month; anyone for a game of Halo 3?



360Zine Site of the Month

Planet Xbox 360 offers the complete package for gamers. It's a website that's easy on the eye, simple to navigate and packed full of news, reviews and features. They offer a thriving community where all the latest games, rumours and hardware are discussed in their forums, but what makes the site really stand out among the crowd is the regular podcasts, where staff writers Joel Clausen and Jacob Corbin discuss the latest goings on in the Xbox 360 world. They often open up their show to other Planet Xbox 360 staff members including writers and forum moderators, not to mention regular PX360 site members.

Editor Matt Gibbs tells us that "Planet Xbox 360 has all the coverage and features of the big network sites, but provides the same sense of community and perspective as the smaller ones. We have more freedom to write and say what we please, and also more scope to listen to our readers and implement the features and changes that they want."

You can visit and join the PX360 community at www.planetxbox360.com



**Click here to
nominate the next
360Zine site of the
month**



Gears of War just
got better with the
new Map Pack.

Streets of
Rage 2 stills
looks the part.

On Marketplace

WHAT'S HOT?

Content: Gears Of War Hidden Fronts Map Pack

Price: Free

Gears of War has sold more than 4 million copies worldwide and continues to hold the title of most popular Xbox 360 game on Xbox live. This free map pack allows you to take the fight to four new areas, including the Krypt-infested swamp, Bullet Marsh.

XBOX LIVE ARCADE

Streets of Rage 2

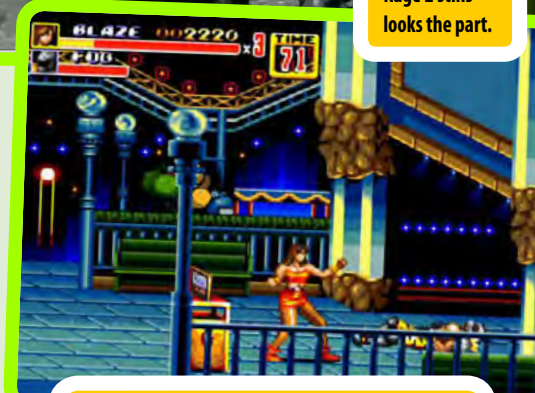
Price: 400 MS Points

SEGA continue to dish out some great titles to the XBLA. The side scrolling beat-'em up Streets of Rage 2 supports two players over Xbox live where it's up to you to take down Mr. X once and for all! After all these years, it still looks great and plays just as well as we remember.

COMING SOON TO THE XBOX LIVE ARCADE

Battlestar Galactica

Based on the popular sci-fi television show, Battlestar Galactica is a top-down space combat game where you can choose to defend the Galactica, or play as the ruthless Cylons as they seek to remove the human menace from existence. We're promised 8 player battles online, with Firefight, Skirmish and Domination modes.



**"Take the fight to four
new areas, including the
Krypt-infested swamp,
Bullet Marsh"**



Get ready for thrills and
spills in the soon-to-come
Battlestar Galactica

360Zine Clan of the Month



Head over for LoX and LoX of gaming goodness.

LoXgamers was set up by founder Domingo SG back in December 2003, originally under the team name Clan LoX and the gamertag ThundaLox. They've been together as a clan for over 4 years and become really good friends thanks to Xbox Live and their commitment to meeting up regularly for gaming parties, LoX-organised LAN tournaments, which take place four times a year and industry-related events.

Domingo SG told us that his team don't worry (too much!) about stats and don't fret about being the very best of the best. They do however endeavour to have a laugh and not take gaming too seriously. Now that's the spirit!

What games do you play?

Rainbow Six Vegas, Forza MotorSport 2, Texas Hold'em Poker and Gears of War to name but a few.

What do you think makes a great clan?

A great clan / team / community needs a good bunch of people that click well together, enjoy a good laugh, are keen gamers and support each other in matches - win or lose! This is why LoXgamers is so appealing to many Xbox gamers out there - we don't pressure or hassle our team members due to their level of skill in games and we're always looking for the next challenge.

Do you enter tournaments and/or gaming leagues?

LoXgamers entered the "Friends Forum Touring Car League"...and we host our own leagues and knockout competitions, with the most popular being Pro Evo 6, Rainbow Six Sharpshooter, Football Manager, Poker league and Tiger Woods. We also regularly sign up for competitions hosted by our affiliate gaming clans which we have forged a good rapport with over the years.

What's the clans most memorable moment on Xbox live?

I formed LoXgamers after

my obsession with Rainbow Six 3 on the original Xbox. This series of games has brought our most memorable moments... all involving timely grenades for a mass team-killing spree... in a clan match which was to be published in a magazine! Ha ha ha! ;o)

What's your favourite aspect of Xbox live?

The community. The original Xbox really brought alive the online gaming scene for console owners, and with Xbox 360, this has just exploded to create a great sense of teamwork, bragging rights, and with the MarketPlace downloads, gamers are able to playtest forthcoming next-gen games, as well as revel in the hedonistic childhood gaming memories with retro titles from Live Arcade.



Poker-faced Domingo SG challenges you to Texas Hold'em

CHALLENGE US TO... ANY XBOX 360 GAME

To challenge us head over to www.loxgamers.com and post on our forums. We welcome challenges on a range of Xbox 360 games, including Forza 2, Gears of War, Rainbow Six Vegas and Halo 3.

The 360Zine Giveaway!

Fatal Inertia™

In the middle of the 22nd century mankind's thirst for excitement has spawned an evolutionary sporting event that draws from the combined disciplines of rally racing, demolition derby and high-performance aeronautics.

Fatal Inertia features intense multiplayer battles with up to 8 players vying for pole position. There are a variety of modes to choose from with races based around weapons and combat or straight out speed races where all weapon pads are converted to rocket boosters. Customise your craft offline and bring them into the multiplayer skirmish.

To celebrate the September release of Fatal Inertia we have 5 copies to give away. All you need to do win yourself a copy is answer this question...

Which well-known physics engine powers Fatal Inertia?

Click the panel to the right or email your answers to: 360community@gamerzines.com



Click here to win Fatal Inertia



> Inbox

Thanks for all your emails. We love to hear from you so keep 'em coming...

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to send us a letter now!

GAMERZINES IS ONE OF THE TOP mags around - high quality and extremely well detailed. Gamerzines is at the top of its class. So congratulations on a job well done. I would love to see some of Prototype and Wet in the next 360Zines.

> **Joel Escobar**

> Thanks, Joel! It's always nice to get positive feedback from our readers. As for Prototype and Wet - your wish is our command. We'll have more on these two in forthcoming issues of 360Zine.

**Don't miss
The Halo Issue**
Out Sept 25th
Sign up now!

JUICED - TUNING FESTIVAL! I WANT this game as I'm addicted to tuning.

> **Bora**

> Tuning festival is right - there are more mods than you can shake a Lambretta at! And we think it'll be great too.

GUITAR HERO 3 WILL SIMPLY LIVE OR die on how expensive Rock Band is. Fans have been seriously let down over GH2 DLC, this could quite easily turn into the poor man's choice this Christmas.

> **Julian (gamertag: tozOL)**

> It's true that Rock Band looks like it'll blow everyone away, but at what cost? Don't worry about Guitar Hero 3, with such an awesome tracklisting (we're already looking forward to playing Sabotage by the Beastie Boys) we're sure it'll be great. Expect more news on both these titles from 360Zine very soon...

YOU SHOULD INCLUDE A BACK review section that is where you have all the games reviewed and the games

that scored gold put in an elite part. And do this for all of your mags. Also can you do a review between the pro and elite consoles?

> **Jamie**

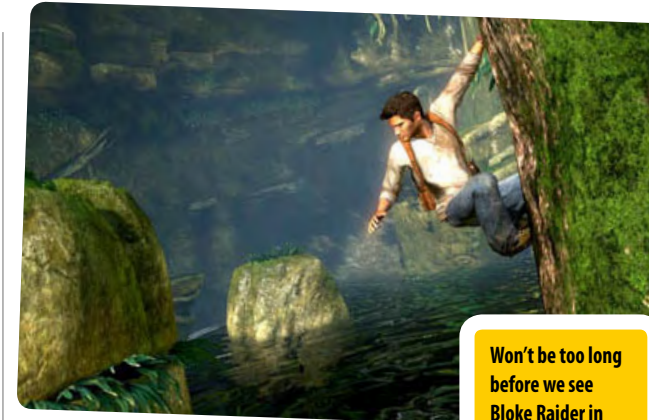
> Nice idea, Jamie. We take all our reader feedback into consideration, so keep your ideas for 360Zine coming in, and we'll be sure to try and incorporate the best ideas into the mag.

THIS IS A GAMER'S DREAM COME TRUE. I thank the team of Gamerzines for coming out with such an innovative and outstanding idea. Providing material to the gamers in this way is cool.

> **Darkslayer**

> Why thanks, Darkslayer. We presume that's not your real name. Either way, we're glad to have you on our side!

UNCHARTED SOUNDS VERY GOOD TO me. Always been a fan of the good Tomb Raider games, as well as the Indiana Jones movies. This looks like a



Won't be too long before we see Bloke Raider in action.

good mix of both. And the animation looks sweet.

> **Clinton Grider**

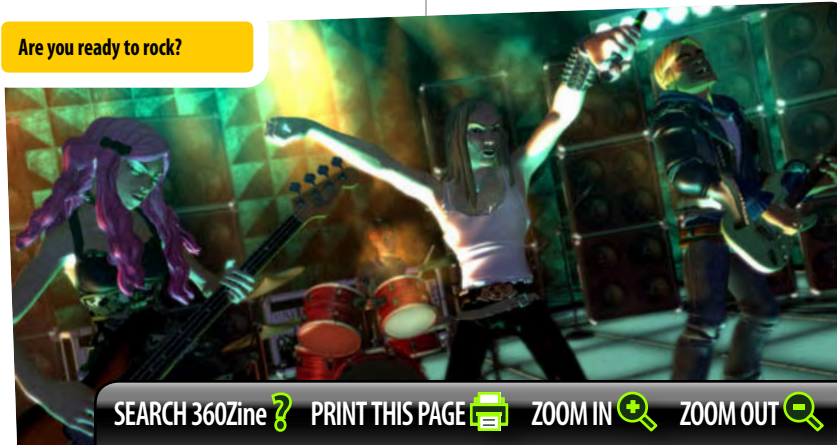
> In press circles, it's already being referred to as 'Bloke Raider', but it does indeed look the business. We'll have another look at the game pretty soon - stay tuned to 360Zine for the latest info.

HI, I HAVE JUST FOUND OUT THAT GTA IV might have police dogs in it. Also Rockstar have announced they have finished the single player part of the game and are working on the multiplayer. Peace.

> **Michael Moss**

> Thanks for the heads-up, Michael. It'd certainly make car-jacking interesting if you had a snarling police dog biting your leg as you climbed in! Now that the game's been delayed, we're sure that Rockstar will have time to make sure multiplayer's not just an afterthought.

Are you ready to rock?





In **360Zine** Issue 11

THE DEFINITIVE REVIEW

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 4

PLUS! MORE REVIEWS

PES 2008

JUICED 2

CALL OF DUTY 4

BLACKSITE

SKATE

PREVIEWS
MASS EFFECT
GTA IV
SEGA RALLY

HALO 3
Don't forget the
360Zine Halo 3
Special Edition
25th Sep

360Zine Issue 11 Out Oct 4th

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