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A REVEALING INTERVIEW WITH SHIGERU MIYAMOTO ON NINTENDO'S GAMECUBE

Gamers' Republic

ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

WORKING DESIGNS BRINGS US TREASURE AND GAME ARTS' ELECTRIFYING PS2 SHOOTER

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Stopping is a bad idea.

In a world of angry cops, rival taggers and lots of paint, it's important to keep moving. It's a race against time to leave your mark on the sprawling urban environment. Armed with skates, a radio and varying quiver of spray paints, it's you against the world. But you'd better be quick because the price of self expression just got higher.

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gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

There is a huge percentage of our population that doesn't vote. Even though MTV tries to rock it every year, young adults, for the most part, usually stay home when it comes to affairs of State. The reason for this is simple: it's impossible to relate to someone that you know is BSing you. It goes without saying that the ideals most high-powered politicians spew are mainly written by far smarter people who would never run for office, because they actually have a life or make more money writing speeches. Politicians wear their "I've sold out" sign like a freaking homing beacon, only you have to be over 50 to pick up the signal. This year, however, regardless of your politics, if you hold dear the right to make your own decisions, it's time to be counted.

Al Gore seems harmless enough, and he probably is. I'm confident he's a moral man and a pretty good, albeit mechanical, politician. But Senator Lieberman, the running mate he has chosen (a move which has boosted him ahead in the polls), is one scary hombre. I take great offense when anyone tries to govern the content that I choose for myself or my family, and that is exactly what Joseph Lieberman is all about. Joe believes that children act out the violence they see in video games and those Hollywood movies in real life, and apparently he's only ever seen Doom, Quake, Kingpin, Tarantino films and porn. He doesn't credit Mario or Sonic for happy kids, just Space Marines for that troubled kid who can't distinguish right from wrong because Mom parked him in front of the family PC with Quake on kill-'em-all-mode before Dad snuck him in to see *Goodfellas*. Mr. Lieberman, if your circuits are overloading, take the blue pill and turn off the big turnpike of life, Cha-Cha; don't try to tell me what I should or should not consume.

The very notion that movies, video games, or music are somehow responsible for violent crime in this country is so juvenile that I find it deeply insulting. It's unconscionable that he gets anyone to listen, but he does—and the same people who send money in to TV shows to find God will vote for him as a result. I guess some people are content to let the government run their lives, but I'm not and I'm pretty sure that you aren't either. Sure, it's a lot easier to blame the media for America's troubles than focus on the real problem (which is clearly education), but until they do, nothing will change. Then again, if everyone had a good education, they'd wake up and smell what these guys have been shovelin' and they'd be in real trouble.

I know Mr. Bush is scary, heck, I wouldn't trust the guy to tie my shoes, but considering the real threat of Joe-censorship sitting a heartbeat away from the presidency scares the enchirito with extra sauce out of me. Over 100 million people in America play video games and although a good percentage of you aren't old enough to vote, you're old enough to talk to someone who is. I think it's time that the video-game-playing public chimed in on this debate. If we make a difference, and I think we can, we might just turn the tables, then we can sit back, grab a plastic gun and shoot to our hearts content while they search for a safer scapegoat. If these boneheads really want to save lives, they can start by clearing the booze hounds off of our streets and keeping them off for good. Then they can work on drugs, and then if they're still bored, I'm sure we can find something for them to do.

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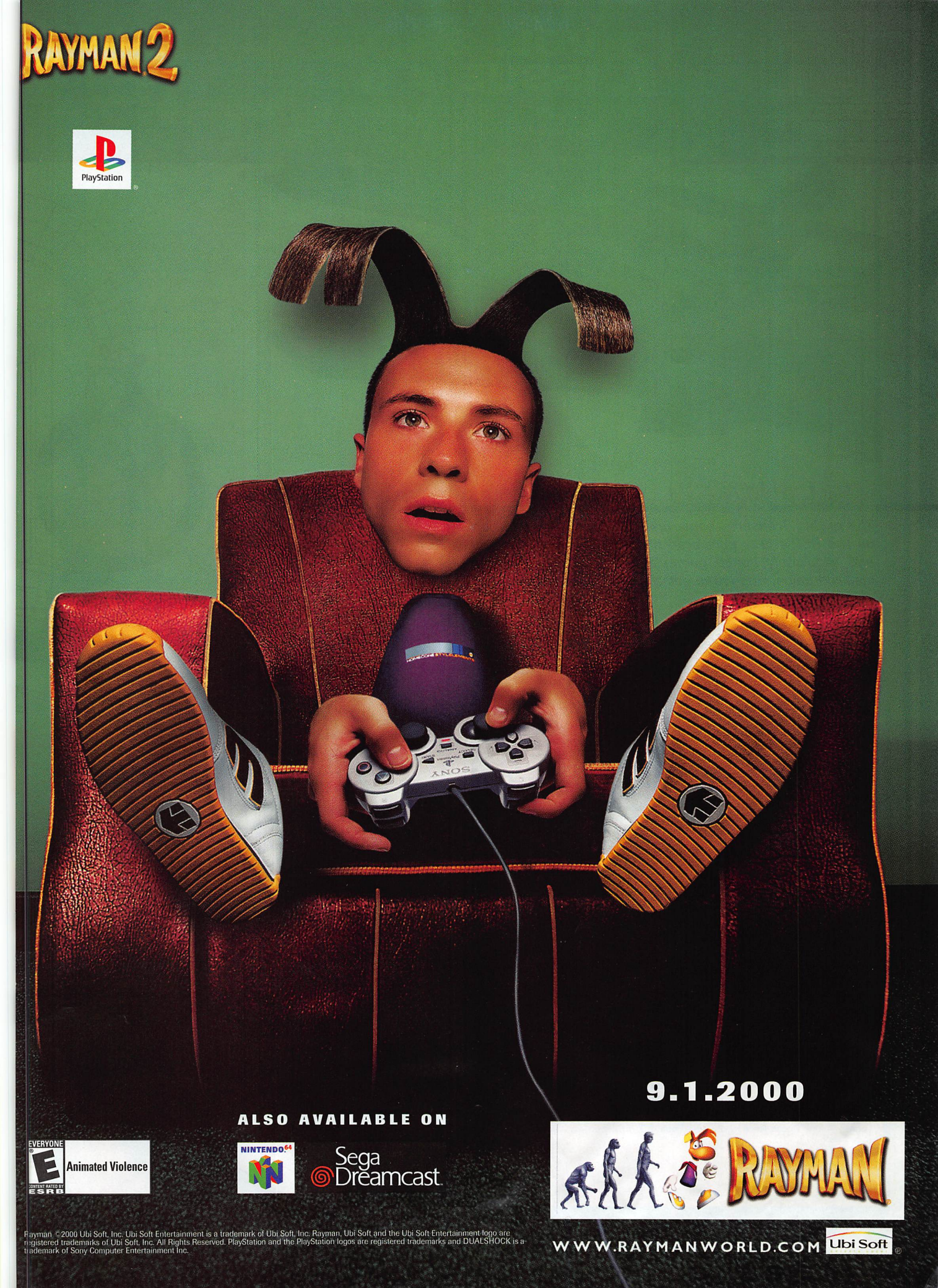
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• Number of GR babies born this issue:1. Whoo-hoo!

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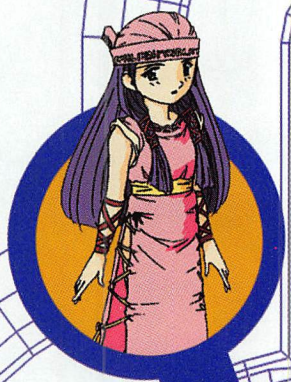
GR VOL. 3 ISSUE # 5

TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE
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SILPHEED .24

The mighty Treasure teams up with Game Arts to bring us the PS2's first pure-bred shooter. Stunning imagery and exquisitely honed gameplay are the fruits of this inspired union, and we've got the first domestic review.











PS2
Armored Core 2 60
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2 53
Ephemeral Fantasia 54
Eternal Ring 78
Evergrace 78
G-Saviour 93
Gungriffon Blaze 57
Madden 2001 86
Mobile Suit Gundam 94
Motor Mayhem 52
Munch's Oddysee 50
Nascar 2001 52
NHL 2001 87
Onimusha 51
Orphen 28
Project Eden 33
Ridge Racer V 59
Silpheed: The Lost Planet 24
Smuggler's Run 65
SSX Snowboarding 62
Street Fighter EX 3 64
Surfroid 96
Swing Away Golf 87
Tekken Tag Tournament 58
Wild Wild Racing 95
X Squad 63

DREAMCAST
Alone in the Dark 50
Buzz Lightyear 24
Capcom vs. SNK 38
Championship Surfing 51
D2 66
Demolition Racer: No Exit 80
Destruction Derby Raw 80
Donald Duck 48
Extreme Games 52
Ferrari F355 70
Giant Gram 2000 95
Gorka Morka 51
Legend of the Blade Masters 51
Looney Tunes: Space Race 50
Max Steel 41
Napple Tale 97
NFL Blitz 2001 88
San Francisco Rush 2049 82
Starlancer 53
Stunt GP 53
Sydney 2000 88
Test Drive: Le Mans 52
Vampire Chronicle 92

PLAYSTATION
Alien Resurrection 75
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 44
Dino Crisis 2 76
Dragon Valor 73
Driver 2 43
ECW Anarchy Rulz 80
Emperor's New Groove 50
Hogs of War 79
Medal of Honor: Underground 45
Mega Man X5 42
Micro Maniacs 79
Muppet Racemania 80
NBA Live 2001 89
NBA Shootout 2001 89
NFL Blitz 2001 88
NHL Faceoff 2001 89
R.C. Revenge 79
Star Trek: Invasion 82
Sydney 2000 88
Tatsunoko Fight 97
Team Buddies 82
Tyco R.C. 79
WCW Backstage Assault 53
WWF Smackdown! 2 54

NINTENDO 64
Donald Duck 48
Mia Hamm Soccer 89
Ogre Battle 64 77
Paper Mario 46
WCW Backstage Assault 53
WWF No Mercy 54

GAME BOY COLOR
Austin Powers 84
Blaster Master: Enemy Below 84
Dragon's Lair 84
Spider-Man 84

SEGA CD
Sonic CD 90

GAMES INDEX

ISSUE 29 - OCTOBER 2000

www.gamersrepublic.com

Manifesto .02	Mobile Gaming .84	GR Gear .116
Frontlines .06	GR Sports .86	Codex .117
Database .18	GRkives .90	GR Music .118
PG Previews .50	World Republic .92	Cinematrix .120
Reviews Opener .56	Anime Republic .100	Fallout .122
PG Reviews .78	GR Synthetics .114	Coming Next Month .127



MAX STEEL .41

Max Steel has officially entered crossover heaven, going from a major action-figure line to a CGI TV show on the Kids WB to his very own Sega Dreamcast game. Mattel has wisely recruited Treyarch and their Draconus engine to bring the nanotech teen to life, giving Sega action fans even more to celebrate.

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MONTHLY GAMING NEWS

FRONTLINES

SPACEWORLD 2000: THE DAWN OF GAMECUBE

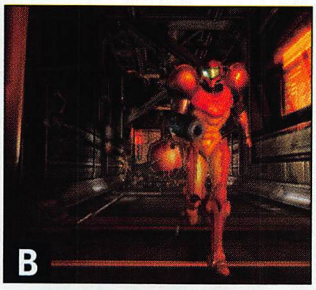




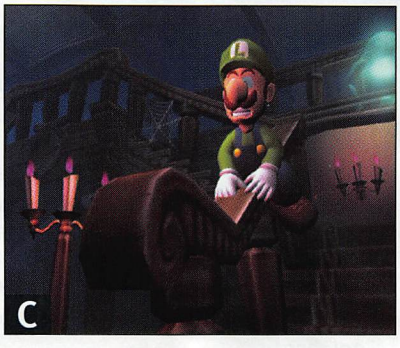
With the veil of secrecy lifted on Nintendo's next-generation system and the Game Boy Advance making its official debut, Nintendo's Space World 2000 event, held this past August in Tokyo, was nothing short of monumental as it mapped out the future of the company and the future of gaming. First and foremost, Nintendo finally revealed the details on their much-anticipated new dream machine, set to debut in Japan in July 2001, and in North America in October 2001. No longer swimming with the fishes, the new machine is called the Nintendo Gamecube (not Starcube as had been anticipated). Unlike their competition, Nintendo isn't concerned with making a be-all, do-all set top box. Simply looking like a game machine, the sleek, compact, cube-shaped (6" x 6" x 4.3") console, complete with four controller ports on the front and a convenient handle on top, looks primed to do what Nintendo does best —give us great games.

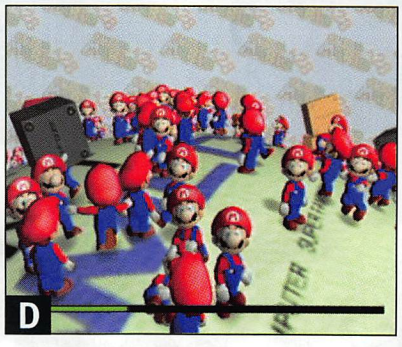
The demonstrations were nothing short of awesome. The legendary Shigeru Miyamoto showed off Super Mario 128 (a tech demo, not an actual game), where 128 gorgeously rendered Marios were running and rolling and playing on a circular stage (D. E. F). Mr. Miyamoto then added special effects to Mario using the Gamecube controller, including lighting, transparency, and toon-shade effects that render polygons like cartoons. He also morphed the landscape into a roulette wheel, a dartboard, and a pizza, which he then used to slingshot the herd of Marios with flawless fluidity. Nintendo also demonstrated incredible-looking footage of Zelda (A, J, L), Metroid (B), a Luigi adventure (C, K), Wave Race and Star Wars. Although Nintendo states that these were only tech demos and not necessarily based on games currently in development, the screens alone were enough to make the most jaded gamer break down in excitement. At the end of the demonstration, Mr. Miyamoto showed a Pokémon music video (G, H). Based on a CG movie from the Pokemon TV show, what Mr.Miyamoto showed was running in real-time on Gamecube - and it looked exactly like the original CG movie.

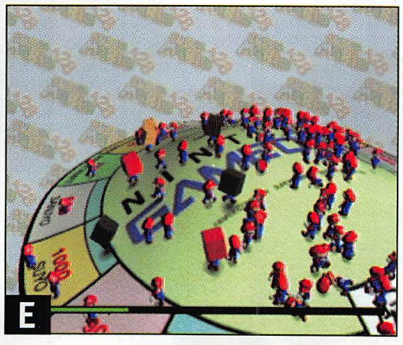


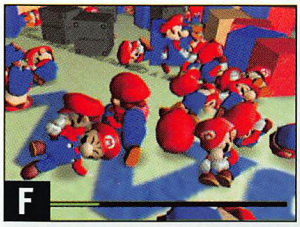


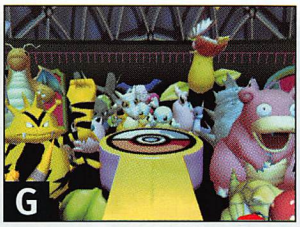
As previously announced, Gamecube features a highly customized, Power PC-based, 405 MHz, copper-wire Gekko CPU from IBM. ATI's revolutionary graphics chip, with embedded Mosys 1-T SRAM, serves as the coprocessor, and the main memory is 40 MB —the largest static memory in consumer video-game platform history.





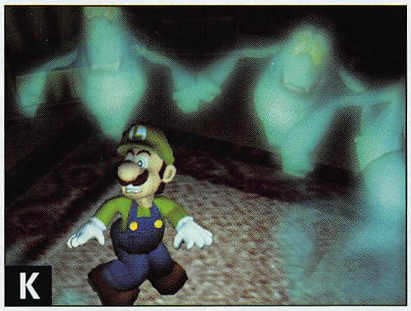



F


G


H


J


K


L

From the demos, the machine seems to have no problem running 6 million to 12 million polygons per second, even with many special effects in use and fully anti-aliased. While the games will come on DVD format, it won't be your standard DVD. To combat piracy, games will run on small (8 cm diameter) DVDs with a data capacity of 1.5GB. Most likely, this means Nintendo will keep Gamecube as a pure gaming system without the ability to play DVD movies. Several accessories were also announced, including controllers, modems, memory cards and a digital video cable (see inset).

Now, we just need to wait until the E3 show in May 2001, where Nintendo says the first playable Gamecube games will be unveiled.

The other big gun was Nintendo's long-awaited savior of 2D, the Game Boy Advance. It's not just hype to say that GBA should be the world's best portable system, as games like Mario Kart Advance (N, O) and Konami's Wai Wai Racing looked better than SNES titles. All of Nintendo's previously announced specs held true, as the system uses a 32-bit architecture, can display 32,000 colors simultaneously, features a resolution of 240x160 (60 percent more precise than GBC), and a screen size increase of 50 percent. As expected, the system is now vertically oriented, but surprisingly features only two main face buttons. Instead, the machine has L and R triggers on the upper corners much like a controller. Worth noting is that four GBA units will be able to link together, and the system can also plug into the Gamecube to act as a controller or to exchange data. Mario Kart drew the biggest crowds at the show (we had to wait 90 minutes to try it out!) due to its gorgeously colored graphics and the ability to play linked four-player mode. Nintendo also displayed Kuru Kuru Kururin (puzzle) (M), Ougon No Taiyou (beautiful fantasy role playing) (Q, R) and Napoleon (strategy) (P), while third-party titles included Konami's Silent Hill and Golf Master and Capcom's Rockman EXE. Games announced but not shown included Wario Land 4 and F-Zero from Nintendo and the latest Castlevania game, Akumajo Dracula: Circle of Moon, from Konami. Game Boy Advance will be released in Japan in March 2001, and in North America and Europe in July 2001. The system will retail for approximately 9800 yen (about $90) in Japan.

Nintendo's current systems weren't ignored either. Most significant was a peripheral for the Game Boy Color called Mobile System GB, scheduled to hit Japan on Dec. 14. Mobile System GB is an adapter that connects the GBC to cellular phones and allows players to go online to exchange game data, send e-mail, and more. As far as games go, the biggest news

GAMING ESSENTIALS CUBED



Gearing up for online gaming, Nintendo will release both a 56K modem and a broadband adaptor for Gamecube.



Analog video will be output no differently than the N64 or even SNES, but a new digital connector can interface directly with HDTVs.



The Gamecube will accept standard 4MB Digicards as well as high-capacity SD cards for storing increased saves or even MP3 files.



The Gamecube controller in all its dual analog glory. A wireless controller called the Wavebird is also planned.



M



N



O



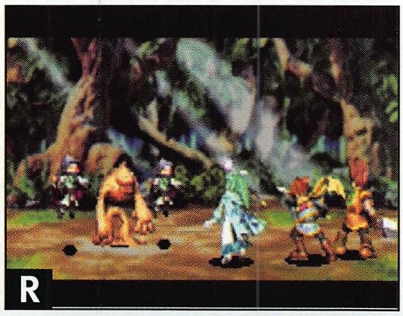


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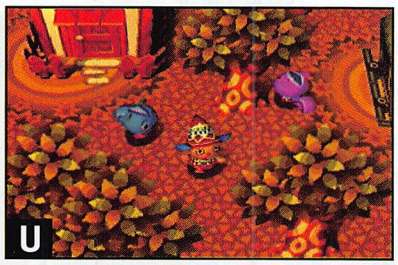
was the latest Pokémon title, Pokémon Crystal. If you have Pokémon Crystal and the Mobile System GB, you can have Pokémon battles or trade over the 'net! Nintendo also displayed many previously announced GB titles such as Zelda, Pokémon Puzzle League, The Legend of Stafi, Hamster Hamutaro, Tennis GB Color and Zonar: Mystery Man. Other games that attracted many gamers were Namco's Tales of Fantasia: Narikiri Dungeon, Konami's Pop'n Music GB: Disney Tunes and Hudson's Grandia: Parallel Trippers. The N64, though not quite as strong a presence, still had many high-quality games, including Custom Robo V2 (S), the shooter Sin and Punishment (T), Animal Forest (U), Mario Party 3 and Pokemon Stadium Gold Silver Crystal, along with games that have already been released in the U.S., like Perfect Dark.

Overall, Nintendo's showing at Spaceworld 2000 was phenomenal. More than anything else, Nintendo has demonstrated that they are staying faithful to their history of pure gaming fun even as other companies strive to draw gaming further from its roots. We couldn't be any more excited.

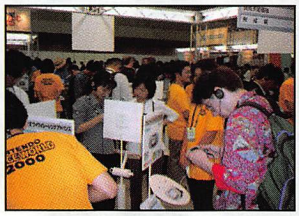

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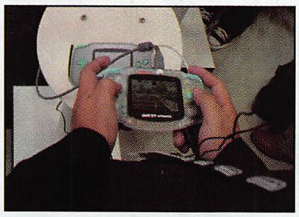


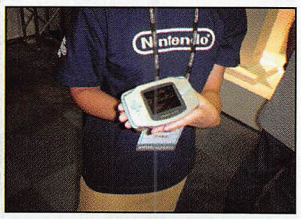
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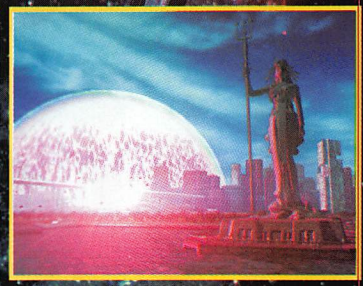
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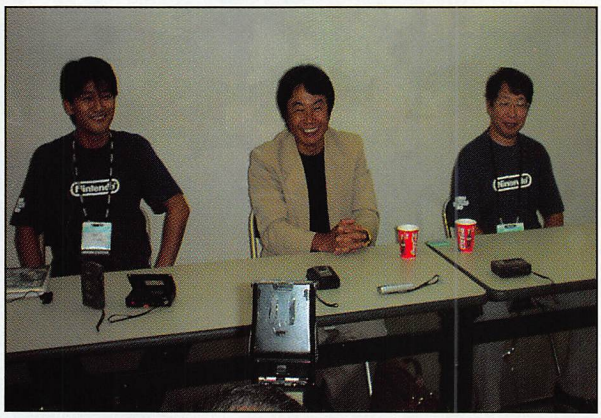
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SHIGERU MIYAMOTO: THE FIRST GC INTERVIEW



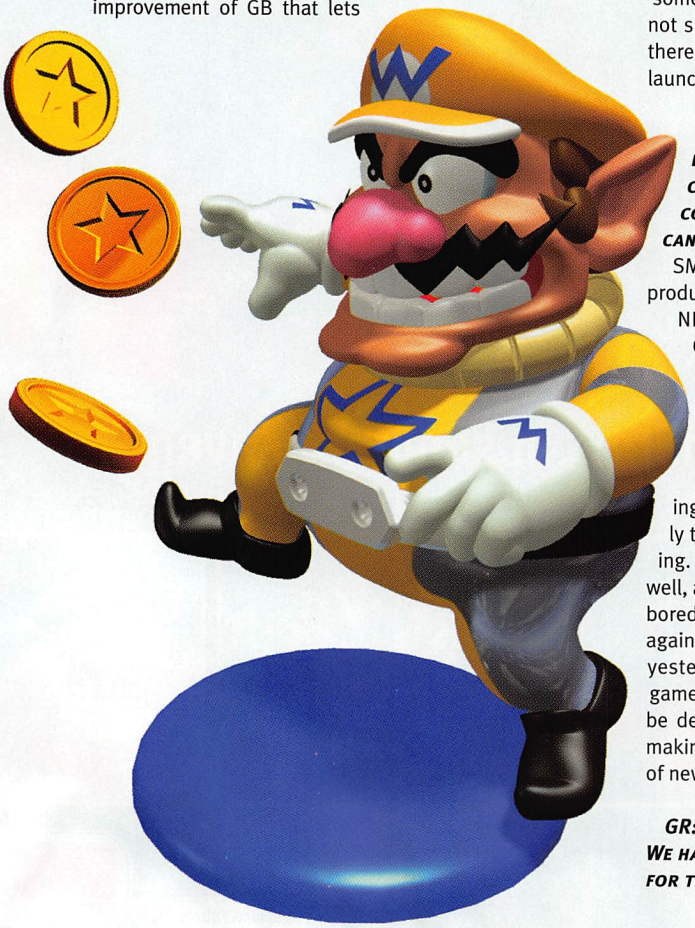
GAMERS' REPUBLIC: I would like to first ask about the market for Game Boy Advance and Gamecube in relation to the design of each machine? Was there any influence from the N64 users' ages? Also, how are you going to handle both the Game Boy and Game Boy Advance in the market since Nintendo will keep releasing 8-bit Game Boy titles?

SHIGERU MIYAMOTO: Well, I'm not sure if I can answer all of those questions, but you are right about the design of Gamecube. We considered for who and how Gamecube would be used, and we also listened to developers' voices in our company. For example, the Gamecube controller is more complex, but I kept simplicity in it. Since Gamecube will be used for more than five years, and most parents will be from the Super Mario generation, I wanted Gamecube to be a machine that's loved by the whole family.

GR: According to the user generation history of the N64, will the main target of Gamecube be young kids?

SM: I would like to enlarge the target generation, but I think that the Gamecube design will be favorable to adults, too. As for the Game Boy Advance, it might be better for our publicity department to address this.

YASUHIRO MINAGAWA, Nintendo Publicity: We are not going to target adults immediately with the Game Boy Advance. The most important concept of the Game Boy is that you can take games anywhere. GBA is just a technology improvement of GB that lets you enjoy more interesting games. That means the main concept of GB and GBA are basically the same. Then the question is, how they will coexist? Remember when Game Boy Color was released, people wondered how Game Boy Pocket would fare. We, as Nintendo, thought that the interest of the system itself would not change whichever you had - black and white GB or GBC - so we thought GB Pocket would keep being purchased. And in fact, GB pocket still accounts for 10 percent of our entire GB sales. At this time, people may say, 'GBA is so different much better than GBC that I cannot play 8-bit GBC games anymore.' So are we going to shift to GBA completely? Although we might say the answer is 'someday,' we are not thinking about this right now. Also, we are not sure what the monthly sales of GBA and GBC will be. But if there is a demand, we will keep releasing GBC titles after GBA launch.



GR: When the Nintendo 64 was announced, it was easy to realize how the games were going to be changed. The evolution of Mario from the SNES to N64 could be easily imagined as the leap from 2D to 3D. How can we explain the change from N64 to Gamecube?

SM: I cannot tell how Gamecube technology will be used to produce new games. There were obviously vast changes from NES to SNES and SNES to N64. If we say N64 is NES, then Gamecube would be SNES. Of course, the improvement is much larger in 3D game development.

GR: What do you want to try with Gamecube as a creator?

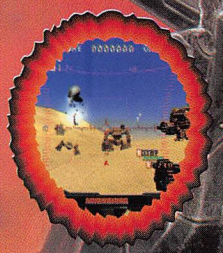
SM: Ahhh, today, Nintendo publicity stops me from speaking too much (Everyone laughs). Really, I cannot speak directly to this point. If they do not stop me talking, I will keep talking. But I can say this: not only gamers, but also creators as well, are getting bored with today's games. We do not want to be bored with creating games. But with Gamecube, we are excited again. For example, we were making the Gamecube demos for yesterday's presentation right alongside actual Gamecube games, and someone said, 'Gamecube game development will be delayed if we keep on making this demo!' But we enjoyed making the demo so much, and I am very excited about the kind of new games we can produce.

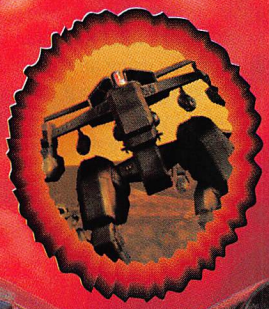
GR: What kind of media is the 8 centimeter (3 inch) disc? We had heard that Nintendo was going to use a DVD format for the machine. Is this a specially formatted disc?

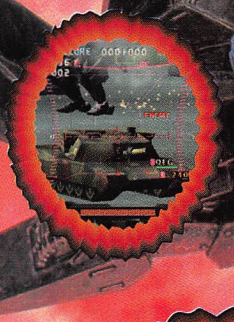
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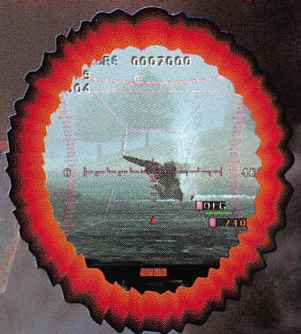












"*Easily* one of the best PS2 launch titles."
– Gamers' Republic

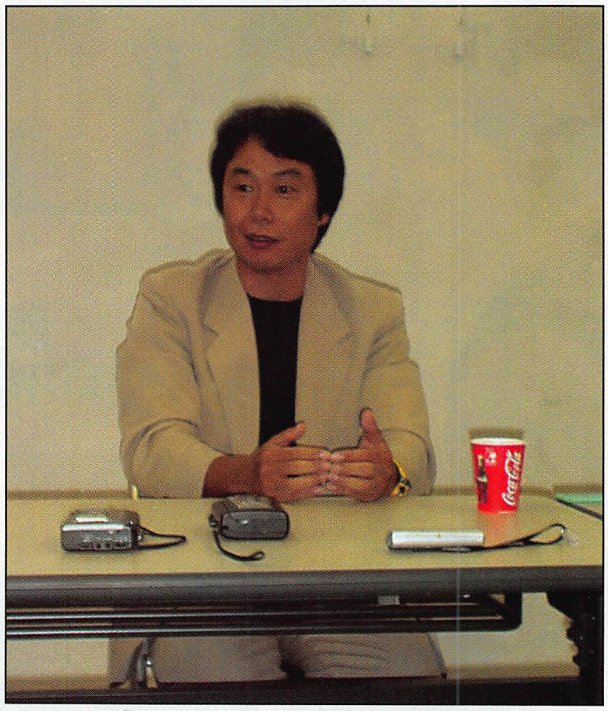
PlayStation 2

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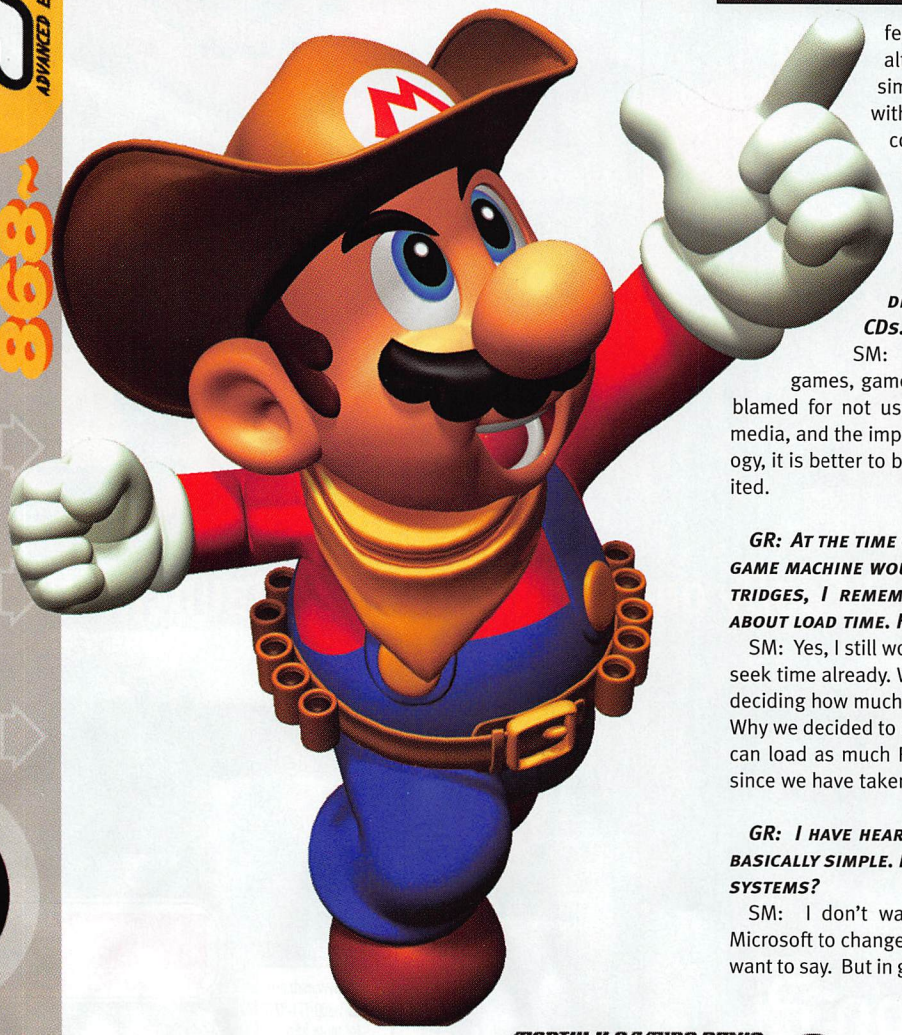
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YM: Panasonic provided us with this 8 cm disc and its drive. Although it was said that Panasonic was going to release a version of the Gamecube using a full-size DVD format, Panasonic has yet to announce such a product officially. As to why Nintendo decided to use 8 cm discs, the reason was to make the best game machine. We, including Mr. Miyamoto, had been discussing how a 21st-century videogame machine should be. As Mr. Miyamoto lifted the Gamecube with one hand yesterday on the stage, we wanted to show how the Gamecube can be portable so that you can bring it anywhere in the house. Also, we had to make it durable since kids will be using it. Then, thinking about the actual game size, we thought that a full-size DVD was not necessary. This 8 cm DVD (1.5GB) can contain 190 times the amount of data as in the Super Mario 64 cartridge. We do not need more than that, do we? And even if someone needs more, they can always use multiple disks. The last reason for choosing a Panasonic DVD-based format was for copy protection. Since I am not an engineer, I do not know about its security technology. But our staff, including Mr. Takeda, realized that the Panasonic security protection was the best. In addition, by using an 8 cm disc, mass-production of a copied disk will be difficult even if the copy protects are broken. In fact, the lack of copy protection of CD-ROM games resulted in the collapse of the European game market.



SM: The matter of copy protection is very serious, so we adopted an original format because after a few years, everyone will have DVD-R. And although we wanted to put a disc in a carrier, similar to a MiniDisc, we decided to leave the disc without a case because we had a concern about compatibility with a potential Panasonic version of Gamecube.



GR: When I went back to my office after yesterday's press conference, some said, 'Why does Nintendo have to adopt 8 cm disks? We won't be able to listen to music CDs.'

SM: Isn't it enough that you can play Nintendo games, games won't be duplicated, and creators won't be blamed for not using full disk capacity? The media is just the media, and the important thing is the game. And thinking of ecology, it is better to be smaller since resources on the earth are limited.

GR: At the time of the announcement that Nintendo's next game machine would use optical media instead of ROM cartridges, I remember you saying that you were worried about load time. How do you feel about it now?

SM: Yes, I still worry about this, but I found a way to reduce the seek time already. What I was concerned most about is the RAM , deciding how much a machine can handle in one loading session. Why we decided to use optical media for Gamecube is because we can load as much RAM as we need. I feel it won't be a problem since we have taken steps to make loading fast.

GR: I have heard that developing games for Gamecube is basically simple. How is it easier than developing for other systems?

SM: I don't want to say precisely because I do not want Microsoft to change the Xbox specifications (laughs). I really don't want to say. But in general terms, I can explain it like this: We need

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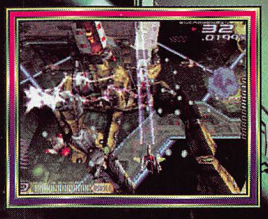
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to use polygons to make 3D games. Then, we do many things around the polygons: lighting, morphing, adding textures, etc. Recent videogame machine companies have been asked how many polygons they can display at their machine's peak performance point. But then they whisper, 'If you add textures, it will be half. If you use lighting effects, it will be half again.' Then, if they keep using more and more effects, it will be 1/10 of the actual reported figure. In addition, the hardware itself can have a bottleneck, and when a command hits this bottleneck, all operations will stop. As a result, although a spec sheet may say that the maximum polygons are 10 million per second, it, in fact, can only display 5 million. There are many potential bottlenecks in displaying polygons, and the CPU is not only working for graphics. Obviously, there is so much more to a game than having a bunch of polygons displayed on screen. There are many things a CPU has to calculate such as characters' movements, collision judgements, etc. Gamecube is a machine where these operations are neatly separated. If you see the spec sheet for it, the numbers attributed to the Gekko processor's speed may not impress you, but the balance of the Gamecube internal architecture will be the most efficient for the next few years.

GR: How about Gamecube development tools?

YM: You mean development tools for the third parties? Of course, the second parties and Nintendo have started development already. But it is very difficult to distinguish which developer is second- or third-party. Yesterday's announcement and demos were messages for creators of third-parties. But we have not officially introduced Gamecube development tools yet.

SM: Have we announced any information to the third-parties?

YM: Yes, we have. We will announce more to the third-parties during a briefing session sometime in September.

SM: Development tools aren't provided even to us since if 50 members are in a development team, each of them will want to use it. In fact, if we could provide 50 development tools, we would actually rather provide them to more than 10 companies. We will be able to provide development tools gradually, and they are inexpensive. In fact, they are the cheapest in the history of Nintendo hardware. Also, it is possible to make games even if you don't have many development tools. For example, you can do most development using one CG CAD (Computer Assisted Design) tool. The basic cost of Gamecube development tools will be 1/10 of N64 game development in the business. Our managers are so happy since estimates are one digit smaller than five years ago (smiles).

GR: How many titles would Nintendo like to release at launch?

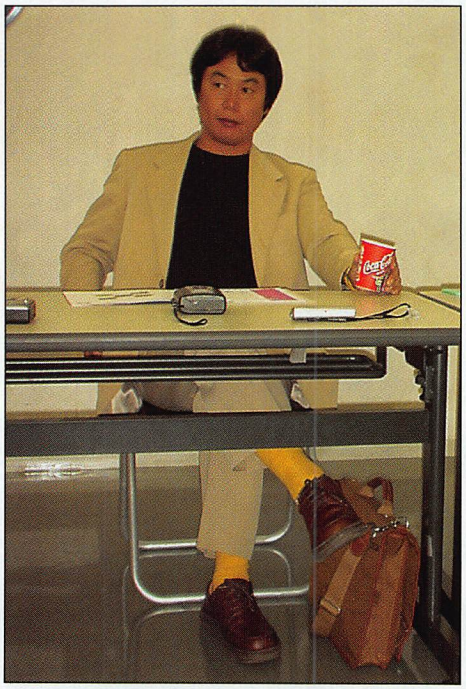
SM: Well, we will announce game titles at E3 in May 2001. We cannot promise anything from third-parties yet, but we are preparing to release five Nintendo-brand titles.

GR: How much is the price of Gamecube games going to be?

YM: Honestly, it's undecided. Of course, there is a change of media from ROM cartridge to optical discs, so the cost of media itself is much cheaper. We would rather price it according to a software's value instead of production costs. As a company, we have to popularize Gamecube, so we can't answer this question right now.

GR: Is there any possibility that games will be priced higher than N64?

SM: Well, I would like a game that has a high value to have a higher price. In fact, although the cost of media is almost nothing, I would be happy if my games were sold at the price of an AIBO ($2,300) (laughs). But, we have thought that it is severe to sell N64 games at the price of $95. It is possible to sell games at $18 if we find ways to profit from such a low price. Although NCL President Yamauchi has said, 'Make a monthly game,' it is too hard for us. I want parents to purchase games. They may not want to buy a $30 game for children, but if they have a game that they can play with their children, they may pay $100 or more. My most favorite game that can be enjoyed with my family is Samba de Amigo for Dreamcast (laughs).



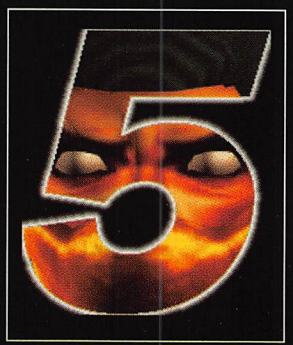
IN OTHER NEWS...

Sega officially dropped the price of Dreamcast to $149.95 and created a line of older Sega All-Star games priced at $20 to further cement its user base before the PS2 launch...

Bandai, makers of the Japanese Wonderswan handheld, is likely to be releasing an all-new handheld soon, and Square has reportedly already signed on to make a Final Fantasy game...

Speaking of Final Fantasy, Square is currently looking for investors to help with their FF motion pictures, even as they have signed a three-picture deal with Columbia Pictures...

Rumors in Japan point to Goemon, the mystical ninja, soon making his PS2 appearance courtesy of Konami...

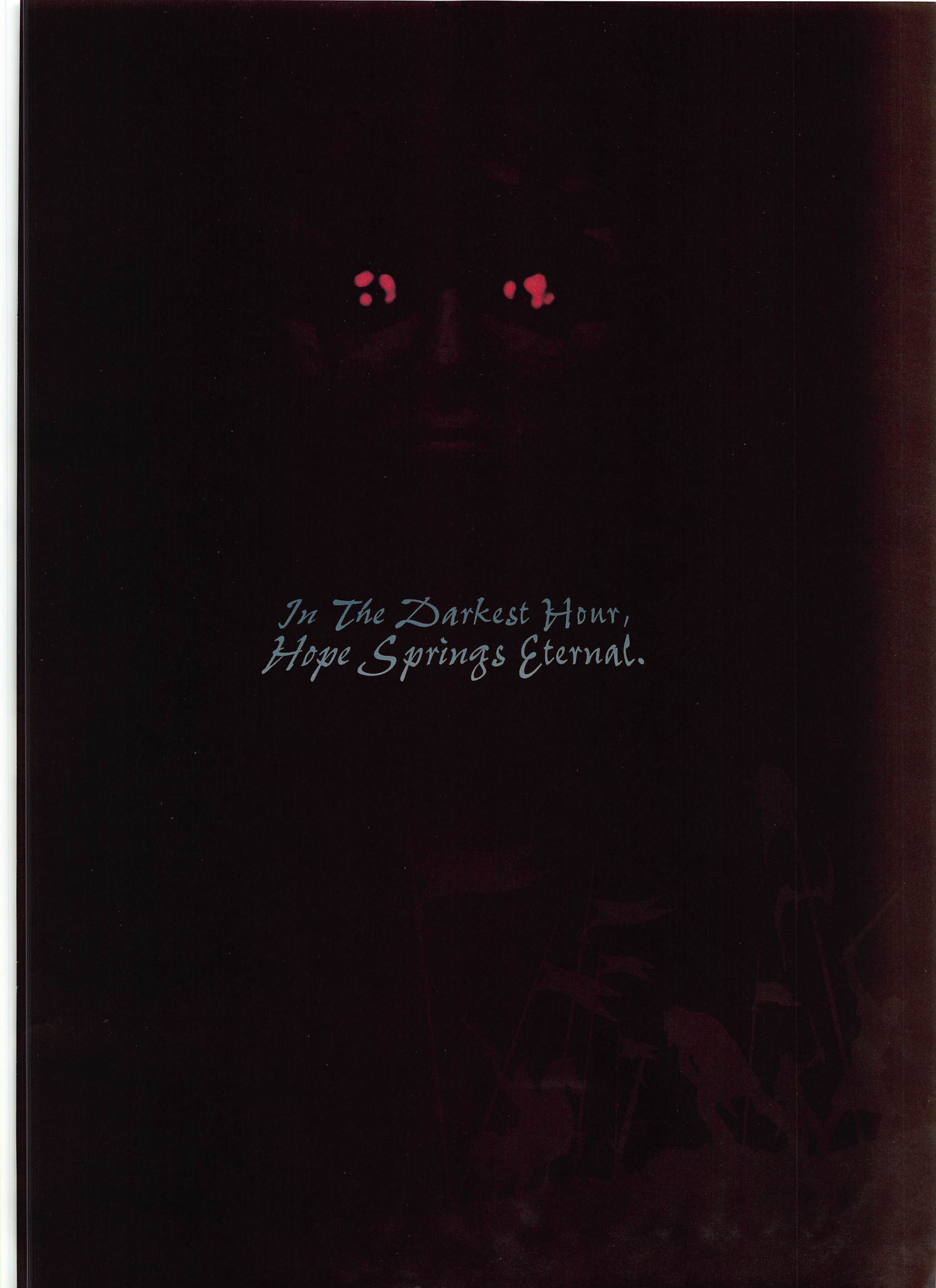


Mortal Kombat co-creator Ed Boon announced on his web site that MK5 is currently in development at Midway...

The next Spyro game will be coming out in 2002 on PS2, Xbox, Game Boy Color and PC, but it will be programmed by Havas Interactive, not Insomniac...

Gearing up for its worldwide PS2 launch, Sony reportedly recently more than doubled its PS2 production from 400,000 to 1 million units a month...

Finally, congrats to Tony Ceccarelli of Indiana for correctly identifying the item in our Plastic Thing Contest as the most ridiculous game holder ever created.


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top ten selling playstation titles



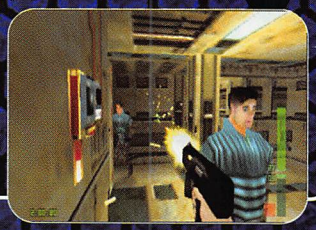
*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF AUGUST 13-18, 2000

1. CHRONO CROSS	SQUARE/EA	6. DRIVER	GT INTERACTIVE
2. MADDEN NFL 2001	EA	7. DIGIMON WORLD	BANDAI DIGITAL
3. TENCHU 2	ACTIVISION	8. LEGEND OF DRAGOON	SONY
4. NFL GAMEDAY 2001	SONY	9. SPEC OPS	TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
5. NCAA FOOTBALL 2001	EA	10. X-MEN MUTANT ACMY.	ACTIVISION

top ten selling nintendo64 titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF AUGUST 13-18, 2000

1. PERFECT DARK	NINTENDO	6. JET FORCE GEMINI	NINTENDO
2. T. HAWK PRO SKATER	ACTIVISION	7. EXCITEBIKE 64	NINTENDO
3. SW EPISODE 1: RACER	LUCAS ARTS	8. MARIO PARTY 2	NINTENDO
4. KIRBY 64	NINTENDO	9. MARIO KART 64	NINTENDO
5. POKÉMON STADIUM	NINTENDO	10. SUPER SMASH BROS.	NINTENDO



top ten selling dreamcast titles



*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF AUGUST 13-18, 2000

1. WWF ROYAL RUMBLE	THQ	6. MARVEL vs. CAPCOM 2	CAPCOM
2. WORLD SERIES BB 2K1	SEGA	7. HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	TAKE2
3. VIRTUA TENNIS	SEGA	8. T. HAWK PRO SKATER	ACTIVISION
4. ECCO THE DOLPHIN	SEGA	9. NAMCO MUSEUM	NAMCO
5. SEAMAN	SEGA	10. GAUNTLET LEGENDS	MIDWAY

top ten selling pc titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF AUGUST 13-18, 2000

1. DIABLO 2	BLIZZARD	6. SIMCITY 3000 UNLIMITED	MAXIS
2. WHO WANTS..MILLION 2	DISNEY	7. RLR CSTR TYCOON: Cork	HASBRO
3. THE SIMS	MAXIS	8. SHOGUN TOTAL WAR	EA
4. RLR COASTER TYCOON	HASBRO	9. SLOTS	MASQUE PUBLISHING
5. VAMPIRE: Masquer. R.	ACTIVISION	10. SIM MANIA PAC	MAXIS



top ten selling overall console titles



*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF AUGUST 13-18, 2000

1. CHRONO CROSS-PS	SQUARE/EA	6. SUPER MARIO DLX-GBC	NINTENDO
2. MADDEN NFL 2001-PS	EA	7. NFL GAMEDAY 2001-PS	SONY
3. WWF ROYAL RUMBLE-DC	THQ	8. NCAA FOOTBALL 2001-PS	EA
4. TENCHU 2-PS	ACTIVISION	9. VIRTUA TENNIS-DC	SEGA
5. WORLD SERIES BB 2K1-DC	SEGA	10. POKÉMON YELLOW-GB	NINTENDO

world republic top ten games

top ten japanese titles

1. SD GUNDAM GG-F	PS	6. MARIO TENNIS 64	N64
2. SHIN SANGOUKU MUSSOU	PS2	7. WORLD SOCCER 2000	PS2
3. GRANDIA II	DC	8. DUEL MONSTERS III	GB
4. ARMORED CORE 2	PS2	9. FINAL FANTASY IX	PS
5. MARIO STORY	N64	10. POWERFUL PRO 2000	PS2

* FROM AUG24-AUG31, 2000

top ten u.k. titles

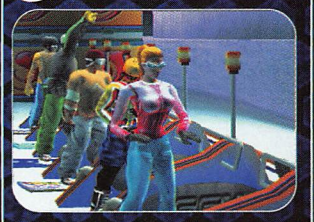
1. POKÉMON YELLOW	GB	6. IN COLD BLOOD	PS
2. PERFECT DARK	N64	7. POKÉMON RED	GB
3. WWF SMACKDOWN!	PS	8. W.C. SNOOKER	PS
4. COLIN McRAE RALLY 2.0	PS	9. TOMB RAIDER	GB
5. POKÉMON BLUE	GB	10. POKÉMON STADIUM	GB

* WEEK ENDING AUG 31, 2000

gamers' republic top ten games

* BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2000

d. halverson



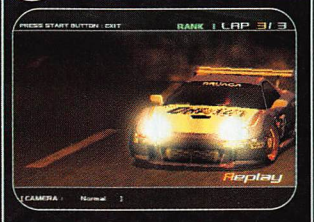
1. SSX SNOWBOARDING	PS2
2. ORPHEN	PS2
3. D2	DC
4. SILPHEED: TLP	PS2
5. HEAVY METAL	DC
6. X SQUAD	PS2
7. PAPER MARIO	N64
8. SMUGGLER'S RUN	PS2
9. MAX STEEL	DC
10. DONALD DUCK	DC

b. siechter



1. SSX SNOWBOARDING	PS2
2. X SQUAD	PS2
3. TEKKEN TAG	PS2
4. METAL OF HONOR UG	PS
5. SILPHEED: TLP	PS2
6. MARIO TENNIS	N64
7. DINO CRISIS 2	PS
8. DRAGON VALOR	PS
9. FANTAVISION	PS2
10. GUNGRIFFON BLAZE	PS2

mike hobbs



1. RIDGE RACER V	PS2
2. SILPHEED: TLP	PS2
3. FERRARI F355	DC
4. MARIO TENNIS	N64
5. PAPER MARIO	N64
6. GUNGRIFFON BLAZE	PS2
7. SSX SNOWBOARDING	PS2
8. OGRE BATTLE 64	N64
9. ARMORED CORE 2	PS2
10. TEKKEN TAG	PS2

t. stratton



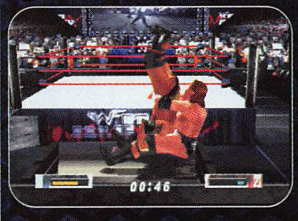
1. T HAWK'S PRO SKTR 2	PS
2. MARIO TENNIS	N64
3. WIPEOUT 3	PS
4. SPIDER-MAN	PS
5. SSX SNOWBOARDING	PS2
6. SEAMAN	DC
7. GRIM FANDANGO	PC
8. TECH ROMANCER	DC
9. RIDGE RACER V	PS2
10. NFL2K1	DC

pooch



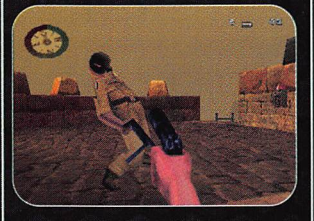
1. MADDEN 2001	PS2
2. MARIO TENNIS	N64
3. MADDEN 2001	PS
4. NBA LIVE 2001	PS
5. NBA SHOOTOUT 2001	PS
6. NFL GAMEDAY 2001	PS
7. SSX SNOWBOARDING	PS2
8. WAVE RACE 64	N64
9. PERFECT DARK	N64
10. NFL BLITZ	DC

nelson lui



1. WWF NO MERCY	N64
2. SAMBA DE AMIGO	DC
3. STREET FIGHTER EX3	PS2
4. SSX SNOWBOARDING	PS2
5. HALF LIFE: CS	PC
6. CAPCOM VS. SNK	DC
7. CHRONO CROSS	PS
8. TEKKEN TAG	PS2
9. C&C TIBERIAN SUN	PC
10. RCT: CORKSCREW F.	PC

bob elmquist



1. MEDAL OF HONOR UG	PS
2. ECCO	DC
3. HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	DC
4. GIANTS	PC
5. MADDEN 2001	PS2
6. DRAGON VALOR	PS
7. SSX SNOWBOARDING	PS2
8. TIME SPLITTERS	PS2
9. X SQUAD	PS2
10. SPIDER-MAN	PS

c hoffman



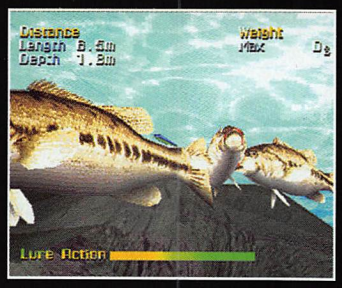
1. CAPCOM VS. SNK	DC
2. MEGA MAN X5	PS
3. WWF NO MERCY	N64
4. FINAL FANTASY IX	PS
5. BLASTER MASTER	GBC
6. VAMPIRE CHRONICLE	DC
7. SILPHEED: TLP	PS2
8. SPIDER-MAN	PS
9. EPHEM. FANTASIA	PS2
10. STREET FIGHTER EX3	PS2

ACTION BASS









After a hard day of fishing under the sun or competing in a tournament, you look with awe at the trophies your angling skills have awarded you. In this action-packed arcade style fishing game, the player can either spend time leisurely casting across lake waters waiting for a bite on the line or they can enter an intense fishing competition where the only fish that matters is the biggest catch of the day. Along the way players will face all sorts of challenges including shifting water conditions, unstable weather and even more skilled opponents as he continually attempts to outwit the wily bass during each season of the year. Amazingly realistic fish behavior ensures that no fish is caught without a fight and that reeling in a winner delivers optimum angling action excitement.

- Tournament-style Challenge Mode, free-wheeling Free Mode, and an Extra Bonus Mode.
- Lure Action Gauge allows the player to monitor lure movement easily.
- Enjoy watching fish (up to five heaviest) you brought back in the Aquarium Mode.
- Five diverse lures are available at the beginning, covering a wide range of water conditions and lure movements. More lures will be available as the player gains experience.
- Wide variety of "lure action" possible to attract bass, some requiring retrieving or rod movements only, others requiring skillful combination of the two.

$9.99* GOT GAME? **$9.99***

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SPEC OPS:
STEALTH PATROL









Welcome to the US Army Rangers, one of the toughest and most elite of the world's military task forces. Your main objective is to control your team of Rangers and eliminate opponent targets while completing mission sub-tasks in the time allotted. Choose between stealth or all out frontal assault- it's up to you. 3D action, time pressure and realistic combat will keep you begging for more.
Immersed in huge, outdoor 3D environments you and your team members must successfully execute your tasks which revolve around several different mission objectives including reprisal attacks, seize and destroy missions, counter-terrorist attacks and raid and destroy missions. Each environment is unique, not only in look and feel, but in game play as well. With the emphasis on action and realism, navigate your team with guns blazing or silently under the cover of darkness across landscapes of thick jungle, barren desert, arctic tundra and dense forest.

Do you have what it takes? Will you be able to complete your mission, though you may be the lone survivor?

- :: 5 intense mission campaigns each with numerous sub-missions based on real activities carried out by the US Army Rangers
- :: An arsenal to choose from including shotguns, grenades, machine guns, sniper rifles and more
- :: 3 difficulty levels - Private (Easy), Corporal (Medium), Sergeant (Difficult) offers massive replay value
- :: In the 2 Ranger option the player has simultaneous control of 2 Rangers
- :: Create an inventory filled with hi-tech equipment to aid the Rangers in their tasks - GPS navigation for moving through dense landscape, tripwire mines to booby trap enemies, nightvision goggles for stealth accuracy, med kits for injury repair and more

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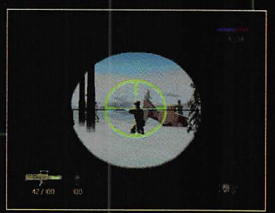




SPEC OPS: STEALTH PATROL

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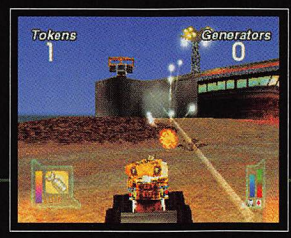






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ACTION BASS

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PlayStation

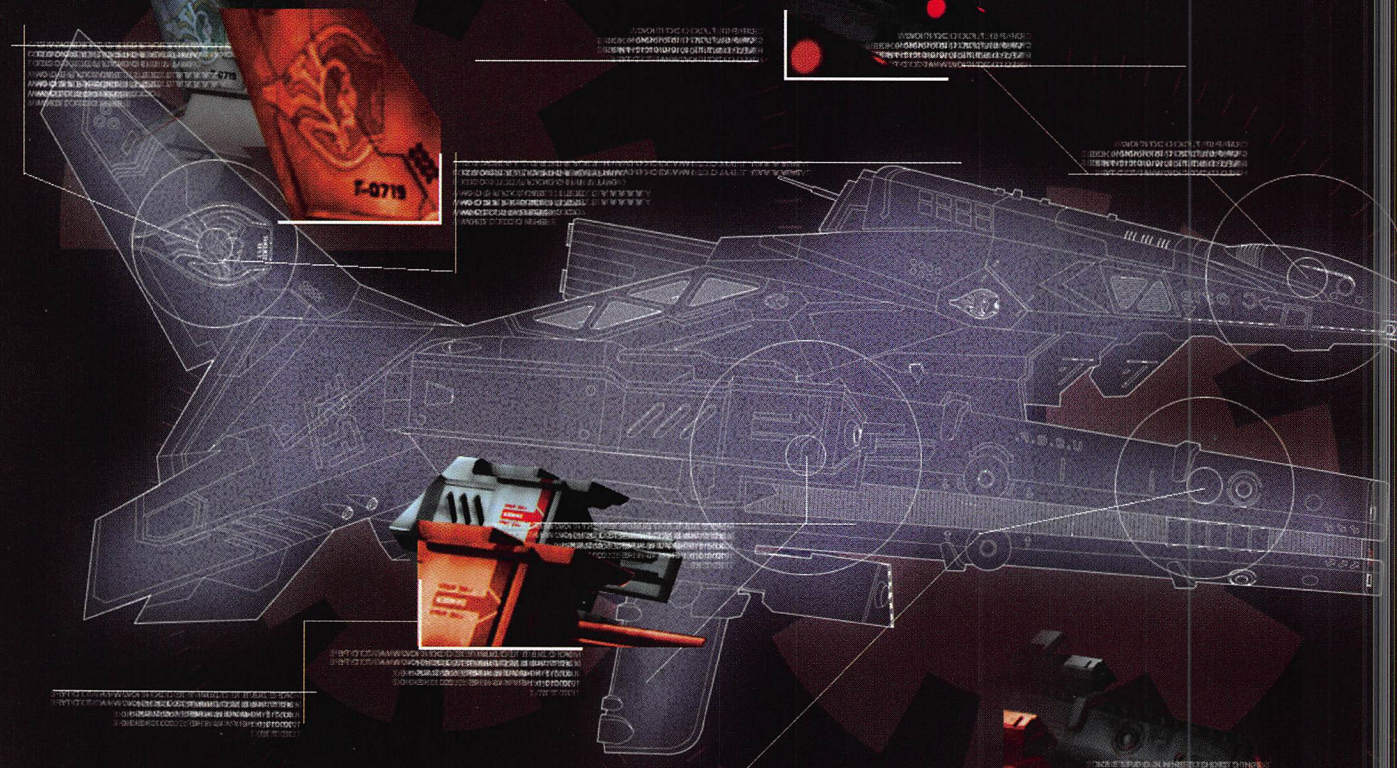
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SILPHEED
THE LOST PLANET

BY MIKE HOBBS











Seven years after the graphically revolutionary Sega CD game, Game Arts commissions Treasure to help them create another classic shooter

I must be dreaming. Here I am playing a Treasure-developed Silpheed on the PS2. A year ago, I wouldn't have believed this scenario. Oh, I knew Silpheed was coming, but the knowledge that it would make launch courtesy of Working Designs, and more importantly, that it was developed by Treasure, hit me like news of a long lost billionaire brother. In other words, good news indeed.

Just bear in mind that this is not a complete reinterpretation of the shooter in the way that Treasure's Radiant Silvergun was. Rather, Silpheed: The Lost Planet is more straightforward in its approach, understandable considering that this is a sequel and not an original game, but there is still that massive feeling of quality and thoroughness of design that permeates every Treasure game. The enemy patterns, collision detection, weapon conception, and perfectly modulated challenge level speak to the collective talents of this small, brilliant company. They understand that keeping it simple yet sophisticated is key to truly satisfying gameplay. There are no distracting power-ups or purity-robbing super bombs in Silpheed for PS2, just a user selectable set of left and right weapons, various iterations of which are earned level to level based on performance. Each weapon is vastly different, allowing for a surprising degree of individuality in player style. I loved using the short-range but powerful Napalm Blasts, which disperse radially from the ship, while others found great success with the piercing Optic Laser and very unique Plasma Ball.

Sterling gameplay aside, I have a sneaking suspicion that it's the graphics that will draw in most players, as the Treasure name is not yet the mainstream commodity that it should be. So be it. Those looking for nothing more than a flashy new game to celebrate the launch will be hugely satisfied, as Silpheed's graphics heartily deliver on the promise of the PS2. True, the game doesn't push the hardware all that much, and greater things are sure to come, but the machine is so inherently capable that these early results still astound, rendering it one of the best-looking shooters of all time. In this, Treasure cannot take all the credit, as Game Arts, creators of the Sega CD Silpheed, developed the 3D engine that powers the game so satisfyingly. But Treasure did all the design and texture work, and it's stunning. Take the moment at the start of the second level. After entering the atmosphere of a devastated









- INCREDIBLY WELL CONCEIVED GAMEPLAY
- FOR NOW, THE BEST-LOOKING SHOOTER IN EXISTENCE
- AMAZING CG SEQUENCES FROM GAME ARTS
- NOT AS GROUNDBREAKING AS RADIANT SILVERGUN

REPUBLIC SAYS... TREASURE'S DEEPLY REFINED GAMEPLAY SENSIBILITIES RENDER THIS SEEMINGLY SIMPLE SHOOTER A TRULY INSPIRED EFFORT. IT'S NOT THEIR BEST WORK, BUT IT WILL AMAZE.

A-







planet, you fly down through these gorgeous Michelangelo-inspired 3D clouds, marveling at the sense of depth while taking out these electrically charged, beautiful jellyfish-like enemies. It's easily one of the great shooter visuals of all time. And even in the more traditional deep-space environments, there is imagery the likes of which you've never seen before. Massive structures, dotted by thousands of little window lights, are simply epic in scale as you fly above them and through them, having the time of your life overdosing on Treasure's inspired design.

But there is more to Silpheed's look than beautiful backdrops. The luminous blasts and particle effects that pepper the screen are truly next generation in execution, and the bosses, a Treasure specialty, are often awe-inspiring, both because of their look and typically inspired patterns of doom.

As if this weren't enough, Game Arts devoted themselves to creating elaborate CG movies that run between each level, and they're incredible. A shooter's storyline may be perfunctory, but the quality of the FMV sequences held our attention firmly. Together with the rather accomplished in-game visuals, Silpheed's presentation is through the roof.

If you haven't gotten the message by now, Treasure and Game Arts' first PS2 outing is a stunner. It obviously looks the part, but it's the finesse evident in the game design that will keep you reaching for it again and again. Unlike most shooters, it's immensely replayable, not because you get to open up ancillary goodies, but because it's so fun and utterly satisfying to play.

And it's obvious, not only by their track record, but by the game itself, that Treasure is in love with the shooter genre, and that makes all the difference in the world. This genre got its start nearly two decades ago, and here's Treasure, still finding ways to extract immense pleasure out of the simple notion of blasting everything in sight. **GR**









AN INTERVIEW WITH: VICTOR IRELAND

WORKING DESIGNS PRESIDENT VICTOR IRELAND KNOWS A GOOD GAME WHEN HE SEES ONE, OR IN THIS CASE TWO, AS HE SPOKE WITH US ABOUT ACQUIRING SILPHEED AND GUNGRIFFON FOR THE U.S.

Gamers' Republic: How important was it for you to secure Silpheed and Gungriffon for the U.S. market?
Victor Ireland: It was very important that they be seen here, but up until around E3, we assumed that Capcom U.S. would publish them here. Once we learned that wasn't the case, I pursued the licenses until we had them.

GR: Any idea why Capcom, which has the Japanese rights to both games, passed on publishing them in the States?
VI: No idea whatsoever. Considering the pedigree of both, I certainly wouldn't have let them go.

GR: Apart from the obvious text translation, what else has been done to the Japanese versions of the games?
VI: Given that we had little time from the point when the Japanese versions were nearing completion until we had to finish them, the changes are very minor. The biggest change is probably the addition of Dual Shock 2 analog support on Silpheed. The Japanese version was D-pad only. We also re-wrote and re-recorded the officer logs at the beginning of each level and at the end of the game. In Gungriffon Blaze, the onscreen text is simplified somewhat for the scenarios and weapons to accommodate the space, though full descriptions are now in the manual for the weapons and scenarios. Oh, and a few really odd sounding pieces of radio chatter were re-recorded to something that sounded more natural. One I can think of is the "What are you doing? Do you want to die?" clip. Doesn't look too bad on paper, but the inflection in the delivery was really weird and unnatural.

GR: Given that you had an incredibly limited time frame within which to localize both games, were you able to achieve everything that you wanted?
VI: There's always a laundry list in my mind when I play a game, but given that the games were solid when I played them, aside from analog control on Silpheed and the voice clips on Gungriffon Blaze, there wasn't much else to change. Probably the only things I would have done if given more time is to address the few areas left of slowdown in Silpheed, and to re-record the "British" guy in Silpheed and the "country" guy at the end of Gungriffon Blaze.

GR: Do you have anything special planned for either game's packaging?
VI: We are doing an outer shell that is different from any other publisher and pretty cool. We're working on SCEA approval for it, so if that's a go, you'll know what I'm talking about when you see the game. The manuals are our usual full-color, high-quality items. With our next PS2 releases, we'll have more time to think about what kind of extras we can fit in the boxes. We have some ideas, but again, time was the big issue this time around.

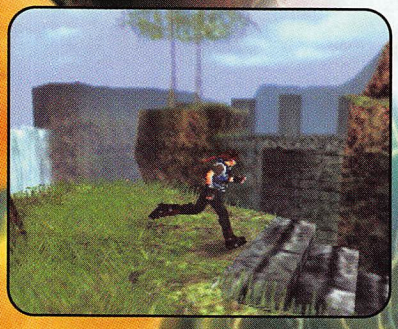
GR: Are you releasing Silpheed under the Spaz label?
VI: No. We used Spaz to create a brand identity for shooters and offbeat action games, so as not to confuse the consumer. Spaz for shooting,Working Designs for RPGs. When we did the initial sheets for Silpheed, we had FOUR company logos on there (Game Arts, Treasure, Spaz, Working Designs). It was overly crowded and seemed unnecessary. I felt after thinking about it for a while that just to go back to Working Designs alone would be easier in the long run. Our fans are our fans and they're smart enough to know the difference between a shooter and an RPG. Besides, many, many of them are fans of both genres as well. So, going back to the single company identity, we decided to resurrect the "Working Designs Ultra Series." Gungriffon Blaze and Silpheed are both part of that, and I must say, it's really cool to see it back.

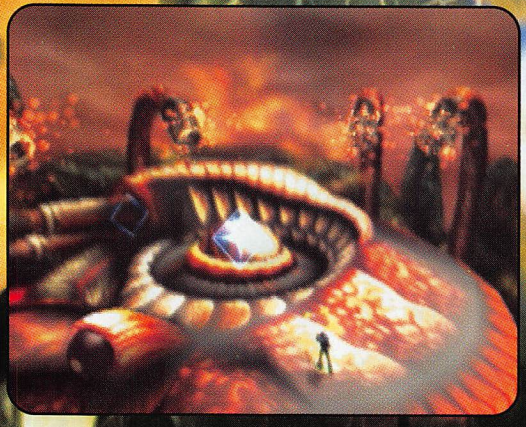
GR: What's your take on the shooter market in general, now that hardware has risen to a level where innovation can once again prevail?
VI: Shooters are a tough category because they require guts, skill, and persistence. A not-insignificant portion of the gaming public lacks at least one of the key qualities a shooter player must have. Part of that is that some of the younger players came into gaming just after the blowout on the Genesis, when shooter availability dropped off to an all-time low after the market was glutted with me-too shooters. Since there were few good ones available when these guys were cutting their video game teeth, they missed out on that experience. Up until Silpheed, there really hasn't been a shooter with the eye candy to draw those kinds of players in and the addictive gameplay to keep them coming back.

GR: What is the criteria for Working Designs to adopt a project? What kind of factors help you decide whether or not a game is worth your unique localization process?
VI: It has to be fun and involving. That's pretty much it. We play a game, and if it's fun, we do it.



オーフェン









Sorcerous Stabber ORPHEN

魔術士オーフェン



BY DAVE HALVERSON



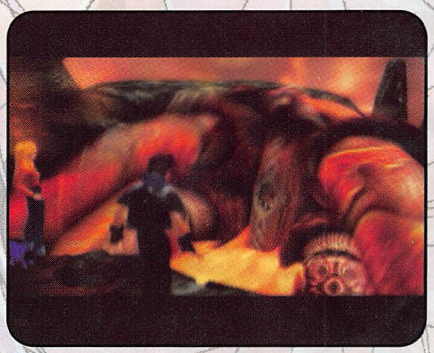
Activision has a nose for high-powered launch action-RPGs. Shade's Orphen has thankfully found a home in America

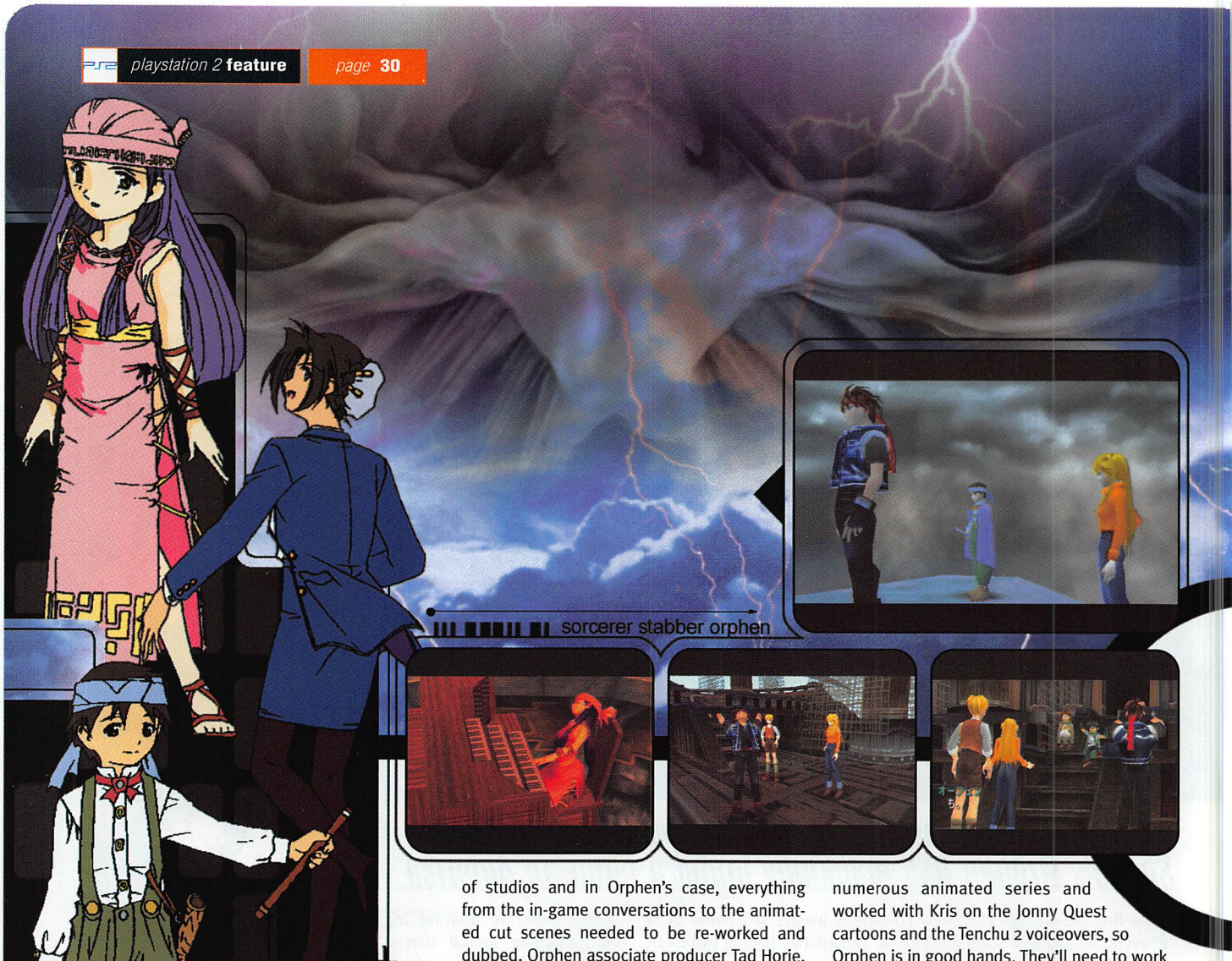
The first action-RPG for a new console is always somewhat of an event, as any new special effects or capabilities lurking within are often exhibited for the first time, allowing us a glimpse of the new chipset's polygon crunching abilities in action. It's one thing to read specs, but another entirely to witness the end product of initial development. And since action-RPGs (usually) lend themselves to detailed character models and sprawling outdoor environments, they are a great testing ground. Sorcerous Stabber Orphen (now dubbed Orphen: Scion of Sorcery) in particular, is oftentimes a wonder.

For Sega's Dreamcast, the first milestone was Climax's Blue Stinger which, as fate would have it, shares some evolutionary similarities with Orphen. Aside from being the first of their kind for their respective platforms, both games were originally created in Japan and when they debuted possessed previously unseen visual integrity. Both had camera issues. And both were adopted and localized by Activision. With BS, the camera was deemed overly cinematic as it constantly went for the dramatic angle rather than the most user friendly. With Orphen, however, the camera was deemed too user friendly as it allows you to clip through walls (which go transparent) to achieve the exact angle you desire. The problem with this is that it allows you to see the space the environment is floating in, like watching special effects in front of a blue screen, thusly sapping any dramatic effect. Like with Blue Stinger, Activision has taken on the task of reworking the title, fixing the camera and localizing the speech—which in this case is a tall order. Based on the popular Japanese anime series, Orphen is laced with cutscenes from the TV series that contain a lot of dialogue, not to mention the hours of in-game speech that takes place during the countless real-time cinemas. In an extremely character-intensive universe, Orphen travels with two of six possible companions in each scenario, and they actively ramble on. While this makes for one grand anime-inspired action-RPG for the PS2 launch, it's also a lot for the localization team to deliver in a very short time span. In order to get the game ready for its November debut, Activision had to get actors into the studio quickly, but thankfully they are not squandering quality to do so. We dropped in on the recording session at Screenmusic Studios in Studio City, California, for a taste of how Orphen's dub was coming along. Many animated series and Japanese Anime have recorded voice overs in this quaint network









of studios and in Orphen's case, everything from the in-game conversations to the animated cut scenes needed to be re-worked and dubbed. Orphen associate producer Tad Horie, from the Activision offices in Japan, was responsible for localizing Knight & Baby, Tenchu 1 and 2 and Alundra, among many others, so his keen sense in ironing out and improving import titles for U.S. release is quite renowned. The Voice Director Kris Zimmernan has directed for many animated series including The New Adventures of Jonny Quest, and her video-game credits run deep, including Activision titles like Tenchu 2 and Alundra 2. Of course, her work on Metal Gear Solid and Grandia 2 are at the pinnacle of her illustrious career. Kris has great rapport with the people she works with and is able to create the atmosphere the voice actors need to put themselves in their respective roles. And finally Quintin Flinn who plays Orphen, has lent his voice to numerous animated series and worked with Kris on the Jonny Quest cartoons and the Tenchu 2 voiceovers, so Orphen is in good hands. They'll need to work fast, though, so be sure and check back next month for the Orphen review, along with an interview with creators Shade, to see how it all worked out. **GR**







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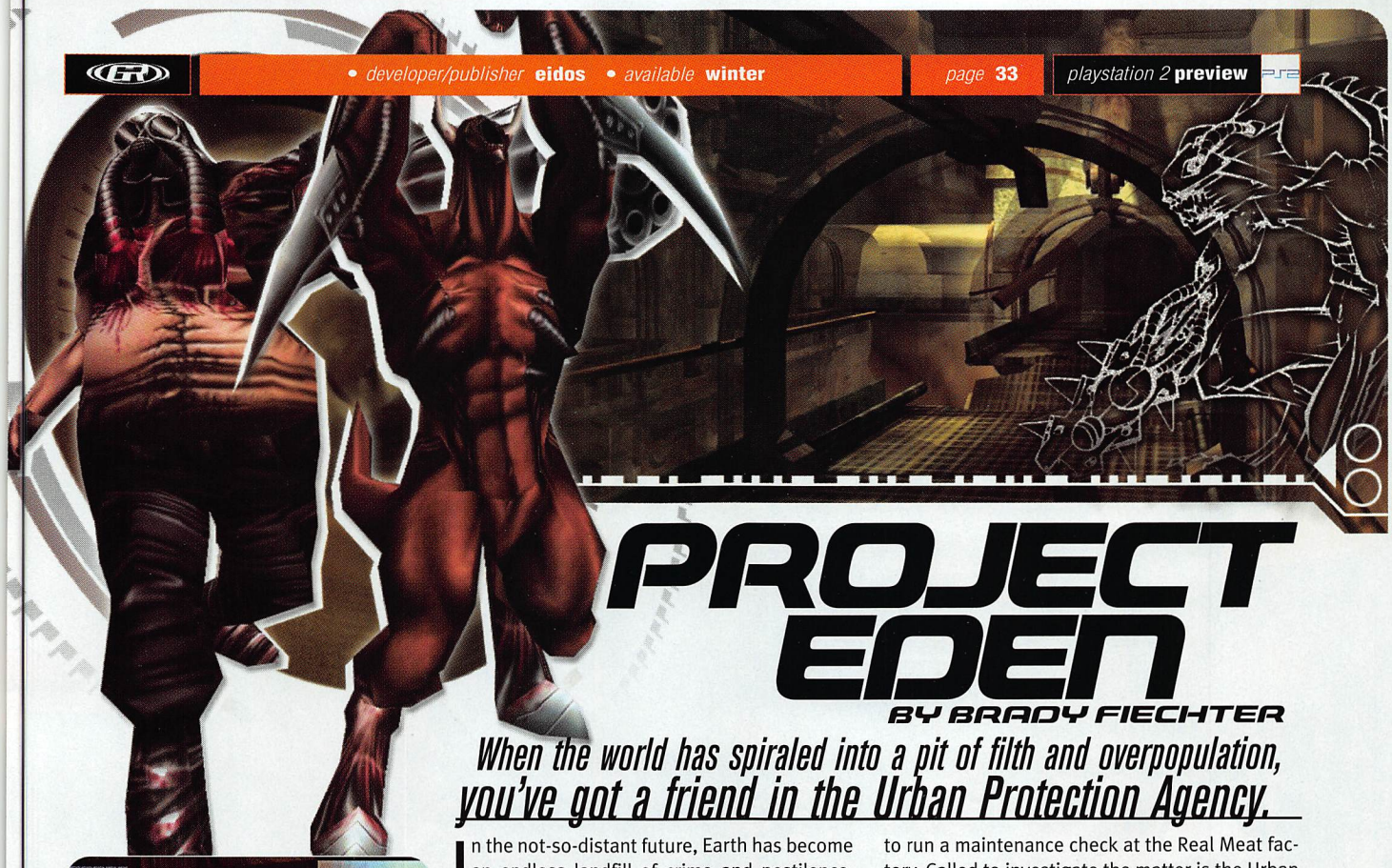
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PROJECT EDEN

BY BRADY FIECHTER

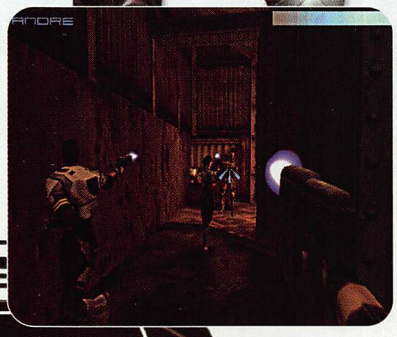
When the world has spiraled into a pit of filth and overpopulation, you've got a friend in the Urban Protection Agency.

In the not-so-distant future, Earth has become an endless landfill of crime and pestilence, crumbling metropolises and critical overpopulation. Towering above the thick layers of interconnecting streets and walkways are apartment complexes that reach toward the sky, gasping for what little sunlight is left. It is here that the choice few congregate, leaving the majority of the world to rot in the slums below.

At the very bottom of this trash heap of twisted steel and concrete live the cultists, criminals, psychotics and other rejects of society. The only contact they have with the outside world is the occasional engineering team brave enough to venture down to locate points of structural integrity on which to build even more city.

Project Eden's source of conflict begins with the disappearance of one of these teams, sent to run a maintenance check at the Real Meat factory. Called to investigate the matter is the Urban Protection Agency, an elite group of peace keepers. Taking control of any of the four characters, your mission begins at the City Limits before gradually descending through the underbelly of the city. As multiple scenarios begin to form during exploration, shifting back and forth between team members becomes routine, and control can also be switched over to remotely operated vehicles.

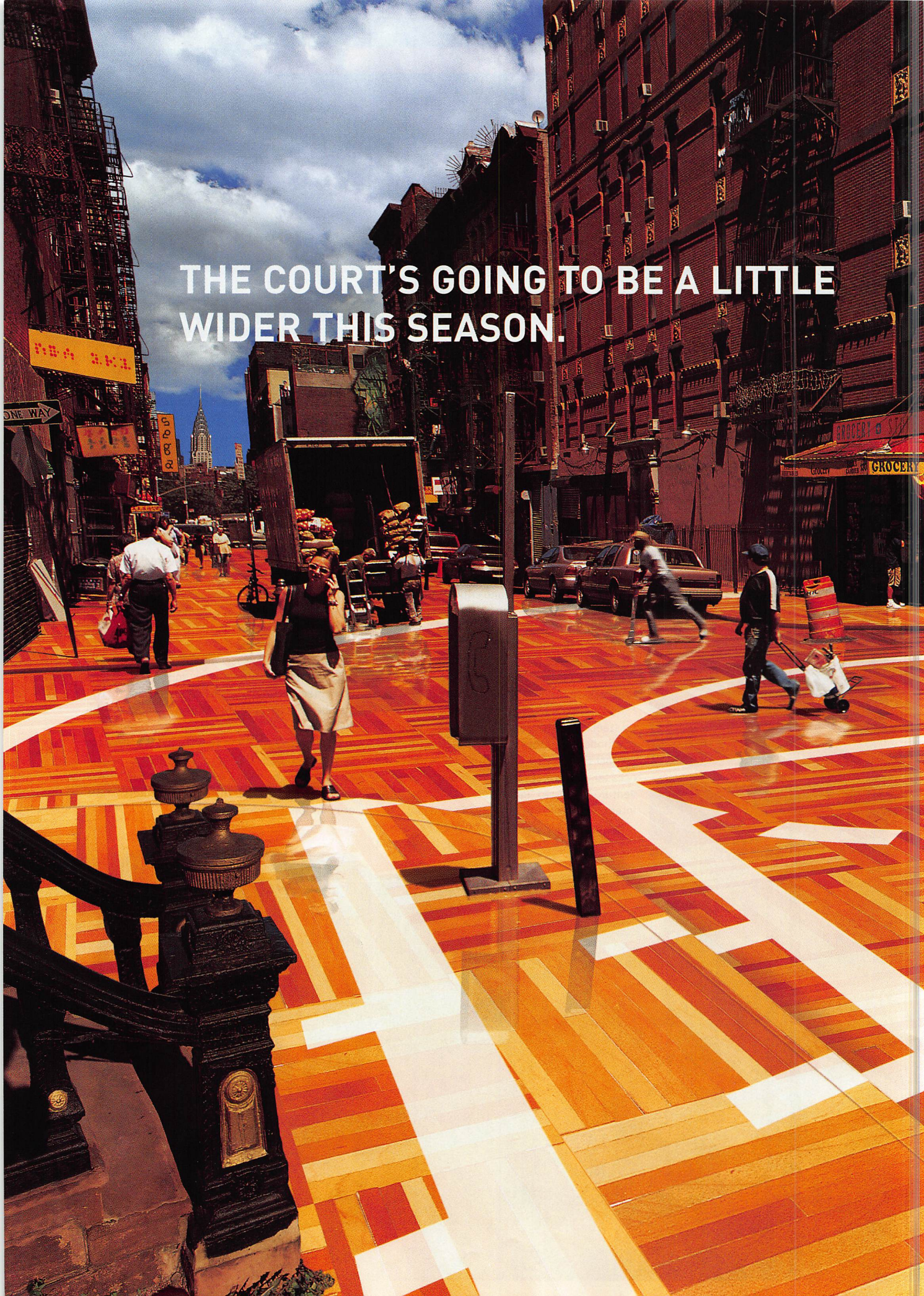
After seeing what the PlayStation 2 is capable of with X Squad, this somewhat similar action-adventure game comes with big potential. It can't hurt that it's being designed by members of the original Tomb Raider team. **GR**









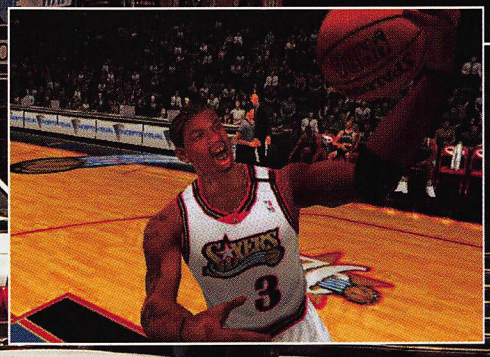

THE COURT'S GOING TO BE A LITTLE
WIDER THIS SEASON.
ONE WAY
GROCERY

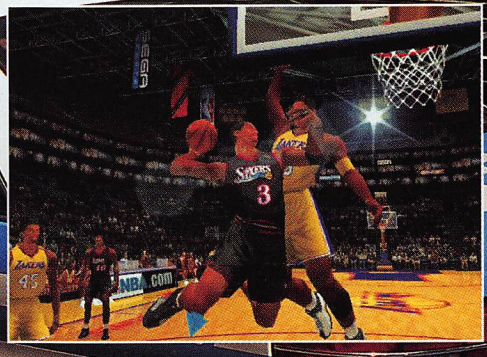
SEGA SPORTS

NBA 2K1

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Time to reach out and posterize someone. Our new online gameplay lets you and up to three of your boys use one console to take on wannabes nationwide — from gloating Laker groupies in L.A. to nostalgic Knicks-worshippers in Queens. There's e-mail so you can, uh, "chat." Plus franchise mode, swat blocks, and ill crossovers and spin moves. All with graphics tighter than a point guard's shorts circa 1974. Now we'll see who's got internet game.







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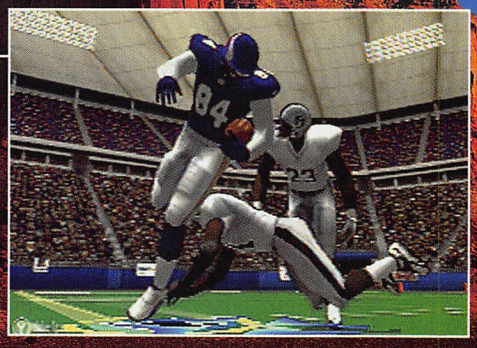
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SEGA SPORTS

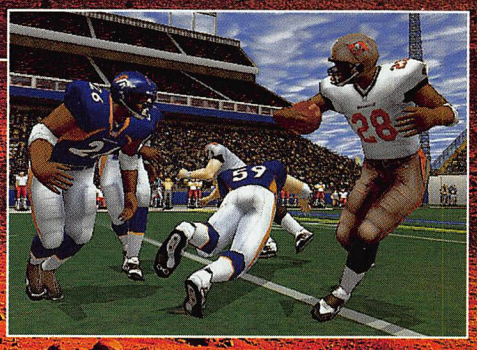
NFL 2K1

Online gameplay is here. Now you and up to three buds can get on one console and school opponents nationwide -- from pathetic Cowboys sympathizers in Tulsa to masochistic Bills fans in Schenectady. You can even exchange "pleasantries" in real time. Throw in a radically improved running game, franchise mode, and complete team-specific playbooks, and you've got yourself a full-contact chat room. Does technology rule or what?

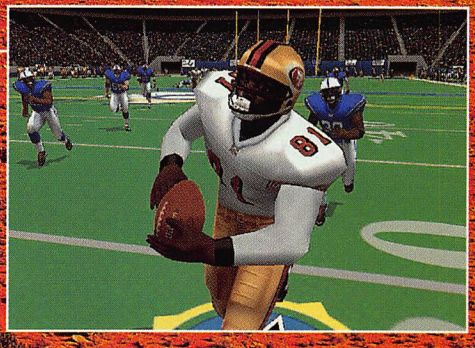
ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER



OFFICIALLY LICENSED NFL PRODUCT



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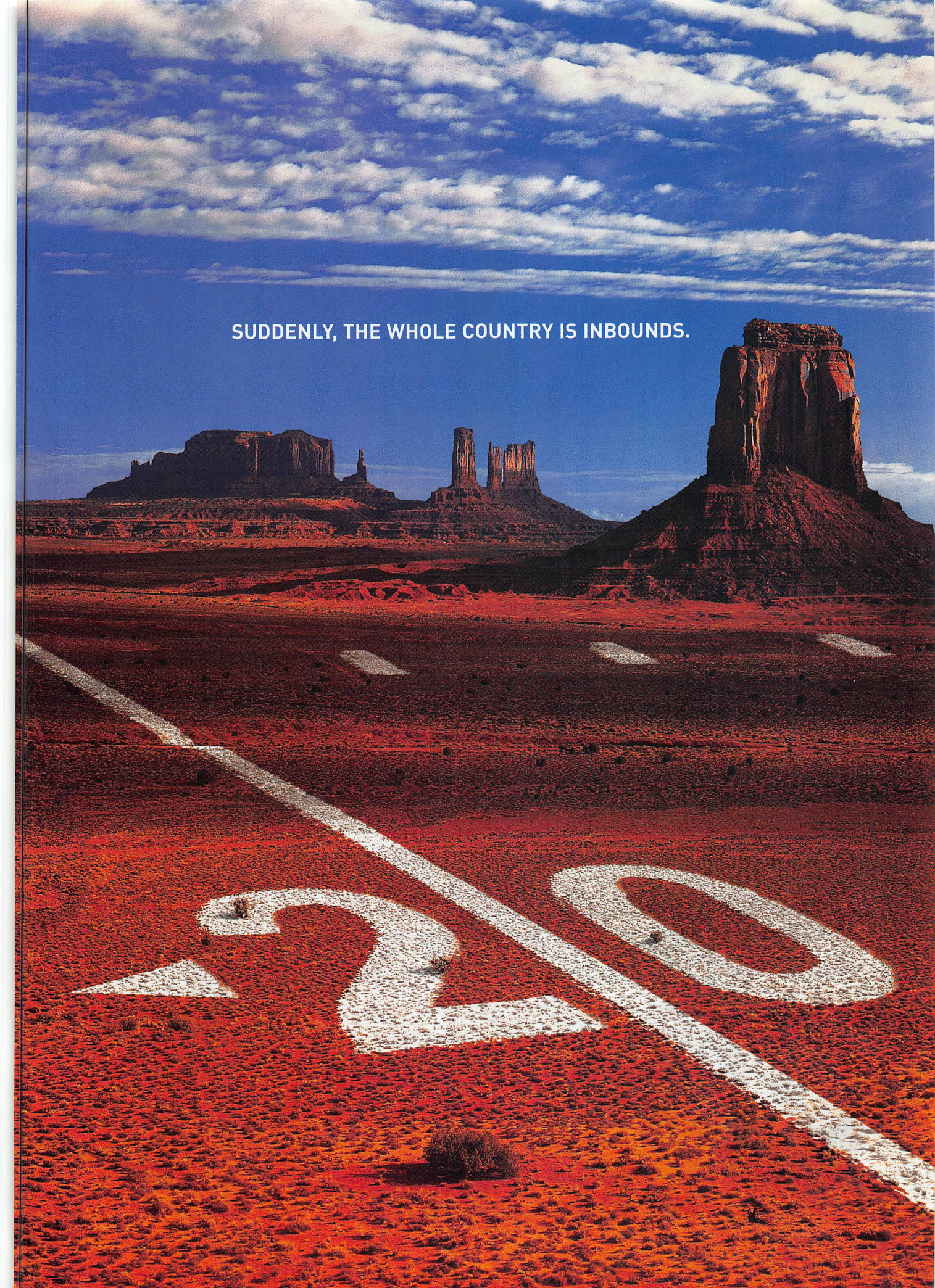


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SUDDENLY, THE WHOLE COUNTRY IS INBOUNDS.



The ultimate names in 2D fighting join forces to bring
home the ultimate fight and an all-star cast

CAPCOM VS SNK

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

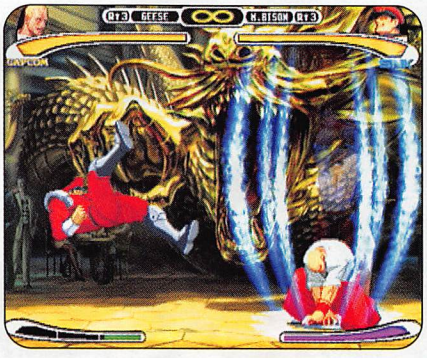
We've begged for it, we've dreamed about it, and now the fighting game that hardcore fans have wanted for years is almost here: Capcom vs. SNK: Millennium Fight 2000. Very possibly the ultimate game for 2D fighting purists, Capcom vs. SNK takes fighting back to its roots as only the masters from these two companies can, replacing flash and ludicrous combo counts with deep, solid, strategic gameplay.

Using a team system similar to King of Fighters, players square off using up to four characters, with a "Ratio System" determining how many you can select. The 26 fighters are drawn from the all-star casts of Street Fighter and KOF, from Ryu and Kyo to Geese Howard and M.Bison. All the SNK characters have been redrawn as Capcom-style sprites, while many of the Capcom fighters have been altered to resemble their pre-SF Alpha selves, so M.Bison is back to his old lanky self. Though some characters have actually lost moves (no Power Dunk for Terry!?), other characters have extra moves and beautiful new animations, and the incredible SNK-style backgrounds are just jaw-dropping. Gameplay is definitely a throwback to classic fighters, without tagging, partner assists, air blocks or any built-in counter system, but the classic style of play is beautiful in its simplicity. Additionally, players can choose between either the Capcom or SNK "groove" settings, which affect how you build and use super moves.

Recently, Capcom vs. SNK received an 8/8/7 score (out of 10) from Famitsu DC magazine. In an exclusive article for GR, editor-in-chief Koji Aizawa writes, "The basic game system of Capcom vs. SNK is very good, but the reason I am not totally satisfied with the game is that the gameplay is mundane because of its simplicity. Unlike other current fighting games, it doesn't come with huge combos and there is no aerial guard. Although Japanese gamers can play over the Net, the game does not come with a story mode.

"After playing the game, I became sort of nostalgic as it reminded me of Super Street Fighter II Turbo or Fatal Fury, which are the basis of

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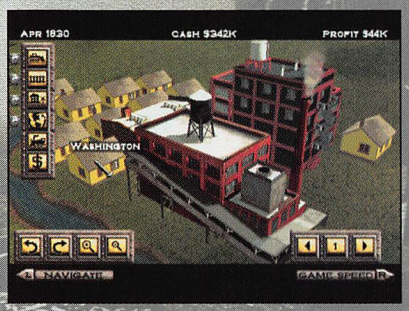


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BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND

BY DAVE HALVERSON



Activision takes the toy out of the story and Buzz makes his Dreamcast debut with no Woody

The first breakaway character from the Toy Story universe, and the recipient of his own direct-to-video (and DVD) feature and very own video game, is none other than Buzz Lightyear. And rightfully so: Buzz has the backstory, the attitude, and stands as the most likeable cyber guy in the galaxy. He's part Captain Quasar, part Tick, and all superhero. His first solo sortie into the wonderful world of video games comes to us from the respectable UK developer, Traveller's Tale. Once a mighty platform game makin' machine, they've been somewhat hit and miss of late (see A Bug's Life), so I'm hopeful that Buzz Lightyear of Star Command will mark their return to the greatness they exhibited in games like Mickey Mania for the Sega CD.

This game is a peculiar one in terms of execution, which will ultimately determine its fate. Instead of strictly shooting and/or platforming through each timed linear 3D level at your leisure, each requires you to fulfill one of three goals: chase and destroy, recon, and a simple race to the end. One might expect a game of this origin to be more obstacle-based due to the time restriction, but in this case the levels are filled with characters that shoot at you, yet, to reach the end of the stage in the allotted time, you don't really have very much time to shoot back. And since blowing up baddies and collecting the power-ups they produce allow Buzz points to pick up useful items and weapons, you do need to find this balance; I hope TT can find a happy medium between these two elements during the final tweaking stages. Also, Buzz's strafe is a tad slow in relation to the enemies' shots.

Besides the required tuning and the simplistic enemy models, Buzz Lightyear is a great-looking and very enjoyable game. It moves at a brisk 60 fps, benefits from a bevy of animated (not rendered!) cut scenes, and shows great promise in terms of variety and playability. I like the Buzz universe, too. The environments are nicely textured and laid out, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 124 ▸

MAX STEEL

BY DAVE HALVERSON

Rendered to perfection on the Kids WB...
Mattel readies Max for his big game debut

The beauty of a strong proprietary game engine is the ease in which its benefactors can produce quality games. Ubi's sturdy 64 engine, for example, has shined brightly with Tonic Trouble, Rayman 2 and now Donald Duck, all delivered within a two-year window. Keeping the ball rolling on Dreamcast, Treyarch is employing their steadfast Draconus engine once again for Max Steel's game debut. Mattel's high-line action hero, this guy makes the Ken doll look like RuPaul. He's one adventurin' dude. Between him and Action Man, it would be one helluva fight. Of course, along with the creation of a new property, certain aspects of a game's mainframe will be tweaked, and so Dreamcast users can expect Max Steel to be, at the very least, as good as Draconus. All that's left in question is the Max Steel universe, and I can attest, it's pretty cool. Max's life is forever changed when he is infused with super nanotechnology after taking an involuntary bath in some lethal ooze. The extreme teen is faster, stronger, and more powerful than any human. Working with N-tek, a secret global security force, he fights to eliminate the enemy and a most terrifying villain, his nemesis Psycho.

The game is divided into eight five-level zones with an emphasis on action (Max can climb, jump, creep and roll), which is also where the game varies most from Draconus. Max can attack via kick or punch but does not lock on to a single target. The action is of the more traditional, stand-and-brutalize type. If Max has a gun and sufficient ammo he can also take out targets from long range. Along with the action elements, there's plenty of interaction going on. Max almost always needs to find items or network with somebody to progress in each huge level.

Our preview version was still pretty early, but Treyarch is known for pulling their games together quickly and efficiently, so we expect Max will make his projected November release. The game is already showing great promise in every area, from the draw distance and frame rates to the animation, level design and music, and although I'm a little weary of the absence of a strafe, it's all systems go. Look for lots more on Max Steel in the months ahead. **GR**



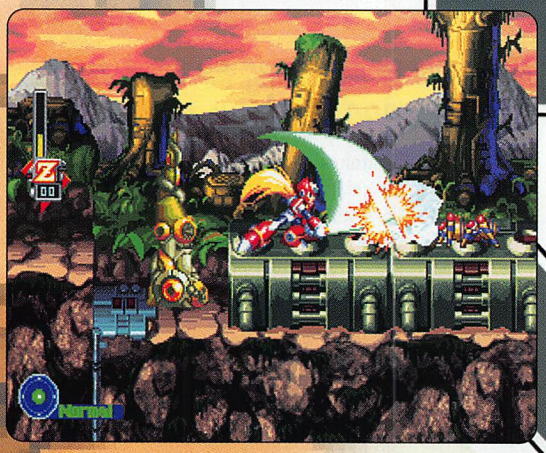




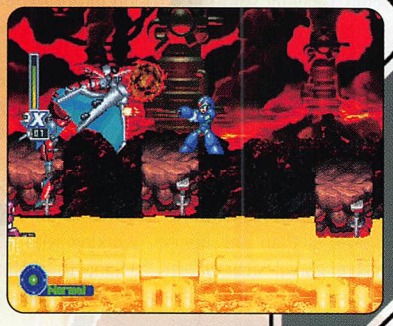
MEGA MAN X5

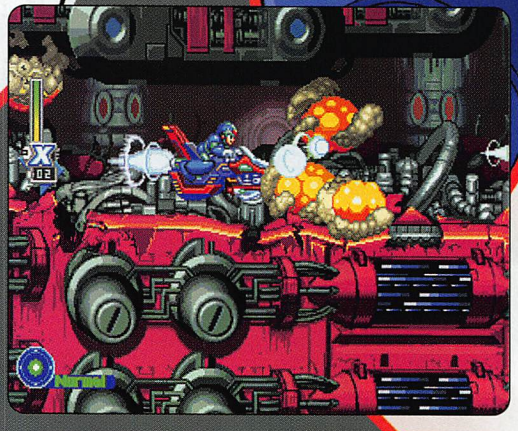
BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

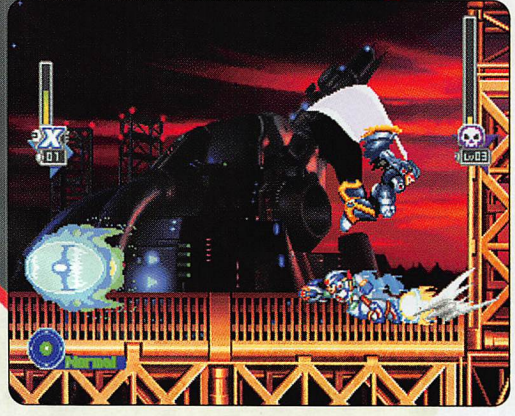












Capcom proves 2D gaming is alive and well as the classic series returns on PlayStation

Mega Man has returned! What else do you need to know? He's taken a few years off for 3D adventuring, but now Mega Man is back in 2D—the way he should be—in Mega Man X5, surrounded by all the boss-battling, weapon-stealing action that gamers around the world know and love.

If you've ever played a 2D Mega Man game before, then you already know what X5 is all about: charging through numerous vertically- and horizontally-scrolling themed levels, avoiding traps and destroying enemies until you get to the Maverick robot boss. Sigma is back again (as a computer virus) and it's up to Mega Man X and Zero to stop him. Just like in X4, both characters feature individual moves, but all the trademark maneuvers like charging up the X-buster, climbing walls, and using defeated bosses' weapons are here, along with new moves. Now the heroes can hang from cables and—after fourteen years—actually crouch! In some areas there are special vehicles to use like a speeder bike or robot suit, and, like always, there are tons of special power-up items and suit enhancements lying in wait throughout the levels.

The graphics in MMX5 are a bit different from what we're used to seeing from the series. Instead of going for a gritty anime look, the visuals actually look almost pre-rendered and have an excellent metallic appearance overall. Another major change is that time plays an important factor in the game. Players only have 24 hours of game time to complete the mission, and the ending you receive depends on the amount of time it took you to finish.

Perhaps best of all, Mega Man X5 promises to conclude the story arc that began way back on the SNES, so all the secrets Capcom has hinted at will finally be revealed. Without giving anything away, I'll just say that long-time fans of the series will be thoroughly pleased. Add to that some excellent music and animated cutscenes and you get a game that looks to live up to the legacy. GR

DRIVER 2

BY TOM STRATTON

What if Steve McQueen became a video-game character?

Calm, suave and cool as hell. Tanner is Driver

Due in November, just in time for Christmas bedlam, gamers will, once again, be able to outrun cops, chase down pedestrians and muscle through city streets in some of the baddest cars ever built.

Those who remember the original (shame on you if you don't) know that Driver pushed one of the cleanest-running engines of any driving game. Car physics were accurate, city landscapes were expansive and the frame rate was solid. Gutting the old engine and tweaking it to push more polys and retain an organic look and feel, the Reflection team has crafted a game that involves some of the best car chases outside of the Los Angeles evening news reports.

Aside from the huge improvement in game visuals and speed, the most notable addition to the game is the ability to get out of your car. This single attribute will allow you not only to switch cars at any given time, but also opens huge doors in more intricate scenarios. Imagine foot chases, pick-ups and drop-offs or even jacking a city transit bus! All of these elements will help tie the game together into a whole new experience.

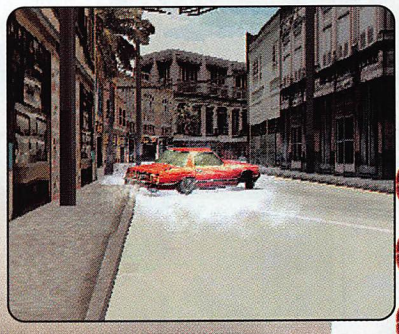
Driving locales have a nice, diverse flavor to them. They include Las Vegas, Rio de Janeiro, Chicago and Havana. Each different area will look and play completely seperate from the others. Havana will have snug, tiny streets with more people on foot or in taxis, whereas Chicago will have wide, winding freeways with off-ramps you can exit. Also, if you recall, the first Driver only had 90-degree intersections. Now, roads will bend and merge, producing new problems and solutions.

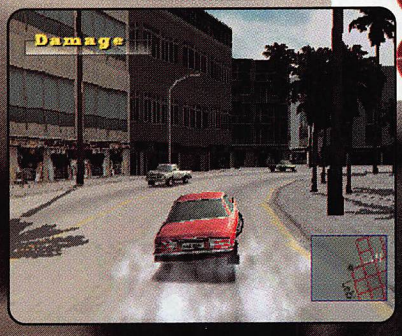
Lastly, Driver 2 will include a two-player game. The frame rate still needs to be optimized, but the notion of playing a game of cops and robbers or capture the flag on top of getting a superior single-player game is flat out, too cool. **GR**













DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX

BY DAVE HALVERSON







Acclaim and Z-Axis bring Mirra, Nyquist and eight other pros to the PS and Dreamcast! Let the BMX wars begin!

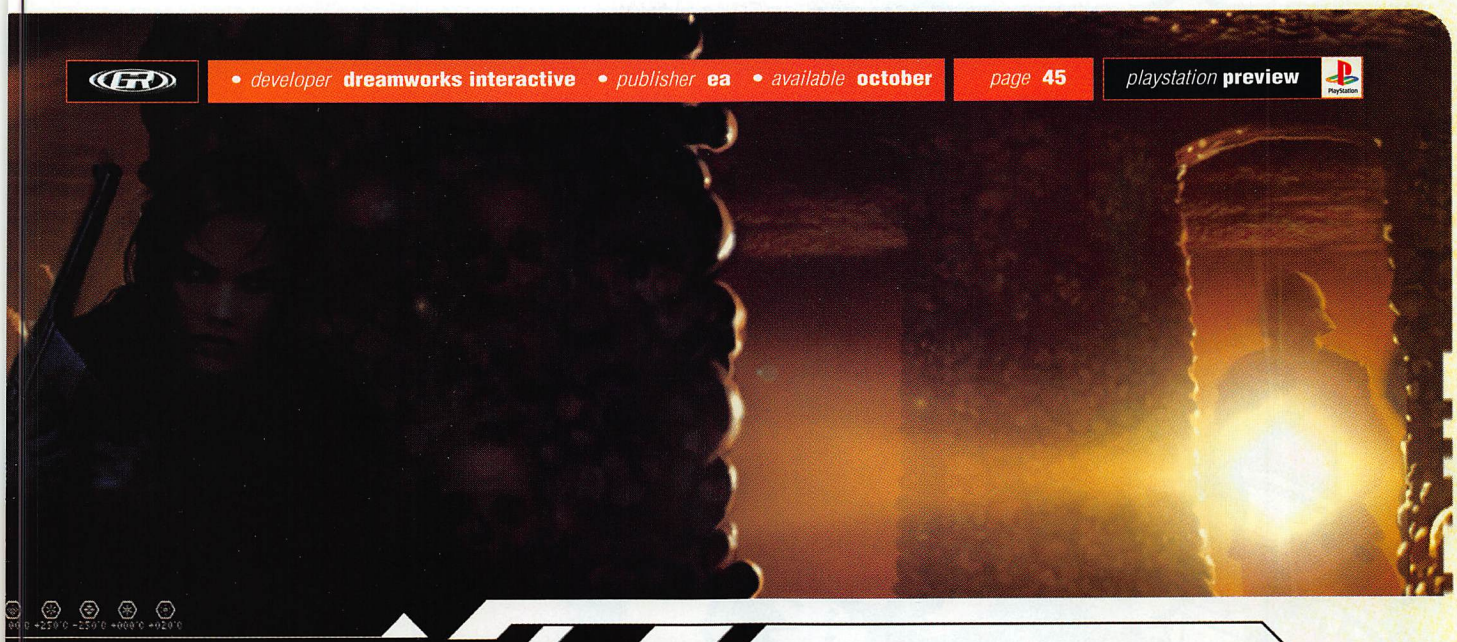
True, there are two big BMX games on the horizon—one using the tried-and-true T-Hawk engine, and the game before you, Acclaim's Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX. The good news is that both games not only look great but they excel in different areas, making each a worthy contender for your BMX dollar. Having played both games on the PlayStation, I'm leaning in Mirra's direction (although it's Mirra for Dreamcast that I'm really after) because of its vast outdoor areas and insane depth. There are things I like better about Hoffman too, but it's Mirra I'm here to talk about.



Acclaim and Z-Axis have gone to great lengths to make Mirra a contender. The impressive menu includes ProQuest (Career), Session, Free Ride, ten multi-Player venues, and a host of extras, making Mirra the most well-rounded Xtreme sports game you've ever seen; I'm surprised it doesn't come with a bike. The best aspect of Mirra, however, is the easy-to-learn, hard-to-master controls.

The minute you enter your first of the 12 venues, you'll be pulling off tricks, and as soon as you grow accustomed to the flow, you can intensify them by way of the modifier button. This makes for an insane amount of depth as you carve up each area; the amount of tricks you can perform by experimenting with combos is reportedly over 1,300!

Looking a little deeper into Mirra's vast recesses, we find real-time crashes that are different every time (now I'm looking for real-time scabs), individual rider and bike attributes, authentic in-game sponsors that upgrade your bike as you ascend the ranks, and you can even select your music track, anytime, anywhere, from a dozen possibilities. I can't say I'm crazy about the trite collection of songs, but at least I can dial up my least-annoying selection. I do have one early axe to, ahem, grind. Although the game does control smoothly, sometimes it's hard to aim accurately when looking to hit a grind spot or navigate a narrow obstacle. I'm sure Z-Axis will tweak this, though, and present this product 100 percent dialed. Next month we'll dive deeper into Dave Mirra's development from behind the scenes at Z-Axis. GR



MEDAL OF HONOR 2

BY BRADY FIECHTER

World War II becomes the powerful backdrop to this engaging first-person shooter that continues the excellence of the original

One of video-games' greatest gifts is their ability to transport us into places of pure fantasy. A designer often reaches for creations from his own mind rather than borrowing events from the real world. Some of the very best games haven't a single recognizable landscape or inhabitant, yet when direct references to reality become part of the experience, a distinct poignancy can be tapped into.

Take Medal of Honor Underground, the prequel to last year's extraordinary Medal of Honor. Because it uses the Nazi resistance of World War II as a vein of conflict, there is an intrinsically unsettling atmosphere spilling over the game. Missions take place in Africa, Create, Germany and other WWII hot spots, where castles, forests, catacombs, city streets and monasteries are swarming with German soldiers. In any other game, a level where human bones line the walls couldn't possibly have the same effect it does here as you move through the shadowy depths of a crypt, the Nazi opposition barking orders in the distance.

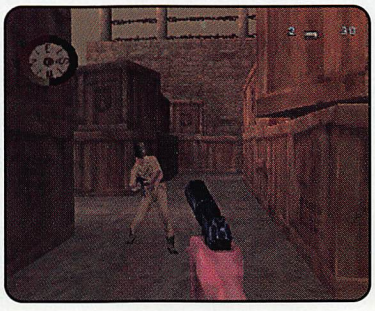
The skilled use of sound plays a crucial role in pulling you into the action. The soldiers cry out as you approach their position, sometimes accompanied by the angry bark of a dog. The distinct echo of an old PA system intones German orders. Muffled music floats down the halls. And the clank of an old tank or pop from an assault rifle is re-created convincingly and always cleverly positioned in the sound field for greater effect.

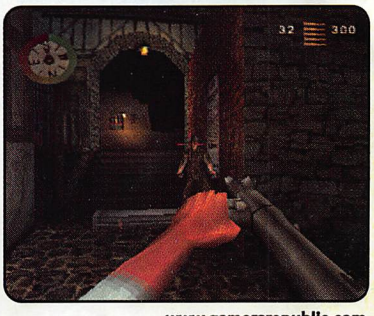
It's not often that an involving story adds invaluable support to the action in an FPS, but each mission in Medal of Honor Underground begins with briefings that inject the game with heightened emotion. The setup is extensive and detailed, following actual accounts of the war; it's intriguing to, say, hear about Himmler's efforts to construct a castle to house the remains of top Nazi officers—including Hitler—and construct labs for experimentation into the occult. Entering that castle to pop the steel helmets off the heads of the Nazi resistance with a WWII-era handgun is nothing at all like blasting aliens in outer space. **GR**



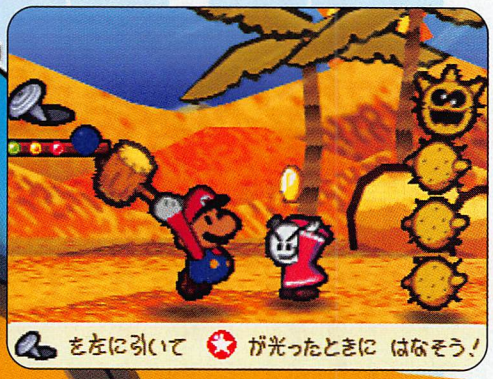










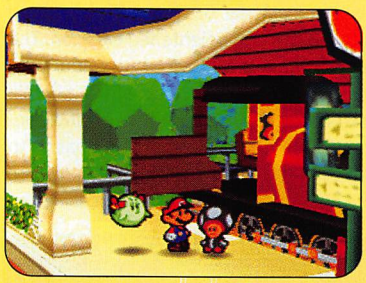




PAPER MARIO

BY MIKE HOBBS

A wafer-thin Mario makes his last N64 appearance in the delightful Paper Mario. It's cute, it's fun, and it's coming this Christmas







Unless Nintendo has something up their sleeves for the forthcoming end of the N64 era, Paper Mario is going to be the last Mario title for the N64. That's a sad thought, tempered somewhat by the knowledge of Gamecube Mario, and it's a slightly strange send-off for the character that helped define the path of the N64 as the system for 3D adventure games. Nevertheless, Paper Mario is surprising, delightful, and an absolute joy to play.

The greatest talking point of Paper Mario has been the flat, 2D characters, and indeed, these are a big draw of the game. Nintendo has tried this before, in Yoshi's Island, and to slightly more dramatic effect in that game, it must be said, but the look is very novel on the N64, and the concept flawlessly executed. The flat characters don't feel pasted onto the backgrounds, as they are subtly affected by lighting, either by moving in and out of shadow or by being rim-lighted. They feel surprisingly of the environments that they are in. But more important than the gimmick of 2D characters moving about in 3D space is the way they are drawn. Everyone is so cute in this game, even Bowser, and Mario looks like he did in Super Mario Bros. 3: he has no white part to his eyes, and it gives him this endearing, innocent sort of look that practically defines the entire feel of the game.



But this is all just window dressing for the very entertaining and very clever game hidden beneath. Platforming, exploring, and turn-based combat are the tenants of Paper Mario's gameplay, and every one of these elements has been executed with typical Nintendo clarity and finesse. Or should we say, Nintendo-like, as a company called Intelligent Systems handled the bulk of the actual development work. Not so you'd notice, as this feels like a thoroughbred







Nintendo game.

And that means it's fun, with great little touches throughout. For instance, something as fundamental to RPGs as leveling up has been given the classic Mario treatment. By collecting one hundred stars (what else) from fallen foes, Mario levels up, at which point you can decide whether to raise total hit points, flower points, or BP. Flower points function like magic, while BP points affect the amount of accessories Mario can activate at one time, granting access to more strength and various types of attacks. And the combat, which has hints of the Square-developed Super Mario RPG on SNES, has loads of entertaining interaction, using timed button presses and analog charging and wiggling to execute attacks. And then there's the fun of fighting alongside various helper characters that Mario meets in the course of his little adventure, and each assists in different ways. A winged Koopa, for example, can help Mario fly across short distances, while a little Bob-Omb friend can blast holes in walls, handy for finding hidden passages and items. And of course, they all have their own strengths in combat as well, and you can switch between them at any time, only having to sacrifice a turn during battle.

Paper Mario is sure to please when it's released later this year, but it will also sadly signal a drought of full-fledged Mario games until the monumental day when the Gamecube is released. So in other words, prepare to savor this, Mario's final adventure on Nintendo 64. **GR**



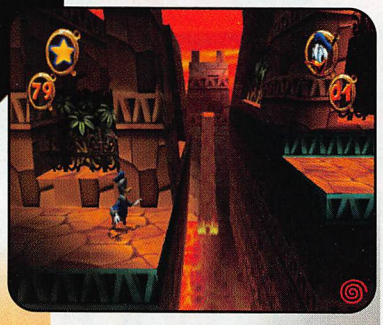


DONALD DUCK

BY DAVE HALVERSON

Ubi does Disney right with a little magic from the A-team behind Tonic Trouble and Rayman. I'll definitely have the duck!





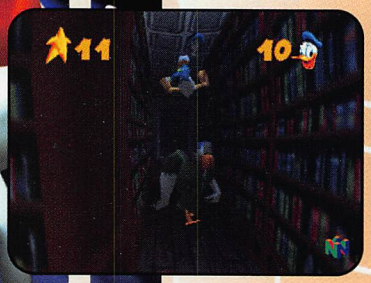


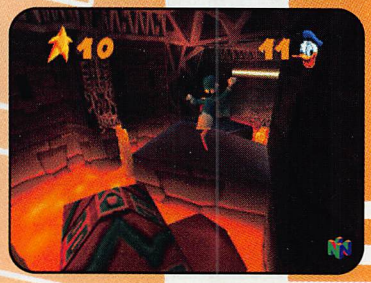
Cross Crash Bandicoot, Tonic Trouble, and a duck, and you get another great platformer for the Dreamcast and N64. It's all about Ubi's amazing engine, which is now on the third leg of its Nintendo tour (following the under-appreciated Tonic Trouble and one of '99's best, Rayman 2), and its second outing on the DC. Normally, I'd balk at a Disney character in a platforming role, but Donald and I go way back. I have such fond memories of Quack Shot for the Genesis that, in my eyes, the Duck can do no wrong; the same goes for Mickey because of Castle of Illusion.

In this mind-numbingly beautiful platformer, Ubi's Tonic team has produced another game that not only seemingly surpasses the 64's graphical limitations, but exhibits a brand of text-book platforming that we just don't get enough of these days. Switching between 2D and 3D á la Crash, the game is divided in to five quadrants with five levels in each, culminating in a boss encounter.

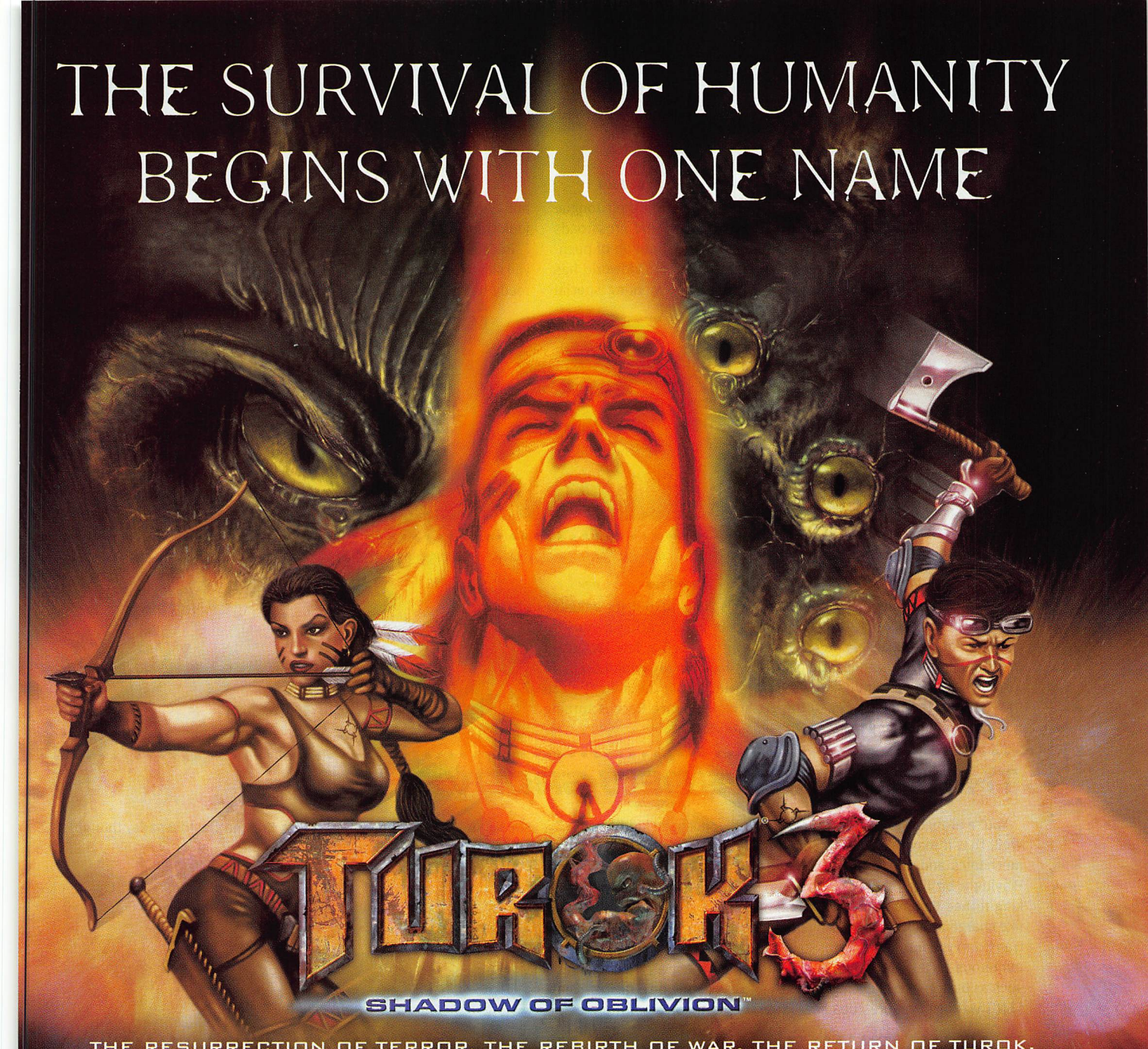
What makes Donald Duck so alluring is the combination of the visuals and the game's flow. Akin to the great platformers of old, you can get into a rhythm playing DD where you're at one with the rhythm of the game, traversing moving platforms, dodging, double-jumping, and thumping enemies. Donald can attack with a punch, Kung- Fu kick or head bop, but when he takes off on a sugar high, check out the photo-realistic spin attack—it's quite a sight.

Overall, this is a welcome game on every platform, although, of the four planned, the DC game is king. The 64 game, however, given the hardware, is pretty amazing, laying duck droppings on the PS game. In the end, though, when these guys are at the helm, you know you're in store for an E-ticket ride regardless of which system you own. **GR**





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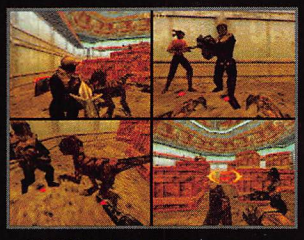
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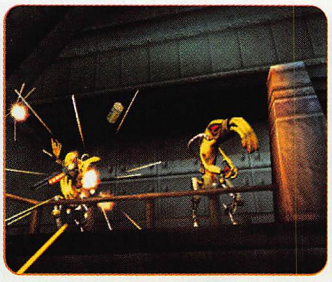
MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

preview by t. stratton • dev: oddworld • pub: infogrames • avail: q2 2001

The founders of Oddworld have never bitten their tongue when talking about the development woes and crossroads they have had to overcome. Continuing the tradition of pushing console hardware to its known limits, the team at Oddworld has had to spend a considerable amount of time implementing special anti-aliasing filters to smooth out the visuals and bring the organic look Oddworld games have been known to deliver.

Because of the effort to deliver a flushed out look, Munch's Oddysee will slip to a mid-2001 release. The game is playable and what little was ready has already left a lasting impression on us. We controlled Abe inside a huge factory, using the innovative Gamespeak to instruct other Mudokans to work. We also got to fidget with Munch, a curious fellow with a hankering for wheelchairs. Nothing we've seen on the PS2 has come close to this gripping display of visuals. GR







SPACE RACE

preview by b. fiechter • dev: melbourne house • pub: infogrames • avail: nov

How could a developer take this long to put its valuable Looney Tunes license to good use in a kart racing game? No matter, because after sleepwalking through a few lackluster platforming roles, these classic characters have finally ended up in an inspired setting of scintillating cartoon racing. From the animation to the music to the personality to the great looks, Space Race is turning out to be yet another winner on Dreamcast. GR



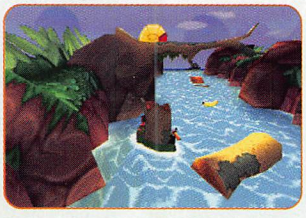


THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE

preview by c. hoffman • dev: argonaut • pub: sony • avail: november

You're probably thinking, "Oh great, another licensed kiddie game." Well, that it may be, but The Emperor's New Groove might have the mechanics and variety of gameplay to back up the Disney license. Playing a bit like Spyro the Dragon, TENG puts you in the role of a king-turned-llama as you explore eight colorful 3D worlds with skills like charge attacks, hoof-boxing and deadly llama spit. Magic potions transform you into other forms (like a turtle or a rabbit), and there are numerous puzzle elements, secret areas and integrated minigames such as button-mashing chase scenes and a wild ride on a raging river. TENG will also feature cutscenes from the film, voices of the movie stars like John Goodman and Eartha Kitt (no David Spade, though), and ample doses of sarcastic humor. GR





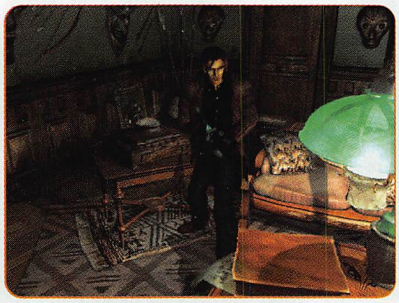
ALONE IN THE DARK: A NEW NIGHTMARE

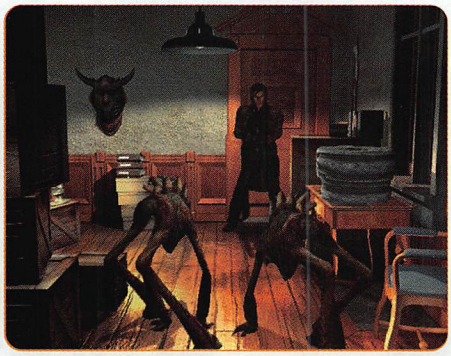
preview by t. stratton • dev: darkworks • pub: infogrames • avail: november

A bit more light has been shed on the latest installment of Alone In The Dark for the Dreamcast and PlayStation. Under control of a new development team, the game seems to still hold the true sense of the original. There are over 1200 prerendered screens, extremely detailed and unusually dense.

Where many survival horror games focus on building a heavy arsenal of weapons, AITD keeps the player thinking with involved puzzles and mind-bending riddles. A big, and probably most important, tool used in the game is the flashlight. This item will be used to engage combat in some cases, avoid combat in others. With what we've seen so far, Resident Evil could finally get some real competition. GR







ONIMUSHA

preview by b. fiechter • dev/pub: capcom • avail: february





Maybe it was the inhospitable surroundings of the E3 show, but for some reason, when Onimusha was first displayed, it didn't leave near the same impact that was felt during Capcom's presentation of the game in the comfort of our own space. Having actually gotten a chance to play the game and see farther into its compelling ancient-Japan world, I've come to think of Onimusha as a potential master work.

Capcom's choice of prerendered backgrounds has been critisized by some who believe the PS2 should only harbor fully polygonal games, but this thinking is proved flawed when you take into account the artistry and unprecedented visual sophistication running through Onimusha. And because Capcom chose to avoid real-time processing woes by using static images for the settings, the character models have been constructed from as many as 10,000 polygons each. The level of detail is staggering, and as many as six enemies can pack the screen. Just how well the game plays can't be commented on just yet, but if the same fastidious attention to atmosphere and production values—a budget that's swelled past $15 million and a 250 piece orchestra to compose the music—is adhered to, Onimusha will set a new standard for game design. **GR**

BLADE MASTERS

preview by b. fiechter • dev/pub: ripcord avail: fall









One of the first Dreamcast online games, Legend of the Blade Masters is an action-RPG that features over 40 levels of quest-based tasks carried out by any of the five playable characters—a Black Knight, Orc, Warrior, Dwarf or Elf.

Blade Masters is not meant to be an overly complex game, and the designers are focusing on making the action intuitive and swift. But this doesn't mean storytelling is taking a backseat. An extensive story is woven into the action, telling the plight of Erik Valdemar as he searches for a collection of mythical swords that will grant impenetrable power to a group of warlords known as the Guardians.

Coming from the PC world, Blade Masters' battle system is of the point-and-click nature, so selling this to the console audience will be an interesting challenge. But with fantastic music and the fantasy settings, getting lost in this game just might be easier than you'd think. That it's focused on network play sure won't hurt. **GR**

CHAMPIONSHIP SURFING

preview by s. akinnuso • dev: krome studios • pub: mattel interactive • avail: fall





There's irony in the fact that console gaming virgins Mattel Interactive and Australian-based Krome Studios will be the first to offer fresh perspectives on water-based gameplay with their Championship Surfer—one of only two Surfing-based games on any next-gen system. The fact that the game's been in development for well over a year, being tweaked and fine-tuned since the pre-E3 Australian press debut (developing something of an Internet following in the process), is fairly obvious in the impressive 70-percent build we've been playing. In what can only be described as a surfing sim, the game has you riding 20-feet-high crests, skimming violent waves, and doing competitive surfing in perhaps the most unique experience available on the Dreamcast. High on learning curve but big on reward, Championship Surfing could be a surprise hit on DC. **GR**

GORKA MORKA

preview by b. fiechter • dev/pub: ripcord • avail: october



Now here's a cool idea: rowdy spectators actually affect the outcome of a race by disrupting your driving in Gorka Morka, a unique combat racer set in the Warhammer 40,000 universe. Weaving RPG elements into the game's strategy, Ripcord is reaching for more than just straightforward racing and combat.

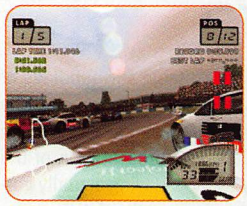
The competitors in the game are known as Ork Mobz, who can be recruited to form gangs that battle it out in interactive, treacherous expanses of open road. Victory grants you the chance to tweak your ride, improving parts like the tires, suspension, and engine.

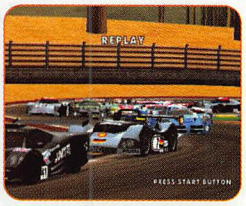
Perhaps the biggest drawing card of this game is its online play. Up to eight teams of two can compete, with the option of either driving or shooting. **GR**

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TEST DRIVE: LE MANS

preview by m. hobbs • dev: infogrames • pub: infogrames • avail: fall

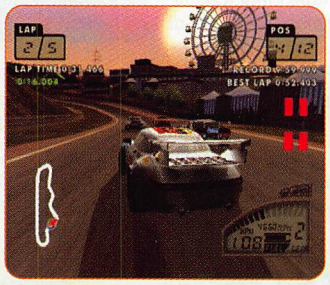




It used to be that Test Drive games would elicit groans. "Not another one," we'd say. Ah, but things are changing over at Infogrames. Just look at the latest game to wear the Test Drive monicker, Test Drive: Le Mans. This game, in a word, is stunning. Graphically, only Ferrari F355 and V-Rally look as good.

Simulating GT2 and prototype cars, Test Drive: Le Mans recreates the illustrious 24 hours of Le Mans, complete with a real-time mode for the ultimate experience, while also including numerous real world courses to race on. Japan's famed Suzuka circuit joins the likes of Donington and Catalunya in this eye-watering sim. Not only are the courses faithfully and beautifully rendered, but the car models are surprisingly smooth and rounded, recalling work that we've seen on the PS2. And various graphical effects really drive the visuals home, like the real-time shadows thrown onto the track by the cars that actually move in relation to the sun's position.

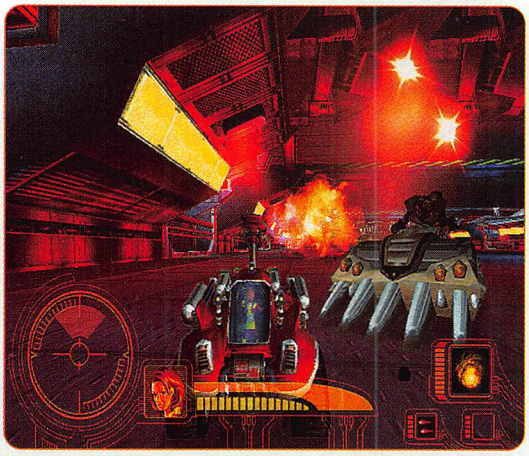
Look for much more on Test Drive: Le Mans next month as we delve deeper into the latest Dreamcast racing spectacle. GR





MOTOR MAYHEM

preview by tom stratton • dev: beyond games • pub: infogrames • avail: dec



Video-game demos usually display and fudge just a bit more visually than the the actual game will deliver. So while we were all impressed and excited about Beyond Games' Motor Mayhem, we remained reserved until we got the chance to really play it. That chance has come and we can all express enthusiasm without reserve. MM is taking vehicle combat games to a whole new level. Expansive multitiered levels are designed to compliment all of the combatants in one way or another. The amount of animations in each car and driver is amazing, as is the physics engine. GR



EXTREME GAMES

preview by s. akinnuso • dev: inner loop • pub: infogrames • avail: nov

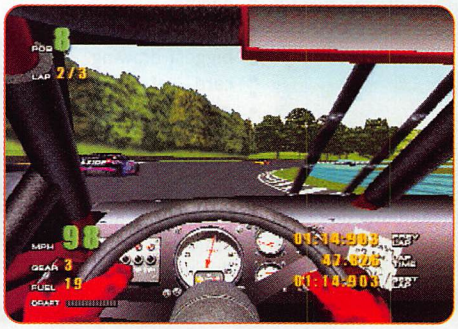




The first time you see it, you'll know why Sega Sports Europe (Infogrames is bringing it out here) chose the developers at Inner Loop to handle their newest, and perhaps most ambitious sports title. The textures are extremely detailed, the game moves fast, and it looks fantastic. With its three styled, themed events in one, this ironman endurance spin on conventional racing allows you to compete in off-road rallies, hang-gliding tests, snowboarding, and more during the span of a single race. And get this: you can download extra tracks onto your VMU. GR

NASCAR 2001

preview by m. puccini • dev: ea sports • pub: ea • avail: december



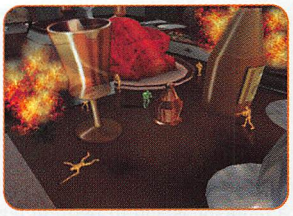


Eminem. Kid Rock. Pooch. Britney Spears. NASCAR. White trash is back in a big way. And if you're a NASCAR fan and are getting a PS2, you're in luck as EA is in the midst of getting a game out just for you. Featuring all of the pros on the circuit and all of the courses they drive on, the game brings the, um, excitement of the sport to the PS2. Graphically, it's a little rough, but it's still early. GR

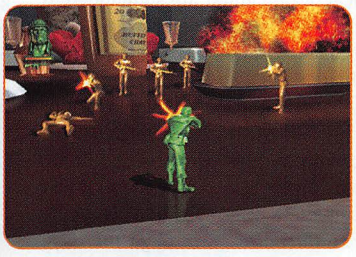
ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2

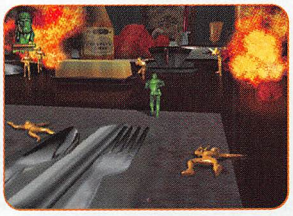
preview by b. fiechter • dev: 3do • pub: 3do • avail: fall

There's something so delightfully entertaining about the idea of assuming the role of tiny objects waging war in larger-than-life settings like a house or back yard. Such a setup worked wonders for Sega's Toy Commander, and this newest entry in the Army Men series is capable of capturing a bit of that same appeal. In Sarge's Heroes 2, you command a legion of soldiers into battle across pool tables, under playroom tables, and even inside a pinball machine. Melt your opponent with flame throwers or blast them into bits of charred plastic with a scintillating realism thanks to the PlayStation 2 lighting effects. GR









STUNT GP

preview by b. fiechter • dev: team 17 • pub: infogrames • avail: fall

As the title implies, Stunt GP is more than just racing: combo points are gained through special stunts pulled off of ramps, loop-the-loops, and other track hazards. But the emphasis on crazy maneuvers does not mean driving skill can be ignored. Finding slipstreams, racing lines and the right moment to recharge will be necessary to make the finish line. This is fantasy racing, but the developers are even focusing on ensuring that you feel the difference between a front- and rear-wheel-drive car. GR



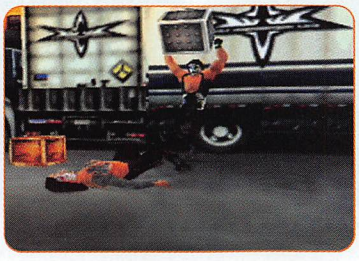


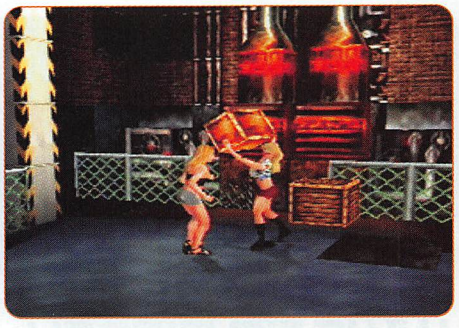


WCW BACKSTAGE ASSAULT

preview by the heartbreak chris • dev: kodiak interactive • pub: ea • avail: fall

The folks at EA decided that the best thing about last year's WCW Mayhem was the backstage brawling, so they're basing the entire sequel around it. WCW Backstage Assault for N64 and PS will be the only grappling title without a ring; instead the action takes place in 14 back areas like the boiler room, media center and bathroom. More than 50 WCW stars, including Sting, Booker T and Jeff Jarrett, will be featured (along with female characters) and there will be 40 types of weapons and some 800 mo-capped moves to do damage with. Right now the character models could use some improvement, but Backstage Assault promises to be unique if nothing else. GR





STARLANCER

preview by t. stratton • dev: warthog pub: crave • avail: november

Crave's on a roll scooping up the hottest properties, tuning them for solid Dreamcast successes. Starlancer, the hit space flight-sim game by the legendary Chris Roberts and his Digital Anvil team, was a rush for sci-fi junkies on the PC, and Crave/Warthog plan to make the game a fantastic solo and, more importantly, online experience, for anybody who's needed an excuse to get the Internet-ready Sega Dreamcast. Promising 1-8 player competitive and cooperative play in an expansive online universe, Crave's early version plays fast, chock full of fancy lighting effects for solar flares and awesome weapon power-ups, and looks gorgeous. Not only do hordes of huge enemy ships dot the galaxy-scape, but squadrons of your own fleet (complete with impressive voice chatter) touch off the communal feel. Colony Wars fans dare not miss this. GR





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EPHEMERAL FANTASIA

preview by **chris hoffman** • *dev:* **kcej east** • *pub:* **konami** • *avail:* **november**

Ephemeral Fantasia is shaping up pretty well for the first true RPG on PS2. From an unusual source, KCEJ East, Ephemeral Fantasia combines traditional RPG elements with intriguing new twists to take the genre to new heights. The adventure starts when the hero and his magical talking guitar are summoned to a fantastic island to perform legendary music for the princess' wedding. However, the hero quickly discovers that there's more to the proceedings than meets the eye. Though the gameplay is the usual menu-based stuff, EF employs a constantly running in-game clock to keep things interesting, much like Zelda on the N64. Day rolls to night as time progresses, and events unfold in quasi-real-time. You only have five days to stop the evil forces on the island though, so if you don't build up your power and complete the necessary tasks, you'll find yourself in a time warp and be forced to go through the days again, though your levels and skills will be retained. Much like Konami's other PS2 offerings, the graphics are a bit underwhelming at this point. Seams are painfully obvious on the character models and many of the enemies are just laughable (Oh no! A giant limbless gerbil!). However, the character designs (reminiscent of Contrail's Alundra) are well-done, environments are vast, and the music is great. As the game's hero is a musician, you can even jam along using Konami's Guitar Freaks controller at certain points. I'm eagerly awaiting the final English version of the game. **GR**





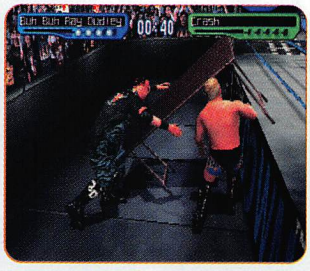
WWF SMACK DOWN! 2: KYR

preview by **the heartbreak chris** • *dev:* **yuke's** • *pub:* **thq** • *avail:* **november**

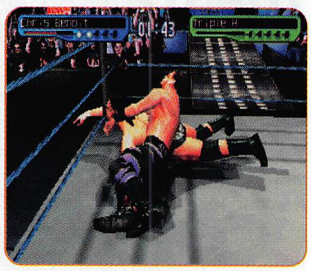
It was just this past March that players got to layeth the smack down for the first time on PS and already the sequel, WWF SmackDown! 2: Know Your Role, is upon us. Using the same popular Yuke's engine as before, SmackDown 2 continues the action with more characters and new play modes. Virtually everyone on the WWF roster is represented, from The Rock to Al Snow to Pete Gas. The character editor has been greatly enhanced as well. Loads of new modes have been added, such as a casket match, table match, ladder match and—the one every fan has been waiting for—the dreaded Hell in a Cell match where you can climb on top of the cage and re-create your favorite death-defying bumps at home. All this in addition to the guest ref matches and the plot-driven season mode that were so popular the first time around. **GR**







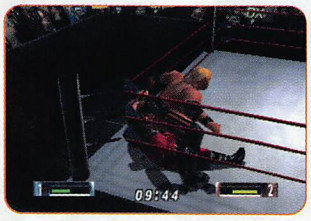




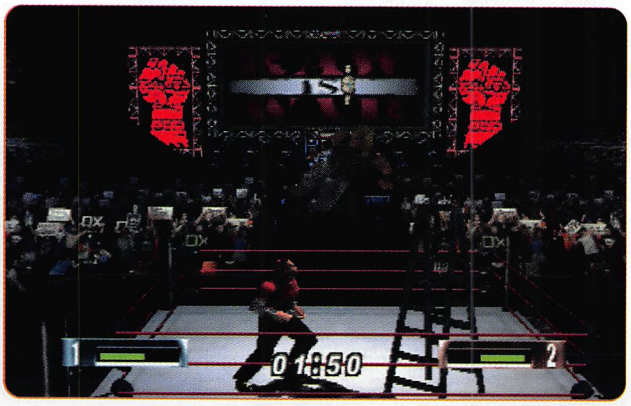
WWF NO MERCY

preview by **the heartbreak chris** • *dev:* **asmik/ace** • *pub:* **thq** • *avail:* **november**

Fans of Wrestlemania 2000 will feel right at home with WWF No Mercy. Developed by the same team and using the same tried-and-true engine, No Mercy delivers the same brand of wrestling action but with more features and minor gameplay tweaks. More than 70 characters are in the game, including several new additions to the roster such as Chris Benoit, Kurt Angle and Rikishi...heck, even Linda McMahon! The major new play modes are an awesome ladder match and an iron man match, and the career mode has been replaced by belt quest modes, complete with backstage storylines. You can even brawl in several back rooms and piledrive opponents through tables! The only problem so far is that the facial textures and models aren't quite up to par with WM2K, but No Mercy should be a blast anyway. **GR**







As a member of a ruthless gang of smugglers, it's your job to evade the U.S. Border Patrol, CIA, and cutthroat rivals to deliver illegal cargo. It'll take complete mastery of your off-road vehicle to make it across unforgiving terrain and stay one step ahead of the forces out to destroy you.



DELIVER AT ALL COSTS

SMUGGLER'S RUN



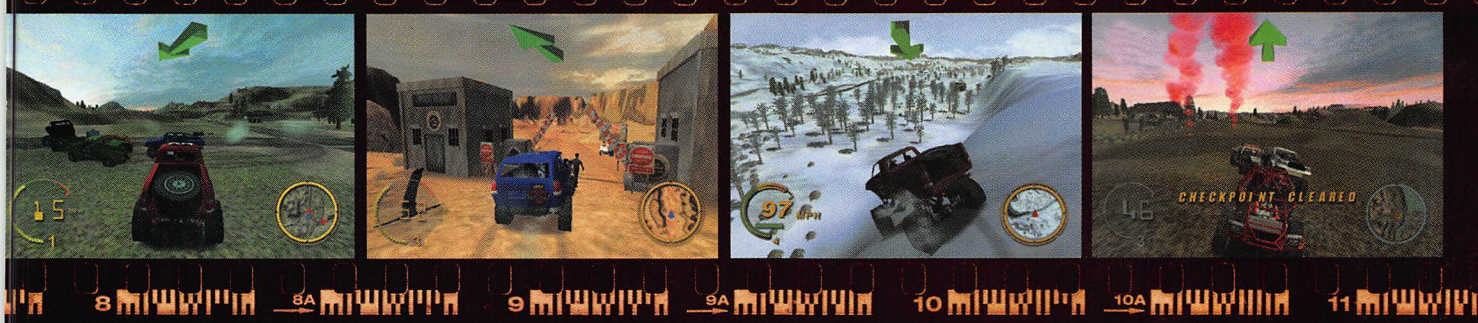
- Levels are over 5 square miles, each with a "drive anywhere" environment filled with other smugglers and law enforcement officials.
- Choose from 35 different vehicles, each with unique modifications and strengths.
- Compete head-to-head or run "pick up and deliver" missions against AI opponents or in full multiplayer mode.
- Maneuver your way through arid desert, icy tundra, or rocky mountain forest.
- Real Time Damage Models allow you to watch the parts fly as you pay the price for punishing collisions!

PlayStation®2

RELEASE DATE: PLAYSTATION 2 LAUNCH

WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/SMUGGLERSRUN

SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON GUIDANCE RECORDINGS



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This title is not yet approved by Sony Computer Entertainment America.

gamers' republic REVIEWS

GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

DOMESTIC REVIEWS

ALIEN RESURRECTION PS	C+
ARMORED CORE 2 PS2	B
D2 DC	A-
DEMOLITION RACER DC	D+
DESTRUCTION DERBY DC	C+
DINO CRISIS 2 PS	B-
DRAGON VALOR PS	B-
ECW ANARCHY RULZ PS	D
ETERNAL RING PS2	C
EVERGRACE PS2	B-
FERRARI F355 DC	A
GUNGRIFFON BLAZE PS2	B+
HOGS OF WAR PS	B-
MICRO MANIACS PS	B
MUPPET RACEMANIA PS	C
OGRE BATTLE 64 N64	B
R.C. REVENGE PS	C-
RIDGE RACER V PS2	A
RUSH 2049 DC	C+
SILPHEED PS2	A-
SMUGGLER'S RUN PS2	A-
SSX PS2	A
STREET FIGHTER EX3 PS2	A-
STAR TREK PS	B
SUPER RUNABOUT DC	B
TEAM BUDDIES PS	B
TEKKEN TAG TOURN. PS2	B+
TYCO R.C. PS	B
X SQUAD PS2	B+

IMPORT REVIEWS

GIANT GRAM 2000 DC	B
SURFROIDS PS2	B+

SPORTS REVIEWS

MIA HAMM SOCCER N64	C-
NFL BLITZ DC/PS	B/C-
NHL FACEOFF PS	D+
SWING AWAY GOLF PS2	A-
SYDNEY 2000 PS/DC	C-/C-

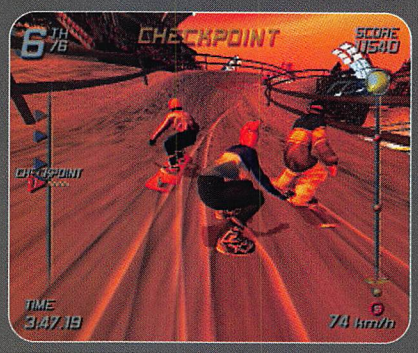
HANDHELD REVIEWS

AUSTIN POWERS GBC	C+
BLASTER MASTER GBC	A
SPIDER-MAN GBC	C+



SSX SNOWBOARDING

GAME OF THE MONTH



developer/publisher: ea

SSX snowboarding

Easily one of the most impressive of the PlayStation 2 launch titles, EA's incredible SSX Snowboarding will redefine your graphical expectations. The PS2 is turning out to be everything Sony promised it would be.

GUNGRIFFON BLAZE

BY MIKE HOBBS

Game Arts' PS2 festival continues with this update of their fondly remembered Saturn series.

Gungriffon holds a special place in many gamers' hearts. Game Arts' classic Saturn mech game found a devoted following, both in America and Japan (which was blessed with two Gungriffon titles), as players fell in love with the game's fast action and solid, thorough design. I have a feeling that a whole new generation will fall in love with Gungriffon.

What separates the Gungriffon series from other mission-based mech games like Armored Core and Gundam 0079 is the speed and immediacy of the play. You don't lumber around in GG, and this is especially true in the new PS2 version, which effectively uses the dual analog sticks for movement and aiming, lending the game a nimble, fluid feel. And the missions are designed to take full advantage of this, offering up a blazing mix of intense shooting action and simple yet satisfying elements of strategy. It's only the rather low mission count (six core levels plus variations) that slightly disappoints.

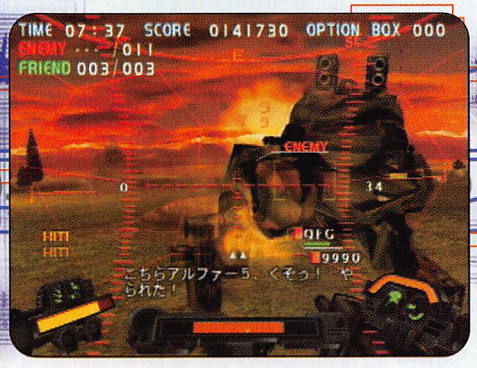
And to some, the graphics may disappoint too, but only at first blush. The texture work is average for a PS2 game, as are the models, but what the game lacks in visual complexity is more than made up for by its superlative execution. There is a real sense of space and scale, especially when you leap into the air, flying high over the action, bombarding the enemies below. Sure there is draw in, but you can't get this kind of open experience in Armored Core 2. And the smaller touches, like the way the ground will react when shot, looks just like footage from military exercises and it lends the game a reality that goes beyond the quantitative aspects of the textures or models.

Between Gungriffon Blaze and Armored Core 2, mech aficionados are going to have one of the best selections of games in some time. Personally, I find Gungriffon Blaze a far more entertaining game, but concede that as an experience, Armored Core 2 lasts a little bit longer. GR









- EPIC ENVIRONMENTS AND BEAUTIFUL DETAILING
- PERFECT DUAL ANALOG CONTROL SCHEME
- VERY, VERY GOOD MISSION DESIGN...
- ...BUT THERE ARE ONLY SIX OF THEM

REPUBLIC SAYS... EVEN MORE THAN ARMORED CORE 2, THIS IS A SERIES THAT HAS FOUND NEW LIFE ON THE PLAYSTATION 2. WITH A FEW MORE ENVIRONMENTS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AN A.

B





TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

BY BRADY FIECHTER

It may be classic Tekken, but just look at those ***beautiful backgrounds and characters***

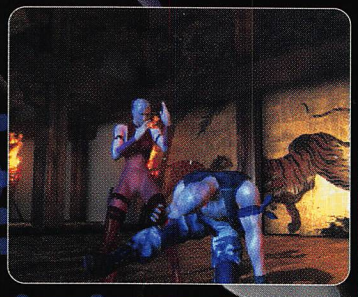
Some of you have never liked the Tekken series, and you will not like Tekken Tag Tournament. Some of you just don't like fighting games, and Tekken Tag Tournament will do nothing to change that distaste. Some of you lash out when Tekken disciples strain to preach the virtues of why their series is so much better than your Street Fighter or Dead or Alive or Virtua Fighter or Soul Calibur, and this game doesn't even attempt to change your mind. To you all I say: go away and let the rest of us enjoy a familiar game of Tekken that sizzles from the visual energy generated by the PlayStation 2.

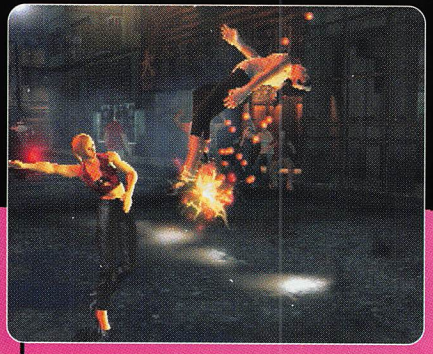
Namco took the Tekken 3 foundation, dumped in every Tekken character from the start of the series, set them against a generous collection of new backdrops, and added the ever-standard tag function of bringing a partner along for the fight who can jump in to finish a combo or just provide a break from the match. For Tekken fans, this is probably all the change needed to sustain another healthy installment in the series. The thrill factor hits when the typically superb opening CG movie leads in to the first fight and you see combatants who don't look much less detailed than they did in the intro.

The settings are as striking as the characters. One of the best examples is one of the most richly stylized stages I've scene in a fighting game—a dojo where beautifully textured tigers adorn the walls and streams of sunlight pour through the rows of windows framing a fall-colored mountain range. The worn wood floor is so detailed you can practically see an errant splinter poking out.

Despite the old Tekken 3 animation routines and the obtrusive backgrounds that appear hinged to the floor—an inherent flaw to the Tekken engine—Tekken Tag Tournament is a visual powerhouse. If there's one thing even those Street Fighter fans can agree with, that's more than enough to compensate for recycled gameplay. **GR**





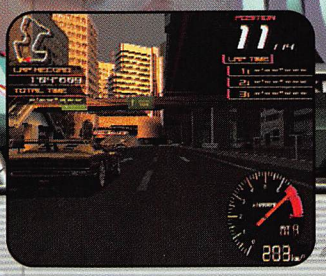


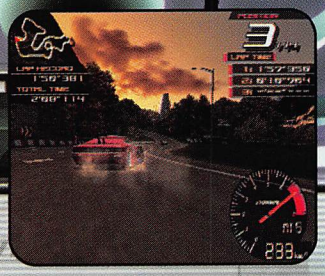
- BACKGROUNDS ARE GORGEOUS
- CHARACTER MODELS REMARKABLY DETAILED
- THE ENTIRE CAST OF TEKKEN CHARACTERS IN ONE GAME
- NEXT TIME, LET'S HOPE THE GAMEPLAY IS AS NEW AS LOOK

REPUBLIC SAYS... TEKKEN TAG DOES VERY LITTLE THAT TEKKEN 3 DIDN'T ACCOMPLISH ALREADY, SO ENJOY IT FOR ITS SPECTACULAR VISUALS.

B+







RIDGE RACER V

BY MIKE HOBBS

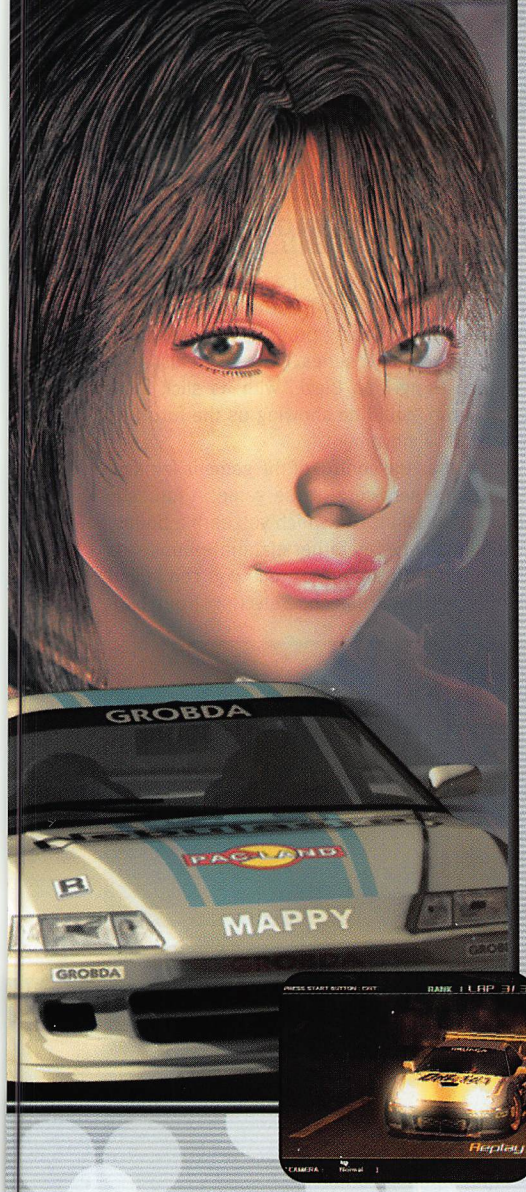
Good? Of course. How good? Let's just say that Namco has crafted a racing masterpiece in Ridge Racer V

Ridge Racer V is one of the best racing games I've ever played. A thrilling combination of visuals, control, and dynamic brilliance helps to create an experience that is truly unprecedented for a home console racer.

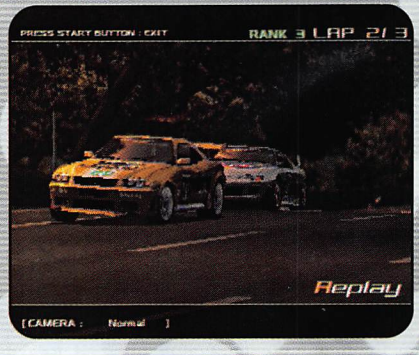
Not revolutionary in concept, Ridge Racer V is revolutionary in its presentation. In short, no racing game has ever looked this good at home. The frame rate is a given at 60, but the amount of detail, both on the cars and within the courses, is exhilarating. The sense of artificial reality is amazing, and there are moments in Ridge Racer V that will take your breath away. Cresting over a gentle left hander while watching the sun flutter through copious, seemingly voluminous trees is one such moment, created through equal parts high technology and brilliant artistry.

And the play is just as epic as the imagery. Cars have a very special relationship with their track surfaces in Ridge Racer games, and this one is no exception. Sure, the way the cars behave is never what one would call realistic, but my God is it exciting and addictive at the deepest level. This is because the lack of realism is not accompanied by a lack of theory or sophistication. And even if RRV in its broad strokes admittedly feels like previous Ridge Racer games, there has been an appropriate ramping up of the general feel. It's as if the extra processing power of the PS2 is allowing for not only a massive graphical leap, but also for a far more detailed physical model that gives the new game a larger-than-life feeling of next-gen evolution. And of course, tracks are laid out such that finding their speediest, most entertaining lines is an exercise in pure pleasure. This is part of Namco's seemingly inherent gift for designing courses, and if Ridge Racer V shares some real estate with the original Ridge, to complain is to be a disaffected snob.

My only gripe with RRV is that the wisps of pop-up evident in the Japanese version have not been corrected for the domestic release. This keeps the game a hair's breadth away from perfection, but it's so close it's scary. **GR**



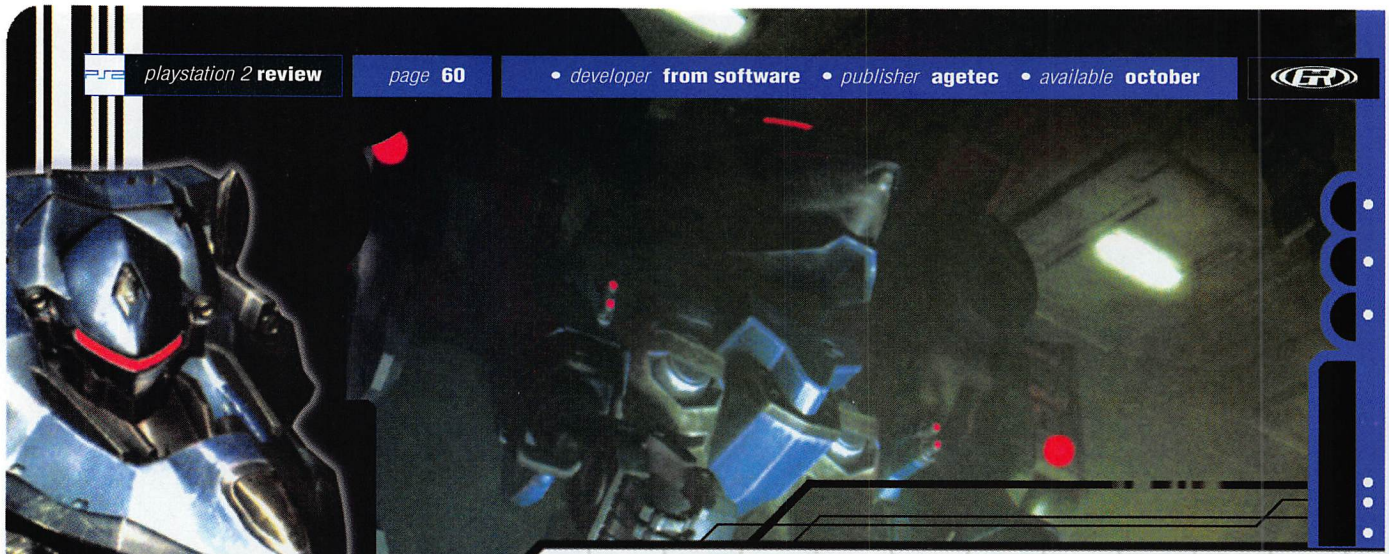




- THE BEST-LOOKING HOME RACER EVER. FOR NOW, AT LEAST
- PERFECT CONTROL
- PERFECT PRESENTATION
- TYPICALLY POUNDING MUSIC

REPUBLIC SAYS... WOW. THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT RIDGE RACER V. THE GRAPHICS, CONTROL, AND PRESENTATION ARE SIMPLY BEYOND REPROACH. ONE OF THE BEST RACERS OF ALL TIME.

A



ARMORED CORE 2

BY MIKE HOBBS

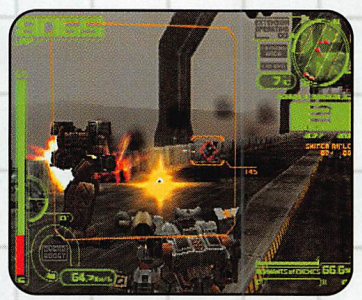
A predictable effort, From Software's latest still manages to impress with its amazing graphics and tried and true gameplay

Operating in a typically conservative mode, From Software takes few chances with Armored Core 2 as the series stretches its legs on the PS2. Playing more or less identical to the three Armored Core games released on PlayStation, this latest iteration is basically nothing more than a new set of missions and a huge graphical upgrade.

The game's true to its conception, and anyone who's played previous Armored Core games will feel instantly at home here. The digital control scheme, which cleverly uses every button on the PS pad, has been untouched. The lack of analog support may come as a surprise, but From is apparently not interested in introducing proportional movement control just yet to the series. It doesn't really need it, though Gungriffon Blaze, with its slick dual-analog setup, could be showing us the future of Armored Core movement.

And just as the control of the game is familiar, so too is the very core of the game. A fantastic number of missions, for which you earn a bounty for fulfilling, serve as rather elaborate bookends to the enormous amount of time you can spend tinkering with your mech. Selecting from hun-















dreds of new parts, designing logos with a USB mouse, coloring, and testing your machines can consume you if you let it. Indeed, you can spend more time in the garage than in the actual missions in some play sessions.

Does this speak poorly of the actual mission design then? Not really, but to be honest, the ones on offer here are really no better than what we got in previous Armored Core games, meaning that the missions are solid and entertaining, if a little dry in execution. As before, the liveliest part of the game is the two-player link-up mode, facilitated with the PS2 through a standard iEEE1394 or FireWire cable.

So we've firmly established that AC2 does not rewrite the formula. The graphics, the only offer of something new, thankfully do deliver. Areas are still artificially enclosed, but the resolution, polygonal complexity of your mech, and general richness of color and effects are all superb. Like most PS2 games, Armored Core 2 has a resoundingly solid and smooth look, and only assorted instances of nasty slow down ruin the show.

Maybe next time around, we'll get a little something different out of From Software. Their track record doesn't point toward this, but if they want to add more users, they're going to have to. But if you love Armored Core, this game is simply awesome. **GR**

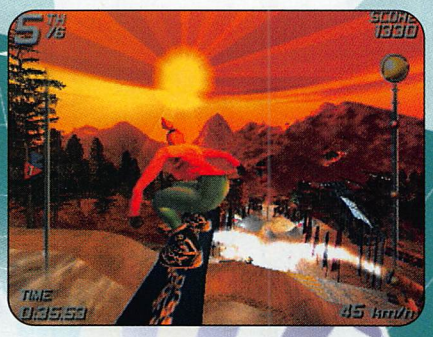


- AMAZING-LOOKING MECH GAME
- RATHER SEVERE SLOWDOWN AT TIMES
- FAIRLY LARGE MISSION SET
- THE CEASELESS FUN OF CREATING ORIGINAL MECHS

REPUBLIC SAYS... FOR THE ARMORED CORE FAN, THIS GAME REPRESENTS THE ULTIMATE VERSION OF FROM'S VENERABLE SERIES. FOR THE REST, IF YOU DIDN'T LIKE IT BEFORE, YOU WON'T LIKE IT NOW.

B





SSX

BY BRADY FIECHTER

EA leaps from the PS 2 starting gate with one of the best games of the year, taking snowboarding to extreme heights







There is not a single criticism I have of SSX Snowboarding. Given that it's among the first batch of games for Sony's spectacularly new hardware, it demands to be called perfect, working on so many different levels in so many different ways that the hundredth play is as incredible as the first.

There are the sweeping qualities of SSX that make it a triumph—the extraordinary animation, visual style and sophistication, the true sense of speed and presence on the mountain and flawless control of the board. But equally impressive are the brilliant, sometimes subtle design strokes that fill in around the game's foundation, strengthening its power of immersion in a way that's never even been attempted. One example is the meticulous use of sound in the game, and, in one instance, the lack of it: when you leap off the edge of the run or launch off of an enormous jump, reaching tremendous, exaggerated heights, the music drops out, and the sound of the wind intensifies. Such a basic touch is hugely effective in adding to the feeling of soaring above the ground.



If one element defines SSX, it's the ability to go basically anywhere on mountains that are enormous—cut through the trees, launch over signs and fences and masses of track, take shortcuts at every turn. Because the game is rooted in fantasy, the courses are littered with all sorts of obstacles to interact with, and it's not uncommon to find yourself grinding a fallen tree or crashing through giant sheets of glass.

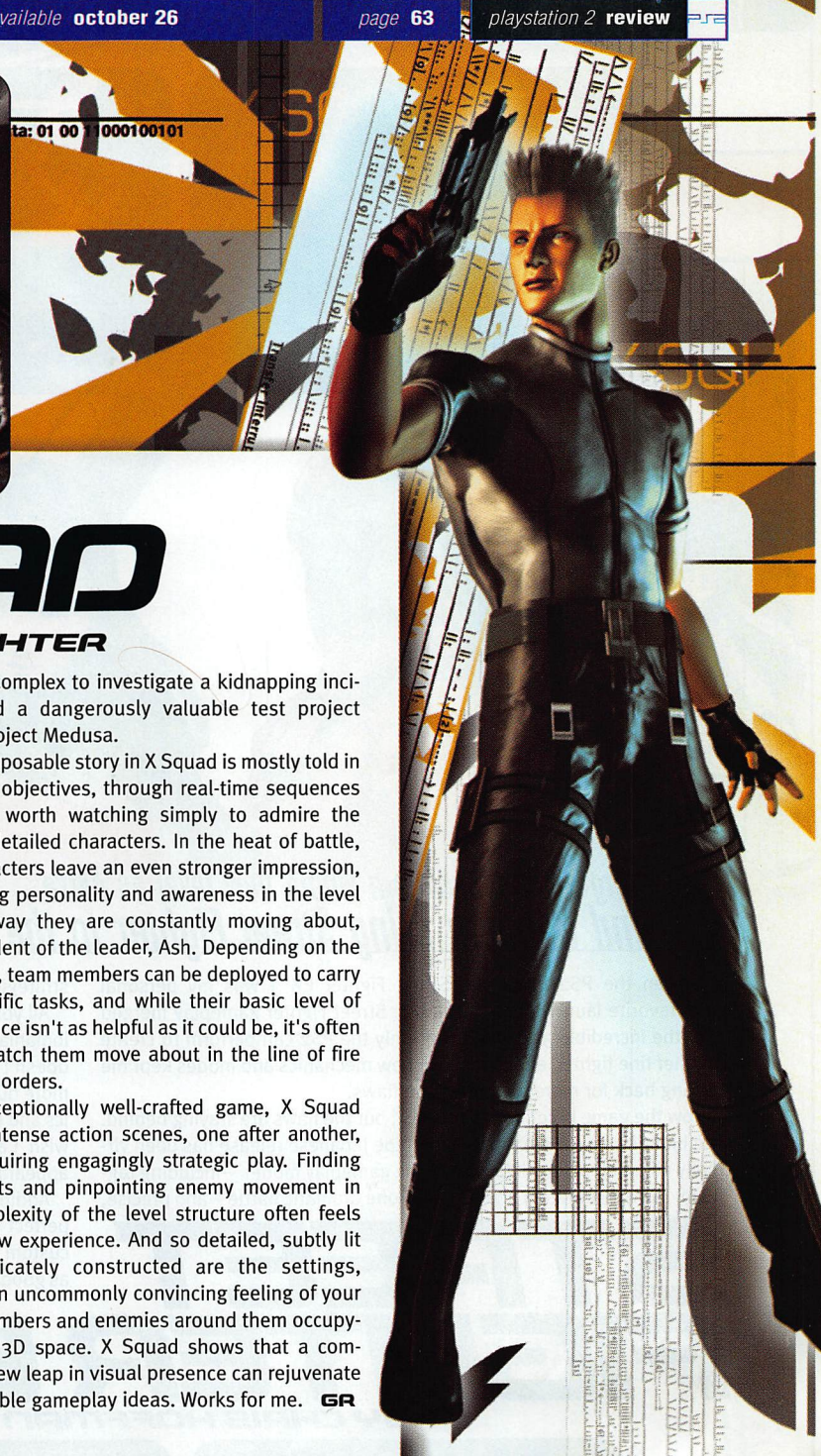
Most snowboarding games place too much emphasis on the tricks, denying the importance of racing to the complete package. Here, SSX again reaches uncommon ground, striking a perfect balance between racing against the five competitors and acrobatics off the jumps, allowing you to win by a mastery of the best racing line while having fun simply

CONTINUED ON PAGE 124 ▸

- IT'S LIKE THE FIRST TIME YOU SAW MARIO 64
- THE CHARACTERS ARE SO GORGEOUSLY DESIGNED
- WHERE CAN THE GAMEPLAY BE TAKEN FROM HERE?
- WHAT? AN EXTREME SPORTS GAME WITH AWESOME MUSIC?

REPUBLIC SAYS... LAUNCH GAMES AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS GOOD, BUT I GUESS TIMES HAVE CHANGED. SO HAS GAME DESIGN.





X SQUAD

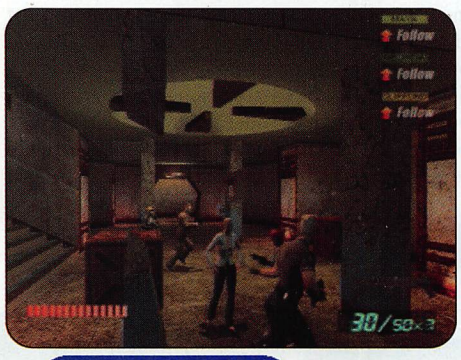
BY BRADY FIECHTER

X Squad drops you into a war zone of violence, and the primary mission is to kill everything that moves. This includes an army of terrorists carrying shotguns, bazookas, grenade launchers, assault rifles and a few other ridiculously high-powered weapons. Occasionally, a gargantuan mech or armored vehicle is sent in for a little back-up, unleashing enough firepower to decimate a small town.

Not a problem, because it's the year 2037, and the good guys have access to a large number of really cool weapons, like the BR-11 Sniper Rifle and Aurora Ion Cannon, which do a fine job of mowing down anything in their path. One group of these good guys in particular is known as the X Squad, a band of four ex-military elite sent to a government military complex to investigate a kidnapping incident and a dangerously valuable test project called Project Medusa.

The disposable story in X Squad is mostly told in between objectives, through real-time sequences that are worth watching simply to admire the game's detailed characters. In the heat of battle, the characters leave an even stronger impression, displaying personality and awareness in the level by the way they are constantly moving about, independent of the leader, Ash. Depending on the situation, team members can be deployed to carry out specific tasks, and while their basic level of intelligence isn't as helpful as it could be, it's often fun to watch them move about in the line of fire and take orders.

An exceptionally well-crafted game, X Squad stages intense action scenes, one after another, each requiring engagingly strategic play. Finding safe spots and pinpointing enemy movement in the complexity of the level structure often feels like a new experience. And so detailed, subtly lit and intricately constructed are the settings, there's an uncommonly convincing feeling of your team members and enemies around them occupying true 3D space. X Squad shows that a completely new leap in visual presence can rejuvenate old, durable gameplay ideas. Works for me. GR



squad 001





- SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO STOP AND ADMIRE THE GRAPHICS
- ALL ACTION, BUT MORE STRATEGY THAN YOU FIRST REALIZE
- LIGHTING EFFECTS SUBTLE YET TREMENDOUSLY COMPLEX
- EVEN A PURE ACTION GAME COULD USE BETTER STORY/VOICE

REPUBLIC SAYS... X SQUAD WILL LOSE A BIT OF ITS KICK WHEN WE GET USED TO THIS LEVEL OF VISUAL QUALITY, BUT THE GAMEPLAY IS STILL SOLID, MAKING IT AN IMMENSELY SATISFYING LAUNCH TITLE.

B+







Fighting action reaches a whole new level as Akira and Capcom bring Street Fighter to the PS2

When the PS2 hit Japan, Street Fighter EX 3 was my personal favorite launch title. The classic Street Fighter gameplay merged with the incredible 3D visuals that only the PS2 can perform to create another fine fighter, and innovative new mechanics and modes kept me coming back for more, despite some flaws.

Now the game is coming to the U.S., but the flaws are staying behind. The hideous slowdown that plagued the Japanese release has been virtually eliminated, yet all the awesome gameplay modes—including tag-team, team elimination and three-on-one dramatic battle—and precise, strategic gameplay have been retained without a hitch.

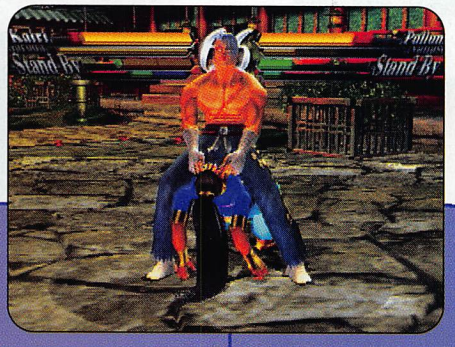
All your favorite characters are back too, including Ryu, Sakura, Skullomania, Chun-Li and Vega, and they look excellent. Admittedly, SFEX3 doesn't look as good as, say, Tekken Tag (better clothing movement and more fluid animation would have helped), but the sharp, vibrant graphics and extremely smooth models look very nice in their own right. I just wish Capcom could have done something about the funky warped appearance of the backgrounds.

Adding to the enjoyment of EX3 are a great soundtrack, trademark perfect controls, and a number of cool modes (like the skill-building custom character mode). The only problem is that EX3 still isn't quite as good as Capcom's 2D fighters, but there's still lots to love here. GR

STREET FIGHTER EX3

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN



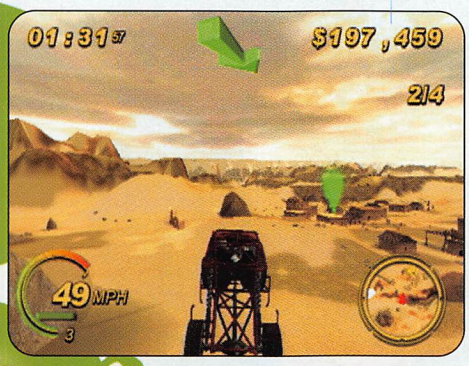


SFEX3

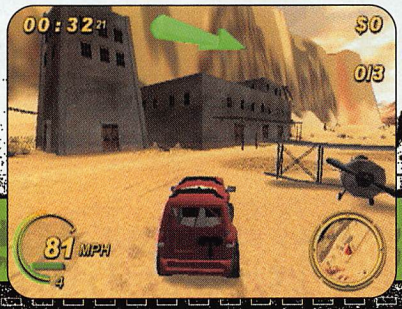
- CLASSIC GAMEPLAY WITH PS2 VISUALS
- FUN TAG AND DRAMATIC BATTLE MODES
- SLOWDOWN PROBLEM FIXED
- STILL NOT AS GREAT AS THE 2D SFS

REPUBLIC SAYS... A FUN, GOOD-LOOKING GAME MADE EVEN BETTER FOR ITS U.S. RELEASE. STREET FIGHTER EX 3 IS 3D JUSTICE.

A-







SMUGGLER'S RUN

BY TOM STRATTON

Part cops-and-robbers, part driving adventure, Angel Studios' PS2 debut hits its mark

Rockstar Games is known for serving up something new and interesting for gamers, never quite following the grain in concept or execution—two traits that are rare and admirable in the mainstream, tailored games of today. Teamed with Angel Studios, the two companies are set to deliver the very provocative and technically outstanding game Smuggler's Run.

We've seen this game from a very early stage in development and, quite honestly, we weren't sure if it was going to live up to the expectations the creators had evoked. Alas, following the game's progression has been extremely inspiring, considering the various stories we had been told about working with the PS2 hardware.

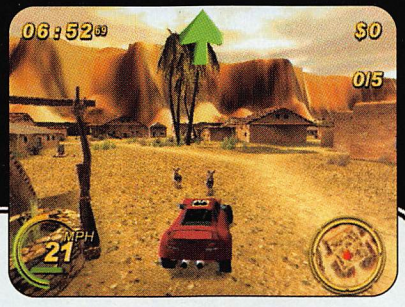
To start with, and this can't be stressed enough without experiencing it first hand, the entire environment is available to study. As you drive around any given level, you might see something like a temple or ruin sitting on top of a mountain. It looks to be 10 or 15 miles away and it probably is. Well, if you have the time or desire, you can go there and check it out. And this distinct allowance of area to travel is probably the best display and truest testament to the processing power of the PS2 to date.

In Smuggler's Run, you will need to keep good control and seek clever routes in delivering your packages, because the heat are intensely tenacious in taking you down.

You're given an assortment of vehicles to pick up and deliver goods in, each one displaying realistic point physics. After picking up a parcel, you need to keep your vehicle damage to a minimum. If you don't, the goods will become damaged and your cut of the loot will be decreased. And if your car or truck takes a squirrely jump, you can adjust the pitch with the right analog and iron out a clean landing.

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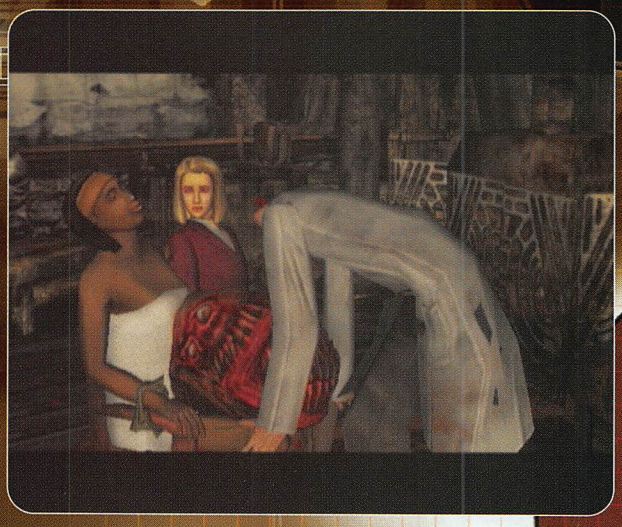


- DEEP, EXPANSIVE ENVIRONMENTS UNLIKE ANYTHING BEFORE
- DOING BAD NEVER FELT SO GOOD...IN A VIDEO GAME
- DIFFICULT, YET NEVER FRUSTRATING
- GREAT VEHICLE PHYSICS AND CLEAN TEXTURES ALL AROUND

REPUBLIC SAYS... THE DESCRIPTION "GO ANYWHERE" HAS NEVER BEEN SO TRUE. THIS GAME TAKES THE DRIVING GENRE INTO ENTIRELY NEW TERRITORY.

A-

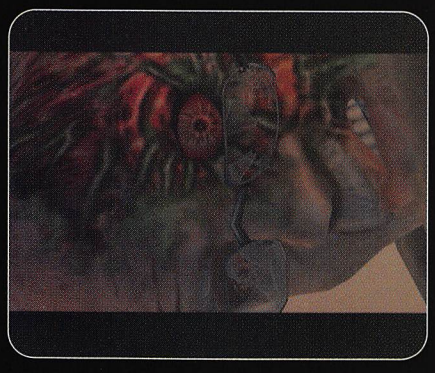




D2

BY DAVE HALVERSON

You must fight for all mankind... for all life that I have created.
I am the great mother-creator of all things...



Kenji Eno sweats the details. With D2, Kenji and company at Warp have raised the bar in terms of mood, environment, and blending gameplay and cinema. A more convincing cinematic game you simply will not find. As Sega's Ecco submerged the player in a vast underwater playground, D2 immerses us in a cold, barren mountain resort deep within the Canadian mountains.

As the story commences, having miraculously survived a horrifying plane crash, Laura awakens in a remote cabin, under the care of another survivor, Kimberly. Seemingly all but five passengers have been lost. Among the living are Jenny, a child on her way to visit her grandfather; Laura, who cannot recollect why she was on board; Kimberly, a troubled young woman attempting to escape from her bleak past; and the mystery man, David, who supposedly helped Jenny and Laura reach the cabin. From here you will begin your journey as Laura, embarking on a living story that unfolds

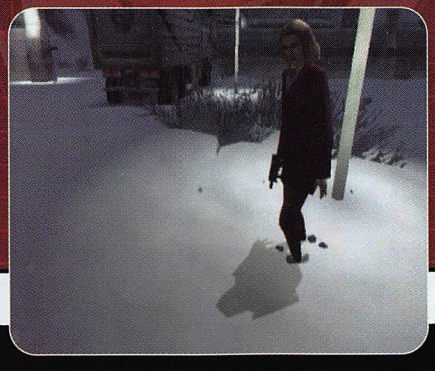














like a visual novel. Dead passengers, along with most of the province's sparse population, have been infected with a strange syndrome. Mutated with plant-like organisms, they "blossom" into flesh-eating machines, and the only way to tell if someone is human or monster is by the color of their blood. This is the stepping-off point; what lies ahead becomes much deeper and surreal. During moments of unconsciousness, Laura is spoken to by who appears to be God, and a cloaked sage is slowly making his way to the region. More characters are introduced as well. But I don't dare give anything away.

Combining real-time free-roaming combat and exploration with fixed camera scenarios among lush polygonal backdrops, D2 is a perfect example of how art can now imitate life in real-time through a video game. This genre was bound to have its day in the sun sooner or later. Since games like Sewer Shark and Night Trap (I know—yuck), the writing has almost worn from the wall. Amazingly, D2 doesn't cover much ground, taking place within a single snow-covered region, yet Kenji keeps the game fresh by incorporating environmental changes that will leave you breathless, an intriguing, well-executed combat system drenched in mutated bodies and ingenious bosses, and story elements so masterful you'll wish he was directing Hollywood movies. Even the way in which Laura replenishes her energy is engaging: Equipped with a hunting rifle, should you spot a caribou, rabbit, or other game, you must kill your food, and then, via an automatic cleaner/cooker (ah, the magic of video games), inventory meats to heal your wounds. Great care has also been taken in the game's exquisite detail. When, for example, Laura and Jenny hug, you can hear the materials from their clothing rubbing together exactly as thick wool and cotton should, and while you are roaming about the resort, the wind, birds, and overall realism is eerie. Graphically the game is a marvel, a testament to modern game design. My only complaint lies with the snowmobile in the game, which handles somewhat erratically. But this is very minor since its sole purpose is to get you from point to point quicker as the game progresses. **GR**

- KENJI FINALLY HAS THE HARDWARE TO REALIZE HIS VISION
- A TRULY CINEMATIC GAME
- GOOD VOICE ACTING & ONLY VERY MINOR, MINOR EDITS
- IT'S JUST SO UNIQUE. D2 IS IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN

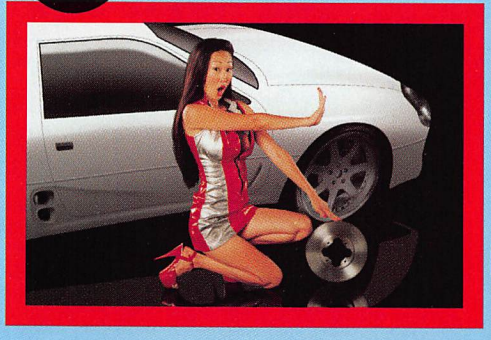
REPUBLIC SAYS... THE FIRST LEAP IN CINEMATIC GAMING SINCE RESIDENT EVIL, KENJI ENO BRINGS US A FREE-ROAMING HORROR NOVEL THAT TRANSCENDS THE SCREEN AND GETS IN YOUR HEAD.

A-



1

Famous pro speed racer Benny Moto says, in life and in racing we must know how to SLOW DOWN. Benny uses carbon fiber rotors and 4 piston calipers because he says the curb tastes like defeat.



2

Are you hard core? Have this beefy spring please. It's good for you. Without a trick suspension the hairball track will shake your head up and down like one of those stupid dogs in the back window.

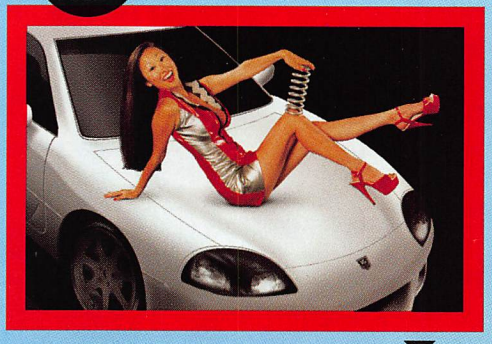
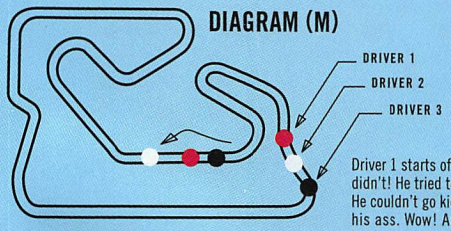


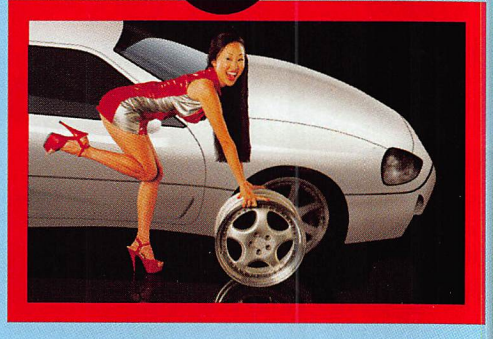
DIAGRAM (M)



Driver 1 starts off in the lead. But did he listen to Benny? He didn't! He tried to save money on brakes. He's cheap. He's stupid. He couldn't go kicky fast through the turn. Now Driver 2 passed his ass. Wow! And look at Driver 3! He's making power. How to be the leader? Customize and drive like a freak with fiery pants.

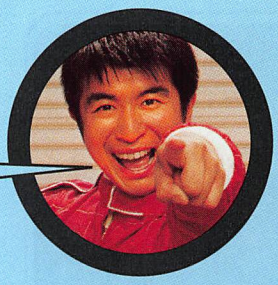
3

A big, 19 inch, 3 piece magnesium wheel is your fun friend in the quest for a sweeter contact patch. It's hot too.

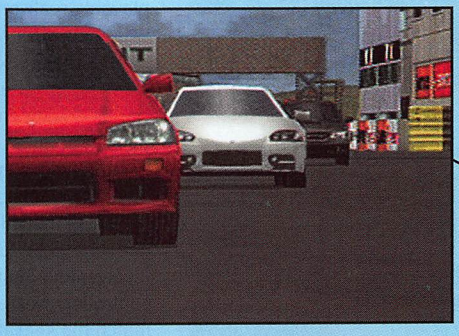




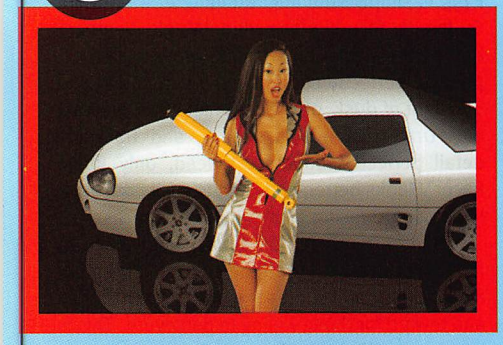
YOU FOLLOW MY ADVICE. YOU CUSTOMIZE. YOU BEAT EVERYBODY. **POW!**



Tear it up in this total competition speed trip where you can build original machines from scratch or tweak over 130 GT sports cars that reproduce exact handling and performance specs. Then use your VMU to trade machines, parts and laptimes on the net. Assuming you got anything worth trading, Grandma.

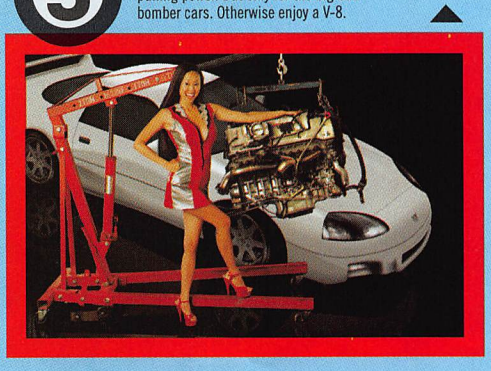


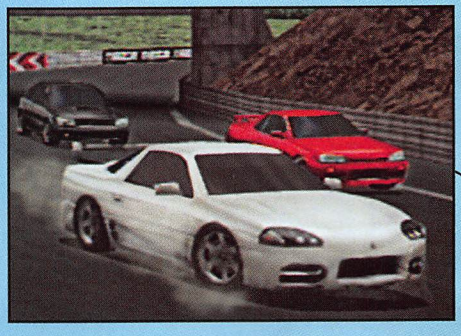
6 The shock absorber is often overlooked. Not here. In Benny's shop everyone concentrates on the shock. A good shock where it really counts will bring forth nimbler handling and quicker transitions.





5 Oh my God! Look at that engine! Yes, that's a kicky big damn motor. Benny likes the superhuge V12 for stump-pulling power. But only for the big bad bomber cars. Otherwise enjoy a V-8.







4 Oh! What a loud muffler! Loud coolie mufflers intimidate chump-ass rivals. Get a big pipe for greater flow at high rpm levels.

Dreamcast.

IT'S THINKING

sega.com

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EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB







FERRARI F355

BY MIKE HOBBS

The best racing game on Dreamcast? Easily. Yu Suzuki brings his unflinching arcade masterpiece to the masses

Yu Suzuki makes brilliant games. Of this there is no question. But what's particularly fascinating about their brilliance, and what separates Yu Suzuki's games from those of fellow masters like Miyamoto, is that capturing reality is their goal. Look at Virtua Fighter 3 in comparison to Tekken, or look at Shenmue in comparison to everything else. Suzuki's aim is incredibly playable realism, and once again that is exactly what he's after with Ferrari F355.

And that's exactly what he's achieved. By focusing his attention on re-creating the sensation of driving one specific car, he has produced one of the most satisfying and engaging racing games ever to appear on home consoles. The physics model here is simply beyond reproach, a benefit of modeling one car instead of hundreds, and it allows for such a high level of player involvement that F355 almost transcends the controller. Now obviously, nothing virtual can match the sensation of actually feeling the road through a steering wheel, but this game comes closer than anything ever has, including Gran Turismo. You can almost feel the steering loading up as you tackle the high-speed corners in Ferrari F355, and the limits of the car are amazingly obvious considering that you have no real physical feedback.

Naturally, this realism comes at a price, in this case in the form of a steep learning curve. Driving assists like anti-lock brakes, traction control, and speed control, are there to help you along in the early stages, but I'll tell you now that the game doesn't become truly special until you turn off the assists and begin to marvel at and appreciate the depth of this game's physics model and overall sophistication.

In this modern age, all this would be for naught if the game didn't also look the part, but Ferrari F355 is simply stunning. Running at a constant 60 fps, Yu Suzuki's so-called "Magic Weather" bathes the tracks and cars in amazing atmospherics, perfectly capturing the rich colors and dim light of dusk, or the cool feel of an overcast day. Draw distance is superb, and trackside detail perfectly rendered. Indeed, only Ridge Racer V looks better, and F355 is easily the best-looking pure racing game on the Dreamcast.

Within its concept, it's almost impossible to fault F355. It's beautiful, the control is frighteningly sorted, and it presents massive challenge and reward for those willing to persevere. This is a truly magnificent racing game. **GR**



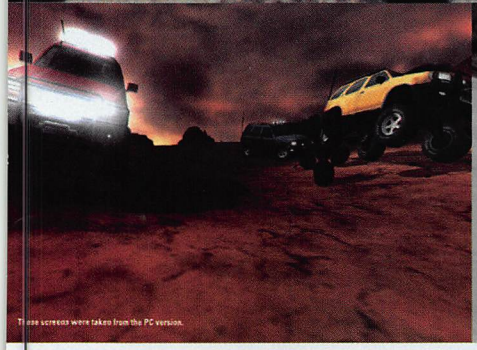
- BEST LOOKING DREAMCAST RACER
- STUNNING PHYSICS MODEL
- A WEALTH OF REAL-WORLD CIRCUITS. NURBURGRING ANYONE?
- BRILLIANT SAMPLED SOUNDS

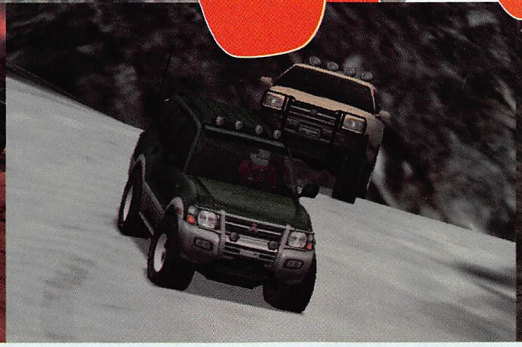
REPUBLIC SAYS... IT MAY NOT BE EASY, BUT YU SUZUKI'S FERRARI F355 STANDS AS THE FINEST DREAMCAST RACER YET. NEVER HAS SUCH REALISTIC HANDLING BEEN ACHIEVED AT HOME.

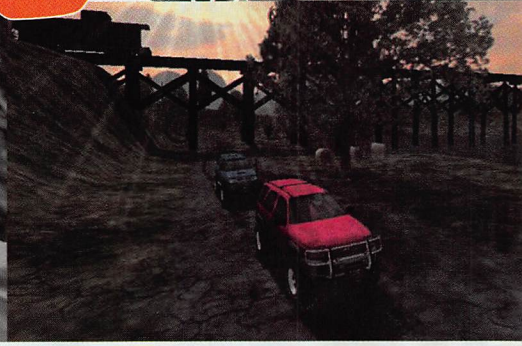
4x4 EVO™

You've been hypnotized into thinking you're pretty good. On the count of three, you will wake up.

You are no stranger to single-player mode racing. You are King of the Road. You are way out of your element. Introducing 4x4 Evolution, the first game with internet connectivity for heavy-duty off-road competitions between Sega Dreamcast, PC and Mac users simultaneously. Because racing alone is like having sex by yourself.







These screens were taken from the PC version.

ALL THE TOP SUVS AND TRUCKS FROM LEADING MANUFACTURERS TO CUSTOMIZE • 16 MERCILESS OFF-ROAD COURSES, EACH WITH THEIR OWN ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT, MUSIC SCORE AND DIFFICULTY • GO ANYWHERE GAMEPLAY — NO PREDETERMINED TRACK • ACCURATE PHYSICS, PHOTO-REALISTIC GRAPHICS, AND UNFORGIVING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Developed by TERMINAL REALITY

Published by GATHERING DEVELOPER

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Sega Dreamcast.

Mac

PC CD ROM

SUPER RUNABOUT

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN



You don't drive a taxi, but it's definitely crazy. Obviously this isn't approved by the DMV

Reads an introductory screen of Super Runabout: "Warning: The car driving experience you will have is only possible in a virtual world and very dangerous. Please do not try to duplicate these actions in the real world under any circumstances." Yeah. That's putting it mildly. Super Runabout is a Hollywood chase scene gone amok, defying the laws of sanity and realism but filled with action and fun (and fruit carts). Think Crazy Taxi but with more definite goals and the ability to total your car if you aren't careful.





Set in San Francisco, Super Runabout offers a dozen inane missions that take place amidst cable cars and famous landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge. Divided between two scenarios (cops or couriers), the missions involve all sorts of entertaining, logic-defying objectives like plowing into missile launchers, ramming terrorists' cars into the bay, and even making hot dogs and collecting the condiments. Additionally, you get bonus points for everything you destroy on each mission; now that's entertainment. The missions are backed by good control and appropriate physics, along with loads of vehicles and a rock/surf soundtrack.



Huge environments and a speedy frame rate add to Super Runabout's appeal, but they don't come without trade-offs. Vehicle models aren't anything special, and there's some unsightly pop-up and occasional glitches, like once when a CPU-controlled jeep got stuck levitating inside a wall. The graphic effects that appear on vehicles as they take damage are pretty cheesy too, and I won't even start on the goofy character models in the cutscenes.

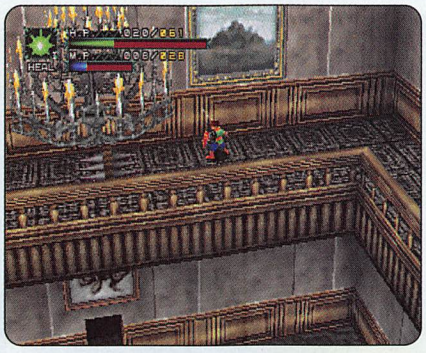
Even with these problems, I found myself greatly enjoying Super Runabout. That I even mention it in the same sentence as Crazy Taxi should be testament enough to SR's quality. It's not quite on the same level but definitely worth a spin. GR



- VARIETY OF WACKY MISSIONS
- GOOD ARCADE-STYLE PHYSICS AND ACTION
- MASSIVE LEVELS AND SPEEDY PLAY
- UNPOLISHED GRAPHICS

REPUBLIC SAYS... IF YOU WANT SOME ARCADE-STYLE DRIVING FUN AND ALREADY HAVE CRAZY TAXI, SUPER RUNABOUT SHOULD SATISFY THOSE CRAVINGS.

8


DRAGON VALOR

BY BRADY FIECHTER

Golden Axe it isn't, but for an old-school dose of Medieval hack-and-slash and role-playing, this game delivers

Assembled with throwaway flair from the sturdy parts that made old 16-bit games such simplistic fun, Dragon Valor is antiquity in a modern gamer's collection but a valuable antique for any gamer who jumps into a SNES vs. Genesis debate with unbridled passion.

On the surface, Dragon Valor doesn't look like much at all, its sometimes drab, often base exterior recalling a PlayStation game that would have generated a bit more appeal a few years ago. But there is something about it that grows on you, an air of old-school design sensibilities that takes you back to a good Genesis game. From the start, the music is catchy and sets a nice tone that wouldn't be too out of place in a Golden Axe, and—maybe I'm digging to deep here—even the teal border on the dialogue screen belongs in a sprite-based fantasy game of old.

There really was no need to make this game 3D. After seeing the excellent opening CG sequence of a knight fighting a grand dragon set against a brilliant sunset, you yearn for the dense design elements to transfer directly to the game. Instead, you get limited artistry and gameplay that could have been even more engaging on a restricted plane.

But that's not say the gameplay isn't fun; it's what carries the game. In a fantasy world threatened by dragons and power-hungry royalty, Clovis starts out his journey as the first of the Dragon Slayors. Bestowed with the power of the magic sword, he hacks and he slashes and jumps over pits of lava, onto moving platforms, avoiding spikes and falling traps. Items can be collected along the journey and sold at shops, and magic is earned and enhanced along with experience.

Through the progression of the story, Clovis marries and fathers a child, eventually passing on, forcing his son to continue the pursuit for the dragon. At this point the journey branches, depending on the path you choose, and eventually other characters become playable as the lineage continues through the game's five long chapters.

In the opening of the game, as Clovis sees his sister consumed by the flames left by a dragon, he cries out, "Just you wait. I'll get you with this sword. I'll chop you into pieces to avenge my sister!" If this makes you smile, you can understand the appeal of a game like Dragon Valor.

GR







- CONTROL IS PERFECT AND GAMEPLAY CLASSIC FUN
- THE THEME IS APPEALING; NICE MUSIC
- DRAB USE OF COLOR
- YOU EXPECT A MORE IMPRESSIVE PRODUCT FROM NAMCO

REPUBLIC SAYS... I'M NOT ABOUT TO RECOMMEND THIS GAME TO ANYONE WEANED ON 32-BIT GAMING, BUT THERE IS A HEAVY OLD-SCHOOL APPEAL THAT CARRIES THE GAME THROUGH TO THE END.

B-

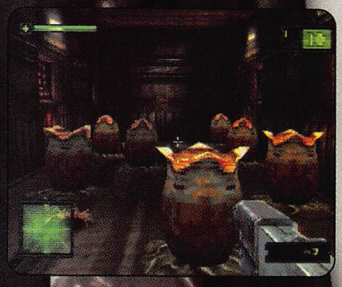


ALIEN RESURRECTION

BY BRADY FIECHTER

It's taken several years for the Alien universe to show up again in a game. Is the result as good as Alien Trilogy?

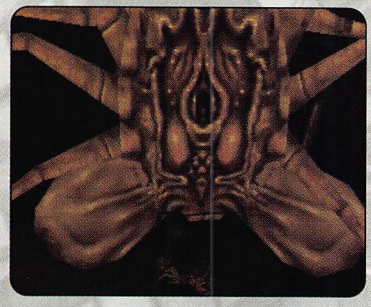




Darkly quiet, marvelously constructed and full of macabre imagination, *Alien* was a remarkable achievement. Few science fiction films have been able to reach its greatness, and there may never again be a creation as wildly original as H.R. Giger's aliens. They're absolute malevolence.

If only all developers were as lucky as Argonaut, granted the freedom to borrow from such triumphs of modern cinema. In the densely atmospheric Alien Resurrection, Giger's aliens are the centerpiece to the gloom and doom. Loosely following the plot of the movie, the game puts you in the role of Elen Ripley, a human clone fashioned from the DNA remains of a suicide meant to kill the alien gestating inside her. That alien was also cloned, and now an accident has lead to the research vessel USM Auriga's mass infestation of these killing machines.

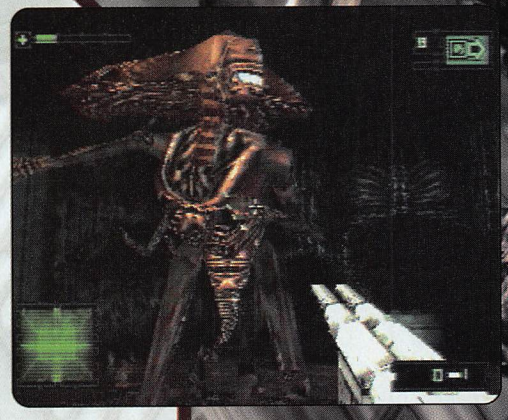
The site of death pervades the dark, claustrophobic halls of the ship. Mutilated bodies lie everywhere, slumped in corners, hanging off benches, crumpled under catwalks. Blood drips from the ceilings. Aliens burst from the stomach of the dead and feed on their remains.



The gloomy look of Alien Resurrection is its strongest quality. The ship is an endless labyrinth of detailed corridors, leaky, rusty and bathed in the glow of perpetually flickering lights that are used to great, varying effect. Whether Ripley's crawling through air ducts filled with bursts of steam and fire, blasting clones in labs or swimming through flooded mess halls, the feeling of being transported into the moody chaos of an *Alien* film







couldn't have been accomplished much better on PlayStation.

What's unfortunate is that the gameplay isn't handled as skillfully as the presentation. From the very start there is a persistent urge for increased speed and mobility in movement, and the devilishly difficult combat can be a tedious affair without swift strafing and the assistance of a slight auto-aim to compensate for the clumsy analog control. Crippling the game further is the fact that the enemies don't attack with intelligence as much as they do with manic aggression, popping out of scripted positions; the game degenerates into an exercise of perfunctory memorization.

Some of Alien Resurrection's better moments involve not the combat with the aliens, but the genuine unease that comes before the attack—when there's nothing but a long tale hanging from the shadows in the ceiling; a pack of aliens freaking out behind a force field or crushing a metal door trying to escape; a room full of motionless pods preparing to spew an army of face huggers. Or when you think there's nothing in the room at all, yet your motion tracker is flashing at full intensity, and you discover after a frantic search that an angry queen is attempting to strike under the protection of a glass floor. What an incredible sequence this is! Maybe next time Argonaut will link its fantastic design ideas with inspired gameplay. GR

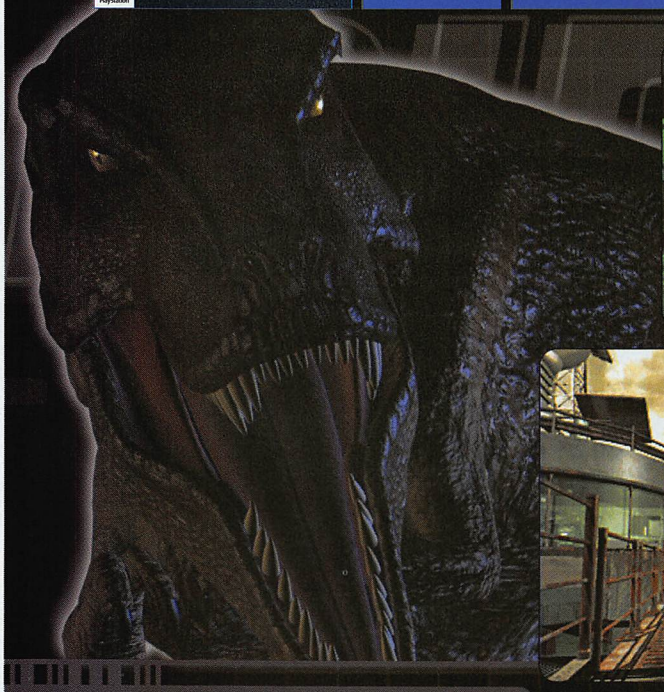




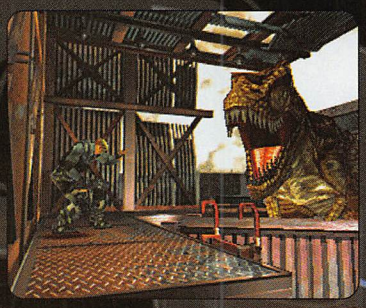
- DARK ATMOSPHERE AND RICH ENGINE
- ALIEN ENCOUNTERS SKILLFULLY STAGED
- SLOW AND TEDIOUS
- SOME FUNDAMENTAL FPS GAMEPLAY ELEMENTS IGNORED

REPUBLIC SAYS... WITH THE INCOMPARABLE ALIEN LICENSE IN TOW, ALIEN RESURRECTION COULD HAVE BEEN A STANDOUT FPS. SPEED IT UP AND IT SUCCEEDS.

C+











One of the best games of '98 follows up with this obligatory sequel, and the radically different result might surprise you

Warns the opening screen of Dino Crisis 2: "This game contains scenes of explicit violence and gore."

Well, duh. Do you think all those dinosaurs are in this game to serve as a petting-zoo exhibit? No, these powerful creatures like to stalk hapless soldiers who counter with really big guns and cool military equipment and rip out their insides for feeding. This point is made graphically clear in the opening scene where herds of velociraptors mercilessly descend on a camp, pouncing on screaming victims, devouring whole torsos and mauling faces. It's a great setup to the chaos that is quick to come.

About the only people left in this dinosaur-infested realm are Regina and Dylan, two determined special agents sent through a time warp to investigate a disaster precipitated by a project known as Third Energy. Somehow a midwestern research facility and nearby town were gobbled up by the accident, replaced with thick jungle from another time, and on the other side of the time warp lies what remains of the area and its inhabitants.

After the interesting setup and entrance of a mysterious group of aggressors shrouded in futuristic garb, Dino Crisis 2 merely flirts with story development, leaving ceaseless action to drive the game. Every step you take is followed by a dinosaur leaping from caves, descending from the sky, striking from water, pouncing from the shadowy corners of the screen; you can kill enough dinosaurs to force another extinction, and they still keep coming. The action quickly becomes mechanical and almost pointless, sucking away any level of tension or surprise. The only reason to stay and fight is to add to the combo total, an ill-conceived points system that translates to currency for the purchase of supplies.

The emphasis on combat almost pulls the game under, and the paltry scattering of grade-school puzzles is an insult to the series' heritage, but just enough great moments come to the rescue: I really liked the underwater area and its chilling atmosphere, and the scene where Regina and Dylan switch off firing rockets at a T-Rex before fleeing in a tank is guaranteed to show up in some form in subsequent games.

There's more to like about Dino Crisis 2 than dislike, but set against the greatness of the first game, this five-hour adventure feels like a side project while the big guns at Capcom load the Onimusha and Biohazard 4 ammunition for PlayStation 2. GR



DINO CRISIS 2

BY BRADY FIECHTER

- COULD BE BETTER, BUT PACKS THE TYPICAL CAPCOM FLAIR
- A FEW INTENSE MOMENTS WITH AN ANGRY T-REX
- A COMBO SYSTEM IN A GAME LIKE THIS? BAD IDEA.
- ACTION BECOMES DISTRACTING AND POINTLESS

REPUBLIC SAYS... A DISAPPOINTING GAME MORE THAN A BAD GAME, DINO CRISIS 2 DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT RECEIVED THE USUAL ATTENTION AND CARE LAVISHED ON A CAPCOM PRODUCT.

B-

OGRE BATTLE 64

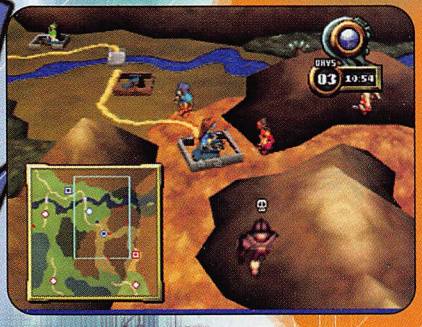
BY MIKE HOBBS







Yes, it's finally here. Quest's long-awaited 64-bit Ogre Battle game is set to ship, and it does not disappoint.



It was a long time coming, but Quest's Ogre Battle 64 is finally due to ship domestically. Far from being rendered irrelevant by the wait, the game still enters the N64 strategy-RPG genre pretty much on its own, a fact sure to enhance its already desirable nature.

Not a game for the faint of heart, Ogre Battle 64 offers up mounds of juicy strategy to sink your teeth into. Even with its basically non-interactive battle system (you don't have individual control of your troops during combat), the amount of options available to you in troop organization and deployment will leave your strategy skills plenty taxed. Thankfully, the interface is about as simple as it can be for the amount of customization available to the player. Nevertheless, the wealth of options and various settings can be a bit daunting at first, a matter not helped along much by a quick-save system that doesn't allow for any in-mission experimentation. Any saves from within a mission are erased the next time you load, precluding any save-fail-reload scenarios. That's to be expected in a game of this type, but it's still demoralizing to spend a great deal of time managing your numerous troops before a mission, only to have all that work lost if you happen to make a mistake.





The game's aesthetic component can help you through the more trying moments, as Ogre Battle 64 looks wonderful. The pre-rendered backdrops, seen in story sequences and during the isometric battle scenes, are simply marvelous, rich in color and sometimes boasting subtle animations. And the characters are equally appealing, blending beautifully with the filtered backgrounds, making every scene look like a little painting.

Ogre Battle 64 was definitely worth the wait. As expected, the game's strategy element is very well developed and challenging, and the game's intricate, branching story structure keeps the action coherent and always with a sense of purpose. It may the only game of its kind for the N64, and at that, it's far better than it needs to be. **GR**

- WONDERFUL CUSTOMIZATION OPTIONS AND DEEP STRATEGY
- BEAUTIFUL AND REFRESHING PRE-RENDERED GRAPHICS
- FANTASTIC IF SLIGHTLY LIMITED MUSICAL SCORE
- LACK OF FLEXIBLE SAVE SYSTEM MAY FRUSTRATE SOME

REPUBLIC SAYS... OGRE BATTLE 64 IS A GREAT GAME. THE LOOK, WHICH IS SO NEATLY DONE, CARRIES THE PLAYER THROUGH MANY, MANY HOURS OF CHALLENGING AND FUN STRATEGY ROLE PLAYING.

B

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ETERNAL RING

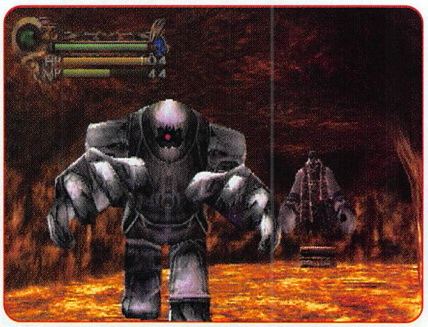
review by b. fiechter • dev: from software pub: agetec • avail: now

PS2 C

When the PlayStation 2 launched in Japan, Eternal Ring seemed a bit more acceptable standing in the company of so few games. Like any launch game, you want to try and like it, but the more you analyze it, the more it shows its many flaws.

Despite Agetec's attempt to make a few changes from the Japanese version, the game progresses languidly—a flaw that buries every one of Eternal Ring's positive qualities. Essentially the next installment in the King's Field series, the game continues down the same path of mediocrity—a path that takes a tedious and monotonous course through dungeons and caves and cavernous passages. Enemy designs are appealing, and the dragons look especially nice, but looking is one thing, attacking another: the first-person combat with magic casting and simple sword attacks is protracted and clumsy.

Some will enjoy Eternal Ring's emphasis on mixing magical rings in exhaustive combinations—coming up with the right magic is key in mounting strong attacks against the aggressive enemies. There is also a rich, quiet ambience floating through the game's world of medieval fantasy, heightened by an exceptional musical score. In fact, the more I think about the game, the more I admire its strong atmosphere. And the more I dislike the sluggish gameplay. GR









EVERGRACE

review by c. hoffman • dev: from software • pub: agetec • avail: october

PS2 B-

As the PS2's first third-person action-RPG, Evergrace is a decent game. For the most part, this quest is typical of the genre—lots of hack-'n'-slash fighting, lots of items to find, and a healthy dose of puzzles to punctuate the action, and it's all backed by nice, if not spectacular, PS2 models and textures. The inclusion of two characters—Sharline and Darius—with separate but intertwining quests is a nice addition, but the most inventive twist to the gameplay is the vast number of weapons, armor and accessories with which you can equip your character. Aside from changing your character's appearance (you can even recolor them if you want), each piece of equipment has its own attributes and magic powers, and using it all correctly is imperative to completing the quest. On the negative side, the voice acting is pretty bad and the camera can often be a pain during combat. The game also requires a bit too much trial-and-error experimentation to find what weapons are needed for the job, but at least a quick-change function is available. Evergrace isn't going to blow anybody away in any respect, but it's a solid fantasy title that should keep adventurers occupied for the time being. GR









HOGS OF WAR

review by b. fiechter • dev/pub: infogrames • avail: now

PlayStation B-

Strategy games rarely succeed as a strong single-player experience, saving their full intensity for the multiplayer arena. But Hogs of War actually succeeds on both accounts; it's a surprisingly entertaining and original idea.







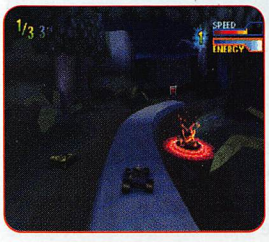
Of course, when a friend is positioned at the other end of the battle field, the game is at its best. Here you're fighting for the world's riches—the supply of swill, the "lifeblood of pigs." Or something like that. Story really isn't much of a factor in Hogs of War. All you need to know is that you're a hog fighting against German hogs, Russian hogs, Japanese hogs...well, you get the idea. Positioned on undulating fields littered with mines and other traps of war, your soldiers must wipe out the opposition with grenades, rifles, TNT, bazookas and various other weapons inspired by the old World Wars. The pig jokes are taken too far, but there is enough personality and gameplay strategy in Hogs of War to keep you involved till the pigs come home. GR

TYCO R.C.

review by s. thomason • dev: lucky chicken pub: mattel

PlayStation B

Now this was a pleasant surprise. Leaps and bounds better than Acclaim's R/C efforts, Tyco R/C Assault With A Battery features fast action, an incredibly clean graphics engine, and eight authentic Tyco R/C cars. Tight controls eliminate the possibility for frustration and some nice lighting effects provide the eye candy. It doesn't really bring anything new to the table (other than some chicken-themed mini-games before each race while the track loads), but the game is very well put together and a lot of fun to play. GR





R.C. REVENGE

review by c. hoffman • dev: acclaim studios cheltenham • pub: acclaim • avail: now

PlayStation C-

R.C. Revenge is turning me into a cursing, swearing, foul-mouthed deviant. It seems that everything in this game was designed for maximum annoyance. Take a turn and chances are you'll drive dead-on into a bizarre-looking obstacle. Veer too sharp and you'll get stuck on the wall. Use the breaks and you'll just spin out of control. The AI is nothing short of cheap. Though the CPU vehicles hang back when you're in last place, the minute you get into the pack you'll find yourself constantly bombarded by uncannily accurate attacks and jostling that nearly always sends you in the wrong direction. It actually pays at times to stay in last place and then make your move in the final lap! Toss in some ugly textures, lame power-ups (such as the flaming phallus) and questionable physics and you get a racer that lacks the vital element a kart racer should have: fun. A couple of the courses are mildly cool and the track editor is appreciated, but they don't save this title. GR

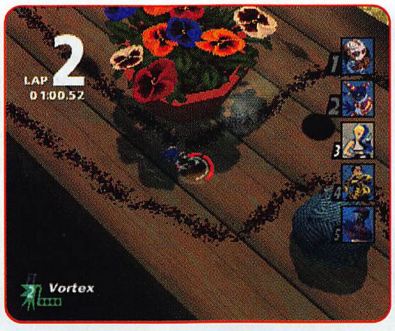


MICRO MANIACS

review by c. hoffman • dev/pub: codemasters • avail: sept

PlayStation B

I'll admit that when I first played Micro Maniacs I didn't care for it much. Between the decidedly bizarre characters and the unforgiving course designs, I was afraid MM wasn't going to be too enjoyable. But the more I played, the more I liked it, especially in multiplayer mode. Like they did with their Micro Machines games, Codemasters has made a surprisingly fun, top-down racing game, the main difference this time being that you control little mutant dudes instead of vehicles. One of the most appealing things about the series has been racing through the giant-sized real world environs, and that continues here with 32 nice-looking levels that take you around bathtubs, over birthday cakes and even into 8-bit video game machines. I just wish it weren't so easy to accidentally go out of bounds and get hammered by the CPU. Still, the single-player mode is fun, after some practice, and multiplayer is a blast right off the bat. Even playing with two users on one controller isn't that bad. GR





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DESTRUCTION DERBY RAW

review by b. fiechter • dev: psygnosis • pub: midway • avail: now

C+

This racing/pound-the-crap-out-of-the-opposition game has taken the solid Destruction Derby series into more racing-oriented territory, and the result is flawed but at least a step in the right direction. Instead of focusing on wanton destruction, the goal is to rack up the majority of your points by crossing the finish line near the front of the pack. Problem is, the racing side of the game just isn't engaging enough to carry the experience. And the destruction side lacks the raw energy you'd think would pump through a game like this.

What Destruction Derby Raw thrives on, and Demolition Racer: No Exit on Dreamcast grossly lacked, is an excellent physics engine, which imparts a proper sense of mass and density to the cars. A good balance was struck between realism and arcade play, but the game never quite manages to pull enough strong design qualities together for a complete package. GR



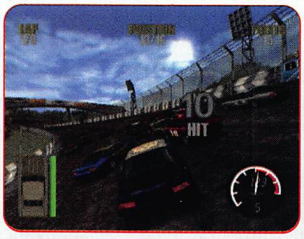


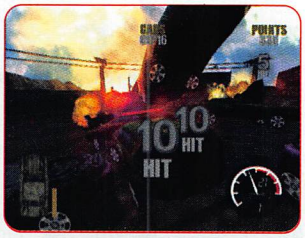
DEMOLITION RACER: NO EXIT

review by b. fiechter • dev/ pub: infogrames • avail: now

D+

Next to this month's other lackluster destruction derby game, Destruction Derby Raw, this game is visual gold. No matter, because decent looks can't escape the trap of bad gameplay. So poorly constructed is the physics model in this game that the cars feel like they're covered in cotton to ensure that you have no feeling of contact in a collision. Simply finishing first in a race will enhance your chances of moving on to the next course, but causing the competition to crash and burn is still the primary objective, and this becomes boring and wanton; with the lack of proper mass on your car, the gameplay strategy is locked into a pattern of push the gas and drive. It's not easy getting a game like this to work, especially given that so many cars are on screen at once, demanding complex AI to support these design ideas. It's also not easy holding back an acidic criticism of the numbingly amateurish musical selections that pollute the game. GR



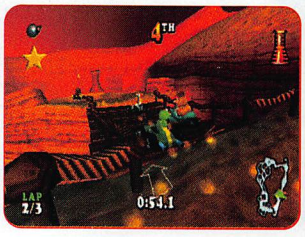


MUPPET RACEMANIA

review by c. hoffman • dev: sony • pub: midway • avail: now

PlayStation C

Apparently, the designers didn't know exactly what they wanted to make when they came up with the idea for Muppet Racemania. Extremely ambitious, MR has more than two dozen courses and characters, loads of secrets and three main play modes, but it all seems haphazardly thrown together. Half of the courses are for good ol' kart racing (complete with shortcuts, speed boosts and weapons), but the others are battle arenas or stunt tracks, almost like a platform game. The game would have benefited from a DKR-style quest mode. Play is a mix of good and bad—some courses are fun while others are poorly designed, and though the graphics are good as a whole, there are some nasty poly priority problems and weird texture draw-in. There's also the jerky camera, the seemingly random Muppet movie clips, cheap super attacks and boring collecting games that just make me think more time was needed in the conceptual stages. Racemania certainly doesn't have the universal appeal of the Muppet TV characters. This one's probably best left for the kiddies. GR



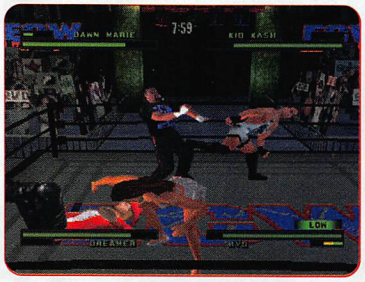


ECW ANARCHY RULZ

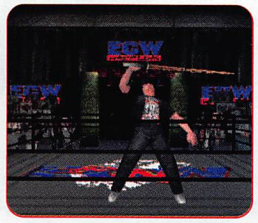
review by the heartbreak chris • dev/pub: acclaim • avail: now

PlayStation D

Do you smell it? Yep, it's the odor of recycled monkey crap once again coming from Acclaim. Essentially the same wrestling game we've been playing since Warzone, ECW Anarchy Rulz does nothing to improve on past success; in fact, this is actually worse. The animation is still stiff, collision and priority are still poor, load times are atrocious and the character roster looks like more of a police line-up than anything else. The graphics are incredibly sloppy (I haven't seen a crowd look this bad since the NES) and filled with obvious glitches, my favorite being Sandman drinking from a kendo stick and then crushing it against his head. The alleged simplified controls fall flat, as the basic engine is the same, only altered so it's actually harder to perform the moves you want. Even the custom character editor is more difficult to use than before. Anarchy Rulz? Anything but. GR







Ten people locked in a house with no GR...



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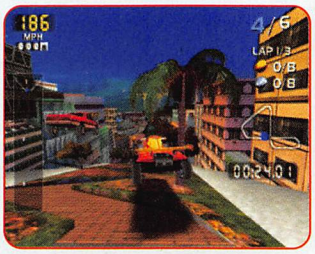
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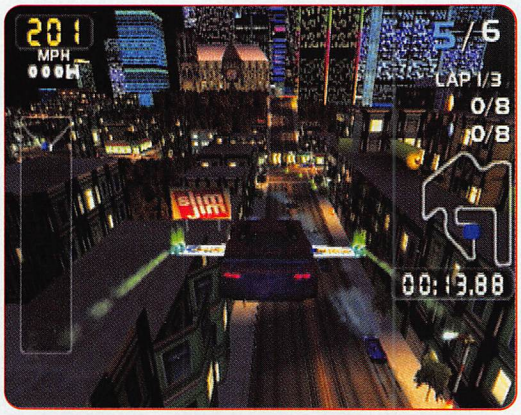
SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049

review by m. hobbs • dev/pub: midway • avail: now

C+

Rush 2049 is not a sophisticated game, but it's one that you can have a fairly good time with nonetheless. With its ambitiously crafted, yet somewhat gaudy, futuristic tracks, you'll enjoy simply zipping around the courses and looking at the scenery, even if negotiating the courses isn't all that satisfying from a physics standpoint. And the ability to sprout wings and pitch and yaw while in the air is entertaining if a hokey gimmick. But where the game is most enjoyable is in its multiplayer modes. Up to four players can compete at a time in a convincing split screen, battling it out on the race tracks, stunt domes, or best of all, in battle arenas, where you drive around collecting weapons to blow each other up. As I said, not sophisticated, but pretty fun. GR



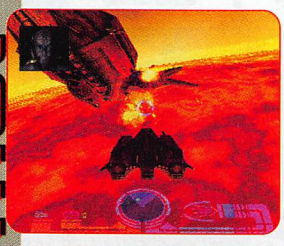


STAR TREK: INVASION

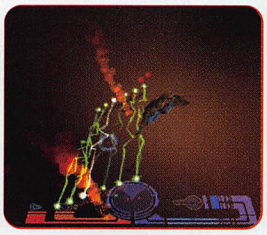
review by c. hoffman • dev: warthog • pub: activision • avail: now

PlayStation B

Colony Wars IV? Oh, sorry. Case of mistaken identity. But, as it's developed by some of the same team members that did CW, Star Trek: Invasion's substantial gameplay similarities to the PlayStation's space-fighter franchise are not only expected but welcome. Set during the Next Generation era, Invasion places you in the cockpit of a one-man, Federation fightercraft. Varied but typical space missions ensue: rescue missions, escorts, retrieval, all-out dogfights and more - the dogfights being most enjoyable. The pacing is somewhat odd (missions branch from too easy to frustrating and back in a heartbeat) but things could be worse. The ships are armed with a good selection of weapons and tons of maneuvers, but it seems that the game's two-dozen or so moves were designed more for a keyboard than the PS' eight-button controller. However, Invasion's graphics are certainly up to the task. Draw distance is good and the galactic backdrops combine with very nice ship models for stellar results. As far as being a space combat sim goes, Invasion is extremely solid. It's as a Star Trek game that things go a bit awry. Sure, you get the real voices of Patrick Stewart and Michael Dorn, plus encounters with famous Trek races (Klingons, Borgs, etc.), but the emphasis on new ships and enemies is a bit of a turn off; the new vehicles hardly live up to the Star Trek standard of design. If it weren't for the decidedly Next Generation HUD, you'd hardly know what game you're playing at times. Still, Invasion is a worthy game. Just know that the Star trek aroma is subtle. GR







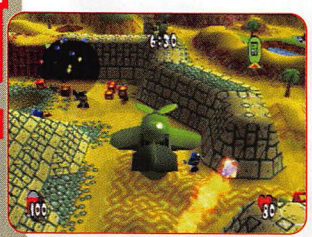


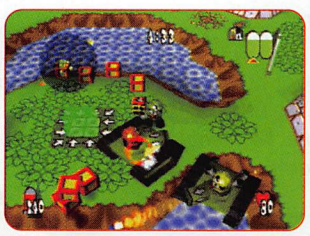
TEAM BUDDIES

review by s. thomason • dev: psygnosis • pub: midway • avail: now

PlayStation B

Like a bizarre lovechild of Bomberman and Starcraft, Team Buddies combines multiplayer mayhem with just a touch of real-time strategy to create an enjoyable and addictive party-game experience. The unique play mechanic of stacking crates to produce weapons, more buddies, or even vehicles works well and there's enough variety in the game (Medic Buddies, Ninja Buddies, etc.) to prevent it from becoming stale. Some distinctly British humor helps sustain Team Buddies during single-player missions, but its true appeal undoubtedly lies in the four-player battles. So dust off those multi-taps and call up three buddies for some of the best party action on PlayStation. GR







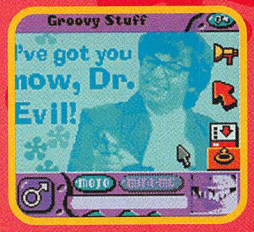
Yeah Baby!! Gameboy has gone groovy!!

AUSTIN POWERS™





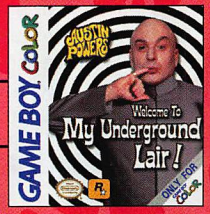






* Explore the Mojo Maze
* Beam your opponent a message via Infra-Red link!
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If my game is too groovy, perhaps you might like this game for squares:



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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GAME BOY COLOR

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PORTABLE GAMING ANALYSIS GAMES MOBILIZED

SPIDER-MAN

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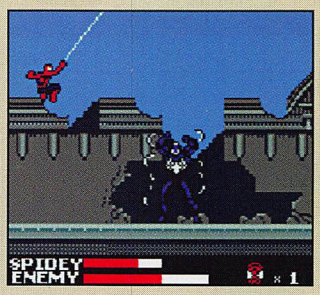
dev: vicarious visions · pub: activision · avail: now

reviewed by c. hoffman

C+

If superpowers were as frustrating to use in comic books as they are in this game, I think Spider-Man would have hung up his tights long ago. Not that the GBC version of Spider-Man is all bad; in fact, everything starts out pretty darn good, with Spidey being able to crawl on almost any surface and wrap his opponents in webbing, just like in the comic. An RPG-style leveling-up system adds a unique twist, the colorful graphics retain the comic feel well and the music is decent (a version of the old Spider-Man theme is even included). No, the problems come when you need to use Spidey's powers with precision and find that you don't have nearly the control over Spidey's wall-crawling and jumping that you should. You have to manually stand from a crouch, and you'll often find yourself in weird positions when crawling through tight spaces. When enemies (especially seagulls and bats) start constantly bashing you from surface to surface and you're stuck facing the wrong way, you'll want to hurl your Game Boy across the room. And why can't Spidey shoot a web line to climb straight up? Not awful, but not the solid action experience I'd hoped for. **GR**





BLASTER MASTER

GAME BOY COLOR

dev/pub: sunsoft · avail: now

reviewed by c. hoffman

A

Another true classic is reborn on Game Boy Color! As a remake of the 1980s NES game, Blaster Master: Enemy Below is a throwback to awesome gameplay and masterful 2D level design. It's great to still find a game where skillfully jumping an enemy barrage means the difference between victory and the "Game Over" screen, and collecting a batch of health-ups and laying into enemies old-school style sent chills up my spine. All the elements that worked so well in the original Blaster Master are back: the bulk of the game is vehicular platforming action, but Jason can also get out of his vehicle for top-down shooting and exploration. As you progress, your vehicle gains new abilities so you can jump higher or climb walls (to name a few), thus opening up new areas of the game, almost like an action-RPG. The graphics and music work wonderfully on Game Boy Color, and the control is dead on. BM's high challenge level is still in full effect too, but at least now there's a password feature. The only thing I could ask for is a built-in map. Blaster Master absolutely rocks with its classic action and charm. **GR**





AUSTIN POWERS

GAME BOY COLOR

dev: tarantula studios · pub: rockstar games · avail: now

reviewed by c. hoffman

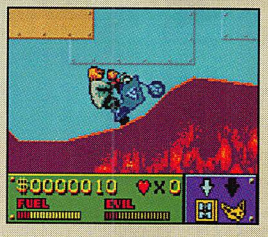
C+

When Rockstar announced Austin Powers was coming to Game Boy, I really wondered what they were planning to do. After spending considerable time with the title, I'm still baffled. Austin Powers on GBC is funkiness beyond your wildest imagination. Not really a game at all, both Austin Powers: Oh Behave (Austin flavor) and Welcome to My Underground Lair (Dr. Evil flavor) are theme programs that temporarily transform your GB into an Austin-themed mini-PC, complete with shagadelic versions of Windows. You can pick screensavers, listen to tons of voice sound bites, watch FMV clips (!), surf mock web sites, use a word processor (with GB printer compatibility) and more. Four simple mini-games are also featured, including rock-paper-scissors, a puzzle game and a Pac-Man clone. Oh Behave has an amusing, simple platformer while WTMUL has a weird stunt race game, but otherwise the versions are nearly identical in term of modes. The Austin Powers humor is abundant, but the actual interface is rather clunky, making these titles for true Austin Powers nuts only. **GR**









DRAGON'S LAIR

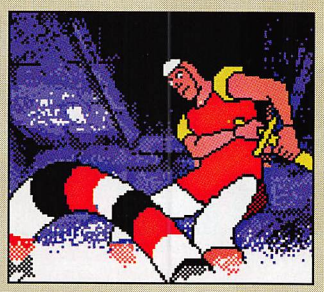
GAME BOY COLOR

dev: digital eclipse · pub: capcom · avail: 2001

previewed by c. hoffman

I couldn't believe my eyes when Capcom demonstrated an early version of Dragon's Lair. This is a Game Boy game!? Not related to the old GB game from years back, this Dragon's Lair is the complete, fully animated, FMV cartoon adventure, and it's on freakin' Game Boy! This technological marvel looks as good as the Sega CD version and it actually plays better. The only thing it's missing are the voices, but considering what they've done so far, I'd believe Capcom if they told me they'd make it in. **GR**





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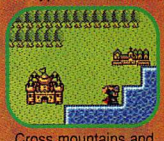




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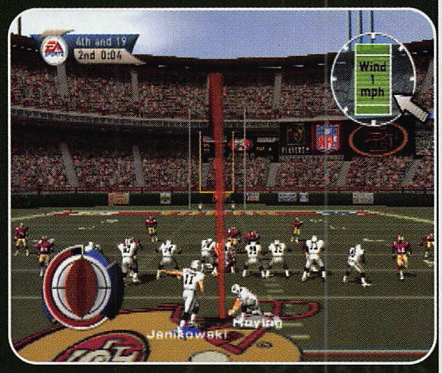
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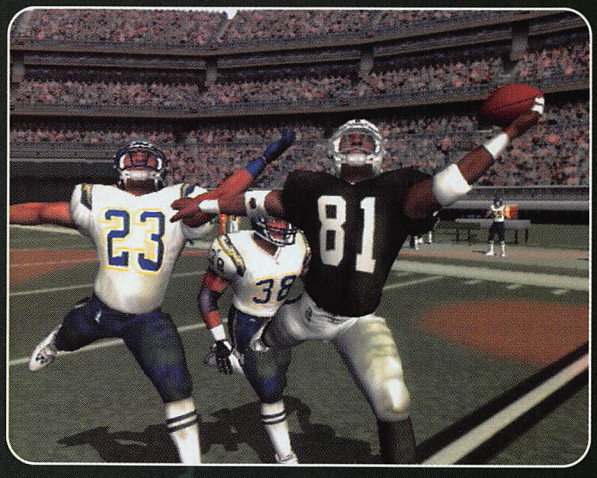
The hulking fullback rushes through a gapping hole between the guard and the tackle, spinning and sidestepping a would-be tackler, stiff-arming another as he flees for the sideline. Once past the initial defense, he's immediately pounced upon by a comparably smaller d-back and drags the defender five or six yards, as a rhinoceros would drag a hyena, before stumbling out-of-bounds near an official who quickly drops his first-down marker and backpedals to avoid a collision with the oncoming gladiators. The fullback gets up, blinks his eyes and grabs his facemask to adjust his helmet as he heads back to the huddle.

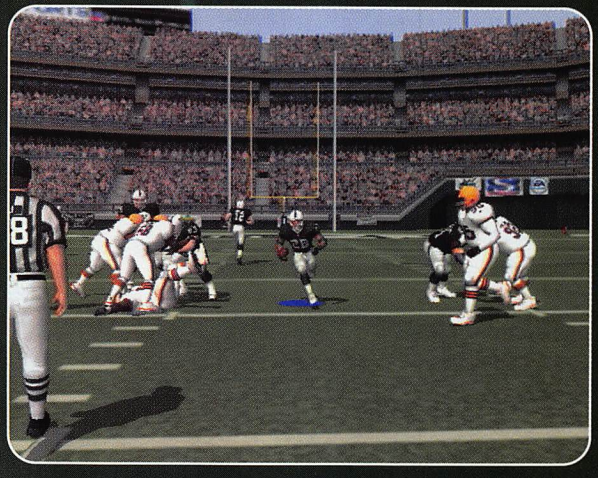
The preceding was an account of an actual play I experienced during my habitual use of Madden 2001 on PlayStation 2. And this is just one of hundreds of plays I could have described: wide receivers making one-handed catches then tip-toeing to stay in bounds to score a touchdown; a d-back knocking down a pass only to have a trailing linebacker make a shoestring catch for an interception; a swift kick returner cutting on a dime and turning a corner to reverse his field to outrun the coverage.

Then there's the sheer beauty of the graphics. Although no actual player faces are included, on close ups, not only are the faces quite detailed—with visible five o'clock shadows or mustaches or nose breathing strips—but the uniforms are equally as detailed— you can actually see the cross in the screw that holds the facemask onto the helmet. And the running animations are flawless.

Adding to an already stellar Madden gameplay engine, there are several new enhancements that enhance the overall presentation of the game. Reasonable facsimiles of real NFL coaches are now seen and heard from the sidelines. There's even the ability to have the coach recommend the next offensive play. Think that the NFL Questionable Call Instant Replay rule should be included...it is. And adding an immeasurable amount of replay value to the one-player game is the addition of Madden Cards—the earning and collecting of electronic, Upper Deck-brand football cards that can actually be used in the game to improve player abilities.

It's staggering to think that this is a first-generation game. I haven't praised a game this much since Super Mario 64. So I had to think, "What's missing?" And then it dawned on me...cheerleaders. But then again, this is a preview. **M. PUCCINI**







gamers' republic sports

MADDEN 2001

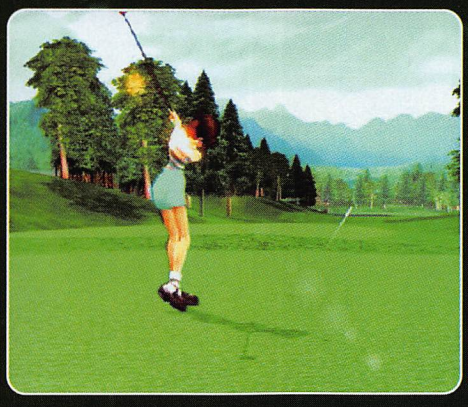
developer: ea sports publisher: ea available: october

PS2

I've spent about three months of green time with the import version of this game. It plays that well. It's no wonder EA snatched it up for release here in the States. The game uses slightly exaggerated characters on perfectly designed and varied golf courses, so it will cater to both the casual, slightly intimidated video-game golfer and the sim-heavy Tiger Woods' PGA master.

The play mechanics and the onscreen interface are easy to pick up and read, making it easy to look at the entire screen and not just zone in on the center of the screen. Scoping the backgrounds, you get a definite sense of depth and realism. Even the slightest winds will cause local trees to gently sway. Water hazards even ripple in the direction of the wind...how hardcore is that? And it is these small, subtle details that are strung throughout the game that really make it a solid package.







Swing Away's control can be understood in about 15 minutes, but it takes a good 54 holes before your play begins to grow to a more accurate and pinpoint state. This evolution will drive you to replay a course and make a birdie on a hole you were certain could only be done in par. Swing Away Golf's control will surprise a lot of gamers never interested in golf. It's that good.

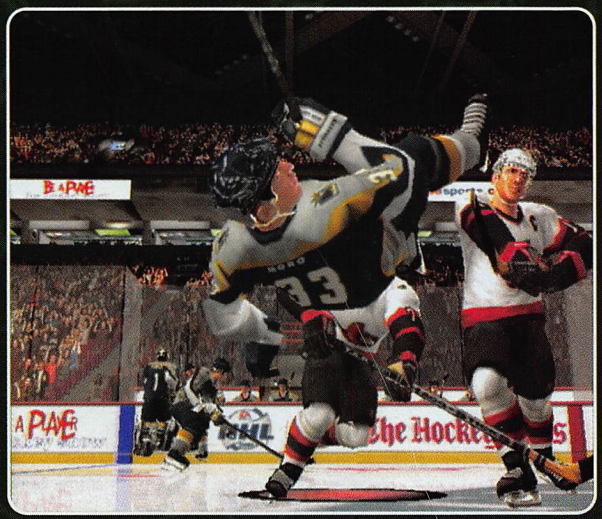
T. STRATTON

gamers' republic sports

SWING AWAY GOLF

developer: t&e soft publisher: ea available: october

PS2 **A-**





At this stage, probably the best thing about NHL 2001 is the outstanding facial mapping on the skaters. The detail in PS2 games is setting new standards and this game is no exception. These models are quite exquisite. Pausing the game and moving the camera around the players, á la *The Matrix*, to view the craftsmanship almost makes it worth stopping the gameplay.

But, on the flip side, at this stage, probably the worst thing about NHL 2001 is the number of fisticuffs you get in throughout a game. On average, I experienced seven fights per period - that's 21 fights total. It's great if you're into that aspect of the hockey games, but seven fights per period seriously break up the continuity of the game.

The overall presentation is your standard fare with a PS2 makeover—there are 10 different camera angles and the announcer seems to keep up with the action and his excitement lends a certain air to the game. Gameplay-wise, the best element I experienced was being able to quickly do a 360-degree turn to shed a defender and then shoot for goal. I'll wait for the review copy to lay down the word on the overall gameplay, as the game is still being worked on. But the skaters do move great.

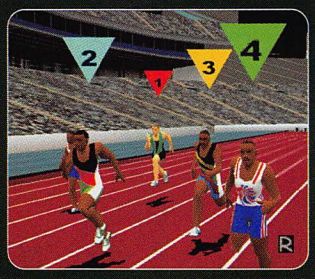
NHL 2001 includes all of the NHL teams, plus the two new squads in Minnesota and Columbus, as well as 20 international teams. Two helpful features are the Momentum Shift indicator and a Power Meter for slamming home those slap shots. And you have to love the way the walls sway back and forth when players are checked into the boards. **M. PUCCINI**

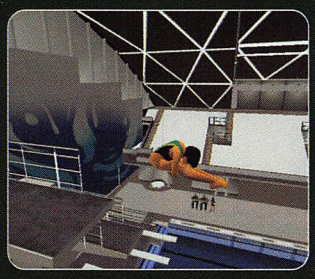
gamers' republic sports

NHL 2001

developer: ea sports publisher: ea available: november

PS2





As a second generation game, Sydney 2000 falls way short in high-res visuals. It wouldn't be so important if this type of game didn't need to look absolutely amazing to maintain good long-term impressions, but it does. The play mechanics are simple but a bit frustrating and more times than not too strenuous, demanding constant button mashing. Not all events take sweat-breaking button pounding, but those that don't have you barely doing anything aside from a cued button tap, not a good balance.

Which takes me back to the graphics. If the game was presented in a more broadcast style of camera directing and the player models were fleshed out, Sydney 2000 would be more acceptable. But even the backgrounds are half-assed: static, flat crowds should be left on the 32-bit systems. **T. STRATTON**

gamers' republic sports

SYDNEY 2000

developer: attention to detail publisher: eidos available: now

C-

The frantic button pressing that is the heart of track and field games is in high form in Sydney 2000, the official video game of the Olympics. There are 12 events—100 meters sprint, 110 meters hurdles, javelin, hammer, triple jump, high jump, skeet shooting, 100 meters freestyle swimming, 10 meter platform diving, super heavyweight weight lifting, sprint cycling and kayak K1 slalom—some of which translate into a video game better than others. For example, the kayaking and the cycling aren't really that fun to play, and the control in the skeet shooting is far too loose, making that one pointless. But I will admit that I moderately enjoyed the platform diving (OK, it was the girl in the bathing suit that got me.)

Graphically, the models are seamless and move fluidly and are probably the best that the PS is capable of, but the environmental graphics aren't all that great. There are four modes of play: Arcade, Olympic, Head to Head, Coaching. But anything other than a multiplayer game becomes repetitive and boring. **M. PUCCINI**



gamers' republic sports

SYDNEY 2000

developer: attention to detail publisher: eidos available: now

C-

The overall presentation and the player models in Blitz 2001 for the Dreamcast look so different than those in the PS version, it's almost like they're two completely different games. Of course, gameplay still takes precedence over graphics, but in this case...the game just seems more enjoyable when it's easier on the eyes.

Also adding to the appeal of the DC version is the ability to view instant replays, graphical touches like dust flying up from the ground, and a better play selection screen (actually showing a mini field and the routes that will be run). Another Blitz DC feature is when a player scores a touchdown and his picture appears on the screen.

Blitz DC also includes the new Party Games—1st And Goal Frenzy, Goal Line Stand and QB Challenge—but they are simply minor enhancements as opposed to major selling features as seems to be with the PS version.



Sure, there are still noticeable collision problems, like players walking right through players lying on the ground, but with so much else done right, it's completely forgivable. **M. PUCCINI**

gamers' republic sports

NFL BLITZ 2001

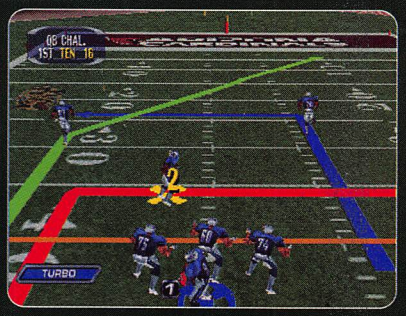
developer: midway publisher: midway available: now

B

For the most part, if you own Blitz 2000 for PS, you don't need this version. The blocky models are still here, so is the poor collision detection, and the game is...um...identical, save for a few new after-play moves and some dancing animations.

But if you do decide to pick up a copy of Blitz 2001, you will find that Midway has included a couple new mini-games for your enjoyment under the option of Party Games. The games are: 1st And Goal Frenzy, Goal Line Stand and QB Challenge.

1st And Goal Frenzy starts you on the 10-yard line and you need to score a TD in four plays or less. If you do so, you move back 10 yards and try again and keep moving back until you fail or succeed from the 50-yard line. Goal Line Stand puts you as defender to stop the CPU from scoring and QB Challenge is practicing passing to certain routes.



To be quite honest, it almost looks like Midway slapped the new mini-games in and re-released Blitz 2000. **M. PUCCINI**

gamers' republic sports

NFL BLITZ 2001

developer: point of view publisher: midway available: now

C-



Mia Hamm Soccer 64 is a bare bones soccer title. It's not an exceptional game nor is it a terrible game. It's just an average game with really nothing new to offer, besides the women teams. The game even seems to be a variant, if not a direct descendent, of Konami's International Superstar Soccer, although not as deep and complex.

The control is a little too tight as the players don't cut left and right as smoothly as you'd want. And, in the one-player game, the CPU opponent AI is unrealistic. There are clear shots that the CPU players don't take or miss altogether. And the CPU players will oftentimes dribble the ball out-of-bounds on their own with no hard pressure.

Graphically, there's nothing really outstanding, as a matter of fact, nearly all of the player models are identical, save for different skin and/or hair colors.

Four years ago, this would have been a noteworthy title, but these days it just doesn't compare to other available offerings.

M. PUCCINI

gamers' republic sports

MIA HAMM SOCCER

developer: silicon dreams publisher: south peak inter. available: now

C-

In comparing EA Sports' NBA Live 2001 to 989's NBA ShootOut 2001, at this point, I'm going to have to go with Live. I know these are preview versions, but I truly like the way Live feels and plays.

I also appreciate and enjoy the other extras in the game. Take to the three-point line against your friend in a 60-second match of 3 Point Shootout. Or just spend some time alone on the court and slam to your heart's content. Or take on Michael Jordan, returning from last year's version, as you can play a game of one-on-one against the living legend and can even unlock him as a character in another enhancement to the engine, the NBA Live Challenge.

Following on the heels of the innovative inclusion of the Madden Cards (electronic Upper Deck-brand football cards) in Madden 2001, EA has included a similar, but not nearly as fulfilling feature in Live. It doesn't matter because with everything else included, this game is Live.



M. PUCCINI

gamers' republic sports

NBA LIVE 2001

developer: ea sports publisher: ea available: fall

There is some overall tweaking being done to the NBA ShootOut 2001 game engine, and if they address the problems I'm experiencing, this should be a pretty decent game of hoops for the PS. Returning from last year's version, the Touch Shooting Bar adds some help with the shooting accuracy by showing each player's shooting range from that spot on the court. Hitting the green part of the red-yellow-green bar almost assures a drop every time.

The engine features probably the best free throwing mechanism I've ever played, with two balls moving vertically and horizontally through a hoop and you just have to stop each inside the rim. The balls move faster for the players who suck at the line, like, um, Shaq.

Both offensive and defensive plays can be called, like a high-post pick-and-roll or a half-court trap, respectively. The Create-A-Dunk returns, and the game now allows you to draft players from 989's NCAA Final Four 2001 hoops game. We hope to have a complete review next month.



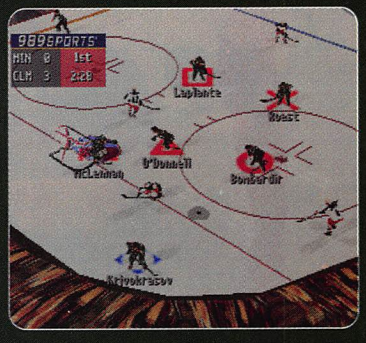
M. PUCCINI

gamers' republic sports

NBA SHOOTOUT 2001

developer: killer game publisher: 989 sports available: fall

As I mentioned in my review of Blitz 2001 for PS, it's easy to slap a couple new modes or features into a game and re-release it for a new year. And it's sad—for you, me and the company. Sad for you because you waste your hard-earned cash. Sad for me because I have to play it then say it. Sad for the company because they make a truckload of...okay, so it's not sad for them.



New to the fourth installment of 989's NHL FaceOff engine is a Shootout Mode as well as a Practice Mode, and new to the team list are the two new franchises in Minnesota and Columbus. Other than that, this is pretty much last year's game.

The biggest problem the game still has is in the AI department, as I'd skate right into three defensemen in front of the goalie and they wouldn't take the puck away...none of them.

Graphically, you'd think that 989 would have the top graphics on the system what with being a Sony company and all, but alas, they don't.

M. PUCCINI

gamers' republic sports

NHL FACEOFF 2001

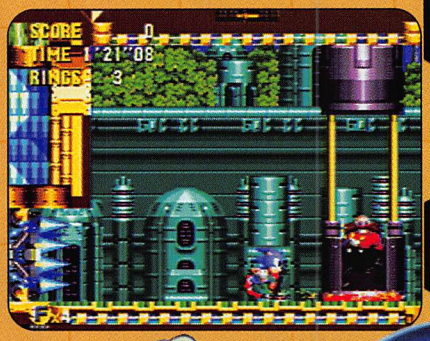
developer: 989 sports publisher: 989 sports available: now

D+

SONIC CD

(publisher) sega
(genre) action
(system) sega cd
(year) 1993





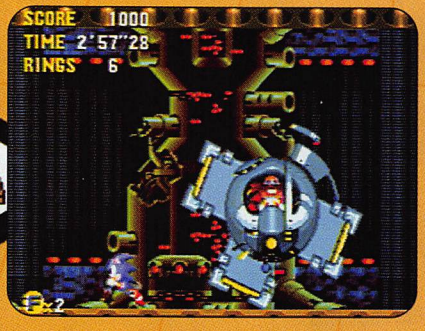


When you think Sega, you immediately think of Yuji Naka's Sonic the Hedgehog. And when you think of Sonic, you have to think of Sonic CD. Regarded by most as the best game in Sega's top franchise series, this gem of a platformer was a gift from the gaming gods in both gameplay and presentation.

Even compared to contemporary 3D masterpieces, Sonic CD stands out as one of the best-looking games ever created. A gorgeous rainbow of colors bombarded players' eyeballs at every turn with incredibly rich hues and awesome multi-layer parallax. Using the Sega CD's scaling and rotation, players even got to challenge funky 3D bonus stages that could be considered predecessors to Sonic Adventure. Sonic CD even featured a kick-ass anime intro and ending that were just awesome beyond words back in 1993.

But beyond the graphics were the majestic high-speed Sonic gameplay and brilliant level design. Sonic CD took "blast processing" to new speeds as Sonic blazed through the game's seven loop-filled worlds (such as Palmtree Panic and the pinball-inspired Collision Chaos) faster than ever before. One of the best things about Sonic CD was that you could jam through the levels at top speed if you wanted to play for a quick adrenaline rush, or you could take your time and explore each level to find all its secrets. In an all-new twist to the series, Sonic could travel to the past or future by passing time warp signs and then rocketing to top speed. You could only get the game's best ending by warping to the past and destroying Dr. Robotnik's evil generator. Each time period had different enemies and routes, and destroying the generator would unlock yet another version of the future, nearly quadrupling the game's size.







If only the pure bliss of the Japanese soundtrack hadn't been scrapped in favor of the lesser U.S. tunes, Sonic CD would be a perfect title. As it stands, the hedgehog will have to be content with his game being called one of the greatest moments 2D gaming has ever witnessed. **-Chris Hoffman**

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WORLD REPUBLIC

[i] *So many games came in this month for World Republic, we couldn't even pack them all in. No way were we passing on Vampire Chronicle, a collection of games from the Vampire series distilled into one package. Even more exciting was an update on Napple Tale. Anything even remotely resembling Klonoa is a good thing.*

sega dreamcast / dc

World Republic Review • developer/publisher **capcom** • available in japan **now**

VAMPIRE CHRONICLE

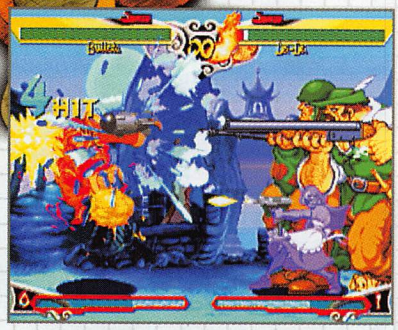


Although it's always stood in the shadow of Street Fighter, Capcom's Vampire (aka Darkstalkers) series has brought gorgeous graphics and awesome fighting action to homes and arcades around the world since 1994, and now the dark side of fighting has come to Dreamcast in all its glory in Vampire Chronicle.





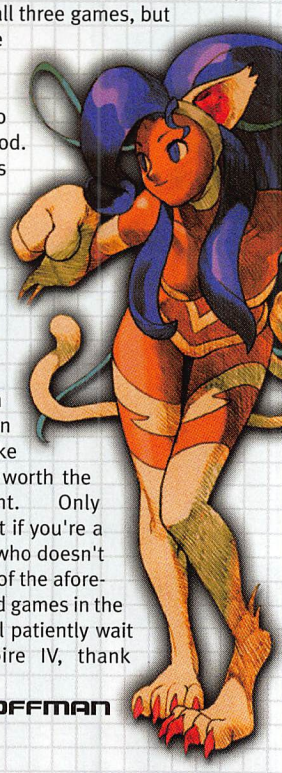
Unfortunately, Vampire Chronicle arrives as a decidedly mixed bag. On the one hand, Vampire Chronicle combines many of the elements of the previous games in the series—Vampire, Vampire Hunter and Vampire Savior—into one package, complete with the magnificent characters and amazing animations the games are known for. Players can select the overall game system from the three titles, which primarily determines how your super moves work and how the round system functions. Also, you can select from four play styles for each fighter. If you liked the original Felicia with her sand-kick attack, you can pick her, or you can opt for the Savior version with her pouncing scratch attack, follow-through and devastating 34-hit super combo. Even Demitri's varied fireball animations are included. In fact, every little animation detail from the entire series—Anakaris' transformations and Bishimon's dismemberments included—appears to be packed in. Of course, it's all backed by classic 2D Street Fighter-style play and excellent Capcom controls, although a six-button pad or joystick is highly recommended.







However, the game would have been even better if it had been a true trilogy (or better yet, a true sequel) complete with the Vampire and Vampire Hunter backgrounds, bosses and stage progression instead of using only the ones from Vampire Savior. Even that is incomplete: you don't get boss conversations or even personalized endings. At least they gave us the music from all three games, but what about the rest? The big draw in Japan is the ability to play the game online, but that won't do stateside gamers any good. What it comes down to is that, while Vampire Chronicle is good—no, make that great—in the gameplay department, it doesn't offer enough enhancements over Night Warriors or Vampire Savior on the Saturn (or even Darkstalkers 3 on PS) to make Chronicle worth the investment. Only consider it if you're a huge fan who doesn't have one of the aforementioned games in the series. I'll patiently wait for Vampire IV, thank you.



-C. HOFFMAN

World Republic says "Everything about this game—characters, visuals, music, control—is great. Just not great enough, compared to previous versions, to warrant a purchase." **B**

vampire chronicle © capcom 2000.

WORLD REPUBLIC ELECTRONICS WR電気製品

PS2
sony playstation 2 / ps2

World Republic Preview • developer/publisher **sunrise** • available in japan **sept**

G-SAVIOUR

G-Saviour for PS2 is an action shooter based on G-Saviour, the Gundam series which was created last year by talented American and Japanese staffs in Hollywood as a part of the 20th anniversary of the great robot anime. Using the Japanese animation and Hollywood's CG technology, Sunrise has not only intrigued Gundam fans but also given viewers a different perspective of robot animation (and controversy among traditional anime fans) by applying CG into traditional footage.

The game scenario takes place on Earth 70 years after the world in V-Gundam (or one year after the G-Saviour series), where you, as a commander and pilot, try to accomplish assigned missions by utilizing various different kinds of mobile suit robots. Each MS has advantages and disadvantages, so it is necessary for you to know and decide what is the best suitable robot for each battle environment and mission objective, just as if it were a real war. Unlike other mech games, the interface is kept simple. Depending on the distance between you and the enemy, your weapon system changes automatically from a cannon or laser beam to a saber, making it easy to concentrate on actual combat. However, you do have control over your viewing perspective. Between each level, gorgeous FMV is inserted to reward you and pull you into the game world.

The first DVD shooter for PS2 indeed looks exciting to play. Stay tuned for next issue with GR's hands-on experience with G-Saviour.

-J. SAKAI









g-saviour © sunrise 2000.

Gamers' Republic GR12
World Republic
Monthly Import Game Reviews
ワールド リパブリック
A 323-91

PS2 sony playstation 2 / ps2

World Republic Preview • developer/publisher **bandai** • available in japan **december**

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

Gundam, one of the greatest robot anime series of all time, has appeared on consoles numerous times in the form of RPG or simulation games, but no action-oriented Gundam games have been released. Every time I found out the games were non-action, I'd wish that Bandai would make Gundam as an action game. Well, at last, in Mobile Suit Gundam for PS2, expected to be released this December, Bandai is set to deliver the much longed-for action game, tantalizing both gamers and anime fans alike.

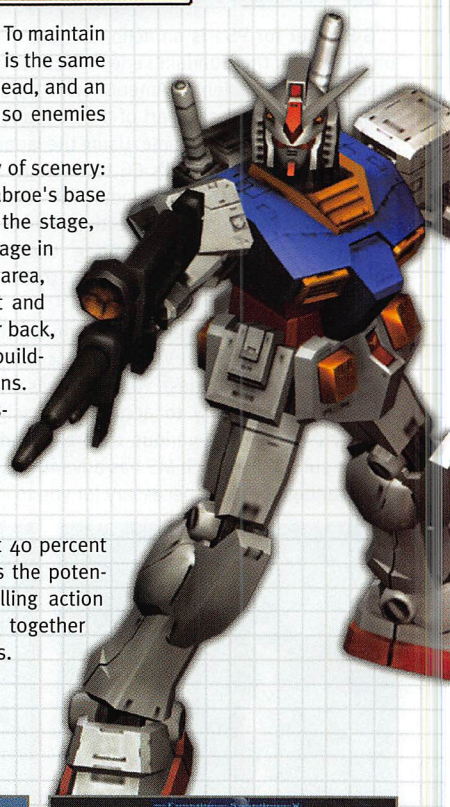
The game is based on the first *Gundam*, in which the Federation and Zion engage in the "One-Year War." Straight from the anime, players will take the role of Amuro and set out to destroy the enemy mobile suit army, including Shah's red Zaku. The visuals are astounding, as intricately modeled mobile suits move in real time with detailed joint animations that aren't even featured in the anime.

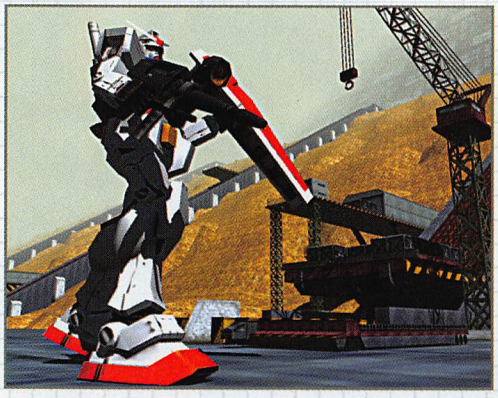
To give more drama to the game, over 40 minutes of newly created anime clips are inserted with original voices and arranged BGM. Also, there are four different views to watch the action: over-looking, zoom, look-up, and wide. There is no first-person view, because Bandai wanted to deliver the same presentation and perspectives used in the animation. To maintain gameplay, though, the point of view is the same as the direction of your Gundam's head, and an auto-targeting feature is included, so enemies don't get out of your sight.

The stages feature a great variety of scenery: cityscapes, desolate deserts, and Jabroe's base are just a few. And depending on the stage, you can use different tactics to engage in combat advantageously. In a vast area, you'll need to find the enemy first and move in swiftly with the sun at your back, or in a city, you'll have to use the buildings as cover against enemy cannons. Throughout the course of the missions, you won't be alone against the enemy either. Guncannon and Guntank, controlled by the CPU, will support you on your missions.

Although the game is only about 40 percent complete, Mobile Suit Gundam has the potential to become one of the top-selling action titles for PS2, if everything comes together properly. Let's hope Bandai delivers.

-J. SAKAI



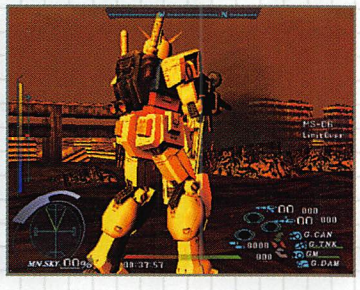












mobile suit gundam © bandai 2000.

IMPORT GAME REVIEWS FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM
WORLD REPUBLIC ELECTRONICS WR電気製品

sega dreamcast / dc

World Republic Review • developer: **wow entertainment** • publisher **sega** • available in japan **now**

GIANT GRAM 2000

For serious pro wrestling action on Dreamcast, Giant Gram 2000 is really your only choice. Forget those rushed, unimproved ports and the shallow games with no features: Giant Gram balances great graphics with decent features and an unparalleled depth of play. Sure, WWF fans may balk at the lack of flash or the generally unrecognizable (to U.S. audiences) characters, but as far as pure gameplay goes, Giant Gram is as solid as they come.

More than 40 superstars from the All Japan Pro Wrestling league are included, from big names like Vader and Dr. Death Steve Williams to legends like Giant Baba and Bruno Sammartino to recent stars like Jun Akiyama. Tons of bone-breaking moves are available—around 100 per character—and no two wrestlers play alike.





The models are incredible. With seamless bodies and well-defined physiques, they look better than any other wrestling game currently available in the U.S. The wrestlers even have modeled jaw structures for amazingly realistic facial animations. All the moves in GG2000 look excellent, especially the finishers and double-team moves. But that's not to say everything here looks flawless; the flat crowd looks pretty bad at times.



Arcade-style singles and tag-team matches (against human or CPU opponents) make up the bulk of the play, but the more inventive mode is the historical match feature, which re-creates classic match-ups from the last 20 years. The goal in these contests is to pull off the same moves used in the real matches, and though doing so is a lot more challenging than it sounds, success yields hidden characters and other goods.

If there's any problem with Giant Gram, it's that it doesn't quite have the pick-up-and-play interface that other wrestling games (like Wrestlemania 2000 on N64) have. You'll have no problem doing all kinds of cool moves, but the depth of the counter system may take a while to get the hang of. For wrestling enthusiasts, though, mastering Giant Gram's wealth of technique will be part of the fun.

-C. HOFFMAN

World Republic says "For serious pro wrestling action on DC, Giant Gram 2000 is really your only choice." **B**

PS2

sony playstation 2 / ps2

World Republic Preview • developer **rage** • publisher **imagineer** • available in japan **october**

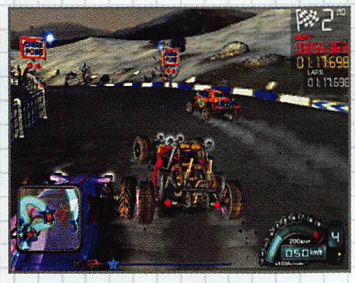
WILD WILD RACING

Imagineer and Rage are making something of a habit out of developing for fresh-faced hardware. First we had Incoming and Expendable on Dreamcast, and now we have Wild Wild Racing, the first buggy racing title to make its way to the PS2.

Right off the bat, you can tell that this is a Rage game. It just has that familiar dark look, and you'll not find gaudy colors or blazing sunlit scenes, as this European developer seems to put an emphasis on sustaining a rich black level. And I think it's a look that works, especially on PS2. There is a disconcerting amount of fade-in in this preview version, however, and after seeing games like SSX and Ridge Racer V, there seems little reason for this to be the case. Let's hope this gets some attention in the final stages of development. Rage, however, can leave their buggy models well enough alone, as they are superb. Everything from working suspension bits to moving elements visible on the exposed engines has been faithfully reproduced.

As for its play, WWR reminds me a little bit of the under-appreciated and overlooked Buggy Heat (TNN Hardcore Heat), in that you have to be very aware of the type of surface you're racing on, whether it's ice, mud, or sand. The effect is not quite as pronounced here, which will probably be to most people's liking, but it is a big part of the play just the same. And thanks to incredibly long courses, you'll have a chance to sample many different types of terrain, as some tracks go from mud to pavement to loose dirt, all within the span of several corners.





We'll have more Wild Wild Racing in coming months, including a look at the U.S. version, coming from an as yet unnamed publisher.

-M. HOBBS

wild wild racing © imagineer 2000. giant gram 2000 © sega 2000.

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PS2 sony playstation 2 / ps2

World Republic Review • developer/publisher **ascii** • available in japan **now**

SURFROID

Not since the unforgettable ride Nintendo drenched us in back in '95 have I experienced such aquatic thrills as those so amply supplied by ASCII's king of all surf games, Surfroid. This is the ultimate setting for a surfing contest: a meteor smacks the moon, a big chunk breaks off, and after partially vaporizing as it passes through our atmosphere, hits *Deep Impact*-style and the sea engulfs the planet. What's next? Easy: Kevin Costner and a raft. No - all of the aliens from the outlying galaxies make a bee-line for the sweetest sets in the solar system—planet Earth.





This clever setup allowed the designers enough free reign in terms of both environmental factors and characters to go a little crazy as they went about the business of creating Surfroid. Contestants include Vague Gean, a breasty android; Gareos, a shark man; Morsa, a being made of stone; humans Kai and Perl; a man-eagle named Turbine; and, my personal little shredder, Largo, who's sort of a cross between a raptor and a bird. From a behind-the-board perspective, with your fingers firmly planted on the supplied finger board that snaps snuggly onto the analog wands you must carve the waves, hitting marks, making time, and performing tricks to rack up enough points to progress through each of the six rounds. Such simplicity could easily equate to a snore-fest of a game, but in this case, using the PS2's ample liquid-producing power, ASCII has crafted the PS2 equivalent of the N64's Wave Race, with waves that look and feel like nothing you have ever experienced. Coupled with the freaky character designs, intuitive gameplay, and cinematic replays, Surfroid is as fun as it is unique. For the American version, Rockstar is changing the characters, so the jury's out until we see whether this is a good or bad choice. No matter which version you buy, new PS2 users can't go wrong with this one. Chances of a game like it coming along any time soon are slim at best. **-D. HALVERSON**











World Republic says "Not since Wave Race have I experienced such aquatic thrills." **B+**

surfroid © ascii 2000.

sony playstation / psx

World Republic Preview • developer/publisher **takara** • available in japan **oct**

TATSUNOKO FIGHT

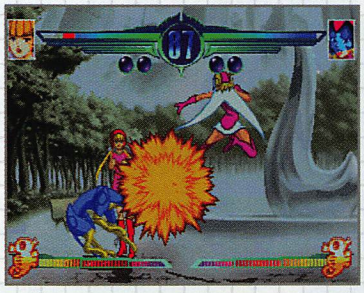
It is no exaggeration to say that Takara's 2D fighting game, Tatsunoko Fight for PS, is a game that could make anime fans go wild. The reason is simple: All the greatest characters from immortal anime series, including *Gatchaman, Polymer, Casshan Volter* and *Tekkaman*, are at your command to engage in one action-packed fight!

The game includes four play modes: Story mode, Vs. mode, Gallery mode, and Sound mode. Story mode is the heart of the game, where you duke it out with character-specific weapons and super combos straight from the anime (which could be considered the origin of all fighting game super moves). Also, if you solve a riddle after pummeling your enemies in Story mode, you get to see anime clips made especially for the game.

All the characters are being redrawn by Tatsunoko official designer, Robert Ferrari, and most of original voice actors and actress are participating in the creation of the game. Although the game is too early in development to report on how it plays, the game has a lot of exciting potential. Hopefully Takara can give us a refined 2D fighting experience on par with games from Capcom or SNK.

-J. SAKAI







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World Republic Preview • developer/publisher **sega** • available in japan **november**

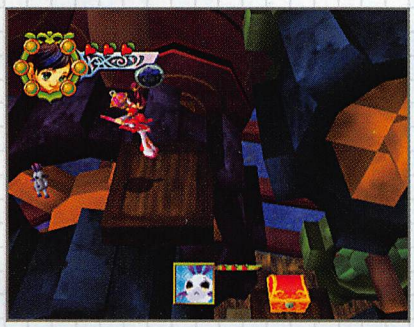
NAPPLE TALE

A new action-RPG title for Dreamcast from Sega, Napple Tale is an adventure featuring cute chicks and magical fantasy. The entire game has an incredibly cute fantasy look unlike any other Sega RPG (it looks like Namco's old action game, Klonoa), thanks in large part to the many female designers working on Napple Tale.

The game takes place in a dream land called Napple World (so called because someone is napping), where the main character, a cute girl named Porchi, has been taken by mistake. To go back to the real world, she has to seek out a fairy who lives in the dream. On the way, Porchi has to get through six different worlds, each with 10 to 20 short scenarios. Unlike a normal RPG, the episodes are somewhat separate instead of telling a continuous story, so you can easily pick up and continue the game even after a long break. Each scenario has two parts: the Napple Town part and action map part. In Napple Town, Porchi will be asked to solve problems for the people who live there, and you can also create Pafet creatures that help her through her journey. Porchi makes Pafet by collecting items that form an element called MIS. By mixing certain kinds of MIS, various Pafets will be born according to the combination of MIS you are using. In Action Map mode, Napple Tale turns into a side-scrolling action game.

There are many kind of gimmicks and traps, and you have to use a certain type of Pafet to clear some traps. At the end of each stage is a boss character that you have to defeat, although you are able to go back to Napple Town without doing battle if you want. With its unique appearance and side-scrolling action, Napple Tale looks to be a rare treasure.

-T. MIURA





napple tale © sega 2000. tatsunoko fight © takara 2000.

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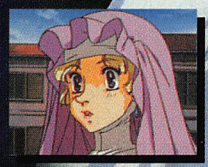

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SOL BIANCA DVD VOL. 2

REVIEWED BY CHRISTINA ALEXANDER
•2000 PIONEER ENTERTAINMENT
60 MINUTES•ENGLISH DUB/SUB
★★★★ ACTION/SCI-FI/ADVENTURE

Sol Bianca always amazes me whenever I watch it. This new series is so visually different from just about everything else out there, it's quite surprising. That's why it is so unique. The Sol Bianca and her crew make it into port and it's time for everyone to get some much-needed sleep. After being up for an ungodly amount of time, everyone quickly runs for their beds. Everyone except Jani, who is well-rested and ready to get up and see the city. After her morning jog, Jani goes out into the city to sightsee. She discovers, much to her disgust, that this city has privatized police. Which means being protected by the law is not a right, but a privilege. If you can't afford law enforcement, then you don't get any. Jani ends up, naturally, in a gun shop checking out the latest in hand-held weaponry, when she hears that the space port is under attack.

Fearing for her friend's lives, Jani returns to the Sol Bianca with the largest gun she could get her hands on. A well-known psychic terrorist has attacked the Sol Bianca and is holding its crew hostage. While attempting to rescue her friends, Jani runs into a man who knows much about the terrorist and is willing to help her. But Jani is interested in him, because he seems to look beyond the fact that she is rather masculine for a female.

At first the glaring difference between the 2D and the 3D in *Sol Bianca* can throw you off, but once you get used to it, there are some really amazing- looking scenes. The high-tech look of the CG works very well when combined with the futuristic, hard-lined design of the characters.

The storytelling and character development is really where *Sol Bianca* excels, though. Each female crew member of the Sol Bianca has her own distinct personality. With this focus on Jani, we are allowed to see that even though Jani is a strong-willed individual who is very proud of her rather masculine body, she has her insecure times. Deep down she seems to be scared of the fact that she is not considered feminine by most standards. The story never deals with this issue straight on, but her insecurity can easily be read by the way she deals with certain situations. This is the kind of storytelling that, when combined with the excellent art, makes *Sol Bianca* a must-have for all anime fans. **GR**



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PHOTON: THE EMPEROR STRIKES BACK

REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•2000 U.S. MANGA CORPS
60 MINUTES•ENGLISH SUBBED
★★★★ ACTION/ADVENTURE

As the third installment of *Photon* gets underway, we find Photon and Aun home for the first time since the show started. Photon has succeeded in safely returning Aun home from her lustful escapade, but he's got some extra baggage in tow. Namely, the pudgy Pochi; Papacha's exiled servant, Lashara Moon, the First Imperial Princess; and his new wife Keyne, who joined him in matrimony when he drew "idiot" on her forehead with a Magic Marker. In other words, if you haven't been watching up to now, you'll need to start at the beginning. As they all dine on a feast of snake meat served up by Aun's really big sister, Keyne has a moment of realization and they decide to set out for the legendary shrine, God's Resting Place, where it turns out her grandfather has hidden the Anti-Aho furnace. Everything is beginning to come into focus, yes? Since Aho is the raw magic power that one could use to rule the universe, the demented, perverted (and so on) Count Papacha isn't far behind. He's still got Lashara brainwashed into thinking he loves her (I know, does this woman have no self-esteem?), and so he uses her to betray her new friends and create a diversion to separate Photon and Keyne. So we finally find out why Papacha was after Keyne in the first place (after all, he does have 17 other wives). Papacha needs Anti-Aho to cancel out Photon's Aho so that he can get Keyne back and get all the Aho—because Keyne is the key to the Anti-Aho furnace. See, simple! Created by Keyne's grandfather, who had the best of intentions for Aho's magical qualities, the Anti-Aho furnace is the set for the ultimate showdown—and that is exactly what we get.

There are so many twists and turns in the last hour of *Photon* that you need a map to follow it; nothing is as it seems. Intertwined with over-the-top comedy—the glue that has held this series together—Aun is still infatuated with Keyne's big boobs, Photon continues to be the king of mood swings (and drooling), and, of course, Papacha gives new meaning to the term A-hole. Finally, as the tension and drama build, just as you think Photon is going to close on some profound note...we get the weirdest ending in history. Love it or hate it, you may never look at a Magic Marker quite the same way again. GR









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COWBOY BEBOP VOL. 10 & 11

REVIEWED BY SHOLA AKINNUSO
•2000 BANDAI ENTERTAINMENT
60 MINUTES•ENGLISH SUBBED
★★★★1/2 ACTION/DRAMA

Twenty-two of 25 episodes in, and we're close to the end of what has been remarkable boy's fiction. Like any good adventure, *Bebop*'s set itself as a series of stories within a universe that should never end, even though the best fairy tales often do. I imagine most of the important stories have been told by this point, though. We know Spike. We know Jet. We're intimately attached to Faye, Ein, and Edward, too. The remainder of this series (most likely until the big-budget *Bebop* movie), will likely be a quilt of quieter character moments, adding the final swaths of color to a boyish fantasy of violence and morality that continue to make these wacky characters as familiar as they are ageless.

Leave it to director Shinichiro Watanabe to not only begin the end of this series with style, but have a bit of fun with the damn thing along the way.

Case in point: there are two standout episodes in volumes 10 & 11. Episode 22's *Cowboy Funk* spoofs the industrial bomber motif, as a madman with an agenda wants to destroy large buildings in order to validate his self-importance. Unfortunately, Spike and the newly introduced Cowboy (a Spike imitation that shares both his look and goofier character traits) are far too concerned with besting each other than pursuing their bounty. Like no episode before it (each episode is stylistically different from the previous), Cowboy Funk turns out a fair dose of slapstick that's as effective in showing off the jazz-like versatility of the *Bebop* style as Mushroom Samba showed skill in irreverence. Both funny and poignant, madcap and solemn, *Cowboy Funk* slaps uptight viewers with enough levity that they can't help but laugh at the genius of it. Writers carefully plant characterization seeds between the laughs, making this throwaway episode mandatory viewing. Poking fun at impervious Spike's insecurities makes him a richer character; this episode of *Bebop*, guilty, but smart, fun.

The episode of choice, however, goes hands down to the sinister Pierrot La Fou. Following formula, the easiest measure of good heroics is a healthy dose of credible villainy. While Spike's always had his rival in Vicious, so talented are the string pullers behind the *Bebop* drama that they're capable of creating a rogues gallery of foes, if only to last a single episode, serving the sole function of solidifying Spike's superhero status.

Taking visual chances not seen since the earliest volumes of *Bebop*, Pierrot La Fou tosses impressive camera work, moody pacing, and a sinister theme (a mad assassin who cannot die is hunting Spike) into an almost horror-tinged episode with enough sci-fi elements to bring comparisons to the earlier *Sympathy For The Devil* (ep. #6), but gains respect in its own right.

Still, even as this series closes, *Bebop* is the absolute finest wine on the market. For newbies, I'd recommend starting your journey at the magnificent first tape, but *Bebop* is so well written, in tightly contained story arcs, that this is as good a place to start as any. **GR**







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OUTLAW STAR VOL. 13

REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•2000 BANDAI ENTERTAINMENT
60 MINUTES•ENGLISH DUBBED
★★★★★ ACTION/ADVENTURE



Space odysseys: when a good one comes along it can consume you, and at the bittersweet end all you can hope for is a respectable ending and some semblance of closure. *Outlaw Star* delivers both. Twenty-five episodes ago, Hilda, a notorious Outlaw, liberated Melfina, a bio-android of infinite importance. Commissioned by pirates to navigate the Outlaw Star to the Galactic Leyline, in search of its ultimate power and riches beyond the imagination, Melfina became the pawn in a game that would ultimately determine the future of mankind. Hilda enlisted the aid of Gene Starwind, a bounty hunter and skilled grappler pilot haunted by visions of his father's murder in space, and Jim Hawkins, an ace hacker following in his father's footsteps, to get herself and Melfina out of their home port, Blue Heaven, and out to the asteroid where the Outlaw Star was hidden. Long story very short: pirates took chase and the MacDougall Bros. joined the pursuit; Hilda dies; a Ctarl Ctarl security officer, Aisha, joins the crew; Gene's rich gay friend, Fred, is targeted for assassination; Gene helps; and the assassin "Twilight" Suzuka ends up becoming the fifth crew member.

In the meantime, space travel isn't cheap, and the Galactic Leyline is at the end of the known universe, so we get to sit back and watch all of these characters develop as they work (literally) their way closer and closer to the answers they are all seeking. And that's what I love so much about this series: it stands as the pinnacle of character development for an animated TV series. It has its own commerce, checks and balances, and enough backstory to fill volumes of DVDs. We go on countless adventures with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 124 ▸

SHAMANIC PRINCESS VOL. 3

REVIEWED BY CHRISTINA ALEXANDER
•2000 U.S. MANGA CORPS
60 MINUTES•ENGLISH SUBBED
★★★★ ACTION/ADVENTURE



Shamanic Princess continues to impress with its beautiful storytelling and incredible art. This volume of *Shamanic Princess* takes us back to the days when Tiara was still in training. Back before she went after Kagetsu and the Throne of Yord. Back when she had a different partner. The first test Tiara must undergo is the summoning of her first partner. Her chosen partner is dragged, disoriented and fearful, from his own world and into hers. Tiara's own strong power and her new partner's fear give her much difficulty during this process. Graham becomes a powerful partner for Tiara and would give his life to protect her, but things start to deteriorate when Tiara's interest in Kagetsu grows. Graham sees Kagetsu as a threat to his mistress, and to make matters worse, there are things going horribly wrong with Kagetsu's sister, Sara, and her own set of magic trials. *Shamanic Princess* is one of those few anime where the viewer can actually start to care about the characters. Since the line between who is doing the right thing and who is doing the wrong thing often gets blurred, the viewer is forced to re-evaluate the reasons why they are so fond of or not so fond of a certain character. With Atsuko Ishida's penchant for beauty through asymmetry, the wonderful character designs are often just as disturbing as they are beautiful. The story, while sometimes confusing, holds itself together well and somehow gets away without telling the viewer everything. GR



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'Behind the Battle'

Akira travels with his newfound friends to New Las Vegas, which turns into more than they bargained for. Sarah is kidnapped during a high-speed car race and Jacky must fight for his life on the racetrack. All of them are now caught in an intricate tale of daring rescues, violent battles, hidden pasts, and seemingly dark futures. Sarah must deal with the mysterious Kage-maru and boiling a romance evolves. Once again, they must face the dreaded Koenkan in a fight for both Pai and Sarah's freedom.

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SIN: THE MOVIE

REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•2000 ADVFILMS
60 MINUTES•ENGLISH DUBBED
★★★★★ ACTION/DRAMA



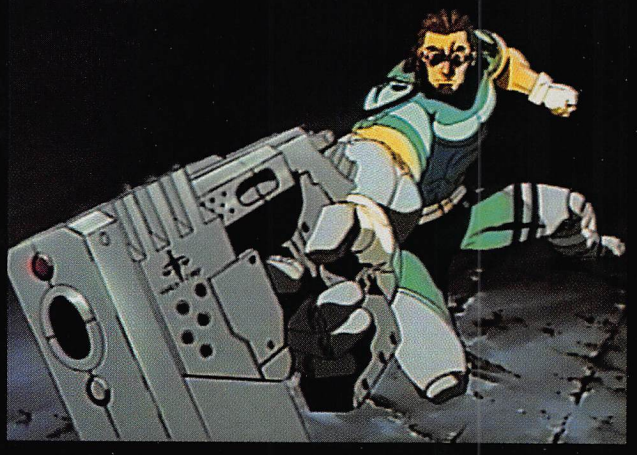


How do you top a year that included the culmination of *Evangelion*, the birth of a new *Bubblegum Crisis* and the introduction of *Spriggan*? If you're ADV films, it's simple: co-produce and develop the best game-related anime ever devised with the animation studio that brought us *Ninja Resurrection*.

As *Sin* opens, Colonel John Blade of the elite police strike force HardCorps. stands over the grave of his best friend, JC. As the funeral ceremony commences, we flash back as John relives the untimely demise of his friend and comrade. En route to the crime scene, the production glistens with fine details, ingenious vehicle designs, and excellent editing. While attempting to rescue a young child, JC is attacked by a genetic mutation that begins fusing with his own body. As JC begins to twist and mutate in to a hideous blob, he throws the young girl to John as the last shred of his true self is overcome by the transformation. John raises his gun and fires at what is left of his friend, and just before the bullet explodes his face, the moment is frozen in time just long enough for us to glimpse JC's final expression—one of relief and sadness before dying. I knew right there that the first fusion of American storytelling and Japanese animation was going to be a hit.

On the threshold of making a better human, Siro Sinclair was asked to halt his genetic experimentation. When he refused, the powers that be had his wife brutally murdered. Riddled with grief, Sinclair killed himself, but not before his latest test-tube baby, Elise, was integrated into society. They forgot about daddy's little girl too, and now years later, Alexis Sinclair has completed her father's research and given rise to a veritable mutation nation behind the corporate auspices of SinTEK. Her motto: "It's taking us longer than seven days, but we're working on it." Once she gets her "sister" Elise, the girl JC saved and the key to worldwide mutation, out of police custody, it's all over but the cryin'.

It wasn't so long ago that Blade himself almost met his maker, standing beside his father when Alexis had him gunned down. John's father, not unlike John, became frustrated with the red tape that ensnarled justice in Freeport City, and turned to the mafia to launch his own investigation into SinTEK. When he discovered the one way to stop Sinclair, he was killed for it and John was wounded so seriously that he

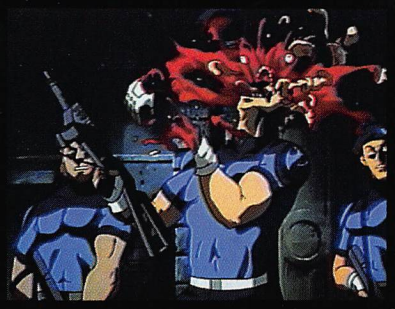










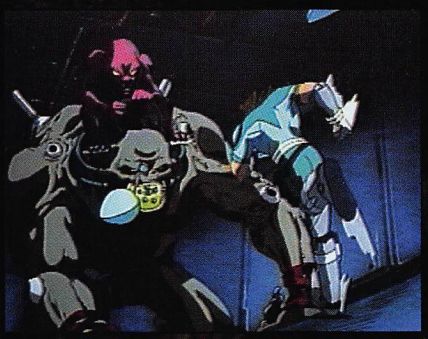


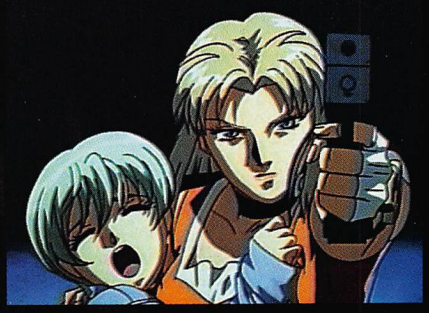
sin the movie

the movie

had to undergo extensive cybernetic reconstruction to survive. Now, with JC's sister (a USSF agent) by his side, and the secrets his father left behind, John Blade is out for double payback, and he's got nothing to lose.

Executed with great animation, exceptional integration of CG, superb voice talent, a truly inspired soundtrack and excellent production all around, from the credits to the box art, it would be a sin for any animation fan to miss *Sin*. **GR**









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CUSTOMIZE

SOME REALLY COOL TOYS



SILENT SCREAMERS

Aztech Toyz' first foray into the ever-burgeoning action-figure market, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari Series 1 (developed by Art Asylum) are here, and they are some of, if not the, most incredible action figures ever assembled. From the left: Cesare the Sleepwalker, Knock Renfield The Madman, Graf Orlock The Undead, and Dr. Caligari The Hypnotist; each comes with an exquisite diorama and a film cell collectors card. Cesare even comes with a dead chick...eeewww.

MAX STEEL

Mattel's insanely detailed Max Steel action figure line has been out for awhile, but now that the Dreamcast game is upon us, it's time to take another look. The sheer magnitude of this line is staggering. From the car to Max' mountain bike—which is so detailed a tiny person could probably ride it—it's a nanotech smorgasbord! Check out the CGI show on the Kids WB too.



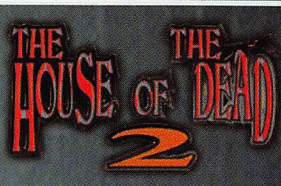


SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Toy Island's talking 9-inch Sonic and Knuckles are in stores now. And while they may not sound exactly like themselves, they sure look good. Each has articulated head, arms and legs, and the stand is included. You can find TI's entire Sonic Adventure lineup at Toys 'R' Us and larger toy retailers.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD



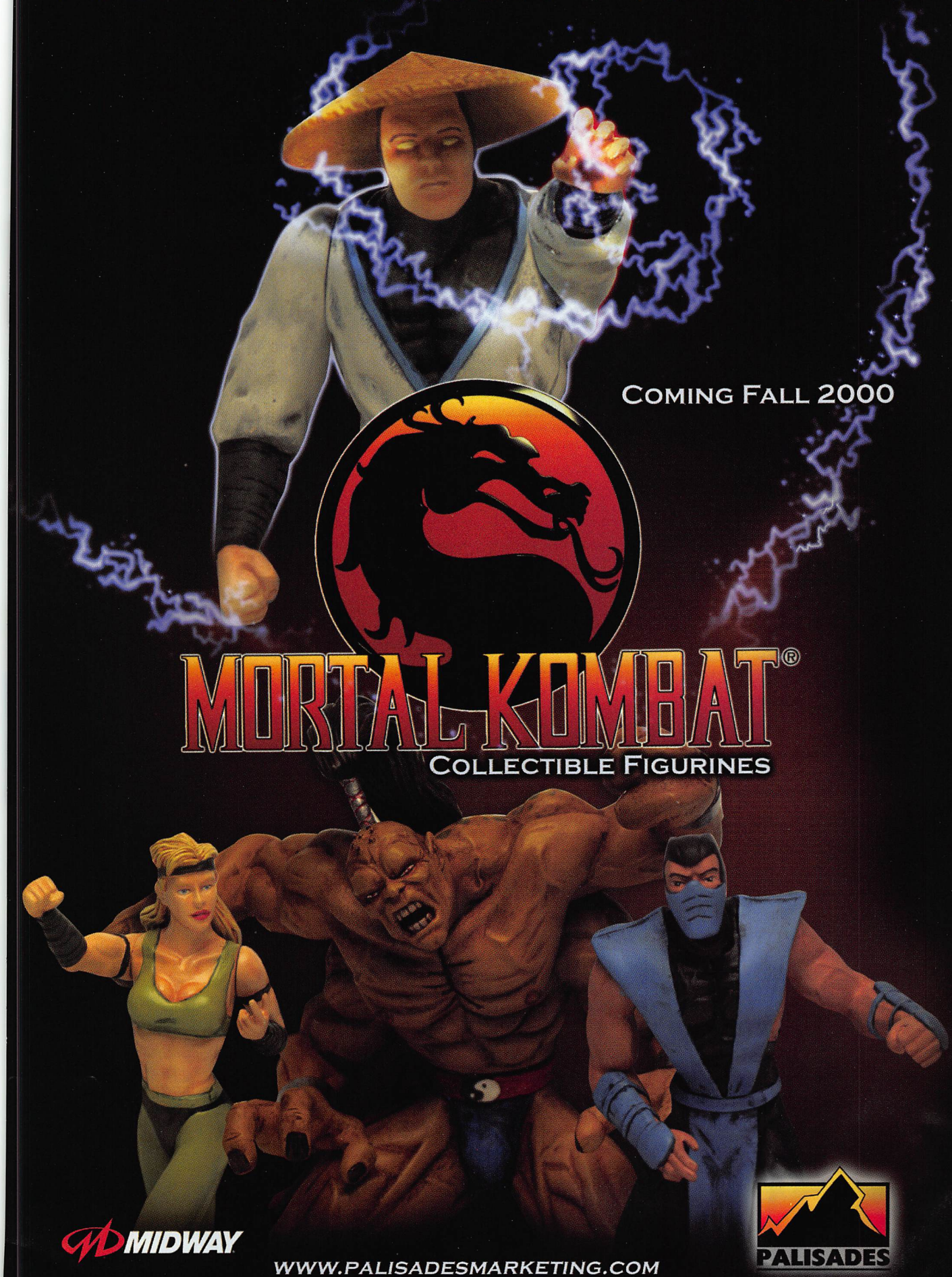


Palisades' latest is based on Sega's The House of the Dead 2 franchise, and judging from these amazing sculpts, game-related action figures are once again your friend.

From the left, the Ken, Johnny, Strength, and Heirophant (shown with his pet fish) should be slithering onto store shelves about the time you read this, and each comes with its vid-game counterpart.



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• Sony XBR400 & STRDA777

Sony • www.sony.com • Retail: $1500–$2400

Desirability: ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●





With the release of the PS2 just around the corner, the need for a high-quality display and receiver has become more important than ever. The system's ability to playback both DVD software with Dolby Digital and DTS sound and amazing-looking games absolutely requires a no-compromise monitor and receiver, and that's exactly what Sony has delivered with their latest Wegas, the XBR400 series and their STR-DA777ES receiver. For starters, the displays (available in both 32" and 36" sizes) boast two component video inputs, allowing players to extract every last morsel of detail from the PS2 video circuitry. Better than even S-Video, component splits the video signal into three isolated carriers, delivering what is for all intents and purposes a pure RGB image. And to enhance movie watching, the XBR400s also feature a 16x9 enhanced mode, which digitally expands the vertically compressed, anamorphic signal from a widescreen film and displays it with a full 480 scan lines. Most sets will simply "throw away" up to 30-percent of the image detail in letterbox mode. And if this wasn't enough, Sony's latest flat screens are also 1080i compatible, which allows them, with an outboard receiver, to display High Definition television signals with full resolution. These stunning displays will show you video games and movies as you've never seen them before, and are worth every penny of their slightly steep price.



As for the receiver, it is part of Sony's upper crust ES line, and it features five channels of amplification at 120 watts each, along with a dedicated 24-bit processor to decode Dolby Digital and DTS signals. An anti-resonant frame keeps vibration out of the sound signal for that last ounce of audio purity, while the two-way remote keeps you abreast of the unit's functions. Again, it may be expensive, but the PS2 deserves it.

GRGEAR

BY MIKE HOBBS

• Palm M100

sony • www.palm.com • Retail: $149

Desirability: ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Responding to the runaway success of Handspring's Palm clone, the Visor, Palm has released their own low cost PDA designed for first-time and light users. The Palm m100 features a small, rounded case, the face of which can be snapped off and replaced by an assortment of trendy colored shells. The unit ships with 2Mb of RAM, capable of storing hundreds of addresses, memos, and e-mails, and AvantGo's Web Channel manager, allowing you to view miniature web pages on the go. And of course, the intuitive Grafitti handwriting recognition makes it amazingly easy to input data. By drawing simple, slightly stylized versions of the letters and numbers in the writing area below the screen, you can jot down notes or phone numbers as quickly as using pen and paper...with a little practice.



• Technics DVD-A10N

Technics • www.panasonic.com • Retail: $1200

Desirability: ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

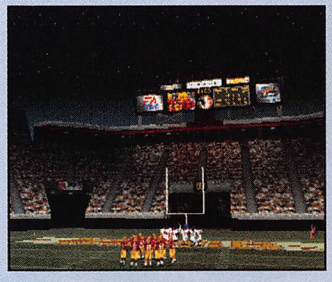
The compact disc's time has finally come. After two decades of valiant service, it is finally set to be eclipsed by a wholly superior mainstream format, DVD-Audio. Unlike Sony's audiophile-geared Super Audio CD, which is currently limited to two amazing-sounding channels, DVD Audio will allow artists to record in full, multi-channel sound at 96kHz, more than double the resolution of CD. And in two-channel mode, DVD-A will support an astonishing 192kHz. And contrary to what you may think of the quality of CD audio, there is a huge difference in DVD-A's favor, sounding almost live in its immediacy, though you do need a decent amp and set of speakers to hear this difference. Two current downsides are that you need a new player capable of reading the DVD-Audio discs (like the Technics DVD-A10N, just released), and it's going to be a long while before any decent library of titles is available. But this is the future of recorded audio.



NCAA FOOTBALL 2001

The following codes are inputted at the Secret Codes option. There are two ways to access the secret codes option. From the main menu, select Game Settings and then go to Secret Codes. During a game, press Start to pause then go to the Game Setup option then select Secret Codes. Press the Select button to access the code screen. If entered correctly, you will see the code in the list and can toggle it on or off at your discretion.

SCHIZOPHRENIC SUN
To make the sun keep rising and falling throughout the game, enter: DAYNIGHT



WHAT'S TODAY'S DATE?
To be able to trick the programming's date function for strategic purposes in some of the gameplay modes, enter: Y2K

WHERE IN THE HELL'S DOLGEVILLE?!
To be able to access any of the stadiums, enter: OPENSESAME

YOU BIG SHOWOFF
The following celebrations can be performed after scoring a touchdown. You must press the button immediately after scoring. You may be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty...but who cares. A quick way to check all these out is to go to Situation mode and set yourself up on the opponent's one yard line, score, quit and do it again.
Spin the ball = R1
Spike the ball = Circle
Take a bow = X
Flex for the ladies = Square
Do a back flip = Triangle



MY WHAT GREAT HANDS YOU HAVE
To make it so that your receiver always catches the ball, enter: HANDSOFGLUE

GRAB THEIR BALLS
To make it so that the defense always intercepts a pass, enter: OSKIE

CHACHING$$$
When playing in the Season/Dynasty mode, to obtain the maximum recruiting points, enter: HEADCOACH

EAT YOUR WHEATIES
To play with a stronger team, enter: BULLDOZER

NCAA Gamebreaker 2001

To use the following codes, select the CUSTOMIZE option from the Main Menu and then select the EASTER EGGS option and then ADD ENTRY. When inputting the codes, use the large capital letters unless indicated otherwise below.

THIS IS OUR YEAR!
To make a Season team stronger using the Simulation control style, enter: POWERHOUSE

WAIT, DIDN'T WE DO THIS LAST YEAR?
To revert all of the Season mode teams to their 1999 capabilities, enter: HAMMER

IT'S ALIVE...IT'S ALIVE!
To enable the ability to create a superhuman player in the Create Walk-On mode, enter: FRANKENSTEIN



I LOVE TAKASHI HOORAMA'S WORK
To instantly view a scroll of all of the credits of who made the game, enter: HOLLYWOOD

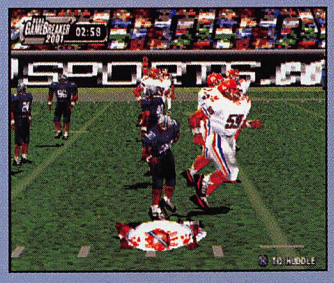
WE'VE GOT FAT CHECKBOOKS
To be able to get all of the recruits you wanted in the Blue Chip Recruiting option, (using the smaller letters) enter: MOTIVATE

WELL, SHE WAS PASSED OUT
To make your team's passing game great, enter: GO DEEP

RUN, FOREST, RUN
To make your team's running game great, enter: REAL ESTATE

LET'S GET PHYSICAL
To make your team's blocking and tackling great, enter: PHYSICAL

NOW DOES THIS SEEM FAIR?!
To make one team huge and one team small, (use the smaller letters for the last eight letters) enter: BIGandSMALL



Test Drive LeMans

The following codes are inputted in the section where you enter a name.

ALTERNATE OPENING, enter: JACKPOT

ALL CARS AND TRACKS, enter: TATOO

1999 AUDI R8R PROTOTYPE, enter: MAYOU. A race will start instantly. Complete it to own that car.

1999 TOYOTA GT1, enter: PINOU. A race will start instantly. Complete it to own that car.

1999 BMW PROTOTYPE, enter: POHLIN. A race will start instantly. Complete it to own that car.

QUICK VICTORY, enter: FIRSTON

BEACH BUGGY CARS, enter: BIGGY1, BIGGY2, BIGGY3, BIGGY4, BIGGY5, BIGGY6, BIGGY7 or BIGGY8

HOT DOG CAR AND FAST FOOD RACE, enter: HOTDOG

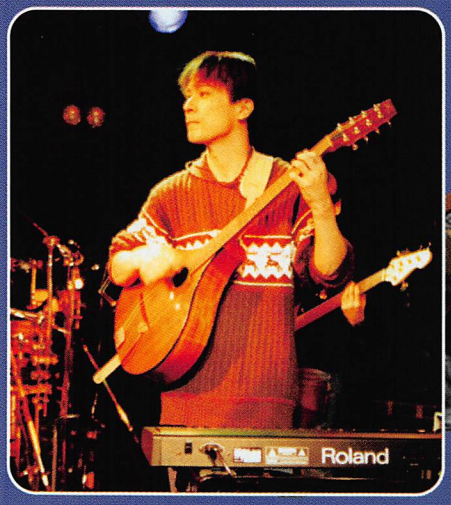
CHEESE CAR AND FAST FOOD RACE, enter: FROMAGE

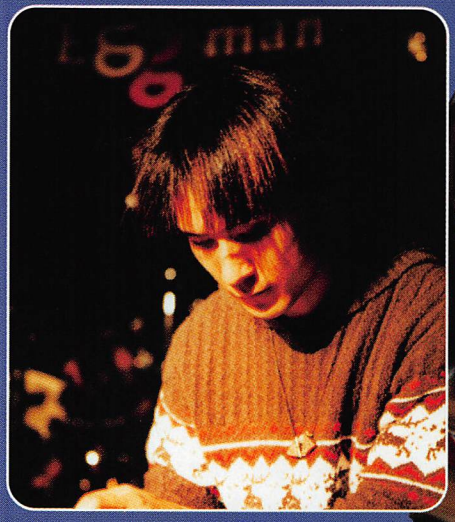
PIE CAR AND FAST FOOD RACE, enter: PIE

PIZZA CAR AND FAST FOOD RACE, enter: PIZZA

GAMERS' REPUBLIC INTERVIEWS

YASUNORI MITSUDA







CHRONO CROSS MUSIC

Chrono Cross is one of the best games this year, a phenomenal sequel to the SNES classic Chrono Trigger. Much praise has been given to Chrono Cross' beautiful images and exceptional story and gameplay, but just as important to the game's effect is the marvelous musical composition. Some of the pieces flowing through the game evoke genuine moments of emotion, giving greater strength to the wonder onscreen. All praise must go to Yasunori Mitsuda, the musical composer of one of the great video-game soundtracks.

Gamers' Republic: Are you excited about creating music for the PS2? Will you change the way you write music, being able to compose on DVD format?
Yasunori Mitsuda: Well, I am not as excited trying to create music for PS2 as much as I was during the platform shift from SNES to PS. I rather feel that interesting planning itself is more important. Anyway, I guess I will try more live-recorded music rather than MIDI sequenced music using DVD capability of PS2. It would give a more natural sound.

GR: How did you get started writing music? Was it always your desire to be a musician?
YM: When I was in 9th grade, a music contest was held, and the prize for the winner was $10,000. I applied for the contest because I realized it was a better way to earn more money, rather than doing a part-time job every day. Of course, I failed in the contest flatly since it was the first time I wrote music. Although I felt that writing music was interesting at that time, I didn't think that I would write music for a living. The first time I hoped to be a music writer was when I watched a railroad-worker movie called *Popoya*. At that time, I was in 12th grade, and thought, I wish I could write music like that.

GR: How do you prepare to write a piece? What inspirations do you draw from?
YM: Well, I can't write any music without theme. To write game music, inspirations are scenario, movies, image illustrations, etc. In the case of Chrono Cross, I drew inspirations from characters' lines.

GR: The music in Chrono Cross is so beautiful. Do you think Chrono Cross is your best work? Is there anything you wish you had done differently?
YM: I always feel that this is the best work after each work is done so that when I completed Chrono Cross, I honestly thought, This is my best work! But, I always have a little discontent with all of my works. It is okay since I get to the next step by reflecting on these discontents [laughs]. In other words, it is impossible to fix them after release.

GR: What kind of music do you listen to yourself?
YM: Well, I listen to world music mostly, but also punk music, British rock, minimum music, and contemporary music. I haven't listened to jazz these days...why is that?

GR: Would you ever consider writing music for orchestration to make it a richer, fuller sound, especially since the PS2 has no limits for its audio capabilities?
YM: I don't think that orchestration is the only way to make richer sound. Since I compose music to match with a world view or story of the game, if orchestration matches the game best, I will do it.

GR: How important do you feel music is to the impact of a game?
YM: Of course, it is very important. There are only few game companies that understand the real importance of sound and music. I feel sad that game music is valued by how much the game sells rather than music quality itself. I feel Japanese culture level is low. On the other hand, it is fun surfing overseas personal web sites since they indicate precisely which part of a game is fun or not. I feel that American and European gamers understand the importance of game music more.

GR: Do you play any of your own instruments?
YM: Although I am not good at performance, I likely to play piano, guitar, bass, percussion and bouzouki.

GR: Do you draw influences from any one type of music?
YM: I'm not influenced by any one type of music. I think that many composers influence me.

GR: Did you approach writing music for Chrono Cross any differently than you did for Chrono Trigger?
YM: Yes, I did mean for there to be a difference in music genre. But, I composed music with the same worldview taste. Also, I linked the two titles and Radical Trad in Radical Dreamers, which is not sold as a game.

GR: What do you try to achieve when writing music? Do you think of what kind of emotions you want the player to experience?
YM: I work without thinking any achievement. I just let my emotions do it all [laughs]. I want the player to feel nostalgic, the same as I feel when I watch Japanese movies. I wish to make music that the players remember for a long time, even after they finished the game.

GR: How long does it take you to write a song? How does the process unfold?
YM: It depends on the kind of tune. Sometimes, I write one or two songs within a day; sometimes, it takes a week. On the average, I will take two days. In the case of using internal sound with sound chips, there are steps added such as selecting the sound source and mixing, so that the total time is four days. Well, I am a slow composer...it's my homework [laughs]!

- Brady Fiechter



Audiophiles
What GR is listening to this month

D Halverson	B Fiechter	M Hobbs	T Stratton	Pooch
1. **U.P.O.** *debut*	1. **MADONNA** *music*	1. **MADONNA** *music*	1. **MR. OIZO** *analog worms attack*	1. **THE PHARCYDE** *frontlines*
2. **SCORPIONS** *moment of glory*	2. **BJORK** *homogenic*	2. **PHILIP GLASS** *symphony no.3*	2. **MADONNA** *Bedtime Stories*	2. **NOTHIN BUT HEATT** *don't take it personal*
3. **BT** *movements in still life*	3. **MOBY** *play*	3. **ORBITAL** *middle of nowhere*	3. **BJORK** *debut*	3. **HANDSOME BOY M.S.** *so how's your girl?*
4. **MADONNA** *music*	4. **PERFECT CIRCLE** *mer de noms*	4. **PAUL VAN DYK** *out there and back*	4. **DEL** *wish my brother george...*	4. **THE PHARCYDE** *chapter one*
5. **MOTLEY CRUE** *new tattoo*	5. **INCUBUS** *when incubus attacks*	5. **APHEX TWIN** *windowlicker*	5. **TRIBE CALLED QUEST** *midnight muraders*	5. **STEVIE RAY VAUGHN** *the sky is crying*

N. Lui	S. Thomason	S. Akinnuso	B Elmquist	C Hoffman
1. **MEGUMI HAYASHIBARA** *vintage a*	1. **LUNAR: SSS Complete** *soundtrack*	1. **De La Soul** *Art Official Intelligence*	1. **INCUBUS** *when incubus attacks*	1. **MADONNA** *music*
2. **MAMOTTE SHUGOGETTEN** *extra songs vol. 1*	2. **NOBUO UEMATSU** *final fantasy VI soundtrack*	2. **EMINEM** *Marshall Mathers LP*	2. **SR-71** *now you see inside*	2. **NOBUO UEMITSU** *ff8 piano collections*
3. **LOVE HINA** *"naru, mutsumi,sara"*	3. **NOBUO UEMATSU** *symphonic suite*	3. **BLACKSTAR** *Blackstar*	3. **SOULFLY** *primative*	3. **YASUNORI MITSUDA** *chrono cross ost*
4. **MADONNA** *music*	4. **EMINEM** *marshall mathers LP*	4. **MOS DEF** *Black on Both Sides*	4. **DEATH** *fate*	4. **YASUNORI MITSUDA** *chrono trigger '99 ost*
5. **MAX** *super eurobeat*	5. **VIVALDI** *four seasons*	5. **COMMON** *Like Water For Chocolate*	5. **KORN** *all mixed up*	5. **ORRIZANTE** *soundtrack*

LUCINDA'S SPELL

REVIEW

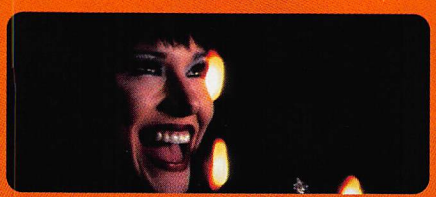
ADV FILMS (www.advfilms.com)
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RATED R
REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON





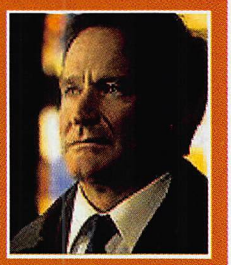
Lucinda's Spell isn't the kind of film you'd expect from anime giant ADV, but since it's one of the few cult films out there that deserves recognition (for adults only), why not? Compared to the recent onslaught of drivel I've exhumed out of Blockbuster lately—like SuperNova (which was more like super slowva), *Erin Brockovich* (hey it's a Steven Segal movie without the ass kicking!), the predictable *Simpatico* (the ultimate cure for insomnia) or, grabbing worst film ever made honors from *Battlefield Earth—Play It to the Bone* (the only bone you get is when you hand over the $3.50 to watch this turd stink up your VCR)—it's a freakin' masterpiece. The driving force behind the film's success is actress Christina Fulton who plays Lucinda, a combination single mother/hooker/witch, with unbridled abandon. Besides her fascinating looks—full lips, magical eyes, and a lanky yet voluptuous frame—she's an exceptional actress. Without just the right amount of pity and sympathy towards Lucinda, the film simply wouldn't work, but she pulls it off like she was born into it.

The story revolves around Jason, or as the Druids call him, The First Horn. A direct descendant of Merlin, on The Eve of the Beltane, he must find a woman pure and magical and conceive a child to carry on his powerful bloodline. The contest to become his sacred bride is open to witches only and the rules are quite simple: the witch who casts the most powerful spell will win. The problem is, Beatrice, the bitch queen of the local coven is a shoe-in, and he simply despises her. The sad fact is that his heart belongs to a prostitute he made love to years before at Mardi-Gras, whom he knows only as Necessity. If you guessed that the prostitute in question was Lucinda, you win the prize, but the plot thickens. As the result of their union, Lucinda had a baby. But because of her status at the time (a poor hooker) she decided it best to put him into an orphanage. A choice she now regrets, she'll do anything to get him back.

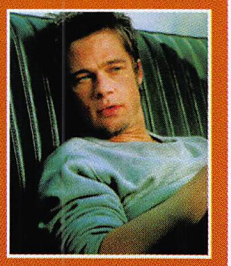


So we know that Jason already has a love, and a son, as does Lucinda, but the problem is, Jason is still in the dark. The tension mounts when Beatrice casts a spell on Lucinda so that whenever Jason looks at her he sees a hideous rope scar running the entire length of her face, making any interaction between the two doubtful at best. Lucinda's only hope is to cook up the spell of her lifetime, unless Jason finds her and his son first. But that won't be easy; Beatrice is just getting started. Written and directed by Jon Jacobs (who also plays Jason), *Lucinda's Spell* is set among the magical backdrop of New Orleans and has all of the trappings of a big Hollywood production without all of the reservations. This spell is definitely not for the kids, but if you've had it up to here with the predictable slop Hollywood has been dishing out way too much these days, why not live a little dangerously and have a look.

THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR



George Lucas and friends have just completed their stint at Fox Studios Australia, finishing the first portion of *Star Wars: Episode II*'s principal photography. The nine-week shoot culminated on August 25th in Sydney, and now cast and crew will travel to Italy for the second leg of principal photography. Scheduled for release in 2002, George is leaving himself quite a post-production window, leading to speculation that there will actually be two versions of the film, one with Jar Jar Binks for Lucas and his kids, and one without for everyone else.



After the raping of the *Batman* franchise by that no-talent hack Joel Schumacher, Warner Bros. may be desperate for a dose of credibility to bring their money printing machine back on its feet. To that end, they have been in talks with director Darren Aronofsky, the auteur behind the intense, mathematical thriller, *Pi*. And Aronofsky, who has said that he wants to "bring an independent guerilla flavor to Batman," has been talking to Brad Pitt about taking over the codpiece.

Being Norman Osborne? According to his own representatives, actor John Malkovich is in talks with Sam Raimi concerning the part of the Green Goblin/Norman Osborne in the upcoming *Spider-Man* flick. Could be great, but can you picture John Malkovich green? Neither can we.



Question Robin Williams' recent acting choices as much as you like, but he's just landed a plum role. The follicly-blessed actor has just been cast as the narrator in Steven Spielberg's interpretation of Stanley Kubrick's unfinished *A.I.* project which spins the tale of a small robot child (played by Haley Joel Osment) that becomes self aware. Whether Williams' narrator is a character in the film or just an omniscient voice is not yet known.








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a I am writing this letter specifically for those gamers who are 18 and over!
There is some serious danger coming this November to the video game community! As most of us probably know, it was recently announced that Al Gore has selected Sen. J. Lieberman as Democratic candidate for VP. This spells trouble for all gamers should they be elected. Between Mr. Lieberman and Mrs. Tipper Gore, it can be guaranteed that they will do all they can to end video games (as well as other forms of entertainment) as we know it! Now, I'm not telling you who to vote for this fall! What I am trying to do is to inform you and convince you to make sure you vote for the right reasons. Lieberman is already being hailed by the press for being the first Jewish candidate. I hope that this does not influence your votes (either way) and that you take a look at the issues to decide on your selection. Remember this, when it comes down to it, censorship IS illegal! It is against the Constitution. We have the right to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of choice! Just the same, we have the right to turn away if we see something that offends us. When you cast your vote this November, think about this, and make the right choice! Also, our community needs voices! We need to start writing letters to congressmen about our defense! Write one letter and mass mail it to as many politicians as you can! The more we speak out, the more we can help to protect our rights and our way of life. Thank you and have a nice day!

Sal Serio

Dear Sal,

Imagine waking up tomorrow and finding out that there won't be a Metal Gear Solid 2 or Resident Evil 4 or Tomb Raider 5 or Final Fantasy X because gamemakers are no longer allowed to explore their imaginations with violent themes and characters that carry weapons. "Yeah, right," you say, "that's never gonna happen." Do you want to even take that chance? In a society so confused that people want to blame Doom for the problems and not face up to the fact that they're too lazy to be good parents and teach their kids the difference between right and wrong, anything's possible. What better time to throw away your apathy and vote?

Dear GR,

Do you think that it's fair to say that Sony (and Toshiba) rushed the PlayStation2 just a bit too much, in order to beat Nintendo and Microsoft to market and to cash in on the PlayStation name vis-a-vis the mainstream consumer (both here and in Japan)?

You and your readers have seen, either first- or second-hand, how excruciatingly tedious and difficult this machine has been so far to program for. So where were the top-notch development kits, the libraries, the "middleware" software goodies to help get the ball rolling?

I've got a hint: Ken Kutaragi, Kazuo Harai, and Phil Harrison "whistle louder when they've got nothing." Too bad sheer hype won't get the games home on time. I just am hoping this whole PS2 deal doesn't sour too many new consumers to the expanding video-game market.

<----sound of muffled explosion/gold dust flying everywhere---->

Dear Anonymous,

OK, so we haven't played any Xbox or Gamecube games, and maybe these systems will be markedly better than the PlayStation 2, but let's get one thing clear: Sony has designed a powerful piece of gaming hardware. Whatever its flaws may be, many of the recent games we've played are huge leaps ahead of what you've been playing these past five years. It's gonna take a while before the PS2 development is fully accepted by the development community and properly supported by programming tools; by then, who knows what the gaming will be. Maybe you'll be loving Mario so much that you'll forget Sony ever entered the market in the first place.

Dear G.R.,

You're right, it is mind-boggling that so many PlayStation2 units have been pre-ordered. Do you think that the DVD movie capability is a driving force behind this here in North America as it was in Japan?

Oh, just an aside: Klonoa for Dreamcast would be fine, but how about Splatterhouse? For those who can't get enough of that sort of thing, of course. And (of course) it would have to be massively updated...

And it is strange enough how Ronald Reagan, whom you mention in this latest Fallout, was so vilified by so many for so many years (sometimes rightfully so, one must add), yet is now roundly pitied for his advanced Alzheimer's predicament. I guess I pity him, too; man does that ever feel unexpected.

DW

Dear DW,

If Splatterhouse gets a sequel, hopefully there will be enough splatter and guts and guns to boil Senator Lieberman's blood. And if the game is on PS2, make sure to continue to feed your rage with a good dose of violence and gore by popping in *Seven* or *Braveheart*. Before you snap, listen to Eminem a bit on your new CD player. Won't the PS2 be the coolest system ever? That DVD technology will allow us to become efficient cancers of society in no time. Everyone's gonna want one. When Senator Lieberman loses in November, maybe we'll send him a system as a consolation prize.

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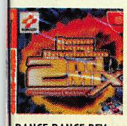
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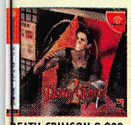
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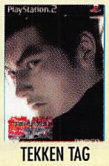
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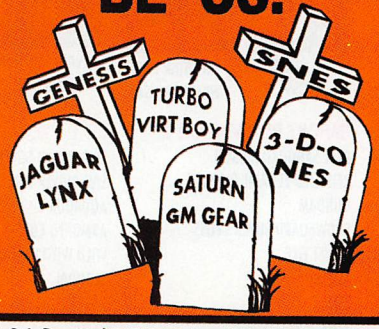
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▸ *CAPCOM VS. SNK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38*

current fighting games. In a way, I think the game is good for those who think the current games are too complicated and, most of all, I give credit to the game for helping gamers remember the origin of fighting games."

Although Capcom vs. SNK probably won't redefine the genre, fans who've always wanted to see the world's greatest fighting characters battle it out should be in heaven. **GR**

▸ *OUTLAW STAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 106*

crew of the *Outaw Star,* and all the while the stage is set for many more. Around episode 20, miles of tape begin to culminate, leading up to a seriously satisfying conclusion. In fact, this is the best ending I've seen for a made-for-TV anime series. All of our questions are answered. Who or what is Melfina and what does her future hold, if she even has one? What were the real circumstances behind Gene's father's death? Why has Suzuka not only stayed on all of this time, but not killed Gene? Can Gene and Jim's partnership endure, given Gene's propensity for chaos? Why has Aisha come so far? And what's the deal with Harry McDougal? Most importantly, though, we discover what the Galactic Leyline is, and that payoff is abundant. Investing in a 13-tape series (an expensive venture), you pray for suitable closure, and *Outlaw Star* goes beyond the call of duty. There's even a little bone after the final credits role, so keep your digits off the rewind button til the very end. There's more to this fond farewell than Gene's new hair cut.

With the creation of the Munchausen Drive and space travel faster than the speed of light, humanity set out to explore the deep reaches of outer space and a new frontier era was born. The colonization of the galaxy, however, is not immune to man's inherent appetite for corruption, and soon pirates are reborn in space. Standing against them are the Special Forces, and somewhere between the two—in support of neither—Outlaws became the galaxy's new purveyors of freedom. **GR**

▸ *BUZZ LIGHTYEAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40*

visually they deliver a good cartoon ambience. Buzz's home planet is a world apart from his digs in Toy Story - soaked in bright hues and retro space alien architecture. The game offers up plenty of extras like Buzz' jet board, rocket cycle, and jetpack, and although Tim Allen doesn't lend his voice talent, the stand-in does a respectable job. Look for the review in the November GR. **GR**

▸ *SMUGGLER'S RUN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65*

The game's AI is set pretty difficult, but no one ever said smuggling illicit items was easy. So you need to dial in your corrupt driving skills and outsmart your enemy, whether it be a rival group of desperados or law-flexing coppers. The elevation in difficulty, however, is gradual to keep you from becoming the catch of the day for the cops too early in the game.

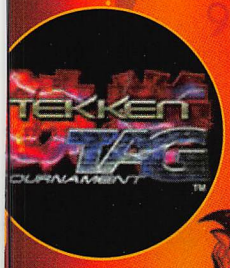
The graphics and sound are just as impressive as the engine pushing the entire operation, but the most distinguished element is the layout of the missions. Having the enormous environments is great, but without the careful placement of the objectives, it would be for nothing. And it's here where the game is fitted with a silver lining. Pushing you to explore spots all over the map and keeping it fresh and exciting couldn't have been an easy task, yet it all feels very natural and ideal.

I didn't even touch upon the two-player modes, which add a whole new dimension and lets your friends experience your joy, instead of inviting them over to just watch you do all these cool things in the game. If there was ever a new franchise to look out for, it's Smuggler's Run. **GR**

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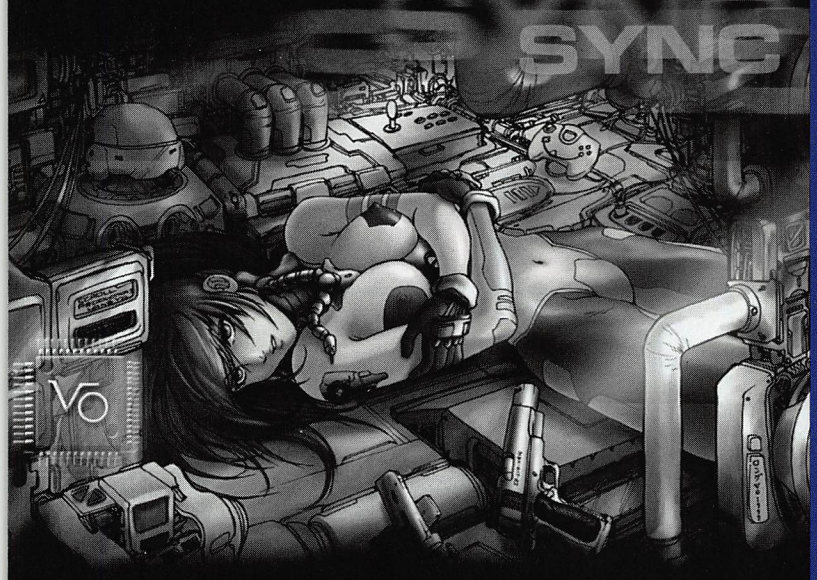


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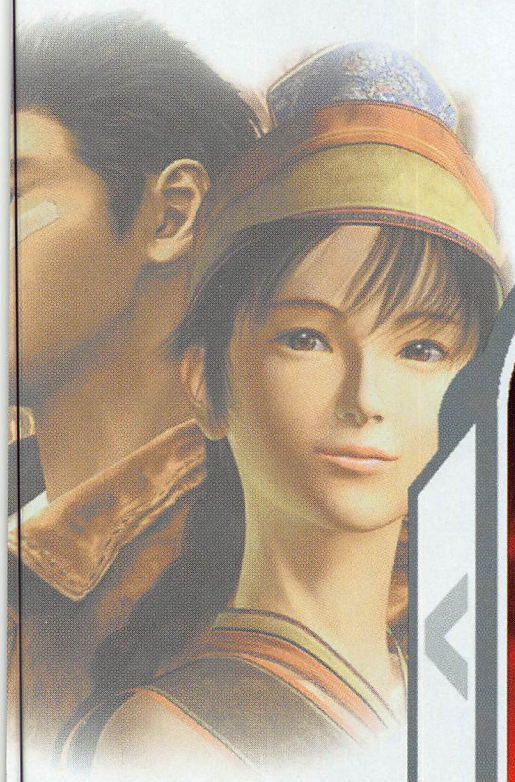
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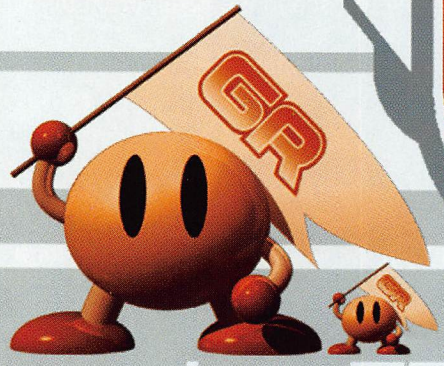
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SHENMUE







November 2000

Yu Suzuki's multimillion dollar labor of love will be reviewed by GR next month. Can Suzuki-san's epic survive the trials of localization? From what we've seen and heard thus far, its chances are good. We'll also look at the U.S. version of Sega's Jet Grind Radio, the game that has been earmarked for the October 26 showdown against the PS2. Same with Nintendo's latest Zelda title, Majora's Mask, also set to stave off the PS2 on launch day. And, finally, the September Tokyo Game Show is sure to show us the future of PS2 games, and you'll find the best coverage anywhere next month in GR. Don't miss it.

issue # 30 number thirty



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Your mettle will be tested as you face tormenting decisions involving powerful issues of love, death and revenge. Destiny hinges on your choices, and your ability to recruit and train the souls of fallen warriors for a war between the gods.

Heed the call. And find out why death is only the beginning.











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The battle begins when life ends.



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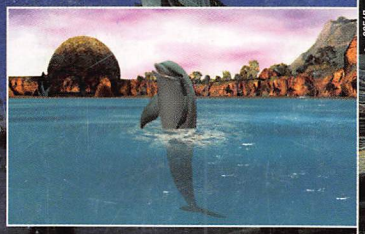
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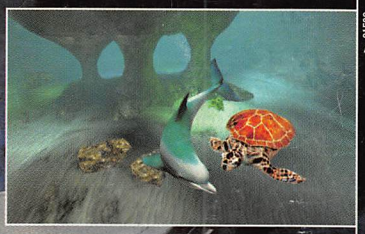
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Animated Violence
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes

You'll need skill, endurance and a reliable blowhole.







ecco
THE DOLPHIN
DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE

Appaloosa Interactive

Sega Dreamcast
IT'S THINKING

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Stay away from jellyfish. Remember to come up for air. Don't eat bad fish. Or you could die. Of course, a shark could kill you too. On top of all that, the ocean's in a downward spiral and it's up to you to save it. Tough job, but you'll figure it out. You're the chosen one. The big fish (although you're not a fish). Too bad you can't even count on Greenpeace. The weight of the ocean rests on your dorsal fin.

E EVERYONE
Animated Blood
ESRB