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03

Tom Clancy's

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS

Definitive verdict of Sam Fisher's PSP-exclusive sneak-'em-up!

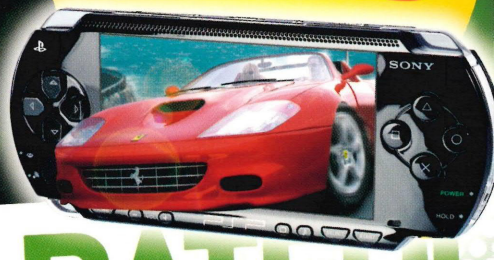
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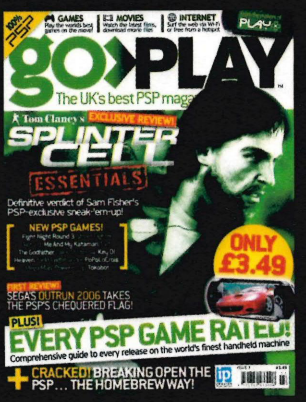
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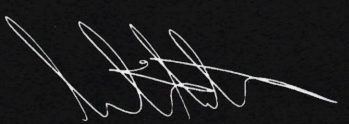




IT WOULD APPEAR that the ball, she is a-rollin'. The PSP's been out for just over six months and, where just a few months ago there was a void of quality titles beyond the initial launch line-up, now we're finding it rather hard to move for 'the good stuff'. And it's not even that we're being given miniaturised versions of great PS2 games; **no, developers have finally woken up and started giving the PSP the love and attention that it deserves**, with games like *Me And My Katamari*, *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* and *Splinter Cell: Essentials* all proving what the handheld can do. The wealth of movies available is now phenomenal too, with something for literally everyone.

Not surprisingly, we say 'yay' to this, if only because it gives us even more of a reason to take our little box of tricks with us wherever we go, **having quick games on the bus and asking total strangers if they fancy going 'ad-hoc' with us**. You'd be surprised how many people give us funny looks after that sort of suggestion.

Things can only get better and rest assured we'll be here to tell you what's hot and what's not in the brand new, exciting world of PSP.



Martin Mathers, Editor

BIG THIS MONTH

[06] COVER STORY SPLINTER CELL: ESSENTIALS
An exclusive review of Sam Fisher's latest adventure? Stealthy!

[34] FEATURE THE DAY THAT GAMING CHANGED
Concrete proof that the PSP is the best console ever...

[32] REVIEW OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST
Girls, Ferraris and a whole lot of road - thanks, Sega.

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

[06] SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS

The stealthiest handheld game ever made - bet you didn't see that one coming, did you?

REGULARS

[12] Insider

All the latest from PSP land, including:

- Sony plays Nintendo at its own game with two new simulation-style titles
- New RPGs announced - time to get your +4 Sword of Excitement ready
- Another GTA game coming to the PSP? We're so happy, we just wet ourselves



[24] PSPost

Rapier wit, insightful comments... or just a load of people saying we're awesome

[78] Widescreen

It's like having a cinema in your pocket, but without the popcorn or crying children

[84] Music

Be-bop, be-doo-bop, be-bop... bo!

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There's more?! Oh, you'd better believe it...

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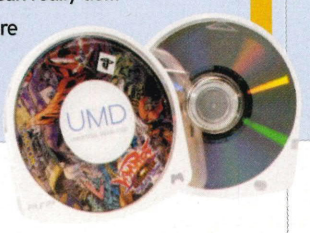
Cheating's not a crime - it's just a little bit wrong. But don't let that stop you doing it, eh?

- Monkey fans rejoice! We've pulled *Peter's Jackson's King Kong* to pieces, meaning you can literally 'go ape'. Hurrah!
- **PLUS!** More cheats than you'll ever know what to do with... well, maybe

[106] Connect

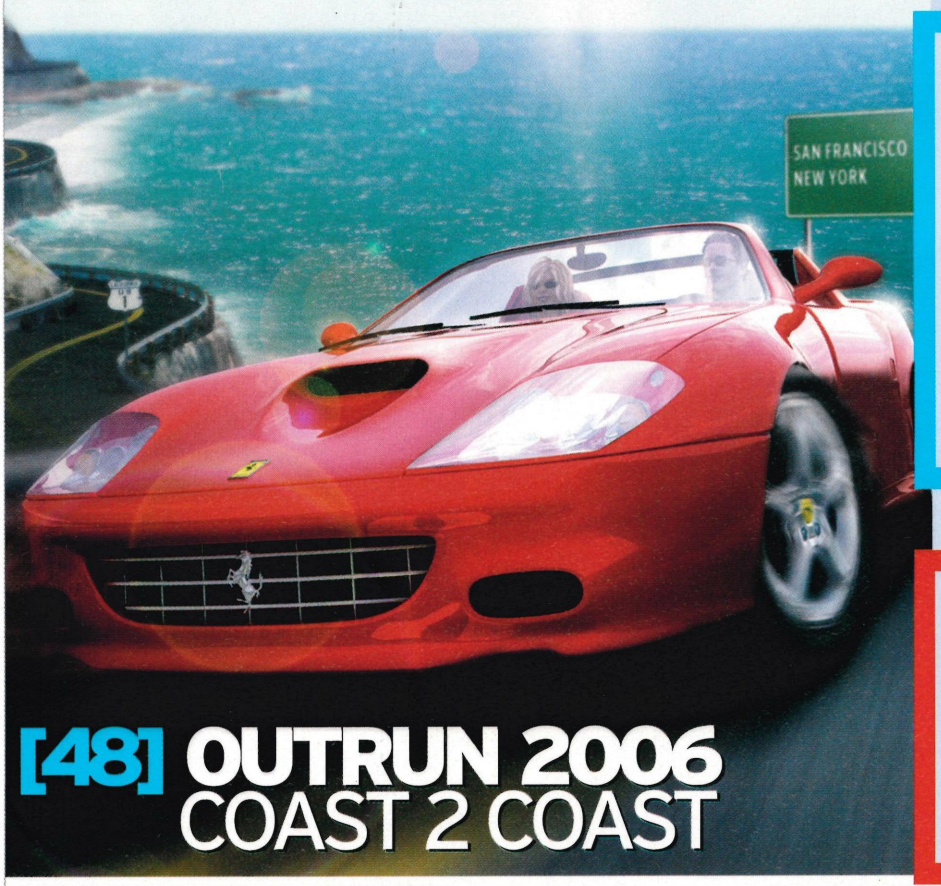
The bit of the magazine where we show you what else your PSP can really do...

- Crack that firmware
- Play homebrew
- Emulation



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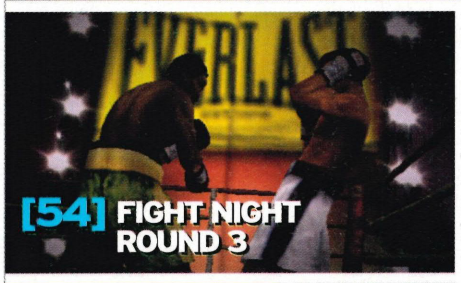
[42] SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS
Sam's bad to the bone - b-b-b-b-bad. Thankfully though, the PSP game is exactly the opposite...

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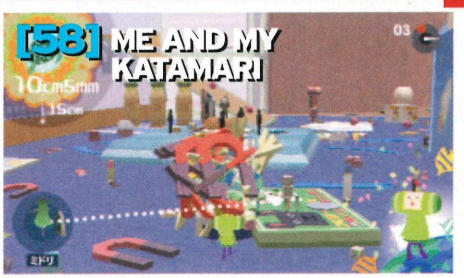
Coming soon

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You're coming to us, on the day of our daughter's wedding, and asking for a preview of EA's take on the classic movies? Oh... go on then.

[32] Key Of Heaven
[34] Field Commander
[36] SOCOM 3: Navy Seals Fireteam Bravo



[54] FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3



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[62] STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

COMING SOON

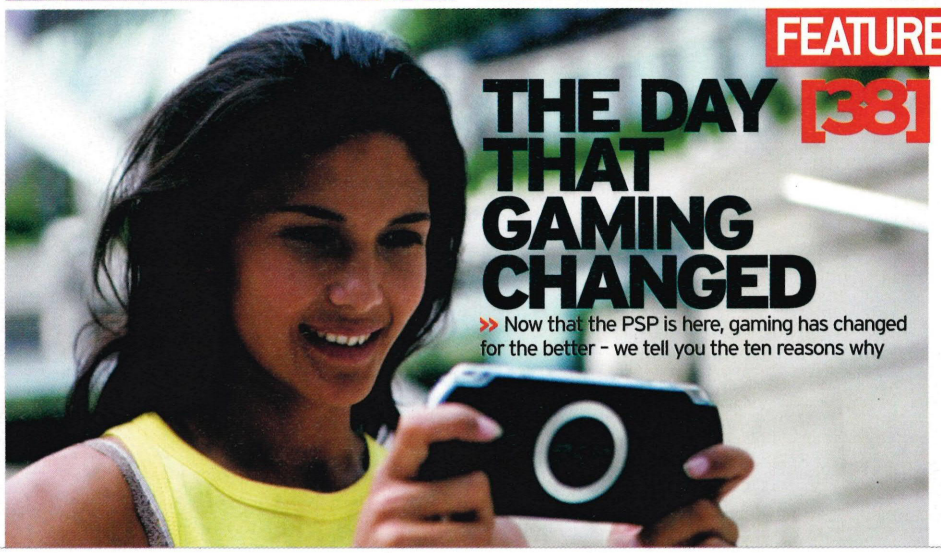


[28] THE GODFATHER



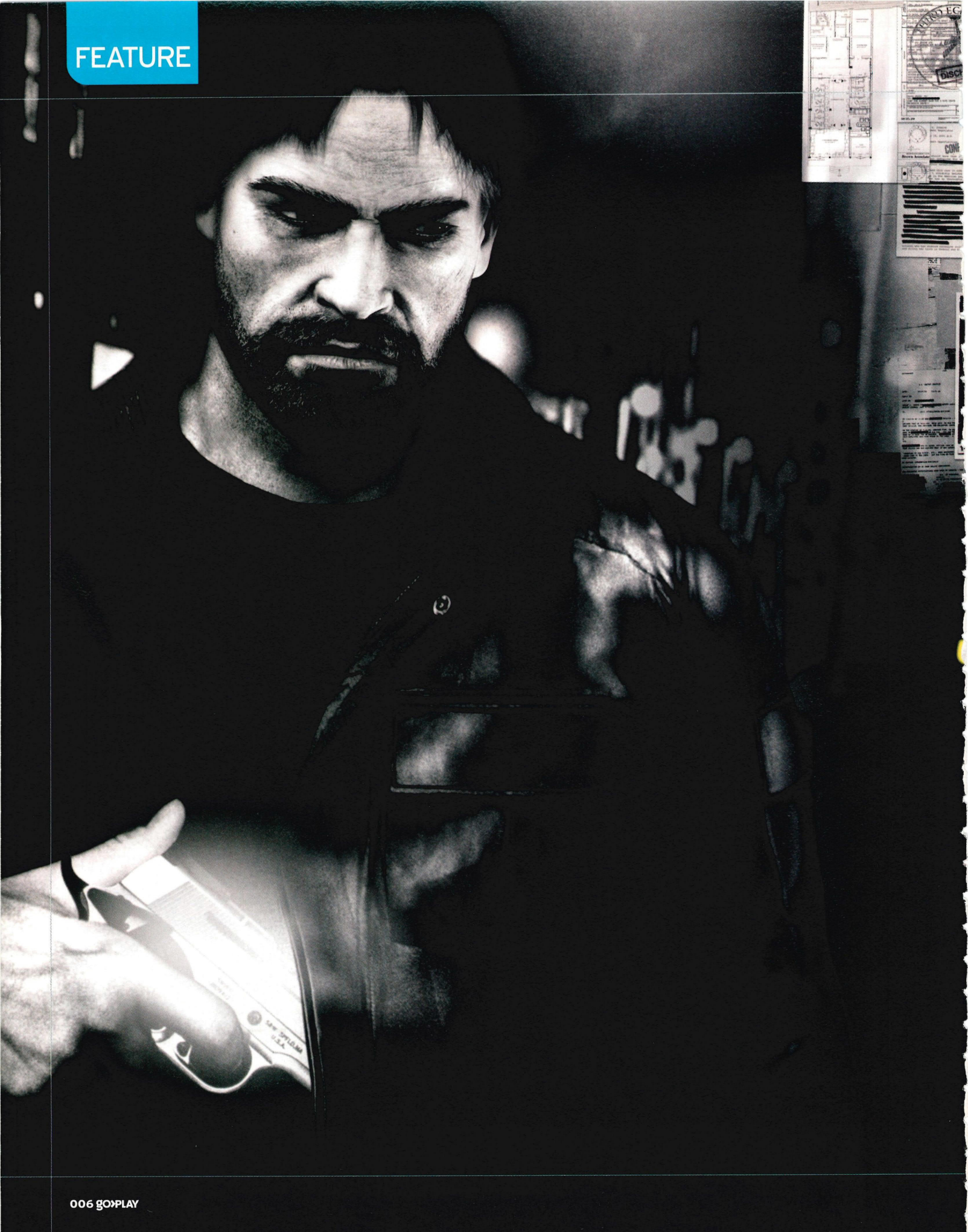
[32] KEY OF HEAVEN

FEATURE



THE DAY THAT GAMING CHANGED [38]

>> Now that the PSP is here, gaming has changed for the better - we tell you the ten reasons why





Tom Clancy's SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS

Sam shrinks down into the palm of your hand – sneaky indeed...

OUT: 31 MARCH

Publisher **Ubisoft** / Developer **In-House** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multiplayer**

THE Big QUESTIONS

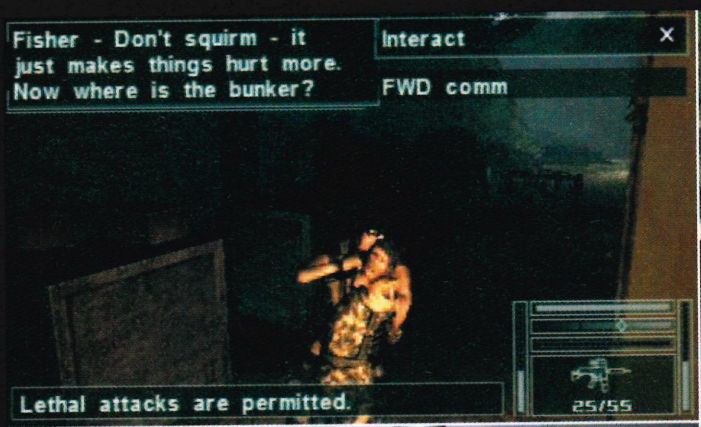
I'm confused... when the hell is this game set?
Apart from the first and last levels, all the missions are flashbacks, ranging from Sam's early career right up to his infiltration of the terrorist organisation that we'll see more of in the forthcoming *Double Agent*.

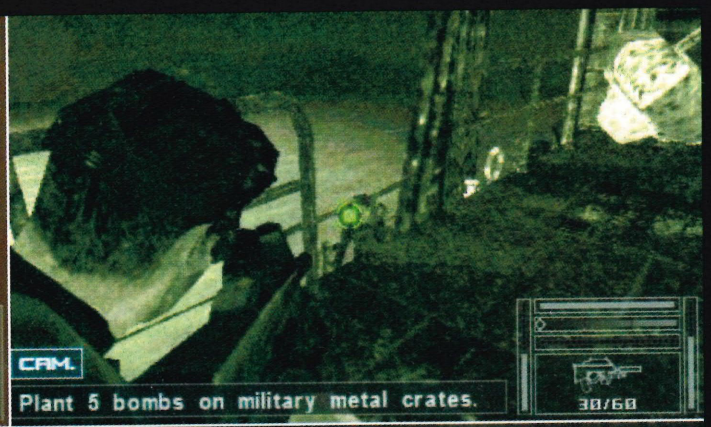
Does the infamous knife make a reappearance?
Most of the missions will see you carrying a knife among your arsenal and, in some cases, it will be your only form of defence. So, yes.

Splinter Cell first crept up on us in 2002 and the series has gone from strength to strength ever since. The covert action on offer out-sneaked Solid Snake and provided gamers with an authentic and unrivalled stealth experience; rather than just hiding in a box to evade enemies, Sam Fisher can perform all manner of acrobatic feats in order to stay hidden.

Darkness conceals his movements and every *Splinter Cell* game has featured ultra-realistic lighting effects that not only make the game a visual feast, but also ensure the player can easily find a place to hide when under threat from evil terrorists.

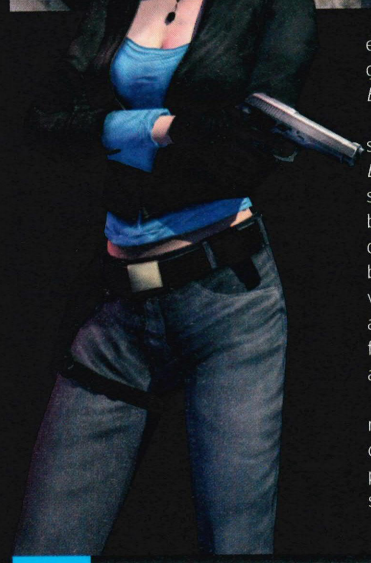
So far, Fisher has worked tirelessly for Uncle Sam stopping global threats and generally saving the world, all the while staying off the radar. Since *Chaos Theory* (the third in the series), however, something has gone terribly wrong. While away on a mission, a drunk driver runs down and kills Fisher's daughter; wracked with remorse, Sam seemingly goes rogue and winds up in prison, where he coincidentally befriends a member of a terrorist organisation. This storyline forms the basis of the forthcoming *Double Agent* (now delayed until September, annoyingly











enough), but it's actually after that game where this adventure, entitled *Essentials*, picks up... confusing, eh?

Not to worry – rather than being a sequel to an as-yet-unreleased game, *Essentials* is made up of flashbacks spanning the entire series. After being arrested when visiting his daughter's grave, the cut scenes between levels conveniently mention various missions from Fisher's past, after which you're plunged into familiar *Splinter Cell* action from past and present...

In total there are nine main missions, plus three unlockable bonus ones that are lifted directly from previous games. The first mission serves as a training level and is so short it shouldn't really be included in that total. Sadly, another mission towards the end, presumably lifted from *Double Agent* as it sees you in the terrorist headquarters, is almost equally as short. This reduces the number of full-length missions to seven, which isn't too shabby but is certainly less than we hoped for. As mentioned the game harks back to periods earlier in Sam's career starting with his days as a Navy SEAL and progressing right up to present day (or future day, considering it's already 2009 in the world of Splinter Cell). Those of you disappointed by the delay of *Double Agent* may be pleased to hear that there's a small taster of the new levels in *Essentials*, though we're assuming they're

> You should look at it as **more of a 'best-of'** than a full game

Splinter Cell timeline

Almost entirely set around flashbacks, the action in *Essentials* can be confusing to fit into the *Splinter Cell* chronology. Luckily for you we've taken the time to create this handy timeline...

1992

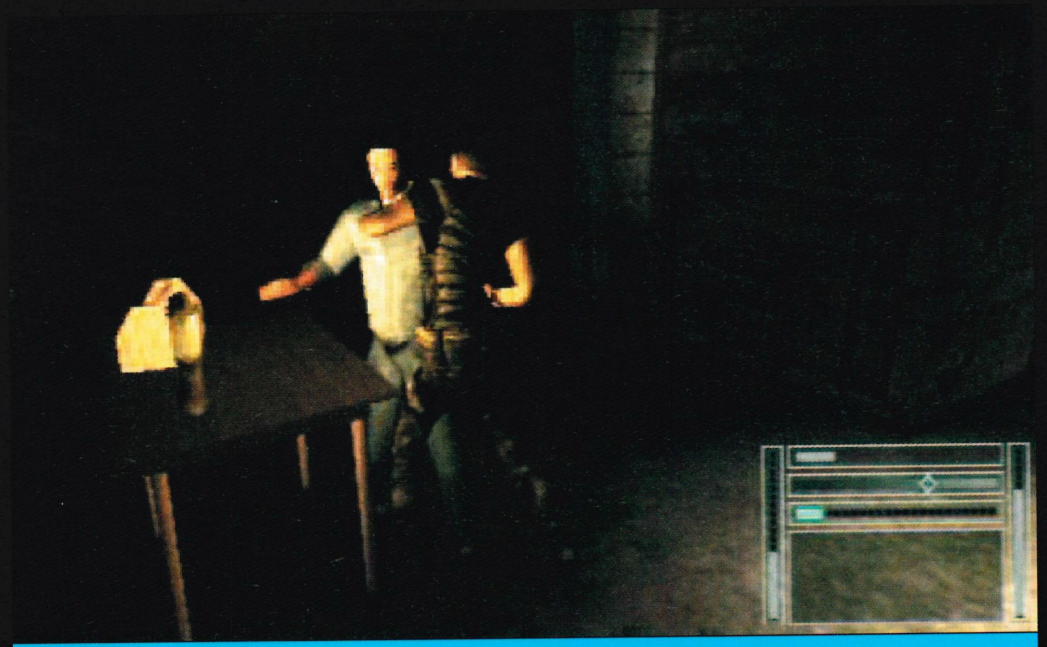
ESSENTIALS MISSION 2
YEAR SET: 1992
Location: Norte de Santander, Colombia

1999

ESSENTIALS MISSION 4
YEAR SET: 1999
Location: Belgrade City, Yugoslavia

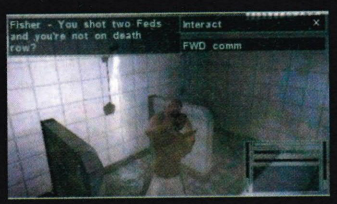
2004

SPLINTER CELL
YEAR SET: 2004
Synopsis: When an American agent goes missing in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia while monitoring widespread communication shortages in the country ,another agent is sent to investigate the disappearance. When he disappears, too,



Silent kills play a big part in *Essentials*, with the knife being your only weapon on a number of occasions







simplified versions of what will be seen on home consoles.

Disappointingly, earlier levels are simply variations on old missions. Remember the oil rig in the first game? Well, that's in here along with some other familiar locations. It's not that these levels are bad, it's simply that we've already seen them and a larger selection of new ones wouldn't have gone amiss.

That aside, one nice side effect that results from the flashback format is that it sees you controlling Sam in a number of different guises. Whether it's civvies, prison clothes, SEAL gear or his classic black number, it gives the levels some welcome variety. It also affects the way you have to approach each mission. When dressed in his civvies, Sam isn't going to be carrying around his famous goggles, and plunging rooms into darkness so the enemy can't see you will only result in making things harder on yourself.

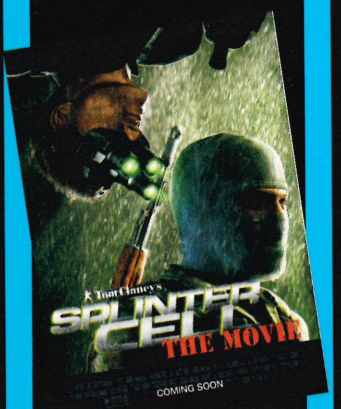
The inclusion of Sam's other gadgets also varies greatly from mission to mission, with some seeing your pockets filled to the brim with useful items, while others have you scrounging for anything you can get your hands on. If you've never played a *Splinter Cell* game before then this is certainly the perfect introduction, with samples of gameplay from all four titles in the series.

So, how does this gameplay translate to the PSP, a format that provides a very different medium for the game? Playing *Splinter Cell* at home allows you to turn the lights down and the speakers up for the best experience in a game that requires your undivided attention. Can a console that is generally played while on the move really do such a game justice? Imagine trying to hear

Splinter Cell: The Movie

Sam blows his cover and heads for the silver screen...

Given the current trend in making game-to-movie adaptations, it's not surprising that a Splinter Cell movie is in the works at Paramount Pictures. With Peter Berg set to direct, George Clooney rumoured to be in the starring role and a decent script turned in, it could be yet more money in the bank for Mr Clancy. The plot is said to stick closely to the style of the game, with Fisher globetrotting in search of clues and terrorists to thwart. Could it be the new Bond franchise?



Obviously we made this poster up, so don't storm your local multiplex looking to buy tickets, it's not real

2006



ESSENTIALS MISSION 3
YEAR SET: 2004
Location: GFO Oil Rig, Georgian waters, Caspian Sea

Third Echelon send in Fisher to discover their whereabouts and assess the situation.

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW
YEAR SET: 2006
Synopsis: The US installs a temporary military base in the southeast Asian country of East Timor to train the country's defence force. This arrival is not welcomed by much of the region and the biggest threat comes in the form of an Indonesian militia. After they attack a US embassy Fisher is sent in to take down the militia leader.



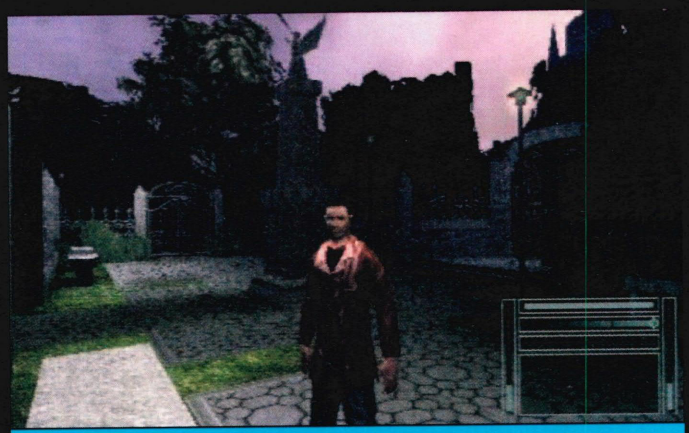
ESSENTIALS MISSION 5
YEAR SET: 2006
Location: Steel Factory, Warsaw, Indiana, USA

Tom Clancy trivia

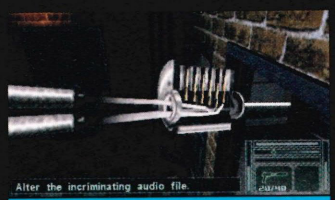
A sticker for realism, Tom likes to stick his oar in...

Clancy originally rejected the idea for Sam Fisher to have goggles that contained both heat and night vision, as they are impossible to make in the real world. The developers explained that having two sets of goggles would make the gameplay awkward (not to mention require more animation) and convinced him to allow it. We're sure the hefty additon to his bank balance helped soften the blow...

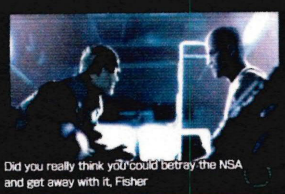




Just because you can't see him carrying anything doesn't mean he won't have the means with which to kill you, secreted somewhere upon his person



The trusty old lockpick makes a return to aid your infiltrations



While the cut-scenes aren't fully animated they do the job



the footsteps of an approaching guard and avoid him while playing on a crowded bus... it doesn't sound ideal does it? Obviously there's nothing to stop you playing in the comfort of your own home, but that's hardly the point. Thankfully, the developer has taken this very problem into account and has added a handy sound meter to the HUD, which will alert you of any noise in the vicinity. While the game still works best when you have no distractions this new addition works well, especially when the guy next to you seems to insist on shouting into his mobile phone.

Apart from that though the HUD is unchanged, with the obligatory health meter and a light meter that indicates how visible you are. Also added is the option to save at any point in a mission, which some may say makes it all a bit too easy, but on a portable game this really is an essential feature. Some would say fast loading times are essential, too, and they're always a point of interest for PSP games. While *Splinter Cell* isn't exactly lightning quick between or during levels, it's not unbearably slow either - a happy medium if you will.

The biggest alteration that has been introduced is to the controls, which have always been a little tough to get to grips in *Splinter Cell* games. Not surprisingly then, *Essentials* is no different. As with the majority of PS2-to-PSP translations, the lack of a second analog stick requires some major rejigging. On the PS2, the right analogue was used to control camera movement, but now you have to hold down Circle and use the main analogue stick available to look around. The drawback of this is that you can no longer move while rotating the camera. It doesn't cause an enormous problem, but having to stop just to have a quick scan of your surroundings does get irritating.

This camera doesn't particularly aid the game in the looks department, either. It's fine for the most part where gameplay is concerned, but when rotating in enclosed spaces the camera often clips through the scenery or even Sam himself. Like we said, this doesn't particularly affect the gameplay, it just makes the game look a bit... well, sloppy.

This isn't helped by some rather bland backgrounds and muddy visuals in general. Obviously the restrictions of the PSP mean that any



2007

SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

YEAR SET: 2007

Synopsis: Japan's creation of an Information Self Defence Force is deemed a violation of international law. Tensions are ignited in the region, with Japan facing shipping blockades. Third Echelon dispatch Fisher to investigate a seemingly unrelated matter that may turn out to be of greater significance to the crisis in Asia.

2008

ESSENTIALS MISSION 6

YEAR SET: 2007

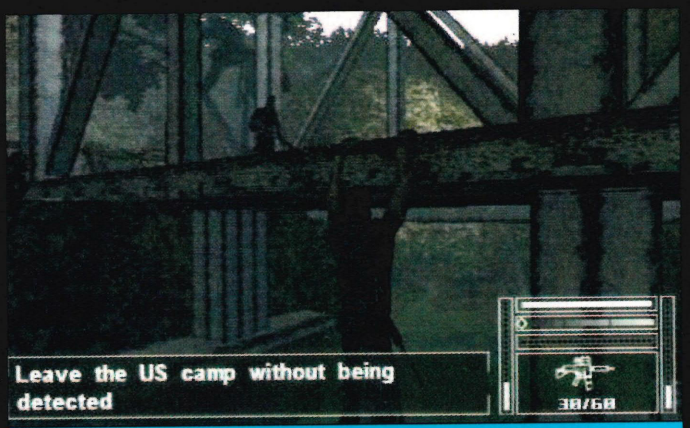
Location: Manhattan Garment District, New York City, USA

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT

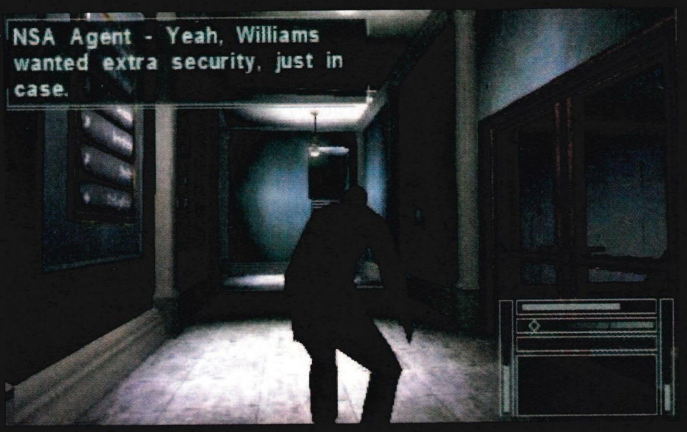
YEAR SET: 2008

Synopsis: After months away from duty recovering from the loss of his daughter to a drunk driver, Fisher begs Lambert to give him a mission, any mission. He is given the job of infiltrating the relatively unknown criminal organisation known as John Brown's





If there's no cover available then you'll need to get creative in the ways that you hide from the enemy; just don't look down or Sam might lose his lunch



dynamic lighting is pretty much non existent but despite this, the game does just about manage to retain that *Splinter Cell* look and style, helped by the continued input of Michael Ironside's gravely tones as Fisher.

Of course, graphics aren't everything and, despite the control changes, *Essentials* still retains the quality sneaking action that has made the series so popular. However, with so few brand new levels on offer it's difficult to recommend this to anyone but die-hard fans or those who don't already own the earlier games. It's certainly not a bad addition to the series, there's just not enough of it; look at it like it's more of a 'best of' than a full game, much like *Hitman: Contracts* was on the PS2. While the majority of levels available are of a decent length, the experience is over far too quickly and with the thinnest of plots holding it all together you never really feel that involved in proceedings, as there's no real objective at the end of it all.

Thankfully, multiplayer hasn't been forgotten, with Spy versus Spy Deathmatches available for you and a friend to out-sneak each other. Although it certainly isn't the greatest multiplayer experience on PSP, this Wi-Fi option is a welcome addition and should provide a fun distraction from the main game.

We'd love to score *Essentials* higher but it just doesn't reach the same standard of quality achieved in the series so far. Okay, so it's probably better than *Splinter Cell: Team Stealth Action* and the other N-Gage outings for Fisher and co, but that isn't exactly a tall order. Good then, but not great... ■ **Simon Griffin**

A solid *Splinter Cell* experience with some niggling problems **80%**



There are plenty of opportunities to snipe your enemies from afar



2009

Army. Sam must befriend an inmate of Ellsworth Prison, so a complex cover story can be concocted.

ESSENTIALS MISSION 8

YEAR SET: 2008

Delta Atlantic Warehouse, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

SPLINTER CELL: ESSENTIALS

YEAR SET: 2009

Synopsis: Sam is captured while visiting the grave of his daughter. Someone within the NSA is trying to discredit him by changing mission details - we flashback to see what really happened.

ESSENTIALS MISSION 1

YEAR SET: 2009

Location: Elysian Fields Cemetery, Washington DC, USA

ESSENTIALS MISSION 9

YEAR SET: 2009

Location: National Security Administration HQ, Fort Meade, Maryland, USA

INSIDER

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PSP GAMING



BREAKING NEWS

WHO NEEDS NINTENDO?

New PSP titles kick DS games into touch

They say that imitation is the best form of flattery, but we'd suggest that you don't just need imitation to prove to someone that you're better than them. With that in mind then, we're thrilled that Sony has taken the fight directly to the door of Nintendo with two brand new titles that'll see the PSP prove it can do anything the DS can do, only bigger, better and far more fun than anything the two-screened wonder can throw at the gaming market...

Not surprisingly, it's the advent of the 'non-gaming' game that has spurred Sony into action – Nintendo has been pushing such titles on the DS for a while now and seen much success, so it's only natural that its biggest rival in the handheld market would want a slice of that oh-so-juicy pie.

Specifically, it's the twin phenomenons of *Animal Crossing* and *Nintendogs* that Sony is taking aim at with its two new games – something that should prove a challenge seeing as how they're both 'open-ended experiences with goals' rather than games in the conventional sense.

First up is *Fuku Fuku no Shima* (which roughly translates as *Happy Happy Island*), Sony's answer to *Animal Crossing*. Set on a distant magical island, the game uses the PSP's real-time clock to determine events, as well as information provided by you to offer a different experience each and every time you play it (as well as a different experience to anyone else you might know playing the same game... so long as you don't input the same data, of course). The focus appears to be very much on mini-game style play and interaction with the various characters found on the island and Sony has already confirmed the ability to download new data into the game using the PSP's wi-fi link-up – it certainly sounds incredibly interesting to us.

The other game on the horizon is based on the popular *The Dog* license and is called *Happy Life*;



NEED TO KNOW

The PSP has already been matching various popular DS titles toe-to-toe in Japan. Following the totally undeniable success of Nintendo's *Brain Training For Adults*, Sega launched *Brain Trainer Portable* for the PSP – a 'game' that poses a series of questions for you to answer, with the ultimate goal being to find out whether your brain is as advanced as it should be.



Why humiliate a real life dog with stupid clothes when you can do it to a virtual one and not feel any of the shame? We hope there's a tiara and cloak option in there...







Typically for an open-ended adventure, *Fuku Fuku no Shima* features a cast of weird and wacky characters for you to have a quick natter with.

players will be able to pick their own dog from a wide number of breeds, play with them and take them for walks, dress them up in all manner of clothing accessories and even organise the areas in which they can play with furniture and other items. Given how popular *Nintendogs* has proven with the non-gaming crowd, this is exactly the kind of game the PSP needs in order to get even more people buying it... so long as Sony can keep the supply up with the obvious demand, of course.

So far, the games have only been announced for the Japanese market but given Sony's determination to 'spread the love' as far and wide as possible, we don't doubt that they'll both be appearing on western shores some time in the future. Just make sure you're got plenty of spare time to hand – it looks like you're going to need it.

PSP price drop?

Deal with Samsung could mean cheaper PSPs in 2006

PSP prices look certain to drop this year after news emerged that Sony is close to reaching an agreement with Samsung that would see the company snap up as much as a fifth of all Samsung's NAND flash memory supplies.

Financial newswire Bloomberg revealed details of the arrangement last month. It could be worth up to $1.8 billion for the Korean company's coffers and should allow Sony to drop the price of PSPs, since the bulk purchase of chips makes them cheaper individually, enabling Sony to save money on each PSP unit.

Dropping the price of PSPs – the largest complaint most gamers have about the portable console – could help the company meet its goal of doubling sales of the platform in 2006.



CAPCOM'S GOT IT COVERED

Bonus D-pad cover offered with Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX

The PSP's analogue nub is rubbish. There, we've said it. And we feel a whole lot better for doing so. As unresponsive as a three-week-old corpse, the nub has been responsible for more crashes, more untimely deaths, and more wildly inaccurate shots at goal than we care to mention.

But while it's perfectly serviceable for most of our gaming needs, when it comes to 2D fighting games, it's just not up to scratch. If you don't believe us, play *Darkstalkers*.

All is not lost, however, because Capcom is offering a PSP D-Pad cover to Japanese gamers who pre-order *Street Fighter Zero 3 Double Upper* (*Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX* here in the UK), which should meet all your spinning-piledriver requirements.

While there's no word as yet on whether Capcom's Official Support Pad will make it to Europe, PSP importers looking for a classic Sega-style D-pad need look no further, though this is a limited edition product, suggesting that once it's gone, it's gone for good. Check with your favourite importer for details of how to get the bonus D-pad cover if you plan on importing.









FIRST PICTURES

RPGs HIT PSP

Raft of RPGs set for Sony's portable console

This year looks set to be a bumper one for PSP-owning RPG fans following the recent announcements of three new releases for everyone's favourite portable.

Sony's *Blade Dancer* is a new title and will be exclusive to PSP, while portable editions of Idea Factory's flagship title, *Spectral Souls*, and Square Enix's *Valkryie Profile* are also in the pipeline.

Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth is a remake of the PSOne's original *Valkyrie Profile*, which won praise for its stunning visuals, particularly during battles, and its engaging cast of characters when it was released in 2000. *Lenneth*, named after the game's heroine, will contain additional cut-scenes and extended movies to link the original game to *Valkyrie Profile: Silmeria*, a sequel scheduled for release on PlayStation2 this year.



***Blade Dancer*: Just one of many RPGs for you to get excited about this year**



Spectral Souls is a strategy RPG released in Japan by Idea Factory, which will be brought to the United States and Europe by NIS America. Set in Neverland, a continent torn apart by three warring kingdoms, players switch between soldiers from each of the factions, allowing them to play as the Royal Demon Kingdom, Imperial Army, and Rebel Army.

Spectral Souls, which includes grid-based battles, a unique combo battle system and an extensive item synthesis system, is set to hit the shelves in the autumn.

Comparatively little is known about *Blade Dancer*, Sony's new RPG developed by Sega spin-off, Hit Maker, the development team responsible for *Crazy Taxi 2* and *Tennis 2K2*, though early screenshots indicate anime-style characters, full 3D visuals and a *Phantasy Star 2*-style viewpoint from behind your characters.

Most exciting of all, however, is the promise of a network mode that will offer simultaneous play for up to four players, though whether this is purely an ad-hoc mode or net-based remains to be seen. More details are sure to emerge following the game's March release in Japan.

With *Tales of Eternia* and *PoPoLoCrois* already available or shortly headed to the platform, and rumours of a portable *Final Fantasy* title, 2006 looks sure to be the year when the PSP establishes itself as a major player in the RPG world.

Online for all

Datel releases Wi-Fi adapter

PSP owners without Wi-Fi connections will soon be able to enjoy net-based play, thanks to a new USB Wi-Fi adapter from Datel.

The Wi-Fi MAX for PSP plugs into your computer's USB port, accesses its internet connection, and allows your PSP to go online, enabling dialup users and others who are unable to attach routers to their internet connections, at school or work for example, to get their PSPs online.

The Wi-Fi adapter, which supports up to five PSPs, and even includes integrated file management options for wirelessly transferring files is available now.



RETRO GAMING

PSP GOES REWIND

Mystery Sega classic set for portable revival

One of Sega's classic franchises is set to be resurrected on the PSP this year, but exactly which one is being revived remains shrouded in secrecy.

Totally Games president Lawrence Holland announced this month that his team is working on a new PSP game based on a classic Sega arcade title. But he refused to specify which retro franchise was the inspiration, instead offering just a few tantalising details.

"The game is a run and gun blast-a-thon, drawing its inspiration from such timeless arcade classics as *Robotron* and *Smash TV*," Holland revealed.

With so many quality arcade blasters in Sega's back catalogue, the game could be anything from a revised *Space Harrier* to updated versions of *Zillion* or *Comix Zone*.

However, with the mention of running and gunning, we're going to be mighty disappointed if it's *Shadow The Hedgehog*.

NEED TO KNOW

Larry Holland's Totally Games team was responsible for the epic space combat simulator *Star Wars: TIE Fighter*, released on PC in 1995, and widely considered one of the most influential titles ever created. Though Totally Games has focused on developing mobile phone games in recent years, it certainly has the pedigree to make the PSP release a success.



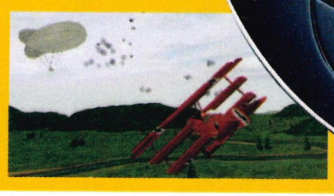
That's what they call you

Rising Star brings host of new titles to Sony's handheld

Never let it be said that some publishers aren't trying to do new things with the PSP. Between all the PS2 ports and other conversions, you'll find many unique titles... such as the ones being brought out by Rising Star in the next few months.

First up is an update to a classic franchise, *Bubble Bobble* – except it's far from how you'll remember it. As *Bubble Bobble Evolution*, Taito has transformed a simple platformer into a complex puzzle game that'll push you to the limits... it's tough, but fun all the same. Meanwhile, flight sim fans can also look forward to the release of *Pilot Academy* in September, the PSP's first real flight simulator – all the fun of a game, but with plenty of real mechanics behind it.





MUPPET OF THE MONTH



Which member of the team got stuck for the longest on a game? We mock the 'winner'...



DAVE SAYS: I've been writing the guide for Tokobot and there's no information on the internet about the things you need to find at the end of the game. Now I've got to find them myself...

WE SAY: **So speaks someone whose main job it is to write guides. Finding information on the internet? Shame on you, Dave – mockery is only a small part of what you truly deserve...**

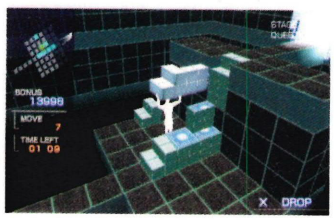
'Ow... My brain hurts!'

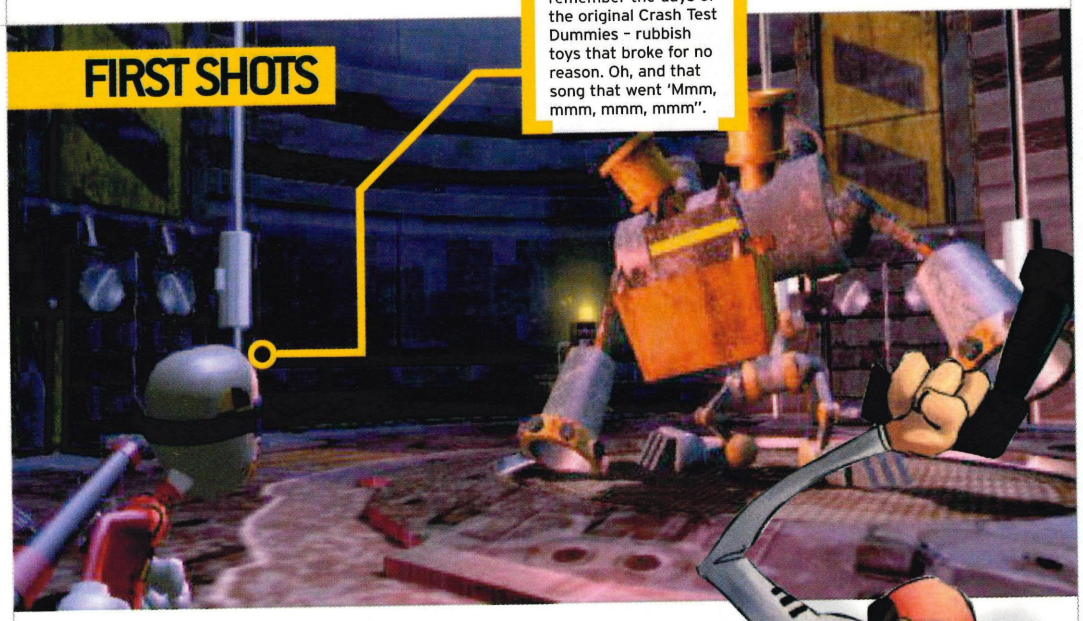
Mental stimulation for the PSP

THOSE OF YOU who are concerned that the majority of PSP games out there today don't challenge you on a higher level should be celebrating right now, as there's a game coming next month that'll have all you could ever need.

Entitled *PQ* (which, despite missing an entire letter, stands for Practical Intelligence Quotient), the game challenges players to negotiate a series of increasingly difficult levels within a limited number of moves. Over 100 logic puzzles (requiring much thought, block moving and guard dodging) stands between you and success, after which you'll be given your PQ rating that says how clever you are. You can even upload your scores to see how you rate against other gamers from around the world.

Due to hit the shelves in April for £29.99, we'll be reviewing *PQ* in the next issue of Go>Play.





We're old enough to remember the days of the original Crash Test Dummies – rubbish toys that broke for no reason. Oh, and that song that went 'Mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm".

CRASH AND BURN

First look at Crash Dummy, confirmed for PSP in 2006

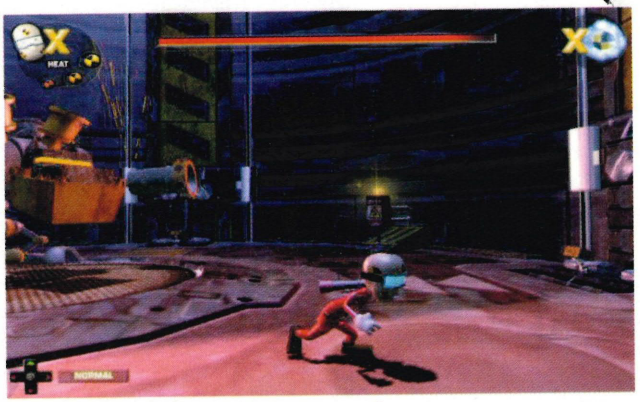
The first screenshots of *Crash Dummy Vs The Evil D-Troit*, Twelve Interactive's utterly original, downright bizarre action adventure, have been released via the game's official website, with confirmation that the PSP version will be released later this year.

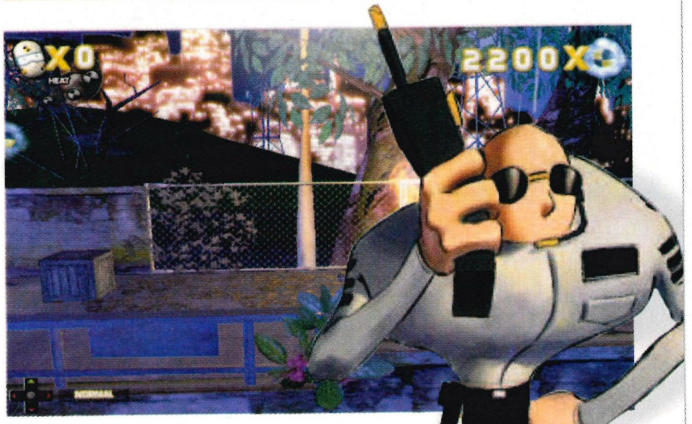
Tentatively scheduled for a Q3 release, early impressions suggest the game is the sort of colourful, humorous romp ideally suited to portable gaming.

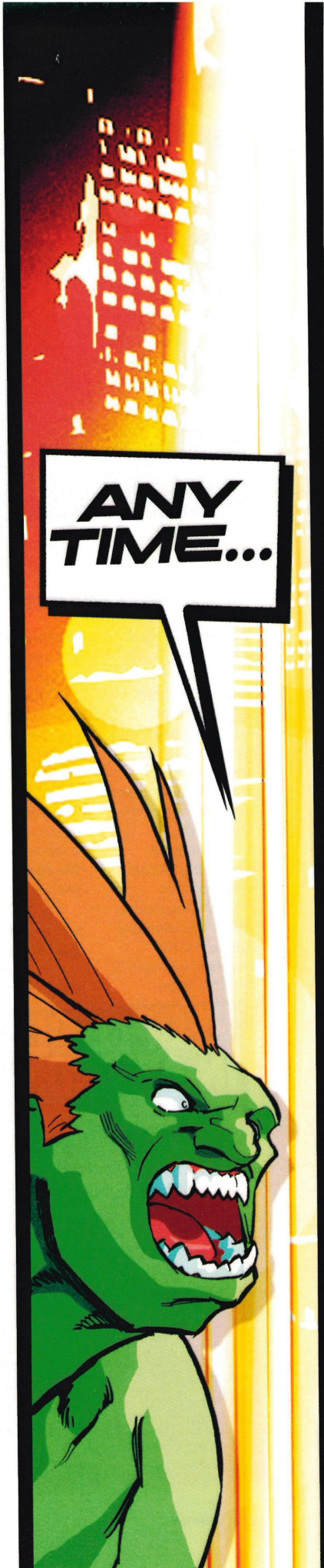
Players assume the role of Crash Dummy, an intrepid dummy who must journey through the D-Industries industrial complex in order to rescue his girlfriend, Tyre, from the evil clutches of the terrible mastermind D-Troit.

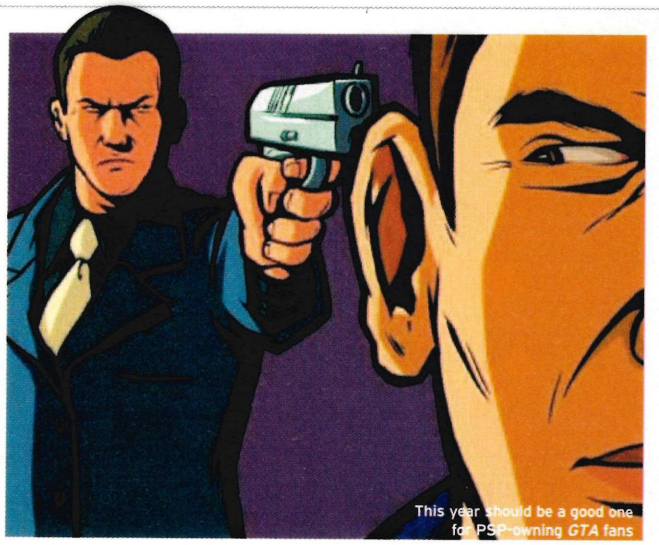
Though entirely unrelated to *The Incredible Crash Test Dummies*, which enjoyed success on the NES and Master System over a decade ago, *Crash Dummy Vs The Evil D-Troit* shares the same comic tone as the retro favourite, avoiding violence altogether in favour of a slapstick approach to battling enemies.

Whether the gameplay is as inventive and amusing remains to be seen, but this collection of *The Incredibles*-style screens are enough to ensure we'll be keeping an eye on *Crash*. Here's betting it's a lot more enjoyable than the adventures of his namesake, that bloody Bandicoot.









This year should be a good one for PSP-owning *GTA* fans

MORE GTA FOR PSP

Take 2 reveals new portable GTA title

A COMPLETELY new *Grand Theft Auto* game will be released on PSP later this year, according to an announcement made by the franchise's publisher, Take Two Interactive, this month.

In a financial update to declare disappointing financial results for 2005, the company confirmed that another original *GTA* title would be released on Sony's portable before the end of 2006.

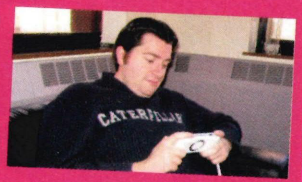
Though further information about the new title was not disclosed, Rockstar is expected to provide more details, together with information about another new title for the PSP, at E3 later this year.

The PlayStation2 will also be receiving a *GTA* title this year, according to the announcement, although it is unlikely to be the same as the game due to be released on PSP.

Ironically, *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories* has been lined up for release on the PS2 this spring, some six months after the game premiered on PSP. And with the PlayStation3 expected later this year, *Liberty City Stories* could well be the last *GTA* game released on the PS2.

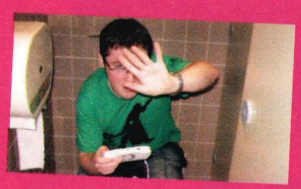
PEOPLE PLAYING PSPS IN AWESOME PLACES

The best portable handheld being played in the best places



IN OUR SHINY NEW OFFICES...

1 Look! We have new offices! And desks! And even a relaxation area with a Scalextric set! Of course, we haven't got time for that when there are PSP games to be played – supposedly, us sitting here having a bit of a play still counts as work. Ha! Just don't tell anyone what we're up to...



SITTING ON THE LAVATORY...

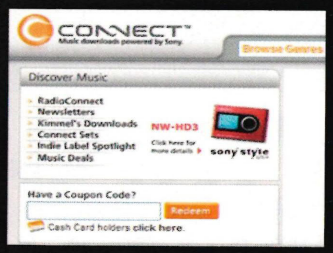
2 Okay, so you caught us – we were supposed to be off taking a break in the little boys room, but instead we couldn't help breaking out the PSP. Cue the rest of the team, bursting into the loo 20 minutes later to find out where we were and finding us mid-game. Oh dear.

MUSIC MADNESS

SONY TO RE-CONNECT IN MARCH

iTunes rival download service to distribute music, games and videos for PSP





Sony will relaunch its iTunes-esque Connect service in March, offering movies, games and music for download onto PSP, it announced at the Consumer Electronic Show (CES) in Las Vegas in January.

First launched in March 2004 as a rival to Apple's iTunes service, Connect uses Sony's proprietary, non-iPod-compatible ATRAC3 audio format. But while iTunes continues to break records, Sony's service has only a tiny share of the market.

By revamping the service, and tailoring it to the company's multimedia and gaming portable, Sony expects to recapture a large slice of the music download market.

"Soon, Sony will be rewriting the rules once again," the company said in a statement released at the CES.

to be planning a section that will operate in a similar way to the Xbox Live Marketplace, enabling PSP owners to download titles, though no specific ones were mentioned. Xbox Live Marketplace has seen almost five million downloads since it launched in November.

No details of movies were mentioned either, but the company owns the Columbia/Tristar and MGM film studios and, as such, has a huge catalogue of titles at its disposal.

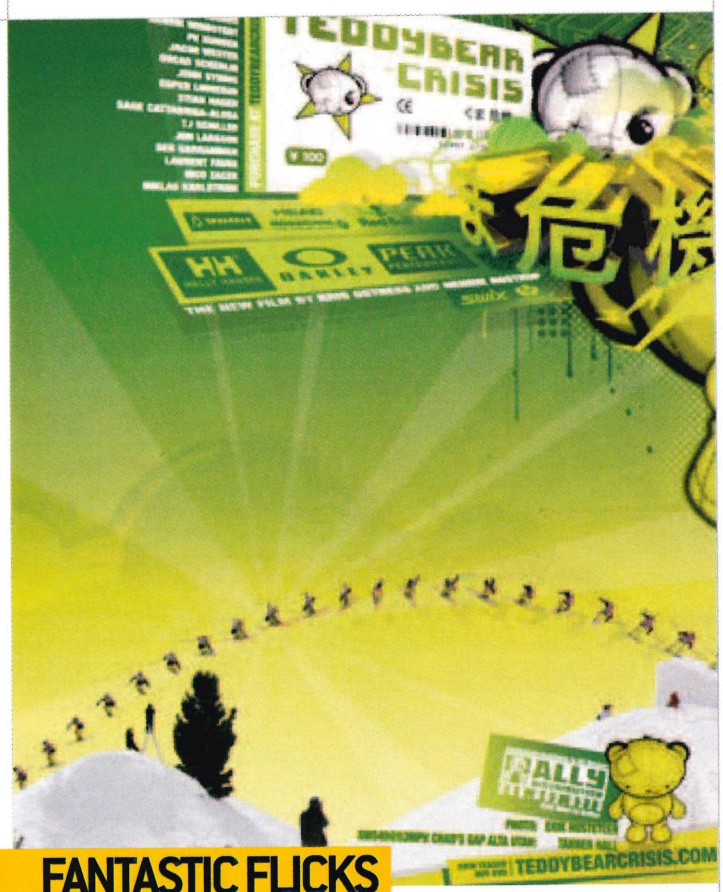
Whether the new, improved Connect will be able to recapture a significant portion of iTunes' market share is debatable, but the launch of a dedicated download service, exclusively for its portable console, will be welcomed by PSP owners. Provided they're not still stuck with a 32Mb memory stick, of course.

> Sony expects to **recapture a large slice** of the download market

"The Connect service will enable you to download hundreds of videos, games and TV shows, as well as films and other content. You'll even be able to browse from a wide selection of books."

By confirming that games will be offered by Connect , Sony appears





FANTASTIC FLICKS

INDEPENDENT DAY

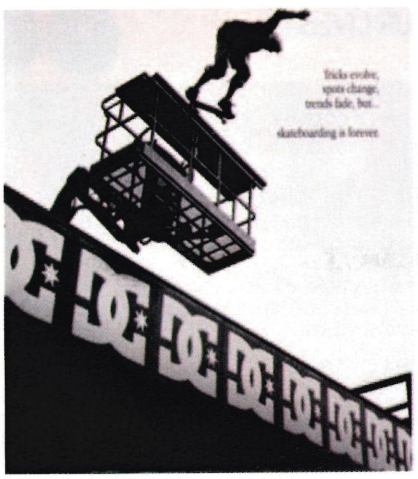
First indie UMD label could mean cheaper movies for PSP owners

Cheaper movies and original films for PSP owners could be served up by Silver Platter, a newly launched independent UMD label, said to be the first such label on the market.

The company boasts that it searches only for content that is suited to the UMD format, and then distributes and markets the films worldwide, making a refreshing change from the majority of labels, which are only too happy to port existing material straight to UMD.

The DC Video, *Teddybear Crisis*, and *The Community Project* are among the first full-length features to be released by Silver Platter.

Though the company has yet to confirm the price of its UMDs, they are expected to be significantly cheaper than the current standard, a move that could put pressure on other distributors to lower their prices in order to compete with the indie label.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX
ANY WHERE.
ON PSP.™
New characters - New challenges
New moves - Wireless tournaments
IT'S FIGHT TIME!
CAPCOM
capcom-europe.com
PlayStation Portable
QSOUND



BREAKING NEWS

FIRM BUT FAIR

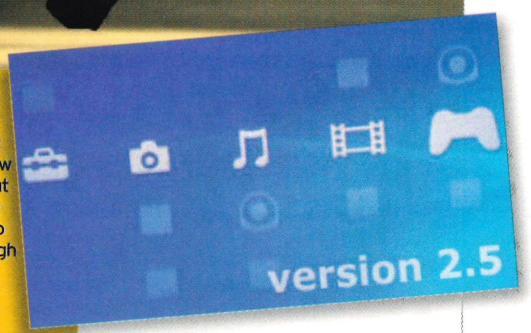
Rockstar taking liberties with firmware hack

It looks as though the world of homebrew software has finally been opened to all PSP users... and all thanks to the handheld's biggest selling game, *GTA: Liberty City Stories*.

Following reports that hacker extraordinaire Fanjita ran a demo called Hello World on a PSP via a goof in *Liberty City Stories*, which allows unsigned code to be run through the game's save file, an eLoader program has been created that will boot several emulators using the same method. It's only at the beta stage right now, but with Sony continually updating the PSP's security, it was only a matter of time before the hackers found another way to crack the system...

SIX LIFE

All you security addicts out there might be keen to know that firmware 2.6 is now out for the PSP. Features in the update include the ability to play WMA audio files through your PSP, as well as the option to access RSS channels on the internet.



THE HOURS

WHAT'S BEEN EATING OUR LIVES... AND FOR HOW LONG



MARTIN

ME AND MY KATAMARI

"Rolling around a giant sticky ball, picking up anything in my way... it's the thing of dreams, I tell you. If only I could do it for real, I'd be ecstatic." 15 hrs

MOVING TO A NEW FLAT

"And it's about bloody time too – I've been waiting for ages for this to finally happen. Welcome to Chick City, ladies... population, you. Oh yes." 48 hrs



SIMON

FIGHT NIGHT: ROUND 3

"I've spent ages playing the Xbox 360 version and I have to say, it's amazing how 'not crap' the PSP version is compared to it. In fact, it's pretty damn awesome... nice one, EA." 06 hrs

NOT LIKING MONKEYS

"Why do people keep assuming that I like monkeys? They're rubbish. All they do is eat bananas and pick fleas off each other." 27 yrs



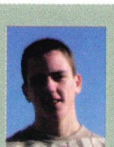
HENRIE

MEGAMAN: POWERED UP

"Blimey... who'd have thought that such a simple looking game would turn out to be so damn hard? I nearly broke my PSP in anger, after dying for the hundreth time..." 05 hrs

EATING TOFU

"Best. Food. Ever. Anyone who thinks tofu is horrible doesn't know what they're on about – it's the greatest food ever made!" 06 hrs



ANDY

PRINCE OF PERSIA REVELATIONS

"I like to think that me and the Prince have a lot in common... although I'm not nearly as good at running along walls as he is, obviously." 03 hrs

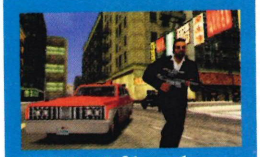
LEARNING TO SNOWBOARD

"Oww. Ooof. Crunch. These are the noises that my body has been making over the last few times I've tried. I'm getting better at it though... honest." 05 hrs

UK CHARTS

We've been keeping an eye on...

CHART POSITION	GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS...
01	**GTA: Liberty City Stories**	Rockstar	Oh, come on... did you really expect this not to be at the top?
02	**Pro Evolution Soccer 5**	Konami	Mad football skills ahoy; try and beat us if you can.
03	**The Sims 2**	EA Games	Like holding tiny little people in the palm of your hand.
04	**Need For Speed: Most Wanted**	EA Games	Criminal racing of a handheld nature - it's wicked bad.
05	**WWE Smackdown! Vs RAW 2006**	THQ	Kick, punch, it's all in the mind... or rather, on the PSP.
06	**FIFA 06**	EA Sports	Stands just behind Pro Evo 5 in the quality soccer stakes.
07	**World Snooker Challenge 2005**	Sega	Why play for real when you can pot balls on the move?
08	**Star Wars Battlefront II**	Activision	Clearly, the force is with this miniature Star Wars adventure.
09	**Championship Manager**	Eidos	All the stats you could ever want from a management sim.
10	**Peter Jackson's King Kong**	Ubisoft	'Be' the ape - go on, be him. You know you want to.
11	**Pursuit Force**	SCEE	Incredibly hard, but then that's the life of a cop for you.
12	**Prince Of Persia: Revelations**	Ubisoft	Surprisingly solid revamp of the Prince's PS2 outing.
13	**Lumines**	Ubisoft	Easy to learn, difficult to master, great fun to play.
14	**Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition**	Rockstar	How did Rockstar fit the entire PS2 game onto the PSP?
15	**Virtua Tennis: World Tour**	Sega	Game, set and match - Sega scores the winning point.
16	**Burnout Legends**	EA Games	Not quite as hot as it probably should have been.
17	**Crash Tag Team Racing**	Vivendi	Fast, furious fun for the younger PSP owners among you.
18	**World Tour Soccer**	SCEE	The least inspiring of the three football games out there.
19	**Metal Gear Ac!d**	Konami	Stealth with cards... has the entire world gone mad?
20	**Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06**	EA Sports	Too serious for our tastes, but still a good deal of fun.



GTA: Liberty City Stories

Are you really all that surprised that Rockstar's title is the most popular PSP game right now? *Liberty City Stories* is set to sell the PSP through the roof - we'd certainly call that a victory for Sony...



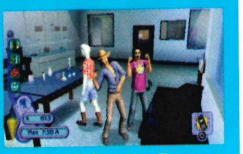
WWE Smackdown! Vs RAW 06

Tiny little men in lycra pants, slapping each other around - it's not one of Miles' dwarf fantasies, but more the action of THQ's wrestling extravaganza. Fists at the ready, boys!



Prince Of Persia: Revelations

We had reservations about the Prince being moved onto the small screen, but Ubisoft has managed to pull it off. That isn't to say he's easy to control but at least it all looks lovely.



The Sims 2

We always thought that a PC game like *The Sims* really didn't work on consoles... so how is it so great on the PSP? It's like there's been a miracle or something - not that we're equating EA to Jesus, you understand.



Star Wars Battlefront II

We always knew that Yoda was small... but Darth Vader, too? Activision's blasting-based *Star Wars* effort translates well to the PSP, although if you try to stop us from being Jango Fett, we'll break your arms.



Metal Gear Ac!d

Not to everyone's taste, but *Ac!d*'s strategy angle is certainly a change from the usual *Metal Gear* action. The sequel's looking tasty, but that's not to say you shouldn't get this one too.

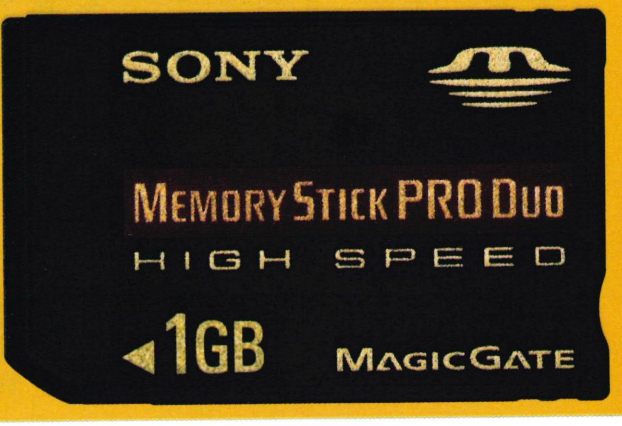
THE BIGGER THE BETTER

Sony launches PSP-geared super-size memory stick

THE QUESTION OF MEMORY is a sticky one for PSP owners - memory sticks are, after all, rather expensive considering how much space you actually get. Music, movies, game saves... it all adds up. Thankfully then, Sony is already thinking one step ahead and has just released a new 2GB Memory Stick (specially branded to appeal to PSP users still using smaller memory sticks) that goes at least some way to bridging the gap.

Able to store up to 60 hours of music, 1000 photos or four full-length movies, the stick has as much capacity as an iPod Nano despite being far, far smaller. Although the price will vary from country to country, Sony is predicting that it will retail for around £120 when it appears in stores in the next few weeks.

Of course, we're pleased that Sony is finally realising that if it wants to push the PSP properly as a music and film-storage device, it needs to have the memory to back it up. After all, we'd never get all our thrash metal and wuss rock on a lowly 32Mb stick...



RELEASE LIST

THE HANDHELD HAREM IS BURSTING AT THE SEAMS. DELIGHT AWAITS!

OUT THIS MONTH MARCH

So many games coming... how will you ever be able to afford them all?

FRIDAY 3 MARCH

EXIT
Ubisoft (£35)
A pleasingly original game that puts you in the shoes of a professional escapologist and sees you solving various puzzles in order to rescue victims from life-threatening dangers.

FIFA STREET 2
EA Sports BIG (£35)
EA's bombastic soccer sim is back with MC Harvey thankfully having departed, only to be replaced by the bizarre and thoroughly annoying choice of Zane Lowe; news that could perhaps be described as both wicked and/or skill.

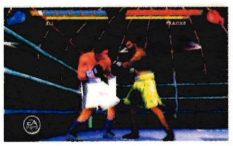
FRIDAY 10 MARCH

BUBBLE BOBBLE EVOLUTION
Rising Star (£35)
Bubble Bobble is an all-time classic, with one of the most insanely irritating and annoyingly catchy theme tunes ever devised. Buy this, and curse the evil musical genius responsible.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX
Capcom (£35)
Sho-ryu-ken! Capcom brings its never-ending *Street Fighter* legacy to the PSP, thanks to the arrival of *Alpha 3 MAX*. We always loved *Alpha 3* (nearly as much as *Street Fighter 3: 3rd Strike*, in fact) so being able to play it on the move will be aces. As long as the controls work, of course.

RECOMMENDED

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3
EA Sports (£35)
EA's boxing sim improves every year and is guaranteed not to pull its punches on the PSP. If you even have a passing interest in the sport, then this should have a place in your collection.



FRIDAY 17 MARCH

WORMS: OPEN WARFARE
THQ (£35)
The little pink critters are back with an awesome arsenal to put each other six feet under. Even better is the fact that the game has returned to its 2D origins, as we all know 3D Worms was rubbish.

STAY CLEAR

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE
Electronic Arts (£35)
Much like the PS2 version, this is the weakest Bond outing yet. Unless the super-spy's PSP conversion has seen a vast improvement since we played it then you may want to give this a miss.



KEY OF HEAVEN
SCEE (£35)
Think *Onimusha* crossed with *Golden Axe*, throw in some RPG-lite elements and you'll be in the neighbourhood of where *Key Of Heaven* is trying to come from.

MEGAMAN POWERED UP
Capcom (£30)
Another *MegaMan* game hits the PSP and features the ability to play as any of the super-powerful bosses. Not only that but you can also build and explore your very own levels... or you can simply take on the evil Dr. Wily and stop his plans for world domination.

PAC-MAN WORLD 3
Electronic Arts (£35)
Everyone's favourite yellow ball comes bouncing onto the PSP to celebrate his 25th anniversary. The evil genius Erwin has created a machine to penetrate into the Spectral World - be afraid, be very afraid.

SAMURAI WARRIORS: STATE OF WAR
Koei (£35)
A tactical action game set during the civil war in Japan that allows you to take control of famous military commanders and play out dramatic battles as the conflict unfolds.

WORLD POKER TOUR
2K Sports (£35)
Sure, a pack of playing cards would be cheaper at £1.50. But then you'd have to worry about making friends to play with.

ASTONISHA STORY
Ubisoft (£35)
Take on the role of a brave knight as you embark on an epic journey to recover a sacred relic that has been stolen. Wizards and other allies will assist you on the way - now that's magic!

FRIDAY 31 MARCH

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST
Sega (£35)
Breakneck racing in a range of beautiful Ferraris with a cute girl in the passenger seat - what more could you want? Well, apart from the whole thing to be completely real, of course.

MUST BUY

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: ESSENTIALS
Ubisoft (£35)
Sam Fisher finally sneaks his way onto Sony's handheld in a brand new adventure. It also makes up for the crushing delay of *Double Agent* on home consoles. Damn them.



APE ESCAPE: ON THE LOOSE
SCEE (£35)
A remake of the classic PSone title, featuring more of the lovably cheeky monkey's colourful chaos that made the original such a delight. Go ape!

FOOTBALL MANAGER HANDHELD
Sega (£35)
You either love 'em or hate 'em but there's no denying that Sports Interactive make the best football management games and now you can play anytime, anywhere. Clear your diary.

TOKOBOT
Take 2 (£35)
Use cute little robots to solve puzzles and defeat nasty monsters. Addictive gameplay and a range of fun mini-games make this perfect handheld fodder.

OUT NEXT MONTH APRIL

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY: THE TAKEOVER
EA Sports BIG

FIELD COMMANDER
Ubisoft

SOCOM: U.S. NAVY SEALS FIRETEAM BRAVO
SCEE

UNTOLD LEGENDS: THE WARRIOR'S CODE
Ubisoft

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POKER 2
Crave

LAWKS! THERE'S MORE! 2006

MAY

APE ESCAPE P
SCEE

INFECTED
THQ

TALKMAN
SCEE

THE CON
SCEE

JUNE

JUICED: ELIMINATOR
THQ

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
Ubisoft

SEPTEMBER

MORTAL KOMBAT: UNCHAINED
Midway

TBA

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF
Vivendi

BLACK & WHITE CREATURES
THQ

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30
Ubisoft

DAXTER
SCEE

FREE RUNNING
Eidos

GENERATION OF CHAOS
Nippon Ichi

GRAN TURISMO 4 MOBILE
SCEE

KILLZONE: LIBERATION
SCEE

ME & MY KATAMARI
Electronic Arts

MLB '06: THE SHOW
SCEE

MONSTER HOUSE
THQ

MONSTER HUNTER: FREEDOM
Capcom

METAL GEAR AC!D 2
Konami

NBA BALLERS: REBOUND
Midway

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED 5-1-0
Electronic Arts

OPEN SEASON
Ubisoft

POCKET RACERS
Konami

SILENT HILL EXPERIENCE
Konami

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH
Ubisoft

STREET RIDERS
Ubisoft

SURF'S UP
Ubisoft

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR
SCEE

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE
Buena Vista Games

THE GETAWAY
SCEE

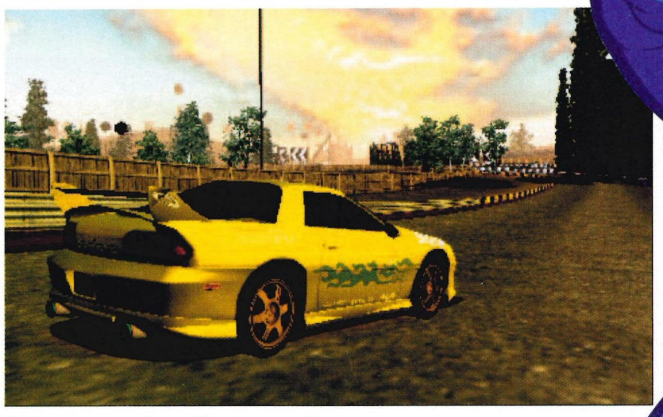
THE GODFATHER
Electronic Arts

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND
Eidos

VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE
Capcom

WORLD TOUR GOLF
Oxygen

YS: THE ARK OF NAPISHTIM
Konami



If this screenshot is anything to go by, it would appear that the Juice is loose... again



Out on import

The best and the latest PSP releases from around the world

PQ: PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

D3 Publisher ($30)

If you really can't wait for this brain-bending game to make its way to these shores, you can pick it up right now on import from the US. It features many puzzles to test your intelligence, most of which contain boxes. Sounds a little dull - but hey, that's us.

BOKU NO WATASHI NO KATAMARI DAMACY

Namco ($50)

If bizarre Japanese games are your thing then this quirky cult favourite is just for you. Scheduled for release in the UK in the next few months under the moniker of *Me & My Katamari* you can pick up the Japanese version on a variety of online stores right now. There's lots of Japanese text in the game but all the important stuff is perfectly understandable, so you can leave the phrase book on the shelf.

PSP Pirates

Avast, ye land lubbers! We've plundered the very best online merchants to find you all the greatest PSP booty. Next month... rum!

Movietyme.com have brought import copies of Sony's *Gretzky NHL*, *World Tour Soccer* and *NBA* down to the bargain basement price of £9.99. Also at a wallet friendly £14.99 price point you can pick up *Ridge Racer*, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour*, *Lumines*, *Archer Maclean's Mercury* and *Smart Bomb*.

Let's hope Play.com's sale lasts forever, as they currently have the fantastic *Virtua Tennis World Tour* (90% in this very magazine) for just £17.99. If movies are your thing, then you can also get hold of the awesome Arnie classic *Predator* for the crazy price of £6.99. And If that doesn't take your fancy, then *Robots* and *The Day After Tomorrow* can be found at that price too.

PSPOST

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT PSP? PEPPER US WITH PROSE...

CONTACT US

EMAIL: goplay@imagine-publishing.co.uk

POST: Go>Play, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 3 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EQ

UMD movie reviews, a lack of quality games, emulation and not being able to buy a PSP in the first place... you lot certainly have plenty to say, don't you? Keep it coming, though – there really is nothing like hearing you all **speak your brains...**

So many movies...

Picked up the second issue of your mag and loved it. Great to see such a detailed and fun magazine devoted to PSP. One thing though: having checked out your movie and music reviews, I was wondering whether you actually cover everything that's being released on UMD? I'm sure I read somewhere that there are more than 300 movies available and, while I appreciate you don't have the space to review everything, I'd at least like to know what's coming out. Is there somewhere that I can get this info? Perhaps you could do some sort of 'Also released this month' listing on your review pages? Anyway, keep up the good work.

Dennis Reardon, via email

We do try and squeeze as much in as possible when it comes to our extensive movie and music reviews section but, as the range of titles just keeps growing and growing, we're finding that we have to cherry-pick the best titles... oh, and the ones that you might be considering getting but actually suck harder than a Dyson vacuum, too. If you're looking for a comprehensive guide on the upcoming PSP movies and music, your best bet is to check out www.play.com – not only does the website list pretty much every UMD release that's coming out, but you can also buy them at knockdown prices and have them delivered directly to your front door. Bargain? Oh, you'd better believe it, buddy.



There are plenty of ace movies available on UMD, so the PSP isn't just for those who like gaming on the go – it's an all-round entertainment powerhouse



Just think... playing *Super Mario 64* on the PSP. Exciting thought, eh?

Naughty, naughty

Look, I know this isn't legal and I probably shouldn't even be asking you this question, but... will I ever be able to play games like *Super Mario 64*, *GoldenEye* and *Banjo-Kazooie* on my PSP? The emulation scene on PSP seems to be growing massively and an N64 emulator would be fantastic.

Nick Jackson, Boroughbridge

Never say never, Nick... although you have to remember that the newer a format is, the more complicated it will be to make an emulator for (not to mention the

Why aren't there more 'Triple A' titles heading to the PSP? Am I missing something here?

F.A.Q.

Mail to: goplay@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Putting out the fires of those burning PSP questions

> I've heard something about Sony's new LocationFree TV system, and the fact that I might be able, at some point in the future, to use it with my PSP, but I'm not sure what it does or how it works.

Andy Sheridan, via email

Well, we wouldn't worry – unless you're prepared to splash out about £250 for a LocationFree base station AND go to the US to get one, we doubt it's going to be an issue. Certainly, the ability to watch TV or movies via wi-fi hotspots with LocationFree is a nice idea but until it becomes popular enough to bring the price down and availability up, we'll stick to converting our own files and putting them on our Memory Sticks, thanks very much.

> I read on the internet that big capacity Memory Sticks don't come cheap and that Sony is planning on releasing a 2Mb version soon for over £100. But do you know if there's a limit on the size of a Memory Stick that Sony can produce for PSP? A 10Mb stick would be awesome – it'd hold loads of songs and films, more than my iPod Nano.

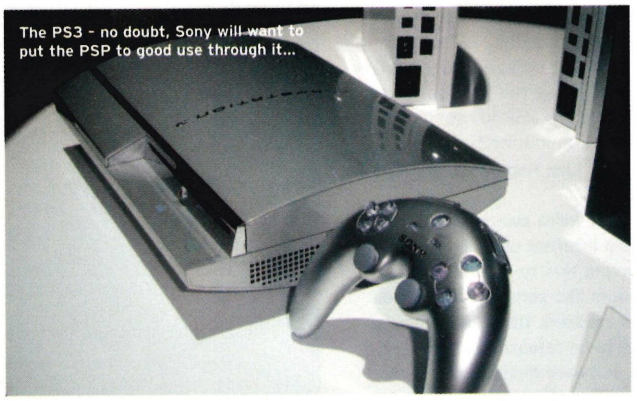
Katie Marsh, Chipping Sodbury

It certainly would, but you have to take into account the price of such a creation – it'd be so expensive that no-one would buy it. Once Sony's costs to make bigger Memory Sticks come down, they'll start appearing... mark our words.

STAR LETTER

FIRST OFF, I'D just like to say what a great job you've done on the mag, I don't usually buy videogames magazines but the PSP has so many features and games, it's hard to keep up without getting hold of **Go>Play** every month. Anyway, I would just like to ask if Sony has any plans to make even more of the PSP when the PS3 arrives. I've heard that on certain current PSP games, you can transfer elements you've unlocked in the PSP version of the game to your PS2... will this also be an option with PS3 games, or will Sony not worry about it? One more thing – my friend told me that the PSP will act as a sort of media controller for the PS3. Is he telling the truth or should I smack him upside the head for lying to me yet again?

Keith Hendersey, Blackpool



The PS3 – no doubt, Sony will want to put the PSP to good use through it...

Why, thank you kindly for the compliments – it's always nice to know we're loved. As for your questions though, it certainly seems like you've hit the PSP-shaped nail right on the head. The PSP is undoubtedly going to form an important part of Sony's strategy when the PlayStation3 comes along, whether it's through game data transfer, wireless connectivity or something else. We expect that you'll be able to stream video and music off your PS3 onto the PSP, play games on the PS3 while using the PSP as a controller and plenty more besides. Of course, there are no solid details right now (and probably won't be until the Electronic Entertainment Expo – or E3 – rolls around in May, so your mate's probably lying to you. Better get his head ready; it looks as though he needs a serious smacking of the upside variety, sir.



games get a whole lot bigger). The fact that there are already N64 emulators around means it certainly won't be impossible but unless you've got an incredibly big memory stick, we wouldn't count on you carrying more than a few games with you at any one time. And, of course, it's all completely illegal and get you in trouble. Bah.



Another *GTA* title... how can you possibly complain about that?

Where's the love?

From what I've been reading, *Gran Turismo 4 Mobile*, *Tomb Raider Legend* and another *GTA* port seem to be the biggest titles we can expect to see in 2006 on PSP. Given that Sony has been banging on about it being the fastest selling console in history, and the fact that it's supposed to be the greatest thing since someone started slicing bread, why aren't there more 'Triple A' titles heading our way, or am I missing something? Don't get me

>>

› I've just bought my kids a PSP and not being much of a technology buff, I'm struggling to access the wireless internet function, even though I know we live in a hotspot. How does it work, and what's an 'IP address'? (I do know about the Wi-Fi switch on the side of the PSP, by the way!)

James Robinson, Nuneaton

Theoretically, you shouldn't have to worry about any of that – just head into your PSP's Network Settings menu and tell it to detect any nearby wireless access points. Providing there are no security codes locking out the hotspot (and, if it's a locally provided one, there shouldn't be) then you'll be sorted. Just remember to take the PSP's wi-fi range when using it... you don't want to be cut off mid-game, do you?

› I've got an Apple Mac with iTunes, which I use to copy songs onto my iPod, obviously. I've just bought a PSP and I'm wondering whether I can transfer songs from iTunes straight onto my PSP's music facility. I've messed around with it but it doesn't seem to work. Any ideas?

Charlie Jeffries, via email

Unfortunately, it's not that simple. The only process of getting music onto your PSP is by copying it there directly yourself (which, if you're using a Mac, you'll have to do), or using software like Datel's Media MAX to handle all the work for you. Sorry, Charlie.

>>

HOT TOPIC

What's on everyone's brains this month?



What would you prefer – handheld ports of your favourite PS2 games, or something a bit more original?

I prefer newer versions of PS2 games I've already played, because I know what I'm getting into and that I'm not wasting my money on something that's going to turn out to be rubbish. Just so long as it's not exactly the same as the PS2 version, I don't mind at all...

Jimbo, via email

Remakes are great, but the PSP needs something else as well to set it apart – Sony's already proven that it's as powerful as a PS2, but without the decent new games to make people want it, why bother?

Andrea Trenton, Slough

Enough with the PS2-to-PSP ports! I want new games! I didn't spend nearly £200 to get a portable version of something I already own... don't make me go and buy a DS!

Gordon Rudd, Harrow

There's nothing wrong with developers making PSP versions of PS2 games, so long as they're decent. As soon as you start seeing the cracks, it's enough to make you want to put your handheld down and go back to playing PS2... and that's not a good thing, is it?

Steve Culverwell, Northampton

If the games that comes out on the PSP are as good as they are now, I don't care what I get. PS2 games, new PSP games... I know it's going to be awesome!

Nick, via email

The games on the PSP are far better than anything else I've ever played. I can take my PSP anywhere... you can't do that with a proper console, can you?

Mark Chiocca, Brighton

wrong, I love my PSP and I think it's a brilliant piece of kit, I just wonder whether I'd get better games on Nintendo's DS.

Dan Micklewhite, Hemel Hempstead

Go wash your mouth out with soap and water right now, young man... that's a terrible thing to say! True, it might seem like there's a lack of big-hitting titles on the horizon but you need to look at the bigger picture – or, more specifically, the huge list of quality games just around the corner that you might not have considered. *Killzone: Liberation*, *Loco Roco*, *Fight Night Round 3*, *Syphon Filter*, *Def Jam: Fight For New York*... these are the things that we want. And don't forget, E3 is just around the corner so expect to see plenty of games announced there.

Selling out

At the end of your letters page in issue two, you asked if people had found it difficult getting their hands on a PSP. Frankly, I have to say that the answer is most definitely "yes". I decided to buy one at the beginning of October and it took me until the end of November to get my hands on one. I looked all over the place – I even saw a banner saying 'PSPs in stock' on the outside wall of Toys 'R' Us and when I got there... well, they weren't. The only saving grace was that by the time I got my hands on one, the new Giga Pack was out and I got a fairly good deal.

Shay Walters, Poole

We know what you mean, Shay... considering all the boasting that Sony's doing about how well the PSP is selling, we'd like to see a few more of them on the shelves for people to actually get hold of. Still, with Christmas now well out of the way, we expect that stock will start filtering into stores once again – if you're hoping to get one from Santa this coming December (and remember, that's only 10 months away), it might be a good idea to go out and buy it now. You know... just to be sure.

All about the freebies

I think your magazine is really good, but would it be possible to give away a UMD on the cover with footage of the latest games and movies available on PSP?

Mo Witton, Houghton le Spring

It'd be nice, wouldn't it? Unfortunately, until Sony lifts the restrictions on only Sony-licensed companies being allowed to press their own UMD discs, we doubt it's going to happen. Still, a disc of some kind with movie and game trailers might not be such a bad idea... we'll look into it and get back to you. Promise.

Turn left... now

I've recently read on the net that soon the PSP will also double up as a GPU; does this mean I can lose the TomTom and start using my PSP to help me find my way around town?

Liza Hammond, Weymouth

Not that we're aware, Liza – certain internet sites are reporting this to be the case, but it seems like someone's got their wires crossed. Turns out, Sony's going to be releasing a series of map software designed to show you places of interest and routes to popular spots in certain countries; it'll be handy, but it isn't the GPS tracking everyone thinks it is. If you want that, you're better off getting a Gizmondo. But don't – they're really, really rubbish.



***Killzone: Liberation* is going to be a real corker – how can anyone say there are no decent titles for the PSP when games like this are coming?**



Point and laugh, everyone – it's that silly Gizmondo thing. Ha!

Next month: tell us exactly what it is about your PSP that makes you so happy to have one. Go on...

>> Last year I bought one of those Bose SoundDocks for my iPod and it works brilliantly. Is Bose planning on releasing something similar for PSP? (I've looked on Bose's website and couldn't find anything.) If not, is there anything you can recommend that does a similar job? Price isn't a problem; I want to get the best possible thing available, although it has to be portable.

Dave Nichols, Plymouth

It doesn't look as though Bose has got any plans to enter the PSP peripheral market just yet, which is a shame – its stuff is pretty freakin' sweet, although it can also be a tad pricey if you're looking to get hold of the really good stuff. Thankfully though, there are a few other options you can look at, as both Joytech and Logic 3 have speaker systems available for the handheld. We'd be tempted to go for the Logic 3 Sound Grip as it's not only incredibly good at boosting your PSP's audio abilities, but also helps keep the handheld useable; plus, it comes with a stand so you can watch films hands-free, and even gather a small crowd, possibly whilst charging them to watch and selling them popcorn for an extortionate price. A portable cinema with no seating or cleaning up... what more could you possibly ask for?

GO>PLAY

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It's a family affair

The Godfather

OUT: APRIL

Publisher **EA** / Developer **In-House** / Players **1**

WHAT IS IT?
EA does *GTA* in this free-roaming mean street adventure based on Francis Ford Coppola and Mario Puzo's epic family drama.

Delay," Thomas Jefferson once said, "is always preferable to error." Which just goes to show that Dubya isn't the first American president to be found a little wanting in the upstairs department.

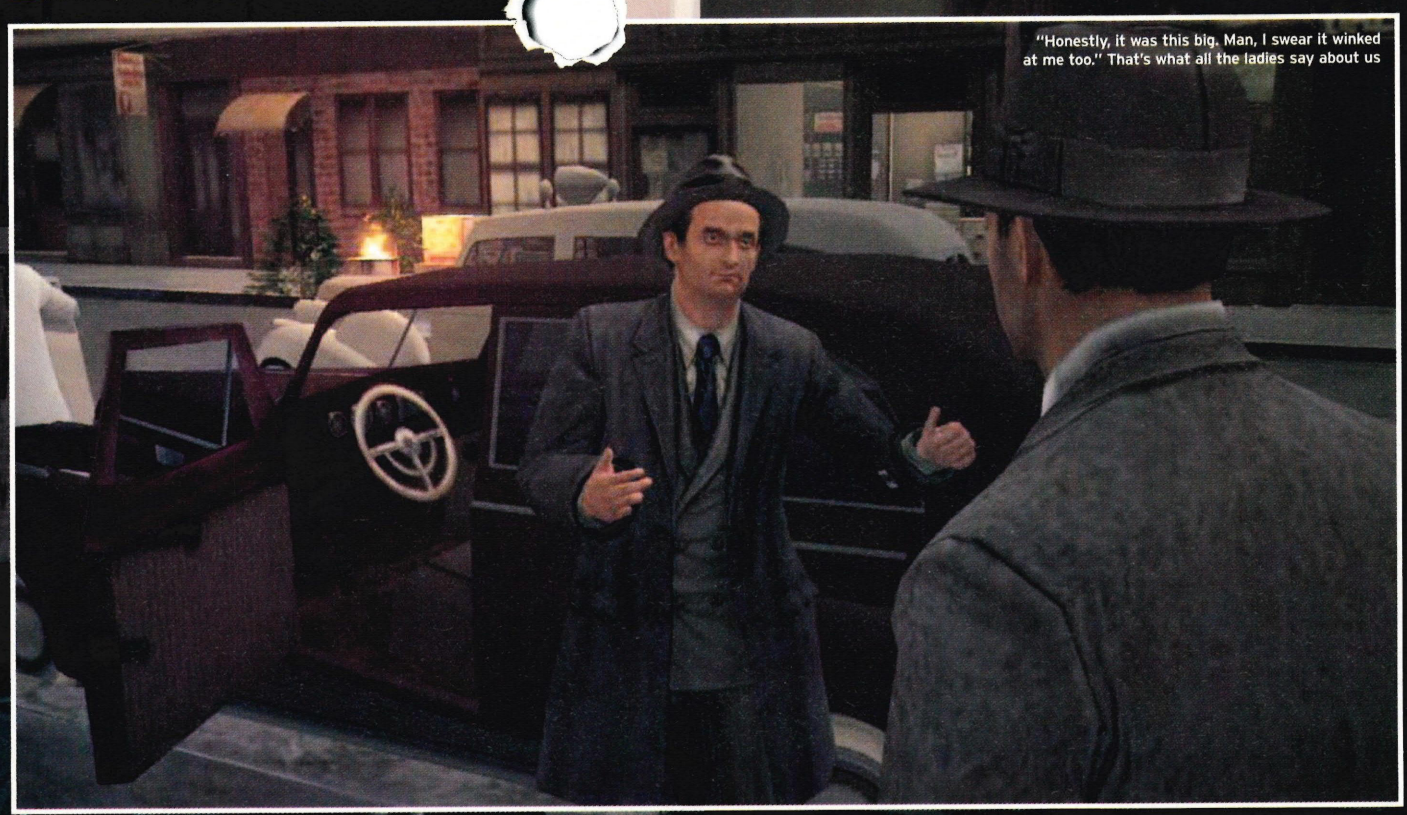
Contrary to Jefferson's pronouncement, and as anyone with even a passing interest in videogames knows, delay is about the least preferable thing imaginable for a new title. In fact, it's something of a curse. There is, after all, no more ominous sign for a game, no greater guarantee of utter mediocrity, than pushing back its release date.

While developers invariably maintain that they're spending the extra time perfecting the game, tidying up glitches and fixing bugs, and the publisher's PR department whirrs into overdrive, assuring us that the unfortunate postponement will make sure the finished product looks and feels just right, we've seen enough of these games to know that's oh-so-rarely the case.

It's something of a shock, then, to find that EA's *The Godfather* might just be the exception. Contrary to all our expectations, and in spite of a seemingly interminable delay, the game of Mario Puzo's masterpiece is actually shaping up very nicely.

We'll admit that we were a little concerned when we first heard that the monolithic publisher was going to take on such sacred source material, and early impressions seemed to suggest yet another lazy *Grand Theft Auto* clone.

Stepping onto the streets of the Corleone's NYC, however, it's immediately apparent that this isn't the '*True Crime: New York City* circa 1940' abomination we half expected. Thankfully *The Godfather* is much more ambitious – an epic



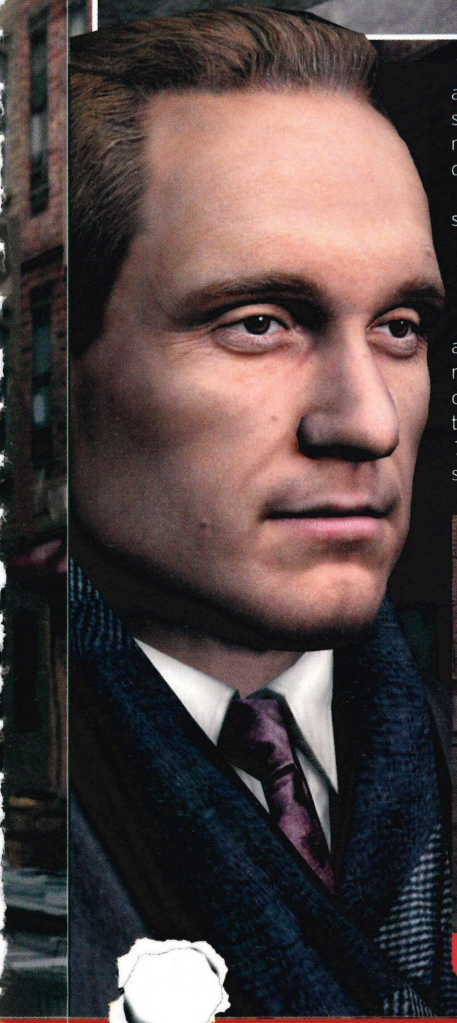
"Honestly, it was this big. Man, I swear it winked at me too." That's what all the ladies say about us

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Each of the Big Apple's distinct boroughs recreated in astonishing detail and Forties style
- Impressive cinematic style throughout
- Story or character-driven game arcs
- Voiceovers from James Caan, Robert Duvall and the late Marlon Brando
- Based on the daddy of all movies



The good news is that she's wearing a red coat, so you won't have to worry about blood stains



action adventure with a broad scope and cinematic style that might just mean that this family drama can live up to expectation.

Though it's a free-roaming mean-street adventure, *The Godfather* is a little more cerebral than *GTA*. It's about keeping your friends close, and your enemies closer, loyalty and fear, building your reputation, and ultimately it's about gaining respect. Sure, there's the requisite dose of shocking ultraviolence, played out to the incongruous accompaniment of *The Godfather*'s soothing classical score, but there's more to this gangster actioner than Tommy guns and sleeping with the fishes.

In the sprawling metropolis that is Forties New York, sumptuously rendered on the PSP's stunning screen, your actions don't go unnoticed.

> More than just Tommy guns and **sleeping with the fishes**

Rather, by populating the city with innocent civilians and rival mobsters, each endowed with their own motive-driven behaviours, just like characters from *The Sims*, EA has managed to create the impression of a living, breathing world where each decision you make, and each action you take, has real consequences.

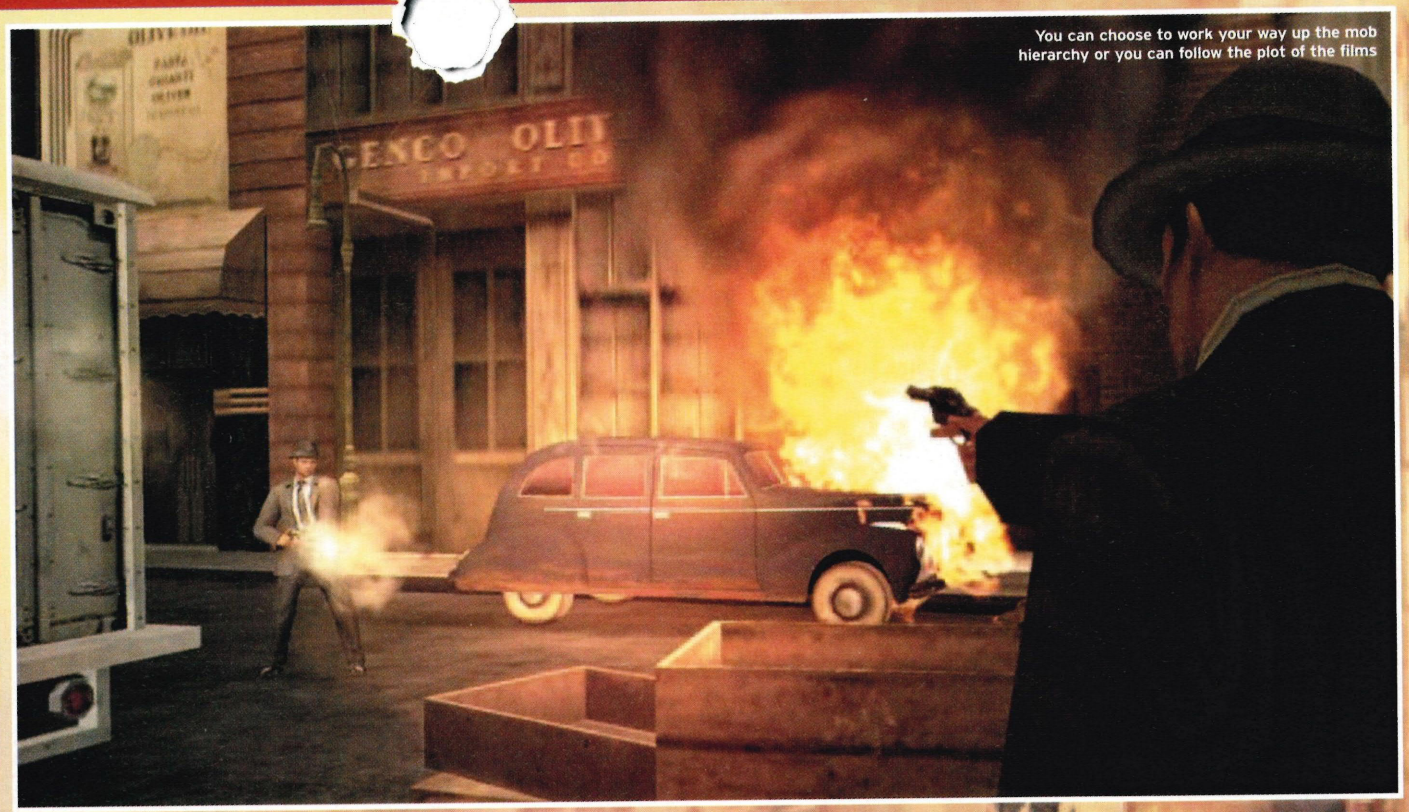
As such, you can't wander around the streets swiping cars and dishing out brutal beatings to anyone who so much as gets in your way without attracting the attention of Johnny Law, with your Heat meter measuring how much of a target you are for the NYPD.

And while it's possible to cool off by heading to a safe house (much like stopping in at the spray shop in *GTA*), *The Godfather*'s multi-layered approach means it's also possible to bribe the local Filth, offering beat cops a small chunk of wedge in return for turning a blind eye to your nefarious activities.

Obviously, the more serious your crime, the more it'll cost to pay off the cops, and if you want to avoid jail for a serious offence, like a bank robbery or a hold-up, you'll need to go straight to the top and line the police chief's pockets with some of your hard-



The likenesses are pretty faithful to the movies, including the world famous No Neck Man pictured here. How does this guy turn his head?



You can choose to work your way up the mob hierarchy or you can follow the plot of the films

earned. Drop some serious moolah and you can enlist cops to help you take on rivals during gang wars, so the long arm of the law can be called in if things start heading south.

That said, your low-rung hoodlum is working for the Corleone family, and The Don isn't going to be in the mood to do you any favours if you've splurged all his cash on backhanders. And besides, using excessive force on innocent bystanders is bad for business, and you're not going to rise to the top of the family tree if the local population are in revolt.

Violence, then, isn't always an option, and the emphasis on intimidation as a means of getting what you want and extorting local businesses makes *The Godfather* a genuinely refreshing change from the slew of *GTA*-alikes.

All of the different types of local businesses – grocers, bars, diners and hotels – pay protection money, and if they're not paying you, they're paying the Tattaglias or the Barzinis, or one of the other New York families, so it's up to you to use your powers of persuasion to make them change their minds.

Intimidation is best achieved by a combination of verbal and physical threats, which roughly translates as lightly roughing up the shop owner until he agrees to give you a cut of the profits. Be warned, though – dish out too much of a beating to the elderly shop owners and they're liable to keel over and die, a scenario that sees the business remain closed for good and, at the same time, might attract the attention of the local police.

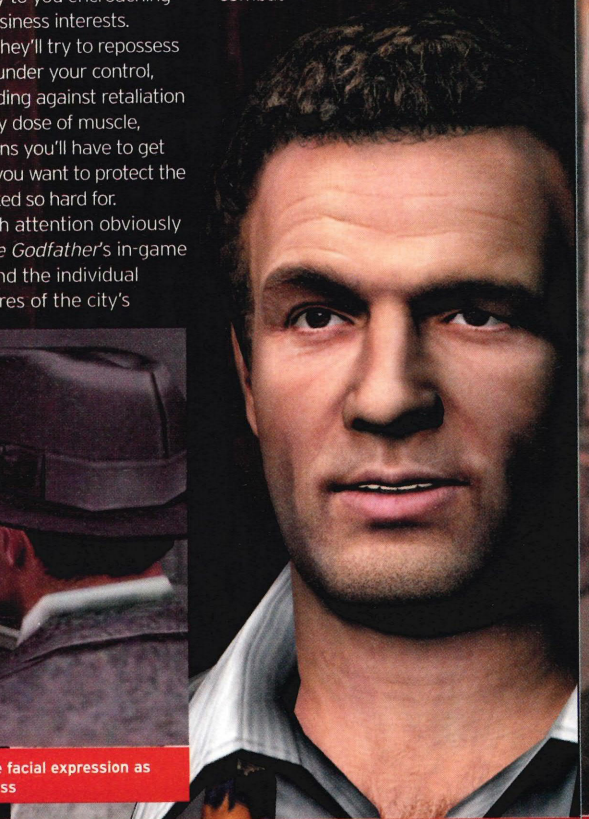
Make the shop owner an offer he can't refuse though and as your empire expands, so you can use the local stores as fronts for your prostitution and gambling rackets. Turn the grocers into a house of ill repute and you'll soon have a queue of customers only too eager to part with their cash and morals.

As your criminal network grows, however, you'll arouse the interest of the other five New York families, who won't take kindly to you encroaching on their business interests. Invariably they'll try to repossess the shops under your control, often guarding against retaliation with a hefty dose of muscle, which means you'll have to get physical if you want to protect the turf you've worked so hard for.

With so much attention obviously lavished on *The Godfather*'s in-game environment and the individual needs and desires of the city's heaving population, we were sceptical about the combat element. Happily, however, EA has come up trumps. In fact, by importing the combat



Hey, it's the No Neck Man again and he's still got the same facial expression as before – a mixture of shame, relief and creep overfriendliness





Crisp suits, slicked back hair and massive machine guns, available by mail order now

mechanic from the superlative *Fight Night* series, *The Godfather* surpasses even *GTA*, replacing *Liberty City Stories*' basic 'lock on target and shoot' combat system with a more refined, more sophisticated brand of fisticuffs.

Though *The Godfather* does require you to lock onto your target, the game mimics *Fight Night*'s controls once you've done so - the analogue nub controls movement, while the face buttons take the place of the PS2's right analogue stick, controlling an array of punches and kicks, jabs and haymakers. Unlike *Fight Night*, the triggers don't control blocks or allow you to dodge your opponent's attacks. Instead, they allow you to grab hold of your opponent by the scruff of the neck and inflict a particularly punishing series of attacks, including a slap across the jowls or the classic head butt, even allowing you to launch them through a glass window should the occasion arise.

Whack enough hoods and lowlifes and your Respect level will steadily rise, meaning people will be more inclined to do favours for you, which is how the family likes to conduct business. As you gain respect, and keep pulling in the cash, so your standing within the Corleone family increases. Just as in *GTA: San Andreas*, there are myriad ways to enhance your rep, from taking out key enemies to donning new threads; after all, nothing says 'made man' quite like a sharp suit.

Working your way up from Sgarrista, or foot soldier, to Consigliere and eventually Don, your rise up the family tree is just one way to advance in the game; you can also choose to follow the story of the *Godfather* films, from the opening wedding scene, right through to the bloody finale and beyond, carrying out the same hits and killing sprees featured in Coppola's masterpiece.

[A genuinely refreshing change from the slew of GTA-alikes]

With James Caan, Robert Duvall, and the late Marlon Brando all on board to lend an extra layer of authenticity, *The Godfather* looks to be one of the most beautifully polished, profoundly ambitious pretenders to *GTA*'s throne we've yet seen. In fact, its catalogue of features rivals *San Andreas* for boldness and depth, meaning that - contrary to all our expectations - when it comes to the PSP's nascent action adventure library, EA's offering might just be the Don. ■

Jon Clegg

WE SAY **By all rights *The Godfather* should be a complete disaster. Stuck in development for what seems like forever, it's treading on Rockstar's turf and taking on a revered cinematic classic all at the same time. And yet somewhere along the way, it's all gone so right. Cerebral, action-packed and perfectly in keeping with the source material, this might just be an offer you can't refuse.**



EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Over 150 martial arts styles to learn
- You can create your own combos
- Harness the power of your Chi
- Download new skills, weapons and items
- Press the ⊙ button over and over again

It's all about swords and kung-fu and stuff

Key Of Heaven

OUT: MARCH

Publisher **Sony** / Developer **Climax** / Price **TBA** / Players **1**

WHAT IS IT?
A button-bashing RPG, in a non-descript Oriental setting

Life is loaded with uncertainties, but there are just as many things you can be damned sure of. You know, for example, that the sun is going to rise in the morning; you can be pretty certain that eating one of those pink things in a public urinal won't do you any favours, and it's also odds on that the press releases for videogames will always be sugar coated and lovely. Until *Key Of Heaven* comes along and screws up the theory entirely, that is.

"Create your own martial arts styles," it says. "More than 150 skills" and "countless combinations," it says. Okay, so far so predictable, but then Sony's media machine goes crazymental and spits out this: "Easy to control with simple one-button operation". What the... ! 'Easy to control' we like, but 'one-button operation' – surely this must be a misprint. Just taking into consideration the shoulder and main face buttons, we count at least six. That leaves five buttons not doing anything. Five buttons!



The animations in *Key Of Heaven* aren't bad at all. However, this move was probably achieved by pressing ⊙



Our hero loves getting his blue shaft of light out for the ladies



Never stand outside in a lighting storm with tin foil on your head



The bad guys are the ones that look as if they've poured custard over their heads and it's set. We like custard, especially with treacle pudding



'Everybody was kung fu fighting' would be a terrible caption as it's been done about a million times before. But not by us. Apart from now

However, you can't believe everything you read (except in GO>PLAY of course), so we broke out our preview copy and fired it up. The first thing that struck us was the graphics, which are pretty decent, as is the sound. The story – set in the fictional world of Ohka – follows the exploits of Shinbu, a young man with a troubled past who finds out that the future of his people lies in his hands and he's also given the chance to avenge the death of parents. It's not massively original but it is, nevertheless, fairly interesting.

Unfortunately, there are still a few flaws that need to be ironed out, like the camera, which doesn't do justice to the well-designed 3D environments and also the lack of a training level. It's too early to pass judgement though, as these little problems might well be fixed by the time *Key Of Heaven* is released.

What probably won't be sorted out, however, is the simplistic button-bashing mechanic, which basically requires you to just hit the ⊙ button repeatedly until all the enemies are dead. On a positive note, you can upgrade your hero and learn new skills, as well as employing the intriguing Chi system, which determines which attacks are most effective against which enemies.

The simplistic button-bashing mechanic is a bit off-putting

Whether the RPG elements of the game will be enough to compensate for the simplistic battling, though, won't be completely clear until review time. ■ **Anthony Enticknap**

WE SAY **The basic nature of *Key Of Heaven*'s combat is off-putting, but it's too soon to make a decision. We're not writing this one off until we've seen review code, so in the meantime, we advise you to get that ⊙ button warmed up – just in case.**



"Die, colourfully costumed villains, die! Feel the pain!"



At this point, both you and he know that he's just about to get his evil ass kicked about the place like an old football



Different moves can be more effective against certain clans. It's all down to the Chi



EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- 15 Army divisions are at your disposal
- You can create your own missions and make them available to other players
- Campaign mode consisting of 30 missions
- 36 different types of unit
- Play online and watch your progress on the official leaderboard

Make lots of tiny people die in your hands

Field Commander

OUT: 31 March

Publisher **Ubisoft** / Developer **SOE** / Price **TBA** / Players **1-4**

WHAT IS IT?

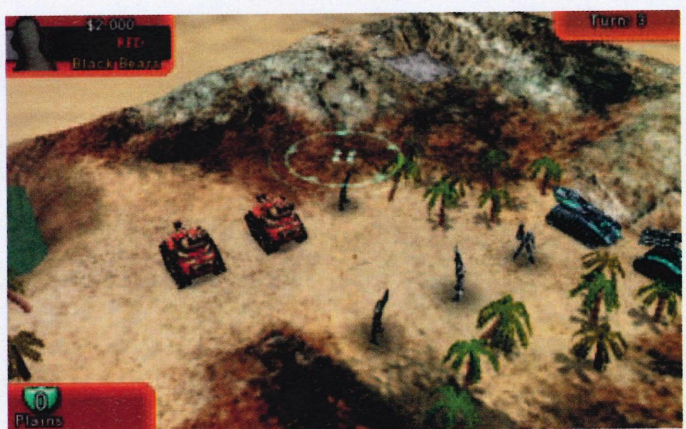
The PSP's first turn-based strategy title and being hailed as its answer to Nintendo's *Advance Wars*

Way back in the mid-Eighties, at least one of the GO>PLAY team spent far too many hours playing *Battle Chess* on the Commodore 64. To be fair, most of that time was taken up waiting for the computer to load an animation of a knight having a scrap with a bishop. Indeed, the load times were slower than a tortoise with no legs but, vitally, it was worth every second.

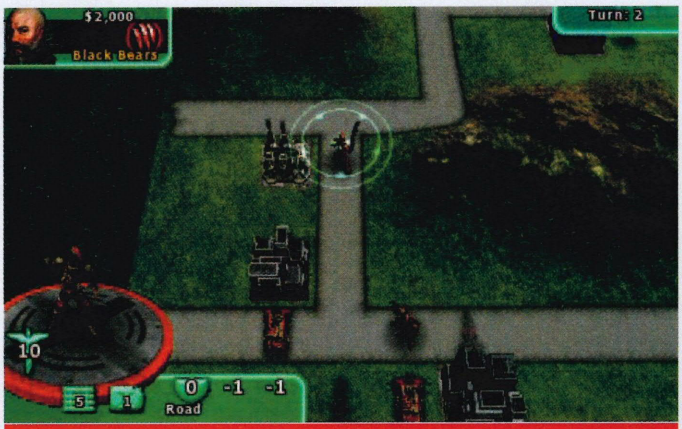
A couple of decades on and we're still playing *Battle Chess*, only it's not *Battle Chess* anymore, it's *Field Commander* on the PSP. You might be thinking it's a little odd to compare anything on the PSP to a game as ancient as chess, or to a machine as antiquated as the C64, but there are real similarities. Like any turn-based strategy, the gameplay basically consists of moving various units around a board, much like chess. When you come across an enemy unit, the camera



The battle animations are fairly well presented and a little bit reminiscent of *Battle Chess*, but perhaps not enough to warrent the introduction to this review



The overall design of *Field Commander* definitely owes something to the *Command & Conquer* series, which makes us very happy



From time to time, we feel a little pang of guilt for all the fictional computer people we've killed over the years. Then we kill some more and we feel okay again



Field Commander features several different unit types, including aeroplanes, which are handy for checking out the rest of the map

zooms in so you can witness a close-up animation of the action - a bit like *Battle Chess*, then.

Of course, there aren't any chess pieces in *Field Commander* and you can't just 'take' an enemy unit; you have to fight for it. Also, there's more tanks. And so here our analogy falls flat. Luckily, judging from what we've seen, *Field Commander* won't.

Hailed as the PSP's answer to *Advance Wars*, but looking more like *Command & Conquer*, the game has a decent variety of modes, including an extensive campaign and plenty of multiplayer options.

In the Campaign mode you take control of a Field Commander working for the Allied Nations, but in truth the story is of little consequence, because although the single-player mode will provide a decent challenge, we're betting that the real fun will lie with multiplayer.

But regardless of who your opponent is, there should be a good helping of variety in the battles. In each environment, buildings and terrain can be used tactically, so there should be plenty of different ways to emerge victorious.

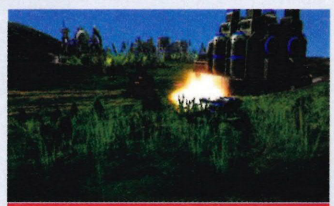
At this stage, there are still a couple of minor imperfections that need dealing with but *Field Commander* is showing signs of being a classic, with or without the chess pieces. ■ **Anthony Enticknap**

[A couple of decades on and we're still playing Battle Chess]

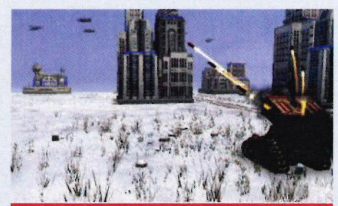
WE SAY **Although you can only save the game after each mission, the turn-based nature of *Field Commander* should make it perfect for short bursts of play. That said, with this kind of game, there's usually enough to keep you going for hours and if the multiplayer is implemented correctly, there's no reason why it can't become a must-have title.**







Unsurprisingly, the tanks are double hard, ahem, bar stewards...



... but these are even harder. We blew up many things with these



It may look all futuristic and, therefore, restricted to the realms of fiction, but Martin actually arrives to work in one of these things every day



Use the terrain to limit the damage that your opponent can cause. Like when we hide behind our monitors to avoid being hit by paper clips from the other side of the office



EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- There are 14 huge single-player missions and 12 multiplayer environments
- Completing levels unlocks extras in *SOCOM 3* on PS2
- Up to 16 players at once in multiplayer mode
- Lock-on targeting to overcome the lack of a second analogue nub

Better late than never, we suppose

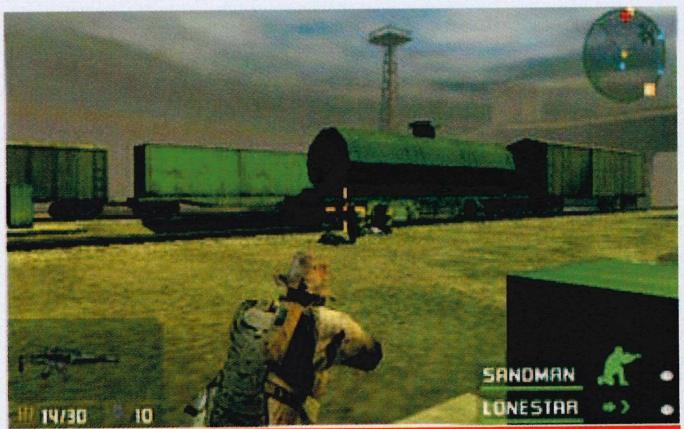
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo

WHAT IS IT?
A multiplayerific third-person tactical shooter, which lets you control a guy called Sandman

OUT: APRIL
Publisher **Sony** / Developer **Zipper Interactive** / Players **1-16**

Since November of last year, a number of fairly interesting events have taken place – the Conservative Party elected a new leader; Joe Scully from *Neighbours* successfully sued Grundy Television for unfair dismissal and, somehow, Peter Crouch became a good striker. As significant as these events undoubtedly are, they seem wholly unimportant when we realise that since 8 November 2005, the Yanks have been playing *SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo* on their PSPs, while Europe has been typically made to wait. However, if the response coming from the other side of the pond is anything to go by, it should be worth it.

Scheduled for a simultaneous release with *SOCOM 3: U.S. Navy SEALs* on the PS2, *Fireteam Bravo* will mark the handheld debut for the franchise, which was the first PlayStation game to utilise a USB headset for communication.



The targeting system has been created to ovecome the PSP's limitations and looks to have been sucessful too. Thanks, Zipper



Think you can hide from us up there, huh? We got news for you



Sniping is cowardly, but in videogames it's okay with us



Although there's plenty to do in single-player, we're looking forward to getting online and dealing out the pain to the rest of the world



Even though it's just you and your mate, Lonestar, you're a lean, mean killing machine anyway. Which is just as well, because there's lots of that to be done

In terms of gameplay, it's business as usual – squad based, tactical third-person shooting.

Other things are similar, too; the stories are linked with each other, so some of the levels in the PS2 game feature here, although *Fireteam Bravo* does include Chile as one its locations and this is a PSP exclusive. But, of course, there are inevitably changes which come about as a result of the PSP's limitations. For a start, rather than controlling a squad of four, your main guy, Sandman, is accompanied only by the aptly named Lonestar. Another difference is the lack of headset support, but if the word on the world wide web is to be believed, this will be on its way shortly after the game is released.

Probably the most significant difference between *Fireteam Bravo* and the PS2 *SOCOM* games, however, is the control system, which, unsurprisingly, has had to go through a bit of a rethink to accommodate the PSP's non-existent second analogue nub. The developer, Zipper Interactive, has apparently succeeded, by installing a simple lock-on targeting function, while also allowing the more hardcore gamers to make use of the manual Free Look mode. At this early stage, we're optimistic that the controls will be spot-on.

We can say with a good deal of certainty that this will rock

The same sentiments apply to the gameplay – from what we've heard and seen in preview code, this instalment of the *SOCOM* series provides as much of a challenge as its predecessors. With 14 massive single-player missions, set over several locations – including Morocco, Poland and Yorkshire (actually, forget that last one) – there should be plenty to do. As always, there's a wide array of weapons at your disposal, with the usual enhancements available and just as with previous *SOCOM* games, you'll be taking on terrorists, completing primary and secondary objectives as you go.

Meanwhile, the multiplayer allows for up to 16 players at once, either locally or online, and consists of the typical last-man-standing, extraction and defend-the-base games. American players have reported a steady frame-rate (which is, perhaps, surprising considering the intensive nature of the gameplay and the quality of the graphics) and there's no reason why this shouldn't be the same for the European release.

Another feature worthy of note is the ability to synch your *Fireteam Bravo* data to that on *SOCOM 3* on PS2. By completing levels and objectives on the PSP game, you can unlock extras on its PS2 counterpart and vice-versa. To be honest, we're not sure just what's available to unlock, but we're certain it'll be wicked-cool.

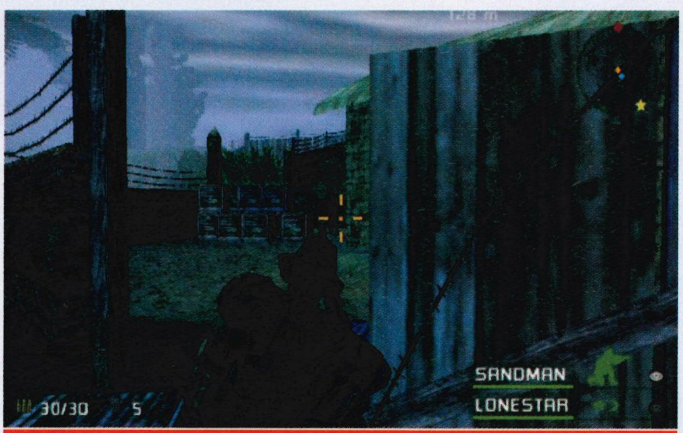
As it is, *Fireteam Bravo* is looking to be an essential title when it's released in April, but much will depend on the quality of the AI and the game's long-term appeal. However, even though it might be premature to make any kind of qualitative judgement, we're going to go right ahead and say this game is going to be amazing and the anticipation of its release will only make it better.

On an entirely unrelated note, Peter Crouch is still no way worth £7million. ■ **Anthony Enticknap**

WE SAY **Since *SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo* has been out for so long in America, we can say with a good deal of certainty that it will rock. However, we're too old and too wise (well, maybe just too old) to make up our minds without playing the game first. That said, it *is* going to rock.**



None of us has ever been in the armed forces, but if we had they'd be much more fun than they are. We'd get rid of those boring green uniforms, for a start



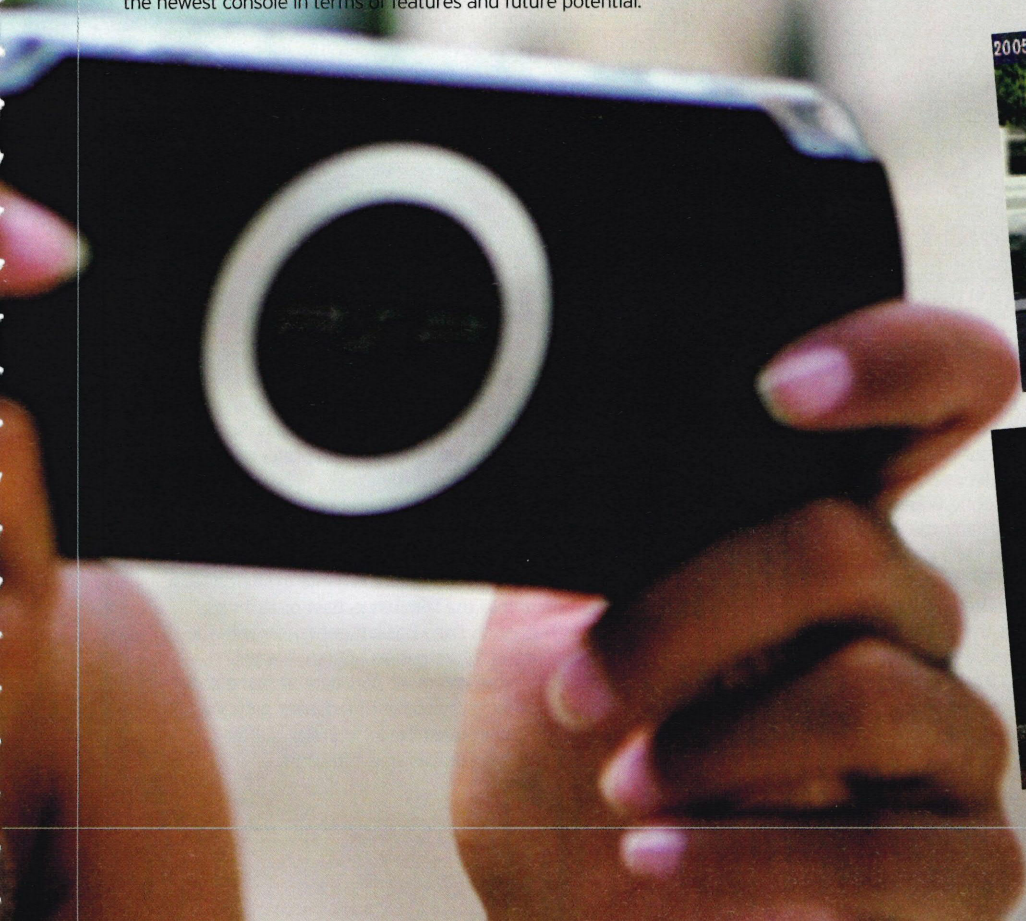
Those boxes are full of cheesy nibbles and we love cheesy nibbles. First we're going to take care of him and then we're having a cocktail party. With cheesy nibbles



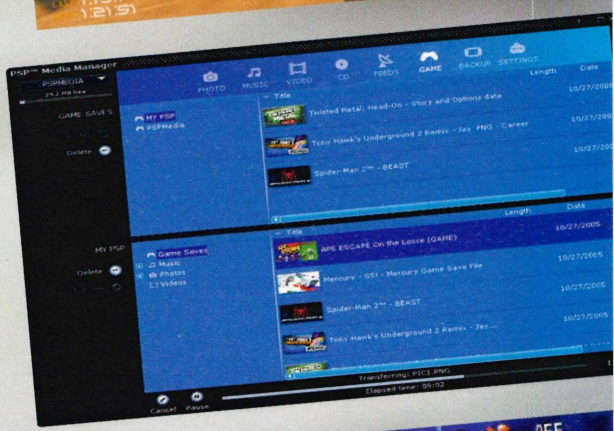
10 WAYS THE PSP HAS CHANGED THE FACE OF GAMING

The PSP isn't just the most powerful portable in the world, it's the most exciting console of any kind. Here's the proof.

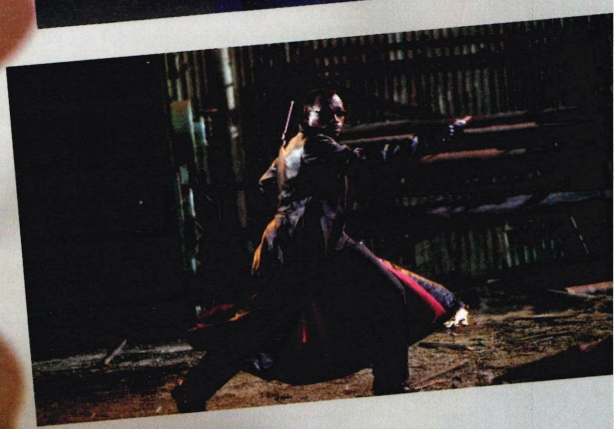
When Sony first released the PSP it wasn't just trying to muscle in on the portable games market, it was creating a new type of console. Home console quality 3D graphics and sound is one thing, but that's only one reason why the PSP is the most important thing to happen to the videogames industry for a decade. We examine what it is that makes the PSP so different, and why it outranks even the newest console in terms of features and future potential.











1 Why Graphics Matter

Until the PSP arrived graphics on a portable console worked in a bizarre time warp, permanently stuck at least ten years behind home consoles. 3D graphics were impossible, as were voiceovers and music that didn't make your ears bleed. When the PSP arrived it was like going from a Model T Ford to a Ferrari 612 Scaglietti in one step.

Nerds can argue about exactly how powerful the PSP is compared to the PS2 but the fact is that in the hands of a half decent developer the difference is irrelevantly small. Having a portable with current generation home console graphics isn't just intended as erotica for graphic whores though, it suddenly opens up the full range of game genres that were previously impossible on portables.

Detractors keep moaning about the number of racing games on the PSP but they're missing point. Before now, racers were essentially impossible on a portable - unless you had a thing for Super Sprint or sprite-based cardboard cutouts racing around a completely flat track.

Not only can we finally have complex, realistic racers but role-playing games can have proper cut scenes and proper text. Proper 3D platformers are now a reality, so that games such as Prince of Persia: Warrior Within actually look and play better on the PSP. Likewise beat-'em-ups no longer have to be just 2D, while those that are, are arcade perfect. Heck, Rising Star even has a flight simulator on the way. Essentially, any genre of game is now possible on the PSP, except those that require a bizarre controller (and even that didn't stop Taiko Drum Master).

So whenever someone tries to make up for the fact that their portable only plays games that work in early '90s style 2D by saying that graphics don't matter, only gameplay, remind them that in fact both are equally important. Without state-of-the-art 3D graphics the PSP wouldn't have anything like the range of games it does, enabling it to produce gameplay in any style you please.



2 Modish Infrastructure

Considering the amount of hoopla surrounding online access for the home consoles it's easy to forget that the PSP does it all without breaking a sweat. In fact it does it better than the home consoles with built-in Wi-Fi connectivity and full access to the internet. With Xbox Live and the PS2 all you can do is play games and talk to other people from the enclosure of a game's chat lobby. With the PSP you get a web browser built in and the ability to surf anywhere you want.

It's the unrestricted access to the web that the PSP's browser offers that is the key to the console being so much more than a games machine. Apart from the curate's egg of pleasures that is the worldwide web itself, the chance to download extra content directly onto your PSP is the real prize, with Sony starting the ball rolling itself with extra content for WipEout Pure. It then kept the information superhighway snowball rolling by allowing you to listen to podcasts via RSS channels as well.

Podcasts are basically audio (and sometimes video as well) weblogs that can be everything from radio stations to city audio tours to the most popular and obvious usage - random rants from every man and his dog on whatever topic happens to occur to them that day. So prevalent are podcasts now that you can find them on pretty much any subject imaginable, including games, obviously.

Of course, if you do insist on using the PSP purely as a games machine then the internet is hardly wasted. Twisted Metal: Head-On was the first proper online PSP game and it had a fully featured player-matching lobby that would put many a PS2 online game to shame, with a proper online chat feature and all the trimmings. Best of all it was completely free to use and although Sony has left publishers with the option to charge for online play in future games nobody has yet.

As Wi-Fi hotspots becomes more and more prevalent at home and on the move, you'll be seeing a lot more online PSP games, with the likes of SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo, Monster Hunter Freedom and Battlefield 2: Modern Combat all yet to come.

3 Video Killed The Game Star

The UMD disc format was invented purely for the PSP so it's unsurprising that Sony should want to try and get its money's worth out of it. Once again it's as near as dammit the same quality as DVDs used on a home console and yet at the same time vastly more useful.

After all, you can get a standalone DVD player now for under £50, so being able to play movies on your PS2 really isn't that much of a bonus. There isn't any portable that plays the same quality movies as well as the PSP though and that includes the new iPod. UMD movies are pretty cheap and after just a few short months there's already a huge range (including music videos and, er... prOn).

Some movies (notably the rubbish ones) are even starting to include games content as well with the otherwise dreadful Stealth coming with some exclusive WipEout Pure extras. You can bet that when the next big budget Sony Pictures film comes out it'll go overboard with the concept as well, and UMD will become the format of choice for some releases, just as it is with Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children.

Of course, you don't just have to watch video clips on UMDs, as long as you've got a decent sized Memory Stick. This allows you to watch all those episodes of Dad's Army that the BBC stubbornly refuses to release on UMD. With all the important video formats already supported, it is this feature more than any that makes the PSP irresistible to non-gamers. It also makes it much more difficult for rival hardware to try and muscle in on the PSP's territory, with portable video players currently forced to sell purely on price alone since they can't hope to match the PSP's range of other features.



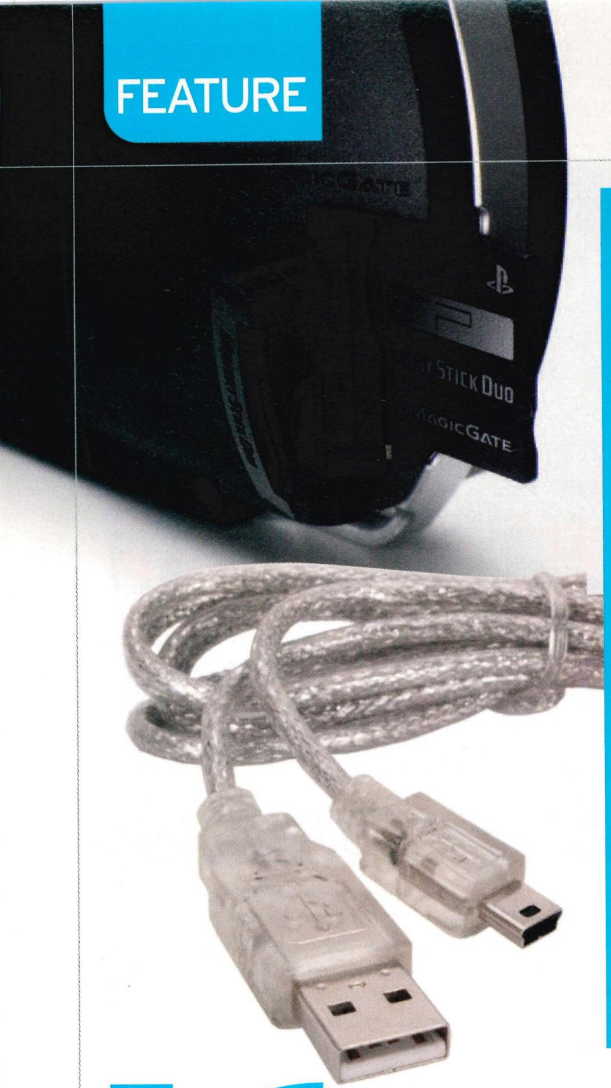
4 sPod

Ken Kutaragi is a big fan of crazy talk but even he has never suggested that the PSP could replace the iPod as the instrument of choice for playing music on the move. It might not be the number one choice then but it's certainly number two and when you consider everything else it does it's poised to take over as the only serious all-in-one solution to never being bored when you're on the bus.

With all the major music file formats now supported, including MP3 and WMA (assuming you have firmware version 2.6) and the new iTunes-like Connect service, the only reason not to use the PSP instead of your iPod is the size of your Memory Stick, which to be fair in most cases is going to be smaller than the iPod's hard drive.

Much is made of the PSP's relatively low attach rate for games (the ratio for the number of games that are bought for every console owned) but the reason Sony isn't worried is that the console itself is being bought just as much as a multimedia player as anything else. There's not just video and audio files but also photos, which as simple as it may sound is actually one of the PSP's major killer apps. The reason the PSP Media Manager was released was primarily to aid in the movement and sorting of photos to and from your PC, rather than video or audio. You might be able to fill up the average Memory Stick relatively quickly with movies or music files but you'd have to put in quite a bit of effort to do the same with just photos. A virtual photobook might not sound like the last word in rock 'n' roll hardware but the option's there and it's yet another way for the PSP to distance itself from the competition.





5 The Right Connection

No console is an island nowadays, entire of itself. For the next generation home consoles though there is only an awkward kind of socialising with the PC and possibly backwards compatibility - if you're lucky. The PSP though is more garrulous and its ability to instantly connect to any PC through a simple cable is, as mentioned, one of its most important features. It's this that allows you to watch any video, audio or picture file you want on your PSP, but that's really only the start of it.

There are already a number of PSP games, such as WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw 2006, which interact in a fairly basic way with their PS2 counterparts, allowing you to unlock special features and characters. Sony has also spoken about games that will allow you to directly control PS2 games via the PSP and vice versa - even going as far as to suggest that some will be released as a bundle with both a UMD and PS2 disc included.

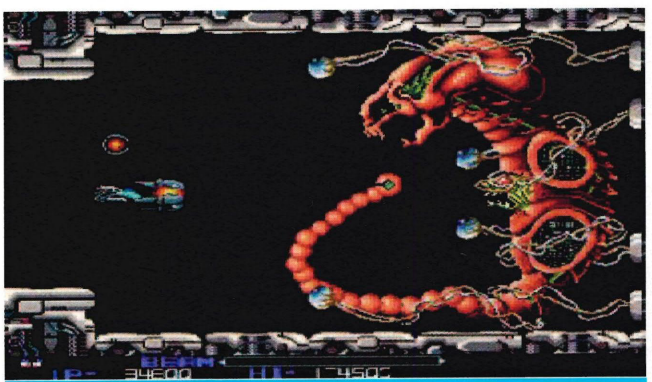
Whether that will actually happen with the PS2 is unclear though because as far as connectivity is concerned Sony clearly sees the PS3 as a more obvious partner. The PSP didn't exist when the PS2 was born so any connection with it has to be a work around, but the PS3 has been designed with the PSP in mind from the off. Indeed right from Sony's first E3 press conference they have been talking about how the PSP will act as a remote access device for the PS3. The example being given that you could be using your PSP in Japan to access a music or photo file on your PS3 back in Britain and play it instantly just as if it was a local file on your Memory Stick.

The implications for gaming from this one example are obvious, with the PS3 potentially being used as a server hub for networked PSP games or a storage medium for additional files and movies. Imagine a new PSP game that used the PS3 like a giant Wi-Fi hard drive, and suddenly the portable seems even more powerful than ever. PSP games could also use the PS3 and its access to a TV screen for displaying common data such as maps and stats during a multiplayer game or reversing the idea so that you use the PSP as a controller to play a PS3 game, while keeping your own private info and display hidden. Together the PSP and PS3 will seem like merely two facets of the same console and you can bet that Sony will be taking advantage of this fact from the off.

6 The Bedroom Programmer

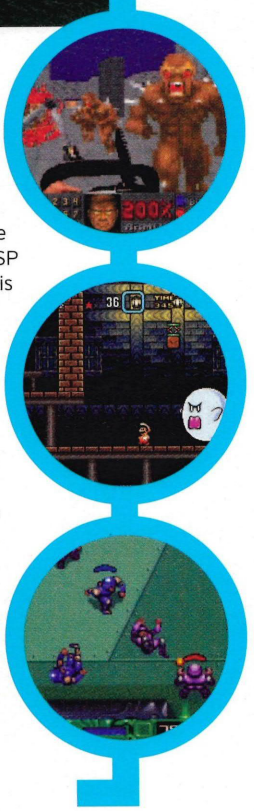
The PSP is a far more open ended system than the PS2 ever was. The connectivity with the PC, the infrared port (which can turn the PSP into a great universal remote) and the web browser means it's possible to make it do or run pretty much anything you want. Sony's response to the so-called homebrew scene has been largely antagonistic, with each new firmware update trying to stop people from using it to its full potential (although to be fair this is probably largely so they don't get sued to buggery for allowing the PSP to run unlicensed software or retro games that publishers were still trying to charge real money for).

Case in point, one of the first things anyone got working that they shouldn't have on the PSP was coin-op emulator MAME, which instantly gives you access to hundreds of classic arcade games from every publisher in the business. On a technical level it works really well and it opened the floodgates for emulators for everything from the NES and Mega Drive to the Game Boy Advance. This essentially gives the PSP the biggest library of games outside the PC - even if it is unofficial.



Classic games like R-Type can be played on your PSP if you download the right emulation programme, try doing that on a Nintendo DS

As soon as hackers got in a bit of practice the PSP was flooded with everything from ports of the PC version of Quake II to software that lets you turn the portable into an iPod remote. Fans have even found a way to run the PSP display though a TV, although it also requires a bit of hardware tinkering as you remove the console's faceplate. Of course some software has been perfectly legitimate, with everything from keyboard and drum machine sequencer to tools to connect the PSP to a Mac and run its files to an online TV player and recorder. No mainstream console has ever had anything like these opportunities, as the PSP basically becomes a mini laptop able to run any kind of software and console quality games at the same time.



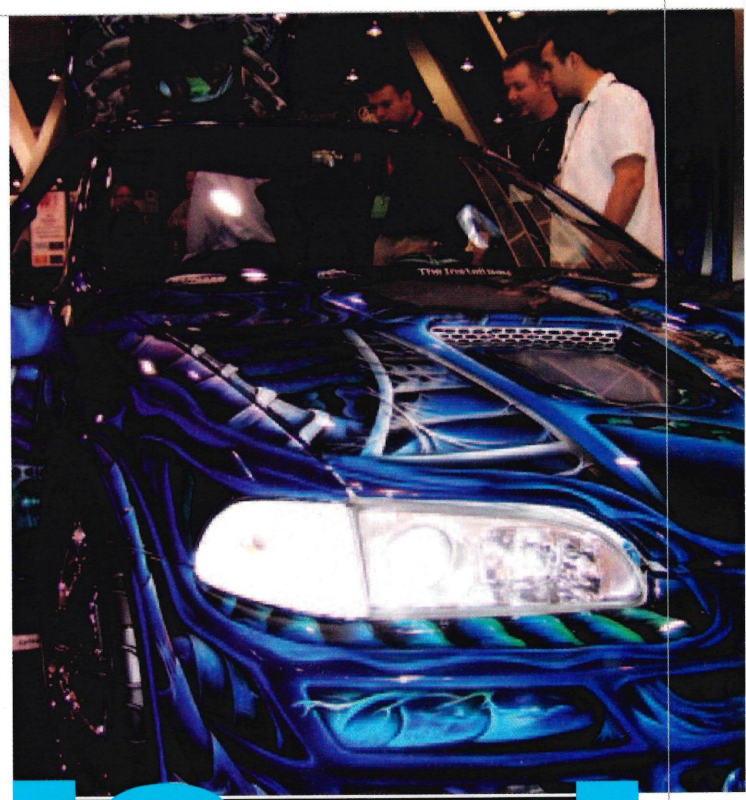
7 TV Go Portable

One of Sony's favourite uses for the PSP at the moment - and another feature entirely impossible on any other console - is LocationFree TV. The basic idea with LocationFree TV is that you buy a base unit that sits somewhere in your house and then any Wi-Fi device you might have nearby can watch whatever TV shows it beams out.

This is great because it lets you watch TV in the garden or wherever else you've decided is more convenient than a nice comfy sofa in the living room. What's really interesting though, apart from the fact that the technology supports the PSP out of the box without any nefarious hacks being needed, is that the base station can also be told to compress whatever video source it's playing (you can also get it to play a DVD and beam that out too) into MPEG4 format and then send it across the information superhighway to be watched by you and you alone.

It's basically how Sony was talking about using the PS3 except you can do it right now. Indeed its benefits become more exciting the more you think about it because as long as you're near a Wi-Fi hotspot you can watch anything your TV is playing anywhere in the world. Considering the quality of TV outside this Sceptred Isle that's an absolute godsend, meaning you never need miss an episode of My Hero ever again.

Since you can also connect a PC to the LocationFree TV base unit the PSP becomes a window not just on your entire DVD collection and every TV channel you can cram into a Sky box, but also on every other video file on your PC. For anyone upset that the year 2000 didn't see the government doling out free jetpacks and silver jumpsuits for everyone, this really does feel like the sort of sci-fi future we've so long been promised.



8 Knight Rider 2006

Sony owes much of the momentum the PSP has gained to enthusiasts in the homebrew scene that have modified and tinkered with the console to make it do and play all manner of things it was never meant to. Sometimes though you can go too far.

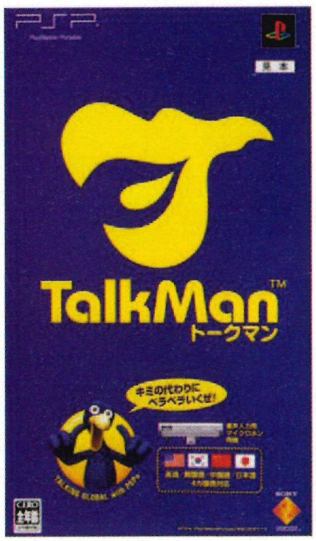
The monstrosity below used to be a '94 Honda Civic but its owner decided, no doubt after a quick game of Midnight Club, to see what it would look like if he added 24 (yes, twenty four) LCD screens to it, including one in the front grille. But what does this have to do with the PSP you may ask? Well, the thing is the whole Frankenstein's monster can be controlled directly via a PSP.

Everything from opening the doors, turning on the lights and even driving it - à la James Bond in that one with the stealth boat and all the Germans - can be done remotely via the PSP and a Wi-Fi connection. Quite what that paint scheme is all about though we couldn't imagine.



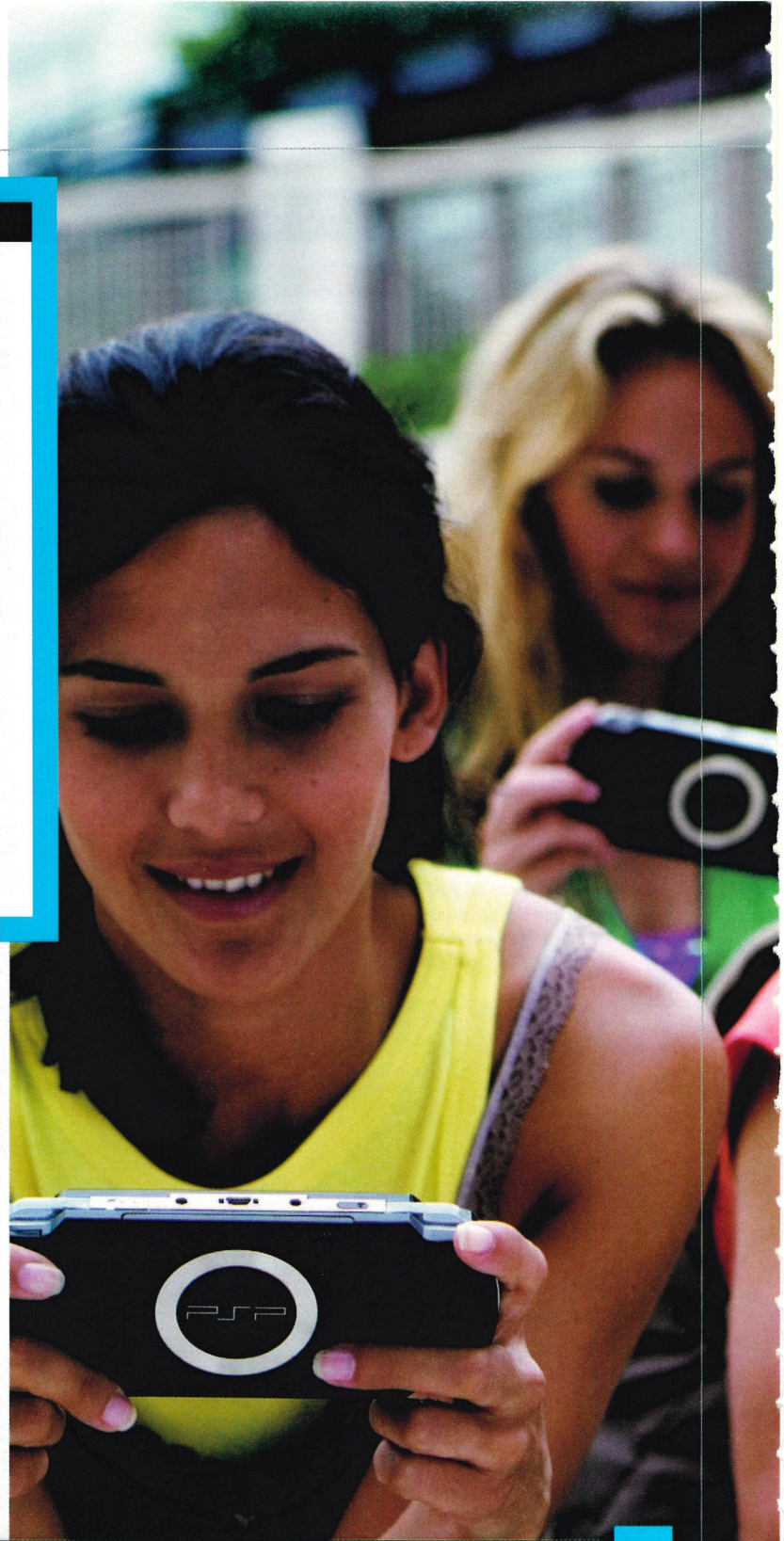
9 Talk, Man

The first peripheral released for the PSP - not counting the bizarre 3D goggles for Metal Gear Ac!d 2 -has nothing to do with games. Talkman is a voice activated translation tool meant to translate between English, Japanese, Korean and Chinese. It comes with a USB microphone, which sits on top of the PSP and which you speak into in your native tongue and then have the software translate it into the language of your choice. Essentially, it's a semi-universal translator.



It also includes a bunch of largely forgettable mini-games and clearly it's not much use if you're not actually going to visit the Far East, but expansions for other languages are no doubt on their way. Perhaps more importantly it now means that the PSP has an official functioning microphone, allowing portable SingStar on the train to become a real and terrible possibility...





10 Accessorise, Accessorise

Since the days of the black and white Game Boy, a stills camera has traditionally been one of the first accessories to be released for any portable. It's odd then that aside from a few oblique references from Sony, that none has so far been announced for the PSP. Sony's clearly working on one though so it's interesting to wonder what else might be on its way.

Some sort of official TV adapter would seem to be a shoe-in, as well as a printer such as is now common for digital cameras. An extra to allow GPS navigation also seems an obvious addition, as well as perhaps a proper keyboard and, dare we say it, a touch screen. There's little that the PSP can't do all ready, but with a few little upgrades it could officially become the most versatile piece of electronics ever made.

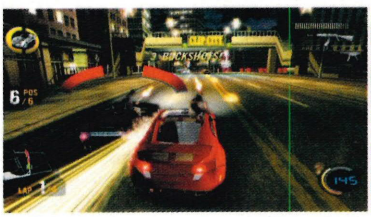
STREET RIDERS™



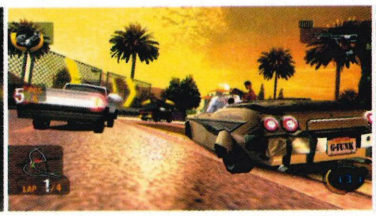
Urban street racing

and furious firefights collide as you crush your rivals in fierce weapon-based combat.





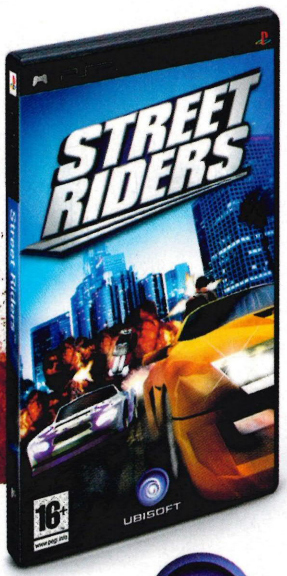
Boost, swerve and shoot through **14 modes** and **66 missions.**



Punch the gas and defend your block with **14 weapons** and **30 vehicles.**



Face up to rival racers in **45 multiplayer stages.**



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PSP™ (PlayStation®Portable)

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REVIEWED

WE PLAY 'EM, WE RATE 'EM, YOU BUY 'EM

HIGHLIGHTS

"It's still pure. It's still simple. **It's still fun.** And that, dear friends, is what they call a **'good thing'...**"

There's **no escaping** the power of **OutRun** on **page 48**

"Cue you, as the Prince, **rolling around your katamari**, picking up things and using them to rebuild the islands that **your dumbass father** ruined."

Rolling around is fun as **Me And My Katamari** proves on **page 58**



"To be blunt, it's **the MILF of the gaming world...** if you're too young or naïve to understand **what that means**, just get a copy of it anyway."

Slightly old, **but still sexy?** Tales Of Eternia's still got it – **page 64**, if you please

1 Ryan's head is so far off the ground, it occasionally sees sprinklings of snow and circling clouds. And birds too, though we don't point them out for fear of scaring them away.

2 As a man who loves the Xbox 360, we often wonder exactly what's between Ryan's ears. Thankfully, it turns out he's got a brain just like the rest of us and not fluff, as we once believed.

REVIEWER OF THE MONTH

(As picked by us, out of a tombola)

REVIEWER: Ryan King
SUBJECT: The man behind the myth

3 Stubble. It's the mark of a real man's man and make no mistake, Ryan's as manly as they come. Except on Wednesdays, when he prefers to go by the name of Sabrina, the hooker with a heart of gold.

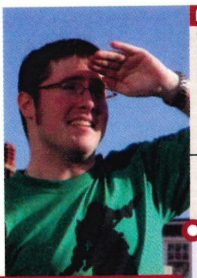
5 You can't say that big people don't have a taste for fashion, too; here, as you can see, Ryan's wearing a sporty little number from his Paris collection that really sets off his eyes.

4 Don't mess with these hands – they're made for *Street Fighter*. In fact, Mr King is in possession of practically every 'mad skill' ever invented and now there are none left for us.

6 Punch him. Go on... punch him. Feel that? That's cold, hard steel. His iron stomach allows Ryan to experience even the hottest curries, from the mighty Faal to the not-so-awesome Shame Kebab.

CHAMP OR CHUMP?

So, what exactly have the hard-working, oh-so-fine Go>Play review crew been up to this month? We ask them directly...



MARTIN MATHERS

CHAMP

5 January
Met Liz, who thinks I'm mega-cool-awesome. I think she might be right.



14 January
Buying new furniture isn't actually boring at all - I reckon I could fit at least two giants in my new bed.



21 January
Went to Paris just because I felt like it. French chocolate is awesome.





18 January
STILL waiting for my new flat to go through. I should have been in there before Christmas. Bah.



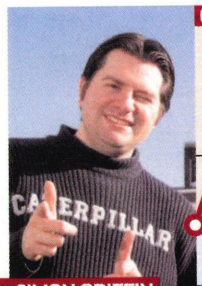


24 January
Er... can someone tell me where my job's gone? Please?

1 January
Got dumped by the girl I'd been seeing over Christmas. Rubbish.

CHUMP

SIMON GRIFFIN



CHAMP

12 January
I'm in charge of XBM; finally, I can get someone else to make the tea. No sugar, fools!



10 January
Got myself an Xbox 360 - next-gen rules, as do my *PGR3* skills. Look out world!





31 January
Have to play *Fight Night* for hours on end, just to check I really am awesome at it.



26 January
Thrashed former editor Miles Guttery at *Pro Evo*; that man is an absolute bottler.

7 January
Puked my guts up after overindulging at a house party. Great start to the year.

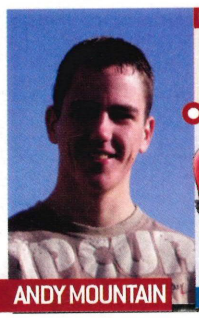




20 January
Um, what the hell happened to my job? I didn't even get to finish an issue - jipped.

CHUMP

ANDY MOUNTAIN



CHAMP

1 January
Was informed by police that someone who stole a large sum of cash from me spent New Year's Day in jail. Yay!





27 January
Ended a quiet week with a fantastic night out, met loads of people, got absolutely wasted and managed to wake up without a hangover.





16 January
Started snowboarding lessons and seemed to spend most of my first lesson learning how to get back up after falling over.

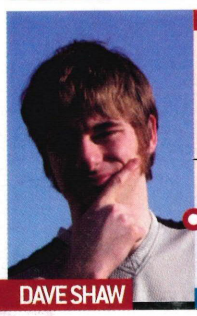
20 January
Took the day off work as holiday only to later find that everyone was sent home anyway for the whole day.

23 January
Had my mobile phone cut off for a week because of a missed payment; sad to say it was a dark week for my social life.



CHUMP

DAVE SHAW



CHAMP

3 January
Started building up a collection of the Top 20 highest rated games on each console, only to find some are US-only. Blast!



20 January
Received a clear, blow-up Monkey Ball and have since cherished it like I would my first born. Can't wait for a PSP version!



26 January
Beat Ryan Butt at *Pro Evo 5* becoming the first player to defend the cup he bought in to play for thrice. Sad, me? Never!





17 January
The mighty, Potters need a replay and penalties to beat lowly Tamworth, ensuring I become the laughing stock of the office.

30 January
Several close colleagues force five whole rums down me (very rock and roll). I'm feeling the effects still, I think. I wish I drank more.



CHUMP

HENRIE ROWLATT



CHAMP

8 January
Had a mammoth *Dr. Robotonik's Mean Bean Machine* session with my mate Hannah. Bostin!



22 January
Got tickets for Mogwai in Southampton! And found out the trains go back well after 1am... get in!





1 January
Woke up at a mate's house after a New Year's Eve party to find that I'd fallen nose first into a record box. Had a scabby face for a week.



11 January
Got very drunk with my housemate. Ended up painting the front room full of badgers. Looked better when we were pissed.



28 January
Had to climb through my front room window 'cos I'd forgotten my keys, but I was just in time for *Murder She Wrote*! C'mon Jessica!

CHUMP

Reviewed this month

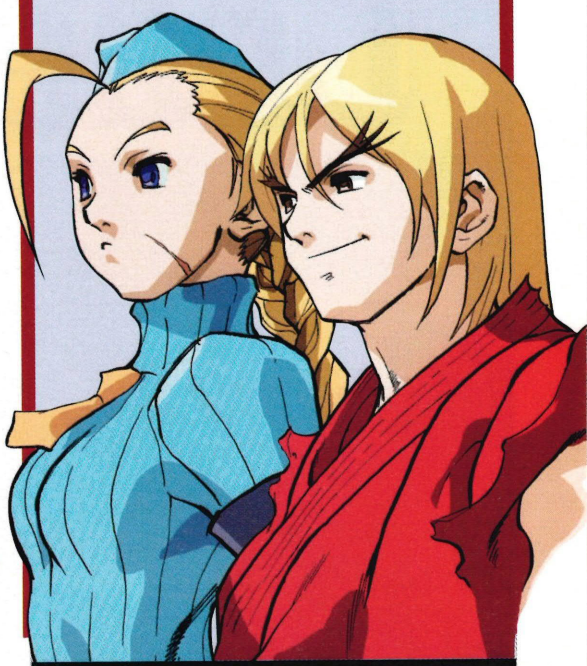
[48] OUTRUN 2006
Coast 2 Coast

The entire arcade machine in the palm of your hand? It's not too good to be true, you know...

To find out why, just flip the page...

PLUS ALL THIS!

[06] Splinter Cell: Essentials
[54] Fight Night Round 3
[58] Me And My Katamari
[62] Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX
[64] Tales Of Eternia
[68] Tokobot
[72] Exit
[74] PoPoLoCrois
[76] MegaMan: Powered Up
[77] Dead To Rights: Reckoning



How we review

The Big Question

Even the fairest-minded reviewer makes assumptions. How good have the developer's other games been? How good are the games this is up against? We outline The Big Questions...



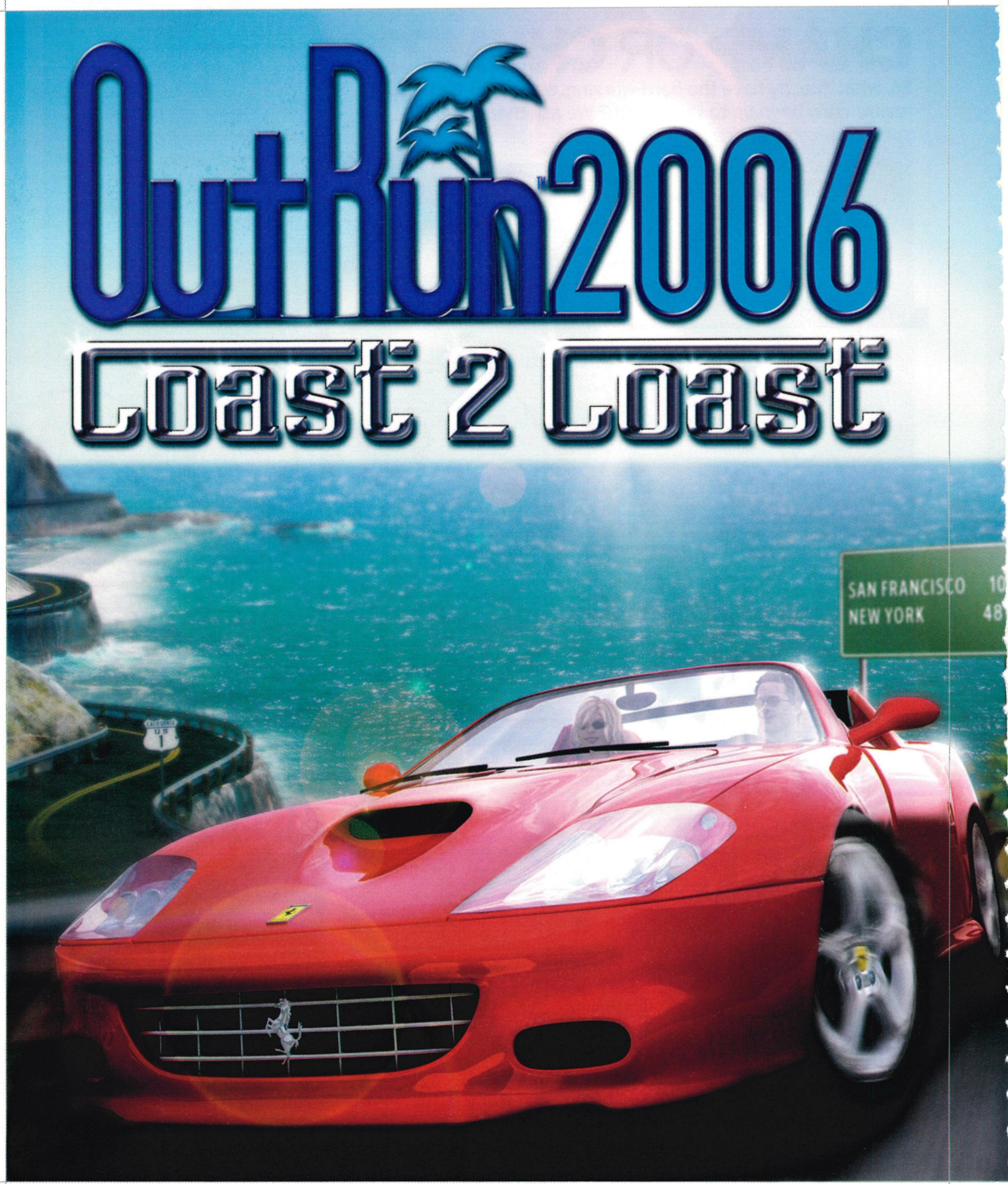
Percentage Score

It's a games mag tradition to score out of 100 per cent, and who are we to break with tradition? Chances are you know how these work, but in case you don't:

Under 30% = atrocious
Under 60% = pretty damn poor
Around 70% = now we're interested
Around 80% = well worth buying
Around 90% = fantastic. Sell your gran to get it

Summing-Up Line

The whole game boiled down to 15 or so words.


OutRun 2006
Coast 2 Coast
SAN FRANCISCO
NEW YORK





How far are we going to take you? All the way baby...

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

OUT: OUT NOW

Publisher **Sega** / Developer **Sumo Digital** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multiplayer**

There's perhaps a common misconception held by many people that we should clear up before we even begin: *OutRun* is not, and has never been, a racing game. Not in the traditional sense, anyway. Yes, so it's got cars in it. And road. And tight corners, tight handling and an even tighter time limit. But it's not about racing. It's about driving. Driving with skill. With precision. And, most of all, with style.

In the original *OutRun*, released in the arcades way back in 1987, there were no opponents against which to race, no rivals looking to nudge you off the track and into the path of an oncoming truck – it was just about you, the open road and a whole lot of bendy corners. Nothing else. The only real challenge was to reach the goal at the end of the course; the only aim to navigate each route well enough without hitting traffic, the sides of the track or any other obstacles and cross the finish line before the time limit ran out; the only opponent being your own abilities. It was pure. It was simple. It was fun. But it wasn't a racing game... it was a driving game. Really, it was.

Fast forward nearly two decades (or to where we are now, if you're not able to do the maths) and things are hardly any different – *OutRun*, in the current form of *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast*, is still all about the skill, still all about pushing your driving abilities to the limit in order to best your previous achievements. Okay, so maybe Sumo, in all its developmental wisdom, has added a few pure racing elements (amongst other things...) into the mix in order to enhance the overall experience, but they're still rather minor in the context of the game as a whole. What's more, none of the additions, tweaks or other changes to the original formula muddle what the *OutRun* name stands for. It's still pure. It's still simple. It's still fun. And that, dear friends, is what they call a 'good thing'.

Of course, some of the more travelled gamers amongst you – or at least those with access to the likes of an Xbox – will probably be wondering what all the fuss is about. After all, a souped-up home version of *OutRun 2* (the arcade game released by Sega to huge fan response) came out some time ago and, while it was incredibly good fun for those people who did pick up a copy, many people chose to ignore it. Why? Probably because they're idiots, although we'd hate to point any specific fingers for fear of a good beating.

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Isn't this just a port of the arcade version then?
Nope – there's loads of other things in there as well, so there's no excuse not to splash out some cash on it.

I don't get it... what's the point?
It's about practice, practice, practice – that's the only way you're going to become skilled enough to finish every single route.



You'll only be able to drive the most basic cars to begin with, so earning those OutRun Miles and then buying new cars with them is an absolute necessity

Let's go shopping

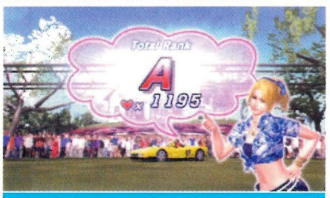
Time to save up those frequent driver miles

Whether you win or lose, reach the finish or come up short, you'll notice that you're earning OutRun Miles each and every time you race onto the track. While they might seem pretty useless at first, these miles actually come in incredibly handy once you've amassed a good handful as they're the only way you can get your grubby mitts on much of the game's locked content. And believe us, there's plenty of things locked away that you're going to want, or even need later on – from the majority of the Ferraris on offer (which you'll have to unlock in order to make progress through the tougher parts of the single-player mode) to reverse and special versions of the game's 30 main routes, alternate car colours and even a great deal of specially mixed music tracks to listen to as you hurtle along the road, it's all up for sale. Naturally then, you're going to need to drive a long, long way if you want to buy it all... it's just a good job the game's so easy to pick up and play, or else we doubt we'd have the will to earn enough of them.







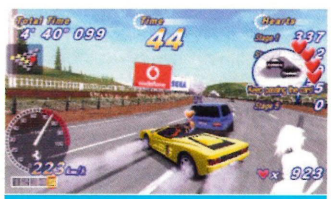


Women are easily pleased, apparently – we're all about the A Rankings

However, not taking notice of the game was, and indeed still is, a mistake. Against the haphazard AI of *Ridge Racer*, the ridiculously exaggerated bling of *Midnight Club* or the general malaise that is *Need For Speed*, *OutRun's* purity shines through to create a very different driving title.

Plus, there's the fact that *Coast 2 Coast* isn't just a lazy update to a game that's already released – more specifically, it's the game that the original should always have been, with more than double the number of courses, plenty of new cars and a whole slew of new things to do (such as an insanely extensive single-player game that'll take you an age to clear).

Oh... and did we mention it's on the PSP? And that it looks so incredibly good, your eyes are liable to pop out of their sockets while you're playing it? Yeah... that's probably important, too.



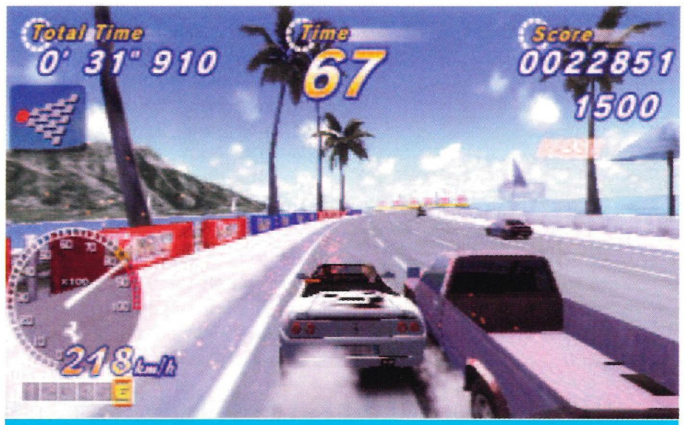
Pass the cars, earn the hearts... it really couldn't be any simpler

That *Coast 2 Coast* looks as damn good as it does is perhaps the biggest surprise, despite all the knowledge we have about the PSP being the canine's testicles as far as raw power goes.

You see, it doesn't just look good – it looks *goooood*. The same kind of good you'd probably imagine saying if you happened to have a particularly delicious chocolate cake, then someone came along and covered it in honey, ice-cream and a handful of £50 notes all at the same time.

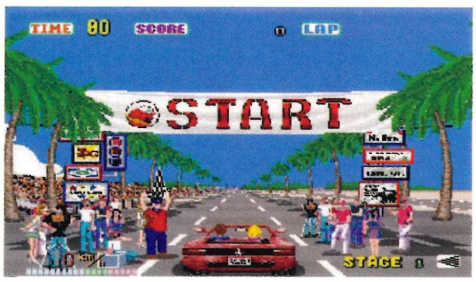
We can appreciate that such quality wouldn't be an issue for a 'bigger' console but from a handheld, it's enough to induce a huge grin that just won't go away.

Each of the routes, exhibiting their own unique setting as they do, is massively detailed. Some of the more intricate locales, such as Casino Town, Milky Way or Skyscrapers look downright gorgeous, although that isn't to say the game suffers in other areas as a result. *Burnout Legends*, take note – a high level of detail doesn't mean you have to draw the road in just a few metres ahead. The point at which your Ferrari 360 Spider peaks the crest



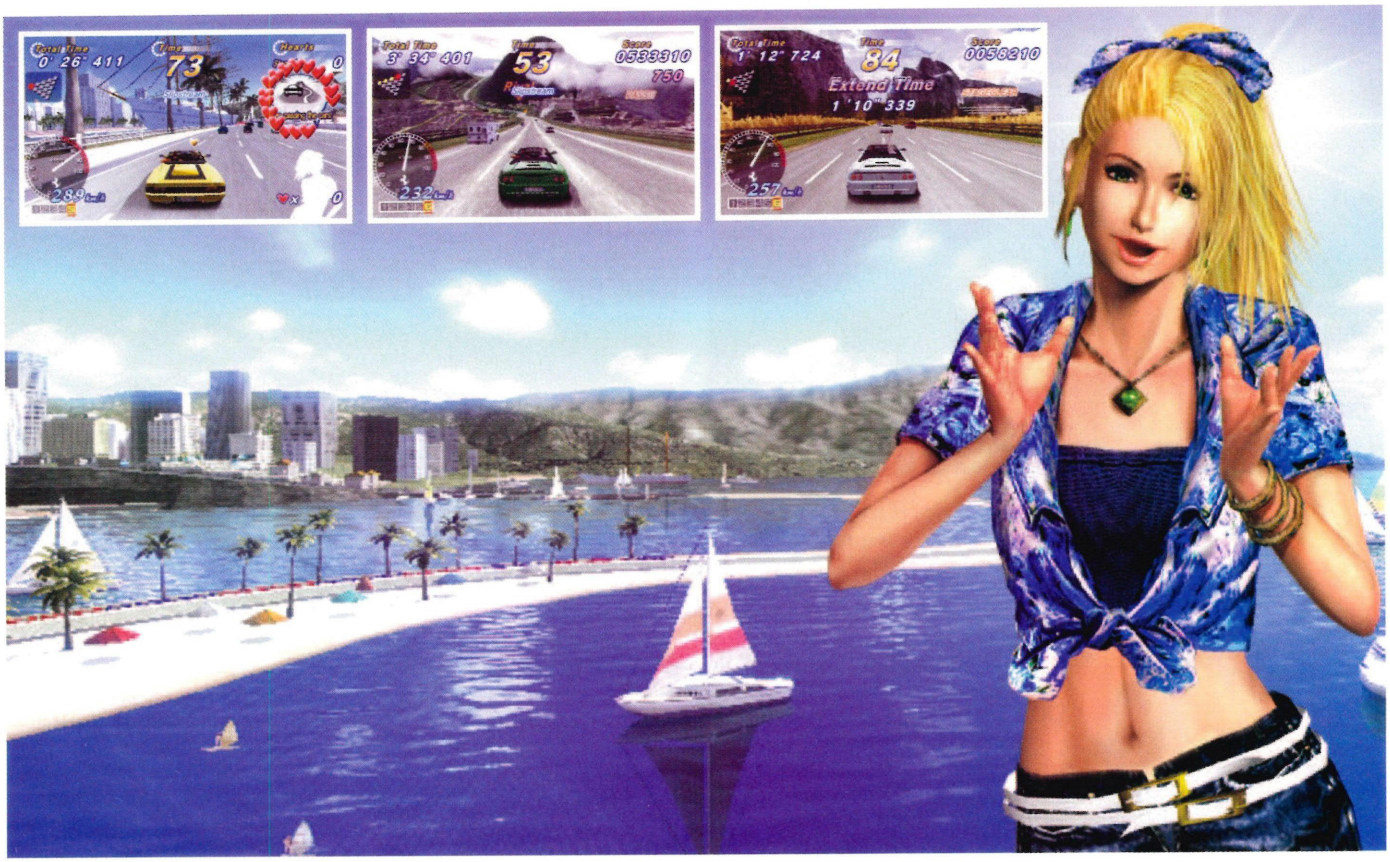
Clean lines and perfect driving is the key to finishing each route – you'll never amount to anything if you spend all your time rubbing against other cars...

SEQUELICIOUS



There's no more evocative marquee in motoring than the prancing pony. It embodies the spirit of speed, the essence of Italian style and the injustice of having more cash than anyone can possibly deserve. We're talking about the kind of money that enables minging blokes to get really fit girlfriends... not that we'd describe ourselves as minging, you understand. We're clearly far too hot for that to happen.

Anyway, *OutRun* is sadly still the closest most of us will get to owning one, but the game is quite the legend in its own right, and for good reason. Ask anyone to name their top five arcade machines and *OutRun* is a virtual a shoo-in. It's a classic, see; not in the depressingly overused sense of the word, but classic in the sense that people still remember it, love it and play it more than 20 years after it came out. Hanging sequels on the back of successful games isn't a new thing, of course, and *OutRun* sired a shower of bastards, ranging from 'just not as good' to utterly pointless long before Sega finally came up with a worthy follow-up last year. Check out the complete history...

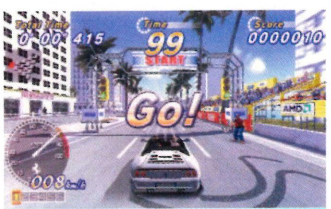


of a hill on the Canyon route, only to see the road fall away in front of you so that everything in the distance is revealed should be enough of an indication of what Sumo has achieved here. Like we said... it's *goooooood*.

Before we get a little too carried away here though (and end up thinking of chocolate cake all over again), let's rewind a little just here and explain, for those of you unfortunate enough to have never played previous games in the series before, exactly what the gameplay of *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* entails. Like we've already said, it's first and foremost a driving game, not a racer – as such, the only thing stopping you from succeeding is a lack of ability on your part, rather than the kind of cheating AI or misplaced obstacles that we've experienced in other car-based games.

From the moment the flag waves, you're against the clock to get as far down the course as possible. A total of five routes lie between you and the final goal, although which routes you end up travelling down is entirely up to you. While the first route is always the same (Sunny Beach or Palm Beach, depending on whether you choose to play on the original *OutRun 2* courses or the new-and-improved Special Tours ones), you get to choose where to go simply by driving down one of the two paths at the end of the route, with left-hand turns offering relatively easier routes than those to the right. Five different goals lie at the end of 16 possible paths along the route tree, and actually crossing those finish lines – particularly down the routes to the far-right of the tree – will take plenty of nerve, reflexes and just a little bit of stylish drifting.

Ah, yes... drifting. If you thought that *Ridge Racer* was the pioneer of drift racing, you're wrong – *OutRun* was there way before it, almost a decade before *Ridge Racer* even appeared in arcades.



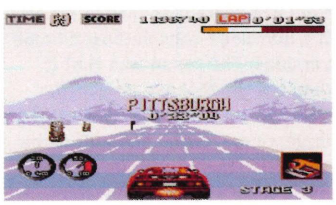
Well, go on then – time to depress the pedal down to the metal, as they say

As was also the case in Sega's more race-intensive games such as *Daytona USA* and *Sega Rally*, sliding sideways around corners is very much a part of *OutRun's* gameplay, although the trick here is knowing where to use it. As sliding tends to slow you down and

FASTER

Turbo OutRun
Released: 1989

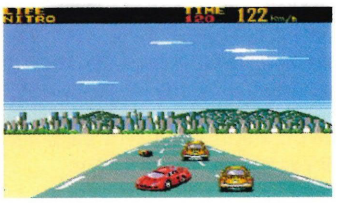
A sequel in the traditional sense, with new tracks and our playboy racer trading in his Testarossa for an F40. It was fun but just didn't have the character of the original. The home conversions were more successful, but that's because the arcade version was nothing special. While everything about the original sits fondly in memory, *Turbo* was just a by-numbers racer. Where the original set out to drag the 3D driving genre forward, this chose to rest squarely on its turbo-charged laurels. Not good.



CRASHIER

Battle OutRun
Released: 1989

Take something that's really good, mix it with something else that's really good, and what do you get? Something horrible, that's what. Much like putting pistachio ice cream on top of a lovely steak and kidney pudding, saddling a dreary clone of Taito's excellent *Chase HQ* with the hallowed *OutRun* monicker was only ever going to lead to disgruntlement. At least it was confined to the Master System, meaning not too many people were duped into blowing their wads on it.





Rivals aren't exactly there to be overtaken, but doing so will land you a ton of points and the love of your girlfriend. And isn't that what driving too fast is all about?



See what we mean about the graphics? You can see for miles, and the gme is all the better for it - *Burnout Legends*, you'd better be paying attention...



speed is very much of the essence, the skill lies in only making use of powerslides when it's absolutely necessary; while you can abuse it to your heart's content if it makes you feel clever, you'll never pass some of the tougher goals without displaying a bit of reserve. Even so, performing a massive drift around a long corner and sliding straight past a rival car before straightening up and powering off down the track is immensely satisfying... especially when racing a human opponent and can laugh in their face as you do it.

That isn't to say that *Coast 2 Coast* is best played in multiplayer, however; certainly, bringing in your friends to play via Wi-Fi link-up turns the game into the racer that we're insisting that it isn't and that's a good thing all in itself, but there's plenty of action to be found for those lacking in the mates department too. In fact, we'd suggest that Sumo has gone a little overboard turning *Coast 2 Coast* into something more than just a bog-standard arcade conversion. Yes, so the original arcade games - both *OutRun 2* and the updated *OutRun 2 SP* - are present and correct for you to play through, including the special 15-route courses that see you race all the routes from either of the games one after another (although you have to unlock it through the collection of OutRun Miles). However, there's so much packed into the game's main single-player mode that the arcade modes seem like more of a distraction than a focal point... even though if it's a quick race you're looking for (and if you play with your PSP like we do, that's going to happen quite often), they're the perfect solution.

Primarily though, you'll be sticking to the Flagman and Girlfriend missions - a long series of increasingly difficult events spread over many, many routes that'll test your skills to the limit.

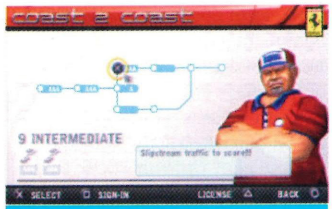
Not surprisingly, the two sections each offer their own challenges similar to the arcade mode: Flagman, for instance, prefers to give you race-based tasks such as coming first among a large pack of cars (which is where the racing elements do finally come in), fighting to keep your girlfriend (the person in last place constantly loses 'love', leading to them being dumped once the counter reaches zero) or other such driving-related



Aww... just fell short. But there's always next time to do better



The further you get along a route, the flashier it usually ends up looking



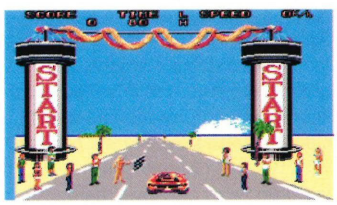
This is just the second Flagman stage - it gets even tougher later on

GIMMICKIER

OutRun 3D

Released: 1989

You wait four years for a sequel and then three turn up at once. This was another Master System-only instalment, but it's memorable for at least one thing; namely the 3D glasses that came in the box. It was quickly relegated to the status of curiosity piece but if you have a Master System mothballed up in the back of a cupboard somewhere and you happen to see a copy for a quid in Oxfam, it's worth a punt (if only to see what passed for innovation back in the late Eighties).



EXTRA VEHICULAR

OutRun Europa

Released: 1991

This one had nothing to do with Sega, developed as it was by US Gold who were responsible for all the non-Sega console-based home versions. The result was that it didn't really feel like an *OutRun* game at all. For a start you got to drive a Lamborgini and a Porsche as well as the trusty Ferrari, but there were also bizarre water-based powerboat and jet-ski sections. All very well in the name of variety... but it's just not *OutRun*, is it? Still, at least they tried. Tried and failed. Ha.







objectives. The various girls available, however, offer missions based upon the arcade's Heart Attack mode; your girlfriend will call out various requests as you hurtle down the road, and it's up to you to complete them to the best of your ability. The better you do, the more she'll love you...

next one), you have to race through each route trying to reveal all of the missions available and then complete them all with a high enough ranking – believe us, with 15 routes per girl and multiple mission branches per route, depending on how well you do, it's not an easy task. But then, if it

[So beautifully smooth, it will make your eyes pop out...]

although why anyone would love someone for hitting ghosts and ducks, overtaking traffic, dribbling a giant beach ball or avoiding UFO abduction is beyond us. In order to totally please each girl (and therefore get to move onto the

was... well, we probably wouldn't keep coming back to them time and time again.

And that's probably the key concept that makes *Coast 2 Coast* so damn addictive: while it's certainly easy to get the hang of driving, drifting and ultimately reaching the goal, you can always do better. *Always*. As a score-based driving game where every second counts and achieving those elusive perfect runs are every player's dream, there really is nothing like *OutRun*, and the fact that it's now completely portable (as opposed to seeing you stuck in front of your television for hours on end) is the clincher as far as we're concerned.

Remember *Lumines* and how it made you want to have just one more go, in case you managed to break that barrier you hit last time? Then you ended up playing for hours, racking up massive scores to impress your friends with? *OutRun's* like that... except with lots of Ferraris instead of brightly-coloured blocks. It's true. You'll pick it up for a quick blast of your favourite routes, maybe taking a little bit of a detour to see something different... and then it'll be five o'clock in the morning, your dinner will be cold and your girlfriend probably won't be talking to you for a few days.

Not that we'd be all that bothered, of course. So long as we've got a bright red Ferrari and a constantly-excited virtual girl by our side, there's not much else we could ask for in this world. Thanks, Sega. We always knew we loved you really... ■ **Martin Mathers**

Smooth, silky and oh-so-fine... that's *OutRun*

93%



RACIER

OutRunners
Released: 1993

The two-seater, double-screened custom arcade cabinet gave away what this one brought to the party – simultaneous two-player OutRunning. Sweeping bends, gruelling climbs and plunging descents showed off Sega's increasingly impressive hardware and its development team's ability to squeeze the most out of it.

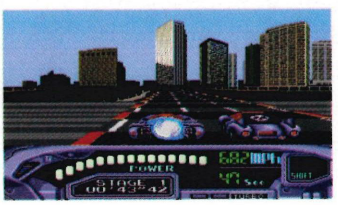
Once again a choice of vehicles were on offer, including a beach buggy, a big-finned 50s roadster and a hot rod. It was all good, if short-lived fun overall.



NOT OUTRUNNIER

OutRun 2019
Released: 1993

Nintendo's 1991 SNES classic *F-Zero* inspired a mini invasion of futuristic racers, most of which have disappeared from memory far quicker than they disappeared from shop shelves. Unable to re-create *F-Zero's* Mode 7 stylings, Sega instead opted for a traditional sprite-based rolling road engine and slapped the *OutRun* name on top. However, mean-looking futuristic cars and dark, cyber-punky environments are NOT WHAT *OUTRUN* IS ALL ABOUT. Is nothing sacred?





See what we mean when we say it looks pretty damn special? Every punch, replayed in slow motion for those action replays, looks like they really hurt



Who needs energy bars when you can judge your boxer's performance on just the way they move and how beaten up they look?

Is EA boxing clever or punch drunk?

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

OUT: NOW

Publisher **EA Sports** / Developer **In-House** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multiplayer, Wi-Fi internet multiplayer**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

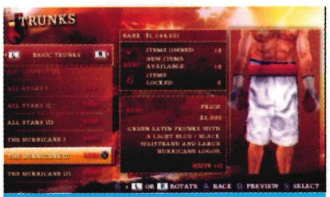
Can you replay the Bruno-Tyson fight in the rivals mode?
Sadly neither of those legendary boxers feature in the game so the possibility of changing history by giving Frank the victory over 'Iron' Mike is denied.

So without two analog sticks, how does the 'total punch control' work?
Obviously the lack of a right analog stick totally removes that feature but the control layout is still well done and totally intuitive. Killer haymakers are still easy to pull off.

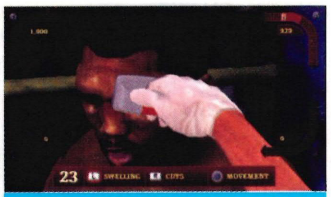
It's a miracle that this review was written at all, such is the unbelievably addictive nature of *Fight Night Round 3*. Despite its portable nature, the game is totally unsuitable for gaming on a bus or train, as you'll be so engrossed that you're likely to miss your stop. We usually reserve the gushing praise until the end of a review but it's just impossible to hold in - this game is awesome. So what if it's just two guys hitting each other? It's the simple things in life that give us the most pleasure. Do you know who said that? No, us neither... but whoever it was, they clearly knew what they were talking about.

The *Fight Night* series has steadily improved with each successive sequel on other formats and that really shows on this first PSP outing. The biggest part of the game is the Career mode but it's not just a simple succession of increasingly difficult fights; there are a number of factors that need to be considered before you set foot in the ring. Before anything can happen, you need a boxer - not surprisingly, you can choose to either use one of the real-life boxers available or to create one in your image (or at least how you wished you looked). With that decision made you plunge straight into the Amateur circuit, where headgear is required to protect your fragile newbie skull. Fight your way through some simple opponents and you can enter the heady heights of the Pro league, where you need to make proper decisions and hire your own trainer and cutman. They both cost a wad of cash and also command a cut of your profits from the fight, but are invaluable if you want to be left with something resembling a face at the end of 15 brutal rounds. The more you spend on them, the better training you'll receive; strangely though, the training between bouts is almost completely automated and all you're required to do is select how hard you want to train and whether you want to concentrate on speed, power or a balance of both attributes. Whatever your trainer specialises in is the area that you should focus on, otherwise you run the risk of injury and falling stats if you train too hard in the wrong area.

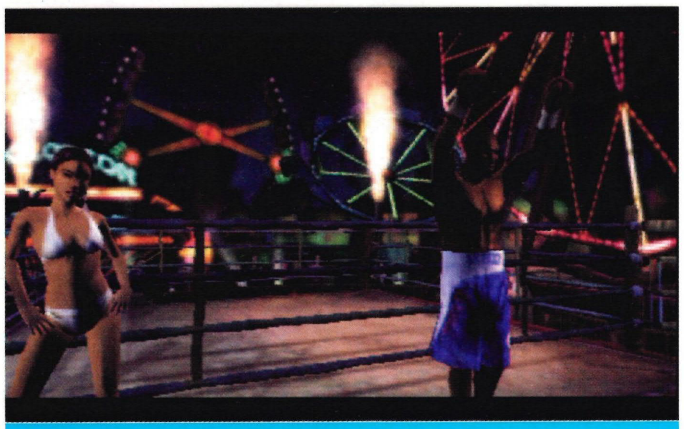
Other factors also affect your stats in the ring, such as your choice of entrance music, effects and bikini-clad babe to usher you into the ring. These don't come cheap but will give you a fighting chance in a tough match. The store is also a valuable source of extra stat points, with more and more equipment being unlocked as you progress,



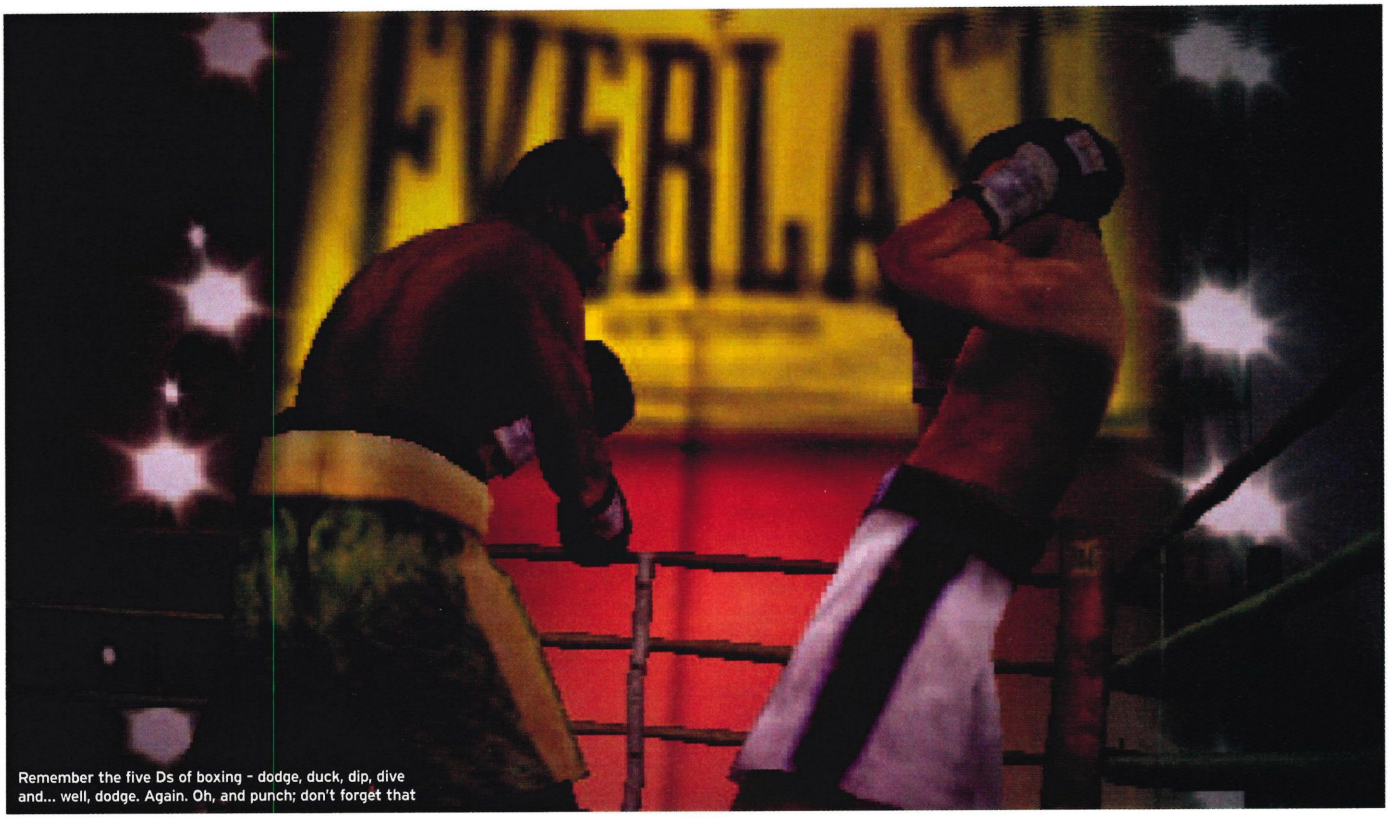
Customisation - it's like blinging up a motor, only with men's pants



Manual healing is more effective, but you can really balls it up, too



Fighting in a fairground? It's not exactly the setting we were expecting, to be honest - we're more keen on the bright lights and big city of Las Vegas



Remember the five Ds of boxing - dodge, duck, dip, dive and... well, dodge. Again. Oh, and punch; don't forget that

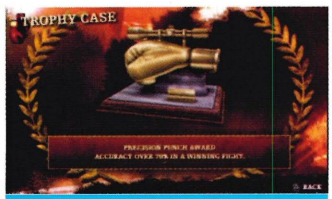
It's not all about **beating the living crap** out of someone

most of which boost various attributes - at a price, of course. See? It's not all about jumping in the ring and beating the living crap out of your opponent, although there's obviously nothing to stop you doing that, especially when you don't have time for tinkering about.

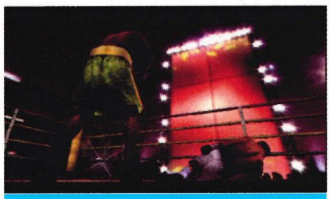
Once you've finished messing around with your kit and picking your trainer, you can actually get down to some fighting... well, nearly. Even the fight contracts require some close observation, as your cut of the profits will vary from bout to bout, along with the percentage that goes to the promoter. Hidden within the small print there may also be the potential for extra earnings; end the fight with a special punch, for instance, and a stack of money could be yours. Alternatively you could be asked to go down in a certain round for an amount of money that dwarfs the sum you get for actually taking part in the bout. Taking a bung like this will boost your bank balance but give your ranking a knock, so you need to make some careful decisions before succumbing to the greed.

Not every fight will go towards your ranking either, and special charity events will give a greater monetary return while putting your ascent on hold. All this adds a whole new level of depth to your career path, rather than simply putting a line of opponents in your path.

While the career will garner most of your attention it's worth taking note of the Rivals mode, which



Winner! Just look at it - though don't try and put that glove on...

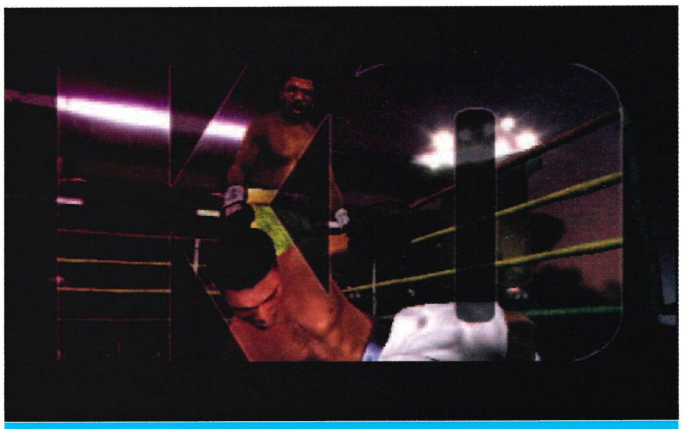


'Get up, punk! I ain't done using my fists to polish your forehead!'

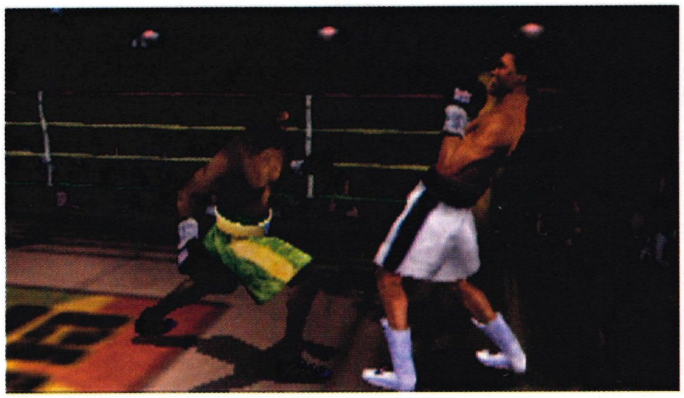
With friends like these...

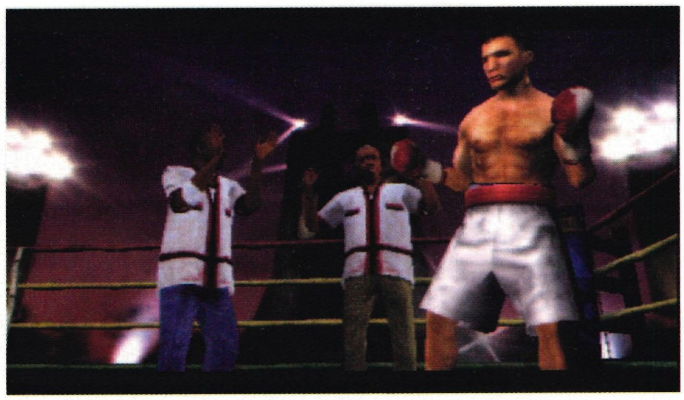
How to make enemies and beat people

During your lengthy career in the ring, it's only to be expected that you will inevitably piss someone off when you dish out a brutal beating; so much so, in fact, that they'll hold a lifelong grudge and want to be your rival in the future. Not content with being beaten to a pulp, they will consistently challenge you to fights as you move up through the ranks, giving you some extra dough. For us, it was the guy we won the amateur belt from who took it personally. At first it was a fair match-up, but as we climbed the ranks he became totally outclassed and fighting him was simply a way to earn some quick cash rather than any sort of challenge - what a glutton for punishment, eh?



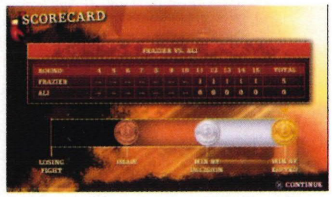
This is what we believe is known as being 'out for the count'... or perhaps 'you're going down, bee-atch'. Either way, it looks like it hurts loads





allows you to replay classic fights between legendary boxers. If you don't fancy simply repeating history, then you can change it by jumping into a fight at a pivotal moment and turn it around. For example, do you have what it takes to jump into the shoes of the battered and bruised Frazier, trying to beat the mighty Ali in the eleventh round of their 1975 bout instead of taking the inevitable fall? This great new feature really tests your skills in the ring and bringing these underdogs back from certain defeat inevitably rewards you with goodies.





[Fantastic presentation, great gameplay... it has it all]

So, by now it's a given that there is plenty of longevity in *Fight Night* but that can all be a waste if the game looks like Holyfield's ear. Thankfully *Fight Night* is a shining pearl in the world of PSP gaming, with looks to die for. The quality certainly surprised us, along with anyone who happened to be passing as we were playing. Despite the lack of a big screen, booming speakers and a rumbling pad it's still difficult not to wince when a haymaker hits home and sends the unlucky recipient stumbling back, such is the quality of the animation. With some clever lighting even the audience surrounding the ring still looks impressive, if you do no more than give it a casual glance.

The fantastic presentation doesn't end with the graphics, the audio is spot on, too. The commentary employs ESPN analyst Joe Tessitore, who provides an accurate (for the most part) blow-by-blow account of the action taking place on screen, although he could probably use another participant to bounce off.

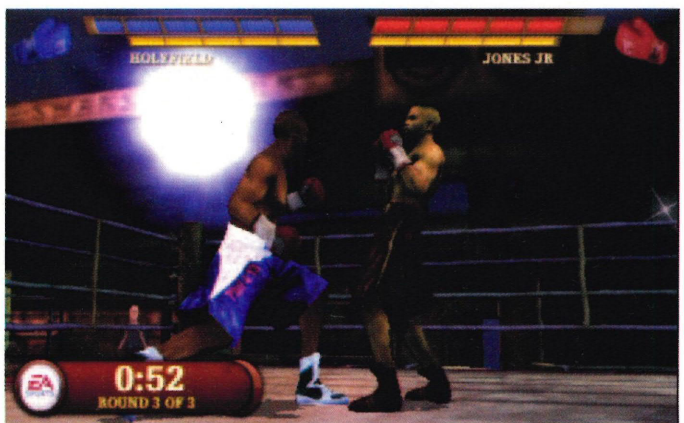
The spot effects are superb, with the sound of leather pounding skin and grunting boxers adding a sense of realism. Of course, this wouldn't be an EA title without the obligatory EA Trax and if you like hip hop then there's plenty enjoy as you peruse the menus. If you don't, then you can always listen to your own tunes... but when most of your time is spent in the ring, it doesn't really matter.

So, let's recap: longevity, check; great presentation, check. Yet it's all for naught if you can't control the damn thing. But EA has done a great job here, too. Despite losing the second analog stick the button layout is simple to learn and easy to use, making devastating haymakers a cinch to pull off. Blocking and parrying isn't quite as intuitive but after a little practice you'll be countering like a pro.

With all this praise you must be thinking *Fight Night* is impossible to fault, and you're nearly right... but



There's a fair range of boxers on offer across the weight divisions, with plenty of faces that fight fans will recognise



Evander Holyfield is a bit of a bruiser, while Jones Jr is... well, skinny. Which one gets to put their name on a new type of fat-draining grill first?



something that we do feel has been overlooked is the potential for PS2 connectivity. Imagine being able to transfer your career from one console to the other (from PSP to PS2 and back again) so your rise to the top of the rankings doesn't have to be put on hold when it's time to go to work. Sounds good doesn't it? It's a little thing but we'd like to see it explored, especially as very few PSP games so far have actually taken advantage of the potential on offer, even if EA has already dabbled with *Madden 06* and had dubious results.

An area that hasn't been ignored, however, is the multiplayer, with both local and internet options available. *Fight Night* has always been perfect multiplayer fodder and the pure pleasure found in beating a mate to a pulp as he begs for mercy really is an unrivalled joy.

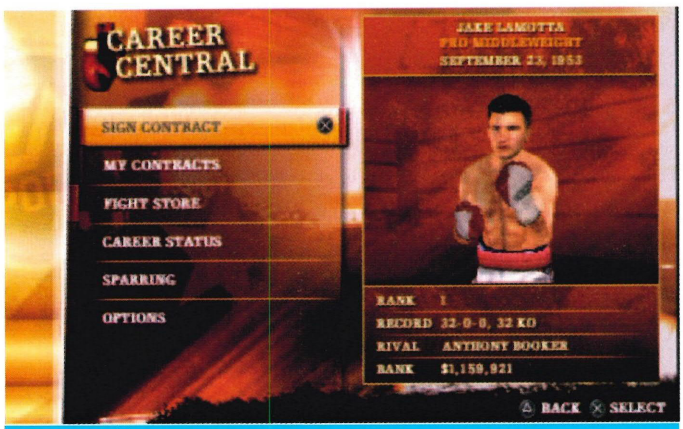
Speaking of beating people to a pulp, we must level one more small criticism at *Fight Night*: for seasoned players experienced on the versions appearing on other consoles, it can be a little on the easy side. We never even came close to being knocked down, let alone hitting the canvas. Perhaps that's down to awesome skill rather than shortcomings of the game.

Despite a couple of tiny niggles though, *Fight Night* never becomes boring even if you never lose; each fight is just as thrilling as the last, and that's what counts.

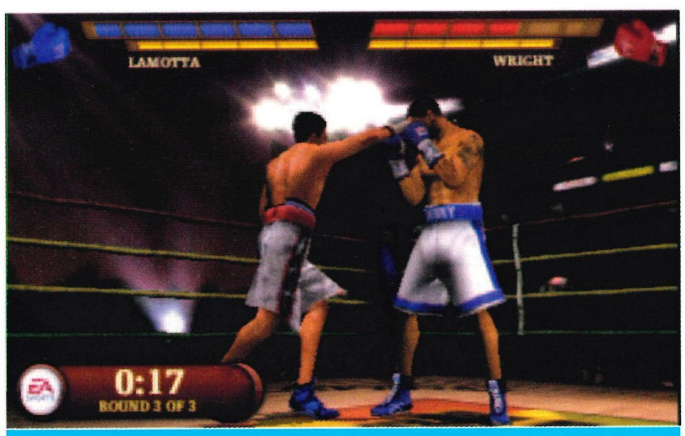
On its PSP debut, *Fight Night* has blown us away and we really can't recommend it highly enough. Not only is it an accomplished sports title, it also floors the lacklustre collection of beat-'em-ups already available. There really is no argument. Just get it... okay?

Simon Griffin

You need this game - it's a pugilist's paradise **93%**



Oooh, he's a baaaaad man - just look at that face. Don't look too hard though, or you might get upset once it gets beaten in later...



The punch system isn't quite as fluid as it is on the bigger consoles, but you'll soon get the hang of it and be knocking people out in no time



Come on everyone, join in with the prince – rollin', rollin', rollin'...

ME AND MY KATAMARI

OUT: 5 APRIL

Publisher **Electronic Arts** / Developer **Namco** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multiplayer**

Apparently, it's a horrendous cliché (not to mention just the tiniest bit xenophobic) to suggest that the Japanese are actually 'crazy'. Not that we'd ever do such a thing. We're not looking to make any sweeping statements, and we've got no doubts that virtually the entire population of Japan is actually quite sane – we've met more than a few Japanese people on our travels and they're all absolutely lovely. Really. But even so, there has to be that small percentage of people over there that have a screw loose somewhere, whose grip on reality isn't quite as firm as everyone else. And what's more, it's almost certainly a coincidence that all these people (and we do literally mean ALL of them) appear to work exclusively in the games industry.

Oh, come on... don't say you can't agree with us. Have you seen some of the games that only come out over there? Are you genuinely telling us that the likes of *Ape Escape*, *Parappa The Rapper* and *Bishi Bashi Special* were created by sane people? They have games solely dedicated to cooking, for god's sake! Games where you help people out of



Once you've big enough, you can roll through these size barriers



See what happens when you become absolutely friggin' huge? You can squash buildings and grab virtually anything your heart desires. Awesome – truly awesome

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Rolling balls... what's the point?
There isn't a point – you just roll around, picking stuff up and laughing. Laughing lots. And surely that's the whole idea when you're out to have fun?

What about replayability?
Given the nature of the game and the movement around levels each time you start, you can play *Katamari* almost infinitely. And that's definitely a good thing.



Best. Intro sequence. EVER. Anyone who doesn't love *Katamari Damacy's* crazy range of music deserves to be put in a cannon and fired into the sun



Crashing into items you're not big enough to pick up at high speed isn't a good idea, as the collision can actually shake other items loose and make your katamari smaller

sticky situations by cheering for them! It's completely insane and no mistake. With that proof in mind then, there's clearly no argument – Japanese games developers are, for the most part, mental. If they weren't... well, we doubt a game like *Me And My Katamari* would even exist at all.

Now, we don't doubt that many of you are now scratching your heads in bemusement wondering exactly what a katamari is, let alone whether you'd even want one for your own. Trust us though, you do. In fact, it's not even a question of just wanting one... you need one. Why? Because it's a big ball of things. Just things. And not just one specific type of things, you understand – it's pretty much all the things. All of them. See? We told you the Japanese were crazy. But seeing as *Katamari Damacy* has become quite a phenomenon over there (and, it would appear, everywhere else too, seeing as European PS2 owners have just been treated to the second game in the series, *We Love Katamari*), we're prepared to let it slide... if only because they might roll over us with a big sticky ball of things otherwise.

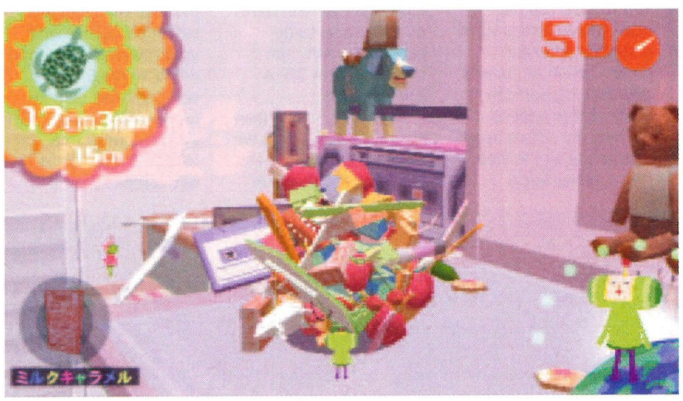
Unsurprisingly then, that's the whole idea of not just *Me And My Katamari*, but the entire *Katamari Damacy* series – rolling around a giant sticky ball, picking up anything that happens to get in your way. Sound stupid? You don't know the half of it. You see, in expanding the *Katamari* series, Namco has also continued the adventures, mishaps and general antics of the King Of All Cosmos, his beautiful wife and their son, the Prince. In the first *Katamari* game, the King managed to destroy the stars after a drunken night on the town (really... we're not making that up) while the second saw him revelling in his new-found fame for rebuilding the sky by doing favours for his multitude of fans, with both games leaving the action firmly in the hands of the Prince as far as star-repairing and favour-doing went.

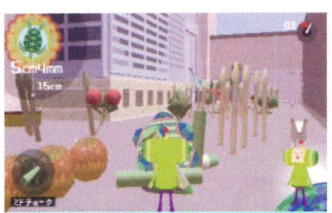
Unfortunately, the King's first handheld appearance has led to yet another disaster – the family's vacation to Paradise Commonwealth

Fantasy Island

When you fancy something a little different...

While the majority of the game is set on the large main island, a quick tap of the right trigger will send the Prince to a smaller volcanic island. Here, you'll meet all kinds of new animals looking for your help, although things aren't quite as simple as usual – you'll still be rolling up objects, but this time with more specific objectives than just a size limit. Whether you're picking up candy to try and appease the sweet tooth of a sugar-mad ant (avoiding savoury items along the way), grabbing 'old' items to create the most ancient Katamari possible or helping a bear achieve his goal of flying to the moon, it's a nice twist on the usual gameplay; if you're looking for replay value, you're sure to find it here.





Small prince, small katamari... but that'll change once you get rolling



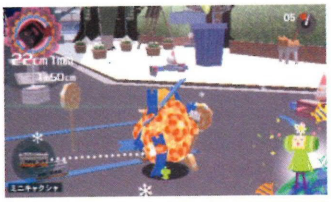
Collect presents within the levels and you can even play dress-up

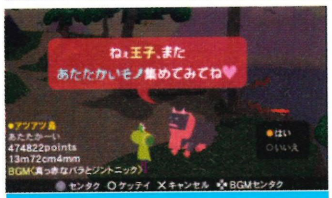


This small island offers some slightly more challenging stages – if you don't follow the objective guidelines, you'll get a severe punching from your dad, the King









He's so cute - how can you resist helping a scarf-wearing cat?

Island goes a little wrong when the King, showing off in the sea as only kings do, creates a tidalwave that wipes out all the surrounding islands, leaving the animals homeless. Oops. Cue you, as the Prince, doing what you do best; rolling around your katamari, picking up things and using them to rebuild the islands that your dumbass father ruined. Like we've said from the start... mental. That isn't to say that 'mental' doesn't equate to a heap of fun as well, though. *Me And My Katamari* is one of the most fun games we've played for ages, as simple a concept as it is.

After finding yourself on the main part of Paradise Commonwealth Island, you're free to roam around at your leisure - chat to any of the nearby animals (more of which will appear as you progress through the game) and they'll ask for your help in restoring their home.

One swift catapult launch later - straight into the crotch of your own father, we might add - and you're behind the 'wheel' of your very own katamari in one of the game's many environments, ranging from a downtown shopping district and the harbour to the local park and even inside someone's home. From here, the premise is simple: roll the katamari around, picking up objects by rolling over them until the time limit expires. Easy, eh?

As you might expect though, there's a catch - you can only pick up objects that are proportionate in size to the current dimensions of your katamari. Say, for example, you start off with a very small katamari, only a few centimetres wide, you'd only be able to grab small items such as coins, pencils, biscuits and ants. Yes, ants. Of course, the more things you roll up, the bigger your katamari gets and so does the choice of items you'll be snagging: from Lego bricks to actual buildings, toys cars to real cars and even mice to cats to dogs to people, you can pretty much pick up everything so long as you're big enough to grab it. It's quite interesting to see just how far you can go, considering the first few stages start you off really small... towards the end of the game, you'll be tumbling across the landscape with a giant katamari, picking up skyscrapers and huge cruise ships like they were nothing. Each level has a size that you have to achieve before the time runs out, so the real skill lies in working out which items to pick up first in order to grow as big and as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, that's not quite as easy as it should be - the one minor flaw in the otherwise silky-smooth

Howdy, cousin

Genuine fun for all the family

Being the Prince of All Cosmos is fun, but sometimes you just want to see things from a slightly different angle... after all, there's only so long you can stare at that green cylinder he calls a head. Thankfully, the Prince has a rather large extended family spread across the world, although meeting them all isn't going to be easy (especially since there are over 35 of them to find).

And, of course, when we say 'meet'... well, we mean find them in each level and roll them up like any other object. True, it's not exactly the way we'd suggest getting together with your relatives but when doing so means that you can head over to Cousin Island and switch control to a different face, we're not complaining.



This is what's known in the business as 'all the things' - you can check out what you've managed to pick up and see where the holes are, so you can fill them in



So many cousins, so little time - if you fancy taking on a new persona to help get the rolling done, then a trip to this little island is just the thing you need



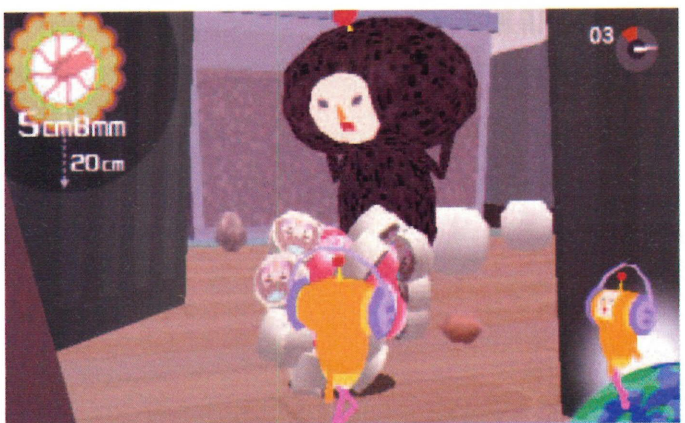
ointment happens to be the controls which, to be frank, are pretty important in any game requiring quick thinking and movement. It's not that they're rubbish because after a little bit of practice, you can soon be darting around the levels grabbing anything that does or doesn't move; however, against those of the PS2 version (which used the twin analogue sticks in tank-driving fashion, pushing both up, down or in opposite directions to move forward, backwards and turn respectively), they're not quite as intuitive. Replacing analogue with a digital pad and face buttons was always going to be risky and, to be fair, it does work, particularly with the subtle tweaks that Namco has put in place to accommodate fast turning and boosting. The fact that you'll have to spend a good few levels getting used to it all is the only real bugbear, mainly since the original was so easy to pick up and play... but then once it all clicks, there's no looking back.

[It's utterly bizarre... but that doesn't really matter, does it?]

Of course, the fact that *Me And My Katamari* is so addictive might have something to do with it as well, and that's most certainly the best thing about the whole experience. That one-more-go element, the prospect of racing around behind your katamari and pushing it just that little bit further to grow even bigger (creating an even better island for your animal friends in the process) is what drives the entire game and it's amazingly compelling. So compelling, in fact, that we're still playing despite having already completed it a while back.

And, of course, the fact that it's also portable is a massive boon, too - the number of times we've fancied a quick roll, but been miles away from a PS2 frustrates us immensely, so now we can just bust out the PSP and spend hours enjoying the Prince's adventures on the move.

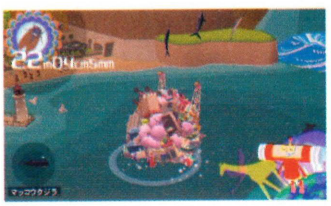
Yes, so it's utterly bizarre and seems like the stupidest idea for a videogame ever - but that doesn't really matter. All you need to know is that it's awesome and you need it in your life, because it'll soon become the most played game on your PSP. And if that's not enough to make you buy the game, then we don't know what to do... would a large ball of things help? ■ **Martin Mathers**



Finding cousins isn't always hard, although you'll need to be a hell of a lot bigger if you want to have any chance of picking this 'little' guy up before the time runs out



If you succeed, the King will give you a rundown of how well you did



Perfectly simple, but simply perfect... buy it now **91%**



Who leaves an entire watermelon just lying around the place? Honestly...



Chun-Li is one of the stronger characters, thanks to her insane priority on the air and in the ground. Rose is also quite handy but tricky to master...



Hadoken! Hadoken! Hadoken! Shoryuken! Shoryuken! *super flash* Shin! Sho! Ryuken! Hadoken! Hadoken! There are days when we hate fighting Ryu

The best things come to those who wait...

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Capcom** / Developer **In-House** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multiplayer**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Is it worth it with a wonky d-pad?
Yes, only because *Street Fighter Alpha 3* is still easy to play and is extremely forgiving on timings of combos. Some of the trickier V-Ism combos are a nightmare but by and large, *Alpha 3* just about survives the hardware's problems.

Is it worth modding the d-pad?
Not really. The supposed stick-on d-pad that came with Japanese and US pre-orders don't make much difference, and modding the innards invalidates your warranty. Just learn to work with the quirks of the current d-pad...

Eight years. 106 months. You-do-the-maths-because-we-can't minutes. Should we be angry at the wait or happy that this has finally arrived? Because for eight long years, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* has been kicked around various consoles like a dirty toy as the PSone, Saturn and Dreamcast all received ports that were hampered by technology, in an attempt to emulate Capcom's arcade brawler. It's too fast. Those combos don't work. That character's hitbox has changed. All reasons why fans of the arcade original couldn't love the ports, all reasons why the various ports were left to collect dust...

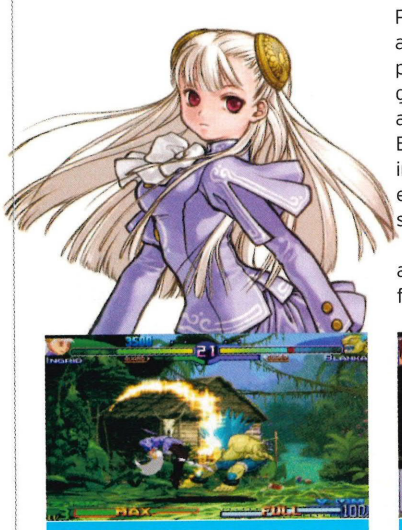
Good news, though. It's okay to fall in love again! Capcom has spiked the PSP's drink with its special seal of approval – a proper arcade perfect port. And by arcade perfect, we genuinely mean arcade perfect; not arcade perfect after your cousin Essex Dave messed around with the innards of your hardware to install emulators while accidentally melting some of the cables with a stray fag.

Good work guys! Took your time about it. Still, that's why there are four new characters here, to placate any misplaced PSP-thumping anger. It sounds like a fair deal but it comes with bad news attached. While the initial prospect of adding four recognisable faces sounds great, the reality doesn't quite match up to the potential. Ingrid, the only positive to *Capcom Fighting Jam*'s avalanche of negatives, loses her mobility options and therefore loses her unique lockdown style. Elsewhere, Yun loses Genei-Jin and Eagle loses A-Groove, and because you're not going to pull off a 720 on a PSP d-pad without the aid of Vaseline and garden gloves, you also lose out on the only decent super Maki has, so her style of play changes somewhat.

> **Capcom spikes the PSP's drink with its seal of approval**

The surgery these characters have undergone to fit the *Alpha 3* line-up isn't exactly butchery, and novices will never be able to tell the difference, but it's still enough ammo for the pessimists. They've waited eight years for this; they still don't know whether to be angry or happy.

Ultimately though, you won't be able to tell this PSP version apart from the arcade version (we're conveniently ignoring the whole you're-actually-playing-this-on-14:55-to-Woking aspect). It's absolutely perfect – the original soundtrack is present, all the background details have survived the shrinkage to handheld and V-Akuma is still the best character. Even the various bugs and glitches have been left in, such as kattobi cancels, OTG grabs, and so on. If this sounds too complicated,



Ingrid's flip kick is a reliable and consistant anti-air to use. Cheap!



"Go for broke! Nobody blink! Triumph or die!" And on it goes





don't worry – *SFA 3* is the most accessible brawler Capcom has released, a 2D fighter with a solid feel, with combos lenient enough for beginners to get stuck into, while the choice of three fighting modes in A-Ism, X-Ism and V-Ism add extra depth for experts to fuss over. Throw in tons of single player modes and there's enough to keep everyone happy. It's enough to make fighting fans dance pixellated jigs of joy.

A whole paragraph of good news? Time for some bad news. After finally conjuring up a perfect conversion, Capcom finds itself defeated by a new problem – the PSP's d-pad just isn't responsive enough. While mapping six buttons to the PSP was always going to be tricky, it's what the left thumb is doing that will be your main source of problems. Even jumping diagonally is troublesome, as you often find yourself jumping straight up, instead. Hit confirming into supers? Cancelling into combos? V-Ism combos? They're all needlessly tough to pull off. Japanese and American players have even gone as far as unscrewing their PSP and playing around with modding the d-pad. True, it's nowhere near as bad as *Darkstalkers*, but still a far cry from the control offered by DualShocks, let alone arcade sticks.

SFA 3 MAX manages to overcome this through its strength of design, brilliant characters, forgiving mechanics and fantastic modes, yet the d-pad is a needless stain on an otherwise flawless conversion.

So again, despite the happiness at the arcade perfect port, there's anger that the simplest of problems still hold us back from truly enjoying *Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX*. Guess we'll all just have to wait a little bit longer for that truly perfect port... ■

Ryan King

True fighting classic marred by wonky D-pad **80%**



Maki's hit and run style isn't as effective anymore... a real pity



R. Mika! An undeniably cool character. Shame she's rubbish

V-ISM Charlie guide

Impress friends while punching them. It's fun!

V-Ism is the ultimate way to show off. The d-pad renders the more complex and damaging V-Ism combos all but impossible (bye bye Akuma), so here's one that's fairly easy to pull off with Charlie. Activate V-Ism using light punch and light kick, then do crouching jab, crouching medium kick, light flash kick. From there, you repeat crouching fierce kick into fierce flash kick until the meter runs out. Et voila! Instant kudos, the ladies will want you, the men will want to be you, and the scrubs will call you cheap. The end.



Slowly herd your opponent into the corner and V-Ism becomes deadly, as there's literally no escape to the longer, powerful combos you can pull off



Could this be the number one 2D RPG for PSP?

TALES OF ETERNIA

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Ubisoft** / Developer **Namco** / Price **£29.99** / Players **1** / Supports **N/A**

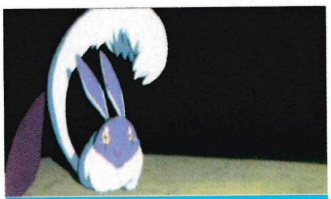
THE BIG QUESTIONS

This game bears more than a passing resemblance to *Tales Of Destiny II*. Why is that?
The simple answer to that question is that it's the same game. However, *Tales Of Destiny II* wasn't released here, so for a lot of people this will be something completely new.

Surely a 2D battle system can't be any fun, can it?
Well, you'd be surprised just how enjoyable it is. If you find turn-based battles to be a bore, then this could be just your cup of steaming-hot, ass-kicking action (which tastes nothing like tea). It's a little bit retro, but works far better than you'd expect.

Way back in the day, at the dawn of PlayStation2, Sony's eldest child – the PSOne – was settling down, ready for retirement. Although it was sad to see it entering its twilight days, there was much excitement about the new age of gaming. 3D was already becoming the norm and by the time the PS2 arrived, it would be an absolute necessity. 2D videogames were sure to be a thing of the past.

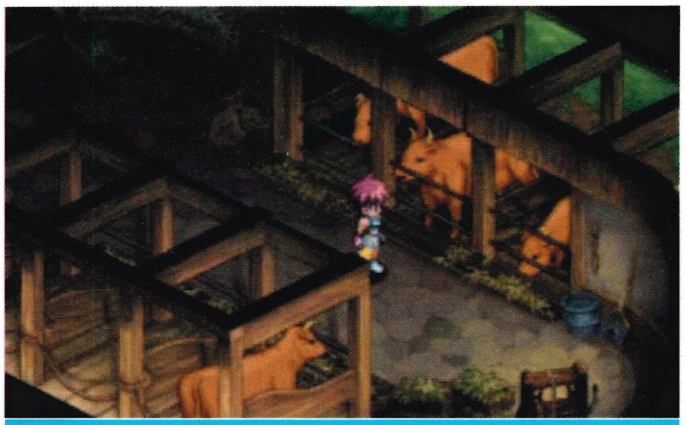
Yet in spite of this, *Tales Of Destiny II* burst unashamedly onto the gaming scene, complete with a typical RPG plot, which centred on the two worlds of Eternia (Inferia and Celestia) as they face an imminent, world-ending collision. While not released in the UK, it still had plenty of fans, who delighted in the old-school cartoon graphics, levelling up and an enjoyable 2D battle system. Yes, 2D! That's, like, one whole dimension less than 3D. However, even with this obvious lack of dimensional endowment, it was a charming slice of action-RPG



This is Quickie. All you need to know about him is he's impossibly cute



Going into shops and buying stuff – what RPGs are all about. It's a shame you can't haggle a bit though. We once got 10p off some peanut butter with our smooth talk



Your main man, Reid, counts livestock among his friends. We guess being born with bright purple hair, he was probably bullied a bit as a kid



Reid and Farah are good friends from the same village, but they're not getting it on. That's fine with us, because we want to keep her for ourselves

fodder, which deserved, but didn't get, a UK release.

Now some years on, as the once revolutionary PS2 sees out its final months in anticipation of the PlayStation3, *Tales Of Destiny II* is finally getting its British debut. Except it's not called *Tales Of Destiny II*, but *Tales Of Eternia* and it's not for the machine that's on its way out, but for another revolutionary system – the PSP.

As a pretty much pixel-perfect port of a PSOne game, *Tales Of Eternia* is fairly easy on the eye, but doesn't even remotely push the capabilities of the hardware. Its looks are crisp, clear and perfectly adequate for this kind of game. There are plenty of odd-looking enemy creatures, as well as a healthy portion of colourful characters with luminous hair, while the isometric view used for the non-battling parts of the game should be familiar to anyone who's played a *Final Fantasy* title. So apart from the occasional transparency effect in battle, it's as easy as 1, 2, D for the PSP.

[You will be enchanted by Eternia's glorious simplicity]

The rather lovely side effect of all this is that loading times are almost non-existent. From map screen to battle-mode, from cut-scene to real-time play, the transition from one section to the next is quick and painless, giving the game a decent sense of flow, which it might otherwise lack. In an effort to demonstrate this by contrast, the next paragraph will not link to this one at all.

Tales Of Eternia's battle system (see, what did we tell you?) is one of the most interesting aspects of the game. At its core, the Linear Motion Battle system is a single-plane 2D beat-'em-up – you only have direct control of Reid, whose skills are all combat based, while the rest of your party are controlled by AI. But while you're mostly limited to blocking and striking, your companions possess a range of other skills – some of which are of the magical variety.



Hit points, combos and big, pink monsters. Does life get any better?



"Seriously, mate, I'm on the guest list and they're with me"



The formation setting screen will be of particular importance, but we always put Reid at the front because he's well hard and that

Cooking up a storm

Wonder Chef, two-der chef, three-der chef, four...

Rather than just letting you eat the food that you find and buy throughout the game, *Tales Of Eternia* requires you to cook. By combining ingredients you can make meals, which have a range of positive effects on your party. Of course, culinary creation can only come about if you've got a recipe. Thankfully, the mysterious Wonder Chef has loads of them shoved up his not inconsiderable sleeves. The only problem is finding him, as he has a habit of disguising himself as inanimate objects – which we doubt Lloyd Grossman has ever done. Anyway, he'll share his recipes with you and then disappear in a puff of smoke, which we reckon probably smells of garlic.









[It's an old game on a hi-tech console, but it still feels right]

Although you can manually order them to use these Skills during battle, you can also set their behaviour in a particular way, so that they'll use them automatically and as often as you desire. This mix of action and *Final Fantasy*-style 'queuing' takes a little getting used to at first, but once you get the hang of arranging your party and stringing together combos, it becomes a true delight. Somehow, despite being years old before the game's even been released, it still manages to feel fresh and fun.

Indeed, this seems to be true of everything in *Tales Of Eternia*. Even though there's nothing new here – which you know full well – you can't help being enchanted by its glorious simplicity. You're totally aware that you're playing an aged game on a high-tech console, but it still feels right. Yes, it's rough around the edges, but its new, shiny PSP-shaped attire grants it a new lease of life. Yes, it has its limitations, but it's still worth a go. To be blunt, it's the MILF of the gaming world. If you're too young or too naïve to understand what that means, just forget about it and get yourself a copy of this game. ■ **Anthony Enticknap**

Like the perfect woman, uncomplicated and plain **84%**

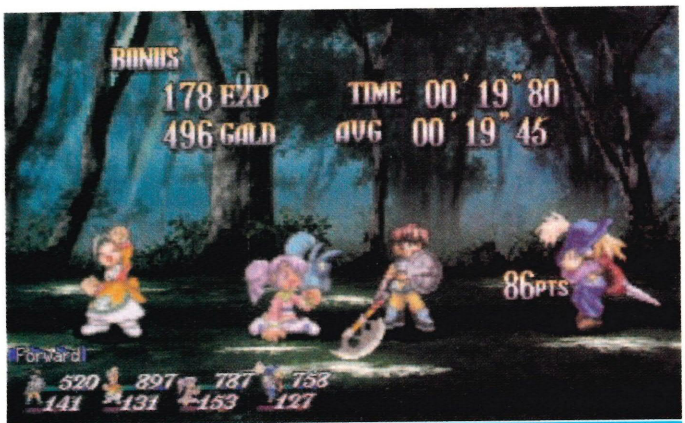




Unfortunately, the food fight we were hoping for didn't break out



Visual effects like these aren't exactly groundbreaking, but they do the job, as well as helping remind us what happened in the mid-Nineties



The latest line up for *Celebrity Big Brother* had everyone confused. We think the guy with the hat on might have sold a pint of milk to Abi Titmus once



"Hi, did anyone here order a nemesis? Oh no, it's the wrong house again! Barry's definitely going to fire me now. I don't suppose any of you need an evil genius?"

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'Arghhh, my eyes!' We're guessing that big beams of fire won't be good for your Tokobot's paint job – good thing they're under warranty or you'd be screwed



'Hey, you... are you looking at my bird? Did you spill my pint?' Not surprisingly, Bolt's hard man act didn't really wash with the giant mechanical bouncer

You know what they say about jacks of all trades

TOKOBOT

THE BIG QUESTIONS

So, which is it? A puzzler, or a platformer?
The simple, honest answer is it's a complete mixture. It's just a shame *Lumines*, *Archer Maclean's Mercury* and *Prince of Persia: Revelations* exist, or it'd have quirky, cerebral and acrobatic sewn up...

Surely it's aimed at those below 12?
If you're talking about IQ score and the 'proper' puzzles, then yes. The exploration is worth checking out, though, even if the puzzle elements are a little dumbed down for the more cerebral among us.

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Take 2** / Developer **Tecmo** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1** / Supports **None**

For bringing *Tokobot* to the PSP to sit on shelves chock-a-block with safe bet, established franchise releases, Tecmo is to be applauded. The way in which the game slaps the cold, stiff, platforming carcass in the face, refusing to believe it can't be revived warms the heart, it really does. Ultimately though, despite multiple doses of lateral thinking, relative originality and cute design, the deceased is still slipped into the freezer with a toe-tag reading 'died through lack of imagination'.

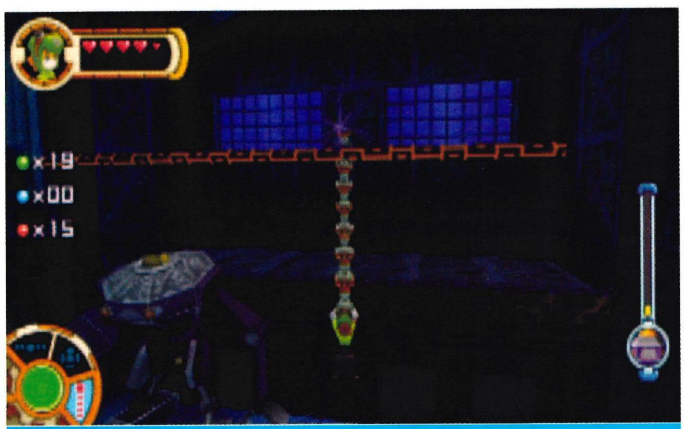
To elaborate the point a little background information is needed. Players step into the shoes of Bolt, an archetypal fictional Japanese school kid charged with investigating the ruins of ancient civilisation in the interest of science. Along the way, he discovers that the prehistoric world was once filled with awesome technological achievements, not least of which were Karakuri robots, mysterious automatons capable of a variety of gymnastic functions, when placed in the right hands.

Proceedings would be rather dull if those hands weren't Bolt's and, sure enough, you assume control as our hero sets out on another archeological outing with his clockwork companions in tow.

Controlling your Tokobots is a relatively simple affair. While toddling about at your side, they can be commanded to form one of three basic formations: Circle, V, or U. These see your bots surround you entirely, line up behind you or fan out at either side, respectively. Each formation has an associated action that is performed by holding a shoulder button and hitting square, and that single action can have multiple effects upon the environment; the 'V' formation's throw move, for instance, can see your bots grab onto ledges and form a useful ladder, bridge the gap across a yawning chasm or simply be used as an effective bludgeoning attack as Bolt flings the bots over his head.

So far, so simple. New actions appear as the story progresses, with the option to collect parts from crates and fallen foes to use 'Karakuri combinations'. These are essentially special moves, turning you briefly into a sword-wielding Samurai robot, a catapult, or whatever's immediately necessary. Bizarrely though, the game never really gets hard enough to demand their use (other than at mandatory points such as the refreshing train sections, reminiscent of the mine cart level in *Donkey Kong Country* on the SNES, way back when).

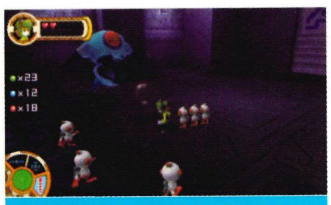
Tokobot's main selling point is the fact that its regular platforming action and its puzzles are more often than not the same thing, as the constantly-changing nature of your bots' skills means you're always struggling to find which tool on your metaphorical Swiss army knife best



Slam your Tokobots into one of these magnetic rails and they'll go rigid, allowing you to climb up them like some kind of crazy robotic ladder



They might be small, but those Tokobots can push almost anything



Although you can't lose Tokobots, you have to wait for them to return to you



One little kid and a small group of miniature robots against a gigantic drill on tank tracks... hardly a fair fight, is it?

fits the job. In this respect, it's more *Prince of Persia* than *Lemmings* or *Pikmin*. For example, you'll reach an apparent dead-end in a room that seems only to contain two humongous wooden blocks. After spending several hours mentally picturing the lead designer at Tecmo burning in the bowels of hell the realisation will dawn that the Tokobots' 'carry' skill mentioned half-an-hour's gaming earlier was given to you for a reason. Later on, you'll find yourself going insane in a tower with no entrance or exit hallway before noticing an Annie Lennox lyric might best describe the floor. Simple yes, but gratifying all the same.

The bona fide, more traditional puzzles tell a different story, however. For a start, your helpful assistant Ruby is more often than not on hand to ask a solution-bearing question before the whole thing's begun. Those that aren't answered for you patronise with their simplicity. More irritating still, many require the almost flawless repetition of some fiddly action or other simultaneous to your thought process. A particularly bad offender here is the Crane-O-Matic Karakuri combination that features on two separate occasions. Each time, you must use your crane's grabber to seize a number of crates that float across the screen on a conveyor belt in order to finish a task you've mentally done in seconds. Annoyingly, you'll only be given a set (unrealistic) number of grabs before your crane destroys itself, then you'll have to start over.

[It's more Prince Of Persia than Lemmings or Pikmin...]


Glowing rings on the floor are good... right? We just don't know any more


It's the evil eye! Run away! Or better yet, just hide behind your robots

You're not the boss of me

Whatever happened to the days of jumping on something's head to kill it, eh?

The boss encounters in *Tokobot* deserve a special mention, easing players into the robots' actions nicely. Straight after receiving the 'spin' ability, this slightly obscene-looking thing challenges you, casting land mines about the joint. Flicking the weapons back at it is the way forward, of course, before butt-stomping the yellow buttons, Mario-style, into the ground. Later on things get more complicated – before you know it, you'll be combining abilities with deft skill to down each one.

Furthermore, fact fans, the game's final boss is the only one we can remember who sits down for the entire duration of the battle. Now there's one to tell your mates!



Button, button, who's got the button? Bosses come in all shapes and sizes, although working out their weak points only takes a small amount of brain power



Something tells us that spinning into that giant cog might make this guy dizzy... but don't quote us on that



Returning to past areas once you've learnt new skills is how the game lengthens the action

It's a problem that isn't just confined to the puzzles, either. The game seems to prematurely age almost every good idea contained within by either over repetition or demanding a completely unreasonable level of skill. Memories of the boss battles, though skillfully varied, are tarnished by the fact that it's mandatory to fight through them all over again during the climax, which is about as symbolic of the game as a whole as it gets. Before that, the story pretty much demands walking every square inch of the environment for a second time. Why not just make more game in the first place? It all smacks of a chucked-out Christmas comedy DVD with only five per cent new footage over a previous release. The Two Ronnies would have a good excuse, but not *Tokobot*.

Sadly, too, Tecmo seemed to have missed out on an opportunity to create an endearing personality using objects so undeniably cute as your little robot pals. If you're longing for something along the lines of chimps drinking tea and disco dancing (always personal favourites), you're not going to find it here. The dialogue is delivered in a pretty dry manner through the use of text boxes (which seems strange with so much available storage space, but it could still have developed its own unique charm).

Sadly, there aren't even any humorous mis-translations other than in the manual where it's suggested that 'numerous tramps' have been laid throughout the game's levels. Innuendo or not, that's still wrong.

[It's an original mix, but one trumped by other games]

Looking at the concept the developers had to work with, it's hard not to imagine a more full-on puzzle experience could have been created. Imagine if you found yourself at the entrance to a maze, say, where the only way to get through would be to physically slot the bots together, one by one, to form a ball with Bolt inside it? The fact that you can't get involved in what the Tokobots do at this basic level reduces the game to being simply a platformer with a few nice set-pieces in it. Even if the bots just gained a few more actions during the eight hours it lasts, it'd rise above the dross. As it is, *Tokobot* stands as a relatively original mixture whose genres are all trumped elsewhere. ■ **Dave Shaw**



The further you get into the game, the more Tokobots you have to use


Watch out for this guy - if he spots you, there'll be plasma blasts a-plenty

A nice idea carried only half-way to its creative limit **72%**



Watch for those markers on the floor, as they're indications that you can use a Karikuri combination; helpful, but rather obvious for a puzzle game



An example of Tokobot's puzzle mechanic - these giant cogs need turning, so spinning into them results in the desired effect. Not exactly brain surgery, is it?

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With titfer positioned at a suitably jaunty angle, Mr Esc heads north

Mr Esc and his mates Miss Ctrl, Mrs Alt and Mr Del

EXIT

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Ubisoft** / Developer **Taito** / Price **£29.99** / Players **1** / Supports **Downloadable content**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Can I upload my own levels?
Unfortunately not. You'll have to rely on the ones made by Taito; they seem to be making a load though so worry not, dear friend...

Is it as good as Lemmings?
Well no, but it's nearly as good. The frustrating parts are its downfall, but at least you've never played any of the levels before.

Referring to Mr Esc as cool is like saying Cliff Richard is a cheesy Christian singer. The hero of *Exit* is a lesson in cool. He holds his trilby constantly as his red cape flutters behind him. He also mutters in a gruff voice "I'm getting too old for this" while putting out blazing fires and rescuing moaning maidens. We loved him from the moment he tipped his hat at us.

This cool also permeates through the whole look of *Exit*. The characters and effects feel like *Viewtiful Joe*, while the backgrounds look almost painted. Look out for the old school red phone boxes just outside the buildings.

Mr Esc is like all the emergency services baked into one suave caviar soufflé of a man. His moves flow like old school *Prince of Persia*, but he also has to get everyone out. Our hero walks, runs and leaps over platforms in two dimensions; he'll also grab then pull himself up and skid when he doubles back. Instead of the Prince's stilted sword fights, the trilbied one must help a number of companions to the exit with a *Lemmings*-like yelp of "Yahoo!" It's mainly puzzle based, with a spot of



What an ungrateful little bugger - he didn't even say thank you...

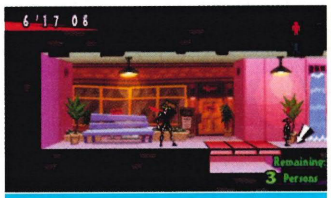


The puzzle elements of *Exit* don't just revolve around helping people escape, but also working out how to put those people to good use while you're with them









No time for a breather, matey – you've got people to save!

It's a game that rewards you for all the hard work you put into it

nimble fingered jumping. The PSP's d-pad makes jumping a little difficult because of the diagonals; either that or our thumbs are too small.

In order to progress, you must also use the various talents of your companions to reach the exit; kids can crawl into tight spots, normal people can stand on switches and fat bastards push heavy safes out of the way. To control them you select the person with the cursor and point it where you need them to go.

Of course, it's annoying that they have to be told to climb the stairs – apparently, they're incapable of thinking up and down as well as left and right. That's probably why they need rescuing. This mixture of analogue and digital controls works okay for the most part, although the cursor would definitely have worked better on... egads... the DS. But once you get used to it, you won't be chucking your beloved PSP out the window. Instead you'll be frowning at the screen, trying to find the best way to get Irene Robinson (she's just spent her last savings on a winning lottery ticket) out of a tight spot.

Not surprisingly, *Exit* definitely wouldn't work on a home console – not unless the controls were tweaked quite a bit. It's designed to be dipped in and out of, and considering how frustrating some of the levels are you'll be glad to put it down when you reach your bus stop. It's not just the controls though, it's the level design... suffice to say that at least two PSPs flew over our heads while reviewing this.

The problem comes when you're playing a level, sort of knowing what you need to do and then make a tiny mistake right near to completion. Being eager to finish can make you run when you should walk and end up with Mr Esc in a crumpled heap after a long drop. You can also get yourself trapped or find that you can't rescue all the people because you've done something in the wrong order. It's not a case of going back, because there is no going back; you've got to hit start and select retry. Repeating levels where the player knows what to but can't do it could be *Exit's* undoing, but the game's style and panache lift it away from its obvious pitfalls. Planning is key, as is taking the levels very carefully. *Exit* isn't a game for impatient people; Gordon Ramsey would hate it.

Of course, once you've completed all 100 levels (yes, you read that right) you can go on the net and download even more. There's even some available right now if you're lucky enough to have a copy. That being said, finishing the game is no mean feat; you'll be faced with electric floors, massive fires, deadly conveyor belts, dark levels with a torch and women crying "I really need a shower".

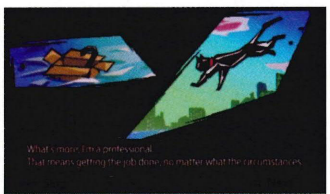
The music is suitably brassy, like a cartoon version of John Barrie's James Bond themes. The voices, however get repetitive very quickly, there's only so many times you can hear a woman squeal "He-elp!"

If *Exit* starts to annoy you, stick with it. It's a game that rewards you for your hard work and my, are the rewards rich. ■ **Henrietta Rowlatt**

Puzzles and patience – two things you'll need for this **83%**



Well, duh – open your eyes. Mr Esc is standing right in front of you!

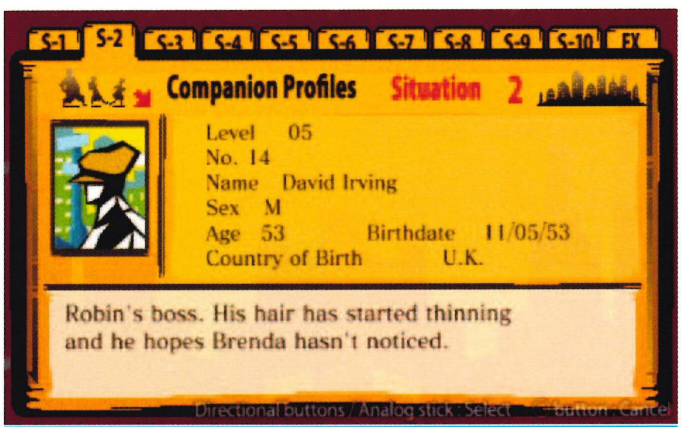


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In the small ads

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Sure, so there's not actually much point behind these profiles... but it gives the game a bit of character, so we're hardly going to start complaining



Another chance to say 2D, RPG and PSP in the same sentence

POPOLOCROIS

OUT: NOW (US)

Publisher **Agetec** / Developer **G-Artists** / Price **$30** / Players **1** / Supports **none**

For the second time this month, we have an RPG to review and for the second time, it's a port of a PSOne title. However, these two games – *Tales Of Eternia* and *PoPoLoCrois* – differ quite distinctively. Other than 2D graphics, these games are completely their own.

For example, *Tales Of Eternia* is action-based and has a single-plane 2D battle system, while *PoPoLoCrois* is more of a tactics RPG, requiring you to move your team around a grid during battle. There are plenty more differences between these games, but we won't go into them here.

PoPoLoCrois is an old-school RPG, set in a world ruled by kings and inhabited by dragons, witches and ice demons. The plot is rather less eccentric than many games of its ilk and owes as much to Western fairytales than it does to anything from the East.

Taking the role of 10-year-old Prince Pietro, you learn that your mother, who you thought was dead is, in fact, somewhere in the castle in which you live, in a deep, deep sleep. She has been that way since she defeated the evil Ice Demon 10 years



Get the chests, kill the knights, save the girl... all in a day's work, eh?



To label *PoPoLoCrois* as traditional would be a bit of an understatement – from the castles and swords to its magic and monsters, it's incredibly old-school material

THE Big QUESTIONS

PoPoLo... what? It's pronounced 'po-po-lo-cross' according to the soapy-voiced American lady that narrates the game and is the name of the kingdom which Prince Pietro's father rules over. It's a magical world full of dragons, witches, funny-looking monsters and 10-year-old princes that save the world.

Do I really need another 2D RPG? Maybe. While *PoPoLoCrois* is far from perfect, it does offer a different take on the genre, which, at the moment, is not available elsewhere on PSP. Of course, a slew of new titles are on their way, but for some people, this could be the perfect stopgap.



Setting the computer to automatic when entering combat situations might save you some effort, but what's the point? You should be doing all the work here...



Don't just stand there looking gormless, son, there's a world to save. Not that you look like the world-saving type - that haircut's got to go for start...

ago, by turning herself into a dragon and sending the demon to the World Of Darkness. Unfortunately, she was dragged down as well.

Although there's nothing wrong, as such, with the plot, the way it's presented and narrated makes it seem like story time in a nursery school and, as a result, it grates slightly with mature, grown-up gamers like the ones we think we are. However, once you get past the initial stages, and get into it, you find there's a decent tale to be told and plenty of humour, too.

[It's enjoyable, but too simple to have any lasting appeal]

Of course, there's more to a worthwhile role-playing game than its narrative and *PoPoLoCrois* does a fairly good job of demonstrating this. There's everything from random battles to levelling up, as well as buying and equipping weapons. It's nothing new, but it's exactly what you expect and want. Sadly, though, it's somewhat limited by its own simplicity and the measly amount of interactivity is disappointing - you can open chests and chat to people, but that's about it.

In many other RPGs, you can read books on shelves, open cupboards and generally distract yourself from the objectives of your quest. Perhaps it's not the most important aspect of a game, but when it's not there you certainly notice it.

When you walk into a room with nothing in it, other than inert objects, you wonder why the room is even there in the first place.

Unfortunately, it's not just the open play that's flawed, as the battle sections of the game also have a few problems. While, for the most part, the turn-based, grid-movement system is enjoyable, the inclusion of an automatic function for each of your party seems slightly ridiculous. By turning them all on auto, you can let the computer play all your battles for you, while you sit back and watch. Some people might see this as a useful way of saving time, but we don't see the point, because if you're not going to play the game, why buy it in the first place? Of course, you don't have to use this function, so we're not really criticising it, but we are nevertheless, confused.

That said, the battles do have one genuine problem - the load times. While they aren't particularly long, they do occur with startling frequency and when you consider that the enemies appear on the screen without going to a separate battle screen, it seems bizarre that there should be any loading times at all. With such a basic-looking game, you'd expect the enemies to appear instantaneously, so the stop-start experience you get is a most unwelcome surprise.

It's a shame, as *PoPoLoCrois* could have been so much more. As a amalgam of two PSOne games and tweaked for the PSP release, more ingredients could have been added to spice up the formula. But they haven't and the result is a decidedly average RPG which is enjoyable, but far too simplistic to have any lasting appeal. ■ **Anthony Enticknap**

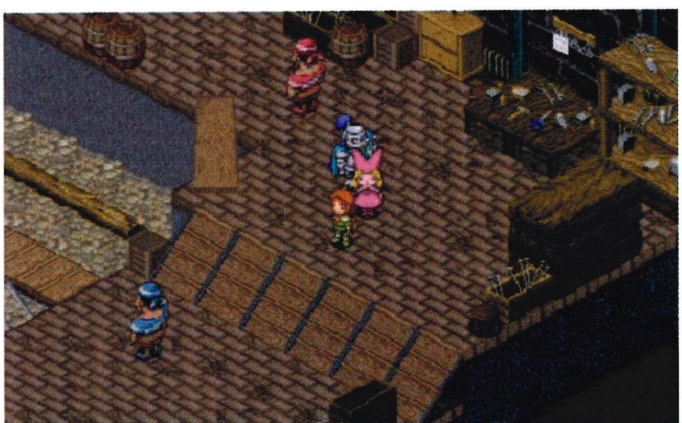


Grid-based combat - the staple of what many see as classic RPG action



There's no denying the charm of *PoPoLoCrois*... it's all very lovely

Not bad, but just not that good either **69%**



The lack of interactive environments gets a little grating as the adventure goes on. It'd be nice to have something to look at, even if it is all completely meaningless

Hole in one

Can you dig it? Yes you can...

As well as simple swordplay, special moves and a liberal sprinkling of magic, your man Pietro also learns the ability to set traps. This consists of digging a big hole in front of an enemy and hoping they'll be careless enough to walk straight over it. Be careful though, because you can also fall in if you're not careful. In truth though, you'd have to be plain stupid to do so, because it's easy to avoid once you've dug it. Still, it comes in handy, because opponents act as if it isn't there, so they fall right in.









Don't pick up the soap, Mega Man!

MEGA MAN POWERED UP

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Capcom** / Developer **In-House** / Price **£29.99** / Players **1** / Supports **Downloadable content**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Is it really the original Mega Man?
Yup, it's all here. When you power up the game it even shows a short clip of the NES version just to prove it to you. No need for an emulator!

How do I download levels?
Connect to the net using wireless and you should see a list of the available levels. Pick which one you like and whack it on your memory stick. Easy.

He's Mega! He's a Man! He's Powered Up! He... can't duck. It's 2006, we can talk to mates in the pub from the top of Mount Snowdon via the net and on telly, we can see fish that live under water pressure that would squash the moon. But still... still Mega Man can't duck. How's he meant to pick up a lost fiver off the floor?

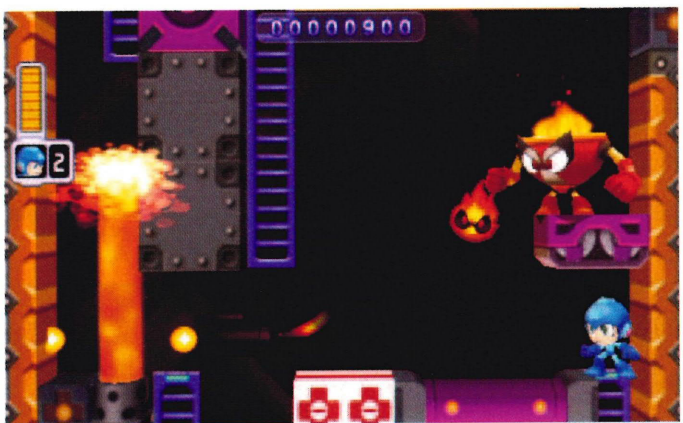
Powered Up is a remake of the NES original classic, and its 2D charm has been given a 3D makeover. OK, so it's still 2D... but the platforms and enemies have, well, depth to them. This isn't as lavish or as lovely as the anime inspired SNES re-hash *Maverick Hunter X*, but it serves its purpose. There are two game modes: New Style and Old Style. New Style looks better and the levels have been made slightly, not a lot, easier. Old Style featured an exact update of the original NES version, complete with TV aspect ratio and bleepy bloopy music. The real killer here, however, is the Construction mode – you can make, shape and mould a level of your own then share it on the internet. We can't wait to see what the *Mega Man* fan girls and boys will create over the next few months.

But all this amazing internet techno-wizardry doesn't make up for the design flaws. *Mega Man* is old and if you completed the original, you must be knocking on 40 by now.

Playing the game requires some deft three-handed action to be able to shoot at the arc of jump, and auto-fire would be a godsend. Also you can only shoot forwards... even an ancient game like *Turrican* was more advanced. It's rock solid difficult, especially at the beginning where there's not even a tutorial or hints on how best to slay the spawning, tracking and spread-bullet firing enemies. And not being able to duck hampers this no end; that bit still bugs us. Once you beat the various robots however (there's even a Fireman!) you'll gain their skills and weapons, which makes the game easier, but still... basically if you love *Mega Man*, then get *Maverick Hunter X* instead; if you're a budding game designer though, get this and get making... ■ **Henriatta Rowlatt**

> **Playing the game requires some deft three-handed action**

Good, but sadly not great – *Maverick Hunter X* is better **79%**



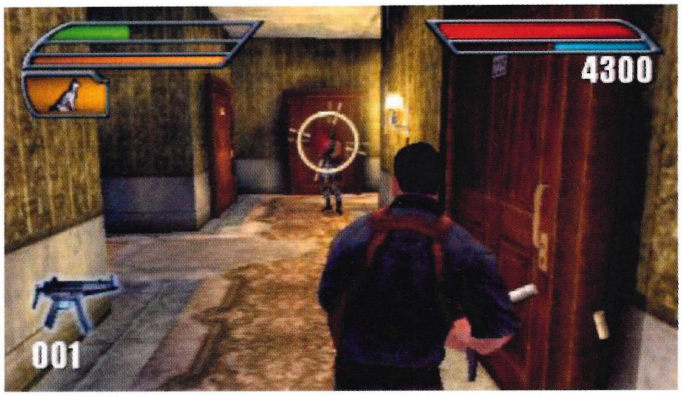
Big cartoon heads might be a new addition, but the gameplay is decidedly old-school – if you're a hater of retro games, you're going to loathe this one

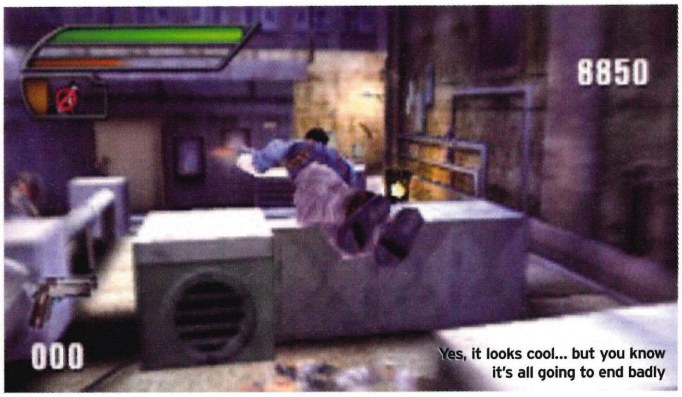
Make-a-Man

Construct a brand new level out of string and cardboard

This is how *Powered Up* will get you addicted. The construction set allows you to make your own levels from every single item and enemy in the game. Make a level full of hearts or one-eyed jumping robots, or do what we did and make a Go>Play level! The possibilities are endless. Once you're happy with your creation you can upload it to the net for the whole world to play and rate, as well as downloading other people's levels and play them at your leisure. This could be the start of something very special indeed.







Yes, it looks cool... but you know it's all going to end badly

One man and his dog, it ain't

DEAD TO RIGHTS: RECKONING

THE BIG QUESTIONS

It doesn't look so bad from the screenshots...
While it's true to say that *Dead To Rights* isn't the worst looking PSP game we've seen, it doesn't showcase its capabilities. It looks as average as it plays.

Any level on offer that isn't in the PS2 version already?
Though the plot bears similarities to *Dead To Rights II* on PS2, the levels are substantially different, so if you're a fan you won't get ripped off if you buy both games.

OUT: NOW

Publisher **EA Games** / Developer **Rebellion** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multiplayer**

Dead To Rights never really set the world alight on PS2, with repetitive action and clichéd *Matrix*-style slow-mo, and yet po-faced cop Jack Slate has made the transition to PSP. Along with his trusty canine companion, Jack works to clean up the crime-ridden streets of Grant City. He generally accomplishes this by filling anything that moves with white-hot lead – perhaps a more effective solution than handing out ASBOs.

Unsurprisingly, this action is as basic in plot and execution as the Eighties action movies that it tries to emulate. Each level sees you moving forward, dispatching enemies then going through a door to the next area to repeat the process. Apart from the odd switch to flick or boss to beat, the game rarely strays from this formula, and is worse off for it.

Of course, this repetition is softened slightly by the ability to dive in slow motion which, despite being painfully unoriginal, is still good fun. It has to be said that diving from a balcony, blasting enemies below then landing in a perfect roll will bring a smile to the face of almost anyone.

Even the slightly original addition of Shadow the dog is sadly wasted, as rather than actively fighting alongside you, he's invisible until you call on him, and the poor old pooch spends much of the game sitting on the sidelines waiting for a biscuit.

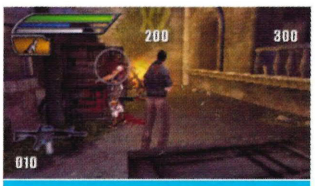
While the short levels and mindless gameplay suit a portable machine, we can't help but think that *Reckoning* could have offered so much more. With some extra effort, this could have been made into a fun-packed shooter rather than something that's worth little more than a rental.

Simon Griffin

Repetitive action that irritates, not exhilarates **63%**

> **Grins turn to grimaces when the camera goes haywire**

These grins soon turn to grimaces, however, as you realise that while the camera does a decent job in open areas, it goes haywire once you reach an enclosed space. You have little control over it and when you turn you have to wait for it to follow suit, all the while unable to see what lies ahead. Targeting something will speed it up, but that often compounds the problem as it picks a barrel or car rather than the enemy running towards you with a shotgun aimed at your face.



Ooh... guns, guns, guns! Best make good use of them, Jack...



The camera is the real problem here, as it flits around like some kind of crazy person on speed – spotting where the enemies are coming from is a whole lot of hassle

Killing time

Get friends in your sights and take 'em out

Dead To Rights features four-player wireless multiplayer that sees you and three friends fighting it out in a deathmatch – this usually involves the participants leaping around all over the shop like *Matrix* wannabes, trying to avoid the bullets flying about. There are plenty of weapons and items to pick up across the maps but the winner will usually be whoever can find the most powerful weapon first. Sadly, while there's some limited fun to be had the multiplayer mode suffers from the same camera issue that plagues the single player game – shame.

WIDESCREEN

AARON ASADI CHECKS OUT THE MONTH'S HOTTEST UMD MOVIES...



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Your UMD guide at a glance...

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★ Must Buy
★★★ Average
★★ Fair
★ Don't Bother

UMDs

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Music

[84] Daft Punk Interstella 5555
[85] Green Day: Bullet In The Bible
[85] Placebo: Soulmates Never Die
[85] Red Hot Chilli Peppers Live At Slane Castle

Not your typical comic book movie, but, hey, like we care...

HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

OUT: 20 MARCH

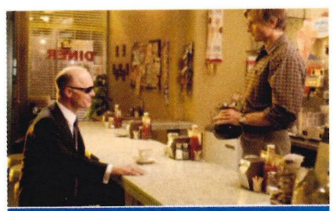
Director: **David Cronenberg** / Starring: **Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello, Ed Harris** / Price: **£17.99**

★★★★★

Here's three 'can'ts' for you: you can't make comic book movies without 200 million bucks worth of CGI; you can't make violence shocking anymore; and you can't make a 69 look romantic on film – especially when the female participant is dressed up in a cheerleader outfit. Or at least you couldn't until David Cronenberg came along with this beast of a movie and showed us how.

Tom Stall (Mortensen) runs a coffee shop. He has a wife (Bello) and kids, and sometimes enjoys a good 69, making him as normal a bloke as you could imagine. Then, when his coffee shop gets held up, he beats the living crap out of the assailants, swiftly killing them with first a coffee pot and then one of their guns. Hooray! He's a hero! Hooray! He's on national TV! Hooray! His kids think he's awesome! Boo! He doesn't see the big deal! Boo! Some gangsters come into town insisting Tom isn't all he says he is! Nope, instead they argue that he's actually Joey, a former mobman with a violent history. All of a sudden the title starts to make sense. His denial in the face of their protestations naturally leads to some more mano-y-mafia action, and all the while his family suffer with the notion that daddy and lover boy may not be all he says he is, but instead a heartless killer that ripped a man's eye out with barbed wire.

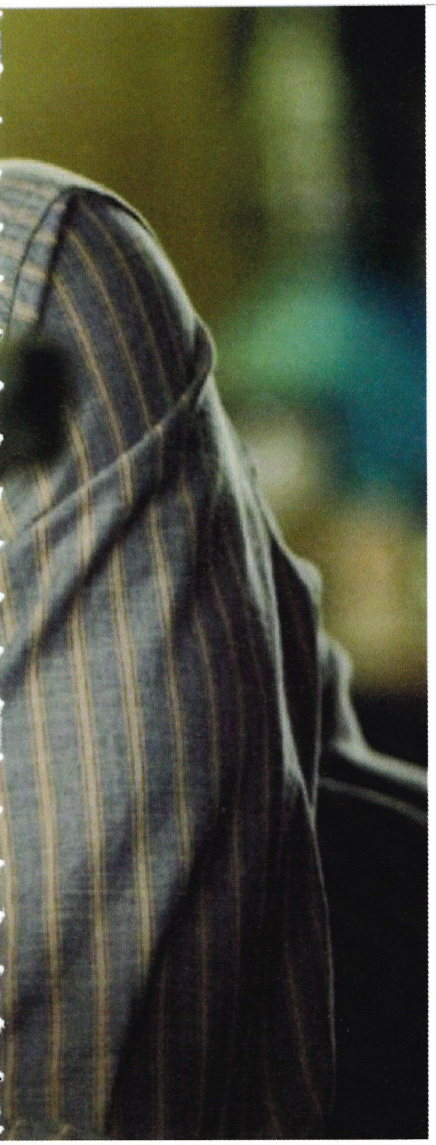
From the casually terrifying opening sequence to the subdued, heartfelt climax, Cronenberg's movie is a masterclass in pace and revelation. The slow trickle of detail is perfectly controlled, matched in turn by a once stable family spiralling into domestic turmoil. The latter, of course, is only really made possible by the superb understatement of the performances, with Viggo looking more and more the Seventies-style star we all hoped he could be. Sure, William



Whatever you do, Viggo, don't spill the coffee in the mafia guy's lap...

SHOCK FACT!

Cronenberg thought the original coffee shop scene was way too heavy and thought it glorified violence, which he is against



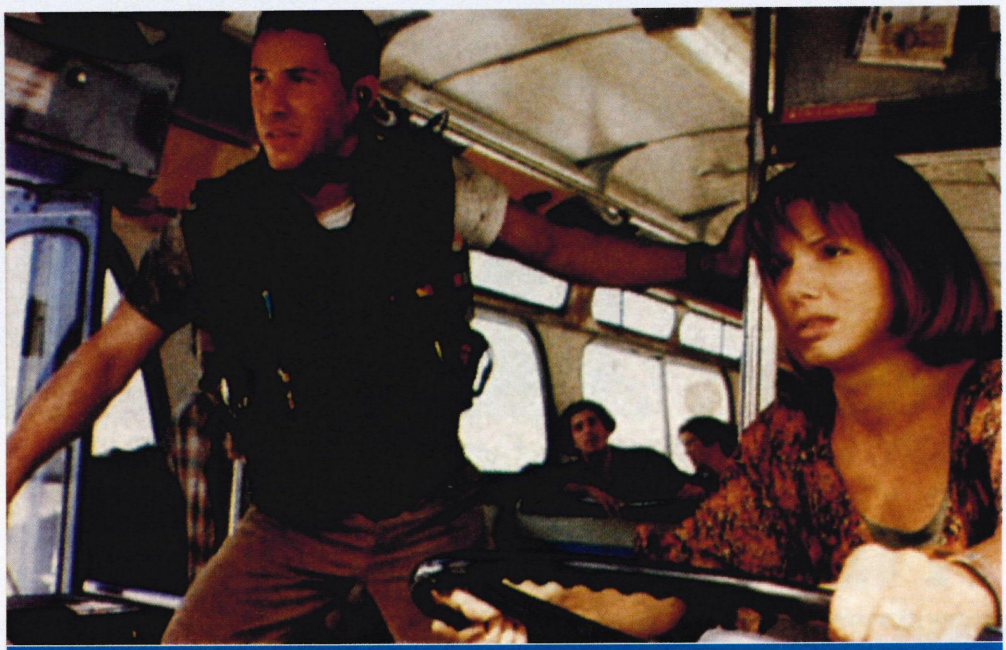
Hurt's cameo is in danger of altering the film's tone slightly, but all in all, it's a magnificent ensemble performance.

What elevates this above the status of mere action thriller, though – besides the sheer efficency of the style – is the handling of the violence. Cronenberg has somehow given potency back to blood and guts. This violence looks painful and it is sickening. There is no heroism to it; instead, it's steeped in tragedy and remorse. It's really quite something – brave, intelligent and, in an odd way, subtle. Everything, in fact, that the majority of movies released today aren't.

So in conclusion, see this movie. It's superb. It's great action cinema, great drama and the best comic book movie of all time. Plus, it's got a cool scene with a 69 in it. ■

The wildcat rides the greyhound

SPEED



And to think we used to fancy Sandra Bullock when she did this film. Thankfully, we've seen *Miss Congeniality 2* since then and have fully come to our senses... thanks, but no thanks Sandra. Please, stop calling us...

OUT: 27 MARCH

Director: **Jan De Bont** / Starring: **Keanu Reeves, Sandra Bullock, Dennis Hopper** / Price: **£15.99**

★★★★

You know that bit in a movie when the cop with a hangover and divorce papers dismantles a bomb because that's what cops do? Well, despite the whiff of cheese that often emanates from such a set-piece, they can be quite enjoyable. *Speed* is essentially that scene multiplied by 70 minutes and instead of a red wire that needs to be cut, there's a bus that can't go over 50 miles per hour. We say 70 minutes because that sequence in the movie is bookended by a couple other action scenes and a bit of story. But we don't care about those parts – we care about a bus and the passengers on it that will blow up if it goes below 50 miles per hour.



Run, Keanu – run as fast as your stumpy little legs will carry you!

It's one of cinema's greatest set-ups, or at least one of its most infamous, and is so not just because it's a perfectly over-the-top concept, but because it works so bloody well. There's something just plain excellent about Keanu Reeves (the hard-as-nails, hotshot supercop) standing behind Sandra Bullock (the almost-by-accident bus driver) as they careen through the city in a two-tonne bomb full of people.

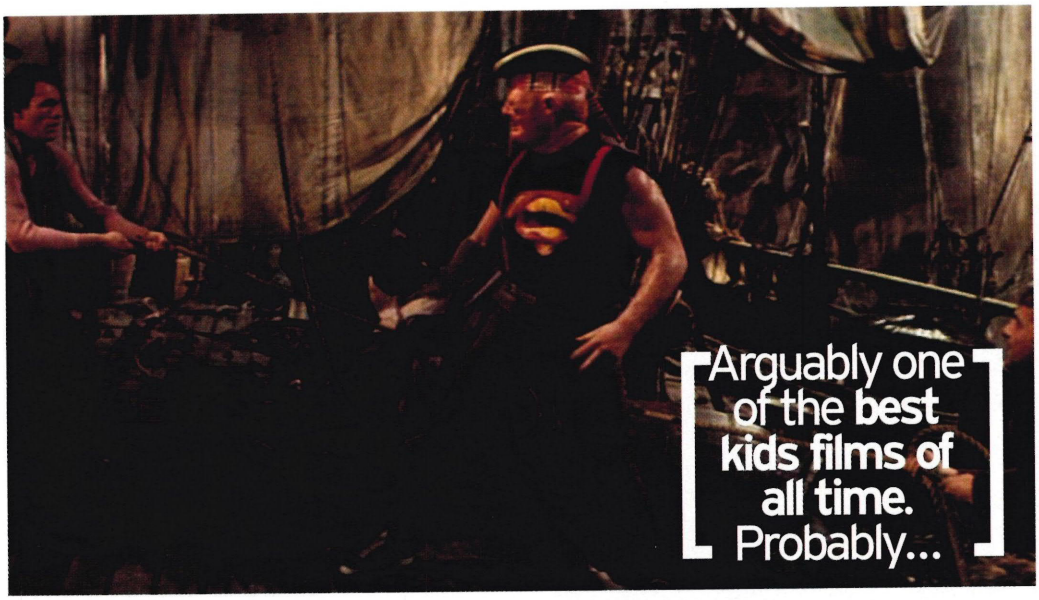
The complications that arise from this are, of course, obvious – finding the terrorist behind it all; avoiding things that may slow you down, such as traffic; and getting people off the bus – and the film confronts them with admirable pace and vigour. Indeed, the title of the flick is not so much to do with the concept but the manner in which it is delivered. Swift edits, loud bangs, and fast cuts are the order of the day, and yet distant enough from the MTV-style of direction that litters our screens today to not leave you nauseous.

> It's one of cinema's **greatest set-ups**

It does ease up on the gas a little towards the end, which is disappointing, although perhaps inevitable given that the best set-piece was saved for the middle part of this film. Still, with a concept played out as well as this and a few surprises thrown in to boot, this deserves its status as an action classic, sitting snugly alongside the likes of *Die Hard*. ■

SHOCK FACT!

Halle Berry turned down the role of Annie – a role that went on to make Bullock a star



Will the kids discover One Eyed Willy's treasure?

THE GOONIES

OUT: 13 MARCH

Director: **Richard Donner** / Starring: **Sean Astin, Corey Feldman, Sloth** / Price: **£17.99**

★★★★★

It's the best kids film of all time. Probably. Some people argue that it's not a kids film at all, but a decent action-adventure yarn, and shouldn't be marginalised in such a cruel fashion. But balls to that. It was made for kids, it was loved by kids, and it stars kids. It's a kids film. It's also a great action-adventure yarn that you'll just so happen to love until you're too old to even claim on your pension.

From the 'truffle-shuffle' to Data's gadgets, from the map to the gold, from the booby traps to the awesomeness that is Sloth, *The Goonies* is as fun a film as you'll ever watch. Telling the tale of a group of adventure-hungry kids who find a map leading to One-Eyed Willy's treasure, Richard Donner's film managed one of the greatest feats in cinema history – it featured a whole host of child actors and not one of them was annoying, not even Corey Feldman. Yeah, that's right.

Produced by Spielberg, *The Goonies* is very much in the vein of a whole crop of Eighties films that would have easily been a matinee and a comic book decades before. It's almost completely ridiculous, it's silly, it's childish, and yet because of the control behind the camera, because the story is always over-shadowing the kids, it's immensely likeable. There's also something about it that captures the imagination as well as any story told by Tolkien or Lucas, and it's to do with the fact that it somehow feels rooted in a very real suburban setting, the threat-of-eviction back story casting a welcome shadow over the spectacular events that unfold in the hunt for the treasure. The presence of the criminals also on the trail for the treasure is handled with equal skill, the bad guys staying on just the right side of bumbling to remain threatening.

It's a treat of a film, easy to watch and even easier to like. In terms of enjoyment there isn't many that people can honestly say 'one for the whole family' and mean it. This is one for the whole family (although crowding them around your PSP might be a bit of an issue). ■

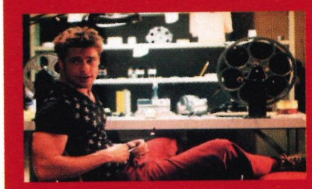

Behold, Mr Corey Feldman – former child star, now just a bit of a wash-out. Oh well...

SHOCK FACT!
Richard Donner was sacked from the set of Superman II even after the film broke all records

5 of the best UMDs on the shelves

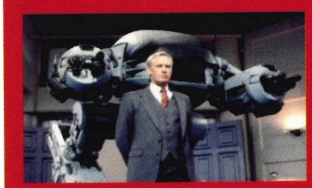
[1] Fight Club

Brilliant black comedy that's as cool as hell. Brad Pitt has never been better as the iconic Tyler Durden, and Ed Norton has rightly conceded that he will never star in a better film. Trudat, Ed.



[2] Robocop

Excellent sci-fi. Super violent and often misunderstood as nothing more than that, which is a shame. Still, so long as you know that this is Verhoeven's best film and one of the best of the decade as well.



[3] Akira

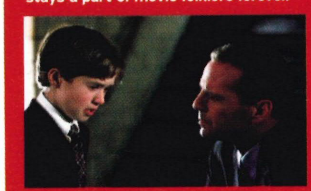
People often moan about how this makes little sense, especially towards the end, but in truth it's not anywhere near as impenetrable as its reputation makes out, but is every bit as cool. The most famous and successful anime of all time, and deservedly so.

[4] Kill Bill Volume 1

A terrific martial arts movie from start to end/middle. Doing what he does best, Tarantino somehow turns what is essentially terrible cinema into a thing of excellence. Wonderful choreography and a central performance from Uma Thurman that's good enough for three Oscars.

[5] The Sixth Sense

The twist-laden story of a young boy being able to see dead people and reluctantly enlisting the help of a quiet psychiatrist, played by Bruce Willis, to get him through it, is just one of those films that comes from nowhere and stays a part of movie folklore forever.





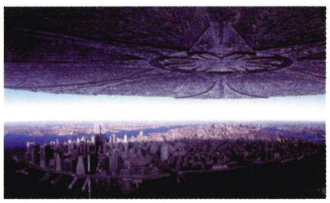
Close encounters of the poor kind

INDEPENDENCE DAY

OUT: 27 MARCH

Director: **Roland Emmerich** / Starring: **Will Smith, Bill Pullman, Jeff Goldblum** / Price: **£15.99**

★



Usually we give the films we dislike less space than this, but as we really want to describe just how bad this is, we thought we might need a few more words.

Now, as is often the logic, the worse a film is, the more people have seen it, but just in case you haven't, here's the lowdown: aliens attack Earth and fighter pilots try their damnedest to strike back while Jeff Goldblum uses his Apple laptop to destroy alien technology. Even alien motherships, it seems, have USB ports – who'd have thunk it?

Now we've nothing against patriotism if it's handled well, but here it's sickening. We can only imagine the whoops and cheers President Pullman's speech was met with when this was first screened. Equally, we don't mind snappy one-liners after a nice swift blow to some bad guy's chops, but here it's done with such a lack of charm and style, we didn't know where to look. "Now that's what I call a close encounter!" Piss. Off.

This is the sort of film where humans can die, but dogs can't. It's the sort of film where presidents are incorruptible and every American is willing to die for their country. It's the sort of film that has loads of big effects, but none that look good after a few years. It's the sort of film that is nothing more than an extended trailer. In short, it's the sort of film that gets one star. ■



SHOCK FACT!
James Brown's distinctive scream was used as a sound effect for an alien energy beam

"Bruce, as well as seeing dead people, I see dead careers and Alex Ferguson's is just over there by the stairs. It's saying 'I hate Jose' over and over"



OUT: 27 MARCH

TRANSPORTER 2

Director: **Louis Leterrier** / Starring: **Jason Statham, Matthew Modine, Kate Nauta** / Price: **£17.99** ★★

NOW GIVEN THAT the first 'film' was so bad it took all we had just to leave it on, this is a big improvement. Statham, after annoying everyone with his tiresome London gangster schtick once more with *Revolver*, shows us again that he's got some moves when it comes to kicking ass in slow-motion. As the film doesn't bother with the plot, we won't either; suffice to say that it's only there to link one set-piece to another and give the people who can't fight a reason to talk. The point here is the action, and by-and-large it's handled with confidence, style, and dare we say it, even a bit of innovation. The scene with the hosepipe will surely impress anyone who doesn't mind their screen battles cut at a blindingly fast rate.

It's shallow, entirely forgettable, poorly acted, over-styled and not at all good, but somehow it's okay. Don't bother, but if you do, we're pretty sure you won't hate it as much as you think you might. ■



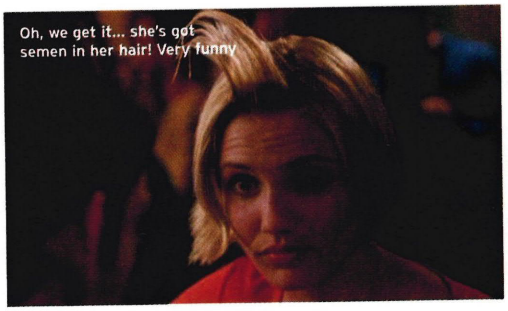
OUT: 20 MARCH

STEAMBOY

Director: **Katsuhiro Otomo** / Starring: **Alfred Molina, Patrick Stewart, Anna Paquin** / Price: **£15.99** ★★★

AFTER AKIRA, anime went boom all over the world. Did this mean we got inundated with quality animation akin to the neo-Tokyo masterpiece? No, it meant we got flooded with a lot of bizarre crap that loads of people pretended to like. Consequently though, only the really good stuff now gets any notice – *Spirited Away*, the classic example. So where does *Steamboy* fall? Well, on the side of the good... but only just.

The story of a young boy living in 19th century London bestowed with a steam-ball-thing that gives him powers is, unfortunately, riddled with the clichés that have killed the genre. From the evil business men to the young, reluctant hero, this is old hat, saved only by the grace that it's done with a large amount of style and told with a fresh verve. We expect better from the man behind *Akira* though. ■





But is there really?

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY

OUT: 30 JAN

Director: **Peter and Bobby Farrelly** / Starring: **Ben Stiller, Matt Dillon, Cameron Diaz** / Price: **£15.99**

★★

Crowd-pleasing and good filmmaking should be the same thing, but they're not. The fault, though, isn't that of the films, but of the people. Some people just don't know a good comedy when it smacks them on the arse, and worse still, overrate a mediocre one when it runs a zip through their penis.

Ouch indeed, and no doubt many of you are aware that our metaphor was also a reference to the Farrelly brothers' most-liked comedy, the opening scene starting a string of scenes that test the boundaries of gross out with confident aplomb.

Another memorable one would be the cum-gel scene, or even the dog resuscitation sequence – the problem is, though, that they just don't add up to a decent enough story. Usually the Farrellys manage to balance the story with the humour, but here the narrative has as much worth as it would in a sketch show. It's just a series of bits, and after a short while it feels like that, the would-be-heartfelt story of our lovelorn prom-reject obsessing over his former date, pushed to the side in a *tour de farce*.

In truth, you'll be much better off with some of the Farrellys' other unique comedies such as *Dumb & Dumber* or the spectacularly overlooked *Kingpin* (which really deserves more credit) instead of plumping for this. Where as those other films have a heart at their centre, *Something About Mary* has a factory, coldly pumping out scene after scene of lowest-common-denominator humour. You could well find that it's funny, but you certainly won't find anything else here to keep you entertained. ■



PHONE BOOTH

Director: **Joel Schumacher** / Starring: **Colin Farrell, Keifer Sutherland, Forest Whitaker** / Price: **£15.99**

★★

If nothing else, Colin Farrell can do a good American accent. He can also do nervous and determined really well. He's also good at being a bit of a cock. Thankfully in *Phone Booth* he's all of these things, so he's naturally the best thing in the film... although that's not hard when you consider just how limited a thriller it is anyway.

Poor old Colin plays a PR chappy who gets lured into a phone booth and is then threatened with a sniper's bullet if he leaves. That's the premise, and it's good for as long as it lasts, but it doesn't do so for very long. It's an incredibly short feature film, but still feels stretched, which should speak volumes about its content. Short, sweet but ultimately unfulfilling. ■



SAW II

Director: **Darren Lynn Bousman** / Starring: **Donnie Wahlberg, Shawnee Smith, Tobin Bell** / Price: **£19.99**

★

Did you see the first *Saw*? Well, if you didn't then it's no real problem; this isn't so much a sequel as it is another film with the same premise, but with different set-pieces.

The aforementioned premise is this: a bloke with nothing better to do terrorises people with fatalistic games. It's a contrivance, but you'll forgive it because, hey, it's a horror. Anyway, this is one of those über-violent films that's just not for the squeamish (which basically means it's made for those with squeamish girlfriends who might need a hug after seeing so much blood and hearing so many screams). In closing, a word of warning: any hopes you might harbour for this to be any good will be severely dashed. ■



BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Director: **John Moore** / Starring: **Owen Wilson, Gene Hackman, Gabriel Macht** / Price: **£15.99**

★★

Before he started to suffocate us with a brand of comedy he used to be great at, Owen Wilson had a shot at being an action hero. It didn't pan out.

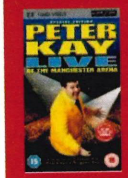
As a tale of an agent on the wrong side of the field, *Behind Enemy Lines* features brash Hollywood politics mixed with brash Hollywood effects, and feels like a cumbersome action flick with too much to say about bugger all. Which is exactly what it is.

Wilson is awkwardly cast as the alone ranger, but Hackman is typically thrilling back at headquarters. Not that you should see that as a positive. In fact, it's a film without even the decency to be so completely awful, that we'd have something genuinely interesting to say about it. ■

TOP FIVE BEST-SELLERS



[1] Robots
The mediocre CGI affair is still topping the charts.



[2] Peter Kay Live at the Manchester Arena
The Bolton wonder makes an easy transition to PSP.



[3] The Day After Tomorrow
The effects extravaganza makes a deep impact in the charts.



[3] Alien
Ridley Scott's sci-fi horror does well on the UMD format.



[3] Predator
The fun action flick makes good on Sony's sexiest mini-cinema.

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH

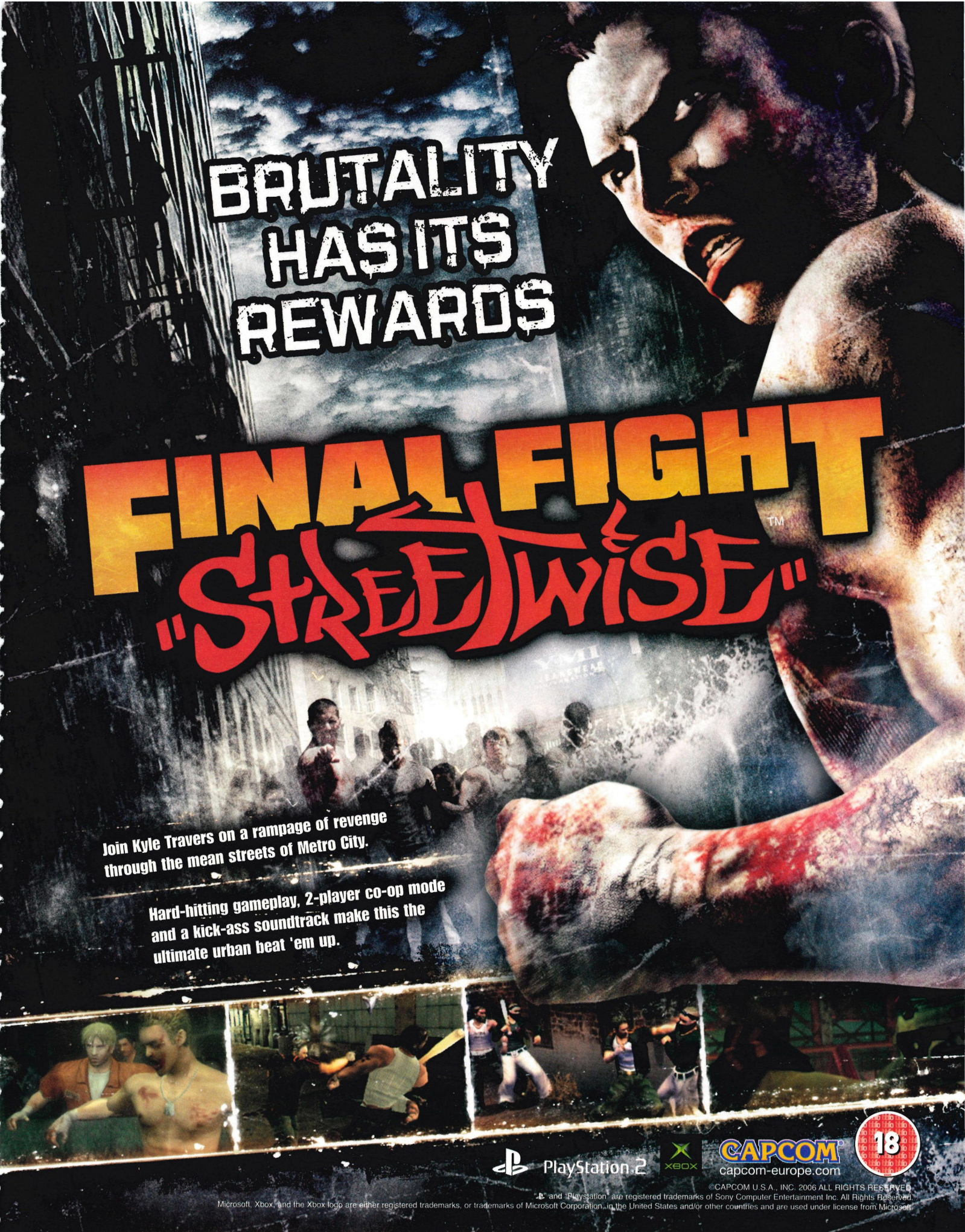
I Spit On Your Grave
Release Date: 20 March
The once-banned rape-revenge flick makes its way to UMD.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
Release Date: 20 March
The big wizard franchise hits your small screen...

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
Release Date: 20 March
...continuing with this, the worst of the lot.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
Release Date: 20 March
This one's also out, so no surprises for guessing...

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
Release Date: 20 March
that this one is as well. Bloody terrific.



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DAFT PUNK: INTERSTELLA 5555

One more time around the world

OUT: NOW

Price: **£13.49** / Rating: **Exempt**

★★★★★

SHOCK FACT!

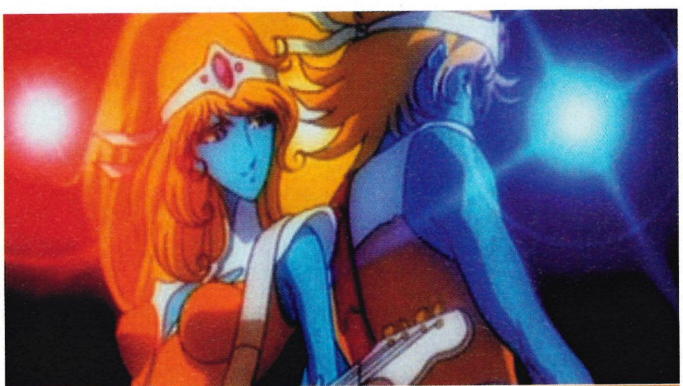
The band got their name after a journalist called their first group "a bunch of daft punk."

Daft Punk are known for being a bit of an enigma – they're rarely seen without some form of disguise and *Interstellar 5555* only adds to the mystery. Telling the tale of an alien rock band who are captured and taken to Earth, this feature length animation is actually a compilation of all the videos for Daft Punk's *Discovery* album, which were created so that when put together they would form a coherent story. And indeed they do, without any dialogue but just the heavenly synthetic sounds of Messrs. Bangalter and de Homem supplying the emotion.

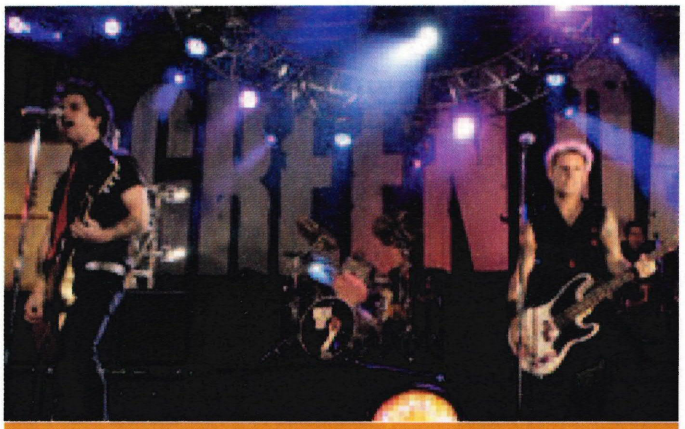
It's an interesting approach to music promotion and even if you're not a fan of the French duo's brand of electro-pop, it's a disc that still has plenty to offer. Beautifully animated and with a heart-warming narrative, it manages to transcend the concept of the music video. If you're a fan of Daft Punk and manga, it's an absolute necessity. If not, just get it anyway. ■ **Anthony Enticknap**



Anyone who's ever seen an episode of *Star Trek* will know that Captian Kirk had a bit of a way with the ladies, particularly the blue ones



Either these guys are aliens or they're both very, very ill. Personally, we don't care if they're aliens, because they've both got awesome hair



Green Day have been going for a while now, and their experience shows in their first-class showmanship. They're even dafter punks than Daft Punk

Yanked up to eleven

GREEN DAY BULLET IN A BIBLE

OUT: **NOW**

Price: **£13.49** / Rating: **Exempt**

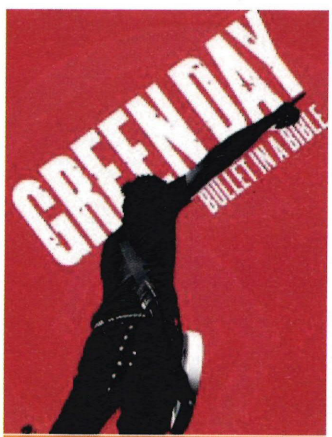
★★★

SHOCK FACT!
A favourite at weddings, 'Good Riddance (Time Of Your Life)' is about breaking up.

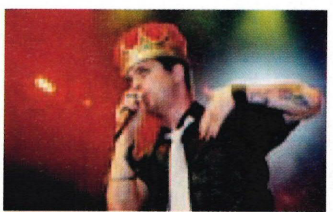
After a significant dip in the quality of their output, Green Day went through something of a resurgence with *American Idiot*, which marked a return to form, both commercially and critically. This UMD is taken from their two-day stint at the Milton Keynes National Bowl and about half the tracks on the disc are from that album. Thankfully, there are plenty of their classic tunes as well, including *Basket Case* and *Longview*, among others.

As you'd expect from the boys, there's plenty of horseplay too, with Billy Joe singing *King For A Day* while wearing a cape and a crown. Half of you feels embarrassed for him, aware that he's well into his thirties, while the other half of you just wants to get on stage and join in the fun.

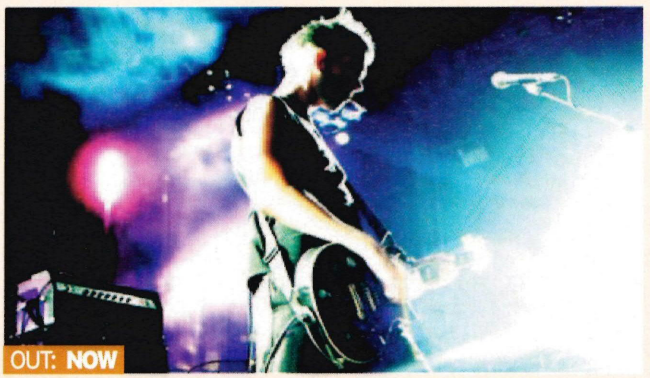
Overall, this a strong performance by the band, but you can't help wishing you could go back and listen to *Dookie* for the first time again. ■ **AE**



This is the back of Billy Joe Armstrong. He wears a lot of black



Billy Joe aspires to rock royalty but the tie and shirt gives him away



OUT: **NOW**

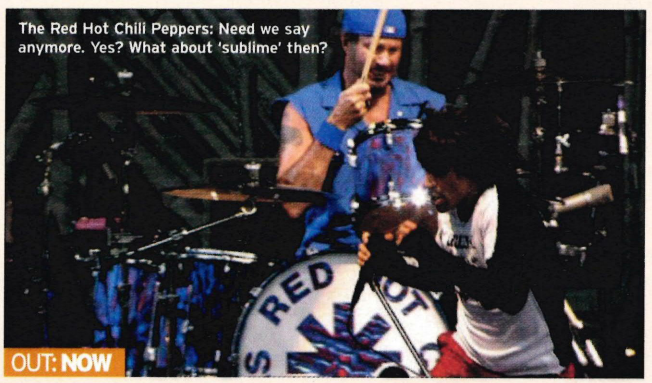
PLACEBO SOULMATES NEVER DIE LIVE IN PARIS

Price: **£13.49** / Rating: **Exempt** ★★★

IN CONTRAST TO the band's name, this recording of their *Sleeping With Ghosts* tour is a genuine blast of musical medicine, which should revive even the weariest of weary souls.

With the perfect blend of new and old tracks, *Soulmates Never Die* offers something for fans as well as the more casual listeners who are probably only familiar with the bands bigger numbers, like *Pure Morning*.

As always, Placebo are consummate performers and every strum, every beat and every angst ridden note is delivered with the kind of commitment that we've come to expect from them over the years. Maybe it's not their greatest performance ever, but if not, it's pretty damned close. Throw in a guest performance from Frank Black of the Pixies for a decent cover of *Where Is My Mind* and you've got yourself a top-notch UMD. ■ **AE**



The Red Hot Chili Peppers: Need we say anymore. Yes? What about 'sublime' then?

OUT: **NOW**

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS LIVE AT SLANE CASTLE

Price: **£17.99** / Rating: **Exempt** ★★★★

THE RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS were created just after Adam and Eve, while Flea was made from the ashes of God's very own double bass. Although none of the previous sentence is true, you'd be forgiven for thinking otherwise, such is their talent. Whether recorded or live, they sound like they've played together forever.

Here, the band are on top form, belting some of the best tunes they've ever written, including *Under The Bridge* and *Californication*. Nearly every song sounds fresh, as if you've never heard it before. But, of course, you have and this feeling of familiarity is one we don't mind at all.

Probably the only criticism we could have is that with a band as prolific as the Chilis, you can never get enough. ■ **AE**

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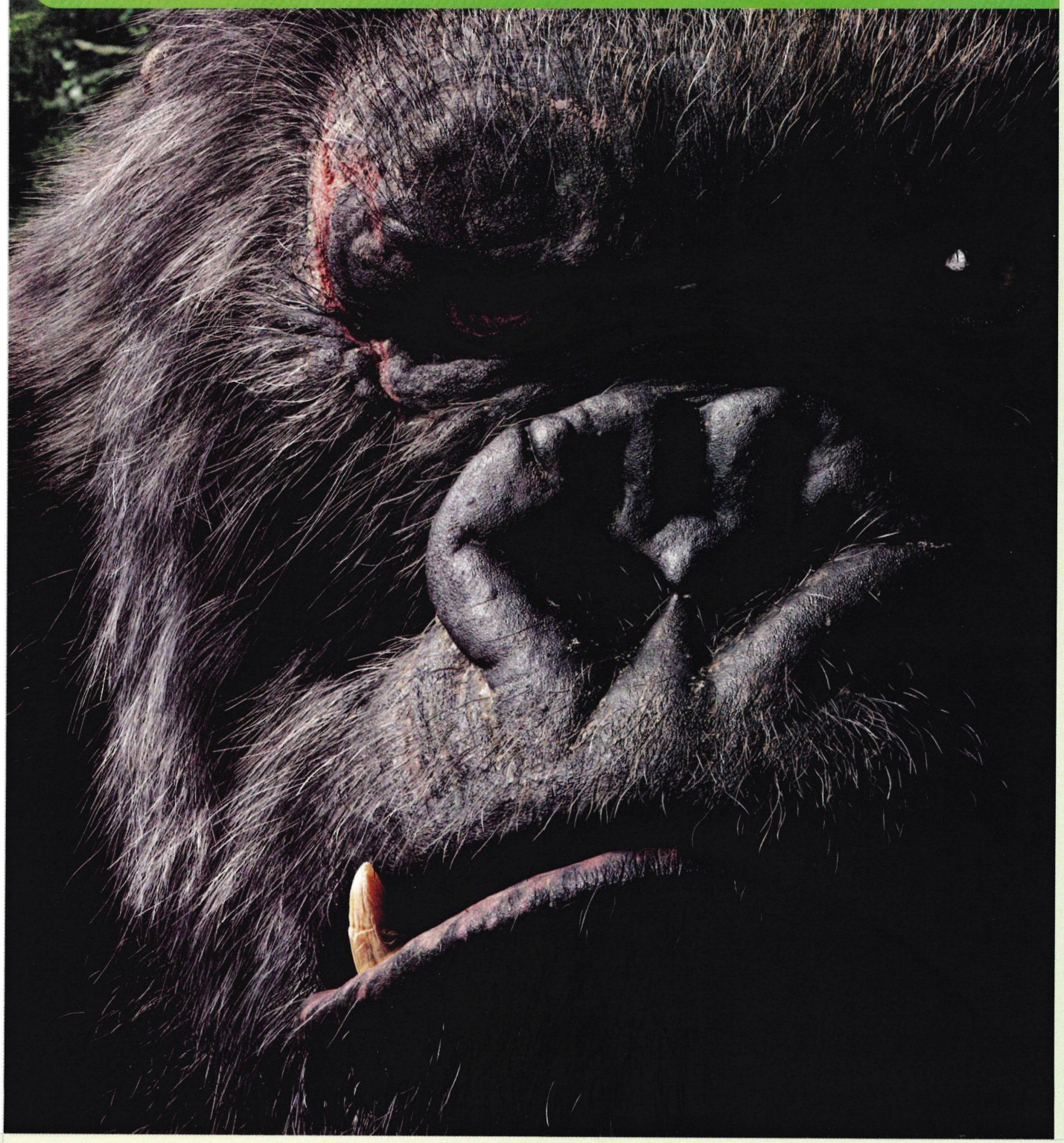
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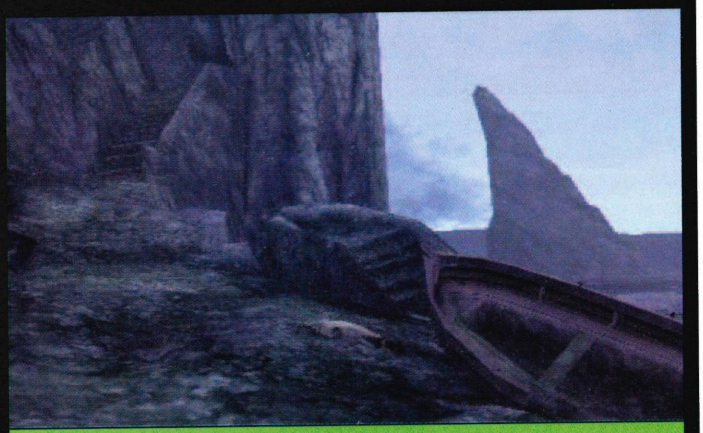
BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES

SOLUTION

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

FULL-ON SIMIAN SOLUTION TO GET YOU THROUGH THE JUNGLE





The very first area on the very first level. Not much going on here - just an old row boat and a dead body... Oh no, a dead body! WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE!

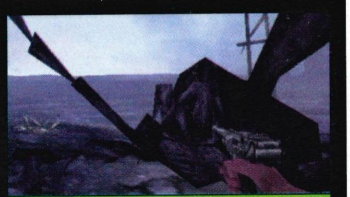
Part One
SKULL ISLAND

After the opening cut-scene, you find yourself on the beach of Skull Island. Go up the cliff steps into the cave. You'll be attacked by crabs as you enter. Keep shooting at them (they're most vulnerable when they rear up, exposing their bellies).

When all the crabs are dead, jump down and move to the back of the cave towards the wooden barrier. Another crab will appear. Kill that and then break open the wooden barrier and follow the cliff path down to the wooden gates. Go up to the pillar outside the gate, then grab it by pressing R. As you start to turn it, some more crabs will come out of the sea. Let go of the pillar and kill the crabs. When they're dead, the giant crab will appear. This is the first and easiest boss to kill. Its shell will protect it from your gunfire, so wait for it to scream at you, so you can shoot its belly. It will do this if you get close to it and when it screams take your shot. Defeat it, open the gate and go through.

Keep going and pick up the shotgun on the way. As you continue, another crab will attack and you'll find another wooden barrier. Break it and kill the crabs on the other side.

Keep going until you come to another wooden gate. You'll find another pillar, but this time it will be missing its lever. Take the lever from the broken pillar leaning against the wall and put it into the pillar with the missing lever. Open the gate and follow the path round to finish.



The first boss looks mean, but is actually a total pussy



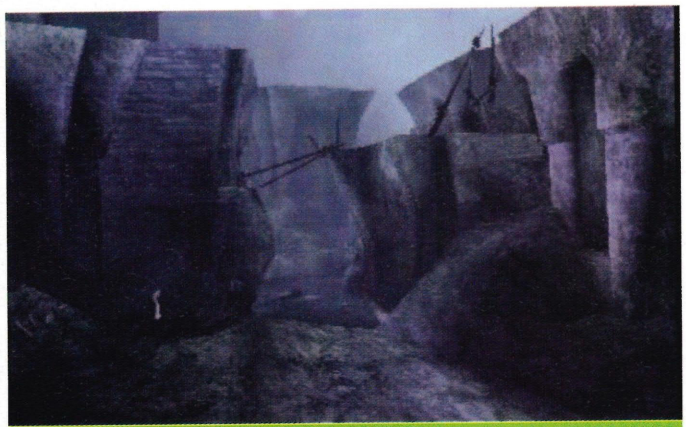
This cave is where you meet your first 'nasty thing'. Simply shoot these little buggers a couple of times and move on

Part Two
SCORPIONS

Head out of the area you're in, until you find some spears sticking out of the ground. Above you a couple of giant bats are flying around. Use the spears to kill them and then go up the stairs. You'll come to a channel of water with an alligator in it. Pick up a bone from the nearby pile and throw it at the alligator to kill it. When it's dead, pick up another bone and swim through. Another alligator will attack. Kill it and continue.

Go up on to the bank and follow it round. Then go through the doorway at the end until you find a chamber full of scorpions. Use the spears dotted around to kill the scorpions and when they're all dead make your way up the hill.

You'll eventually come to a bridge, with a giant millipede on the other side. Grab a bone from the pile and use it kill the millipede. Take another bone, and cross the bridge. Another millipede will attack. Kill that and then use the pillar to make a bridge drop over the ravine. Cross the bridge to finish the stage.



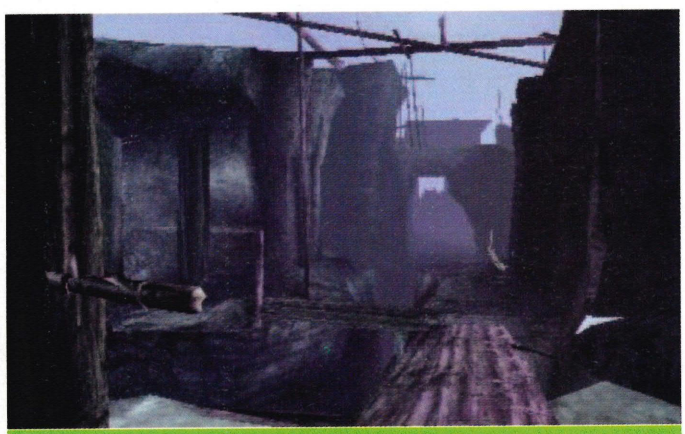
It all very serene, but in the water ahead there's a dirty great alligator waiting to nip your face off. Grab a bone and stick one in its head. That'll teach it



These scorpions can be a nuisance, but there are plenty of spears



Try to keep your distance from the millipedes, as they can jump



Turn the pillar and this bridge will drop down. Simply cross it and the level will end. Well done - you've completed level two

Part Three
SACRIFICE

After another cut-scene, you find yourself in an area with some spears and a fire. Take a spear and light it on the fire, then use it to burn the grass, so that you can go through the doorway.

On your way down the path, pick up another spear or bone, as you'll need it to kill the bat that attacks you. Kill the bat and continue until you come to a clearing, where you'll hear the sound of a V-Rex, which will run round to attack you.

The dinosaurs will seem tough at first, so use the environment to your advantage. Use all the nooks, corners and passages to hide from the V-Rex and throw spears at it from safety. The passage you use to enter the clearing is a good place to hide and you can use the nearby spears or the bones from the previous area to kill the dinosaur. Kill it and explore the area. A millipede might attack, but there are plenty of spears around to kill it.

Next you need to open the gate. Find the broken pillar in a corner of the area and take the lever from it. Insert the lever into the pillar by the gate, then open the gate and go through, picking up the Tommy gun on your way. Continue until the next cut-scene loads.



Extreme gymnastics are particularly popular in the jungle

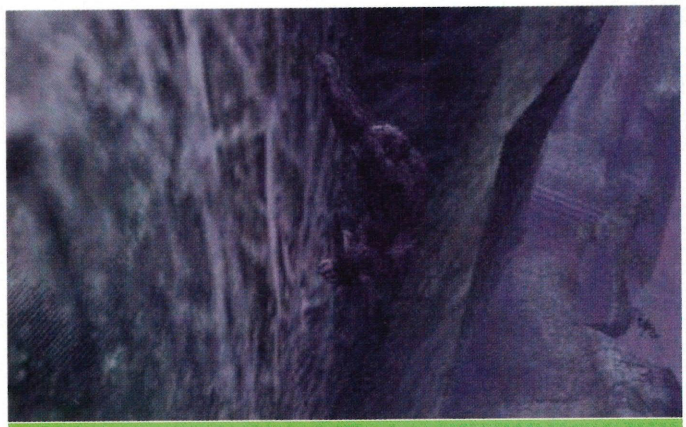


The grass, the grass, the grass is on fire. We don't need no water...



Your first meeting with a V-Rex is tricky, but be patient and use the environment to your advantage. If this guy gets hold of you, it's lights-out





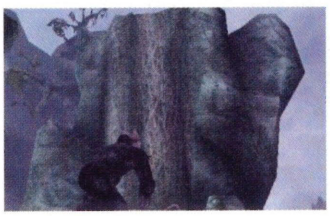
When Kong grabs this wall, he'll slide down. Don't worry though, as he'll simply land on the ledge below, where he'll have to fend off a few bats

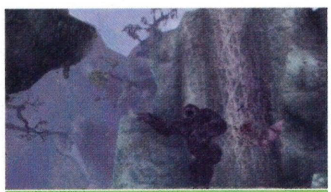
Part Four
KONG

Run to the end of the path and jump to grab the branch. Swing and then jump to the grab the next. Follow the way round, swinging from branches and running along the cliff face. You'll then have to fight several bats, but these don't pose a challenge for Kong. Just keep going until you find the gate.

Tap △ repeatedly to lift the stone pillar out of the way and then smash down the door. Go through and jump the gap in the path to finish this section.







These bat things are irritating, but don't do much damage to Kong



Simply lift this massive stone pillar out of the way...



...and smash the door down, like the big, angry ape thing that you are. Then go through, do a little jump and the level's over

Part Five
ON KONG'S TRACKS

Follow the path, until you come to a clearing, where you'll be confronted by three small dinosaurs. Kill them and then take a bone from the pile on the ledge above you. Use the fire to make a torch, then use the torch to burn away the grass in the passage at the back of the area.

Go though and continue until you find a gorge with a bat flying overhead. Kill the bat using one of the bones in the nearby pile and then go right, down the path and round past the waterfall.

Keep going round until you come to some spears. Arm yourself with one of these and then go up the slope, but be ready for the dinosaur that comes running down. Kill that and carry on up the slope, making sure to grab another spear.

In the next area, two more dinosaurs will be waiting. Deal with them and continue. You'll eventually come across another bat. Defeat it and keep going. Round the corner is a rickety bridge consisting of a few planks. Cross this very carefully, while also killing the bats that come at you while you're crossing.

Continue to follow the path, killing a few more bats on the way, and you'll end up at another plank bridge. Cross and make your way up the path. At the top, you'll find a lever lying on the floor. Pick it up and go back the way you came, stopping when you reach the waterfall. Go round to the right side of the waterfall, to the gate. Put the lever in the pillar, open the gate and go through.



Who's afraid of the little old dinosaur? Not us, that's for sure



Starting fires is neither big nor clever, except in *King Kong*, where it's big, clever and actually entirely necessary to the completion of the level



The Tommy gun will drop just about any enemy in a fraction of a second. Ammunition is scarce though, so use it sparingly

Part Six
FIGHT

This section begins with Kong having to kill a V-Rex. To make life easier you should enter Rage mode, by repeatedly tapping the ⊙ button. You then need to grab the dinosaur and kill it by snapping its jaws apart.

When you've killed the V-Rex, move the stone pillar away from the gate and smash it open. Run and jump along the path until you get to a ledge where predators will attack you. These are easy to kill: hit them or throw them off the edge! When they're finished, smash the gates and go on. You'll eventually come to a clearing where you have to fight two V-Rexes. Kill them both and then push the stone pillar out of the passageway and go through.



Who is the ape that would risk his neck for his brother man? KONG! Can you dig it? Who is the ape that won't cop out, when there's danger all about? KONG! Right on!



These raptors can be fairly frustrating, as they're quick and quite strong. One good spear to the head should see them off though



You'll need to come back to this area later to grab the lever from the broken pillar leaning up against the wall. First you need to find yourself a torch

Part Seven
HAYES

Follow the pathway and kill the two raptors that attack you. Grab a bone and veer to the left, going past the patch of grass. You'll come to a large clearing and you'll be able to see a V-Rex eating at the far end. Keeping as much distance as possible, grab a spear and head for the shelter on the right, going between the columns. There are some stairs in here which lead up to a fire, but don't worry about that just yet.

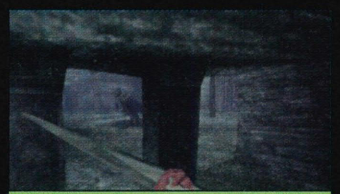
Stand in between the columns and throw a spear at the V-Rex. It will try to attack you, so back off into the shelter. If you stand back far enough, the V-Rex will forget about you and continue eating. Go out and grab another spear and repeat until it's dead.

Now you need to take a bone or spear and light it on the fire at the top of the stairs. Use the torch to burn the grass that you passed earlier and take the lever from the broken pillar. Return to where you killed the V-Rex and use the lever on the pillar to open the gate.

The next area requires you to kill a millipede before walking through a waterfall into a watery cave. Follow the water round and climb up on the bank when you can, then follow the passage. You'll come to section with a set of stairs on the right, blocked by grass and a waterfall on the left.

Go over the waterfall, making sure to do so when the dinosaur on the other side has run away. Cross over and deal with the V-Rex, then go through the doorway which has a pool of water on the other side. In here, you'll be faced with a couple of raptors. Kill them and then a make a torch.

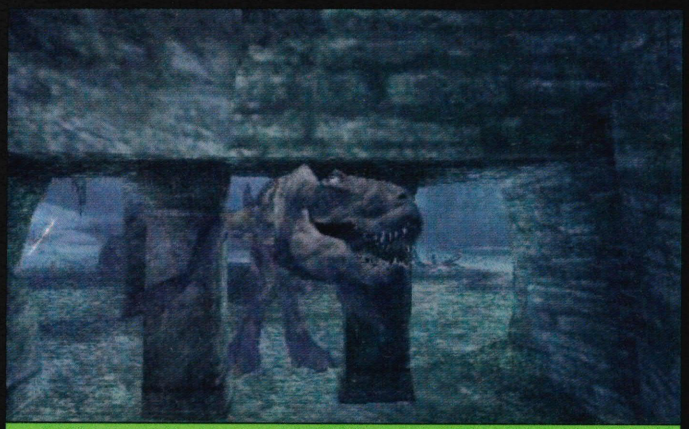
Take your flame back to the stairs with the grass blocking them and burn the grass. Up these stairs you'll find the lever you need to open the gate and finish the level.



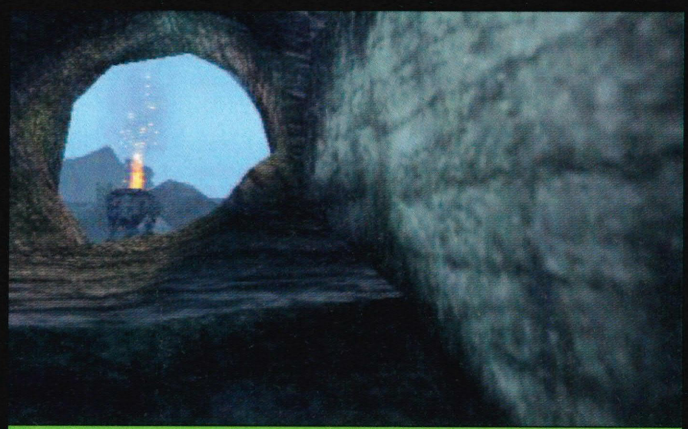
This V-Rex is too busy eating to notice you. Chuck a spear though...



...and he's all ears. And big, pointy teeth. Worry not though, because he can't get you in here. Come to think of it, where are his ears?



Aah, bless him. He still thinks he can get us in here. Just wait at the back of this room and he'll soon forget all about you



The all-important fire that you need to complete the level. Light a spear here and burn down the grass that you saw earlier

Part Eight
VENETOSAURUS

Go down the steps, pick up a spear, then knock down the wooden barrier. In this passage, you'll find a millipede. Kill it, if necessary, and go on. Keep going until you walk through a waterfall and find a clearing with a fire in the middle. You'll be attacked by a group of crabs. Destroy them and get yourself a torch.

Use the flame to burn the grass next to the waterfall. This lets you to leave the area without getting your torch wet. Return to the beginning of the level and burn the grass. Climb the stairs to end the section.



Bash this barrier a bit and it'll come tumbling down



Find this waterfall and you're halfway to finishing the level



When you reach this part of the level, you'll be confronted by a gang of crabs. Fortunately, not one of them is wearing a Burberry baseball cap





Fighting the V-Rexs is probably the best thing about the game



You'll meet a few bats along the way, but they're not a danger

Part Nine
KONG TO THE RESCUE

This section starts with Kong versus a V-Rex again. Deal with it the same way you did before, then move the stone pillar and smash open the gate. Go on through and swing your way to a meeting with another V-Rex. Smash the gate and go through.

Follow the path round and you'll come to an area with a river of lava flowing below. Get down to the debris floating in the lava and rotate Kong into a position where he can make a leap for the branch. Swing on this, jump and climb up to safety.

Jump down into the next area and fight yet another V-Rex. When you've defeated that, you'll have to fight another. Then another. When all three are dead, smash the gate and go through.



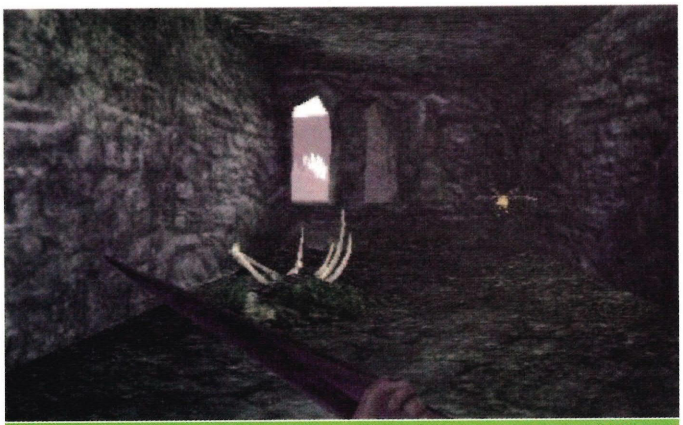
Swinging through the level is pretty simple



Jump from here to the branch above or jump onto the wall on the right. Don't take too long though, because this little island is sinking



At this point you have to fight three V-Rexs. It's not too tough if you're in Rage mode, so find time to do this while fighting the first of the dinosaurs



You can grab bones from here to kill the bats outside, if you're low on ammo. However, you should find some in this room anyway

Part Ten
THE CANYON

Follow the path and you'll find a bridge. When you try to cross, three bats will try to attack you. Kill them and cross the bridge. Keep going and you'll find a crate with a rifle in it. Take the rifle and then cross the bridge, killing the bats on the way and head down the path to the valley floor.

Swim through the swamp. Head to the island near the centre to light any spear or bone you're holding, then swim to the bank. Burn the grass and head up. Follow the path around and over the plank bridge. Keep going and then walk through the waterfall. Drop down and go through the doorway and follow the water around, being aware of millipedes.

The next area is quite literally crawling with millipedes, so be prepared to fight them off. Smash down the two gates and go through the tunnel on the left. Continue, fighting the millipedes as you go. It's possible to run past them instead of fighting, but whatever you do, you'll come to bridge which marks the end of the stage.



This rickety bridge is as dodgy as it looks, so be careful when crossing it. You be attacked by bats as you go over, so be prepared



This dinosaur won't harm you, but we shot at it anyway



Up here, you'll find the fire that you need to light the grass ahead

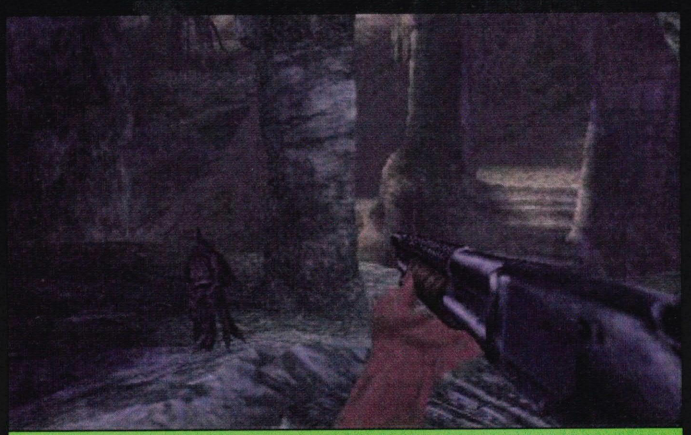
Part Eleven
KONG'S LAIR

Break the barrier at the start, then kill the bat waiting outside. There are plenty of spears available to do the job.

Keep going and pick up the shotgun. Follow the path and head up the steps. Kill any bats you see on your way. Eventually, you will be confronted by three raptors, which can be easily disposed of with the shotgun. Follow the path to end this short section of the game.



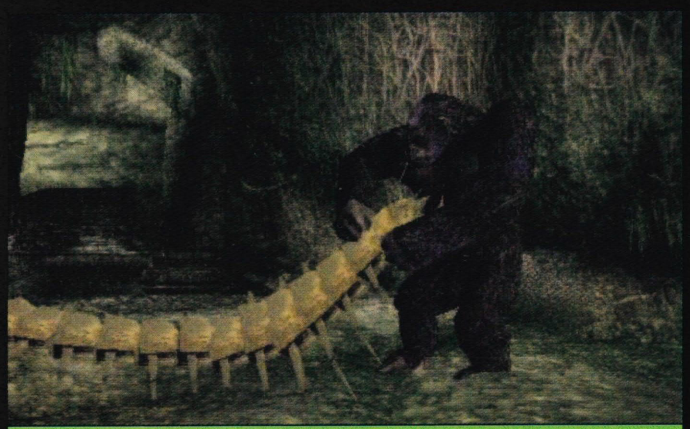
Next to these stairs should be a box with shotgun in it. Don't forget this, as it wil come in handy as you climb the steps



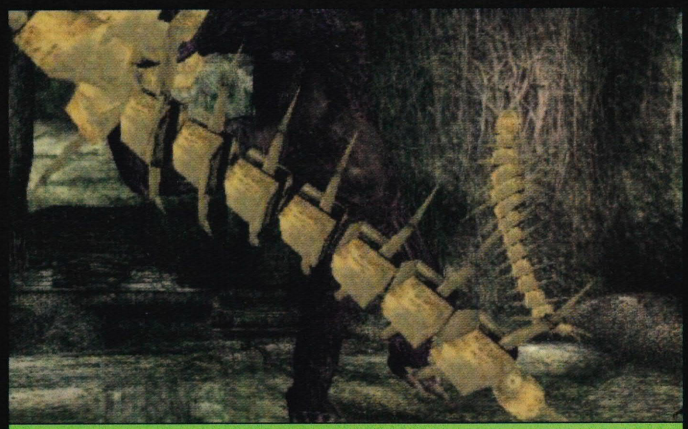
Sshhh... we're hunting wabbits. Actually, there aren't any rabbits in *King Kong*, but if there were, we'd definitely be hunting them

Part Twelve
FIGHT IN THE LAIR

Fight the worms. Once the larger worms are dead, they can be used as a flail to injure or kill any other enemies nearby. It's quickest to kill the larger worms by grabbing them and the hitting the smaller worms with them. Beware of the small worms jumping onto you, as they hurt and are hard to see. Kill them all to proceed.



The bigger worms can be used as a flail to kill the others. This level is tough, as the smaller worms are particularly nasty



Wow, what a 'swinging' kinda guy Kong is. Just swing that worm round and deal out a hefty portion of gorilla justice

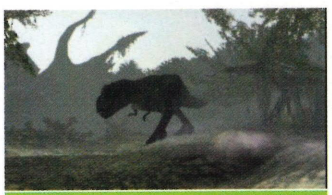




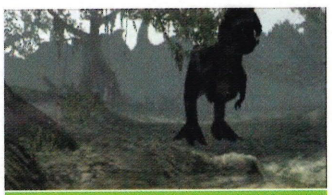
Oh, how beautiful, how serene. Just you, your raft and the eternal tranquility of the open river. Maybe we'll write a poem when we get home...

Part Thirteen
RAPIDS

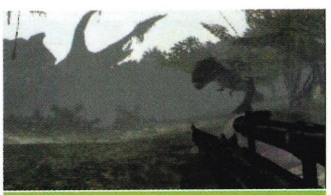
This whole section is a chase between your raft and a V-Rex. You can't kill it, so keep throwing spears and shooting at its head to keep it away. Use your ammo sparingly, doing just enough to drive it off. Halfway along you'll also be attacked by bats. Dispose of these and continue to evade the V-Rex until the level ends.



...hello, what's this coming towards us with big pointy teeth?



Oh my god, we're all gonna die! Help! Help! We're going to be eaten!



Hold on - We've got a big gun. Let's see who the daddy is now



Yes, we're definitely the daddy in this relationship. Have some!



Ah, our ammo just ran out. Oh dear. Our claim on the crown of daddyness is starting to look a bit feeble. Luckily, the level's about to end



At the beginning of the level, a few guys will shine massive spotlights at you. They can't hurt you, but give them a bit of slap anyway. It feels good



The cannons are the only thing on the level that you need to worry about. They're capable of dealing out plenty of pain. Your best option is to throw a car at them

Part Fourteen
In The Streets Of New York

Kill the people shooting at you, then smash down the two fences and work you way round and out onto the street.

Police cars and soldiers on rooftops will fire at you. Pick up and throw cars to kill them. You'll know they can hit you when you see yourself from their view. Throw cars at the trucks too, as they have cannons on them, which cause a lot of damage.

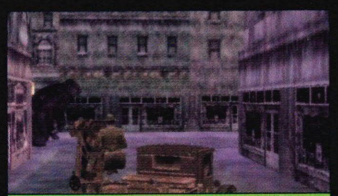
Follow the police to where the bus is blocking the street. Kill the soldiers on the roof, then lift up the bus. Smash the fence and go through. You now have to run a gauntlet of trucks with cannons on. Keep moving down the road towards the Empire State Building.



When you see this viewpoint, throw a car to kill these guys



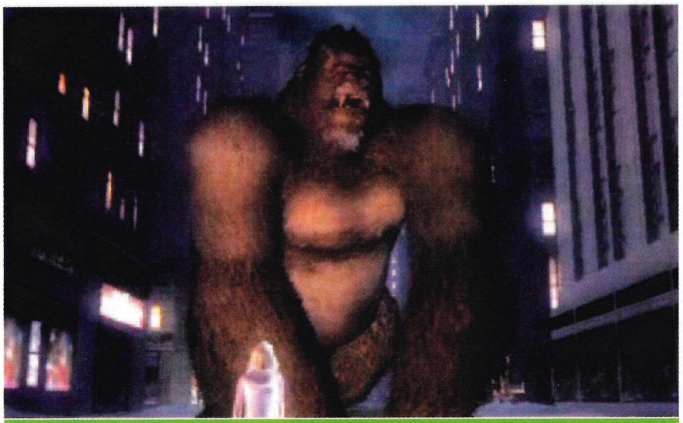
Make sure you kill everyone in the area before picking up the bus



Don't worry about these cannons. Just run right past them

Part Fifteen
THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

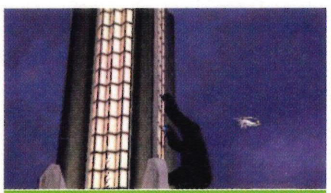
Climb up to the top of the building, then use the stick to move around the spire and press ○ or △ to strike at the planes. Try to hide from them as they fire, then swing out and hit them when they pass. Eventually the level will end by itself and you'll see the cut-scene of Kong falling to his death. Congratulations, you've just completed *King Kong*. All that's left to do now is to sit back and watch the credits roll.



This touching scene about the love that dare not speak its name is the beginning of the end for Mr Kong. We all know what happens to him in New York, don't we?



You start in the middle of the Empire State Building and climb up



And you're still climbing. This isn't at all interesting, but keep going



When you reach the top, rotate around the spire to avoid the planes' gunfire, then when they fly past spin back into position to strike them as they pass



Smashing the planes gets you a nifty animation of them exploding. The guy in this plane probably isn't too happy about the situation, though



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Archer Maclean's Mercury

CHEAT CODE

To unlock all puzzle stages, enter two-player mode and enter **hg?** as your initials. Cancel and return to the main menu, starting a new one-player game. Hold L2+R2 at the 'World Select' screen then press Select to make every level accessible.



Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX

After completing Arcade Mode, return to the character select screen. Holding down Select, choose M.Bison to fight as EX-M.Bison or Vega to fight as Final-Vega. Alternatively, complete Arcade mode using Evil Ryu, then return to the character select screen, hold v then choose Akuma to fight as Shin Akuma.





Pinball Hall of Fame: The Gottlieb Collection

Achieve the high score on 'Big Shots' to receive 'Goin' Nuts'.

CHEAT CODES

Enter the following as a code to unlock the corresponding prize.

PAYOUT MODE
WGR

BLACK HOLE TABLE
LIS

NO TILT MODE
BZZ

CENTRAL PARK TABLE
NYC

CUSTOM BALL
CKF

LOVE METER TABLE
HOT

ACE HIGH TABLE
UNO

PLAYBOY TABLE
HEF

TEE'D OFF TABLE
PGA

STRIKES AND SPARES TABLE
PBA

XOLTEN TABLE
BIG

Mega Man Maverick Hunter X

UNLOCKABLES

To play as Vile, receive a new title screen and access the Mega Man X movie, complete the game as X.





Star Wars: Battlefront 2

CHEAT CODE

Enter the following at the pause screen in single-player mode to receive the indicated reward. A sound will confirm the code has been entered correctly.

UNLIMITED AMMUNITION
↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, →

LOW RESOLUTION SOLDIERS
↓, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, ↑, ↑, ←

TURN OFF HUD
↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ↑, ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, →

SLOW MOTION SOUND EFFECTS
↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →

Twisted Metal: Head-On

Enter the following codes at any time during play to receive the specified bonus. They will not work in multiplayer modes and online, however.

KILLER WEAPONS
✕, ✕, ↑, ↑, L2+R2

INVINCIBILITY
→, ←, ↓, ↑, L2+R2

INFINITE WEAPONS
△, △, ↓, ↓, L2+R2

MEGA GUNS
✕, △, ✕, △, L2+R2

HEALTH FOR WEAPONS
△, ✕, □, ○, L2+R2

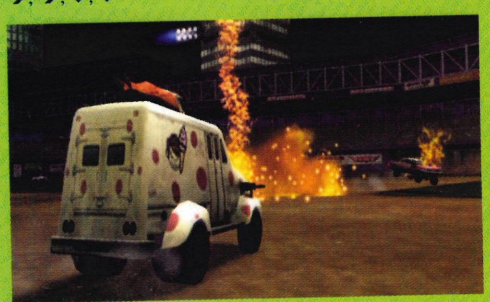
TEMPORARY SHIELD
→, →, ↓, ↓

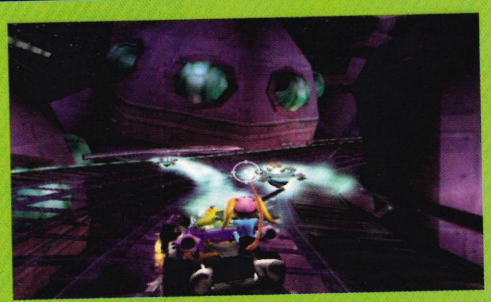
TEMPORARY INVISIBILITY
←, ←, ↓, ↓

SPAWN A MINE
→, ←, ↓, ↑

SPAWN A FREEZE MISSILE
→, ←, ↑, ↓

UNLOCKED PRIMED
(use after exhausting all weapons in story mode)
↑, ✕, ↑, ✕, L2+R2





Crash Tag-Team Racing

CHEAT CODES

Enter the following at the main menu to receive the indicated prize.

TOY BLOCK CARS
Hold L2+R2 then press ○, ○, △, □

ONE HIT KNOCK-OUTS
Hold L2+R2 then press ✕, ○, ○, ✕

JAPANESE CRASH
Hold L2+R2 then press □, ○, □, ○

HIGH SPEED MODE
Hold L2+R2 then press ○, ○, △, △

CHICKEN HEADS
Hold L2+R2 then press ✕, ○, ○, □

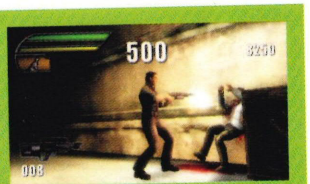
REMOVE HUD
Hold L2+R2 then press ✕, □, △, ○



WRC

CHEAT CODE

Enter **dovecam** as your profile name when beginning a new one-player game to access a bird's eye view of the action! Be warned, this changes the way you have to play the game, so take extra care...



Dead To Rights: Reckoning

CHEAT CODE

To unlock all available levels and cheats, enter the Edit Profile menu and change the profile name to **DoggieStyle**. Be aware this code is case-sensitive, and you should not enter any additional spaces.

THE TIPS MAGAZINE FOR PLAYSTATION GAME ADDICTS

THIS ISSUE:

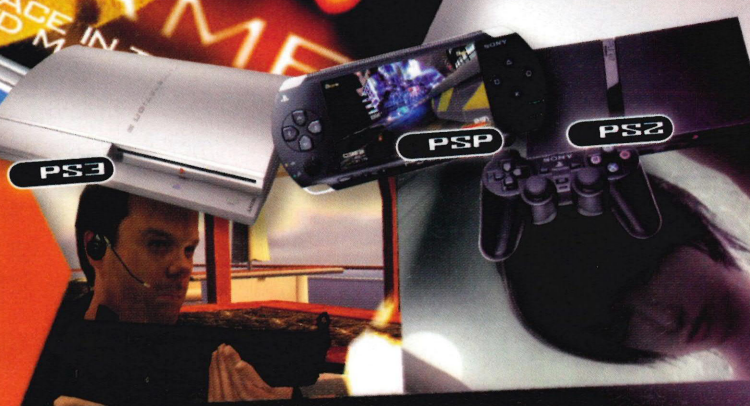
24: THE GAME

EVERY LEVEL MAPPED AND EXPERT TIPS STRAIGHT FROM THE DEVELOPERS!

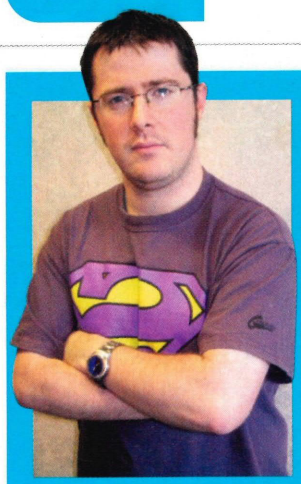
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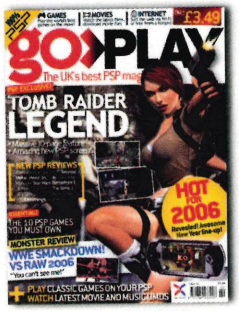
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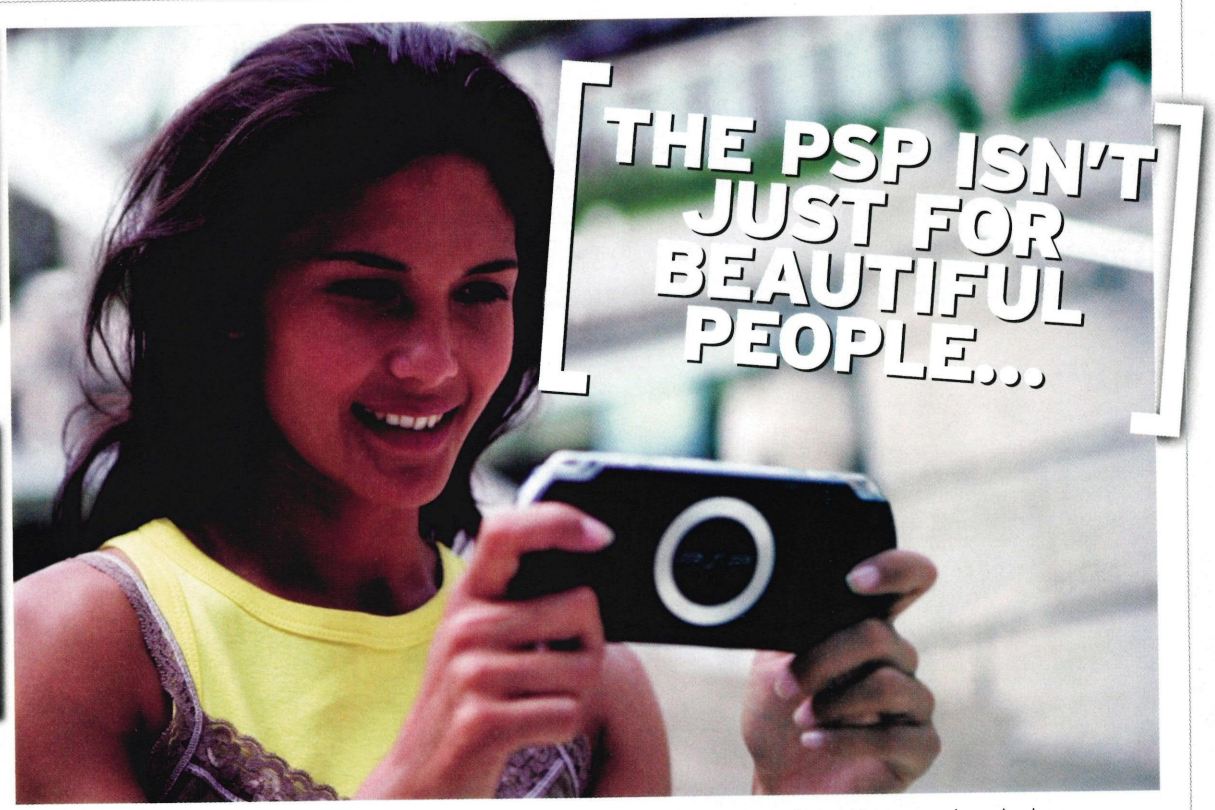
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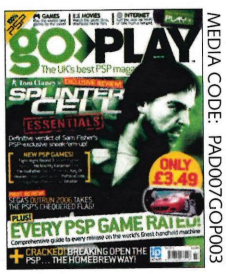
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The PSP is such a sexy piece of kit, it's clear you need some equally sexy accessories to compliment its suave looks. Thankfully, we've brought you the best looking and the most useful add-ons for your favorite handheld...



4 Gamers Premium Travel Pack £29.99

For those PSP owners who want to carry their beloved console around in style, 4Gamers has produced this rather fancy leather case. With storage for three UMDs, a ton of leads and the PSP itself, it's all you could ever need. Bear in mind though that if you fill it up too much, there won't be much room left for the PSP without it all becoming a bit of a squeeze. However, this isn't too much of a problem as the pack also comes with a leather pouch in which to keep your PSP, which is a great deal sturdier than the cloth pouch you get with the console. It doesn't end there though - also included in the pack is a USB charger and data splitter cable, which obviously allows you to move data between your PSP and PC, but also has the incredibly useful addition of a DC jack that enables charging straight from a USB port, removing the need for bulky power leads.

The visor is another novel feature which screws securely to the PSP and not only protects the screen but also flips up and shields it from bright light, meaning your gaming need never be interrupted by the sun again. While this is certainly a useful item, it does make the incredibly cool-looking PSP look somewhat less cool, so remove it before trying to impress your mates. The earphones included are reasonable, but don't expect anything particularly amazing from them. Last but not least, if the white wristband is getting tiresome, or even worn out, 4Gamers have helpfully provided an alternative black one, although it's worth noting that it is slightly smaller than the Sony one if you have unusually thick wrists.

Overall, this pack is pretty good value and is far more stylish and useful than many of the other similar products available. **SCORE: ★★★★**



Etymotic ER-6 Isolator Earphones £89.99

If you were thinking that these earphones don't look like a normal pair, then you'd be right. Developed specifically for use with portable digital players like the PSP, they're designed to slide into your ears like earplugs. The result? They almost completely block out external noise, allowing you to hear music, games or movies in perfect clarity. While the sensation might be odd when you first put them in, they're surprisingly comfortable once you get used to the feeling. Not only that, but the sound produced by them is so good that you probably won't want to go back to regular earphones ever again. The only drawback is the price, but for your outlay you do get a pouch to keep them in and some foam eartips if you don't fancy the flanged ones. Also included is a pair of replacement filters and a tool that allows you to change them. If you have money burning a hole in your pocket then these make a 'sound' investment. For more information on them head over to www.widget.co.uk.

SCORE: ★★★★★

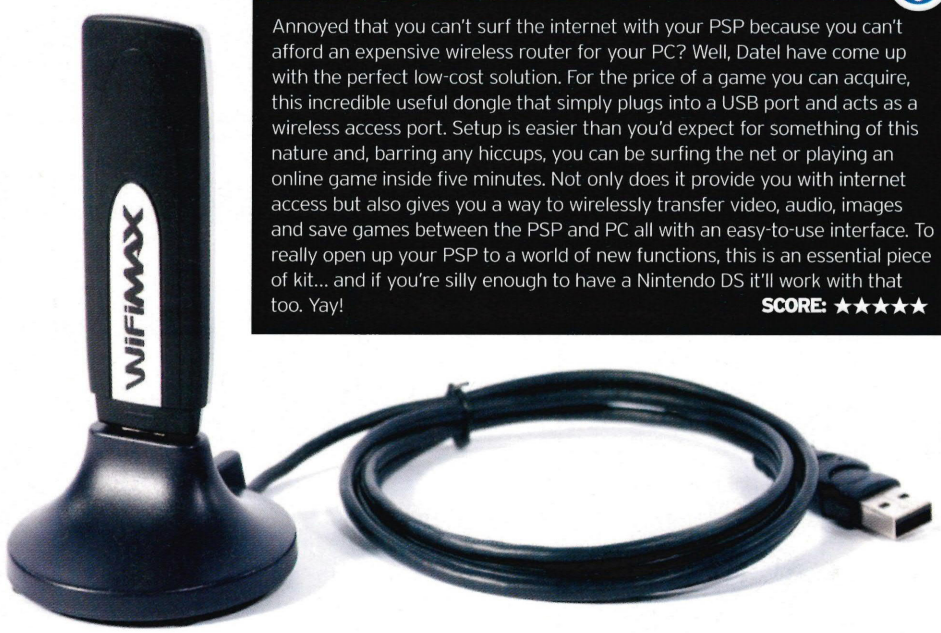


4 Gamers 2.0 Sound & Dock System £19.99

Tired of holding your PSP while watching a movie? Well, 4Gamers has the solution. This mains-powered dock will hold your PSP in a variety of positions thanks to its tilting mechanism, and its built-in speakers produce far better sound than those of the PSP. It also doubles as a dock, similar to what you might have for your mobile phone or camera, which will recharge your PSP while it's not in use. For the extra lazy among you, a tiny remote control is included which allows you to pause, skip chapters and change the volume. Disappointingly there are no fast-forward or rewind functions, so you'll still have to use the shoulder buttons on the PSP for that.

This product would be of most use on a long train or car journey, but it requires an external power source, which, disappointingly, limits its portability so the option to use some rechargeable batteries would have been a welcome addition. Apart from that, if you enjoy watching movies on your PSP at home then this a very handy little device, although there are better, more expensive ones available.

SCORE: ★★★



Datel WiFi MAX £29.99

Annoyed that you can't surf the internet with your PSP because you can't afford an expensive wireless router for your PC? Well, Datel have come up with the perfect low-cost solution. For the price of a game you can acquire, this incredible useful dongle that simply plugs into a USB port and acts as a wireless access port. Setup is easier than you'd expect for something of this nature and, barring any hiccups, you can be surfing the net or playing an online game inside five minutes. Not only does it provide you with internet access but also gives you a way to wirelessly transfer video, audio, images and save games between the PSP and PC all with an easy-to-use interface. To really open up your PSP to a world of new functions, this is an essential piece of kit... and if you're silly enough to have a Nintendo DS it'll work with that too. Yay!

SCORE: ★★★★★



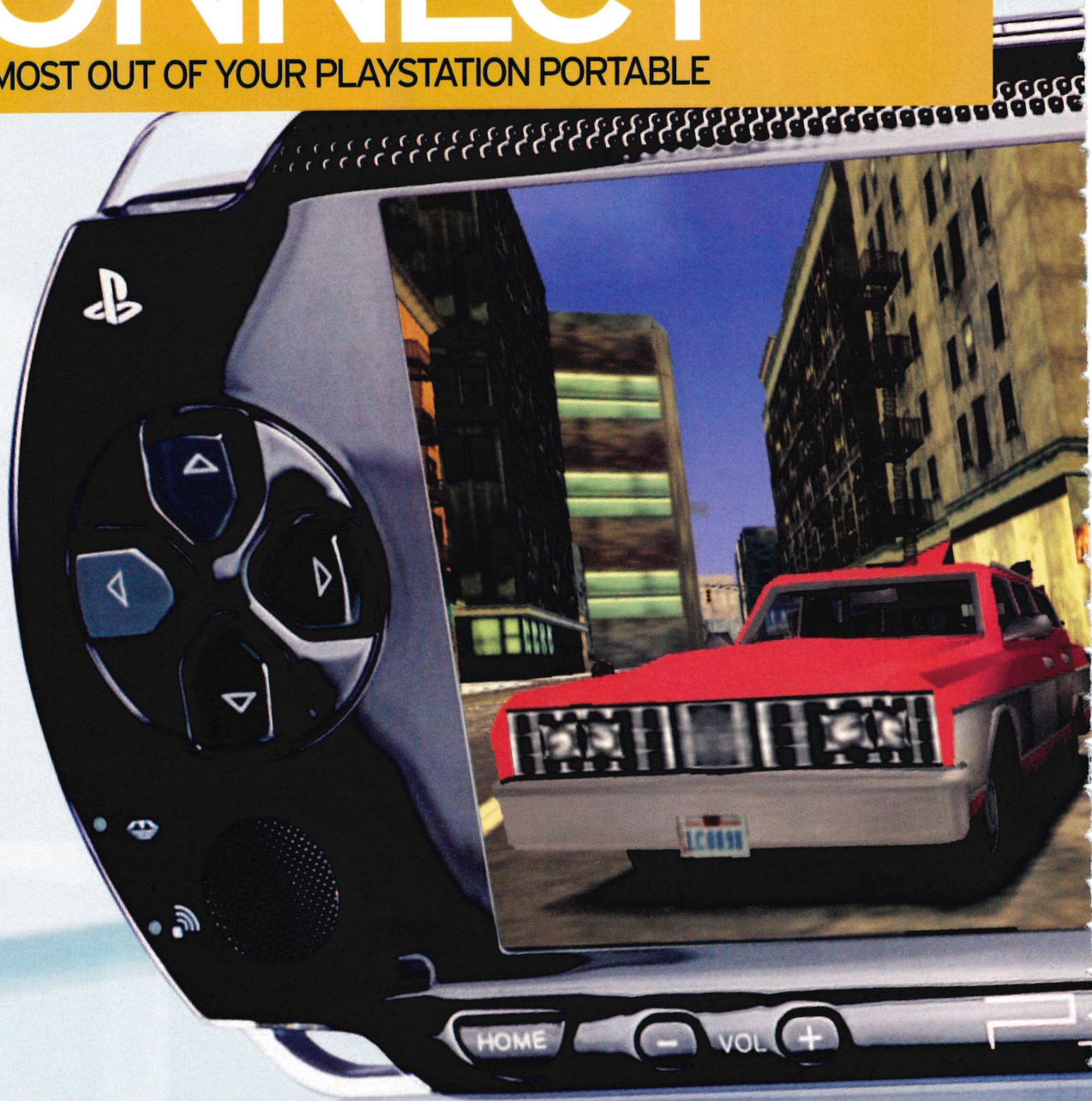
4Gamers Travel Pack £19.99

Essentially, this is a cut-down version of the Premium Travel Pack. Included is the leather pouch, USB charger and data splitter, visor and black wrist strap: all for half the price. Of all the items, the USB cable is the most useful and the rest aren't exactly essential – especially as when the visor is attached, the PSP won't really fit in the pouch. If you can afford the Premium pack, that's definitely the one to go for instead.

SCORE: ★★★

CONNECT

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PLAYSTATION PORTABLE



HACK THE PLANET,

The homebrew train just keeps on rolling – why buy UMDs when you can play legal games for free?

Homebrew. It's a common word among the more dedicated gaming community, and one that's become increasingly synonymous with the PlayStation Portable since the handheld's appearance. Why? Probably because of its versatility – while the movie, music and photo functions are something Sony is more than happy to boast about, the fact that the machine (with a little cajoling from a friendly hacker or two) can run all manner of other software is almost certainly one of the best reasons to own a PSP...

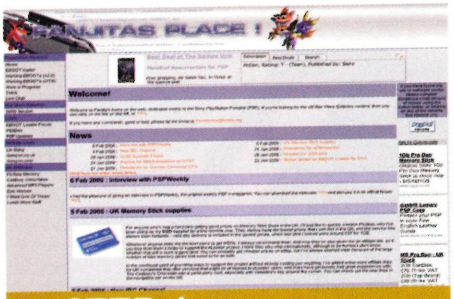
But what exactly is homebrew, anyway? Well, it's exactly what it say it is – software that is made,



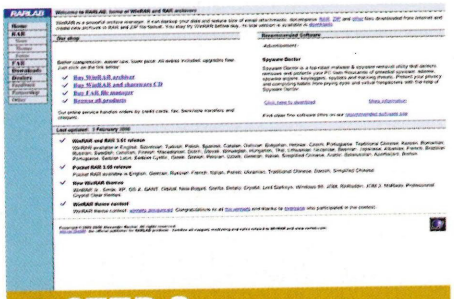
CRACK THE SYSTEM

or 'brewed', at home. Games development might be big business now, but there's still plenty of room for the little guy... providing that little guy's willing to work for the sheer love of doing it rather than the money. The underground community of homebrew programmers beaver away on their own projects and then share their creations with a dedicated and continually growing legion of fans, who then pay them back with respect and perhaps even the odd donation of cash for their troubles. And best of all, it's not even the slightest bit illegal; against the absolute minefield that is emulation of old consoles, homebrew is (for the most part) 100 per cent above board.

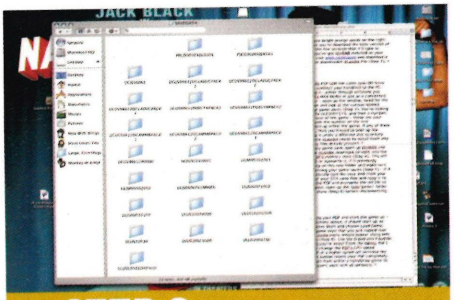
Of course, getting into homebrew used to be difficult but now there's been a breakthrough; a guaranteed way of playing homebrew and other software without any need to break down any security walls. Want to know more? Then grab your PSP, a PC and a copy of *GTA: Liberty City Stories* before turning the page...



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3

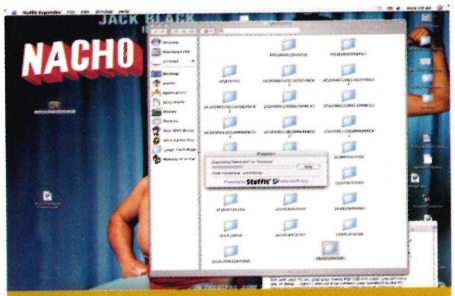
Getting Started

First things first: let's get you sorted with the software that you're going to need to make any of this work in the first place. Thankfully, this isn't hard at all... like we said, the developers of homebrew want their efforts to be used, so it's not like you're going to have to go hunting in the darkened corners of the internet to find it (not that we'd even know where those darkened corners are, of course). Using your PC, head over to Fanjita's official homepage at **www.fanjita.org** (STEP 1) and look on the front page for a news post entitled Homebrew For All Firmwares – at time of writing, this was the latest version of the eLoader, posted on 31 January, although a newer version may be available. The second link down (those bright orange words on the right-hand side that just say 'here') allows you to download the beta version of the eLoader, so click on it and wait the few seconds that it'll take to download the program. Make sure you've got WinRAR installed on your computer – if you haven't, you can visit **www.rarlab.com** and download it – as you will need this to open up the downloaded eLoader file (STEP 2).

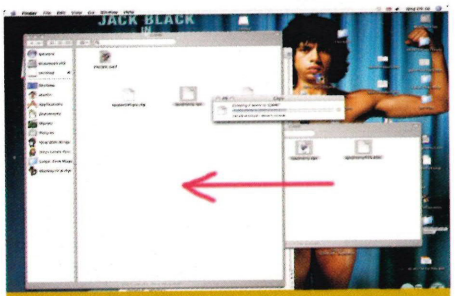
Transferring The Files

Still with your PC on, grab your handy PSP USB link cable (you DO have one of those... right?) and use it to connect your handheld to the PC. Once your computer has recognised it – either through software you have already installed, such as Datel's MAX Media or just as a connected USB hard drive under Your Computer – open up the window, head for the SaveData folder inside the PSP folder and look at the various labelled folders available that represent your game saves (STEP 3). You're looking for any folders labelled with the prefix ULES00151S, and then a number, presuming you're using the PAL version of the game – these are your *GTA: Liberty City Story* save files, with the number on the end representing which slot the save takes up within the game. If any of them end with a five (so, ULES00151S5), then you'll need to boot up the game, load that file and then resave it under a different slot to ensure you don't lose your game data, as the eLoader needs to install itself into this slot and therefore overwrite any files already present.

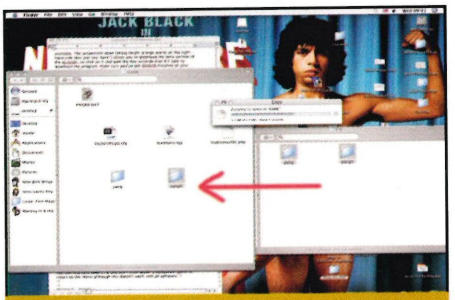
Once you've backed up the necessary game save, open up WinRAR and use it to unpack the contents of the eLoader download to your desktop (STEP 4). Open the folder that's created, then copy the contents of the Game folder and SaveData folders into the respective folders on your PSP. Double check the date stamp on the SaveData folder you've just copied and make sure it's not the most recent file listed among your game saves (STEP 5) – if it is, that means the game will automatically load the save and crash your PSP! To remedy this, take another of your *GTA* save files and copy it to your desktop, then copy it back to the PSP and overwrite the old file to update the date stamp. With that done, open up the /psp/game/ folder and drop all your homebrew



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6

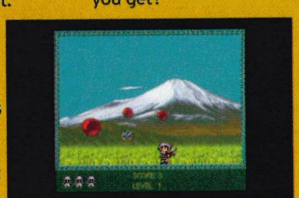
BUT WHAT SHOULD YOU BE PLAYING?

Even once you've managed to successfully get through the initial setup of the eLoader (and bear in mind, it may not work all of the time... it is a beta, after all), there's the small matter of knowing what to play. Sure, there are all kinds of homebrew titles out there but knowing what's worth your download time isn't exactly easy – plus, many of the games are incredibly simple, so you can't go comparing them to 'proper' PSP games.

Here's a few suggestions to get you started; you can find links to them through either Fanjita's homepage (www.fanjita.org) or from PSP Updates (pspupdates.qj.net).

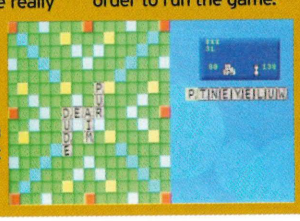
Pang

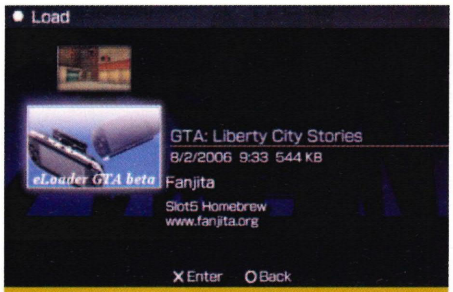
Not emulation, but more a home-created version of a classic arcade hit; if you've never played it, you're missing out. Travelling the world, spending all your time bursting bouncing bubbles in front of popular tourist attractions might sound odd, but it's incredibly addictive (and rather difficult, once you start making progress. How far around the world can you get?



Wordingo

No, don't run away... Scrabble isn't rubbish, despite what you might think. It's cleverer than Sudoku (which we really don't see the point of) and more multiplayer-friendly to boot – hence, we reckon this one's perfect for those long train journeys with friends. Just remember, you'll need to download the latest version of LuaPlayer (www.luaplayer.org) in order to run the game.





O STEP 7

files in there (STEP 6) before turning off the PSP and carefully disconnecting it from your PC.

And Off You Go...

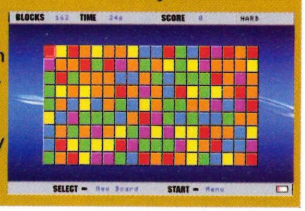
Boot up your *Liberty City Stories* UMD – providing you've followed the instructions above, it should start up as normal. Once you're in the game, press Start and choose Load Game, making sure to select the eLoader game save that you just copied over (STEP 7). After a brief delay, the eLoader menu should appear along with a list of all your homebrew software (STEP 8). Use the D-pad and X button to select the program you want and you're away! From the menu, the L and R shoulder buttons allow you to change the PSP's CPU speed (remembering that running your PSP at a higher speed will increase the drain on the battery), while the Start button resets your PSP completely. You can also hold down L, R and Start from within a homebrew game to return to the menu, although this doesn't work with all software.



O STEP 8

Zorblocks

This one looks easy, but it isn't – by clicking on groups of connected coloured blocks, you have to clear the screen until there's nothing left. Frustratingly tough is a bit of an understatement... although there's plenty of fun to be had as you try and clear the various levels on offer. Again, you'll need to download the latest version of LuaPlayer and get it running on your PSP if you want to have a go at it.



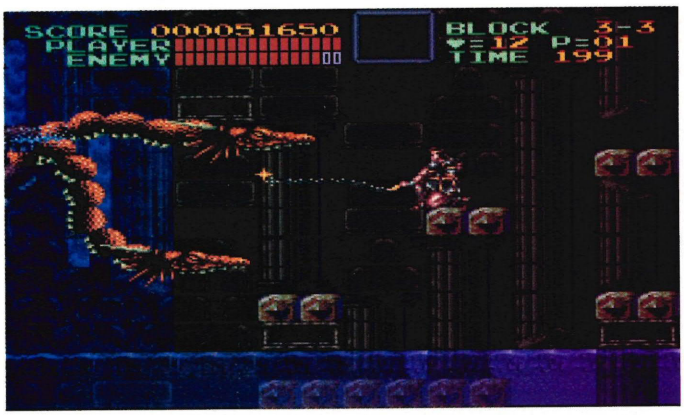
Cheat Like You Mean it



Of course, what some people don't know is that the whole process of using a *GTA: Liberty City Stories* save game to bypass the PSP's firmware wasn't actually the original intention here. Certainly, hackers like Fanjita and Ditlew took things one step further to create their eLoader but the original groundwork was actually laid down through the creation of CheatDevice, a piece of software designed specifically to allow all manner of cheats and glitches in Rockstar's game. It works in a similar way to the eLoader (in that you're required to download a file and copy it to your memory stick before loading it into the game as a save file), except that loading up the save allows access to a menu laden with options for you to mess around with. From obvious cheats like infinite health and armour, changing the time of day or teleporting around the map to more unique elements, like being able to drive up walls, increase the game's speed to 333MHz or even access vehicles that aren't even supposed to be in the game (like the almighty Hunter helicopter), there's plenty of things for budding cheaters to try... even if it will end up spoiling much of the game experience for you.

Those interested in getting hold of CheatDevice (and knowing how popular *Liberty City Stories* is, we don't doubt that'll be quite a few of you) should point their internet browsers in the direction of **www.maxbot.com/gta**. Be aware though – the website makes it quite clear of the issues that the software raises and offers a number of disclaimers, suggesting that you can 'screw things up in innumerable ways if you don't know what you're doing'. Don't say we didn't warn you, eh?





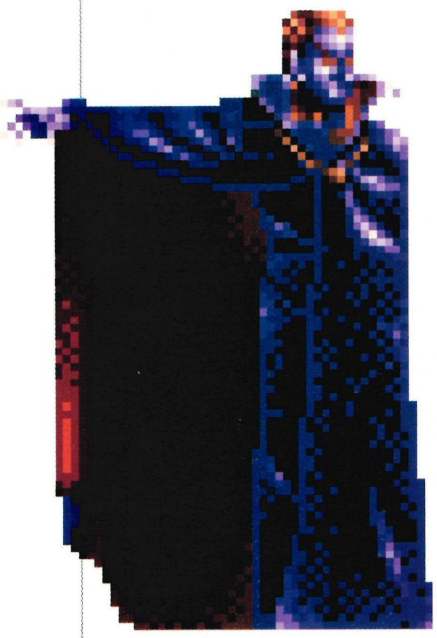


SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV

Thanks to the joys of emulation, every month we'll be looking back at a classic game that we've been revisiting on our PSPs. This month, we've been slaying the monster that is Konami's classic vampire-'em-up...

Super Castlevania IV

Originally Released **1991**
Developer **Konami**
Emulator Used **SNES9X**



What is it about vampires that makes them so prone to being hunted, eh? True, they're not exactly the most sociable creatures imaginable (being restricted to working at night as they are) and the whole blood-sucking thing leaves a bit to be desired, but they can't be all that bad, can they? Well, perhaps – after all, if they weren't so detestable and unwanted, then you wouldn't have almost every single vampire-related game making the lead character a vampire hunter...

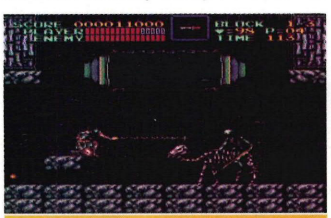
Not surprisingly, *Super Castlevania IV* doesn't buck the trend... although, as it was the *Castlevania* series that practically invented the vampire-'em-up (hey, don't look at us like that... it's a real genre as far as we're concerned), we can't really blame it. Playing as the always dashing, daring and downright dangerous vampire hunter, Simon Belmot, the object of the game is fairly simple: make your way through the outer grounds and inner chambers of Count Dracula's evil castle, fending off any demons you encounter along the way until you face off against the dark lord himself. Naturally though, the task at hand always sounds a whole lot easier than it actually is and killing the Prince Of Darkness (no... not Ozzy Osbourne) isn't exactly a small obstacle. Thankfully, there's a whole host of goodies available to help you get the job done...

Most important to the task is Simon's trusty whip – not only can it be powered up from basic leather to a ridiculously long chain-whip with a spiked ball on the end, but you can use it to swing from special hooks (crossing divides with great ease) and knock down candles to claim the power-ups hidden inside. And it's these power-ups that could really make or break your efforts; special sub-weapons like the lightning-fast, but slightly weak dagger, bottles of holy water, arcing axes or the all-powerful crucifix boomerang came in particularly handy when facing off against some of the nastier bosses... and believe us, there's more than a few of those to get through before facing Vlad himself.

Of course, all this could have turned into a fairly standard platform adventure but what makes *Super Castlevania IV* extra-special is the level of polish that Konami managed to apply to the whole game. From the glorious visuals which, for the time, were beautifully drawn and detailed to the haunting score of some really cracking tunes (all of which sound just as good today as they did 15 years ago), it's a great package and no mistake. The fact that we still avidly play the game through today from start to finish is testament to its greatness... we just wish that the more recent games in the series (the PS2 ones in particular) could match it in the quality stakes. **Martin Mathers**



Ah, the whip – the most graceful and trusted weapon in the whole world



The bosses come in many forms, but none of them are easy to beat

Other great SNES games we've been playing this month

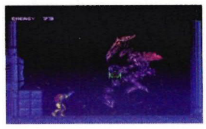
PILOTWINGS
Mmm... Mode 7. While it might not exactly be the most action-packed game in the world, *Pilotwings* still ate up plenty of our time when we were younger – mastering those flight skills and hitting those perfect scores was damn hard and no mistake. Fast forward to now and it's still not easy... and not because we're rubbish either.

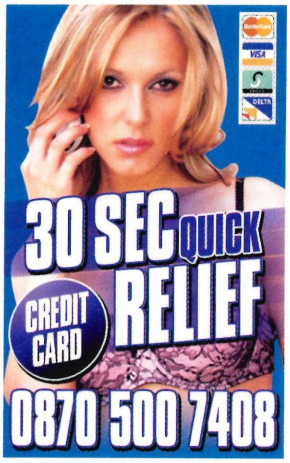


SECRET OF MANA
Don't think Square's classic SNES RPG is one of the best adventure games ever made? Then you're wrong. And clearly a bit mental. Sadly, getting the three-player multiplayer mode to work on the PSP is completely impossible but nevertheless, *Secret Of Mana* is everything that we could ever ask for in an RPG... and then some.



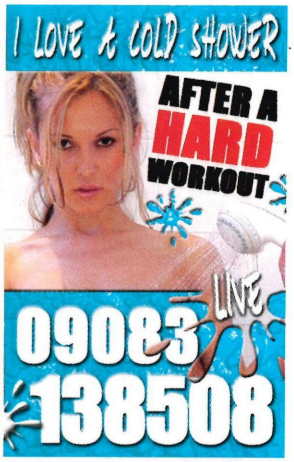
SUPER METROID
Proof that virtually all of the first-party titles on the SNES starting with the word Super really deserved the moniker – Samus' third outing is still one of our favourite games of all time (right up there with *Zelda: Link To The Past*) and demands your respect. Just don't even get us started on how hard Mother Brain turns out to be...











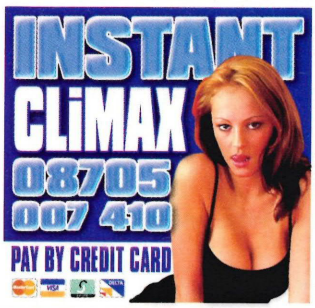














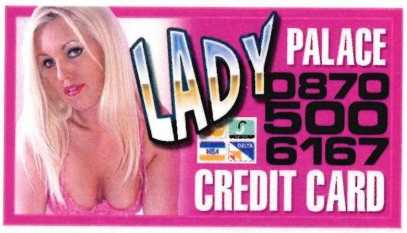


































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DIRECTORY

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE NOT-SO-UGLY LIST OF PSP GAMING



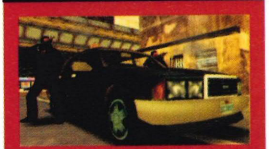
Archer Maclean's Mercury

As tricky as Jock McTricky, winner of the Mr Tricky contest, but that doesn't make it any less addictive. Be careful not to smash your PSP in frustration...



Coded Arms

It might have been the first FPS to appear on the PSP, but then first doesn't necessarily mean best. Yes, it looks nice but the repetitive gameplay makes it more of a drag to play through.



GTA: Liberty City Stories

There's a reason why everyone thinks that Rockstar makes great games - it's because it does. If you own a PSP, you have to own this... it's as simple as that.



Lumines

Those with addictive personalities, take note: you might want to stay well away from this one. Dropping blocks might look easy but to become an expert, you'll need to practise...

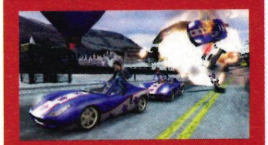
TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	Thought for the day
Ape Academy and	SCEE	1	85%		Simian silliness of the highest order tremendously enjoyable.
Ape Escape: On The Loose	SCEE	1	62%		Do we really need this old PSone game on our shiny new PSP?
Archer MacLean's Mercury	Atari	1	82%		A tough challenge but you won't be able to tear yourself away.
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails	SCEE	2	70%		Fun for a while if you don't mind a rather limited experience.
Burnout Legends	EA	1	71%		A lack of draw distance ruins the fun, but it's still worth a play.
Championship Manager	Eidos	2	80%		Addictive but there's plenty of room for improvement.
Coded Arms	Konami	1	64%		An okay attempt at an FPS, but not quite good enough.
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	Codemasters	1	83%		Just like the PS2 version, but a bit smaller.
Crash Tag Team Racing	Vivendi	2	77%		Bandicoot fans should find this funny, innovative and perfect for the PSP.
Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower	Capcom	1	79%		A good game and a good port, but the controls aren't perfect.
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	1	70%		Fun a first but even fans will be a little disappointed.
Everybody's Golf	SCEE	1	91%		Fun, addictive and perfect golfing in almost every way.
F1 Grand Prix	SCEE	1	81%		Spot-on adaptation of the sport, worthy of a decent place on the grid.
FIFA 06	EA	1	76%		Possibly the best footie game on the PSP (after Pro Evo 5).
Fired Up	SCEE	1	59%		Just about playable, but not worth anything more than a passing look.
Go! Sudoku	SCEE	2	40%		An expensive way to play a game that simply needs pen and paper.
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	Rockstar	1	97%		Quite simply, the best there is. If you only buy one game make it this.
Gripshift	Ubisoft	1	69%		An interesting kart-based game, with not enough racing.
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	EA	1	70%		It's good for the fans, but not many others.
Kao Challengers	Atari	2	55%		Surprisingly good multiplayer, but everything else about this is bad.
Lemmings	SCEE	2	82%		The suicidal critters are back and just as good as you remember.
Lord Of The Rings Tactics, The	EA	1	74%		A decent effort, but falls short of its potential.
Lumines	Ubisoft	1	88%		Delightful to watch and addictive to boot - puzzle heaven.
Madden NFL 06	EA	2	76%		Too much is missing from the PS2 version for this to get top marks.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	Thought for the day
Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects	EA	1	73%		A reasonable beat-'em-up, but flawed.
MediEvil: Resurrection	SCEE	1	67%		Big on personality, if not on gameplay.
Metal Gear Acid	Konami	1	82%		Tough to learn, but an original slice of action for fans.
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Rockstar	1	70%		If 'pimping rides' is your thing then look no further.
NBA Street: Showdown	EA	1	87%		A great conversion of a solid game that's great in multiplayer.
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	EA	1	68%		Not particularly good, but perfectly adequate.
Need For Speed: Underground Rivals	EA	1	61%		'Pimped' to the post by the superior Midnight Club.
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	EA	1	76%		Fun but still filled with the flaws of the PS2 version.
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	2	79%		The best footy game on PSP but a few flaws hold it back from classic status.
Pursuit Force	SCEE	1	89%		High-speed hi-jinks that really show off the PSP.
Ridge Racer	SCEE	1	92%		Ridge is back on form with a truly fantastic PSP debut.
Sims 2, The	EA	2	86%		The Sims is always great and that doesn't change on the PSP.
Spider-Man 2	Activision	1	47%		Spidey's latest outing pales in comparison to the PS2 version.
Star Wars Battlefont II	LucasArts	2	80%		Controls take getting used to but still an absolute blast.
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	1	81%		Carbon copy from the PS2 which still manages to impress.
Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix	Activision	1	70%		More of the usual boarding antics, let down by dodgy controls.
Twisted Metal: Head On	SCEE	2	70%		Fun in multiplayer but plagued by annoying control issues.
Untold Legends: Brotherhood Of The Blade	SCEE	1	73%		A button bashing RPG which doesn't quite make the grade.
Virtua Tennis World Tour	SEGA	1	90%		One of the most addictive games on the PSP to date, essential.
WipEout Pure	SCEE	1	88%		Fast, beautiful and intense futuristic racer.
World Snooker Challenge 2005	SEGA	1	89%		Filled with content and plays surprisingly well.
World Tour Soccer: Challenge Edition	SCEE	1	71%		No trailblazer, but worthy of a Premier League status.
WRC	SCEE	1	65%		Solid but lacklustre racing coming a firm second place behind Colin.
WWE Smackdown! Vs RAW 2006	THQ	2	90%		A perfectly formed miniature version of the PS2 grappler.
X-Men Legends II: Rise Of Apocalypse	Activision	2	69%		Fun for fans of the super-mutants but far from perfect.



MediEvil: Resurrection

Why Sony thought it'd be a good idea to bring back an old PSone title is anyone's guess, but it should have been left in the ground. There are better games out there...



Pursuit Force

Damn, this is tough – perhaps too tough, if we're honest. But even so, the mixture of frantic action and high-octane racing makes it well worth a look for anyone after a real challenge.



THUG 2 Remix

A game like *Tony Hawk's* requires perfect controls if you're going to get it right... but sadly, the PSP version doesn't quite cut it. It's nice, sure, but far from being totally playable.



Smackdown! Vs RAW 2006

Despite the images of old women waving their handbags shouting "Hit 'im!", wrestling's ace – hence we love this miniature grappling game very much.

KEY

Racing
Beat-'em-up
Sport
Action/Adventure
Platform
Shoot-'em-up
Puzzle
RPG/Stategy

NEXT MONTH

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN THE NEXT PACKED ISSUE OF GO>PLAY



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Sony takes out more pesky terrorists... go team!

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And much, much more besides

TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION

First look at the biggest fighting game to hit the PSP

REVIEWS

- Key Of Heaven
- Worms: Open Warfare
- FIFA Street 2
- Football Manager 2006

COMING SOON

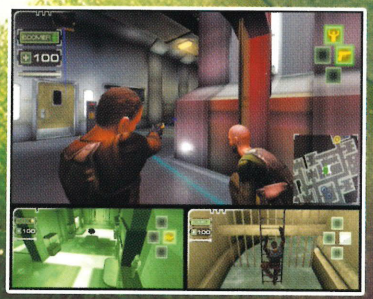
- Black & White Creatures
- Metal Gear Ac!d 2
- Talkman
- Monster Hunter Freedom
- Infected

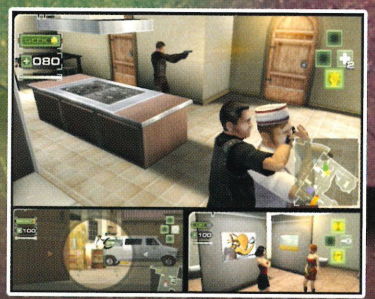
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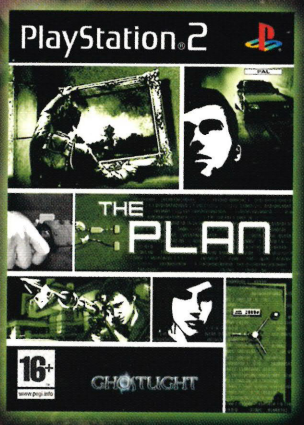
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Ubisoft presents Sam Fisher's Spy Thriller

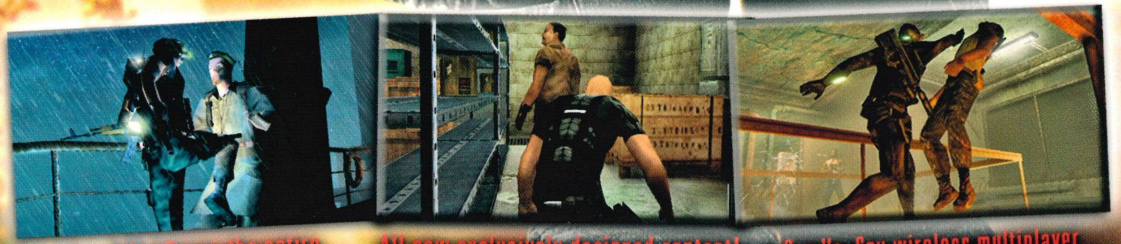
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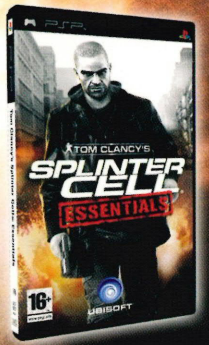
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