

# NAG

NEW AGE GAMING MAGAZINE

south africa's leading technology & computer entertainment magazine



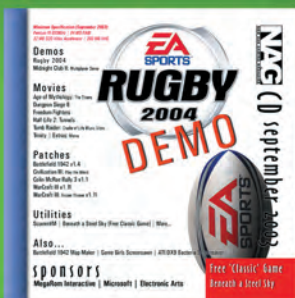
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## LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER *the angel of darkness*

## STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY™



Win 5x



If you didn't get a Cover CD this issue  
lick the Lara Croft in-store model!

PC | Xbox | GameCube | PlayStation 2 | GBA

H@rdcor3 Round-up: Motherboards | Freedom Fighters  
Is this the end of Lara Croft? | Evil Genius



[www.nag.co.za](http://www.nag.co.za)

September 2003 | Volume 6 Issue 6

South Africa | Singapore | Malaysia

R 35.00 | S\$ 8.90 | RM 14.90



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**RELEASE DATE:**

**SEPTEMBER 2003**



The distant future. Planetary colonisation continues and the army has given control of its defensive weapons to a Computerised Armament Management System (CAMS). Tragedy strikes when one of the settlements is turned into a killing field after a CAMS malfunctions.

In an effort to bring the situation under control the military sends Vanessa Z. Schneider, a freelance mercenary and a soldier filled with rage over the death of her parents who were murdered by one of the army's machines.





: Fast action gameplay - unleash devastating attacks and killer combos through choreographed moves.



: Two methods of attack - Palm Shots, an attack mode that locks onto targets; Energy Drives, a special attack that is capable of mass destruction.



: Upgradeable suits - add to Vanessa's arsenal by obtaining special attacks and different Aegis suits that give her more powerful abilities.

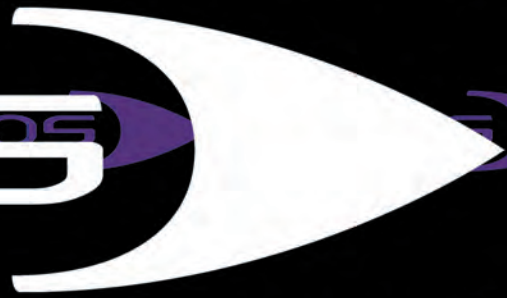


# P.N.03

PRODUCT NUMBER



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LARA CROFT  
**TOMB  
RAIDER**  
*the angel of darkness*

**PRAETORIANS**

**HITMAN 2**



# retailing end august



R299.99

### Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness

A series of grisly murders brings Lara into conflict with a sinister Alchemist from the past, and a secret alliance of powerful individuals shrouded in mystery. Accused of the murder of her one time mentor, Lara Croft becomes a fugitive on the run.



R199.99

### Praetorians

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### Championship Manager 4

Championship Manager 4 is the next generation of football management games offering more players, leagues and competitions than any other title. For the first time ever in the series, Championship Manager 4 features a 2D match engine enabling you to make tactical decisions as the action unfolds.



R199.99

### Hitman 2

Step into the world of a cold-blooded killer for hire, hunting and stalking your prey in a deadly game of cat and mouse. Obtain a disguise, find a way in, and silently finish the job unnoticed, or kick down the front door with gun's blazing, and take everybody out. It's completely up to you how to fulfil the contract.

## forthcoming attractions

# DEUS EX INVISIBLE WAR

# COMMANDOS 3 DESTINATION BERLIN

# REPUBLIC

THE REVOLUTION

PC  
CD

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**Cover:** Meet Jill de Jong, the latest model to fill those great big Lara Croft boots. Inside this issue we review the latest Tomb Raider title, as well as take a good long look at Lara...

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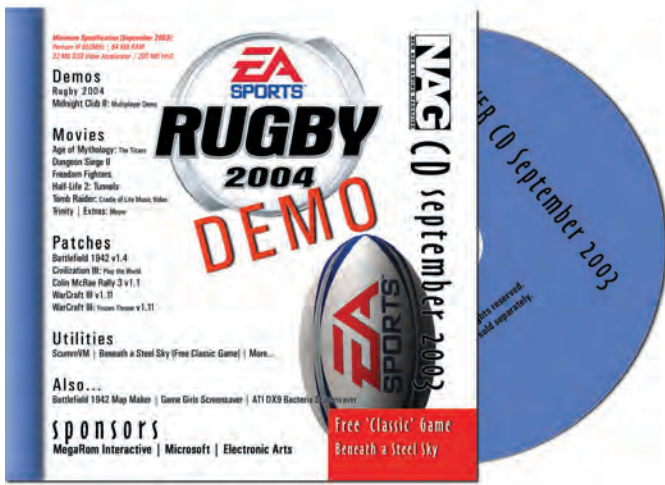
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The following companies make the Cover CD possible every month...

without them we are lost.



# COVER CD

## DEMOS

Midnight Club II: Multiplayer Demo 167 MB  
Rugby 2004 114 MB

## MOVIES

Age of Mythology: The Titans Trailer 8.8 MB  
Dungeon Siege II 18.2 MB  
Extras 2.7 MB  
Freedom Fighters 9.3 MB  
Half-Life 2 Tunnels 97.9 MB  
Tomb Raider Cradle of Life: Music Video 33.4 MB  
Trinity 11.6 MB

## PATCHES

Battlefield 1942 v1.4 66.5 MB  
Civilization III: Play the World v1.27f 11.4 MB  
Colin McRae Rally 3 v1.1 10.7 MB  
WarCraft III v1.11 14.6 MB  
WarCraft III: The Frozen Throne v1.11 4.9 MB

## ADD ONS

Battlefield 1942 Map Maker 13.1 MB  
Game Girls Screensaver 3.1 MB  
Radeon DX9 Bacteria Screensaver 9.0 MB

## UTILITIES

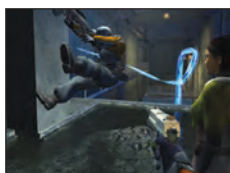
Adaware definitions 0.2 MB  
Quicktweaker 1.0 0.6 MB  
ScummVM 66.9 MB  
Slimbrowser 3.72 (build 002) 1.1 MB  
Soundcontrol 2.15 0.6 MB  
Statbar 2.406 0.3 MB  
Winamp 2.91 2.2 MB  
WinZip 8.1 1.7 MB  
XP-Antispy 3.7 0.1 MB

## CHEATS

Cheatbook Database 9.9 MB  
May 2003 Update 1 MB  
June 2003 Update 1.8 MB  
July 2003 Update 1.2 MB  
August 2003 Update 1 MB

## ESTIMATED TOTAL

685 MB



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...be sold separately.

## Virtual character assassination by means of substandard electronic entertainment package

### Lara Croft goes into chains

Today it was revealed that the latest Tomb Raider game is a real stinker, our foreign correspondent reported that fans were chaining themselves to any available pyramid in Egypt and demanding their money back. The Egyptian archaeological authority has reportedly instituted legal action against game publisher, Eidos, for aggravation...

/Continued on page 206

### RIP Lara Croft

I've always been a huge fan of the Tomb Raider series and I try not to review any of the games because my fan boy tendencies might cloud my better judgement - so I just play them for fun. Besides enjoying the series for the sake of adventure and exploration Tomb Raider also represents a big chunk of gaming nostalgia for me. So I naturally waited with eager anticipation for the latest game. I hate to say [fan boy or not] that this latest instalment of Tomb Raider had me pushing my keyboard away in disgust and sitting there shaking my head. There is a syndrome I'm suffering from [perhaps one of our readers with medical qualifications can explain] - I keep hoping the next Tomb Raider game will be better so I can relive my nostalgia only to be disappointed and then immediately going back to hoping the next one will be better. You may find this issue saturated with Tomb Raider stuff - think of it as our farewell to Lara Croft until 2005 when the next game, developed by Crystal Dynamics, arrives - let's hope they write a new engine for it.

### The industry

Dramatic recreation [bear with me I don't know how to write screenplays...] It is late one afternoon, the Editor of NAG, umm... that's me, is about to leave the office of a local game distributor [name withheld to protect the innocent]. Before turning to leave the product manager has this to say, "Hang on... before you go I've got a new title you can preview in NAG but you can't take your own screenshots, you have to use the ones we supply you... or you can't have the preview code." My immediate reaction, usually, is to tell them to keep their game... but then I think of our gaming information hungry readers and grudgingly accept the conditions. Before I go any further - this isn't something created by the local guys but rather by an international publisher.

Anyway back to my point, the picture painted here is that this overseas publisher is trying to control the media by dangling juicy but conditional carrots. I personally don't like this organised crime-like muscling - it also smacks of arrogance in many ways. You either give the press the preview code or you don't - trying to bolt on conditions and only allowing approved screenshots only does one thing and that is make us [the gaming press] suspicious, not to mention annoyed by these limitations - it's the kind of suspiciousness that preconceived notions are born from and will, whether they like it or not, ultimately end up affecting the games final score and exposure in the magazine... They never learn. Tell me what you think - should NAG swallow the 40 page legal contract and terms and conditions to bring our readers scoops and early previews or should we tell them to stick their 'exclusive' offers?

### All about rAge

Just so everyone knows [those that missed the last few issues] NAG Magazine is putting on a gaming event in SA like you've never seen before. In the October issue we're going to be highlighting as many of the specific details that we can and even provide a floor plan of the venue so everyone knows what they're in for. So watch out for that one. Remember it's at The Dome @ Northgate 10 - 12 October; R20 for adults, younger people under 12 in for free. The show will also be open late on the Friday and Saturday so you can keep the wife happy by taking her to dinner before popping to see what is happening @ rAge.

Oh, it's done [www.nag.co.za](http://www.nag.co.za).

Michael James [Editor]

## Winners

### Enter the Matrix Winners

Peter Huang | G de Jaager  
Andrew Koen | Garth Parsons  
Juan-Paul McCracken

## Breaking News

Last minute news - South African distributor MegaRom Interactive has once again scooped the goods by becoming the official distributors of all Eidos titles in ZA [PC]. This comes at a good time for them with titles such as Commandos III and Deus Ex II just around the corner. MegaRom will also be supplying a quantity of older titles to fill out their back catalogue. This now only leaves a few smaller publishers who are still not represented in this country.



## next issue

October - this is the last issue of normality before we enter the November, December and January crunch - it's a crunch because we have to produce 3 whole magazines in 2 months so we can all go away in December. As I type this I really have no idea what will be in that issue. In case you're wondering we've decided to do the rAge article in the October issue because it's closer to the time of the actual event...

The October issue will be on sale: 25th September 2003

## caption of the month



### Bee fun knee

Each month we'll select a screenshot from

one of the games in the issue and write a funny caption for it, well... we'll try and make it funny...

Your job is to see if you can come up with an even funnier caption and send it to: [ed@nag.co.za](mailto:ed@nag.co.za)

Subject: **September Caption**

If you use the wrong subject in your e-mail it'll get deleted...

**Your prize:** Our sponsor for the screenshot of the month competition is Vivendi Universal Games. They said they'll give us something interesting each month... if we don't want it we'll be sure to send it along to the winner mentioned to the right of this... here...?



▲ 'Oh look a worm' - **nag's best** [99.3% lame] effort

## july winner



▲ 'Too late Bob realized his FX5800 fan was broken...' - **Steve Allcock**

### nag magazine

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Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality color  
Free bundled with WinDVD support Deluxe DVD / VCD play back  
Support 8X AGP and Direct X 9.0

**Aeolus Legend**  
Aeolus, dwelling at Island Aeolus that floats in the sky, stands seized of the power of playing with nature wind under His employ, forecasting the weather, and the mastery of navigational knowledge, bestowed by Zeus.



## Aeolus FX 5800

AGP8X / DVI / TV-out / 128MB



400MHz Geforce FX5800 GPU / 800MHz, 128MB DDR II video memory  
Turbo pipeline cooling fan with copper Heatsink  
nView 2.0 / Direct X 9.0 support  
Free bundled with WinDVD support Deluxe DVD / VCD Play back  
Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality color

## Aeolus FX 5600

AGP8X / DVI / TV-out / 128MB



325MHz Geforce FX5600 GPU / 128 MB fast DDR video memory  
DVI, Video Out, CRT connectors - Full nVIEW functions support  
Support 8X AGP Direct X 9.0  
Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality color  
Free bundled with WinDVD support Deluxe DVD / VCD Play back

## Aeolus FX 5200

AGP8X / DVI / TV-out / 128MB



250MHz Geforce FX5200 GPU / 128 MB fast DDR video memory  
DVI, Video Out, CRT connectors - Full nVIEW functions support  
Support 8X AGP Direct X 9.0  
Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality color  
Free bundled with WinDVD support Deluxe DVD / VCD Play back

## Geforce4 MX PCI

PCI / TV-out / 64MB



nVIDIA Geforce4 MX 420 - PCI  
64MB SDRAM  
Support TV-out  
Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality color  
Free bundled with WinDVD support Deluxe DVD / VCD Play back



Distributed by:



## Component Solutions



# tech news:



**Shure E2c**

Shure's E2c are miniature earpieces that offer surprisingly good sound for their size. They make partial use of noise-cancelling technology to filter out ambient noise. The only downside is that, in order to function properly, they must be seated quite deep in the ears, which is not comfortable for everyone. In order to allow for differing ear sizes, the units include sleeves in three sizes.



**SPC291 Sportsboard**

The SPC291 Sportsboard from 4Gamers is an input peripheral for use with the PlayStation 2 skateboarding and snowboarding games, allowing players to stand on it and perform various moves. The unit allows connection of a standard controller for additional control of features that can't be accessed via a board. [www.bigbeninteractive.co.uk](http://www.bigbeninteractive.co.uk)

## Samsung Yepp 55 MP3 players



Samsung has released two ranges of MP3 sleek, portable players, the YP-35 and YP-55. They boast flash memory ranging from 128 MB to 256 MB, and include direct connect USB adapters, neck straps, earphones, carry case and line cable. The carry case features a Velcro strap, allowing it to be strapped to an arm or wrist, as an alternative to wearing the player around the neck.

Austrian Laks Watch Company, well-known for its art wrist watches, has released a USB Memory watch. The analogue timepiece contains a MB Flash-Drive, and carries its USB cable inside the wrist-band. As it is a Flash-Drive, modern operating systems don't require any drivers for it, although software is bundled with the unit to allow data encryption; the contents of the removable drive may be partitioned into public and private sectors, if desired. A tiny LED indicator reflects the status of the unit - whether it is connected, and whether it is transferring data. The watches are water resistant, and are available in 32 MB, 64 MB, 128 MB and 256 MB capacities. [www.laks.com](http://www.laks.com)



**Laks USB Memory Watch**

## news bits ...

### Xbox 2 rumours

Current rumours suggest that personnel involved in the design of Microsoft's next generation of console are referring to it as Xenon. This, however, is purely a hardware design codename, and will likely not be used to refer to the final product.

### PSP Information

Sony has released some details on the specification of their upcoming PSP handheld unit. The unit will be powered by two MIPS R4000 32-bit cores, and will boast 3D audio and video, as well as Embedded Wireless LAN 802.1. The control

layout will be the traditional Sony design, and will include an analogue stick. A prototype is expected to be on show at next year's E3, and the unit itself is being planned for release late next year.

### PlayStation 3 update

The latest rumours have it that the PS3 will carry 256 MB of main RAM in the form of four XDR-DRAM chips. This is something of a step up from the PlayStation 2's 32 MB capacity.



### RhinoSkin for GBA SP

Saunders, manufacturer of the RhinoSkin brand of cases for cellphones and laptops, has released a case for the Nintendo Game Boy Advance SP. The aluminium case protects the unit without interfering with any of its functionality - the unit can be used while encased, and all controls and ports remain readily accessible.  
[www.saunders-usa.com](http://www.saunders-usa.com)



### LumiCON PS2 controller

Mad Catz has released the LumiCON PlayStation 2 controller. The unit's main innovation is the underglow design with lighted buttons, both allowing gaming in the dark and looking really cool. In addition to analogue sticks, vibration motors and all the regular buttons, the LumiCON features a macro button that can be used to program complex command sequences. The unit draws its power from the console itself, so does not require batteries.

### Lara Croft Bundled



August 1st marks the END-GAME for the days where weak software bundles containing tired titles of yester-year passed for acceptable media to be included with your latest graphics card purchase. Sapphire has

adopted the approach that members of the Sapphire clan should be delivered only the latest and greatest in not just hardware technology but also the hottest software available. Ms. Croft, yes she is still single but don't hit us up for her digits, can be found in bed with Sapphire's: RADEON AIW 9000, RADEON 9600 & 9600 ATLANTIS PRO, RADEON AIW 9700 ATLANTIS PRO, RADEON 9800 & 9800 ATLANTIS PRO as well as escorting our two newest most impressive members to the Sapphire graphical family that will be introduced on July 25th. So stay tuned for much more to come from the leader in gaming hardware technology...

### SPC777 Playfree wireless controller



The SPC777 Playfree from 4Gamers is a vibrating wireless controller for the Microsoft Xbox. The unit has a range of 10m, and boasts a frequency selection switch, allowing up to four units to be used together. The system runs on four AAA batteries, yielding an operating time of up to a hundred hours.



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## New Creative NOMAD MP3 players

Creative has released two new MP3 players. The NOMAD MuVo NX is available in 128 MB and 256 MB models, and can play MP3, WMA and WAV files. It is very light, features USB interface and battery life of up to 11 hours playback or 8 hours of recording via a built-in microphone. The NOMAD Jukebox Zen features 20 GB or 30 GB of storage, is much bigger and heavier, carries a backlit LCD display and can run for up to 14 hours. It also supports higher data bitrates.

## Plantronics wireless office headset



The new CS60 from Plantronics is the first truly cordless hands-free headset aimed at the office market to become readily available locally. The system has a range of 100m, and the "convertible" headset can be worn in any of three distinct ways, depending on user preference. The unit has a battery life of up to 9 hours. An indicator light on the unit makes it easy to identify when a CS60 user is on a call. However, all this technology comes at a price - it is currently retailing at around R4500. [www.plantronics.co.za](http://www.plantronics.co.za)

## JBL Invader multimedia speakers



The JBL Invader multimedia speaker system delivers exceptional sound value for money, although locally you can still expect to pay around R2000 or more. The system consists of a subwoofer that carries the amp and main controls, and four satellites. The Invader can be used with any 4.1, 5.1 or 7.1 surround sound audio card. [www.jblinvader.com](http://www.jblinvader.com)

## Siemens SL56



The Siemens SL56 GSM will be available later this year in a masculine gray-and-silver color scheme. With a full colour display, an optional clip-on mobile camera and a slider design this is the first non-candy bar design phone in the world that can be operated without ever having to be opened. The slider design allows users to make and receive calls without opening the phone by using one-touch buttons or voice commands.

## news bits ...

### Force feedback lawsuits

Microsoft and Immersion recently settled a lawsuit pertaining to Immersion's haptic technology, which is at the core of "force feedback". The agreement allows Microsoft to resume using the technology, granting Immersion the equivalent of around R260-million. Immersion filed a similar suit against Sony at the

same time, and this legal action is still in litigation.

### Western Digital improves SATA hard drives

Western Digital has overhauled their design for Serial ATA drives. The Caviar Special Edition Serial ATA 7200 RPM drives are available in 120 GB and 250 GB capacities, and feature a new

connection cable technology that is much stronger than its predecessor. The new cabling, however, is fully backward compatible. Serial ATA drives, which offer higher data throughput than parallel ATA architectures, are expected to become very common within the next couple of years. [www.westerndigital.com](http://www.westerndigital.com)

## ABIT IC7-MAX3 motherboards

These new motherboards carry some nifty features. The standard stuff first: FSB 800, Dual DDR400 with ECC, Intel CSA Gigabit LAN, AGP Pro 8x/4x, 3 Firewire ports, 8 USB2.0 ports, optical S/P DIF In/Out, 6 channel audio and Serial ATA 150 RAID support. Some of the fancier technologies include performance enhancement functionality, software controlled overclocking and a dynamic fan system that minimises noise by reducing fan speeds when this is safe to do so. Last but not least, the ABIT Secure IDE is a device that encrypts data on its way to the hard drives, so it cannot be read without the correct key, even if the drive is removed from the system. ABIT products will be distributed in South Africa by Esquire Technologies. [www.esquire.co.za](http://www.esquire.co.za).



## TE 329 Music Free Transplayer

This innovative gadget allows audio from a PC to be transmitted, via short-range FM radio, to any radio in the general vicinity of the computer. This is rather reminiscent of the way drive-in movie theatres broadcast their shows' sound to their patrons. The unit is powered by the USB cable, and it offers 11 usable broadcasting frequencies.



## Behringer Headphones



Behringer produce a range of professional head gear for studio recording and mixing, DJ's, producers, and audiophiles. Sporting features such as an adjustable headband, cushioned ear pads and good audio quality they come in a range of 3 different models to suit your budget. [www.behringer.com](http://www.behringer.com)

A company called Xenarc has released a computer that fits into a car's dashboard. The system is powered by an Intel Pentium MMX 266 processor, carries 128 MB RAM, has a built-in 15 GB hard drive, video, audio, GPS and a variety of input and output ports. It is capable of a full range of functions and applications, as limited by its physical specifications, including media playback, gaming and office work. [www.xenarc.com](http://www.xenarc.com)



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**SYSTEM SOLUTION**

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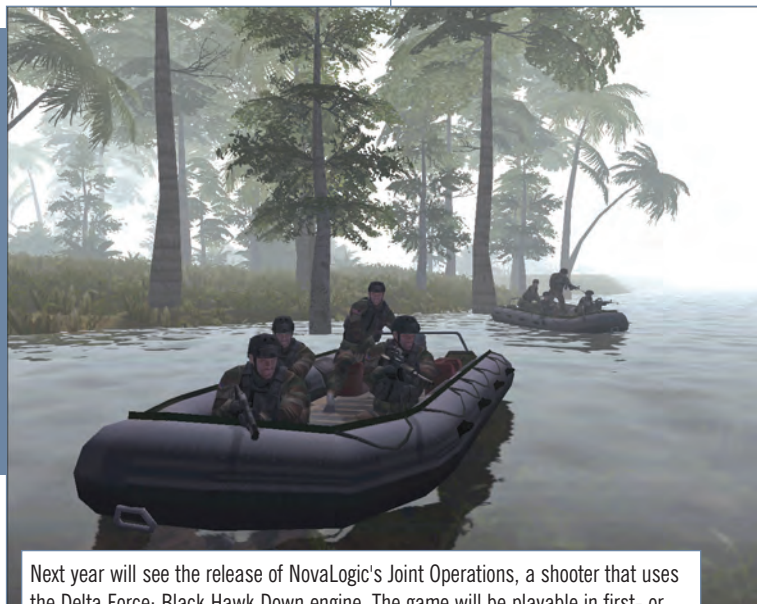
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## Joint Operations



Next year will see the release of NovaLogic's Joint Operations, a shooter that uses the Delta Force: Black Hawk Down engine. The game will be playable in first- or third-person perspective, will allow up to 64 players and will feature land, air and aquatic vehicles, which inspired the title. The setting will be near-future Indonesia. Joint Operations has been postponed until the first quarter of 2004.

## GP Simulator

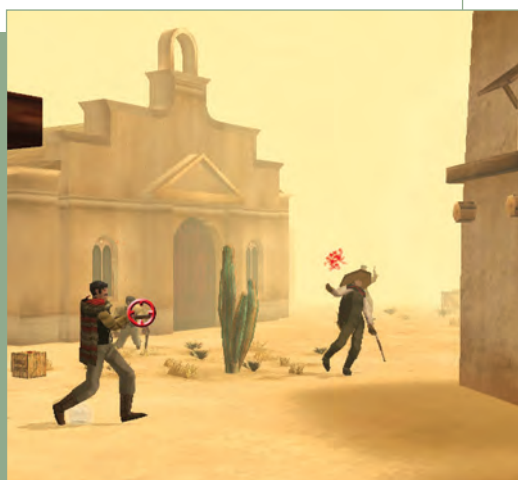


Italian development house Milestone is working on Grand Prix Simulator, a game that will reproduce every aspect of the sport. Players will be able to design tracks and cars, then drive the latter. GP Simulator will encompass the Constructor aspect of Formula 1 as well as the driving elements. The game should be ready by the end of the year, and will include online multiplayer capabilities.

## TRON 2.0 comic book

88 MPH Studios and Disney Publishing Worldwide have announced that they will be producing and publishing a TRON 2.0 comic book series. The series will be based on the computer game, which should be appearing as you read this. The story, as is the case with the game, is set 20 years after events in the original film, and will revolve around the film protagonist's son. Expect the comic to debut early next year.

## Wanted Guns



Wanted Guns, currently being developed by Iridon Software, is a story-driven action game set in Mexico and the Wild West during the time of the American Civil War. The main character is a gunslinger-turned-priest, and the game dynamic will blend action and stealth elements. Weapons have been designed to be authentic to the era. Wanted Guns will also allow fighting from horseback, including the ability to ride an enemy down. It is scheduled for release late this year.

## Dungeon Siege: Legends of Aranna



An expansion pack for Dungeon Siege is expected late in November, currently in development at Mad Doc Software and Gas Powered Games. The add-on will feature new locales, playable character types, monsters, spells and even a pack animal that will defend its load.

## Underworld

Underworld, which is to be released on 19 September, is a dark third-person shooter with a vampires and werewolves theme. The gothic environments will feature a high degree of manipulation and many destructible objects and features.

### Castle Strike

Castle Strike, from Related Design, is a highly detailed simulation of European castle warfare in the Renaissance era. Three playable nations will be featured: England, France and Germany. Players will have to balance economic and military elements in order to succeed, and the game will include an easy-to-use castle design interface. Castle Strike is expected to be available at the end of the year.

### Dangerous Waters

Sonolysts are currently at work on a new naval title, called Dangerous Waters. Unlike their previous games, this one integrates surface and submarine vessels. The game is expected to be complete late next year.

### Desperados 2

Spellbound, from Germany, is working on a sequel to Desperados: Wanted Dead or Alive, titled, Desperados 2: Cooper's Revenge. The game's style will likely be similar to that of Commandos, and will retain its predecessor's Wild West theme.

### Gorky Zero: Beyond Honor

Gorky Zero: Beyond Honor, a prequel to Gorky 17, is under construction at Metropolis Software. The game's story is set a few years before events in Gorky 17, and it is being written by an accredited science fiction writer. The game will fall into the stealth category, with the environment being presented in isometric view most of the time. At this point, neither a publisher nor a release date has been decided.



### Sacred

A new computer RPG is on its way from Ascaron. Dubbed Sacred, the game will offer six playable characters, including an angel-like being and a vampiress, and will be unusual in that 70% of the world will be available right from the start; the remainder will be unlocked by progress through the story. Another innovation is the fact that players will also be able to operate and fight from horseback. As yet, no release date has been announced, but it is known that the game will feature online play capability.



### Empires: Dawn of the Modern World

Empires: Dawn of the Modern World is an upcoming real-time strategy title from Stainless Steel Studios, and is expected to become available in a couple of months. The game will recreate the last 1000 years or so, and will feature nations with historically accurate units and weapons. Single player campaigns will focus on prominent historical figures such as General Patton.



### The Roots

The Roots is a third-person fantasy role-playing game from Polish development house Tannhauser Gate, to be published late next year by Cenega Publishing. The game dynamic will use arena-style turn-based combat.



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## SimCity 4: Deluxe Edition

Electronic Arts have announced that SimCity 4: Deluxe Edition will include the base game and the Rush Hour expansion pack. It should be hitting stores soon after you read this.

## Half-Life 2 delayed

Half-Life 2's release has been rescheduled from end of September to some time during the Christmas season.

## Contract J.A.C.K.



Monolith Productions are at work on Contract J.A.C.K., a game set between No One Lives Forever and No One Lives Forever 2, chronologically speaking. Players will assume the role of a H.A.R.M. assassin who must stop a Mafia-like organization from interfering with H.A.R.M.'s plans. As well as single player and various multiplayer modes, the title will include a mod-making toolkit. Expect this one later this year.

## Gangland



Whiptail Interactive is at work on Gangland, a mafia-themed strategy-simulator. In the fashion of titles such as Rollercoaster Tycoon and the like, Gangland will require players to set up and manage numerous elements of their illicit enterprise, and the goal for the player is to rise within his or her family. Gangland is expected to be released in November.

## The Sims: Makin' Magic



The last add-on pack for The Sims is on its way, given that next year will see the release of The Sims 2. This latest expansion will add many fanciful elements to the game, mostly revolving around the working of magic. Appropriate and fantastical new non-player characters and objects have also been added. Some other items have also been added that don't have anything to do with the arcane, a baker's oven being one example.

## The Lord of the Creatures



A third-person fantasy game called The Lord of the Creatures is under construction at Spanish design house Arvirago Entertainment, which explains the somewhat inelegant title. The game will include both single- and multi-player play modes, and is said to be making use of a spectacular graphics engine. No other details have been made public yet.

## Port Royale 2

Ascaron is at work on a sequel for Port Royale. Presently, all that is known is that the graphics will feature significantly higher levels of detail, and the game is scheduled for release next year.



### Monster Truck Fury



Swedish developer Iridon Software has announced Monster Truck Fury, its upcoming racing game for the PC. A variety of race modes will be available, including a "car crushing" event, and multiplayer will be implemented for up to six players over LAN and a split-screen option for an undisclosed number of players.

### Spartan

Slitherine Studios are busy on another turn-based strategy game, this one titled Spartan. This is Slitherine's first game to feature battles in 3D, but the developers are also implementing an option whereby users of low-spec systems can play in 2D. The game will be set in the area around ancient Greece, and so a naval aspect will be very prominent. In addition to warfare, players will need to master commerce, diplomacy and espionage in order to succeed.

### FIFA Football 2004



The latest iteration of FIFA Football from EA Sports is on its way, and will become available late in October. The new game boasts numerous enhancements since its predecessors, including smoother animations, enhanced career mode, smarter AI and new camera angles. The engine allows mid-game adjustments to be made to a team's tactics, and a new dynamic weather feature influences playing conditions. The licensing aspect of the game is mind-boggling: 16 leagues, 350 teams and 10000 players! The game will be playable online, of course.

# AGE OF WONDERS SHADOW MAGIC



Available  
September

### Age of Wonders: Shadow Magic

This enchanting fantasy game throws players into the heart of a mythological world where a new Empire has launched an aggressive assault on the Ancient Races and all things magic. Meanwhile an even greater evil populated by hellish demons breeds in its shadows.

R 299

PC  
CD



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## Vietcong Fist Alpha

Gathering, a subsidiary of Take Two Interactive, has announced Vietcong Fist Alpha, an expansion pack for Vietcong. The add-on is based on an elite unit that was repeatedly called upon to carry out dangerous assignments in the Vietnam War. As well as 7 new single player and 8 new multiplayer missions, 6 new weapons including bayonets and machetes, the expansion adds authentic air support with the inclusion of the B52 Bomber and F-105 Thunderchief.

## Gothic II expansion



Gothic II: The Night of the Raven is Piranha Bytes' upcoming expansion pack for Gothic II, and will apparently tie up ends left loose in Gothic II.

## London Racer: World Challenge



Dutch developer Davilex Games is at work on London Racer: World Challenge. In addition to the usual game modes, one will be able to play in Cannonball Run style of race, requiring the player to outwit local law enforcement agents. Play will take place at various international locations. No release date has been stated yet.

## Airborne Troops



Playlogic's upcoming Airborne Troops, under construction at WideScreen Games, will cast the player as a paratrooper behind enemy lines in occupied France during World War II. Players will need to combine combat and stealth, and missions will be objective-oriented, with secondary objectives helping pave the way in the later game. Airborne Troops should be available at the end of the year.

## Novus Ordim

Novus Ordim is PagTech's original upcoming political strategy game. The title's premise is to undermine political leaders by exploiting known weaknesses and past mistakes and scandals, as well as manipulating media, religion, industry, the military and criminal organisations. The ultimate goal is to set up a new world order.

PlayStation 2



AVAILABLE  
**22.OCT.03**

PlayStation 2

**R399.00**

excluding VAT  
subject to change based on currency fluctuation

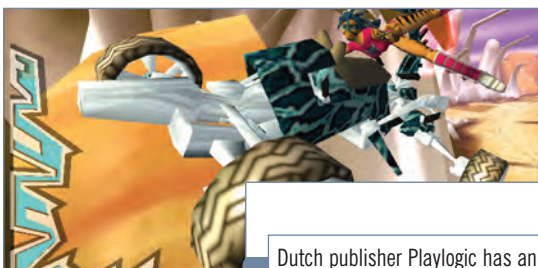
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## console news:

### Criminalympics

With a premise reminiscent of various Johannesburg-inspired jokes that were doing the rounds a few years ago, this upcoming title from British company R8 will allow players to choose a character from a choice of eight hoodlums, and then to participate in various competitive "sport events" of an illegal and, usually, violent nature. The atmosphere of the game will be lightened by liberal measures of admittedly gallows humour. Criminalympics is being made for PlayStation 2; presently, no release date or publisher are known.



### Cyclone Circus

Dutch publisher Playlogic has announced Cyclone Circus, in development at Games Factory. Cyclone Circus will have players control wind-driven vehicles in international races. Given this fact, the controls will be slightly different to those of the racing mainstream. The game is scheduled for release in December.

### Hitman 3: Contracts

Eidos have released the first official confirmation that Hitman 3: Contracts is in development. As yet, no other information has been made public.

### Killzone

Guerrilla's upcoming Killzone for the PlayStation 2 will be a squad-based first-person shooter. Although the title will be primarily a single-player game, it will feature online playability. It draws much inspiration from various 20th Century theatres of war, which is expected to add to the authenticity of the experience. Killzone is expected to be ready late next year.



### Legend of Success Joe

Ashita no Joe, known in the West as Legend of Success Joe, is an anime series about a boxer who rises from prison boxing to world championship level, but gradually takes neurological damage during the course of his career. The concept will soon be brought to the PlayStation 2 and Game Boy Advance by Konami. The PS2 version of the game will be a 3D sport title featuring the original story-line, while the GBA version will cast the player simultaneously in the role of Joe's coach and Joe himself, and will be playable head-to-head via a link cable. Both versions are scheduled for release in December.

## TRON 2.0



Available  
September

### TRON 2.0

The game takes place in present day, approximately 20 years after the events of the film. Playing as Jet Bradley, son of ENCOM programmer Alan Bradley from the movie, gamers are digitized into cyberspace and will race on light cycles, battle corruption both inside and outside of the computer world.

R 299



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### Lionhead's Dimitri



Peter Molyneux is up to his innovative tricks again! Codenamed Dimitri, Lionhead's current project has, rumour has it, been in the works since 1999. Little is known about this game, other than that it won't be a game in the traditional sense of the word. The fact that the character will express subtle emotions and will age and react to his environment realistically suggests something of a "super-Sims", but given Molyneux's track record, we can be sure it will break the mould. This particular title will not see the light of day for some time yet, it seems.

### Mystery game for PS2 in the works

A company by the name of Blue 52 is at work on an action-adventure title named Stolen. Very little is known about this game, as Sony are not confirming anything at this point, but rumour has it that it will be technologically intensive and will feature a female lead in third-person perspective.

### Justice League

A game based on Cartoon Network's Justice League TV series is on its way from Midway Games. Playable characters will include DC Comics superheroes such as Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, The Flash and Green Lantern, and each will feature its trademark special powers. Justice League will be available for PlayStation 2, Xbox and GameCube next year.

### Conan: The Dark Axe



Coming from TDK Mediactive toward the end of the year, Conan: The Dark Axe will be a 3rd person action game incorporating elements of role-playing and adventure games. The title will boast a custom-made 3D graphics engine allowing a variety of special effects. The game's dynamic will include traps and puzzles in addition to the mandatory fighting, and will also feature an experience system to allow the player character to grow as the game progresses. The game will feature the soundtrack from the first Conan film.

### NARC

Midway Games are at work on a remake of the 1988 arcade game NARC. Players will fight minions of the drug cartel K.R.A.K., with the ultimate goal of eliminating the organisation. NARC will appear next year on PlayStation 2, Xbox and GameCube.



## RPG on its way to the GameCube

Namco have embarked upon production of Baten Kaitos, a role-playing title for the GameCube set in a mythical world where people have wings. The protagonist of the story, however, has only one, as well as a huge responsibility to thwart a nefarious plot. Much of what will transpire in this game will take place in the air, and it is said that the game will feature turn-based battles. As yet, no release date has been hinted at.

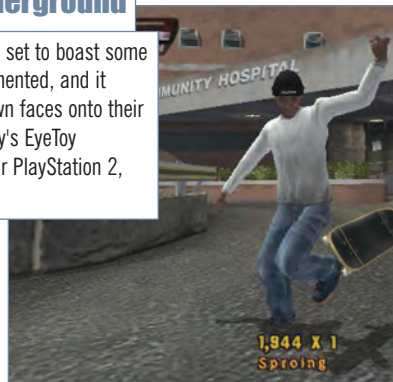
## Gran Turismo 4



Due out sometime next year, Gran Turismo 4 is aimed at a very broad audience - casual gamers, hardcore gamers, car enthusiasts, collectors and just about anybody who has the faintest interest in cars. The game will present the most comprehensive collection of cars ever to appear in a game, with a total of 500 cars spanning virtually all of automotive history. The game will allow up to six players to compete online. Needless to say, every aspect of the game is being upgraded from its predecessors, and some of the fancier features include the ability to choose between Assisted Stability Management and Traction Control System, or neither, in the cars one drives. It is thus surprising that model damage is not being implemented. AI for computer-controlled drivers is an area that is being intensively overhauled. Polyphony, the Gran Turismo's creators, are aiming to squeeze as much as possible from the PlayStation 2 with this one, stating categorically that this has not been achieved in past games. GT4 is expected to be complete next year.

## Tony Hawk's Underground

Activision's upcoming Tony Hawk's Underground is set to boast some new frills. A series of new moves has been implemented, and it seems the game will allow players to map their own faces onto their in-game characters, presumably by means of Sony's EyeToy accessory. Tony Hawk's Underground is planned for PlayStation 2, Xbox and GameCube.



## Manhunt

Take Two's upcoming Manhunt, originally titled Manhunter, sets out to explore the depravity of humans. As such, it will carry a 'mature' rating. The plot involves a psychopath who calls himself The Director, who takes over a town and sets the protagonist loose and every one of his thugs out to chase down and kill the hero. This is The Director's entertainment, and it is up to the player to spoil his game. The game will feature, simultaneously, some of the most brutal and most casual violence ever, with guns being hard to come by, so players will end up getting their hands dirty. Sound plays quite an important role, and the game dynamic has been compared, in some respects, to that of stealth-based games such as Metal Gear Solid. Manhunt is scheduled for release later this year, and will be available on the PlayStation 2.



Coming  
Soon

## Hidden & Dangerous 2

Hidden & Dangerous 2 is a first and third person tactical shooter that builds upon the tremendous success of Hidden & Dangerous. You lead a small squad of Allied soldiers deep behind enemy lines, to carry out secret missions during World War II.

R 299



Coming  
Soon

## Space Colony

In production at Firefly Studios, the creators behind the million selling Stronghold series, Space Colony promises a gaming experience that's out of this world. Through a series of unique and pioneering missions players will be given the opportunity to combine all the intricacies of running a Space Colony with the most dysfunctional crew ever assembled.

R 299



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# scores, charts and release dates:



www.musica.co.za

## PC Web Scores

Title	New Age Gaming	gamespy.com	gamespot.com	pc.ign.com
Neverwinter Nights Exp.	85	84	7.8	7.7
F1 Challenge 99 -02	79	n/r	n/r	9.5
Gothic II	84	n/r	n/r	n/r
Will Rock	70	n/r	6.7	7.2
Neighbours From Hell	85	n/r	n/r	n/r
Tomb Raider: AOD	36	n/r	6.1	5.3
Tropico 2	72	88	7.4	8.4

## CHARTS

- 1 **PS2** Grand Theft Auto 4 Vice City
- 2 **PC** Grand Theft Auto Vice City
- 3 **PC** Sims Ultimate Collection
- 4 **PS2** Crash Bandicoot 5
- 5 **PS2** Enter the Matrix
- 6 **PS2** Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness
- 7 **PC** Sims Superstar
- 8 **PC** Enter the Matrix
- 9 **PS2** Grand Theft Auto III Platinum
- 10 **PC** Harry Potter Philosphers Stone
- 11 **PC** Bond Nightfire
- 12 **PC** Cricket 2002
- 13 **PSone** Grand Theft Auto Collectors Edition
- 14 **PC** WarCraft III
- 15 **PS2** Tiger Woods 2003
- 16 **PC** F1 2002
- 17 **PS2** Gran Turismo 2 Platinum
- 18 **PC** Age of Empires Gold
- 19 **PS2** Eye Toy
- 20 **PSone** Tekken 3 Platinum

Chart information supplied by Musica for the period 1- 31 July 2003

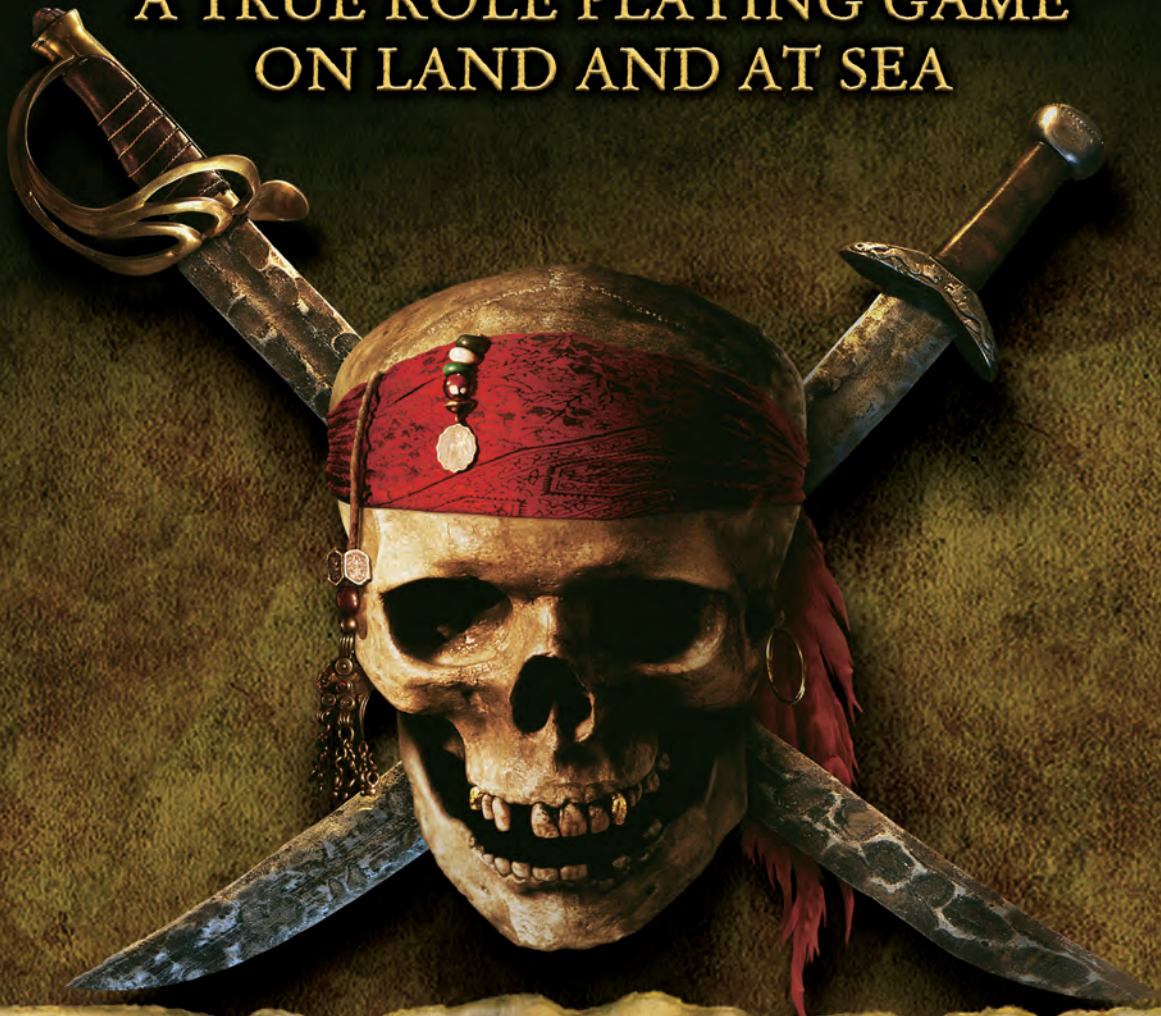
## Console Web Scores

Title	New Age Gaming	ign.com	gamespot.com	gamespy.com
Tomb Raider: AOD [PS2]	49	5.3	6.5	34
Def Jam Vendetta [PS2]	85	8.9	8.4	75
Wakeboarding Unleash. [PS2]	76	8.6	7.3	89
Return to Castle Wolf. [PS2]	61	7.6	4.9	65
Starsky & Hutch [PS2]	90	n/r	n/r	n/r
WarioWorld [GC]	75	7.1	6.4	70

## Title Release Dates

Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	PC	FPS	September 2	Bionicle: The Game	GBA	Action	September 11
Crusader Kings	PC	Strategy	September 2	Boktai: The Sun Is in Your Hand	GBA	Role-Playing	September 11
Rugby 2004	PC	Sport	September 3	Corvette	Xbox   PS2   GBA	Driving	September 11
One Must Fall: Battlegrounds	PC	Action	September 4	ESPN NHL Hockey	PS2   Xbox	Sports	September 11
EverQuest: Lost Dungeons of Norrath	PC	MMORPG	September 8	Final Fantasy Tactics Advance	GBA	Strategy	September 11
Lords of the Realm III	PC	Strategy	September 9	.hack Part 3: Outbreak	PS2	Role-Playing	September 11
Fire Warrior	PC	FPS	September 9	Hunter: The Reckoning Wayward	PS2	Action	September 11
Battlefield 1942: Secret Weapons of WWII	PC	Action	September 9	Lethal Skies II	PS2	Simulation	September 11
Starsky and Hutch	PC	Action	September 14	Mr Nutz	GBA	Action	September 12
BloodRayne	PC	Action	September 14	P.N. 03	GC	Action	September 12
Commandos 3: Destination Berlin	PC	Strategy	September 14	Power Rangers Ninja Storm	GBA	Action	September 12
Apocalyptica	PC	Action	September 14	Red Dead Revolver	PS2	Action	September 12
Space Colony	PC	Strategy	September 14	Reel Fishing III	PS2	Sports	September 12
Contract Killer	PC	Action	September 14	Risk	PS2	Strategy	September 12
Halo: Combat Evolved	PC	FPS	September 14	Rocket Power: Zero Gravity Zone	GBA	Action	September 12
NHL 2004	PC	Sport	September 16	Rugby 2004	PS2	Sports	September 12
Underworld	PC	FPS	September 16	Spirits & Spells	GBA   GC	Adventure	September 12
Charm of War	PC	Strategy	September 21	Starsky & Hutch	PS2   Xbox	Driving	September 12
Freedom Fighters	PC	Action	September 22	WWE Wrestlemania XIX	GC	Sports	September 12
Medal of Honor: Allied Assault Breakthrough	PC	FPS	September 22	Armada 2: Star Command	GC	Adventure	September 12
Command & Conquer Generals: Zero Hour	PC	Strategy	September 22	Banjo-Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge	GBA	Action	September 12
Chrome	PC	FPS	September 22	BlowOut	PS2	Action	September 12
Lock On: Modern Air Combat	PC	Simulator	September 23	Dino Crisis 3	Xbox	Adventure	September 12
Midnight Nowhere	PC	Adventure	September 23	Disney's Party	GC   GBA	Puzzle	September 17
Etherlords II	PC	Strategy	September 23	Freedom Fighters	GC   PS2   Xbox	Action	September 17
Supreme Ruler 2010	PC	Strategy	September 23	Galidor: Defenders of the Outer Dimension	PS2   GC	Action	September 17

A TRUE ROLE PLAYING GAME  
ON LAND AND AT SEA



# PIRATES *of the* CARIBBEAN



[HTTP://PIRATES.BETHSOFT.COM/MAIN.HTML](http://pirates.bethsoft.com/main.html)

The Pirates of the Caribbean game transports players to the 17th Century where they can experience life as a pirate in any way they see fit," said executive producer Todd Vaughn. "Whether they want to be feared by all and welcome nowhere, or just enjoy compelling missions or a life at sea, we're creating a game that fits their game play style.

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The question of why a corporation needs a website has been plaguing scientists and mathematicians for hundreds of years, even Julius Caesar himself pondered the need for www.rome.com when he said, "I have conquered the lands to the North and the East, West and South, I have commanded an army of 50 000 men but here I sit on my throne of gold and I still can't get my website to load." Perhaps the great Inca prophet Am'uel put it best in 1604 when standing on the gallows seconds before they hung him for stealing the lead apple when he said, "www.nag.co.za? I can't say I've heard of it".

**Remember:** Letters are clicked on at least once before deletion.

**Important:** Include all your details when mailing us or you won't get a prize if your letter is chosen as random winner of the month.

talk about something lame like your "BMW with Intel stickers on it". (AMD rules!)

**EvilCow**

*Ed: Actually all our competitions are serious. We never lie much about anything - that's Len's job - he's the sales manager. Regarding the survey, we had to wait until all the prizes were in our office [some distributors were a little sluggish in getting the thumb out] and only then could we pick a winner. His picture appeared in the magazine in the August issue. The design a logo (cover actually) competition will be featured in our October issue - we'll announce the winner then. The survey results are at a data capturing company as you read this and we'll publish the results when we get them back - it isn't quick and easy you know. We're very busy, do you know how much time it takes to polish the little bits of metal in-between the sticky plastic bits of the Intel sticker on my BMW? Ages!*

**NAG Multiplayer Gamers**

I was just wondering whether any of you guys @ NAG play WarCraft III: TFT or Wolfenstein: ET, online? If so... what nicks do you use? Another thing, please expand your local multiplayer pages. I know it's already been lengthened but I like getting updates on the local SA multiplayer gaming scene.

**Carl**

*Ed: When we play online we usually play using the nicks in the magazine. I play Battlefield 1942 every now and then and I just never had any fun playing WarCraft III online. SAIX is the best place to play - <http://games.saix.net>.*

**Oh what a feeling**

It all really comes down to feeling... with capital F. I have been doing a lot of thinking about what it is games are lacking. And I have come up with a rather inspired yet selfish answer to the question that drives us as a gaming community. Where are all the good games these days?

The other day I stepped out of Brooklyn cinema, having just watched the incredible Hulk I found that there was a feeling of incredible disappointment hanging over my head. I couldn't place it, but there was something that had made me feel as though I had wasted my

money on the movie. The casting? The story? The special effects?

The answer was that the movie was more of the same thing. I had seen this story before in numerous Hollywood adventures. It lacked true feeling. Then I tried to remember the last time I came out of a cinema feeling refreshed and satisfied. The answer was easy. Spirited Away. The characters, the story, the emotion, humour and feeling brought by this movie is undeniable! Half-Life. Yes, I hear your sighs of approval. Feeling! Atmosphere! That's the answer! Of course no feeling compares to the kiss of a girlfriend or loved one, holding a child of your own (yet to experience), or being in love, but please people (game developers) don't forget that's what we want out of games! Feeling, experience, atmosphere, emotion!

The reason I feel I may be selfish in this answer is because I understand that not all gamers want this out of games... but **I think they should!**

*Ed: I think this is what id Software is aiming for with DOOM III - watch as they lead the industry again.*

**Sick and Tired**

Why the hell don't you ever publish me? I write nice, informative letters and you choose to publish stupid, senseless junk! I mean I pay my money as well. And I DARE YOU to publish me!! There that should work. Just to make sure: Did I mention your magazine is BRILLIANT? Yeah... well it is BRILLIANT. In fact it's the most BRILLIANT magazine in the whole world. There, now I should get published... (Insert contented laughter here).

**t.A.T.U. fanatic (SIS)**

*Ed: Please go away now... .*

[The next 3 letters are from the same person. Ed]

**Why do people cheat?**

A lot of people always yell and scream with self-righteous rage when they hear of someone cheating in games. They yell, "What's the point?" and "You lazy bum!" etc, etc. It is no mystery why people cheat. For many it is a chance to hold (what they believe to be) true power. These people often have anger management issues and like stomping on insects and other small critters trying to prove their dominance over these

Send all topical and otherwise interesting items to the following:  
P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158 [if you must use ink, paper, an envelope and stamps please include an electronic copy for easy processing] :o  
Real mail to: letters@nag.co.za

There is a new rule for those of you sending in any artwork for publication - your submission must include the NAG logo or one of our magazine covers [download @ [www.nag.co.za](http://www.nag.co.za)] built into the image somewhere - and by 'built in' we mean not pasted or stuck on somewhere - built in - you real artists will know what we're talking about - no logo / cover - no fame. NAG logo on CD.

creatures. They like the feeling of immortality and complete freedom. On the other hand you get people like me. If a game has a story you want to know the story but can't be bothered to sit through puzzles etc. To us a game is nothing more than an interactive book. Well that's that.

**Pick a fight!**

Yeah! Let's pick a fight with The Basilisk. In the last article somewhere you mentioned how people find it strange and amusing when people say things like LOL, ROLF etc. But people have been saying FYI for a long time?

**Terrorist games**

I wonder if playing video games creates terrorists. Let's pose this question to President Bush. No rather not. You know children might start thinking its fun to plant the bomb in real life. That's why I say Counter-Strike is the devil. Well no I say that because I suck at it. But Counter-Strike is the devil and makes people evil. Ooh a bunny!

**Schizo PUPu**

*Ed: I don't really have anything to say to this - it's just interesting to peer into the mind of the gamer every once in a while. Besides I've also given you your allotted 15 minutes of fame in this lifetime - I was taking one for the team.*

**Intel & AMD**

Here is a thought on the AMD versus Intel Wars - Who cares as long as you can play games.

**SNIPER**

*Ed: Deep.*

**Game port**

Where can I find a game port to USB converter?

**Stormrage**

*Ed: After a quick check I can report that you probably can't get something like this in South Africa - only in speciality electronic shops in America where they make them up.*

**NAG Website Query!**

I have a query to file with you, actually not so much a query but more along the lines of just a question I need answering. I love reading your magazine, but when it comes to going online, I want to look at more about the NAG magazine.

However I go to [www.prophecy.co.za](http://www.prophecy.co.za) and click on the NAG hyperlink and get taken to a page that doesn't really exist. Why isn't the site working?

**Ravage**

*Ed: It's alive... visit [www.nag.co.za](http://www.nag.co.za) - we ditched James [offered him a promotion] and hired a proper webmaster.*

shorts...

**Strategy Guide**

Seeing as WCIII: The Frozen Throne is so different from Reign of Chaos, and WCIII is so popular could you please put another strategy guide in the magazine? It would also be super useful to people who would like to start attending LAN events.

**Brian**

*Ed: The strategy guide for WarCraft III: The Frozen Throne will appear in the October issue - the guy doing it had bronchitis [that's what he told us] so he'll, cough, get it done, cough, soon. My reply - if you didn't die from something it couldn't have been that bad... .*

**Random winner and stuff**

Is the Letter of the Month randomly picked every month or what's the story behind that rubbish? How come you folks haven't reviewed a GBA game for 2 months? Also how do you get screenshots for GBA reviews, do you have some kind of mechanism you stick in the port thingy?

**Not given**

*Ed: The letter of the month is carefully selected using a predetermined random system - but then give me one system that doesn't have some element of randomness to it. Regarding the GBA screenshots, if we don't get press material for the games from the publisher or developer we do use our special mechanism that we stick in the port thingy. We only review games if we get sent them.*

**Desperate**

If you never reply to any of the 10 letters that I've sent you over the past 10 months, please reply to this one. I read somewhere that they are making a PlayStation 2, Le Tour de France: Centenary Edition game. Do you know if there will be a PC version of this, and are there any existing PC versions of a Tour de France simulation?

**Not sure**

*Ed: As far as I know it's only planned for PS2 & Xbox. You probably get ignored because you keep asking questions about cycling simulators.*

# domain of the basilisk:

This is the best column in the universe. If you disagree with anything said in this column you are wrong.

Usually this topic only pops up at the end of the calendar with the World Cyber Games (WCG), but not so long ago this year, Gamers Gate sent players to the Electronic Sports World Cup (ESWC) in France. What was arguably the most successful international gaming tournament ever was spoiled for South African spectators by the fact that none of our players made it through the first round. In fact, only one player out of the entire team even won a match. The gross disappointment was made even worse by the general consensus among the community that this was the best team we'd ever sent overseas. While trying not to sound pessimistic about my fellow countrymen, I must say that the crushing defeat we suffered was exactly what I expected. This is not the first time we have competed on the international stage, and it is only one of the many times we have been annihilated like complete amateurs. So, I am going to ask the pressing question, and hopefully answer it once and for all.

## What went wrong? (Again)

Counter-Strike is still regrettably the most popular so that's where I'll start. Going into the tournament, Evolve had an advantage over every previous team - experience. Five of their six members had been overseas before, one of them twice before, and they had beaten all their local rivals convincingly in qualification. Having lost relatively close games against all opponents at the 2002 Korea WCG and having worked hard since, one would expect them to perform this time, right? As we have seen, that is not necessarily the case. They were prepared for Korea, not France. If the Evolve team (as it stood at ESWC) played in the WCG tournament last year, they would have done very well. The problem was, while they were preparing for what they knew about their opponents back then, the rest of the world had moved ahead without them. Evolve would have needed time to experience this new style of play and adapt to it. Instead, they only had one chance to learn and to compete at the same time, which wasn't enough.

The problem with WarCraft III was fairly similar to Counter-Strike. While there is considerably more competition in the local WC3 community than the local CS community, there are also far more tactical elements to master in the game. Swoop has spoken of how he was continually surprised by what his opponents were doing. Any local real-time strategy player who wants to be on par with international standards has to play often against the other top players. By doing this he learns of new strategies and, most importantly, how to counter them. This isn't possible with the international bandwidth available to South Africa. Unreal Tournament 2003, oddly enough, was the area where a South African player was the most successful. Livid finished with figures of 2 wins / 4 losses, and missed qualification for the second round by only one point. The reason for his inability to make the grade can simply be put down to the size of the local community. At the Gamers Gate ESWC qualifier, compared to the other games which each had over 30 players / teams

competing, UT2003 had eleven. There simply isn't enough competition to push our local boys to the highest standards of play.

The biggest disappointment of the tournament for South Africa was the poor performance of Ph4ntom in Quake 3. At WCG 2001 and 2002, Ph4ntom shocked the world by finishing remarkably well, beating "big names" such as Socrates, Cha0tiz and Aim. Naturally, we all expected him to do it again. I believe the reason for Ph4ntom's previous success is not that the standard of Quake 3 is higher than any other game, but rather that Ph4ntom himself is what one could call a gaming prodigy. Add that to the fact that he practices far more than anyone else in this country, and you have the answer. Why, then, did he not do well at ESWC? Firstly, the tournament was a hall-of-fame competition with only the best players invited. Tensions were high right from the beginning, giving him no time to "warm up" against the weaker players. He

insane level of sponsorship. Hopefully a big corporate name will step forward and prove me wrong, but I'll stick to my guns for the moment and say it won't happen.

The situation may seem hopeless, but there is a workable alternative. The one advantage that we have, being isolated from the rest of the world as we are, is the one advantage we're not using - surprise. Without exception, the top players watch demos, download configs, and try to emulate the overseas play styles. This is futile, I'm afraid. We'll never have enough experience to beat them at their own game. But while

**"While they were preparing for what they knew about their opponents back then, the rest of the world had moved ahead without them."**



had issues with mouse sensitivity as well. While this is no excuse in itself, it could very well have affected his concentration. In the end I believe nerves got the better of him, or he simply had a bad day - it does happen to everyone.

So essentially, the problem boils down to lack of exposure to the international style, or does it? The only way for South African players to acclimatize to the overseas way of playing is for them to go on a sort of "gaming tour" prior to the actual competition. This would mean traveling around Europe or the USA, playing open LANs, small competitions and pre-organised challenges. Well, call me a cynic but somehow I don't think this is a possibility. Gaming isn't popular enough to warrant that

we watch every move they make, they have no idea what we're doing, all alone, down here at the tip of Africa. Trying to play like them is throwing our advantage away.

I believe we should be aware of international trends, but rather work on developing our own style and being unpredictable, rather than trying to copy what we see. It's inevitable that we'll be surprised by new tactics, so the only defense is to surprise them right back. Of course this is difficult since our communities are small, but it is not impossible. And if we manage to pull it off, before the international players have had a chance to adapt to what they don't know - the tournament is over and we've won. (A man can dream, can't he?)

On a side note, I came across an interesting e-mail in my inbox this week. While I don't usually include letters in my column, I felt this one was particularly well-worded and its content very applicable.

Dear The\_Basilisk

I don't know if you remember me, we used to be really good friends. I used to write for NAG just like you. Well, the thing is, people didn't like my articles much and I have a low self-esteem and so I stopped writing for a while. I've gotten help now and the Editor said I could try again and see if I do better this time. He really seems eager to give me another chance (I think he owes my parents money). Anyway, I was really

scared no-one would care about my article because it pales in comparison to your brilliance and majesty, so I thought if I made up an e-mail and mentioned your name people would take notice. I'm really sorry and I hope you didn't mind. You see I was never very popular and... umm, you're still my friend, right?

Your devoted acolyte

Ramjet

It's all right, Ramjet, you're forgiven and I'm still your friend. But you know, next time you should just ask for my help, I'd be more than happy to give you a few pointers. (The poor guy, he really does try so hard).

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## rampage:

▶ How many times must I say this? How many times does this particular scab need to be picked open? Why the hell do you people not listen? I said this last month, and I am going to say it again, because the juvenile ranting that has been populating the message boards just makes me want to vomit.

It so happened that this particular publication reviewed a certain game on two different platforms, and the result was a very wide variation in scores. Obviously the fact that people are allowed varying opinions has not yet dawned on some readers, because the excrement hit the fan just after the magazine hit the shelves. Now, I am going to say it again, one more time, for those people who, with their rantings on the message boards, obviously do not have the mental capacity to understand this concept. I will say it slowly. I will use bold, capital letters. I will increase the font size. Anything to make you realise that reviews are a matter of opinion. Let me say it again. REVIEWS ARE A MATTER OF OPINION.

I mean, come on. Every person has one, and they often conflict with those belonging to other people. That's what makes them such fun to have. So, these two different reviewers, who reviewed this particular game on different platforms, had different opinions. That's what it's all about, folks.

Now don't start thinking that I am defending these guys, because I am not. I know them both and I don't really like either one. My point here is to inject some logic, common sense and, dare I say it, maturity into the minds of these idiots who cannot understand such a simple principle.

We do not tell our reviewers what to write here. We do not tell them what to think, say or do... okay, we do tell them what to do, but there's money involved, so that doesn't

# Let's try again...

count. We expect our reviewers to express their opinions openly and honestly, without malice or prejudice. We expect them to be able to spell, but the odd typo will creep in here and there. We do not, and I stress this point to the utmost, expect these people to become faceless automatons devoid of personal thoughts and opinions purely so that a game reviewed by two different people (with two very different world views, might I add) on two different platforms can get the same friggin' score!

Add to the whole thing this little fact. I went to [gamerankings.com](http://gamerankings.com) to check out the scores on this particular title and, hey, wow, they varied from 90% ratings to 40% ratings. Lots of opinion out there.

The big thing on the forums is about the fact that the scores on this title occurred in the same publication - namely this one. This kinda goes back to the faceless automaton thing. I personally would rather read an article written by someone who has a personality, thank you very much... Now, I would like to respond to one or two points brought up on a particular forum board by some of the usual gripe mongers.

Firstly, this magazine is in no way aimed at the so-called "hardcore" gamer. If it was, it would never sell well enough to survive, considering how many of these guys are pirates. Nice one for the industry, boys.

Secondly, one of the reviewers had an attack on his journalistic integrity. This casts a bad light on the entire magazine staff, due to the rather serious allegations made. Let me assure you, NAG does not bribe advertisers. For that matter, NAG does not tell reviewers what to write. It's all OPINION, plain and simple.

Now, has any of this sunk in? Any at all? Probably not - I guess I will be beating my head against this particular wall for some time to come... [can only help, Ed].



## (lack of) letters:

Okay, so my cleverly crafted trap to try and get you people to send me letters didn't work. Either that, or you're all afraid of the old 'jet here. It seems to me that people just don't have anything to say to me, which is quite surprising. However, I am willing to assume that there are a few people out there who didn't get round to sending me their comments, opinions or other stuff like that for me to ignore, ridicule or (by some far stretch of the imagination) agree with. On the other hand, perhaps very few of our readers have access to the Internet and, subsequently, e-mail. I know that I am picky in wanting only e-mail submissions, but let's be honest... it's easier to check my e-mail inbox to find it empty than to go all the way to the post office to find the p.o. box empty.

**All correspondence can be sent to [ramjet@nag.co.za](mailto:ramjet@nag.co.za). I will not accept snail-mail (this isn't the freaking Stone Age) and I will appreciate it if you actually check your spelling. Additionally, the all mighty Ed and I will select one letter addressed to him every month, which I will respond to on this page, just for a laugh.**

## suckermail:

nicked from the Ed, printed verbatim

**I KNOW IM GOING TO GET BURNED FOR THIS LETTER BY HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, BUT IM SICK OF LISTENING TO IDIOTS THAT THINK PLAYSTATION IS BETTER THAN A PC. LETS START BY SAYING THAT THE PS IS A CONSOLE FIRST OF ALL, NOT EVEN IN THE PC'S LEAGUE. SECOND OF ALL, YES THE PS 2, THE FLAGSHIP CONSOLE?, HAS GOOD GRAPHICS BUT THAT IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE SHOCKING GAMES. CORRECT ME IF IM WRONG BUT A TELEVISION SCREEN ONLY RUNS AT 640X480. AS FOR THE PRICE, I BOUGHT MY PC INDIRECTLY FROM RECTRON [ :- ) ] AT ONLY R4800 AND LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE SPEC: CELERON 1.7GHZ PROCESSOR, 512MB DDR RAM, ASUS G-FORCE FX 5200 128MB GRAPHICS CARD, 40GIG 7200RPM MAXTOR HDD (ONLY 40 BUT DOES THE JOB) WHY NOT SPEND THE EXTRA 2 GRAND AND BUY A DECENT PC. THE GRAPHICS ARE BETTER, THE GAMES ARE BETTER AND CHEAPER, THE GAMES ARENT ONLY ANIME STYLE, MORE RESPONSIVE PERIPHERALS, MORE VERSATILE, FUNCTIONALITY, AND THE LIST GOES ON.**

**ON ANOTHER NOTE REGARDING PS GAMES. WHY DO THEY PORT THEM IF THEY DONT ACTUALLY CHANGE ANY OF THE CODE? [PRESS CIRCLE TO CONTINUE]????? ROUGHLY ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR KEYS ON A KEYBOARD AND THEY CANT CHANGE THE GAME TO SAY ENTER OR SPACE OR ANYTHING ELSE? (I have never come across this problem - RJ) IF I DONT GET ANY SUPPORT WITH THIS LETTER THEN IM GOING ON A RAMPAGE. (I think you're psychic - RJ) OH AND WE ( PC FANS ) GET DOOM3 AND HALF LIFE 2 AND FAR CRY AND I HOPE YOU GUYS NEVER GET SEE IT AS PUNISHMENT FOR FOLLOWING A CRUSTY TREND TO BUY STUFF NOT WORTH THE MONEY I.E. PS AND PS 2 AND ALL THE OTHER CONSOLES OUT THERE. (As far as the rumour mill goes, all three titles are coming out on console... - RJ)**

**REGARDS  
EVILKING**

*Let me see. You are entitled to your opinion (as stated above) but there have been over 50 million PS2 units sold around the world. That would, according to you, be a hell of a lot of stupid people. Of course, that's 50 million less people taking up bandwidth when you need to download your PC game patches. Did you know that less than 10% of global game sales are PC games... the rest are crusty trend console games. Based purely on the odds, who's the idiot here? And by the way, one of those keys on your keyboard is called CapsLock... tap it.*

**Ramjet**

**Disclaimer:** The staff and management of New Age Gaming really don't like this guy. Sadly, he has glued himself to a chair, and glued the chair to the ground in front of a desk. He has become an immovable feature of the office. We have tried not feeding him, but rats and cockroaches bring him scraps at night.

# Sequel to PC Gamer's "Game of the Year"

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# role playing:

# Return of the Mexican Inquisition

Due to the way deadlines work here at NAG, we were unable to bring you our report back on Icon XI, which took place in July. However, better late than never...

With around 1700 people through the door this year, attendance for the event was a little down, I was told by a very tired looking Grant Charlton. (Grant is the head of the Icon Committee, as well as a store owner and official importer of several role playing and card gaming products.) "But hot dog sales were up," he noted, "We sold around fifty five dozen on the Saturday alone!"

Despite a slightly lower attendance, Icon XI is hailed as a great success. Overall attendance for Magic: The Gathering was up from last year, due to a number of extra events held for the trading card game this year. One of these was a Team Sealed PTQ event. The winners of that event, Team Scrub, are to represent South Africa in Boston later this year. Well done guys!

Another group of events that saw an increased number of players were the table top war-games; players even had to be turned away from the Warhammer 40k events, due to too many players. It seems that wargaming is doing well in the country, and the possibility of a national league (particularly for Games Workshop games, like the various Warhammer titles) is quite big at the moment.

Of course, Icon would not be Icon without a huge number of RPG events. Aside from impromptu games, there were 12 official events this year - all of which started late, as usual. "The role playing registration software is still bugged," Grant stated wistfully. "Maybe one of these years we'll get someone to write us a decent program..." The RPG events, as well as the live action role playing (LARP) events were well attended, as usual.

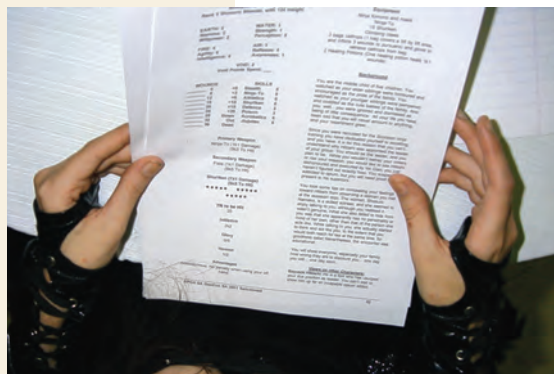
Of course, the ever infamous Icon After Party was held for those who had bought tickets to the event. The catered sit down dinner was accompanied by speeches, including a word from Martin Frain, one of the founders of the South African Icon events, now working for Wizards of the Coast UK. And then all hell broke loose... far too much tequila was consumed, Charlton admits. It was, of course, administered by the now infamous Mexican Inquisition... if you don't know what that means, you've never been to an Icon After Party!

We will see a major Magic: The Gathering event taking place at rAge later this year, which will be a nice change - turning rAge into a true gaming event... not just electronic gaming.

Oh, hang on. The winners! I almost forgot. Although Icon normally is more about fun than prizes, there are winners announced every year. Some of those were:

- Greg Hollyman** - Best Role Player
- Graham Caine** - Best Game Master
- Russel Tancher** - M:TG Type 1
- Werner Cloete** - M:TG Block Constructed
- Werner Cloete** - M:TG Iron Man (Best overall M:TG player)

(You may have noticed that there is no product review this month. Rest assured, next month that feature will be back, plus a little more...)



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## Learning Japanese, Part 5

Once again it's time to put on those concentration goggles as we continue our journey through Japanese grammar. Last month we focussed on the basic sentence markers and word order. To recap, we discussed four markers that are put directly after words to show their functions in the sentence, these markers being "ga" (subject), "o" (object), "wa" (topic) and "no" (possession). This month we move onto questions and adjectives.

To ask a question we use the marker "ka", placing it at the end of the sentence. Let's look at an example: "Neko wa nezumi o tabeta," which means, "The cat (neko) ate (tabeta) the mouse (nezumi)." When turned into a question, this sentence becomes, "Neko wa nezumi o tabeta ka?" meaning, "Did the cat eat the mouse?". When asking the question in this way, it is important to use the topic marker "wa" to show what you're asking about (in this case it is the cat).

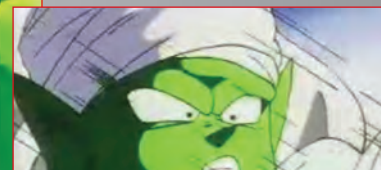
If you wish to ask for new information, you will need to know the interrogative words. They are "nani" (what), "dare" (who), "itsu" (when), "doko" (where), "naze" (why) and "dou" (how). When asking the question, they are put in place of the information you want to know (and the marker "ka" is added to the end as before). Say we arrive home and find that the cat is sick. Naturally

we ask, "what did the cat eat?" In Japanese, the question would be, "Neko wa nani o tabeta ka?" (Here "nani" replaces the answer we are looking for, which would be "nezumi"). There is also the affirmation marker "ne", which is used the same way "right?" would be in English. "Neko wa nezumi o tabeta ne?" means, "The cat ate the mouse, right?"

We will only be going into the existential form of adjectives, since this is the easiest to grasp and, unfortunately, we do not have space to go into further detail. The existential form is where the adjectives require the word "be" ("is", "am" and "are"). Japanese verbs have this part of speech built in, so you do not need to add "desu" (is / am / are) or "deshita" (was / were). "Sushi wa oishikatta," means, "The sushi was tasty," ("Oishikatta" is the past tense of "oishii"). For now, you can also learn:

- " "Yo!" (present) / "yokatta" (past) meaning "is / was good".
- " "Atsu!" / "atsukatta" meaning "is / was hot".
- " "Ureshii!" / "ureshikatta" meaning "is / was happy".

You will see that there is no indicator for future tense in Japanese. This is because their tense system is dependent on whether an action is complete or incomplete, not specifically past, present or future.



## Dragonball Z

After many requests from members of the anime community (who I won't name for their own sake), I've decided to give in and review Dragonball Z. I was hoping to avoid it for as long as possible since, when I first watched an episode, it almost put me off anything animated for life. I simply did not know it could get this bad.

Dragonball Z cannot be described in any way other than varying degrees of awful. The story revolves primarily around a group of warrior-type characters, lead by the infamous Goku, and their battle against a super-android from the future who has come back through time to eliminate those who would stop him from destroying the universe. Well, the lines get a little blurred after a few minutes and you're never really sure what's going on. The concept is combat, and the formula for each episode pretty much works out to: "meet villain, trash talk, power up, fight, end." The characters are completely two-dimensional and so similar to each other that it's impossible to tell them apart, aside from physical appearance. Not to mention their appearances are remarkably similar as well. This reflects the overall style of animation which is crude, bland, uninteresting and lacking in variation. It is also very static. The number of genuine movements per episode (characters, props and scenery alike) can probably be counted on one's fingers. The soundtrack is abrasive and the English translation is so far from the original Japanese that it might as well be a different show altogether. No less dreadful, of course. (At least the grammar is halfway decent.)

This is undoubtedly the poorest series I have ever come across. Amongst the vast sea of titles out there I suppose there must be something worse, but I have yet to learn of its existence. This show is nothing more than a very, very mediocre children's anime, but for some reason the vast majority of its fans worldwide are adults. My recommendation, however, is to watch Dragonball Z if you are exceptionally bored, under the age of five and / or mentally handicapped; otherwise save whatever brain you have from rotting out of your skull and avoid it at all costs.

**Genre:** TFSG (They Fought Some Guy)  
**Year:** 1989  
**Producer:** Toei Animation  
**Format:** Series / Movie Series  
**Episodes:** 291 + 19 movies  
**Language:** English Dubbed  
**Availability:** Common

Concept	3
Story	1
Soundtrack	4
Characters	2
Animation	4
Translation	5
<b>Total Score (out of 100)</b>	<b>32</b>





# The how and why of Cosplay



You've probably heard the catch phrase... but what exactly is cosplay? I suppose the easiest way to describe cosplay is to call it "grown-ups playing dress-up" but that wouldn't really be right; cosplay is a far cry from your garden variety kid's game.

Cosplay involves a person dressing up as his/her favourite anime character (and trying his/her damndest to look and act exactly like that character for the duration of the cosplay event). Very popular in the Japanese and American Otaku circles, the trend seems to have finally hit our shores.



Cosplay is however still very new on the South African scene and we have only recently seen it crop up at our Anime days. In order to cosplay you need a few of the following things:

- 1) Courage, lots of courage / alternatively a "who cares what others think" attitude
- 2) Dressmaking skills / and or know someone who does
- 3) The location of a costume shop (if you don't have No. 2)
- 4) A level of creativeness
- 5) A location to enjoy cosplay (No not the local mall! Not in this country anyway)
- 6) A sense of gender identity (we don't want some hairy-backed guy trying on a Sailor Moon outfit now do we?)
- 7) Not necessary, but I hear a chemical imbalance helps

If you'd like an example of cosplay, head on over to [www.blackblade.za.net](http://www.blackblade.za.net) and take a look under the Otaku Life section.

There you will be able to find pictures of South African Otaku (Including Black Blade's one and only Infamous Schoolgirl) Cosplaying. rAge is but one month away, and we here at blackblade would like to issue an open challenge to all of you Otaku out there.

We'll be giving out Daily Prizes for the best Cosplayer and 1st runners up during the course of the rAge expo; there will be quite a few people cosplaying, so don't be shy, show us what you've got! (PS you can all look forward to seeing Black Blade's Infamous Schoolgirl in a CHI from Chobits outfit!)



## Serpent's Monthly Character Bio

**Name:** Rally Vincent

**Title:** Bounty Hunter Gun-Toting babe

**Favorite colour:** Gunblue

**Favorite hobby:** Anything with cordite in it

**Famous Quote:** Robbers? Yipee it's been a while!

**From the following anime:** Gunsmith Cats

Rally Vincent, every man's dream! She's tough, she defines the term gun-enthusiast.. she drives a Mustang shelby GT500 and has looks of a cover-girl. Okay so she may not be every man's dream, but this hard hitting no-nonsense babe can handle a gun better than any military crackshot I've ever seen. Running a gun shop as a cover, Rally Vincent and her rather annoying sidekick Minnie May (explosive expert and all out nutcase) operate as bounty hunters, hunting down criminals and running into the oddest and usually most dangerous kinds of situations. It all started when agent William Collins from the ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) muscled Rally into helping him run a sting operation... they had no idea what they'd uncover in the end.

- Serpent



## Bio Erata

It was brought to my attention that many people out there were getting annoyed with the fact that I neglect to mention which anime my character bio's come from... well after allowing the blush to subside, I've decided to put a list here in order to rectify the mistake (you'll also see I've included it this time with my BIO). In chronological order

1) May - Princess Nausicaa can be found riding the air currents in Miyazaki's epic Kaze no Tani no Nausicaa <Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind>

2) June - Straight Cougar can be seen shrinking the world in the alter inhabited Scryed

3) July - Yakumo Fuji can be seen protecting the girl/holy demon he loves in 3x3 eyes

4) August - Gatsu can be found wondering through the mountains in the bloody yet heroic Berserk

- Serpent

## the transition of black blade

**As the Black Blade Anime administration core sweats blood in preparation for the next anime day, I thought it would be prudent for me to put a little mention about the success of the event in October.**

Although I have had some involvement in most of the Black Blade Events since the first, my involvement was little more than material provision or artistic conjuration (although I have yet to really get going on this) and I only started attending the events once they had moved to that odd venue near the Randburg CBD. I was initially impressed with the turnout at the first event I attended, seeing a few more than twenty people seated in the room, eyes glued to the makeshift paper screen. As luck would have it, we were kicked out of the venue early for some or other unexplained reason, but I was impressed to see the turnout nevertheless. Although Black Blade ran at a loss,

taking rental, printing and equipment hire into account, Serpent's love of anime knows no limits and he expensed most of it himself for the sake of the event. I would have helped myself if I wasn't still a lowly, penniless college student at the time. The next one I attended was the first one held at Randburg High School, and I was blown away by the success of it all. Roughly a hundred otaku attended throughout the day, although they weren't all present at once, but for the first time, Black Blade Anime broke even and covered costs, including the well deserved fee of the lovely new doorlady, who dressed in a kimono in the spirit of things without being told to. Black Blade Anime holds the best anime events in South Africa. End of story. Word has been going around and it looks like it's finally starting to pay off. Just having a blast like that with that many other otaku is worth showing up for on its own.

- KnightGainax

# lazy gamer's guide:

We've all played coin operated games, but we never asked how they work. However, if we don't know exactly what happens in our PCs, we get all miffed. Stange, eh? Anyway, this month we take a good long, hard, look at

## The House of the Dead 2

Special thanks to Galaxy World for letting us take their machine apart and forgetting how to assemble it again. For great entertainment, check out one of the Galaxy World branches: The Zone (Rosebank), Menlyn Shopping Mall (Menlyn) and Wierda Park (Centurion.)



### Light things up!

A lightgun has something called a Photodiode in it. The photodiode is able to detect light coming in from the screen. This data is constantly sent through to the onboard computer. At the same time the computer is also getting data from the screen using horizontal and vertical retrace signals. This tells it exactly where the gun is pointing. When you pull the trigger, the computer blanks the object that is supposed to be hit in white. If the photodiode picks up the white, it's a hit. Naturally things are a tad more complex, considering you have location specific damage on the models, but you get the idea on how it works.



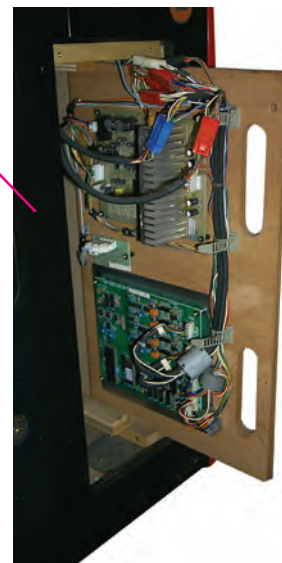
### The dead incarnate

The original House of the Dead arcade game appeared in 1997. House of the Dead 2 then appeared in 1998. The game has since spawned a third game for the Xbox, as well as the strange, but fun, Typing of the Dead, not to mention that a movie is also on its way. This version of the game comes in three cabinet sizes: the traditional size (seen here) you see in most arcades, the medium size and a larger, sit-down version, similar to the Jurassic Park: Lost World game, complete with curtains and a more powerful sound system. HotD 2's arcade machine was the first lightgun shooter that reloaded the gun automatically when you pointed it away from the screen.



### Dreamcast?

The House of the Dead 2 machine uses the Sega Naomi Original chipset. Which also later appeared to power the Dreamcast - a clever move by Sega, since it made porting their arcade games to the DC a breeze. Sadly the console didn't survive long enough to really exploit this feature. Games that were on arcade and then went on to be converted also included Crazy Taxi, Soul Caliber and Sega Rally 2.



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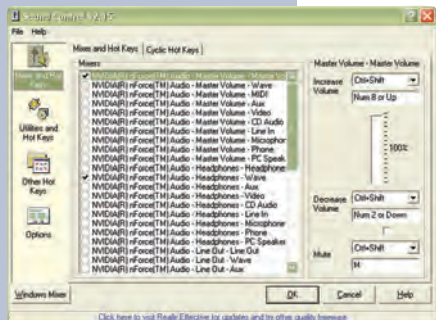
# THE ORIGINAL FREELOADER

## sound control | statbar | xp-antispay v.3.7 | quicktweaker

### Sound Control

Windows, in all its glory, still lacks a lot of the functionality that would make it the perfect

operating system. Of course, every PC owner's idea of what is 'perfect' is entirely subjective, so a lot of people would want the stuff I want in as much as they need a 3D version of Solitaire. But there are a lot of likeminded people out there, and therefore there are a lot of likeminded apps.



Sound Control arrived whilst in the frantic search for a means to control Winamp globally. There are lots of alternatives, from shell plugins to extra taskbar tools that add Winamp functionality. But most of us don't need an additional taskbar or a

new shell. Not to mention that most of the utilities do not support a wide variety of global shortcuts for the program. The software allows you

to set global shortcuts for any of Winamp's player functions. For instance, if you are playing a game or working in an application, and you don't like the current song playing, or find the volume too loud or soft, it's a simple combination of keys and Winamp does what you want, without having to focus on the program. There is also support for the resident CD player software - in most cases Media Player. Sound Control also gives you more control over your sound hardware. It gives you a full list of all sound devices available on your machine (any modern card has at least a dozen or so). You won't ever use most of these, but you might switch between using the Master Volume and Headphones. Each section, if the hardware supports it, can carry a profile with its own shortcuts and volume levels.

### CD Nitpicks

This month we also included...

- Adaware definition files (27 July) If you use this popular anti-spyware software package, it's a good idea to keep your references updated.
- Slimbrowser 3.72 (build 002) This popular multi-site browser received a few new tweaks.
- DirectX 9.0b A minor update of Microsoft's popular software.
- Winamp 2.91 A newer version with some much-needed media library tweaks.

### Statbar

Statbar has been around for a while, and has even graded this article once as a great tool. A bit of time has passed, but the tool has remained essentially the same, at least for the uninitiated.

In a nutshell, Statbar is a free toolbar that sits at the top of your desktop screen (with an option to hide itself) and it displays PC info such as CPU and RAM usage. It also allows you to add shortcuts to programs, control the master volume, check your network traffic, and control Winamp 2 or 3.

Each component is a module you can add and remove to fill up the bar. New modules include the aforementioned Winamp 3 controls as well as search engine and email launchers. The program is also more stable with games and works much better in older versions of Windows, plus it has two or three new colour schemes. Best of all - it needs no installation. Just copy it to your machine, run it, and remember to check the Run Statbar on Windows Startup option in the configuration.



### XP-Antispay v.3.7

It seems everyone wants to know what you are up to, not the least of all Windows XP. The operating system also has a host of services that you don't need, including the mostly-annoying MSN Messenger and such bandwidth consumers as automatic updates.



XP-Antispay is a freeware tool that looks at a few options that you can tweak. As with Quicktweaker it's not the be-all of OS-system tweakers, but it has its little uses, not to mention that it's free and it requires no installation. If anything, use it to uninstall the MSN Messenger and disable some of the bandwidth and resource hogs that run in XP.

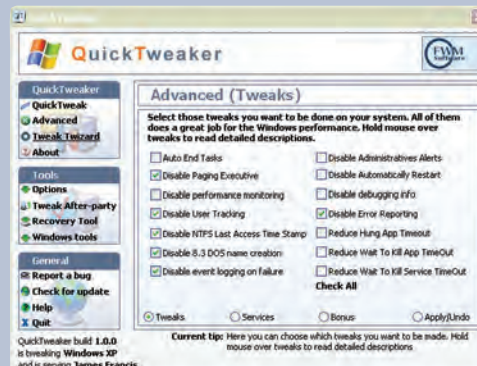
### Quicktweaker

There are a thousand and one

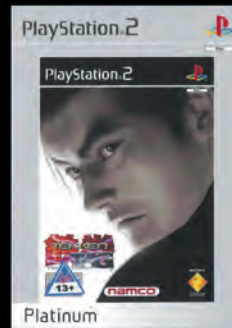
pieces of software out there to tweak your operating system and Quicktweaker is another new arrival in the ranks. The difference is that it has a very easy design, and it tends to aim for nips and tucks other programs ignore. In general, an operating system tweaker is bloated with a ton of small options that you really don't need. For instance, who really cares what the message is in your Internet Explorer header? It may be fun for the average PC punter, but if you are serious about tweaking your system, look elsewhere.

Quicktweaker is what I'd call the quick and dirty way to tweak XP at its core. The program has three ways to go about it. You can either run the recommended tweaks, go through the tweak list and select individual items, or use the wizard, which tells you step-by-step what the tweaks do. It's the same as the manual option, but it's a bit friendlier on your eyes. Once you've selected the tweaks, the system reboots, and the tweaks are active. Quicktweaker also allows you to

reset tweaks and even do a full system reset, in case something goes seriously wrong. None of the tweaks are of such a nature that they will kill your system, but they could disable services that you never knew you used - something that you can easily fix by simply loading the program and unchecking the relevant box. Quicktweaker is not a all-in-one tweaking solution, but it does seem to support most of the modern Windows versions on the market, and it gives access to areas you normally would ignore, or not find, in more extensive tweaking programs, making it a perfect companion for something such as TweakXP or FreshUI.



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WHILE STOCKS LAST.

Lara Croft as a name brings several images to mind. First off there are her curves - something she's become renowned for. Then there's Angelina Jolie, who did a good job filling the digital lass', er, shoes. Then there are the models that ended up portraying her. Lastly (and perhaps least) there is the fact that a female character has turned the gaming world on its ears, at least for a few years.

# Lara Croft: the end of an era?



### An icon in the making

Lara Croft saw her birth in the early nineties, when Core started working on an action title for the Sega Saturn in which you took the role of a psychotic military woman clad in camos and an urge to kill. These were early days, and it's been a major step between that and the heroin we know today, though sadly the developers never went into any detail on what changed their concept so much.

A very tight reign of control was kept on the development of the character, according to Core's Jeremy Smith. Though the company remains tight-lipped about the details behind Croft's creation, it's clear that they had a vision that eventually lead to what some refer to as the female Indiana Jones. Lara Croft was created by Core animator Toby Guard, who once jokingly remarked her breasts were that big because he typed in 150% instead of 50% in whatever breast-size algorithm he used. Whether that's really true is quite a debatable point, but the 'assets' stayed on and further helped propel Ms. Croft into icondom.

Lara even arrived with a full biography, explaining how she is from an aristocratic background, but a plane-crash left her stranded in the jungle for days, and meant she had to learn to fend for herself. Later games also revealed where her love for archeology came from. Core and Eidos styled a very careful insider look to the girl's past and interest, which apparently includes gunplay and listening to classical music. It seems odd to actually give a game character this much background (including where she was schooled), but you can't argue with her resulting popularity.

Her looks and sultry British accent must have made an impact, as did the fact that at its time Tomb Raider represented the best 3D graphics out there. It was a major success on the PlayStation and still remains credited for being one of the titles that boosted Sony's console into gaming history. The PC title did not do badly either. As far as gaming goes, it's rather easy to see where Lara gets her fame (gaming geek fantasies apart).

But there is a difference between being a gaming icon and a world icon. Lara Croft is arguably more recognizable than Mario, and definitely more than Solid Snake. Her first major break came when the UK magazine *The Financial Times* had an article looking at Eidos' financial future, and Ms. Croft was on the front cover. The rest, as they say, is history, and she's since appeared on a lot of magazine covers and even stars in her own comic book series.

Eidos haven't been sitting on their laurels, though, and since the word go an active campaign has been on to promote the character, the most recognizable move probably being the various life-action models who portrayed her...

### Lara in the flesh

The first human Lara Croft appeared at E3 in 1996. Rhona Mitra was 24 at the time, and of Indian and British decent. She still ranks as one of the favourite Tomb Raider ambassadors to this day, but Rhona's career as Lara Croft was marred by allegations that her father, a well-known British plastic surgeon, did breast-augmentation work on her. She denied this, and it has since been ruled out that her father did any such work

on her, but the rumors stood.

She wasn't favoured by Core either, who wanted to keep a tight reign on the character. This meant she couldn't speak without Core's permissions and interviews had to be done on queue, with everything she said being approved. This didn't suit Rhona's demeanor and she became well known for speaking outside of the developer's box of reference. They weren't happy with it, but the fans loved it.

The strain between her and Core finally came to an end and she was relieved from portraying Lara. The next Lara look-alike was French model Vanessa Demouy, but she did an average job at best, portraying a more school-girl version of Croft instead of the more muscular and independent image portrayed by both the digital Lara and Rhona Mitra. Demouy was never comfortable

in the role of Lara, either, and her usual energy never came through, not to mention that of all the models to date, she bore the least likeness to Croft. 1998



marked the arrival of Nell McAndrew, probably the most controversial Tomb Raider model. While she matched the attitude and charm of Mitra, she was the model who took Lara where she has never gone before - Playboy. Sitting on the front cover in a camouflaged bikini and combat helmet, she was accompanied by the headline "Tomb Raider-- Nell McAndrew--A.K.A. Lara Croft NUDE". Inside her photo shoot there were also images of the digital Lara. Core and Eidos had a fit, naturally, and accused her of tarnishing Lara's image. They also got a judge to order Playboy to cover the words "Tomb Raider" with a sticker on all of the Playboy covers.

So it's no surprise that come E3 1999, there was a new Lara Croft, namely Lara Weller from Holland. While Weller did a good job, she had to fight against fanboy favouring, which was pretty set on McAndrew at this point. Some argued she lacked the spirit and mannerisms of Croft, and it was evident that she wasn't keen to try and compete against the Croft legacy set to date. At this point, though, the game series' appeal was also faltering.

Lucy Clarkson was next on the list, and she'll basically go down for one thing - being the youngest Tomb Raider model ever. At the time she was Lara, Lucy was sweet sixteen. In fact, her youthful appearance even got her stopped by security guards when she was in full costume, carrying the dummy guns and all.

The latest model? Jill de Jong, who hails from Holland



## Tomb Raider: a legacy in games

There have been 10 Tomb Raider games, not counting the Gold versions, spread over nearly every modern platform known, with the exception of the Xbox and non-handheld Nintendo systems. That's quite a legacy. But as the games were released, things subsequently became worse, culminating with the worst scorer of all, *Angel of Darkness*. Still, there are several things that could be attributed to Lara Croft as a gaming icon and gaming series.

Gamers who played the original game on the PC will remember that this was a watershed for graphics, where the PlayStation version looked vastly superior to the PC, unless you had a Voodoo card. This is thanks to the 3D engine Core employed to power the games. Sadly, the subsequent titles saw little improvement in that field, and the graphics started to look dated - one of the reasons for the slowly sagging sales of a once-unstoppable game.

Despite this the game's reputation still held strong. It has seen versions appear on numerous platforms, including on the Apple Mac and Gameboy, and when the movie opened, it made the most money ever for a title starring a female lead.

and has been modeling since age 15. She's always wanted to be the Tomb Raider model, and this might help her promote the character more. In fact, the new game's Lara is closely modeled after her looks, and not vice-versa.

Of course, there is one woman I haven't mentioned yet...

#### Angelina Croft?

Angelina Jolie will probably go down as the world's favourite Tomb Raider. She not only fits the look, but the ability to act as a movie version of the character allowed her to actually flesh out Lara Croft to something more believable beyond the game appearances.

It was a bit of a risk for Jolie to take the role, since her other work (including an Oscar for *Girl Interrupted*) was far more cerebral and less action (if you mercifully ignore the lackluster *Gone in 60 Seconds*).

A lot of fans seem to feel that the human side of Croft ends with Jolie, for being the perfect Tomb Raider. Perhaps this is because she was able to act outside of the constraints set by Core (due to it being a movie franchise), something that seems to have strained the relationship with the former human doubles in the past. And as mentioned, she is given the opportunity to truly act out the character, and not just stand there and look pretty. Of course, these are big shoes to fill for any future actresses or models who are expected to portray the character at trade events.

The rumour is that Jolie has a three movie contract for the series, though after the second film's poor performance at the US box office (grabbing just over \$20 million on its opening weekend and failing to take the number 1 spot - a far cry from the first film's \$47 million opening) it remains to be seen if there will be a third movie, and if she plans to appear in it at all.

#### Game on?

The real question of Lara Croft's future, though, lies in the game titles. If the box-office slump seems like a disaster, the latest games are akin to a meteorite hitting the Titanic in the middle of the Bermuda triangle.

Despite initially selling 500,000 units, *Angel of Darkness* is not doing well, instead receiving terrible scores all around.

Publisher Eidos is becoming the poster child for

publishers hanging on by the skin of their teeth and the company's future has been in question for a while now. *Angel of Darkness*, after much hype and a lot of delays, was such a bad title that Paramount blamed it for the bad performance of the movie. It averaged a score of 57% out of 197 reviews on *Gamerakings.com* and prompted the immediate resignation of Eidos Interactive development director and Core Design MD Jeremy Heath-Smith.

The Tomb Raider series has always seemed to be running on an increasingly slippery slope, somewhat akin to cash-cow products. It took Core two sequels before a new engine was introduced to the game, and even today the control system for Tomb Raider remains archaic and annoying. It might have been great when the first title has been introduced, but such marvels as Analog sticks have found their way onto controllers since.

If you look at the games from the first to the latest, the scores slowly slide down lower and lower to the current title. *Angel of Darkness*, the first next-gen title in the series, was expected to bring the series back to glory, and Eidos were banking quite heavily on the title's success, but it seems the Tomb Raider curse continues. Perhaps it's due to a flawed business philosophy over at Eidos, or perhaps its Core's failure to expand on the game's world and engine.

#### Long live Lara?

It's very hard to try and predict what the future holds for Ms. Croft. After the dismal latest games and the poor returns from the latest movie, things aren't looking great. Eidos' problems are also having an impact. What would happen if the Tomb Raider franchise went up for sale? Despite withering sales, there's still a chance that a major publisher will nab it up and give the series the justice it deserves.

The series might still live on at Eidos, provided they have the money. Not only did Core's MD resign, but Eidos removed the development duties from the developer, and the relationship between the two companies seems to be in peril. On the upside, Eidos financial reports reveal that the next game is planned for mid 2005, and they revealed that Crystal Dynamics (*Soul Reaver*) are doing the honours. Considering Eidos

does have a few stars in its stable, such as Ion Storm (post John Romero and happily at work on *Deus Ex 2*, led by Warren "System Shock 2" Spector) and Pyro Studios (*Commandos 1, 2 and 3*), as well as good 3rd party partnerships such as IO (*Hitman* and the upcoming *Freedom Fighters* for EA) and the aforementioned Crystal Dynamics, they are still a fairly formidable publisher. So Lara might live on, and hopefully the future games will capitalize on the mistakes made in the past. If anything, it'll keep a few geeks warm at night for a few years still.



## Tomb Raider: Cradle of Life

No article on Lara Croft would be complete if we didn't take a look at the new movie, due out soon in SA. To set the record straight, I didn't like the first movie. It felt like a cash-in on the franchise instead of a honest attempt of bringing Tomb Raider to the big screen. It also had that ominous overtone on 'game movie' that it seems only *Resident Evil*, to date, really seemed to avoid.

Now it's time for the sequel, which I had not planned to see at all. That is until the Editor mailed me with the press preview details. The things we suffer for this job...

There are several reasons why you might not want to see the second movie. Firstly, it did poorly at the box office in the US (but then again, so did *Terminator III* and *Bad Boys 2*). Secondly, it's directed by Jan de Bont, whose last movie was *The Haunting*. And lastly, there's the first movie. Yet, despite all of these factors working against it, including a curiously negative US press, the movie is pretty good. In fact, it's really fun to watch. Whether the original movie was more a result of Simon West's directing or the script, the new movie definitely benefited from a far more interesting script, as well as De Bont's over-the-top style, last truly seen in his directing debut *Speed*.

When a lost temple is discovered, Lara (played comfortably by Angelina Jolie) almost recovers a sphere that ends up being the map to the Cradle of Life, the place that houses Pandora's Box - the container of a terrible plague. The sphere is stolen,

though, by Chinese bandits, and she needs to travel to China, with the help of ex-flame Terry Sheridan (Gerard Butler), to recover it. Meanwhile, bio-chemical warfare scientist/tycoon Jonathan Reiss (Ciarán Hinds) also wants the sphere so that he can find the plague.

The movie gets rid of the plot element rather quickly, and has no intentions of throwing any curveballs at you. From start to end the movie is filled with action, corny quips becoming of James Bond, lots of gunfire and acrobatics, and a lot of exotic locations.

The movie moves beyond the game constraints that the first title did, and it sits comfortably on its own. In fact, to an uninformed viewer who has never heard of Lara Croft, this might very well seem like a new heroin is born. Jolie is far more comfortable in her role, and the villain, Hinds, is as cold and evil as you'd need. Where the game series has gone stale with ideas, *The Cradle of Life* restores some dignity to the Croft legacy. I also want to tip my hat to the fact that the wire-tricks are, for a change, done very well and generally can't be noticed, unlike the overkill usage most movies go for.

It's no masterpiece, and doesn't go beyond standard popcorn fodder, but it's a fun way to waste 2 hours.





## Other hot women in games

### Jill Valentine

Game: Resident Evil, Resident Evil 3: Nemesis [PS | Dreamcast]  
The girl that we thought started it all (then they had to go and release Resident Evil 0) appeared again later on in Raccoon City, unwillingly, to take on the zombies again, as well as Umbrella Corp's very own Nemesis. She likes shotguns and walks in moonlit, biochemical compounds. She considers hearing "Brains! Braaaains!" as a major turn-off. And the cast listing for the next RE movie shows that she's in it!

### Kate Archer

Game: No-One Lives Forever, A Spy in H.A.R.M.'s Way [PC]

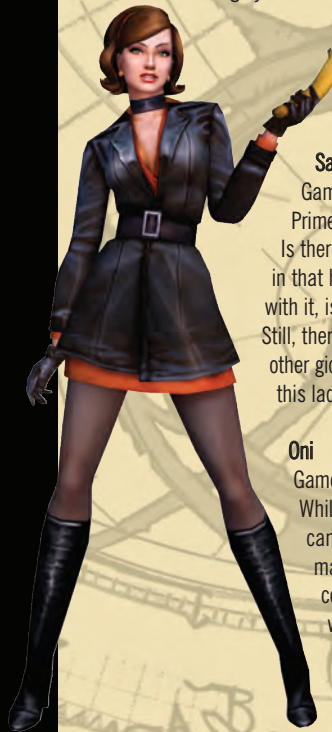
A, Kate Archer. She's a combination of Roger Moore's dry wit and Sean Connery's charm, in Austin Power's world. Yes, the NOLF games aren't exactly strictly serious spy stuff, but that's why we like them. It's also one of the few shooters where you assumed the role of a woman, namely Kate, who had to battle discrimination inside her own organization and, even worse, mimes in H.A.R.M.



### Julie Strain

Game: Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K. 2 [PC | Mac]

Who is Julie Strain? Why, she is only the creation of Simon Bisley, not to mention a babe with an attitude. Before any neo-feminists start sending us angry letters. Strain falls into that rare category that even Playboy Playmates only have dreams about: unbelievable looks, a torn bodysuit and the ability to back it up with some serious firepower, including a vacuum cleaner - but what else would work against Tyler, apart from the chaingun, plasma shotgun, rocket launcher and flamethrower?



### Samus

Game: Metroid, Metroid II, Super Metroid, Metroid Fusion, Metroid Prime [NES | SNES | GBA | GCN]

Is there really anything to Samus? We reckon that after all that time in that heavybody armour, not to mention that she eventually melds with it, isn't doing much for her looks, and it must be hell on her tan. Still, there are the occasional Samus bikini pics from Nintendo and other giddy fanboy memorabilia. But if anything, we'll tip our hat to this lady for being one of the first female game characters.

### Oni

Game: Oni [PC | Mac]

While we risk looking like dirty old men for mentioning her, you can't deny the appeal Oni had, if only for a stone-cold killing machine. In the game, though she is a young teen, she's also a combat robot, and a pretty deadly one at that, taking on a whole range of foes and eagerly taking them apart with kicks, punches, gunfire and combo moves that include grabbing someone by the neck with her legs and twisting her hips until you heard that bone-chilling crack of the neck...

## Tomb Raider 2005

Tomb Raider isn't dead yet, but after the dismal Angel of Darkness, Eidos have removed the development duties of the series from Core. Instead, it's going to Crystal Dynamics, who've had a lot of success with the Legacy of Kain series (Soul Reaver, Soul Reaver 2, Blood Omen 2 and Defiance). The game is slated for release in mid 2005, and might just be the turn in fortunes Lara needs to keep those manicures and foreign trips coming.

# SCUMM-BACK

ON  
THE  
CD

Adventure games were at their peak during the early and mid eighties, with such titles as Sam & Max, Space Quest, Rex Nebular and the Kyrandia series. Since then they've taken a back seat, but a project that started on Sourceforge is starting to change all that, for adventure buffs at least.

I'm a bona fide adventure gaming geek. Monkey Island still ranks as my all-time favourite game, and I own original copies of nearly all of the games released over that period, including the Kyrandia series, and even the creepy H.R. Giger's Dark Seed. Despite their completely linear approach, they are still very engrossing, at least to those of us who played them years ago.

Recently, the team working on SCUMM VM had a huge boost in introducing the adventure genre to new gamers. Revolution Studios, creators of the Broken Sword series, have released Beneath a Steel Sky as freeware, both in its floppy (no voice) and CD versions. They also helped the VM team in getting the front-end to run Beneath a Steel Sky, something a lot of fans have been waiting for. Even the well-known Dosbox app doesn't seem to handle it very well.

## SCUMM?

SCUMM stands for Script Creation Utility for Maniacs Mansion. If you haven't gathered yet, it was developed to power Maniac's Mansion, the first LucasArts adventure game (then still known as LucasFilm) and the prequel to Day of the Tentacle. Created in 1987 by Aric Wilmunder and Ron Gilbert, the engine then went on to power the bizarre Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders. After that, LucasArts released Monkey Island and Loom, two vastly different adventure games that made the developer's mark on the adventure community, eventually dethroning Sierra Online as the defacto king of the adventure hill. Since then, SCUMM has appeared in a range of titles such as Full Throttle, Indiana Jones, Sam & Max and The Dig. SCUMM has since been replaced by GrimE, which powered Grim Fandango and Monkey Island 4.

## BENEATH A STEEL SKY

Released in 1994 by Revolution Interactive and Virgin Software, the game remains a classic in the adventure genre. Set in an alternative, industrial future, you play as Robert Foster who is taken from The Deep, a community on the outskirts of City, for reasons unknown. When the helicopter carrying him crashes, he has a chance to find out what is going on and get back home, not to mention uncover his mysterious past.

The game featured a dynamic between Robert and his robot Joey the droid, which expanded the puzzles in the game. Interaction was also a big deal in the title as you have to find your way through the city to the underground and the rich fortresses of those in control. Its William Gibson meets George Orwell at its best.

The version on the Cover CD includes the full voice-overs.

## Build it and they will come...

SCUMM VM was created to allow new operating systems to run SCUMM games without hassles, but it doesn't stop there. The software recently added support for Revolution's games (Beneath a Steel Sky, Broken Sword series) and Adventure Soft's Simon the Sorcerer series (in progress).

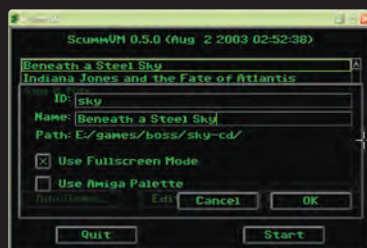
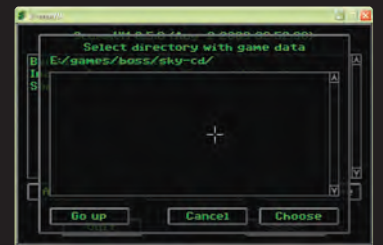
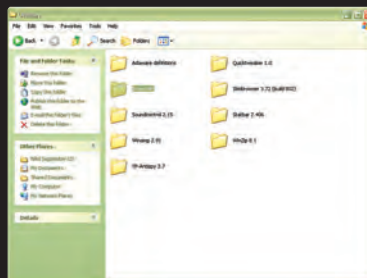
Does this mean we can expect to finally get other games



going soon? Not yet, says the site. Their FAQ explains that reverse engineering is a tricky business. While the SCUMM system was easy to adapt to, it seems that other titles will actually require some support from their developers. Considering that games such as Rex Nebular and Dark Seed now belong to practically defunct studios, it's not all that bright a future, but maybe they get lucky and Sierra help out in making some of their classics work. In the mean time, the SCUMM VM team have quite a lot to keep themselves busy with.

## RUNNING BASS IN SCUMM VM

1. Find SCUMM VM under the utilities section of the CD or under the Utilities folder if you prefer browsing. Run the self-extractor and select where you want the files to be copied to.
2. Locate the Beneath a Steel Sky zip file on the CD, under the SCUMM VM folder. Unzip the game to its own folder.
3. Load up SCUMM VM and click on Add a Game.
4. Point to the Beneath a Steel Sky folder on your PC and click OK.
5. All you really need to check on the next step is if you want to use the original AMIGA palette and if you want to run it full screen.
6. Double Click on the Game's name, and it runs!
7. Yes, we knew you'd ask - F5 opens the save/load/quit menu.





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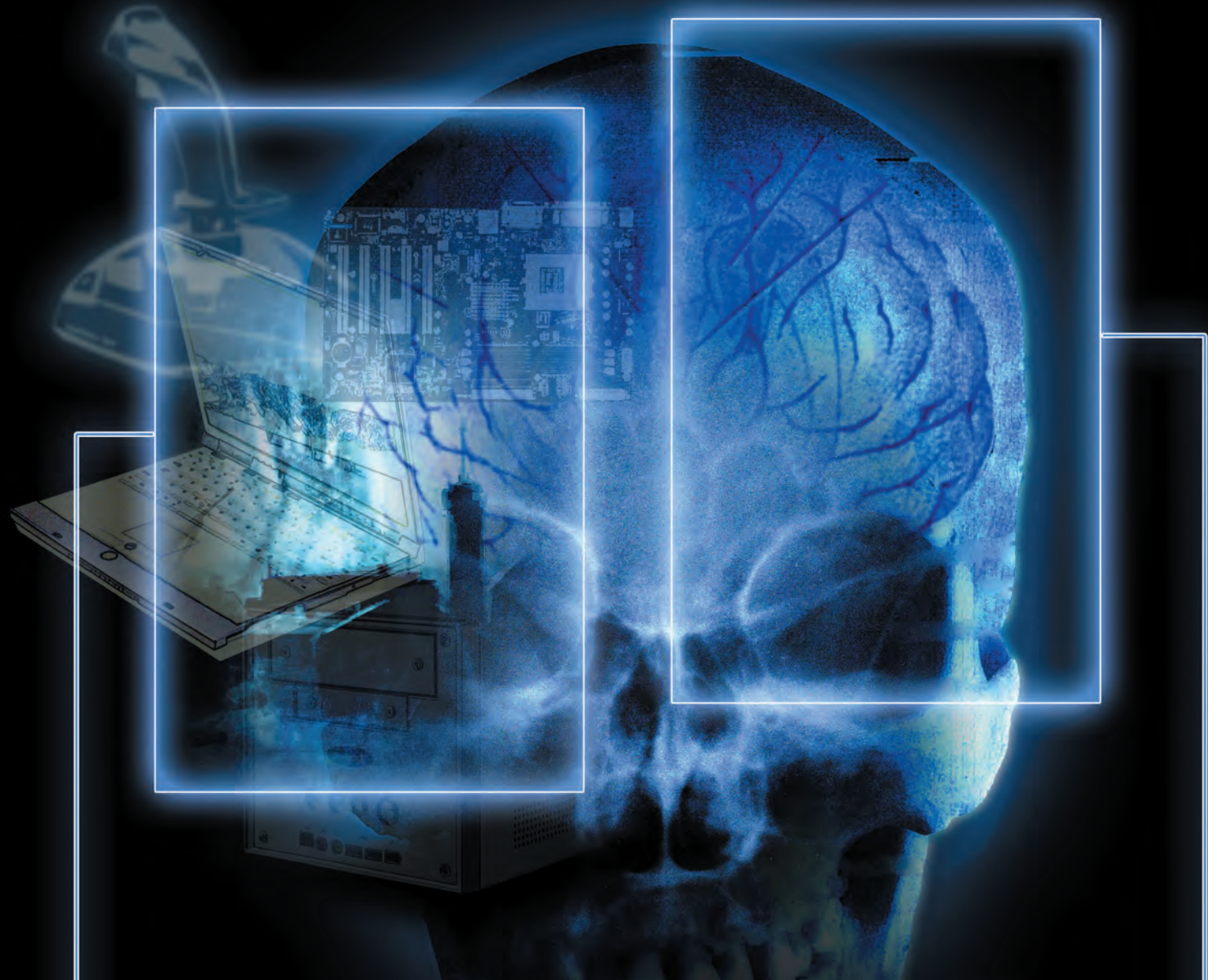


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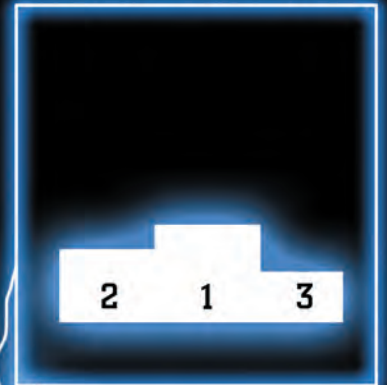
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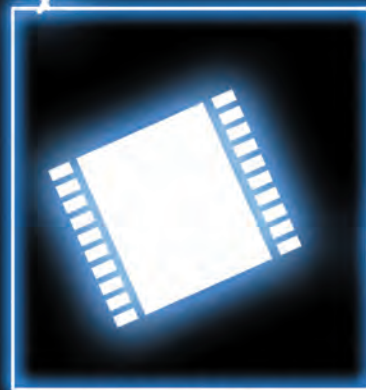
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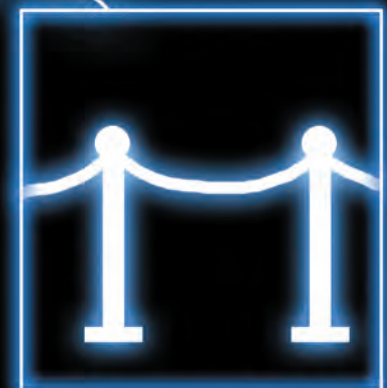
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**Technology Exhibits**

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## Player of the Month

**Name:**  
Nico-Louis Joubert

**Occupation:**  
Scholar

**Nick:**  
Livid

**Games:**  
Unreal Tournament 2003 | Quake 3

**Age:**  
17

**Quote:**  
"Ruspek to the sama."

**Clan:**  
Team 42

### Achievements:

- 1st place Gamers Gate ESWC UT2003 Qualifier
- Competed at the Electronic Sports World Cup in France
- 1st Place at 1000manLAN UT2003
- 1st Place at Collective UT2003 Tournament
- 4th Place in Quake3 2v2 at 1000manLAN (Team 42)
- 3rd Place in Quake3 4v4 at Gamers Gate Carousel 2002 (TM)
- 2nd Place in Quake3 at Mayhem 1v1 Worfaire qualifier 2002.
- Top 6 in Quake3 at Worfaire 2002 Finals



**<The\_Basilisk> What is it like being top of such a small community?**

**<Livid>** I guess it feels good being at the top, but disregarding the fact that the community consists out of about 8 people is impossible, thus taking away some of the pleasure. I have to say, if it wasn't for Mburr and C@sper being such dedicated and good opponents I wouldn't consider it an achievement at all.

**<The\_Basilisk> How seriously do you take gaming?**

**<Livid>** Gaming is fun when the competition around you is on the same skill level as you and the games are close and exciting. So I take it as seriously as my friends and

clan mates take it. I was serious and dedicated with UT2K3 because I had clan members with the same attitude.

**<The\_Basilisk> What was it like being the most successful South African in France? Did you live up to your own expectations?**

**<Livid>** Hahaha, it felt good and made my "bad" performance less disappointing. To be honest, my expectations weren't very high - I was only aiming to beat the other weak player (a player from a country without a decent community or not connected to Europe or America). So I lived up to my expectations and exceeded them by beating the best UK player.

**<The\_Basilisk> What are your future plans for gaming, and for life?**

**<Livid>** For the rest of the year I will be concentrating on my matric and won't be attending the World Cyber Games preliminary because it clashes with my exam dates (a sad,

but big problem for my gaming future). Next year I may take gaming as seriously as this year, it all depends on the 1v1 game that will be played competitively at that time. Life related, I'm thinking of studying accounting (ye so what, I like numbers... and a lot of really boring work).

**<The\_Basilisk> What do you think is the most important attribute of a competitive player?**

**<Livid>** Tactics! Yip Nautilian you were right after all (personal joke). No, seriously, I think game-consciousness / awareness / knowledge or simply - experience. The player needs to be aware of all the possible moves of the other player and be prepared for any of them. He needs to know how a particular action would affect the game and be able to use it to his advantage. It's not a play style you can think up before the game, but a knowledge you need to build up game-after-game.

## Enemy Territory: A replacement for CS?

Well, it would be wishful thinking at best, but Return to Castle Wolfenstein's free, standalone multiplayer expansion - Enemy Territory - is proving to be a very enjoyable alternative to the currently Counter-Strike-dominated genre of the team-based, tactical shooter.

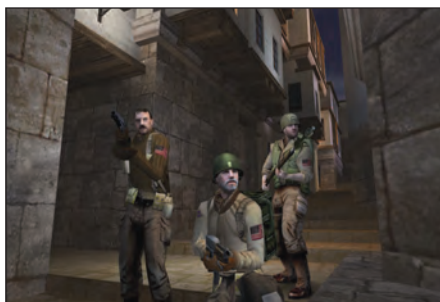
The game is objective-based like its predecessor (also similar to assault mode in the original Unreal Tournament), where each team plays both sides of a particular scenario (attacking and defending). The team attacking first sets a time for completing the mission, and then must swop sides and hold off their opponents until that time runs out. The graphics engine is unchanged, but two entirely new multiplayer campaigns, containing six new and impressive maps, have been created. The first campaign takes place in Western Europe and the second in North Africa.

The focus in Enemy Territory is much more on realistic World War II combat than the supernatural elements present in the original game. Teamwork is emphasized by four classes of characters that the player may choose from, namely Soldier (general purpose combat), Medic (reviving and healing fallen comrades), Engineer (land mines, repairs, construction), Field Ops (specialist combat) and Covert Ops (snipers et cetera). As the game progresses, players gain experience which allows them to improve their skill with certain weapons (reload times, power usage) and also to improve ability efficiency and to gain new abilities (for example, Medic gets "full revive" at level 3, and Covert Ops gets "assassin" at level 4). The official team size is six players, but clan matches are currently played with anywhere from five to nine members on each side.

In the local gaming community, there are currently five established clans (including the old Tribes 2 clan Iridium and the new, as yet undefeated, Hard Corps). Servers are being run both by Mweb and SAIX, although pings across the ISPs are quite poor. Essentially, if you are an Mweb subscriber, it is much faster to play on the Mweb server and vice versa. On the Shadowfire IRC network, the community channels are #enemyterritory and #rtcw (there are also channels #iridium and #hardcorps for those respective clans).

**Mweb Server** - zero.mweb.co.za:27960 or 196.2.128.99:27960

**SAIX Server** - balaam.saix.net:27960 or 196.4.79.45:27960



## Racing League Update

Last month, we spoke with Rory McLeod about his involvement with racing games and his efforts to popularize them competitively. The most recent phase of his plans to develop this particular e-sport has been set in motion; this being the Formula One racing league.



The league will be held four weekends of every month, on Saturdays, at his house in Edenvale (interested players should get in touch with him for directions or a map to the venue). Since racing is new to most competitors out there, the initial focus will be on training. Rory will first be going through the basics to ensure that no-one is left behind. After the players are at a high enough skill level, the league structure will begin. Entrance is R40 per person, with a maximum of 20 players. The entrants will be split up into two groups of ten, and the groups will alternate every weekend.

"The first two months will be practices, working on the racing and staying consistent on the track. Once that is sorted it will be time for rAge and the guys will be ready to put on a really competitive race," says Rory. New Age Gaming's rAge event will be featuring a racing tournament (details and prizes to be announced). If your sights are on winning, Rory's league is a good opportunity for practice and getting to know your opponents. A few Counter-Strike players from clans XTC and Phantom Force have also signed up alongside the pure-blood racing players and places are disappearing fast. If you are interested, contact Rory on (011) 452-5970 or 084-371-5253 to reserve your seat. Alternatively, you can email him at rorymac@webmail.co.za.



### USELESS INFO:

Did you know that the only 15 letter long word that can be spelled without using the same letter twice is (uncopywritable). This bit of useless info was brought to you by Sting-Ray. Apparently he got bored one day and found a really awesome site called [www.bored.com](http://www.bored.com). The site has a huge list of links to arbitrary sites. Go have a look, we have found that it can be a life saver when trying to cope with mundane work days.

### EVENT NEWS:

July was most definitely excess amounts of fun for many. First off the Mayhem OPEN LAN was a tad on the nuts side of things with just over 260 people attending the event.

July was also a month of much needed work on the electrical system at Mayhem. There was some long term damage that resulted in one of the electrical breakers burning out. Lucky for us the dead breaker only affected areas that we do not use during events. Repairs were done and checkups on the system will be done before and after every event from now on.

A bit of advice: If you are running a regular event, please do not take it for granted that all is working. Don't wait for the power to trip before you check on things, before and after each event as well as now and again during each event take time to look at your main power box. Most people have no idea of how much heat builds up running a LAN, this can cause issues in the long term if not checked. Don't let things like this sneak up on you. We did, we got lucky and it only cost us a bit of money. You don't want to be caught off guard and have a room full of people and NO power. Mayhem went through that three years ago and it was not fun.

For more about what happened at the mayhem OPEN LAN as well as news of the CHKNHD VIP LAN go check out [www.mayhem.co.za](http://www.mayhem.co.za).

### LAN LORE:

Not too long ago, we jumped up and down screaming for people to stop using port and share scanners. The main reason for this was that certain port or share scanners out there allow the user to crack passwords and do other rather nasty things to people at LANs. Mayhem staff would like to thank all who were kind enough to stop using these scanners.

The good news is with a bit of help from Funky Cow we have come across a rather nifty tool called Shed. Shed is a shares scanner which allows the user to scan for shares. The main difference with shed is that it only shows normal share and not hidden ones, it also does not allow the user to crack passwords.

### DATES TO LOOK OUT FOR:

**12, 13, 14 September**

WCG JHB (hosted by Mayhem and Gamers Gate).

**12, 13, 14 September**

Das Wolf section at WCG JHB

**20 September**

Monthly Link Day PTA

**27 September**

Funky Cow LAN PTA

**10,11,12 October**

rAge (brought to you by NAG, Gamers Gate and Mayhem)

For more info and event dates check out [www.mayhem.co.za](http://www.mayhem.co.za). All organisations mentioned above are listed under the links page on [www.mayhem.co.za](http://www.mayhem.co.za).

Vapour[CHKNHD]

*Mayhem: nothing comes before the Gamer's needs, that is except really stunning girls.*  
[staff@mayhem.co.za](mailto:staff@mayhem.co.za)

## The World Cyber Games returns to South Africa



After the controversial collapse of the Gamers League of South Africa last year, gamers have been speculating on what would happen to the World Cyber Games license that the GLSA had relinquished. For a while, it seemed as though no local players would be competing in Korea this year. Then Samsung approached Gamers Gate to step in and run the SA qualifier.

This makes quite a paradigm shift from the days where gaming companies were forced to drop to their hands and knees and beg for sponsor endorsement. "Samsung, globally, wanted to get involved with the gamers and, as they had no gaming component like Sony for example with the PlayStation brand, they needed to sponsor events. Thus the WCG was born," says Len Nery, head of Gamers Gate. "Samsung SA are getting more involved in sponsoring gaming locally as a result of their international association. It is a branding or rather marketing exercise for them, a good way to show their products to the gamers who use them, and also to the general public who simply view the competition. It is for this reason that we are hosting the WCG events at shopping centers around SA - branding and market awareness." Samsung have invested a total of R1 million in the WCG events country-wide, ranging from advertising to event costs to prizes.

The three national events will be held in Cape Town at Canal Walk Shopping Centre from 15th to 17th August, Durban at the Ocean Conference Centre from 29th to 31st August, and Johannesburg at Sandton City Shopping Centre from 12th to 14th September. The Durban and Johannesburg events will feature Bring Your Own Computer sections. "I really want to grow the guys in areas outside of Gauteng," says Len, "as you know this is Gamers Gate's first real regional event and we really don't know what to expect. I would love to see a good response from Cape Town and Durban as this will determine future event structures. Since these are regional events, no JHB-based team or player will be able to enter them. The most important thing for us is hosting a successful event that will stimulate interest, and translate into bigger LAN attendance for the other events within those regions." Also as part of the development plans, Samsung will be flying the top two finishers in each game from Durban and Cape Town (28 people overall) up to Johannesburg for the finals. The players will receive free accommodation and be shuttled to and from the event. Registration for WCG is open on the Gamers Gate site - [www.gamersgate.co.za](http://www.gamersgate.co.za). The website is clear and well-laid out, but it could do with a little more specific information.

Gamers Gate has been heavily involved in South African gaming in 2003 already. "We were halfway through the Nintendo events when we were approached by Samsung," says Len, "and we would already hit our ninth event of the year before June! To still consider the WCG events was a mind blow. Fortunately we are finished with the previous events and can focus on WCG. In addition to this, we have a competition at rAge and have nearly signed the details for an Intel and Monash University event (where the winner will walk away with a scholarship to study programming and then move onto games development), scheduled for December. The reason why this year is so important for Gamers Gate, is that we are in the process of launching schools, varsity and college league structures. We are getting involved with grassroots upliftment, and it will bode well for the future of local

gaming."

Because of the large number of successful events they have held in recent times, Gamers Gate has managed to secure a good reputation with the competitive and casual communities alike. However, there were GG events in the past that didn't run as well as they do now. "Eastgate was badly managed in two sectors," admits Len when questioned about it. "The PC sponsor delivered late and also short-delivered. Secondly, the event managers failed to implement a detailed event structure, and thus the gamers were kept waiting for an inexcusable amount of time for the matches to begin. This time around, the PCs are being shipped by Sahara and will be overseen by Samsung themselves. Contracts have been put in place by Samsung and I am confident that Sahara will not let us down. We will also have the time schedule drawn up by the competent Mayhem team, which will mean everything will run professionally and on time."

The prizes for the event include cash, hardware and seven tickets to Korea, to compete in the third World Cyber Games. "Gamers Gate have and always take heed of what the gamers would like to see, WCG is the perfect example of this," adds Len. "We asked a few months ago what gamers would like to see in terms of prizes: a trip overseas or a car or cash. 83% voted for the opportunity to participate at an event overseas. Based on this we signed the deal with ESWC for France, and similarly the WCG event."

The cash prize breakdown has been announced and will be as follows:

### Cape Town & Durban (Each)

CS (1st)	R 5,000.00
CS (2nd)	R 2,500.00
WCIII (1st)	R 1,000.00
WCIII (2nd)	R 500.00
UT2K3 (1st)	R 1,000.00
UT2K3 (2nd)	R 500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>R 10,500.00</u></b>

### Johannesburg

CS (1st)	R 15,000.00
CS (2nd)	R 5,000.00
WCIII (1st)	R 3,000.00
WCIII (2nd)	R 1,000.00
WCIII (3rd)	R 500.00
UT2K3 (1st)	R 3,000.00
UT2K3 (2nd)	R 1,000.00
UT2K3 (3rd)	R 500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>R 29,000.00</u></b>

For more information on The World Cyber Games go to [www.worldcybergames.org](http://www.worldcybergames.org)

**Anton Lines**  
"The Basilisk"



# Electronic Sports World Cup Report Back

Experience, this is what the event taught us here in Africa - not only from a gamers point of view but also by enhancing the gaming experience at the events for the gamers.

On stage, in the auditorium was one of the best gaming exhibition set-ups I have seen thus far. Let me give you a brief overview. They had 10 plasma screens in front of all the gamers for the audience to view their moves and strategy and a huge screen behind them. They had heart monitors connected to the players, and when the player is virtually eliminated the light dimmed on them.

On a sad note however, we lower our South African flags to half-mast...

Our hope of putting South African gaming on the map had all but faded the first day of the competition. Our players (with fire and undying African spirit in their hearts) were eliminated from their respective events.

This boils down to BMT (big match temperament), we just don't have it in our sports be it on the field or as virtual gamers. Our gamers believe they can beat anyone but when it comes to crunch time, they go down in flames. The real difference between the professionals and us is that they make a full time career out of gaming.

Watching the finals of each event was spectacular except for CS as the American team were eliminated, so the CS cup remains in Europe. But on another note the Female CS final was a real nail-biting showdown and to be honest I believe they could beat any SA CS team - they played like real professionals (we need more women players). The ESWC event staff always went out of their way to help even though there was a significant language barrier, but eventually with lots of sign language we eventually got everything sorted out.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors for uplifting the gaming community in South Africa. It is important that we grow as a community - which has "virtually" no boundaries.

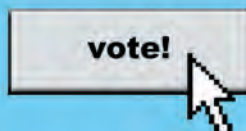
Now we are preparing to take on the world once more at the WCG event - good luck to all our competitors, but then its not luck you need its... skill.

Justin Thorpe (Wh1sp3r)  
Gamers Gate Team  
[www.gamersgate.co.za](http://www.gamersgate.co.za)



## A good slogan for the NAG site would be...

- about damn time
- pr0n for members only
- wait, this isn't 'naked animal groupies.com'!



Online

[www.nag.co.za](http://www.nag.co.za)



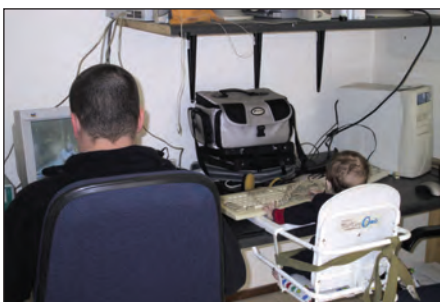
## Host a LAN, you will become rich!

There is a misconception out there that has been bugging me recently. The only reason to host a well organized event is to make money. Although some LANs make money, and some people are making good business by you supporting every LAN they host, it has become a driving force for every second person who mails me asking where they can start. I find myself asking the same trick question that seems to stump them "What games do YOU play?" I feel that it is a very relevant question for any LAN organiser.



When LanGames.co.za started it was the elite few who organized events. They were considered the all knowing and be-it-all of gaming in South Africa. Far be it for me to not give credit where it is due but the fact that vanity has crept in and people started believing they were the only people capable of hosting major events. This has been a driving force for LanGames.co.za from the start. When the site started we saw some regular LANning groups post their information on a monthly basis. The idea of a regular LAN that could actually make money was started and a few groups started learning from their monthly events on how an event should be run. Finally the elite have been shown that they are not unique.

Though they are very successful and very organized in their own, it has been starting to bother me again that history is in fact repeating itself. On the one side you have the new-elite hosting events, and at the other end you have people playing at their own event and having a social gathering. The new-elite once again making the same statements of "no one else can host great LANs" and that they are the definition of what a LAN should be.



The only difference now is that people see that it is possible to make money from hosting events, and their only reason for starting a regular organized LAN is to have people pay them to play on their network and you end up with halls of strangers and no social friendly events (I would rather play online than suffer that again). What I want to see again is a public social LAN like there used to be. I have opted to skip so many LANs recently to attend small socials between 7 and 15 people because of the atmosphere at small events and being surrounded by people who do the event for the right reasons. Organisers should think a bit about why they are hosting an event, and see it a bit from a casual gamer's perspective.

TadMadLad  
LanGames

## Thundercity shot down in flames

Competitive gaming in Cape Town took a step backwards in July as the Thundercity LAN's venue at Cape Town International Airport fell through. Unfortunately only a few days before the event the venue's management decided it would be a good idea for the OC organisers to pay more for the venue. The OC organisers disagreed with this, so Thundercity didn't happen. As such I have nothing to tell you about this event except the fact that as soon as the organisers find a new venue, the competitive scene will kick off again.



However, this unfortunate event was offset by the Organised Chaos that took place from the 18th-20th. Which turned into a killer LAN. It started off with 160 people walking through the door and for the first time Theo Marais Park was full. This was ably followed up with there being no power problems and no network hassles (which is quickly becoming a defunct statement for OC LAN's as this has become the norm).

A monstrous WC3 2v2 tournament took place with 33 teams participating. Thanks to the organisational skills of Sweep and [SR] Standarsh this tourney took over the whole of Saturday without so much as a pebble in the data stream. The winners of this tourney were [nf]Juvenile and [nf]Stealth. They won MSI DVD\ROM's and CD Writers.

A friendly CS Tourney was also organised with many clans joining forces to make up full teams. This tactic however backfired when halfway through the tournament they all stopped talking to each other and went their separate ways bringing the tournament to a stand still. The continual fight between the organisers and those that want to play CS at OC LAN's has hopefully been resolved with a section of the tables being allocated for the use of those that want to play CS, though it must be said that participation came from all quarters in the various games that were played over the weekend. And for the first time in many a LAN CS did not become the most predominant game played as it was given a run for its money by WC3.

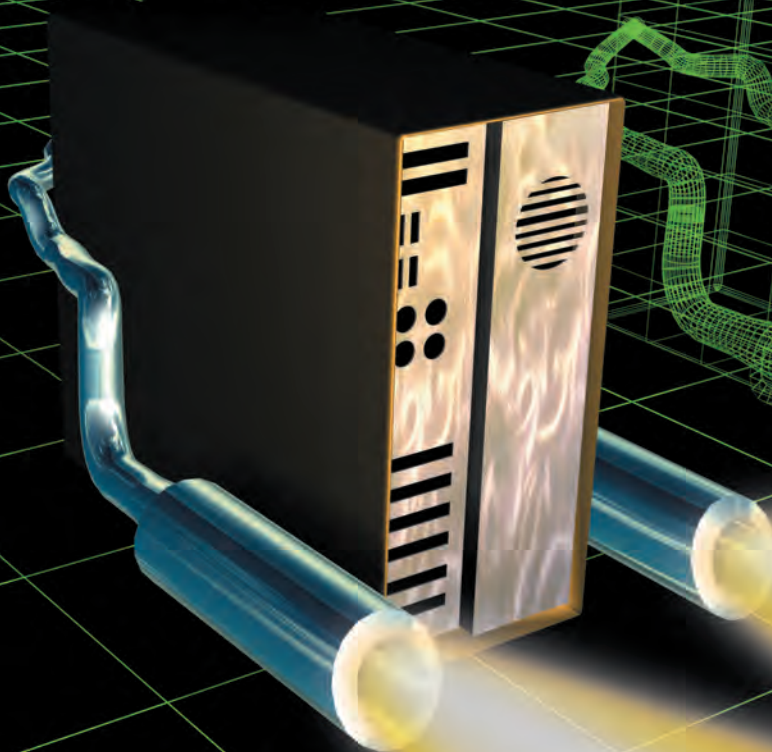
A highlight of the LAN was wireless internet sponsored by Scoop Networking, which had many of the gamers abusing the hell out of this connection; I believe [AF]Slowhands and, another gamer who shall remain nameless, had a role to play in the over 1.5gigs downloaded in the first twelve hours that the link was online.

Taking into account the gamers request for prizes other than games the organisers came to the party in fine style and gave away a 17" Proline monitor from Pinnacle Micro and a watch sponsored by Fossil, thanks to AirbornCakewalk. These were won by Greyhound and AngelofDeath respectively. The gamers that didn't win anything however didn't go home empty handed as there were over 300 free donuts handed out at the prize giving.

The July OC had it sad moments as well, as this was the first OC LAN without the participation of Steve and Tiaan, who unfortunately due to work commitments can no longer be part of the OC organising crew. They will be missed, though hopefully they will come and visit.

Sean "KiLroY" Beamish  
www.oc.co.za

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# Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy

▶ "Use the Force [insert name here]"  
Isn't that what we all want? Let's face it, no-one really cares much for Luke or Vader - we want those force powers! And it requires no wheezing and coughing - just an enrolment into the upcoming school for Jedi Knights, backed by those gaming alumni known as Raven...

I'm not sure if I can make up my mind about Star Wars games. On the one side of the spectrum there are titles such as Force Commander and other lacklustre (but successful) attempts at making money off the license. On the other side there are such great offerings as Jedi Knight. To paraphrase Terry Gilliam, LucasArts won't let go of a thread until the entire sweater is gone.

Jedi Knight is soon to be delivered into its fourth chapter, developed by Quake engine aficionados Raven Software. You might recall their work on the previous game Jedi Outcast, or the likes of Elite Force and Soldier of Fortune. Look, anyone who knows their shooters know what they are doing, and even the somewhat pale Jedi Outcast was a fun game to play, even though no real war room stories resulted from it.

Jedi Academy sees the end of playing as Kyle Katarn, and instead you become a novice in Luke Skywalker's Academy for People Who Want To Be Jedi. We were recently allowed to play the game a bit and get an impression of what you can expect. So let's start at the beginning, which is the aforementioned novice.

You will get to create your own character within a selection of species, as well as select your type of lightsaber. These are largely cosmetic, though. The real difference comes in choosing your force powers as you progress. Of course, this is nothing new, since it's been a feature of the later Jedi Knight games. The game takes a less linear approach, though, and allows you to choose your missions as you progress. At one point, once you've completed most of the missions, you'll go on more story-specific missions, each adventure allowing you to add more power to some force powers. Naturally, you'll be allowed to dabble in the Dark Side, because why push someone over when you can choke them?



## In Star Wars 3D!

Jedi Academy will be using the Quake 3 engine, which is seriously beginning to show its age. In fact, I was speculating Jedi Outcast and Elite Force would be the last games to see the use of the engine. Of course, both now have sequels, and both look quite good - a bit of a testament to how very capable they are at their respective jobs (Raven and Ritual). But I suspect they already have some preliminary code of Doom III (well, we know Raven already has it), so these are quite likely the last of the Quake 3 legacy, apart from perhaps a few small future titles from arbitrary developers.

The main reason, possibly, why another Jedi Knight game is in development is the massive popularity of lightsaber battles at LANs, because it's a major component in the title. You will be able to use conventional blasters and such, but these pale in comparison to what a lightsaber can do. My character happily hopped in-between the bad guys, chopping off limbs and using the occasional force power to just sway odds even more in her favour.

The game will have a training mode that gives you the hand-on show of how to use your Jedi powers - not dissimilar to what Katarn went through in Outcast. After that you head out on your first missions, though there are obviously far bigger things afoot.

## Join the Jedi, see the Universe

Your initial missions take you to a few planets in the system, such as Tatooine, Hoth and a few other spots. Some missions range from simply recovering parts to get your shop working again to jumping between flying transporters eliminating hijackers to cleaning out a power station full of troopers planning to blow it up. The initial missions are there to up your skills, help you define some additional force powers and get used to the combat system. For instance, one Tatooine mission has you jumping from rock to rock, avoiding large worms - no combat required at all - and a mission with Chewbacca lets you get used to more intense, close-quarter combat.

◀ Yeah, right...



Later missions also focus on Hoth, underground layers and various installations, amongst others. Apparently the game will allow you to use different types of lightsabers, such as dual-sided and two-handed - something we saw demonstrated at E3, though the preview build only allowed for one style - the standard one lightsaber approach. Hey, what's good enough for Luke is good enough for me.

### It's a galaxy far, far away

Talking about our favourite snout-nosed farmed boy



◀ "Hang on... umm, is this the Star Wars or the Dune set? I think I might be lost..."



◀ Quake 3 engine? Really?

turned pseudo messiah, Luke Skywalker is in attendance, as are several notable people from the Star Wars universe. The areas are also going to be largely familiar areas that you visit. It seems Raven does not intend any real expansion into the Star Wars universe - the villains are still pretty much Sith-style villains and the general bad guys are generally mercenaries of Imperial troops.

Raven is expanding on the theme of using vehicles that we saw in Outcast with a host of new vehicles and creatures to ride on. There will also be larger monsters, including a Rancor that needs to be killed before it bites your head off.

As mentioned before, the major twist comes into making your character and developing him or her. As you progress into the game, different lightsabers and lightsaber styles will become available. You'll also be able to improve force powers and make them more

useful, while the natural force powers upgrade themselves. Eventually you'll have a somewhat different character, based on the type of force powers and the various lightsaber styles you choose. Look, it's no Knights of the Old Republic, but it's a step towards the theme of making your own Jedi. Sadly I couldn't play in far enough to determine if using dark powers a lot really affect the game, but these have been known to impact the storyline in past titles.

### The dark side isn't that strong

To be honest, my initial impressions of the preview build were largely negative. It seems that what Raven is doing is adding a heavy combat element to an engine that doesn't suit it. Lightsaber battles are more intense and would require something more to the line of Oni or Die by the Sword to really compliment it. But this turned out to be more a matter of poor initial levels, which are a bit tedious, especially with the combat. As you progress, though, and your combat styles expand, not to mention stronger force powers develop, the game becomes far more entertaining.

The later missions that you choose are also more varied, some being of a sneaking variety, while one or two even demand no lightsaber combat at all, making you rely on the slowly expanding range of weapons in the

game. In short, once you trawl through the initial levels, the game becomes a lot of fun.

There were a few other bugs, such as pretty dumb AI, and aiming force powers and saber blows are not as accurate as I'd have preferred, but these will most likely be tweaked away in the final game.

The ever-popular multiplayer component also returns, as do the bots, plus a new Siege play dynamic mode that allows for different player classes in combat. There will also be vehicles to control, including ATSTs.

The in-game voice acting seemed a bit below par, though, and don't expect any expansive dialogue. In general, it's a game filled with familiar Star Wars goodness, which is fine if you are a fan, but it does seem like overkill. Still, it is a Star Wars game, after all.

### Feel the royalties, Luke

Off the top of my head, there's no reason why fans of the series should not get this game when it comes out, since it is truly Star Wars, and it comes from a series and a team of developers that have a reputation for quality.

The beta has a few bugs, and the game is rather slow in getting going, plus the characters act in a horrendously mannequin fashion in their cut scenes. But these points will either be fixed or are moot to begin with. In the end, it's all about being a Jedi and chopping things up. The Quake 3 engine is really at its end, though, but it does make me look forward to future games of Jedi Knight and Soldier of Fortune that will probably use the power of Doom III.

Until then, though, look forward to Academy, where snapping Imperial trooper necks still won't get you reprimanded much, apart from a scolding from old master Kyle.

### The RAVEN timeline

<b>1992</b> Black Crypt	<b>1998</b> Portal of Praevus *
<b>1993</b> ShadowCaster	Heretic II
<b>1994</b> CyClones	<b>2000</b> Soldier of Fortune
Heretic	Elite Force
<b>1995</b> Hexen	<b>2001</b> Elite Force Expansion
<b>1996</b> Shadow of the Serpent Riders *	Pack *
Deathkings of the Dark Citadel *	<b>2002</b> Jedi Outcast
Necrodome	Soldier of Fortune II
<b>1997</b> Take No Prisoners	<b>2003</b> Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy
MageSlayer	<b>2004</b> Quake IV
Hexen II	* Expansion



## preview:

Due for release in August we took a quick stab at this great looking title and came away wanting more.

Strange how some gaming themes re-appear - many will fondly remember Pirates, which was a kind of strategy game with out and out action on the high seas. Now after 20 or so years the original Pirates is being brought up to date to an eager gaming community. It does appear that swashbuckling and shenanigans on the high seas could be the flavour for the next year.

Then there is also a great online game in the making called Pirates of the Burning Sea set in the same period as this title - the 1700s.

Okay, all the actual game genres are slightly different but they all have the focus of 'life at sea', a nice time line from a set period offer some great action, plus deep challenges - buccaneer style!

It is billed as a RPG-at-Sea that will harness compelling action and some deep thinking,

from a detailed world that will capture the imagination. Don't be put off by the Disney billing as this is no cartoonish challenge or insipid creation. You only have to take a look at the screenshots to see how detailed the game will be in both visual and play dynamic elements. Role-playing elements and intricately created quests will offer players the unique opportunity to prove their mettle against the legendary buccaneers of the Caribbean.

A Ubi Soft spokesperson commented: "Pirates of the Caribbean is a unique role-playing experience with an intriguing storyline that will offer the opportunity and ability to explore everything the world has to offer. Deciding to become a cold-hearted mercenary for hire, a peaceful and profitable merchant or a swashbuckling pirate will influence future interactions. Gaining wealth and experience gives players the opportunity to hire crewmembers, sail larger ships and uncover priceless treasures."

Strictly speaking, the game has very little to do with the

movie. Akella have resurrected the project behind Sea Dogs II and started on that premise, but with a few changes to suit the movie connotation a bit more. But in essence, this is not a movie game, and rather a sequel to the classic Sea Dogs.

The film studio, though, has provided the development team with a set of resources and has been eager to assist the team necessary to help create the essence of the film but it does appear that the team, once having the basic overview to the story, has not had that much interaction with the studio regarding the actual game challenges, although named actors from the film will be adding narrative.

Akella has been at pains to point out that this game is in no way Morrowind on the high seas. This misconception arrived because there are a few similar qualities and members of the team also developed Morrowind, another major Bethesda title. One of the impressive features within the game is its open-ended feel allowing

the player to progress through the game in almost any fashion he feels like. The player assumes the role of a freelance captain who becomes caught in a struggle for power. At the start of the game you witness the French Forces invading an English island. Sailing away to avoid harm you set course for a nearby English colony to inform the English Governor of the bad news. Upon reaching the island, the Governor decides to enlist you to infiltrate the captured island as a spy for the English to see what you can discover about the French Invasion force and their future plans. (There is also an option to align to other military factions if you wish.) Events, as you would assume, are both on land and sea and there is a plethora of places you can visit on land which include forts, taverns, shipyards and all the other places you would readily assume where Pirates hang out. (Pirates cleverly allows you to jump quickly back and forth between key locations.)

The Pirates of the Caribbean has an interesting jumble

of ideas and merges action and skills seamlessly within the RPG focus. The fighting system is very similar to one used in the original Sea Dogs and implements a strategic approach of when to block, when to strike and when to use your pistol.

At sea developing your characters is important and plenty of thinking and skilful planning is required. Selecting the right weapons is all part of the strategy, as is selecting the right location to do jobs, just in case you meet up with old enemies. The combat also takes a more complex approach when attacking other craft - for instance, taking out a ship's respective sails will slow it down.

The central/main quest will probably take the player between 20-30 hours to complete although there are randomly generated side quests on offer that will make the game challenge even more expansive. Trading, sea battles, smuggling, with always more ships to plunder, and with the addition of other NPCs fighting with or against you add real depth to this well crafted RPG title. In a nutshell, it seems to be building up to a worthy, if only spiritual, successor to Sea Dogs, plus its running on the movie bandwagon, though in reality it has nothing to do with the film. Still, if you like pirates and you want to try out a life on the high seas, keep this one on your list.



▲ If they knew there was a T-Rex in the cargo hold they wouldn't be fighting so hard for the 'loot'

### The game of the movie?

Pirates of the Caribbean was called Sea Dogs II, but obviously a lucrative cross-license opportunity made Bethesda give it a new name, specifically that of the new movie

starring Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom and Geoffrey Rush. When Will Turner (Bloom)'s fiancé, played by Keira Knightley, is kidnapped by the pirate Barbossa (Rush), he employs the pirate Jack Sparrow (Depp) to get her back. Of course, Barbossa and his crew aren't exactly alive anymore, thanks to a cursed treasure they found... The movie took the number one spot when it launched, and in its first three weeks grossed nearly \$190 million, outdoing Bad Boys II, Terminator III and the ill-fated Tomb Raider 2, not to mention that IMDB.com's users rate is an average of 8. The movie is directed by Gore Verbinski, better known for The Mexican and the American version of Ringo.





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PlayStation 2

## preview:

▶ Electronic Arts tends to bring a lot of titles to the market, and every now and then they land on very unique and interesting concepts. Their new game, *Freedom Fighters* is one of them and puts gamers on the streets of New York City in a third-person action-adventure played out in the grim reality of an alternate history. Gamers take on the role of a mild mannered blue-collar worker and unwittingly find themselves battling an invading Soviet Red army on the besieged streets of New York as a fearless freedom fighter.

Due for release on all the major next-generation platforms, each utilising the individual machine to its optimum potential, this title is looking tasty and many people will fondly remember the development team IO Interactive, which produced *Hitman Codename 47* for Eidos.

Approximately 30 people are working on the project, many of whom worked on *Hitman* before they started on this project. Others have prior experience from game companies outside Denmark. It is thanks to their history with the *Hitman* series that they have a superb foundation to build the technical elements of the game on, as well as improving fundamental play dynamic mechanics. They are also using their own Glacier engine, which has been well received. The team

has been inspired by movies such as *Red Dawn* and *The Patriot* and they have created a main character that is up against all odds.

Derek de la Fuente spoke with the team, whose philosophy is to 'always make the next game a better game'.

In a new reality where the Soviet Union won the Cold War, a fierce conflict is unfolding in America as the Red Army invades a vulnerable United States. The player takes on the role of an average citizen caught in the middle of the conflict as forces take control of New York City and begin imprisoning innocent Americans, including the player's brother. With American military forces pushed out of New York City, an Underground Resistance movement in Manhattan is all that remains to retake control of the fallen city. Recruited by the Resistance, the player will rise through the ranks by successfully completing missions with minimal casualties, ultimately becoming the charismatic leader of the group. Success will largely depend on the player's ability to recruit and lead fellow New Yorkers to join in the battle, and eventually rescue his sibling and liberate the city.

*Freedom Fighters* provides two layers of play - a strategic turn-based mode centred around base operations in the underground sewer and an action

mode that unfolds in the streets where fierce battles are won or lost and resources are captured. In this mode players will experience intense urban guerrilla warfare scenarios ranging from small sabotage missions to large battles where characters have to conquer enemy installations.

Although locations in the game are fictional the team has gone a long way to make the game world recognizable as New York City. "The levels are strongly inspired by NYC. There are however many buildings which are real-life buildings from New York and while you confront the enemy, with seamless urban fighting that takes place outside as well as indoors, you'll be able to see for example the Chrysler Building or the Empire State Building."

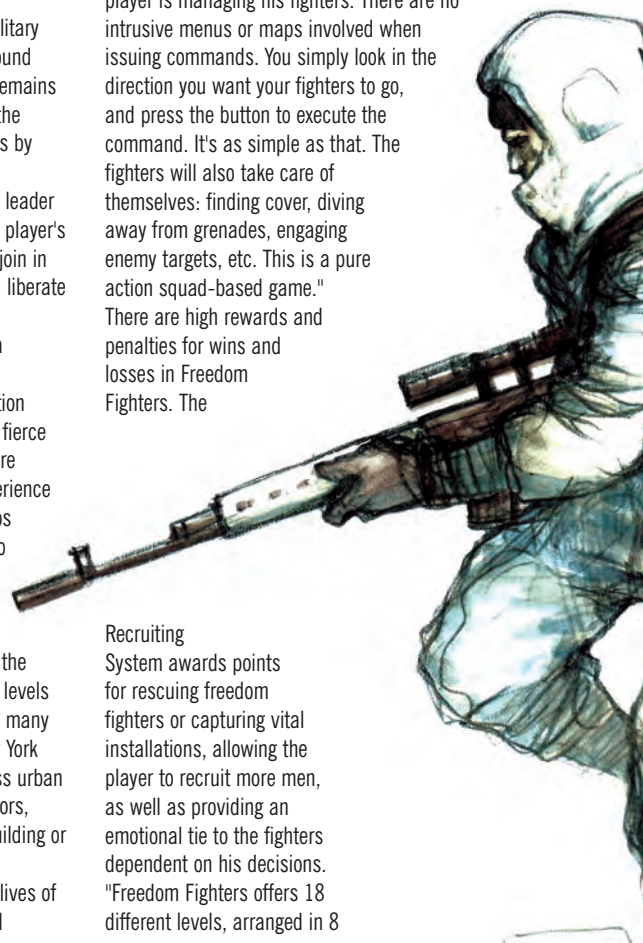
With leadership comes great responsibility. The lives of your soldiers and the quest for freedom are held together by your courage, charisma, and leadership skills. Because wars are not won alone, a key component of the game depends on the player's ability to recruit and lead. Cleverly an intuitive recruiting command system allows you to give orders to your fellow soldiers and execute critical missions at the

touch of a single button.

A member of IO explained more. "You can issue orders to a squad of up to 12 fighters. You can order several members of your team to scout ahead for enemies, while having several others guard your flank. Should you wander into a fire fight - the simple push of a button will bring your team-mates running to your support. Different *Freedom Fighters* will be carrying different weapons. But we do not have special characters like engineer, medic and so on. We have chosen to go this way, as we do not want the pace of the game to slow down when the player is managing his fighters. There are no intrusive menus or maps involved when issuing commands. You simply look in the direction you want your fighters to go, and press the button to execute the command. It's as simple as that. The fighters will also take care of themselves: finding cover, diving away from grenades, engaging enemy targets, etc. This is a pure action squad-based game." There are high rewards and penalties for wins and losses in *Freedom Fighters*. The

Recruiting

System awards points for rescuing freedom fighters or capturing vital installations, allowing the player to recruit more men, as well as providing an emotional tie to the fighters dependent on his decisions. "*Freedom Fighters* offers 18 different levels, arranged in 8



**"The fact that enemies and freedom fighters will work with the environment itself to seek cover, hide, throw grenades, give support fire, etc, will blow people away. No pun intended."**





missions are tackled. For example, in one level you'll encounter a sniper perched in a far off tower that makes things difficult for you and your recruits. However, if you return to base and choose a mission in that nearby city block, you can destroy the tower and eliminate the threat. Then you may return to the previous mission to complete your objectives."

Both the hero and his Freedom Fighters can be injured in battle. If a fighter is badly injured, they will collapse onto the ground until they can be healed by the player. However, the character may only carry a certain amount of medical supplies at one time, so the choice of healing one's self and keeping the rest of the squad alive is a delicate balance. The team was eager to explain that this offers more than meets the eye. "It is certainly 'in your face', in the sense that we're offering the player an intense action experience unlike any other. On the other hand, the game is definitely story driven, with professionally acted dialogue throughout. The play dynamic itself has influences from the real-time-strategy genre - i.e. the tactics that you use to deploy your troops can definitely affect the outcome of battles. For example, if you were trying to take on a military blockade (equipped with mounted machine guns) attacking it head on would not be the most successful strategy. Using your fighters to flank the target, while you provide cover fire or toss in grenades could be much more effective. It's all in how you play."

Various types of single and two-handed weapons, as well as unarmed combat martial arts manoeuvres, can be executed and there are 12 weapons in total. Weapons range from small hand-arms, such as pistols

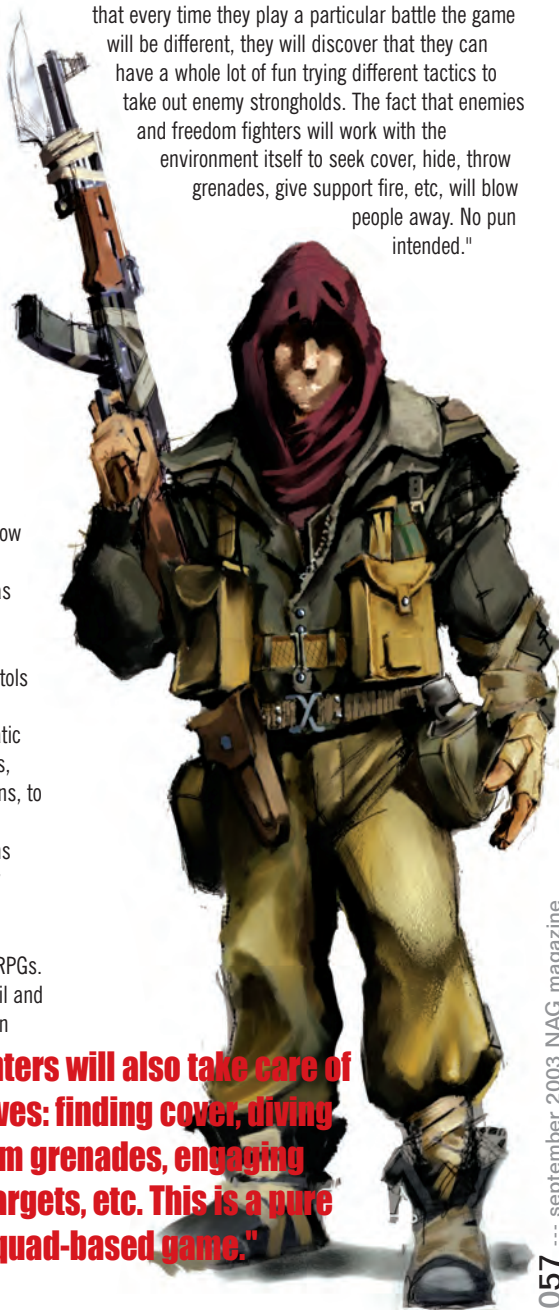
and revolvers, through automatic and sniper rifles, submachine guns, to machineguns. Ranged weapons include Molotov cocktails, fragmentation grenades, and RPGs. If in-game detail and ideas count then

**"The fighters will also take care of themselves: finding cover, diving away from grenades, engaging enemy targets, etc. This is a pure action squad-based game."**



this title is looking extremely polished.

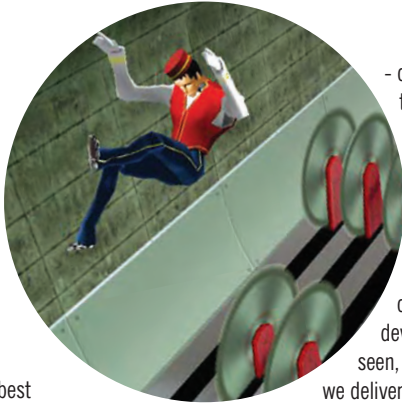
The team gave their final comments on some of the innovations on offer and what should excite gamers. "Players will definitely find the lack of scripting in the enemy AI to be refreshing. I think when people realise that every time they play a particular battle the game will be different, they will discover that they can have a whole lot of fun trying different tactics to take out enemy strongholds. The fact that enemies and freedom fighters will work with the environment itself to seek cover, hide, throw grenades, give support fire, etc. will blow people away. No pun intended."



## preview:

# Evil Genius

▶ 'Evil Genius - it's colourful, it's stylish and it's fun', quipped the developers. And when it's a game that throws such phrases as 'global domination' and 'doomsday machine' at us, who are we to argue?



You would not expect anything formulaic from this developer, best known for Republic: The Revolution, but rather something slightly different from the norm. Work is well underway at Elixir Studios on their second title, Evil Genius, which is pencilled in for release on the PC at the end of the year from Vivendi. The game is a tongue-in-cheek take on the spy thrillers of the '60s, offering you the unique opportunity to play the villain as you control a secret island fortress complete with powerful henchmen, loyal minions, ice-cold beauty queens, and a host of hilarious gizmos. Although it is very early in the development cycle of the title many of the leading game publications are already naming this as one of the highly anticipated, must-have, titles for the year. Early screenshots already conjure up evil plots to rule the world.

With this intriguing plotline in mind - where the player assumes the role of a malevolent mastermind bent on achieving global domination through the construction of the ultimate doomsday device - we were delighted to be offered the opportunity to collectively speak to three of the Elixir team - Peter Gilbert, Evil's Producer, Sandy Sammarco, Evil's Lead Designer, and Alex Thomson, Evil's Lead Programmer, to get a fuller insight into the mental process and creation trials that are being conjured up and worked on to create Evil Genius.

Briefly touching on the numerous awards that are already stacking up for Evil Genius, these must give the team excellent motivation. But did it mean much to Elixir so early into the project

- could any real significance be paid to these awards or are they a bit premature? "We were quite overwhelmed by the response that we got at E3 this year. The awards that we received were generally for innovation and originality of design, which I think can be awarded early in development. What remains to be seen, however, is whether the game that we deliver lives up to that promise. While it is nice to receive these awards, we will pay far more attention to the feedback that we get during focus testing and ultimately from those who play the game."

After Republic, with its deep, heavy and serious approach, perhaps something completely different in terms of concept and visuals could be the order of the day.

You will be required to find and recruit talented henchmen from a variety of exotic locations. Dispatch agents to war zones in search of talent...scour universities for ideologies...launch prison breaks to free captured



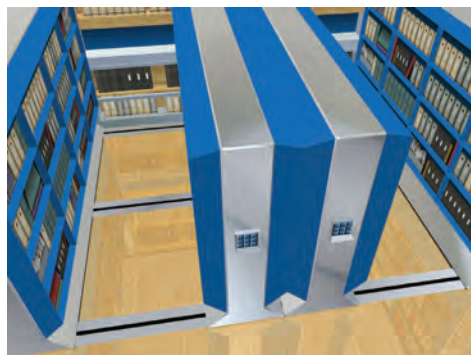
henchmen. So with this already-enticing list of ideas ready to



**"Elixir's overall thoughts are that innovative game design will always be more important than innovative technology. The simplest games on the most basic technology can be just as engaging as a multi-million pound blockbuster."**



▼ It's either a torture sequence, or a new weight-loss fad...



be fleshed out, the team collectively spoke as one pertaining to the inspiration behind it. "There are some very obvious sources of inspiration for the game: the Bond films, Our Man Flint, Austin Powers, etc. The look of the game is completely different from Republic, although this was the product of the concept design process rather than a conscious effort to look different. Our Evil lead artist, Brian Gillies, wanted a shiny 'atomic age' sixties style for the game and that's exactly what we are producing. Ideally we want Elixir studios to be known to gamers as a leading independent developer of original products, with the emphasis most definitely on original." Evil Genius can best be described as a strategy simulation game where the player's aim is for world domination. In order to take over the world, the player must build, manage, and defend their evil lair, send out minions and henchmen to complete daring missions around the globe, whilst simultaneously researching a diabolical master plan. The game doesn't have a linear path, it's quite freeform, although there will be some plot points where the player must specialise in their evil career. The five play dynamic elements mentioned at the start, are all inherently interlinked. Once your training rooms are built you can begin schooling your minions and henchmen; once trained you can send them on



missions. Completing missions brings you more resources and unique items, which can then be researched to develop your evil master plan. Completing more missions around the world also means that more agents will start to try to infiltrate your base, which means that base defence becomes extremely important. There are 12 different types of minions, who are trained in one of three fields: military, social and science, and a large variety of unique henchmen who each have special skills. Nurturing your own character's skills and using them wisely against the forces of justice is also incredibly important in the game.

Sandy Sammarco, Evil's Lead Designer, explained the importance of generating more money in the game to be able to achieve the end results.

"Generating money in Evil Genius is important, but only as a means to an end and not the end itself. Money is

used to purchase lots of megalomaniac trinkets and gadgetry, as well as to hire more sycophantic lackeys to do your bidding. Running out of cash will leave you vulnerable, but you cannot lose the game by being penniless. One of the more obvious ways of obtaining money is to go and steal it from somebody else.

Robbing federal reserves and international banks is part and parcel of being an evil genius." Evil Genius uses a range of AI

techniques to solve the different AI challenges presented by this sort of game. Elixir has a modular scripting language to let the designers add objects and traps to the game quickly. There is also some very optimised path-finding and general behaviour code for all the characters. On top of that, the 'enemy' characters use a specialised goal-based behavioural system, so they can quickly adapt to changing circumstances (for instance, discovering one of their friends in a cage, or worse, a body bag).

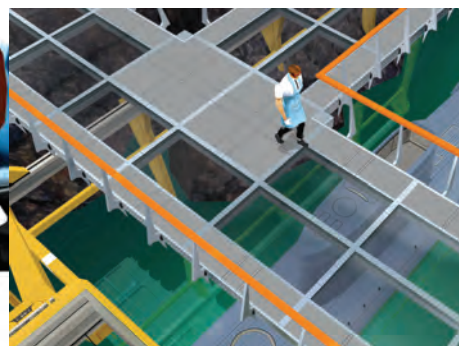
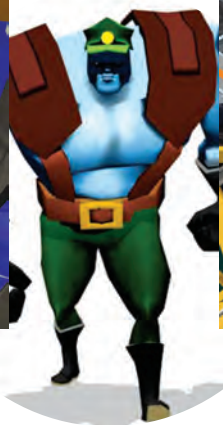
Being told it is not all about base buildings, and with five areas on the world as settings, how pertinent will they be to events and storyline? The answer comes from Sandy: "The different territories are important to the player for several reasons. Each area roughly corresponds to a geo-political alliance active around the '60s (like the Communist states), and contains missions that can net the player vital equipment, cash, and notoriety. Notoriety is especially useful - the player will not be taken as a credible threat to the world unless enough of this resource

has been harvested from all the territories. However, the more nefarious activities the player carries out in a territory, the more 'heat' they generate there, and each area has its own set of agents to send to the player's island, all of them more than capable of causing problems."

At this stage having got more information than we had hoped and being told I would be dangled over a large pool of killer robotic cuttlefish if I probed any more, I parted with the final words and summary from the team. "We want Evil Genius to be a fun, entertaining game. That means it needs to have solid mechanics, and lots of diverse, comprehensible tactics. The best part of these types of games is when, as a player, you get to recognise and then successfully employ a particular strategy. Evil Genius isn't an RTS in the conventional sense though, it's a strategy game based on a simulation, where the player influences events based on his actions, rather than issue direct commands.

Just because we have 'serious' mechanics doesn't mean we have to have a dark and brooding setting - there are plenty of other games for that.

Evil Genius is all about over the top fun, and the style reflects that."



# PlayStation®2



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### Starsky and Hutch [PS2]

*"It features wild action and spectacular stunts (a-la 70s TV show) as the player is required to chase down all manner of criminals through busy city streets."*

**89%**



Walt Pretorius

### Def Jam VENDETTA [PS2]

*"Def Jam VENDETTA is just like the real rap world, without the firearms, and it's got the opposition down for the count."*

**85%**



Adam Liebman

### Neighbours from Hell [PC]

*"It's nice to find a good honest game that delivers a few hours of novel entertainment."*

**85%**



Brett Hamilton



# AVAILABLE SEPT 2003

PlayStation®2



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## pc review:

# F1 Challenge '99 - '02

NOW AVAILABLE



EA Sports, having been the custodians of the official F1 license for the past four years, have turned the process of creating simulations into an art, with their last offering, F1 2002, being undisputedly one of the finest F1 racing games ever made. Now that their tenure with the license is coming to an end, will their final F1 game bring enough to the table?

Firstly, let me clear up one (probably) common misconception regarding F1 Challenge - although the game does span 4 seasons, if you're specifically looking for a career mode, turn your attention to the console

versions - you won't find it here. Having said that, the PC version does allow you to perfectly recreate the past four F1 seasons and, as one would expect, the cars, branding and tracks all accurately reflect the season in which you choose to race. Bearing in mind that the earlier EA Sports F1 titles weren't all quite up to scratch, this feature will certainly appeal to enthusiasts of the sport.

### I am pony, hear me roar!

When it comes to visuals, F1 Challenge can hardly be faulted. The cars and tracks are, for the most part, faithfully recreated according to the year you've chosen, and if your PC is capable of handling the strain, you'll be shocked and awed (apologies to George W. Bush for stealing his line) at the level of detail, and the replays are of near-TV quality. It needs to be said, however, that any improvements made over F1 2002 are subtle indeed, as the two games are almost visually identical. Aurally, the engine tone is still lively enough to send a chill down the spine, and the comforting squeal of tyres going round a fast corner is convincing. Also present is limited commentary, and pit dialogue, but again, no major improvements have been made over this game's predecessor.

### Have spanner, will tweak

Once again, EA Sports have succeeded in creating a game perfect for novices and experts alike, with the player being able to select numerous driving aids, as well as make adjustments to the (noticeably improved) opposition AI. You'll also be pleased to know that you can tweak virtually every aspect of your vehicle's set-up, and you'll most probably need to, especially when weather takes over. Although the depth of options may seem daunting at first, it truly isn't very difficult to get to grips with. For those who are more technically-minded, the stand-alone telemetry program makes a return

appearance in F1 Challenge too, giving you an idea of what needs to be done to gain that extra half a second on lap times.

### On the podium

All in all, F1 Challenge '99-'02 is certainly a very well rounded and presented simulation, bringing back all the improvements made in F1 2002 and extending them to the previous 3 seasons as well. It's sure to appeal to most racing fans, especially those intent on reliving the good old days (well, if 4 years ago counts as the good old days). Furthermore, there is sure to be a vast number of mods available for F1 Challenge, further adding to its longevity. Do bear in mind, however, that it is undoubtedly an F1 simulation, so those looking for a quick adrenaline rush with little thought required would do best to look elsewhere, but anyone who appreciates the intricacies of the sport is sure to enjoy this title. However, when considering F1 Challenge alongside last year's F1 offering from EA Sports, it becomes exceedingly difficult to pinpoint areas that have been noticeably improved, aside from damage models and driver AI. If you're new to the genre, this is probably a good place to start, but for those who own F1 2002, you need to ask yourself whether the ability to race the previous four seasons is reason enough to buy this game - I can't help but feel that it's an attempt to milk as much cash as possible from last year's proverbial cow.



all games reviewed on rectron machines

### Minimum Specification

Pentium II 450 MHz | 128 MB RAM | 4 x CD ROM | 16 MB D3D Video Accelerator  
 1 GB HDD

- Great graphics
- Longevity
- Challenging

We've seen it all before

### Summary

EA Sports final F1 offering accurately recreates both the adrenaline rush and strategy of F1 racing, and a very solid title in its own right, but unfortunately offers very little improvement over the last title in the series.

# 79



**pc review:**



Some games push the limit in terms of graphics, play dynamic and complex storylines which involve us for 40 hours or more; occasionally we just get to play something downright fun. Neighbours from Hell is just that type of game, one that is high in fun and low on system requirements whilst being kind to our South African Rand. NfH also gives some great prank ideas (use these at your own risk).

Hyping the graphics in NfH (Neighbours from Hell) would be similar to the movie trailers for South Park: The Movie, good looks are not that important to NfH as it's



▶ An assisted accident involving a washing machine...

all about the play dynamic. JoWood's game development is firmly in the "B" grade market where quantity sometimes outweighs quality, fortunately they occasionally create a decent title (or maybe it was a mistake). NfH is a side scrolling platform game with a few twists; you get to play Woody who's a star of a television series whose sole aim is to make his neighbour's life a misery.

Woody has to go through a number of seasons with each episode getting more complex and the gags more hilarious, although sometimes difficult to figure out.

Woody has a limited amount of time to perform as many pranks as he can using a limited number of items available, the more pranks he can pull off the higher his episodes will rate with the viewing public and opening the next episode. Woody also gets bonus points for pulling off a number of pranks in succession, this also succeeds in making his neighbour (a big grisly bear swilling galoot) intensely angry much to the amusement of the audience, Woody needs to hide away from the neighbour because if he is spotted the game is up and the angry neighbour gets the stuffing beaten out of him.

There are three seasons for you to play each getting progressively tougher; the neighbour starts to get pets which you need to sneak past, the pranks also become harder to string together as more rooms are added to the neighbours house making it more difficult to string the pranks together. NfH is not difficult to play but getting a 100% show rating takes a bit of practise, also finding out how to use a cactus or empty milk bottle in a prank takes time (maybe I'm not that much of a practical joker). Graphics are almost clay-animation looking, with character expressions exaggerated, the sets (neighbours house) you find yourself on are well drawn, with an eye for detail

# Neighbours from hell



although the sound is limited to cheesy introduction music, occasional laughter and sound effects, some comical voiceovers would have worked well in this title. I finished the game pretty quickly, but getting 100% in each episode takes perfect timing and a fiendish mind, there is no multiplayer and not much re-playability after you have completed it. It's nice to find a good honest game that delivers a few hours of novel entertainment; NfH had me in stitches with some of the pranks, my four year old son thought it was the best game he had ever seen and made me play through the episodes quite often. JoWood have delivered a decent budget game that doesn't make you feel that you have been ripped off after you ripped open the packaging.



all games reviewed on rectron machines

**Minimum Specification**

Pentium 166 MHz | 64 MB RAM | 8 x CD ROM | 16 MB D3D Video Accelerator 130 MB HDD

Ⓢ Novel concept

Ⓢ Game is short

**Summary**

Neighbours from Hell (NfH) throws the gamer into a reality TV scenario, where the aim of the game is to perform as many pranks as possible to advance through the 14 episodes with an ever increasing level of difficulty. NfH offers a unique play dynamic without taxing those grey cells to much, it also shows there's more to making a game then pushing the envelope on technology.

**85**



## pc review:

# Gothic 2

NOT AVAILABLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Piranha Bytes is a developer that most gamers will not have heard of, their only previous title being the first Gothic. Recently they were picked up by the publisher JoWood Productions, which is why we are all-of-a-sudden hearing about the sequel, Gothic 2. This is, in my opinion, what Diablo and its clones should have been. Not only is the game about levelling up and character building, but there is actually skill involved in the combat, rather than seeing how fast you can click. While the technical aspects of this game are nothing spectacular, and its programming is highly questionable, there is something intangible about Gothic 2 which renders it very enjoyable and virtually impossible to stop playing.**



The plotline continues from just after the events in Gothic 1. Before you begin the game, there is a brief recap of the situation and your character is introduced with the particularly poetic line, "He's back!" There is something about the cheesy humour that warms the heart and draws the player immediately into the game world. Thankfully, this happens only during the light-

hearted parts of the story and when necessary, the tone becomes appropriately serious. Having brought down the barrier surrounding the prison colony you were once part of, setting the prisoners free and defeating the greatest of evil creatures - the Sleeper - your character is narrowly rescued from death by an old necromancer. The wizard warns you that the battle is far from over, as the Sleeper has already set the armies of darkness in motion. Naturally you are charged with the quest of stopping them.

While the story is fairly engrossing, it is rather the detail and massive scope of the world that will keep players coming back for more. Every area has been designed and arranged to perfection (a good example being the humorous engravings on tombstones in a very remote and seemingly arbitrary graveyard). Exploring for no reason whatsoever has never been this interesting. The world is consistent and well thought-out, especially when it comes to the politics of the people and organisations inhabiting it. What the game manages to do is give the player a large amount of freedom, allowing him / her to make unique choices that will affect the entire world, while still following a linear storyline. That a game as intriguing as this is marred by technical problems is a sad fact indeed. Firstly, the graphics can be described as your typical "diamond in the rough". The environment looks pretty overall, but there is no engine-based anti-aliasing, the textures are coarse and there is an overuse of sprites. Texture clipping is often faulty as well. The main problems, however, are not so much in the visual department, but rather the gameplay itself and especially the engine's stability. Enemy AI is waypoint based and as such you can exploit certain points on the map where you can attack and your opponents can't.

Creatures chasing you often vanish into thin air after getting stuck behind part of the landscape. The game freezes when you jump into water at specific points, or when drawing your weapon after walking over specific terrain. Loading new areas (and sometimes saved games) crashes it on a regular basis. But even through the frustration of these problems, Gothic 2 is still very much worth playing. I believe most of the issues with the engine are there due to a lack of initial finance. When (if) a patch is released, they should be sorted out, as they aren't very difficult to find.



▲ Bob uses magic to turn into a butterfly...



▲ "Six of them, one of me... where's the run key?"

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**Minimum Specification**  
 PentiumIII 750 MHz | 32 MB RAM | 24 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator  
 280 MB HDD

☉ Huge, detailed world	☉ Bugs
☉ Player freedom	☉ Bugs
☉ Very addictive	☉ Bugs

**Summary**  
 A wonderfully imaginative title spoiled by its never-ending accompaniment of bugs. Everything about Gothic 2 just screams out "low budget". It is the most unstable game I have played this year. However, it is also the most enjoyable, well-designed game I have come across in a long time. If the issues were to be corrected, it would certainly score in the 90's.

# 84





## pc review:

Although the urge was strong I swore that I would not begin this review by talking about parrots, wooden legs or walking the plank... job done. There's something so captivating about the whole pirate thing - some kind of romantic notion about life on the high seas and swashbuckling heroes that appeals to a large number of people... myself included. But is this title a true "pirate" game?

Tropico (the original title) saw the player running a banana republic as a dictator. Tropico 2: Pirate Cove returns to the same part of the world, but turns the clock back a few hundred years, to a time when pirates terrorised the trade routes of the Caribbean. And, of course, you get to be one of those pirates. Well, no, not really. You get to manage a number of those pirates. Tropico 2 is little more than a return to Tropico, only with different buildings and new ways of getting money in. In fact, the game doesn't seem to have progressed much at all. The graphics are still the same, the play dynamic is almost exactly like the previous incarnation and it features the same basic principles of supply and demand that you find in Tropico (or any other management titles, for that matter). Although aspects of the game do seem rather dated, it still holds a lot of appeal - the concept of running a pirate colony is pretty original, although some of the



# Tropico 2: Pirate Cove



"new" game aspects are just old ideas cunningly disguised behind words like "Order" and "Fear." The game works on a basic principle. Keep your pirates happy, and they will bring you money. To help ensure this happiness, slaves can be captured (or even delivered by "friendly" nations) to keep your island running smoothly. Instead of keeping these workers happy, as you may in other titles, you have to keep them scared, as well as resigned to their fate. It's basically a normal management idea, but seen from a left field viewpoint. Pirate happiness is determined by drinking, gambling and carnal activities. If there are not enough taverns, casinos and brothels on your island (of varying quality, to cater for every pirate's tastes) you may have a rebellion on your hands. Add to this that the pirates also like a nice amount of security and anarchy, and things may get a little interesting... especially when a high anarchy rating is liable to make your slaves revolt. In other words, it's a careful balance - nothing new there, but enjoyable none the less. The main source of income for your island comes from pirates attacking and plundering vessels. During these raids treasure is acquired, new crew members are taken on and, occasionally, wealthy captives are taken. These wealthy captives are a good source of income (through ransoms) when the treasury gets a little low. These marauding voyages of self enrichment can be incredibly

frustrating, though, because the game has a tendency to sink ships that are doing well on their missions. You will be kept informed about a number of successful raids, and then get the bad news that the ship has gone down. It's enough to induce premature baldness - particularly when your coffers are looking a little threadbare. Personally, I would have liked to see some kind of involvement in the actual piracy side of things - perhaps strategy suggestions, or the like - at least more than deciding where ships go, and when they go. This would have given the game a different slant, and set it apart from its

predecessor. However, it is another management title, which, while entertaining and challenging enough, is the same old stuff presented in a different package.



all games reviewed on rectron machines

**Minimum Specification**  
 Pentium III 500 MHz | 64 MB RAM | 8 x CD ROM | 16 MB D3D Video Accelerator  
 1.0 GB HDD

- ☑ Pirates are cool
- ☑ Fun to play
- ☑ Tropico reshaped
- ☑ The music

**Summary**  
 Tropico 2: Pirate Cove is a rather unique way to approach management, even though it is little more than a reshuffle of the first Tropico title. See, this time around, you use fear as a motivator, instead of happiness. And you get to plunder ships. But other than that, be prepared for Tropico with different graphics. Still fun, though.



## pc review:

**Will Rock is a first-person shooter (FPS) that has almost as many things going against it as it has for it. It tries not to take itself too seriously and allows the player to let his/her hair down (so to speak) and play for the pure enjoyment of it. Unfortunately, some control issues will leave many rueing the waste of their hard-earned money.**

I had a distinct feeling of déjà vu when playing this latest Ubi Soft FPS for the first time. Here is a game that gives you a character with attitude, large environments, loads of monsters and a wide selection of weapons to blow aforementioned monsters to pieces. It seems Will



^ I'd like my steak medium-rare please



^ How does seven years bad luck translate to eternity?

Rock and mister Duke Nukem went to the same school for angry young men.

While busy on an archaeological dig with his professor and beautiful niece (are there any other kind?) in Greece, they encounter a fanatical cult called the Olympian Restoration Army (ORA). The ORA wants to resurrect the ancient Greek civilisation by opening the doors to a lost city nestled in the opening of a mountain near Olympus. Of course, this is the same place our intrepid team of archaeologists are busy excavating. After forcing Will and the professor to open the doors to the city, they kidnap the professor's niece and kill the professor leaving Will to go after them and try and rescue the damsel in distress while stopping the ancient Greeks from returning to the world.

Further complicating things (or making them easier) is the fact that Will has been possessed by the spirit of the Greek Titan Prometheus. For those of you not familiar with Prometheus he is the one who gave mankind the secret to making fire. This annoyed Zeus had him chained to a mountain and left to have his flesh eaten by ravens for eternity. Now free, Prometheus is just slightly annoyed at this and wants payback. With monsters that range from regenerating minotaurs (really annoying ones these), kamikaze sword-slashing skeletal soldiers and several gods you are bound to have your work cut out for you.

Thankfully, you are equipped with some very powerful weapons that include a shotgun, mini-gun, medusa gun and, my personal favourite, an atomic gun (need I say more?). Additionally, being possessed by a Titan does have its benefits as Will can use special powers that include Immortality and Titan motion (bullet-time anybody?).

This has all the makings of a satisfying title, but Will Rock falls flat on a number of areas. Firstly, it has some major control issues. No matter how I set the mouse sensitivity, I could never quite get it right. It was either too

sensitive or not sensitive enough. This is all well and good when there are only a few monsters charging at you, but the nature of the game means that the number is close to a dozen. This leads you to run around like a headless chicken trying to aim properly. Another annoying thing about Will Rock is that it is very difficult. It could be that I am just getting on the old side and my reflexes are starting to let me down, but I had some difficulties in progressing even in easy mode. Monsters that keep coming at you ad infinitum is all well and good on the more difficult levels, but it gets a bit much when you continually run out of ammunition. If you can see past these two annoyances (control being the most aggravating), then Will Rock is a fun title to play. It has all the ingredients for a really enjoyable title but these problems will see it moving to budget status fairly soon.



all games reviewed on rectron machines

### Minimum Specification

Pentium III 500 MHz | 128 MB RAM | 4 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator  
 750 MB HDD

- ⊕ Lots of weapons
- ⊕ Graphics
- ⊕ Attitude
- ⊖ Difficult
- ⊖ Repetitive
- ⊖ Control issues

### Summary

Will Rock is one of those first-person shooters that you are either going to love or hate. Its whimsical nature might not endear it to many gamers, but it has a certain attitude about it that I have not seen since the early days of Duke Nukem. Unfortunately, finicky control issues will annoy most sharp-shooting players.

# 70

# Will Rock

NOW AVAILABLE





## pc review:

# Neverwinter Nights: Shadows of Undrentide

NOW AVAILABLE



▶ Times are dark up in the northern reaches of the Forgotten Realms... dark indeed. And the Silver Marches are not the safest of places, even at the best of times. But, as Master Drognan's pupil, you have more than a fair chance to carve a name out for yourself as an adventurer in these wild and cold lands...

The thing that took me by surprise about the Neverwinter Nights: Shadows of Undrentide expansion was the fact that, instead of continuing the tale from the original game (although it was pretty much concluded)

the tale in this is completely new. In fact, it takes place quite a distance away from Neverwinter, in a place called the Silver Marches (those familiar with the Forgotten Realms will certainly recall the name.) Not that there is anything wrong with that, of course, because the story presented in this expansion is full of mystery, intrigue and, of course, action - exactly what we have come to expect from the Dungeons & Dragons titles from BioWare. I did, however, come across one little hiccup that is a result of this new story...

As I started up the game, I immediately chose the character I had used to finish Neverwinter Nights. Great character, strong, and so on. But, to my dismay, I discovered that the expansion's tale is intended for new characters - level one characters, in other words. Here I was carving swathes through the enemies, bored out of my skull because there was no challenge in the game. Sure, I tried with a first level character, and it was great... but I am fond of my old character. I want to make use of it. I think it would be safe to assume that most people who purchase Shadows of Undrentide have finished at least a bit of Neverwinter Nights, and that the tale in this expansion could have been written to accommodate high level characters. Oh, well...

This expansion brings a few new elements to the game which, while great in the single player mode, are really going to help out those who enjoy playing multiplayer. The first such change is the inclusion of "prestige classes." These are specialisations that characters can undertake... however, they need to meet certain skill and ability requirements. This of course means that the character needs to be of a higher level - someone starting Shadows of Undrentide with a new character will likely not get that far. Added tilesets and improved functionality for the DM tools will also help the multiplayer side of things. For the single player, new elements that

will make a difference include new skills and spells, as well as a greater degree of interactivity with whatever sidekick you may have. They now express opinions and have more personality. Additionally, you can now open and manage their inventory - something that was sorely lacking from the game before. There's nothing like using your NPC assistant as a pack mule.

With an extra 20 hours of story for the single player and a host of new features that can affect both single and double player games, Shadows of Undrentide is a worthwhile addition to the Neverwinter Nights game. It makes no major changes to the play dynamic or engine; it does, however, add more options for the player (always important) as well as improving some of the in-game functions. The story included is fun, and those who enjoyed the original will most certainly enjoy this expansion.



▶ Rats? Tenth level and I get to fight Rats?



▶ Dark, forboding, evil... perfect for a D&D excursion!



all games reviewed on rectron machines

### Minimum Specification

Pentium III 500 MHz | 128 MB RAM | 24 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator | 1.2 GB HDD

- ⊕ Extra character classes
- ⊕ New spells & skills
- ⊕ Good story
- ⊖ Not great for high level characters

### Summary

We return to the world of BioWare's Neverwinter Nights for an all new story in the Forgotten Realms. While this is not really a great expansion for well established characters, it offers around 20 hours worth of new story, a number of enhancements for the game and new tools for the multiplayer game. A worthwhile expansion, especially for fans.

# 80



## ps2 review:

# Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness

NOW AVAILABLE



Lara Croft is back again, in a game that was never meant to be, but inevitably came out anyway. Surprise surprise. But this is a darker title, a far more grown up story for a group of gamers that have been growing up with the ample bosomed, impossible waisted Ms Croft since her first appearance in computer games. Still, there comes a time when enough really is enough.

Although they said it would probably not happen, it did. Lara Croft is back, and this time she is ready to disappoint fans the world over. Although developers Core seem rather excited about this new title, it's the kind of nervous excitement and pride felt by parents of really

dumb kids. Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness is full of problems.

The first thing that crops up is the camera. Despite being adjustable by the player, the camera is something of a problem, particularly when preset camera angles come into play. It just seems to be stupid, really. But, then again, the graphics displayed by the camera are rather middle of the road. They're an improvement over the last title, sure... but that was a PS One title.

Next thing, and this is one that really got to me. The controls felt, well... not entirely sluggish, but not as crisp as you would like them to be. Sort of like a few milliseconds of delay between your control command and the character's action. This leads to a lot of

frustration, because this title is one where precision counts. Sure, you can get around it by having Lara walk everywhere and by being ultra careful, but when you have half the Gendarmes in Paris bearing down on you for a murder you didn't commit (yes, they went with that disgusting Hollywood storyline) careful ain't an option. The story is much darker, but totally clichéd. I won't go into that too much - there might still be a few slow witted fans who won't see through the plot right away. Add to that the fact that, while this game was supposed to be revolutionary, they really didn't add too much in terms of game play - you still do the same old stuff as in any other Tomb Raider title. Jump, duck, push, pull, snore, drool. The puzzles are a little too easy, but the movement challenges are a little too difficult (those dodgy controls again).

Oh, wait, there is a new "character development system!" Yes. This time around, Lara can become stronger as the game progresses. Hardly an original concept and it seems

that these "power-ups" happen at conveniently coincidental moments - like just before you need them. Fans may go nuts for this, but even RedTide has stopped playing it (and he's probably the original Tomb Raider fan boy). There are going to be many disappointed faces out there, their tears shining in the glow of a boring, unoriginal and rather sad television image...

Lara Croft's first visit to the PS2 is shoddy. It is certainly not the super game everyone thought it would be, and judging by the story line, the folks at Core are running out of ideas. The game that was meant to reinvent the Tomb Raider series has probably done more damage than good. However, there will be another Tomb Raider title - but Core will not develop it. That job will fall to Crystal Dynamics, who did Soul Reaver. At least this title will make the next one look a lot better.

### What RedTide says about the PC version

This latest instalment in the Tomb Raider series is a nasty disappointment - it's still Lara Croft alright but after all the speculation, hype and excitement Eidos [for more specifically Core] have delivered exactly the same game that we've been playing for the last 7 years. If the poor control, finicky and tedious game world interaction, patchy graphics, terrible camera [they've been struggling with this problem since the first game] and lack of pace don't put you off then the numerous bugs will. This isn't a syndrome of too many sequels - it's a case of a tired and obviously incompetent developer, and more distressingly, an indifferent publisher for allowing an obviously sub-standard game like this to see a store shelf. Don't worry Lara, we still love you - maybe these fools will get it right in 2005, until then.

SCORE: 36

#### Requirements

1 Player | Analog controller

- Core are out
- Crystal Dynamics are in

- What control?
- Snore...
- This is a plot?

#### Summary

Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness sees Ms Croft make her debut on the PS2. Sadly it isn't the sparkling performance one would have hoped for. While fans will probably go mad for it, that will be because Lara looks better than ever. The improved graphics are probably the best point of this rather mediocre title. Will this be the last Tomb Raider? That is a possibility...

# 49



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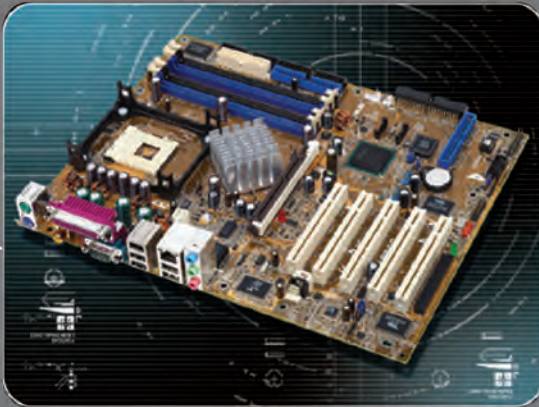
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## ps2 review:



Remember the Seventies? No, you probably wouldn't... I do, but just barely. I must admit that, in those hazy childhood recollections, Starsky and Hutch on TV is a fairly prominent feature. But how does a hit television show from around 30 years ago translate onto a modern gaming platform? And how will a younger market react to it?

Why exactly the Starsky and Hutch license was chosen for this game I do not know. Sure, it probably reruns every now and then in the States, but the market who would appreciate it tends to be older - and probably in search of youthful nostalgia. I don't have enough space to muse, though, so on



with the review. Starsky and Hutch, I can safely say, is one of the most enjoyable games I have encountered on the PS2 in a long time. It features wild action and spectacular stunts (a-la 70s TV show) as the player is required to chase down all manner of criminals through busy city streets. While the game does feature a shooting element, this comes down to little more than good timing - driving well is the key to success in this one.

Instead of a time limit, the game uses a unique "viewer rating" system. Performing stunts and the like earns viewer rating points. Making a hash up of things loses them - run out, and you fail your mission. With brilliantly overstated physics, a nice, simple control system and more action than you could shake a stick at, Starsky and Hutch is a great way to while away a few hours. The game may be a little short but the mission replay value is immense, as you keep trying to do things better and faster. It also

features a free drive mode, as well as tons of cars to unlock. Now I need to get Priest away from my PS2. He hasn't left my house for a week... guess he likes it too.



- Great action
- Brilliantly OTT
- Replayability
- Only 18 missions

# 89

## ps2 review:

Extreme sports simulations on the PS2 are about a dime a dozen these days, with many titles

resembling each other so closely, it's sometimes hard to distinguish between such vastly different activities as skateboarding and BMX riding. Despite this, it seems that Activision are determined to turn even more outrageous sports into games, and with Wakeboarding Unleashed, they've even managed to break free of the genre's monotony.

Apparently, so-called extreme sports are the "in thing" these days, despite the fact that most of us have never heard of any of these sports (no offence intended to any waxed-turtle-pavement-sledding aficionados out there), let alone the goofy looking individuals who are paid



obscene sums of cash to endorse the simulations of aforementioned sports. Despite my ignorance in the field of wakeboarding, I was soon to find that although Wakeboarding Unleashed is in many ways similar to the Tony Hawk series of games (and that is by no means a bad thing), it still has enough variety to make it a worthwhile addition to most people's collections. In layman's terms, wakeboarding is sort of like water-skiing, except using one solid board instead of

ski's. The 12 levels in the game are filled with rails to grind on and ramps to launch off, allowing you to score points and string combo's together a la Tony Hawk, but you also have the option of launching off the wake created by the speedboat to get air. Along the way, you'll need to complete gaps and objectives (some of which even see you behind the wheel of the speedboat) to unlock later levels, like most games in the genre. Aside

from some of the objectives being rather vague, the challenges and gaps are challenging enough to keep most gamers busy for a decent amount of time. Graphically, WU is practically superb - the water effects (and while we're talking about water, the physics are wonderfully realistic too), though the scenery does tend to look drab and dull at times. The soundtrack is standard alternative rock fare, which tends to complement the action quite nicely. Sorely lacking from WU, however, is a "Create a Boarder" mode - something I've come to expect from most titles in this genre, and given a selection of only 7 playable characters, it is indeed disappointing. Nevertheless, Wakeboarding Unleashed succeeds in being an entertaining, albeit imperfect, extreme sports game, with enough innovation to make it stand out from the plethora of titles in its genre.

- Innovative
- Entertaining
- Depth
- No "create-a-boarder" mode
- Relatively steep learning curve

# 76

# Starsky & Hutch

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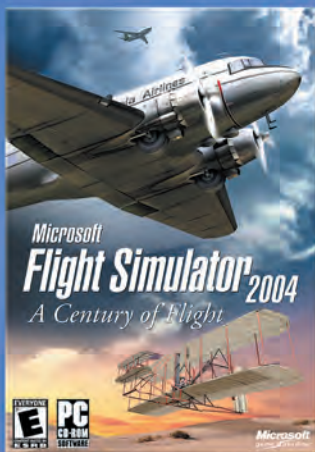
# Wakeboarding Unleashed

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# ps2 review: Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Operation Resurrection

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**Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Operation Resurrection** seeks to bring the relatively successful PC title of (almost) the same name to the PS2. Bearing in mind that consoles and FPS games are hardly synonymous with each other, this is certainly risky territory, and Operation Resurrection is, unfortunately, far from perfect.



easy to pick up, and within a few minutes you'll be blasting away undead mutant Nazis with the best of them. Unfortunately, however, there is absolutely no multiplayer mode on offer in the PS2 version of RTCW, and the

single-player mode leaves much to be desired at times. You control B.J. Blazkowicz, a US Army Ranger charged with the task of stopping Hitler's demented right-hand man, Himmler, before he succeeds in using the power of the occult to destroy the Allied forces. As is to be expected from this sort of game, the story merely provides an excuse for the different locales you'll find yourself in through the course of the game, without providing any additional excitement or intrigue.

Unfortunately, the play dynamic revolves solely around destroying everything that moves - there's nothing on offer to challenge the grey matter, and the enemy AI is, sadly, quite pathetic. Graphically, the textures generally look sharp, but the game does suffer from typical PS2 jagged edges, and occasional frame rate drops. The sound is rather good, with appropriate background tracks adding to the suspense, reasonable sound effects, and above-average voice acting. Ultimately, Operation Resurrection is a decent FPS, but no more than that. It pales considerably in comparison with the PC version, and the lack of multiplayer capabilities hampers its longevity, while the single player mode offers little more than the challenge of pointing and shooting. If all you're looking for is an excuse to blow things away, this may be the game for you, but if that's not the case, you're advised to try before you buy.

When porting a first-person shooter to a console, developers are faced with 2 major problems - firstly, a joypad is no match for a keyboard and mouse combination when it comes to control, and secondly, most FPS games rely on multiplayer capabilities to succeed. On the first count, Raster Productions have done a decent enough job - although a DualShock2 will never be ideal for this style of game; the controls are

single-player mode leaves much to be desired at times. You control B.J. Blazkowicz, a US Army Ranger charged with the task of stopping Hitler's demented right-hand man, Himmler, before he succeeds in using the power of the occult to destroy the Allied forces. As is to be expected from this sort of game, the story merely provides an excuse for the different locales you'll find yourself in through the course of the game, without providing any additional excitement or intrigue.

- Decent graphics
- Good sound
- No-brains-required action
- No multiplayer
- Poor enemy AI
- No-brains-required action

61

# ps2 review:



**If you had to choose one particular group of musical artists to base a fighting game on, rappers would probably be the most logical choice, since one wouldn't have to use too much imagination to combine the two. Def Jam VENDETTA is just like the real rap world, without the firearms, and it's got the opposition down for the count.**

The concept may seem somewhat absurd - a wrestling game without any actual wrestlers - but Def Jam VENDETTA is undoubtedly one of, if not the, best

wrestling game I've seen recently.

Although wrestling fans may be disappointed that DJV is, in many ways, a very basic game, lacking such novelties as steel-cages, assorted furniture, flamethrowers and the like, I found the lack of WWE-style soap opera melodramatics to be quite a refreshing change. In addition to roughly 32 fictional characters created for the game, 12 Def Jam artists,

including the likes of Redman, Method Man, Ludacris & DMX are on offer, each spectacularly detailed. The essence of the game is found in the story mode, which sees you controlling one of four characters on offer, working your way to the top of the "bizness" from scratch. As you win matches, you're awarded cash to boost your attributes, and as your attributes increase, your character's move sets "evolve", gradually becoming more powerful. The control system is easy to get to grips with, and DJV features literally hundreds upon hundreds of moves, including particularly vicious (and certainly far-fetched) finishers, most of which involve direct collisions between your opponent's head and the mat. The story mode is well executed, if a touch short, but the cut-scenes are beautifully rendered, and the story never feels contrived - it's gripping, but without being a burden on the player. Visually, Def Jam VENDETTA cannot be faulted - the different rings are all very nicely detailed, and the characters are spectacularly animated, with each of the Def Jam artists looking very much like their real-life counterparts. Aurally, the sound track is filled with cuts from many artists featured in the game, as well as a few who aren't, and if you can forgive the censoring of lyrics, it is certainly quite pumping (or

# Def Jam Vendetta

NOW AVAILABLE



should I say pimping?). On the whole, Def Jam VENDETTA is a highly entertaining wrestling game, blissfully free of WWE-inspired clichés, and is a must for anyone looking for fast paced, no frills fun.



- Tremendously fun
- Good story mode
- Dares to be different
- Lack of "gimmicks" may disappoint wrestling fans

85





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- ▶ Overclocking - FSB Multiplier

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- ▶ On board high speed connection IEEE1394a,mini1394a,USB2.0
- ▶ Integrated Cooling Engine(ICE)technology



- ▶ Supports AMD Socket 462 Athlon XP / Duron CPU
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- ▶ Supports AGP BX,6 Channel Audio
- ▶ Supports ATA 66/100/133,6 USB2.0
- ▶ On-board LAN Port
- ▶ Overclocking - FSB Multiplier



## gc review:

▶ Let's get deep for a moment - Wario is the epitome of a game character. He doesn't sugar-coat the ideologies of platform characters - it's all about the swag - running around a colourful world, beating up monsters that are in your way and picking up a lot of stuff. Sure, you get the occasional noble chaps, like that knight from Ghosts n' Goblins, but even Mario can't resist the occasional sound of coins hitting his wallet (or head). Wario is, if anything, an honest example of what platform gaming is all about. He's also a selfish bastard of note.

You'd know, this, though, if you've played any of the



▶ Giant plants seem to feature strongly... hmm...



former Wario games. This man is all about the money, and in Warioworld he finally amassed all of his wealth into a huge castle, complete with a throne on which he sits all day, laughing about his incredible fortune. All is fine until an evil jewel, one which he happens to own, decides to transport all his money into another realm, and change it into monsters. The rest is stuck into a massive treasure chest. Of course, that won't stop Wario as he embarks on the quest to beat up the monsters and get the runes that will open that treasure chest.

Warioworld is Warioland in 3D, more or less. The game areas are bigger, more interactive, and your powers of exploration are more, but it's still a side scrolling affair at heart, as opposed to the more common 3D platform games that give you a free-roaming world (Ratchet and Clank, Spiro, etc). This works well with Wario, though. The monsters re-spawn and are able to try and swamp you from all sides, but the greedy protagonist is able to punch, dive and shoulder-drive things out of his way. He can also use objects and dazed enemy units to do power attacks, such as spin them around as a weapon or do a power-slam into the ground.

Wario has to clear three worlds before he can get to the treasure chest. Each world consists of two levels with a boss each, and a final boss at the end of every world. This doesn't sound like a lot, but the respective maps are quite big, and they have a lot to do in it. Before you can exit a level, you need to pick up a certain amount of crystals. Crystals are at the end of puzzle rooms, which test your jump and movement reflexes. You can also collect all the golden hearts on a level, which will give you half a heart of permanent health (that's a heart per world, then). The maps are pretty distinct, ranging from a haunted mansion and a circus to a snow-level and a jungle. If you were expecting a complex game, though, look elsewhere. Although Warioworld is very challenging, it's

# Warioworld



pretty simple - jump, punch, pick stuff up. The amount of times you can re-spawn is determined by the money you have, and you're not bound to run out of that soon. The levels do have a degree of replay to uncover all the goods, but if you pay enough attention from the start, you'll be able to fully complete an area in two to three tries.

Still, it's a fun game, especially if you like Wario. He doesn't get any larger-than-life than this - yet.



### Requirements

1 Player | 20 memory blocks

- ⊕ Colourful world
- ⊕ Authentically Wario
- ⊕ Mindless fun
- ⊖ Too short
- ⊖ Gets repetitive

### Summary

Wario loses all of his cash and needs to get it back. He does so by beating up monsters and collecting even more cash. Warioworld is a great game, but it gets repetitive and doesn't provide a huge challenge to the non-platform-reflex impaired.

# 75

## gba review:

# Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

▶ How will one make a prolific martial arts movie into a compelling portable title? Simple - make it a side scroller...

In the tradition of Shinobi and Double Dragon comes Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, a game that is so retro it must have had the developers jump around like giddy boys, clutching their SNES systems in their sweaty little hands. Then again, should I be surprised? The GBA is pretty much a slightly more powerful SNES console.



That said, CTHD is fun. I'm not sure how the 3D incarnation will be, but the 2D one is fun, and pretty old-school, right down to having to write down codes for every



level. That bit is rather annoying - why couldn't they just use the GBA's ability to save onto the cartridge?

You play as the Jade Fox's apprentice as she steals the sword, takes her desert travels and so forth. The game has several combos you can use, and as you progress through a stage you can pick up power-up spheres from slain enemies that will eventually let you do once-off special attacks (afterwards you need to fill up again). Each stage has several sections with a variety of enemies, and you also need to collect jade dragons (10 of which give you an extra life).

The story is represented, quite simplistically, with scrolling photos from the movie. Characters glide across the screen independently from the background and the text tells you what they are saying. Not that it matters. You won't be playing Crouching Tiger,



Hidden Dragon for any kind of meaningful addition to the movie experience. Its good arcade fun and perfect for people who like to time their simplistic button bashing. A built-in Kung Fu guide will show you how to do combos, and different enemies need different tactics, but in essence it's a new face for an old genre - quite suitable for the GBA.

- ⊕ Classic arcade scroller
- ⊕ Variety of moves
- ⊕ Addictive
- ⊕ No depth
- ⊕ No save feature

# 80

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**Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness**  
A series of grisly murders brings Lara into conflict with a sinister Alchemist from the past, and a secret alliance of powerful individuals shrouded in mystery. Accused of the murder of her one time mentor, Lara Croft becomes a fugitive on the run. Pursued by the police, she follows the Alchemist into a dark world of blood, betrayal and vengeance where it is up to her to defeat this unholy alliance, and stop them from unleashing their incredible powers on the world.



**Enter the Matrix**  
Enter the Matrix is the story-within-the-story. It features awesome gunplay and spectacular martial arts that bend the rules of the Matrix, as well as insane driving and stunts, and the chance to pilot the fastest hovercraft in the fleet. This game isn't just set in the Matrix universe - it's an integral part of the entire Matrix experience, weaving in and out of the highly anticipated 2nd instalment in the film trilogy, The Matrix Reloaded™.

# H@RDOR3

## m o t h e r b o a r d s

writer: Tom "Fr00tC@k3" Taylor

All H@rdcor3 hardware is tested on an Emerald computer supplied by Light Edge Technology:

2GHz Intel Pentium 4 processor  
MSI 845PE Max 2 motherboard  
Transcend Radeon 9700  
Philips 107E 17" monitor  
Transcend 1GHz RAM DDR333  
Western Digital 80GB HDD 7200rpm  
LG DVD/CD-RW combo drive



### Benchmarking

Benchmarking motherboards is a tedious task. For both the AMD and Intel motherboard platforms I used two sticks of Transcend 512MB DDR400 RAM, a Transcend Radeon 9800 Pro, and a 7200rpm Maxtor 80GB IDE hard drive. The AMD test processor was an Athlon XP 3200+ and the Intel processor was a 3.2GHz Intel Pentium 4. The operating system comprised of Windows XP service pack 1, with DirectX 9.1 installed. If the motherboard supported it, the RAM was installed in DUAL DDR mode, and all Intel based motherboards had Hyper Threading enabled. The Benchmark programs I used were PassMark's Performance Test ([www.passmark.com](http://www.passmark.com)), UT 2003, 3DMark 2001 SE build330, 3DMark03, Quake III (I ran both time demos), and finally I ran the CPU Arithmetic benchmark, CPU Multi-Media benchmark, and the Memory Bandwidth benchmark in the new SiSoftware Sandra Standard Max3! application.

The Radeon graphics card featured the latest Catalyst 3.6 drivers. I rated the motherboards according to four criteria, with features I looked at what the specific motherboard offered, anything new, unique and useful earned extra points. I took into account any extra's that are bundled with the motherboard such as software, rounded cables and so on. I rated each motherboard's overclocking potential according to the level of overclocking it is able to achieve. The value for money category should speak for itself and Performance rating was deducted from a motherboards benchmark results.

With each motherboard I formatted the hard drive, and reinstalled everything. To keep the process as consistent as possible I installed each application in the same order throughout, and the same goes for the benchmarks, which were run each time in the same order.

Finally I would like to thank the following companies for supplying me with the relevant test equipment - Light Edge supplied me with the 3.2GHz Intel Pentium 4, Transcend DDR400 RAM, and the Transcend Radeon 9800 Pro. Sahara supplied the AMD Athlon XP 3200+ and I would like to extend huge thanks to Rectron Cape Town for supplying me with the Maxtor 80GB hard drive at the last minute.



▶ I remember the days when a motherboard was the one hardware component that was never upgraded, unless of course you bought a new CPU. Motherboards have always been dull and unattractive and when you went to buy one it usually came with a generically branded box and featured nothing exciting. But the times they have a changed...

During the last two years companies like MSI, ASUS, and Gigabyte have produced motherboards that come bundled with extra features and attractive packaging. When case modification became a serious hobby and every other gamer started doing it motherboard manufacturers had to reinvent their products, making them more appealing to look at - if your motherboard is going to be visible through a glass or Perspex window it should look a little more exciting. Both Gigabyte and MSI were the forerunners in this department. Gigabyte almost had it right when they introduced a blue LED on their DPS2 (Dual Power System) daughter-boards [which fitted onto their motherboards]. This looked awesome when installed in a case which had a window and I am sure that this feature alone encouraged sales amongst many eager gamers.

MSI, on the other hand, introduced the 3-colour running lights on the Northbridge heat sink of their Intel-based NEO motherboards. But my hat goes off to DFI who took the gap and introduced a motherboard aimed directly at the gamer. The DFI LANPARTY motherboards host various features aimed squarely at the gamer, but more about that in the review.

Another feature to new motherboards are the inclusion of extra's like rounded IDE cables and front connection-panels which allows for USB ports and audio connectors to be brought to the front of your computer.

Apart from the visual aspect, motherboards these days also come bundled with a wide range of features. Things like Serial ATA, Dual DDR, Gigabit Ethernet, and RAID allow us to do far more with our motherboards than was previously possible. Many motherboards are also geared towards the over-clocking market, and as such, manufacturers allow for the processor to be over-clocked from within the BIOS. It goes without saying though that if you wish to over-clock your processor you need to make sure your heat sink and fan is able to adequately cool the over-clocked processor.

The motherboard industry has really broken all barriers, so much so, that I honestly cannot wait to see which product will feature what, next.



Here is a very brief rundown of the different chipsets I will mention throughout this roundup.

#### Intel Chipsets

**Intel 875P Chipset** - This is Intel's flagship chipset, although not all that much better than the 865PE chipset it has one feature which sets it apart, PAT (Performance Acceleration Technology), or should I say 'did' set it apart. Only Compatible with Pentium 4 (Prescott) or higher processors.

**Intel 865 Chipset** - This chipset is available in three flavours, 865P (aimed at mainstream-does not support 800MHz FSB), 865PE (the one to go for-supports 800MHz FSB) 865G (almost identical to the 865PE, only difference is that this one has an integrated graphics controller). The great thing about the 865PE chipset is that the developers have figured out a way to enable PAT technology on it (you can enable it by flashing the Bios to the latest version), thus effectively closing the gap between it and the 875P chipset. Soon though, Intel's new 865 chipset will have the PAT feature permanently disabled. Compatible with both Celeron and Pentium 4 processors.

#### AMD Chipsets

**VIA KT600** - The VIA KT600 chipset is the newest chipset from this Taiwanese company. The KT600 takes-over the reigns from the not-too-popular KT400 and KT400A and with it VIA is hoping to give some competition to the NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra. Having said that though the chipset has not changed all that much, it now supports the AMD Athlon XP processors with 400MHz FSB but sadly does not support a Dual DDR RAM setup

**NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra** - Probably the most popular AMD based chipset, the Ultra depicting the new version of this chipset. The NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra supports 400MHz FSB and Dual DDR400. It had a tough time proving its worth after the original nForce but it has done a good job of it and many gamers would agree with me.

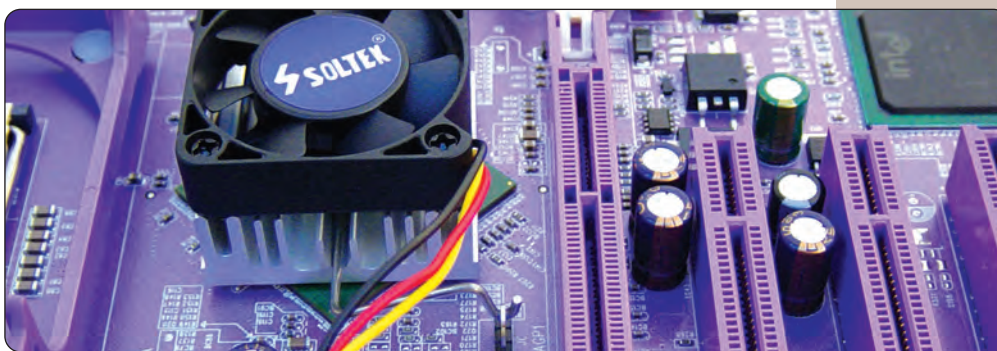
Even though I said in the introduction that motherboard manufacturers are creating motherboards with a strong visual impact, this one was really quite impressive to look at. The Soltek SL-86SPE-L is a completely purple motherboard with matching PCI, RAM, and IDE slots. Soltek motherboards have a large following internationally and it is not difficult to see why. This motherboard, based on the Intel 865PE chipset features all the standard goodies but its performance vs. price ratio sets it apart from most of the Intel based motherboards in this roundup. A reason why this, and other, Soltek motherboards in general are so well priced is because its added extras are a bit on the thin side. There are no fancy extras on the motherboard itself and the box also does not contain much. The software which ships with this motherboard is nothing spectacular and includes titles such as PC-Cillin 2002, Virtual Drive 7, and a rather outdated PartitionMagic 6.0 SE to name a few. There is also a hardware monitor utility included which allows you to see the CPU and system temperatures as well as some voltage ratings.

Sadly this software looks very tacky and I was disappointed that Soltek did not put more effort into its layout.

This motherboard's BIOS shows some potential in the over-clocking arena. On the motherboard itself there are 3 jumper settings which allow you to either autodetect the FSB, or set it between 100MHz, 133MHz, or 200MHz FSB. In

automatic mode you are able to set the FSB in the BIOS.

I was impressed with the offering from Soltek, although it would not be my motherboard of choice as it does not offer much extra, this is a superb motherboard for the gamer on a tight budget.



Features	80	<b>Overall</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>Pros:</b> Price <b>Cons:</b> Extras <b>Supplied by:</b> TVR Computers [011] 807-1390 <b>ERP:</b> R 1139 <b>Internet:</b> www.soltek.com.tw
Overclocking	87			
Value for money	92			
Performance	80			

Intel

It is a sad fact that the Albatron brand is not as well known as some of the other brands available locally. This is largely due to the fact that Albatron is fairly new to the South African market and it does not enjoy a large advertising campaign. The Albatron PX865PE Proll is a motherboard which impressed me in many ways and it will soon be clear why I say this motherboard is a dream for over-clocking. This motherboard is based on Intel's 865PE

chipset and its package contents sadly do not offer much extra, its over-clocking ability makes up for it though. Albatron also showed that it can be hip by placing a blue LED fan on the Northbridge heat sink. Something else which caught my attention was that this motherboard has an 8 channel onboard audio codec which is powered by the VIA VT1720 sound processor.

The manual supplied with this motherboard has a section dedicated to over-clocking and explains the practice in detail. Incredibly this motherboard is able to over-clock the FSB to 1.3 GHz (333 MHz CPU host frequency), but at this high frequency you will need a serious CPU cooler. Something not supported by many motherboards is DDR RAM over-clocking, this motherboard allows you to increase the DDR frequency up to 532MHz. Ram can be finicky so if you wish to over-clock your RAM make sure you buy



a product which can handle the higher frequencies.

Another feature I found interesting was the watch dog timer, this feature will monitor over-clocking experiments and as soon as a system becomes unbootable, it will then reset the BIOS configurations preventing you from having to open the case and do it manually. This is a great motherboard, albeit a bit bare in the extra's department. On the up side, the person who will buy this product will not be interested in much else apart from the high performance it offers.

Features	89	<b>Overall</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>Pros:</b> Great for overlocking <b>Cons:</b> You'll probably need water-cooling <b>Supplied by:</b> When-Shen [044] 8747588 <b>ERP:</b> R 1960 <b>Internet:</b> www.albatron.com.tw
Overclocking	94			
Value for money	90			
Performance	85			

Intel

Gigabyte has always been a strong brand locally, thanks to Rectron who has done a superb job of marketing the brand. But Gigabyte, like Soltek, ASUS, and Epox does not supply its motherboards with many extras (Symantec Internet Security 2003 is the only 3rd party bundled software with this motherboard) but it does sport a couple of very handy features. The first and most obvious is Gigabyte's Dual Bios technology, although it is not a particularly new feature it is still one of the best ideas implemented on a motherboard. Dual BIOS simply means that Gigabyte has produced the motherboard with main and backup BIOS. The backup BIOS automatically kicks in when the main BIOS fails due to a BIOS flash gone wrong or virus activity. Another BIOS related feature is X-Press BIOS

Rescue, which automatically recovers a damaged BIOS.

Over-clocking junkies will love this motherboard as its BIOS allows the CPU, RAM, and AGP slots to be over-clocked. The CPU Host Frequency can be set up to 355MHz and the RAM frequency can be over-clocked to 710MHz, this is somewhat unrealistic in real world terms, but it is great to have the ability to



do so if your RAM and CPU cooling can handle the job.

My first impression of this motherboard was an average one simply because the product looked plain and the bundle a bit thin, but after looking at its benchmark results it becomes obvious that this motherboard is a solid performer. If you want no frills but only performance you cannot go wrong with this motherboard. Its price is a tad high though and is about the only thing I disliked.

Intel

Features	89	<b>Overall</b> <b>89</b>	Pros: Great Performance
Overclocking	95		Cons: Price
Value for money	85		Supplied by: Rectron [011] 203 1000
Performance	90		ERP: R 1999
			Internet: www.giga-byte.com

If you regularly read online hardware reviews, chances are that you have heard great things about the ASUS P4P800 Deluxe. It is for this reason that I was quite eager to test this motherboard to see if it lived up to my expectations. Sadly the answer is two-fold; this Intel 865PE-based chipset motherboard offers an array of interesting and useful features, which is what ASUS motherboards have a reputation for. On the flipside its performance lets it down a bit and it scores well below some of the other contestants in this roundup.

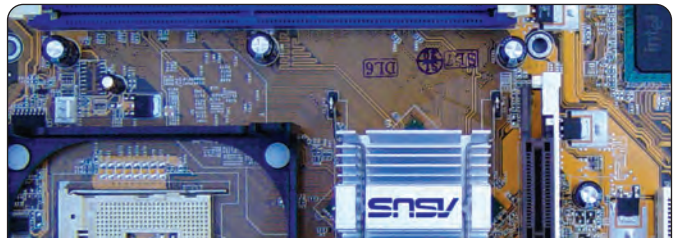
Feature-packed is the right description for this motherboard and apart from the usual features offered on an Intel 865PE based motherboard this one hosts unique features such as Ai BIOS solution, C.PR (CPU Parameter Recall), Instant Music, and Ai Over-clocking, among others.

Ai BIOS solution is a combination of three BIOS related features - CrashFree BIOS2, which allows you to restore the original BIOS data from the ASUS support CD, or a floppy containing the BIOS data files, in case the BIOS gets corrupted, ASUS Q-Fan technology adjusts the fan speeds according to the system load allowing for quiet operation. The last of the Ai BIOS solution features is the ASUS POST (Power On Self Test) reporter, in a nutshell this allows you to have voice prompts, instead of beeps for POST errors. C.PR is a handy feature for Over-clocking enthusiast which automatically resets the BIOS to its default values when a system becomes un-bootable due to unstable over-clocking settings.

A feature on the ASUS P4P800 Deluxe called Instant Music allows you to play audio CD's without booting into Windows. Although this might sound handy it

is not really and it has its limitations such as it will not work if you install an add-on sound card and it only works if you have a PS/2 keyboard.

This motherboard might not be a top performer but it has great over clocking abilities. You can either use the built in automatic over-clocking feature which will allow for an overall over-clock of 30% or you can do it manually. The CPU host frequency is able to be set up to 400MHz (effectively allowing an FSB of 1600MHz) and its CPU Ratio setting can be set to 28. Doing the math you will see that this motherboard allows the Pentium 4, 3.20GHz processor to be over-clocked to 11.2GHz, unrealistic by all conventional means but fun to know nonetheless.



Intel

Features	92	<b>Overall</b> <b>89</b>	Pros: Great overclocking
Overclocking	96		Cons: Performance lacks
Value for money	90		Supplied by: Sahara Computers [011] 542 1000
Performance	80		ERP: R 1521
			Internet: www.asus.com.tw



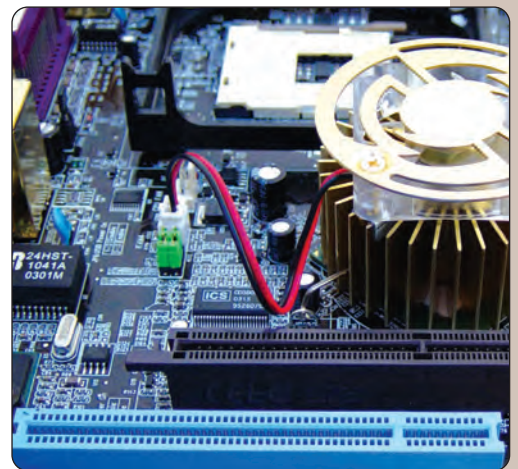
One thing I have always liked about Chaintech's products is that the bundle they offer is always a great one and there are always one or two extra surprises in the box. The Chaintech Zenith CT-9CJS is based on Intel's top-of-the-range 875P chipset, it features two

Gigabit Ethernet adapters, Chaintech's CBOX3 and the Handigator. There are also a set of rounded IDE cables which is great to improve the airflow inside your case as well as a funky 4-in-1 Zenith branded screwdriver set.

The CBOX3 I mentioned is a device which fits into an open 5 1/4 inch bay on the front of your case and includes various ports making connectivity much easier. These include two USB 2.0 ports, an earphone and microphone jack, an IEEE-1394 port, a two digit LCD which displays POST codes and CPU temperature. My favourite feature of CBOX3 was the 6-in-1 card reader which is able to read memory storage cards as used by digital cameras and PDA's. The Handigator is another interesting device, it is a wireless remote control which mimics the function of a mouse and features various hot keys to applications. Although I do not feel that controlling your computer via a remote is all that practical what I did like about the Handigator is that it can also control your computer's volume which is great if you are watching a DVD on your computer while sitting a distance away.

The onboard sound is provided by the VIA ICEnsemble codec and offers 8 channel sound. There is also an added PCI CMC (Chaintech Multimedia Card) card which enables the 9 channel sound by adding three extra audio jacks as well as an S/PDIF port for digital audio output.

Even with all its extra features, Chaintech also included a decent software bundle which includes Norton Internet Security 2003 as well as a standalone version of Norton AntiVirus 2003. Over-clocking hasn't been forgotten and this motherboard is able to over-clock from within the BIOS and by using the supplied Apogee Over-clocking Utility. The BIOS does not offer much in terms of over-clocking but the Apogee Over-clocking Utility allows for better over-clocking.



Intel

Features	95	<b>Overall</b> <b>91</b>	Pros: Superb performance   Great extras
Overclocking	90		Cons: Not for the gamer on a budget
Value for money	88		Supplied by: Sonic Informed [021] 551 8218
Performance	92		ERP: R 2699
			Internet: www.chaintech.com.tw

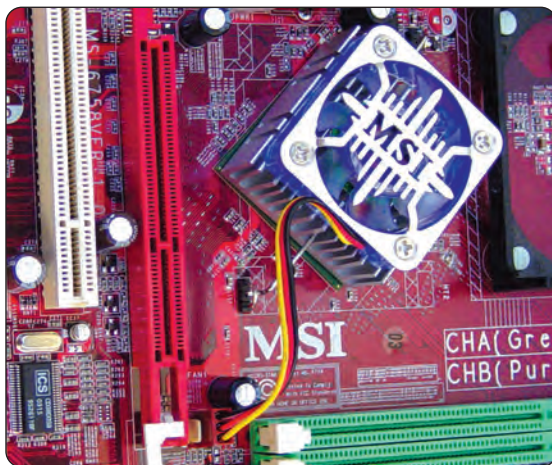
**MSI 875P Neo**

MSI has always been one of those brands which you know that if you buy it you buy quality. The MSI 875P Neo is the older brother of the very popular 865PE NEO2 and the only major difference between the two is the chipset this one uses, the Intel 875P chipset.

The most noticeable feature of both the 875P Neo and the 865PE Neo2 is the tri-coloured running lights on the fan of the Northbridge chip. This funky looking light display is a great way to attract attention to your computer if you have a window in your case.

A new and interesting feature found on this motherboard, is MSI's CoreCell technology. This technology is made up of four sub-features - BuzzFree,

PowerPro, LifePro, and Speedster. Working together these technologies monitors the system state and acts accordingly ensuring a stable and cooler running computer. A good example is BuzzFree, this feature monitors the system temperature and controls the CPU and Northbridge fans accordingly. If your system is running hot, BuzzFree speeds up the fans and ensures your



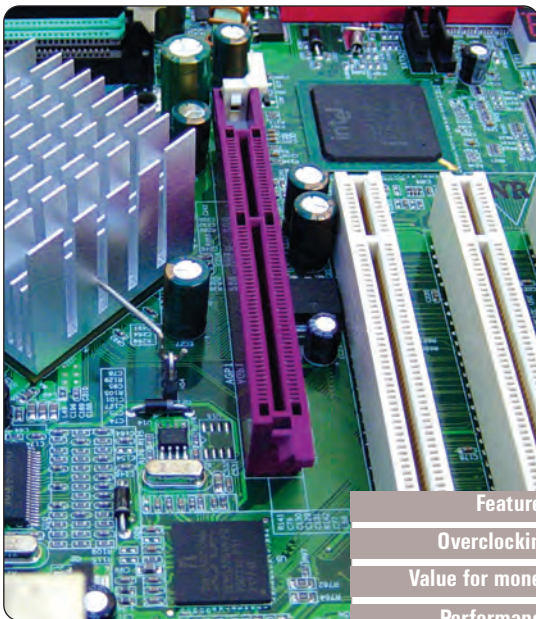
system will never overheat, the opposite is also true, if the system is idle then BuzzFree will reduce the fan speed thus lowering system noise. In conjunction with the CoreCell technology is the Core Centre Software which allows for over-clocking from within the Windows environment. MSI also recently released a new BIOS for the 875P Neo motherboard which adds an extra item to the BIOS, a Voltage and Frequency control menu. Under this new menu there are various preset over-clocked ranges, the highest of which over-clocked the 3.20GHz Pentium 4 to 3.50GHz. The MSI 875P Neo is an exceptionally stable motherboard with much room for over-clocking, that is if you upgrade the BIOS. It did not perform as well in all of the benchmark areas as I would have hoped but its overall performance proved it can keep up with the top competitors.

**Intel**

Features	90	<b>Overall</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>Pros:</b> Solid performance <b>Cons:</b> BIOS update needed <b>Supplied by:</b> Light Edge Technology [021] 510-8270 <b>ERP:</b> R 1999 <b>Internet:</b> www.msi.com.tw
Overclocking	90			
Value for money	89			
Performance	87			

**EPoX 4PCA3+**

I have always wondered why so many gamers bought EPoX motherboards. Aesthetically, they have never appealed to me and they did not seem to offer much bundled extras. It was not until I saw the performance offered by these boards that I learned to appreciate the hidden beauty they possess. Internationally, EPoX is a strong brand with a large following and it will soon become obvious why. Although the EPoX 4PCA3+ does not offer the same appeal as some of the other motherboards in this roundup purely because of its lack of extra's. What counts in its favour though is its Intel 875P chipset, a



couple of innovative and handy hardware features, and of course the benchmark results it produces.

The first thing you will notice on the motherboard is the two digit LCD display built onto the motherboard. This LCD displays POST codes which will help to identify any errors, should they occur. A feature I particularly liked is EZ Boot, this feature allows you to simply press the escape key to select a boot device, this, instead of going into the BIOS, is a great time and effort saver. This motherboard is definitely not over-clocking shy, it has a dedicated BIOS menu called Power BIOS in which you can over-clock to your hearts desire. The first option in this menu is called Watch Dog, as with the Albatron PX865PE Proll this feature will automatically reset your BIOS to its default settings if a system becomes unbootable after an over-clock attempt. Looking at this motherboard's benchmark results it is easy to see why I was so impressed, it out performed most of the Intel based motherboards in this roundup and its retail price is not all that bad either.

**Intel**

Features	88	<b>Overall</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>Pros:</b> Superb performance <b>Cons:</b> Lack of extras <b>Supplied by:</b> pc-dot-com [021] 949-1243 <b>ERP:</b> R 1881 <b>Internet:</b> www.epox.com
Overclocking	91			
Value for money	88			
Performance	92			

**DFI LANPARTY PRO875**

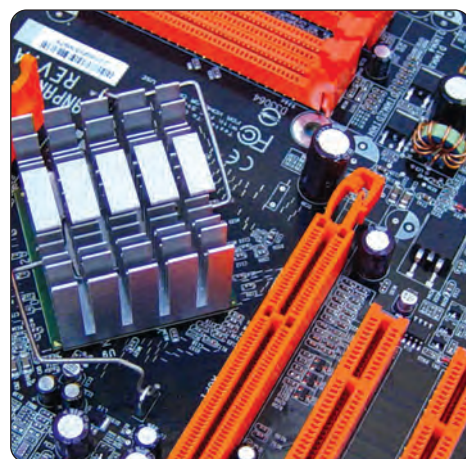
As a NAG reader I am sure you have heard about DFI's LANPARTY motherboards. The LANPARTY motherboards are available in three models, one for the Intel platform and two for the AMD platform. This one, based on the Intel 875P chipset, features an orange colour scheme whereby all the plastic slots on the board will glow a luminescent orange when placed under UV light. There is also a set of orange rounded cables included, which are also UV sensitive.

Apart from a great performing chipset, this motherboard has many extra's which makes it a great value for money motherboard. To me, one of the most innovative ideas in a long time is the PC Transpo. It is effectively a carry strap for your case and it has a place for your keyboard and mouse. Another innovative feature is the FrontX device which slots into an open 5 1/4 inch bay on the front of your computer. But this is no ordinary expansion panel, in theory you are able to select the expansion slots you want to use and then manually slot them into any of the given slots. Sadly there is not much option on what to place on the FrontX and for the LANPARTY PRO875 motherboard there is only the option to use the USB, headphone, and microphone expansion.

On the motherboard there is yet another innovative feature, the EZ Touch switches, these are merely a power button and a reset switch which is built onto the motherboard, allowing you to switch on your PC before even connecting the cases' power button. There are also a set of four diagnostic LEDs which indicate the system state as it boots up.

For some reason the Intel based LANPARTY motherboard does not feature dual

Ethernet ports, something the other two models in the LANPARTY series does have, and this is one feature I would have loved to see on this motherboard. The DFI LANPARTY PRO875 is not as versatile in its over-clocking as some of the other motherboards in this roundup, but looking at this package as a whole you will not be disappointed.



**Intel**

Features	96	<b>Overall</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>Pros:</b> Great extras and features <b>Cons:</b> No Dual Ethernet <b>Supplied by:</b> AXIZ [011] 237-7000 <b>ERP:</b> R 1899 <b>Internet:</b> www.dfi.com
Overclocking	90			
Value for money	92			
Performance	87			

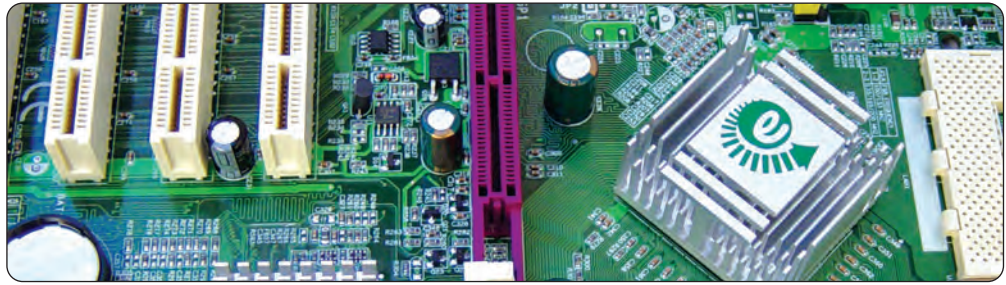
All of my gaming friends rave about the AMD based EPoX motherboards. The 8RDA3+ builds on the successful 8RDA2+ with the biggest improvement being built in support from the new 400MHz FSB AMD processors. This motherboard uses NVIDIA's highly popular and successful nForce2 Ultra chipset and features something I particularly like, Dual Ethernet adapters, albeit only 100Mbps. A feature becoming a standard on the EPoX

motherboards is the two digit-LCD built onto it. This diagnostic LED displays system state information and is useful for troubleshooting.

EPoX motherboards are not popular amongst gamers and computer enthusiasts for its bundle, having said that the EPoX 8RDA3+ does ship with a useful item, rounded IDE cables. A feature also found on the Intel based EPoX motherboard I

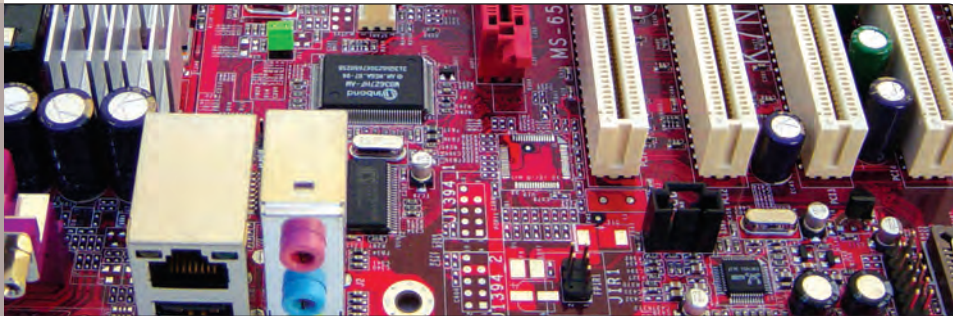
reviewed this month is EZ Boot. When the computer boots up you simply press the Escape key and it prompts you with a boot menu from which you can select the desired boot device.

Looking at its over-clock abilities, the EPoX 8RDA3+ has a System Performance menu item which allows you to select an automatic over-clocking



Features	88	<b>Overall</b> <b>89</b>
Overclocking	91	
Value for money	89	
Performance	89	

**Pros:** Dual Ethernet  
**Cons:** Performance  
**Supplied by:** pc-dot-com [021] 949-1243  
**ERP:** R 1402  
**Internet:** www.epox.com



The MSI K7N2 Delta seemed a bit boring after I looked at the 875P Neo motherboard. There are no flashy lights or even a fan on its Northbridge for that matter

There is not much to this motherboard in terms of features either, it is based on the NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra chipset, it supports dual channel DDR400 RAM, and has a built in 100Mbps Ethernet port.

There are a set of rounded cables included in the box but these rounded cables are not like the neat, plastic covered cables, instead the ones bundled with this motherboard are the normal IDE cable which has been folded and covered with a mesh-like material. Although these would help with airflow in a computer case they do not look as good as the optional red rounded cables

found in the box of the MSI 875P Neo motherboard.

What counts in this motherboard's favour is that it is able to perform very closely to some of the other motherboards in this roundup and it retails for a lot less than many of its competitors.

In the BIOS there are three levels of system performance settings - the first is Auto and at this level the most stable settings are automatically set. The second option is High Performance and at this level the BIOS automatically

sets the system to over-clock. Lastly there is Manual which allows for customisation of performance options.

Taking the performance vs. Price ratio into consideration, this is a great motherboard at a very reasonable price.

Features	80	<b>Overall</b> <b>84</b>
Overclocking	88	
Value for money	85	
Performance	85	

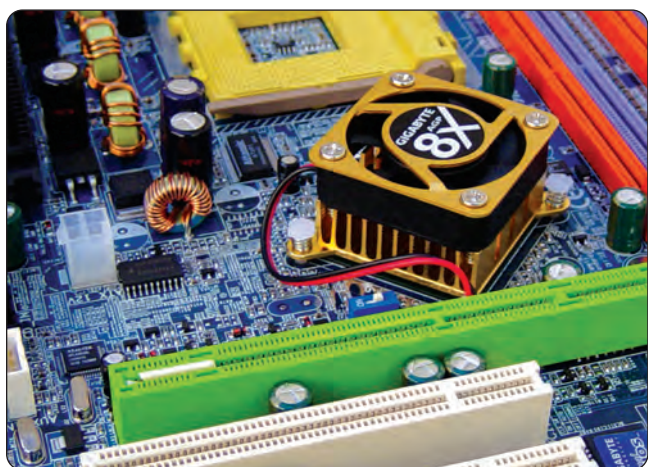
**Pros:** Price  
**Cons:** Package is a bit thin  
**Supplied by:** Light Edge Technology [021] 510-8270  
**ERP:** R 950  
**Internet:** www.msi.com.tw

Gigabyte has incorporated some really useful and innovative functionality with the 7NXP. This motherboard uses NVIDIA's nForce2 Ultra chipset and supports dual channel DDR RAM as well as the new 400MHz FSB for AMD processors. Another quite noticeable and unusual feature is the DPS (Dual Power System) daughter board which slots onto the motherboard and is situated right behind the PS/2 ports. The idea behind the DPS daughter board is to provide a 6-phase power circuit to the motherboard thus increasing overall stability and it also has a hand in ensuring a slightly better over-clock. A feature only found on a select few motherboards, and on which I really like, is dual Gigabit Ethernet ports.

Another feature, on which I have never seen before, is a bracket that slots into the back of the computer case brings two Serial ATA headers and one power connector to the outside of the case. This is a great idea, especially with Serial ATA drives being hot swappable, no need to open the case if you wish to connect a hard drive temporarily.

Looking in the BIOS at the over-clocking potential of this motherboard you will be pleased to see that this motherboard, although not my personal favourite for the job, can over-lock to a very acceptable level. It has four pre-defined System Performance settings. The first, Optimal, sets the PC to its most stable settings, the second and third settings, Aggressive and Turbo allows the motherboard to use higher performance settings, and the fourth, Expert, allows the user full control over the over-clocking settings.

Looking at the Gigabyte package this is a great buy, its price might not be ideal but loyal Gigabyte fan's will love this one.



Features	90	<b>Overall</b> <b>87</b>
Overclocking	89	
Value for money	82	
Performance	88	

**Pros:** Dual Gigabit Ethernet | External Serial ATA header  
**Cons:** Price  
**Supplied by:** Rectron [011] 203 1000  
**ERP:** R 1999  
**Internet:** www.giga-byte.com





The Shuttle brand is probably better known for its X-PC small form-factor PC's and when I was first introduced to its motherboards I did not think all that much of them. Like the ugly duckling in the fairy tale, this one turned out to be a real beauty.

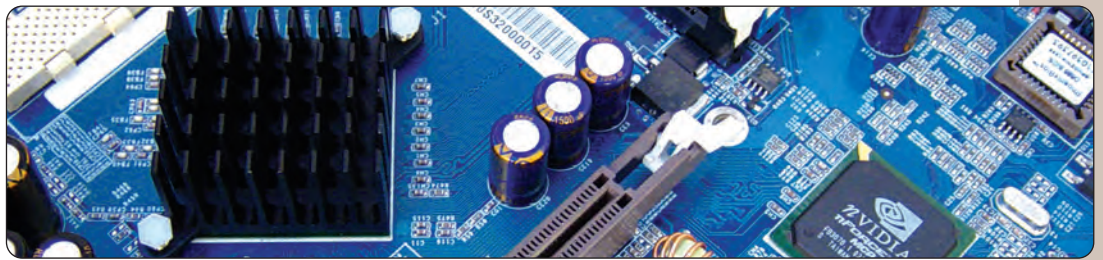
Looking at the contents of the box, there isn't much bundled with this motherboard but the one benefit to this is that it keeps the price to a minimum. The Shuttle AN35N Ultra is based on the NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra chipset and supports processors with 400MHz FSB, it also supports dual channel DDR400.

The over-clocking features for this motherboard are very acceptable especially when looking at the estimated retail price. As with the EPoX 8RDA3+ this motherboard features three over-clock settings in the BIOS - Optimal, Aggressive, Turbo, and Expert. The function is exactly the same as the ones found on the EPoX board so I will not go into that much detail. On the Expert setting though the motherboard's voltage and clock settings are fully adjustable making this a great budget over-clocking motherboard.

Sadly this motherboard does not feature any exciting specifications, which

can be either a good or bad thing depending on your perspective. I for one appreciate the fact that there are still manufacturers who cater for people who want a straight forward decent performing motherboard.

The benchmark results show that even though this mother does not have all that many features it is able to outperform many of its competitors. If you are looking for a non-nonsense motherboard and want to save some bucks in the process this is definitely the motherboard to consider.

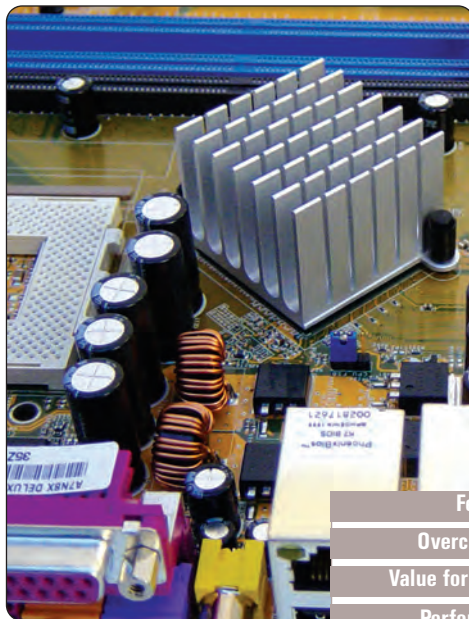


Features	80	<b>Overall</b> <b>86</b>	Pros: Price
Overclocking	89		Cons: Lacks features
Value for money	88		Supplied by: Wen Tek International [021] 551 8866
Performance	89		ERP: R 883
			Internet: www.shuttle.com

AMD

When I unpacked this motherboard I was quite excited. There have been many online reviewers who have raved about this particular motherboard and as I do not always believe their judgements I wanted to see for myself. The ASUS A7N8X Deluxe

is based on the NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra chipset it supports features such as 400MHz FSB and the NVIDIA SoundStorm audio processor. One feature which immediately caught my eye was that this motherboard has dual 10/100 Ethernet ports onboard and although I would have preferred two Gigabit Ethernet adapters it is dual nonetheless. This motherboard also hosts some features which have



become standard on ASUS motherboards. The first of which is ASUS POST reporter, this feature allows the system to use a voice instead of beeps to indicate POST activity. Another, more useful, feature is ASUS' C.O.P (CPU Overheating Protection) which will automatically shut down the computer if the processor temperatures reach high levels; this is a great feature to have, especially if you over-clock your processor. Looking in the BIOS there was the regular over-clocking options, nothing which really impressed me, but all of which seems standard amongst most motherboards. This motherboard also features the preset over-clock settings that allow the motherboard to be set to Optimal, Aggressive, and Expert. Optimal allows for the most stable and conservative performance, Aggressive sets the performance slightly higher which increases the risk for system instability and Expert which allows for full customization of the over-clock settings.

Even though some other reviewers raved about this board, this one, in comparison to some of the others in this group test, delivered nothing that really made me sit up and take notice. It offers solid performance and will not be a bad choice for prospective buyers.

Features	89	<b>Overall</b> <b>87</b>	Pros: Dual ethernet
Overclocking	88		Cons: None comes to mind
Value for money	83		Supplied by: Sahara Computers [011] 542 1000
Performance	88		ERP: R 1416
			Internet: www.asus.com.tw

AMD

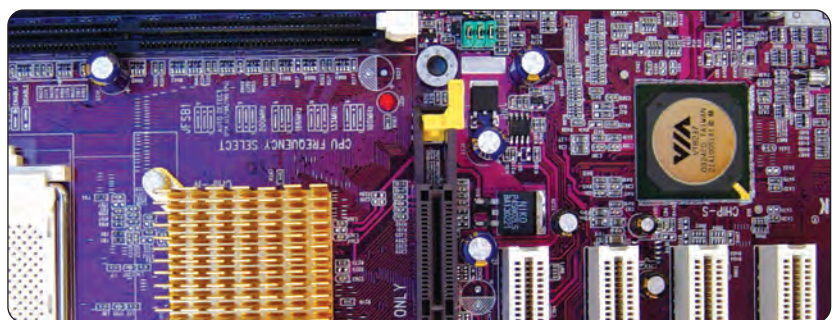


The guys at Sonic Informed were really keen to get this motherboard to me for this roundup. I was glad, as this is one of the first KT600

motherboards in the country, but when I first saw the price I thought it must have either been a mistake or it performed really badly. Boy was I wrong.

The Soltek SL KT600-R does not feature much on the bundle side, but its performance vs. price ratio more than makes up for it. Looking at the board you will notice it is a funky purple/maroon colour which is a nice change from the traditional colours. There is very little that I did not like about this motherboard, and apart from the fact that there is no onboard Ethernet adapter (the SL KT600-RL has an onboard Ethernet connector) the one thing that I did not like all that much is the positioning of the 20-pin power connector on the motherboard. It is situated about one and a half centimetres from the AGP slot and my concern is that if you install a graphics card with a big heat sink on the back of it, like the new NVIDIA FX5900 the power connector and graphics card will fit very tightly.

Over-clocking is not this motherboard's strongest feature though and there are a couple of things you would need to take note of before rushing out and buying this motherboard. This motherboard only has basic over-clocking



features, a good indication of this is that the AGP speed cannot be locked, thus it will also be over-clockable when you set higher frequencies and voltages for the processor. Even though this motherboard is not for the over-clocker it offers a great performance at a very reasonable price. This motherboard will be perfect for the gamer who is not too fussed about over-clocking.

Features	85	<b>Overall</b> <b>89</b>	Pros: Great performance   Price
Overclocking	80		Cons: Not for the overclocker
Value for money	96		Supplied by: Sonic Informed [021] 551 8218
Performance	95		ERP: R 899
			Internet: www.soltek.com.tw

AMD

MOTHERBOARD	PASSMARK PERFORMANCE RATING (MEGAFLOPS)	UT2003 FLYBY	BOTMATCH	3DMARK 2001 SE BUILD 330	3DMARK03	QUAKEIII DEMO1 1024 32B	QUAKEIII DEMO2	SANDRA CPU ARITHMETIC	CPU MULTIMEDIA	MEM BANDWIDTH		
									Dhrystone   Whetstone	Integer   Float (it/s)	Integer   Float (it/s)	
Intel												
Soltek SL-86PE-L	491.9 (252.4)	207.72	75.96	15640	5384	281.9	273.1	9919	2775/6171	14830	23442	4383   4396
Albatron PX865PE ProII	499.8(253.6)	222.99	80.07	17465	5743	361.1	359.5	9871	2768/6187	14781	22415	4367   4377
Gigabyte GA-8IPE1000 Pro	514(238.1)	224.36	80.99	17816	5754	363.4	362.2	9830	2774/6180	14808	22311	4469   4470
ASUS P4P800 Deluxe	486.5(250.4)	207.8	76.03	15730	5384	282.5	272.9	9833	2768/6177	14781	22456	4377   4383
Chaintech Zenith CT-9CJS	514.4(255.4)	232.71	86.19	18426	5792	383	381.2	9840	2777/6121	14998	23569	4914   4862
MSI 875P Neo	513.8(725.8)	221.34	79.82	17561	5737	360.4	357.3	8333	1843/4223	12754	16259	4409   4425
EPoX 4PCA3+	520.6(252.0)	228.4	83.27	18128	5767	373.7	371.9	9843	2786/6227	14879	22662	4623   4628
DFI LANPARTY PR0875	513.9(250.8)	226.97	82.53	17876	5762	319	316.4	9795	2763/6133	14775	23250	4582   4592
AMD												
EPoX 8RDA3+	499.8(253.6)	222.99	80.07	13863	5342	263.8	256.8	8276	3317	11827	13059	2857   2682
MSI K7N2 Delta	445.7(737.3)	206.75	81.84	13892	5324	229.1	225.4	8221	3296	11789	12699	2837   2669
Gigabyte 7NNXP	450.4(737.1)	207.13	82.01	13860	5331	235.6	230.7	8169	3296	11790	12957	2827   2659
Shuttle AN35N Ultra	456.1(740.4)	207.67	82.62	13890	5339	235.7	231.2	8134	3317	11862	12964	2859   2687
ASUS A7N8X Deluxe	449.8(724.1)	206.78	81.56	13907	5321	233.5	230.6	8250	3285	11805	12994	2834   2665
Soltek SL KT600-R	467.5 (722.9)	206.48	80.53	16405	5499	283.5	282.3	8237	3285	11805	12975	2652   2479



MOTHERBOARD	CHIPSET (NORTHBRIDGE)	PROCESSOR	FSB	MEMORY	DUAL CHANNEL DDR	PCI SLOTS	AUDIO	NETWORK ADAPTER(S)	RAID	SERIAL ATA	IEEE 1394	PRICE	RATING
Intel													
Soltek SL-86PE-L	Intel 865PE	Socket 478 P4/ Celeron	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	6	6-channel	10/100	No	Yes	No	R1139	84%
Albatron PX865PE ProII	Intel 865PE	Socket 478 P4/ Celeron	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	5	8-channel	10/100/1000	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1960	89%
Gigabyte GA-8IPE1000 Pro	Intel 865PE	Socket 478 P4/ Celeron	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100	No	Yes	Yes	R1999	89%
ASUS P4P800 Deluxe	Intel 865PE	Socket 478 P4/ Celeron	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100/1000	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1521	89%
Chaintech Zenith CT-9CJS	Intel 875P	Socket 478 P4	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	5	7-channel	10/100/100 and 10/100	Yes	Yes	Yes	R2699	91%
MSI 875P Neo	Intel 875P	Socket 478 P4	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100/1000	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1999	89%
EPoX 4PCA3+	Intel 875P	Socket 478 P4	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100/1000	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1881	89%
DFI LANPARTY PR0875	Intel 875P	Socket 478 P4	800/533/400MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 4GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1899	91%
AMD													
EPoX 8RDA3+	NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra 400	AMD Athlon XP/Athlon/ Duron	400/333/266MHz	400/333/266MHz (3 Slots/Max 3GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	Dual 10/100	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1402	89%
MSI K7N2 Delta	NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra 400	AMD Athlon XP/Athlon/ Duron	400/333/266MHz	400/333/266MHz (3 Slots/Max 3GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100	Yes	Yes	Yes	R950	84%
Gigabyte 7NNXP	NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra 400	AMD Athlon XP/Athlon/ Duron	400/333/266MHz	400/333/266MHz (4 Slots/Max 3GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100/1000 and 10/100	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1999	87%
Shuttle AN35N Ultra	NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra 400	AMD Athlon XP/Athlon/ Duron	400/333/266MHz	400/333/266MHz (3 Slots/Max 3GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	10/100	No	No	No	R883	86%
ASUS A7N8X Deluxe	NVIDIA nForce2 Ultra 400	AMD Athlon XP/Athlon/ Duron	400/333/266MHz	400/333/266MHz (3 Slots/Max 3GB)	Yes	5	6-channel	Dual 10/100	Yes	Yes	Yes	R1416	87%
Soltek SL KT600-R	VIA KT600	AMD Athlon XP/Athlon/ Duron	400/333/266MHz	400/333/266MHz (3 Slots/Max 3GB)	No	6	6-channel	No	No	No	No	R899	89%



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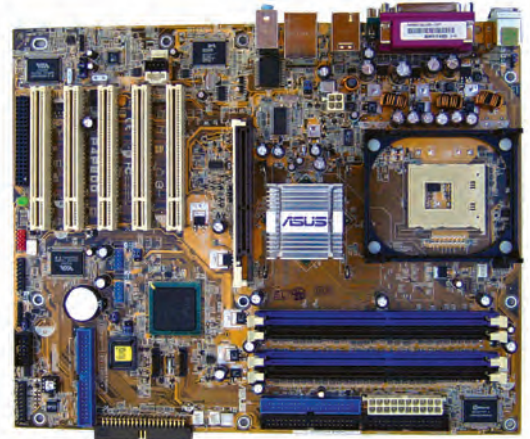
# ASUS P4P800 Motherboard

ASUS have brought out the big guns with their new P4 board based on Intel's newish i865PE chipset, ASUS have managed to enable PAT (Performance Acceleration Technology) which was initially found on the more expensive i875 chipsets only. ASUS has managed to create a performance bargain of note, which all Intel fans will enjoy.

ASUS is nothing if not innovative, they got their engineers to sit down with an Intel handbook and managed to get PAT support for the i865PE, thus bridging the performance gap and giving budget minded gamers an awesome performance platform. i865PE chipsets support serial ATA, 8 USB 2.0 ports, onboard NIC, AC97 sound and DDR400 ram, making this a perfect solution for performance minded gamers. Surprisingly the new Intel chips using the 800mhz FSB have to have some of the loudest fans I have ever heard, Intel also seemed not to like ASUS "hacking" their chipsets and so ASUS have called their PAT implementation HyperPath so as not to annoy Intel. As we can see from the performance figures ASUS HyperPath performs very close and even beats out PAT in some instances, to get the best out of this board you

need to set your Performance Mode to turbo and Memory Acceleration Mode to auto - why ASUS say something different in their manual is beyond me.

The P4P800 PCB is pretty well designed although the AGP slot is way too close to the DIMM slot clips making memory removal difficult with a decent size AGP card installed. Sound performance is amazing with the new AD1985 audio chipset that supports the new AC97 2.3 codec fully (6 channel audio with superior audio quality). ASUS have created an awesome Intel solution; it's innovative and gives performance benefits of more expensive offerings. If you have the latest 800fsb chips you could do no better than the ASUS P4P800.



## comparisons

	ASUS P4P800	ASUS P4C800	Other i865PE Board
<b>Business Winstone 2002</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>32.8</b>
Multimedia Content Creation Winstone 2003	49.1	49	48.1
<b>3DMark2001 SE, Default</b>	<b>17293</b>	<b>17163</b>	<b>16461</b>
3DMark03, Default	5230	5228	5179
<b>3DMark03, CPU Score</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>695</b>
PCMark2002, Memory score	9964	9987	8429
<b>Unreal Tournament 2003, dm-antalus, 1024x768x32</b>	<b>65.58</b>	<b>65.59</b>	<b>61.23</b>
RTCW, Checkpoint, 1024x768x32	194.7	194.5	179.7
<b>Splinter Cell, 1TbilisiDemo, 1024x768x32</b>	<b>47.48</b>	<b>47.43</b>	<b>47.33</b>
Serious Sam 2, The Grand Cathedral, 1024x768x32	110.8	109.9	105
<b>SiSoft Sandra 2002, RAM Buffered Bandwidth+</b>	<b>5021</b>	<b>5023</b>	<b>4434</b>

As you can see the P4P800 using the i865PE chipset with enhanced PAT blows away other i865PE chipsets and competes well with the much more expensive P4C800 (using i875) board. ASUS P4P800 is also very friendly when it comes to overclocking, sporting ASUS's new AI overclocking utility that allows overclocking from 5% to 30% depending on CPU and memory setups, this has to be one of the best BIOS utilities I have seen in a while.

REVIEWED BY	
Brett "KnightMarE" Hamilton	
PLUS	MINUS
Fast	Not a great bundle
Innovative	No free USB bracket
Well priced	

**SUPPLIER:** Profile Design Tech [082] 339 7361  
**PRICE:** R 1869.00  
**WEBSITE:** www.asus.com

# M3000 Bluetooth Headset

If you use a mobile phone that supports Bluetooth [our test model was a Nokia 6310i] and want to make the move to a wireless headset then this unit might just be what you're looking for.

Getting the M3000 charged and paired to the phone was a simple case of following the detailed instructions in the manual and the process went through without incident - just make sure you've correctly activated the Bluetooth facility on your cellular.

Using the unit is ever easier and you can answer or terminate calls via the headset as well as initiate calls via voice dialling. In addition you can also redial the last number called, reject an incoming call or even transfer the call back to your cell phone [provided your cell phone supports this extra functionality]. The unit has a 'call control' button on the face as well as



a LED that glows red or green or alternates depending on the current context. On the side there is a power on and mute button, a volume control and, located on the opposite side, an AC adapter for recharging. The unit is easy to use and all the buttons are easily recognisable by touch.

In terms of performance the M3000 works exceedingly well with its noise cancelling microphone technology - test subjects reported better than normal clarity. Overall the speaker provided loud and crystal clear sound even while driving with the windows open. The unit exceeded specification and worked perfectly up to [and beyond] 10 meters from the phone. Battery life was harder to measure accurately but during a week of average use the unit didn't need to be recharged.

Despite all these positives the M3000 is let down by its design and in real terms good design often rates highly over functionality and

performance - there is little point in showing off your latest gadget if it makes you look daft. Someone remarked that the headset looked like a tiny alien spaceship had landed on my head and was trying to dock with my ear. The M3000 is quite heavy resulting in some minor dislodgement whenever you rapidly turn your head i.e. checking for traffic at a stop street. It really cannot be described as stylish - it's large and isn't comfortable to wear for prolonged periods and considering that you're constantly adjusting the unit should tell you everything you need to know. The M3000 is almost flawless in terms of performance and functionality but unfortunately it's difficult to recommend a headset that doesn't look stylish or wear very well.

REVIEWED BY	
Michael "RedTide" James	
PLUS	MINUS
Performance	Too big and heavy
Functionality	

**SUPPLIER:** Plantronics [0800] 22 0202  
**PRICE:** R1200.00  
**WEBSITE:** www.plantronics.co.za

# Logitech Premium Stereo USB Headset 30

▶ Logitech have produced some **smashingly good products this year, from mice to keyboards everything Logitech seems to produce is nothing short of excellent. So when I ask the question "will the Logitech USB 30 headphones be in the same category as all other Logitech products?" you can assume its pretty much a rhetorical question.**

It's about time someone brought out USB driven headphones that can deliver digital sound without being plugged into anything other than a USB port. Logitech have delivered a high quality headset perfect for the competitive gamer that may be faced with using poor quality on-board sound reproduction. Logitech have produced a set of headphones that installs without any fuss and needs no drivers (on WinXP anyway), you don't need a sound card as the Logitech unit has its own built in sound reproduction unit (a small black box just before the USB connection). The design and build quality of the unit is impeccable while the microphone attachment is robust and delivers clean crisp audio that is essential for team games like Counter-Strike.

I found that the unit was slightly small for my head (but then I am on the larger side of the scale), but most people that tried the headset found it to be a comfortable fit, the unit is lightweight allowing for extended usage without discomfort. Logitech have got the right idea with this product, especially for gamers that have to travel to far flung places and want to be sure they have decent sound at any event they may attend. People looking for a good set of headphones without breaking the bank will be delighted with

the sound reproduction, mp3's and DVD's sound reproduction was spot on, considering that the unit is purely digital you could expect nothing less than stellar sound quality.

You may think I don't seem to find much wrong with Logitech products that I have reviewed (yes they bribe me with lots of free goodies and in the immortal words of James Hetfield "Free Goodies Good" "Fire Bad" "Free Goodies Good"), truth is there is very little to find fault with this product. For those of you who just have to find fault with everything I have the following gripe with the headphones - the volume control while supporting volume up, down and microphone mute doesn't have a volume mute button which I would have liked as people always feel it necessary to interrupt my gaming at most LAN events. (Feeling better now? See everything does have some minor flaws). Well, another fuss free product from Logitech, the USB 30 Headphones might be the top of the range solution from Logitech but their price point is spot on when you compare it to solutions from established audio brands. So all those people out there stuck with the R50 earphones with tin can emulation now have a reasonably priced range of headphones to look at. "Logitech Good" "Fire Bad" "Logitech Good" (Just shut up James!).

#### REVIEWED BY

Brett "KnightMarE" Hamilton

#### PLUS MINUS

Professional gamers look no further	No volume mute
Priced well	Doesn't fit my big brained head well

**SUPPLIED BY:** Logitech

**PRICE:** R699

**INTERNET:** [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)




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# Saitek Cyborg Evo Joystick

► Saitek have once again produced another awesome product, although I'm firmly a mouse and keyboard fan there are some titles that don't really come into their own until you have the right equipment. The Saitek Cyborg Evo is one of these products that helped change this jaded old gamers view on how certain games should be played.

Let's have a look at the Cyborg Evo, finished in black with brushed aluminium, it looks more at home in a high tech cockpit than my desktop. This joystick provides all functionality from eight way POV hat, programmable function keys to the expected throttle control. Saitek also look out for the lefties with the ability to convert the stick to left handed by simply unscrewing the removable bolts (adjustments for all hand types are also easily accomplished). The unit seems rugged and performs responsively, games like Flight Simulator 2004 which I found almost impossible with a keyboard suddenly became an awesome experience with the Cyborg Evo. Something I hated with joysticks was all the configuring that needs to be done before you could use it properly in one game, only to go through the same procedure again for another title. Saitek have provided Smart Technology drivers for their joystick range that allows you to switch game profiles easily, even reconfiguring the button

assignments is a breeze with this technology.

The Evo is USB driven and is automatically installed under WinXP, the only problem I have with joysticks is that I cannot get to grips with racing games, I find that a game pad or racing wheel just works better. This didn't stop me from taking the Cyborg out for a test drive with Midnight Club II (the most frustratingly difficult racing game known to man ever!) and Toca Race Driver (my favourite racing game at the moment). If we still used joysticks for FPS this would have been the ultimate DOOM II controller, it's nice to see how far peripherals have come in terms of functionality and durability, the Cyborg Evo is certainly one of the best examples of form and function. Saitek have also embraced the Internet by making software profiles available to over 200 titles that users can download and use with the Smart Technology programme. Suddenly I was trying to find all my old



flight simulators so that I could see if I missed out on anything that was really awesome to play with the right equipment, games like Comanche 4 suddenly became more than just video card benchmarking software. I may not be a flight simulator nut but I have come to appreciate why some gamers have embraced this segment of the market, Saitek are going to have a hard time getting this review sample back. With Microsoft departing from the gaming peripherals scene Saitek and Logitech have a chance to assume a dominant role; judging from the quality of products available from both companies this is sure to be an exciting race.

REVIEWED BY	
Brett "KnightMarE" Hamilton	
PLUS	MINUS
Great looks Great price Great performance	Available Oct 2003

**SUPPLIER:** VMS [011] 678 3221  
**PRICE:** R649-99  
**WEBSITE:** www.saitek.com

# Saitek ST90

► When Microsoft announced that they would be discontinuing their PC game controllers the other joystick manufacturers must have been ecstatic. It is no myth that Microsoft develops great hardware and I know many gamers who swear by the Microsoft Sidewinder Force Feedback 2. To me, Saitek are the real underdogs of the game-peripheral industry. I for one, do not know one person who owns a Saitek controller, this is a sad fact as they really produce great hardware at very competitive prices. Their products are very well designed and out of experience I can say their joysticks are very rugged.

With the ST90, Saitek decided to develop an entry-level joystick for the gamer on a budget. Games like Battlefield: 1942 and its excellent add-on, Desert Combat (still in Beta version), is taking local LAN's by storm and many gamers feel the need to invest in a joystick. Even though high-end joysticks with Force Feedback will always rein supreme, there is a market for entry level joysticks, especially amongst the younger gamers and gamers on a tight budget. Enter the Saitek ST90. After using this entry-level joystick, which has retractable legs, I must emphasise the fact that by entry-level Saitek means just that. The unit comes neatly packed in a plastic cylinder-shaped housing and there are no drivers with this unit as it makes use of Windows' built in joystick support. As mentioned, the legs are foldable and with the use of a

dial at the base of the joystick, the legs are locked in place.

The joystick consists of the stick, a trigger button and four programmable buttons. The two buttons within immediate thumb reach are best used as the missile launcher and the two buttons above it is designed to be a digital throttle. The throttle has four LED's linked to it and it has a limited range of four clicks up and four clicks down again.

I enjoyed using the ST90 and although I had to adapt to it from my Force Feedback joystick, the only thing I missed was the twist-grip for the rudder-control. The Saitek ST90 is very responsive and its ambidextrous design is comfortable to use. The foldable-legs featured on this joystick is quite a novel idea and I would love to see this feature added to some mid-range joysticks. If you are on a tight budget consider this one, it will not burn a hole in your pocket.



REVIEWED BY	
Tom "Fr00tc@k3" Taylor	
PLUS	MINUS
Price Foldable legs No drivers required	No rudder Digital throttle not ideal

**SUPPLIER:** VMS [011] 678 3221  
**PRICE:** R246.00  
**WEBSITE:** www.saitek.com

# Samsung SyncMaster 192V 19" TFT-LCD Monitor

▶ The Samsung SyncMaster 192V 19-inch flat-panel monitor is the big brother to the 172B. However, does being larger necessarily equate to being better?

Sporting the same silver finish and also capable of a resolution of 1280x1024 at 75Hz, you may be excused for thinking that there is not much difference between the two liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors. At first glance, you may be right. However, there are a few extras on offer. Most importantly, the monitor ships with a driver CD that adds some extra functionality to your display settings. Also supplied with the drivers, is the Samsung Natural Color software. This is quite a nifty piece of software since it enables you to save different lighting schemes according to whether you are working in daylight, in a dark room or under phosphorescent lights. There are subtle differences in the colour output of the monitor. Obviously, the darker the profile, the more light is forced from the display. The software also includes monitor and printer adjustment options that enable the user to quickly set the contrast, screen and paper position for his/her specific machine. On the negative side, the 192V is a bulky piece of

hardware. Due to its solid stand, it is more difficult to adjust the viewing angle of the viewing angle. Perhaps, Samsung could have used the same dual hinge design of the 172B?

The 192V is also not wall mountable. This might not seem like such a big thing, but having the option to mount a flat-panel monitor on a wall is a nice one to have. Whereas the 172B was still acceptable for some gaming, this monitor is not suited to games of any kind. Even on lower frame-rate games like Tetris, ghosting occurs. But then, you are probably not going to purchase a 19-inch flat panel monitor for gaming. It really comes into its own when running business applications and surfing the Internet. The text and image quality is really something special. As expected, smaller fonts are wonderfully crisp. Another minor irritation of the 192V is its menu system. Whereas the 172B was as intuitive as one could get, this one is almost exasperating with the sequence of buttons you need to press to get anywhere. Unless you are desperately looking for a 19-inch flat panel monitor, I would suggest you rather buy the 172B. This is not to say that the 192V is a bad monitor, it just does not warrant the higher price and does not give you that much extra functionality.

REVIEWED BY	
Iwan "Da3dalus" Pienaar	
PLUS	MINUS
19-inch Display	Price
Natural Color software	Not much different to the 172B
	Annoying menu system

**SUPPLIED BY:** Samsung [011] 549 1500  
**PRICE:** R 7500.00 (To be confirmed)  
**INTERNET:** www.samsung.co.za

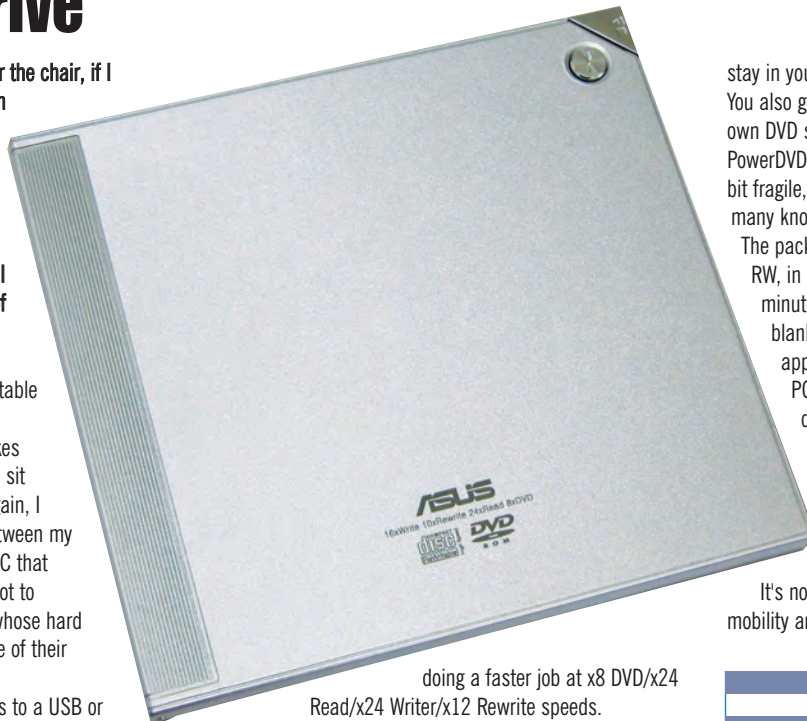


# ASUS SCB-2408-D External Slim Combo Drive

▶ I have a question for the chair, if I may: if someone can make a piece of hardware able to do everything a standard CD-writer with DVD capabilities can do, and it only weighs around 250g, why on earth do I still have these heavy pieces of hardware in my case?

Realistically, though, Asus' portable writer/DVD combo is more for laptops and such, since it makes little sense to have your drives sit outside your machine. Then again, I comfortably carted the unit between my work and home PCs - or any PC that lacks a writer or DVD player. Not to mention I know a few people whose hard drives perpetually hang outside of their cases.

The Slim Combo drive connects to a USB or Firewire port, which means it will work on Mac models as well. The only detraction to this is that your data transfer speed is rather slow unless you use USB 2.0 or Firewire. The player also needs a power plug, but this makes sense - if a CD walkman can drain batteries in a few hours, this unit will have no problem



doing a faster job at x8 DVD/x24 Read/x24 Writer/x12 Rewrite speeds. Asus had the common sense to add three different plugs for the various regions. This also means the player is very travel-ready. They also included a travel pouch that holds the unit plus one CD (the driver CD, perhaps?), but they neglected to add space for the rather important power cable and plug, but I suppose that will happily

stay in your Notebook's carry case. You also get Nero's CD-writing software, as well as Asus' own DVD software - basically an OEM version of PowerDVD. The only real detraction is that the unit is a bit fragile, and I doubt it will be able to take near as many knocks as your everyday Notebook or PDA. The package also includes one blank CD-R and CD-RW, in case you simply must write something the minute you open the package, and there are no blank CDs around. Apart from the portable applications, the reader/writer is also great for PCs that have no writer but you need to write data from it. Unfortunately there was no price given to me by the time of publishing, but I guess this will set you back a bit, considering it's got all the features most people need two drives for. It's not the fastest little drive on the market, but its mobility and looks make up for that.

REVIEWED BY	
James "Priest" Francis	
PLUS	MINUS
Light & compact	Slow on lower end machines
Good portable writer	Travel pouch has no space for cables
Decent 3rd party software	

**SUPPLIED BY:** ASUSTek [011] 262 0395  
**PRICE:** R 2199.00  
**INTERNET:** www.asus.com

# Asus V9950 FX5900 Video Card

Another day another video card, maybe I sound a bit blasé but it's seems to me that I have had an unending supply of video cards to review; you may think that this is great and I agree, the only problem is I don't get to keep all this lovely silicon (hint hint) [Sorry... what was that? Ed]. Asus have a reputation for breaking the mould when designing hardware; let's have a look at their latest offering, one of only two manufacturers in SA who has the FX5900 cards available.

Before we get into drooling over the latest and greatest from NVIDIA I'd like to add my 2 cents to the current state of the war on graphic card development. I'm guessing many users are confused as to what they should be looking at buying when purchasing a new graphics card, now I'm not going to pick sides but simply give some advice that you can use or lose. Graphics cards will not always turn your machine into a monster gaming rig, many people have started looking at graphics cards as the solution to performance nirvana,

and this unfortunately has led to a lot of unhappy gamers out there. If you are looking to get the most out of a top of the range card you need a high spec machine and by this I mean high spec; anything above 2.8 Ghz will do quite well, also memory architecture and hard drive access speeds play an important role in getting the most out of your gaming experience. Even Doom III which everyone is waiting for will run quite nicely on a 1Ghz machine with 256mb and a GeForce 3 card, older games require even less horsepower;

## specifications

Graphics Engine	GeForce FX 5900
Video Memory	128MB DDR
Engine Clock	400MHz
Memory Clock	850MHz
RAMDAC	400MHz
Vertical Refresh Rate	70-240Hz
Max. Display Mode	2048x1536x85Hz
Bus Standard	8X/4X/2X
VGA out port	Yes (Standard 15-pin D-sub)
TV-out port	Yes (S-VHS & Composite)
Digital Flat Panel Output	Yes (DVI-I)
2nd VGA Output	Yes

the reason I bring this up is because I see everyone trying to get the latest hardware and due to the huge expense involved I feel that software sales are suffering as more of our income goes into hardware. Bleeding edge graphics cards are now so far ahead of the curve that by the time we are able to use a FX5900 to it's

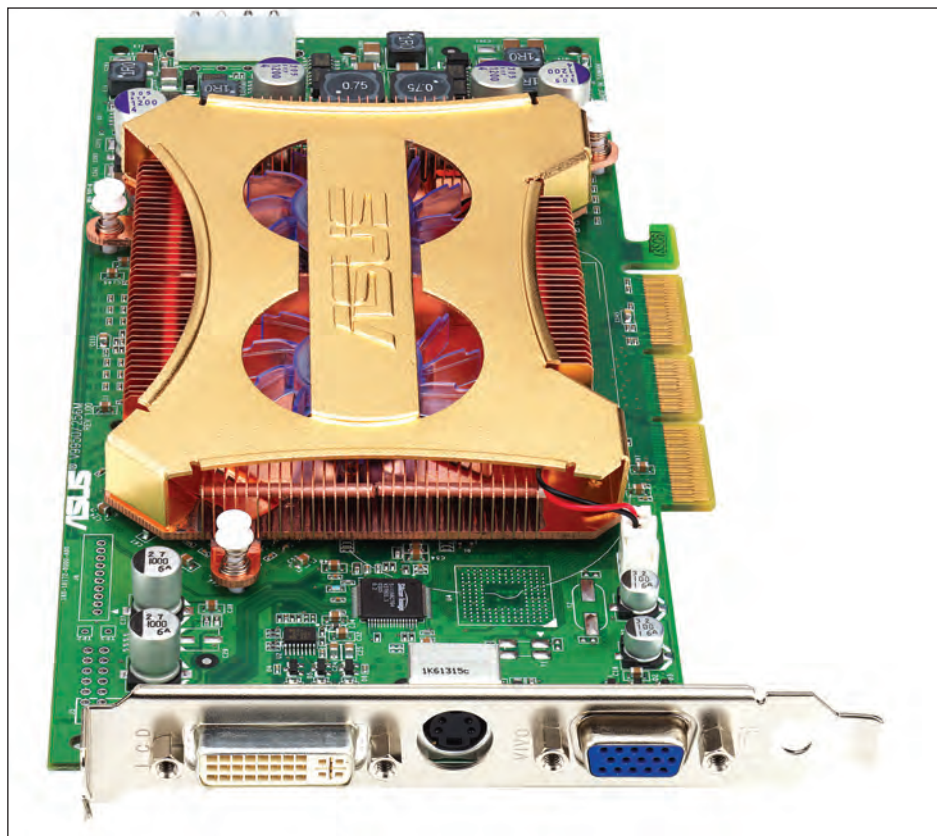
full potential no-one will remember it even existed. Now that I have gotten off my soapbox let's have a look at the pretender to the graphics throne, although I haven't got my hands on a FX5900 Ultra yet, the plain old FX5900 is one impressive card. NVIDIA who have been given a blood nose by ATI on many occasions lately can now compete and sometimes beat the best ATI has to offer. I remember when NVIDIA products were sneered at by 3dfx fans and the same happened to ATI when they first launched their Radeon range; competition is good for any industry and helps speed up product development and keep pricing competitive. Asus have chosen to use a plain PCB for the board design, the one area that they have worked on is the cooling, Asus has used a unique copper heatsink design, which is pretty quiet and looks good to boot. The FX5900 is one big card; you also lose a PCI slot to make room for the large heatsink, the FX5900 is fully equipped with all the features you would expect from a high-end graphics card.

Asus ships the V9950 with an alright software bundle which includes Black Hawk Down, GunMetal, DVD software and a few other titles and demos which may or may not interest you, it also includes ASUS gameface which allows you to play games online whilst using a point-to-point video interface to view your opponent online via a webcam.

Although I did not get to test this feature I see it as nothing more than a novelty, gamers are too ugly to look at anyway.

Picking a graphics card in today's market is not an easy task, getting the most bang for your buck requires a bit of shopping around.

Asus have always offered good products but at a premium, if you are looking for a bargain then the 9700 range is a good bet, if money is no object wait for the Ultra to be available (currently at the \$500 mark).



## asus v5990 vs gigabyte radeon 9800 pro

Programme	Resolution	Asus V9550	Gigabyte Radeon 9800 Pro
3d Mark 2001 se	1024*768	17088	17094
3d Mark 2003	1024*768	5368	5536
Comanche 4	1024*768	60.2	58.8
Gunmetal 2	1024*768	26.4	36.3
UT 2003	1024*768	220.4	224.7

After the disappointment of the FX5800 the results of the FX5900 are a pleasant surprise, it has the ability to compete with the best ATI has to offer and is more than competitive when enabling anti-aliasing with anisotropic filtering. Based on Internet reviews on the Ultra part from NVIDIA once again regains it's performance throne, pricing on these bleeding edge cards is not cheap but if you want the best then you are going to spend in excess of R5000-R6000.

### REVIEWED BY

Brett "KnightMarE" Hamilton

### PLUS MINUS

Competes well with ATI	Expensive
Good image quality	Game bundle ok
Nice cooling solution	No video editing software

SUPPLIER: ASUSTek [011] 262 0395

PRICE: R 5299.00

WEBSITE: www.asus.com



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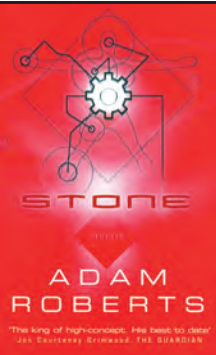
## book review:

# Abuse of trust and planetary genocide

In this month's book review section, I take a look at what appears to be two vastly different titles. *Stone*, written by Adam Roberts, is a science-fiction mystery novel with a twist while *The Art of Deception*, written by well-known hacker Kevin Mitnick, examines the art of social engineering.

Unless you are a seasoned science-fiction (SF) fan, the name Adam Roberts is probably an unfamiliar one to you. His debut novel, *Salt*, was published as recently as 2000. Since then, this English lecturer has written six SF novels with his most recent one, *Polystom*, arriving on our shores a few months ago. However, it is the intergalactic whodunit, *Stone* (2002) that drew my attention to this new author.

*Stone* tells the story of Ae, the last criminal in the universe who is offered a unique business proposition. He will be sprung from an apparent inescapable prison on the proviso that he agrees to kill the population of a planet. The catch is that the planet must not be damaged. Ae does not know who is offering him the job and does not know the reason why he must commit this genocide. He accepts the terms but his curiosity makes him determined to find out who is behind this and for what reason. Roberts says he started the novel with the idea of writing a crime story in which the detective is also the murderer in this way. "I liked the generic complexifications that notion involved," says Roberts. Well, "complexifications" is exactly what Roberts created. In *Stone*, the universe is divided into three civilisations, the tT (of which Ae belongs to), the religiously fanatical Weah and the unknown Palmetto. Throughout his journey, Ae is faced with questions about his own morality. In part this is caused by the fact that he has not killed anyone for a long time. However, as his journey progresses he finds



himself rediscovering the exhilaration he experiences when committing murder. His growing relationship with Klavier, a female tT he met while trying to track down his employer also leads him to doubt the feasibility of the mission.

*Stone* is a well-crafted novel that will satisfy both "hard" and "soft" SF fans. For the "hard" readers, Roberts continually raises discussion points with quantum physics. Also, his description of Faster Than Light travel is something out of the top drawer. "Soft" readers will be drawn towards the conflict Ae experiences through his individuality and his seemingly impossible mission. No matter what your taste in SF though, be sure to give *Stone* a read. You will not be left disappointed.

### stone

**Author:** Adam Roberts  
**Publisher:** Gollancz  
**ISBN:** 0 575 07396 9  
**Pages:** 338  
**Format:** Paperback  
**Kalahari.net price (excl. delivery):** R107.95

### about the author

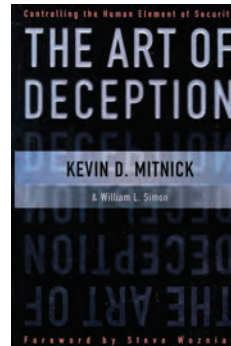
Adam Roberts was born in 1965 in London, England. He was educated at what he describes as a "rundown state school" in Kent. Roberts studied at the Scottish university in Aberdeen. Thereafter, he went to read for a PhD on Browning and the Classics at Cambridge University. Currently, Roberts is a Reader in Nineteenth-Century Literature in the English Department at Royal Holloway, a college at the University of London. He teaches courses in nineteenth-century literature and poetry and is the deputy course director for Masters studies in Victorian Media and Culture. Roberts also teaches post-modernism and contemporary popular cultures courses. His partner, Rachel, recently gave birth to their first child, Lilly. Roberts' first novel, *Salt* was short-listed for the Arthur C. Clarke Award in 2000. He is currently working on the *Critical History of SF* to be published next year.

Arguably one of the most notorious hackers in the world, Kevin Mitnick has finally put pen to paper and has written his first book, *The Art of Deception*.

In the book, Mitnick takes the reader through what he describes as the mind of a hacker. He provides the reader with scenarios of cons, swindles and social engineering attacks on businesses and the consequences it has. The stories are narrated from the points of view of both the attacker and the victim and explain why each attack was successful and how it could have been averted.

*The Art of Deception* is divided into four parts: a brief introduction, the telephonic tricks social engineers use, how they enter buildings and get what they want from companies and outlining different security policies. Mitnick describes a social engineer as someone who can get people to do things they would not ordinarily do for a stranger. He goes

on to write that a social engineer uses deception, influence and persuasion against businesses, usually targeting its information. Each scenario is divided into a fictionalised account of a social engineer in action, analysing the con and preventing the con. There are also useful "Mitnick messages" scattered throughout the book explaining a specific term or describing the reason why seemingly useless information becomes important later on. The bulk of the book is devoted to describing how trust is the downfall of so many organisations. Mitnick is careful to point out that no matter how expensive your physical security systems (whether it be computers or otherwise) are it cannot protect a company from employees giving away information they should not. It is quite interesting that the



majority of case studies show that a social engineer does not need to have a high level of computer knowledge but just an amiable personality. While it is fascinating to read how easy it is to get information from a company, it does become tedious after a while. It seems the book drags on with what could best be described as variations on a theme. Having said that, if you read *The Art of Deception* selectively looking for specific case studies, it will serve its purpose.

I can recommend this book to anyone who wants to know more about how trustworthy human nature can be and how easy it is to exploit people's innate trust.



### the art of deception

**Author:** Kevin D. Mitnick  
**Publisher:** Wiley  
**ISBN:** 0 471 23712 4  
**Pages:** 352  
**Format:** Hardcover  
**Kalahari.net price (excl. delivery):** R223.96

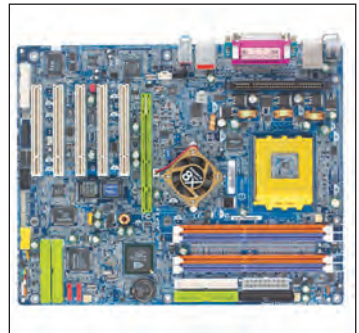
### about the author

Kevin Mitnick was born on August 6, 1963. He was arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation on February 15, 1995 and charged with breaking into some of the most secure computer systems of the U.S. thereby making him the most notorious computer hacker in the world. He was held without bail for over two years before sentencing took place. He was charged with 25-counts that included wire fraud and the illegal possession of computer files stolen from companies such as Motorola and Sun Microsystems. Mitnick was held in solitary confinement for eight months. This led to an outcry from the hacker community, with well-known hacker site 2600 spearheading the "Free Kevin" campaign. Mitnick was released from prison in January last year but banned from using the Internet until midnight on January 21 this year. He has also been banned from using computers for three years after his release.

## GA-7NNXP [nForce 2 Ultra400 chipset]



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- Intel 82540EM Gigabit LAN chip  
- Realtek 8100 Ethernet Controller  
- Realtek ALC650 Audio AC'97 Codec  
- 2 x 4M bit flash ROM

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- 400/333/266 MHz FSB

#### Memory

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- 4 x UDMA ATA 133/100/66 Bus Master IDE connectors  
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- 2 x IEEE 1394 connectors ( supports 3 ports)  
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- 3 x cooling fan pin headers  
- WOL pin header  
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- 1 x Game/Midi connector

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- 2 x COM ports  
- 1 x LPT  
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#### GPU/AGP/DIMM setting

- CPU FSB / Multiplier / Vcore Voltage adjustable via BIOS  
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#### Power

- ATX power connector and ATX 12V connector  
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#### Form Factor

- ATX form factor  
- 30.5 x 24.4 cm

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- System health status auto-detect and report by BIOS  
- Hardware detecting and reporting for case open, power-in voltage, CPU voltage, and fan speed.

#### BIOS

- 2x4M bit flash ROM, enhanced ACPI feature for PC98/Win98/Win2000/Me/ CE/XP compliance, Green, PnP, DMI, INT13 (> 8.4GB) and Anti-Virus functions  
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# music reviews:



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## SEPULTURA to visit S.A.

Sepultura are a well-established and respected band with the highest of accolades behind their name. Due to their third world background they have felt a certain connection to our country and have given the South African people the opportunity of seeing them do a series of rare and intimate shows. This is something not often seen from a band that has the capability of packing out stadiums worldwide. The mention of the possibility that they will be playing in our country has caused a stir of seismic proportions. Venues for the shows will not exceed capacity of 1000 people to preserve the intimacy but no compromise will be made on the show. Full lighting rigs, décor and sound will make for a once in a lifetime opportunity.

- **Cape Town** - 1 show Sept 10th Parow Civic Centre
- **Gauteng** - 2 shows Sept 5,6th Mega Music Warehouse
- **Durban** - 1 show Sept 3rd BAT Centre

### Hotel Paper

#### Michelle Branch

On Hotel Paper, Michelle Branch returns to her slightly country, slightly rocky style of popular music. She has sentiments of Sheryl Crow and even a little Shania Twain, but Branch has managed to establish a strong individual style that keeps her afloat in a time when female vocalists really are a dime a dozen. I wouldn't call her one of the absolute greats, and I wouldn't classify her as a diva (in the true sense of the word) but she does have a wide appeal and excellent execution to her music. The album is pleasing, but does little to set itself up as a future classic.

[Gallo]

### Statuses Moloko

Not everyone can pull off what Moloko does. On the other hand, not everyone can stomach what Moloko does. They are certainly a dance band, but that's where their similarity to any other popular band ends. They have pushed the envelope on their music and have, quite surprisingly, managed to establish a fairly original sound within a rather jaded and bland market. Their sound is somewhat funky, a little jazzy and very hypnotic. Its great dance stuff, but I don't know how big it will ever be, because it isn't the usual spoon-fed rubbish the masses are used to.

[Dave Gresham Records]

### Come on up

#### Brian Culbertson

Normally when some artist is going for jazzy or funky these days, that is just an element of a much larger picture - like a slight change to try and set themselves apart from the run of the

mill. However, Brian Culbertson prefers to go all the way and produce wonderfully complex and relaxed instrumentals that pay homage to the greats while still retaining their own identity. Most will probably not enjoy this, but those out there with a broad musical taste and a penchant for the smooth, soulful and laid back will certainly find something worthwhile here.

[Gallo]

### New York City

#### The Peter Malick Group (feat. Norah Jones)

While Norah Jones is a very accomplished musician, her appearance on this CD does nothing to save it from a light jazz mediocrity that leaves much to be desired. While this kind of music is hardly run of the mill these days, it still needs to captivate a listener - which this CD does not really do.

It's great as background music, but don't expect too much from it. You will be sorely disappointed.

[Dave Gresham Records]



### Woodstock 5

Woodstock is Gauteng's premier music and lifestyle festival. In the fifth year since its inception, Woodstock has become an essential date on all party-lovers' calendars. Due to the festival's phenomenal growth, Woodstock's new home is at Roodeplaat Dam, just east of Pretoria.

Roodeplaat Dam offers a venue twice the size of their previous venue; bigger camping grounds, 200 caravan sites with electricity, hot showers, two swimming pools, and a huge dam.

The festival's move to this beautiful venue steps up the level of quality entertainment that has become synonymous with Woodstock. A variety of new activities will be showcased for the first time in the festival's history, from jet skiing and wake boarding demos to international competitions including BMX, skating, freestyle motocross and much, much more.

Woodstock 5 will accommodate a huge variety of flea market and food stalls, plus six on-site bars, a trance area, a hip-hop area, and the celebrated main stage for live music from noon till whenever.

Confirmed bands include Tweak, Wonderboom, Mean Mr Mustard, Pink Noise, Cutting Jade, The Narrow, Zen Arcade, Jo Day, Soil 717, El Camino, and Thirteen. More artistes will be confirmed daily for the next two weeks.

**Woodstock 5 begins on Thursday 25th and runs until Sunday 28th September.** Entry is R220 per person, plus R50 for car access. Tickets are available from Computicket, Musica outlets, selected venues, and the 5FM website ([www.5fm.co.za](http://www.5fm.co.za)). Under-12s get in free. No alcohol will be sold to under-18s. [www.woodstock.co.za](http://www.woodstock.co.za).

### You Gotta go there to come back

#### Stereophonics

The Stereophonics are way up there on my list of British rock bands. They really have what it takes to make it as an original and strong act in a rather tired market. With so many bands out there suffering from an over-influence of Nickleback, it is refreshing to hear the slightly funky, almost grungy grind produced by this band. They are fun and upbeat, with a very distinctive sound that is well carried on this latest album. This one will please all the fans, but will undoubtedly bring more people into the fold too!

[Dave Gresham Records]

### Who are the Stereophonics?

Kelly Jones, Richard Jones and Stuart Cable are the Stereophonics, a band established in Cwmaman, Wales, in the early 1990's - originally as a cover band called Tragic Love Company. Signed to Richard Branson's V2 record label (one of the first acts signed to that label) in 1996, the Stereophonics have gone from strength to strength in the British Alternative rock scene - and the rest of the world, too. Having won the BRIT award for the Best New Band in their year of signing, they have produced a large number of singles, and have established themselves as a very solid band.





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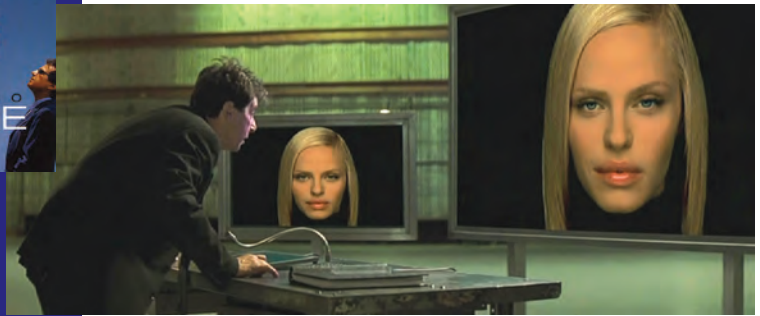
# dvd reviews:

## Simone

As a director, Viktor Taransky (Al Pacino) is tired of the politics and moods from the stars he works with. When a late fan hands him a virtual star as part of his estate, he finds the perfect star - and he has complete control of her, until she becomes too popular.

**James:** The trailer is very misleading. Simone never becomes sentient or anything like that. Instead, it's a rather complex metaphor about the film industry and how the actors, agents, directors, producers and studio bosses are all a part of the problem. The movie is set in the US, but it has a very European feel, probably to establish that the commentary is about all film industries. Pacino is in prime form, and the movie only falters a bit at the end. If you enjoy movies such as Being John Malkovich, Simone is well worth seeing.

**Walt:** Here is a film that I will be able to watch time and again - and each viewing will more than likely reveal something new within it's rather deep and commentary-filled plot. While the film offers an entertaining and darkly comedic tale on the surface, it goes a long way to being an important piece of social commentary. Al Pacino is absolutely brilliant in this film - not a hint of the usual Scent of A Woman style of character that he seems to portray far too often. This film goes a long way to show why he really is one of the finest actors in Hollywood.



## Apocalypse Now: Redux

Francis Ford Coppola's ground breaking war movie returns digitally re-mastered and with 49 minutes of extra footage. This means 14 new scenes never seen before. Martin Sheen is captain Willard, sent to assassinate Kurtz, a renegade Colonel who is based in Cambodia.

**James:** This still remains a must-see movie, and its shock level has not withered much. The new scenes flesh the story a bit, but it's not very different from the original story. Sadly, the studio didn't exploit the DVD format with more useful extra features. A few interviews wouldn't have hurt. It's still a great opportunity to own this movie on DVD, and the chapter list clearly shows what has been added, making it more a must-buy for fans than for new viewers.

**Walt:** Although Apocalypse Now is an important movie, I have to admit that I found Francis Ford Coppola's Viet Nam epic incredibly disturbing. I can't say that I enjoyed the film, but, on the other hand, I cannot say that I didn't - it's a film that I feel I will always be undecided about. Fantastic visuals, great soundtrack... but there is still that certain darkness to the film that unsettles me completely. The Redux version is an interesting change, with much added. Still, it makes my stomach do weird things...

## The Transporter

Frank Martin is an ex-military man who is excellent at driving, and delivering packages. When he delivers a package for a human smuggling syndicate, and discovers it's a woman, things go south for him pretty quickly. Good thing he shoots first and asks later.

**James:** Think Taxi 2 meets Bodyguard from Beijing, but

without the first's strange French humour or the latter's somewhat deeper character development. It lacks the energy of either movie, and if you expect to find logical things such as bullet count and physics to work, look elsewhere, because this is an all-action movie made in the most earnest sense of the word.

**Walt:** If you think too much when you watch this movie, you start seeing a whole bunch of mistakes, impossibilities and inconsistencies. That was my problem when watching The Transporter... I tried to analyse what I was seeing, instead of short circuiting my thought patterns and just accepting what my eyes and ears reported to my brain. Some great action sequences and nice cinematography, I admit... but this film falls into the brainless category quite nicely.

## The Adventures of Pluto Nash

Eddie Murphy plays Pluto Nash, a former smuggler who now has the most successful club on the Moon. But when the local gambling tycoon tries to muscle, and then blow, him out of his establishment, Nash takes matters into his own hands.

**James:** Pluto Nash reminded me of Space Truckers and Zoolander - prime cult material, but it's not likely to make any impact with the general masses. Still, it's a

## Red Dragon

Before Silence of the Lambs, there was Red Dragon. Anthony Hopkins returns as Hannibal Lector, and Edward Norton is Agent Will Graham, the man who caught Lector. Now he is forced out of retirement and needs Lector's help to catch a new serial killer - the Tooth Fairy (Ralph Fiennes)



**James:** Fiennes makes a great killer as the Tooth Fairy, but sadly his character is the dullest serial murderer since the Ed Gein movie. Lector is a far more supporting cast character, and it doesn't work with the dynamic of the film, which tries to force him into a main character position without giving him enough screen time. The bonus disc has some great extra footage, though, plus commentary for all the extended and deleted scenes.

**Walt:** Being something of a Thomas Harris fan - he wrote the books that the three "Hannibal Lector" films were based on - I was interested to see how this story (the first in the tale) would be handled. I was disappointed, but not completely. While Hopkins delivered less than I would have liked, and Ed Norton was not his usual brilliant self, I was pleasantly surprised by Ralph Fiennes' portrayal of a deeply disturbed Dolarhyde. True fans may be a little let down... it's a good thriller, but it ain't Silence of the Lambs.

Not the best film, but an excellent DVD overall, with tons of great features and the like.

hoot providing a) you can handle Eddie Murphy and b) you prefer your comedy a bit more left of field. You'll probably love it, but never admit to that in mixed company.


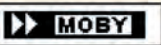







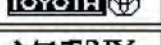



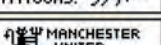







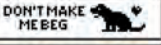












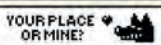









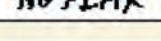
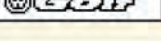


**Walt:** This film lost huge amounts of money - 94% of what it cost to make, in fact - and is probably, in terms of earnings, Murphy's worst film ever. However, I don't know why. It's far more appealing than the left-field Bowfinger, and more fun than Holy Man. It's straight forward funny - there is nothing really clever or thought provoking in this movie. But it is quite enjoyable none the less, and if you don't want to be challenged, it's great entertainment.

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Stan	10099	14099	18099
Teenage Dirtbag	10100	14100	18100
Thong Song	10101	14101	18101
The Ketchup song	10102	14102	18102
Twasa	10103	14103	18103
Walking away	10104	14104	18104
Who let the dogs out	10105	14105	18105
What about us	10106	14106	18106
We will rock you	10107	14107	18107
Wind beneath my wings	10108	14108	18108
X Files	10109	14109	18109
Thousand miles	10110	14110	18110
Seidonga	10177	14177	18177
Setsokotsana	10178	14178	18178
Siyaiikalento	10179	14179	18179
Summersong	10180	14180	18188
Supalava	10181	14181	18181
Sweetie my lovie	10182	14182	18182
The Rocka	10183	14183	18183
The way Kungakhona	10184	14184	18184
Like a virgin	10041	14041	18041
UI	10186	14186	18186
Ungawa	10187	14187	18187
Whyc	10188	14188	18188
Yalopa	10189	14189	18189
Zabalaza	10190	14190	18190
Zabokhabo	10191	14191	18191
All out of love	10192	14192	18192
I'm gonna getcha good	10193	14193	18193

OPERATOR LOGOS	NOKIA & SAMSUNG	ERICSSON & MOTOROLA	OPERATOR LOGOS	NOKIA & SAMSUNG	ERICSSON & MOTOROLA
	CODE	CODE		CODE	CODE
	20017	24017		20077	24077
	20019	24019		20078	24078
	20020	24020		20079	24079
	20022	24022		20081	24081
	20023	24023		20085	24085
	20024	24024		20088	24088
	20025	24025		20089	24089
	20027	24027		20090	24090
	20028	24028		20092	24092
	20033	24033		20093	24093
	20044	24044		20094	24094
	20049	24049		20096	24096
	20050	24050		20111	24111
	20057	24057		20114	24114
	20061	24061		20118	24118
	20063	24063		20127	24127
	20064	24064		20128	24128
	20066	24066		20129	24129
	20068	24068		20130	24130
	20069	24069		20132	24132
	20073	24073		20136	24136
	20075	24075		20144	24144
	20076	24076		20146	24146
				20148	24148
				20163	24163

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# Tits and spirits

## It's Bewitched!

[www.popsi.com/popsi/computers/article/0,12543,464015,00.html](http://www.popsi.com/popsi/computers/article/0,12543,464015,00.html)

Why does your PC crash? Bad memory? A drive in much need of defragmentation? No space on your primary drive? Or perhaps bad drivers, a virus or your machine is quite simply just doing too much? No, according to the magazine *New Witch*, it's because a nature spirit called a Vaettir resides in your harddrive, because it has a unique kind of energy. And this article highlights a few ways to make the little bugger happy, including rattling stuff at it and putting pretty things around the machine to make it happy. Oh, and you must talk nicely to your machine, which means I'm halfway there.



[www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com)

Maybe I'm just too much of a movie junkie, but I really have to know how well a movie's doing. Don't ask me why. Maybe it's because I saw the trailer and the fact that it grossed millions of dollars means I should probably go watch it. Or it's just another way to create idle banter as some or another party or thing. Either way, it pays to know how well a movie is doing - at least to people who are interested in movies. And it's a great conversation topic - someone is always bound to talk about the latest movie, and then you interject with such useless info as "Yes, apparently it's great! I saw it grossed over \$ 30 million on its first weekend." Okay, so it's a way to be superficial and shallow. This site is also the place to find out exactly how well movies are doing. They track the money being made, and they project how well a film will do. There are also other things to discover, such as what was the most successful sequel in history (*Terminator 2*), just how much money did *Titanic* gross (\$600 million), and what movie holds the opening weekend record (*Spiderman*). Delve a bit deeper and you can also find out how successful an actor or actress is on the big screen.

## Movie Money Magic

For instance, Robin Williams' most successful film is *Mrs. Doubtfire*, and both Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts have *Ocean's Eleven* as their best. The actor section is still severely lacking, though. The site details the US box office standings on a daily basis, and it also covers foreign territories to a degree. Each film is represented with an estimated marketing and production budget, so it's easy to see if a movie is making money. It's also good for pointing possible duds. For instance, *Bad Boys II* barely held the number one spot for 4 days.

## What's Wapanese?

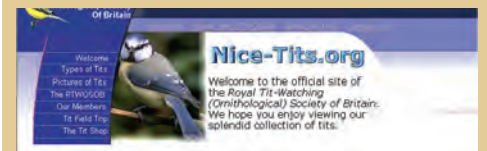
[www.urbandictionary.com](http://www.urbandictionary.com)

Recently an English judge ruled that most of the language in hardcore rap is akin to a foreign language, which is far from the truth. Even though slang has always existed in our society, it finally has a mainstream media voice, and is becoming more relevant. But who cares? What we normal denizens of the world would like to know is if we're being insulted or complimented when a streetwise, urban-slang chugging guy says something to us. That's why we need sites like Urban Dictionary. For instance, getting crunked means getting drunk or high, or both. And if someone calls you a Wapanese, you might have to consider two things - cutting down on your anime intake and to maybe get a girlfriend. Even 'Gamer' is mentioned, referring to it as people who play games, but aren't obsessive nerds. Or at least, the jury is out on that one. See, there is nothing official about the site. Definitions are supplied by users and are voted on. The entry with the highest votes is at the top, since it reasons that most people agree. Entries can also be recommended for deletion. It's a mob-rules system that compliments the nature of the site, though if you intend to learn urban slang of any form, don't start here, since it's purely useful for looking up definitions, some of which are quite stupid and probably inaccurate. And yes, it has a pretty extensive coverage of L33tspeak.

## Misnomer of note

[www.nice-tits.org](http://www.nice-tits.org)

Finally, a site you can point your grandmother to! I know I can - she just loves these little critters! Tits, of course, are small birds that come in fashionable blue, long-tailed and bearded varieties. Nice-Tits.org is the official site for the Royal Tit-Watching (Ornithological) Society of Britain. And whoever thought up the name had to have had a sense of humour (birdwatchers have such a thing? We're as awe-struck as you are). It's a funny site to send people to, because chances are they get the joke, which isn't rude at all. Of course, it ends there, unless you are really into watching birds. The flying kind.



Hunter S. Thompson once referred to writing wrestling press releases as easy, because it's like having a nail stuck between your brain lobes. There's a reason why they call it sports entertainment - you drink while watching it, and its entertaining. Just pray you never have to get into the head of a hardcore wrestling fan. Still, a few sites that are celebrating Vince McMahon's mortgage payments...

[www.wwe.com](http://www.wwe.com)

Yes, the World Wildlife Fund won their lawsuit, so it's World Wrestling Entertainment now. And on this site you can check on events, and



perhaps get your favourite redneck a Stacy Kiebler cut-out at the shop.

[www.steveswrestling.com](http://www.steveswrestling.com)

A site that shows what happens if you take wrestling seriously - bad design, but tons and tons of info. And Steve Austin giving you the finger.

[www.rajahwff.com](http://www.rajahwff.com)

One of the better wrestling fan sites - just a pity about the really ugly ads.

[www.cml.com/history.html](http://www.cml.com/history.html)

Now if you want to see a country in the grips of wrestling frenzy (and I'm not talking about WWE), go to Mexico. And this site will tell you of the sport's history.

## Pro Wrestling?

[www.puroresu.com/home.html](http://www.puroresu.com/home.html)

Sorry, did I say 'Mexico'? What about the Japanese? They love their wrestling - and 'Ultimate Crush' is so much cooler a name than 'Wrestlemania'. Plus, hectic Japanese commentary you can't understand is a hoot.

[www.wffstyle.com](http://www.wffstyle.com)

A really pretty WWE fansite, thanks to PHPnuke. And it tells you stuff about wrestling.

[www.100megsfree4.com/wiawrestling/pages/other/moves.htm](http://www.100megsfree4.com/wiawrestling/pages/other/moves.htm)

Wrestling has a lot of moves, and this site has a list of them. Of course, if you don't know what a *Amityville Horror* is, then this site is useless. I think this site is useless.





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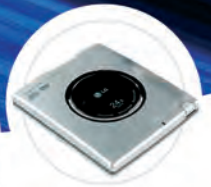
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# PRIEST IS SITTING IN FRONT OF HIS PC, LOOKING AT THE MONITOR WITH A BLANK EXPRESSION...

**Shryke:** Writer's block?

**Priest:** Shut up! Who the hell knew these things were so difficult to write?

**Shryke:** Yeah, I know the feeling. I mean, we always talk utter rubbish... every single day. Yet we can't come up with something sufficiently stupid to write Smack Talk about...

**Priest:** This sucks! I quit! **[Priest gets up and leaves]**

**Shryke:** Oh, no, not again... Priest! GET BACK IN HERE!

**Naffel:** Hello! My name is Naffel! I'm here for the job as **[Naffel looks at sheet of paper in his hand]**... Priest.

**Shryke:** That was quick! Um, well, okay, I suppose I should conduct an interview, then. Tell me something about yourself... Naffel, is it?

**Naffel:** Yes. I used to work on the farm, milking sheep and ducks. But I decided my destiny lies in professional journalism. So I came to the big city!

**Shryke:** And you came here, to this office to find a job as a professional journalist? Here? You are obviously as dumb as you look...

**Naffel:** Yes, that guy who told me about the job said I'd fit right in. Is it true that he liberates small, oppressed countries in his spare time?

**Shryke:** I take it you're talking about Priest? Ah, yes, he has this liberation fantasy going. Likes to think he is a reincarnation of Ghandi. But the only similarity between Priest and Ghandi is that they both wear diapers. Anyway, I think you'll do nicely for the job... filling Priest's shoes isn't too challenging. In fact, you may be a bit too smart for the job...

**Naffel:** He also gave me this photo of you. I'm so happy to see we share the same love for farmyard animals! We're going to be great friends! **[Naffel does a little dance]**

**Shryke:** Um, yes, well... You will have to change your name, though.

**Priest:** What? Like this? Won't it confuse people?

**Shryke:** No, they're not even going to notice. Trust me, you're perfect for this position. You do know what you're expected to do, right?

**Priest:** **[looks at paper]** "Counter his gargling crap with witty banter"?

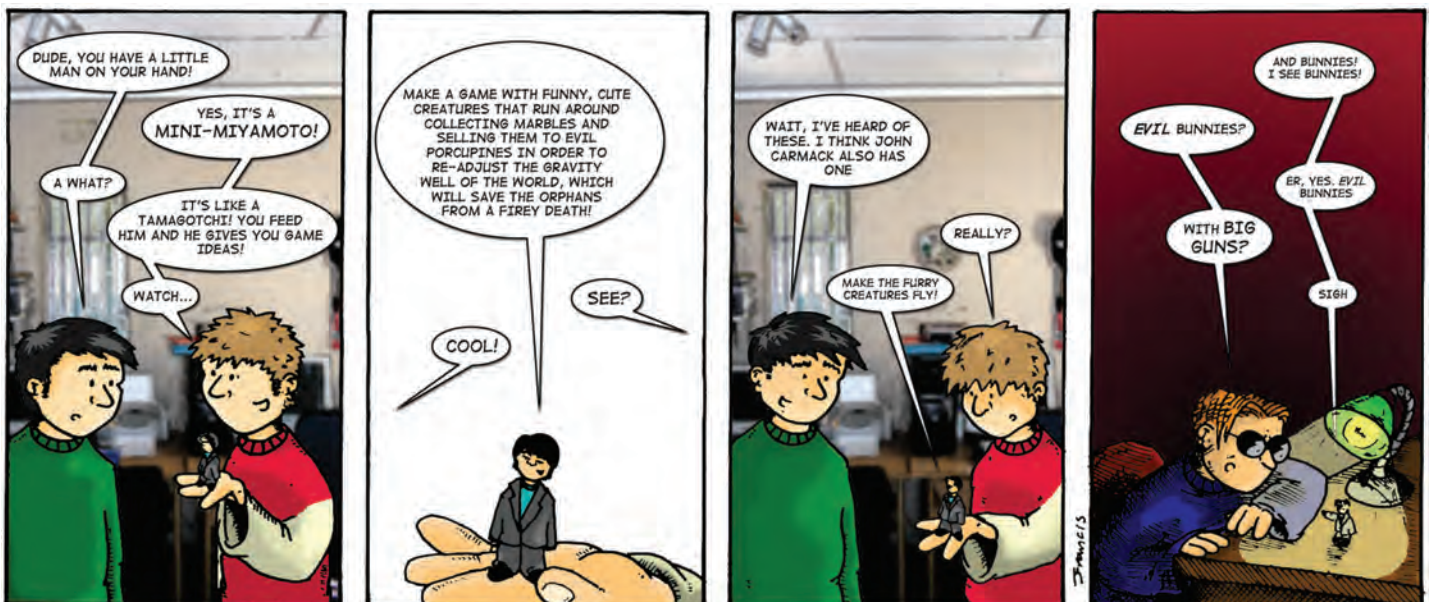
**Shryke:** Theoretically. Of course, the old Priest had the wit of a bit of three week old road kill, so you should do fine in that department. In fact, I think you are going to excel as the new addition to this rather distinguished duo...

**Priest:** "You suck. You are an idiot <- say this a lot" You suck! You are an idiot! How was that?

**Shryke:** Yes, um, wait... let me see that piece of paper...

**Former Priest:** **[sitting in a bar somewhere]** Ya know, I t'ld th't snbich 'verythin' h' knowsh! **(hic!)** Can shtill kick hish ass with one hand!

**WILL SHRYKE AND PRIEST SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES? OR IS NAFFEL HERE TO STAY? STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT EXCITING INSTALLMENT!**



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# Unreachable Limit !

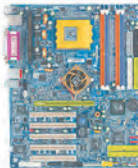
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- Integrated 10/100Mb Ethernet controller
- Provides 6 USB 2.0 ports for high-speed connectivity
- Provides CPU thermal detect and overheat protection



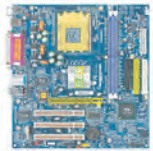
USB 2.0 DualBIOS™ 6-Channel Audio EasyTune™ 4  
 Q-Flash™ @BIOS†



K7 Triton™ series

**GA-7VM400M** VIA KM400/ 8235 Chipset

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- Integrated 10/100Mb Ethernet controller
- Provides 6 USB 2.0 ports for high-speed connectivity



USB 2.0 6-Channel Audio EasyTune™ 4 Q-Flash™ @BIOS†

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