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FULL REVIEW INSIDE!

GRAN TURISMO 2

SUPERCHARGED CARS, SIZZLING TRACKS, SEXY SUMPS. CAN YOU HANDLE THE POWER?

WIPEOUT 4

THE LOWDOWN ON THE FASTEST EVER ANTI-GRAVITY BLOCKBUSTER

CLUB RETRO

PONG, CENTIPEDE, Q-BERT, AND TETRIS REBORN ON PLAYSTATION

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

THE PLAYSTATION'S ULTIMATE FOUR PLAYER FRENZY. UNMISSABLE!

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MGS SPECIAL MISSIONS
LEGO RACERS
EVIL ZONE

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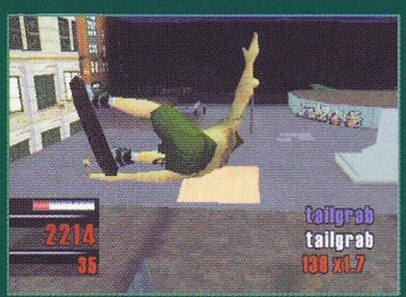
ACE COMBAT 3, DUNE 2000, NBA LIVE 2000, GRANDIA, THRASHER, REVIEWED!



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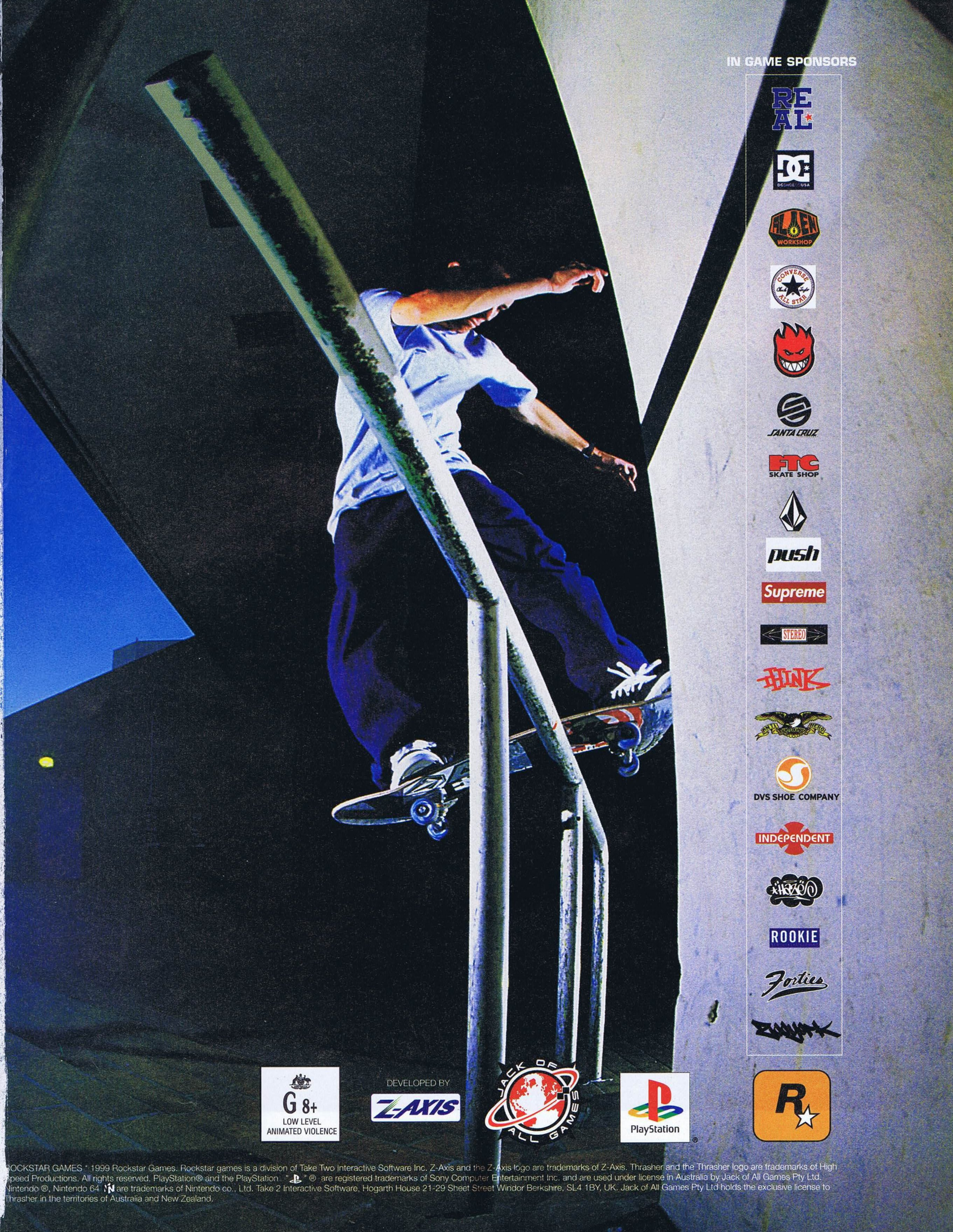

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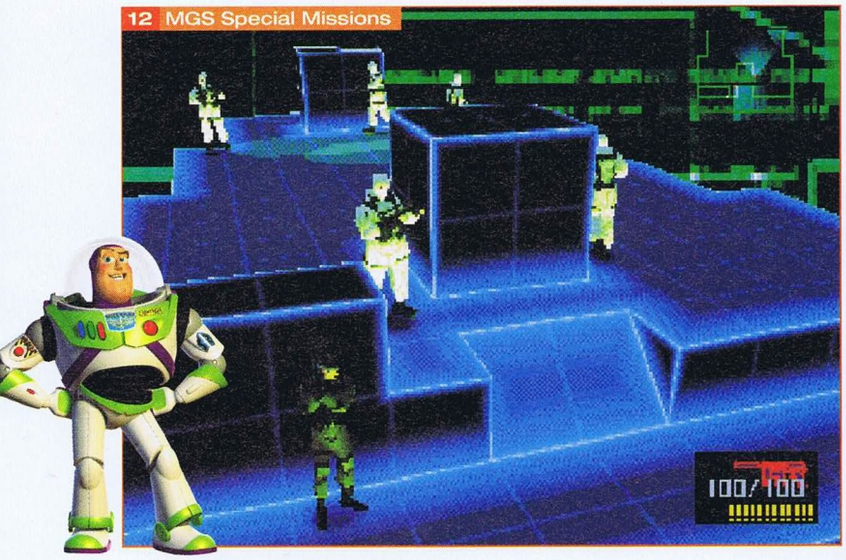
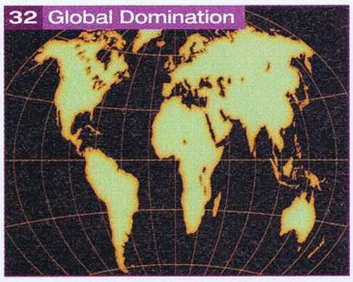
Mike OíPallack. Pro In-line Skater. Nike V-neck Raglan S/S Top. Nike Sport Cargo Pant.

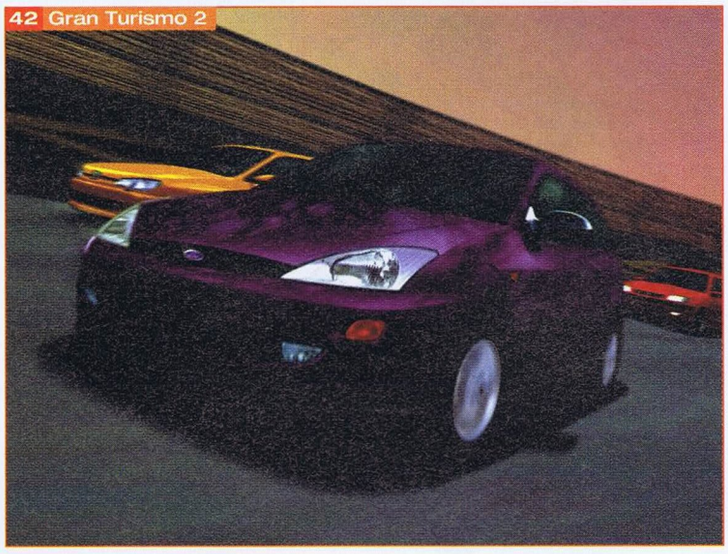
NIKE0128

contents

MARCH 2000







11 EDITORIAL
New name, same team... you get the picture. Meet the crew of New Zealand Station, the same all-star team that brought you New Zealand PlayStation.

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This month's free and independent demo CD comes packed with Metal Gear Solid Special Missions, Lego Racers, and Evil Zone. Flip through for guides and tips!

14 FEEDBACK
The world of PlayStation is huge and naturally, everyone's got a thousand questions.

18 SUBSCRIPTIONS
Like what you see? How does getting this mag on a discount sound? Subscribe to New Zealand Station, and you'll also be in the running to win loads of mad prizes, as well as being able to show off your latest issue before it hits the news stands!

20 UPDATE
If information is power, then the power mongers among you will love this month's news. New PlayStation 2 rumours, Final Fantasy IX, WipEout 4 developments, and some buffoon who changed his name to Darth Maul are some of the things you'll find.

28 MULTIMEDIA
This month, we've got The Mummy, the long-awaited release of Terminator 2, and a few awesome soundtracks to the biggest games around.

30 COMPETITIONS
Get yourself kitted out with our deluxe Thrasher: Skate and Destroy prize pack, containing games, clothing, and much more!

32 GLOBAL DOMINATION
Earth is carved into distinct sectors to which corporate giants apportion their money-making prowess. Somewhere between the American and Japanese markets is a role for us to play. Flick through this feature to discover who the major players are worldwide, and where we fit in.

36 WORK IN PROGRESS
Take a look behind the scenes at some of the titles that are currently under development. Not all of these titles are guaranteed to make it to a local release, but they're hand-picked by us on the basis of novelty, originality, hype, and general coolness. This month, the titles include Front Mission 3, Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure, and Boombots.

40 TOP TEN
Clueless about games? Need some kind of guide? If you don't trust our judgement, then stop here to find out what every other gaming head in the country is buying.

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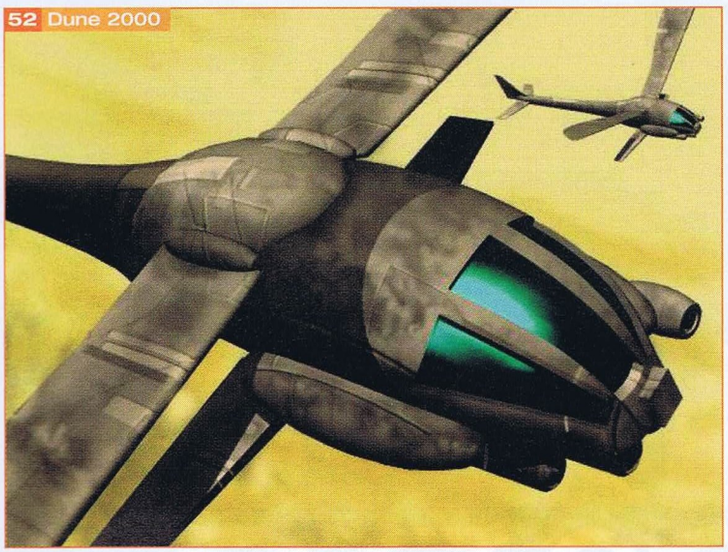

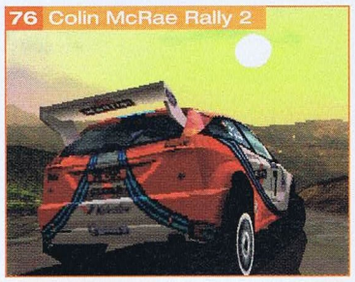

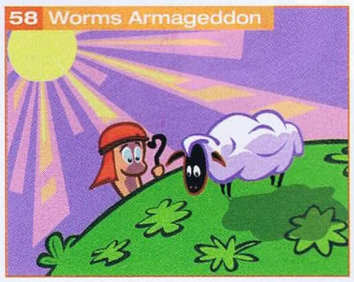

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80 MEGA GLOSSARY 2000
Texture compression, anti-aliasing, transparency effects... who'd have thought a videogame could be so complex? With this glossary, you'll be able to grasp all of the modern technobabble that's involved in the business and sound like a pro. All you've gotta do is read it!

86 HELP STATION
We understand that sometimes, people just get stuck; and when you're suffering from one of those mental blocks, you'd just like a little divine help. Well here it is- cheats, cheats, and more cheats!

90 BUYER'S GUIDE
The sheer number of PlayStation games on the market is mind-numbing. To save you the time and frustration of having to seemingly playtest every game under the sun, we'll happily do it for you! We sort out all the latest games available in the market, rate them, and briefly talk about their main selling points.

96 CRITIC'S CIRCLE
The world is not all a bed of roses - at least not in videogames. Think about it: if you have got several million game heads, they are not at all likely to agree on the one point. In fact, that is why many games-based debates like system wars and game design often flare up. This month, we deal with the age-old issue of graphics vs gameplay.

98 NEXT EDITION
Take a peek at the greener pastures on yonder hill - the possibilities of the future are endless, and we shed some light on where we'll be headed in the world of PlayStation next month.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU!

New Zealand Station's mission is to provide you with the very best reviews, the most comprehensive news, and all of the information you need to be totally on top of everything PlayStation. As an unofficial magazine, we don't settle for betas and we don't source articles from overseas. We test everything for ourselves, so you can rest assured that everything you read in this magazine is honest, unbiased, and based on the final product that you, the reader and consumer, may buy.

New Zealand Station comprises a team of the most experienced videogamers in the business. We know our games. We know the technology. We know the industry. And above all else, we are gamers first, journalists second. You can trust us. You'll never find us reprinting a press release or cluttering up space with inconsequential nonsense about fashion, food, or whatnot. We're here for one thing and one thing only: interactive entertainment. We believe so strongly in how it can benefit society that there is no way we will ever sell out on you. Happy Gaming!

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR

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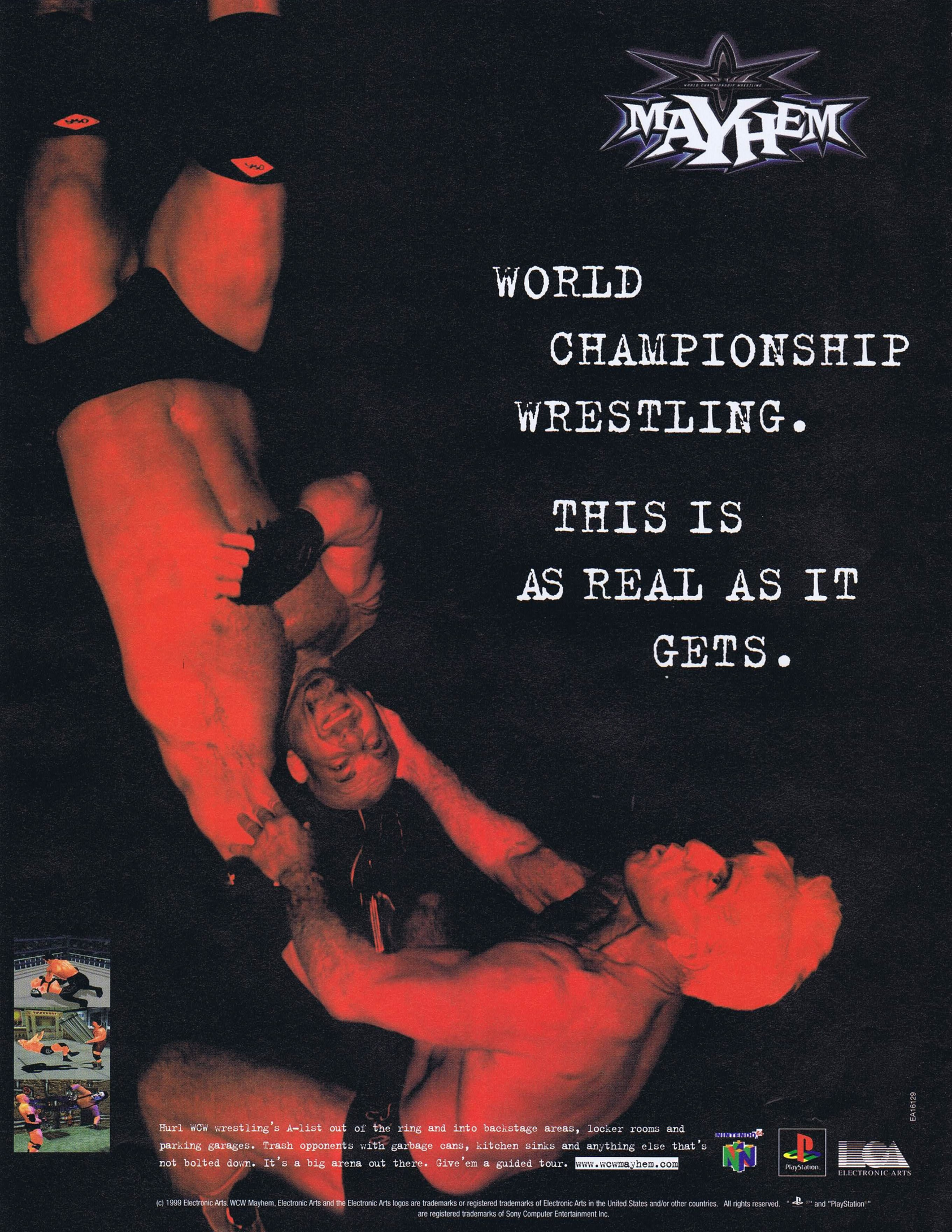

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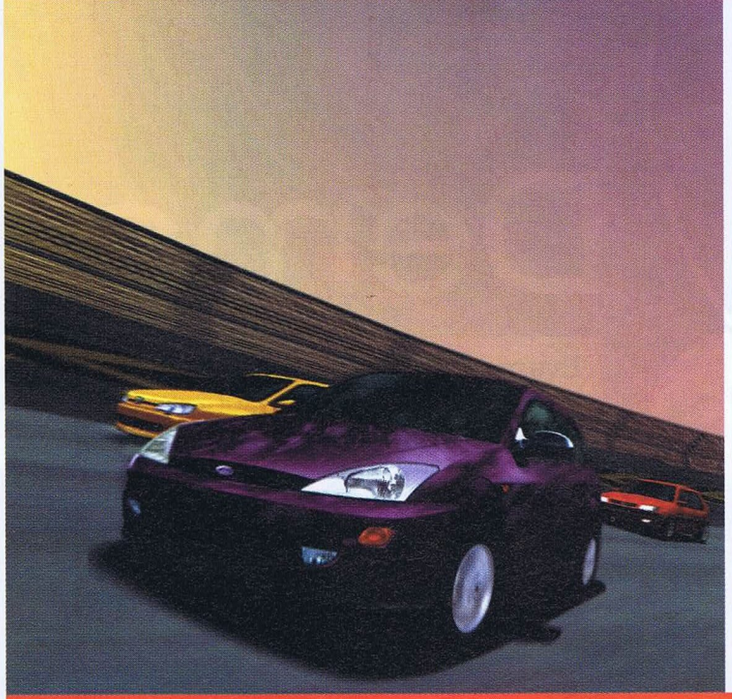


Gran Turismo 2 - this month's big title, and the first game to give us a sample of what the PlayStation 2 will offer

What's in a name?

Welcome to the first issue of *New Zealand Station*, New Zealand's leading independent magazine for PlayStation enthusiasts, formerly known as *'New Zealand PlayStation'*. Some of you may be wondering why there is an *"Issue 10"* written on the cover. Well, that is because we are technically on our tenth issue as a magazine. Why the name change? Because all-encompassing legal forces beyond our control willed it to happen. Either way, everyone can rest assured that the change is in name only, and that the team you have come to know and love are still producing - and striving to improve upon - the same quality publication that you have been familiar with.

This month's big title is, without a doubt, Gran Turismo 2. Go get it. We strongly recommend it. Not only is it destined to be one of the best sellers on the PlayStation this year, but it is also a sign of many things to come. With so much attention being drawn to the fact that the PlayStation 2 is on its way - not to mention that Gran Turismo 2 has a PlayStation 2 GT2000 video clip - many of us are wondering where we currently stand with the PlayStation.

First of all, the quality of Gran Turismo 2 is an indication to all of us that the PlayStation still has what it takes to be the king of the hill. The need to make programming methods more efficient and streamlined is the driving force behind games that are smart, games with originality, and games that innovate. This is exactly what we'll be seeing more of in the future, and it is these kinds of things that true gamers crave - as opposed to the lazy alternative of pretty graphics that do little else save looking pretty. In the time leading up to the launch of the PlayStation 2, we can all look forward to enjoying the absolute best that the PlayStation has to offer. Given the timing and all, it would appear that Sony, like a well-trained athelete, is peaking at the perfect time.

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR

Meet the New Zealand PlayStation Team

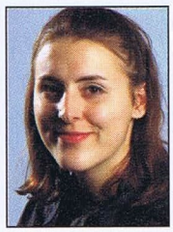
This month, we ask what game (real or fictitious) the crew is fantasizing about?

Kevin Cheung

Final Fighter
I am still waiting for a decent 3D Final Fight game. Scrolling beat'em ups are a forgotten genre. Tragic.

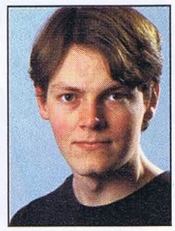
Hillous Lesslie

Stealth Ninja
They've released numerous add-on packs in Japan, and all I can fantasize about is Ayam... err... Tenchu 2.



Chantal Bairle

Wipeout 2000
I can't wait for Wipeout on the PlayStation 2. Imagine how good the Eliminator mode will be by then!

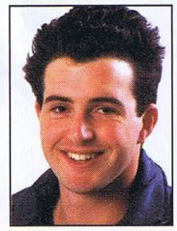


James Cottee

To be Elite
What I'm really hanging out for is a space combat game that allows complete freedom of action. Elite IV, please!

Amos Wong

Anime Nut
It's true. Most anime games out of Japan suck. I'd like to see a few that rock the world for a change. Give me Evangelion!

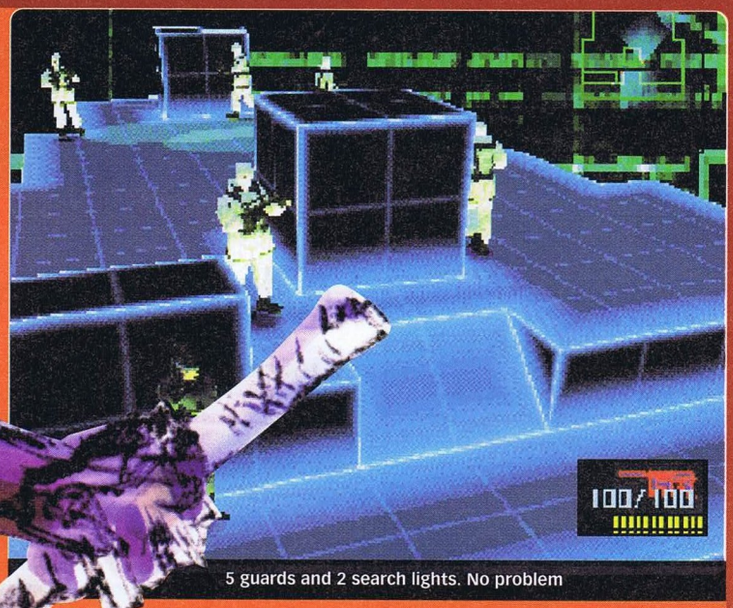


Keith Talent

Dancerama
I just don't get how it is that after Bust a Groove, the genre died in the arse. Give it another shot with Bust A Groove 2!

Demo Disc

Every month, the Station crew provides you with its own locally made, totally independent, and deliciously free demo disc! Experience all the games you were too chicken to try now!



5 guards and 2 search lights. No problem

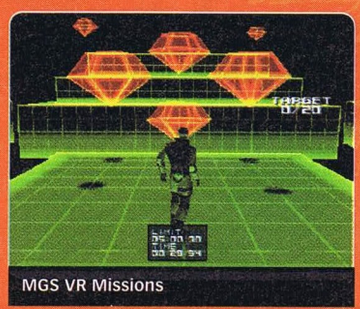
Special Mission Tips!

- When you are armed with the Socom, don't just stand there and shoot - hold down the × button to run while you are shooting!
- Don't be a silly Rambo! You will only get yourself killed!
- Live guards might be able to detect you and even kill you, but they are almost as stupid as the dummy targets. Stand up against the wall and knock at it to lure them some place else.
- Standing still with the Socom, you can home in on a target and shoot them even when they are off the screen.

MGS Special Missions

Playable Demo

Metal Gear Solid is arguably the most innovative game that was ever made for the PlayStation, if not on any system available to date. Boasting a flexible graphics engine and control system that has not been seen yet in any other game developed so far, Metal Gear Solid allowed you to live out all of your wildest espionage fantasies. You are the legendary super-spy, Solid Snake, and your job as a spy is to infiltrate a military base that is threatening the world with various weapons of mass destruction.



MGS VR Missions

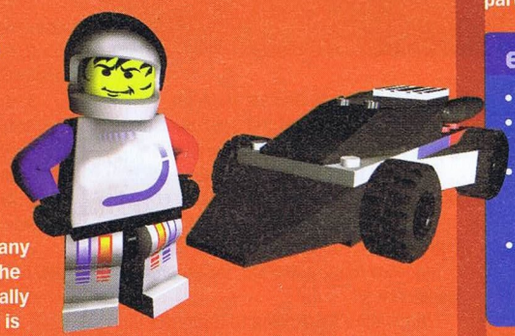
Now that the dust has finally settled, and we can look back on the game in hindsight, the game certainly did deserve all of the hype that it got. And with Metal Gear Solid fans across the globe screaming for a new installment to the game (how much of a giveaway was the ending?), Konami have seen fit to release an expansion disc, the *Metal Gear Solid Special Missions*. The *Metal Gear Solid Special Missions* expansion disc is every Metal Gear Solid fan's dream come true.

The knobs aren't very aerodynamic...

Smash the opposition into little pieces

Lego Racers

Playable Demo



You can use Lego to make practically anything, so it doesn't take a genius to figure out that a game based on Lego could be made to fit any kind of theme. *Lego Racers*, the only racing game where virtually everything you see on screen is constructed through the ingenuity of coloured blocks, is the latest cutesy go-kart racing game to hit the PlayStation

As a taste of things to come race your way through a whole playable track of *Lego Racers*. Choose one of the selectable racers, each of which has its own individual handling and performance attributes, and rocket away!

The controls for Lego Racers are:

D-Pad	Steering
×	Accelerate
□	Brake/Reverse
△	Rear View
○	Change perspective
L1	Fire Weapon

Basic Lego Racer tips

- Collect the weapon pick-ups scattered across the road. They're normally arranged in groups of three across the road, so they're hard to miss!
- Follow the racing lines. This will minimise the distance you travel, hence reduce your lap times and allow you to be placed in a higher position.
- Turbos are cool, but don't use them if you're approaching a turn! All that you'll do is ram into the wall, which doesn't help at all.
- Use those weapons. They're there for you to gain the advantage. If some silly sod is hanging in front of you and you're armed with a cannonball, don't hesitate to knock that sod out of the way.

Evil Zone

Playable Demo

Evil Zone is one of the more underrated 3D fighting games in the market. Originally released under the title *"Eretzvaju"* in Japan, *Evil Zone* is a title that features many original new cinematic elements that Yukes has been famed for in its previous game developments.

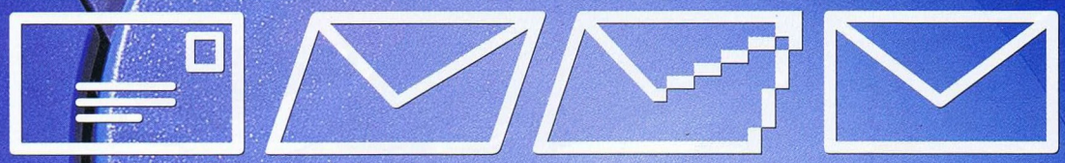
In this awesome playable demo, you can select one of two characters and play through a Story Mode and a Versus Mode. These demo games will show off not only some of the cinematic finesse this game employs, but also reveals parts of the intriguing storyline that lays underfoot.

Evil Zone Gameplay tips!

- Hold down the △ button to power up your attacks
- While you're powering up, you're vulnerable to attacks, so be sure your opponent is either at a safe distance or in the process of eating the dirt.
- The block button doubles up as a deflection button against projectile attacks. Use this to your advantage, as you can attack your opponent with his or her own projectile attack while you're up close.
- Evasion and manoeuvrability are the keys to success in Evil Zone. While dashing (double tap), press the △ button in order to rapidly step around your opponent and take him or her by surprise.

"You should talk. I'm not the one dressed like a Power Ranger."

feedback



This is where the most important people in the gaming universe (you) get to voice their opinions about games. Send in your comments, concerns and complaints to:

feedback
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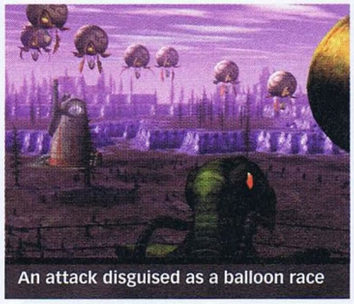
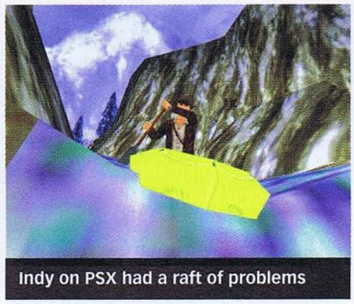


An attack disguised as a balloon race



Indy on PSX had a raft of problems

Up with the Joneses

Hi! I've got some questions:

[1.] When is Abe's 3 coming out? I've got One and Two and I've finished them.

[2.] Is there going to be a Broken Sword 3?

[3.] When is Spyro 2 coming out?

[4.] My friend said there was going to be a Tekken 4. Is this true?

[5.] In your February issue you had a Preplay on Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine. I'm looking to buy it but it's not out at any shops and I can't hire it.

Zach Jackson

To answer your questions:

[1.] In a year or two. It will be a launch title for the PlayStation 2 and sadly will not be appearing on the current PlayStation.

[2.] No word on BS3 yet.

[3.] It's out!

[4.] Tekken Tag Tournament will be coming out on the PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast. Unfortunately it looks like there will be no more Tekkens for our current PlayStation.

[5.] Another sad tale of a game that was too ambitious for the present PlayStation. You can get Indy's latest adventure for PC only.

Full of Questions

Dear New Zealand Station,

You have the best mag in the world so you should definitely be able to answer these questions.

[1.] What's this I've heard about the Dreamcast controller having a screen on it? If it has, will this make more people buy it instead of the PlayStation 2?

[2.] Is the MGS Special Missions normal two discs (not the Special disc) going to be the same as the original?

[3.] Will the PSX 2 ever drop its price down to what the current console costs?

[4.] Are Tomb Raider and Metal Gear Solid going to come out on the PSX 2?

[5.] Are there any plans for Crash Bandicoot 4?

[6.] Is the PSX 2 going to be better than the new Nintendo?

[7.] You know how Ape Escape uses thumbsticks instead of the normal D-pad; will all games soon be like that?

[8.] Will the PSX 2 have to run with the new digital television?

Ta! Yours sincerely,

Tom Lennon

Thanks. Sometimes it's hard, running the world's best mag, but comments like yours make it worthwhile.

[1.] The Dreamcast will have a thing called a Virtual Memory System. It is like a memory card that plugs into the back of the controller, with a small LCD screen displaying game info. It will hardly make a difference to sales. All it is really is a fancy memory card. Peripherals require excess expense, so console designers will always endeavour to invent useless and superficial peripherals such as these.

[2.] Metal Gear: Special Missions consists of one disc. The missions are very similar to the training course in

Gauge

One reader is baffled by acronyms and a plethora of other issues. Such matters are vented in Gauge.

Phoenix Down

Good Day to New Zealand Station,

I have to say I am surprised at the sheer arrogance of my fellow teenager (issue #7, November) who goes by the name of Phoenix.

Does Phoenix realise how lucky they are, or are they completely isolated from people of other economic status? Regarding their question of resisting the *"temptation of the Sega Dreamcast,"* I am sure that many Kiwi PlayStation owners could resist this. At least it was polite.

Anyway, I have a few questions:

1. What do DVD, PAL and NTSC stand for?

2. How does a PlayStation game become Platinum?

3. Is KKnD Krossfire ever going to be released in this millenium?

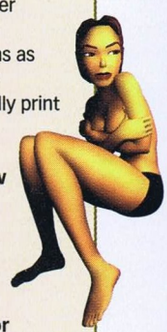
4. What is the best soccer management sim?

5. Are the PocketStations as useless as you guys tell us?

6. Why did you guys really print those revealing Lara pics?

Danke schön,

Matthew



1. Digital versatile disk; Phase alternate lines; National television standards committee. Check out the glossary for further information.

2. Games that are published by Sony have to sell half a million to gain platinum status. Other companies have their own bargain bin systems.

3. It has been out for over six months. Not many copies of the game were produced though, so it may have passed you by.

4. Premier Manager 99.

5. Expensive memory cards, just like the Dreamcast's Virtual Memory System. As useless as you could imagine and it is very, very gimmicky.

6. To sell more copies of our magazine, of course! Anything else would be a lie and you know it.

the original game and nothing like the game itself.

[3.] What with the PlayStation dropping to $99 at the moment and the PlayStation 2 not being released here for another year, chances of seeing it drop that low are very slim, at least for another few years.

[4.] Definitely.

[5.] Yes, it will be coming to the PlayStation 2, although it won't be made by Naughty Dog any more.

[6.] The PlayStation 2 is going to be better than anything ever, but the Dolphin's specs haven't been finalised yet, so we can't truly tell.

[7.] Ape Escape is an exclusively Dual Shock game. It is rather unlikely that many future games will be analogue only in this way. What is far more likely is that more and more games will let you choose between analogue or digital control.

[8.] No it won't. There will be plugs available to hook it up to older tellies and it will even plug straight into a computer monitor. Mind you, the resolution will not be as good on an old television as it would on a digital.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask

Hello New Zealand Station,

I have bought your great mag for a couple of issues and I'm impressed by how well everything is done and presented. I have a few questions to ask.

[1.] Is there any news or a release date for Omikron: The Nomad Soul?

[2.] I heard that the X-Files game was cancelled. Is this true?

[3.] Resident Evil 1, 2 and 3 have been made on the PlayStation now, but to play the fourth instalment, will PlayStation owners have to buy a Dreamcast? Will Code Veronica come out on PlayStation?

[4.] Finally, my fourth question to New Zealand Station is: What do you think the PlayStation's greatest game ever released is?

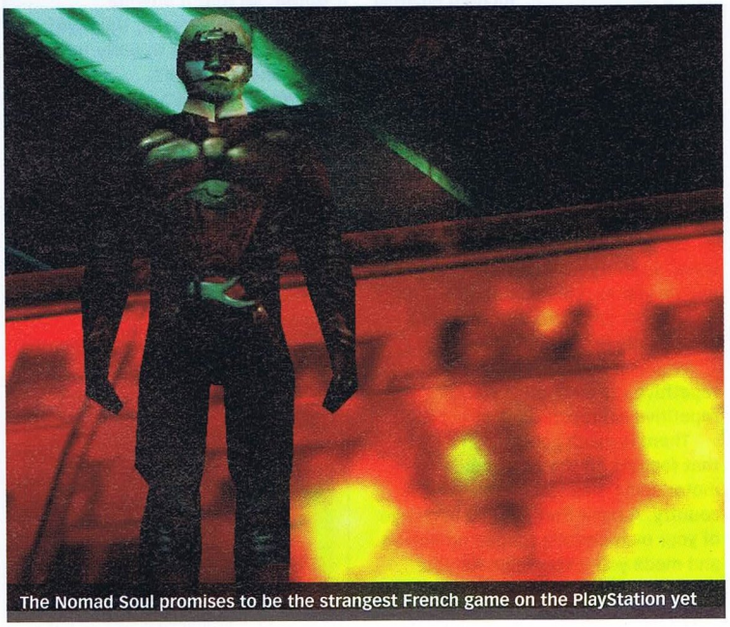
Nemesis

[1.] Sadly it would seem that Omikron is no longer headed for the PlayStation. It is out for PC and chances are that it will be ported to the PlayStation 2, in a couple of years.

[2.] No, sorry. It's available now.

[3.] Rumours Code Veronica may come out on the PSX 2 have not yet been denied, but nor have they been confirmed either.

[4.] Kevin can't really decide between Metal Gear: Solid and FFVIII, Hillous doesn't know if it's Tony Hawk's Skateboarding or Tenchu: Stealth Assassins and James isn't sure whether he likes GTA2 more than WipEout 3. But to answer your question, the PlayStation's greatest game is most certainly Bust-A-Groove, which is unfortunately out of production after experiencing poor sales in its first year on the shelf.



The Nomad Soul promises to be the strangest French game on the PlayStation yet

LETTER OF THE MONTH

This month's winner receives a Dual Force Steering Wheel!

GAMESTER
LIVEWIRE DISTRIBUTION PTY. LTD.

Waiting for RPG's

Dear NZ Station,

Great mag. I am a 40 year old RPG fan and I am looking forward to some new games coming out. I have a bit of a problem with your Buyer's Guide at the back of your mag. I am trying to get hold of Legend of Legaia but none of the leading stores know anything about it.

In fact it doesn't even get a mention in the coming months. Shadow Madness has even been put back until January. Are all the RPG distributors scared of the success that Final Fantasy VIII has been?

There are a lot of Role Playing Game fans out there, young and old, that must be peed off at all of this. There is a market for top quality RPGs in the Southern Hemisphere but distributors are too blind to see it. I have one question: are there any cheats for an old RPG called Azure Dreams as this game is really getting to me. That is all for now.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Craig

Shadow Madness - delayed by FFVIII

We apologize for the misleading information in our Buyer's Guide. The release date of a game can be a very difficult thing to predict. Dragon Valor, Shadow Madness and Saga Frontier 2 are all coming out (from Sony) before Legend of Legaia, which has unfortunately slipped back again and is looking at an April release.

Presumably, these games have been postponed to make some room for Final Fantasy VIII. It seems a little totalitarian though, to force consumers to purchase Square's latest masterpiece by temporarily stopping the flow of games early on in the year, solely to maximize sales of the one game.

Of course RPG fans are going to buy it! There is no need to apply a tourniquet to a market already deprived of the goods it so rightly deserves. If only the higher powers were to realize the extent of the Southern Hemisphere's RPG fanbase. Perhaps then brilliant titles like Legaia wouldn't take over twelve months to be converted to a PAL format.

Quest For Evangelion

I was reading the letters in Issue 7 and in there was an Evangelion question. Your answer was that it wasn't coming into New Zealand, so my questions are, how can I get an import copy of the Evangelion game (not pirated), where can I get a modification chip that will allow me to play the game and roughly how much will the chip cost? Thanks for your time.

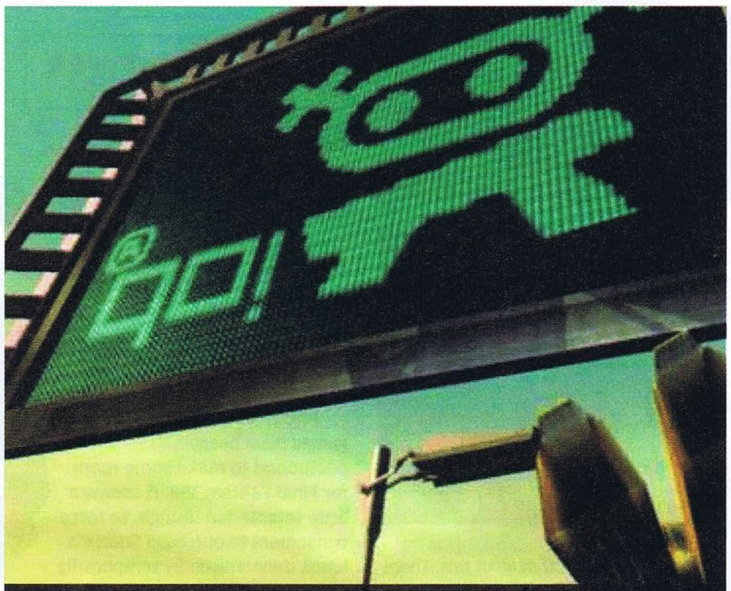
P.S. Keep that info about Resident Evil 3 and the Resident Evil gun game coming. OH, and great mag!

Wes

Evangelion - Not available locally

You're on the right track if you want to play the Evangelion game. All you need now is an import shop, where chances are you'll have to order the game. As for the mod chip, check out the Trading Post. It's full of trader's ads for places which will do it for around forty to seventy bucks.

However, even though your intentions are pure, be warned:



Curly from Wipeout - Sexiest game babe?

Do not hand over your PlayStation to someone whom you do not fully and completely trust. Once that little seal on the underside of your grey box has been punctured, Sony will have no part in fixing your 'Station should it somehow be damaged.

Get the wrong guy to install your chip, and you could be paying fifty bucks to a person who then destroys your beloved console. Anyone who has been there (Bootleg Bozo, for example) will know no one wants to go there.

WipEout what?

Great mag. It's way better than the ACP OAPSM. Anyway, I hired out WipEout 2097 and was so impressed that I straight away said, *"I'm buying it!"* but since WipEout 3 just came out I wanted to know which one to buy. Thanks a lot.

Alistair Haskett

A real point of contention. Most prefer the third in the series for its superior framerate, analogue control and higher resolution, but Hillous prefers 2097 as it's easier. However WipEout 2097 Platinum is no longer being produced.

FREAKY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Throw a sharp query at us and you could win one of these →

GAMESTER

LIVEWIRE DISTRIBUTION PTE. LTD.

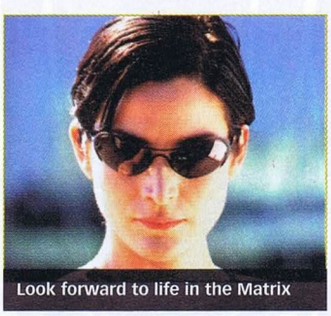
Chip in the head

Hey guys,

We all know that the disks for the PlayStation 1 are black and we now know that the disks for the PlayStation 2 will be blue. So, it could be inferred that Sony is black and blue, probably because of competition from PC games.

But seriously, what is Sony going to do when they run out of colours? Will the PlayStation 10 have stripey disks? I can't see that selling! The future is looking like a scary place. What do you think? Yours truly,

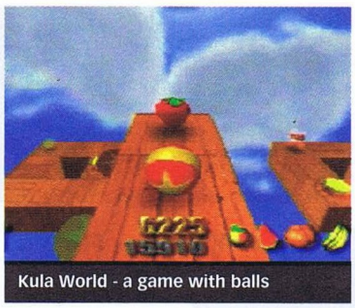
Mazra Baz (It's Maz time)



Look forward to life in the Matrix

Congratulations, Mazra! Yours is definitely and undisputedly the freakiest question that we have had the honour of answering. The answer is that Sony expect to be implanting game chips into the brains of newborn babies by the year 2063, in anticipation of the PlayStation 7's release.

The PlayStation 7 will beam radio game waves around the globe from a central hub in Japan, so no-one will even have to purchase a console to play. Those lucky enough to possess a chip in their head will be subjected to a ceaseless lifetime of continuous play, a bit like in The Matrix.



Kula World - a game with balls

Pay Heed to Rev Heads

Hey fellas!

I'd just like to say I love ya new mag! Unofficial kicks ass! I'm a big racing fan like most PSX owners and I love V8 supercars. I was just thinking (while waiting for Gran Tursmo to boot up) that fangin' an XR8 around Mt Panorama on the old grey box could be a big hit here in Oz, and I think it's about time they did something with it, specially now that EA's opened development down here.

I mean TOCA's good but it's hard to compare to thrashing V8 Commodores and XR8 Falcons down the mountain and simulating the Bathurst 1000 right down to the 3 hour sports races and top ten shoot outs.

So what do ya reckon guys?

Is there potential for a game?

Thanks a lot! Keep up the good work!

Caleb Young

Can you tell me if anyone will be bringing out a game called *"Bathurst"* as it would be a good idea. You could have tracks at Oran Park, Eastern Creek, Melbourne Thunderdome, Tasmania track, Queensland track and Adelaide track, and then the big one at Bathurst. They could have the V8 supercar Fords vs the Holdens and it could be a good seller.

If this is on the cards, could you let me know. By the way, could you tell me where I can get a copy of Kula World as I can't buy it anywhere.

Yours truly,

Richard Picarelli

To our disbelief, there is still no Australian-specific car racing game in production for the PlayStation. No Bathurst, no Summernats, no nothin'. Dick Johnson's V8 Challenge almost appeared on our favourite console, but in the end only ever came out on the PC (sigh). It has the Bathurst track...

We get countless letters on this issue, so every now and then we print one up just to remind all the developers out there that there is a gaping hole in our market.

Whoever keeps on making stale, repetitive car racer after stale, repetitive car racer, think about it.

There is much potential in a game that focuses on the grittier side of motor sport, localised in this very country. A racer that put you in charge of your own illegally souped-up hotrod and made you responsible for your under-hood alterations could really take off in Australia.

Gauge

Taking the pulse of the gaming world, we look at pivotal issues of the day in Gauge.

Finally Frustrated

Dear Guys,

I am not going to suck up. I am going to get straight to the point. I just noticed that on my new PlayStation, because my old one decided to die on me, there was no space for me to put my Action Replay. What do I do?

I loved your Final Fantasy VII playguide. Do you think that you could tell me where to find all of the 12 Shinra dolls and what do they do? Will Final Fantasy Anthology be coming to the land down under? If so, when? Because I have not had a chance to play Final Fantasy V or VI.

Is it true that in Gran Turismo 2 you can sell parts as well as buy them, unlike the first Gran Turismo? Is there a drag mode? In Final Fantasy VIII will you be able to buy new weapons? Is it true that there will be a Final Fantasy IX and X?

Jason Sandford

Since the beginning, Sony Japan have been phasing out the many diverse and useful outlets in the back of the PlayStation. Now all there is left is the Sony-specific outlet, so that if anyone damages their cords, they will have to pay Sony directly for a new one by default.

What you will have to do is purchase a transformer box or a specialised convertor for your game enhancing device to work on your new PlayStation.

As for Gran Turismo, read our absolutely smashing review this issue! And yes, there will definitely be many more *"Final"* Fantasies to come.

Satisfied Customer

Dear PlayStation mag,

First of all, congrats on the great mag. The Tony Hawk demo in issue 6 was great. Just over a year ago I decided to subscribe to the Official PlayStation Magazine. Six months into my subscription you changed the name to Australian PlayStation and went unofficial.

Not only did my subscription value go up, you gave me the choice of either six free issues of either Complete PlayStation Solutions or PlayStation Gamer. I chose CPS and when I had one issue left in my free subscription, they went bi-monthly. I wondered if I would be waiting two months for my last issue.

When my last issue of Australian PlayStation came, enclosed was a copy of Playguide and a pack of game cards. If the people at your offices went to the effort of giving me an issue of Playguide just so I wouldn't have to wait longer for CPS, I thank you immensely. Things like that and the six free issues of CPS just because of a name change show true faithfulness to the customers.

Before I go, I must say that games are too expensive unless they are Platinum. Also, if games like Thrill Kill are too graphic for children like me, let the parents decide if their kids can buy them. I am thirteen but I speak for the adult gamers that may want to play graphic games. Keep the mags coming.

David Yovens

PlayStation owners may feel pretty smug about having Tony Hawk to play with, but he'll be on N64 soon too

We too feel that it is high time for a general price drop in new PlayStation games, David. Don't worry, for when the successive PlayStation is finally here the cost of PlayStation 1 games will drop severely and there will still be plenty coming out.

As for the graphic games issue, yes, we repeat ourselves. Why is there no restrictive rating when it comes to games? All we can hope for is that, as time drags on, the authorities at the office of Australian film and literature classification realise that there is a growing mass of mature gamers who deserve to play whatever they want.

Bootleg Bozo

Station Mag,

As a wise man once said: *"a fool and his money are easily parted."*

That's me - a thirty-something game player who paid $45 to have his PlayStation installed with a *'chip'* to play copied game discs and NTSC format. However, I found (as did half a dozen mates) that the chip eventually becomes invalid, causing games (bootlegs) to freeze on the opening logo and then revert to the PlayStation no disc mode.

I now have many bootlegs that are useless - and I regret having the chip installed and having many useless copies made. Now, I prefer to buy official discs at pawnbrokers for a bargain price. My advice to your readers? Beware of the chip - it is not a long term component and very restrictive. Don't do it.

Bootleg Bozo

Always, always check the water level!

Quite right, Bozo. Fiddling with the insides of a delicate machine such as the PlayStation can too easily result in frustration and tears. The best that you can hope for is a few weeks' worth of cheap entertainment (at the cost of dedicated consumers, of course) before your PlayStation conks out altogether. Then who're you gonna go crying to? Not Sony, oh no.

I love my FMV

To all the staff at the Station Magazine,

As a subscriber to your mag I have noticed that in nearly every issue there is at least one *"nut-sack"* who tries to insult all the readers of your mag. I'm very open- minded on the issue of which gaming console or system is superior.

I don't despise the N64, Sega, PC or PSX. They all have different good points and aspects about them. But when *"nut-sack"* has to go out of their way to try and insult us, well that just pisses me off.

In response to Jazza in issue 5, I thought I might pick on his console of choice for a while.

So, you like the N64, eh? Well as far as I'm concerned you can go and play on your heat generator of a console with crappy cartoon style graphics, and in-game music that is looped every 30 seconds and keep waiting for the games to be converted from PC or PSX to come to your system.

But wait! Something's missing from the 64 versions: there is NO FMV and minimal speech in all your games, eg: Vigilante 8 when you complete a mission you get a nice slide show with subtitles, while we get a fully animated and spoken FMV movie. And there's also Gex 3D on the N64. Gee, that was a great FMV - it was so fast! Oh wait a second - there wasn't one.

All this time I can be playing my racing simulation Gran Turismo. Have you heard of that type of game before? I don't think you have because the only half decent racing game on the N64 is Pod Racer. PlayStation has so many racing games that I can't count that far. Don't think about Top Gear Rally or Beetle Adventure Racing either. The Macquarie Dictionary defines *"simulation"* as *"noun of simulate, to make a pretence or likeness and appearance of."* Those games don't even come close to realism in any way.

Isn't it funny how the new Nintendo Dolphin system is turning towards using disc technology even though other systems have been using it for ages now?

In closing, I must say if I have insulted anyone by this letter, please direct all insults to someone who cares: not me!

The Raven

We don't encourage system advocacy in any way, but we do encourage intelligent discussion. Any time you feel the need to take the piss out of another system, you'd better be prepared with a few facts to back yourself up. Be thankful you sent your mail to a PlayStation magazine that can explain things to you, and not a Nintendo magazine that would have humiliated you rather savagely.

Now, it's perfectly fine to knock the N64 for over-filtered graphics, space limitations, and unoriginal *"cloned"* platform games like Mario, Banjo, and Donkey Kong. But it's just plain WRONG to take it from the FMV slant. Reason? The new N64 version of Resident Evil 2 features every FMV from the PlayStation original.

And now that we have cleared up that issue, we will pretend that it just never happened.

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NZS010

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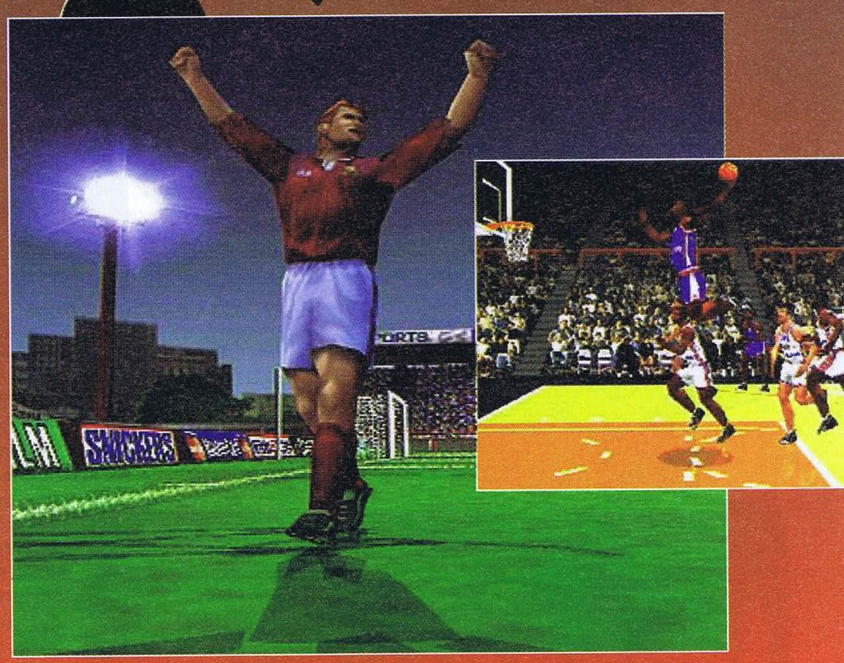

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY: 1. Entry is open to all residents of Australia and New Zealand who subscribe to Australian or New Zealand Station from Issue #10, except employees and the immediate families of Next Gaming Pty Ltd and its agencies associated with the promotion. Only entries completed with these terms and conditions will be eligible. 2. Competition begins at 9am Wednesday, 2nd February 2000 and entries close at 6pm Wednesday 1st March 2000. 3. Winners will be drawn manually and at random at 9am on Friday 3rd March 2000 at Next Gaming Pty Ltd, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW, 2016. 4. The promoter is not responsible for lost or misdirected mail. 5. In determining eligibility the judge's decision will be final and no further correspondence will be entered into. 6. Prizes must be taken as offered and are not redeemable for cash. 7. Total Prize value is $450, consisting of the following: EA Sports NBA 2000 PlayStation game (RRP$80), EA Sports FIFA 2000 PlayStation game (RRP$80), EA Sports Knockout Kings PlayStation game (RRP$80), EA Sports Baseball Cap (RRP$45), EA Sports Polo Shirt (RRP $60), EA Sports Triple Play 2000 Tshirt (RRP$30), EA Sports 2000 Wall poster (RRP$20), EA Sports Frisbee (RRP$15), EA Sports Stickers (4 x 3) (RRP$5each). Total Prize Pack Value $450. 8. Winners will be notified by mail and results published in Issue #12 Australian Station magazine on sale Wednesday 29th March 2000. 9. The promoter is Next Gaming Pty Ltd of 78 Renwick Street, Redfern NSW 2016. TP pending.

PlayStation Update

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Firmly gripping the world's latest PlayStation developments

Just imagine WipEout at 60fps...

at an incredible resolution...

WipEout 4 promises this and more

Wipeout Four blasts off!

Next generation racer to launch on to two consoles at once!

WipEout Director's Cut will feature all of your favourite tracks from WipEout 1, 2 and 3!

Two new Wipeout games are in development. Scheduled for a late 2000 release, Psygnosis are making one last Wipeout game for the PlayStation, as well as a separate and unique title for the PlayStation 2.

"Wipeout: Director's Cut" will include all the tracks from Wipeout 1, 2 and 3, as well as a new selection of racing circuits, including conventional oval tracks as well as other bizarre new shapes. Building on the success of Wipeout 3, it will take the PlayStation to the limits of its capabilities, topping the high res visuals and analogue control of Wip3out. *Wipeout Director's Cut* is scheduled for an October 2000 release.

While it may not be out in time for the launch of the PlayStation 2 in PAL territories, the first Wipeout game for the new platform, referred to at this stage as *"Wipeout Four,"* is already at a playable stage, running at a rock solid 60 frames per second. Psygnosis have had advance access to the valuable PlayStation 2 development kits, and are well on the way to creating the next generation of futuristic racing.

Details of the musical acts supporting the two new games have yet to be announced, but will doubtless continue the Wipeout tradition of hardcore electronica. As for the visual *"look"* of the new games, Brendan McNamara of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe has said that *"We try to create a new look for each new Wipeout game."* Considering the order of magnitude of each improvement so far, Wipeout from both PlayStation barrels will blow the 21st century away.

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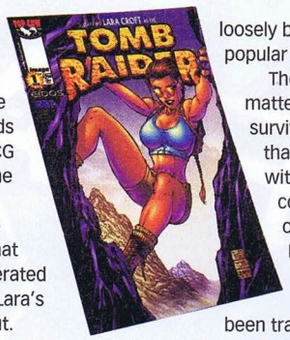
NEW FLAVOUR
INTENSE
REFRESHMENT
NEW FLAVOUR
Pineapple Strawberry & Citrus
Gatorade
Thirst Quencher
BlueBolt
Electrolyte Sports Drink
GAT1462PS

Tomb Raider Card Game

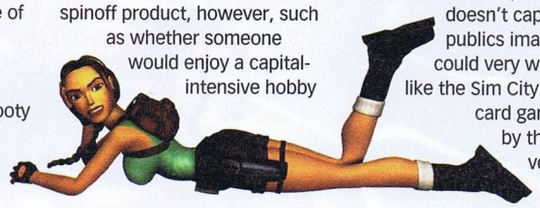
Lara raids the bandwagon of Magic The Gathering

The Lara Croft merchandising phenomenon continues, with the release of a trading card game based on her exploits. The Tomb Raider Collectable Card Game places the player in the role of a raider of tombs, who must use skullduggery and cunning to loot the booty and avoid the machinations of the other human player(s).

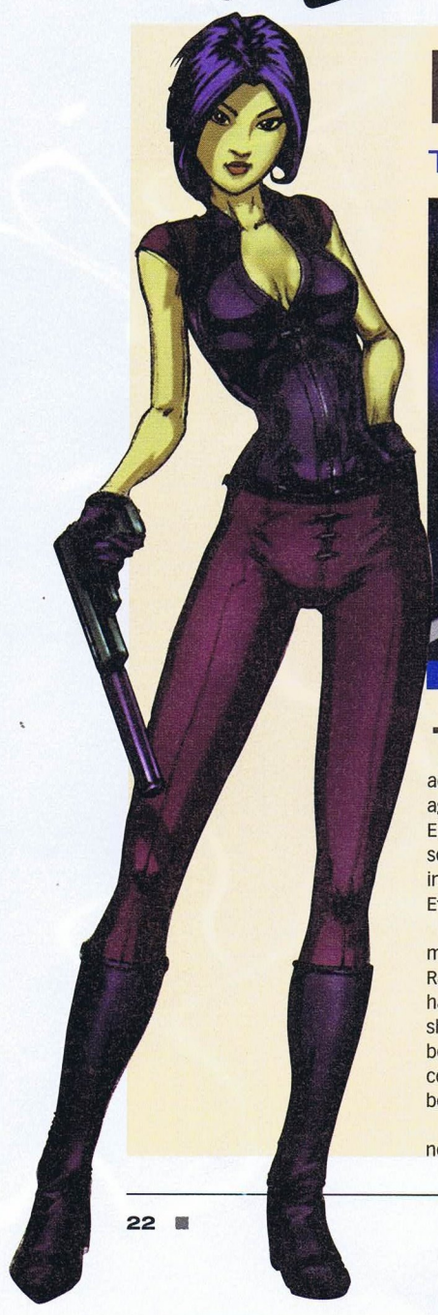
A joint venture between Eidos and Precedence games, the cards use extensive CG artwork from the Tomb Raider games and also other images that have been generated specifically for Lara's cardboard debut.



There are questions surrounding the release of this spinoff product, however, such as whether someone would enjoy a capital-intensive hobby loosely based on a popular video game.



There is also the matter of the product surviving in a market that is saturated with dozens of collectable trading card games, like Magic The Gathering. Video games have been translated to the card game format other times before, and if this product doesn't capture the publics imagination, it could very well end up like the Sim City trading card game. Which by the way, did very, very, badly.



More Eidos Games to become comics

Top Cow Comics sign on to create comics of Fear Effect and Daikatana

Fear Effect employs a radical shading system which makes the whole game look like an animated show - perfect for translation to comics!

The company who are behind the comic book adaptation of Tomb Raider has agreed to incorporate other Eidos games into the world of sequential graphic literature, including Soul Reaver, Fear Effect and Daikatana.

Following on from the massive success of the Tomb Raider comic book, Top Cow have agreed to produce one-shots based on more Eidos best-sellers, and if these new comics sell well, they could become on-going titles.

Fear Effect is set in a seedy near future version of Hong Kong, where three mercenaries find themselves pit against the forces of Hell. The story in the comic will be a stand alone adventure separate from the continuity of the game.

Daikatana

Soul Reaver

The Soul Reaver comic will depict the events up to and including the opening of the game, including Raziel's evolution over, and destruction by, his lord and master Kain. Soul Reaver is being written by Matt Hawkins, who is more renowned for his comic creation Lady Pendragon.

The guys at Top Cow Comics are big video game fans, and have no intention of stopping the game-to-comic spinoff steamroller they've started. Top Cow CEO Marc Silvsetri was quoted: *"I see us making comics based on the games we love continuing into the 21st century."*

As they continue to work through the Eidos catalogue, Top Cow will also make a comic based on the upcoming PC and PSX 2 first person shooter Daikatana. How a shooting game can be given a plot is anyone's guess, but we can be sure these industry vets are up to it.

Oh my God! It's the PlayStation 3!

1000 times the power. Gosh!

The PlayStation 2 is nowhere near the technological perfection that Sony have idealised. At least that's what Shinichi Okamoto, Senior VP of Sony's Research and Development, thinks. In a recent statement at the Microcomputer System and Tool Fair 99, Okamoto-san reportedly said:

"We are working to create the PlayStation 3 game machine so it will have 1000 times the performance of the PlayStation 2."

Gasping in amazement? We sure are. According to Okamoto-san, the system requirements for reaching technological perfection has only be *"half met"* with the PlayStation 2, and his hope is to reach that goal with the PlayStation's next incarnation.

How was the magic number of *"1000"* reached? According to several sources, when Sony asked developers and game-makers what kind of performance they would want out of a next generation machine, they came back with a figure of 18,000 times the performance of PlayStation.

As it stands, the PlayStation 2 is 300 times more powerful than the current PlayStation. When the developers were asked again, they wanted something 1000 times more powerful than the PlayStation 2.

Just goes to show that you can never keep the developers really happy.

Ridiculous Legal Lengths

Midway throws down the Gauntlet

Working Designs have been forced to change the name of their upcoming title, Detonator Gauntlet, as a result of legal pressure from Midway. Reason: the title *'Detonator Gauntlet'* was considered by the Midway folks to be too similar to their own cult hit, *'Gauntlet Legends'*. As a result, Working Designs, who are renowned for championing the cause for great Japanese RPGs that usually don't make it out of Japan, are changing the title to *'Vanguard Bandits'*.

Our own legal analysts are slightly baffled by Midway's bully-boy tactics. After all, nobody ever confused Metal *'Gear'* Solid with Guilty *'Gear'* or Heavy *'Gear'*. And it's not as though *'Gauntlet'* is a newly invented word either. All we can do is sit back and laugh.

"No! You can't have my giant leaf!"

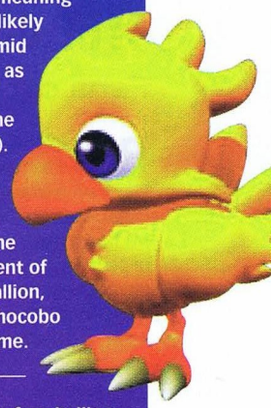
This isn't the first time the videogames industry has been turned upside down by a single word. The famous dispute between Apple Computers and Apple Music comes to mind, as do the trademark question marks that hovered over the Atari name in the early 1980s.

Gauntlet Legends is proving to be the exception to the "retro sucks" rule

Mini News

Microsoft have been approaching all major console developers in a bid to determine the market's feelings towards its new X-Box console.
The most recent company confirmed to have been approached is Squaresoft, who have also recently confirmed they will be bringing a number of titles to Bandai's new handheld game unit, the Wonderswan. Since the details and specifications of the X-Box are still being finalised, both Microsoft and Squaresoft have declined to comment.

The ever-expanding world of the dear Chocobo is continuing to grow and grow! Recently announced by Square's European division was the forthcoming release of Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon 2, meaning that we are likely to see it by mid 2000 (funny, as we haven't even seen the first one yet). Further to the Land of the Giant Chicken is the announcement of Chocobo Stallion, which is a chocobo breeding game.



Guess who is free-balling through the jungle?
While the Western world lapped up Tarzan like any other feature-length Disney film, censors and moral groups in Israel were in an uproar over the film and videogame.
What is it about Disney's monkey-boy that is so offensive to people?
Well, Tarzan is apparently *"too nude"* for audiences, and it wasn't enough he had nothing more than a measly loin-cloth to cover his coconuts. Suggestions were made to have the vine-swinger don a simple pair of jeans, but sanity prevailed and the products were released without further hitch.

Building up the Racer Hype

Namco's new Ridge Racer V screens

Never mind the fact that none of its cars are real - they just look too damned awesome!

Namco are busy at work on the next instalment of the Ridge Racer series, and they've released a series of brand new images for everyone to drool over while we wait for the eventual release of the game with the PlayStation 2.

More highly anticipated than even Gran Turismo 2000 in some circles, these new shots have got us convinced that *Ridge Racer V* will fulfil the dreams of every circuit racing fan new and old.

Sporting incredible reflective surfaces on every car and running at a lightning pace, fans who are in wait of the PlayStation 2 have every reason for believing that Ridge Racer V will be a bigger adrenaline rush than GT2000. Thus far, Namco have released numerous demonstration videos, while GT2000 has only had a demo from GT2. Make no mistake: this rivalry will be epic.

Commence drooling here

War of the Ridge Racer Girls

Fans cat-fight over the PSX 2's flagship racing title

Reiko Nagase is a name that should be familiar to many PlayStation owners. She's the Ridge Racer girl. Was, actually. Ms Nagase, who won the hearts of countless racing fans as the innocent girl next door in Ridge Racer, Rage Racer, Ridge Racer Type 4, and most recently in the PlayStation 2 promotional videos, has apparently been shown the door. Her replacement: a far less innocent-looking bombshell by the name of Ai (Japanese for *"Love"*).

Ridge Racer fans across the globe were in an uproar once news of this change came to light, with Reiko Vs Ai polls featuring prominently in many fans sites on the internet.

Reiko's replacement also comes amidst the latest reports that Sony are now considering stalling the release of Gran Turismo 2000. Why? Well, Ridge Racer V will be coming out at the same time. It certainly wouldn't make sense for either of these games, both of them guaranteed best-sellers, to have to compete with each other. All this means is that there's more resting on the shoulders of Ridge Racer V and Ai!

And what does this mean for the rest of the videogame industry and its reliance on increasingly disposable silicon vixens to sell product? Previous experience has seen characters like Nikki from Pandemonium blossom into full woman-hood in Pandemonium 2. On the other hand, evolution of game babes can plough into dangerous new territory, such as Capcom's pivotal female icon changing from the wholesome and strong-willed Chun Li into the cute but undeniably underaged Sakura (though curiously, the Japanese age of consent is 13).

Reiko Nagase will be the first mascot to be actually axed from any videogame series. We can only hope that Curly from WipEout is spared this fate.

Like the cherry blossoms that fall to earth, Reiko will fade away

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First Oz Game Developers Conference heralds dawn of new age

AGDC spawns new Game Developer's Association and atmosphere of optimism

Over the course of the 26-28th of November 1999, the first *Annual Australian Game Developer's Conference* was held in Kings Cross, Sydney. Modest in scale but with lofty ideals, game developers large and small from Australia and New Zealand gathered to share contacts and ideas, and help build a future we can all be proud of.

Most significant of the shows revelations was the formation of the Australian Game Developers Association, an industry body to lobby Canberra for the gaming cause, and represent the interests of the local industry to the rest of the world. The AGDA is headed by Adam Lancman of Infogrames Melbourne House.

While the primary focus of the event was developing games for the PC, the PlayStation 2 ran a close second, with local developers tooling up to write software for the new machine. Juan Montes, the head of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe made a special guest appearance, in which he outlined the capabilities and marketing strategy of Sony's new platform. He wasn't able to hint at the price of the console, saying the cost question won't be resolved until *"February or March."*

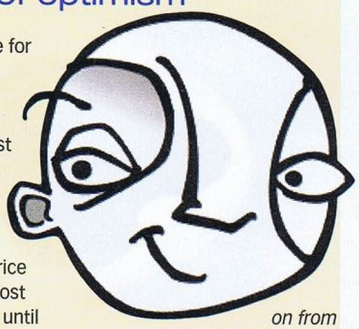
Ratbag's Dirt Track Racing - their PC experience will serve the PS2 well

See? Developers are humans too

Game heads running amuck

Right now the only thing holding back local development for the PS2 is the availability of development kits. All big local developers are planning for at least one PS2 title for late 2000 or early 2001, and Adelaide developer Ratbag is planning two!

Tom Crago from Ratbag had this to say: *"We are under contract with Sony to produce two games for Playstation 2. The deal's worth five and a half million dollars. One of the titles will be a racing game, following on from the success of Powerslide and Dirt Track Racing [on the PC]. The other game will be an 1st / 3rd person action title, like Metal Gear Solid, only better."*



The ADGC may have started small, with about 300 industry types in attendance, but by next year it's set to be huge. Infogrames Melbourne House, EA Gold Coast, Microforte, Ratbag and others are all hiring aggressively, and all aim to be first class developers of cutting edge game software for the next millennium.

Does God = Good?

RPG update with Sony and Namco

Namco, better, known for titles such as Ridge Racer and the Tekken series, has decided to take a slight detour from its usual games and has resolved to produce a role playing game worthy of blockbuster status. Tentatively titled *"The God RPG"*, Namco's ambitious project places you in a world where gods and people coexist. Such a story is sure to attract bucket-loads of hard-hitting philosophy.

Namco, who have had mixed success in the RPG field with the Tales of Destiny series and Dragon Valor, are aiming for the kind of success enjoyed by companies like Square. Funnily enough, *"The God RPG"* sound incredibly similar to one of Square's equally philosophical titles, Xenogears. Not only will the relevance of religion or the status of deities be questioned, but the game will also specifically be aiming at Square fans with its 3D backgrounds and 2D animated sprites.

Sony's next RPG attempt will be with Kamurai, which bears an uncanny resemblance to Grandia (see p.60)

"In battle, we love to SING!!!"

"Don't I look butch in this bow?"

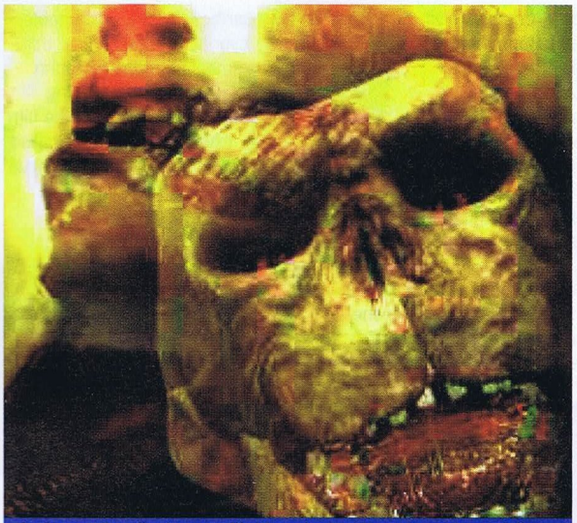
The 2D artistry will also be going so far as to incorporate the character designs of Haruhiko Mikomoto, the character designer of the legendary Macross: Do You Remember Love (Robotech) series.

It would seem, however, that Namco definitely aren't the only ones trying to learn from the RPG greats. Sony Computer Entertainment has now announced the development of a new RPG of their own called Kamurai, which bares a striking resemblance to Game Arts' RPG title Grandia.

The announing of this game follows the lukewarm reception received by its latest RPG attempt, Legend of Dragoon, which in turn was clearly modelled on the Final Fantasy games.

Many questions loom over the Square RPGs...

When are the distributors going to get off their arses?

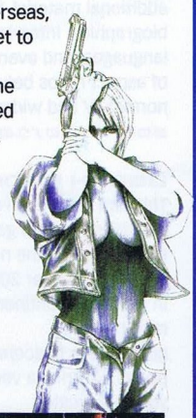


The horror! Excellent games like Parasite Eve 2 may never materialise

Squaresoft's European branch has committed itself to launching titles like SaGa Frontier 2, but how many of us actually know what the original SaGa Frontier was? This is the dilemma facing local distributors as the industry wrestles with the debate on whether RPGs are a viable genre for consoles.

To this date, the Final Fantasy series has proven to be the one exception to the rule that RPGs don't work in the West. But between Final Fantasy VII and VIII, the rest of the world has already seen incredible titles like Parasite Eve, Brave Fencer Musashi, and Xenogears. We have yet to see a single one of these. And yet with the announcement that SaGa Frontier 2 will be coming out locally, it's as though the mistakes of the past are all being repeated in that nobody knew what Final Fantasy I-VI was, and nobody knows what SaGa Frontier is. One could say the constant indecision on releasing these titles has institutionalised the RPG genre's status in limbo.

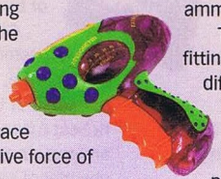
What is even better is that *Parasite Eve 2* has been released overseas, and we've yet to see even a whisper of the long-promised Parasite Eve. Oh, the excitement never stops!



The Strangest Freebie

The Ultimate Potato Gun

Like it's partner in crime, the water pistol, the spud gun is a weapon of deadly force in the aggressive backyard battles of pre-pubescence. It's ability to turn an garden potato into a source of limitless projectiles has captured the imagination of young and very young alike. And now, at the dawn of the 21st century, the spud gun is ready to ascend in an arms race to rival the destructive force of the Super Soakers.



The good people at Moose Enterprise have gifted us with one of their new weapons in the battle for the parks and schoolyards of the future; *The Spudinator*. This new device aims to set itself above and beyond the tame spud guns of yore by maxing out the power and by upping the features.

Aside from the novelty value of being able to see the inner workings of the translucent weapon, and thus the force you are exerting on the tiny starchy cube of death you're about to fire, it also has a number of different nozzles to vary your ammo spread.

The four different fittings allow for pellets of different sizes to be created, so you can trade off range against stopping power. There is even a head which allows you to fire two bullets at once, making either for some interesting sharp shooting or some very pissed off friends. We were fighting over *The Spudinator* as soon as it entered the office. It's a weapon of mass destruction like none we've seen before, and we like it.

The Spudinator - The ultimate in starchy vegetable armaments

Syphon Filter 2

The smash hit returns!

Double the intrigue!

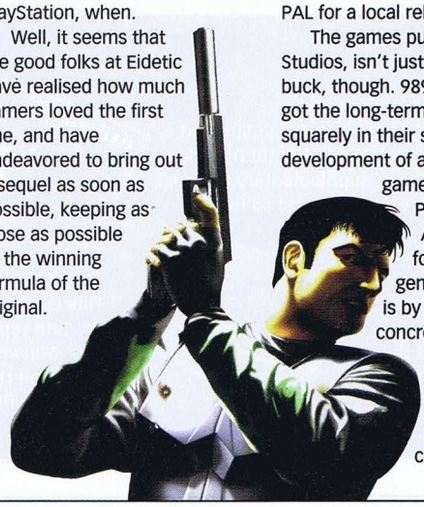
Double the action!

Syphon Filter 2, the sequel to the fan favourite spy action game of last year has been rushed through production, and will be hitting the shelves in the U.S. in March. There was a degree of uncertainty hovering over the project for a while, such as whether *Syphon Filter 2* would be on the PlayStation 2, and if it appeared on the PlayStation, when.

Well, it seems that the good folks at Eidetic have realised how much gamers loved the first one, and have endeavored to bring out a sequel as soon as possible, keeping as close as possible to the winning formula of the original.

In terms of game concept and technology, this makes the *Syphon Filter 2* more of a mission pack than a genuine sequel, with the familiar action returning over a series of all-new levels. As the game will be developed for the American TV format first, there will be the usual delay of a few months before the game is adapted to PAL for a local release.

The games publisher, 989 Studios, isn't just out for a quick buck, though. 989 Studios have got the long-term buck set squarely in their sights with the development of a Syphon Filter game for the PlayStation 2. A release date for the next generation version is by no means concrete info yet, but is likely to be emerging late 2000, if not at the consoles launch.



Mini News

The Simpsons

Yo Goober! Where's the beef? Rumours are currently circulating that Fox Interactive may have secured the rights for a game based on Matt Groenig's cartoon series, The Simpsons; and that a game will be appearing soon on the PlayStation.

One has to wonder, though, whether a Simpsons game is necessary at all. An arcade game based on the series died in the arse several years ago, and everyone must surely be wanting a Futurama game as well!

"The world is mine!" **Sony Computer Entertainment recently announced that the total shipment of PlayStations across the globe numbers at 70 million - with 16.77 million in Japan, 25.94 million in America, and 27.33 in Europe, Australia, and other PAL territories. Number crunchers should note, however, that this is the number of units *"shipped"*, and not necessarily sold.**

"My name is Maul. Darth Maul. Stop laughing." **Okay. Everyone had a bit of a giggle when some silly sod in the UK decided to change his name to Sony PlayStation. Well, it's happened again. Sort of.**

Following the immense fanaticism of Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace, UK cinema manager Simon Capeling signed a deed poll changing his name to Mr. Maul. Darth Maul, that is. Unfortunately, Mr. Capeling... err... Maul wasn't prepared to paint his face black and red, but blu-tacking a few horns to his head is certainly on the cards.

DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC

All the latest DVD and music CD releases for your multimedia pleasure

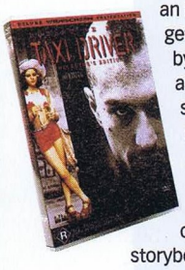
THE THING

A crew of American scientists stationed within Antarctica stumble across a super intelligent creature which can take any form and reproduce rapidly, and begins replacing base members one by one. If they can't stop it, the world's next.

It could be argued that the presence of Kurt Russel is a feature in and of itself, but *The Thing* on DVD has other merits too, such as extensive interviews with the cast and crew.

SCORE: 8/10

TAXI DRIVER



Martin Scorcece made a name for himself by shattering the notions of a perfect society with a grimey urban blend of sex and violence. Robert DeNiro plays an insomniac taxi driver who gets pushed over the edge by the unrelenting brutality around him, as resolves to save a 14 year old prostitute from her ravaging pimps. Aside from the extensive language and sound options, there are storyboards from the production of the movie, and the complete script to the film.

SCORE: 9/10

ROLLERBALL

In the 21st century, the world is ruled by omnipresent corporations that dominate all aspects of our lives. The public is kept passive by watching a futuristic death sport called rollerball, which teaches the futility of fighting the system.

So when the greatest rollerball player in the world refuses to retire, rule changes are introduced to ensure that he won't leave the track alive... *Rollerball* is a cinematic masterpiece, and has influenced every violent facet of the video gaming mileu. The DVD contains a wealth of additional material, including biographies, interviews, various languages, and even the choice of aspect ratios between normal TV and widescreen.

SCORE: 10/10

DEATH RACE 2000

This film more than any other has defined video games as we know them. In the nightmare world of the year 2000, entrants in the trans-continental road race run over pedestrians to score points. Starring a very young Sylvester Stallone, this DVD is packed with features, including an interview with the director, and a collection of trailers from other 70s action films with titles like *"Eat My Dust"* and *"Big Bad Momma."* All in all, a package incomparable class.

SCORE: 10/10

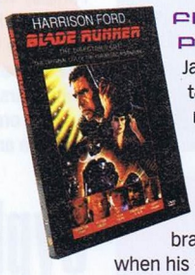
2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

This collaboration between Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C Clarke is an icon in the fields of science fiction and cinema, inspiring more references on The Simpsons than any other film. A scientific mission to Jupiter starts to go wrong when the ships computer HAL 9000 decides that the lives of the crew are secondary to the mission itself.

2001 on DVD includes trailers and a speech given by Arthur C Clarke before the premiere of the movie in 1968.

SCORE: 9/10

BLADE RUNNER: DIRECTOR'S CUT



This is the definitive version of Ridley Scott's classic. *Blade Runner* is set in the post-apocalyptic L.A. of 2019, where every able-bodied person has fled the ruined Earth to the relative paradise of Mars.

Harrison Ford plays a blade runner, an elite cop brought out of retirement to eliminate a squad of renegade androids who want a word with their manufacturer over the issue of their built-in obsolesence.

This DVD is a little on the sparse side. Aside from the language options, there are no added features. Considering how much of a cult film this is, bonus material like interviews and production notes would have been welcomed by fans.

SCORE: 7/10

MISSISSIPPI BURNING

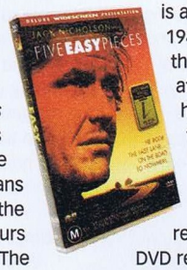
Yet another preachy drama where people spontaneously sing *"Amazing Grace."* In 1964 the American civil rights movement is at fever pitch, and when 3 civil rights activists disappear into the Mississippi swamp, it's the FBI versus the KKK, with the fate of democracy at stake.

Aside from the odd burning cross, you get subtitles, the theatrical trailer and scene access, but not much else.

SCORE: 7/10

FIVE EASY PIECES

Jack Nicholson plays a talented pianist running away from the responsibilities of adult life by dicking around with blue collar jobs and brainless girlfriends. But when his elderly father takes ill, he returns to his upper class family and is forced to question his values, attitude, and what exactly the hell he thinks he's doing with his life. A slow moving but powerful drama from 1970.

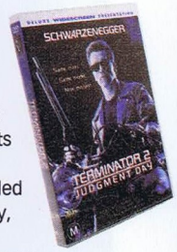


Five Easy Pieces has limited features on DVD, and is more likely to appeal to fans who have heard of the film than connoisseurs of modern cinema. The disc also includes cast biographies and about 20 different subtitle languages.

SCORE: 6/10

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY

The sequel to the 1984 classic, this once again casts Arnie perfectly as an unstoppable cyborg killing machine, this time sent to protect John Connor instead of icing him. The content of the film itself could almost be called minimalist, as the dialogue is a sparsely dotted afterthought between extended chase scenes, gunfights and explosions.



The quality of the master itself is exemplary, without a hint of the artifacts and noise that can dog hastily assembled DVDs. Unfortunately, extra features are practically non-existent, and even the languages available are limited. Still, buyers of this disc will want to see Arnie blowing stuff up and not much else, and that's exactly what they'll get.

SCORE: 7/10

GILDA

Starring Rita Hayworth, *Gilda* is a classic noir film from 1946. A shady gambler thinks he's just getting a job at a casino, but soon finds himself in a twisted love triangle and a plot to control the worlds supply of tungsten!

Gilda was digitally remastered for DVD release, bringing out the richest monochomes and the single channel of sound is crisp and flawless. Extensive documentary footage is also included, as are cast biographies.

SCORE: 8/10

JAMMIN' MUSIC

DUKE NUKEM: MUSIC TO SCORE BY

Includes tracks by Type O Negative, Slayer, the Wu-Tang Clan, and even a rendition of the *Duke Nukem* theme by Megadeth! Of added benefit to PC users is 175 megabytes of supplementary material, including playguides, shareware, level editors and so forth.

TAM - TWO TRIBES

This is the official single (or anthem) for the latest game in the Command & Conquer series, Tiberian Sun. TAM cover *Two Tribes* by infusing it with a mechanised insanity that befits the future of war. Fingers crossed for a PlayStation 2 version.

SILENT HILL

Instrumental in creating the mood for the superbly creepy *Silent Hill* was the music, which alternated between haunting folk guitar and grinding industrial desolation. The full scope of the *Silent Hill* experience is represented, with over 40 different tracks.

MOVING SHADOW 99.1

This is a budget Drum 'n Bass release from the UK, and represents collossal value spread over 2 CDs. *Moving Shadow's* hottest acts are represented here, and there's a bonus data track too, featuring the short film shot to promote Grand Theft Auto 2.

the mummy
feature review

Inspired by the classic 1930s film, this 90s remake of *The Mummy* throws together the modern conventions of Indiana Jones-style action and a truckload of special effects. Starring Brendan Fraser (George of the Jungle), *The Mummy* tells the tale of how a band of adventurers from around the world release the curse of *The Mummy* upon an unsuspecting Egyptian populace. And what more does this mummy desire, other than bringing pestilence and suffering upon the innocent? He wants to get busy with the leading lady.

The Mummy is a tongue in cheek film that tries to break away from the melodrama that's usually found in a film of this type. The quippy one-liners work well in some scenes - but fail horribly in others. Ultimately, the film isn't to be taken taken seriously at all, as it's more of special effects-laden action spoof than anything else.

Special effects buffs will also enjoy the DVD extras immensely, as there are loads of options to view how each scene was created step by step. Beyond that, the excellent video transfer quality and visual effects make it a worthy showpiece title.

score: 8/10

competitions

This awesome March competition will close on the 14th of March 2000.

thrasher comp

We are only giving you one option this month: Skate or Die!

This month we have only ONE competition for everyone to enter, but don't feel ripped off - it is undoubtedly the biggest comp you ever laid eyes on! If you're at all familiar with the PlayStation skateboarding game Thrasher: Skate and Destroy, then you will know that it is one of the finest and most comprehensive skating games ever made.

Thanks to the generosity of Jack of All Games, Team One Sports and Chubby Board Clothing, we have over $1200 worth of prizes to give away!

We will be handing out 3 game packs, each includiong a copy of Thrasher: Skate and Destroy, a copy of the Thrasher soundtrack and a 100% cotton Thrasher T-shirt. In addition to that swag, we will also be delivering 3 runner-up packs each including a CrossXOver sports bag, a cool and colourful dress shirt, a pair of freight shorts so you can look smooth while swimming, and a Chubby cap to protect your gaze from the Sun's harsh rays. For your chance to win a copy of the game, its soundtrack or perhaps some cool clothes and a bag, just answer this simple question:

NAME THREE OF THE FICTITIOUS CHARACTERS WHO APPEAR IN THRASHER: SKATE AND DESTROY

Put your answer on the back of an envelope and send it to:

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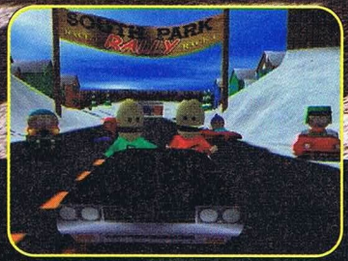

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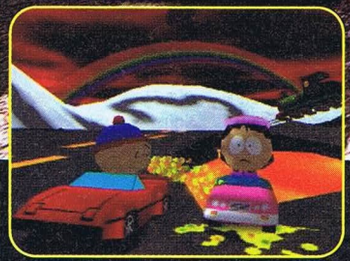

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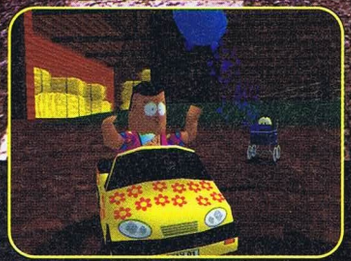

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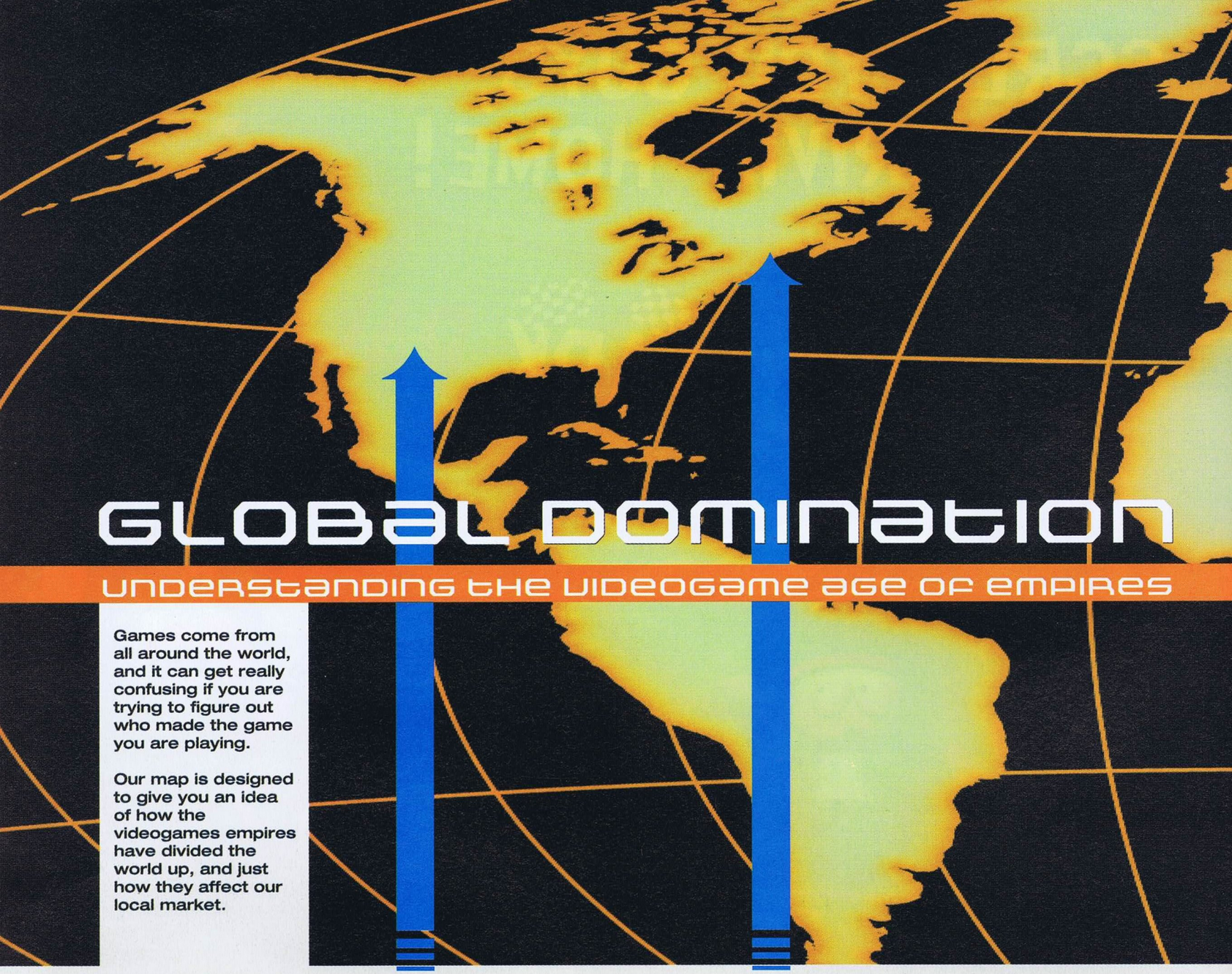


GLOBAL DOMINATION

UNDERSTANDING THE VIDEOGAME AGE OF EMPIRES

Games come from all around the world, and it can get really confusing if you are trying to figure out who made the game you are playing.

Our map is designed to give you an idea of how the videogames empires have divided the world up, and just how they affect our local market.

AMERICA

ELECTRONIC ARTS
One of the most recognised names in videogames today, Electronic Arts has been involved in the videogaming scene since the earliest of PCs and game consoles. The Madden NFL series, for instance, dates back to 1992! Its presence in the industry is further strengthened by its affiliate development groups like Bullfrog, Origin, Maxis, Jane's, and Lionhead Studios.

UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE
As the publisher for developers like Naughty Dog and Insomniac, Universal enjoys the luxury of blockbuster franchises like Spyro the Dragon and Crash Bandicoot. A big question mark is looming over who will take up the Crash 4 duties from Naughty Dog, now that Universal's contract with Sony has expired. Universal's latest efforts with Crash Team Racing and Spyro 2 are indicative that they are nowhere near finished yet.

SQUARE/EA
Even though Square has its own studios in Hawaii and Los Angeles, they have a reciprocal distribution agreement with EA. That is, EA will distribute all of the Square games made in Japan. This deal doesn't apply to the PAL markets, as Square has its own arrangements there.

989 STUDIOS
989 Studios was originally launched as a development team specialising in sports games. They didn't do too well. 989 are now concentrating its efforts on other genres of games - especially since Syphon Filter has earned so much praise across the board.

MIDWAY
Midway can be credited with popularising videogames with titles like Mortal Kombat and NBA Jam - especially through the controversy of the *"fatalities"* back in the early 90s. These days, Midway is soldiering on with Ready 2 Rumble, Gauntlet Legends, and other projects for next generation systems.

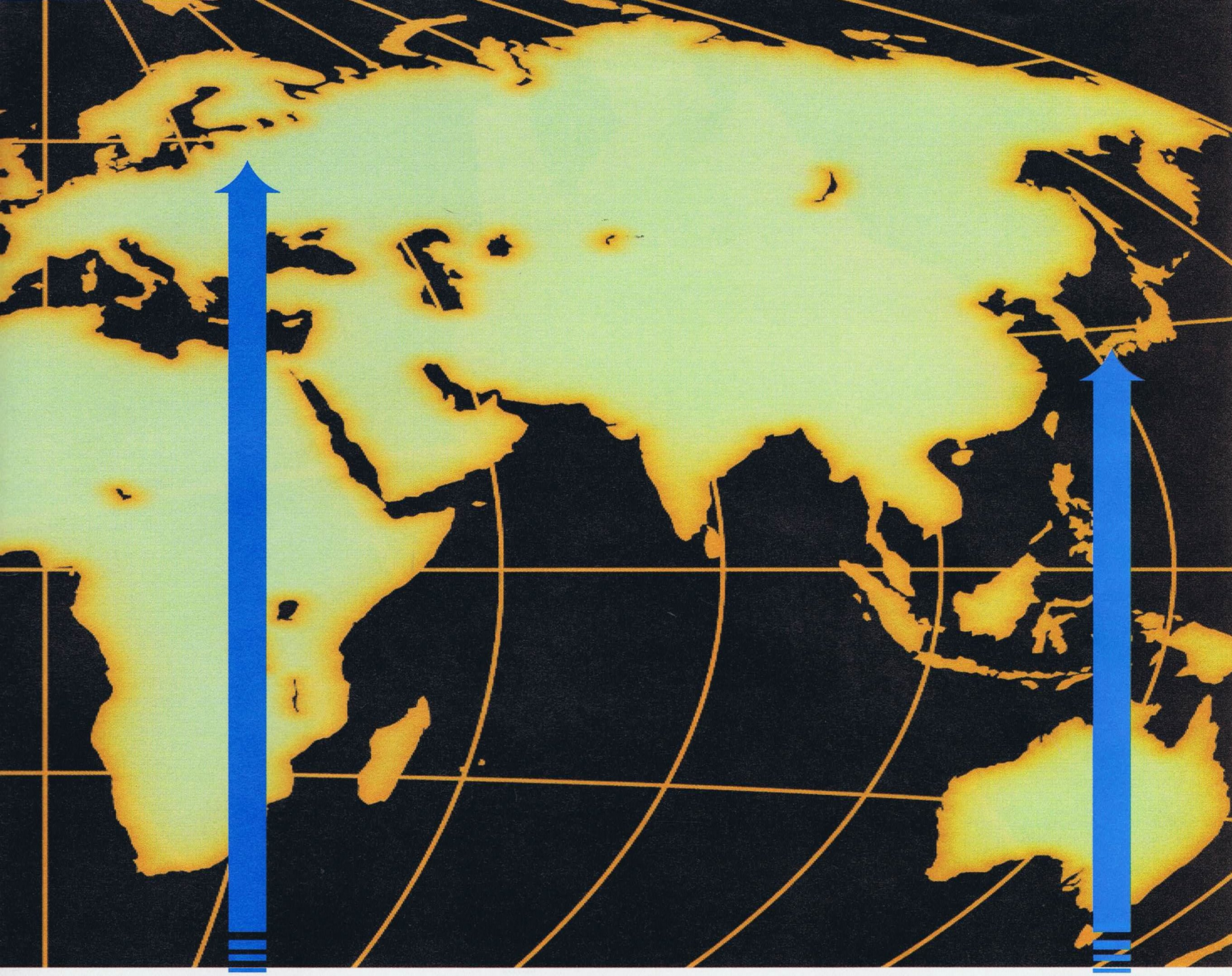
ACCLAIM
With its head office in Glen Cove, New York, Acclaim is probably better known for its efforts on other systems - particularly the N64 - with titles like Turok and Armorines. It nevertheless makes valuable contributions to the PlayStation software library with games like South Park and Shadowman.

ACTIVISION
Activision was founded in 1979, and was part of the original generation of videogaming companies with its involvement with the old Atari systems. Since then, Activision clawed its way back to prominence mostly on the PC scene. Most recently, it's now shifted its market strategy to evening up the odds on consoles, such as the PlayStation and PlayStation 2. Some of Activision's latest titles include Quake 2 and Tony Hawk Skateboarding.

LUCASARTS
If it has something to do with Star Wars, then it's from Lucasarts. They are responsible for titles like Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace, Dark Forces, and Star Wars: The Masters of Teras Kasi. Lucasarts also have exclusivity to the Indiana Jones games, none of which have surfaced on the PlayStation yet.

CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT
A relatively new company to the videogame industry, originally gaining fame for releasing a number of small-time Japanese hits like Jade Cocoon. Now, it's involved more in independent titles like Killer Loop.

WORKING DESIGNS
Headed by Dave Zdyrko, Working Design enjoys the a reputation for always releasing the cult titles like Lunar: Silver Star Story and Alundra - all of which came packed with incredible artwork, music CDs, and a whole slew of goodies that would make any fanboy cry. Unfortunately, the specialist nature of its market means that its releases are often plagued by delays.



europe

UBI SOFT
Established in 1993 with its head office now in Paris, Ubi Soft first gained fame for publishing the now legendary soccer title, Kick Off. They have been involved with virtually every game platform since then, appearing on the Sega Megadrive, the SNES, and now the PlayStation. Ubi Soft is more well known these days for titles like Tonic Trouble, Rayman, and the Monaco GP series.

PSYGNOSIS
Before WipEout, Psygnosis has been around since the days of the Commodore 64. Back then, Psygnosis was synonymous with names like Shadows of the Beast and The Killing Game Show, all of which shared a similar slant to WipEout. Also known for the F1 series.

INFOGRAMES
Pronounced *"info-gram"*, this French giant is currently enjoying a reputation for buying up large portions of other companies. They currently own a controlling share in companies like OziSoft, Melbourne House, Thrustmaster, and most recently GT Interactive. They also happen to make games, such as V Rally 2, Bugs Bunny Lost in Time, and The Smurfs.

CODEMASTERS
Codemasters has got a reputation for churning out the titles, most of which practically every PlayStation owner will have heard at some point in time. Amongst their more recent achievements include the popular TOCA Touring Car series, Music and Music 2000, and No Fear Downhill Mountainbiking.

EIDOS INTERACTIVE
Big-time publisher that boasts one of the PlayStation's biggest sellers, Tomb Raider. Also the publisher of Fighting Force 2 and the upcoming Omikron: The Nomad Soul.

SQUARE EUROPE
Set up by Square so that it would have a distinctive presence of its own on the PAL scene. Prior to that, Square was *"just another 3rd party company"*. Now, it handles its own game translations without the hassles of dealing with local distributors.

CRYO
Game developer. Haven't had the best of luck as far as game development goes, with titles like 360 and Dreams under its belt. Amazingly, Cryo have been in the industry for quite a long time.

Japan

CAPCOM
Best known on the PlayStation for the Street Fighter Alpha and Resident Evil series, and most recently for Dino Crisis, Capcom's support for the PlayStation is confirmed to be extending to the PlayStation 2.

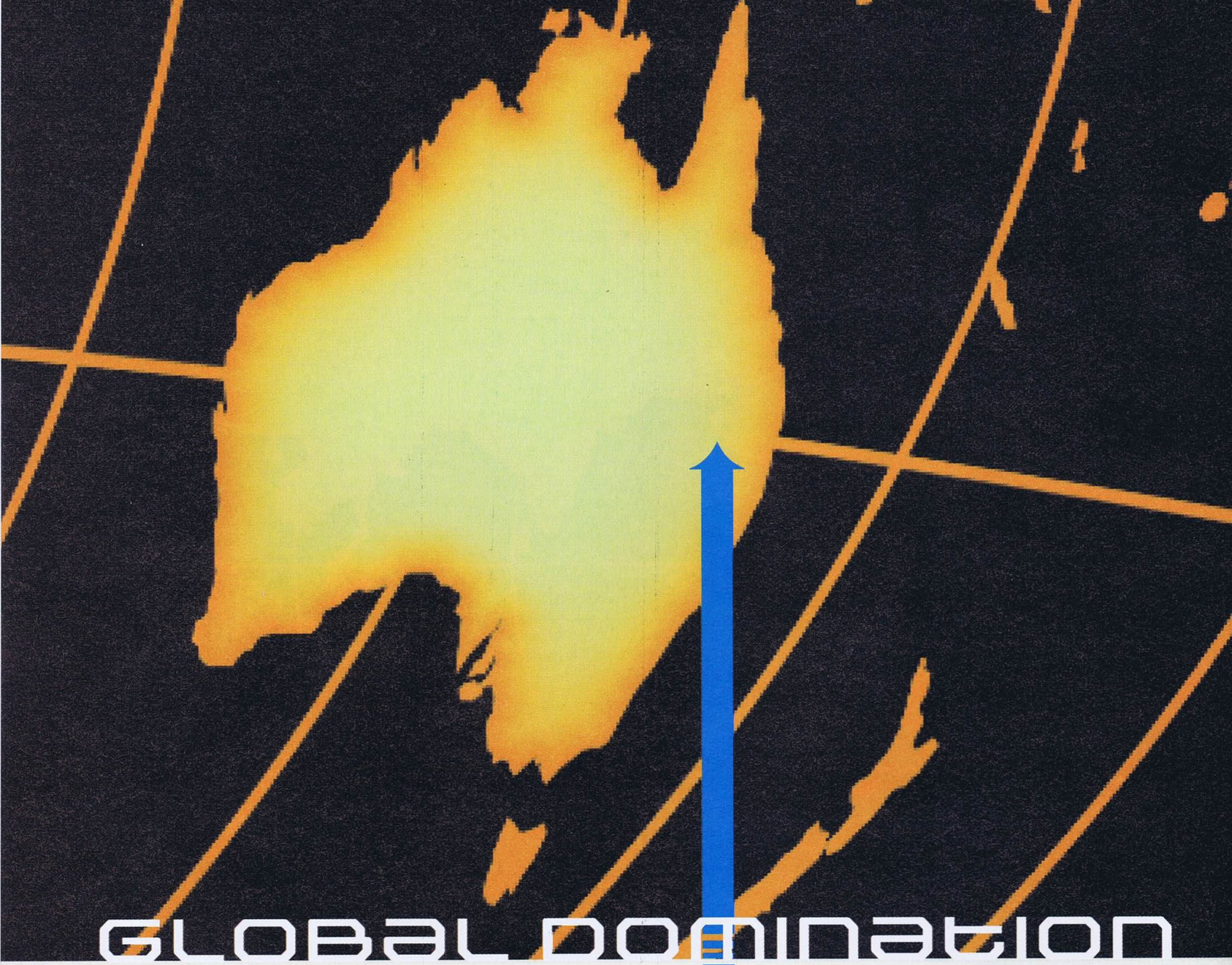
KONAMI
Having a reputation locally for releasing wacky Japanese games like Dancing Blade, or the seriously under-appreciated Castlevania: SOTN, Konami are riding a wave of popularity with Beatmania, Guitar Freaks, and Dance Dance Revolution.

SQUARESOFT
Two words: Final Fantasy. Whilst not being known to the West for much else, Square is responsible for legendary games like Chrono Trigger, Legend of Mana, Tobal 2, Brave Fencer Musashi, and Parasite Eve.

NAMCO
Like Konami and Capcom, Namco is one of the oldest names in the business, being the creator of Pac-Man. They are more well known these days for the Tekken and Soul Blade series. Namco has been one of the driving forces behind the current PlayStation 2 hype, particularly with its pre-rendered and real-time demos of Ridge Racer V and Tekken Tag Tournament.

ENIX
The only game developer in Japan capable of scaring off Square's FF series and Sega's Shen Mue. Their flagship series: Dragon Quest. Also known for Bust A Groove in the West.

GAMES. CODEMASTERS.



GLOBAL DOMINATION

Local Scene

The landscape of the videogames industry in Australia and New Zealand is strikingly different from overseas. With practically every developer in Europe, Japan, and America, most of the companies we have locally are either strictly involved in distribution or established offices of the parent company.

SONY COMPUTER ENT.
The head office. SCE's role in Australia is not only to see PlayStation hardware and peripherals, but to distribute and sell titles from Namco, Squaresoft, Tecmo, Sony Music, and Polyphony Digital. SCE is also the company most likely to pick up the hot/promising titles from Japan that don't have a local distributor.

OZISOFT
Originally established as Sega OziSoft, the company soon expanded into other formats of videogames and thereafter removed the *"Sega"* part of its name. Now owned by Infogrames, OziSoft are responsible for distributing titles from Capcom, Infogrames, Eidos Interactive, and Codemasters.

GT INTERACTIVE
GT Interactive established itself in Australia in around 1996 after buying Warner Interactive. In addition to its commitments to the PC and Nintendo formats, GT Interactive is responsible for distributing any PlayStation title made by Konami, THQ, Mindscape, Titus, Oddworld Inhabitants, Singletrac, Reflections, and also Eurocom.

ELECTRONIC ARTS
With an office in Sydney and its Studio Asia Pacific in sunny Queensland, EA has perhaps the strongest individual presence of any company. EA is the company responsible for titles like the EA Sports 2000 series, Dune 2000, and Medal of Honour.

ACTIVISION
With its Australian office established in 1992, it enjoys a reputation for having strong professional ties with its American counterparts. This past year, Activision have made several decisive releases on the PlayStation, the crowning achievement being Tony Hawk Skateboarding.

JACK OF ALL GAMES
JOAG is the distributing arm of Take 2 Interactive, whose head office is in the US. Its distribution responsibilities include titles from God Games, Talonsoft, Rockstar, and Sirtech. These responsibilities were originally handled by Directsoft, which was sold to Take 3 Interactive in 1998.

PLAYCORP
Established in Melbourne, Victoria in 1986, Playcorp is one of the oldest gaming warhorses in the Australian gaming scene. Playcorp's distribution responsibilities include games from Lucasarts, Empire, Midway, and Kemco. Most recent release: Ready 2 Rumble.

UBI SOFT
With an Australian office established in the exclusive Sydney locale of Double Bay, Ubi Soft are currently busy doing the rounds with games like Racing Simulation Monaco GP 2, Rayman 2, and other projects that will see their way to the PlayStation 2.

ACCLAIM
Even though Acclaim isn't new to the videogaming scene, its Australian office was only established in 1998 after taking over Digital Leisure. Prior to that, distribution of Acclaim titles was handled by Village Roadshow. In addition to games like South Park, Acclaim also distribute games from Hasbro Interactive and Midas.

INFOGRAMES MELBOURNE HOUSE
Stationed down in Melbourne, Victoria, Melbourne House is home to Australia's little pride and joy, Beam Software. Credited for games on the PlayStation and beyond for games like KKND, KKND Krossfire, and Dethkarz, Beam's promise as a games developer prompted French giant Infogrames to buy a controlling share in the company.

JACK OF ALL GAMES. PLAYCORP.

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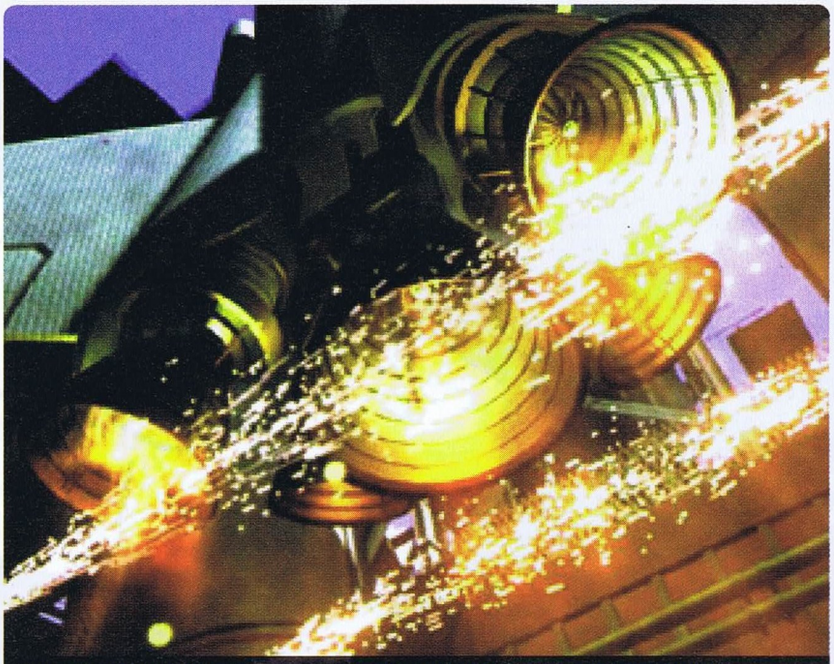
Front Mission 3

In the year 2115, Mankind uses giant robots in epic battle!

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Squaresoft
- **Developer**
  Squaresoft
- **Genre**
  RPG
- **Players**
  One
- **Expectations**
  Should appeal to fans of robo/mech anime.



Blast off to excitement! Front Mission 3 promised the best tactical mech combat we've seen yet

It's a shame mechwarrior-themed games are rarely released outside Japan. *Front Mission 3* is the latest robotic RPG from Square, and like most of their titles it's pretty impressive. The game mechanics are very solid and woven around and in between the turn-based strategic battles is an interesting story.

Like its predecessors, *Front Mission 3's* main component is urban warfare between giant mechs known as Wanzers. The Wanzers are customisable and can be fitted with upgraded parts that become available throughout the game - either through buying them or salavaging them from defeated Wanzers. Each of the body parts has its own hit points, so by targeting specific areas of the enemy you can immobilise them or prevent them from attacking.

The backdrop for *Front Mission 3* is Yokosuka, a Japanese military city, in 2115. A mysterious explosion at the base sparks an outbreak in fighting between Southern Asia's Oceana Community Union (OCU) and the United States of New Continent (USN), which spans all of North and South America. These opposing political entities are also carry-overs from the previous Front Mission games.

Thrust into this turmoil is Kazuki Takemura, a Wanzer test pilot for Kirishima Heavy Industries. After the explosion Kazuki embarks on a search for his sister Arisa, who worked at the base. He's aided in his quest by friend and fellow pilot Ryogo Kusama. As they search for the young girl the two heros uncover a conspiracy that could have global implications.

The depiction of technology in *Front Mission 3* is a far cry from some of the overly simple interpretations seen in other games and movies. As well as the usual menu screens you'll also spend a portion of the game at a computer terminal, checking for new e-mail messages and navigating government and corporate networks for information. When you are out in the field, you are by no means limited to the cockpit of your Wanzer, and it's possible to battle it out on foot, hijack abandoned Wanzers or pilot other vehicles. Depending on which part of the urban landscape you are fighting in, you might be able to steal helicopters, tanks and trucks as part of your battle plan.

Visually, *Front Mission 3* is a bit grainy and gray. The battlefields are viewed mostly from an overhead isometric viewpoint, but as each Wanzer (or other vehicle) makes a move the camera swoops down for a closer view of the action. The overall effect is quite atmospheric, but not particularly striking.

With around 100 varied missions covering aspects of warfare - assault, ambush, defense, reconnaissance - there are plenty of gameplay hours ahead. If you are into this style of game you can take heart that a lot of recent Square games like Dew Prism and Chrono Trigger are being translated into English and there's some chance we might see *Front Mission 3* on the release schedule before the PSX 2 hits our shores.

Elton Cane

Practice your Austrian accents for this one!

These robot pilots are so cool, they take point blank gunfire without batting an eyelid

Karate Project

He is the enemy! The enemy deserves no mercy!

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Bandai Visual

■ Developer
Bandai

■ Genre
Fighting

■ Players
One or two

■ Expectations
The most detailed karate simulator since IK+.

Focus visible light energy, just like in real life

Be sadistic! Damage specific body parts

A handle on Japanese characters is essential

It's an interesting historical note, but the martial art Karate is not actually from Japan. While their cultural purity hardliners will insist that *"Karate"* means *"open hand,"* it actually means *"China hand,"* referring to its continental origins.

Either way, this highly structured form of unarmed combat hasn't been used as a practical tool for real combat for centuries. Karate is as inflexible and unchanging as Mt Fuji, a system which reduces the primal vagaries of violence to rigid order, belted out to the beat of *"Ich- Ni- San- Shi!"*

Such a staid and stately national sport would lend itself well to a video game, hence *Karate Project* for PlayStation. While most Japanese games will take on the familiar futuristc style, with manga characters, lashings of loan-words, and sometimes universal use of American english in its menus and options, *Karate Project* is about as conservative as you can get.

The layout is designed to resemble a Shinto shrine, with wood panelling, masonry, caligraphy and kanji manifesting in densely packed conformity. This makes bluffing one's way through the intricate characters of the menu system too arduous an ordeal for a mere western savage to fathom...

The combat itself models the moves and stances of karate to a fault, and the characters are large and well defined within the play area. Damage is calculated by noting which body parts have been struck, and restricting the victims movement accordingly. The referee will step in if one party is getting pummeled, and you can guess when this is coming by the stars buzzing around your head.

There are coloured lights and super moves as well, but these serve to embellish the action rather than define it. There's even a career mode, where your Karate apprentice trains and takes exams, and there's some role playing action when you get into fights with street thugs! While the lack of variety may turn some away, those after the ultimate karate simulator will be hard pressed to beat *Karate Project*.

James Cottee

Juggernaut

Yet another horror style game, what can we say?

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Jaleco

■ Developer
Will & Tonkinhouse

■ Genre
Survival Horror

■ Players
One

■ Expectations
A Z-grade attempt at cashing in on a genre that's as old as the PlayStation.

When *Juggernaut* arrived on our desks we were a little surprised. Anticipating an epic adventure in the same vein as FFVIII, we stuck the first disc in to our trusty console and watched the screen avidly. Within minutes, we realised how wrong we were. Juggernaut is an attempt to capture the interest of survival-horror fans everywhere.

Currently, it's not going to capture the interest of anyone except the bean-counters because almost every aspect of the game is shoddy. The graphics feature the lowest resolution textures we have ever seen, and the animation of moving from one location to another is virtually non-existent.

The storyline is all about your girlfriend Sarah being possessed by an Evil Force and your quest to save her by entering her soul and battling it out in the spirit world. A direct quote from the game suits our feelings on this title quite well: *"The battle may seem difficult and to last forever"* - It did seem to last forever and it was definitely a battle to play this game.

If Juggernaut makes it to our shores, we severely hope that it is a completely different game, because if it's the three CDs full of bad graphics, music and scripts, it'll surely be looking forward to a dusty existence on the store shelves.

Andrew Parsons

Hmmm... He is off to an *early* start

Max Surfing 2000

Wax your stick and plunge into a tube. Then play this game

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  TBA
- **Developer**
  KSS
- **Genre**
  Surfing
- **Players**
  One
- **Expectations**
  Hardcore surfers might want to take a look.

Japan isn't a place that springs to mind when you think of surfing. Hawaii definitely, Australia yes, but not Japan. Nevertheless Japanese developers KSS have come up with something that may appeal to anyone who's ever taken a board out into the waves.

Max Surfing 2000 is based on competition surfing where competitors must catch as many waves as possible within a given time, with each ride being scored by a panel of judges.

The last time I remember playing a surfing game was an event in World Games on the Commodore 64, and it had a similar system of scoring and also the added attraction of a dolphin poking its head out of the water and laughing at you when you wiped out.

Max Surfing 2000 doesn't have any dolphins, but it does have a range of famous breaks from around the world - Manly, Australia; Pipeline, Hawaii; Huntington Beach, California; and Tonami, Japan. How did that one sneak in there?

Scoring points is only a matter of trying to stay in the tube for as long as possible. There are no options for cutbacks, floaters or any of the other sick moves that could have spiced up the game. The best thing about *Max Surfing 2000* is that it might serve as an inspiration for someone to make a much better surfing game.

Elton Cane

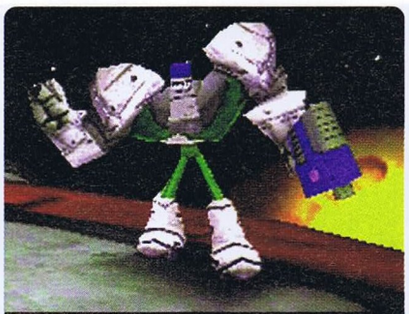
This presumably refers to your performance, not your dress sense

Boombots

In the year 15 million, they're Earth's only chance

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  TBA
- **Developer**
  The Neverhood
- **Genre**
  3D Fighting
- **Players**
  One or two
- **Expectations**
  Claymation masters branch out into regular polygons.



Bad engineering can make for good comedy

3D environments mean 3D tactics

The plot has a lot to do with evil space cats

The Neverhood have had many a glorious victory in the past with their claymation 2D fighting games. The choice of working with plastecine was a wise one, as it's a medium that lends itself to humour, and has a sort of sympathetic friendliness to it. It's a bold move then, for a development team who have their roots in 2D to lash and out and create a fighting game based fundamentally on 3D movement, but that's what The Neverhood have done with *Boombots*.

Perhaps the PlayStation 2 will be able to handle a realistic depiction of clay moving in 3D in real time, but the PlayStation just doesn't have the goods. So while all the cut scenes have excellent renditions of clay given life, the game itself settles for cartoony polygons of the kind we're familiar with.

That said, the style of play is anything but hackneyed. Each arena is a vast open space littered with platforms and powerups, and the players are encouraged to dash about the landscape collecting the glowing yellow pellets.

For while all the robots have identical weapons, an unguided heavy missile, a guided light missile, and machine guns that do almost no damage at all, the only way to inflict sudden and massive damage is by collecting enough powerups and transforming into a supercharged version of your boombot.

For a few precious seconds you will be able to wreak robotic death on your slovenly opponent, punishing him for his laziness.

It's a fairly unique game. On the PlayStation the closest match would be The Unholy War, and it's got a lot in common with Capcom's Powerstone on the Dreamcast. For those reasons alone, Boombots is a game that deserves attention, simply because unique games are pretty hard to come by these days. If *Boombots* is released locally it could shake up conventional notions of 3D figthing. Then again, it could simply enjoy the fruits of being an underrated cult hit. Either way, we like it.

James Cottee

JO JO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE

Unleash surreal psychic attacks on cult manga heroes

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Capcom

■ Developer
Capcom

■ Genre
2D Fighting

■ Players
one or two

■ Expectations
Just another Capcom 2D fighter? Well, yeah, but it's not quite as dull as you think.

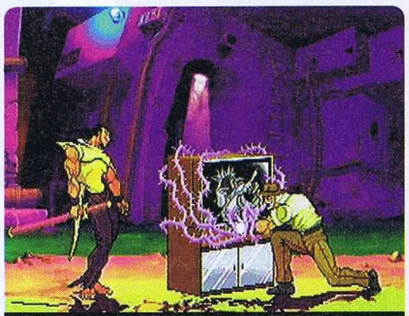
In spite of whatever inroads Capcom have made in game development - whether it be Resident Evil or Dino Crisis - they still never forget their roots: 2D fighting games. Based on a highly popular comic book series in Japan, *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* is the latest offering for the genre.

The buzz that was surrounding the release of this game in Japan was absolutely incredible - the equivalent of, say, a great fighting game based on the Justice League of America.

No pun intended, but *"bizarre"* is the word that best sums up the feeling one gets from *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure*. Even for this writer, who'd like to think of himself as a 2D fighting game connoisseur, the game is somewhat bewildering for at least the first hour or so.

Picture this: you get a heavy and a weak attack, and a *"stand"* button that causes your psychic energy to manifest itself as an aura or spirit that aids you in the fight. This spirit can be used as part of your ordinary special attacks, but you can summon it to attack independently of you. If your spirit is injured by the other fighter, you will incur damage as well.

What's so bizarre about this game is not so much in the *"spirit"* concept, but in the many different ways Capcom have gone to executing the idea. On one hand, some of the spirits are predictable, muscle-bound oafs who throw big punches or launch projectiles. On the other hand, some spirits take the form of weapons and bodily extensions.



Death by TV cabinet. Oh, the humanity

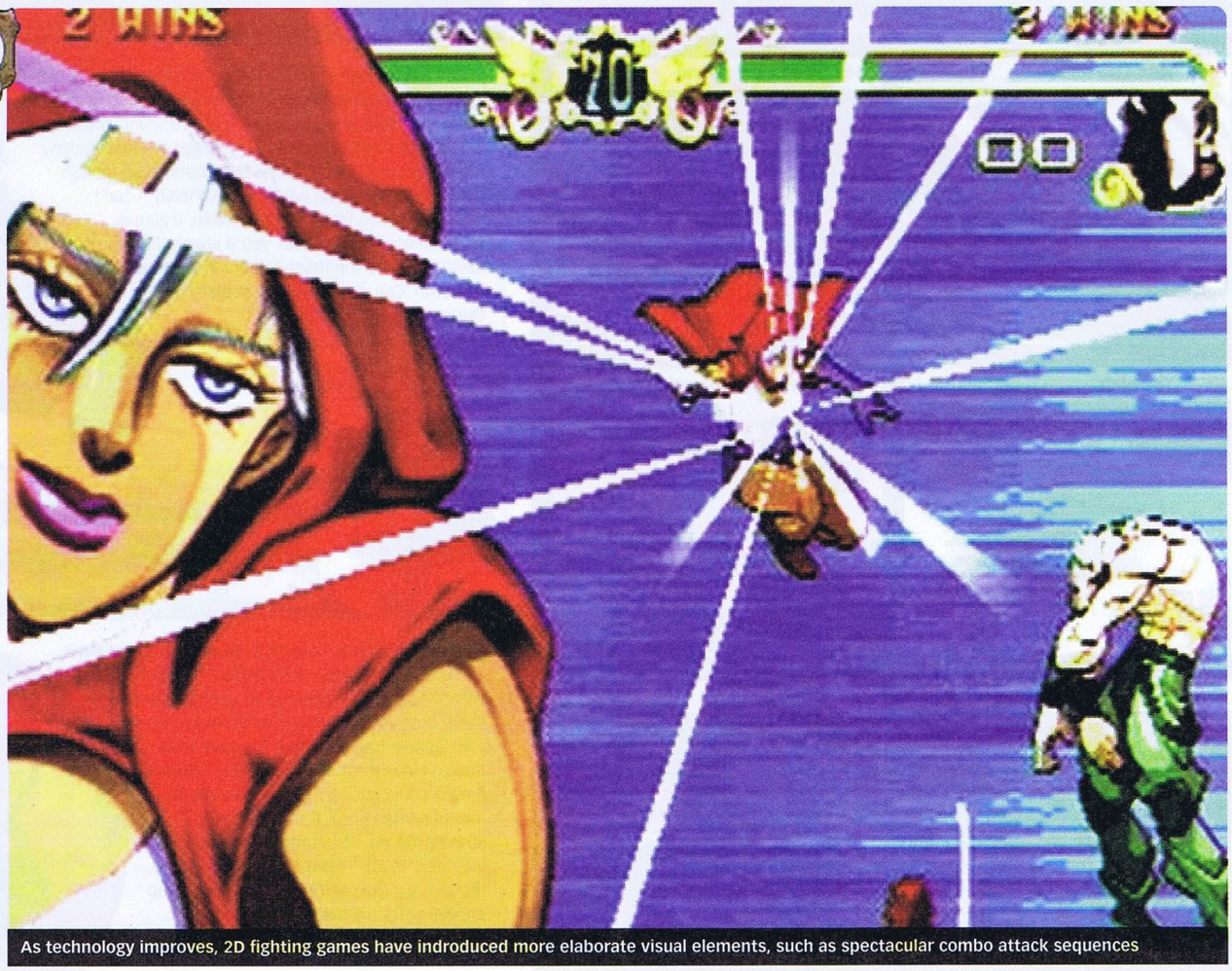
Your guess is a good as mine

For instance, one character's spirit is actually a shadow cast on the ground. If the shadow attacks while an opponent is standing on it, the opponent's life energy will be sucked out, turning him or her momentarily into a useless child. The benefactor of this energy, in the meantime, becomes more powerful.

In addition to the usual super moves, *Jo Jo* also has a feature that allows you to stop time for around 2 seconds (for only a couple of times per round) so you can program what moves you want your spirit to perform. This opens up numerous possibilities for multi-layered attacks, such as running in with jump kick combos and a super while your spirit is busy doing its own combo.

While it's not likely *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* is going to make a splash, or even appear, in our local markets, this is a title that fans of the genre should keep their ears pricked up for. It's a fast game and equally as creative as Capcom's other fighting great, the Vampire Hunter series. Maybe people will pay attention if it was in 3D...

Kevin Cheung



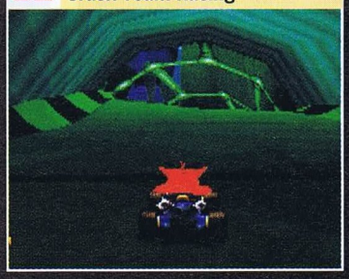
As technology improves, 2D fighting games have indroduced more elaborate visual elements, such as spectacular combo attack sequences

PlayStation Top Ten

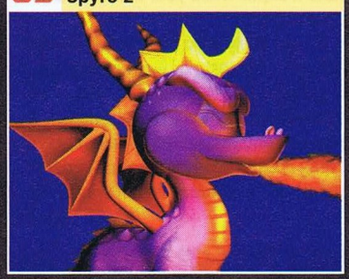
This is the period where all the big Christmas and post-new year juggernauts come head head to head. Unsurprisingly, Gran Turismo 2 came out the clear winner, with the rest of them bunched up behind it. Good to see everyone likes Worms too.

01 Gran Turismo 2

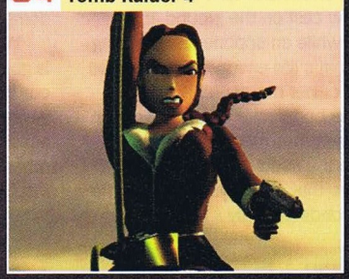
02 Crash Team Racing



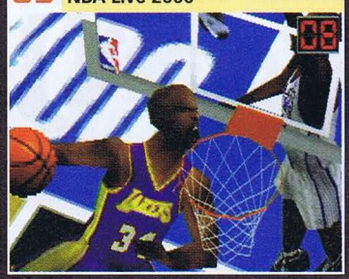
03 Spyro 2



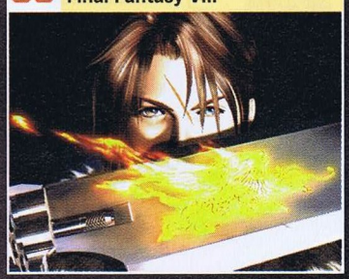
04 Tomb Raider 4



05 NBA Live 2000

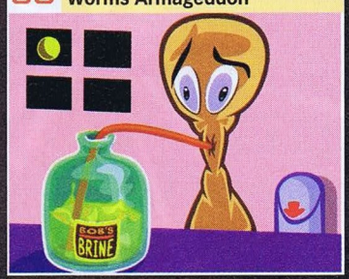


06 Final Fantasy VIII

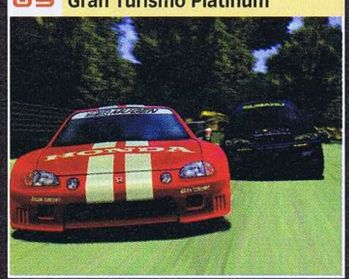


07 Thrasher

08 Worms Armageddon



09 Gran Turismo Platinum



10 Dune 2000

What's the crew playing?

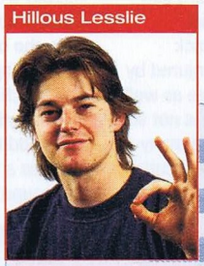
Kevin Cheung

Kevin's Top Five

1. Grandia
2. Worms Armageddon
3. Gran Turismo 2
4. Quake 2
5. Tomb Raider 4

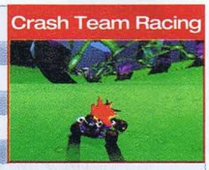
I can't help but put Grandia at the top of my list. Its lush 2D artwork and battle system are the stuff of the classic traditionalist RPG titles I grew up with, and I can't express how refreshing it is to see cult titles like this to hit the market. I also want to take this opportunity to plug Worms Armageddon. Never before has a PlayStation game offered a game with such a laid back yet competitive atmosphere. It's simple, it's hilarious, and it's perfect with friends. Lastly, there's Gran Turismo 2. Technically a great game, but having flogged the original to death, it's hard to get overly excited about a game that offers just more cars.

Hillous Lesslie



Hillous' Top Five

1. Crash Team Racing
2. GTA 2
3. Tony Hawk
4. Pac Man World
5. FFVII Platinum

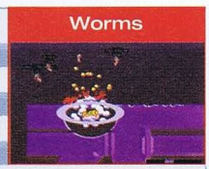


I can't get enough of Crash Team Racing. Between frustrating Kevin with my knowledge of the short cuts and finding out more and more goodies on my beloved Grand Theft Auto 2, I've also finally discovered the magic of Final Fantasy (on Kevin's insistence). Not a bad game, even though everyone's telling me where to go. Finally, I can't say I care much for Thrasher. I mean, if games were meant to be realistic you'd always find yourself having to go to the toilet and brush your teeth and stuff. Call me a girl, but I actually prefer the unreality of Tony Hawk.

James Cottee

James' Top Five

1. Worms Armageddon
2. Dune 2000
3. Wip3out
4. GTA2
5. Thrasher



I just can't get over how good Worms Armageddon is. The balance between skill and luck, randomness and certainty, the potential for devious glee every time you launch a rival worm on an inescapable trajectory into the cold briny deep... I love it. On the other hand, Worms Pinball could suck a monkey through 30 feet of garden hose. Dune 2000 puts strategy on the PlayStation the way God intended; in 3D. Thrasher's a bit of a curio, though. It makes self-mutilation a little too appealing for my taste. Aren't games supposed to punish you for losing?

PlayTest Contents

Every game featured in our PlayTest section has been reviewed independently and objectively by our team of writers. We aim to give an informed and comprehensive idea of what the game is about, and most importantly, whether the game is good or bad. Each game reviewed receives an overall score out of 100 which should be seen in context of the type of game it is and in relation to similar titles it is competing with.

THESE FACTORS ARE AWARDED UP TO FIVE STARS:

GRAPHICS Does the game look good and has it taken advantage of the available technology?

SOUND The PlayStation offers developers the potential to create mind blowing audio. Have they?

GAMEPLAY This is what it boils down to. Is the game enjoyable and fun to play, or will you hurl the joypad at the TV?!

DIFFICULTY Is the game difficult? Does it take a great deal of skill to play? The higher the mark here, the more difficult the game is.

LIFESPAN How long can you expect this game to hold your interest? Will you play again after you have beaten it?

PLAYERS Some games allow two or more players to take part, either alternately or simultaneously, and some can even be linked to a second PlayStation for head-to-head two-player action.

GAME FEATURES Many games take advantage of after-market devices such as analogue controllers, steering wheels, Sony's PlayStation Mouse, various light guns, the Multi-tap four-player adaptor, memory cards, various peripherals and accessories.

ALTERNATIVES A selection of games that are similar in concept or appeal to the one reviewed.

WHAT OUR RATINGS MEAN:

91 - 100%	AN INSTANT CLASSIC, YOU MUST PLAY THIS GAME!
81 - 90	EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD, WITH FLAWS YOU'D BARELY NOTICE
71 - 80	A GOOD EFFORT WITH A FEW NIGGLING FLAWS
61 - 70	AN AVERAGE GAME THAT DOES A COMPETENT JOB
51 - 60	HAS SOME NICE IDEAS, BUT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER
41 - 50	A GAME WITH A GREAT DEAL MORE FLAWS THAN MERITS
31 - 40	THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU BOUGHT A PLAYSTATION FOR!
21 - 30	OH DEAR, SOMETHING HAS GONE HORRIBLY WRONG...
11 - 20	DON'T BOTHER, A WASTE OF BOTH TIME AND MONEY
01 - 10	IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH A COOL BLACK DRINK COASTER!

42 GRAN TURISMO 2
The PlayStation's greatest racing game returns! Drive like the wind!

44 THRASHER: SKATE AND DESTROY
Can Rockstar Games steal Tony Hawk's crown?

46 ACE COMBAT 3
Lavish visuals, amazing planes, and futuristic dogfighting.

48 FORMULA ONE
There's more racing games than you can shake a stick at. But this one's good.

50 NBA LIVE 2000
Now with Michael Jordan, NBA Live 2000 slams as well as dunks.

52 DUNE 2000
The best strategy game ever just made it to PlayStation.

54 SPYRO 2: GATEWAY TO GLIMMER
One of the finest platform games out just got finer.

55 TOY STORY 2
You've seen the movie. If you liked it and are under 10, you might like this.

58 WORMS ARMAGEDDON
Little worms fight each other with big guns. It's riotous fun.

60 GRANDIA
An epic RPG with the best anime graphics we've ever seen. Ever.

61 POOL HUSTLER
Get ready with those two dollar coins...

62 SUPER CROSS CIRCUIT
Fly high, get muddy, crash, and smell like lawnmower fluid in the morning.

63 SUPER CROSS 2000
Fly high, get muddy, crash, and smell like lawnmower fluid millennium style.

64 ACTION MAN
The star of action figures and cartoon shows now stars in his own game.

65 ARMY MEN: AIR ATTACK
Green plastic men return with massive air support in this shoot-em-up.

66 KNCOKOUT KINGS 2000
EA's boxing title sheds another snake-like skin to return fresher than ever.

67 FIGHTING FORCE 2
Core Design, the makers of Tomb Raider made this mindless beat-em-up.

67 WU TANG
We're reviewing this arena bloodbath game twice. Why? Find out inside.

68 WORMS PINBALL
Liked Worms Armageddon? Then you won't like this. Pinball at its most timid.

70 PONG AND CENTIPEDE
Whatever happened to Pong? Hasbro bought the rights and re-released it.
Jump into your rocket sled and fight giant insects! No drugs required!

71 GLOVER
Become a magician's living glove in this strange platforming experience.

72 THE NEXT TETRIS AND Q-BERT
Tetris! A Russian mind control experiment to corrupt the evil West!
Q-Bert is a little drug fiend from a happy land of colourful cubes.

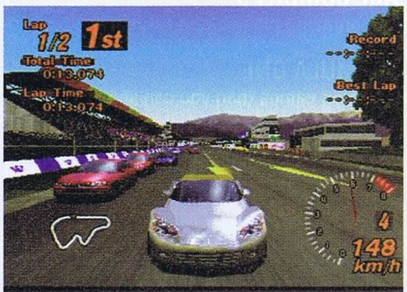
74 PLATINUM REVIEWS
Only best games go platinum. The best, and bad games that sell well.
Decide for yourself.

GRAN TURISMO 2

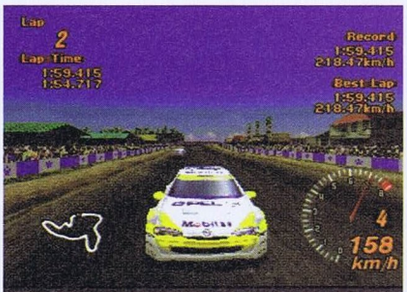
Even as you read this, you should already have bought the game

FACT FILE

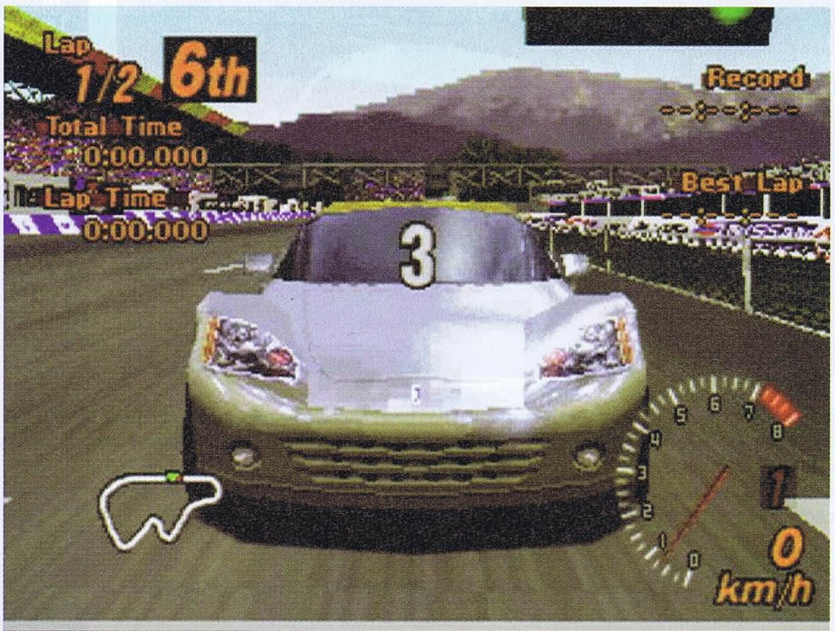
- **Publisher**
  SCE
- **Developer**
  Polyphony Digital
- **Genre**
  Racing Simulation
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One or two
- **No. of CD's**
  Two
- **Expectations**
  GT was last year's biggest seller next to Final Fantasy VII. So the expectations are very, very high.



It almost looks like it's smiling at you



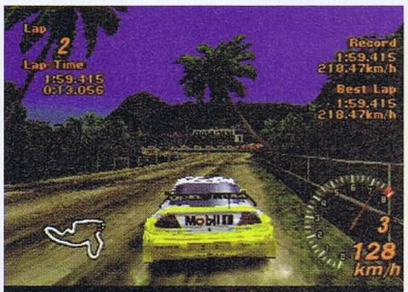
This track also takes you off-road (see below)



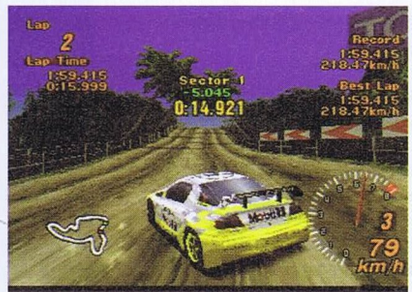
The main drawcard of Gran Turismo 2 is its comprehensive collection of cars

ALTERNATIVES

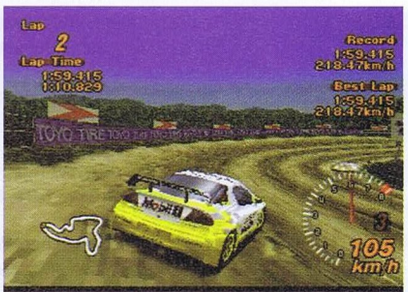
- Ridge Racer 4
- V Rally 2
- GT Platinum



GT2's off-road mode is ground-breaking...



...as you can go on and off-road in one track



Pixellation spoils the sensation of speed

Over five hundred different cars. And over 29 tracks. These numbers alone have the ability to dwarf any other racing game on the PlayStation, yet somehow, because *Gran Turismo 2* is a sequel to a game with comparable numbers, people are expecting something more.

Carrying the weight of the expectation surrounding the sequel to one of the greatest racing games ever, *Gran Turismo 2* also carries the hopes of every PlayStation owner who is aware of the PlayStation's mortality, particularly with the PlayStation 2 on the horizon.

It should come as no shock that *GT2* involves racing in cars again. What's on offer in this sequel are the fruits of more efficient programming on the part developer Polyphony Digital, who claimed their first GT effort didn't push the PlayStation near its processing limits. In plain English this means more cars, races, and better scenery.

DOUBLE THE DISCS, DOUBLE THE FUN

Like the original game, *Gran Turismo 2* offers two distinct modes of play: arcade and sim, only this time they are separated on to two discs. Those of you who dive for the Arcade Disc will be surprised by the inclusion of a new rally mode, which grants you a refreshing break from the relentless city-based circuit races.

The Simulation Disc offers a deeper game. Starting with a meager sum of cash, you can only afford a modest car; and with it, you must enter races, earn money, special licenses, and chalk up enough cash to purchase new parts and new cars. Veterans of the original sim mode will feel at home with the new additions made.

There are new car dealers in the game, who can be accessed in different parts of the city. Each dealer has its own races, which allow you to *'break in'* your new car. The license system has also been expanded. You can earn special international licenses that grant you access to new tournaments in other countries such as the UK, France, Germany, USA, and so on.

EWW - IT LOOKS BLOCKY!

Anyone who has played the original GT will realise that this game is more a sequel for the hardcore car-crazy fans than a *"blockbuster sequel"* generally per se. At first glance, *Gran Turismo 2* doesn't enjoy the benefit of the same visual improvement as what, say, Ridge Racer Type 4 did over Rage Racer.

In spite of how fantastic the cars look as they muscle their way through the tracks, *Gran Turismo 2's* road surfaces and surroundings look somewhat pixellated by comparison to the first game. It also seems to run a tad slower, so the sensation of speed isn't quite as effective.

The trade off is the excellent additions that have been made to the game's graphics engine, which has allowed the game to be more of a *'true'* driving simulation. The rally mode in itself is an example of the additional physics that have been packed into the game which, notwithstanding some sluggish steering, is comparable to the experience provided by the best rally car games in the market.

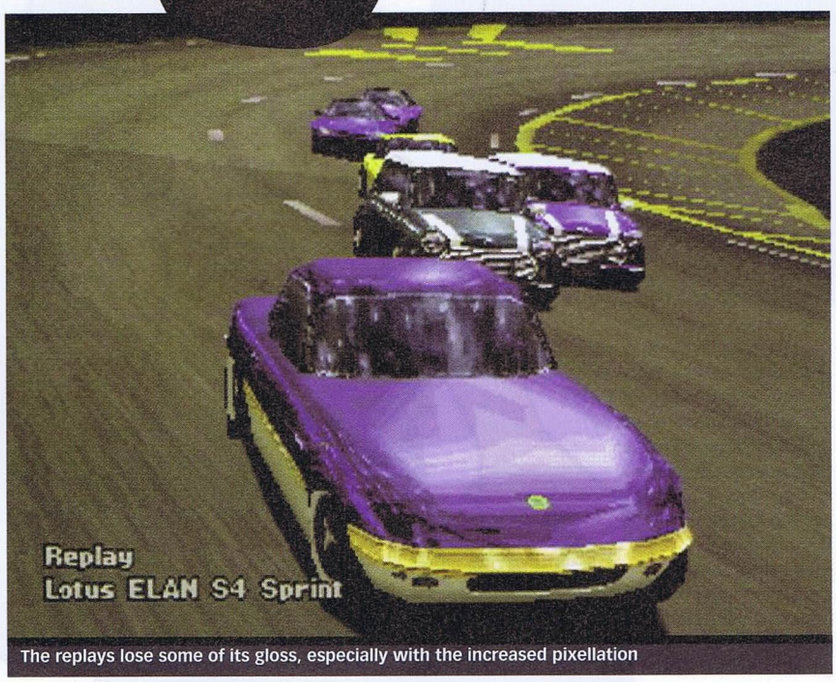
GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible
- Negcon Controller

SECOND OPINION

HILLOUS LESSLIE

I'd hate to play the devil's advocate, but I just had to point out that many of the tracks are the same as the first game, and so are the license tests. Just as long as existing fans are aware of that, *Gran Turismo 2* is a showpiece that everyone should have.



The replays lose some of its gloss, especially with the increased pixellation

buildings can now loop around and overlap each other, creating an amazing sense of cohesion in the 3D environment. Buildings that you drive past are independent 3D constructions, looking far more lifelike than just a picture of a building on a flat surface.

And when you look up, you can even see the power lines zigzagging haphazardly overhead. These seemingly meaningless and minute details are what distinguish *Gran Turismo 2* from the rest of the rabble.

Ultimately, the combination of an impeccable eye for graphical detail with the most comprehensive parts and tune-up options ever seen in a racing game makes *Gran Turismo 2* a *'must have'* title for any self-respecting racing fanatic. The added flexibility of being able to drive off-road is also an invaluable feature that all future racing simulations should one day implement.

It's unfortunate that most mainstream consumers are more likely to focus on the game's lack of obvious glossy visual improvement over the original - but then again, *Gran Turismo 2* is more than likely to sell just on reputation alone.

Kevin Cheung

OH MY GOD - POWER LINES!

Switch from the dirt-laden roads to the sublime urban tracks, and you will bear witness to some of the most incredible visual detail in the surroundings. Many of the things you can observe in *Gran Turismo 2* make you realise just how much you have taken the genre for granted, and how other racers look inferior by comparison. Let's say, for instance, you are driving through a winding freeway in the city. Most racing games will present you with a series of pretty concrete walls that generally lead you in the one direction.

Gran Turismo 2 presents you with *'real'* architecture. Overpasses, ramps, and entire

EXPERIENCE THE PSX 2!

The opening FMV of Gran Turismo 2 is actually a demonstration of what the GT 2000 will look like on the PlayStation 2. The novelty of this feature alone is worth just about every penny that you spend on the game!

STATION

OVERALL: Polyphony has pushed the PSX to new limits, and the result is the best driving game on the PSX ever.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Incredible track designs, marred by the pixellation
SOUND:	★★★★	There's a sound for every different car on every track. Amazing
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	So many cars, so much upgrading to do, and so little money...
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Those damned driver's license tests are back
LIFESPAN:	★★★	Dependant on your love for collecting all the cars

93

PERCENT

THRASHER: SKATE & DESTROY

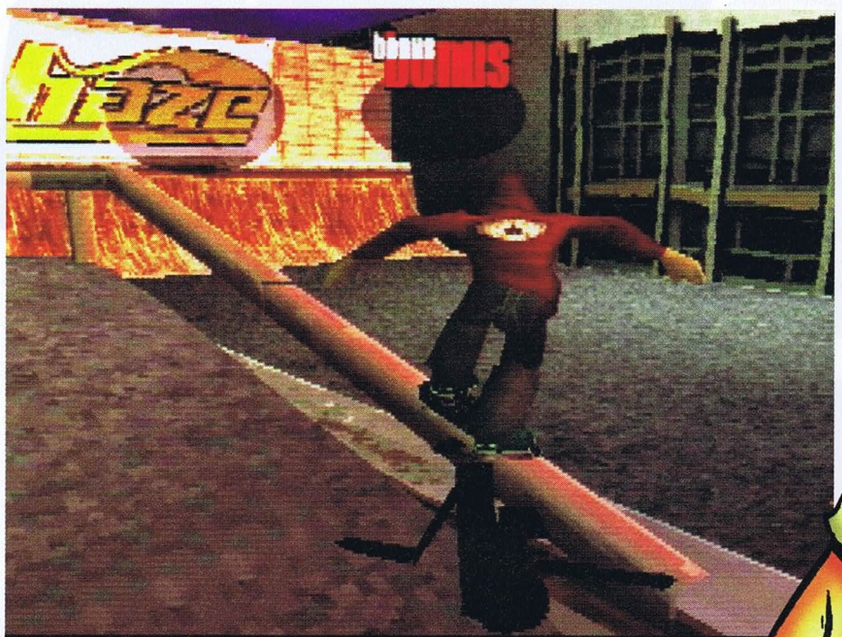
Become a hardcore sellout in your mission to skate or die trying

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Jack Of All Games
- **Developer**
  Rockstar Games
- **Genre**
  Skateboarding
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One or two
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  Riding on the coat tails of Tony Hawk, Thrasher tries to keep it real.

ALTERNATIVES

- Tony Hawk
- 3Extreme
- Street Sk8ter



Ride real boards, grind real rails, and sport real overpriced skate wear

Thrasher sets out to fill a niche that has been long neglected in the chronicles of video game lore, that of a *"realistic"* skateboarding game. Every other title to come out so far has had an element of fantasy introduced to make the game more playable, from the ludicrous racing luges of the Xtreme games series, to the grind-happy fantasy lands of Tony Hawk Skateboarding.

Every skateboarding game to ever come out of the sausage factories of the big studios has felt the need to dilute the pure essence of the skateboarding experience, as if the nature of the sport itself wasn't enough to entertain the player.

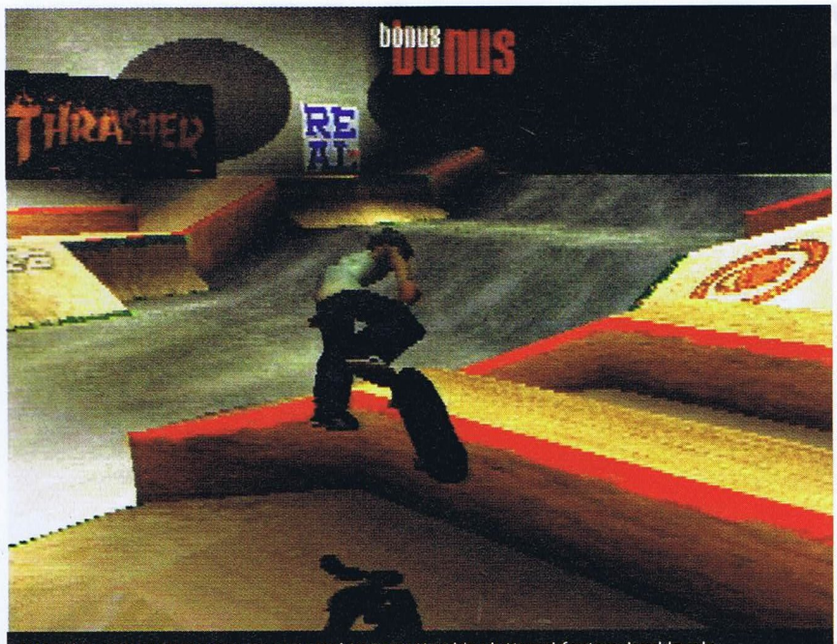
Well, in producing their own contender for the title of definitive PlayStation skateboarding game, Rockstar have endeavoured to make the experience as close to reality as possible. This tack has the immutable advantage of making a game that at least feels true to life, but it also sets up obstacles to maximising the potential for action and dramatic tension. In real life, you can skate along any flat surface, you can ollie and grind and so forth, but where is the dreaded timer squeezing every last drop of trick styling out of your deck?

COPS ARE TOPS

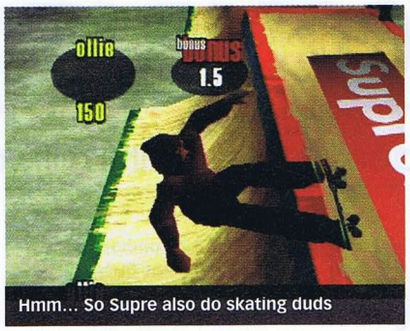
In *Thrasher: Skate and Destroy*, the timer is the police. All first world nations have fairly well trained police forces with universal sanction to lock up unruly types who create a public nusciance. While this keeps drunks and crazies out of harm's way, it also means that young punks who want for nothing but to ride their skateboards all over war memorials have their very own mall gestapo.

Tolerance levels for public skating vary widely, but at worst skaters are bunched in with pushers and smack heads by uniformed brutes who itch for any opportunity to lock up any young larrakin that looks at them sideways.

A crying shame, as everyone knows that skaters are actually game heads. In this game, the cops will close in on you once your time is up. For a given stage you have unlimited time to come to grips with the layout, try a few practice grinds and so forth, and to judge which course will lead to maximising your points. Once you believe you have the path to victory, you press Select to begin your run. As your last few seconds tick away, police sirens rise from the distance, and you hear a cop alighting his vehicle. The instant the timer runs out, your



Note the vast open spaces, as opposed to Tony Hawk's cluttered fantasy land levels



Hmm... So Supre also do skating duds

Pull off elaborate tricks in mid-air...

...Once you've learnt the tricky controls

view switches from immediately behind your skater to a first person view from the cop chasing you. You may still perform tricks and attempt to rack up the points you need, but he will gradually close in, eventually zapping you with his taser and confiscating your board!

BODY MOVIN'

The other cop out that skating games take is in determining damage to your skater and his deck. As graphics continue to improve, the new frontier in realistic game development is in accurate physics modeling. Other games have made do with limited motion capture routines that give the same sequence of moves no matter where or how the player stacks it.

This had a certain charm in Tony Hawk, but after a couple of hours of seeing the same blood and teeth spurting out time and again, the monotony actually served to motivate the player to improve his or her form, lest there be a painful repetition of the mistakes.

Thrasher throws that whole mindset away, and instead rewards the player for incompetence. The game keeps track of the skeletal movements of the game character during play, so when you crash, your body movements can be accurately displayed in the context of the environment, instead of just the same routine clipping through walls and poles alike in unconvincing repetition.

The effect works. While your character on the screen is a collection of polygons with a fairly low level of character detail, the cartoon like feel ends rather abruptly when you crash into a solid object and you see limbs flail and bend in directions they were never meant to, as your character plummets into a lifeless heap.

It's like living out one of those videos that just shows bail after bail, and in one concession to playability your character magically reappears on his feet after each stack, ready to be crippled again...

RUN PSX RUN

Aside from one or two unique game features, there is not a lot to distinguish *Thrasher* from its main rival, Tony Hawk. The motivating force behind progression from one level to the next is to play out a career mode, in which the ultimate goal is to sell out and get on the cover of *Thrasher* magazine. This will see you parading through a hierarchy of urban skating locations in LA, New York, London and Berlin.

Rockstar have tried to reinforce their authentic urban image by getting an old school lineup of hip-hop artists to supply the soundtrack. With performers like RUN DMC, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash and Public Enemy, the sound, at least, fits the part.

But the gameplay is something else. While in Tony Hawk, an unattended character would skate away, bouncing off every ramp your character in *Thrasher* must be motivated to push off from their board, slowing to a halt with every lapse of will. The backgrounds and textures, while smooth, are less detailed then their counterparts in Tony Hawk, and overall the game feels like it was cut from its cloth with a jagged edge of realism.

There are a number of modes, where the object is to perform a number of set tasks in a set time, while ensuring a maximum of onlookers see your evil deeds. These vary from simple grinds to self-mutilation, and form the crux of the two player modes objectives.

Thrasher: Skate and Destroy will not appeal to everyone. For those who want the immediately accessible, friendly fairy floss of Tony Hawk, the effort involved may not justify the hardcore reward. But for those who want to earn their baggy pants, pain may be your path to utter fulfillment.

James Cottee

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION

KEVIN CHEUNG

Thrasher **doesn't have the same kind of immediate appeal as Tony Hawk, but it's a game that I can respect a great deal more. This game pays attention to physics, body movement, and collision detection, which are areas oft neglected in games these days. The slight RPG slant also adds an interactive appeal not found in Tony Hawk.**

STATION

OVERALL: It won't be as popular as Tony Hawk, but those with a mean streak will get the most out if.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Plain, yet uncluttered, smooth, and realistic
SOUND:	★★★★★	The crankin'est hip hop soundtrack yet assembled on the PSX
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Personal taste. Patience rewards with innumerable moves
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	Bloody hard. As hard as an osmium diamond in a black hole
LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Mastering Thrasher is a time consuming, but rewarding

89

PERCENT

ACE COMBAT 3: ELECTROSPHERE

Dice with death in a multimillion dollar flying machine once more

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Sony
- **Developer**
  Namco
- **Genre**
  Flight Sim
- **Release Date**
  Available now
- **Players**
  One
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  Techy groovy Top Gun stuff, the long anticipated sequel has finally arrived!

ALTERNATIVES

- Air Combat
- Ace Combat 2
- Wing Over 2

Namco's wonderful Air Combat series lives on with this brilliant flight simulation. It seems that these games just get better and better with each new instalment and this one is no different.

Flaunting a number of improvements to the game, both dramatic and superficial, *Electrosphere* succeeds fully in outdoing both of its fine prequels.

SWANKY MENUS

Set in the near future, *Electrosphere* puts you in the shoes of a newly trained Air Force pilot. The menu interface consists of a slick and stylish series of computer screens packed with data both useful and trivial. These screens are so swish, you'll get the feeling that your PlayStation has been replaced by a military-funded supercomputer.

But, smart as it looks, the menus are surprisingly quick to load up, the majority of each screen being 2D symbols. You are briefed on your next mission thoroughly, but the only polygonal activity is the small 3D topographical map that shows you which way to go, where the bad guys are, etc.

In between missions you receive a save prompt. By using a simple saving system, *Electrosphere* manages to pack up to six game saves in a single memory card block, so you can return to your favourite dogfight at any time. You choose your plane from a selection of vaguely fantastic makes and models, then choose the primary and secondary weapons to accompany your mission. As you play through the game, more and more planes will become available to you. Each plane has its own selection of weaponry to choose from.

Ace Combat 3 has everything in Top Gun except the homo-erotic shower scenes

Stay on target... stay on target...

That's one less giant whale plaguing our skies

Great shot kid, that was a one in a million

PLANE CONSTRUCTION

The planes themselves are very similar to their real-life counterparts, yet their designers have had a bit of fun toying with their constructs. Here you'll see an enlarged air vent; there you'll notice the wings are too long. Sometimes you'll get to fly a completely fictitious model, looking like something out of the new Star Wars film.

Primary weaponry ranges from standard mounted machine guns to plasma cannons. Secondary weapons are more interesting, stretching beyond the old missiles of Air Combat and Ace Combat 2. There are short-range missiles, ground missiles and multiple impact re-entry vehicles. The MIRVs are the most spectacular, with four missiles all spreading out and then converging on the chosen target.

Once you're in the game and flying, a few changes will be immediately noticeable. Things like the air streaks coming out of nowhere add to the feeling of being up in the clouds.

The general head up display has also been modified for the better, with a twirly icon on the left measuring your acceleration and numerous other dials blinking incessantly.

PRETTY SWISH

The ugly polygonal squares which comprised many landscapes in *Electrosphere's* two prequels have been cleaned away, leaving nothing but seamless scenery from start to finish. The texture detail on the ground has also been upgraded, so the cities and mountains you fly over look even more realistic.

The old mission themes of the first two games return, with various objectives ranging from escorting large cargo planes to high altitude dogfights to bombing a travelling navy fleet at night. There's even a mission that demands full concentration as you fly through a ravine, shooting choppers out of the air as you go. Every few missions you will be presented with

Ace Combat 3's depth perception is incredible, stretching from this huling iron construct in the foreground to the itsy bitsy city on yonder hill

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION

KEVIN CHEUNG

I am not impressed. Namco made this mistake with Ridge Racer Type 4, and they've done it again for *Ace Combat 3*. What am I talking about? I'm talking about how the game is too bloody easy. Fair enough - I'll give credit for the fact that it's technically very well excuted, and that the graphics are simply awesome to look at. But if I can finish the game within one sitting, I can't help but feel for the poor sods who forked out all that cash for a night's worth of gameplay. There is simply no excuse for it. It's got to stop somewhere.

I say, Algie. Let's give the hun what for!

a choice. Depending on the wingman you take, your missions may vary. Occasionally you'll be required to follow one or the other at the end of a mission, leading you on differing missions.

You will even have a chance to manually land your aeroplane on a naval aircraft carrier and take off as well. These small exercises are not compulsory though. You may skip them just by pressing a button. The replay mode is one of the best yet, only you can't save any particular sortie to memory card. After you complete your objectives you will see yourself flying through the mission exactly as you just did. You can toggle the camera in several ways with the four main buttons and you can also activate motion blur, or even simulate a monochrome television transmission using the shoulder buttons.

One of the most outstanding (and useful) additions to the game is the nearest target button. In previous Ace Combat titles, hitting the triangle would switch targets from one to another foe. Tapping the button will still perform this helpful function, but now you also have the option to hold it down for a different result.

Holding the △ will swing the in-game camera around to focus on your nearest target, whilst still cleverly capturing your own aeroplane in the middle of the screen. This is very handy for keeping track of a shifty opponent in the skies as they swoop above and below you.

AND THE GAMEPLAY...

In terms of gameplay, Ace Combat remains a sim, as opposed to an unrealistic arcade experience. The control configuration lets you use both thumbsticks on the Dual Shock for optimum precision and subtle control. The default setting is now the advanced mode: the left stick rotates and lifts the plane while the shoulder buttons are used for yaw. The right stick can be used at any time to look in different directions without altering your flight path.

On the whole, this is a much nicer package than Namco's other two air combat games. It has been made more enjoyable than ever with the inclusion of free look and auto-targeting. There are easily enough improvements over the previous games to keep fans happy, such as the heat distortion in the jet trails and the beautiful reflection of the sun off the sea.

If you've never appreciated the Ace Combat series, now is definitely the time to try it out.

Hillous Lesslie

STATION

OVERALL: The slickest, smoothest, most stylish flight simulation for PlayStation.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★★	Very sharp textures and lots of little touches that make a difference
SOUND:	★★★★	Cheesy music, but it can be quieted to enhance the great effects
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Barrel rolls, swooping loops, freedom in the air
DIFFICULTY:	★★	Not very hard at all. Go Namco!
LIFESPAN:	★★★	Those MIRVs are so pretty, you will want to see them again

93
PERCENT

FORMULA 1 '99

Psygnosis wins back a little of the dignity lost in last year's F1 outing

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Psygnosis
- **Developer**
  Studio 33
- **Genre**
  Racing
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One or two
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  It has to be better than last year's pile of crap.

ALTERNATIVES

- Monaco GP 2
- Formula 1 '97

Be sure not to rear-end the guys in front

That's right - squash that yellow line...

After the disaster of F1 '98, F1 '99 was built from the ground up. And they've done a fine job too

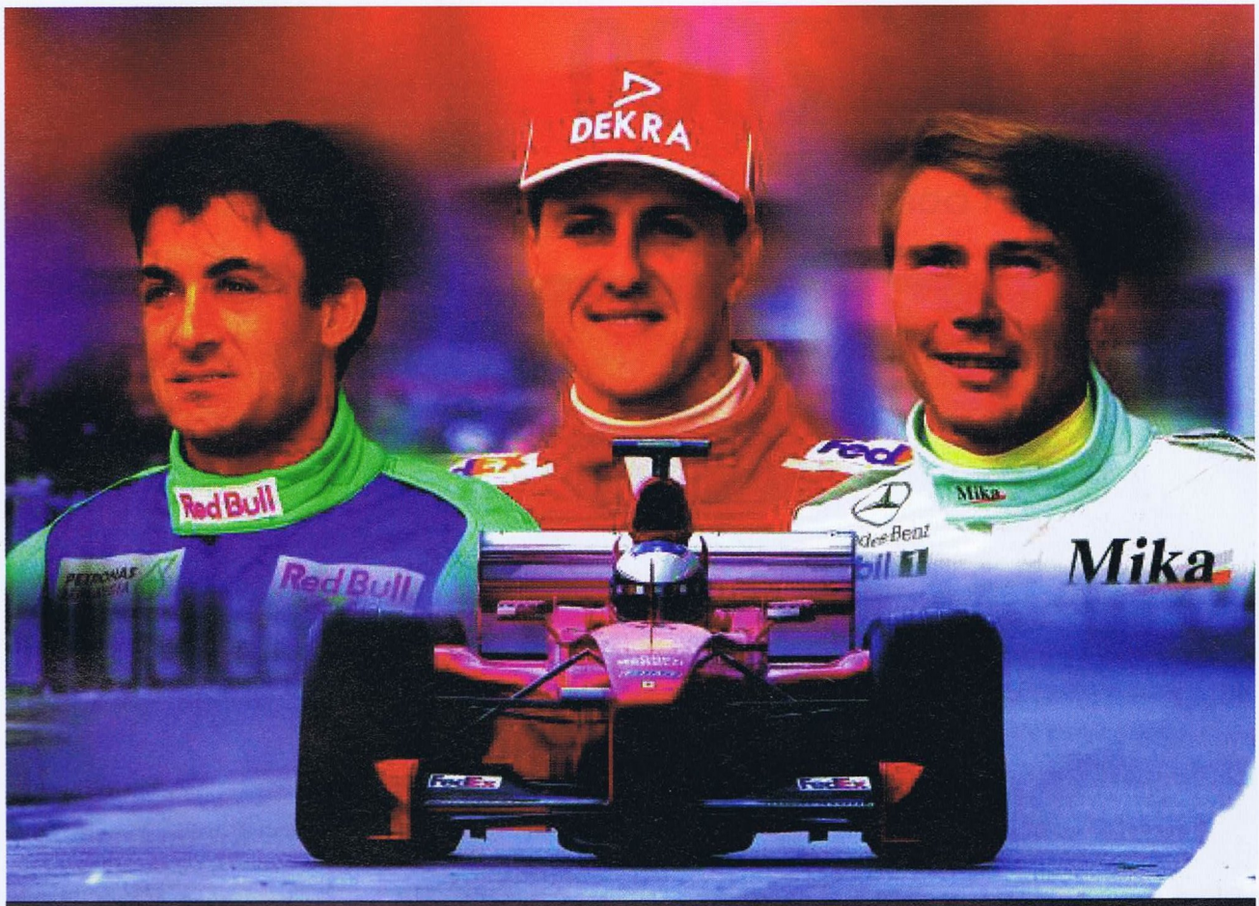
When you have a sports game that comes out every year with a different number after the title you expect each game will be an incremental improvement over the previous one. But occasionally, for whatever reason, a series suffers a major setback. Such was the case with last year's officially licensed Formula 1 game from Psygnosis. Formula 1 '98 sucked. To use an Aussie automotive analogy, it was the P76 of racing games, and thankfully the developers of that title have been given the flick.

It was with some trepidation that we slipped the latest Formula 1 game into the PlayStation - would the new team have learnt from last year's mistakes? Thankfully the answer is a big yes. We pulled out an old copy of Formula 1 '98 that we use as a beer coaster in the games room and compared it to the latest offering. The difference was amazing - more like a 10 year than a one-year time span.

Formula 1 '99 has been totally rebuilt from the bitumen up and the result is without a doubt the best Formula 1 game ever seen on the PlayStation (and it's possibly even better than the Dreamcast ones). It looks good, it feels good and its attention to detail makes it truly worthy of the official license.

Thanks to a technical consultant at the Stewart racing team, all of the details of last year's cars have been faithfully recreated, even down to which manufacturer has the most problems with gearboxes. The cars were even designed using the Formula One Association's own CAD files, and sound recordings were made of each of the cars in action for the ultimate in high-pitched realistic engine noise.

The only sound effect that isn't realistic is the hollow donk when you plough head-first into a wall. The developers have spent too much time and effort on these cars to have novice drivers smashing them up. As well as the cars, the tracks have also been faithfully modelled, right down to the camber on the chicanes and the



F1 '99 not only simulates the F1 driving experience well, but it also captures the essence of the sport with all of the drivers and commentators

Wow. Look at those times. You were whipped!

placement of local sponsors, advertising billboards. I haven't been to any of the other tracks, but the Melbourne one was spot on.

All of the drivers are in the game, even Jacques Villeneuve who has previously been excluded for contractual reasons. The regular TV commentators are on board too, and even though their comments can get a bit whiny and repetitive it adds up to an authentic experience. It's possible to recreate the best races of last year by editing the grid position before a race.

The Arcade mode of previous Formula 1 games has been ditched in favour of a complete Formula 1 experience. You arrive at a track a few days before the race and get to know the track, tuning your car to meet its particular characteristics as well as the forecast weather conditions. Then you go through qualifying to race for a grid position and then finally its race day.

TEST DRIVE THE TRACK

Taking a test drive on the track before qualifying will give you the best idea of the racing line by providing translucent witches hats of different colours to not only indicate where you should be on the track, but also where you should be breaking and accelerating. This is great for novice drivers and will have you racing competitively in no time.

Thankfully the AI of other drivers has been improved significantly over previous games. Team members are more considerate and cars you are lapping will let you pass. On the other hand, competitive drivers like Hakkinen and Schumacher will nudge you off into the gravel without the slightest hesitation if you impinge on their line.

Visually *Formula 1 '99* is a treat. The impression of blindingly fast speed is adequately conveyed by the smooth frame rate, and while racing through the first track it struck us that this was a rare breed of game indeed - a racing game with zero pop-up.

You can see right down to the end of the long straight and the cars pulling further away into the lead. The well-detailed scenery is also a constant, smoothly scaling in perspective as you noisily whiz past.

SQUEEZING IN THE TWO PLAYER

The two-player game runs as smoothly, but a lot of the graphical polish doesn't make it into the vertical split screen. Press material on the game said the developers wanted to make the two player game work with the full complement of 22 cars on the grid, but it seems this was a bit much to squeeze into the PlayStation's limited capabilities.

Similarly missing is the option for four player games via the link cable. Previous incarnations of the Formula 1 series have included this, but Studio 33 must have prioritized their efforts on more urgent matters like rebuilding the whole game from scratch.

Despite missing a few of the capabilities that would have made this game truly great, *Formula 1 '99* is a must buy for driving fans, even if you already own an Formula 1 game. Psygnosis take the checkered flag, and hopefully they will be back to race again next year with Formula 1 2000 on the PlayStation 2.

Elton Cane

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION

HILLOUS LESSLIE

Now this is a nice improvement. Formula 1 '99 basically picks up where F1 '97 left off. Pretend '98 didn't even happen. Psygnosis is to racing games what EA is to sports games: ultimate simulation. It's a pity the game didn't manage to squeeze in the CPU-controlled cars for the two-player mode, because it would've meant you and a friend could *'share'* the experience. Without it, you just compete with each other. This is something I'd like to see changed next time around.

STATION

OVERALL: Thank goodness this title turned out okay. Now if only the disgruntled fans of '98 would pay attention...

GRAPHICS:	★★★★★	Smooth, no pop-up - almost perfect execution
SOUND:	★★★★	Lots and lots of sampled car engines. Incredible
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Excellent simulation, but 2 player is limited
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★	Newbies always find F1 driving tough
LIFESPAN:	★★★	If you're a fan, it'll last you for ages

92

PERCENT

NBA LIVE 2000

The only series that can boast Michael Jordan. And that's a lot

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  EA Sports
- **Developer**
  EA Sports
- **Genre**
  Basketball Sim
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One to eight
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  The usual EA Sports update - better graphics, gameplay, and Michael Jordan.

ALTERNATIVES

- Foxsports 2000
- Total NBA
- NBA Showtime

Shaquille O'Neal gets ready to throw down a nasty dunk on yet another white chump

After seeing the great work EA Sports have done with their 2000 sports series (Madden, NHL and FIFA), it's NBA Live's turn. While both FIFA and NHL had their graphics and gameplay cranked up a notch for the PlayStation, NBA Live went the way of Madden, with the graphics being downgraded from the '99 version of the game to allow for more gameplay options.

If you, like me, have played NBA Live '99 to death, don't be put off by first impressions of *NBA Live 2000*. The menus look a little different to before, and are a little hard to get used to, but after a day or two it'll be second nature. The in-game graphics are also different to past Live's, but instead of them being upgraded, this time the game is distinctively less pretty than Live '99. Each player is a little smaller and more *"jagged"*, and while you can still usually tell who each player is, it's not as easy as '99.

The trade-off for this is that now the game runs a little quicker than Live '99, and there's also been a few new bits and pieces added to the presentation that gives the game more of an authentic feel. For instance, when a player goes to the foul line you now get a close-up of the player's face while he's setting up for the shot, and after he shoots his first free-throw you'll then see him lean over and high-five or knuckle-touch with one of his teammates.

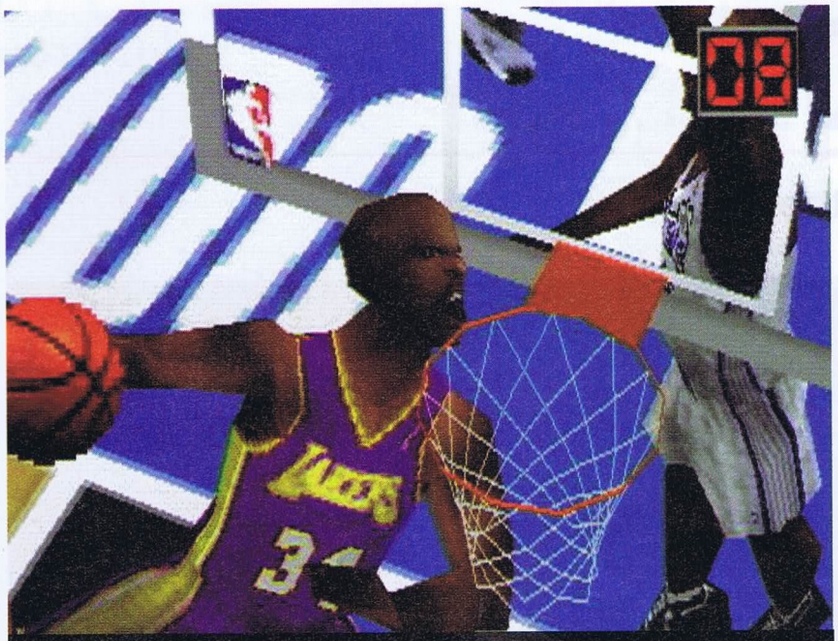
There's also more in the way of player animations in *NBA Live 2000*. Almost all of the dunks, layups and celebration moves from Live '99 have been kept, plus a whole slew of new ones added, courtesy of Kevin Garnett of the Minnesota Timberwolves. One of the new dunks, a Jordan special *"cradle dunk"*, looks awesome. Another one of the new jams, where the player's head is well over the ring, doesn't look so hot though.

From a more technical perspective, NBA Live 2000 has many of the same visual quibbles that were to be found in some of the other EA Sports 2000 games - especially Madden NFL 2000. Of particular note are the graphics. Previous NBA Live games are always praised

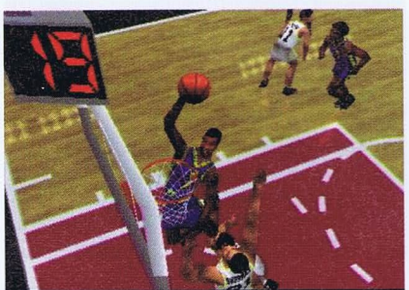
UNLOCK NBA LIVE LEGENDS

Earvin *"Magic"* Johnson

NBA Live 2000 is the only game allowing you to control Michael Jordan. It's also the only game where you get to use Wilt Chamberlain (R.I.P.), Dominique Wilkins, Larry Bird and Magic Johnson! That's right, EA Sports have added All-Star teams from the 1950's through to the 1990's, and the players on these squads are also available to be drafted into existing NBA teams once you've unlocked them by performing tasks like winning five straight season games or getting 15 steals in a game.



What has more fibre? A bowl of bran or a basketball hoop?



The old-school legend gets up for the jam...

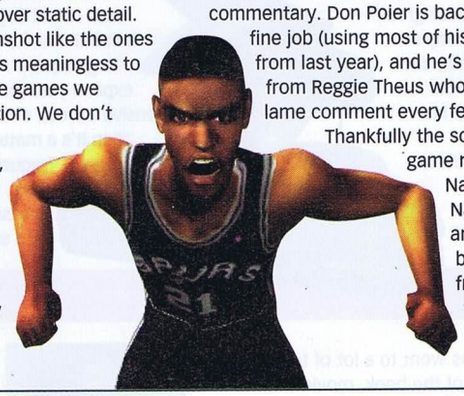
...while the white fella can only lay it up

for their attention to detail and high polygon count. This time around, it's fairly obvious to the naked eye that the player polygon counts are reduced somewhat, and the texture detail has even been slightly lowered. In English, it means that it doesn't look quite as good as before, at least as a still picture.

In motion, it's a completely different story. Frame rates have increased, meaning that the action you see on screen is very, very smooth compared to other NBA games. Maybe this is EA's way of experimenting with the idea of placing motion in priority over static detail.

That is, a pretty screenshot like the ones you see in this magazine is meaningless to game players, because the games we play are constantly in motion. We don't play still pictures.

Even with that in mind, it's a little difficult to ignore the pixellated crowds in the background, who really stand out because of how much they look like dodgy cardboard cut-outs.



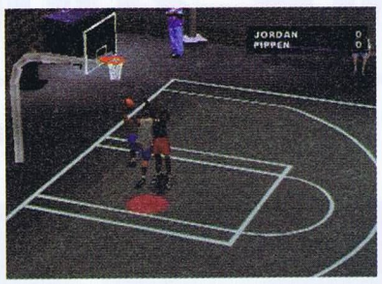
SMARTER PLAYERS

Die-hard Live fans will love the improved AI in *NBA Live 2000*. Most people I know who religiously played Live '99 could play a whole season on the Superstar difficulty setting and never lose a game. The All-Star level in *NBA Live 2000* is like the Superstar level in '99, and the Superstar level is now insanely tough. You will have to try and run plays and exploit favourable defensive matchups to win games, not just run fast breaks.

One area that is a bit of a let-down is the commentary. Don Poier is back, and does a fine job (using most of his comments from last year), and he's got some help from Reggie Theus who basically adds a lame comment every few minutes.

Thankfully the soundtrack to the game rules, with Naughty By Nature, Rahzel and Parliament being heard frequently throughout the game.

ONE ON ONE MODE



Whenever we've played a game of NBA Live in the past (and we've played every Live from '95 through to '99), there's only been one game mode that we've considered using - Season mode with the difficulty maxed out. However, with Live 2000 there's a new mode that I've found myself coming back to constantly and that's the One On One mode.

A great thing about this mode is that it's much harder than the standard season mode. You've got no computer teammates to help bail you out, and the CPU has no crappy teammates to get in his way, so it's all up to you to score or be scored on. The CPU seems to crank up the defence in this mode too, so if you thought the standard game was hard then this is another level entirely.

The One On One mode is also used to unlock some of the legend players in the game. To unlock Michael Jordan for use in the normal season mode, you need to beat MJ in a game of One-On-One with the difficulty level on Superstar. It sounds impossible, but if you use someone like Allen Iverson, Eddie Jones or Michael Finley, it can be done.

In terms of gameplay, NBA Live 2000 provides an even balance of difficulty and detail that's accessible to fans new and old. For the newcomers, it's got all the glitz and glam you'd expect of a gaudy American basketball game, featuring all the flashy lights, commentary, taunts, and signature moves you could wish for. The game's official license to use the name of actual players is also a big plus.

For the diehards who've stuck it through with the series from day one, it is basketball heaven. Surely, the true fans must be getting sick of these hippy post-modern reinventions of the genre, such as NBA Showtime and such. For that alone, NBA Live 2000's attention to stats, abilities, and so on make it the perfect basketball sim for all fans to feel at home with.

NBA Live 2000 is close to perfection. The increased difficulty levels and the addition of past legends makes it a must-have for NBA nutcases, while the One On One mode and quicker pace of the game makes it easier to pick up for those who have never played Live before. If only the graphics were sharper... but for that we'll have to wait for the PlayStation 2.

Wesley Willis

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible
- Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players

SECOND OPINION

JAMES COTTEE

Hmmm... Sports games. This genre has always been a bit baffling to me, as the opportunity exists within most people's lives to play real live sports. Why, in the face of the real adrenaline and exercise you could be getting in the great outdoors would you coop yourself up in a dingy lounge room and send polygon men out onto virtual courts to have virtual fun? Aside from that, it's great.

STATION

OVERALL: Graphics haven't been improved but overall, NBA Live 2000 is the Michael Jordan of basketball games.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	You can tell who each player is, but that's about it
SOUND:	★★★★	Great soundtrack, average play-by-play
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	One-on-One mode and Legends Mode will keep you coming back
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	Even die-hard Live fans will have trouble
LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Unlocking the legend players keeps it interesting

91

PERCENT

DUNE 2000

Command the spice. Conquer the universe

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Westwood Studios
- **Developer**
  EA
- **Genre**
  Real Time Strategy
- **Release Date**
  February
- **Players**
  One or two
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  The first ever Real Time Strategy game comes to the PlayStation. In 3D!

ALTERNATIVES

- Warzone 2100
- Krush Kill N Destroy
- C&C Red Alert

Dune 2000 captures many of the hallmark elements of Frank Herbert's literature

Destroy their refinery to cripple their economy

Ignore your units, and they'll get eaten

Dune is one of the greatest legacies of science fiction. Frank Herbert's series of books inspired a generation, and the desert planet of Arakis has also spawned a David Lynch movie and the odd video game. Dune 1 was a French made RPG on the PC, which followed the plot of the book too closely and for this and other reasons was very lame. For Dune 2's PC release in 1992, Westwood threw the story out the window, and pit the main antagonists from the books against each other in an all out war.

Instead of the player and the computer taking turns to move their units like in a game of chess, both could move any and all of their forces simultanously. It made the battlefield more like an arcade game, and the genre of real time strategy was born.

This was in the early nineties. To cash in on the nostalgia value Westwood released *Dune 2000* on PC in '98. It had greatly updated graphics and gameplay, but was criticised for having identical levels to the first game, ripping off the Red Alert engine, and for just being more of the same.

For the PlayStation version, Westwood have done something different. *Dune 2000* abondoned the system of using flat sprites on a flat background, and opted for an environment completely rendered in 3D. Which is not to say there is any genuine three dimensional combat going on. The new engine does nothing to broaden the depth of the original formula, but rather display it in greater clarity.

ONLY ONE HOUSE WILL PREVAIL

Dune 2000 is set about 20, 000 years in the future. Mankind has spread uniformly throughout the galaxy, with each planet dominated by its own feudal dynasty. These great houses are constantly at war with each other, and harbour grudges that stretch back centuries. The emperor has selected three of these rabid houses to fight for control of Arrakis, commonly known as Dune. An offer they can hardly refuse, as Dune is the most strategically important planet in the universe.

The FMV cut scenes which constitute your briefings are modeled on the characters and settings from the movie, and for B-grade green-screen work look pretty good. After choosing the house to fight for you get briefed by their monarch's personal mentat. Mentats have enhanced faculties more powerful than any computer, thanks to the mind expanding properties of the spice melange. The galactic economy hinges on this super drug, and it's only found on one planet - Dune.

Each round begins with your base and a handful of units set up in some corner of a large square map. You must rapidly expand your facilities, building factories, defensive turrets, a radar station and so forth. Then it's a matter of staving off the frequent incursions of your foes, building up a massive invasion force of your own, and smashing their base.

SPICE WORLD

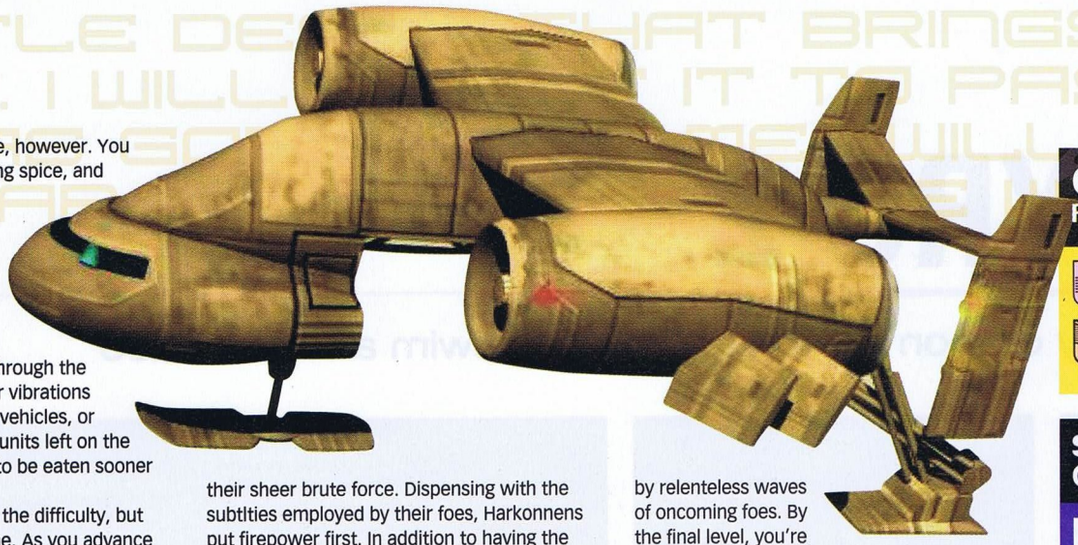
Ordos Mentat

Harkonnen Mentat

Westwood Studios went to a lot of trouble to recreate the feel of the book, movie and previous game in the cut scenes of Dune 2000, and the effort has really paid off. When faced with the over-the-top personality of your mentat, it's easy to get into the groove of your house.

What is a Mentat?

A techno-sensei



All of this gear isn't free, however. You have to fund it all by refining spice, and this means sending your harvesting machines out onto the treacherous desert sands. There is always an element of risk when straying from the rocky land, because giant menacing worms plough through the dunes, attracted by regular vibrations such as those given off by vehicles, or even footsteps. Forgotten units left on the shifting sands can expect to be eaten sooner rather than later.

The set levels increase the difficulty, but also the variety of the game. As you advance more structures and weapons become available, and the personality of the side you have chosen becomes apparent.

I WILL NOT FEAR. FEAR IS THE MIND KILLER

The Atreides value honor and all things civil, and as such soar above their foes in ornithopters; flying machines that work by mimicking the movement of a birds wings in flight. Once built you can't directly control them, instead they buzz around the battlefield of their own volition, pestering likely targets until struck down. The Atreides can also get sonic tanks, which attack with powerful, concentrated sound waves.

The Ordos are a pack of sinister smugglers, who attack by means of devious treachery when at all possible. Their trademark weapon is the deviator. This mobile rocket launcher fires missiles filled with nerve gas, and makes forces swap sides to join your army! They also have heavy troopers, which the Atreides are denied, and faster trikes.

The Harkonnen are the side most people play through the game first with, by virtue of their sheer brute force. Dispensing with the subtlties employed by their foes, Harkonnens put firepower first. In addition to having the toughest infantry of the playable sides, they can also build the most powerful tanks.

While the other sides have to settle for light and heavy tanks, these homicidal maniacs can build the devastator. In addition to commanding excellent armour and weapons, it can also self-destruct, damaging all units and buildings around it.

An impression imparted by Dune 2, and retained by *Dune 2000*, is the tension created by relenteless waves of oncoming foes. By the final level, you're facing off against the other two houses and the emperor himself. At this stage each team's super weapons come into play. The Atredies can call on the Fremen, natives of Dune who actually like living in a giant desert.

The Ordos get saboteurs, similar to engineers in C&C. And the Harkonnen get nukes, technically illegal in the fundamentalist future of Dune, but more than appropriate in the context of mass destruction.

There are definitely shortcomings to *Dune 2000*, make no mistake. It incorporates none of the innovations of Warzone 2100 or KKND, let alone any of the recent hit Real Time Strategy games on the PC like Total Annihilation or Starcraft.

The gameplay is almost 10 years old, and it could be argued that it was ambitious to even bring the game to the PlayStation in the first place. Still, *Dune 2000* is a solid game which delivers classic sci-fi, smooth graphics and irrepressible action. It is the best Real Time Strategy on the PlayStation.

James Cottee

In space, no-one can hear you scream

Armies have to be built up one at a time

Don't forget about the airborne units!

Elaborate buildings, all lovingly created in realtime 3D, and waiting to be destroyed in seconds

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION

KEVIN CHEUNG

Everyone loves the occasional RTS. Warzone 2100 was the last *"good"* title, but the PlayStation has been in want of one of the *"big name"* titles for a while. *Dune 2000* amply fills that void - albeit a rather hardcore one.

STATION

OVERALL: If you want action, strategy and a touch of class, then Dune 2000 is your vat of spice gas.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★★	Outstanding achievement, with PSX 3D power pushed to the max
SOUND:	★★★	Atmospheric music, slavish units, nice explosions
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	The grandfather of all RTS action
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★★	The computer is always faster and better resourced. Intimidating
LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Three huge campaigns, and a custom single mission mode

91
PERCENT

SPYRO 2

The baby dragon's back and he can swim and climb too

FACT FILE

Publisher
Sony

Developer
Insomniac for Universal Studios

Genre
Platformer

Release Date
Available now

Players
One

No. of CD's
One

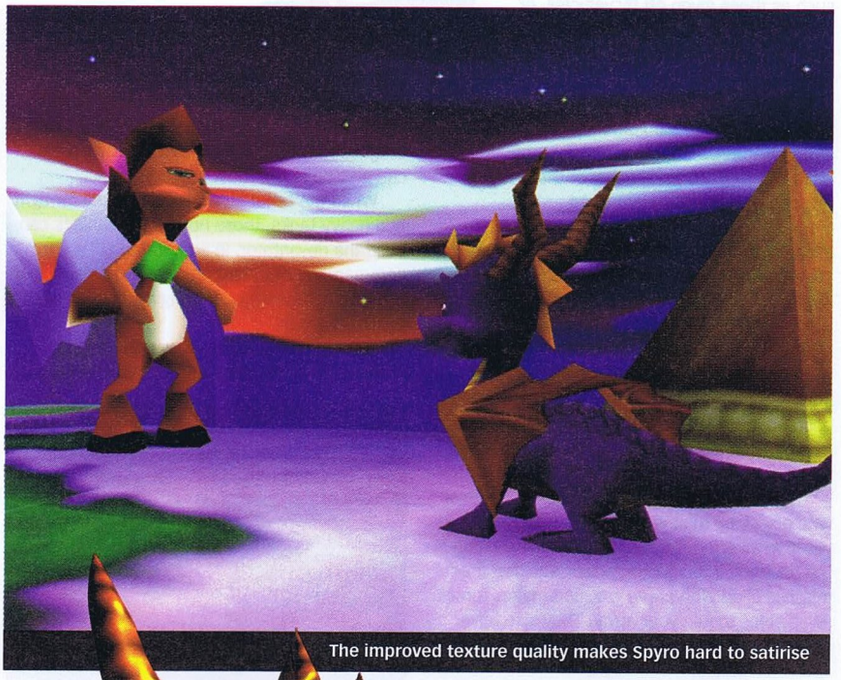
Expectations
Once again, the little purple dragon takes to the skies (sort of), but has learned a few tricks.

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

"Here 'lil dragonfly, ah'm gonna eatcha!"



The improved texture quality makes Spyro hard to satirise

When the first Spyro came out, Sony put a whole range of marketing and PR effort behind the game. This push had a positive impact on sales, some say more than the game deserved. Well, the sequel has finally hit the shelves and with an amazingly quiet entry too.

What's satisfying to those who pick up this second episode of the baby dragon's adventures is that the gameplay is so clean and the graphics so crisp and well defined that it doesn't need any false hype. *Spyro 2* can firmly sit on its own achievements and really is a good game in its own right.

The story line is one of those that make you think that there must be a lot of kids in the game design business. Spyro is bored where he is and decides he needs a vacation to the beach. Jumping into a portal, he soon discovers that he's mistimed his holiday, as certain parties have decided to summon a dragon to help them rid Avalar of Ripto and his two ugly thugs.

IMAGINATIVE BREAKUP

The way the levels have been divided up has been done imaginatively. There are three hub worlds, Summer Forest, Autumn Plains and Winter Tundra. Each hub has a number of sub-worlds to explore, and the hub worlds are whole levels in their own right. You start in one sub-world, Glimmer, and have to find your way to Summer Forest where you begin your adventure in earnest.

To get to the next hub world, you need to collect the talisman from each sub-world you currently have access too. Each sub-world has the mission of attaining the talisman by fulfilling the main quest as well as several sidetracks where you can gather orbs. It turns out towards the end that you need these to gain access to Ripto's hideout, but until then all you need to do is get the talismans.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

What this does is provide a fun and relatively easy game to newcomers and youngsters, while giving older gamers a chance to test their brain cells in trying to gain the magical 100%.

Graphically, the game is smoother than its predecessor and the characters have all had detailed skins applied. The movements are realistic for the various moves that Spyro himself can do. He runs, climbs and swims the way you would expect a four-legged animal to.

Added to his old bag of tricks is the capabilities of swimming underwater or dog-paddling on the surface, and climbing ladders. Another nice addition is the different kinds of rocks that Spyro can pick up in his mouth and spit out instead of his usual flame. Some levels actually require you to use these different methods to complete and so keep you from using the one tactic to finish the whole game.

All up, *Spyro 2* is a most satisfying game. For those who are younger, the colourful graphics and cute looks on all of the inhabitants of Avalar (including the bad guys) will attract and mesmerise. However, this title offers much more than that, and anyone who likes platform games is sure to get a level of satisfaction out of this one.

Andrew Parsons

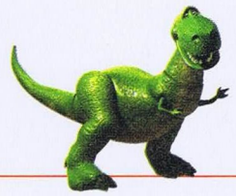
STATION

OVERALL: More of the same baby dragon only with extra abilities and a richer set of environments and characters.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Crisp and smooth animation go hand in hand with the bright colours
SOUND:	★★★★	It's good to see a company not skimping on voice-acting
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	Good use of analogue controls shows the depth of programming
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Spyro definitely suits a younger crowd
LIFESPAN:	★★★	Fairly straight forward platforming

82
PERCENT

TOY STORY 2



The movie went to infinity and beyond. The game, however...

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Activision
- **Developer**
  Disney Interactive
- **Genre**
  Platformer
- **Release Date**
  Available now
- **Players**
  One
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  Another direct result of a Disney movie - a platformer with a Disney-cute hero doing all of the Disney-cute things.

You can see all the way into the distance and the detail is great, but it chugs. Badly...

Unlike some of Disney's other platforming titles, *Toy Story 2* is completely 3D, and it shows. The graphics are crisp and well defined and coupled with nice animations and the game feels similar to the movie. So many titles utilise a combination of 2D and 3D effects and end up with things looking out of place; not so with *Toy Story 2*. The characters and environment they play around in mesh extremely well together, and coupled with the topic of the game (ie, toys), provide a wonderfully immersive experience.

There are loads of nice touches within the game, like the reflection of Buzz's face on the inside of his faceplate when you are in aiming mode. The cute characters such as the little tykes and Bo Peep make appearances which will keep Disney's commercial ties happy.

If you're looking for a gift for a young person, look no further. Disney have a good track record of creating solid dependable titles, and *Toy Story 2* isn't letting down the rest of the fold. Sure it doesn't break any new ground, but the quality of what Disney does best shines through from the movies to the characters, from the sound effects to the storyline.

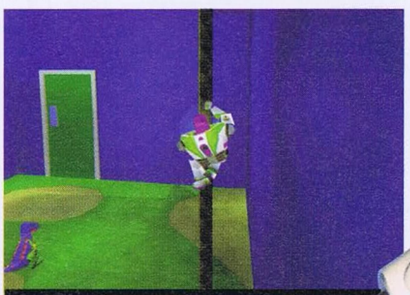
Rhys Jacobssen

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

Disney now has a reputation with going all out across the retail sector when they release a new movie. Timed to coincide with the cinematic release, dolls, books, board games and computer and console games are on the shelves, and *Toy Story 2* was always going to follow the trend.

Disney also have a tradition of releasing titles on every platform conceivable, and the PlayStation, given its popularity, is always covered. If you had to guess at a genre of game for *Toy Story 2*, you would most likely have guessed right. *Toy Story 2* the game IS a platformer.



Never mind me - just climbing my rod

THE SPACE RANGER AT HIS BEST

You take control of Buzz Lightyear in his quest to save Woody from the evil Al. Armed with your tiny laser beam and the ability to spin into opponents with your wings, you must work through various environments to find Woody and break him out of his brainwashed state.

The game is remarkably short, with only 10 normal levels with a boss level after every two regular episodes. Luckily, the levels have multiple objectives, some of them easy, some of them more difficult. What this allows for is the young gamer to finish the game while providing a more challenging task to complete the game by getting 100%.

The puzzles require you to do things like collect a set amount of coins for Hammy, or race around a track against the clock or another toy. Again, Disney hasn't presented anything out of the ordinary here, but instead has opted for the safety of prior success.

A DOG, A PIG AND A DINOSAUR

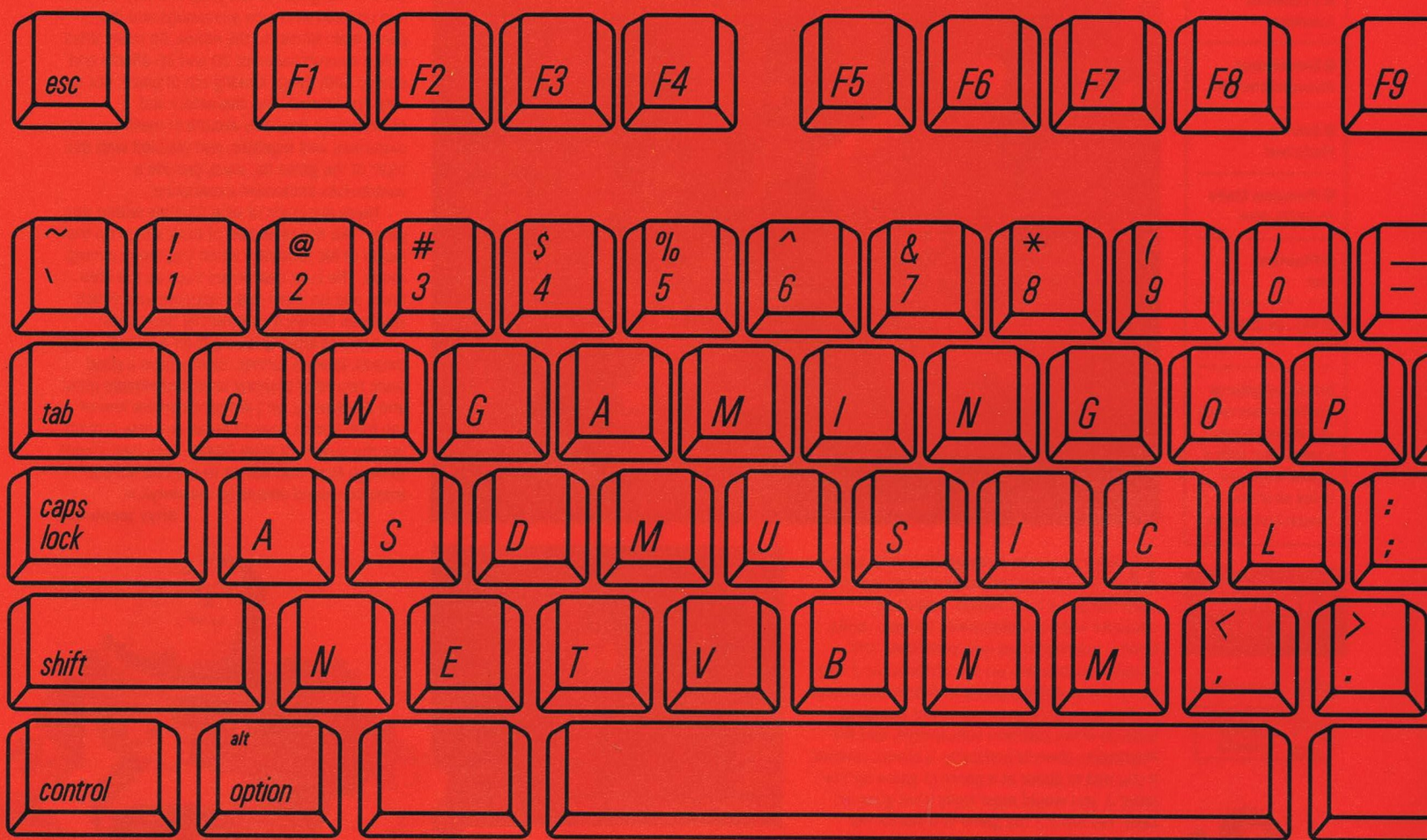
Buzz has the help of Rex who provides tips in every level on what the objectives are, while Slinky the Dog and Hamm are involved in the action. Mr Potatohead makes irregular appearances when his body parts go missing. Find the part that is lacking and he'll give you another piece of equipment.

STATION

OVERALL: Yet again, Disney have applied their formulaic methods and again, it has worked.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Typical cutesy quality from Disney
SOUND:	★★★★	Direct sound bites from the movie plus a few extras thrown in
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Run, jump, shoot. Collect the baubles. Nothing fancy
DIFFICULTY:	★★	Some levels deathly easy, while others will keep you on your toes
LIFESPAN:	★★	Too short. A day or two to get to the end. A few more to get 100%

77
PERCENT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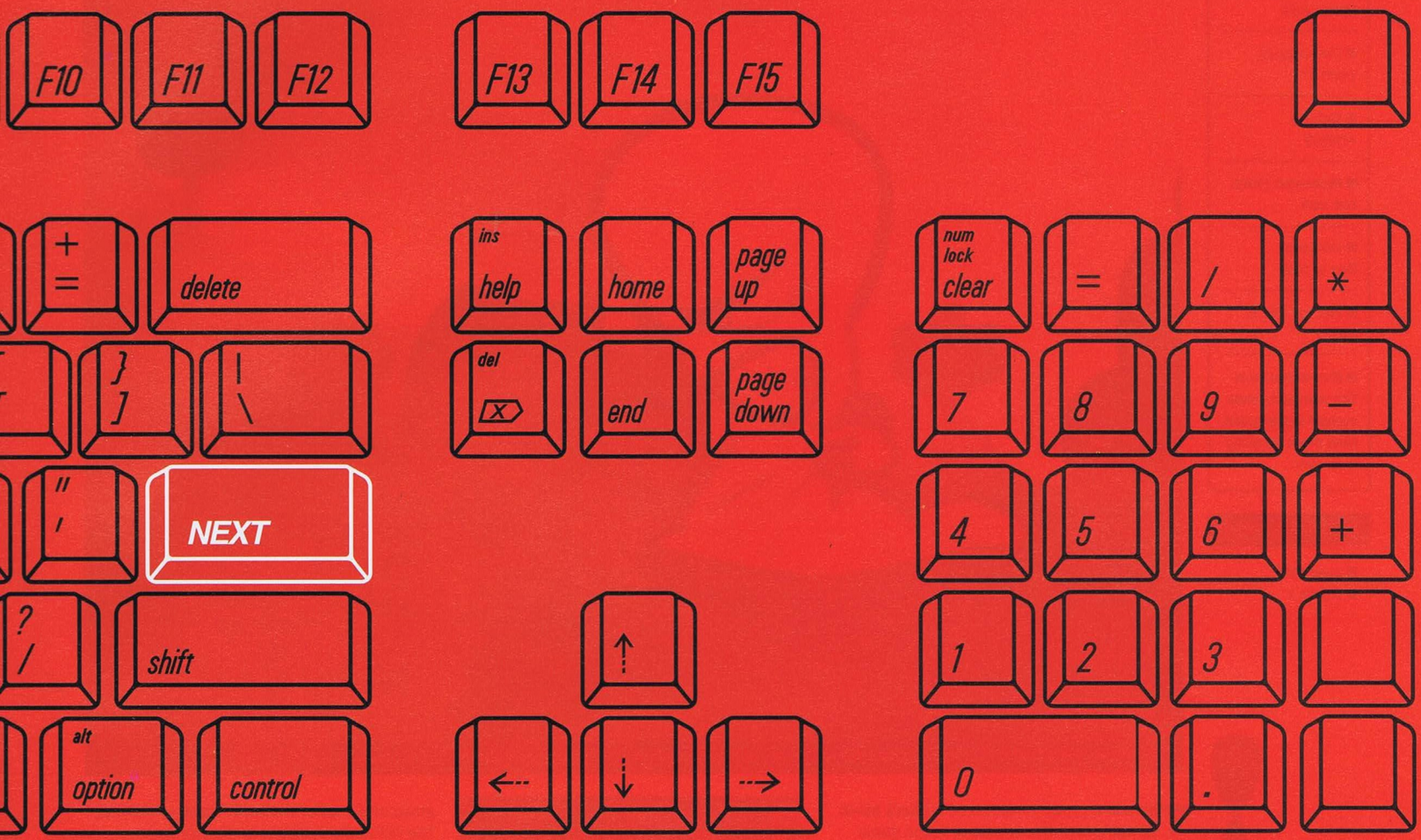
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WORMS ARMAGEDDON

When people speak of party games, I reach for my gun

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Microprose
- **Developer**
  Team 17
- **Genre**
  Artillery
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One to four
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  The worms formula evolved to perfection. Now more cartoony than ever.

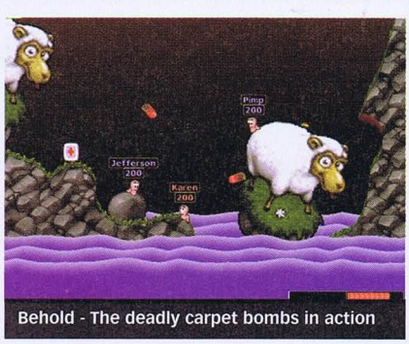
ALTERNATIVES

- Dune 2000
- Worms 2

What little realism existed in the previous Worms games has been completely replaced with outrageous cartoon antics

There is a proud tradition of artillery piece simulators in the annals of video game lore. At their simplest, they consisted of a side on view of jagged terrain, a gun emplacement at either side of the screen, and a blustering wind that would change in direction and force each turn. It was up to the players to correctly gauge the angle and force to use to propel their shells closer and closer to their foe, finally crushing them with the might of science.

It's a good formula, but Worms improves on it by adding the magic of movement. Each worm, in the finite seconds of its turn, can crawl, jump, backflip, ninja rope, bungee, or even jetpack around the battleground, adding new levels of randomness and mayhem. What was once a methodical process of refining your aim becomes a tactical game of twister, as each squad of worms vies to out-manouver the other as they employ maximum firepower in a surreal cartoon environment.



Behold - The deadly carpet bombs in action

GO MULTIPLAYER

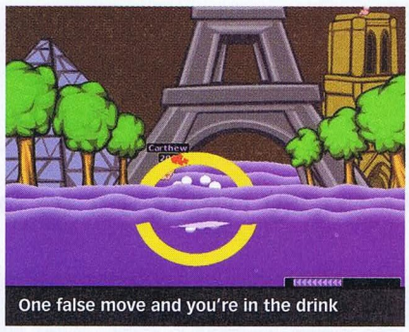
There are a number of single player game options, but *Worms Armageddon* comes into its own when played multiplayer. Up to four humans can compete, and each starts with a squad of four worms scattered through the game area. This is a convoluted block of cavernous Swiss cheese suspended over a bottomless watery pit.

Opposing worms can be killed by attrition, or by knocking them into the void, making a grasp of the lay of the land crucial to success. The random placement of the worms throughout the level can make for heavy losses in the first turn, as a worm on the edge can be sent sailing off into the sea, or one on a flimsy bridge can be dispatched by blasting away the ground beneath his feet.

If your enemy has worms clustered together, striking them with a heavy weapon early on can decimate him. If your own worms are bunched together, then breaking them up will increase their survivability.

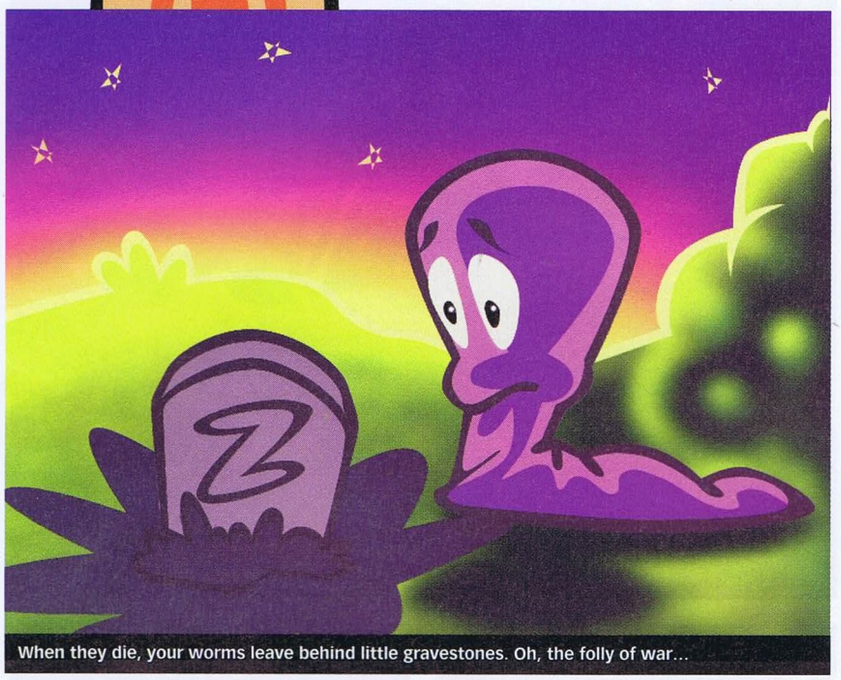
The strategic potential is multiplied again by the weapons at your disposal. There are over fifty, each with their own unique properties. You have an unlimited supply of bazookas and grenades, and everything else is limited to either what you start with or what you can find in crates.

As the weapons become more powerful and surreal, more involved control methods are required. The Super Sheep is a fluffy white projectile with a red cape, which if steered expertly over hill and dale can take 3/4 of the health off an enemy worm. Likewise the Mad

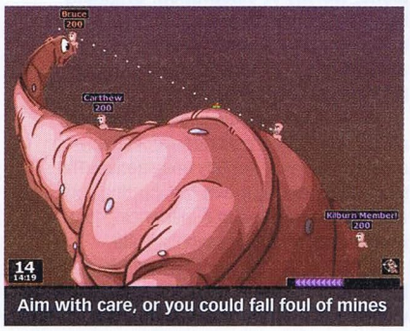


One false move and you're in the drink

Here we see Grant about to go ballistic



When they die, your worms leave behind little gravestones. Oh, the folly of war...



Aim with care, or you could fall foul of mines

Who farted?

Cows are cantankerous things to aim, as are the Old Ladies and the Mole Bombs.

Returning from Worms 2 is the Holy Hand Grenade, borrowed from Monty Python and The Holy Grail. All are immensely satisfting to use, with humorous sights and sounds punctuating your every triumph.

MISSIONS, FOR VARIETY

Diversifying the action even further is a collection of standard scenarios that by varying the starting weapons and other parameters effectively creates dozens of different games in one. For instance, the scenario called *"A Clockworm Orange"* each team of worms starts with only the handgun active, with all other weapons ghosted.

As the turns progress they unlock, stimulating the violence with sustained release action. Or on the *"Armageddon"* setting, all the worms start with a fatal disease that takes five percent of their health each round, and the entire map is sinking streadily into the sea, similar to the *"sudden death"* option.

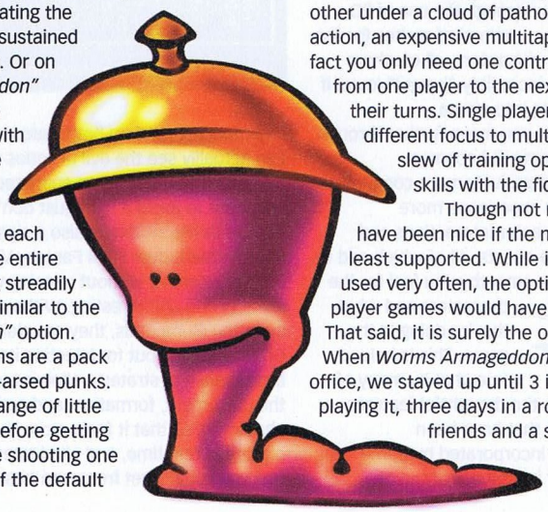
Your worms are a pack of little smart-arsed punks. They have a range of little quips to say before getting shot or before shooting one another, and if the default *"Stiff Upper Lip"* vocabulary doesn't strike you, then there are 29 others to choose from, including Scots, the French, the Swedes, and more. The physics and sound effects are all reminiscent of the old Warner Brothers cartoons, but this is a very British game. Your worms will rip apart English country gardens and tube stations alike, while yelling such cockney slang as *"Oi! Nutter!"*

On top of the finely tuned gameplay and the huge battery of game options is the presentation and the interface. Eliminating all unnecessary detail, the well designed menus grant you your choices with a minimum of mess or fuss. Instead of a bloated and cliched opening sequence, there are instead a collection of CG FMVs that play when the game is left idle for over a minute.

Each depict worms demonstrating the weapons from the game, vapourising each other under a cloud of pathos. For four player action, an expensive multitap is not required. In fact you only need one controller as it is passed from one player to the next as they have their turns. Single player games have a different focus to multiplayer, with a slew of training options to hone your skills with the fiddly weapons.

Though not required, it would have been nice if the multitap was at least supported. While it wouldn't be used very often, the option of four to eight player games would have been incredible. That said, it is surely the only thing missing. When *Worms Armageddon* first arrived in the office, we stayed up until 3 in the morning playing it, three days in a row. If you have friends and a sense of humour, Worms is essential.

James Cottee



GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION

HILLOUS LESSLIE

James does not exaggerate. It's hard to say anything bad about a game that's been so well thought out. Given a little time, *Worms* is a game that will grow on everyone with its subtle charms and wicked sense of humour. If you play any games at all with your friends, this title is an essential purchase.

STATION

OVERALL: There may be better single player games available, but this is the greatest party game ever made.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Brilliant design and execution, surreal settings and lovable worms
SOUND:	★★★★★	Both sound effects and music sit perfectly
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	The worms formula distilled to its purest essence
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Aiming can be awkward; the computer never makes mistakes
LIFESPAN:	★★★★★	You can play 'till 3am without scratching the surface. Repeatedly

96
PERCENT

GRANDIA

Game Arts' much-celebrated RPG finally makes it to our shores

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Ubi Soft
- **Developer**
  Game Arts
- **Genre**
  RPG
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One
- **No. of CD's**
  Two
- **Expectations**
  2D looks cheesy, but its reputation for giving FF7 a run for its money make it worth checking out.

For many an RPG fan, the fact that *Grandia* is being released locally is, alone, worthy of celebration. Originally released on the Sega Saturn in Japan over two years ago, *Grandia* was Game Arts' answer to the RPG that made gaming history: Final Fantasy VII.

What *Grandia* offers is a very traditional adventure - highly polished, impeccably detailed, and wonderfully imaginative. The story starts out light-hearted, putting you through the motions of experiencing just another day in the protagonist's life.

As Justin, a young boy whose family runs a long line of adventurers, you play a few games with friends, get into scuffles with rival gangs, get into trouble with your mother... eventually, you stumble upon a plan of the Garle Army to unlock the dark secrets of the planet and take over the world! And of course, you and your friends take it upon yourselves to stop them.

INEVITABLE FINAL FANTASY COMPARISON...

Grandia is the sort of game that's initially easy-going and easy on the learning curve, placing you in a relaxing fantasy environment of peasantry, swords and sorcery. This is as opposed to the heavy-duty post-industrial clutterage of Final Fantasy VII that threw you straight into the deep end.

This approach is reflected in the overall presentation of the game, offering fully explorable environments that are rotatable via the shoulder buttons. While the environments are three dimensional, the game retains its traditional fantasy flavour through the use of 2D animated sprites for the main characters, all of whom look incredibly *"kawaii"* (cute) if you're into anime.

As you move further through the game, it becomes progressively more complex as you experience more character interactions and more sub-quests, all of which add to the empathy you feel for the characters and what they're doing in the game. This is helped somewhat by many of the thoughtful features that have been incorporated by Game Arts. For instance, instead of experiencing random battle sequences, you can actuallly see the evil beasties wandering around on the map as an animated sprite. If you want to avoid a fight, just don't walk into it.

The battle system is also a significant improvement over Final Fantasy VII. FFVII's battle system is, without mincing words, shallow and uninteresting. Without the summon elementals, they are plain boring. *Grandia* stands out for injecting its battles with a real sense of strategy, allowing you to control the placement, formation, and actions of your characters so that it feels more like you're playing in real-time, and eliminates the artificial feel you usually get from turn-based battles.

Unfortunately, *"better than Final Fantasy VII"* is the best accolade *Grandia* is likely to achieve - and under the present circumstances, it's not worth very much. After all, since Final Fantasy VII, subsequent games like Parasite Eve, Lunar, and even Final Fantasy VIII have pushed the proverbial yardstick several lengths ahead.

By today's standards, the graphics appear a tad pixellated, and the control systems are a whole step behind the newer titles. That said, even though RPG connoisseurs will no doubt appreciate a game like *Grandia*, the newer RPG fans might feel that the game is a little dated.

Kevin Cheung

FFVII: 2D backgrounds, 3D characters. Grandia: 3D backgrounds, 2D characters. Any difference?

Voice acting accompanies the text

You mean you're all sisters?

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

STATION

OVERALL: Very cutesy, but every bit as epic as the best RPGs in the market. Too bad it came out so late.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Rotatable 3D environments = huge amount of detail
SOUND:	★★★	Frequent use of voice samples adds human element
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	Big story, lots of sub-quests - everything good RPG needs
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Well balanced. Hopefully you won't get stuck at any one point
LIFESPAN:	★★★	A decent-sized adventure that'll last a good month

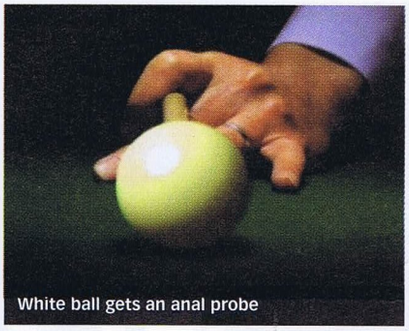
85
PERCENT

POOL HUSTLER

We'd all like to be a debonair pool hustler, but not quite like this...

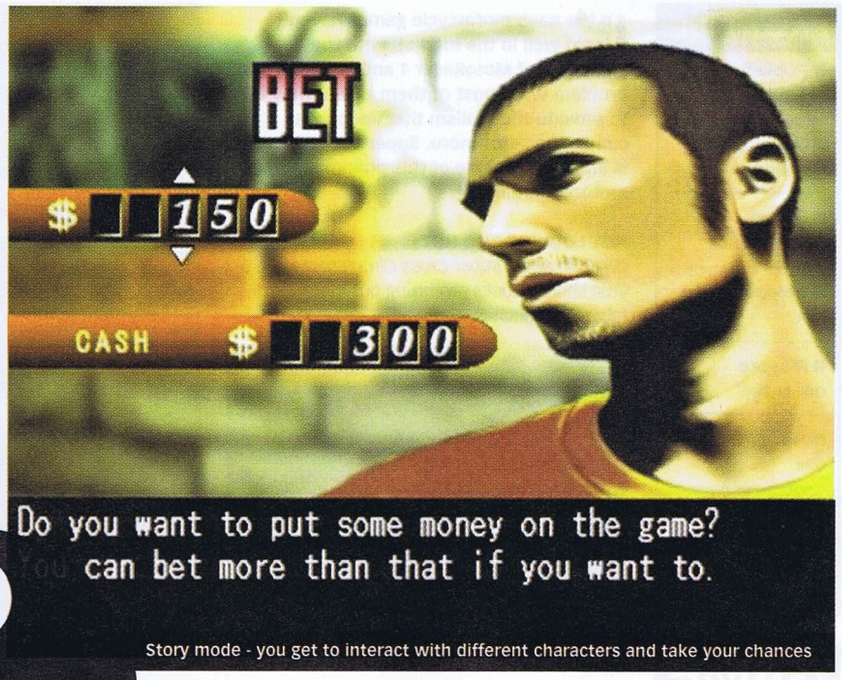
FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Activision
- **Developer**
  Sunsoft
- **Genre**
  Pool
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One or two
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  Pool Hustler is just another pool simulation - but not quite really.



White ball gets an anal probe

Reward for your efforts



Story mode - you get to interact with different characters and take your chances

GAME FEATURES

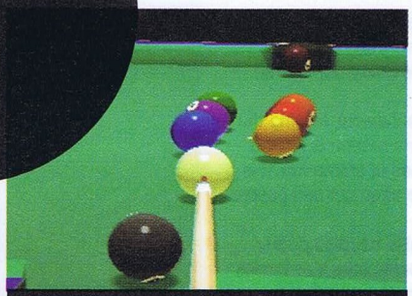
- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

8

The Friday afternoon game of pool, considered to be an institution in our office, is not something we've always considered in videogaming terms. Older pool games on the PlayStation were often marred by the fact that they offer nothing more than a simulation; and in being a simulation, they can't offer anything that's better than playing in real life.

Enter *Pool Hustler*, from the Japanese developer Sunsoft. *Pool Hustler* is not your typical pool simulator, as Sunsoft have implemented one of those atypical Japanese game features, the Story Mode. Yes, *Pool Hustler* is an RPG. About pool. Or rather, about being a pool hustler.

That said, the primary goal is to travel to numerous locales on a map, wandering into pubs, clubs, and other such seedy/glitzy establishments, and testing your skills against other players in the field. Your skill, cunning, and tenacity for the game are measured through the accumulation of cash, which you bet at each game. Accumulate enough cash, and you will eventually be crowned the ultimate pool hustler.



Trick-shot mode. Complicated. Head hurts

ENTER THE PUZZLE GAME

There's more to *Pool Hustler* than the Story Mode, though. To add short term appeal and variety, the game also features a Two Player Mode, a Practice Mode, and a Trick Shot Mode.

It could very well be said that the Trick Shot Mode is the next logical step from Practice Mode. Basically you get one shot, and you have to sink every ball on the table. Since the balls are arranged in a specific fashion, there 'is' a way to do it - you just have to figure out how. The result is something of a puzzle mode, similar to Devil Dice, requiring you to move from one ball configuration to the next as you figure out what you are meant to do.

EVERYTHING BUT THE BALL

So it's got a story and a set of puzzles. The question that ultimately remains is whether or not it's any good as a pool game. To that end, *Pool Hustler* comes off as fair. Visually, the graphics are very clean and unobtrusive, and the sounds - whilst understandably plain - all do the job just fine.

The main complaint to be made is of the balls themselves, which appear to have a weight that's disproportionate to the speed at which they travel. In other words, the momentum doesn't feel right. Sometimes they can go flying at lightning speeds, and at other times they can take seemingly forever to come to a halt. This disproportionality also makes it difficult to gauge how hard you should be hitting the ball - but wait - there isn't even a gauge for you to look at! The consequential "trial and error" gameplay is a tad frustrating.

The problem with *Pool Hustler* is pretty obvious: it went out of its way to include interesting new concepts, but in doing so, it neglected the core element of playing pool. It's by no means a terrible game, since the story mode offers a mildly involving adventure, but we doubt that's what pool fans will be looking for.

Kevin Cheung

STATION

OVERALL: Tragic the ball physics weren't better as the extra modes are more fun than your average pool game fare.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	You can only do so much to make balls look pretty
SOUND:	★★	Questionable music, ball effects could have been more varied
GAMEPLAY:	★★	Excellent extra modes, but the ball physics are a bit dodgy
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Without a gauge, it's difficult to spot yourself well
LIFESPAN:	★★	Story mode is good value, but it's not too captivating

68
PERCENT

SUPER CROSS CIRCUIT

How well does dirt-bike riding translate to PlayStation? Not very well

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  989 Studios
- **Developer**
  Idol Minds
- **Genre**
  Motorcycle sim
- **Release Date**
  TBA
- **Players**
  One or two
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  It is fast and furious but make sure you bring your ear plugs.

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

In the past, motorcycle games haven't fared well in the market, with the exception of MotoRacer 1 and 2. The problem with most of them is that they fail to provide the realism that keeps you coming back for more. Super Cross Circuit is another example of this phenomenon in motorcycle gaming.

Bike surfing. It'll take off any day now

There are numerous advantages to substituting games for extreme sports, such as spinal damage

NOT LOOKING TOO HOT

Graphics wise, *Super Cross Circuit* comes up a little short. It looks promising but there are a few major glitches. The graphics engine provides a fairly decent background and other than a few heavily pixelated trees the ride is fairly smooth. However the animation of the riders is substandard.

Every movement is mechanical, leaving the impression that each rider's motion is limited to a small number of frames of animation. It is almost like the riders have been cut and pasted on to the screen.

Collision detection is also handled poorly, where the camera has a panic attack as it tries to keep its line of sight. Another niggling drawback is the position of the camera, sitting rigidly behind the rider, generating jerky movements around corners and leaving you feeling a little disoriented. There are two alternate camera positions available but both seem to make matters worse.

In the single player career mode you start off with $5200 and choose from a selection of four 125cc bikes which appear to be exactly the same aside from the brand name. Once you have completed all the 125cc tracks five 250cc bikes become available for purchase. It's possible to upgrade the parts for your bike but only two extra settings are provided one best suited for Moto Cross and the other for Super Cross (each bike comes with middle of the range parts). On the later tracks you won't be competitive without the right parts and it almost becomes a hassle to change them between tracks. It's basically a poor man's version of the upgrading functions in Gran Turismo, where replacing outmoded parts is integral to success.

Lose contact with the ground, and reality

A better point of the game is the ability to apply extra throttle or goose over the jumps creating the opportunity for extended air time and some nasty spills. You can also perform some nice tricks in the air, the best time being just before you cross the finish line. Often racing sims will only include a standard single race two player mode leaving you feeling a little let down. *Super Cross Circuit* provides pretty much anything you could ask for, from two player seasons to a track editor that lets you create both race and stunt tracks.

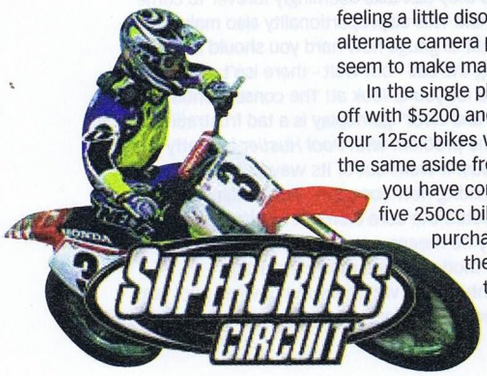
It even gives you the option between horizontal and vertical split screens. Surprisingly the playability only suffers marginly with the reduced size so if you enjoy the single player mode this game has quite a few features to keep you playing after you've finished it.

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE MUTE SWITCH

Listening to this game could be the audio version of Chinese water torture. The bikes make a sound like a swarm of testosterone drip-fed bumble bees who have had their nest poked and prodded one too many times. After five minutes you'll find yourself unconsciously reaching for a can of Mortein.

Fortunately it's possible to turn the sound down, unfortunately the soundtrack isn't much better. There are a few heavy punk tunes which go well with the fast pace of the game but some of the tracks are the same old, same old repetitive guitar riffs with a few major chords. There's no running commentary, but what's the point in icing the cake if it's only half baked.

Gareth Holly



STATION

OVERALL: Worth a rent if you like motorcycle games but only buy it if you're a motocross fan with money to burn.

GRAPHICS:	★★	Mmm... I like the scenery
SOUND:	★	Hit the mute button
GAMEPLAY:	★★	Controls are ok but let down by graphics and camera positioning
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Once you have got the hang of it
LIFESPAN:	★★	It will last IF you like it

65
PERCENT

SUPER CROSS 2000

Realistic motorcycle racing? On the PlayStation? Yes and no. Mostly no

FACT FILE

■ **Publisher**
EA Sports

■ **Developer**
MBL Research

■ **Genre**
Motorcycle sim

■ **Release Date**
TBA

■ **Players**
One or two

■ **No. of CD's**
TBA

■ **Expectations**
Prepare yourself for boredom central OR Slightly more exciting than a game of noughts and crosses.

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

What makes a great racing sim? Realism, but that's not all as *Super Cross 2000* demonstrates. It looks as if EA Sports have scrapped the traditional model and attempted a more realistic style.

However, everything besides the rider dynamics seems to have been severely neglected. This game almost suffers from all of the opposite problems to Super Cross Circuit. If you combined the best parts of both games you would most definitely have a best seller on your hands.

SUPERIOR VISUALS

The graphics model of the riders is true 3D and unlike Super Cross Circuit the riders most definitely mesh with the track and the background scenery. The physics engine is substantially nearer to reality than most other motorcycle games on the market.

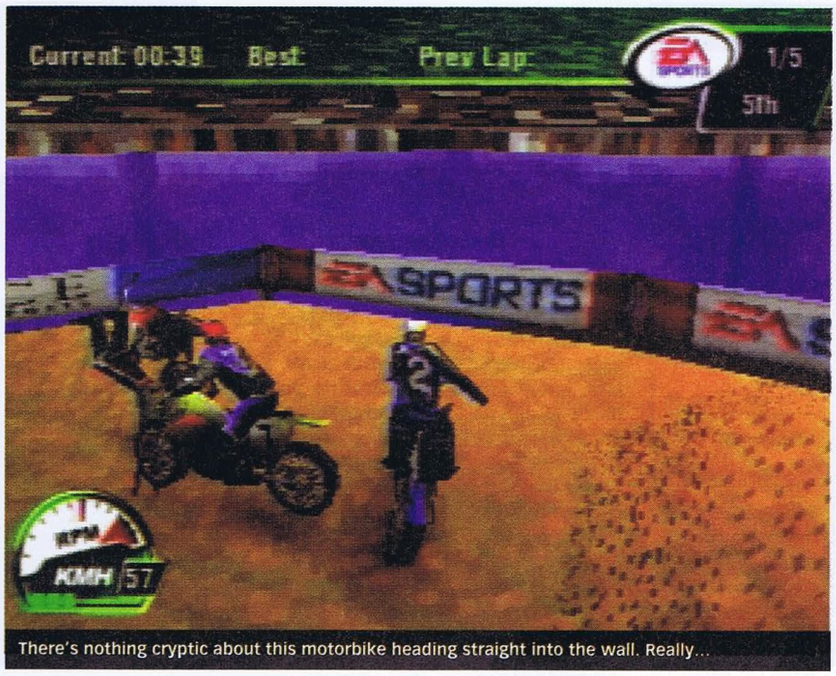
For example, when the bike lands on a large enough angle it wobbles sufficiently following its original inertia. Nevertheless, occasionally your bike may have a tendency to hang in the air for longer than is physically possible. Each rider moves fluidly through the track using a real time rendering process rather than a limited sequence of images, although you could be forgiven for thinking the rider's legs were modeled on lego man's.

There are 16 different stadiums to race in but they all look exactly the same with a crowd that's just a set of random drab blocky colors. This sort of effect is excusable in a 8 bit or even a 16 bit machine but not in a game for the PlayStation in the year 2000. Tracks differ in colour, jump size, length and corner placement but in spite of this once you've seen the first track you've seen the entire game.

GAMEPLAY - I WOULD RATHER WATCH EUROPEAN HANDBALL

To maintain control over your bike you must remain parallel to the grooves in the track at all times. If you don't, you'll find yourself slipping and sliding all over the place, usually straight into the competition or a wall. One assumes that this feature is supposed to add to the realism to the game but it just ends up being down right annoying.

The bikes are exceptionally slow around corners, even the computer controlled bikes move like public servants in slug world. Initially you'll find yourself getting stuck on the barriers surrounding the track. Yes, stuck. This is either a glitch in the game or motocross racing in the US is very different to the Australian version.



There's nothing cryptic about this motorbike heading straight into the wall. Really...

T-bone collisions are not encouraged

Try to get the drop on your opponents

A back-on-track button helps the problem, but just seems to have been tacked on as a quick fix. In fact, the game is quite sluggish in general which is the last thing you want from a racing game.

There are three levels of difficulty each with varying levels of max speed, competition speed, collision sensitivity and braking effectiveness. You can change these levels to get your own custom setting.

Try turning the collision sensitivity all the way down enabling you to plough through other riders without falling off yourself, it makes the game just that little bit more enjoyable... but only a little.

INFERIOR SOUND EFFECTS

When will the game developing community learn that the key to creating a great atmosphere to any type of racing game is good music? To compare the sound that the bikes make in this game to a lawn mower would be an insult to grass cutters everywhere. It's more like the sound of a swiss army pocket chainsaw.

Aside from this, *Super Cross 2000's* sound doesn't fail. The music is acceptable, there are six real music tracks including two great ones by The Living End. The running commentary is a nice touch but it would be better if the music tracks could be played at the same time.

Gareth Holly

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** This is a nice attempt and hopefully a step in the right direction... wait for Super Cross 2001.

■ **GRAPHICS:**	★★	You could mistake the background for a NES game
■ **SOUND:**	★★	Add half a star if you like The Living End
■ **GAMEPLAY:**	★	About as thrilling as watching the hair grow on your big toe
■ **DIFFICULTY:**	★★★★	The pro setting is close to impossible
■ **LIFESPAN:**	★	You will be sick of it after the first lap

61
PERCENT

ACTION MAN: MISSION XTREME

Testosterone fuelled violence for those who have none

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Hasbro Interactive
- **Developer**
  TBA
- **Genre**
  ACTION!!!
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  The cartoon star and action figure action hero finally gets his very own Action Game.

Action Man, for the uninitiated, is one of the generic morning cartoon heroes of the pre-pubescent under-tens. *Action Man*, AKA Alex Mann, is sort of like James Bond without the overt sexual promiscuity.

The arch enemy of the evil Professor X, *Action Man* is forever being whisked around exotic locales in exotic vehicles, fighting moustache-twirling foes, defusing bombs, rescuing maidens, busting the sellers of *"drugs,"* and generally being a UN endorsed unilateral killing machine with unlimited authority to take action when words fail.

He now has his own video game too, so eager fans may take action on his behalf. To best represent his exploits across the globe, the developers have chosen to use more than one game engine, that is, the levels are of two different types: either driving or running.

The driving stages are viewed overhead like in Grand Theft Auto, and the beat-em-up stages have an interface reminiscent of Metal Gear Solid. Unfortunately, by dividing their efforts between these two game styles, the end result is far less than what it could have been.

The 3rd person stages of Action Man are a lot like Metal Gear Solid, only less demanding

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

COLLECT-EM-UP

But for a real understanding of why *Action Man* can infuriate more than entertain, one must play the game itself. Take the first level. In an introductory movie to establish setting and purpose, we see *Action Man* striding out of the armoured doors of *Action Man* headquarters, into the *Action Man* car park.

After the shock of the astoundingly bad FMV, we cast our eyes over the different vehicles at *Action Man's* disposal. A sports car, a motorbike, and a four wheel drive. Once you hit the streets, the visuals are a pleasant surprise. Smooth, vibrant and colourful, the nameless city that *Action Man* is protecting from toxic waste terrorists really comes alive.

There are helpful arrows pointing to the nearest enemy car, and even reminders to your control keys on screen. After a hit and miss exercise in tracking down the minions, you'd assume it would be time to go after the boss. But no. You must first collect *"power points."*

These are little *Action Man* symbols scattered throughout the map. The on-screen displays advise you to swap your sports car for a motorbike to reach some of the more inaccessible tokens, but a bigger question one may ask is why you need to collect theses stupid little discs at all when the fate of *"the city"* is at stake? Well, to defeat Toxica (the servant of the evil Professor Gangrene) you need to use your *"Power 4x4,"* and you can't use it until you've collected the tokens. From the FMV seen it is obvious that *Action Man* can use the jeep whenever he wants, it is merely the games own logic that makes you earn the privilege.

GREATER REWARD?

If you survive your highly illogical battle with Toxica, you will be whisked away for a special forces style solo mission into Professor Gangrene's secret dessert base. Your mission is allegedly to infiltrate his base and discover the nature of his plans, but you'll be forgiven for thinking the point was to collect a lot of round tokens that say *"AM"* on them. There is a lot right with *Action Man: Mission Xtreme*, but there's a lot wrong with it too. The graphics look great, and there's a lot of cheesy super villain dialogue to be had.

[insert quippy GTA2 comparison here]

But the gameplay is shallow, the missions are both convoluted and simplistic, and there's not a lot to reward you with when you fulfil your objectives. The movies look shoddy, the control interface is wonky, and all in all *Action Man: Mission Xtreme* feels like a hastily assembled product of exploitation. If you want to be exploited, then this could be your game.

James Cottee

STATION

OVERALL: If you want a 2D driving game, get GTA2. If you want an espionage action game, get Metal Gear Solid.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Quite nice actually, but a little too much clipping
SOUND:	★★	Repetitive. Not inspiriing in the slightest
GAMEPLAY:	★★	One or two good bits. One or two
DIFFICULTY:	★	Aimed squarely at action figure enthusists
LIFESPAN:	★	Fits the target market's tiny attention span perfectly

70
PERCENT

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK

Inside every gook there is an American trying to get out

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  3DO
- **Developer**
  TBA
- **Genre**
  Shooter
- **Release Date**
  TBA
- **Players**
  One
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  Army Men return, this time reliving horrible memories of Vietnam.

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

Join the battle for the beach towel!

The action in Army Men Air Attack is now more similar to Nuclear Strike

The Army Men series has been a stark commentary on the nature of war. It's been traditional in times of conflict to use propaganda to depict the enemy as a faceless horde of evil creatrues, souless, without distinguishing features, let alone mercy. The Army Men games have taken this to the extreme by making the opposing sides warring species of plastic soldiers.

That's right, those cheap-arsed identical little plastic men, all cast in the same handful of poses. As a child it was very difficult to get attached to the little bastards, with their visible casting imperfections and stark refusal to stand up on their ineffectual little bases.

The sarcasm here is twofold, because not only are the warring armies basically the same, save for one being green, the other tan, but the environments they battle in are entirely domestic. The first Army Men game, a real time strategy debacle, made the mistake of assuming that the warring plastic sides lived in a world that was built to their scale.

Army Men Air Attack dispenses with such delusions, placing the soldiers in comically realistic settings. One minute you'll be buzzing around some living room, the next some unassuming backyard. A backyard crawling with Tan troopers!

I CAN STILL HEAR THE CHOPPERS...

Before each mission you must select both your gunship and your co-pilot. Each have their own strengths and weaknesses, the former in terms of firepower and survivablilty, the latter in terms of specialisation. One wingman will be an expert in winching, another in firing rockets, the third in machine guns. From your mission briefing you must ascertain which combination will best suit your task, as the wrong decision could see you floundering before hundreds of faceless, souless fiends, cast from the devil's plastic, in his favourite colour: tan.

I love the smell of napalm in the morning

Once you are out on the battlefield, things don't really look quite the way they did on the newsreels. Hovering closely over the terrain, the security of your base is soon far behind you, as you plunge into the advancing columns of tan. Your helicopter can move forwards, backwards, rotate and strafe, and also has a winch for picking up crates.

There will be any number of weapon filled boxes littered throughout the level, and a crucial crate will often be the crux of a mission, where you must escort it to safety, all the while unable to pick up the shells or energy that could spare your from encroaching destruction.

You know that death in *Army Men Air Attack* is just around the corner for you when you hear your Texan wingman muttering something about how he would rather be back on his ranch...

THE UNITED COLOURS OF PLAYSTATION

As far as 3D shooters go, *Army Men Air Attack* isn't half bad. The World War theme ties the game together, with patriotic propaganda filling the FMV quota, and your exploits making the front page of the Green Plastic News when you succeed.

There are innumerable little touches, like the way that immobile troopers will stand with the same identical pose indefinitely, how land based reinforcements will boldly stride out to assist you, only to be cut down in seconds, and the way that every single piece of hardware in action is a direct rip off of their toy store equivalents.

Aside from some low intensity puzzle work and a dash of map reading, *Army Men Air Attack* revolves entirely around mindless blasting and bullet dodging. So if an explosive expedition into the 'nam of your own backyard appeals to you, then this could most definitely be what you are after. Maybe.

James Cottee

STATION

OVERALL: An unoriginal, yet entertaining foray into warfare. Think of it as Choplifter 3D.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Colourful enough, but the screen is crowded and confused
SOUND:	★★	Explosions. Machine guns. More explosions
GAMEPLAY:	★★	It's a shooting game. Nothing more, nothing less
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Overwhelming odds have a habit of overwhelming you
LIFESPAN:	★★	If mindless shooting is what you need, then this is what you need

73
PERCENT

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2000

Simply put... The best boxing game yet

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  EA Sports
- **Developer**
  EA Sports
- **Genre**
  Boxing Sim
- **Release Date**
  Available now
- **Players**
  One or two
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  EA Sports usually has the best sports sims, but the last KK was a real let-down. Thankfully, this one isn't.

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

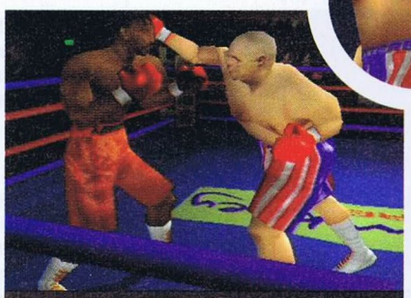
In a genre that is inherently limited by its straightforward mentality - punch the other guy till he is on the floor - EA Sports' *Knockout Kings 2000* makes it to No. 1. It is one of the most realistic and playable boxing simulation for the Playstation to date. Having said that, there is still room for improvement.

How does *Knockout Kings 2000* differ from KK99?... in oh, so many ways. It looks smoother, feels better and provides a greater range of tongue-tantalizing options.

A new feature is Classic Fights mode where you can play out your favourite match ups from history, excluding all those involving boxers with their own games. It's a pity: what we wouldn't give to be Ali in the Rumble in the Jungle, but that's Okay, the Thrilla in Manilla does more than make up for it.

Career mode allows you to create your own boxer with every possible look catered for. Choose anything and everything from body size and height to taunt type and entrance walk. Then brawl your way through the ranks developing your boxer's skills and earning specialty moves. SlugFest is the comic relief to this otherwise serious boxing simulation. The aim is to knock the other fighter out as quickly as possible. As you land punches during the match your punch meter builds up. When this is full, you are capable of delivering a knockout punch, so press △ and X together and send your opponent head over heals, literally.

Knockout Kings 2000 is surprisingly more fluid (and fun) than the original



Screw biting: I'll rip your ear off by hand

Stats - the hallmark of any EA Sports game

The controls respond well and due to the game's style, even the most inexperienced gamer could play straight away. Yet to achieve victory in your boxers division you will need to master blocking, weaving and most important of all, timing.

The graphical model of the boxers is a stand out feature of *Knockout Kings 2000*. Talk about smooth curves. Gone are the unnaturally blocky figures that plagued the predecessor, and in their place are smoothly animated texture mapped characters that will make you look twice. In Classic Fights mode, every boxer is easily recognizable. The presence of heroes like Muhammed Ali emanate from the screen almost as well as if you were actually watching them fight.

Another attribute that will have you giggling with delight is the attention to detail in the game. As a fight wears on, the faces of the fighters become more bruised and battered depending on how much of a beating they are taking.

Between rounds you are either treated to a replay of the most brutal snippet of the last three minutes or a girl in a swimsuit kindly tells you the number of the next round which could be deemed unnecessary... but hey that's boxing and like EA says if its in the game, it is in the game.

NOTHING'S PERFECT

It's quite obvious that EA's first concern was the boxers. And when you think about it, a boxing game doesn't really need anything else to be graphically spectacular. While EA has done a better than average job of the 3D Arenas, it would have been nice if the crowd was little more animated.

Also, quite often you will see arms swinging through the torsos of you are opponents, this is either a clipping problem or a contact flaw in the 3D engine but it doesn't take away from the game. You'll be so busy trying to knock the other guy out, you won't even notice it.

Finally, there's EA's trademark commentary to add to the atmosphere. Unfortunately, it is not always accurate, with many lines delivered often a tad too late to be comprehensible. In spite of these niggling problems, Knockout Kings is EA Sports' finest effort yet.

Gareth Holly

STATION

OVERALL: The level of improvement over the original game makes it a worthy addition to the genre

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Close to the real thing
SOUND:	★★★★	Biff, baff, whack with running commentary
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Varied combos, heaps of options
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Timing is essential, without it you'll find yourself unconscious
LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Beat up your friends time and again

87
PERCENT

FIGHTING FORCE 2

Hawk Manson returns for a solo mission into mediocrity

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Eidos Interactive
- **Developer**
  Core
- **Genre**
  Action/adventure
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One
- **Features**
  Dual Shock
  Memory Card

One could very well say that we were asking for it. Here we were, lamenting over the fact that the first Fighting Force was one of the dog-ugliest games we'd ever played. When we got wind *Fighting Force 2* would feature a revamped game engine, we saw that there were possibilities. Heck, we even talked up the game as a means of encouragement. How wrong we were.

Fighting Force 2 is basically Tomb Raider, except you're a guy. As a member of a covert operations team, you are sent to a variety of exotic locations like genetic research labs, nuclear missile silos, and so on. Your mission: to destroy. Never mind the mission briefing gobbledegook - all you need to remember is that you have to destroy everything.

Given the space constraints of this review, we'll dispense with the analysis of how disappointingly bland the graphics and sounds are. At the heart of *Fighting Force 2*'s problems is its design. Simplistic, linear, and unimaginative, *Fighting Force 2* is the kind of game that has you cursing every time you pick up a health box since it means you have to keep on playing just those few moments more. The entire structure of the game can be described as follows: kill every person in the area. The last baddie to be killed always produces a key, which grants you access to the next area. Repeat 500 times.

Like Tomb Raider, but more repetitive

That's it - no more Mexican beans for lunch

Our advice: instead, spend your money on Tomb Raider 4 or Syphon Filter. You will thank us for it later.

Kevin Cheung

STATION

OVERALL: Eidos would have been better off trying to improve on the original fighting engine of the first game

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Some nice explosion effects, but otherwise bland
SOUND:	★★	Gotta love that looping techno... not
GAMEPLAY:	★★	Repetitive to the extreme, and ultimately frustrating
DIFFICULTY:	★★	Simple to go through, but incredibly huge
LIFESPAN:	★★	Plenty of better games out there to distract you from this

61
PERCENT

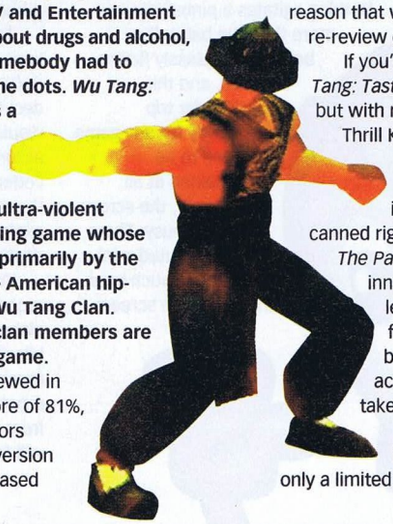
WU TANG: TASTE THE PAIN

Fight your friends! Rip their heads off, literally!

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Activision
- **Developer**
  Paradox
- **Genre**
  Fighting
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One to four
- **Features**
  Multitap
  Memory Card
  Dual Shock

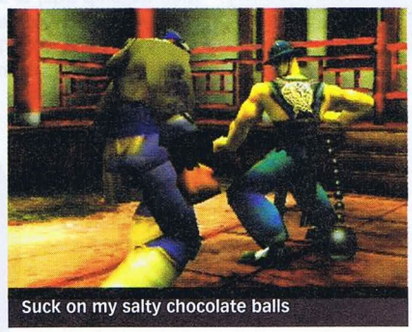
Hardcore hip hop, gangsta rap, violence, endless MTV and Entertainment Weekly gossip about drugs and alcohol, videogames... somebody had to eventually join the dots. *Wu Tang: Taste The Pain* is a marketing enigma, presenting gamers with an ultra-violent multiplayer fighting game whose appeal is driven primarily by the popularity of the American hip-hop group, the Wu Tang Clan. How? Well, the clan members are the stars of the game.



Originally reviewed in Issue 8 with a score of 81%, the local distributors insisted that the version on which it was based was not appropriate for review. It's for that reason that we are obliging their request for a re-review of the game.

If you're not familiar with the game, *Wu Tang: Taste The Pain* is basically Thrill Kill, but with members of the Wu Tang Clan. Thrill Kill, in turn, was the ultra-violent 4-player fighting game whose gruesome fatalities and sexual innuendo caused the game to be canned right before launch. *Wu Tang: Taste The Pain* simply removes the sexual innuendo (ie the whips and studded leather suits) and replaces it with a funky Shaolin-style motif that borders on a Ninja Turtles brand of action. That is, of course, if you can take Ninja Turtles seriously.

This final version of the game has proven to be a let-down. With only a limited single player mode, *Wu Tang: Taste The Pain* only has value as a multiplayer game. Beyond that, the game doesn't offer any additional features, modes, or improvements to the controls we had hoped for. As before, this is strictly a game for fans of the Wu Tang Clan and gory mindless violence.



Suck on my salty chocolate balls

Kevin Cheung

STATION

OVERALL: Wu Tang's music and copious gobs of gore are likely to entertain the crowds. Single players avoid.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Lots of characters, lots of slowdown
SOUND:	★★★	Cool hip-hop tracks. But only if you like it.
GAMEPLAY:	★	Only worthwhile in 4-player, but not worth much even then
DIFFICULTY:	★★	Button-mashing bollocks. Can't be that hard
LIFESPAN:	★★	The novelty will wear off in all of 13 minutes

70
PERCENT

WORMS PINBALL

An ancient arcade stalwart gets infected with intestinal parasites

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  OziSoft
- **Developer**
  Team 17
- **Genre**
  Pinball
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  The adorable worms sidestep their usual genre for a foray into pinball.

It looks pretty and all, but a string of profane words would more accurately describe the game

Also included: World Rally Fever

Dodgy, unresponsive flippers. Grrr...

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Standard Controller

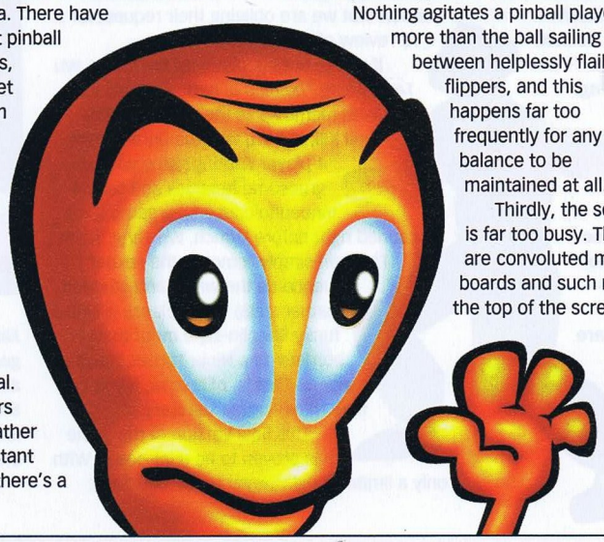
As the game series that delivers the best value in multiplayer backstabbing on the PlayStation (see the review of Worms Armageddon on page 58), Worms has powerful brand recognition among gamers. Team 17 have sought to capitalise on this by producing a game completely different to their flagship title, to sell by virtue of it being under the umbrella of Worms mania.

It's not a bad idea. There have been many excellent pinball games over the years, including Space Cadet Pinball, Night Mission Pinball, and even David's Midnight Magic. The thing is, there are a number of predictable pitfalls that await the producers of any pinball game, and Team 17 have succumbed to several.

Firstly, the flippers are unresponsive. Rather than reacting the instant you tap the button, there's a delay of about a quarter of a second. This needlessly increases the difficulty of hitting the ball, forcing the player to second guess when the program is going to react to their input. What's more, it makes aiming for specific targets near impossible, as the ball can roll half way down the flipper in the time it takes for the game to do what you tell it.

Secondly, the flippers are way too far apart. Nothing agitates a pinball player more than the ball sailing between helplessly flailing flippers, and this happens far too frequently for any game balance to be maintained at all.

Thirdly, the screen is far too busy. There are convoluted mini boards and such near the top of the screen, but the perspective employed makes it impossible to see what's going on. When you hit the ball it hurtles off into the horizon, dwindling to nothing, and then flies back towards your retarded flippers from an unpredictable angle. Finally, variety is minimal.



You can choose between a whopping two boards, either *"Worms"* or *"World Rally Fever."* It's not uncommon for a modern pinball game to offer dozens.

The tragedy is compounded by the knowledge that this was a bad game made by good people. Someone in upper management decided that a good way to make a quick buck would be to ready for market a hastily assembled piece of minimalist tosh, and the coders who slaved over this must have known the whole time they were making an exploitative product inspired by greed and destined to rip off the fans.

One or two nice touches, like the monochrome pinball score displays, with their elaborate animations, are drowned in a sea of bile. The sounds are repetitive and lame. The music is repetitive and lame. *Worms Pinball* is repetitive and lame. This is not a five star effort from Team 17, and any Worms fan who buys it will feel cheated. The intro is nice, though.

James Cottee

STATION

OVERALL: An uninspiring, exploitative ripoff that doesn't do the Worms brand name any favours.

GRAPHICS:	★	You can't see what's going on. End of story
SOUND:	★★	A cute, yet limited battery of explosions and worm speech
GAMEPLAY:	★	Unresponsive flippers. Unrewarding game dynamics
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	If this game was a real pinball table, you'd kick the hell out of it
LIFESPAN:	★	It's hard to get tired of pinball. It is easy to get tired of this

40
PERCENT

Harvey Norman

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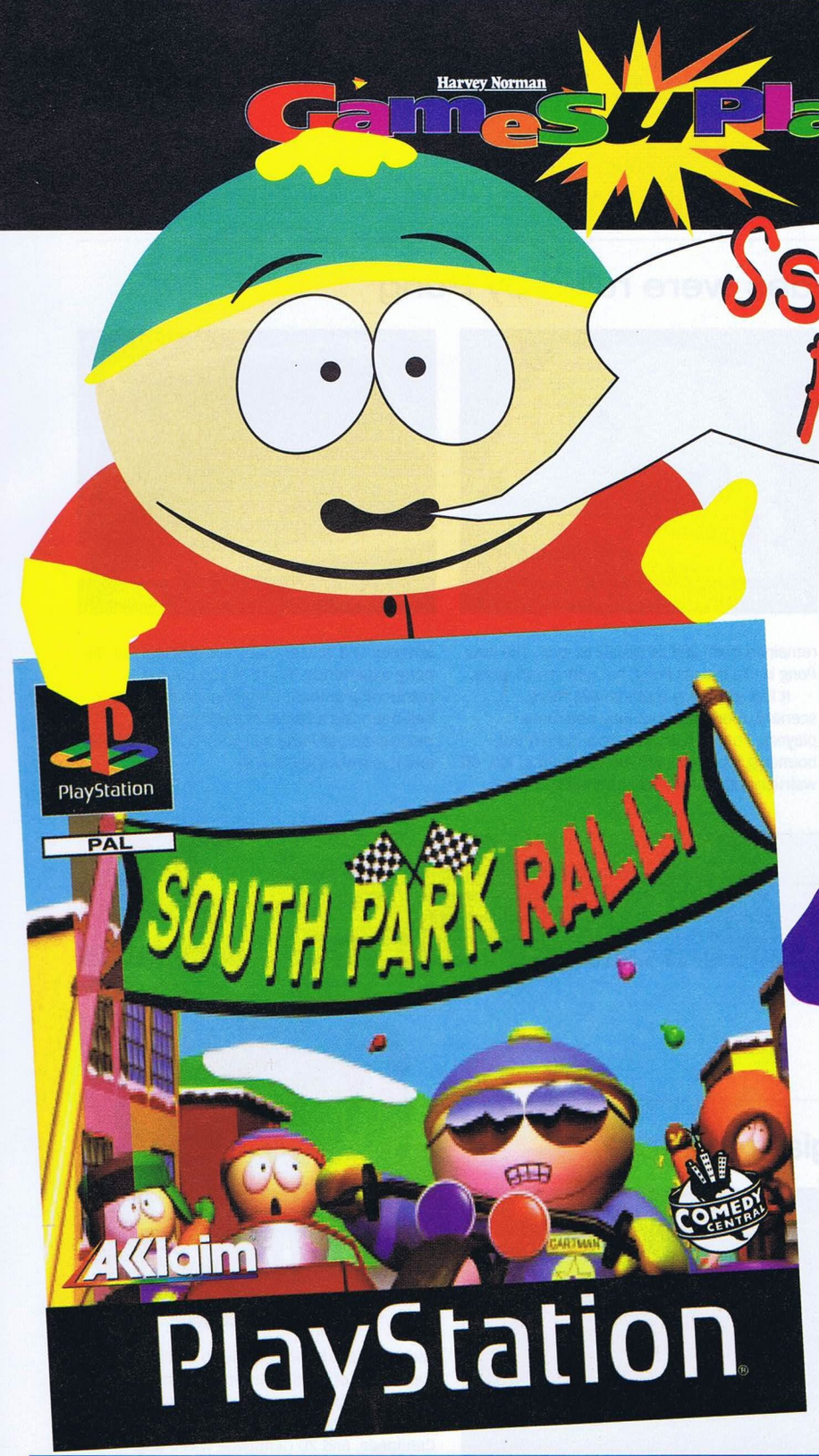

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HN21408

PONG

Long before the Kong, the arcades were ruled by Pong

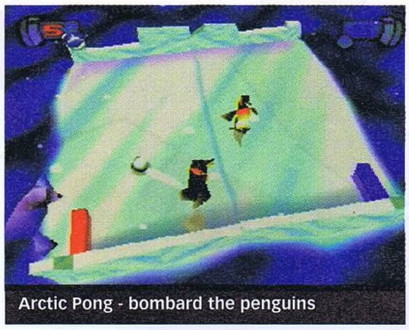
FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Hasbro Interactive
- **Developer**
  Supersonic
- **Genre**
  Retro
- **Release Date**
  Out Now
- **Players**
  One to four
- **Features**
  Memory card
  Dual Shock

***Pong* is a classic arcade game, which usually means that it is a superannuated piece of garbage that has been artfully recycled into a post-modern, new-millenial piece of garbage. Yet the developers have done quite a good job on *Pong*, resurrecting it for another shot at the title of *"best game of all time"*.**

But first, a little history. *Pong* was released in 1972. It was the first fully functional arcade game. It was a little ahead of its time, as there were no arcades yet, and the original *Pong* suffered from a few teething problems that have plagued videogames ever since; it was a little repetitive, overpriced, but it did have a two player mode where the hapless consumer could duel his or her friends, each controlling their own paddle, which would deflect a ball across the screen at the opposition.

Eventually, the game sped up, wiping out the human player while the digital opposition remained fresh and as deadly as ever. The new *Pong* is like the old *Pong*, but with much more.



Arctic Pong - bombard the penguins

Soccer Pong - control two paddles at once

It has got many more levels, more scenery, more styles of play and more players. Four players can now duke it out, bouncing a ball madly around a field of ice, off walruses and penguins and the like. Aztec temples and soccer fields are now part of the pong experience. There are an almost maddening amount of options to make your ball-bouncing a better experience. The resurrection of *Pong* has been a labor of love, and it is truly a joy to play.

Jack Elliott

STATION

OVERALL: The definitive arcade experience. Pong is definitely the king.

GRAPHICS:	★★	Excellent graphics, the cute little paddles do cute little dances
SOUND:	★★★	The music is silly and cheerful, though strangely mesmerising
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth...
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Pong caters for every level of player, from beginner to expert
LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Pong has survived this long; this game will keep it fresh for years

78
PERCENT

CENTIPEDE

Wage a forgotten war against giant insects

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Hasbro Interactive
- **Developer**
  Leaping Lizard
- **Genre**
  Retro
- **Release Date**
  Out Now
- **Players**
  One
- **Features**
  Memory card
  Dual Shock

Centipede is a good example of everything that has gone wrong in computer gaming. As nothing more than a sad attempt to extort more money from an obscure franchise, *Centipede* is the kind of forgettable outing that will be choking up bargain bins and landfill in just a few years' time.

The original was a bit of an eighties hit, but the classic arcade game, available on the CD as Arcade Mode, is nothing short of a club-footed Space Invaders. The difference is in the centipede itself, made up of separate and apparently combustible segments, which advance toward you, until you shoot them all. Then, like all arcade games of the *'classic'* era, it starts all over again. A classic game just seems to be one you can play endlessly, until it gets unplayable.

Adventure Mode is the fully revamped, late nineties version with 3D graphics, CD soundtrack, special effects and cut scenes. An impressive introduction announces your mission - go out and destroy the evil minions of the sinister centipede (like you need help figuring that one out).

The Centipede is now a lumbering beast

You then get to drive around in the shooter, a ship that looks like a Barina mated with a space shuttle, blowing away an endless succession of centipedes until you get bored and go get something to eat. Unfortunately for the developers, 3D Centipede is much like 2D Centipede, and 2D Centipede was a dog.

Poorly conceived, though well executed, *Centipede* is a horror of a game that should never have even got out of the planning phase, let alone gone into production. No-one remembers *Centipede* like they do Missile Command, Pong or Tetris, and there is a good reason for that. History forgot *Centipede*, and moved on.

Jack Elliott

STATION

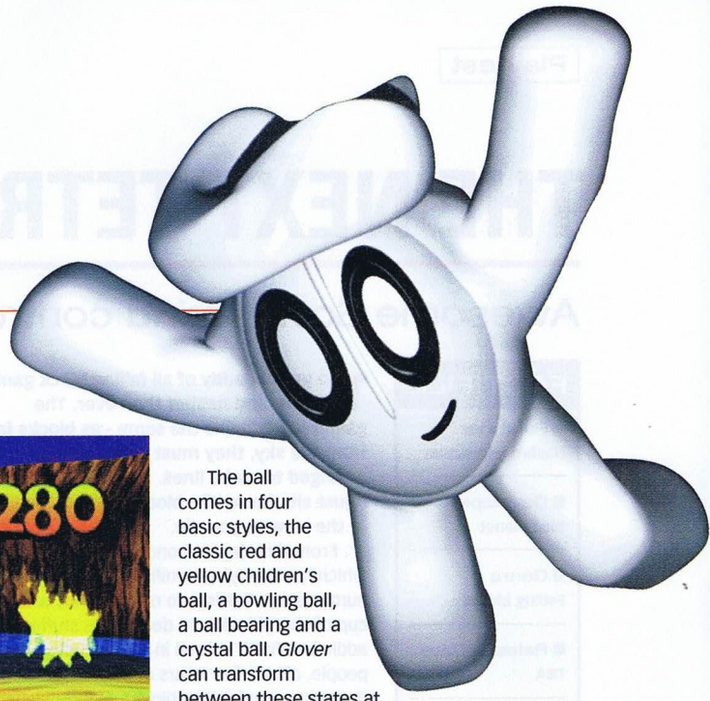
OVERALL: You would have to be a very hardcore fan of the original game to get anything out of this.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	The Adventure mode is competently executed
SOUND:	★★	The music is extremely annoying
GAMEPLAY:	★★	Based on a stupid arcade game, this game remains faithful to it
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Simply too boring to finish more than a few missions
LIFESPAN:	★	This game should have been left behind in the nineteen eighties

54
PERCENT

GLOVER

Where's the middle finger?



FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Hasbro Interactive
- **Developer**
  Atari Interactive
- **Genre**
  Platformer
- **Release Date**
  Out now
- **Players**
  One
- **No. of CD's**
  One
- **Expectations**
  You control a glove that controls a ball with magic powers. Very weird...

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

Glover goes troppo. This is an innovative platformer where you manipulate the enivironment

Glover can really clutch at balls

Note that he can also slap balls around

Who would have thought you could have so much fun playing a glove? Well, we didn't either until we saw *Glover*, one of the new Atari series published by Hasbro Interactive.

Glover is the name of a magician's glove with a life of his own. The story opens with *Glover's* twin, Cross-Stitch, falling into a magical potion gone wrong and transforming into a bad guy. The Magician, who normally oversees justice in the land, is unconscious and seemingly unable to save the world from this walking piece of leather.

So, it falls to *Glover*, the ever faithful white glove, to save the day. With a thumb and three fingers, it is amazing to see the sorts of things you can do. It's amusing just to sit and watch *Glover* as he goes through the motions of doing back-flips, finger-stands and various other antics, but the real activity comes when you combine the glove with his magic ball.

A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTION

Not only can you move and jump around, but you can push, bounce, slap and throw your ball around to get to places you might not otherwise be able to reach. You can leave the ball at any time, but on later levels some enemies may be inclined to steal it, so you need to be careful of where you leave it.

The ball comes in four basic styles, the classic red and yellow children's ball, a bowling ball, a ball bearing and a crystal ball. *Glover* can transform between these states at any time and different parts of any given level may require one of these forms in particular.

Power ups are scattered throughout the levels but are usually situated only where you need them, thus adding to the puzzle element of the game. The magic takes two forms, one that affects your ball, such as the magic that transforms the ball into a huge beach ball, and the other affects *Glover* himself, such as the Strength or Speed boosts.

YOU NEED TO THINK TOO

The puzzle element of the game becomes more prevalent as you move through levels. Initially, you need to roll the ball to the end of the level, dodging obstacles and killing enemies as needs be. Further on in the game, you'll need to do some special things with the ball in its various guises, such as transforming your ball into a ball bearing so that a magnet will pick it up.

The levels are split in a formulaic fashion, with a few normal levels, followed by a boss level and at the completion of the boss level a bonus level to regain life and points becomes available. The levels are depicted in various environments with names such as Atlantis, Carnival and Space. All levels within a particular world-environment reflect their respective themes down to the last. This produces numerous entertaining visual treats like floating pink elephants and juggling birds in the Carnival.

OH, WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

The camera angles sometimes are quite awful and there isn't too much provision to fix them. Atari have provided the obligatory pan left and right buttons, but these only allow a limited amount of movement, and in some scenes they won't budge the camera at all.

The overriding concern is that the fiddly process of rolling a ball around with harsh camera angle restrictions, leaves little to be desired. Acknowledge the fact it is a weird hybrid of platform and puzzle genres and you'll find yourself addicted in that *"one more time"* manner.

Andrew Parsons

STATION

OVERALL: Another title by the *"new"* Atari, Glover should keep both the old and new fans happy for a while.

GRAPHICS:	★★	Camera angles way too limiting to make the graphics enjoyable
SOUND:	★★★	Nothing overtly out of place here
GAMEPLAY:	★★★	The old Glover, come to life
DIFFICULTY:	★★★★	Keeping the ball on track is extremely fiddly
LIFESPAN:	★★★	You'll either be addicted to its difficulty or frustrated by it

75
PERCENT

THE NEXT TETRIS

Awesome Soviet mind control

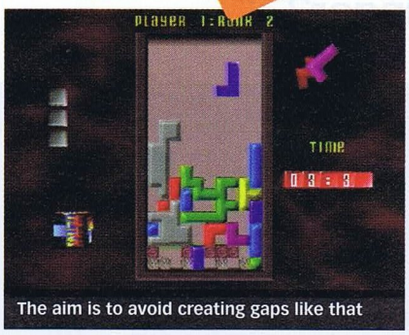
FACT FILE

- **Publisher** Hasbro Interactive
- **Developer** Blue Planet
- **Genre** Falling blocks
- **Release Date** TBA
- **Players** One or two
- **Features** Memory card

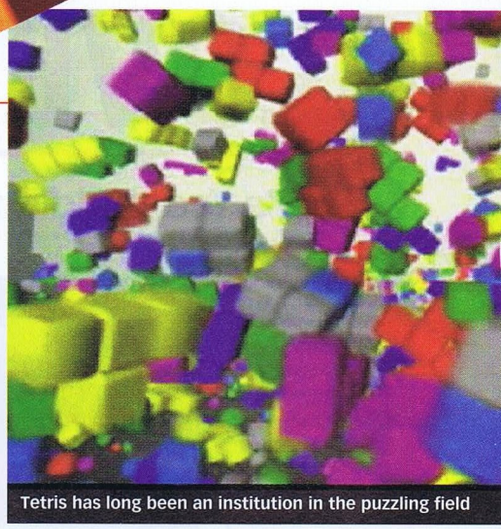
The grand daddy of all falling block games is back, and nastier than ever. The gameplay remains the same - as blocks fall from the sky, they must be hastily re-arranged to make lines. If a line is not solid, it just sits there. If a block touches the top of the screen, you die.

From this elegant concept is born a game which has terrifying ramifications for the human spirit. Tetris is to other games what a cup of short black is to decaf. This stuff is so addictive that it is used in sleep studies; most people, after a few hours of play, begin dreaming about falling blocks. Elderly readers will recall with horror the first Tetris, which came out of the USSR in the late nineteen eighties.

The Next Tetris is faithful to the original falling block experience. As strange shapes hurtle themselves towards the bottom of the screen, the player must rely only on his or her spatial reasoning to rearrange them in a suitable pattern. The graphics are well done, though there is no need for bells and whistles here - the only thing which detracted from a pure Tetris experience was a strange American woman, who occasionally mumbles something about going up a level. Heavy-duty use of the mute button is advised.



The aim is to avoid creating gaps like that


Tetris has long been an institution in the puzzling field

The highest praise a reviewer can give a Tetris game is that they didn't mess with the formula. Unlike other conversions of classic games that flood the market, there's been no attempt made to put in a story line or to make it 3D. Tetris is back, and is as compelling as ever.

Jack Elliott

STATION

OVERALL: There's no doubt about it. The best puzzle game on the block.

GRAPHICS:	★★★	Good graphics, but animating falling blocks is not rocket science
SOUND:	★★	Annoying but extraneous sounds are more distracting than helpful
GAMEPLAY:	★★★★★	The Next Tetris retains the gameplay of its older parent, Tetris
DIFFICULTY:	★★	Tetris gets hard eventually, but it starts off slow for the beginner
LIFESPAN:	★★★★★	Tetris will live longer than Methuselah. A favourite for years to come

89 PERCENT

Q-BERT

80s icon or mindless drug hoover? You decide...

FACT FILE

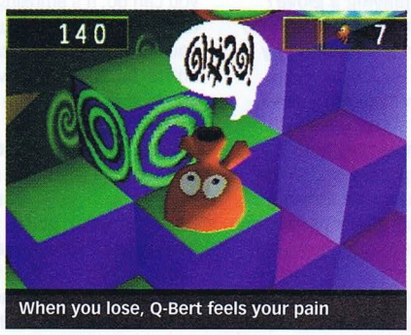
- **Publisher** Hasbro Interactive
- **Developer** Artech Studios
- **Genre** Retro
- **Release Date** Out now
- **Players** One or two
- **Features** Memory card

Of the arcade stars of the very early eighties, there are none that really come close to *Q-Bert*. Other famous characters may have made sense within the context of their environment, such as Frogger, or at least gained widespread acceptance, like Pac Man. But *Q-Bert* is an absolute mystery.

Why is he on a stack of cubes? Why do some bouncing balls and a purple snake want to kill him? Why does he have to change the colours of the cubes he's jumping on, and how does he achieve this, with no appendages other than his feet and an odd-looking snout?

Some of these questions are answered in this new and improved 3D version of *Q-Bert*. We can deduce from the opening sequence that his body and cube platform are perfectly normal within his own cubic dimension, where bipedal snout creatures live out their happy little lives on cube structures that float in a colourful void with no visible means of support. This happy reality comes crashing down when the evil purple giant snake creature shows up and starts sucking all of the happy creatures of *Q-Bert* land into his own warped reality.

This poses more questions than it answers. Still, your objective is the same. Work your way through a variety of levels, changing the colour of the blocks you walk over and avoiding the other nasties who inhabit this baffling place.



When you lose, Q-Bert feels your pain

You can play in arcade or adventure mode, and arcade supports either the new and improved 3D engine or the isometric, pseudo 3D of the original. There's even a flummoxing 2 player mode. If you like you retro action incomprehensible, then you can't go past *Q-Bert*.

James Cottee

STATION

OVERALL: Q-Bert's appeal can't be described. Not, perhaps, the best choice for your chill-out room.

GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Crisp, smooth, colourful. Rather nice, actually
SOUND:	★★	Very minimal. But Q-Bert's electronic swearing is better than ever
GAMEPLAY:	★★	Awkward, counter-intuitive, and largely unrewarding
DIFFICULTY:	★★★	Will push your snout-eye co-ordination to the limit
LIFESPAN:	★★	If you are keen, there's a huge blocky world to explore

73 PERCENT

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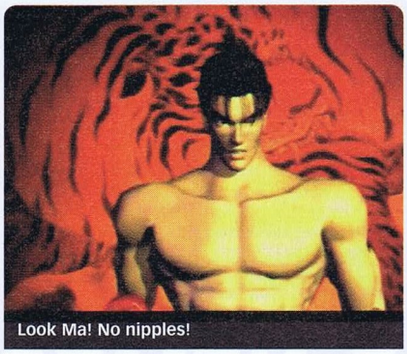
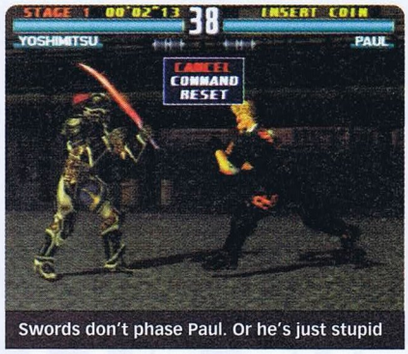
FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Namco
- **Developer**
  Namco
- **Genre**
  Fighting
- **Price**
  $39.95
- **Score**

93%



Look Ma! No nipples!



Swords don't phase Paul. Or he's just stupid

All these cool FMVs and more on the disc!

The third King of Iron Fist tournament is finally a great deal cheaper after reaching its milestone of 500,000 copies sold. If you have never bathed in the glorious brutality it has to offer, then you have never truly lived.

23 characters, each with their own stunning pre-rendered full motion ending sequence, all very well practiced in entirely different styles of martial arts, beating each other up, one on one. Every fighting style is covered, from Tae Kwon Do to Ai Ki Doe to Judo to wrestling.

Tekken 3 did not arise from nowhere. Behind it were two equally awesome (for their time) games which both pushed the 3D fighting game genre to new depths.Having been based strongly on the design of Street Fighter II, Tekken has never had a Block button. In order to defend yourself, all you have to do is move away from your opponent.

There are four buttons for attacking, each one assigned to a specific limb. The eight direction buttons move your character around: Up to jump, Down to crouch and Left and Right to walk. Although movement remained in a strictly 2D plane, the polygonal construct of the characters and seemingly endless backgrounds gave players the sensation that they were fighting in the third dimension.

Tekken 3 improves upon its prequels in numerous ways, one of which involves this 3D movement. It is possible for any character to move on the Z-axis at will now. Unlike in the other Tekkens, this axis shift allows players to dodge attacks and then launch into a side-on assault. The original Tekken concentrated on its ten-hit combos. While they still remain intact for the third in the series, the game's focus is not so narrow any more.

The addition of reversals and deflections means that any long combo can be broken with ease halfway through. Not much comes close to the satisfaction one feels after cutting short yet another of Paul's ten-hitters, then landing a bone-crunching blow to the back of his head, sending him to the gravel in a crumpled heap.

Tekken 3 also features multiple throws. Previously each character had two main throws and maybe one or two other special ones. Now, each person has five standard throws plus specials. Some people can even continue to break several of your limbs in succession by using chain throw combos.

Tekken has always strived to be as brutal as possible without being unrealistic. Not that springing to your feet after having both your legs broken and your neck snapped is realistic, but things like the bodily proportions and the jumping height are spot on.

One of this series' strong points has always been its deep background storylines. Although the full saga is not presented in the instruction manual, Tekken fans will always find strangely detailed information about their favourite characters in unexpected places.

Ling Xiaoyu wanted desperately to enter the tournament, but the officials would not take the sixteen-year-old seriously. She stowed aboard one of Heihachi Mishima's ocean liners and beat up its crew to get the direct attention of the main man running the show.

Heihachi Mishima owns Mishima Conglomeration, and rules the world. Every now and then he likes to host an unarmed combat competition which he calls the King of Iron Fist tournament. Bryan Fury was brought back from the dead by a crime syndicate to crush cops. He collects lighters. Try it. Buy it.

Hillous Lesslie

PLAYSTATION RELEASE SCHEDULE

LOOK AHEAD, MY SON, INTO THE MYSTERIOUS FUTURE WORLD OF THE YEAR 2000. THIS LIST IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

GAME TITLE	DEVELOPER	DISTRIBUTOR	RELEAS
Supercross 2000	-	Acclaim	13 Jan 2000
Cricket 2000	EA Sports	EA	21 Jan 2000
Road Rash Jailbreak	EA	EA	21 Jan 2000
Tiger/PGA Tour 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	21 Jan 2000
Ace Combat 3	Namco	Sony	Jan 2000
Colony Wars: Red Sun	Psygnosis	Sony	Jan 2000
Destruction Derby 3	Psygnosis	Sony	Jan 2000
Grudge Warriors	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 2000
Martian Gothic: Unification	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 2000
Prince Naseem Boxing	Codemasters	Ozisoft	Jan 2000
Railroad Tycoon II	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 2000
Resident Evil 3	Capcom	Ozisoft	Jan 2000
Rollcage Extreme	Psygnosis	Sony	Jan 2000
Shadow Madness	SCEE/Rage	Sony	Jan 2000
Space Debris	SCEE/Rage	Sony	Jan 2000
Space Station Silicon Valley	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 2000
Spec Ops	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 2000
Tiny Tanks	MGM	Sony	Jan 2000
Thrasher: Skate and Destroy	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Jan 2000
Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	Activision	Jan 2000
WWF Wrestlemania 2000	THQ	GT Interactive	Jan 2000
Die Hard 2	Fox	EA	4 Feb 2000
Dune 2000	Westwood	EA	4 Feb 2000
Superbikes 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	4 Feb 2000
Simpsons Bowling	Fox	EA	15 Feb 2000
Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M.	-	Acclaim	24 Feb 2000
NuWrestling 1 (SLCW1)	-	Acclaim	24 Feb 2000
Vanishing Point	-	Acclaim	24 Feb 2000
Alien Resurrection	Fox	EA	25 Feb 2000
Theme Park World	Bullfrog	EA	25 Feb 2000
Grandia	GameArts	Ubi Soft	Feb 2000
International Track & Field 2	Konami	GT Interactive	Feb 2000
ISS Pro Evolution	Konami	GT Interactive	Feb 2000
X-Men	Activision	Activision	Feb 2000
Formula One Championship	EA	EA	3 Mar 2000
Rugby 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	25 Mar 2000
Beatmania	Konami	GT Interactive	Mar 2000
Civilization: Call To Power	Activision	Activision	Mar 2000
Duke Nukem: Time To Kill 2	GT Interactive	GT Interactive	Mar 2000
Ford Racing	Empire	Metro	Mar 2000
F1 Racing Championship	Ubi Soft	Jack Of All Games	Mar 2000
Gauntlet Legends	Midway	Metro	Mar 2000
GTA: Berlin Mission Pack	Take 2	Jack Of All	Mar 2000
Karting World Championship	Midas	Metro	Mar 2000
NBA Showtime On NBC	Midway	Metro	Mar 2000
Rayman 2	Ubi Soft	Jack Of All Games	Mar 2000
State Of Emergency	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Mar 2000
Eagle One	Infogrames	Ozisoft	Q1 2000
Premier Manager 2000	Infogrames	Ozisof	Q1 2000
Rally Masters	Infogrames	Ozisoft	Q1 2000
Ronaldo V-Football	Infogrames	Ozisoft	Q1 2000
Airport Inc.	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Apr 2000
Kiss	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Apr 2000
Joe Blow	Take 2	Jack Of All Games	Apr 2000
Riding Star	Midas	Metro	Apr 2000
Unreal	-	GT Interactive	Jul 2000
PlayStation 2	Sony	SCE	October 2000
Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	SCE	October 2000
Evil Dead	THQ	GT Interactive	TBC
Commandos 2	Eidos	Ozisoft	TBC
Fear Effect	Eidos	Ozisoft	TBC
Prince Of Persia	Red Orb	Dataflow	TBC
Spiderman	Activision	Activision	TBC
Tenchu 2	Activision	Activision	TBC
WipEout 4	Psygnosis	SCE	TBC
Pet in TV 2	Sony	SCE	TBC

PREPLAY CONTENTS

76 Colin McRae Rally 2

What could possibly out-rally the Subaru WRX? Perhaps the Ford Focus, Colin McRae's new racing machine and the star of Codemasters' new rally driving simulator. More graphics, more physics and more action will be hitting a store near you in just a few months!

77 Cool Boarders 4

RADICAAAAAAAAAAAAL! The world of snowboarding is, sadly, an impossible luxury for most of the population, especially in the snow devoid summer months. Fear not, the Cool Boarders evolution continues with this, the fourth instalment in the PlayStation's definitive snowboarding series.

78 Toonenstein

Anyone remember the Tiny Toon Adventures? In the early 90s Warner Bros attempted to breathe new life into their cartoon legacy by creating a sort of Loony Toons: The Next Generation. They eventually wised up and made Animaniacs, but first they hoisted this rancid tosh on us. And now it's an adventure game. Christ.

78 Micro Maniacs

Miniature robotic characters, all racing around Micro Machines-fashion in a stylish household setting. And you get to kill each other in the process. With its own sense of comic-book style, Micro Maniacs is promising to be the next cult hit for the PlayStation

79 Tombi 2

Pink-haired monkey boy Tombi is back. And yes, he eats Babe. Well... at least he clobbers the filthy swine over the head with pointed implements, but you get the idea. In his newly designed 3D form, Tombi 2 will surely bring back his original fans, but whether or not this new adventure slant will work is up to question.

79 Silent Bomber

Building on last year's cult hit, Trap Runner, this new title hopes to offer the same explosive thrills and spills but without those bothersome mazes and obstacle courses. With any luck, this title should come off as non-stop fiery mayhem unbound, with cool anime sequences to boot!

Colin McRae 2

In Rally War 2, history is set to repeat itself

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Ozisoft
- **Developer**
  Codemasters
- **Genre**
  Racing
- **Release Date**
  March
- **Players**
  TBA

PROGRESS REPORT

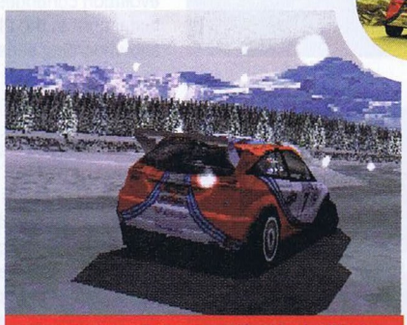
Positive Points

- New graphics engine with superior textures and reflections.
- Promises to be the best driving game available.

Negative Points

- More of the same.
- Some poor fools may blow their $$$ on GT2 before this hits the streets.

Mr. McRae's new car, the Ford Focus!



Is it me or do all those conifers look alike?

Collin McRae Rally 2 is sure to fire up its old rivalry with the V Rally series

It may be a simplistic comparison, but it's an unavoidable one. Just as the Germans were defeated by the allies in not one but two world wars, now the mighty Gran Turismo is set to be upstaged once more by Colin McRae Rally. Back in '98, Colin McRae 1 appeared hot on the heels of GT, hurling through just the right launch window to show up all of GT's shortcomings, yet still ensure massive sales for itself.

Well, now that Gran Turismo 2 has surfaced, with decidedly less impact than the original, *Colin McRae 2* is primed to sweep the floor, claiming all discerning rally driving dollars for itself. While the sequel to GT offered seemingly nothing new besides a lot of new cars and some poorly chosen textures, *Colin McRae 2* actually has some degree of depth in the improvements it has to offer.

For starters, the graphics engine has been improved. All the cars have higher polygon counts, smoothing out their edges and adding cumulative hints of realism. A new type of reflection mapping has also been incorporated, giving all the cars a silky smooth sheen on their paintjobs. Efforts have also been made to improve the overall speed of the game.

Most ambitious of the changes to the engine is the fact that each of the wheels now have independent suspension, with the aim being to match as closely as possible the manner in which a car with four independently moving wheels hugs the road.

The improved clarity afforded by the new and improved game code will take advantage of visual references taken from location shots from all the host nations who have offered up their dirt tracks for the sequel. The overall effect is levels of photorealism previously unseen on the PlayStation from any game, driving or otherwise.

Since Colin McRae himself has switched from Subaru to Ford for his 1999/2000 tour, Codemasters has opted to concentrate on his new machine. Called the Ford Focus, it has been outperforming the mighty WRX in time trials across the globe. The programming team has worked closely with Ford to get the technical details of the Focus down pat.

There are going to be a number of new game modes and race styles included, but these have yet to be finalised.

Fans of the original need not fear that the name Colin McRae is merely being tacked onto a cheap knockoff, for the man behind the original production has headed up the colossal 30 man team which coded the sequel. Guy Wilday was in no small part responsible for the massive success of the first game, and his guiding hand can surely make history repeat itself.

James Cottee

Cool Boarders 4

In case you have forgotten... it's a snowboarding game

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
989 Studios

■ Developer
Idol Minds

■ Genre
Snowboarding Sim

■ Release Date
TBA

■ Players
One to four
(not simultaneous).

PROGRESS REPORT

Positive Points

✪ Improved control, better graphics and more options.

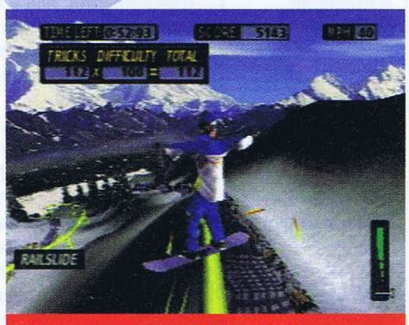
✪ Wider variety of tricks and a trickmaster option to help you learn them all.

Negative Points

✪ Improvements aren't enough to justify a sequel.

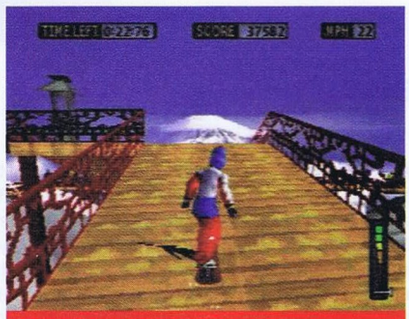
✪ The blatant advertising gets on your nerves.

Cool Boarders 4 promises all the great features of the last 3 games plus a whole lot more



Calm down - you're not Tony Hawk

Woohoo! I'm in Japan!



This is theoretically impossible...

Yet another addition to the Cool Boarders saga, beginning with the original Cool Boarders, followed by the much improved sequel, CB2, crashing and burning with CB3, (what went wrong there?)... and now we arrive at the rethought and redesigned continuation, *Cool Boarders 4*. Even so, you'd have to say CB4 is more of an extension rather than an addition to this up and down series.

The first thing you notice about *Cool Boarders 4* is that the control system is more responsive, closer to the first couple in the series than the most recent. The analog controls could use a little work: its a tad fiddly to perform tricks with them, but anything is better than the disappointing effort of CB3, right? Given a little time, we're sure that the controls will be tweaked just enough to make all Cool Boarders fans happy.

NEW WAYS TO SKIN A CAT

Players can choose to rip up the powder in five different locations all around the world, anywhere from France to the USA. There are five events to compete in, each with three difficulty settings. Race with three other AI controlled snowboarders as you punch and kick your way through the Down Hill event.

Half Pipe is the same as always except with a greater array of tricks. Slope Style is a solo version of the Down Hill except the aim is to score points... oh and there are more obstacles and bigger jumps.

CBX is like a Slalom Olympic event on a Snowboard, again with competitors. Big Air is similar to Slope Style but shorter and with a cliff at the end. Every Location has a special course which can only be unlocked by breaking the record in every event on pro setting.

THIS DOG'S TOO OLD TO LEARN NEW TRICKS... SURELY

Some of the new features include *'create your own rider'* and *'design your own board'*, or simply choose one of the 16 pro snowboarders that are part of the game.

The board editor allows you to adjust your top speed, stability and response. It also provides a selection of board styles with a suitable coloring mechanism, however the small number of board brands on offer suggests advertising has been slipped in under the guise of realism.

The trick system is a vast improvement over CB3 with its expanded selection of stunts. There's also a Trick Master mode, which is basically a training session presented as an event. Many of the tricks require intricately timed button combos in order to pull them off.

That way, there is the potential for at least a few hours of fun competing with your friends. With any running series based on the same theme, the first few installments can be similar, but without a dramatic twist or addition to the game's style, the idea wears pretty thin.

Amongst some of the additions we will be hoping for is a freestyle type option to let you snowboard over one section of a mountain, not just be limited to a 30 metre wide track. As far as we can tell it looks like *Cool Boarders 4* will clean up many of the problems with the previous Cool Boarders games, but whether the new features make it worthwhile will have to wait till the review.

Gareth Holly

Micromaniacs

Mr. Domino meets Micro Machines

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  OziSoft
- **Developer**
  Codemasters
- **Genre**
  Racing
- **Release Date**
  TBA
- **Players**
  One or two

Usually, certain high profile games will be criticised for rehashing tried-but-true concepts. Much to the frustration of critics like us, people nevertheless flock to them like bugs on candy. *Micromaniacs*, on the other hand, has somehow managed to tickle our fancy.

Offering consumers a much-deserved break from racing games running at break-neck speeds and overly involving platform games, *Micromaniacs* takes a more laid back approach where the simple features and addictive gameplay are the stuff of legend.

Imagine a game that combines the bizarre racing pleasures of Micro Machines V3 and the sophisticated charm of Mr. Domino, and you have *Micromaniacs*. Selecting from an eclectic group of characters that look as though they came straight out of a Comedy Central cartoon, your job is simply to run your miniaturised character through a series of tracks in the house and win the race.

With only an early beta to look at, our impressions of the game thus far are mostly visual. What is most striking about *Micromaniacs* is in how well the tracks have been designed and depicted. There is something strangely captivating about being able to run around a gigantic toaster or a kitchen bench... it is the kind of appeal that harkens back to our childhood fantasies as we played with our Micro Machines and Matchbox cars.

The keyboard holds untold treasures

The added appeal, as mentioned before is also in the attention to environmental detail. Not since Mr. Domino have we seen such subtle creativity in using the backgrounds as part of the action. It is also for this reason alone that we didn't really mind *Micromaniacs'* similarities to other various games. We will certainly be watching out for the final version of this game.

Kevin Cheung

Toonenstein

Another game firmly aimed at the under-tens

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Warner Bros
- **Developer**
  Terra Glyph Int.
- **Genre**
  Adventure
- **Release Date**
  TBA
- **Players**
  One

This game initially defied our genre definitions until we decided to call it a Puzzle game. But that's not quite right either. What we have here is a game that's being designed for kids that is heavily based on the Myst style of game. Just remember the *"designed for kids"* part.

The opening scenes show some areas that borrow all the traditional elements of Escher-like art, but the in game levels are much more straight forward and less interesting. There isn't anything that distinguishes between the movie segues and the in-game graphics.

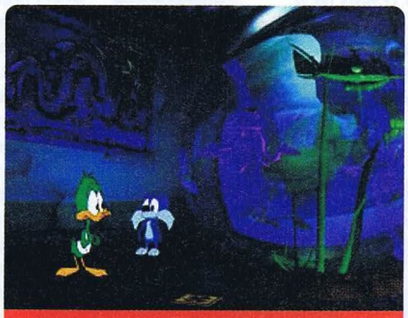
Both are of high-quality Warner Brothers standards and are done in 2D all the way.

The game mechanics are where the game breaks down. At each location, besides admiring the artwork, you can either move to another location or use a device (if there is one). There are two types of equipment: bat-guns and powered bits and pieces. Every time you use one of the items that require power, a lightbulb lights up on your power meter. Get six lightbulbs and you can ride the elevator to the next floor. Intermittently, Plucky and Hammy will reappear and give you advice or insult each other, but there isn't any real interaction to be had at all.

Whenever you have got the chance to enter the elevator, you meet up with Paddy, the elevator guy. He gives you one piece of advice per trip about how to start up the generator and how to escape from the clutches of the vile Baroness *Toonenstein*.

If you have young children of your own, then you may want to watch out for this one, with the stress on *"may"* due to the often confusing level layouts. Of course, Terra Glyph may fix up the problem areas before release, so stay tuned, folks.

Rhys Jacobssen


That duck looks uneasy coz he has no pants

Atmospheric cartoon surroundings abound

"This is not the best way to proposition me"

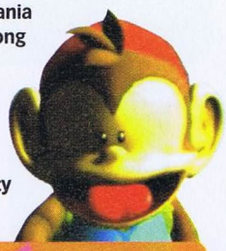
Tombi 2

Return of the evil swine! In 3D, too!

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Sony
- **Developer**
  Whoopie Camp
- **Genre**
  Platform/Adventure
- **Release Date**
  TBA
- **Players**
  One

Tombi. Remember him? Half naked, loin cloth, wild pink hair... no? How about that he waged a war against plump little pigs? No? Well, don't fret too much if you don't know what Tombi is: like Klonoa of the Wind and Castlevania SOTN, Tombi joins a long line of traditional platform titles that, in spite of how good they were, failed to stir the interests of the gaming community at large.

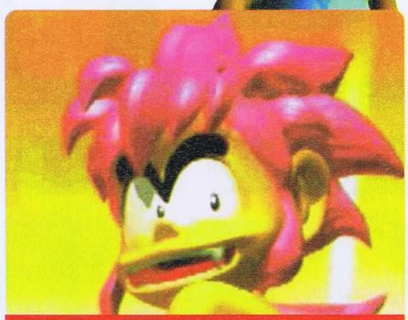


Tombi 2 represents Whoopie Camp's second stab with its pink-haired mascot. *Tombi 2* pits our neanderthalic hero once again against the nefarious pigs. Instead of nicking off with Tombi's precious personal belongings, they've managed to abscond with Tombi's girlfriend. Take one guess what you're quest is going to be, Wonderboy.

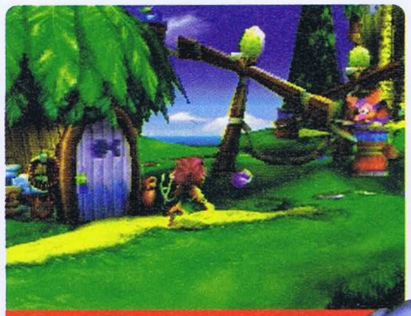
Tombi 2 is quite a departure from the 2D platforming hijinks of the original game. Instead, the graphics are fully polygonal; and instead of keying in on mastering the mechanics of jumping and avoiding multiple obstacles, *Tombi 2* puts you through an ingenious series of mini-quests that award you with items essential to completing the game. Thankfully, in spite of these changes, the game still maintains its comical flavour, particularly in the hilarious character animations (you can push a button to make Tombi run like a monkey!).

What we have played so far of the game looks very promising, but outside the difficulty of translating everything directly from Japanese on the fly, the game is incredibly easy. With any luck, by the time the final local version comes out and we have played it through, the difficulty quibbles should be sorted out.

Kevin Cheung



Back with a fresh coat of pink paint



Tombi looks great in 3D

Man in loincloth vs pig with pitchfork

Silent Bomber

Oxymoron: a self-contained contradiction

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
  Bandai
- **Developer**
  Bandai
- **Genre**
  Action
- **Release Date**
  TBA
- **Players**
  One

With a name like *Silent Bomber* you would expect that this game had more than a few explosions up its sleeve. And you would be right. There is nothing silent about them either, but that's also to be expected.

Silent Bomber sees you as a renegade young hero, Utah, who's been enlisted to battle an invading battleship from an evil galactic empire. Utilising a special arm-mounted unit you lay bombs around the environment and trigger them with a press of the △ button. You can also use a laser sight to lock on to enemies and toss the bombs, which will then stick.

The gameplay is standard for the genre. You run through a level blowing up everything, confront a boss creature and move on to the next level. The use of different types of bombs, as opposed to randomly sprayed bullets, makes it different, as do the cut scenes that weave an interesting story in between the explosive action.

The cut scenes were developed by the team responsible for the FMVs in Tekken 3 and Final Fantasy VII and the result is cinematic, both in terms of the visuals and the dialogue. If *Silent Bomber* is translated for sale outside of the Japanese market it should sit alongside other shoot'em ups like Apocalypse that deliver more than robots and immense firepower.

Elton Cane

Hey, does anyone remember something like this in Metal Gear Solid?

MEGA GLOSSARY 2000

Technobabble can send anyone up the wall, especially when it comes to videogames. For those of you who are feeling a little daunted or confused by all the names, terminologies, and phrases that are commonly used in the industry, we give you a concise explanation of everything the world of videogames has to offer, in layman's terms. Then you'll be able to sound just like a pro and be just as good as the smart aleck next door.

Acclaim - Shadowman

3D Realms
American developer. Most famous for making the game Duke Nukem 3D.

989 Studios
American developer. Most famous for producing the game Syphon Filter.

Activision
American developer, publisher and distributor. Started with Pitfall in 1982, and has of late brought us many fine titles, such as Tenchu and Tony Hawk.

Accolade
American publisher, recently bought out by Infogrames. Most famous for Test Drive series.

Acclaim
American publisher. Brought us Shadowman, as well as all the South Park games.

Analogue
As opposed to digital, a control method that grades input on the level of pressure applied, rather than an on/off switch.

Anti-Aliasing
A programming technique employed to counter the appearance of jagged, sawtooth edges on game objects. It achieves this by averaging the colours at the edge, producing a smoother, blended effect.

Artdink
A small arthouse developer in Japan, noted by critics for creating games with original concepts. The most notable title of late is Mr. Domino. Beyond that, there is Notam of Wind, a hot air balloon simulator, and other quirky titles.

Ascii
Small third party developer in Japan whose journalistic influence is more far reaching than the games it produces. Trading under the name Agetec in the United States, Ascii is the publisher of Weekly Famitsu, considered as the gaming bible of the world.

Atlus
Japanese third party developer that is most noted for its fantasy-themed turn-based strategy games. Of particular note are titles like Tactics Ogre and Ogre Battle. Members of the Atlus development teams also went on to produce titles like Final Fantasy Tactics.

Attract Mode
Originally designed to make a video game pay for itself in the arcades, the attract mode is the games idle setting, where it cycles through demonstration levels and high score tables to compel onlookers to play.

Bandai Visual
More famous in Japan for its production of anime series, Bandai Visual is responsible for games that reflect that anime taste. Its titles typically include the massively popular Gundam cartoons, as well as Macross: Do You Remember Love.

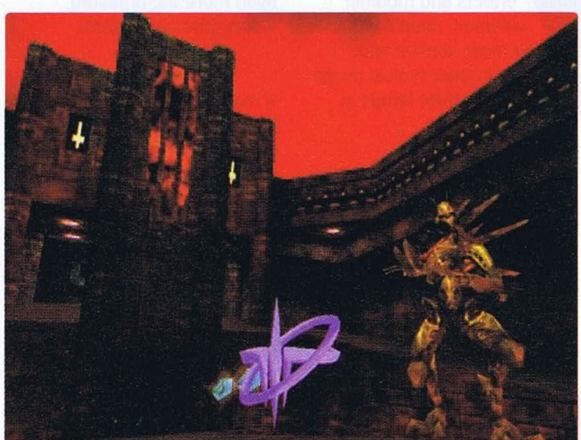
Banpresto
Similar to Bandai Visual, Banpresto's speciality lays in anime-related games, such as the SD Gundam series and Gundam Generation series. Its other games like Panzer Bandit are often never picked up because local distributors don't warm too much to 2D games.

Beam
Australian game developer. Recently bought out by Infogrames, Beam has a glorious history of development, from Way of the Exploding Fist, all the way through to - KKND.

Bezier Curves/ Surfacing
A programming technique that optimises the number of polygons needed to represent a curved surface. This is a effect that involves massive number crunching, so it's only effective when supported in hardware.

Bits
Short for binary digits. Either 1 or 0, the simplest numbers that digital computers can process. Also used as a rough measure of a platforms raw processing power. The CPU on the PlayStation can process 32 bits simultaneously, so its referred to as a 32 bit machine. By comparison, the N64 is 64 bit, the Dreamcast is 128 bit, and the PlayStation 2 will also be 128 bit. Bits can be a misleading way of measuring machine performance, however, as the PS2 will be much more powerful than the Dreamcast, and there are many things the PSX can do better than the N64.

Bullfrog
British game publisher affiliated to Electronic Arts. Most renowned for bringing us Syndicate Wars and Populous.



One of the first examples of Bezier curves: Q3A

Its speciality lays more in producing PC games before the port to the trusty PlayStation.

Bytes
A byte consists of eight bits. Bytes are used to measure computer memory and storage. A kilobyte is 1024 bytes. A megabyte is 1024 K. A gigabyte is 1024 megs, and so forth.

Capcom
Japanese developer. Responsible for two of the biggest game phenomena ever, the Street Fighter series and the Resident Evil series., and have made many other worthy titles like Dino Crisis and Dark Stalkers.

CD-ROM
Compact Disc-Read Only Memory. The data format of the common CD, CD-ROM can store up to 650 megabytes of information.

Codemasters - No Fear

The standard used by all PlayStation games, CD - ROM will also be used by many PS2 games, at least to start with.

Clipping
A programming glitch where polygons that are supposed to be part of the same object do not join up properly. The reason for this phenomenon comes down to polygon sorting. On the PlayStation, the polygons are sorted by placing them on to the screen like a series of layers, with those in the background placed first and those in the foreground placed last. If the polygons are not sequenced properly, you will see sections of the graphics clipping and disappearing on and off the screen.

Codemasters
British publisher. Has given us such marvels as Music 2000, the TOCA touring cars series, and No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking.

Collision Detection
Programming rules that surround the way game objects interact. Basically, it determines how much contact is needed visually before the *'thing'* you

2000

EA - Dune 2000

are controlling will register a *'hit'*. Good collision detection is crucial for most genres, especially fighting games, to *"feel"* right. Poor collision detection will, for instance, blow up your space ship even when a laser blast missed you by a good inch. In many games, collision detection makes all the difference between a game with *"tight execution"* and a game that's just frustrating.

Core Design

British developer. Responsible for the unstoppable Tomb Raider games, as well as Fighting Force.

Coronas

A lighting effect that typically resembles a star or sun on a set position in a 3D environment. Are used as an alternative to transparency effects and modifier volumes, people would be most familiar with them in their typical usage to depict street lamps in racing games.

CPU

Central processing unit. The control centre of a digital computer. Controls all aspects of operation, including memory and I/O. If your game console were a car, then the CPU would be the engine. It provides the raw muscle. Contrary to popular belief, the CPU alone doesn't determine the overall power of a console, as it must work in concert with a graphics renderer, sound driver, RAM (general, video and sound), and so on. These concepts are becoming far more important to understand as console designs and PC designs begin converging with the next generation machines.

CRT

Cathode ray tube. A vacuum tube that creates an image by bombarding phosphor dots through a grill with an electron gun. Most of the worlds TVs and computer screens are CRTs. Its dominance over the world's TVs are of course.

Crystal Dynamics

A developer that has stayed faithful to the PlayStation from day one. Better known these days for game series like Gex: Enter the Gecko, Crystal Dynamics made its first mark with the fan favourite, Pandemonium! It then went on to draw more attention to itself in Pandemonium 2 by turning the game's female protagonist, Nicki, into a gorgeous buxom babe (which went on to inspire a chain of even more big-breasted videogame characters).

Dithering

A method of saving CPU processing power. There are many different styles of dithering, but the idea is essentially to randomly remove a certain percentage of pixels from the screen for each frame of animation. The benefit is that it supplements the console's fill rate, and even lets programmers pack in more detail than they ordinarily would have. And you don't notice the pixels missing! Honest! The latest dithering techniques on PlayStation can be seen in games like Ridge Racer 4 and Ace Combat 3, which seem to have used dithering in excess to create a parched washed-over effect.

DMA Design

British developer. Originally famous for giving the world Lemmings, more recently noteworthy for making Grand Theft Auto and GTA2.

DVD

Contrary to popular belief, it does NOT stand for Digital Video Disc. It stands for Digital Versatile Disc. The same size as CD-ROM, but employs denser information packing, and can also be double sided and/or dual layered to allow for up to a whopping 18 gigabytes of information. It's the format that's dominating the home cinema revolution, and will also be employed on the PlayStation 2.

Eidos

British publisher. Published Tomb Raider and Soul Reaver.

Electronic Arts

The single biggest video game company in the world. Develops, publishes and distributes games like Xena, Sled Storm, Dune 2000, Populous and Hot Wheels. Most notable for its huge lineup of fine sports titles such as FIFA 2000, WCW Mayhem, NBA Live 2000 and Tiger Woods '99.

Enix

Prolific Japanese games development company that has had hardly any of its games released locally. Probably better known amongst the local folk for Bust A Groove, Enix is best known within the industry for being Squaresoft's main competition in the RPG stakes. Dragon Quest VII, a game that has been put through one delay after another, currently has Squaresoft changing its schedules for the release of their next Final Fantasy game for fear of having to compete with DQ7.

Fill Rate

The rate at which the console fills the screen with pixels, measured in megatexels or megapixles. The higher the fill rate, the smoother the games will generally run. It can also allow programmers to pack more detail into the screen. A low fill rate generally means the image will appear in a lower resolution, or be forced to run at a lower frame rate.

Floating Point

A programming variable stored to a number of decimal places, as opposed to just an integer. One method of measuring a machines performance is by determining how many floating point operations, or FLOPS, it can perform a second. Generally used as a yardstick to gauge the performance of a 3D game.

FMV

Full motion video. The so called *"cut scenes"* that begin and interspersed so many modern video games. Used in practically every PlayStation game that is on the market to supplement the normal gameplay. FMVs are usually created on powerful workstations with many times the power of a PlayStation, and then saved as a streaming video that is simply played back on your PlayStation once it's given the prompt.

Fox Interactive

American publisher. Has brought us a number of games, including The X-Files and Croc.

Full Motion Video - they rock the PlayStation's world

FPS
This acronym has two meanings:
Frames Per Second:
The number of static full screen images flashed up on a screen per second to create the illusion of moving pictures. Normal TV runs at 24 frames per second, but some games sport 60 FPS for extra silky smooth visuals.
First Person Shooter:
A game like Doom or Quake 2 where you see a 3D world through your game character's eyes, which you run around in shooting stuff.

Fragging
Originally from the Vietnam War, where it referred to the practice of murdering your commanding officer if you felt his incompetence was endangering the lives of his men. More commonly used these days in respect to multiplayer games of first person shooters, where it simply means to blow someone into tiny bits.

From Software
Japanese development company, responsible for Armoured Core series.

Gouraud Shading
A programming technique used to provide the illusion of rounder objects. By gradually shading a flat polygon from one

Gouraud Shading

edge to another, chunky objects appear smooth. Gouraud shading has been used to great effect in games like Tobal No. 1.

Genki
New development company in Japan involved in games for all consoles. Best known so far for the critically acclaimed Jade Cocoon: The Story of Tamamayu.

Gremlin Graphics
British developer, recently acquired by Infogrames.

Hasbro
Huge toy company, with its own game division, Hasbro Interactive. Hasbro has recently re-released updated version of a number of Atari classics such as Centipede and Pong.

HUD
Head up display. Method of projecting vital information onto a jet fighters cockpit so the pilot doesn't have to waste precious seconds looking down at dials. In video games, this usually refers to green text superimposed on the the game action, as opposed to fake visual representations of some *"real"* instrumentation.

Hudson Soft
The makers of Bomberman. Also the makers of cult fighting favourite, Bloody Roar.

Id
American developer. Most famous for making the games Doom and Quake.

Infogrames
Huge French game developer, publisher and distributor. Aggressively expanding its influence around the world.

Interlacing
Refers to the black lines that appear horizontally down your television screen. Interlacing is inherent to all televisions. For videogame purposes, it is an alternative method of saving processing power. That is, each alternate line of the image is removed so that your CPU can operate faster and smoother, as there is less to fill on the screen. This can be observed in games like Tekken 3.

I/O
Input output. The subsytem of a computer that interfaces between the user in the real world and the CPU. The I/O processor on the PlayStation 2 will be an exact replica of the PlayStation, allowing all PlayStation games to run on the PlayStation 2.

Jag
Look closely at the diagonal lines on the screen. They are not straight. They are jagged. Every game on the PlayStation experiences jag at some point or another, but it is particularly the low-res games that suffer from jag.

Jag - very typical in low-res games

Koei
Japanese developer whose current claim to fame is Kessen for the PlayStation 2. Is also responsible for the creation of semi-original titles like Destrega and highly unoriginal titles like Zill 0'11 - which is a straight rip off from Final Fantasy and thankfully hasn't made it to local shores yet.

Konami
Japanese publisher that's been around in the industry from the very beginning. Has offices in Tokyo, Osaka, and several other major cities across Japan. Has given us Metal Gear Solid, Silent Hill, and Kensei, but is also famous for the Castlevania and Contra series, which they are trying desperately to turn into 3D.

Lucasarts
American developer. Due to close ties with Lucasfilm, Lucasarts has got the rights to develop any and all games based on Star Wars and Indiana Jones.

Midway
American developer. The makers of Ready 2 Rumble and the Mortal Kombat series, Midway is also the owner of Atari Games, and their recent hit Gauntlet Legends.

Modifier Volumes
When a defined area is set aside so that any object that enters it will change to different colours. Typically used to create simulated lighting effects, and can be seen in games like Tomb Raider 4.

Namco
Japanese publisher. Made Pac Man in 1980, and more recently the Ridge Racer games, Pac Man World and Point Blank 2.

NTSC
National Television Standards Committee. The video standard used in the US and Japan. Australia and New Zealand use PAL, which is why videos and games from the States don't work here.

Oddworld Inhabitants
American developer. Famous for making Abe's Oddysee and Abe's Exoddus, is currently working on Munch's Oddysee and The Hand of Odd for the PlayStation 2.

Ocean
Videogames publisher from the Golden Age, bringing us titles like Operation Wolf and New Zealand Story. They've since been bought by Infogrames, but are still referred to fondly by gaming oldies.

OFLC
Office of Film and Literature Classification. Responsible for rating all films and games released in Australia. At present, games can only be rated G, G 8+, M or MA. If a game has content deemed R-rated or above, it is refused classification and cannot be sold. The popular myth is that persons over 18 do not play videogames.

Omake
That's Japanese for *"fan-related stuff"*. Most of the Japanese option screens will have an Omake mode with some different rendered artwork for your enjoyment. Sometimes, you can even download it to your PC for some much better results.

PAL
The video standard used in the UK, most of Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Peripheral
An add-on device, such as a game pad, mouse or multitap.

Pixel
Short for picture element. The smallest individual dot that a game displays on the screen. A game with high resolution has got more pixels, and thus has finer detail.

Platformer
A game genre typified by a third person view where the game character explores a convoluted environment consisting of platforms and ladders. The best example on the PlayStation would be the Crash Bandicoot series.

Polygon
A flat geometric shape, such as a square or triangle. 3D games build up their objects by arranging a number of polygons in three dimensions. The more polygons a computer can generate, the more realistic the game worlds created.

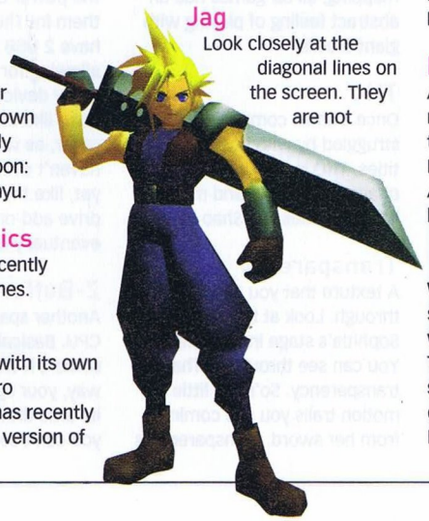
Polyphony Digital
Made Gran Turismo, Omega Boost, and Gran Turismo 2. Started out as a development team within Sony Computer Entertainment, but branched out to form its own development company.

Psygnosis
British developer. In the 80s Psygnosis made a string of hit games for the Amiga, like Shadow Of The Beast and The Killing Game Show. Now that they're owned by Sony, they've been making a string of hit games for the PlayStation, like Rollcage and wip3out.

Rage
British developer. Rage is developing the sequel to their PC hit incoming for the PlayStation 2, and has had a few small successes on the PlayStation as well, such as - Dead Ball Zone.

RAM
Random Access Memory. The more RAM that a computer has, the more information it can process, such as graphics and sound.

Red Storm
American developer, owned by Tom Clancey. Responsible for



2000

bringing out games based on his books, such as Rainbow 6 and Rogue Spear.

Resolution
Refers to the density of pixels on screen at once. The higher the resolution, the higher the detail. The lower the resolution, the harder it becomes to make out things in the distance.

RGB
Red, Green and Blue. These three colours of light can be mixed to create any other, and a signal based on the three of them is the basis for modern video. Look closely at the dots on your TV screen, and you'll see that all the vivid colours you take for granted are made by this humble trio.

Rockstar
British publisher. Relatively new to the scene, Rockstar is striving to make a name for itself by producing some top notch titles like Grand Theft Auto 2.

RPG
This acronym has two meanings:
Role Playing Game:
A genre of exploration, storytelling and epic combat, role playing games are huge in both scope and following. It's not unusual for players to get emotionally attached to the characters they nurture for scores of game hours.
Rocket Propelled Grenade: A lightweight, man-portable weapon that fires an exploding rocket device. Popularised by first person shooter games like Duke Nukem.

RTS
Real Time Strategy game. Strategy games like Command & Conquer and Dune 2000 which present a battlefield full of units which are all concurrently moving and firing, and represents a departure from more traditional strategy games that were entirely turn-based. RTS games provide the player with an addictive combination of both strategic command and fast arcade action, and have gained a huge following, especially on the PC with games like Starcraft and Total Anihhilation.

Shiny
American developer whose gaming credentials include Earthworm Jim and Wild 9.

Sony
Huge Japanese electronics firm, with interests in home electronics, cinema, and of course home video games. In recent years Sony's traditional markets have been on very shaky financial ground, and it's been the enormous success of the Sony PlayStation keeping the company in the black.
Sony Computer Entertainment
The division of Sony responsible for the Sony PlayStation. SCE has three branches, one for each of the worlds main video game markets, namely Japan, America and Europe.

Sony Music
Sony have had a very profitable music business ever since they bought CBS music in the early 90s, but for reasons unknown Sony Music has taken it upon itself to develop video games too. They have already made waves with the excellent Tenchu: Stealth Assassins.

Sprite
A bitmap that represents a distinct game character on screen. For instance, in the original Pac Man, both Pac Man and the ghost monsters were sprites. Sprites are less relevant in todays 3D world of gaming.

Sugar & Rockets
Japanese publisher, responsible for the legendary Jumping Flash series and most recently Robbit Mon Dieu. Also attempted to spearhead the revival of interactive movie games with the Yarudora series - but has thus far been unsuccessful.

Taito
Japanese developer. Taito's first big hit was Space Invaders, and since then they have been lords of the shoot 'em up, producing hit after hit with games like 1942, G-Darius and Raystorm. Also well known for the Bubble Bobble and Puzzle Bobble series (aka Bust A Move locally).

Square - Ehrgeiz

Rollcage: lots of transparencies and coronas

Takara
One of the original PlayStation developers who wooed crowds with the now defunct Toshinden series. Enjoys massive success in Japan with its Choro Q series - aka Penny Racers in the Western world.

Team 17
British Developer. Most notable for the excellent series of Worms games.

Telefrag
An extension of the frag. Thanks to teleportation and respawns in games like Quake 2, it's now possible to materialise on the exact position where another person is standing. The result is that upon respawn, you'll rip the other person into tiny little pieces. Happens randomly. Infuriating to the victim.

Texture Mapping
The programming technique of taking a 2D image and placing it on a polygon in 3D space, thus making the object in question look more *"real."* Before texture mapping, all 3D games had an abstract feeling of playing with giant blocks.

THQ
Once a small company that struggled by with iffy WWF titles, THQ is beginning to come of age with newer and more lucrative titles like Shao Lin.

Transparency
A texture that you can see through. Look at the floor of Sophitia's stage in Soul Blade. You can see through it. That's a transparency. So's the little motion trails you see coming from her sword. Transparencies are also commonly used to create lighting effects, such as the exhaust trail behind your vehicle in WipEout 3.

Squaresoft
Japanese publisher. Has made some of the most outstanding games on PlayStation, including Final Fantasy, Ehrgeiz, Bushido Blade, Tobal No. 2 and Parasite Eve. After excruciating delays, some of their unreleased games are finally being readied for release in PAL territories like us.

Namco
Japanese developer. Has made swag of classics like Pac Man and Dig Dug, and also some modern greats like Ridge Racer and Point Plank.

UbiSoft
French developer. Responsible for games like the Rayman series. Most recently, are responsible for distributing Grandia locally.

USB
Universal Serial Bus. A new way of connecting digital devices to each other, USB affords a plug-and-play flexibility previously unseen, as you don't even need to turn the power off when plugging them in! The PlayStation 2 will have 2 USB ports standard, allowing for it to connect to many devices that are available now, like computers and each other, as well as machines that haven't even been invented yet, like the 50 gigabyte hard drive add-on that will eventually be available for it.

Z-Buffering
Another space saver for the CPU. Basically, if it's off the screen, it won't draw it. That way, your system won't waste its time drawing something that you can't see anyway.

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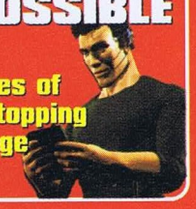

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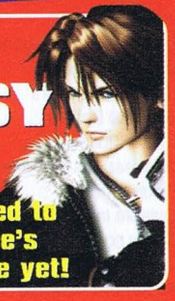

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MISS NURSE WANTS YOU!

Can't find the magic glowing rabbit to get past the third squid boss in the underwater city? Stuck in the boiler room of the old factory? Do you require some level skip codes and invincibility cheats to feel like a real PlayStation success? Write to Ms Nurse. She may just help you!

WRITE TO: MISS NURSE
Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW Australia 2010
Email: playstation@next.com.au

DARKSTALKERS 3

EXTRA COLOURS
At the character select screen, highlight your character and press two punches or two kicks.

PLAY AS MALE SHADOW
Go to the character select screen, highlight the ? box and push select 5 times.

PLAY AS FEMALE SHADOW
Go to the character selection screen, highlight ? box, then push select 7 times.

PLAY AS OBORO
Go to the character selection screen, highlight Bishamon, hold select and push any button.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

CHANGE THE RADIO STATION
To change the radio when in a car press Up + Select.

CHEAT CODES
To activate a cheat, enter its corresponding code (without spaces) as a player name.

BIG SCORE	1,000,000 Dollars
MUCH CASH	500,000 Dollars
HIGH FIVE	x5 Multiplier
NAVARONE	All weapons and ammo
NO FRILLS	Debug mode
LOSE FEDS	Disable law enforcement
WUGGLES	Show coordinates
ITS ALL UP	Level select
DESIRES	Maximum *"wanted"* level
LIVE LONG	Unlimited health

FREE MONEY
Steal a taxi and pick up people, they pay you about $5 per second. Be patient - they don't always get in. They pay you until you drive recklessly or if you are being chased by cops.

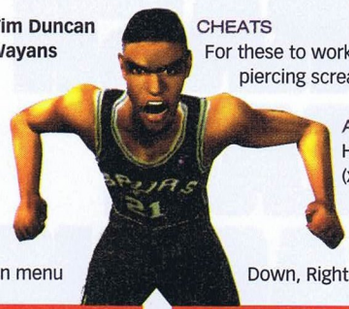
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2000

BONUS BOXERS
For more boxers go to Career and type the name:

ED MAHONE	**Ed Mahone (Undefeated Boxer)**
MARC ECKO	**Marc Ecko (Clothes Designer)**
GARGOYLE	**A Gargoyle**
SHMACKO	**A Clown**
ROSWELL	**An Alien**
O	**Rapper *"O"***
Q Tip	**Tribe Rapper *"Q-Tip"***
Jermaine Dupri	**Rapper *"JD"***
Tim Duncan	**Basketball Star Tim Duncan**
Marlon Wayans	**TV Star Marlon Wayans**

SUPER PUNCH
When your opponent is dazed hold R1 + R2 for as long as he is dazed. When he wakes up let go and you will unleash the super punch.

PLAY AS MILLS LANE
To play as Mills Lane, go to the option menu and watch the Cyber Athlete Video, then after watching the video go to exibition and get disqualified...
Go back to boxer selection screen and he will be under Middle Weight.



LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

FIRST-PERSON VIEW
Press and Hold R2 + L2 while playing.

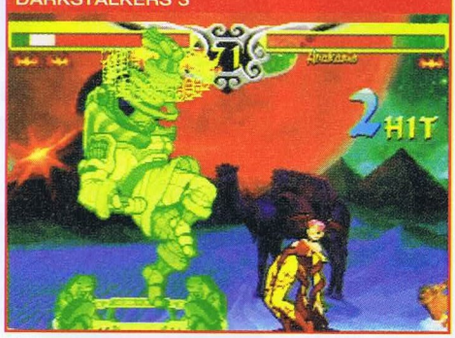
CHEATS
For these to work, enter these before starting. A piercing scream signals cheat entry.

AERIAL REAVER
Hold L1 or R1, press ✕, Right, Up (x2), △, Left (x2), Right, Up.

ALL ABILITIES
Hold L1 or R1, press Up (x2), Down, Right (x2), Left, ○, Right, Left, Down.

DARKSTALKERS 3

DARKSTALKERS 3



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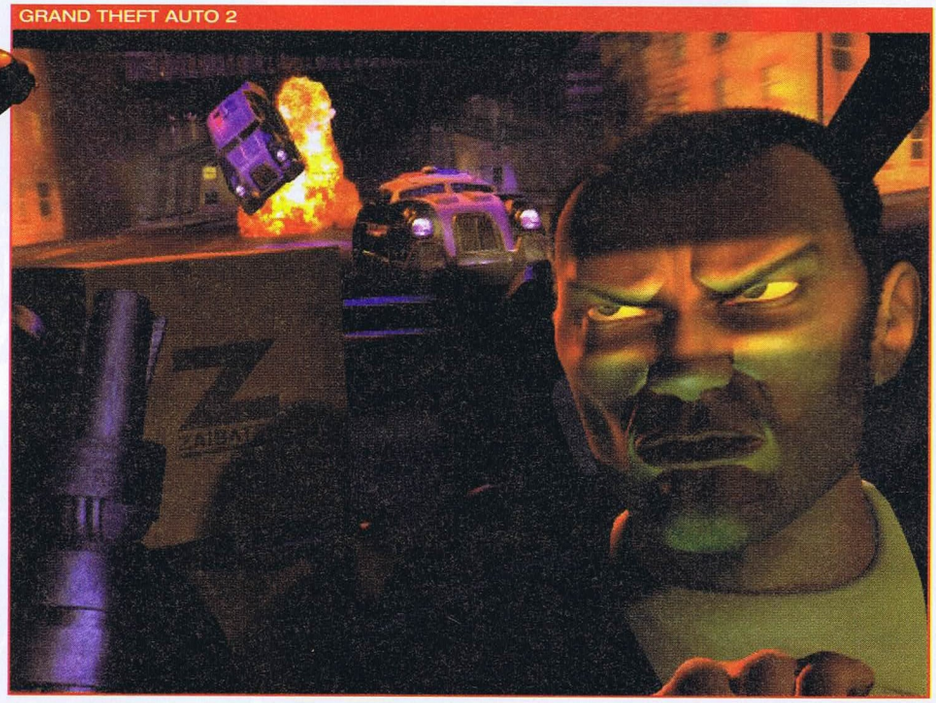

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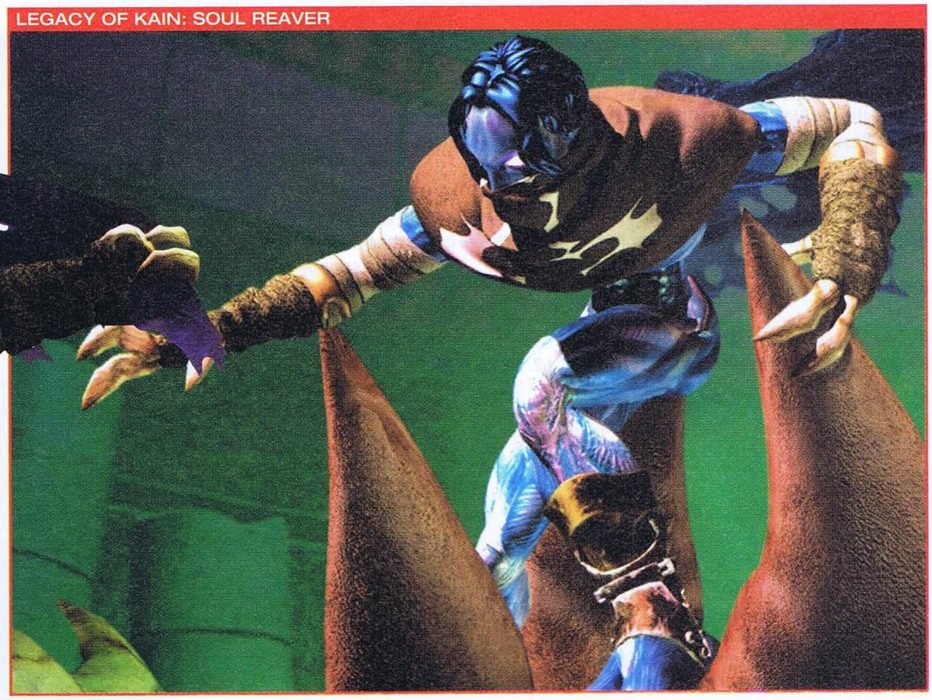

CONSTRICT
Hold L1 or R1, press Down, Up, Right (x2), O, Up (x2), Down.

FIRE GLYPH
Hold L1 or R1, press Up (x2), Right, Up, △, L2, Right.

FIRE REAVER
Hold L1 or R1, press Down, Up, Right, Up, Down, Left, O, Right, Down.

FORCE GLYPH
Hold L1 or R1, press Down, Left, △, Down, Up.

FORCE PROJECTILE
Hold L1 or R1, press Left, Right, O, Left, Right, Left.

HURT RAZIEL
Hold L1 or R1, press Left, O, Up (x2), Down.

KAIN REAVER
Hold L1 or R1, press ✕, O, Right, △, Left (x2), Right, Up.

MAKE FIRE REAVER
Hold L1 or R1, press △, Right, Down, O, Up.

MAXIMUM HEALTH UPGRADE
Hold L1 or R1, press Right, O, Down, Up, Down, Up.

MAXIMUM MAGIC UPGRADE
Hold L1 or R1, press △, Right, Down, Right, Up, △, Left.

OPEN WARP GATES
Hold L1 or R1, press Up (x2), Down, Right (x2), Left, O, Right, Left, Down.

PHASE
Hold L1 or R1, press Down, O (x2), Left, Right, △, Up.

RESTORE HEALTH
Hold L1 or R1, press Down, O, Up, Left, Up, Left.

RESTORE MAGIC
Hold L1 or R1, press Right (x2), Left, △, Right, Down.

SOUL REAVER
Hold L1 or R1, press Down, △, L2, Right (x2), Down (x2), Left, △, Down, Right.

SOUND GLYPH
Hold L1 or R1, press Right (x2), Down, O, Up (x2), Down.

STONE GLYPH
Hold L1 or R1, press Down, O, Up, Left, Down, Right (x2).

SUNLIGHT GLYPH
Hold L1/R1, press Left, O, Left, Right (x2), Up (x2), Left.

UPGRADE HEALTH TO NEXT LEVEL
Hold L1 or R1, press Right, ✕, Left, △, Up, Down.

WALL CLIMB
Hold L1 or R1, press △, Down, L2, Right, Up, Down.

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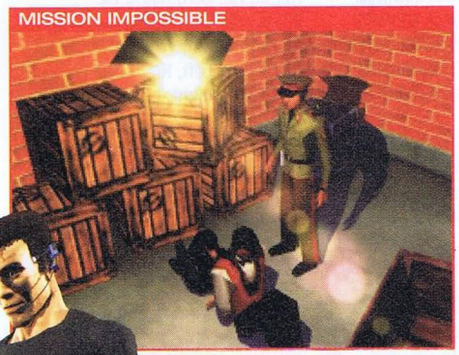


MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

CHEAT CODES
Enter these codes at the password screen. Ignore any *"bad password"* messages that come up.

TTOPFSECRETT	Secret message
GOOUTTAMYWAY	Turbo mode
BIONICJUMPER	Super jumps
IMTIREDTODAY	Slow motion
SEECOOLMOVIE	Show FMVs

QUAKE II

BRONZE CHEATS
To achieve the Bronze Cheats, you must end the game in the easy difficulty This opens two options for multiplayer mode: **Weapons Stay and One hit kill.** Remember to save these on memory card.

HelpStation

SILVER CHEAT
To enable Silver Cheat, finish the game in MEDIUM difficulty. This opens 2 more bars in multiplayer mode: **Game Speed and Blast Force.** Plus it will also unlock the multiplayer cheats that you get for winning bronze.

GOLD CHEAT
To get gold you must beat the game on hard. Winning gold will give you infinte ammo, all weapons and all the rest of the multiplayer codes you recieve when you win silver and bronze.

INVINCIBILITY
Pause the game and press L2, L2, R1, R2, R1, L2.

TAI'FU: WRATH OF THE TIGER

CHEAT CODES
While playing, press R2, △, R2, △, △, ○, ×, □ to enable cheat codes. You may now enter any of the codes below (also while playing.)

FULL CHI	R2, △, R1, Left, Right, □
FULL HEALTH	R2, △, R2, Left, Right, ○
INFINITE LIVES	R2, △, R2, Left, Right, ×
STEALTH	R2, △, R2, Left, Right, R1 (Runs out when chi power is gone)
INVINCIBLE	R2, △, R2, Left, Right, R2
ALL STYLES	R1, △, R2, Left, Right, △
SMALL ENEMIES	R2, △, Right, Left, Right, Down
HUGE ENEMIES	R2, △, R2, Left, Right, Up
TONS OF BLOOD	R2, △, R2, Right, Left, Right

DEBUG MODE
Start a game and finish any level to access the map screen. While there, press Select + L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 to open the Debug mode.

ENABLE MAP SCREEN CHEATS
The map screen code must be enabled before any of the other codes at the map screen can be activated. At the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, ○, Down, □.

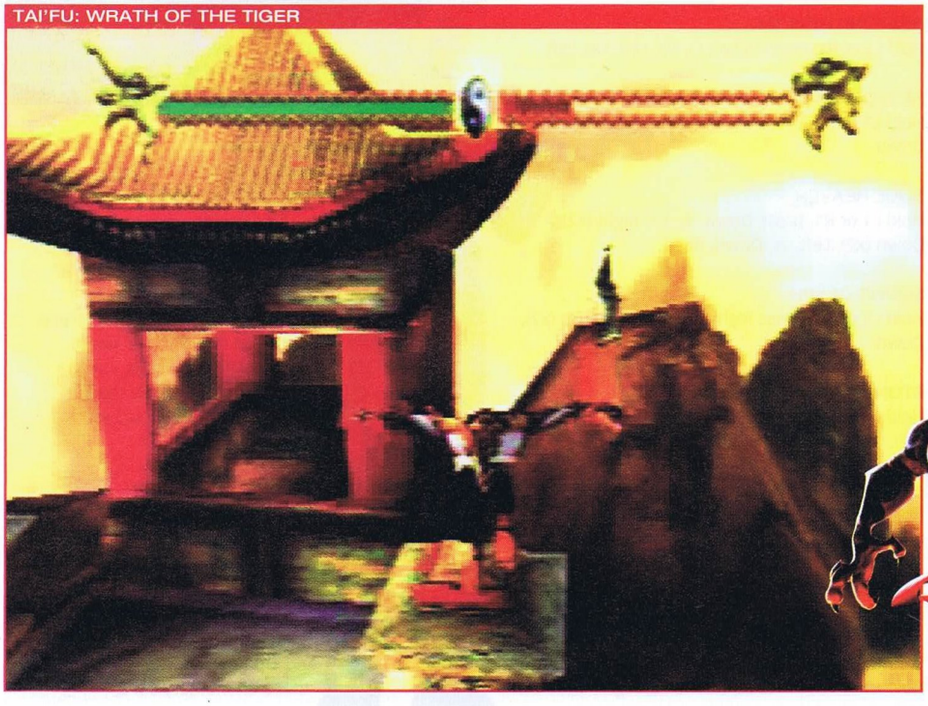
LEVEL SELECT
Enable the *"Map screen cheat mode"* code. Then at the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, ○, □, Down, △, Up, Right, Left, Down, Up, L1.

LONGER FLIGHTS
After learning the crane style, you can fly really far by rapidly pressing the JUMP button. This will carry you further than simply holding the button down.

STORY/STYLE SELECT
Make sure that you enable the *"Map screen cheat mode"* code. Then at the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, □, ○, Down, △, Up, Left, Right, Down, Up, L2.

VIEW CREDITS
Enable the *"Map screen cheat mode"* code first. Then at the map screen, press R2, △, R2, △, Down, □, ○, △, Up, Down, Left, Right, Up, R1 to view all of the credits.

TAI'FU: WRATH OF THE TIGER



TOCA 2

You make the following cheats do their thing, enter them as the player's name.

MECHANIC	Access all cars.
BIGLEY	Access all tracks.
CASTLETRIPPY	Trippy, psychadelic background
BCASTLE	Bounce away from collisions (single player).
DUBBED	Instant damage whenever you touch another car (single player).
LONGLONG	Race for forty laps (single player).
ELASTIC	Stretches track higher (single player)
LUNAR	Stay in air longer when you crash (single player).
JUSTFEET	Only wheels of your car are visible (single player).
BANGBANG	Activates a special challenge. where you travel around the track backwards, with all other traffic heading straight for you.
MINICARS	Overhead, Micro-Machine like view (single player).
FASTBOY	Makes your car go very, very fast (single player).
PUNCHY	Full championship mode only. No matter how many points you score, you will still be able to continue with championships.

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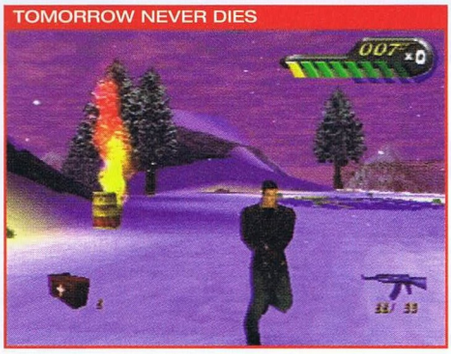
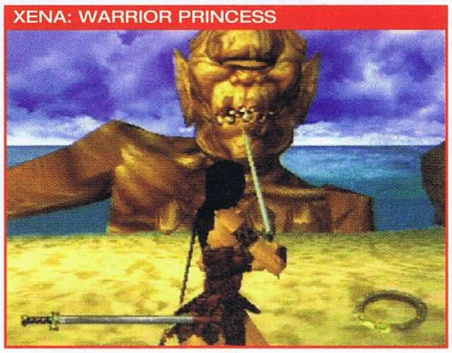
TOMORROW NEVER DIES



XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS



WORMS

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

50 MEDICAL KITS
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), △, Select. (Correct entry resumes the game.)

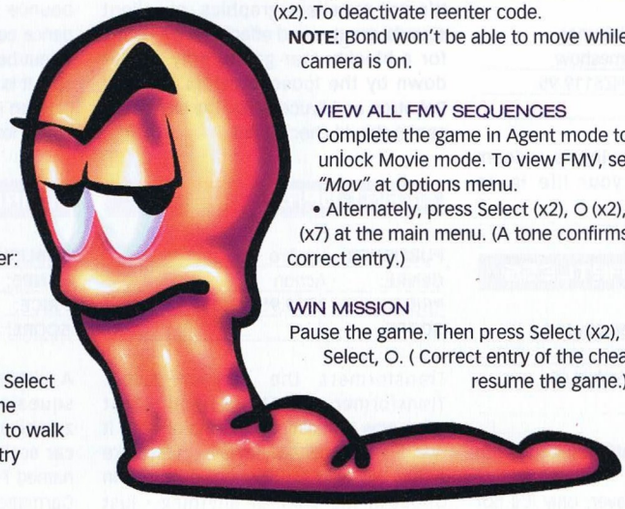
ALL WEAPONS
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), L1 (x2), R1 (x2) for weapons in the current mission. (Correct entry will resume the game.)

DEBUG MODE
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), L2, R2, L2. (Correct entry resumes the game.)
NOTE: To disable press Select (x2), O (x2), R2, L2, R2 at the pause screen.

FULL HEALTH
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), Up (x2), Down. (Correct entry resumes the game.)

HUD TOGGLE
While playing a mission, press *"Start"* to access pause menu then press the following buttons in this order: Select, Select, O, O, Left, Right, Select.

INVINCIBLITY
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), △ (x4) to make the character invincible and able to walk through objects. (Correct entry resumes the game.)



LEVEL SELECT
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), L1 (x2), O, L1 (x2). (A tone confirms correct entry.)

MINIMUM HEALTH
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), Down (x2), Up. (Correct entry resumes the game.)

TOGGLE LIGHT SOURCE
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), Select (x2), O (x2). Reenter to de-activate. (Correct entry resumes the game.) This code makes it so that there is no ground below you and you can see through some walls.

TOGGLE SPY CAMERA
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), R2 (x2). To deactivate reenter code.
NOTE: Bond won't be able to move while the camera is on.

VIEW ALL FMV SEQUENCES
Complete the game in Agent mode to unlock Movie mode. To view FMV, select *"Mov"* at Options menu.
• Alternately, press Select (x2), O (x2), L1 (x7) at the main menu. (A tone confirms correct entry.)

WIN MISSION
Pause the game. Then press Select (x2), O (x2), Select, O. (Correct entry of the cheat will resume the game.)

WORMS

BOXING RING
While playing, execute a fire punch or a dragonball, then quickly hold □ and press R1, L1, O. If you did it correctly, one worm from each team will be teleported to a boxing ring where all you can do is punches and dragonballs. When one of the worms dies you will teleport back to the original landform.

EXTRA WEAPONS AND ROPE TRICK
At the Weapon Options screen, press × + □ 10 times. This code also lets you swing 360 degrees with the ninja rope.

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

To activate a cheat, highlight *"New Game"* at the main menu and enter its code. (A tone confirms correct entry.)

CHEAT - FULL SHIELD & ATTACK
△, □, △, □ (x2), Up (x3)

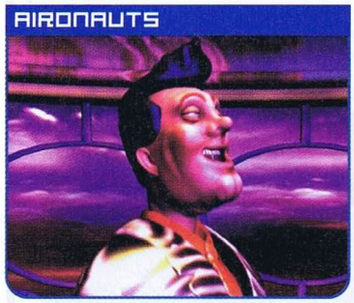
CHEAT - INVINCIBILITY
Up (x3), O, □, Up, Right, Left

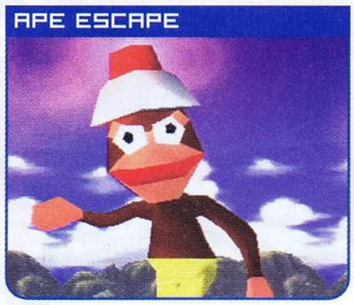
CHEAT - LEVEL SELECT
△, □, O, △, □, Up (x3)

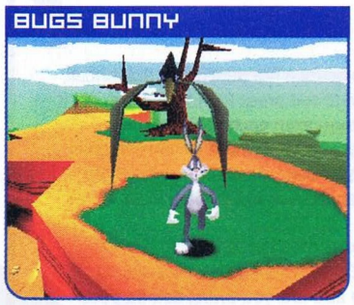
SECRET ROOM
In the level *"The Labyrinth"* just as you go into the room to save Xena's friend take a right. There will be a series of halls. Follow them to the end. There should be some health potion and a torch on the wall. Walk through the wall into a computer lab.

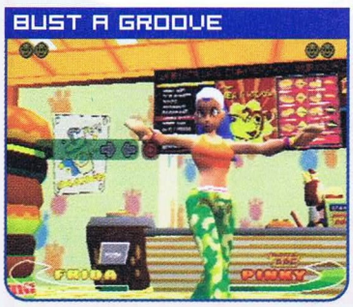
BUYER'S GUIDE

Station Magazine has formed the Buyer's Guide to give you, the reader, an idea about the games that have been released over recent months. Use this as a guide when buying your PlayStation software.









360

PUBLISHER:	Cryo
GENRE:	Futuristic Racing
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	6

An average racing game about futuristic vessels whipping up a wet storm along river circuits. Reminiscent of WipEout with its colours and weaponry.

A BUGS LIFE

PUBLISHER:	Disney Interactive
GENRE:	Platforms
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	7

Quite a charming little platform title, whose visuals are strikingly faithful to those of the movie. A tad simple for the more experienced gamers, but it's ideal for the littlies.

AFL '99

PUBLISHER:	EA
GENRE:	Sports
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	7

Uses an interesting graphics technique whereby the players have polygonal torsos and sprites for limbs. The poor frame rate lets it down.

AIRONAUTS

PUBLISHER:	Jack of all Games
GENRE:	Flying Gameshow
PRICE:	A$69.95/NZ$119.95
SCORE:	3

You play a criminal trying to redeem yourself by risking your life in an aironautic arena. Avoid.

AKUJI THE HEARTLESS

PUBLISHER:	Eidos Interactive
GENRE:	Adventure
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	7

A decent mixture of platforming fun with Lara-style puzzles. The game is reminiscent of Soul Reaver, only it's not executed quite as well.

ANNA KOURNIKOVA

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Tennis
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$69.95
SCORE:	8

A deep tennis game with all the charm and playability of the first Smash Court. Cute characters and amusing animations breathe life into the stale genre of videogame tennis.

APE ESCAPE

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	3D Platform
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$79.95
SCORE:	10

A superb adventure for younger gamers, or anyone with an itch to go catch some monkeys. The first game to be exclusively used with a Dual Shock controller, it isn't even compatible with a standard controller at all. Colourful, action-packed and huge, Ape Escape will enchant all ages.

APOCALYPSE

PUBLISHER:	Activision
GENRE:	Platforms
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	7

An average sci-fi action shooter for most people, this game is also the most decent Robotron revival in recent history. It's got excellent graphics, excellent sounds, great sound effects - it's a recipe for a blockbuster game, only it's let down by the loose controls. Fans of Robotron and Bruce Willis (the star of the game) should check it out.

BEAST WARS

PUBLISHER:	Hasbro
GENRE:	Action
PRICE:	A$69.95/NZ$119.95
SCORE:	3

Transformers the cartoon ruled. Transformers the Movie ruled. Beast Wars was a questionable spin-off, but it was fine. The game, however, plays like a dog. No wild robot shoot-outs like in Ghost in the Shell or anything - just platforms. There is no justice .

BLOODY ROAR 2

PUBLISHER:	Ozisoft
GENRE:	3D Beat 'em up
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$109.95
SCORE:	9

An extremely fast fighter with very sharp graphics that unfortunately doesn't really improve on the first game too much. Nonetheless, it is a great fighting game and one for the collection of any fighting fanatic - especially a pet lover. Also one of the few 60fps fighters in the market.

BUGS BUNNY

PUBLISHER:	Ozisoft
GENRE:	3D Platform
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	6

Everyone's favourite wabbit stars in his own 3D platform title. Bugs looks surprisingly round for a polygonal character. It's not a bad game, but it's simplistic for veterans of the genre. Recommended for younger players.

BUST A GROOVE

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Dancing
PRICE:	A$69.95/NZ$79.95
SCORE:	8

The dancing title for your PlayStation. Your head will swim at the sight of the silky smooth graphics and your booty will bounce to the beat of the tunes. Two dance contestants take the stage and try to out-boogie each other with timing and skill. It is guaranteed to please any crowd, or even a small gaggle. If you can find it, buy it, for it is no longer in production.

CARMAGEDDON

PUBLISHER:	Ozisoft
GENRE:	Driving
PRICE:	A$89.95/NZ$109.95
SCORE:	8

A mighty fine conversion it is. Not for the squeamish, this game is filled with zombies, dismemberments, gore-filled car accidents, and a hapless wee lamb named Fifi who survives the destruction. Carmageddon is definitely for lovers of wild destruction and mayhem.

CRASH BANDICOOT 3

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	3D platform
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	10

The best reached a glorious climax with this beautiful game. Go scuba diving, fly an aeroplane, ride the tiger, hoon on a motorbike, pilot a spaceship and surf on a jetski! Crash Bandicoot: Warped is a platforming experience not to be missed by anyone. An absolute must for any platformer fan.

CRASH TEAM RACING

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Kart racing
PRICE:	A$69.95/NZ$79.95
SCORE:	10

A perfect MarioKart clone, CTR takes the silly karting genre to new heights of excellence with crazy weapons and wacky characters. Multitap compatible for four player fun.

DEMOLITION RACER

PUBLISHER:	Ozisoft
GENRE:	Destructive driving
PRICE:	A$59.95/NZ$69.95
SCORE:	4

An enjoyable yet ugly game about cars, with equal emphasis on racing them and thn smashing them. Features the destruction derby bowl right out of Destruction Derby 1 & 2, plus many racing tracks and modes.

DINO CRISIS

PUBLISHER:	Ozisoft
GENRE:	Horror
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	9

Jurassic Park meets Resident Evil. Play the curvaceous special forces babe Regina as you investigate an island research base where re-gened dinosaurs have run amok. Sharp graphics and a lingering sensation of menace make it the best game of its kind yet seen.

DRIVER

PUBLISHER:	GT Interactive
GENRE:	Driving
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	9

Think GTA, except in first person. This game puts you in the shoes of an undercover cop, and your missions involve high speed chases, bank robberies, getaways, and other forms of motor-head malarkey through the streets of America. A satisfying game in every respect.

EVERYBODY'S GOLF 2

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Golf
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	7

Worthy of a higher score for pure gameplay, but it was lowered due to the fact that it is almost identical to EG1. Cute, very playable and great for parties. One of the most underrated series of all time.

EHRGEIZ

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	3D fighting
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	9

Concocted in the minds of the best developers in Square and Namco, Ehrgeiz is the most advanced and complicated 3D fighting game ever made. Features a full RPG mode and several mini-games. Just brilliant.

FIFA 2000

PUBLISHER:	EA
GENRE:	Soccer
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	10

The absolute best soccer game of all time just got better. Superb lighting effects top the list if this year's improvements, with a superior framerate and higher polygon count adding to the joy. Look at this game for a nanosecond before buying.

FINAL FANTASY VIII

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Epic RPG
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	10

A better game than FFVII in every way, apart from the low-res battle backgrounds. With turn-based combat, hours of the world's best FMV and a never-ending plotline, this is a game that will hold any player still for months, if not years.

FORTY WINKS

PUBLISHER:	GT Interactive
GENRE:	Platform
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$89.95
SCORE:	6

A vaguely original platform game in which two children must search a number of dream realms to find the forty winks. Some nice ideas, but there are so many of these games anyway. And why oh why does the PlayStation version lack the co-operative mode while the N64 does not?

G POLICE 2

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Flying Shooter
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	6

In the dark, distant future crime is way out of control. G-Police 2 improves on the formula employed by the first game, with more weapons and vehicles to pilot, yet fails to offer either anything new, or a particularly rewarding experience.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

PUBLISHER:	Take2 Interactive
GENRE:	Criminal Acts
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$59.95
SCORE:	9

A splendid sequel that carries through Grand Theft Auto's tradition of ignoring the law in a big city. Plenty of *"you're nicked,"* and *"cor blimey!"* type language to suit the times plus the odd murder, kill frenzy and hit and run. Playing various bosses against each other is also a great new feature ingame.

GUNGAGE

PUBLISHER:	GT Interactive
GENRE:	3D Shooter
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	7

Run around in chunky environments blasting all that moves and many things that don't. An appreciable game for shoot-em-up devotees with some truly imaginative boss characters, but not for most people.

INTELLIVISION CLASSICS

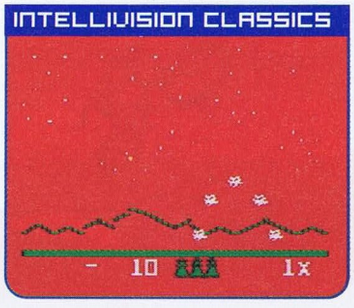
PUBLISHER:	Activision
GENRE:	Retro games
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	6

A collection of thirty-odd games from the old Intellivision console. Includes interviews with developers. Retro heads will love this title to death, but everyone else would just use the game as an expensive coaster.

JET RIDER 3

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Jetski Racing
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	4

The third Jet Rider in the series is almost identical to the first two: you race over all manner of surface, pulling off big stunts and using the electromagnetic poles to corner sharply. Colourful fun, sadly with a poor framerate and really dodgy controls.



KINGSLEY

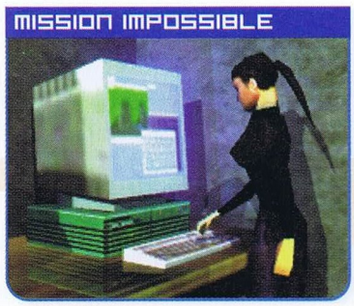
PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D platform
PRICE: A$89.95/NZ$119.95
SCORE: 3

Kingsley is Psygnosis' absolute worst game to date. Usually they are reliable developers but this really proves that platformers are not their forte.

KURUSHI FINAL

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Puzzle
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$69.95
SCORE: 8

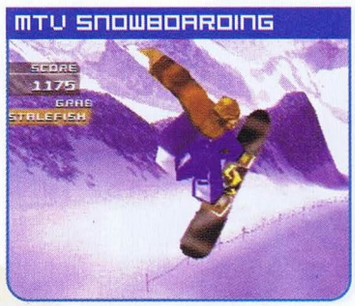
This is arguably one of the toughest puzzle games ever conceived on the PlayStation. If you loved the challenge of Devil Dice, or are a puzzle fan anyway, make this game your next stop. Very stylish and it supports two players.



LEGEND OF LEGAIA

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A$69.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 9

Legaia is a traditional RPG, programmed entirely in 3D. Its strong point is the tireless battle system which involves fists and feet as much as weapons and spells. The plot is also better than average and there are mini-games within the whole to keep players' interest up. Not exactly in the same vein as the Final Fantasy series, but definitely a thoroughly entertaining piece of work.



LEGEND OF KARTIA

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE: 8

A fantastic title for anyone who loved Vandal Hearts. It's a traditional turn-based strategy game with a wonderful storyline and excellent graphical effects. Some of us think it's better than Final Fantasy Tactics!

MADDEN NFL 2000

PUBLISHER: EA Sports
GENRE: Gridiron
PRICE: ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE: 9

Running at a surprisingly high frame rate all the time, Madden has the fluidity to please any eye. The graphics could be rounder on the whole, but the motion-captured animations of the many players on-screen will soothe any American football fan.

METAL GEAR SOLID

PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Tactical Action
PRICE: A$99.95/NZ$119.95
SCORE: 10

Probably the PlayStation's biggest name yet, Metal Gear Solid is subtitled *"Tactical Espionage Action"*, and it is just that. As an old spy dragged out of retirement for a mission the world depends upon, you must break into high-tech installations and rescue the hostages using whatever you can find lying around to help you out.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Action/Espionage
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 9

Slightly better than its N64 counterpart, MI features fake face skins that made the TV show so good. For running around doing missions, this is above average, but for fans, it's the closest you'll get to the real thing.

MONACO GP 2

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A$89.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 9

One of the best Formula 1 racing games available for PlayStation, MGP2 offers an excellent mix of graphics, sound and realistic gameplay that features an arcade mode for the beginners and simulation mode for the experts. This game comes very highly recommended.

MONKEY HERO

PUBLISHER: Take 2
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A$89.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 4

Monkey Hero should be given credit for trying to revitalise some interest in traditional 2D RPGs, but this game does more damage to the genre than actually helping it. With its strict linearity and simple puzzles, this is a game that would only suit younger players.

MTV SNOWBOARDING

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Snowboarding
PRICE: A$89.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 4

Another questionable snowboarding title to add to the growing pile. Thing is, it sucks. Don't touch it unless a gun's pointed at your head.

MUSIC 2000

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Musc application
PRICE: A$89.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 9

Not a game; a music maker. Sample your own sounds off any music CD - yes, using your PlayStation - and mix them into your own custom designed beat. A complete sound studio that no budding DJ should miss.

NBA LIVE '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Basketball
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$69.95
SCORE: 9

NBA Live '99 has everything a basketball fan needs in a videogame. The graphics and the gameplay have improved from NBA Live '98, and the depth of stats is incredible. The players also smile from time to time. Can't wait for NBA Live 2000.

NFL BLITZ 2000

PUBLISHER: Midway
GENRE: Gridiron
PRICE: ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE: 9

Blitz 2000 picks up where the original NFL Blitz wasn't even able to leave off, being the first Blitz game to hit our local shores. This game throws the rules out the door and turns it into a game of unabashed bone-crunching mayhem. An excellent game, even for non-fans of the big-time American sport.

NHL 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Ice Hockey
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$69.95
SCORE: 9

Simply the best in ice hockey, simply because of the Hit button, used to initiate violence in the rink. Great graphics and framerate; rich statistical data - this is the kind of game all hockey fans flock to.

NO FEAR BIKING

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Downhill cycling
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 8

The first game to take cycling seriously does a very good job. The handling and feel are substantially different to the physics of a car game. Overall, an oddly relaxing game with oodles of strategy, stunts and speed. And it comes with Hillous' personal seal of approval!

PAC MAN WORLD

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D platform
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$129.95
SCORE: 5

Alas, poor Pacman, we knew him well. Now he is fashionably 3D, making him the star of a mediocre platform game. On the other hand, the retro-heads seem to really like the game. Check it out, if you can be bothered.

POPULOUS THE BEGINNING

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE: 8

Get to play God in this 3D civilisation simulation. It remains much the same as all of the other Populous titles were before this, but is tweaked in the name of PlayStation playability. Everything is 3D, for example, which might be considered good...

POY POY 2

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Party Game
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$119.95
SCORE: 8

With a multitap this game can't be beat. All you have to do is throw some rocks and other dangerous articles at your varied competitors in a small arena. That's basically the aim of the game! There is a good sense of humour in this that makes for a great fun game.

RAINBOW 6

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: Action/Espionage
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 9

An excellent spy-like thriller that will require more than just gunpowder to play. Smart enemies and a team of many to commandeer makes it a winner over the likes of Quake 2.

READY 2 RUMBLE

PUBLISHER: Playcorp
GENRE: Boxing
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 8

The most accessible boxing game for PlayStation yet. Immemorable titles include Knock Out Kings and Victory Boxing - R2R blows them out of the water, but the graphics are still a bit patchy. It's the best boxing game since Mike Tyson's Punch Out on the NES... no biting please!

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

PUBLISHER: Namco
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$89.95
SCORE: 8

On one hand, the game's physics and mechanics are well executed through the JogCon. On the other hand, the game is far too easy to sustain any challenge. Should've been a 10, but it let is down.

ROLLCAGE

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$89.95
SCORE: 9

'No rules racing'. In the future, cars are created with the ability to flip onto their roof and keep driving. Add to that a host of diabolical weapons, hidden routes on every track and destructible scenery and you have Rollcage. An amazing game.

RONIN BLADE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Action/adventure
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$89.95
SCORE: 9

A story of a ronin samurai and female ninja with Resident Evil-esque backdrops. Lovely graphics, good storyline. Features a battle system with customisable combos, but more importantly the dynamic sex appeal that made The X Files such a hit.

RUGRATS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Multi-format
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$109.95
SCORE: 7

Rugrats is possibly the best choice around at the moment for the young gamers. It also features a variety of different minigames that are simple and enjoyable as well. The game is presented colourfully and is hugely enjoyable as long as you are young at heart.

SHADOW MADNESS

PUBLISHER: Crave
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE: 7

A competent RPG from America to rival the likes of the best of Japan. A slightly more emotionally powerful storyline to what you would normally expect, with all the spells and stats you would want to poke a stick at. The cool battle system makes it worthwhile, but it's really hard to look past what a rip off it is of the Final Fantasy series.

SHADOWMAN

PUBLISHER: Acclaim
GENRE: Morbid Platformer
PRICE: A$79.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE: 7

Has a gripping storyline, one or two new ideas, and manages to breathe sufficient life into this tired old genre to keep most people playing to the end. Like Tomb Raider minus the bosom with much better voice-acting. Not to mention sinister Voodoo imagery.

SHAO LIN

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Fighting sim
PRICE: A$89.95/NZ$119.95
SCORE: 5

A confused title that doesn't know whether it's a fighting sim or an RPG adventure in feudal China. Lack of a decent plot relegates it to the former. Supports up to eight players at once with a multitap.

SILENT HILL

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Horror Adventure
PRICE: A$89.95/NZ$109.95
SCORE: 8

A truly petrifying thriller with astounding cinematography. It is let down by its weak characters, sometimes too dark settings and lack of plot direction. Still, it is guaranteed to deliver many shivers for those who really want to wet their pants. This is true intelligent horror.

SILICON VALLEY

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: 3D Platformer
PRICE: ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE: 9

This free-roamer is made compelling by its novel idea of letting you control any of a huge number of different droids on a space hulk. Puzzles and exploration, sheep on springs, dogs with rockets, and lethal polar bears keep the interest high in this cartoony update of Paradroid.

SMURFS

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Platform
PRICE: ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE: 7

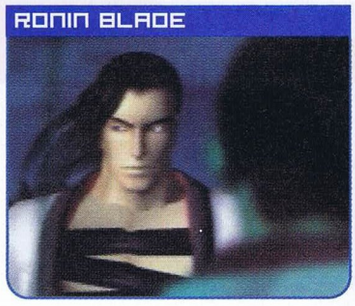
A bog standard platform game that pretends to be 3D but isn't, resulting in blocky graphics and a linear game. The reputation is what will sell the game, but most people would probably prefer a game like Klonoa.

PAC MAN WORLD

RAINBOW 6

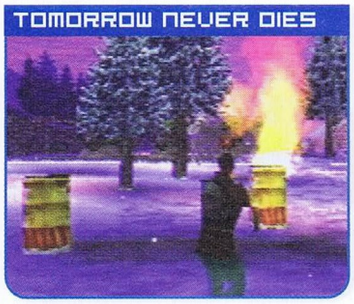
READY 2 RUMBLE

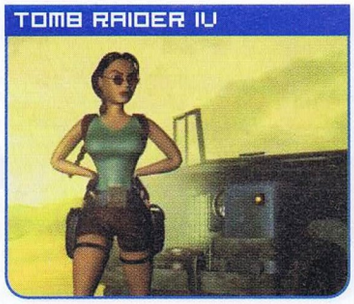
RONIN BLADE

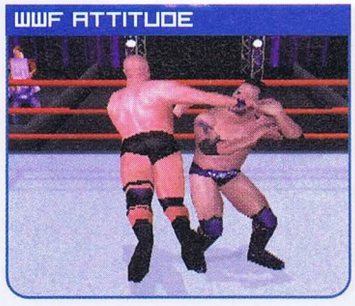


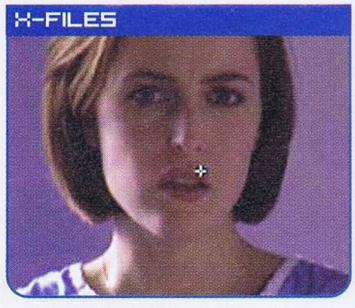
SHAO LIN

SMURFS









SOUL REAVER

PUBLISHER:	Ozisoft
GENRE:	3D RPG/Adventure
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$109.95
SCORE:	9

In this gothic tale of the supernatural you play an ex-vampire turned soul reaver. Brooding and extremely well-spoken, this game is huge, with superlative graphics and a cool story. Even the loading screens are disguised as eerie cinematic sequences.

SPACE INVADERS

PUBLISHER:	Activision
GENRE:	Shooting
PRICE:	A$69.95/NZ$89.95
SCORE:	5

The game of old returns in 3D, but it's not really any better than the 21-yr-old original. The addition of two player mode and special weapons save the game, but the bosses still suck. Naturally, it is in pseudo 3D. If you finish the whole thing you unlock the original version, that was obviously a move to assure the "real" game would be played at all.

SPEED FREAKS

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Racing
PRICE:	A$69.95/NZ$TBA
SCORE:	8

A racing game for up to four players simultaneously, by way of a quartered split screen. There are plenty of weapons, and speed-ups, which show how much Sony drew from Nintendo's Mario Kart to create this little winner. A pity then that it's completely outclassed by Crash Team Racing.

SPORTS CAR GT

PUBLISHER:	Activision
GENRE:	Racing
PRICE:	A$69.95/NZ$89.95
SCORE:	5

A truly appalling title that, amazingly, we still see shop attendants recommending to people. The mind boggles.

SYPHON FILTER

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Tactical Espionage
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ TBA
SCORE:	9

Syphon Filter is the game for all you guys left wanting more after Metal Gear Solid. It's viewed over the shoulder, like Tomb Raider, but it has much better controls and heaps of weaponry to play with. Great espionage action.

TOMB RAIDER IV

PUBLISHER:	Eidos
GENRE:	3D Platform
PRICE:	A$89.95/NZ$119.95
SCORE:	9

The latest and greatest adventure starring Lara Croft, this game goes back to basics by providing smarter graphics, smarter level designs, and a training mode where you get to see Lara in her sumptuous youth as a 16 year old. Don't miss it!

TONY HAWK

PUBLISHER:	Activision
GENRE:	Skateboarding
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	10

Superb, sublime, exquisite, exemplary, amazing, astounding, enthralling and excellent. Tony Hawk supervised the creation of this fine game and the results bring tears to the eyes. You'll be ollying into seventh heaven. Vast environments, superlative graphics, and the soundtrack could have been taken from any thrasher's walkman. Hours of bliss.

TRIPLE PLAY 2000

PUBLISHER:	EA
GENRE:	Baseball
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	8

Terrific graphics and splendid gameplay make Triple Play 2000 the only choice for you if you want to add a baseball sim to your PlayStation collection.

UM JAMMER LAMMY

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Rhythm/Dance
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	9

The splendid sequel to Parappa has more than thrice the songs, plus extra modes for two player rapping and jamming action. Unfortunately the PAL release was slightly edited due to dangerous references to death and philosophy, but it still maintains its spontaneous Japanese style. If you never discovered Parappa, go out and discover Lammy now.

V RALLY 2

PUBLISHER:	Ozisoft
GENRE:	Rally Racing
PRICE:	A$89.95/NZ$99.95
SCORE:	10

The fastest rally racer on the PSX, VR2 creams Colin McRae, Rally Cross and its own prequel. A comprehensive track editor adds countless circuits to the already whopping 92 available, and there are all the upgrade and set-up options you could shake an oil stick at. Even the four player split screen mode works as smooth as Cassanova Frankenstein. This is a fan favourite, and rightly so.

WIP3OUT

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Futuristic
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$89.95
SCORE:	8

Much flatter, greyer, smoother but some might say not as much fun. The only thing that makes it worth buying over 2097 is the split-screen and link-up options, allowing for four player frolics. Wip3out's frame rate is exceptionally smooth, even in the multiplayer races. The soundtrack is the traditional hardcore techno, now more trancey and consistent than before.

WWF ATTITUDE

PUBLISHER:	GT Interactive
GENRE:	Wrestling
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	8

Attitude features a great wrestler maker. This Create-a-wrestler mode is the most innovative feature we've seen in a wrestling game to date, allowing you to custom design almost anyone that you can think of, right down to tattoos, hairbands and obesity. Plus there are over 25 modes of play for single and multiplayer mayhem.

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

PUBLISHER:	EA
GENRE:	Action/Adventure
PRICE:	ATBA/NZTBA
SCORE:	8

Not unlike Tomb Raider, or Tenchu, this third-person action game pits you as Xena against an army of leather-clad nasties. Kick, slash, or use that death frisbee of hers! You can actually steer the thing towards the codpiece of your nearest enemy (they're all men of course). Xena: Warrior Princess is not really an amazing game, but is lots of medieval fun. Like the TV show, you get to rescue terrorised innocents and deal justice unto their evil-doers.

X-FILES

PUBLISHER:	Sony
GENRE:	Investigative adventure
PRICE:	A$79.95/NZ$109.95
SCORE:	6

A sometimes slow game based on video sequences, starring Scully, Mulder and many other characters from the TV show. Was written and produced by the main man Chris Carter.

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PLAYSTATION MAC PC-CDROM CHAT SEGA ARCADE NINTENDO 64

the critics' circle

This is where the Station crew take a step back and look at the big picture. The Critic's Circle is a forum where we hammer out issues that arise in the world of PlayStation gaming. This month we discuss: Has gameplay taken a back seat to graphics?

The debate is older than the PlayStation itself. The issue at hand: whether or not game developers are settling for dazzling us with pretty graphics at the expense of imaginative game designs. Let's face it: people gawk at bright lights. That's why people flock to see the fireworks or hang out in the city overnight. By the same token, that's why special effects movies and grand FMV sequences are so popular - and yet as far as videogames go, you know that you do nothing at all to interact with it. You just watch it.

Ironically, pretty graphics are the ultimate marketing tool. When you walk into a shop, it is more than likely that you are going to buy the glossiest game that is on the premises. Let's be honest: how many of you wrote off GTA2 as pixellated 2D bollocks, and opted instead for Final Fantasy VIII (because of the cool opening movie) or Tomb Raider 4 (because she is a chick with big chest-puppies)?

Anyone who picked up GTA2 *'knows'* that it's a more original, creative, and interesting game to play. Anyone who picked up FF8 or TR4 wouldn't know any better, save that they rode a wave of popularity and spent $80 in order to be a member of a specific consumer demographic. These are the people who say *"I've got [insert game title]. How come you haven't got it?"*.

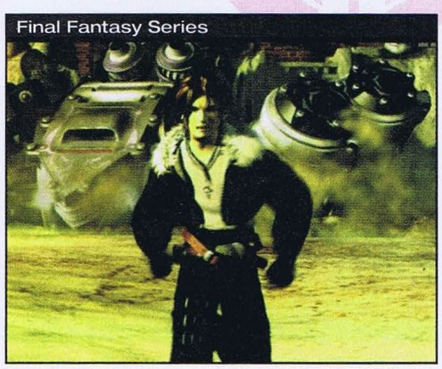
With the PlayStation 2 and its massive processing capabilities less than a year away from release, one has to wonder which direction games of the future will take. Make no mistake: without exception, every person in the office stained their pants at the sight of Munch's Oddysee, The Bouncer, Ridge Racer V, and Gradius 4. The question now is whether or not these games will continue the fine tradition of creative gameplay.

The alternative is the loathsome possibility that all game developers will bow to the disturbing trend of late of *"mainstreaming"* the games. That is, dumbing down the games and making them much prettier so that the people who ordinarily wouldn't be interested in games might buy it. It will make more money for the developers, but it will sure make the dedicated gamers amongst us unhappy.

the suspects this month are!

final fantasy series

Let's face it. If you were ever under the impression that you had to look at pixellated characters against 2D backdrops with copious amounts of text and repetitive battles 100% of the time, you wouldn't have bought it. But you were sold by the great FMVs, and now that you have seen them all, the likelihood of you ever picking the game up again is virtually nil. How is that for value?
This is a sad indicator of just how valuable FMVs are to the marketability of a game. The quality of this veritable window dressing can make all the difference in the success of a game. Just imagine: Final Fantasy, without the FMVs. That's pretty much what most other RPGs are in the market anyway. Is its success fair?


Final Fantasy Series

Abe's Oddysee

abe's oddysee

A diamond in the roth. *Abe's Oddysee* is one of the handful of 2D games on the PlayStation to enjoy mainstream success, in spite of the fact that its graphics were clearly not as appealing as, say, Spyro or Ape Escape. Instead, Abe managed to win the hearts of countless people throughout the world for its creativity, attention to detail, and wry satirical humour.
It is also one of the few games that encouraged you to use a little bit of common sense, exercise some lateral thinking - the simplicity of which had you constantly coming back for more. This is gaming addictiveness in its purest form. Abe's Oddysee is a game that should be championed by all true gamers.

shen mue - dreamcast

Sega have been touting this game as its be-all and end-all flagship title, pretty much staking the success of its shaky new Dreamcast system on this very game. Now, we wouldn't be doing our jobs if we didn't get a Dreamcast to see what the competition is doing; and we've actually got a final copy of the game.

Our verdict? Graphics 100, Gameplay 12. For the most part, you just walk around and gawk at the luscious surroundings. If you get to an action sequence, all you do is press a button when you see it flashing on the screen. Honestly, this is just a poor excuse for a new Space Ace or Dragon's Lair, which we all thought died back in the 80s. Guess we were wrong.

Shen Mue - Dreamcast

NEXT EDITION

Loads of goodies in next month's issue of station!

RESIDENT EVIL 3

Making zombies cool. We waited, and we waited. Finally, it's here, and we have got the full low-down on Capcom's latest installment to the Resident Evil series. Also be sure to check our feature on the rise and rise of the Survival Horror genre!

COOL BOARDERS 4

Sony's flagship snow-based slip slope slider is back for its fourth installment, bringing with it more jumps, more tricks, more stunts, and disturbingly phat air. Tune in next month as we bring you the low-down.

THE ULTIMATE GAMING LAIR

Think you've got a big TV? Got yourself 5.1 channel surround sound? Do you know what we're talking about? Next month, we will reveal the secrets behind constructing the ultimate gaming lair. You'll impress your mates, annoy your neighbours, and most important of all, you'll knock yourself out.

also coming next month!

Die Hard Trilogy 2, PlayStation 2, Vagrant Story, American Pie and Austin Powers 2 on DVD, priceless deleted scenes, games we'd rather forget, and much more!

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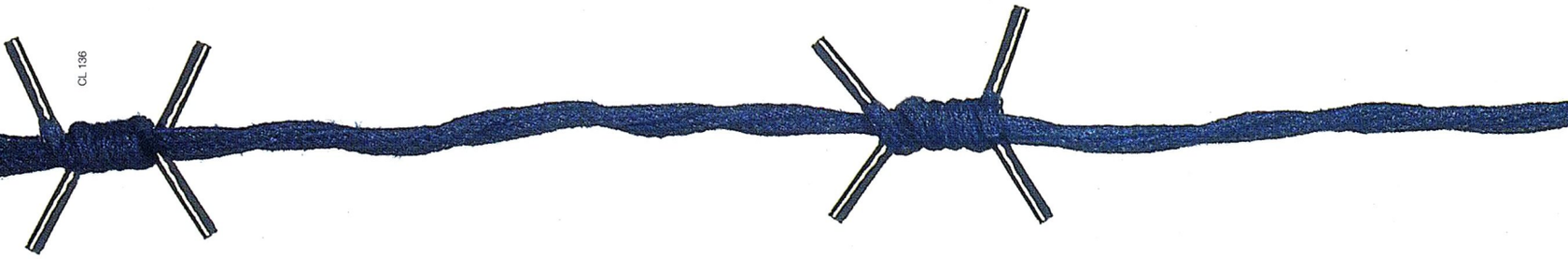

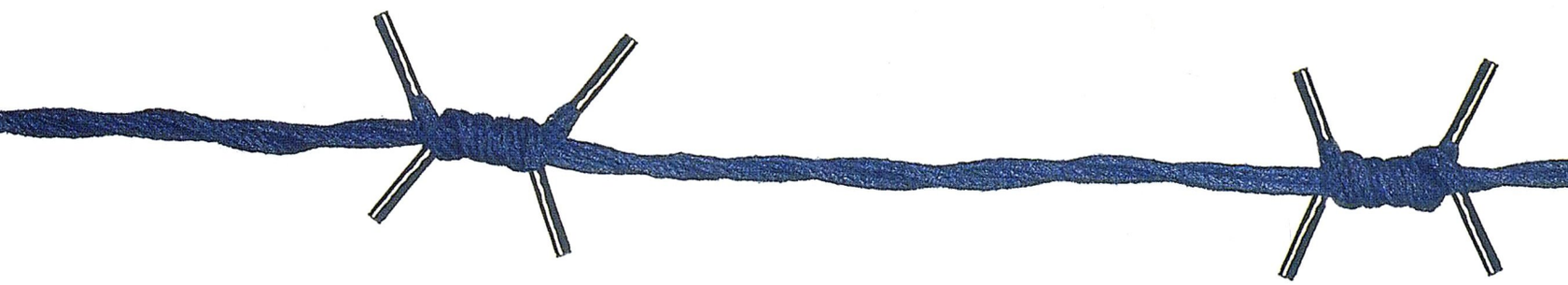

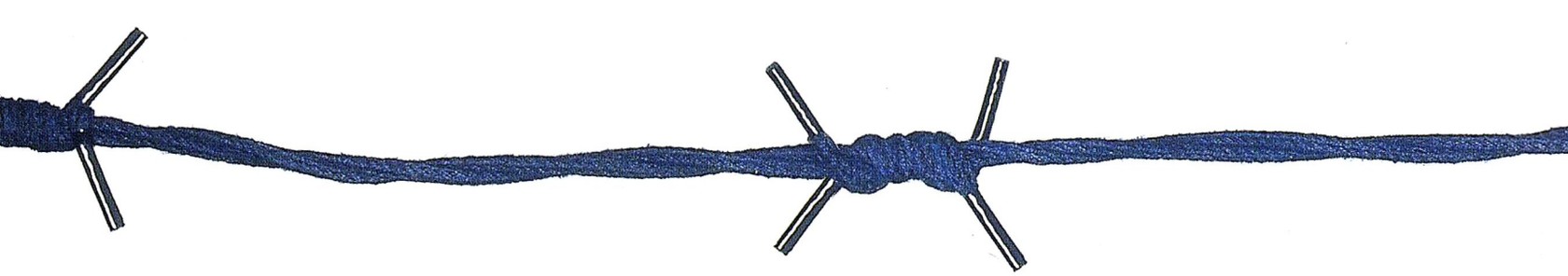

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