P3Zine

Issue 6 | September 2007

Free Magazine For PlayStation 3 Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008

Meet the real Lord of the rings...



FIRST LOOK

Lair

All the facts on this stunning game



SPECIAL REPORT

P3Zine's 50 Most Wanted

All the PS3 games heading your way

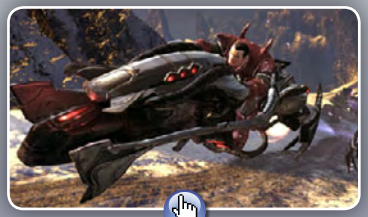


MASSIVE REVIEW

Darkness

Read the definitive verdict inside...

LATEST NEWS



UNREAL TOURNAMENT 3

Another PS3 exclusive



LITTLEBIGPLANET

The most original game ever?



METAL GEAR SOLID 4

The year of the snake

PLUS! MORE INSIDE...

Welcome to P3Zine



We're entering one of the most important times for the PlayStation 3. This Christmas period will define who's going to lead the next-generation console race and who's going to be an also-ran. And we can't help but feel that it's the PS3 that's going to come out on top.

Take a look down the list of exclusive titles and you'll see what we mean: Killzone 2, Gran Turismo 5 Prologue, Unreal Tournament III, Metal Gear Solid 4 and Uncharted, among many others. It seemed like the perfect time to round them all up and so we've compiled this, the 50 Most Wanted PS3 games.

More than that though, we've also got an exclusive look at WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008, a massive review of The Darkness and an in-depth look at Lair.

Enjoy the issue!

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
p3zine@gamerzines.com

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

MEET THE TEAM

Take it from us – what they don't know about PlayStation 3 really isn't worth knowing



Chris Schilling
Our PS3 workaholic found 50 games you'll want to play.



Lee Hart
Lee embraced his dark side this month and kinda liked it.



Ian Morris
Ian is in touch with his feminine side, hence this hat.

DON'T MISS!

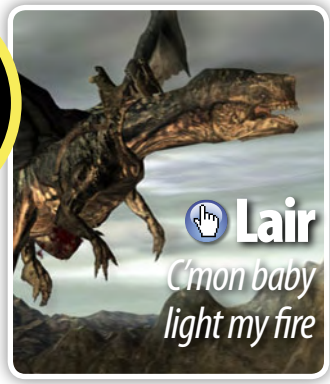
This month's highlights...

Every New Game Reviewed



WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2008

We talk to the people behind one of the biggest games of the year



Lair

C'mon baby light my fire



LittleBigPlanet

Trust us, you've never seen anything like this



The Darkness

Something evil this way comes...

P3Zine's 50 Most Wanted

Read it now!

We reveal the finest 50 PS3 games coming your way...

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

Unreal Tournament III
LittleBigPlanet
Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots
InFamous
LocoRoco
Rock Band
Top Spin 3
Silent Hill V
Resident Evil 5
WipEout HD
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008
Lair
Darkness
Grim Grimoire
Warriors Orochi
Nucleus



PLUS! *The best of the Blu-ray releases reviewed!*





Publisher: Midway
Developer: Epic Games
Heritage: Gears of War
Link: www.unrealtournament3.com
ETA: November 2007



An entire core of the PS3's Cell processor is used just to calculate the woman's breast physics. Fact. Actually, that's a lie.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Unreal Tournament 3

Unreal Tournament 3

LATEST NEWS

The PS3 gets an Unreal exclusive, but not for long

What do we know?

Recently announced as a timed PS3 exclusive, we know that this Christmas, the only place you'll be able to get your hands on some rocket-launching, tank-driving, flak-cannon opponent-shredding action is on that shiny black box sitting in front of your TV.

Does it do anything special?

Apart from being the best multiplayer FPS of recent years, it's also recently been announced that UT 3 will feature support for user-created mods (add ons), and allow you to download all new levels, characters, and possibly even entirely new modes to your PS3, all completely free of charge. Even better is the news that you won't have to go trawling around the Internet to find your mods, as the game comes with a built-in browser, allowing you to upload and download custom content at your own will. Being fragged by Postman Pat? It's now possible on PS3.

"Unreal Tournament 3 will feature support for user-created mods"



In the PS3 version, there are going to be more vehicles per map than on PC, to let us console gamers create maximum carnage.



The SIXAXIS's tilt sensing capabilites are to be put to use on things like these hoverbikes, which you can steer by tilting the controller.

Anything else to declare?

As it's the next instalment in the Unreal Tournament series, you can expect to find the same blistering gameplay that the series is now famous for, along with a few PS3-specific tweaks, such as SIXAXIS tilt-sensing controls, and a larger number of vehicles per map to play with.

40 maps, 24 players, and thousands and thousands of frags over the PSN, all set to launch this November, and all exclusive to PS3. Get in there.

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5 OUT OF 5
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9.1 OUT OF 10
IGN

9.0 OUT OF 10
PRO-G

9.0 OUT OF 10
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LittleBigPlanet

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Media Molecule
Heritage: Rag Doll Kung-Fu
Link: www.mediamolecule.com/games.html
ETA: Spring 08

Your world, your rules – let your imagination run wild

LATEST NEWS



We're beginning to wonder if Sony are spying on us, as that looks like a perfect rendition of our editor in the morning.

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

What is it?

This is one of the most original games of this generation, LittleBigPlanet is an innovative little title that's divided into three main parts: Play, Create and Share. A pseudo-platformer with an emphasis on cute playability and a cast of dolls with strange haircuts, it's certainly looking to be, well, very 'unique'.

So, what's new?

Recently, we've seen a little bit more of the 'Create' phase of LittleBigPlanet – the part that'll let you make, and play through your own levels with your friends. And brilliantly, it looks really easy to use, utilising a simple drag and drop interface that's based entirely in-game, and will let you and up to three friends create a level, together.

A recent trailer we saw showed just how simple it was to get to grips with, as you can drag, rotate, chop, bevel and trim standard pieces until you're left with exactly what you want. We saw a group of friends make a tank out of a simple square and a few circles. And when they hopped on-board the thing actually drove! It doesn't get much cooler than this.

When do we get to see more?

A demo is meant to be launching over the PSN later this year, along with a dual PSN and Blu-Ray release in early 2008. This really is going to be huge.



We watched someone make this in just a few seconds. If it's as easy to use as it looks, Sony are on to a winner.

"We saw a group make a tank out of a square and a few circles. And when they hopped on-board the thing actually drove!"



Bagpuss, a pile of bricks, and a strange, three-eyed, bearded stick-bloke wearing a top hat. Can this game get any cooler?

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Kojima Productions
Heritage: MGS3, MGS2
Link: www.metalgearsolid.com
ETA: Spring 08

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of MGS4: Guns of the Patriots



The whole gang is back for the final MGS, including Meryl and Raiden.

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

Snake's back for one last dance…

LATEST NEWS

So, what do we know?

Down for a simultaneous worldwide release in 2008, MGS4 is going to be giving Killzone 2 a run for its money as the biggest PS3 game of the year. Set in a war-torn country in the near future, MGS4 puts you into the wrinkled boots of a much older and wiser Solid Snake, as he embarks on his final mission, and the last game in the Metal Gear Solid series.

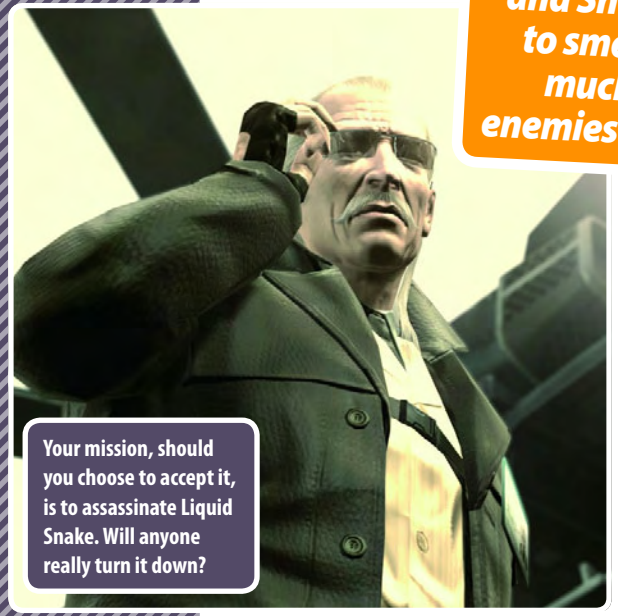
Lots more hour-long cut-scenes then?

Quite possibly. Metal Gear Solid games have always been famed for their intriguing – but somewhat confusing – storylines, and MGS4 is certainly looking to be no different. Hideo Kojima himself has even promised that MGS4 is set to wrap up all of the loose ends that the previous games have left, which is no mean feat considering that the series' plot line currently has more holes than a particularly moth-ridden piece of Swiss cheese.

What about the gameplay?

Recently, Kojima-san himself demoed 20 minutes of in-game MGS4 action, and a lot of info has been revealed. Apparently, the game can be played entirely in both first- and third-person perspectives, with your tilt-sensor being used to lean round corners. There's also a greater emphasis on realism – hide in a dumpster and Snake will begin to smell, making it much easier for enemies to detect him. Full preview soon…

"Hide in a dumpster and Snake will begin to smell, making it much easier for enemies to detect him"



Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to assassinate Liquid Snake. Will anyone really turn it down?



The trailer featured a sizzling sword fight between Raiden and Vamp - the only problem was, it all looked like it was a massive, uninteractive cut-scene. Not fun.

SEARCH P3Zine PRINT THIS PAGE ZOOM IN ZOOM OUT TOGGLE FULL SCREEN VIEW PREVIOUS PAGE NEXT PAGE



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INCOMING

P3Zine rounds up the big hitters coming to PS3...



InFamous

Publisher: SCEE | **ETA:** 2008

The new game from Sly Cooper creators Sucker Punch, InFamous is a weird one. Similar to the 360's Crackdown (at least in the gameplay stakes), InFamous puts you into the shoes of a guy with super powers in a dystopian sandbox city, to cause as much trouble, or do as much good as you like.

LocoRoco PS3

Publisher: SCEE | **ETA:** November

This one's been heavily rumoured for a while, turning up in such bizarre places as Home's trophy cabinet, but now it's finally been made official. Bringing its unique brand of smiley faced, yellow blobbed fun to the PSN sometime later this year, LocoRoco will feature some 200 characters and make full use of the PS3's tilt-sensing controllers.





Rock Band

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** December

Guitar Hero III has better be watching its back, as Rock Band is looking better all the time. Developed by Harmonix, the creators of the first two Guitar Hero games, Rock Band lets you and your mates play in a digital band, with guitars, drums and a microphone. The perfect blend of music and lyrics outside of a Hugh Grant film? We'll find out soon.

Top Spin 3

Publisher: 2K Sports | **ETA:** Spring 2008

The only true challenger to Virtua Tennis 3's crown, Top Spin 3 will be heading to PS3 early next year. With a focus on realism and new character creation tools that include a free-form tattoo editor, we're looking forward to playing against a host of inappropriately tattooed muscle men next spring.





Silent Hill V

Publisher: Konami | **ETA:** Summer 2008

Silent Hill V follows the story of Alex Shepherd, a war veteran who's searching for his younger brother, ending up in (where else?) Silent Hill. Signalling a return to the visual direction of Silent Hill 2, with a soundtrack composed by series legend Akira Yamaoka, this is very high on our most wanted list.



Resident Evil 5

Publisher: Capcom | **ETA:** 2008

With a brief new trailer shown at E3, Resident Evil 5 is slowly getting closer to becoming a reality. Rumoured to be set in Africa, the lead character is once again played by Chris Redfield from Resident Evil 1. Oh, and the Umbrella Corporation are back…

WipEout HD

Publisher: SCEE | **ETA:** December

New from Studio Liverpool, WipEout is set to make its next-gen debut over the PSN before the end of the year. Rumoured to be an HD upgrade of WipEout Pulse, the game's looking gorgeous, with all sorts of fancy bump-mapped tracks.



IN THE PIPELINE

SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER	SPRING
STUNTMAN August	**FIFA 08** September	**SEGA RALLY** November	**TEKKEN 6** Q1 2008
SINGSTAR August	**DiRT** September	**ALONE IN THE DARK** November	**MGS4** Q1 2008



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XBOX 360 LIVE



Publisher: THQ
Developer: Yuke's
Heritage: The SmackDown series
Link: www.smackdownvsraw.com
ETA: 9 November

HANDS ON

SmackDown vs Raw 2008

Featuring ECW

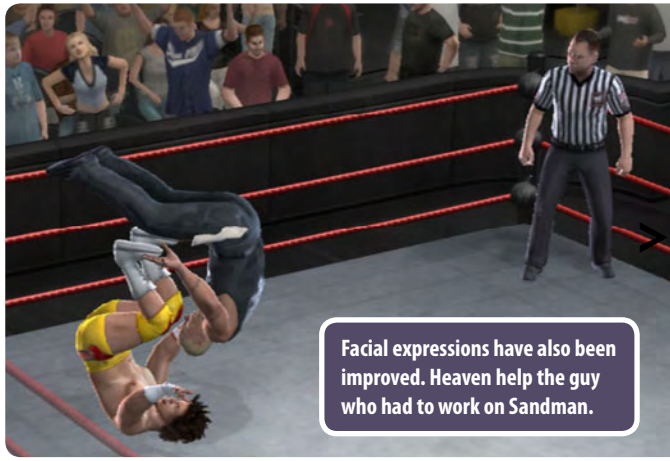
We go hands-on with the latest SmackDown game, as WWE (and ECW) invade PS3

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

"Flaming barbed-wire baseball bats, dual burning tables – oh my!"

When Good ol' JR uttered the phrase "Tables, ladders and chairs – oh my!", we can bet he had no idea that his vision of extreme would be completely outdated by 2007. When recording the commentary for this year's vision of SmackDown vs Raw, the world's most successful wrestling franchise of all time, perhaps we'll be hearing him yelling "Flaming barbed-wire baseball bats, dual burning tables – oh my!" instead, as these are by far the deadliest weapons you'll come across in this year's game. It's also a clear indication of the exciting direction that the series is taking.

As a new addition for 2008, THQ were quick to shout from the rooftops (literally) about the Extreme rules match type, which is where both of the deadly weapons we >



Facial expressions have also been improved. Heaven help the guy who had to work on Sandman.



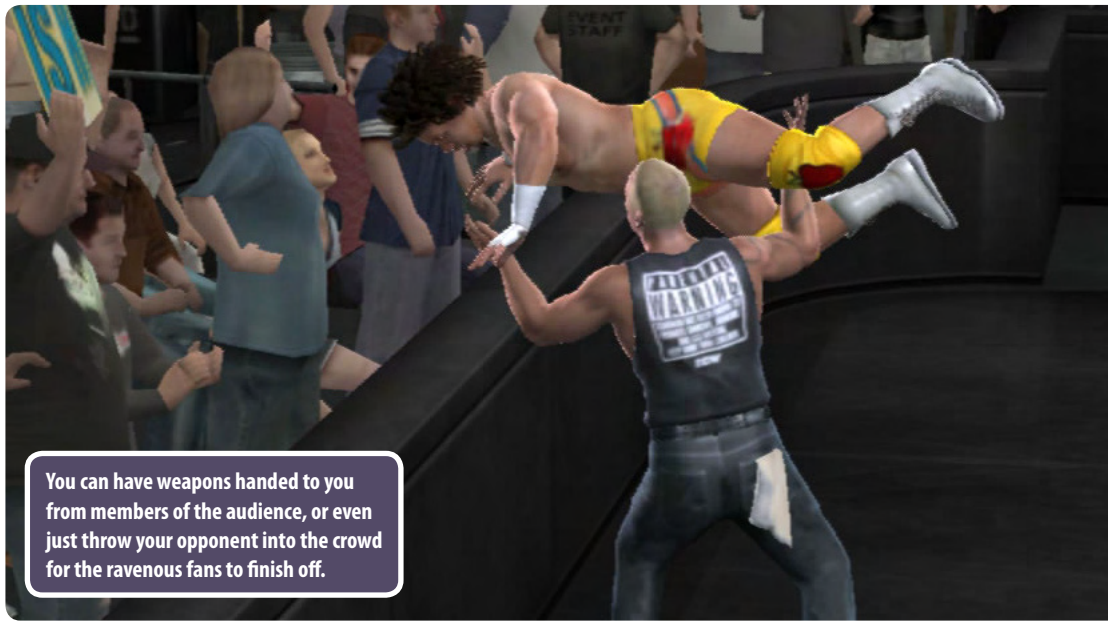
>SmackDown continued

mentioned above can be found. In this match, as you may have guessed if you follow WWE (or ECW), there are basically no rules, and any weapons are permitted. Before beginning the match, you can even choose what weapons you have available to you, from two-by-fours, to dustbins, steel chairs, and even – as we mentioned previously – flaming barbed-wire baseball bats and stacked burning tables. To quote ECW commentator Joey Styles: "Oh. My. God!"

Mano-a-mano

While we didn't get the chance to go hands-on with the Career or Create-a-Wrestler modes (although we did ask, the extra game modes weren't quite ready at that time), we had plenty of chance to take part in numerous one-on-one bouts across a variety of different matches.

As you might expect, the game is looking rather nice on PS3, and if you've just made the jump to next gen without seeing the 360 version of last year's game, you're in for a treat. Each wrestler sweats, bleeds and grapples in a much more refined way than before, thanks to an all-new animation system, and looks even better than before. We wouldn't be surprised at all if we found out Carlito's afro alone had more polygons in it than an entire wrestler on the older PS2 SmackDown games.



You can have weapons handed to you from members of the audience, or even just throw your opponent into the crowd for the ravenous fans to finish off.

"Each wrestler sweats, bleeds and grapples in a much more refined way"

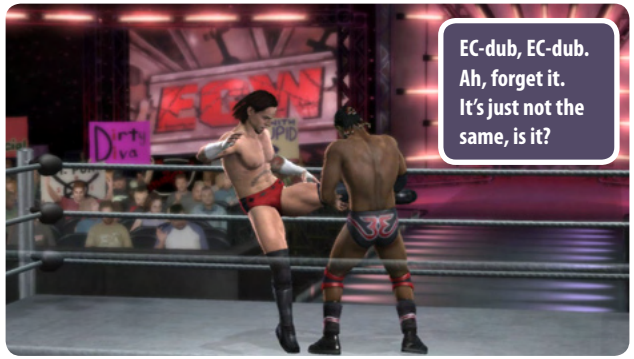


The presentation feels more gritty this year, and as a result, the game feels more involved.

Some kind of Superstar

By far the biggest change to be implemented this year is the Superstar fighting styles. While we were initially sceptical as to how much these would affect the gameplay, we're pleased to report that it actually does make things feel very different – as well as adding a lot more strategy to each encounter by giving each character a number of different special abilities you have to try and counter.

For example, if you're playing as the masked wonder Rey Mysterio, you can now bounce off the ropes with reckless abandon and lay a cunning trap known as a 'Possum >



EC-dub, EC-dub. Ah, forget it. It's just not the same, is it?



Sweet chin music? Looks more like his neck to me...



>SmackDown continued

Pin', which lures your opponent in, before pinning them in a quick roll-up. Powerhouse wrestlers like Bobby Lashley have the power to simply muscle out of every pin attempt until you weaken their arms, and upon the press of a button they can go into a special rampage-type mode, where they take no damage from any hits whatsoever.

First impressions

Being in the privileged position to have played the game extensively and get a strong initial impression of how well it stacks up on PS3, we're delighted to see the new options, stunning graphics and amazing new touches and flare. It's clear that WWE fans are going to utterly love it.

Having said that, the early build of the game we played was prone to the odd spot of dodgy collision detection (for example, during our ladder match between Jeff Hardy and Rey Mysterio we found our wrestlers getting stuck on the ladders which were scattered around the ring) and there was also a spot of slowdown in places, but we're fully confident in THQ and Yuke's (long-time developers of the SmackDown series) to be able to iron out the niggles and create a wrestling game that sets a new standard for the other fighting games to beat.



Ken Kennedy pulls off a big back bodydrop…

"It's clear that WWE fans are going to utterly love it"



Ouch! That's dirty.



All the sets from the big shows have been faithfully recreated too.

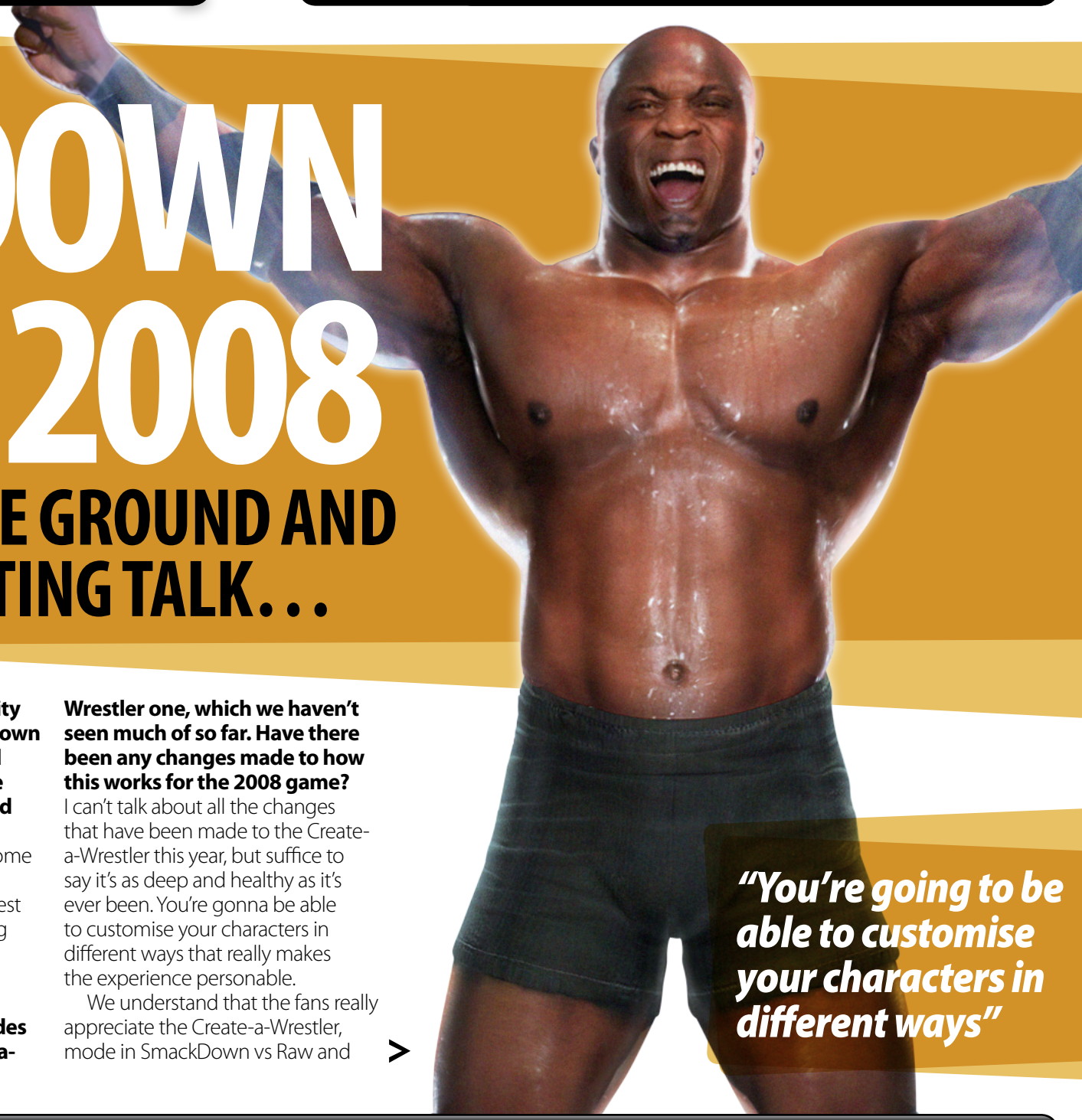
P3Zine

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
75%	85%

With a bit of polish this could be something special.

SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2008

WE WRESTLE THQ TO THE GROUND AND INDULGE IN SOME FIGHTING TALK...



After playing SmackDown vs Raw 2008 on PS3 for several hours, taking in every match type on offer and wrestling with each superstar that was available, we have to say we were pretty impressed with the way this year's game's turning out. To try and dig a little further, find out a few more details about this year's game and discover what lies ahead for the SmackDown series, we sat down with Keith Kirby, THQ's Vice President of Product Development, and asked him a few questions...

We've just had the opportunity to go hands-on with SmackDown vs Raw 2008, but what would you say is the biggest change between this year's game, and last year's instalment?
Well, this is the first year we've come out on PS3, which is obviously a huge deal for us. I'd say the biggest difference this year is the fighting styles, each of which has its own strengths and weaknesses.

One of the most popular modes in these games is the Create-a-Wrestler one, which we haven't seen much of so far. Have there been any changes made to how this works for the 2008 game?
I can't talk about all the changes that have been made to the Create-a-Wrestler this year, but suffice to say it's as deep and healthy as it's ever been. You're gonna be able to customise your characters in different ways that really makes the experience personable.

We understand that the fans really appreciate the Create-a-Wrestler, mode in SmackDown vs Raw and >

"You're going to be able to customise your characters in different ways"



Carlito's Backcracker looks especially nasty.



The wrestlers' faces have obviously received a lot of attention for 2008.

> Interview continued

we're finding from our testing that almost half the gamers play with their own character, and that shows that feature's super, super important.

Can you tell us if we'll be able to use our own songs on the hard drive as entrance music?
There's a chance, but it will be revealed later…

That was one of the things I really liked about the Xbox version, that you could use your own tune for your wrestler…
You can trust me when I say that the team realises that it's important for the users to be able to customise their experience as much as possible. You can create your own character, and create him in your own likeness, but although we can license some great songs, they might not be what your character needs.

You need to be able to bring your own music in. We understand there's a need for that, and I can't promise it this year, but trust me that we're looking at it very seriously.

Another side we haven't seen very much of is the online side of things. How have the online features evolved from SmackDown 2007 to 2008?
We haven't announced all of the features for online SmackDown yet, but suffice to say the PS3 version is going to have some very gracious online features. You're going to be able to match up against players and play exactly what you expect to be able to play.

One of the things we're looking forward to is the day when you get a persistent online community, and where you've got a Global champion…
Definitely. That's an absolutely spectacular feature, and we like that idea. One of the strengths of the WWE brand is the community that's built around the brand. We're constantly looking for ways we can leverage that fan base and make the product better. The idea of creating an online community around the game, whether it's SmackDown vs Raw, or another game (wink wink, nudge nudge)… we really like that idea, and we're definitely looking into that. >

"The PS3 version is going to have some very gracious online features"



When skydiving goes wrong…




You really have to see this moving to appreciate how good it looks.


Ken scrapes the boot across Flair's face.

> Interview continued

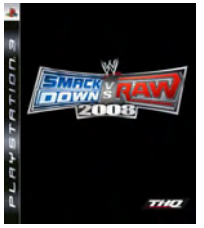
Is there any chance of downloadable content?
There is a chance, but I can't talk about that! Let me put it this way though, one of the strengths about the WWE brand is that it's ever-evolving. Every week the stories are changing, the characters are changing, and new things are added to the experience. Our game needs to figure out a way to support the moving brand underneath our feet, and it's something we're very dedicated to doing.

It's wonderful that our next-generation platforms – the PS3, the 360 and the Wii – are all connected to the Internet, as that gives us the chance to update the experience. I can't tell you today, but I promise you that we're looking into it.

It sounds like there's definitely interesting times ahead…
That's what I'm trying to convince everybody! I was at the WWE last week, and the whole day was spent on how we can expand the offering to the customers in order to make more products that the customers want to buy – different platforms, different gameplay styles – and it was a very positive meeting. Our game is as complete an experience in a videogame that exists. You look at any other game, and they don't have that much brand in it.

We've got a total of seventy characters, our storylines are written by WWE writers, the models look exactly like the superstars, our voiceovers are recorded – and also written, too – by the superstars themselves, so our game offers a very true WWE experience.

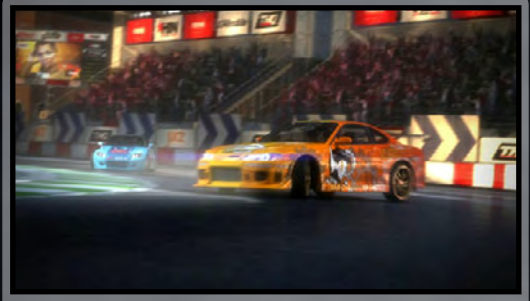
You've just mentioned WWE branding, but now WWE has access to the WCW and ECW back catalogue, is there any chance we'll be seeing legends from those two companies included in this year's game?
There's a very, very good chance of that indeed… ●



Publisher: THQ
Developer: Yuke's
Heritage: The SmackDown series
Link: www.smackdownvsraw.com
ETA: 9 November

"One of the strengths of the WWE brand is that it's ever-evolving. Each week the stories are changing"

IT'S ALL ABOUT... TO START



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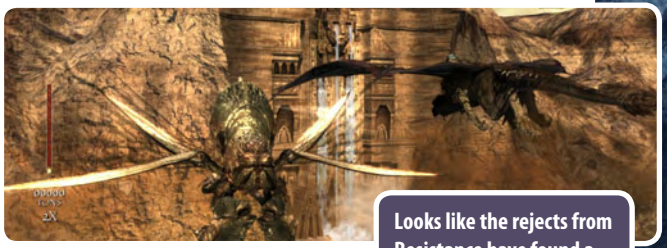
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Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Factor 5
Heritage: Rogue Squadron: Rebel Strike, Turrican
Link: www.us.playstation.com/Lair
ETA: October

HANDS ON

Lair



Looks like the rejects from Resistance have found a place to stay in Lair.

Fly into the world of dragons again, with the PS3's latest fantasy romp

For almost a decade, Factor 5 have been best known for their Star Wars Rogue Squadron series. So when the team announced they had a game in development for the PS3, many presumed that the Star Wars franchise had merely jumped ship, and that it would be us PS3 owners who were going to be treated to the first next-gen incarnation of the space sim series.

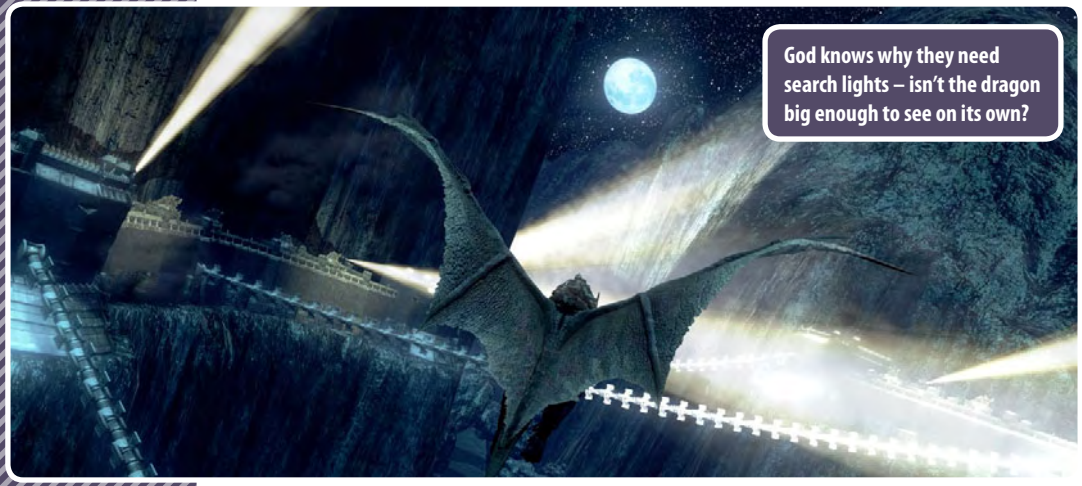
Imagine our surprise, when instead of an X-Wing, we see a huge dragon swooping across the screen. Where there once was space, there's now a beautifully visualised city, with cathedrals, bridges, waterfalls, and hundreds of townspeople. This is Lair, and from what we've seen so far, it's looking better than Rogue Squadron could ever have dreamed of.

We could have easily spent the entire preview telling you just how astounding Lair looks, but even if we were to spend the entire magazine waxing lyrical about it, we still wouldn't come close to capturing >



Some of the architecture in Lair is just immense.

"We could have easily spent the entire preview telling you how astounding Lair looks"



God knows why they need search lights – isn't the dragon big enough to see on its own?



Toss another grunt onto the barbie.



>Lair continued

its visual magnificence. In many levels, there are tens of thousands of enemies doing battle below you, and at any point, you can swoop down and send dozens of soldiers flying with each sweep of your claws, or scorching hundreds with each breath of fire.

Each and every second of action you see has been crammed to the brim with special effects – in one scene we saw, you and your dragon find yourself in the middle of a storm, as streams of water trickle off your dragon's wings and lightning flickers through the sky, illuminating the medieval city below you. Gorgeous doesn't even begin to describe it.

However, as impressive as the game might look, we're actually a bit concerned about how well Lair is going to play. You see, whereas most games come with an option for turning motion control on or off, Lair doesn't. In this game, if you're flying your dragon, you're *really* flying it, yanking left and right on the reins to get it to steer, and swooping down the side of mountains while looking like some sort of demented gibbon on your sofa.

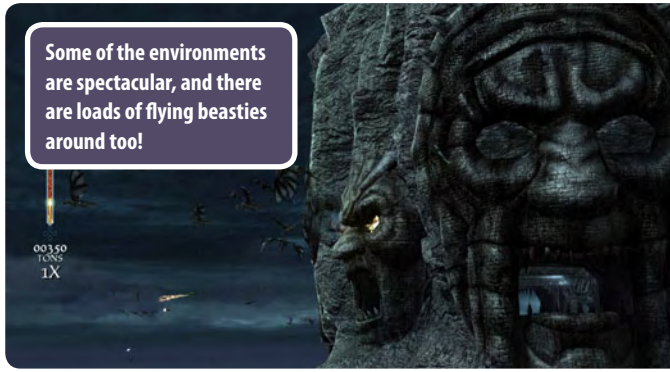
"Every second of action has been crammed with special effects"

It's certainly an interesting idea, and one we give Factor 5 credit for – the tilt-sensing capabilities of the controller certainly seem to lend themselves perfectly to a flying game, but we can't help but feel that unless they get the controls exactly right, this could be the one thing that cripples Lair's appeal.

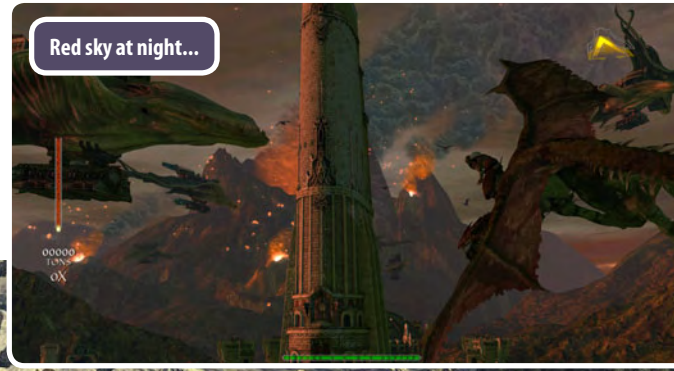
If we were to be our usual, optimistic selves (ho-hum), and presume that Factor 5 manage to get it spot-on, Lair could end up being something very special indeed. Because the controls have been so rooted to the core of the gameplay (even mid-air battles between two dragons make use of the tilt sensor, as you can jerk your controller left or right to barge into an enemy dragon), Lair is promising to offer one of the most involving dragon riding experiences ever. If the gameplay can match the massive >



Farting is another hidden move, that can have devastating consequences to any enemies within range...



Some of the environments are spectacular, and there are loads of flying beasties around too!



Red sky at night...



Chunks of rock, a chunky sword and a chunky dragon. Mmm, Chunky.



>Lair continued

production values, this could be one of the defining games of the PlayStation 3's early years. We'll find out how well it turns out in October.

Letting go

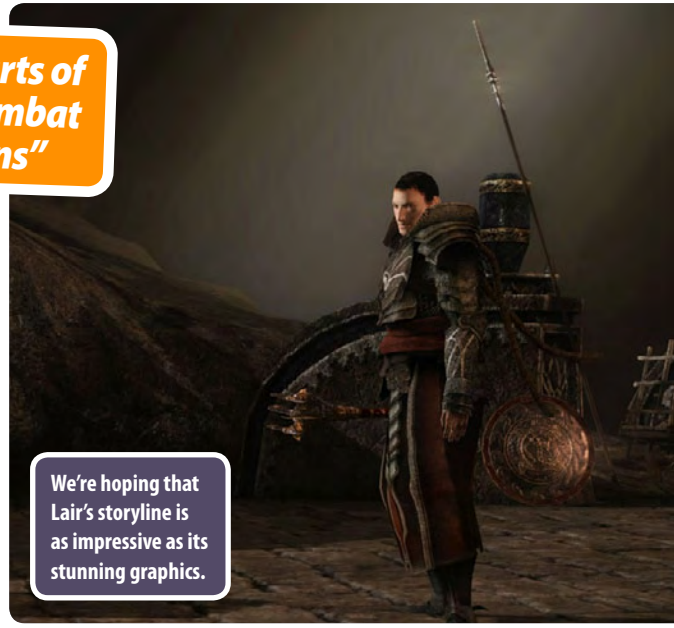
Moving away from the Star Wars license must have been a tricky decision for Factor 5, but it's not been without its positives. Allowing the developers full reign over the creative side of things, the move into the foreboding territory of 'own IP' has helped Factor 5 to make Lair an incredibly story-driven game.

In a world suffering from global warming (sound familiar?), two rival groups, the Asylians and the Mokai, are engaged in a war over the remaining pieces of fertile land. Placing you into the steel boots of Rohn, an Asylian dragon rider, Lair's storyline borrows heavily from real world concepts, and should be gripping throughout. Of course, due to the heavy reliance on the story, Lair will be a completely linear experience, but that's fine by us – we'd rather have a game with a storyline that'll make us think, than a game that's been watered down due to having too many branches.

We'll fight them in the skies

One of the coolest, and most gruesome parts of Lair is the airborne combat between two dragons. By slamming into your opponent with a flick of your wrist on the SIXAXIS, the gameplay will change into a one-on-one fight between your two beasts, where you can take swipes at the enemy, or ram into him again with the hope of knocking him out of the sky. There's even a selection of more advanced techniques for you to learn, such as the ability to dive behind the enemies dragon, then leap off and kill the enemy rider, sending him tumbling into the ocean below, and keeping his dragon for yourself. Water way to go...

"One of the coolest parts of Lair is the airborne combat between two dragons"



We're hoping that Lair's storyline is as impressive as its stunning graphics.

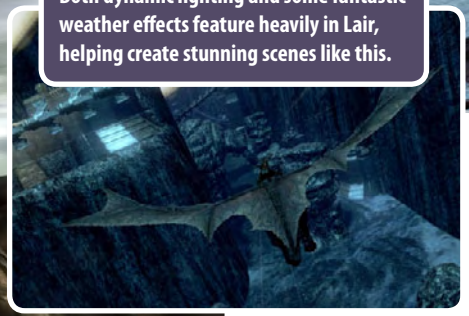


It seems that not every mission will involve pure fighting, as some stealth may be required in places, too.

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



We wonder if the dragons will ever refuse to be mounted by their riders?



Both dynamic lighting and some fantastic weather effects feature heavily in Lair, helping create stunning scenes like this.

P3Zine LAIR

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 75%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 80%

Stunning to look at, but we just hope the gameplay's as sharp

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★★★
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Dedicated to handheld
Written by the best in the biz
★★★

P3Zine's 50 Most Wanted

All quiet on PS3? Not for long...

It's been a fairly lacklustre couple of months for new releases on Sony's new-generation beast, but the PS3 will soon explode into life with a blistering run of games lasting from next month, well into 2008 and beyond.

Worried about the lack of must-have titles so far? Don't be. As we'll show you over the next five pages, there's a stunning array of software lined up, with many titles set to absolutely blow you away. From Guitar Hero 3 to Gran Turismo 5 Prologue or Silent Hill 5 to Soul Calibur IV, there's something for absolutely everyone coming to PS3 in the near future.

Whether you're more SingStar than Rock Band, or you prefer the cute look of Ratchet & Clank Future to the gory horror of Clive Barker's Jericho, you'll be well catered for.

If you're reading P3Zine for the first time and haven't taken the plunge yet, then this little lot should push you over the edge. Believe it – the new generation has really arrived. Are you ready for the onslaught? Then let's begin...

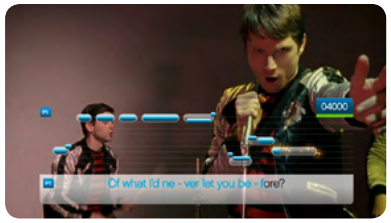
(Please note that all dates are correct at the time of going to press, and are subject to change, so please don't shout at us if any of them slip!)

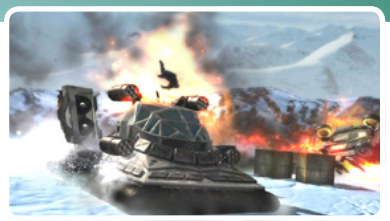
August

SingStar

ETA: 24th August 2007 **Publisher:** SCEE

Sony's karaoke-fest hits the PS3 very soon and looks to be comfortably the most accomplished yet. With the online SingStore allowing you to download your favourite tunes to wail along to and HD videos, this should be a massive hit.





Stuntman Ignition

ETA: 31st August 2007 **Publisher:** THQ

The original Stuntman was a fab concept that the execution didn't quite live up to. With a create-a-stunt mode, online multiplayer and 25 different vehicles to drive, this new-gen update looks set to make the trial-and-error gameplay a hell of a lot more varied and fun.

Pixeljunk Racers

ETA: August 2007 **Publisher:** SOE

This PSN title comes from Starfox co-creator Dylan Cuthbert. The overhead viewpoint and Scalextric-esque gameplay give this multiplayer focused game an irresistible old school feel.



September

Warhawk

ETA: September 2007 **Publisher:** SCEE

32-player online battles? Motion-sensing controls for piloting aircraft? Don't mind if we do, thanks. This remake of the PS One game is now multiplayer only, but a wealth of content and different modes should make this well worth a download from the PSN. There's a retail version to come later with some DVD-style extras, but the vanilla version should do us just fine for our military warfare kicks.





FIFA 08

ETA: 28th September 2007 **Publisher:** EA

And so the annual footie battle begins again. FIFA steps onto the pitch first, with its new, improved AI (players can now process multiple thoughts and react accordingly in real time) and Be A Pro mode, which has you assuming the role of a single player, with realistic training and skill-learning. WAG-boffing mini-game sadly not included. Maybe next year, eh?

DiRT

ETA: September 2007 **Publisher:** Codemasters

Inferior 360 ports? Pah. Thing of the past. DiRT PS3 promises to be the 360 version's sexier younger sister, with improved graphics, a steadier frame rate and uncompressed surround sound.



September cont...

Stranglehold
ETA: 7th September 2007 **Publisher:** Midway
Slow-motion gun battles! Chow Yun Fat! Doves! It can only be a John Woo production, and indeed Stranglehold looks to be a genuinely cinematic thrill-ride of a game. The PS3 version's been delayed a bit, but we also get ace Woo flick Hard Boiled in a Limited Edition release. Lovely.



Heavenly Sword
ETA: September 2007 **Publisher:** SCEE
With fully motion-captured leaping about from Andy Serkis, this preciousssss looking title has truly gob-gaping animation to bolster its Dynasty Warriors-meets-God of War enemy-stabbing gameplay. Incredible cut-scenes, too. Could be huge, we think.



Fatal Inertia
ETA: September 2007 **Publisher:** Koei
Wipeout with magnets, basically. Shoot the metal-attracters at your rivals and watch as their back ends trail along the ground like a Mini with Rik Waller in the boot. Spiffy looks and a smooth-as-butter frame rate mean this is a future racer worth looking out for.

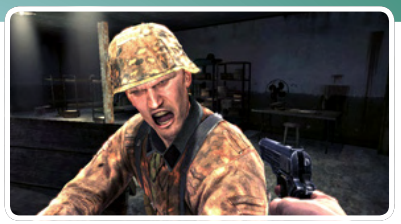
Blacksite: Area 51
ETA: September 2007 **Publisher:** Midway
Aliens, squaddies, and plenty of shooty action make this a pretty standard Martian-zapping FPS, right? Wrong. Blacksite throws emotion into the mix, meaning errors will cause your pals to doubt you, just as your inner demons cause conflict between your instructions and personal ethics.





Lair
ETA: October 2007 **Publisher:** SCEE
This dragon-riding, SIXAXIS-swooping piece of sheer eye-candy looks suitably epic. From the makers of the ace Rogue Squadron games Factor 5, Lair could well set the standard for new generation visuals. Check out our massive preview on page 17 for more info.





MoH: Airborne
ETA: 5th October 2007 **Publisher:** EA
Allowing you to parachute directly into the action – no doubt with some tilt-based tomfoolery – EA's latest war-based shooter also has a soundtrack from Lost composer Michael Giacchino. Though no polar bears, hatches or Others (unless you count those pesky Nazis, that is).

October

Need For Speed ProStreet
ETA: 31st October 2007 **Publisher:** EA
Fully-pimped is no longer about just looking good. Now you can upgrade your ride to improve your racing performance, as well as giving it a delightful flame-effect paint job, too.



Autumn



Pro Evolution Soccer 2008
ETA: Autumn 2007 **Publisher:** Konami
With Portuguese winker – as we're contractually obliged to call him – Cristiano Ronaldo on the box, you might expect a bit of new trickery from Pro Evo this year. But at its core will still be the same wonderfully balanced game of football (not soccer, Becks) that defines this fantastic series.

Sega Rally
ETA: Autumn 2007 **Publisher:** Sega
Even muckier than DiRT, Rally's deformable scenery means that slicing through thick mud will leave huge ruts and divots that actually affect your handling on subsequent laps, or give the trailing pack something to think about. We loved the original, and this utterly filthy update looks absolutely marvellous, too.





The Simpsons Game
ETA: Autumn 2007 **Publisher:** EA
There's a reason for the 'Game' bit of the title (and not just because it is one). Nope, in a bit of self-referential genius, the levels in this will be based on other games – Shadow of the Colossal Donut, anyone? At the very least, this is sure to be one of the funniest games out this year.

Autumn cont...



Mercenaries 2: World In Flames

ETA: Autumn 2007 **Publisher:** EA

This time the 'playground of destruction' is Venezuela, and you'll be able to blow the hell out of pretty much everything this time round, with building-levelling explosions all over the place. Online co-operative multiplayer is available for those times when just one rocket launcher won't do.



Ratchet and Clank Future: Tools of Destruction

ETA: Autumn 2007 **Publisher:** SCEE

You might not think that a third-person platform shooter would be one of the best-looking games on the PS3, but R&CF's visuals are some of the most vibrant that the system has to offer. With the same polished gameplay promising the usual massive amounts of fun, this will continue the series' unbroken run of brilliance.

Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock

ETA: Autumn 2007 **Publisher:** Activision

Bet you never thought you'd play a videogame where Slash was the end-of-game boss (apart from on the Wii, perhaps). Joking aside, this fantasy has finally been realised in GHIII, which builds on the series' genius rhythm-action gameplay to let you face off against real-life axe heroes. Proper licensed tracks this time, too. Can't wait.



November/ December



Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

ETA: November 2007 **Publisher:** Activision

Hang on, did we say Lair set the bar for new-gen graphics? We lied. Call of Duty 4 is one hell of a looker, with supremely realistic physics and environments. Modern Warfare has bucketloads of new features, such as being able to blast enemies through thin walls.



Assassin's Creed

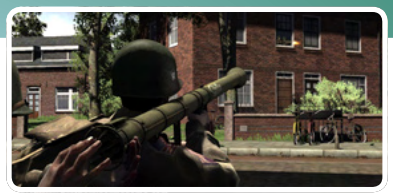
ETA: November 2007 **Publisher:** Ubisoft

Hugely impressive sneak-and-murder-'em-up from Ubisoft set in the Crusades, but with a big twist that we're not allowed to reveal. Unprecedented environmental interaction and masses of onscreen characters make this a truly new-generation experience.

Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway

ETA: November 2007 **Publisher:** Ubisoft

Probably our favourite WWII squad-based FPS series, Hell's Highway looks set to carry on the series tradition of cinematic combat, involving a cracking story and so-real-you-can-smell-the-sweat immersive audio-visuals. Call of Duty for the lone soldier; this if you like company.





Haze

ETA: November 2007 **Publisher:** Ubisoft

Drugs are bad, but in Haze they can actually enhance your combat abilities, so that's alright then. This future shooter comes from the geniuses behind the TimeSplitters series, Free Radical Design, and has some near-hallucinatory effects to either disorientate you or focus you in the heat of battle.



Alone In The Dark

ETA: November 2007 **Publisher:** Atari

The original survival horror series is back in business with Atari's shock-packed latest, featuring a script from the pen of famous NY-based author Lorenzo Carcaterra (Sleepers). Set to frighten the living daylights out of a whole new generation of gamers.



Beowulf

ETA: November 2007 **Publisher:** Ubisoft

Released to tie in with the Robert Zemeckis-directed film (based on the legend of the titular Norse warrior), the game promises an expansion of the film's universe to create an experience full of physical combat and cinematic spectacle. Its grimy looks give it an unusual feel in a generation whose graphics are generally dominated by a modern sheen. One to watch.

Army Of Two

ETA: November 2007 **Publisher:** EA

Co-operative modes are one thing, but an entire game based around a buddy-buddy mechanic sounds right up our street. With an array of tactics and strategies based on having a partner with you at all times, this could well bring an original spin to the shooter genre.



November/ December cont...

Dynasty Warriors: GUNDAM

ETA: 9th November 2007 **Publisher:** Namco-Bandai

It's Dynasty Warriors, but with huge stompy robots instead of fighters from feudal Japan. Brilliant. This mech-enhanced variation on the hack-and-slash theme will be ideal for those who thought that there weren't quite enough metal behemoths to blast in Armored Core 4.



LittleBigPlanet

ETA: December **Publisher:** SCEE

We say December as an educated guess, but that's more in hope than expectation. Either way, when this hits we're predicting an all-time classic. And we're promised that there's as much of a traditional game in there as there is revolutionary creation tools. It really does look like nothing that's gone before. We. Can't. Wait.

The Club

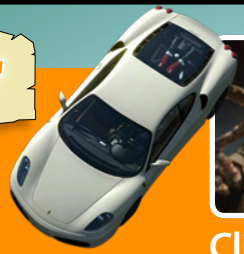
ETA: December 2007 **Publisher:** Sega

It's a third-person shooter, but not as we know it. The Club – from Bizarre Creations of Project Gotham Racing fame – is incredibly fast-paced. The combo-based gameplay requires you to kill as quickly and stylishly as possible – there's no hiding here, you're always on the move. Heart-pounding stuff.





Winter



Gran Turismo 5 Prologue

ETA: Winter **Publisher:** SCEE

As the wait for GT5 goes on, Sony have decided to sate car-lovers' thirst for super-real racing action by releasing this cut-down version on PSN before the year's out. A pre-Christmas treat for sure.



Clive Barker's Jericho

ETA: Winter **Publisher:** Codemasters

With extreme horror very much in vogue at the moment – fuelled by the likes of Hostel shocking audiences at the box office – it's likely there'll be a big audience for Codies' gory actioner. The man himself has had plenty of creative input, so expect buckets of blood and a few brown-trouser moments.



Half-Life 2: The Orange Box

ETA: Winter **Publisher:** EA

Otherwise known as The Best Value Videogame Ever, EA's tangerine package contains the original Half-Life 2, plus episodes 1 and 2 to continue the story. Not only that, but the fascinating puzzle-based Portal and revamped multiplayer classic Team Fortress 2 will be putting in an appearance. Bargain.



Unreal Tournament 3

ETA: Winter **Publisher:** Midway

A PS3 exclusive from the folks behind Gears of War? Well, not quite, but PS3 owners can lord it over their 360-owning mates as this new version of the legendary PC shooter won't be touching Microsoft's console until 2008. We'll have plenty more exclusive info on this massive game next month.



Burnout Paradise

ETA: Winter **Publisher:** EA

Anyone a little disappointed with Burnout Revenge will be pleased to hear that EA have completely revamped the series – instead of driving around set tracks and smashing cars at specialised crash junctions, Paradise has a completely free-roaming world to ride around looking for races and places to twist as much metal as possible. Sounds fantastic.



Folklore

ETA: Winter **Publisher:** SCEE

Half fantasy adventure, half Pokemon-style monster-collectathon, Folklore is the latest from Genji creator, Game Republic. Thankfully though, this remains relatively crab-free, with some excellent cut-scenes, inspired creature design and interesting controller-shaking action.

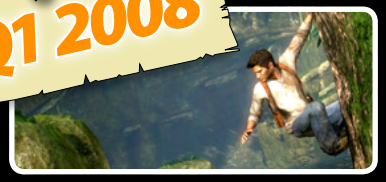


Rock Band

ETA: Winter **Publisher:** EA

With Activision taking control of the Guitar Hero franchise, the original developers have defected to EA, taking their new generation ball with them. That ball is Rock Band, which sees you forming your own group online or off to play your favourite tunes on faux drums, guitar and bass, with a mic for those who fancy their crooning abilities. Expensive? Maybe. Game of the year? Quite possibly.

Q1 2008

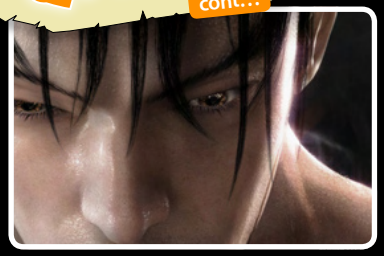


Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

ETA: Q1 2008 **Publisher:** SCEE

Naughty Dog are behind this pulpy action-adventure, which sees the titular Drake hunting the lost treasure of El Dorado. It looks very Tomb-Raider-but-with-a-fella, but with a graphical sheen that shows off its new generation credentials.

Q1 2008 cont...



Tekken 6

ETA: Q1 2008 **Publisher:** Namco-Bandai

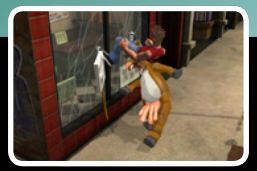
The arcade version hits Japan in September but PS3 owners have a little longer to wait for the latest in the legendary one-on-one fighting series. Promising multiple light sources, swappable costumes, three new characters, and (wait for it) online play, this could usurp VF3 as the console's premier scrapper.

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

ETA: Q1 2008 **Publisher:** Konami

If ever there was a system-seller for the PS3, this is it. Mixing stealth with astonishing action sequences, there's now a fully manoeuvrable camera instead of the static viewpoints of the previous games. Snake's getting on a bit, but he has a chameleonic camo suit which should keep his (slightly saggy) ass out of trouble. Looks truly incredible.





PAIN

ETA: Q1 2008
Publisher: SOE

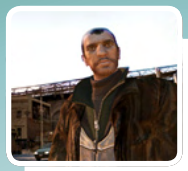
The capitals are there for a reason, as one of PSN's most exciting forthcomers sees you catapulting some poor jackass (pun intended) around a highly destructible environment, causing as much damage and general chaos as possible. Think Burnout's Crash mode but with people, and you're on the right track.



Condemned 2: Bloodshot

ETA: Q1 2008 **Publisher:** Sega

Developer Monolith's latest attempt to scare the absolute crap out of you has had some of its excesses toned down a little after the Manhunt 2 furore. It's still violent as anything mind, and the brutal combat has been augmented by a more involved forensic investigation mechanic.



Grand Theft Auto IV

ETA: Q2 2008 **Publisher:** Rockstar

Do we need to say anything? You're going to buy it, we're going to buy it, the whole damn world's going to buy it. With a grittier feel, we're already touting this as the game equivalent of The Wire (ie, it's impossible not to adore). Shame about the release slip, though.



Everybody's Golf 5

ETA: 2008 **Publisher:** SCEE

Already a hit in Japan, this glorious-looking golfer maintains the series ethos of blue sky looks, big-headed players and deep-as-anything golfing gameplay. Its mechanics remain relatively unchanged, but its online capabilities and stunning graphics make this a potential Tiger-beater.



Silent Hill 5

ETA: 2008 **Publisher:** Konami

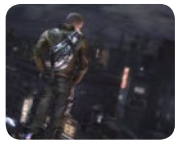
The thought of Konami's terrifying psychological horror returning in new generation clothes has already got us shuddering. If ever there was a series bound to benefit from graphical bells and whistles, this is it. An improved combat system suggests there'll still be plenty of ghastly beasties to fend off.



Killzone 2

ETA: 2008 **Publisher:** SCEE

It wowed the pants off the attendant press at E3, not quite matching those 'target videos' but coming damn close. Killzone looks to be the most effective realisation of a future war ever seen, with plenty of background action to accompany the close-range gunplay. Halo killer? You never know, it just might be…



Infamous

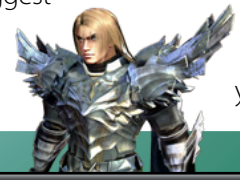
ETA: 2008 **Publisher:** SCEE

The latest from Sly Cooper developer Sucker Punch, Infamous looks quite a departure from their previous work, resembling Crackdown with added storm clouds. The game allows you to control your character's destiny – will they become a hero or villain? Complex moral choices, we love 'em.

Soul Calibur IV

ETA: 2008 **Publisher:** Namco-Bandai

If you'd rather fight with bloody great swords than fists, then the latest in Namco's consistently dazzling franchise will be an ideal counterpoint to the punch-tastic Tekken. Namco have always pushed the graphical envelope with the other games, and the shots we've seen suggest they've pulled off another visual masterpiece.



2008 & beyond

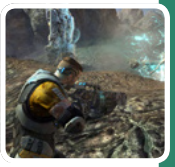
Echochrome



ETA: 2008 **Publisher:** SOE

We said it last month, and we'll say it again: Echochrome is going to be an absolute gem. The Phil Harrison-endorsed puzzler has enough brain-blending brilliance in its concept to outshine many of the bigger-budget titles coming your way. Trust us, you're going to want this one when it hits next year.

Fracture



ETA: Q3 2008 **Publisher:** LucasArts

It's some way away yet, but we've seen enough of LucasArts' amazing future war game to set our saliva glands to 'drool'. The USP is the terrain deformation feature, which allows you to simply blast your way through natural obstacles. If a particular rock face offends you, you can burrow through it or simply explode it out of your path. Fantastic stuff.

Resident Evil 5



ETA: 2008/9 **Publisher:** Capcom

Resident Evil 5 is slowly getting closer to becoming a reality. Rumoured to be set in Africa, with Chris Redfield back in the lead role, this is looking to be one of the strangest Resident Evil's yet. Oh, and Umbrella are *back*.

360Zine Issue 9 Out Now

★★★
360Zine
Completely free of charge
Passionate about Xbox 360
Dedicated to the biggest releases
Written by the best in the biz
★★★

"I was impressed with the quality of the writing, content and layout of this publication."
MajorNelson.com



INSIDE ISSUE 9

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 4
Now with bikes! Read the hands-on preview and see the latest screens only in this mag!

MASS EFFECT PREVIEW
Bioware's Xbox 360 epic is about to be unleashed. We play it and report back.

WORLD IN CONFLICT INTERVIEW
The RTS that's a FPS comes to the Xbox 360

GET IT FREE NOW! WWW.GAMERZINES.COM



Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: Starbreeze
Heritage: The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay
Link: www.2kgames.com/thedarkness/local.htm
OUT NOW

The Darkness

A shooter that's even more gruesome and offensive than its hair-metal namesake

The Darkness starts with a bang. Sitting in the back of a car, driving through New York, you listen to the two gangsters riding up front as they discuss their last job, which didn't go too well. The banter stops short when another car packed with rival mobsters launches an attack. A shotgun is thrust into your hands and you start blasting as a high speed shootout unfolds; the vehicles racing down city streets, slaloming through traffic and finally crashing into a construction site.

It's one of the best openings to a game ever and a hell of an introduction to your character, 20-year-old Jackie Estacado, a young buck in the Mafia's Franchetti family, who's already gained a reputation as a deadly hitman. But it's on his 21st birthday that Jackie's career really takes a plunge into the dark side. Having grown up as an orphan, he had no idea that hitting 21 would trigger a rather unwelcome family inheritance – a demonic entity called The Darkness that's been passed down for generations and has now claimed Jackie as its host.

Happy birthday?

This evil parasite affords Jackie a range of malevolent powers and he's going to need them, because the poor sod's other big birthday present is an attempt on his life by the new head of the Franchetti mob, Uncle Paulie. This dapper Don wants Jackie out of the equation and has an army of goons and corrupt cops >



What a 21st birthday for poor Mafia hitman Jackie Estacado. Marked for death by his Don, inheriting The Darkness… What's wrong with a nice box of Celebrations?

"The evil parasite affords Jackie a range of malevolent powers"

THE DARK DESTROYER

From a game packed with extreme wrongness here are just a few standouts…



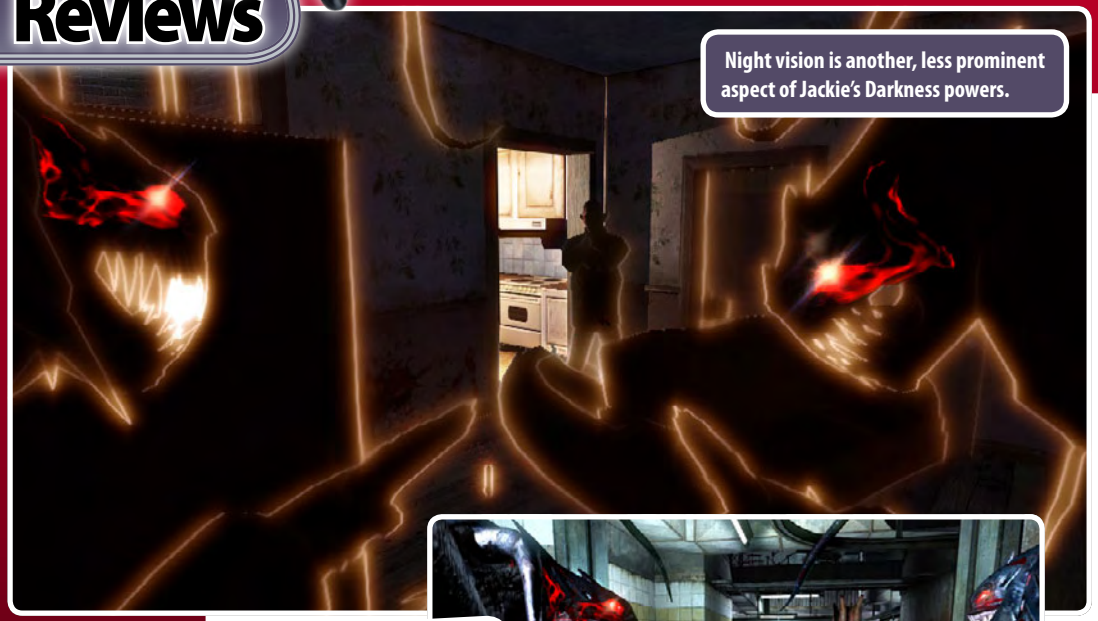
The Berserker | Otherworld | Cop Killer

The Berserker

Of all the Darklings, the Berserker is easily the sickest. While the Lightkiller zaps out light, the Kamikaze suicide bombs and the Gunner lets rip with a massive Gatling gun, the Berserker just kills people with saws, pneumatic drills, whatever, and delivers a cheeky quip as a coup de grace.



The Berserker in gruesome action. When the Darklings actually work properly they provide some of the game's sickest moments.



Night vision is another, less prominent aspect of Jackie's Darkness powers.



If the guns don't get them, the demonic appendages almost certainly will.

"Mobsters, cops and innocent passers-by are all on the hitlist as the carnage escalates"

>The Darkness continued

to help him achieve this aim. Clearly, a campaign of Darkness-assisted, bloodthirsty vengeance is going to be right at the top of Jackie's agenda.

With that stellar opening getting the pulse racing, and the main characters and the demon curse all nicely introduced, the pace remains high as you embark on the quest for revenge. Stalking your prey through the dingy tunnels and rundown buildings on the rotten side of the Big Apple, the demonic curse drives you on to ever more grisly mayhem.

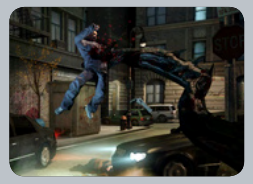
Whether you're dispatching the Darkling minions, tearing folk to pieces with your Demon Arm or just using good, old-fashioned dual pistols to murderise the bad guys, there's a pleasing variety to the action and the methods in which you can instill deadness. Mobsters, cops and innocent passers-by are all on the hitlist as the carnage escalates, the general rule being that if it's alive then it's fair game.

Demon days

By this stage you'll probably be thinking 'potential classic' but unfortunately the game can't sustain its rapid momentum. The Darkness is hampered by two major flaws that occasionally threaten to kill it stone dead. Firstly, there's its theme of light and darkness. The demon powers only work in the dark, so when Jackie enters a room his first task is always to destroy any light source. Initially you'll think this adds a clever tactical edge to the action, but it doesn't take long to recognise the extreme >

DEMON SEED

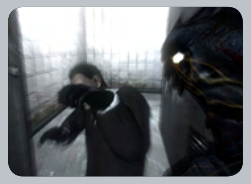
Those Darkness powers in full gruesome detail.



DEMON ARM – The most useful ability lets you send out a long tentacle to knock out lights and skewer enemies.



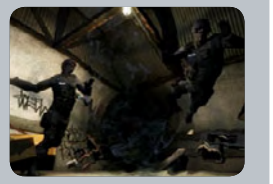
CREEPING DARK – Snaky tentacles with big teeth that can be used to scout areas and bite enemy faces off. Nice.



DARKNESS GUNS – The demon heads that now follow you can be turned into weapons. Not as effective as guns, though.



DARKLINGS – Sick little gremlins that can be summoned. There are four types: Berserker, Gunner, Kamikaze and Lightkiller.



BLACK HOLE – A vortex that sucks in anything nearby and makes you virtually unstoppable for the final part of the game.





Despite all the demonic talent at your disposal, simply unloading with the dual guns is often the best policy.



Mmm… meat cooler. The game's environments certainly add to the overall atmosphere of pervading badness.



The Darklings provide some top comedy moments. Witness this cheeky little devil shushing an hysterical victim.

Next Gen?

Your evil Darkling minions should be a showcase for top draw next-gen AI, but more often than not they just end up looking silly. Getting stuck behind walls, randomly blasting the hell out of empty space, refusing to move altogether – these malevolent gremlins were meant to be the game's main attractions, but unfortunately they usually merely highlight its shortcomings.



>The Darkness continued

daftness of a situation where you're more concerned about blasting out light bulbs than dealing with the goons taking potshots at you.

The city of darkness

The other big mess up is the structure of the game. Its version of New York is divided into a few small locations and these are broken up by loading times as you travel between them. Throw in the need for regular backtracking and it all adds up to an extremely disjointed experience. Given their size, you can clear locations pretty quickly, but any sense of momentum is immediately lost as you move on to the next area and have to endure a tedious cut-scene while it loads up.

This is exactly the same structure as used in the previous title from developers Starbreeze, ace Xbox shooter The Chronicles of Riddick.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



And while it suited *that* game's claustrophobic prison setting, here it just frustrates and prevents the kind of dynamic non-stop action found in the cream of the FPS crop.

It's a real shame, because there are undoubtedly some brilliant ideas here and the brutal mayhem of the game's opening salvo promises great things. The macabre demon powers, the gripping story, the sadistic sense of humour… The Darkness gets so much absolutely right that if Starbreeze can just tighten up the game's structure we could be looking at something special for the inevitable sequel.

Lee Hart

P3Zine Verdict

A decent horror shooter that sadly wilts quickly

\+ Violent, demonic fun

\+ Ace Mafia storyline

\- Poor game structure

76%

Grim Grimoire

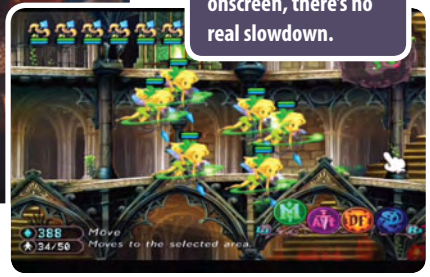
A strategy game with fairies – no, wait! Come back!



Publisher: Koei
Developer: Vanillaware
Heritage: Odin Sphere
Link: http://nisamerica.com/games/grimgrimoire
ETA: 28 September



The cut-scenes are sparsely animated, but work beautifully.



Despite all the sprites onscreen, there's no real slowdown.

You might not think you need a real-time strategy game in your life. Particularly one that takes place in a fantastical Harry Potter-aping universe of witchcraft and sorcery with an array of weird and wonderful creatures at your behest. But you'd be wrong, as the latest game from Odin Sphere creators Vanillaware is a 2D RTS par excellence.

Taking control of young magician Lillet Blan, it's your task to control monsters and other beasts to try and stop the evil Archmage from killing all her school chums and teachers.

A twisting Groundhog Day plotline sees Lillet repeat the same five days as she tries to change her fate, and there's some irresistibly accessible strategy gameplay that sees you using Grimoires to pit dragons against chimeras, and golems facing off against demons.

It looks amazing too, with some stunning character art and some epic scraps. Admittedly, there's little variety, while genre experts might scorn its relative lack of depth, but it's balanced, fun and addictive.

Chris Schilling

P3Zine Verdict

Gorgeous real-time strategy fun

+ Looks utterly stunning
+ Easy to pick up, tough to put down
- Too simple for strategy veterans

89%

Warriors Orochi

Dying for a slash?



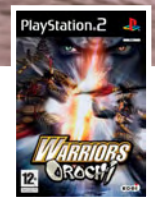
The game throws around tons of enemies with nary a pause – it makes for some exciting battles.

Serpentine god Orochi is evidently a bit bored of life up in the heavens, so he decides to liven up his existence by capturing various heroes from Feudal-era Japan and Ancient China and pitting them against each other for his own amusement. Yep, it's a spin-off from the Dynasty Warriors series, and despite the bizarre plot, it's pretty much business as usual – so it's a series of levels under different disciplines, with large arenas to travel around, hacking all your enemies into tiny pieces.

This time round there are three characters at your disposal, with more unlocked as you progress. So you can set up quite a varied team of combatants, with speed merchants swapping out for powerful-but-slow warriors and technically skilled fighters. The scrapping as ever is fairly repetitive, but with the ability to learn new attacks, grab new weapons, and switch between heroes on the fly, there's a little more variety than you'd think.

Non-believers will find nothing new here, but Warriors fanboys will thrill at the inclusion of a huge array of their favourite characters from the series. You'll probably already know if you want this, but if you've never experienced the franchise before, this is a good starting point.

Chris Schilling



Publisher: Koei
Developer: Omega Force
Heritage: Dynasty Warriors series
Link: www.koei.com/games/index.cfm
ETA: 21 September



There's an amazing number of characters to find.

P3Zine Verdict

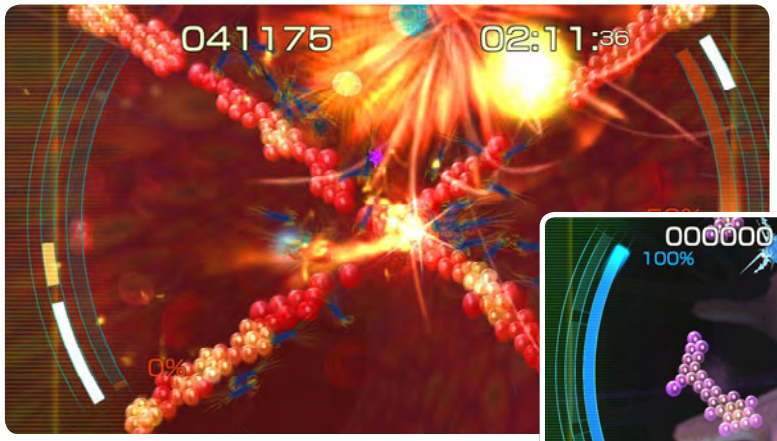
A decent enough hack-'em-up

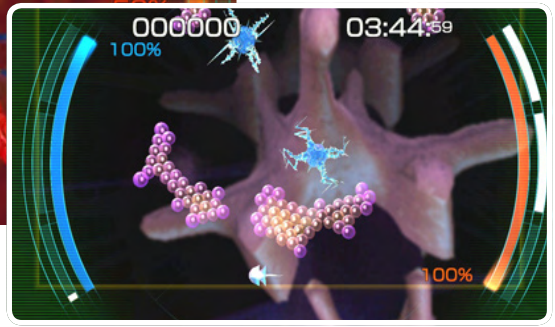
+ Epic battles look great
+ Tons of onscreen enemies
- Weak voice acting, repetitive gameplay

72%

PlayStation Network

This month we have a disease that's easy to shake off





LEFT: Bacteria – the small blue things here – are nasty little buggers that are forever trying to damage your ship.
BELOW: Presumably these icy-looking nuclei cause colds?

Nucleus

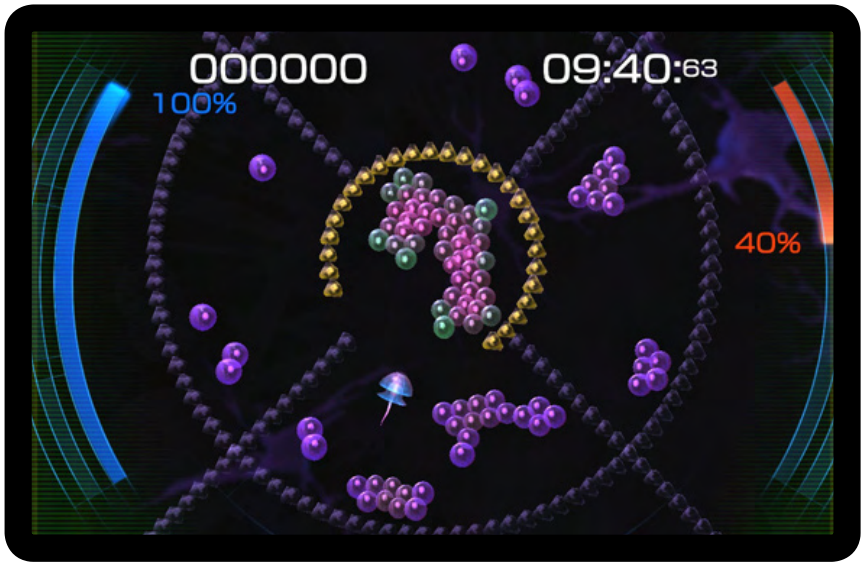
After playing this, you may well think your PS3 has a virus...

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Kuju Entertainment
Heritage: Go Sudoku, Link
Link: None
Price: £4.99
OUT NOW

We're beginning to wonder if publishers pay any attention to release schedules at all. Just last month, we were treated to the best dual-analogue shooter on the PS3 (and one of the finest examples of the genre so far) in Super Stardust HD, yet Kuju has seen fit to release this oh-so-similar game now, with just a week's gap in-between. To be honest, it never stood a chance…

Nucleus is set inside the body of an infected individual, who's come under attack from a deadly strain of virus called 'The Scourge'. By piloting a little microship, it's up to you to rid them of their infection, by arranging proteins, destroying nuclei, and shooting at the various bacterias, viruses and other assorted baddies you find along the way.

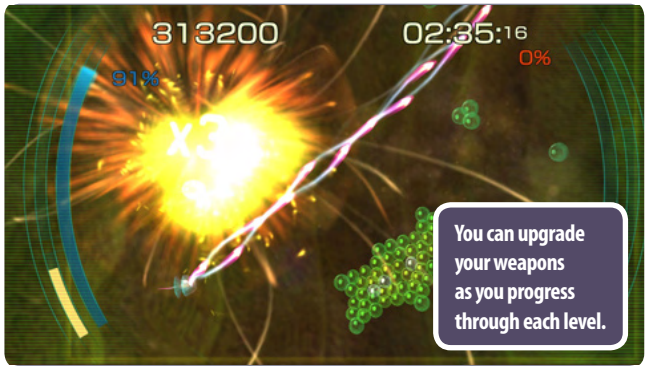
The game is structured through a number of branching missions, which let you tackle the infections in different parts of the body. One of the nicest things about Nucleus is how varied these missions are, ranging from simple 'upgrade your weapon nine times' collection missions, to boss fights against killer viruses, and even missions where you have to 'plug the hole' by pulling and tugging the cells into a specific shape. It's clever stuff so far.



However, as varied as the levels may be, it doesn't make up for the fact that, when compared to Super Stardust, Nucleus feels like a timid and characterless experience. The graphics are poor, the music is atrocious and the gameplay, while not fatally flawed, just offers none of the excitement of the PSN's other star shooters, Blast Factor, and Super Stardust.

"Compared to Super Stardust, it's a timid experience"

While you might think this is okay if it's your first download from the PlayStation Store, we'd suggest you spend your £4.99 elsewhere, and get the far superior Super Stardust. You won't regret it.



You can upgrade your weapons as you progress through each level.

P3Zine Verdict
Stick with Super Stardust
+ Varied missions
− Not worth £4.99
− Boring graphics
48%

PCGZine

GEARS OF WAR PREVIEW
The Xbox 360 Epic epic comes to PC

ASSASSIN'S CREED PREVIEW
Read it, watch the video, want the game

HELLGATE LONDON PREVIEW
Stunning RPG-cum-FPS game

GHOST RECON 2 REVIEW
The console smash arrives on PC



PCGZine Issue 8
Your monthly PC games magazine
Download it for free today!



Welcome



Two more months. Just two more months. No, that isn't the latest song from Bloc Party, but rather, the number of months left before the PS3 really begins to get exciting. What's so special about October? Well, apart from the launch of Factor 5's dragon game, Lair, October should see the release of the thing I'm most excited about: Playstation Home.

"But how do you know Home's launching in October?" I hear you ask. Well, it's recently been announced that Lair is going to be the first title to support Trophies, the PS3's version of achievements. These trophies are intrinsically linked with Playstation Home, and I can't see how you can have one without the other. So a little bit of detective work, and just two more months to wait, and I'll be inviting you round to my crib on PS Home. Hopefully.

I'll see you online.

Ian Morris

Tell us about your clan!

PSN Clan of the month

BodyZnatchers

It's time for a clan invasion



Left: Muz; Below: Li Mu Bai & Mrs ; Right: Urban Chick; Far right: Fleshwound; Bottom right: Cas & Ging.



The BodyZnatchers (**www.bodyznatchers.co.uk**) are famous over the PSN for bringing their A game to each and every match. When they discovered they were to be P3Zine's latest clan of the month, the guys (and girl!) were 'well pleased' with the news. We spoke to joint clan leader, Wayne Hutchinson (aka, Fleshwound) to ask him a few questions about their clan, but rather than answer himself, the honourable Fleshwound opened the questions to the entire clan. Read on, and see what makes this infamous PS3 clan tick...

Can you give us a bit of background information about your clan?

The BodyZnatchers were originally formed in early November 2004, and the plan was to start up a clan to take on all others on Killzone (PS2) and come out on top.

The idea was to take in people that had a passion for all maps, and not just the favoured ones that other clans to wanted to play. With a 24-strong clan this gave us a clear advantage, as there really was no map that the BodyZnatchers didn't know like the back of our hand.

The stage was set. As the BodyZnatchers moved through the GameBattles Ladder, we became known as a merciless clan that most other clans were told would be suicide to take on.

The pinnacle of our campaign was the GameBattles BloodBath Tournament 2005. A lot of other clans had shown their true colours both on and off the game, but in the end BZ had fought through it all to become Tournament Champions of Killzone EU and went on to defend the crown for a record 15 times (only losing once) before we retired from the game. **By: Fleshwound**

What do you think of the PSN so far?

PSN is just a baby. It's new and it has its bugs, but it will get better. **By: CashyUK**

A few bugs here and there, which I hope Sony sort out soon as I'm getting pretty sick of hearing a loud annoying noise on R6V – or is that Cashy? **By: Urban Chick**

I think PSN is okay, but will get much better when Home comes out. **By: Muz**

How many members do you have?

There are around 27 active members, so to minimise a riot in the BZ barracks, the names are: Itchio, Fleshwound, Muz, xxDevilfishxx, Chan, Weed, Use Of Weapons, ANARCHY X, Wraith, Cashy, Chersi, Cas, Ging, MadDog, mashers, DeadEdd, Urban Chick, Scottish21, B-Digital, xXx Solid, GuttermouthSin, Li Mu Bai, X HITMAN Z, PsychoManic, Gurigonzalaz, Nakatsu Hime and HellboyWAW. **By: Fleshwound**

What activities do the clan get up to?

When we get a full team of BZ on R6V we like to get out the shields and attack like Romans! **By: Muz**

On or offline? Last time I heard, the boys were gonna meet up at a lap-dancing bar **By: Urban Chick**

The big favourite has always been what we call 'Last Man Standing' training on Killzone – the rules are secret, the outcome is as the title says. **By: Fleshwound**

What sets you apart from other clans?

You just have to say the word BZ and people start talking, but what I would say sets us apart is the fact that we have so many good players that have a variety of different skills. The fact we can do the talking with our hands; the fact that most clans hate BZ because they hate the fact that when they cross us they will get a team that will not back down to any challenge. **By: Ginbin**

What sets us apart from other clans? Our ability to get up other clans' noses. Don't ask me how, it just happens. But were a cool bunch once you get to know us, honest! **By: Muz**

What games does your clan play?

Killzone, BF2:MC, SOCOM 3, RFoM, R6V. We've fanned out until the big reunion on Killzone2 but R6V is the main game at the moment.

How do players join up?

We're mostly active on R6V at the moment. Contact us via our website/forums, state your game interest and we take it from there. We love to have fun, that's the main motivation in our clan, but when the time comes to 'Bring the Rain', we bring it. **By: Fleshwound**

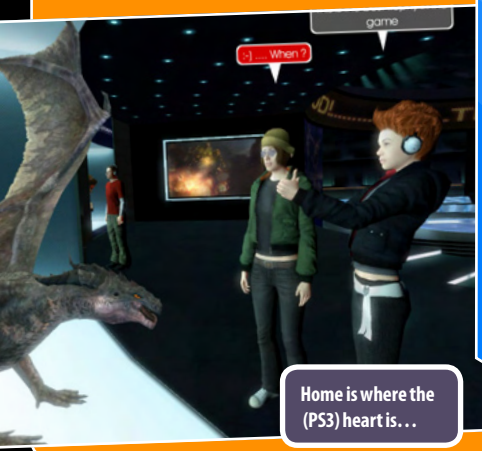
PSN REPORT

Coming Soon

GT HD PROLOGUE
Announced at E3, you can now download two trailers for this off the PSN. Stunningly gorgeous, with interior views for the first time in a Gran Turismo game, you'll be able to download a Prologue version of the latest Gran Turismo game later this year.


GT on PS3… coming soon.

HOME
It's been redesigned, it's been Beta tested, and it's nearly here. Get ready to start earning trophies in your games, and spending a ridiculous amount of money just trying to buy that extra virtual cap you've always wanted, as Sony begin to take over your life.



Home is where the (PS3) heart is…

WHAT'S HOT

HEAVENLY SWORD DEMO – Letting you play the PS3's first killer app before it launches, this is possibly the biggest download to ever hit the store. If you haven't already done so, download it now, and find out what you're missing.

3. MGS4 – Six minutes of gorgeous cut-scenes, over the top action and Meryl Silverburgh's hair, though the codec does make it look a bit weird.

2. LITTLE BIG PLANET – It's the most inventive game we've seen all year, and now you can see for yourself just how easy it is to express your latent creativity.

WHAT'S NOT

FIRMWARE 1.90 – A massive file that took forever to download, Firmware 1.90 was the non-event of the decade. Delivering precisely none of the features we'd talked about last month, the sole useful thing this update provided was the ability to change the wallpaper on your PS3.

DOWNLOAD SPEEDS – It's a good job we can do something else while downloading, or else we think we'd have died of boredom. Has anyone else noticed just how slow downloads from the PlayStation Store are, unless you're downloading at three in the morning?

Site of the Month – www.ps3-leagues.co.uk

Ever wished you could have a bit of competition, but don't know anyone who has a PS3? Or maybe you're looking to step up your game and you need a new set of frag fodder that might actually put up a bit of a challenge?

Whatever you're looking to find, PS3-leagues.co.uk has the answer to all your online gaming problems. Set up eight months ago to serve as a meeting ground for PS3 owners, PS3-leagues offers a 'one-stop shop for all your online activities', with support for numerous leagues and tournaments, as well as a host of match-making options. You can even set up private leagues for you and your friends!

Of course, it couldn't be a PS3 meeting site without support for clans, and that's certainly something that PS3-leagues.co.uk does well. Letting you set up your own clan page, which you can customise with a clan logo, news and roster list, setting up your clan on the website will also grant you access to a private clan forum, which makes finding other clans a whole lot easier.

As with most things PS3, it seems that everything will be kicking off in the near future, as according to site owner, Ronan: "The lack of good online games available at present is holding all this up slightly, but [we] should be kicking off properly in autumn when we are spoilt for choice with the games due for release." We'll be checking back later this year to see how things are progressing, and we'd suggest you all do the same.


PS3-leagues gives you plenty of competition for online gaming.

The P3Zine Giveaway!

Looking for something to do in the long summer evenings? Want to get a game that'll last you till the snow starts falling? How about losing yourself in one of the greatest fantasy worlds ever crafted, in the Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion.

We can't say enough good things about Oblivion. With a massive fantasy land to play through, a gripping storyline, epic soundtrack and hundreds of thousands of unique decisions to make, this is one of the greatest games on PS3, and a title that everyone should play.

We awarded the game a massive 93% in issue 2, making it our highest rated PS3 game ever, and now thanks to our friends at Ubisoft, you can delve into the fantasy realm for yourself. We have three copies of the game to give away on PS3, and to be in with a chance of winning, just answer the following question:

Which famous, former Star Trek actor plays the voice of Emperor Uriel Septim?

The competition closes on September 19th, and winners will be notified by email.


Enter our competition and you too could be off on a knight to remember

Click here for your chance to win!

Blu-ray reviews

The latest and greatest new releases...



300

Warner Home Video / £24.99 / Director, writer and cinematographer commentary, deleted scenes, making-of videos, Spartan historical discussions, webisodes

There's not much more to say about 300. It's a gripping, visceral, and nerve-shatteringly violent, yet almost poetic epic that, despite all the grotesque mutants, manages to also be a surprisingly accurate depiction of one of the greatest military battles of the ancient world. If you missed it in the theatres, the high-definition transfer is definitely the next best thing. A hybrid of CGI and live-action, the transfer looks excellent and sounds brilliant.



P3Zine Verdict

An amazing action film, with plenty of extras

+ Fantastic transfer, gripping violence
- It's missing some features

95%



Black Snake Moan

Paramount / £24.99 / Director's commentary, deleted scenes, making-of videos

With a cover that suggests the blaxploitation movies of the 70's, Black Snake Moan only toys with the genre. In reality, it somehow manages to be funny, tragic, moving and uncomfortable in varying degrees. The story of an aging bluesman who takes in a beaten nymphomaniac manages to make its characters not just believable, but understandable, too. The disc itself is pristine, and this is one of most unusual and engaging movies of the year.

P3Zine Verdict

Original, funny, tragic, and also great

+ Fantastic HD transfer and great performances
- None

97%



Waiting

Lionsgate / £24.99 / Making-of videos, interactive cast commentary, additional commentary tracks from cast and crew, deleted scenes and outtakes

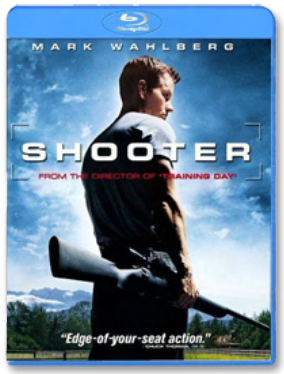
Sure to earn a nostalgic spot on the shelf with anyone who has done their time in the service industry, Waiting just so happens to be a quaint – if absurdly vulgar – and amusing American comedy about the rigours of one day in the sort of dime a dozen, faux-atmosphere restaurants that dot the US landscape like a plague. It's funny and often uncomfortably crude, but the strangely endearing cast make it a dinner trip worth taking at least once.

P3Zine Verdict

A funny but incredibly crude look at diner life

+ Good looking and pretty funny
- Added scenes are a bit fuzzy

85%



Shooter

Paramount / £29.99 / Deleted scenes, making-of videos, director's commentary, trailer

Everyone loves a good redneck hero, right? Shooter is perhaps Mark Wahlberg's attempt to cash in on fellow pretty boy Matt Damon's Bourne success with this story of a world class sniper who is betrayed, framed and out for revenge. The story is hard to take at first and rife with cliché, but the action sequences are great and the pacing rapid enough to keep you from dwelling on those dying brain cells. Strangely, it only offers Dolby Digital 5.1 audio, but the picture quality is top notch.

P3Zine Verdict

A solid 'one man against the world' action flick

+ Looks great, with cool action sequences
- No HD sound

80%



Blood Diamond

Warner Home Video / £25.99 / Director's commentary and several factual shorts of the topics of the movie

If you don't hate diamonds after watching this moving, well-paced action/adventure, you may, in fact, lack a soul. A stellar cast, cliffhanger-style plot elements (find a giant red diamond and save a child at the same time), and the awful brutality of the African backdrop make this movie anything but standard. The high definition disc is generally on par with the movie, with riveting audio and a usually beautiful picture. A political thriller that does all it sets out to achieve.

P3Zine Verdict

A fine action movie with an important message

+ Moving and entertaining
- Video quality varies

88%

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TURNING THE CORNER

Why PS3 is on the up and up...



Chris Schilling
Chris is the proud owner of all three 'next-gen' consoles. Every issue Chris will chart the progress of PS3 and commenting on Sony's latest and greatest initiatives.

First, the bad news. The announcement that Sony weren't adopting a similar price cut in Europe to the $100 reduction of the PS3's cost in the US was a big disappointment. Granted, the addition of an extra SIXAXIS controller plus two games added substantial value, but a solus version at a lower rate would undoubtedly have enticed buyers until now a little concerned at PS3's relatively high price. Of course, that didn't concern Sony Computer Entertainment Europe president David Reeves, who, when asked by Gamesindustry.biz whether the console was still a little expensive, stated: "It is, but surprisingly, people are paying that amount of money for it. Now they'll get two games and an extra controller as well." Well, thanks for that, Dave.



Timed exclusives such as Unreal Tournament III will boost PS3 sales...

Good month

Other than that slight letdown, the PS3 has had a good month. Sales nearly doubled in Japan recently with the release of the excellent Minna no Golf 5 (or Everybody's Golf 5 as it'll be known here), while the US price cut has seen a sales increase of around 135 per cent. With software announcements, such as the next instalment of the RPG Disgaea, a sequel to LocoRoco, and the new game from Katamari creator Keita Takahashi all appearing on the console, the usual post-E3 lull has had more pleasant surprises than expected.

"The US price cut has seen a sales increase of around 135 per cent"

We've seen the release of the Heavenly Sword demo on PSN, not to mention the additions of PS One games to download, like Crash Bandicoot 2, Syphon Filter and MediEvil, all for the bargain price of £3.49. These may only be minor announcements, but it shows that Sony are gearing up for the third-quarter in fine style. And while it's an unconfirmed rumour at this stage, it'd be remiss of us not to mention the exciting prospect of the console receiving a digital tuner in early 2008, which should effectively turn the console into a programmable TV recorder…

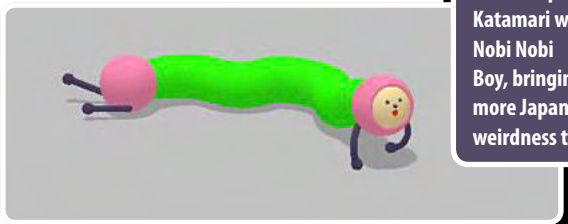
More PS3 exclusives

Meanwhile, Rockstar revealing that they've got a PS3 exclusive planned after GTA IV is a further sign that more developers are getting behind the console. With sales on the rise in Japan, expect to see more big Eastern franchises making their bow on PS3, while Western titles such as Unreal Tournament III are appearing on Sony's console well before the 360. With that console's hardware failure issues, Microsoft have seen sales hit in the US, and though Halo 3 could well see a sales spike, many industry analysts are predicting that PS3 will start to motor ahead by as early as the first quarter of next year.

If there's one signifier as to the bright future the console has, it's in this issue of P3Zine – the line-up of titles for next year could well see Sony rise to the top of this generation's console tree. Keep the faith, and ye shall be rewarded… promise.



...meanwhile, 'new and improved' ports like DiRT will have more buyers choosing the PS3 version over any others.



Takahashi follows up Katamari with Nobi Nobi Boy, bringing more Japanese weirdness to PS3.

>Inbox

Thanks for all your feedback - keep your emails coming... P3zine@gamerzines.com

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

GTA ETA?

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT Rockstar have delayed GTA 4. I've spent months waiting for this game and now I've got to wait another six months at least. Do you know why the game's delayed? Do you now know when it is going to be coming out? Thanks!

> Liam Hornsby

> We're as gutted to hear about the delay as you are Liam, but the fact remains that developing for PS3 is still relatively new, making it very hard for developers to say exactly how long a project will take. I'm sure that you'd agree with us that it's much better that Rockstar are taking their time, rather than rush something out for October that wouldn't be finished and properly tested for bugs.

We've got our fingers crossed that GTA IV should be released sometime in Quarter 2 next year, which means between April and the end of June.

It's worth the wait, as we suspect that GTA IV will be simply stunning.



UNCHARTED TERRITORY

THANKS A LOT, great preview. As for U: DF, it's looking awesome. I didn't know anything about it until a month or so ago, when I downloaded the trailer from the US PSN. Well it was quite a pleasant surprise, as I really didn't expect to see what I saw… and it completely blew me away. Let's just hope it doesn't disappoint in the gameplay side of things, but as for theme and setting then it has to be said that it's looking and 'feeling' great.

> FX

> Ah, we presume that you're talking about Uncharted: Drake's Fortune. And yes, you're very right, it is looking like being something very special indeed. When you realise that it's being developed by Naughty Dog – the creators of the Jak & Daxter series of games – then you know that U: DF will definitely be something to look forward to early next year.



Uncharted: Drake's Fortune is looking very special indeed.

THE RIGHT DECISION?

I BOUGHT MYSELF a PlayStation 3 a couple of months ago but now I'm not sure that I've made the right choice, as it seems that both the Xbox 360 and Wii are selling much more and have better games. Have I made a mistake?

> Lee Huston

> Not at all. While it's certainly true that the PlayStation 3 is lagging behind the other two slightly, you have to remember that they've been on sale longer and have had a bit of a head start. If you take a look at our huge future gaming preview this issue, you'll see that there are some stunning games coming out for PS3 over the next 12 months.

LIFELONG SUBSCRIBER

KEEP UP THE GOOD work. I was impressed with the PDF format. You have a subscriber for life, with me and I will definitely recommend your ezines to all of my gaming friends. I can't believe this is all for FREE!

> Bruce Taranto

> Glad you like the mag, Bruce. It just goes to prove that you really can get something for nothing.

MORE FOOTBALL

PES IS CLEARLY THE BEST football game on any format. It's just so much better than FIFA…

> Steven Clark

> Whooah, Steven – we're going to stop you right there. The PES verses FIFA debate is officially over, as we've got the results of last month's survey on the very next page. Skip over now to see which game lifts the P3 footballing trophy. >



PES 2008 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER™ or FIFA 08

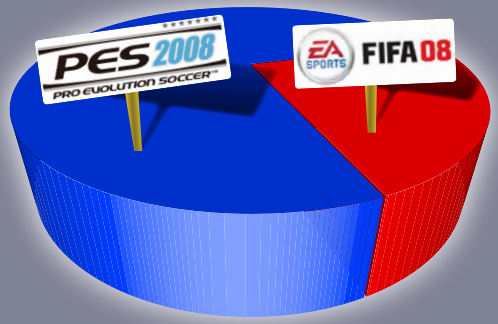
The results!



Last month we asked you to vote on which game you preferred out of FIFA and PES, in the hope that this timeless (well, about nine years to be precise) debate might finally be resolved. Thankfully, plenty of you decided to cast your vote and here are the results…

AND THE WINNER IS...

We raided the ballot box and here's the result. As you can see, PES is a runaway winner with 76% of the votes, while FIFA could only manage 24%. Of course, our poll might not be indicative of the whole country, but we suspect that our readers know their gaming onions.



It's all very well voting, but you need to have an opinion, too. As it happens, plenty of you have an opinion when it comes to the clashing of these two mighty footballing giants…

FIFA may look good but when it buckles down to being a football game, it doesn't come close to the capabilities of PES's gameplay. PES captures the essence of what football is all about.
Pete

The gameplay on PES is unbeatable. Each year FIFA uses a gimmick and copies an idea from PES – this year it was manual passing and be a pro… um, manual pass has been on PES for years, as has 'fixed' players, which is the same as being a pro.

If you want fun, then FIFA is for you. If you want realism and to get emotionally involved; if you want to scream, jump up and down when you've worked so hard to score a goal and succeeded, then Pro Evo is the way to go!
Mike Younis

PES is much more realistic than FIFA. The only goals I've ever seemed to score on FIFA are headers and accidental presses of the shoot button from the halfway line. It goes without saying that this is rather unrealistic – even the great Xabi Alonso has only done it twice in real life!
Chris

I think that it's got to be FIFA, because of the license thing that's going on, and in my opinion the gameplay in FIFA is also so much better.
D'foe

It's got to be PES all the way, for the gameplay. I prefer the game being realistic and true to how I actually play.
Elian T

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First look and interview

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 3

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Stuntman Ignition
FIFA 08
Colin McRae: DiRT

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