FREE!

P3Zine

Issue 12 | March 2008

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

MASSIVE PREVIEW!

GTA IV

All the latest videos inside

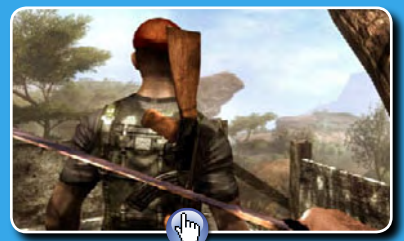


INTERVIEW!
TNA iMPACT

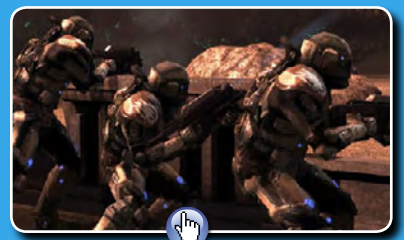
PLUS...



ARMY OF TWO
Come together



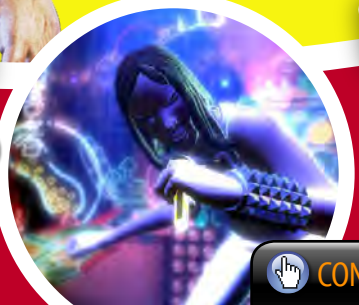
FAR CRY 2
Jungle japes



C&C TIBERIUM
Squady style

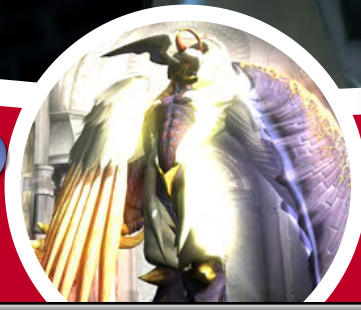
REVIEWED!

Rock Band
Take to the stage with your mates



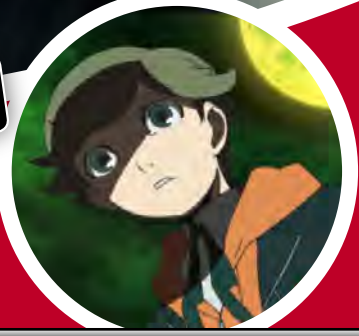
REVIEWED!

Devil May Cry 4
Bigger, badder and better than ever before?



REVIEWED!

Persona 3
70 hours of RPG loveliness



Welcome to P3Zine



Rockstar have done it again. No sooner as the tumbleweed had threatened to roll through the streets of Liberty City and the developers with marketing nous release not one, but five, video clips to whet the world's GTA appetite. Along with a website to boot. You can see all five cameo clips in our cover feature preview kicking off on page 8.

Other cool stuff this issue? Check out Army of Two, have a gander at TNA iMPACT, and strut your stuff with Rock Band ahead of its imminent arrival this side of the pond. Oh, and take a look at the new tweaks to your favourite (and let's not forget, free) PlayStation magazine. Enjoy the issue...

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
p3zine@gamerzines.com

MAGAZINE FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of the magazine.

MEET THE TEAM

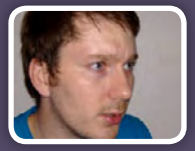
There's nowt they don't know about PlayStation



Chris Schilling
Has mostly been playing Rock Band



Ian Morris
Looking forward to Army of Two



Lee Hall
Can't. Wait. For. GTA IV.

DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights...

The latest & greatest titles on PS3

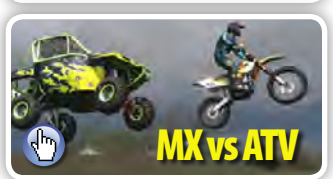












QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

C&C: Tiberium	GTA IV
Far Cry 2	Army of Two
Disgaea 3	MX vs ATV Untamed
Mirror's Edge	TNA iMPACT
Battlefield: BC	Devil May Cry 4
Highlander	Rock Band
Final Fantasy XIII	Persona 3
Team ICO	The Club

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WARNING! MULTIMEDIA DISABLED!

If you are reading this, then you didn't choose "Play" when Adobe Reader asked you about multimedia when you opened the magazine.

Without the multimedia playing, the magazine will look correct, but you will be missing out on all of the extra content built into each issue, like videos, animated screenshots, annotations, quizzes, competitions and more.

We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

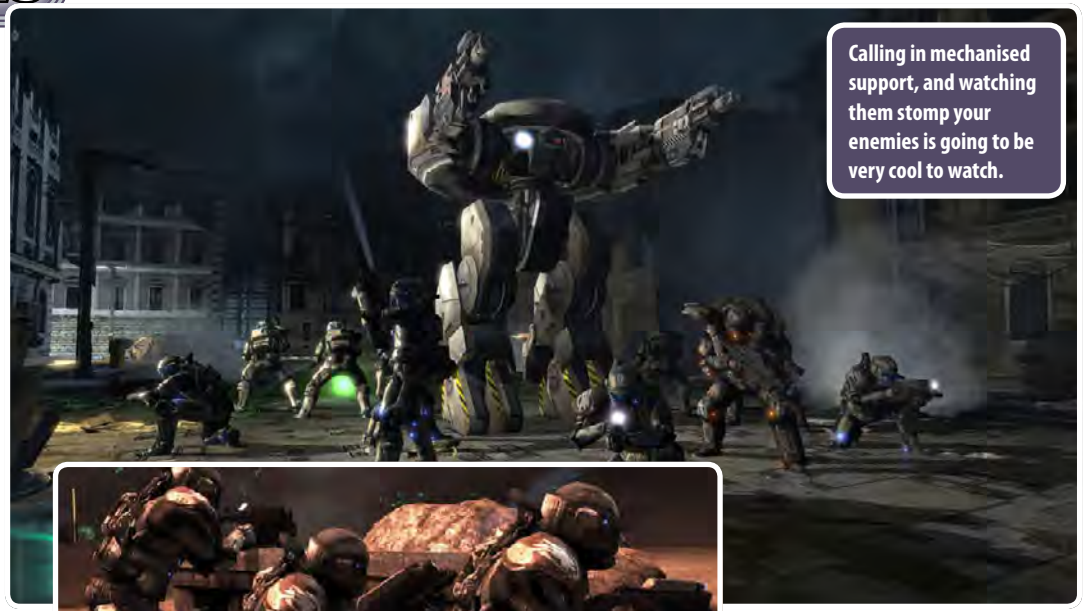
Tiberium

FIRST LOOK

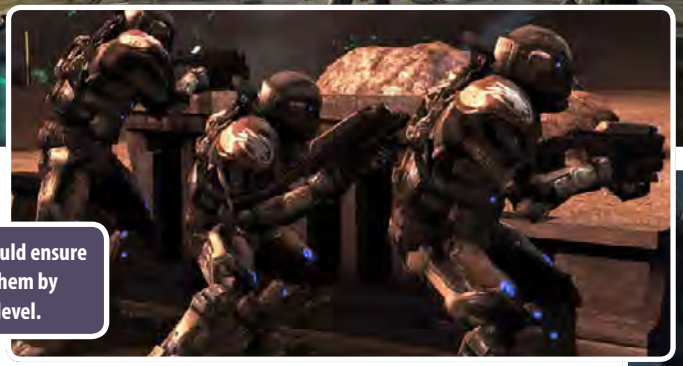
Squad based C&C action...

Publisher: EA
Developer: In-house
Heritage: Command and Conquer 3
Link: http://www.ea.com/tiberium/
ETA: Autumn

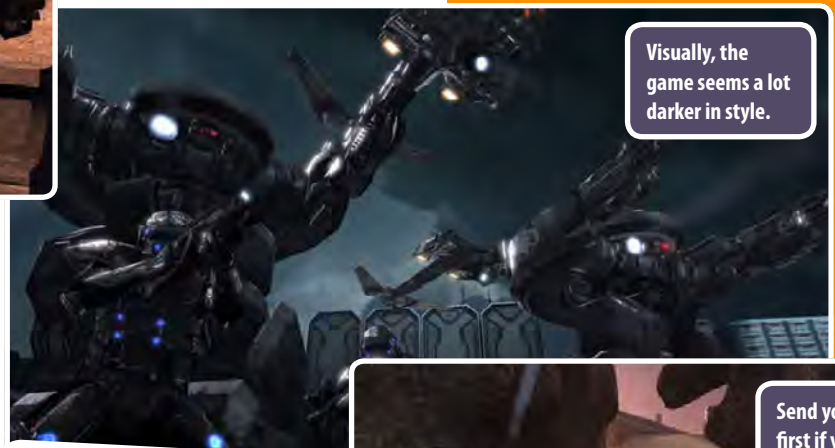
PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Tiberium



Calling in mechanised support, and watching them stomp your enemies is going to be very cool to watch.

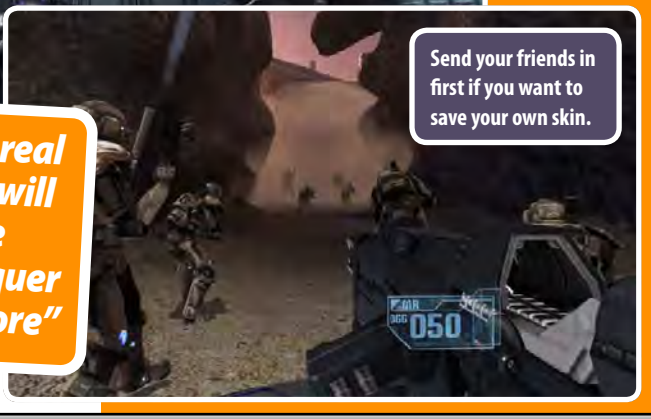


Your team mates' AI should ensure you don't have to lead them by the hand through each level.



Visually, the game seems a lot darker in style.





Send your friends in first if you want to save your own skin.

What is it?

A first person shooter, set in the Command and Conquer universe, Tiberium is the spiritual brother to C&C Renegade, an average FPS that didn't set the world alight in quite the way it was intended.

So, what's new?

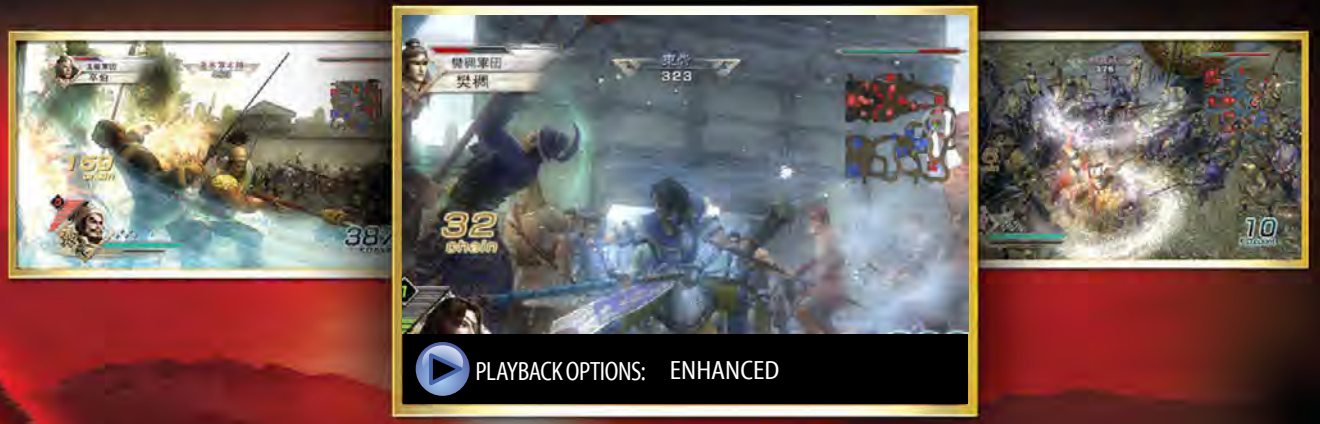
The big difference here is that rather than being a straight out FPS with the oh-so-familiar setting of C&C, Tiberium is said to play more like Vegas than Resistance, and is actually a squad based shooter. Running on the Unreal 3 Engine, Tiberium will suck you into the Command and Conquer world like never before. With a variety of destructive weapons on tap, a vast tapestry of C&C mythology to draw from, and a storyline that picks up where C&C 3 left off, we'll be the first to admit we're actually quite looking forward to this.

"Running on the Unreal 3 Engine, Tiberium will suck you into the Command and Conquer world like never before"

Anything else to declare?

One of the most impressive things about Tiberium is the way it's looking to capture the big-battle feel of its RTS brethren. Rather than simply controlling a group of three people, you'll be controlling numerous squads of men in the battles, with the ability to call in heavy armour support, or air strikes, as you make your way through the numerous missions. Turning the RTS into an FPS is going to be no easy task, but with two and a half years of development already under their belt, this should be a polished, and enjoyable ride.

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PLAYSTATION 3 XBOX 360 LIVE Produced by Force 12+ www.pegi.info

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Montreal
Heritage: Rainbow Six Vegas, Assassin's Creed
Link: http://www.farcrygame.com
ETA: Winter

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Far Cry 2

Far Cry 2

There's a rumble in the jungle

FIRST LOOK

What is it?

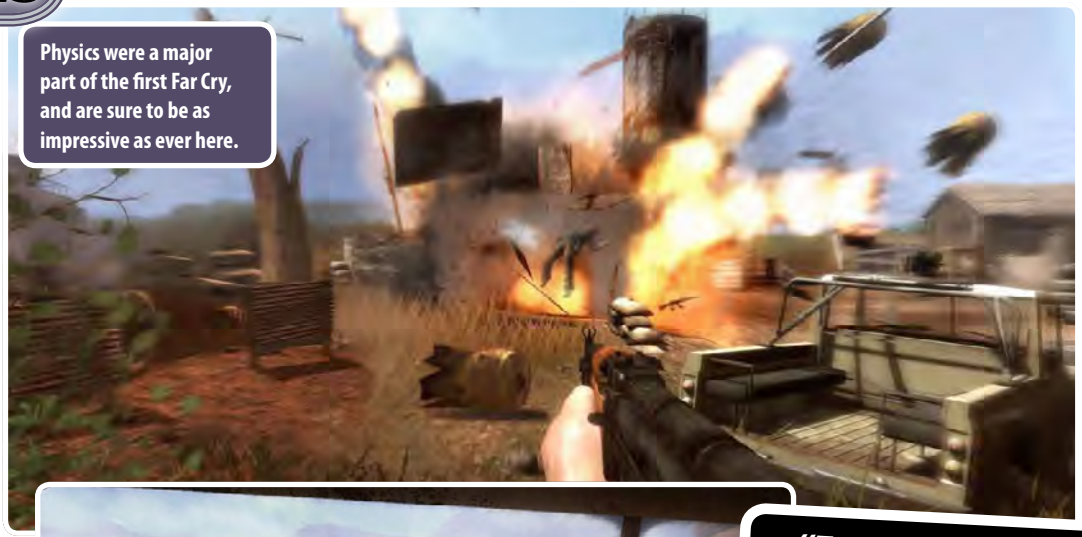
Before you get too excited, this isn't the official announcement of Crysis, rather, it's exactly what it says on the tin - the official sequel to Far Cry, rather than the spiritual cousin.

What's the story?

Rather than being set on a tropical island, as has become vogue as of late, Far Cry 2 instead takes place in the vast African Savannah, with over 50 km2 of ground for you to explore at your free will. Built on an entirely new engine, Far Cry 2 promises some explosive physics, destructible environments, and a real time day-night cycle to boot! The game sees you sent to Africa in pursuit of a mysterious terrorist type bloke called "The Jackal" who has somehow managed to draw the country into a state of war. Using the environment to your advantage, it's up to you to pursue him through the outback, before eventually bringing him to justice.

When can we expect more?

Having been in development for quite some time, we're hoping to be able to start driving across the open desert, looking out for any zebras or lions along the way, sometime this winter. Hopefully, we'll have more on this for you before then.



Physics were a major part of the first Far Cry, and are sure to be as impressive as ever here.



Driving vehicles was brilliant fun in the first one - here's hoping it'll be just as good here.

"Far Cry 2 promises some explosive physics, destructible environments, and a real time day-night cycle to boot!"



Graphically, at least, the game's looking the "biz". Just look at the exploding warehouse in the background.



INCOMING

More top tiltes coming to PlayStation 3...



Disgaea 3

Publisher: TBA | **ETA:** TBA

Fans of turn-based 2D strategy games rejoice, as Disgaea 3 has been confirmed for a PS3 release, though we don't yet know whether or not it'll see the light of day over here. Having said that, thanks to the PS3's region-free nature, we don't see that being much of a problem for the most hardcore of gamers. The campaign for a UK release starts here.

Mirror's Edge

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** Autumn

While a parkour game from the makers of Battlefield may seem as likely as Mr.Blobby making a comeback and being elected President of the USA, that's actually what Mirror's Edge is all about. Putting the focus on the person, rather than on the gun, Mirror's Edge will be played from a first person perspective, and is one of the most intriguing games on the horizon.





Battlefield: Bad Company

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** Summer

Along with the mega destructible environments that we've been salivating over for the past few months, Battlefield: Bad Company is also bringing with it something else that's new to the series - a full single player campaign. With some humorous dialogue intertwined with blowing everything up, this should be a sure-fire hit.

Highlander

Publisher: Eidos | **ETA:** 2008



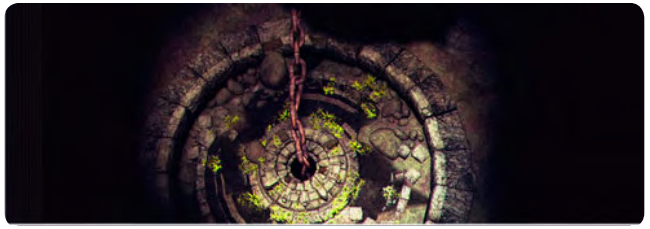
From French developers Widescreen Games comes the Unreal 3 Engine powered conversion of the film and TV series of the same name. Sounding, and looking like a typical hack-and-slasher, you step into the shoes of an Immortal, and experience the brutal combat of Medieval Scotland.



Final Fantasy XIII

Publisher : Square-Enix | **ETA :** Winter

More shots are continuing to leak out of Square-Enix's opus, Final Fantasy XIII, including this nice one of everyone's favourite fire-beast, Ifrit. While rumours swirling round the internet of a 2008 release and summer demo have not been confirmed as true, the very prospect has excited already.



Team ICO's New Game

Publisher: Stainless Games | **ETA:** '09

Just one, tiny screenshot of this one, but even that's enough to get us dribbling with anticipation. Team ICO, the legendary developers behind PS2 classics ICO and Shadow of the Colossus have released this first piece of artwork of their first PS3 project.

"Mirror's Edge is one of the most intriguing games on the horizon"

IN THE PIPELINE

SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
GTA IV ETA: April 29th	**ALONE IN THE DARK** ETA: June	**TNA iMPACT** ETA: September	**TOMB RAIDER: UNDERWORLD** ETA: October
HAZE ETA: April	**SOUL CALIBUR IV** ETA: June	**TEKKEN 6** ETA: October	**KILLZONE 2** ETA: December

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- PC ZONE









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MIDWAY

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CITY FINAL

Grand Theft Auto IV

Lesbian sex, patent lies and five wonderful videotapes...

Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: Rockstar North
Heritage: GTA series
Link: www.rockstargames.com/iv
ETA: April 29

This is how you imagine it feels in that split second of lucid realisation after you see a grenade swirl to a stop next to your feet, and just before it's ripped apart by a limb-wrenching explosion...

What promises to be the best Grand Theft Auto yet is almost upon us and our eyes are wide, our breathing's heavy and we've just about got a handle on the enormity and slavish detail of GTA IV.

The big bang is imminent, all hell's about to break loose and then Rockstar go and pull a trademark masterstroke... by making us laugh.

How the hell are we supposed to wax lyrical about the latest AI revelations, gameplay hints and vehicle unveilings when we're choking back a guffaw? How? We'll tell you how...

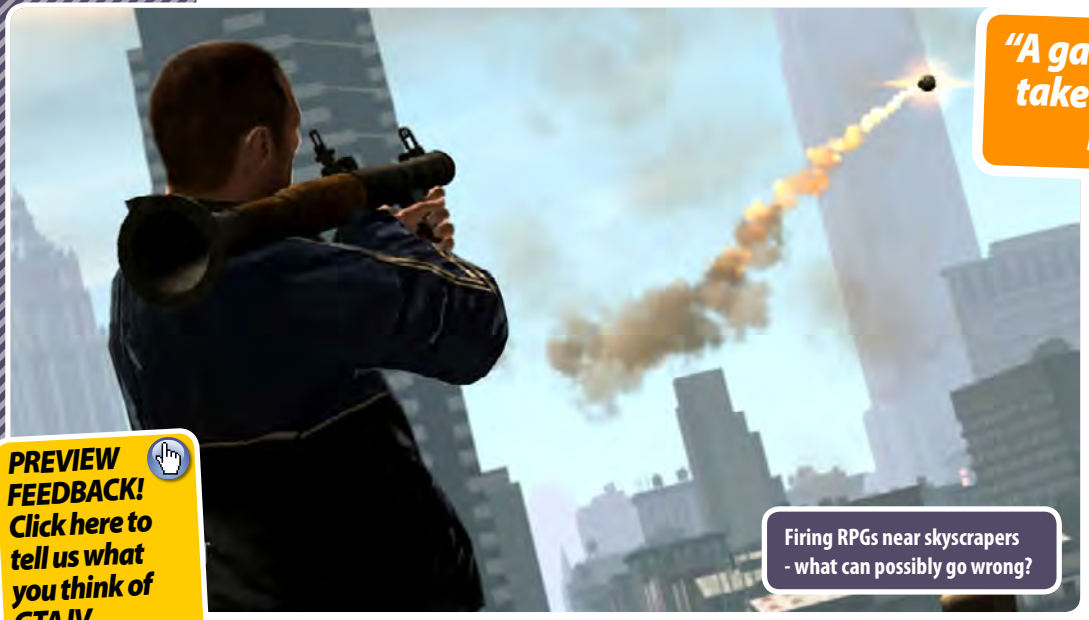
To coincide with the debut of the new GTA website, Rockstar has leaked out five videos showcasing the pitch black sense of humour that's become synonymous with the series.

But this being Rockstar, each video is a conceptual cameo, a comedy signpost to the mouth-watering gameplay and immersive atmosphere we're expecting from the most ambitious free-roaming shooter yet.

If you were expecting to see

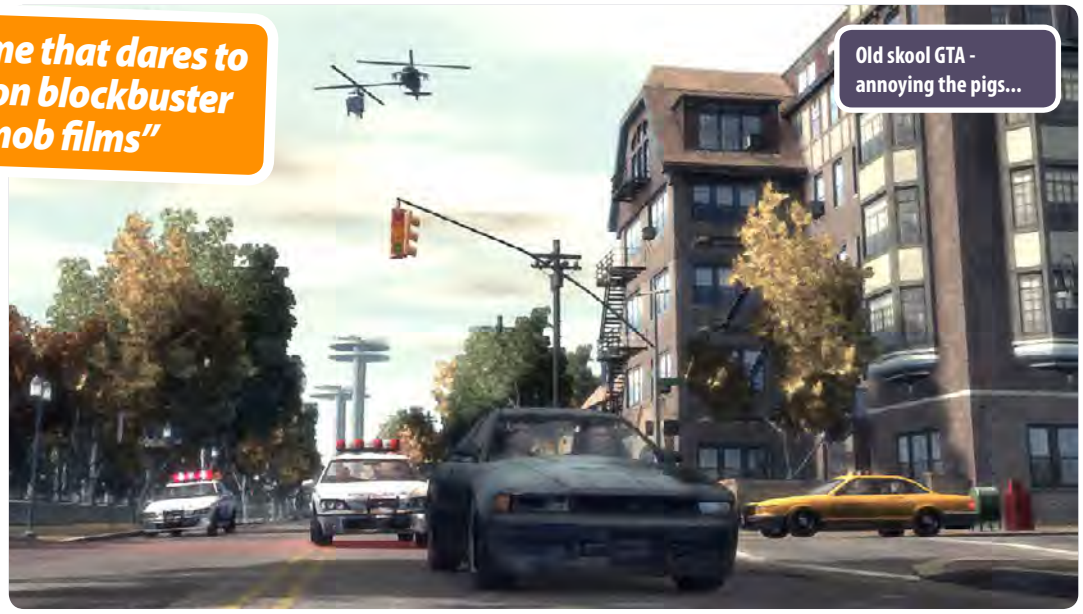


Fly a chopper - it's quicker than taking the stairs



Firing RPGs near skyscrapers - what can possibly go wrong?

"A game that dares to take on blockbuster mob films"



Old skool GTA - annoying the pigs...

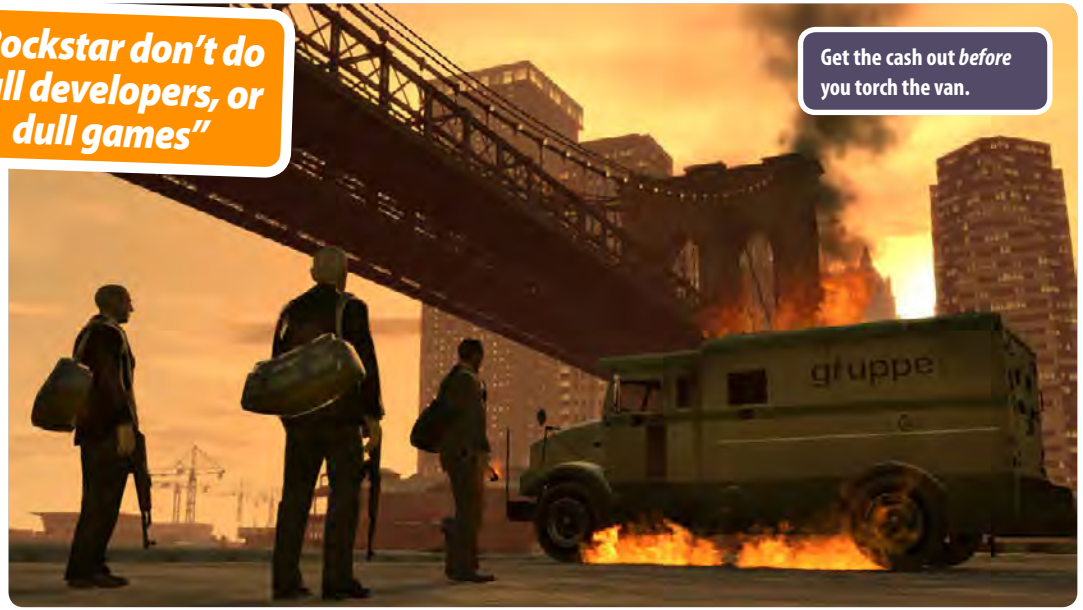
PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of GTA IV

>GTA IV continued

a full level played out by a dull as ditchwater developer, forget it. Rockstar simply don't do dull developers, or dull games. (Hell, they even made table tennis seem interesting..)

The first video is an advert for Whiz, a provider of mobile communications who are happy to sell you crappy ringtones that will bug the hell out of fellow Liberty City residents. It shows the Eastern >

"Rockstar don't do dull developers, or dull games"



Get the cash out *before* you torch the van.


A Vice City moment, minus the mullet.

VIDEO EVIDENCE

Exhibits A-E for your consideration, your honour...

BOSH
Watch all the latest clips here!



Gee Whiz | Steinway | Roman Bellic | Manny Escuela | Vlad Glebov

Gee Whiz

Keeping Liberty City dwellers in touch, with their dealers...

>GTA IV continued

European anti-hero of GTA IV, Niko, calmly walking from a scene of police panic. He's on his phone, a device that will be your link to tasks from assassination to old fashioned theft, and clearly in touch with a contact for his next hook-up. Then follows some slapstick comedy and a lesbian reference - ok, so it's not all sophisticated stuff...

Next up is an advert for the Steinway beer garden, and a pop at the kind of macho culture of drinking and fighting which we all love to secretly enact in front of our console. Hey, if you can't laugh at yourself, who can you laugh at? Well, probably not that radgy bloke in the corner who came out for a quiet drink armed with a baseball bat. Look out!

The other three videos are character cameos and give an insight into the rich tapestry of lowlife you'll encounter in Liberty City's backstreets and strip clubs.

Roman Bellic, Niko's cousin, is portrayed as a bit of a joke. He's variously drunk, legging it, trying out horrible chat-up lines and getting a shinning. And to cap it all, set against dodgy East European music, he gets knocked over. It made us laugh, anyway.

The crass humour, which is set against dark themes of violence and crime, comes through in the

"All the characters show flares of humanity"



Fight like a man. Or just pick on old guys.


Shoot out of cars using a precise reticule.


Better threads - things are looking up for Niko

>GTA IV continued

remaining videos which take the proverbial out of gangster mo-fos who take themselves a little too seriously at times.

All the clips are testament to the detail and characterisation in a game that dares to take on blockbuster mob films and TV shows at their own game.

Look beyond these videos to the gameplay snippets we've seen so far and there lurks a game of vast potential.

GTA IV has been largely under wraps for six months, but minus the framerate issues that bedevilled earlier builds it's looking sumptuous.

Enemies are more intelligent (and dumber!) than ever, seeking cover and firing aimlessly into the sky as you snipe them from afar. Better still, all the characters show flares of humanity that will generate genuine empathy, or loathing, thanks to the NaturalMotion AI-based physics. This new technology sees characters cowering when they're in danger - even 'instinctively' moving their hands to protect their head when a speeding car approaches.

The roster of weaponry, from rocket-propelled grenades to your more potent than ever fists, feet and knees is a toolkit for destruction. Mind you, in GTA IV stealth and brains are as likely to win the day as all-out nut-cracking - though obviously you'll be erring on the face-kicking side of the peace-war axis. You can creep up on enemies to steal vehicles and even use police computers, if you can snaffle a squad car, to get classified info on targets and associates. Can't wait? Us neither...

On next generation consoles Grand Theft Auto looks set to truly come of age as the technology catches up with the ground-breaking ambition Rockstar have shown throughout the series evolution.

As grown up as GTA has become, this latest round of teasers prove it's still in touch with the mischievous child within us all. ●

"Stealth and brains are as likely to win the day as all-out nut-cracking"



Motorbikes: impractical, dangerous... and bloody marvellous.


Taking cover isn't just for wusses, so hide!

P3Zine

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 94%

Bang on target to blow you away

ARMY OF TWO

Publisher: EA
Developer: EA
Heritage: N/A
Link: www.armyoftwo.com
ETA: March

HANDS ON

Army of Two

When two become one

Let's face facts; in many games, the co-op mode is simply an afterthought - a tacked on addition to garner an extra bullet point in the press releases, and hopefully an extra point in reviews. As it turns out, it often doesn't work all that well, as with no real thought having gone into these modes, you're left playing through a single player game with two people - the only real benefit being that you now have double the firepower. There's no particular need for you to work together, and in some cases, you can't even drive the same vehicles. In all, it's a pity poor show, but every now and then, you'll get a game that makes it work, and makes it work well. A game like a Halo, or a Resistance, that drains you and your buddy of sleep for the next month or so, as you play through with a friend, and the experience is magnified many times over.

With Army of Two, EA are looking to take co-op to the next level. Here, co-op isn't simply a mode - it's the entire damn game. While that doesn't mean it's necessary to rope in a friend for all you Billy no mates out there, as the computer can take over the second player when need be, it's apparent from the start that this is a game that's been made to be played through with two people. And in our books, that's enough to get us excited.

"With Army of Two, EA are looking to take co-op to the next level"

But, what exactly do we mean when we say it's been designed for >



Get your buddy to watch your back, turning you into an impregnable unit.



As you would expect, there's a wide range of vehicles in the game, which both players can drive.



Drag your partner to cover, while he lays down suppressing fire.



The Slipknot reunion tour was proving to be a bit of a disappointment.



The game will take you round all sorts of exotic locales, such as Iraq and Southern China.

>Army of Two continued

two players? Well, each and every thing about the game's levels has been created with the intent of making it as interesting and exciting as possible for two people to play through. For example, the vast majority of the puzzles will require you to work as a team to overcome them - whether it's by lifting your friend up on the forks of a forklift truck to get him over an obstacle, or giving him a leg up over the side of a building. Each level is based around the concept of teamwork, and the developers have promised that experienced players won't simply be able to carve a path through the level, leaving the novice behind.

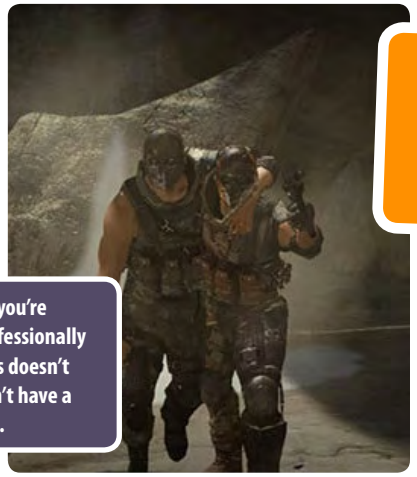
Even when you get hit, the game falls back on the co-op mechanic, relying on, of all things, tampons to patch your buddy up. Upon taking a few hits, your partner will go down, and it's up to you to get over to them, and revive them, by either jamming a tampon into their chest to absorb the blood (courtesy of a healing mini-game), or simply by dragging them to a safe spot, while they give you covering fire by shooting behind you.

With its mature rated themes, and somewhat unrelenting plot (which revolves around - you guessed it - the Iraq war), Army of Two is not a game you'd want your granny to see you playing. However, thanks to its unique co-op mechanics, this is high on our most wanted list. Let's hope it doesn't disappoint.

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



You wouldn't want to see this coming towards you on a dark night...

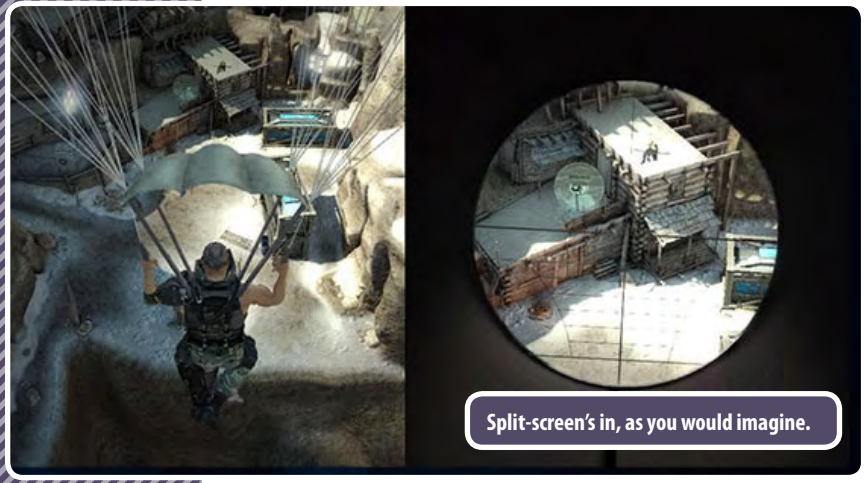


Just because you're hard nut, professionally trained killers doesn't mean you can't have a sensitive side.

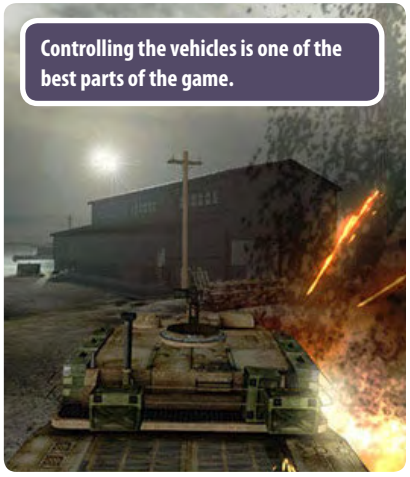
"You'll need tampons to patch your buddy up"



There are loads of different ways you and your partner can team together, and you'll have to make use of them all to survive.



Split-screen's in, as you would imagine.



Controlling the vehicles is one of the best parts of the game.

P3Zine Army of Two

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 90%

Could take co-op to a completely new level...

LIVE FREE OR DIE

1953, THE NAZI INVASION OF NEW YORK IS COMPLETE.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
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HANDS ON

MX vs ATV Untamed

Riding dirty in open worlds - sounds right up our alley

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Rainbow Studios
Heritage: Motocross Madness, Cars, MX vs ATV
Link: www.mxvsatv.com
ETA: 7th March

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of MX vs ATV

If there's one thing Rainbow Studios know well, it's how to make a good off-road game. Beginning their developing careers with the brilliant Motocross Madness, the team have gone on to produce MX after ATV game after MX vs ATV game for the past few years. Now, with the latest game, MX vs ATV Untamed, the team are looking to kick things up a notch, as the series makes its next gen debut.

And while it may seem the PS3's off-road market has been firmly wrapped up by the seminal Motorstorm, MX vs ATV Untamed does enough to distance itself from the pack, and is an impressive package on its own. Like Motorstorm, each race will pit a mix of vehicles against each other on the track, joshing it out for position as they career over hills, valleys, streams, mud pits and more in each of the well-designed courses.

Thanks to a nifty physics engine, the game also manages to get the balance between realism and arcade-style handling just about right. This means that while it's possible to pull off all sorts of fancy jumps and mid-air spins, you'll also have to worry about gravity pulling you back down to

"12-player online and some of the largest open-world environments we've seen"



Savour this picture - it's pretty much the last time you'll be on a firm surface.



The tracks on offer are well varied, and take in a variety of different environments.



Buggies and bikes, together in harmony.



Brilliantly, all the scenery you see is completely scalable.

>MX vs ATV continued

earth a bit too soon, though the game is nothing if not forgiving.

The main chunk of Untamed comes with the X-Cross mode - a tournament that sees you racing through loads of different competitions, taking in the full gamut of MX vs ATV's vehicles, including monster trucks, dune buggies, and even 4x4 golf carts. Throughout the progress of each competition, you'll be required to drive in each of the different vehicles, and, as you might expect, every type has a radically different way of handling that you'll have to adapt to if you want to win the race.

Another new mode is the Endurocross - a bizarre, torturous scheme that's designed to test both rider and machine to their limit. Racing through courses that are scattered with hundreds of obstacles, it's up to you to try and stick to the narrow, unobstructed path, which, when you're racing against several other competitors, is much easier said than done.

Outside of the single player game, MX vs ATV is also going to be shipping with a full multiplayer mode, including both on and offline split-screen that's sure to be a massive hit. Allowing up to 12 players to compete in straight races, or a series of mini games, the human competition adds a lot to the game, and leaping over a real person to finish in first place is an incredibly rewarding experience. One of the cooler mini-games, named Snake, basically turns your bikes into Tron style light-cycles, as you leave a trail around the course, attempting to trap your opponents. However, the twist here is that, with some perfect timing, it's possible to leap over each other's trails, making the mode all that more competitive.

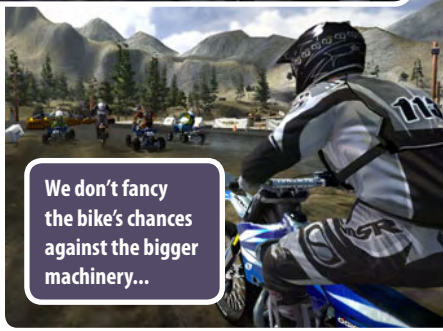
With 12-player online, a huge selection of vehicles, and some of the largest open-world environments we've seen in an off-road game, there's plenty to like about MX vs ATV Untamed. We'll be bringing you our full review very soon.

"Leaping over a real person to finish in first place is an incredibly rewarding experience"


Racing away from the sunset. How romantic.


Apparently, there's some sort of real-life rivalry going on between MX and ATV. We had no idea.


Each car comes with a variety of different skins, and you can unlock even more.


We don't fancy the bike's chances against the bigger machinery...


Each vehicles handles suitably differently, forcing you to adapt to each race.

P3Zine

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 87%

More off-road antics in the offing



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TNA iMPACT

Meet the new kid on the block...

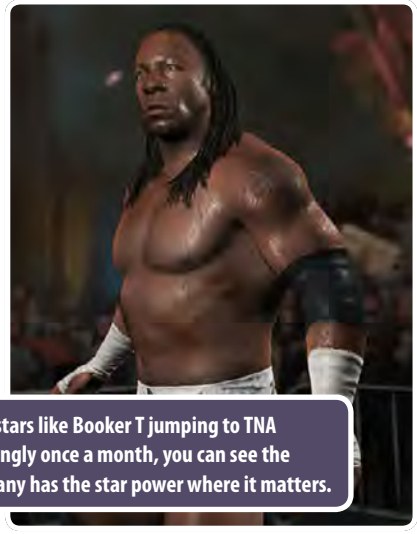


Christian Cage is also a former fixture of WWE - remember him?

As the "new kid on the block", going up against the sheer power of the WWE, the TNA game appears to be mirroring the company in real life. Is the power of the WWE brand a concern to you?
We think being the "new kid" in the wrestling genre is a blessing in disguise! We won't have the same number of features, or the same number of wrestlers, but instead we choose to target the most important aspect: Gameplay! At the end of the day, professional wrestling is bigger than just the WWE, and we are delivering a game with stunning visuals, tons of wrestling superstars, and exceptional gameplay.



Abyss is a man you don't want to meet in a dark alley.



With stars like Booker T jumping to TNA seemingly once a month, you can see the company has the star power where it matters.

A lot has been said of the grappling system in game, and how it's being likened to WWE No Mercy - could you tell us a bit about how the game's controls work?
We are certainly big fans of the old No Mercy videogame on the N64 and used it as an initial blueprint for TNA Impact. We are not using an analogue stick to trigger grapples, so in that respect we are old school, but then the analogue sticks open up an entirely new level of smooth and intuitive manoeuvres, submissions, throws, and power moves. Of course, countering attacks, and reversing grapple moves is paramount to our gameplay and skilled players will use them to their advantage.

TNA is famous for its X Division, who have a unique ring-style, which often involves them staying in the air more than it does on the ground - has it been a challenge to capture this style of wrestling in game?
Yes, the X Division and it's Ultimate X matches are crazy fun but have posed many unique challenges to our development team. But it just may be the most important, most rewarding, and visually gratifying aspect of TNA. Seeing Samoa Joe attempt to unbuckle the X, while hanging 20 feet above the ring, all the while being attacked from every angle by multiple wrestlers is a wild gameplay moment.

The 6 sided ring means flying turnbuckle attacks, and rope spring moves are more the norm, than a rare choreographed moment. The action is always fast and often highflying in TNA Impact.

How has working with wrestlers like AJ Styles and Samoa Joe, both of whom are known for being huge gamers, affected the development of the game?
It has been surprisingly huge! Both of those guys are huge gamers, have strong insightful opinions, and have been a pleasure to work with. From the motion capture sessions, down to the audio recordings, these guys >

"The action is always fast and often highflying in TNA Impact"

> Interview continued

worked hard. It's clear to everyone why they are successful in the ring too, they are just talented & hard working athletes. Even beyond the moves, they impacted our design on things such as venues. We now have venues from around the world, it was important to get their insight into how the crowd and announcing should be developed for each locale.

How many wrestlers are we going to be looking at in the final game? Are we nearing the point now where you have to lock the roster down, and no more wrestlers go in?
We'll have at least 25 TNA superstars in the game, and then a series of lesser known wrestlers will be included in our story mode. If another strong talent signs with TNA prior to our Beta date in early 2008, we'll scramble to add them to the roster.

We can only hope that's sweat dribbling down AJ's huge chest.



A few clips we've seen of the TNA game seem to show each wrestler having a really brief intro, cutting out before the guy even gets to the ring - will each wrestler have a full ring entrance in the finished game?
No. Extended ring entrances will not be included in TNA Impact, but certainly the unique way each wrestler enters the arena and charges toward the ring will be included.

Could you tell us a bit about the story mode and how it will play? Will it be a proper, story driven career mode, or will it just be a series of matches?
We don't have a career mode, but rather a story mode which begins with the player waking up dazed and confused in a Mexican doctor's office, dazed, confused, and trying to recall who and where he is. The player is drawn to the ring, and slowly begins to unfold his past, and future.

What sort of multiplayer functionality are you looking to include?
TNA Impact supports 4 players wrestling on the console, but only 2 humans for on-line matchups. Although all match types are accessible.

Do you want to fire Eric Young?



Disappointingly, submission moves won't play much of a role in the gameplay.

Of course! When Eric was recently in our studio to review the game, he played for at least 30 seconds holding the controller upside down. He was smiling the entire time! Shortly afterwards he was touring the studio and I swear he must have sniffed every person here at least once.

How complete is the game at the moment?
65% - But we are rolling on all cylinders and the game gets better each day! It's such an exciting time for all the developers in the studio.

And, finally, when can we expect to see more of TNA iMPACT? Is there a release date set for the UK at the moment?
Summer 2008.



We're not sure just holding his hands up is gonna help Sting in this situation.



Publisher: Midway Games
Developer: Midway Studios
Heritage: X-Men, Backyard Wrestling
Link: www.midway.com
ETA: Summer 2008

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Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Heritage: God Hand, Resident Evil 4
Link: www.devilmaycry.com
OUT NOW

Devil May Cry 4

So Nero, yet so far...

When so many undeserving games get hyped to the gills, it's somewhat unfair that all the pre-release talk about Devil May Cry 4 has been about anything but the game. Yes, there's a twenty-minute initial install on the PS3 version of the game - but it comes with a host of pretty concept art bringing you up to speed with the story of the previous three games. Yes, this wait means you won't be looking at any loading screens for any length of time - though you're talking a difference of about two or three seconds max each time. And yes, it's the first time that this PlayStation-centric series has been released on another console. But the negligible differences between both versions make all this pretty moot. All you need to know is that it's a very, very good action game, whichever format you choose.

The Devil May Cry series has always been renowned for its fearsome difficulty - so it's quite a shock to see both options for a casual-friendly Human difficulty mode and - horror of horrors - a tutorial. Naturally, this is the kind of thing that sends the ultra-hardcore into fits of rage, but ignore the internet bile - the change is a worthwhile one, making the game more welcoming without blunting its tough-as-nails edge. Seasoned DMC players will find the available Devil Hunter mode much more to their tastes.

Surprisingly, it's not the series' wisecracking, ice cool protagonist Dante that takes centre stage. Instead, he's sidelined for much of the game in favour of Nero, a younger, better-looking version of Dante whose relatively ineffectual gunplay is made up for with his all-powerful Devil Bringer - a demonic right arm that can smash enemies into the floor at brain-shattering force and velocity. He also has a sword with a handle revs like a motorbike - a touch that will bring out the inner teen in anyone. DMC4 is full of moments like this - from

>



Even on Human difficulty, the bosses require far more than just button-mashing to defeat. Each one is gloriously different from the last.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

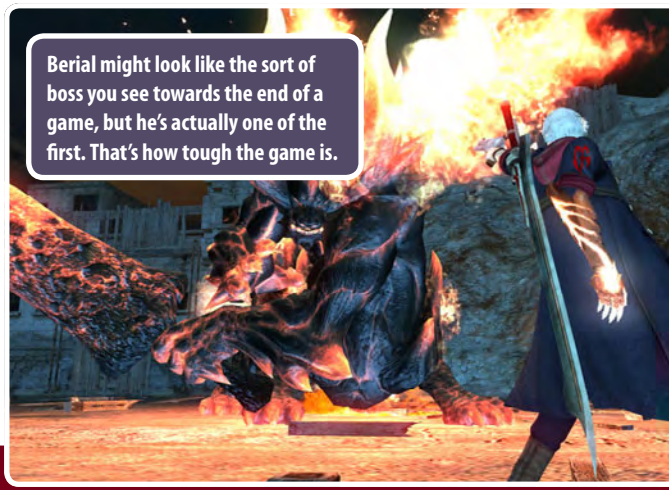
Dealing death, demonically



It's Gripped | **Bringer it on** | **Exceed-ingly good**

It's Gripped

Capcom certainly can't be accused of resting on their laurels in chucking in handfuls of new elements to further enhance the combat. The Grim Grips use Nero's demonic arm to grab specific parts of scenery, to zip him from one place to another at high speed.



Berial might look like the sort of boss you see towards the end of a game, but he's actually one of the first. That's how tough the game is.



It might look good in static shots, but it's genuinely stunning to witness in motion. The pace never lets up.

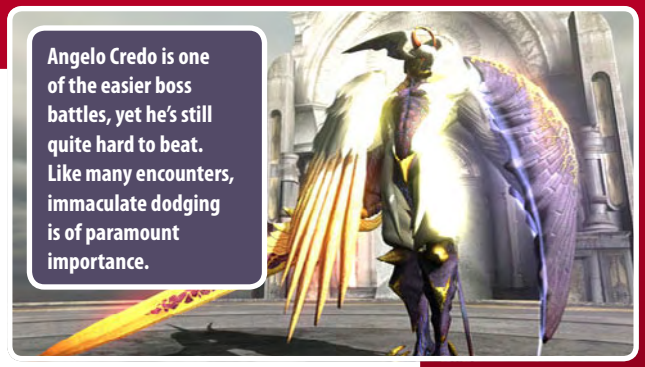
>DMC4 continued

hyperactively-edited cutscenes set to a ridiculous J-metal soundtrack, to flamboyant wire-fu scraps that - let's face it - are incredibly cool. Some critics may sniff at its sniggeringly adolescent feel - lesbian sirens and double-entendre-loaded dialogue - but its all so deliberately OTT, you can't help but get caught in the whirlwind.

The story's not up to much, but then that was never the point - all you need to know is that Nero and Dante are at each others' throats from the outset, and that the next few hours see you battling myriad monsters of fantastically grotesque design (scythes for feet, anyone?) and unerring efficiency, even on the lower difficulty setting. Beginners can turn on an automatic combo system which essentially rewards button-mashing, allowing less adept players to pull off the kind of moves that only experts can usually manage. It might be less satisfying this way, but it sure lets you get further. The level guardians are spectacular, as expected - Capcom just can't do bad boss encounters - and reward both skill and persistence. Though once you relinquish control of Nero, things do go a little downhill.

Put simply, the structure of the game is baffling - once you're in Dante's shoes, everything seems all too easy. Clearly pandering

"The level guardians are spectacular"



Angelo Credo is one of the easier boss battles, yet he's still quite hard to beat. Like many encounters, immaculate dodging is of paramount importance.



While ice and fire demons are fairly cliched, their design is far from rudimentary. This has some of the most stunning villains we've ever seen.

Roll over screen for annotations

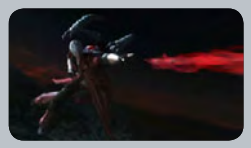


FREEZE FRAME

All in a day's work...



15 MINUTES
Tum te tum....waiting for the game to install to your PS3's HD.



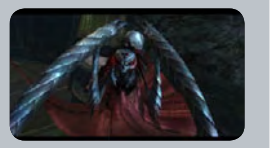
30 MINUTES
Dante arrives - as an enemy! Great opening boss scrap.



4 HOURS
Starting to string together combos - you've got 'smokin' style'!



7 HOURS
Nero's adventure is over, and Dante's the main man now.



11 HOURS
Credits roll, and the higher difficulties beckon - if you're up to the task...





Dante is much quicker than Nero, and with his four different fighting styles, he's just a little too strong to be true.



It's a shame that so much of Dante's adventure revisits previous areas.

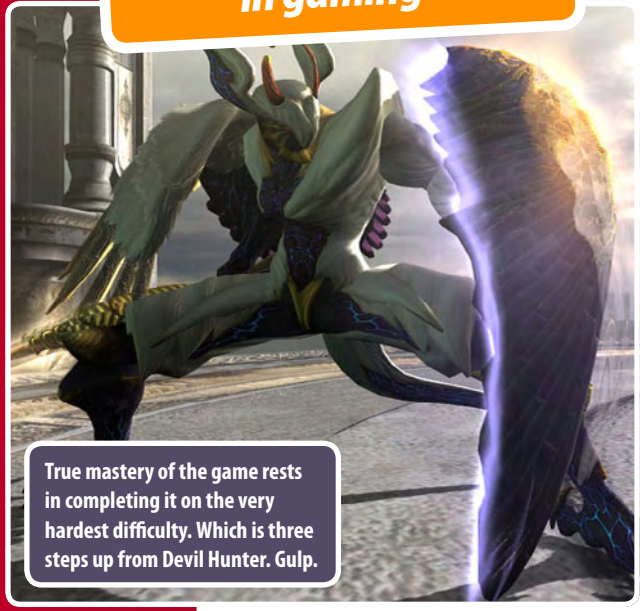
PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



Devil May Cry 4 represents the most accessible entry to the series to date - and, for most players, it will be comfortably the most enjoyable. ●

Chris Schilling

"Its balletic scrapping provides the kind of spectacle you rarely see in gaming"



True mastery of the game rests in completing it on the very hardest difficulty. Which is three steps up from Devil Hunter. Gulp.

>DMC4 continued

a little too much to fans, Capcom have overpowered him, to the degree where you'll dance around your opponents with very little resistance - certainly compared to your earlier struggles with Nero. Not only that, but you're essentially retreading old ground, fighting the same baddies, with very little change from the first time around. Perhaps that's part of the point - Dante is displaying his clear superiority to this young pretender - but the result is tantamount to some of the worst backtracking we've seen in a game. It smacks of laziness, that Capcom simply ran out of ideas, or time... or both. Either way, it takes a considerable amount of shine off what's otherwise an incredibly polished product.

Fortunately, when DMC4 is at its best, its balletic scrapping provides the kind of spectacle you rarely see in gaming. Whether you're fending off a screen-filling boss, or simply making mincemeat out of a horde of grunts, you'll be dazzled at some of the most graceful - almost poetic - fighting in any videogame. It's satisfying, enjoyable, rewarding, achingly hip and beautifully presented. And if its final third feels like such a disappointment, it's only through awe-struck wonderment at what could have been. Hopefully Capcom will master the formula with the next game. But for now,



P3Zine Verdict

It loses its way, but DMC4 is a fabulous fighting fantasy.

\+ Stunning, silky-smooth visuals

\+ Simple yet deep combat

\- Unnecessary repetition

85%

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10/10
"An absolute triumph"
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

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Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Harmonix
Heritage: Guitar Hero, Amplitude, Frequency
Link: http://www.rockband.com/
ETA: April

IMPORT

Rock Band

P3Zine GOLD



It's great to play online, but the quintessential Rock Band experience comes with three pals in your front room.

Ay! Oh! Let's go!

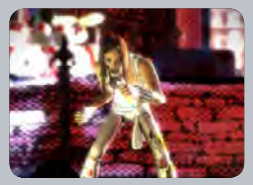
It's not often that you can say of a game that it's worth every penny without knowing the price, but that's the position we find ourselves in with Rock Band. Despite being pencilled in for an April release, there's no concrete details of how much the full pack (with bundled guitar, drum and mic peripherals) will cost - if the US release is anything to go by, it could cost around £90. Now, to the average consumer, that might seem expensive. Not a bit of it - in fact, Rock Band is one of the best value games we've ever played, and our countless hours on the region-free US version is testimony to that. Bearing in mind that thanks to extortionate postage costs we shelled out around 150 notes for the privilege of playing this early - and we still think it provides more bang for your buck than 95% of other games should tell you everything you need to know. Rock Band is a genuine gaming masterpiece.

Open the enormous box, and what immediately strikes you is the quality of the peripherals. The Fender Strat guitar controller may not feel quite as chunkily solid as the Guitar Hero III Les Paul, but it looks more like a real guitar. The fret buttons are coloured on the side of the neck rather than the front, while an additional set of five near the bottom allow you to play the solos in a more realistic position - and without the need >

"Rock Band is a genuine gaming masterpiece"

ROCK ON

You're a rock & roll star!


1 HOUR
Starting out on the rocky road to stardom - you'll be playing a few toilets.


5 HOURS
Goosebump-inducing moments galore, as crowds holler along to your best performances.


8 HOURS
It's 4am, and time to stop playing for the day. One... more...song..


15 HOURS
A well-timed drum fill into Overdrive saves you from an online booing. Sheer joy.


2 MONTHS
New track packs keep you coming back for never-ending encores. It's the game that never stops...

Roll over screen for annotations





There's a slightly fuzzy look to the background graphics, though that's no doubt deliberate so as not to deflect your attention from the crystal clear note displays.



As you progress in Solo Career or World Tour mode, stages get bigger and lighting more elaborate. There's a genuine sense of achievement in getting further and further.

Hearing the crowd shout the lyrics back during some songs - or even just clapping along enthusiastically to the beat - is truly goosebump-inducing.



"The drums will get most people's anticipation glands throbbing"

>Rock Band continued

to strum during those particular sections. Meanwhile, there's an effects switch whose various sounds (from flanger to chorus) kick in on the aforementioned solos and whenever you tilt your Strat to unleash Overdrive for the multipliers that get you the biggest scores.

The mic is probably the least impressive part of the whole package. It's a compact little number which performs well enough, but we've seen this sort of thing before in the likes of SingStar. Vocals tend to be marginally easier to master than the other instruments assuming you've got some competence in that area, though we prefer its less savage appraisal of your performance than SingStar's ever-wavering blobs.

It's the drums that will get most people's anticipation glands throbbing though, and once you've put them together - a surprisingly simple process - it's likely that you'll immediately launch into the solo career mode. Easy is going >



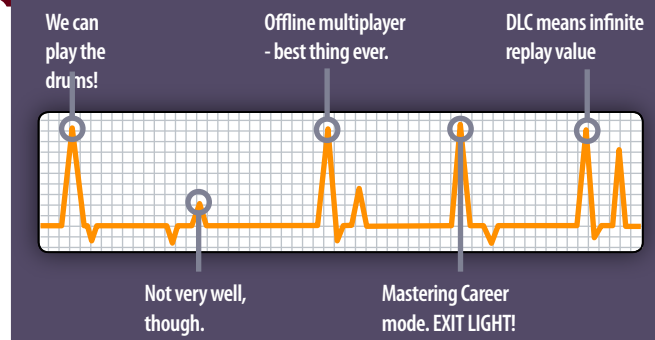


Some songs finish with sections where you can indulge in some freeform fretwork or drumming - just make sure you all end on the right note to get extra points for that special finale.



The singing is the weakest part of the package, and that's highly entertaining on its own. Rock Band is basically four games in one.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



ROCK BAND
Put on the red light!



Skins | Licks | Pipes

Skins

The onscreen display for the drums is similar to the guitar, with a line across the meter for kick drum beats. To save your calf muscles, it's best to keep your foot pressed down on the pedal at all times - just lift and press back down for each thump.

>Rock Band continued

to be the best stepping-off point for most, though we were able to pass most Medium songs first time, even though we were rarely getting five-star ratings. The thwack of the sticks against the solid rubber pads is occasionally a little loud - particularly when you're going hell for leather on the faster numbers - but if you adopt the game's suggestion of holding the sticks a little looser (and take our advice and turn your TV's volume way, way up) then you won't notice. Besides, it provides useful feedback to your thrashing in the early stages. The kick drum pedal works just as well, though occasionally the spring seemed a little spongy after lengthy play sessions.

Harmonix have plenty of ex-musicians (and those still plying their trade in amateur bands) onboard, and it shows. Note placement is absolute perfection on most songs, with Medium guitar never feeling like a compromise for the weak, while the drumming is still satisfying well before you reach Expert where you'll essentially be playing like a pro sticksmith. Like all games, drums take a fair bit of practice before you master them, the main stumbling block getting your feet and hands moving independently.

Once you feel up to playing in a band, you can start the offline-only Band World Tour mode with up to three mates (though you'll need an extra guitar for the bass parts) or venture online and play different songs with a few online buddies. While it's a shame you can't progress through an online career as a group, it's still a hugely satisfying and enjoyable experience to nail that perfect gig. And if one of your band isn't quite up to the task, or is struggling with an unfamiliar track, the Overdrive power you accumulate through consistently hitting consecutive highlighted notes or beats can be used to 'rescue' them and get the crowd back behind you.

Saving your mates via the healing power of music? Moments like that provide the kind of satisfaction you'd get from beating a tricky boss or solving a difficult puzzle in other genres. Rock Band transcends its rhythm-action origins to become something altogether more social, more thrilling. And when you've pulled off a blistering group performance and your onscreen avatars take their bows to an enraptured crowd, you'll get a gaming buzz that will have you coming back time and time again. Whatever the cost, come April you must own this game.

Chris Schilling



P3Zine Verdict

It's like God gave rock and roll to everyone.

- Play-all-day fun
- DLC adds astonishing longevity
- A cracking soundtrack, with more to come

95%

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Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3

P3Zine GOLD

Publisher: Koei
Developer: Atlus Co.
Heritage: Odin Sphere, Disgaea
Link: http://www.atlus.com/persona3/
ETA: February 29th

School's out for summer, though you won't be

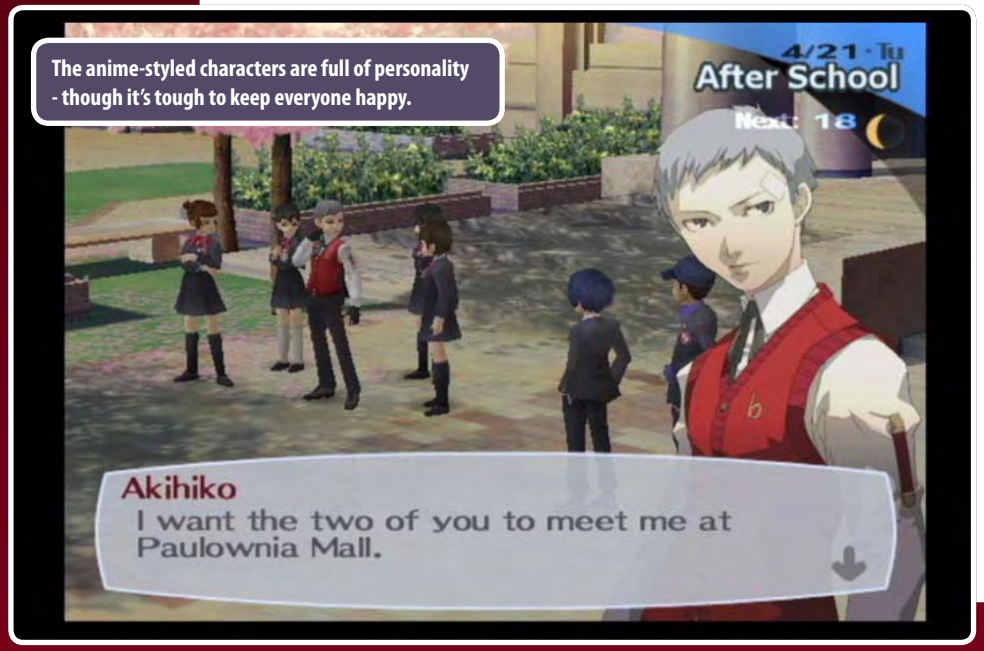
"Significant depth and a fascinatingly complex story"



The number of extra-curricular activities is quite astounding.

The Shin Megami Tensei series has always dealt with adult themes such as isolation, death and the occult in a measured, mature way. But rarely has its gameplay been able to match up to its ideas. Persona 3 changes all this with a more accessible approach that somehow loses none of its hardcore edge.

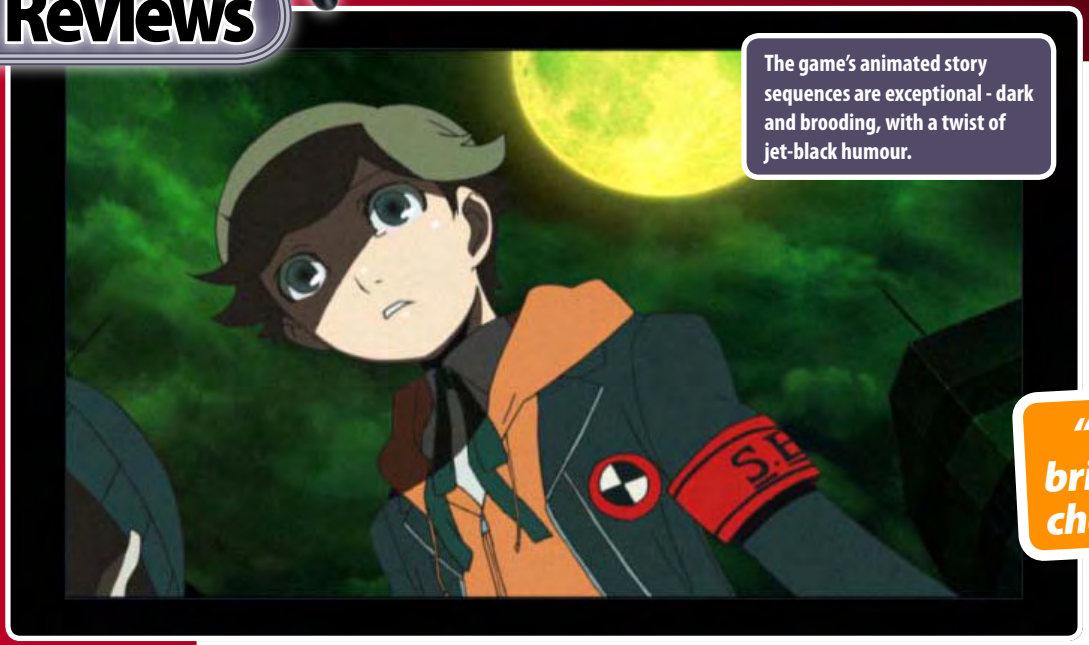
It's essentially two RPGs rolled into one. During the day your character attends school, chats to friends and takes part in lessons - you'll be asked questions and tested in various ways throughout each day, all of which affect your statistics. You might be asked to sing karaoke which boosts your confidence, while studying hard increases your Academics skill. The idea is really to build friendships with classmates, as these ties >



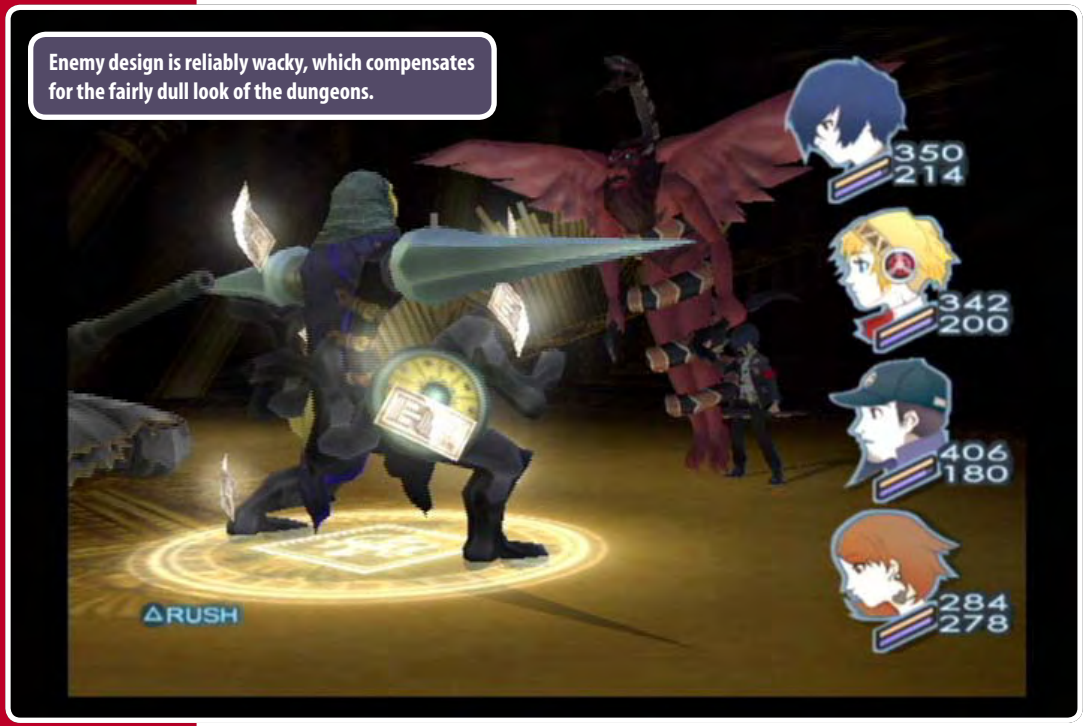
The anime-styled characters are full of personality - though it's tough to keep everyone happy.



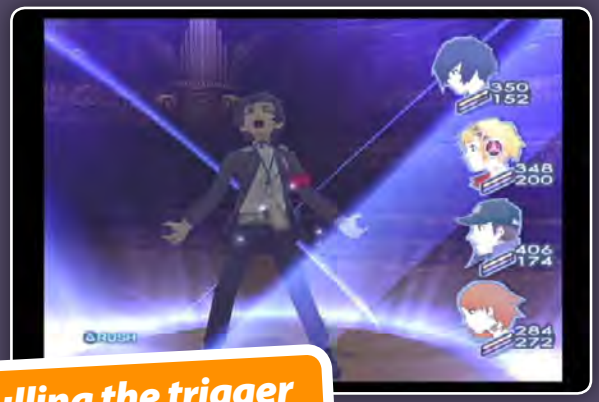
While you can waste a few attacks figuring out your opponent's weakness, once you're aware the battle's yours for the taking.



The game's animated story sequences are exceptional - dark and brooding, with a twist of jet-black humour.



Enemy design is reliably wacky, which compensates for the fairly dull look of the dungeons.



Once More, with feeling

The battle system is very reminiscent of the series' Press Turn mechanic, rewarding any attacks on opponents weak to their elemental power. You'll often get an extra turn for this, which allows you to knock your enemy to the floor. Here your party can rush any grounded foes to finish them off with a powerful combination attack.

"Pulling the trigger brings out your character's Persona"

>Persona 3 continued

affect your combat performance in the other half of the game.

Because when midnight strikes, your school transforms into a tower full of monsters - and it's here that your skills are really put to the test. Pointing a gun at your head and pulling the trigger - a controversial touch sure to get certain MPs frothing at the mouth - brings out your character's Persona, a powerful demon that can use magic and special moves to defeat the powerful foes that await in the randomly generated dungeons. The more social connections you have, the more effective your Persona will be - so it pays to try and keep your friends close in order to beat your enemies.

The mix of such peaceful, almost relaxing daytime sections with old-school dungeon-crawling is an effective one that surprisingly doesn't feel jarring. Skilfully connecting both worlds, Atlus has crafted a lengthy (around seventy hours) RPG which offers significant depth and a fascinatingly complex story. If you're short on money and looking for something that will last you a while, then we can't recommend Persona 3 highly enough. With more content than your average PS3 game - never mind its PlayStation 2 rivals - you'll be playing well into the summer months.

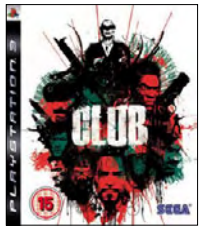
Chris Schilling

P3Zine Verdict

A schizophrenic masterpiece

- \+ Epic story and likeable characters
- \+ Beautifully translated dialogue
- \- Tough-going in places

90%



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Bizarre Creations
Heritage: Project Gotham Racing 4
Link: www.bizarrecreations.com/games/the_club/
OUT NOW

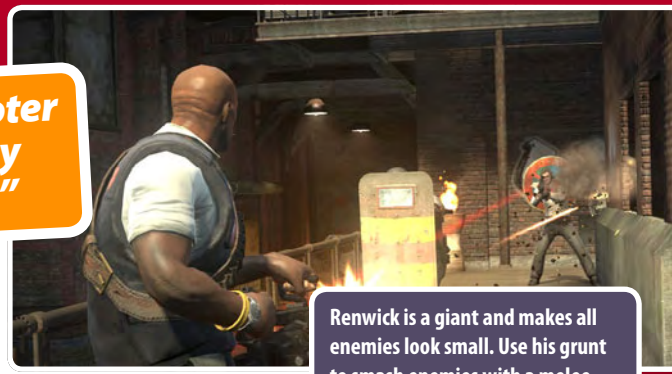
The Club

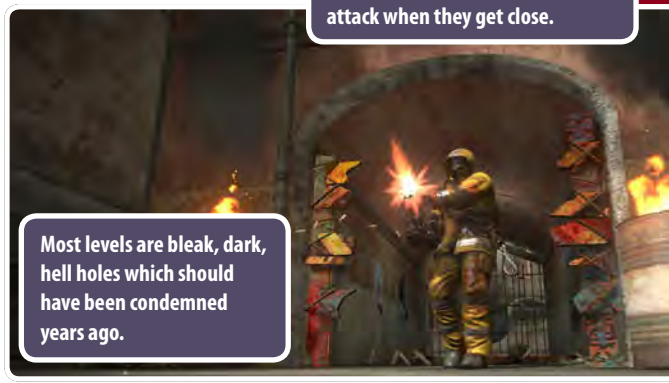
The first rule of The Club? Run. The second rule? Run faster.

"A fast paced shooter with the gameplay principles of PGR"

It's not often that a game developer moves outside of its comfort zone and makes a game that bears no relation to the kind of games that made it famous. In the case of Bizarre Creations, that game was Project Gotham Racing - a game so great, it made everyone forget that Sony had spent five years pissing around with Gran Turismo 5 only to deliver a half baked demo. Before Project Gotham Racing, Bizzare Creations produced Sega Dreamcast predecessor Metropolis Street Racer which attracted the attention of Microsoft and quickly prompted a signing that would produce the ultimate racing series on Xbox.

Fast forward to today and Bizzare Creations have taken a break from developing solely for Xbox which not only makes a PS3 Project Gotham clone a cert but has led to the creation of The Club. The Club is a fast paced shooter based upon the gameplay principles of Project >


Renwick is a giant and makes all enemies look small. Use his grunt to smash enemies with a melee attack when they get close.

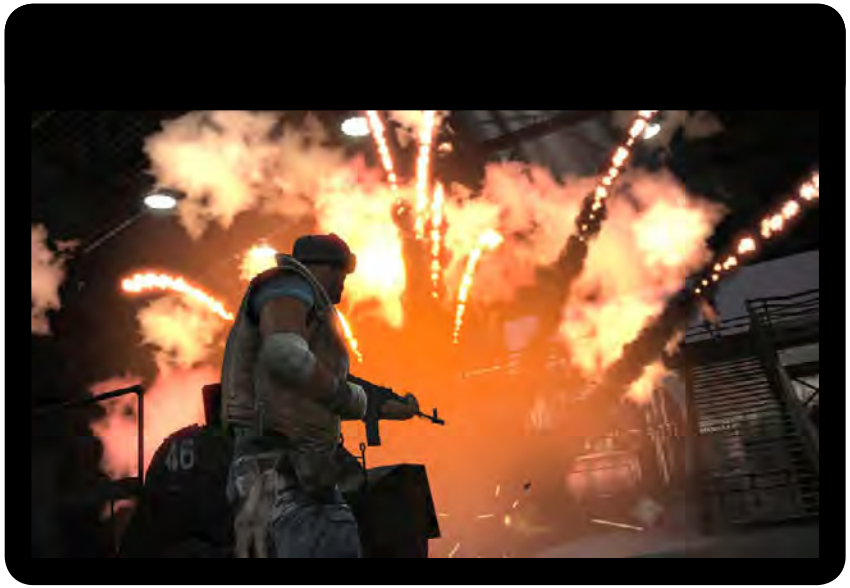

Most levels are bleak, dark, hell holes which should have been condemned years ago.


Blast enemies and you can immediately steal their weapons and ammo by running over their grave.



Prepare to hit the shoulder button and sprint, but be ready to shoot the target as soon as you see him appear at the end of the road.


Targeting enemies at speed can be tricky, even if they're close thanks to the fiddly controls.





>The Club continued

Gotham Racing. If that sounds odd, that's because it is - let us explain.

The secret formula of Project Gotham Racing was 'kudos', a points based reward scheme for doing tricks and performing well on the race track. Get a great lap, overtake an opponent or perform a tyre shredding drift and kudos points fly across the screen, acting as currency for your next vehicle purchase. It made racing games exciting again and inspired arcade based racers such as Burnout and Need For Speed. But how does kudos fit in to The Club? There's a Kill Meter which serves as a kudos meter, rewarding players for headshots and the speed of each kill. Continue a killing spree and you'll get points combos, constantly building your score. Fail to find a new kill or walk the wrong way and the points frenzy stalls or - in the language of The Club - starts to 'bleed', leaving you feeling deflated and a bit stupid. That's not to say that picking one of the brilliantly designed characters and letting rip isn't fun for an hour.

There's a comic book style range of weird vigilantes that range from a man in a yellow anorak called Nemo and a buff ex-cop called Renwick. Ultimately, The Club is a bit like Fight Club with guns, an illegal underground human cockfight for the entertainment of the wealthy. Renwick wants to bring the whole thing down from the inside while other characters have their own motives for joining the murderous party. Each level is based around an area which allows such behaviour. Scenarios include a crumbling closed prison and a German factory, procured by The Club on the basis that a Hollywood film is being made on the premises.

The plot and characters are flawless and much effort has been spent on creating believable >



FROM THE MANSION TO THE PRISON

Got to jail, a mansion and a warzone in one week!



PRISON
Bleak, long corridors and lots of close combat. Your introduction to The Club.



STEEL MILL
The German factory where the locals think you're making a film, with 'real' explosions.



VENICE
The beautiful city gets taken over by The Club thugs and becomes ugly.



WARZONE
Combat for kicks in a warzone? Can The Club be any more sick than this?



MANOR HOUSE
Like crapping at the Ritz, only with guns and shit. Or bullets, rather.

"The plot and characters are flawless"

Next Gen?

The sheer amount of bullets and enemies moving at speed could only be done on a modern console. Forget waves of enemies approaching as you kill their friends one by one. In The Club, armies of vigilantes will come at you together while rockets, grenades and bullets make the screen shaking action pulse with giant explosions.



INCOMING!

The ultimate weapons of The Club revealed...



The Titan | The Zeus RG | The Enforcer

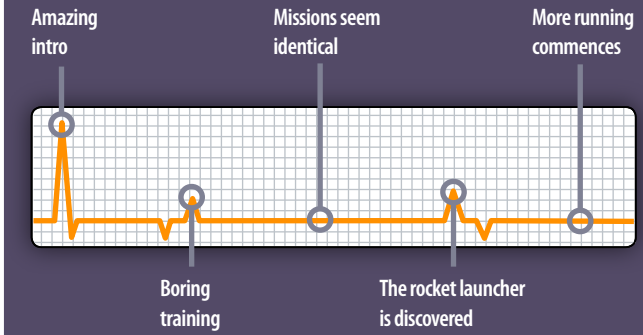
The Titan

A big turrent gun which is fast, powerful but not as accurate as other weapons because of the time it takes to shift the hulking thing towards a target. It also makes the greatest budda-budda sound we've heard in ages.



The split screen mode works well, and no detail is lost when the screen is scrunched.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



>The Club continued

personas and every bit of the game has a big budget feel, including the shining visuals, not that you'll have time to look at them in any detail. Which is kind of the problem. Racing to collect kudos points in a racing game worked because gamers were used to travelling at speed. Rushing through a shooter isn't half as much fun. If stealth epics like Metal Gear Solid and Splinter Cell taught us anything, they showed us that creeping and killing an enemy slowly with an element of thought was thrilling. There's always a time and a place for running into a barrage of enemies with a shotgun but you need breathing space. The Club feels like one desperate rush from beginning to end, with players frantically looking for the next head shot before their kill meter falls. It feels like chasing stars in a particularly violent Bushtucker Trail from I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!

In a strange parallel, veteran racing game developer Criterion paused development on Burnout to create a shooter called Black in 2006 and, rather than trying to redefine the genre, simply made a polished shooter which was gloriously violent and looked amazing. You can't help wishing that Bizarre Creations had done the same. After all, the look and overall style of The Club is appealing, it's just the business of running and killing at speed that's wrong. We might have spent a few minutes dashing around a city in Grand Theft Auto, shooting shoppers in the head in a moment of madness, but that's just for a laugh. Ultimately, we don't want a whole game based around point combos and a clock unless it features a Ferrari Enzo. Call us sickos, but we want to spend at least two seconds savouring a kill, waiting to see if he collapses or falls forward, over that balcony and flat on his face.

Richard Melville



You'll rarely see anyone standing still in The Club. They should've called it The Running Man.

P3Zine Verdict

Fun in short bursts, but short bursts is all you get.

+ Great characters
- Flawed concept
- Lack of varied gameplay

78%

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PlayStation Network

More? You want more? Well here's another four...

PixelJunk Monsters

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Q-Games
Price: £3.49

P3Zine GOLD



A real-time strategy game of sorts, PixelJunk Monsters takes place in a forest, and, as the guardian of a tribe of little people, it's up to you to chop down the trees that make up their home, and construct a veritable armoury of weapons and turrets in their place, to wipe out the waves of enemies that attack you. With a good deal of thinking required if you're going to place your weapons efficiently (each turret has a limited optimal range), fantastic hand-drawn graphics, and a 2-player co-op mode to boot, this is worth every penny of your three-and-a-bit pounds. ●

P3Zine Verdict
Nothing "junky" about this at all
+ Innovative gameplay
+ Incredibly addictive
90%

Theme Hospital

Publisher: Electronic Arts Ltd
Developer: Bullfrog
Price: £3.49



Taking the premise that made Theme Park so much fun, and swapping the patrons for patients, Theme Hospital was a classic when it was released on the PS1, and thankfully, the game remains as fun to play now as it was then. Unfortunately, however, the same problems that plagued its original release are very much present here - squashing an entire keyboard's worth of controls onto the PS3 controller is not an easy task, but luckily, it can't distract from the fun too much. ●

P3Zine Verdict
Cough Cough
+ Fun management game
- Dodgy controls
80%

Fade to Black

Publisher: Electronic Arts Ltd
Developer: Delphine Software
Price: £3.49



The first of two band references this month, Fade to Black is, in fact, not a game based on the Metallica song, but actually the 3D adventure-game sequel to Flashback, a well received 2D game from Delphine Software, the creators of Another World. Set in an inventive sci-fi universe, Fade to Black puts you in the shoes of Conrad, the hero from Flashback, who somehow finds himself captured and imprisoned by the baddies from the first game. While it may not be as enjoyable as its prequel, thanks to the switch to 3D, Fade to Black remains an interesting look back at the PS1's heritage. Worth a try. ●

P3Zine Verdict
Not quite Tomb Raider
+ Good 3D adventure
- Lack of movement
78%

Motorhead

Publisher: Zoo Digital
Developer: DICE
Price: £3.49



From the people who went on to bring us Battlefield 1942, Motorhead is a futuristic racing game, with an interesting blend of Ridge Racer and Gran Turismo style handling. With ten cars to choose from, and a respectable eight tracks to race around, there's certainly plenty to do here for your money, and the action is as smooth as they come. Running on a fantastic custom coded engine, Motorhead's actually managed to age fairly well, and stunningly, still manages to look impressive, all these years later. Which is certainly more than we can say for Lemmy. ●

P3Zine Verdict
Time to play the game
+ Great looks
+ Smooth gameplay
85%

Out of the shadows...

How PS3 is starting to live up to its precursor's legacy



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.

Playing brilliant role-player Persona 3 over the past week or so required me to dust down my PlayStation 2 and plug it into my HDTV for the first time in a few months. I hadn't realised how long it'd been since 'old faithful' had been relegated to a box in the cellar, but it's proof that the PS3, given pride of place under my new telly, is finally beginning to emerge from the large shadows cast by its predecessor.

The release of Persona 3 is proof that there's still a substantial market for PS2, and that's something that's both surprising and highly admirable. It's easy to forget that - of the last generation consoles - PlayStation 2 was the first to market, and yet it's still getting new games. When was the last time you saw a new Xbox or GameCube release on shop shelves? Exactly. Yet the continued success of PS2 has caused Sony quite a few problems - or, rather, it's created trouble for their current generation model. This late renaissance for what should, by now, be an obsolete machine has led many gamers to delay upgrading. FIFA 08 and Guitar Hero III are just two games which sold considerably more on PlayStation 2 than on 3 - something that must prove more than a little embarrassing for Sony, given the hype surrounding its most powerful games console. It's one of the most important factors in the company removing PS3's backwards compatibility - rather than the cost saving excuse many thought Sony would trot out, SCEA boss Jack Tretton held his hands up and admitted it was to "encourage buyers of the entry-level PlayStation 3 to purchase more games designed specifically for the new system". In other words: please stop buying PS2 games, you're making us look bad.

Model console

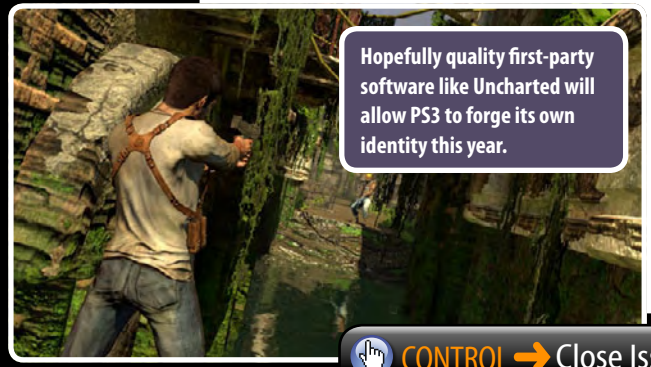
Indeed, Sony's repeated fudging of the SKU issue - one minute criticising Microsoft for having two different 360 models, the next releasing four different PS3 units over the three major territories - has led to widespread customer confusion over which model to buy. We're lucky that in Europe, the issue is less complex, with just the 40GB and 60GB units (and the latter being phased out) available, though rumours of a 120GB PS3 with increased functionality won't go away.

Yet if the first six months of the PlayStation 3's life were chaotic and underwhelming, recently it's starting to look like the machine we know it can be. As the blurb on the left says, I'm the proud owner of all three current generation consoles, yet in my free time I've been playing the PS3 almost exclusively - Uncharted, SingStar and the incredible Rock Band are all terrific games that make use of the machine's capabilities in very different ways - the former not only playing very well indeed but looking a cut above 95% of Xbox 360 titles, while the latter two have the advantage of regular downloadable content to add to their already impressive longevity.



PlayStation 2 - the console that wouldn't stop selling. It's only recently that its star has finally started to wane.

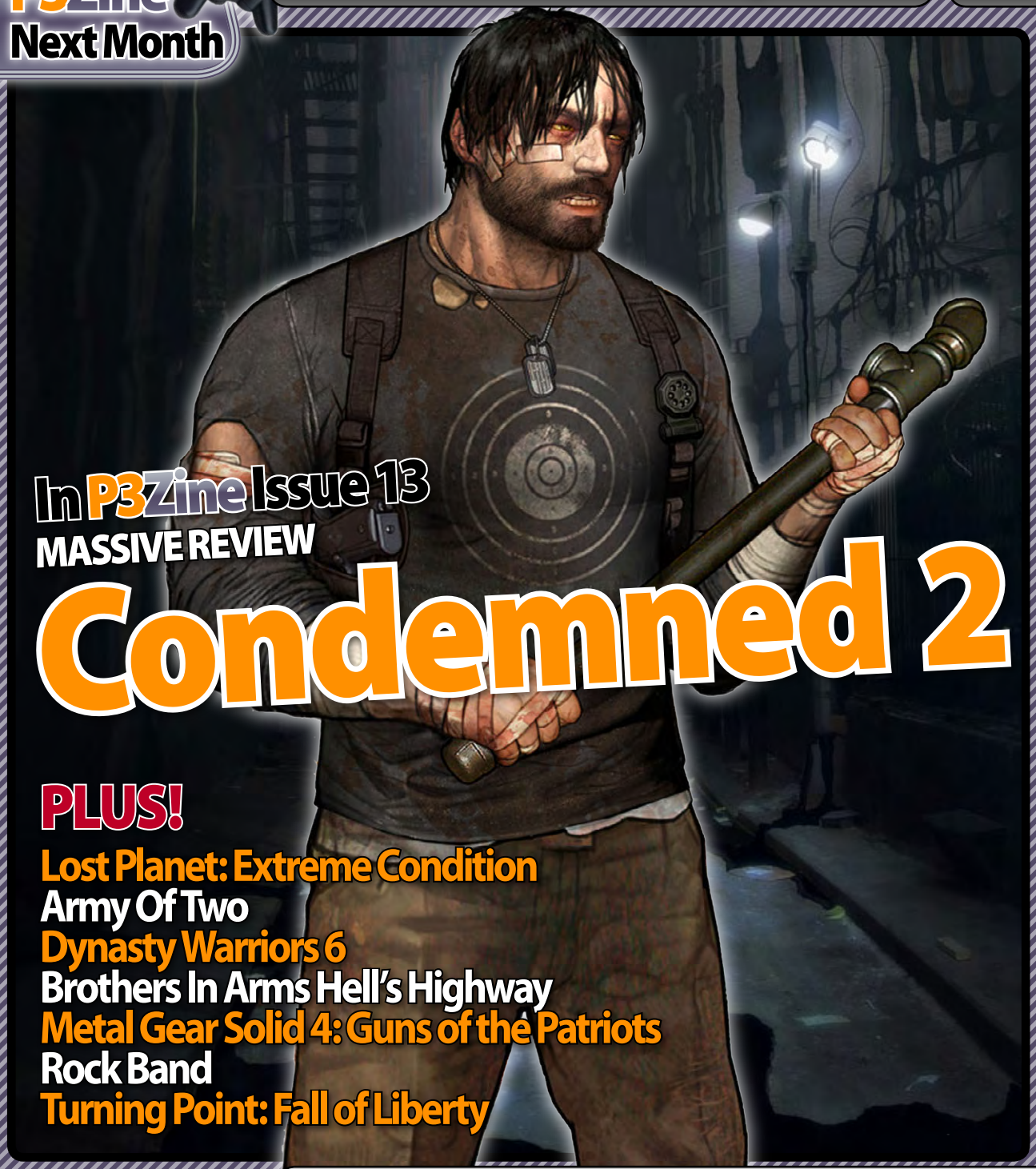
PS3 isn't the only thing to emerge from the shadows, either - the recent screenshot teaser of Team ICO's follow-up to Shadow of the Colossus is surely one of the most exciting gaming developments of recent months. The thought of such a talented team at work on much more powerful hardware is further proof that PS3 has a tremendously exciting future ahead of it. At this rate, it could even last longer than its predecessor - now that would be an incredible feat!



Hopefully quality first-party software like Uncharted will allow PS3 to forge its own identity this year.



The one simple screenshot that caused so much anticipation - expect to hear more about Team ICO's latest at the Game Developer Conference later this month.



In P3Zine Issue 13

MASSIVE REVIEW

Condemned 2

PLUS!

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition
Army Of Two
Dynasty Warriors 6
Brothers In Arms Hell's Highway
Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots
Rock Band
Turning Point: Fall of Liberty

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