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NAVIGATE

P3zine

Issue 27 | June 2009

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

EXCLUSIVE!

DANTE'S INFERN

Dead Space meets God of War?
Hands-on and interview inside...

PREVIEW!

PREVIEW!

REVIEW!

InFamous

Damnation

Wolverine: Uncaged Edition

PLUS!

EXCLUSIVE SHOTS
CROSS
EDGE



CONTROL





Welcome to P3Zine



There's a veritable feast of up-coming titles for you to chew on this issue. Dante's Inferno leads the charge with a hands-on playtest and exclusive interview with Producer Phil Marineau. That said, inFamous and Damnation are both clacking at its heals for your deserved attention. We also have a cool exclusive on Koei's Cross Edge.

On the reviews side Activision's Wolverine is a worthy contender for your cash, Rock Revolution not so much, but PSN offerings Penny Arcade Episode 2 and Outrun Online Arcade are also worth checking out.

We now hit the pre-E3 lull as we wait to see what feasts Sony and pals have in store for us later this year, when they reveal all in June.

Until then, 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
Sent to Damnation



Steve Hill
Deep into Dante's Inferno

DON'T MISS!
This month's highlights...

The latest & greatest titles on PS3

Dante's Inferno
Hands-on preview & interview

Cross Edge
Exclusive pics

Damnation
First look preview



inFamous
First look

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

Wet
Katamari Forever
Cross Edge
Damnation
inFamous
Episode 2
Dante's Inferno

X-Men Origins: Wolverine
Rock Revolution
Penny Arcade
Episode 2
OutRun Online Arcade

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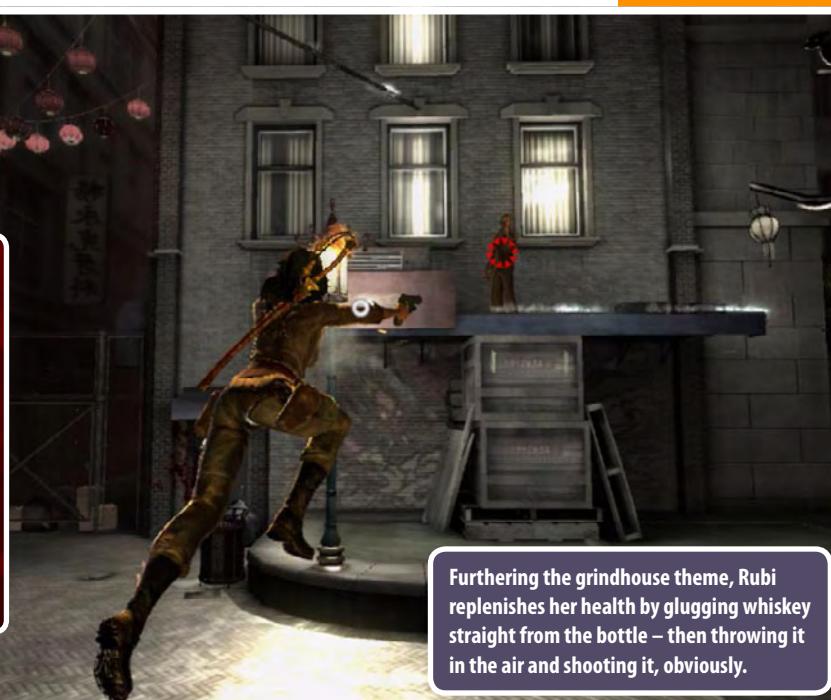


Publisher: Bethesda
Developer: Artificial Mind & Movement
Heritage: Happy Feet, Iron Man
Link: www.wetthe-game.com
ETA: Autumn



As soon as Rubi leaps, the slo-mo activates. If you're clever you can chain some really impressive kill sequences.

"Wet has clearly been influenced by the likes of Desperado or the Crazy 88 scene in Kill Bill"



Furthering the grindhouse theme, Rubi replenishes her health by glugging whiskey straight from the bottle – then throwing it in the air and shooting it, obviously.

Wet



These ain't no water pistols...

What is it?

Wet's gun-toting protagonist Rubi is a fixer. That's not to say she's a dab hand with a screwdriver, more that she goes on undercover missions which are likely to get messy. She is, we're told, a contemporary take on The Man With No Name – she's an enigmatic stranger with a mysterious background, driven by money. Yet we don't remember Clint ever flipping upside down while running up a wall and shooting two bad guys in the face simultaneously...

Why should we be excited?

Developer Artificial Mind & Movement describes Wet as a 'stylised Tarantino-flavoured acrobatic shooter'. Which loosely translates as 'Stranglehold with a girl and a grindhouse theme'. It bears more than a passing resemblance to Midway's underrated blaster, not least in its use of slow motion and stylish cinematic presentation. Yet Rubi's gymnastic tendencies take her places Chow Yun Fat's avatar was never able to go – she can slide on her knees to gun down a pair of goons before slicing a third with her sword, then wall-run, flip and dive forward to take out three more. It's clearly been influenced by sequences in the likes of Robert Rodriguez' Desperado or the Crazy 88 scene in Kill Bill, and thus the grindhouse presentation – all gaudy intermissions, crackly filters and bubbles in the film reels – fits perfectly.

Rubi can also go into 'Rage mode' at scripted intervals – at which point the action resembles Queens of the Stone Age's Go With The Flow video, with Rubi and her foes silhouetted against a crimson backdrop with white blood spattering the walls. There's a focus on chaining moves for more spectacular kills during the main combat sequences but here it's all about murdering as >

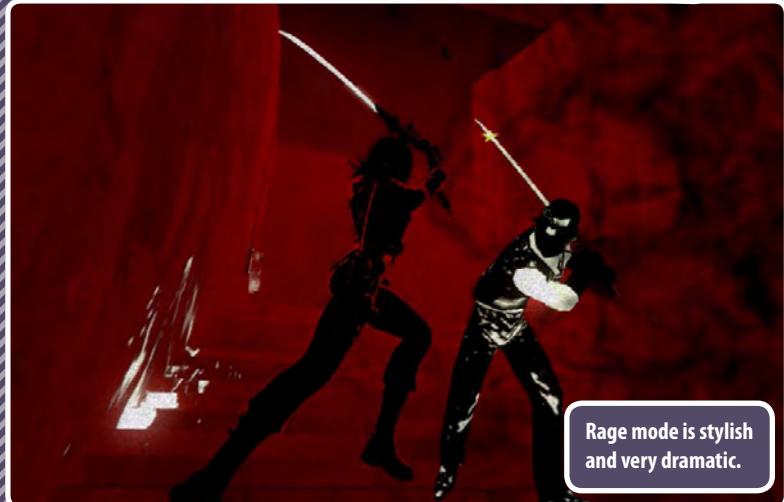


PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!
Click here to
tell us what you
think of Wet



Pressing L2 activates 'Rubi vision' which, in a similar manner to Mirror's Edge, highlights objects our heroine can interact with.

"Aware that all the killing could get repetitive, Wet mixes things up for the boss battles"



Rage mode is stylish and very dramatic.



I know she's the one with the sword, but I still don't fancy his chances much.

> Wet continued

many evil-doers as you can before her Rage dies down. Aware that all this killing could get repetitive, Wet mixes things up for the boss battles – the one we saw involved a highway chase as Rubi jumps from car to car in an attempt to get a bead on the man she's hunting down. At around eight hours long, it seems Wet won't outstay its welcome, but it offers a number of additional modes for extra replay value, with time and race challenges, and Rubi's home – a hub offering a large environment to test your parkour skills out on.

When can we expect to see more?

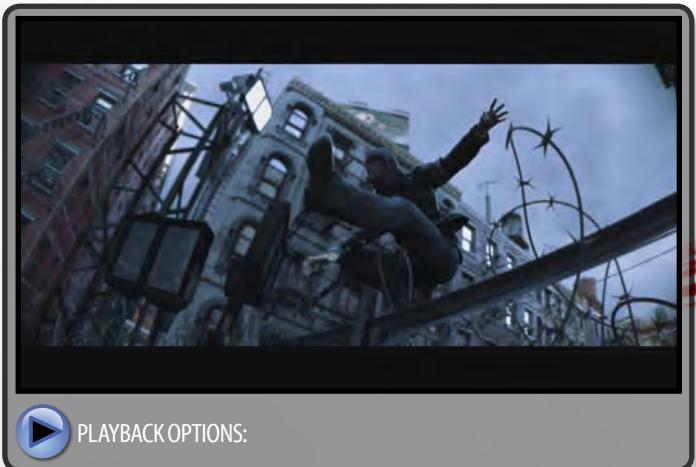
It's due out in the autumn, and we're hoping to get some more hands-on time with the game before then.

Anything else to declare?

Buffy alumna Eliza Dushku voices Rubi, with Malcolm McDowell playing the main villain and Alan Cummings adding a dose of camp as another as-yet-unrevealed character.

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PLAYSTATION 3



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◀ CONTROL ▶





Publisher: Namco-Bandai

Developer: Namco-Bandai

Heritage: Katamari

Damacy series, Time Crisis 4

Link: <http://katamari-damacy.jp/tribute/index.html>

ETA: Autumn



"From the footage we've seen, it seems that a number of the levels are lifted from the previous PS2 titles"



Katamari Forever

FIRST
LOOK

Roll up! Roll up! Roll up! Roll up! Roll...

What's the story?

Announced by Japanese gaming bible Famitsu as Katamari Damacy Tribute, the latest in the cult ball-rolling franchise has been confirmed for a PAL release in the Autumn. It's the first game in the series to support full HD – i.e., a 1080p resolution – something that even 360 entry Beautiful Katamari couldn't boast.

Why should we be excited?

From the Japanese title and the footage we've seen, it seems that a number of the levels are lifted from the previous PS2 titles – the original Katamari Damacy and sequel We Love Katamari – with a few new additions besides. Levels will be more crammed with collectibles in much greater number than before, with over 30 stage goals in total, again besting anything the series has offered so far. And to make even better use of those extra pixels, players can choose from a number of different graphical styles – one makes all items look wooden, while another offers an attractive cel-shaded twist.

When do we get more?

Japan will more than likely get it slightly before us in the West, but we shouldn't have much longer to wait. Having said that, Famitsu claims it's only '40%' finished....

Anything else to declare?

One new stage we saw features a monochromatic world, which gradually fills with colour as your Katamari increases in size. And there's a two-player mode, with some kind of PSN functionality promised. Online play, perhaps? Let's hope so.



FALLEN ANGEL
SACRED 2



PLAYSTATION 3



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◀ CONTROL ▶





INCOMING

Another secret six heading your way...



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Publisher: Sony | ETA: Winter

Not only is the sequel to one of our very favourite PS3 games looking substantially prettier than the already lush original, but Naughty Dog has revealed the game will feature multiplayer modes. There's a beta available with the US release of inFamous – at the time of writing we don't know whether this will be part of the PAL version. Fingers crossed, eh?



Fairytale Fights

Publisher: PlayLogic | ETA: Christmas

With the likes of Fat Princess proving that gamers like nothing better than a bit of cel-shaded carnage, Fairytale Fights takes things a step further by allowing you to hack and slash fluffy bunnies into little more than a pile of bloody entrails. It blends combat with platform adventuring as your lapsed storybook hero tries to save a fantasy world from impending doom.

Singularity

Publisher: Activision | ETA: Autumn

Raven's forthcoming FPS promises to mess with time in a more inventive way than your average sci-fi shooter. Rather than manipulating time itself, you're able to affect the age of objects – so, for example, you can artificially antiquate concrete supports so explosive items or bits of rubble fall on your enemies. And you can hold certain objects in time, allowing you to throw grenades back at your foes. Because the timer is stopped, see? Clever stuff.



IN THE PIPELINE

JUNE

RED FACTION: GUERRILLA OPERATION FLASHPOINT VANDAL HEARTS: FLAMES OF JUDGEMENT
SACRED 2: FALLEN ANGEL HARRY POTTER ATHBP

SUMMER

SEPTEMBER

G-FORCE

OCTOBER

BRUTAL LEGEND
BLITZ: THE LEAGUE II

Dead Rising 2

Publisher: Capcom | ETA: Late 2009

Capcom's hack-'em-up sequel might have eschewed the fun photo-taking mechanic from the original, but it's replaced that with tons of other stuff. A new hero, Chuck Greene, is the man single-handedly fighting off waves of the undead, with roulette tables, twin chainsaws (which can be attached to a motorbike) and a giant moose head to impale zombies as he ploughs through the hordes.

Fight Night Round 4

Publisher: EA Sports | ETA: 26th June

Just six weeks until EA launches the latest version of its critically-acclaimed fight series, but has the surprisingly excellent UFC Undisputed stolen its thunder? The uber-publisher obviously hopes not, and with the likes of Ricky Hatton rubbing shoulders with legends like Mike Tyson and Muhammad Ali on what's a pretty substantial roster.



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10

Publisher: EA Sports | ETA: 3rd July

The big draw in PGA Tour 10 is the new Tournament Challenge, which offers a fresh take on character progression, giving players the chance to recreate (or even rewrite) famous golfing situations from tournaments past – complete with tips from the man himself on how he handled the pressure and the techniques he used.





Publisher: Koei
 Developer: Compile Heart
 Heritage: Astonishing Story, Octomania
 Link: <http://koei.co.uk/viewgame/?gid=81>
 ETA: 10th July

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

Cross Edge

"Surely Disgaea's loveable Prinny would have made a more compelling animal companion than Dogmeat"

First exclusive shots and info on this superstar-tag-team RPG

It's fair to say that Japanese and Western role-playing games have slightly different approaches to the genre. Whereas Western games often tend to focus on single characters exploring pseudo-realistic worlds (or at least places grounded in some kind of reality), Japanese RPGs more often than not put you in charge of a group of people, sending you to bizarre fantasy

universes. In general, Western stories are presented in-game rather than via lush CG cut-scenes and lengthy chatter between NPCs. They're very different beasts, but we do sometimes wonder if Western role-players would benefit from a more Eastern-friendly approach. Take, for example, Fallout 3. Wouldn't those bleak journeys traipsing around The Capital Wasteland looking for your

father have been enlivened by the input of a host of characters from Capcom, Nippon Ichi and Namco-Bandai games? Wouldn't it have been more aesthetically interesting to garb your avatar in a PE outfit or a devil costume? And surely Disgaea's loveable Prinny would have made a more compelling animal companion than Dogmeat, dood. Then again, perhaps those elements are best left >





>Cross Edge continued

in a Japanese role-playing game. A game like Cross Edge, say.

And believe us, it really doesn't get much more Japanese than this. Developers such as Idea Factory, Gust and the triumvirate mentioned above have contributed characters, yet it's fair to say most Western gamers won't have heard of the vast majority. Raze Meitzen from Mana Khemia 2, anyone? How about Zelos from Absolute Blazing Infinity? No? Tch, you haven't lived. Regardless of whether you're familiar with this little band of heroes, there's no denying that Cross Edge's release was something of a big deal in Japan. And now us Europeans are

lucky enough to be able to find out what all the fuss is about when it's released in Europe this July.

So what's it all about? Well, it's the tale of a strange girl in a strange world which is made from the souls of other worlds. These other worlds face extinction should this soul-eating continue, and so it's up to this eclectic cast of JRPG favourites to join forces and free the souls from the world's evil master. Not quite the same as searching for your dad in a post-apocalyptic Washington DC, eh? Like we said, it's all different strokes for different folks.

As with most JRPGs, Cross Edge will live or die by its combat





>Cross Edge continued

– which initially seems like a simple, traditional turn-based system, but soon blossoms into an almost bafflingly complex array of moves governed by stats, slots and formations. Your group consists of Vanguard, Midfielder and Rear types of combatant, and they can be arranged in a small grid until you find the perfect blend. Not that all your characters need to be in play at once – you'll need to make judicious use of the character-swap option when members of your party are in trouble, remembering to be mindful of your attack power which influences the order you take your turn in battle. And that's before you consider which team members can combine their attacks for devastating branching combo moves and which EX skills you need to allocate to your down, burst and normal skill slots. Then, just as you've got all that down, there are Guard Breaks, Overbreaks and Pursuit Attacks to think about. Of course, hardened JRPG veterans will be licking their lips in anticipation of all those lovely stats and numbers – just consider this advance warning for the newcomers.

It wouldn't be a Japanese role-player without some kind of random elements, and so you'll sometimes find yourself revisiting areas to release any souls you may have missed the first time around. Though

perhaps it's not quite as random as you think – you're offered oblique hints as to how to conquer certain villains or complete specific quests, so as long as you're able to figure out these cryptic clues, you'll be quids in. Similarly, the dungeons which link the maps sometimes offer rare monsters to fight (and thus rare items to pick up when you best them), but depending on the level of your party and that of the creature you are fighting then this can be a good or a bad thing.

Graphical charm

There's plenty of charm in its graphics – it's not pushing the hardware by any means, but you'll want to watch each of the specials at least once for their gloriously OTT effects, while the 2D anime art looks thoroughly lush in HD. And for those who can't quite take to the Western vocals (but how could you resist that shout of "Screw off, would ya?") there's the option to use the original Japanese voiceovers with English subtitles. Another thoughtful localisation effort from Koei, then, and we're looking forward to spending more time with Cross Edge before its July launch. In the meantime, feast your eyes on these exclusive shots and start engaging your right brain, so by summer you'll know instantly whether your Sonic Blast will deal with that Hell Dog... ●



PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



A typical Japanese RPG, but that's no bad thing at all

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



DAMNATION

FIRST LOOK

Damnation

River deep, mountain high

The shooter goes vertical... is the concept for Blue Omega's Damnation, a game which started life as an Unreal mod five years ago and has been transformed into a steampunk-styled retake on the American Civil War. And it's clear from the start of our preview version that its levels go a long way up – these sprawling environments showing a distant exit which you need to climb and shoot your way to.

The rebel alliance

You play as Hamilton Rourke, a rugged gunslinger who is leading a band of rebels against a new threat to peace – the militaristic Prescott Standard Industries. From the evidence here, PSI is all but forcing the residents of mining hamlet Boomtown into virtual slavery – offering these poor people running water, food and a serum which purports to enhance physical capabilities but which in reality is turning them into mindless drones. The voice of evil tycoon William Prescott echoing down the mines

is a constant jarring reminder to the Boomtowners of their purpose – they're apparently helping to build a better America, and they need to keep productivity up to keep getting those shots of serum. Not a particularly pleasant place to be, then – particularly when you hear the announcement that "All miners under the age of 12" are to "Report immediately to military command."

Clearly Prescott needs to be stopped, and Rourke isn't capable of doing it alone. Thankfully he has the help of two friends – Yakecan is a Native American healer who's taken up arms to fight PSI, while Zagato sounds not unlike Resident Evil 4's Luis – a selfish, wisecracking rogue whose skill with a gun nevertheless makes him a worthy ally.

Together, the three firstly attempt to rescue rebel leader Professor Winslow, who is about to be tortured to death by two women – after a couple of brief shoot-outs deep within the mines, you enter a large area which shows a near-vertical route to your destination, tasking you

"In a way, the pathfinding reminded us of Tomb Raider, in that half the fun is uncovering a route to the top"

Steampunk bikes which can ride on walls? Sounds brilliant, but the reality doesn't quite live up to the idea.



with finding your own way there. In a way, the pathfinding reminded us of Tomb Raider, in that half the fun is uncovering the route to the top. Yet although there are usually a few

different routes you can take, the way forward is often obviously signposted with the use of ladders and wooden ledges, some of which are a little too ostentatious – the wood seems to be ➤

PSI are a little careless in the number of barrels of explosive liquid they leave lying around...





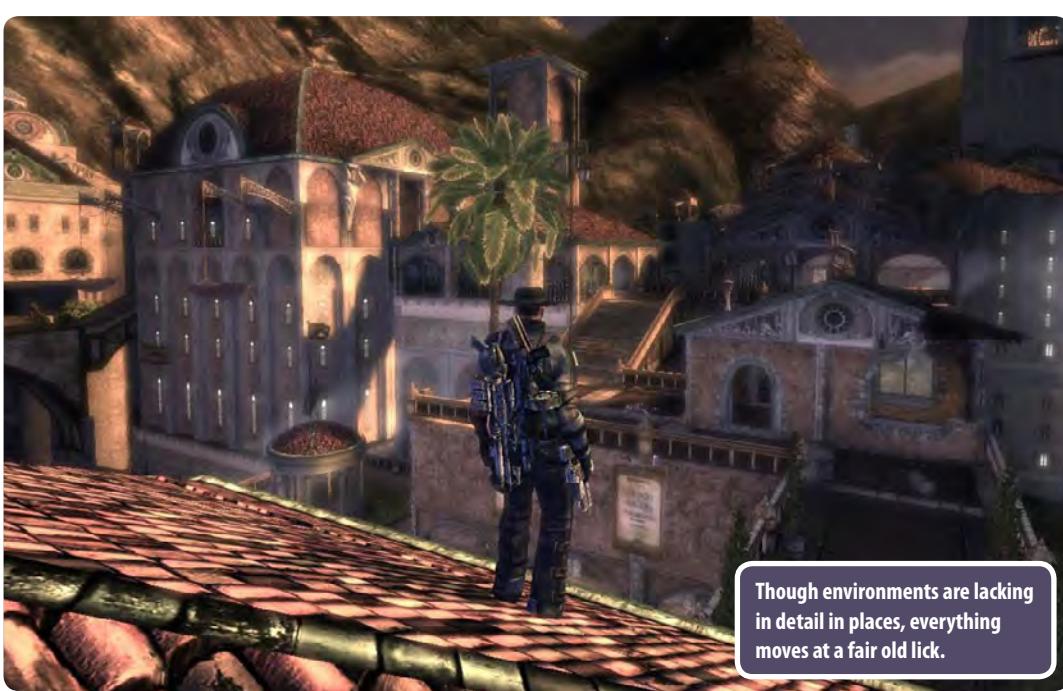
DAMNATION

> Damnation continued

varnished so much that it practically glows against the rock it's set into. There's a little room for improvisation, though – a couple of clever wall jumps and you can avoid baddies without needing to engage them.

Not that they should give you any real trouble, as while Rourke can't take too much punishment (the screen saturating as he's hit) the enemies are rather erratic for the most part – often failing to spot you until it's too late, and occasionally not even responding to long-distance sniper shots or deaths of nearby comrades. That said, a group of them in close proximity can cause problems for you and your chums, so it's fortunate that

Rourke is imbued with the power of a seer. Yakecan's brother Akehando gives him the chance to spot enemies through walls, so you know in advance when you need to tread carefully. There's an element of risk involved, in that you need to stay still while using the power, and it takes a few seconds to activate, though you'll rarely be using it in the heat of battle – it's best used in advance, or when you need to locate colleagues who need reviving with a tap of the R1 button. Generally, your pals can handle themselves pretty well in a firefight, and if you're not happy with the AI, you can always play through co-operatively with a friend.



Though environments are lacking in detail in places, everything moves at a fair old lick.

You'll rarely find yourself leaping off objects when you didn't mean to, owing to a sensible control mechanic.



DAMNATION

> Damnation continued

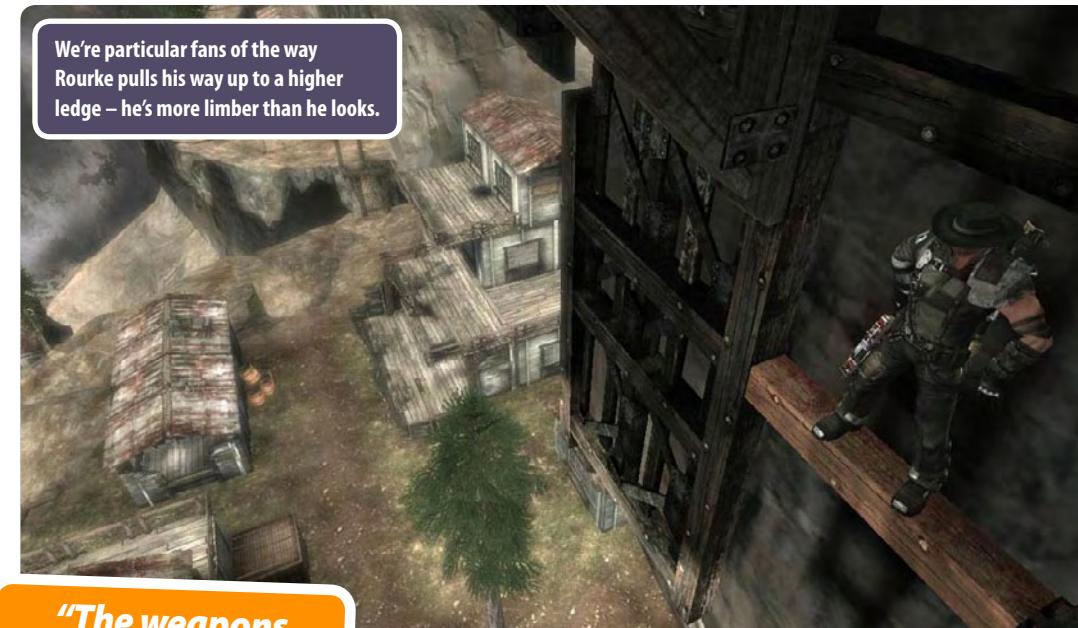
Without a dedicated cover system, the gunplay is less about stopping and popping and more about finding ways to get the jump on your foes – whether it be finding higher vantage points, or simply avoiding them by clever route-finding. You have an arsenal of three weapons (the D-pad choosing between them), with weapons of similar types being swapped out should you find any suitable replacements. Though aiming can feel woolly at times, the weapons are good fun, particularly the railroad spike gun, which is a bit

like FEAR's nailgun for amusing pin-them-to-the-scenery kills.

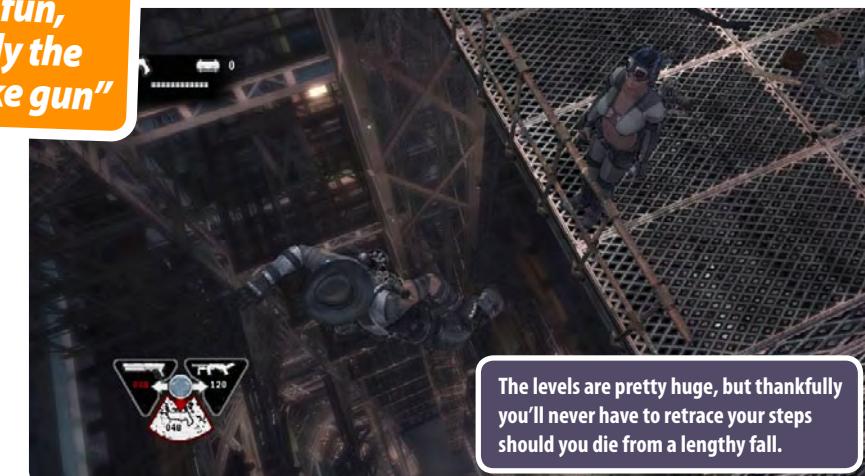
Graphically, it can be a little rough, and at times Damnation seems to fall uncomfortably between two stools – it's not as enjoyable a shooter as a dedicated blastathon like Gears, nor as satisfying in its platforming exploration as the Tomb Raider games. But if you've been itching for a game which combines the two and adds in some engaging steampunk design as well (particularly on its weapons), then Damnation will give you a jolly good scratch. ●



Your partner can fire at enemies during the bike sections, though it's easier to just plough through at full tilt.



"The weapons are good fun, particularly the railroad spike gun"



The levels are pretty huge, but thankfully you'll never have to retrace your steps should you die from a lengthy fall.



PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



A rough-hewn but engaging shooter with depth... and height

inFAMOUS

Publisher: SCEA
 Developer: Sucker Punch
 Heritage: Sly Cooper series
 Link: www.infamous.thegame.com
 ETA: May/June

HANDSON

InFamous

He's electric...

Unwisely written off as a cel-shaded GTA clone prior to release, the very pleasant surprise that was Realtime Worlds' Crackdown was actually one of the best platform games of the past five years. Be honest – did you really spend much time in the cars? Or shooting people? Nope. The joy was in jumping around the city, climbing as high as you could and leaping prodigious distances in a single bound. inFamous realises the joy inherent in clambering about such an engaging playground and so has taken things a step further, introducing a touch of the Assassin's

Creed into its game's parkour. Hero Cole sticks to scenery like he's got Superglue on his bodysuit, and with Empire City's complex geometry providing plenty of hand- and footholds, you can scamper up a multi-storey building in no time. All the better for leaping onto the roof of an armoured bus...

Superheroics on show

Yet there's more Frank Miller than DC Comics in the superheroics on show here. Empire City is in total disarray, with cracked pavements, burned-out cars, and hungry and dying citizens scurrying about in a panic

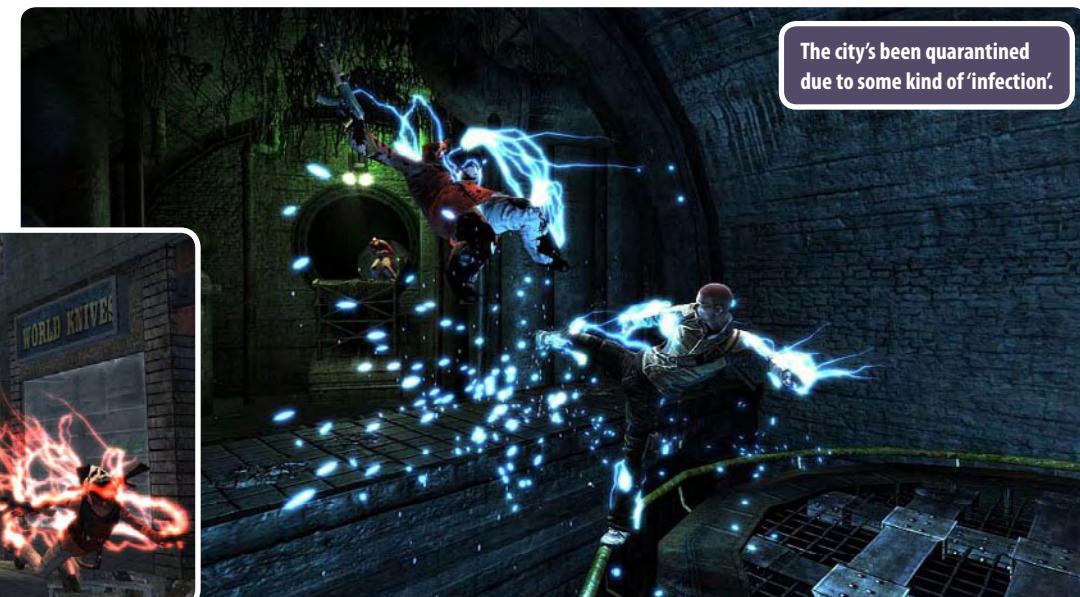
"Hero Cole sticks to scenery like he's got Superglue on his bodysuit"



The draw distance is suitably impressive – not that Empire City is that much to look at in its current state.

as their home becomes something of a battleground – with Cole forced to tackle the new threat of a group of hooded nasties named Reapers as he attempts to protect his city.

Erroneously blamed for the blast that has torn the city apart, Cole finds the residents have turned against him, leaving him with just two allies – his ex-girlfriend Trish and tubby pal Zeke, >



The city's been quarantined due to some kind of 'infection'.





inFAMOUS

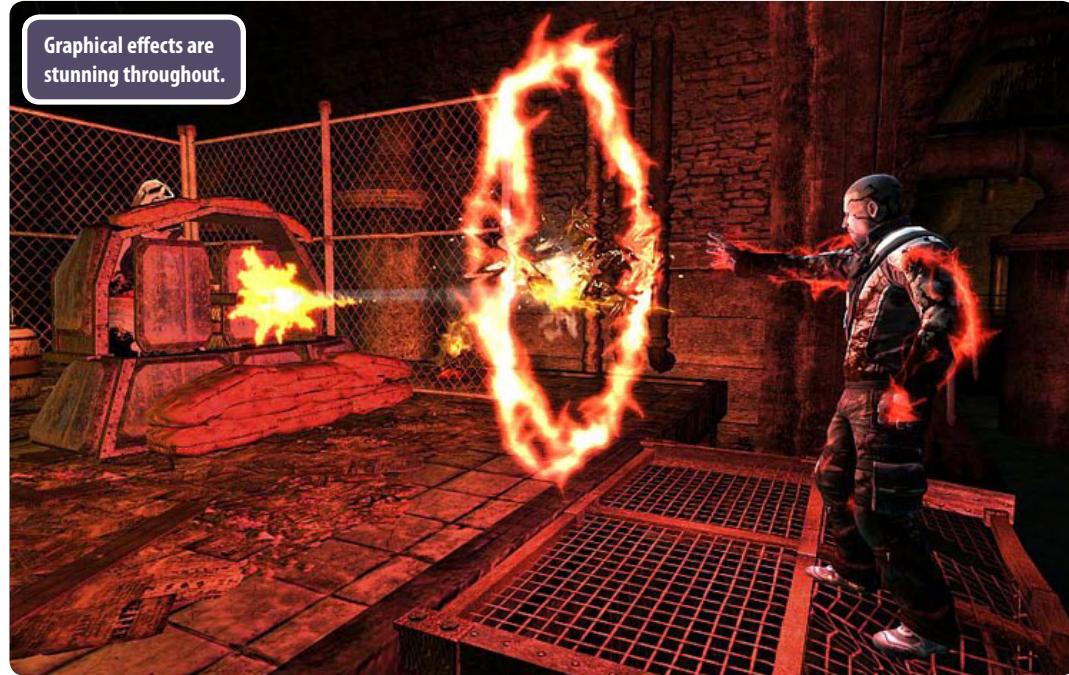
> InFamous continued

who sounds like he's gone AWOL from Ratchet and Clank's next.

Though you're just about the most hated man in Empire City, you've got a host of electrical powers to zap the baddies and save the world. Though you might not want to – Cole gets his own special Karmic Moments at key intervals, so you can choose whether to play good superhero or bad superhero. The first choice comes during the first mission, where you have to recover a food package dropped in to the quarantined city. This first choice is a bit of a no-brainer, unless you're planning on being evil – you either let the citizens chow down or keep it all for yourself – but there's certainly potential for some

more thorny dilemmas further down the line, and some missions will only become available to you when your moral compass has shifted far enough in one particular direction.

Other missions showcase Cole's firepower a little better – electric blasts focused on single targets or waves which knock enemy groups backwards can be upgraded, with their effects dependent on Cole's good or evil 'ranking'. So shock grenades can be used to automatically restrain weakened enemies, while an infamous rank increases the devastation factor significantly, causing splash damage likely to take out anyone and everyone within its blast radius. ➤



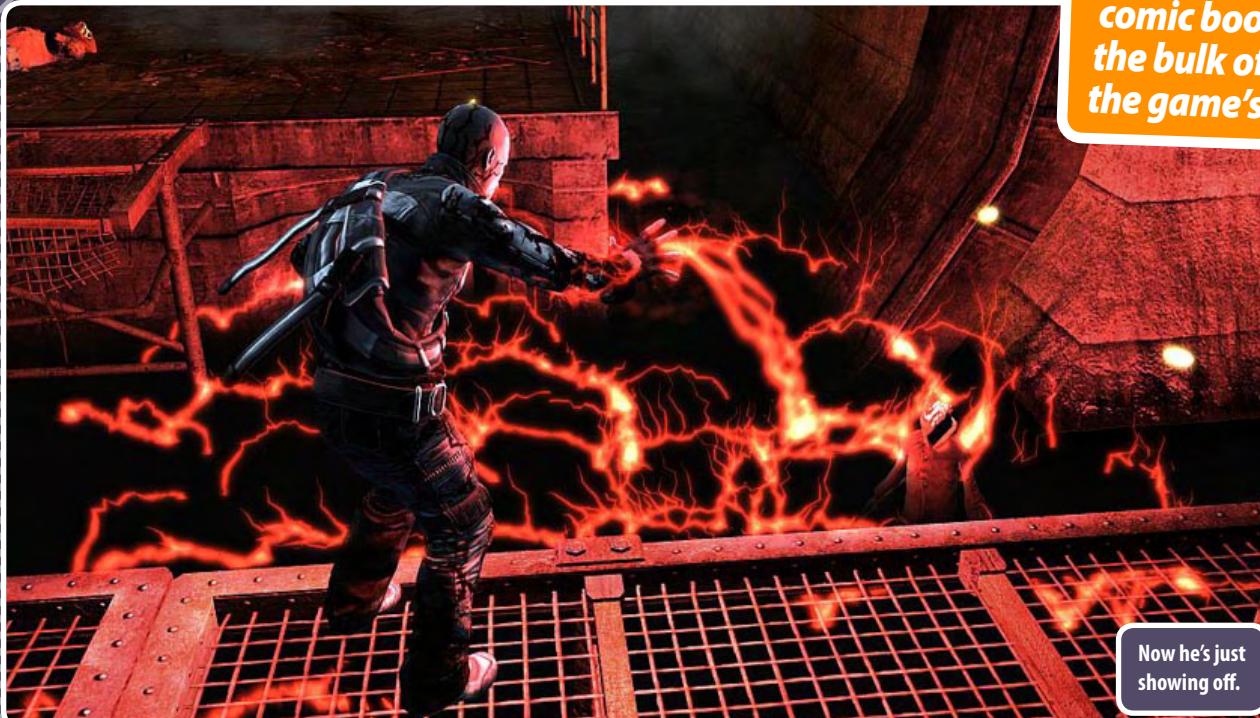
inFAMOUS

> InFamous continued

Occasionally things can get a little fiddly – miss a jump onto an armoured bus and its machine guns will rip you to ribbons before you've had time to run for cover, while the camera can lurch wildly if you're climbing in a straight line. Moreover, the final mission we played turned into a rather awkward third-person shooter with hordes of powerful enemies, which was all too much for our relatively untrained hands to cope with. Perhaps with a little more knowledge of Cole's powers we'd have triumphed, but we hope the

finished game has fewer missions that feel like Gears of Lightning.

With some terrific comic book art telling the bulk of the story in the game's cut-scenes and some splendid graphical effects keeping the chaotic action visually exciting, Sucker Punch's first current-gen effort looks just as polished as its platforming predecessors in the Sly Cooper series. And with plenty of open-ended sandbox gameplay and side-missions to get stuck into, it looks like the PlayStation 3 has another must-have exclusive on its hands. ●



Now he's just showing off.



"There's some terrific comic book art telling the bulk of the story in the game's cut-scenes"



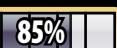
As you'd reasonably expect, Cole's powers get stronger and more varied as you progress through the story.



PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



This Cole-powered adventure is electrifying stuff

DANTE'S
INFERNO

Publisher: EA

Developer: EA

Redwood Shores

Heritage: Dead Space

Link: www.dantesinferno.com

ETA: 2010

FIRST LOOK

Dante's Inferno

Straight to Hell...

In the history of interactive entertainment, the number of games that have been based on poems can probably be counted on the fingers of no hands. However, a 700-year-old piece of prose does at least have the advantage of being in the public domain, hence saving on those costly licensing fees. For non-English students, Dante's Inferno is the first episode of a three-part story from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri. The dark fiction

gave birth to the Tuscan Italian dialect and is widely considered to have defined the Western world's contemporary conception of Hell and purgatory. The poem tells the tale of Dante, who journeys through the nine circles of Hell in pursuit of his beloved Beatrice. Written in the 14th Century, The Divine Comedy was published and read aloud in Italian, thereby making the poem accessible to the mass public, as well as delivering a striking and allegorical



Horned beasts
are ten-a-penny.



"You step into the ancient shoes of Dante himself, positioned here as a Crusade veteran"

vision of the Christian afterlife and the punishments of Hell.

But you probably already knew that. As for the game, it's a third-person action adventure from the studio behind recent scare-em-up, Dead Space. They would appear to be very different games however, with Dante's Inferno concentrating less on stealthy scares, and more on all-out frenetic action. And while the concept of a literary masterpiece being turned into a mere videogame will inevitably be met with disgust by some, it would appear to offer some rich source material.

And before anyone gets too snobbish, the script has been written in conjunction with an Academy Award nominee, no less. With an emphasis on story, you step into the ancient shoes of Dante himself, positioned here as a Crusade veteran, journeying through the

nine circles of Hell in search of the missing Beatrice, a concept that despite its heritage is not a million miles away from Mario going after Princess Peach. It's a darker approach here however, with Dante traversing limbo, lust, gluttony, greed, wrath, heresy, violence, fraud and treachery in an attempt to defeat the sins of his past, and win the girl.

In order to achieve this feat, you do have a few tricks up your sleeve, not least of which is Death's Scythe, so named as you manage to purloin it from none other than Death himself. As your primary weapon, you'll spend a lot of time meleeing with various monsters and minions of Hell, handily sucking up their souls when you kill them. These souls can then be spent on a slew of upgrades and special combos.

There's more to the scrapping than wielding a giant scythe

>

DANTE'S
INFERNO> **Dante's Inferno** continued

however, as you're also equipped with the Holy Cross – a gift from Beatrice before she scarpered – which provides the game's ranged combat. More floridly, it is apparently used to either absolve or punish the damned shades encountered by Dante. Further mystical shenanigans also play a role in the game, in the form of the so-called Magic of the Inferno, whereby Dante acquires the powers of Hell through the defeat of certain monsters, and can turn these powers back against the creatures of Hell. And in a further twist, you'll also be able to tame these creatures and ride them around Hell, using them to conquer enemies, solve puzzles, and make epic leaps forward into the bowels of the inferno.

On paper it sounds entertaining, but games aren't played on paper; they're played on enormous high definition TVs, such as the one we sat in front of at a recent EA event. As such, it looked fantastic, with each of the nine circles brought to life, as envisioned by the original poem, with a unique art style per level and a variety of minions, demons, sub-bosses, and bosses themed for each level, with creature design by award-winning artist Wayne Barlowe.

Launching straight into a fight against a couple of horned beasts, pummelling the buttons seemingly at random proved reasonably effective, at least in the short term.

"You'll be able to tame creatures and ride them around Hell, using them to conquer enemies and solve puzzles"

Death's Scythe certainly has some momentum, and proved a match for most enemies if wielded correctly. However, button bashing only keeps you alive for so long, and the game appeared hard enough for that approach to eventually prove frustrating. More success was achieved by mixing up the combat style with the cross and the scythe, and presumably learning what is effective against particular monsters will prove key. You'll have to do it all by yourself however, as Dante's Inferno will be single-player only, with some downloadable content to follow. With a release scheduled for next year, it's already looking highly impressive, and dare we say it, slightly more accessible than a 700-year-old Italian poem. ●



This is probably how the poet imagined it...



When poets attack!



P3zine
DANTE'S
INFERNO

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Big on story and big on gameplay, this could be special

WELCOME TO HELL

And it ain't a bad place to be, apparently...

Producer Phil Marineau at Redwood Shores talks us through a lifetime of sins and a journey to the depths of despair...

How do you interpret such an ancient literary work through the medium of videogames?

Throughout time people who have read The Divine Comedy, especially

Dante's Inferno, have attempted to draw it or sculpt it or carve it; people like Rodin and Doré. And so for their time, for whatever the medium was, they tried to put out visually what they read. And so a member of our team had read it and came up with the idea for the game. And we thought it was a really good idea and a really perfect fit in the modern

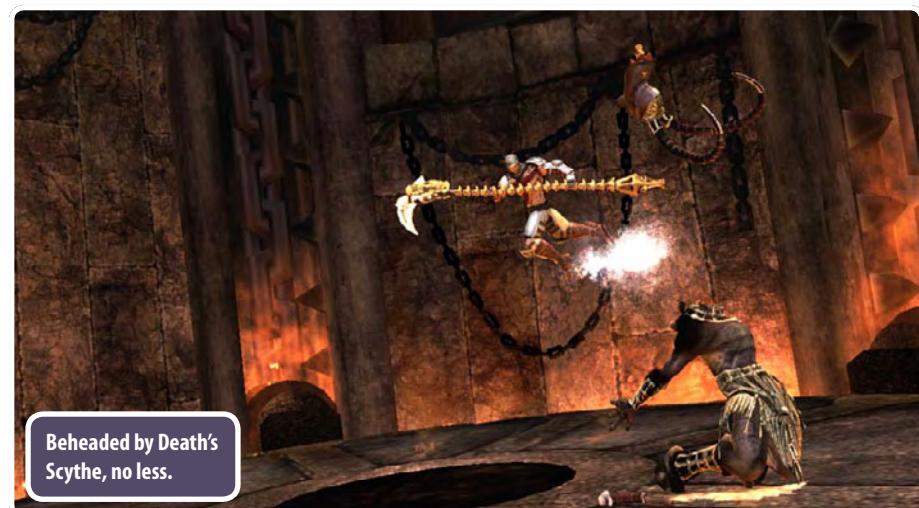
times. This is our interpretation; our piece of art and how we would take Alighieri's work and translate it into a game.

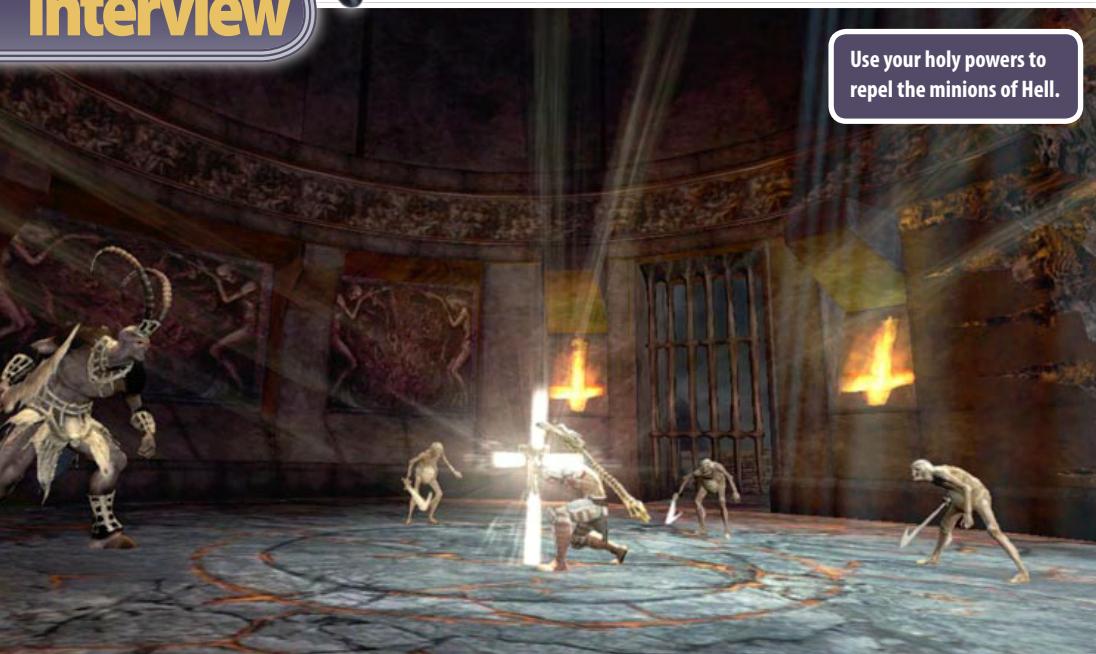
So in terms of genre what have you gone for?

It's a third-person action adventure game and we take some liberties, but basically the core fundamentals of the poem are in there. We start

on the surface, we end in Hell, and we go through the nine circles, ending in treachery, with the face off with the ultimate boss, Satan. And it is in pursuit of your long lost love Beatrice, and Virgil's in there with you. Where we depart a little bit from the poem is with our main character Dante – we've given him a little bit more of an antagonist's role than he has in the poem.

Phil Marineau,
the Producer of
Dante's Inferno
at EA's Redwood
Shores studio





"The gameplay hook is that we're going to take you to Hell with this game"

> Interview continued

In gaming term, what's the gameplay hook?

The gameplay hook is that we're going to take you to Hell with this game. The levels we've got in here, the ability to go through limbo and gluttony and greed and anger and treachery and heresy and fraud – and all with a different

gameplay mechanic – and there's action adventure gaming with these monsters that have clearly been imagined by Dante for us and then we've gone and sort of taken our own spin on it, that's the real hook. We think you're going to love it.

It looks fairly gory to us. Is it an 18-certificate game?

Yes, it's going to be an 18 game – and M in the States. Certainly it deals with some serious content, as the poem does, and our interpretation is to just continue that. Beatrice, your love, gives you a Holy Cross before you go away. Your other weapon is a scythe. In the very beginning of the game you'll face off with death and you'll defeat him and take his scythe. So throughout the game you're fighting with this cross, which kind

of works like a gun so to speak, and then the scythe mechanic. And we call that the Swiss Army knife of Hell.

It feels very God of War and Devil May Cry. Are they influences on the game?

Absolutely. Those are huge influences on it – Devil May Cry in terms of the combat system, and we just the way the levels played in God Of War. We've played all those games and we're big fans... Onimusha and all that stuff. We wanted to do at least what we really liked about those games before building Dante's Inferno.

What would you say you've brought to Dante's that those games don't offer?

The story first and foremost has never been done before. This is

our personal spin, so you haven't seen that before anywhere. Our mechanics with the scythe are a lot different than you've seen before, especially as you get farther on into the levels, you'll see more varied gameplay. You're going to be able to fight monsters on an epic scale and take control of them.

DANTE'S
INFERNO

Publisher: EA

Developer: EA

Redwood Shores

Heritage: Dead Space

Link: www.dantesinferno.com

ETA: 2010





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X-Men Origins: Wolverine

The uncut take on a brutal legend

Okay, it's not got an original bone in its adamantium-enhanced body – at first glance it could just as easily be called God of Wolverine – but as Riddick proved last month, it is possible to create a worthy movie tie-in. As the name suggests, this Uncaged Edition refuses to tame the beast that is arguably Marvel's darkest and most violent hero.

Forget the neutered PG-13 version, this Wolverine is the real deal, spiking enemies in the face and ripping arms and even heads from torsos with his powerful claws.

It's odd to find a game based on a film which seems to be aimed at an entirely different audience, but despite rigidly enforced embargoes forbidding us from revealing the plot in any real detail lest we spoil

the movie for anyone, this is not your traditional game-of-the-film. Raven's adult actioner started life as a Mature-rated hack and slash, with the licence hurriedly slapped on halfway through development. So don't expect much by way of story – the plot flits backwards and forwards through time, sometimes

referencing the film, sometimes not, and as such it feels little more than a series of loosely connected episodes with some occasionally impressive CGI just about managing to tie them all together.

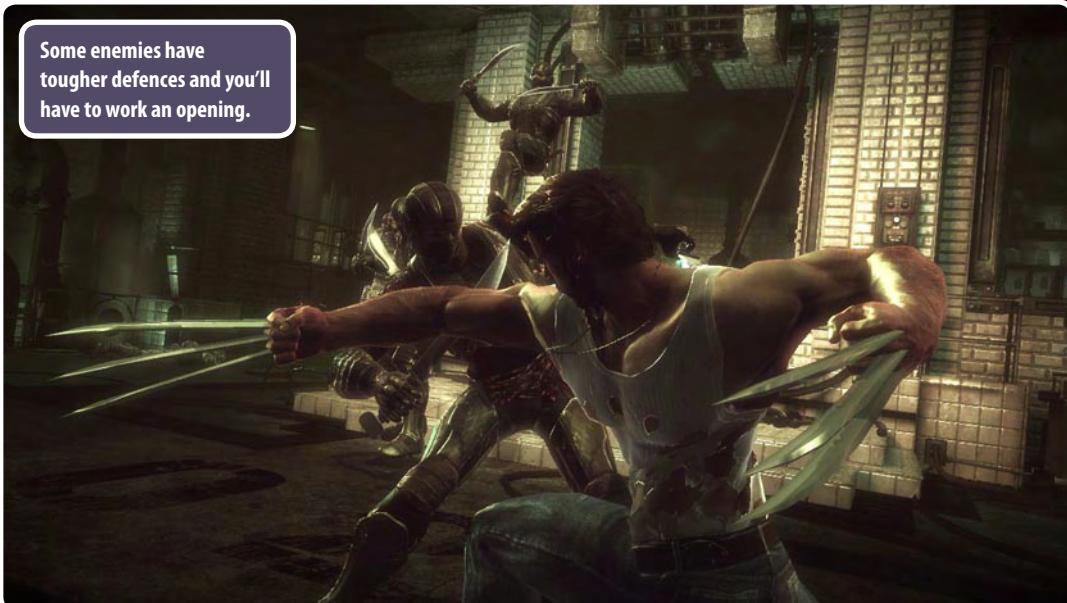
Yet what the game lacks in motivation it more than makes up for with its sheer brutality.



Roll over screen for annotations



Some enemies have tougher defences and you'll have to work an opening.



> Wolverine continued

Combat is vicious – bloody corpses hurled into spikes and onto stone floors as Wolverine's claws tear through flesh and score metal and masonry. It's got all the gory spectacle of God of War, but with a fluidity that almost feels like a Ninja Gaiden Lite – its initial economy of moves broadening into a range of manoeuvres that flow together effectively. The block button is more important than you'd think for a game of this type, particularly on the harder difficulties, while the lunge move allows Wolverine to cover large distances, sometimes crossing rooms in virtually a single leap. It means you can take down three opponents on a gantry before spinning and hurtling towards another group below at full tilt. The



slo-mo finishers are the crimson icing on a very gory cake.

But after a blistering start, the game starts to lose its lustre. We didn't want another three-hour Wanted on our hands, but Raven over-eggs the pudding, extending the running time by reheating



the same ingredients – most egregiously with repeated mini-boss battles. It wouldn't be quite so bad but for the fact that so many of them are defeated via the same method – dodge attack, leap onto back, mash attack buttons, rinse, repeat. The on-rails segments are slightly hackneyed attempts to add variation, but they're competently handled and occasionally quite exciting – a mid-air Wolverine versus Helicopters scrap offers a few cinematic thrills, while an early bar fight is all splintered furniture and smashed windows, with a dramatic rain-lashed climax thrown in for good measure.

Ultimately, Raven has constructed a solid and thoroughly enjoyable tie-in which you can't help but feel has been slightly compromised in the licensing process. Yet it's a remarkably polished and well put-together scrapper which overcomes

The lunge looks great and is a good way of racking up quick kills.

LOGAN'S FUN

Why an uncaged Wolverine is a real Marvel



Take the lunge

Mutant higher

Furious vengeance

Take the lunge

Though some enemies are wise to it, your lunge move is perhaps a bit too overpowered against basic enemy grunts – press R1 to target an enemy at a distance and a tap of L1 immediately launches Wolverine at his target, with your next button-press during your flightpath determining the move you pull off on landing. We particularly like the lunge throws and finishers.

the game-of-the-movie stigma to become a superior slice of adult comic book action. ●

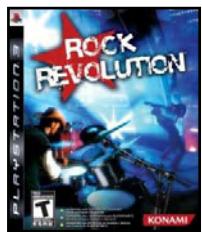
Chris Schilling

P3Zine
Verdict

A pleasingly solid, no-nonsense tie-in

Deliciously, surprisingly violent
Combat is fluid and fun
Repetitive and occasionally uninspired

80%



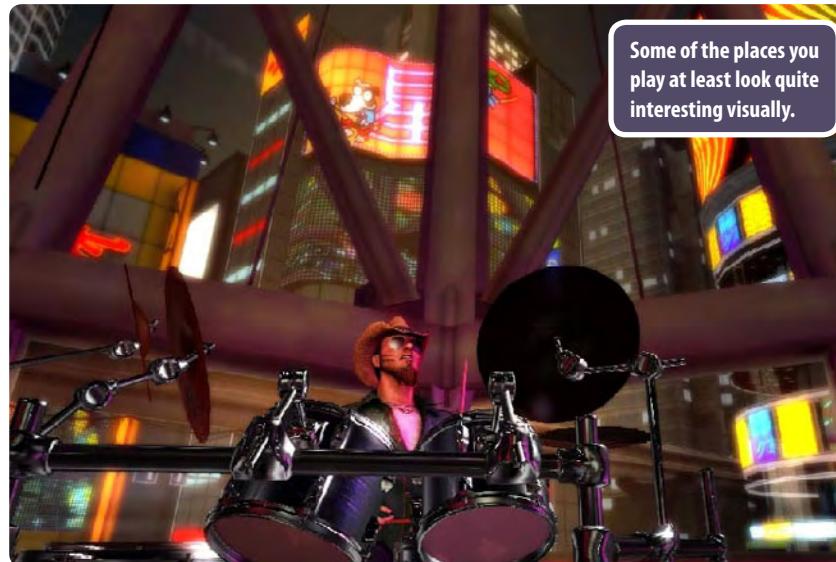
Rock Revolution

Devolution, more like

It's rare that two games constitutes a crowded genre, but when you're talking about peripheral-dependent music games, Rock Band and Guitar Hero undoubtedly rule their particular market with an iron fist. Which makes it difficult for anyone to try and make their mark on that well-trodden turf. Rock Revolution feels a bit like Shaun Wright-Phillips trying to win a header against Marouane Fellaini and Peter Crouch – it might make a valiant leap for glory, but it's just not got the vital stats to compete in that area. It must be doubly disheartening for Konami, as it popularised the rhythm-action game in Japan with hits like Guitar Freaks and DrumMania, but now it finds itself in the unenviable position of being late to its own party.

Talkin' bout a revolution

The main problem with Rock Revolution is that it's impossible to review as a game in its own right; to forget that Guitar Hero and Rock Band exist. And it wouldn't be fair to do so, either – it's a game which has been released as direct competition to those two titles, and so it's only right that the comparison should



Some of the places you play at least look quite interesting visually.

be made. Unfortunately for Konami, Rock Revolution fails on just about every single count.

While the soundtrack itself isn't bad, consisting of 41 tracks with some genuine rock classics included (and plenty which don't feature on Guitar Hero or Rock Band), they're all cover versions – indeed, the game doesn't even deign to tell you who performed the originals. They're not terrible covers by any stretch, but why settle for a facsimile when you can have the real thing? It's not as >



Though the band characters are well-realised and animated, the crowd all move like automatons.

SOFT ROCK

Where RR goes wrong... and right



Uncharted



Studio flat



Stage debut



Uncharted

While the note charts are generally fairly competent – rarely asking you to play more notes than exist in the real song (hello Guitar Hero 3!) – they're often quite dull to play. Some of this is down to the lack of audiovisual impact, but sometimes it's more that the charts themselves are just a little uninspired.

> Rock Revolution cont.

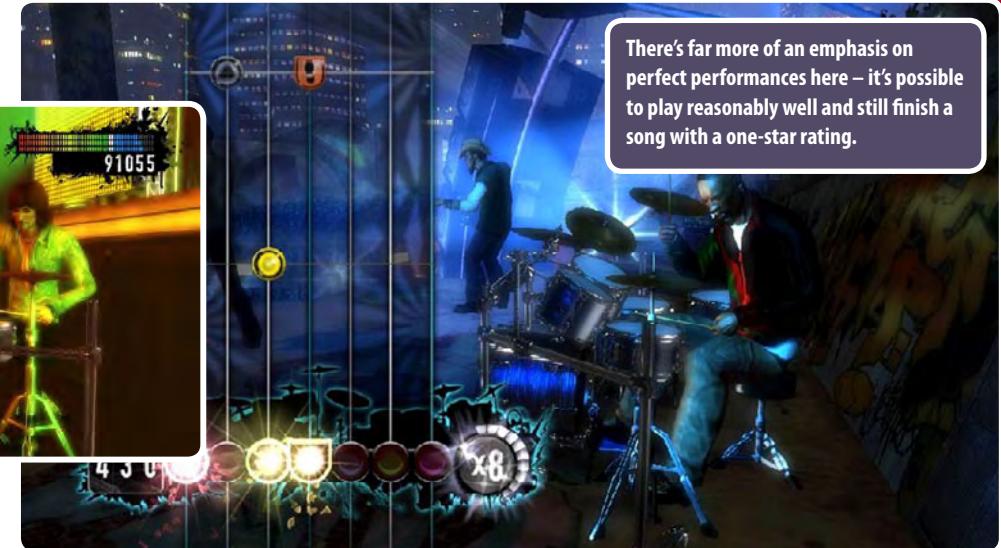
if you'll get the chance to fill in your own vocals instead, because while the game is works with any guitar or drum controller you might already own, there's no option to sing.

So you'll have to play along instead – though even that's more difficult than it needs to be, with the vertically-scrolling display making learning tracks much harder than the out-of-the-screen approach of Rock Revolution's two rivals. It might make sense in the bemani genre – indeed, it might have been more fun with Pop 'N' Music-style button controls – but it just adds another obstacle to overcome. On drums, it's even worse. Even when you reduce the number of lanes from seven to



We should perhaps be thankful that the PAL game doesn't come with the original drum peripheral, which was widely panned.

five – a leftover from the ill-fated drum peripheral which Konami included with the US version of the game – you've got an individual lane for the kick drum to further complicate things, not to mention



There's far more of an emphasis on perfect performances here – it's possible to play reasonably well and still finish a song with a one-star rating.



Roll over screen for annotations



the fact that it's coloured orange, which is sure to initially baffle any of those of you playing with the Guitar Hero World Tour kit.

It's a shame, especially for developer Zoe Mode, who had a near-impossible job trying to make this work, because Rock Revolution does have a couple of nice ideas. In the Career mode, you're offered some different challenges from just completing song after song – Crank It Up tasks you with completing a performance as it ramps up the difficulty through three levels, while the Poison Note songs place a host of false notes across the charts, which you have to avoid while reaching a target score to pass. And improvising your own guitar solos works rather well.

Ultimately, however, Rock Revolution feels like a poor-quality copy of its popular peers. If you're a fan of the included songs, then

"Rock Revolution feels like a poor-quality copy of its popular peers"

it has some appeal as a budget-priced track-pack, but otherwise we recommend you stick to whichever of the 'big two' you prefer to live out your rock star fantasies. ●

Chris Schilling

P3Zine
Verdict

Kicked off the stage

+ A couple of decent ideas

+ Poor presentation

- Just not much fun

48
%



PlayStation Network

Download 'em today!

Penny Arcade Episode 2

Publisher: Hothead

Games Inc.

Developer: Hothead

Games Inc.

Price: £7.99

Or Penny Arcade Adventures: On The Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness Episode Two to give the game its full name. And the first game was almost as unwieldy as that title, offering a mix of point-and-click adventuring and turn-based combat, reminiscent of Japanese RPGs of old. Yet Gabe and Tycho's second adventure is a vast improvement, as Hothead Games having taken the time to listen to complaints about the first game and tweaked things accordingly.

So scrapping is now simpler, offering new, clearer visual clues to enable more effective blocking of enemy attacks, while the adventure

seems better-paced than before – and perhaps a little longer than the first episode, too – and there's an ultra-hard mode to be unlocked if you don't find the standard mode enough of a challenge.

It's still a bit of an acquired taste. If the webcomic on which this is based leaves you cold, then you'll likely be tutting rather than laughing at the jokes, while it's by no means the perfect entry point, as half the story won't make any sense if you've not played the first game. And it still feels a little shallow – with no real way to mould the characters into the type of heroes you want them to be, it doesn't feel as deep as other RPGs which offer extensive character evolution. But if you liked Episode One, chances are you'll enjoy Episode Two even more. ●



P3Zine Verdict

Better, but not quite enough

✚ Better than the first

⊖ A little shallow, though

70%
%



OutRun Online Arcade

Publisher: Sega

Developer: SUMO Digital

Price: £7.99

The sunniest, happiest, driftiest arcade racer is back on consoles, and not before time, too. We'd gone far too long without our OutRun fix, so we're thrilled with this remake of the SP arcade version of OutRun 2, complete with multiplayer modes and online leaderboards.

It's not as fully featured as 2006's Coast 2 Coast, but then that wasn't available for a mere eight pounds minus a penny. Nor was it glorious HD – and while the visuals betray their last-gen origins, this is still a treat for the eyes. The dazzling colour on the cars and at the roadside can't fail to make you grin as everything fizzes past at ridiculous speeds. For a game which is essentially one long race – albeit with several different routes to the

finish – it's surprising how long you'll be hooked, with the allure of those leaderboards adding plenty of what us oldies call 'lastability', and the Heart Attack and Time Attack modes offering further variety.

Mind you, it's not perfect, though. Multiplayer is bugged and sometimes laggy, while there's evidence of financial corner-cutting here and there, with the game's menus looking particularly dated. But with any luck this will convince Sega that a full-blown current-gen refit would do OutRun the world of good. And for this price, it really does feel a little churlish to grumble. ●



P3Zine Verdict

A racing classic for under £8

✚ Top racing fun

⊖ A little cheap in places

86%
%



Time to go home?

Should gamers be taking Sony's online hub more seriously?



Chris Schilling

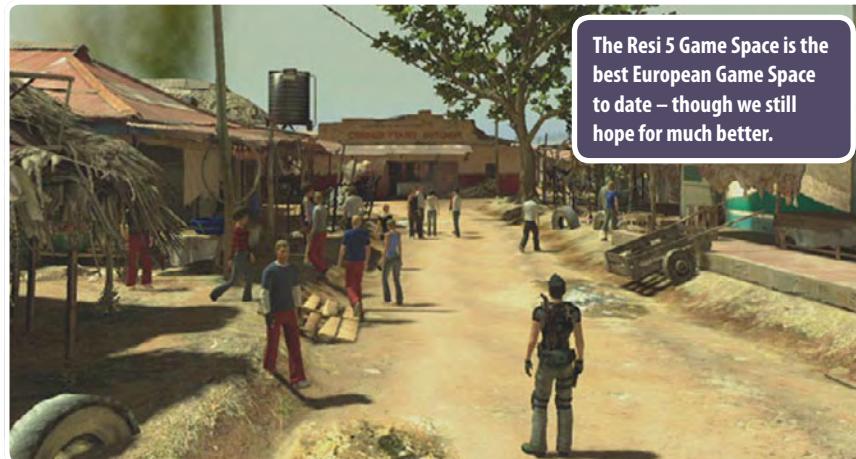
Chris is the proud owner of all three 'next-gen' consoles. Every issue Chris will chart the progress of PS3 and commenting on Sony's latest and greatest initiatives.

After the initial buzz of excitement, Sony's PlayStation Home soon started to become a bit of a running joke among gamers. Firstly, there were the delays – Home was seemingly constantly on the verge of release, only to be put back each time. Then there were the misgivings over its bland, focus-tested-to-death IKEA world – a hollow urban dystopia filled with charmless avatars, like Second Life without the weird sex. And when it was finally made available to the PSN public, most people ventured in, spent a few frustrating hours downloading new areas, only to wind up playing a few games of virtual

bowling or dancing crazily in front of the WipEout video adverts and then logged out, never to waste any more time in this virtual universe again. And that's before we get onto the charges for virtual clothes and furniture.

Yet it's clear that Sony hasn't given up on Home, and nor have the many advertisers still pimping their wares on its virtual billboards or cinema screens. So is it worth dipping your toes back into its slightly plastic-looking waters?

Well, yes and no. Firstly, don't go expecting any dazzling changes to the way everything works. Functionally, everything is all but identical, and you still have those agonising waits as you



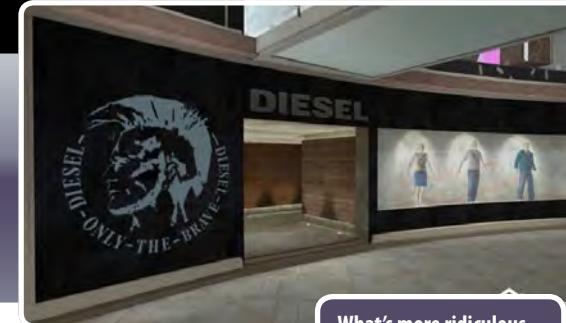
The Resi 5 Game Space is the best European Game Space to date – though we still hope for much better.

"Home is starting to take its first baby steps into some potentially interesting places"

transition between areas, and lengthy downloads if you fancy a look at a new area. It still doesn't feel as user-friendly nor as accessible as it should be, despite the claims that over four million people have downloaded Home – it's fair to say nowhere near that many are actively using it. It still smacks of something that's been dreamed up by advertising execs rather than anything that's going to seriously benefit your PlayStation 3 gaming experience. And yes, spending £1.59 on a virtual T-shirt really is ridiculous. What were you thinking?

Home is where the heart is?

Yet there's more to Home now than our last visit a few months ago. Some titles have their own themed Game Spaces, which can offer mini-games or other diversions related to the game in question. Far Cry 2 has two areas, a train station and an office directly upstairs, the former offering

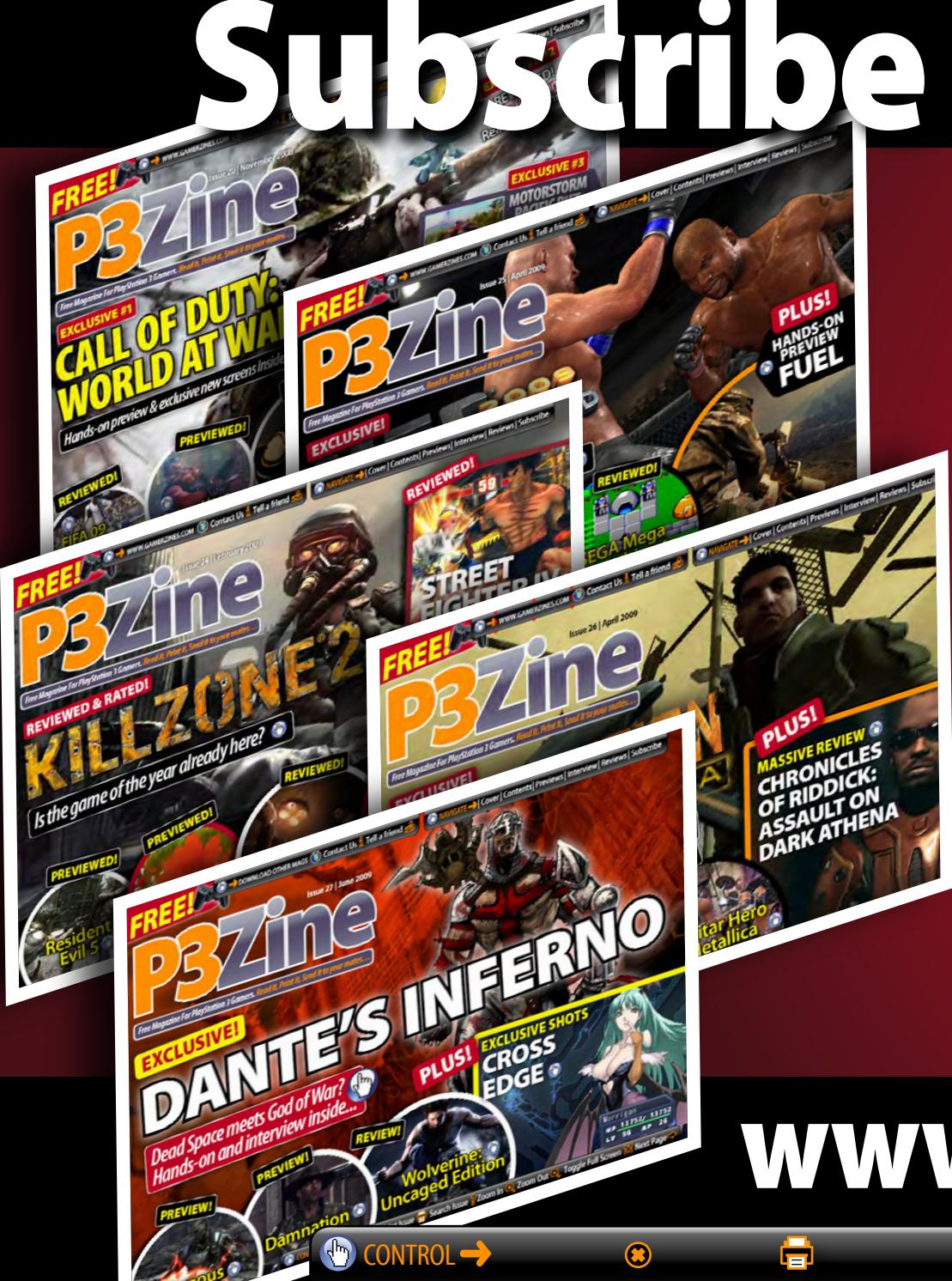


What's more ridiculous – paying for a virtual T-shirt, or a virtual sofa for your virtual apartment?

a two-player game of Mancala and a single newspaper clipping with the latter containing a (barely) interactive map and some 'dossiers' on four of the sidekicks featured in the game. It's perhaps a nice teaser for those who don't own Far Cry 2, but there's nothing here for those who've played the game. The Resident Evil 5 Studio Lot perhaps represents the most substantial Game Space to date, with the chance to explore the area featured at the start of the game – it'll likely just make you wish you were playing the game instead, so as a promotional tool, it's probably done its job – and it's the first European Home area where you can launch the game from its space.

With the addition of Xi, an Alternate Reality Game which takes place in a number of secret areas within Home, and the promise of more to come – including the well-received Siren: Blood Curse Game Space, which is available overseas – Home is starting to take its first baby steps into some potentially interesting places. It'll be a while before it's an essential stop-off point for most gamers, but it's no longer the joke it once was.

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In P3Zine Issue 28

Guitar Hero Smash Hits

Reviewed next month!

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Editorial Director: Dan Hutchinson
Email: dan.hutchinson@cranberrypublishing.com
Commercial Director: Duncan Ferguson
Email: duncan.ferguson@cranberrypublishing.com
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