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PCGZine

Issue 29 | April 2009

Free Magazine For PC Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates…



WIN! JUMPGATE EVOLUTION BETA KEYS!

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS & VIDEO

CALL OF JUAREZ: BOUND IN BLOOD

Exclusive Video and Hands-on Preview!

PREVIEWED!

DEMIGOD

Exclusive Chris Taylor Interview

VIN DIESEL OVERLOAD! 2 MUSCLE-BOUND REVIEWS INSIDE:



WHEELMAN

CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

PLUS ALL THESE GAMES & MORE

REVIEWED!



CODENAME PANZERS

REVIEWED!



ELVEN LEGACY

PREVIEWED!



RED FACTION: GUERILLA

Exclusive screens!

Welcome to PCGZine



God I love a good western. Maybe it's a youth of woodland adventures with homemade bows and arrows (I still have one in the garage, no really) or my staple diet of beef jerky but no other setting gets my blood up quite so much. Not even space. Perhaps I'm predisposed to love Call of Juarez then, but even so Techland's latest is looking mighty tasty. Check out our exclusive gameplay vid and judge for yourself. After that why not saunter over to our brace of Vin Diesel themed reviews or sample the delights of our exclusive new Red Faction screens? You wont see 'em anywhere else. Nor will you find elsewhere our exclusive chat with RTS-giant Chris Taylor. He really is a giant you know...

James Carey, Editor
pcgzine@gamerzines.com

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

MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best games writers on the planet



Adam Oxford
Optimistic Demi-Dandy Oxford views through rose tinted specs.



Steve Boxer
While down-to-earth Boxer prefers to hide those cryin' eyes.

Don't miss! *This month's highlights...*



Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood

Wild West wonders to be had with our exclusive hands on preview inside.



Demigod

Enchaning RTS from a legendary dev.



Dark Prophecy

The OTHER space MMO...



Wheelman

GTA wannabe or viable alternative?



Red Faction: Guerrilla

New screens, new info. Get it now!



Godfather II

Can you refuse this offer?



Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena

Is it a return to form for RIddick?

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Dark Prophecy	Chronicles of Riddick:
Red Faction: Guerrilla	Assault on Dark Athena
Call of Juarez:	Wheelman
Bound in Blood	Elven Legacy
Demigod	Codename: Panzers –
Godfather II	Cold War

MORE FREE MAGAZINES! LATEST ISSUES!

Black Prophecy

FIRST LOOK

Space predicted to remain dark

Publisher: TBD
Developer: Reakktor Media
Heritage: Neocron
Link: www.blackprophecy-game.com
ETA: TBD

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



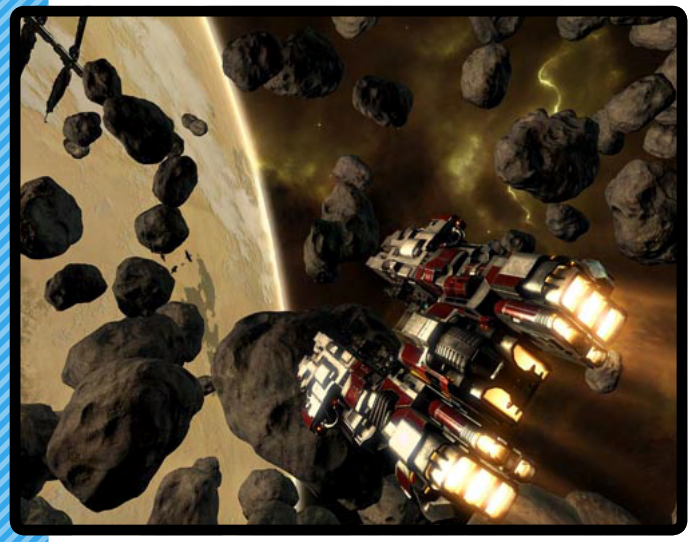
That looks like a rag-tag fleet to us.

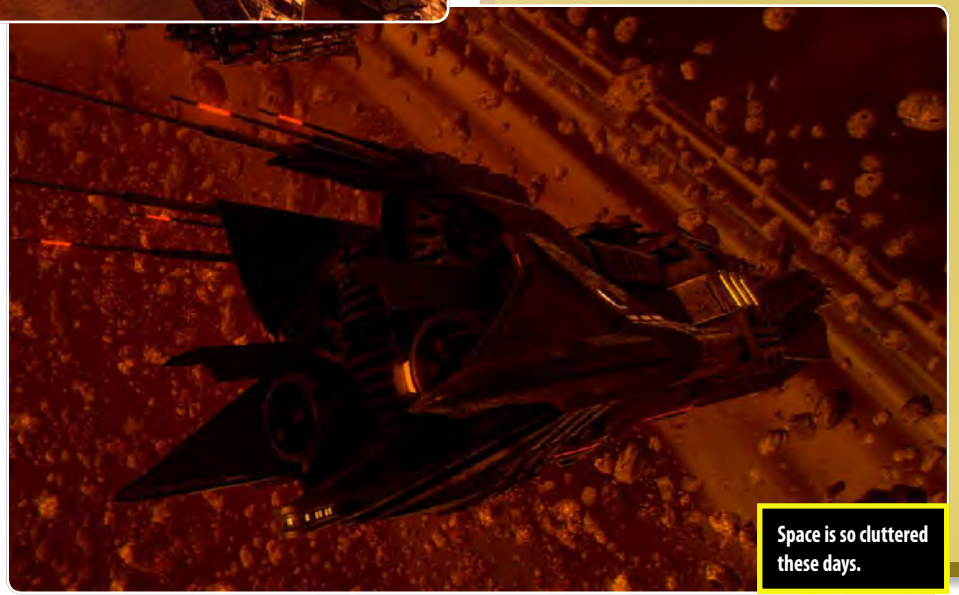
What's the story?

What with EVE Online's continued success and Jumpgate about to launch, spaceships are clearly taking off with persistent world gamers. Hoping to ride a coat-tail slingshot around the gravity well of these two binary stars of sci-fi gaming is Black Prophecy, a space combat MMO that looks to combine the dark PvP core of EVE with the fast-paced direct combat of Netdevil's imminent game. We think it's an interesting idea.

What do we know?

We do know that Neocron, Reakktor's previous game, was also an intriguing prospect, but one that sadly didn't quite live up to expectations – but then few games ever do. That said, lessons must surely have been learnt in the interim. The ship designs are certainly looking very EVE-like, and the graphics will certainly be leading a charge for dominance among what will be the 'big three' of spaceship MMOGs. With modular ships and stations looking to cement a foundation of customisation that could put the game above its peers, it remains to be seen how elements such as trade, resourcing and crafting will play out.





Space is so cluttered these days.

Anything else to declare?

Nothing is being said regarding beta testing, and Reakktor have been very clever in keeping quiet in only releasing enough to remind people that Black Prophecy is waiting in the shadows should Jumpgate get waylaid in the asteroid field of indifference. Our guess is that Reakktor will remain in stealth mode for a few months yet.



CONTROL Close Issue Print Page Search Issue Zoom In Zoom Out Toggle Full Screen Previous Page Next Page

RED FACTION GUERRILLA

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Volition
Heritage: Red Faction series, Saints Row series
Link: http://community.redfaction.com
ETA: August

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Red Faction: Guerrilla



ROLL OVER THE BIG PICTURE

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!





ROLL OVER THE BIG PICTURE

FIRST LOOK

Red Faction: Guerrilla

Super, smashing, great

What's the story?

Alec Mason, owner of the world's strongest sledgehammer, arrives on Mars to join his brother Daniel in hitting things for fun and profit. Before long, Dan is shot down by the Earth Defence Force, a regime which rules the red planet with an iron fist. So Alec joins the Red Faction, a rebel group aiming to reclaim six key EDF strongholds and to make Mars a peaceful place to break stuff.

What do we know?

Volition is quite rightly proud of Geomod 2.0, its destruction engine which allows players to destroy pretty much any man-made structure in sight. So much so that it's built an entire game around it – some missions require you to destroy EDF bases with guns, remote charges and your trusty hammer, while others lob in scores of explosive barrels for you to topple structures onto enemy vehicles or to funnel troops into ambushes. Completed missions raise rebel morale, affording you better-stocked ammo crates and assistance from miners, who'll down tools and take up arms to take the fight to the EDF.

Anything else to declare?

The online modes are total chaos, while local multiplayer diversion Wrecking Crew is a destructive delight. And, in an inspired touch, there's an unlockable 'ostrich hammer', referencing an Internet gag which emerged when the first – rather unflattering – screens were released.

7 UP

More golden nuggets of gaming glory to come

Damnation



Publisher: Codemasters | **ETA:** Q2

This steampunk shooter aims to turn the FPS on its head. Well, maybe its side anyway. Blue Omega are emphasising verticality in this intriguing offering with maps that are apparently thousands of feet high, as well as miles wide. How you explore this landscape will be up to you, and what's more, you can play the campaign in co-op with a buddy.

Mount & Blade: Warband

Publisher: Taleworlds | **ETA:** Q3

Mount & Blade is something of a cult classic. Offering a blend of Sid Meier's Pirates!, strategic play and innovative, incredibly tactile first-person battles, this indie gem was snapped up by Paradox last year. The first expansion, Warband, is due next month and will add a multiplayer mode to the game – allowing players to fight against (and with) up to 31 friends on the battlefield.



Max Payne 3



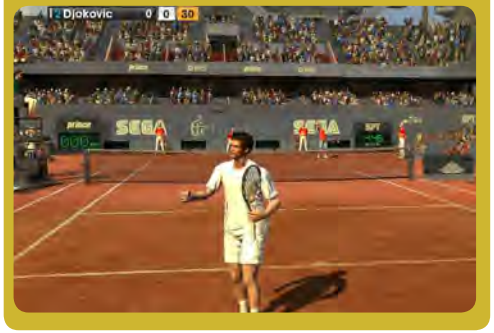
Publisher: Rockstar | **ETA:** Late 2009

Details are scarce, save some generi-quotes from Rockstar founder Sam Houser on the official site. Apparently this time 'Max is trapped in a city full of violence and bloodshed using his weapons and instincts in a desperate search for the truth and way out'. Could be a late contender for game of the year.

Virtua Tennis 09

Publisher: Sega | **ETA:** May

It's easy to dismiss yearly sports releases as cash-ins but in the past Sega have always delivered the goods and we expect 2009's offering to be no exception. The mini-games (crocodiles on court?) are starting to sounds a little strained but as long as they've nailed Murray's form we're buying.



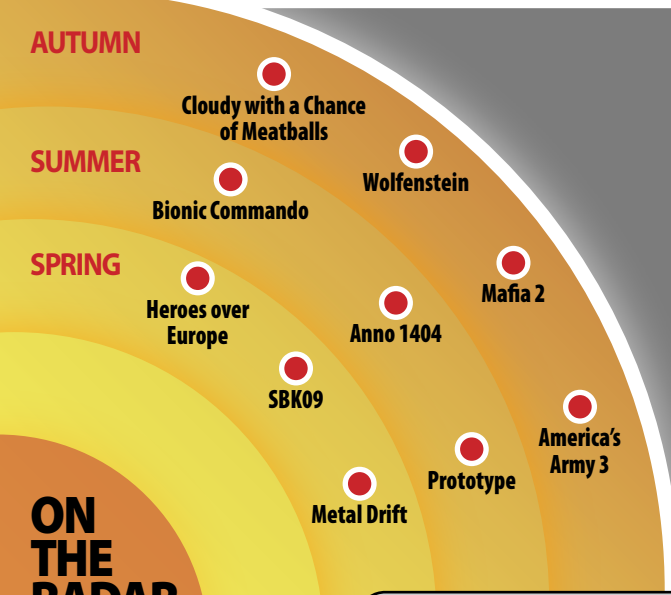
The Sims 3

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** June

We're only a month or so away now after The Sims 3 was recently moved to a June 2nd release. This new iteration is bound to be a massive success, with a bewilderingly anal collection of new traits and skills for your little people. For example, the ability to go fishing and then mount their catches on the living room wall or stick them in a bowl for all to see.



ON THE RADAR



Sherlock Holmes vs Jack the Ripper

Publisher: Frogwares | **ETA:** May

We were hoping for some kind of 'street' dance-off or possibly a Violin/Rip-Rap based mash-up but it seems Sherlock Holmes vs Jack the Ripper will be neither. Nor will it be a Victorian pugilist's gas-lit beat-'em-up. Denied! Ah well, we'll have to make do with a pleasing blend of first- and third-person puzzle solving and adventure come next month.





Trine

Publisher: Frozenbyte | **ETA:** Q2

Golden Axe meets Crayon Physics with three playable fantasy characters doing the whole left-to-right thing in a changable fantasy world, but there are hints of Left 4 Dead here too as the other players can revive the fallen at certain points along each level.

WARHAMMER 40,000
DAWN OF WAR II

LEAD WITH RIGHTEOUS FURY



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THQ

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Games for Windows



EXCLUSIVE!

Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood

As good as gold, or worth a panning?

Call of Juarez was a refreshing take on the FPS. The uncommon setting, the technical expertise in open environments, the horseriding… So will the sequel, Bound in Blood build on this promising start and deliver what the first game lacked? That indefinable element of greatness?

We say sequel but this is actually a prequel, the Bible-toting Reverend Ray McCall is back (or rather was there… before… again… gah!) but sans bible and this time accompanied by younger sibling Tomas (also playable) and their non-playable emo priest. brother. That means there's less of the unsatisfying sneakiness of the first game, and more of the gunslinger action that went down so well. So far so good for customer feedback.

We're still in the Wild West, a Tex-Mex fantasy of Aztec gold and >

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Techland
Heritage: Chrome, Call of Juarez
Link: www.callofjuarez.com
ETA: June

> Bound in Blood cont.

lawless frontier towns, but we're also in Georgia during (and just after) the American Civil War. As Confederate soldiers, the brothers are on the losing side and have to make tough choices between familial and military loyalty. It all goes a bit Gone With The Wind but soon we're back out West and robbing, rustling and riding like a good cowboy should.

John Romero recently released footage of early Doom development onto the web (http://vimeo.com/4022128) and the thing that stuck out was the young studio's excitement over their own innovation. Their joy over being able to shoot through a hole in a wall, over such 'new then but now stock' devices as exploding barrels. We reckon this gleeful imagineering must be mirrored at Techland, the studio responsible for Bound in Blood, because this game is genuinely inventive.

How many FPS games actually dare to alter the mechanics of first-person shooting? We've seen some nods to 'stacking up', mantling and diving for cover in shooters in recent years but not much that actually changes the way we control our gunslingers. The core concept of CoJ seems to be that there's more to gunplay than point and shoot. Let's look at cover: Some games let you stack up to a wall and peek around, but how do you do that? Q or E lean? Juarez isn't satisfied with that. Juarez wants to engage you more, so every surface becomes something >



Look at that and tell us you don't want to ride off into the sunset.



The lighting in Jurez is especially good. You really feel the heat.

PCGZine EXCLUSIVE VIDEO

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

ENHANCED VIEW



REPLAY

CALL OF JUAREZ BOUND IN BLOOD

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood

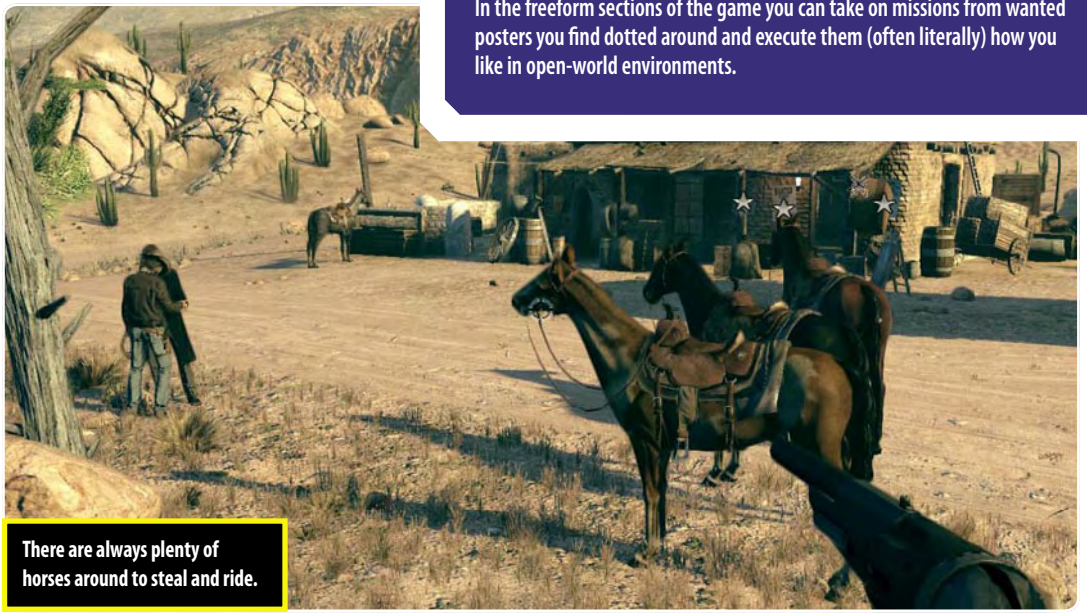


It wouldn't be a western without an Alamo-esque last stand...

> Bound in Blood cont.

tactile, something your character sticks to when you get close and slides around and over with subtle mouse movements. It's a shock at first because it's so very different from how we've been trained to play shooters, but it works. Then there's the shooting itself. The First Juarez game dabbled with different techniques like dual crosshairs for dual pistols but for Bound In Blood they're really going to town. Each of the two brothers has different gunplay skills. Ray can plaster an area with targeting circles in freeze-time before dropping back into the continuum to unleash a hail of rapid shots at everything he's painted. Younger brother Tomas can palm the hammer of his pistol back to rapidly auto-pinpoint targets within range, but you have to do the hammering yourself by jerking back the mouse. Likewise with lasso throwing, as circular mouse movements control the throw. It's this willingness to play with the control system of an FPS that'll really make Juarez stand out. It shows they're trying to do something more.

Despite some totally freeform sections where you can freely select quest-like missions from wanted posters, from what we've played of the preview build this Juarez is actually slightly less open than the first. There's clearly been a more >



There are always plenty of horses around to steal and ride.

HOWDY PARDNER

Staying alive in the Wild West



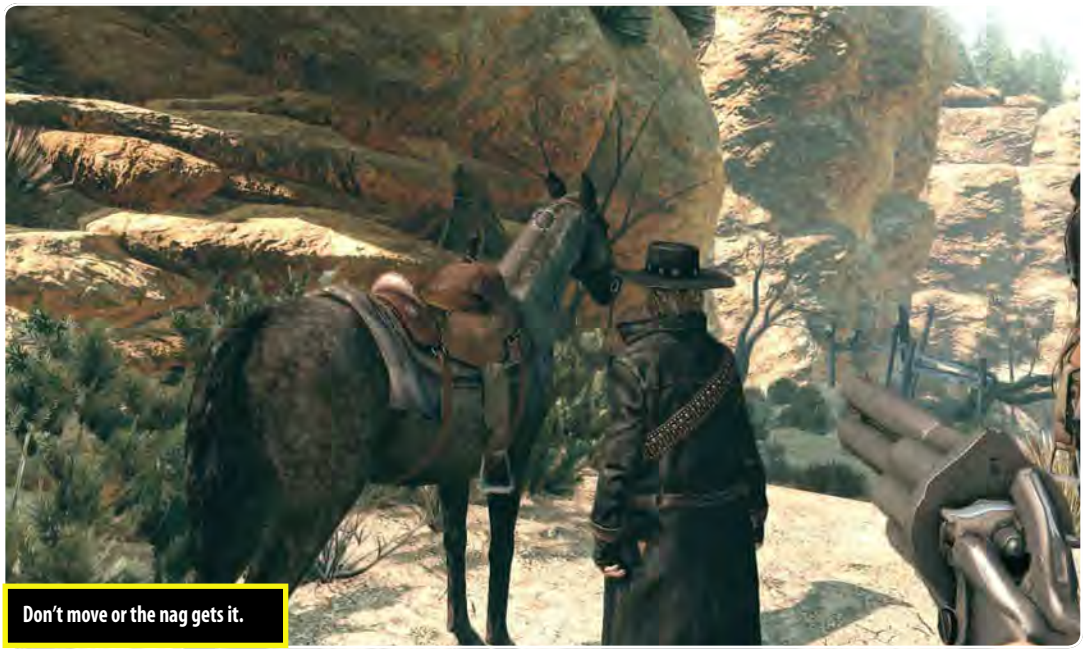
Dead or alive | **Sharp shooter** | **Wild Wild West**

Dead or alive

In the freeform sections of the game you can take on missions from wanted posters you find dotted around and execute them (often literally) how you like in open-world environments.



Don't really want that Derringer...


Don't move or the nag gets it.

Roll over screen for annotations



> Bound in Blood cont.

focused look at wow-moment set piece linearity which seems at odds with some of the more RPGish touches (the ability to buy weapons and equipment from general stores for example). The freeform sections hold the promise of wide open plains, galloping around on horseback and chasing stage coaches like some kind of GTA (Magnificent) VII, but we'll have to wait for the final version to see if this is fully realised. Whichever way you look at it, Juarez is as thrilling a prospect as a Klondike claim.


Bound In Blood features some really classy set-piece moments.

PCGZine
CALL OF JUAREZ BOUND IN BLOOD

HOW COMPLETE? 75%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS? 85%

This one definitely makes our Wanted poster...

IN A TIME WHEN MEN DIED
FOR CONQUEST OR FREEDOM, ONLY A FEW MEN
WOULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN DEFEAT AND VICTORY





MILITARY HISTORY

COMMANDER
EUROPE AT WAR

OUT NOW

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HANDS ON

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

DEMIGOD

Publisher: Stardock
Developer: Gas Powered Games
Heritage: Total Annihilation, Supreme Commander, Dungeon Siege
Link: www.demigodthegame.com
ETA: May

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

"Demigod is a much simpler affair than Gas Powered Games' previous technical tour de forces"

Team-based arenas make it the god game of two halves

Gods are too tough to go to school. There's no vocational training course for deities, and you can't get an A-Level in godding – although we have heard some universities were planning on adding a module next semester…

No, gods win their place in the pantheon by proving their prowess on the battlefield, or at least they do in Gas Powered Games' latest strategy affair, Demigod. It's a much simpler affair than their previous technical tour de forces, Supreme Commander and Dungeon Siege, in which the combat is kept tight and the pace never lets up.

It's a deliberate experiment by the company, in association with leading independent publisher Stardock, to create a very simple, quick game with high-end production values. Each new round sees you pick one of eight different Demigods, each looking for promotion to full godhood. Then you join the light or dark team, before entering a small, gladiatorial-style battlefield to duke it out with the opposing demis.

There's absolutely no attempt at placing the arenas of combat in any real-world spaces. They're simple, flat and abstractly shaped, defined by the friendly or hostile structures that are placed throughout them as the fight goes on.

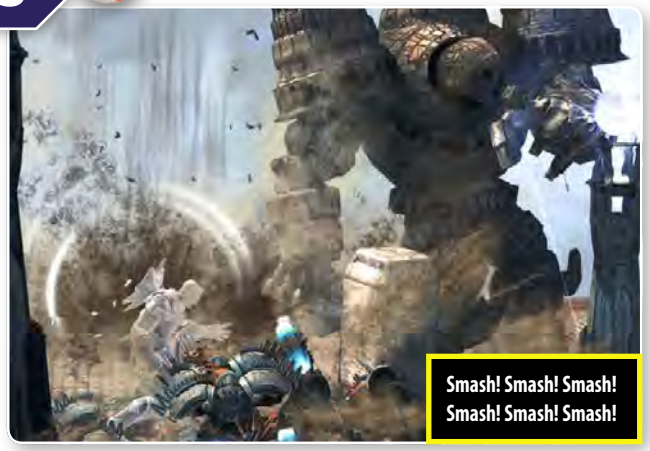

In the endgame, chaos ensues…

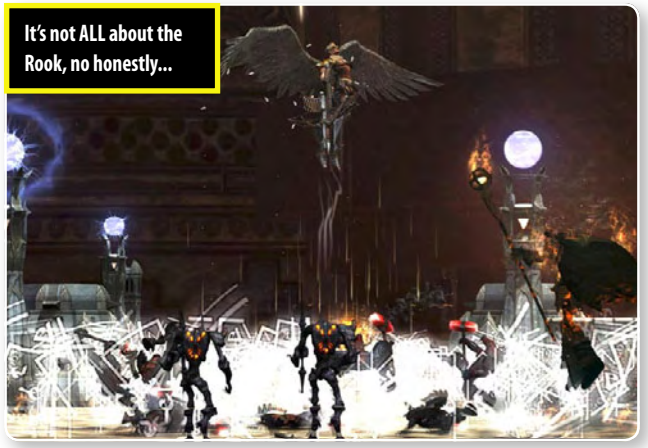

Mmm, nested menus. An embarrassingly wide array of skills to deploy.


Bet he doesn't have much trouble getting a date.


We mean come on, look at the line up, which one would YOU want to be?

DEMIGOD





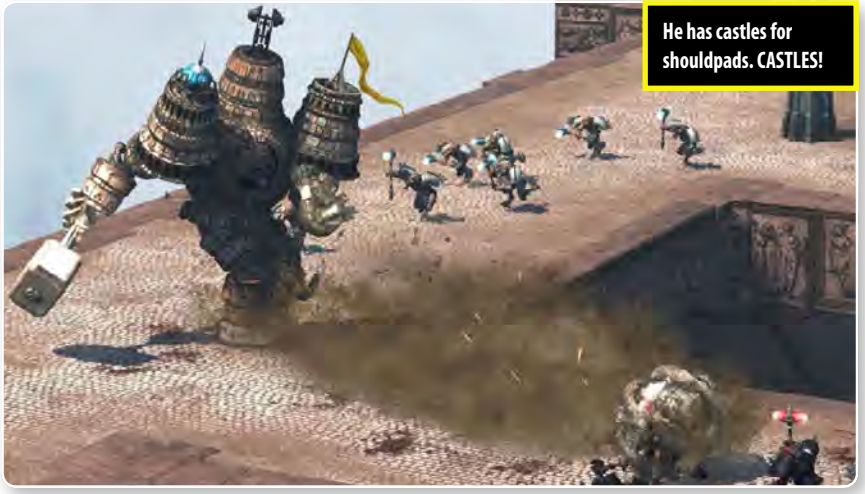
> Demigod continued

If it sounds overly simple, that's because it is, but GPG is hoping this will be the core of its charm. You could get two multiplayer skirmish matches done in a lunchtime and still be able to pop out for a quick croissant. Playing the game is as simple as spawn, charge to the frontline, smash everything up and then spawn again. A sound tactical brain is rewarded though, as the lack of scenery combined with a tight fog of war around your units aids players who are able to think quick enough to take up flanking positions around an enemy.

Things are spiced up further as there are two types of Demigod: Assassins and Generals. The former have powerful direct assault abilities which can be upgrade or enhanced as the fight goes on – you earn XP and gold for each kill which can be spent during battles. The Generals, meanwhile, have progression trees too, but are weak in melee combat. As the name suggests, their power lies in summoning their many minions to do their dirty work for them.

Each Demigod has its own archetypal powers, such as tanking, healing or ranged abilities, and are assisted by waves of computer-controlled units which pour out of portals onto the field of conflict.

We've played around with the multiplayer beta and so far it's looking like a lot of fun. There's some balancing to be done yet – there's a point in most games where one side becomes an overwhelming force, and the narrow maps sometimes limit the scope for tactical play. The biggest problem is that there are eight Demigods, but only one (the Rook) is a near-indestructible mecha-style man fort, with archers, trebuchets and lightning cannon on his shoulders, who wields a hammer which delivers insane damage to all units around him. With that short of power, why would you want to play as any of the other seven? ●



THREE OF THE BEST

Units in Demigod are classic RPG archetypes



Regulus | **Sedna** | **Queen of Thorns**

Regulus

An Assassin with a crossbow, Regulus' strength is in ranged combat. He can take down giants with a single shot, but don't put him too close to the front lines or he'll get swatted out of the sky.

PCGZine DEMIGOD

HOW COMPLETE? 90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS? 80%

Fast, furious strategy with a difference

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

Inside the godhead

The legendary games designer Chris Taylor talks to us about Demigod

Publisher: Stardock
Developer: Gas Powered Games
Link: www.demigodthegame.com
ETA: May



Chris Taylor is one of the world's best RTS designers, with Total Annihilation and Supreme Commander under his belt. But he's a tired man. Oh so tired…

When you want to know all about one of the most intriguing real-time strategy games yet you have to go straight to the horse's mouth. Take it away, Chris…

Can you sum up what makes Demigod unusual in 50 words?
Demigod is a hybrid real-time strategy and action role-playing game. Players control a Demigod and their army, and their Demigod level and purchases skills during gameplay in addition to having an inventory and being able to purchase equipment.

RTS meets RPG… Is a Demigod an ACU in a fantasy setting?
The Armoured Command Unit (ACU) from Supreme Commander served as the starting point for what Demigod became, however we vastly expanded on that premise, adding abilities, skill trees and equipment. While the ACU had only one ability (Overcharge) Demigods have four activated abilities and a host of passive abilities.

Gear slots provide passive bonuses to the Demigod (such as additional health or damage), consumable slots are used for items like potions and scrolls, and the favour item slot is used to gain access to a fifth activated ability of the player's choosing.

Do you think that a game based around quick, short fun battles can have long-lasting appeal?
Without a doubt! The premise that games with lasting appeal are long I believe to be flawed. There are plenty of examples of games that have a short duration that are entertaining and have proven to have lasting appeal.

Which is your favourite Demigod?
Each of the Demigods offers something that calls to me, and my favourite varies from day to day depending on my mood and the

>



The Rook towers over other combatants.



Destroying enemy structures is vital to success.



A tight fog of war means you can't see far into the distance.



The Rook can drop Towers of Light, which link up for a power aggressive beam.



The aim is to destroy the opposition's citadel.

> Interview continued

people I'm playing with. If I'm playing with very aggressive players, I'd play Sedna to back them up. If I was playing with more defensive players, I might pick the Unclean Beast. However, if cornered, I'd say that my favourite Demigod is the Torch Bearer.

I almost felt like I wanted to be able to design my own Demigod…
Early on we considered the idea, but wound up tabling it.

The UI stands out as very simple for an RTS. What's the happy balance between paring out superfluity and dumbing down?
The design goal for the UI was to take out a lot of the trappings of an RTS interface and go for something that achieved a similar level of control but without occupying so much space and intimidating users new to the genre.

Demigod was first mentioned barely a year ago. It seems to have been quite a tight turnaround in terms of development time.
Prior to being announced, Demigod had been in R&D with a small team of three people working on it to test the core gameplay mechanics. This gave us a firm gameplan once the game was announced and we went into production. The team managed such a tight turnaround on the product by having a clear vision and leveraging our experience in the RTS and RPG genres to minimise wasted effort.

Do you think the processes you've gone through with Demigod could be applied elsewhere to help with the problems publishers are facing making games profitable?
This is a difficult question for me to answer. Each game is unique and offers its own set of challenges. However, I believe there is a lot to be said for prototyping your gameplay with a small team before going into production.

With a small development team over a longer period of time you have the ability to test gameplay mechanics and make sure they are delivering gameplay that is entertaining. More often than not, what I've witnessed in this industry is the Lead Designer being forced to design the game in his imagination and it being halfway through production where that set of ideas manifests itself in the game in a meaningful way – at which point you've got to hope that whatever was written is actually entertaining because there's little time to change it.

"There is a lot to be said for prototyping your gameplay with a small team before going into production"

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Publisher: Atari
Developer: Starbreeze Studios
Heritage: The Darkness
Link: www.riddickgame.com
OUT NOW

The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena

Take two futuro-shooters into the prison shower? Not our boy Mr Riddick…

In Hollywood terms, Vin Diesel's growling goggle-wearer Riddick is treading water, but in the gaming world, Dark Athena sees him secure an undisputed seat in the hall of the sci-fi greats. From the very second you board the Dark Athena – a body-harvesting mercenary ship with a speciality in turning the human body into a borg-meets-gimp fetish-zombie with a snazzy red head-laser – you feel immersed in a pitch-perfect sci-fi world that's up there with the very best of the genre. Sure it borrows heavily from stuff like Aliens (there's a cute little girl hiding in the vents for a start) and yes, the pace of the game does slacken as you move onwards, but as a sci-fi tale peppered with encouraging and original gameplay, Riddick starts off leaking gaming cleverness from its every metal grate. Of which, it has to be said, it has too many of.

As with the original, Escape from Butcher Bay, the emphasis begins with brutal hand-to-hand combat before gradually introducing weapons of familiar hues to spice things up. Right clicking for block, left clicking for slash and timing your moves to do something gory and spectacular to your foe's ear/throat/nostril with your hairpin/screwdriver/spiky metal hoops is yet again a paramount joy, and actually more fun than the gunplay which – with the best will in the world – is more suited to a console gamepad than it is your mouse. It's still decent enough though, and original gameplay ideas like having to use downed drones as draggable gun emplacements work brilliantly when you're low on ammo – as well as some excellent bullet-based puzzles, too.

"Something that Dark Athena continues to champion is its shadow-based stealth"

Something else that Dark Athena continues to champion is its shadow-based stealth – now backed up by >



A Butcher Bay health terminal. Oh, the memories.

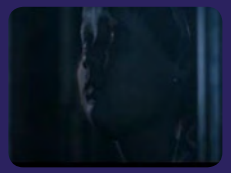
INTO THE DARKNESS
Welcome to Fight Night



We like, Ulak | To the left | What a way to go

We like, Ulak
These things are called Ulaks. Bizarrely, even when holding them up to show people, they still don't run away…

FREEZE FRAME
Taking you through the game, one step at a time…



5 MINUTES
You'll find this one in the vents, but she's not called Newt. Honest.



10 MINUTES
Grab your first drone and start making some strange whooping noises.



3 HOURS
Control your first drone through this Tron-style bike thing. More whoops.



4 HOURS
It's a whole new world. Welcome to the planet's surface. It's quite bright.



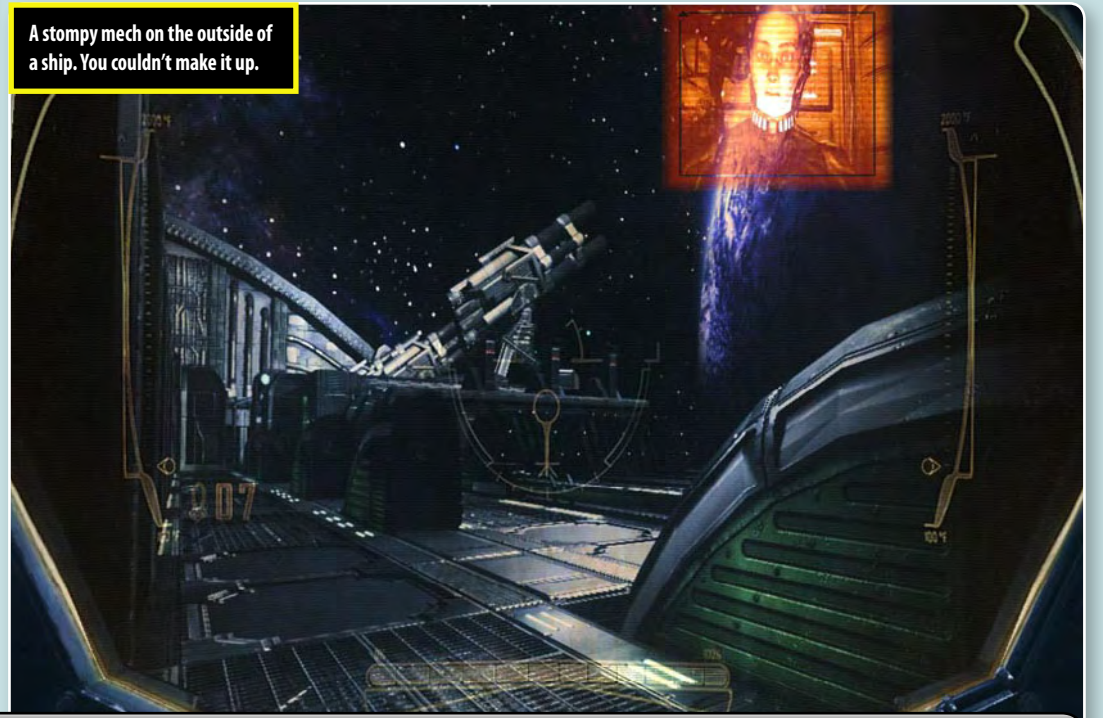
5 HOURS
A new sticky grenade gun is introduced. It isn't very good. Boo!



Control a drone and create a pile of drone bodies.



Scientific medical staff must die.


A stompy mech on the outside of a ship. You couldn't make it up.

> Chronicles of Riddick cont.

some frankly marvellous searchlight effects alongside Riddick's carrot-based spectral night vision. It's somewhat out of fashion with other gaming luminaries, but still done fairly well here – yet notably nowhere near as well as it was done in Butcher Bay, something of a pattern that will run through this review. Most encounters with three or more roaming guards will end up in a raucous chase through the ship's metal corridors rather than the sneaky stealth mentality you went in with. Riddick's stealth abilities also become a bit null and void when the action becomes somewhat more sunbathed on the gently lapping shores of the planet below. Then again, elsewhere the balance between melee and guns and light and shadow is perfectly pitched, and when put alongside mech combat and spectacular firefights next to a sideways-pulling gravity machine, there's little to complain about.

Well, there's not *much* to complain about. The difficulty curve is all over the place and level design and signposting occasionally snarls up, meaning that hopeless backtracking and a one-off trip to Gamefaqs.com >



Egomaniac developer faces appear on 'wanted' cards throughout the game, each linked to the usual unlockable content.

> Chronicles of Riddick cont.

won't be unlikely. It can't be denied either that the first half of the game, before the action transfers to the doomed colonial planet below, is for the most part a rehash of Escape from Butcher Bay – it has a similar structure and similar characters, yet it sadly lacks the Prison Break mentality of its forerunner that robs it of its impetus as the game moves on. In terms of story and atmosphere then, the game's progenitor is again the superior work, but this is only something to moan about if you've already played it, since that entire game has been retouched, bathed in graphical love and packaged with Dark Athena as a companion campaign. In these days of ever-shrinking play times, this new Riddick adventure is quite the value package. Now technically much of its gameplay isn't quite as developed as Dark Athena, – there are less clever puzzley bits for example – but at the same time it's far less linear and has incomparable moments of splendour, like the 'enforced sleeping' maximum security wing. In fact, Dark Athena often comes off as quite workman-like in its approach compared to its talented elder brother.

Buy one, get one free

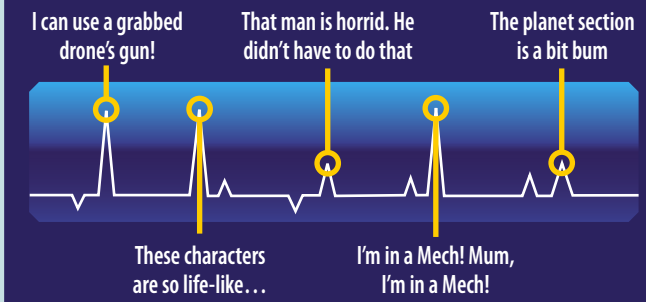
Indisputably though, both remain games that you should play and that you will definitely enjoy – not least because Riddick is such a brilliantly designed nihilistic videogame hero. In fact, all of the characters you'll meet imprisoned in the Dark Athena and Butcher Bay are simply brilliantly realised – well acted, superbly written and impeccably motion-captured. For a player new to the growls of Riddick, this is verging on a must-play game – but if you've already escaped from Butcher Bay a few times it might be advisable to hold off until there's a bit of a price drop. Dark Athena contains many moments of punch-the-air greatness, but in truth would only just be able to stand on its own two legs if it didn't come surgically attached to former glories.

Will Porter



This is where the dronification process is enacted. We blame science.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*





PCGZine Verdict

Proof that the old ones are often the best

- The best gaming character in years
- Some superbly original gameplay
- Occasional graphical glitches

79%



Godfather II

"I don't have to wipe everyone out. Just my enemies…"

"At its base level it's like a crim-sim Monopoly – you try to take over different crime rings and secure their bonuses"

Publisher: EA
Developer: EA
Heritage: Godfather, Dead Space
Link: http://godfather2.ea.com
OUT NOW

System Requirements: 2.8 Ghz CPU, 2GB RAM and a 256Mb 3D card

For a game as gleefully amoral and keen to flick V signs at the Coppola estate as Godfather II, there's actually quite a clever backbone behind all the topless models and 'execution move' shotguns placed in hoodlum mouths. At its base level it's like a crim-sim Monopoly – you try to take over different crime rings and secure their bonuses while spending the cash you earn on guarding them. Rival families are playing the same game as you, so you'll tussle over whorehouses, chop shops and drug factories, all the while slowly taking out their key 'Made Man' players until you eventually lay siege to their HQ and finish them off.

What's more, seemingly everyone wandering around the streets of New York, Havana and Miami seems to want someone else dead, injured or rendered homeless – the tasks that you can choose to complete in return for cash and gameplay favours suggest that community spirit is at an all-time low. This is where the first problem arises, as you and your heavily upgradable Made Men storm around your environs spreading widespread adolescent carnage. You're robbing banks, taking over fronts, shaking pimps to find their weak spot and adding them to your HMRC self-assessment form… but it all gets very samey very quickly. The clever scripting of, say, GTA is entirely absent, and the gunfights, driving and basic controls all entirely lack-lustre. This is also an eminently buggy game, released in remarkably tatty condition – a pre-play patch will be a necessity.

It's an interesting and well-constructed concept then, sadly shrouded in angry mobster effing and jeffing, wonky AI, decent explosions and rinse and repeat gameplay. If Rockstar North had made it then we strongly suspect that it could have been wonderful. Then again, that's the case with most things – isn't it?

Will Porter



It cannot be denied that GFII explosions are glorious.

FAMILY VALUES

Survey your criminal empire

You'd have thought the only thing obscuring Don Corleone's vision would be the summits of his strange puffy cheeks, but no. This is the Don's View – a strategic map showing you what you own and how heavily guarded it is. It's easily the most polished and interesting part of the game, even if it clearly hasn't been designed with a mouse in mind.





Nothing like a quick bout of meaningless carnage to pass the time.



Welcome to sunny Florida. Please drive-by safely.

PCGZine Verdict

Despite wanting to be a gangster all our lives, it now seems quite over-rated

- Engaging Monopoly stylings
- Does something different
- Wonky combat and driving

61%



Wheelman

Burnout meets GTA in Barcelona, with Vin Diesel at the wheel

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Midway Newcastle
Heritage: LA Rush
Link: www.midway.com/us/MidwayStudioPhotosNewcastle.html
OUT NOW

What happens if you're supposed to be making a film but it falls through? If you're Vin Diesel, you just make it as a game. Enter Wheelman, a game-of-a-film-that-never-was. In it, you play Vin playing Milo Burik, wheelman extraordinaire, who has pitched up in Barcelona, ostensibly to drive for the gangs, but actually to gather information about them – he's undercover, you see.

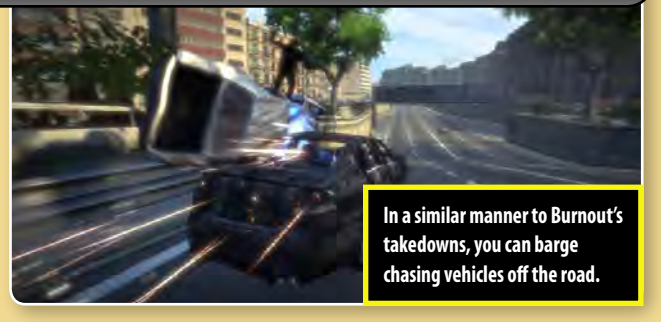
Wheelman's gameplay is easy to describe: it's Burnout Paradise meets GTA-lite. Thus, you get driving missions, in which the key gameplay mechanic is Burnout-style takedowns, in which you get alongside chasing cars, then barge them into the scenery. And you can do some even flashier things behind the wheel – Aim Shot gives him a certain amount of time to shoot specific parts of the cars ahead (such as tyres, drivers or fuel tanks) and Cyclone is the same, except Burik spins his car 180 degrees so can fire at chasing cars. He can also 'Air jack' cars by following them, then leaping precariously into them, chucking out the driver and taking the wheel.

There are also GTA-style on-foot shooting missions, with a heavy emphasis on auto-aim, and the need to make maximum use of cover. Frankly, these are much less appealing than the driving missions, even when using keyboard and mouse rather than a gamepad. Given that this is a port from the 360, it works much better with a gamepad – none of the keyboard maps are anything other than fiddly when driving.

Get it going with a gamepad, and you will find a frothy but adrenaline-filled experience, with great (albeit somewhat texture-free) graphics, impressive occasional cinematic sequences and plenty of side-missions, which is just as well, as it's single-player-only. But you tend to suffer the on-foot missions in order to get to the next driving mission, and the whole shebang really makes much more sense on the consoles.

Steve Boxer

"Get it going with a gamepad, and you will find a frothy but adrenaline-filled experience"


In a similar manner to Burnout's takedowns, you can barge chasing vehicles off the road.


Mr Diesel in mid-Air-jack. Mercifully, this complicated-looking manoeuvre is easy to pull off once you're in range.


At least when you're on foot, there are plenty of weapons available.

ON YER BIKE

It's more fun on two wheels…

Bikes feature heavily in Wheelman – both top-end jobs like this and, appropriately given that it's set in Barcelona, old putt-putt mopeds. One mission is a hilarious low-speed moped chase which at least shows off the level design, as it takes place on backstreets and alleys, up stairs and so on. The focus mode, which gives you a limited amount of time for accurate shooting while driving, is particularly satisfying when you're on a bike. The bikes' handling is very much arcade-style, rather than realistic, though.



PCGZine Verdict

Driving good, shooting bad – not Vin's finest gaming moment

- Cool Burnout-style driving moves
- Driving near-impossible
- Bog-standard shooting engine

68%



Elven Legacy

Conclusive proof: Gaming, good for your elf.

"To anyone with experience of the genre, it will make instinctive sense"



If you stand on a giant ribcage, you've got to expect a giant skull to appear above you.

Publisher: Paradox Interactive
Developer: 1C:Ino-Co
Heritage: Majesty 2, Fantasy Wars
Link: www.elven-legacy.com
OUT NOW

System Requirements:
1.5Ghz single core or 2000+ AMD, 512Mb RAM, GeForce 5700

There's something comfortingly old-school about Elven Legacy, from the off-the-shelf heroic fantasy universe to the accessible system requirements. Elven Legacy is classic turn-based strategy that's straight from another decade. That's no bad thing. Nostalgia may be rose-tinted, but some things in the past were actually pink.

To anyone with experience of the genre, it'll make instinctive sense – if you're a newcomer, read the manual. There's nothing in the way of tutorials, and the combat isn't transparent. It's not immediately obvious what units beat others, and if you're a fan of the Total War series you might be surprised that pikemen aren't great against mounted units. And the table of defence and attack modifiers are something you might like to squint at every now and then.

Even with the difficulty turned down, there's a lot to do in the turn limit if you want to get the gold award. The best thing to do is forget about that. It's a fairly meaningless achievement anyway, and you get more satisfaction and rewards from exploring the slightly-too-small maps. Taking over towns can earn you money, extra units and experience. Also, checking out anything unusual will usually result in a bonus – often an artefact that can be equipped to give your units special powers.

The problem is, that the difficulty doesn't always come from being convincingly outclassed with tactics. More often than not, it's simply a matter of being overwhelmed by the sheer number of units appearing from the fog of war. The multiplayer lets you fight a more balanced battle, and will boost the life of the game beyond the relatively short single-player campaign, though.

Elven Legacy may be from another era, and it may not be the most approachable game, but if you're willing to spend time getting under its skin, there's retro fun to be wrung from this earnest homage to a forgotten genre.

Jon Blyth

PASSING ON THE LEGACY

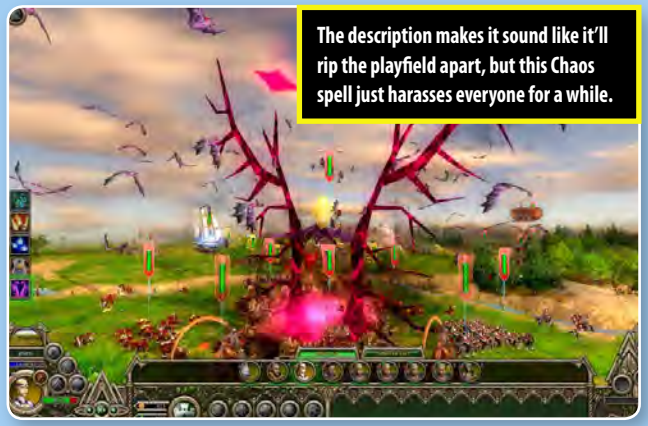
Read before you play…

The game might not give you much information, but the manual gives you plenty – tables, impenetrable battle formulae, flow charts of unit types. It's just another way in which Elven Legacy plays it old-school and it's something to read on the bus home from town. Assuming that we still have buses and towns these days of course.





Orcs have access to a different set of levelling perks and are more fun to party with.



The description makes it sound like it'll rip the playfield apart, but this Chaos spell just harasses everyone for a while.

PCGZine Verdict

Tough, but this is a slice of retro gaming that fans should like

- Classic gameplay
- Looks good for the low specs
- Could be friendlier or less earnest

71%



Codename: Panzers Cold War

"While the graphics look as if they could come from a five-year-old game, they take a lot of processing power to run"

Publisher: Atari
Developer: Stormregion
Heritage: Codename: Panzers series, Rush For Berlin, S.W.I.N.E.
Link: www.codenamepanzerscoldwar.com
OUT NOW

System Requirements:
Intel Core2Duo 3.0Ghz or AMD X2 +5600, 2Gb RAM, ATI Radeon HD 4850 or NVIDIA 8800 video card

It's like the war never ended…

While the big name franchises such as Command & Conquer have taken the plaudits over the years, the lesser-known Codename: Panzers series has plodded along in the background, doing its own historically accurate RTS thing to moderate acclaim. In a buck with tradition, Cold War is a slightly more fanciful affair, taking place in 1949 when a tragic collision between an American cargo plane and a Russian fighter threatens to kick the whole thing off again. And that is where you come in…

While the back-story may be fictional, to all intents and purposes, this is a straightforward World War II real-time strategy title that is barely distinguishable from any previous instalment in the series. And while the graphics look as if they could come from a five-year-old game, they perversely take a lot of processing power to run, chugging to a crawl on anything but a top-end rig. Why exactly? We're not sure, but there doesn't seem to be any logical reason why that should be the case.

The action itself is scarcely any more dynamic than you'd expect it to be, consisting of taking charge of a small handful of units and plotting a predictable path over a series of familiar scenarios and environments. Keeping your boys alive is naturally key, and this can be achieved by using health-giving and vehicle-mending units, which magically repair your troops simply by virtue of being parked somewhere in the vicinity of them – a somewhat forced approach that detracts from the realism factor.


Not the best use of a football pitch.

The main campaign can be played through at your own pace, with enough difficulty levels to cater for all levels of experience. For bite-sized action, various skirmish modes are thrown in, as well as multiplayer – which would be vastly improved if there were actually anyone playing it. The game ticks enough boxes for enthusiasts to plough through, but there's not a lot here for the casual player. There's not even anyone from Hollyoaks in the cut scenes…

Steve Hill

PICTURE IN PICTURE

Keeping an eye out for key events

During the course of a mission, you'll find that key events will occasionally pop up in a separate window enabling you to see the full enormity of the task ahead – and possibly cause slowdown too, which is always a pleasure. So in this instance, while you're skulking around some broken houses a helicopter is wreaking carnage elsewhere. Get moving, soldier!



PCGZine Verdict

An pretty unremarkable slog through a cod-historical setting

- Straightforward
- Needs behemoth PC
- Seen it all before

64%

WIN! JUMPGATE BETA ACCESS!

100 places up for grabs





We've teamed up with Codemasters and NetDevil to give 100 lucky readers a secured spot on the closed beta of their upcoming Cos-MMO-logical online space opera, Jumpgate.

Jumpgate is one of the most exciting MMO prospects this year, with real-time combat in a Massively Multiplayer multiverse. Set in a vast universe, players join one of three playable human nations struggling for survival in a distant galaxy. Embarking on an immersive and action-packed space adventure, players can build fortunes by trading valuable commodities, take part in intense battles against massive Capital ships, meet and play with friends and build their reputation as a legendary intergalactic hero. Featuring a rich and varied universe to explore, Jumpgate Evolution has been designed for experienced and novice MMO players alike.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these exclusive beta places, simply fill in the form opposite and cross your fingers!

Competition closes 18th May 2009. See website for full T&Cs.

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TOP MARKS

THERE IS NO DOUBT that your online mag gets a 95%! Thoroughly enjoyable read and I can't wait for the next one. If you want to make it better then more video links to games-related stuff would be appreciated. Is there any chance of throwing in the occasional hardware review maybe and/or games issues and answers, especially relating to Vista and Windows 7? Lovely stuff!

Don't miss Issue 30
Out May 19th
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More of this? Or more PCBs and heatsinks?

Don't stop! Burn the midnight oil for us games junkies! We appreciate you!

> Finn

> PCGZ says… Thanks Finn, glad you're enjoying the mag. We try to get in as many video and massive screenshot exclusives as we can but we're always conscious of our download size. Give us your feedback on this, readers. Is the size of the download important to you? As for hardware reviews, we're heading back into that territory (see our Commodore PC review last issue). If you guys do want more of this sort of thing then let us know.

THE DRAGON DRAGS ON

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ANNOYED WITH RPGS. I've wanted to enjoy them but I always felt lost, confused or bored with most of the dialogue. For that reason, many RPGs I pass up. Since the announcement of Dragon Age: Origins, I have never been so excited about an upcoming RPG. From the interactive elements of spells and environment, to the real-time/freeze camera gameplay, I can't get enough information. This game is beautiful and will be just as classic as Baldur's Gate.

> Jack

> PCGZ says… It's lucky for you then Jack, as in a few issues time we'll have an update on Dragon Age with some more exclusive screenshots and new info. If you missed it, we had some excellent exclusive videos and more in Issue #25 – you can still grab it at www.gamerzines.com/pcgzine/issue-25.



SHARKING FOR SHARING

We're *never* wrong. Well…

FIRST THINGS FIRST, THANKS FOR THE GREAT DCS BLACK SHARK REVIEW in Issue 28. One thing I wanted to point out is that in the 'A Mixed Bag' box, you mention that the datalink target sharing does not work between MP players. Actually you'll find that it does work, and he's just doing it wrong! Could you please pass the news on to him? Thanks.

> George L

> PCGZ says… Thanks for bringing this up, George. DCS Black Shark is a complex beast so we thought it would be best to ask Producer Matt Wagner to clear things up. He said: "You can in fact send and receive data link tasking from any other player-flown Ka-50 in a multiplayer game. You just need to make sure that each aircraft of the four-ship group is on the same VHF frequency and that each aircraft within the group is assigned a unique ID number." So thanks for clearing that up George and Matt! We'll make sure our radios are set up properly next time and not tuned into Jazz 24/7 FM…



With a 90% clickable cockpit, say you can forgive confusion...

PCGZine Issue 30



Prototype
Aion: Tower of Eternity

Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood
ArmA 2

Issue 30 Out 19th May

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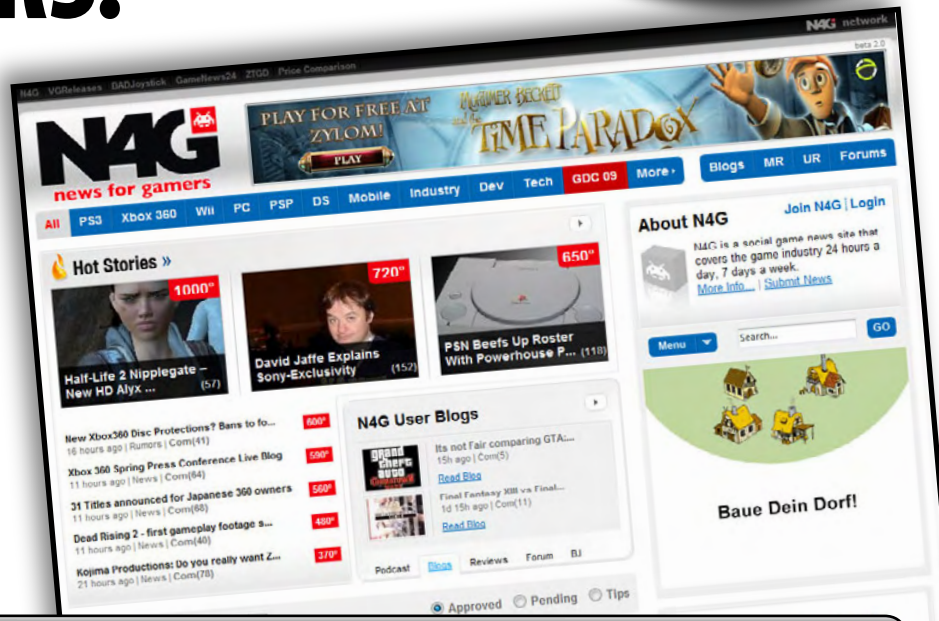
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