

PREMIERE ISSUE

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2003 FEB. **ISSUE 01**

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**INSIDE:  
MONSTER  
REVIEWS  
ARCHIVE!**  
EVERY SYSTEM!  
HUNDREDS OF  
GAMES RATED!

# GMR®

→ GET MORE FROM YOUR GAMES

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

PAGE  
58

## DOA

**XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL!**  
FIRST VERDICT ON TECMO'S HIGHLY  
PHILOSOPHICAL NEW GAME...

DON'T BE A LOSER!

PAGE  
88

## TOP CODES AND TRICKS!

- METROID PRIME: EXPERT GUIDE  
PLUS: METROID FUSION GBA TIPS!
- TOP 20 TIPS AND CODES FOR ALL  
SYSTEMS REVEALED!

PAGE  
28

## THEY'RE MONSTERS!

TOP 50 GAMES OF 2003 REVEALED!

WE PICK 'EM ALL IN OUR HUGE, GIANT,  
ENORMOUS, PREVIEW FEATURE!



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Xbox, GBA and  
PC games!

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→ WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW:  
EVERQUEST ONLINE PS2 p70

**RATED:**

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MINORITY REPORT (PS2/XB/GC) ■ SIMS (PS2) AND MORE...

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Visions™

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games

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//end transmission//

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# GET MORE FROM YOUR CONTENTS



**DOA: XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL** 058  
→World exclusive review of Tecmo's titillating take on sports

**THEY'RE MONSTERS!** 028  
→GMR's Top 50 Most Exciting Games of 2003 revealed!

## REGULARS

THE GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

**PEOPLE** 008  
→Meet the parents!

**POST** 010  
→E-mail, Letters, Ordinance

**ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES** 014  
→Which games are coming and which games are going

**TALENT** 017  
→Sega's Yu Suzuki

**CHARTS** 018  
→All-formats sales charts

**GAMEPLANNER** 024  
→Never miss a game release again

**NEXT MONTH** 078  
→Be prepared!

## FRONT

GMR NEWS NETWORK

**SQUARE AND ENIX MERGE!** 012  
→Big news from little Tokyo

**SEGA AGES** 016  
→Go back to the future with *Space Harrier* and *Alex Kidd*

**GAMEPARK HANDHELD** 016  
→The handheld Nintendo should have made

**THE MATRIX** 016  
→The latest on the game

**GEFORCE FX** 020  
→Stunning images from the next generation in PC graphics

**WIRELESS CONTROLLER ROUNDUP** 022  
→Beam us up



# OUR GAMES

## NOW

REVEALS YOU CAN TRUST

DEAD OR ALIVE: XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL	058
WAR OF THE MONSTERS	062
THE SIMS	064
EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING	066
SIMS ONLINE	066
NCAA BASKETBALL	067
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS	068
EVERQUEST ONLINE	068
PANZER DRAGON ORTA	069
DRAGONBALL Z BUDDOKAI	069
HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING	069
SIMCITY 4	070
SKIES OF ARCADIA	070
ASHERON'S CALL 2	071
FATAL FRAME	071
DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL	071
MINORITY REPORT	071
JEDI KNIGHT II	072
DYNASTY WARRIORS	072
BMX XXX	072
DISASTER REPORT	073
WHITEOUT	073
BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA	073
LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST	074
METROID FUSION	075
PHANTASY STAR COLLECTION	075
RETROACTIVE	076

## MORE

TIPS, CODES, MOVIES, ARCHIVES

METROID PRIME 082

→In space, no one can hear you cheat

TOP 20 CODES 088

→All systems. All cracked.

SCREEN 090

→DVD reviews

THE LIST 092

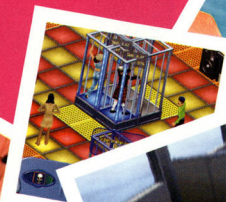
→Hundreds of games rated!

GAME GEEZER! 098

→He's old and he's pissed

2003 FEB

# ISSUE 01



GET MORE FROM YOUR GAMES

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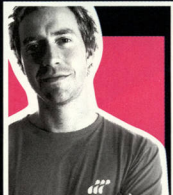
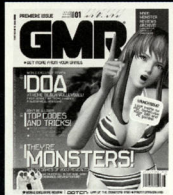
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THE PRODIGAL SON  
**JAMES MIELKE  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

Straight outta: EGM  
Our Executive Hipster likes long walks on the beach, sushi, leather pants, and cowboy hats. For reals! Hey, that's what he wants!



THE BLACK SHEEP  
**TOM PRICE  
NEWS EDITOR**

Straight outta: GBW  
Tom's a bit of an outcast at GMR, what with his lameass PC games and his insatiable taste for human flesh. Don't feed the news editor.



MOODY MOMMA  
**GERRY SERRANO  
SENIOR DESIGNER**

Straight outta: His mind  
Gerry, our resident freak-out artist, redefines the notion of "punchy" when we're on deadline by walking around the office in a pair of bikini briefs and some furry antlers.



THE ADOPTEE ONE  
**DAVID CHEN  
MANAGING EDITOR**

Straight outta: Konami  
David is here to make the trains run on time. And like Mussolini, his fascist blood will spill upon the earth at the hands of the people. Viva la revolution!



HOTIE FLONIE  
**ANDREW PFISTER  
WRITER**

Straight outta: Unemployment  
aka "Skip," aka "The First," aka "Company Mule," our boy Andrew does a lot of the heavy lifting around here. Well, he will once he moves his ass out from wherever he's hiding.



LIT GIG  
**CAROLINE KING  
DESIGNER**

Straight outta: Utah  
GMR's youngest and second-most feminine staff member. Absorbs all the foul and offensive effluvia put forth by the vile boys surounding her and turns it into yummy baked goods.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD'S NEWEST VIDEOGAME MAGAZINE!

I know what you're thinking. No, not that—the other thing you're thinking. Your thinking that another videogame magazine sits just below SUVs, ICBMs, and Justin Timberlake albums on the list of things the world probably does not need even one more of. So why on Earth have we assembled a crack team of writers and designers, gleaned from the very highest echelons of magazine publishing [and that alleyway under the freeway] to make another one?

Because GMR is different, that's why. GMR is about you. Not the part that has a life, but the part that doesn't. The game-playing part. The part that wants to read trusted, in depth reviews before parting with \$50 of hard-earned loot. The part that gets frustrated reading about games that are as likely to arrive in the near future as a one-legged camel on a skateboard.

GMR will deliver more than 20 packed pages of reviews every issue, covering every system. We will keep our previews focused three to six months out, and no more, so that when you read about it in GMR, you know it's really on its way. We'll always give you the latest tips and codes that you need for the games that your 6-year-old nephew seems to have no problem with, despite being incapable of keeping cereal on a spoon. Not only that, but we'll scour the globe to bring you interesting stories, weird objects, and websites that will enhance your gaming experience.

So, welcome to GMR. Enjoy.

...Simon Cox, Editor in Chief  
(AND BIG DADDY)



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that turns  
old games  
into new  
games!



# POST

RANTS, RAVES, QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, CORRECTIONS, MISSIVES, DIATRIBES, ESSAYS. HOWEVER YOU CHOOSE TO EXPRESS YOURSELF, YOU GET TO DO IT RIGHT HERE. WELCOME TO POST.



**How does a magazine that's never had an issue on the street generate mail? We considered stealing some of EGM's mail (Mielke was ready to go all *Splinter Cell* in the mailroom until we took away his night-vision goggles) but eventually settled on putting the call out on *Gamers.com*, our online chill spot. You responded in droves. Here's a little sampling.**

## GOOD QUESTIONS

Is there going to be a subscription available for *GMR*, or am I going to have to go to the nearest Electronics Boutique every month to pick up a copy?  
\_Danny Rivera

Yes, Danny, there is a Santa Claus. And subscriptions available for *GMR*. You can sign up at an EB or go to their website [www.ebgames.com](http://www.ebgames.com) to sign up.

## WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?

Does *GMR* stand for Gaming Monthly Reviewer or something like that?  
\_David Kreppov

**Actually, it doesn't stand for anything; it's a contraction of "gamer." GaMeR. Get it? Good.**

## WHAT SETS GMR APART?

First off, congrats on the new magazine. I view your entrance into this field as just another sign of how healthy the videogame industry is. To your prospective readers, how do you feel you will distinguish yourself from *EGM* or *CGW*, other

than the fact you will be covering all platforms, including PC, in one place? Perhaps a top-10 list response à la Letterman is in order??  
\_Jonathan Fuhrman, via email

**Yay! Lists! We love lists!**

**Top 10 ways *GMR* is different from its sister gaming pubs at Ziff-Davis [Electronic Gaming Monthly, Computer Gaming World, Official PlayStation Magazine and GameNow]**

10. 40 percent fewer morons.
9. We've got an insane Englishman at the helm. Oh wait, so does *OPM*.
8. Our area in the Ziff offices has a permeating minty smell.
7. We're spicy; but nice.
5. We only do mental.
4. When angered, our Art Director turns into the Incredible Hulk.
3. We can drink any of the other mags under the table.
2. Maybe it's the bass.
1. It must be the shoes.

## GET IN LINE

Hey, so you guys play videogames for a living. I must know how to get a job like that! I like to review games, and I like to play games. This sounds perfect for me. You know, I consider myself a pretty good writer and have done some little things here and there. I'd really like to know how to get a job like that or at least how you got your job.

P.S. But seriously, you actually get paid to play videogames?  
\_Brad Pike

**THANKS FOR GIVING US  
A CHANCE**

Howdy folks,  
As an avid *PSM* subscriber, I was a little bemused to see yet another gaming mag coming out. "Money-grubbing, hacks," I grumbled to myself as I got ready to load the *Penny Arcade* website. But then, I stopped. In retrospect, I think its actually a good idea, and I may even be cajoled into becoming a subscriber. I have a PC and a PS2 at home and an Xbox at work. I used to subscribe to the once vaunted *PC Gamer* mag (until they went the more filler, less filling route of advertisement overload) for my PC game fix. I use *PSM* for my PS2 news, and was debating assessing the Xbox-only mags to get the scoop on what's up-and-coming for that console. Now (hopefully!) my problems have been solved. I will continue to get *PSM* for the lovely demo disc, and I will supplement my gaming goodness intake with *GMR*...if the first two issues are up to snuff.

Good luck gang. Make me proud.  
\_Bill Jowitz

**A CONCERNED GAMER**

I've been a gamer as long as I can remember. I played *Madden '93* with my Dad and *Sonic the Hedgehog* when I was alone. I lived through the best and worst of all of the Sega, Nintendo, and Sony gaming platforms. I can remember when videogaming violence was nothing more than seeing a little bullet coming at you and then seeing your screen turn red. It seems to me that recently, certain companies are trying to piss the world off. Now, since I don't die before I try, I will honestly say that *Grand Theft Auto 3* and *Vice City* are both extremely deep and well thought-out games that only provide what the gamer wants. If you want mindless violence go for it, but if you want a deep, throughout story line that's here too. But, *BMX XXX* seems to push the boundaries too far. I am 14 and my parents have taught me (more like drilled in my head) that women aren't meant to just "strut" their stuff in public. I do not believe that there should be a game which has you

being a topless BMX rider as a character. I personally believe this wrong and that games like this will make congressmen want to ban the videogaming industry even more. If this trend continues, I fear we may have a desensitized youth before they even hit 10.  
\_J.Shanefelter

**EXCLUSIVES**

It seems every time I watch a commercial or read an ad about a game it says, "ONLY ON XBOX" or "ONLY ON GAMECUBE." I can't stand it anymore. I already have a GameCube and a PS2—now I have to go buy an Xbox just to play *Toejam and Earl 3?* Come on. This is getting ridiculous. I know it makes them tons of money, and idiots like me will just end up going out and buying the systems, but come on, is it really fair?  
\_Joe Hope

**Fair? No. Welcome to capitalism. But what you may be beginning to realize is that the console wars have very little to do with the actual consoles and their exclusive specs. It's all about the games Joe.**

**WHAT WE LIKE TO HEAR**

The whole mission for your magazine is absolutely brilliant. This kind of magazine that caters to the hard-core gamers is a dream I thought would never come into existence! Previewing games only for the near future is a perfect solution for gamers who actually want to know about games without the useless fluff that is "hype." Good luck with your magazine, and you can count me in as one more subscriber. In fact, *GMR* will be the only magazine I subscribe to ever again!!  
\_Jordan Zepeda

**Thanks Jordan! The check is in the mail.**

**YOU GO, GIRL!**

You know what I hate? I hate the idea that a girl who plays videogames ("girl gamer") is so hard to find. I know this topic must come up a lot, but I notice that people don't get the fact that girls like videogames. Like at school, everyone is all surprised when I whip out a gaming

mag in study hall, or boys get surprised when I jump into a conversation about *Metal Gear Solid* with them. I mean, really, I know TONS of girls who play, but I constantly hear guys say things like, "Wow, you actually like videogames?" Girls interested in videogames ARE NOT a rarity. I wish we could get over that. Maybe there are more girls who don't play than those who do, but I have finally come up with a theory of why most girls don't play videogames. Ready to know why? It's boys. Yep, that's exactly why. Girls seem to want to impress the guys, so they waste precious gaming time on going to the mall, buying clothes and make-up to look good for guys. The theory hit me about the time my ex-gamer cousin stopped her gaming days when she hit adolescence. We used to love to play games together, but she grew out of it as soon as boys stepped into her life. So guys, whenever



**WHENEVER YOU FEEL THAT A GIRL PLAYING A GAME IS A RARE FIND. ITS BECAUSE OF YOU. SCUMBAG!**

you feel that a girl playing a game is some rare find, remember, it's only because of you, ya scumbag.  
\_NaughtyKiki

**Please send picture.**

**SKINNY PIPES**

I am excited about all the new MMORPGs, especially *Final Fantasy XI*. I can't afford broadband. Would it make gameplay harder if I use a standard dial-up connection?  
\_Orion Foeller, St.Louis, Mo

**Well, it sure won't make it easier. But if you're exclusively playing RPGs, which are far less dependent on action and twitchy fingers, you should be fine with dial-up.**

**SOUNDS KIND OF FRUITY, MIKE**

I'm a 29-year-old male, and yes, I feel fruity asking this question, but here it goes anyway. Do you know of any plans for a sequel to *Britney's Dance Beat*? For some reason, I really enjoyed the last one and am looking forward to a second. The fact that Britney was on a game actually made me not want to even try it, but because of *OPM's* demo disc a few months back, I tried it and became addicted. I just wish the game had more songs. And yes, before you even ask, my friends do make fun of me whenever they catch a glimpse.  
\_The Very Manly Mike

**Yeeeah. I think we might be doing you a favor by not telling you about the sequel to *Britney's Dance Beat*. In fact, we're doing everyone a favor.**

**[SHORTS]**

**Care not.**

➔ I don't really care what games Square and Enix do now that they've merged. I just hope they change their name to "Squenix."  
\_Sean Murray a.k.a. Redlof.

**How?**

➔ Hey? How can you have mail in your first issue?? I'm confused.....  
\_Jason Pimental

**Fakin' it**

➔ Dude...did you ever wonder if Mario's mustache was fake?  
\_Phillip Lippi

# FRONT

WII  
PS3  
XBOX  
PC  
GAMECUBE  
XBOX  
PS2



GMA NEWS NETWORK



IN THE NEWS

SQUARE AND ENIX MERGE! 012

→Big news from little Tokyo

SEGA AGES 016

→Go back to the future with *Space Harrier* and *Alex Kidd*

GAMEPARK HANDHELD 016

→The handheld that Nintendo should have made

THE MATRIX 016

→The latest on the game

GEFORCE FX 020

→Stunning images from the next generation in PC graphics

WIRELESS CONTROLLER ROUNDUP 022

→Beam us up



# SQUENIX RISING

THE SUPER-SIZED, TWO-HEADED KING KONG OF RPG-LAND

FROM JAPAN

➔ In a move that sent lesser RPG-publishers running home crying to mama, Japanese publishing Goliath, Enix (home of *Dragon Quest*) and fellow RPG giant Square (of *Final Fantasy* fame) stunned the industry by announcing plans to merge on April 1.

All of Square's assets will be rolled into Enix, with the surviving firm to be retitled Square Enix Inc., bringing two of Japan's biggest franchises under one roof. Square's president, Yoichi Wada, will assume the top job at the new firm, with

Enix chairman Yasuhiro Fukushima keeping his position. In case you're at a loss as to the significance of this announcement, this is big news. *Dragon Quest VIII* (known as *Dragon Warrior* in the States) on PS1 moved over four million copies in Japan, while the last single-player installment in Square's biggest franchise, *Final Fantasy X* on PS2, sold just under three million units (so if you have an RPG in the works right now, be afraid).

Despite outward similarities, the companies are actually quite different.

Enix holds a number of hot properties, while it could be argued that Square has far too many in-house developers—witness the creation and closure of its Hawaiian complex. The cultural cross-pollination has already begun, with Square sending Enix some graphical artists to spruce up *Dragon Quest*, though Level-5 seems to be having little trouble with *Dragon Quest VIII*.

The goal behind this sudden pairing is to find strength in a tough game climate. "The market environment is rapidly

Ⓜ *Dragon Warrior VIII*'s amazing toon-shaded graphics, as created by Level-5 (*Dark Cloud 2*), really bring to life the characters of Akira Toriyama, the series' character designer. This could be the move that thrusts the *Dragon Warrior* series, in North America, into the same league as *Final Fantasy*. Just don't expect to see it in 2003.



→ With *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Warrior* under the same roof, does any other RPG stand a chance?

changing in part due to the spread of broadband communications," Wada said at the announcement. "Through the merger of two firms that possess strong business assets, we will aim to become the winner again when next-generation game consoles reach the market."

The Japanese game market—the largest by far for Square and especially Enix, which hasn't seen *Dragon Quest* catch on abroad—has been shrinking for the last four years, and Square is just recovering from the failure of the dismal *Final Fantasy* movie last year. With that in mind, insiders suggest that it was Square who approached Enix back in August with the suggestion to strengthen both firms through a merger.

There's no word on how the deal alters Square's publishing relationship with EA, but Wada noted that Sony's 18.6 percent stake in Square is irrelevant because of the utter dominance of PS2 in Japan—quite simply, the new company would develop titles for it anyway, regardless of any influence from Sony.

Curiously, one of the other reasons cited for the merger was to strengthen both companies against competition, which is a little strange considering that

*Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy* are so huge that the only competition they have is each other—or so it seems. "If you can't beat them, join them" is the mantra behind the move.

Either way, this union creates a formidable beast. You fear for Japan's shopkeepers. The country's legendary RPG fans filled stores to the breaking point with the release of *DQVIII* back in 2000...imagine the chaos when the inevitable *Final Fantasy/Dragon Quest* crossover is unleashed on the island nation. *Final Quest* anyone?

In a not-so-shocking development, Enix announced that *Dragon Quest VIII*, the sequel to the most successful PS1 game of all time (in Japan) is in development for PS2. What is shocking is who's responsible for it: Level 5, of *Dark Cloud* fame. The teen-shading is rock-solid and translates *Dragon Ball* creator Akira Toriyama's designs perfectly. Considering *Dragon Warrior VII* tanked in North America, thanks mostly to its crap graphics, the future looks well for *DWVIII*, as it unites the every-man hero with one of the most potent RPG development teams around. Now if only we didn't have to wait so long. ☞

—James Mielke

## GAMEPORT VITAL GAME INFO. NOW BOARDING.

### Arrivals COMING SOON

SYSTEM	ETA	TITLE	HOW HOT?
PC	JAN	<b>IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES</b> Lead legions of freaky <i>Dr.Morsau</i> -esque creatures into battle.	🔥🔥
PS2	FEB	<b>.HACK</b> Anime meets real-world-in-a-virtual-world head trip.	🔥🔥🔥
PC	FEB	<b>BATTLEFIELD 1942: THE ROAD TO ROME</b> New maps and features make a great game even better.	🔥🔥🔥
PC	FEB	<b>COMMAND AND CONQUER GENERALS</b> New engine, three sides, and a stew of units? Sign us up.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	FEB	<b>EVIL TWIN</b> Alter, like, the years, can you blame us for being curious?	🔥
PS2	FEB	<b>FINAL FANTASY XI</b> It's going to be online. And you know you're going to get it.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2/Xbox	FEB	<b>INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB</b> Whip it, Dr. Jones, whip it good!	🔥🔥
PS2	FEB	<b>TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS</b> If it's bad, the game may be up for Lara's many fans.	🔥🔥
PS2	FEB	<b>MIDNIGHT CLUB II</b> They've got the engine, now let's see the fly paintjob.	🔥🔥🔥
GBA	FEB	<b>SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II</b> One of the best puzzle games ever made, now good to go.	🔥🔥
PC	FEB	<b>UNREAL II: AWAKENING</b> One of the hottest PC first-person shooters slated for 2003.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	MAR	<b>AUTO MODELLISTA</b> Capcom's at the wheel of this novel cel-shaded racer.	🔥🔥
GC	MAR	<b>THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WALKER</b> It looks and plays like a dream. If only we read Japanese....	🔥🔥🔥
PS2/XB/GC	MAR	<b>NBA STREET VOL. 2</b> With better graphics and balancing, it's all an new ballgame.	🔥🔥🔥
XBOX	MAR	<b>NINJA GAIDEN</b> Tecmo's been on a roll...here's hoping this one's no Shinobi.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	MAR	<b>TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN</b> Old-school stealth sim comes to PS2 looking aces.	🔥🔥

### DEPARTURES OUT NOW

SYSTEM	TITLE	GMR SCORE
XBOX	<b>STEEL BATTALION</b> Gratuitous? Sure. But then again, so is a Humvee.	8 <sup>10</sup>
GC/PS2/XBOX	<b>MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE</b> Not the most refined fighter, but double, it's <i>Mortal Kombat!</i>	7 <sup>10</sup>
GC	<b>PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODES 1&amp;2</b> Come find one of the GMR editors lounging in the lobby.	8 <sup>10</sup>
PC	<b>MECHWARRIOR 4: MERCENARIES</b> Still, it's fresh and fun and that's all that really matters.	8 <sup>10</sup>
GC	<b>METROID PRIME</b> It's been said, but this is worth buying a GameCube for.	10 <sup>10</sup>
GBA	<b>CASTLEVANIA HARMONY OF DISSONANCE</b> As novel and nostalgic as <i>Metroid Fusion</i> , which says a lot.	10 <sup>10</sup>
XBOX	<b>SPLINTER CELL</b> Awesome in ways this space doesn't allow us to describe.	8 <sup>10</sup>
PS2	<b>CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER</b> Tough as taking candy from a baby, but a lot more fun.	9 <sup>10</sup>
GC/PS2/XBOX	<b>TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4</b> Four games and still going strong, 4 features great design.	9 <sup>10</sup>
PS2	<b>WILD ARMS 3</b> Take a break from angst-ridden teens saving the world.	8 <sup>10</sup>
PC	<b>AGE OF MYTHOLOGY</b> Dietly-fueled strategy sim pushes the envelope of the genre.	8 <sup>10</sup>
PS2/XBOX	<b>MADDEN NFL 2003</b> Madden online? Now this is fantasy football.	9 <sup>10</sup>
PC	<b>MEDIAEVAL: TOTAL WAR</b> Epic battles in the time of noble knights and fair maidens.	10 <sup>10</sup>
GBA	<b>METROID FUSION</b> Every bit as good as <i>Metroid Prime</i> , and you can link 'em!	9 <sup>10</sup>
GC/PS2/XBOX	<b>NHL 2K3</b> A great hockey game. Even better using Xbox Live!	9 <sup>10</sup>
GBA	<b>A LINK TO THE PAST/4 SWORDS</b> Convince three friends to buy 4 Swords. Lie, if necessary.	9 <sup>10</sup>



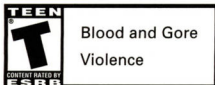
DESTINIES SO BIG THE UNIVERSE  
CAN BARELY CONTAIN THEM.



# Xenosaga™

EPISODE I

Der Wille zur Macht



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PlayStation.2



**INFOMANIA!**

THE LATEST ON...



**ENTER THE MATRIX**

Making every efforts to create one of the most seamless partnerships ever between game and movie, developer Shiny will release *Enter The Matrix* for GameCube, PC, PS2 and Xbox simultaneously with the release of *The Matrix Reloaded* in theaters this upcoming spring. Shiny has enlisted the help of the Wachowski brothers themselves to help create the game world. You won't get to play as Neo or Morpheus, although they will have significant roles. Instead, you will choose to be one of two players, each with unique characteristics and backstory. Action will be plentiful, with varying degrees of sneaking and blasting, around environments—you know, stuff like moody, empty buildings. See the movie, play the game, or both. Just don't take the blue pill. **IE**

**CLICKS**

GO HERE NOW, PILGRIM



[www.realtimatepower.net](http://www.realtimatepower.net)

We got so superpumped over this totally sweet ninja website, that Caroline kicked Simon in the face while Milky wailed on his guitar in the background, harder than ever (if that's even possible). Go there. **IE**

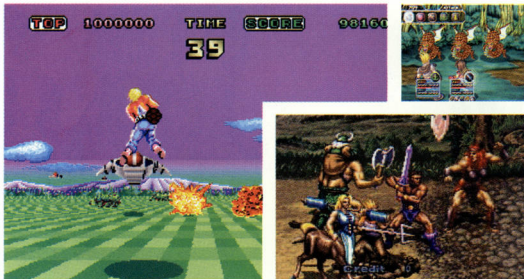
# GEEZER GAMES

SEGA WHEELS ITS OLDIES OUT OF RETIREMENT

FROM JAPAN

➔ **SEGA of Japan recently announced plans to re-release a series of classic games on various platforms, under the SEGA AGES label.**

While some of the games will be enhanced [*Phantasy Star Remix* being the most significant], most will be straight ports of their classic counterparts. The clear winner in the quantity sweepstakes is the PS2, which will receive the lion's share of games [*Space Harrier*, *Phantasy Zone*, *Golden Axe*, *Monaco GP*, *Alex Kidd's Miracle World*, *Gain Ground*, *Bonanza Brother*, *Tant-R*, *Phantasy Star 2*, *Phantasy Star 4*, *Virtua Racing*, and *Last Bronx*], while the Xbox will get ports of classic and not-so-classic Dreamcast games [*Rent-A-Hero No. 1*, *Illbleed*, *Dynamite Deka 2*, and *Blue Stinger: Premium Cut*]. The GameCube, sadly, is scheduled to score only a baseball game out of the deal. The games will retail for 2,500 yen in Japan (roughly \$20 U.S.). Whether these games will make it to North America is unknown. As of press time, Sega of America had no plan to bring these titles to the States.



➔(Top left) Sega's *Space Harrier* shooter ushered in the hydrolic coin-op era. Early multiplayer classic *Golden Axe* (above) took the beat-em-up to Tokkein-land. (left) *Blue Stinger* and classic *Alex Kidd's Miracle World*...

[HANDHELD NEWS]

## WEAPON OF MASS DISTRACTION

FROM KOREA: THE GP32 HANDHELD VIDEOGAME SYSTEM



➔ **What's this? The new GBA we've been hearing rumbings about? Or perhaps a tiny computer for your dog?**

Surprisingly, no. It's the Gamepark GP32, and this new handheld gaming console is causing quite a stir in, er, Korea.

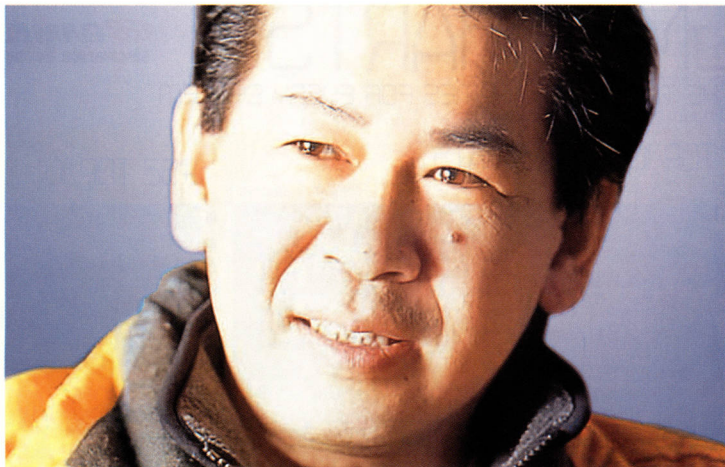
We love our GBAs here at GMR, but we'd be less than honest if we said that a better screen, an MP3 player, and some hardware hook-ups wouldn't be cool. The GP32 has all of those things and more, and it rivals the Pop Tart for its contribution to humanity. It boasts a

320x240-pixel color screen, and a 32-bit RISC CPU. The result is some impressive-looking games, marred only by crappy third-party support. *Dungeon and Guarder*, a *Golden Axe*-style arcade scrolling fighter is OK, but fans are awaiting the RPG *Astonisha R*, which is beautifully

detailed. Games aside, the GP32 can store high-quality MP3s on its external smart cards, and it links to your PC. The most amazing feature is the four-player mode, which allows four GP32s to talk to each other via RF (radio) signals. No plans yet for a U.S. release. **IE**



[TALENT]



# \* YU SUZUKI

THE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT FROM SEGA'S CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARDS

➔ **Legendary game developer Yu Suzuki is responsible for more of the games you play than you probably realize.** *OutRun*, *Afterburner*, *Space Harrier*, *Daytona USA*, *Virtua Fighter*, and, of course, *Shenmue*. With *Shenmue II* recent appearance, we sat down with Suzuki to discuss the past, present, and future...

**GMR: With *Shenmue II* completed, can you tell us about *Shenmue III*? We know you had to compress multiple chapters into *Shenmue II* because of cost constraints. Will you have to further condense the series?**

Suzuki: The series will continue, but I think we will go with a different approach for *Shenmue III*. I'd like to make the next chapter

into a movie.

**GMR: A CG movie, kind of like the one on the free DVD that comes with *Shenmue II*?**  
Suzuki: Yes.

**GMR: Is it true that *Shenmue* originally began life as a *Virtua Fighter* RPG?**

Suzuki: That's something of an urban myth. When we were first planning the game, Akira [from *Virtua Fighter*] was scheduled to be the main character, and the working title was *Akira's Quest*. As development progressed, we felt it

would be better to start with a brand-new character.

**GMR: Are you still working on the true RPG, *Virtua Fighter Quest*?**  
Suzuki: Yes, we are.

**GMR: Can you tell us what else you're working on now?**  
Suzuki: We're currently testing *Virtua Cop 3* in Japanese arcades. We were inspired by *The Matrix*, so it has a lot of cool effects. We're also working on the new *OutRun* arcade game.

**GMR: Sounds exciting. What**

**arcade hardware are you using?**  
Suzuki: The Chihiro board. It's the Xbox-based arcade hardware we developed with Microsoft.

**GMR: When will we see *Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution* on a console?**  
Suzuki: Hah. We'll have good news for you soon.

Shortly after this interview was conducted, Sega of Japan announced the Japanese release of *Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution* for PS2, on March 13, 2003. At press time, Sega of America was unsure if the title would come to the States.

"HAH. YOU'RE A VERY BIG VIRTUA FIGHTER FAN. AREN'T YOU?"

## FOUND! JAPANESE KIRBY



This sweet Kirby toy from Takara Co. lets you treat everyone's favorite cream puff like a Mr. Potato Head doll, but with a "Super Magnet System." 📌

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

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GMR's publishing partner, games retailer Electronics Boutique (EB), sports a website where you can buy games, pre-order games, and accessorize your games, get discounts, subscribe to *GMR* (er, the magazine that you're reading), and check the availability of preowned titles. 📌

PAGE

17

## [BLIPS]

### Miyamoto Confirms Super Mario 128

➔ **Super Mario 128 and Pikmin 2 in development**  
In an interview with Japanese *Playboy*, Shiggy acknowledged that *Sunshine* didn't quite impress enough people, but that 128 will indeed. And *Pikmin 2*? Oh, they're all about the gardening thing.

### Import Sport Car Sales Go Up

➔ **Racing games raise import sportscar sales**  
Thanks, *Gran Turismo*. Because of the popularity of that game and others, some car manufacturers, like Subaru, Mitsubishi, and Nissan are bringing previously unavailable cars to U.S. shores, including the *Evo VII*.

### Playboy Game

➔ **ARUSH Entertainment has entered into a venture with Playboy Entertainment Inc. to develop a series of Sims-style games.** No word on the nudity level, but you do get to be He! And that's really every man's dream, isn't it?

## KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



### PS2 MACK DADDY

This year, the PS2 hits its peak, the middle of its cycle, the Wednesday of it's week. If it were Eminem, it would be on the brink of releasing *The Marshall Mathers LP*. At this point in a console's life, a number of things happen.

First, really good games start selling in remarkable numbers. *GTA3* has already sold several quadrillion copies, much as *Final Fantasy VII* did at roughly the same point in the PS1's life. *Vice City* will likely follow *Final Fantasy VIII*'s suit by selling even more and catapulting Rockstar's esteem higher than God's.

Secondly, really crap games start selling in enormous numbers as well. You reach a point where there are so many consoles out there that anything with a vaguely relevant name slapped on the box will sell zillions purely by accident.

Finally, the point of my first column for *GMR*: At this point, we start to see indications of how the future will shape up. I'd put money on Sony dribbling out information on PS3 this year. We know they're working on it. Sony has already stated that the machine will be out "by 2005," so if they follow their own set pattern, my bet would be that by the May or June 2003 issue of this magazine, there'll be something like "PlayStation 3 Revealed" slapped in huge letters across the cover. Anyone care to take that bet? ☹

John Davison, OPM

# GMR CHARTS

THE TOP-SELLING GAMES FOR EVERY SYSTEM

IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
**EB GAMES™**  
electronics boutique™

## TOP 10 ALL FORMATS

RANK	TITLE	FORMAT	RATING
01	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY More gangsta', more blood, more gun-talk, more people dying, more hardcore.	PS2	10
02	METROID PRIME One of the most impressive games we've ever seen, heard, and—for that matter—played.	GC	10
03	WWE SMACKDOWN Every aspect of this popular franchise has been overhauled, including the polished reversal system.	PS2	8
04	SPLINTER CELL An incredible game, even if it's not quite the "Metal Gear-Killer" it was hyped up to be.	XBOX	9
05	MORTAL KOMBAT: DA The <i>Mortal Kombat</i> series will always occupy a very special fist-shaped hole in our hearts.	PS2	7
06	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP The Xbox is a perfect port of entry for first-class PC shooters, as this game proves nicely.	XBOX	8
07	TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON Realism's the name of the game here: one shot and-bang-you're dead. Best played with friends.	XBOX	8
08	MECH ASSAULT We always feel safest talking online smack from the comfort of a 10-story mech. Don't you?	XBOX	8
09	METROID FUSION First <i>Castlevania</i> , and now this. While we're at it, could we please have <i>Comix Zone</i> , too?	GBA	9
10	MORTAL KOMBAT: DA After an extended bout with irrelevance, Scorpion and his merry band of murderers make good.	XBOX	7

## PS2 TOP 10

01	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	10
02	WWE SMACKDOWN!	8
03	MORTAL KOMBAT DA	7
04	ATV OFFROAD FURY 2	8
05	THPS4	4
06	SHINOBI	6
07	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	8
08	JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE	7
09	MADDEN NFL 2003	9
10	NBA LIVE 2003	8

## XBOX TOP 10

01	SPLINTER CELL	9
02	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP	8
03	TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON	8
04	MECHASSAULT	8
05	MORTAL KOMBAT: DA	7
06	MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE	8
07	MGS2: SUBSTANCE	9
08	JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE	8
09	STAR WARS JEDI OUTCAST	8
10	BMX XXX	4

## PC TOP 10

01	MOH: SPEARHEAD	7
02	ASHERON'S CALL 2	8
03	AGE OF MYTHOLOGY	8
04	MW4: MERCENARIES	8
05	THE SIMS UNLEASHED	10
06	THE ELDER SCROLLS III	9
07	ROLLER COASTER TYCOON 2	7
08	THE SIMS DELUXE	10
09	ST: STARFLEET COMMAND III	7
10	EQ: PLANES OF POWER	9

## GBA TOP 10

01	YU-GI-OH! ETERNAL DUELIST	5
02	METROID FUSION	9
03	HARRY POTTER CHAMBER	8
04	YOSHI'S ISLAND: SMA 3	9
05	FROGGER'S ADVENTURES 2	6
06	MADDEN NFL 2003	8
07	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	3
08	NAMCO MUSEUM	8
09	SUPER MARIO WORLD: SMA 2	9
10	DBZ: LEGACY OF GOKU	5

## GC TOP 10

01	METROID PRIME	10
02	RESIDENT EVIL 0	8
03	MARIO PARTY 4	8
04	MORTAL KOMBAT	7
05	JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE	8
06	SONIC MEGA COLLECTION	7
07	MARIO SUNSHINE	9
08	ANIMAL CROSSING	9
09	STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS	7
10	HARRY POTTER	7

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

18

From the Shadows of History  
a Legend Reawakens

PANZER  
DRAGON  
ORTA™



ONLY ON  
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XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE  
20

# FACING UP

THE \$400 GEFORCE FX SHOULD HAVE ENOUGH GRUNT

TECH

➔ If you're tired of the way graphics-card technology seems to leapfrog every six months or so, we're here to warn you there seems to be no relief in sight.

Last year, Canada's ATI Technologies took the lead in the graphics-card wars with its awesome Radeon 9700 Pro, a \$400 card that had every game from *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* to *Unreal Tournament 2003* screaming at super-high framerates. Not

to be outdone, Santa Clara-based Nvidia recently announced that it's poised to regain the throne with its latest card, the GeForce FX. Expected to hit store shelves by February of 2003, the GeForce FX will ship with 128MB of memory, and while we've yet to get exact prices, rumor has it that the card, similar to ATI's top contender, will cost around \$400. Since we haven't actually played with the card ourselves, we

can't say how well it will perform, but Nvidia is claiming that their card is 40 percent faster than the ATI card in the as-yet-to-be-released *Doom III*. And, as you can see from the screenshots, the next-level technology will make some pretty amazing things possible. Start saving your nickels now. ■◀

more info at [www.nvidia.com](http://www.nvidia.com)

## KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



### PC SPEAK

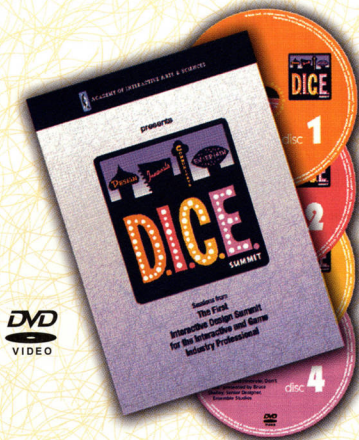
**S**crew Albert Einstein. I have my own theory of relativity—one that the average beer-drinking, video-addled, American dumbass like you and me can understand. It's this: The worse the *Star Wars* movies get, the better the *Star Wars* games get—especially on PC.

Exhibit A: *Jedi Knight II*, one of the best games of 2002. Exhibit B: the steaming suckfest that was *Episode II*. Now, just in time to purge the stink of Hayden Christensen from our collective sinuses, LucasArts is readying two more *Star Wars* games—*Galaxies* and *Knights of the Old Republic*—that look awesome. There's a big MMORPG war brewin', and them mainstream media folks are going gaga over *Sims Online*, but *Star Wars Galaxies* is going to win this war. I've been having a great time with *Sims Online*, but let's be real here: This game is a graphics-based chat room. In *Galaxies*, I get to live *Star Wars 24/7*. I can be a Wookiee with a house on Tatooine. Now all Lucas has to do is cancel *Episode III*.

My assignment for this *GMR* column, now that I've read the e-mail, is to provide you with some kind of "scoop." Here's a couple quick ones, so I don't get fired. Don't spend your money on that PS2—*GTA Vice City* is coming to PC. And cancel that preorder on *SWAT: Urban Justice*—the game is dead, dead, dead. For now. Trust me. ■◀

—Jeff Green, CGW

# Learn From The Masters!



The Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences is pleased to present the D.I.C.E. Summit DVD Series. D.I.C.E. (Design, Innovate, Communicate and Entertain) is the Game Industries widely praised, exclusive interactive design conference held annually in Las Vegas. This 4 DVD set includes over 9 hours of the top tier creators and Legends in the Game industry explaining the in's and outs of the development process and the lessons learned while providing insight to the roadmap of the future of Interactive entertainment. This Unique "Master Class" of Game Design and Development is a crash course in the realities and issues affecting anyone interested in the Game industry.



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- **Will Wright** Creator of the "Sim City" and "The Sims"
- **Satoru Iwata**, President of Nintendo
- **Lorne Lanning**, Founder of Oddworld Inhabitants
- **Bruce Shelley**, Ensemble Studios, Game Designer of Age of Empires
- **Louis Castle**, founder of Westwood Studios
- **Cliff Bleszinski**, Epic Games, creator of Unreal
- **Larry Probst**, CEO of Electronic Arts
- **Bruno Bonnell**, Founder and CEO of Infogrames
- **Shigeru Miyamoto**, Game legend and creator of Zelda, Mario, Pikmin.



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## KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



## GBA GOES BIG TIME

Nintendo has finally decided to release a GameCube add-on that allows us to play GBA games on our televisions, and there's nobody out there more excited than I am.

Aside from the obvious joys of playing GBA games on something larger than a 2.9-inch screen, I wonder what else this swell new device means for Nintendo fans. Could it signal a 128-bit version of *Pokémon* on the handheld of *Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire* just came out for GBA in Japan, so it seems a natural fit. Imagine leading your most powerful *Pokémon* from *Ruby and Sapphire* into battle in a hypothetical GameCube version.

Then there's the device's ability to link multiple GameCubes. It'd be a hassle to get all the components together, but think how cool it will be for four people to play *The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords* with everyone watching their own television screen!

Of course, it's only logical that this Super GBA launches with a killer app. Back in 1994, when Nintendo released the Game Boy-to-TV Converter, Super Game Boy (for the Super NES), it also released an enhanced *Donkey Kong*, that showed off what the new add-on could do.

Perhaps in May we'll see the release of *Donkey Kong*, the seldom-mentioned update of the 1994 *Donkey Kong*, that Nintendo tucked away at the last E3. **☛**

Phil Theobald, GameNow

# "IT'S WITCHCRAFT, I TELL YOU!"

## CORDLESS CONSOLE-CONTROLLERS TO BAFFLE THE CAT

TECH

Peripheral makers love to trot out the next big thing, and lately, they've been leading their controllers out of the corral sans reins. Now, all three consoles have wireless controllers that work well (through walls, even) and cost about the same amount as traditional high-end controllers. We fearlessly leaned back on our couch with a slew of these cordless wonders, impressed by their long battery life (average: 50 hours with rumble, 100 hours without), steady connections, and multiple channels that avoid cordless phone interference.

### PS2 PASSTHROUGH

Pelican's WaveStation with receiver and dock lets you move your standard PS2 controllers back 50 feet, but batteries aren't included. Saitek's WOW version comes with four rechargeable batteries. (It also has a second battery cartridge, so you can charge one up while gaming with the other.)

Logitech's Cordless Controller offers just a 20-foot range, but has dual-vibration feedback in a large, sturdy, comfortable frame.

### GAMECUBE CORDLESS

Nintendo's the only console maker to join the wireless soiree, and its excellent WaveBird controller feels just like a normal GameCube pad—without the rumbling. Pelican's G3 Wireless adds that effect, for the same price as the WaveBird.

### XBOX XTENSION

MadCatz' Lynx controller and Pelican's Eclipse both fit snugly in your hand. The Lynx is the better-performing (and more expensive) option. Expansion devices can be inserted into the base stations of either, although this proved troublesome for the Xbox Live headset.

Severing your digital umbilical cord definitely makes your long-range gaming more enjoyable—but hardcore gamers will need to stock up on copperspots.

### COMPANY INFO

(1) SAITEK  
WOW FOR PS2  
\$39.95  
800.452.4377  
www.saitek.com

(NOT SHOWN)  
LOGITECH  
CORDLESS  
CONTROLLER FOR  
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888.863.8312  
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(2) MADCATZ  
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www.madcatz.com

(3) NINTENDO  
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www.nintendo.com

(4) PELICAN  
WAVESTATION FOR PS2  
\$39.99  
[5] G3 Wireless for GameCube  
\$34.99  
[6] Eclipse for Xbox  
\$39.99  
323.234.9911  
www.pelicanacc.com



## [BLIPS]

### Where's Half-Life?

Animal Xing expansion due next year  
Miyamoto revealed plans for a sequel to *Animal Crossing*. Nintendo's highly original, um, animal game. Details are sketchy at this point, but you can be sure the game will see release in Japan first.

### GameCube GBA Player

If you're in Japan next March with 5,000 yen burning a hole in your Toughskins, you might want to pick up one of these babies, which allows you to play GBA games on your GC (duh).

### PS2 Rose Bowl

Proving it must have more money than God, Sony announced it will officially sponsor the 2003 Rose Bowl. Washington State will play Oklahoma on January 1.

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

22

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CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE



PlayStation



GameNOW

# GAMEPLANNER

JANUARY

01

Oklahoma plays Washington State at the Rose Bowl, with PlayStation 2 assuming sponsorship from AT&T.

02

Majesco's *Black and Bruised* for GameCube ships today.

03

J.R.R. Tolkien born today.

04

05

The invasion begins anew: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* action figures ship today.



06

07

M. Night Shyamalan's uneven alien-invasion thriller *Signs* ships today on DVD.



08

George Foreman born today.

09

10

11

12

13

*SimCity4* for PC ships today.

14



Xbox-clusive *Panzer Dragoon Orta* ships today, as does the GameCube update of *Resident Evil 3 Nemesis*.

15

Sony's online-compatible *My Street* ships today.

16

*DQA: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* ships, gawky teens swoon. Horror-maven John Carpenter born today.

17

Films *National Security* (Martin Lawrence, Steve Zahn) and *Kangaroo Jack* open. Expect lots of not-quite-hilarious hijinx.

18

19

Edgar Allan Poe born today.



20

21

*The Getaway* screams onto PS2, and not a moment too soon. *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* ships for PS2.

22

Bill Bixby, the original Bruce Banner, born today. Don't make him angry. You wouldn't like him when he's angry.

23

24

25

*Wing Commander Prophecy* ships today... on the GBA? Acclaim's *All-Star Baseball 2004* also ships today.

26

Super Bowl XXXVII kicks off at Qualcomm Stadium. Time to stop playing *Madden* online... but only for a couple hours.

27

28

Dante returns in *Devil May Cry 2* for PS2. *Skies of Arcadia Legends* ships for GameCube.

29



30

But seriously, Phil Collins born today.

31

Don Quixote documentary *Lost in La Mancha* opens today. Likely to be far better than *Final Destination 2*, which also opens today.

## KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



## FUTURE PERFECT

Having spoken to hundreds of game developers and critics about the 300-pound gorilla of a game system that is Microsoft's Xbox, I found there's one thing every single one of them agrees upon: Xbox Live is the f\*cking business.

Live was conceived more than three years ago, and a dedicated team of online-gaming gurus has been working to perfect it ever since. Microsoft has always excelled in technological expertise, and its preparation for creating the world's first truly broadband console gaming service has paid off in spades.

While *Mech Assault* is hardly the most inspired game ever to grace a DVD, it provides an experience unlike any we've had before. The entire process—logging onto Xbox Live; finding a game, or setting up your own; unleashing a flurry of heat-seeking missiles at your friend Klownez5000, and then reminding him with an accompanying flurry of insults how much it must have hurt—is absolutely seamless. No lag. No random disconnects. No typing, "How'd that grenade work out for ya, BIT---?" before being blasted misentense by someone with absolutely zero compassion for the fact that you're using a keyboard to insult him.

Someone should buy Bill Gates a beer. ☹️  
—Evan Shamoon, XBN

XB

PC

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PAGE 24



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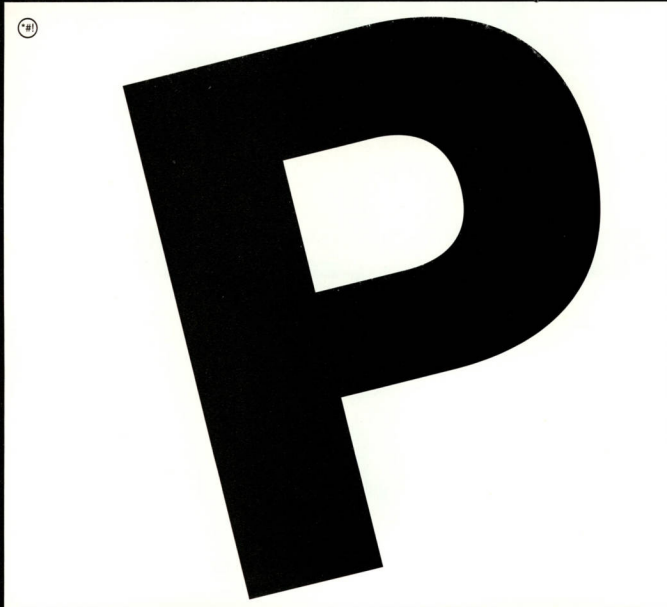
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A DISTANT RUMBLE...A  
RIPPLE ON THE SURFACE  
OF YOUR COFFEE...THE  
LOOK OF PANIC ON A  
CHILD'S FACE AS SHE  
SCRAMBLES FOR A  
FLASHLIGHT. IT CAN ONLY  
MEAN ONE THING: *GMR'S*  
GIANT PREVIEW FEATURE  
IS HERE...

Hundreds of new games will descend upon you in 2003, from every genre; a veritable swarm of them, from cool cell-shaded racers, to the multitudes of spiky-haired RPGs and games whose primary goal is to teach you how to shoot evil robots, just in case *The Terminator* movies turn out to be right about the future. *GMR* has painstakingly raked through the known universe of 2003 releases to bring you the most exciting games. Not just the titles with the biggest bucks behind them, or even the most well known (though there are certainly many of those here), but also those that, to quote *Fable's* producer, Simon Carter, make us feel as if we've been "injected with Christmas." You'll also find our report cards on each of the major publishers, judging their progress in 2002 and predicting how they'll fare in 2003. So dive in. Last year was big, but this year is going to be monster! **I→**

Photography: Sara Fleur Abou-El-Haj





# MONSTERS!

THE 50 MOST EXCITING GAMES OF 2003



I'm just one wild and crazy giant radioactive lizard!

# 50 TOMB RAIDER: ANGEL OF DARKNESS

RAIDING TOMBS CLIMBING STUFF IN ROOMS SHOOTING GOONS BETTER-LOOKING BOOBS

■ SYSTEM PS2 ■ PUBLISHER EIDOS ■ DEVELOPER CORE DESIGN ■ RELEASE Q1 2003

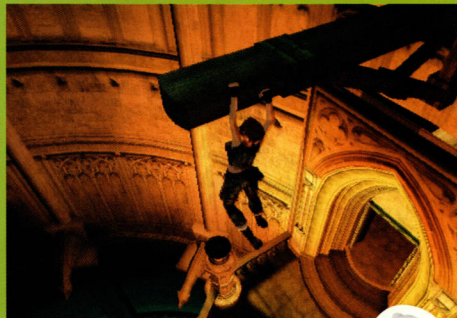
■ QUICK PITCH EVERYONE'S FAVORITE BLOOM ARCHEOLOGIST IS BACK WITH A NEW ATTITUDE GIRLFRIEND  
■ SOUNDS LIKE A DEAD HORSE BEING FLOGGED, "UH-MINY-THUD, THURACK, THURACK, THURACK."

➔ That's right—Lara's back, after seemingly meeting an untimely end in the last installment of the series. But this time, expect more than just graphical updates. [Yes,

her naughty bits and everything else will look more realistic, but that's not why you play the game is it? Is it?]

This time around, Core is promising a greater departure for the story line, with a much darker focus and a second playable character—some dude, like we're interested in looking at his butt all day. Yeah, it's pretty much the same old Lara, so why are we excited about it? Because we really liked the first two games, and still believe this franchise has some potential in it. This just might be the game to reach it. ◀

So exciting it makes: us want to shoot botox into our sagging rumps.



## 49 BREED

■ SYSTEM PC ■ PUBLISHER N/A ■ DEVELOPER BRAT DESIGNS ■ CHALLENGE Q1 2003

□ QUICK PITCH LIKE STARSHIP TROOPERS ONLY IN SPACE OH WAIT.  
□ SOUNDS LIKE F\*LL HELL BREAKING LOOSE.

➔ A charismatic guerrilla-force leader, nasty aliens that have invaded Earth, and a ragtag crew of space marines provide the backdrop for Brat Design's much-anticipated *Breed*. The game picks up the *Starship Troopers* assault rifle where *Halo* left off, runs down the beach shouting "Ban'zai!", and lobbs a grenade right in your face, if the screenshots Brat sent us are representative.

Among the game's most exciting features is the open level design, which provides for you running about on the ground, ventilating aliens, and then seamlessly hopping into a dropship and flying up into space to ventilate alien spacecraft—all courtesy of Brat's proprietary "Mercury" graphics engine.

"If I had to categorize it, I'd say it was a cross between *Operation Flashpoint*, for the open levels, and *Tribes 2*, for the

use of vehicles," says *Breed* producer Spencer Low. "It's been compared to *Halo*, but *Halo* only had a few outside levels, whereas *Breed*'s levels are all outside, and some are as big as 256 miles across!"

The graphics are so promising that Nvidia, maker of the famed GeForce graphics cards (and, by the way, the Xbox graphics chips), has included Brat Design in its elite bunch of new-technology testers (see FRONT, page 20)—a group that counts id Software's genius programmer John Carmack among its hallowed, computer-wank members. ◀

So exciting it makes: us want to watch a Paul Verhoeven movie...oh, wait, nothing's that exciting.

GMR PREDICTS...

### 2002



**ACCLAIM**

### ACCLAIM

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** Aggressive Inline, BMX XXX, Dave Mirra BMX, Headhunter, Shadow Man, Turck
- **LAST YEAR** Released Aggressive Inline to critical acclaim; sparked controversy and then took a drubbing with the sciency ctd BMX XXX. Turck Evolution surely signals the extinction of the franchise.
- **THIS YEAR** The All-Star Baseball series should continue to look and play great, while Vexx's edgy visual style and classic platform action could be just the thing for working some mascot magic.

### 2003



# 48 WARHAMMER ONLINE

SYSTEM: PC PUBLISHER: GAMES WORKSHOP DEVELOPER: CLIXMAX RELEASE: Q1 2003

QUICK PITCH: EVERQUEST MEETS ITSELF!  
SOUNDS LIKE: FURTHMAGE, CLACK, RUMTUMGE, HEY WHO STOLE MY TWENTY-SIDED DIECP

➔ There was a time when young men huddled over tabletops, painstakingly brushing away with tiny paintbrushes at miniature Hobbit trousers or Orc satchels or other such utter nonsense, before lining them all up and rolling dice to see which ones lived and which "died." This was sad and regrettable, but it spawned a world to rival anything Tolkien ever imagined, even after a particularly long drag on his famous pipe. That world was *Warhammer*, and it made the UK-based Games Workshop the king of tabletop wargaming and, by extension, girlfriend-deflecting.

After a number of forays into the videogame world, Games Workshop is back with a massively

multiplayer online RPG: *Warhammer Online*. And it looks stunning. Players get to romp about the ultra-realistic and, frankly, enormous world (it would take you 18 hours in real-time to walk across the Reikland in which the game is set) as humans, Dwarves, Ogres, or halflings. The game also boasts an open-ended career system that builds your character's skills in accordance with what they do and who they hang with.

The game has been receiving huge buzz in the UK, but will face stiff competition here from the likes of *EverQuest* and *FF11*. Let the, er, dwarf-tossing begin! 🗡️

So exciting it makes: us grow beards.



# 46 P.N.03

SOUNDS LIKE: A GLASS OF MILK POURED INTO A HOT-CHICK BOTTLE

DEV: GIG SYSTEMS INC. DEV PRODUCTION STUDIO 4  
PUB: CAPCOM REL: Q2 2003

QUICK PITCH: DEVIL MAY CRY MEETS GUMBAKRYARE MEETS HOTNESS

➔ *Resident Evil/Devil May Cry* mastermind Shinji Mikami has been awfully busy lately. While his fingers are in multiple pies (several new Capcom games for GameCUBE), he's up to the elbow in his newest computer-generated confection: *P.N.03*, which stands for Product Number 03.

The protagonist in this slick looking action game is Vanessa Z. Schneider, a mercenary hired to help suppress a naughty Computer Arms Management System (CAMS) that's turned a colonial settlement into a graveyard. Vanessa has motivation, too—CAMS killed her family and she slings around a fancy "ultra-destructive laser gun," doling out super-charged punishment to the array of transforming mechs and artillery cannons that block her path. Why does this make us whistle a happy tune? If you've played *Devil May Cry*, you know what Mikami is capable of. 🗡️

So exciting it makes: us technophobic.



## ASK GOJIRA!

MEETS ANSWERS TO MONSTER QUESTIONS

"Grrraaghhhh! Grrrr... Okay, what's your problem?"

Q: What happened to *Metal Gear Solid 3*?

A: Ragh! KCEJ is hard at work on the game right now. While series creator Hideo Kojima has mentioned that he will not direct the next installment, it's unlikely that he (or Konami) would let the franchise fall into ill repute. One thing is for sure: the game will not star the willowy Raiden. Gojira eat Raiden for breakfast.

# 47 SILENT HILL 3

YOU'LL NEVER LOOK AT KIELBASA THE SAME WAY AGAIN.

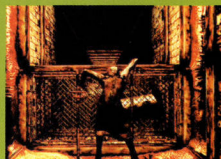
SYSTEM: PS2 PUBLISHER: KONAMI DEVELOPER: KONAMI RELEASE: Q1 2003

QUICK PITCH: VISIT THE HILL, OCEAN AGAIN.  
SOUNDS LIKE: A WET DOG ON A HOT SUMMER DAY.

➔ The small town of Silent Hill has never been the most welcoming place. In fact, Silent Hill has always been pretty crappy. It might have something to do with the fact that it's always covered in thick fog.

That, and being assaulted at the local high school by a walking sack of meat, is off the charts on the uncool-meter. Less *Friday the 13th* and more *Hellraiser*, *Silent Hill 3* marks the debut of Heather, the series' first real female lead character. According to Konami, the graphics are "further enhanced with flesh texturing integrated into the environments." So now, we can look forward to skin-covered walls in the "sure-to-be-a-hit-with-the-kids" Amusement Park level. Although Heather will make use of the classic weapons, chunks won't really start to fly until she gets the new sub-machine gun. And it really is all about chunks, isn't it? 🗡️

So exciting it makes: us go veggie for a year.



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



ACTIVISION

ACTIVISION

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? *Blade 2*, *Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX 2*, *Spider-Man*, *Tony Hawk 4*, *Wreckless*
- LAST YEAR: Stood its ground with the fourth *Tony Hawk* title and took gamers on the ultimate thrill ride with *Spider-Man*. *Wreckless* looked ravishing, but what we really liked was the *Activision Anthology*.
- THIS YEAR: The *Tony Hawk* franchise continues to impress, but Activision needs to expand its portfolio of quality titles in order to stay competitive. After all, new *Spider-Man* movies will only come out every so often.

2003



FR

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

31



## 45 VIEWTIFUL JOE

SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING A LITTLE BIT SUSPECT. BUT, HEY, WE'LL GO WITH IT.

■ SYS: GC ■ DEV: PRODUCTION STUDIO 4  
■ PBL: CAPCOM ■ REL: SPRING 2003

QUICK PITCH 2D SIDE-SCROLLING BRAWLER GETS BEAT UP BY GRAFFITI. POW!ER RANGERS. NELUS AT IT!

➔ *Viewtiful Joe's* director, Hideki Kamiya, tells us, "A superhero must not only be brave and strong, but he must fight his foe with beautiful style. In *Viewtiful Joe*, you must fight beautifully. No, wait. I should say, when you fight, your moves naturally become beautiful! This game will give you a taste of what it's like to be a true superhero." And here we thought a pair of Aquaman Underos and the ability to make a good "shwooshi!" sound was all that was needed.

With the game's unholy marriage of *Power Ranger* rental design, hand-drawn 2D urban backgrounds, and side-scrolling *Final Fight*-esque brawling, we haven't wanted to button-mash this much in a long time. Featuring a unique zoom-in feature, the camera, er, zooms in on *Viewtiful Joe* as he lands a particularly beautiful punch to the chin of an equally beautiful enemy. Originally called *Red Hot Man* before the mind-altering switch to *Viewtiful Joe*, we've got the hots for Capcom's old-school flava. ☞

So exciting it makes: us want to punch our friends.



## 44 DOT HACK

■ SYSTEM: PS2 ■ PUBLISHER: BANDAI ■ DEVELOPER: CYBER CONNECT ■ RELEASE: Q1 2003

■ QUICK PITCH A PS2 YOU CAN PLAY WITH PRETEND FRIENDS  
■ SOUNDS LIKE AN MMORPG, WITHOUT THE MM OR THE D.

➔ Bandai's high-concept, low-maintenance, multipart RPG takes the MMORPG to new heights by removing the massively multiplayer part, as well as the online element. What does this leave you with? Lower monthly Internet fees, for one thing.

But if that's not enough to entice you, how about the chance to play as an invisible gamer who controls his online alias, Kite, in an in-game MMORPG called *The World*? Kite finds himself embroiled in a digital conspiracy when his friend, Orca, buys the farm. *.hack* the game (actual title: *.hack//INFECTION*) comes with a bonus DVD containing a 30-minute anime episode to enhance the story. So how does *.hack* actually play? With dozens of non-player characters to interact with in *The World*, it feels a lot like *Phantasy Star Online*, minus the need for a keyboard and broadband adapter...and, er, other people. ☞

So exciting it makes: us want to try this exciting game called "life."



## 43 RAINBOW SIX 3: RAVEN SHIELD

A SILENT BUT DEADLY FROM SPY-MASTER TOM CLANCY

■ SYSTEM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT ■ DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT MONTREAL ■ RELEASE: Q1 2003

■ QUICK PITCH HARDCORE TACTICAL SIMULATION FOR THE TROOPS, AND GUNCLARUS  
■ SOUNDS LIKE NOTHING (YOU NEVER HEAR THEM COUGH).

➔ When the original *Rainbow Six* hit PCs back in 1998, it spawned a whole new genre of first-person-shooters: the tactical simulator. While gamers have been hooked on the real-world counter-terrorist simulation those games have provided, many have been put off by the high learning curve and attention to detail—not to mention the dated graphics.

*Raven Shield* aims to fix that with a more accessible interface and streamlined mission planning. And, thanks to the latest *Unreal 2* graphics technology (check out the shadowing), it looks a lot more real, too. But anything that makes wetting terrorists easier and more fun is aces in our book. ☞

So exciting it makes us want to go and spend 10 years in SEAL training.

[...anything that makes wasting terrorists easier is aces in our book]



GMR PREDICTS...

### 2002



### CAPCOM

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? *Devil May Cry*, *Maximo*, *Mega Man*, *Onimusha*, *Resident Evil*, *Street Fighter*
- LAST YEAR: A pair of *Resident Evil* for GameCubes made our Jaws drop. *Maximo* was a delightful retro-romp, and *Street Battalion*, with its novelty-sized controller, redifined gaming excess.
- THIS YEAR: *Devil May Cry 2* and *PN03* look to steal action-fans' hearts, while the *Resident Evil* series should continue to be survival-horror fans' No. 1 choice for meat and potatoes.

### 2003



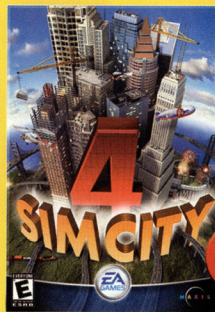


# HOT NEW RELEASES!



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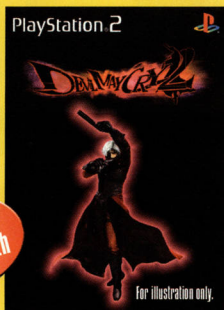
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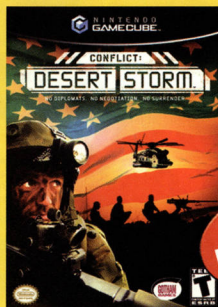
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# THEY'RE MONSTROSITIES!

## 5 OF THE LEAST EXCITING PROSPECTS OF 2003

➔ It's not all rash excitement and bated breath around the *GMR* offices. There are some things we're not exactly looking forward to in 2003, like that long overdue dentist visit, the beginning of the curling season, or that new Christina Aguilera box set of rarities and b-sides. But this here list is about gaming, so here are some of the games and trends that we're not looking forward to this wonderful industry of ours secreting onto the kitchen floor in the upcoming year. Better put some newspaper down, 'cause the puppy looks sick. 🐶

05



### Another Tony Hawk

If *Activision* wants to keep cranking out the same game every year and run this franchise straight into the ground like a wingless pigeon, they can. And they'll still make a zillion bucks doing it. *Tony Hawk 4* seems like a step in the right direction, with a fresh approach to the game's entire structure. All we're asking for is a year off to let that sink in and give the developers time to think up something new and fresh for next time around. Don't worry, your fanbase won't outgrow you. Heck, your eponymous cover boy is what, like, 82 now or something?

03



### WWII games

Yes, *Saving Private Ryan* was an impressive and gritty reminder of what our grandparents' generation sacrificed for freedom. Yes, the *Medal of Honor* games have elevated the esteem of videogames by presenting an equally impressive depiction of The Great War. And yes, there are many fine WWII-themed games like *Combat Mission 2* coming out in the next year that probably shouldn't be dismissed. But seriously, what's it going to take to get publishers to cool it with the *Axis & Allies* action, a *Hogan's Heroes* game? Don't put it past them.

04



### Tomb Raider Series

Wait a minute, how can we have one game be on both lists, as something we're both looking forward to and dreading? Because it's like this: Lara is like one of those girlfriends you have to break up with repeatedly. She keeps doing you wrong, and you keep taking her back, even though you know she'll just let you down again. We love that girl, and we hope this time we can make it work, but...

02



### The Matrix

Despite, or maybe because of, the incessant hype about Shiny's movie tie-in, we feel less than enthused. It's nothing against the *Matrix* movies, we're super pumped about the upcoming sequel. But one look at the crappy screens of *Enter The Matrix* that have been released so far and we're about as unroused as a construction worker at a Keanu Reeves film festival. For now, we'll take the blue pill, thank you very much.



So, what are you saying, that my breath's a little 'spicy'?

01



### GTA Clones

There's little debate that *GTA3* and its follow-up *Vice City* are two of the best things to happen to gaming since the advent of electricity, but publishers are showing their cluelessness in thinking they can cash in by doing cheap knock-offs that focus simply on driving around and randomly smashing crap. Someone tell the developers of the likes of *Driver 3*, *True Crime* and *Jacked*, that they just don't get it.



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



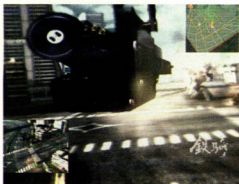
### ELECTRONIC ARTS

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Harry Potter*, *James Bond 007*, *Madden NFL Football*, *Medal of Honor*, *The Sims*
- **LAST YEAR.** Continued to dominate the traditional sports gaming field, successfully managed huge franchises and licenses, brought *The Two Towers* to the small screen in spectacular detail, and finally set *The Sims* loose online.
- **THIS YEAR.** *Madden* and *The Sims* are perennial best-sellers and will continue to be in '03. Having some of Hollywood's hottest licenses (*Potter*, *Bond*, *LDR*) doesn't dampen the outlook, either.

2003







## 39 STEEL BATTALION ONLINE

PUT THAT \$200 CONTROLLER AND THAT SPARRING ROOM IN YOUR HOUSE—TO GOOD USE.

XB360 PS2  
CAPCOM MICROSOFT

QUICK PITCH BATTLE BUILDING-SIZED ROBOTS ROCKET-FISTS SOLD SEPARATELY.

Remember that extravagantly expensive behemoth of a controller you justified to your parents/significant other/small animal friend a few months ago? Right. It cost more than the gross national product of certain third-world nations.

Well, now you will be able to experience the full potential of the controller with *Steel Battalion Online*, a game that features war-torn environments, highly customizable mechs, bucketloads of ammunition, solo- and squad-based excursions, clans, and voice-chat. To make *Steel Battalion* truly accessible to the masses, Capcom will have to design a control scheme that's playable on a normal Xbox controller, but crazier things have been done. **1C**

So exciting it makes: robots kill ninjas.

## ASK GOJIRA!

MONSTER ANSWERS TO MONSTER QUESTIONS



Grrraagh! Hrrr Grrrr...  
OK, what's your...

Q: I have this downy hair on my upper lip—what's happening to me?

A: Hmm...I don't want to alarm you, but in a few weeks it will have engulfed your upper body. Oh—and you might want to start thinking about girls a lot. I say "thinking" because that's as far as you're going to get for the next five years. Now go away, you angst-ridden little creep, before I throw up.

# 38 CAPCOM FIGHTING ALL-STARS!

SYSTEM PS2 PUBLISHER CAPCOM DEVELOPER CAPCOM RELEASE 02 2003

QUICK PITCH CAPCOM'S MOST FAMOUS FIGHTERS DO IT IN 3D.  
SOUNDS LIKE EVERYBODY'S KUNG FU FIGHTING.

Since the demise of Dreamcast, Capcom's focus has drifted—no, exploded in the direction of zombie-sims, samurai zombie-sims, and, zombie-dinosaurs-in-space sims (see *Dino Crisis 3*). Alongside its most-popular recent 2D fighters are making the trek to nearly every system (in one dumbed-down form or another), an original new browser has been a long time coming.

Fighting game lovers, you may finally wipe away those salty tears: *Capcom Fighting All-Stars* is on the not-so-distant horizon. The cast features a funky blend of Capcom characters (Strider, Ryu, Haggar) alongside new combatants D.D. and Ingrid. And, unlike the mediocre *Street Fighter EX* series (handled by an external development team, Arka, which was made up of former *Street Fighter II* staff), CFAS is being developed internally at Capcom. The name of the game is "drama," with a Dramatic Counter System that's basically a fancy way of saying, "We have a parry system similar to *Street Fighter III's*, thanks." The Dramatic Finish Moves—essentially genteel finishing moves like those in *Mortal Kombat*—should spice up the smack talk. **1C**

So exciting it makes: us dress up like Chuck Norris in *The Octagon*.



# 37 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

KUDOS!

SYSTEM XBOX PUBLISHER MICROSOFT DEVELOPER BIZARRE CREATIONS RELEASE 01 2003

QUICK PITCH ILLEGAL STREET RACING FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR LIVING ROOM.  
SOUNDS LIKE THE BEEFY GRUULF OF A SUPERCHARGED JEWELL WHO KNOWS WHAT? THEY WON'T LET US SEE THE CAR LIST (FERRARI ENDO?—ED)

Racing games may seem like a dime-a-dozen to people who don't know the difference between a Maranello and a Caramello (one is a mouth-watering piece of sugary-sweet heaven, and the other is a candy bar) or to those who think Porsche Carrera is an Italian porn star.

But if you're the type who pores over power-curve charts or buys an exhaust kit for your Plymouth Neon, you probably went nuts for *Project Gotham Racing*, the street-racing game from Bizarre Creations (the people behind *Metropolis Street Racer*). In which case, you should go nuts for *Project Gotham Racing 2*. Why? New cities like Edinburgh and Hong Kong; new cars, including SUVs and classic speedsters; and support for online multiplayer with Xbox Live. **1C**

So exciting it makes: us want to do donuts in our wood-paneled AMC Pacer.



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



EMPIRE INTERACTIVE

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? Antz Xtreme Racing ENDGAME. Sheep. Total Immersion Racing.
- LAST YEAR: Failed to deliver the one-two punch: manga-based *Victorious Boxers* featured deceptively simple prizefighting engine, but shooter *ENDGAME* was immediately forgettable and *Antz* was several years too late.
- THIS YEAR: With nowhere to go but up, it looks as though this Empire will steadily expand. Many of us might be too young to remember '70's cop show *Starsky & Hutch*, but shooting and driving are always a good mix.

2003



# 36 TMNT

SOUNDS LIKE NINJAS COMING OUT OF THEIR HALF-SHELLS AND THEN KICKING THE SHIT OUT OF YOU.

SYS: PS2       DEV: KONAMI  
 PUB: KONAMI       REL: 02/2003

QUICK PITCH CGI MEETS GUYS IN SUITS, PIZZA AND SIGHT GIGS. THERE'S A NEW MOVIE ON THE WAY. TOO.

➔ Whether it's simple nostalgia that fuels us our memories of standing around the original arcade version of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1989) with three other people, furiously slapping away at the Attack button, we're, "like, totally psyched" for our pizza-eatin' pals to return to the scene later this year (possibly in movie form, too!). So, what's so red hot about *TMNT* now that, oh, only a decade or so has passed?

While we can't reveal the exact nature of the games (check back next month for exclusive details), we'll roll down a few givens for you: four-player multiplayer hotness (duh!), weapon-based action (yeah!), and next-generation graphics (sweet!). That basically says it all right there. ☞

So exciting it makes: us crawl inside our shells and play videogames all night.



# 35 FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

MOVE THE LITTLE FANTASY PEOPLE!

SYSTEM: GBA       PUBLISHER: SQUARE       DEVELOPER: SQUARE       RELEASE: 02/2003

QUICK PITCH: THE SEQUEL TO THE MOST POPULAR STRATEGY-RPG OF ALL TIME  
 SOUNDS LIKE: THE PITTER-PATTER OF TINY FEET.

➔ For years, strategy RPGs like *Ogre Battle* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* had been relegated to niche audiences that found pleasure in spending hours upon hours arranging tiny, superdeformed characters around a gridlike map. Square recruited key members of the *Tactics Ogre* team (Yasumi Matsuno in particular, who is now working on *Final Fantasy XIII*) to design a very *Tactics Ogre*-ish strategy RPG using the *Final Fantasy* license.

With *Final Fantasy Tactics*, the team introduced a broader audience to a unique, satisfying style of gameplay that puts a premium on gameplay over graphics. And now? The most popular strategy-RPG of all time is getting a sequel, courtesy of the original FFT team and the newly inducted members of *Quest*, the original *Tactics Ogre* developer that Square recently acquired. ☞

So exciting it makes: Anatoly Karvov sweat bins.



# 34 PROJECT BG&E

SYSTEM: PS2/GC/ Xbox       PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft       DEVELOPER: Ubi Soft       RELEASE: 04/2003

QUICK PITCH: MYSTERIOUS NEW LABOR OF LOVE FROM THE CREATOR OF RAYMAN.  
 ITS FRENCH: JUST LIKE ARTIEU: WE LOUVE ARTIEU.

➔ You're probably familiar with the work of Michel Ancel, whether you know it or not. Let's put it this way: If you've played any of the *Rayman* games, you are. He created *Rayman* and directed that series to critical acclaim with *Rayman 2*. Ancel isn't directly involved with the upcoming *Rayman 3*, but that doesn't mean



he's slacking. Instead, he's left the limless wonder in the hands of others while he works on his game, *Project Between Good and Evil*. While the name will probably change between

now and the game's late-2003 release, one thing won't change—just how good it looks. Living, breathing environments that are absolutely huge make the perfect playground for Jade, the main character, and her porcine companion to roam around on. Though she sets out to take a photographic journal of some rare life-forms, Jade soon ends up in the middle of a much greater plot involving corrupt government forces who want to put an end to her travels. Less *Super Mario* and more *City of Lost Children*, *Project BG&E* looks set to satisfy folks who want something a little different from their 3D action-platformers. ☞

So exciting it makes: limbs seem superfluous.

GMR PREDICTS...

2002  
ECCO



## INFOGRAMS

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? *DragonBall Z: Stunman*, *Superman: The Shadow of Apokolips*, *Unreal Tournament*
- LAST YEAR: *The Terminator* tanked, and the *Stunman* stumbled, but *Unreal Championship* proved to be just what the doctor ordered. Two *Superman* titles fared better than *Titus*, but they still don't do him justice.
- THIS YEAR: Sequels and licenses are big on the horizon. *Unreal 2* has an enormous legacy to live up to, and a third *Driver* title will lock horns with the *Grand Theft Auto* series. Regardless, *DragonBall Z* games should sell.

2003  
HOLD!

XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE  
37

# 33 FULL THROTTLE II

ITM A HOG FOR YOU BABY

SYSTEM: PC / XBOX/GP/PS2 PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS DEVELOPER: LUCASARTS RELEASE: Q3 2003

- QUICK PITCH A CLASSIC LUCASARTS ADVENTURE BROUGHT BACK FROM THE GRAVEYARD OF FUNNY AND ORIGINAL GAMES
- SOUNDS LIKE A DEEP, FARTY CHOPPER RUNNING OVER A CARTOON SCORPION ON A DESERT HIGHWAY.

➔ **Who'd a-thunk it? A long lost PC gaming classic gets a sequel when no one expects it—and just when adventure-game fans are ready to give up on the genre and start playing Japanese dating sims.**

*Full Throttle*, created by mad gaming genius Tim Schafer, was a hilarious story about bikers, corporate greed, and demolition derbies. Our badass hero and leader of the Polecats, Ben, is back, but this time, with a more polygonal outlook. Yes, graphics have improved just a bit since 1995, and while *Full Throttle II* will look much more advanced than its predecessor, it will maintain the cartoony look that helped make the first installment so charming. **IC**

**So exciting it makes:** us want to tear around on an electric scooter...



„Just when adventure-game fans are ready to give up on the genre completely...“

# 32 RESIDENT EVIL ONLINE

SYSTEM: PS2 DEVELOPER: CAPCOM DEVELOPER: CAPCOM RELEASE: FALL 2003

- QUICK PITCH FIGHT THE LIVING DEAD WITH FRIENDS!
- ZOMBIES TASTE LIKE: CHICKEN

➔ **Chances are you need very little introduction to the world of Resident Evil. Evil corporation performs naughty experiments. Zombies take over Raccoon City.**

It's as easily explained as that. As if the games haven't been successful enough, they made a movie out of it, and *RE* awareness is at an all-time high. What better time then to let gamers go online, selecting from eight different characters (Kevin, George, Yoko, Mark, and more!), and whip undead ass? Although parties are limited to groups of four, you encounter the other four at some point during your journeys. And for the antisocial types (you know who you are!), no one ever said you had to cooperate with the your allies. **IC**

**So exciting it makes:** us want to get our flu shots.



## ASK GOJIRA!

HOSTED BY: MACHETA BROTHERS

"Grrraaghhhh! Grrrr... OK, what's your problem?"



**Q: Will we see Star Fox Armada this year?**

A: Hmmm... I heard about *Star Fox Armada* while doing research on a vacation to Dinosaur Planet II (had to leave; something I ate). Expect a return to the space-faring *Star Fox* we all know and love. But Gojira heard from sources (Mecha-Gojira that the game is unlikely to be ready this year.

# 31 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP. I & II

SPRECKEN: ZIE DEUTSCH!

SYS: XBOX DEV: SONIC TEAM  
PLAT: SEGA REL: Q1 2003

QUICK PITCH THE SAME GREAT PSO TASTE, WITH FEWER CALORIES THAN BEFORE!

➔ **Sure, this game is already out on Dreamcast (as if that really matters) and GameCube (OK, that matters), but even if the Xbox version of PSO is no better (graphically or otherwise) than the others, it still has one ace up its sleeve: voice chat.**

Some of you might not care that much about talking to your fellow questers (you're antisocial, don't speak Japanese, think headsets look wonky, etc.), but voice chat eliminates the need for a keyboard. And isn't that what's most important? Xbox owners won't experience the broadband adapter shortage that plagued GameCube players (i.e., there weren't any!). With broadband support built into the Xbox, anyone with Xbox Live will be able to play *PSO*, hassle free. You'll still have to pay for a hunter's license, but we'll go ahead and assume you're OK with that. **IC**

**So exciting it makes:** us want to take French lessons. Du?!



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



KOEI

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Crimson Sea*, *Dynasty Warriors*, *Gitaroo Man*, *Kessen*, *Mystic Heroes*
- LAST YEAR.** *Kessen* moved up the mainstream. *Dynasty Warriors 3* gave us hand cramps, and *Gitaroo Man* made us smile. Can the company best known for its ancient Chinese secrets move into the big time?
- THIS YEAR.** Expect Koei to bring more of what it does best: a fourth *Dynasty Warriors 4*, *P.T.O. IV* (you sunk my battleship!), etc. We're not complaining, but we're hoping for more innovation and variety.

2003



# 30 F-ZERO

QUICK PITCH THE GRANDDADDY OF ALL HIGH-SPEED COMBAT RACING GAMES ERLUPTS ON GAMECUBE.

- SYSTEM GC
- PUBLISHER Nintendo
- DEVELOPER Nintendo
- RELEASE 01/2003

SOUNDS LIKE WH000000SHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

➔ Before there was a *WipEout*, a *Quantum Redshift*, or an *Extreme-G Racing*, there was *F-Zero*. The series, which started on SNES and made a brief but unspectacular appearance on N64, is heading to GameCube, this time with the development duties handled by *Super Monkey Ball* maestros, Amusement Vision.

Anyone who's played either of the *SMB* games will see how Amusement Vision is an inspired choice to code the new *F-Zero*. After all, *Monkey Racing* is as close to *F-Zero* as it gets: high-speed racing, weapon pick-ups, speed-burst patches, and (sometimes) tubular tracks. But *F-Zero* is much more than monkeys in hovership clothing. Besides being the symbolic yin to *Star Fox Armada's* yang (*Star Fox* is developed by Namco, a partner with Nintendo and Sega on the Tri-Force arcade board), *F-Zero* is a graphical showcase for the GameCube's power: Energy effects; heat shimmers; a cockpit view; enormous, detailed backgrounds (R.O.B. the Robot is seen in one level), and a full grid of competitors are just the tip of the iceberg. 🍌

So exciting it makes: we want to drive responsibly.



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



# 29 STAR OCEAN 3: 'TIL THE END OF TIME

■ SYSTEM PS2

- PUBLISHER ENIX
- DEVELOPER TRI-ACE
- RELEASE SEPTEMBER 2003
- QUICK PITCH 400 YEARS LATER, THINGS HAPPEN.
- SOUNDS LIKE ASTRONOMY AND ASTROLOGY ARE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT THINGS. BOB!

➔ The *Final Fantasy* series sure has made things hard on other RPGs, hasn't it? The *Star Ocean* series, which first appeared in the United States as *Star Ocean: The Second Story* (1999) on PlayStation, was well received by critics, but failed to make a dent on the sales charts.

Hopes are high for this third installment of the series, developed by Tri-Ace (*Valkyrie Profile*). In *SO3*, a character named Fate Linegod is traveling with his family to a protected planet in the Galaxy Federation when their destination is attacked by aliens. As Fate and his friend Sofia seek refuge at a nearby shelter, he discovers that his family has been lost. Yep, that's where you come in. 🍌

So exciting it makes: we want to figure out exactly Ursula Minor is



# 28 BREATH OF FIRE V: DRAGON QUARTER

■ SYSTEM PS2

- PUBLISHER CAPCOM
- DEVELOPER CAPCOM
- RELEASE 01/2003
- QUICK PITCH CAPCOM'S PREMIER RPG SERIES LEVELS UP!
- SMELLS LIKE A BAD CASE OF DRAGON-BREATH

➔ While Capcom's *Breath of Fire* series (in case you missed the first two parts, they're now available for GBA) has always been well regarded as solid, if unspectacular, it's never come close to capturing the imagination of the PlayStation nation the way *Final Fantasy VII* and its successors have.

"Why?" you might ask. We'll venture a guess that the strictly old-school graphics had

something to do with it. After all, while it's true that you can't judge a book by its cover, it can be tough to get people to investigate the book when the cover looks like used toilet tissue. It is with happiness, then, that we look upon the newest *BOF*—this one dubbed *Dragon Quarter*—with greedy eyes. Gone are the 2D sprites of yesteryear; in their place are the somewhat cel-shaded 3D graphics of today. Angelic series mascot, Nina, is back in

top form (even if her wings are a bit clipped) and looking better than ever. The new battle system, which actually encourages avoiding conflict when possible, is another fresh injection into an otherwise dependable series. 🍌

So exciting it makes: we say nice things to our friends.



2002



KONAMI

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? *Contra*, *Dance Dance Revolution*, *Metal Gear Solid*, *Silent Hill*, *Zone of the Enders*
- LAST YEAR: Successfully revived the *Contra* series (difficulty fully intact), shared *Solid Snake* and spooky *Silent Hill* with Xbox owners, and captivated the preteen set with *Vu-Gu-Di*: It's quite the monster itself.
- THIS YEAR: Even with no new *Metal Gear* announcements so far, this year is looking good. *Silent Hill 3* seems set to chill. *ZOE: The End Runner* is sure to thrill, and soccer fans are going wild for *Winning Eleven*. Goodooooo!

2003



XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE 39

## 27 COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS

SYSTEM: PC PUBLISHER: EA DEVELOPER: WESTWOOD STUDIOS RELEASE: Q1 2003

- QUICK PITCH: C&C GOES 3D. AND THEN SOME.
- SOUNDS LIKE: CLICK-CLICK.

➔ The *Command & Conquer* franchise simply refuses to die. Year after year, Westwood cranks out one 2D real-time strategy game (along with the occasional wretched first-person shooter) after another, and the public devours them one after the other like Krispy Kremes.

But it seems that *Generals* will be more than just another iteration cranked out to please the masses. For one, it's 3D—and beautifully rendered 3D, at that. The universe looks a little different this time, focusing more on real-world weaponry. It also features three unique but finely balanced sides for you to play, with different units and tech trees that should give gamers plenty of the great multiplayer RTS action they've come to expect from *Command & Conquer*. And nukes—don't forget the nukes. **I**◀



So exciting it makes: tanks trundle around in a sort of weird dance!

## 25 CS: CONDITION ZERO

SOUNDS LIKE: FIRE IN THE HOLE!

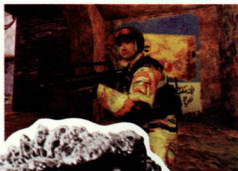
SYSTEM: PC PUBLISHER: Ritual Entertainment DEVELOPER: Vivendi Universal RELEASE: Q2 2003

- QUICK PITCH: MULTIPLAYER-ONLY ONLINE SHOOTER GOES OFFLINE AND SINGLE PLAYER.

➔ *Counter-Strike* is a freely distributed, tactical operations-themed mod for *Half-Life*—and it's become one of the most popular online games ever, with thousands of addicts playing online at any given time. *Half-Life* creator Valve Software has taken the continuing *Counter-Strike* development in-house and is working on a single-player version of the game. Countless delays and at least three third-party developers later, *Counter-Strike: Condition Zero* might actually see the light of day in 2003.

More than just CS with bots, *Condition Zero* contains a series of globe-trotting, terrorist-quashing missions that the player must complete with his trusty team of computer-controlled soldiers. *Condition Zero* also adds new real-world weapons like the Israeli Galil and LAW rocket launchers, and it polishes up the dated-yet-solid graphics engine. **I**◀

So exciting it makes: us want to jump out of choppers and run around the place.



## 26 GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE

THANK GOD FOR THE GAME BOY PLAYER!

SYSTEM: GBA PUBLISHER: NINTENDO DEVELOPER: CAMELOT RELEASE: Q1 2003

- QUICK PITCH: ONE OF THE BEST HANDHELD RPGS EVER KICKS OUT A SEQUEL.
- SOUNDS LIKE: A SNES GAME FROM 1992.

➔ The original *Golden Sun* game for GBA was initially intended for N64. Call it divine intervention that instead it ended up squished down to a cartridge half the size of a Triscuit, giving gamers megafresh RPG action on the go.

*Golden Sun*, to be precise, is not just one of the best handheld RPGs around—it's one of the best RPGs, period. Hurrah, then, that *The Last Age* picks up right where the first game left off: Isaac, Gareth, and Mia return to help stop the elemental lighthouses from being lit. Does this mean folks who missed out on the first game will be absolutely lost if they jump right into *The Last Age*? Probably not, but playing the first one wouldn't hurt, either. That way, you'll know the ins and outs of equipping the right djinns (elemental helpers) with the proper characters. Chock-full of secrets and special events, *The Last Age* will keep legions of role-players busy on bus rides to school or work for months to come. **I**◀

So exciting it makes: elves bearable.



### GMR PREDICTS...

## 2002



## LUCASARTS

- ▶ **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Drim Fandango, Monkey Island, Rogue Leader, Jedi Knight 2, Jedi Starfighter*
- ▶ **LAST YEAR,** *Rogue Leader* sold more than a few GameCubes, while the *Star Wars* license kept the clones coming with *Star Wars Bounty Hunter, Jedi Knight II, Jedi Outcast,* and *Starfighter* debuting on multiple platforms.
- ▶ **THIS YEAR,** LucasArts returns to original content, including *RTM Red Rock, Gladius*, a new *Indiana Jones* title, and the sequel to *Full Throttle*. Wookiee wannabes can still get their fix with *Star Wars Galaxies* and *MDOR*.

## 2003







## 24 VF4 EVOLUTION

FEELS LIKE A SWIFT KICK TO THE TEETH.

■ SYS: PS2      ■ DEV: AM2  
■ PUB: SEGA      ■ REL: 01/2003

QUICK PITCH: THE BEST FIGHTING GAME EVER MADE GETS EVEN BETTER.

➔ Take the best weaponless fighting game of all time and improve the graphics, shorten the load times, add two new characters designed to out-Tekken Tekken, and throw in even more insanely addictive single-player modes. What do you get? *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution*.

The multiplayer brawling is as good as it gets, and the single-player is excellent, too. Why? Kumité mode. Designed to simulate the rigors of playing actual VF4 experts in the rigors of arcade, Kumité mode rewards players with accessories and items they can wear in battle to display their skill level. So, the most outlandishly adorned players are clearly the most accomplished. *Evolution's* new guys, Goh and Brad, are biased toward slower, more brutal pit fighting than the graceful martial artists of the original VF4, which makes them the perfect choice for gamers who prefer Tekken. **1**◀

So exciting it makes: you kick something. Hard.

### ASK GOJIRA!

MONSTER ANSWERS TO MONSTER QUESTIONS

“Grrraagghhh! Grrrr... OK, what's your problem?”

Q: What's Miyamoto working on next?

A: The unflappable Nintendo frontman acknowledged that *Mario Sunshine* didn't live up to the legendary status of its predecessors. The solution? *Mario 128!*



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



## 23 TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE

IT'S A MOUTHFUL.

■ SYSTEM: XBOX    ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT    ■ DEVELOPER: LEVEL 5    ■ RELEASE: 02/2003

■ QUICK PITCH: LIKE A MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER PHANTASY STAR ONLINE, BUT WITH A CARTOON, CEL-SHADED LOOK.

■ SOUNDS LIKE: SHHHHHRRINGGGG FEEL THE POWER OF MY MIGHTY WEAPON! HELL-BERST! OH, HIND! I HAVE TO GO. THE SOPRANOS IS ON.

➔ Key for Microsoft in the emerging battle for your online console dollars is the massively multiplayer RPG, already popular on PC. Which is why PS2 *Dark Cloud* creator Level 5 is working on *True Fantasy Online*—a game that will go toe-to-toe with Sony's *EverQuest* and could help revive Xbox in the crucial Japanese market, where its lack of anything even vaguely resembling an original RPG is blamed for only three Xbox's being sold since launch, specifically to Mr. Minagi of Shinjuku district, Mr. Aizawa of Naka-Meguro, and one Mr. Takuda (who was surprised to learn from us that his "new kind of car battery" was, in fact, a videogame console).

Making it in the West, however, is Microsoft's chief concern, and Level 5 will no doubt be including plenty of cross-over potential.

The game takes place in a world stuffed as full as a full Bag of Holding, with broomstick-riding wizards and



Knights mopping up the encroaching denizens of evil. All the characters are fully customizable, and the Xbox Live voice-chat will make this cel-shaded wonder a much more immediate and engrossing experience than even

current online RPG champ, *Phantasy Star Online*. **1**◀

So exciting it makes: us want to wear little pointy hats. [Speak for yourself—Ed.]

## 22 Z.O.E.: THE 2ND RUNNER

■ SYSTEM: PS2    ■ PUBLISHER: KONAMI    ■ DEVELOPER: KONAMI    ■ RELEASE: 01/2003

■ QUICK PITCH: THE FASTEST MECH-FIGHTER AROUND.

■ SOUNDS LIKE: CLANG! SHING! PZZZZ!

➔ When last we checked in with *Zone of the Enders*, much bathos and melodrama was getting in the way of all the mech-fightin' action—and that wasn't a good thing.

The bright spots in the first game were excellent, responsive controls, a fantastic camera system that kept all the action in plain sight, and superb mech designs, courtesy of *Metal Gear Solid's* Character Designer, Yoji Shinkawa. The downside was patchy voice acting, a crap ending that required little in the way of the gamer's participation, and dubious mech "cockpits." *The 2nd Runner* aims to fix all that with a beautiful new graphics engine that allows for hundreds of onscreen enemies and cool, semi-cel-shaded mechs and environments. Said environments are highly destructible, and the debris can be used as a shield or weapon (like *War of the Monsters*). We expect nothing short of greatness. **1**◀

So exciting it makes: us want to make aluminum-foil clothes.



### MAJESCO

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *BloodRayne*, *GTG Africa*, *GunMetal*, *Indion 3D*, *Totalled*
- **LAST YEAR**: Leather and the living dead meshed in *BloodRayne*, while *GunMetal* enabled us to live out our wildest giant robot fantasies (or at least, uh, some of them...). Both were original, but not ultimately compelling.
- **THIS YEAR**: Majesco pushes forward with all-new content, including *Black & Bruised*, featuring cel-shaded fistcutts for PS2 and GC. The futuristic PS2 racer *ASN (Aeronaeron Extreme)* sounds intriguing. Sort of.

2003



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

41



# 18 LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

THAT'S A MIGHTY BIG LEAF YOU HAVE THERE, SON.

SYSTEM: GC PUBLISHER: NINTENDO DEVELOPER: NINTENDO RELEASE: MARCH 2003

- QUICK PITCH: SAIL THE SEAS WITH YOUR FAVORITE ELF-BOY.
- SOUNDS LIKE: ZAPPAS' PAN FLUTE SIGH.

➔ If there's one thing you've learned since last year's debut of the new *Link/Zelda*, it's that people either love or hate the series' new cel-shaded style. Sure, the game still plays like *Ocarina of Time*, but it looks like a Disney cartoon—albeit a very, very stylish Disney cartoon.

In our opinion, once you've sat down with the game for five minutes, you won't notice either way. But for those of you riding the fence, trust us when we say the game rocks. While the familiar *Zelda* style of dungeon crawling, puzzle solving, and platform jumping remains intact, Nintendo has added high-seas sailing courtesy of the Chinese skiff known as the Red Lion King, which helps Link look for buried treasure on the churning ocean. The only real question is if gaming's increasingly sophisticated audience will identify with this young, green-clad cherub? **1C**

So exciting it makes: us want to be 10.



## ASK GOJIRA!

MONSTER ANSWERS TO MONSTER QUESTIONS

"Grrraagghhh! Grrrr... OK, what's your problem?"



Q: Is *Dragon Quest VIII* coming to the United States this year?  
A: Sadly, probably not. The game is definitely moving forward, especially in light of Square and Enix's partnership announcement (see *FRONT*, page 12). But developer Level Five has had its hands full with *Dark Cloud 2* and *True Fantasy Live*, and *Dragon Quest* games tend to be notoriously slow in the making....

## 16 NBA STREET VOL. 2

LOOKS LIKE: MOS DEF ON HOB'S DEF POETRY JAM, WEARING A DR. J. JERSEY.

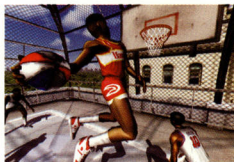
SYSTEM: PS2/Xbox/GameCube DEVELOPER: EA Canada PUBLISHER: EA Big RELEASE: March 2003

QUICK PITCH: OLD-SCHOOL BALLERS. NEW-SCHOOL GRAPHICS. AND TUNES TO HOOP TO.

➔ *NBA Street Vol. 2* makes the original look like a warm-up. Instead of pumping out a sequel on EA Sports' annual cycle, the company is putting 18 months of work into *Street 2*. But this isn't just a sequel; it's an entirely new experience. Instead of cranking through a load of *Street Legends* like *Stretch* and *Bonafide*, you'll now be going up against the greatest players ever to don NBA jerseys.

You can bomb threes with Larry Bird, swat wannabe dunksters with Wilt the Stilt, and kick-pass off the backboard from Magic to Earl the Pearl. This game is the definition of old-school. It features three versions of Michael Jordan from three different eras, plus a two-player Co-op mode, so you can play on the same team with a bud. **1C**

So exciting it makes: us want to empty our bank accounts for an old-school Pistol Pete Maravich jersey (priced around \$300 bucks!).



## 17 B.C.

SYSTEM: XBOX PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT DEVELOPER: INTREPID RELEASE: Q2 2003

- QUICK PITCH: JURASSIC SIMS
- SOUNDS LIKE: "YEAH, BUT IF THE PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN BREAKS, THE PIRATES DON'T EAT THE TOURISTS."

➔ Take control of a tribe of prehistoric folks making their way across the land to the safety of the mountains. *Prod T-Rexes* with sticks! Hunt in packs for food! Be hunted by packs as their food! Go bowling with boulders off the edge of cliffs, where the pins are 60-ton do-you-think-he-sauruses munching on wild grass! Run away from stuff with huge teeth! Compete with evil simians for resources! Set fire to monkeys! All the while taking care of the every need of your tribes members, from the newborns to the old folks ("Throw grampa to the T-Rex! His chewy, sinewy body will buy us time!").

The game is just one of several titles benefiting from *Black and White* creator, Peter Molyneux's Lionhead umbrella company, which takes care of the business in order to leave teams, such as

Intrepid, alone to concentrate on the important stuff: creating cool games. And *B.C.* is cool, all right.

We asked Intrepid boss, Joe Rider, to describe *B.C.* in 10 words or less, to which he says, "A violent and bloody prehistoric action-adventure with unprecedented depth," which safely qualifies it as one of the most exciting games of the year in our book. Rider's not kidding when he mentions *B.C.*'s unprecedented depth. The real-world physics and astounding detail (there are actual insects in the grass, if you care to look) conspire to create a world where if you can figure it out, then you can certainly do it—whatever it is.

"It is possible to chop a tree down" Rider enthuses, "break it into logs, set a log on fire, and roll the burning log into the middle of a flock of dodos and watch them run around and scream as

they burn to death!" Now *that's* entertainment! **1C**

So exciting it makes: us want to make a prehistoric movie using a blue screen and turtles with plastic bits stuck on.



## GMR PREDICTS...

### 2002



### MIDWAY

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? Dr. Muto, Gauntlet, Mortal Kombat, MLB Slugfest, NFL Blitz, NHL Hitz, Spy Hunter
- LAST YEAR: Did games returned...with varying degrees of success. *Mortal Kombat*, *Deadly Alliance*, *Spy Hunter*, and *Defender* did well, but not quite as memorably as the originals. *Blitz* and *Hitz* are still a blast, though.
- THIS YEAR: Last year was OK for this one-time arcade giant, and little indicates that this year will top it. *Franky Flyers*, *Crank*, *The Weasler*, and *Freestyle Metal X* lead the charge for 2003, but it doesn't look great....

### 2003



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

43

# 15 FINAL FANTASY X-2

A REALLY SUPERLONGS TIME AGO IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY

SYSTEM: PC/XBOX PUBLISHER: SQUARE DEVELOPER: SQUARE RELEASE: Q3 2003

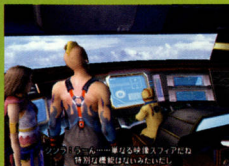
- QUICK PITCH: THE FIRST TRUE SEQUEL IN THE LONG HISTORY OF THE FINAL FANTASY SERIES.
- SOUNDS LIKE: A RANDORI BATTLE FANFARE.

➔ Although the *Final Fantasy* series is 10 games strong, with loads of FF-related side stories and adventures on various consoles, there has never been a direct sequel to any of the games. That's all about to change when *Final Fantasy X-2* debuts, the follow-up to the blockbuster *FFX*.

Everyone's favorite summoner, Yuna, is determined to find out what's happened to "hunky" blonde hero Tidus, who disappeared at the end of *X* (he's probably just in the bathroom, doing his hair). Not only has Yuna acquired a return role, but she's also inherited a pair of hot pants and a rather-revealing blouse. We think it's an idea whose time has come! Joining the scantily clad summoner are *FFX* alumnae Rikku and Lulu, with the possibility of other fan favorites making an appearance.

Besides the slew of new femme fatales that will join our heroines during the game, another surprise element is seeing Yuna wield twin pistols, John Woo-style! Is this behavior unbecoming of a summoner? You decide when the game ships this September. **1C**

**So exciting it makes:** us want to level-up our pet hamster, Hamtaro.



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

44



# 14 PSYCHONAUTS

SYSTEM: XBOX PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT DEVELOPER: DOUBLELINE RELEASE: Q2 2003

- QUICK PITCH: CERTIFIABLE (MADMAN) CREATES CERTIFIABLE (MAD) GATHE WHO KNEUP
- SOUNDS LIKE: THE CHITTER-CHATTERING VOICES IN OUR HEAD.

➔ We like weird (just look at our designer, Gerry). And *Psychonauts* designer Tim Schafer is definitely weird. What else would you expect from the freak behind such LucasArts adventure classics as *Full Throttle* and *Grim Fandango*.

But don't let *Psychonauts'* platforming roots fool you into thinking Tim's on his meds. The main character in *Psychonauts*, Raz, spends most of his time going into people's heads and rooting around their strangely cartoonish cerebellums. Sounds like a bit of a head trip to us. **1C**

**So exciting it makes:** us want to go clinically nuts. More so...



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



NAMCO

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? *Ace Combat*, *MotorGP*, *Pac-Man World*, *Ridge Racer*, *Soul Calibur*, *Tekken*, *Menasage*
- LAST YEAR: *Tekken 4* satiated our street-fighting needs, while *Ace Combat 04* provided high-flying, story-driven thrills. These and a second *Pac-Man World* proved solid, but *Dead to Rights* was ODA.
- THIS YEAR: Things are looking up; *MotorGP 3* will reflect Namco's arcade roots. *Menasage* should be spectacular, and *Soul Calibur 2*, the long-awaited sequel to one of the greatest fighters ever made, is coming to all consoles.

2003



## GET THE HOOKUP

### TOP 5 ONLINE TRENDS TO WATCH FOR IN 2003

Online gaming is clearly here to stay, and it's not just for PC heads anymore. Not online yet? For the love of Pete—get there! And check out these five fine reasons to keep paying for an Internet connection.

05



#### Downloadable Content

PC gamers have enjoyed this convenience for years; console gamers are just starting to enjoy it as an option. Get extra levels and maps, new missions, or player skins. Check out the downloadable *NIGHTS* GBA game, available on Sega's servers, and Ubi Soft's *Splinter Cell* holiday surprise.

04



#### Technology a-Go Go!

The single biggest advancement in online gaming has been—and will continue to be—the broadband proliferation. As more households are wired to fatter pipes (via DSL, cable, etc.), more people can play more complex games online, and with a whole lot less lag. And, since success often begets success, it's reasonable to predict that the better the online experience becomes, the more people will want to get hooked up—which means more frag-bait for you.

03



#### Massively Multiplayer Games

It's social interaction, minus the interactive part—and with the large number of communicable diseases (and actual live humans you might have to talk to) running wild in our world today, how could you not love that? MMORPGs are one of online gaming's hottest fads, on both PCs and consoles. Just look at *True Fantasy Live* (No. 22 on our hit parade) or *EverQuest: Online Adventures*

(see review, page 68). Watch for a variety of huge, new worlds to open their doors to gamers in 2003. A few notables:

**Planetside**—*Halo*-esque shooter pitting virtual armies of gamers against each other in real-time, 24-hour-a-day combat. From the makers of *EverQuest*.

**EVE Online**—Gorgeous outer space trading/pirating/freelancing corporation sim from Iceland.

**unannounced Marvel MMORPG**—Mum's the word, but we know Vivendi Universal snagged the license and promised more details later.

02



#### Explosion of Xbox Live (the good kind of explosion)

It seems that nearly every Xbox game-to-be promises some online component or another. We're not all that down with the fee-for-access part, but it's a small price to pay for *Steel Battalion Online*, *Halo 2*, and *Project Gotham Racing 2* bouts against friends around the world.

01



#### Counter-Strike on Xbox

Oh, yes. The all-time best online shooter (four out of five PC gamers agree) makes its way to Xbox. Can Xbox Live support what we're sure will be huge demand, as legions of gamers become hopelessly addicted to busting their buddies' asses with MP5s? You gotta believe....



## THE WRATH OF HEAVEN...

GMR PREDICTS...

2002



NINTENDO

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Metroid*, *Pikmin*, *Mario Sunshine*
- **LAST YEAR**, *Mario Sunshine* underperformed; *Metroid Prime* was great, but *GameCube* was well behind Xbox in sales.
- **THIS YEAR**, *Zelda* should be the masterpiece that *Sunshine* wasn't; *Mario 128* is on its way, but can they sell systems?

2003



PlayStation 2

# 13 FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

SOUND LIKE CASH REGISTERS RINGING UP LOTS OF BRACELETS, BEARS, AND LINK CRYLES.

■ SYSTEM: GC ■ PUBLISHER: CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER: CAPCOM ■ RELEASE: 04/2003

■ QUICK PITCH: CAPCOM EXHIBITS THE LATEST ENTRY IN THE SPOOKY SERIES, AND GRIPPERS PATCH (WITH ENTHUSIASM).  
■ HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF.

➔ Sporting the cute look that characterized the cast of 2000's *Final Fantasy IX*, *Crystal Chronicles* for GameCube (and Game Boy Advance) was announced last year with surprisingly little fanfare. Gamers in the know, though, recognize this title's existence as a homecoming of monumental significance: Despite the companies' rich collaborative history, there hasn't been a new *Final Fantasy* game on a Nintendo console since 1994's *Final Fantasy III* for the SNES. Now that Nintendo and Square have formed a brand-new development division called The Game Designer's Studio, you can expect *Crystal Chronicles* and more.

In a move designed to inspire cooperation between man, machine, and, er, machine, *Crystal Chronicles* will allow gamers to link a GBA to a Cube, and to use the GBA as a controller in this four-player game. Players can discreetly monitor their character stats on the GBA screen, although why exactly they'd want to isn't known.

Early movies suggest action-oriented gameplay and an earthier, less-fanciful aesthetic. Nonetheless, *Final Fantasy* fanatics can expect plenty of spell-slinging and swordplay, as well as the sort of epic scope that's helped shoot Square to the top of the role-playing genre. ▶◀

**So exciting it makes:** Sony green with envy.



# 12 RESIDENT EVIL 4

SURPRISE! THE FOOT OF ALL EVIL RESIDES SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

■ SYSTEM: GC ■ PUBLISHER: CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER: CAPCOM ■ RELEASE: 04/2003

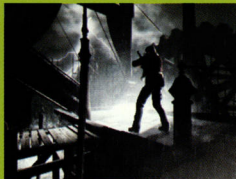
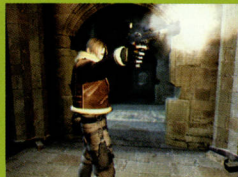
■ QUICK PITCH: CAPCOM EXHIBITS THE LATEST ENTRY IN THE SPOOKY SERIES, AND GRIPPERS PATCH (WITH ENTHUSIASM).  
■ HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF.

➔ Only recently announced, the fourth installment in Capcom's *Resident Evil* series has already shot to the top of many gamers' most-wanted lists, and with good reason: While the series has its share of quirks, its signature "helpless humans versus the undead" formula has been honed to an art.

Details are scarce right now, but early screenshots reveal that the game will star Leon S. Kennedy, the hapless rookie cop players guided through *Resident Evil 2*. Furthermore, Capcom has announced that the game will take players "deep into the very heart of Umbrella," so they can expect to learn even more about the highly mysterious and malevolent organization.

All the footage that's been demonstrated so far has been entirely rendered in real-time—in other words, this game looks incredible. But, graphically splendid remakes and prequels aside, the series could use a significant update. Capcom's being coy about this one so far, so expect nasty surprises at the end of the darkened tunnel—the good kind, of course. ▶◀

**So exciting it makes:** us want to watch Michael Jackson in the "Thriller" video. Then shoot him.



GMR PREDICTS...

## 2002



# SEGA

## SEGA

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** Jet Grind Radio, Rez, Shenmue, Sonic, Super Monkey Ball, Virtua Tennis, NFL2K3
- **LAST YEAR:** Poor Sega. Despite a solid sports lineup, the EA marketing machine has left the company smarting. Classy action titles *Gunvarknife*, *Shinobi*, and *Gungrave* won't likely go down as classics. *VF4* kicked hard.
- **THIS YEAR:** SEGA is known for doing one thing well: Just about everything. *Panzer Dragoon Orta*, *Skyes of Arcadia Legends*, *Aero Elite*, a new *Virtua-Oh* game, and the first U.S. appearance of the *Sakura Taisen* beckon.

## 2003



# 11 FINAL FANTASY XI

DROP THE ZERO AND GET WITH THE HERO

■ SYSTEM: PS2/PC ■ PUBLISHER: SQUARE/EA ■ DEVELOPER: SQUARE ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2003

■ QUICK PITCH: SHARE THE FANTASY WITH THOUSANDS OF YOUR BEST FRIENDS

■ BIG IN JAPAN SO FAR

➔ Taking a cue from massively-multiplayer successes *EverQuest* and *Ultima Online*, Square steps into new territory with *Final Fantasy XI*. Designed as an online-only RPG, this ambitious epic enables gamers from Asia, Europe, and the United States to live, laugh, play, and slay in the beautifully rendered world of Vana'diel. No longer limited to simply saving the world, players can interact with other players from around the globe, perform tasks for various NPCs (à la Nintendo's *Animal Crossing*), barter for items, and learn a wide array of abilities.

Players will need a broadband connection (cable modem or DSL) and a hard drive-equipped PS2. That's right—Square and Sony are betting that the series' millions of fans won't mind dropping the extra cash when the new hardware ships. Can a bundle be far off? How will Square reward those PC gamers who've helped pave the massively multiplayer road? A PC version is also on the way. **IC**

So exciting it makes: us want to call in sick, for a month.



# 10 UNREAL 2: THE AWAKENING

■ SYSTEM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMMES ■ DEVELOPER: EPIC ■ RELEASE: Q1 2003

■ QUICK PITCH: ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

■ SOUNDS LIKE: THE BLOOD-CURLING SCREAM OF A SKIPPED WARRIOR (SORT OF A "AAAAEEEEIIIGGGHHHHHHH.GURGLE."?—ED)

➔ In the world of first-person-shooter fanboys, there are two main camps: the Id-fanatics, who view *Doom 3* as only slightly less important than the Second Coming are on one side, and the CliffyB-disciples, who've made *Unreal* into a household name (households with souped-up gaming PCs, that is), on the other. But while no one knows how long we'll have to wait for *Doom 3*, *Unreal 2* is right around the corner, and it should deliver the kind of action-packed, single-player experience gamers have been thirsting for ever since *Half-Life*.

You play as an erstwhile space marine-turned-bounty-hunting mercenary, with your own ship and crew, including the easy-on-the-eyes Aida, and a ticket to adventure. The myriad worlds you'll travel to and aliens you'll encounter (and subsequently blow up) look amazing thanks to Epic's next-generation graphics engine. **IC**

So exciting it makes: us want to go right out and join the space marines.



...IS CLOSER  
THAN IT APPEARS.



Live by honor. Kill by stealth.

GMR PREDICTS...

2002

HOLD!

SONY



COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

SONY

- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? *Sly Cooper: Ratchet & Clank*
- LAST YEAR: All new action titles showed polish and pizzazz. SCEA's games had wide-audience appeal.
- THIS YEAR: Gamers can finally take *The Getaway* for a spin. *My Street*, *Primal*, and *Dark Cloud 2* are on their way.

2003

GO!

RATING PENDING

RP

Visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org) or call 1-800-771-3772 for Rating Information.

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# 9 STARCRRAFT: GHOST

GHOST REPORTING

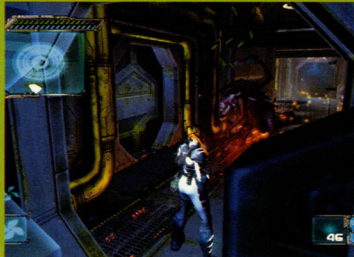
■ SYSTEM PS2/XBOX/GC ■ PUBLISHER BLIZZARD ■ DEVELOPER BLIZZARD/NIHILISTIC ■ RELEASE NOVEMBER 2003

- QUICK PITCH PC GAMES' MOST POPULAR SELF-PUBLISHING HITS HOME
- SOUNDS LIKE NOTHING IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SWEAT

➔ If you are even remotely familiar with the PC-gaming phenomenon known as *StarCraft*, you'd know that it's still played daily by tens of thousands of players (not bad for a 5-year-old game), and that it boasts a compelling plot that has spawned a number of novels.

While the gaming world prayed that Blizzard would one day spawn a sequel, no one was prepared for what followed. *StarCraft: Ghost* is an action-stealth game in the *Metal Gear Solid* and *Splinter Cell* mold that focuses on the exploits of Nova, a member of the Terran's crack-commando Ghost unit—a group of super-powered soldiers specializing in secrecy. Gamers will quickly learn that a stealth cloak is a handy item; it helps Nova sneak in and out of enemy bases (seeing the Zerg and Protoss move around in true 3D is a sight to behold) to execute her mission objectives. We're pretty sure nothing beats slipping into an enemy stronghold and calling in reinforcements. This winter you'll be able to find out for yourself. **LE**

**So exciting it makes:** being a hot, invisible chick seem like a viable career option.



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE 48

# 8 STAR WARS GALAXIES

■ CRYSTAL PC ■ DEVELOPER LUCASARTS ■ DEVELOPER LUCASARTS/SONY ■ RELEASE 02/2003

- QUICK PITCH MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE RPG AND STAR WARS: TWO GREAT TASTES THAT GO TOGETHER.
- SOUNDS LIKE "RRRRRLLUULLUUPRRRGGSHHHH" WHICH IS WOODKEE FOR "WARRIOR JOIN MY PARTY"

➔ How many lonely nerds do you think, after seeing *Star Wars* for the first time back in 1977, said to themselves, "If only I could live in that galaxy far, far away, maybe I too could score a hot chick like Princess Leia." *Star Wars Galaxies* makes no promises that a cinnamon-coiffed princess will fall in love with you, but it will let you live the life of an intergalactic rogue, rebel fighter pilot, cantina band member, or whatever else you've always dreamed of being.

Thanks to the makers of *EverQuest*, the people who practically invented massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPG from now on, OK?) as we know them today, gamers can live inside the *Star Wars* universe as one of eight different character species. Yes, Virginia, you can be a Wookiee—doing whatever makes your little Jedi heart content. **LE**

**So exciting it makes:** us want to wear our meticulously crafted stormtrooper costumes and sit in front of the PC.



Where does a giant lizard even get a Brazilian wax?



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



SQUARESOFT

SQUARE

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *The Bouncer, Einhander, Final Fantasy, Kingdom Hearts, Parasite Eve*
- **LAST YEAR:** Even though *Final Fantasy X* was a 2001 title, its 11th-hour release helped make it one of the biggest RPGs in 2002. Aside from *Kingdom Hearts*, things have been fairly quiet for Square.
- **THIS YEAR:** Should be a big one for Square, with the online-only *FFXI* and the Nintendo-exclusive *FF Crystal Chronicles* debuting this year, as well as the first-ever true *FF* sequel, *FFX-2*. More *Yuna*, more *pistols*!

2003





# 7 EVERQUEST 2

FACE IT, YOU'RE SINGLE AGAIN

■ SYSTEM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: SONY ONLINE ■ DEVELOPER: SONY ONLINE ENT. ■ RELEASE: Q1 2003

- QUICK PITCH: THE MOST ADDICTIVE ONLINE GAME EVER DROPPED AND LURKED (WHILE YOUR SOCIAL LIFE MOVES BACKWARDS PAST)
- SOUNDS LIKE: YOUR GIRLFRIEND WALKING OUT ON YOU

➔ They don't call it **EverCrack** for nothing. *EverQuest* is one of the most addictive games ever, and the game that really started it all when it comes to massively multiplayer online RPGs. It's been draining bank accounts, pastyfying skin, and breaking up marriages for nigh on four years now.

But even in the world of MMORPGs, where game content constantly changes and each gamer's experience depends on the other people playing along with them, it's time for something new. That, of course, is *EverQuest 2*, which not only significantly ups the level of graphical polish, but also adds new monsters, character classes, and miles and miles of new territory to explore. So strap on your gauntlets and go. **Ⓜ**

**So exciting it makes:** Tom want to wear chain-mail knickers. Seriously.



# 6 FABLE

■ SYSTEM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: BIG BLUE BOX/LIONHEAD ■ RELEASE: Q1 2003

- QUICK PITCH: GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES MEETS ZELDA (IN A DARK, RAINY NIGHT)
- SOUNDS LIKE: "AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER... UNTIL A BIG, HAIRY (MAN) LOPPED THEIR HEADS OFF AND STUCK THEM ON A SPIKE"

➔ In merry old England, where dentistry is considered witchcraft, a small developer under the wing of veteran **Lionhead** is creating a grim fairy tale RPG that seeks to do nothing less than **redefine the genre**.

"It's like being injected with Christmas," says Big Blue Box founder Simon Carter, before presumably disappearing up his own rear end. And we sort of see what you mean, Carter (embarrassed silence)... Oooh-kay...well, the fact is that *Fable*, formally known as the incomparable *Project Ego*, looks outstanding.

You get to wander about a fantastically realized world, choosing whether to do evil or good in the service of your fellow man, growing old in the process (in real time), and growing in infamy and wealth until you're the most revered hero in the land. Or a pitiful wretch. Or a cold villain who thinks nothing of lopping the heads off those who look at him funny. The aging process is especially cool. Your hero—whether he be fat or thin, big or small, as bald as a coot or hippy-haired—wears every incident and every battle on his face. As the seasons change, he becomes tanned or pale, and as he ages, wrinkles begin to creep across his skin.

The game sports an extensive magic system known as the Will (sounds like Skywalker talk to us), which Carter describes as "visceral and powerful," with the emphasis firmly on the visceral.

The only cloud on the horizon? No one really knows when this game will be ready, and Big Blue Box's parent, Lionhead, is legendary for taking ages to finish what it starts. Remember, Mr. Carter, we're aging in real time, too... **Ⓜ**

**So exciting it makes:** England seem fun.



## GMR PREDICTS...

2002



## TAKE 2/ROCKSTAR

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Grand Theft Auto: Max Payne*
- **LAST YEAR:** *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* pulled its predecessor from the top of the charts...finally.
- **THIS YEAR:** Muscling in on the holiday season for two years running, Rockstar Games is looking good for 2003.

2003



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Electronic Gaming Monthly  
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Computer Gaming World  
GameNOW and Xbox Nation





XB  
PC  
PS2  
ORA  
GC

PAGE  
50



## 5 DEUS EX 2

EPIC ROLE-PLAYING IN THE DARK FUTURE

■ SYSTEM: XBOX/PS2/PC ■ PUBLISHER: EIDOS ■ DEVELOPER: IRRON STORM/EIDOS ■ RELEASE: Q2 2003

■ QUICK PITCH: EUCLIP CORPORATIONS AND CYBERNETICS. AHHH!  
■ SOUNDS LIKE: WHARR, CLANK, WHARR, CLANK, SCANNING PAPER, INTRUDER DETECTED, ETC.

➔ Set 20 years after the events of 2001 bestseller *Deus Ex*, *DX2: The Invisible War* dims the lights of an already double-dark future another notch, as a rogue's gallery of corporations and religious factions vie for control of the new world order. What made the original *Deus Ex* so amazingly good was a terrific plot, believable characters, and outstanding first-person shooter action, all rolled up into a tasty *Blade Runner* world that was disturbingly real—a sort of giant egg roll of RPG

and action goodness.

Plot details are thin to nonexistent at this stage, but with genius game designer Warren Spector once again on the case, we can surely expect another epic battle between the forces of good and evil, as well as lots of robots to blow up in interesting new ways. Luddites of the world, unite! How? By, uh, snail mail, we guess. **1C**

So exciting, it makes: a bleak, post-apocalyptic future seem like a giggle.

GMR PREDICTS...

2002

HOLD!

**TDK**  
www.tdkgames.com

TDK

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Robotech: Battlery, Robotech: Macross Saga, Shrek, Masters of the Universe*
- **LAST YEAR:** While a series of *Shrek* games have failed to capture the movie's charm, the anime-inspired *Robotech: Battlery* was an impressive critical rebound for this console newcomer.
- **THIS YEAR:** TDK looks to be hedging its bets by snagging more licenses. *Mercedes-Benz World Racing* and *Aquaman: Battle for Atlantis* are due out for Xbox, and *Shrek: Super Party* is coming to GameCube. Oh great.

2003

HOLD!

# 4 XENOSAGA: EPISODE 1

□ **Platform:** PS2 □ **Publisher:** NAMCO □ **Developer:** MONOLITH SOFT □ **Release:** FEBRUARY 2003

□ **QUICK PITCH:** THE SERIES THAT STARTED WITH SQUARE RETURNS VIA NAMCO  
□ **SOUNDS LIKE:** THEY CAN'T HEAR YOU SCREAM!

➔ In 1998, Square released an RPG that didn't have the letter 'F' embedded in it: *Xenogears*. Sidestepping the genre's usual sword-and-sorcery themes for a sci-fi backdrop, the game explored, among other things, the existence of God. Disturbing to some, irresistible to others, *Xenogears* pushed the genre in bold, new directions. Oh, the character-piloted giant robots were cool, too.

Now that Monolith Soft (composed of the majority of Square's *Xenogears* team) has defected to Namco, *Xenosaga* (which is actually the prequel to *Gears*) is nearly upon us. Focusing on the exploits of main character Shion and her cybernetic soulmate Kos-mos, *Xenosaga* is a galaxy-spanning adventure (man only

lives in space at this time). The game's theme is to find the ultimate truth, and nearly 80 hours of gameplay await. Random battles are a thing of the past as any enemy seen onscreen can be avoided, and rather than experience points, players earn battle points, which are used to customize and upgrade characters' equipment and skills. With production values as polished as anything we've seen, *Xenosaga* is one RPG that's got the goods to clash with 2003's *Final Fantasy-heavy* surplus of games. 🍀

**So exciting it makes:** us want to see next month's cover feature!



I just want to be loved, is that so wrong?



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



TECMO

TECMO

■ **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** DOA3, *Monster Rancher*, *Rygar*

■ **LAST YEAR:** A gorgeous update of *Rygar* gave the good-old days a shiny new coat, while *Fatal Frame* did a fine job of creeping us out.

■ **THIS YEAR:** DOA: Xtreme Beach Volleyball is sure to have tongues lolling, *Ninja Gaiden* has us waiting with bated breath.

2003



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

51

# 3 SOUL CALIBUR II

IMPROVED FORMULA NOW FEATURES 50 PERCENT MORE SOUL-BURNING

□ SYSTEM PS2/XBOX/GC □ PUBLISHER NAMCO □ DEVELOPER NAMCO □ RELEASE MAY 2003

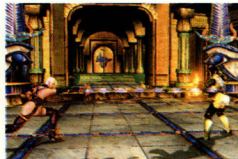
□ QUICK PITCH ONE OF THE BEST FIGHTERS EVER MADE RETURNS FOR ROUND TWO.  
□ SOUNDS LIKE MILLIONS OF GAMERS DROOLING IN UNISON.

➔ The flagship title in the early days of Sega's Dreamcast, *Soul Calibur* earned a legion of fans and plenty of accolades for its intuitive fighting engine and intriguing cast of characters, all rendered in dazzling detail. Namco's newest fighter promises much more of the same, and we couldn't be happier.

Not surprisingly, the story is simply a tool for pitting armed warriors against one another in vicious, spectacularly realized combat. Rumors of a cursed weapon capable of unspeakable carnage have spread from east to west, and several interested parties set out across the seas to track it down. Endless hours of

furious fighting will surely ensue. Newcomers Cassandra (the younger sister of golden-coifed Sophitia), Raphael, Talim, and Yunsung round out the otherwise familiar cast of characters, and fans will be happy to see returning fighters donning all-new duds. Larger arenas and a deeper fighting system are the major improvements this time around, but the song remains largely the same. So, dig up a Dreamcast (or head to the arcade) and sharpen your skills...we'll be waiting. ☞

So exciting it makes: other fighting games turn tail and sink away.



→ White *Soul Calibur 2* doesn't seem dramatically different from the original game (the visual upgrades are subtle), beneath the surface lies a greatly expanded fighting system that offers loads more depth. Taki, for example, has a wider array of distance-closing moves to help compensate for her limited range. The injection of new characters into the game has given the development team a chance to create a broader cast of fighters with familiar, but diversified, fighting styles. Still, getting cut is no fun.



GMR PREDICTS...

2002



UBI SOFT

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Batman Vengeance*, *Rayman Arena*, *Real Myst*; and all things Tom Clancy
- **LAST YEAR**, *Splinter Cell* brought some much-needed competition to the stealth-action genre and took our breath away in the process. *Batman Vengeance* looked great, but didn't fly, and *Rocky* was cooler than it seemed.
- **THIS YEAR**, Big licenses such as *C.S.I.* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* have the potential for wide-audience appeal, while *XIII*, *Murakumo: Mech Hunter*, *Myst Online*, and a third *Rayman* adventure should appear.

2003



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

52



Ladies and germs, please give a big hand for The Doom Dead-guy Barbershop Singers!... (Grrr, etc.)

## 2 DOOM 3

THE BEST-LOOKING REAL-TIME VIDEOGAME EVER IS COMING

■ SYSTEM PC/XBOX ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION ■ DEVELOPER ID SOFTWARE ■ RELEASE Q4 2003

■ QUICK PITCH MPD TECHNOLOGY THAT HAS THE WHOLE INDUSTRY TALKING  
 ■ SOUNDS LIKE HUGHHHHHHH-HUGHHHHHHH-LOH-CHUNK-CLICK-BOOM! SPLATT!

➔ It's the game everyone's talking about. Of course, anytime Id software announces it's working on something, it gets everyone talking, but that's because they've been one of the leaders in 3D-engine technology since the original *Wolfenstein 3D*. It's also because *Doom* is one of the all-time great games, and it's been more than five years since the release of *Doom II*.

But what's really got people talking is the amazing demo of the game shown at last year's E3. About five

minutes of live gameplay revealed some amazing graphics, especially the lighting effects, and some really cool level and monster design. But that's about it. We really don't know much more about what the game is going to play like. No matter. Keep showing us amazing screenshots and jaw-dropping videos and we'll keep salivating for more, more, more. **1c**

**So exciting it makes:** us want to hide under our bed. Those monsters are scary!

GMR PREDICTS...

2002



VIVENDI/UNIVERSAL

- **WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?** *Crash Bandicoot*, *Spyro*, *The Thing*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Mummy Returns*
- **LAST YEAR** *Crash* and a New Line license-free *LOTR* met with stiff competition and unspectacular results. *The Mummy* made an unwelcome return, and Bruce Lee was complete crap, but at least *The Thing* was all right.
- **THIS YEAR** Not much is known about Universal's 2003 lineup, but rest assured we'll be seeing more titles based on the literary works of J.R.R. Tolkien. We suspect the Bruce Lee license is as dead as he is.

2003



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

53



- XB
- PC
- PS2
- GBA
- PC

# 1 HALO 2



## THE SECOND COMING

□ SYSTEM: XBOX □ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT □ DEVELOPER: BUNGIE □ RELEASE: FALL 2003

□ QUICK PITCH: "LIKE HALO 1 BUT ON FIRE AND WRAPPED IN BRONZ" —BUNGIE STUDIO HEAD JASON JONES  
 □ SNIFFLES LIKE: NAPPALU IN THE MORNING

➔ "We don't want to make a different game," says Bungie Studios head honcho Jason Jones, summing up his team's attitude for *Halo 2*. "Why eliminate the reasons people played our first game?"

Good question. The original *Halo* must have done something right. After all, it's by far the best-selling Xbox game to date, a sci-fi first-person shooter that even those who hate sci-fi and FPSs bought Microsoft's system to play. Maybe most important, it remains one of very few games we still play regularly over a full year after its release.

But Jones' ain't-broke-don't-fix-it attitude begs a couple questions—just what are the reasons so many people played and loved the first *Halo*? And how does *Halo 2* improve upon those ideas?

## Reason #1: Beautiful Graphics

Sure, *Halo*'s sprawling outdoor vistas and surreal alien corridors still make us proud to own an Xbox, but take a look at the *Halo 2* teaser trailer (at xbox.com in case you missed it), and you can see the gigantic visual leap Bungie has in store for the sequel. The craziest part? The Master Chief in that trailer [where most of our pics here came from] uses fewer polygons than his *Halo* iteration did. Fewer. Applied on a larger scale, that means everything in *Halo 2* can look this much more detailed and this much more realistic without any kind of performance drain. The game can run just as smoothly, with at least as many soldiers fighting, vehicles flying, and explosions bursting all at once.

## Reason #2: Killer AI

During some of *Halo*'s most memorable moments, you actually weren't doing jack squat. Like when you sat back and watched your fellow marines storm a squad of aliens entrenched on the beach, *Private Ryan*-style, or those times you held back while the Flood and Covenant aliens duked it out among themselves. *Halo* made you feel like you were part of a team, fighting an

intelligent (but not unrealistically so) enemy force; *Halo 2* takes the same A.I. principles and runs with them. "[Marines will] really watch each other's back," says Technical Lead Chris Butcher, "and coordinate their actions for maximum effect. The [guy] with the assault rifle will start suppressive fire, while the two with shotguns charge across the beach and the guy with the rocket launcher watches the skies for Banshees." And don't worry about the bad guys; Design Lead Griesemer tells us they'll be smarter, too. "[Enemies] are going to understand how to move through the environment in not only effective ways—so they can find you—but also in ways that are cool-looking and make them more difficult to fight." Expect to see Covenant jumping over barriers, crawling under debris, and even climbing up objects.

## Reason #3: Awesome Multiplayer

*Halo*'s been out for more than a year, but you never really finish it—an assortment of incredible multiplayer maps and modes makes sure of that. There's always another game of Capture the Flag, one last Slayer Deathmatch, or a double-or-nothing Oddball contest for you and some friends to split-screen over.

But what if you each got your own screen? And you could play with 11 or more of your buddies instead of just three? And they could be anywhere in the country? And if you could heckle them, in realtime? *Halo 2* intends to answer all those questions with full Xbox Live online support. Even better, you'll be able to play as freedom-fighting space marines or blue-blooded Covenant aliens: your pick. "The thing we're excited about bringing to Xbox Live," says Jones, "is recreating *Halo*'s single-player experience—with all the weapons, vehicles, and explosions—among a bunch of players on the Internet." ☛

**So exciting it makes:** us weep. Well, almost. OK, maybe just a little.

## (TALKING HEADS)

How are the two sides in *Halo 2* gearing up for their next intergalactic conflict? In the interest of fair and unbiased reporting, *IGN* sat down with a representative from each party. For the humans: the Master Chief, and for the aliens: a Covenant Elite who would only give his name as 'Ain:



I got a pretty strict regime to get back into shape. I usually get up around 1 a.m. and start with a nice jog—70 or 80 miles, somewhere in there. It may seem like a lot, but I have a new run move and I'm expecting this game to be a lot bigger, so...then around noon, I drive vehicles for a few hours—the Banshee, Ghost, the new ATV four-wheeler, a couple other new things I can't talk about, and finally, the Scorpion. Then I lift for an hour.

OK, yeah, the first game didn't go so well for us. The regular humans weren't a problem, but that one green guy...yeah, the Master Chief or whatever...for some reason, we just couldn't kill him. I mean, sometimes we'd think he was dead, and then, like, suddenly, there he was again. It's like he had unlimited lives or something. It totally sucked... Anyway, this time around, we're going to totally kick his ass! Yeah! Worth! Worth!



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REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST



## REVIEWED THIS ISSUE:

DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL	XB	P.58
WAR OF THE MONSTERS	PS2	P.62
THE SIMS	PS2	P.64
EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING	PS2/GC	P.66
THE SIMS ONLINE	PC	P.66
NCAA BASKETBALL	XB/PS2/GC	P.67
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS	XB	P.68
PANZER DRAGON ORTA	XB	P.69
DRAGONBALL Z BUDDOKAI	PS2	P.69
HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING	PS2/GC/XB	P.69
SIM CITY 4	PC	P.70
SKIES OF ARCADIA	GC	P.70
ASHERON'S CALL 2	PC	P.71
FATAL FRAME	XB	P.71
DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL	GC	P.71
MINORITY REPORT	GC/PS2/XB	P.71
JEDI KNIGHT II	XB	P.72
DYNASTY WARRIORS	PS2	P.72
BMX XXX	PS2/XB/GC	P.72
DISASTER REPORT	PS2	P.73
WHITEDOUT	PS2/PC/XB	P.73
BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA	PS2/XB	P.73
EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES	XB	P.74
LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST	GBA	P.74
METROID FUSION	GBA	P.75
PHANTASY STAR COLLECTION	GBA	P.75
RETROACTIVE		P.76

At GMR we eat, sleep, drink, and occasionally puke, games. If we say something sucks, then it sucks. If we award it our prestigious Essential Selection award, then you can take Grandma's savings from under her mattress /husband and spend the lot on copies for you and your pats. Might want to ask her first, though.

WARNING! WHERE MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A GAME ARE REVIEWED, GMR WILL ONLY MENTION DIFFERENCES IF THEY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE GAMEPLAY!

1 FLAMMABLE | 2 FLUSHABLE | 3 LAUGHABLE | 4 FALLIBLE | 5 PLAYABLE | 6 STERILABLE | 7 COLLECTIBLE | 8 ENVIRABLE | 9 UNMISSIBLE | 10 INDESTRUCTIBLE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE GMR SCORING SYSTEM

## HOW WE RATE





→ Ah HA! You may think this game is about little more than brassy, buxom babes soaked in Hawaiian Tropics Tan Amplifier Carrot Gel (4 SPF) bouncing around in skimpy swimsuits, but you're wrong. It's actually a digitally delicious dissertation exploring the effects of planetary gravity on the game frameworks of athletic young women (age range: teen to early '20s). Ah, the poetry. The motion.

# DEAD OR ALIVE: XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

SHE BLINDED ME WITH SCIENCE. ACTUALLY... THAT'S NOT TRUE

XBOX | TEEN

PUBLISHER: TECMO  
DEVELOPER: TEAM NINJA  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: AVAILABLE NOW  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
ORIGIN: JAPAN

➔ In a perfect world, we'd all be given a two-week vacation to a sun-drenched paradise, where one's only responsibilities are to gamble and play volleyball (and maybe watch a little television). For the girls of the *Dead or Alive* series, this is now a reality. Having been lured to Zack Island (by, natch, *DOA* mainstay, Zack) by the promise of competing in the fourth *Dead or Alive* tournament, the girls (and none of the guys) arrive and find themselves with nothing to do. So, they decide to

sunbathe, practice their kung fu, snorkel, climb trees, gamble (for Zack bucks), and, oh yeah, play volleyball—you know, since they're already there and all.

Appearances can be deceiving. Anyone who dismissed this title as a lame excuse for slobbering perverts to parade hot digital chicks around in various states of virtual undress...well, they're only half right. Despite the lightweight premise, the game's mechanics are deeper than one might

suspect, utilizing an analog two-button configuration (one button for set, the other for spike). Meaning, if you're receiving and you set the ball with a light touch, your partner will set up your eventual spike; if you hit the analog button with force, your partner will go up for the quick slam, leaving the opposing team less time to prepare defensively. Likewise, while striking, you can either spike hard or feint (lob the ball over an overcompensating defender). And strong running serves have a better ➔

## 2ND. OPINION

*DOA*'s outside action is deep and polished, and the games' many extras demonstrate Team Ninja's ability to pack a parody of digital diversions onto a single DVD. For all the hype, Tecmo's "racy" tagline is actually harmless. Unabashedly amusing and absolutely unique. **K**  
David Chen

XB

PC

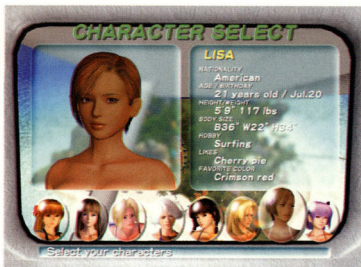
PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE

59



XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

→ This portrait of Lisa (top left) in the Character Select screen highlights her favorite hobby, food, and color. While this information might seem superfluous, if you hope to achieve any sort of success in the game, you'd better learn her preferences quick. If you lose too many matches, your partner will bail on you, and recruiting another girl might be difficult if you haven't bought them a nice gift or two.

PAGE  
60

chance of acing the opposition, while a standing serve has less chance of netting. These factors, in combination with your shot location and each girl's varied strengths and weaknesses, makes for surprisingly strategic gaming.

Unlike Sega's *Beach Spikers*, *DOAX* replaces the need for court markers with the understanding that any ball that hits opposing sand scores a point. The first team to seven points wins. Likewise, *DOAX* lacks onscreen power meters, encouraging players to master the game's particular timing. Once mastered, the game becomes a lot of fun indeed.

But volleyball is only half the game. Between matches, time is spent building relationships between fierce rivals like Ayane and Kasumi, who are bitter opponents on the fighting field and need convincing (via gift giving) to partner with each other. This is harder than it sounds—characters may reject offered gifts. Knowing each character's preferences is crucial (for example, Hitomi's favorite

color is sky blue).

So, what exactly is the point to *DOAX*? Besides playing volleyball, it's to procure swimsuits and accessories (see *DOA Xtreme Tactics*). We are not making this up. Once unlocked, any swimsuit can be chosen from the Character-select screen in two-player mode.

Why, you might ask, doesn't *DOAX* support four players? Probably because the game features a dynamic camera (instead of a static, overhead camera) that swings back and forth, favoring the team currently fielding the ball. While this makes for a beautiful-looking match, it handicaps the team that's not playing the ball, since one of the players is usually obscured. While the forgiving *Virtua Tennis*-esque defensive control somewhat compensates for this, it causes a problem in more than a few instances. Does it render the game unplayable? Hardly, but it takes some getting used to.

But, as Team Ninja chieftain Tomonobu

Itagaki tells us, "I want players to play this game and feel it is a gorgeous and relaxing game. Competition is not the focus. Instead, gamers should concentrate on enjoying all of the island's activities."

If this is Team Ninja's goal, they have succeeded. With a lavish, tropical setting (not a hurricane in sight) against which beautiful characters cavort, a vibrant reggae-themed soundtrack (you can rip your own tracks too), and a piña colada atmosphere, *DOAX* is a flawed but guilty pleasure. Absolutely bizarre, and more than a little perverse, *DOAX* is the cheapest tropical getaway you'll ever find for fifty bucks. **B+**

—James Mielke

TOTALLY SWEET  
**GMR** 8<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: BEACH SPIKERS  
NO SUBSTITUTE FOR: A GIRLFRIEND  
WAIT FOR IT...NINJA GAIDEN

# DOAX XTREME TACTICS

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, PLAYING VOLLEYBALL ISN'T THE ONLY THING TO DO ON ZACK ISLAND. NO SIR! THIS IDYLIC PARADISE FEATURES A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES WITH WHICH TO DISTRACT YOUR BAD SELF



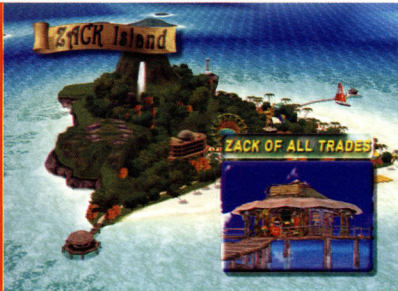
## HOPPING ISN'T JUST FOR BUNNIES

Of the many things the girls may do poolside, the hopping game is the most beneficial. The first benefit of this simple exercise, which involves hopping across the pool on randomly generated floating cushions, is that it helps familiarize gamers with DOAX's analog-button sensitivity. Knowing the difference between a light touch and a strong touch has significant results on the volleyball court, and the hopping game is the perfect consequence-free place to practice your timing. A light touch causes your character to jump one cushion, while a hard press results in a two-cushion jump. Since spaces appear between some cushions, a poorly executed button press will dunk your character.

The second benefit of the hopping game is that it earns you Zack bucks. Faster times result in bigger bucks: typically a couple grand, which is good for a cheap swimsuit or two. The hopping game features both a long course and a short course. *GMR* holds the world record (better than Team Ninja) for the short course, with a time of 5.4 seconds. Try beating that! If you can land you can prove it, write us at [gmr@ziffdavis.com](mailto:gmr@ziffdavis.com), and we'll make you famous. Maybe. **1**◀

## SHOPPING SPREE

Girls love to shop, and if you plan to get along with an island full of bitter rivals, you'd better learn to love to shop, too. Fortunately, Zack Island features a number of shops to satisfy every girlish need—namely, the Accessory shop (put the lotion in the basket), the Sports shop (swimsuits), and the Zack of All Trades shop (revolvers, tobsters, secret volleyballs, and, er, dog collars). Charge it!

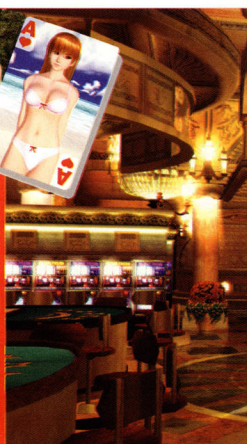


XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC  
PAGE  
61



## DICE, DECKS and GIANT CHESTS

If you're planning to acquire the game's most elusive swimsuits, you won't be buying them with your volleyball winnings. Instead, you have to go to the casino. The casino features four games: roulette, poker, blackjack, and slot machines. Unlike many gambling games, DOAX's games are truly based on chance—there's no algorithm in place keeping you from winning more than a preset number of times. If you're especially skilled at games with superior odds, like blackjack, you'll be buying those bikinis in no time. Of course, if you'd rather spend your time at one [or all] of the eight different slot machines (each designed after one of the girls), you can take your chances there. **1**◀



## THE VALIANT QUEST FOR STUFF

Stuff fanatics will be happy to know that DOAX features a mind-boggling collection of stuff to buy. More than a hundred swimsuits (including the pogs 'n' thong concoction show below), even more accessories, some fancy volleyballs, and videotapes of special Team Ninja CG cinemas to watch on TV (including a trailer of the upcoming *Ninja Gaiden* game) are available for purchase. And if you build a good rapport with the other characters (by giving them gifts), they will eventually send you presents, too. Don't be stingy! **1**◀





XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE  
62

# WAR OF THE MONSTERS

KING KONG. CHECK. GODZILLA. YUP. NEITHER OF THEM ARE IN THIS GAME

PS2 | TEEN

PUBLISHER: SCEA  
DEVELOPER: INCOG  
PRICE: \$39.99  
RELEASE: AVAILABLE NOW  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
ORIGIN: USA

➔ As socially disturbing as it is, you can't deny that it's fun to destroy things, and *WOTM* lets gamers take this primal instinct and run with it. Similar in concept to Infogrames' recent *Godzilla* game, *Incog's* baby throws an assortment of giant monsters into city-sized arenas with the simple goal of having them beat the crap out of each other until only one is left standing. While none of the creatures is licensed, this doesn't detract from the fun since each of *Incog's* creations is a loving homage to a particular genre. Ultra-V (*Shogun Warriors*), Togera (*Godzilla wannabe*), Congar (*King Kong-a-like*), and the rest of the menagerie (with the

exception of the truly inventive *Kinetictops*) are all inspired by existing monsters, but each is still unique and well designed in its own right.

But what good are cool-looking monsters if they don't have sweet environments to kick around in? That's where *WOTM* excels. Every stage looks utterly fantastic, with detailed architecture filling every corner of the screen. These aren't just cardboard buildings, either: Nope, every structure, when punished enough, crumbles with stunning realism in a cavalcade of glass, girders, fire, and rubble. Nearly every piece of debris can be used as a weapon, too (antennae and poles can be used to impale your

opponent). Likewise, every car, truck, and helicopter can be snagged and whipped at your foe, usually with explosive results.

Thankfully, the controls are simple enough to keep the action intense. While the R1-plus-L1 lock-on function can cause severe hand cramps after extended play, you never have to figure out where your prey is lurking amidst the huge environments. If the pair of you spread out too far, rather than the camera pulling back until both monsters look minuscule, the screen splits (effectively, too), allowing both characters to view as much of the playfield as possible. When two monsters move close together, the screen reunites. It's a system that results in uninterrupted

## 2ND. OPINION

*War of the Monsters* settles just about every destructive tendency in me. Smashing a building and watching it crumble to its steel skeleton, picking up cars and hurling them a half-mile, stomping on screaming throngs of panicked ants (people whatever): these are the things that make the voices go away. If only for a little while. **B+**  
—Tom Price



## "AS SOCIALLY DISTURBING AS IT IS, YOU CAN'T DENY THAT IT'S FUN TO DESTROY THINGS."

gameplay and few headaches.

The main headache is the final boss in the Adventure mode. While a stiff challenge is fun, this boss is ridiculous. This giant pest has attacks that drain half your lifebar, and the only obstacles to block his main attacks are easily destroyed by his long-distance attacks. He's made bearable only by the fact that you have unlimited continues, and every time you restart, his lifebar remains where it was when you last "died." But it's a war of attrition that takes less skill than patience to continue over and over again, chipping away at him during his few moments of vulnerability.

The game also stumbles in the finesse department. Why, for example, feature an Endurance mode in the game, but not include a Name-entry screen? A game like this promotes smack talk and bragging rights, and not having a place to cement your reputation kind of sucks. Incog might have also included a movie viewer so gamers could watch the endings of characters they've beaten in the Adventure mode. Online play is another missing element that would have added significant replay value. Still, with hidden characters and a wealth of other secrets to unlock, few will be disappointed with what's being offered.

→ Everything breaks real good in *War of the Monsters*. We'll go ahead and admit, right now, that there is nothing quite as satisfying as picking up the tail end of a Boeing 747 and clocking some foot ape over the head with it. But don't try that one at home. We're trained professionals.

In the end, *War of the Monsters* earns its keep with an unbeatable *War of the Worlds* atmosphere and one of the most fun multiplayer games around. Could the game use some polish in the features department? Yes. But don't let that stop you from trying one of the most impressive brawlers ever made. Smash, brothers. **✪**

James Mielke

**GMR**

EXTREME FUN  
9<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: RAMPAGE  
NOT AS FAST AS: TWISTED METAL BLACK  
WAIT FOR IT: SOUL CALIBUR II

## GMR'S TOP, UH, FOUR MONSTER MOMENTS!

For those about to rock, we salute you...



### SQUISH THE LITTLE PEOPLE

→ What good is a monster unless he (it?) stomps all over the local populace—whether they be crazed city-dwellers or sun-worshipping island peeps? No good!



### GAS TANKERS BLOW UP NICE

→ While debris, vehicles, and helicopters make tasty snacks, nothing satisfies quite like a gas tanker, which blows up hot in your opponent's face. Spicy!



### PART OF THE BOGARD

→ Nothing tickles the funny bone more than grabbing that full-health power-up before your foe, especially when you don't need it. Sharing is for suckazzz.



### BEATING THE FINAL BOSS

→ The cheese-wheel at the end of the game posing as a boss is so crazy cheap, you'll do a little dance when you finally take him down to Chinatown.


 XB  
 PC  
 PS2  
 GBA  
 GC

 PAGE  
 64

# THE SIMS

LIVING LIFE. ONE SIM AT A TIME.

## PS2 | TEEN

PUBLISHER: EA  
 DEVELOPER: Maxis  
 PRICE: \$49.99  
 RELEASE: JANUARY 2003  
 PLAYERS: 1-2  
 ORIGIN: USA

➔ **It's really hard to describe exactly why this game is so fun. The game requires you to do...what? Remind your Sims to eat and sleep? Make sure they don't get too lonely? Tell them when to go to the bathroom? It all seems so...wrong.**

But that simple architecture—in which you continuously care for your Sim's eight different motives—does, in fact, create a truly incredible gaming experience. (It is the best-selling PC game of all time, after all.) There's just something satisfying about sending a happy Sim to work and finding him promoted when he comes home. The promotion means he earns more money and can buy nicer furniture.

With better furniture, he can throw rowdier parties, which lead to more friends. A better social life means he performs better at work...and so on. In short, you grow to care about your Sim.

Then there's the dark side of *The Sims*, which is also terribly amusing. See, if you ignore your Sims needs, he will try to satisfy them on his own—with often-comedic results. A hungry Sim will attempt to cook dinner, whether or not he knows how to cook, and few things are funnier than a Sim kitchen on fire. Lonely Sims might try to talk and joke with friends, but on their own they end up alienating people instead of attracting them, which puts them in an even worse

emotional state. And then there's the bladder problem. Sims left to their own devices will neglect their bladder needs until the last possible minute—and, should the sprint to the bathroom prove too long, an unseemly puddle will appear beneath them. The game allows for countless varieties of such cruelty. It isn't quite wholesome, but it's certainly fun.

The mission-based *Get a Life* mode (newly added for the PS2 version) is a well-designed introduction to the more open-ended classic game. You initially complete small goals (serve a dinner, repair a television), but the challenges gradually become harder (find a mate, raise two children). Beating *Get a Life* opens the Play

## 2ND. OPINION

If you have an addictive personality stay away from this game: If *Animal Crossing* had you at "hello," you don't stand a chance with *The Sims*. There's a good reason soccer moms play this Sims—because it's an all-consuming interactive soap-opera that grabs hold of you and never lets go. Consider yourself warned. **James Meeks**



[IT'S WHO YOU KNOW]

➔ It's weirdly fascinating (and embarrassing to admit) just how involved you can get in the social lives of your Sims. Many goals in the Get a Life mode can't be completed unless your Sim has lots of friends, so it's important to keep yours constantly socializing. Have her make frequent phone calls to friends, invite people over for dinner, and throw regular parties to keep her friendships strong.

Sim relationships are surprisingly complex. Each Sim

has a unique personality, resulting from a combination of interests, astrological sign, personality traits, and skills. Whether or not two Sims get along depends on how compatible they are and what you have them do and say. They can dance, hug, flirt, give back rubs, and more—you just have to make the right choices. Some Sims enjoy being joked with; others don't. Some take kindly to compliments; others see through your cheap attempts at flattery. The back

rub can be either a total score or a friendship-ender, and it's a blast finding out.

The social aspect of *The Sims* is probably one of the most enjoyable facets of the game, and Maxis was smart to integrate it so well into the mission-based mode. Sure, PC gamers can now take their Sims online. But that, in a way, almost defeats the purpose of living this faux-life, doesn't it? Still, you just can't beat how great it feels to be the most popular Sim on your block! 📌



➔ Keep your Sim in the "in" crowd by throwing raging parties.

➔ Mr. and Mrs. Sim sitting in a hot tub, K-I-S-S-I-N-G. Wait, that's not right. Not right at all. Anyway, voyeuristic look it up! Types like yourself will love peeping into the window of a Sim's world. Yes, you, naughty bugger. Watch Sims taking a poop! Laugh at Sims pitching woo at the opposite Sim sex! It's very hysterical and also very disturbing. But it's OK. We won't tell. Now go step out into the real world and have a breath of fresh air.



the Sims mode, which provides total freedom to create the neighborhood you're now very capable of managing.

If you've learned your lessons, you'll soon find yourself with a great job, a stylish pad, and a kickin' social life. Simple, right? Well, not necessarily. Just as in real life—success might not come easy, but getting there is all the fun. 📌

—Jennifer Tsao



**GMR** EXTREME FUN  
9/10

BETTER THAN: SEAMAN  
AS SOUL-CONSUMING AS: ANIMAL CROSSING  
WORTH FOR IT: BLACK & WHITE 2



Staple your head to the carpet. Wax your eyebrows. Wear an extra-small wool sweater. Eat rigatoni with chopsticks. Ride a seatless bike. Super-glue your upper lip to the side of your nose. Start a rutabaga-only diet. Comb your hair with an icpick. Eat a super-duper-rare Royale with cheese.

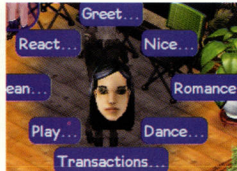
But do not, under any circumstance, play *Evolution Snowboarding*. It's taking things way too far. Snowboards? Check. Fighting? Check. Post-apocalyptic punk-rock snowboarders with chainsaws? OK, I'll buy that. But it would have helped if Konami had included good controls to go with all the chaos, which it did not. And the fighting system has been poorly implemented, too.

Anytime you group fisticuffs-and-snowboarding onto the same PS2 disc, you have to wonder why no one stopped to ask, "What the heck are we doing here?" This game is underthought, quarterbaked, and hopeless. It's one of the worst games on PS2. Dare I say, skip it? **C-**  
—Todd Zuniga

PC | KONAMI OF AMERICA PRICE: \$39.99  
DEV: KONAMI PLAYERS: 1  
REL. AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN: USA

GMR 3/10 SUMMER

BETTER THAN: A COMPOUND FRACTURE  
NOT AS GOOD AS: 55X TRICKY  
WAIT FOR IT... 1080 SNOWBOARDING AVALANCHE



# SIMS ONLINE

## TAKE YOUR PSYCHOSES PUBLIC

PC | TEEN

PUBLISHER: EA  
DEVELOPER: Maxis  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: DECEMBER 2003  
PLAYERS: 3  
GABILLIONS: 1  
ORIGIN: USA

RunAwayFromDangerMan, the superhero in the purple tights, is furiously working at the blackboard on a mathematical formula, while Senor Swingledingle, the kill-wearing skullface, is pilledriving an anthropomorphic polar bear, just for the fun of it, right in front of Tiny Alice, who's oblivious, too absorbed in making out with some Santa in a leisure suit to notice. Peer into the dark recesses of America's heart and this, apparently, is what you'll find. Twenty-four hours a day.

*Sims Online* brings the twisted domestic melodrama of Maxis' world-dominating hit *The Sims* to a massively multiplayer online arena, and for the

most part, the result is incredible. Just bolt one of hundreds of heads onto one of hundreds of bodies and you're ready to go—ready to build your own home or business, make friends, fall in love, alienate strangers, sing, dance, create, earn, laugh, love, fight, and on and on.

While you'll still have to watch your *Sims*' needs (comfort, hunger, bladder, etc.), the focus in *Sims Online* is squarely on interaction, not management. Accordingly, in this version, your needs seem to diminish more slowly, freeing you to deal with the assorted misfits around you and allowing you to indulge more than ever in your *Sims*-fantasies.

### 2ND. OPINION

If you think that buying yourself a life in a virtual world is going to make up for the fact that you don't have one in the real world, well, you might be right. There's so much to do in *Sims Online*. It makes me ashamed that I ever sit around the house with nothing to do but play games. Not really.  
—Tom Price

XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE 66



Entrepreneurial players set up businesses (nightclubs and skill-improvement centers are already plentiful) while others are content just to wander the game world, creating interactive social dramas they could only dream about in *The Sims*. Yes, you'll find groups of people griping about the real-life weather in Chicago, but when you find people willing to indulge in their characters and the incredibly baroque role-playing the game allows, the results can be amazing. Whether you're spilling and spinning wildly concocted psychodramas to an attentive play-psychiatrist or wallowing in the hedonism of one of the many make-out centers in

the game, you'll more often than not find others relishing this rare chance to play dress-up and act out in a way that real life never allows.

Frankly, this is a game that no review can adequately describe, since the possible experiences are virtually limitless. Is it a game or a playground? Play it and decide for yourself. **A-**  
**Ralph Kiner**

**GMR** EXTREME FUN **9**<sup>10</sup>

MORE EXCITING THAN: REAL LIFE  
 NOT AS GOOD AS: A STEAK DINNER  
 WAIT FOR IT... STAR WARS GALAXIES

**NCAA COLLEGE BASKETBALL 2K3**  
 COLLEGE BOYS MAKE MORE NOISE  
 XBOX | GAMECUBE | PS2 | EVERYONE



While *NBA 2K3* is a tighter (and better) game from top to bottom, it doesn't have the same guts as *NCAA College Basketball 2K3*. Barring with Allen Iverson is great, but it's equally fun to play with the upstart Richmond Spiders' Darrold Timberbush. Anonymity makes for bigger heroes and connects you to the game the way you're connected to Indiana's Keith Smart (who hit that last-second shot in 1987, but you knew that). Play this game with your best friend, and 10 years from now over a Chimay, you'll be praising that diaper-dandy named Hector Shattuck who won you the conference tourney.

No-names turned superstars aside, *NCAA* is fast-paced, big on fun, and contains the best passing engine of any hoops game. You can run the break with consistency and finish it off with an alley-oop—if your team features a dunkaroo-worthy player.

If you like recruiting (anyone who played *EA Sports' NCAA Football 2003* knows what I'm talking about), then you'll love this game. You'll have the chance to take over a roughed-up rubbish team and build it into a contender. But you're not tied to it. The Legacy mode allows you, as the coach, to move on to bigger and better things. You might even sit in the Kansas driver seat if you know your playbook. **A-**  
**Todd Zuniga**

PHYS. SEGA SPORTS PRICE \$49.99  
 DEV. VISUAL CONCEPTS PLAYERS 1-8  
 REL. AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN USA

**GMR** TOTALLY SWEET **8**<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: NCAA FINAL FOUR 2002  
 NOT AS GOOD AS: NBA 2K3  
 WAIT FOR IT... NBA STREET VOL. 2

XB  
 PC  
 PS2  
 GBA  
 GC

PAGE  
**67**

→ As in life, *Sims Online* lets you do anything or be anything you want. If you want to go-go dance, then get your groove on. If you want to take a wooden gnome carving class, work it. If you want to go around in a skull mask and kill then...actually, that's your biz, freako.

# 5 GAMES YOU CAN PLAY IN 10 MINUTES

SOMETIMES, YOU DON'T WANT TO PLOW THROUGH AN EPIC STORY. SOMETIMES, YOU DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THE EXPLOITS OF SOLID SNAKE, SAM FISHER, OR TIDUS AND HIS PALLS. SOMETIMES, YOU WANT A QUICK GAME WHILE YOU'RE WAITING FOR YOUR PARTNER TO FINISH IN THE BATHROOM SO YOU CAN HEAD OUT TO A CLUB. EACH MONTH, WE'LL BRING YOU FIVE SUGGESTIONS THAT WILL ABLY KILL TEN MINUTES OF YOUR TIME, BUT NO LONGER.

## LOTR: TWO TOWERS

NO HOBBITS HERE  
XBOX | TEEN



➔ If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, J.R.R. Tolkien might as well be blushing in his grave. Books, movies, and games have stolen material from his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy for the past 50 years, with no sign of stopping. At long last, with Peter Jackson's amazing film adaptation of Tolkien's work, we've seen a revival of the original, and EA has followed suit with its officially licensed *Two Towers* game.

*Two Towers* essentially serves as a companion to the first two *LOTR* films, allowing the player to control Gimli, Aragorn, or Legolas during the films' most intense combat sequences. The game takes an extremely cinematic approach, using movies clips in place of pre-rendered cut-scenes, and dramatic, movie-style camera angles during gameplay. For fans of the movies, it plays like a wet dream, although the squirrely camera sometimes makes tracking enemies difficult.

*TT* plays like a standard hack-and-slash action game. The player picks a character, then battles through hordes of Orcs and Goblins using melee and ranged attacks. As the player progresses, more deadly combat moves become available, which come in handy during the game's extremely challenging climax. For hardcore gamers, it's in these final levels, with the multiobjective mission design, that the action really heats up.

The only real knock against *Two Towers* is its limited replayability. Once or twice through the game will probably be enough for most players, adding up to roughly 10 to 15 hours of total gameplay. Not bad, but not epic. Still, *Two Towers* is sure to please fans of the movie, and is plenty of fun to play while it lasts. **C**  
**Adam Galle**

PUB	EA	PRICE	\$49.99
DEV	STORMFRONT STUDIOS	PLAYERS	1
REL	AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN	USA

**GMR**

CHECK IT OUT

7/10

BETTER THAN: DYNAMITE COP 2  
NOT AS GOOD AS: DYNASTY WARRIORS 3  
WAIT FOR IT... DEVIL MAY CRY 2



### 01 BEJEWELLED

**PopCap**  
Great for a quick game, but it's possible that the session may extend exponentially depending on your susceptibility to addictive substances. Gameplay is simple: Switch jewels around on a grid to make lines of three or more. They disappear and more arrive in their place. A surefire way to get a non-playing partner into videogames, this is gaming's gateway drug. It's available on nearly every platform (except consoles). Ubiquity rules.



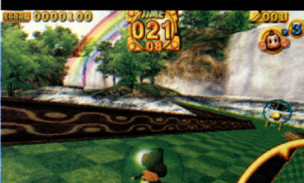
### 02 MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE

**Midway**  
Not the greatest fighting game ever made, but the system of collecting "koins" for prizes means you get a sense of real achievement from just a few bouts. Mastering some of the more complex moves will require more of a time investment, but if you pick up the strategy guide, you can have an awful lot of fun aspiring to the famous "fatalities." Want an example? You can punch someone in the ass and pull out his skeleton. Whaddaya think of that? Fun, huh?



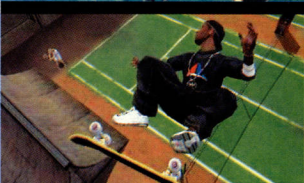
### 03 NHL 2K3

**Sega Sports**  
The spiritual successor to *EA Hockey* on the Genesis makes this the modern-day "one match before going out" game. If you've ever seen Jon Favreau's *Swingers*, you'll know how culturally significant that is. *The hockey* experience is perfectly portrayed, the graphics are awesome, and, most important, it features something so many hockey games have ignored in recent years. What's that? Fighting. We love fighting. On ice.



### 04 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

**Sega**  
You can make a significant impact on this in ten minutes, and you can rest assured that it will bring a smile to your face. Who could deny the charms of a monkey in a ball running around collecting bananas? No one. And if you get totally addicted, this is another of those super-simple experiences that actually manages to transfer rather well to a cell-phone screen. If you're on Sprint's new super color service, you can get this.



### 05 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

**Activision**  
You can attempt some of the tasks if you're so inclined, but there's a lot to be said for just cruising around, chaining tricks together purely for your own sense of self-satisfaction. Time will fly. After a few sessions, you'll start to open up the real time-killers—like playing Bjorn Borg at tennis using your board, or avoiding a monkey that's flinging poop at you. We can't think of much that could be more fun than that.

XBOX  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE 68

# PANZER DRAGON ORTA

YOU ORTA PLAY THIS GAME

XBOX | TEEN

➔ It's wonderful to see this series back in action. In the late '90s, while the majority of the world fiddled with its PlayStations, savvy gamers who devoted their dollars to Sega Saturn were rewarded with one of the most stunning game trilogies ever created. The wicked combination of simple yet efficient gameplay, understated CG sequences, and jawdropping organic techno-fantasy aesthetics earned *Panzer Dragon* a loyal and devout following.

Fast-forward five years. Despite proclamations (from the developers no less) that the series was finished, *Panzer* has returned, complete with a new rider (Orta), a new civilization, and a new empire to defeat. The gameplay remains largely the same: You fly around on rails (you constantly move forward), shooting enemies who attack you from 360 degrees. You can blast away by rapidly pressing the Shoot button; lock on

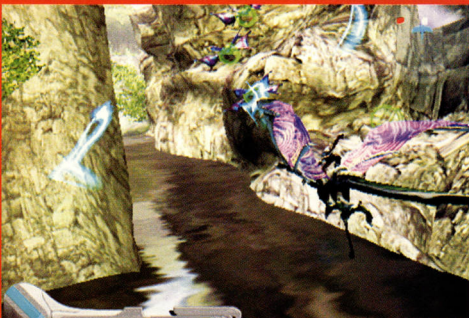
enemies and unleash a rain of deadly dragon-lasers; and, provided your power bar is full, let fly with a Berserk attack. The addition of a speed boost adds an extra element of strategy, but it's Pandora's Box, a treasure trove of bonuses including extra modes and characters, CG movies, detailed stats, and the original *Panzer Dragon*, that will keep gamers coming back. Beautiful, compelling, and utterly rewarding, *Panzer* is back in brilliant form. Let's hope the masses sit up and notice this time. **1+**

—James Mielke

PUB SEGA	PRICE \$49.99
DEV SMLBIT	PLAYERS 1
REL JANUARY 14, 2003	ORIGIN JAPAN

**GMR** BUY IT NOW **9/10**

BETTER THAN: REIGN OF FIRE  
NOT AS THIRPY AS: REZ  
WAIT FOR IT... RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN



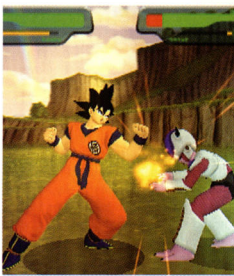
# DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI

NEW DBZ GAME SELLS 4 BILLION COPIES—NEARLY AT 11

PS2 | TEEN

➔ Despite being nearly as popular as Pokémon, Mickey Mouse, and sliced bread, the hit Japanese anime *Dragon Ball Z* has been woefully under-represented in the gaming arena. Other than some mediocre Game Boy titles, a super-rare (and super-crappy) PS1 game based on the *Dragon Ball GT* series, and a really old 8-bit Nintendo Game (it's called *Dragon Power*—rifle through the used-game bins for it), fans of the fireball-filled show have been left hanging. Luckily, *Budokai* gives 'em exactly what they've always wanted: a fun, frantic fighting game that completely captures the unique spirit of the show.

In fact, playing through the single-player *Budokai* game looks and feels like playing through the cartoon. If you're gaga for Goku, you'll be in heaven. Plot-wise, the game chronicles three of the show's giant story arcs: the Saiyan, Namek, and Android sagas. The story lines come to life through oodles of lengthy real-time cinemas voiced by the show's actors. Although the flood of cut-scenes threatens to engulf the experience, the actual fighting engine isn't bad, offering punches, kicks, throws, fireballs, and killer combos. The game teaches you new moves with each successive fight.



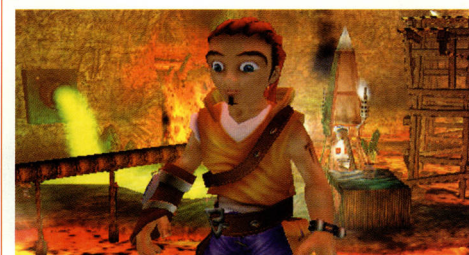
Realistically, this isn't quite on par with the likes of *Virtua Fighter 4* or *Soul Calibur*, but it's surprisingly playable. A must for *DBZ* fans. Everyone else, try it first. **1+**

—Shane Bettenhausen

PUB INFOGAMES	PRICE \$49.99
DEV DIMPS	PLAYERS 1-2
REL AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN JAPAN

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT **7/10**

BETTER THAN: DRAGONBALL GT: FINAL BOUT  
NOT AS GOOD AS: MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2  
WAIT FOR IT... SOUL CALIBUR II



# HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING

CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR  
PS2 | GAMECUBE | XBOX | TEEN

➔ If you'd be embarrassed to see an animated movie in the theater, you'll probably be embarrassed to play *Haven*. The game's slightly-more-mature-than-Disney fantasy/sci-fi story plays like it was created by developers who spent the last few years working on Pixar-licensed games and the last *Crash Bandicoot*—which it was.

This 3D-platform game is full of offerings that include participating in aerial dogfights, navigating a *Super Monkey Ball*-style sphere, manning a gun turret, and more.

Many of them rock, but it's not enough to make *Haven* much more than a so-so platformer with a problematic camera. **1+**

—Joe Fiedler

PUB MIDWAY	PRICE \$29.99
DEV TRAVELLER'S TALES	PLAYERS 1
REL AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN USA

**GMR** WORTH A LOOK **6/10**

BETTER THAN: CRASH BANDICOOT: WRATH OF CORTEX  
NOT AS GOOD AS: ICO  
WAIT FOR IT... APE ESCAPE 2

# SIMCITY 4

URBAN RENEWAL

PC | TEEN

➔ Lately, it seems like the game that originally put developer **Maxis** on the map has been pushed aside by the new baby in the family. *The Sims*' success is unprecedented and was completely unexpected, but the long-awaited installment of the franchise that started this whole weird world of controlling the lives of ordinary people is finally here, and it's amazing. *SimCity 4* is clearly the best of the series and completes a circle for all the *Sim*-related games.

*SimCity 4* doesn't reinvent *SimCity*'s concept: that urban planning is fun. It's particularly fun when the city you get to build—one living, breathing neighborhood at a time—and care for by poring over charts and graphs to maintain positive cash flow and a happy citizenry (it is too fun, dammit!) is full of subtle, funny details and so richly rendered in that familiar *Sims* look. The cities crawl with unique objects, from cars and trains to

individual people. In fact, you can import some of your favorite *Sims* characters and have them set up house. Look closer and you'll see funny little touches like zombies walking around the cemetery.

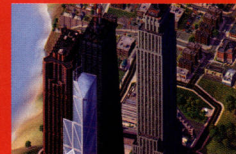
Underneath it all, *SimCity 4* is still *SimCity*, and there's nothing wrong with that. The fundamental mechanics haven't changed much, but they have been significantly enhanced. What's most noticeable is the excellent presentation. *SimCity 4* looks and feels like something we could spend a lot of time with. **E+**

—Tom Price

PIU: EA PRICE: \$49.99  
DEV: Maxis PLAY: 1  
REL: AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN: US

**GMR** TOTALLY SWEET  
8/10

BETTER THAN: SIMCITY 3000  
NOT AS GOOD AS: THE SIMS  
WAIT FOR IT... SIMS ONLINE



# SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGEND

UP IN THE SKY—IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A BATTLESHIP!

GAMECUBE | TEEN

➔ *Skies of Arcadia Legends* is a new example of function over form. Whereas games like *Kingdom Hearts* and *Final Fantasy X* can mask various faults with eye candy a-go-go, *Legends* (based on the original Dreamcast *Skies of Arcadia*) needs no such crutches. It looks great (beautiful islands float silently in the sky, stunningly designed battleships slice through the clouds, and every town and dungeon is rendered in loving detail), but it's the finely tuned battle system that's the real attraction here. *Skies of Arcadia* features two encounter types: hand-to-hand (with characters warding off enemy troops), and high-flying, ship-to-ship aerial combat. Although the battles are turn-based, the small but varied list of offensive and defensive options (essentially the same on the ground or in the air) makes *Skies* easy enough for anyone to play, while adding incremental layers of depth as the game progresses.

Another subtle bonus is the relatively small cast of characters (*Skies* is no *Chrono Cross*), which allows the tiny crew of Vyse, Aika, and Fina to blossom

and mature. As the story unfolds, each crew member's role becomes more defined, giving *Skies* a personality many of today's flashy RPGs lack. And, when personality isn't enough, the shake and shudder of broadsides leveling your skyborne ship is more than enough to get the blood pumping. Factor in a sassy new pro/antagonist (Piaalto) not found in the Dreamcast version, dozens of treasures to find, new side quests, and additional boss battles, and you have a one-time sleeper hit that's evolved into a bona fide classic. Quite possibly the finest next-gen RPG thus far, *Skies of Arcadia Legends* belongs in any gamer's library. **E+**

—James Mielke

PIU: SEGA PRICE: \$49.99  
DEV: OVERWORKS PLAYERS: 1  
REL: JANUARY 28, 2003 ORIGIN: Japan

**GMR** EXTREME FUN  
9/10

BETTER THAN: EVOLUTION WORLDS  
ON PAR WITH: SUIKODEN III  
WAIT FOR IT... XENOSAGA: EPISODE I



## ASHERON'S CALL 2

MICROSOFT'S GOT A NEW DRUG FOR EVERCRACKHEADS

PC | TEEN

➔ Microsoft has dared to challenge Sony not only in console-making, but also in MMORPG-making. While Sony controls the market with *EverQuest* (and now *EverQuest Adventures*), Microsoft has bankrolled Turbine to come up with a suitable challenger. Although *Asheron's Call* was pretty good, *Asheron's Call 2: Fallen Kings* is an improvement over that game, and a step up for MMORPGs in general.

*AC2* maintains the traditional "hunt, loot, chat" gameplay of every other MMORPG, but it fixes some of what's wrong with this system. For example, death changes from a frustration to a mere annoyance; instead of searching for your corpse and losing experience, you merely get a penalty to health and vigor (aka, mana), something you can easily overcome.

There are no stupid NPC vendors bilking your money, so player-crafting is easier and more beneficial. I usually hate making things in an MMORPG, but I actually had fun crafting new hammers and whatnot. Dungeons are more than enemy spawn points; they reward players with special loot, bucketloads of

experience, and story elements. The skills system is flexible and user-friendly: If I don't like the way I've been improving my character, I can untrain his skills and focus on building a new set. And the excellent production values for sound and graphics easily make *AC2* the best-looking and sounding MMORPG on the market.

While *AC2* is still ultimately trapped by the same gameplay seen in every other MMORPG, Turbine offsets this seeming weakness with monthly content updates. The December update alone changed the newbie experience, plus added quests, monsters, etc. If Turbine can keep the quality content coming, *AC2* deserves your hard drive, your Internet bandwidth, and your \$12.95 a month. **A-**

—Thierry Nguyen

PUB: MICROSOFT GAMES	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV: TURBINE GAMES	PLAYERS: LOTS
REL: DEC. 2002	ORIGIN: US

**GMR** 8<sup>10</sup> TOTALLY SWEET

BETTER THAN: ANARCHY ONLINE  
NOT AS GOOD AS: DARK AGE OF CAMELOT  
WAIT FOR IT... EVERQUEST 2

## FATAL FRAME

GHOSTEMON SNAPI

XBOX | TEEN

➔ Plenty of games claim to be scary, but *Fatal Frame* literally gave us sweat-soaked, teeth-gnashing nightmares.

On the surface, it's a less flashy *Resident Evil*, with a smooth control scheme and a first-person picture-taking mode. But its gameplay, pacing, and story are so well crafted, it had us hooked from the beginning. This game doesn't rely on typical shock-horror tactics to get a rise out of you. Be warned: This is not a game for junior. *Fatal Frame* is gory and twisted in ways only the mature freak can appreciate. **A-**

—Adam Gale



PUB: TECMO	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV: TECMO	PLAYERS: 1
REL: AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN: JAPAN

**GMR** 8<sup>10</sup> TOTALLY SWEET

BETTER THAN: RESIDENT EVIL 2  
NOT AS GOOD AS: RESIDENT EVIL 4 (MAMECUBE)  
WAIT FOR IT... CLOCK TOWER 3

## DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL

WHAT KIND OF MICKEY-MOUSE OPERATION IS THIS? OH, WAIT  
GAMECUBE | EVERYONE

➔ *Disney Sports Football* may be loaded with cute graphics and the clever use of various Disney characters, but its insanely difficult game mechanics and quasi-realistic, *Madden*-esque football simulation (albeit with magic powers) doesn't seem to serve any kind of game, kid or adult.

The presentation is top notch, but maybe you need to be a 5-year-old to make stupid-ass Goody complete a pass. This game's got nothing on the superior *Disney Sports Soccer*. **C-**

—Tom Price



PUB: KONAMI OF AMERICA	PRICE: \$39.99
DEV: DISNEY INTERACTIVE	PLAYERS: 1-4
REL: AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN: JAPAN

**GMR** 5<sup>10</sup> VANILLA CONE

BETTER THAN: LUCY PULLING THE BALL AWAY  
NOT AS GOOD AS: DISNEY SPORTS SOCCER  
WAIT FOR IT... DISNEY SPORTS BASKETBALL

## MINORITY REPORT

RENT DON'T FUN

GAMECUBE | PS2 | XBOX | TEEN

➔ Everybody runs. In the case of the lackluster 3D-adventure-cum-beat-em-up *Minority Report*, rent assured, they're not running to the videogame store.

Though competently produced, this *Report*, we'd say, gets a C-. Developer Treyarch has done a decent job attempting to translate the futuristic Tom Cruise vehicle, but the end result is a game that requires players to punch, punch, punch, and kick, kick, kick to progress. If you're still curious, rent, but do not run. **C-**

—Greg Orlando



PUB: ACTIVISION	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV: TREYARCH	PLAYERS: 1
REL: AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN: USA

**GMR** 6<sup>10</sup> WORTH A LOOK

BETTER THAN: MORTAL KOMBAT: SPECIAL FORCES  
NOT AS GOOD AS: THE MOVIE  
WAIT FOR IT... CROUCHING TIGER: HIDDEN DRAGON

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC



## JEDI KNIGHT II

THIS IS THE GAME YOU ARE LOOKING FOR  
XBOX | TEEN

➔ *Jedi Knight II* lets you do pretty much everything you want to do as a Jedi. You get to swing your lightsaber around and cut people's limbs off, use the Force to move stuff around and mess with people's minds, and, of course, smash waves of stormtroopers with impunity.

As far as first-person shooters on Xbox go, *Jedi Knight II* ranks up there with the best of them. It's no *Halo*, but what is? As far as *Star Wars* games go, it's pretty darn decent. My only gripe is the less-than-perfect lightsaber con-

trols, but otherwise, *JK2* is definitely worth your credits. **C+**

—Tom Price

PUB. LICENSING	PRICE	\$49.99
DEV. BAVEN/CARIBUS	PLAYERS	1-2
REL. AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN	USA

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT  
**7/10**

BETTER THAN: MASTERS OF THE TERAS KASI  
NOT AS GOOD AS: JEDI KNIGHT I  
WAIT FOR IT... KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC



## DYNASTY WARRIORS 3 XL

AS EXPANSION PACKS GO, XTREMELY POORLY TIMED  
PS2 | TEEN

➔ Considering the (well-deserved) rising popularity of the *Dynasty Warriors* games, Koei's release of this expansion pack (you can also play it independently of *Dynasty 3*) isn't exactly surprising. However, with *Dynasty 4*'s release scheduled for March, it's hard to recommend *Xtreme Legends* for purchase, fine game though it may be.

Only the most hardcore *Dynasty* fans—those who care that you can play as Lu Bu and six other new warriors in Musou (Story) mode, among other small

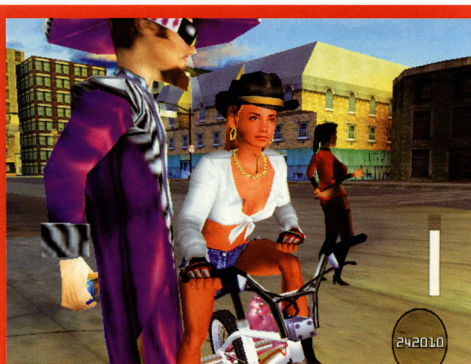
enhancements—should fork over the cash for this one. **C+**

—Chris Baker

PUB. KOEI	PRICE	\$49.99
DEV. KOEI	PLAYERS	1-2
REL. AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN	JAPAN

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT  
**7/10**

BETTER THAN: SHINOBİ  
NOT AS GOOD AS: MYSTIC HEROES  
WAIT FOR IT... STATE OF EMERGENCY XBOX



## BMX XXX

XXX STINKXXX

PS2 | GAMECUBE | XBOX | MATURE

➔ We proudly report that society has indeed crumbled. Players of Acclaim's new M-rated *BMX XXX* can create their own female rider, dress her in the glorious style of a preadolescent schoolgirl hooker, and then ride her through this crappy-ass title's horribly unfunny fourth-grade humor, annoying sound samples, and delightfully dumb challenges. Acclaim paints a world dripping with pimps and hookers, and brushes every stage with enough profanity to make foul-mouthed comedian George Carlin blush. It's a world where a fireman who can't get it up (his hose, that is) is "funny."

Questionable taste and humor aside, *BMX XXX* stands as a mediocre extreme-sports title. Physics don't play a big part in the proceedings; it's possible to ride a character full-speed into a wall, without any ill effects. Players can perform tricks poorly, with the rider seemingly destined for a light snack of concrete and peeled skin, but be magically redeemed at the last second by pressing the Grind button, which enables the most-doomed biker to realign both his body and bike, catch a rail, and gain

points in the process. Less is more for *BMX XXX*. Players have to perform the same stunt on different levels. Oddly enough, these tasks don't get any more fun the second (or third, or fourth) time around. Depending on the stage, you'll need to pick up and deliver hookers while cursing at clowns, strippers, anally impaled aliens, and the like. Missions are often poorly explained or not explained at all, such as when a rider must assault a fruitbooter with no hint as to what a fruitbooter is. Completed missions allow players to progress to new stages and unlock movies of exotic dancers in various states of undress. We recommend not bothering. **C+**

—Greg Orlando

PUB. 2-Axis	PRICE	\$49.99
DEV. ACCLAIM	PLAYERS	1-2
REL. AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN	USA

**GMR** NICE TRY  
**4/10**

BETTER THAN: A SKINNED KNEE  
NOT AS GOOD AS: MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2  
WAIT FOR IT... TRAVIS PASTRANA'S PRO MOTO-X





## WHITEOUT

DON'T JUST HIT THE POWDER—SHRED IT

PS2 | PC | XBOX | TEEN

➔ If you dig on snow sports but prefer high-octane speed and the roar of an 800cc engine to snowboarding's cocky attitude and waxed wood, then *Whiteout* is for you.

While the race modes and snowmobiles are varied enough to satisfy any couch-racer, it's *Whiteout*'s Career mode that provides the greatest replay value. Finishing in the top three earns players points that open up greater challenges. Placing high and pulling off tricks wins you cold, hard cash you can use to upgrade your

snowmobile. It isn't exactly groundbreaking, but *Whiteout* plays well and offers a good-looking experience. **C**

—James Mielke

PUB: KONAMI	PRICE: \$39.99
DEV: VICARIOUS VISIONS	PLAYERS: 1-2
REL. AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN: USA

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT 7/10

BETTER THAN: DARK SUMMIT  
NOT AS PAR: WITH SLED STORM  
WAIT FOR IT... 1080 SNOWBOARDING AVALANCHE



## DISASTER REPORT

WHOLE LOTTA SHAKING GOING ON

PS2 | TEEN

➔ If there's a genre that could use a fresh lick of paint, it's survival-horror. The whole shooting zombies thing is getting pretty played out.

Realizing this, Irem has come up with a brand-new take on the genre, one in which your biggest enemy is, well, the ground beneath your feet.

It may sound boring on paper—you're trying to get off a floating city that is being ravaged by earthquake aftershocks—but in practice, it's rather exciting, since you never quite know what'll happen next. Huge chunks of scenery will collapse right before your eyes (or under your feet), putting the fear in your veins. Adding to the suspense are scenes that emulate some of Hollywood's finest disaster flicks.

*Disaster Report* also offers lots of innovative puzzles, many of which are platform-based. Thankfully, the control system is flexible enough to allow you to perform seemingly difficult stunts with few problems. Item management is also a large focus of the game, and solving puzzles often requires the use of nontraditional objects.

The game's story is the high point; it

strings you along with subtle hints. Let's just say that there's more going on here than a random earthquake.

Throughout the adventure, you'll meet up with all sorts of people, some of whom need your help, and others who will ask you to solve tasks. The dialogue's pretty typical survival-horror fare, though.

Unfortunately, *Disaster Report* is lacking in the production department, with awful slowdown at times and a camera that makes life difficult. These factors don't ruin the experience, but they definitely keep the game out of *Resident Evil*'s league. Still, if you're in need of something entirely fresh, you'll find an enjoyable adventure here. **C-**

—Sam Kennedy

PUB: AGETEC	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV: BEM	PLAYERS: 1
REL. AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN: JAPAN

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT 7/10

BETTER THAN: DINO CRISIS  
NOT AS GOOD AS: FATAL FRAME  
WAIT FOR IT... KILLER 7



## BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

PS2 | XBOX | TEEN

➔ *Battle Engine Aquila*, despite its odd name, vivid graphics, and hugely detailed battle scenes, is as straightforward and simple a shooter as you'll ever play. What it lacks in depth, it makes up for in brilliance, and while we're averse to rewarding style over substance, in this case, we can't really deny the game's addictive appeal.

The downside is, all that blowing stuff to kingdom come gets repetitive after awhile, and once you're done, there's a lot of replay value. Still, the weekend

you spend beating this game won't be an entirely wasted one. **C-**

—Tom Price

PUB: ATARI/INFOTRAMES	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV: LOST TRIPS	PLAYERS: 1-2
REL. JANUARY 21, 2003	ORIGIN: UK

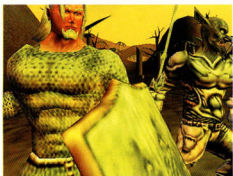
**GMR** WORTH A LOOK 6/10

BETTER THAN: SPACE INVADERS  
NOT AS GOOD AS: ARMORED CORE 3  
WAIT FOR IT... STAR FOX ARMAADA



XB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE 73



(GBA REVIEWS)

THE  
 LEGEND  
 OF ZELDA:  
 A LINK TO  
 THE PAST

CONNECT FOUR

GBA | EVERYONE



➔ As a portable version of the SNES classic, *A Link to the Past* is worth the 30 bones. And not having to dig out the SNES and clean out the cartridge port is nice enough, but to play this classic game on the bus? Pure nirvana. But, as it did with the *Mario Advance* series, Nintendo threw in a lit something special to considerably increase the value.

Co-developed by Capcom, *Four Swords* is a multiplayer adventure that balances cooperation (completing dungeon puzzles) with competition (collecting rupees and medals). The more friends, the merrier the game, but keep in mind that everyone needs their own copy. If you can assemble such a party, multiplayer *Zelda* is definitely worth the effort, and a great deal of fun. **A-**

—Andrew Pfister

PS2	NINTENDO	PRICE	\$29.99
DEV	NINTENDOCAPCOM	PLAYERS	1-4
REL	AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN	JAPAN

**GMR** 9<sup>10</sup> EXTREME FUN

BETTER THAN: DBZ: GOLDEN SWORD WARRIORS  
 NOT AS GOOD AS: GOLDEN SUN  
 WAIT FOR IT... FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES

EVERQUEST FOR THE (OTHER) MASSES

PS2 | TEEN

➔ Count me among the legions of skeptics who guffawed upon hearing that Sony Online was going to make *EverQuest* for the PS2. An MMORPG for a console system? Uh huh. Yeah. Pardon me while I laugh up my lunch. As someone who's logged in literally hundreds of hours on the PC version, I was unwilling to believe that Sony could possibly port the game to a console system while retaining any of the original's character and depth. But, I was wrong. And now, PS2 owners are going to discover just what it is about *EverQuest* that has enslaved hundreds of thousands of PC gamers for the last four years.

"But, dude," I hear you saying, "I've seen screens of this game. It looks like ass!"

I know. I hear you. It does look like ass.

And not a choice, good-looking ass like J-Lo's. More like Bea Arthur's ass. But, here's the thing: It pretty much looks like ass on the PC, too. Get over it. This is a gaming revolution.

Unlike any console game you've ever played—including *Phantasy Star Online*—*EverQuest Online Adventures* is an online game that does not end. Ever. Not even when you shut off your PS2. It's a living, persistent world, with thousands of other real-life players logging in 24/7. It's something between an amusement park and a chat room, with people banding together to bash monsters, share spells, and, quite often, just shoot the breeze.

With this version's simplified controls, Sony's actually managed to create a much friendlier game (e.g., the PC's notorious "corpse running"—retrieving your corpse after you die—is gone from

this version). While the controls are intuitive, the only thing that truly sucks is chatting. Get a keyboard for your PS2, or don't bother playing. However, with a keyboard, this is *EverQuest*, the PC phenom, in all its addictive glory. It may seem dumb or ugly or pointless—until you start playing. Then, suddenly, 100 hours have passed and you're just another addict. Be forewarned. **A-**

—Jeff Green

PS2	SONY ONLINE	PRICE	\$49.99
DEV	VERANT	PLAYERS	60/25!
REL	FEBRUARY 11, 2003	ORIGIN	USA

**GMR** 8<sup>10</sup> TOTALLY SWEET

BETTER THAN: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING  
 NOT AS GOOD AS: THE ORIGINAL PC GAME  
 WAIT FOR IT... TRUE FANTASY LIVE

PS  
 PC  
 PS2  
 GBA  
 DC

HERE AT GMR, WE DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE LITTLE GUY. AFTER ALL, SOME OF GAMING'S BIGGEST MOMENTS HAPPEN ON THE SMALLEST OF GAMES. INVESTIGATE.

# PHANTASY STAR COLLECTION

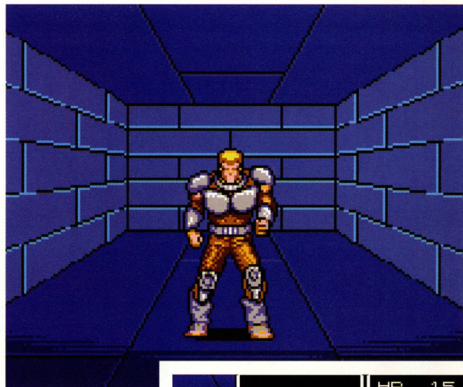
PHANTASTICAL RPG VALUE

GBA | EVERYONE

➔ **Sega's *Phantasy Star* series remains one of the most influential and important role-playing franchises in gaming history...although most gamers haven't played it.**

RPGs rested squarely on gaming's fringe when these games originally landed, so it's great that a new generation of fans will have a shot at them on GBA. This collection features pixel-perfect versions of the first three PS games. The emulation is nearly flawless (though the music sounds slightly different), but you won't find any reworked graphics or hidden features here. Really, though, that's inconsequential—these are fantastic (albeit amazingly difficult) games that every RPG fan should experience. **✚**

**\_Shane Bettenhausen**



PUB. TIO PRICE \$29.99  
DEV. DIGITAL ECLIPSE PLAYERS 1  
REL. NOV. 2002 ORIGIN JAPAN

RENT IT FIRST  
**GMR 9**

BETTER THAN: LOTR: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING  
ON PAR WITH: FINAL FANTASY LEGEND  
WAIT FOR IT... GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE



# METROID FUSION

A FUSION OF OLD AND NEW

GBA | TEEN

➔ **For fans of the series, the wait for a new *Metroid* was excruciating. Eight long years have passed, and two new, yet different titles have arrived. While *Metroid Prime* represents a complete 3D-enabled overhaul, *Metroid Fusion* represents the absolute best of the 16-bit platforming style.**

*Fusion* may look new, but only a few key elements have changed, the most significant being the objective-based mission structure. From beginning to end, Samus' guidance computer will tell you what's happened, where to go, and what to do—an idea that seems contrary to the series' heavy reliance on exploration. The

implied sense of urgency works well within the plot, but the objective-hopping often drives the game too quickly, resulting in limited opportunities to search for hidden secrets. Despite this, *Fusion* remains true to the series while improving upon it, most notably with Samus' weaponry and mobility.

These improvements, and *Fusion*'s environments, enemies, and story elements, are brand new, but as you make your way through the space station, it becomes clear that this fresh coat of paint has been applied to a palace: the flawless gameplay of *Super Metroid*. If you can break away from the main story path

(or even if you can't), *Metroid Fusion* is one of GBA's best games, and a stellar addition to the series. Hopefully, we won't have to wait another eight years for the next one. **✚**

**\_Andrew Pfister**

PUB. NINTENDO PRICE \$29.99  
DEV. NINTENDO PLAYERS 1  
REL. AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN JAPAN

RENT IT FIRST  
**GMR 9**

BETTER THAN: CASTLEVANIA: COTM  
NOT AS GOOD AS: CASTLEVANIA: HOD  
WAIT FOR IT... MEGAMAN & BASS

➔ While the gameplay is faster, and more responsive than ever before, *Metroid Fusion* manages to feel even more claustrophobic than in the past. That's a good thing.

FB  
PC  
PS2  
GBA  
GC

PAGE 75

# RETROACTIVE

AS LINK ARRIVES ON GBA, GMR PRESENTS A QUICK GUIDE TO THE SERIES



- 3DS
- PC
- PS2
- GBA
- GC



## THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

JULY 1987 FOR NINTENDO (NES)

➔ When the first *Zelda* hit in the late '80s, it was completely unlike anything console videogames had seen before—and not just because of its one-of-a-kind, shiny, gold cartridge. At a time when generic platformers and disposable shooters ruled the shelves, along came this huge adventure so deep, so complex, you actually had to [gasp!] save your game progress. *Zelda* contained so many extras and secrets, you couldn't go to recess anywhere in America without overhearing kids trading information in the schoolyard. Gameplay was simple—one button to slash your sword, the other to use your items—but set the template for every *Zelda* game to date. **1C**



## ZELDA II: THE ADVENTURE OF LINK

DECEMBER 1988 FOR NINTENDO (NES)

➔ The second *Zelda* was a creative leap, replacing the top-down perspective of the popular original game for side-scrolling fighting and town exploration. *Zelda II* also included a heavy emphasis on Mario-like platform jumping. While many fans were blown away by the gutsy new direction, others thought it was just too different, and not "like *Zelda*." **1C**

**BONUS!** Most gamers actually didn't get a chance to play *Zelda II* until well into 1989, due to a shortage of the computer chips that went into the cartridges. Some eager beavers actually flew to Canada, where the game was in ready supply, to get their hands on one.



## LOZ: A LINK TO THE PAST

APRIL 1992 FOR SUPER NINTENDO

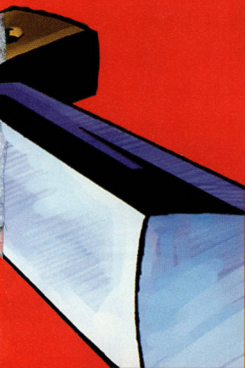
➔ *Link to the Past* was more than just this game's subtitle. Perhaps as a result of the mixed reaction to *Zelda II*, the third *Zelda* marked a return to the first game's top-down perspective, dungeon set-up, and core gameplay, but with crisp, colorful graphics that took full advantage of Nintendo's then-recently introduced 16-bit console. An alternate-dimension version of the overworld provided plenty of ground to cover, while switching between the two realities made up much of the game's puzzles. **1C**

**BONUS!** Attack any of the chickens in town enough and an entire brigade of assault poultry will suddenly pounce, pestering you until you run away or die.

GMR 7/10

GMR 8/10

GMR 9/10



## LOZ: OCARINA OF TIME

NOVEMBER 1998 FOR NINTENDO 64

➔ After a long wait and numerous delays, the next *Zelda* game debuted to overwhelming critical praise and commercial success. This first fully 3D *Zelda* featured many important achievements, including a world with its own day/night cycle and a revolutionary new battle system (that's since become common) in which the players' perspective "locks on" to an enemy. Link played a musical ocarina to travel back and forth in time and (once again) stop Ganon, and save Princess Zelda. The formula was the same as always, and as always it was perfect. **1C**

BONUS: *Ocarina of Time* is still the best-reviewed game ever, according to the tracking site [game Rankings.com](http://game Rankings.com).



## LOZ: MAJORA'S MASK

OCTOBER 2000 FOR NINTENDO 64

➔ Though the argument over which is better, *Majora's Mask* or *Ocarina of Time*, rages to this very day, just about everyone agrees this second N64 *Zelda* was...bizarre. Your quest was to prevent a giant moon (complete with a big face on it, by the way) from crashing into the world by repeating the same three days over and over again, solving dungeons as time allowed. Link could wear various masks to transform into different creatures, using their powers to solve puzzles and defeat enemies. Although superficially similar to *Ocarina* (the graphics were a bit sharper due to the required memory Expansion Pak), *Majora's* bizarre story and transformations gave it a feel all its own. **1C**

GMR 10<sup>10</sup>

GMR 10<sup>10</sup>

### HANDHELD ZELDAS



➔ All the portable *Zeldas* have followed in the *Zelda 1/Zelda 3* mold: an overhead perspective and a series of dungeons you fight your way through room by room. The first Game Boy game and its color re-releases (*Link's Awakening* in

1993 and *DX* in 1998) are often considered the toughest *Zelda*, bar none. But a feature that allowed you to combine items for new abilities was genius. Then, *Oracle of Ages* and *Oracle of Seasons* were released in May of 2001, as two completely new and separate games developed by Capcom that worked together to unlock secrets in each other. Link shifted time (*Ages*) or the weather (*Seasons*) to progress. Finally, just last month, Nintendo released a Game Boy Advance version of the Super Nintendo classic *A Link to the Past*, with an added *Four Swords*

four-player link-up game. **1C**

FUN FACT: Playing the *Oracle* games on a Game Boy Advance opens up a secret-item shop not available by playing the games on a Game Boy Color.

NEXT ISSUE: GMR UNEARTHS DEVIL MAY CRY & XENOGears!

## SERIOUS GAMER?



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NEXT ISSUE...

# XENOSAGA

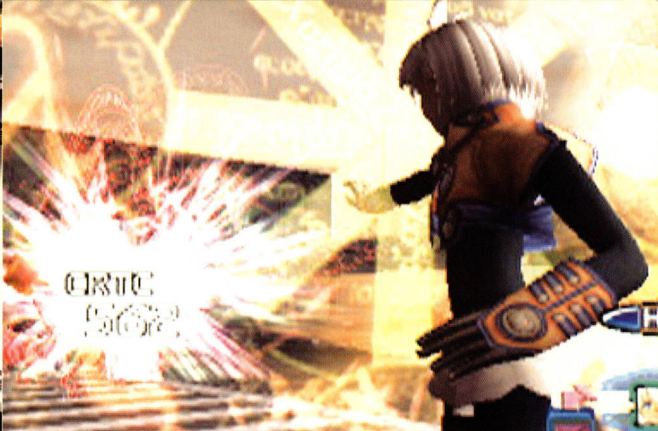
Exclusive review: *GMR* travels to the end of the galaxy and beyond to unveil the secrets of the next great console RPG.

PLUS: *GMR* investigates the PS3 rumors (what, you hadn't heard?), reviews scores of games, goes gangster trippin' with *The Getaway* (PS2), tomb raidin' with *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb* (PC), kicks demon butt in *Devil May Cry 2* (PS2), explores the impossible with *Impossible Creatures* (PC), and kicks over a few buildings in *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* (XBOX), all the while entertaining and amusing you in ways as yet unheard of by the people of Earth.

Oh, and some tips.

**GMR** 02  
SOON. IN A GALAXY NOT SO FAR AWAY...





# Serious Gamer?

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## PlayStation 2



PREOWNED TITLE	U.S. PRICE	CANADIAN
FINAL FANTASY X	\$29.99	\$49.99
GRAND THEFT AUTO 3	\$24.99	\$59.99
SPIDERMAN	\$24.99	\$49.99
GRAN TURISMO 3	\$14.99	\$24.99
MAX PAYNE	\$14.99	\$24.99
TWISTED METAL BLACK	\$14.99	\$24.99
MADDEN 2002	\$9.99	\$34.99
NBA 2K2	\$9.99	\$24.99
NBA LIVE 2001	\$7.99	\$19.99

## NINTENDO GAMECUBE



PREOWNED TITLE	U.S. PRICE	CANADIAN
SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE	\$39.99	\$59.99
ETERNAL DARKNESS	\$29.99	\$54.99
LUIGI'S MANSION	\$29.99	\$54.99
AGENT UNDER FIRE	\$24.99	\$34.99
TUROK EVOLUTION	\$24.99	\$34.99
RESIDENT EVIL	\$19.99	\$34.99
PIKMIN	\$19.99	\$54.99
CRAZY TAXI	\$14.99	\$34.99
SSX TRICKY	\$14.99	\$24.99

## XBOX



PREOWNED TITLE	U.S. PRICE	CANADIAN
DEAD TO RIGHTS	\$39.99	\$64.99
SPIDERMAN	\$29.99	\$49.99
MAX PAYNE	\$19.99	\$29.99
DEAD OR ALIVE 3	\$19.99	\$39.99
WRECKLESS	\$14.99	\$39.99
BLOODWAKE	\$14.99	\$24.99
AMPEd	\$14.99	\$24.99
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### METROID PRIME

→In space, no one can hear you cheat

082

### TOP 20 TIPS

→All systems. All cracked

085

### SCREEN

→*Minority Report* and *XXX* reviewed

090

### THE LIST

→Hundreds of games rated

092

### GAME GEEZER

→He's old! He's pissed!

098





- XB
- PC
- PS2
- GBA
- GC

PAGE  
82

# METROID PRIME

BY THE NUMBERS: *GMA* PREPARES YOU FOR NINTENDO'S MASTERPIECE

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR



## SCANNING AND GETTING 100 PERCENT

Scanning everything isn't an essential part of the game, but if you don't use your scan visor to its full potential, you'll miss seeing parts of the story, finding hidden power-ups, and unlocking some really cool concept-art galleries. The first thing you should do in a boss fight is scan—not just because it gives you tips on how to beat him, but you get only one chance to add him to your log. And if you're a true *Metroid* fan, this game won't truly be completed until you collect 100 percent and see the best ending. Scan everywhere and everything. Lay down power bombs if there's any doubt. Switch visors to reveal hidden platforms and access points. Explore.



## COLLECTING THE ARTIFACTS

You can't get to the final area of *Metroid Prime* without collecting the 12 hidden Chozo Artifacts. Fortunately, the clues make this a relatively easy, but time-consuming, task. Go to the Chozo Temple in the Tallon Overworld to collect the clues—they'll tell you almost exactly where on the map to go. Most artifacts can be found during your natural travel pattern through Tallon IV, but you'll have to make special trips for some of them. Just be mindful of where you are.

## GBA FUSION CONNECTIONS

If you bought *Metroid Fusion* for Game Boy Advance (and if you didn't, you really ought to), you can connect it to your GameCube to unlock neat extras. A completed *Fusion* Save file will open up Samus' yellow and blue Fusion suit in *Prime*, and a complete version of the original 1986 *Metroid*.



## BEAMS AND VISORS

Switching beams and visors is vital near the end of the game, where three of the final four boss battles are based on alternating beam and visor types. The multicolored Space Pirates that inhabit the Phazon Mines will get you acclimated to the concept, but you'll need to be highly proficient, not to mention fast, once you reach bosses like Omega Pirate.



## HARD MODE

Finishing the game once will unlock the Hard mode, which increases not only the amount of damage you take, but also the health of the enemies and bosses. You thought Omega Pirate on regular difficulty was tough? Collecting every energy tank and missile upgrade is essential if you want to survive in Hard mode. ▶



## THE THREE LAST BOSSES



## OMEGA PIRATE

Go deep into the Phazon Mines and Metroid Quarantine Unit A. You couldn't get across the Phazon deposits before, but now you're prepared. Activate your X-ray Visor to reveal the hidden platforms, then hop across them to the Level 3 elevator. Inside the Fungal Hall are the more tenacious Hunter Metroids, so take proper care. You'll eventually end up in the Elite Quarters, where the dreaded Omega Pirate you've been reading so much about lies in wait. Scanning him while he's still in the Phazon Chamber reveals that he likes to cloak, but doing so leaves him vulnerable to attack. He's impervious to beam weapons, so you'll have to use Super Missiles and your X-ray and Thermal Visors. He has a very similar attack pattern to the Elite Pirates, only he's much faster and much more powerful. Target the Phazon Armor covering his limbs. When the armor's gone, he'll disappear and call out a group of regular Beam Pirates. After a few moments, flip to the X-ray Visor to see Omega regenerating his armor. Target his center mass and let him have it with Super Missiles, all while avoiding the Pirates' fire. Wash, rinse, and repeat!



## META-RIDLEY

Return the 12 Artifacts to the Chozo Temple in the Tallon Overworld. Taking offense to your good deed, Meta-Ridley appears. When he's flying around and swooping in, charge your Plasma Beam and aim for his chest. He's got a variety of attacks, including Cluster Missiles, Laser Beam, and Tail Whip. When



about three-fourths of his energy is gone, his wings will burn off. Aim for the head and make him stand up, exposing his chest. His charges and ensuing Tail Whips will take away large chunks of energy, so keep your distance and space-jump over the attack. When his energy's almost gone, his dashes become faster and more frequent, and he'll try to whip you twice. Keep your beam charged and ready for when Ridley stands up. Fire at his head, then hit his chest with missiles, a charged Plasma Beam, or the Wavebuster. **▶**

**AREAS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST**

**▶ BEAM MISSILE COMBOS**

Beam have secondary functions, but to use them you'll have to first find the appropriate upgrades. Because each one eats up missiles like they're chocolate-covered crack, you should max out your missile capacity in order to be most effective in battle. The Wavebuster is in the Chozo



Ruins. Go to the Ruined Shrine, which is just off the Main Plaza. Use the Spider Ball to get past the door to the Tower of Light.

Scan and take out the weak support columns to bring the platforms down to a jumble level. At the top of the tower, you can grab the Wavebuster. The Ice Spreader lies beneath the glass-enclosed Lake Shore Tunnel in the Magmoo Caverns. Power-bomb the glass away, then drop down below the tunnel. The flamethrower resides in the Phazon Mines Security Station—behind a door blocked by a force field. Power-bomb the wall blocking the access computer to deactivate the field.



**▶ BOMB JUMPING**

This isn't really a required skill to have, but learning how to jump on bombs will get you two extra energy tanks. The "tap, tap, tap" pattern to practice is as follows:

- First bomb: Whenever.
  - Second bomb: Right before the first bomb goes off.
  - Third bomb: At the peak of the first bomb's explosion.
- Practice makes perfect!

**▶ THE IMPACT CRATER**

Right before the end of the game, a new and incredibly annoying Metroid type appears in the Phazon Core. Fission Metroids split into two differently colored Metroids that seem to enjoy knocking you



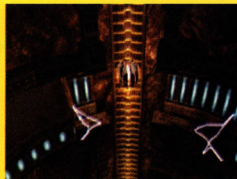
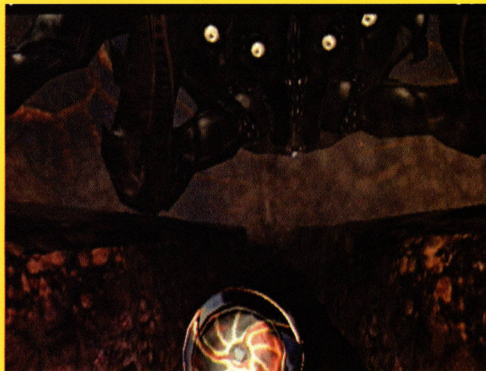
**▶ METROID PRIME**

This is it: Metroid Prime. She'll take off right away; follow her down into the first sub-chamber. Whatever color Prime is, change your beam to match her. When she goes down to Sub-chamber Two, she'll start charging at you. When this happens, go into the Morph Ball and take cover in the crevice on the main floor. Sub-chamber Three introduces the Tractor Beam—use a charge shot to make her release the beam. Try to avoid the middle crevice when dodging her charge, so her carapace doesn't hit you as she passes by. Sub-chamber Four is where she really gets nasty. Attacks and color changes become more frequent. Keep dodging her attacks and blasting her with the appropriate Charge Beams; the Wavebuster works well at the

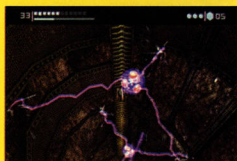
end. Once you "defeat" Prime, she reveals her final, true form. Scanning her reveals that your regular weapons are now useless, and she's vulnerable only to Phazon-based attacks. When she disappears to enter Hyper mode, step into the Phazon pools. Switch between the X-ray and Thermal Visors to attack and evade Prime. Space jump over her Orange Wave attacks; Power-bomb or Hyper Beam any bothersome Metroids focused on Prime, wear her down, then sit back and enjoy the ending.



PS3  
Wii  
PS2  
GBA  
GC



off platforms. Like the different Pirate types, you'll have to switch to the appropriate beam to eliminate them. That's if you want to bother with it. It's easier if you ignore them—why try to outrun two Metroids instead of one? If they happen to catch you, Power-bomb and quickly move on. They respawn, so don't linger in the core for too long. There's a Missile Recharge station near the top of the area, right before Crater Tunnel B.



**➔ SPIDERBALL TRACKS**  
One of the cooler power-ups in the game, the Spider Ball is relatively easy to figure out. But there are some areas where it can get a bit tricky. In the Ore Processing Unit in the Phazon Mines, you have to line up the three colored tracks to get to the top. Fix the blue track first. Climb up to the first-level computer, then align the middle section with the red track. Drop down and align the bottom section with the middle, completing the path. Go up to the second-level computer and repeat the process to complete the yellow track. **▶**

**➔ PHAZON MINES**  
Space Pirates and Metroids abound in the Phazon Mines, especially as you get deeper into the area. Use your Thermal Visor to detect the Pirates early, then whack 'em with a charged beam to get the upper hand. If you encounter Stealth Pirates amongst other Beam Pirates, take them out first, because you can't lock on them without using either the Thermal or X-ray visor.



- AB
- PC
- PS2
- GBA
- GC



# METROID FUSION

CURE YOUR GBA METROIDS FOR GOOD BY APPLYING THIS CREAM...

## ➔ SA-X: POWERFUL. RUTHLESS. CAN'T LOOK DOWN

Shortly after you acquire the Space Jump, you'll hear the ominous sound of clanking metal footsteps: Your evil twin sister is on patrol and blocking your path. Drop down and fire ice missiles; that'll buy you an extra second or two to maneuver past her and out the door. In the chamber with the three gates, morph into a ball and drop into the small gap near the door and the column. While immensely powerful, SA-X ain't none too bright, and she won't be able to see you hiding like the coward you are. Detonate a power bomb, switch to missiles, take out the block, and drop down into the room below and sweet, sweet freedom.



### WHO'S THE BOSS?

Most of the bosses and sub-bosses in *Metroid Fusion* are fairly easy—that is, once you figure out their movement patterns and weak spots. Often, the

most difficult part is trying to position yourself for a good shot. Once the original form of the boss is defeated, you'll have to take out the X parasite that had

infected it. The strategies are, by and large, the same for each boss parasite: Wait for it to reveal its eye, then fire a missile or a charged beam into it.

## ➔ ROBOTS? ON A SPACE STATION?

You already fought and defeated the spider-like B.O.X. security robot once, but apparently you didn't do a good enough job of it. After you explore the sector, B.O.X. will be waiting in the room with water on the floor. Power bomb immediately to reveal the ceiling grips, which will give you access to the robot's weak point. He's much faster and more mobile this time around, and when he jumps, he'll likely knock you off the ceiling and into the electrified water below, so watch your distance.



low and near the tail—you'll get whipped, but it's less damage than his happy hug-o'-death. You should be firing missiles constantly, by the way.

main control room and you'll run into SA-X, the first phase. Use charge beams to attack and the Screw Attack to evade, keeping close to the bottom of the room. You can lull SA-X into a pattern by shooting, then jumping over her as she comes at you. Phase II is the mischievous X parasite that started this whole mess. Aim for the eye and jump out of the way when it shoots at you. Time to make like Samus "Evacuate Immediately" Aran and head for your ship and the final act, where Omega Metroid is waiting. The weak spot is the chest, but no matter what you do, he'll bust you down to a single unit of energy. Things look grim, until a familiar scenario is played out: Use your new-found powers to take Omega down, dashing quickly in and out to avoid the painful claw attacks. Aim up at an angle and fire rapidly, because the clock is ticking. See you next mission! **1E**



## ➔ THE TALENTED MR. RIDLEY

Hope you found a lot of missile containers during your travels throughout the station, 'cause you're gonna need them. Like previous battles with Ridley, this one's a pure firefight. Try to avoid his horribly mutated claws at all costs—if he grabs you, he'll pick you up and drain your energy. It only takes a couple grabs to put you in serious danger. It's better to stay

## ➔ WHAT'S THIS ABOUT METROIDS, NOW?

The final battle is separated into three acts, and you won't be able to save after you begin, so make sure your health and ammo are where you want them to be. Go to the



# A.I.

HIS CODES ARE REAL. BUT HE IS NOT



## 1 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY PS2

➔ Having a blast in Vice City, but need more firepower or a bit more health? Check out the codes below.

### All Weapons 1

R1, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up  
Brass Knuckles, Baseball Bat, Molotov Cocktails, Baretta, Shotgun, Machine Pistol, Assault Rifle, Flamethrower, Sniper Rifle

### All Weapons 2

R1, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Down, Left  
Katana, Grenades, Magnum, Shotgun, Uzi, Assault Rifle, Bazooka, Laser-sighted Rifle

### All Weapons 3

R1, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Down, Down



Chainsaw, Grenades, Magnum, Shotgun, Machine Pistol, Assault Rifle, Minigun, Laser-sighted Rifle

### Instant Armor

R1, R2, L1, X, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up

### Full Health

R1, R2, L1, O, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up

### Play As Candy Suxxxx

O, R2, Down, R1, Left, Right, R1, L1, X, L2

### Play As Ricardo Diaz

L1, L2, R1, R2, Down, L1, R2, L2

### Play As Lance Vance

O, L2, Left, X, R1, L1, X, L1

### Play As Sonny Forelli

O, L1, O, L2, Left, X, R1, L1, X, X

### All Cars On Screen Explode

R2, L2, R1, L1, L2, R2, Square, Triangle, O, Triangle, L2, L1

### Pedestrians Riot

Down, Left, Up, Left, X, R2, R1, L2, L1



## 2 CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER PS2

➔ Let's face it: *Contra* is a hard, hard game. But Konami put in a variation of its classic Konami Code from the original NES title to help even things out.

For thirty men (on your first try only, not on continues), go to the Title screen. Make sure the cursor is on 1 Player and the game is set in normal difficulty. Then, on the second-player controller, enter Up, Up, Down, Down, L1, R1, L2, R2, L3, R3.

If you've done it right, you'll hear a chime.



## 3 NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2 PC

➔ Press T during gameplay to activate the Cheat mode, then type any of these codes.

**God Mode god**  
**All Ammunition ammo**  
**All Weapons guns**  
**All Weapons, Ammunition, Health, and Armor kfa**  
**Scopes, Silencer, and Camera Zoom mods**  
**Full Armor armor**  
**Full Health health**  
**Invisibility pottergeist**

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

## 4 MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE ALL SYSTEMS

➔ **Fatalities** Press the Stance Change button at the Finish Him/Her screen to change into your fatality stance, then press the following key combination and your corresponding button.

Character	Xbox	PS2	GameCube (Attack Button)
<b>Bo Rai Cho:</b> <i>Away, Away, Away, Down</i>	B	Circle	4
<b>Cyrax:</b> <i>Toward, Toward, Up</i>	Y	Triangle	2
<b>Drahmin:</b> <i>Away, Toward, Toward, Down</i>	A	X	3
<b>Frost:</b> <i>Toward, Away, Up, Down</i>	X	Square	1
<b>Hsu Hao:</b> <i>Toward, Away, Down, Down</i>	Y	Triangle	2
<b>Jax:</b> <i>Down, Toward, Toward, Down</i>	Y	Triangle	2
<b>Johnny Cage:</b> <i>Away, Toward, Toward, Down</i>	Y	Triangle	2
<b>Kano:</b> <i>Toward, Up, Up, Down</i>	X	Square	1
<b>Kenshi:</b> <i>Toward, Away, Toward, Down</i>	A	X	3
<b>Kitana:</b> <i>Down, Up, Toward, Toward</i>	Y	Triangle	2
<b>Kung Lao:</b> <i>Down, Up, Away</i>	A	X	3
<b>Li Mei:</b> <i>Toward, Toward, Down, Toward</i>	B	Circle	4
<b>Mavado:</b> <i>Away, Away, Up, Up</i>	X	Square	1
<b>Nitar:</b> <i>Up, Up, Toward</i>	X	Square	1
<b>Quan Chi:</b> <i>Away, Away, Toward, Away</i>	A	X	3
<b>Raiden:</b> <i>Away, Toward, Toward, Toward</i>	A	X	3
<b>Reptile:</b> <i>Up, Up, Up, Toward</i>	A	X	3
<b>Scorpion:</b> <i>Away, Away, Down, Away</i>	B	Circle	4
<b>Shang Tsung:</b> <i>Up, Down, Up, Down</i>	Y	Triangle	2
<b>Sonya:</b> <i>Away, Toward, Toward, Down</i>	Y	Triangle	2
<b>Sub Zero:</b> <i>Away, Toward, Toward, Down</i>	A	X	3

PAGE

87



## 5 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 PS2

➔ Enter these codes at the Cheat menu (off the Main menu), then enable them from the Option screen during gameplay. **Unlock hidden skaters Mike Vallely, Eddie, and Jango Fett:** homielst  
**Matrix Mode (Slow-Motion Air):** nospoon  
**Moon Gravity:** superfly



## 6 THE TWO TOWERS PS2

➔ There are several codes to help you defeat Sauron. Pause the game, hold all four shoulder buttons, then enter these babies:

**Devastating Attacks:** Square, Square, Circle, Circle  
**Small Enemies:** Triangle, Triangle, X, X  
**All Upgrades:** Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Circle  
**Invulnerability:** Triangle, Square, X, Circle  
**Slow Motion:** Triangle, Circle, X, Square  
**Infinite Missiles:** Square, Circle, X, Triangle  
**Full Health:** Triangle, Down, X, Up  
**All Level Eight Attacks:** X, X, Down, Down



## 7 BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER XBOX

➔ For all of these codes, first enter the game's Extras menu. If you enter a code successfully, you'll hear a vampire scream.

### Infinite Health

Yellow, White, Black  
Black, White, Yellow  
Black, Black, Black  
Yellow, Yellow, Yellow  
Infinite Slayer Power  
Yellow, Yellow, Yellow  
Black, Black, Black  
Yellow, White, Black  
Black, White, Yellow

**Multiplayer Arenas** Three other players can now control the various demons in the arenas simply by pressing Start on any controller (press Back to abandon your demon and choose another one).

Yellow, Yellow, White  
Black, Black, Yellow  
Yellow, Yellow, Yellow  
Yellow, White, Black  
**To play as a Dark Slayer in the arenas,** press

Black, White, Yellow  
Yellow, Black, Black  
White, Black, Black  
White, Black, Black  
White, Black, Black  
Black, White, White



## 8 SONIC MEGA COLLECTION GAMECUBE

➔ **Sonic the Hedgehog Level Select**  
At the Title screen, press Up, Down, Left, Right. If this is done properly, you'll hear a bell. Then hold B and press Start to activate the Level Select mode.

**Sonic the Hedgehog 2 Level Select**  
Choose the Options mode from the Title screen, then choose the Sound Test mode. Play sounds 19, 65, 09, and 17 (in that order). Then hold X and press Start to return to the Title screen. When Sonic and Tails appear, hold B and press Start to enable the Level Select mode.

**Sonic the Hedgehog 3 Level Select**  
After you hear "Sega" (when the screen is fading to black and before the Title screen appears), press Up, Up, Down, Down, Up, Up, Up, Up. If you do it correctly, you'll hear a chime. Once the Title screen appears, press Up and a hidden option will take you to the Level Select screen.

**Sonic and Knuckles Level Select**  
Go to Mushroom Hill Zone, Act One, and play until Sonic is hanging from a pulley

machine that's used to reach higher areas.

While he's hanging, press Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Up, Up, Up. If you've entered the code correctly, you'll hear a chime. Pause the game, then press B to return to the Title screen. Start a new game, choose your character, hold B and press Start. You'll end up on the Level Select screen. If you end up playing a level with the wrong character (i.e., you need Knuckles to climb a wall that Sonic can't),



## 9 RED FACTION II PS2

➔ **Unlock Everything**  
Go to the Cheats menu, enter Triangle, Triangle, X, X, Square, Circle, Square, Circle, then press Accept. This will give you your choice of Unlimited Ammo, Super Health, All Levels, or even the Director's Cut of the game.



## 10 HUNTER: THE RECKONING XBOX

➔ **Every Weapon/Max Ammo**  
Slaughtering scores of evil zombies can be rough, but having max ammo and every weapon can help even the score. During gameplay, press B, Up, Right, Down, Left, B, B.

## 11 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 GBA

➔ We've got the scoop on how to unlock the game's many secret characters.

### Evil Ryu

Defeat Arcade mode with three different characters.

### Guile

Defeat Arcade mode with five different characters.

### Maki



Defeat Arcade mode with seven different characters.

### Yun

Defeat Arcade mode with nine different characters.

### Eagle

Defeat Arcade mode with eleven different characters.

### Shin Gouki/Akuma

Defeat Arcade mode with Evil Ryu, Guile, Eagle, Maki and Yun.

### Final Vega

Defeat Arcade mode on the hardest setting with Shin Gouki/Akuma.



## 12 JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE GAMECUBE, PS2, XBOX

➔ If you're not quite as suave as your on-screen counterpart, try entering these codes at the Secret Unlock screen.

### Level Select

PASSPORT

More Sniper Ammo

MAGAZINE

Enhanced Tranquizer Darts

SLEEPY

All Gadgets Upgraded

Q LAB

Multiplayer Assassination Mode

SCOPE

Multiplayer Demolition Mode

TNT

Multiplayer Explosive Scenery

BOOM

Multiplayer GoldenEye Strike

ORBIT

Multiplayer Protect Mode

GUARDIAN

Multiplayer Team King of the Hill Mode

TEAMWORK

Multiplayer Uplink Option

TRANSMIT

Multiplayer Mode for All Characters

PARTY

Multiplayer Tuxedo Mode

BLACKTIE





### 13 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 3: YOSHI'S ISLAND GBA

➔ To play the title's many minigames, go to the Level Select screen. Hold down Select, then press Left, Left, B, A, Right. A new window will appear.



### 14 CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE

➔ Simon Belmont makes his return to the series that helped put Konami on the map. Once you've beaten the game, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A while the Konami logo is being shown. Start Boss Rush mode and you'll play as Simon Belmont.



### 15 NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2 PS2

➔ If you're not happy with the cars that you begin the game with, use these codes to unlock some of the snazzier ones. Enter them all at the Main menu.

#### Aston Martin V12 Vanquish

R2, Right, R2, Right, Triangle, Left, Triangle, Left

#### BMW Z8

Square, Right, Square, Right, R2, Triangle, R2, Triangle

#### HSV Coupe GTS

L1, L2, L1, L2, R1, Triangle, R1

#### Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 VT

Right, R2, Right, R2, R1, L1, R1, L1

#### McLaren F1 LM

Square, L1, Square, L1, Triangle, Right, Triangle, Right

#### Porsche Carrera GT

Left, Right, Left, Right, R1, R2, R1, R2

#### Ford TSS0

Right, Left, Right, Left, R2, Square, R2, Square

#### Mercedes CLK GTR

R2, R1, R2, R1, Left, Triangle, Left, Triangle

#### Ferrari F50

L1, Triangle, L1, Triangle, Right, L2, Right, L2

#### Ferrari F550

L1, Square, L1, Square, Right, R1, Right, R1

#### Corvette Z06

Left, R2, Left, R2, L1, R1, L1, R1

#### Ferrari 360 Spider

R2, Square, R2, Square, Triangle, L2, Triangle, L2



### 16 X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION GAMECUBE

➔ Having trouble defeating evil mutants? Go to the Main menu, enter the Master Code, then pick off evil mutants with ease with these other codes.

#### Master Code

Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, A, B, Start

#### One-Hit Kills

Up, Up, Down, Down, X, Y, Y, X

#### Slow Deaths

Repeat the One-Hit Kills code

#### Unlimited Supers Toggle

Up, Up, Down, Down, A, X, A, X

#### Artificial Intelligence Toggle

Up, Up, Down, Down, A, A, B, B, X, X, Y, Y

#### Unlock Bastion

Win Story mode as Magneto without losing any matches, then defeat Bastion.

#### Unlock Bishop

Win Arcade mode as Gambit.

#### Unlock Blob

Win Arcade mode as Bishop.

#### Unlock Psylocke

Win Arcade mode as Betsy.

#### Unlock Dark Phoenix

Win Arcade mode as Phoenix, or win story mode as Magneto.

#### Unlock Sentinel A

Win Arcade mode as Cyclops.

#### Unlock Sentinel B

Win 20 matches in Survival mode.



### 17 BLOODRAYNE GAMECUBE, PS2, XBOX

➔ Go to the Cheat menu and enter these codes for vampire goodness.

#### God Mode

TRIASSASSINDONTDIE

#### Full Health

LAMEYANKEEDONTFEED

#### Full Bloodlust

ANGRYXXXINANEHOOKER

#### Time Factor

NAKEDNASTYDISHWASHERDANCE

#### Secret Louisiana Level

BRIMSTONEINTEHBAYOU

#### Show Weapons

SHOWMEMYWEAPONS

#### Extreme Dismemberment

INSANEGIBSMODEGOOD

#### Level Select

ONTHELEVEL. Then hold X and press A at the Main menu to display the Level Selection screen.



### 18 STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER PS2

➔ Chapter/Level Select

Enter these at the Cheat Entry menu.

#### Chapter 1

SEEHOWTHEYRUN

#### Chapter 2

CITYPLANET

#### Chapter 3

LOCKDOWN

#### Chapter 4

DUGSOPLENTY

#### Chapter 5

BANTHAPOODOO

#### Chapter 6

MANDALORIANWAY

#### Mission 1

BEAST PIT

#### Mission 2

GIMMEMYJETPACK

#### Mission 3

CONVEYORAMA

#### Mission 4

BIGCITYNIGHTS

#### Mission 5

IEATNERFMEAT

#### Mission 6

VOTE4TRELL

#### Mission 7

LOCKUP

#### Mission 8

WHAT A RIOT

#### Mission 9

SHAFTED

#### Mission 10

BIGMOSQUITOS

#### Mission 11

ONEDEADDOG

#### Mission 12

WISHIHADMYSHIP

#### Mission 13

MOSGAMOS

#### Mission 14

TUSKENS R US

#### Mission 15

BIG BAD DRAGON

#### Mission 16

MONTRUSSISBAD

#### Mission 17

VOSAISBADDER

#### Mission 18

JANGOISBADDEST



### 19 BMX XXX PS2, XBOX

➔ Go to the Cheats menu to enter these passwords.

#### Unlock All Levels

Champagne Room

#### Unlock All Movies

XXX Rated Cheat

#### Unlock Amish Boy

ElectricityBad



### 20 DEAD TO RIGHTS XBOX

➔ Level Select

Go to the New Game option, then punch in Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Right, Y, X, X

# SCREEN

CRUISE SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER. DIESEL GETS PUMPED. PLAYERS GET PLAYED

XB

PC

PS2

XBLA

WII

PAGE

90



→ "Don't EVER call me short! I mean it!"

## MINORITY REPORT

EVERYBODY RUN!

➔ *Minority Report* is set in the not-too-distant future of Washington, D.C. 2054—a brisk 50 years away. But the D.C. of 2054 is a very different place than it is today.

Law enforcement has changed dramatically with the creation of the Pre-Crime unit who arrest and convict murderers before they commit the crime. Murder rate = zero.

The system is based on the visions of three unique, mysterious individuals—"precogs" who see the future. Pre-Crime detective John Anderton (Tom Cruise) believes in the system. His life is the system. The system is sup-

posed to be completely flawless.

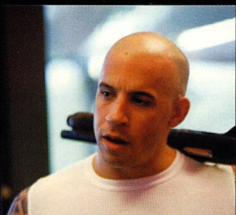
Then his world turns upside down. Anderton is predicted to commit the murder of a man he does not know. On the run from his own unit, he has 36 hours to prove his innocence, to prove the system that is never wrong is just that. Wrong.

Director Steven Spielberg's future-world is breathtaking, but not overwhelming. As well as offering spectacular action sequences and some futuristic police gadgets well worth getting paranoid over, *Minority Report* poses provocative questions: Can someone be found guilty of a crime that never actually hap-

pened? I don't really know, but then I don't live in the future—Ed

There's certainly a lot more here than meets the eye, and it goes some way, at least, toward making up for *A.I.* But not quite...

**Special features:** The highlight of the impressive selection of special features is "Deconstructing *Minority Report*"—how Spielberg brought together a group of respected researchers and eminent scientists to brainstorm their vision of the future, which became D.C., 2054. Also included are excellent features on the stunts and an in-depth look at the special effects courtesy of ILM. **B+**



➔ "Shaken...and stirred" quips XXX in a twist on the classic Bond line. Xander Cage (Vin Diesel) is a spy—code-name XXX—so comparison with the classic English icon is inevitable. However, beyond access to some super cool gadgets we all secretly want for Christmas, and witty one-liners when enemy agents die horribly, XXX is no Bond.

Living well outside the law, XXX writes his own rulebook early in the movie with an insane stunt [and what a stunt!]. He gets caught. The authorities give him a choice: Go to work for The Man or go to jail forever. Working undercover to provide intelligence on a ruthless Russian crime ring, XXX goes above and beyond the call of duty, saving the world [literally]. He gets the girl, too, of course. Fun. **B+**



➔ **The PlayStation 2 DVD Kit**  
My first impression of this kit was, "This is the remote I want for my DVD player." There are a ton of buttons covering every function that any full, stand-alone DVD player would have. There's also a hefty manual covering all those functions.

Uh oh, what's this? Is that an install disk? And an IR receiver that plugs into one of my only two joystick ports? Use one up and I have to remove this thing every time I want two-player action. That's lame.

Following the instructions, the install takes just a minute. Not bad. I pop in my first DVD and watch my stereo switch over to Dolby Digital without a hitch. The picture looks great. I get deep, true blacks, good contrast, and fantastic color. Sony is known for its well-made video products, and it shows. The PS2 is not a bad DVD player.

**The Xbox DVD Kit**  
At \$29.99, this kit is a tad more pricey than the PS2 version. I open the package to reveal a flimsy manual and goofy-looking remote with big rubber buttons. Given

# WHICH DVD PLAYER IS BEST?

A/U OBSESSIVE ANDREW BURWELL  
PITS XBOX AGAINST PS2

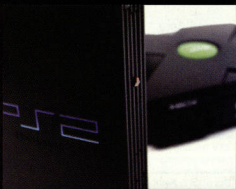


the size and placement of the buttons, they are far easier to press than those of the PS2's remote. However, they lack the advanced functions you would find on a regular DVD remote, such as program, angle, shuffle, repeat, etc.

I drop in a DVD. Dolby Digital clicks on, and the movie begins to play. Hmm...the picture looks washed out—the dark blacks are more like dark grays, and the colors lack punch. Bleh. As a DVD player, this thing isn't great. It's not bad by a long shot just not great. I start to fast-forward my movie, and...Wow. The Xbox has smooth, silky playback you don't normally see in a player. I press my DVD menu button and see another feature missing from most other players: zoom. You can zoom the picture up to 10 times. That's pretty nifty, OK, while an Xbox might not make the best DVD player in the world, it's got a functional remote and some cool extras that you won't find anywhere else.

So, how do the PS2 and Xbox compare to one another?

Obviously, you can't cram a premium DVD player into a home console, or no one



would be buying standalone DVD players. If you're a videophile, you want the absolute best in sound and video processing that a DVD player has to offer. In that case, these kits are not the way to go. Neither offers progressive-scan video. The Xbox video processor is subpar at best, and the PS2 DVD player is made of cheap components that render the DVD drive loud enough to distract you from your movie viewing. However, both these systems are very functional for the gamer who wants his or her movies, too. Even those gamers with high-end audio systems will be able to enjoy crisp Dolby Digital and DTS sound through their console's optical-out audio ports.

Given Sony's background in the home-electronics department, its DVD player comes out on top in terms of quality and the remote's capabilities. Microsoft's direction of catering to the customer, while lacking great video quality, gives the average Joe a solid remote with some nifty extras. **B+**  
—Andrew Burwell

➔ [below] Not impressed with either console's DVD playback? The Denon DVD-2800MK1 is as good as it gets, for a mere \$849. Right, we'll have two, then...



# THE LIST

GMA'S EXHAUSTIVE GUIDE TO THE ONLY GAMES THAT MATTER

BUYER'S GUIDE

## ➔ TOP 100 PS2 GAMES VICE IS NICE

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GMA RATING
<b>Ace Combat 4: Shattered Skies</b>	Namco	After experimenting with, well, experimental planes in Ace Combat 3, Namco returned to the real jets this time.	7
<b>Aggressive Inline</b>	Acclaim	From the makers of Dave Mirra BMX comes a just-as-playable inline skating game with a simple trick system and large levels.	8
<b>Army Men: Air Attack 2</b>	3DO	The best Army Men games have been part of the Air Attack series. A port of the PlayStation version, it's not exactly groundbreaking.	7
<b>ATV Offroad Fury</b>	Sony	The key to being a successful ATV offroader lies in launching yourself through the air as often as possible. A fun and floaty racer.	9
<b>Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance</b>	Interplay	A beautiful-looking Dungeons & Dragons-based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
<b>Burnout 2: Point of Impact</b>	Acclaim	An aggressive driving simulator that defies the rules of physics. Includes a dedicated crash mode for aspiring demolition-derby stars.	8
<b>Capcom vs. SNK 2</b>	Capcom	Take the best elements of Street Fighter and King of Fighters, and you'll have the best thing going in the world of 2D fighters.	8
<b>Contra: Shattered Soldier</b>	Konami	After numerous shoddy attempts to bring classic Contra gameplay to a next-gen system, Konami finally gets it right.	9
<b>Crazy Taxi</b>	Acclaim	As good as opening your PlayStation 2, rigging Dreamcast hardware inside, and then loading up a Dreamcast build of Crazy Taxi.	8
<b>Dance Dance Revolution: DDRMax</b>	Konami	Before, if you wanted to play DDR you'd have to subject yourself to Joe and Jane Public. Now, you can embarrass yourself at home.	8
<b>Dark Cloud</b>	Sony	Equal parts RPG, simulation, and world-builder, Dark Cloud pays homage to RPGs past while establishing its own unique identity.	8
<b>Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2</b>	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on Dave Mirra and it actually focused on...get this...biking.	8
<b>Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore</b>	Tecmo	Before the entire series went Xbox exclusive, Team Ninja's gang of jiggly grapplers found a temporary home on the PS2.	8
<b>Deus Ex: The Conspiracy</b>	Eidos	One of the best PC games of 2000 is ported faithfully to the PS2. Upgrade your character's skills and attributes to your liking.	8
<b>Devil May Cry</b>	Capcom	Did you know Devil May Cry was going to be Resident Evil 4, before it was spun off into its own series? Oh, you did? Nevermind, then.	9
<b>Dynasty Warriors 3</b>	Koei	Meteo combat set to the history of ancient China. Enemies number in the hundreds along its branching parts of the story.	9
<b>Escape from Monkey Island</b>	LucasArts	LucasArts has a fine tradition of putting out excellent graphical adventure games, and this latest charmer is no exception.	9
<b>F1 2002</b>	EA Sports	Minor refinements over the 2001 version may not be enough to justify the upgrade, but it's still a solid F1 game.	8
<b>FIFA 2001</b>	Electronic Arts	Until Konami's Winning Eleven series hits American shores, we'll have to deal with the FIFA franchise, which is not a bad thing.	9
<b>Final Fantasy X</b>	Square EA	The PS2's first Final Fantasy does away the traditional overworld, but introduces full voice acting. Artistically beautiful, as always.	9
<b>Freestyle 2</b>	EA Sports Big	It's SSX, only with dirt and bikes instead of snow and boards. Another over-the-top and energetic effort from EA's Big label.	8
<b>Gran Turismo 3 A-spec</b>	Sony	Core gameplay is unchanged, but the graphics get a complete overhaul—which makes GT3 the best-playing/looking sim on the market.	10
<b>Grand Theft Auto III</b>	Rockstar Games	A phenom in terms of both gameplay and sales. A free-roaming interactive mobster film that's sold more than 8 million copies to date.	9
<b>Grand Theft Auto: Vice City</b>	Rockstar Games	As bad boy Tommy Vercetti, there's something indescribably cool about cruising Vice City's beach strip while rocking to "Billie Jean."	10
<b>Half-Life</b>	Sierra	After it got cancelled for the Dreamcast, a console version of this PC classic didn't seem very likely. But here we are.	8
<b>Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland</b>	Natsume	It's a farming simulator. It's fun. These two statements may seem wildly incongruous, but somehow, Harvest Moon makes it work.	8
<b>High Heat Major League Baseball 2003</b>	3DO	It might not look like something special, but the High Heat series excels at providing a deep and comprehensive game of baseball.	8
<b>Hitman 2</b>	Eidos	Most of the problems with the original Hitman have been fixed, making this one of the more rewarding action games on the PS2.	9
<b>Hot Shots Golf 3</b>	Sony	Some golf games need something extra to attract gamers. How about arcade-style control, annoying taunts, and multiplayer modes?	9
<b>Ico</b>	Sony	An underappreciated work of art with challenging puzzles, fantastic lighting, and engrossing character relationships.	9
<b>Jade Coaxer 2</b>	Ubi Soft	A notable improvement over its predecessor, and an equally as addicting feature of monster breeding.	8
<b>Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy</b>	Sony	The studio that gave birth to Crash Bandicoot brings a couple of new mascots and new gorgeous 3D world to the PS2.	8
<b>Jet X20</b>	Sony	More extreme sports fun, but this time it's all wet. Finishing is only half the battle: performing tricks factors into the final standings.	7
<b>Kessen</b>	Electronic Arts	A strategy-sim based loosely on Japanese history, Kessen was one of the more interesting PS2 launch titles. A sequel is coming soon.	8
<b>Kingdom Hearts</b>	Square EA	When the amazing, talented artists from Square join forces with the amazing, talented artists from Disney, good things happen.	8
<b>Klonoa 2: Lunatic's Veil</b>	Namco	Klonoa became a rare find in the later days of the PlayStation. The outstanding sequel looks to share the same fate. Grab it if you can.	8
<b>Le Mans 24 Hours</b>	Infogrames	There's an option to play the famous endurance race true-to-life: 24 straight hours of driving. Better stock up on Mountain Dew.	8
<b>Madden NFL 2003</b>	EA Sports	The series' first foray into online console gaming is a success. Everything you love about Madden can now be shared with strangers.	9
<b>Maximo: Ghosts to Glory</b>	Capcom	It's the spiritual successor to the classic Ghosts 'n' Goblins, complete with heart-boxers and insane difficulty.	8
<b>MDK 2 Armageddon</b>	Interplay	Much-improved over the original Dreamcast incarnation, MDK 2 Armageddon is one of the better action games in recent times.	8
<b>Medal of Honor: Frontline</b>	Electronic Arts	A strong single-player campaign paves the way through the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
<b>Metal Gear Solid 2</b>	Konami	This highly anticipated sequel throws a real curveball early on in the game. It was probably the least confusing part of the story.	9
<b>Midnight Club</b>	Rockstar Games	This enjoyable and energetic one-on-one street racer from Rockstar provides a refreshing change of pace from the usual fare.	8
<b>Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon</b>	Bandai	Giant robots are great, but basing them on the Gundam license with Capcom developing makes them greater, if that's even possible.	8
<b>MotoGP</b>	Namco	Solid motorcycle racing, but if you have a choice, go with the sequel. It's got twice the number of tracks, among other enhancements.	8
<b>MotoGP 2</b>	Namco	An excellent motorcycle racer with an arcade-like mode for novices and a sim mode for those who want to get their hands dirty.	8
<b>NASCAR Thunder 2003</b>	EA Sports	Hate driving left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," Thunder 2003 should be right up your alley.	9
<b>NBA 2K3</b>	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to own a PS2 network adapter, NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
<b>NBA Live 2003</b>	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
<b>NBA Street</b>	Electronic Arts	All the trash-talking and showmanship of inner-city basketball, from the comfort of your suburban home. But why is it only for 2?	8

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	IGN RATING
NCAA Football 2002	Electronic Arts	Whenever an EA Sports game makes a "best of" list, rest assured previous years' versions aren't far behind.	9
NCAA Football 2003	EA Sports	A lot like Madden, only with exploited college kids, marching bands, and the option. It's also the best college football game available.	9
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	Strangely, the best version is on the least-powerful hardware. Running from cops has never been this fun, or free of consequence.	9
NFL Blitz 2K3	Sega Sports	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched Madden juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	So you like football games but don't care for playcalling strategy, formations, and clock management? Blitz has been here for years.	8
NHL 2002	Electronic Arts	Hockey is played on ice, with six men trying to put a puck into the other team's goal. This is a good digital representation of that sport.	9
NHL2K3	Sega Sports	For the more discerning hockey connoisseur, NHL2K3 has made great strides since its debut on the now-defunct Dreamcast.	9
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	The effort put forward in defeating Nobunga in Onimusha has gone to waste, as he's risen from the dead and appears in the sequel.	8
Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	Survival horror with a taste for feudal Japan, gorgeous artistic design, and a whole lot more action than its Resident Evil kin.	8
RAD: Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	It's hard to go wrong with giant robots blowing stuff up, but Enix's latest effort goes one step further with a novel control scheme.	8
Ratchet & Clank	Sony	Insomniac's terrific action-platformer has you jumping from world to world in search of new weapons and gadgets.	8
Rayman 2 Revolution	Ubisoft	One of the best 3D platformers available, the Rayman franchise doesn't get the attention it deserves. It's good, and you should buy it.	9
Real Pool	Infogrames	It's real. It's pool. It's Real Pool. If for some reason it had curved tables, exploding balls, and flaming cues, then it would be fake pool.	8
Red Faction	THQ	A first-person shooter that features destructible environments, driveable vehicles, and a strong single-player campaign.	9
Red Faction II	THQ	As entertaining as the original, but with a shorter campaign mode and detrimental framerate issues. Still worth checking out.	7
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Capcom	More of a true sequel than Resident Evil 3, its Dreamcast debut meant that many fans missed out. Problem solved!	8
Rez	Sega	A fairly standard shooter dressed as a visual and aural masterpiece. Sadly unappreciated by the vast majority of the gaming world.	8
Ridge Racer V	Namco	The always enjoyable Ridge Racer series scores well, thanks to solid control, an enthralling sense of speed, and a fitting sound track.	9
Robotech: Battlerey	TDK Mediactive	Cel-shaded graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic 1980s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	7
Rumble Racing	Electronic Arts	This fun arcade-racer originally started out with the NASCAR license, but it was dropped in favor of original designs.	8
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	This Greek mythology-based action game is an update of the arcade and NES classic in name only. Fun combat and great music.	9
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega	Arcade-style tennis perfection when it launched for Dreamcast. It's holding up just as well on PS2, too.	8
Silent Hill 2	Konami	More creepy than downright scary, the Silent Hill series takes a more sophisticated, cerebral approach to the survival-horror genre.	8
Sky Gunner	Attus	If you can look past the slowdown issue [and it can be a pretty big issue at times], Sky Gunner is a great shooting fun.	8
Sky Odyssey	Activision	A flight game that channels the spirit of Ploewings with mission-based gameplay and a large array of aircraft to pilot.	8
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	Sony	A solid platformer with a unique aesthetic and animations. Lacks a little in the challenge department, a little on the short side, too.	8
Smuggler's Run	Rockstar Games	Keeping in touch in Rockstar's games generally involving breaking the law, Smuggler's Run indulges the inner criminal in all of us.	8
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony	Possibly the best reason to own a PS2 network adapter. The team-based military tactics work better online than off.	9
Spy Hunter	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all of the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	8
SSX	Electronic Arts	A surprisingly good snowboarder with over-the-top stunts and great course design; it stands out as one of the better PS2 launch titles.	9
SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	SSX Tricky boasts a new set of insane gravity-defying and physically impossible stunts, not to mention all-new tracks and characters.	8
Sub Rebellion	Metro3D	Customizable submarines rule the waters of the future; Sub Rebellion is an action game that's short on graphics but very entertaining.	8
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	Another solid version of the hard-to-foul-up puzzler. Don't let the terrible box art steer you away from this one.	7
Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	Essentially Tekken 3 with enhanced graphics and tag-teaming. Which isn't bad, considering Tekken 3 is a great game to begin with.	8
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	Anything bearing the valuable Lord of the Rings license will sell well. Happily, there's more to this beat 'em up than just the license.	8
The Mark of Kri	Sony	A slick action game with innovative controls. Each button is assigned to a different enemy, allowing for combat with multiple targets.	8
Theme Park Roller Coaster	Electronic Arts	Sim City meets Six Flags. Design your own dangerous rollercoasters without fear of getting slapped with wrongful death lawsuits.	8
Time Crisis 2	Namco	What better way to debut the GunCon 2? Two players shoot cooperatively, teaming up and watching each other's backs.	7
TimeSplitters	Eidos	Many responsible for N64's GoldenEye are also responsible for this, and it shows. A great shooter with loads of multiplayer options.	8
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including masks, weapons, and game modes, too.	8
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	Cruise Tokyo's highways in search of less-than-legal street racing action. Despite some visual issues, it's definitely worth checking out.	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	The first Hawk to land on PS2. Neversoft upped the speed and added the manual, allowing for near limitless combo opportunities.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	Neversoft dropped the two-minute time limit in career mode and added an array of objectives. Level design is a step up from THPS3.	9
Twisted Metal: Black	Sony	With the franchise safely out of the hands of 989 Studios, Twisted Metal makes a welcome return to its former, gruesome glory.	8
Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony	If you buy a PS2 network adapter, you get it for free. Which kind of makes sense, considering you can't play it without one.	8
Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	The Virtua Fighter series has always been finely crafted, and this version is no exception. The depth of this game is staggering.	10
Wild Arms 3	Sony	A grand adventure with a wild west theme, enduring characters, great music, and a refreshingly uncomplicated battle system.	8
Wipeout Fusion	Barn	The Designer's Republic touch may be missing, but the series' oft-limited, never surpassed style of racing remains intact.	8
WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It	THQ	Even if this game scored a zero, it would still sell a truckload of copies. Such is the marketing power of Vince McMahon & Family.	8
Zone of the Enders	Konami	A straightforward action game with great mech design and an excellent camera, but repetitive battles and an abrupt story.	8

[BUY]

**ICO**  
 ➔ A timeless game in every sense of the word. Simple gameplay, intuitive controls, a dreamlike story, and some of the most impressive visuals the videogame world has ever seen make *Ico* an adventure like no other. Snag a copy—you'll thank us.



[AVOID]

**SIMPSONS SKATEBOARDING**  
 ➔ The Simpsons: Wrestling? Terrible. The Simpsons: Road Rage? Terrible. The Simpsons: Bart's Nightmare? Truly terrifying. It's one of the most valuable licenses in the entire world. And yet, no one can build a decent game around it. Terrible.



# PC TOP 50 SIM-TASTIC!

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	IGN RATING
<b>Aliens vs. Predator 2</b>	Sierra	Three completely different first-person shooters combined into one dark and terrifying gaming experience.	9
<b>Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn</b>	Interplay	The rare occasion when the sequel to a classic goes above and beyond its predecessor. Can't wait for III.	10
<b>Black &amp; White</b>	EA Games	Highly conceptual "god-game" that has you ruling over mortals with a little help from a giant cow monster.	10
<b>Battlefield 1942</b>	EA Games	Multiplayer shooter set in WWII that lets you jump in and out of vehicles [even planes!] while battling dozens of your friends.	9
<b>Civilization III</b>	Infogrames	Sid Meier's classic just keeps rolling along, getting bigger and more complex while somehow managing to remain just as addictive.	10
<b>Commandos 2</b>	Eidos	Control a squad of elite commandos in WWII as they infiltrate, detonate, and assassinate across multiple battlefields.	9
<b>Diablo II: Lords of Destruction</b>	Blizzard	The sequel to the ultimate dungeon-crawling clickfest should please anyone who wasted their teens playing the first game.	9
<b>Dungeon Siege</b>	Microsoft	Hack and slash doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes it can even be in beautiful 3D with no loading time between levels.	9
<b>Enemy Engaged:Comanche v. Hoku</b>	Empire Interactive	Extremely realistic attack chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger.	9
<b>EverQuest</b>	Sony Online	The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.	9
<b>EverQuest II</b>	Sony Online	The expansion pack to EverQuest opens up new worlds, new characters, and tigers with boobies [finally!].	9
<b>F1 2002</b>	EA Sports	Delivers authentic yet accessible Formula One racing enjoyment for every open-wheel racing fan out there.	9
<b>Fallout Tactics</b>	Interplay	Squad-based, tactical strategy game set in the same universe as the classic Fallout rpg set in a new standard.	10
<b>Freedom Force</b>	EA Games	Clever use of strategy and RPG elements help to make this witty comic book superhero-themed game one of the best.	10
<b>Front Office Football 2001</b>	EA Sports	Football management simulation at its purest: X's and O's mixed in with the complexities of drafting and the salary cap.	9
<b>Ghost Recon: Island Thunder</b>	Ubisoft	This top-notch mission pack makes a decent modern combat simulation into an outstanding one.	9
<b>Giants: Citizen Kabuto</b>	Interplay	A shooter/strategy hybrid full of weird British humor, unique and beautiful 3D graphics, and naked lady sea monsters.	9
<b>Grand Prix 4</b>	Infogrames	It's a tough choice for formula one fans, with GP4 and F1 2002 both being worthy of your hard-earned dollars.	9
<b>Grand Theft Auto III</b>	Rockstar Games	The poster child for all that's wrong in gaming is chock-full of all that's fun in gaming. And you get to import your own mp3s.	10
<b>Hitman 2: Silent Assassin</b>	Eidos	An almost-perfect blend of action and stealth, it's a humongous improvement over the first game.	10
<b>IL-2 Sturmovik</b>	Ubisoft	Amazingly realistic WWII flight sim covering a region seldom visited in computer games: the Eastern Front.	10
<b>Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast</b>	LucasArts	Yeah, the lightsaber battles are sweet, but Lando's cameo just about seals the deal. And is his ship fly or what?	10
<b>Kohan: Ahirman's Gift</b>	Strategy First	Surprisingly accessible fantasy-themed real time strategy that's as much fun in single player as against other mages online.	9
<b>Madden NFL 2003</b>	EA Sports	Finally as good as all the superior console football games out there, this one is a gridiron classic on PC.	10
<b>Max Payne</b>	G.O.D.	Despite some corny writing, this uberhip noir videogame feels like a movie but plays like a great action game.	9
<b>Medal of Honor: Allied Assault</b>	EA Games	Worth it just for the incredibly intense D-Day mission that almost matches the same scene in Saving Private Ryan.	9
<b>Medieval: Total War</b>	Activision	The ultimate historical strategy game has everything from political intrigue to sweeping real-time battles.	10
<b>Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002</b>	Microsoft	The definitive civilian flight simulator. So authentic, actual airline pilots use it to keep their skills sharp.	9
<b>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</b>	Bethesda	The definitive, open-ended RPG epic. Sort of like GTA3 but with magic and Elves and all that D&D flava.	9
<b>Motocross Madness 2</b>	Microsoft	It's mud-splattering, off-road supercross fun with this free-wheeling dirtbike simulator from the makers of ATV Offroad Fury.	9
<b>Myth III: The Wolf Age</b>	G.O.D.	Bungie's renowned magical real-time-strategy title goes 3D and maintains its fantastic multiplayer reputation.	9
<b>NASCAR Racing 4</b>	Vivendi Universal	Superior simulation of the nail-biting sport of stock racing, with the amazingly realistic physics matched by a sublime 3D engine.	9
<b>Neverwinter Nights</b>	Infogrames	If you're a D&D nerd then you already know, but buy this one for the multiplayer and user-made mods.	9
<b>No One Lives Forever</b>	Vivendi Universal	Austin Powers ain't got nothing on Cate Archer, the hottest digital chick with a gun since that old hag Lara Croft.	9
<b>No One Lives Forever 2</b>	Vivendi Universal	As funny and stylish as the original '60s spy spoof (if that's even possible) and more fun to play, too.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis</b>	Codemasters	The first in the highly original series of combat sims, this soldier/light/tank sim went on to win COW's 2001 Game of the Year award.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Red Hammer</b>	Codemasters	Letting you play as the bad guys is the sure way into our hearts. Especially when they're nasty Roosties.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Resistance</b>	Codemasters	Features and content worthy of a brand-new game, this is a benchmark expansion of an overlooked classic game.	9
<b>Rowan's Battle of Britain</b>	Empire Interactive	Best re-creation of dogfighting ever seen in a WWII flight sim, which is saying something considering how many there are.	9
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Interplay	Action/strategy hybrid defies the conventions of all the genres it touches, while making for a fantastically original multiplayer experience.	9
<b>Serious Sam</b>	G.O.D.	Brainless running and gunning is an underappreciated way to waste a couple of hours with a great-looking game.	9
<b>Sid Meier's Sim Golf</b>	EA Games	SimGolf will have you laying out golf courses and building resorts like a virtual Robert Trent Jones.	9
<b>Stronghold</b>	G.O.D.	Castle-building strategy game that's part medieval architecture sim, part siege engine showdown—boiling oil and all.	9
<b>The Sims</b>	EA Games	It's impossible to categorize EA's addictive superclubbuster life simulator, just like it's impossible to stop playing it.	10
<b>The Sims: Hot Date</b>	EA Games	Gamers everywhere rejoice! Finally a game where you can actually learn a thing or two about interacting with the opposite sex!	10
<b>The Sims: House Party</b>	EA Games	Get your soiree [no to mention your freak] on with this great addition to the Sims amazing stable of add-on packs.	9
<b>The Sims: Livin' Large</b>	EA Games	The first Sims expansion pack, this one gives you a whole new set of career paths and more clutter for your Sim life.	9
<b>The Sims: Unleashed</b>	EA Games	Not just a great addition to EA's behemoth franchise, an essential one. Everyone needs a dog or maybe a monkey.	10
<b>US Open 2002</b>	Strategy First	Hard to find fault with this fine tennis sim, especially since the sport is so woefully underrepresented on the platform.	9
<b>Warlords: Battlecry II</b>	Ubisoft	RTS and RPG, two great flavors that go great together, especially when stirred together with a big gnarly wizard's staff!	9

XB  
PC  
PS2  
GTA  
G2

PAGE 94

## [BUY!]

### N.O.L.F 2

➔ The sequel to one of the most surprising hits of 2000 is even better than the original. First-person spy-thrills abound as operative Cate Archer sets out to save the world. 9/10



## [AVOID!]

### VIRTUAL RESORT: SPRING BREAK

➔ Survivor meets MTV Spring Break in this immediately tiresome management game that leans heavily on crap toilet humor and a simplistic logic. Zoom in and its pixel hell. 4/10



# ➔ XBOX TOP 50 GREEN IS GOOD. GREEN WORKS.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GNR RATING
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Wvendi Universal	A beautiful-looking Dungeons & Dragons-based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
Blimx: The Time Sweeper	Microsoft	This green-eyed feline can control the flow of time, but puzzles designed around that concept are lacking. Great idea, flawed execution.	7
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	The Legacy of Kain story picks up where the original Blood Omen left off, with you in control of the evil-yet-likeable vampire Kain.	8
Burnout	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes, which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
Cel Damage	Microsoft	Crazy cartoon-car combat with great use of cel-shading and varied multiplayer options. It can quickly become repetitive, however.	8
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	Everybody's favorite rally racer, Colin McRae has got a brand-new game, featuring finely tuned physics and car damage.	9
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller	Sega	It's hard to improve upon the original, but that didn't stop Sega from trying. Twice. The setting is new, but it plays pretty much the same.	8
Dead or Alive 3	Tecmo	It's not the deepest of fighters, but it definitely competes for the best-looking prize. Plus, the girls are back in all their bouncy glory.	8
F1 2001	Electronic Arts	A Formula One racer with a plethora of gameplay options, including several entertaining multiplayer modes. No wheel support, though.	8
Genma Onimusha	Capcom	An enhanced port of the PS2 game, Genma Onimusha adds improved graphics, available 5.1 audio output, and a new type of soul engine.	7
Halo	Microsoft	The definitive reason to own an Xbox. There are plenty of secondary reasons, sure, but no Xbox owner should be without Halo.	10
Jays Bond 007: Night Fire	EA Games	GoldenEye set an impossibly-high standard for the Bond license, but NightFire does an admirable job of re-creating the feel of the films.	8
Jet Set Radio Future	Sega	Jet Set Radio Future has substance and an overabundance of style. Sega simplified tagging in favor of a more robust trick system.	8
Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	It's a crowded genre on Xbox. With three different franchises competing for your attention, Madden is always a safe bet.	9
Max Payne	Rockstar Games	The "bullet time" effect is the big draw of this action/shooter. Inspired by Hong Kong action flicks, set in a gritty New York City.	8
MechAssault	Microsoft	It's a good single-player game, but it really shines on Xbox Live, where you're pitted against other mech pilots.	8
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	A strong single-player campaign paves the way through the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	Includes the original MGS2: Sons of Liberty, 5 brand new missions featuring Solid Snake, and a slew of challenging VR missions.	9
MotoGP: Ultimate Racing Technology	THQ	Different from Namco's MotoGP games of almost the exact same name, but just as good. Can be played via system link or online.	9
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate driving left for NASCAR? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," Thunder 2003 should be right up your alley.	9
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to sign up for Xbox Live, NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
NBA Inside Drive 2002	Microsoft	Not a bad debut for Microsoft's internal sports team, but it pales to EA's and Sega's established names. Should improve over time.	7
NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
NFL 2K3	Sega	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched Madden juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	So you like football games but don't care for playcalling strategy, formations, and clock management? Blitz has been here for years.	7
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	"NHL Hitz" rhymes with "NFL Blitz." That's no mere coincidence. Hockey with no rules is just as fun as its lawless football counterpart.	8
Oddworld: Munch's Oddyssey	Microsoft	Originally destined for PS2, the now Xbox-exclusive Munch's Oddyssee is a clever action/puzzle game with a great deal of character.	9
Phantom Crash	Phantagram	The Xbox certified isn't lacking in mech titles. The quirky, unique Phantom Crash has upgradeable mechs and a story-driven 1P mode.	8
Project Gotham Racing	Microsoft	The refinement of the Kudos point system is the biggest difference between Project Gotham and its Dreamcast predecessor.	8
RalliSport Challenge	Microsoft	This rally racer is one of the best examples of the Xbox's power. More arcade than simulation, with enough depth to please both camps.	8
Robotech: Battletory	TDK Mediaeject	Cel-shaded graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic 1980s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	8
Rocky	Ubi Soft	The best boxing game you can get for your Xbox. A technical knockout really, considering there's not much competition.	7
Sega GT 2002	Sega	Sega's answer to the Gran Turismo phenomenon. Not quite as expansive in terms of tracks and cars, but even more on the details.	8
Shenmue II	Microsoft	The second chapter of Yu Suzuki's opus sees our hero Ryo traversing the streets of Hong Kong in search of his father's killer.	7
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams	Konami	A creepy port of a creepy game with a creepy bonus: a creepy extra episode of the creepy story. Play without lights for extra creepiness.	8
Spy Hunter	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all of the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	8
Star Wars: Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	As usual, the Star Wars universe inspires great aesthetic design to complement for Raven Software's solid sense of game design.	8
Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	Plays like the original Starfighter, but set against events from Episode II. Graphically underwhelming, like its PS2 cousin.	7
Steel Battalion	Capcom	If you want to play this game, you'll have to shell out \$200 for the massive controller. For those with the cash, it's well worth it.	8
Test Drive	Atari	Race for pink slips on the underground circuit, and live out your Vin Diesel role-playing fantasy. Or just act normal and race cars.	8
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda	An exhaustive open-ended RPG that essentially allows you to make it up as you go along, with hundreds of people to talk to.	8
The House of the Dead III	Sega	While there's nothing overtly wrong with it, HOD3 just doesn't offer that much that's new. There's no official first-party light gun, either.	7
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the PS2 original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	8
ToeJam & Earl III	Sega	Toe Jam and Earl haven't seen much action lately, but the funk is strong this time, and it's better to enjoy funk with a partner. Oh yeah.	7
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubi Soft	There's not much of a graphical upgrade from the PC version, but the interface and audio is improved. Goes great with Xbox Live.	8
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubi Soft	Comparisons to Metal Gear Solid were inevitable. Splinter Cell holds its own, and even outdoes Konami's behemoth at times.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	If you have to have Tony Hawk 3, improved graphics and framerate and the custom sound track make this the best version to get.	9
Unreal Championship	Atari	Mindless deathmarching with great weapon design and entertaining multiplayer modes, including the sportlike Bombing Run.	8
World Championship Baseball	Sega Sports	Finally gets a franchise mode worth mentioning, along with fantastic visuals and sound. Control is improved, but still somewhat limited.	9
Wrackless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	Looks great but problems quickly become apparent, including inconsistent difficulty, questionable physics, and poor mission scenarios.	7

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PAGE 95

## [BUY]

### MOTO GP

➔ THQ's MotoGP series has been synonymous for some time with realistic motorcycle-racing thrills, but this Xbox installment is as good as it gets on two wheels.



## [AVOID]

### KABUKI WARRIORS

➔ This is a 2D fighter of the lowest caliber. Repetitive character models, backgrounds, sound effects, and gameplay earn this game bargain-bin status right off the block. Run away! 9/10



# → GAMECUBE TOP 50 SHINE ON!

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GNR RATING
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	It was a solid series on N64, but Acclaim's first outing on GameCube left plenty to be desired.	6
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	All-Star Baseball '03 is much improved over the buggy '02 effort. Want to get into the franchise mode? Bring a huge memory card.	7
Animal Crossing	Nintendo	The game that never ends and is based largely on routine chores, yardwork, and interior decorating. So why is it so much fun to play?	9
Beach Spikers	Sega	Easy to pick up and easy to play, à la Virtua Tennis. Like most arcade sports games, it's definitely better as a multiplayer affair.	8
Bomberman Generation	Majesco	A surviving member of the Old School, Bomberman has earned some tenure in the industry. This time he sports a cel-shaded look.	8
Burnout	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	Universal	The mascot that would master Mario isn't doing so hot these days, thanks in part to a developer change and stale design.	7
Cubivore	Atlus	A simple but compelling game of reproduction and cannibalism. Plus, you can get "hump punts." You know you're interested.	6
Dark Summit	THQ	It's snowboarding set against some sort of nonsense about a secret government plot. The important part is that it's snowboarding.	7
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynn for inspiration, XXX was based on the well-mannered Dave Mirra and actually focused on...get this...biking.	8
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	Gamers in need of a puzzle fix would find enjoyment with this take on Tetris and Mr. Driller. It also has an eggs-cellent pun in the title.	6
Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	Nintendo	This game, if you let it, will mess with your head. The insanity effects are clever (the first time) and the scenery is downright creepy.	8
FIFA 2002	Electronic Arts	Though there's always room for improvement, EA's soccer series has been fairly decent. Plus, there's no real alternative yet.	7
Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee	Atari	Godzilla & Co. wrecking cityscapes and each other, with support up to four players. What's not to like?	7
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	This Potter kid seems to be pretty popular, so the folks at EA decided to make a Zelda-esque adventure based on his magical exploits.	7
Lost Kingdoms	Activision	The GameCube's first RPG, featuring fast-paced battles, a multiplayer mode, and a well-designed card system. Worth checking out.	8
Luigi's Mansion	Nintendo	We all wanted Mario at launch, and we got this. Like getting socks for Christmas, it's good and comfortable, but not what we wanted.	7
Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	Those who bought the GameCube version instead of the PS2 edition were treated to roughly the same game. Good for them, though.	9
Mario Party 4	Nintendo	There are few things better in life than three friends, Mario Party, and a healthy flow of alcoholic beverages (if you're legal, of course).	8
Metal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	A new story of D-Day and the ensuing action on the French front lines. The GameCube version has a multiplayer mode the others don't.	7
Metrod Prime	Nintendo	As if they dissected Super Metroid, added a dimension, and put it back together again with slick graphics. In fact, it's exactly like that.	10
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Games	It's apparently the fastest growing "sport" in America, and Thunder 2003 is packed under the hood; including an in-depth career mode.	9
NBA 2K2	Sega	More of a sim than NBA Courtside, but it's the best basketball simulation available. Includes a gear mode of street ball, as well.	9
NBA 2K3	Sega	Added to this year's version is a slick ESPN interface, an upgraded franchise mode, and a fresh class of rookies.	9
NBA Courtside	Nintendo	No longer under the Nintendo development umbrella, Left Field's final installment of the Courtside series is a worthy b-ball game.	8
NBA Street	EA Sports Big	The spirit of NBA Jam lives on, but with 3-on-3 instead of 2-on-2. The fact that the multiplayer maxes out at 2 instead of 4 is suspicious.	8
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	For some reason, Hot Pursuit 2 runs worse on the GameCube than it does on the less-powerful PlayStation 2.	6
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	Puritans will yell "HERESY!" at the new Pac-Man who can take multiple hits. People who actually enjoy good games will ignore them.	7
Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II	Sega	Unhealthily addictive. The pursuit of rare items helps one ignore the somewhat repetitive battle (and the \$9 monthly fee).	9
Pikmin	Nintendo	Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto got the idea for this quirky strategy game from observing his personal garden. What kind of gardener?	8
Resident Evil	Capcom	This remake could almost be described as a new game. But is it really Resident Evil without the laughably bad voice acting?	9
Resident Evil 0	Capcom	This one actually is a brand-new game, with significant changes, such as droppable items and the dirty-sounding character-swapping.	8
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega	An arcade-style soccer game with off-the-wall characters, arenas, and power-ups. And it's still better than Virtua Striker!	8
Smuggler's Run: Warzones	Rockstar Games	An enhanced version of Smuggler's Run 2, with new vehicles and maps, and an expanded multiplayer mode with support for four players.	8
Sonic Adventure 2: Battle	Sega	Remember when you and your friends held daily Sonic vs. Mario debates? Don't you feel silly now? Or at least a little odd?	7
Sonic Mega Collection	Sega	Sure, the Sonic games may have been great, but \$40 may be too steep a price for a collection of old and enhanced games.	7
Spider-Man	Activision	Spider-Man, Spider-Man, does whatever a spider can. Good luck following him with a shoddy camera system and control issues.	6
Star Fox Adventures	Nintendo	Rare's last Nintendo effort took forever, but Star Fox Adventures takes its inspiration from The Legend of Zelda—and it ain't bad.	7
Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader	LucasArts	At times, Rogue Leader syncs closely with scenes from the movies. Impressive when you consider it took only nine months to make.	9
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	All the intense action of the movie, without melodramatic writing and weak acting. As with many GC games, multiplayer is a big draw.	7
Super Mario Sunshine	Nintendo	Maybe not quite as groundbreaking as Super Mario 64 was, but even when Nintendo "misses," they make a big splash.	9
Super Monkey Ball	Sega	Monkeys in balls! An exceptional game based on a simple concept; some of the later levels will eat you for lunch.	8
Super Monkey Ball 2	Sega	Even more monkeys in balls running around for your entertainment! The extra game modes add quite a bit to the simple concept.	8
Super Smash Bros. Melee	Nintendo	A Nintendo fanatic's dream, if only for the exhaustive gallery of collectible Nintendo characters. Plus, you can beat the crap out of Jigglypuff.	9
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	7
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	For those who have the Dual Shock firmly hardwired into their psyche, switching over to the oddly-shaped GameCube can prove difficult.	9
Virtua Striker 2002	Sega	Arcade soccer that was all the rage in Japan, despite severely limited control over player and ball movement. Looks nice, though.	6
Wave Race: Blue Storm	Nintendo	Nintendo messed with the controls when they didn't need any messing with, making Blue Storm pale in comparison to its predecessor.	6
WWE WrestleMania X8	THQ	Ratings have cooled and Stone Cold has had some run-ins with John Law. This is irrelevant, as wrestling games will always sell.	8
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	If you absolutely must have an X-Men fighting game, this is your best bet. Better fighters exist, but they don't feature Wolverine.	7

## [BUY!]

### LOST KINGDOMS

➔ This rather brief adventure features a mediocre story, graphics, and production values, but a cleverly implemented real-time combat system keeps the action varied and intense. 8/10



## [AVOID!]

### CRASH BANDICOOT: WRATH/CORT.

➔ The source material was already a derivative amalgamation of prior Crash titles. The Wrath of Cortex features tired gameplay mechanics and the usual camera flaws, and it feels uninspired.







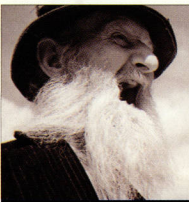
# PS1 TOP 25 IT'S OLD, BUT ITS SOUL STILL BURNS!

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GNR RATING
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	Konami	Like Super Metroid, with vampires instead of Metroids. And it was on PlayStation. A certifiable classic.	9
Chrono Cross	Square EA	It wasn't quite the Chrono Trigger sequel most people expected, but it's a magnificent game by its own right.	10
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	Codemasters	Americans might be slow in recognizing the name, but race fans know that the Colin McRae games were and are among the best.	9
Crash Team Racing	Sony	Countless mascot racers flooded store shelves during the PlayStation era, and Crash Team Racing was the only good one. Really.	9
Einhandler	Sony	"Einhandler" is German for "awesome 2D shooter that should have sold way more than it did." That, or "one-handed." We're not sure.	9
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	We're not exactly sure how two games out of a series of nine constitutes an "anthology," but they're good games nonetheless.	9
Final Fantasy IX	Square EA	The crystals return to the series, along with a four-member party, blue magic, and black mages. Biggs and Wedge, sadly, do not.	10
Final Fantasy VII	Sony	Brought RPGs into the Western spotlight and contained the most debated plot twist of an era. We won't spoil it, but no, you can't.	9
Final Fantasy VIII	Square EA	Things were more "real" this time around. As real as chocobos, guardian forces, and "time compression" could be, anyways.	9
Gran Turismo	Sony	Of course it seems foolish now, but the replays had some of us doing double-takes to make sure we weren't watching real race footage.	9
Gran Turismo 2	Sony	More tracks, more cars, more races, more cars, more cars, more modes, and more cars. The second lap was even better than the first.	10
Madden NFL 2001	Electronic Arts	Don't call it a comeback, he's been here for years. Play a version of Madden where the Rams could actually win with Kurt Warner.	9
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Hideo Kojima's cinematic classic continues to impress, and features the first video to unofficially win E3's Game of Show. Twice.	10
NFL GameDay '97	Sony	Hilped to steal the football crown away from Madden [only to fumble it right back a few years later].	9
NHL '98	Electronic Arts	While still a decent game of hockey, this is one of the series' brighter spots. Played in college dorms throughout the country.	9
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	An unlikely hero rises up to overthrow big business. It's very clever; the political overtones are great for that last-minute term paper.	9
Point Blank	Namco	If Time Crisis taught us to be killers, then surely Point Blank taught us how to shoot up a car before it fell on us from 40 stories up.	9
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	Zombies running amok in Raccoon City; more B-movie video acting running amok on your speakers. Enough to fill two discs this time!	9
Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	Plenty of cars, silky-smooth graphics, and of all things, a story mode. Best played with the Joystick controller.	10
Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	Another well-executed arcade port and arguably the best version of Street Fighter to grace the system.	9
Tekken 3	Namco	An amazing conversion, given the difference between the arcade and PlayStation hardware at the time. Set the standard for bonuses.	10
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Activision	Some say it's the best installment of the series in terms of control, music, and course design. So do we, actually.	10
Twisted Metal 2	Sony	The granddaddy of vehicular combat games. Sweetest is damning evidence that clowns and anything related to clowning is evil.	9
Worms Armageddon	Hasbro Interactive	A highly addictive turn-based strategy game, and a practical alternative to throwing grenades at the sidewalk after a rainshower.	9
You Don't Know Jack	Sierra	The ultimate judge of useless-yet-impressive knowledge, assuming you still can't find your Star Wars edition of Trivial Pursuit.	9

# GAME BOY ADVANCE TOP 50 SIZE MATTERS

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Advance Wars	Nintendo	Turn-based military strategy that should be a part of everyone's GBA library. Once you get sucked in, it's hard to pull yourself away.	8
Baseball Advance	THQ	There's only four stadiums and there's no multiplayer, but it's still a great game of baseball.	8
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	Konami	Castlevania was meant to be played in two dimensions, and this game shows why. A complex card system governs your special abilities.	9
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	Konami	The second Castlevania game is one of the best reasons to own a Game Boy Advance. The colors are brighter and the bosses are bigger.	10
ChuChu Rocket	Sega	Highly addictive and highly cute puzzle action from Sega. Best played with friends.	8
ESPN Golf	Konami	It's always a good idea to have a golf game as a part of your portable library. ESPN Golf is that game.	8
F-Zero Maximum Velocity	Nintendo	An enhanced port of the classic SNES racer with improved graphics and support for 4 players.	8
Golden Sun	Nintendo	A deep combat engine and brilliant graphics make this the best RPG available on the GBA.	9
GT Advance Championship	THQ	A great-looking and playing racer with one major drawback: a tedious password save system. If you can get past that, well, good for you.	9
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	The best reason to get this is the ability to link with the Gamecube version to transfer items and spells.	8
Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land	Nintendo	A remake of the NES classic Kirby's Adventure with updated graphics and multiplayer support.	8
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams	Namco	Straying from the original formula, this Klonoa is more of a puzzle game than a platformer with great graphics and sound.	8
Konami Crazy Racers	Konami	A Mario Kart-esque mascot racer filled with classic Konami characters like Dracula, Goemon and MG's Ninja.	9
Lunar Legend	Ubi Soft	The anime cut-scenes and superb video acting may be gone, but the great gameplay and story of Lunar remain intact.	8
Mario Kart: Super Circuit	Nintendo	A balanced blend of Super Mario Kart and Mario Kart 64 that even includes all the Tracks from the former.	8
Mega Man Zero	Capcom	A difficult yet engaging installment of the X sidestory played as Zero, who is equipped with an arm cannon and beam saber.	9
Metroid Fusion	Nintendo	The follow-up to Super Metroid is eight years late, but the wait was well worth it. An adventure that ends way too quickly.	9
Puyo Pop	THQ	The series has been around a while, but this is the first American portable version of the puzzleizer based on colored blobs.	8
Rayman Advance	Ubi Soft	Rayman is just as good in 2D as he is in 3D. It looks great and provides a decent challenge.	8
Super Mario Advance	Nintendo	Aside from the odd naming system, you can't really complain about a portable version of Super Mario Bros. 2	8
Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2	Nintendo	There's really not much else that can be said except "portable Super Mario World" and "you should buy it."	9
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis	Atlus	An incredibly deep strategy RPG with a branching story line and a rewarding battle system.	8
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past	Nintendo	A Link to the Past is worth the money by itself, but the new four-player adventure mode is the icing on the cake.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	It's amazing how they managed to cram Tony Hawk into a cartridge, while keeping the essence of the game true to the console version.	8
Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3	Nintendo	Yoshi is the star of this show, one of the greatest 2D platformers ever put to silicon. There are even a couple of new bonus levels.	9

AD  
AC  
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GBA  
GC



HE'S OLD! HE'S PISSED!

# GAME GEEZER

YE MYSTERIOUS OLDE GAME GEEZER GOES OFF ON GETTING OFF. "BAHI"

➔ After staring at the cover of this first issue of *GMR* far longer than a man who has actually had sex ever should, I have only one question: Does the game ship with a one-handed controller? No, seriously. Look at her. I'm not sure whether to be disgusted with *GMR* for appealing to my baser instincts or grateful to them for bringing this lovely lass into my life. Being a conscientious journalist, I will keep the issue under my pillow until I decide.

Actually, judging from all the screenshots, I'm not even sure a one-handed controller will be necessary. Because I'm not sure there's a game here. Or if there is, it certainly seems beside the point. Out of the seemingly hundreds of *Dead or Alive: Extreme Beach Volleyball* screenshots that I've now seen and burned onto CDs, I swear I can't remember seeing one that showed anyone actually playing volleyball. In fact, I'm not sure I've ever even seen a volleyball or a net—just shot after shot of barely legal, bikini-clad babes, lounging around, leaning back, and bending over so we can ogle their prodigious polygons from a variety of strategic angles.

We all know this is totally pathetic, right? I mean, do I

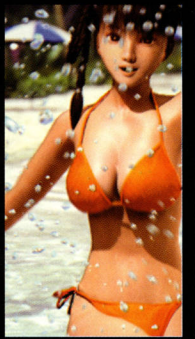
have to say this out loud? We are talking about fake girls here. Digital models. Drawn by men—most of whom have probably never touched a real girl before. So think about this: If you find yourself attracted to one of these women, then what you are actually attracted to is some other guy's sexual fantasy. Which may mean that what you really should be looking at is a men's volleyball game—except, strangely, Tecmo doesn't seem to be interested in making one of those. Gee, I wonder why?

Look, I'm not trying to be all holier-than-thou here. I'm not going to harsh everyone's buzz and say that Tecmo should be ashamed of itself for making this game, even though it should. You put a jiggy pair of mummies in front of me, and odds are I'm going to look at 'em, just like everyone else. What can I say? I was breast fed. It's nostalgia for the good old days.

But that doesn't mean I can't think that this trend isn't just pathetic and embarrassing and a true sign that the gaming industry has a long way to go before it actually makes anything truly worthy of the "mature game" label. So far, every "mature" game I've ever seen looks more like

something aimed at eighth-grade boys. Fart jokes. Profanity. Large female breastages. [*And your problem is?—Ed.*] All these years of videogames, all this technology, all this massive brainpower by all these genius developers, and the best we can come up with for "mature" is the gaming equivalent of a *Porky's* movie?

Bah. I understand that sex sells, especially since I'm often the one buying. But man, let's try to grow up, just a little. Let's put some clothes back on these poor girls and save this stuff for where it truly belongs: the Internet. 📧



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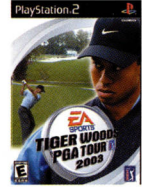
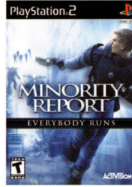
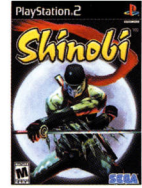
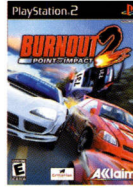
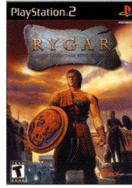
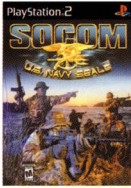
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Gamefly	<a href="http://www.gamefly.com">www.gamefly.com</a>	26-27
NAMCO HOMETEK	<a href="http://www.namco.com">www.namco.com</a>	15
Sega Of America Dreamcast	<a href="http://www.sega.com">www.sega.com</a>	19
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