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ISSUE 161 JANUARY 2006

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Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 161 JANUARY 2006 £3.99

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- Brain Exercise
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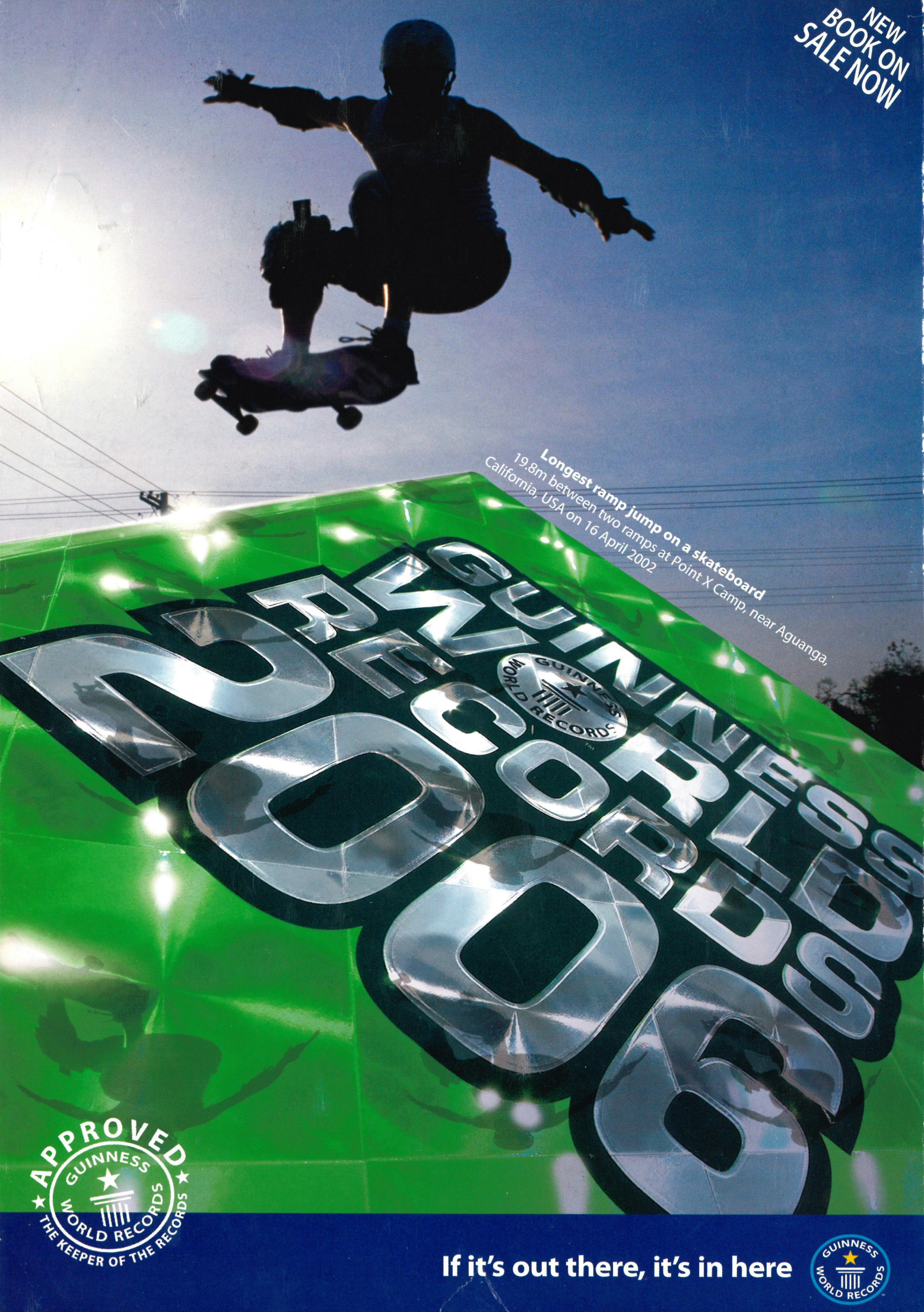
and more!

ISSUE 161 JANUARY 2006 ANIMAL CROSSING WILD WORLD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Longest ramp jump on a skateboard
19.8m between two ramps at Point X Camp, near Aguanga, California, USA on 16 April 2002
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS 2006
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If it's out there, it's in here
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

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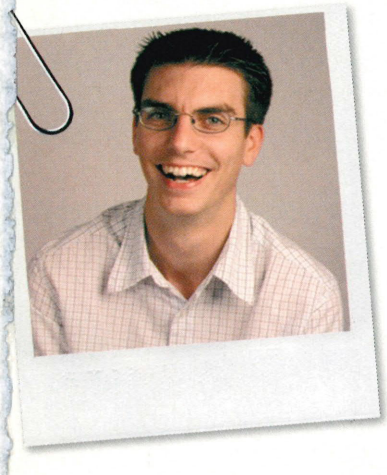

100 issues ago I sat at a computer and wrote my first words in *NOM*

Work it out and that's over eight years of Nintendo games. Back then, only the Japanese knew what a Pokémon was. I've witnessed the first play of *Mario Sunshine*, *Metroid Prime* and *Perfect Dark* to name but a few and reviewed some of the worst games ever. Feel the shame if you bought *Buffy* on GB Color or N64 *Superman*. But nothing can top the memories of the first day: "Once you've done those tips pages Tim, we've got a game you need to preview." It wasn't just any old game. It was *GoldenEye* - the one game above all others that the *NOM* team has played the most. It was used so much that the label rubbed off the cart and every controller had that white powder stuff ruining the Stick. Who knows what the next eight years hold? Revolution for sure, but today there's only one thing you need to concern yourself about. Get *Mario Kart DS*, get online and get involved.

Enjoy the mag!

Tim Street

Editor

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WHO DOES WHAT

(and their favourite *Animal Crossing* accessory)

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DK's Big Bananas

THE COOLEST THING IN GAMES THIS MONTH

THIS MONTH... DS ONLINE IS CLEARLY THE FUTURE

You're sitting at home, doing nothing and desperately want to play some multiplayer *Mario Kart DS*. But unless you fancy rounding up some tramps who have a DS, you're not going to be able to. Unless... you play Wi-Fi? YES! Nintendo scorched into the online gaming zone last month and it did it in style. If there's anything better than *Mario Kart DS* online, we'll roundhouse kick it into orbit.

Now there's never an excuse not to be playing *Mario Kart* against real people. During the day, you can play people in Europe. As the evening draws in and you stare blearily into the early hours of the morning, you can play Yanks until it's time to start playing Europeans again. People will fear your stats and worship your 100+ wins.

We've been playing everywhere we can: pubs, cafes, work, home... a zoo, the moon. Anywhere with a Wi-Fi connection that can be used to quench our lust for continuous *Mario Kart*. Wherever you go, you're not safe from a potential beating. It's GREAT and we love it more than toast.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN PETERBOROUGH... ROB SECRETLY USES NOM'S BANDWIDTH TO CRUSH MIKE AND ADD TO HIS MIGHTY WIN TALLY.
POW!

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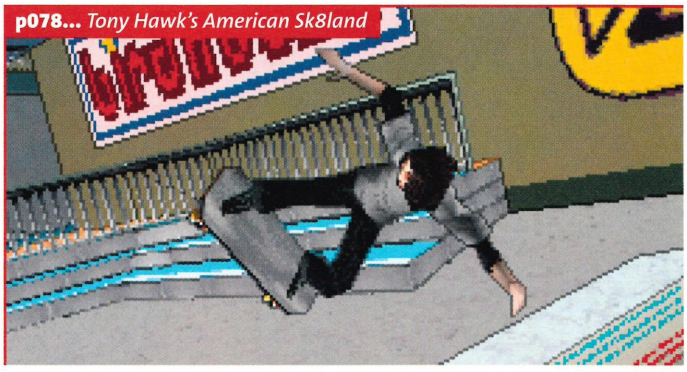
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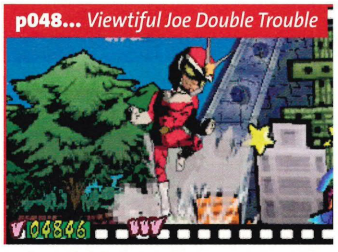
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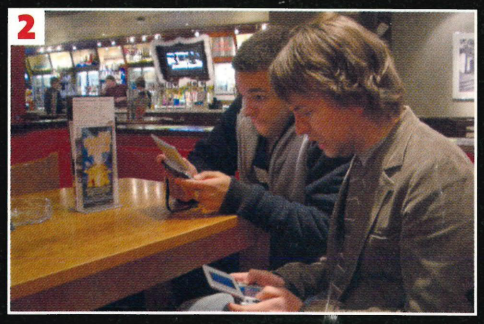
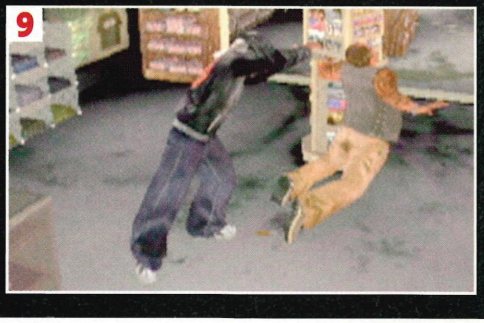


10 THINGS WE DIDN'T KNOW LAST MONTH...

1. Rob Burman could cry his way through an entire box of Kleenex (*Animal Crossing: Wild World*, p008) **2.** Playing *Mario Kart* with a pint in our hands was a bad idea (World of Nintendo, p020) **3.** We'd get so annoyed with online gamers, we'd start a campaign (World of Nintendo, p022) **4.** Something could convince us to pull *Mario Kart* out of our DS's (*Metroid Prime: Hunters*, p038) **5.** Aliens would invade the Mushroom Kingdom (*Mario and Luigi 2: Partners in Time*, p042) **6.** Touching Monkey Balls would be so enjoyable (*Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll*, p054) **7.** Bad Guys don't always have more fun... (*Shadow the Hedgehog*, p060) **8.** ...but most of the time, they do (*Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones*, p064) **9.** A game could look awesome but stink like a month-old kipper (*True Crime: New York City*, p070) **10.** A woman's place is in a cave (*Lost in Blue*, p086)



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Animal Crossing: Wild World

On the first day, God created Nintendo. On the second day, he played *Super Mario Bros.* for a bit, before making the DS.

Then God created the Garden of Eden and it was known as *Animal Crossing: Wild World*. He made all kinds of trees grow from the ground, that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. He also made a shop that was owned by a greedy raccoon called Tom Nook, which wasn't pleasing to the pocket but was good for buying things.

Then the Lord took the DS owner and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. It was a nuisance chopping down the trees and watering plants but it had to be done, otherwise no-one would want to come to Eden and there'd be no odd jobs to do.

And out of the ground, God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the DS owner to see if he could become friends with them all. The gorilla posed a particular problem but God told the DS owner to keep trying and shut up about it. Finally, God buried Forbidden Fossils into the Earth, which the DS owner should find and charitably give to the Museum of Knowledge, for all to enjoy.

But then the tempter Tom Nook whispered to the DS owner that he should forget all about the Museum of Knowledge and flog the Fossils to him. Then Tom Nook told the DS owner he could have a bigger house if he sold the Forbidden Fossil. And lo, the DS owner fancied more room for his settee and sold the fossil, causing all kinds of problems for God. But at least the DS owner could choose his new house's roof colour. »»

It's *Animal Crossing* time again and hopefully you won't have to wait for YEARS to get to play this. Obviously we've already played it because we personally went to Miyamoto's house and cried. He actually didn't have anything to do with developing the game but he was so scared that he pulled some strings. You're still not going to be able to play it until next year but because we like you, similar to a distant cousin we've never met, we're going to tell you all about it. Read on and rejoice.

THE FIRST DAY

The scene opens inside a taxi with the rain hammering down outside. A lovely 3D taxi. The train was for losers. Now you must be minted because you can afford to ride in style. It might even be a limo, it's probably not but it might be. Then you notice who's driving... it's the Kapp'n from the boat in *Animal Crossing*. Things have clearly hit rock bottom in the ferry business and now he's having to make ends meet by taxi driving. But he still remembers the simple sailing days because there's a little Gashapon model of him in the boat on the dashboard. SWEET. We want one, right now.

"We're going to tell you all about *Animal Crossing*. Read and rejoice."

Next, Kapp'n starts asking a lot of questions, just like Rover the cat. First he wants to know your name and the name of the town you're planning to visit. He even asks you why you've chosen to move. Was it because of the town's beach, town hall, shopping facilities or museum? We think that, depending on how you answer these questions, they alter your appearance. At first we said we were there for the beach and ended up with a sad-faced character. Next time round we said we liked the shopping and started as a character with rosy cheeks and a smile. Of course, it could also be totally random.

The taxi ride comes to an end and you arrive in your new town. But wait... Tom Nook's not waiting for you. What's going on? Kapp'n tells you to visit the brand new town hall (more on that later) to sort out your living arrangements. Inside the town hall is the office clerk Pelly... but wait, it's the same pelican from the post office. Luckily, Tom Nook has briefed her all about your arrival and she tells you exactly where to find your new home. She even marks it

❑ The purple hat may be fly but you need to sort the hairstyle out

❑ Catching insects was hard for the researchers on David Attenborough's latest documentary

❑ After nicking the T-shirt she legs it from Mable

❑ "No, of course I don't think you're too skinny"

❑ Tom Nook drives his workers even harder at the 24-hour store

Accessorise this If there isn't a deer-stalker, we'll cry

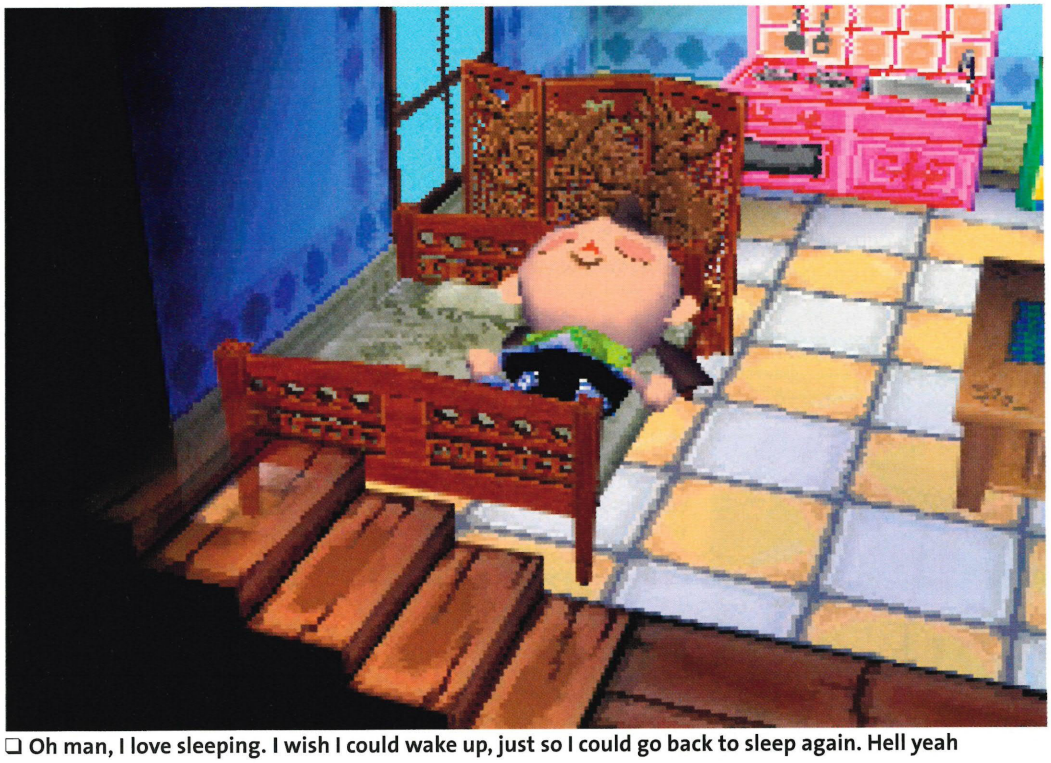
The Able Sisters' shop is now the place to go to customise your character's face. There are loads of different things that you can buy and we were delighted when we got to wear a thick pair of glasses like Rivers Cuomo from Weezer. Here we take a look at some of the wonderful accessories available for YOU to parade as you wind your way through the world.

❑ A scuba mask; not the most practical of eyewear, unless you're planning to go swimming. You can't in *Wild World*

❑ Ah, the motorcycle helmet, perfect for when you want to rob a bank or a local post office. Pelly, you better watch out

❑ So you're planning to go to a 1970s cinema, are you? We hear 3D's all the rage there. Cue gratuitous screen effects

❑ For fans of Salvador Dali, this has to be the perfect accessory. Curl it with tweezers, wax it at night then go mental. Woo!



❑ Oh man, I love sleeping. I wish I could wake up, just so I could go back to sleep again. Hell yeah

❑ Shut up moaning and wear the shirt with pride, you twit

❑ "That's right sir, we just repossessed your house. Soz"

on the map for you. The map is pretty much the same as the GameCube version. Which is fine but we would have loved it to mark where the actual animals are in the town. That would be so incredibly useful.

Now it's time to get out and explore. One of the first things you'll notice is the control method for the game. You can either choose to run around using just the touch screen or the D-Pad. If you use the touch screen, it acts like an analogue stick. Put the stylus in the centre and you won't move but drag it further away and your character will start to run. It works really well and makes the analogue control in *Super Mario 64 DS* seem like a bit of a bad joke.

Once you've adopted the far superior touch screen running about, you need to find your house. It looks pretty much the same as your one in *Animal Crossing* but there's a secret waiting inside; an ATTIC. Right from the beginning. It only contains your bed at first but if more residents want to move into your town, they all live upstairs in your house - we think. Instead of getting their own houses, they all have to share a room. It's like the Victorian slums all over again.

"If you use the touch screen, it acts just like an analogue stick."

Unfortunately, we weren't able to decorate the upstairs bit but you can get different beds. You use the bed to sleep and save your game. Or you can just press START at anytime to save. That's a God-send. It saves time and makes sure you're always more willing to save. Whereas before you might not have bothered, because you had to trawl all the way back to your house each time.

Also, Resetti the Mole is back and he's just as angry. He doesn't tolerate any kind of excuses and will bust your ass if you switch off without saving. Your character will even tell you if the battery is running low, to ensure you don't run out of power and lose your save.

So, your house is looking pretty cool. You're already thinking about the items to put inside. But then Nook turns up and says you now owe him a whopping 19,800 Bells. »»

Have you got the Bells to pay for it? Have you heck as like. So it's time to start working part-time for Nook again. To be honest, we were disappointed the DS version starts in exactly the same way as the 'Cube one. *Animal Crossing* is a game that started life on the N64, the 'Cube version was almost identical to that and now the DS one is the same. Something crazy should have happened in this new game. You even have to plant flowers around Nook's shop. This isn't much of a reward to those people who've already slogged through the introduction before.

THE TOWN

But all is not lost. When you really start to look round the town, you'll notice some clear differences from either of the previous games. For starters, the horizon now curves into the distance as you walk; it's like your town is on the back of a huge sphere. It's a cool effect, particularly when you see other characters walking about just on the edge of the horizon. It does mean the whole town is very flat though. There are no hills, like the 'Cube one. But there is still a beach, trees and a river that runs through the town though.

There's also a brand new town hall - Tortimer actually has an office this time. The town hall has two main functions; a civic centre and a post office. The post office is pretty much the same as before and you'll use it to post letters, obviously, and pay off your mortgage to Nook. The only new feature is a savings account you can withdraw and deposit money into. We never used that, we preferred to spend all our money on pinball machines.

❑ It's not actually raining but she's terrified of falling dead birds

❑ The cold black eyes stare deep into your weakening soul

❑ Oh no, does this mean it's poisonous or not?

❑ "Shh, please don't tell anyone I'm actually a TURTLE. The shame"

The civic centre is something entirely different though and will become an important part of your daily routine. Particularly if you want to make sure everyone in the town is happy. The civic centre has replaced the wishing well. So instead of getting subtle hints from the well about how to improve your town, Pelly the clerk will actually tell you how residents feel. It's a lot better and makes the job of sorting your town out easier.

However, caring for the town can be a real nuisance. Now, not only do you have to clear trees out the way, you also have to plant flowers and water them. To be honest, we thought having to water the flowers as well as plant them was a bit much really. We're scared that making a really great town could be more like playing *Harvest Moon*, rather than *Animal Crossing*.

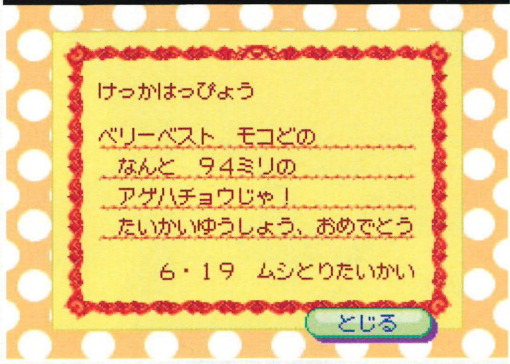
You can also make donations to charitable causes at the centre. When we played, we were told the terrible plight of a town called Boondoxia. Unfortunately, the Boondoxians could only eat cheese on toast but because they were so poor, they couldn't afford cheese and had to eat mud instead - seriously. Clearly we were moved by this story and donated 1,000 Bells to the cause... but nothing happened. Later on, another resident told us not to donate because the Boondoxian fund was supposedly being raised to help Tortimer buy a plasma screen TV. We're not sure what will happen with the Boondoxians but we can't wait to be visited

Fossilise this The museum has been bought out by Starbucks

Blathers the owl has clearly realised the museum business has slowed since people saw the brontosaurus on the back of a truck in *One of Our Dinosaurs is Missing*. So he's decided to branch out. For starters, he's now identifying the fossils himself, instead of sending them off to be analysed. He still wants donations though and has even got a spectacular set of new fish tanks.

But look upstairs and there's another surprise... an observatory. It's run by an owl called Celeste, who's got a great big telescope. It works by actually stretching to the stars, we think. Anyway, she's lost her star chart, so you have to create the constellations for her. This is done by joining stars together to create a line. Once you've finished making your constellation, Celeste will then tell you when it will be most visible.

❑ "Screw this museum lark, I'm nicking all the paintings to buy an owl pellet cleaner"



"The relationship between the animals is more complex, as is yours with them."

by one of the mud-eating berks.

Along with the town hall, another new element are the town gates. These have replaced the station as the place you need to go to get to new towns. The best thing about the gates is that Booker and Copper are the gate keepers. They're both still as ridiculous as ever and Booker can hardly string a sentence together.

The gates are the entrance to the online Wi-Fi world. Unfortunately, we couldn't go online for the preview but we totally can't wait to see what's waiting for us through the gates as soon as we get them open.

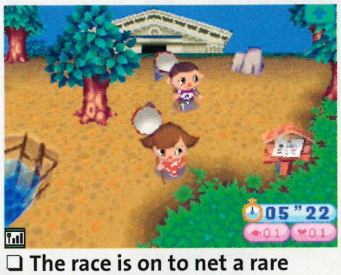
THE RESIDENTS

So now you've seen what the town has to offer, it's time to start meeting the people... or animals. They're generally a weird bunch, although we did notice a lot of them were from the GameCube version. That's not really too much of a problem because there are so many characters, it's unlikely you'll get a town full of ones you've met before.

And who cares, really? They're all so genuinely funny, it's great to get to know them again. It was certainly LOL-time for us while playing.

One thing we did notice is the relationships between the animals is more complex, as is your relationship with them. Some will become your actual friends; they confide in you and gossip about other townsfolk. Our friend Bob asked us if we thought Peewee and Daisy were more than just good friends. A little bar then appeared with 'just friends' at the bottom and 'they're kissing' at the top. We could raise the bar up or down by using the touch screen. We didn't even think twice about it and obviously said they were kissing, which was greeted with peels of laughter from Bob. It was great to feel that you were in on some sort of joke. It was almost better than having actual friends. That's a cry for help, by the way.

But back to Bob, our BESTEST FRIEND IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD. One day he said he'd like to come and visit our house. Fair enough, but then he asked for a specific time and day to come round.



❑ The race is on to net a rare type of caterpillar up a tree

❑ "I've just eaten that mouse that lives at number six. Ha!"

Hair today... If you ask for a mullet, there's no point in talking to us

Eventually a hairdressing shop, owned by a pink poodle of course, will open up in your town. We didn't get to see it but it looks awesome. Here's how to get your haircut. We'll have a short back and sides please, graduated. And a tramline.

❑ "As long as you don't cut my hair like yours, it'll be fine."

❑ "So anyway, just a little off the top and keep the length."

❑ "I can't wait to see it. I've got a date with a monkey tonight."

❑ "Blue? BLUE? At what point did I say blue, you berk?"

Dates for your diary

We discover the secret diary of an *Animal Crossing* character.

December 31st - NEW YEAR'S EVE

Hooray, there's a big party down near the town hall tonight. I'm going to take a few beers and get hammered, then try to snog that monkey. There's a fireworks display at midnight. Can't wait. The monkey's mine...

January 1st - HAPPY NEW YEAR

Oh dear, I've got a terrible headache, I had too much of Nook's grog last night. Everyone's wishing me Happy New Year today. For some reason, the monkey's not talking to me this morning. Don't know why.

February 6th - BRIGHT LIGHTS FESTIVAL

Woo! There's a competition to see who can cram the most lights onto their house. The winner will get a prize. I'm guaranteed to win, I've bought a thousand bulbs. The monkey's going to be well impressed. She's mine.

March 4th - FLOWER FESTIVAL

Hmm, after beating the monkey in the Bright Lights Festival, she's not speaking to me anymore. Perhaps if I offer to help her decorate her garden for the festival? Then she's bound to let me take her on a date.

September 9th - ACORN FESTIVAL

Things aren't going well with the monkey. Perhaps that fit duck's my best bet? I'm going to try to get as many acorns as possible and give them to the duck. Acorns are clearly the way to a duck's heart. Or bread.

November 11th - LA-DI-DAY

Oh no! As if the duck was a bloke? I had no idea. My only chance now is to compose a decent town for La-Di-Day and impress the monkey so much with my musical skills. Otherwise it's a whole year down the drain...

Our house was a mess so we said 5.00pm the next day. We needed to clean up all the old shirts we'd just thrown on the floor. We didn't really know what to expect when we switched the game back on at 4.59pm the following day. But within a minute, there was a knock at the door and it was BOB. He came in and just chilled out with us for a few minutes. We chatted about other animals in the town and he even commented on what our house looked like. It was awesome and continued to cement our terrifying obsessive relationship with a little purple cat. We dream about him.

Obviously we had more friends apart from Bob and because we were so pally, we formed a special greeting with them. Peewee the gorilla shouted "You rock!" every time we saw him. Actually the animals seem full of more character, with great quips and off-the-wall conversations. You still have to do odd jobs for them but it's handled in a much more natural fashion. Instead of directly asking them for a job, you just speak to them and in the course of the conversation you may learn that they want a fossil, for example. Other times they may challenge you to see who can catch a particular fish first, with a reward for the winner. We loved this more natural interaction with the animals because it encourages you to actually speak to them, rather than just asking them for a job.

❑ Each time she misses a bite, she just pretends she's catching invisible fish. Her pals are invisible too

❑ If the map showed animals, we'd kiss a dog on the lips

❑ "I'm probably the most terrifying thing you've ever seen."

"Peewee the gorilla shouts 'You Rock!' every time we see him."

The animals in the town were always one of the most charming aspects of *Animal Crossing* and we're delighted to say it looks like they've lost none of their charm in the conversion to the DS.

SHOPPING

Something else that hasn't lost anything in the conversion is Tom Nook's insatiable desire to fulfil his raccoon capitalist dream. That's right; the most business-savvy raccoon is back in business at Nook's Cranny. Initially, there's very little difference in Nook's shop, it sells pretty much the same things as before, like carpets, furniture and tools. He also has a catalogue to order items and can still tell you all about the price of turnips.

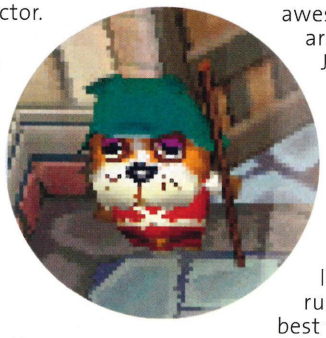
But in the corner of the shop sits something new; the Point Tracking Machine. That's right, inspired by the Tesco Clubcard, Nook has set up his own customer reward scheme. You get points each time you buy something from the shop and eventually you become a fully-fledged member of the club. It's a nice little feature to drive you to shop at Nook's store instead of just getting items from the animals themselves.

Something else we spotted when first shopping at Nook's Cranny was some medicine. Eh? We bought some and kept it with us, not really knowing why we'd bought it in the first place. But then there was a revelation... Blaire the chipmunk/squirrel became ill and asked for MEDICINE!

❑ Topshop keeps approaching the Able Sisters for new designs

❑ It's purple hat man again and he's still got the lame hairstyle

We gave her some and she was over the moon. But unfortunately we'd made a rod for our own back. After that, we had to give her medicine for three days before she was better. And at 400 Bells a pop, it's not a cheap cure. But this added another level to the friendship factor. If she'd died, we would have been saddened at a needless lost of life... oh, and we wouldn't have received any reward. So the course of action was obvious.



One thing that we didn't spot in Nook's shop were the NES games we got so used to in the original. We're not sure if they'll even be making an appearance at all in *Wild World*. That would certainly be an absolute crying shame.

The Able Sisters have also expanded into new wares. Now the hedgehogs sell accessories as well as T-shirt design. There are all sorts to customise your character with, like different hats, glasses and even wigs. It's a very nice feature to make sure that when you do go online, your character is totally unique in the other towns.

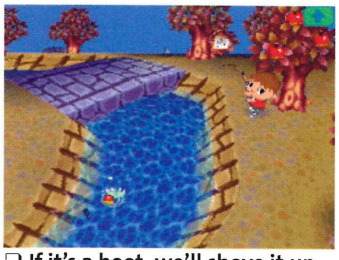
We've also seen some awesome items that are available in the Japanese version. One young chap was wearing a Mario hat and even has a moustache to match. It makes the items in *Nintendogs* look like a load of rubbish. Plus the best thing is, you can wear more than one, which is much better.

We're hoping that there will also be exclusive items that will become available once you connect to Nintendo Wi-Fi. If we can't get our hands on a Waluigi outfit in one-size-fits-all, there is going to be a county-sized heap of trouble.

❑ "Nooo, I haven't seen the bull from down the road at all. Ahem"

❑ Aaaaaargh, it's raining needles. Forget the umbrella, get inside

❑ At least wash that turnip before you try to eat it



❑ If it's a boot, we'll shove it up Nook's big raccoon nose

"Believe it or not, Lyle is actually an insurance salesman."

VISITORS

As well as visiting other towns, there are still visitors that pop into your town on a regular basis. Some of them will be familiar to those who've already played the 'Cube version. Particularly Redd the fox, who still sets up his dodgy stall now and again. Although this time, you have to be part of his special club to actually buy anything. Also making a return is Katrina the fortune teller and Gracie the fashion giraffe.

But the best visitor, who also happens to be a new one, was Lyle the gopher. Believe it or not, Lyle is actually an insurance salesman. First of all, he quizzes you about your future, before laying a load of life insurance off on you. You actually can't say no and will only get out of a sale if you don't have enough money. It costs a massive 3,000 Bells but it may not actually be such a rip off. You see, if you ever get stung by bees or fall into one of the many pitfalls, you'll receive 100 Bells as compensation. We purposely went around smacking trees to get the cash. Who cares about the pain when there's money to sweeten the blow?

EVENTS

Although we're not worried about getting stung by bees anymore, we're a bit concerned about the events in *Wild World*. To put it bluntly, there just don't seem to be enough. We quickly skimmed through most of the year and were actually disappointed by the number of events. Of course, there's always the possibility that we were just missing them but when we checked the notice board

Get ahead with threads

If you make a Burberry shirt, we'll kill you

It was a bit of a pain making a shirt at the Able Sisters' shop in the 'Cube version but now it's a damn sight easier in the DS one, because you can use the touch screen. We'd love to say that we designed all the awesome shirts in the background here, but we didn't. Monkeys at Nintendo spent three years creating this, so we imagine it'll take us twice as long.

Also, in some kind of *Mario Kart* and *Animal Crossing* mutation, you can use your kart icon as your shirt in *Wild World*. That way, once you go on the internet, everyone will know exactly who you are.

So expect to see our awesome Godzilla icon doing the rounds sometime soon. You won't believe how great it is, until you come up against it or alongside it, of course. Bow to the power of Godzilla.

❑ The girl refuses to pay her bill, so Mable explains exactly where her sharp spikes will be inserted

❑ "In my net, I have a decapitated head."

❑ "I wish I wasn't too fat to fly, little girl."

❑ All the lines are actually tangled together

outside the town hall, there weren't too many special days mentioned there.

But instead of there being lots of special events throughout the year, there does seem to be a few events that happen on a more regular basis. The best is almost certainly the flea market, which takes place every Saturday. One of the irritating things about *Animal Crossing* on 'Cube was the fact that everyone else seemed to have better items in their house than you. It was a bloomin' nuisance, frankly.

Thank the lord for the flea market then. Now, each week, you can pop into people's houses and make them an offer for that lime-shaped chair you'd had your eyes on for weeks but couldn't steal. Sometimes they'll just refuse, blabbering on about it being their prized possession. Losers. But other times, you can haggle with them and get the furniture you want. If you stay in your house on a Saturday, animals will come to visit and make you an offer for items you've got in your pad. It's great because they mooch around for a bit before saying how much they NEED one of your pieces of furniture in their own house. It's great way to get some extra Bells and potentially rare pieces of furniture. David Dickinson watch out.

❑ The rabbit tells us to leave after we played Chopsticks for six hours

❑ "Well, if you haven't got the cash right now, I can take your soul."

IS IT WILD?

Well, we've only played about ten hours on *Wild World* but already we think it's going to be one of the most charming and magical DS experiences yet. *Animal Crossing* is a game that should always have been on a handheld, it makes perfect sense. And the fact you'll be able to go online proves God has been listening for the past few years. It's still not due out until March at least but it's best to start clearing some free-time in your diary. Who needs real people when you've got a baboon and a crocodile as mates? We don't. ***Rob Burman***

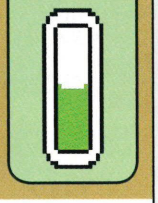
❑ As soon as the hare turns his back ,we're skinny-dipping in that pool. No problem

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: NINTENDO

FAMOUS FOR:
Creating a wonderful animal game on the N64 then taking about a hundred years to release it in the UK on GameCube.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



MULTIPLAYER: 1-4
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: EARLY 2006
REVIEW: TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

We would have loved to spend more time in the town of Notts but Nintendo stole the DS from us. *Wild World* looks like one of THE reasons to own a DS.

90% PLUS

World of Nintendo

INSIDE World of Nintendo

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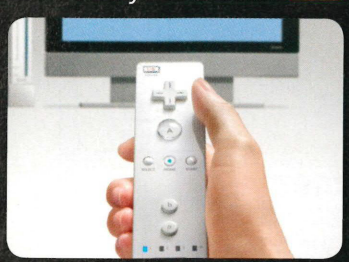
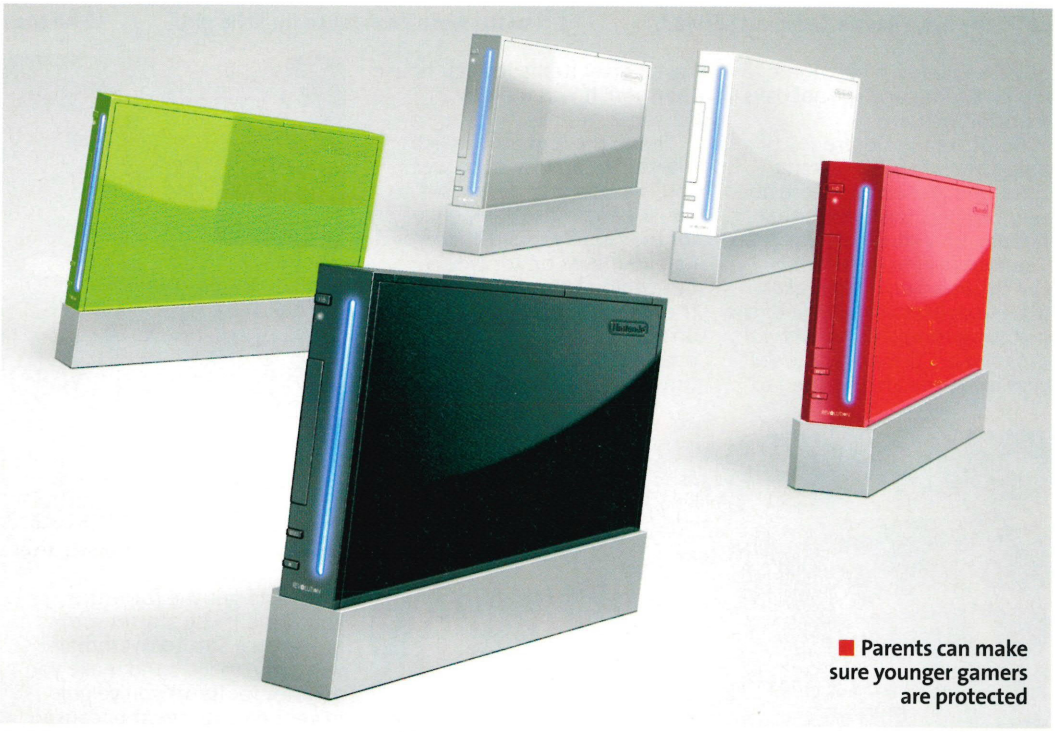


PICTURE THIS
Eight years' work and all your fave superheroes 30



Parents can make sure younger gamers are protected

PARENTAL CONTROL FOR REVOLUTION

Nintendo unveils enhanced security for young gamers.

Parents will be given tighter control over the types of games their younglings play on Nintendo's next-generation console.

The Revolution will utilise a parental control system that will allow your old folks to stop the console playing games over a certain age rating. Using a password setting, set by an adult, the Revolution will be able to prevent younger users from playing games with adult scenes or scenarios, while allowing older gamers access.

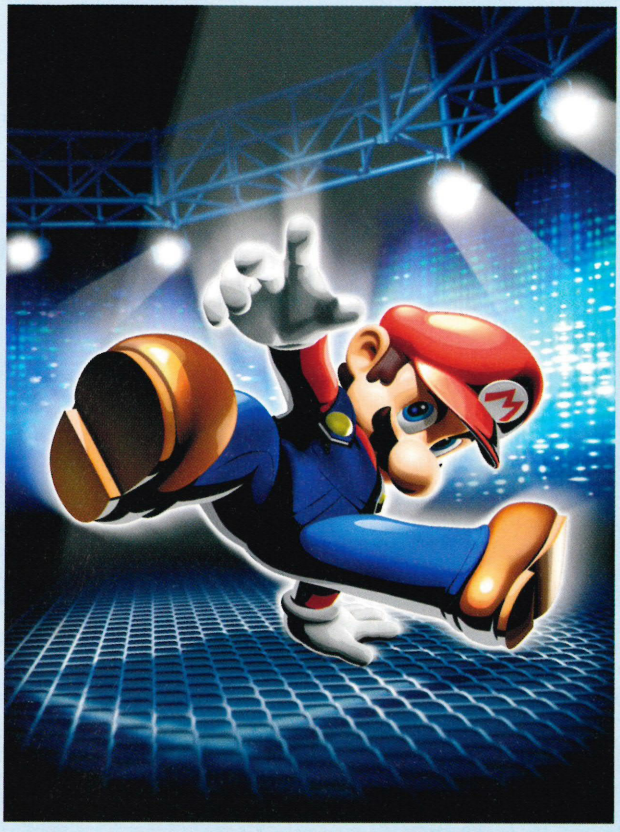
The age rating a game receives will be stored within every game disk. If a game has a higher rating than has been permitted on your Revolution, you will need to enter a pre-set password to play. This is not so much of a problem for young Nintendo fans – most of Nintendo's best games are made for players of all ages anyway.

In other news, it has been revealed that Masahiro Sakurai is on-board for the development of the next *Smash Bros.* game coming to Revolution. Why do you care about this? Because he's the dude responsible for the *Smash Bros.* series when he worked at HAL Laboratories.

Since Sakurai-san left HAL Labs in 2003, he's flexed his game-making muscles at Q Entertainment on *Meteos*, the genius puzzler on DS. Now having left Q, he's turned his attention to Revolution and will be heading the development team for the next Nintendo all-star brawler. No details about the game itself have been released yet, but we can't wait to see how it will utilise the amazing new Revolution controller. And with Sakurai-san involved, you can be sure it will be nothing less than awesome.

FREE Nintendo ringtones

Get your phone bleeping Mario tunes of joy



This is just what you've always needed. Delete that crap 50 Cent ringtone you've been using because you can get some NINTENDO tunes on your phone instead!

Have you been registering your Nintendo games on the Nintendo Europe website? You better have, because you're going to need the Stars to land yourself some Nintendo tunes for your mobile.

By the time you read this, Nintendo will be offering ringtones and wallpapers to download directly to WAP enabled phones. Just head over to the Star Catalogue at www.nintendo-europe.com and have a browse.

You can get snazzy jingles from loads of Nintendo classics like *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, *Super Mario Bros*, *Metroid Prime* and more, at around 350 Stars each. There's 20 realtones available. Download them and turn them up loud, because when those babies ring out on the bus, you will get RESPECT! Besides, anything's better than that poxy Crazy Frog.

US in online frenzy

Mario Kart DS in staggering online success

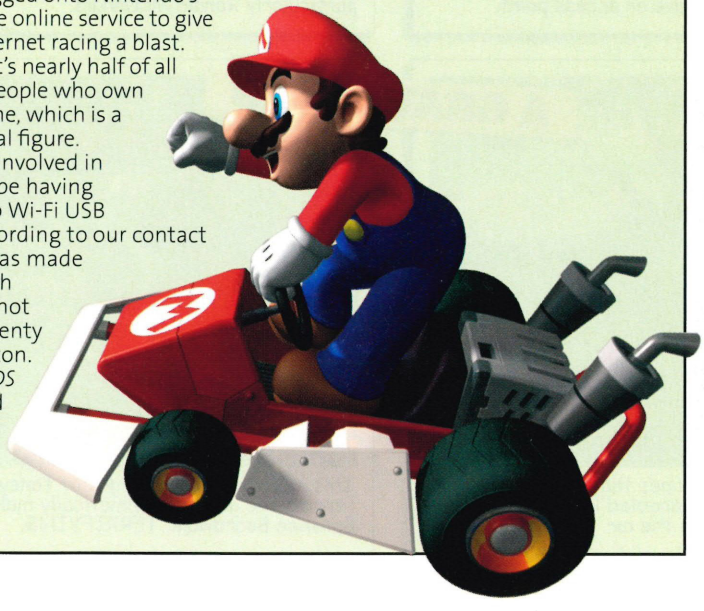
nintendo Wi-Fi connection

When getting online is as easy as Nintendo made it on *Mario Kart DS*, you've got to have a go. A huge online play-rate was Nintendo's aim and it seems to have succeeded.

112,000 kart-happy gamers bought *Mario Kart DS* within its first week on sale in the US. In that same week, nearly 52,000 of them logged onto Nintendo's free online service to give Internet racing a blast. That's nearly half of all the people who own the game, which is a phenomenal figure.

If you're desperate to get involved in the online party, you might be having difficulty finding a Nintendo Wi-Fi USB Connector in the shops. According to our contact at Nintendo, the company has made plenty for everyone, although some retailers have chosen not to stock up. But we found plenty on online retailers like Amazon.

Get one now. *Mario Kart DS* online will rule your life. And things will get even better when *Animal Crossing: Wild World* and *Metroid Prime: Hunters* arrive early next year.

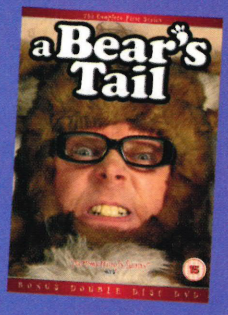


Luigi's Prize Pit

LUCKY COMP WINNERS

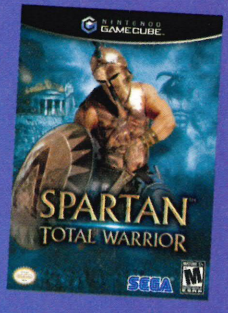
Have you bagged yourself a sweet, sweet prize from one the many competitions in issue 159? Check below to find out...

THE BEAR COMP



(Main Winners)
Anthony Jones, Sunderland
Ian Teo, Ealing
Alan Caston, Hayton
(Runners-up)
Christian Roberts, Walthamstow
Adam Foley, Cumbernauld
Steven Tapper, Brighton
Jonathan Robinson, Doncaster
Phil Pritchard, Sanderstead

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR COMP

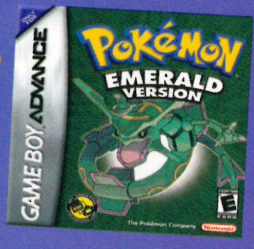


Thomas Everington, London
David Norman, Liverpool
Joanne Cunis, Norfolk
Adam Westcliffe, Altricham
Charles Bernard, Birmingham
Robert Perry, Belfast
Matthew Norton, Manchester
Paul Baster, Essex
Donna Bowen, Bursledon
Chris Rowlan, South Shields

BUBBLE BOBBLE COMP

Matt Gordon, Peterborough
Adam Forde, Berks.
Tomos Castillo, Wigan
Phillip Tharm, London
Mark Jefferson, Epsom
Lewis Potter, Southend
Alex Burges, Sunderland
Anthony O'Meara, Fishermead
Kelly McBride, Surrey
Gary Fernandes, Norfolk

POKéMON BATTLE ADVANCE COMP



Ross White, Yorkshire (Main Winner)
Greame McGuire, Essex
Clive Nicholas, Lancashire
Tim Li, Hamilton

Adventures in Wi-Fi

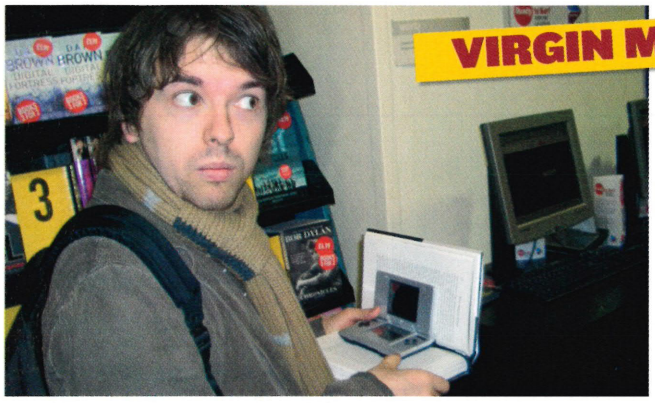
We hunt down the places to play online *Mario Kart* for FREE.

Like Sam Fisher with a DS, Mike and Rob busted into Peterborough city centre with their guerrilla Wi-Fi tactics. Yes, we all know Nintendo has signed up with a number of partners to offer free hotspots.

But we wanted to push Wi-Fi to its limits. This was EXTREME hotspotting... if the police knew, we'd have been arrested.

The aim was simple. Head to some places where we thought we might get free access, then search for *Mario Kart* matches. We wanted to hijack the Wi-Fi waves for our personal gain. Obviously we probably should advise you to stick to places that Nintendo recommends, like McDonald's or Coffee Republic. Otherwise you could end up looking like idiots. A bit like this.

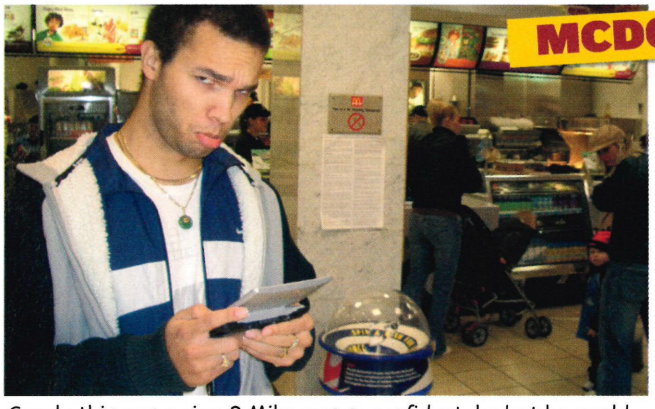
VIRGIN MEGASTORE



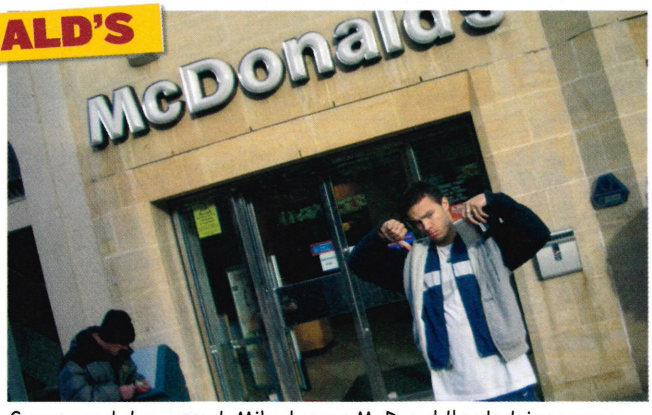
We saw a sign in the window saying something about Internet access. We weren't sure if we were supposed to be using it, so we used stealth tactics. Can you spot the DS in this picture?

Unfortunately the result in Peterborough Virgin Megastore was a negative. Rob could hardly be consoled and had to buy the book because he cried into it, smudging the ink.

MCDONALD'S



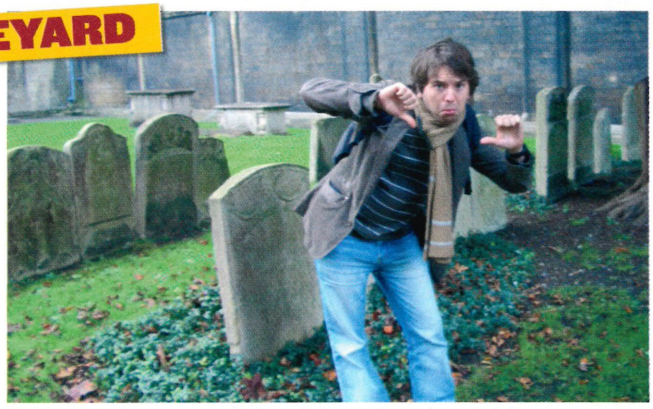
Surely this was a given? Mike was so confident, he bet he would drink old chip fat if he couldn't access Wi-Fi. Unfortunately, for Mike at least, this McDonald's didn't have an access point.



Greasy and depressed, Mike leaves McDonald's pledging never to eat a French Fry ever again. A sad day for all involved, particularly Ronald McDonald.

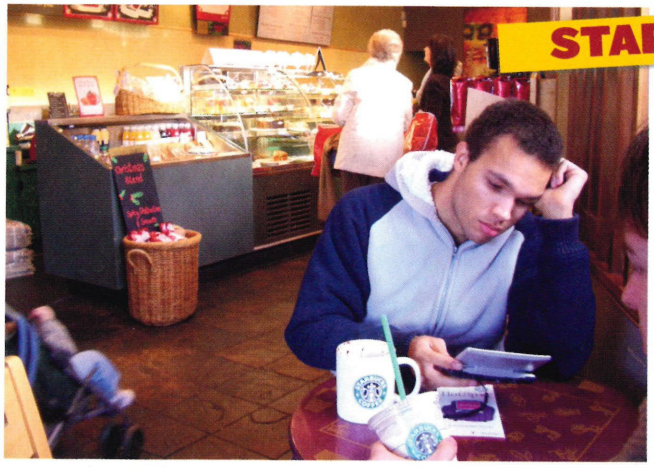
A GRAVEYARD

Never one to pass up a challenge, Rob hopes that a techno geek insisted on being buried with his Wi-Fi-enabled laptop and an undead signal would be pumping through the air.

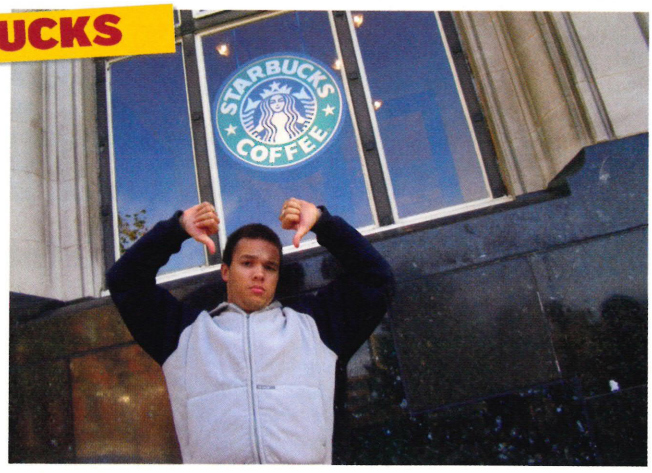


This was, of course, a flight of fancy. But that didn't stop us all fearing the ghosts automatically making us play as Drybones on Banshee Boardwalk. TERRIFYING.

STARBUCKS

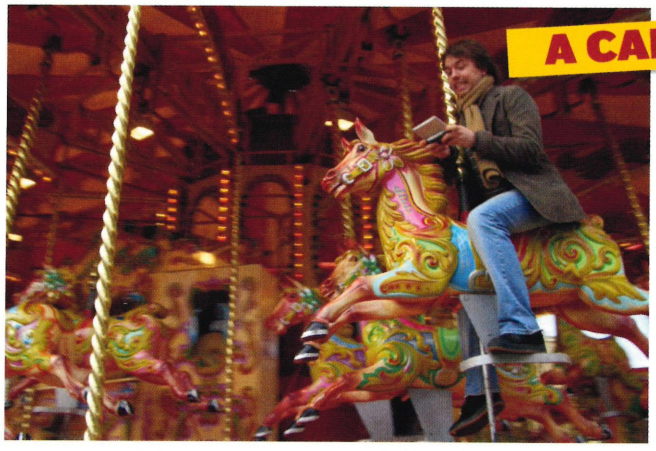


It said it had a T-Mobile Wi-Fi connection on the door, so we were pretty confident. In fact, Mike ordered the largest hot chocolate he could, expecting to be there all afternoon.



When the connection was denied, Mike stormed out. The connection probably didn't work because it's a pay service. Don't be fooled into thinking that all hotspots will be free.

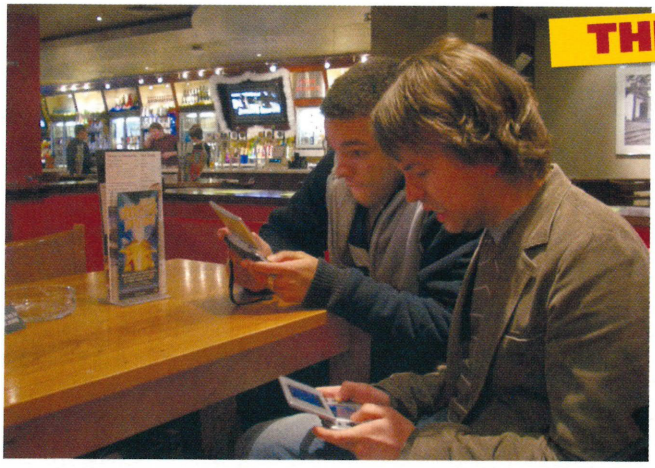
A CAROUSEL



The day was going badly, so Rob choked back the tears and rode the carousel while sniffling slightly. He didn't even whoop with joy when the horses sped round at a terrifying speed.

Of course, this didn't work. But if you get the chance to ride a carousel for free, don't turn it down. Rob almost lost his DS as the horses reached dizzying speeds. A risk you shouldn't take.

THE PUB



We went in to drown our sorrows. Then, to our surprise, there was a Wi-Fi access point. So we slammed down the whisky and switched on our DS instead. Things could have got messy.

This was a Yates with The Cloud connection, one of Nintendo's partners. The pub should only be used by adult Karters and we wouldn't condone a fake moustache or deep voice to get in.

THE CONCLUSION

So there you have it. A slightly silly guide about places to play online over Wi-Fi. You're probably best sticking to places you know. But a little experimentation can be fun sometimes... perhaps you could even create some sort of graph. Everyone loves graphs or pie-charts, ooooh a pie-chart.

NOM's Conduct Of Competitive Karting

We need YOU to stamp out the filthy cheaters who ruin everyone's day

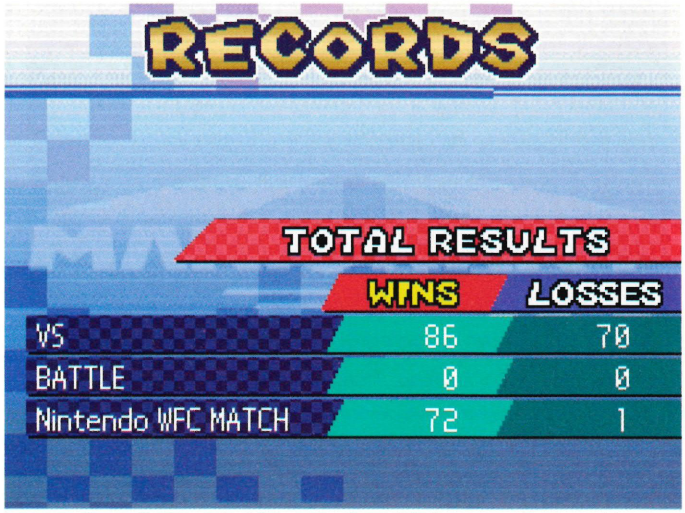
We shall fight them on the beaches, we shall fight them on the landing grounds, we shall fight them in the fields and in the streets and in the hills; we shall never surrender to the horrible cheating gits on *Mario Kart DS*.

We want to bloody kill them. We're fuming at them. A whole weekend of pure online karting action was almost ruined by them. If you've played a Wi-Fi match, then you've probably come across them. In fact, some of you lot could even be one of them and we HATE you for it. If we find out who you are, we'll slap you round the head with an exhaust pipe. That's right, we're talking cheaters in *Mario Kart DS*.

Those evil little sods that quit half-way through a race they're losing, so their losses tally doesn't increase. But more importantly, your winning tally doesn't increase either. These people are spineless wimps and we hate them for it. So we're starting a campaign against them. If you come across one, write down their names. If you see them again, just quit out the match before it starts. That way, hopefully they'll start to learn.

But even worse than that are the karters who quit just before the winning ceremony. AAAAAAAAARGH. Once again, it damages your stats and doesn't damage theirs. They tease you with the possibility of points and rip out your beating heart at the end. BigTony, if you're reading this, we'd like to rip out your bladder and feed it to some tramps. So we're giving you some guidance about how to combat the nightmare of these evildoers.

This shows you're part of our exclusive club. Wear it on your kart with pride and prove to the world you hate cheaters. With a passion



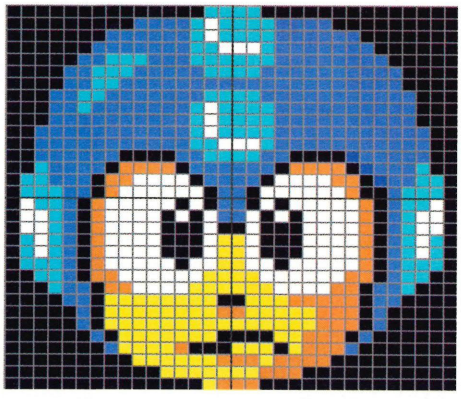
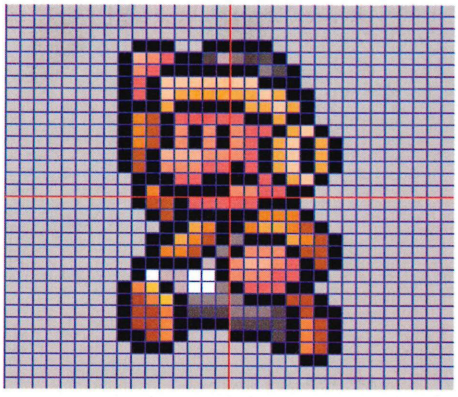
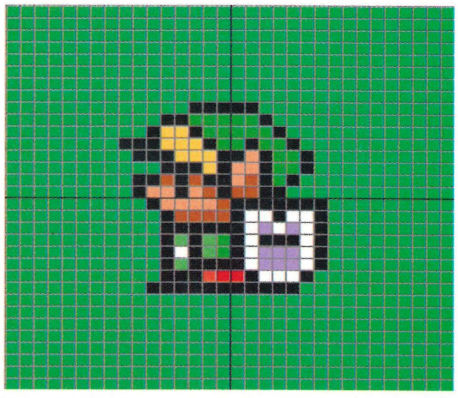
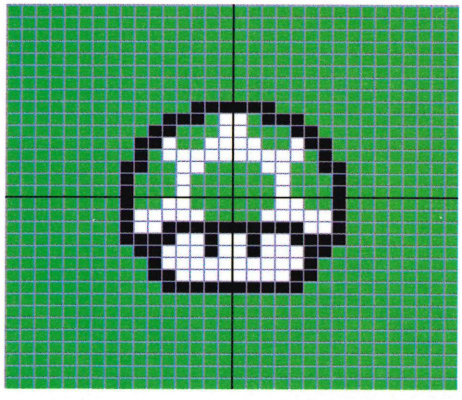
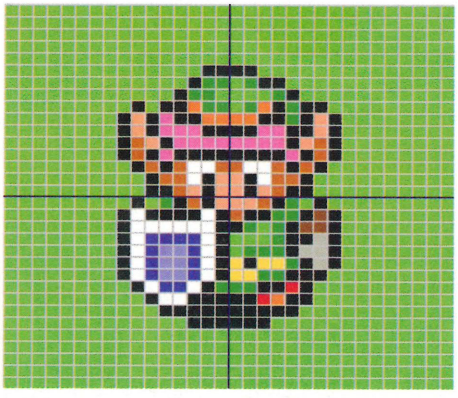
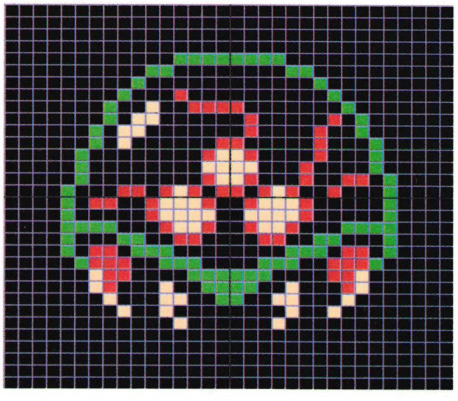
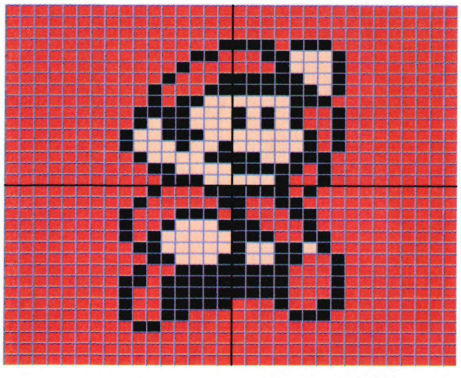
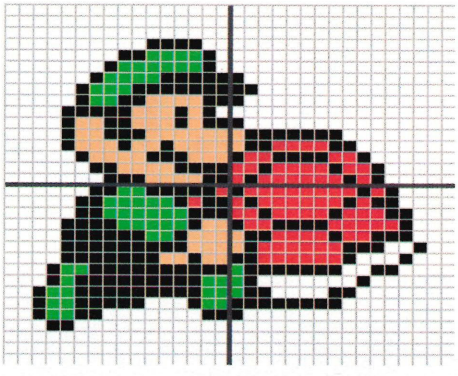
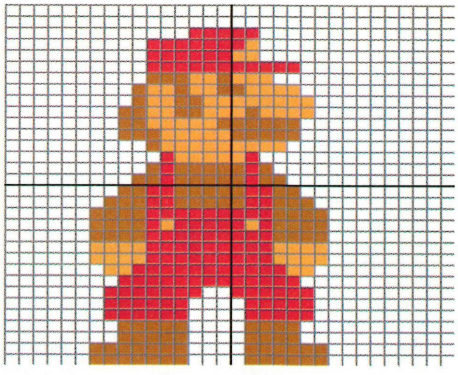
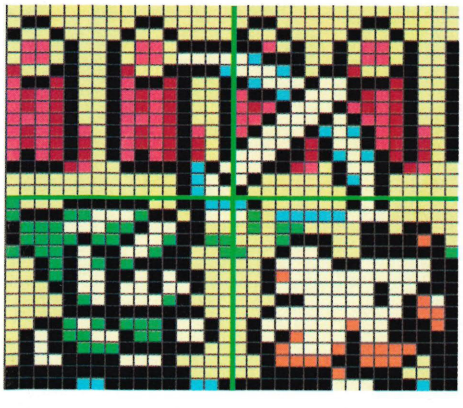
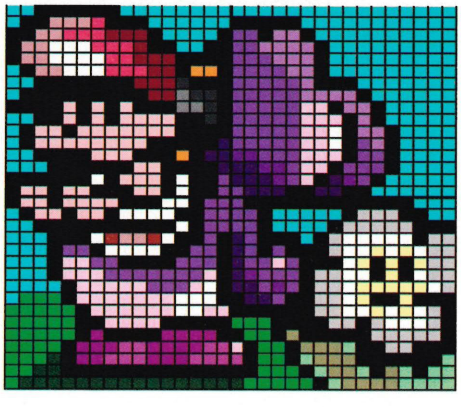
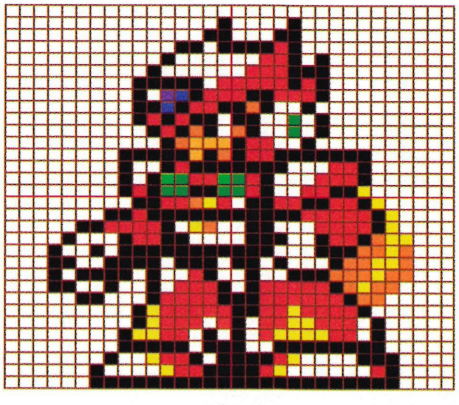
Our wins tally is probably more than this but was damaged by petty cheaters. We know who you are and we're coming for you

Avatart

Of course you want classic Nintendo icons in *Mario Kart DS*

Your *Mario Kart* avatar should be your pride and joy. Don't just cobble together some rubbish that might look a bit like the Master Sword. Spend some quality time perfecting the icon and everyone online will be incredibly jealous of your awesome sprite skills.

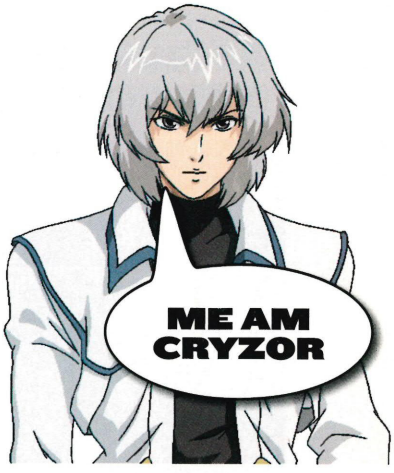
But we realise it can be hard getting started with your icon, so we're going to show some of the best we've found on the 'net. Each icon is taken from www.animalxing.com and they're actually designs for T-shirts. But they work perfectly in *Mario Kart DS*. So what are you waiting for? Get designing right now, then go online and start showing off. Thanks to animalxing.com and the designers: Afriscot, Captain N, Jon Leung, Lion Heart 2k4, Lost On Zebes, Ranma, Roen and Wraith10.

cut along the dotted line to release your awesome *NOM* poster

Fangs for nothing

Castlevania is heading to a big screen near you soon.



Some news has chilled us to the bone this month. *Variety*, the magazine about films and actors, has confirmed that a *Castlevania* film could be in the works. Apart from perhaps talk of *Mario Brothers the Movie 2*, nothing could have upset us more.

According to the magazine, Crystal Sky Pictures has done a deal with Dimension Films and Konami. That wouldn't be so bad but there was an ominous snippet of information to come. The man committed to adapt and direct this potentially wonderful film is Paul W. S. Anderson. The chump who directed the dreadful *Alien Vs Predator* and awful *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*. We'd rather kiss a corpse than watch those turkeys again.

God, we love the *Castlevania* games and the prospect of some half-baked movie project makes us want to vomit. Someone needs to step in and replace W. S. Anderson. Actually, then again, it could be worse... Uwe Boll could be directing. Eeeeeek! Anyway, just to make sure Crystal Sky Pictures gets the film just right, we've got some casting advice.

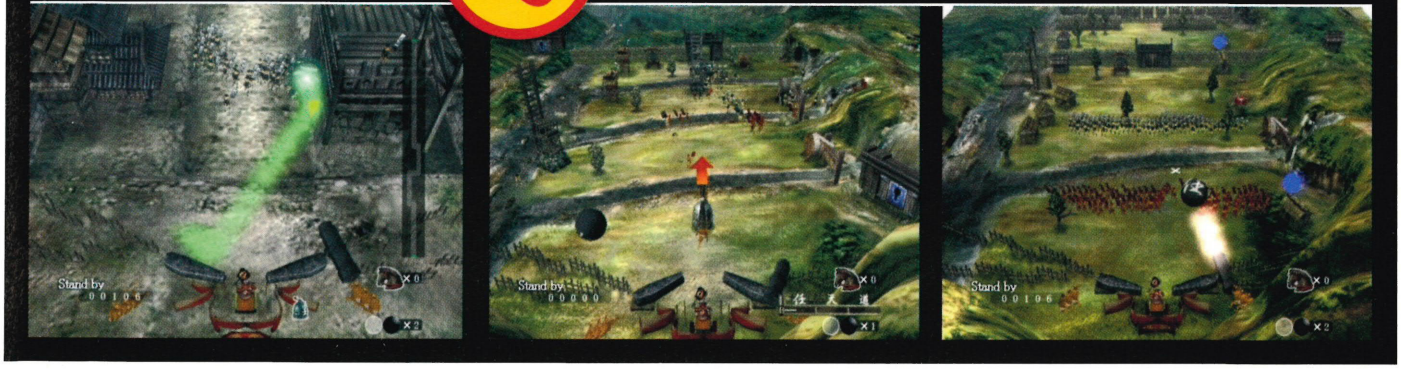
■ ***WHY?*** He's one of the few men on the planet to commit himself to collecting 100% of the Souls in *Dawn of Sorrow*. If that isn't enough to get him a part, what is?

■ ***WHY?*** She's become a Nintendo favourite and a regular feature of *NOM*. When not playing *Mario Kart DS*, she pretends to be a Romanian villager who speaks in tongues

■ ***WHY?*** One member of *NOM* is terrified of frogs to the point of screaming like a girl when he sees one. So a frog with FANGS is enough to have him weeping like a Brownie

We Can't Wait For...

ODAMA



Well, the curious pinball military crossover has been in development for longer than *War and Peace*. But we saw it again recently and we're relatively interested in it. Using the mic to command your troops while firing a cannon ball like a pinball is a weird yet interesting mix, a bit like gin and milk. But it could just work... you might be surprised. We liked *Metroid Prime Pinball*, so perhaps we'll like this. Look at the screenshots and just decide for yourself.

We Can't Wait For...

CHIBI ROBO

Oh God, we love *Chibi Robo* oh so much. It's a beautiful off-the-wall title that could only be developed in Japan. It oozes quality and charm from every single pore. But the most exciting thing is... it may be released over HERE.

It's coming out in American in February and we demand a UK release to follow soon. We're going to have a preview of it next month, where we'll probably tell you to devote your entire life to the awesome delights that make up *Chibi Robo*.

CENTER Pokémon

A bug even uglier than Pinsir is infecting copies of *Pokémon Mysterious Dungeon*. Quick, get the Super Potions.

POKéMON MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON

There are loads of bug-like creatures in *Pokémon*, but the Japanese version of *Pokémon Mysterious Dungeon* has one bug that Nintendo didn't want in there.

It's a dirty bug of the game-erasing type and resides in the *Blue Rescue Force* version of the game (that's the DS one). Seemingly, it hates any GBA cart other than its GBA brother, *Red Rescue Force*, being plugged into the GBA slot of your DS.

If you have any other GBA game in your DS' GBA slot while you play *Blue Rescue Force*, it busts crazy rage and deletes the saved game data on your GBA cart. It must be called the Hyper-Erase attack, or something like that.

But Nintendo isn't wasting any time. This bug will not win. Players in Japan will be able to trade in their dodgy game cart for a fixed one by registering on a website which Nintendo has set up specially to deal with this problem.

We're not sure what happens to the defective carts, but we'll just presume that Nintendo defeats all the game-erasing bugs with its all-conquering giant Lvl 1000 Charmander.

By the way, Nintendo UK is not supporting defective imported carts because importing is naughty. Don't forget that, kids.

Nintendogs reaches 1 million sales

Soon there'll be more Nintendogs than humans

You lot are going crazy. Real dogs have been around forever and no-one really cared. But Nintendo has squeezed man's best friend into little DS cartridges and everyone's rushing out to get their paws on them.

Continuing from its phenomenal success in Japan, *Nintendogs* is storming the European market, having sold more than 1 million copies since its release on October 7th. You guys have been whisking them off the shelves before they get the chance to sniff each other's backsides.

Not surprisingly, the DS is doing well from the success of the *'Dogs*, with up to 120,000 gamers grabbing themselves a DS each week. Things can only get better for the DS in the run-up to Christmas. And with the glorious online *Mario Kart DS* rocking the Nintendo world, the DS is absolutely unstoppable.

A Nintendog isn't just for Christmas, you know

We Can't Wait For...

BURNOUT LEGENDS

We remember the days when we used to thrash the crap out of our GameCube's mega-chips with break-neck speeds in *Burnout*. There hasn't been any car-wrecking love on GameCube for a while but we're looking to the DS to make up for that.

Check out these screens for *Burnout Revenge*, looking silky smooth on the double-screens of power. It's already making *Need for Speed: Most Wanted* look like Lego Land. It's bound to be loads faster and have better crashes too. And we know the tracks will rock because it features all the best tracks from previous games in the series. That's why it's called *Burnout LEGENDS*! Clever, that.

COSPLAY COMEDY CORNER

Rob would like to dress up as Mega Man. Mike would like to be a Goomba. Jonathan, our work experience/tea boy wants to be Princess Peach. We're not going to dress up because we don't want to look like berks. But you guys love it.

- **Who?**
Michael Park as Ash Ketchum
- **Where?**
Preston
- **Verdict?**
Mike's got the hat with the little sign on, the blue jacket and even the Pikachu in place. But where's the mad hair? Ash has got the wickedest hyper-spiky hair busting out of his cap. We need more of that to be fooled.

Embarrassment rating: 38%

- **Who?**
Joel Cope as a Tetris block
- **Where?**
Surrey
- **Verdict?**
You see that? THAT'S what you call genius. Joel has innovated with his Tetris block costume. Why dress up as something with arms and legs? Why do you even need to be something that's alive? Joel says you don't, and he wins.

Embarrassment rating: 0%

We Can't Wait For...

BATEN KAITOS 2

April 1 is usually a time for bad jokes, but this year we got a card battling RPG called *Baten Kaitos*. We like nothing more than hoping we get dealt a card than means we can regenerate some health. If we handed out awards for graphical achievement in card RPGs, *Baten Kaitos* would win a big golden... thing right about now, while *Phantasy Star Online Episode 3* ended up in tears. It's a good thing that a sequel is on the way. Or a PREQUEL, as it's set 20 years before the last one. Games never used to be this confusing. Looks lovely though, eh?

Remote cons trolls

Nintendo plays a joke on the haters

"OMGLOL it looks like a TV remote!!" scoffed idiot people on messageboards the Internet over, when Nintendo unveiled its latest controller innovation for the Revolution. Now, in a hilarious act of self-depracating irony, Nintendo is giving away a TV remote that looks like the controller.

The bad news is this is confined to Japan. Specifically, gamers who have 'Platinum' status in Club Nintendo (Japan's equivalent of the STARS catalogue). As is always the case with limited promo items such as this, you can bet on a few finding their way onto eBay, with a suitably extortionate price tag. But how much is too much to be able to flip channels with a Revolution controller TV remote? Actually, we know. Anything over £57.92 is too much, we say.

Revo control TV remote. That'll learn 'em

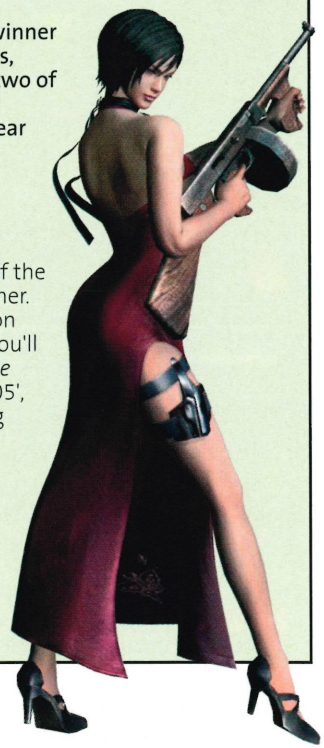
Golden shower

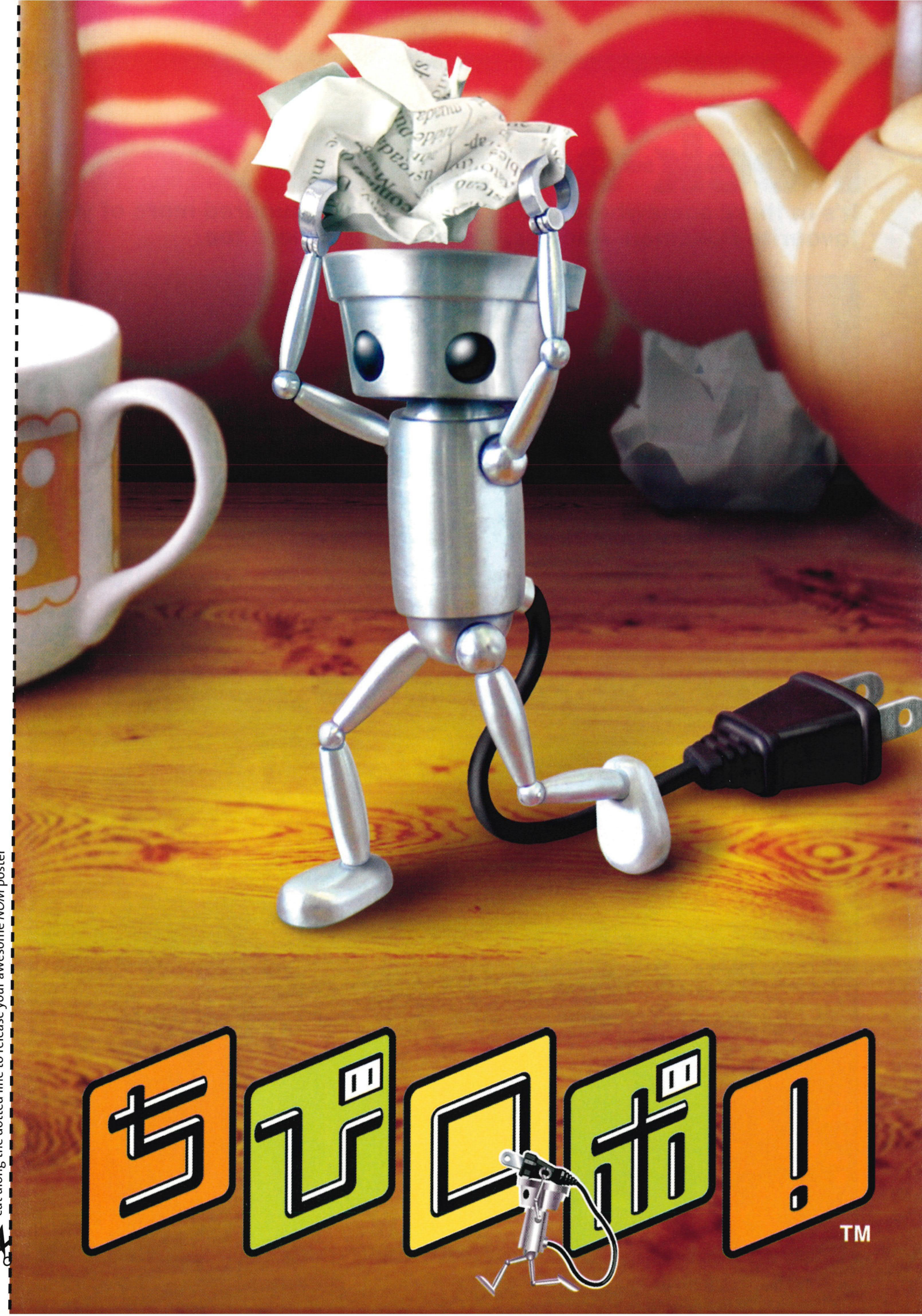
Resi 4 wins big at 'gaming Oscars'

Capcom's *Resident Evil 4* was a big winner at this year's Golden Joystick Awards, taking home three gongs - at least two of which made sense. As well as scooping GameCube Game of the Year and Editor's Game, it also won Best Film-Based Game of 2005.

While you're wondering how a credibility-killing gaffe like that was allowed to occur, know that *Super Mario 64 DS* won Handheld Game of the Year, and Nintendo won Best Publisher. *Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* won 'One To Watch For Christmas', and you'll still be 'watching' well into 2006. *The Sims 2* won 'The Girls Choice for 2005', which is sort of like winning the egg and spoon race.

Stay tuned for next year's award ceremony, when a Black and Decker power drill is named Console of the Year, and a piece of toast wins the coveted accolade for Film-Based Game of the year. We can't wait. We've got the butter and Marmite ready and waiting.





Cut along the dotted line to release your awesome NOM poster!

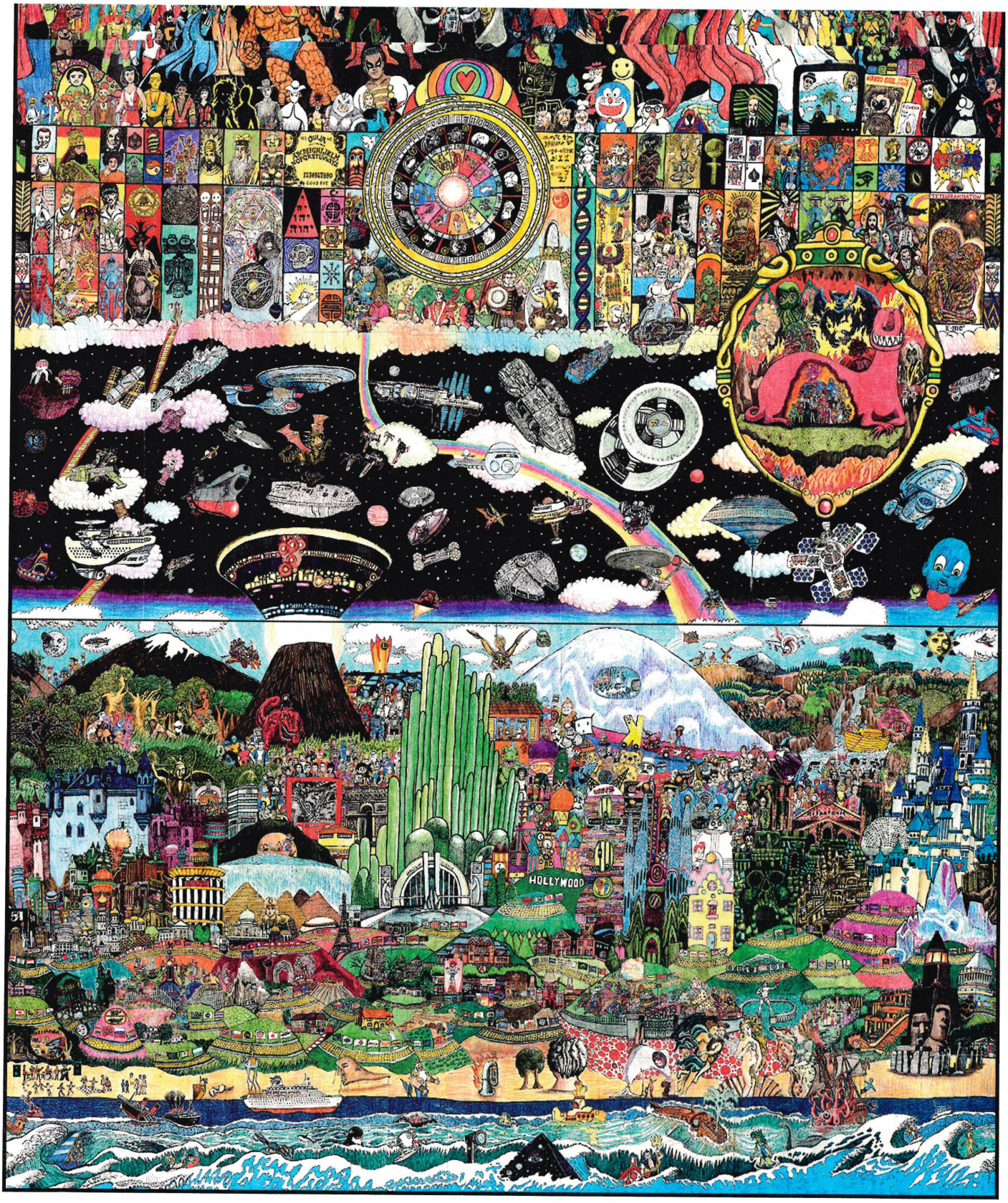
Peek-a-boo Pikachu

It's in there somewhere, along with over one hundred more of your favourite Pokémon. And yes, Charmander's there too.

Described as the 'Picture of Everything', this is the ultimate doodle. It certainly shows that artist Howard Hallis had too much time on his hands. Nearly everyone is included in the gargantuan doodle, including plenty of your favourite video game characters.

Spotting them all will be a mammoth task and we gave up after seeing Charmander. That was Dean's only goal when he saw this picture. It took an incredible 17,520 hours to create this huge six foot by 14 foot giant and was started way back in 1997 when the artist drew a picture of Spider-Man. We found him straight away, that was easy. But there are plenty more characters to try to find; it's like a fun version of *Where's Wally* that doesn't feature a speccy idiot.

To get you started, we'll mention a few characters we noticed: Haunter, Mario, Astro Boy... er, other games people. Oh look, we got bored after a while but if you can spot all 157 Pokémon, send us the list and we might be a little bit impressed. Only a little though.



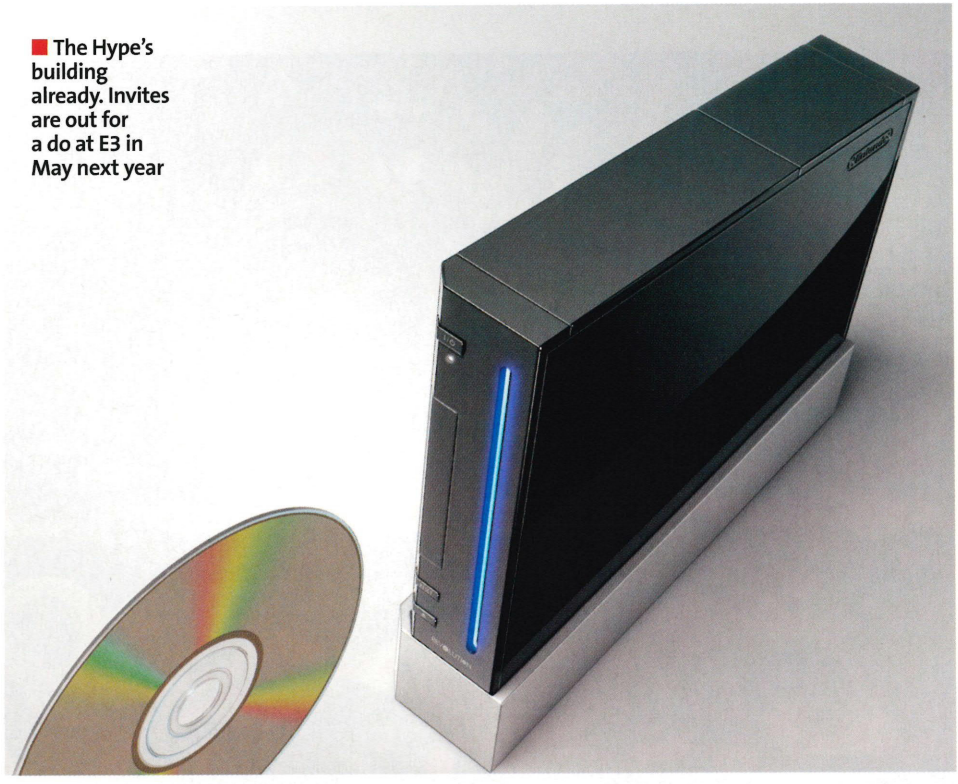
Revolution revs up

Let the E3 excitement commence right NOW.

Nintendo has gone against form and already started sending out invites to its big E3 presentation next year. Normally it only sends invites out a couple of months before the event, so this year must be something special. Hmm, it's almost like there's a new console coming out or something.

Nintendo of America sent out an invite on November 29th, to make sure games journalists are excited to the point of exploding by May. The invite said: "You're probably just starting to plan your time for 2006. With a mere 165 days to go (give or take), it's time to start thinking about next year's E3. Nintendo is most certainly thinking about it. So pencil us in. You'll hear all the incredible details about Nintendo's upcoming games and hardware, including our next home console, code-named Revolution. You won't want to miss it. See you there."

Unfortunately, the announcement didn't say Revolution will be playable at the event and we can only hope that some games will be seen at E3. Well, the invite has certainly got us all intrigued and we can't wait to see what Nintendo's got up its sleeve next year. Be excited, be very excited.

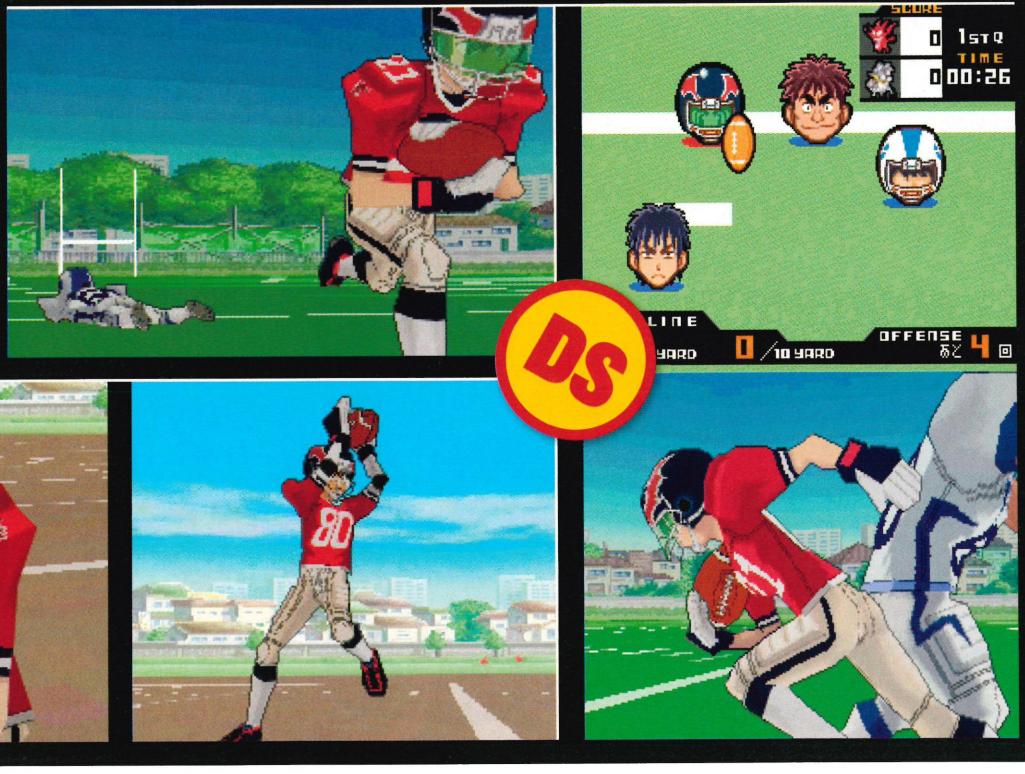


■ The Hype's building already. Invites are out for a do at E3 in May next year

We Can't Wait For...

EYESHIELD 21

Look; it's a Japanese American football game... wait, don't go, please come back. *Eyeshield 21* is actually an awesome manga in Japan, a bit like *Prince of Tennis* but with loads more padding. Okay, so it's probably never going to be released here in the UK but it's a good example of how DS graphics are getting better and better. So actually, this is a We Can't Wait For... the next batch of DS games with great graphics.



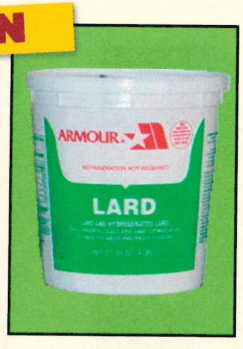
It's Christmas, so it's time for the obligatory Xmas feature. Obviously I hate the festive season. I can hardly cram the turkey down my throat because I'm so busy gagging at the thought of so many people being merry.

SEAL'S CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

You're probably going to want to buy me presents. I'm kind of like a God to you. I realise you love me, like a lost brother you never knew but fear anyway. But I don't want some crap presents that are part of the Boots two-for-one offer. And if I receive any more soap, I'll scream. So to stop you wasting your time, here's the list of presents that will make me happy.

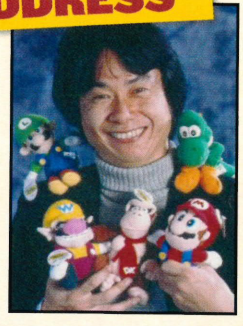
LIPOSUCTION

I know I have a weight problem, that's why I'm so angry. Do you think it's easy being this fat? I can't fit through doors, I have my own gravitational pull and don't even get me started on the seal mating season. Sob.



MIYAMOTO'S ADDRESS

As a long-term fan of Nintendo, I think it's only right that Miyamoto should regularly invite me round for noodles. I'd also like to discuss the chance of him making a *Super Seal Bros.* game. I think it should be made.

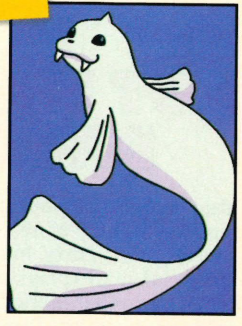


A MONKEY IN A BALL

Playing *Super Monkey Ball* always makes me realise how much I'd love to have an actual monkey in a ball. I'd roll him around, making him balance precariously above chasms on a small platform. We'd laugh all the time.

A MATE

I recently realised that my best friend Dewgong is actually female. Damn Pokémon and their refusal to point out their sex. So anyway, it got me thinking about how lonely I am. Please find me true love.



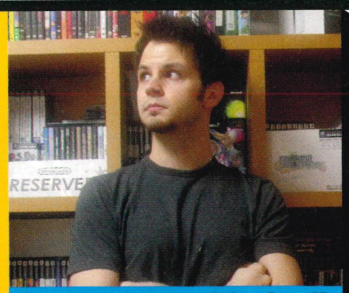
A NEW PEN

I've had that bloody purple pen for years now. It doesn't even work. Each month I think about what an idiot I must look holding a pen that doesn't even work. Instead I use it to stab penguins and threaten them.

WORLD PEACE

I bet you've think I've gone mad, don't you? Me, the Great Hater, wanting world peace? Well, if you bunch of meat-bags stop fighting and destroy all your nuclear weapons, me and the other seals can take over, forcing you into slavery.

Blip Japan

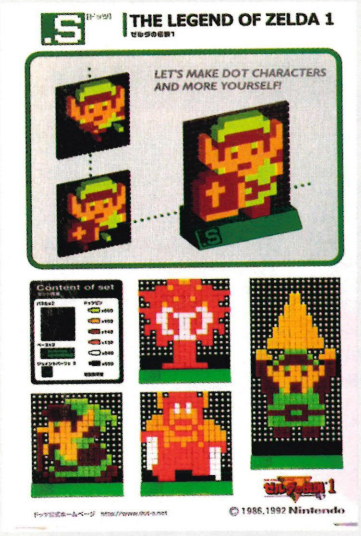


reporter John Ricciardi

● DOT FRENZY ● SIBLING RIVALRY ● FLASHAPON

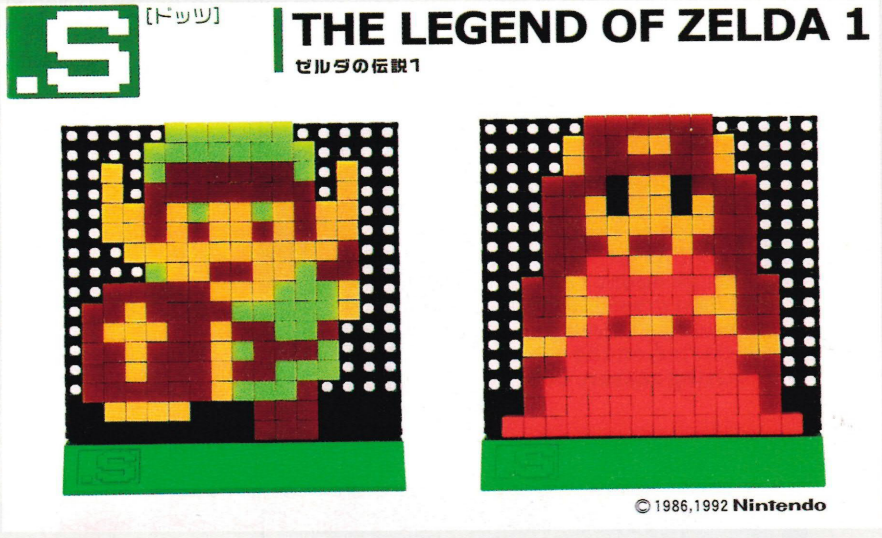
RETURN OF THE DOTS

These retro-themed pixel-art building sets are super-hot, and the company has wasted no time coming out with a second series. The crown jewel of the new collection is, without doubt, *The Legend of Zelda*! This new kit of coloured pegs and black grid fields lets you recreate Link, Zelda or an assortment of enemies from the classic game. How cool?



◀ All the characters from the *Zelda* series are waiting for you in dot form

▶ Get busy with the dots to create Link and the awesome Zelda



HOT MARIO BROS.

Nintendo has hired popular Osaka comedians 'Ninety-Nine' to advertise the latest *Mario Party*. In the TV commercial, Mario plays *Mario Party 7* with seven other Marios but refuses to let Luigi join in the fun. In the end, though, Luigi manages to crash Mario's party. This photo is taken from the poster - they appear to have gotten over their sibling rivalries. Thank god.

8-BIT MELODIES

With the mould for last month's Question Block moneybox complete, Nintendo's toy marketing department quickly set about looking for other cubic objects to give a *Super Mario* flair. First: a mono speaker for your PC, iPod, or any other device with a headphone jack. It also plays the coin sound when you push a button, so it's perfect for making *Mario*-themed remixes at your next DJ set.

FAMILY COMPUTING

You can't play games all the time. Sometimes, you have to work to earn money for them. So the next time you've got to crunch some numbers for the boss, try one of these Famicom cartridge-shaped calculators. These babies add, subtract, multiply AND divide! Even more thrillingly, pressing the '=' key plays a sound effect from *Super Mario Bros.*, *The Legend of Zelda* or *Ice Climber*.

GASHAPON GOODNESS

Nintendo's a company with more than two decades of gaming history, a rich library of hundreds of titles and an army of nostalgia hungry soldiers ready to fight for every bit of merchandise known to man. Now see if you can find these bad boys on eBay. The chaps in question are ten pocket-sized renditions of months-olds DS games from *Nintendogs* to *Polarium* and *Advance Wars Dual Strike*. Just don't expect them to come out here. Ever.

Look at Pichu's face. It looks like he's got one waiting in the departure lounge. But maybe his face is there to catch your eye and say: "Please buy my new Gashapon or I'll cry." That's 'cos they aren't any old rubbish. They are mobile straps that light up when it rings. Genius.

THE AD GALLERY

THE LATEST ADS FROM JAPANESE GAMING MAGS...

Akihabara WATCH

Animal Crossing: Wild World hit Japan on November 23rd. Nintendo has triple-dipped the game in Japan, with N64, GameCube, and e-Reader versions, so the big push is online via Wi-Fi Connection. The Japanese motto is "Easy. Safe. Free." They clearly haven't heard of the Tree-Cutting Mafia.

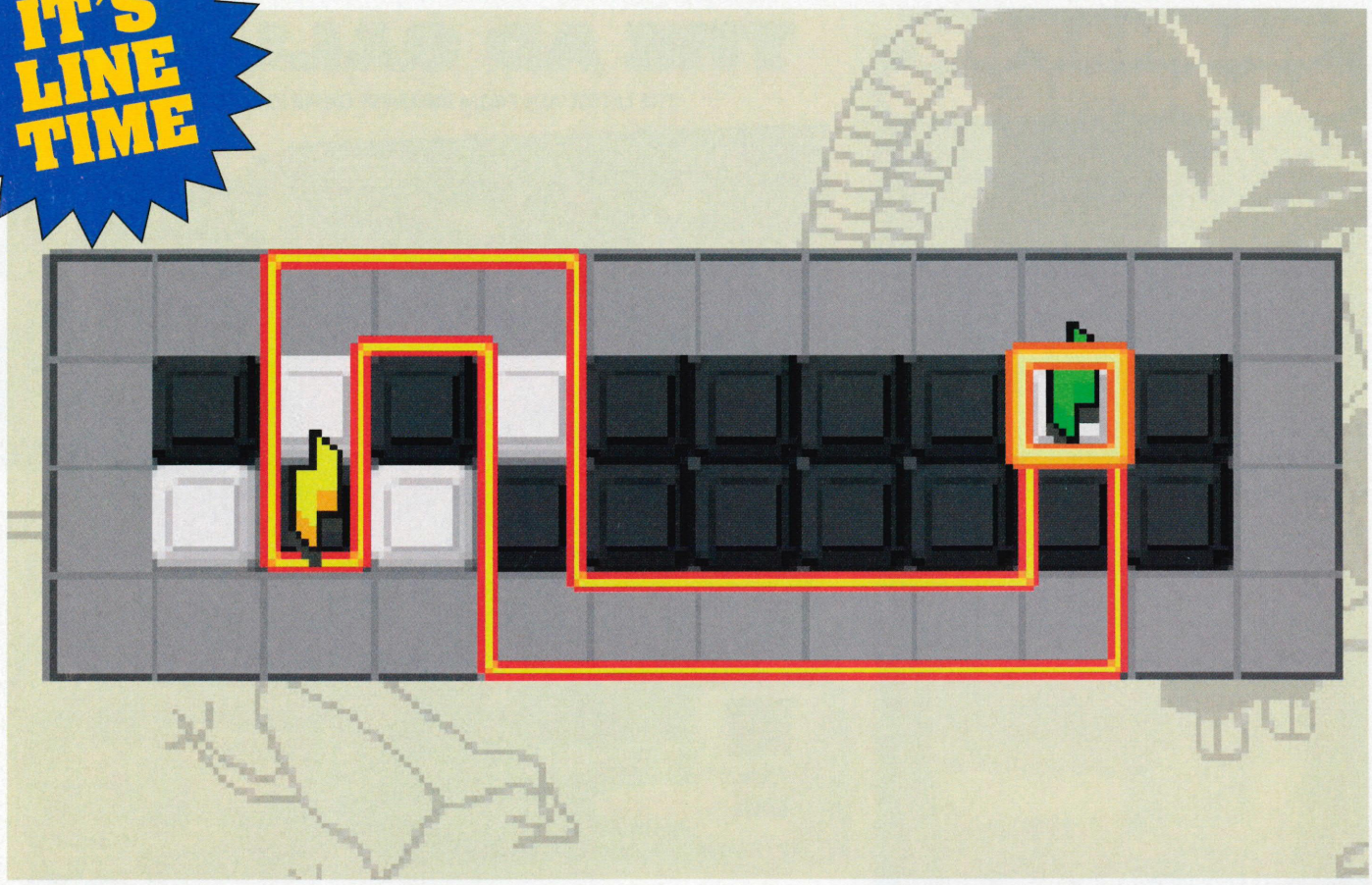
JAPAN TOP TEN

The current best-selling games on Nintendo platforms in Japan

1	*MARIO PARTY 7*	*(NINTENDO, GC)*
2	*DARE DEMO ASOBI TAIKAI*	*(NINTENDO, DS)*
3	*NOU WO KITAERU OTONA NO DS TRAINING*	*(NINTENDO, DS)*
4	*TAMAGOTCHI NO PUCHI PUCHI OMISECCHI*	*(BANDAI, DS)*
5	*YAWARAKA ATAMA JUKU*	*(NINTENDO, DS)*
6	*POKéMON TOROUZE*	*(NINTENDO, DS)*
7	*FAMICOM MINI SUPER MARIO BROS.*	*(NINTENDO, GBA)*
8	*BATTALION WARS*	*(NINTENDO, GC)*
9	*OTONA NO DS GOLF*	*(NINTENDO, DS)*
10	*SUPER PRINCESS PEACH*	*(NINTENDO, DS)*

Source: Mediacreate, week ending November 13th

IT'S LINE TIME



Tsuukin Hitofude

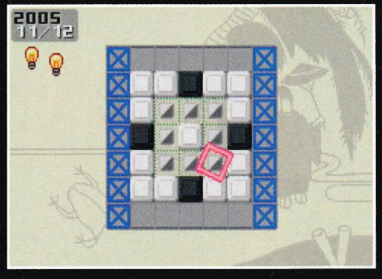
PLAYED!

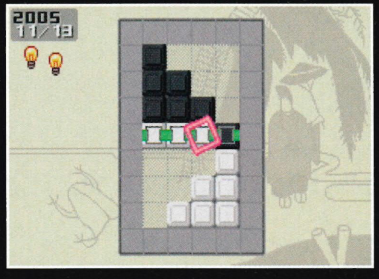
Polarium is one of the most criminally under-rated puzzle games since Carol Vorderman's _Naked Sodoku Challenge on Stilts... With Gibbons_. _Polarium_ should be mentioned in the same breath as _Meteos_ and _Tetris_. It's a wonderfully addictive, challenging and brain-melting experience that verges on the impossible. Luckily, although you bunch may not worship it like a God, the Japanese people love it. And rightly so.

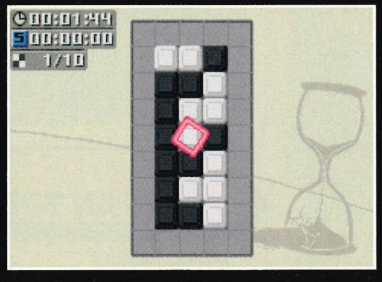
So thank the Puzzle Lord, known as Puzzlor, that there's now a GBA version of *Polarium* - better known as *Hitofude* in its native Japan. It's actually a stripped-down version of the DS game that doesn't have the Challenge mode but does have a damn sight more puzzles and NEW blocks.

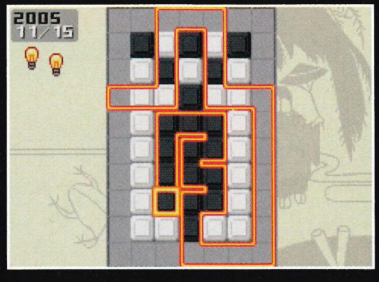
It's not just black and white tiles anymore, now there are completely different... black and white tiles. Some tiles act as chain links, so that when you make them disappear, any tiles above them drop down and hopefully line up with other, same-coloured blocks. There are also grey blocks that are a disgusting result of intimacy between black and white tiles. So they can be either black or white, depending upon which tiles you connect them to. If your brain can keep up in some of the later levels, you're probably Carol Vorderman or one of her Sodoku-playing gibbons.

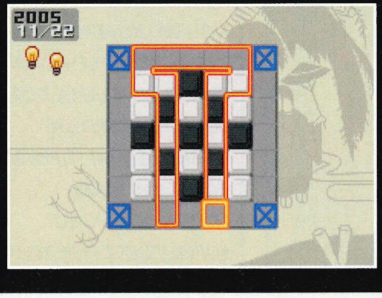
Interestingly, at least for us, the game was actually designed to be played while commuting on the tube or bus. This means you can play by holding the GBA in just one hand while your other hand can be used to hold a suitcase, some noodles, an umbrella or a tiny Sodoku playing gibbon. Japanese adverts boast about this factor and show tens of people in crowded tube trains playing the game. It makes us want to live in Japan, where they APPRECIATE this game. There may be the chance for you to show your respect next year, because there are rumours this version will be hitting the UK. Do the honourable thing and buy ten copies - at least.

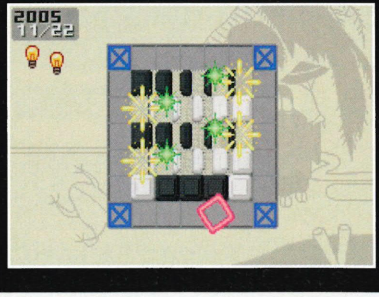












SPACE IS THE PLACE

PLAYED!

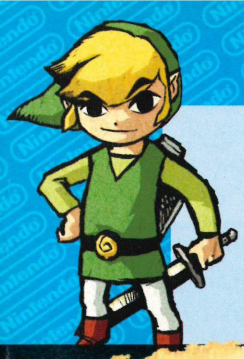
Frontier Stories

Last time you were on a train, it probably didn't warp through a wormhole into space. That kind of occurrence is rare, and you'd probably get a refund on the price of your ticket if you survived the onslaught of the LETHAL SPACE ARMADILLOS.

It starts off like any other train journey. You're there with your red locks and sword, followed by some kind of ghost girl with big feathers in her hair. Presumably a seagull tried to love her, but was interrupted halfway through. You're talking to your fellow passengers on the train - all of them - because that's what you do on public transport. The one in the top hat, the twins, the girl with the pink hair - the conversation flows in Japanese as you keep hitting what you assume to be 'OK'.

Then, DISASTER. The carriages start to shake, and the game cuts to an outside camera, as the train FLIES INTO A BIG SWIRLY WORMHOLE. Now you're on some kind of moon and the tracks abruptly stop short of the vast yawning nothingness of deep space. So, of course, you and the rest of the passengers pile down into some kind of awesome space dungeon and it's there where the fun begins.

IF YOU FIND KILLING LETHAL SPACE ARMADILLOS FUN! The idea now is to repel the creatures, while setting waypoints so the other passengers can toddle off to safety. It's like *Pikmin* with passengers. Balance telling people where to go with slaughtering the things that want to eat them for lunch. It's a neat concept, the graphics are great, and it's as likely to come here as the 11.15 out of Peterborough is to end up on the moon. Which is a pity.



WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE
SAMUS ARAN

REWARD
5,000,000 SPACE DOLLARS

Metroid Prime: Hunters

This time around she's not the only bounty hunter in the galaxy.

SCANNING... NEW DATA ADDED TO LOGBOOK. Something's stirring in deep space. An ominous telekinetic message has invaded some of the most powerful minds in the galaxy. The Tetra Galaxy, thought to be dead, has started to wake up and it could mean trouble.

The Galactic Federation has decided to investigate this strange message and rumours of an 'ultimate power' in the Alimbic Cluster, within the Tetra Galaxy. There's only one man to get the job done and it's actually a woman - Samus Aran. But it's going to be tough, the Alimbic Cluster is guarded by some of the most advanced technical arsenals in the universe. There are lasers, robots, traps and they're all gunning for anyone who invades the sacred heart of the cluster.

But that's not the only problem facing Samus. The mysterious message has enticed some of the most cold-hearted bounty hunters. Some want the power for themselves, others want to prove they're the best bounty hunter in the galaxy and some just love the chance to maim and kill. But they've all got one thing in common, they'll do anything it takes to get their hands on the 'ultimate power'. Forget the Metroids, Samus has got bigger and more dangerous fish to fry. LOGBOOK ENTRY COMPLETE

When this hits Earth some time next year, it's going to blow you away. It'll leave you gasping for breath like you've just been dropped out an air lock and into deep space. This isn't a handheld game. The presentation value is higher than the budget of most NASA missions. Seriously, there are times when you'll have difficulty distinguishing between this and the 'Cube *Primes*.

As we've already described, things kick off in the Alimbic Cluster and Samus has to investigate. At first she arrives on a seemingly abandoned spaceship in the middle of nowhere. Everything about this ship stinks of mystery. The music when you first arrive is eerie and with a decent pair of headphones, you'll actually find yourself becoming more and more tense. It makes the hairs on your neck stand up as you explore.

But we pulled ourself together and went through the first door. Once you get through, you end up in a long corridor. It all seems very claustrophobic as you navigate your way along the silent halls. Through a few more doors and you end up in a large room full of computer equipment. You'll gape in awe when you first walk into this room and get a glimpse of just how awesome this game is going to be.

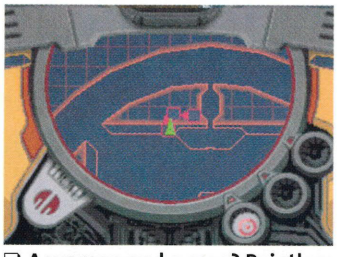
The room has two large computers in the centre. Their orange blinking screens rise up to the ceiling and look like something straight from a sci-fi film. As you approach, a slow motion cut-scene drives your attention to panels surrounding the base of the computer pillars. Ah yes, now it's time to scan. When you want to scan objects in a room, you need to press and hold an icon on the touch screen. You must hold it for a couple of seconds, to ensure you don't accidentally activate Scan mode when you don't want to. Different scanable objects have different colours. Doors are red, enemies are orange and we suppose there'll be more in the final version. We scanned the computers and text appeared on the screen. Although the logbook entries aren't likely to be as in-depth as the 'Cube *Primes*, it's still nice to see Nintendo hasn't avoided this aspect altogether. The emphasis is still on exploration.

So that's exactly what we did and carried on towards the heart of the spaceship. Although some of the corridors looked a bit samey, we still had to admire the attention to detail in each one. Computers lined the walls, different coloured beams of light streaked across the ceilings and giant metal pillars would sometimes block our way. It's amazing just to stop and stare for a while, you almost can't believe you're playing this on DS. When you compare it to the rehashed GBA games that are released by some

❑ Multiplayer arena fights rock. And online too!

❑ We're liking the sound of the Assault Cradle

❑ Morph Ball mayhem remains



❑ A woman and a map? Pointless

❑ Bored with lasers? Missiles then

Hunters or hunted? We take a closer look at the bounty hunters after Samus

SPIRE

❑ The last remaining Diamont, an ancient silicone-based race whose bodies are composed entirely of rock. Spire is desperately trying to find more information about the fate or location of the rest of this race. He hopes the 'ultimate power' will help solve the mystery of his past.

NOXUS

❑ A member of the Vhozon, a proud and reclusive race that lives on the outer rim. Noxus is a spiritual being who became a bounty hunter to deal punishment to the galaxy's criminals and restore order. He wants to make sure the 'ultimate power' does not fall into the hands of evildoers.

KANDEN

❑ The result of an experiment gone tragically wrong, Kanden was created to be the ultimate soldier. However, the process fizzled his brain, turning him into a killer. After busting out the lab and killing his creators, Kanden travels to the Tetra Galaxy to prove he's the best bounty hunter.

❑ That's not a funky torch but missile trails

❑ Respond by blasting him to bits

❑ Morph Ball bowls along. Strike!!!

other publishers, that's especially the case. This is the DS at its best, there's simply no excuse for porting a GBA game with the odd touch screen feature for the hell of it.

After a while we made it to our first enemy encounter. Firing your beam is exactly the same as the *Metroid DS* demo that came bundled with the DS. You use the touch screen to aim and L to fire. There's no lock-on but it's actually really easy to keep track of the enemies using the touch screen, even when they're teleporting all over the place. The arm cannon can fire quickly for a limited amount of time, while with other power-ups, you'll hold L to fire. We're going to be honest and say it can be tiring. Cramping your hands round the DS to keep pressing fire can start to ache after a while. We're concerned that extended sessions could become a real pain, literally. Although there is an auto fire, it's a bit slow, so you just press L yourself. Let's hope we'll see a faster auto-fire in the final game.

❑ OMG! It's Samus' evil clone-twin. Oh no, just someone in blue

❑ Multiplayer arena fights are expansive and detailed. And violent

There was also another slight niggle we had with the controls. After beating the robot enemies, we came to a section where we needed to jump our way up a series of green platforms. The room looked great but the jumping wasn't. To jump, you need to double tap the touch screen. Jumping about during general movement isn't a problem but trying to make precise jumps that require timing can be a chore. There are times when the screen simply doesn't register a double tap, so you fall back down to the start.

But our concerns evaporated when we had our first encounter with one of the six other bounty hunters. Kanden, the slug-like creature, burst into view and we pursued him. The ensuing fight was chaotic, sometimes he'd turn into a slug and start laying huge Power Bombs, before transforming back into his normal form and blasting us with a cannon that interfered with our visor. This fight was incredible and we're salivating with the possibility of yet more to come. Without a doubt, *Hunters* is going to be one of the best DS games yet.

Rob Burman

❑ Samus and clone-thing look like they're having a ball. Ball. See what we did?

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: NINTENDO

FAMOUS FOR:
Handing the *Metroid* reigns to Retro for the *Primes*. Now it's taken them back for Samus' first DS mission.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

MULTIPLAYER: 1-4 (AND ONLINE)
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: Q1 2006
REVIEW: TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

If you're not willing to hunt this down when released, you're mad. With the online multiplay, this is even going to give *Mario Kart DS* a run for its money.

90% PLUS

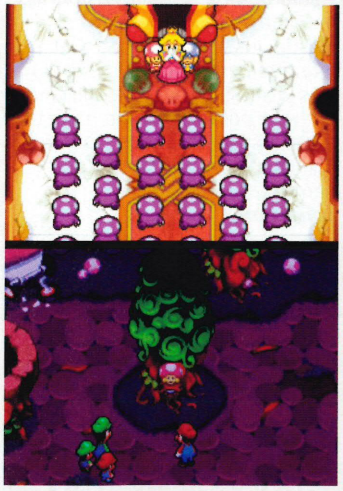
Mario and Luigi 2: Partners in Time

But will it beat Luigi in a dress and Mario in the buff?

Superstar Saga was one of the defining games on GBA. It was something special, something magical. Playing it made you feel part of some elite club. You were in on all the jokes, you knew all the characters that made cameos. It rewarded you for being a Nintendo fan. Now the sequel's on the horizon but will it make you feel as warm inside? Will your tummy be overjoyed? Let's see...

Things all kick off on an alien planet. What's that? Aliens in a *Mario* game? The last time we saw Mario taking on alien invaders was in *Super Mario Land 2*. Perhaps that Martian in the spaceship you had to blast to bits has come back to get his revenge? Perhaps. We won't lie to you, we're speculating with that last statement. *Guinness Book of Records*-style speculating. Annnnnnyway, the aliens decide to invade Mushroom Kindgom.

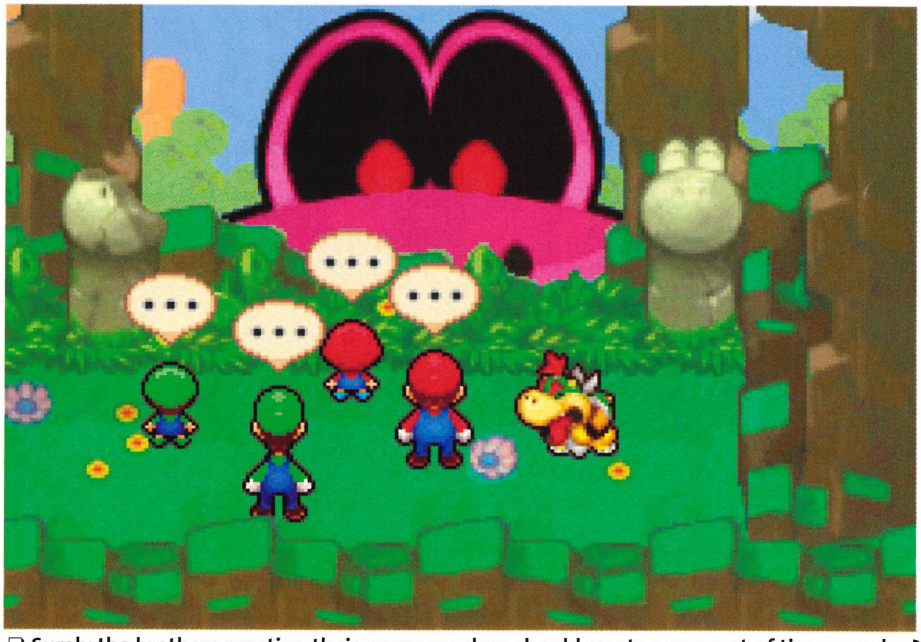
But it's a PAST Mushroom Kingdom. A hilarious old version where everyone is years younger. Within the first few moments, you're introduced to kiddy versions of Mario, Luigi, Bowser and even Peach. This is brilliant. Even though he's only just out of nappies, Bowser has already developed a taste for kidnapping Peach. He looks just like Bowser Junior and isn't even a king yet, he's known as Prince Bowser. We're hoping you'll get to meet his dad at some



❑ Baby Luigi shells out. Ha! Shell!

❑ The brothers are rock hard. Harder than Phil and Grant. Add younger versions and they're invincible

❑ The boys get their whirlwind attack on



❑ Surely the brothers meeting their younger selves should create some sort of time paradox?

point. It would be hilarious if Bowser's dad was actually a really good king and was annoyed that his son was such a bad lad. Once again, that's glorious speculation. But it would be great.

While the young Mario Brothers are fighting Bowser, all Hell breaks loose as the aliens start to arrive. They land in hundreds of UFOs and start blasting everything in sight. It's a cool and funny introduction so far but then things get better. Next we flash forward to the current Mushroom Kingdom, the one you're all familiar with. Prof. Gadd is unveiling a time machine which Peach decides to test out. Unfortunately, on its return, the machine is damaged and out pops one of the aliens. It's fight time...

Those familiar with the Mario and Luigi style of fighting will be delighted to see the system has not been changed for DS. You still need to press A or B, depending on which character you want to control, to either attack or dodge incoming. You still need to time your presses just before you hit an enemy, to deal some real damage. It might have been cool to perhaps use the touch screen in some way for battles but we reckon that might come later in the game, as you unlock more special items.

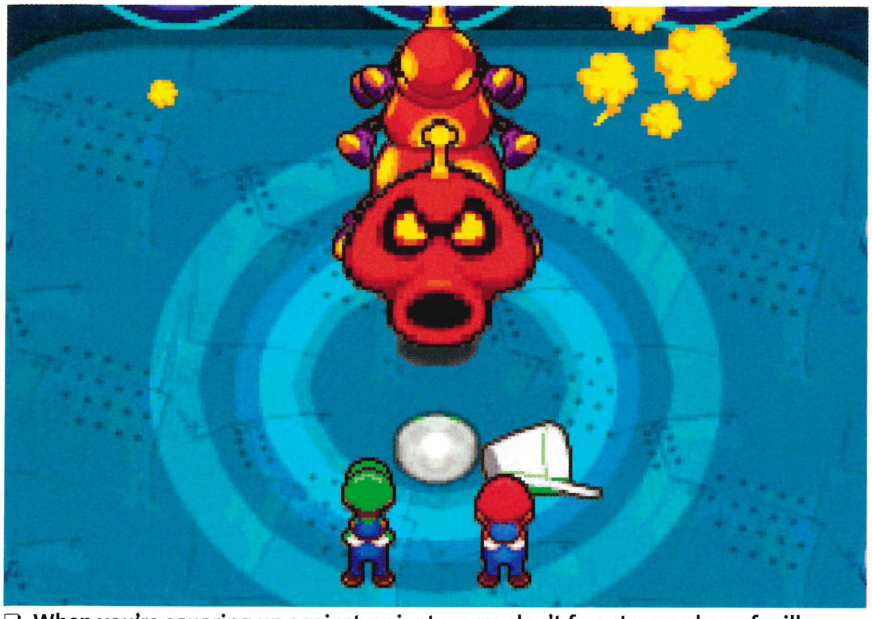
After battling the alien, Luigi falls into the time machine like a bloody idiot and that's when things really start to happen. On arrival in the past, you meet Stuffwell the Suitcase. Unfortunately this is a rather irritating speaking version of the suitcase from *Superstar Saga*. He trains you in the art of fighting and using his innards to store things. We didn't like Stuffwell. He's a berk. We wanted to stuff him with Bob-Ombs and leave them to go off.

Once you've finished listening to him yammering on, it's time to explore. Although the graphics aren't a great improvement on the GBA, it doesn't mean they don't look any less sweet. The first area is a Mushroom zone that's full of giant fungi. It's a beautiful thing to look at. It's certainly a lot brighter and more colourful than *Superstar Saga* and we hope Alpha Dream have made sure all the environments are as interesting as this first one.

Normally the top screen is used to show a map of the area you're exploring. We're not really sure just how useful this will actually be. From playing *Superstar Saga*, it was normally self-explanatory where you had to go. Perhaps the map will help to show secret items or areas that you wouldn't normally see? We're just not sure but at the moment, we really aren't all that impressed by the top screen.

The only saving grace could be the puzzles that use both screens. Once you get to control both young Mario Brothers and older Mario Brothers, there will be times when you take control of one set of brothers and use a single screen. Sometimes actions you perform in one area will affect something on the other screen. This could be a cool recipe for some awesome puzzles later on in the game.

So far, it's not a great leap from *Superstar Saga* but we've only played through the introduction. We think it'll soon step up a gear and we can't wait to get our hands on the finished version next month. And if there's another scene with Mario in the shower, we're willing to call this the Game of 2006. ***Rob Burman***



❑ When you're squaring up against a giant worm, don't forget your glass of milk

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: ALPHA DREAM

FAMOUS FOR:
Superstar Saga was a constant joy that dazzled and delighted all true Mario fans. It became their best friend for a while.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

MULTIPLAYER: NO
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: JANUARY 27TH
REVIEW: NEXT ISSUE

PREDICTED SCORE

We're loving the humour and mental plot. The introduction of young Mario characters is genius. Magic professors must have developed this game.

90% PLUS

❑ Charmander and Pikachu's game of hopscotch goes horribly wrong

❑ The duo use a standard one-by-one cover formation to advance

Pokémon: Mysterious Dungeon

Available soon in Red and Blue variants. Don't worry, HE's in both.

Remember when Charmander was big? Remember when he ruled over us all with his fiery tail and pointy teeth? Remember him standing astride the gaming world like a big orange Colossus, just willing you to give him the opportunity to do something awesome? We think you do.

Then Nintendo made a bad decision. It decided to give a few more Pokémon their chance of a share of the limelight. Presumably because the Pokémon Centre in Tokyo couldn't cope with demand for Charmander toys and his brand of edible Charmander lady pants. So idiots like Treecko were thrust undeservingly onto centre stage. Treecko's not orange, his tail's not on fire and his teeth are pretty blunt. It's an embarrassment, frankly.

Torchic? He's not even a lizard, he's just a bird! But at least he's not a FISH like Kyogre. Don't get us started on that Rayquaza. Being massive is not a substitute for being awesome. We were starting to lose hope, until the Japanese version of *Pokémon: Mysterious Dungeon Red* GBA surfed in on a wave of Tim Street's Visa love. Gaming's prodigal son had returned.

Okay, he appears to be wearing some kind of red neckerchief. We can't condone that, but years in the gaming wilderness can do strange things to a flame-able lizard. It doesn't seem to affect his ability to headbutt other Pokémon in the face, which is what this game is all about. Headbutt Pokémon in the face in dungeons: an inviting mission objective if ever we heard one.

Even more so when you consider this is a buddy movie. Headbutting Pokémon in the face isn't a task to be taken on without an able deputy. The game presents you with a selection of Poképain causers. You could be a retard and choose one of the crap ones like Squirtle. You

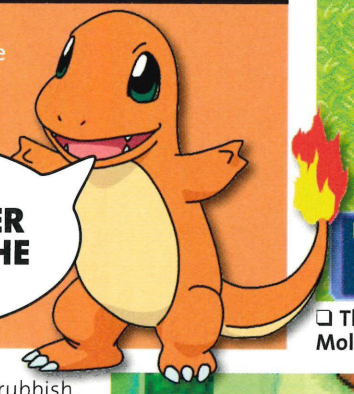
❑ Kangaskhan gets depressed when two more prospective buyers object to the smell

❑ Err, yeees. Is that Japanese for 'Charmander rules'?

❑ A charming residence, light and airy, electric occupant...

Also on DS The Blue version comes on a flatter, squarer cart

The DS version is called *Mysterious Dungeon Team Rescue Blue* and it's the same. We got that too, but we didn't dare put BOTH carts into a single DS. We were afraid of what might happen. What if we unlocked a power greater than we could comprehend? The DS's secret CHARMANDER CREATION feature. The machine glows orange, and he leaps out from the top screen into your real life and starts setting fire to things. It's hard to explain that to the police when they arrest you for burning your school down.



❑ The Thunderbirds take a wrong turn in the Mole and end up in Charmander's garden

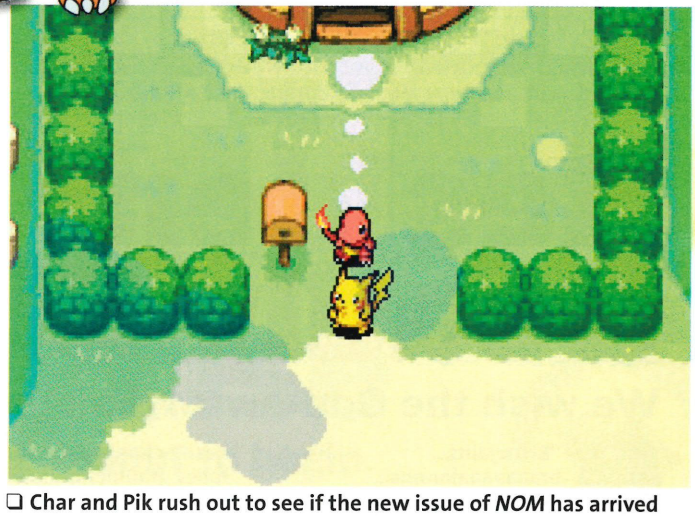
could. Or you could do the right thing and choose the Poké Tom Cruise: Edward J. Pikachu!

Pika and Doctor Char. You know it's the right squad. Time to get down into some dungeons and stick your mind on someone else's mind. Pika's happy to play second fiddle to the returning lord. His agent says it'll be good to show he can perform in supporting roles for when his looks start to fade away with age.

Anyway, enough chatter Pikachu. We're sure your stock portfolio is going berserk, but it's time to mash people up. This game, we're told, is an example of the 'dungeon crawler' subgenre. It's not a genre we're over-familiar with, since these games tend to crash and burn somewhere over the Pacific before we ever see them. The reason for this could be because they're slightly rubbish.

Here, Charmander takes the lead. The idea is to progress downwards and deeper into a dungeon by punching people in the chest until you find some stairs. Get to a pre-determined depth, and you win. There's usually a Pokémon down there to find, like the one that looks like a chrysalis or that magnet one. Neither of which are a mental orange fiery lizard, so their names are unimportant. Dave and Bob we'll call them.

The fighting seems like it's real time, but isn't. Ha! It's a trick. You step up to a Pokémon that needs a dig, and press Ⓐ. If you don't miss, numbers will rise up off him. We're talking numbers of DEATH. He'll get his turn to hit you back, but he won't win because you're Charmander and you're awesome.

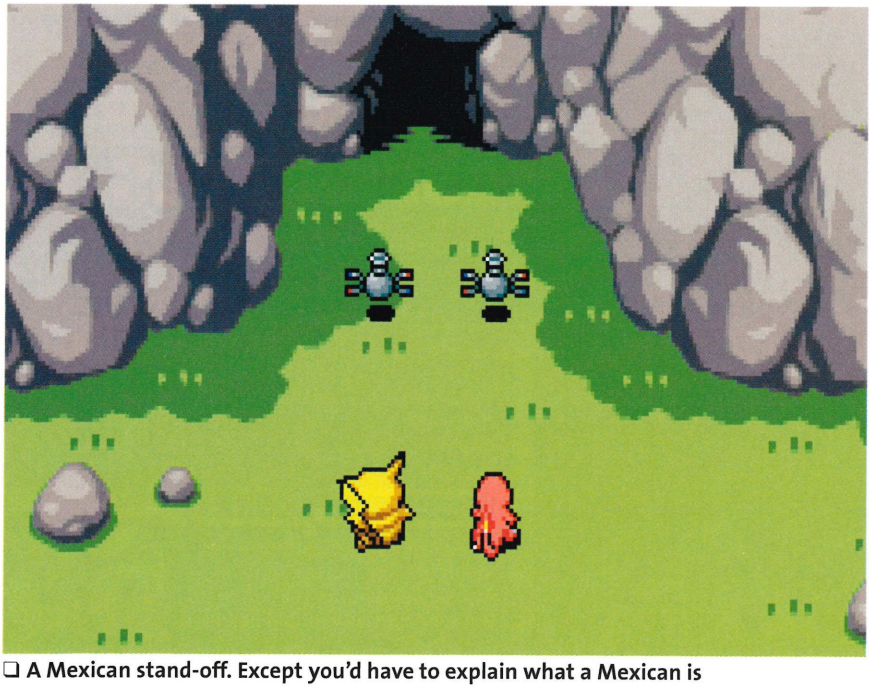


❑ Char and Pik rush out to see if the new issue of *NOM* has arrived

You can avoid enemies altogether, as they're pretty infrequent in the early stages. You can run them into your sidekick if you like, and Pika will demonstrate that, despite the fame and the strippers, he hasn't forgotten how to kill people with electricity. Hold down Ⓑ, and you run in a way that looks broken. Your guys appear at the end of the corridor at a speed that makes even light look positively slow.

After a couple of missions, we ended up in a crazy Pokémon village. Some cat thing took a load of points off us, said a lot of Japanese things, and we walked off confused. There's a tonne of menus to wade through in and out of the dungeons, and they could be the making of this game. The core dungeoneering and fighting is boring though. It's as pedestrian as a normal *Pokémon* game. That'll be where the 'crawler' bit comes in.

Dean Scott



❑ A Mexican stand-off. Except you'd have to explain what a Mexican is

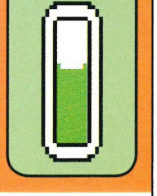
ESSENTIALS

STARS: CHARMANDER

FAMOUS FOR: Going AWOL in the world of *Pokémon*, possibly retreating to a brutal foreign jail to learn to fight even better, like in *Batman Begins*. We're fairly sure that's where he would have gone.

SKIN COLOUR: ORANGE
TEETH: POINTY
TAIL: ON FIRE
AWESOMENESS: INCALCULABLE

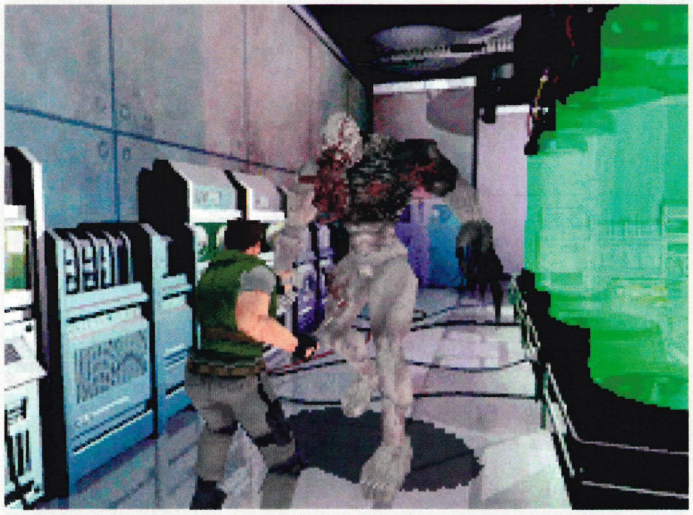
THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



PREDICTED SCORE

As a game, it's not even all that good. In fact, it's boring. But as a vehicle which El Charmander can ride back into our lives, it's a glorious success.

60% PLUS



❑ "Annnnd... cut. You were fabulous darling. Take a break."

❑ Nice that they added a funfair ride. The louder you scream... etc

Resident Evil: Deadly Silence

We wish the God-awful dialogue had been Deadly Silenced.

"Brrrrrrains... braaaaaaainnnns... BRRRRRAINSSSSSSSSS. Ahem, sorry about that. Roger the Zombie here, from that first bit in *Resident Evil*. I'm the gory chap you shot in the face near the start. Since then, I've been busy; an extra in *Shaun of the Dead* and technical advisor on *28 Days Later*. But now I'm back in my own right.

"My pals at Capcom have re-released the first *Resi* on DS to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the world's most-loved zombie series. It's not like the GameCube remake though. Capcom hasn't changed the clunky dialogue, ropey graphics or tragic movie-style intro. I remember being on set, watching them film that intro and thinking what a huge mistake it was. After all, there are only so many close-ups of dog's teeth you can have before it gets silly.

"It's hard to believe that ten years ago, people even took this game seriously. The dialogue is terrible. It sounds like some tramps got together in a room and just started reading stuff from the back of cereal packets. But rather than being a negative point, this now helps to give it the essential 'retro' factor. You can laugh at it, instead of crying and threatening to kill yourself.

"The *Resi 4* revolution seems like it never happened. It's back to the fixed-camera views of rooms you have to awkwardly shuffle around. Unlike the speech, which can be seen as funny, the dodgy controls aren't. Getting about is a nuisance and shooting is equally frustrating. I don't mind though. If it means I can chomp on your retinas while you try to reload, that's fine with me. Yum yum.

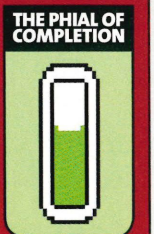
"Okay, there are some touch screen bits where you can slash my pals with a knife. But that seems to happen randomly as far as I could see. This is the third time *Resident Evil* has been released and it seems a bit pointless now. Although the promise of more touch screen has me salivating as much as braaaains." ***Roger Zombie***

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

FAMOUS FOR:
Totally reinventing the *Resi* series with the incredible *Resi 4*. That was amazing but we reckon *Deadly Silence* probably won't be.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



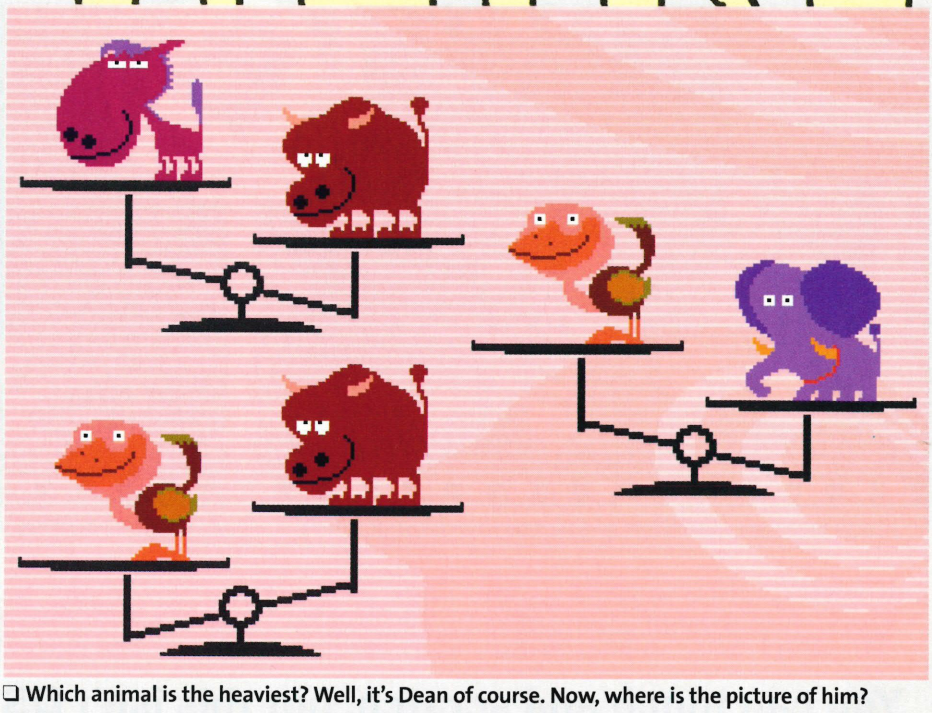
MULTIPLAYER: NO
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
RELEASE: 1ST HALF 2006
REVIEW: TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

After *Resi 4* we're not bothered about playing the original again. Also, a weird game for handheld. But who knows, it could be killer in the end.

65% PLUS

❑ Use shapes to make this picture of Dean



❑ Which animal is the heaviest? Well, it's Dean of course. Now, where is the picture of him?

Brain Exercise

Settle down class, the lessons are about to begin.

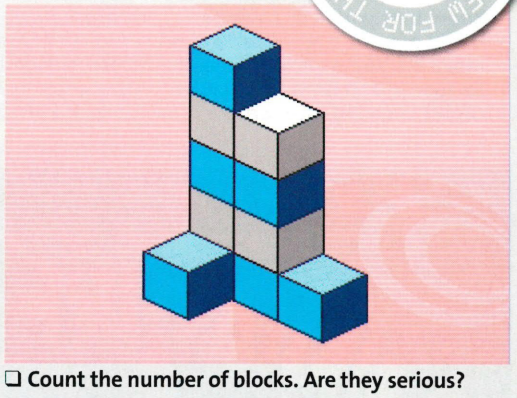
You're not using your brain enough. It's screaming for some attention. If it could run away from the inside of your skull, it would. It's banging against the bone as we speak, just hoping it'll crack so it can make its escape and leave you a gibbering wreck. But there's some brain medicine on its way and it'll calm that pink fleshy mass.

Brain Exercise is going to turn your grey matter into multicoloured super matter. You'll probably develop some kind of telekinesis after extended play. It's quite literally, exercise for your brain, as you tackle all sorts of tricky challenges and tests. It's kind of like an intelligent *Wario Ware* for boffins, university lecturers and rocket scientists.

You have to complete five 30 second tests before the game calculates how intelligent or woefully stupid you are. Just so you know, in a room of about 40 journalists, we were among the most intelligent. The game told us we had the brain of a DIPLOMAT. We'll be running a country within a few months.

The first challenge saw us doing some simple maths. Use the different amounts of animals on the bottom screen to equal those on the top screen. A few seconds later we were identifying which object was the heaviest on a set of scales. Then we were counting the number of cubes within a shape. Next it was time to identify the silhouettes of items. Finally we needed to memorise shapes and say which ones went missing. It's all played at a frantic pace and the desperation to prove you're dead clever often results in a lot of panicking as your brain struggles to keep up.

Although these were the only five puzzles in the preview version we played, we're sure there'll be more in the finished one. It may sound all a bit too academic but it was actually strangely compelling. Plus, if you've got a few mates round, it's bound to turn into a competition to see who's the cleverest. You're probably not going to be a diplomat though, so give up. ***Rob Burman***



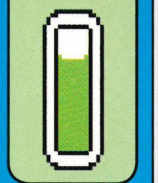
❑ Count the number of blocks. Are they serious?

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: NINTENDO

FAMOUS FOR:
Well it loves its mini-games, doesn't it? This is the top-end of mini-games though. The *Wario* ones that went to university and graduated with a first.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

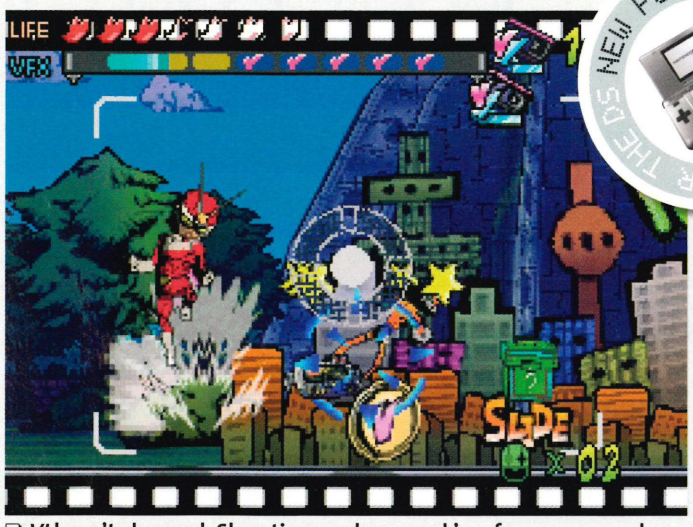


MULTIPLAYER: YES
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: MARCH 2006
REVIEW: TBC

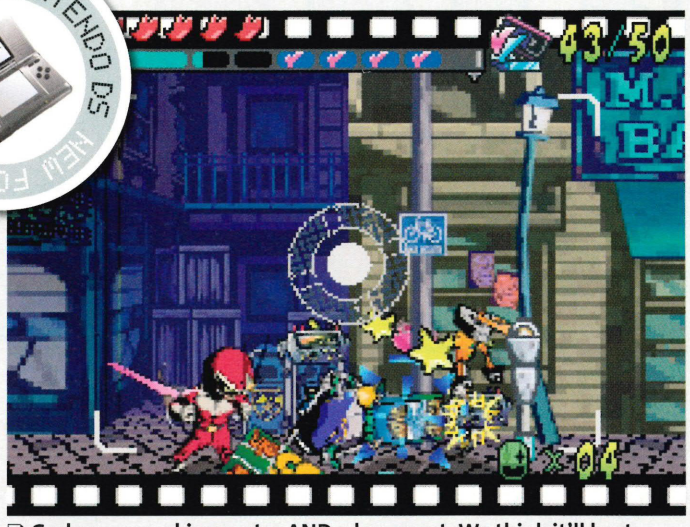
PREDICTED SCORE

It depends on how many challenges there are. Also, the multiplayer is meant to be absolutely awesome. We can't wait, for some strange reason.

80% PLUS



❑ *VJ* hasn't changed. Slow time and pummel 'em for your reward



❑ Garbage, a parking meter AND a lamppost. We think it'll hurt

NEW FOR NINTENDO DS

Viewtiful Joe Double Trouble

You can touch and scratch, but this isn't DS Karma Sutra.

Joe sits hunched, as a robotic Grim Reaper lumbers into view. Mr. Death's slightly-sharp-blade-on-a-stick can cut atoms in half and it's carving up the air just millimetres above Joe's head. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that you're in a whole world of pain if you don't get a move on. You wait for the skull to appear and BAM, the scythe comes crashing into Joe, sending him flying. 'CUT, CUT, CUT!' bellows the director and you're looking at the exit door.

But you haven't played it the *Viewtiful* way. The way this game demands, the way two previous adventures have grabbed hold of your life and uppercut it with the force of a right-hander from Superman. You see the skull, slow down time, dodge the attack and turn to pummel Mr. Death with a blizzard of attacks. Metal parts, springs, coils and plates go flying into the air and you move onto the next. Joe is back and it's gameplay-a-go-go, baby!

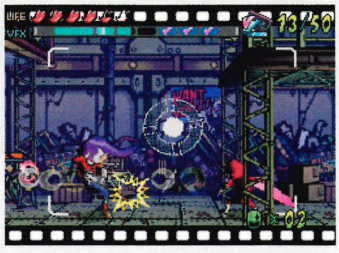
Viewtiful Joe is a gem in a game world increasingly bombarded by tiresome sequels and movie tie-ins. An original idea that deserves your time and respect, and all the more now the mayhem has made it onto the small screen.

The assault on the brain isn't quite as intense as it's been on 'Cube. Battering the droids into scrap metal still feels mint as you rattle out a combo. Yet there never seems to be enough on screen to make it truly chaotic. You never quite feel as though you are one hit away from the director's dreaded bellows.

That's not to say the fights aren't satisfying, as they are. Knife-wielders, sharp-shooters, wizards,

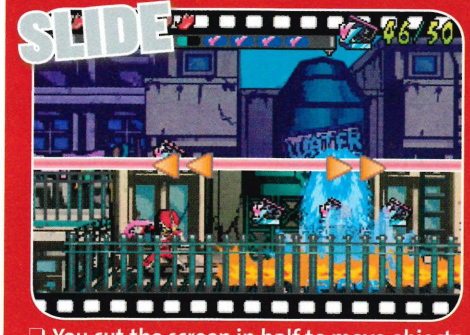
❑ Outside Miniature World, a ruckus broke out in the queue to be the first to play *Mario Kart* online

❑ Robots are kings at staring out

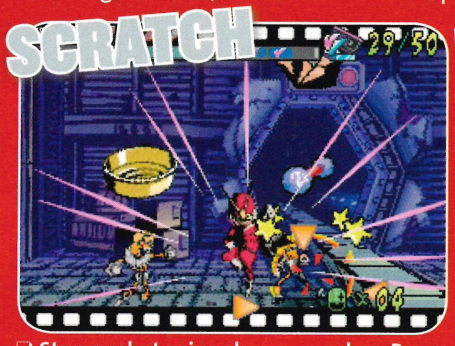


The Viewtiful Game When the game say 'jump', you say 'how high?'

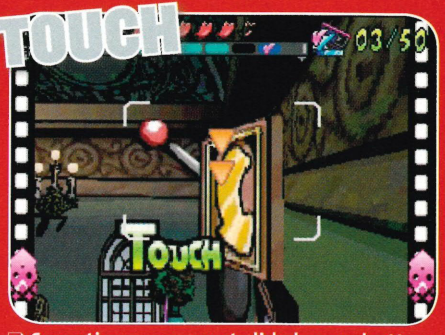
This is an order - put down your stylus and listen up! When you're given on-screen commands, it's time to pay attention and do what they say, otherwise you aren't getting anywhere in this game. Slide, Scratch and Touch are just some of the commands that require you to move the top screen to the bottom, split the screen in half or touch the screen to press a button. Here's what happens...



❑ You cut the screen in half to move objects apart or open your route to the exit. You'll put out fires and move machinery



❑ Stun a robot using slo-mo punches. Press R next to them, scratch their bodies and junk will fall out of the sky to kill 'em



❑ Sometimes you must slide levers, buttons or boxes down to the bottom screen. Just tap away on the object to trigger the action

cleaners and conductors are just some of the enemy army you must destroy. You just need to learn their attacks, slow down time and give 'em the old one-two.

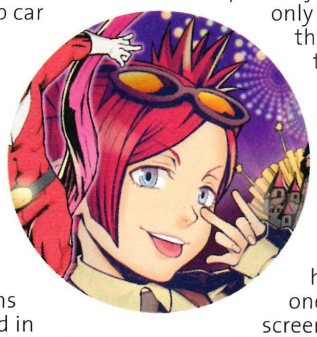
That's unless you get a command to try something else. To compensate for the lack of chaos comes room after room of puzzles that literally drag in the need to touch the screen. You'll be pulling it up, down, left and right to trigger the action that lets you find the key to open the door to the next area. You'll even have to rub the screen, but more on that later on.

The only problem we do have with all this touch screen madness is that too often, you'll have to fend off robots with the buttons and instantly move to the touch screen to scratch/slide/touch to make the magic happen. So throw away the stylus and just use your finger, otherwise you'll end up in knots as you move between the buttons and the plastic pen to keep Joe alive.

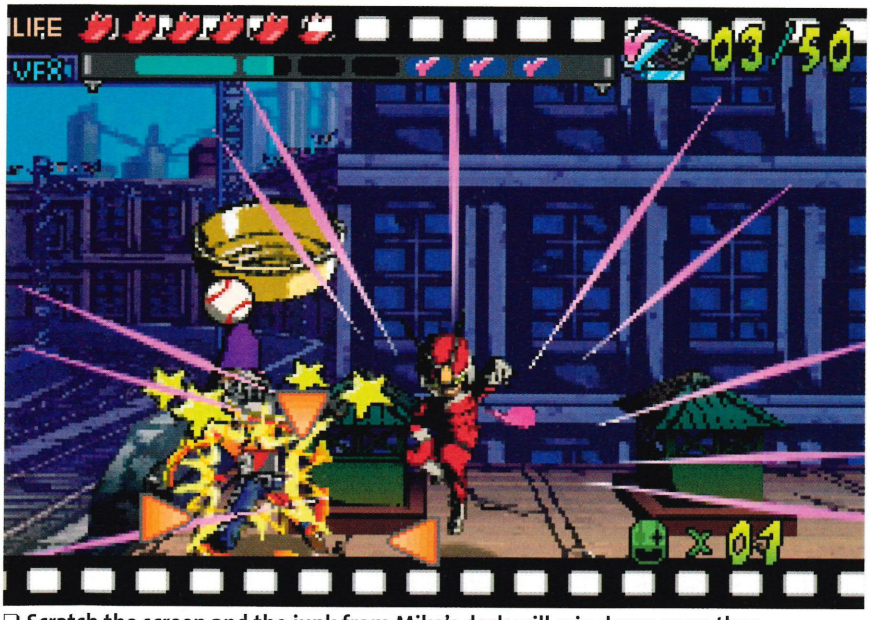
Once again, Capcom scores a *Viewtiful* with its crazy boss creations for Joe to battle. It's a line-up of punishing mechs, with huge Samus-style arm cannons that pump bullets three at a time into your flailing body. *Viewtiful* veterans will know that your only reply is to get ready with your VFX powers. If you don't slow down time and smack them back, they're going to wipe the floor with you.

The range of cool mechs certainly makes the boss battles. From a cop car robot complete with wailing, flashing lights to one that hovers above you before crashing down and breaking your bones, it's a decent mix. Then there's a copper, complete with guns and ammo stashed in his stomach, who can only be poisoned by a lake of green acid. The way to release it? Slide away the blockage and watch the fool fry.

From movie backlots to cemeteries, there's a whole theme park to batter your way through and you'll even get to control Sylvia for some stages, as she bounces her way across the rooftops of a city without any of her sharp shooters at her side. Inch perfect jumping is the only thing that keeps this lady ahead of the game.



Undoubtedly this DS version looks just like it's been ripped straight from your GameCube. Pushing the handheld on not one, but two screens, is a terrific achievement and they've remained faithful to the style of the game, even with the move to the DS. The insane, 'screen filled with baddies' effort of the GC version has been slightly lost but *Viewtiful Joe* hasn't lost its charm. With some inch-perfect jumping skills required on your CV and puzzles more insane than a book full of Sudoku, we're already won over by *Double Trouble*. ***Tim Street***



❑ Scratch the screen and the junk from Mike's desk will rain down upon thee

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: CLOVER STUDIO

FAMOUS FOR:
Being the pad where Joe lives. He hangs out there all day long, sitting in his armchair made of dollars, bought after the success of his first two GC classics.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

MULTIPLAYER: NO
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
RELEASE: FEBRUARY
REVIEW: TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

Joe can still lay the smack down better than any WWE star, even when shrunk for DS. It's lost a little mayhem but *VJ*'s still got lorryloads of gameplay.

80% PLUS

❑ Finally the barrels have their revenge on their cruel master, DK

❑ Try walking around here after a dozen Cheeky Vimtos

Mario Party 7

Last time we checked, parties were s'posed to be fun.

These guys know how to throw a big bash and with the cold hands of winter creeping across the land, a cruise ship is the host of this year's festivities. All thanks to Princess Peach; royal connections get you anything, apart from a new dress. We've never been known to turn down an invite to the Mushroom Kingdom for a shindig. At least, not up to now.

All the features that have already made this series successful are here once again, plus a few extras. As we've come to expect, there are six brand-spanking new boards to take on, including Pagoda Peak and Neon Heights. Just like *MP6*, each board has its own tasks and hazards; some are based on collecting Stars, others need you to go out and pick up coins.

Mario Party isn't about big wallets though, it's all about the mini-games and there are a whopping 86 new ones to get your teeth into. Included are 11 challenges, which require you to use the GameCube mic. These should be avoided at all cost. Once you've opened the mini-games by playing the boards, you can revisit them in the Mini-game mode. It's the usual mix of racing against the clock or other players to test your gaming instincts.

No party would be complete without your mates and this time around, you can have seven of them join the action. This'll mean sharing pads, but if you want to play well with others, you're just going to have to give a little. The degree of chance involved in playing the game continues to amuse and infuriate in equal measure. It really all depends on whether it's you or your mate who's getting pounded by the Hammer Bros.

You may end up taking a hammer to your GameCube and smashing it to bits. For all the fancy new bits and pieces, *Mario Party 7* just can't disguise the fact that this is essentially the same game as before. Each sequel has added more games and new boards, but it's still the same old system. There's absolutely no point in playing *Mario Party* on your own, with all that tedious dice rolling and collecting to do. As diverse as the different games are, they get old very quickly. There doesn't seem much point in getting your glad rags out for this party.

Jonathan Gordon

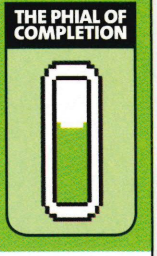
❑ Wario's been on a 24-hour party binge and goes looking for a large kebab

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: HUDSON SOFT

FAMOUS FOR:
All the *Mario Parties* from 1 to 6, as well as the quite brilliant *Bomberman*. We need more of him.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



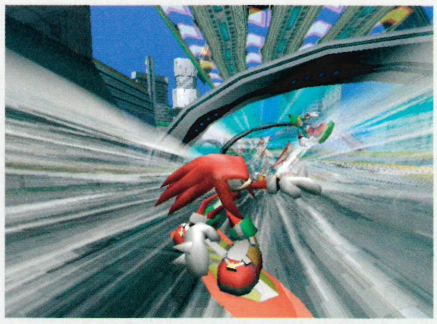
MULTIPLAYER: 1-8
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: JAN 27
REVIEW: NEXT ISSUE

PREDICTED SCORE

More of what we've seen before with plenty of new mini-games to get on with, but little attraction for anyone who has any of the other six.

60% PLUS

❑ Hit the thermal updrafts and stunt like you mean it. Just watch for the nuclear toilet-roll holder



❑ Boards are air-powered. That's AIR!

❑ When the air runs out, start running

Sonic Riders

Sonic shouldn't need to RIDE anything - he runs fast. Remember, Sega?

What sense does it make to put Sonic on a HOVER BOARD to race? He can already hammer along like Concorde on foot. He doesn't need any stupid hover board. Especially not when it corners like a shopping trolley on an ice rink. We've only seen a two-level preview version. We really hope the non-reactive steering is improved for the final version.

We already know that there will be many different types of boards in the final game, each with its own unique performance. Maybe other boards will have better turning performance than the standard board we played on in this early version.

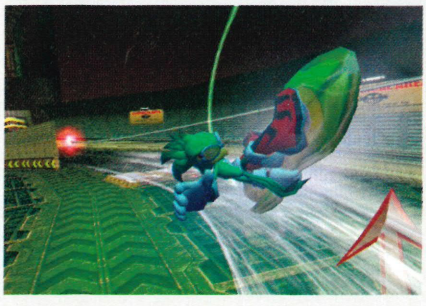
The boards are powered by air. There's air all around but the boards can't breathe. They only recharge their Air Bar when you do stunts. If you run out of air, your board becomes inactive and Sonic has to run. And this SLOWS him down. Stop laughing, we're not joking. You have to jog over to a pit stop to get more air before you can go fast again.

But there are plenty of opportunities to stunt. Thermal air streams run through each course. Apart from making you go even faster, these streams are shaped like half-pipes, so you can flick off them from side to side, performing stunts as you pelt along. They help you get round bends too, which is good, even if it does sort of feel like the game is playing itself.

But without those streams, we found it tough to corner properly, even when using the *Mario Kart*-style drift. It was disappointing because the courses look great. Long wide straights are full of grind rails and air streams, and you will often find yourself flying through the air at some silly height, doing mad stunts like Tony Hawk with a death wish.

At one point, we were launched into the sky above a vast forest. We fell down through the canopy to land on the racetrack which was hidden below the trees. You can also take different routes through these courses by making use of your character's specific talents. For example, Knuckles can smash through scenery to new areas and Tails can fly through hovering hoops. There's no doubt that if the handling is tightened up, this will be a very cool racer. If it's not, we'll avoid it like a lingering fart.

Mike Jackson

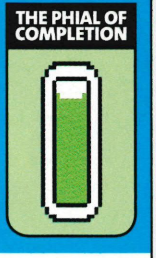


ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM

FAMOUS FOR: Most recently *Sonic Rush*, *Shadow the Hedgehog* and coming your way soon, *The Rub Rabbits!* (*Project Rub 2*).

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



MULTIPLAYER:	1-4
PUBLISHER:	SEGA
RELEASE:	TBC
REVIEW:	TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

Dodgy handling makes it tough to play. This is the sort of game you want to be able to pick up and play instantly. As it stands, we're not loving it.

60% PLUS

❑ It may be a pinball game but it looks like it'd make a top nightclub

❑ This would be the chill-out lounge, with a nice ambient feel to it

Metroid Prime Pinball

It would seem Fuse Games was saving its skills for the DS.

Super Mario Ball may have been utter garbage but Fuse Games isn't a quitter. It's been a while since we saw a truly brilliant pinball game, but _Metroid Prime Pinball_ could well be it.

Samus spends so much of her time as a Morph Ball, it all makes sense in a rather strange way. All the classic features that you would expect from a pinball game are here. You've got rails, flippers, bumpers, buffers and Space Pirates. Hold on just one moment... Space Pirates?

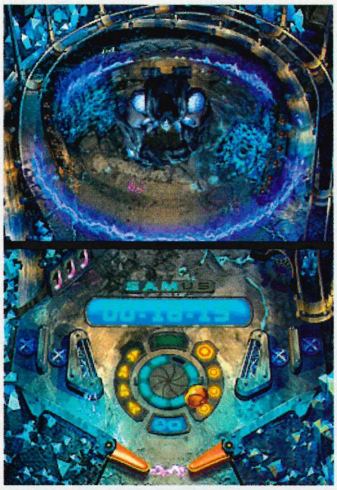
Samus can't even be smacked around a giant pinball table in peace without Metroids and Space Pirates turning up for a ruck. But that's good, because blasting their asses is what makes this game cool. Numerous nasties from your favourite bounty hunter's previous adventures appear and you get to take them out in different ways.

The awesome-looking tables are based on actual worlds from the _Prime_ games, including the Phazon Mines and Phendrana Drifts. Enemies and special events are also tailored to their respective environments. All the music and sound effects have been included, too.

You've got two single-player options to choose from. Multi Mission is the 'story' mode where you collect artefacts, defeat bosses and teleport from level to level. The Single Mission mode is all about hitting high scores on all the tables you've already unlocked.

Point-scoring is also the aim of the game for the neat multiplayer mode. Grab up to seven of your mates and with just one cart, you can battle it out

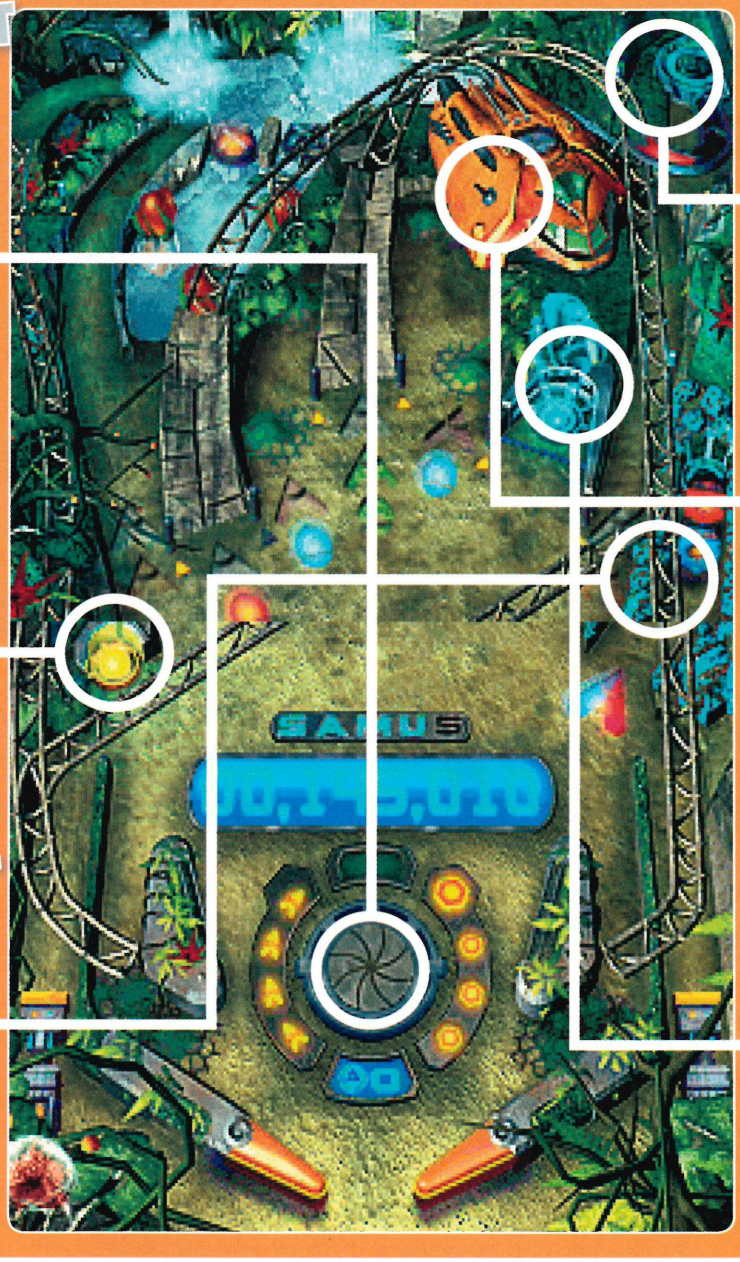
❑ Ah, the dance-floor. There are already shapes being thrown in there. Stage dancers optional



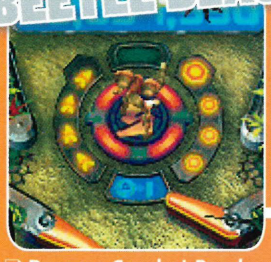
❑ This could be a bar. Or a toilet

Tallon Overworld

Just like proper pinball but with a bounty hunter



BEETLE BLAST

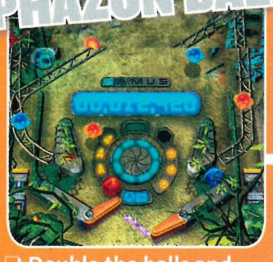


❑ Become Combat Ready and then take out some Beetles. Try to kill them all before you take a hit for a Perfect Bonus.

SCANNER

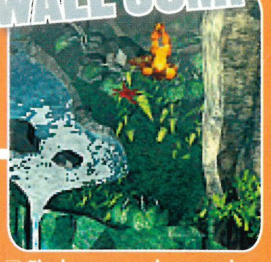
❑ Hit this for a roulette wheel of upgrades and bonuses. There's everything from force fields to extra balls and points.

PHAZON BALL



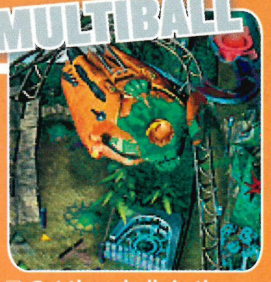
❑ Double the balls and double the jeopardy. Collect as many Phazons as possible with the corresponding colour ball.

WALL JUMP



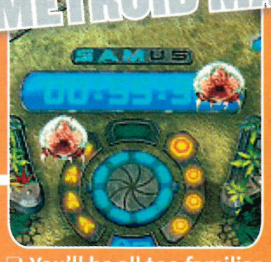
❑ Find a way up here and get Samus up to the top of the back glass by alternating between L and R and collect various bonuses.

MULTIBALL



❑ Get three balls in the gunship and it'll release them all together. Then look for the flashing arrows for some big points.

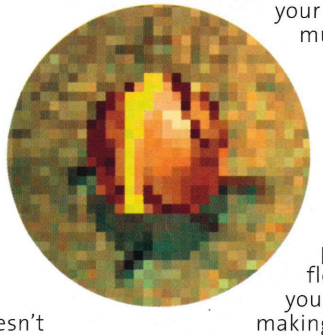
METROID MANIA



❑ You'll be all too familiar with these fellows. They'll roam the table, looking to inflict damage on your Morph Ball.

on a special multiplayer-only table. The first to reach the target score wins. It's a simple concept but it can all get pretty frantic.

The DS was born to play pinball. The dual-screens mean there's no scrolling, which makes it much easier to target bonuses. The physics are flawless and really smooth, even when there are six balls fizzing around the table. We thought the 'dead zone' between the screens, where you can't see the ball, might make things confusing but it doesn't cause any problems at all.



No pinball game would be complete without the ability to tilt the table and for this, the touch screen comes into play. You dirty cheaters will be glad to know that it doesn't freeze your controls if you tilt the table loads. So you can just prod the screen with your finger, mad-style, as much as you like.

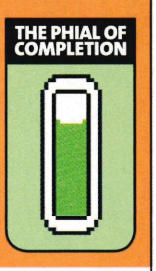
We're not entirely sure about the Nintendo DS Rumble Pak. It's certainly a great idea - a Rumble Pak the size of a GBA cart that slots into the GBA port in your DS. But its kicks are puny, like a little fish flopping around inside your DS. And it's noisy, too, making it more annoying than it is effective. Fortunately, it's free and you don't have to use it. *Metroid Prime Pinball* is great without it. It sure can play a mean pinball. ***Jon Gordon***

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: FUSE GAMES

FAMOUS FOR:
These paddle-pounding specialists made the underwhelming *Super Mario Ball* for the GBA last year.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

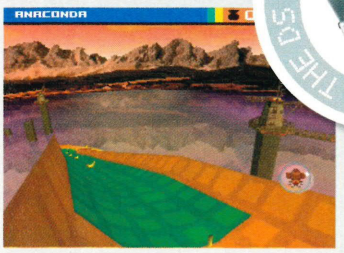


MULTIPLAYER: 1-8
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2006
REVIEW: TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

Metroid Prime Pinball is much better than you might first think. It's looking like one of the best pinball games we've seen in years.

80% PLUS



NEW FOR THE DS NEW FOR NINTENDO DS

Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll

Never before has Simian ball-rolling been so much fun.

You already know you want to own this game. The glorious rolling monkey kings are going portable again, only this time they're doing it properly. Boys and girls, Sega has got skills.

The big issue here is control. *Monkey Ball* is perhaps the greatest test of raw skill on GameCube. For that to remain the case on DS, it needed to have PRECISE control, even without the analogue stick. Don't even worry, guys. Sega has used the touch screen to make it happen.

Super Mario 64 showed everyone how NOT to use the touch screen for analogue control. It drew a circle on the screen which indicated the range of analogue movement. Only, this circle moved about so it was almost impossible to judge accurately. *Touch & Roll* doesn't make the same mistake. It uses the entire screen like a giant, but very precise, analogue control plane.

It works exactly like an analogue stick. The centre of the screen is neutral, obviously. As you move your stylus away from the centre, the game will apply tilt in that direction. The closer to the edge of the screen you touch, the more tilt that is applied. The key thing is, the neutral point is ALWAYS the centre of the screen, NOT where you first place the stylus. So if you just plonk the stylus straight on to the top of the screen, the ball will instantly charge forward.

This is great because it allows your mind to adapt to a set plane of movement. It feels strange at first. Your *Monkey Ball* mastery will want to unleash itself instantly but you will feel a little twitchy. However, we had this stylus business locked down within 20 minutes. Give it an hour and if you haven't got back your tilt-master control, you're rubbish at games. Return to your turn-based strategy, where your feeble fingers can live an easy life controlling characters with thrilling menu options.

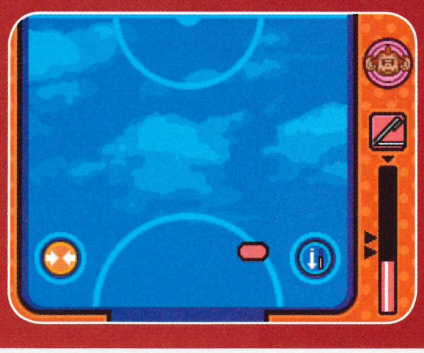
Of course, you could always use the D-Pad to control the ball - if you're an idiot. Eight-way control is a joke with a game like *Monkey Ball*. It's okay on

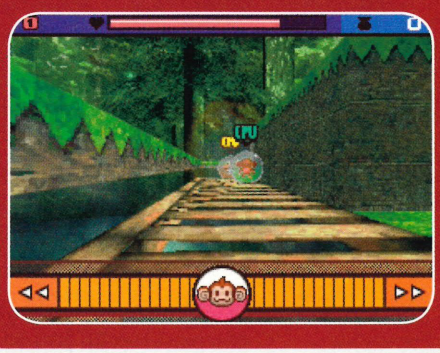
Fun and Party Games

Two new party games for your dual screen delight

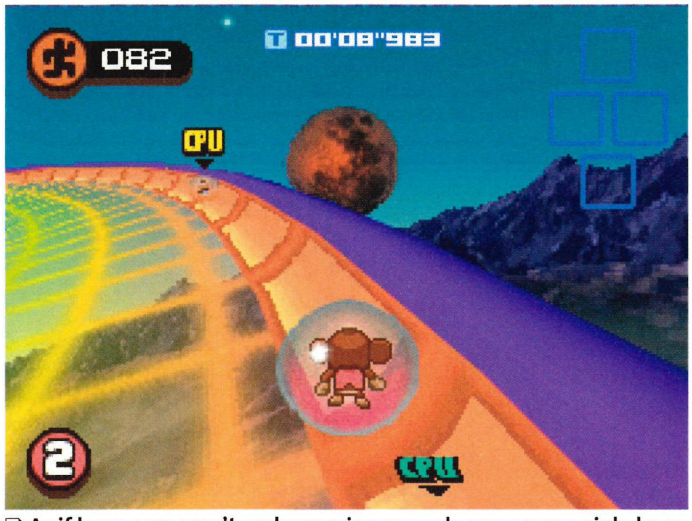
There's NO *MONKEY TARGET*. Done sobbing yet? Don't worry, it's not a complete and utter disaster. There are two all-new party games in *Touch & Roll*; Monkey Hockey and Monkey Wars. So dry your eyes mate, and check out these beauties.

❑ You draw your own mallet with a limited amount of ink. You can draw it any shape that you want to. Win some games and you can earn more ink, allowing you to draw a bigger mallet. This is the fastest air hockey we've ever played.

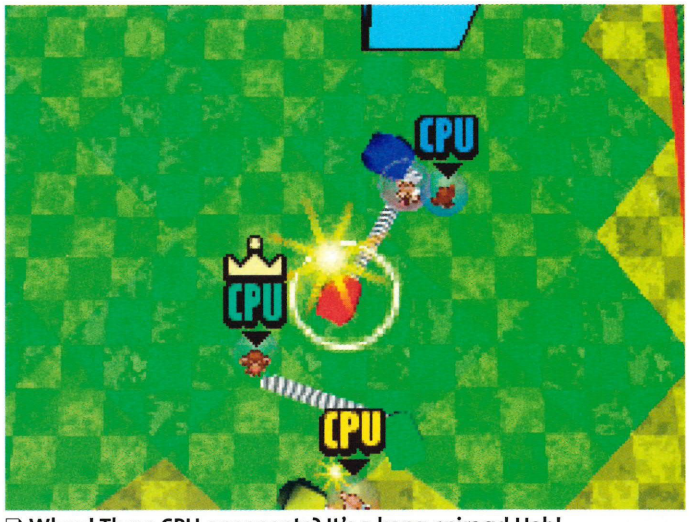




❑ It's a first-person-shooter deathmatch. You control the action similar to *Metroid Prime Hunters* - the stylus-controls look, with movement on the D-Pad. Tap the screen to shoot. There are multiple arenas to choose from, too.



❑ As if huge ears aren't embarrassing enough, you wear a pink dress



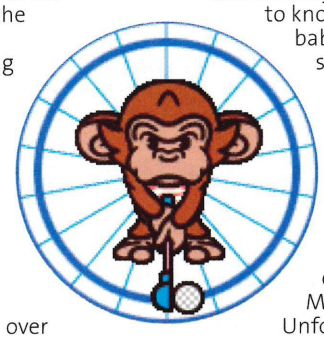
❑ Whoa! Three CPU opponents? It's a kong-spiracy! Hah!

the easy levels but on tougher, narrower stages, you'll be more unstable than a one-legged drunk guy on a tightrope. Besides, after the caning your D-Pad is going to take with *Mario Kart DS*, it will deserve a break when *T&R* turns up to own your DS cart slot.

Your stylus is going to feel the strain on the later stages of *T&R*. They are just as tricky as the GameCube ones. In fact, some of the levels are ripped straight from the console classic. But there are plenty of new stages too, with unique obstacles that test your rolling skills in new ways. Swinging sticks, twisting platforms and intricate moving mechanisms on the stages will aim to send your monkey-in-a-sphere plummeting to the void below. And Sega says there will be more than 100 to crack, so you'll be balling for some time.

But of course, *Monkey Ball* isn't just about the tilt action. Once you've cracked the main game, it's the party games that will keep the happy apes in action for months after. There were six party games in the near-finished version of the game that we played. You'll recognise four of those: Monkey Fight, Monkey Bowling, Monkey Race and Monkey Mini-Golf. However, each has been adapted for touch-screen play. Monkey Fight and Monkey Race simply replace the original analogue function with the same stylus control as the main game.

Monkey Bowling has changed more drastically. You determine your bowling speed and direction with a single swipe of the stylus. The direction and speed with which you slide it over the screen affects your bowl. You then apply spin on the ball by rubbing the screen in a circular motion. It works well. Monkey Mini-Golf has also changed significantly. You point your monkey in the right direction with the 2D top-down view on the lower screen. Then you go to a shot mode, when your monkey appears on the lower screen, holding his club. You drag the club back with the stylus and swing it to slap the ball. The top screen shows the action in 3D, just like on 'Cube.

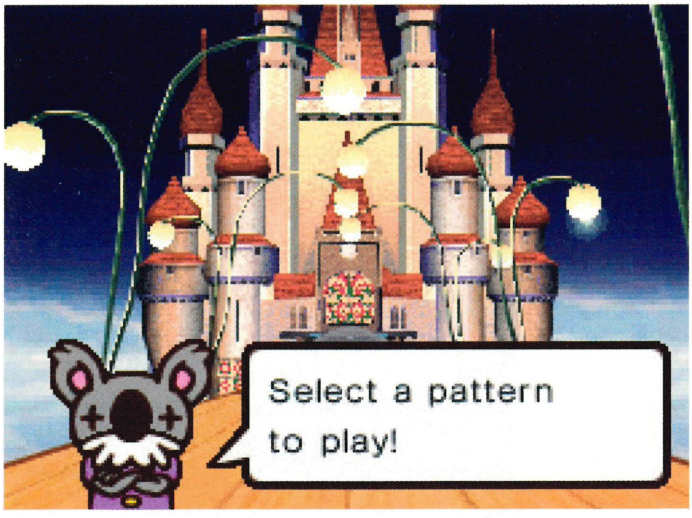


Then there are the two new party games: Monkey Hockey and Monkey Wars. You need to know about these babies in real detail, so head over to the 'Fun and Party Games' box to get the full deal on those. And don't cry when you realise that neither of the games even resemble Monkey Target.

Unfortunately, the godly flying monkeys are not ready for the portable world.

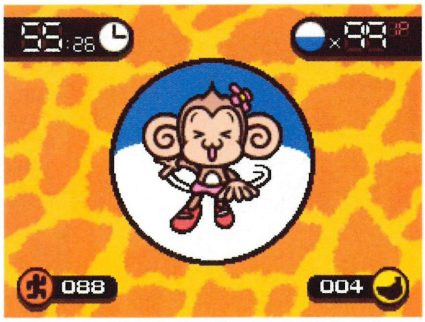
But we can live on because we're overjoyed that a PROPER *Monkey Ball* game has finally found its way onto the portable scene. No crappy controls or cut-back level design - this is a true *Monkey Ball* game with great control, awesome levels, smooth graphics and fun party games. Respect this if you know what's good for you.

Mike Jackson



❑ Well mate, we've always been a little bit partial to Paisley

❑ Proper mini-golf. That takes balls



❑ Lose the dress, the flower and the shoes

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: SEGA

FAMOUS FOR:
Making the best ball-rolling series in gaming history. Turning monkeys into the superstars they deserve to be.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

MULTIPLAYER: 1-4
PUBLISHER: SEGA
RELEASE: TBC
REVIEW: TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

Control is crucial and we feared the worst. But Sega has used the touch screen to great effect, and created a portable *Monkey Ball* experience. We can't wait.

85%
PLUS

Tales of Phantasia

Mickey Mouse lifts the lid on the magical broomstick antics.

When you've got a name like Cress, you're in a lot of trouble. There's very little in life you could do without having to suffer insults and jibes. Working in a vegetable shop would be a potential minefield. So your only real option is to star in your own RPG. Everybody has silly names in those... Lloyd, Skye, Kalas. Cress seems almost too normal, don't you think?

The *Adventures of Cress* or *Tales of Phantasia*, to give it its real name, was actually released on the Super NES and this GBA version is based almost entirely on it. So any *Tales of Symphonia* fans shouldn't flock to this one expecting to see all their favourite characters from the 'Cube RPG. The story is fairly typical RPG-fare though... young boy has his village destroyed, decides to bust some heads.

One element carried over from the 'Cube version is side-on battles. Nobody in their right mind wants to just press A and watch some magic spells happen. No, it's all about running along, swinging your huge sword and killing terrible, terrifying, nasty, evil... bees. There's actually quite a lot of strategy involved with fights and you can choose how your comrades will attack during battles. You can select the formation and whether they'll use their special attacks or not.

We only played through a few fights and it seems like the AI of the computer-controlled characters is a bit hit and miss. Sometimes they'd just get themselves killed for no reason, whereas other times the enemies we were fighting would commit hari-kari. This is something we hope will be sorted out for the final version. Another problem with the battles is that they're random. One of the positive points of *Tales of Symphonia* was the removal of irritating random fights. Having to slog through them here is just a chore. We're better than that now, we've evolved. Randomness is for RPG chimps.

But apart from a few issues with the battles, we reckon *Phantasia* could be another essential GBA RPG, along with the likes of *Golden Sun* and *Final Fantasy*. Now, if only Namco would change Cress's name to something sensible, like Peter, then it would be perfect.. ***Rob Burman***

❑ Battle against deadly, er, sparrows!?

❑ He looks cress-fallen. Ha! Cress! Fallen!

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: NAMCO
FAMOUS FOR:
It's been making the generally awesome *Tales Of...* games for ages now. We've only had *Symphonia* over here but we're hoping the rest will follow.

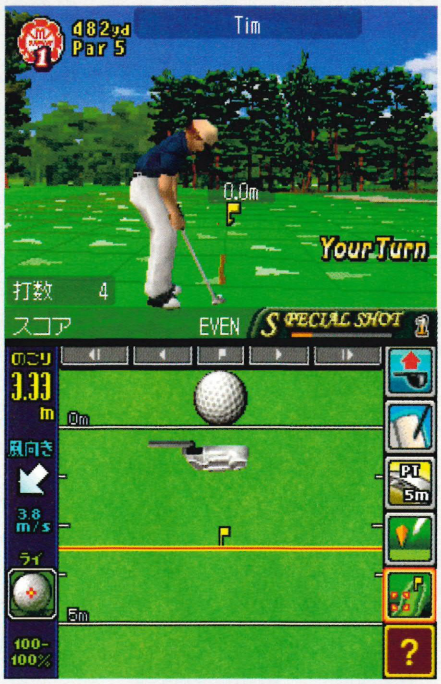
THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

MULTIPLAYER: NO
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: MARCH
REVIEW: TBC

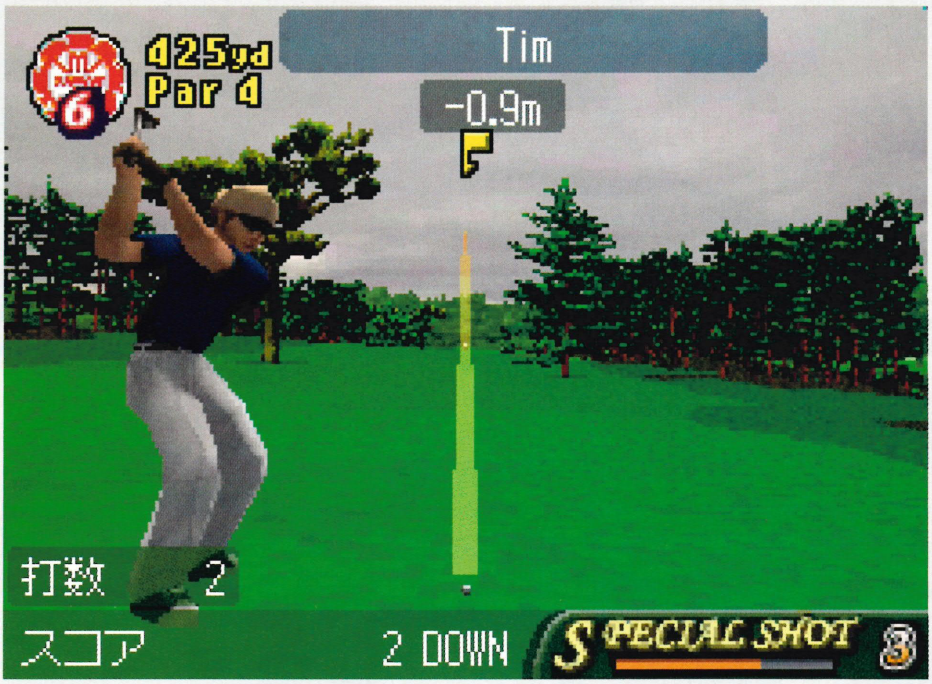
PREDICTED SCORE

There's the promise of a huge adventure here and if that's fulfilled, it could be great. We're worried about the random battles and the poor AI though.

70% PLUS



❑ Use the stylus to determine where to hit



❑ Distance measure is vague at best and useless at worst. Plenty of green, so it's not all bad

Nintendo Touch Golf: Birdie Challenge

We'd rather have a bird challenge that involved touching.

NEW FOR NINTENDO DS

If you've ever wandered into one of those old-fashioned places they call an 'arcade', you might have seen some golf game called *Golden Tee*. Famous for its trackball, used to ping the ball down the fairway, you could do all manner of hooks and slices. But it looked like a dog. Now take the crap graphics, change the trackball for a stylus, throw it on a cart and you're not far off *Touch Golf*.

After half an hour's play, it's obvious there isn't much depth to this. Its only gimmick is the game's stylus control. It's how you'd expect a touch screen golf game to play, yet overall it's only slightly better than *Tiger Woods DS*.

It works like this. To play a shot, the action switches to a top-down view of the club and ball. Using the stylus, you drag the club back to the desired strength and smack it towards the ball.

What makes it different to *Tiger* is the control you have over slice and hook. Finish your move on either side of the ball and there's nothing to stop it hacking off into the trees or landing deep in the sand of a bunker. Crack it bang in the centre though and the ball will launch off the tee and straight down the fairway. It's a fine line between a birdie and a double bogey but that's what keeps you focused.

So while the control is good, it's the power that will cause the headaches. A yellow line marks the distance to the hole, but if you want to bring it up short and let the roll take you nearer the pin, you'll have to guess. That's 'cos there are only three other lines that mark the distance from zero yards to the maximum distance. Sometimes it's as much as 50 yards between each marker, so if it's pinpoint accuracy you want, you won't get it here.

Elsewhere, the game is your staple diet of options from Stroke to Match Play and in a complete shock to the system, the better you score, the more improved equipment you can buy! We haven't seen that before.

The golfers are your generic types - four blokes, four girls - with a mix of blondes and dudes to suit you. Throw in some *This Morning* background music that makes you feel brain dead within minutes, plus your standard whoops and cheers, and it makes for one of the most uninspiring golf games we've ever played. ***Tim Street***

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: T&E SOFT

FAMOUS FOR:
The bizarrely-titled *Waialae Country Club Golf* on the N64. No, we don't remember it much either.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION

MULTIPLAYER: 1-4 (with one cart)
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE: LATE 2005
REVIEW: NEXT ISSUE

PREDICTED SCORE

It nudges *Tiger* off the leader board, but that's nothing to get excited about. The touch screen control is merely a smokescreen for sub-standard golfing.

60% PLUS

Small But Perfectly Reformed

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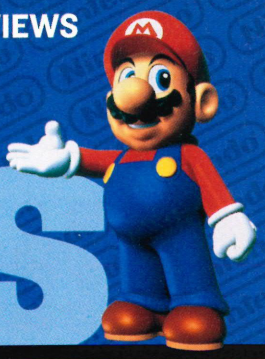
Reviews

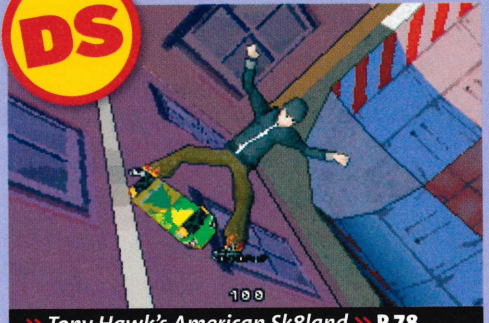


GC

» Shadow the Hedgehog » P.60

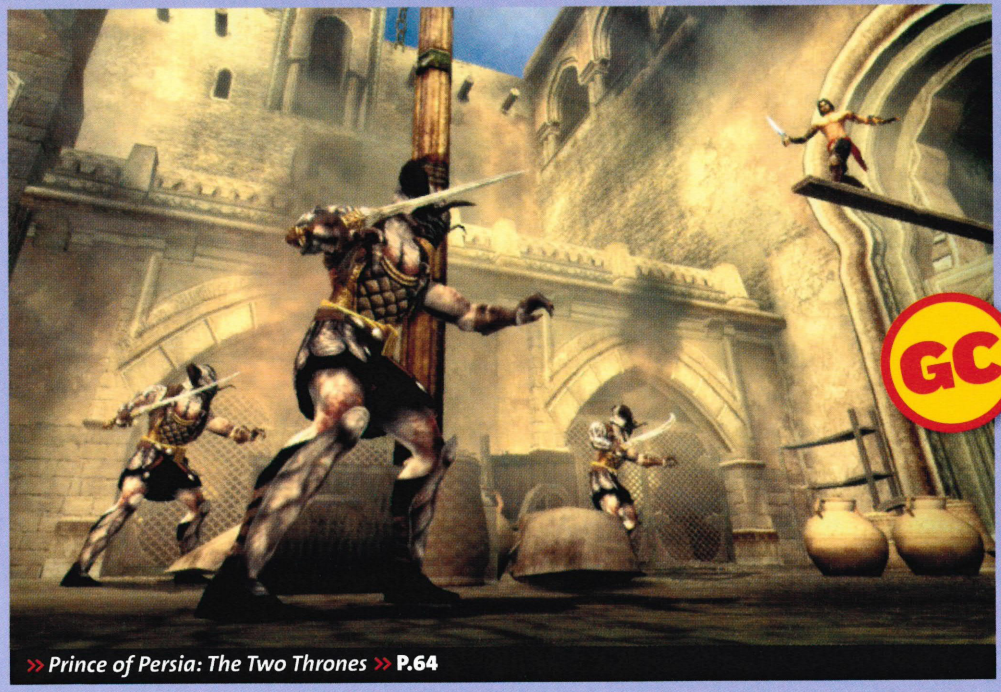
GBA

» Mario Power Tennis » P.82



DS

» Tony Hawk's American Sk8land » P.78

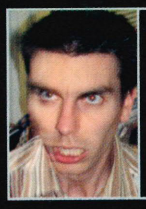


GC

» Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones » P.64

BLAME THIS LOT

We're sorry if anything we did upset you.

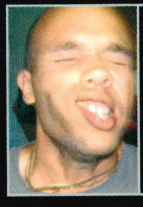


Tim Street

Ran out of the game shop screaming, after buying a Wi-Fi USB Connector. Kept asking kids if they wanted to see his 'dongle'. The police didn't understand.

Dean Scott

Adds a little bit of danger to his online gaming by playing on a tightrope above a pit of spikes. And using the spare office bandwidth to steal music.



Mike Jackson

He's leaving. He got his free copy of *Mario Kart*, shouted "adios, suckers!" and ran for the exit. Embarrassingly, then had to return for his car keys.

Rob Burman

Ask Rob about his online record. Go on, email him. Ask him if that ONE defeat after a string of 72 victories hurts. It does, you know. Like standing on Lego.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

JONATHAN GORDON
Mocks sound waves by refusing to create any. If you lost all your senses apart from hearing, Silent Johnny could stalk you like a ninja.

SAM COUPLAND
A solid week's work experience, undermined by an ill-advised parting gift. Chocolate Orange segments? As if anyone eats those.

CHARMANDER
At the time of writing, still hadn't gone on a killing rampage, burning people to death in their homes. The pills must be working.

SCORES AND AWARDS

90+	A Nintendo Classic
85 - 89	Exceptional in its class
80 - 84	Great fun, but not ground-breaking
70 - 79	Some nice ideas, but lacks Nintendo magic
60 - 69	Few classic moments – for die-hards only
50 - 59	Been there, seen it, played it. Yawn!
40 - 49	No ideas, no gameplay, no way
30 - 39	Poison to your console
0 - 29	Not worth stealing

POISON
A real minger that might give you a nasty disease just by touching it. Steer clear at all costs.

SUPERSTAR
Only dished out to truly great games. There can be more than one in a month, but they have to be special.

Shadow the Hedgehog

As ridiculous as a super-fast hedgehog needing to ride a motorcycle.

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **SEGA**

Shadow's lost his memory. We'd like to lose the memory of the hours we spent playing his latest game. But we can't. We tried electrocuting ourselves, slamming our head in a fridge, drinking ten cans of Tesco Dutch Export, getting shipwrecked and even considered a DIY lobotomy. But there was still a shadow across our brain. Absolutely nothing could clear it.

Before now, only one Sonic character has managed to con his way into making Sega let him star in a game. That young chap was Miles 'Tails' Prower and the resulting game messes were *Tails' Adventures* and *Tails' Sky Patrol*. They're games only spoken about in hushed voices at the annual Tails Fan Club expos, held in a shed somewhere in Dorset. But Sega, never a developer adverse to a challenge, has decided it's time for another character to take his time in the limelight.

■ The star may have changed but there's still rings to collect. Surprise!

Shadow the Hedgehog, come on down.

Things don't get off to a good start though. Earth's being invaded by black aliens who are fed up with everyone thinking creatures from outer space must be green. So they start wrecking everything. At first, Shadow's not going to get involved, he's too busy being moody. But then the leader of the aliens appears and says he knows about Shadow's past. Actually, we knew about Shadow's past after playing *Sonic Adventure 2*. He should have just asked us, instead of going off on some half-baked mission to half-inch the Chaos Emeralds.

In *Sonic Adventure*, Shadow was basically Sonic but black. Don't get all snooty with us, Sonic purists. That's the truth and you know it. In *Shadow the Hedgehog*, he's basically the same as Sonic again - depending upon how you play, that is. If you've been following the progress of this game, then you'll know that Sonic Team has broken the unwritten rule of *Sonic* games by giving Shadow guns to play around with.

Oh dear. There's a reason guns haven't been included in *Sonic* games before and that's because, on the whole, guns + Sonic = rubbish.

But let's talk about them anyway. Who knows, it could be cathartic. Shadow can pick up guns by either killing enemies or finding them in ammo boxes haphazardly left around the levels. There are different types of guns, the alien ones, crazy

"Shadow's not getting involved, he's too busy being moody."

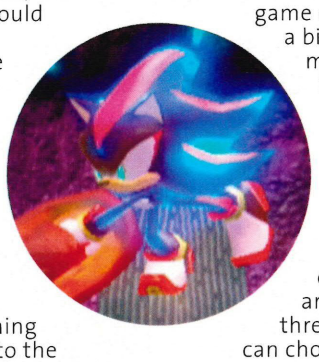
"Sonic Team has broken the unwritten rule of *Sonic* games by giving Shadow guns to play with."

■ You have to admire Shadow's dedication to the spirit of Halloween

weapons from Dr. Robotnik and ones from the G.U.N. soldiers. Holding down B will start to fire your gun. Normally they home in on the nearest target, although this is prone to not actually working. The weapons are quite interesting. You normally start out with a weak pistol but can usually upgrade to automatics or even rocket launchers as you progress through the levels. It's funny to see a hedgehog with a grenade launcher, it really is. But that doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be any good.

The problem with the guns is they spoil the traditional run, run, run and run some more style of *Sonic* gameplay. Something that has actually always been a problem in the 3D *Sonic* games. Normally, to make sure you hit your target, you have to stop and shoot. You can even jump up in the air and magically stay there while you spray a 360 degree arc of bullets around you. It doesn't really feel quite right to be doing this in a *Sonic* game.

Of course, you could always try playing it like a traditional 3D *Sonic* game and use the homing jump attack from *Sonic Heroes* and the *Adventure* titles. Some of you may remember that in *Sonic Heroes*, the homing attack would often hilariously throw you off the side of the level after you'd hit the enemy. Brilliantly, that unmissable feature is back in *Shadow*. In fact, the only times we died were normally a result of the homing attack being set to the 'suicide' option instead of the 'kill enemies' option. Shadow would casually lob himself off the scenery, never to be seen again. Look Sega, we know he's supposed to be moody but making him suicidal is just a bit much, don't you think?



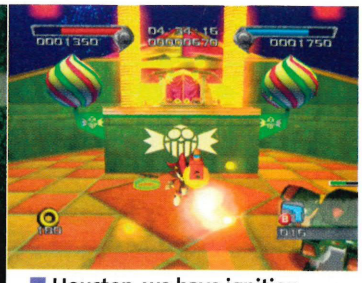
When he wasn't trying to kill himself, Shadow was obviously trying to recover those valuable memories. At this point, the game does actually get a bit interesting. You may have noticed in the adverts for Shadow that it says: "He's a hero... but whose hero?" Well, this is where you step in. On each level there are normally three missions you can choose to finish: Dark, Normal and Hero. Dark will see you siding with the aliens, Normal is just a case of getting to the end and in Hero, you must help Sonic stop the marauding invaders. »»

Whichever mission you choose to finish will determine the level you play next.

This isn't a bad idea but it has its problems. We started off with the best of intentions of becoming as evil as possible. But we just couldn't be bothered. After you've hammered it through the level, trying to kill all the G.U.N. soldiers, only to miss one somewhere near the beginning of the stage, you'll be severely tempted just to collect the giant shining ring and finish. In the next level it might be easier to finish the Hero path than getting to the end. Obviously there's huge replay value because you can actually complete the game in little more than two hours without seeing everything that's on offer. It just depends if you can be bothered.

Another problem with the Dark/Hero idea is that no matter which side you decide to join, nearly everyone is your enemy. This can be irritating when you're being good but you'll lose rings when you run into one of your allies.

The toxic waste from Bowser's loo can melt hedgehogs in seconds



Houston, we have ignition

Sonic pegged it when asked to dance

Shadow finally comes to realise that three bowls of nuclear chilli before a blast through a corridor is a career-limiting move

Depending on how you act during the levels, you'll charge up your special meter. If you go around killing the good guys and destroying the scenery, you'll be rewarded with a huge Chaos Blast which destroys everything in the area by pressing Y. Or help the civilians and kill the aliens to get a power which zooms you through the level at huge speeds - not very clever if you zoom past one of the enemies you're supposed to kill to clear that particular level.

The levels themselves are a mixed bag. Some rekindle moments of the blistering speed of the 2D *Sonics* but others involve too much running about and shooting things. The first level is very much like the City Escape level in *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle*, except with more aliens and lasers. We also like Robotnik's circus level because it was bright and featured funny robots. Ha ha, look at the cheeky automatons. In the levels that work, you can shoot through them, like the best that *Sonic Heroes* had to offer. But then you need to shoot something and it all comes to a halt.

But other levels are just tedious. The one on the Space Colony ARC, where all Shadow's problems started, is just white corridor after white corridor. Where are all the beautiful bright open outdoor environments from *Sonic Heroes*? And the ones

A sliding tackle against something that big is never going to work

Drive us crazy

Just when you thought a gun was too much.

We all know that Shadow's fast don't we? He's faster than a very fast thing that's got a special reason to be fast, like a rocket or a plane perhaps. Anyway, he's fast. He can also kill things pretty well. By jumping at them or shooting them. So why did Sonic Team include a section that lets Shadow drive a jeep? It's buggy and unnecessary. In fact, it's a complete waste of space. Cheers for that, Sonic Team, that's made our day.

This is the exact moment the dream died

How do those things breathe? Through their ears?

Chaos chaos

When a good hedgehog turns bad.

It's not the mindless shooting that makes Shadow bad. It's not even the fact that he's surly all the time. Or that he can side with the aliens to destroy the human race forever. The moment when you know Shadow has simply lost control is when he cuts down a tiny little Chao. Oh, the humanity, the horror. Someone lock that hedgehog up for the rest of his life and flush the key down the toilet. He must never be let out.

Shadow decides the Chao is too cute to live

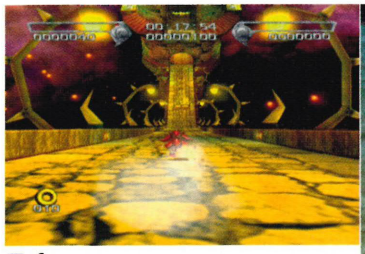
If he's singing 'Beef tonight', you're OK. If he's singing 'Hedgehog tonight', time to call a cab

Special weapon? In a *Sonic* game? Has the world gone mad?

"Another problem is, whichever side you join, nearly everyone is your enemy."

inside cyber space, which often involve you hardly pressing anything while zipping along 'lines of information' or something, are toss. *Sonic* games, even if they do star a moody black hedgehog, shouldn't be drab. They should be brighter than a star and faster than a comet.

Playing *Sonic Rush*, and loving it more than bourbon biscuits, was all the proof we needed that *Sonic* games should have always stayed in 2D. Shadow just hammers that fact home with a rocket launcher... which he has to stop to shoot. At times, there are glimmers of the old Sonic Team magic but mostly, it's a game that's as confused as Shadow himself.



If you ever wanted to know what it's like racing inside a skeleton, well, now you do

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 8

Some of the levels aren't bad. But all the enemies are basically the same across all of them. The camera has some issues too.

SOUND 7

Very rocky. Some of the metal is done by a band called Magna Fi. If we ever see Magna Fi in the street, we will punch them.

GAMEPLAY 6

It's ruined by the gun. It adds nothing to gameplay and detracts from the speed. The levels aren't very cleverly designed either.

VALUE 7

Lots of replay value in there, if you want to see everything on offer. But DO you really want to see everything? We didn't, really.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT'S FAST LIKE *SONIC HEROES*. AS IT SHOULD BE.

THE HOMING ATTACK IS AS TRULY USELESS AS EVER. IT'S RUBBISH.

THE GUN IS A FLAWED AND, LET'S FACE IT, POINTLESS ADDITION.

LEVELS LACK EVEN THE MEREST HINT OF THE OLD SONIC MAGIC.

THE FEW FLYING SECTIONS ARE, FRANKLY, ABSOLUTELY TERRIBLE.

IT'S NOWHERE NEAR AS GOOD AS THE AWESOME *SONIC RUSH*.

THE VERDICT

[Rob Burman] Be bad, be good... be bored. This almost erases the good Sonic Team did with *Rush*. It feels soulless and lacks any charm. Please, play *Rush* instead.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 60%

Prince meets some Spartans. Time to change the title to *Spartan: Total Kebab Filling*

Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones

Makes Prince Charles look a bit rubbish, if we're honest.

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **UBISOFT**

"We all make mistakes," says the game as soon as you turn it on. "Some are small, some are large." We assume it's referring to taking one of the most exciting games in recent memory, and turning it into a soft porn video with a heavy metal soundtrack. We weren't too hard on it at the time, but on reflection, *Warrior Within* was a bit of a disgrace.

The new game, *The Two Thrones*, is the sequel the last one should have been. Perhaps that's why it's got a two in the title, as the designers try to erase *Warrior Within* from history. Heavy metal and bare asses didn't make for a mainstream game, so Ubisoft has let it be about swinging around like a monkey again.

The plot is bewildering, and fits in nicely with the whole 'let's pretend the last one never happened' routine. The bumbling Prince manages to resurrect the evil Vizier from the first game, and he transforms into an extremely camp golden butterfly/scorpion thing. It looks like he's going to the Rio carnival, but in fact he's wrecking Babylon. One woman porn industry Kaileena is taken prisoner, and Farah from the first game helps you out but doesn't know you. Time travelling plot paradoxes! How very 1985. There is no option to perform *Johnny B Goode* at your mum's prom, however.

It's hard to keep up, because you're being talked at

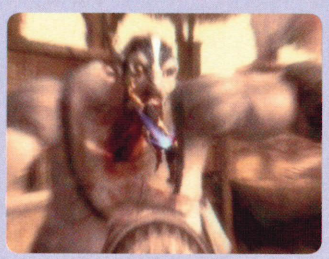
Giant killing

It's like a PS2 game we heard about, only not!

Unless you're lucky enough to be self-employed, you're going to have a boss you hate at some point. Not a good boss like Tim, who buys import games for you with his Visa card, but a bad boss you'd like to watch being eaten by a wolf. That's where games bosses come in: you kill them while your real-life tormentor gets to live. We wish there were more like this in the game.

He's big, you're not. That's not the best starting point for any fight to the death

Climb up to his level and jump at his face. It's what an otter would do against a human



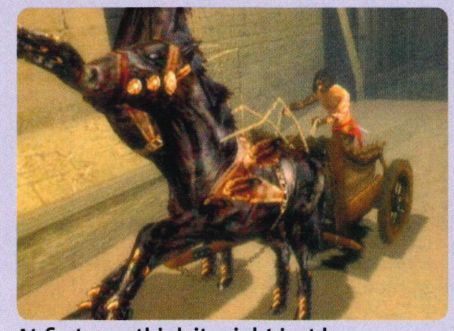
Jump and stab his eyes out. Otters don't carry magical time blades, thankfully

Now he can't see, roll around under his fat ass and hack at his legs. For the win!

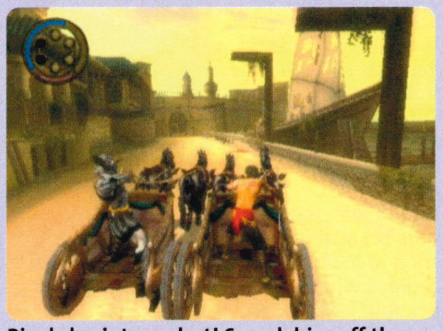
Chariots of dire

Let's just pretend this bit isn't in the game, okay?

■ When you're looking down on the city streets, with vertigo suffocating you as guards scuttle around like ants, you have no idea you'll soon be racing around those streets in a chariot. We could make a list of all the things we want *The Two Thrones* to be, and 'racer' would be lower on the list than 'trigonometry teaching aid'.

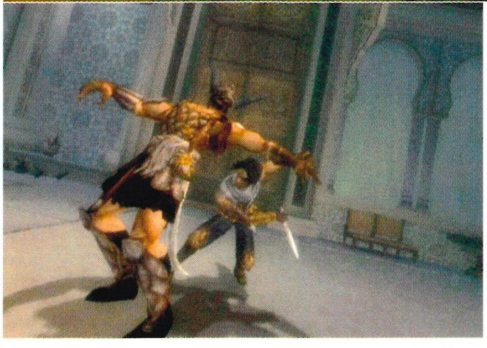


At first, you think it might just be a cut-scene. But oh no, it's more than that. Not more fun, just more



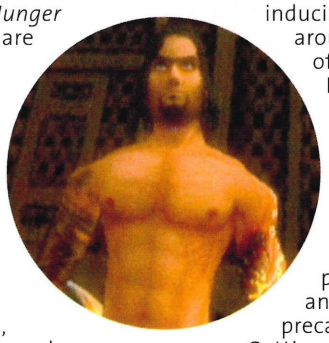
Rival charioteer alert! Smack him off the wall, but try not to explode your own ride in the process

OH NO. You went over a jump, and it cut to slo-mo cam. That's never okay and never cool



■ **Strangely reminiscent of *Starship Troopers*. But without plasma streams. Or guns**

constantly. There's a female narrator who's lilting robovoice sounds like the Mooninites from *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*. Then there are your two internal monologues, because the Prince is newly schizophrenic. Your own voice of reason is stalked in your mind by that of your dark alter ego. Occasionally you 'become' him, turn black as soot, and have to slaughter people to stay alive. More of that later.



From the outset, it's clear that Ubisoft is going back to what made *The Sands of Time* a classic. Lots of vertigo-inducing path-finding around the rooftops of burning Babylon. You bounce along walls, back flip, knife slide down long curtains, trapeze on improbably placed poles and balance on precarious beams.

Getting from A to B is a ninja assault course that is almost as much of a thrill to watch as perform yourself.

Ubisoft couldn't leave it there, though. If you're getting the good stuff back and spread this thickly, it's obligated to throw a few new moves into the mix. Which basically means copying someone else's homework from the *Splinter Cell* team before Rayman calls the register in the morning.

So now the Prince can perform STEALTH KILLS! And do that splits kick thing to suspend himself above ground in a narrow alleyway. The stealth kill is renamed a speed kill, but it's not altogether a bad thing. It actually adds a dimension to the game, because you can then choose to massively cut down on all the crappy, drawn out fighting that split opinion on the last two. If you're all about exploring and acrobatics, just apply that same rigour to dropping in silently behind a foe. Executing the kill means a few precisely-timed button presses for certain death. »»

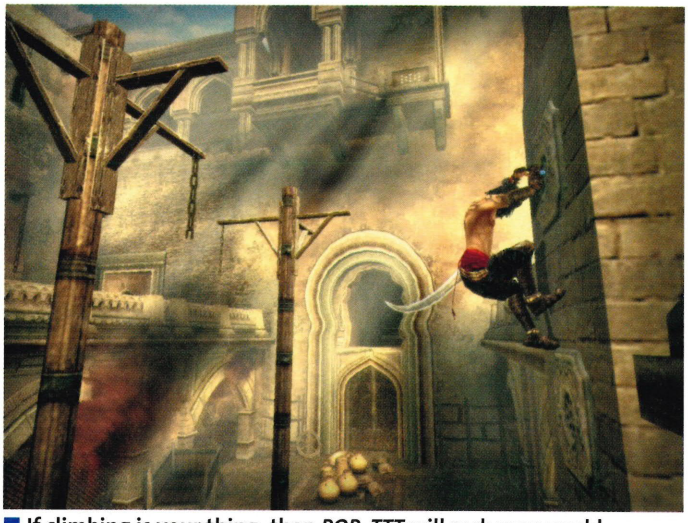
■ **Brand new Climb-O-Nife™ undergoing secret trials**

You've got to be coldly calm to pull it off, and being even a split second off means your enemy is going to grab you and get the first dig in.

Wait, there's more. Little round portals in the wall that you can jab your knife into and hang from, and triangular boards on walls that send you flying off DIAGONALLY with a squeeze of the A button. The dagger holes are probably the most annoying new feature. The splits kick leads to some improbably grip-defying wall scaling, but the split second timing of the dagger jab is guaranteed to see you utter at least 100 swear words. The first game could be irritating when you fractionally mistimed a wall run to back-jump onto a thin ledge, but these new features ratchet up the number of times you fail drastically.

The Two Thrones really isn't a game for the impatient. It's very rare that you can pan out the camera, plan all the points on your squirrel-like room exit, and execute it first time. You'll often have to pick your way though a twisty corridor, and you'll only get an idea of where you have to go next as you're in the middle of a precarious wall run. You'll fall and fail countless times, but luckily you can still rewind and slow down time. The frustration can be high, but not as high as the one you'll feel when you crack a hard bit. We accept the repeated play to solve these action puzzles, because we love the core action so much.

Then, the screen letterboxes. The Prince grabs his scabby arm and is consumed in a whirlwind of mysterious black whirly stuff. Oh no! He's become infected by the Sands of Time! He's now a devilboy Prince that needs to kill people to stay alive. You know that tranquillity you thought you might be able to maintain with the speed kills? Gone.



■ **If climbing is your thing, then *POP: TTT* will rock your world**

The Dark Prince has spiky hair and is black all over. We don't just mean he wears the right trainers and listens to some rude tunes; it's like he got drunk and his mates coloured him in with marker pen. Dark Prince has a chain he can swing about as well as the Dagger of Time, and moves faster and hits harder than the pink prince. His life ticks away constantly, and you replenish it by killing people and, err, breaking boxes open.

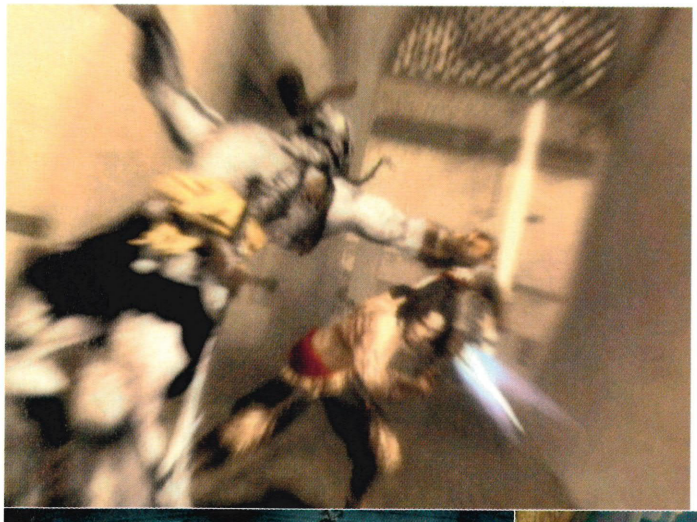
The chain also makes Dark Prince a bit more mobile. He can chain swing along walls and across massive gaps like Spider-Man. Although you're forced to kill people, he does it a lot quicker, so it's less annoying. There are these zombie dog things that the pale Prince takes ages to kill while getting bitten to hell. Dark Prince wallops them twice with the chain and their doggy dream is over.

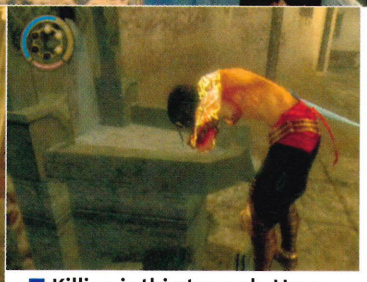
At really basic levels, we're twits. So as soon as Dark Prince appeared, we wanted to believe this was the poison from *Warrior Within* striking again, to wreck a series that looked to be back on the right track. Turns out we don't mind beating people up when the odds are in our favour. If it's going to be quick and violent, yeah that's fun. We're bullies, it seems. Long drawn-out fights where we have to concentrate hard not to lose? We'd rather be swinging about. The way you unDark - by running through some water - is fairly lame though, it has to be said.

So the climbing bits are awesome, and those where you're forced to fight are also pretty awesome. You're no longer able to commit suicide as you're hurling people from ledges for a quick kill. There are still long button strings to learn to pull off your spinning death combos, but learning a few new moves keeps the fighting fresh.

Visually, it's a stunner. Graphics aren't always important, but when you're balancing on a beam a hundred feet above burning city streets, the detail adds to the vertigo. You feel like you're in a truly precarious position, and few games do that as well as this one. The Babylonian architecture is beautiful, even if their doors do often seem slightly too impractical.

Imagine if your doorbell went and your mate was outside. To open the door to meet him, you have to run up a slit in the wall, jam in a dagger, slide down with it wedged in, then flip into slow motion so you can roll under the door before it slams shut again. That's what's awesome about this game: getting from one area to another is rarely as



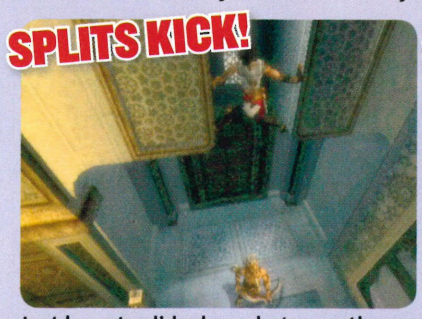


■ **Killing is thirsty work. Have a guzzle and sort your hair out**

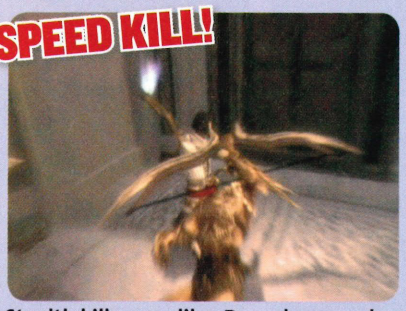
Play it again, Sam

The Splinter Cell *germs have spread to the* POP *team. Goddamn air con!*

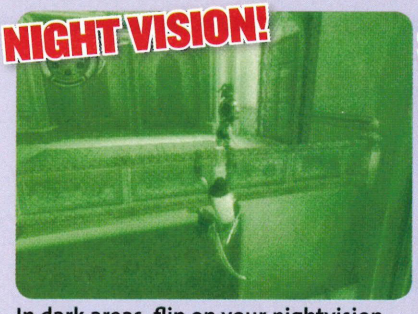
■ You've heard of *Aliens Vs Predator* and we think Ubisoft is gearing up for *Sam Fisher Vs The Prince of Persia*. See what you think of the Prince's mad nu skillz:



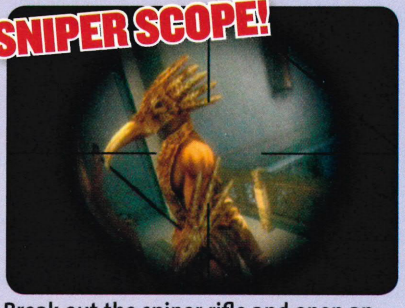
Just have to slide down between these two stone blocks and we'll be in prime position for a...



Stealth kill, more like. Drop down and gut him silently like mute gutting, err, a fish or something



In dark areas, flip on your nightvision and it's much easier to spot enemies in the blackness



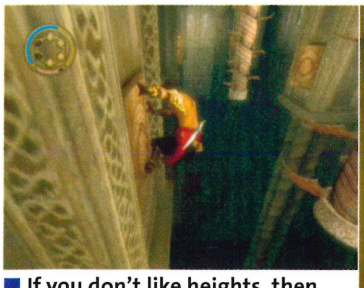
Break out the sniper rifle and open an enemy's head from long range. Keep it steady!

simple as plodding along a path. You have to be a gymnastic genius just to get around in the most basic way.

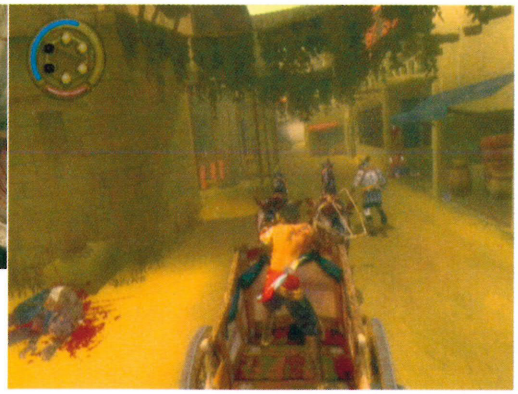
Because of the way it plays, *The Two Thrones* is like one big puzzle. But we wish there were a few more explicit, *Zelda*-style puzzles in the game. Throwing levers to make platforms move around, stuff like that. It seems that in making every area a monkey's playground, the designers burned out their brains for bigger puzzles.

We'd have liked boss encounters a bit more frequently, too. You're hours into the game before the first boss rears his ugly giant head, but it's a false dawn. It's not the first of many, unfortunately. But because *The Two Thrones* is so accomplished, so close to being legendary, you're just willing it to go the extra mile. The only games that actually manage to contain all the elements you want are the *Zelda* series, so finishing a not-too-distant second to that is a serious achievement.

What day is it? December 16th? Later? Look, it's not too late. Send an email to Santa and tell him you've changed your mind about the Girls Aloud album and the baby that wees itself and cries all night. He's going to reply "Look son, if you want to look at boobs and listen to rock music, I'll lend you one of my DVDs I got from Amsterdam". That's when you say, "Listen Claus, it's not about that anymore. *Prince of Persia* is wicked again, and if you don't bring it, I'm going to prise Rudolph's eyes out with a butter knife". Do whatever, just play it.



■ If you don't like heights, then don't become a prince



Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 10

Up there with the best on 'Cube. The art, technology, and animation are stunning. Multiformat games rarely look this special.

SOUND 8

The music actually fits the game! Voice acting is okay, but the game talks too much. Schizo babbling is hard to keep up with.

GAMEPLAY 9

It's frustrating as hell when you need ten attempts to execute one series of jumps, but that core action is brilliantly exciting.

VALUE 8

Save slots no longer give your completion percentage, but your first run through without secrets will be around ten hours.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

- ONE OF THE GREAT THIRD-PARTY GAMES STORMS BACK ON TOP FORM.
- THEY RECOGNISED EVERYTHING WRONG WITH THE LAST ONE AND BINNED IT.
- THESE DEATH-DEFYING ACROBATICS ARE ONE OF GAMING'S GREATEST THRILLS.
- DARK PRINCE WHACKS PEOPLE WITH A CHEZZAIN AND SWINGS LIKE SPIDEY.
- A BIT LIGHT ON PUZZLES AND BOSSES. FIGHTS CAN GO ON A BIT TOO.
- NOT THE IMPROVEMENT YOU'D EXPECT TWO GAMES ON FROM THE ORIGINAL.

THE VERDICT

[Dean Scott] It's like *TransFormers The Movie*: the first one was awesome, the second one was crappy, and the third one is awesome again.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **90%**

When Gunstar Red is in the water, she breaks out a rubber ring. She was too busy learning to slaughter giant robo-snakes to learn to swim

Shoot it in the face! Except it hasn't got a face, it's just floating eyes, nose and a mouth. Put fire into one of its eyes. That's likely to hurt it

Gunstar Future Heroes

It's got future in the title. Maybe it understands the basics of time travel.

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **THQ**

Welcome to 1993, take a seat. What we're about to show you is going to set your eyes on fire. You're going to have to dip them in an eyebath afterwards or you'll be blind forever. Is it 3D? Hah! What's the point of that!? Screens are only 2D, dumb-ass. What's a polygon? It doesn't matter.

See how the sky is whooshing and rotating all around you? Actually, see how the whole LEVEL is rotating around you? See how that watery blob stretches and scales? See how that truck ZOOMS IN from the distance? And look at these guys all over the place! You can set them on FIRE. You've never seen so much fire. Every level's different, pretty much. That's deliberate. We've got so many ideas, explosions and enemies, we're never going to fit them onto one cart.

Treasure is mental. Around 12 years after these kind of 2D effects wowed us, they're bringing it all back home again. Only turned up to eleven. With *Gunstar Future Heroes*, you'll struggle to find a single pixel on the screen where something awesome isn't happening.

Rewind. This is the sequel to an action-rammed shooter from the (dirty) Sega Megadrive. This new version tries to make up for the crushing disappointment that it can't offer two player co-op by massively overcompensating with innovation. Some sections work better than others, but in a climate of one-new-idea-a-year 3D games, you feel as special as if God popped down from Heaven to tell you that you're his favourite human being. 12 years of hindsight helps when making the perfect 1993 videogame.

You're a Gunstar called Red or Blue. You get to choose which one to be, but the main difference is in how they slide and kick. Blue's kick looks far cooler. That's important in a game like this - it absolutely dazzles you with carnage and fire. You have three weapons, each of which can be 'super'd', sapping a bar that's built by killing people.

The fire brigade, only in reverse

Kill the dirty little bogey thing

Slightly more fun than Cluedo

How games are meant to look

Bubbles: Not the hardest enemy

You can dragon punch people (best punch ever) and you can fly kick people (best kick ever).

We have to be honest. In our clamour to jam this into the Micro (couldn't see it properly), GBA SP (better, but the screen looks dull doesn't it?) and eventually the GB Player (YES!) we forgot to read the manual. Manuals are for the weak anyway. As a result, it seemed impossibly hard because we didn't know about the special attacks. So when a boss called Seven Force kicked our asses all afternoon and caused swearing the like of which has never been heard before, we'd declared this game to be impossible. Awesome, but basically impossible.

Seven Force is such a tit. He's

Dynamite Teddy

Set fire to his stuffing. That should learn him.

We just dropped a line into the main story about a teddy and a truck. You didn't think we'd leave it there, did you? How could we!? He steps up to you in the street and no amount of bullets to his furry chest seem to trouble him. Then, from out of nowhere, a truck speeds towards the screen. WHAM! Teddy goes flying as you slide out of the way. Quick! Shoot him in the mind while he's down! The furry bleeder had it coming anyway.

Stay away from the speeding truck, dude

Now burn the bear. EAT IT, TEDDY RUXPIN!

"It's like God popped down from Heaven to say you're his favourite."

got green hair, and he changes into seven different forms, each with a full energy bar. A mechanical puma thing, a spiky spaceship, a fire-spitting phoenix - the kind of things you don't want to have to cope with when you've carried over a small amount of health from the preceding stage. But it taught us to dodge like a ninja, and when we realised we could shoot a constant and wide stream of fire, we coped easily. But it's still a hard game. Harder than *Astro Boy*, and that was pretty damn hard.

You start off on foot. Much of the game is like that. Leaping between platforms, hanging from wires, shooting in every direction and killing hordes of underpaid footsoldiers. In between these solid stages, the game loves to let its imagination run wild. A top-down section, where you fly a helicopter, galloping alongside a speeding arms train on a mechanical ostrich, racing through bubbled-packed corridors against the clock - the level of innovation is staggering. That extends to the bosses, from water blobs, giant faces, all manner of giant robots and a teddy bear you have to run over in a truck.

Just when you thought you'd seen how weird it could be, Moon Four plays out like a board game. Your dice rolls determine

Pink robots with big claws are still scary

who you fight next. Boss after boss. There must be more than twenty in this game, and we lost count. One boss room just sees you getting molested by a gang of guys a fraction of your size. It's almost as weird as the level early in the game which revolves around you as you try to rescue little yellow chicks and not get eaten by plants. EATEN BY PLANTS!

Gunstar Future Heroes isn't perfect, but it's a thrilling reminder of times when games didn't have to make sense, didn't have to have Natasha Bedingfield in them or sound like Radio 1. It's mental, unpredictable, challenging and massive amounts of fun. Let's do the timewarp again. Party like it's 1993.

Look at their faces! They hate being killed

The rubbishy helicopter bit! Look away!

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 10

Everything that's brilliant about 2D. Treasure has thrown every effect at this, with only the slightest touch of slow-down.

SOUND 8

You can barely hear the pumping tunes above the sound of explosions and death. Massive death's our fave 'song' anyway.

GAMEPLAY 8

The helicopter bit is awkward, but the rest is majestic. Hard to play on the Micro, so make sure you drag out your SP.

VALUE 8

Start on Normal. Replay on Hard. Play the time trials. Cry that there's no two-player. Replay AGAIN to relive the awesome bits.

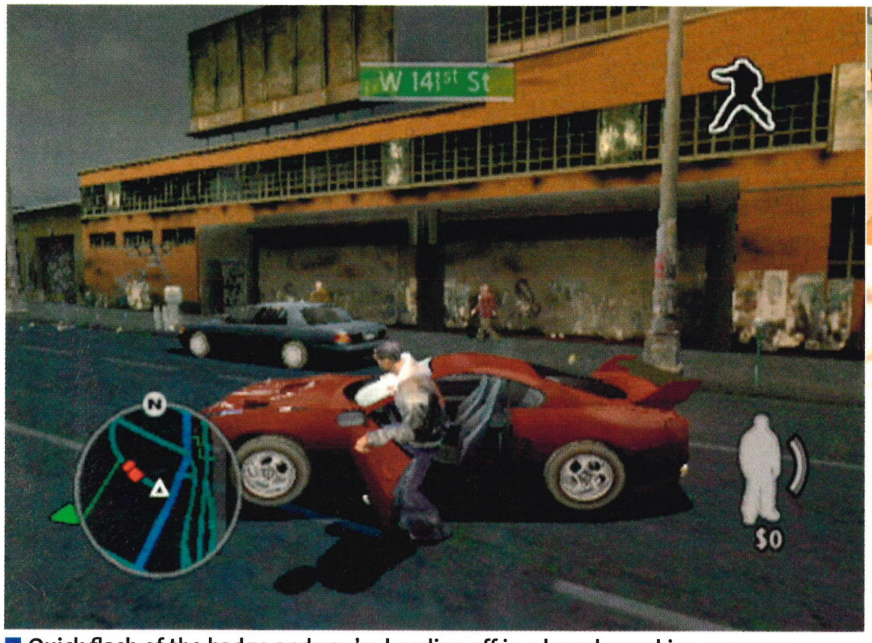
MARIOS AND WARIOS

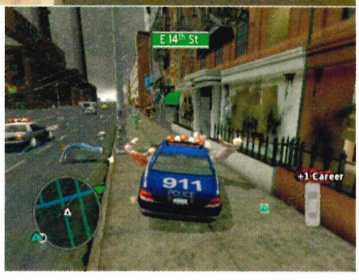
- ONE OF THE FINEST-LOOKING GBA GAMES EVER. A MARVEL.
- GAMEPLAY IS STAGGERINGLY VARIED AND CONSTANTLY SURPRISES YOU.
- SOME OF THE MOST AMAZING BOSSES YOU WILL EVER SEE BEFORE YOUR EYES.
- A MILLION TIMES BETTER THAN MOST OF THE GAMES THIS XMAS.
- THE HELICOPTER BIT TRIES TO BE *ZERO GUNNER 2* ON DREAMCAST, BUT FAILS.
- NO TWO-PLAYER. OK, BUT IT'S WHY WE LOVED THE ORIGINAL *GUNSTAR*.

THE VERDICT

Technologically astounding, packed with inspiration and good fun. How many 3D games can you say that about this month? Zero. Dean Scott

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **89%**



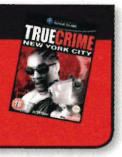


Quick flash of the badge and you're heading off in a brand-spanking supercar

True Crime: New York City

The real criminal is the one who broke the frame-rate.

GAME INFO



Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **ACTIVISION**

Terrorists are the least of Bush's worries. He needs to be worried when gamers get their hands on this travesty. *True Crime NYC* promises to give you the streets of Manhattan Island, where you can do some car-jacking, run some people over, shoot guns, have street races and cause all kinds of chaos.

True Crime NYC promises so much and delivers it all... badly. Rowdy gamers are going to rile and take out fury to the REAL streets of New York, where they can run amok without the interference of glitches and a crap frame-rate. The Five-O might shoot them dead, and there are no 'Continues' in real life, but that's no biggie.

We're distraught, to be honest. The blueprints for *TCNYC* seemed like the foundations of one of the best games on GameCube. However, a few fatal technical flaws have ruined almost every aspect of it. It's a shame because there's a great game hiding under the thick layer of disastrous technical muck, but you'd have to be Mr. Driller to get to it. And you're not Mr. Driller.

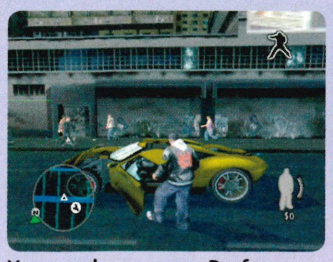
You are Marcus, a black bloke of the gangster variety, like Mike J. Or at least you start off as a gangster; your first mission is to shoot up a bunch of punks who tried to kill you and your crime-lord father, Isaiah. The shoot-out takes place in the grimy gang's safe house and demonstrates the best of what *TCNYC* has to offer.

The on-foot gameplay has been improved over the previous game. You can blast fools with two types of control; aim with the C-Stick in a free-look style similar to *Hitman 2*, or hold the auto-aim button to lock on to the nearest foe. With

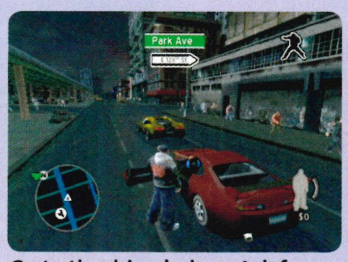
Car-shopping etiquette

How to acquire a car... told by professionals.

Spend MONEY on a car? HAH! Don't let us hear you say that again. We'll wash your mouth out with soap. Or lava. Or two gallons of Super Unleaded. You need a set of wheels? Do things properly. Stick with us and we'll get you rollin'...



You need a new car. Perform a professional emergency stop in front of your desired vehicle.



Go to the driver's door. Ask for the driver to leave. Apply force if required. A kick works well.

Burn off. Running over the original driver is not essential but they'll probably die anyway.

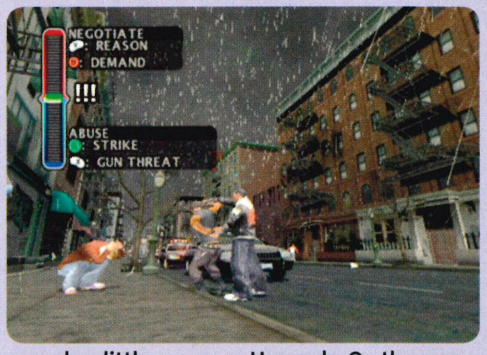
If your new car doesn't last, don't panic. Simply repeat the process. They don't last forever.

21 Questions

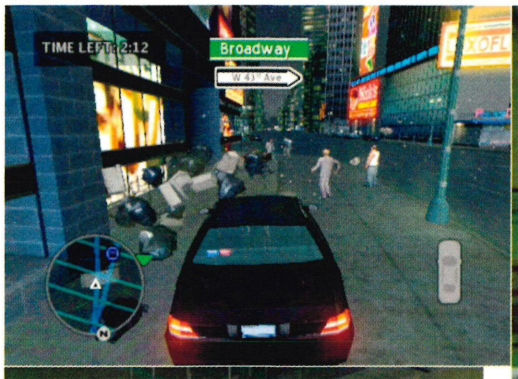
When you want to know something, hit people...

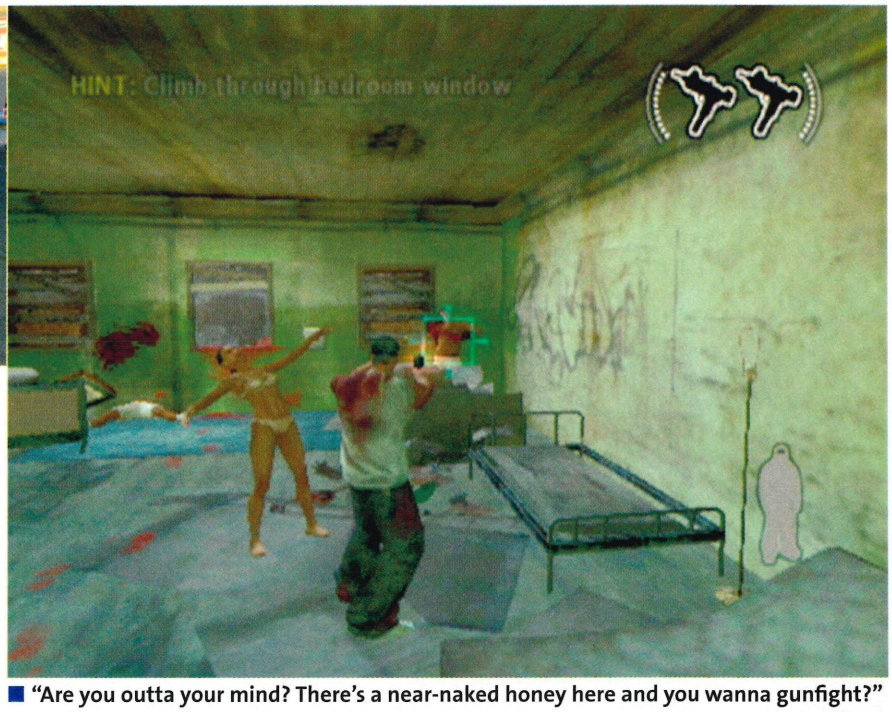
■ Who killed your buddy? That's all you want to know. But fools refuse to tell you. What do you do? You smash them over the head with your gun and press the barrel into their temple. They'll crap their pants and give you the info you need... if you do it right. A bar shows you how stressed your subject is. Get the marker to hit the middle three times and you get your intel. Mess it up and you're left without a lead. We never failed - we're gun-pointing, rib-punching masters.

If he won't tell you what you need to know...



... apply a little pressure. Upwards. On the arm



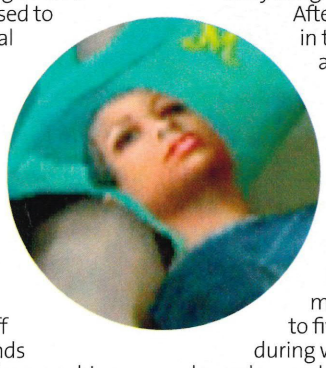


■ "Are you outta your mind? There's a near-naked honey here and you wanna gunfight?"

"True Crime: NYC promises so much and delivers it... badly."

many basic functions based on a combination of two buttons, things are confusing at first. But you soon get used to it and become lethal with your pistol.

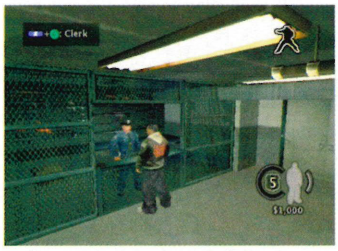
Your main guns have no ammo restriction, which is slightly unrealistic but lets you keep blasting without mercy. And you can grab any dropped weapon and cap off the remaining rounds in them. Foes will drop machine guns, shotguns and all sorts of melee weapons. You can dual-wield weapons as well, so you'll be sprinting about, busting up everything in sight.



After you've put holes in the gang leader, a cop appears, to see you standing over all the dead bodies. It turns out he's a long time friend of Marcus, and is not there to bust your ass but to help you out of this mess. The plot jumps to five years later, during which time you've cleaned up and become a cop. But things get dirty again when your cop friend is killed, and Marcus is left with a pledge to find out who was behind the murder.

So, as in the original, you are a cop with a dirty undercover agenda - breaking loose on the streets like a gangster with the power of the law. You are given the freedom to do whatever possible to uncover the mystery behind your friend's death. You need to speak to a gang leader? Visit his home packing heat, and shoot up the whole place until he speaks. Someone is refusing to talk? Push a gun into their face and keep smashing them in the ribs until they cry. If you need a car, you simply take one.

With the power of the law, all you do is hold your badge in the air and say you need the vehicle. They'll get out and you can hop in. If that's too much hassle, simply open the door, boot their face and throw them out. But you're not above the law. »»



■ "I need guns. Lots of guns. Really big, shiny ones."

■ Massive street map sponsored by Motorola. Hello, Mutha

There's a Good Cop/Bad Cop system that monitors your behaviour. If you shoot innocent people or unarmed suspects, or mount the pavement and mow down dozens of pedestrians, your fellow cops will turn on you. You'll hear a radio alert of a rogue cop and suddenly, you'll have sirens on your ass. All that fuss over a few innocent people. Jeez.

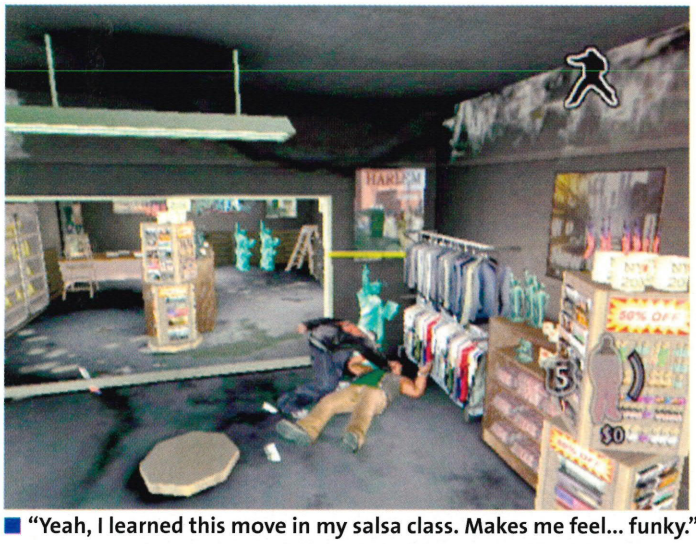
But the MAJOR problem is that you'll have a job staying off the pavements with the truly horrendous steering in *TCNYC*. To start with, it seems like there's a half second delay between your control pad and the car. This alone makes it hard to control. To make it worse, you're faced with steering that doesn't allow for subtle adjustments, hardly moving as you tap the steering. Then, when you get a little anxious on the wheel, it over-reacts, swinging erratically in that direction.

The result is that you plough uncontrollably through a crowd of people, battering their broken bodies all over the street. And this happens often. It's a huge problem because, just like the original game, you will spend a lot of time behind the wheel, getting round the huge game map.

The virtual Los Angeles in *Streets of LA* was shockingly large. *TCNYC* is absolutely enormous. The game spans the full length and breadth of Manhattan Island. This is not a smaller 'game' version of Manhattan, like in *Spider-Man 2*. This is the actual island in polygons. Obviously, not all the shops and buildings are identical, but it mimics the main landmarks and structural layout of the entire island. And it's breathtakingly large.

Try to imagine rocketing along a straight road in a sports car for over 15 minutes; that's the kind of immense size we're talking about here. And it'd take even longer in a slower car that you hijacked from some old granny on her way home from the bingo hall.

The old blokes didn't like it when Marcus strolled into their pub



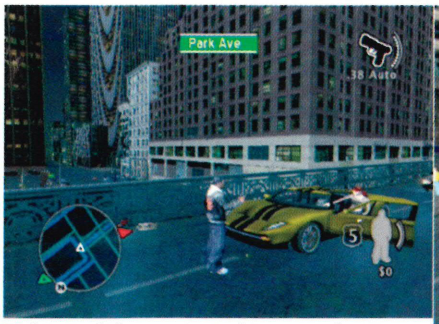
"Yeah, I learned this move in my salsa class. Makes me feel... funky."

With such a large world, you would expect the size would come at the expense of detail, but you'd be wrong. The buildings look great. Instead of being simple square blocks with windows, doors and other effects drawn onto their flat surfaces, the details have actually been modelled in 3D. Most of the residential blocks and shops have interiors, too. You can walk right in whenever you like.

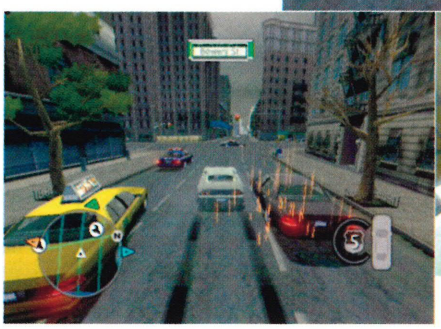
But it's the finer touches that take the streets of *TCNYC* to supreme levels of realism. Litter like newspapers, cups and whatever else those dirty New Yorkers chuck away blows about in the wind. Apart from the obvious street lamps, pavements are full of objects like bin bags, boxes, newsstands and the like. They're not part of the fixed scenery either. You can plough through this stuff, scattering it all over the road. The physics and attention to detail are worthy of praise.

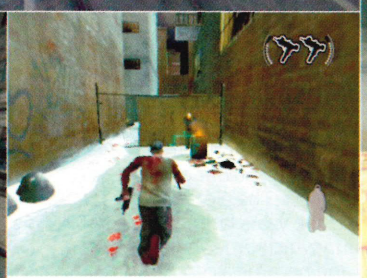
Forget the *Need For Speed*-style deserted streets. This virtual New York is brought to life with dozens of pedestrians, parked cars and dense traffic. There are random weather effects, too. That's not just a drop of rain now and then, but full-on thunderstorms that fill your TV with water droplets and lightning flashes which blind you for a split second.

As well as the visual additions, the missions have been improved, too. The main storyline is now far more linear than the previous game. *Streets of LA* was too open-ended, meaning you could have completely missed some of its coolest missions. Not only does *TCNYC* guarantee that you will see all of its missions, it also maintains

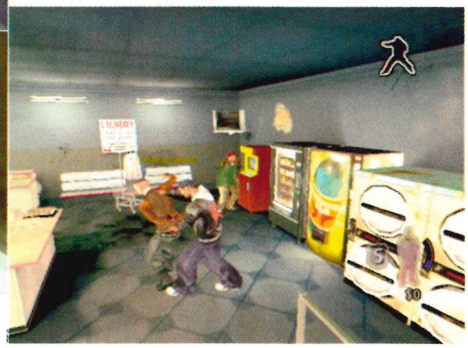


"Out of the car. I need to see why *Top Gear* was raving about that motor."





"You fought the law and the law won; You fought the law..."

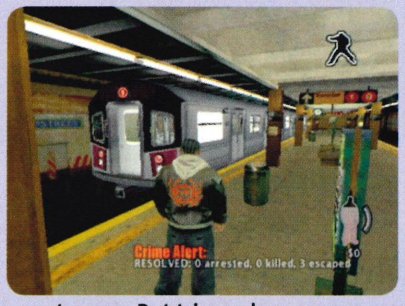


Getting about

The developers have clearly never been on London Underground.

■ The mammoth task of driving about the huge map would be fun if it didn't run like the GameCube has arthritis. But jerk-fever ruins that, so you'd be better to take the subway. There are stations all over the map. You go down into the station, jump on a train and within seconds you will arrive at the station of your choice. You don't even buy a ticket, though. Is that 'cos Marcus is black? This game is all about stereotype. Don't try this in Stockwell, kids.

The main difference between New York and London Underground is...



... no tramps. But trigger-happy cops are a constant on both sides of the Pond

control over the way that the plot unfolds, so it's easier to follow.

Most of the main story missions involve shooting your way through gangster bases to eventually capture and question the gang leader. If you get the information you need from him, you'll get your next lead in your investigation. If you fail to get the info you needed, you're left without a clue.

What happens now? You have to see one of your informants. During your adventures you meet various shady figures who will act as sources of information. A dodgy taxi driver, a brothel manager or even your imprisoned father. You perform a task for them and they'll give you the info you need for your next lead. This is a great way of portraying the illusion that you are conducting an investigation and not playing through a pre-set storyline. You'll feel like Columbo. Well, a slightly more gangsta version and not a scary old man.

And when you're not acting like Columbo, you can patrol the streets, busting up a large variety of crime scenes that occur in the streets around you. There are loads, and you're told about them over your radio. Simpler ones involve people fighting, or chasing a stolen car. Others are more diverse. You will be called to hostage situations, robberies at banks and even rape scenes in apartment blocks. You bust in, put new holes in brothers, and throw the book at anyone who survives. And it feels great.

So we've got a great game on our hands, right? It should have been. But sadly, one major technical flaw has prevented this from being the case - BLATANT and disastrous slowdown.

The moment you step out into the streets you will notice one of the most disgusting frame-rates you've ever seen. It's like you're watching CCTV footage on *Crime Stoppers*. Honestly, we were in such disbelief that this was the final product that we phoned the publishers just to make sure. They sent us another copy of the game with the word 'FINAL' written on the disc. Unfortunately, it was no better.

The constant jerkiness goes from bad to worse as the screen gets busier. We're not tech-junkies but a frame-rate that renders the game BARELY playable cannot be ignored. The problem is, you will be spending the majority of the game outside, in four-frames-per-second mode and this is totally unacceptable.

Imagine buying a box of cornflakes that were so tough you could barely chew them. Or a pair of glasses that were so dark you could hardly see a thing. You would be forced to power-slam them straight into the bin. This piece of software costs 40 sheets and it's technically broken. And we're not happy. Luckily, we got both of our copies for free but you probably won't.

■ **Parking on double yellows is treated much the same as first degree murder in NYC**

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 5

The city and interiors look fantastic, but it's too ambitious. An unbearable frame-rate outside is the unfortunate result.

SOUND 8

Great sound effect and a cool selection of New York rap. But the tracks are not in a radio style, so it lacks that illusion.

GAMEPLAY 4

On-foot interior missions play great. But you'll spend most of your time outside and with the horrible frame-rate, it's a disaster.

VALUE 5

This must be one of the biggest game maps ever made. But how highly would you value a product that is essentially broken?

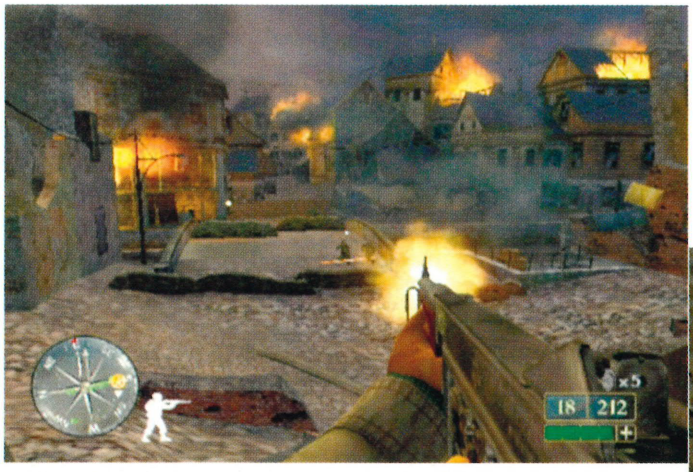
MARIOS AND WARIOS

- A TRULY STUNNING LEVEL OF DETAIL IN A HUGE, BUSTLING CITY.
- A COOL PLOT THAT FLOWS MUCH BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL.
- RANDOM CRIME MISSIONS MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE A REAL FIVE-0.
- THE WHOLE THING IS RUINED BY THE WORST FRAME-RATE ON GAMECUBE.
- HOW DID THIS GAME GET THROUGH QUALITY TESTING, WE WONDER?
- WE HAD TO GET A SECOND COPY TO CHECK IT REALLY RAN THIS BADLY.

THE VERDICT

[Mike Jackson] A massive disappointment. Behind the frame-rate hides a better game than the original. An 80% at least. But it runs so badly it's offensive. You've been warned.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **59%**



Call of Duty 2: Big Red One

Is it as much fun as accidentally treading on Lego with bare feet? Read on!

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **ACTIVISION**

It's 10.58am on November 11. Dean Scott is on the back of a jeep bouncing around the Tunisian desert. He's firing a .50 calibre mounted machine gun at the Germans again. Or they could be Italians. Or whatever. He is oblivious to the entire office falling silent, as he screams out "EAT IT, DEUTSCHLAND!" and "DIE, YOU DIRTY GERMAN MO-FOS!" It all looks terribly unsympathetic on Armistice Day.

It's not like he was so into this, he couldn't even bear to press pause to honour Britain's war dead. It's more about there not being a clock in his eyeline, and him wearing headphones. In fact, Dean had been using all kinds of excuses to stop playing *Call of Duty 2*. "I thought I saw Jesus outside!"; "I need to check my car hasn't turned into a snake!"; "I forgot how to make my fingers move" - each time, an icy glare from Tim sent him slinking back to the console.

We're bored of World War 2 games. This is certainly more enjoyable than the last two *Medal of Honor* games, but the experience is practically identical. World War 2 games can't surprise you. You know you're firing the same crappy slow-loading guns, you know you're just fighting humans, and you know you're going to have to shell tanks at some point.

How is that better than killing ALIENS with LASERS? Aliens can look like anything. They can build awesome giant robots, which you have to waste with rockets and giant cannons that vomit rainbow laser-streams. Possibly with an excellent buzzing sound.

Anyway, after the first mission of relentlessly slaughtering young, blameless Germans, the black and white archive footage rolls. Oh! Another history lesson.

GAMES! STOP TRYING TO TEACH US THINGS! Games are supposed to be the opposite of school. Don't kid on that this is 'real', because if it was, a soldier would EASILY be able to jump over a tiny bit of broken wall instead of being invisibly fenced in on the route the game wants him to take. The cost of feeling 'in a war' and having comrades dying all around you is that *Call of Duty 2* has to be oppressively linear. You're a soldier that can jump to practically no effect, can't open doors and gets immediately bombed to death from above for going 'AWOL'.

Stay on the rails, and you're in for the premier World War 2 experience on GameCube. New objectives get radioed and shouted at you on the fly, so you're never sure where each level is taking you next. The plot threads are plausible, as you suddenly get seconded to take out anti-aircraft guns to make an air strike safe. Visually it's great, too. Smoke billows from bomb-ravaged buildings and every near miss from the Stukkas above sends dust and debris flying into the air.

The 'Big Red One' in the title has nothing to do with sex toys, and was the nickname of the 'legendary' US First Infantry unit that you're part of. We love pretending to be American, because Americans are so awesome. When one of our comrades goes down in battle, we're all like "OMG! WHY?!" and we sit shaking our fists at Heaven, crying onto the Stars and Stripes.

But hey, at least the mouthy one from Brooklyn didn't die, so we'll get to hear his hilarious 'rough diamond' talk in the cutscenes.

The game's mostly first person, but there are a few vehicle sections thrown in. The bits where you get to drive around in Armors aren't as much fun as in *Batallion Wars*. Sniping never gets old of course, unless you're the one getting blasted in the head. You also get to set explosive charges on tanks, gun down planes and use fat static machine guns like in every other war game.

Spot the difference

We're going to make a TV show out of this. Les Dennis needs the work.

Do you buy every war game that comes out? If you do, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?! You're either minted or stupid and if it's the former, we can think of loads of better things to waste cash on - some of them legal. Maybe you'll be able to tell these four war game screenshots apart. The prize? Poland! The whole country. Just go and take it like Hitler did.

Is this *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*?

What's this? *Frontline? Allied Assault?*

Could this be the first *Call of Duty*?

So what's this? *Super Mario Sniper?*

"Sniping never gets old, unless you're the one getting blasted."

As you're part of a squad, the idea is that your colleagues will do something useful for you. Providing you want to hang around and wait for them to help, they eventually might do something productive. They're too dumb to help with a main objective, but they don't mind shooting the odd German. The Germans are dumb too, so you can run around like Rambo and kill tens of people per mission. Health packs are pretty common, but why do we have to press A to grab them? If you're dying, the answer to the question 'Would you like something to make you a bit less dying' is never going to be 'no', is it?

Upon finishing *Call Of Duty 2*, we were left with a sense of it being alright. It's quite short as these games go, so while it's familiar, it packs the action into a smaller timeframe to stop you getting bored. If that's the point where you'd call a mate for a deathmatch, put down your mobile. There's no multi-player option. Just play your other war game in two player. He'll never know...

Unless the sights on that machine gun are seriously out, you are a useless shot

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 9

Hollywood-style production is the norm for console war games these days. *Call of Duty 2* is both epic and atmospheric.

SOUND 8

Hardcore drum and bass soundtrack makes a pleasant change. Only kidding. A 'rousing' traditional score and meaty effects.

GAMEPLAY 7

Playable, but fails to have a single new idea worth mentioning. Much less preachy than *Medal of Honor*, which is a plus.

VALUE 6

Short enough for you to be carried through to the end without it feeling too contrived. Multiplayer? Hell no, soldier.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

LOOKS AND SOUNDS AS BEAUTIFUL AS THESE GAMES ALWAYS DO.

SITTING IN THE BALL TURRET OF A BOMBER IS QUITE ENTERTAINING.

WE'VE PLAYED THIS GAME BEFORE. LOTS AND LOTS OF TIMES.

OLD GUNS ARE RUBBISH. IT'S NO FUN TO KILL PEOPLE WITH OLD GUNS.

NO MULTIPLAYER. WE THOUGHT IT'S A STANDARD FEATURE OF THE FPS.

SLAVISH HISTORICAL ACCURACY. THEY DON'T EVEN SNEAK IN ONE ALIEN.

THE VERDICT

[Dean Scott] Reviewing war games is hell. They feel like slightly different cover versions of the same song. Feeling patriotic? Buy Gunstar Future Heroes and pay a fiver for a poppy.

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **70%**

It's true! Whack a monster and stars really do come out their head!

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Dark is the new Black for the four-eyed magic-maker.

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-3**
Publisher: **EA**

A fourth *Harry Potter* movie can only mean another *Potter* game. That thought doesn't exactly get us jumping for joy. But wait; let's give the kid a chance. He's older, wiser, spottier, so maybe he can pull a rabbit out of his hat this time around.

After *Prisoner of Azkaban,* this series needed a desperate overhaul and that's exactly what it's got. The cartoon-like characters and RPG gameplay of searching for books and chatting to teachers are gone. In their place is a much more accurate depiction of Harry, Ron and Hermione, with levels taken straight from the film.

Most importantly, this game is all about action. All three Triwizard Tasks are here for you to complete, plus some levels in-between for the whole gang to get involved in. Just like in the book and film, Harry's growing up and that means some scarier monsters and stronger spells. Each level has a different style to it, but the tone is set straight away, as you try to escape the Death Eaters rampaging outside the Quidditch World Cup.

For some of the levels, you get the choice of controlling Harry, Ron or Hermione, although all three are always on-screen. There isn't much difference between them at first, but as you buy upgrade cards, you can equip each of them with special skills. The cards are bought with all the beans you collect.

The multi-character feature has been much-touted and there are plenty of occasions when you simply can't solve a problem with a single character. The other two will come to your aid, lifting and pulling objects. The AI isn't too smart though and often lags behind you, which becomes pretty annoying after a while. All the more reason to grab a couple of mates and have them control the other characters instead.

Using the Co-op feature can add plenty of laughs as you fight one another for the rewards. The ultimate aim of the Co-op levels is to collect all the Triwizard Shields. Each time you collect one, the level ends, which means repeat visits. Fortunately, each time you get a Shield or learn a charm, new areas open up for you to explore. Although this adds to the longevity of the game, it doesn't stop it from getting really repetitive eventually.

There is also a separate level of Mad Eye Moody's Challenges that can be unlocked to improve your

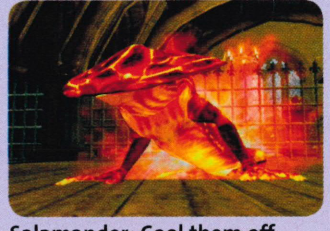
Hagrid's Creature Feature

Know your Dugbogs from your Bubotubes.

'Ello me darlings. Oi 'ope you've been studying hard for your Care Of Magical Creatures exams. Here's a little revision for you. You moind yourselves now; these beauties can be moighty feisty and no mistake. Cuppa tea?

Grindylow: Live in lakes, but don't play well with others. Flash of the wand will sort 'em

Blast-Ended Skrewt: Need double-teaming or else you'll have to knock them out



Salamander: Cool them off before tackling. Remember to nail the grates that spawn them

Hungarian Horntail: Mighty bad breath, so you better steer clear. Mints at the ready

Harry pauses for a cause as the eighth Cheeky Vimto starts to kick in. Ron's already has

Unexpected Earth-killing comet strike puts pay to Voldemort's plans. Oops, don't say his name

"Although *GoF* looks and feels darker, it certainly doesn't play that way."

spell-casting skills and teamwork.

The Triwizard Tasks are for Harry alone and often stray away from the platform style of the other levels. The Dragon Task, for instance, is all about accuracy and speed as you fly around Hogwarts on a rail, avoiding the flames that a Horntail dragon is spitting at you. Eventually you're judged on the number of rings you hit and how quickly you managed to reach the end.

Unfortunately it's not all good news. Although *GoF* looks and feels darker and more serious, it certainly doesn't play that way. Being chased by a dragon sounds fantastic and the sense of speed is breath-taking at times, but there's very little challenge. You only have a limited ability to move around; there's no free roaming. Much of the rest of the game is similar in this respect. You never really feel as though you have to try very hard to complete each level.

For instance, there are plenty of different Charms and Jinxes to work with, from Carpe Retractum to Avifors, but you don't get to choose between them. All the spells in the game are situation-sensitive, which means you hit the same button to put out a fire as you do to lift a boulder. You don't choose the spell, and you don't even need to aim them. This really isn't too helpful when your character lifts a rock when what you actually wanted was to hose down a Salamander.

Without a targeting system, you spend most of your time shooting off Jinxes in all directions, hoping they'll hit enemies while your Charms just go for the nearest object. Any suggestion that it wouldn't just be button-bashing has proved to be false. This kind of gameplay works fine with swords and axes, but not with wands. It doesn't really make you feel very involved in the action.

Despite all the shiny new features and clever adaptations from the film, there just isn't anything new about *GoF*. We've seen all this stuff done before, and often much better. The book and film that this game is based on both tried to take things up a notch or two. More danger, more scares, more puzzles and mysteries. None of that has been translated to this game and because of that, it's weaker than it could have been. Make no mistake, younger fans will probably still love this game but it has no tricks up its sleeves to enchant anybody else.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 8
Everything from the plants to the plumbing looks incredible. The lighting and spell effects deserve a special mention.

SOUND 6
If Ron mentions beans one more time, he's in for a slap. The entire cast is here though, plus Stephen Fry telling the story.

GAMEPLAY 7
It's quite slow at first, but picks up a bit once you start upgrading your characters. There's still no real challenge though.

VALUE 6
Being forced to revisit levels adds some time to the clock but not much. There's nothing here we haven't seen before.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

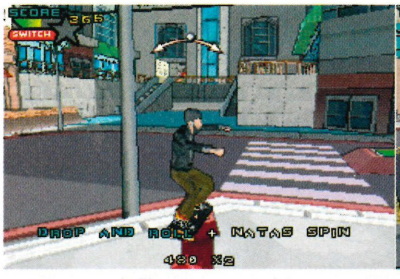
- THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE FACING UP AGAINST A BLAST-ENDED SKREWT.
- LOADS OF VARIED GAMEPLAY KEEPS YOU INTERESTED THROUGHOUT.
- THE SPELLS, LIGHTING, CHARACTERS AND LEVELS ALL LOOK BRILLIANT.
- WHERE'S THE CHALLENGE? EVEN THE HUGE DRAGON IS A WIMP.
- WE NEVER KNEW BLOWING THINGS UP COULD GET SO BORING.
- LIMITED CONTROL OF THE ACTION MEANS YOU DON'T FEEL INVOLVED.

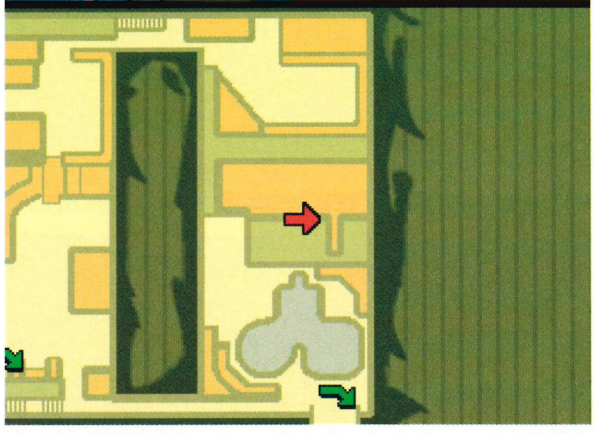
THE VERDICT

[Jon] Like Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans, some things we like and some we don't. If you're not potty about Potter, this game's just making up the numbers.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 73%

Not sure where it is but we're on our way to the 'birdhouse' right now. See ya





Tony Hawk's American Sk8land

GAME INFO
Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **ACTIVISION**

W8, this is gr8 m8, don't be l8... is that hip enough for you? Hell yeah!

Ahem... we may have an apology to make. Last month, you might have noticed a lack of respect for Tony the Hawk. We clipped his wings and tied his beak up. Then called him a poor man's buzzard. He cried all over his board. Well Mr. Hawk, we want to apologise. *American Sk8land* shows that you are indeed a free bird. We want you to fly Tony. Into space.

An impressive trick. Especially if the picture is the right way up!

The GBA *Tony Hawk* games are a lot of fun, aren't they? Even the crazy fixed camera doesn't hamper the fun. Across the board, they score fairly well. In fact, Activision could have easily just churned out the GBA version with a few touch screen elements and only a few eyebrows would have been raised. But NO, it's gone one step further and released a proper, fully-fledged 3D skate-a-thon. It's a genuinely beautiful thing. You NEED to believe.

American Sk8land follows a similar plot to *Wasteland*. You arrive in California as an unknown sk8r boi (wow, we're hip with our Avril Lavigne references, she's *sooo* 2006) and must work your way through a variety of challenges to earn cash. Luckily, there are people lining the streets just waiting to give you a dollar for inane tasks. Sometimes, it's just a case of spine-transferring over some ramps or acid-dropping from a height. Actually, there are hardly any challenges that can't be accomplished within a couple of tries. It's quick fixes before you move onto the following task and ultimately, the next level.

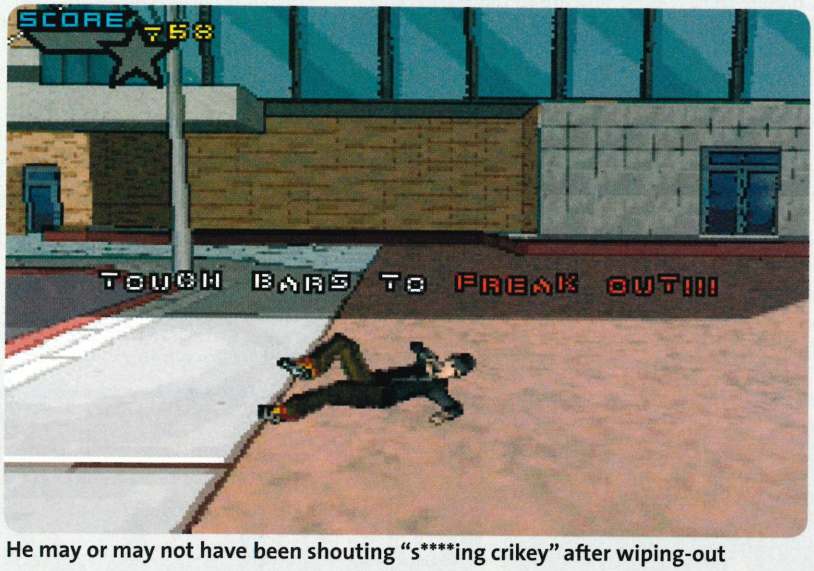
Although the actual challenges may be simple, it doesn't really hamper the action, because you'll be having a lot of fun. The game controls like a beautiful remote-controlled monkey on some wheels. In other words, it's seamless. At first you may have some concerns about the 3D camera. Will it slow down? Will it be unhelpful? Well, stop doubting because it's pretty much perfect.

We never once noticed any problems. The camera's smooth, it never gets stuck on scenery and the game romps along at a decent pace. It's a miracle to behold. If Jesus was in the

Say What?

Now children, let's be sensible with this feature.

Hidden among the options in the Skate Shop is a crafty little feature that's bound to be abused, particularly by those planning to go online. Using the DS's mic, you can actually record your voice, so that when you fall off your board, you can use custom exclamations. Now come on, you've got to try very hard to resist the temptation to use rude words. Ignore the nasty rumours circulating at the moment, that the exclamation we used was "b*****cks". That's a complete untruth.



He may or may not have been shouting "s****ing crikey" after wiping-out

business of making handheld skating games, he would have made this and Moses would own the skate parks.

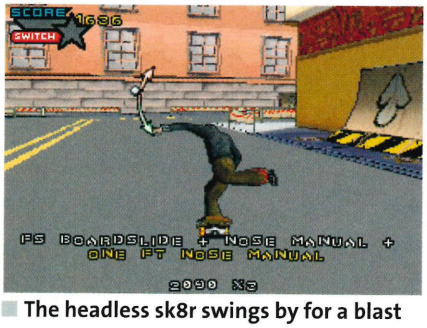
Plus the number of buttons on the DS means all the flips, grinds and grabs are very easy to pull off. You can seamlessly link tricks together without a problem. Thankfully, Vicarious Visions avoided the temptation to make lots of tricks use the touch screen. The only thing you really need it for is to perform special tricks. This is extremely handy and the special moves are context-sensitive. Pressing one while in the air will perform a flip, whereas pressing on a rail will perform a special grind. You can also use the touch screen to 'freak out' but that move is just as pointless as it is on the 'Cube.

Luckily, the dual screen isn't quite so pointless. The top screen is used to show a map - how original. But it's actually useful in *Tony Hawk* because you can see the people you need to speak to. Normally they 'pop up' when you get near to them. So using the map makes it easier to spot them. Also, when you're playing Classic mode, yes the bastion of pure *Tony Hawk* entertainment is in *Sk8land*, it shows you where the S-K-A-T-E letters are. Thank you very much.

So... what other reasons do you need to play it? Well, there's kind of a skate park creator. As you get more money in the Story mode, you can purchase objects for the Warehouse skate park. There are all sorts of things, like a lava-filled pit and a treadmill. Okay, it's not quite as good as making your own park from scratch but it's not a bad effort. What other reasons... well, the graphics are lovely. It's kind of like *Ultimate Spider-Man* but fully 3D. Admittedly, there isn't a lot of detail in people's faces but when you're whipping past them while kick-flipping onto the next grind, you don't really care if someone's got a moustache or not.

Another attraction of *Tony Hawk* on DS is the online mode. Unfortunately, at the time of going to press, we couldn't access the Nintendo network to play against some sweaty Americans. But we reckon the chance to play combo challenges and the like against THE WORLD will be a lot of fun. Plus you can play it in normal multiplayer with a mate who's also got a copy of the game.

The reason why we think this version is so much better than the 'Cube one is because it feels so fresh. You haven't played anything like this on DS and the 3D is among the most impressive so far. It's a game that's perfectly suited to handheld. The quick challenges, particularly the two minute Classic mode, are great for bus journeys or wasting time while on the toilet. Tony Hawk may be over on 'Cube but he's got a long life ahead of him on DS.



The headless sk8r swings by for a blast

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 9

Some of the best on DS. The cel-shaded style suits the *Tony Hawk* series very well. There's no slowdown or pop-up. Awesome.

SOUND 8

Songs get repeated but it's quite impressive to hear Green Day on your DS. Plus there's a lot of actual speech from Mr. Hawk himself.

INNOVATION 8

A map is surprisingly useful and the touch screen for specials never feels stupid. Online gaming is also top notch.

VALUE 9

With the online, the value is near limitless. In single player there are lots of challenges to finish in both Story and Classic modes.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

- A CRACKING ART STYLE THAT LOOKS GREAT IN 3D. YOU'LL LOVE IT.
- THE CONTROLS ARE SPOT-ON. TRICKS ARE DEAD EASY TO PERFORM.
- LOTS OF DIFFERENT BUT PERHAPS SLIGHTLY TOO EASY CHALLENGES.
- ANOTHER GAME TO TAKE ONLINE, ALONG WITH *MARIO KART DS*.
- *TONY HAWK* MAKES SENSE ON A HANDHELD. PERFECT BEAUTIFUL SENSE.
- SOME OF THE CHALLENGES ARE JUST EMBARRASSINGLY EASY.

THE VERDICT

Rob Tony don't sell your board just yet. There's still life in that skating horse you keep on flogging. This ranks among the best on DS.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 87%

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£34.99**
Players: **1-4**
Publisher: **ACTIVISION**

Shrek SuperSlam

Open a can of whup-ass on Donkey's scrawny rear-end and shut him up for good. Excellent.

Shrek has an advantage in fights - it doesn't matter if he gets a slap. He already has a face like a baboon's ass, so there's no point blocking. Now that he's up for a ruck, he's going to wreck Donkey.

That's a good thing, because we've always wanted to pound him down and sell him as meat to the local kebab shop. Unfortunately, *Shrek SuperSlam* doesn't quite deliver that level of player satisfaction.

The single player action on *SuperSlam* feels like it was added on as an afterthought to the multiplayer. It's very sad indeed when the best thing you can say about a Story mode is that its cut-scenes are funny. A *Kill Bill*-style set-up to a fight between Princess Fiona and Humpty Dumpty is all very well, but just doesn't make up for not being able to choose your own character. It's all completely pointless and unfortunately, over much too quickly.

The Mega challenge offers a little more in terms of scope, with plenty of tournaments and challenges to take on. However, the tasks are so simple that it almost feels like you're playing an extended training mission. You will have mastered all the moves within ten minutes and, sorry Shrek, farting doesn't impress us as a special move.

The multiplayer is easily the best feature in the game, but that's not saying much. The 3D arenas add a lot to the action. They're all extremely interactive and take huge amounts of damage during the course of a battle. However, in the middle of a heated contest, it's easy to lose your sense of depth. This can make hitting some of the other characters tough, as you struggle to judge where you are in relation to them.

Apart from that shortcoming, *SuperSlam* stands up pretty well visually. All the characters and stages look top notch. If the same amount of time and effort had been applied to the gameplay as the graphics, then this one could have been a pretty serious contender.

Ultimately, *SuperSlam* is aimed at players who still get excited about sitting on Santa's lap. Older fans of the jolly green oaf don't get a look-in. It's true that *SuperSlam* doesn't take itself too seriously, but the jokes are still infantile. Anyone who has already been potty-trained should look elsewhere for their multiplayer fighting fix. Or just stick to *Smash Bros.*

Puss in Boots trashes the bar. He's always a bit lairy after too much catnip

Humpty Dumpty got whupped by a bird, Humpty Dumpty is a useless fat turd

Monster cold. Bless you!

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 8
Characters look top notch and interactive arenas are all pretty good. Solid stuff.

SOUND 7
Voices, sound effects and music are all okay. In-game banter would've been nice.

GAMEPLAY 6
Supposed to be fast and furious, but there's a lack of control. Not many moves either.

VALUE 7
Only the multiplayer is worth it, but plenty of hidden characters and costumes around.

THE VERDICT

[Jon Gordon] This is a basic but fun brawler, but with appeal limited to those with Shrek duvets and pyjamas. If that's you, then get out more.

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 69%

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**

Need for Speed Most Wanted

MOST wanted? We're struggling to come up with a game we want less!

Let's say you've got no self respect. The idea of a game that gives you RESPECT POINTS would seem like a good idea, yes? Thing is, you can't redeem them for an actual girlfriend. So EA's latest attempt at being cool and street is doomed from the start.

Literally, in fact. When you first press start, it seems like you're playing the worst racing game of the past 100 years. The cars steer like unmanned shopping trolleys on an iceberg. The streets are empty and in the absence of traffic, you wonder why they need traffic police.

Switch to first person view, and it becomes playable. Not actually fun, but playable at least. The cars you're up against are an untextured boxy mess (no, your DS is not broken) but the scenery's OK. Bland and slow to move past your eyes, but passable. Maybe we're stupid, but we like racing games that (a) are fun to drive and (b) fast. It doesn't matter that once we beat someone called Ender, we get to put his stickers on our car.

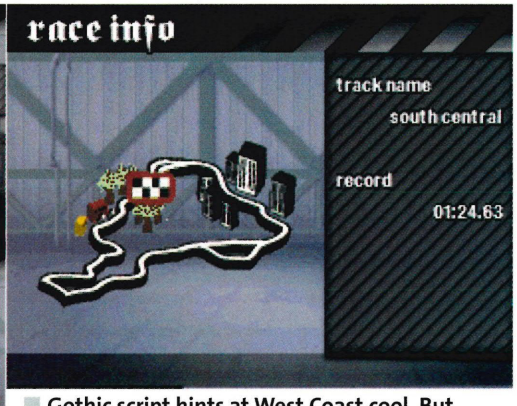
The whole point of this game is modification. Making your car look good. But when it's made of approximately no polygons, it's never going to look good. Flash racing games work well on widescreen TV with the soundtrack pumping out in surround. Without a full-on AV assault, *Most Wanted* is mostly UNwanted.

Racing games aren't fun when you have to memorise the circuit to win. Instead of being able to fall into an exciting racing game groove and use reactions and skill. Mechanically it's doing a lot of what the bigger version does, but on this format, it just doesn't seem the right thing to do.

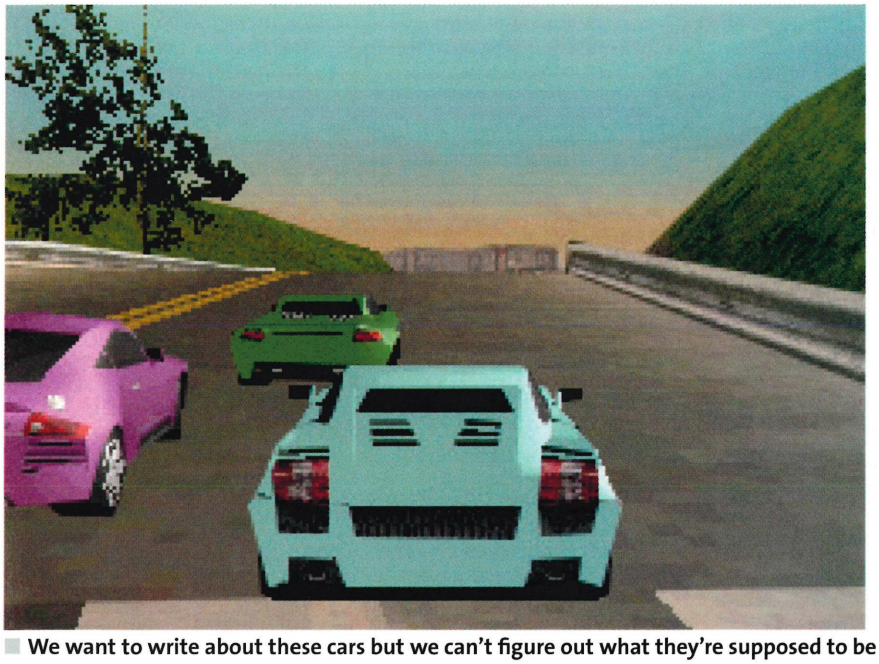
We sometimes get the impression with EA that the brand is bigger than the game. That it's more important to have a DS game box with *Most Wanted* on the front than having a good game inside. So if you're selling a name and not a game, it doesn't matter if it's not great. The adverts get people into the shops, and if the game sucks, well, that's just an unhappy accident, we're afraid.

It'll be incrementally improved for next year, though, and that's a promise!

Start by changing the badge!



Gothic script hints at West Coast cool. But sadly, it just looks a bit rubbish. And the city looks like it's made out of Lego. Really big Lego



We want to write about these cars but we can't figure out what they're supposed to be

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 6
The cars look so awful it's hilarious. Scenery is OK, but blander than plain potatoes.

SOUND 4
The skidding noises are crap. The engine sounds are weedy. Music is reasonable.

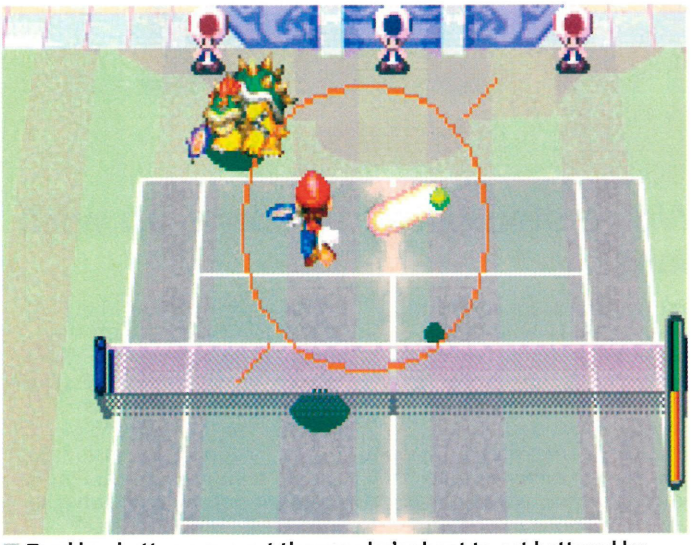
INNOVATION 1
You get to pretend you're a cool street racer AND put stickers on cars. Sorry, graphics.

VALUE 5
Learning to keep the car in a straight line is tough enough. Frustration is guaranteed.

THE VERDICT

Dean If you buy this, you'll feel as cool as if you'd stepped out in a Hi-Tec tracksuit and a pair of Fake Air Max. It makes Ridge Racer DS look awesome in comparison, which pretty much says it all.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 58%



Toad has better move out the way, he's about to get battered by Mario's patented Angry Plumber Power Shot

Twist the nails up and down to avoid getting coated in layers of mouldy candy floss, stolen from a ropey funfair in Hull

Mario Power Tennis

GAME INFO
Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-4**
Publisher: **NINTENDO**

The Power Moves should have been out but Camelot let them back in again.

It's the start of the tennis final in Nintendo Sports Land. First on the court is the Game Boy Color version of *Mario Tennis*. It's looking old and tired. One young scamp vomits at its lack of colours. But behind that old façade lurks the passion of a pro. Next on the court is *Mario Power Tennis* for GBA. The crowd love it, all the mini-games, the colours, the fun music... looking good. The court fills with cheers. But then *Power Tennis* starts running through its Power Moves and the crowd turns nasty. It's going to be tough.

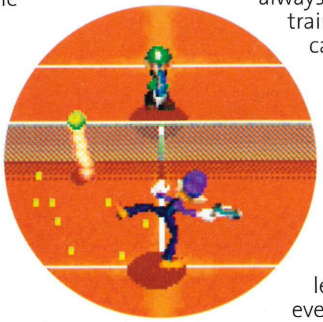
For those not in the know, Camelot's previous sports outings on Nintendo handheld were a revelation. Aeons ago, people travelled by horse and cart to queue for months outside candle-lit shops to purchase *Mario Tennis* and *Mario Golf* for their top of the range Game Boy Color. The intriguing combination of sports sim and RPG worked well together, like gin and tonic. People rejoiced and the king was happy.

Since then, *Golf* has already been updated for GBA and now it's the turn of *Tennis*. It starts off pretty much the same as *Mario Golf: Advance Tour*. As a rookie tennis player, you decide to attend the best club in the universe to hone your skills. While getting better, you climb through the ranks and eventually take on the top dog - Mario. Unfortunately, unlike *Advance Tour*, there isn't a particularly large area to explore and you'll see the whole of the tennis club pretty easily. But, in its defence, the club does look lovely and bright, like Camelot turned all the colours up to 10 and didn't care what anyone said.

I'm hungry, so shut up...

... I'll have the Koopa soup, chef

Note to all boys out there. If this was a female asking, your automatic answer should be: "No of course you don't, my love"



The actual tennis is identical to its GameCube brother but perhaps a little slower. Although you only use Ⓐ and Ⓑ to pull off your shots, the depth of moves available is good. There are slices, lobs, volleys, smashes, serves, backhands... everything you could possibly wish for. It plays beautifully and against the tougher opponents, you really have to have your wits about you to win. Don't be fooled by the small packaging, this is an in-depth tennis game.

This is almost certainly proved by the levelling-up aspect of the game. Before each match, it's always best to hit the training courts. You can perfect your serve, volleys or net techniques. It's vital to do this, so you can level your character up. Unlike *Advance Tour*, in which you basically levelled-up everything.

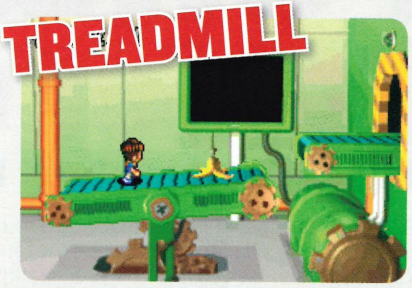
Here you have to think about what kind of player you want to be. If you want to be a tricky spinner, avoid the power and go for the spin. Or if you prefer control, perhaps consider using points on your technique and speed. There are also secondary stats, like serve,

Train spotting

Like an anoraked assistant, we show you the best.

By now, we've already established that Power Moves are stupider than a brain-damaged dinosaur who thinks it will be cool to clean his teeth with red-hot lava. But training for those silly moves is actually a lot of fun. Hooray. Suddenly the game changes from a tennis sim into some kind of *Mario Party* game that's a damn sight better than the terrible *Mario Party Advance*. Rejoice and praise Camelot for these. And when you get to the front door, tell them that Mario said it'd be OK to come and that you've brought some beer, so it's all OK.

TREADMILL



Dash along the evil escalator while avoiding bananas and barrels. Each time you jump, it makes the classic Mario "boing" sound. Nice.

DUCK WALK

Waddle along like a tennis-playing duck to dodge the electrical pads. Press either left or right but you'll need ninja-like reactions.

BICEP PUMP

Forget weights, they're for losers. Instead, try to pop as many balloons as possible with this spiky, and potentially lethal, contraption.

volley and topspin you can increase as well. At first it may seem daunting but once you know just how you like to play, it really shouldn't be a problem.

The club features a cool tennis lab you can visit when you want to get some more points. The challenges here remind us of the mini-games from the 'Cube *Power Tennis*. One sees you hitting balls against a wall, with the balls getting progressively faster and faster as you play. Whereas the other is a frantic stand-off against a robot tennis machine. A ROBOT TENNIS MACHINE. They're nice additions to the main game and are a good break from the standard court action.

But there's a darker side to the levelling-up. The Power Moves. These ridiculous things spoiled the GameCube version and rear their head here. At first they're nowhere in sight. When you open the special gym, it's a different matter. Suddenly a whole can of Power Move whupping is released on your ass. It's a

These two are sharing a moment before having some doubles action of their own

DK forces girls to play him so he can prove how tough he is. How embarrassing

shame because the actual way of training for them (see panel) is actually quite fun. But during games they still interrupt play and generally seem a bit unnecessary. At least the action doesn't stop quite as much in this version as it did on the 'Cube. But still, when you're playing doubles, it can all get a bit ridiculous.

Thankfully though, the Power Moves aren't as in your face as they were before. If you stick to the training and the mini-games, you can pretty much ignore them. Plus if you're playing a Quick Match you can just switch them off entirely. The daft gimmick courts are missing as well, although that does mean it doesn't quite feel like a Mario game.

There's nothing in the majority of play, apart from the odd sound-effect, and a few characters, to suggest you're playing a *Mario* tennis-sim at all. But if you're looking for a fun and lasting portable tennis game, then that really shouldn't put you off anyway.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 8

It's *Golden Sun Power Tennis*. The club looks much brighter and nicer than normal stuffy clubs. But it could be a bit more Mario-ised.

SOUND 8

A lot like the 'Cube version but more like... well, *Golden Sun* actually. There are also some sweet old skool Mario SFX in there.

GAMEPLAY 8

At it's best it's fun and frantic. The controls never let you down as you lob skilfully. But then a Power Move spoils everything.

VALUE 9

A four player multiplayer for GBA owners if you're still into that. Plus some enjoyable tennis based mini-games to tempt you.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

- EVEN WITH ONLY TWO BUTTONS, IT'S STILL GOT PLENTY OF DEPTH.
- LEVELLING-UP IS GOD'S WAY OF REWARDING YOU FOR BEING NICE.
- FUN MINI-GAMES HELP TO ADD THE CRUCIAL MARIO ELEMENTS.
- A LENGTHY AND TOUGH MAIN TOURNAMENT PROVIDES CHALLENGE.
- NO SILLY GIMMICK COURTS, WHICH WERE SILLY. THANK YOU, GAME GOD.
- STUPID POWER MOVES WHICH ARE STILL STUPID. THANK YOU, GAME GOD.

THE VERDICT

The action's turned to maximum and it's better than on 'Cube. Even the Power Moves are less intrusive and you don't feel too sickened by them. Rob Burman

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 84%

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

GAME INFO
Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **EA**

Welcome to Ollivander's Magical Stylus shop. How can we help?

So far, your stylus has carried out a variety of roles; a magical paintbrush for Kirby, a cloud-maker for Yoshi and a comb for your Nintendog. It was pretty magical already but now EA has turned it into a WAND.

That's right. Although this is basically a repackaged GBA game, there are some fancy 3D bits that use the touch screen. Wooooooooo. When you attack one of the ridiculously-named creatures, like the Snorgbuggler or Bumwrangler, it'll randomly go all 3D. Your sprite-based eyes will pop out your head when you see the blocky polygons lurch onto the screen. Then you have to touch the screen to cast spells. It's not hard and it's slightly pointless. But kudos for trying.

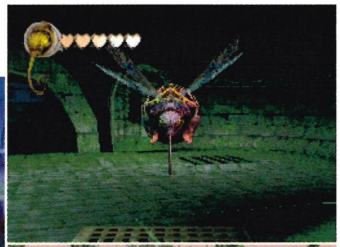
Actually the majority of the game suffers from not being very hard. It holds your magical hands all the way through and, although it's for young fans, it would have been nice to let them use their brains. There are also some mini-games that would insult a badger. They involve the touch screen in such a rudimentary way, it's like the mini-games in *Super Mario 64 DS* never existed.

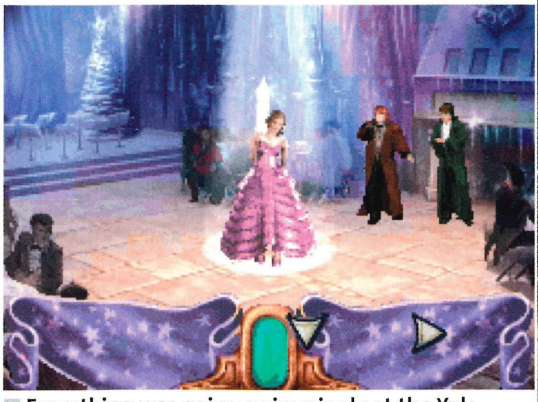
In fact, the actual adventure suffers from just being a bit boring and repetitive. The levels seem too large and go on far too long. That wouldn't be so bad if you were doing exciting things. But you're not. You're wandering around, casting the same spells and killing the same monsters you've been fighting all along. It lacks the magical spectacle of the 'Cube version. Plus the co-op element with Ron and Hermione is just irritating because they get in the way when you're casting spells.

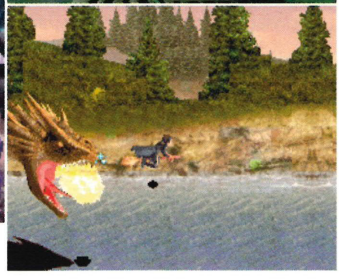
Generally it suffers from being too much like a GBA game with the odd 3D bit. But EA has clearly seen how popular *Nintendogs* has been and has tried to copy that with a Care of Magical Creatures side game. Unfortunately a Niffler just isn't as much fun as a Labrador.

Our three heroes use their magic to clean up after a horrendous toilet disaster

Giant wasp-thing stops to tank up on a blend of diesel, nail varnish and Red Bull. Coming through!







Everything was going swimmingly at the Yule Ball, until Hermione got nicked by aliens

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 6
It looks like a GBA game mostly. The 3D is a nice break but the characters look pretty awful.

SOUND 6
Hardly any music in the main game but when it does kick in, it's suitably magical.

INNOVATION 5
Touch screen spell casting is fun at first but it, and the game, don't get any harder.

VALUE 8
Lots of magic cards and stuff to collect for fans. You also use new tricks on old levels.

THE VERDICT

Rob If you already know what a Blast Ended Screwt is, it's likely you're playing this right now. But those not trained in the ways of the Dark Arts should stay well clear.

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **60%**

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **THQ**

Zoo Tycoon DS

The animals went in two by two, hoorah, hoorah, the animals went in... oh, you know how it goes.

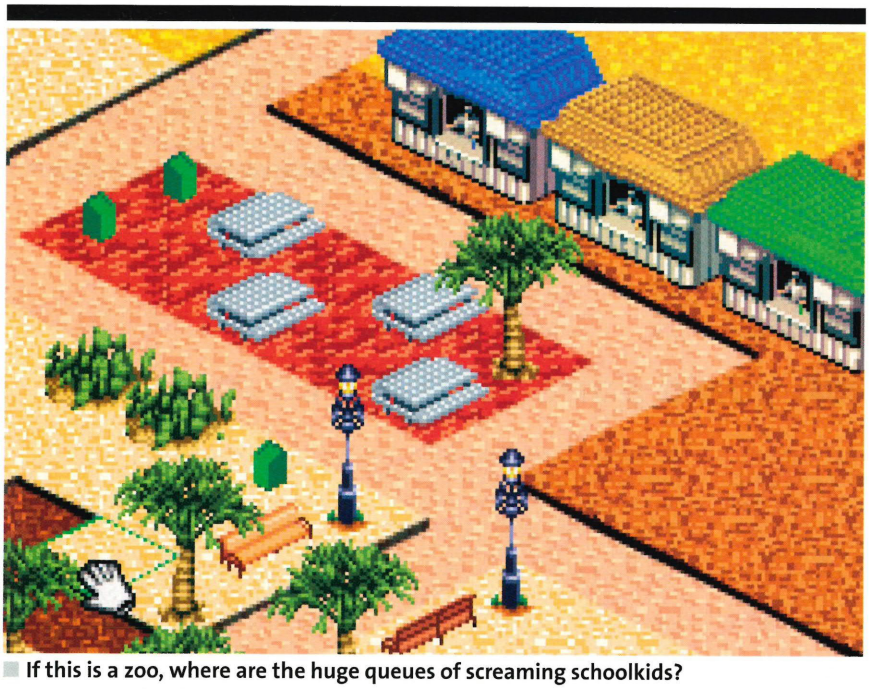
Why's it so bloody hard to run a zoo? Why doesn't the tiger want to live in an aquatic exhibit? Tigers are awesome swimmers. What's wrong with putting a monkey in a cage full of snow? They're monkeys, surely they'd like to muck about with snowballs? God, the RSPCA is going to have a field day with us when this issue comes out.

This is a tricky one, because underneath the dreadful presentation, bad graphics and tricky interface, there lurks a predatory beast skilled in the art of strategy. It's just that it's an elusive animal which lives deep within computer code forests. You want to find it but after a while, you lose interest when the more common lesser spotted *Mario Kart* comes along and distracts your attention with its call; 'Vrrooom vroom.'

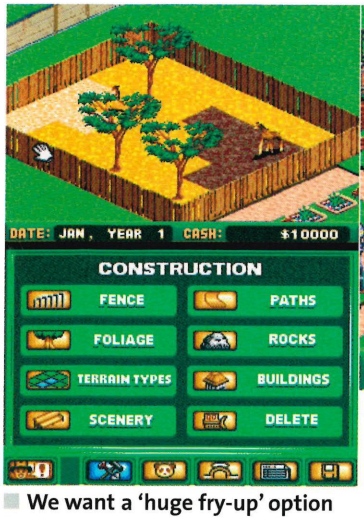
It's been quite a while since we've seen a game like this on a Nintendo console. The most commonly known are probably *Theme Park* and *Sim City*. It's a management sim, which sees you balancing the tricky skills of attracting punters, caring for rare breeds and making sure the staff don't get stroppy about their poor pay. Managing a zoo is a job for a politician, not someone with a DS.

You either choose to build a zoo from scratch or complete one of the scenario modes, where you must earn a certain amount of cash or care for a number of animals. Whichever mode you play, you'll probably have problems building your cages, while most of the animals just look like brown blobs. It's a shame because part of the charm of a game about animals should have been the creatures. But the blocky graphics do nothing for the title. You don't really care about getting some chimps because they look pretty much the same as the badgers or whatever those moving black shapes are.

Generally, it's a struggle to reach the fun part of the game. Trying to make a decent environment for your new animals is often confusing and they'll be unhappy for no apparent reason. Simple things, like planting two trees instead of one, can cause major problems. But if you can overcome the obvious interface problems, there's a fairly interesting strategy game waiting for you. But WHERE are the WEASELS? What's a zoo game without weasels?



If this is a zoo, where are the huge queues of screaming schoolkids?



We want a 'huge fry-up' option

If we had nearly 75 grand in our sky-rocket in January, we wouldn't be messing about with zoos

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 4
It's almost impossible to ID the animals. We could be playing *Sea Monkey Zoo Tycoon*.

SOUND 4
Non-existent. Animals occasionally scream when you select them but that's about it.

INNOVATION 1
Using the touch screen is a chore. It would be better to leave the controls on the D-Pad.

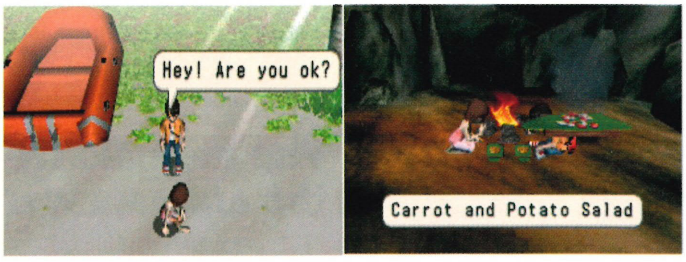
VALUE 6
If you like zoos, there's lots... secret animals, endangered species, getting sponsorship.

THE VERDICT

Rob Zoos are great fun, particularly the otters. There are no otters here. There may be gibbons but the awkward interface and bamboozling exhibit making process put us off. Zoologists may like it though.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 55%

Good job that info's there. We were looking for the 'Drown' option



"I'll have the Filet Mignons with vegetables en papillote, please"

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **KONAMI**

Lost in Blue

You'll wish you'd gone to Majorca instead.

Most games are about not dying. But it's usually aliens that kill you, not the fact that you couldn't find enough coconuts. That's the unique gameplay proposition offered by *Lost In Blue*: the only thing that's going to kill you is starvation. Or perhaps boredom.

You're washed up on a desert island after a shipwreck. Unfortunately, nobody's sat around, drinking Lilt and having a wicked time. You're there on your own, with no food and wet clothes. Worse, your name is Keith. Worse still, your Nintendo DS is still lost at sea somewhere. That's the start of the game. There's no tutorial, you just have to get by on instinct.

You find some coconuts lying around. You find a cave to sleep in. So far so good. Then you make your first mistake: you find another survivor. Her name is Skye, and she ruins your life. A life that, without her, would have just involved scrabbling around for nuts and berries to stay alive. So, a crap life. She manages to ruin the crappest life imaginable.

She's as good as blind. So you have to drag her by the hand if you want her to go anywhere. Her role in the game is to sit on her arse in the cave, while you try to keep BOTH OF YOU alive. So that means finding twice as much food. This is literally a game where you wake up, slowly plod around looking for carrots and stuff, then plod home at night to eat and go to sleep.

This makes for a bizarrely slow-paced RPG, where almost nothing happens. You have a bizarre telepathic link with her, and constantly worry about her being hungry, thirsty or tired. She's human, so is comprised of many millions of cells. But none of them are brain cells. She'll never look for her own carrots, no matter how starving she gets.

"Back so soon?" the brainless cow asks after I walk back into the cave moments after leaving. "Did you forget something? Hehehe." Haha, Skye! Yes, I'M the stupid one. That's why YOU'D DIE OF THIRST if I didn't lead you by the hand to a river that's ten seconds walk away for a drink.

Lost In Blue takes advantage of the DS' unique features better than most games. You 'dig' with the stylus to uproot a potato, and blow on embers to develop them into a raging fire. You hunt fish with a spear by jabbing with the stylus, and rub the screen to search for herbs among the grass.

The problem is the pacing. Before you're in a position to kill big animals for food, your days are filled with the monotony of subsistence. Skye does her best to make a meal out of some dodgy mushrooms, seaweed and a coconut. But the small amounts of health you regenerate mean you're slow to expand your knowledge of the island's geography for fear of dropping down dead of exhaustion.

It's too realistic in this sense. When sharpening a stick to make a spear becomes an air-punching triumph, you know you're being as starved of fun as Keith is of KFC. It's not DINOSAUR ISLAND or ZOMBIE ISLAND, it's BORING ISLAND. As the game advances, you get to hunt deer with a bow. The fur makes for a nicer bed, which means you'll sleep better and recover more health. That's the sort of reward this game is all about as you struggle to find a way off the island and back to the civilised world.

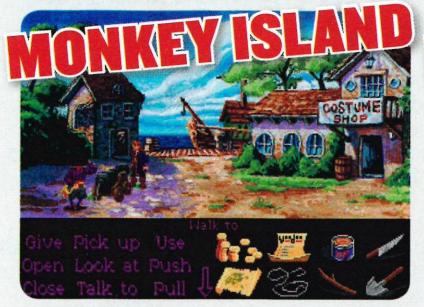
It takes far too long for the game to stop being about boring

Make fire by rubbing two boy scouts together

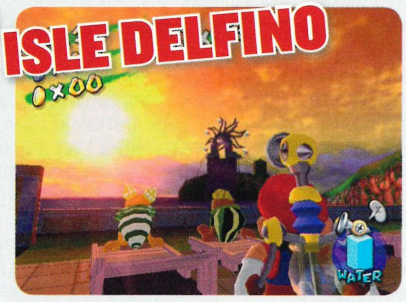
Isle love you

How videogame islands are supposed to be.

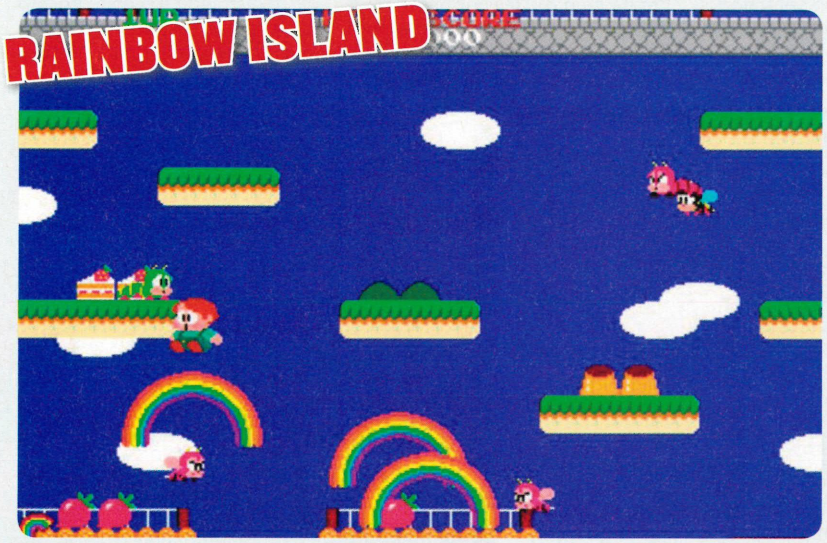
It's not finding coconuts and hoping a skinny girl doesn't die of thirst in the world of videogame islands. Hell no! These aren't necessarily the best: just the first three we thought of. But see how they illustrate the point:



Full of pirates, treasure and Grog. Drink Grog to solve a puzzle, not stay alive



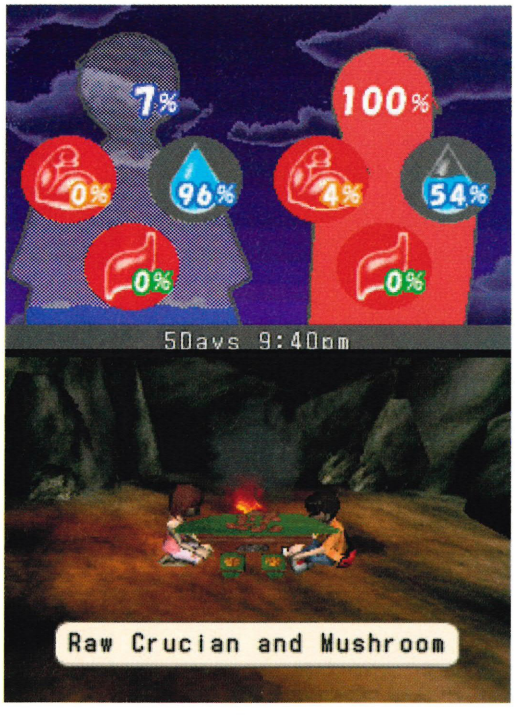
Ninty made 43 new colours for Costa Del Mario. Grab coconuts for a laugh



Giant spiders, vampires, bats, caterpillars, tanks and trucks. Hunt with RAINBOWS!

things, and start being about actual gamey things, like puzzle solving. Weapons level-up when you find the materials to build new ones by getting to further flung corners of the island, and the hunting is good fun. Fishing with a spear is marginally less fun than buying dead ones from Tescos, so we probably won't be trying that in real life.

With the TV show *Lost* speeding towards its non-conclusion, interest in being stranded on a desert island has never been higher. If you can handle hours of game-overs while you work out your bearings ready for the next attempt, you might find this downbeat little adventure is for you. It's satisfying in unconventional ways, even with its comatose pace. It's not going to thrill anyone who knows the definition of action, and it doesn't do a lot for women's lib. Unless chilling in a cave waiting to be fed is the ultimate expression of girl power.



Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 6

There's a limit to how interesting sand, trees and water can look without rainbows, pirates, vampires, dinosaurs and zombies.

SOUND 4

Desert islands are quiet. Luckily the protagonists are too, as hearing "She's getting hungry" is constantly boring.

INNOVATION 7

Lets you stylus-dig in soil as often as you like. But, unlike *Zelda*, doesn't record where you've dug. Supports stabbing and blowing.

VALUE 7

You'll survive a few days longer each time you play, and it's a tough challenge to get off the island. It's original too.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

- IT'S TRYING TO DO SOMETHING NEW, WHICH IS ALWAYS COMMENDABLE.
- EVENTUALLY HEATS UP INTO QUITE AN INTERESTING LITTLE ADVENTURE GAME.
- PAINFULLY SLOW TO START. YOU MAY DIE OF BOREDOM BEFORE STARVATION.
- THE GIRL IS SO LAZY AND ANNOYING, IT MIGHT REALIGN YOUR SEXUALITY.
- YOU SOON START TO WISH YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DIG UP EVERY CARROT.
- WE ENJOYED THE CUTE GAME BOY *STRANDED KIDS* GAMES FAR MORE.

THE VERDICT

Dean Serene and unusual, but to the point where the fun becomes hard to find. Making progress is rewarding, but there's too much tedious repetition. We're never going on a boat again, just in case...

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **67%**

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **BUENA VISTA GAMES**

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe

Has it got the bite of Aslan or is the gameplay as cold-hearted as the White Witch?

Once upon a time, there stood a game of a movie taken from a classic children's book. The game told of four children who stumble across the wintry land of Narnia on the other side of a wardrobe. It had been under the icy spell of the White Witch for 100 years and it was the children's destiny to find Aslan, the banished king of Narnia, and overthrow the Witch. The end.

If only it was the end. We aren't going to bang on about movie tie-ins being crap. Most are. This isn't *Charlie & The Chocolate Factory* (rubbish), but *TLTWATW* is so basic and monotonous that we want to let the White Witch carry on her reign of terror.

The four of you (you can swap on the hoof) run around beating up all manner of creatures, from polar bears to goblins. When killed, they leave behind ice shards (some strange currency in these parts) or food to top up your health. And that's HOURS of gameplay.

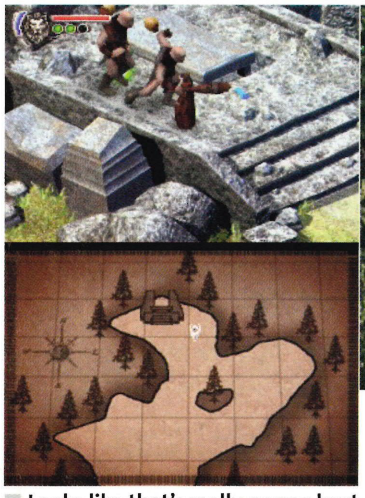
You'd think a sword to the head of an axe-wielding dwarf would kill him instantly. Well, not in Narnia. THREE swipes and then a finishing flourish is what you need for most creatures. The collision detection is so awful too that you think you've cracked it but end up on the receiving end, collapse and die.

There is an element of strategy in the form of topping up your experience and deciding your battle strategies - yet it's too fiddly when there's an army standing around needing a sword in the gut. The last thing you want to be doing is deciding if Edmund should attack the weakest character.

Interestingly, you'll need to keep warm by finding a cave or be faced with slower characters, which isn't great when you're confronted by a pack of hungry child-eating wolves. The only problem is caves are few and far between, so make sure you know where the nearest one is before heading out on the prowl.

Being on the DS, you'd expect some of the machine's functions to be put to good use. However, it's touch screen conversations and drawing spells. So it's not going to bowl you over as you talk to horses, Gimli lookalikes and badgers with the stylus.

We haven't seen the film yet, but if it's as boring as the game, we're dumping the popcorn and walking out. Just don't be a fool and let this game cast a century-long shadow over your DS.



Looks like that's really gonna hurt

Just when you think it's all starting to go right, you find yourself at the edge of a bottomless gorge and no way across. Bugger

Narnia goes all *Booze Britain* on us. *The Pint, The Short and The Street-Brawl*

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 6
It's hard to make snow and ice interesting and dungeons lack any imagination.

SOUND 5
Shut your eyes and it sounds like Woolies at Xmas. Suitable, but not ear-catching.

INNOVATION 1
Action happens on the top screen. Use the stylus for talking and tactics. Wow.

VALUE 5
This gets frustrating within a few hours. Annoyance will get the better of you.

THE VERDICT

Tim Sorry Aslan. As much as we want to save your world from all that snow and ice, the awful controls and hours of boring tasks make us want to leave and never set foot in Narnia again.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **57%**

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **EA**

The Sims 2

It's like Fawlty Towers but with aliens instead of a Spaniard. Did they learn it from a book?

Finally, the DS has got a *Sims* game worthy of it. This is nothing like any other version of the game though. The play is similar, but this is not the usual housewife simulator. Instead of just handling a house, you've got to run a whole hotel!

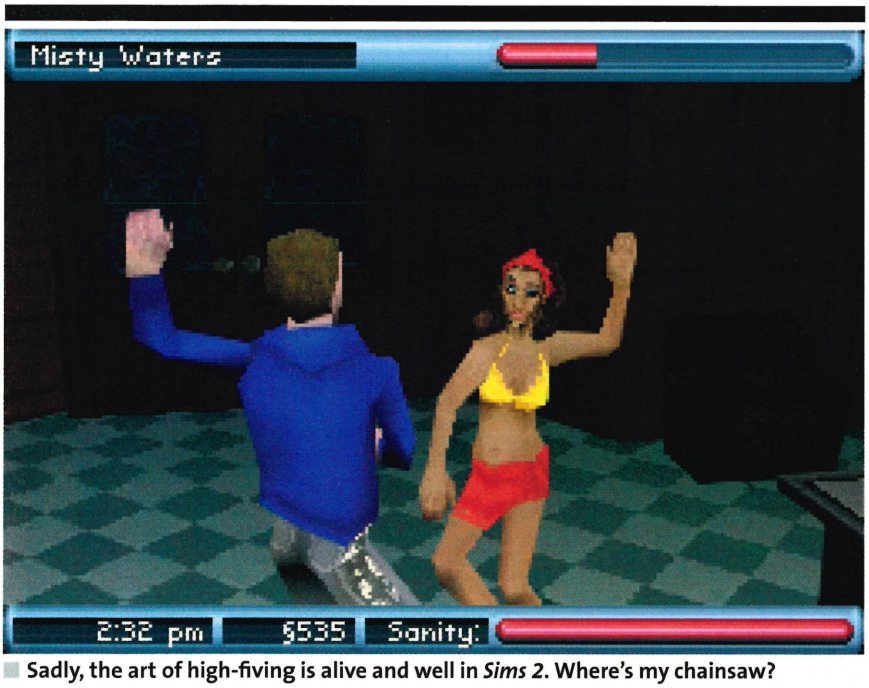
The most important feature of this game, which makes it different from other versions, is the in-game clock. *Sims 2* is actually played in real time, according to your DS's clock and you'll get different missions and meet different characters, depending on the time of day. And don't you dare even think about cheating by changing your clock, because the game will be wise to you. There's always a surprise around the corner.

The game is more plot-driven with various guests giving you errands to complete, sometimes with a time limit. Once the story's over, there's still plenty to be getting on with. Fight crime as the Ratticator, chase down alien scum, paint a pretty picture, do a little dance, make a little love or get down tonight. You can also trade paintings with your mates using your wireless connection.

Sims 2 is tailor-made for the DS and uses just about every trick it has to offer. Your main port of call is the touch screen, which handles everything from controlling your guests' mood swings to picking items out of your vacuum cleaner. This also uses the DS microphone. You may look a fool blowing at your DS but you have to, if you want to clear the air filter.

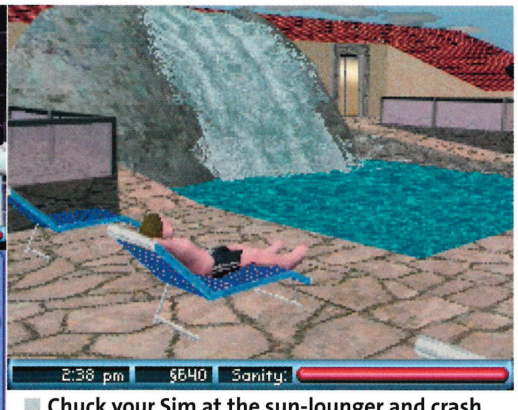
The only shortcoming of *Sims 2* is that it doesn't give you anywhere near the freedom that other versions do. You can still decorate your rooms but you don't build them. If you've played it through once, there's not much point in starting again. Not to worry, there are still plenty of secrets to unlock, seven mini-games to occupy you and it's still as funny as ever.

So whether you fancy yourself as the next Picasso, Jamie Cullum or Richard Branson, *Sims 2* has something for you. Just don't ask us to translate what they're saying because we haven't got the foggiest. Now, if you'll excuse us, Misty Waters is demanding room service.



Sadly, the art of high-fiving is alive and well in *Sims 2*. Where's my chainsaw?

Just going for a quick interaction



Chuck your Sim at the sun-lounger and crash out for eight hours. Real-time gaming rocks!

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 8
The 3D graphics look good most of the time. You can get some slow-down though.

SOUND 7
Sim-talk can get repetitive but it's catchy. You'll be saying 'huggy bugyar' for weeks.

INNOVATION 8
If you're a *Sims* fan you'll get along just fine. There's not much here for newbies though.

VALUE 8
Hours of play to be enjoyed and plenty of diversions to keep you going for weeks.

THE VERDICT

Jon: We all like to play God sometimes, and this DS version is a refreshing change from the typical formula. It's got a cool plot and a great level of interaction, and is well worth saving up your Simoleans for.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT 81%

If you get these for

The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **THQ**

Okay, so we could start by saying that this game is barely credible rather than incredible. In fact we will... this game is barely credible, rather than incredible. It's a dumbed-down idiot of a title that would drool all over your new carpet.

Put simply, you have to walk from left to right, fighting things and opening doors. That may not sound too bad, particularly if you consider the excellent *Dragon Ball Advance Adventure*, which had a similar idea. The main difference with that however, was *DB* was great fun. *Rise of the Underminer* is more like being punched in the face by Mr. Incredible.

The pace is painfully slow. It's too easy and tells you the answers to just about everything you think about. The only interesting aspect is that you can swap between Mr. Incredible and Frozone on the fly. And Frozone can build cool ice bridges, like Ice-Man from the X-Men.

For silly brothers or sisters who know nothing, *Rise of the Underminer* will seem like manna from heaven. But they're idiots and deserve to be punished.

Nintendo Official Magazine Judgement **40%**

Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects

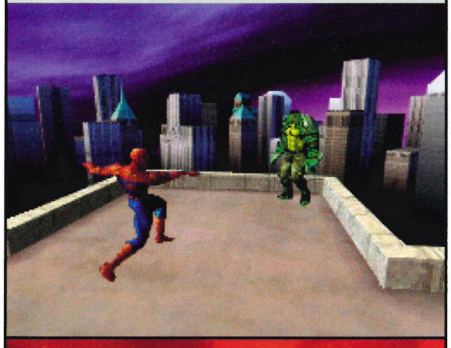
Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **EA**

Marvel has put its name to some rubbish over the years, but this game takes the mutated biscuit. Quite frankly, it's insulting that it's bothered to release such a half-hearted effort. The presence of all your favourite web-slingers and flame-throwers really doesn't improve the experience at all.

This game fails on so many levels that it's hard to find space for them all. The action, if you can call it that, is slow and repetitive. Each character has only a handful of moves, but all that's required for each battle is to mash the punch button repeatedly until the fight is over.

The fixed camera on your character makes you waste half a fight looking for your opponent, and they aren't too smart either. They can often be found beating up a wall instead of you.

Most annoying of all is that it uses one of the most pointless applications of the touch screen to date. You tap out special moves, fly and activate Spidey's web. Even hardcore comic fans are going to find it hard to enjoy any of this.



Nintendo Official Magazine Judgement **21%**

Driv3r

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **ATARI**

***Driv3r* is going to give you a headache. Not one of those ones you get after eating too much ice cream, but one that hits you on a hot day and hammers away at your brain like a psychotic builder.**

It gets some credit for trying to create a 3D city on the GBA, but loses marks for just about everything else. The vehicles don't offer any variety, for example, even though there are 25 of them.

Bouncing off everything isn't very appealing either. Cars don't sustain damage unless the mission demands it and there's no difference between driving on the road and grass. The out-of-car controls are poor and annoying when they hamper efforts to take down gangsters.

Starsky & Hutch this is not. For a game based on a lead character being a demon behind the wheel, there's no skill required. The cities are big enough for exploration, but apart from Undercover missions and the odd side quest, there's little to do.

And the headache? Well those 3D environments warp all over the place and turn your eyeballs inside-out.

Nintendo Official Magazine Judgement **32%**

Xmas, don't blame us

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **EA**

There's nothing wrong with tie-in games. Really, there isn't. As long as they try to do something more than just make cash off the back of a blockbuster.

Unfortunately, the GBA offering doesn't bring anything new to the table. *Goblet of Fire* is solid enough, but it's really just a game by numbers. All the boxes are ticked. Want some spells, no problem. Want some monsters, sure thing. Want to have a fulfilling gaming experience, err... come back later.

Being able to pick between Harry, Ron and Hermione doesn't add anything to the game as they all play the same. None have any speciality spells and the difference in their abilities is difficult to notice. They stay together for most of the levels and occasionally combine powers to move objects, but that's it.

Possibly the biggest misfire is the Yule Ball dancing level. It's as boring as a history lesson. At least they could have made the moves in time with the music! Hardcore fans will get some enjoyment but there's nothing new for anyone else.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **65%**

Spyro: Shadow Legacy

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **VIVENDI**

After a long history on the Game Boy, the purple pyromaniac has decided to take his first baby steps into the world of the DS. But not happy to just sit on his talons and carry on as before, he's also chosen to try his hand at an RPG.

People are vanishing from the Dragon Realms and being taken to the Shadow Realm. No prizes for guessing you're the only one who can save them. Using the Shadowstone, you jump between realms saving elders and villagers. With each battle, you collect experience points to exchange for new techniques.

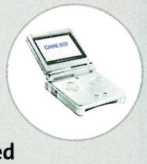
That's all very well, but *Shadow Legacy* isn't the most complex or addictive of RPGs. You need to be careful when buying your upgrades, 'cos you could find yourself stuck with nowhere to go.

There's very little challenge for experienced role-players and not a great deal of originality either. Other games have already explored the idea of alternate worlds much better and casting spells with the touch screen simply isn't as cool as it sounds.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **57%**

V-Rally 3 & Stuntman: Double Pack

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£19.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **ATARI**



Nothing has changed since these two were first out. *V-Rally 3* still rocks as one of the GBA's finest driving sims and *Stuntman* just crashes and burns on take-off.

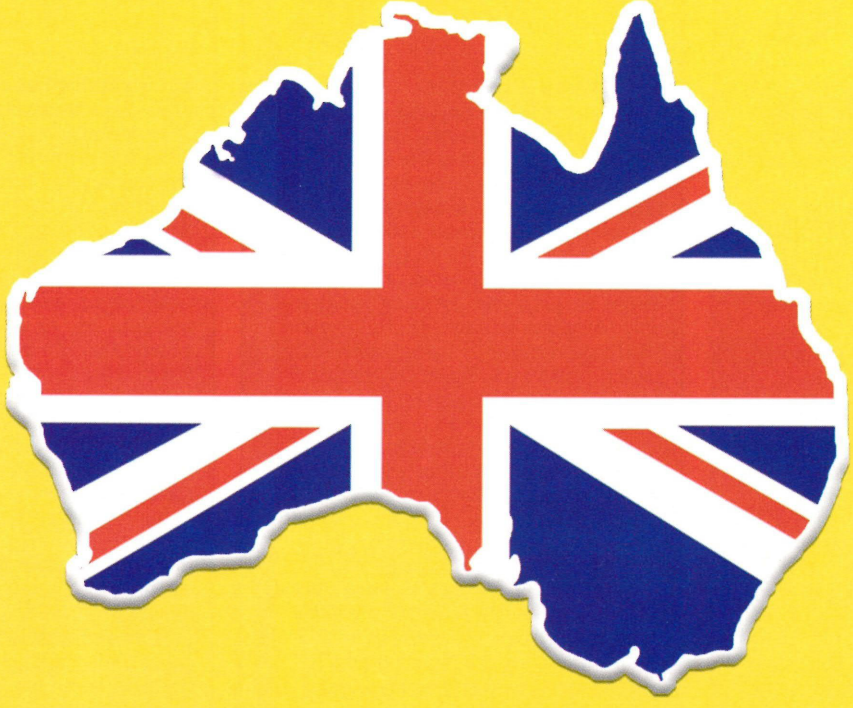
V-Rally 3 looks sharp and plays brilliantly. The handling is excellent and requires some skill to control at top speed. The V-Rally and V-RallyCross modes offer plenty of challenges that test your driving and your tune-up knowledge. Thanks to this, any glitches in the backgrounds can be forgiven. Just try not to bump anyone 'cos you'll fall quickly out of position and it's almost impossible to get back.

Stuntman doesn't have anything like the excitement or speed. Accuracy is the name of the game, with ever-increasing demands from the director to hit your mark on time. Not that you're going to be too bothered when you realise the cars handle like milk floats.

Stuntman really drags this bundle down, while *V-Rally 3* is still worth checking out if you don't already own it. It's still a champ in our books.

Nintendo OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT **69%**

IF YOU LIKE THRASHING AUSSIES



YOU WILL LIKE

MARIOKART DS

Why is Mario Kart DS even more super than the legendary Super Mario Kart? Not because you get fired through cannons. Not because it has the most frantic finishes in history. But because it is Wi-Fi. Beat up to 3 Aussies, or any other earthlings, by just flicking a switch. Link up to Wi-Fi through your broadband connection or at our special hotspots in a town near you. Not only is Nintendo Wi-Fi dead simple, it's free. Happy thrashing!

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NINTENDO DS™

open up and play

Welcome to my world. This is where you can get involved, by checking out the cheats and scores, enter competitions and read your letters.

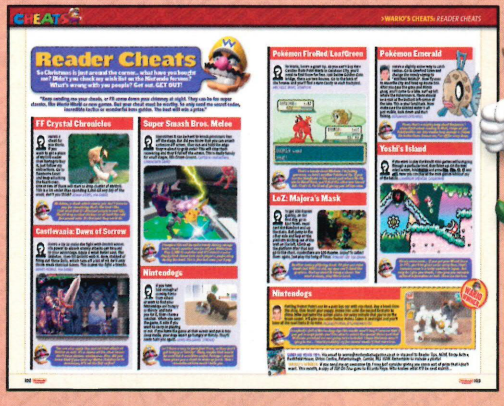
>> TOAD'S TIPS LAB >> P.94

Painting with light; This month, *Kirby Power Paintbrush*

>> WARIO'S CHEATS >> P.100

Hah, my cheats rock. All hail to the power of Wario.

>> WARIO'S READER CHEATS >> P.102



Your cheats rock too. But not as much as mine.

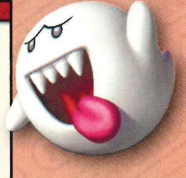
>> PEACH & BOWSER'S ROYAL MAIL >> P.104

What's on your minds this month. It's all here.

>> CHAIN CHOMP'S CHALLENGES >> P.108

Three more challenges for you to attack this month. Who'll be the champ?

>> BOO'S BRAINERS >> P.110



More tests generated by my computer-like brain. You have no chance.

Toad's Tips Lab

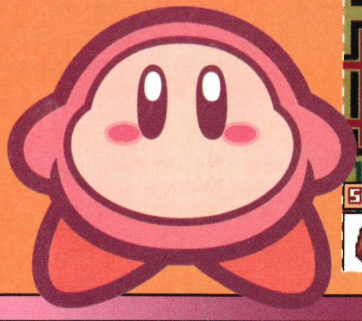
THIS MONTH: Kirby Power Paintbrush

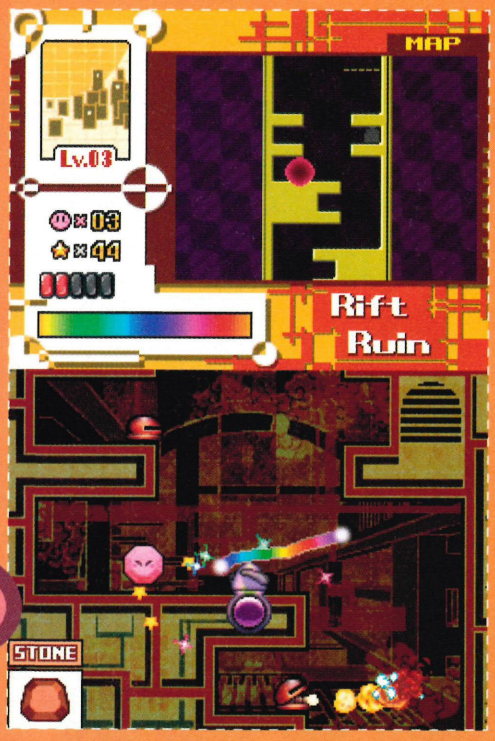
Find the secret switches and collect all the medals in the main game.

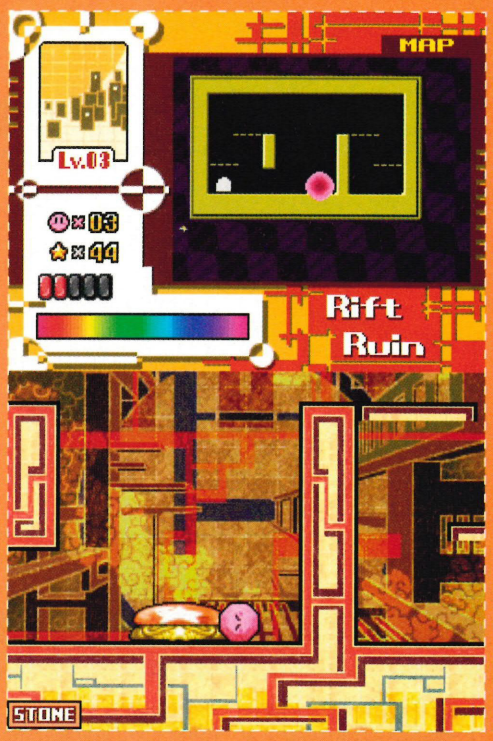
ORANGE SWITCH:

Location: 3-1 (Rift Ruin)

In the fourth section, you'll reach a number of fans. After getting to the third one past the checkpoint, you'll notice a Rocky enemy above you. Kill the enemy and absorb the Stone ability. Look to your right and you should spot a door-shaped area. Make your way up to it, avoiding the flames. Once inside the new room, pound the stake and hit the orange switch.



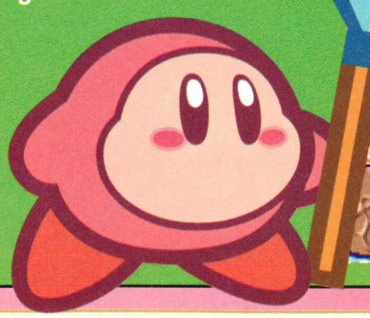


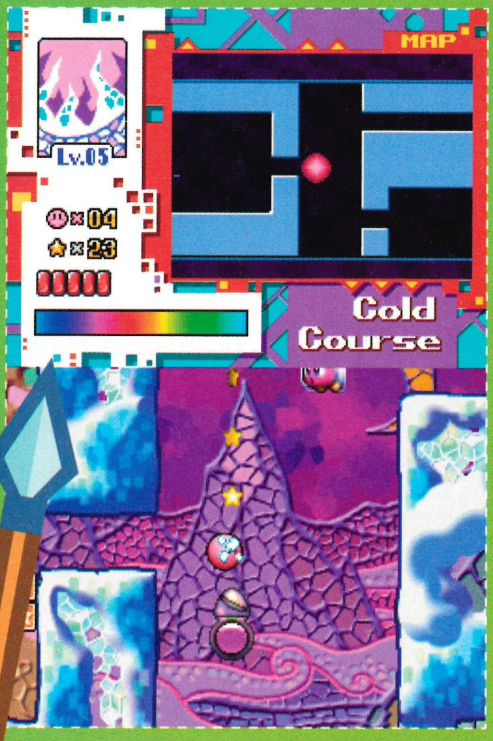


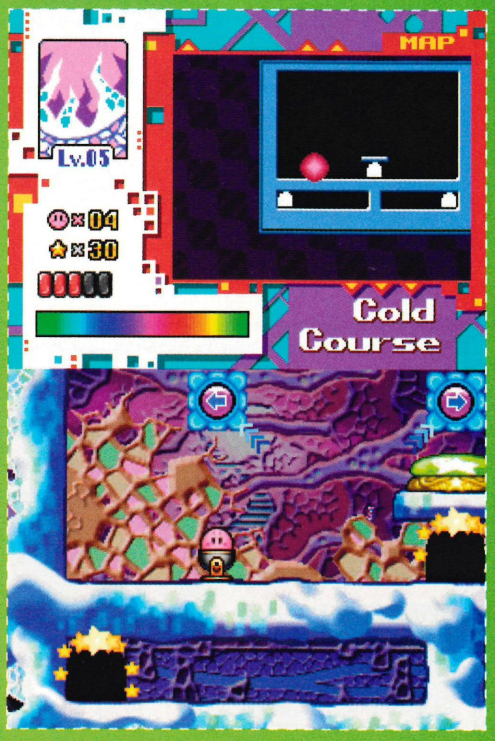
GREEN SWITCH:

Location: 5-1 (Cold Course)

In the second area after the checkpoint, look out for a fan over a pit. Instead of activating the fan, head downwards and you'll see a breakable ice wall on your right. Break it and proceed forwards. Once in the room with the switch, tap the blocks so that Kirby can launch out of the cannon and into the one that allows you to choose the direction you're fired in. Fire towards the bottom left to hit the green switch.

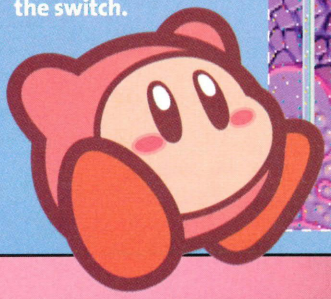


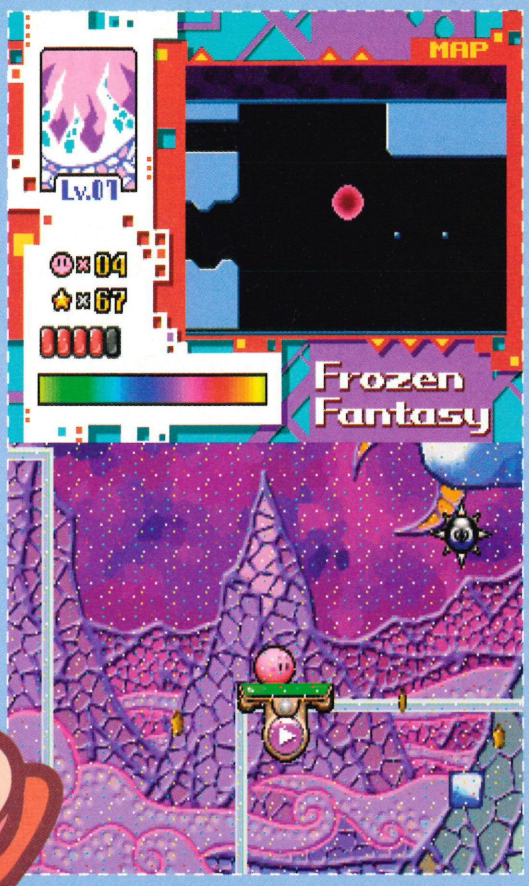


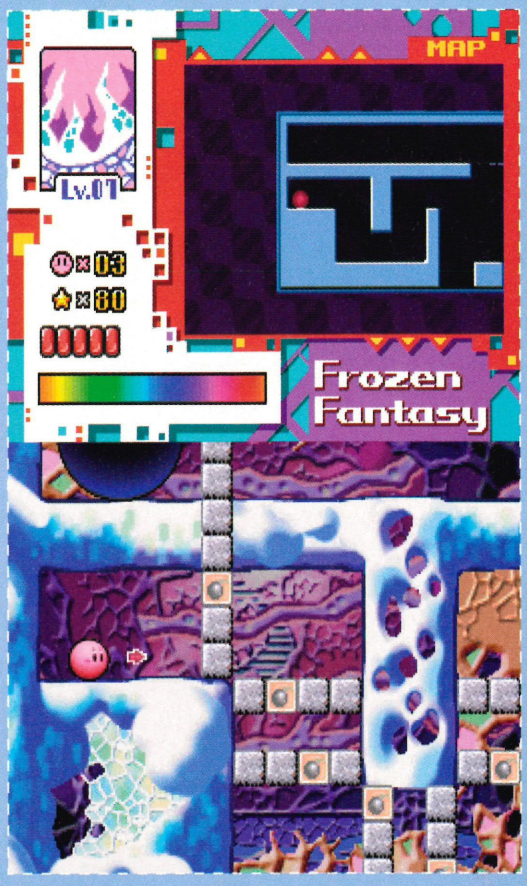


BLUE SWITCH:
Location: 7-1 (Frozen Fantasy)

In the second area, you'll have to ride some platforms through a static field. On the first platform, stop near the line of stars heading right. When you're lined up with them, tap Kirby to leap off the platform. If you don't hit the enemies, you'll land on another moving platform, which you need to ride to a new door. Now you have to break all the bomb blocks and move forward before the giant ball above you reaches the end of the course. Now hit the switch.







REDDY LAND

STAGE 1-1 (PLANT PLAIN)

MEDAL ONE
This one eases you in gently. The medal will be right in front of you, once you've got past the first few enemies. No problems here.

MEDAL TWO
You'll find this one in the second area, towards the end. It's surrounded by a couple of Bomb Block walls. Break either one of them and grab the medal.

MEDAL THREE
When you reach the end of the level, don't head straight into the exit. Instead head towards the top of the screen, then go left. You'll find a little entrance and a few blocks you need to break before you can collect the medal. Grab it and you're away.

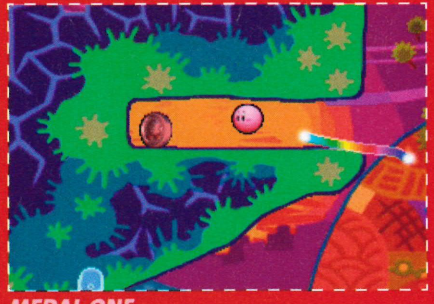
STAGE 1-2 (TINY TOWN)

MEDAL ONE
After you pass the first checkpoint you'll arrive in a large room. The medal can be found in the middle pit near some springs.

MEDAL TWO
You'll need to hit the orange switch before you can go for this one. If you already have, then you'll find it in the second area, after you've killed the six Waddle Dees. Instead of rolling left towards the exit, head right to find the medal and glory.

MEDAL THREE
In the third area, you'll find it in the room with the checkpoint and some spikes. Collect the medal but be careful to avoid the spikes.

STAGE 1-3 (RAVINE ROAD)



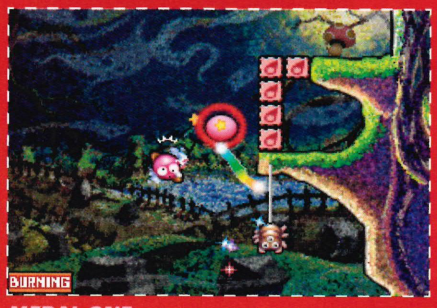
MEDAL ONE
Once you pass the dash panel after the start, you'll enter a large room with some enemies and star blocks. Go to the upper left of the room and you'll find the medal.

MEDAL TWO
After reaching the second area, head towards the top-left corner of the screen. Kill the Bang-Bang, absorb its power and head right. Smash through the missile blocks and collect the medal.

MEDAL THREE
In the third area you'll come to a section with two paths to head down. Take the lower route and watch out for the various obstacles. The medal is guarded by a Bomb Block wall. Blow it up and collect the medal.

ARANGE GORGE

STAGE 2-1 (GHOST GROUNDS)



MEDAL ONE
Absorb the ability of a Bobo and head towards the end of the first area. Before the exit, head up and right, then smash through the blocks to get the medal.

MEDAL TWO
In the second area, roll forward over the cannon. Steal the Sparky's ability and don't lose your power. Once you reach the top, near the exit there'll be some Spark Blocks. Break them and head through to get the medal.

MEDAL THREE
You need to have hit the orange switch for this one. In the third area, you'll come to a section with two paths. Head downwards past a few platforms to grab the medal.

STAGE 2-2 (GROWTH GRASSES)

MEDAL ONE
After reaching the first checkpoint, have a careful look below you. You'll be able to see a hidden door among some Bubble Blocks. Go down to the door and go through it to find the medal you're after.

MEDAL TWO
As you head through the second area, it'll be on your right. It's surrounded by some Bomb Blocks which you'll need to destroy and some Bront Burt enemies to boot.

MEDAL THREE
Before the exit, you'll see a Twister and a static field. Kill the Twister to get the Tornado ability and then fly up to the medal.

STAGE 2-3 (MAG MOUNT)

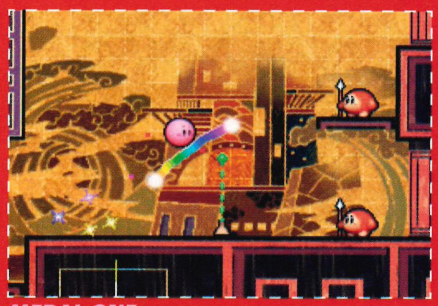
MEDAL ONE
While racing through the first area, you'll see the medal in some lava down below you. Tap the Bomb Block under the medal to blow open a passage to it. Now head towards it, avoiding the lava.

MEDAL TWO
Towards the end of the second area, you'll see the medal trapped among some Bomb Blocks. Inch forward and look for the switch to blow up the Bomb Blocks and free the medal. Head back to it, avoiding the lava.

MEDAL THREE
In the final area you'll find it just below and to the right of the exit. Try not to get toasted by the rising lava though, as you try to collect the medal.

IELLO ADVENTURE

STAGE 3-1 (RIFT RUIN)



MEDAL ONE
After the first checkpoint you'll arrive in a room full of Waddle Dees. Look out for the medal in the upper-right corner of the room.

MEDAL TWO
In the third area you'll get to a section where you have to detonate Bomb Blocks to make a cannon fall to the floor. The medal is on one of the platforms. Detonate the blocks to bring it crashing down.

MEDAL THREE
Just before reaching the exit, kill the Waddle Doo and absorb its Beam ability. Now destroy the Bomb Blocks above the exit to reveal the medal. Grab it and move on.

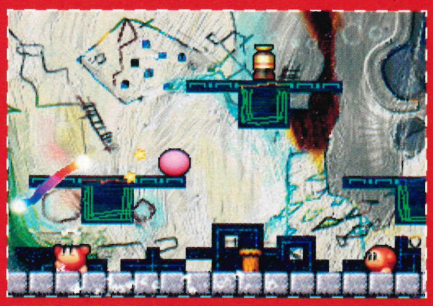
STAGE 3-2 (CONTRAST CAVE)

MEDAL ONE
When you enter the level, you'll spot it. Just break the blocks to grab it.

MEDAL TWO
Underwater in the second area, you'll spot a wooden post and blocks. Kill the Rocky and absorb its Stone ability. Smash the post to unblock the route, grab the Crash ability from the enemy at the top and head for the bottom, avoiding enemies, or you can't use Crash to hit the switch.

MEDAL THREE
Hit the green switch before getting this. In the third area near the checkpoint, kill the Bobo enemy. Head for the static field, over the first block and use Fire ability to cross the second pit. Keep going to a door. Enter to get the medal.

STAGE 3-3 (SILVER SUBMARINE)



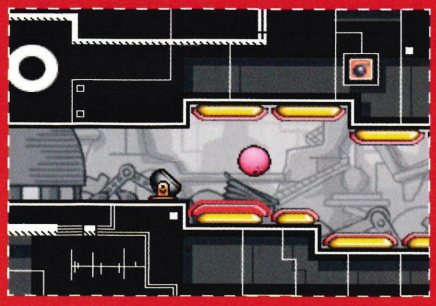
MEDAL ONE
After the first checkpoint is a wooden post. Kill the Rocky to the right and absorb its ability. Hit the post, smashing the blocks and swim to the medal.

MEDAL TWO
In the second area, after you've escaped the boulders, you'll have to travel across some water with a strong current. You need to swim against it using your multi-coloured paint lines. Once you get far enough, you'll arrive in a hidden room containing the medal.

MEDAL THREE
In the third area you'll have to hit some coloured panels to open a red gate. The wall to the right of the switch is actually fake. Go through to find the medal.

NEO GREO

STAGE 4-1 (MACHINE MANSION)

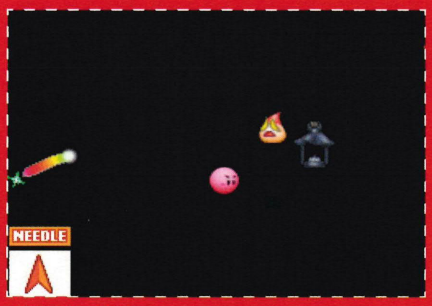


MEDAL ONE
Roll into the cannon. Hit the Bomb Blocks above you and the medal will drop down as you land on the green platform.

MEDAL TWO
In the second area get the missile ability and head for the checkpoint. Roll left and down to a cannon. Get in but don't fire. Hit the Bomb Block to your right so the cannon falls, then fire. You'll get to another platform. Detonate the block, fall to the ground, fire and end up in a room of enemies. Use Missile ability to smash the blocks and enter the door to the medal.

MEDAL THREE
Keep heading right. The medal is next to a few mine enemies. Watch 'cos the floor may squash you.

STAGE 4-2 (DREAMY DARKNESS)



MEDAL ONE
Before the end, there's an alcove with a Tick enemy inside. Kill it then backtrack to the first checkpoint. Go further until opposite the checkpoint near a pillar. Go down and find blocks you can smash with Spike ability. The medal is there.

MEDAL TWO
Try to keep Spike ability. If not, you can kill the Tick by drawing a backwards C that takes you up to it but doesn't force you onto the platform. Once you get the Spike, smash through to the medal.

MEDAL THREE
You'll see the medal trapped in some Bomb Blocks. You'll only see the detonation switch if the light is on though. Head left to switch on the light.

STAGE 4-3 (PALETTO POLIS)

MEDAL ONE
Hit the green switch before this one. Once you start, look out for a door that's below and to the right of the first green moving platform. Head inside for the medal.

MEDAL TWO
After you open the yellow gate, fall down and head right to a new switch. Hit it and a wall to the left of the gate will open. Head into the ceiling tube and through the spike-filled corridor and hit the switch. Now head into the room to the left of the yellow gate to find the medal.

MEDAL THREE
When you reach the exit in the last area, don't finish the level. Instead, go over it and into a pit to the right of the exit. The medal will be in front of you.

BLOO HILLS

STAGE 5-1 (COLD COURSE)

MEDAL ONE
You'll be rolling down a hill avoiding boulders to a door under a platform. On the right is a fake wall and a door. Head through to find the medal.

MEDAL TWO
Head right, kill a Snowy and get the Freeze ability. Break the Freeze Blocks on your left. Avoid the enemies, break the blocks above and head up the shaft. At the top is another ice wall and the medal.

MEDAL THREE
At the second checkpoint, drop down and find a Bomb Block in the wall on your right. Return to the checkpoint and find a switch on your left. Look up, find another Bomb Block, blow it up and follow the black ball to the medal.

STAGE 5-2 (DUNGEON DOME)

MEDAL ONE
At the first checkpoint, go right and kill the Waddle Doo. With the Beam ability absorbed, return to the water. Go down and break the Beam Blocks for the medal.

MEDAL TWO
This depends on Wheel ability skill. Collect it then activate the switches. You have limited time to reach the next one, and the medal. If you fail, restart the level. Or use King Dedede, if unlocked.

MEDAL THREE
After the Star Blocks, you'll be in a long passage with spikes and breakable ground. Destroy the walls and drop into a room with a cannon. Go left, up and across some land. Look for fake walls hiding the medal.

STAGE 5-3 (CANVAS CANYON)

MEDAL ONE
After the first checkpoint, go up to the ceiling. Head right and watch the map for a secret door hidden by a fake wall and alcove. The door is near the ceiling.

MEDAL TWO
Before the second checkpoint, there's a platform with two Pacto enemies under it. Between them is a mound of fake grass. Head for it and it will take you down to the medal.

MEDAL THREE
Hit the blue switch before going for this. After you've reached the checkpoint, you'll get to a cannon held up by a Bomb Block platform. On the right are blocks you can destroy. Drop the cannon down, then fire yourself through to the medal.

OMARINE ZONE

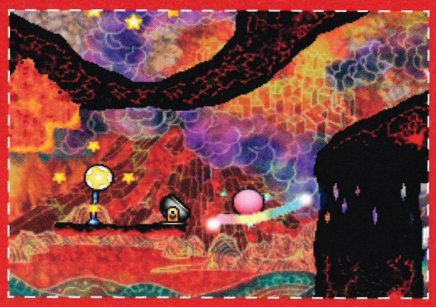
STAGE 6-1 (COLLAPSE CASTLE)

MEDAL ONE
There's a room full of Blados and fans. Although it's dark, you should find the medal easily in the bottom right corner.

MEDAL TWO
Hit the blue switch before this. At the last checkpoint, you'll end up in a static field. Head through it and try to get Kirby to bounce by dashing. Bounce over all the pits and the exit to reach the medal.

MEDAL THREE
You'll get to a section with a static field and some cannons. Towards the end you'll be in a cannon held up by Bomb Blocks. Before triggering, look below to some blocks between two platforms. You'll need to blast through these as the cannon drops down to get the medal.

STAGE 6-2 (VOLATILE VOLCANO)

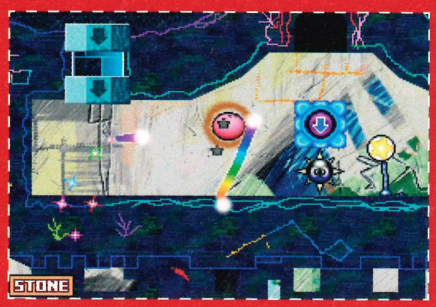


MEDAL ONE
At the first checkpoint, look right for a fake wall with holes. Go through and dash across the platform to the medal.

MEDAL TWO
After the second checkpoint, you'll reach a static field with some Gordos, split by a stretch of non-static. Draw steep upwards lines. At the top, kill the Snoppy and get its Freeze ability. Head right and hit the switch protected by Freeze blocks. This opens a path to the medal later.

MEDAL THREE
You'll come to rising lava and Flame Shotzos. There's a switch that makes the medal fall down and open a gate. Head to the gate and dash through to avoid the lava. Grab the medal then dash out again.

STAGE 6-3 (SILENT SEABED)



MEDAL ONE
Near the second checkpoint, you'll see a blue moving block and a Gordo enemy. Wait for the Gordo to move away, then tap the block. Behind it will be a hidden door, go through it to get the medal.

MEDAL TWO
After the second checkpoint, you'll come to two paths. Take the one to a static field. Cross the small gap with no static and avoid the electric, to the medal.

MEDAL THREE
You should notice the medal in the ceiling that is trying to crush you. Get under it and draw a line to prevent the current pushing you down. Detonate the Bomb Block near the medal and it'll fall onto you. Be careful not to get crushed.

WONDER LILANE

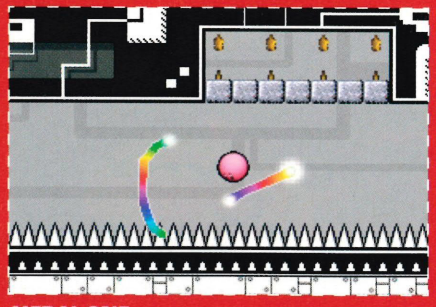
STAGE 7-1 (FROZEN FANTASY)

MEDAL ONE
You'll have to cross some spikes and a dash panel. Avoid it and nearby switch. Roll forward and hit another switch. This moves ice and opens a route to the medal.

MEDAL TWO
You'll find a big static field. Instead of the moving platform in front of you, draw a line outside the field to reach another moving platform above the normal one. Ride the upper platform to the medal.

MEDAL THREE
After you've hit the blue switch in the third area, instead of heading back to the exit, go up and past the spinning blade trap. The ceiling above it is fake; head through it and down the corridor to find the medal.

STAGE 7-2 (MAD MECHANISM)

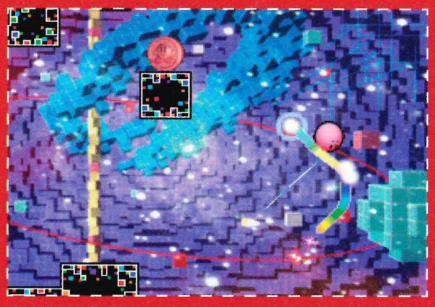


MEDAL ONE
After the first checkpoint you'll see the medal trapped by Bomb Blocks. Go under the medal and destroy the Bomb Blocks.

MEDAL TWO
In the third area there's a big static field. Look for the small hole and draw a ramp inside it. Dash-jump up it to the medal in the top right corner of the area.

MEDAL THREE
In the final area, you'll have to pass some lasers and sticky green platforms. Instead of jumping off the platform and going right, double back and go left. You'll end up in a pit to your left. Head through the short shaft in the pit and you'll find the medal trapped by some Bomb Blocks. Detonate them to collect it.

STAGE 7-3 (SPECTACLE SPACE)



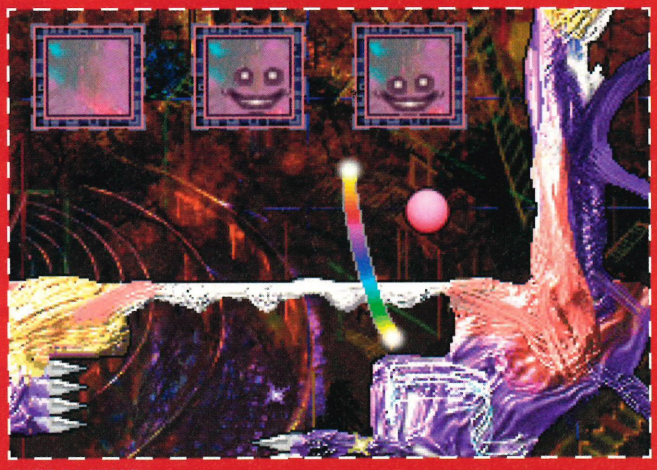
MEDAL ONE
When you start the level, you'll come to a section where you can either go right or up. Go up and look to your left. There will be a platform and a breakable wall. Smash it and continue through, fall down the shaft, then head right. Keep going and eventually you'll get to the medal.

MEDAL TWO
You'll find it in the far south east corner of the second area.

MEDAL THREE
Once you've passed the checkpoint in the third area, you'll have to get past some spikes. You'll then come to a choice of paths, take either one and you'll see the medal trapped by some Bomb Blocks. Just destroy them to get the medal.

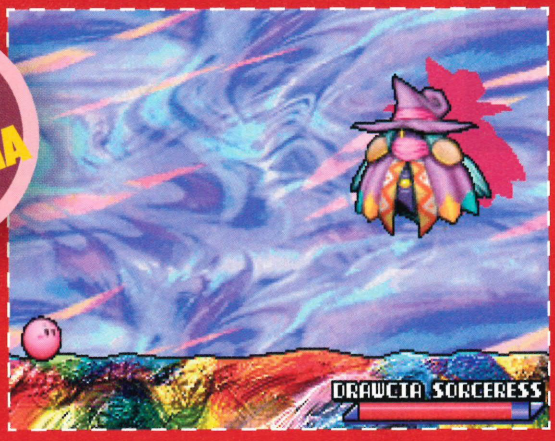
THE WORLD OF DRAWCIA

MEDAL ONE
After getting through the spike-filled passage, instead of going down the steps and to the next area, go underneath the steps, then head up and right to find the medal.



MEDAL TWO
When you're in the second area, kill all the paintings and then the medal will appear near the entrance to the boss door. Job done.

HOW TO KILL DRAWCIA



1. If she launches fireballs at you, draw vertical lines to bounce them back at her. 2. Dash into her three times to damage her. 3. If she fires Para-Sorcerers at you, tap them and they will disappear. 4. When she flies upwards, go to where she was when she took off to avoid any attacks. 5. When she flies off the screen, move to the corner opposite the one where she started. 6. The portrait will either make bombs, enemies or Ticks appear. Destroy them all.

HOW TO KILL DRAWCIA'S SOUL

1. Stick in the corner during the fight. 2. Drawcia will either be in the foreground or the background. She can't be hit in the background. 3. She'll normally start by drawing dots that turn into crosses. Tap them in the right order to damage her. 4. If Drawcia starts bouncing, just predict where she'll land and get out the way. 5. When the sky turns red, meteors will appear which need to be destroyed with ink. 6. As soon as she starts warping around the screen, keep on tapping her to cause damage. 7. Once she's stunned, dash into her and she will start to lose health.

WARIO'S CHEATS

Here's My Top Twenty

SSX on Tour

UNLOCKABLE...	CODE...
All clothing	FLYTHREADS
All levels	BACKSTAGEPASS
All movies	THEBIGPICTURE
Extra cash	LOOTSNOOT
Infinite boost	ZOOMJUICE
Unlock characters	ROADIEROUNDUP
Stat boost	POWERPLAY

Fire Emblem: POR

If you want to easily unlock some maps, just follow these instructions. Connect your 'Cube to your GBA and make sure you have one of the *Fire Emblem* games inserted in the GBA. The original *Fire Emblem* will unlock the Desperation map, an American copy of *Fire Emblem* will unlock the Escape map and *Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones* will unlock the Trapped map.

Sims 2

Before entering any codes, use the Cheat Gnome code first, which is: L, R, ↑, A and Z. Now you can enter X, B, L, ↑ and ↓ to advance the time six hours; R, L, Z, ← and → to get money; Y, X, B, Z and → to set the skill level and X, B, ←, X, ↑ and X to unlock all the lots.

1. **SSX ON TOUR**
2. **ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE**
   Beat the Hard campaign to unlock the Mistwalker and Soul of Hachi CO powers.
3. **NINTENDOGS**
   Get 17,000 or more Trainer Points to unlock the Shetland Sheepdog at the kennel.
4. **KIRBY POWER PAINTBRUSH**
5. **DANCING STAGE MARIO MIX**
   Beat Ex Story with Luigi and you'll be rewarded with the Pick Up mini-game.
6. **SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR**
7. **METEOS**
   Play any mode for more than five hours and you'll be able to buy the Florias planet.
8. **POKéMON XD**
9. **MARIO SUPERSTAR BASEBALL**
   Beat all the mini-games on all difficulties and you'll unlock the special Grand Prix mode.
10. **FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES**
    Finish the Tower three times to unlock Selena and Lyon as playable characters.
11. **FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE**
12. **NANOSTRAY**
    To get the Mitsurin Jungle concept art, beat the Mitsurin Jungle one-life challenge.
13. **SONIC GEMS COLLECTION**
    In Sonic CD, enter PM 07 DA 07 in the Sound Test menu to unlock a special secret stage.
14. **TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND**
15. **MEGA MAN ZERO 4**
    Finish the game with a full Database and you'll get the Magma Border mini-game.
16. **YU-GI-OH! DESTINY BOARD TRAVELLER**
    At the Title Screen enter L, ▶ and B, ▶, B, R, ▶, ▼ and A to get Grandpa.
17. **LOST IN BLUE**
    To play as the Boss in Challenge mode, complete Skye's Story mode.
18. **FIFA 06**
    To get 750 points, complete the Scottish Premier League.
19. **NBA LIVE 06**
    In the password screen, enter DRI239CZ49 and you'll get the Adidas A3 Garnett shoe.
20. **SIMS 2**

Kirby

Normally you have to finish the game with four of the other characters to unlock the Waddle Doo ball. But if you start the game with a copy of *Nightmare in Dreamland* inserted in your GBA slot, you'll get the ball automatically.

Spartan Total Warrior

On the Main Menu, highlight Extras and press ◒ 11 times, then ◒ seven times, both on the D-Pad, and Ⓨ once. This will unlock all the levels in Single Mission Replay. A noise will sound if done correctly.

Pokémon XD

During the interview with Acri in Gateon Port, you'll receive one of four items depending on your answers. Say 'yes' to every question to get the Amulet Coin, say it to just one to get the Mental Herb, say 'no' to every question to get the Quick Claw or say 'yes' to two questions to get a White Herb. Yes?

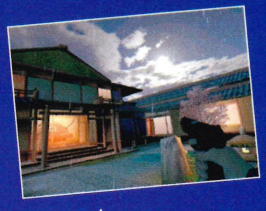
Tony Hawk's AW

There are three different skaters you can unlock by entering passwords into the Cheat Menu. To get Jason Ellis, type sirius-DJ, to get Matt Hoffman enter the_condor and for Mindy, input help1nghand.

Ask The Block!

Forget the Samaritans, they can't help you here.

Q. Hello almighty Block. How can I get all the power-ups on *James Bond 007: Nightfire*? Please help me.
Oliver King, via email



Ah James Bond, one of my favourite spies. Do you know they're looking for a new Q in the next film? Well, let's just say the new Q may be a little square... I've said too much. To get all the upgrades, enter Q LAB in the password menu.

Q. I've bought everything in *Kirby Power Paintbrush* and completed all the missions. Before I go mental getting 100%, will I actually get anything for my work?
Pete Moss, Leominster

Sounds to me like you just want to boast about how well you've done in the game. Well, I'm not one to pass judgement Pete, so I'll tell you what you need to know. Complete 100% and you'll be able to play the Dash Jump mini-game whenever you want.

If you want The Block to help you out, then send a letter to Ask The Block at the usual address. Or email theblock@nintendomagazine.co.uk. Although The Block wants to help everyone, sometimes it's busy doing charity work and stuff, so it can't reply to all requests.

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Army Men: Sarge Heroes 2
Astro Boy: Omega Factor
ATV Quad Power Racing
Back in Action
Bad Boys: 2 Miami T'down
Baiten Kaitos: E.W. & L.O.
Baldur's Gate: Drk.Alliance
Banjo Kazooie
Banjo Tooie
Beyblade: Ult. Blader Jam
Bomberman Generation
Breath of Fire
Call of Duty: Finest Hour
Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow
Command & Conquer 64
Crash Bandicoot2 nTranced
CT Sp. Forces: Back to Hell
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dragon Warrior Monsters 2
Eighteen Wheeler
Enter the Matrix
Eternal Darkness
FIFA Football 2004
FIFA Football 2006
FIFA Football 2005
FIFA Street Soccer
Final Fantasy 1 & 2: D.of S.
Final Fantasy C. Chronicles
Fire Blade
Freedom Fighters
Gekido: Kintaro's Revenge
Goldeneye
Goldeneye: Rogue Agent
H.Potter & Chamber of Sec.
Harvest Moon 2: Wnd. Life
Harvest Moon: F.of M.Town
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
James Bond 007: Nightfire
Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast
Leaf-Green Pokemon
Leg. of Zelda: Ocarina of T.
Lost Kingdoms
Luigi's Mansion
Mario Bros.
Medal of Honor: Euro. Ass.
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Metal Gear Solid: T. Snakes
Metroid Prime
Metroid Prime 2: Echoes
NBA Live 2005
Need for Speed M.Wanted*
Need for Speed: Undergr.
Nintendogs
Paper Mario: 1000 Yr Door
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Colosseum
Pokemon Crystal
Pokémon Dash
Pokemon Emerald
Pokemon Fire Red
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Leaf Green
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Trading Card
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Resident Evil
Resident Evil 4
Resident Evil Zero
Shadow the Hedgehog
Sims
Sims: Bustin' Out
Smugglers Run
Sonic Advance 2
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
Sonic Mega Collection
Spider-Man: The Movie 2
Spider-Man: Ultimate
Splinter Cell 2: Pandora T.
Spyro: A Hero's Tail
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly
Star Wars Episode III
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter
Star Wars: Rogue Leader
Super Mario 64 DS
Super Smash Bros Melee
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams
Tak and the Power of Juju
The Hobbit
The Incredibles
The Return of the King
The Sims
The Sims 2
The Urbz
Tom Clancy's C. Theory
Tony Hawk's 4
Tony Hawk's A.Waste.
True Crime: NYC*
True Crime: St.of LA
Turok Evolution
Ulti. Spider-Man
Viewtiful Joe
WWE R. To Wr. X8
WWE Wr'mania X8
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
Yu-Gi-Oh! 7 Tr. to Glory
Yu-Gi-Oh! F. Kingdom
Yu-Gi-Oh! R. of Destr.
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Reader Cheats

So Christmas is just around the corner... what have you bought me? Didn't you check my wish list on the Nintendo forums? What's wrong with you people? Get out. GET OUT!

"Keep sending me your cheats, or I'll come down your chimney at night. They can be for super classics, like *Wario World* or new games. But your cheat must be worthy. So only send me secret codes, incredible tactics or wonderful boss guides. The best will win a prize."

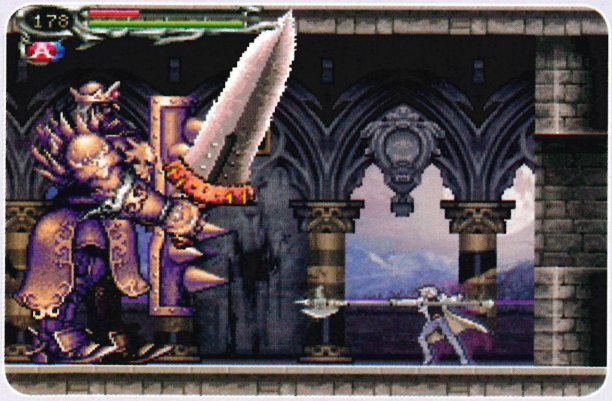
FF Crystal Chronicles

Here's a cheat for you Wario. If you want to get a piece of Mythril easier than having to buy it, just follow my instructions. Go to Daemon's Court and keep attacking the lizard-men. One or two of them will start to drop chunks of Mythril. This is a lot easier than spending 5,000 Gil any day of the week, don't you think? *ADAM KERKS, VIA EMAIL*

Ah Adam, a cheat which means you don't have to pay for something; that's the kind I like. I just wish that if I attacked people in real life, they'd drop cooked chickens or at least the odd five pound note. It's the least they could do.

Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow

Here's a tip to make the fight with Dmitrii easier. His power to absorb enemy attacks can be used to your advantage. Equip a weak bullet soul, like Skeleton, then hit Dmitrii with it. Now, instead of firing out those balls, which take off a lot of HP, he'll only throw weak skeleton bones. This makes the fight a breeze. *JAMES NOBLE, VIA EMAIL*



You can also equip Une and lob that attack at Dmitrii as well. It's a shame all the other bosses don't have obvious weaknesses. Also, did you know that if you level-up Waiter Skeleton to its maximum, it'll set the Yeti on fire?

Super Smash Bros. Melee

Sometimes it can be hard to knock persistent foes off the stage. But did you know that you can smash someone off screen, then run and hold the edge they're about to grab onto? This will stop them recovering and they'll fall off the screen. This is really handy for small stages, like Green Greens. *CAPTAIN UNKNOWN, UNKNOWN LAND*

I imagine this will be quite handy during savage bouts. Here's another one for all you Wario fans. Play 5,000 Vs matches and it'll unlock a score display that shows how each player is performing during the bout. This is free but soon you'll pay.

Nintendogs

If you have had enough of coming home from school or work to find your Nintendogs are hungry or thirsty, and hate you for it, then I have a solution. When you save the game, it asks if you want to carry on playing or not. If you leave the game at that screen and put it into sleep mode, your dogs won't go hungry or thirsty. They'll never hate you again. *LEWIS WILLIAMS, STROUD*

Isn't there a way to force feed them, so they don't get hungry or thirsty? Okay, maybe that would be cruel but it would be useful. Perhaps I should have given you a cheat to make up for it. Then I remembered how much I hate you.

Pokémon FireRed/LeafGreen

Yo Wario, here's a great tip. As you can't buy Rare Candies from Poké Marts in Cerulean City, you'll need to find them for free. Just below Golden Gate bridge, there are two houses. Go to the back of the houses and you'll find a Rare Candy in each backyard. *MICHELE TANG, LONDON*

That's a handy cheat Michele. I'm feeling generous, so here's another Pokémon tip. If you use the Itemfinder in the exact spot where Ho-Oh was in Navel Rock, you'll find the ultra-rare Sacred Ash. That's it, I'm tired of giving you lot tips now.

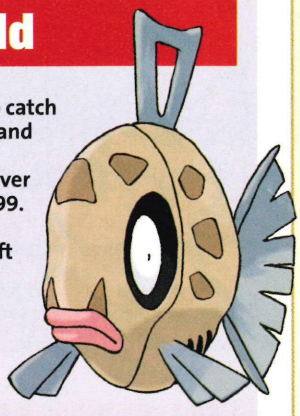
LoZ: Majora's Mask

To get 100 Rupees quickly, on the first day, go to East Town. Head past the Bombers and up the stairs. Roll-jump to the other side and hop on the platform sticking out of the wall on the left. Climb up the platform after that and go to the chest. Inside there are 100 Rupees. Enjoy! To collect them again, just play the Song of Time. *TOMMY LEE, VIA EMAIL*

Another money-pilfering cheat. I'd give you more cheats but MM's so old, my eyes can't stand the graphics. Shut up about it being a classic. You want a classic, play Wario Land.

Pokémon Emerald

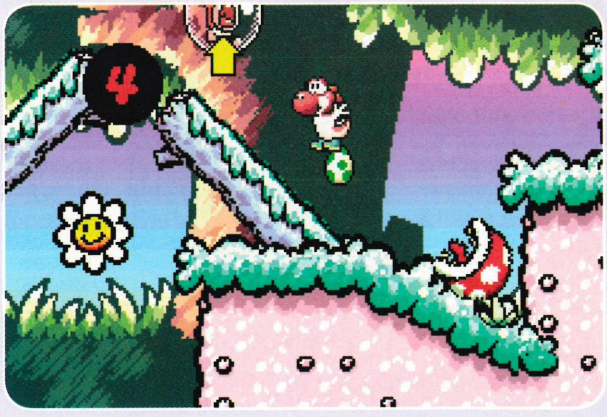
Here's a slightly easier way to catch Feebas. Go to Dewford Town and change the trendy saying to "MISTAKE WORLD". Now fly over to Mauville City and head up Route 199. After you pass the grass and Mimic gang, you'll come to a lake. Surf up left where the Fisherman is. There should be a rock at the bottom left corner of the lake. This is your landmark. Now make sure the tainted water is all just visible, look down and start fishing. *BENJAMIN DODWELL*



Phew, that's a mighty long cheat Benjamin. I almost fell asleep reading it. Well, I hope all you Pokéfanatics can stay awake long enough to follow his instructions. Excuse me, I'm off for a lay down.

Yoshi's Island

If you want to play the Bandit mini-games without going through a particular level, then listen up. On the level select screen, hold SELECT and press L, L, B, A and R. Now you can play all the mini-games without any of the hassle. *CAMERON SPENCER, GOLBORNE*



Here's some more... if you get your World Score to 777, you'll be given seven extra lives. That's because seven is a lucky number in Japan. Not only do I give you cheats, I also give you valuable cultural information as well. Show me the love.

Nintendogs

Getting Trainer Points can be a pain but not with my cheat. Buy a brush from the shop, then brush your puppy. Stroke him until the second he starts to shine. Now just leave the screen alone. For every minute that you're on the brush screen, it'll give you some Trainer Points. Leave it overnight and you'll have all the cool items in no time. *RICARDO FISYA, BOURNEMOUTH*

Everybody's full of Nintendogs tips this month aren't they? I assume that if you get enough points you'll be able to unlock the special Wario kart that Nintendo promised me was going to be included. I hope Nintendo wasn't lying to me... I would probably cry for several weeks if that were true.

WARIO WINNER

SEND ME YOUR TIPS: Via email to wario@nintendomagazine.co.uk or via post to Reader Tips, *NOM*, Emap Active, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 5UW. Remember to include a photo!

WARIO'S WINNER: If you send me an awesome tip, I may just consider giving you some sort of prize that I don't want. This month, a copy of *SSX On Tour* goes to Ricardo Fisya. Who knows what it'll be next month...

PEACH AND BOWSER'S ROYAL MAIL

Get in touch!

royalmail@nintendomagazine.co.uk

Send 'TXT', add a space then your message, to 84070

Royal Mail, *Nintendo Official Magazine*, Emap Active, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5UW

Win! Win! Win!

The Star Letter and Star Picture winners this month get their hands on a brand new GameCuba and a copy of *Mario Smash Football* to go with it. The runners-up get a copy of the game each.

>> Old graphics rule

The GameCube is my first Nintendo console but I recently took a trip to Nintendo's past for the first time and played classic NES and Super NES games. I actually really love the old graphics. My worst fear is that Nintendo will revamp those graphics for playing on the Revolution. I really want to play them just as they were.

Richard Moore, Tamworth

Seeing all the old games with new graphics would be cool. But we have to agree with you, Richard. Those classic games, with their blocky graphics and bleeping music, are a part of gaming history. And we think this history is best served in its purest form.

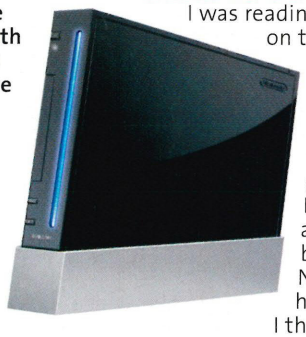
>> Pokéliar

I've got *Pokémon Emerald* and I'm better than you. I've got five Lvl 100 Pokémon, 5555 Rare Candies and 3001 Master Balls. My Pokédex says that I own 389 Pokémon, including Jiroxys, Munchlax and Aquadra. Plus I've beaten the Elite Four 342 times. I will also have *Pokémon Diamond and Pearl* before you. I ROCK!

Rob Ford, Llanishen

389 Pokémon? There are only 202. 5555 Rare Candies? There aren't that many in the game. You like large numbers? We have tens of THOUSANDS of readers and every one of them now knows that you're a liar and a cheat.

>> Show us screens



I was reading a feature on the Xbox 360 in a catalogue and for the first time in my gaming life, I thought about buying non-Nintendo hardware. I think the Revolution will be worth the wait. However, if Nintendo doesn't release some screenshots of proper Revolution games soon, I think I'm going to snap.

Thomas Gordon, Derry

We're all eager to see some actual games running on the new console, and we can't wait to see how the controller will be used. But we all just have to be patient. Nintendo will show something soon. And when it does, you'll kick yourself for wasting money on any other console.

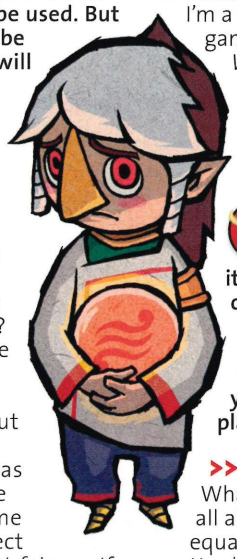
>> The games destroyer

Why is the gaming God punishing me? First, my Gamecube broke. Then, to my horror, my DS broke. Then I got out my Super NES, and the bloody thing was broken. Now all I've got is a crappy Game Gear, which I suspect might break. It's not fair. If my Revolution breaks, I will get Donkey Kong to crush me with his hairy ass.

Kelam Palette, Dumfries

None of OUR DS' are broken. All our Super NES' work fine. Maybe it's YOU. Do you take your temper out on the hardware when you lose a game? GameCubes aren't built to be thrown down the stairs or out a window. A little tender, loving care is all a games machine needs. You animal.

>> Wind Waker woes



I'm a massive fan of *Zelda* games but I hate *Wind Waker*. I have only played it for 40 minutes and it sucks. The graphics are cheap and it's real easy.

Rowan Cunningham, Alwoodley

The graphics are great. Fact. And you've only played it for 40 minutes, so how can you pass judgement on the game's difficulty? We bet the later bosses would ruin you. Maybe you're just too chicken to play that far.

>> Peach is no hero

What is *Super Princess Peach* all about? I'm all about equality and all that but, no matter how hard I try, I can't see Peach as a hero. She's RUBBISH. I never play as her in any of the *Mario* sports or kart games. A WHOLE game based on her is bound to be bent.

Jonathan Grimmer, Hull

What the hell are you on about, boy? *Super Princess Peach* is 2D platforming joy. I flick around gorgeous levels, using my emotions as power-ups. You need to get with it, dude. *Super Princess Peach* rules.

GAME or LAME?

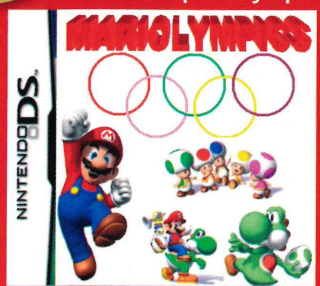
IF YOU'VE GOT A WICKED GAME IDEA, MAKE A COVER FOR IT AND SEND IT IN. DON'T BOTHER IF IT'S *SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE 2* OR *MARIO VS SONIC*, THOUGH.

GAME: Mariolympics

By Alasdair Alexander, Richmond

• WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Toad sets up an Olympic tournament in the Mushroom Kingdom with wacky events.



• WHO'S IN IT?

All of the usual Mario suspects, and a team from the Donkey Kong games, too.

• OUR *MOST* FAVOURITE IDEA?

The super-crazy events like FLUDD-shooting sound great.

• *NOM* RECKONS

THIS WOULD BE MUCH BETTER THAN THE DIABOLICAL *MARIO SUPERSTAR BASEBALL*.

LAME: The Mushroom Kingdom online

By Jack Meredith, Beverley

• WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

An online chat game where Nintendo fans can meet and speak to each other.

• WHO'S IN IT?

Appear in the online Mushroom Kingdom as any Mario character you like.

• OUR *LEAST* FAVOURITE IDEA?

It's just a chat game. There's no actual gameplay in there at all.

• *NOM* RECKONS

BEAUTIFUL BOX ART. CRAP IDEA. SORRY. WE PREFER A TECHNIQUE CALLED TALKING.

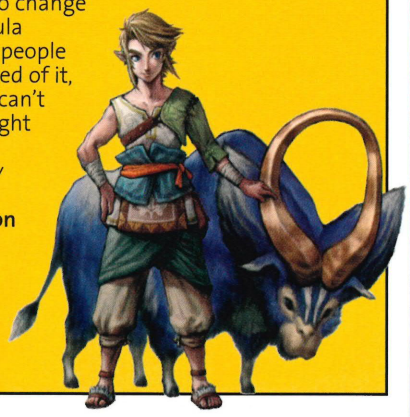
Refreshing Zelda

STAR LETTER

Most of my mates were distraught when Nintendo said that *Twilight Princess* will be the last *Zelda* game in its current form. But I'm actually quite pleased. *Zelda* games are great, but it's better to change the formula BEFORE people grow tired of it, rather than after. I can't wait to see how it might change for the future.

David Nolleth, Walthamstow

We suspect the crazy innovations of the Revolution controller will play a major part in the changing of the *Zelda* series, as well as other Nintendo franchises for that matter. Our hearts are beating fast.



>> Too Micro

I was well into the idea of getting a GB Micro until I played on my mate's one. The D-Pad feels well insecure and the shoulder buttons are uncomfortable. I think I'll stick to my GBA SP.

Alan Dick, London

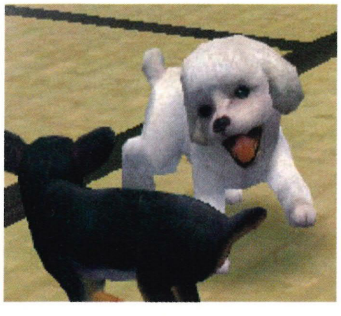
The GB Micro is sleek and sexy but there's no denying, for some, it's a little TOO small. But we love it. Getting the Micro has made us go back to all our old GBA games to play them on its pin-sharp and amazingly bright screen.

>> Doggie skills

I can actually make my Nintendogs breakdance. First I taught them to lay down, then I taught them to chase their tails. When you do these both at the same time, it looks like they're busting some crazy dancing moves.

Michelle Landson, Lincoln

Mike tried to teach his Nintendog to rap, play games, fight like Bruce Lee and fetch orders from KFC. But Nintendo forgot to program those tricks into the game. Damn.



>> Pokémon master

I want to have a good challenge in *Pokémon*, but I keep thrashing people. No-one will play *Pokémon* with me any more because they've all be owned. I wish there were more *Pokémon* events to meet people at. I need loads more competition.

Adam Kirks, Bolton

There aren't any more *Pokémon* events planned at this time. So for now, you will have to continue terrorising Pokémon battlers in your town. An online *Pokémon* game would sort you out for competition. You'd have millions of opponents to choose from. Who knows what the future might bring...?

>> Mario shame

What in the world is happening to Mario nowadays? He used to be a gaming legend, whose face only appeared in games of the highest quality. Now he's in countless sub-standard spin-offs and even sold his soul to the EA devil! Mario, where's your dignity?

Kingsley Fitzpatrick, London

Mario's got to make his cash, dude. Rob nearly wigged out at *Mario Superstar Baseball*, but the other sports titles aren't that bad. You can call Mario a sell-out when you see him being interviewed on GMTV, or competing in *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here*.

>> Free online

I can't believe Nintendo's online gaming services are going to be free! That's absolutely amazing! I can't wait to get my hands on *Mario Kart* and *Animal Crossing*. I'm going to spend so much time online, I'll forget my own name.

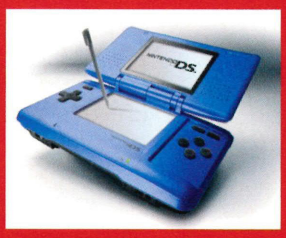
Anthony Boyd, Blackpool

Free online is a great thing. Having to pay to play games that you've already paid for is not right. Nintendo's done the right thing.

ASK SHY GUY

Q. Not having any money is doing my head in. All these sweet games are coming out and I can't afford any of them. How the hell am I going to get my hands on a DS and a lush copy of *Nintendogs* on the cheap?

Michael Gunham, Manchester



A. Your best bet is to try to get one secondhand. Steer clear of eBay. You will hardly ever get a bargain on there for hardware. Look in secondhand games shops. I've seen a DS for around £65. Part exchange some old games too, for some extra cash off.

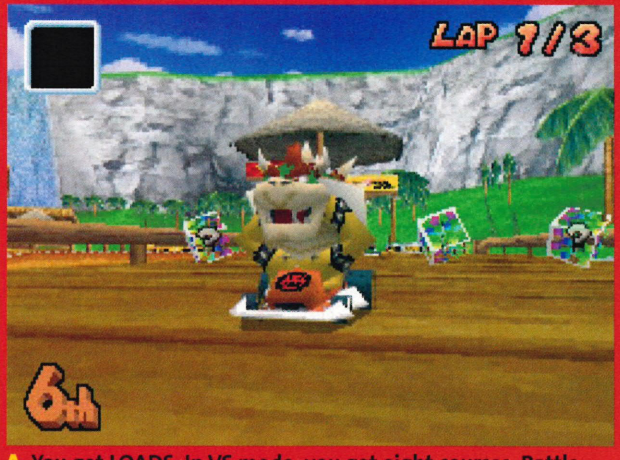
Q. I want to get a GB Micro because I can't do without its miniature sexiness. But I just wanted to know before I bought one if it can play the really old classic Game Boy games?

Roland Foley, Bath

A. No way, dude. Sorry. If you want to play those antiques, you'll have to stick with your ever-faithful GBA SP. The GB Micro can only play GBA games. Which is just as well because those old grey GB carts would dwarf the dinky handheld.

Q. I know that when you only play multiplayer on DS with a single cart, you don't always get all the features that you would with multiple carts. How much of *Mario Kart DS*' features are available on single-cart multiplayer?

Marcus Kelly, Cookstown



A. You get LOADS. In VS mode, you get eight courses. Battle mode gives you all the arenas but you can't choose the one you want to play – it's random only. And all of the non-cart-holding players have to play as ME, Shy Guy. Team options, tournaments and all that neat stuff is still there, too. It's great.

Q. Shy Guy, once I have the Nintendo Wi-Fi USB Connector set up on my computer, will I be able to get my DS online at any time, no matter where I am?

Daniel Longmore, via email

A. Unfortunately, the world isn't that perfect, Daniel. You will need to be within the wireless range of your computer – i.e. in your house. Otherwise your DS won't communicate with the USB Connector.

Q. Seeing as the Revolution is big on backwards compatibility, what are the chances of Nintendo building a GBA/GB slot into the final version of the Revolution? I think that would be ace.

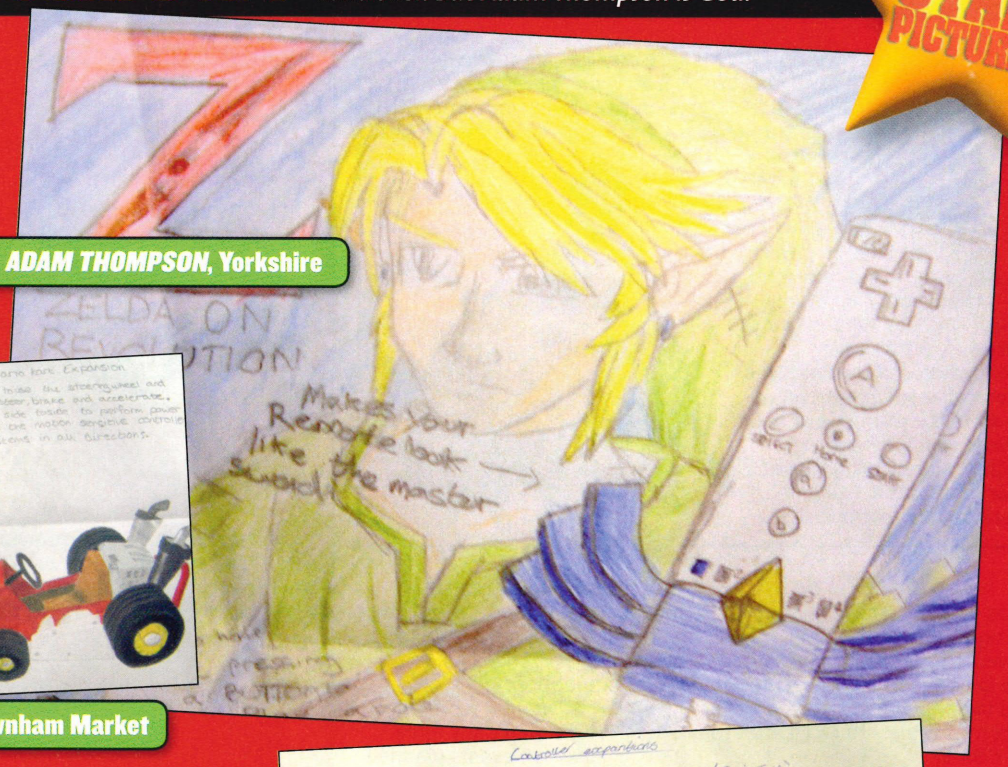
Louis Marr, via email

A. I don't think there's much chance of that happening. Unless Nintendo makes some major changes, the Revolution will only play previous CONSOLE games, not handheld ones.

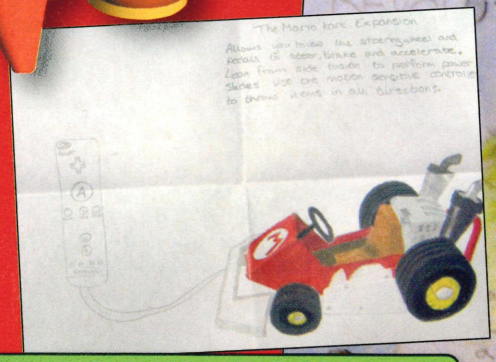
Yoshi's art

You had great ideas for using the Revo controller. But Adam Thompson is God.

STAR PICTURE

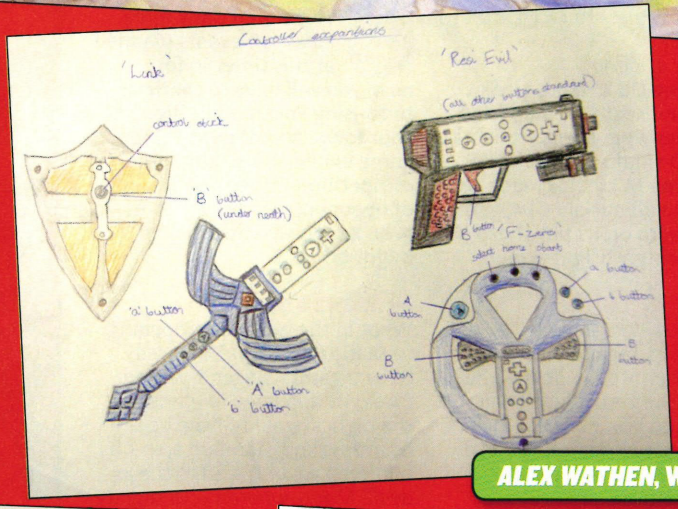


ADAM THOMPSON, Yorkshire

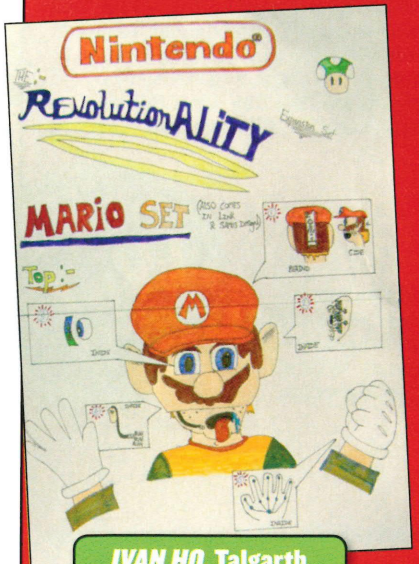


DARRELL LANGRIDGE, Downham Market

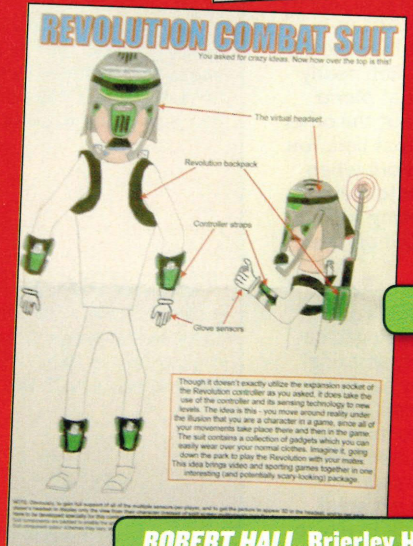
JAMES INNES, Carshalton



ALEX WATHEN, Wimborne

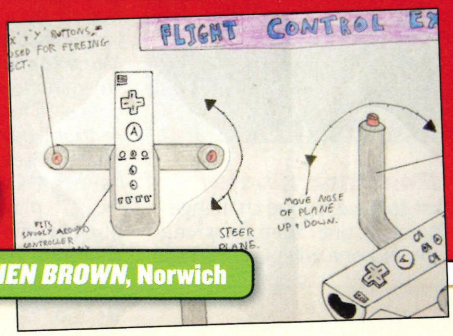


IVAN HO, Talgarth



ROBERT HALL, Brierley Hill

JADE OAFF, Paignton



STEPHEN BROWN, Norwich

*We get hundreds of pictures each month, making it impossible to send them back. If you want yours back, send an SAE and say so! Or better yet, just send us a scan or a colour copy!

>> Twilight Princess upgrade

I read on the internet that the Revolution could be out as early as June. That means it will hit shelves not too long after (if not before) *Twilight Princess* does. I was thinking – it would be cool if Nintendo put some graphical upgrades into *Twilight Princess*, seeing as so many gamers are likely to play it on their Revolutions?

Tom Burgess, Nottingham

It would be cool to see some extra special effects spring into action on the Revolution. But the graphics in *Twilight Princess* hardly need improving. Seeing screenshots is one thing. When you see it in action, you will be stunned. Toaru looks so tranquil we almost wished we lived there, and the temples are full of atmosphere. It's gorgeous.

>> American waste of time

What's up with your low rating of *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland* on GC? It's the best in the series. Okay, so there are a few glitches, Classic mode is way too short, the graphics are a bit ropey, the cutscenes are ugly, there aren't enough skate movies and we've seen the Story mode all before. But these aside, it's still an absolute joy to play.

Neil Innes, via email

So what you're saying is; except for everything that's crap about it, the game is great. We can see you being a great games reviewer in the future. In fact, we've passed your number on to Tim. Expect the call any minute. The future awaits.

>> Bring back Mr. T

Where are all the Mr. T games? He is a legend. Who else goes around saying "I ain't getting on no plane, fool"? He could have been in a *Resi* game, punching zombies and calling them "sukka". In fact, he'd be awesome in any game.

Martyn Vesey, via email

Mr. T is a berk. He was in *Resi* - as an infected citizen who got bitten, because he was too busy shouting "SUKKA" to shoot zombies. The fool. Quit your jibba jabba.

TEXT THE EDITOR

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR BRAIN...

Now you can let us know how you feel about the world of Nintendo on a text!

Tap in 'TXT', leave a space, add your message and send it to 84070. You must get permission from the bill payer before texting us, as each text costs 25p to send. Every text sent to us can be viewed online at www.clubnom.com and here's just a small selection of your ramblings:

* i wanna put my recent nom mags on a small table next to my chair but mum wants her stupid plant there tell her that nom is god

* EVER SANG ALONG TO MARIO TUNES? I HAVE.

* i wish everyone in the world had a DS so i could kick their asses on super mario - phil, poole

* the next chav that sez PSP is better than DS is gonna die choking on his own kidneys!

* the mario kart toy on nintendogs rocks! :-D C:H

* my idiot bro hates ninty yet he begs for a go on my ds

* omg i rock! i just totally beat my bro on double dash! wot a sore loser! girlz rok 4EVA!

* If peach and donkey kong had babies would they be wookies from star wars?

SAMUS NEEDS SOME NEW TOYS

Suit-up your favourite bounty hunter with some flashy kit

Samus is a great hero, and that's not because she has curves and bumps that male heroes don't. Actually, that is the reason. But also because she's a bad-ass bounty hunter who kills things for fun.

The Power Suits she uses are the secret to her power. Without those, the burning lava in Norfair would have melted the flesh off her bones and the teeth on a Metroid would rip through her skull. With each new *Metroid* game comes awesome new suits. We can't wait to see what *Metroid Prime Hunters* has in store for us. But until the game is unleashed on the world, we want to see what suits you guys would like to see Samus in.

We want you to come up with an all-new suit, with great new abilities and new weapons. Draw massive, colourful pictures of Samus sporting her new hardware, and on ANOTHER piece of paper, explain what her flashy new kit is capable of. You could even draw her in the environment that the suit is built to protect her from. Make them good, because if they're crap, we'll be round your gaff to hammer you with the life-size Samus model that guards the office at night.

SEND US YOUR ENTRIES NOW!

Post: My Samus Suit, Royal Mail, *Nintendo Official Magazine*, Emap Active, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW.

The closing date is January 4, 2006. Get involved.

Chain Chomp's Challenges

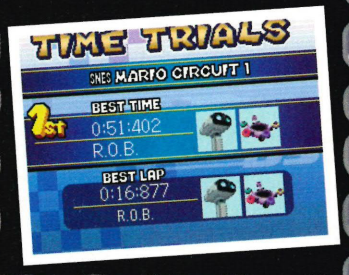
Win the chance to play at *NOM* Towers – if you beat my scores.

Mario Kart DS

On the Figure-8 Circuit, try to get your total time down to 1'32"856 or better. We used R.O.B. the Robot. But, of course, you can use whichever character you want. If you think that you can do it quicker, get going.

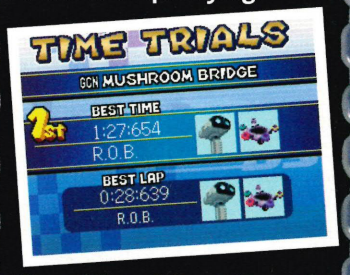
Mario Kart DS

Head for Super NES Mario Circuit 1 and attempt to get a lap time of 0'16"877 or better. Using that Mushroom is going to be absolutely key here. So don't hang about, get cracking if you want to stand a chance.



Mario Kart DS

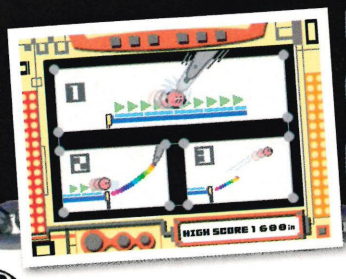
Now it's time for the Mushroom Bridge circuit. You need to get a total time of 1'27"654 or, of course, better! Obviously you'll need to avoid all the vehicles or you will lose time and that'll trash your chances of qualifying.



This month's new challenges | **Last month's challenges**

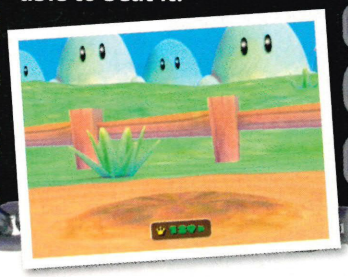
Kirby Power Paintbrush

You've got to score more than 1,688in on the Long Jump challenge. It's best just to keep completing the first level to get to this trial. Try to make your ramp as straight as you possibly can for the best chance.



Mario Party 5

You'll need to score 129m or more on the Leaf Leap mini-game. Be warned though, this can be a tough one. If you miss even just one leaf, you'll mess your score right up. So if you keep trying, you never know, you might be able to beat it.



Pac 'N Roll

The challenge here is to try to beat a time of 00'24"35 on the level 1-1 Time Trial. It's best to make sure that you avoid the wooden crates, because they'll slow you down. And also, don't worry too much about collecting all the dots.

REMEMBER - THIS GROUP OF CHALLENGES STARTED IN *NOM* #157. DON'T MISS ANY!

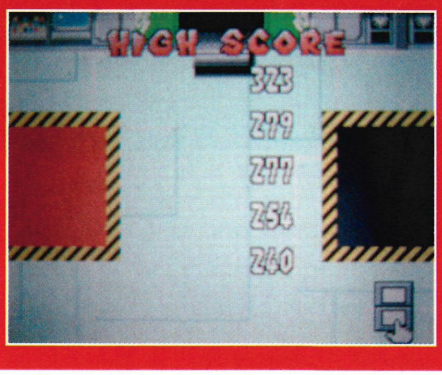
How it works...

1. Every four months, Chain Chomp will start a new competition league for you to compete in.
2. At first there'll only be six challenges to beat, but every month, three more will be added for you to tackle.
3. By the end of the four months, there will be a total of 15 challenges for you to try to beat.
4. For each challenge you successfully conquer, send evidence of your score to *NOM* and we'll give you a certificate to prove how great you are.
5. Get ten or more certificates and you could be in with a chance of coming to *NOM* to show off your skills.
6. Four people will be specially selected to come here and play against each other for the final awesome prize. What is it? Just wait and see...

How to take a pic...

Taking pictures of your DS, GBA or TV screen can be tricky, but with these tips, it shouldn't be a problem. And remember, if you've got a digital camera, you can take as many pics as you want to get it right...

1. Make sure the room is as dark as possible. Draw the curtains, turn out the lights and take the photo standing at a slight angle to the TV or your handheld's screen.
2. Make sure the flash is off, otherwise the picture won't come out properly. If you're taking a pic of a DS or GBA screen, try to put the camera on manual focus.
3. Once you've taken the pic, either email it to us or post it. Send us a couple – just to make sure we can see your score properly.



THE QUALIFIERS SO FAR...

ZOO KEEPER
A. Brightman, G. Colly, D. Brown, L. Rogers and P. Scott

DONKEY KONGA
R. Christie

RIDGE RACER DS
A. Brightman

SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE
A. Brightman, G. Colly, M. Roche, J. Thomas, L. Rogers, T. Sanders, G. Sanders, M. Michaels, R. Nicholls and T. Jays

SUPER MARIO 64 DS
A. Brightman, G. Colly, R. Christie, D. Brown, T. Sanders, G. Sanders, R. Nicholls, I. Dexter, L. Young, L. Westwood, L. Brinson and A. McCann

MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!! (1)
A. Brightman, G. Colly, M. Roche, J. Thomas, L. Rogers, T. Sanders, G. Sanders, M. Michaels, R. Nicholls, T. Jays, R. Christie, D. Brown, I. Dexter, L. Young, A. McCann, P. Scott and L. Brinson

MARIO PARTY 5
A. Brightman, G. Colly, J. Thomas and P. Scott

METEOS
M. Roche and J. Thomas

MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!! (2)
A. Brightman, G. Colly, M. Roche, J. Thomas, L. Rogers, T. Sanders, G. Sanders, M. Michaels, R. Nicholls, T. Jays, R. Christie, D. Brown, I. Dexter, L. Young, A. McCann, P. Scott and L. Brinson

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2
J. Thomas and F. Bailey

MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR
T. Sanders and G. Sanders

POLARIUM
A. Brightman

PAC 'N ROLL
A. Brightman

How to enter...

Chain Chomp's Challenges, *NOM*, Emap Active, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW

chainchomp@nintendomagazine.co.uk

Make sure to include your address and evidence of your score – a clear photo is best (see above), but a video is fine, as long as the Chain Chomp doesn't chew it up. No cheating is allowed and any entry arousing suspicion will be chomped up and posted back to you with a letter full of reasons to hate yourself.

YOU'VE ONLY GOT UNTIL JANUARY 5TH TO COLLECT TEN CERTIFICATES. GO FOR IT!

BOO'S BRAINERS

Cambridge professors spent three months working on these.

Nintendo know-it-all

Show everyone how much of a geek you are

1. How many Gold Skulltulas are there to collect in *The Ocarina of Time*?
2. What is the minimum number of levels that *Super Mario Advance* can be completed in?
3. How many figurines are there to collect in *The Minish Cap*?
4. Who is the final boss in *GoldenEye*?
5. How many Planets are there in *Meteos*?
6. What is the name of Dr. Eggman's grandfather?
7. Which are the three original vehicles you have to test in *Pilotwings 64*?
8. In *F-Zero GX*, who does Black Shadow work for?
9. What three elements are the Regis made of in *Pokémon Ruby, Sapphire and Emerald*?
10. Who are the two unlockable characters in *Kirby Air Ride*?
11. Which planet does *Super Metroid* take place on?
12. What does the SP in GBA SP stand for?
13. In *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance*, what are the summons called?
14. What is the name of the currency in the *Phantasy Star* World?
15. Besides Waluigi, who is the other defensive player in *Mario Power Tennis*?

HANGMAN

Fill in the gaps to work out the game names

1	C_ _ _S_N'/U_ _
2	P_ _G/P_LS
3	R_ _M_N
4	F_ _E/E_ _ _EM
5	_O_T/_IN_D_MS
6	_OU_/C_ _I_UR
7	D_S_ _N/T_ _/_ _ANT
8	B_ _J_/K_Z_ _ _E

Star Fox Puzzle

In space no one can hear you find the 15 words hidden in here

G	V	M	G	N	O	L	A	S	N	P	M	Q	A	D	W	K	R	C	L
E	E	E	E	I	C	N	P	S	F	X	B	P	S	U	B	E	B	V	K
N	G	N	T	T	D	O	G	Y	R	V	A	D	T	O	E	N	Q	S	M
E	G	S	E	R	S	B	R	V	L	R	H	N	A	L	G	T	V	T	J
R	J	N	O	R	J	Y	E	N	O	B	S	J	R	C	C	U	K	Y	T
A	B	S	I	Y	A	I	S	I	E	W	C	V	W	C	T	I	Q	Z	N
L	S	M	B	W	B	L	D	T	D	R	X	I	I	M	X	W	F	E	E
S	J	O	B	C	R	Q	P	I	A	S	I	D	N	X	S	A	J	Q	F
C	D	K	G	D	U	A	S	E	L	L	A	A	G	O	Q	U	V	G	L
A	R	X	I	E	P	E	V	L	P	O	Y	U	N	F	J	N	W	N	O
L	V	B	E	S	U	E	R	Y	T	P	G	L	A	T	S	Y	R	K	W
E	L	N	C	O	D	X	T	Y	L	P	E	P	P	Y	H	A	R	E	U
S	E	Q	H	F	Z	W	P	T	R	Q	H	R	S	H	I	R	E	I	E
N	X	M	W	A	S	P	L	I	F	U	P	X	L	J	J	J	B	P	H
T	N	T	U	T	I	H	M	W	E	O	O	F	Q	V	T	O	U	Y	A
H	J	E	T	L	F	A	L	C	O	L	O	M	B	A	R	D	I	F	U
T	N	O	S	Z	P	Y	N	H	E	X	S	U	V	V	X	V	B	G	H
T	K	A	Q	Y	J	D	A	B	K	E	P	O	R	D	N	N	P	C	P
P	L	E	N	N	O	D	O	F	L	O	W	U	N	O	H	I	N	B	L
C	P	S	C	S	N	J	K	D	H	U	Y	H	W	K	G	C	N	L	N

- ANDROSS
- APAROID QUEEN
- ARWING
- CORNERIA
- FALCO LOMBARDI
- FOX MCCLOUD
- GENERAL PEPPER
- GENERAL SCALES
- KRYSTAL
- LYLAT SYSTEM
- PEPPY HARE
- SLIPPY TOAD
- STARWING
- WOLFEN
- WOLF O DONNEL

ODD-1-OUT

Which of these doesn't appear in *Mario Kart DS*?

1. R.O.B.
2. Shy Guy
3. Waluigi
4. Drybones
5. Diddy Kong

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

There's probably a good reason why there are five differences in these *Mario Kart* screenshots. Make up your own theories about Mario drink driving and seeing double or create another equally ridiculous fantasy.

It's the all-new NINTENDOKU

It's the craze that's sweeping the nation and we wanted to be part of it. But who wants to fit numbers into a grid? No-one, that's who. So we've swapped numbers for letters that spell an awesome word: **SHORYUKEN.**

Make sure each row, each column and each square of nine blocks features every letter only once. They don't have to be in order, that would be ridiculous. It can be tricky, so it's best to experiment with a pencil. But, most of all, persevere - it'll be worth it in the end.

N				K				E
	S		Y	R	E		U	
		O		N		Y		
	E		R		Y		S	
Y	H	S		U		R	O	K
	U		H		K		N	
		H		E		O		
	K		S	H	O		E	
R				Y				S

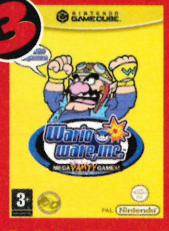
??? KNOW THE SCORE ???

Match this mix of games to their scores - or else!

1

2

3



4

A: 92% B: 84% C: 86% D: 62%

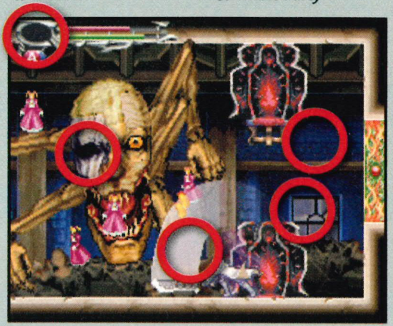
>>>>>>>>>> HOW WELL DID YOU DO LAST TIME? <<<<<<<<<<

KNOW-IT-ALL

1. *Pokémon Crystal*
2. *Super Smash Bros. Melee*
3. Alexey Pajitnov
4. 29
5. *Resident Evil*
6. Impa
7. Seven
8. Four
9. 320
10. Lance
11. Robotic Operating Buddy
12. Banshee Boardwalk
13. *Pokémon Stadium 1/2* and *Mario Tennis/Golf*
14. 22
15. Centaur

HANGMAN

1. *Bomberman*
2. *Mortal Kombat*
3. *Plok*
4. *Meteos*
5. *Tetris Attack*
6. *Geist*
7. *Klax*
8. *Mario Party*



NAME THE GAME

1. *Luigi's Mansion*
2. *Wave Race Blue Storm*

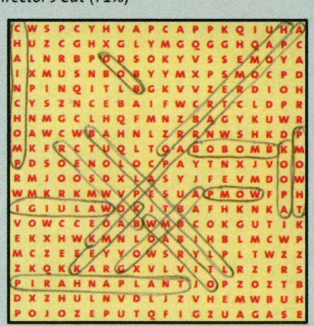
U	N	Y	S	H	K	O	E	R
K	H	R	O	U	E	S	N	Y
E	O	S	Y	N	R	K	U	H
R	U	N	E	O	H	Y	K	S
Y	E	O	U	K	S	H	R	N
S	K	H	R	Y	N	E	O	U
H	R	U	K	E	Y	N	S	O
O	Y	K	N	S	U	R	H	E
N	S	E	H	R	O	U	Y	K

KNOW THE SCORE

1. *Sonic Gems Collection* (52%)
2. *Sonic Mega Collection* (84%)
3. *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* (62%)
4. *Sonic Adventure DX Director's Cut* (71%)

ODD-1-OUT

1. Siberian Husky



REMEMBER... GET ALL THE ANSWERS NEXT MONTH!

Next Month

IN THE BAG

FREE
MICRO POUCH

- Keep your new Game Boy safe, only with *NOM*

IN THE MAG

ALL THIS AND MORE ONLY IN *NOM* NEXT MONTH...

PLUS! The biggest and best guides and tips,

ONLY IN NOM NEXT MONTH!

Metroid Prime Hunters

- Take control of the galaxy's most fearsome bounty hunter - Samus Aran!
- Multiplayer deathmatch ripped apart!
- Every weapon tested - from mortars to sniper beams!
- See the all-new bounty hunters - Spire, Noxus and Kanden!

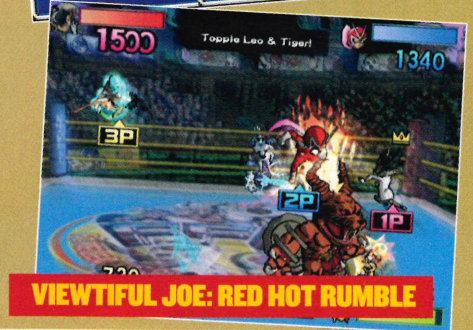
YOU NEED IT. ON SALE JANUARY 13TH

MARIO & LUIGI 2

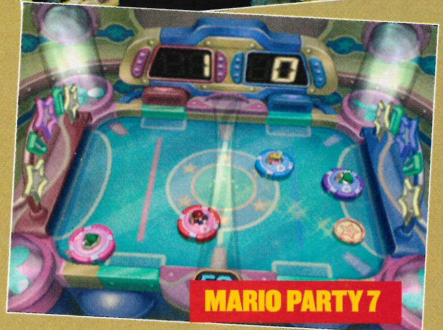
FINAL FANTASY IV

RESI DS

SNOWBOARD KIDS



VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE


MARIO PARTY 7

hot news from Japan and much, much more!

#24 ANIMAL CROSSING

When Moses invented the Internet, he had a grand plan. *Animal Crossing* online, a couple of thousand years later. But then tragedy struck! The people of the UK, officially the most awesome persons on Planet Earth, were denied the N64 version and the GameCube follow-up. How would they be ready for the main event?!

That's where you lot came in. You got wind of *Animal Crossing* not coming here, and went ballistic. *NOM* campaigned on your behalf and after a year, we won a sweet victory. Now you can have your own virtual mortgage and work like a slave selling fruit to pay it off. Where else can you have a pretend friend that's a guitar-playing dog? What other game lets you mince about in a pointy hat while deciding what kind of awesome Nintendo tat you can fill your house with?

And at this time of year, *Animal Crossing* is infinitely more Christmassy than the real world. Look outside now. That white stuff you're not seeing all over the ground is called snow. This amazing virtual world is blanketed in white and everyone is buzzing with festive excitement. Just don't switch off without saving, because that mole guy goes mental.

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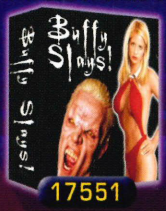
MOBILE GAMES

PLAY THESE WICKED GAMES ON THE MOVE!



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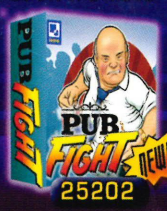

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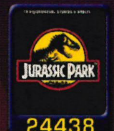

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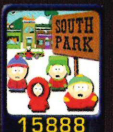

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RINGTONES

GET A REALTONE TO HAVE A REAL VOICE & BACKING TRACK AS YOUR RINGTONE!

REAL	POLY		
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24964	24726	THE DARKNESS	One way ticket...
24472	24280	KAISER CHIEFS	Modern Way
24358	24286	SON OF DORK	Ticket Outta Loser...
22736	22729	50 CENT	Outta Control
24368	24362	ARCTIC MONKEYS	I Bet You Look
24203	24196	BOB SINCLAR	Love Generation
24198	23647	FRIDAY HILL	Baby Goodbye
24431	24264	GOLDFRAPP	Number 1
24474	24545	GREEN DAY	Jesus Of Suburbia
24039	24546	JAMIROQUAI	Give Hate A...
23856	23124	KANYE WEST	Gold Digger
24432	24367	PHARRELL	Can I Have It Like...
23515	23120	PUSSYCAT DOLLS	Dont Cha
23653	23121	SEAN PAUL	We Be Burnin
22736	23768	50 CENT	Outta control
23918	23767	BLACK EYED PEAS	My Humps
23857	23122	F. FERDINAND	Do You Want To
23517	23510	GOLDIE L.C.	Missus Is A Nutter
20107	14485	EMINEM	Ass Like That

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GET A CRAZY SOUND AS YOUR RINGTONE!

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12247	Sizzling Fart	12538	Gun Shot
13120	Blow Raspberry	15983	Wolf Whistle
14082	SouthP Fart Song	15984	Old Phone
12532	Evil Laugh	11760	Hey Big Boy

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GET A TV TONE OR THEME TUNE AS YOUR RINGTONE!

CODE		CODE	
22697	Homer 32 Dohs	23465	Shreck
23662	Little Britain	22362	Chelsea Chant
22633	Darth Vader	22366	Liverpool Chant
22638	Scooby Doo	20203	Willy Wonka
20024	Papa Lazarou	19036	Lou and Andy

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GET 3D CHARACTERS ON YOUR PHONE!

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23170	Bowser
23172	Pikachu
23171	Lara Croft
16031	GTA Ceejay
16036	Halo

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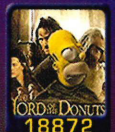
WALLPAPERS

GET A NEW LOOK FOR YOUR PHONE WITH A GREAT WALLPAPER!

16311



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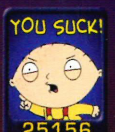

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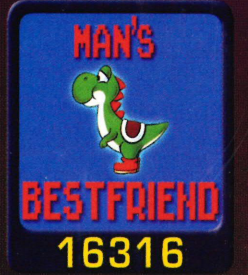

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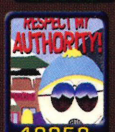

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ANIMATIONS

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25139

25229

13804

15965

11418

15312

18081

23038

15665

23813

23636

17247

25298

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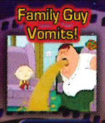
CHOOSE ONE OF THESE GREAT VIDEOS TO WATCH ON YOUR MOBILE!



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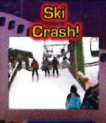

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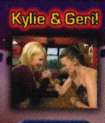

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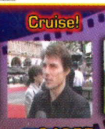

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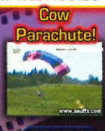

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BUT YOU CAN'T!

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