GAMEWEEK SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

GameWEEK PlayStation 2 LAUNCH GUIDE • 10.16.00

TABLE OF CONTENTS

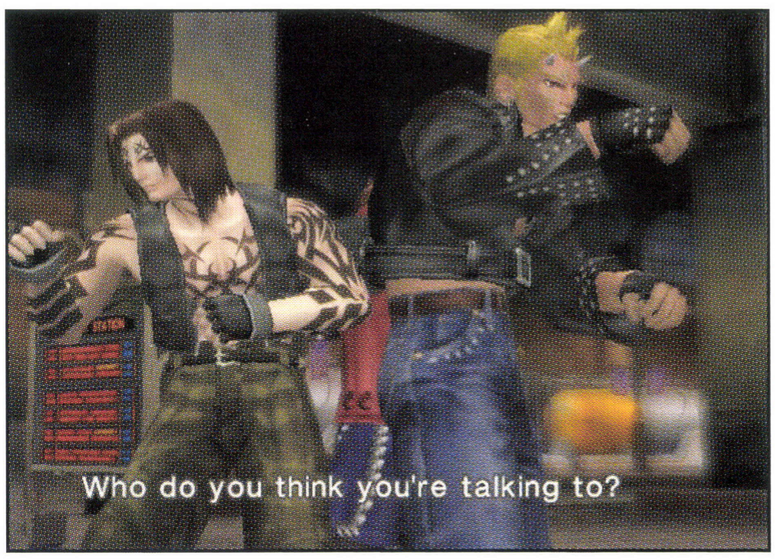
Page 4
UNDER THE HOOD

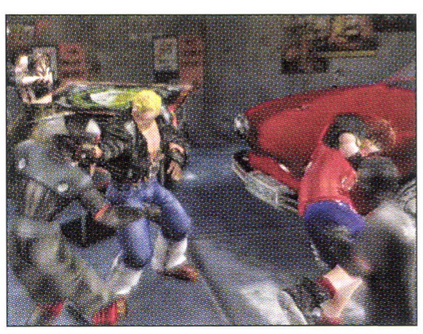
Page 6
PERIPHERALS

Page 10
RETAIL BUYERS GUIDE

PlayStation 2: On the Horizon

By Jim Loftus





Above:
Will The Bouncer *be able to live up to the hype that has been surrounding it for the past several months? Square hopes so.*

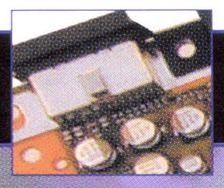
With a selection of nearly 30 software titles accompanying the debut of Sony's PlayStation 2, consumers are inundated with more choices than ever before during the launch of any one game console. And that's a good thing. Sports, racing, role-playing, fighting, action, adventure… for the first time ever, there's literally something for everyone right from the get-go. And while most of the genre bases are covered, one thing is absolutely certain: the best is yet to come.

The year 2001 should see the PlayStation 2 really come into its own as a truly magnificent piece of gaming goodness. While the blazing visual splendor showcased in titles such as *Tekken TAG*, *Silent Scope* and *Kessen* is certainly nothing to sneeze at by any stretch, the expectations for "stuff that will blow state-of-the-art PCs away" have, at this point in time, been met with a touch of disappointment by those in the know.

Since developers are just now beginning to come to grips with the PS2's potential as a graphics powerhouse, much of the software released next year should do much to satisfy any remaining skeptics. One such piece of software—and probably the single-most important piece of PS2 software we'll see during all of Q1—is Sony's very own *Gran Turismo 3*. Originally slated to ship at launch, the next-gen sequel was pushed back to allow Polyphony Digital time to rework the game and mold it into greatness. So far, the decision looks to have paid off, because *GT3* looks better right now than it did just six

(continued on page 3)

INSIDE:



Under the Hood: *Ever wonder just what's inside that ominous black box marked "PS2?" Here's your chance to find out.*

Peripheral Mania: *PS2-compatible controllers, memory cards, decorative stands, and even a snow board. A snowboard?!!*

Buyer's Guide: *From* Unreal Tournament *to* Tekken TAG, *nearly every PS2 launch title evaluated, and then some.*

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PlayStation 2: On the Horizon

months ago. We're talking nearly photo-realistic real-time graphics here, and to see it running, even in its unfinished state, is nothing short of astonishing. By word of mouth alone, Sony should have no problem moving at least a half million copies of *Gran Turismo 3* once it hits retail shelves.

Another one to keep a close eye on is *The Bouncer* from Square. Although still several months away from release (Square bumped the Japanese version to sometime early next year, meaning the game may not ship in North America until summer), early reports are that the game plays much like *Tobal* or *Ergheiz*, with bits and pieces from other games thrown in for good measure. One intriguing aspect of the game is its real-time cinematic action sequences. Speculation has it that at various points during the game, players will be prompted to make decisions to further their adventure, an element that could end up something like the QTEs in Sega's *Shenmue*. *The Bouncer* will contain fully interactive environments that will give players more freedom to fight. Speaking of combat, more than anything else, *The Bouncer* is about fighting.

Samanosuke, the main character in Capcom's impressive DVD title, Onimusha: Warlords, *stands at the ready.* Onimusha *is just one of several must-have PS2 titles in the works.*

Using the pressure sensitive analog buttons on the Dual Shock 2 control pad, players will reportedly have more options for combat than in any previous game of its kind. During single-player Story mode, the player can select from nearly a dozen customizable characters. Life, power and defense meters are in place and need to be adjusted from time to time using points awarded throughout the quest. A separate versus mode and a multiplayer mode for up to four players is also in place and should make for some chaotic fun. *The Bouncer*'s high-resolution graphics and dramatic, motion-picture like approach is definitely something to be excited about and we can't wait for a hands-on test run of the game. Expect an in-depth preview in an upcoming issue of *GameWEEK*.

When it comes to adventure, one upcoming PlayStation 2 game that seems to speak the loudest is Sony's *Dark Cloud*. Best described as *Actraiser* meets *Zelda*, *Dark Cloud* has all the markings of an instant classic. The game stars a little gypsy boy determined to restore his homeland to its former glory. And of course, what good would a game like this be without the necessary battle between good versus evil? The demos we've seen are impressive, with incredibly lush, detailed landscapes, villages and character builds. *Dark Cloud*'s "Georama" system lets players literally build their own environments during the course of the adventure from an overhead perspective, then zoom in for action. Hillsides, buildings, bridges, volcanoes and more can be placed and then fully explored in 3D during gameplay. The player

Left and below: Dark Cloud*'s world building and adventuring segments should provide players with a nice balance of activities and incentive to keep the quest alive.*

can switch between Creation and Adventure modes at any time during the game. We're not certain just how it's all going to gel, but the potential is there for a compelling adventure nonetheless. *Dark Cloud* is expected to ship on December 14 in Japan and sometime in January in the U.S.

Of course, there are other killer apps set to push PS2 hardware sales next year. Capcom's *Onimusha: Warlords* has really come together and should be ready for release sometime during the first quarter of next year. The game is a hybrid of sorts, taking the best elements from games like *Resident Evil* and *Bushido Blade* while adding an enormous amount of drama (see our latest preview this issue on page 20.) Konami's *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* is being touted throughout the industry as the best looking PS2 game so far and the one with the most potential as far as gameplay is concerned. Judging by the early game footage on hand at E3 and the Tokyo Game Show this year, Hideo Kojima's passion for gaming innovation is shining through like never before. When the game is released late next year, all eyes will definitely be on *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Square's *Final Fantasy X* is widely anticipated and the early reports are that it will be one of the first games to take advantage of Sony's online gaming network (we'll have to wait for *FF XI* for Square's full Play Online strategy to kick off.) With a huge quest and the best graphics for the series to date, *Final Fantasy X* is expected to ship during spring of 2001 in Japan and should make it to our shores by fall. **PS2**

Notable PS2 Titles Slated for Release During Q1, 2001

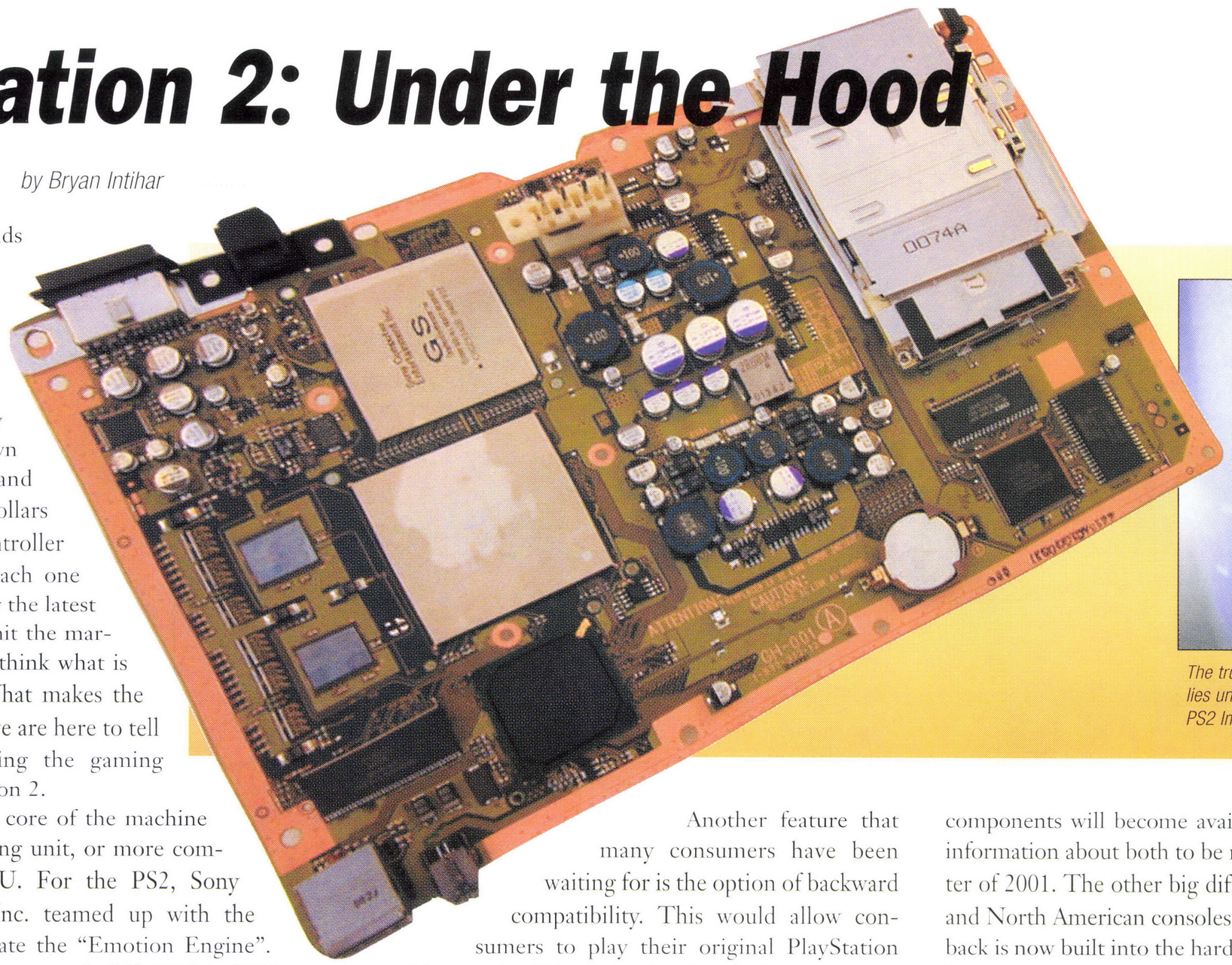
4X4 Evolution • Gathering of Developers
All-Star Baseball 2001 • Acclaim, Sports
Bouncer, The • Square
ESPN MLS Game Night • Konami
Fur Fighters • Acclaim
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy • Midway
Gran Turismo 3 • SCEA
NBA Hoopz • Midway
Onimusha: Warlords • Capcom
Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing • LucasArts
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001 • Electronic Arts
Ultimate Fighting Championship • Crave

Notable PS2 Titles Slated for Release Q2 - Q4, 2001

Dark Cloud • SCEA
Dinosaur • Ubi Soft
Drakan • SCEE
Dropship • SCEE
ESPN MLS Soccer 2001 • Konami
ESPN National Hockey Night • Konami
ESPN NBA 2Night • Konami
ESPN NFL Prime Time • Konami
Eternal Blade • Mattel
Extermination • SCEI
F1 2001 • SCEE
Final Fantasy X • Square
Getaway, The • SCEE
Gundam • Bandai
ICO • SCEA
Jet Ion GP • Crave
Knockout Kings 2001 • EA Sports
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty • Konami
Ninja Gaiden • Tecmo
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee • Infogrames
Reiselied: Ephemeral Fantasia • Konami
Spider-Man 2 • Activision
Tony Hawk 3 • Activision
WCW 2000 • Electronic Arts
Wipeout Fusion • SCEE
Wolverine • Activision
World Is Not Enough, The • Electronic Arts

PlayStation 2: Under the Hood

by Bryan Intihar



The true power of this gaming machine lies underneath its black casing. PS2 Image courtesy Chipworks.

I can see it now, thousands upon thousands of crazed gamers racing to their local game store to purchase what is to be the hottest item of the year, the Sony PlayStation 2. They get to the store, slap down $300 for the hardware and another couple hundred dollars for some games, an extra controller and memory card. Then, each one gets home and begins to play the latest next-generation console to hit the market. However, do they ever think what is under that black casing? What makes the games look so good? Well, we are here to tell you what goes into creating the gaming machine called the PlayStation 2.

As with any console, the core of the machine lies in its computer-processing unit, or more commonly referred as the CPU. For the PS2, Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. teamed up with the Toshiba Corporation to create the "Emotion Engine". This 128-bit CPU is as Sony states, "a full 128-bit CPU-the first of its kind in the world-all integrated on a single chip LSI together with the state of the art 0.18 process technology." The memory storage of the console registers at 32 MB and has a memory bus bandwidth of 3.2 GB per second. In addition, while the Emotion Engine has a 3D CG geometric transformation rate of 66 million polygons per second, its graphics synthesizer has a polygon-drawing rate of 75 million polygons per second.

Until now, all consoles have had software stored either cartridge or CD-ROM formats. With the PS2, that all changes as it contains a disk drive that registers data for CD and DVD-ROMS. This enables developers to pack much more data and create larger games on the DVD discs, and allows consumers to play DVD movies on the PS2. The console has a 24 times speed CD-ROM and four times speed DVD-ROM.

Another feature that many consumers have been waiting for is the option of backward compatibility. This would allow consumers to play their original PlayStation titles on the PS2. Sony has heard the consumer's pleas and delivers this option with its new machine. The function of backward compatibility on the PS2 is made possible by a device called the I/O processor, which also has two megabytes of memory. Players do not have to do anything tricky with their old games; just simply pop the PS title into the PS2, put the power on and the game will automatically load. The loading times of some of the original PS games is also increased due to the faster speed of the disk drive.

Now, the PS2 launched in Japan back on March 4, and while at first glance the consoles may seem to be identical, the North American version has some differences. One major difference is the addition of an expansion bay. This resides on the backside of the console where gamers will eventually be able to add a hard drive and/or network card. SCEA has made no announcements of when these two components will become available, but many expect more information about both to be released during the first quarter of 2001. The other big difference between the Japanese and North American consoles is that the DVD-Video playback is now built into the hardware. Japanese gamers had to have a special program loaded onto their memory cards.

Even though many are considering this to be a "revolutionary" machine, some things have not changed from the original PlayStation. Like its predecessor, the PS2 features only two controller ports. Some may find this surprising due to the fact that the rest of the next-generation consoles—Dreamcast, Xbox and GameCube—all feature four controller ports. The PS2 controller is basically the same as the original Dual Shock, but now all the action and shoulder buttons are analog.

There is no doubt that Sony will have one of the most successful days in retail history with the launch of the PS2. We didn't need to write an article on that, however, we hope this one helps you understand what components make up the console and when consumers ask a question, you can give them some technical answer that makes you look like a PS2 guru. ***PS2***

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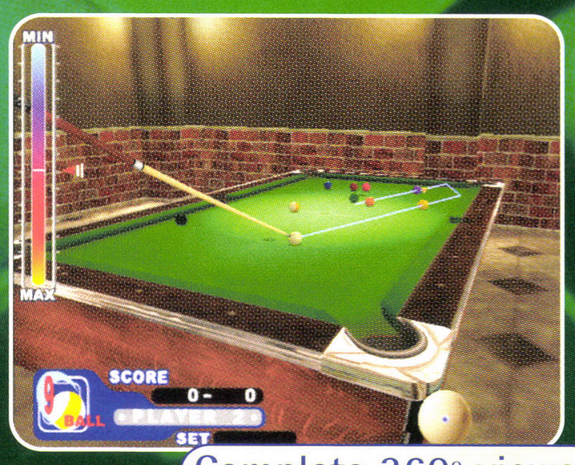

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...with 25 new tables!

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Time to Accessorize—PS2 Style!

By Ben Rinaldi

Okay, so the world's worst kept secret is that PlayStation 2 will become an instant best seller upon its release, as both hardware and software are expected to fly off shelves faster than a speeding bullet. But what's the deal with all those PS2 peripheral products that will accompany the launch? Are they worth purchasing? How reliable are they? Which ones should you stock?

Let's take a look at some accessory products that consumers will be looking for to expand their next-gen gaming experience come launch day.

Controllers

Dual Shock 2 Controller

From: Sony • Price: $34.99

It doesn't get any better than this. First-party controllers, not to mention memory cards and other add-on products, are of exceptional quality and trusted by consumers to perform flawlessly. Sony's PS2 Dual Shock is the best controller money can buy, period.

Retro Shock 2

From: Pelican • Price: $24.95

Pelican's PS2 pad includes all the great features of Sony's Dual Shock but at a more affordable price. Gamers can look forward to fully analog buttons, vibration function plus tactile palm grips for added comfort.

StormChaser

From: InterAct • Price: $29.99

This ergonomically styled gamepad gives precision control with two analog control sticks, six analog fire buttons, and four analog shoulder triggers. Additionally, button pressure programming allows players to adjust the sensitivity of each analog button.

Dual Impact 2

From: InterAct • Price: $24.99

The Dual Impact 2 borrows features from the best-selling Dual Impact for PlayStation and comes with vibration feedback technology, 4 analog fire buttons, 2 analog sticks, 4 analog shoulder buttons, and an 8-way analog directional pad.

Dual Force 2

From: Mad Catz • Price: $29.99

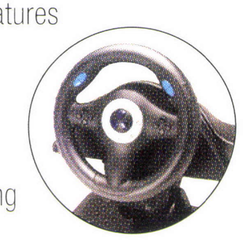
Mad Catz is known for making quality controllers and the Dual Force 2 is no exception. Features include: full analog action buttons, rubber grips, vibration feed back and steering wheel mode.

Racing Wheels

Blue Thunder Racing Wheel

From: InterAct • Price: $69.99

Gentlemen, start your engines! The Blue Thunder Racing Wheel features vibration feedback, programmable fire buttons, auto-centering and a many other cool features to enhance all those driving games heading to PS2.



Sportster (Not Shown)

From: Pelican • Price: $34.95

The Sportster claims to have a "Traction Control System" which is a fancy way of saying it minimizes over steer and improves handling on tight curves. Also included are dual vibration motors and rubberized grip.

V3 FX Racing Wheel 2

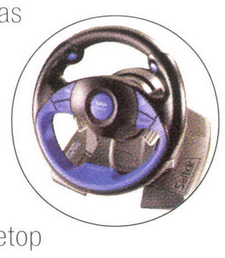
From: InterAct • Price: $49.99

This basic wheel incorporates features like vibration feedback technology, four analog fire buttons, analog gas and brake pedals, four analog shoulder buttons, 8-way analog directional pad, programmable steering sensitivity, button relocation function, adjustable steering column and mode switch.

RX400 Wheel

From: Saitek • Price: $39.99

This stylish looking wheel has six buttons, a D-pad, F-1 style shifting levers and analog foot pedals. Saitek also designed it with clamp mounting and a detachable lap-grip for tabletop or floor play.



Other

Freestyler Skate/Snow Board

From: Thrustmaster • Price: $69.99

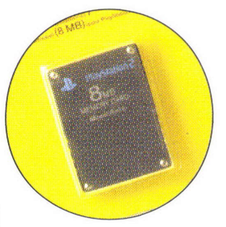
This innovative (and pricey) accessory is dedicated to all those skateboard/snowboard game enthusiasts out there. Realistic shape provides an exciting, true-to-life gaming sensation. Two programmable buttons on the board allow for greater gaming flexibility, while the specially designed hand controller comes equipped with classic digital controller buttons which enables easy navigation between menus and allows perfect stability during game play.

DVD/TV Master Remote

From: InterAct • Price: $19.99

This DVD Master Remote allows total control of your TV or PS2's DVD movie playing capabilities. An infrared wireless sensor is included with every remote control, connecting directly into the PlayStation 2 memory card port. It features 16 function keys and operates up to 23 feet away from the console.

Memory Card (8MB)



From: Sony • Price: $34.99

The new PS2 memory card has a storage capacity of 8MB of data and a data transfer rate up to 250 times faster than the original PS memory card.

Multi-Tap Adaptor

From: Sony • Price: $34.99

Sony's decision to go with only two controller ports for PS2 makes this Multi-Tap Adaptor an absolute necessity for those that like to compete with more than two friends at once. Plug in one multi-tap for up to four-player game play or plug in two multi-taps to allow up to eight players to compete.

As a member of a ruthless gang of smugglers, it's your job to evade the U.S. Border Patrol, CIA, and cutthroat rivals to deliver illegal cargo. It'll take complete mastery of your off-road vehicle to make it across unforgiving terrain and stay one step ahead of the forces out to destroy you.

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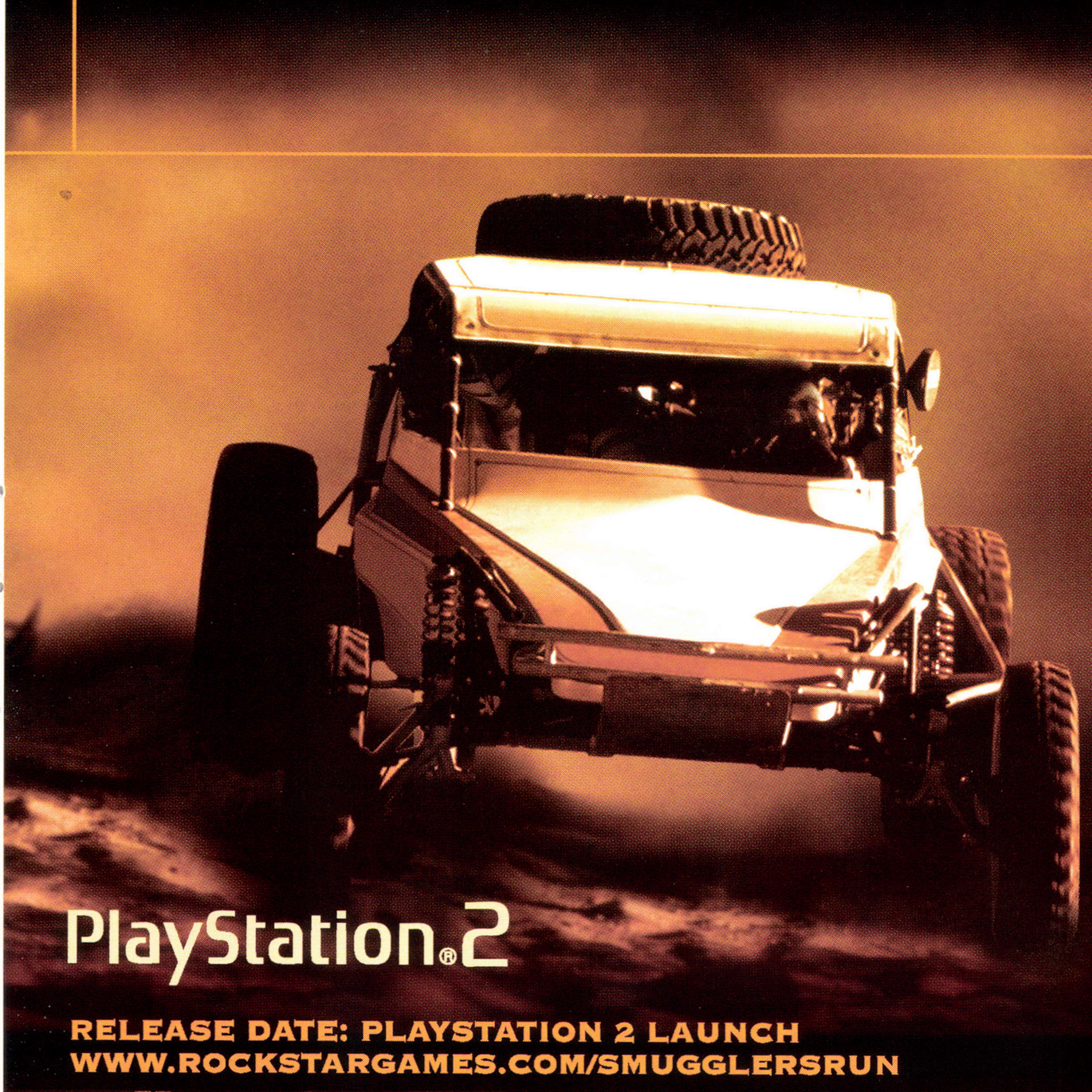

PlayStation®2

- Levels are over 5 square miles, each with a "drive anywhere" environment filled with other smugglers and law enforcement officials.
- Choose from 35 different vehicles, each with unique modifications and strengths.
- Compete head-to-head or run "pick up and deliver" missions against AI opponents or in full multiplayer mode.
- Maneuver your way through arid desert, icy tundra, or rocky mountain forest.
- Real Time Damage Models allow you to watch the parts fly as you pay the price for punishing collisions!

RELEASE DATE: PLAYSTATION 2 LAUNCH
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SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON GUIDANCE RECORDINGS

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Dreamcast™

PS2 BUYERS GUIDE

Picking the Games That Will Bring in the Profits

GameWEEK RATING SYSTEM

A One of the best selling products for that platform. Strong marketing and word of mouth complement excellent game play and design. A "must have" product.

B Great product, but lacking in some areas. Will sell well and bring in the masses, but not to the extent of an "A" title.

C Good product that will sell average in terms of sales, yet not worthy of a "B." Still a solid seller, particularly in niche categories.

D Either unsupported in terms of marketing, severely lacking in quality or both. This product would have benefited from further development.

F Never should have been considered, much less released. A thoroughly unimpressive product that will sell only at a drastically reduced price.

PS 2 Launch Prime pick

GameWEEK PS2 LAUNCH PRIME PICK

PlayStation 2

GW A+ RATING

Manufacturer Sony Computer Entertainment
Available October 26
MSRP $299.95
Contact Info
www.playstation2.com
650.655.8000
Other System runs PlayStation 2 software, audio CDs, DVDs. Also runs most titles from the original PlayStation software library. System comes bundled with Dual Shock 2 control pad, memory card, power cord, set of composite A/V cables, manual.

BOTTOM LINE

With an initial shipment of 500,000 units (versus the one million it had anticipated), Sony will not be able to meet consumer demand at launch. One thing's for certain: any retailer without PS2 hardware in their stockroom is going to need to get ready with the Kleenex. —Jim Loftus

Rundown At this point, what can be said about Sony's newest entry that hasn't been said before? If it were a grease-stained cardboard box with miniature Christmas tree lights sticking out of it, this thing would still sell based on brand recognition alone. And that's good news for you.

In the months leading up to its North American launch, the PlayStation 2 has been one of the most talked about videogame consoles ever, and there are plenty of reasons why. With its sleek, jet black shell and unconventional piercing blue power light, this machine looks more like a piece of equipment stolen from the Los Alamos National Lab than the typical, run-of-the-mill gaming device. To further drive home the point that this is no mere toy, not only can the unit be positioned horizontally or vertically (using the optional stand), the PS2's rocker-type power switch is located in the back, similar to what you might find on a piece of hi-end stereo equipment. Simply put, this thing intimidates like the dickens.

Of course, looks only go so far; it's what's inside that counts. From the standpoint of pure processing power, the PS2 screams, capable of out-distancing—at least according to its technical specifications—even the best Nintendo or Sega have to offer. Bear witness to a side-by-side comparison between *Ridge Racer V* running on the PlayStation 2 and *Sega GT* running on the Dreamcast, and the answer to the question "Who's your daddy?" becomes quite obvious. Although the graphics generated by the PS2 are nowhere near the quality of the amazing tech demos Sony used to hype the system early on (I'd estimate we're about 5-10 years away from working that real-time, "Toy Story-like" magic for gameplay), they're still the best ever generated by a game console.

PlayStation 2 is poised to launch with 30+ game titles; the largest selection of software than has accompanied any other system at its debut. Regardless of the fact that many PS2 launch titles are graphically-enhanced versions of previous PlayStation efforts, between 3-5 game titles are expected to move with every piece of hardware sold.

But games are just one part of Sony's PS2 master plan. In addition to playing standard audio CDs, the machine also plays DVDs and, as demonstrated in Japan, the DVD market will undoubtedly grow in the U.S. with the system's launch. Play *Madden NFL 2001* or watch *The Matrix*, all using one box. Consumers have never had it so good.

PlayStation 2 will bring interactive entertainment to the masses like no other device that has come before it. The product's evolution will offer shopping and gaming through the Internet, amateur video editing capabilities and much more. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Hype & Marketing Sony's PS2 marketing assault will be unprecedented. Everything from print to radio to TV will be covered inside and out. Pre-orders taken by retailers have been maxed-out to the point that Sony can no longer guarantee units on launch day.

Sales Pitch Trust me, you won't need one.

Competition With Sony's PS One and Nintendo's N64 consoles both at the sub-$100 mark, and with plenty of titles to choose from for either one of them, consumers are going to be more confused than ever before. And let's not forget the wildcard, Sega. After a one-year head start, a Dreamcast now carries a price tag half that of a PS2 and offers a library of more than a hundred titles. It also arms users with the option of playing selected games online, such as *NFL 2K1* and *Quake III Arena*. As tempting as that sounds, it's expected that Sony's new black box—which can run both PlayStation and PlayStation 2 games, by the way—will roll in like a thunderstorm to dominate retail shelves through the holiday season...if it can meet consumer demand.

Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore

TEEN CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B- RATING

Publisher Tecmo
Developer Team Ninja
Available October 26
Genre Fighting
No. of Players 1-4
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.tecmoinc.com
310.944.5005

Rundown The videogaming community is jam-packed with adolescent consumers, so what better way to attract that crowd than by indulging in a little sex and violence? Just ask Tecmo. *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore* is a supercharged brawler lined with beautiful, scantily-clad girls and buckets of brutality. *Hardcore* improves upon the Dreamcast version by adding more moves, more costumes and more backdrops. The 3D, *Virtua Fighter*-style gameplay is fast and furious, primarily due to the intensity brought by its multi-tiered, breakaway fighting environments. Tecmo cleaned up some of the "jaggies" from the import version in time for the North American release and it shows. This is tight.

Hype & Marketing Print: spreads in most major gaming pubs through December. One-pager appeared in a recent issue of *Maxim* magazine. TV: spots will run on cable January through February. In-store: heavy saturation in 2,000 retail locations via standees, posters, counter cards, stickers, videos and more.

Sales Pitch "God, this game looks good."

Competition The biggest threat to sales is Namco's amazing *Tekken TAG*.

BOTTOM LINE

Tekken may be king, but DOA2: Hardcore is still going to be a highly sought-after game title for the PS2. Consumers are really getting their money's worth with this one. —Jim Loftus

Evergrace

TEEN CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW A- RATING

Publisher Agetec
Developer From Software
Available October 26
Genre Action/RPG
No. of Players 1
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.agetec.com
408.736.0800

Rundown Only a few action/RPG titles will be made available at launch, and that's good news for Agetec, because otherwise, *Evergrace* wouldn't stand much of a chance. To its credit, the game is more than halfway decent in many respects. The player switches control between male and female characters who set out on an adventure to battle creatures, obtain weapons and items and solve some rather offbeat puzzles. It may not be the most visually detailed PS2 game out there, but *Evergrace* does showcase a nice-looking, well put-together atmosphere and contains enough solid gameplay elements to make it a worthwhile purchase for RPG fans.

Hype & Marketing Print: two-page spreads are appearing in most December and January game pubs.

Sales Pitch "This is a beautiful game and quite enjoyable."

Competition *Orphen* from Activision, *Summoner* from THQ and *Eternal Ring*, also from Agetec.

BOTTOM LINE

Although it's by no means perfect, Evergrace is a commendable role-playing game attempt for the PS2 by From Software and should do well at the register. —Jim Loftus

Kessen

TEEN CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW C RATING

Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer Koei
Available October 26
Genre Strategy
No. of Players 1
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.eagames.com
650.628.1500

Rundown Seventeenth century Japan. An epic battle the likes of which few have ever witnessed is about to erupt. It's called *Kessen*. From its AAA-quality visuals to its tight gameplay, Koei has assembled a fantastic package here, particularly for fans of real-time strategy titles. The player commands hundreds of soldiers, taking them through all sorts of battle environments, in an effort to defeat ancient Japan's greatest threat. The player deploys troops on foot and on horseback using multiple commands and options and can watch the action as it develops in gorgeous, albeit violent, 3D. *Kessen* will be loved by the group of consumers it aims to please, but generally ignored by the masses.

Hype & Marketing Print: two-page spreads are appearing in most December and January game pubs.

Sales Pitch "If you're into strategic battle games, this is one hell of a thrill ride."

Competition No other war strategy titles will be available for the PS2 until early 2001.

BOTTOM LINE

Even with top-notch production values and some of the fiercest battles ever depicted in a videogame, Kessen will appeal almost exclusively to the die-hard strategy segment. —Jim Loftus

PlayStation®2

湾岸 MIDNIGHT CLUB STREET RACING

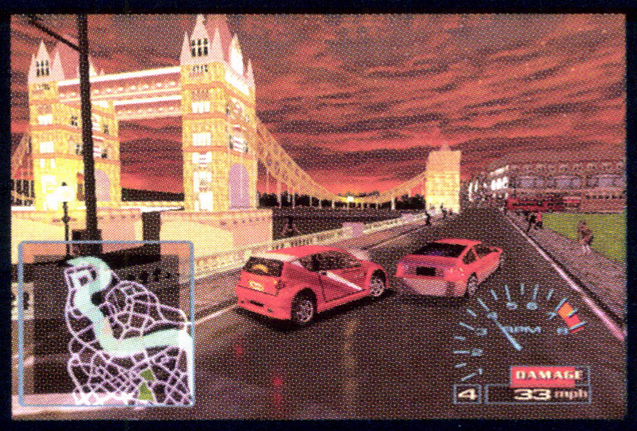
You know the rules, there are no rules.

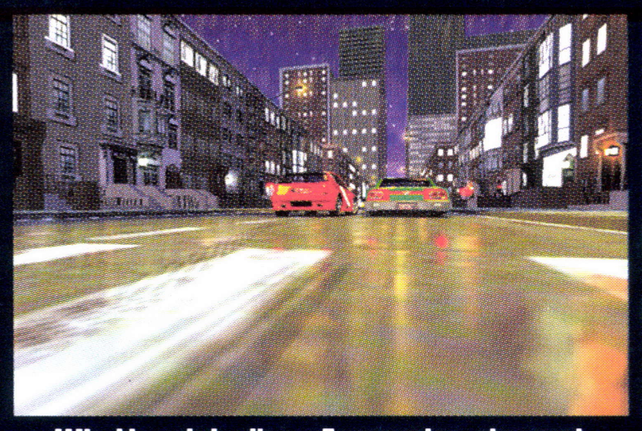
RELEASE DATE: PLAYSTATION 2 LAUNCH

CUTTING EDGE SOUNDTRACK FROM SOME OF THE WORLD'S LEADING TECHNO/DRUM AND BASS ARTISTS - DOM AND ROLAND, DERRICK MAY AND SURGEON

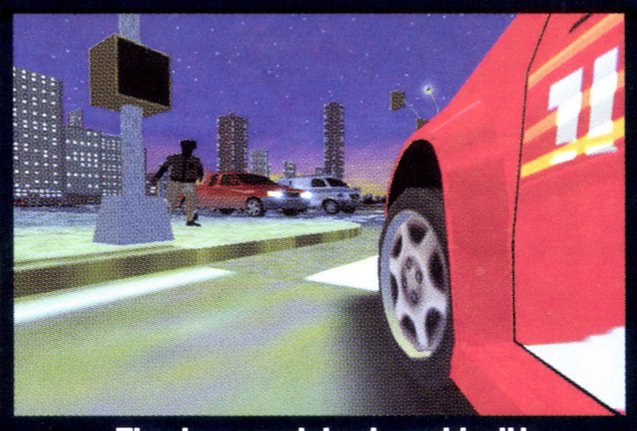
R 575BWY□□ 8 □□ROCKSTAR 575BWY□□ 9 □□ROCKSTAR 575BWY□□ 10 □□ROCKSTAR 575BWY□□ 11 □□ROCK

Race across two accurately modeled cities - New York and London!





Win the pink slips of opposing players! Rise up through the ranks in the illicit world of the Midnight Club.



Play in a persistent world with interactive traffic, pedestrians and law enforcement.

8 8A 9 9A 10 10A 11

WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/MIDNIGHTCLUB

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Angel STUDIOS

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

counterbalance

Mavin Shadow

R★

editor's comments

Rundown *What features does the product have to offer the consumer/end user?*

Hype & Marketing *How will the product be supported prior to and during its life on the shelf?*

Sales Pitch *What do you say to consumers to pique their interest in the product?*

Competition *Are there similar products fighting for the consumer's attention?*

Bottom Line *In the end, it all boils down to one thing: will the product sell?*

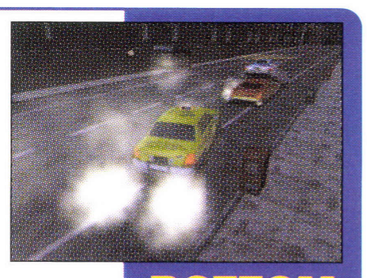
GameWEEK Reviews *reflect the sales potential of a specific product. Each review is an evaluation of a product's potential performance at retail. They are designed to provide retail buyers and store managers with the most accurate, up to date information available regarding upcoming releases.* GameWEEK Reviews *do not attempt to evaluate products on their technical merits or gameplay the way an enthusiast magazine does, although these are factors in the overall grade.* GameWEEK Reviews *do not intend to help or hinder a product's overall success in any way.*

Midnight Club

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B

Publisher Rockstar
Developer Angel Studios
Available Now
Genre Fighting
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.rockstargames.com
212.334.6633



Rundown Anyone looking for heaping helping of *Driver* on the PlayStation 2 will find the next best thing in Rockstar's latest offering. *Midnight Club* is best described as an amalgam, taking pieces and parts from such games as *Tokyo Extreme Racer*, *Super Runabout* and the aforementioned *Driver*. The graphics, although not the best ever seen, definitely have a solid, next-gen look to them and provide more than a taste of what Sony's machine is capable of. Long load times is one price to pay for the eye candy, though. Gameplay-wise, *Midnight Club* doesn't really pull out anything revolutionary, but what it does do it does well.

Hype & Marketing As of press time, none was made available.

Sales Pitch "Wish you had *Driver* for PS2? This is close and it looks sweet."

Competition Stealing the thunder: *Moto GP*, *Smuggler's Run*, *Wild Wild Racing*, and *Ridge Racer V*.

BOTTOM LINE
Midnight Club controls well, looks good and has some nice gameplay mechanics. PS2 owners could do a lot worse than this. Not bad. Not bad at all.
—Jim Loftus

Unreal Tournament

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B

Publisher Infogrames
Developer Epic Games
Available Oct 26
Genre First Person Shooter
No. of Players 1-4
MSRP $49.99
Contact Info
www.infogrames.com
408.985.1700
Other Supports Link Cable, USB Mouse and Keyboard

Rundown The developers at Epic have been working overtime to get *Unreal Tournament* ready for the PS2 launch. This is a faithful port of the PC version and features the same four modes of play: Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Domination and Assault. *UT* supports four player, split-screen frag fests, and while veteran consolers may not have trouble with the control, others will definitely want to hook up the USB mouse and keyboard for total command. The graphics are sharp and the game modes are unmatched in any title.

Hype & Marketing *UT* already has big name recognition yet Infogrames is taking no chances. TV: MTV, ESPN and various WB and UPN shows. Print: consumer mags such as *WWF Magazine*, *Vibe* and *Stuff*, and spreads will be put in *EGM*, *Next Gen*, *OPM* and more. POP's include 6ft. standees, oversized boxes and counter cards.

Sales Pitch "You thought playing *Golden Eye* with your friends was fun?"

Competition *TimeSplitters*

BOTTOM LINE
UT delivers the goods and should find a decent niche in the launch day madness. This is the first big PC FPS port for the PS2, so sales should be brisk.
—Pete Gallagher

Moto GP

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B- RATING

Publisher Namco
Developer Namco
Available October 26
Genre Racing
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.namco.com
408.922.0712

Rundown Namco puts its spin on the racing genre for the PS2 launch with *Moto GP*. Players drive high-speed motorcycles on tracks scattered across the world. Its game modes include: Arcade, Season, Time Trial, Challenge and Vs. Challenge modes are places where players get to test their driving skills and unlock game secrets. Some may have a problem with the game's learning curve due to its emphasis on realistic braking and leaning into the turns, but the control does get easier over time. While the game's graphics are comparable to other PS2 launch titles, *Moto GP* shows its true colors with its replays.

Hype & Marketing *Moto GP* is featured in print ads with Namco's other two launch titles. There is also a section dedicated on the company website to the game.

Sales Pitch "Make a biker's dream come true on October 26 with *Moto GP*. They will be pleased."

Competition *Ridge Racer V*, *Smuggler's Run*, *Wild Wild Racing*

BOTTOM LINE
Moto GP is one of those games that people like more as they continue to play it, but don't expect it to attract the gaming masses.
—Bryan Intihar

Wild Wild Racing

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B- RATING

Publisher Interplay
Developer Rage
Available October 26
Genre Racing
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.interplay.com
949.553.6655

Rundown Interplay joins the PS2 launch madness with the off-road driving game *Wild Wild Racing*. What consumers will get with this title is racing action set in places around the world like India, Iceland and the good old United States. Players who seek to unlock more wacky cars should try their hand at the game's Challenge Mode. Expect to drive on varying surfaces, hostile weather conditions and at different times of the day. The control is tight and can be picked up easily even by the novice gamer. One thing *Wild Wild Racing* lacks though is a killer soundtrack.

Hype & Marketing As of press time, none was made available.

Sales Pitch "Enjoy off-road action? Then pick up *Wild Wild Racing* with your PS2."

Competition *Smuggler's Run*, *Ridge Racer V*, *Moto GP*

BOTTOM LINE
A strong title, but there are too many racing games for the PS2 at launch for it to make any significant sales numbers.
—Bryan Intihar

Street Fighter EX3

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B- RATING

Publisher Capcom
Developer Capcom
Available Now
Genre Fighting
No. of Players 1-4
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.capcom.com
408.774.0500

Rundown Capcom's PS2 entry has shipped early, but unfortunately the results are a mixed bag. *Street Fighter EX3* packs a lot of features and plenty of tried and true gameplay, but it's really hurting in the graphics department, especially when compared side-by-side with other PS2 brawlers set to line store shelves. Sure, the game has a colorful 3D look to it but it can't hold a candle to the incredible visual splendor that is *Tekken TAG* or *DOA2*. True, graphics aren't everything, but they count more in a big way when a company is looking to increase the sex appeal of its brand new console. Regardless, *EX3* does offer Street Fighter aficionados a chance to see their heroes in action on that new black box....

Hype & Marketing Print ads have appeared in most game publications since summer and will continue to run through the holidays.

Sales Pitch "Serious Street Fighter fans need only apply."

Competition Namco's Tekken *TAG Tournament*, Tecmo's *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore*, and Midway's *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*.

BOTTOM LINE
Capcom usually knows how to get maximum results from a piece of hardware, but not this time. SF EX3 isn't bad, but most PS2 buyers will pass and go straight to Tekken.
—Jim Loftus

Armored Core 2

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B+ RATING

Publisher Agetec
Developer From Software
Available October 26
Genre Action
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.agetec.com
408.736.0800
Other Memory Card Recommended

Rundown Agetec and From Software bring consumers one of the first mech-style games for the PS2, with *Armored Core 2*. The power of the console really shows off the beauty and amount of detail put into each mech. Even better, with 14 areas of customization, players can spend hours making their fighting machine fit to their liking. In addition to the standard game missions, *Armored Core 2* possesses a nice Two-Player Split Screen Mode for multiplayer action. The only thing *AC2* has working against it is the lack of popularity for mech games by the mainstream.

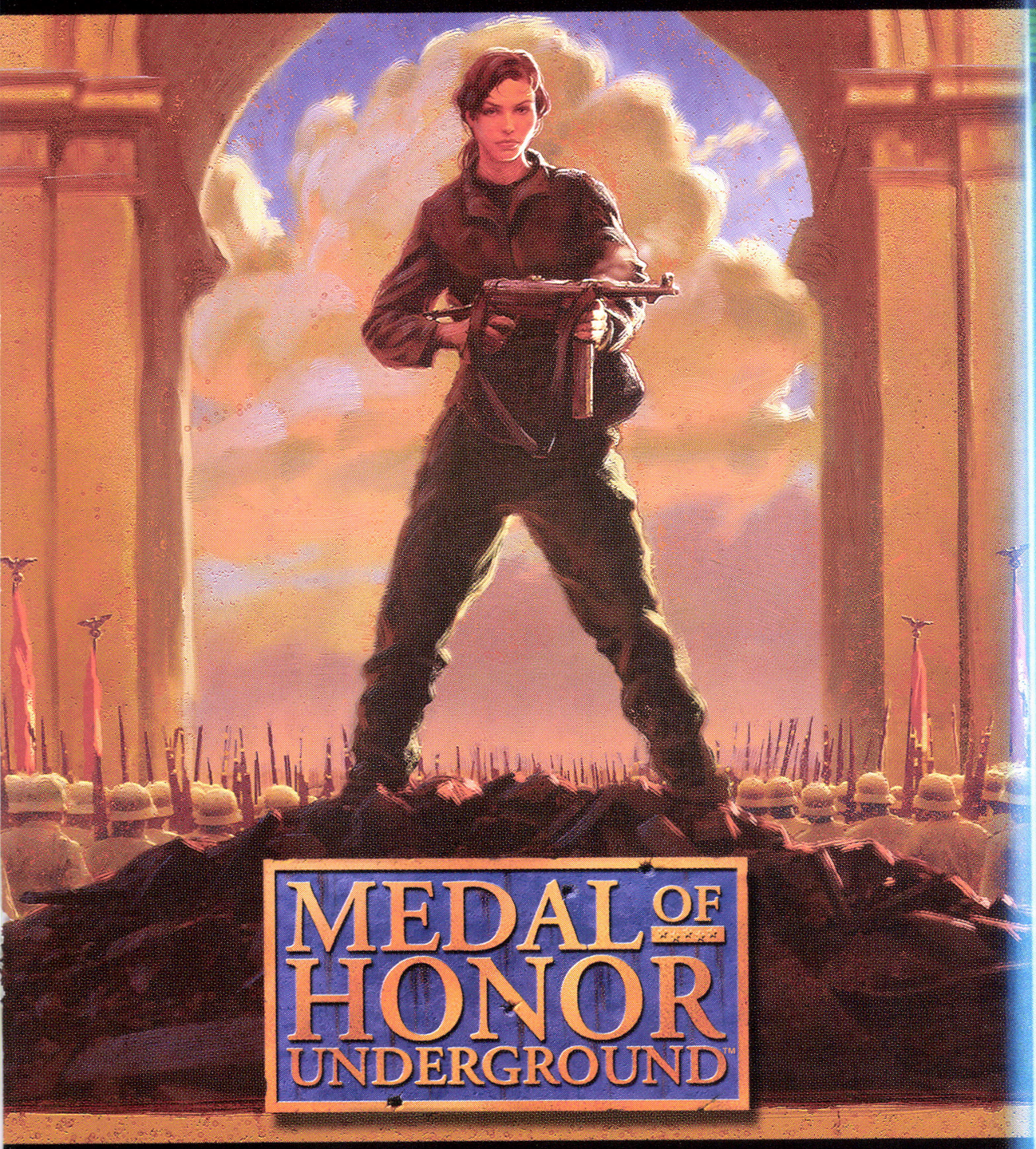
Hype & Marketing Print ads will appear in all major gaming publications. *AC2* is featured on the cover of the November issue of *GameFan*, and retailers will receive oversized *AC2* boxes one month before launch.

Sales Pitch "*AC2* is perfect for console owners who always wanted to give a mech-title a try."

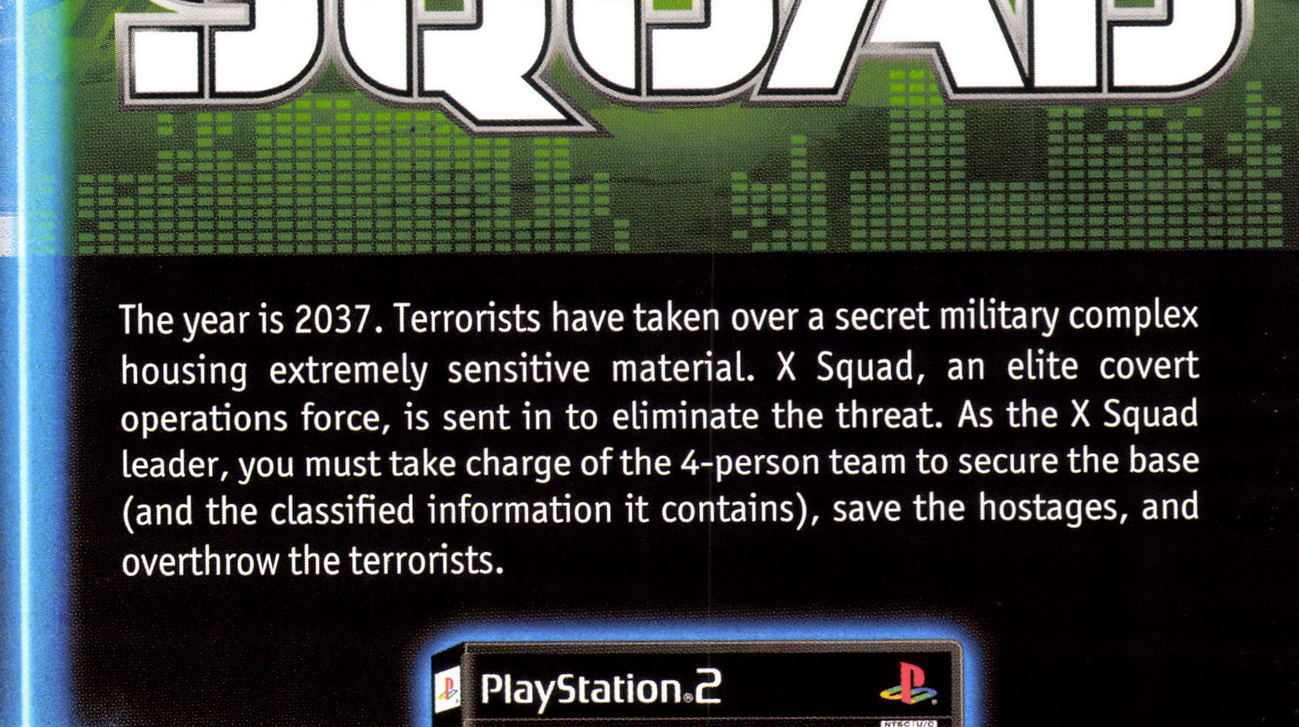
Competition Working Designs' *Gungriffon Blaze*

BOTTOM LINE
With the strong press coverage and marketing campaign, AC2 could achieve some of the best sales for a mech-title.
—Bryan Intihar

Battle the Horror of the Past or the Terror of the Future

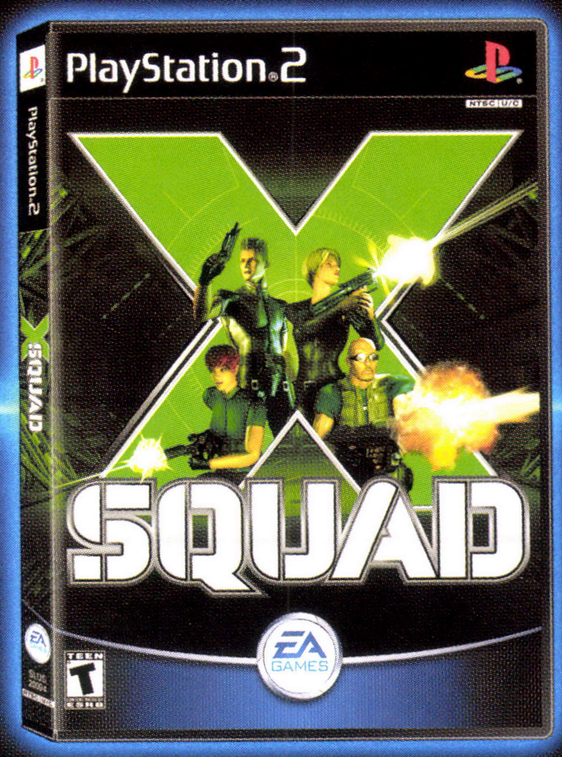


In the next chapter of the highly-acclaimed 1999 hit Medal of Honor, Manon's work in the French Resistance proved vital to your cause. Now, Manon's cause is your cause. Lead Manon from her beginnings in the Resistance through her recruitment by the OSS to thwart the German onslaught. Armed with an arsenal of new weapons, you must combat tanks, half-tracks, and Gestapo thugs across Europe and North Africa. The fight against tyranny is in your hands.



The year is 2037. Terrorists have taken over a secret military complex housing extremely sensitive material. X Squad, an elite covert operations force, is sent in to eliminate the threat. As the X Squad leader, you must take charge of the 4-person team to secure the base (and the classified information it contains), save the hostages, and overthrow the terrorists.

EA GAMES™



for the PlayStation® game console

for the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system

TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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THIS SOFTWARE IS COMPATIBLE WITH PLAYSTATION 2 CONSOLES WITH THE NTSC U/C DESIGNATION. U.S. AND FOREIGN PATENTS PENDING.

editor's comments

Rundown *What features does the product have to offer the consumer/end user?*

Hype & Marketing *How will the product be supported prior to and during its life on the shelf?*

Sales Pitch *What do you say to consumers to pique their interest in the product?*

Competition *Are there similar products fighting for the consumer's attention?*

Bottom Line *In the end, it all boils down to one thing: will the product sell?*

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EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW A RATING

Ridge Racer V

Publisher Namco
Developer Namco
Available Now
Genre Racing
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.namco.com
408.922.0712

Rundown Namco's premiere racing series never looked so good. *Ridge Racer V* packs eye-searing visuals and good old "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" gameplay. As the scenery slips past at 60 frames per second, one can't help but laugh in remembrance of the original PlayStation game released five years ago. Ironically, consumers will find that underneath *Ridge Racer V*'s visual splendor lurks one major disappointment: the gameplay hasn't changed. Yes, all the yummy PS2 graphical goodness in the world can't hide the fact that this really is the same meal only this time, dressed up and served on a silver tray instead of slopped onto a paper plate. Thankfully, Namco's *Ridge Racer* games taste great to begin with...PlayStation 2 owners will eat this up regardless.

Hype & Marketing As of press time, none was made available.

Sales Pitch "You can't leave the store without this game. It's absolutely beautiful and the ultimate racing game for new PS2 owners."

Competition *Midnight Club, Moto GP, Smuggler's Run, Wild Wild Racing.*

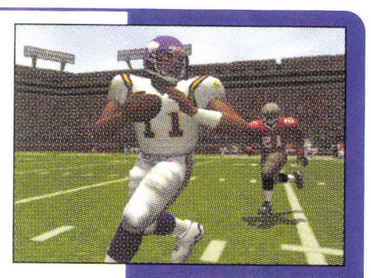
BOTTOM LINE
Forget that this is, for the most part, just a graphically super-charged version of past Ridge Racer efforts; RR V is a work of art and a must-have for PS2 owners.
—Jim Loftus

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW A+ RATING

Madden NFL 2001

Publisher EA Sports
Developer EA Sports
Available October 26
Genre Sports
No. of Players 1-8
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.easports.com
650.628.1500
Other Multi-Tap. Memory Card



Rundown *Madden NFL 2001* is by far EA Sports' crown jewel of PS2 launch titles. The game has everything: sharp graphics, tight control, tons of options and a strong AI. Players will be able to use all of today's NFL squads or go back in time and play as some of the all-time greats. Even the World League teams are included. The Create-A-Player option is one of the most detailed ever found in a sports game. Besides some of the player models seeming a bit "squatty" looking, it is hard to find anything else wrong with *Madden NFL 2001*.

Hype & Marketing EA Sports has already begun with TV commercials for the game.

Sales Pitch "Simply put: The *Madden* series + PS2 = A Must Buy."

Competition Who knows? SCEA still has not released any details about *GameDay 2001* for the PS2.

BOTTOM LINE
Stock up on as many copies as possible...Madden NFL 2001 could easily be the best-selling launch title for the PlayStation 2.
—Bryan Intihar

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B+ RATING

Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2

Publisher Midway
Developer Midway
Available October 26
Genre Sports
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.midway.com
773.961.2222
Other Memory Card Recommended

Rundown Midway follows up last year's stellar boxing title with *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2* for the Sony PlayStation 2. There are four game modes: Arcade, Championship, Tournament and Team Battle. The Championship Mode has been beefed up to give *R2R: Round 2* a bit more longevity. In addition, there are a slew of new boxers that include the likes of a Robotic Punching Bag, a Hippie and Cowboy. There are even some famous people too. However, don't expect the graphics to be that much different from the Dreamcast version.

Hype & Marketing As of press time, there was no marketing information available.

Sales Pitch "A strong boxing title to have for the PS2 until *Knockout Kings 2001* comes out in March."

Competition EA Sports' *Knockout Kings 2001*

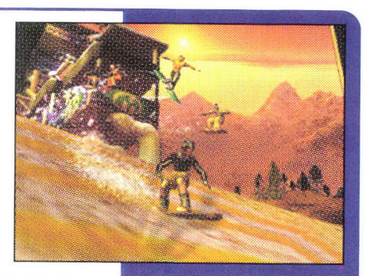
BOTTOM LINE
People who like the original will jump at the chance to buy the sequel. Yet, those looking for a true-boxing simulation will have to wait until KK 2001 next March.
—Bryan Intihar

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW A RATING

SSX

Publisher EA Sports
Developer EA Sports
Available October 26
Genre Extreme Sports
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.eagames.com
650.628.1500



Rundown Don't let all the press for *Madden NFL 2001* fool you; EA Sports has another tremendous PS2 launch title. It's name? *SSX*. This snowboarding game has unbelievable visuals, impressive level designs and tons of tricks. *SSX*'s career mode lets players unlock new characters, courses and boards. The game possesses eight courses as well as eight riders from all over the world. EA Sports has even added a two-player mode for some nice multiplayer action. This is just one of those games that looks great and plays even better.

Hype & Marketing There will be TV ads, print ads in consumer publications, in-store POP and online advertising on popular game websites.

Sales Pitch "Want to put back some flash into your snowboarding skills? Then check out *SSX*."

Competition Konami's *ESPN X Games-Snowboarding*

BOTTOM LINE
Overall, SSX will satisfy the majority of snowboarding fans and convince others to give it a try on October 26.
—Bryan Intihar

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW A RATING

Tekken Tag Tournament

Publisher Namco
Developer Namco
Available Now
Genre Fighting:
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.namco.com
408.321.0531
Other Memory Card Recommended

Rundown One of the most popular fighting series finds its way to the PlayStation 2 in time for the hardware launch. The gameplay is slightly different with each player having a partner, hence, the name *Tekken Tag Tournament*. Players can toggle back and forth between characters and set their opponents up for some devastating combos. The character lineup is massive with over 20 fighters from past *Tekken* titles. Even though the environments are not fully 3D, they are much more detailed than the arcade version of *TTT*. The U.S. version will also feature some new game modes and a graphics engine upgrade to eliminate those "jaggies."

Hype & Marketing None was available as of press time.

Sales Pitch "If you liked the past *Tekken* titles, this is really a no-brainer of a purchase."

Competition Capcom's *Street Fighter EX3*, Tecmo's *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore*.

BOTTOM LINE
With the amount of fans the series has gained throughout the years, many consumers will make TTT one of the first titles in their PS2 library.
—Bryan Intihar

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GW B RATING

Smuggler's Run

Publisher Rockstar Games
Developer Angel Studios
Available Now
Genre Driving/Action
No. of Players 1-2
MSRP $49.95
Contact Info
www.rockstargames.com
212.334.6633

Rundown The goal in this PS2 launch title is to successfully pick up and drop off contraband while avoiding the border patrol and other smugglers. *Smuggler's Run* features six different types of cars and eight teams. Besides the standard missions, there are other game modes such as challenging other smuggling groups to see who can deliver the most contraband. The two-player mode should also increase the game's replay value. The environments are enormous and the control is very easy. The biggest thing going against *Smuggler's Run* is the fact that is doesn't have the name recognition like some other PS2 launch titles

Hype & Marketing Along with print ads in trade and consumer publications, there is a *Smuggler's Run* website.

Sales Pitch "A different driving game that is good for the novice game player, and has enough options to keep the hardcore happy."

Competition *Wild Wild Racing, Moto GP, Mid'night Club: Street Racing, Ridge Racer V, Driving Emotion Type-S*

BOTTOM LINE
Smuggler's Run is for those looking for a different type of driving game at the PS2 launch; however, its initial sales may be hurt by some high-profile launch games.
—Bryan Intihar

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