

**9** GAMES THAT  
WILL SAVE  
THE PS3!

**THE FUTURE OF THE PS3**  
SONY'S CEO ANSWERS THE CRITICS!

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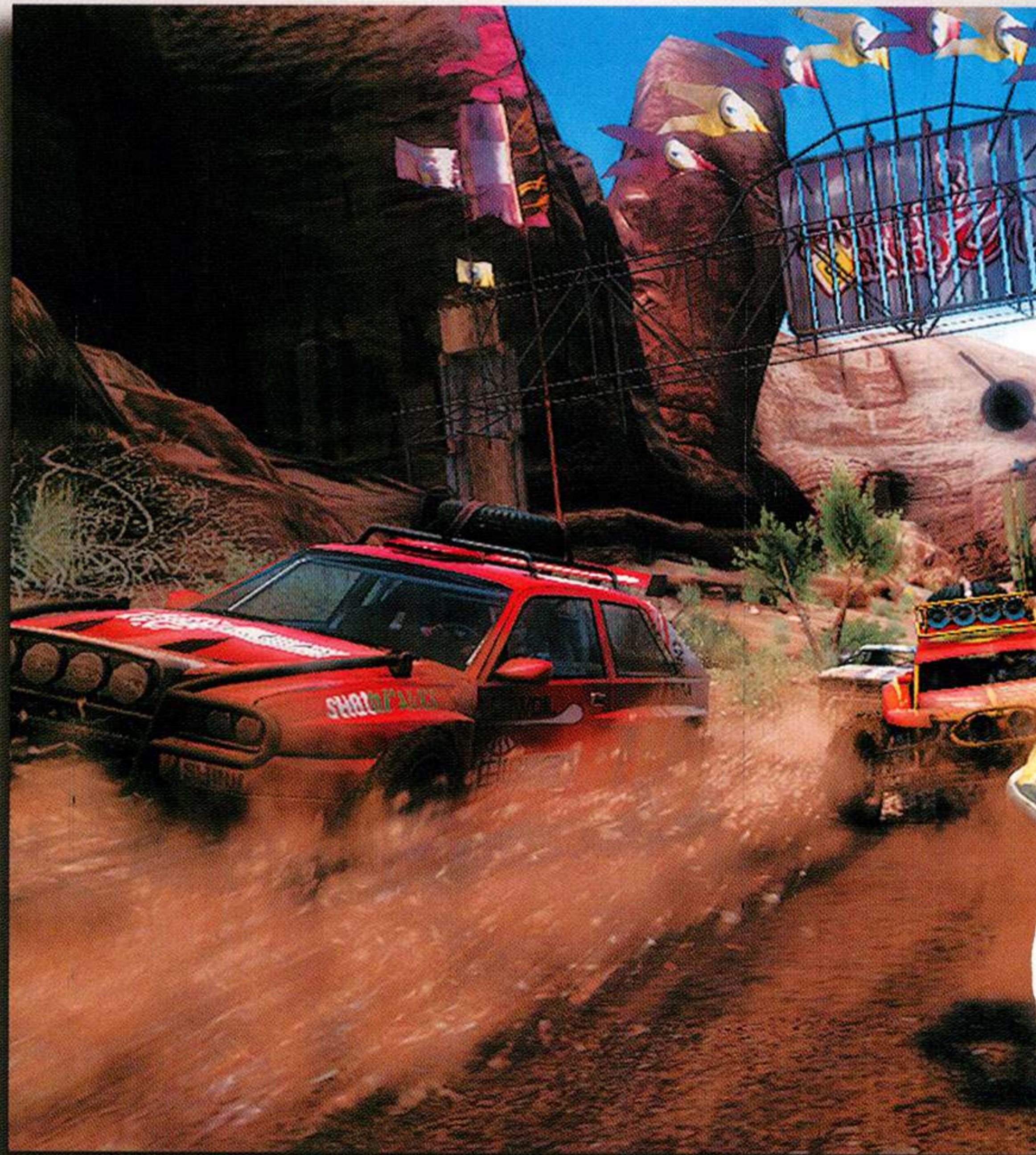
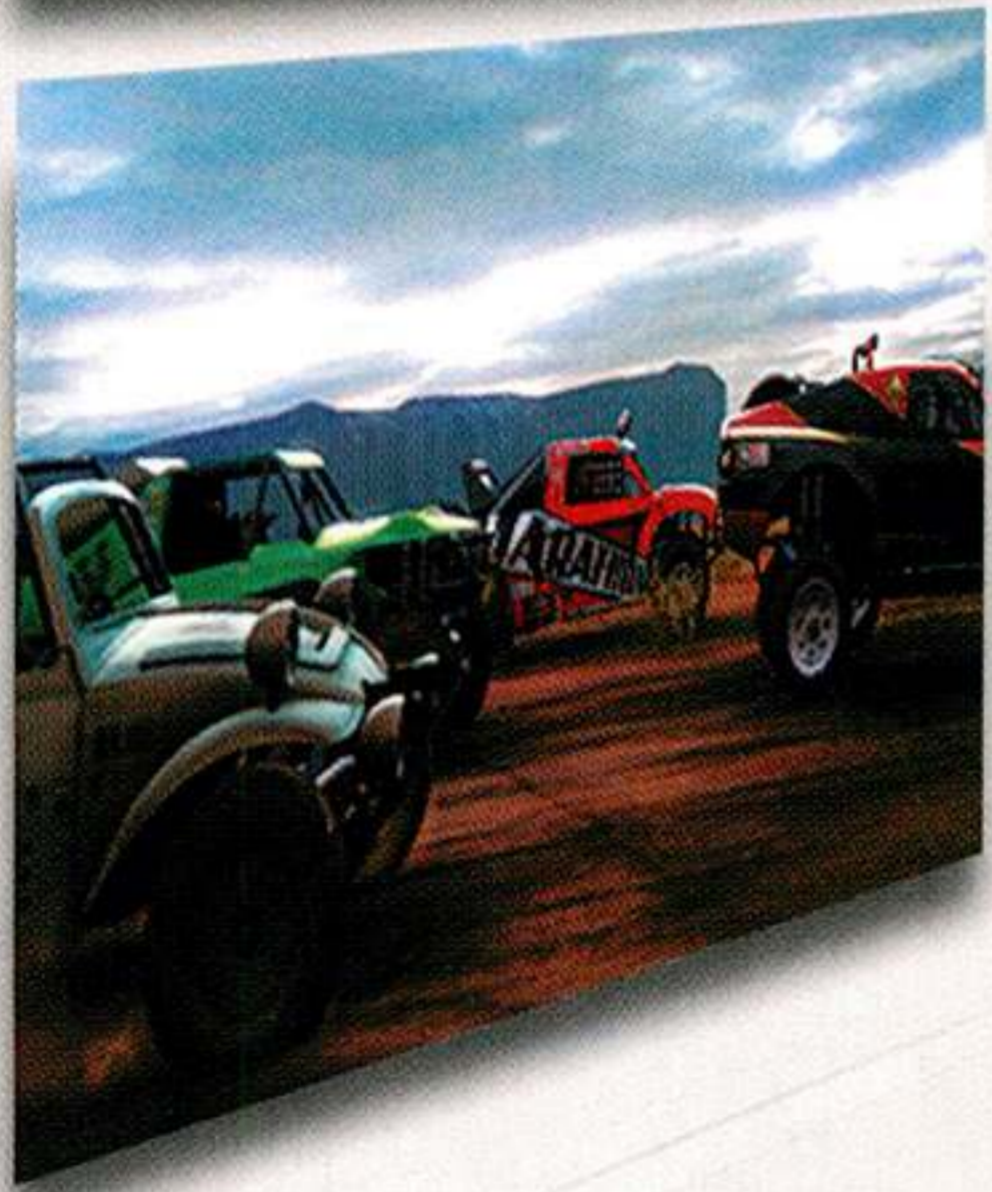
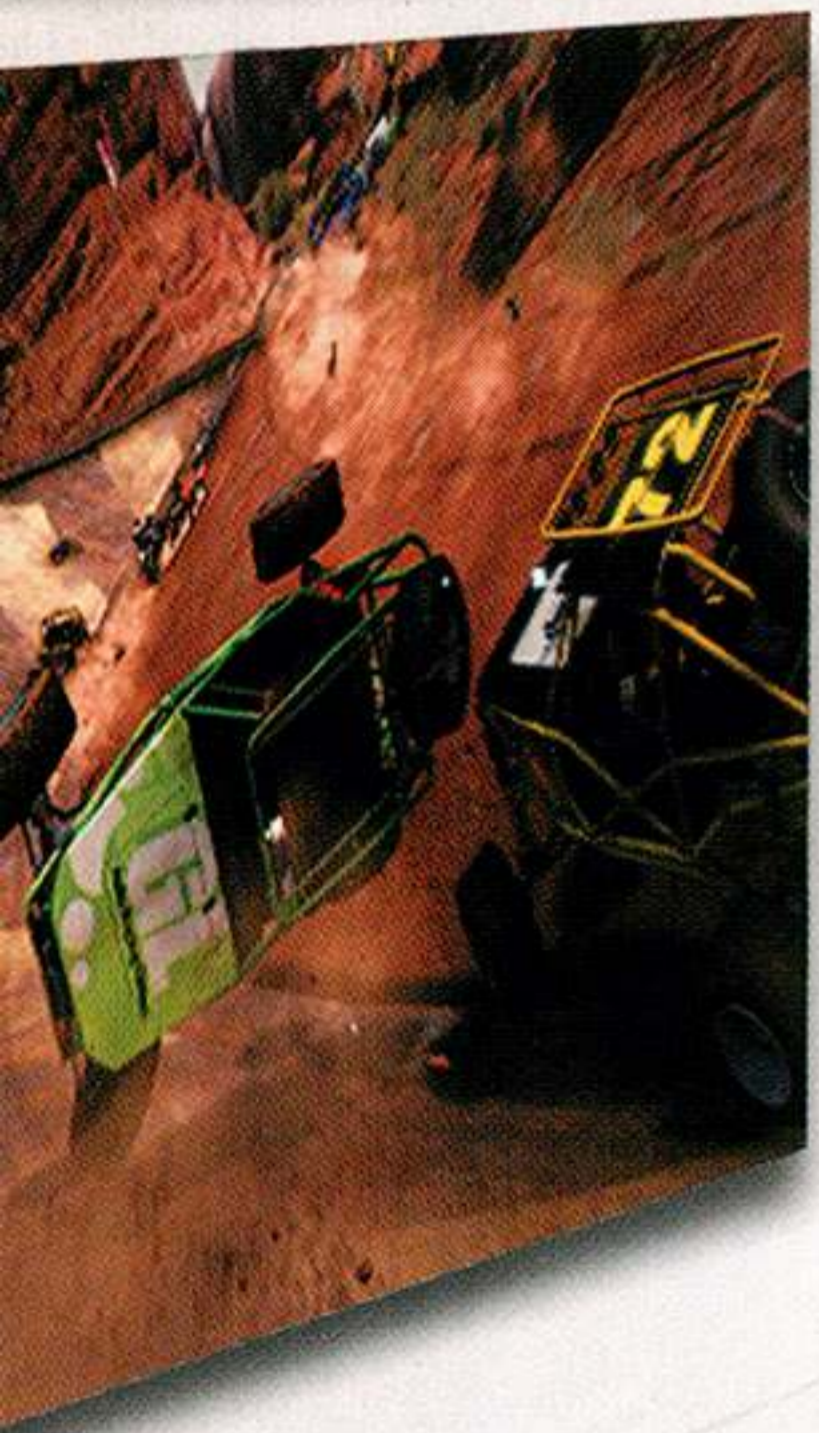
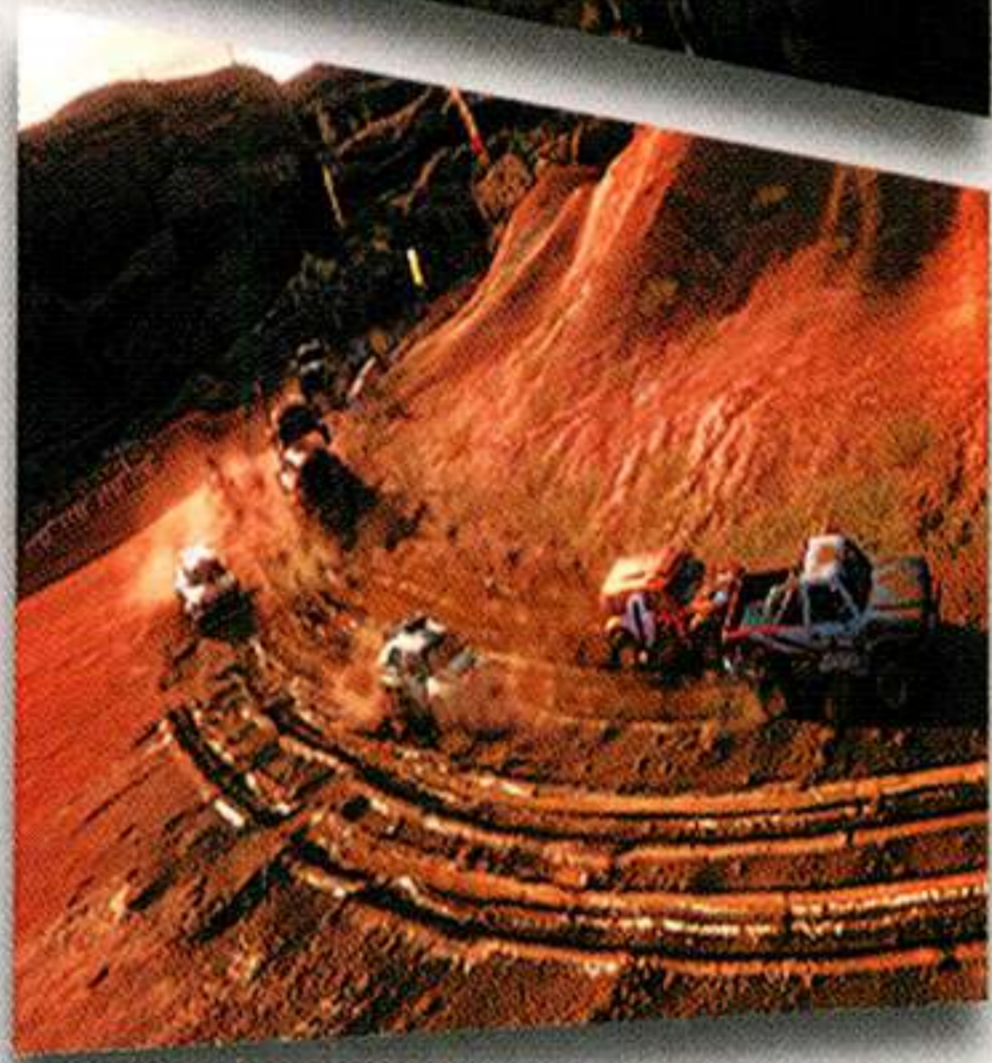
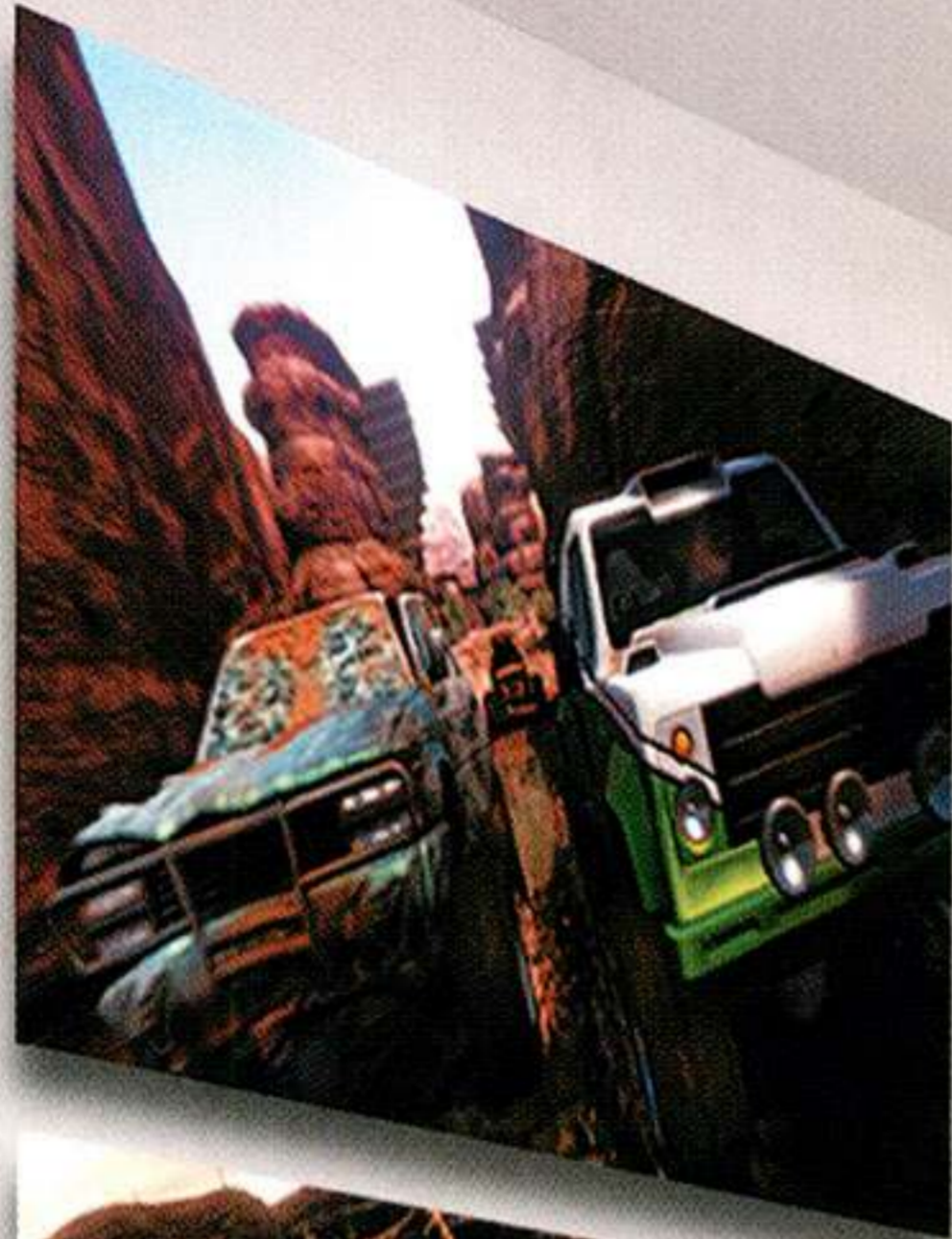
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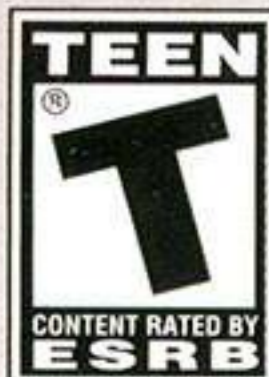
GUITAR HERO II  
DEF JAM: ICON  
GOD OF WAR II  
THE CLUB  
TURNING POINT AND MORE!

**100+**  
GAMES  
THIS ISSUE



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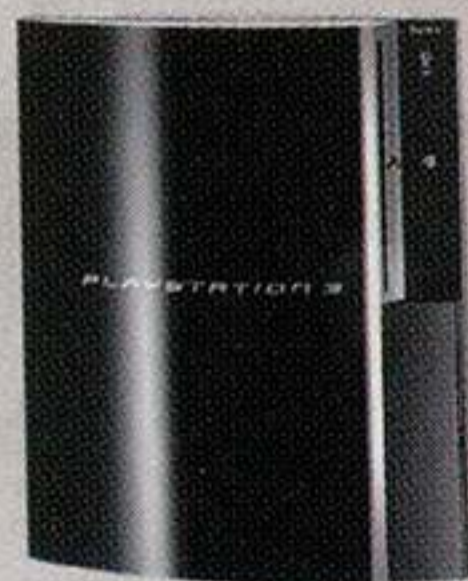
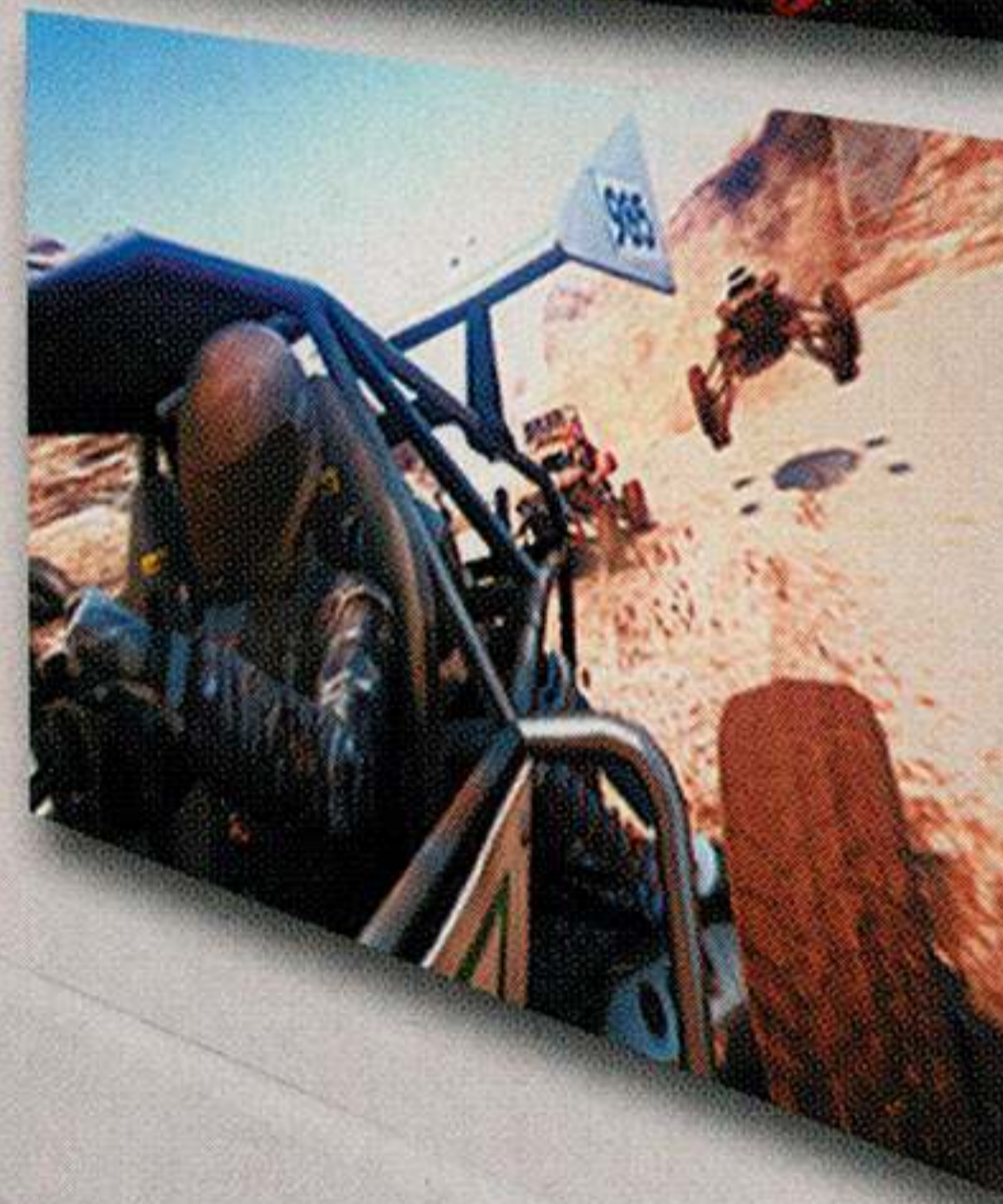
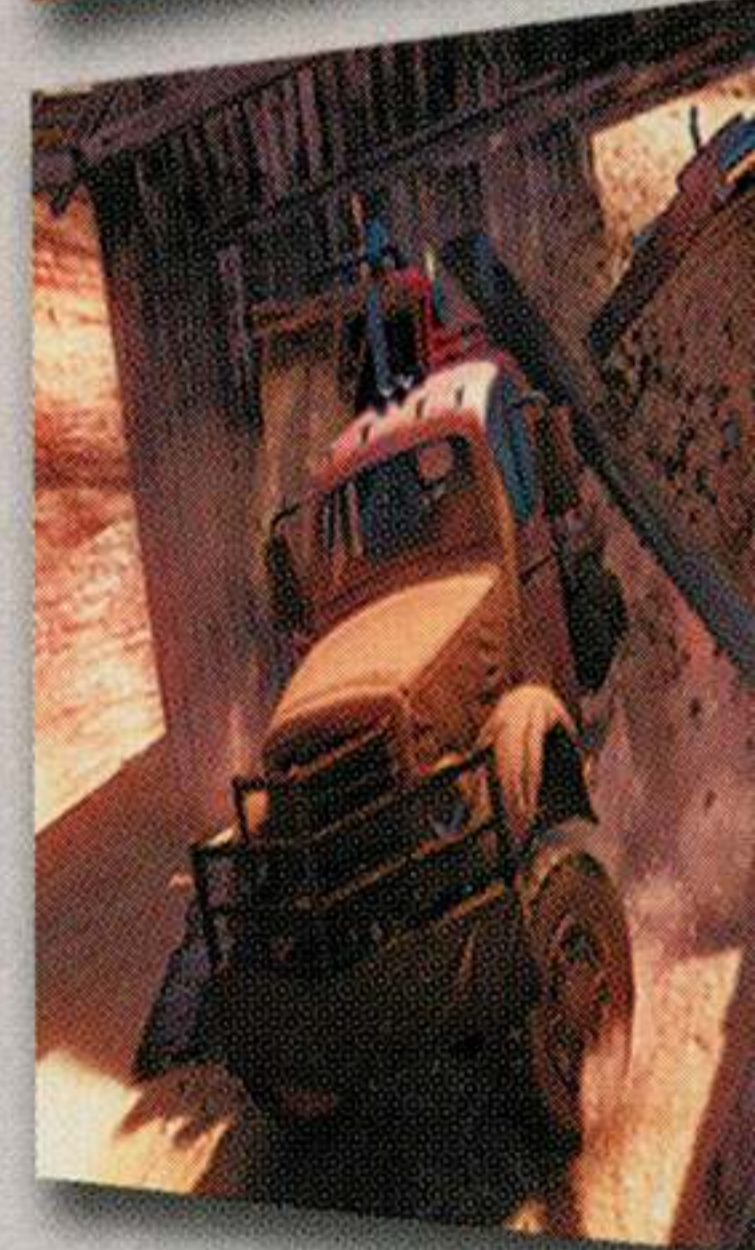
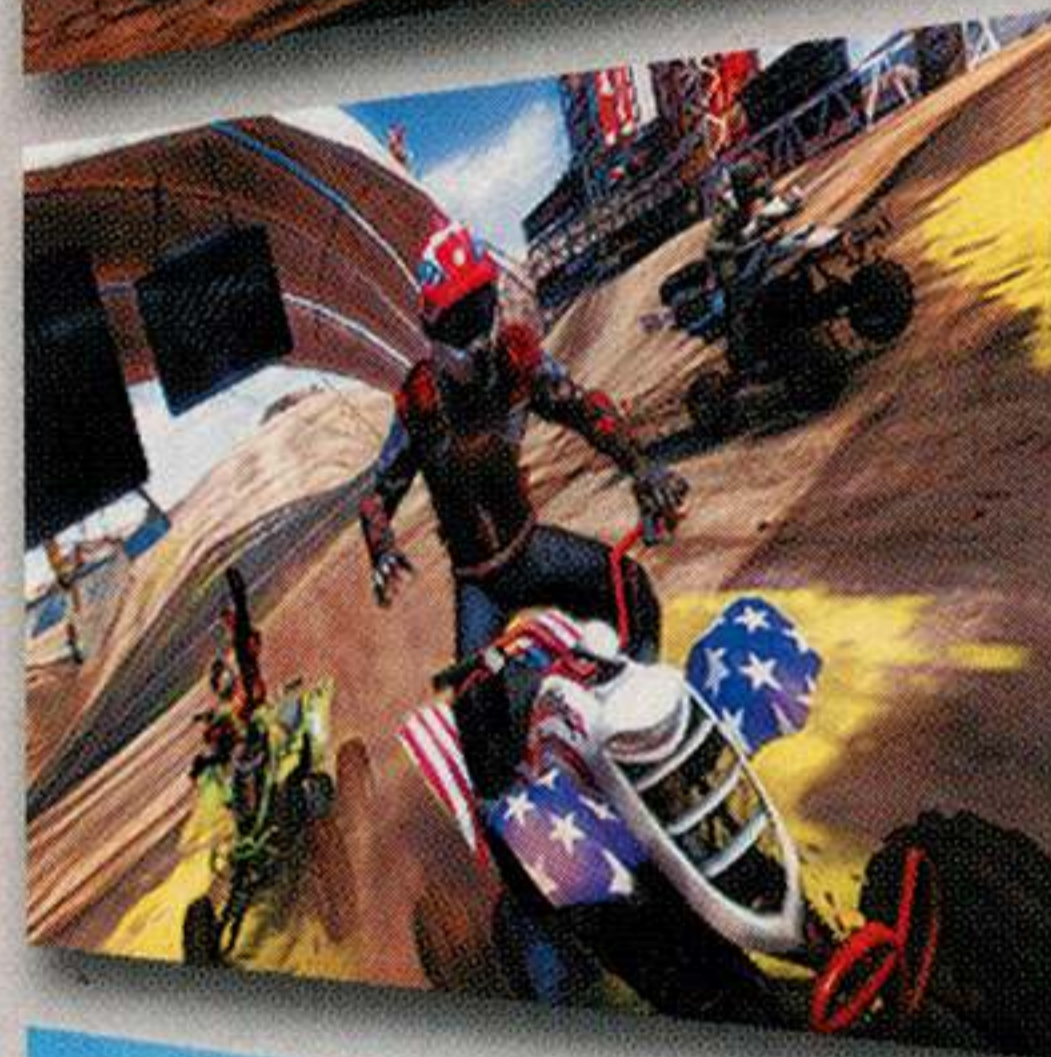
Language  
Violence

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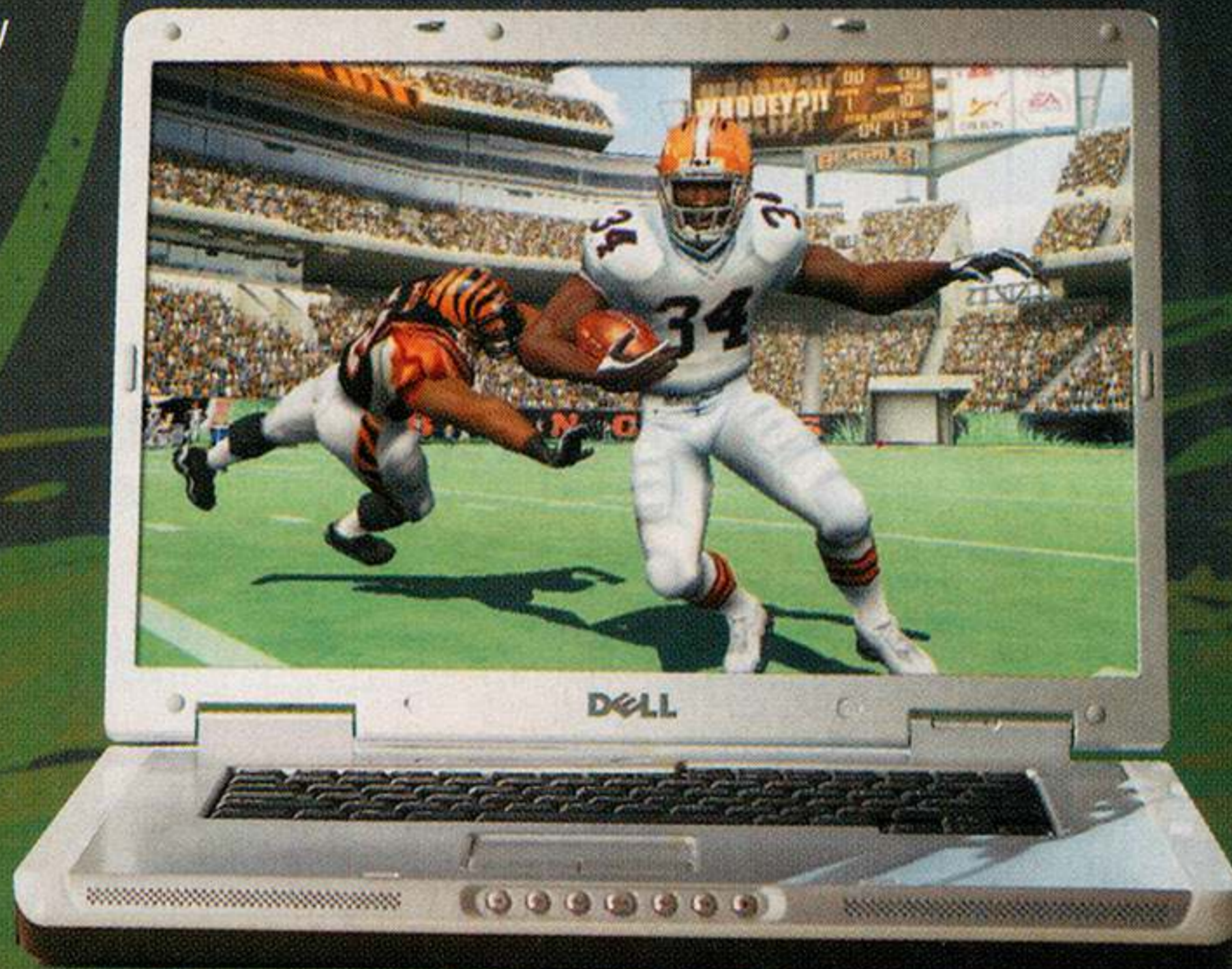
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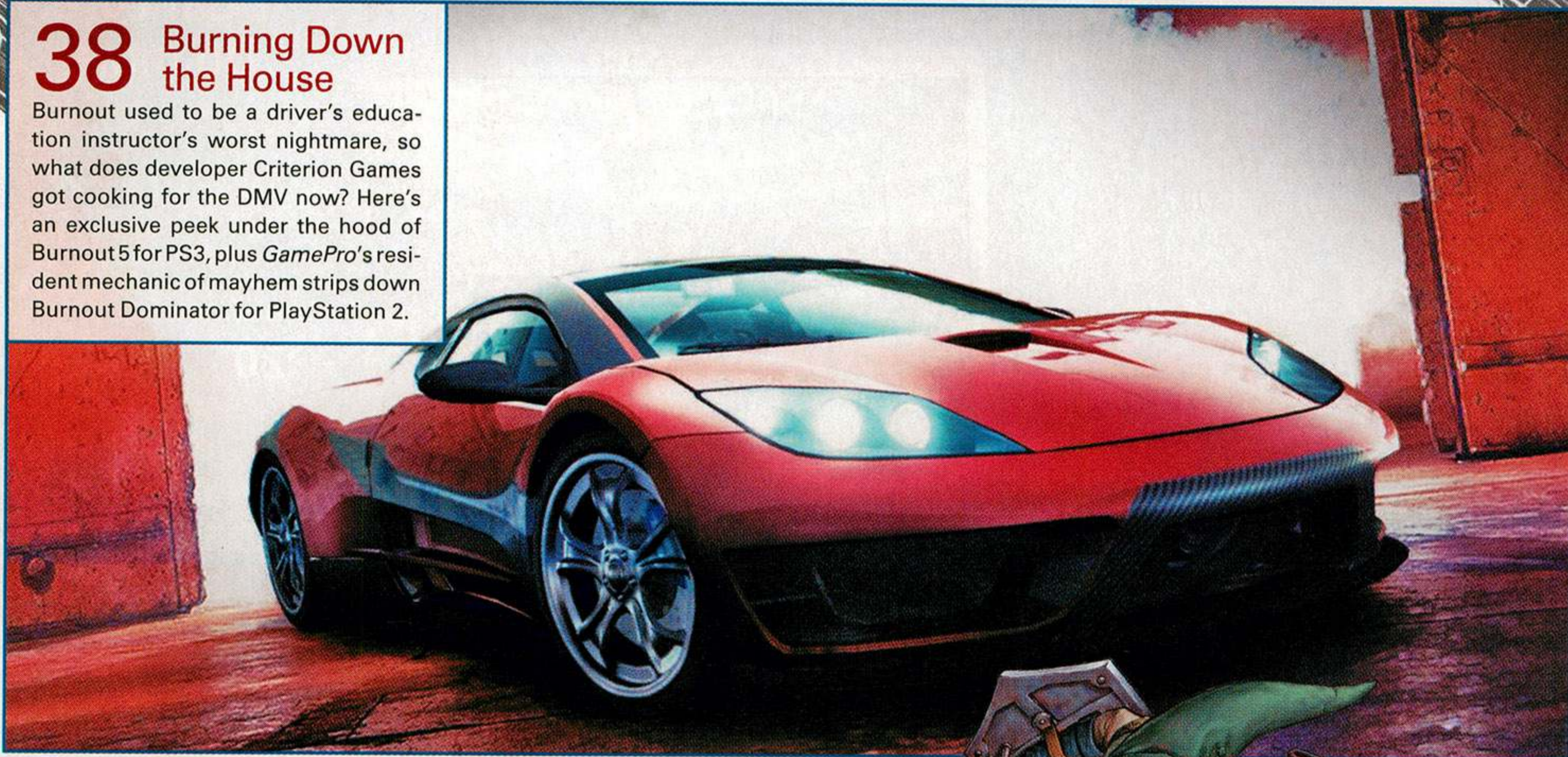
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(for hearing/speech impaired: 1-877-DELL-TTY toll-free).

## ★ Features

### 38 Burning Down the House

Burnout used to be a driver's education instructor's worst nightmare, so what does developer Criterion Games got cooking for the DMV now? Here's an exclusive peek under the hood of Burnout 5 for PS3, plus *GamePro's* resident mechanic of mayhem strips down Burnout Dominator for PlayStation 2.



### 70 ProStrategy: The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess (Wii, GameCube)

The toughest challenges facing the latest incarnation of the hero in Legend of Zelda are hunting down and defeating the gigantic bosses. This strategy guide shows just how it's done.



### 54 You Don't Know Jack

Sony Computer Entertainment's new president and CEO, Jack Tretton, goes head-to-head with the naysayers and fanboys who are putting down the PS3. And if you're still not sure that the PS3 is here to play, our take on the blistering games due out this year should seal the deal.



### 66 What Is "The Club?"

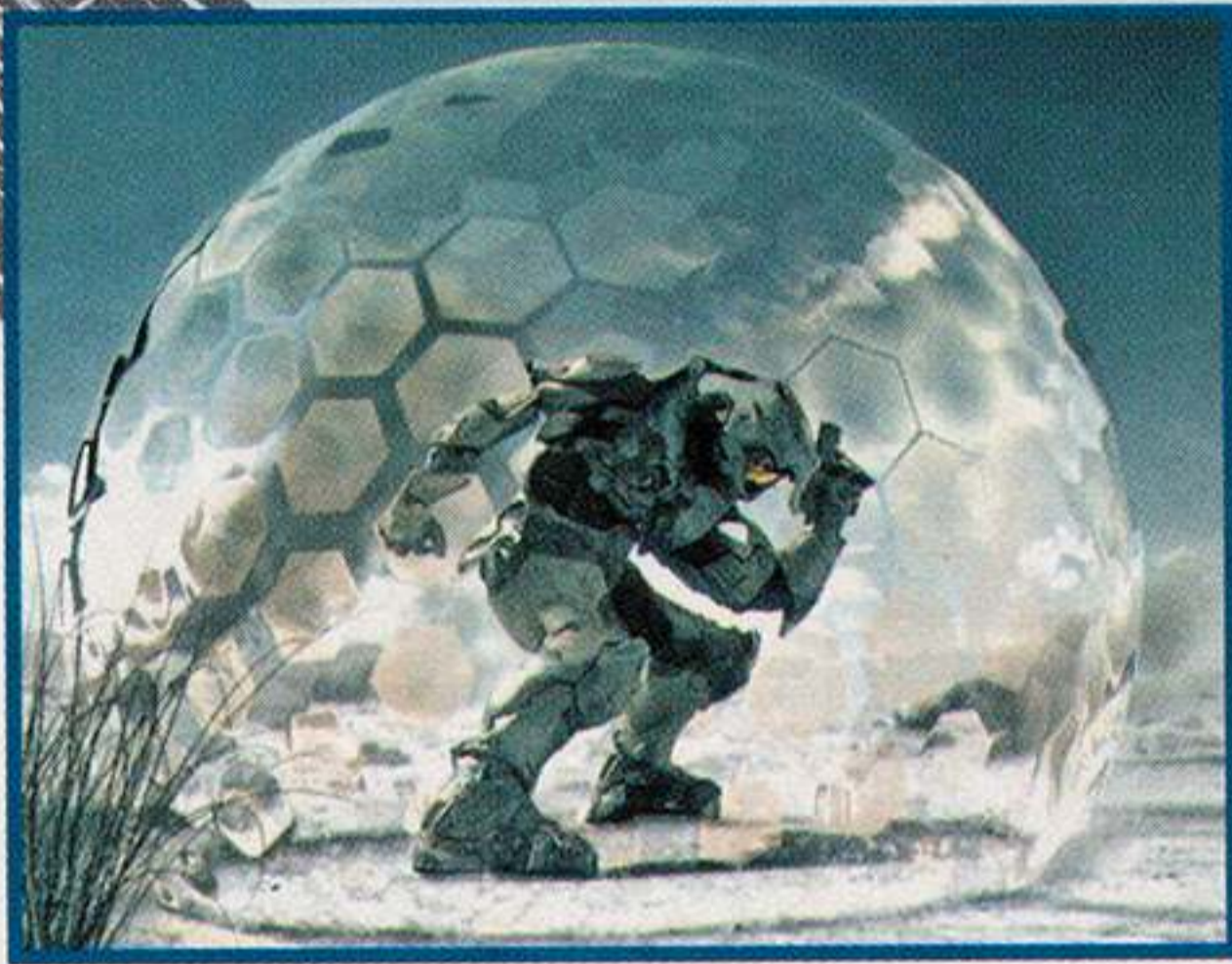
Sega's got a secret, but now we invite you to become exclusive members of the secret society of gun aficionados known only as The Club.



# ★ Departments

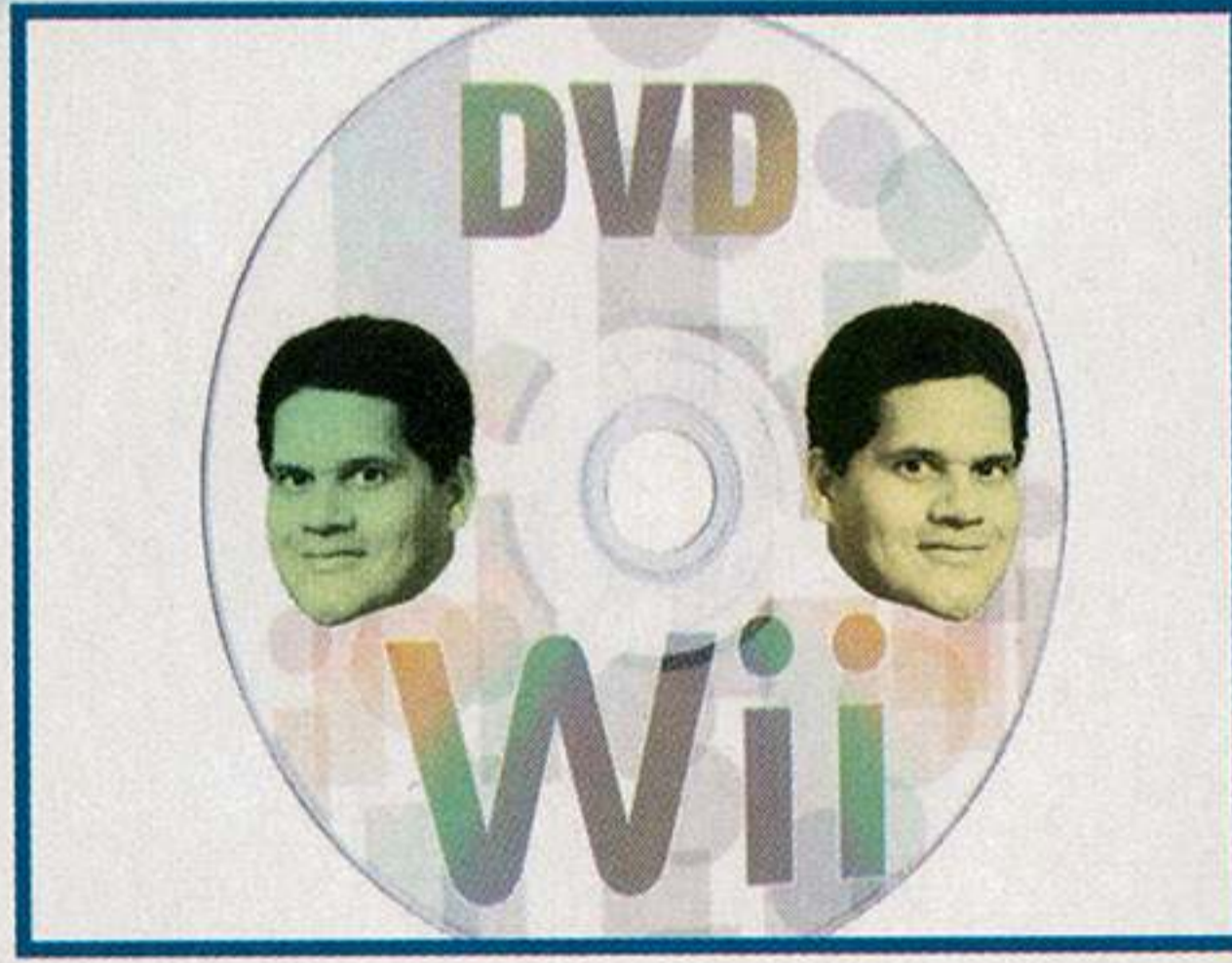
Spawn Point

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## 14 Halo 3: From the Front Lines

Forces are massing behind the launch of Halo 3 this fall. Here's some advanced reconnaissance on the Xbox 360's champion-in-the-making.



## 18 Wii Are the Champions

The Wii came out swinging and scored a hit over the holidays. Nintendo of America's President and CEO Reggie Fils-Aime reveals how they plan to keep the momentum going.

Opening Shots

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## Watch Out for Sony!

All the pieces of the next-generation puzzle are in place. With Sony and Nintendo ready to close their books on fiscal year 2006, just what do the two video game powerhouses have in store for us gamers next?

After Sony bombarded the public with pre-launch hype for the PlayStation 3, was anyone shocked that the console met some withering criticism when production numbers and then game lineup didn't quite live up to expectations? Not Jack Tretton, Sony Computer Entertainment president and CEO. In an exclusive interview, he explains why SCEA wasn't surprised at the reaction to the PS3 launch, and he lays out a convincing argument for why the console is on track. Plus, Tretton also explains why this next-generation system is the one to beat—not only in 2007, but in the far future as well.

Nintendo, on the other hand, is basking in the love the masses are showing the Wii. So we ask Nintendo of America, president and CEO, where the Wii is going from here...and, man, does he have an opinion!

Take it from us, a tidal wave of next-generation video games is about to come crashing in and we're seeing more titles than ever before. The new era in video games starts now, and 2007 may be one of the best seasons for games—and gamers—ever.

Sneak Previews

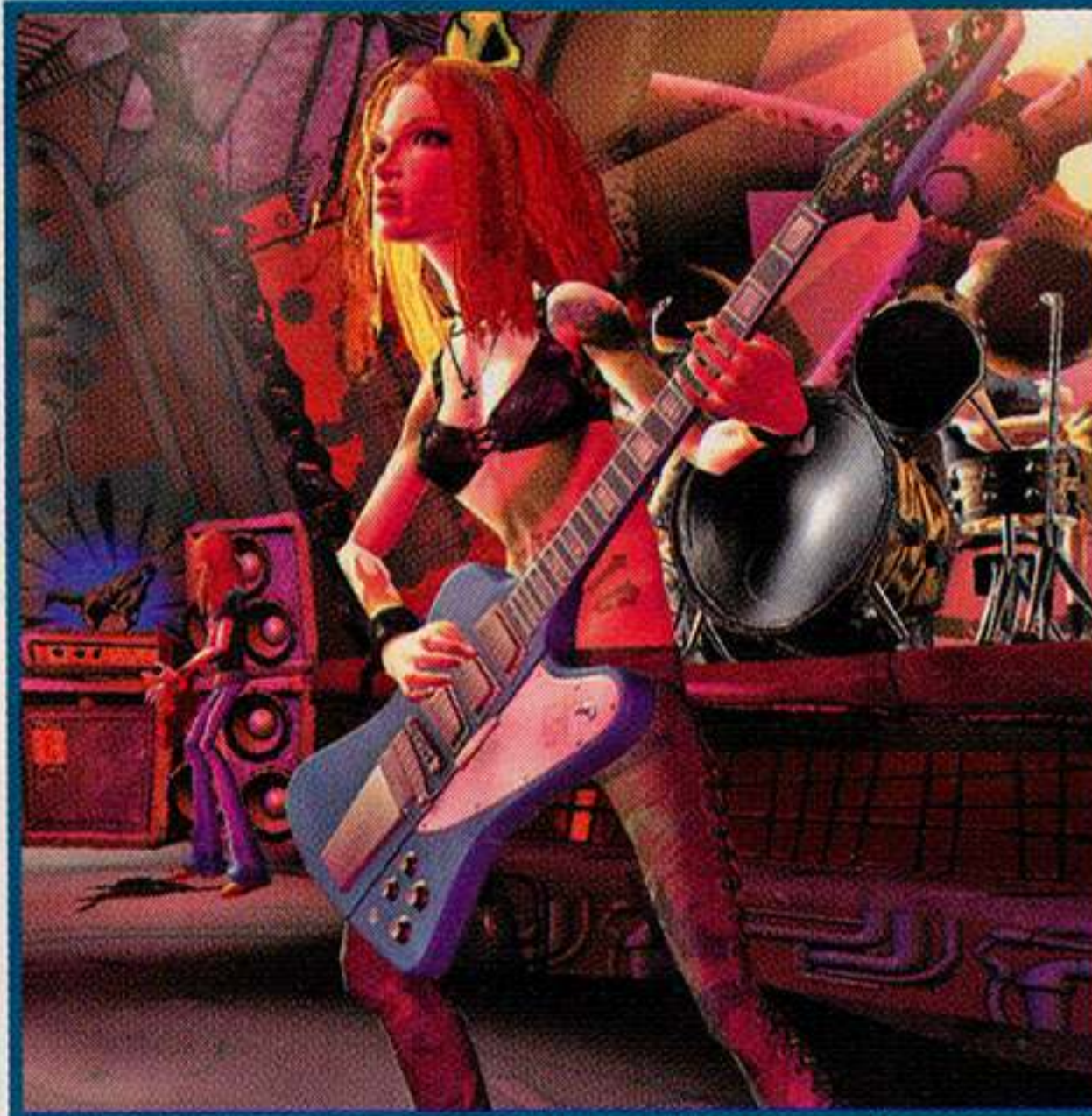
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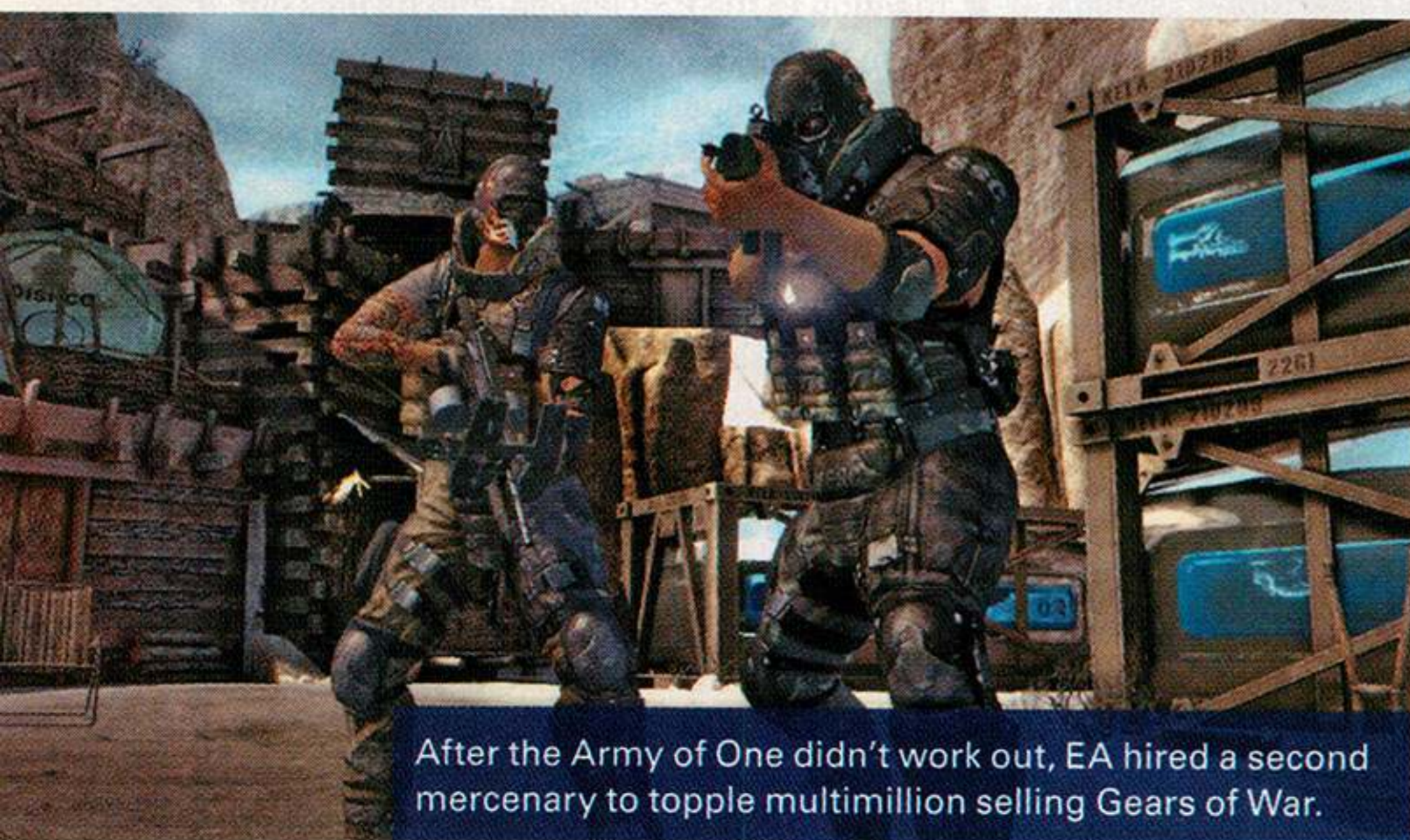


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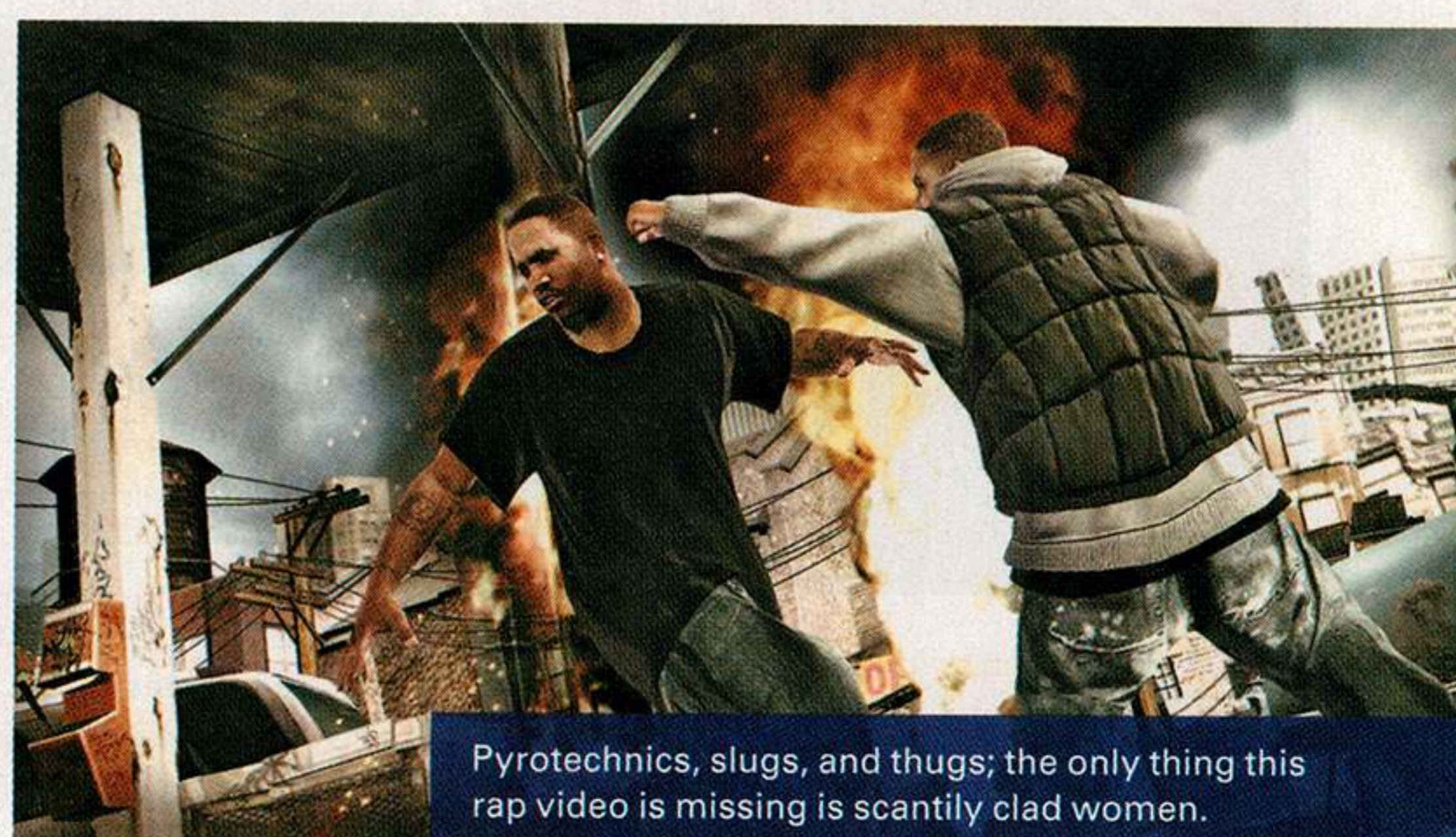
Based on the comic book series starring a possessed Mafia hitman, *The Darkness* gives "mind blowing" a whole new meaning.

▼ **THE DARKNESS** (2K GAMES) (PS3, XBOX 360)



After the Army of One didn't work out, EA hired a second mercenary to topple multimillion selling *Gears of War*.

▼ **ARMY OF TWO** (EA GAMES) (PS3, XBOX 360)



Pyrotechnics, slugs, and thugs; the only thing this rap video is missing is scantily clad women.

▼ **DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY** (EA GAMES) (PS3, XBOX 360)



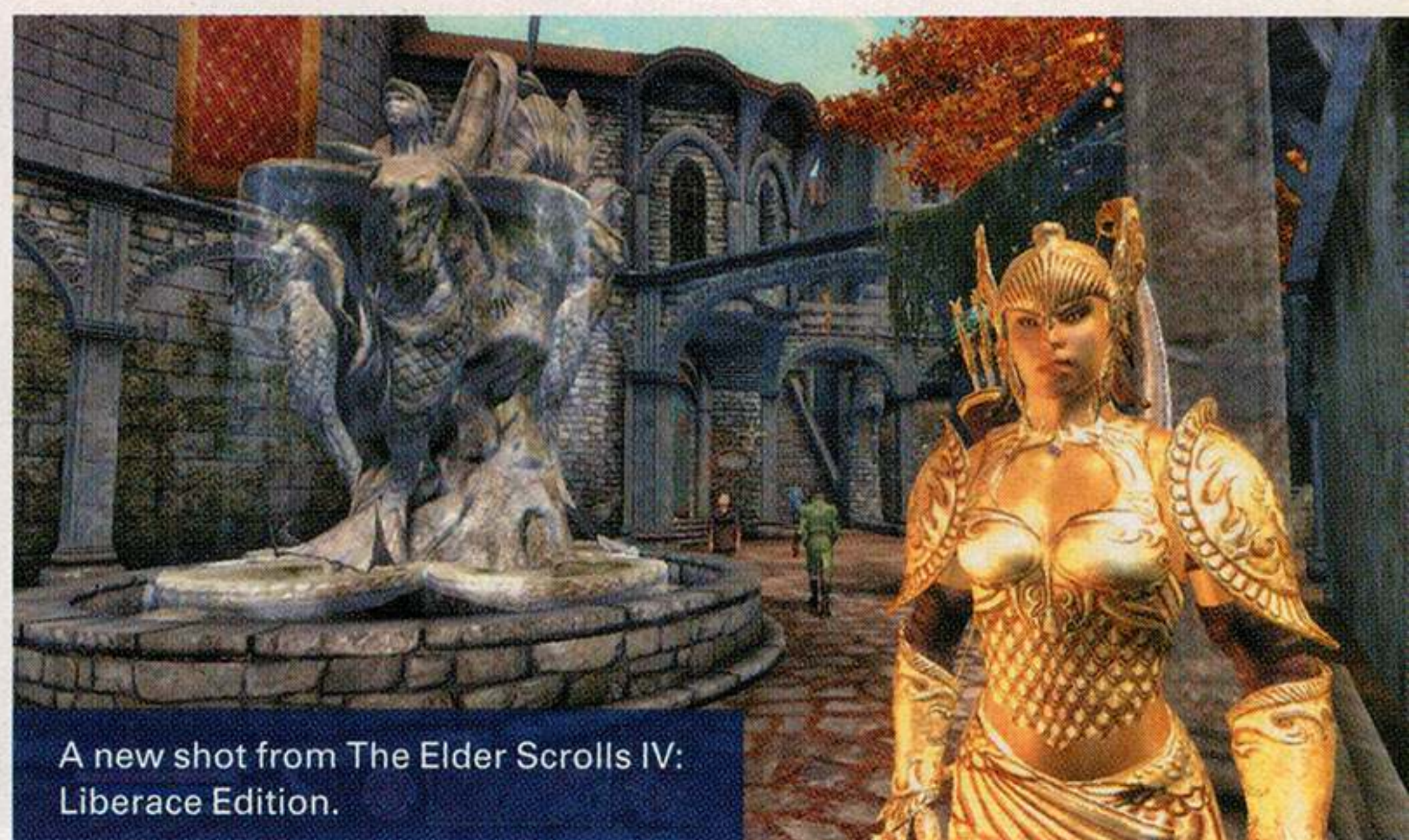
Hitman alone couldn't handle this job—too many dirty windows. Allow Eidos to introduce Kane & Lynch: Ultimate Window Washers.

▼ **KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN** (EIDOS) (XBOX 360, PC)



There's no need for martial arts when you've got guns and trollies.

▼ **STRANGLEHOLD** (MIDWAY) (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)



A new shot from The Elder Scrolls IV: Liberace Edition.

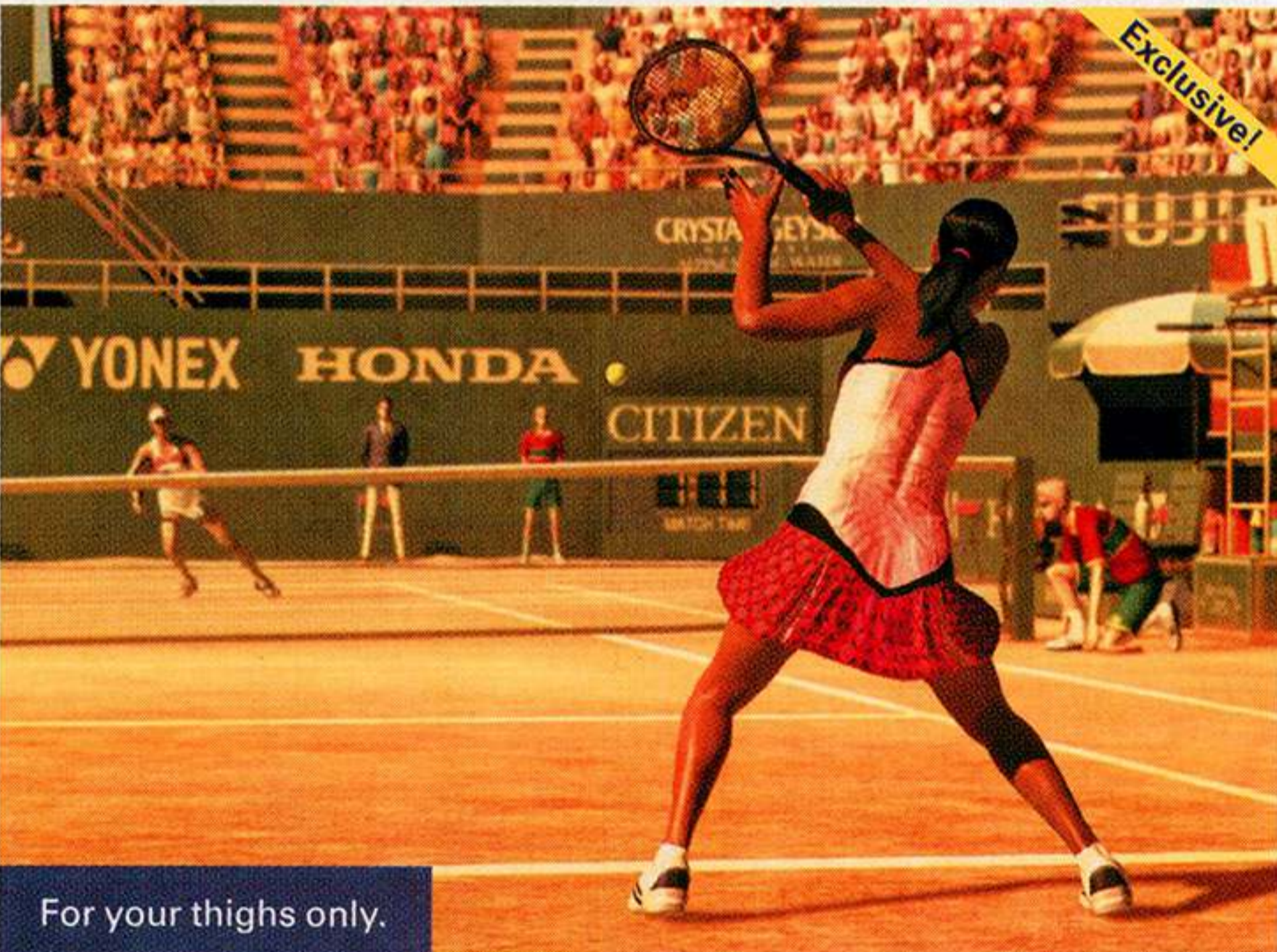
▼ **THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: SHIVERING ISLES** (BETHESDA SOFTWARES) (XBOX 360, PC)

Exclusive!



What better way to demonstrate the high-definition quality of 1080p than with a tennis game.

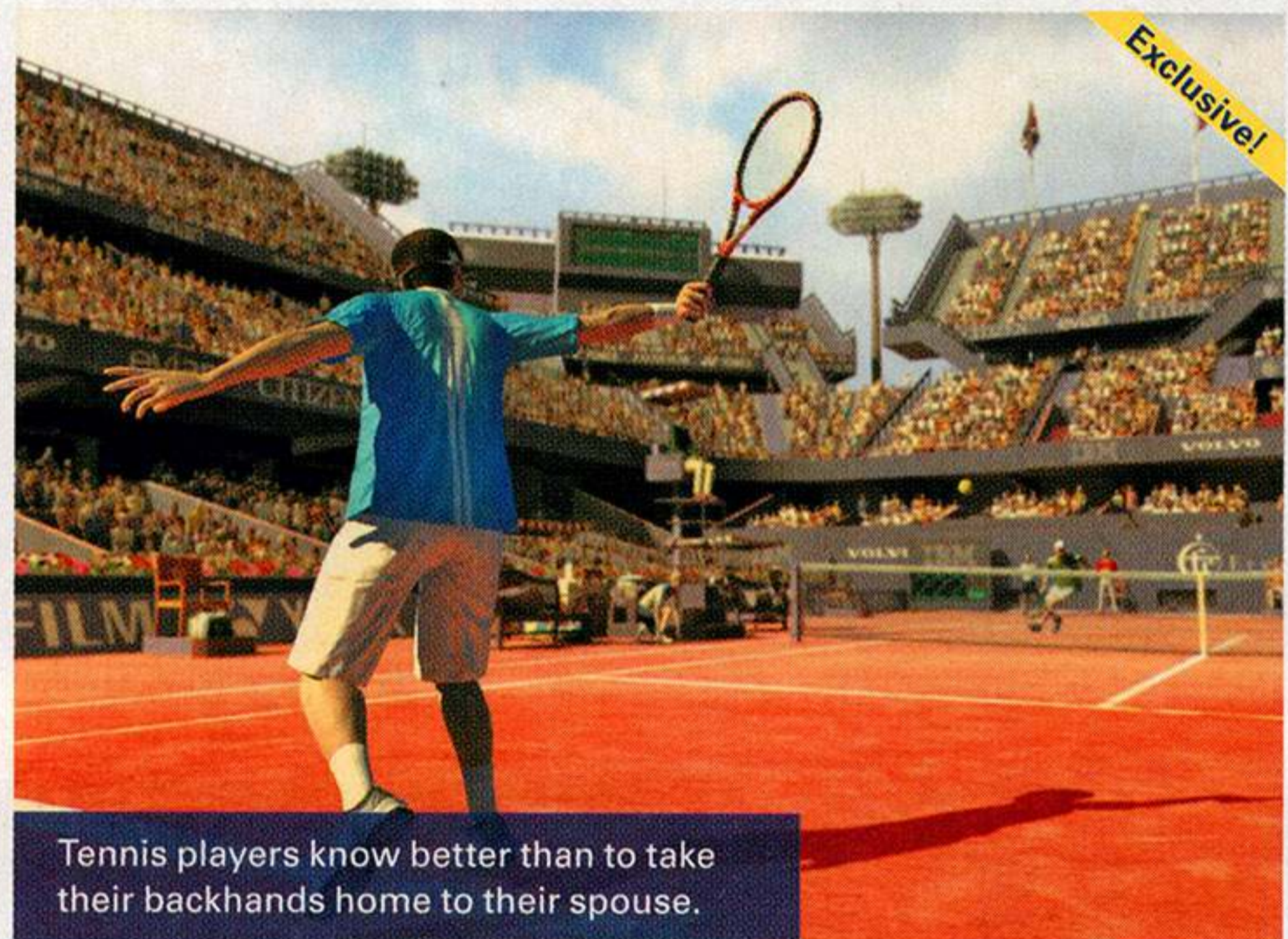
▼ VIRTUA TENNIS 3 (SEGA) (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)



Exclusive!

For your thighs only.

▼ VIRTUA TENNIS 3 (SEGA) (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)



Exclusive!

Tennis players know better than to take their backhands home to their spouse.

▼ VIRTUA TENNIS 3 (SEGA) (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)



▼ BROTHERS IN ARMS HELL'S HIGHWAY (UBISOFT) (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)

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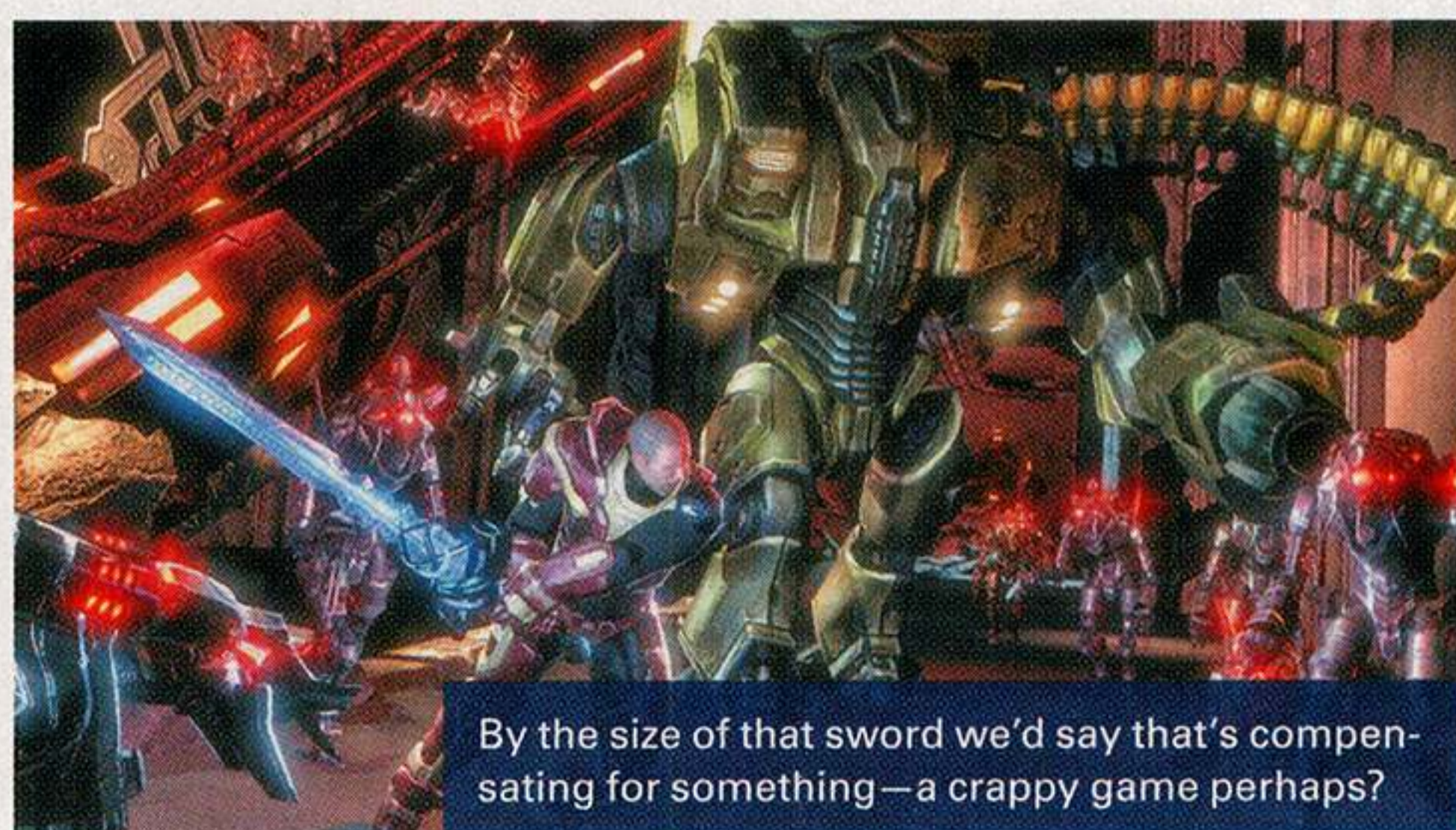
If that's not enough on-screen action for you, we want to know who's providing your cable.

▼ **TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2** (UBISOFT) (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)



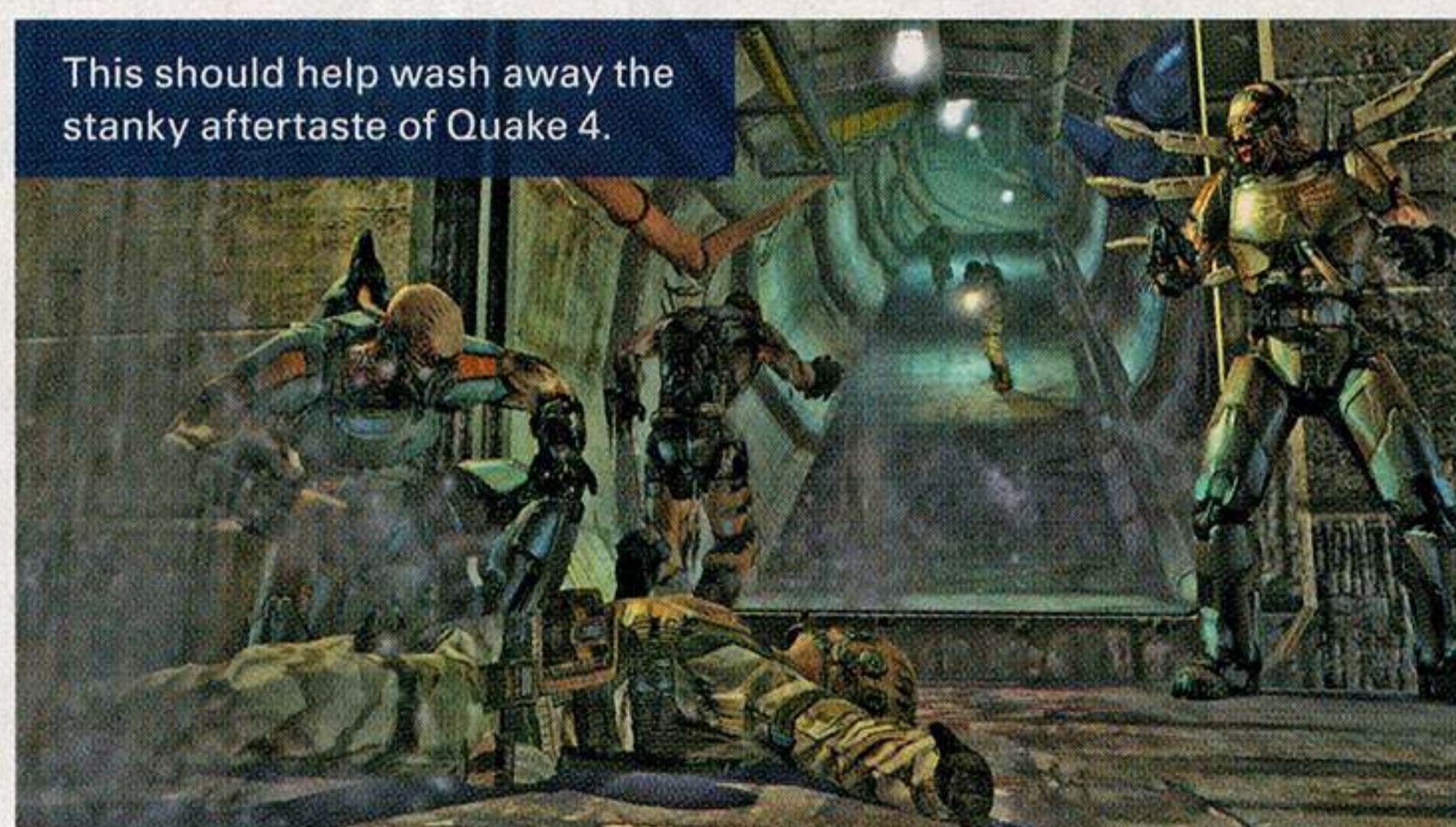
Not quite fast as Cell, Dominator on the PS2 will certainly wet your lips until Burnout crashes onto the PlayStation 3.

▼ **BURNOUT DOMINATOR** (EA GAMES) (PS2, PSP)



By the size of that sword we'd say that's compensating for something—a crappy game perhaps?

▼ **TOO HUMAN** (MICROSOFT) (XBOX 360)



This should help wash away the stanky aftertaste of Quake 4.

▼ **ENEMY TERRITORY: QUAKE WARS** (ACTIVISION) (PC)



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# HALO 3: FRESH FROM THE FRONT LINES

The latest intel on Master Chief's third tour of duty.



Xbox 360 owners are just so darn hungry for fresh news on Halo 3. We don't blame 'em—we are, too. So we spoke with Bungie's Frank O'Connor for the latest dirt and came away with key new details on this console king-maker.

Fans will remember that the Predator-like Elites were tossed out of the Covenant's alien hierarchy at the conclusion of Halo 2. In keeping, Halo 3's key foes will be the Brutes, ape-like beasts with bad attitudes and firepower to match. But these revamped Brutes are smarter, more ferocious, and, in O'Connor's words, "occasionally startling." O'Connor also mentioned "plenty of old favorite" enemies would return in "improved" forms. You'll also see a shift towards assaulting "teeming hordes" of enemies in "huge, complex arenas."

New details on Halo 3's multiplayer mode are under tight wraps for now, but the history-making Xbox 360 online multiplayer beta test is creeping steadily towards its spring release. The online matchmaking system will see some changes from Halo 2, with "more options" and "greater flexibility." O'Connor did mention, however, that the new matchmaking system could have "drawbacks." We think this is a reference to Microsoft's new random-ranked match rules, that force you to play strangers to improve your ranking à la Gears of War. O'Connor dodged rumors of online cooperative play ("What is a co-op?" he joked), but promised big things from the multiplayer experience. —Vicious Sid





## DOES THE NEEDLER STILL SUCK?

...and other burning Halo 3 questions answered.

### Will the Arbiter return as a playable character?

Bungie wouldn't confirm this, though they hinted that something along these lines might be "interesting, maybe even newsworthy."

### Will any Halo 2 multiplayer maps return?

We've got our fingers crossed for a new version of Lockout. Bungie says players won't see any identical Slayer maps, though some may seem "familiar."

### Does the Assault Rifle replace the Battle Rifle and SMG?

No. The old favorites are still in. The new Assault Rifle, which you start with, is a heavy-hitting mid-range workhorse that Bungie says fills a "vital role" in Halo 3.

### Will we see new Brute weapons?

Yes. The all-new Spike Rifle is the Brute's answer to Master Chief's SMG...though "nastier." There will also be a devastating new Brute grenade that fires barbed needles. Halo 2's grenade-spewing Brute Shot is being "tuned for great justice" and will likely make the cut.

### How do you use the new grenades?

The Brute grenade will weaken surrounding enemies and murder close-range targets with its huge splash of needles. It's also sticky and perfect for setting traps. The new Shield grenade can briefly deflect incoming projectiles. Choose wisely!

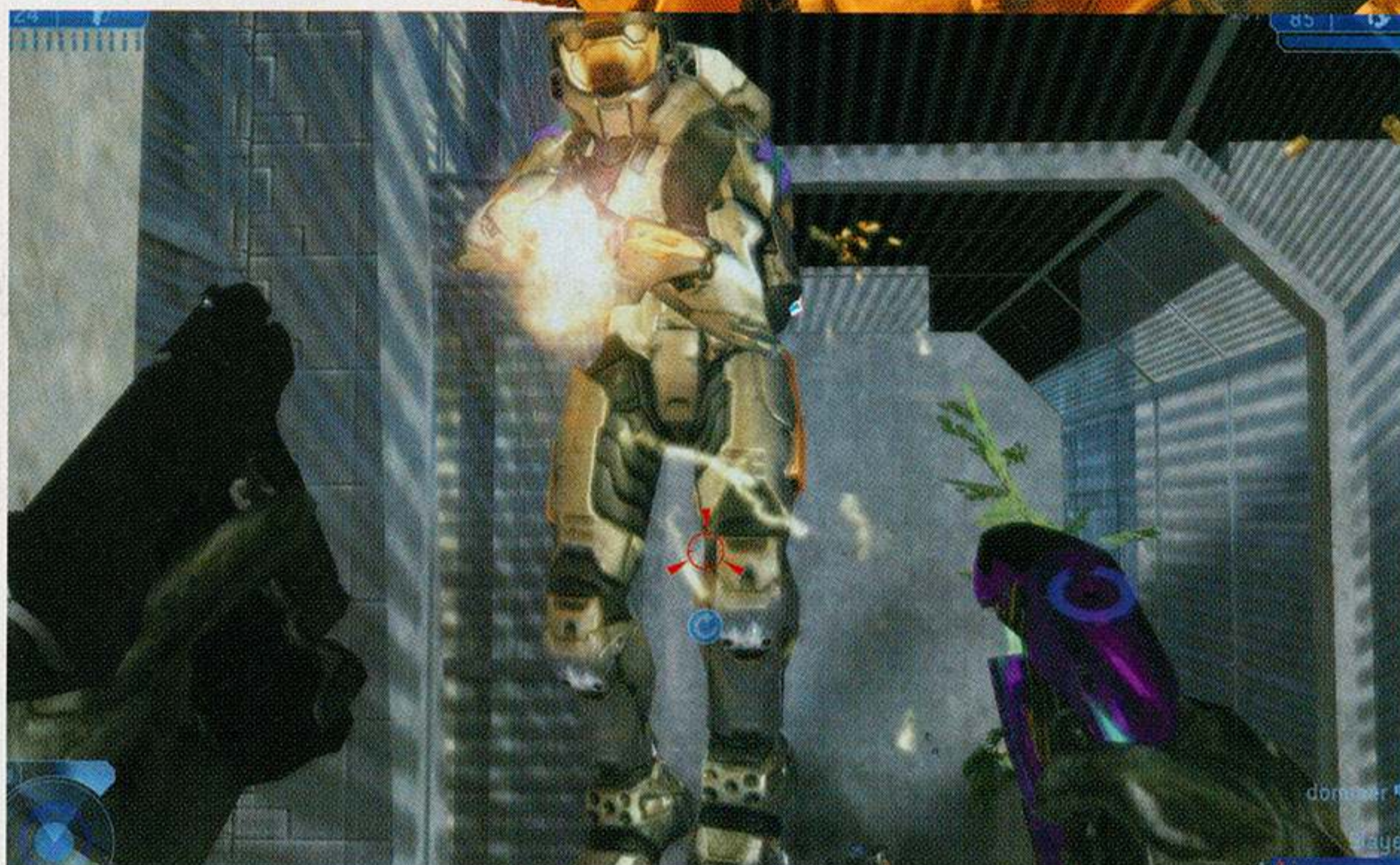
### So does the Needler still suck or what?

We hope not. Bungie promised significant improvements to this long-maligned weapon, noting that it will "assplode your face." That's good enough for us.

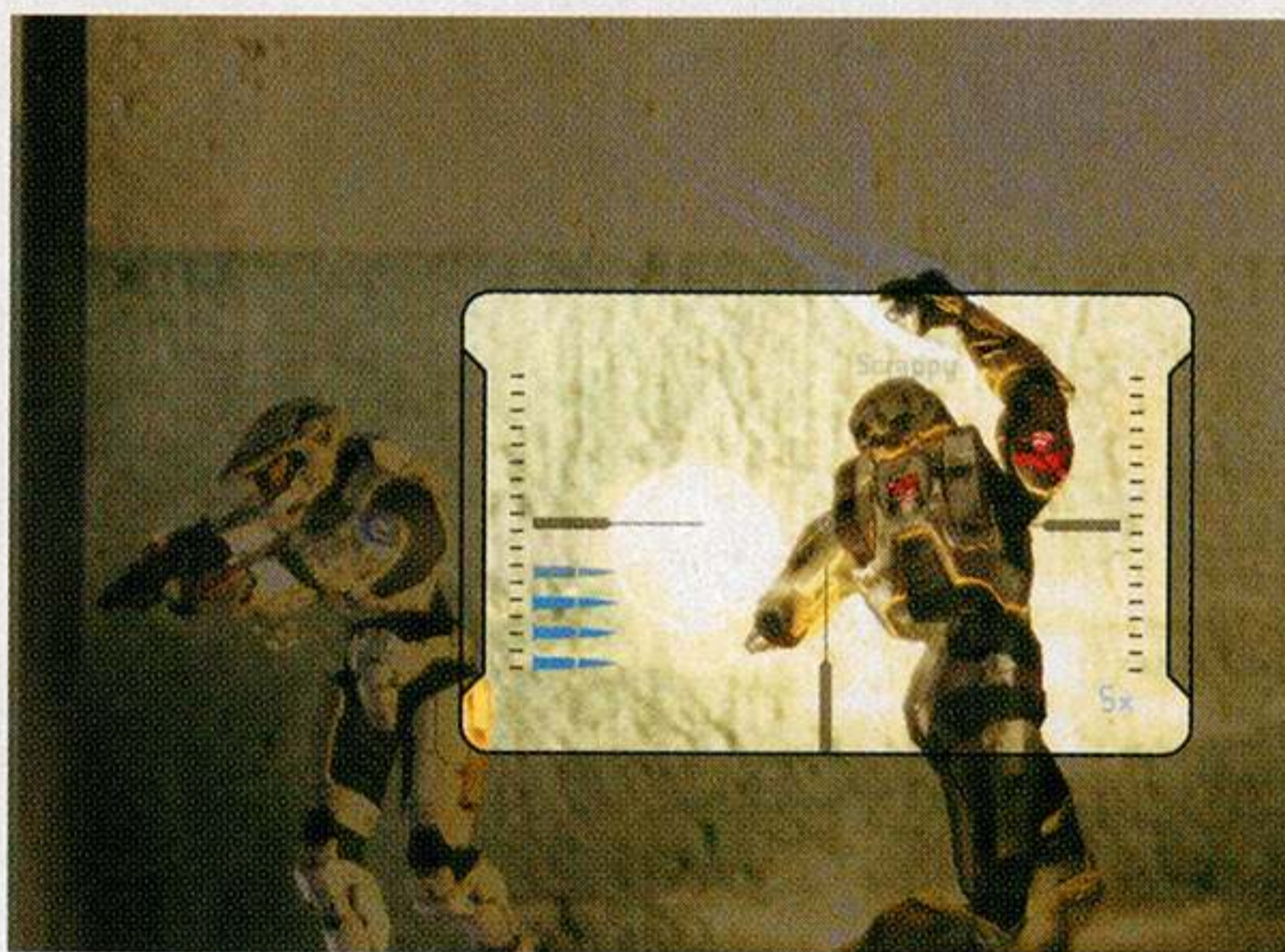
# TOP NEWS

## HASTA LA VISTA

Halo 2's heading to Windows Vista and we've got new details.



Though it's on a flashy new OS, Halo 2 for Vista is a fairly straightforward straight port of the smash-hit original game: that means no gameplay tweaks or storyline changes. But to upgrade the visuals, the developers at Hired Gun went back to Bungie's original Halo 2 assets. The results include higher-resolution environment textures, Direct X 9.0 shader effects, and master object models that are so detailed they couldn't be displayed on the original Xbox version. To top it off, anti-aliasing (4x) adds additional clarity.



The online experience will use Microsoft's online Live service, so you can expect voice chat and cross-platform buddy lists (though no global ranks). And the Vista version of Halo 2 will feature Xbox 360-style achievements, a series first. No release date yet, but check GamePro.com for updates.

## Geek Speak 2.0

Big words, small type.

**1080p:** A new HD resolution that equals 1920 x 1080 pixels, scanned progressively. The ultra-high resolution and smooth, sharp look of progressive scan adds up to a phenomenally sharp image...sadly, only a handful of TVs support it (for now).

**Oversampling:** A process by which a lower-resolution source (such as standard DVD video) can be displayed at a much higher resolution (such as 720p or 1080i). The Xbox 360 and PS3 both support this nifty feature.

# THE BIG 5

Vicious Sid sounds off on the top stories on GamePro.com.

**1 "E FOR ALL EXPO" UNVEILED**  
GamePro sister company IDG World Expo is launching a consumer games show in October. Make sure and check out the full details at eforallexpo.com!

**2 RESEARCHER: BLU-RAY DOMINATION BY 2008**  
Using new sales data, Understanding & Solutions predicts that Blu-ray Disc will overwhelm HD DVD format thanks to the PS3.



**3 THQ ANNOUNCES SAINTS ROW FOR PS3**  
Xbox 360 hit Saints Row will hit the PS3 this spring with its multiplayer mode intact.



**4 UNREAL TOURNAMENT 3 COMING TO XBOX 360**  
UT 2007 becomes UT3 as Gears of War developer Epic announces support for the PC, PS3, and now the Xbox 360.



**5 SONY PONDERING PS3 PRICE CUT?**  
According to an AP report, Sony is studying the effects of a PS3 price cut to determine whether it's an economically viable option.

Sources: Home Media Magazine, Associated Press

VINCE CARTER ©2007 AMERICA'S MILK PROCESSORS

Vinsanity by Carter.  
Body by milk.

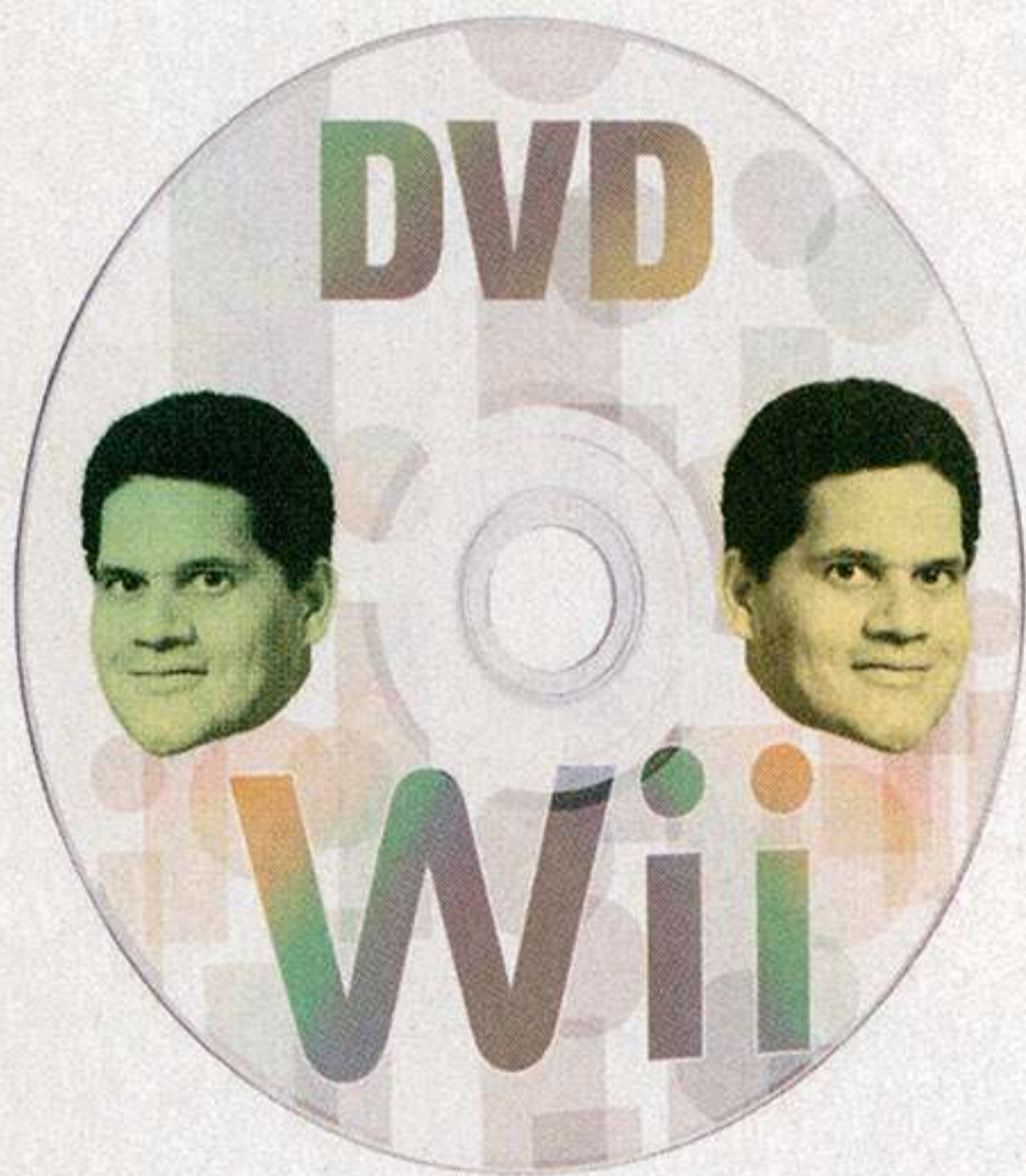


Slam it. The protein in milk helps build muscle and drinking it regularly along with exercise will help keep your body toned. Staying active, eating right and drinking 3 glasses a day of lowfat or fat free milk helps you look great and stay in shape. So grab a glass and go crazy.

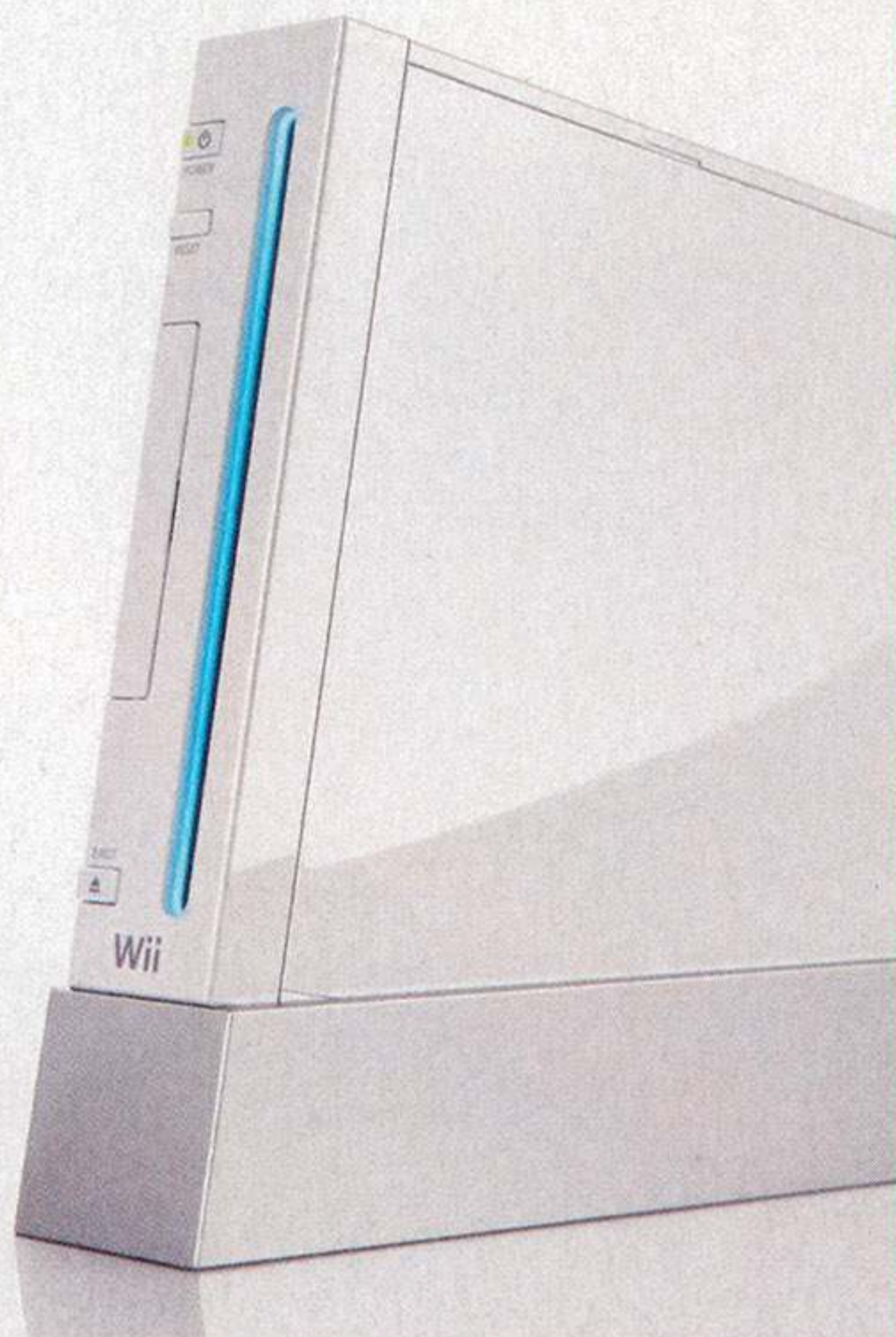
got milk?<sup>®</sup>

[www.bodybymilk.com](http://www.bodybymilk.com)

# Wii ARE THE CHAMPIONS



Wii upgrades? Not yet, says Reggie Fils-Aime, president of Nintendo of America.



## WHAT LESSONS DID NINTENDO LEARN FROM THE LIFE OF THE GAMECUBE CONSOLE?

There's only one lesson that matters: At a certain point just doing more of the same is self-defeating. You've got to give people a fresh perspective or eventually they'll start to lose interest.

## ANY CHANCE OF AN UPDATED Wii IN THE FUTURE, À LA THE DS LITE?

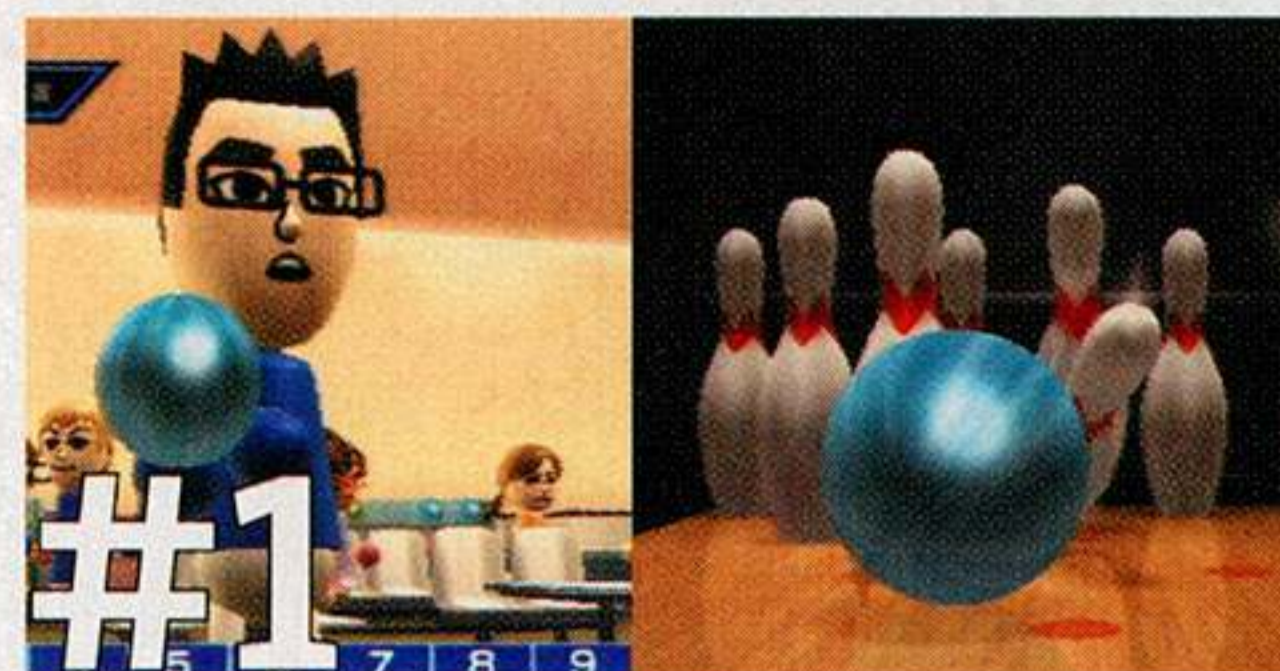
We're always looking for ways to improve our systems...a premium version of the Wii with a DVD player will be available in the future in some markets. But it's a bit early to be discussing any potential evolution.

## AND WHEN ARE THOSE MULTI-COLORED Wiis COMING?

Maybe that question will have more relevance once we've managed to meet the overwhelming worldwide demand for our current color!

## GAMES TO DIE FOR

Our current obsessions



### Wii Bowling (Wii)

Forget the so-so Boxing and Tennis—this is the Wii Sports game to beat. Can you best Ahoy\_and\_Avast's high score of 246?



### The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess (GameCube)

The more we play it, the more in awe we are. The GameCube incarnation is excellent, playing just as well as (if not better than) the over-hyped Wii version.






### Lost Planet (Xbox 360)

Though it's not the most complex shooter ever, the breathtaking graphics and rapid-fire action still give us goose bumps. Brrrr!

# Sux or Rules

Changing the world, one insult at a time.

## SUX

-  **Peter Jackson.** Quit the lawsuits and smack talk and put the fans first. *The Hobbit* movie must be made! And Peter, what's up with that *Halo* movie? **SUX**
-  **Microsoft Game Studios.** Okay, *Gears of War* and *Crackdown* rock. But after *Halo 3* and *Halo Wars*, the first-party Xbox 360 lineup looks a little slim. **SUX**
-  **You.** The sales figures are out, and we know all your dirty game-buying secrets. Two million-plus copies of the Burger King games while perfectly good copies of *Okami* gather dust? **SUX**

## RULES

-  **Blizzard Entertainment.** For promising to create an even more innovative MMO soon. Now, if we could just quit playing *World of Warcraft*...**RULES**
-  **RedOctane.** The Xbox 360 version of *Guitar Hero II* is heavenly, and downloadable songs will surely rock. And what's this we hear about *Guitar Villain*? Sweet. **RULES**
-  **Epic Games.** For supporting the *Gears of War* players with awesome, free new multiplayer maps. Oh, and 3 million-plus copies sold is nothing to sneeze at—bring on the sequel! **RULES**

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 Violence

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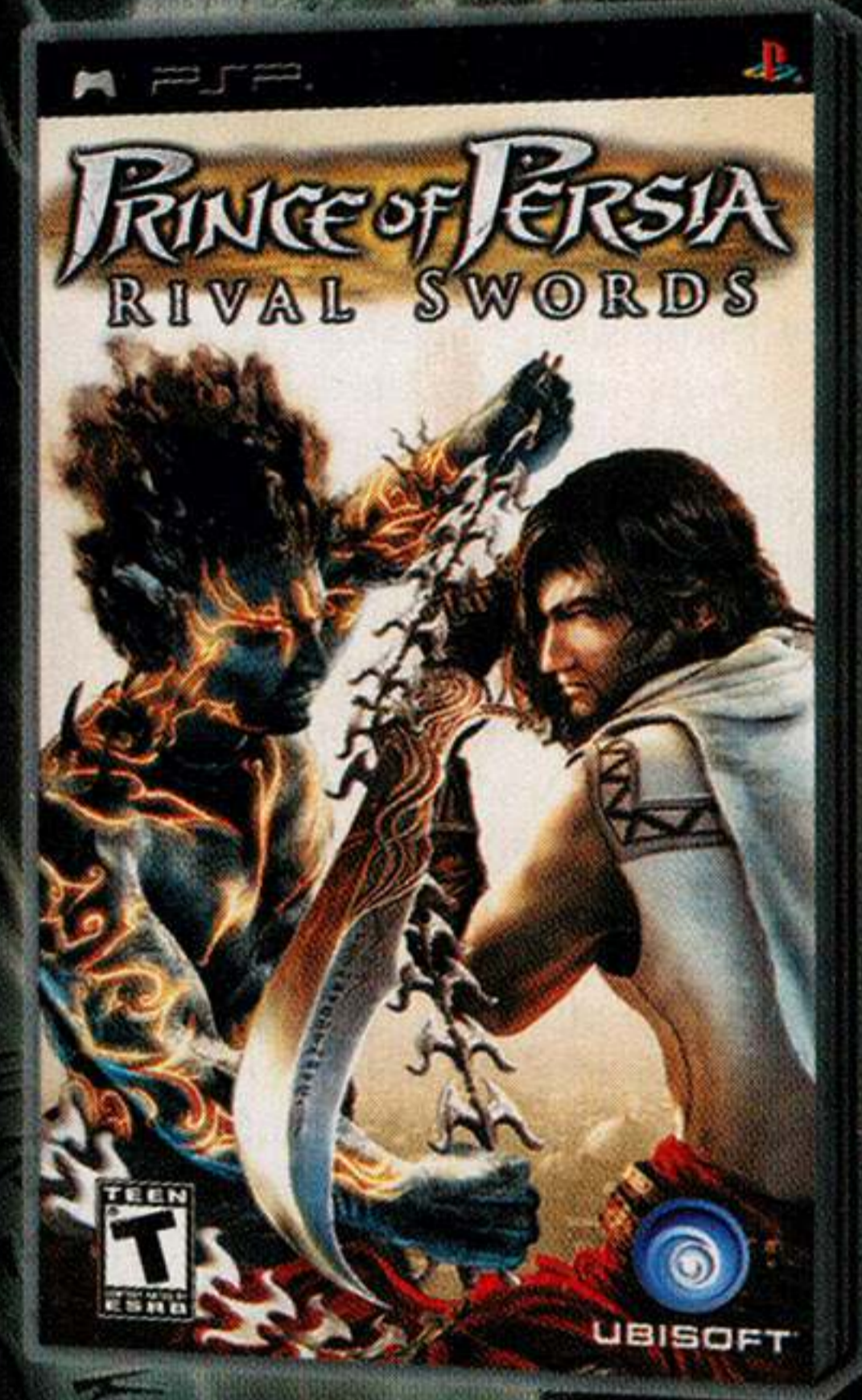
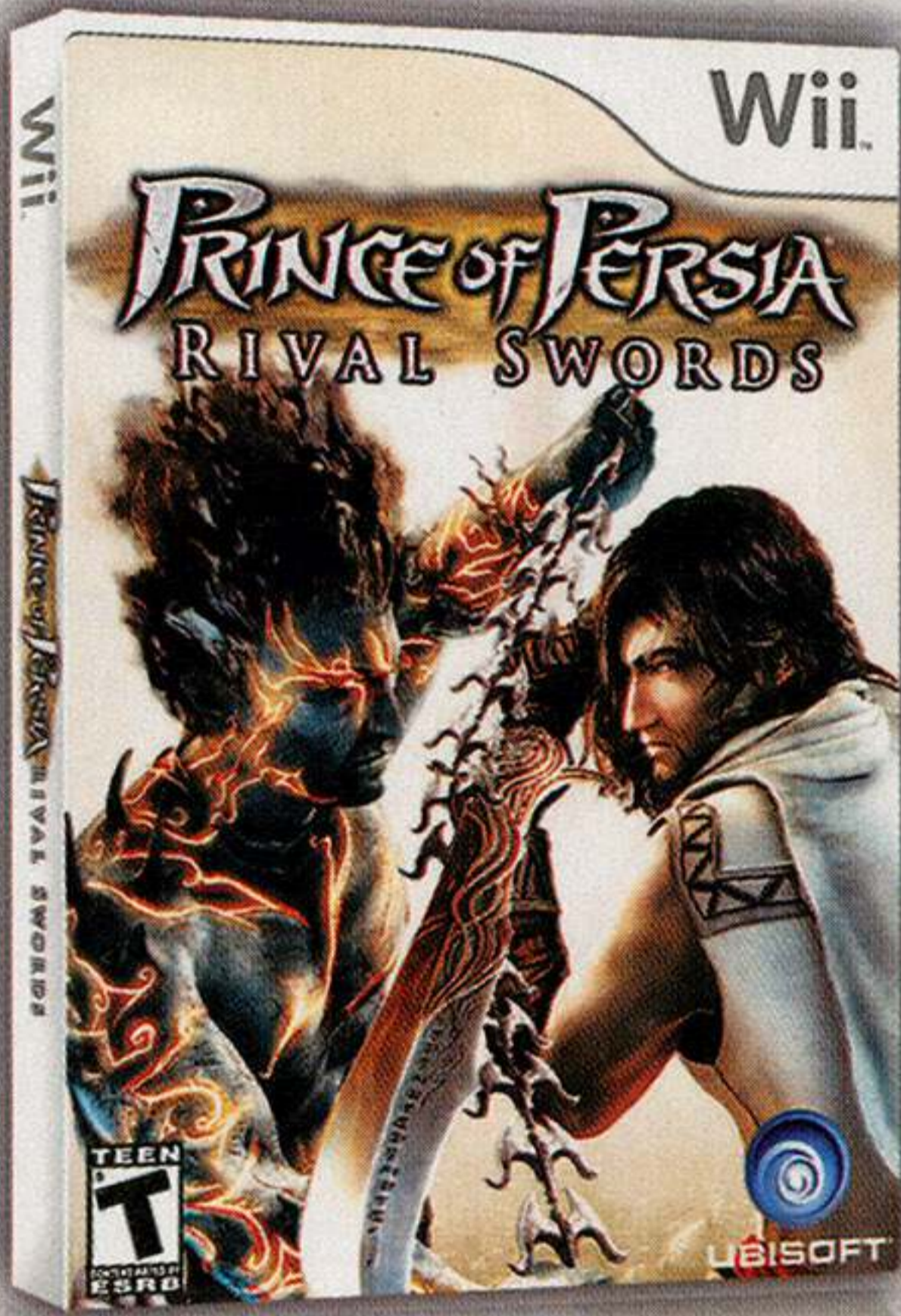


This title is intended for both the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system and the PSP®(PlayStation®Portable) system.  
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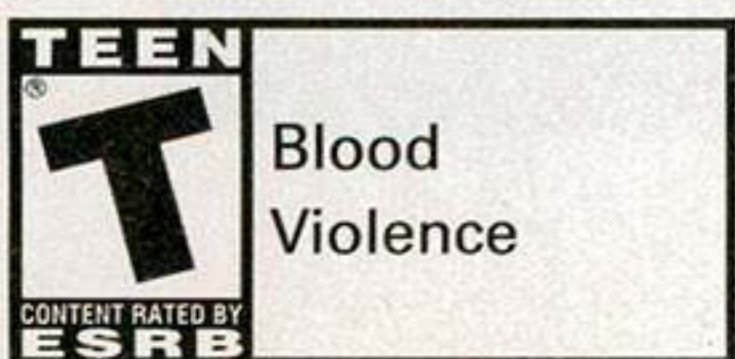


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# BIO SHOCK: GAME OF THE YEAR?



"One of the great things about BioShock is how well the moral choices are integrated into the gameplay," explained Ken Levine, lead designer for horror-RPG BioShock. "Moral choices happen inside gameplay, not dialogue trees." Morality aside, Levine's creepy baby is attracting some serious attention for its potentially groundbreaking gameplay. Take the highly interactive environments of the twisted underwater hell hole Rapture. Levine explained how players can light objects on fire (his example: a teddy bear!) and hurl them at enemies, who will inadvertently spread the flames by stumbling into other characters. You'll also be able to capitalize on oil slicks and water pools while battling the dreaded "Big Daddies." BioShock ships for the Xbox 360 and PC in early June.



## DVD PRO

Movies for gamers.



### CASINO ROYALE

A back-to-basics plot, a new 007, and an amazing construction site chase scene add up to the best Bond in years. Also available on Blu-ray.

sonypictures.com  
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### BORAT

Sacha Baron Cohen brings his clueless character from *Da Ali-G Show* to this comedy classic.

borat.tv  
\$29.98

### FFVII: ADVENT CHILDREN LIMITED EDITION COLLECTOR'S SET

This special edition of the CG film is packed with special features never before released in the U.S.

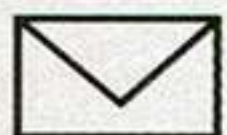
adventchildren.net  
\$49.95

## STATIC By Vicious Sid



Pwned this month:  
Cool PC games,  
Xbox Live Arcade,  
and UTIII

orm...MotorStorm...MotorStorm... • The Wii release calendar's looks a little arid now, huh? That's one downside of relying so heavily on first-party games... • Speaking of arid, where are all the cool PC games? Aside from *Crysis* and *Half-Life 2: Episode 2*, the PC gaming landscape is looking awfully sparse... • In the market for a cheap huge-screen HDTV? My new Epson 720p HD projector fits the bill perfectly... • I'm tired of the ultra-negativity on some of the sleazier gaming blogs and I want to start a boycott. Who's with me?... • C'mon, Sony: add offset analog sticks to the Sixaxis, à la the Xbox 360 controller. It's much more comfy for shooters and fast action games... • Vicious Vision #2: *Diablo II* on the DS! Managing inventory and attacking monsters would be a snap on the touchscreen. And four-player Wi-fi matches would be a godsend. Make it happen, Blizzard!... • If you ask me, Xbox Live Arcade needs a jump start. Okay, so *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* is an awesome new addition, but other than that the pickens look a little slim... • So where's that new-gen *Mortal Kombat*?... • I'll say it one more time: the *GamePro* editors have absolutely no console favorites. You can call me "bias" all you want—it falls on deaf ears... • Speaking of which, what's with the rampant PS3 hating in the media? The Xbox 360 sucked for its first four months, too... • Thank you, Epic, for "*Unreal Tournament 3*." That whole UT 2003/2004 name change freaked me out... • Say, what are those *Doom 3* guys working on now? Talk about flying under the radar... • BioShock...BioShock...BioS...



e-mail Sid:  
vicious\_sid@gamepro.com

## MOBILE GAMES THAT DON'T SUCK



### Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas (Gameloft)

The on-foot sections are a great mixture of stealth, spy gadgetry, and pure shooting action, while the intense sniper interludes generate surprising tension. Recommended.

Also worth a shot: *Centipede*, *Stranded*, *Mo-Pets*, and *Duckshot*.





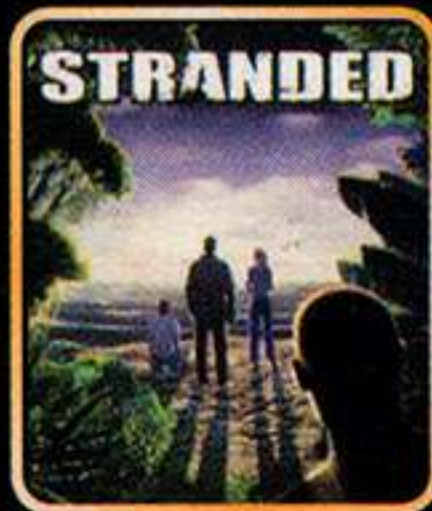
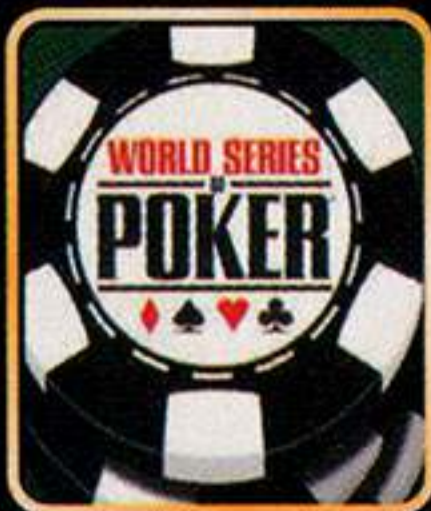
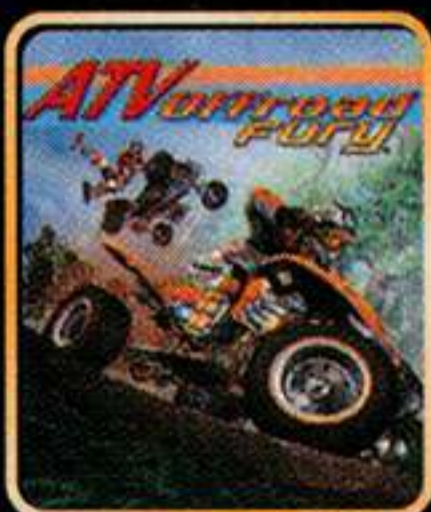
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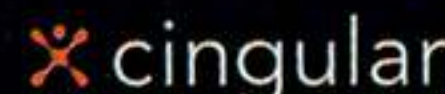


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# KNOW YOUR... AUDIO CABLES



**RCA**  
For crisp stereo sound, these old-school, two-channel analog cables are just fine. But they can't hack 5.1 or 7.1 surround sound standards, making them a strictly lower-end solution.



**Optical Audio**  
This popular 5.1/7.1 surround sound cable is supported by the PS2, PS3, Xbox, and Xbox 360. Optical audio is a purely digital format, so you can expect crystal-clear highs and lows, even through stereo speakers.



**HDMI**  
This digital video cable pulls double duty by pumping out crisp 5.1 and 7.1 sound. Quality is similar to optical audio, though the new HDMI 1.3 revision supports uncompressed audio for enhanced clarity. For a gaming setup, you'll need a PS3 and a capable higher-end A/V receiver.

Illustrations by: Desiree Peel

## FAMOUS LAST WORDS

OVERHEARD THIS MONTH

### PLAYSTATION 3 LIVE

"If I wanted to make my online service better, and I wanted to give Sony a little piece of advice, it would be to copy Xbox Live a little more closely."

**Chris Satchell**, general manager of Microsoft's game development group, in response to the PlayStation 3's online network.



"The honest truth is that Microsoft game development tools are so much better than Sony's."

**John Carmack**, technical director for Doom developer id Software, on why he prefers the Xbox 360 to the PlayStation 3.

"Any trend to produce...animated films and video games that exalt violence and portray anti-social behavior, or the trivialization of human sexuality, is a perversion."

**Pope Benedict XVI**, in an address on the "repulsive" marketing of violent games to children.



"Halo 2 is far less than it could and should be...I f\*\*\*ing cannot play Halo 2 multiplayer."

**Chris Butcher**, technical lead for Bungie, on scheduling frustrations that he felt compromised Halo 2.



"If there was ever any doubt about the power of the PlayStation brand in the U.S., the December NPD data should quickly quell it."

**Jack Tretton**, on higher-than-expected sales of the PlayStation 2 and PSP during the U.S. holiday 2006 season.



## MINI-GAMES

Have you ever heard that a dog's face often resembles that of its owner? See if you can match the faces of the creators with the lead characters of their most famous games!

 <b>Cliff Bleszinski</b>	1	 <b>Wayne</b>
 <b>David Jaffe</b>	2	 <b>Altair</b>
 <b>Tomonobu Itagaki</b>	3	 <b>Kratos</b>
 <b>Jade Raymond</b>	4	 <b>Ryu</b>
 <b>Keiji Inafune</b>	5	 <b>Marcus Fenix</b>

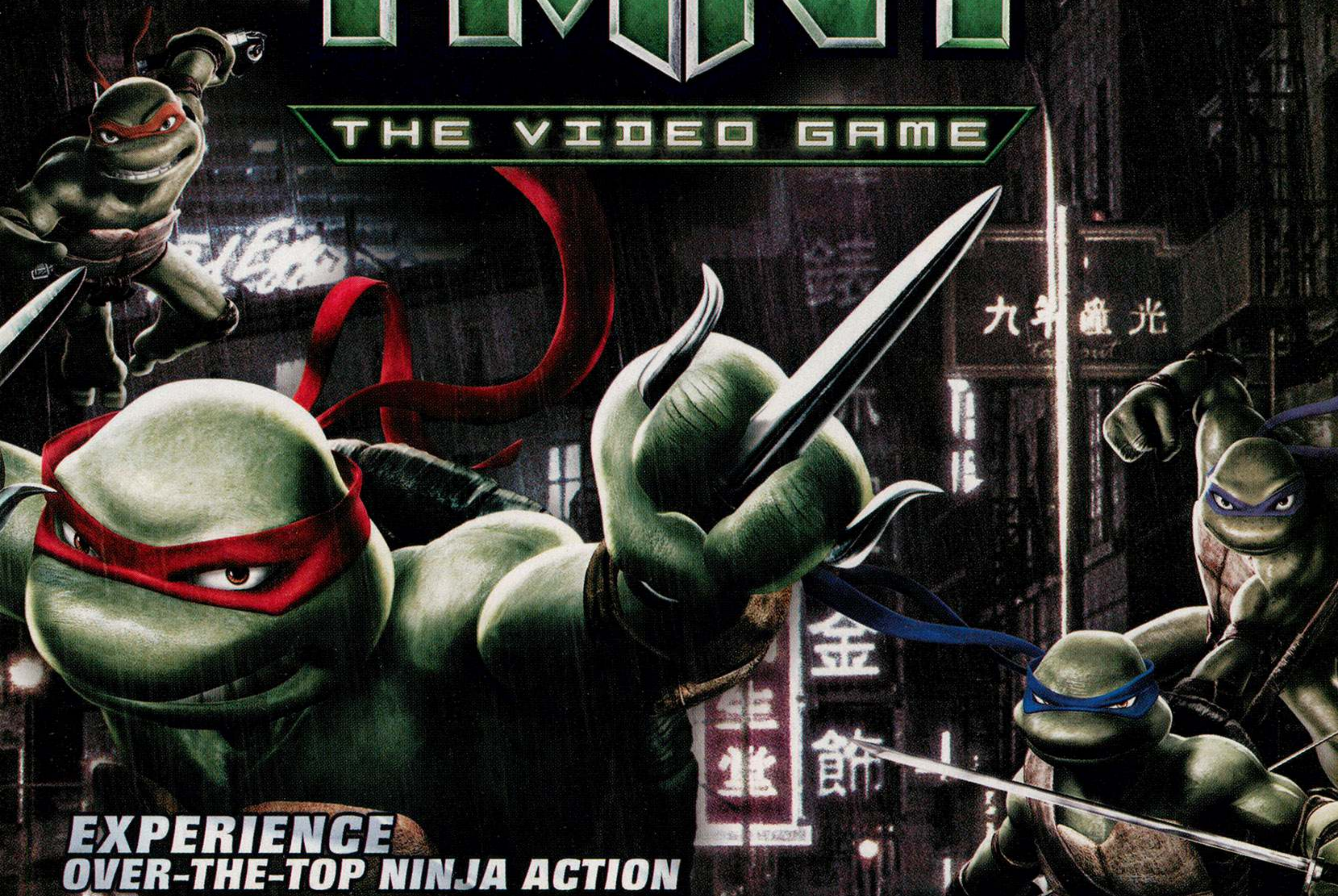
Connect game designers to lead characters

Answers: 1: e. (Gears of War); 2: c. (God of War); 3: d. (Ninja Gaiden); 4: b. (Assassin's Creed); 5: a. (Lost Planet).

Sources: GamesIndustry.biz, Edge UK

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# 48 HOURS WITH... EA TIBURON

GamePro visits Orlando to pick the brains of the makers of **Madden NFL**, **NASCAR**, and **Superman**. Here's what we saw.

## 1. EA REJECTION LEADS TO EA TIBURON.

"I couldn't get hired by EA, so I decided to open my own independent studio," Steve Chiang laughs. "We originally started looking at Florida because there's no state income tax. And the weather is great."

## 2. COMPETITION KNOWS NO BOUNDS.

At every stop and during every conversation, we heard rampant smack-talking. About fantasy sports leagues. About Madden. About the inter-office basketball leagues. We even heard smack talking about Tecmo Bowl!

## 3. THE MADDEN GUYS LOVE MADDEN.

An hour-long conversation with the Madden and NCAA Football teams was the highlight of our trip. These guys take Madden very seriously. "If we screw it up," exclaimed Producer David Ortiz, "our friends are going to be like, 'Man you messed up my favorite game!'" During our chat, it became clear that one of the top missions of the Madden team over the next few years is to make player animations more varied and more realistic.



## 4. SHARING IS CARING.

One of the biggest surprises on our trip was discovering how the different design teams at EA Tiburon—Madden, NCAA, NASCAR, and Superman—share technology. For example: Superman's costume and animation technology is borrowed from Madden. Plus, the engine tech behind his flying ability is co-opted from NASCAR.

## 5. GEEKS AND JOCKS LIVE IN PERFECT HARMONY.

EA Tiburon is a like a utopian vision of high school or college: guys who lift weights and go to the gym are best friends with guys who sit in front of computers writing code all day. Shocking, and very cool.

## 6. SUPERMAN RETURNS: THE VIDEOGAME BURNS.

During our conversation with the lead designers of Superman Returns: The Videogame—Jeff Peters and Chris Gray—we detected some barely contained animosity towards game reviewers. Hey, no one likes being told their baby is ugly. The upside is that, despite the harsh reviews, the game sold very well. Can you say sequel?



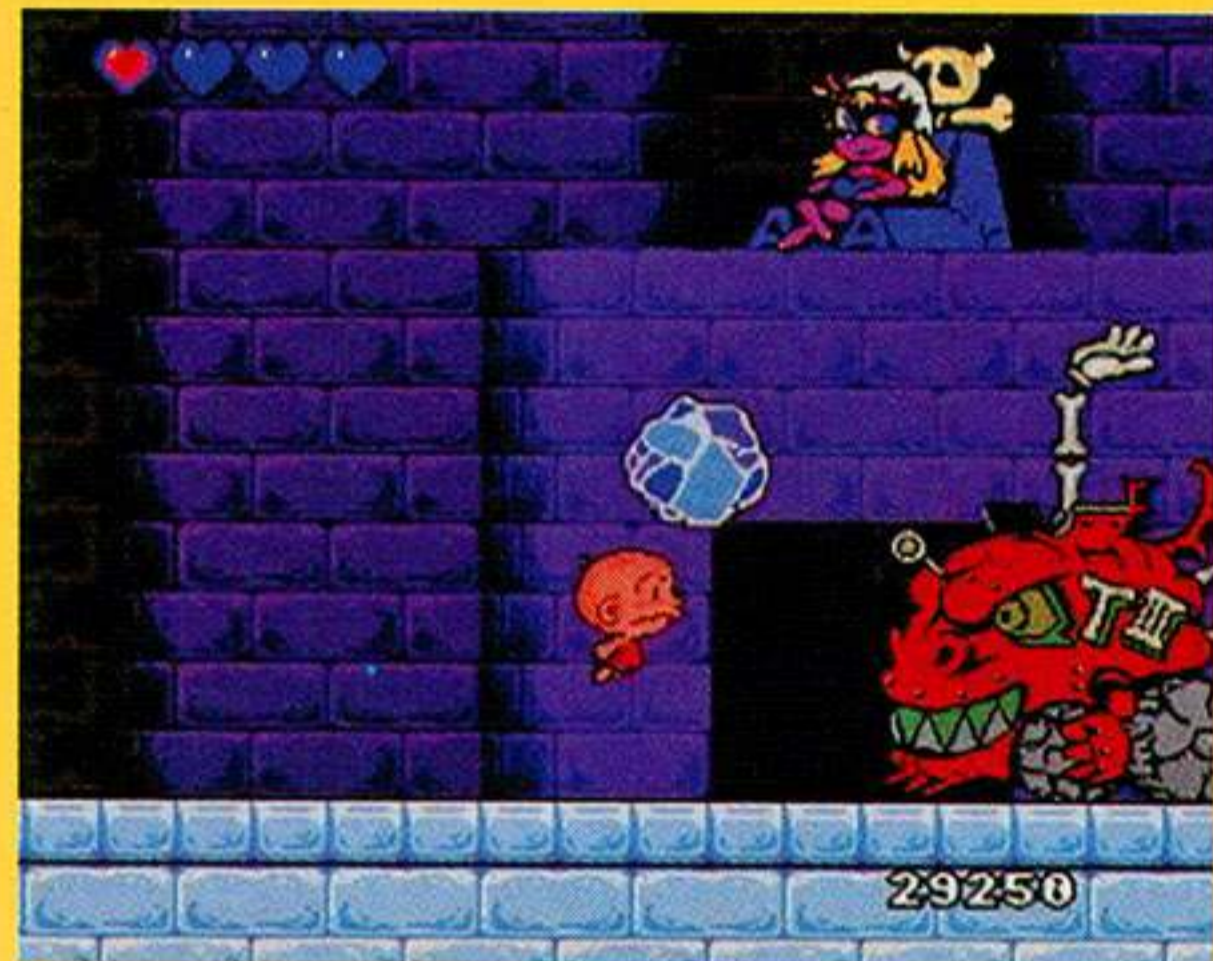
## FACTS AND FIGURES

**Company:** EA Tiburon  
**Age:** 12.5 years  
**Location:** Maitland, Florida  
**# of Employees:** 600+  
**Titles:** Madden NFL, NCAA Football, NASCAR, Superman Returns  
**Perks:** Free arcade games, free EA games, Disney  
**Fun Fact:** Tiburon means "shark" in Spanish.



# HUDSON FLIES AGAIN

**Bonk's Adventure** has been a monster hit on the Wii's Virtual Console, so we spoke with **John Lee**, Hudson Entertainment's director of marketing, on Hudson's bigger plans for 2007.



**Q: So is Hudson, well, back?**

**A:** I don't think I got the memo that Hudson had left the building! Hudson never really left gaming. We always continued to be a strong developer, particularly in Japan...but we're evaluating coming back as a [mainstream] publisher.



**Q: What other Hudson games can we expect to see in the near future?**

**A:** So many factors come into play. You'll eventually see most of our own IPs. Other games that were licensed by other companies are in evaluation. I think fans will be pleased to see the mad mix of games we have coming out in 2007.



**Q: Any plans to move Hudson retro games to the PS3 or Xbox 360?**

**A:** That's the big question we at Hudson are carefully evaluating. Some of these games are selling far beyond our expectations today... a revival of some much-loved games may be happening soon.

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If Nazi Germany invaded U.S. soil, you'd have Turning Point: Fall of Liberty.

# TURNING POINT: FALL OF LIBERTY

Nazis invade America? With Turning Point: Fall of Liberty, World War II first-person shooters are taking a historical twist.

PS3 Xbox 360 PC

■ Developer: Spark Unlimited ■ Publisher: Codemasters ■ Release Date: Fourth Quarter 2007

In 1931, Winston Churchill was crossing Fifth Avenue in Manhattan when he was struck by a cab. He was hurt, yes, but he survived the encounter and later became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II, one of the pivotal political figures of the 20th Century. And, he's the famous person everyone thinks their newborn baby looks like.

But what if he hadn't survived? How would the war, and thus the world, been affected if Churchill had been killed by that taxi? And who, for heaven's sake, would we compare our babies to? It's a question historians and historical scholars have pondered for years, and now it's inspired Turning Point: Fall of Liberty, one of the more interesting World War II first-person shooters since...okay, only since Resistance: Fall of Man for the PlayStation 3. Still, but if what developer Spark Unlimited showed us is any indication, this is one shooter we won't be, well, resisting.

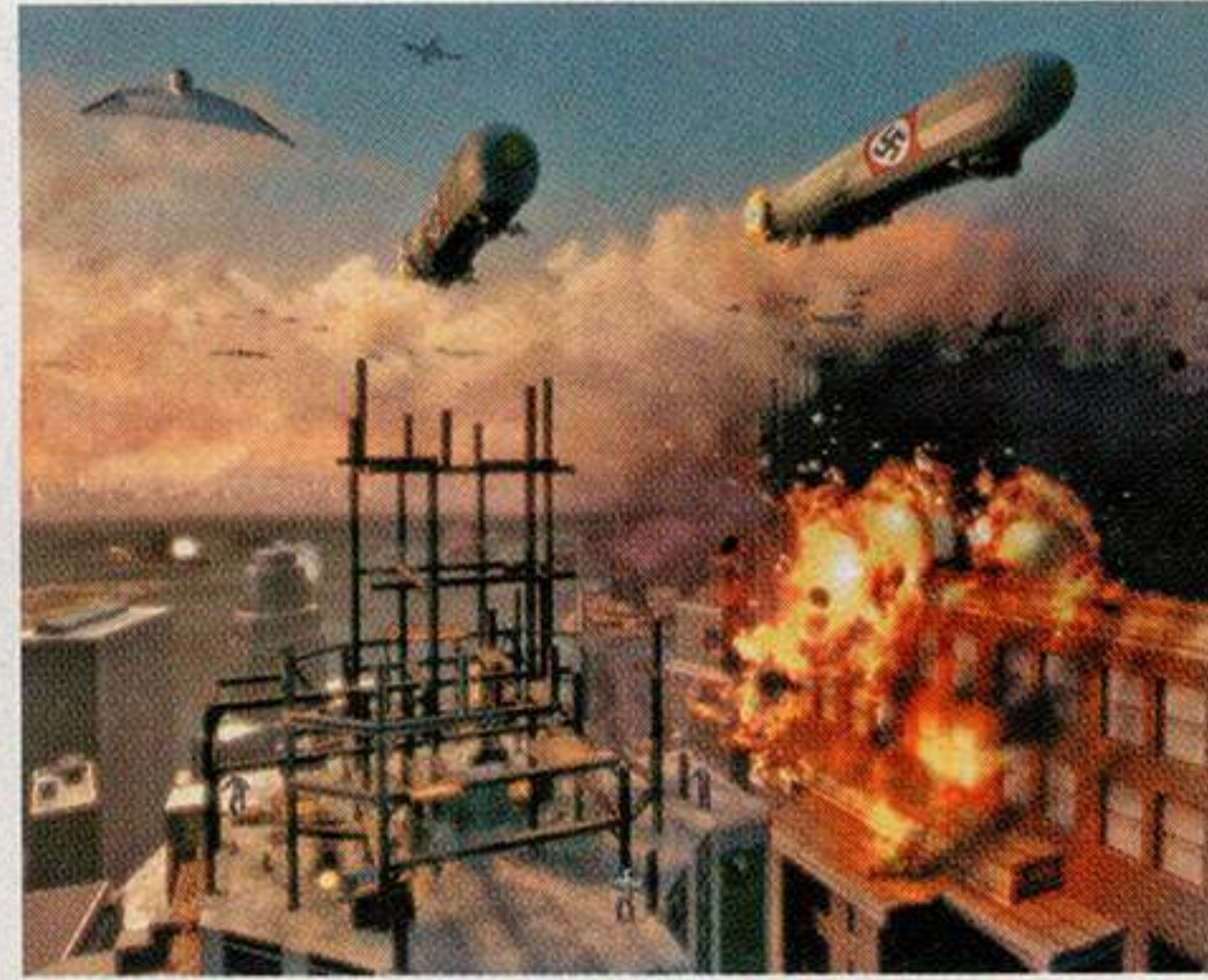
## PATTERNS OF FORCE

The origins of Turning Point don't just reach back into world history, but into the history of the people making it. Spark may be most recently known for 2004's Call of Duty: Finest Hour, and members of its staff have individually worked on a number of realistic, historically accurate WWII first-person shooters, including one that starred it all, Medal of Honor.

That's why they're making the realistic but historically inaccurate Turning Point. "A lot of people here at Spark came through the Dreamworks/Electronic Arts/Medal of Honor/Call Of Duty lineage," explains CEO and Turning Point Executive Producer Scott J. Langteau, "so if you had asked me a couple years ago if I was interested in working on another war game, I would've said, 'Not on your life.' And a lot of people here would've said the same thing. But when Eric came to us with this idea, I got really excited because it was a concept that the team would rally around."

The aforementioned Eric is the game's Design Director Eric Church, who got the alternate history idea from, "Sitting around, thinking about what we could do with a very good enemy in a very played-out kind of world." This led him to consult books like *What If?: The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, which was edited by Robert Cowley, the founding editor of *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal Of Military History*. "It's a collection of essays on what's called counterfactual history," Church explains. "Things like, 'What if Napoleon had won at Waterloo?' And 'What if Churchill had been killed?'"

Combined with Church's own knowledge of the war—"I don't have a degree, and don't claim to," he admits, "but I've been dealing with World War II since the original Medal of Honor, so I've probably done at least a master's level of research into World War II." The team was led to a rather chilling (and, for gamers, hopefully thrilling) con-



clusion: Without Churchill, America would have never gotten involved in the war, Germany would have eventually conquered all of Europe, and eventually the Nazis would have attacked the U.S. somewhere around 1953.

And so the game begins.

### THE CITY AT THE EDGE OF FOREVER

It's a sunny November afternoon in New York City when Germany launches a sneak attack on the U.S. that begins with bombers and ends with troops moving in on the street. But unlike most first-person shooters, WWII or otherwise, *Turning Point* doesn't cast you as an experienced soldier, or even an inexperienced one, at that. You're a construction worker. "And because of that," Langteau explains, "there may be times when you might have to fight guys with a piece of pipe."

It's a move, Producer Dean Martinetti adds, that's indicative of the whole project, hence the reason why *Turning Point* isn't just *Call of Duty*

in New York, or *Resistance* without the Chimera. "I hope it's not," declares Martinetti. "and I don't mean that as a dig; those are great games, but while there are parts of our game that will feel familiar, we're also going out of our way to make the experience different."

"One of the key aspects of that," Langteau notes, "is that you're no longer fighting in Germany and France, places you've seen before, and there's a different feeling to having your homeland invaded." To whit, the team showed off such concept images as the White House adorned with Nazi flags and New York harbor filled with German boats.

"You're also not a soldier in an established army," Church continues. "All World War II games, even when we did a resistance one, you were still in the U.S. Army. The reference is a little painful because the movie is horribly cheesy—though I love it—but it's *Red Dawn* now. We're the underdogs for a change."

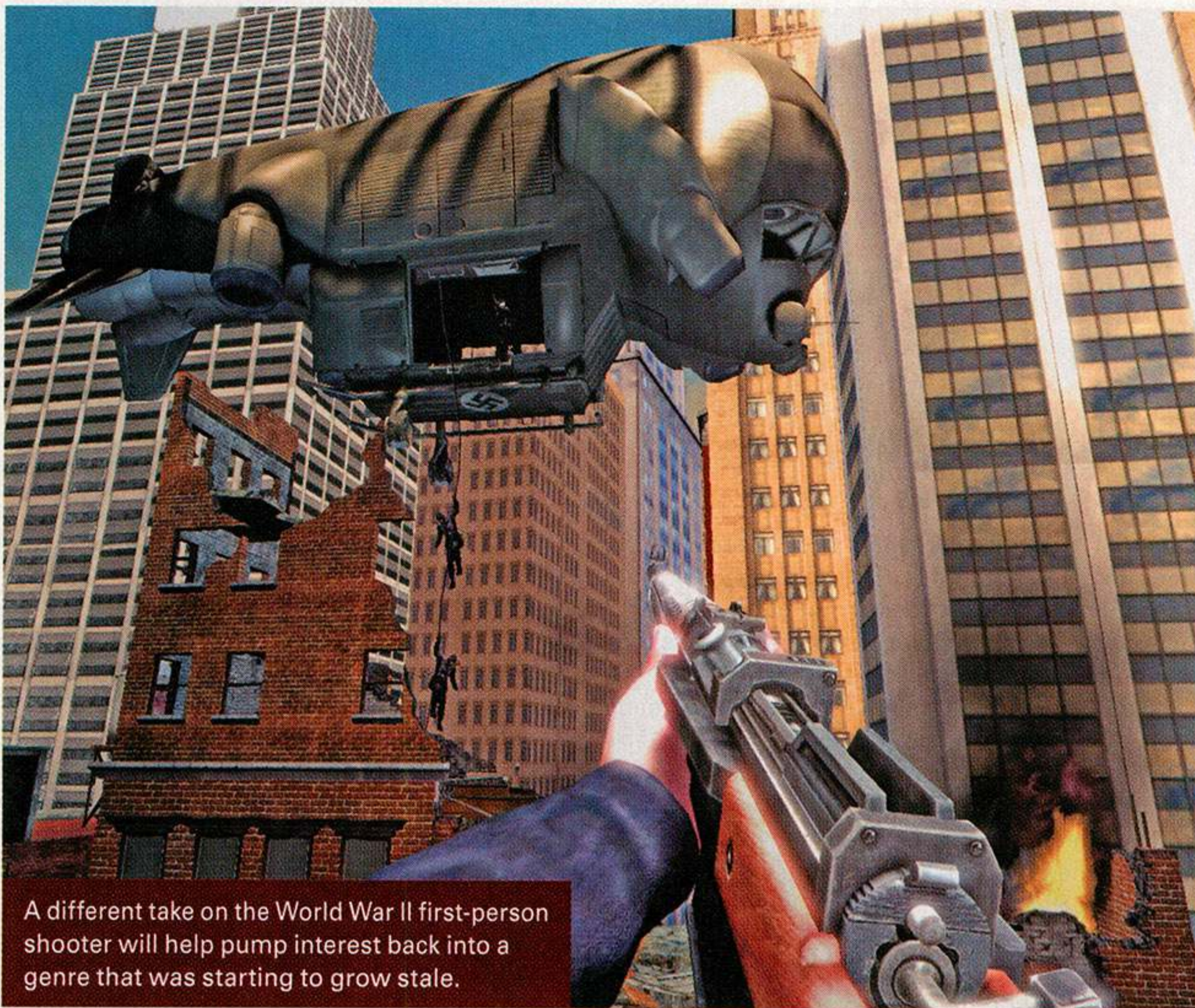
### WHAT WE LIKE

- A fresh, new take on the World War II first-person shooter genre
- Nazis invading American soil excites a nationalistic rage, in a safe, virtual way

In terms of how this will effect the gameplay—besides, of course, letting you shout "Wolverines!" for a power boost (relax, we're kidding)—*Turning Point* will still have you running around, shooting Germans from a first-person perspective, but will occasionally have you sneaking around like Sam Fisher or climbing like Lara Croft. Explains Assistant Designer Lead Sean Soderlind, "At its core, it's a first-person shooter, so it'll have a lot more in common with those games than it doesn't have in common with them. But most first-person shooters don't go into player movement that much. If you're lucky, you might get leaning or ducking.



CONTINUED ►



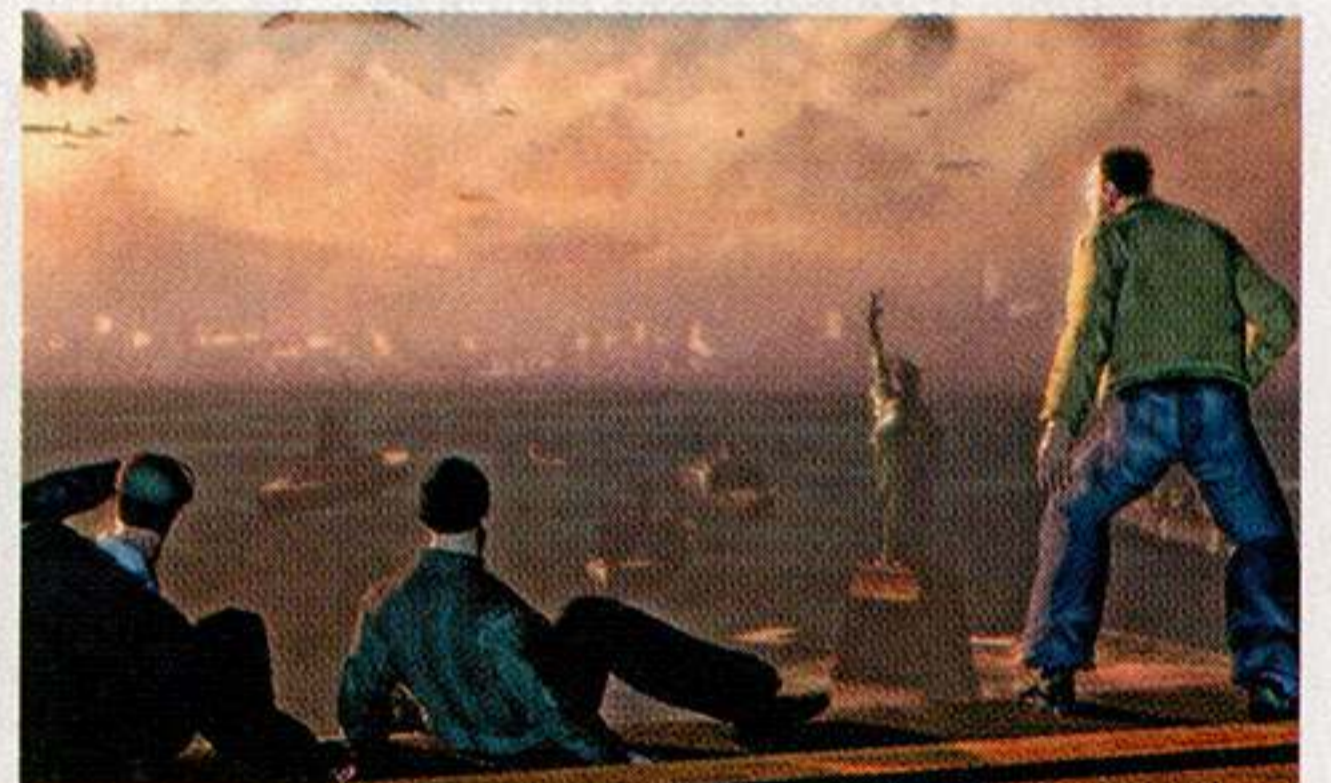
A different take on the World War II first-person shooter will help pump interest back into a genre that was starting to grow stale.



We're doing a lot more with mantling and climbing. So, for example, there will be the obvious way to get to somewhere, but by looking around you might notice 'Hey, if I climb up there, I can drop behind them,' which adds a bit of player choice."

"We're also trying to get away from it being just run-n-gun," Martinetti interjects. "Like with *Rainbow Six: Vegas* and *Gears of War*, you can't run-n-gun in those games or you'll get killed. So we're trying to take that first-person shooter core mechanic and bring more realism to it by letting you use the environment more."

While the game starts with the Nazis taking Manhattan, you eventually end up part of a resistance movement in Washington and other cities. "This is kind of oversimplifying things," Martinetti admits, "but the first part of the game has you running for your life, the second part has you building the resistance, and the third part has you striking back at the aggressors."



"I think we're walking a line between *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty*," Church notes. "The underlying message of *Medal of Honor* was that you're the one guy who can save the world, while *Call of Duty* says that there were an enormous number of people involved. What we're sort of saying is that while it does take an massive number of people, it also takes someone standing up to make a difference."

Which means? "You're our John Connor," Martinetti says with a grin.

### STORM FRONT

The idea of making a different kind of WWII FPS isn't just confined to the way *Turning Point* plays, however. Spark's art team was also interested in doing something new, while remaining somewhat familiar.

"When we were first thinking about how to visualize this game," recalls Lead Character Artist Scott Eaton, "one of the first things we did was look at how all the other war games look the same—they all look like *Saving Private Ryan*—because we wanted to differentiate our game while keeping the elements that make it look good. And one of the directions we thought we could go,



CONTINUED ►



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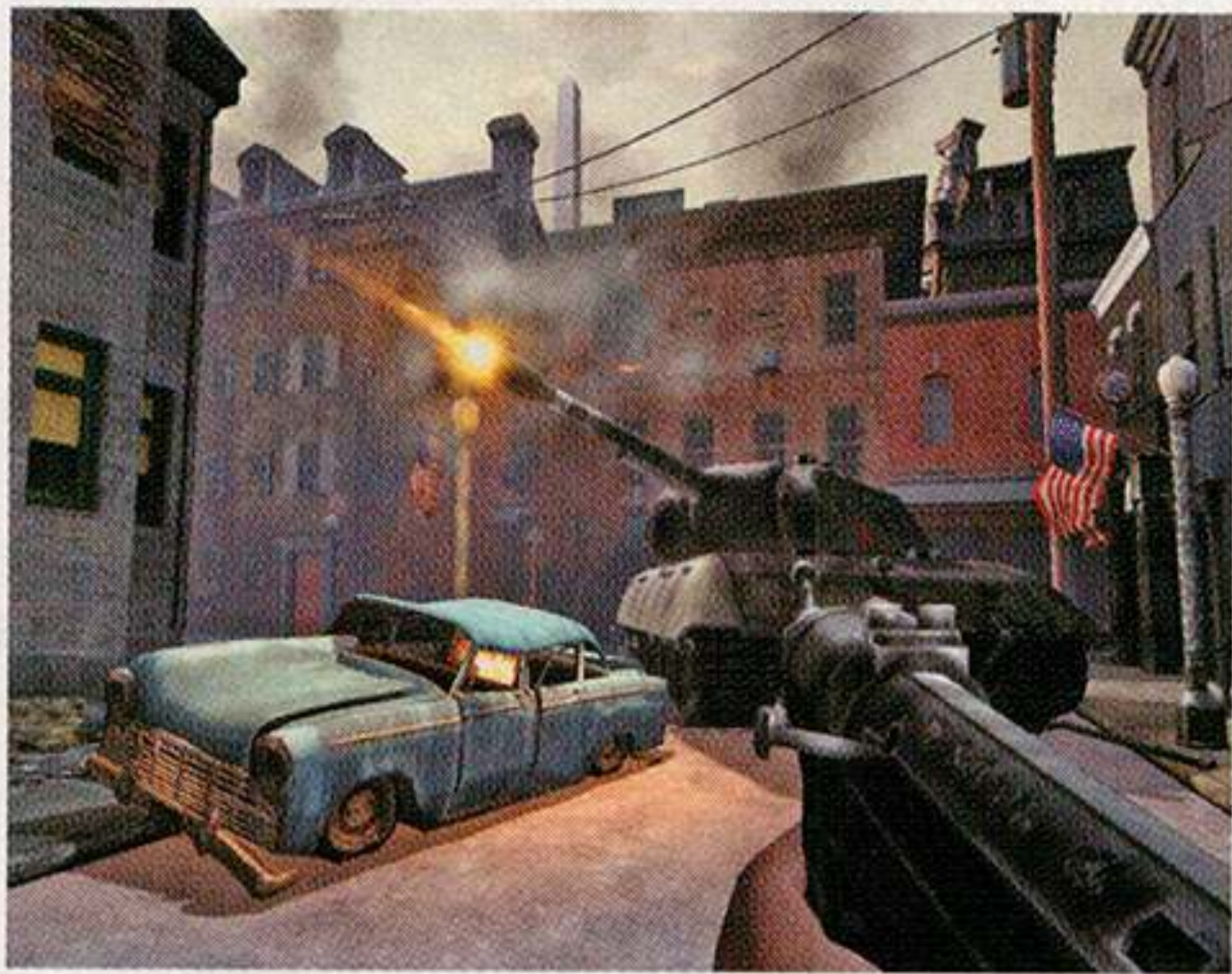
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NINTENDO DS

SQUARE ENIX



because the main character sometimes sneaks around a bit, was a kind of noir-type lighting scheme, to use a lot of dark shadows and high-contrast lighting.”

“But we didn’t want it to look too pulpy or kitsch,” he continues, “so we looked at a lot of movies like The Coen Brothers’ *The Man Who Wasn’t There*. [Roman Polanski’s] *The Pianist* also inspired us a lot, especially in the Washington levels. And we looked at movies like *Amelie* and other films that have really strong color punctuations to create certain moods, things that would make the player feel like an area might be dangerous.”

Movies also influenced the art team when it came to designing the weapons, vehicles, and uniforms that the Germans would’ve developed in the late ‘40s and early ‘50s had they not lost the war. “Some months ago we had a chance to talk to [movie writer/director] Kerry Conran, who did *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*,” explains Art Director Jerry Kowalczyk. “He brought tons of his own artwork from the movie, which was very inspiring. But the big idea I got from him was to push as far as you can, to stylize the game.” This not only led the art team to design some very interesting updates of familiar WWII-era weapons—such as the MP50, an update on the German MPO40 submachine gun, but some zeppelins that actually got the rest of the design team excited. “They were always part of the game,” explains Langteau, “but after seeing them, they definitely took on a bigger role.”

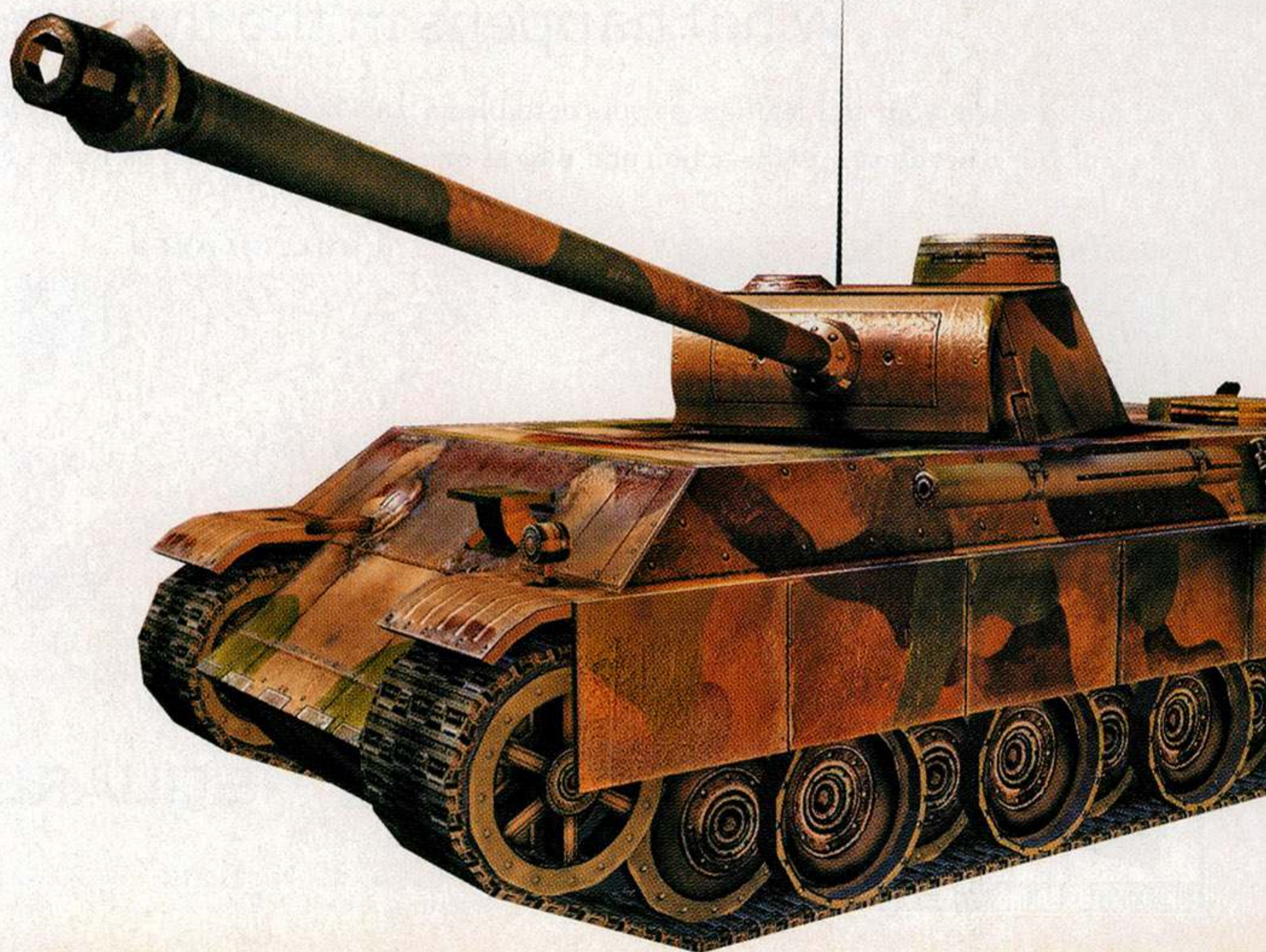


“But,” Kowalczyk interjects, “there are limits to how far we can go [with the stylization] because the world has to be believable. I think it has a pretty good blend of the art deco of the ‘30s and ‘40s, but it’s actually been a little difficult to establish the look of the game, which is why we’re still working on it.”

### THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

While the guys assured us that the game would be out before the end of the year, when it’ll be published by the good people at Codemasters, they weren’t 100 percent sure. They were unwilling to say what, if anything, they are doing with multiplayer, online, and co-op play modes.

The controls are still getting some fine tuning, and there is also some debate on how the main character will gain health. They also wouldn’t tell us how many single-player missions there would be in the game, whether there’d be any vehicle levels or usable turrets, or even what our hero’s name would be. Though, oddly, while explaining that the game takes place over the course of 12 to 18 months, Martinetti did let it slip that, “we’re trying to give a timeline in this game to set up events for...other things.” We’re just hoping he and the rest of the Spark squad doesn’t get run over by a cab before the game comes out; the future might just depend on it. —Capt. Matthew Yelland (Ret.)



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Kratos will face elephantine enemies (among other things) in this epic sequel to God of War.

## GOD OF WAR II

The gods bless the PlayStation 2

PS2

Developer: Sony Santa Monica ■ Publisher: Sony ■ Release Date: March

**A**t the conclusion of the first God of War (spoiler alert!), anti-hero Kratos impaled the heart of Ares with his massive Blade of the Gods. As Ares' punctured chest still gushed blood, Kratos then took the throne in Olympus as the new God of War. Since the finale of his first odyssey, the ex-Spartan has used his new powers as a god to quench his voracious bloodlust, ravaging entire civilizations, and commanding his Spartan legions to commit extreme acts of barbarity and heinousness in his name.

The gods have become furious with the carnage Kratos unleashed, and after an invasion of the city of Rhodes, Athena has stripped Kratos of his divine powers, shrinking him down to a mortal man. Haunted by his personal demons, enraged by the betrayal of Athena, and ready to mutilate his way through a whole new adventure, the Ghost of Sparta is back, angrier than ever, and he's finishing off the PlayStation 2's reign with a sequel that is just as epic as the original.

### CLASH OF THE TITANS

Our first time playing God of War II began with Kratos relaxing on his throne with a couple of half-naked Greek babes, and although their healthy breasts were not freed from their Grecian braziers, the game's Mature-rating description reveals that there will be plenty of adult themes.

Kratos rises from his seat and joins his Spartan warriors in the demolishing of an entire city. Towering over his enemies, Kratos is the Godzilla of ancient Greece, smashing humans like ants under his mighty sandal. Just as he is in mid-slaughter, Ares sends down a bird that sucks Kratos dry of his godly powers, reducing him to the size of his human enemies. The magical bird then brings the gigantic statue of the Colossus of Rhodes to life.

Most of what we played was a 15-minute battle with the Colossus of Rhodes, interrupted by swarms of smaller enemies that you have to massacre with your Blades of Athena. Although epic boss battles occurred in the first God of War, noth-



ing experienced in the previous game has prepared you for the scale of this fight. The stone monster punches through structures like they were made out of feta cheese, and it took a Herculean effort to defeat the Statue of Liberty-sized enemy.

### A GAME FIT FOR A GOD

Some of the highlights of the long battle include using an oversized crossbow to shoot yourself into the face of the Colossus, rapidly tapping buttons to prevent the giant from crushing you under his foot, and pulling its eyelids apart then jamming your jagged Blades into its glowing eyeball.

There was also a simple puzzle included in the brief demo and a few situations that called for Kratos to draw on his new abilities, such as grappling. In God of War II, Kratos will be able to perform a slew of new brutal attacks, including the use of ice, wind, and other elemental magic. But even if you don't like change, many of Kratos' signature moves will return in this sequel. As will the impressive, razor-sharp graphics.

### A DUAL-DISC AFFAIR

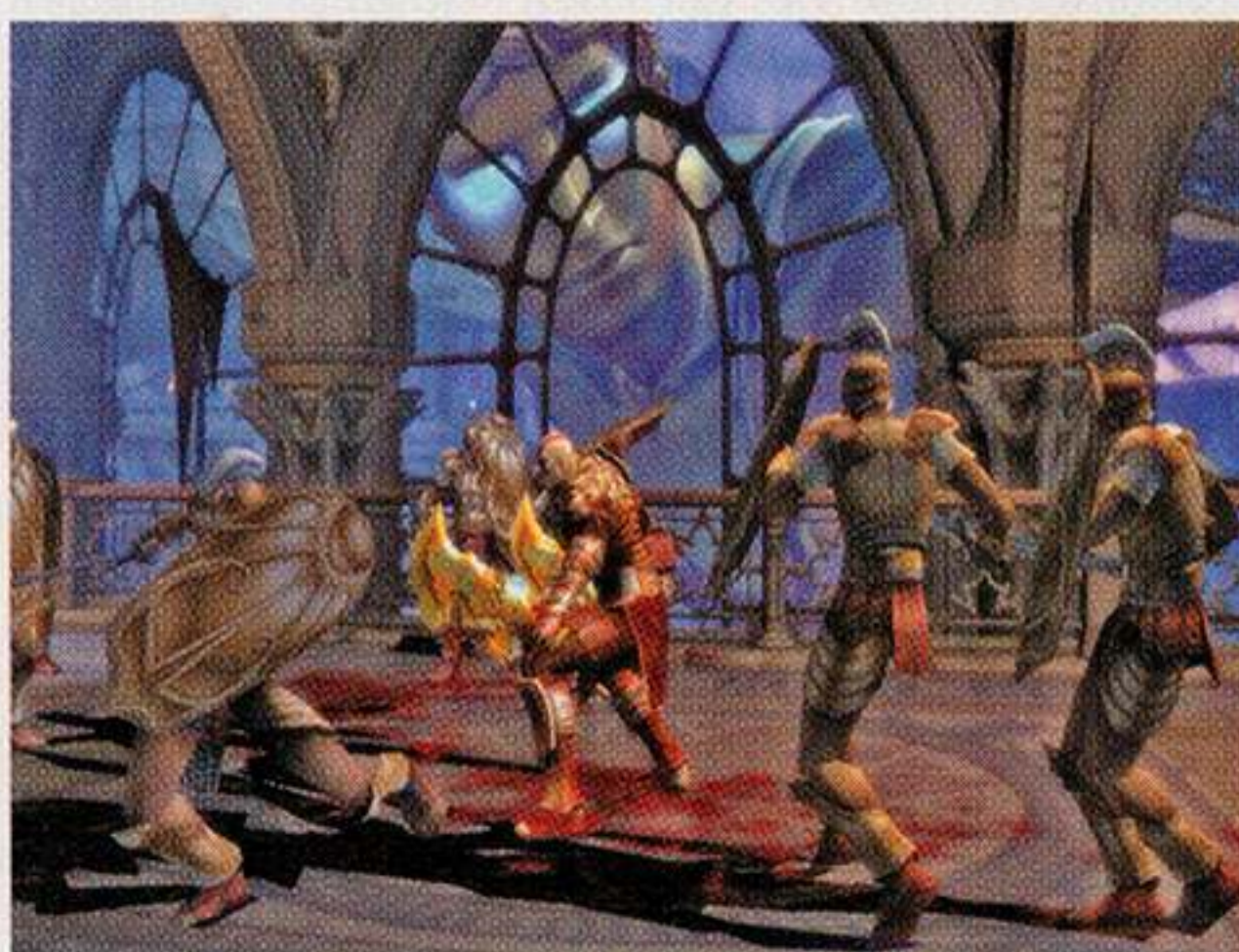
God of War II is not only as gigantic as its predecessor; it even comes with a bonus DVD dripping with killer content, including more than 15 extras such as high-res cinematics, artwork, music from the game, and deleted levels. Plus, it will even al-

### SEQUEL WATCH

- Kratos returns to battle several bigger-than-life baddies.
- Elemental powers and grappling abilities are new for number II.

low you to see what partying with the God of War team was like on Halloween.

Even though our time spent with the game was a small taste of what is to come, it was enough of a taste to guarantee that God of War II will be just as glorious as the original.—**Long-Haired Offender**



(newbie)



(alpha geek)



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| ARTIFICIAL LIFE PROGRAMMING | WEB ARCHITECTURE     |
| COMPUTER FORENSICS          | ROBOTICS             |

## F.E.A.R.

PS3

■ Developer: Day 1 Studios ■ Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games ■ Release Date: March

**T**he PS3 may be ready for F.E.A.R., but is F.E.A.R. ready for the PlayStation 3? That's the key question that nagged our final up-close look at this horror shooter, a translation of the well-liked 2005 PC game that landed on the Xbox 360 last fall.

## HELL ON THE CELL

In a troubling turn, seeing F.E.A.R. running on the PlayStation 3 hardware raises more questions than answers. Why do the 720p-native visuals look so blurry and muddy? Why has the texture detail been downgraded so sharply? The earlier Xbox 360 version suffered from its own visual quirks, but this is a whole 'nother matter entirely. In its current, unfinished form, F.E.A.R. on the PlayStation 3 looks like a pale shadow of the gorgeous original, bearing more resemblance to a really pretty original Xbox game than a cutting-edge title for Sony's new high-powered console. Can its developers overcome the odds and deliver the ghoulishly good new-gen graphics fans expect? We're crossing our bloody fingers.

## CHEAT DEATH, YET AGAIN

Otherwise, it's bone-snapping business as usual. As part of a team of paranormal investigators, you're a new recruit charged with tracking down

a powerful telepath. Your only obstacle? A battalion of cloned super-soldiers armed with delightful toys like particle beams, repeating cannons, and the aptly named "Penetrator" nail gun. As in the earlier versions of F.E.A.R., the plot is little more than a meat hook from which to hang a collection of truly gruesome scenes: hallways hip-deep in blood, victims charred to gristly skeletons, and a freaky little ghost girl who has the unnerving habit of scurrying up behind your person as you slink through ventilation ducts. There's still no word on the multiplayer side of the game, but if it makes the cut intact, expect a slew of frantic deathmatch and team-deathmatch modes.

## THE HORROR, THE HORROR!

This PS3 incarnation also contains a short bonus side mission and a new weapon: a rip-roaring, street-sweeper-style shotgun. Otherwise, the gameplay here mimics the Xbox 360 version to a tee. The controls respond well—thank heaven for the redesigned PS3 analog sticks—and the frame rate appears reasonably smooth. Though we're disappointed by the visuals, we're cautiously optimistic that the game will deliver a nice sharp jolt for PS3 owners. If you've tired of *Resistance: Fall of Man*, F.E.A.R. may be worth a shot this March. —Vicious Sid

## THE LOWDOWN

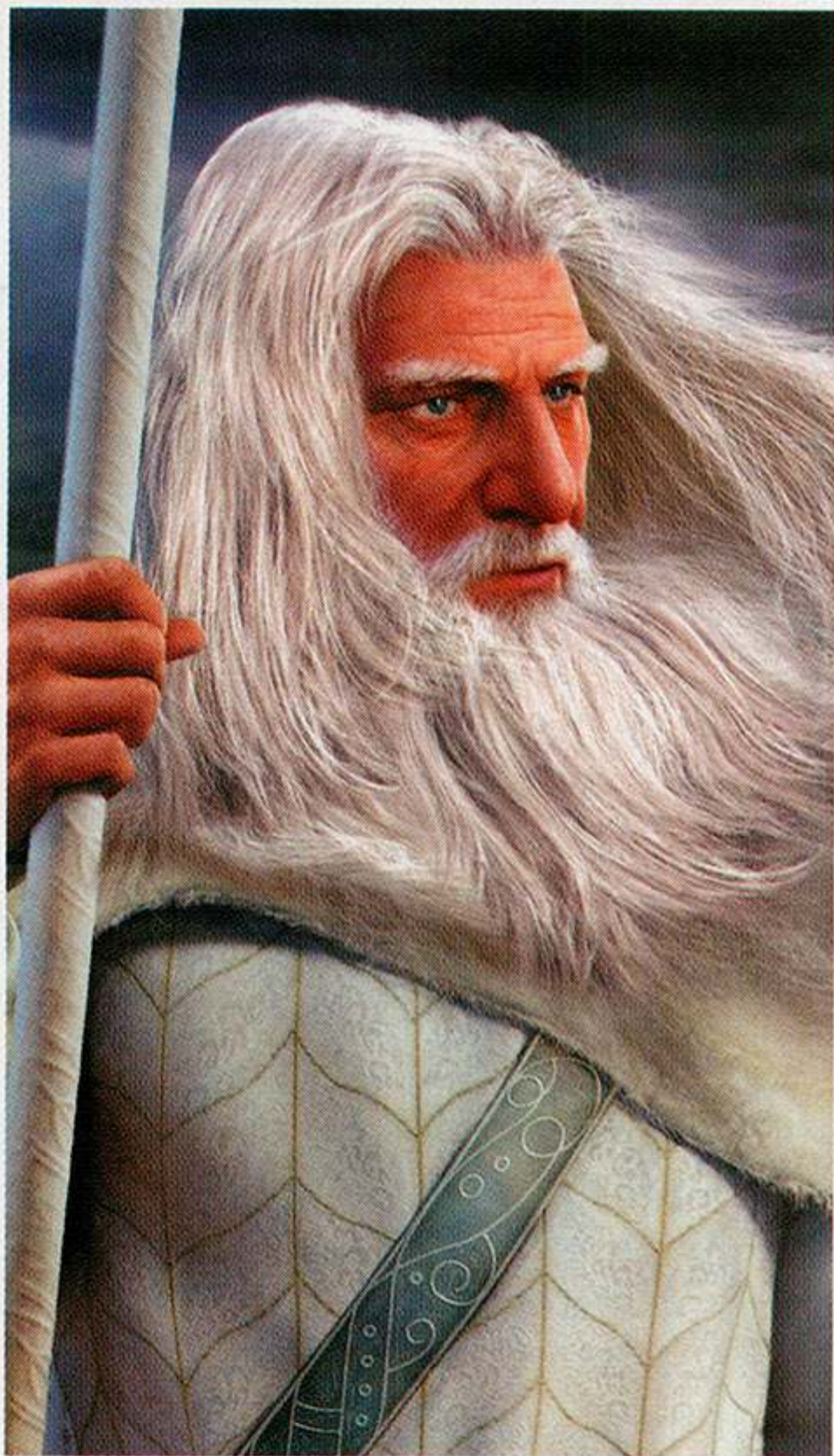
- Bombard enemies with bullets, bombs, and devastating scissor kicks.
- Plays well, but will it be another mediocre PlayStation 3 port?



## THE LORD OF THE RINGS ONLINE: SHADOWS OF ANGMAR

PC

■ Developer: Turbine ■ Publisher: Midway ■ Release Date: April



**T**he developer that brought you *Asheron's Call: Throne of Destiny* and *Dungeons & Dragons Online: Stormreach*, Turbine is taking you even closer to the lore of Tolkien's Middle-earth with *The Lord of the Rings Online: Shadows of Angmar*. But with Blizzard's *World of Warcraft* raking in more than eight million subscribers, it's hard for anyone else to get a piece of the MMO pie. So this time around Turbine is rightly mimicking the winning *WoW* gameplay formula for *LotR Online*, adding some vast and much-needed enhancements.

## THE FIGHT FOR MIDDLE-EARTH HAS BEGUN

The adventure begins with a selection of one of the four good races of Middle-earth: Humans (Male or Female), Hobbits (Male or Female), Elves (Male or Female), or Dwarfs (Male only). There's a fair amount of customization options for your character, but nothing incredibly in-depth. From there it's off to battle the evil and tainted foes of the land during the period marking the War of the Ring.

Depending on the selected race, your adventure will begin in an action-packed instance of the world where you'll get acquainted with the controls and questing mechanics of the game. The first quest gives you insight into your role as part of the War of the Ring, and ends in a climatic reunion with important *LotR* lead characters. Throughout

## THE LOWDOWN

- Explore the world of Middle-earth; from the Shire to Mordor, it's all there.
- Another MMO that can't escape the cast shadow of *World of Warcraft*.

the adventure in Middle-earth, you'll continue to encounter familiar faces and locations from the Tolkien novel, from Gandalf to the Nazgul.

After the brief introduction, you're dropped right into the real world. It's time to get out there, talk to quest givers, slay low-level beasts (for now), and explore the world. And what a beautiful world it is; *LotR Online* is the most visually stunning MMO we've seen yet. If you thought *Guild Wars* was pretty, prepare to be blown away. High-texture quality, insane viewing distances, and populated environments bring you closer to the experience like never before.

## FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

One thing *LotR Online* does better than any other MMO out there is bring together a fabulous community toolset. Forget *Ventrillo* because *LotR Online* boasts its own in-game voice and chat system with stellar user-friendly support. Each player will be able to keep an in-game blog where they can export character stats for comparisons or stat-build guides. Wicked—Tenacious Moses

# S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: SHADOW OF CHERNOBYL

PC

■ Developer: GSC Game World ■ Publisher: THQ ■ Release Date: Spring 2007

We are not afraid of being compared to Duke Nukem Forever," says S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Lead Designer Anton Bolshakov. "They should be afraid of us." Whether S.T.A.L.K.E.R. is compared to Duke Nukem Forever for its postponements or to Half-Life 2 for its post-nuclear meltdown settings inhabited by frightening mutants, the game strives to do something no first-person shooter has done before: combine standard FPS game mechanics with traditional role-playing elements.

## IF HALF-LIFE AND KILLZONE HAD A BABY...

Most of S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl is based on the real-life tragedy of the soviet nuclear power plant explosion of 1986, where hundreds of scientists and plant workers perished in a devastating blast of nuclear radiation and fire. The game takes place in an alternate reality, and a second explosion occurs in the Chernobyl exclusion zone. But strange phenomena begin to occur post-blast. Mutated animals emerge, tearing cattle and humans to shreds. The only thing with the titanium guts to enter this nuclear nightmare loaded with mutants, radioactive poison, and hazardous anomalous energy is you.

## A ROLE-PLAYER'S FPS

S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl is truly an open-ended game, and depending on your actions during the 40-plus hours it takes to complete, you can earn one of seven different endings. But as much freedom as you have in the game to do as you please, you won't be able to get through it by merely firing off bullets. You must embrace the role-playing features of the game.

Where the rest of the game has a distinct science-fiction quality, the weaponry in S.T.A.L.K.E.R. is strictly traditional. But the realistic guns fit the mood of the game, and thankfully it does a good job of not drifting into cheesy creature-feature territory. And most guns are customizable, meaning attaching silencers, laser sights, and other upgrades found throughout the game is a snap.

The Zone may not be crawling with mutants, but the shortage of monsters in the game makes it more of a shock when you do run into one of these creatures. The first time we encountered a bloodcurdling beast cloaked in invisible Predator-like camouflage, we screamed like babies...then we lobbed a grenade in its direction. Everything from deformed doggies, to zombies, to rat wolves inhabit the game. You heard us right—rat wolves. —Long-Haired Offender



# HEATSEEKER

PS2 | Wii | PSP

■ Developer: IR Gurus ■ Publisher: Codemasters ■ Release Date: March

Is there a point to tearing through the heavens in a \$120 million F-22 Raptor if you can't blow everything in your sight to hell with a .50 caliber machine gun and a torrent of heat-seeking missiles? We think not.

## MAKE THEM EXPLODE!

The only person who cares about "pure aerial simulation" is your grandpa, and that's why IR Gurus, the same team that brought us the World War II air combat hit Heroes of the Pacific is hard at work on

their next game, Heatseeker, which aims to heat up the stale flight simulation genre. Its focus? Intense midair mayhem and an abundant amount of pleasing, wing-ripping combat.

## TOP GUN + AFTER BURNER = HEATSEEKER

Slated for the PS2, Wii and PSP, Heatseeker will put players into the cockpits of authentic birds of destruction such as the classic F-15 Eagle, the F-35 Lightning II, Stealth Bombers, and many oth-

ers that I would be put to death for revealing. One of the most unique aspects of the game is the Impact Cam, where the game cuts away to the midair cremations as your foes are reduced to blackened smoke, airplane debris, and charred flesh.

In the Wii version, piloting your aircraft is done with either the Wii Remote or the Nunchuk, both of which are extremely easy to maneuver. Missions range from face-melting dogfights, sea assaults, ground strikes, and just about any other type of violence hailing down on the Earth that your vicious mind can fathom. You might even call this game a present-day version of the awesome arcade classic After Burner.

Heatseeker is just around the corner on your platform of choice (the PSP adds online multiplayer play), and when it lands, it's up to you to put an end to the enemy's reign of terror. Say goodbye to serene virtual flights over the Atlantic and hello to total aerial carnage. —Long-Haired Offender



PS3 Xbox 360

■ Developer: Criterion Games ■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Release Date: 2007

# BURNING

## *DOWN THE HOUSE*

Burnout's toast. Throw what you know about Burnout in the fire.  
Inside Criterion's quest to build a better Burnout. By Daphnicus





CONTINUED ▶

# Burning Down the House

This is Paradise City. It's a sprawling metropolis of industry and commercialism and entertainment, tangled up in 90 miles of wheel-melting asphalt. It's a haven of interwoven pathways; of heart-stopping jumps at unfathomable speeds through unbelievable obstacles. It's a world tailor-made for racing and crashing, built from the ground up to steer the genre's most explosive franchise to the top of the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 hit lists. This is Burnout 5: Criterion Games' latest and greatest ultra-speed destruction derby.

But this is no ordinary retooling of a square-pegged game to fit the round holes of the next-generation platforms. This is a complete reinvention of everything under the franchise's hood. We jumped at the chance to talk to Criterion about how their prized possession is evolving from a multi-headed speed demon to a streamlined, destructive machine, and we weren't disappointed one bit with what we learned.

It's still Burnout—don't you worry about that. It's just got a new transmission and a hell of a lot more horsepower to its name. Read on for all the gritty details.

## Change Is Good

Before mentioning some of the changes soon to come to the franchise, creative director Alex Ward quickly assured us that Burnout 5 (a working title only) will still be the game so many have come to love. "Burnout has always been about driving like a madman through traffic, and that hasn't changed at all." But, he said, "If we just made Burnout Revenge again on the PS3 and Xbox 360, no one would be satisfied with that—least of all us. [Burnout 5] is still based on the premise of driving like a maniac and crashing your car. But it's got some significant differences."

The granddaddy of all those differences is the game's new, seamless world. Paradise City may seem ironically named (considering its rambunctious denizens), but for those of us navigating its streets, it's a utopia of high-speed destructive potential. Split up into 5 districts, together comprising 18 different neighborhoods, the city's size is roughly equivalent to 15 older Burnout courses chained together. And every virtual inch of it will be accessible to the player, from the outset of the game, without loading between districts. "We want to do away with loading," Ward said. "That's a big goal. We don't even know 100 percent if we can pull it off, but that is what we are aiming for." It's a good thing—Revenge's excruciating loading sequences constantly hampered its flow.

The city's massive scope gives Criterion the freedom to do away with menu-driven gameplay, too. The Burnout Revenge experience was broken into discrete chunks: Gameplay was segregated by location, and each location had its own events that had to be unlocked one at a time.

No longer. The old menu system is all but gone. Burnout 5 will allow players to play how they want, when they want, anywhere in the city. "We want one thing to lead to another," Ward told us. "A race could become a Road Rage, which could then become a Pursuit, and then in the middle of that [the player] could get taken down and start flying through the air." From there, you could decide to record the episode as a crash, and "seamlessly blend into what you thought you knew was Crash Mode—because we are taking that to a whole new level. It really is about blending experiences together. We want the player to be able to start things and end things anywhere."

And from the very beginning of the game, the player really will have ready access to any part of the city. No walls will prevent you from getting to certain zones. No glowing barriers will direct races one way or the other. Unlockable content will be a thing of the past. Instead, Criterion has thought up a new method of tracking your accomplishments in-game: You'll get yourself a driver's license.

CONTINUED ►





## THREE AMAZING REAL-LIFE CAR CRASH ESCAPES!

### 288 MPH

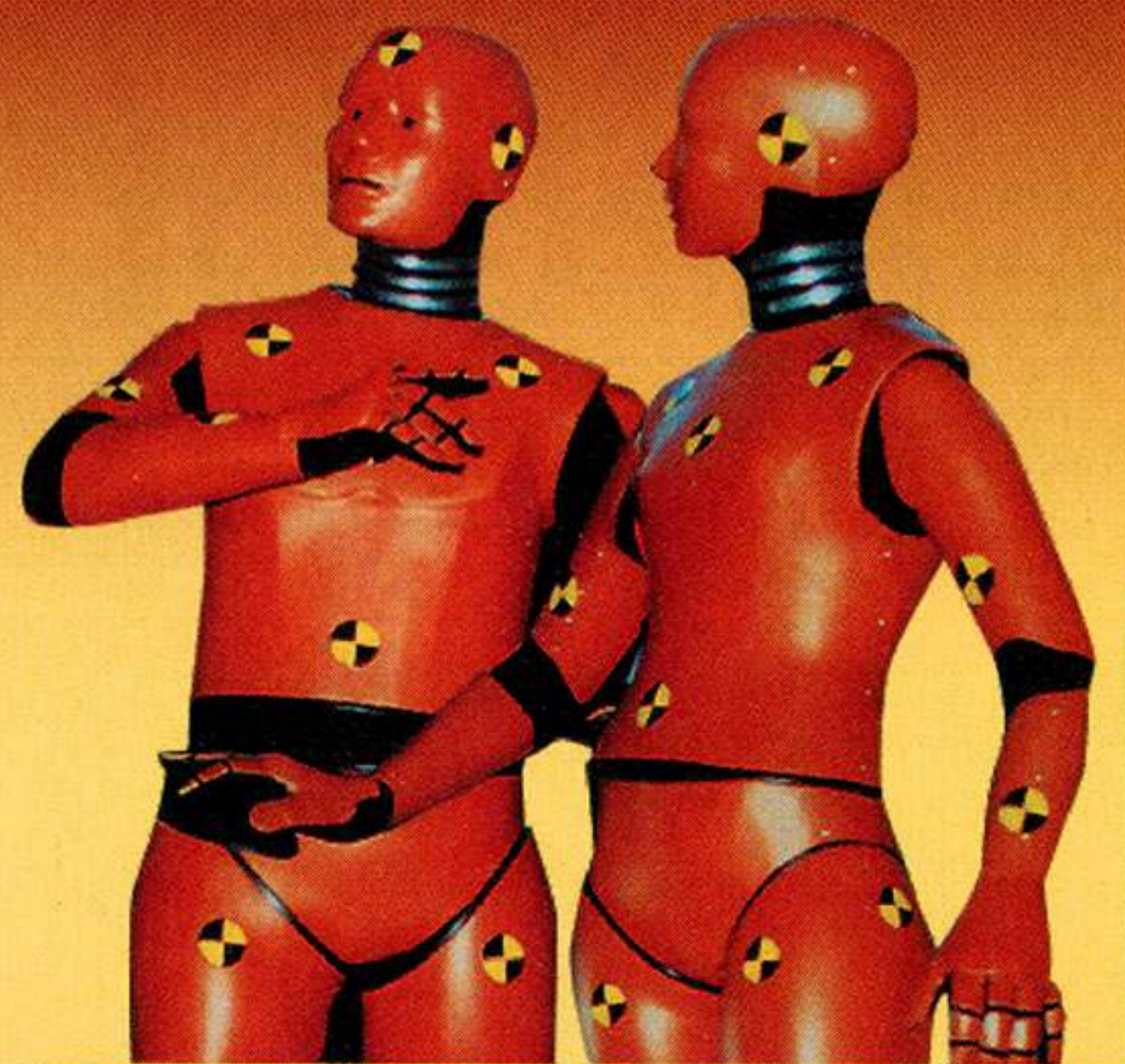
English television host Richard Hammond escaped a 288 mph crash in September of 2006 while driving a Turbo-jet-powered car capable of speeds up to 370 mph. Reports showed that a blown tire sent Hammond's auto into a death spin, dragging his helmet on the ground as he went in and out of consciousness. Hammond sustained significant brain injuries, but astonishingly, made a full recovery in only a few months.

### HEAD OF THE PACK

Chris Stewart is 12 years of age, and had his skull separated from his neck as his racecar hit a barrier at Tongham Motor Club in the U.K. at a speed of 40 mph. But the youngster shocked doctors when following a six-hour operation to reattached his head to his top vertebrae, he made a complete recovery.

### JUST A SCRATCH

In her debut season of the Champ Car World Series, British racer Katherine Legge emerged unscathed after a busted rear wing propelled her car into a wall. The once pretty piece of machinery was literally smashed to bits, but somehow the disaster only resulted in a bruised knee.



# Burning Down the House

## BEST RACING MOVIES

Looking for ways to get psyched for *Burnout 5*? Try these truly great racing flicks.

### DAYS OF THUNDER



Pre-Scientology Tom Cruise and ex-wife/Aussie Nicole Kidman star in perhaps one of the few rock-solid Bruckheimer films, aside from *Beverly Hills Cop*, of course.

### GRAND PRIX



The 1966 Formula One Cinerama classic stars James Garner and an all-star cast. The film sucks in racing fans with its real-life racing footage. It didn't make much box-office money, but won a trio of Oscars for editing, sound effects, and sound.

### TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY



Last year's over-the-top Will Ferrell movie proved anything but a car wreck, as the former *SNL* star delivered the most hilarious, stereotypical portrayal of a NASCAR driver imaginable. Shake and bake!



## Advancement in an Open World

Reflect on any huge racing game on any recent system and the juxtaposition of victory with one particular car is unmistakable. Especially in on-line play, players will generally gravitate towards certain vehicles—and that fact isn't lost on Criterion's developers. "If you've got one 'best car' in the game, that limits the online game," said Criterion. "If you've played Project Gotham [Racing] where everyone just drives the Ferrari F50, or Test Drive Online where everyone drives the Celine all the time," they said, you've likely noticed it. "Putting a 'best car' in the game really restricts game progression, choice, and player experience."

So instead of having a wide variety of cars with a particular best that gets unlocked by the end of the game, Criterion came up with the Burnout driver's license, which logs your in-game accomplishments—crashes, high-speed runs, stunts, running other cars off the road, and so on—and levels up the driver's abilities to match. "The game is constantly tracking what you are doing, whether it's performing takedowns, speeding, or exploring the world to increase your driving skills," the developer told us. "These abilities are being tracked both offline and online."

While individual cars do have their own stats, those stats can be modified based on a driver's skill set. Thus, if you manage to track down a particularly awesome car early in the game, it will likely be incredibly hard to drive, as your driver stats will skew the car's stats. Level up your license, though, and you'll be able to take that wheel without much difficulty.

And as for managing your cars, Criterion's thought of that too: They've implemented permanent enhancement shops all over the city. Repair shops, for instance, can be used to fix up your newly-acquired cars after you've run them off the

CONTINUED ►

## RECORD-BREAKING SPEEDS!

Think ripping through the Autobahn is a rush? Try these speeds on for size. Here are the current speed records for different land, sea, and air vehicles.

### BOAT: 317 MPH

Australian-born Ken Warby broke the record on his Spirit of Australia in Blowering Dam, Australia, crushing the previous American-held record. Breaking the water speed record still remains the most dangerous task, with a fatality rate of 50 percent.

### MOTORCYCLE: 350 MPH

Known for dirt racing, American Chris Carr broke the motorcycle speed record in Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah in September of 2006.

### JET-POWERED CAR: 763 MPH

The first to break the sound barrier on land, British racer Andy Green smashed the ground speed record reaching a shocking 763 mph.

### MANNED JET: 2188 MPH

The SR-71 Blackbird still reigns supreme within Earth's atmosphere, reaching a speed of about Mach 3.3, which is still enough to hold the official record for manned aircraft.

### UNMANNED JET: 7000 MPH

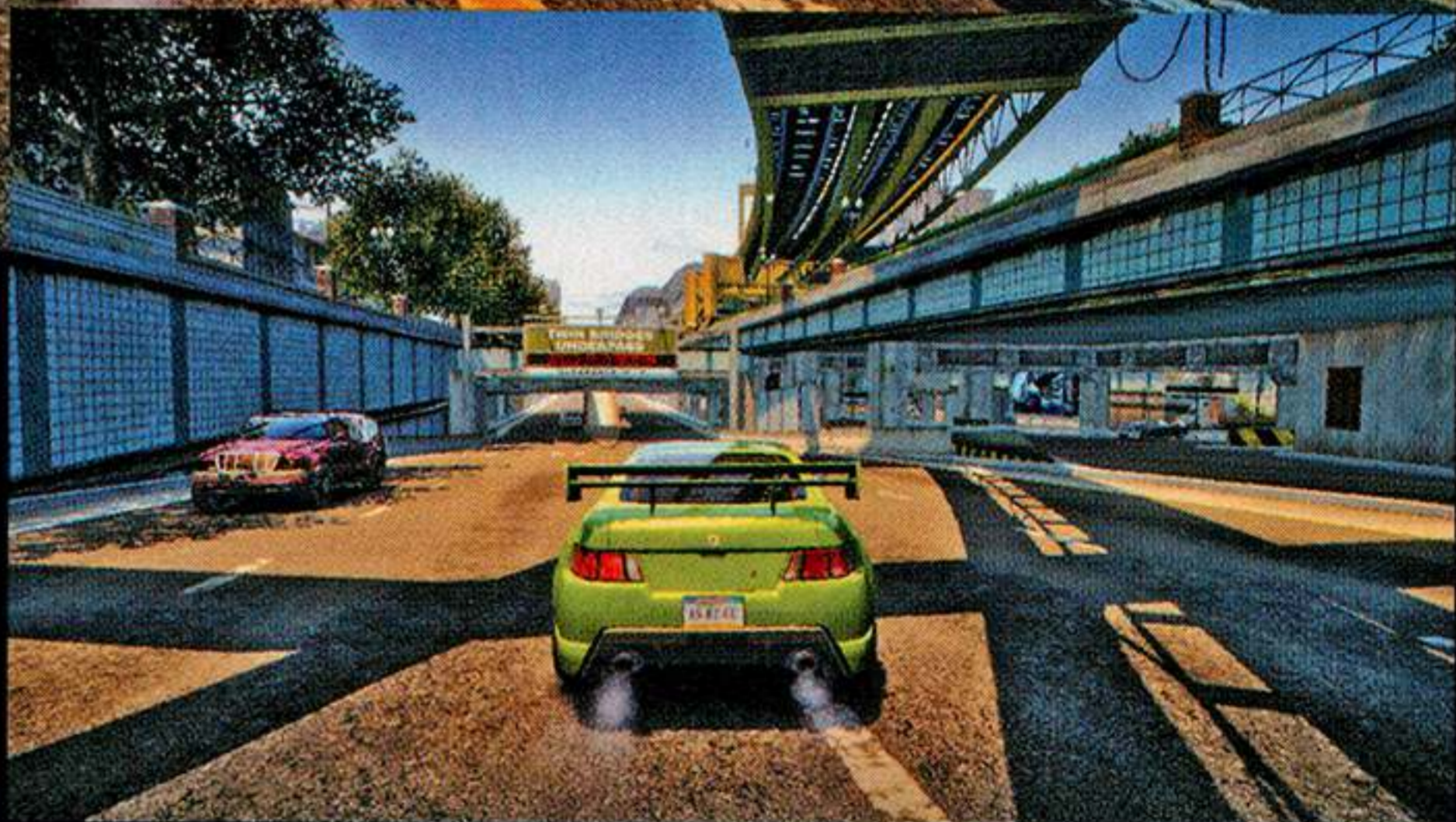
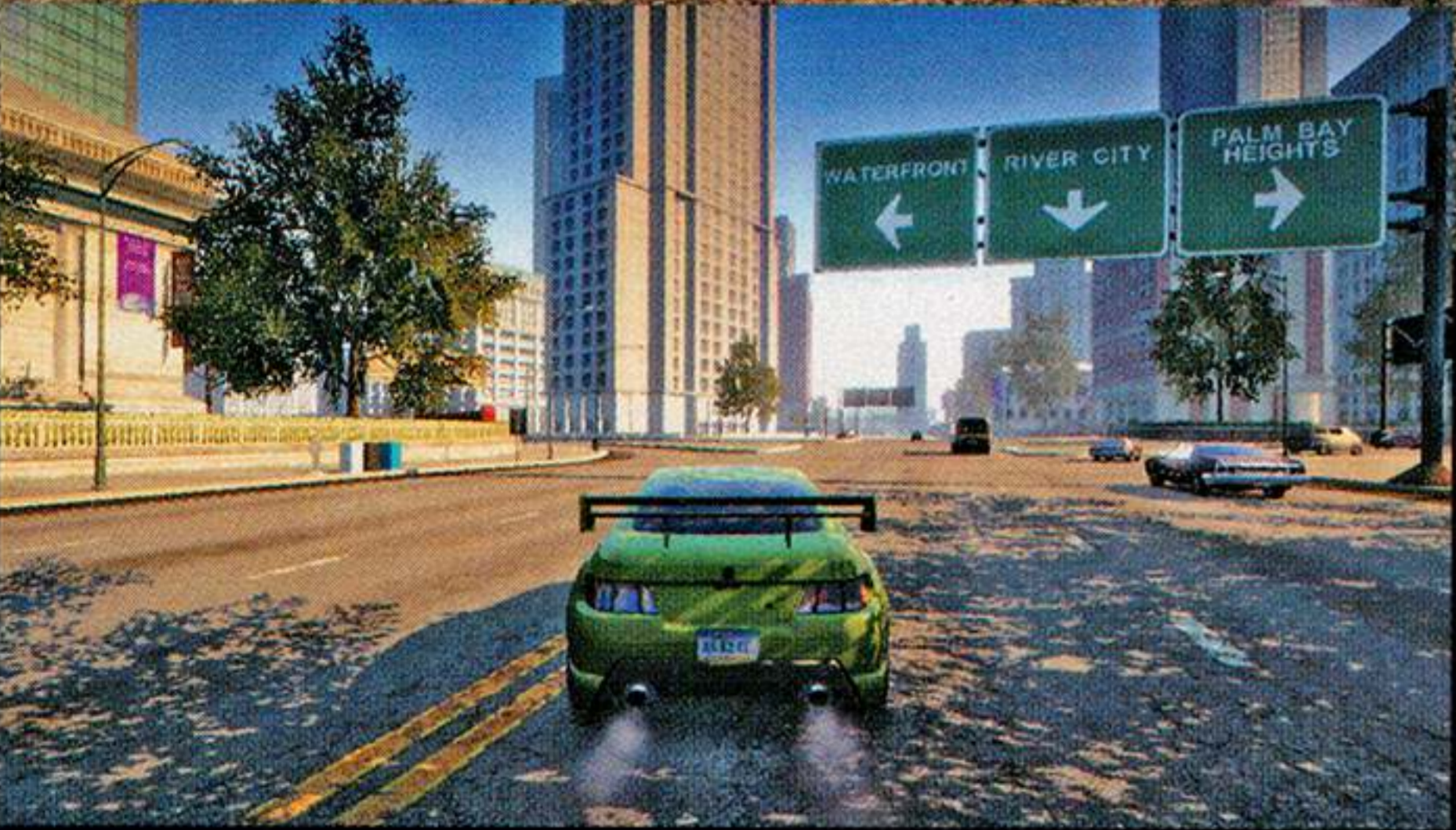
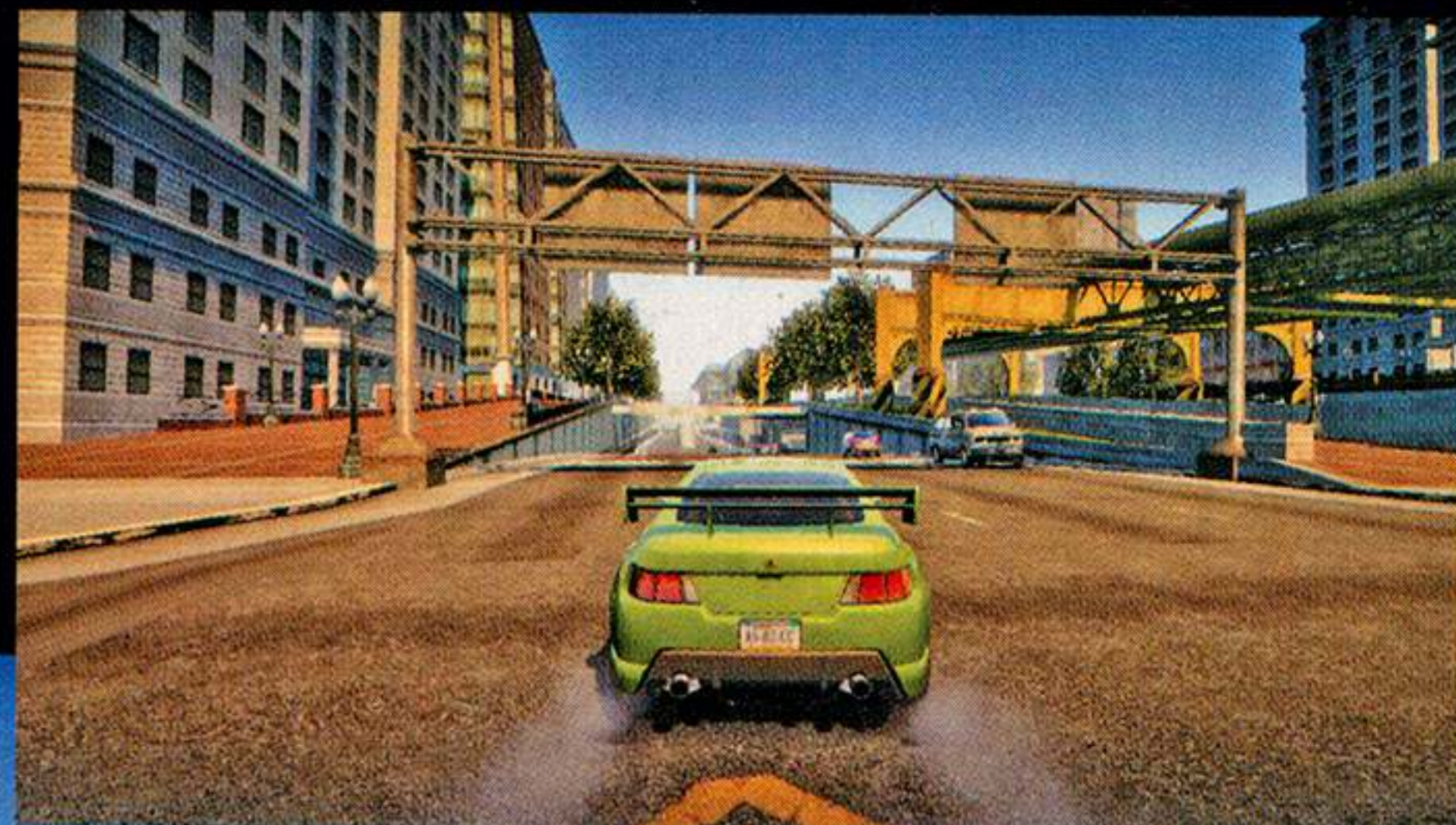
NASA's unmanned X-43A hypersonic scramjet hit an astonishing Mach 9.8 before plummeting into the Pacific Ocean.

### MAN-MADE OBJECT: 150,000 MPH

The Helios 2 satellite sent to probe the sun holds the record of the fastest man-made object in history at a speed of 150,000 mph.



# Burning Down the House



road. A chop shop in the game will allow you to add special abilities to any given car. You can drive through gas stations to grab speed boosts at any time, and, because dust and grime is persistent in Paradise City, there will even be car washes to help keep your paint shiny.

## Technical Takedown

Burnout 5 may find release on both the PS3 and Xbox 360, but for the Criterion team, the PS3 version will be a huge focus. While Ward did say that it was simply too early to be able to accurately predict exactly what would be in either release, he noted that the team is attacking the PS3 with the same fervency they did the PS2—one hell of a lot. 1080p over HDMI, for instance, just isn't possible on the Xbox 360 at this point, although it's a foregone conclusion on the PS3. The PS3's Sixaxis controller will provide additional control options the Xbox 360's doesn't have. Plus, the PS3's advanced processing capabilities make it particularly suited to the physics-intensive crashes that are going to be taking place.

And, boy oh boy, will those be some spectacular crashes. The new physics engine Criterion has implemented will allow fracturing of cars into 80 different parts, a massive leap from the 12 destructive components of Burnout Revenge's vehicles. You'll be able to shear roofs off of rides, shred doors and windows, and even tear entire cars in half during takedowns and crashes.

## CRITERION GAMES' TEAM MEMBERS INTERVIEWED:

Alex Ward, Creative Director  
Charnjit Bansi, Designer  
Matt Webster, Executive Producer  
Craig Sullivan, Lead Designer  
Hamish Young, Producer  
Paul Glancey, Designer

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# Burning Down the House



## SEVEN RULES OF THE ROAD IN BURNOUT 5

Here are developer Criterion's seven criteria to linking together nonstop action in sprawling Paradise City.

### I. DRIFTING

Skidding around corners is still the basic connector in Burnout 5.

### II. JUMPING

Vertical takedowns were few and far between in Burnout Revenge, but now jumping is being taken to the next level.

### III. CONCEALED ENTRANCES TO OFF-ROAD AREAS

Hidden paths are an awesome way to get ahead of your competitors.

### IV. TAKING HIGH/LOW ROUTES

Sure, one route might be more dangerous, but danger is your best friend.

### V. TAKEDOWNS

The essence of the Burnout series isn't going anywhere.

### VI. S\*\*T TO SMASH THROUGH

Need we say more?

### VII. STUNTS THAT LEAD TO STUNT ROUTES

Big risks will always equal big rewards.

The visuals are only half of the action, however; a huge amount of work has also been put into the audio, which has been beefed up to react dynamically with the intricacies of every crash. A devoted process will track the movements of each element in a crash sequence and assign sounds to match the visual proceedings. Thus, instead of the bland, regurgitated sound effects of previous titles, Burnout 5's audio will, figuratively and literally, blow its predecessors away.

## The Long Road to Paradise

Much to our collective dismay, there's still a long wait ahead of us before Burnout 5's release, and much that we still don't know about the game. Our

ignorance is centered mostly on Criterion's plans for online gameplay, which will completely replace split-screen gaming. "When you switch to HD, drawing everything twice is really hard to do," Ward explained. As for specific online details, the team provided few. "We have some killer plans there," Ward said, "but we can't talk about them yet. Rest assured, they are killer. We have so many ways we want to innovate online, [to] push racing to a new place."

For our part, we'll just have to wait and see what the future, and the Criterion development team, will bring. Once it does arrive, it'll definitely be at least three things: mind-bendingly fast, jaw-droppingly gorgeous, and unquestionably, awesomely fun.





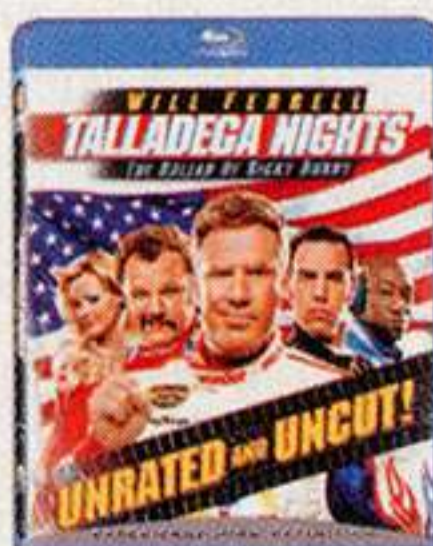
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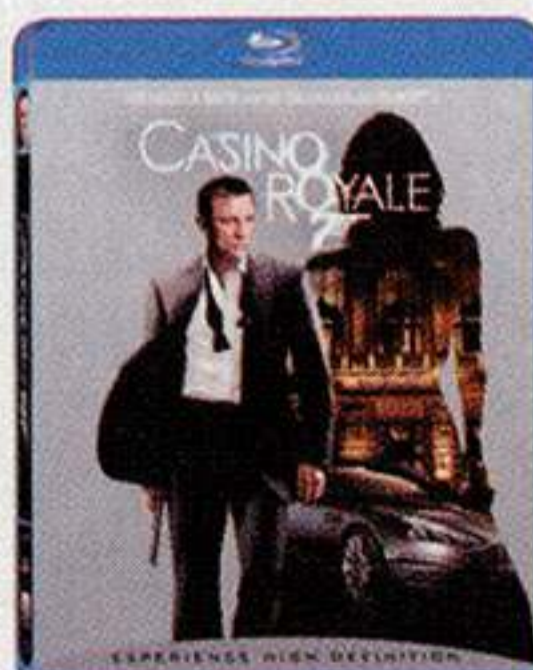
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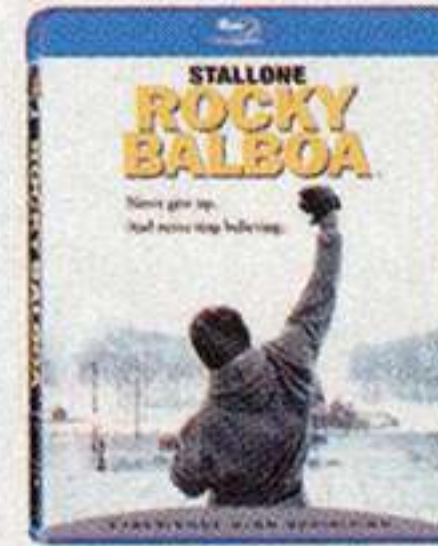
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# Burning Down the House

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RACE

POS  
1/6



**SUPERCHARGE READY!**

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DRIFT ★ ★



**180 MPH**

Super-charged Burnouts return from Burnout 2, where boosting for as long as you can becomes absolutely essential.

## BURNOUT DOMINATOR

Is the wait for Burnout 5 getting you down? EA's got you covered: Burnout is crashing onto your PlayStation 2 one last time.

PS2 ESRB: E10+

Developer: Criterion Games Publisher: EA Games

Any real Burnout fan touts Burnout 3: Takedown as the series' unquestionable high point. Sure, there were things in the last edition, Burnout Revenge, that heightened gameplay in a technical and graphical sense, but Takedown came together as the best overall blend of the high-intensity racing and vehicle-bending mayhem that Criterion has yet slapped with the Burnout patent.

Now Criterion is giving us many PlayStation 2 (and PSP) owners a timely gift to tide us over until the big daddy Burnout 5 hits the PS3 and Xbox 360. Its name is Burnout Dominator.

### BACK TO BASICS

It's easy to see Dominator as a filler title meant to plug the space before the new-generation console

release, a logical bastardization of the franchise to rake in more coinage from an already established worldwide user base of PlayStation 2 owners. And, after all, Dominator has no online support, and a mysterious absence of a Crash mode is quite suspicious to series returnees, for the insane multi-car pileups have always been a big part of the Burnout draw.

But remove the expectations (and take into consideration the \$40 price) and you'll see that Criterion stripped Dominator back to the series' basics. Gone entirely is the Crash mode that changed so drastically from Takedown to Revenge, rightfully upsetting many followers in the process. Instead, racing is the focus, and several older series features return to Dominator to spice up the whole gaming experience.

### THE RETURN OF THE BURNOUT

Dominator is all about simplicity—that's why the game focuses almost entirely on the World Tour. All-new tracks and cars take you through seven



CONTINUED ►

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Image generated by Company of Heroes game engine



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# Burning Down the House



different car classes, ending, of course, with the Dominator class that provides the fastest and most challenging racing. You start with one car class unlocked, and each event you complete earns you a number of points depending on how well you perform. Like other Burnout games, there are gold, silver, and bronze medals to be earned, and the gold usually takes a few tries to complete.

There are returning game modes like Race, Road Rage, and Eliminator, but four new ones provide the most variety to Dominator. But it's Burnouts, a returning Burnout 2 maneuver, that ties everything together. Fill your entire boost meter and you're prompted to unleash a Supercharge Boost. Keep boosting until the meter depletes, and that's called a Burnout. If you perform enough dangerous maneuvers, like executing drifts and near misses, and you'll refill your boost meter to start a Burnout chain. The more you do this, the more chains you link together and the higher the score you receive.

It's a fun, challenging maneuver, but Burnouts change the gameplay entirely. This is because chaining Burnouts increases any other action in the game. For example, there are three new game modes in Dominator: Drift, Near Miss, and Maniac, in addition to a Burnout challenge where linking Burnouts is the only goal. In Drift mode, drifting earns you points, but drifting during a Burnout earns you massive points. The whole game works under the fundamental principle that Burnouts enhance everything you do.

## IT'S BURNOUT, AFTER ALL

The difficulty in Dominator is about the same as the rest of the Burnout series, albeit a bit harder simply because to achieve Burnout chains, you're going to be boosting while dodging traffic for the majority of the game. Aside from World Tour, there's a Record Breaker mode that allows you to jump into single tracks that you've unlocked through your World Tour progress. And there's split-screen multiplayer, which ain't no online, but it's decent with a buddy if you have an amply sized TV.

Dominator's 480p support means car models are some of the best looking on the PS2, but background objects look rather grainy—especially on a display larger than 40 inches. None of this affects frame rate or physics performance, which are surprisingly good for the PS2—just as the rest of the Burnout games have been.

Even with the lack of a Crash mode and no online play, Burnout Dominator is a wise investment—even for the Burnout first-timer—especially with a \$40 price tag.—**Mr. Marbles**



## FUN FACTOR

# 4.25

OUT OF 5.00



**Pros:** High-speed Burnout racing; new cars, tracks, and modes; Burnout maneuver returns; high value; split-screen multiplayer

**Cons:** No Crash mode or online play

EXCLUSIVE!

# GUITAR HERO II™

## THE MAKING OF



**Please provide your name, job title, responsibilities, and years at RedOctane.**

Ted Lange, Associate Producer. I'm in charge of making sure the game reaches it's deadlines while keeping the overall quality and vision of the project intact. I'm also the Head of Music Selection on RedOctane's side and also serve as one of the main resident musicians to keep the legitimacy of making a game based on Guitar and Rock culture. I've been with RedOctane for 2 years or since they have delved into the world of game publishing.

**What was the inspiration for Guitar Hero from the start?**

A music game focused on musicianship that was centered around rock music as well as rock culture.

**How big is the team that creates GHII?**

There are two teams one at RedOctane and one at Harmonix. We run some pretty tight groups with a little over 30 people on each side.

**Were there any challenges creating the Xbox 360™ version of GHII?**

Building a new controller always takes time. We make sure to only create controllers that are of the highest quality so they can take the abuse of a newly made rock star. I'd say that was the biggest challenge. Everything else just took a lot of hard work and dedication.

**What are the online/download plans for GHII on Xbox Live?**

All I can say is that they are going to be huge. We plan to keep all of the Guitar Hero fans

happy and will offer loads of content. Possibly more than has ever been seen on Xbox Live® Marketplace.

**What songs were not able to make it into the game?**

Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath my Wings" unfortunately didn't make it. Other than that we got most of the stuff we wanted besides the songs that we've always had trouble getting such as Metalica, AC/DC...etc.

**Are the new multiplayer features in Guitar Hero II features that didn't have time to make it into the original game or as a result of user feedback?**

A lot of what we do comes from user feedback. Most of us read the message boards and listen to what fans have to say. Multiplayer was something that everyone wanted so it was an obvious decision for us to improve the multiplayer experience.

**Who are the real-life inspirations of some of the new characters?**

They all come from rock culture. I wouldn't say that there are real world examples, but each character represents a certain genre of rock music and so when making characters we have a ton of people to take inspiration from. For example Johnny Napalm just embodies the whole punk scene. He doesn't look like a particular person, but he just screams punk rock.

**Any hints about Guitar Hero III or your unconfirmed wishlist of what COULD be in Guitar Hero III?**

We've noticed a spike in Jug band music sales. So GHIII will definitely be featuring the Jug Band genre more predominantly than before. By the way that was a Joke. We are however planning on kicking it up about 11 notches and should be providing the best song list yet.

**What are some responses that you may have heard about GH/GHII from real-life musicians or the artists that you feature in the game?**

We've actually got nothing but positive responses from musicians and artists. A lot of that I feel has to do with the amount of musicians on both the publishing and development side. Having actual musicians create the game really keeps the focus on making as accurate of a guitar simulator as possible.

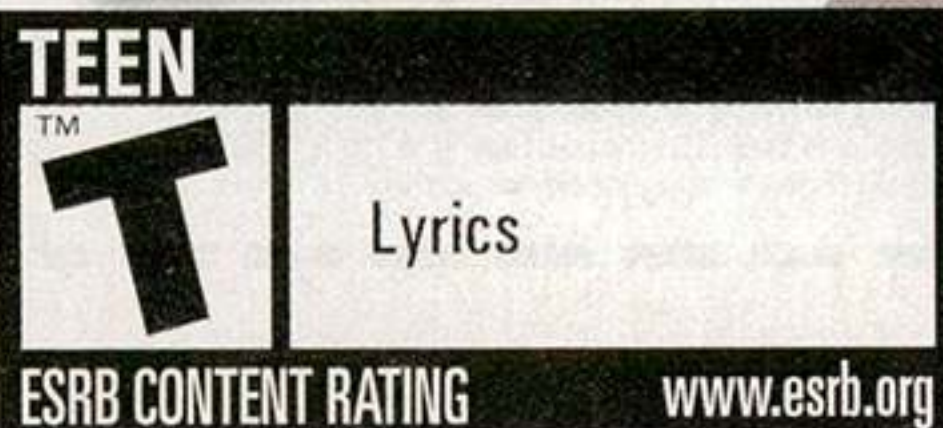
**Any GHII ancillary materials on the horizon? Action figures? Clothing?**

I hope so if only for personal reasons. I'd love to have a little Johnny Napalm staring at me on my desk while I work. Talk about constant GH inspiration.

**Thank you Ted for your time and insights!**



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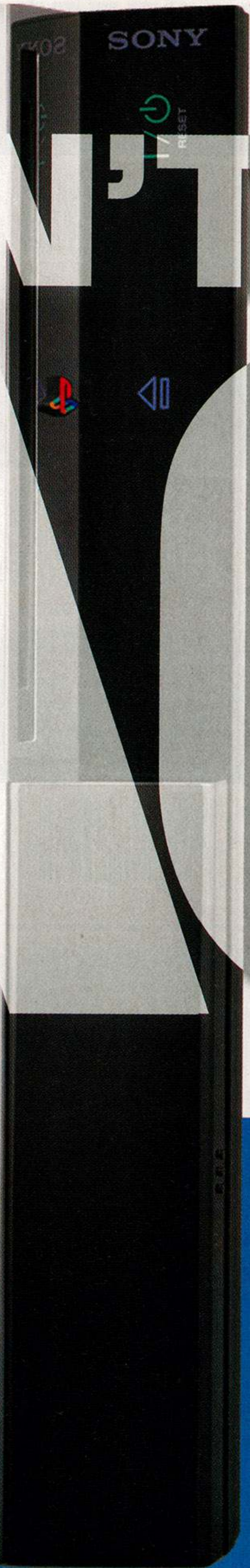
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**The man behind the PlayStation 3 speaks, and we listen. Read how Sony is in the fight of its life with the PS3, and learn about nine key games that could turn the tide.**

By Vicious Sid and Bro Buzz



## Sony Strikes Back

Jack Tretton  
President and CEO,  
Sony Computer Entertainment America

CONTINUED ►

Sony of America HQ  
Foster City, CA



## 8 Burning Questions for Sony

The CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment America responds to pressing questions posed by gamers.

### **B**log post: Why I Trust Sony/When Did Sony Become So Bad?

"Did Sony send Resistance off to die?" asks Luke Smith, an editor for online site 1UP.com. "Keep going," growls David Jaffe, God of War creator and new creative director for Sony's Santa Monica group. "Insomniac crunched hard to get Resistance out for the PlayStation 3 launch, and the sales rates for Resistance were disappointing," continues Smith, "The smarminess of the question demands a smarmy response," counters Jaffe. "Which is, what a stupid question."

Woah. Jaffe's brusque tone in this online video, which created a minor sensation when it was posted online in early 2007, made for more than a cringe-worthy interview. It hinted at an underlying anxiety within Sony, a sudden lack of confidence for a company known almost as much for its fierce saber-rattling as its cutting-edge technology. These days, it's different. These days, Sony is under fire.

If there's ever been a defining moment for Sony Computer Entertainment, it's now. How it handles the rollout of the PlayStation 3 could make or break the company. For Sony the PlayStation 3 represents a huge gamble, partly because it loses an estimated \$800 per unit sold, and partly because the PS3's built-in Blu-ray is the key to Sony's new push into ultra-profitable HD Blu-ray films. To Sony, the PS3 is everything. It is the future.

But in the present, Sony is facing the one thing it wants least: criticism. It's been hard to ignore the growing vitriol directed at the PS3, which started when Sony announced its steep \$600 price tag (see sidebar, "Highs and Lows") and only grew in orders of magnitude over the following 18 months. On Internet boards, in classrooms, and on television, debaters argue that Sony stole its Sixaxis motion-control mechanism from Nintendo's Wii, that we are funding Sony's foray into the Blu-ray film business, and that the PS3 isn't as graphically advanced as its rival Xbox 360. The steady trickle of doubt and bad news has emboldened online sites and game blogs, which have seem to set up a sort of virtual swap shop dealing in Sony criticism.

It's criticism Jack Tretton says is unfounded. "The thing that frustrates me is that there is a whole different level of gaming fans who are haters...I'm not saying the PS3 launch was perfect, but let's try to be a little objective here." Tretton is the president and CEO of Sony Computer En-

### **Why buy into Blu-ray?**

For the gamer, Blu-ray video may not be desired today, but we went through the same thing with the PlayStation 2. People didn't buy it for the DVD player, but in many instances the PS2 was the first DVD player they ever owned. Many of them still use the PS2 as their DVD player today.

### **A new PS3 controller?**

You'll see peripherals coming from Sony Computer Entertainment of America that will address the interests of the U.S. consumer. I can't say anything specific, but we're open to modifying the Sixaxis controller if it addressed North American gamers. Products specific to hardcore gamers, or role-playing gamers, or younger gamers.

### **PS3 online?**

First and foremost, it's free. And there's no "free, but..." You plug it in, log onto the network, and you're immediately downloading demos and movie content. The PlayStation 3 online experience is very robust right now, but honestly it's nowhere near where we want it to be. The PlayStation online store is still in the very early stages. It's the grand opening of the store, the paint's still drying, and we're still hanging up the merchandise. You'll see that evolve very quickly.

ertainment America. And he would rather focus on what's going right with the PS3 launch. "We're very pleased with how things are going. It's very much according to plan. The next stage is to crank up production and get millions of units to Europe and Japan."

A visit with Tretton shows a different side of the corporate monolith at a time when the buzz around the PS3 is in danger of being drowned out by a technologically inferior rival, Nintendo's runaway hit Wii. Microsoft's Xbox 360 is also staking a solid claim thanks to Xbox Live and blockbusters like Gears of War. But the PS3 is a tougher sell than those two consoles, mostly due to its steep price. Tretton doesn't dodge this criticism. He admits that \$599 is a lot to ask for a video game console, even one that features the PS3's cutting-edge technology. "It's clearly an investment," he offers, "but I'm a big believer in 'you get what you pay for'."

### **Why do next-gen games cost so much?**

The good news is I can get you \$29 and \$39 games forever, but the bad news is they'll never get any better. If you want publishers to invest \$30 million in development, you may have to pay \$50 or \$60 for a game.

### **Is PS2 dead?**

The PS2 is extremely relevant. Some of the best games that have ever come out came out in 2006 and 2007. God of War II will stack up to any game on any system.

### **Where does PSP fit in?**

With the PSP, we didn't try to be everything to everybody. We didn't sell four-year-olds little pink PSPs. But we will soon start the second phase, where we reach down to the teen market, and ultimately to the younger consumer.

### **New PS3 Games?**

The launch games will pale in comparison to what you'll see from us one or two years down the road.

### **Downloadable PlayStation and PS2 games?**

I think you will see enhancements of PS2 and PS1 technology. You'll see multiple games combined with maybe video or other enhancements, episodic additions to previously released games.

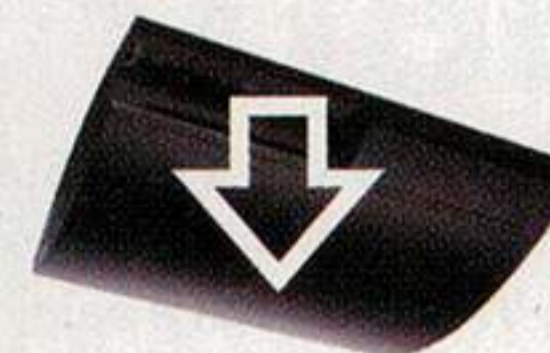
Tretton comes across as charismatic, articulate, and absolutely convinced. Speaking with Tretton, it's easy to be dazzled by Sony's bold plans, even a little seduced by its vision for an integrated network that ties together a family of home and handheld game systems. But for the moment, that vision hasn't materialized. Sony's bread and butter is still the aging PlayStation 2, a system that has held its own sales-wise against newer foes like the Xbox 360 and Wii. "God of War II will stack up to any game on any system," Tretton brags. That may be true, but the PS2 won't last forever, and Sony must inevitably shift more and more focus to the PS3. One chief problem is the PS3 still lacks a killer app, a spark to make gamer interest flare up. At stake is Sony's vice-like grip on the \$12-billion gaming industry, a market it redefined in the mid-1990s with the launch of the PlayStation console.



## The Highs & Lows of the PS3



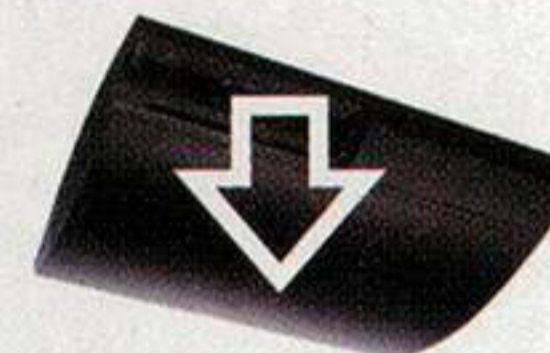
**High**  
Sony steals E<sup>3</sup> 2005 from Microsoft and Nintendo with the inevitable PlayStation 3 announcement and some high-end tech specs...



**Low**  
...until it's revealed a year later that the PS3 would retail for \$499 and \$599, chiefly due to Blu-ray drive costs.



**High**  
At E<sup>3</sup> 2005, Sony announces a worldwide launch date of spring of 2006...



**Low**  
...but blows the date by six months in the U.S. and Japan, pushing Europe to the following spring.

Amidst the criticism for PS3, it's easy to miss that some early feedback is actually weighing in Sony's favor. The fact that Sony could sell two million PS3s in three months, at a faster sales rate than even super-successful PS2 launch, proves high-end gamers are definitely interested. And Sony must also feel comforted that their Blu-ray format is posing a major threat to its fledgling rival HD DVD. Recent Nielsen VideoScan figures show Blu-ray films outselling HD DVD films by more than 2:1, a feat based almost entirely on the strength of PS3 Blu-ray watchers.

It should be noted that console launches are notoriously tricky affairs that tend to bring out the worst in companies. Microsoft struggled to launch its Xbox 360, which like the PS3 was plagued by console shortages and an anemic game lineup. Even Sony's own PlayStation 2 launch read like a comedy of errors. But since

both those consoles succeeded in later months, is it fair to harshly judge the PS3 for stumbling out of the gate? "I would love to fast-forward to the end of the story," Tretton says. "We're taking some lumps in the short term," he says, pointing to the PS3's exotic hardware, "so we can say 'I told you so' in the long term."

In talking to Tretton, GamePro got exclusive access to the company's plan of attack for the PS3. Tretton spoke at length about the competition, the challenges of staying on top, and the strengths and weaknesses of the PS3 as a video game console. Through the following pages, we present a collection of Tretton's most revealing comments and answers, as well as a list of nine key PS3 titles that could put the advantage in Sony's court.

## Sony at a Glance



CONTINUED ▶

# Sony: Competition Not an Issue

Do the Xbox 360 and Wii pose a long-term threat to the PlayStation 3? Not a chance, says Tretton.

## Xbox 360?

The easy job would have been to make a PlayStation 2.5, and retail it for \$199 or \$299. It would be something clearly improved over the PlayStation 2 but only marginally better. We could have said, "We're already the market leader, we've got the momentum, so why take risks?" But Sony's going to take some risks and give you the technology you'll need for the next

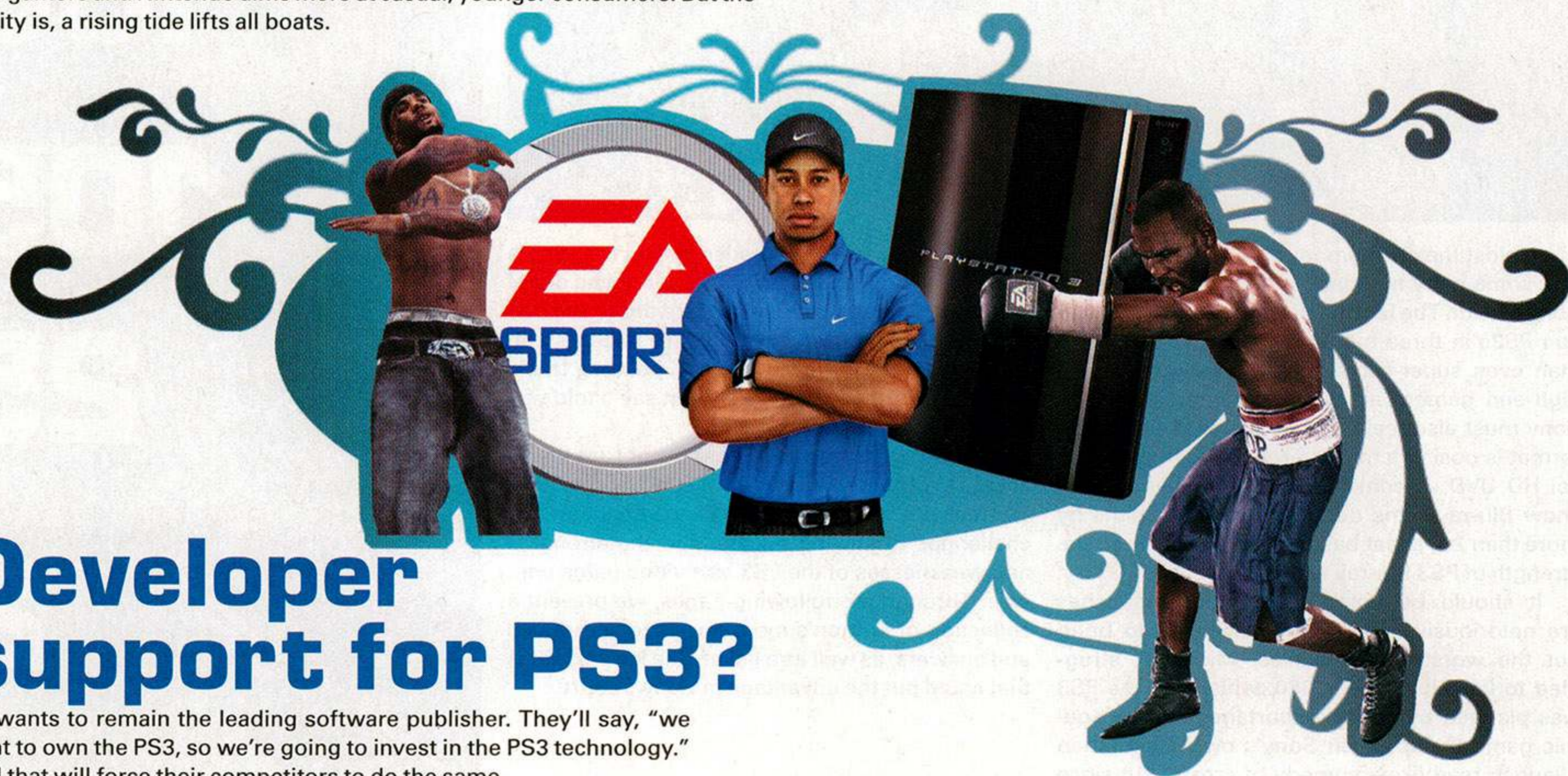
10 years. You could get a machine that costs less money, but if you're not happy with the games or if the system becomes obsolete in less than five years, you won't think about how much you saved. You'll think about how much you wasted.



## Is Wii a real competitor?

We've gone down a very different road than Nintendo, and I haven't seen our paths cross much over the last decade. If we're on divergent paths, it's probably more divergent now than it has ever been. We've carved out very different areas. There's no debating that Sony aims more at traditional console gamers and Nintendo aims more at casual, younger consumers. But the reality is, a rising tide lifts all boats.

Ideally and selfishly, you want 100 percent market share and you want to eliminate your competition. We came very close to doing that in Japan with Nintendo a few years ago.



## Developer support for PS3?

EA wants to remain the leading software publisher. They'll say, "we want to own the PS3, so we're going to invest in the PS3 technology." And that will force their competitors to do the same.

CONTINUED ►

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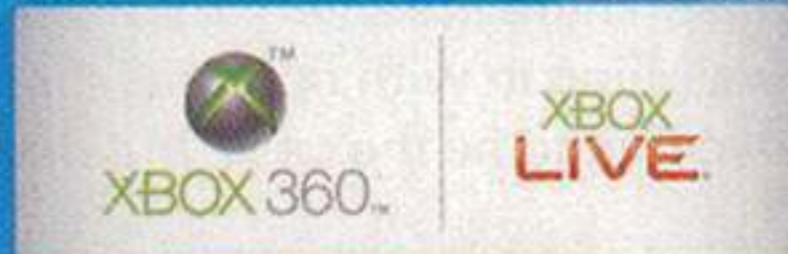
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PLAYSTATION 3



GAME BOY ADVANCE

NINTENDO DS™

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# Sony's Plan for the PS3

The PS3 may be taking hits now, but Sony claims it's designed to last ten years. Can they pull it off? Here's what Tretton had to say.

## Why is PS3 so expensive?

Those PlayStations and PlayStation 2s paid off for 10 years, and so will the PS3. I'll stack our \$599 price tag and our technology against our competition all day long. \$599 is a lot of money, but it's the world's worst-kept secret that we're selling the PS3 at a significant cost to Sony. A lot of people are saying "Well, I don't need PS3's technology." But we know, given where technology's headed, that you're going to want it. And you'll want to invest in it. You're investing \$599, but we're investing along with you."

## Biggest PS3 regret?

The biggest frustration was not delivering the PS3 in spring of 2006. That would have taken a near-miracle and we weren't able to pull it off.

## New versions of PS3?

For PS3 I think you'll kind of see a dual-pronged approach: there's something that drives the latest-and-greatest technology, plus a value offering for those with more limited budgets. More than likely it's a multi-SKU offering, depending on your level of interest.

## PS3 price cuts?

People tend to look at what happened with PS1 and PS2 and assume that's what will happen with the PS3. Look at the iPod, which has evolved but not necessarily dropped in price. Do you need to make an iPod \$99 dollars to get people to buy it? Ultimately we want to cost-reduce PS3 to the point where it's profitable, and ideally to the point where we could enhance the technology for the same price, or reduce the price.

## Is PS3 more powerful than Xbox 360?

If we were maxxing out the PlayStation 3 now, we'd have nothing new to show you a year or two down the road. The reality is, we're just scratching the surface.

## Other Tretton Quotes

"You can't ignore those four letters that are on the outside of the PS3: S-O-N-Y."

"I think creating technology is something Sony does well, but explaining the applications of that technology is something we've got to get better at."

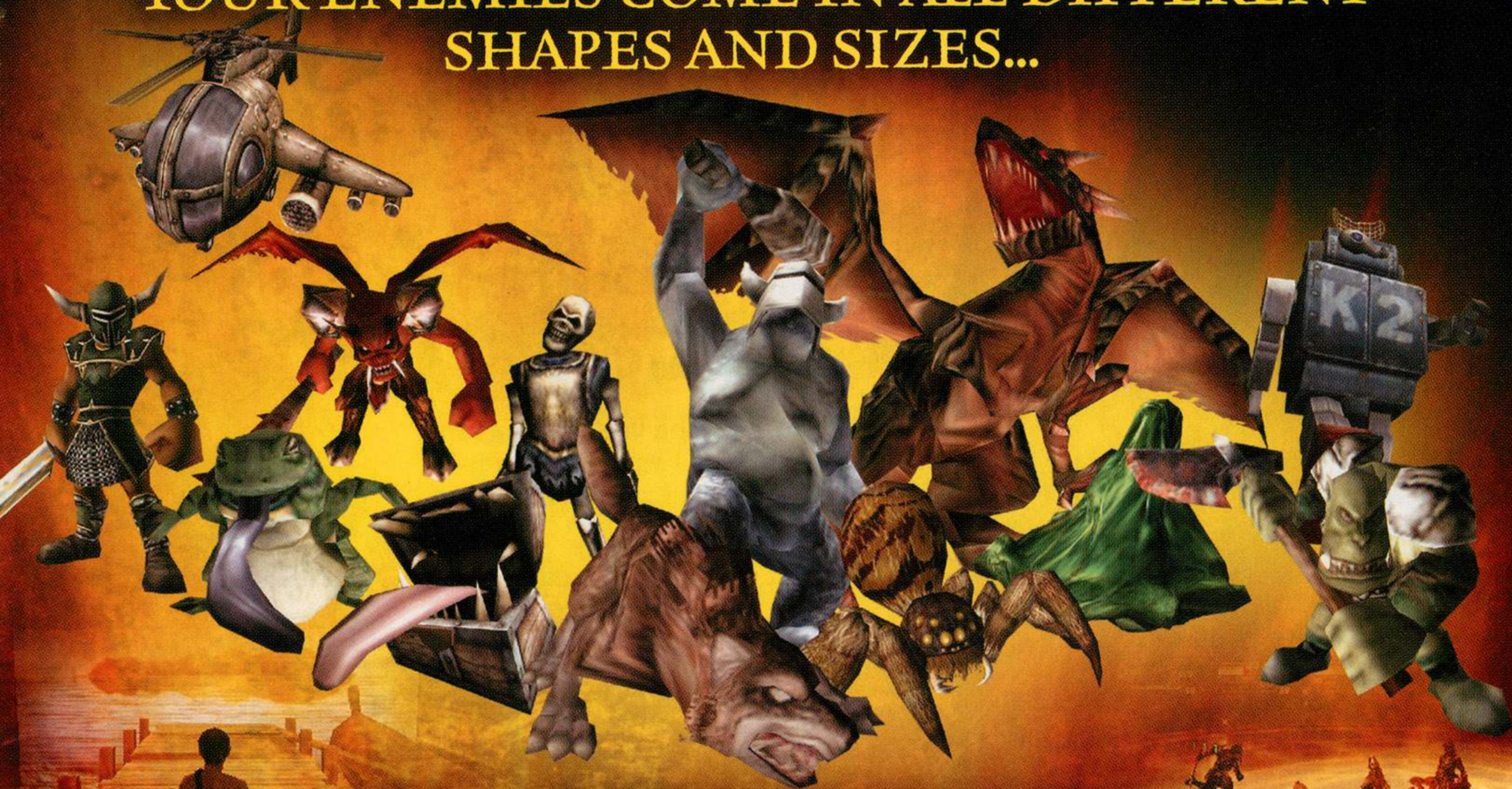
"When we said we'd launch the PS3 worldwide in Spring of 2006, it was like making a Super Bowl prediction at the beginning of the season—you're setting yourself up to fail. But that kind of bravado and confidence is what makes leaders."

"These days everybody is a journalist. There are a very small and vocal group of consumers who are weighing in with opinions, but who just want everything for free. I'd love that to be the case, but that's not how the world works."

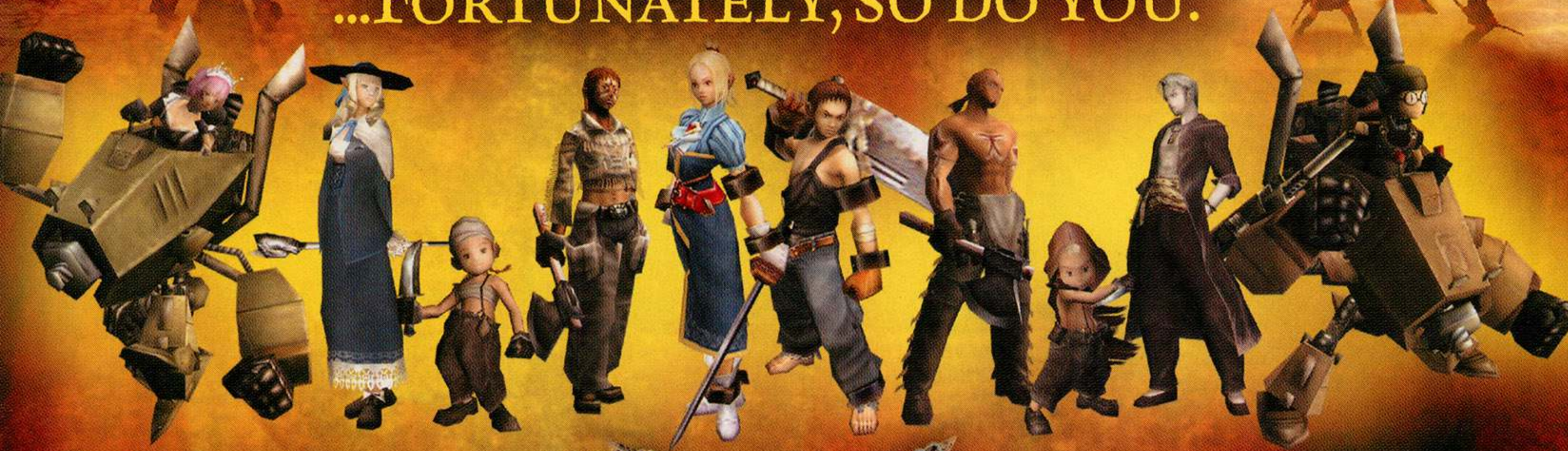


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PlayStation Portable





# 9 PS3 Games We Gotta Have

Let 2007 be known as the year of the long launch for the PS3. Here are the games that will rocket Sony's next-gen machine into the stratosphere.

## Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots



- DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions
- PUBLISHER: Konami
- PREDICTED RELEASE: December

As far as the PS3 is concerned, Metal Gear Solid 4 is solid gold. It's so hot that it could probably exist only as tantalizing trailers and demo builds through 2007 and still help propel the console towards lofty aspirations. Kojima Productions is set to reveal quite a few secrets this year, including a probable release date. But the coveted online multiplayer mode may prove tricky because it all depends on Sony's own PS3 online infrastructure, and MGS visionary Hideo Kojima recently confided that Sony has been mum on its online plans. Still, Kojima's epic vision of a military-industrial complex run amuck is maybe the closest thing we've ever seen to a surefire hit-in-the-making. And above all else, you just know that PSP-to-PS3 interactivity is gonna rock.

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** A classic, groundbreaking series makes its new-gen debut. We wouldn't miss this for the world.

## Killzone 2



- DEVELOPER: Guerrilla Games
- PUBLISHER: Sony
- PREDICTED RELEASE: December

Killzone 2 is riding high on a wicked cool (read: computer-generated) trailer that dropped jaws at 2005's Electronic Entertainment Expo. Hardened vets, however, will remember falling hard for a similar tactic with the original Killzone for PS2, which failed to fully live up to its own staggering pre-launch promise. Guerrilla Games, a Sony-owned developer, has retreated to its secret Dutch lair to finish the game, and early intel has been scant but intriguing. Apparently, they've already invested 16 million euros (about \$20 million) into the futuristic shooter and a team of 120 developers is furiously building code, reportedly including downloadable chapters. They say it's the biggest multimedia project in Dutch history, next to film director Paul Verhoeven's World War II thriller, *Black Book*. Sounds good to us...provided you keep Verhoeven far, far away from the cinematics.

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** If they work out the kinks from the first game, Killzone 2 has the potential to out-dazzle Halo 3.

## Heavenly Sword



- DEVELOPER: Ninja Theory
- PUBLISHER: Sony
- PREDICTED RELEASE: June

Sony's got a lot of gamer cred at stake with this next generation hack-n-slash extravaganza. This is going to be the showcase title for the PS3, intended to bat lead-off for the first-party published games and be the vanguard for a battalion of high-profile games due out in late 2007 (see MGS4). The question is: just what is Heavenly Sword? Rookie PS3 developer Ninja Theory has promised to show off the Cell's multi-core processing chops through advanced artificial intelligence and gameplay. The heroine wields a multi-faceted weapon that can morph on the fly into three types of death-dealing tools: dual short swords, a heavy broadsword, and extendable chain-linked blades. Individual enemies can form into small gangs or thousand-man armies that use tactics unique to both types of groups. Early reports describe it as next-gen God of War (without the gushing blood and salacious sex), which sounds damn fine to us. But what if it turns out to be much, much more?

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** Heavenly Sword is still the buzz leader thanks to a jaw-dropping E3 performance. And it may be as close to a PS3 God of War as we'll get for a long, long time.

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## Lair



- DEVELOPER: Factor 5
- PUBLISHER: Sony
- PREDICTED RELEASE: June

An early demo of this dragon rider game left a trail of drooling game journalists in its wake from Tokyo to New York. Factor 5's been cooking this up for the PS3 for over a year, and it shows. As a dragon jockey, you pilot your fire-breathing beast into battles on land and in the air using a behind-the-dragon view. You can wreak serious havoc with tooth and claw but breathing fire is crucial for spraying down crowds and blasting the occasional airborne foe. Lair will be the first game to harness the Sixaxis motion sensor extensively, and it's used to guide your winged wonder through dog-fights and to trample through armies of pikemen. Can Factor 5 master the motion sensing without a hitch the first time around? Early hands-on experiences were promising, with the 1080p graphics proving that the PS3 is a visual heavyweight. Still, the play's the thing.

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** Amazing visuals, Sixaxis motion controls, dragon-on-dragon combat—what's not to like?

## Final Fantasy XIII



- DEVELOPER AND PUBLISHER: Square Enix
- PREDICTED RELEASE: December

This next installment in the Final Fantasy continuum revolves around the machinations of the rulers of a "cloud" city called Cocoon, who banish dissidents to a less techie world below them. The story flows through one exile, a woman named Lightning. The game draws much buzz as the debut of Square Enix's brand new game engine, code-named "White Engine," which was designed specifically for the PS3. According to Square, the engine utilizes four of the six SPE's (synergistic processing engines) inside the PS3's Cell processor, allowing for exquisitely detailed real-time graphics that supposedly rival CGI animation. Despite licensing the bleeding-edge Unreal 3.0 engine for future projects, Square tells us they have no plans to retire the White Engine for other upcoming games. FFXIV, anyone?

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** Luckily, the first game to reveal what the PS3's Cell CPU is capable of also has the promise of being a classic RPG. It's a win/win.

## Gran Turismo 5

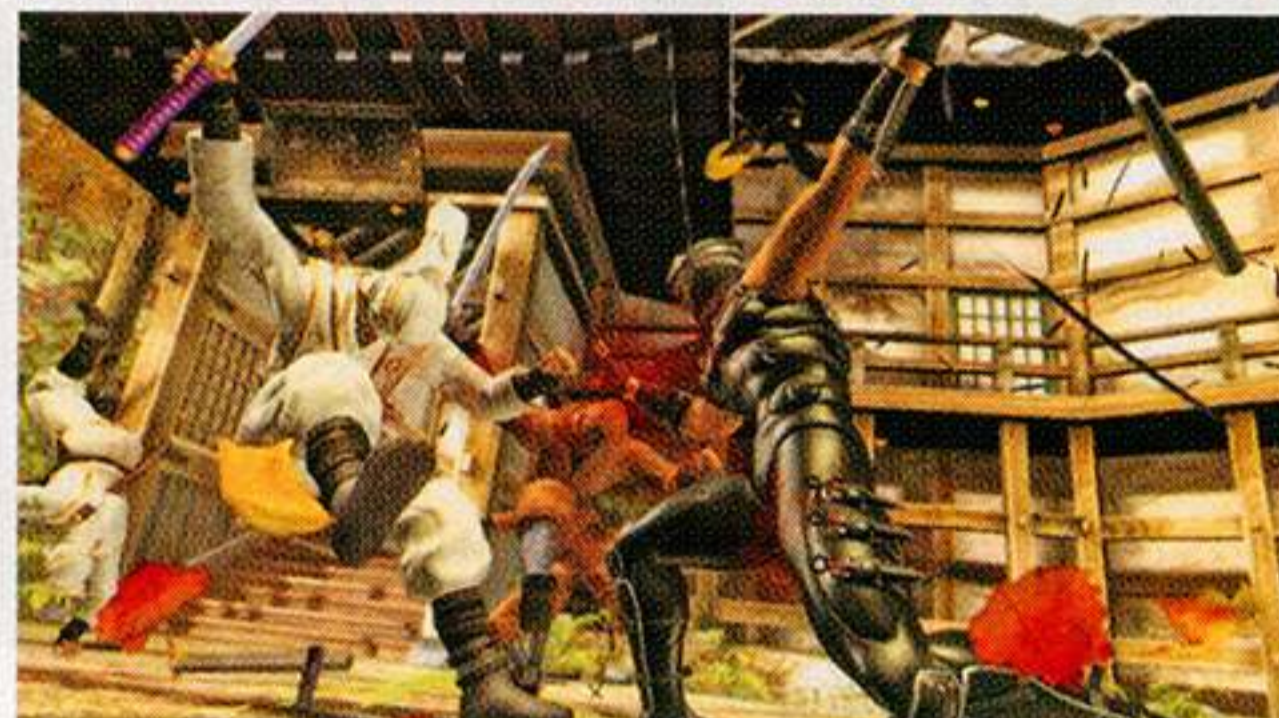


- DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital
- PUBLISHER: Sony
- PREDICTED RELEASE: November

This is the Gran Turismo everyone's been waiting for, and in characteristic fashion GT developer Polyphony Digital has the garage door locked shut and the windows blacked out. Much of what anyone can guess about GT5 has been scraped together from Gran Turismo HD Concept, a free downloadable bone Sony tossed out to PS3 gamers last Christmas. But that was enough to give us a peek at the drop-dead gorgeous 1080p visuals, which were firmly in keeping with Polyphony's reputation for fanatical attention to detail in its cars, tracks, and scenery. Will this be the first GT to support real-time car smashing? The PS3's Cell processor is certainly up to the challenge.

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** Exquisite racing and 1080p visuals will be a driving force...let's just hope Polyphony Digital gets it out this decade.

## Ninja Gaiden Sigma



- DEVELOPER: Team Ninja
- PUBLISHER: Tecmo
- PREDICTED RELEASE: July

Tecmo's Team Ninja development squad are overhauling Ninja Gaiden Black for PS3 duty. That may be a smart move: the PS3 is in need of a top-shelf action game, and judging by history Sigma will fit the bill perfectly. Ninja Gaiden fans will finally get their wish by being able to play as Rachel, a vicious vixen armed with a massive poleaxe. Ninja poster boy Ryo will also gain dual katanas, plus the ability to walk on water, a feature promised but never delivered by the original Ninja Gaiden Black. Team Ninja also promises that the game's rep for eyebrow-scorching challenge will be turned up another notch or two. Hooray! We can feel our calluses tingling already.

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** If this ninja's lyin', you're dyin'.

## ALSO...

### SOCOM 4: U.S. Navy SEALs

- DEVELOPER: Zipper Interactive
- PUBLISHER: Sony
- PREDICTED RELEASE: November

Last year the wily crew at Zipper Interactive let the rumors run rampant, with wild reports that SOCOM 4 (tentative title) would appear at E3. Then they...uh, zippered up and dug in to prep the game for late 2007 release. Nobody's yet seen the game, but if the series' massive fan base is any indication, SOCOM 4 will lead the PS3's assault into online gameplay.

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** Because SOCOM single-handedly made the PS2 a colossal online hit, and chances are it can pull off a similar feat for the PS3.

### Ratchet & Clank 5

- DEVELOPER: Insomniac Games
- PUBLISHER: Sony
- PREDICTED RELEASE: November

Everyone thought Insomniac Games had shelved Ratchet and Clank 5 (tentative title) while they focused their efforts on pushing Resistance: Fall of Man out the door for the PS3 launch. They were wrong, we are happy to report. Insomniac kept the wheels turning on Ratchet & Clank, and now they are prepping a next-gen debut for the comic space opera this fall. Expect to see another massive arsenal loaded with wacky weapons, but we're most intrigued by the promise of new online action. Resistance's smooth multiplayer proved firmly that Insomniac knows how to handle online games. And the PS3 could sure use a few powerhouses for its PlayStation Network, a position that Ratchet and SOCOM 4 could share nicely.

**WHY YOU NEED IT:** Resistance rocked, and Insomniac Games hasn't done us wrong yet.

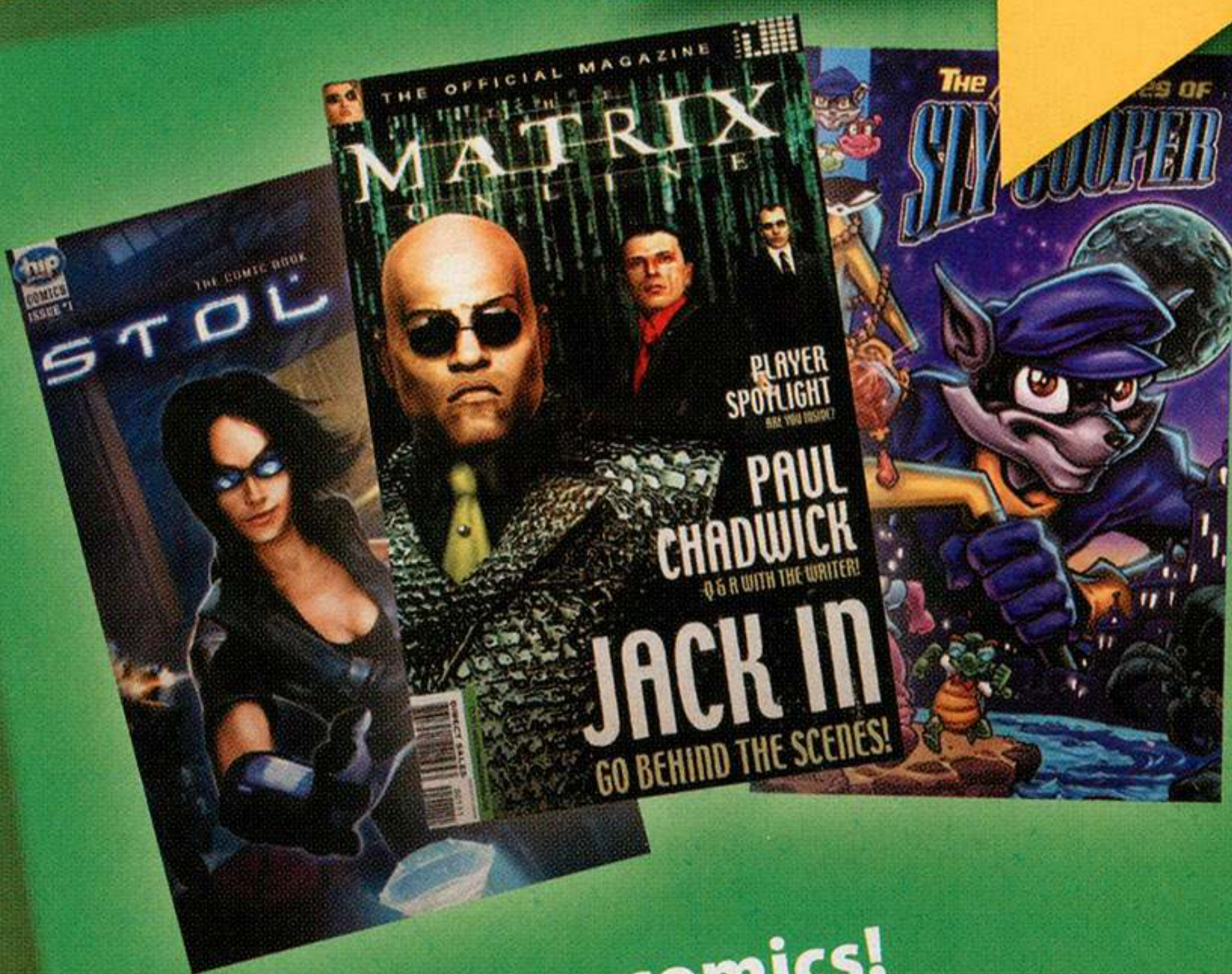
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# WHAT IS THE CLUB?

The makers of Project Gotham Racing and Geometry Wars unveil a secretive new shooter. Are you in?

PS3 Xbox 360 PC

■ Developer: Bizarre Creations ■ Publisher: Sega ■ Release Date: 2007

**I**n the midst of the worst storm to hit the U.K. in almost two decades, I was landing in Manchester, England, en route to the small, northwest city of Liverpool. Known best for being the birthplace of the Beatles, its thick British accents, and its trend-setting youth culture, it's a fitting home for a well-known video game developer.

That developer is Bizarre Creations, notorious for *Fur Fighters*, but better known for the *Project Gotham Racing* series as well as the addictive Xbox Live Arcade game *Geometry Wars*. The latter is a simple retro shooter, but that game's philosophy of simple arcade replayability turns out to be a key ingredient in Bizarre's latest project, *The Club*.

## THE FIRST RULE OF THE CLUB IS...

Fight Club with guns? You're halfway there. *The Club* is a secret society where wealthy members come to battle in an underground blood sport where guns take a starring role. Of course, there are human characters, too, but they take a backseat to the blistering firepower that dominates the gameplay. The basis behind the titular club itself is kept murky, and purposefully so. How did it start? Where is it held? Bizarre wouldn't elaborate, but the designers hinted that *The Club's* roots extend to the signers of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, and even German immigrants who fled following World War II.

But mostly, *The Club* represents wretched excess. Club members include society elites such as mob bosses, dictators, rock stars, fashionistas, and even presidents. Power is a driving force in *The Club*...and what better way to show it off than with death-defying gun fights? And as if surviving *The Club* wasn't enough of a thrill, gambling is the icing on the cake. Like a rake in poker, The Board of Trustees takes a percentage of the action while keeping everyone's identities under wraps...including their own.



### AUDACIOUS AUDIO

The amount of variation and attention put into The Club's sound effects is nothing short of astonishing. A memorable demo in Bizarre Creations' recording studio showed off the unique sounds of a variety of different in-game surfaces and wall types. What does it sound like to shoot plywood compared to brick, metal, or even mud? We fired it up and found out!



CONTINUED ▶



## ARCADE FIRE

The Project Gotham Racing series proves a fine track record for developer Bizarre, but would you trust the makers of a racing series to deliver the next must-have shooter? As it turns out, PGR and The Club have more in common than you might think. Like Geometry Wars, Bizarre is looking to create an arcade-like shooter experience that keeps players coming back for more...and more. You might even call it a racing game on foot, as crazy as it sounds.

The core recurring sequence in the game is a short shootout, recreated in a number of ways. And like a racing game, choosing the best path of action is the key to getting the most points—which is the whole goal of the game—and getting out alive. The game is played in third-person perspective and the glossy graphics make the environments pop with detail.

Bizarre isn't rehashing the typical console shooter, but redefining and refreshing the genre entirely. Each level is extremely short, often capable of being cleared in two or three minutes. But it's not enough to survive: it's all about nailing a high score. The gameplay is based around combos and multipliers, but time is a critical factor, too. Think of each level as an open-ended racetrack right out of *Midnight Club*. The faster you make it through, the better your score is going to be. Finding a quick path to the end is essential, but so is linking together massive combos to boost your score and up your ranking. Each time you play, you'll try

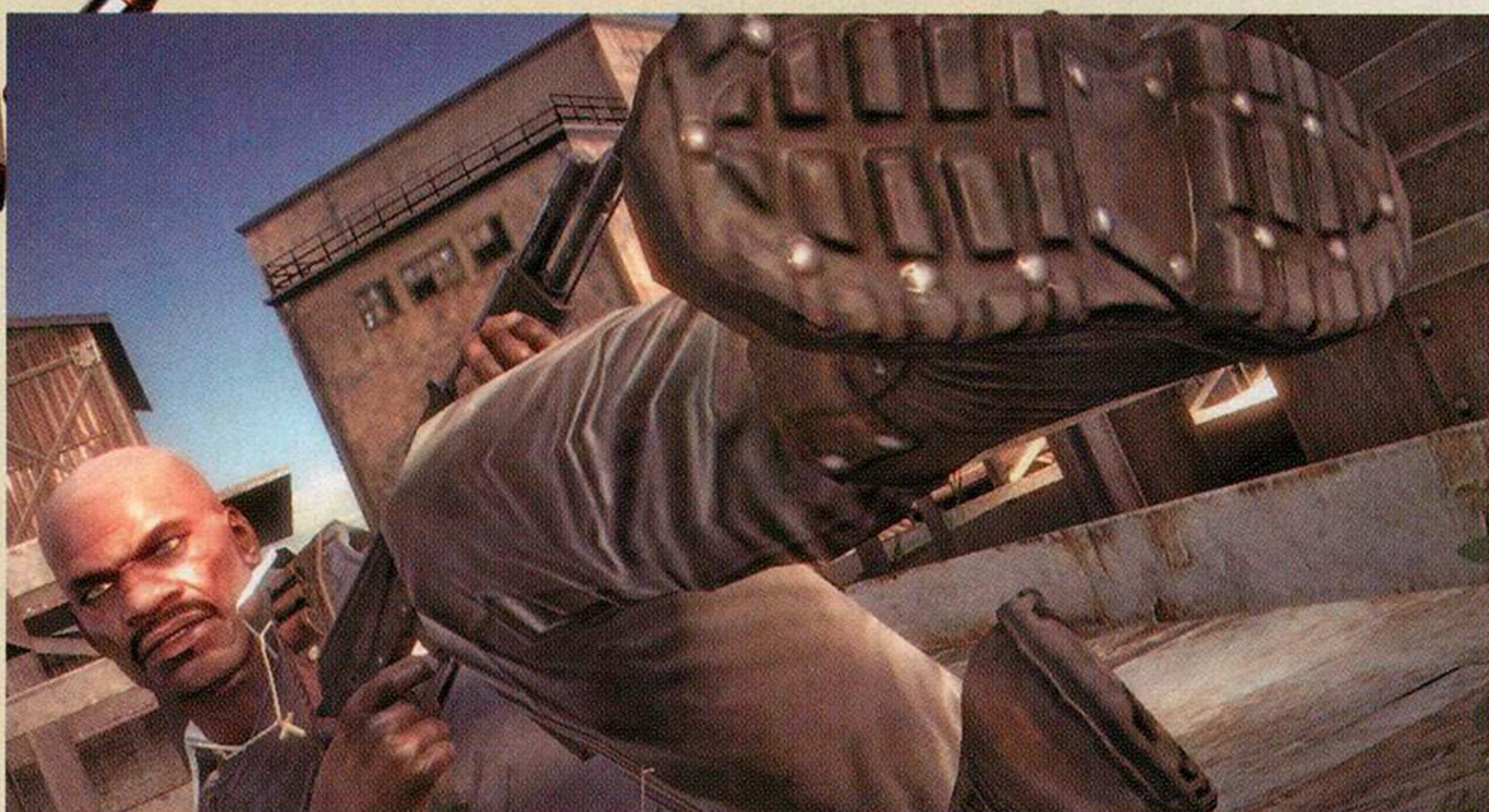
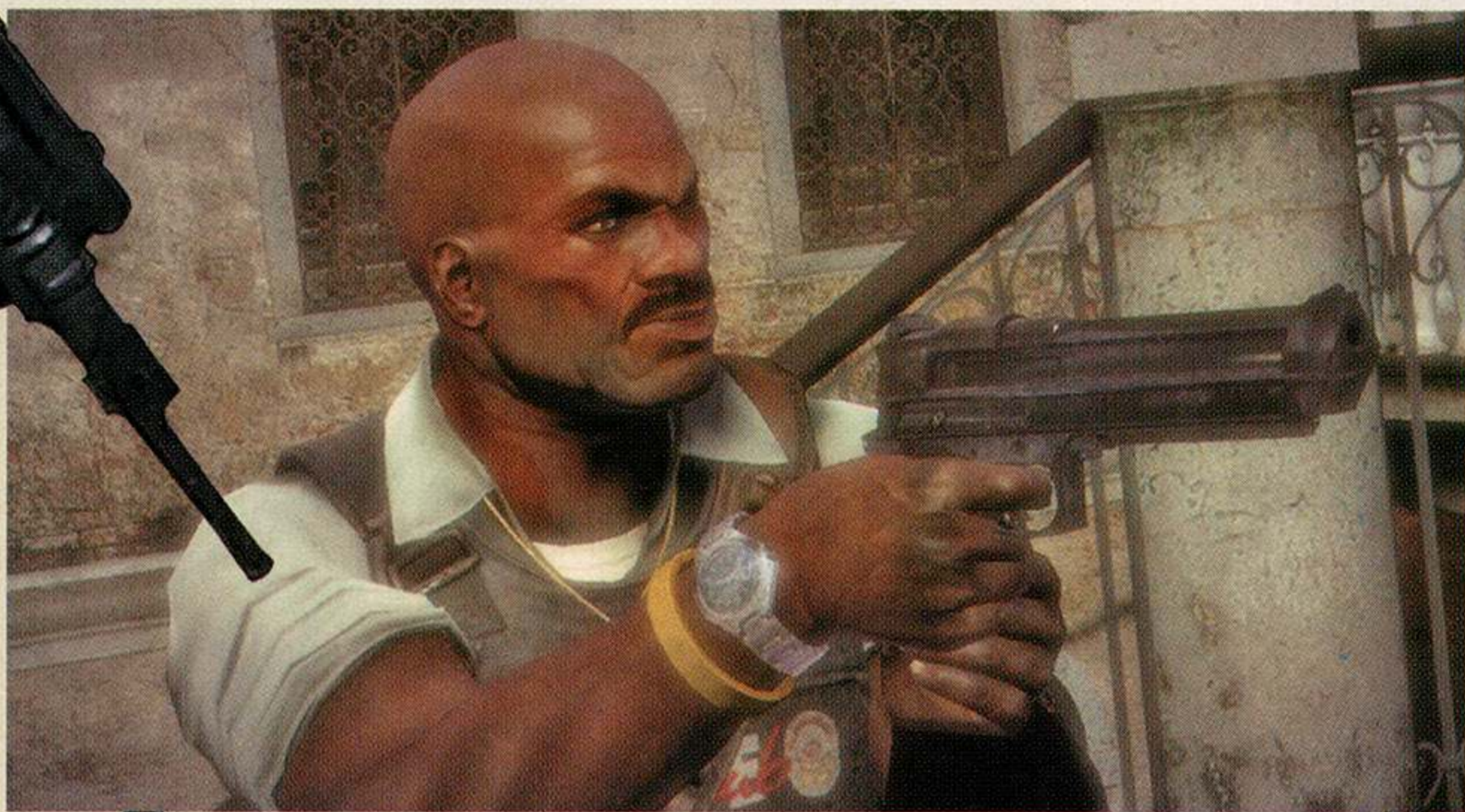
to trim a few more microseconds off your killing rampage and nail better combos, leading to bigger point multipliers and an overall higher score.

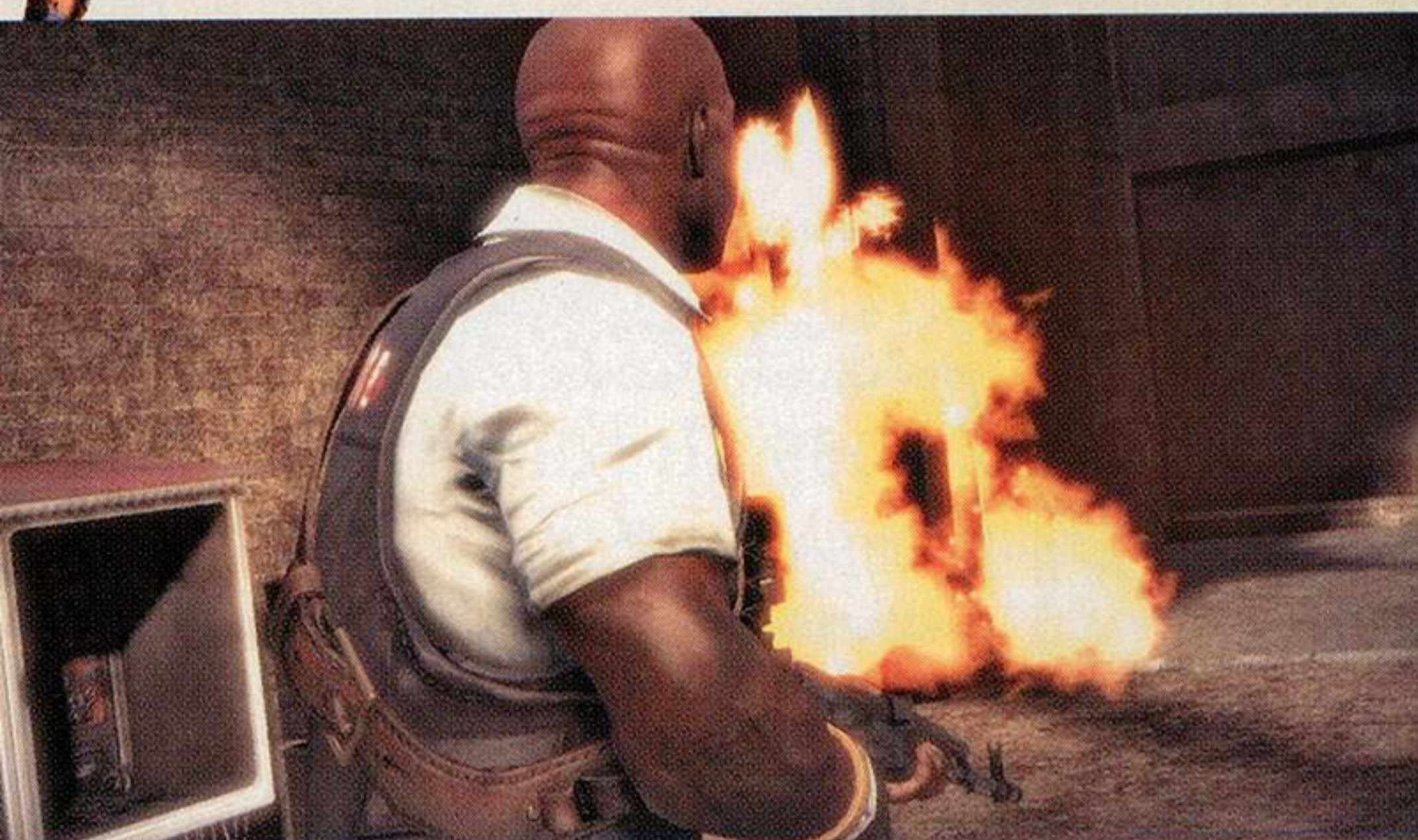
## KNOW YOUR TERRAIN

If your gun-toting baddy is the star of *The Club*, then the surrounding environment is the supporting cast. For instance, if you want to keep a combo surging but can't find a foe to finish off, you can shoot one of many action points in the environment to keep the points flowing. Though these can be as simple as shooting a lock off a door or shattering a nearby object, these actions can be the missing link that chains together a combo that spans the entire level. It forces you to become intimately familiar with your surroundings, meaning each and every time you repeat a level your score should increase accordingly. Combine the short stages with online leader boards for each level and you've got yourself a few great reasons to head back for more.

## MORE MULTI TO COME

While Bizarre is keeping multiplayer specifics tightly under wraps, there will certainly be online as well as split-screen play, the latter getting the same careful care and attention as the former. With a team comprised of talent from industry-leading games like *Fur Fighters*, *PGR3*, *Killzone*, and *Gears of War*, we're expecting *The Club* to shine when it hits the Xbox 360, PS3, and PC later this year.—**Mr. Marbles**





## INTERVIEW WITH BIZARRE CREATIONS



The Club developer Bizarre Creations is out to create a new type of shooter where the short, quick gunfight is the core gameplay mechanic. We sit down with the Liverpool-based developers as they spout out their specific intentions.

### ON GUNS

"We're not concerned on what the weapons are. There are going to be the standards, and there are going to be some that are very different. And it's the enemies that make the gunplay different; some of them require clever tactics. It's always going to be a twitch game...we don't want things to stop you from running the goal."

### ON ENEMY A.I.:

"It's all about having enemies that are focused to kill, and not enemies that are more intelligent than you, because that actually breaks the scoring. It's more like an army movie...like a Tom Clancy novel."

### ON A/V:

"We looked to find the best sounding gunfight movie. And strangely enough it wasn't *Heat* or any of the standard selections. It turned out to be *Bad Boys III*! We sat looking at the visuals to see which one was the coolest, and once again, it was *Bad Boys III*! It's challenging to keep that kind of pace up throughout the game, but that's what we have to do."

### ON STORY AND CHARACTERS:

"Every character has a really cool background. As you play through each game, you find out for yourself more about each character. [We didn't want any] 20-minute movies. Everything in this game is about pace. You've got to do it fast."

### ON INFLUENCES:

"We wanted to make *The Club* like a racing game, and the way you kill the bad guy determines the score. We got that sort of mentality from racing games."

### ON ONLINE LEADER BOARDS:

"You can record your high scores online. We'll try to filter those, so it doesn't end up just the best guys at the top. We want everyone to have a chance at being top at something in the game."

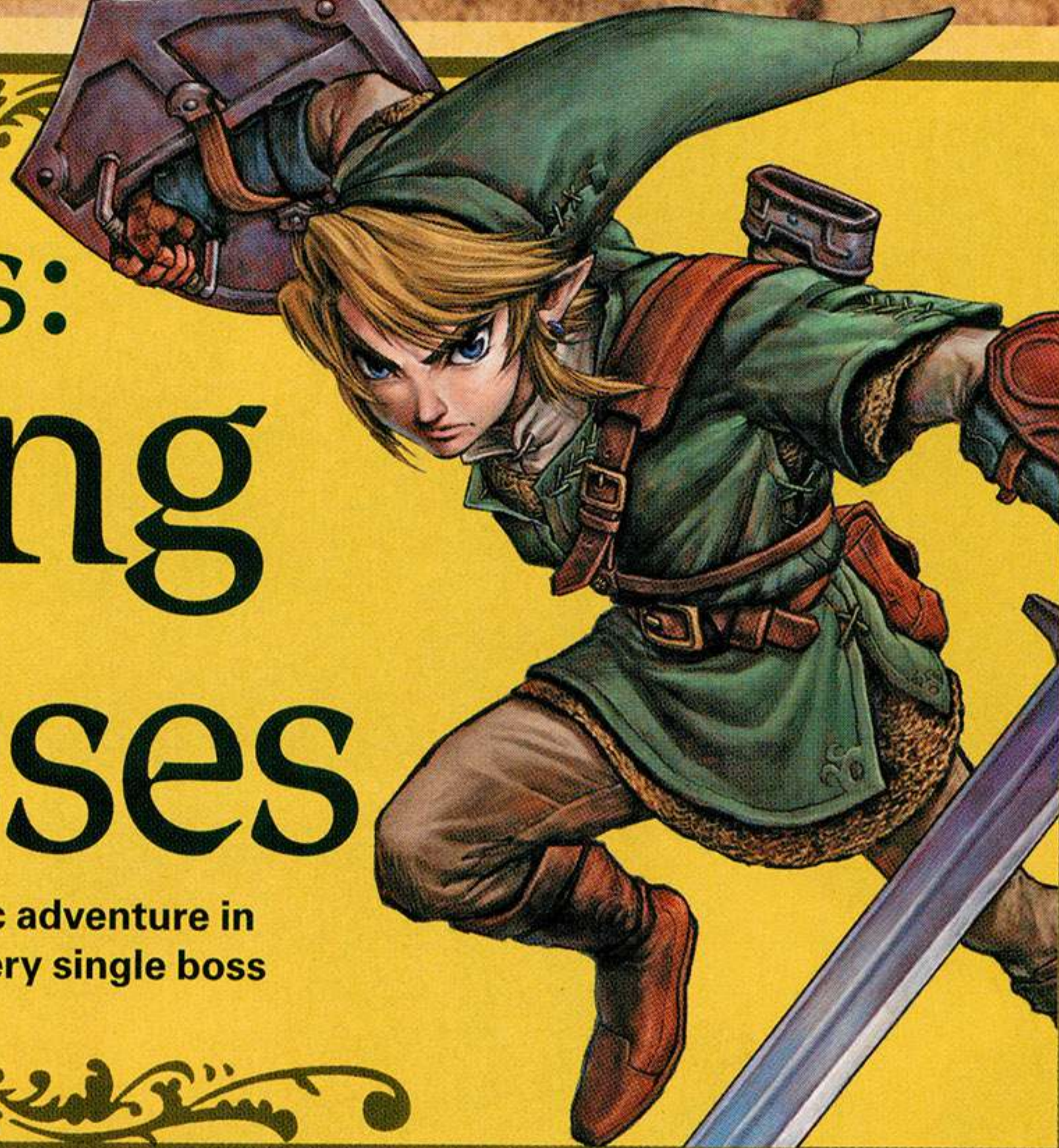
### ON MULTIPLAYER:

"Let's just say there's going to be a lot of variety and quite a bit of stuff you haven't seen before. We don't want to get into too many details...yet. I think the reason is that we've got a whole lot of different ways of playing a game [in *The Club*]."

### ON DIFFICULTY:


"Easy is for people to learn the game, and Hard's going to be bloody hard. We want a game that everyone can get through, but we want it to be a challenge as well. We want each difficulty level to have something worthwhile in it."

# Twilight Princess: Conquering All 21 Bosses



The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess is yet another epic adventure in Nintendo's prized franchise, and here's how to defeat every single boss in the game. By Long-Haired Offender

## Boss I: Ook


Difficulty: 



The first boss in Twilight Princess, encountered during The Forest Temple chapter, is a crazed baboon that loves nothing more than slapping his own inflamed butt cheeks. Despite Ook's amusing performance, he is a danger to you as he brandishes a Gale Boomerang. This disturbed primate is not the only enemy that you will have to fight during this boss battle as there are several Baba Serpents in the area that want to chew on Link. Deal with them by slitting their throats once they expose them.

Ook will chuck the Boomerang, but he cannot catch it when it returns to him. After he beams himself with his own weapon, run up to the hairy beast, **press and hold Z** to focus on his plump rear, and then cut some butt with your steel. Ook will jump back on the pole, so you need to roll into it to bring him down. Sink your sword into his butt flesh a few more times and then Ook will be finished, giving you the Gale Boomerang in addition to a victory.

## Boss II: Twilit Parasite Diababa

Difficulty: 




You will be faced with two Diababa Serpents as soon as this boss battle begins. Use your Gale Boomerang to pick up one of the Bomblings and then feed it to either of the Diababa Serpents. Repeat this process to explode the face of the monster's sibling and prepare for phase two of this fight.

The two enemies will reemerge, but this time the Twilit Parasite Diababa will be with them. Ook will swing from a rope, carrying a Bombling, and you must target him with your Gale Boomerang to detonate the bodies of the twin monsters. Do the same to the Twilit Parasite Diababa, and when it falls over, stab its elongated tonsil with your sword. The Parasite will then try to boil you with his purple vomit, so dodge his caustic spew. Toss your Boomerang at Ook when he swings in front of you to blast the Parasite with a Bombling. Hack up the Parasite's throat-worm again to kill him.



- 1 Sword = No Problemo
- 2 Swords = Easy...Sort Of
- 3 Swords = Medium
- 4 Swords = Hard
- 5 Swords = Memorize This Guide
- 6 Swords = Shart Yourself Hard

## Boss III: King Bulbin


Difficulty: 



The King's horsemen need to be killed off one by one before you can get a shot at the horned boss. Chop up his minions with your sword as quickly as possible and then speed up to the King on your horse. Match the King's speed so you will be able to strike him. Ride through the extinguished fires to heal yourself whenever you need to. Once you reach the bridge, make sure that you are riding slow enough to slash him. Hit him again on your second pass to launch his fat body off the bridge.



## Boss IV: Dangoro


Difficulty: 



Wait for the armored Dangoro to leave open his gut and then unleash hell on his flab with your blade. Be careful though because the morbidly obese Dangoro will bash you if you don't block. He will eventually try to squash you by rolling into a ball after you've landed several hits on him. Equip the Iron Boots. **Press A** to grab him at the precise moment and then throw him before he squashes you.

Once you throw him, he won't be very happy. Get Link to the rim of the arena and wait for Dangoro to come after you with his fury. Slice up his tummy one more time when he shows it to you, and then grab onto him like you did before. Throw him and he will be deep fried in lava. After you have successfully slain the boss, the Hero's Bow appears in a nearby chest.

## Boss V: Fyrus


Difficulty: 

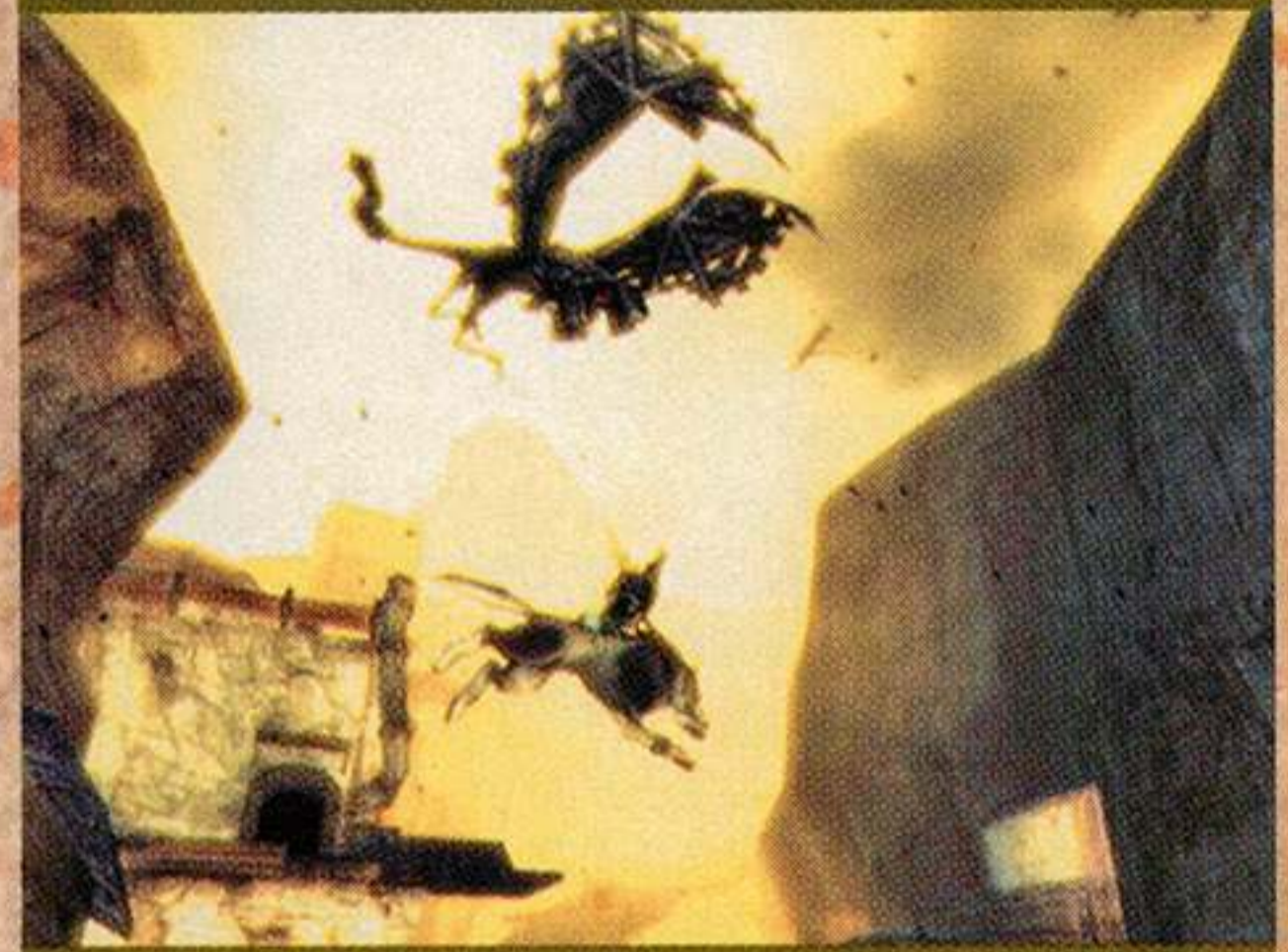


The flaming freak will snap free of his chains immediately, so be ready for his fiery attacks by equipping the weapon fit to extinguish Fyrus, the Hero's Bow. Fyrus will roast you with his ability to manipulate fire and you should make sure that he is at a safe distance from you when he has stopped moving because this is when he is ready to roast.

Fire an arrow into the glowing object in between his eyes and then quickly run over to the downed Fyrus. **Press A** to grab onto a chain and then equip your Iron Boots so you can pull him with the chain. When he falls to the floor, unequip your boots, take out your sword and slice him up as mercilessly as you can. Fyrus will rise to his feet and you need to repeat what you just did to him two more times before he dies.

## Boss VI: Kargarok


Difficulty: 

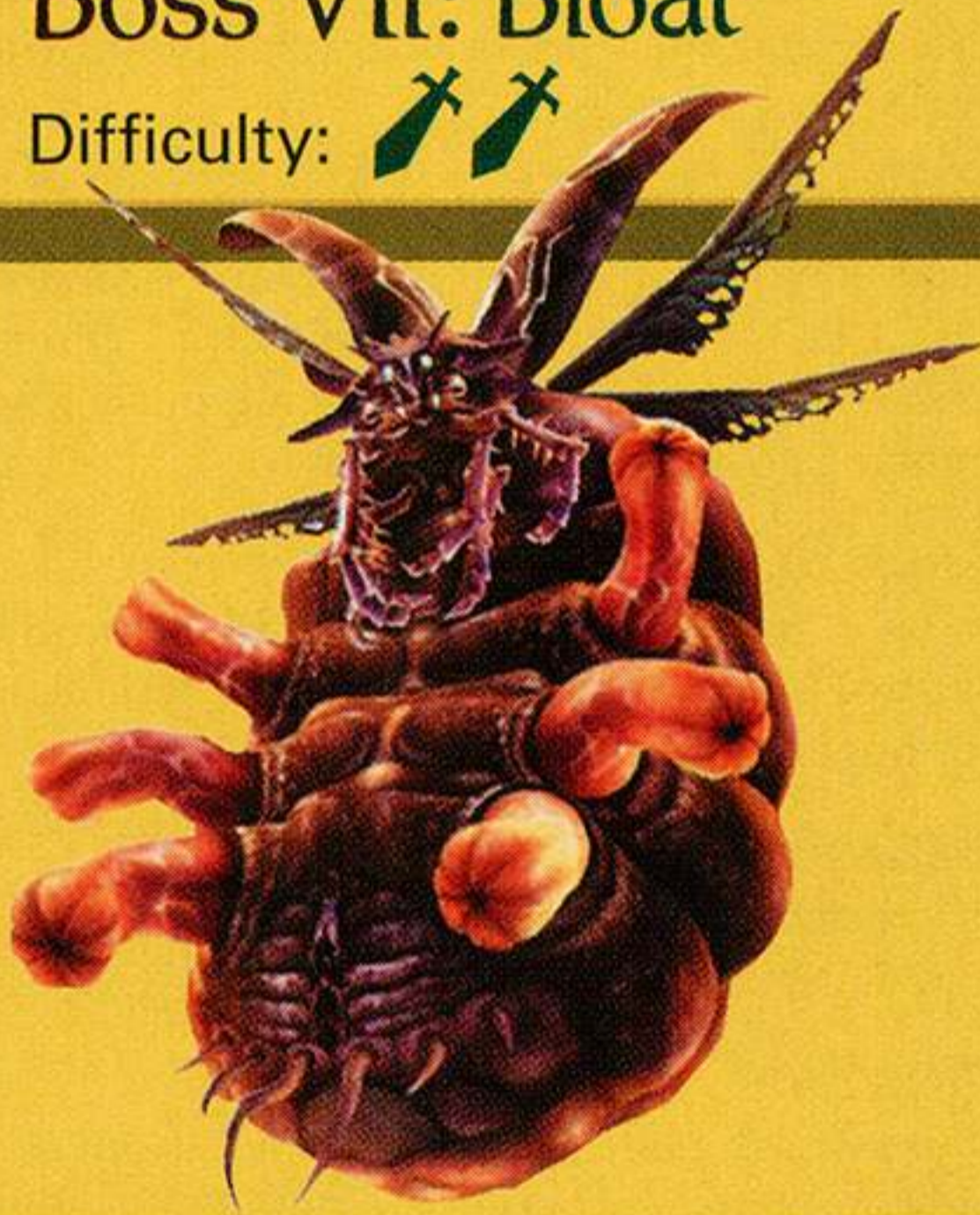


This jumbo version of the Kargarok creature attacks you in the Lanayru Province and is the first boss that you fight in wolf form. By implementing the following strategy, the oversized Kargarok and its rider will be a chew toy for you to munch on.

The archer riding the Kargarok will first shower you with arrows. Keep moving so you aren't an easy target for him to impale. The creature will eventually fly low enough for you to **press Z** to zoom in and then jump attack it. Repeat this battle tactic one more time to force the flying monster to throw the archer off of it.

## Boss VII: Bloat


Difficulty: 



This overfed insect surfaces out of the water in the Lanayru Province. Avoid Bloat when he electrifies his shell and dashes towards you. A platform nearby can be jumped onto for temporary safety. When he stops moving, jump onto his stomach and bite one of his nubs to burst it.

Bloat will then dive into the water, circling you, so stay as far away from the water as you can or else you will be electrocuted. Chew on Bloat's stomach two more times to render his stumpy body useless, and then use Midna's area-of-effect attack to finish off the bug.

## Boss VIII: Deku Toad

Difficulty: 



Use your sword for some frog-infanticide and don't stop spin attacking until all of the baby toads have been gutted. Once you've sent them all to frog hell, big momma will try to crush you under her lard, so roll out of the way. The Deku Toad's tongue will unravel. Lock onto it and then pierce it with your blade. When she opens her mouth, throw a bomb into it.

Sink a couple more bombs into the Toad, while also slashing its tongue and the Deku Toad will be conquered. After the mother toad disintegrates, a chest will appear containing the Clawshot.

### SWORD ATTACKS

The following four moves can be performed anytime during the game while equipped with a sword.

#### SLICE

To execute Link's basic sword attack, the slice, move the Wii Remote left and right or up and down as if the controller was the handle of an actual sword.

#### SPIN ATTACK

Especially effective while surrounded by multiple enemies, the spin attack can take apart large clusters of enemies. Perform this sword move by violently shaking the Nunchuk left and right.

#### JUMP ATTACK

**Press and hold Z** on the Nunchuk, and then **press A** on the Wii Remote to make Link put all 105 lbs of his weight into a sword strike.

#### STAB

If ramming your sword straight into an enemy is more your style, **simultaneously press and hold Z and Up** on the Nunchuk, and then perform a slice attack by moving the Wii Remote.

CONTINUED ▶

## Boss IX: Morpheel

Difficulty: 



To slay the hideous Morpheel you first need to equip and fire your Clawshot at its eyeball. The eye will pop off of the boss and you need to reel it in and then take out your steel so you can hack the hell out of it. While you are doing this, the Morpheel will discharge several Bombfish. Strike each of them with your sword and swim away from them before they have a chance to explode in your face.

After you've wounded the Morpheel's eye enough, he will go berserk, smashing his horrific body through underwater structures. Aim for his eyeball again with your Clawshot and get onto the boss' back. Jam your sword into his eyeball and the Morpheel will breathe its last putrid breath.

## Boss XII: Stallord


Difficulty: 



The first thing you must do to smash this monstrous skeleton encountered in the Arbiter's Grounds is equip your Spinner. Move your Spinner around the Stallord, avoiding the spiked Spinner as you do this. Stallord will then spit out a blackened cloud of poison, so don't let it touch you. Cadaverous warriors called Stal troops will appear, but don't worry about them as they aren't anywhere as deadly as they look. Gather some speed on your Spinner, head towards the Stallord's spinal cord, and then **press B** to strike the creature. Bash Stallord's spine a few more times and he will sink in the sand.

Fit your Spinner into the slot located in the middle of the room, and then start spinning to raise a cylindrical pillar. Stallord is back (well, his head is anyway) and he wants Link's head on a platter. Ride your Spinner along the indentations on the cylindrical pillar. Jump across to the outer indentations to dodge the boss' balls of fire. Stallord will face you and, when he does, this is your cue to jump at him and smash up his bony mug. He will crash into the ground after you do this. Withdraw your sword, **press Z** to target him, and then stick him. Repeat all of the aforementioned steps mentioned to beat Stallord once and for all.

## Boss X: Skull Kid

Difficulty: 

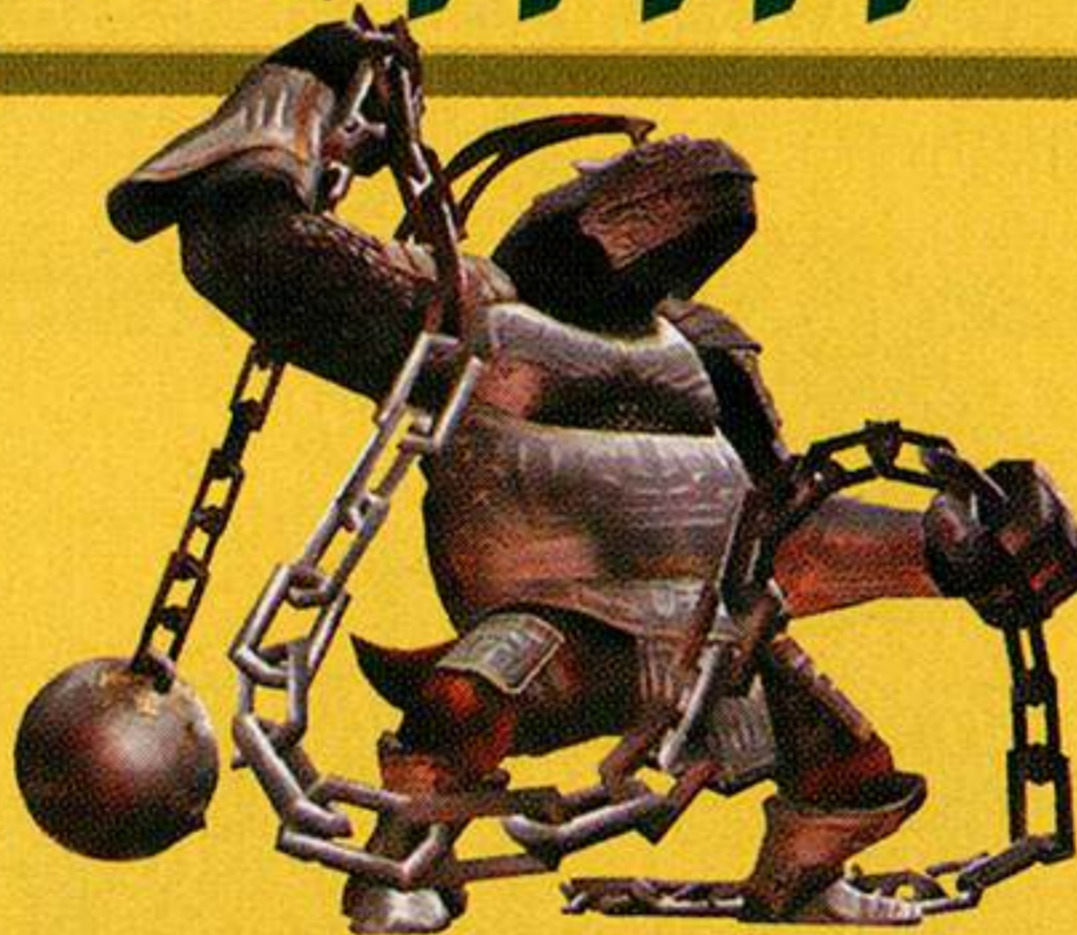


The Skull Kid makes an appearance in Twilight Princess during The Great Hylian Treasure Hunt. The Kid summons a legion of puppets that go after you and you can clear them out by execution spin attacks.

Don't be concerned only with destroying the Skull Kid's puppets because the master needs to be wounded in order for this boss battle to end. When you see the puppeteer on a platform, lock onto him and carve him up with your sword. If you take too long to attack the Skull Kid, he will teleport to a different location. Keep on him and the Skull Kid will eventually unlock a door for you after he has taken a significant beating.

## Boss XIII: Darkhammer


Difficulty: 



You will meet this reptilian knight in the Snowpeak Ruins. Darkhammer is one of the toughest enemies in the entire game. Before he stomps the life out of you, aim your Clawshot at one of the objects on the ceiling. Pull yourself upwards with the device and then stab your sword into Darkhammer.

Roll around on the floor to avoid his ball and chain which can shatter you like a toy. Get in close, **press Z** to focus on his tail, and then shred it with your blade. Strike Darkhammer a few more times by launching attacks while clinging to the ceiling with your Clawshot. Slash up his tail a couple more times and Darkhammer will be defeated.

## Boss XI: Death Sword

Difficulty: 



The wielder of the Death Sword can only be seen once you are in wolf form. Use your sense view to see the warrior. Don't allow him to gore you with his weapon, and bite the hell out of him when he lights up.

Transform into human form and fire an arrow into the Death Sword's wielder. After this happens, run towards him and hail his body with sword blows. Continue these tactics until the boss melts away.

### SPECIAL ATTACKS

The following special moves can be unlocked by finding Howling Stones in wolf form and Golden Wolves in human form.

#### ENDING BLOW

After an enemy is wounded, Link can carry out the ending blow. **Press and hold Z**, target an enemy, **and then press A** to gore them with this powerful attack.

#### SHIELD ATTACK

Bash enemies with your shield (and even deflect attacks) by using the shield attack. **Press Z** to lock onto an enemy and then push your Nunchuk forward to do this move.

#### BACK SLICE

**Press Z**, **press and hold Left or Right on the Control Stick**, and then **press A** to scrape an opponent's back with your blade.

#### HELM SPLITTER

To crack an enemy's head open, complete a shield attack, and then **press A**.

#### MORTAL DRAW

Your sword needs to be put away before you can complete a mortal draw. When an enemy attacks you, **press A** when prompted to issue a deadly blow.


#### JUMP STRIKE

More powerful than the jump attack, the jump strike can be done as follows: **press Z**, **press and hold A**, and then **release A** when your sword shines.

#### GREAT SPIN

The great spin is essentially a mightier version of the spin attack and is executed the same way, only you must have full hearts.

## Boss XIV: Blizzeta

Difficulty: 



The second boss encountered in the Snowpeak Ruins, Blizzeta, is no match for the Ball and Chain you acquired from Darkhammer. Bash all of the frosty armor off of Blizzeta by repeatedly clocking her with the Ball and Chain. Use this weapon to knock away icicles that fall from her.

Start rolling like crazy to avoid becoming a Link Popsicle and after the ice stops falling down on you, take out your Ball and Chain for some serious destruction. When Blizzeta is within striking distance, move towards her and attack with your medieval weaponry. Repeat these strategies and this blizzard beast will eventually give up.

## Boss XV: Darknut

Difficulty: 



Sword fight this evil knight of the Temple of Time by using extreme caution. When Darknut raises his mammoth sword, jump backwards before his weapon can split you in two and **press A** to retaliate with your sword. Keep employing this strategy until you have stripped him of a bunch of his armor.

Darknut becomes more aggressive and even hurls his sword at you. Finish the battle with this knight by rolling around and hitting him several times with your sword when he isn't blocking.

## Boss XVI: Armogohma


Difficulty: 



The showdown with the spider boss Armogohma begins with her trying to scorch you from above with a beam of fire. Roll away from the blaze or you'll be toast. The overgrown spider retreats to one of the far corners and this is when you need to skewer that eyeball growing out of her back with an arrow from your Hero's Bow.

Whip out your Dominion Rod and use it on the statue, making it hammer its fist down on the arachnid. Watch out for baby spiders that she births and tear them to shreds with your spin attack. Continue to implement these strategies and the Armogohma will blow up when her health is sapped. Shoot a few arrows into her eyeball and then there will be nothing left of your enemy.

## Boss XVII: Aerialfos

Difficulty: 



This winged beast confronts you in the City in the Sky. When Aerialfos isn't attacking you, get out your Clawshot, **press Z** to target him, and then fire away. Yank the creature to get an open shot and then quickly dice him up with your sword.

Aerialfos will eventually try to dive-bomb you, so be prepared to get out of his way. Keep executing the Clawshot and sword attack combo until this boss has been vanquished.

## Boss XVIII: Argarok

Difficulty: 



If you thought Aerialfos was menacing, then you will wet your pants at the sight of the eighteenth boss in Twilight Princess, Argarok. Climb the pillars by using the Clawshot. Drop down before the dragon has a chance to cremate you with his breath. Argarok will swoop down and this is your chance to grab his tail with the Clawshot and pull him so he smacks into the ground.

Slip on your Iron Boots because the dragon's wings will create powerful gusts of wind that can literally blow you away. Climb up the pillars with the Clawshot as you did before. Now you can use the orbs that are floating in the air to get close enough to the dragon to jump on his back. When you're on top of Argarok, waste no time and rip through his back with your sword. You will need to repeat these steps two more times before the dragon finally perishes.

### SPECIAL ITEMS

You can obtain the following special items by exploring the corresponding dungeons.

#### GALE BOOMERANG

Not your average boomerang, the Gale Boomerang can be targeted at five different things at once. You can obtain the Gale Boomerang in the Forest Temple.

#### HERO'S BOW

This weapon is crucial for attacking from far away and can be found in the Gorgon Mines.

#### CLAWSHOT

This souped up grappling hook can be found in the Lakebed Temple.

#### SPINNER

The Spinner is a weapon and vehicle all in one and you can get it in the Arbiter's Grounds.

#### BALL AND CHAIN

Great for bashing in an enemy's face, the Ball and Chain is located in the Snowpeak Ruins.

#### DOMINION ROD

Bring objects to life with this item which is in the Temple of Time dungeon.

#### DOUBLE CLAWSHOTS


Pick up these dual grappling hooks in the City in the Sky.

#### LIGHT SWORD

The final special item in Twilight Princess, the Light Sword, can be acquired during the Palace of Twilight dungeon.

CONTINUED ▶

## Boss XIX: Phantom Zant

Difficulty: 



Phantom Zant commands two separate hordes of enemies that you will need to defeat, but both are easily dealt with. The first wave of enemies, the Twilit Keese, can be taken out with a several carefully aimed sword slashes. After you eliminate them, **press Z** to target Zant's ghost and stab him while he is doing his disappearing act.

The second group of enemies, the Twilit Vermin, should be beaten to death as quickly as possible as Phantom Zant is your primary concern. Exorcise Zant's specter by executing some well-timed targeted attacks and he will throw in the towel.

## Boss XX: Usurper King Zant

Difficulty: 



The battle with the flesh and blood version of Zant begins with him transporting you to the Forest Temple. When you arrive, dodge Zant's blasts of magic and take out your Gale Boomerang. Strike him with the Boomerang, unsheathe your sword, and slice him up ruthlessly with a sword combo. He then transports you to the Gorgon Mines. Avoid his energy attacks just like you did before and quickly throw on your Iron Boots before he starts banging on the ground. Take off your boots and then brutalize Zant's body with your weapon.

In the third place Zant transports you to, the Lakebed Temple, you need the Clawshot and the Iron Boots. Use the Clawshot on Zant to pull him out of safety so you can issue him a thrashing with your sword. Zant then takes you to the Forest Temple, and all you need to do is roll into the totem pole he is perched on. Deliver a fury of sword slashes once he has fallen from the pole. When Zant transports you to Yeta's frozen bedroom, fish out your Ball and Chain, belt him with it, and then follow it with a sword combo. Zant will transport you to one more location. Block his wrathful attacks with your shield and be ready to put on your Iron Boots so he can't knock you over with his spin attack. You'll soon get a chance to flog him with your sword. Do this until he bites the dust.

## Final Boss (XXI): Ganondorf

Difficulty: 



It might be a good idea to bust out some snacks because the final boss in Twilight Princess takes a while to defeat. Ganondorf starts off this battle by possessing Zelda. Jump out of her death triangles, **press Z** to target the orbs of energy that she fires from her sword, and send them back to her by slashing them. You must tag her with an orb two more times before this sequence of the boss battle ends.


Ready your Hero's Bow as Ganon mutates into a grotesque monster. Roll out of the way as he attempts to crush you with his weight. When portals appear, take out your Bow, aim at the bluish portal, and launch an arrow into the face of the metamorphosed Ganon. **Press Z** to target his stomach and then hack away with your blade. Transform into wolf form and **press A** when prompted to toss the beast around. Return to human form and then beat him with your sword.

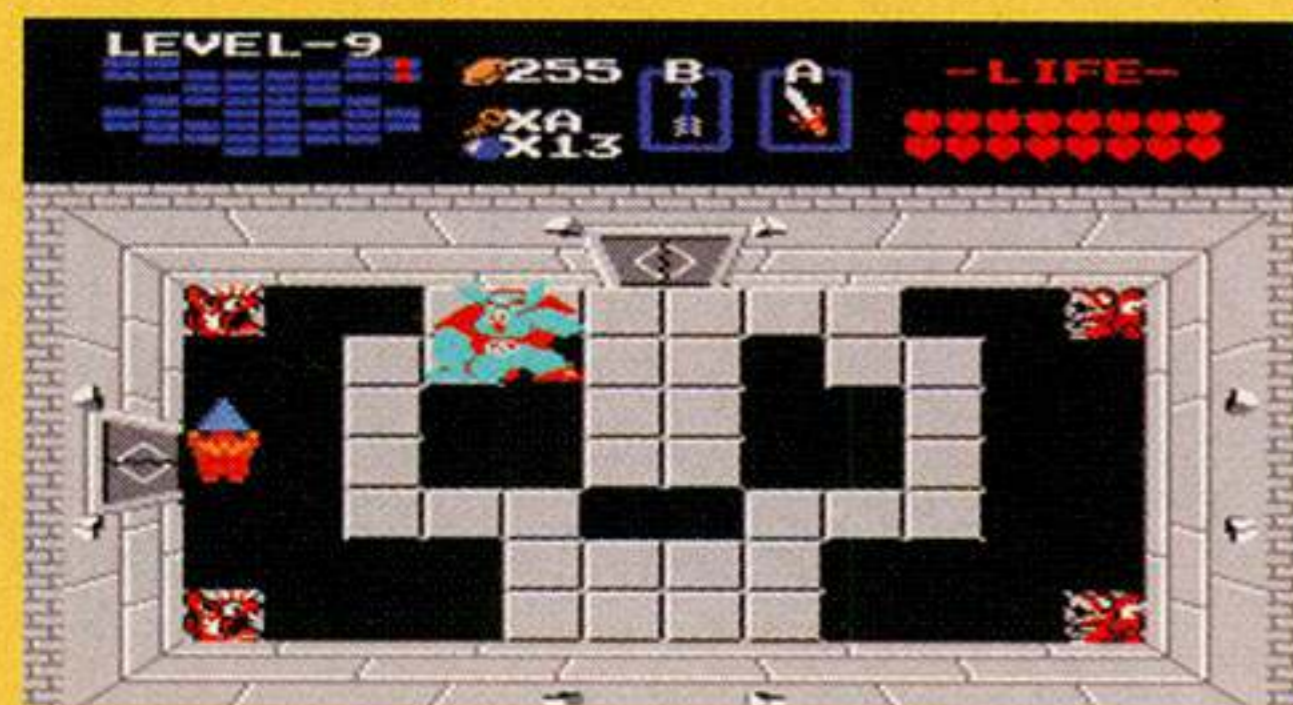
Keep away from Ganon's Phantom Riders and buy Zelda enough time for her to help you with her arrows. Match Ganon's speed by spurring Epona and then attack Ganon with your sword when he is vulnerable. The last sequence of this boss battle is a sword fight to the death. Release the fairy trapped in one of the skulls in the room by shattering the skulls with your sword. **Press A** when prompted to do so and you and Ganondorf will lock steel. Continue to **press A rapidly** to push him backwards and then carve him up with your sword. Repeat these tactics and then **press A** when prompted to and kill Ganondorf.

# Classic Zelda Strategy

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA  
(NES/WII VIRTUAL CONSOLE)

## Final Boss: Ganon

Difficulty: 



Many Zelda fans are hailing Twilight Princess as the best game in the series since the NES original, and since The Legend of Zelda is now available by download on the Wii Virtual Console, we thought it would be only proper to reveal how the King of Evil, Ganon, is conquered in this classic 1987 adventure.

Destroying the hog-headed final boss in The Legend of Zelda requires both the Silver Arrows and a sword. The Magical Sword is the ideal weapon to wield during this battle, but the weaker alternatives, the White Sword and

the Wooden Sword, will kill him eventually. The pink-fleshed Ganon now has the power to vanish due to the Triforce of Power and you will need to anticipate where he is in the skull-shaped room. Start stabbing like crazy even though you can't see him and don't stand in one place for too long or you will be burned by Ganon's nasty fireballs. When your sword slashes Ganon he will reappear and this is when you need to fire Silver Arrows at him. Before you know it, Ganon will be reduced to a pile of bacon bits.

# Complete Your **GAMEPRO** Collection!

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# New Tech

## 7 Game-changing Ideas

Blu-ray, multi-core CPUs, and a crazy little thing called "cross-play"—we count down the seven most innovative gaming advances of 2007 and beyond!

By Vicious Sid



### Drop-in multiplayer

When you're playing on an always-connected game console, the possibilities for new styles of play open up dramatically. While playing a multiplayer match, you could have a friend drop in to fight with you or against you. *Gears of War* proved that when it comes to online cooperative play, everything should happen transparently; no game restarts or digging through menus. That's the premise behind Valve and Arkane Studios' action game *The Crossing*, which promises to seamlessly blend single-player missions with the thrill of playing with live opponents and teammates in a new gameplay style called "crossplay." Why play with brain-dead A.I. enemies and teammates when every role can be filled by real-life humans?



*The Crossing* is coming to the PC in 2008, and its multiplayer-meets-single player twist could make it one of the most innovative games yet.

### Blu-ray and HD DVD

There's no way around it. The lifespan of the standard DVD format is running out. High-definition graphics, 5.1/7.1 surround sound, and HD cinematics gobble up so much disc space that developers are forced to ruthlessly compress graphics and audio to save precious space. Those compromises won't be necessary with new-gen disc formats like Blu-ray and HD DVD, which boast up to three times the storage space as a maxed-out DVD. Add in multiple layers, and upcoming versions of Blu-ray and HD DVD could hold 100 gigabytes or more—as much space as a good-sized computer hard drive!



PlayStation 3 shooter *Resistance: Fall of Man* crams in an astonishing 16 gigabytes of data. And it's only a launch title!

### Cross-platform gameplay

Though Xbox 360 versus PS3 online smack-downs are unlikely to happen anytime soon, we're starting to see encouraging progress on this front. New shooter *Shadowrun* will let PC players blast Xbox 360 players online, and vice-versa. And though the upcoming Windows version of *Halo 2* won't let you compete against Xbox owners (boo!), we wager that a theoretical Windows version of *Halo 3* would allow for cross-platform competition. After all, Microsoft's got nothing to lose: whether you're playing on Xbox 360 or Windows, they win.



*Shadowrun* will allow Xbox 360 and PC players to compete against one another. Is this a sign of things to come?

## Multi-core CPUs

Think of a CPU "core" as a cylinder in a car engine. By adding more low-powered cylinders, you can gain a huge boost to overall power and performance. Until recently, even the most blazing-fast computer CPUs were strictly single-core. Now, four-core CPUs are becoming standard on PCs, and the Xbox 360 and PS3 are sitting pretty with potent multi-core CPUs of their own. For video games, more processing cores translates into more high-level calculations. The benefits? Smarter enemies, more intricate graphics, and bigger, crazier online matches...at least, in theory. Expect big enhancements across the board as developers master this powerful new tool.

PC shooter **Crysis** is built to take advantage of multi-core CPUs, and it's got mind-bending graphics. Coincidence? We think not.



## High-definition TVs

This one's a no-brainer, but it bears repeating. With prices plummeting and screen sizes swelling, high-def TVs are exploding in popularity. HD sets currently comprise only 20 percent of TVs in U.S. homes, but give that a few years and even Grandpa Joe will be watching *60 Minutes* in 1080i on his 46" Grand Wega. The benefits of HD are clear: higher screen resolution gives game developers the ability to create photo-realistic graphics you could never appreciate on your dusty old 19" RCA.

## Motion-sensing controllers

Ask any casual gamer—modern game controllers are way, way too complicated. The Xbox 360 controller, for example, has 12 buttons and three directional devices, a design that's sure to scare off everyone but seasoned gamers. When it comes to lowering the learning curve, it's hard to beat the elegant simplicity of a motion-sensing controller. Just ask Nintendo and Sony, which found success with the Wii Remote and Sixaxis. Even Microsoft's been rumored to be working on a way to add motion-sensing support down the road. The benefits are obvious: higher interactivity with fewer buttons. And that can only be "A Good Thing."



**Lair** will enable PS3 owners to guide their dragon by tilting the controller. It's a tantalizing glimpse of things to come.

## Downloadable content

By now, it should be obvious that the Internet has changed the rules for absolutely everything. That's precisely why downloadable content is such a phenomenal opportunity for Microsoft, Nintendo, and Sony. Let's say *Killzone 2* is released as a glitchy mess. No sweat—fix the bugs, add some cool new features, and release it as a free download for disgruntled fans. Problem (mostly) solved! Of course, that solution isn't perfect because it leaves old-fashioned un-connected players out in the cold. But with broadband access getting cheaper by the second, and free Wi-Fi coming to big cities, it's only a matter of time until everyone has high-speed access whether they want it or not.

But downloadable content allows for more than just post-release fixes. The Xbox 360's Live Arcade and Wii's Virtual Console are just small steps toward something much, much bigger. Retro downloads and fresh multiplayer maps are all well and good, but developers are already plotting to push the limits of this system. Take *Along in the Dark*, Atari's upcoming PS3 and Xbox 360 horror game that will release "episodes" much like a TV show. Missed last week's bloodbath? No sweat: just download the recap, grab your shotgun, and get ready for this week's monster mash. This approach will either change gaming forever or prove to be a huge dud. And we wouldn't want it any other way.



**Guitar Hero II** for Xbox 360 will allow players to download new songs for a small fee, extending the game's lifespan.



GAME OF THE MONTH

## GUITAR HERO II

Finger exercises one, two, three...Guitar Hero II for the Xbox 360 has reviewer Tenacious Moses so spun out in the world of rock that he's speaking in tablature. Much like a definitive box set of a classic album, the 360 version of Guitar Hero II has everything a fan could want, including new-gen graphics, downloadable tracks, and Xbox Live Leaderboards! Squeedlie-deedie doo!



# GAME REVIEWS:

Bullet Witch.....	89	Sid Meier's Pirates!.....	82
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## MEET THE GAMEPROS!

Each month, members of the *GamePro* reviews staff will take on your burning questions in order to reveal more about what makes them tick. In honor of our Game of the Month we asked, "If you could put any song into *Guitar Hero II*, what would it be?"



T3hPanda

"J-Rock band Siam Shade's 'Virtuoso,' because the whole song is one gorgeous guitar solo."



BroBuzz

"'Soul Sacrifice,' by Santana. Watch their performance in the original *Woodstock* movie if you're wondering why."



Hamster4Sale

"'Longview,' by Green Day, so I can play one of my favorite basslines of all time in co-op mode."



Mr. Aprbles

"Rage Against the Machine's 'Know Your Enemy.' The solo just might send your fingers flying right off your knuckles."



RebelPrincess

"'L.A. Woman,' by The Doors. I love the intro because it evokes my very best Rock Star face."



The Watcher

"Guitar Hero II already has a great set list, but I'll take the slick classic rock of 'Hotel California,' by The Eagles over the hair-metal power ballads any day."



Tenacious Moses

"Machine Head's 'Imperium.' Unless you're Lance Armstrong and Jackie Joyner-Kersey's never-winded spawn, you'll pull a hammy half way through the song."



Long-Haired Offender

"Deicide's 'Satan Spawn, The Caco-Daemon,' because I'm here to make everything metal!"



Vicious Sid

"'I Believe in a Thing Called Love,' by The Darkness, so I can shriek along to Justin Hawkins' falsetto and make a total ass of myself. 'Guitars!'"

Have a question for the Pros? E-mail them to [ahoy\\_and\\_avast@gamepro.com](mailto:ahoy_and_avast@gamepro.com) with the subject line "Burning Question of the Month!" If your question is chosen, we'll send you a copy of our Game of the Month!

## GAMEPRO'S RATING SCALE

Behind the numbers:

**5.00 – 4.50**

The best of the best. If you don't own this game, you should. Think Halo, Zelda, Resident Evil, and Metal Gear Solid.

**4.25 – 3.50**

Highly enjoyable, but falls short of true greatness. The *Fight Nights* and *Tony Hawks* of the world.

**3.25 – 2.50**

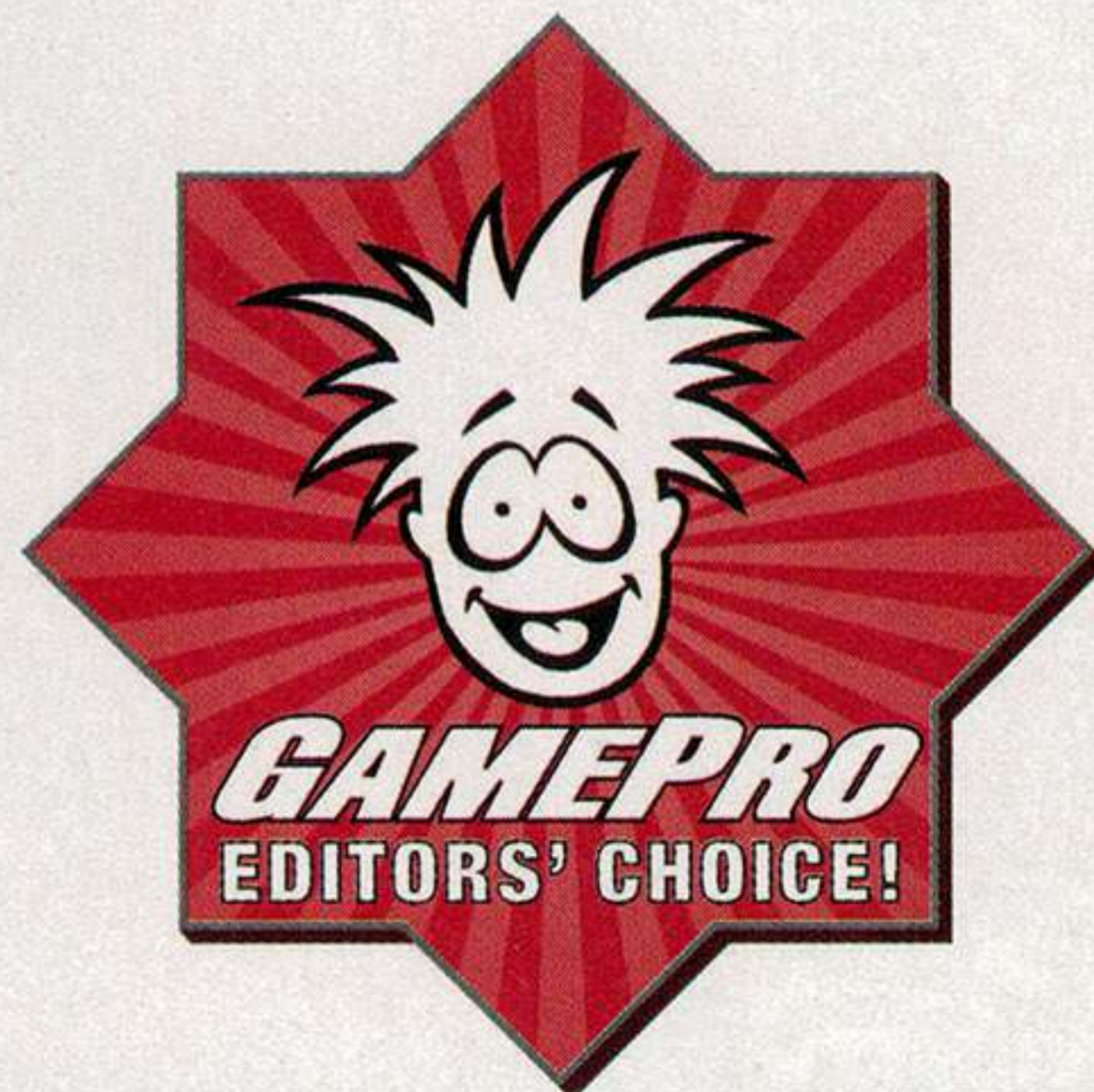
Approach with caution—try before you buy. Enter the Matrix and the *Dynasty Warriors* games fall squarely in this category.

**2.25 – 1.50**

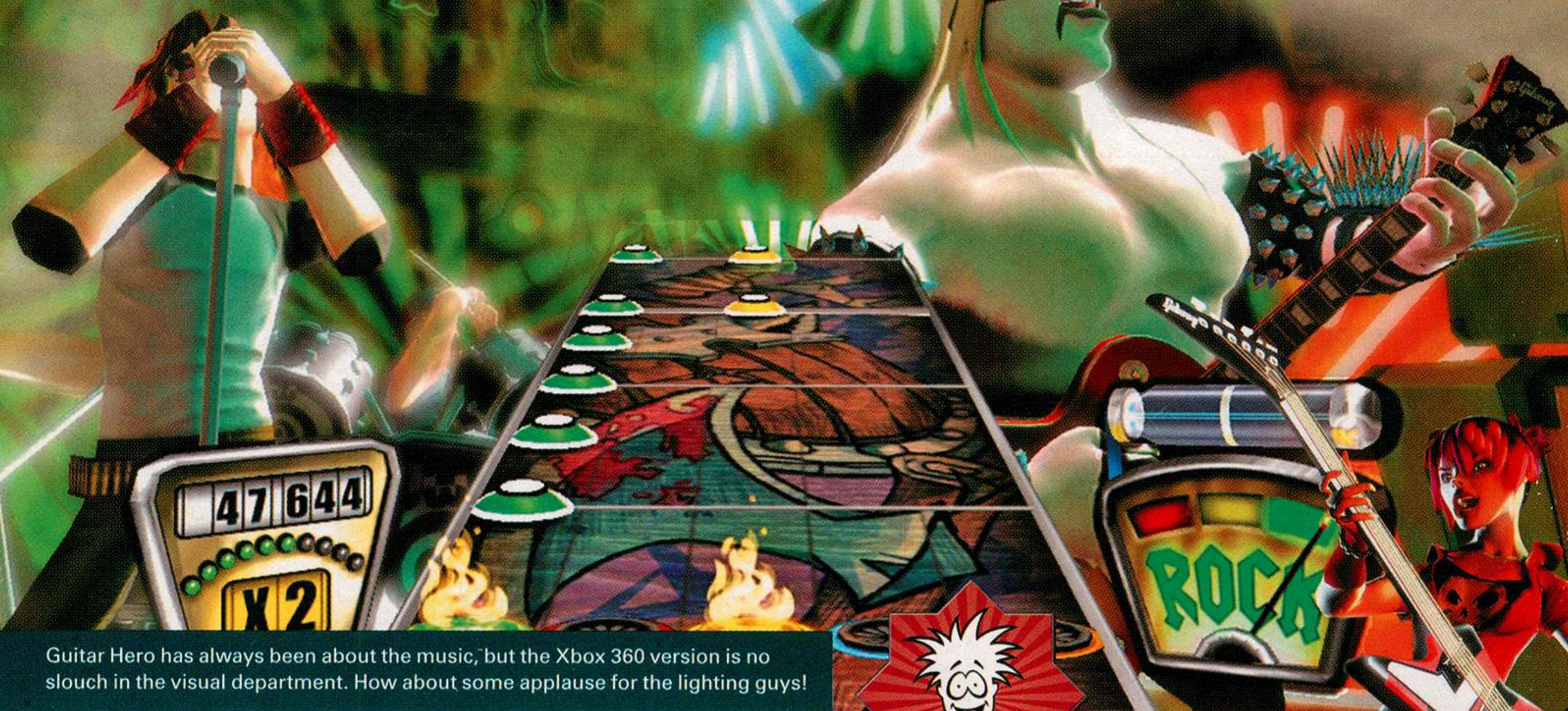
Should come with a sticker that reads, "Warning, contains poisonous amounts of suckage." Remember *Backyard Wrestling*?

**1.25 – 0.00**

An absolute insult to humanity. Kill it with fire and holy water.



Games that score 4.50 or higher are awarded our coveted Editors' Choice Award.



Guitar Hero has always been about the music, but the Xbox 360 version is no slouch in the visual department. How about some applause for the lighting guys!



## GUITAR HERO II

Guitar Hero II for the Xbox 360 has more star power than Super Mario, triple-front flips and all.

Xbox 360 ESRB: T

Developer: Harmonix Publisher: RedOctane

By now, you're most likely finishing up "Hangar 18" and "Freebird" on Expert for the PlayStation 2 version of Guitar Hero II, and you're probably wondering if it's worth it to pick up the Xbox 360 incarnation for another round of furious fretwork, right? Well, the answer is simpler than a toilet; it's "Yes!"

But if you think this is just some port, think again: it's the ultimate Guitar Hero package

and it's packed with more goodies than your little brother's Easter basket. Seriously, even Jesus would rock out with this game. Consider this set list of new additions: 10 new rocking songs, the X-Plorer controller, which puts the PS2's stubby Gibson to shame, the Xbox Live Leaderboards, which separates the rock gods from the garage band wannabes, and downloadable content that ranges from gamer-profile picture packs

to new songs. Any way you add it up, the Xbox 360 version is the only one to own.

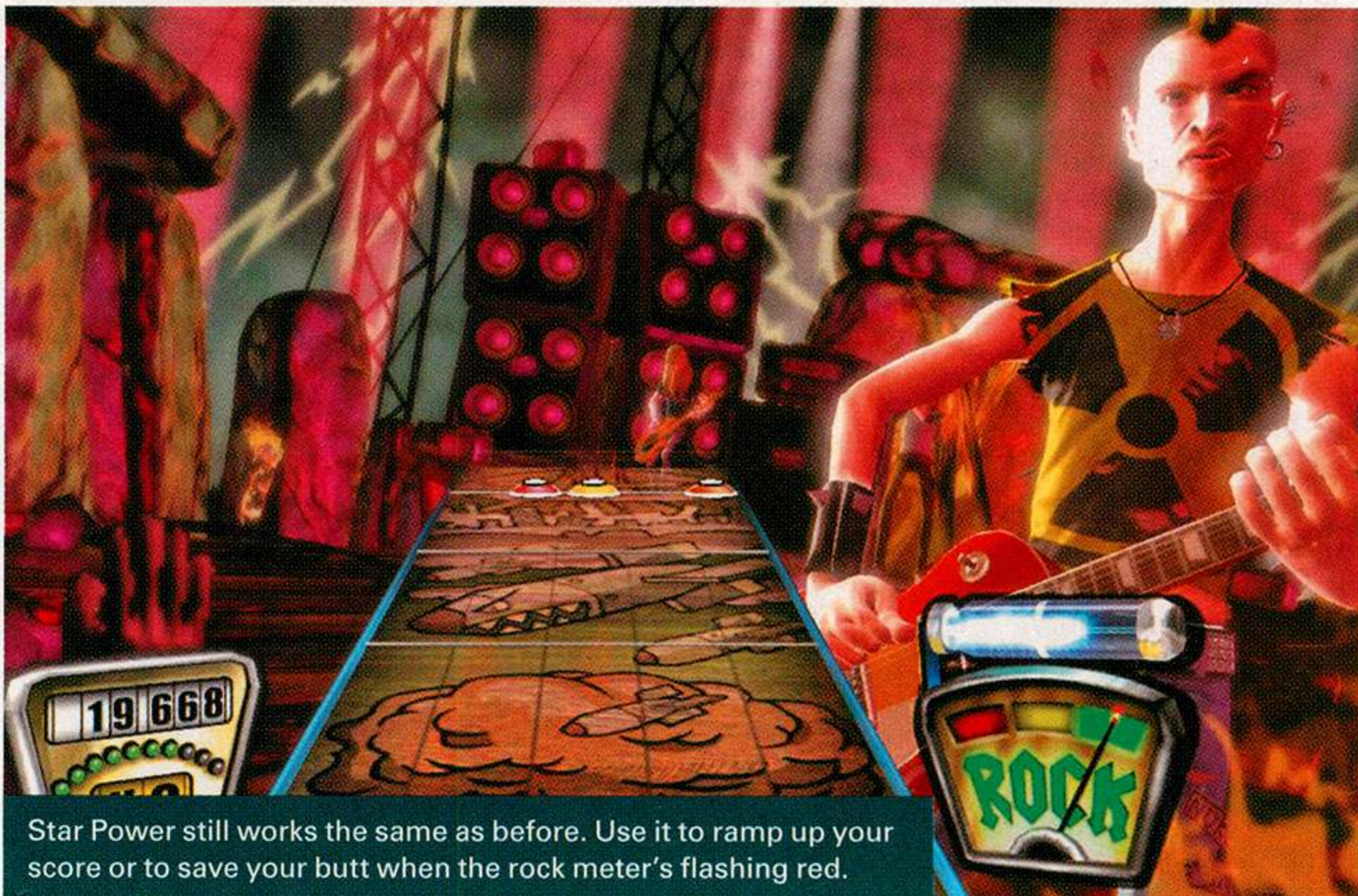
### I WANNA ROCK

The biggest addition to this particular version of the game is the new features Xbox Live brings to the table. Through the Xbox Live Marketplace you'll now be able to download new GH themes for your Xbox 360 dashboard, rockin' picture packs for your profile, get ranked on global leaderboards, or purchase a number of new songs and jam packs. RedOctane has guaranteed new songs, but even old songs from the first GH will continue to be released for GHII on a regular basis, that way replayability is kept very high and you'll never get bored of mastering the same old tracks.

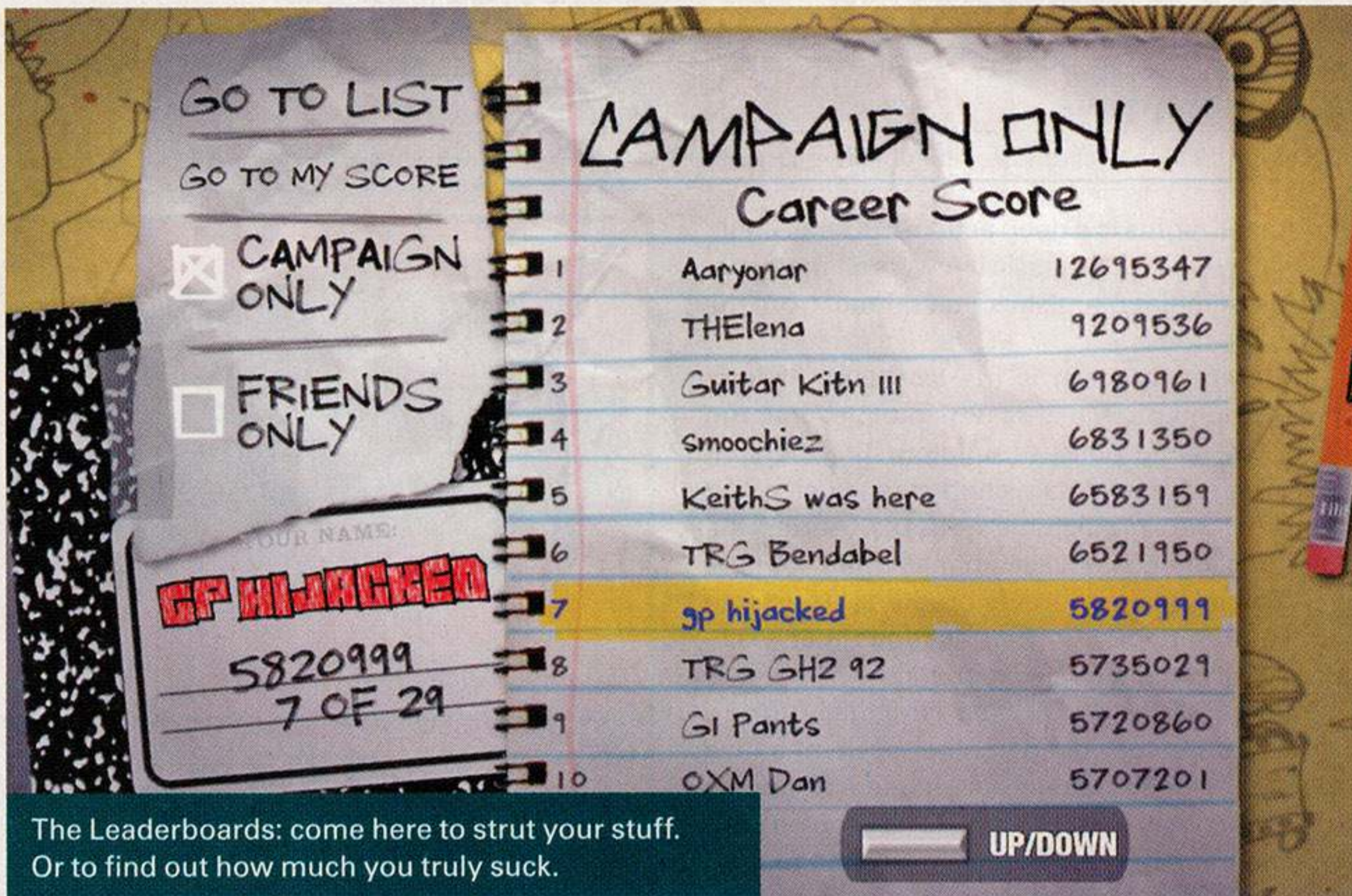
Although, we saw 480 progressive scan support for GHII on the PS2 (component cables required), the Xbox 360 version visually stuns with enhanced HD graphics. Even though the visual style remains the same, the upgraded character models and over-the-top lighting make the Xbox 360 version look like an entirely new game. And with the enhanced audio capabilities in the Xbox 360, sounds system permitting, the quality will make your ears bleed in ecstasy compared to anything you've heard on the PS2. Bring the Noise!

### BATTLE AXE

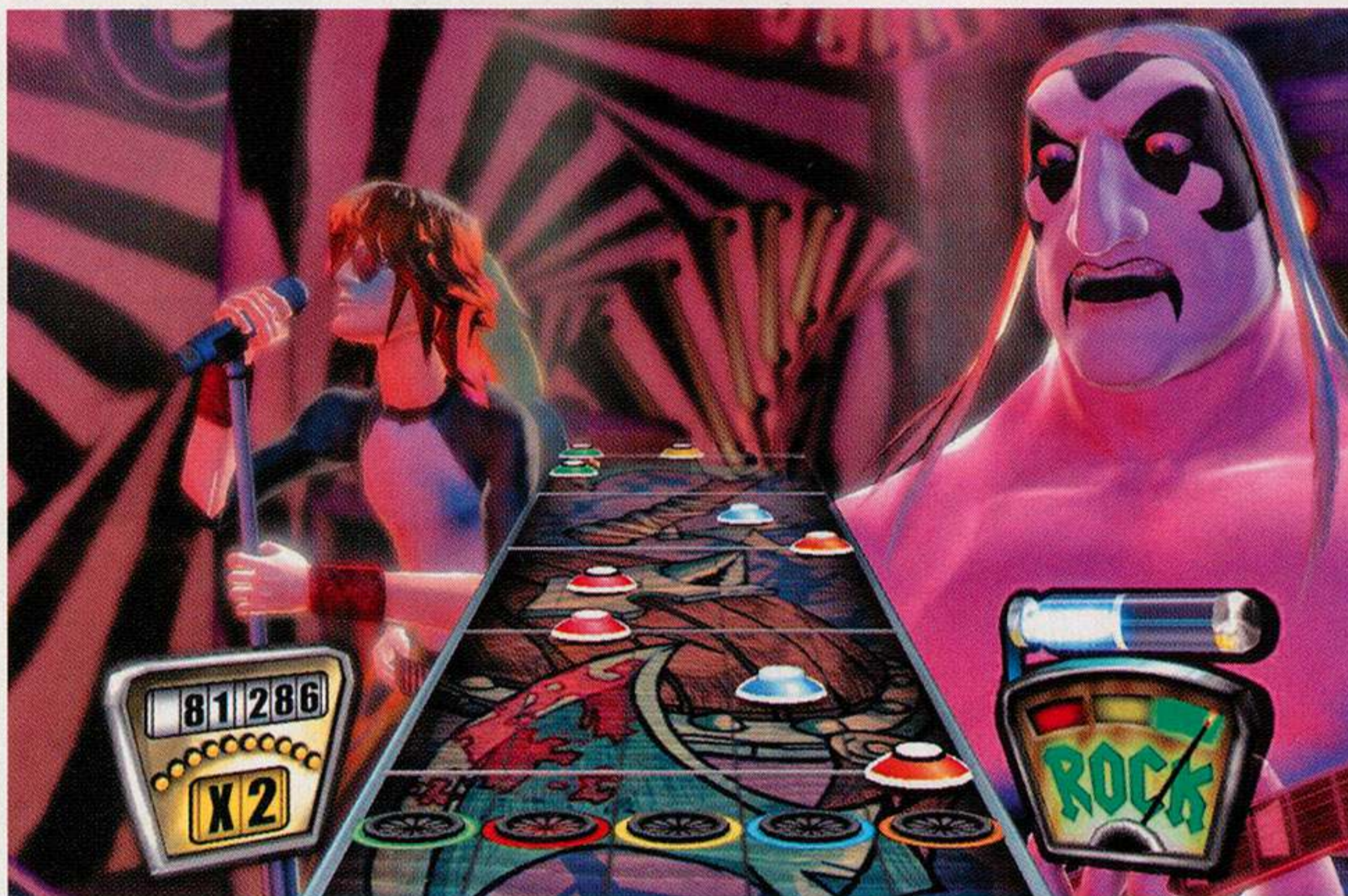
It's also time to throw out the stanky PS2 Guitar Hero controller—by now, it's got to be more worn in than your fat grandpa's La-Z-Boy. The new X-Plorer controller, which is modeled after the



Star Power still works the same as before. Use it to ramp up your score or to save your butt when the rock meter's flashing red.



The Leaderboards: come here to strut your stuff. Or to find out how much you truly suck.



Gibson Explorer, is a welcome edition to GHII Xbox 360. Sadly, it's wired because Microsoft refuses to release its wireless protocols to third-party publishers, but the added Directional Pad allows for swift menu navigation and it even supports an Xbox 360 Headset for chatting it up with fellow rockers.

You'll also find a handy Xbox Guide Button on the controller, which is essential if you have a lot of friends on Live. The only step backwards from the PS2 guitar controller is the Start and Select buttons have reduced in size. Forget about hitting the pause button for a quick time out: you'll miss an entire riff before you find it.

There's also an odd port under the controller, but its functionality is unknown at this time. We figure it will enable Guitar Hero to add stomp pads or effects pedals in the future, but RedOctane's keeping their lips sealed on that front.

### NOT ALL GRAVY

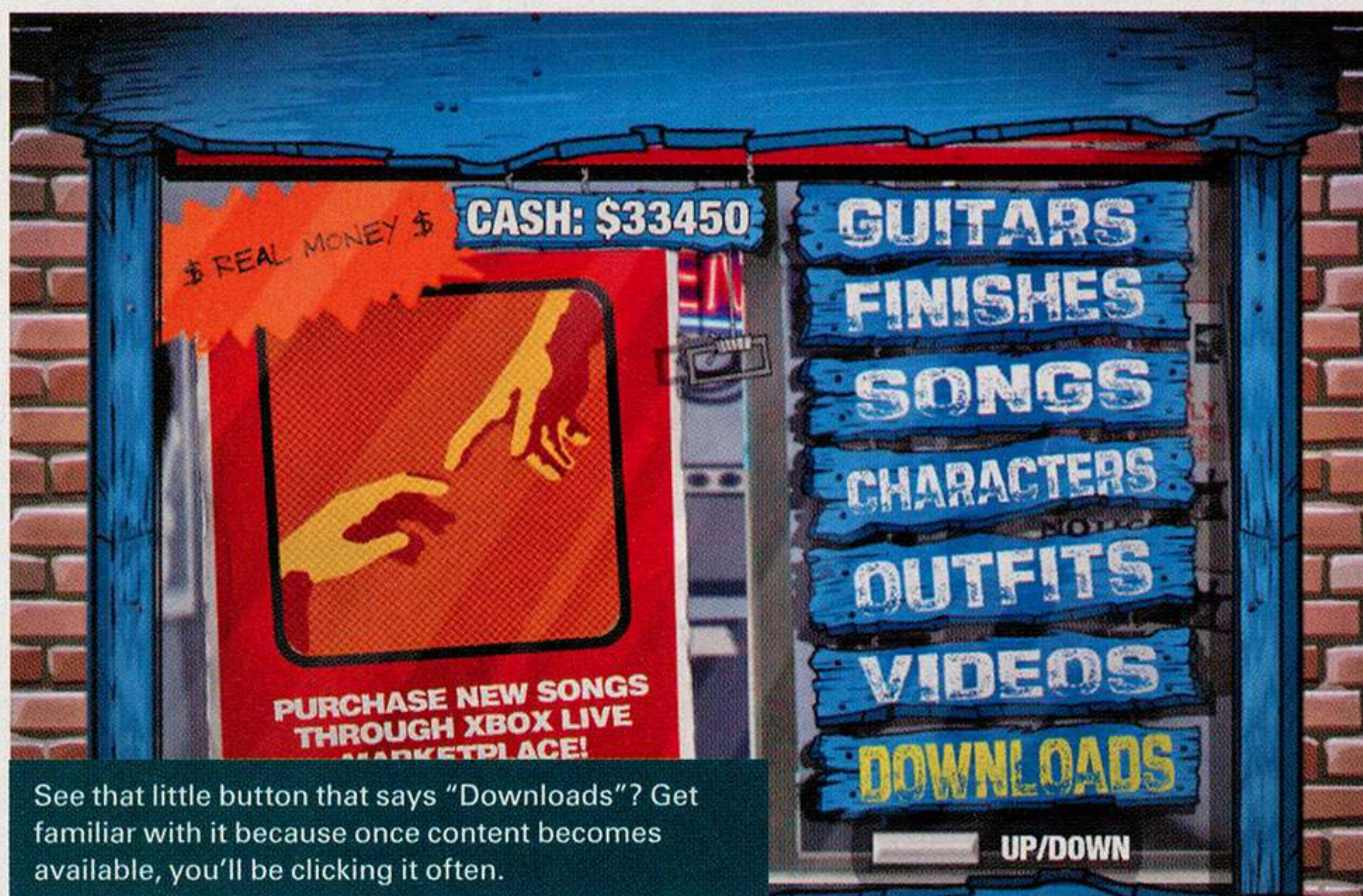
The biggest disappointment with this version, though, is the absence of online multiplayer, which is like buying a Beatles box set and finding that your favorite song was somehow omitted. Seriously, the lack of online multiplayer is the only thing keeping this version from achieving a perfect review score.

Essentially, though, GHII on the Xbox 360 is the same, great game we've all played on the PS2. But, the added level of depth and infinite replay value through Xbox 360 Achievements and loads of downloadable content make GHII Xbox 360 the ultimate version to own.—Tenacious Moses



### XBOX 360: NEW SONGS LIST

- "Billion Dollar Babies" (Alice Cooper)
- "Hush" (Deep Purple)
- "Dead!" (My Chemical Romance)—Master Track
- "Life Wasted" (Pearl Jam)
- "Rock and Roll, Hoochie Koo" (Rick Derringer)
- "The Trooper" (Iron Maiden)
- "Salvation" (Rancid)
- "Possum Kingdom" (by Toadies)—Master Track
- "Drink Up" (Ounce of Self)
- "Kicked to the Curb" (Noble Rot)



See that little button that says "Downloads"? Get familiar with it because once content becomes available, you'll be clicking it often.

### FUN FACTOR

4.75

OUT OF 5.00



Pros: HD graphics, downloadable content, and Xbox 360 Achievements.

Cons: No online multiplayer, tsk tsk.

# SID MEIER'S PIRATES! LUNAR KNIGHTS

**PSP** ESRB: E10+

■ Developer: Full Fat/Firaxis ■ Publisher: 2K Games



One of the downsides of modern civilization is that "pirate" is no longer a viable career choice. Sure, the looting and pillaging business still thrives, especially in some parts of Southeast Asia, but it's less Johnny-Depp-as-Keith-Richards out there and more Freddy-Krueger-packing-a-Chinese-AK.

Thankfully, Sid Meier's Pirates! does an admirable job of letting us relive the romanticized swashbuckling days of yore. In fact, we'll go out on a limb and say that it's probably a lot more fun than real life at sea in the 17th century. At the least, you don't have to worry about scurvy.

Instead of focusing hard on just one type of gameplay, Pirates! features a grab bag of different challenges. There's action, exploration, and a bit of strategy, but the genius of the game is that no one element dominates the other. You'll fight on land and at sea, raid strongholds and outrun the authorities, and woo the daughters of governors. There is a main storyline to follow but you can also sail around and live the pirate's life.

Surprisingly enough, it all works unexpectedly well on the PSP. Complex action games haven't proven especially successful on Sony's handheld but Pirates! succeeds by offering up simple yet intuitive controls and an easy to navigate interface. In short, it's an easy game to learn but it's pretty tough to master. Add in a mostly stable graphics engine that does a competent job of presenting the high seas and you have a game that would put a smile on the grizzled face of even the saltiest sea dog.—DFS



**FUN FACTOR**

**4.00**

OUT OF 5.00



**Pros:** Intuitive controls and interface. Varied and interesting game concepts.

**Cons:** Mild graphical slowdowns.

**DS** ESRB: E10+

■ Developer: Kojima Productions ■ Publisher: Konami

Lunar Knights is a deep action-RPG that could have been a DS classic if it weren't for a couple of major blemishes that detract from the game's greatness.

Chief among these is the lackluster character development. Most of the people you run into in the game possess uninteresting personalities. Also, the two main characters, Lucian and Aaron, fall into predictable patterns. Aaron, the solar gunslinger, is always upbeat while the dark swordsman Lucian is forever brooding. The game also features poorly written dialogue that really detracts from the overall experience.

That said, the game itself is actually fun to play. There's a very deep combat system, a nice selection of upgradeable and hidden weapons, and an intuitively implemented touch screen control scheme; even the built-in microphone gets put to good use. Most of your time is spent tackling dungeons and the vampires that lurk within, but thanks to a character switching system—you can swap between Aaron and Lucian as the situation demands—things rarely get stale. There are some annoying 3D shooting sequences to muddle through but for the most part, Lunar Knights is a solid action-RPG that every DS gamer should look into.—Hamster4Sale



**FUN FACTOR**

**4.00**

OUT OF 5.00



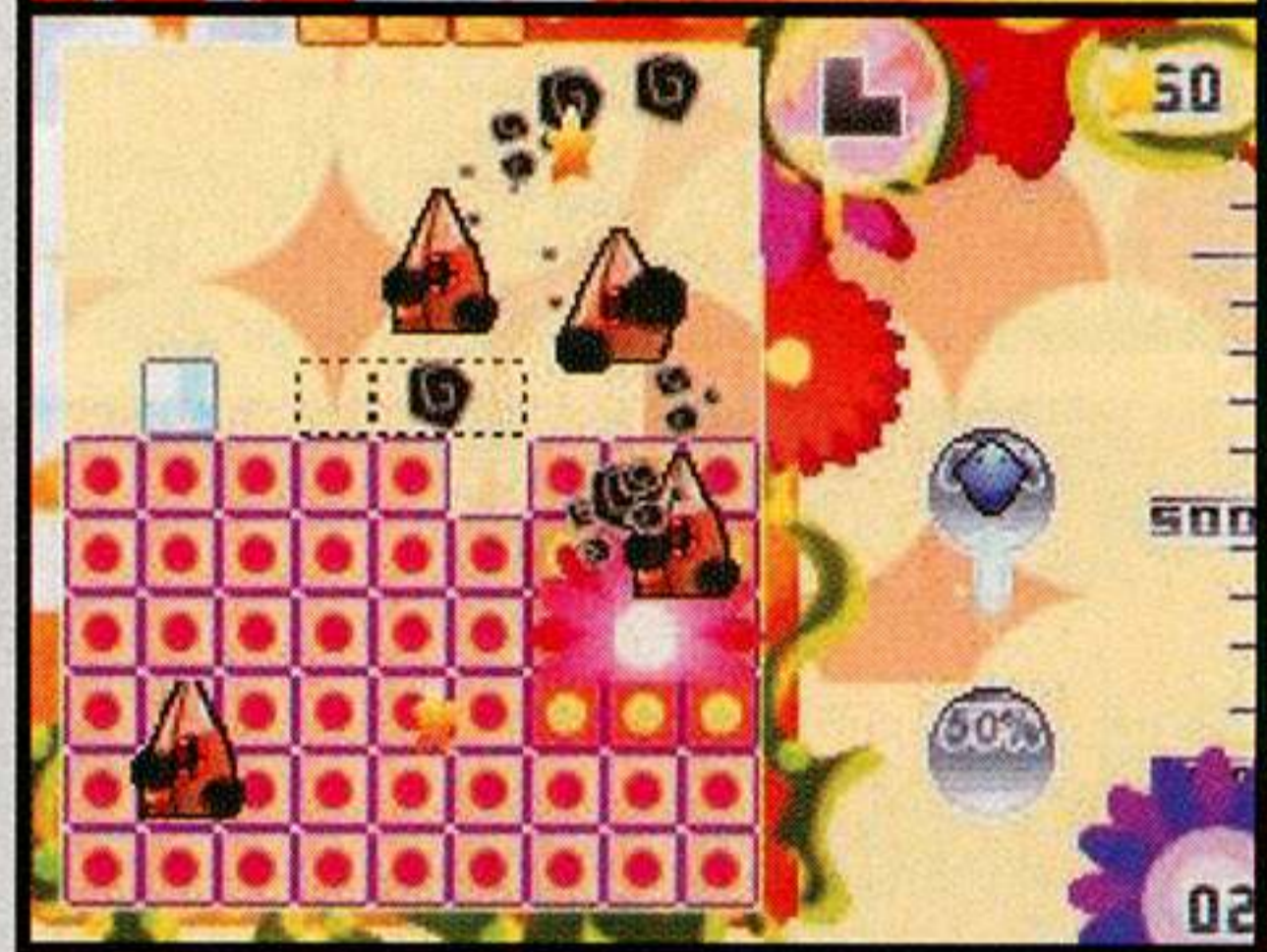
**Pros:** Deep combat system. Nice selection of weapons.

**Cons:** Poor character development.

# TRIONCUBE

**DS** ESRB: E

■ Developer and Publisher: Namco Bandai Games



The premise of Trioncube is quite simple: make 3-by-3 squares of blocks on a familiar Tetris-style grid to fuel your spaceship as it progresses to the goal of each stage. Making a new 3-by-3 square with each subsequent block nets you a chain, and the longer the chain, the faster your ship gets to the goal.

Oddly there is a plot to this simple puzzle game, and it turns out to be one of its main strengths. A princess gets kidnapped and you must get her back using your penguin-shaped space ship. It doesn't make much sense, but it's charmingly strange.

The actual gameplay isn't very deep, though, and it certainly isn't the least bit challenging. You can easily defeat the Arcade mode's eight stages in under 15 minutes. The Story mode offers up 45 stages but again, the easy difficulty means you'll probably blast through it without breaking a sweat. Upon finishing the story, you can play through a second time and the difficulty does begin to ramp up a little but not enough to give you a serious brain cramp.

In the end, Trioncube doesn't offer much for a puzzle game. There's little depth or difficulty to be found, and while the odd story is surprisingly entertaining, it isn't enough to keep you playing for long.—Hamster4Sale

**FUN FACTOR**

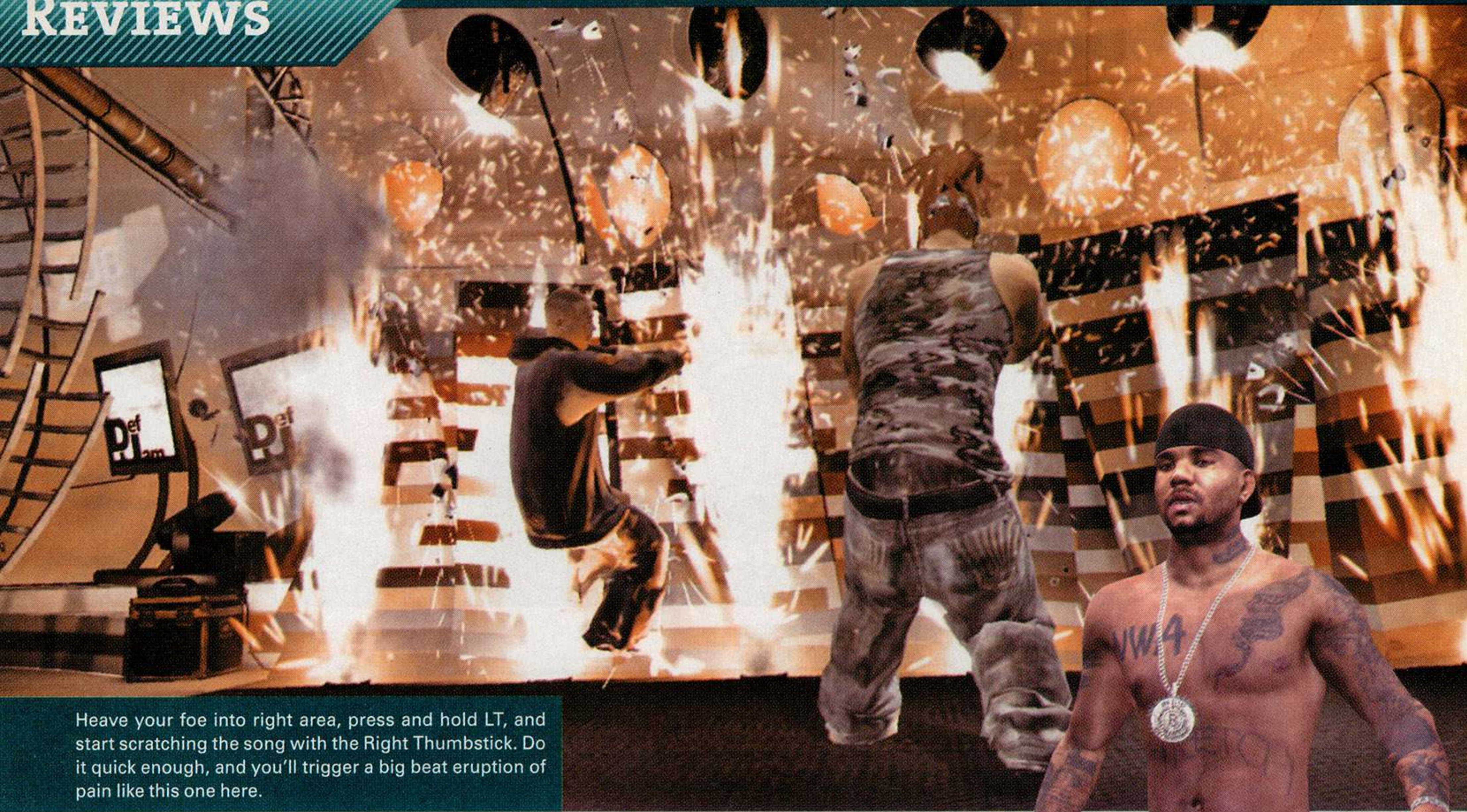
**2.50**

OUT OF 5.00



**Pros:** Quirky story is amusing.

**Cons:** Gameplay is shallow and there's no sense of challenge.



Heave your foe into right area, press and hold LT, and start scratching the song with the Right Thumbstick. Do it quick enough, and you'll trigger a big beat eruption of pain like this one here.

# DEF JAM: ICON

Claiming the ground where beat-down and beat-box meet.

Xbox 360 ESRB: M

Developer: EA Chicago Publisher: EA Games

Once you get by the inexplicably minimalist interface and start knocking out teeth, Def Jam: Icon flashes you some of the snazziest next-generation graphics you've ever seen. From the convincing fiery explosions of a gas station/car wash combo, to the teeth-shattering electrical effects of an L.A. rooftop's broken circuit box, Def Jam: Icon is simply the most beautiful brawler ever to hit the pavement.

But as pretty as the game is, and as great as the soundtrack might be, the game's real draw lies in the eight amazingly detailed rumble locations.

## BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS

The fact that there are only eight locales becomes a drag on the longevity of the game, as each only boasts so many secrets to uncover, but the game keeps things from growing stale by changing up the color schemes, lighting conditions, and even exposure levels based on what song is playing and how close to defeat the participants are.

While the background of each urban arena throbs like some huge equalizer, with erratically scrolling clouds and flickering office building lights, the foreground is loaded with environmental hazards whether you're kicking it in an after-hours club, or soaking up a slice of the ATL hood. High-kicking pole dancers, low-flying helicopters, and powerful amplifier stacks are just some of the many environmental hazards that conspire to leave you broken and breathless.

In Icon, each seemingly sentient bit of scenery moves to the beat of whatever tune is play-

ing. When the "big beat" comes every four measures or so, you'll want to watch where you're standing so you don't take a piano lid to the face, or get knocked across the screen by a donut-peeling hoopy.

## STREET LEVEL

Unfortunately, the innovative environments of Icon can't completely hide the kiddypool depth of the fighting system. There are six unique fighting styles unlockable over the course of the eight hour "Build a Label" story mode, ranging from the straightforward knuckle-dusting of Ghetto Blaster to the Capoeira-inspired dance kicks of Jah Breaka, but every fight still follows a predictable pattern of behavior: punch, punch, grab, throw, scratch, repeat.

The developers also got distracted by pointless dress-up wardrobes and bling collection silliness, a half-baked conspiracy storyline that'd give Oliver Stone the giggles, and an incredibly shallow record label simulation. All this superfluous junk evaporates entirely in the last quarter of the game, as if it dawned on the developers just how disposable it all was.

Despite its misfires and specious distractions, Def Jam: Icon is still a whole lot of fun, thanks mainly to the reactive nature of its environments, the killer integration of its music, and the



overwhelming beauty of its presentation. It may be what's on the inside that counts in the long run, but Def Jam: Icon proves that a slick surface can still make up for a hell of a lot. —Ouroboros

## FUN FACTOR

4.00

OUT OF 5.00



PROS: Stunning graphics, environment and soundtrack.

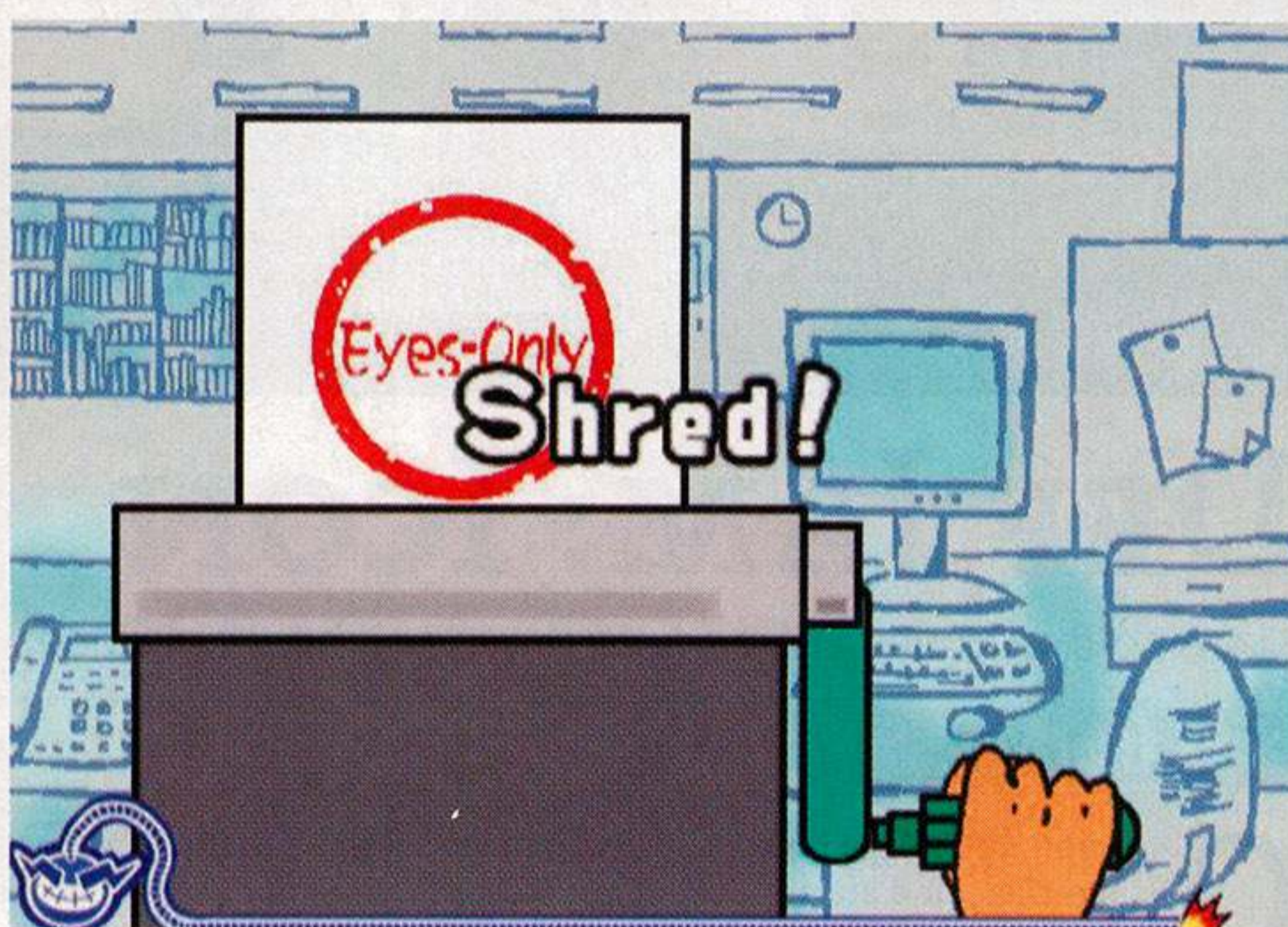
CONS: Shallow fighting system.



**Bwahahaha!**



Balancing games like this one require the Waiter Form, where the Wii Remote is placed in the palm of your hand—just like a waiter's tray.



# WARIOWARE: SMOOTH MOVES

Wii ESRB: E10+

Developer: Intelligent Systems Publisher: Nintendo

**M**ario's evil twin makes his triumphant debut on the Nintendo Wii, demonstrating that there are more fun ways to use your Wii Remote than you can count on both hands. Smooth Moves will please fans of the yellow-clad doppelganger's series and will suck in gamers new to the WarioWare franchise.

## YOU DO WHAT WITH THE REMOTE?

The microgames you'll play in Smooth Moves force you to make a total ass of yourself, as you'll turn the Wii Remote into everything from an elephant trunk to a samurai sword. You'll use the controller to pick a massive nose, saw logs in half, wave a fart cloud away, and partake in tons of other nutty activities. In addition to the many microgames included in Smooth Moves, there are also a few more elaborate games that will keep you occupied for more than a few seconds, such as the NES-esqué Can Shooter and a Breakout-type game that involves a ping pong paddle. These games have multiple levels and can keep you busy (and cursing at the TV) for hours.

## FUN FOR ONE

Even though a "multiplayer" mode can be unlocked by beating the game, players must use the same controller. In one of the multiplayer games, one player uses the Wii Remote, while the other uses the Nunchuk to jump over potholes and hurdles in unison. Using the same controller (or controller set) to play with friends increases the insanity of Smooth Moves' multiplayer games, but passing around the controller gets old fast and the game would have been that much better if it supported multiple controllers. Plus, this really isn't a *multiplayer* mode—you can take turns using a controller with any video game. Another small snag in the game is that it can be completed in about an hour if you really zip through it, but the replay value more than makes up for this minor boo-boo.

In all, WarioWare: Smooth Moves is a certifiably insane party game that is a must buy for any Wii owner and just further proves that the Wii is the must-have console for when you have friends over.—**Long-Haired Offender**



## FUN FACTOR

**4.00**

OUT OF 5.00

**Pros:** Wacky mini-games and off-beat humor ensure a good time.

**Cons:** Sharing the Wii Remote for multiplayer mode sucks.



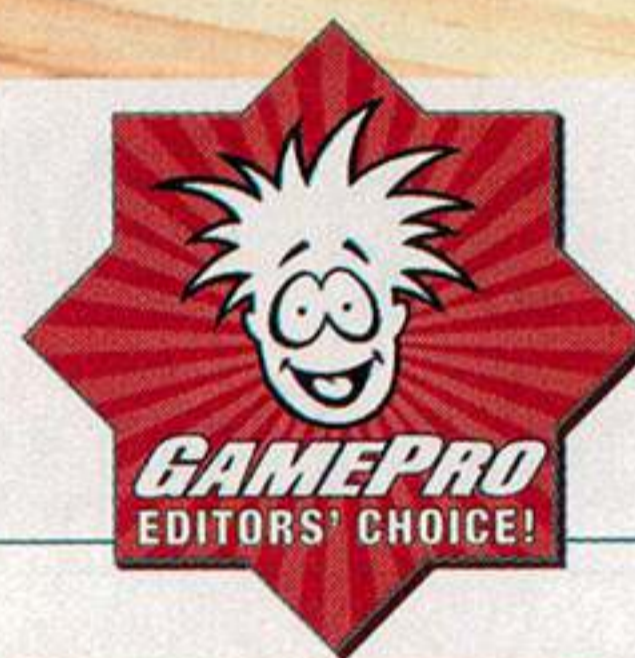
Pai may be sprightly and weak when taking hits, but her attacks can be sudden and varied, so watch out for surprise strikes.



Developer and Publisher: Sega

# VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

Sega's latest fighting game can be described in one word: Amazing.



PS3 ESRB: T

The Virtua Fighter series, in its more than decade-long history, has always been respected for its contribution to the fighting game genre. After all, the original Virtua Fighter was the first 3D fighting game to be released and essentially paved the way, blocky pixels and all, for other 3D fighters like Tekken, Dead or Alive, and Soul Calibur. Now, after plenty of anticipation, the Virtua Fighter franchise is finally making its debut on Sony's slick black box and it's never looked, or played, better.



## READY? FIGHT!

There's no denying it: Virtua Fighter 5's looks are what made it one of the PS3's most anticipated titles. And why not? One look at this game in motion is enough to convince even the staunchest graphics snobs that VF5 is one of the best looking new-gen games released so far. Characters are rendered in amazing detail and with enough variety give a unique quality to almost every aspect of the game.

And, no, it's not just the fighters that look amazing—the game's settings are equally, if not

more, astounding. The only minor complaint is that the game doesn't output at 1080p and the characters, particularly those of the bare-chested variety, seem a bit too glossy, as if they'd been dipped in oil.

As good as it looks, the game is more than a pretty face. It has tremendous depth and a monster list of moves, which is both good and bad. VF5 isn't a "hold-your-hands" fighter; unless you're already familiar with the franchise, you'll be fighting tooth and nail just to complete the normal difficulty setting. But at least it isn't a brain-dead button mashing affair, and your dedication and patience will definitely be rewarded.

## RING OUT!

I won't talk too much about the modes, as most of them feel similar enough to past installments that you'll feel comfortable with them from the get-go. But I will mention the personalization feature which has received a significant upgrade. It's remarkably robust and offers players the opportunity to infuse the game with their own "unique" twist.

VF.TV, an online mode taken from the arcade forefathers of Virtua Fighter, is also included but the main feature—watching other players fight with point-by-point commentary—has been replaced with a neutered version that simply lets you watch recordings of your previous matches.

Along with these new features, two new characters have also been added to the roster. Eileen, a young martial artist taught in Monkey Kung Fu style, has an agile but complex fighting stance



while El Blaze melds the power of the larger wrestling characters with the speed of the more normally proportioned fighters. In all, the two new characters add some great new fighting styles that only further compliment the already broad set of characters found in the Virtua Fighter franchise.

Virtua Fighter 4 was easily the best in the series, and one of the best hardcore fighting games ever released. While it doesn't represent as huge a step up as say, VF4 did over VF3, it can still claim the crown as the best Virtua Fighter to date. It's a rousing success on all fronts.—The Watcher

## FUN FACTOR

4.50

OUT OF 5.00



Pros: Best Virtua Fighter ever.

Cons: Steep learning curve for n00bs.



The two new races each have their own capital city. Here, we see the Draenei capital of Exodar, which was built around a crashed dimensional ship.

# WORLD OF WARCRAFT: THE BURNING CRUSADE



PC ESRB: T

Developer: Blizzard Entertainment Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games

It's hard to think of The Burning Crusade as an expansion pack considering the amount of hype built up around its release, the massive quantity of new content, as well as the considerable \$40 price tag. Nevertheless, it is an expansion, and as such, it delivers in droves. If you are one of the 8 million fans of the most successful massively multiplayer game in history, it'll be worth every penny.



## A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

The Burning Crusade targets two types of World of Warcraft players: those who wish to experience the whole game anew from a different perspective, and those who want to take their veteran level 60 characters further than they ever could before.

For those who want to start over, two new playable races are now available. The Draenei are a race of regal bipeds whose past was pain-

fully entangled with that of the evil Burning Legion and have joined the ranks of the Alliance forces. Joining the Horde are the Blood Elves, a race tainted by their addiction to magical power and cast out by their Night Elf brethren.

Both races have each been given new capital cities and starting zones to explore, full of spectacular sights and quests. The Draenei start off in the Azuremist Isles off the western coast of Kalimdor, while the Blood Elves are secluded on the northern tip of the Eastern Kingdoms in a land called Quel'Thalas.

Unfortunately, the integration of the new zones into the now-familiar world of Azeroth is somewhat disjointed. The Azuremist Isles are currently reachable by boat alone, while the only marginally convenient method of approaching Quel'Thalas is via a teleporter that translocates players from the Undercity to the Blood Elf capital of Silvermoon. As a result, the zones feel like tacked-on happenstance visitors to Azeroth's shores.

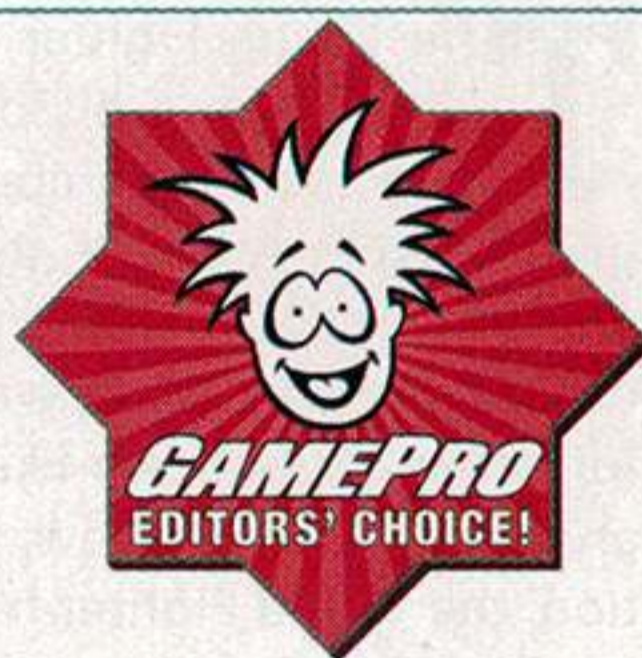
## TRADEMARK BLIZZARD POLISH

For the legions of players who have already achieved level 60 and are far more interested in improving old characters, The Burning Crusade provides passage through the Dark Portal and into the disintegrating realm of Outland. An entirely new continent replete with seven sprawling zones, Outland was built for players between the old level cap of 60 and the new one of 70.

The new locations, characters, items, and monsters Blizzard Entertainment has created

are nothing short of awesome. The voice acting is perfect, the sound effects spot-on, and the score is at times both ominous and uplifting. Quest dialog is well-written and does a wonderful job of pulling players into the ever-shifting story of the war. Put simply, everything just feels right.

But one can never forget that World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade is, first and foremost, an expansion pack geared towards players already familiar with Azeroth. So long as you are, there's very little reason for you to not broaden your in-game horizons. If you can spare the cash, pick up the game and we'll see you in Outland.—Daphnicus



## FUN FACTOR

5.00

OUT OF 5.00



**Pros:** If you're a WoW fan, you should buy this game...

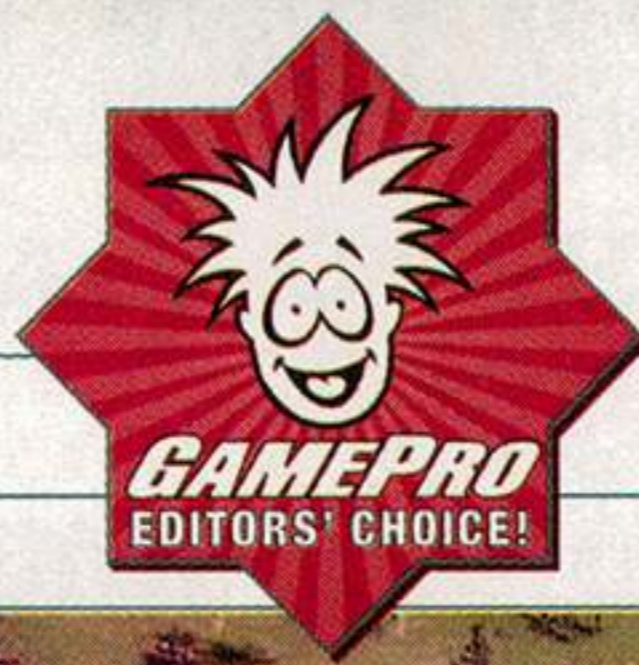
**Cons:** ...but if you're not, you probably can live without it.



SUPREME COMMANDER

PC ESRB: E10+

Developer: Gas Powered Games Publisher: THQ



**T**ake any RTS game you can think of and multiply everything by a factor of 10—now you start to get an idea of Supreme Commander's scope. Everything in the game is big in a Texas-sized way: the weapons, the maps, the unit cap, even the system resources.

I WISH I WERE BIG

But size is rarely interesting unless we're given the context of scale and this is something SupCom excels at. The sheer enormity of some of your war machines is enough to give even the most jaded RTS general pause. Of course, a few jumbo-sized offensive weapons isn't all SupCom has to offer. The number of units that can be present on the battlefield is absolutely insane—up to 500 per side can be produced—and can lead to some epic battles, especially when the experimental units come into play.

These weapons of mass destruction represent the pinnacle of each respective faction's technological abilities. Included are a massive, mobile construction platform that's bristling with defenses, a submersible aircraft carrier, and a giant arachnid-like unit that can both crush enemies underfoot and pummel base defenses with its powerful energy beam.

MASSIVE MANAGEMENT

Of course, the immense nature of SupCom would all be for naught without an outstanding interface to help you manage all those units across the sprawling battlefields. SupCom allows you to zoom in and out of the map with outstanding ac-

curacy, fly across the battlefield swiftly and pick out important units in an instant. Things can get a little hectic when your unit count reaches into the hundreds, but the interface is still one of the best featured in any RTS game.

It also helps that the graphics in SupCom are so great. Besides featuring an outstanding graphics engine, zooming down to the closest level yields minor details like rotating turrets, moving treads, and reloading missile launch bays. And the explosions are jaw-droppingly awesome. Nuclear explosions, artillery shots, energy beams, and anything that deals massive damage looks stellar and really proves that blowing stuff up is just plain fun. The game engine also features great scalability, which means your current system should be able to play, but to get the best results, you'll need a beastly machine.

There are other little quibbles with the game—for example, the unit variety isn't as diverse as it could be and the main story is sort of bland—but Supreme Commander still shines as an eminently impressive RTS title with a massive feel that deserves an equally massive amount of praise.

—The Watcher

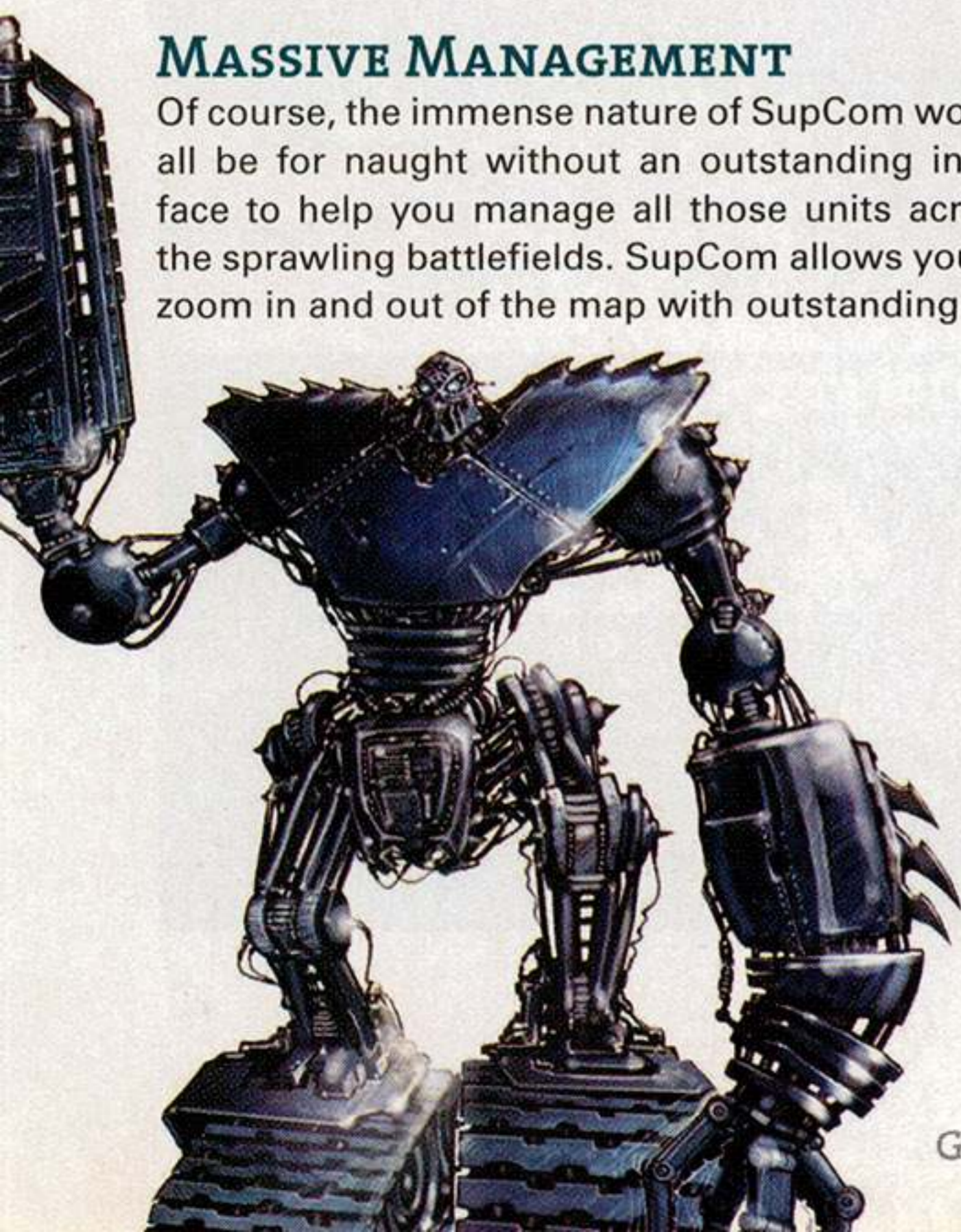


FUN FACTOR

4.50 OUT OF 5.00

Pros: Massive scope; excellent graphics and well executed design concepts.

Cons: Uninteresting storyline; unit variety is sorely lacking.



DEGREES IN: COMPUTER ANIMATION > DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN > ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS > FILM > GAME DEVELOPMENT > RECORDING ARTS > SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING



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## RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS

PSP ESRB: E10+

Developer: High Impact Games Publisher: Sony



**A**s a longtime R&C fan, the wait for my favorite Lombax and robot duo to hit the PSP has been a painful one. Granted, most of my frustration is the result of a rather slim lineup of grade-A PSP titles to provide me ample in-flight distraction, but that's a whole 'nother story in itself. It also didn't help that Ratchet: Deadlocked, the pair's last console outing, left a bland taste in my mouth.

### BACK TO BASICS

So the return to the well-established Ratchet & Clank adventure formula is a welcome one with *Size Matters*. If you've played any one of the first three Ratchet games, jumping into this one will be as easy finding your first Titanium Bolt. It's mostly the standard method of operations for the twosome in this new handheld adventure. You have an army-sized arsenal of firepower at your disposal, and while old favorites like the Lacerator and Agents of Doom are back, they're joined by a few new ones like the Bee Mine Glove—you shouldn't have any trouble figuring out what that one does.

The biggest new addition, however, is the inclusion of different types of armor, which is a great new feature. There are six complete types of armor, and you'll find them in pieces throughout the game. It's all customizable, but once you find and equip a complete set, Ratchet will gain a new ability. For example, the Wildfire armor sets enemies ablaze via Ratchet's now-flaming wrench.

### INSPECTOR GADGET

There are also a number of gadgets that will help you in your cause, including interactive plants that serve several functions, such as launching Ratchet through walls or molding into a handy-dandy ladder. There are plenty of playable Clank sequences, as well, along with a bizarre Ratchet dream sequence and a bunch of mini-games that'll have you platforming long into the night. There are some mandatory hover board races that should have been canned, not so much for their unoriginality but rather for their unforgiving length and tedious feel.

The overall *Size Matters* campaign is long, but it's not overwhelming. The RPG-esqué leveling up of Ratchet's health and weapons keep the pace moving nicely, and managing your weapons will constantly keep you on your toes. You'll find your self getting more efficient with each weapon as you attempt to level them up, and they'll consequently become more powerful. Crazy Quark is back, too—and this time he doesn't think he's a monkey—as well as some other familiar characters, but I won't spoil the surprise.

The game also has a tightly implemented control scheme, including an awesome strafe system that all but eliminates lock-on issues. There is also multiplayer for up to four players via online Infrastructure and local ad-hoc modes, which is nice but most players will probably focus their attention to the stellar single-player campaign.

When a PS2 franchise moves to the smaller PSP, it usually results in a flop. However, recent titles like *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops* proved that the transition doesn't have to be painful, and you can definitely add *Size Matters* to that short but sweet list. —Mr. Marbles



### FUN FACTOR

4.25

OUT OF 5.00



Pros: PS2-sized fun comes to the PSP.

Cons: Mini-games are a mixed bag.

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# GHOST RIDER

PS2 ESRB: T

Developer: Climax Publisher: 2K Games



Everyone knows that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery but someone needs to let the folks at Climax know that flattery won't get you anywhere, especially when it's so shamelessly done.

Take their new game, Ghost Rider. It so "sincerely flatters" the epic God of War that it feels less like a standalone title and more like a total conversion pack, where you take an existing game, reskin the textures and tweak some of the gameplay concepts.



## CARBON COPY

Surprisingly, this actually saves Ghost Rider from the depths of Purgatory. After all, if you had to pick one game to shamelessly ape, you could do a lot worse than God of War. Ghost Rider follows in Kratos' Spartan footprints, wielding a flaming chain through the nasty underbelly of Hell and kicking some demon butt along the way. The flaming skull head also has some interesting powers, like a shotgun that shoots Hellfire and the Penance Stare, which gives criminals and evildoers a serious guilt trip about their actions.

There are also some entertaining motorcycle segments where you jump onto your flaming hog and go tearing around on the byways of Hell, whipping at foes with your chain and jumping massive caverns. There's even a cool slide move that lets you squeeze underneath obstructions.

Up to this point, the game sounds like a winner, doesn't it? Marrying the God of War formula with a unique superhero sounds like a sure thing but the trouble is, for all the careful attention that the developers paid to mimicking GoW's design, they didn't take very many notes

on the game's presentation. GoW had an epic feel, a larger than life vibe that swept gamers off their feet. Despite its cinematic pedigree, Ghost Rider barely manages to stir your shoelaces with an anemic storyline and production value that screams "budget title!"

Then there's the terrible camera that obscures the action, the repetitive combat and the uninspired enemy designs. Even the eponymous Ghost Rider is dull, which is quite a feat for someone whose head is literally on fire.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

There's nothing terribly original or groundbreaking about Ghost Rider. There is enough demon-smashing action to tide you over until Kratos' next adventure hits, provided, of course, that you can ignore the little voice in your head that will constantly whisper, "This isn't as good as God of War," as you play. I recommend that you treat this one just like the upcoming movie, which I'm guessing will also be sub-par: You could pay the full price of admission but it's probably best as a weekend rental.—**This Old Man**



## FUN FACTOR

3.25

OUT OF 5.00



**Pros:** In a nutshell, it's Diet God of War.

**Cons:** The diet version is never as good as the non-diet version.

# BULLET WITCH

Xbox 360 ESRB: M

Developer: Cavia Inc. Publisher: Atari



Let's start with the ingredients that went into making Bullet Witch: You take a moderately hot female lead who looks good and kicks ass, add in a cup and a half of gun-heavy action, and top it off with a heaping teaspoon of magical powers. You then cook the whole mess according to a recipe that yielded titles like Resident Evil and Devil May Cry, among others. Sounds pretty appetizing, doesn't it? Perhaps in the hands of a better developer, it would have been, but instead of a gourmet video game meal, we were served a barf bag full of dog food instead.

Everything, and I mean everything, about Bullet Witch is bad. The character designs are amateurish and hackneyed, the controls are rigid and poorly implemented, the story is nonsensical and trite, the action is dull and repetitive and the overall presentation sucks harder than an industrial strength vacuum cleaner. To top it all off, the game's biggest defect lies in its terrible early-gen PS2-grade graphics. I haven't seen anything this blocky since the last time I played with my Legos! It's almost insulting that they would try to pass this game off as an Xbox 360 title.



Don't be fooled by the cool box art and the sexy leading lady who, by the way, moves like an arthritic grandmother. Sure, she has some cool moves—her lightning strike is pretty nice—but a little bit of razzle-dazzle can't hide the craptacular mess that lies underneath. Or, to put it in food terms, you can sprinkle some spices on a turd but guess what? It'll still taste like...well, you know.—**ThreeRingCircus**

## FUN FACTOR

1.50

OUT OF 5.00



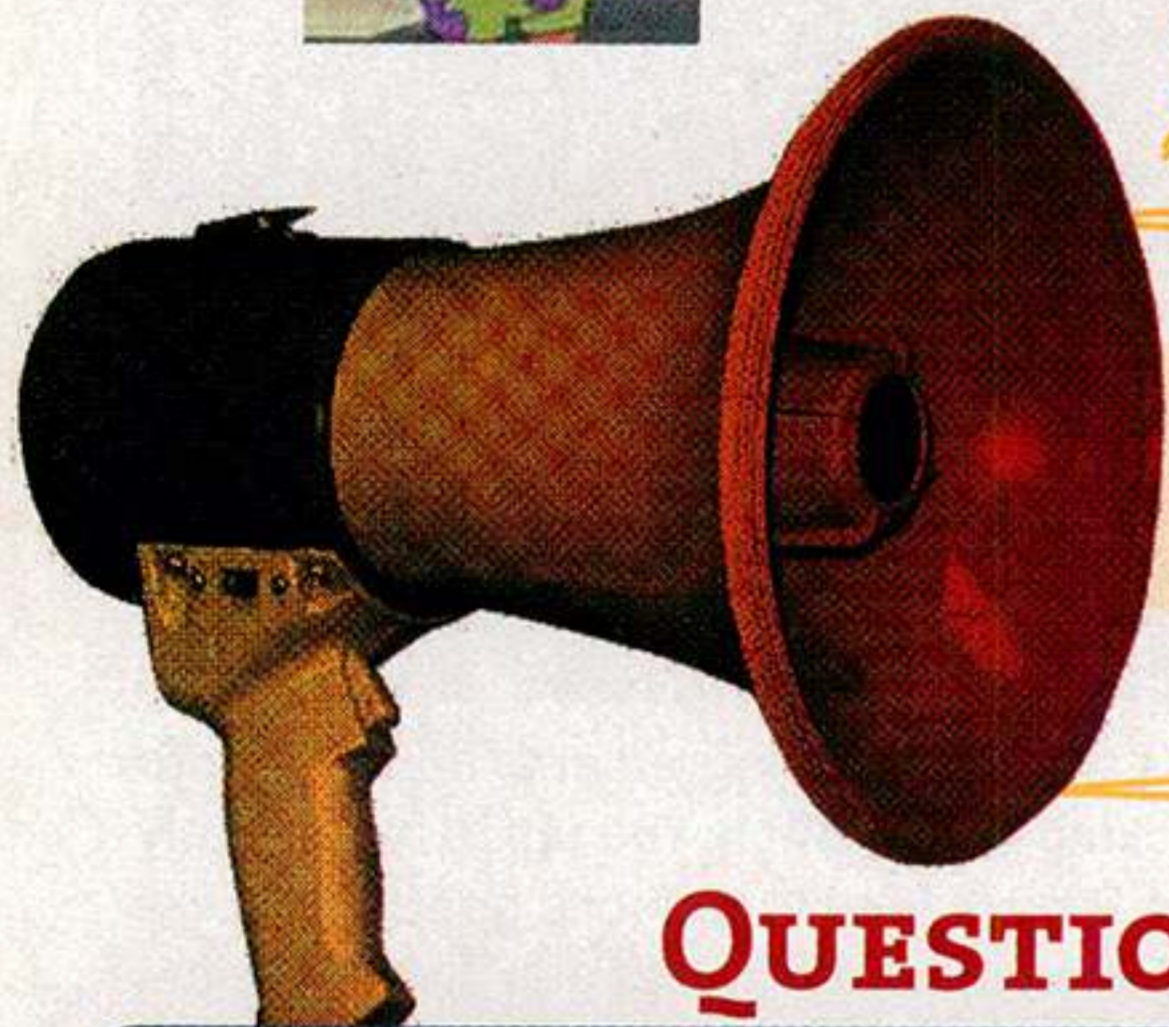
**Pros:** There is nothing good about this game.

**Cons:** Seriously. Not one thing. Trust us, we looked.



# ASK THE PROS

You ask, we answer. Here's why the Wii has more than graphics to win you over. And finally the answer to the burning question: Which is the best **Legend of Zelda** of all time?



## QUESTION OF THE MONTH



coolio93

### BEAUTY, EYE, BEHOLDER

**Q:** Are there any games for the Wii that can compare graphically to the Xbox 360 or the PS3?  
—coolio93

**Ahoy\_and\_Avast says:** The honest brutal answer to your question is: no, there are no Wii games that come close to matching the visual quality of an Xbox 360 or a PS3 game. Before you and the rest of the Nintendo gang write-in screaming about The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, let me explain. Yes, the graphics in Twilight Princess are amazing, and yes, they represent the maxed out capabilities of the GameCube and not the Wii, but facts are facts, people: the Wii just doesn't contain the hardware to match up against the Xbox 360 and PS3. Developers will continue to optimize their code and will learn new tricks and the games will get better, but there is a ceiling at a hardware level and you will never be able to go beyond that.

But that's beside the point. Next-gen graphics have never been the focus of the Wii—instead, it's all about the gameplay, and here, Nintendo obviously has a huge edge. I gladly put up with the cutesy visuals of Wii Bowling because I'm too busy having fun to notice that it doesn't look "next-gen." Gamers will always demand the cutting-edge graphics from their console systems, but at the end of the day, it all comes down to whether or not a game is fun.



Ahoy\_and\_Avast



kratos91

### TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY XBOX 360

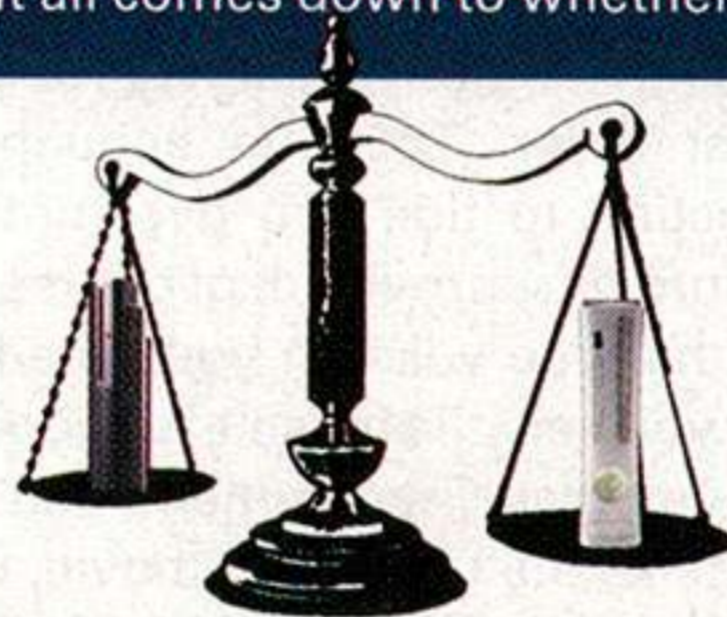
**Q:** I've been contemplating whether or not to buy an Xbox 360 for quite some time now.

But I keep wondering if the system's reliable and worth the money because I already have the past-gen systems. Can you help me out?—kratos91



Tenacious Moses

**Tenacious Moses says:** Occasionally, a faulty unit slips by the quality control police, but recently, Microsoft extended the Xbox 360's warranty to one year. And they're supposed to move to a new manufacturing process for the core CPU, that theoretically will reduce heat output, a main culprit for Xbox 360 breakdowns. Other tweaks may be applied, too. Also, the Xbox 360 is backwards compatible with a large chunk of original Xbox games. That's determined on a case-by-case basis, rather than being supported in hardware. That method is more cost effective, but you may not be able to play some older Xbox games. Whether or not it's worth the money depends on what kind of games you like. I recommend browsing through the library and talking to friends about what they play.



c4rlos

### PS3 OR XBOX 360?

**Q:** How can a mediocre 3.2 GHz chip and eight even weaker cores suddenly endow the PlayStation 3 with supercomputer abilities and allegedly blow the Xbox 360's CPU away? I'm sure it's more powerful, but don't supercomputers operate at many times the speed of the Cell?—c4rlos



Tenacious Moses

**Tenacious Moses says:** The Xbox 360 and the PS3 compute game data pretty differently under the hood, but the two basic technologies are roughly equal when it comes to real-world performance. The difference actually comes down to other factors. The PS3 supports the Blu-ray disc format and HDMI video connectivity, but its price tag is higher. The Xbox 360 supports both component video and VGA inputs, but its 20 GB hard drive is a third of the size of the PS3's premium package. On the other hand, that same package only comes with composite cables.



GamingBeast666

### THE GREATEST ZELDA OF ALL TIME?

**Q:** Zelda has come a long way, baby! It began with the 8-bit classic and worked its way up to Twilight Princess. In your opinion, which game do you think was the greatest?  
—GamingBeast666



Ahoy\_and\_Avast

**Ahoy\_and\_Avast says:** This is a question that could take me a lifetime to answer, so I'll just give you the short answer: There is no "greatest" Zelda of all time. That's because it's all relative and it's not fair to compare one thing from one era to another. Let's say that we compare the first Legend of Zelda for the NES to Twilight Princess for the Wii. Which one wins? It's impossible to say, as they are two radically different games. Also, you have to consider the context in which these games are being played. I was much younger back when the NES was around and my expectations have since been changed thanks to newer and better hardware. Therefore, it's unfair to do a direct comparison because there are too many different factors to consider. If I had to rank them, though, I'd definitely put the NES, the SNES, and the Wii Zelda's at the top of any list. The Game Boy and the N64 versions are a wash. Same goes for Wind Waker for GameCube. So there you go, GamingBeast.



# H2H

HEAD TO HEAD

You write, we respond.

## GET BACK TO YOUR ROOTS

Like most people, I'm attracted to the best visuals that the latest technology can offer. I have an Xbox 360, which I love. I thought I'd eventually get a PS3, but I decided against the Wii because graphically it was not suited to my taste. Then, one day my son came home from daycare and told me he had played "the best video games ever!" Later I realized he had played Super Metroid and Super Mario World. Even though these older games weren't "pretty," I realized that I had forgotten what made me enjoy video games in the first place. I've come to realize that games that I thought were great on the PS2 or Xbox 360 simply are not as much fun or as memorable as games I've played on the Genesis and the SNES. Now I can say the Wii is definitely in my future—not for the graphics, but for the fun.

**Ty Moore—Via Internet**

## LETTER OF THE MONTH CONTEST

### WIN A \$25 MAPLESTORY GIFT CARD

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There's nothing keeping anyone from playing the Wii, PS3, and Xbox 360. All it takes is friendship.

### WAR NO MORE

I'm tired of hearing about the "console war." All three next-gen consoles are great; each well worth its price. This "war" will end just like every one before it: all three consoles will live long and happy lives and have many wonderful games. And in the end, when one has sold more units, or whatever it takes to be the official "winner" no one will care. There will be no one winner, no metals, no victory dance, and no vanquished; doomed to forever hold their heads in shame.

We stand at the beginning of a new era in gaming, each console and its games has evolved far beyond what came before.

So I ask you, why fight when you can share? You can play Gears of War and Resistance: Fall of Man, or be lost in Zelda and Final Fantasy. Don't deny yourself what this "next-gen" has to offer. I know it's not possible for all of us to own all three consoles, but you don't need to own all three systems to play all three. Make friends and play nice. I intend to own a PS3, one close friend plans to buy an Xbox 360, and another a Wii. Thus, I'll get to play games on all three next-gen consoles. What's stopping you from doing the same? When no one fights, everyone wins.

**Jonathan L. Hornsby—Via Internet**

### A GAMER'S PLEA

Remember the first time you were totally absorbed by a game? I can't remember how many times I played Final Fantasy II trying to find all of the powerful weapons. I'm a gamer today, despite the demands of work and family, because of the absorbing power of great games. Sadly, these days high-resolution graphics often take precedence over character development, compelling story lines, and innovative gameplay. So I urge game developers to remember what attracted so many devoted gamers in the early days of video games—depth. An immersive game holds value even after its graphics capabilities have been overshadowed by the next generation. Plus, you have to admit that some of those old games are still pretty cool.

**Matt Tiza—Via Internet**

**The Watcher says:** It's true, games that prop themselves up strictly by looking good simply can't compare to graphically inferior but more substantive games. Just look at the phenomenon that is World of Warcraft. Graphically, it's nothing to write home about, yet millions of gamers log on because of the amazing variety of activities and depth the game offers.

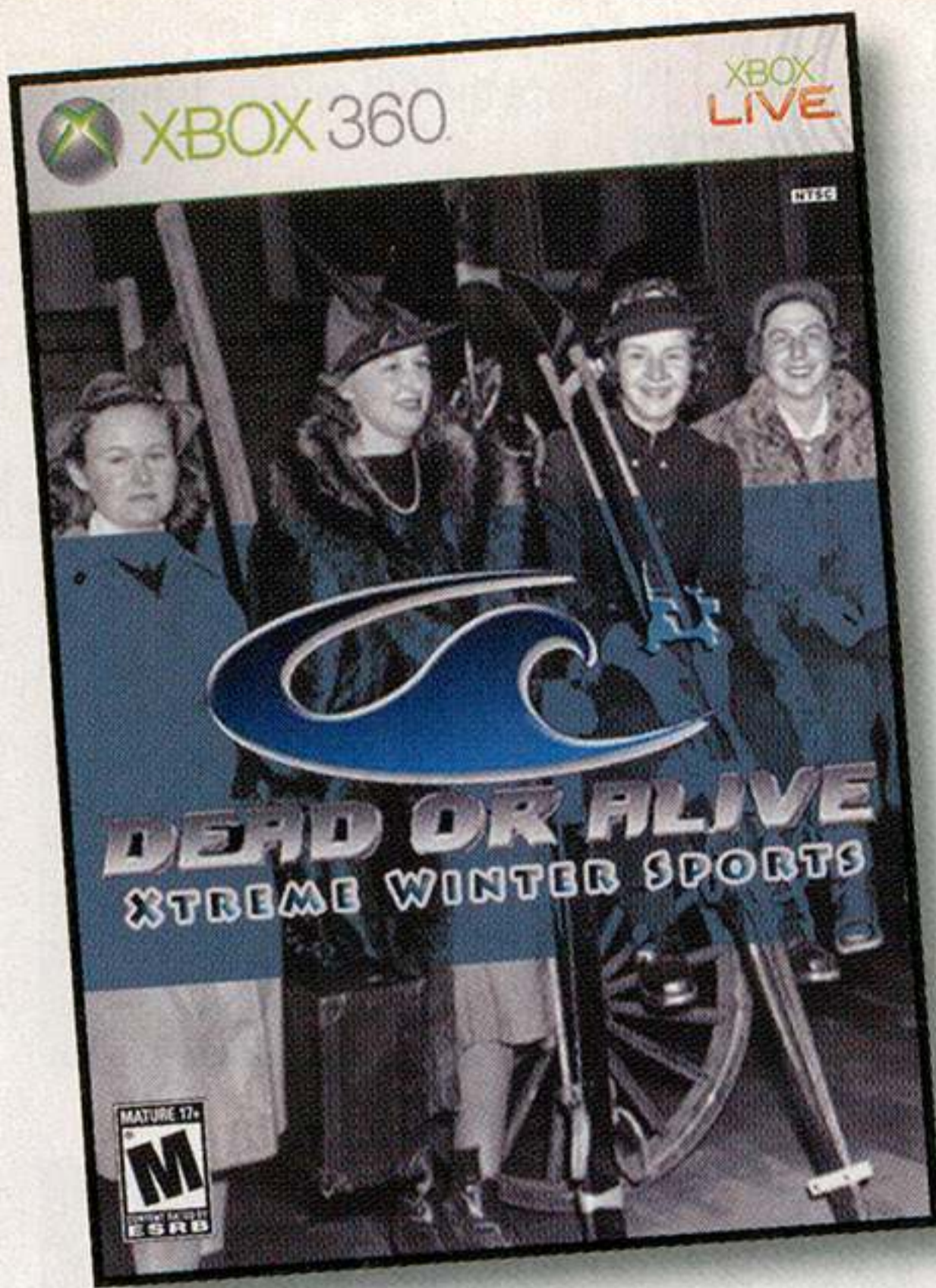
### NO NINTENDO LOVER

I try to tell the kids at school the good news about the Wii and how it has brought to the world a new way to play video games, but as a unanimous group they go off on a rant about how Halo 3 is going to be great and, after a few choice words, I'm written off as a "Nintendo Lover." I am in no way a "Nintendo Lover." I like what's good, and I will enjoy a few rounds on Halo 2; but I'm also not ignorant enough to call it the best game ever.

**Taylor Treadway—Via Internet**



Illustration by Desiree Peel



ESRB. Now if you'll excuse us, we need to get back to playing Dead or Alive Xtreme 2.

### SILENCE IS GOLDEN

After playing with the Wii, it hit me. Wasn't it not so long ago when we were all complaining about the Wii? Weren't we saying how disappointing the PS3 would be? Well, now both consoles are finally here, and I haven't heard so much of a whisper of disappointment about the PS3 or the Wii. I guess it just proves that you can't really judge a game system until after the fact.

Adam Hitchens—Via Internet

### GIRLS JUST WANT TO PLAY SHOOTERS

Why aren't girls aren't supposed to play war games or shooters? When people look at me, they immediately think "girly-girl!" That is until I drop the bomb that I play StarCraft and James Bond

007. I have loved StarCraft and the 007 games since they came out for the N64, and then I moved on to other games until...whoo-hoo! Halo! I now play a wide variety of video games, but war games and first-person shooters are my favorites. So why are girls like me not supposed to play those types of games? And for that matter, some of my friends seem to think we shouldn't play any other video games than The Sims or something that has cute, fuzzy animals in it.

Sarah Cagney—Madison, WI

**BroBuzz says:** The times are changing! Just like you girls are playing all types of video games and even participating in professional game competition. Girl gamers are one of the fastest growing segments among all video game players. Soon there will be more female game designers, too, then...look out!

### CLEAN IT UP!

Hey, GamePros! I don't mean to sound like I'm complaining, but I have noticed lately that a lot of games have half-naked women in them. I can barely turn two pages in a game magazine without seeing some scantily clad women. What's up with that? How come we can't just have good, clean games? Maybe if there wasn't so much sexual content and half-naked women in games our parents wouldn't be against video games. How come games have to have this kind of content? Is it like a lure to attract dudes to buy the games?

Jakob Cridelich—Via Internet

**The Watcher says:** It does sound like you're complaining, Jakob, but it's long been established that sex sells. That goes for video games targeting a mature audience as well. However, plenty of games are available that do not contain excessive sexual content. Actually, more games are released with a "T" (Teen) rating than any other used by the

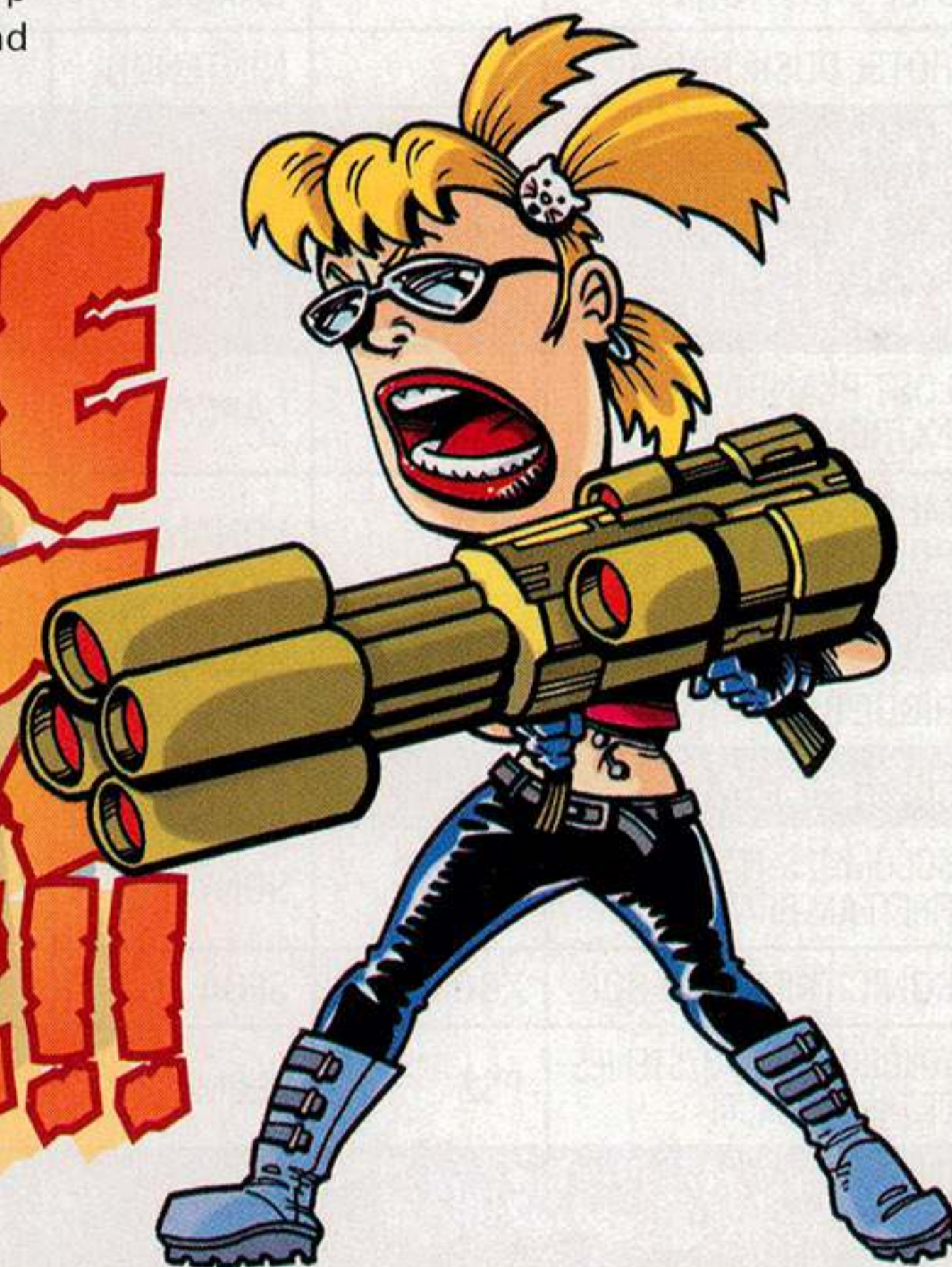


Illustration by Francis Mao

## ART ATTACK!

PICK of the Month!

This month's winner receives

PlayStation 2



**Dance Dance Revolution SuperNOVA**

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Kayla Jiminez—Clayton, DE

## WIN



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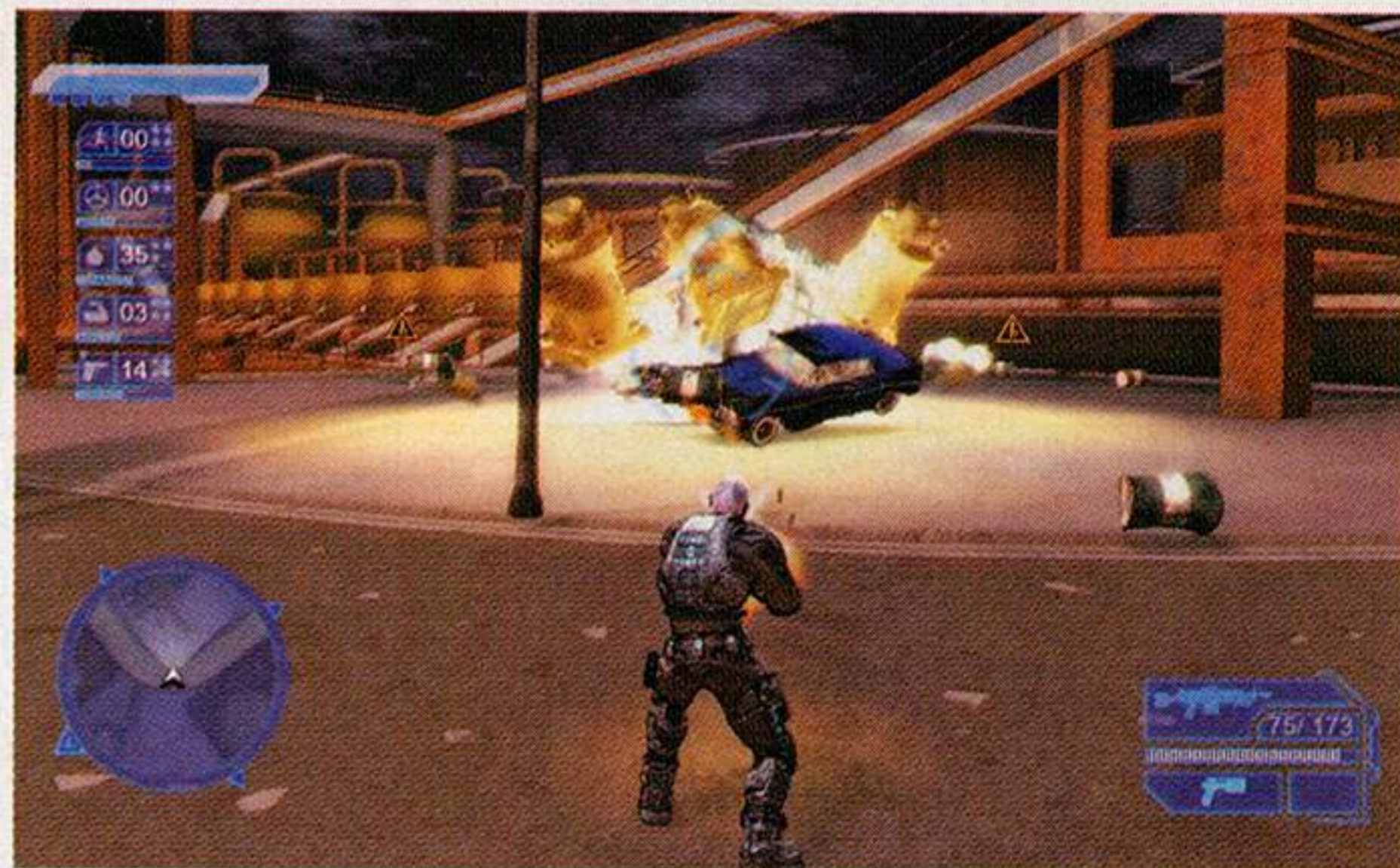
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Identify the location of the photo and include your name, city, and state, too. You can attach a digital photo to an email, put What's Up, Dog? in the subject line, and send it to Letters@gamepro.com. Or you can send a regular printed photo to Head 2 Head, GamePro, Attn. Whats Up Dog, P.O. Box 22210, Oakland, CA 94623-2210.

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GamePro reviews all the hottest new games as well as top current hits. For more the full review, trailers, screen shots, and the best prices, please visit [www.gamepro.com](http://www.gamepro.com)

NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
CALL OF DUTY 3	PS3	ACTIVISION	4.00	T	2/07
CALL OF DUTY 3	WII	NINTENDO	2.50	T	2/07
<b>CRACKDOWN</b>	<b>XBOX 360</b>	<b>MICROSOFT</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>3/07 →</b>
THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: KNIGHTS OF THE NINE	XBOX 360	BETHESDA	4.25	M	3/07
ELEBITS	WII	KONAMI	4.00	E	2/07
EXCITE TRUCK	WII	NINTENDO	3.75	E	2/07
FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES	PS3	SEGA	3.25	T	3/07
<b>GEARS OF WAR</b>	<b>XBOX 360</b>	<b>MICROSOFT</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>1/07</b>
GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES	PSP	ROCKSTAR GAMES	3.75	M	1/07
HOTEL DUSK: ROOM 215	DS	NINTENDO	3.75	T	3/07
<b>THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS</b>	<b>GAMECUBE</b>	<b>NINTENDO</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>3/07</b>
<b>THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS</b>	<b>WII</b>	<b>NINTENDO</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>2/07 →</b>
LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION	XBOX 360	CAPCOM	3.00	T	2/07
METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS	PSP	KONAMI	4.00	M	2/07
<b>RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN</b>	<b>PS3</b>	<b>SONY</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>1/07</b>
RIDGE RACER 7	PS3	NAMCO BANDAI	4.00	E	2/07
<b>ROGUE GALAXY</b>	<b>PS2</b>	<b>SONY</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>3/07</b>
SOCOM: U.S. NAVY SEALS FIRETEAM BRAVO 2	PSP	SONY	4.25	T	2/07
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG	XBOX 360	SEGA	2.75	E10+	2/07
TOKOBOT PLUS: MYSTERIES OF THE KARAKURI	PS2	TECMO	3.50	E	3/07
<b>TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX: VEGAS</b>	<b>XBOX 360</b>	<b>UBISOFT</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>2/07 →</b>
TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT	WII	UBISOFT	3.00	M	3/07
TONY HAWK'S DOWNHILL JAM	WII	ACTIVISION	3.25	E10+	2/07
<b>TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8</b>	<b>PS3</b>	<b>ACTIVISION</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>2/07</b>
UNTOLD LEGENDS: DARK KINGDOM	PS3	SONY	4.00	T	2/07



Crackdown: "A killer addition to your Xbox 360 library."



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Game Name	Fun Factor	Game Name	Fun Factor
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<b>Madden NFL 07 (PS3)</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent (Xbox 360)</b>	<b>4.50</b>
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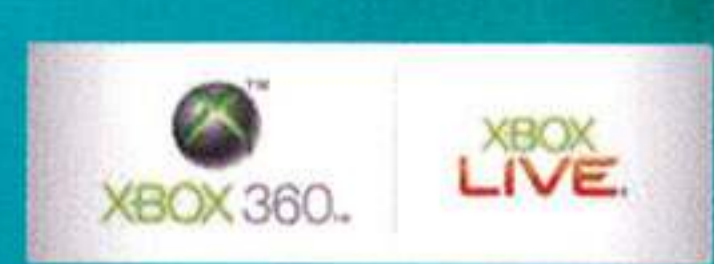
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PlayStation 2



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