PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK
059 MAY 2005
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PlayStation 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

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PLUS

- 007: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE
- SOUL CALIBUR 3
- 24 THE GAME
- PRINCE OF PERSIA 3
- LEGO STAR WARS
- GOD OF WAR
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STAR WARS

BATTLEFRONT 2

future publishing
Media with passion

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FUN, ANYONE?

PlayStation 2

namco

THE LEGEND OF TEKKEN'S FIRST LADY BEGINS HERE.
With her shadowy past, an impressive arsenal and trademark Tekken moves, Nina Williams is a woman to cross at your peril. www.ninawilliams.com

PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

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In honour of our cover game *Star Wars: Battlefront 2* we asked what would tempt you to turn you to the dark side?

GET A LOAD OF THIS...

...I've got a lot to tell you this month. Firstly, we've a massive line-up of exclusive first-look games: *Battlefront 2*, *007: From Russia With Love*, *Prince Of Persia 3* and *Soul Calibur III* not to mention *Tomb Raider: Legend*. We've got more *Burnout 4* shots too, following on from last month's world first look. It's *Star Wars* that takes centre stage this month though, and our giant trilogy of coverage kicks off on page 64 – although purists might want to skip page 76 as we've only gone and spazzed the whole *Ep III* plot. For God's sake play *Lego Star Wars* on the disc though; it's bloody fantastic.

A PSP for £9.99? Impossible, surely? But no, as a quick detour to *OPS2*'s Big Bargain Boutique™ on page 34 will reveal. Simply put, we are going to flog PSPs and other great stuff for bargain basement prices every month on Ebay to you, our loyal readers. Just remember (before the inevitable rip-offs appear) the original is always best.

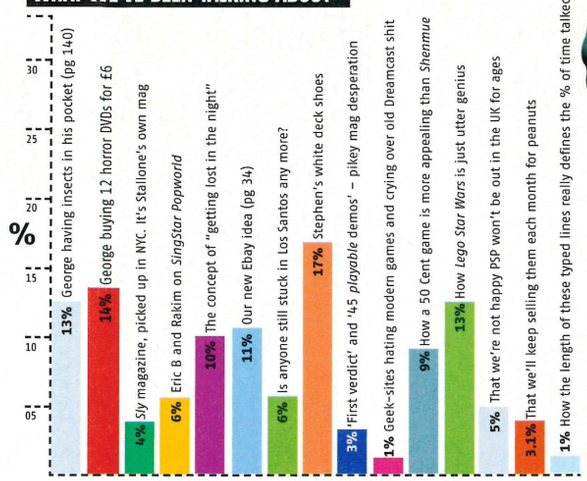
As a further display of stupid generosity, how about this... The first five people (I've never met) to approach me holding a copy of this magazine and say, "come on Mr PlayStation, let's have a copy of *God Of War*", will be sent a copy. Simple. And if you don't know *God Of War*, check out page 58 – it's had no hype but it'll blow your mind.

Finally remember, *OPS2* is your magazine. Are you happy with it? Please write to me at the usual address with your loves, hates, likes, dislikes, wants, needs and, most of all, ideas. The best ones will receive something special in the post. Enjoy the issue.

Stephen

STEPHEN PIERCE editor-in-chief

WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT



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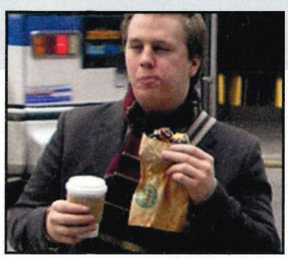
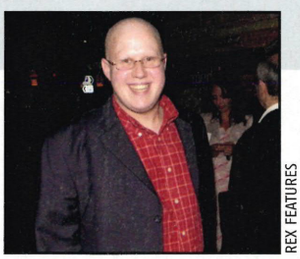


Nathan Ditum

Writer, *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat* (pg 54)

"I had to travel to Sweden to play this," Nathan explains. "With 'work' complete, we headed for a bar made entirely of ice, finishing the night in a Stockholm kebab shop at 4am." Classy.

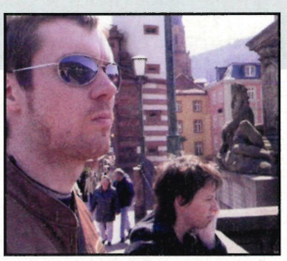


REX FEATURES

Matt Lucas

Writer, *Star Wars* feature (pg 64)

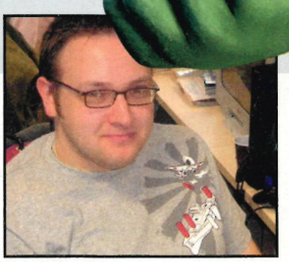
Even on the eve of *Episode III*, you say *Star Wars* to the *Little Britain* funny man and he can't help writing about the 'made for TV' obscuro, *Star Wars Holiday Special*. "It's got Wookie cookery, " he points out.



Leon Hurley

Writer, Postal (pg 10)

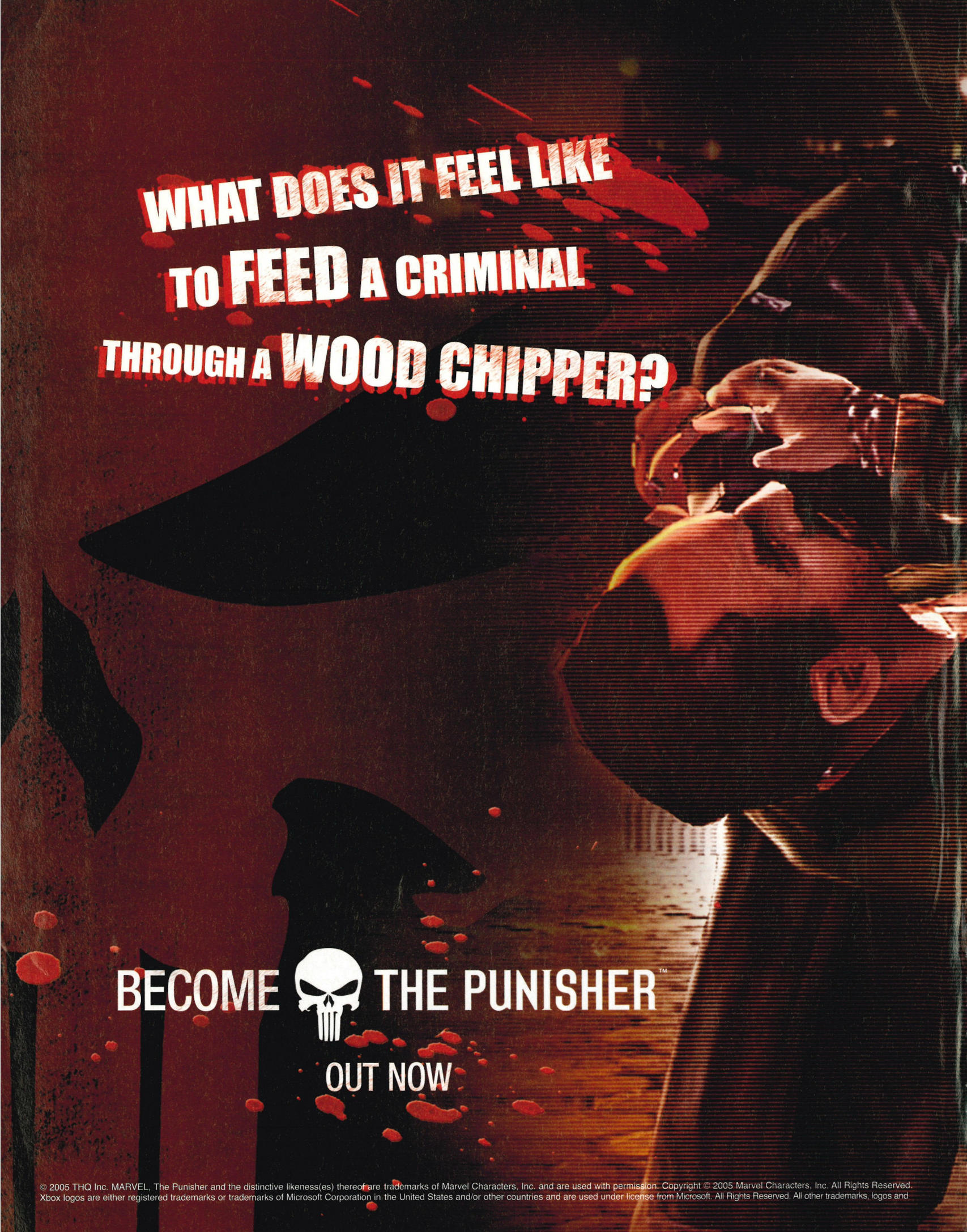
"The whole gay Snake thing from last month has certainly caused an uproar," says Leon. "I'm not sure everyone realised it's just a joke by the makers of the game; some readers were genuinely shocked."



Michael French

Writer, *24 The Game* (pg 36)

"To be honest, at the start of series three when Kim just turned up working for CTU I was seriously confused," Michael says. "The game deals with these fan confusions brilliantly and should answer any questions left hanging at the end of series two."



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PlayStation®2
OFFICIAL magazine-UK

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BATTLEFRONT 2 KICKS OFF OUR MASSIVE *STAR WARS* COVERAGE. READY, JEDI, GO!

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027 ALL CHANGE FOR RATCHET, JAK, AND SLY RACCOON
THREE FAVOURITES GET SPANKING NEW MAKEOVERS

030 TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND
LARA'S BACK! WE EXPOSE HER LATEST ADVENTURE AND HOT NEW LOOK

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THE UNLIKELIEST *STAR WARS* GAME IS ALSO THE BEST EVER...

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084 NARC

086 SINGSTAR POPWORLD

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Hidden *GTA: San Andreas* stuff you can discover TODAY

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PLAY GAMES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST DEMOS!

WELCOME

Your very own personal guide to the *OPS2* DVD

What better way to kick off this month's *Star Wars* overload – a fully playable demo of *Lego Star Wars*. Take control of a microsized Jedi and experience the first chapter of the game's *Episode I* section. *'Wars* geeks here can't get enough of it. Elsewhere, we've got two brilliant two-player demos – *Fight Night 2* and *Rugby 2005* – and a chance to play *Enthusia*, a racing title that claims to outdo the mighty *Gran Turismo 4*. Enjoy!

George Walter,
Disc editor

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY WON'T MY DISC WORK?

To be honest, we're not sure. But seriously, if your DVD appears not to be loading properly, first try resetting the console and loading the disc again. If that fails, we'll gladly replace it for you. Simply mail the faulty disc (no need to send the box) to *Official PS2 Magazine*, DVD Returns, Customer Services, Future Publishing, Cary Court, Bancombe Road Industrial Estate, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TB. If you have any further queries, email us at ps2disc@futurenet.co.uk

HOW DO I ACCESS SAVES?

To access the game saves, put your memory card into your PS2 and scroll through the disc menus until you reach the Downloads section (it's in the Replay section). Now highlight the save you want to put on your card and press ⊗. Bingo!

Note: If you have important saves on your disc, back them up. We cannot be held responsible for any saves lost during the process.

01 LEGO STAR WARS

What you get: The first level of the game to sample playing as Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan. Enjoy the story alone or in two-player and use the Free Play mode to go exploring. And exclusive to the demo, collect all the Lego parts to get a code to unlock a special character in the full game!

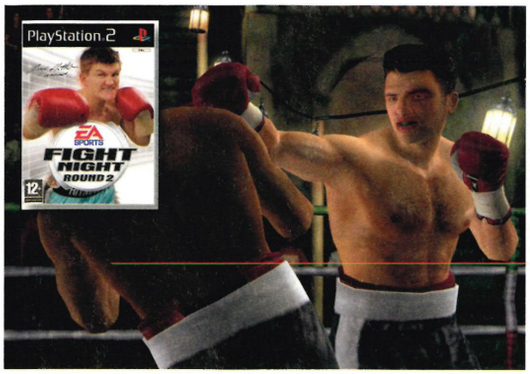
02 ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING

What you get: An introductory video showing how the game mimics real-life car physics. Then the choice of three different tracks and five cars, and a single-lap race.

NOW!

And there's more...

THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE EXTRA DVD CONTENT

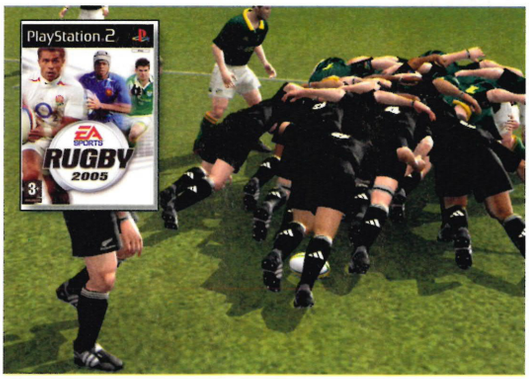


03 FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

What you get: A two-round bout of pummelling at the Staples Center between Bernard Hopkins and Ricky Hatton. Also playable in two-player mode.

04 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE

What you get: Three separate mini-games including one bizarre race sequence 'Sandwich Driving' where your mode of transport is a large hamburger.



05 RUGBY 2005

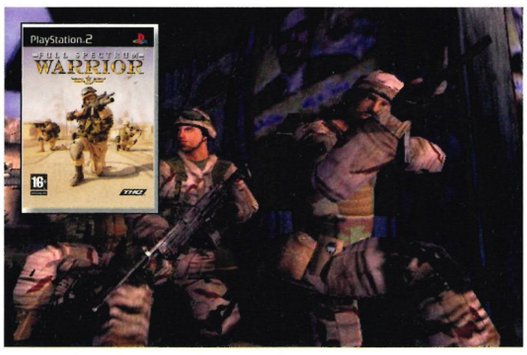
What you get: Choose from the England or Australia teams and play a half of rugby at Twickenham. Also has a two-player option.

06 KILLZONE (PLATINUM)

What you get: Play the slums level of this futuristic shooter as either the stealthy Luger or the more rugged Rico or Templar.

07 JUICED

What you get: A pink slip race between a Skyline GT-R and a Supra with you taking the wheel of the fast-as Nissan.



08 FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

What you get: A healthy slice of the most tactical military action you can get hold of on PS2. We recommend you take the tutorial or you'll get leathered.

Spy

ESPN American Sports Games
NFL, NHL and NBA sports events trailers

Marc Ecko's Getting Up
The free-running graffiti game in action

Star Wars: Episode III
Lightsaber combat recreating the film

Monitor

EyeToy: AntiGrav
Futuristic skateboarding using your EyeToy

Pilot Down
Stealth action behind enemy lines

Ace Combat: Making Of feature
How they created this combat flight sim

Darkwatch
Gothic cowboy zombie shooter

Replay

***PES4* Goal Of The Month**
The best goals of March

Downloader
A library of saves for you to pilfer

Comedown

New PSP videos
See all of Sony's titles

Colin McRae on PSP
The rally game goes tiny

postal

THIS MONTH: GAY SNAKES, SEXISM AND A DAMN GOOD SCHOOL REPORT

Write: Postal, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW Email: ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk

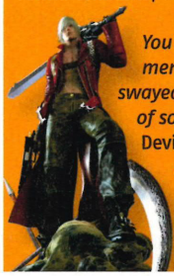
WIN THIS!
This month, any letters published will receive *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* courtesy of Gamestation.co.uk. The Star Letter also wins *Gran Turismo 4*, *TimeSplitters Future Perfect* and *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*. Only main Postal letters receive games. Letters will be edited for length and clarity.

gamestation

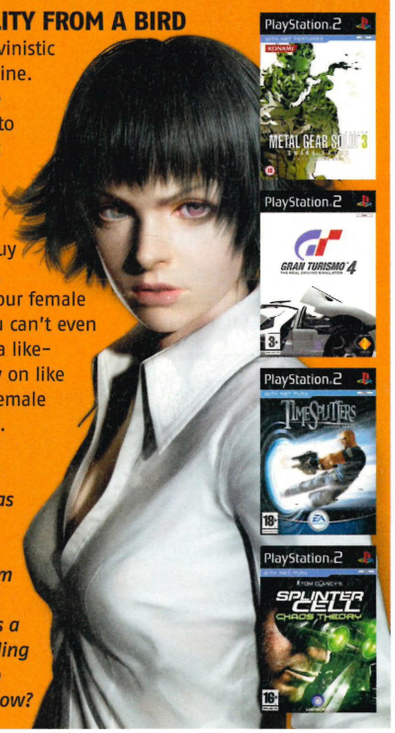
EF star letter

A DEMAND FOR SEXUAL EQUALITY FROM A BIRD

I'm really disgusted to see all the chauvinistic stuff you've been putting in the magazine. I'm a girl gamer and I buy *OPS2* for the information it contains on games, not to see near-naked ladies. The sudden sex obsession you have is a worrying slide in standards. I'd expect to see this sort of exploitative content in things like *Loaded* or *FHM*, which is why I don't buy them. It's embarrassing. For one thing, THEY'RE NOT REAL PEOPLE! It alienates your female readers by objectifying women and you can't even be bothered to return the favour with a like-minded feature on fit men. If you carry on like this you will lose the rapidly growing female demographic that love and play games.
Jenna Williams, Hertfordshire



You're right Jenna. But as men it's hard not to be swayed by the lovely looks of someone like Lady from Devil May Cry 3 *on the right there, so here's a little picture of leading man Dante (left) to even it out. Okay now?*



WON'T SOMEBODY THINK OF THE CHILDREN?

I would like to share with you a simple idea that I've had to stop underage children playing games they shouldn't have access to. All that needs to be done is to make them password protected. At the beginning of the game, the adult gamer will be required to create a password before they start playing. You could even create personal questions like 'mother's maiden name' to verify the correct person is trying to enter a code. That way underage gamers would be prevented access to games they shouldn't be playing.
Gary Marsden, email

It's a lot of bother really, isn't it? Why can't the 'adult gamer' just hide 'dangerous' games? (Maybe next to their porn stash?) And what's to stop little Johnny whipping out the memory card and using his own, thus rendering the passwords useless. We would love to say it's a nice idea but we can't.

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

I noticed in Professor Frenchipus' *San Andreas* column in *OPS2* issue #57 that he said the existence of Bigfoot and UFOs in the game is a load of lies. But I know three people who have seen the Bigfoot. He is apparently very big, almost as tall as the trees and is invincible. I also know two people who have seen UFOs above Area 69. Get your facts right Professor numpty. Now you must grovel and apologise to every one of your readers for this gross act of misinformation.
Louis Keal, email

We'll apologise when we see evidence, Louis. The official word from Rockstar is that both Bigfoot and the UFOs don't exist. So here's a challenge to all OPS2 *readers: take a picture and prove us wrong. Right?*

THE EDITED HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STRANGEST LETTERS SENT IN THIS MONTH...

Anthony Fray, Essex
Print this or I will kill you.

Andy Birch, Liverpool
Everyone says that *GTA: San Andreas* is a truly kick-ass game but personally I compare it to the *Scooby-Doo* show.

Mark Keen, email
Did you know that electrocuted hamsters smell like lightly cooked bacon?

Matthew Carr, email
Is my mail getting through to you because I can't send any emails?

Alex Hetherington, County Durham
Could you take the important parts of my letter out and print them for me?

Molanza Loweya, Milton Keynes
I wouldn't mind getting my hands on your... Nevermind I'm going to listen to some Westlife.

EVERYONE'S A COMEDIAN

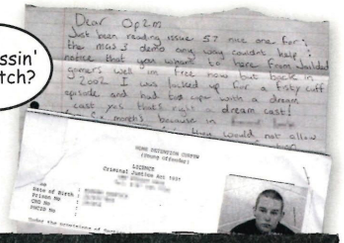
Okay, I have an idea. Someone should make a game where you could do absolutely anything. You could go outside, meet people, get a job, spend money on things and so on. Wouldn't that be amazing? I'd call it 'Live Your Life' and I think it's a kick-arse idea.
Edward Whitaker, Robertsbridge

Do we detect the subtle whiff of sarcasm Ed?

DONE THE TIME

Reading issue #57 I noticed you wanted to hear from jailbird gamers. Well I was locked up a while ago for six months. Worse than the loss of freedom, I had to make do with a Dreamcast because the DVD functions on a PS2 made it illegal in my chokey. I'm free now and I've gone straight ever since, but I thought you might like to see my release papers.
Name and address supplied

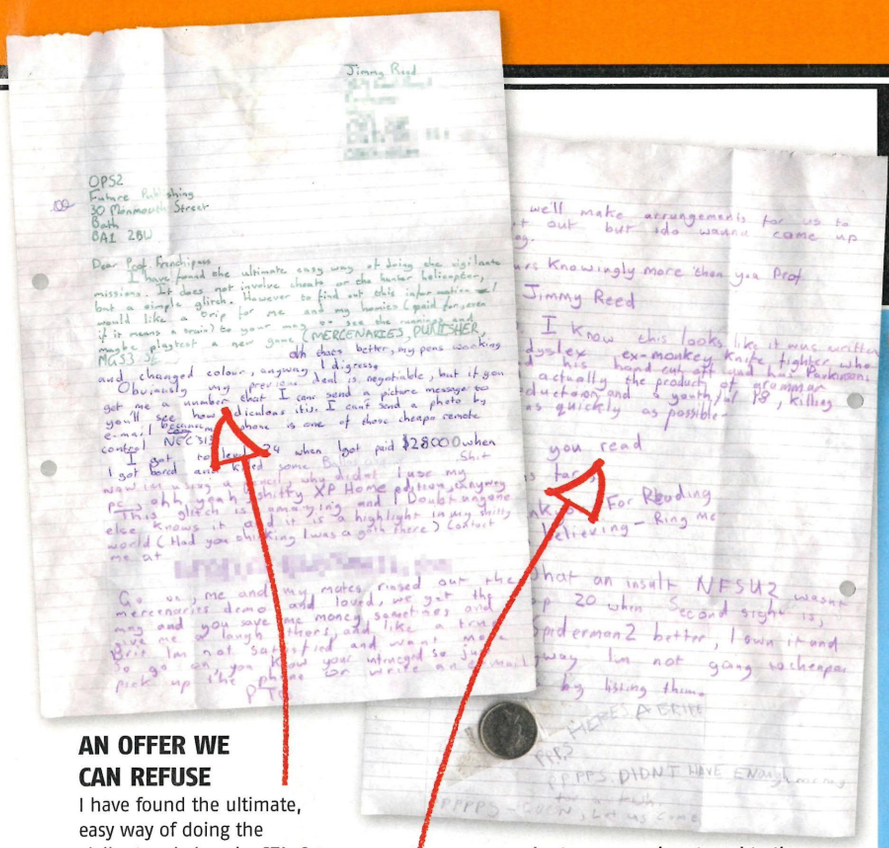
We did wonder if the promise of a prize would be enough to make people confess their criminal past. Don't worry though; your secret is safe with us.



DISTRESSING DIALOGUE

THINGS WE WERE REALLY TROUBLED TO FIND IN OUR SACK THIS MONTH

1. Offers of heavy physical love from a reader for one of our female *OPS2* staff members.
2. Multiple threats of violence for 'not liking' American football games.
3. This postcard



AN OFFER WE CAN REFUSE

I have found the ultimate, easy way of doing the vigilante missions in *GTA: San Andreas*. It does not involve cheats or the hunter helicopter but a simple glitch. However, to find out this information I would like a paid for trip for me and my homies to see your mag and to playtest a new game...

...I know this looks like it was written by a monkey who has had his hand cut off but I'm actually the product of a grammar school education and a youthful 18, killing my liver off as quickly as possible...

PS here is a bribe.

Jimmy Reed, Rochester

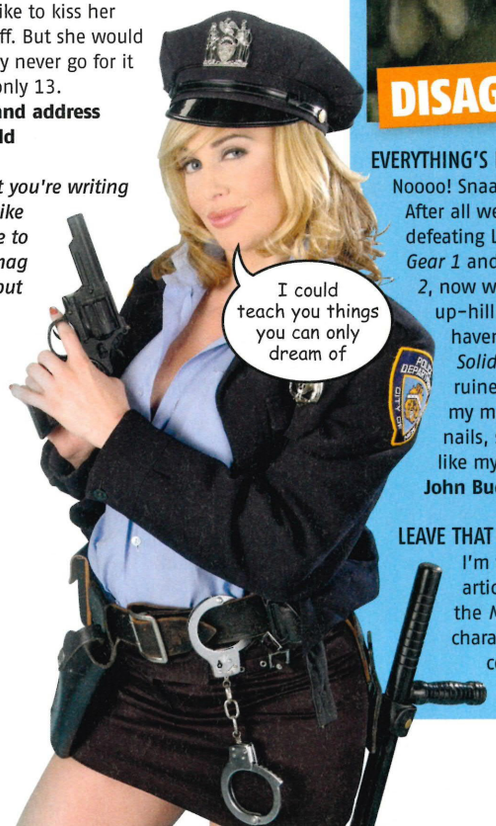
Two sides of A4, four different colours of pen and a ten pence piece taped to the back – all to try and blag your way into the office with the promise of a dubious 'glitch'. We'll be honest: it isn't going to happen. You scare us and there was a strange hair trapped under the Sellotape. Send us an SAE if you want your 10p back.

THE LESSON IN THE LAW

I was surprised to see the model done up as a cop in last month's Busted feature for two reasons. Firstly because I thought she looked a bit too old. And secondly because for a second, I thought it was my art teacher Mrs White. I would totally like to kiss her and stuff. But she would probably never go for it as I'm only 13.

Name and address withheld

The fact you're writing letters like this one to a PS2 mag might put her off too.



THE SHORT ANSWER

Q Is it me or has the amount of swearing in your mag increased in the last month or so? Thomas Roberts, email
A *F*ck yeah.*

Q Do you watch a lot of *The OC*? Sarah Harknett, Beckenham
A *Far, far too much.*

Q Is *Katamari Damacy 2* coming out in the UK? Ricky Tappenden, email
A *Yes*

Q My friend told me there's a cheat that makes the *Rumble Roses* characters naked. Please tell me it's true? Martin Swaali, Bournemouth
A *No, it isn't.*

Q Is *He-Man* really that bad? Ricky Hammond, Somerset
A *Yes, it is.*

THE BIG (ISH) ISSUE

IT SEEMS LAST MONTH'S EXPOSE OF THE *MGS3* MAN-ON-MAN KISSING ACTION HAS CAUSED AN OUTCRY. SO DO YOU AGREE THAT OUTING SNAKE IN THIS WAY WAS THE FAIR AND RIGHT THING TO DO?

AGREE

LOVE THAT PINK SNAKE

Hurrah, a gay game character. Okay it might not be entirely serious but as a gay gamer it's nice to see a little homosexuality in a console game. I just hope people take it for the bit of fun that it is and don't start getting annoyed about it. Unfortunately I suspect your mailbag will be full of the pointless, homophobic responses that often greet this sort of thing.

Stephen Kent, London

WHO'S OUT NEXT

Oh how I laughed. I am, quite frankly amazed that Konami can take the mickey out of its best character so irreverently. Well done. If only other game companies were more light-hearted we'd all have more fun. Who else could we line up for a bit of a piss take? CJ from *GTA: San Andreas* actually being a closet Blazin' Squad fan?

Mary Cavendish, County Durham

CLOSET STEALTH

So, after Snake's tonguing action, is he actually out? If so then that's truly amazing. The world's first gay PS2 hero. Komani, I salute your brave stance on the world of heroic sexuality. This truly is a step forward for gay rights. What are the chances of a nice Snake swimwear centrefold then?

Luke DeLaney, Camden

DISAGREE

EVERYTHING'S RUINED

Noooo! Snaaaake! Say it isn't so. After all we've been through: defeating Liquid Snake in *Metal Gear 1* and Solidus in *Metal Gear 2*, now we find out you're an up-hill covert agent. I haven't got *Metal Gear Solid 3* yet and already it's ruined. In a game, I like my men to be hard as nails, super-soldiers. I don't like my men to *like* men.

John Buchan, Bedford

LEAVE THAT SNAKE ALONE

I'm worried about your article making out that the *Metal Gear Solid* character Snake is gay. I'm concerned that you feel such a piece of news warrants such coverage. People should realise that a man should be judged by his actions and it doesn't matter what his sexuality is. It's that sort of news coverage that constantly marginalises gay people and prevents complete sexual equality.

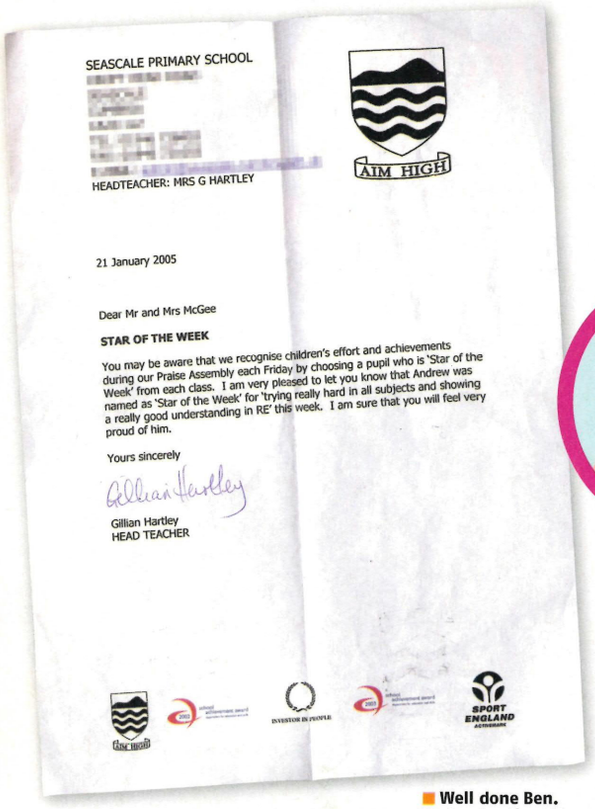
Claire Middlesex, Warwickshire

COULDN'T CARE LESS

Christ, Snake's gay? Brilliant. Nice one fellas. What's next? Sam Fisher and Snake to marry and adopt a Vietnamese baby? What about Dante coming out of the closet – actually that wouldn't be that much of a surprise. I don't want to know about a character's sexuality, I just want to play the game, so next time you find out something like that keep it to yourselves please.

Brian Clements, Yorkshire

letters



SEASCALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

HEADTEACHER: MRS G HARTLEY

AIM HIGH

21 January 2005

Dear Mr and Mrs McGee

STAR OF THE WEEK

You may be aware that we recognise children's effort and achievements during our Praise Assembly each Friday by choosing a pupil who is 'Star of the Week' from each class. I am very pleased to let you know that Andrew was named as 'Star of the Week' for 'trying really hard in all subjects and showing a really good understanding in RE' this week. I am sure that you will feel very proud of him.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Hartley

Gillian Hartley
HEAD TEACHER

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

SPORT ENGLAND

■ **Well done Ben. Understanding RE, that must be... useful**

A NOTE TO MR AND MRS MCGEE

You might like to know that your son Andrew has been named 'Star Of The Week' at Seascale Primary School for 'trying very hard in all subjects and showing a really good understanding in RE'. You won't know this though as in his desperation to enter one of our competitions he wrote his entry on the back of the school's letter. He didn't win by the way.

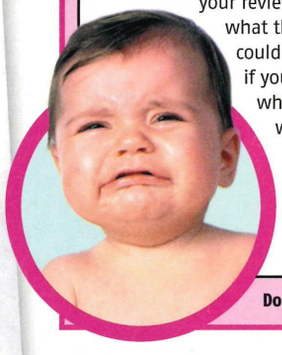
FOOTBALLERS LIKE LOOS GIRLS

When I started writing this letter, I wanted to complain. I thought it was pretty ludicrous that gaming gods like Konami would skew the brilliant *PES4* by altering player attitudes and morale like you say in your Boot Room (*OPS2* issue #57). Then I thought about it for a bit and, eventually, it made sense. Hasn't every footballer that scales the dizzy heights of the Premiership had something affect them outside of what goes on during a match? Of course they have – God knows how low Beckham's morale must have plummeted after all that business with Rebecca Loos... So thanks for spelling out such a confusing matter in such a clear manner. I can't understand how it happens but *Pro Evolution Soccer* just gets better and better.

John Yates, Derby

We love PES4 *and, while we doubt testing your ball control with Rebecca L would be that demoralising, she'd have her work cut out for her if she tried to spoil our game.*

FAT CRYING BABY



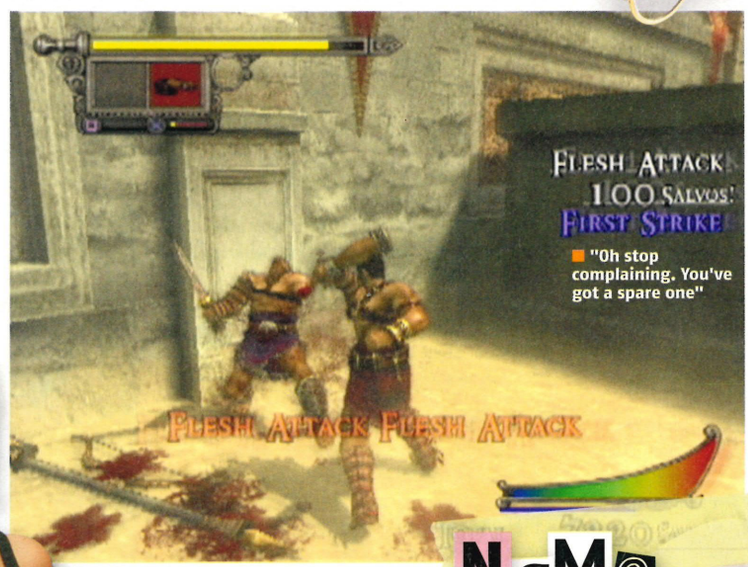
YOU COMPLETE RANTER

Frankly, I am disappointed with the lack of information in your reviews. You tell us who you play as and what the game's roughly about, which I could read on the back of the box. Maybe if you put more effort into telling us what sort of mini-games are hidden within the games, and what your personal opinion is then more people might buy your mag. The point of this email is: think before you write, you idiots.

John Rush, email

Do you actually read the reviews? At all?

GOT A GRIEVANCE BUT SECRETLY KNOW THAT NOBODY'S TO BLAME BUT YOU? FEEL LIKE WHINING ABOUT IT ANYWAY? BE CAREFUL, YOU COULD END UP IN OUR PRAM OF SHAME



■ **"Oh stop complaining. You've got a spare one"**

HOLBY SHITTY

Why do all games have to be violent? Surely there's all sorts of potential for non-violent games. What about an ambulance driving game for example? Playing as a paramedic you have to race to get people to hospital or transport organs across town for operations. Instead of taking lives you'd be saving them. Why do people have to resort to fighting just to make a game interesting?

Katie Leanne, Glamorgan

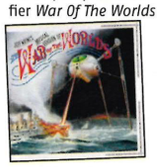
Because fighting is just more fun. Have you played Shadow Of Rome*? The bit when you hack an arm off then beat the dying owner to death with the wet end is brilliant. The crowds cheering, the splash of blood in the sand. Why wouldn't a girl like that?*

GAMES FOR TAT!

We want stuff, you want games. The first to send us these oddities to keep gets the related gamery. Simple as that

WE WANT

CDs of pomp-rock sci-fier *War Of The Worlds*



YOU GET

A copy of *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*

WE WANT

DVD of *The Bird With The Crystal Plumage*

YOU GET

A copy of *Lego Star Wars*

Mark the package 'Games For Tat' and send to the usual address (include your address). The first one we receive gets the game, any others will be returned.

NAME AND SHAME

This Month's Postal Pest

Name: Tony Blair (Aka Alistair Mawdsley)

Offence: Pretending to be our esteemed leader Tony Blair in an attempt to snag some free games. How did we rumble the cunning ruse? Well the Teddington postmark was a bit of a giveaway for a start. Then there was the feeble excuse that thieving policemen meant we should send it all to Ali's house for safekeeping. A poor effort indeed.

www.freesterling.com

RETRO BOND REVEALED!

We've got the world's first **From Russia With Love** info and screenshots, and we're licensed to spill...

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

Following months of careful reflection, passionate debate and intensive focus-testing, Electronic Arts has gone with Sean Connery for the next Bond game. And, much as we're fond of Tim Dalton's notoriously 'difficult' interpretation, it's the right call. Particularly after the 6/10 fiasco that was *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* (a game so ill-advised that if it'd been a movie it would've been *Citizen Kane 2* directed by Guy Ritchie). Two issues ago we sneakily revealed that the new game would be based on *From Russia With Love*. Now we've 'retrieved' these oh-so-exclusive shots, revealing Connery in action and looking every inch the ultimate superspy. Brilliantly, we can also confirm that Connery, is doing the voice. Hey, he's 75 years young.

But why choose *From Russia With Love* when, as one staffer here immediately pointed out, the climax takes place entirely on a train? (Our money was on *You Only Live Twice*, with its brilliant ninjas-storming-base-inside-a-volcano finale.) Answer: the game blends missions based directly on the original movie with spectacular new sequences. For instance, check out the jetpack in the screenshot on the right. The device apparently plays a big part in the game. However, it actually only appeared in *Thunderball*. So it seems the new game will be a stiff cocktail mixed from several classic Connery movies. Certainly, that's what we're hoping for. ▶

Bond paused to reflect on a job well done. Nothing could go wrong now...

KOBAL COLLECTION

spy

PS2 News & More

SPY CONTRIBUTORS | TIM CLARK, PAUL FITZPATRICK, LEON HURLEY, GEORGE WALTER

Bond's suit is immaculately tailored and perfectly complements the '60s style. Why do we always seem to end up rocking the 'ex-con at Topman' look?

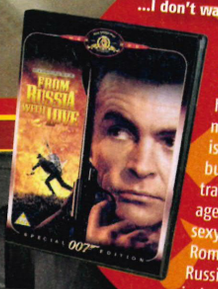
Oooh, look, vintage cars! Our resident car expert says: 'I think it's a Plymouth'

Check out the sexy soft-focus effect. Looks to us like *From Russia With Love* shares the same fuzzy-old-film technology used for *The Godfather* game

Bond's gadgets will be in keeping with the Connery era, but many will have a modern twist

PAY ATTENTION, 007...

...I don't want to explain the plot twice



Ernst Blofeld, the leader of the SPECTRE organisation, is trying to get his graspy hands on a Russian decoding machine called the Lektor. Bond is ordered to retrieve the device, but finds himself lured into a trap. Having disposed of SPECTRE's agents, 007 is free to enjoy the sexy ministrations of Tatiana Romanova, a defecting Russian sexpot. Ding, and indeed, dong.

"Yes Q, it seems to work fine, except for the lethal arcs of electricity"

Expect a tweaked version of the shooting from *Everything Or Nothing*

DIAGRAM OF DEATH

***From Russia With Love* has 'less linear' missions. This, frankly superb, picture is the proof**

We absolutely love this kind thing, and have done ever since seeing a diagram of how the SAS stormed the Iranian Embassy. This is actually the parliament building from the game, and as you can see there are multiple ways in and out, suggesting greater freedom in how you approach the missions. No idea what the guy on the glowing orange plank represents though.

More red-hot-never-been-seen-before Bond-in-a-warehouse action

▶ *From Russia With Love* sees 007 return to the successful formula of *Everything Or Nothing* (issue #43, 9/10). As such, it features the same mix of third-person gunplay spliced with driving missions. Talking of which, we're particularly keen on cruising around the streets of swinging London in Bond's Q-tuned Bentley, one hand casually exploring a Russian double agent's exposed thigh. However, that kind of thing will probably be confined to the occasional risqué cut-scene. In terms of gameplay, frantic car chases and nonsense involving miniature helicopters are significantly more likely.

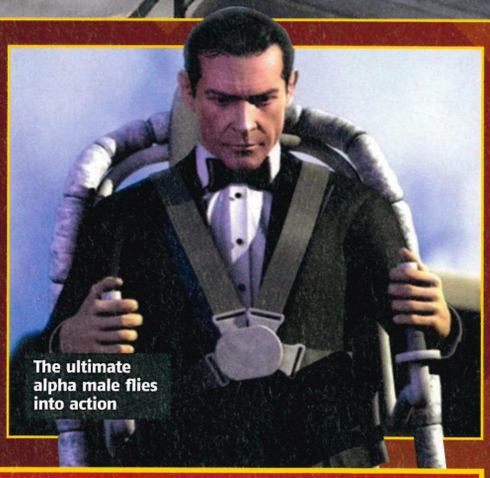
TARANTINO SAYS 007 IS SO OVER

Quent recently spluttered, "Once I heard Brosnan wasn't going to do any more Bond films, that killed it as far as I was concerned." Right, nothing to do with being turned down to direct the new *Casino Royale* movie then?

JAMES, BEHAVE YOURSELF. WE'RE BEING FILMED

Judging by these screens, *From Russia With Love* captures the feel of the 1960s era magnificently. EA is also taking a chronologically accurate approach to the game's architecture, fashion and script. The biggest gameplay change is the inclusion of RPG elements and the chance to customise your Bond. Interfering with Jimmy B sounds a bit odd to us, but it's probably nothing more sinister than equipping gadgets like the laser watch (with authentic '60s strap, obviously) and enhancing his abilities. There's even talk of upgrading him to specialise in vehicles, explosives and marksmanship.

What else? It's scripted by Bruce Feirstein (the guy who did the last game and wrote the first three Brosnan films), it's out this November and we're also promised new multiplayer modes, with online play a possibility. There's also mention of a new 'zoom' mode which, judging from the last game, Bond will enter when he's in the zone and challenging everything. Sounds like a winner. Right then, we're off to the casino to play some high-stakes Baccarat with a Soviet honeytrap. Okay, yes, to the online 'casino'... ■



The ultimate alpha male flies into action

ON THE CASTING COUCH

Meet the key characters in *From Russia With Love*

■ TATIANA ROMANOVA

Initially used to entrap Bond, Tatiana (played by the almost luminously beautiful Daniela Bianchi) soon falls for his charm, and defects quicker than you can say "unzip me, James"

■ DONALD 'RED' GRANT

Remorseless killer trained by SPECTRE to be the perfect assassin. His mission is to kill Bond, thus avenging Dr No's death. Red is muscular, blonde and utterly psychotic. Quite a catch, eh ladies?

■ ROSA KLEBB

She's the ex-head of SMERSH, a secret Russian agency, and now 'Number 3' in SPECTRE. Klebb is armed with a retractable poisoned blade in her shoe. Distinguishing feature: heinous ugliness

■ KERIM BEY

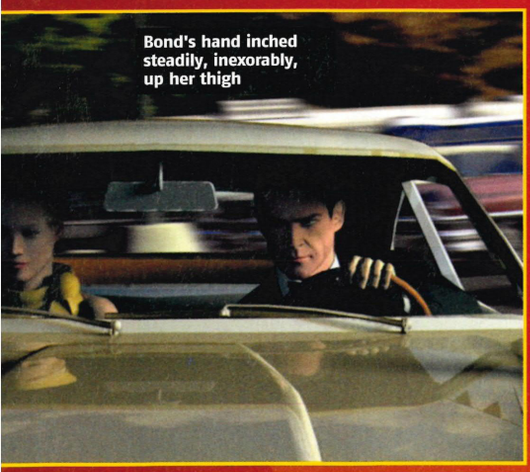
Moustachioed MI6 agent operating at station T in Istanbul, Kerim kicks ass during the gypsy camp battle midway through the movie. Dies on the Orient Express at the stony hands of Red Grant

■ Q

From Russia With Love was Desmond Llewelyn's first appearance as the gadget-dispensing but permanently annoyed Q.

■ GYPSY GIRLS

At the gypsy camp 007 watches two fiery young gypsy girls fighting for the affection of one man. This fantasy was immediately banked by young men everywhere. Yes, *banked*



Bond's hand inched steadily, inexorably, up her thigh

Another blue collar worker dies for reasons he'll never understand

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVELY DRAWINGS

So, how closely will the game follow the classic movie? These scrawls from Electronic Art's top easel-jockeys reveals some clues...

LONDON!

As usual for a Bond adventure, 007 kicks off *From Russia With Love* in London, but unlike the film, this concept art suggests that there may be more to the location in the game than a quick chat with M and a gadget pit-stop at Q's gaff. This picture, for example, depicts the restaurant terrace at the Houses Of Parliament. Could EA be working on a cat and mouse level set in the British government's very own backyard?

BUDAPEST!

007's infiltration of the Russian consulate in Budapest is one of the film's big set-pieces, and from the look of those red Soviet flags, it seems it'll be making its presence felt in the game. The image of 007 entering the grand lobby appears to come from his first reconnaissance visit. Later on in the game, we expect to storm the building (with the help of local MI6 officer Karim Bey) to seize the Russians' Lektor code-breaking device.

ZURICH!

We know this picture is set in Zurich, but 007 doesn't visit Zurich in *From Russia With Love* – the only time he does is with Diana Rigg in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* – so this seems to be an original location for the game. See the smelting works? If we were being uncharitable, we'd guess that following *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent*, the developer had a shit load of fiery special effects sitting around doing nothing. Just a thought...

The only man who could wear a suit in a blizzard and still look suave

Kwik Fitz

RUMOURED: *Tomb Raider* is also coming to PSP

RUMOURED: *Driv4r* is underway now

CONFIRMED: *Brothers In Arms* is getting the sequel treatment

CONFIRMED: Ubisoft has announced a new next-generation shooter called *Killing Ground*

CONFIRMED: Sega's ace new role-player, *Phantasy Star Universe*, will be exclusive to PS2

RUMOURED: Free Radical Design is working on a brand new game, said to be a "major departure" from anything the firm has done before

RUMOURED: There's a *Wonder Woman* game on the way

RUMOURED: *The Red Star*, which was to be released through the recently defunct Acclaim, has now been picked up by a new publisher

RUMOURED: *Splinter Cell 4* is already underway

CONFIRMED: *The Darkness* is coming to PS3 – it's a game from the people who made *The Chronicles Of Riddick* rather than the band

CONFIRMED: *Pac-Man World 3* is being made to celebrate the yellow gobbler's 25th birthday

CONFIRMED: Atari is releasing a beat-'em-up based on a cult animé called, wait for it... *Saint Seiya, Knights Of The Zodiac: The Sanctuary*

TIME LORD

LIKE, COULD IT BE ANY MORE DARK?

Three games in, and the **Prince Of Persia** can't stop cocking up the space/time continuum

OH MY GOD! FIRST SHOT

Stealth gaming on speed. That's the contradictory but exciting message being trumpeted by the third *Prince Of Persia* game. The action takes place after the events of the *Warrior Within* and begins with the Prince and Kaileena (previously the Empress Of Time, now his shag-buddy) returning to Babylon to find the city in flames and nobody's pleased to see him. Then something *really* nasty happens (no prizes for guessing, but don't get too attached to Kaileena) and the Prince has to unravel another fine temporal mess.

The Prince's expanded range of moves now includes lethal one-hit-kills. To perform these you must sneak up on your target, but in direct contrast to something like *Splinter Cell*, this can be done at full speed, free-running style. He also appears to be armed with a new whip-like weapon which he can use to snag enemies. The Babylonian cityscape is significantly more open-plan than the environments in the previous two *POP* games. The idea being that you're free to hurtle across rooftops, vault balconies and swing between streets – all while the city, a stark mixture of opulent palaces and impoverished slums, tears itself apart.

As you can see from our world exclusive screenshot, *Prince Of Persia 3* retains the dark look rocked by its predecessor. However, this time we're promised the vibe is 'mature' rather than 'sixth form Goth'. Those of you who completed *Warrior Within* will know that the Prince managed to prevent the creation of the *Sands Of Time* – theoretically undoing all the wrongness committed in the past two games. Inevitably, it's not quite that simple – and without wanting to get mired in the paradoxes of time travel, we can tell you that, due to the Prince's actions in the last game, he's created an evil version of himself. It's always the way. Will he be playable? Don't bet against it. As for the inevitable subtitle, we're rooting for *Prince Of Persia: I'm Going To My Room*. ■ **TC**

IT'S

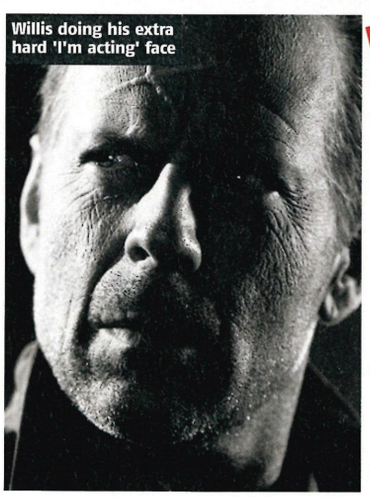
SIN

THE GAME

Crooked cops and shady dames in **Sin City**

Alba plays a stripper. Just let that sink in

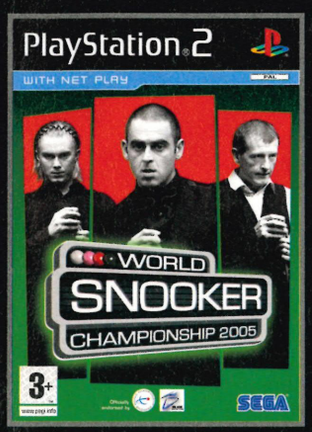
Walk down the right alley in Sin City and you can find anything... like news that a game based on this summer's hottest movie is underway. For anyone who doesn't spend a disproportionate amount of time rifling through plastic-jacketed comics, *Sin City* is the none-more-hard-boiled crime series, written and drawn by Frank Miller. The film, directed by *Desperado*'s Robert Rodriguez, rocks the same starkly monochromatic look as the comic and stars Bruce Willis, Mickey Rourke, Clive Owen and Jessica Alba. Will the game be a bit like *Max Payne*? Our magic 8-ball says 'probably'. ■ **MF**


Willis doing his extra hard 'I'm acting' face

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

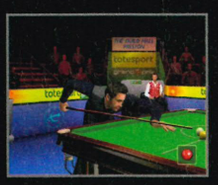
When you look at Ronnie O'Sullivan, do you see the most naturally gifted player of all time.

Or do you see a man you're about to break.



Take on the world's top hundred players in the official game of the 2005 World Championship.

Look out for World Snooker Challenge on PSP.



THINK LIKE A PRO. PLAY LIKE A PRO

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PlayStation 2

Deliver Her From Evil.

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The vile stench of death reaches out from every corner of this wretched place. Torturous cries still echo around its walls as a sinister air fills your lungs. Waking up in this darkened fortress, trapped within its confines, you must search its ancient rooms and hallways and try to make sense of your forgotten past, before the horror of the Haunting Ground imprisons you forever.

MMMM... BACON

S**T! IT'S THE PIGS!

Get yourself nicked in **Need For Speed: Most Wanted**

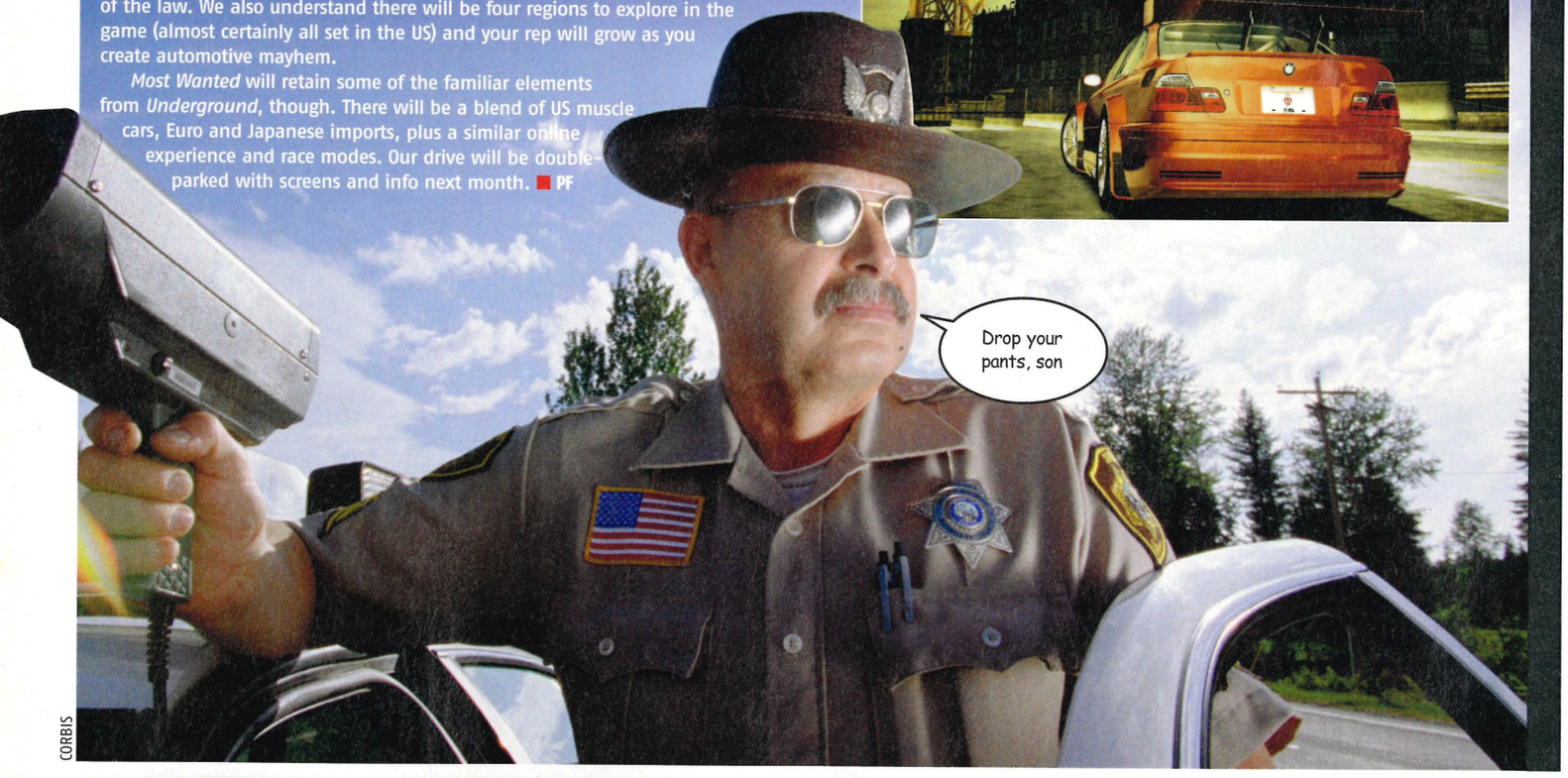
OH MY GOD! FIRST SHOT

Looks like the good times might finally be over. And by 'good times' we mean 'hanging out in a B&Q car park, standing moodily next to a tricked-out Corsa'. Having ruled the streets unmolested for two games now, Electronic Arts' *Need For Speed* game has finally picked up some heat from John Q Law. The new game is called *Need For Speed: Most Wanted*, it's due out towards the end of the year and it wants you spread-eagled across its bonnet.

Tipped off by our 'friend' at EA, we can confirm that *NFS* is returning to the theme of the old *Hot Pursuit* games and placing the emphasis on frenzied police chases and breakneck filth-avoidance. The game also marks an end to night racing, with all the action unfolding in daylight hours, and rather than respect won from your peers by customisation skills, you now have a 'rap sheet' that shows your notoriety in the eyes of the law. We also understand there will be four regions to explore in the game (almost certainly all set in the US) and your rep will grow as you create automotive mayhem.

Most Wanted will retain some of the familiar elements from *Underground*, though. There will be a blend of US muscle cars, Euro and Japanese imports, plus a similar online experience and race modes. Our drive will be double-parked with screens and info next month. ■ PF

Here comes the sun: *NFS* drives into the daylight!



CORBIS

MORE GHOSTS AND GIRLS...

...courtesy of **Project Zero 3**

Horror movies from the East are hot like stolen Skylines, so the timing should be right for *Project Zero 3*. The third game in the creepy series (called *Fatal Frame* in its native Japan) should come out in the UK this autumn. Leading the three playable characters is Rei Kurosawa, a 23-year-old journalist who's understandably concerned to find her dead boyfriend appearing in snaps she's taken. Rei has to battle ghosts using her paranormally powered camera, with gameplay split between normality and a 'nightmare' world you enter when she sleeps. The plot centres on a snake tattoo that appears on Rei's body (cue lingering cut-scene) and starts to spread. And no, it doesn't say 'Lee 4 Ever'. ■ TC

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

SHATTERING

YOU CAN'T DO *THIS* IN GRAN TURISMO

TOCA Race Driver 3 goes for *GT4*'s fuel pipe by offering gamers full car damage

No, we wouldn't be seen dead in a car this colour

Real-life off-road tournaments will also feature

The obvious inconsistency at the heart of *GT4* is that it claims unparalleled driving realism, but when you crash, your car doesn't break. That's just wrong. Returning driving sim *TOCA Race Driver 3* is the polar opposite. Pile into a wall and not only will your vehicle crumple, but your engine might explode, tires burst and windscreen shatter. *Now* try finishing a race. And stop whining about the whiplash.

The funny thing is, we're always told the reason *GT4* doesn't include real car damage is the problems it causes with fussy car manufacturers, wary of their babies being visually molested. Well, the cars in *TOCA* are all licensed versions of the genuine article, so what gives? Not only are the cars proper, the races are too, including an enviable range of motor sports events from Monster Trucks to Go Karts to Formula One.

We're also impressed at *TOCA*'s response to one of our major problems with racing games – not being given access to the fastest cars until you've played the thing for 50 hours. Some might see it as a challenge, but we just see it as an annoyance. If you share our impatience, the World Tour section will be right up your street, as it puts you straight into the seat of the most powerful motors from the word go. Better than *GT4*? We'd be idiots to say yes, seeing as it's nearly six months from completion, but if *TOCA* can pull of the damage effectively, it should give the *Gran Turismo* makers no excuses for *GT5*. ■ GW

INFO NUDGE

"BABY, I CAN MAKE YOU FAMOUS"

Wannabe Hollywood moguls will be glad to hear that *The Movies* is still coming out on PS2 this autumn. The game is the latest mindchild of the legendary game maker Peter Molyneux (who, let's face it, most of us couldn't pick out of a line-up), and enables you to create your own *Sims*-style film studio, going from the days of silent movies through to modern blockbusters. Inevitably, we plan to churn out no-budget exploitation flicks set in female prisons...

RUNNING TO A STANDSTILL?

Our sources at Eidos recently let slip that the company's mooted Free Running game (which was featured in the ace *Jump Britain* documentary on Channel 4 a while back) may not come out after all. The game has been under wraps for ages, due to all manner of financial and licensing boredom. However, now it seems the suits are having second thoughts about its quality. Did anyone else just hear a SPLAT noise?

TRUE CONFESSIONS

Namco, the *Tekken* boys, are to make games based on the *Warhammer* fantasy universe (that's the wizards and elves one, rather than the futuristic one that THQ does). Annoyingly, the publisher plans to concentrate on PC for the moment, but may do PS2 stuff in the future. We mention all this only because a recent team-bonding session revealed that four staffers had 'used' Games Workshop's products as young men (including confusing dice of many sides). These are dark days, friends...

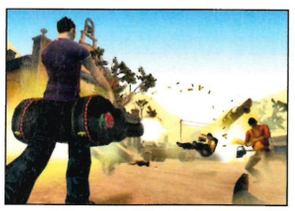
INFO NUDGE

GT4 ONLINE... SORT OF

Still smarting over the absence of online play in *Gran Turismo 4*? Us neither. But those of you who simply *must* have your games replete 'With Net Play', may we point you in the direction of www.gt4league.com. Here you can post your best lap times and prettiest in-game photographs. There are prizes available for the fastest laps and finest snaps, but sadly nothing on offer yet in the 'total inability to follow the racing line' or 'creative swearing' categories.

DUTY CALLS AGAIN

Stand easy, men. Activision has confirmed work on a *Call Of Duty* sequel. The new game, due later this year, is being made by an entirely new development team. That's because Spark, the firm which developed *Call Of Duty: Finest Hour*, recently entered into an exclusive agreement with Atari to make next-generation games – the first of which will be released next year. And if it isn't a WW2-themed shooter we'll kiss Winston Churchill's corpse.



ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE MAYAN JUNGLE

Hmmm, this is awkward. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we neglected to bring *Total Overdose* to your attention last month. Thing is, the email sounded like a flyer for a Mexican restaurant, we were tired, and... anyway, here it is. Think *Desperado* meets *Max Payne*, with a revenge-driven storyline and the chance to shoot bad guys while munching on a burrito. Apparently, 'stealing hats' is also a key feature. *Que?*

RESERVOIR HOG

An armed hedgehog aims for PS2

With another 40ft to go, Shadow kissed goodbye to his balls

SEGA GOES GUN CRAZY

New **Sonic** game to star arch-enemy Shadow and tons of guns

As a rule, hedgehogs live a sad, flea-riddled life, usually culminating in the hot glare of headlights and the cruel kiss of a Dunlop all-weather tyre. Sonic has bucked that tragicomic trend – Sega's blue mascot has enjoyed unrivalled success recently, with *Sonic Heroes* being one of last year's biggest sellers and *Sonic Mega Collection Plus* knocking *San Andreas* off the top of the charts. Not content to sit on their spines, the hedgehogs are preparing for another assault on PS2. This time, however, Shadow The Hedgehog, the bad guy from *Sonic Adventure 2*, is taking centre stage.

The high-speed racing through fluid landscapes remains the basis of this latest adventure, but it looks like the series has had a *Ratchet & Clank*-style weapons-heavy makeover. Not only is Shadow armed but it's up to you to decide how dangerous he is – good or bad is now your choice – presumably with multiple story paths and endings as a result. We're not sure where Sonic is but we guess he's whimpering in a bush, shaking uncontrollably as every gunshot rings through the air. ■ LH

BEST MENUS... EVER!

Gentlemen, pay homage to the finest-looking management sim on PS2

"Mmm, yeah, that's it baby... show me your menus." That wasn't what we said when the first screens of *LMA 2006* arrived. But you take the point: they're pretty. If Jesus had forsaken carpentry for designing football manager simulations, this is probably what his menus would've looked like. But beyond the handsome interface, what else can you expect when the new game kicks off in October. Well, the player database and transfer negotiations have been totally overhauled, plus there's a jazzed-up 3D engine for the matches (not pictured... gah!) expanded training options and the chance to share content with others on the interwebnet. All good, basically. And it will need to be, with both the debut of *Championship Manager* and a new *Total Club Manager* on the way. Expect a three-horse title race this season. ■ TC

Get Modded. Get Racing. Get Juiced.

Juiced™

THQ
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INFO NUDGE

HAND OVER THE GOLDEN TICKET, FATTY...

Not content with delivering the strangest trailer ever, it seems there's also going to be a videogame version of Tim Burton's *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory* movie. It's due in July and players will be able to explore Wonka's phantasmagorical factory while greedy youngsters cause mayhem with the outlandish confectionary. Look at it this way: it's essentially about chocolate, and anything that gets more girls playing games has to be a good thing.

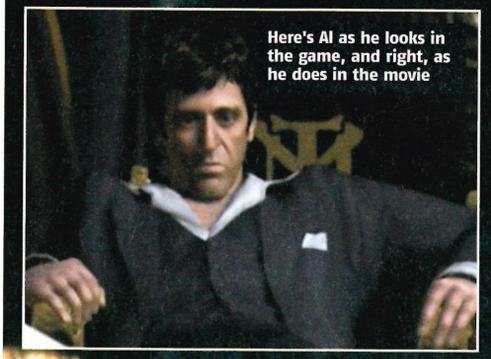
PSPOKER!

We kicked gambling after losing 200 sheets on John Terry to be young player of the year in 2004. However, *Stacked... with Daniel Negreanu* (who?) could make us fall off the wagon. It's a PSP Poker game due out this summer, and captures the look, excitement and drama of playing Texas Hold 'Em All – but, crucially, without the complimentary drinks served by a sullen-but-pretty waitress to lubricate you towards destitution.

GINGER QUEEN CONFIRMS NEW ROCKSTAR GAME

Josh Homme, chief growler with Queens Of The Stone Age, recently revealed he's doing tunes for a new Rockstar game. In an interview with MTV.com Homme mentioned that both he and current bassist Alain Johannes are working on the music for *Spec Ops*, a squad-based army game. We're told to expect a mix of new tracks, re-recording of old tracks and what Homme's has referred to as 'Hick-Hop'. Yee haw, bitch.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Here's Al as he looks in the game, and right, as he does in the movie

PACINO DOES LINES FOR *SCARFACE*

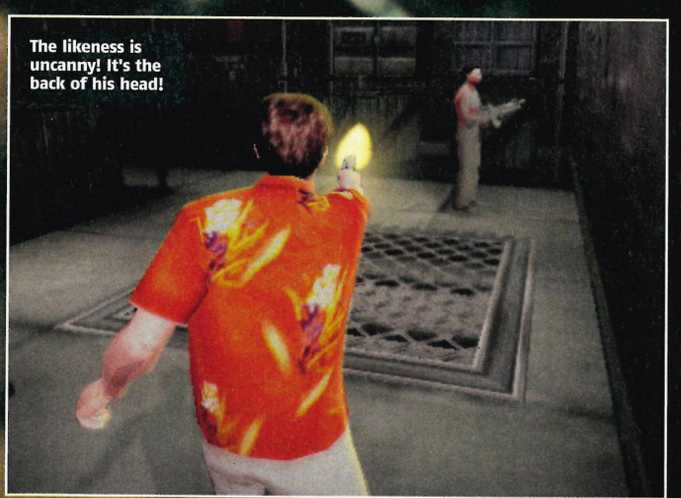
"You're never gonna see a bad guy like this again"

TALK TONY

Check out the *Scarface* soundboard for an audio collection of Tony M's most inventive cussing. You can find it at www.ebaumsworld.com/scarface.html but it's not suitable for nippers or office 'pranksters' already on a final warning from HR

After some gangland-style negotiations, Pacino has finally signed on to allow his likeness to appear in *Scarface*, the game. Tony Montana, the star of both the game and the original film, will now feature both Al Pacino's face and voice. Perhaps more significantly, Pacino's presence in *Scarface* is an exclusive deal – so that means his voice won't be used in *The Godfather*, although we're betting his (not-so-scarred) face will still be included.

The game picks up where the *Scarface* movie left off (with Tony's body in an ornamental pond, ruined by cocaine abuse and, to a greater extent, machine gun bullets). In the game however, Montana survives, and it's up to you to rebuild his shattered crime empire. Starting from the bottom, you'll be setting up drug deals, protecting your turf from attack and avoiding the Drug Enforcement Agency. The overall aim, of course, is to become Miami's cocaine overlord – complete with palatial mansion, luxury pets and trashy women. To make it to the top, you'll need to master smuggling back 'white gold' from the nearby Caribbean islands. More info soon, plus the inevitable tabloid outrage and a powerful scareumentary from Trevor McDonald... ■ LH



The likeness is uncanny! It's the back of his head!

"YOU WANNA PLAY ROUGH?"

Here's what else is in *Scarface*...

BLIND RAGE MODE
Tony Montana's hot temper leaves him spitting teeth as much as bullets. Work up enough of a temper in the game by committing violent acts and you'll activate Tony's blind rage. When this happens, a bullet time effect kicks in and the targeting system automatically locks on to every goon in view

FREE-ROAMING ENVIRONMENTS
Miami, Florida and the Bahamas are among the areas to explore. Cars, boats and planes will all be available for those bored with the 'foot' option. Vehicle shoot-outs are also in the offering

LOOSE MORALS
No women, no children. Tony is strict about who's fair game for an M16 to the face. Apart from that, pretty much everyone else is one big walking target

REAL-TIME OCEAN WAVE SIMULATION
Used for the speedboat missions. To be honest, we've been promised 'the best water ever' so many times now, normally we just feel a bit betrayed

ALLSTAR

TIME FOR HEROES!

Platform superstars get new games. Here's what to expect...

RATCHET: DEADLOCKED

Don't panic, but there's no sign of Clank the snooty little robot sidekick (pictured above.) *Deadlocked* features squad-based action in a plot about a combat-based reality TV show. There's also net play, more deranged guns and a fancy robo-suit (left) for Ratchet. Unless Clank somehow *is* the suit?

JAK X

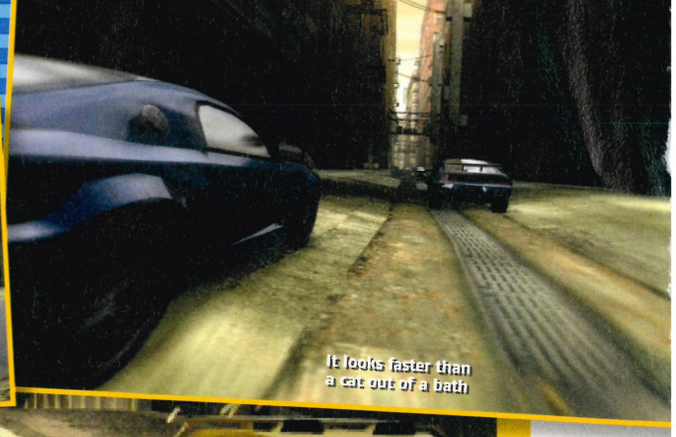
Here's another shocker. It's a racing game, with Jak and the gang competing in a massive tournament. Expect buggies, speeders and a vast range of modifiable armaments. Think *Twisted Metal: Black*, but in a world of visual spankery and with added drive-around-exploring bits.

SLY 3

The light-fingered raccoon brings up the rear. New locations for his thievery include Italy, China and Australia, plus Bentley and Murray will return (or, for those who skip the cut-scenes, the turtle and the hippo). Otherwise it's business as usual, with a few new moves and whispers of a multiplayer mode. ■ TC

FOUR-PLAY

Fancy racing supercars through the set of *The Godfather*?


It looks faster than a cat out of a bath

CHRIST! MORE SHOTS

MORE *BURNOUT 4* BRILLIANCE

Check the latest traffic-stopping pics

Last month we furnished you with the world's first ever screenshot from *Burnout: Revenge*. (Yup, that's the new name.) Meaning you good people were the first ones to see the game. *Anywhere*. Indeed, so exclusive was the image, and so surprising was the new visual style, that some readers assumed it was a hoax. Not so. We don't tease, and to prove the point, here are more astonishing pics and the first hard info.

- Wider, more realistic courses
- Eight ultra-accurate locations, including Detroit, Rome, Hong Kong and Tokyo.
- Ramps... we kid you not.
- Inspired by *Bad Boys II*, the pod race from *Episode I* and *Smallville* (think Superman's running effect).

Burnout: Revenge is due out later this year when, no doubt, we'll be kissing its shiny face, swooning over the playable demo and refusing to return the calls of all other racing games. ■ TC

JAPAN, 14 DEC 2004

US, 24 MARCH 2005

BLIGHTY, TODAY

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE DELAYED...

US and Japanese gamers go mental for **PSP**, while the UK is forced to wait its turn

On 24 March, fevered American gamers got their chance to purchase the most desirable man-gadget since the iPod. (And let's face it, even your mum's got an iPod these days.) Meanwhile, sorry-looking UK game shops still had empty shelves where the PSP was supposed to be. The reason for this state of affairs? Sony hasn't made enough of the damn things.

While one million of the handheld consoles had already been manufactured for the US release, Sony's resources couldn't stretch to making a similar amount ready for the UK and Europe at the same time. Someone had to miss out, and it was us.

The only consolation is that when the PSP finally becomes available here – our best guess is sometime in June – there'll be more than enough to go round. Like, *thanks*, Sony, we'll hold you to that.

In the meantime, gen up on more PSP news – including a hands-on play with Sony's *GTA*-killer – over on page 114. ■ GW

THE $35,000 PSP!

While the American Average Joes queued in the freezing rain to get their PSPs, the celebrity rich set including Nicky Hilton, Courtney Cox, David Arquette, Alyssa Milano and Paula Abdul were handed free consoles at an exclusive 'fashion show' event in Los Angeles. The event was held to showcase a bizarre set of fashion accessories designed specifically to carry the PSP – including this $35,000 gold and diamond encrusted number (below). Other less expensive vestibules included a black leather 'clutch' from Marc Jacobs and J-Lo's thoughtfully named 'Muff' bag (left).

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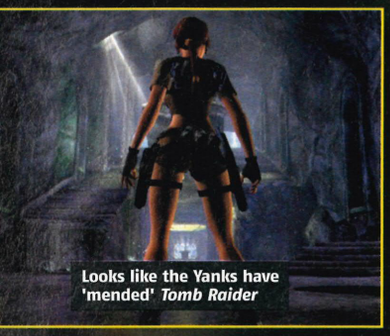
DID YOU MISS ME, DARLING?

Lara's back and we've got the exclusive. Business as usual...



Looks like the Yanks have 'mended' *Tomb Raider*

Judging by the number of marriages ruined by Friends Reunited, it's true that you never really forget your first love. So, despite the wailing and stroking of beards that met Lara's last game, this magazine is ready to welcome her back into its papery heart. Lara's next outing is called *Tomb Raider: Legend* and it's due out later this year. As you can see, the first lady of games has scrubbed up very nicely. For that you should thank Crystal Dynamics, the US outfit now responsible for the franchise after it was yoinked away from Core Design following *The Angel Of Darkness* debacle. Our initial worry was that the Americans would turn Crofty into some kind of MTV-approved extreme explorist. But that proved unfounded when the developer hired Toby Gard, the designer who originally birthed Lara, to work on the new game. The result is a character who looks more modern, but no less iconic. "We want her to be more active," says Gard. "It's sort of back to basics, but faster-paced and more actiony." You can also expect more gadgets, a return to the matinée adventuring of the early games and boobs that bounce in perfect sine waves. Probably. We'll have bundles of gameplay info next month, but for now drink in the world's first screenshots and whisper this: she's back. ■ TC

SCOOP! WORLD FIRST SHOTS

NEW LOOK LARA EXPLAINED

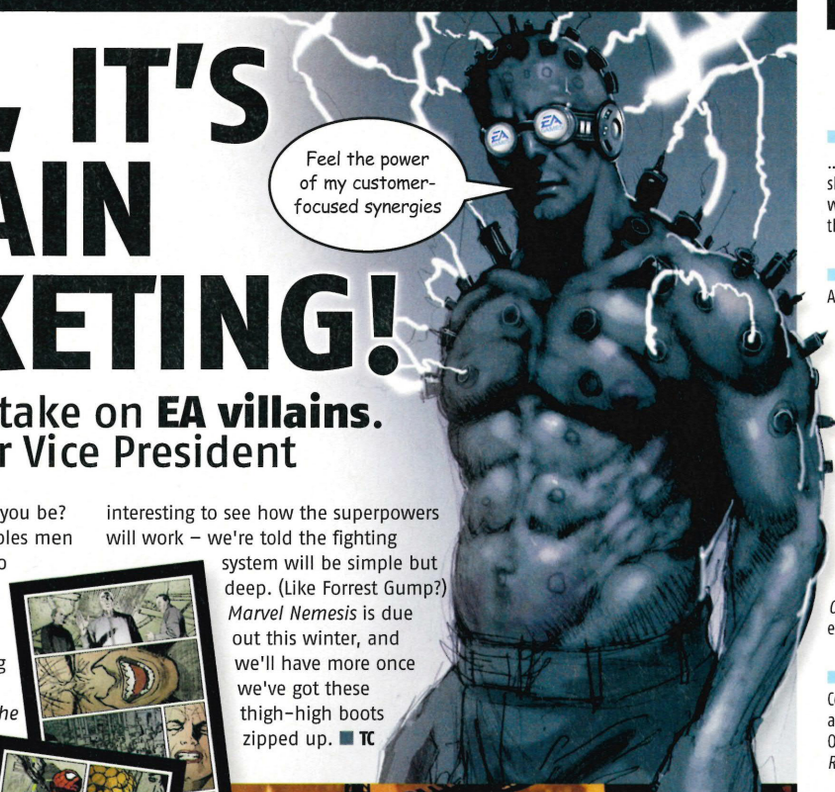
Sexy, not slutty... has Lara been seduced by the Gap adverts?

Look at the detail on her knees! Why, what were you looking at?
Here's Lara in a more jungle-y setting. Looks mint, doesn't it?
Lara infiltrates a snowy environment – check out the armed guards
Ah, the classic down-the-blouse shot. Note the city in the background
Expect a return to the vintage, acrobatic exploration gameplay

MARVELLOUS!

LOOK, IT'S CAPTAIN MARKETING!

Marvel heroes take on **EA villains.** Bagsy not Junior Vice President



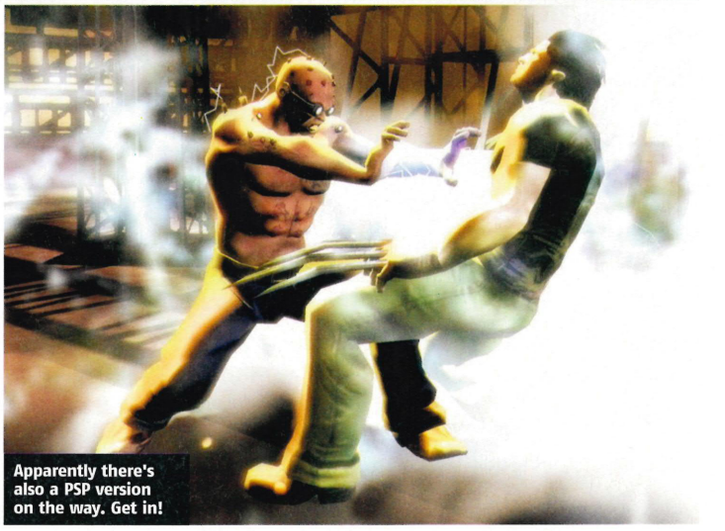
Which superhero would you be? It's a question that troubles men of all ages. Would you go for Spider-Man's athleticism or Wolverine's savagery? Maybe you'd rather explore your barely repressed femininity by taking the willowy shape of Elektra... [cough] In *Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects* that decision is reality. You can select from the biggest names in the Marvel roster, and pit them against (here's where it gets weird, folks) a new stable of supervillains designed by EA and led by an alien scientist.

Panic not, true believers. Much as it would have helped the comedic intent of this story, the new characters won't be suited automatons with the ability to deflect lawsuits. The characters have all been designed by a proper artist. Certainly, the main guy pictured here looks reasonable, in a monster from *The Suffering* kind of way.

The gameplay sounds like a resolutely modern beat-'em-up, with a nod to the *Def Jam* series in the use of interactive arenas and destructible scenery. It will be interesting to see how the superpowers will work – we're told the fighting system will be simple but deep. (Like Forrest Gump?) *Marvel Nemesis* is due out this winter, and we'll have more once we've got these thigh-high boots zipped up. ■ TC

Spidey gives Generoman a battering

JUST SO YOU KNOW...



Apparently there's also a PSP version on the way. Get in!

THE LIGHT SIDE

LARA'S BACK
...and the ace new shots have already washed the taste of the last game away

ITUNES ON PSP
Apple's ace music software comes to PlayStation Portable

STAR WARS
Non-believers on the team have been borrowing the comics... just to get up to speed

SOUL FOOD
Praise be! *Soul Calibur III* is a PS2 exclusive! Testify!

RUSSIAN LOVE
Connery looking aces in the new 007 game, *From Russia With Love*

IN THE SABER

HILARY CLINTON
Really hates *GTA*, apparently. Until the next band wagon rolls past, anyway

PS3 NO SHOW
Sony postponed the supposed March unveiling, so we'll all have to wait until May now

CRAZY PEOPLE
Too much this, not enough that... it's getting so we don't dare pick up the phone any more

NEW MATRIX
Hard to write about *Path Of Neo* if the only pictures we've got are of empty train stations...

THE DARK SIDE

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

YOU KNOW THE SCORE!

OFFICIAL PS2
8/10

NINTENDO OFFICIAL
93%

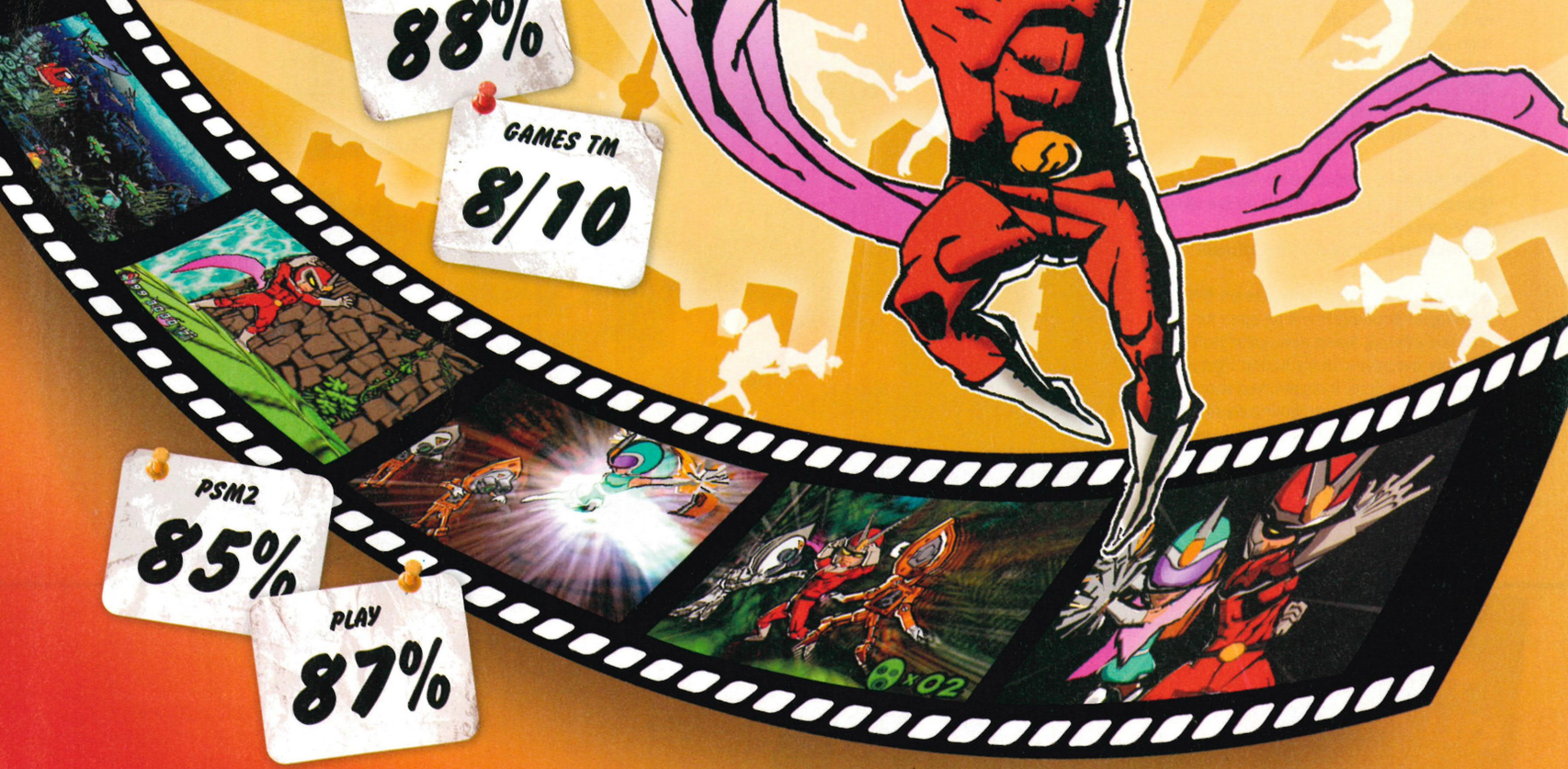
CUBE
9.1/10

GAMESMASTER
88%

GAMES TM
8/10

PSM2
85%

PLAY
87%



NINTENDO GAMECUBE

PlayStation 2

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As an experiment a few weeks back we put a PSP up for sale on the interweb. We asked only £9.99. After a few sceptical email enquiries, finally a chap by the name of John Carnegie decided to risk a tenner on us telling the truth about being *OPS2*. But, of course, there was no risk. We were *OPS2* and we really had a PSP for sale. So he now owns a PSP for the princely sum of £9.99. How would you like that to be you?

This month we're offering three PSPs for £9.99 each on Ebay. There's no bidding involved and the rules are simple. The first person to click 'Buy It Now' for £9.99 on our auction will get a PSP. We're sticking all the other stuff on these pages on Ebay too at stupidly cheap prices – the same rules apply. First to pay the money gets the goods. You're thinking there's a catch? There isn't. The dates and times when the items go up for sale are printed alongside the pictures, as are the rock bottom prices.

PSP1
PRICE: £9.99
Date of sale: 09/05/05
Time of sale: 12 Midday

PSP2
PRICE: £9.99
Date of sale: 10/05/05
Time of sale: 11.45pm

PSP3
PRICE: £9.99
Date of sale: 11/05/05
Time of sale: 7.00am

Head on over to http://search.ebay.co.uk/_W0QQsassZofficialPS2magazineUK to see what we've got on sale.
Our seller ID is: officialPS2magazineUK

Each and every month from now on *OPS2*'s Big Bargain Boutique™ will be open for business offering brand new, great stuff for insanely low prices. So if you don't get what you want this time, try again next month. All you've got to do is get your copy of *OPS2* as quickly as possible each month as we plan to put the merchandise on Ebay within two weeks of the mag going on sale. The next issue of *OPS2* hits the streets on 19 May. Good luck! ■

PLUS

PRICE: 99P
Date of sale: 16/05/05
Time of sale: 1.00pm

PRICE: 49P
Date of sale: 17/05/05
Time of sale: 1.00pm

PRICE: 75P
Date of sale: 18/05/05
Time of sale: 1.00pm

WHO'S THE GUY WITH THE GUN?

OPS2's Big Bargain Boutique™ is, this month, run in association with our great, great videogame-producing mates over at Vivendi Universal and their mighty game *Cold Winter*. We are contractually obliged to point out that it's really rather good and worth a bash if you like that sort of thing. In fact, why not check out the review on page 90?

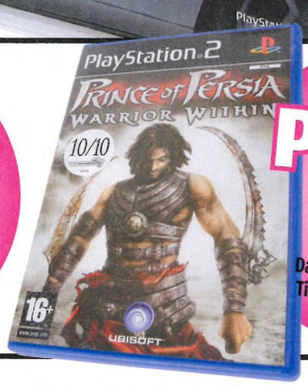
IN ASSOCIATION WITH

COLD WINTER™

METAL GEAR GOODIES
PRICE: £4.99
Date of sale: 12/05/05
Time of sale: 2.00pm

GT4 BOX SET
PRICE: £3.99
Date of sale: 13/05/05
Time of sale: 3.00pm

PRICE: 69P
Date of sale: 19/05/05
Time of sale: 1.00pm



PRICE: 79P
Date of sale: 20/05/05
Time of sale: 1.00pm

*Any monies made will be donated to the ESC, Entertainment Software Charity. To find out more visit www.escuk.org

THE FOLLOWING TAKES PLACE BETWEEN PAGE 36 AND PAGE 39

24

The Game has been on our most wanted list for some time now. Even before the show's hottie Elisha Cuthbert let slip that she was starring in it last year, we've maintained that it lends itself perfectly to an 'interactive experience'. Imagine taking counter-terrorist hero Jack Bauer through a day's work of tense shoot-outs, beating up terrorists, driving between locations, last-second reversals, constantly having to rescue daughter Kim... it all has a heady aroma of '*Metal Gear*, but with a time limit' that's impossible to resist. Until now, it's been the best game never made.

Clearly, Sony agrees with our admirations for *24*, nabbing the rights to make a PS2-exclusive title based on the show. And guess what: it's being made right here in the UK. We tracked down the developers to Sony's Cambridge Studio for a 'gloves off' interrogation. They're aiming, like the show, to go in fast and keep the tension running. But have they captured *24*'s essence, the ticking sense of impending doom? From what we've seen, it looks very promising...

The trademark split-screen action punctuates key gameplay sequences

CTU HQ?

Jack Bauer and co work for the Los Angeles department of CTU – that's the government's Counter Terrorism Unit. So when you see us say 'CTU' that's what we're talking about

AS SEEN ON SCREEN

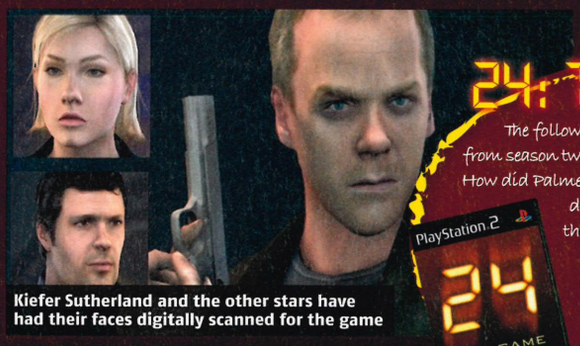
Whenever a new tie-in appears, you hear claims that the game will be faithful to its source. The makers of the *24* game however, can say this without guilt. Although we're only discovering the first facts now, collaboration between Sony and *24*'s makers, 20th Century Fox, kicked off two years ago. At the time, the writers were finishing season two, so organically the game is set between those episodes and the third season. To set this up, the writers deliberately left some questions unanswered (take a glance at 'Seriously, I'm Having A Really Bad Day...' to refresh your memory) so the game can fill the blanks.

While picking this point offers plenty of material to play with, our first thought is that choosing a time in the series' past could deflate any tension. We already know the game will have 'a happy ending' because the characters are alive and well in season three. The game's creative director, Cambridge Studio's Chris Sorrell, explains why that isn't necessarily the case: "We won't be killing off any of the main cast," he concedes. "But we wanted to create a new day that had a place in the *24* universe and that fits in with everything that you've seen (and will see) in the show. So be assured that there are still plenty of twists and surprises."

To make sure such surprises are consistent with the show, Sony hasn't just had the blessing of the producers. Direct input has come from the show's cinematographer to make sure they've captured the mood, while the show's writer, Duppy Demetrius (that really is his name), has penned a story that fits the between-season gap. Demetrius' familiarity with games, of which he says he's a keen player himself, meant he also devised ideas for the missions. In all, every effort has gone into making sure the game could genuinely stand as part of the TV show's twisty-turny mythology.

And that mood of high-drama American action/espionage will be siphoned via the many different gameplay types. When we ask Sorrell to explain how *24* will play, he rattles off a list of genres we're more than familiar with: "The game is a third-person mix of gun-based action, stealth and driving." Refreshingly, he isn't kidding himself, observing, "Obviously a lot of games share these elements." But he insists the feel will be fresh, courtesy of how things are mixed together. "We've been able to infuse the whole experience with the distinctive qualities so central to the TV show," he says. Which means while you might recognise the *Splinter Cell*-ish bits, the *Burnout*-styled highway pursuit and the *Killzone*-like shoot-outs, where *24* will beat comparable games is by virtue of the very fact that it *is 24*. You'll take the game as seriously as you do the show.

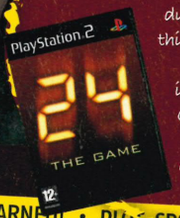
IT BEATS COMPARABLE GAMES BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT IT IS 24

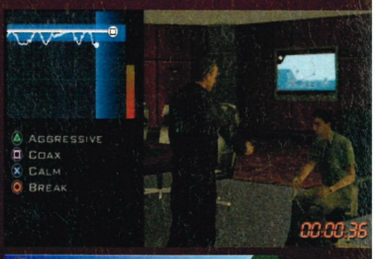


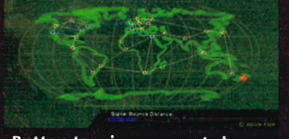
Kiefer Sutherland and the other stars have had their faces digitally scanned for the game

24: THE GAME

The following unanswered questions from season two should be answered in the game: How did Palmer survive the poisoning? Will his duplicitous wife turn up to make things worse for him? Who ran the country while he was incapacitated? How did Chloe, Chase and Kim all get their jobs at CTU? And what does Kim see in potato-head Chase?





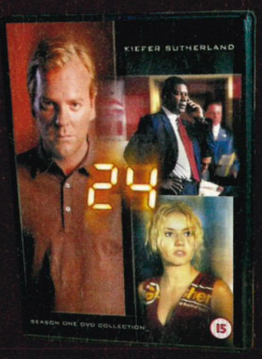


Button tapping moments have you interrogating goons or hacking computers

PLOT-SPOILING FACTOIDS! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! • PLOT-SPOILING FACTOIDS! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! • PLOT-SPOILING FACTOIDS! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! • PLOT-

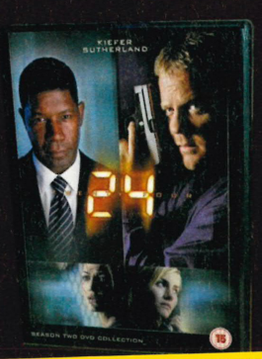
Seriously, I'm having a really bad day...

The game is set six months after season two, but if you need to know what's happened, here's a handy recap...



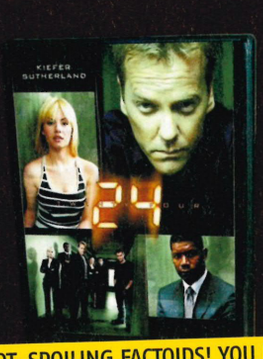
SEASON ONE

In the series' premiere season, Jack's family was kidnapped by a terrorist group trying to kill presidential candidate, David Palmer. Jack saved them, then foiled the assassination *and* generally saved the day (ensuring Palmer's rise to power), but not without heartache – despite being rescued, his wife was murdered by a Russian spy.



SEASON TWO

As this season came to an end, Palmer had been poisoned after overcoming a particularly hectic day battling off more political intrigue and a traitorous wife. Meanwhile, Jack, Tony and Michelle averted another bomb plot, and Kim had tried out a job as an au pair only to find she's catnip for madmen even in that 'safe' occupation.



SEASON THREE

This season begins with Palmer in good health, ready to face another political crisis. Jack's head of CTU, but also has a big time heroin habit. Kim works at CTU, alongside new guys Chloe (computer geek) and Chase (new tough guy field agent). Oh, and Tony and Michelle are married. Aw...

PLOT-SPOILING FACTOIDS! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! • PLOT-SPOILING FACTOIDS! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! • PLOT-SPOILING FACTOIDS! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! • PLOT-

BACKGROUND INTEL

A guide to who's who in the world of *24* and what they'll be up to in the game...

KIM BAUER

Jack's daughter. Has a tendency to get herself in trouble. During the first and second seasons she was kidnapped, went on the run, embroiled with some drug dealers, embroiled with some terrorists, embroiled with a wife-murdering nutter while working as an au pair, attacked by a mountain cougar (seriously) and kidnapped (again!) and locked in a conspiracy theorist's underground bunker. No wonder that she was given a CTU desk job so Dad can 'keep an eye on her'. The game explains how they decided upon this. And maybe we'll see Jack rescue her one last time (probably from a fire-breathing terrorist with seven arms, or something) before she signs up for a government wage.

DAVID PALMER

If your average US president is a target for terrorists, then this one has a bullseye painted on his back. And if there's not one protracted assassination attempt on his life going down, then he's usually facing some kind of political web of backstabbing and lies. In season two it became apparent that everyone around him – including his wife – was trying to manipulate him. Then someone tried to kill him again. The game picks up from there. The other characters in this picture are probably the five playable characters in the game, so don't expect to get a mini-game where you help move his hand to sign some divorce papers.

JACK BAUER

His life is like the metaphorical rollercoaster. Wife murdered by his ex-mistress, shadowy men from his past trying to shit up his life, a daughter constantly in jeopardy – all this and a job as an anti-terrorist. No wonder that, by season three, he's head of CTU but has picked up a drug habit while undercover. While we've been told there's no belt tightening/vein tapping sections, the game will go some way to show Jack's career yet again sending shockwaves through his life as he steps into the line of fire. Jack will be the main character, so expect to see him do a bit of everything – driving, running, shooting and generally being a hard ass.

MICHELLE DESSLER

Stepped in to CTU to replace turncoat Nina at the start of season two, and soon hit it off with Tony. By season three they were married, so the game should show their relationship bloom. We expect to see her based mainly at CTU, bossing the computer geeks around and generally looking important – she's a trained field agent though, so can hold her own in a fire fight. Expect to play as her and fire off a few rounds before ordering Kim to type faster.

TURNING THE SHOW INTO A GAME

Also like in the show, the *24* game will track multiple plots playing out in different locations, with characters on individual missions and events overlapping. "The game has one story – a brand new *24* story – the equivalent in scope to a full season of the show, so we cover a full *24* 'day'," Sorrell explains. To prove how this works, he talks us through the game's opening hour.

AS A GAME, *24* WILL FEEL FRESH THANKS TO THE MIX OF STYLES

The game opens as CTU raids a ship smuggling arms into the US, which it turns out is really rigged to release the lethal chemical Ricin into Los Angeles harbour. Controlling Jack, you successfully stop the attack. Then the action cuts to a terrorist gang where another agent is already undercover. In that section, you must 'prove' yourself as one of them, but make sure you don't harm any civilians. We then jump back to Jack's team performing the clean-up operation, where they spy a survivor escaping – cue a running shoot-out with you controlling Jack. The hour is closed off with a story twist that leads into the next 60 minutes' worth of events.

Further on, we've seen missions that don't just follow action-adventure sequences, but take in other styles as well. Driving missions have you covertly trailing suspects through busy LA roads or pursuing them in high-speed chases. A sniper sequence tries to subvert the stereotypical 'long distance shooting' area by making you not the shooter but a protective marksman guarding a political figure.

Expect to see bloody interrogations as well, with you choosing what line of questioning Jack or Tony will follow from a range of options. So press ◎ to 'go good cop', ▣ to 'go bad cop', or △ to 'shove towel down throat and shoot suspect in the kneecap'. Maybe. Numerous 'gadget' sub-games will see you, as one of CTU's techies, accessing computers and tracing phone calls. (Hopefully they've managed to strike a balance between the fast-paced keyboard tapping moments and outrageous technical stunts, such as zooming

TONY ALMEIDA

Now, we like Jack, but Tony's our true *24* hero. He's the bedrock at CTU, riding the storm of multiple terrorist attacks. He was a little unlucky in love in season one – turned out his woman, another CTU operative called Nina, had not only had an affair with Jack, but was also a Russian spy. How fortunate, then, that he's found a bit of lovin' with Michelle in season two. He's still got a bit of a rogue, dark side, though. Expect to see him staging spectacularly aggressive interrogations and probably have a hand in a good portion of the gun-based shooty missions as well.

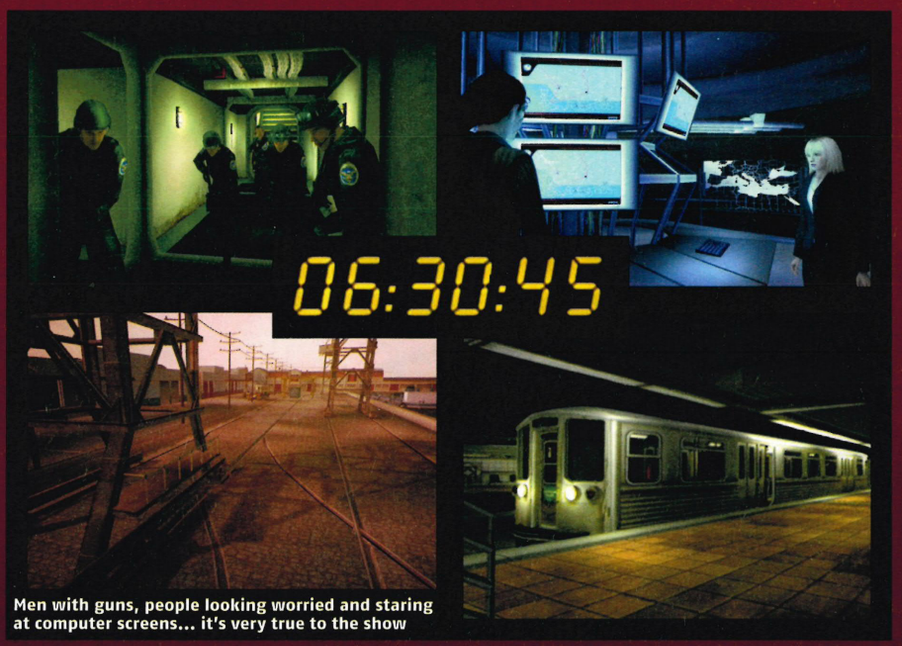
CHASE EDWARDS

CTU's newest recruit: a young, fresh field agent who, by season three, is Jack's protégé. Which causes a conflict of interests when he and Kim start doing the horizontal dance – but don't tell daddy. We'll learn to understand the exact circumstances that brought him to CTU, probably controlling him during the heavy assault missions.

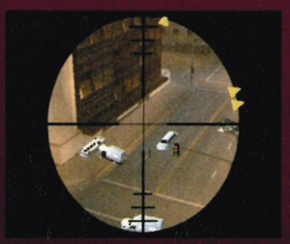
into a photo's resolution until it's crystal clear, 'hacking the mainframe' or stopping viruses that are [sigh] 'corrupting the Internet'.)

And while much of the action revolves around controlling Jack Bauer through another 'longest day of his life', Sorrell says four other characters from the show will crop up as playable at some point in the story. (Check out 'Background Intel' above for more info on them.) It should also be possible to switch between them to progress quickly. You could be infiltrating a building in downtown Los Angeles, but could phone CTU HQ and get them to 're-route a satellite feed', or something, and scan the area to see if trouble is ahead. These moments should prove tense and exciting, but also allow a bit of leeway depending on how competent a games player you are.

Which leads us to the most important revelation about the game: unlike the show, it's not in real time. But don't worry, the game is still set across a 24-hour story. Cambridge Studio has chosen a looser, adaptable timeframe to play in, where each 'hour' is divvied up into a chain of shorter missions, some timed, some not – the overall intention being that a constant ticking time limit might put you off.



Men with guns, people looking worried and staring at computer screens... it's very true to the show



We weren't entirely convinced at first, but Sorrell puts up a good defence for why they've chosen the, if you will, 'unreal time' route. "We do cheat time a little because the game has to present just the right amount of time pressure to account for different skill levels," he says, explaining that this was necessary "to make sure we're not creating a game that you have to be the gaming equivalent of Jack Bauer to complete. We wanted to be able to control the game's intensity and sometimes give the player the opportunity to play at their own pace."

This solid reasoning is probably the best compromise, and we're assured that a good batch of missions will still be 'against the clock' while the show's heart, the beating digital clock, will tick away throughout proceedings to evoke the series' omniscient sense of dread. In order to keep you further anchored into the *24* feel, throughout you'll see the stylistic split-screen shots of furrowed brows and worried looks at the fact that the world may go pop any second, as the screens here show.

THE CLOCK IS NOW TICKING TOWARDS THE AUTUMN RELEASE

These shots also show that Kiefer and the rest of the crew (including the delectable Cuthbert) have fleshed out their characters. Facial likenesses, body posture, character animation, voice work – it's all been digitised. Sony has even hired show composer, Sean Callery, to make some of his rousing music for the game. The *24* game has one of the biggest casts/crew crossovers of any straight-to-video-game adventure, outstripping other big-budget titles, such as those associated with *The Matrix* and *The Simpsons*.

It's this final touch that seals the deal for us. Sony Cambridge has put together a package near indistinguishable from the show proper. Which is exactly what everyone's looking for from a *24* video game. The final six months of development time is a lot roomier than any 24-hour doomsday deadline, especially with the game already at such a healthy stage. But the clock is now ticking towards the autumn release, and we can hardly wait. ■

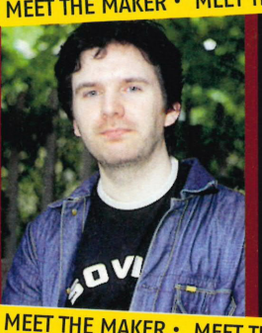
The game takes in a variety of locations – be it the counter terrorist head quarters or locations 'in the field' (also known as 'outside')

MEET THE MAKER • MEET THE MAKER • MEET THE MAKER • MEET THE MAKER

WANT MORE ABOUT *24*?

Then join us online to grill the developer

Fancy interrogating the game's creative director, Chris Sorrell (right)? Head to the forums at uk.playstation.com on 4 May. He'll be there at 5pm to answer your questions. And no, you can't have Elisha's autograph.

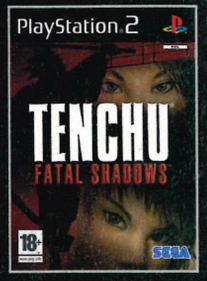


MEET THE MAKER • MEET THE MAKER • MEET THE MAKER • MEET THE MAKER

Two warriors, united by destiny. One fights for honour, one for vengeance, and both must use stealth, cunning and their deadly Ninja fighting skills to reach their goal, in this new chapter of the Tenchu epic.

- New multi-kill stealth moves allow you to dispatch two enemies at once
- Two playable characters – returning heroine Ayame and newcomer Rin – each with unique fighting styles
- Cutting-edge graphics – the Tenchu world has never looked so good
- Drag bodies, breathe under water and use your arsenal of Ninja weapons to ensure you are never seen

Death never looked so good.



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monitor

KISSING THE FUTURE OF GAMING FLUSH ON THE LIPS

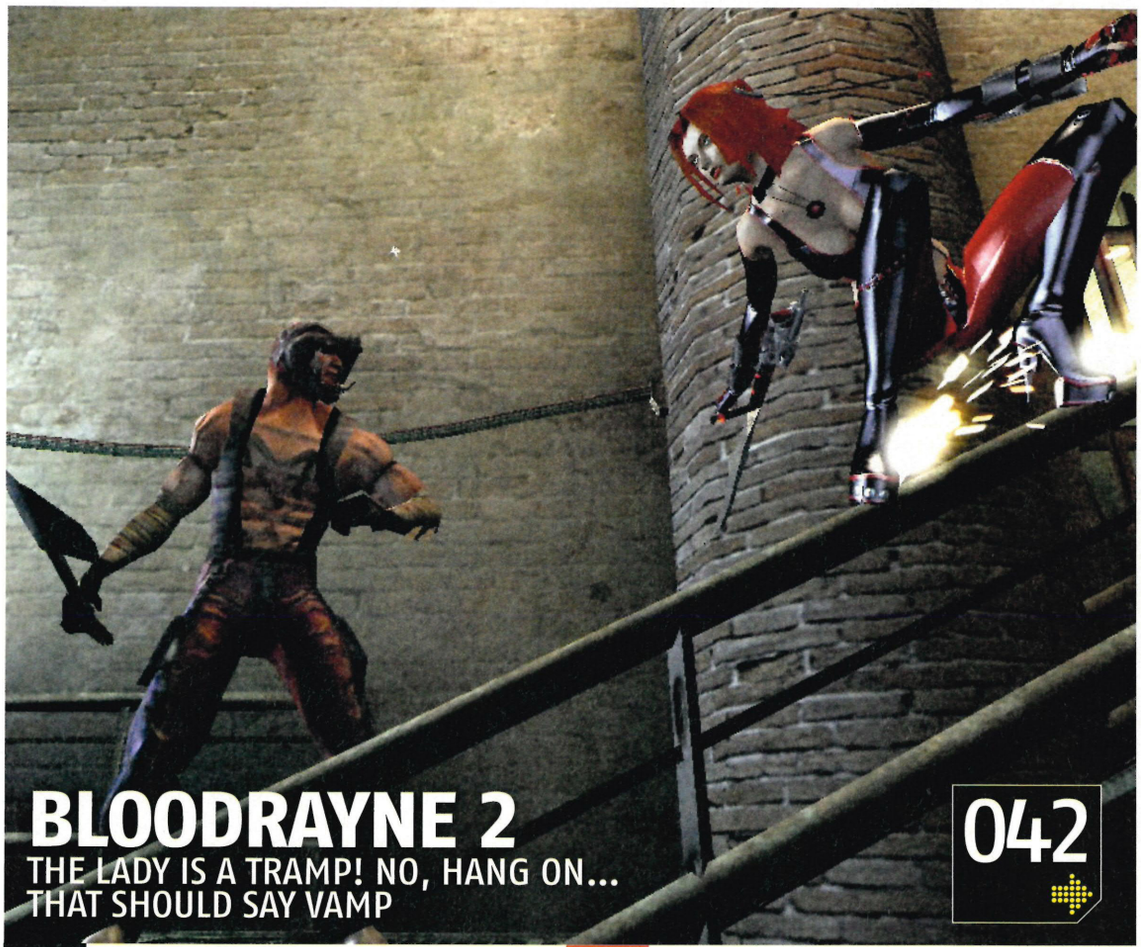
WELCOME TO MONITOR

"Tomorrow, tomorrow, you'll play them tomorrow..."

This month I've been playing through the pain barrier. It went like this: midway through a marathon *Pro Evo* session, I realise that if the washing up isn't done before her ladyship returns, questions will be asked. Angry questions. So I get scrubbing quick-style, without bothering to ascertain if there's a newly sharpened knife lurking under the suds. One girlish yelp and a not-quite-big-enough-to-need-stitches gash later, and I'm back in front of the TV, wincing each time I play a chipped through ball. That, chums, is commitment.

And this is Monitor. Self harm aside, I've corralled together a 'who's who' of PS2 gaming. From vampires and superheroes to small boys and mighty Spartans. They're all here, and for the most part, looking slightly deranged. In a refreshing change from men in gas masks, it's been all about the swordplay this month, with *Spartan: Total Warrior*, *God Of War* and *Soul Calibur III* (see page 111) all looking magic. As ever, our coverage is a cut above the rest, dripping with exclusive screens and swinging fiery opinion.

Tim Clark,
Associate editor



BLOODRAYNE 2

THE LADY IS A TRAMP! NO, HANG ON... THAT SHOULD SAY VAMP

042

044 **BATMAN BEGINS**
"Alfred, have we got three green lightbulbs? I'm considering making a few changes to the outfit..."

046 **TEKKEN 5**
The PS2's flagship arse-kicker goes back to basics, but is there anyone left who still cares?

048 **THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION**
Bruce Banner still looking 'mighty ticked off'

050 **MARK ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE**
Luckily, the game is as good as its name is stupid

052 **SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR**
Ignore the historical whiff, this is a handsome actioner with no discernable Achilles heel

054 **BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT**
Because it just wouldn't be the same without some Kevlar-plated hardmen and sobbing widows

056 **SHADOW OF COLOSSUS**
...In which a plucky lad overcomes Big Ben-sized rockbeasts with the help of his trusty steed

PLUS

045 SQUADRA CORSA ALFA ROMEO
047 SNIPER ELITE
053 EVIL DEAD: REGENERATION

PUBLISHER VIVENDI UNIVERSAL | DEVELOPER TERMINAL REALITY | WEBSITE WWW.BLOODRAYNE.COM

BLOODRAYNE 2

THE SLINKY, LIMB-LOPPING VAMP-HUNTER RETURNS TO PS2

"Oh my God we just cut that chick's leg off! Look, she's trying to hop away." We've only been playing for five minutes and already we're having fun. It doesn't stop there either; after a little bit of not-at-all-gratuitous research we discover all sorts of body parts can be can hacked off. We even manage to lop the top off someone's skull, like a hard-boiled egg, during one gory flurry. Blood and guts might not be big or clever, and they certainly aren't going to make a crap game good, but in *BloodRayne 2* there's a gleeful exuberance to the dismemberment that can't help but bring a smile to our faces. We admit it, we're sick.

But back up there a second though. *BloodRayne*? *2*? Wasn't the first one total arse? Well yes, to be honest the original vampire adventure sucked in all the wrong ways and scored an anaemic 6/10 way back 2003. The only reason the series got another bite at the neck of PS2 gamers was the surprising popularity of the original in America. Because of those high Yank sales, the sequel got the go-ahead and now, two years later, there's a film in the works too (see 'Bite Me, Bite Me!'). BloodRayne is a dhampir and, just to cover the bats and the bees, that's what you get when mummy-human loves daddy-vampire very much. As a half-breed she gets the best of both worlds, namely vampire powers and not so much chance of bursting into flames should she leave the curtains open come morning. Her last adventure saw her joining the Brimstone society (a supernatural Neighbourhood Watch) to kick Nazi ass in 1935 and ultimately led to a showdown with her father, Kagan. The result was an end to both daddy dearest and his plans for vampire world domination. This time round, the Cult Of Kagan, her dad's surviving mates, have concocted a plan to block out the sun's rays leaving it party time for the vamps both day and night. So packing her sexiest outfits the sultry BloodRayne sets off to save the world again.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK hands on

NEW BLOOD

It doesn't take long with *BloodRayne 2* before it becomes very clear that all the bad points from the original have been well and truly taken care of. The shoddy looks that left 'Rayne looking a bit stringy have been polished up to an almost *Hitman*-like sheen and the controls have also had a major tweak. Guiding the original *BloodRayne* was a horribly insubstantial experience, and the button layout did all it could to mess things up further. *BloodRayne 2* however, is much more responsive under the thumb, and combat is now feeling a great deal meatier. It's still basic button bashing but with armed and unarmed combat plus special blood rage or bullet time powers, there's a lot more to play with. And did we mention the wanton dismemberment? One of Bloodrayne's main weapons are those arm-mounted blades that can make oh-so-much mincemeat out of the unwary undead. (And even these have had a rethink, looking much more elegant this time, instead of the unwieldy planks from the first game.) There are also plenty of combos, with more to be unlocked as the story progresses. Adding to her armoury are also some arcane handguns that use her own blood as ammo, driving the need to feed.

It looks like the gameplay has also been expanded from the *Punisher* style run and gun action of the previous title. BloodRayne's good sense of balance which, in the first game, meant she could run along narrow edges, has now been expanded to the ability to slide down railings in sheets of sparks, slashing and shooting all the way. She can now also manage her own *Prince Of Persia*-style pole swinging moves. Unfortunately this is where things start to go a little bit wrong. The controls for the swinging, climbing sections are less than intuitive and thus halt any chance of a graceful succession of leaps. It's more a case of jump, stop, reposition and jump again. It's not totally broken but it lacks the fluidity and grace you might expect.

There are also some other issues we'd like to see tightened before review time. The level design is at best unbalanced; unnecessarily cluttered in some places, little more than tunnels in others and sometimes your path is less than obvious. We'd also like to see more intelligent enemies – we know they've got brains because we've sliced their heads open and seen them. But most of the time they seem content to queue up for a beating. That said, if *BloodRayne 2* can sort out these issues then with its new graphical gloss and deeper plot this sexy-vamp slasher could be quite seductive when it's finally released in June. ■ LH

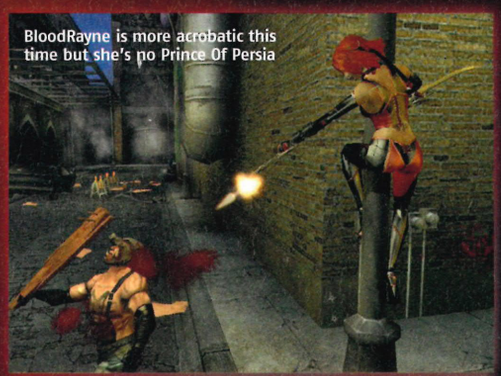
In *BloodRayne 2* you don't kick ass, you slice it off

BITE ME, BITE ME!

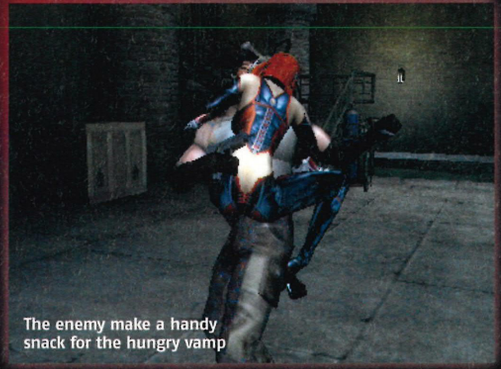
The original *BloodRayne* game was so well received in America they haven't just made a sequel, they've made a film as well. Not just any film though, it's got Kristanna Loken in it – the sexy robo-babe from *Terminator 3* (seen below looking a little rank). There's also Michael Madsen, Ben Kingsley and ahem, Meatloaf.

"You've got some red on you"

Michael Madsen came back for the other ear



BloodRayne is more acrobatic this time but she's no Prince Of Persia



The enemy make a handy snack for the hungry vamp

monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

BETTER CONTROLS, characters and looks – better everything basically. *BloodRayne 2* is worlds apart from its clumpy predecessor. On the whole, things are looking good for the red-haired vamp

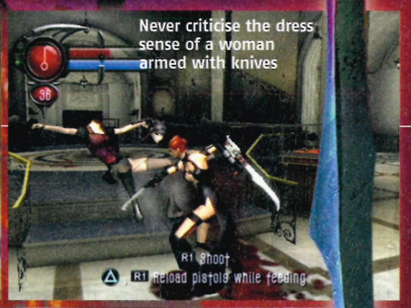
HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

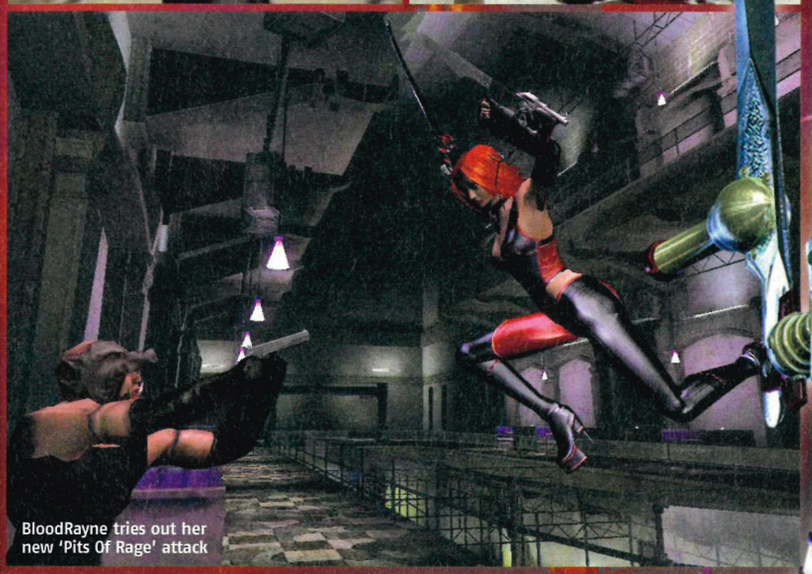
ETA 1 month
Jun 2005

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Dracula had a secret hobby on the weekends

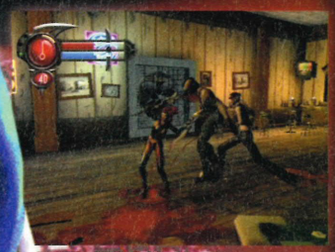


Never criticise the dress sense of a woman armed with knives



BloodRayne tries out her new 'Pits Of Rage' attack

"...and you'll find this is very good for tension in the lower back"



PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK hands on

PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS | DEVELOPER EUROCOM | WEBSITE WWW.EAGAMES.COM/REDESIGN/GAMES/PS2/BATMAN/HOME.JSP

BATMAN BEGINS

...AND SO DOES THIS PREVIEW

The lazy option would be to describe this as The Caped Crusader does *Splinter Cell*. Lazy, but almost entirely accurate. That's not really a criticism, though. If you're going to be 'inspired' by another game it might as well be a brilliant one. The *Cell*'s influence really is everywhere – from the bat-cam you snake under doors to the way you take patrolling enemies from behind. (Steady now.) That's to be expected though, given that the producer and writer are veterans from the *Splinter Cell* team. But there are key differences. *Batman Begins* epitomises modern movie-licensed games because it takes an established genre – in this case, stealth – removes the rough edges and throws in some flashy effects.

The first thing you notice is that, although starring the Dark Knight, the game actually isn't very dark at all. That's because *Batman Begins* doesn't want you to waste time squatting in the shadows, hoping the cleaning lady doesn't flick the light on. Instead, the idea is to make you feel like a fearless, avenging force, working your way through the underworld one scum bag at a time. And in this respect it definitely works, delivering a real sense of menace as you prowl Gotham's impressively detailed rooftops.

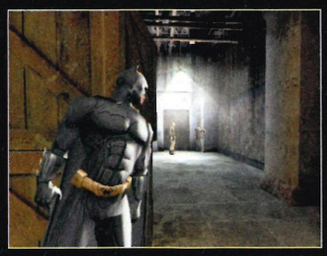
Hanging around in Gotham City. *Hanging around...* Tough crowd

Strictly Come Dancing, caped crusader style. Bats always insists on leading

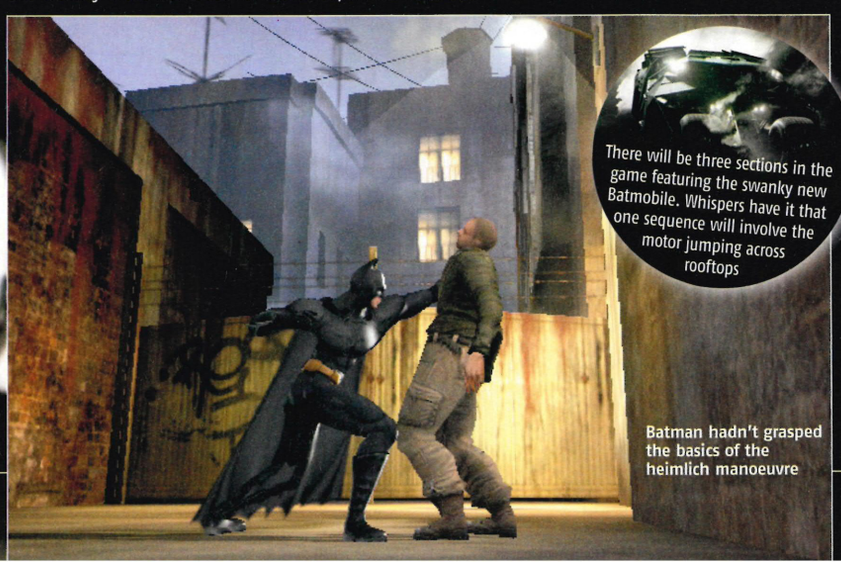
WELCOME TO HELL

As we've noted several times before, Batman is, in fact, just a man. He hasn't got any superpowers, unless you count 'being a bit scary'. Which we don't. Consequently, when drilled with a machine gun he dies as easily as the next guy. So you can't just stroll up to armed mobsters with your cape billowing. Before swooping in you need to put the fear of God into them. Or, more specifically, the fear of a man dressed as an enormous bat. The whole fear system plays on the idea that, among the criminal fraternity, Batman is an almost mythic, bogeyman figure. This is made particularly clear during one interrogation, when the dangling crook splutters, "Please don't eat my soul."

There are two main ways to shit up your opponents. You can trigger scary events that make every enemy in the vicinity more nervous. For instance, in the level set



Bruce Wayne gives it his all in the 'Mr Stealth 2005' competition

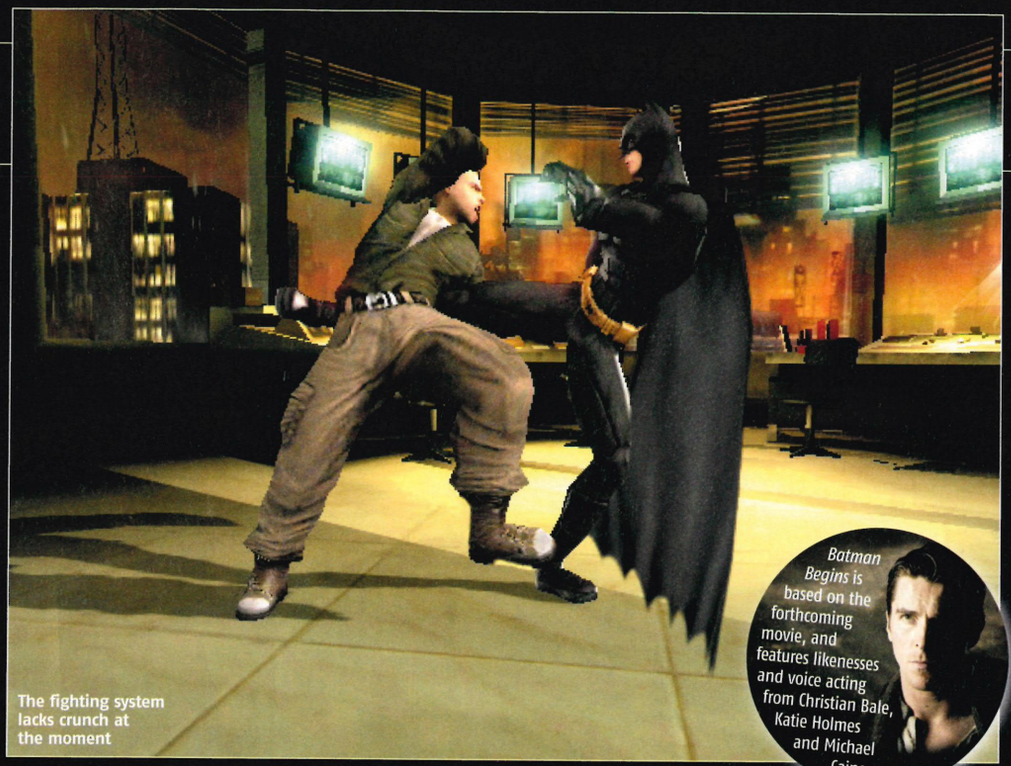


There will be three sections in the game featuring the swanky new Batmobile. Whispers have it that one sequence will involve the motor jumping across rooftops

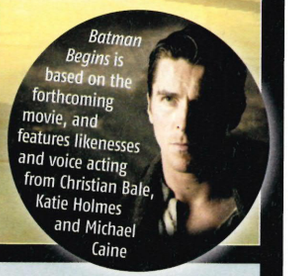
Batman hadn't grasped the basics of the heimlich manoeuvre

The environments look detailed and moody throughout

WARNER BROS/EVERETT/REX FEATURES



The fighting system lacks crunch at the moment



Batman Begins is based on the forthcoming movie, and features likenesses and voice acting from Christian Bale, Katie Holmes and Michael Caine

in Gotham's slum district, you can use Batarangs to make walkways collapse. Alternatively, you can target individual crooks with other gadgets like a high frequency transponder that instantly attracts a swarm of bats. This immediately raises the victim's vulnerability meter, leaving him ripe for a stern throat punching. Problem is, these devices only seem to affect the main target. And it seems pretty odd when one guy is screaming and clawing at the bats in his hair, while his mate stands two feet away completely unperturbed.

AMERICAN PSYCHO

Here's an example of when the fear system does succeed. Batter a couple of goons and the remaining hoodlum will now be so terrified that he'll just lie in a corner whimpering, leaving you free to perform a finishing move. These are always non-lethal though, because (as any fan knows) Batman never kills. Which is something of a problem for us, because we spent most of last month plunging Sam Fisher's hunting knife into scum and cackling like drunken bag ladies. Blame our desensitised brains. The lack of knife play isn't a deal-breaker though, because the chance to 'be Batman' remains an alluring prospect. But we do have one serious concern. Once it kicks off, the fighting engine feels clumsy, with blows that lack the pelvis-snapping KRRAAAAK! of the comics. Ironically, this reinforces the idea that *Batman Begins* is the archetypal movie tie-in, because for some reason they never seem to get the hand-to-face combat right. Hopefully the developer will pour the remaining weeks into making the fighting snappier. But knowing our luck they'll probably spend it all on getting the cape physics 'just right'. ■ **TC**

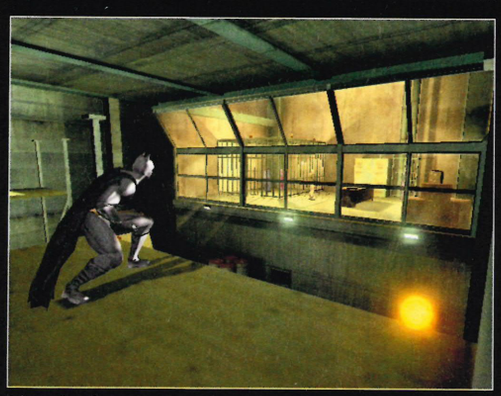
NO, SERIOUSLY... IT'S ART

Want a *Batman* comic but don't know where to start?

YEAR ONE
Written by the mighty Frank Miller, this is an adult (not in the sex and swearing sense) spin on Bruce Wayne's initial 12 months as Batman. Brilliantly sombre, and a huge influence on the new movie.

THE KILLING JOKE
Batman attempts to compromise with the Joker – whose origins this story also reveals – but everything goes wrongside when laughing boy shoots Commissioner Gordon's daughter in the spine.

THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
The most 'important' Batman text, Alan Moore's classic finds our hero dragged out of retirement in this satire about the social impact of superheroes. Actually far less boring than it sounds.



Crime-fighting done for the evening, Batman spent the rest of the night perfecting his peeping Tom skills

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

THE STEALTH IS DEFINITELY of the diet variety, but this is miles away from being a *Catwoman*-shaped atrocity. If they can get the fighting to feel punchier, Batman fans will be in for a dark treat

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

ALSO 1 MONTH AWAY...

PUBLISHER **BLACK BEAN GAMES** | DEVELOPER **MILESTONE**
WEBSITE **WWW.BLACKBEANGAMES.COM/?ACT=GAMES&GAME=SCAR**

SQUADRA CORSE ALFA ROMEO

ARE YOU READY FOR THE WORLD'S FIRST CARPG?

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK **new info**

Ordinarily, a racing game like *SCAR* would be condemned to tomorrow's bargain bin pronto. It's a single manufacturer racer, and no matter the quality of the marque, it demands an awful lot of love to stay satisfied with just one badge in the garage. Face facts: even a 100% Ferrari game could find it hard to seduce gamers wholesale, so what hope does Alfa Romeo – positioned middle of the Italian league table between Maserati and Fiat – have?

Better than you'd imagine. For one thing, *SCAR*'s AI drivers have been given all the flair and focus of the stereotypical arm-waving Italian driver. That is, they shunt, jostle, bully, and are as predictable as natural disasters on the road. A fact that, unsurprisingly, makes for pulse-hammering racing.

Then there's the unusual inclusion of role-playing game elements. It works like this: as you race, you accrue points that can then be spunked on nine different driver abilities that range from focus and intimidation to something more rare like Tiger Effect; an ability that enables you to pull a *Prince Of Persia* and rewind time to correct mistakes. Add to this a heavy emphasis on the effect of intimidation on driving ability, and while it may be some 680 cars short of *GT4*'s roster, *SCAR is* at least coming to the racing party with passion. ■ **PF**

Bagsy the Alfa Romeo. No, the other one

HOT OR NOT?

Not a premier league racer, but *SCAR*'s got nice ideas

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

PUBLISHER SONY | DEVELOPER NAMCO | WEBSITE TEKKEN5.NAMCO.COM

TEKKEN 5

THE FIGHTER TAKES ANOTHER LEAP SIDEWAYS

Some games aren't supposed to be completed. The likes of *Pro Evolution Soccer*, *TimeSplitters* and *Tekken* are games which, in multiplayer at least, offer almost infinite replay value. You play these games, fundamentally, for the pleasure of honing your skills and crushing your friends. This was clear after a few hours with a finished version of *Tekken 5*. To get the most out of the game you have to invest a vast amount of time fighting through the pain barrier (virtual and actual). There's a story, sure, but *nobody* plays fighting games for the story. Indeed, once your skills are nearing The Bride levels of mastery, the 'story' mode can be bested in a matter of minutes. No, you play *Tekken* for the rush. It's about kicking ass and looking cool.

TEKKEN ITS TIME

Tekken 5 tries very hard to look cool. Pulling off a combo and slamming your opponent into the floor hurls rubble into the sky. Which looks ace for about ten seconds, until you realise that even baby leg sweeps trigger Earth-shattering effects. Plus, for all the polish, next to the still-glistening *Soul Calibur II* (and its notably more fluid control system) *Tekken 5* can sometimes feel uninspired. Example: why does every character pull the same back spasm animation after losing a round?

Underneath the gloss there's a struggle going on. In the 'old *Tekken*' corner, there's the archaic control system (memory-testing combos that most casual players will ignore in favour of button mashing) and a truly impenetrable back story. In the 'modern *Tekken*' corner are beautiful looks, detailed customisation and an arcade ranking mode that's surprisingly deep and fulfilling. The result of this conflict is that *Tekken 5* comes on like a pretty girl who only wants to talk about her geology degree. Fine if you're into the subject, but quickly boring otherwise. Truth is, the overriding impression is that 'it's still *Tekken*'. Which would be fine, if it weren't for Namco's *other* fighting series (see page 111).

LEVELLED BEST

One of *Tekken 5*'s biggest changes is actually an omission. The new stages, although undeniably beautiful, have reverted back to spirit-levelled planes. This partly seems like the developer admitting defeat, after people slagged off the more ambitious arenas of *Tekken 4*. Maybe that's why, on first play, *Tekken 5* seems embarrassingly out of date. But persistence reveals a refined fighting game, with leagues of depth beneath its surface. After a few hours we were biceps deep into the arcade ranking mode. Like we said, proper enjoyment requires time spent either eagerly trying to learn every one of Raven's combos or frantically kicking a friend's face off in multiplayer. Review next month ■ MF

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK hands on

The adventure mode has you playing as Jin investigating his (surprise!) mysterious past

Graphics are flamboyant, but we don't think they beat *Soul Calibur II*

monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

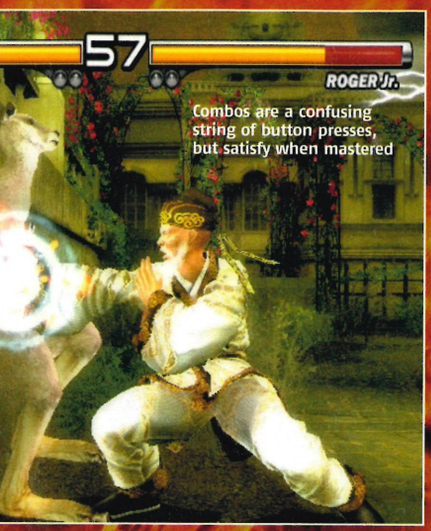
WE MAY HAVE SOME minor quibbles over the animation, but *Tekken 5* has been muscled up with stacks of extras. We're still a little undecided if any of them are genuinely useful, though

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

FANCY DRESSES

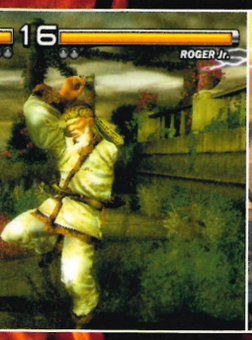
Who needs combos when you've got costumes?

Playing through *Tekken 5* earns you money that can be spent on upgrading each character's outfit. This has no effect on your character's power or skill – no, the fighting is still in your hands – but it certainly makes them look damn stylish. Shallow? Of course, but who has time to worry about this when there are more pressing matters at hand. Such as: do we spend half our cash on that fedora or wait and save up for a battle cape? Hmm...



Combos are a confusing string of button presses, but satisfy when mastered

And to think they banned kangeroo boxing because it was cruel to the *animals*



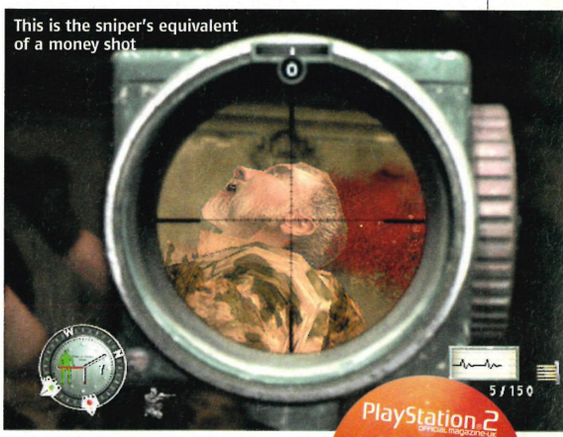
Environment floors crack with concrete snaps. Pretty, but shallow

ALSO 1 MONTH AWAY...

PUBLISHER **MC2** | DEVELOPER **REBELLION**
WEBSITE **WWW.REBELION.COM**

SNIPER ELITE

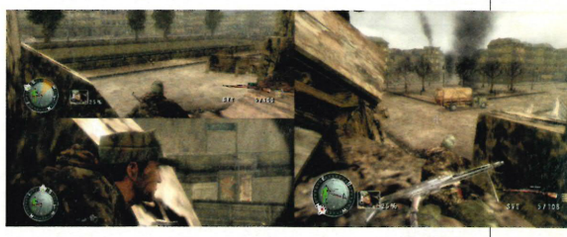
TAKE POST-WW2 BERLIN, ONE SOLDIER AT A TIME, IN THIS STEALTHY SHARP SHOOTER


This is the sniper's equivalent of a money shot

PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK **new info**

Since we last saw *Sniper Elite* the war-torn streets of Berlin are now looking even more ravaged and inhospitable. The soldiers you hunt, one bullet at a time, are shaping up to be formidable opponents, but the big surprise is how well the two-player co-op works. You and your mate don't just provide extra eyes for each other as you work through your objectives; teamwork is vital. You're outnumbered, outgunned and when the sound of your rifle brings a dozen hacked-off Russians bearing down on you, you'll be glad of your buddy's covering fire as you leg it to a new hiding place.

It's also worth mentioning the developer has listened to our previous suggestion to up the bloodshed. There are now some horribly messy death scenes rewarding your good marksmanship. Score a hit and the camera whips away to follow the bullet, shortly before an eruption of your target's bone, tissue and blood carves one more name on a distant village's war memorial. ■ **LH**



You can explode some vehicles with a well placed shot, but not this one

HOT OR NOT?

A great looking change of pace with a good aim so far

TEPID | WARM | **HOT** | BOILING | MELTDOWN

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

Hulk may be big, but many of the enemies dwarf even him

Hulk's powerful legs let him leap tall buildings. In your face, Superman

PUBLISHER **VIVENDI UNIVERSAL** | DEVELOPER **RADICAL GAMES** | WEBSITE **WWW.SIERRA.COM/PRODUCT.DO?GAMEPLATFORMID=1846**

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

CHRIST, MAKE IT BETTER THAN THE FILM

If you're going to call a game 'Ultimate Destruction' you better be sure you can ultimately destruct everything on screen. Fortunately, *The Incredible Hulk*'s new tagline isn't a hollow label – we've been spending time with the big green heap of muscle's new game and can tell you it's shaping up to be brilliant.

The good news is that the development team has got the most important element right: that is, *feeling* like the Hulk himself. Cast your mind back to *Spider-Man 2*, and all you'll remember is the freedom you felt in swinging around (it's also this which makes us fear next year's Superman game – if we learn that something as empowering as flying is a skill to buy with points in the game we'll be kryptonite-bombing the developer's office). With *Ultimate Destruction*, the feel of power is immense. Along with the usual punch and stamp attacks, by holding down a shoulder button, Hulk can be made to stampede through the terrain, bashing smaller objects out of the way as if they were made of paper. That includes vehicles, lampposts and people (yes, people – although developer Radical tells us comic-book bosses at Marvel may change their minds about this. Y'know, superheroes not being supposed to kill innocents, and all). Plus, you can use those hugely powerful thighs to bound around and jump way high into the air. You can even pick up objects and modify them into unique weapons (more of this is explained in Weaponisation).

Scenery can be manipulated to create weapons. Or turn buses into surfboards

"EAT MY FISTS"

Anything you would expect to be able to do as an angry radioactive comic-book colossus seems possible, and running around and smashing stuff up is remarkably freeform and exciting. One minute you're stamping through a New York-like car-filled street, the next you're

JOLLY GREY GIANT

SPOILER!

Could the comic character's dark alter ego be one of *Ultimate Destruction*'s secrets?

Our guess is that as time goes on we'll get to see the grey Hulk – the more vicious, calculating, stronger, angrier alter ego that resides in the depths of green Hulk's fractured psyche. This will be a way of rewarding your time spent with the game by making the Hulk even more powerful and out of control.

WEAPONISATION

No, it's not a real word, but the game's developer would like it to be

In *Ultimate Destruction* it's possible to pick up cars, lampposts and other environmental objects and use them not just as large lumps of metal to throw or kick but also as proper weapons. With a press of a button, lifted cars can be pulled apart and turned into large metal boxing gloves, while busses can be flattened and turned into skateboards. Signs dotted around roads and outside restaurants can even be used as baseball bats. Knowing that almost everything on screen can be smash 'n' grabbed to create a makeshift weapon is hugely empowering – despite the fact that the creative minds behind the game insist on calling it the particularly wanky sounding 'weaponisation'.

Even the ground shakes and shatters when Hulk stamps through the scenery

clawing up the side of a skyscraper with your meaty fists before vaulting into the air to grab a passing fighter plane to ping to the ground with all the effortlessness of throwing a paper aeroplane.

The bad news, perhaps, is that we still don't really know anything about the story. Radical says it wants to protect the game from spoilers, hinting that there will be an unexpected left-turn half way through the game (which we suspect will involve the appearance of the grey Hulk, the green monster's angrier alternate personality). However, it might also be because there isn't much story at all. But if that's the case, Radical needn't worry too much, especially when the team's work so far is proving to be so much fun, regardless of any great plot. ■ **MF**

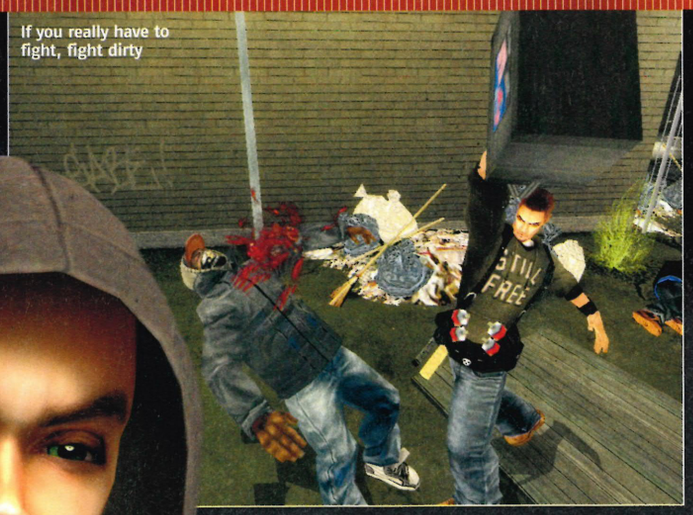
monitor

ALREADY IT'S CLEAR they've got the most important thing right – the actual *feel* of the Hulk – so in terms of accuracy we have little to worry about. Anything else will just be a bonus

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | **BOILING** | MELTDOWN

TM & © 2005 MARVEL.

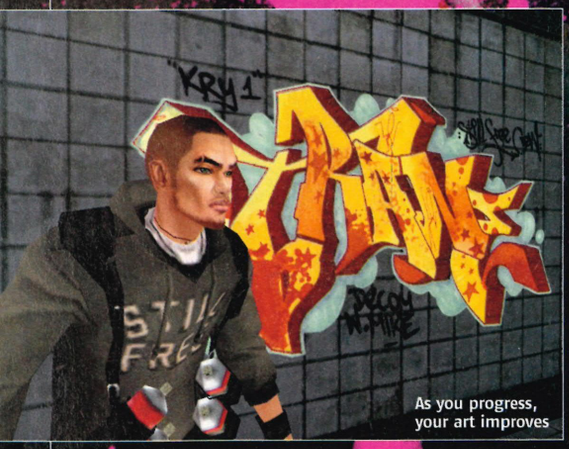

If you really have to fight, fight dirty

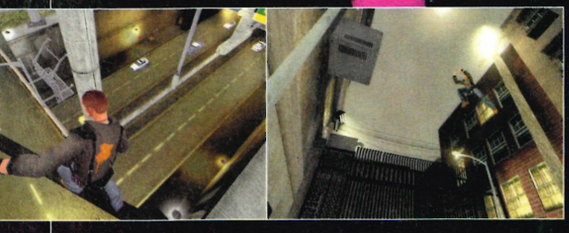
The android was tiring of hide'n'seek

PUBLISHER **ATARI** | DEVELOPER **THE COLLECTIVE** | WEBSITE **WWW.GETTING-UP.COM**

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE

APPARENTLY THERE'S MORE TO GRAFFITI THAN CARVING RUDE WORDS INTO OUR DESKS


As you progress, your art improves



Our meeting with Marc Ecko began catastrophically badly. Thing is, we weren't to know that when we took our seat at the game's unveiling in Berlin he was sitting there, keeping it real in the row in front. As it was, this unfortunate fact was only pointed out by his personal assistant *after* we'd spent five minutes making noisy jokes at Ecko's expense. Our cheeks had scarcely cooled as the presentation drew to a close an hour later. But we were suspicious of Ecko, 'graf' writer and purveyor of expensive urban wear, now turned game designer. Except he doesn't call his game a game, he calls it a 'cultural experience'. And that's exactly the kind of thing that makes cynics like us start shooting our mouths off.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK **hands on**

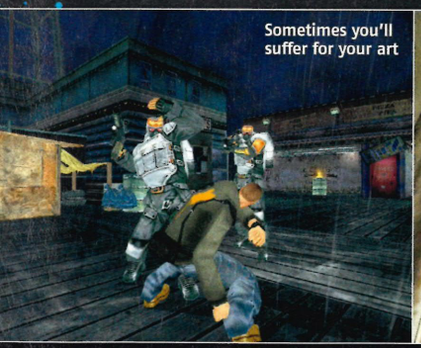
Putting aside our reservations about a man who describes himself as a 'navigator of youth culture', the thing that matters is: 'does his game look any good?' Answer: yes. *Getting Up* is set 15 minutes into the future (lunchtime?) in the city of New Radius, a mix of the dangerous streets of New York and the cramped skyline of Hong Kong. The district is oppressed and patrolled by Civil Conduct Keepers (CCK) – fascist cops commanded by the local Mayor. As Trane, a wannabe graffiti artist (or 'toy') it's up to you to turn vandalism into revolution and overcome 'the man'.

It'll take more than just scrawling 'The Mayor is a gayer' on the back of a toilet door, though. As a toy you get no respect from your peers, so you set out to master the graffiti method of 'get in, get up, get out' to build respect and assemble a crew of your own. To 'get in' you have to pick the best spots to tag, using a system called Intuition. This marks up mission-critical tag points for you to paint as well as optional spots that you can hit for extra respect. There are also special Legend spots, where only the rough area is indicated by the Intuition markers, meaning you'll have to use your own growing intuition to pinpoint where to mark your art. Clever stuff.

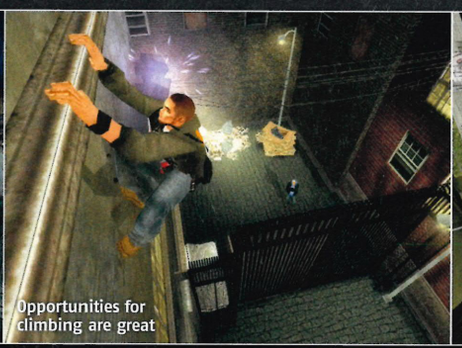
ART ATTACK

Before each mission – the whole city is explorable, but to finish the game you have to complete special objectives – you can choose graffiti styles, paint colours and throw up outlines (the basic shape of a tag) from your Black Book (see Graffiti Glossary). Actually laying on the paint for your pieces will use the analogue stick, with Trane's arm responding directly to your control. Move too fast and you won't get a quality fill, but move

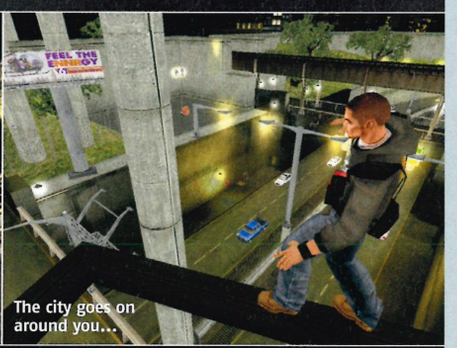
Getting Up uses analogue control for spray-painting



Sometimes you'll suffer for your art



Opportunities for climbing are great



The city goes on around you...

too slowly and the paint will drop, making your work look shoddy.

From what we've seen of his 'getting up' Trane can clamber, scale and vault almost everything in the game, and traverse the tops of buildings with some impressive free-running manoeuvres – think the Prince Of Persia with a can of spray paint. Hunting down (or should that be up?) the best, most visible spots to paint will mean using your skills to reach what graf writers call Heaven Spots, because if you mess up, you're dead.

So far, so good. But it's the 'get out' bit that'll make or break this ambitious title. Ecko refuses to call it stealth – he says 'sneak' – but that's basically what 'getting out' is about. When tagging you have to look out for a number of threats, from pedestrians to the jack-booted ranks of the CCK. Get spotted and you trigger 'urban alarms' – too many of these and the local graf crew or police units will be on your back. Trane can defend himself with street-style fighting or use his surroundings to attack his opponents (making flamethrowers with spray cans and lighters, or lobbing empty paint sticks to distract patrolling guards) but *Getting Up* isn't a fighting game, and avoiding attention is the order of the day.

We're still unconvinced about the name, but despite the fact it's sporting one of the most pretentious tags this side of *Brothers In Arms Road To Hill 30*, Marc Ecko's *Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* promises more than just bland 'urban' gaming. It certainly ain't *The Urbz Go Graffiti*, and if the combat and sneaking action can be as fluid as the acrobatics already are, then Ecko will be able to add 'Game Designer' to his already comprehensive list of successful endeavours. ■ BR

monitor

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

WE WANTED TO HATE IT, just on principal. But, suitably shamed, we can see the exciting potential just busting to get out. The Eckomeister really wants this to be excellent, and so do we

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

GRAFFITI GLOSSARY

Get props not front with our handy vocab list

ALL CITY
High-status graf writer. One of the eight ranks that you can achieve as Trane, the game's hero.

BLACK BOOK
A writer's bible, where they put all their planned and previous tags and designs.

BOMBING
Going out to tag or write graffiti.

BURN
To beat all the competition hollow; to burn your rivals.

DRIPS
Purposeful design, adding a drip-look to a piece. However, accidental drips are a sign of bad painting – the less Trane drips the better his rep.

FLICKS
Any photos of graffiti. Trane can take pictures of good pieces for his black book.

FRONT
An abbreviation of 'confront'. To challenge or threaten someone.

GETTING UP
Repeatedly hitting or tagging to spread your name and get known.

GOING OVER
To paint over another writer's piece. As Trane you'll be able to go over enemy crew's designs to claim territory.

HIT
To paint or tag a wall.

KING
A very high status writer.

PROPS
Proper respect.

TAG
The personal signature of a writer.

TOY
Used to describe a rookie graf artist. TOYS initially stood for 'trouble on your system'.

WILDSTYLE
A very hard, very complicated piece with lots going on.

WRITER
Someone who paints often and doesn't just tag their name.

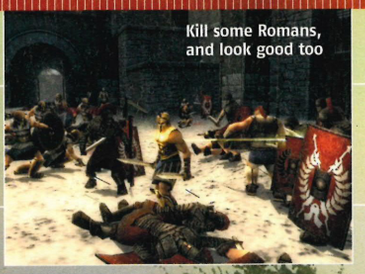
TAG YOURSELF SOME THREADS

Fancy sporting a T-shirt just like Trane? Then tell us what your graffiti signature would be, either in pictures (but just on paper, mind) or words. The ten coolest (as judged by our panel of culturally relevant persons) will win an Ecko unltd T-shirt. Entries to 'Graf Me Up', address and terms and conditions on page 7, or email ps2compos@futurenet.co.uk

PUBLISHER SEGA | DEVELOPER CREATIVE ASSEMBLY | WEBSITE WWW.CREATIVE-ASSEMBLY.CO.UK

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR

KICK SOME HISTORICAL ASS IN THIS CROWD-FILLED HACK-'EM-UP


Kill some Romans, and look good too

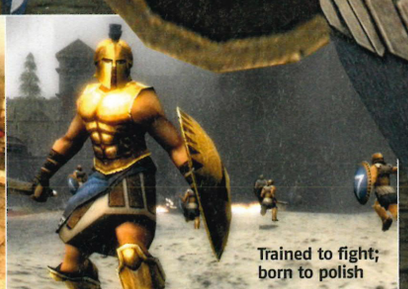
Contrary to what you may have heard, *Spartan: Total Warrior* is pretty much strategy-free. Actually, that's not entirely true, but let's do the introductions before the detail. *Total Warrior* is the first console outing from the people behind *Total War* on PC. This ambitious series enables players to recreate historical bust-ups via real-time-strategy; that is, issue orders, watch the results but generally without getting your sword bloody. *Total Warrior* on the other hand sticks a variety of weapons in your hand, slaps you on the back and sends you straight into the heart of battle. There are no orders to issue or maps to ponder but strategy does arise as your battlefield choices can affect a fight's outcome. For example, do you take out the huge ogre decimating your troops to prevent further losses or block the enemies' reinforcements? Choose unwisely and the enemy will have your most precious extremities in a vice-like grip.

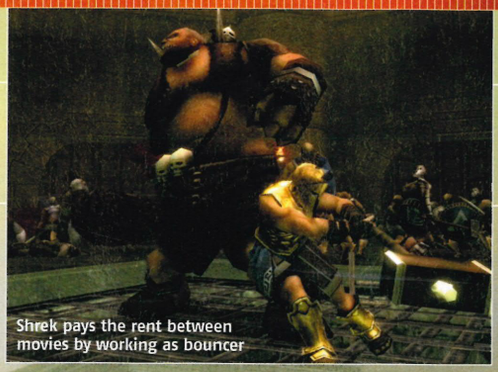
Taking the role of 'Spartan' (Mr? The? MC?) the story is split into three distinct stages: 'Warrior', 'Hero' and 'Legend'. It opens with Spartan as 'Warrior', caught up in a conflict between Sparta and Rome. And it's here that *Total Warrior* takes the first of many steps to differentiate itself from its historically anal PC brethren. You see, much like cavemen and dinosaurs, Spartans and Romans never actually met, but as far as entertainment goes, it's more interesting to pretend they did. Let's face it, when was the last time you saw an interesting, accurate historical epic? (Anyone who says *Troy* can leave this page right now.) As the game opens with the Romans laying siege to the Spartan city, we get an idea of just how epic (if inaccurate) *Spartan* is, as the camera sweeps across an enormous level. We're told you can see up to 3km within the game, and there's no *GTA*-style pop-up either. It's all crystal clear and beautifully detailed; you can look down from a tower and see hundreds of soldiers fighting in the distance. The record so far is 186 people rattling around on screen, without so much as a stutter from the PS2.

So how does the Spartan fit into all this impressively scaled carnage? *Total Warrior* is a hack and slash adventure, but just running around hitting everything won't do you much good. Battles require objectives to be completed in order to win them and there are usually several goals per level. In one stage the tick list went as follows: kill commanding centurions to rout the enemy, protect gunpowder-carrying troops as they destroy towers, pour boiling oil over opponents scaling the walls and use a catapult to take down a 200ft bronze statue. The combat system and weapons allow a great deal of

Normal combat has the potential for magical upgrades

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK new info


Trained to fight; born to polish


Shrek pays the rent between movies by working as bouncer

variety through all this – swords, spears, hammers and bows were all on display, along with some spectacular magical pyrotechnics. You can target single foes or groups and blending these various elements together produces some satisfying bloodshed. In addition you can earn favours from the gods to further expand your skills and armoury.

GREASED LIGHTENING

The later stages of the game see the Spartan as 'Hero'. Here he travels the world, collecting allies and weapons to fight the Romans, and following that, as 'Legend' the Spartan returns home to end the Romans' reign once and for all. Most of the ancient world gets a visit, with Athens, Rome and Troy all joining Sparta as stops-offs along way. And there are monsters such Medusa and the Minotaur. One amazing battle pitches the Spartan against the 12ft Minotaur in a cavernous maze of pillars. Plus, if you fancy the bloodshed without the story then there's an arena battle mode. Set up your own fights by choosing the weapons, enemy number and type, then fight for the sheer hell of it.

And if you think the screenshots here look good, wait until you see *Spartan: Total Warrior* in motion – it's stunning. The action does lean heavily towards hack and/or slash but the diversity of skills, weapons and magic adds depth to the button bashing. Combine all this with the huge variety of missions, locations and enemies and it opens up the potential for *Spartan: Total Warrior* to unleash an epic tale of bravery, monsters and bloodshed. The only challenge facing it is *God Of War* (see page 58). ■ LH

WHO WERE THE SPARTANS ANYWAY?

Miserable killjoys, that's who

The Spartans were a thoroughly unpleasant bunch. These Ninth-Century sheet-wearing nutters thought that, from birth, your life belonged to the government. New babies were inspected and the weak ones killed. The surviving males were then taken away at the age of seven, trained as warriors and fought till their 60s (assuming they survived that long). This luxury-free life of hardship and suffering coined the phrase 'Spartan existence'. Basically you had no stuff, no fun and no life. Fortunately these days we have things like Ebay, TV and PlayStation to make sure this never happens.

ALLSTARZ

Kill Bill-imus, Plateus and Maximus

monitor PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR looks like an incredible adventure – huge atmospheric levels and great action – if the gameplay is as stunning as the visuals, this could be history in the making

HOT OR NOT?

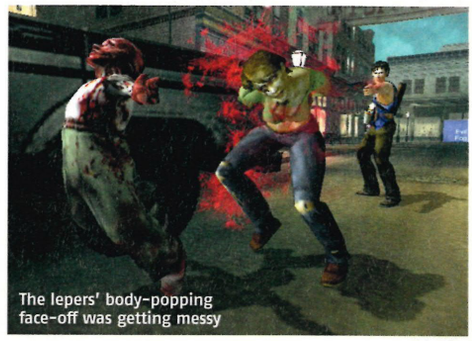
TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

ALSO 4 MONTHS AWAY...

PUBLISHER **THQ** | DEVELOPER **CRANKY PANTS STUDIOS**
WEBSITE **WWW.THQ.COM**

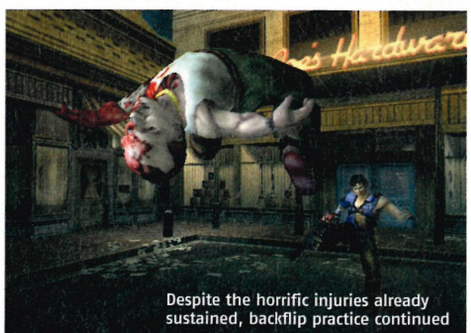
EVIL DEAD: REGENERATION

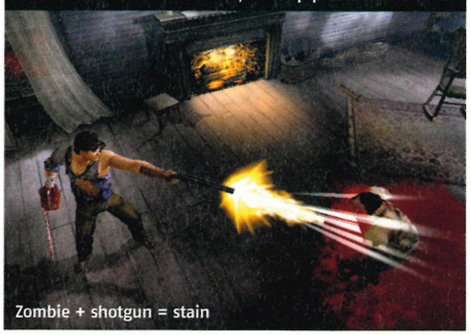
NOW WITH ADDED DWARF...


The lepers' body-popping face-off was getting messy

That's right, rather than going it alone for the third game based on Sam Raimi's '80s gorefests (*Hail To The King* and *Fistful Of Boomstick* being the previous ones) Bruce 'slab-chin' Campbell has followed the example set by Jak, Ratchet and Mr Scaramanga by getting himself a midget sidekick. Obviously there's plenty of 'hilarious' banter, but the main draw seems to be kicking the tiny chap into your enemies (the Deadites) so he clings to their face while you chainsaw their legs off. Chuck in some 'puzzles' – again, mostly dependent on murdering your knee-high cohort with electricity or explosives – and some extra weapons, and you've got a fairly standard shoot 'n' slasher enlivened by some black humour. Let's hope the much-touted instant-kills and rumoured involvement of the movie's director (Raimi) pay off – otherwise it's going to take more than a few passages from *The Book Of The Dead* to resurrect this franchise... ■ JS

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK hands on


Despite the horrific injuries already sustained, backflip practice continued


Zombie + shotgun = stain

HOT OR NOT?

Our love for the chined-one is the main saving grace

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

PUBLISHER **ELECTRONIC ARTS** | DEVELOPER **ELECTRONIC ARTS/DICE** | WEBSITE **WWW.EAGAMES.COM/OFFICIAL/BATTLEFIELD/BATTLEFIELD2/US/HOME.JSP**

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

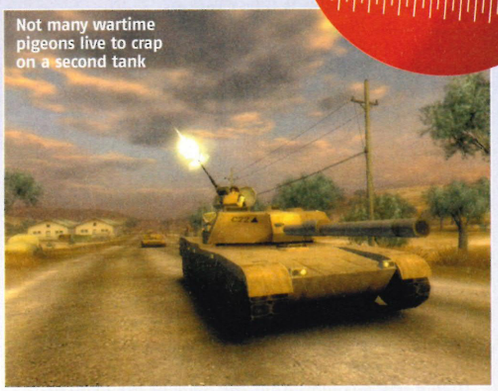
HEY, WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO *BATTLEFIELD 1*?

Answer: It only came out on the personal computer. For those not up to speed with PC gaming, *Battlefield* has been an online phenomenon and a genuine multiplayer landmark. It provided the inspiration for the recent, decent *Star Wars: Battlefront* and now the series is having a crack at PS2 directly. *Battlefield* creator DICE is doing what it does best – the online and multiplayer elements – and it's chosen to place responsibility for the new single-player mode in the big, safe hands of Electronic Arts.

What they've come up with is a campaign set in Kazakhstan. Why Kazakhstan? Because it's an obscure, politically unstable country which borders Russia, China and the Middle-East and contains hotly contested oil resources. In other words, it's a very convincing place to play 'let's pretend it's the beginning of World War Three'. Plus it handily features a range of cool places to fight – Kazakhstan stretches from snowy Siberian wastelands in the West to arid Asian deserts in the East and South, and the game will feature built-up cities and settlements, too.

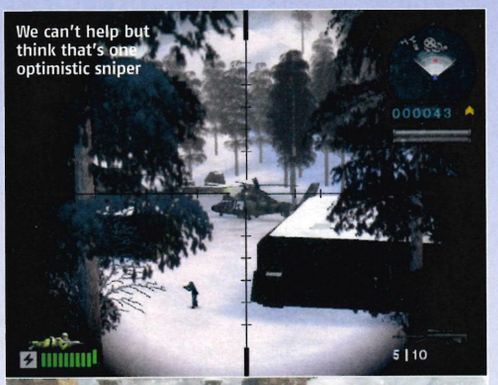
PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

The story pitches forces from China, Kazakhstan, NATO and the US against each other in various tactical dust-ups, with an emphasis on flexibility and choice throughout – like *Medal Of Honor: European Assault*, *Modern Combat*'s missions will be mostly set in large, open maps in which you can move about freely. Intriguingly, you'll switch sides between the missions, too. This gameplay dynamic is bizarre, but refreshingly progressive – by playing as the US then the Chinese, for example, you'll see right through each side's propaganda and arrive at a more balanced view of how these conflicts arise. A right-on war game? Like, beautiful, man.


Not many wartime pigeons live to crap on a second tank

GROUP COMBAT

But *Modern Combat*'s biggest asset is clearly the strength of the multiplayer. If you've played *Star Wars: Battlefront*, you know roughly what to expect – immense territorial battles, a massive range of vehicles and a potential for incredible tactical team play. Our big problem with *Battlefront* was how hectic it was. We called it 'run-and-gun' – spawning and dying so fast you don't know what's going on. *Modern Combat* has a better pace to it.



We can't help but think that's one optimistic sniper

Think of a big, online, *Mercenaries*-style scrap

The 11th Airborne line dancers demonstrate the dose-doe

There's loads of potential to 'accidentally' kill teammates from a tank

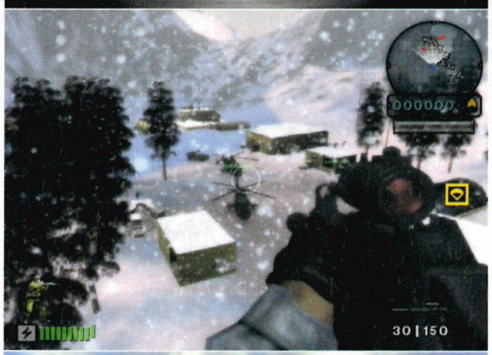
"In the event of an emergency, shrapnel will tear our frail bodies to pieces. Please enjoy your flight..."

On the levels we played – a flat, sprawling industrial zone and a sloping desert village – there was plenty of cover to be found, especially near the spawn points. In fact, the design of these levels in general was fantastic. There's an exceptional depth to the architecture. Every building can be entered and explored, the windows used for sniping, the corridors and entrances secured. Exploring the levels was truly thrilling, not just in case of enemy encounters, but because we were piecing together what the designers had done. We could envisage how certain spots in the game – walkways, roofs, darkened corners – will be used by snipers, defenders and vehicles. It made us hungry for more.

Thankfully the game feels good, too. The current crop of online PS2 shooters – *Rainbow Six*, *SOCOM* – too often feel flimsy when it comes to up-close fighting, giving no physical sense of your actions. From the tanks and choppers to the shotgun and SMG, *Modern Combat* feels different – solid and powerful. And it's got the looks to back it up. The vehicles and buildings are sharp and detailed, and even when the action really starts moving, it's comparable to *Medal Of Honor* at its impressive best.

The only real problem we can see is that the multiplayer may be too good, at least in relation to the single-player game. After all, there's no point having the best online experience out there (which we believe this could very conceivably become) if the majority of PS2 owners are missing out. Early signs are highly positive, but we obviously need to have a much closer look at the game before we can get properly excited. ■ **ND**

The Beckham's new anti-paparazzi measures were... drastic



Run, shoot, fly, shoot, drive, shoot... God it looks like fun

monitor

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

ALL ONLINE PS2 GAMERS go ahead and consider this a 'Meltdown' proposition. For everyone else, it's looking tasty, but let's save the fireworks until we get our hands on the single-player game

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | **BOILING** | MELTDOWN

FREEDOM FIGHTING

***Battlefield* aims to give you as much choice and freedom as possible. Does it work?**

So we're playing *Battlefield* in a plush room in Sweden, eating free sweets and piloting a chopper around a Kazakhstan village. Just as our gunship nears its objective, we bail.

Obviously this is bad news for the two passengers in the back, so why did we do it? Mainly because we wanted to know if we could. We expected the game to show its limitations – 'You cannot leave this vehicle in mid-air' – but it didn't.

What's more, as we were parachuting slowly to the ground we were able to pull out our sniper rifle and headshot an enemy defender from the air. And we've been waiting to tell someone how cool it was ever since. Choice? Freedom? Oh yes, it works.

PUBLISHER **SONY JAPAN** | DEVELOPER **SONY** | WEBSITE **WWW.PLAYSTATION.JP/SCEJ/TITLE/WANDA**

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

MORE THRILLING, BOY VERSUS BUILDING-SIZED BEAST ACTION

Look, you're a big boy now, so if you don't want to play the new game from the team that made *Ico*, then we aren't going to force you. Make your own mistakes... Anyway, as revealed last month, the game is now called *Shadow Of The Colossus* and it's due out at the end of the year. More details are also emerging over how a young boy can possibly take down vast, skyscraper-sized beasts. As suspected, you explore the gloriously sparse countryside in free-roaming style, searching for the massive Colossi using the glow of your sword. Encounter a monster and the camera will lock-in – it's then a matter of jumping off your horse and onto the behemoth's back.

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK **new info**

The game's producer, Kenji Kaido, told us that 'clinging on' is the key. Our hero must scramble around, completing inch-perfect jumps and solving puzzles created by the fact that the beast is constantly in motion, which means the ground under your feet is shifting. Judging by these new screenshots, get it wrong and you'll be thrown clear and left vulnerable to attack. The ultimate aim is to make your way to a specific weak spot before administering a fatal blow. Next month we go hands-on for the first time. That's right, hands-on with a young boy and a horse. Yes, very funny. ■ **TC**

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

CLEARLY MORE-ACTION ORIENTATED THAN *ICO*, but still likely to play best with the arthouse crowd. Everything now rests on how the game is going to *feel*. We'll let you know next month

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

That little white speck is you. No pressure then

STOMP!

Fall off and it's a job to not end up pulped under foot

Wait for the beast to strike and jump on board

SMASH!

THUD!

Survive the size 900s and get another chance to climb up

WE PUT THE S IN ACTION!
SKECHERS
FOOTWEAR

Words: Tim 'Trojan' Clark

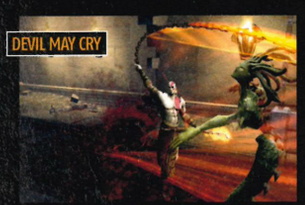
When someone asks you if you're a god...

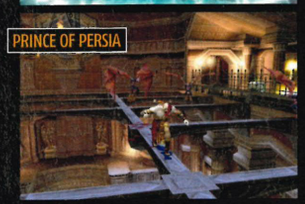
God Of War is the greatest game you've never heard of. Here are 14 reasons why it rocks like an orgy on Mount Olympus

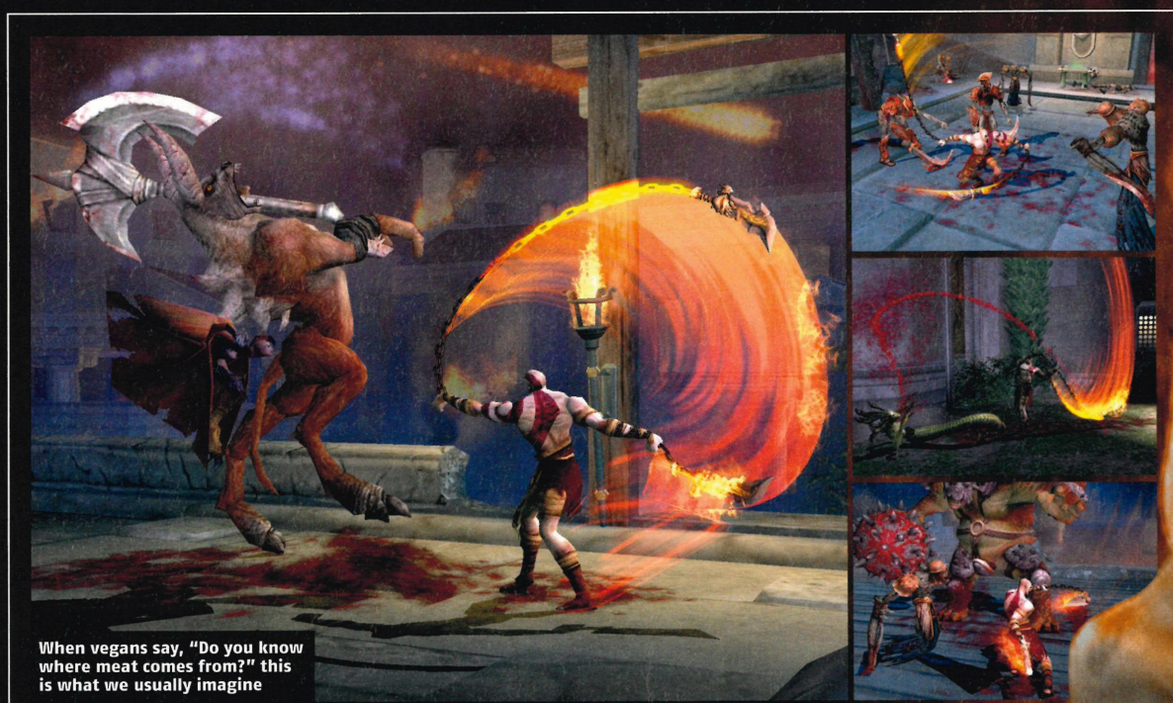
This is the biggest lightning bolt since *GTAIII* dropped – and to think, it was so nearly a Greek tragedy. *God Of War* was revealed almost a year ago, but since then it's only made a couple of appearances in the mag. Not because we doubted its quality, but until recently it didn't even have a release date. That was a disaster of accidentally killing your dad and unwittingly marrying your mum proportions – because *God Of War* is one of the best games on PS2, period. So thank Athena's wisdom that someone finally saw sense. *God Of War* charges into action this June and, having played the finished version, people around here are already muttering stuff like "masterpiece", "genius" and "Jesus, is he doing what I think he's doing?" Here's why...

1 IT PLAYS LIKE A 'GREATEST HITS OF ACTION GAMING'

Imagine splicing *Devil May Cry*'s combo-centric savagery with the puzzlery and athleticism of *Prince Of Persia*. Now throw in the upgrade system from *Onimusha* and a gripping story. Suddenly it sounds like the best thing since switching off Google's SafeSearch. What's remarkable is how it all comes together to create a game that's even better than the sum of its remarkable parts.







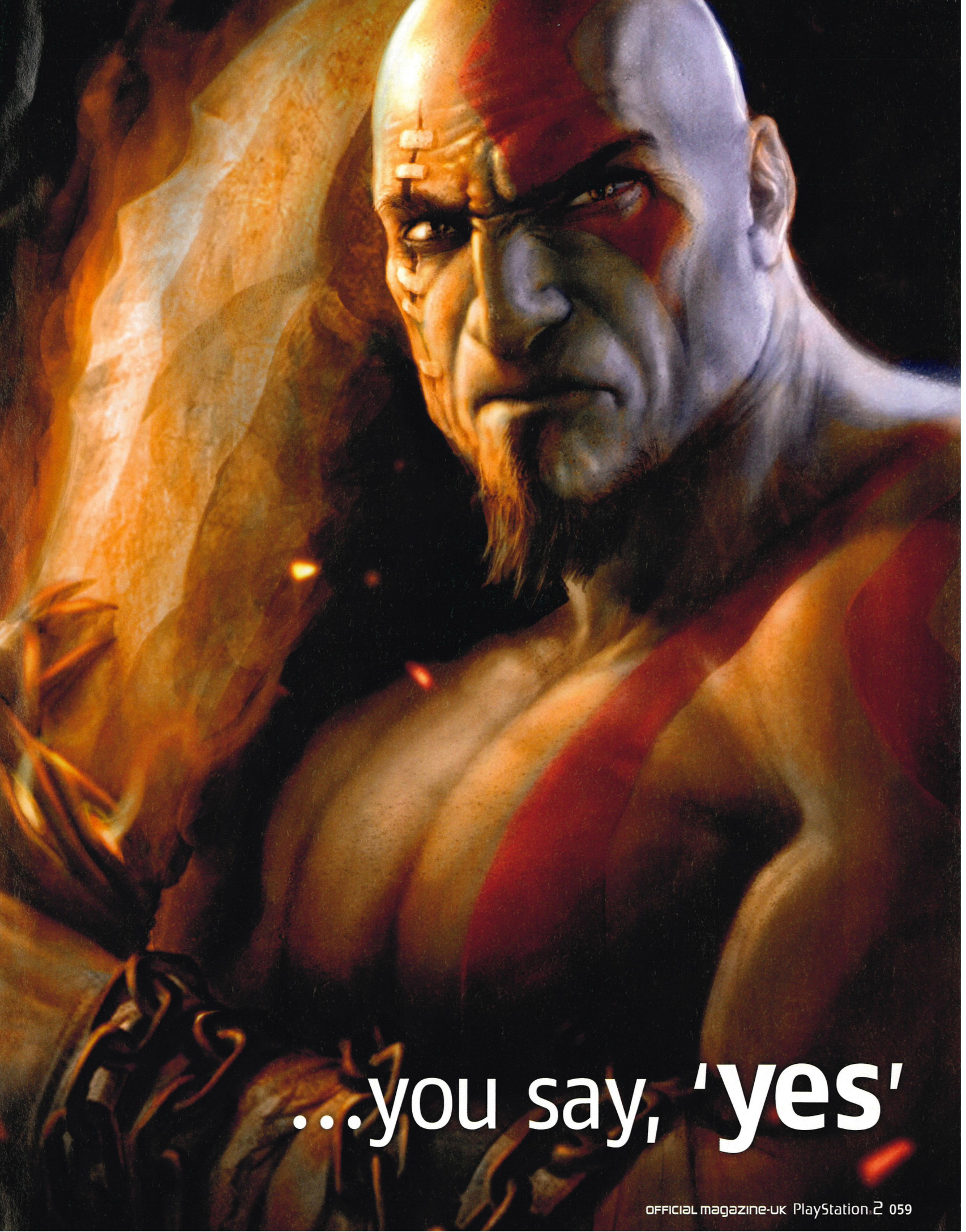
When vegans say, "Do you know where meat comes from?" this is what we usually imagine

2 THE FIGHTING NEVER, EVER GETS BORING

Repetitive combos cost the original *Prince Of Persia* dear and often ruin lesser games completely. Not a problem for *God Of War* – it's the *Tony Hawk's* of stabbing. The swordplay feels intuitive, looks thrilling and offers almost limitless variety. You play Kratos, a mighty Spartan warrior who fights using twin blades attached to retractable chains. These enable him to batter enemies from a distance, twirl them around and unleash combos that look like a bomb going off in a knife factory. The system is built on simple foundations ('light' and 'heavy' attacks combined with a 'grapple') but once you start upgrading, the permutations soon get dizzying. Thanks to the buttery animation, all the moves can be chained and you're soon notching massive combos, disembowelling enemies in mid-air, jamming blades through their eyes and literally tearing them apart with your bare hands. On the defensive, you can block using L1 (which interrupts any other move you're performing) and use the left stick to roll out of danger. There's no need for a lock-on either, because executing your attacks is so precise, controlled and instinctive. Caution be damned, it's the best example of third-person fighting we've seen. Put that on the box.

3 THERE'S NO STEALTH

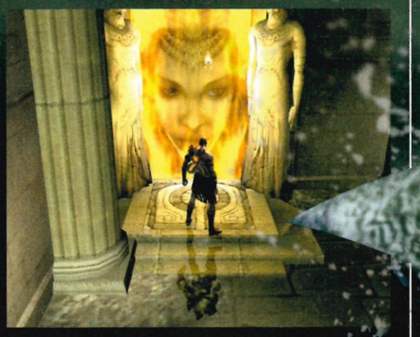
Not that we've found, anyway. Unstoppable killing machines don't tend to spend too much time hiding under tables.


...you say, 'yes'

4 IT'S EDUTAINMENT

Our knowledge of the classics is based entirely on *Jason And The Argonauts* and *Clash Of The Titans*. Fortunately, so is *God Of War*'s. The storyline cherry-picks all the best bits (read: most violent) from Greek mythology and goes like this: Ares is the god of war, but unfortunately he's had 'a bit of a turn' and decided to attack Athens. However, his celestial siblings can't intervene because of a rule laid down by Zeus that prevents god-on-god action. Instead, they enlist a mortal, the legendary Spartan general Kratos, to kill their brother. Predictably, it turns out wasting a god is a comparatively big favour. To stand any chance, Kratos must get his hands on Pandora's Box. Best buy her a couple of WKDs first, eh?

Kratos is armed with the classical equivalent of car keys on chains



5 NO LOADING TIMES

God Of War uses the same spot-the-join streaming technology that powers games like *Jak 3*, meaning you seldom – if ever – notice it loading new areas. Also, the save points are spaced judiciously, and there are regular restart points, meaning you never have to repeat large portions of the game. Kratos, we could kiss you.

6 IT LOOKS TREMENDOUS

God Of War couldn't look any prettier without Aphrodite lap dancing as you played. And, realistically, that would be a distraction. The first time we saw screens from the game, we cynically assumed they'd been enhanced using Photoshop. But no, it really looks as rich, detailed and solid as these pages suggest. You're also never more than a few feet away from the next jaw-dropping spectacle – from Ares, standing several storeys high, taking on the entire Grecian army to the vast sword blade which Kratos must cross, suspended from a statue high over the sea. It even opens with a piss-your-pants awesome boss battle (against the Hydra) almost as if to say: "...and that's just for starters."

This is just the first boss! *God Of War* pities the graphics of other games

7 SEX

Wisely playing to the 'hormonal teenager' demographic, the ladies in *God Of War* almost always be bare of breast. That's everyone from the Oracle of Delphi (sexy!) to the snake-haired Gorgons (less so). There's even an optional mini-game in which Kratos is pleasured by a brace of maidens. During said sequence, you have to match the on-screen prompts to reach a 'satisfying' conclusion. Roll on our first 18-rated demo...

8 VIOLENCE

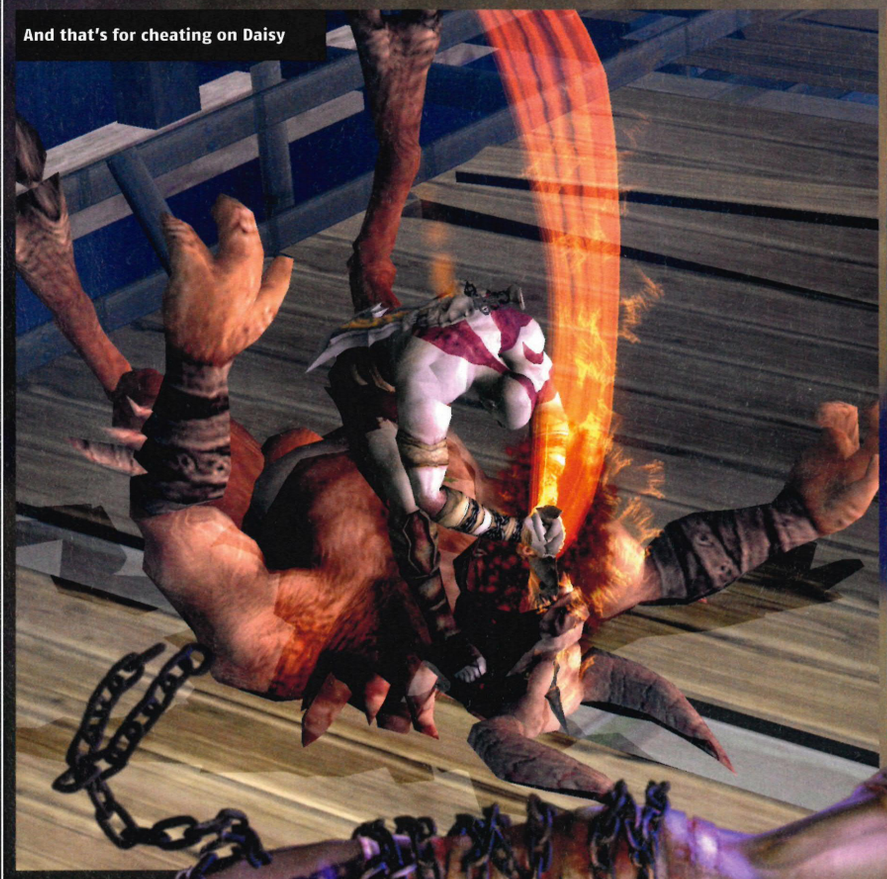
Kratos is not your conventional action hero. In fact he's more your smeared-in-the-blood-of-innocents psychopath. For starters, he looks like the bassist in the harshest Norwegian death metal band ever. Plus, every cut-scene tells you that he's slaughtered thousands of men, women and children. Essentially for laughs. So you buy him as a relentless badass. Example: you're fighting a gang of Cyclopes (yes, that's the plural) when you notice terrified Athenians running around. But you aren't expected to protect them. Instead, you can slaughter them and recharge your health with the green orbs released by their bodies. The most spectacular instances of blood letting occur when your enemies are weakest. At this point ◎ will appear over your opponent's head. Press it and you initiate a finishing move mini-game – like a rhythm action game, you just follow the on-screen prompts. The result: wrenched-off heads and ripped-out guts. Cool.

MOUTH STABBING!

EYE GOUGING!

9 YOU DON'T WANT TO SMASH THE CAMERA

How many times have we moaned about battling off-screen enemies or being at a complete loss over where to go next in an adventure game? Even removing *Angel Of Darkness* from the figures, it's a disastrous amount. The fault usually rests with the camera, but in *God Of War* meticulous care has been taken to ensure you always have the best angle on the action. In a lift from *Prince Of Persia*, the camera gives you clues by tracing the correct path through complex environments. It will also zoom in for a front row view during particularly impressive butchery.

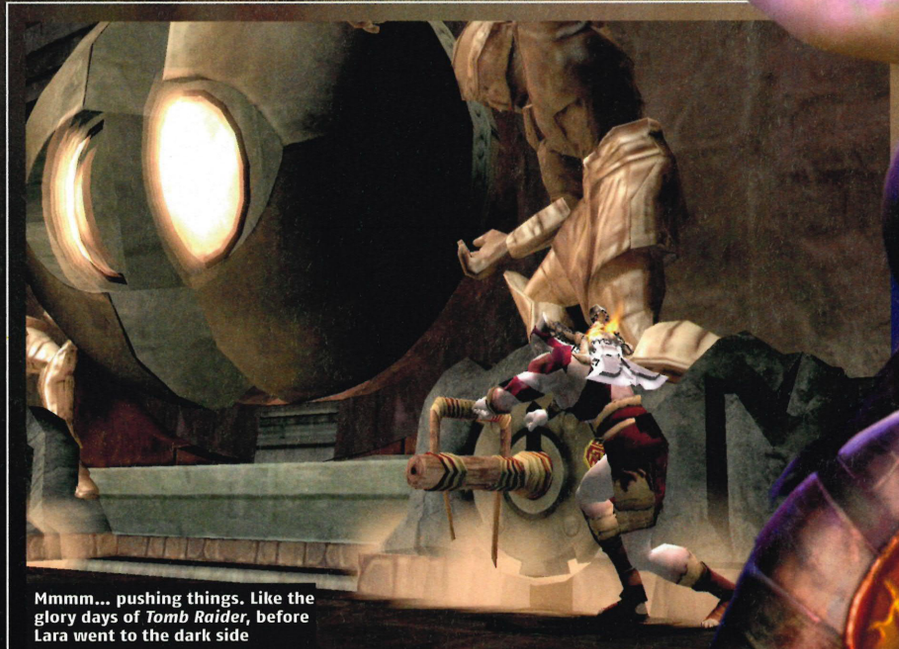


And that's for cheating on Daisy

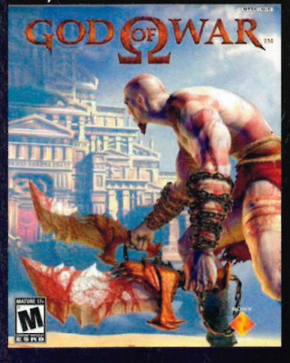
Your attacks get increasingly spectacular as you progress

10 SERIOUSLY, IT REALLY DOES LOOK TREMENDOUS

Mentioned already, but worth repeating – visually, this is astonishing stuff. One word of warning, though: when you buy the game – which you must – switch off the 'softness' option. All it does is put a '70s softcore porn filter on the otherwise lacerating graphics.



Mmmm... pushing things. Like the glory days of *Tomb Raider*, before Lara went to the dark side



11 IT'S MASSIVE

The finished game needs one of those fancy dual-layered DVDs, last used for *Gran Turismo 4*. Go on, feel the girth.

12 THE PUZZLE BITS MAKE YOU FEEL CLEVER

Some of *Prince Of Persia*'s puzzles made us feel stupid like drunk babies. Truly, the line between 'satisfying challenge' and 'ruined game' is a fine one, but *God Of War* walks it with confidence. There don't seem to be too many puzzles, but the ones we've discovered have involved genuine lateral thinking – crucially, without the frustration normally associated with trying to stack pillars while fending off harpies.

DON'T MISS! Next month's review of *God Of War*

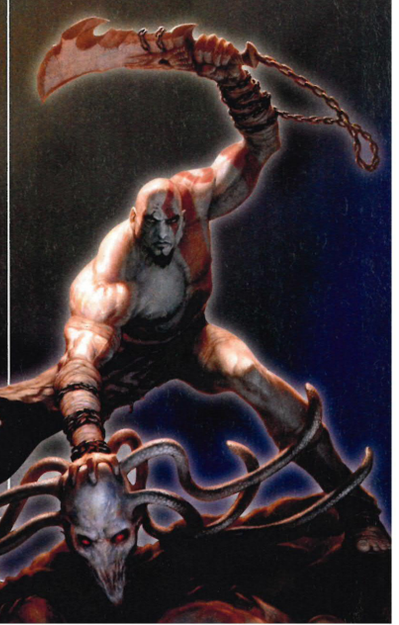
Lobbing lightning bolts at your enemies makes for a refreshing change from firing sniper rifles

13 YOU'RE MORE POWERFUL THAN GOD

Kratos isn't an actual god, but he is gifted with their powers. During the game, his immortal patrons give him magical abilities. First up is Poseidon, who gives you a massive electroblast to unleash. Next comes Aphrodite, who leads you to Medusa, whose severed head you can use to petrify enemies. Next up is daddy Zeus, who enables you to throw lightning bolts. There's more, and all of the abilities look mint, and can be upgraded to über-powerful levels. Now that's magic.

14 IT'S SO GOOD THEY'VE ALREADY STARTED THE SEQUEL

At least that's what the US instructional pamphlet suggests. Lurking at the back it mentions how to discover a secret from Kratos' past and then says: "Could this be his next adventure?" Our guess: yes.

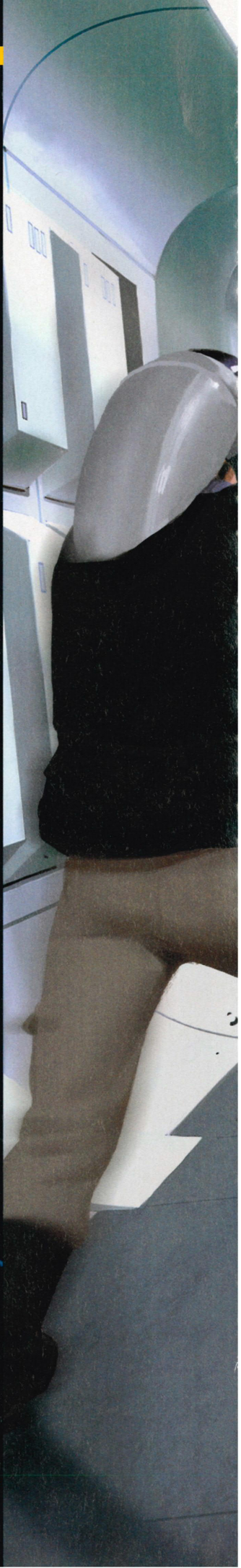


STAR WARS

WORDS: PAUL FITZPATRICK

THE CIRCLE IS COMPLETE

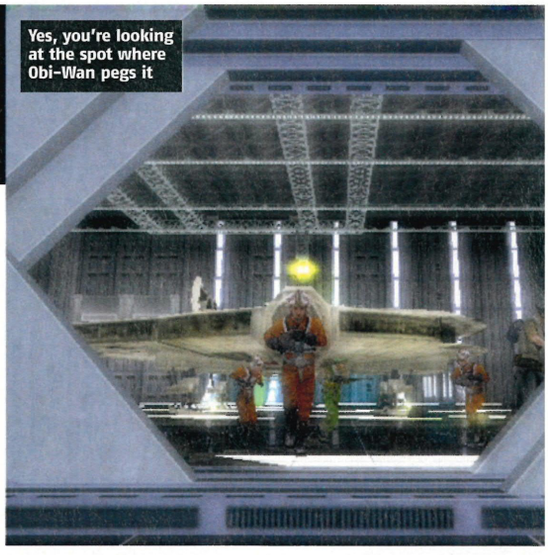
It's taken 28 years, but with the worldwide release of Star Wars Episode III: Revenge Of The Sith *on 19 May, the greatest sci-fi saga ever conceived finally comes to a spectacular close. Whether you remember* A New Hope *from the first time around, or were weaned on* Episode I *and don't understand why Dad hates Jar Jar Binks so much, one thing is certain: the* 'Wars *are still a force to be reckoned with. Join us as we celebrate the ultimate epic with the first details anywhere on* Star Wars: Battlefront 2, *a wealth of fresh info on* Revenge Of The Sith, *the game, plus our massive review and demo of the awesome* Lego Star Wars. *And can we tempt you to the dark side with our massive spoiler on* Episode III*'s plot? Go on. Give into your feelings...*



STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT 2

In *Battlefront 2* the 'Wars spread to the Death Star

With Star Wars: Battlefront, *developer Pandemic gave gamers the epic skirmishes they'd always dreamed of. Now, with* Battlefront 2, *it's busy creating* Star Wars *battles on a scale you won't believe...*



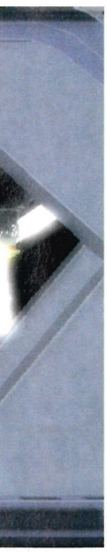
Yes, you're looking at the spot where Obi-Wan pegs it

How do you follow a game like *Star Wars: Battlefront*? Unlike scores of previous niche games that focused on single aspects of the *'Wars* – take your pick from Pit Droid puzzling to beat-'em-ups and kart racing – or restricted themselves to single episodes from the saga, *Battlefront* gave gamers the lot. An entire galaxy far, far away to conquer, online and off; a sizeable cluster of good and evil factions to play as; scenarios that spanned *A New Hope* to glimpses of the Wookie home world of Kashyyyk in *Revenge Of The Sith*; and most impressively of all, scalable warfare that started with single soldiers, but that expanded during battles to include every desirable hunk of hardware from speeder bikes to AT-STs, STAPS and even the mighty AT-ATs. Fan-boy heaven? Close, but while *Battlefront*'s scope and ambition were groaning like Jabba's waistline, there were aspects of the game that left definite room for improvement – Jedis that only appeared to assist you as non-playable 'hero characters', for one. None of the campaigns enabled you to take the fight into space, either (a *Star Wars* game without spectacular space battles?). Then there was an online hub that wasn't as user-friendly as it could've been, and an offline single-player experience that simply felt like a poor relation to the online multiplayer skirmishes.

Given its all-encompassing approach to the *Star Wars* universe, a sequel to *Battlefront* was a class-A no-brainer. That said, the developer had a definite choice here. Would it succumb to the dark side of games development, bung a few new maps from *Episode III* into *Battlefront*, spruce up the graphics a bit and use PR mind tricks to convince the world that 'Battlefront 1.5' was actually a new game? No chance. Backed by the might of LucasArts and its unique relationship with uncle George's source material, Pandemic has decamped to its war room and redrawn the battle lines. The mission? To create the definitive compendium of *Star Wars* skirmishes on PS2. Here, exclusively, is the game's five-part battle plan...

The Tantive IV mission has you defending Leia

THERE WERE ASPECTS OF THE ORIGINAL GAME THAT LEFT DEFINITE ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT



1 RESPECT THE PAST: LOOK TO THE FUTURE

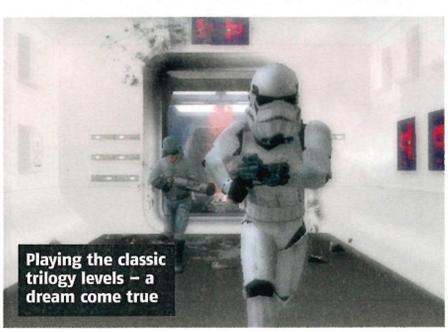
Or... Play the classic moments from the original trilogy and the prequels

Just about everyone has a favourite *Star Wars* movie, but whether you're an *Empire Strikes Back* man, a disciple of *Attack Of The Clones*, or just know you liked the one where the princess bird wears that metal bikini, there are certain moments and locations in all the films that are seared into everyone's brains. *Battlefront 2* is acknowledging that fact, and putting you right there. Example one: the classic opening sequence from *A New Hope*, where the Imperial forces, led by Darth Vader himself, board Princess Leia's ship, the Tantive IV, murderising Rebel troops by the dozen. In *Battlefront 2* you'll be able to recreate that scenario on either side of the Force divide, shooting up the enemy in those brilliant white corridors.

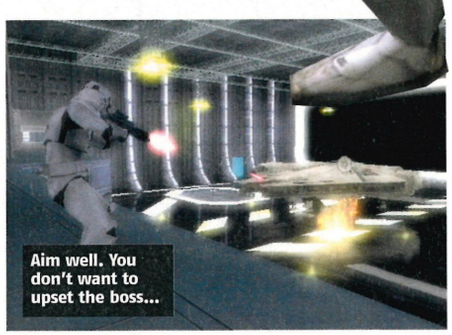
But that's just a taste of what's to come. The Death Star remains the holy grail of *'Wars* locations and finally, in *Battlefront 2* you'll get to go there (not to mention blow huge chunks out of it). And it's not just some vague recreation of the orbiting battle station, either. As you can see from the screenshots on these pages, you'll get to visit the gigantic hangar housing the Millennium Falcon, the dizzying trenches Obi-Wan navigates to turn off the Death Star's tractor beam, as well as the cell block Princess Leia is rescued from *and* the infamous trash compactor. Not sure why that's so exciting? Really? Ask a fan – surely every family has at least one – and stand well back.

As for *Revenge Of The Sith*, while the developer is still keeping its *Episode III* cards close to its chest, it has confirmed two of the new planets from the film will definitely be locations in *Battlefront 2*. Utapau is the location of *Ep III* hardcase General Grievous' HQ. Expect

Light side or dark, the Death Star is your playground



Playing the classic trilogy levels – a dream come true



Aim well. You don't want to upset the boss...

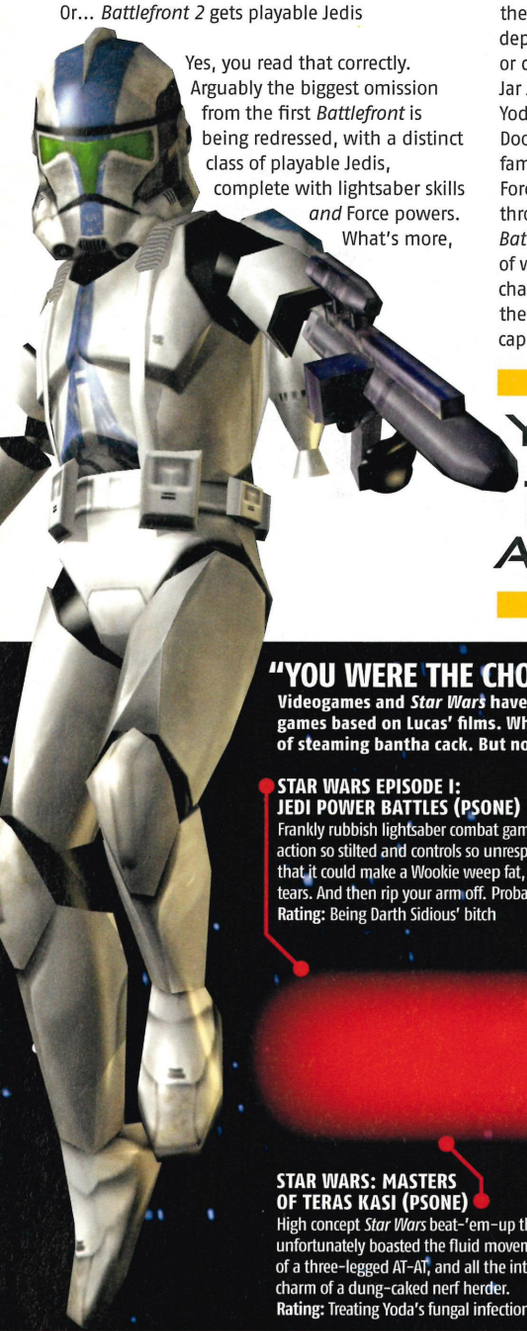
Time to start tearing the Death Star apart...

gigantic assaults by clone troops against the massed droid armies of the Separatists. Then there's the hellish planet of Mustafar; an inhospitable dollop of molten rock that plays host to Obi-Wan's climactic 'saber fight with Anakin. And since the original *Battlefront* gave us a glimpse of Kashyyyk, you can bet its sequel will take you back to the Wookie home world.

Pandemic wants the game to feel as epic as the film

2 USE YOUR STRONGEST WARRIORS DECISIVELY

Or... *Battlefront 2* gets playable Jedis



Yes, you read that correctly. Arguably the biggest omission from the first *Battlefront* is being redressed, with a distinct class of playable Jedis, complete with lightsaber skills *and* Force powers. What's more, the particular talents you'll have as a Jedi depend entirely on whether you follow the light or dark side of the Force. Imagine Force-choking Jar Jar as Anakin, levitating the odd X-Wing as Yoda, or (mercy) crippling Obi-Wan with Count Dooku's Force lightning? There will also be the familiar Jedi staples, like increased speed and Force push and pull. Naturally though, by throwing playable Jedi Knights into the *Battlefront* mix, there's a risk of creating a class of warriors that could devalue all the other character choices in the game. Not least because the Jedi will be *Battlefront 2*'s only characters capable of skilful melee attacks. As a result, Pandemic is working on giving the Jedis specific vulnerabilities that can be exploited by opponents.

YOU NOW GET PLAYABLE JEDIS, COMPLETE WITH LIGHTSABER SKILLS *AND* FORCE POWERS

3 LURE YOUR ENEMY INTO THE OPEN

Or... They've only gone and put space battles in

We loved being free to fight on-foot in *Battlefront* and then climb into vehicles to drive or fly around the surface of whichever planet we were defending/attacking. The thing is, there was always something missing, and that something was sodding great space battles. You know the deal – A-Wings to X-Wings screaming through the cosmos vaporizing TIE Interceptors in the shadow of impossibly huge Imperial Star Destroyers. In other words, the *Star Wars* mother lode. In other words, exactly what *Battlefront 2* is going to enable you to experience. Okay, so gamers won't be able to recreate a blast-by-blast assault on either Death Stars (although it's clear from the screenshots that you'll definitely be fighting near the *Return Of The Jedi*'s

"YOU WERE THE CHOSEN ONE!"

Videogames and *Star Wars* have been around for almost the same amount of time, and since 1977 there have been some 78-plus games based on Lucas' films. While fans have met each game with (a) new hope, the majority of them have been regrettable links of steaming bantha cack. But not all. Here, on our double-ended lightsaber, are the best (and worst) *Star Wars* games ever...

STAR WARS EPISODE I: JEDI POWER BATTLES (PSONE)

Frankly rubbish lightsaber combat game with action so stilted and controls so unresponsive that it could make a Wookie weep fat, salty tears. And then rip your arm off. Probably.
Rating: Being Darth Sidious' bitch

STAR WARS: DARK FORCES (PSONE)

An originally classy PC first-person shooter set on the Death Star that was unceremoniously stuffed onto PSone, relieving it of its class, depth, and most of its framerate.
Rating: Slow digestion by the mighty Sarlacc

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS (PS2)

The successor to the *Starfighter* games restricts it to the kind of ground-based battles that made the end of *Attack Of The Clones* so spectacular. Unfortunately, without the film crew's mainframes to pump out the visuals, the game pales in comparison.
Rating: Jar Jar Binks doing anything at all

STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE (PS2)

Spinning an entire game out of *Episode I*'s pod racing sequence, *Racer Revenge* kept the irritating child-Anakin moments to a minimum and set the break-neck, dust-kicking velocity to maximum. Too short, but a blast while it lasted.
Rating: The caress of Anakin's robot hand

STAR WARS: MASTERS OF TERAS KASI (PSONE)

High concept *Star Wars* beat-'em-up that unfortunately boasted the fluid movement of a three-legged AT-AT, and all the intrinsic charm of a dung-caked nerf herder.
Rating: Treating Yoda's fungal infection

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING (PS2)

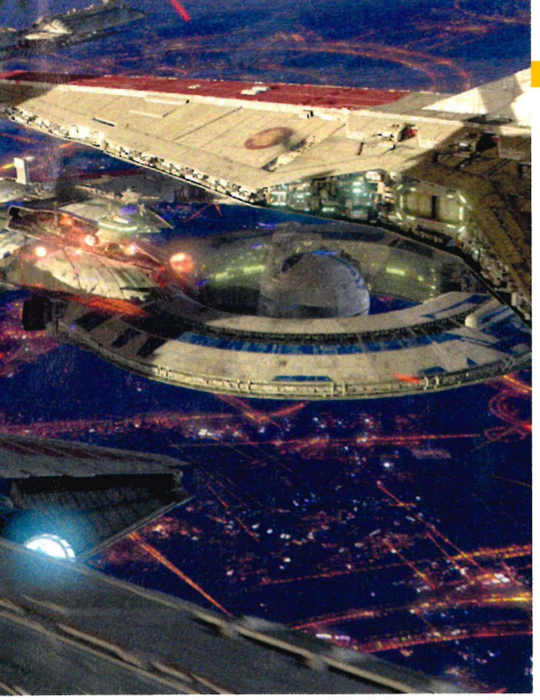
Essentially a 'kart' racer with all your favourite *Star Wars* characters robbed of their dignity by having their heads inflated and then being forced to sit in 'cute' versions of their signature craft. 'Krappy' didn't come close.
Rating: Delousing Ewoks with your teeth

STAR WARS: EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE (PSONE)

The official tie-in with the first of Lucas's prequels was a blend of shooting, slashing and leaping that appeared to have been stirred with a 'meh' spoon. Deeply average – a lot like *Episode I*, then.
Rating: *Episode I*. Full stop

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER (PS2)

Definitely one of the better (and for 'better', read 'not offensively awful') *Star Wars* spin-offs in existence. Oddly though, for a game based on Jango Fett, with the phrase 'bounty hunter' in the title, the cash for kidnap content was surprisingly slight.
Rating: Luke's haircut in *Return Of The Jedi*



Space battles are going to be *huge* in *Battlefront 2*

unfinished version). However, Pandemic has already confirmed that the incredible battle of Coruscant witnessed at the start of *Episode III*, between Rebel capital ships and General Grievous' Separatist flagship amidst scores of fighter craft, *will* be playable.

Potential pilots will also be pleased to hear that dog-fighting environments in *Battlefront 2* will be considerably larger than in the original game. Which kind of makes sense, really – you are in *space* after all.

But the real juice is still to come. Space battles in *Battlefront 2* aren't just stand-alone missions, but rather extensions of whole campaigns. Here's an example of what we mean: Let's just say you begin a mission walking around a gigantic Rebel ship. You're free to head to the hangar, hop in an X-Wing and fly out to vaporize a squadron of TIE fighters that are attacking your capital ship. Job done, you may want to return to base. Alternatively, you could pilot your X-Wing into the belly of an Imperial star destroyer, dock and continue to take the

***Episode III*'s battle for Coruscant, and you're starring**

STAR WARS: DEMOLITION (PSONE)
The integrity of the *Star Wars* franchise was stretched to the brink of collapse with this vehicle combat game. However, the end result defied the cynics and was pretty damn playable. So there.
Rating: Beating a wookie at chess (and living)

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER (PS2)
Quality space shooter sequel with a plot that 'intersects' (ie, steals the locations from) *Attack Of The Clones*. A variety of surface and orbital battles keeps the interest high. Having ship-crippling Jedi 'force powers' didn't hurt, either.
Rating: Tripping up an AT-AT on Hoth

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT (PS2)
Epic battles in a galaxy far, far away, with cast members ranging from single Stormtroopers to giant AT-ATs. It's as widescreen as *Star Wars* gaming gets on PS2, and with *Battlefront 2*, a new playable Jedi class of warrior is set to cause one hell of a disturbance in the Force.
Rating: Throwing Palpatine off the Death Star

STAR WARS: EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH (PS2)
We haven't reviewed this, so we're not sure yet. But playing the final climactic struggle between the Jedi and the Sith in all of *Episode III*'s sexiest locations with lightsaber and Force combat? That's got to be pretty damn good?
Rating: A stolen kiss from Padme

SUPER STAR WARS (SNES)
Back in 1992 *Super Star Wars* managed to cram more condensed *Wars* gameplay into a single SNES cartridge than most games makers have managed since. Just goes to show, you don't need high tech for high entertainment.
Rating: Hitting a womp rat in beggar's canyon

STAR WARS: COIN-OP (ARCADE GAME)
The original *Star Wars* arcade game recreated *A New Hope*'s nail-biting attack on the Death Star via the (then) achingly cool medium of wire frame graphics. Okay, okay, it sounds rubbish, but it was the dog's once.
Rating: Levitating an X-Wing from a swamp

STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC (PC)
Set some 4,000 years before the events of the holy sextet of films, *KOTOR* was a satisfying blend of RPG depth and 'saber-swishing action that captured the elusive *Star Wars* vibe in a way that few other games have managed.
Rating: *Being* Mace Windu

LEGO STAR WARS (PS2)
With few exceptions, *Star Wars* games have historically been pump. Ditto Lego games. So a *Star Wars* Lego title should suck like the Death Star's tractor beam. But no, combining the Force with little dimpled blocks has thrown up an unlikely classic. (Review on page 80.)
Rating: A stolen 'anything else' from Padme

Base capturing is not the only objective this time

Disable systems inside and ships become vulnerable

Battlefront 2 spans all six films but favours *Ep III*

fight to the Emperor on-foot. Brilliantly, you'll also have the opportunity to compromise the Star Destroyer's external defences – cannons, shields, etc – by sabotaging systems on the inside, making it easier on your teammates in their fighters.

4 RAISE THE MORALE OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER AND YOU FORGE A POWERFUL ARMY

Or... *Battlefront* gets a decent single-player game

Multiplayer *Battlefront* (online and split-screen) was a blast. However, there was no getting away from the fact that the single-player game left a lot to be desired. Without the unpredictability that human opponents brought to network battles, the offline campaigns tended to feel a little uninspired. AI (both enemy and ally) could be excruciatingly dense at times, effectively reducing the difficulty level, and unfairly emphasizing the repetitive nature of the 'capture the base' gameplay. Mindful of this, the developer has made the creation of a quality, story-driven solo game a top priority. The AI is being sent back to boot camp for a kick off – in *Battlefront 2* non-playable units will work both towards their overall mission objective *and* adapt their behaviour depending on what the player is doing. And this is true whether the other character is a friend or foe. Best of all, yoking the single-player game to an overarching plot has enabled the developer to include a variety of objectives in battles over and above the bare bones, faction versus faction scrapping. What's more, helping the plot along will be a vastly expanded roster of non-playable hero characters that you can call on for assistance when the Rancor shit hits the fan.

5 AN ORGANISED ARMY WILL BE VICTORIOUS

Or... Streamlining the *Battlefront 2* online game

Supremo single-player game or not, the majority of *Battlefront 2* gamers will probably still be drawn to the online game. And who's to argue with that? If any experience lives for network play it's the *'Wars*. Still, the original title's online hub lacked a few creature comforts that the urbane broadband-enabled *hommes de jeux* expect from their games. Maybe that's why *Battlefront 2*'s network presence will now incorporate a new system to help locate and organize gaming clans, and enhanced, persistent stat-tracking for players. Perfect if you want to see if you truly are the chosen one, as you've always suspected... ■

Online you can play as any faction unit you like

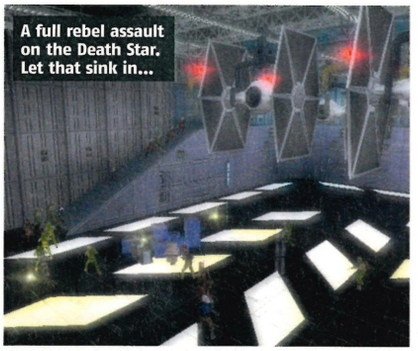
Here's hoping the wookies can wrench limbs off

REX FEATURES

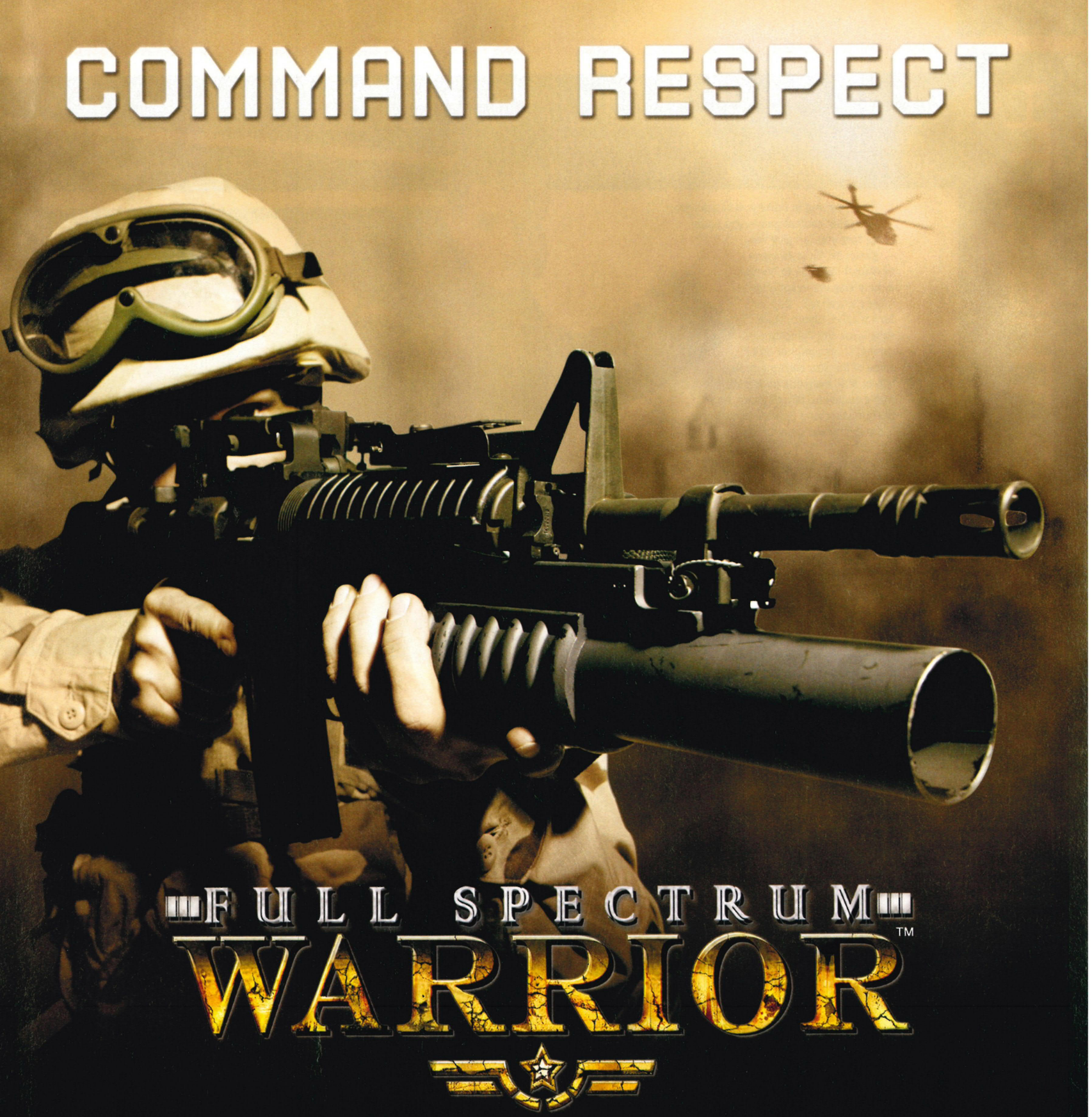
***Battlefront 2* and *Episode III* aren't what *Star Wars* is about for the *Little Britain* star**

When I think of *Star Wars*, I'm afraid I tend to think, quite unfairly, of the *Star Wars Holiday Special* which was made for US TV and screened once, before George apparently withdrew it. Now it sits in the vaults somewhere on his vast ranch. However, I have a copy at home on a bootleg video and was warned not to watch it but I did and boy do I regret it. It's got Wookie cookery, Bea Arthur serving behind the cantina bar and Princess Leia singing a hymn at the end. It's very bad but not in any sort of ironic, enjoyable way. It's just very bad. I also remember going to see *Caravan Of Courage : An Ewok Adventure* when I was about 11 with Mark Weston and coming out and going, "I'm sorry but there's no way that should be a U. That should be a PG."

The original cast of *Golden Girls* was rough as


A full rebel assault on the Death Star. Let that sink in...

COMMAND RESPECT



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Episode III: Revenge Of The Sith *is an ambitious game. Nothing less than the definitive lightsaber battler will do. And to make that you need the ultimate Jedi master,* Star Wars *'saber expert, Nick Gillard...*

If you're going to make a max strength lightsaber combat game, you better be sure you can give the gamer an accurate sense of what it feels like to handle a more elegant weapon for a more civilized age. Step forward Nick Gillard, stunt supervisor and lightsaber combat choreographer on all three of the *Star Wars* prequels. Sith or Jedi, everyone in *Star Wars* is Nick's padawan. What's more, he's been making sure *Episode III* the game is the definitive 'saber battle...

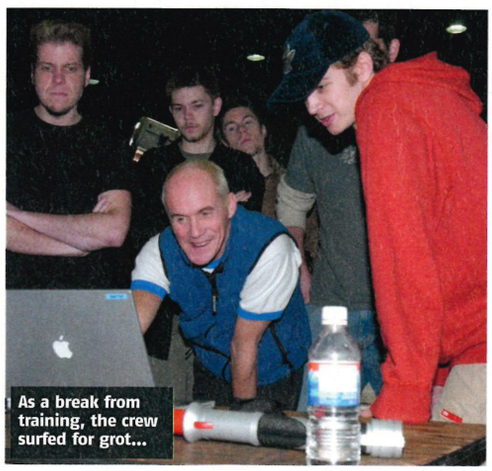
Stunt co-ordinator Gillard fights new baddie, A'didas

***OPS2*: So what has your role been on *Episode III*, the game?**
Nick Gillard: We've been working on breaking down the Jedi moves. Trying to work with the system – a written system that only a few of us know. Only the actors and the stunt guys do it, so I've been trying to teach the animators of the game and show the specific moves – show them how wrists move, how feet move – so we can get it as close as possible to the action of the movie.

Are there any moves that didn't make it into the film but did make the game?
The glory of doing the game is that there are lots of moves that don't work on the movie. They might be too complicated, or they might be too fierce, and get rejected for the film – we can now put those into the game.

Can you tell us about your character in the movie?
I only did it providing my name could be my own name. So I have my own name backward, which is Cin Drallig. I play an instructor and I get killed by Anakin (laughs). Obviously in real life, I'd cream him.

What was most important to teach the animators? What did you want to show them to make sure they created authentic fighting sequences?
In the games I've played, the character movement seemed to be incorrect, and I know that the people here were keen to fix that. So we're working particularly on the footwork – how exactly they move. How their wrists move when they turn, that they turn the right way, that the blocks and grapples are correct. We spent a lot of time showing how Count Dooku walks, how Anakin walks now as opposed to how he walked in *Episode II* – which is different – and why Obi is so bouncy and jolly.



As a break from training, the crew surfed for grot...

Which lightsabers did you bring to the hands-on demonstration session for the team?
I brought Anakin's, Obi's and mine. And they're all actually like the characters'. They're all different lights, different weights and different lengths. I think it was good for the guys to see that and how it's not just a generic lightsaber. Obi's 'saber is always much thicker than everyone else's. Anakin's is longer.

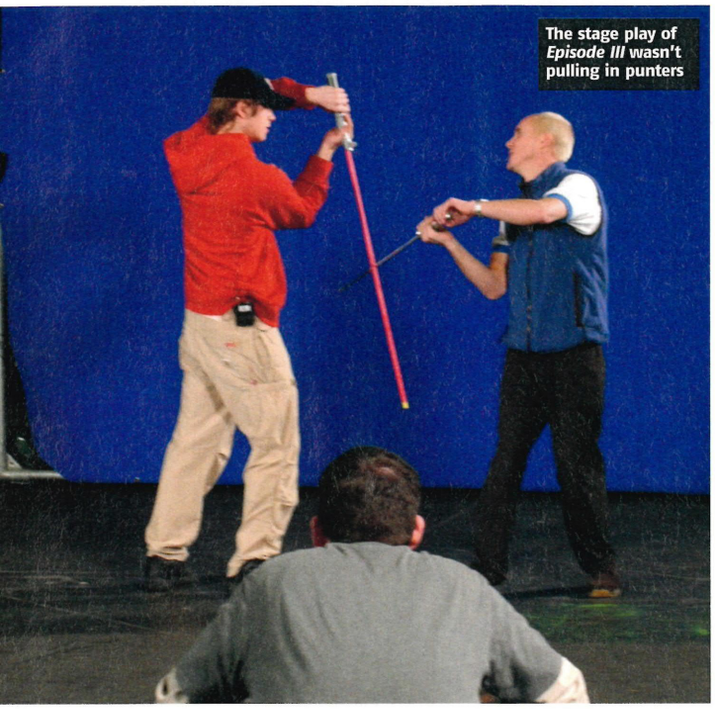
Do you think about the characters involved when choreographing a fight scene?
When we started on *Phantom Menace*, I set out certain styles and, particularly, faults for characters. Once you know the line of them, you know why they're going to behave a certain way; what's going to make them angry or not angry.

What's Anakin's particular fault?
Anakin has the least of them all, but his would be being on a slope.

How about Obi-Wan?
Obi's is his aggression. If he has a downfall, that's the one.

How was it working with Ewan McGregor and Hayden Christensen, especially on such a long and arduous fight?
The fight with Anakin and Obi-Wan at the end is an incredibly long one – I think it'll be the longest fight in cinema history. It was fantastic

OBI'S IS ALWAYS MUCH THICKER THAN EVERYONE ELSE'S. ANAKIN'S IS LONGER



The stage play of *Episode III* wasn't pulling in punters

to work on. I had Hayden for maybe seven weeks of rehearsal and I tried to keep him and Ewan apart for a long time. I would fight them against doubles, and I kept it right until the very end before they went against each other, because it's so emotional.

How would you say Obi-Wan evolves as a swordsman from *Episode I* to *Episode III*?
Obi-Wan has gone up one level from *Episode I* to *Episode III*, but it's a huge jump from one level to another. It's not just about a style of fighting – it's mental as well. Anakin has gone up probably four levels from *Episode II* to *Episode III*. So he's gone beyond Obi-Wan, but he hasn't gone beyond him mentally.

If you could arrange a fight scene between any two *Star Wars* characters, who would they be?
The fight I'd really like to see would be Boba Fett versus Anakin.

What's been your favourite fight sequence from *Episodes I* through *III*?
Without question, it's Obi-Wan versus Anakin in *Episode III*. One was the master, one was the pupil, but now Anakin has replaced Obi-Wan, technically. Obi knows that Anakin is better, but because he taught him, he knows emotionally how he's going to behave. I took it on like a fight between a husband and wife. It sounds silly, but Obi doesn't want to kill him. Obi has got to try and withstand this huge onslaught that's going to cover a mile and be ten minutes long – an enormous amount of time for a fight. So I took it as Obi trying to take this onslaught continuously and hoping that Anakin was going to eventually, you know, get over it and calm down. That doesn't happen though...

SITES OF THE FIGHT

***Revenge Of The Sith* has four confirmed worlds and at least one bonus location**

THE SILENT HAND

This is General Grievous' personal ship. A gigantic, federation battle cruiser packed to the chromed rafters with battle droids, droidekas, and even more variations on the mechanised Jedi hurter theme. Of course, it's also where Anakin and Obi-Wan will come up against Grievous, as well as Darth Tyrannous himself, Count Dooku.

CORUSCANT

Coruscant: home of the Republic senate and location of the Jedi Temple. It's the centre of the *Star Wars* prequel universe, and a crucial location in *Episode III*. To reveal more would be a Wookie-sized spoiler. Talking of which, if you simply can't wait to know what goes down in *Revenge Of The Sith*, turn to page 76 for a massive plot spunk up.

UTAPAU

A brand new planet for both *Episode III* the movie, as well as the game, Utapau is a world whose surface is riddled with gigantic, subterranean sink holes. The inhabitants live in cities circling the rims of these gigantic holes. Obi-Wan traces General Grievous to Utapau. Expect to notch up a lot of scrap metal when you visit.

MUSTAFAR

Already revealed on a thousand fan sites, Mustafar is the lava planet on which Obi-Wan confronts Anakin in the mother of all 'saber battles. In the movie, this showdown is likely to be the longest fight in cinema history. In the game it's going to be even longer and more vicious.

MYGEETO?

Confirmed as a location for the movie, Mygeeto is a crystalline planet, held by the Separatist forces. With Jedis seen leading the clone army into battle on Mygeeto in *Episode III*, we wouldn't be surprised if the icy planet was an unlockable location for one-on-one versus battles.

KASHYYYK?

As revealed in our preview in March, while there's no official word on Kashyyyk, the Wookie home world, appearing as a location in the *Episode III* game, we keep getting sent artwork depicting Chewbacca's leafy gaff. We're putting money on Yoda (who fights with the Wookies in *Episode III*) appearing as an unlockable character in the game's two-player versus mode.

WERE THE JEDIS ASKING FOR IT?

"YOU REFER TO THE PROPHECY OF THE ONE WHO WILL BRING BALANCE TO THE FORCE. YOU BELIEVE IT'S THIS BOY?" MACE WINDU, *EPISODE I*

Are the Jedi the real menace in the galaxy far, far away? It may not be as strange as it sounds...

The peace loving, evil-hating Jedi baddies? Some perverse Sith mind trick, surely. Well, maybe not. Let's look at the facts. Anakin (as the quote above suggests) is the chosen one, set to right some crucial imbalance in the Force. You'd think that this would make Mace Windu and Yoda break out the midichlorian brews, and yet, throughout *Episodes I* and *II*, they seem increasingly concerned about Anakin. Why?

Given our knowledge of *Episodes IV, V,* and *VI*, it's no secret that Anakin is instrumental in the near extinction of the Jedi. Which kind of suggests that this is how he brings balance to the Force. Could it be that for there to be universal peace, there is supposed to be an even number of Sith and Jedi? With only two Sith (Tyrannous and Sidious) versus hundreds of Jedis, something has to give, and that something is a cull of Jedi Knights. Perhaps Mace and Yoda know this, but are powerless to alter the inevitable.

One more thought, at the end of *Return Of The Jedi*, there are no Sith and only one Jedi left. But in Luke, maybe a balance has been struck after all. He's a true Jedi Knight, but he's got some dark elements. He wears a black outfit that echoes Vader's tailoring, and he has one mechanical hand (just like Dad). Let's just pray Luke doesn't sire any sprogs. If he does, it's all going to kick off again. Lucas? Get typing now...

THE GOOD GUYS

Key figures in the forces of the Republic. But can they all be trusted? (And we're not just talking about stroppy Anakin, either...)

ANAKIN SKYWALKER
Play as Anakin and you'll develop the vicious skills and evil swagger of Mr Vader as you pucker up and embrace the dark side.

OBI-WAN KENOBI
Obi-Wan is the second playable character in the single-player game. Among others, you'll be tackling General Grievous and Anakin.

YODA
No confirmation of Yoda as a playable character as yet, but with the mouldy midget leading the attack on Kashyyyk, we're sure you'll be able to.

MACE WINDU
Senior member of the Jedi Council and one of the few Jedi that sense Palpatine is up to no good. Anakin and Darth Sidious tackle him in the film.

CIN DRALLIG
The alter-ego of Nick Gillard, stunt co-ordinator for *Ep III*. Glimpsed in the film, he's a focused and formidable Jedi Master and teacher.

SERRA KETO
Cin Drallig's padawan is a new Jedi for the game. While feisty, her training has helped, but she can still be unpredictable. Wields a pair of lightsabers.

JEDI BRUTE
These guys are the heavy muscle of the Jedi Knights, and are trained to be tactically more aggressive than the regular 'saber twirlers.

JEDI SNIPER
Rather than using rifles, these Jedi snipers are capable of lobbing lightsabers over great distances and with even greater accuracy.

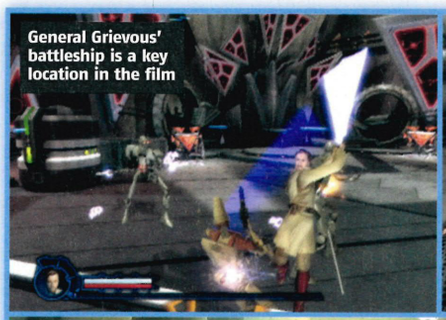
COMMANDER CODY
Cody is one of the first clone troopers to have been given greater cognitive capabilities – meaning he's a skilled battlefield tactician.

CLONE HEAVY GUNNER
Heavily armed, these Gunners are capable of taking down tanks and air units, so it's a good job they're on the Jedis' side. For now, at least...

CLONE BLAZE TROOPER
Your standard, jetpack-assisted, flamethrower wielding, impenetrable armour-wearing clone trooper. Mercy.

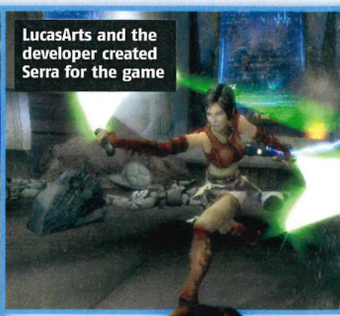
CLONE ASSASSIN
Clone Assassins are genetically closer to their clone father Jango Fett, and as such are perfect for any cloak and dagger work that needs doing.

Separatist cyborg and leader of the droid armies, General Grievous hunts Jedis for sport



General Grievous' battleship is a key location in the film

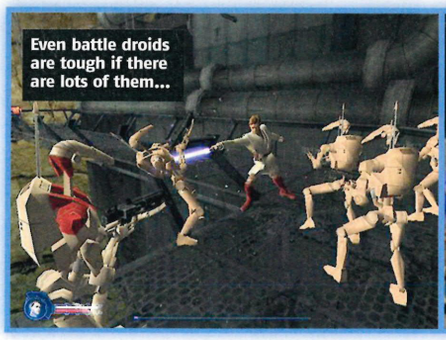
Force powers go hand in hand with 'saber battling



LucasArts and the developer created Serra for the game

On the planet of Utapau, Obi-Wan fights a destroyer and battle droids en route to Grievous

THE MASTER: OBI-WAN KENOBI



Even battle droids are tough if there are lots of them...

Light side and dark side combos offer huge variety

THE BAD GUYS

Forces to be reckoned with from the Separatist camp in *Revenge Of The Sith*

COUNT DOOKU
AKA Darth Tyrannous. Previously a Jedi of high standing, and Yoda's former padawan, Dooku is the right-hand man of Darth Sidious.

GENERAL GRIEVOUS
Second only to Count Dooku, Grievous hates the Jedi and collects the lightsabers of his victims. Wields four of them against Obi-Wan.

GRIEVOUS BODYGUARD
Often working in tandem and toting long electrostaffs, Grievous' bodyguards make for shrewd and extremely formidable opponents.

BATTLE DROIDS
Your standard battle droid. Not much of a challenge to Obi-Wan alone, but deployed in their hundreds? Now that's a different matter...

SUPER BATTLE DROIDS
The clue's in the title. These guys are more aggressive, have better armour, and those cool, clicky, wrist-mounted laser cannons we like so much.

DROIDEKA (DESTROYER DROIDS)
These are the heavy-duty units you saw rolling into battle and unfolding in *Episode II*. Tough customers.

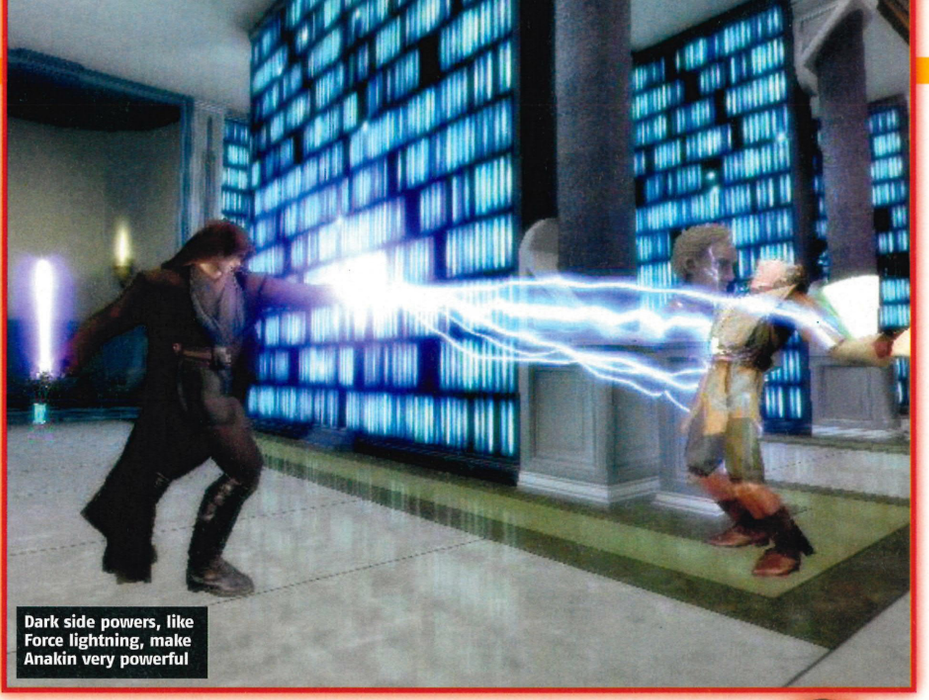
GRAPPLE DROIDS
Based on the Super Battle Droid frame, these fresh creations for the game are armed with electrically charged pincers.

CRAB DROIDS
Much bigger than the average Separatist droid, these babies are used primarily to attack and dismantle Republic tanks and gunships.

NEIMOIDIAN GUARD
As far as the Neimoidians are concerned, they are the leaders of the uprising. When Sidious takes control, he sends Anakin to 'meet' with them.

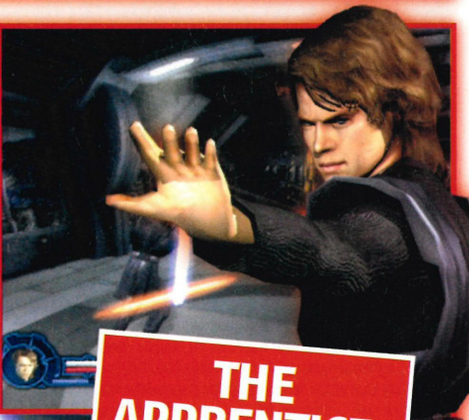
NEIMOIDIAN BRUTE GUARD
These genetically enhanced thugs aren't too bright, but make up for low IQs with a tendency to go berserk at the slightest provocation.

NEIMOIDIAN SNIPER
Very patient, very focused, *and* they don't arse around, throwing lightsabers. They're deadly marksmen of the old-fashioned, rifle-toting kind.



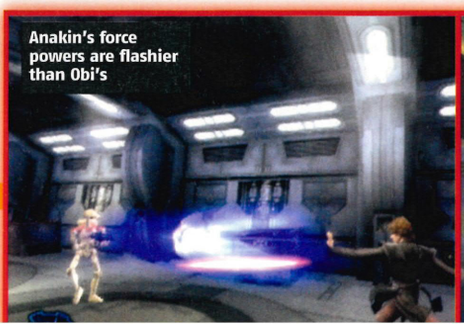
Dark side powers, like Force lightning, make Anakin very powerful

Play as Anakin and give in to the brutal dark side

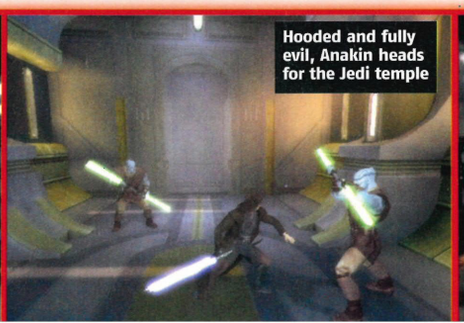


THE APPRENTICE: ANAKIN SKYWALKER

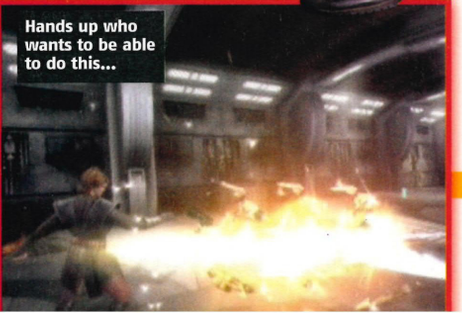
Anakin faces off against a Jedi brute guard



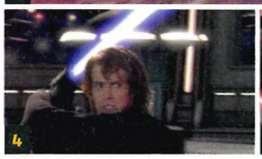
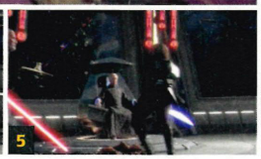
Anakin's force powers are flashier than Obi's

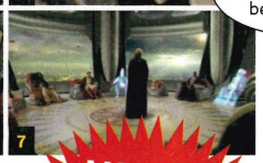


Hooded and fully evil, Anakin heads for the Jedi temple



Hands up who wants to be able to do this...



STAR WARS

THE PLOT REVEALED

MASSIVE SPOILER! The entire *Revenge Of The Sith* plot spunked. You have a choice...

The full, shocking truth of Anakin's devastating journey to the dark side of the Force (probably) brought to you via Netspionage. Many Bothan spies died to bring you this information...

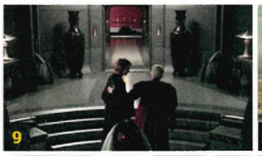
The Clone Wars are raging (1). The Republic is taking a battering from the Separatists and their droid armies, lead by Count Dooku and the vicious General Grievous. In a bold attack, Grievous has kidnapped the leader of the Republic, Chancellor Palpatine, whisking him away to The Silent Hand, his ship orbiting the planet of Coruscant. With a battle between droid and Republic forces raging above the planet (2), Obi-Wan and Anakin are dispatched to infiltrate The Silent Hand and rescue the Chancellor (3). Eventually locating the shackled Palpatine in General Grievous' quarters, Obi-Wan fights Grievous, while Anakin confronts Count Dooku (4). With Obi-Wan distracted, Palpatine eggs Anakin on with sinister suggestions. Giving in to the dark side of the Force (5), Anakin eventually seizes Dooku's lightsaber and coldly decapitates him. Grievous escapes.

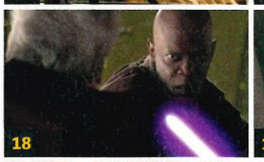
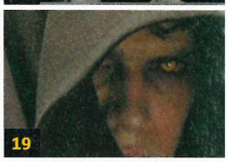
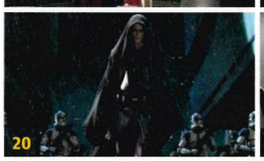
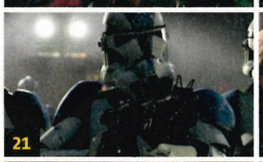
Safely back at the senate, Palpatine aggravates the Jedi (6) by granting Anakin a place on the Jedi council (7), despite protests. Anakin is angered by this apparent lack of trust and recognition. Meanwhile, Jedis around the galaxy are poised to lead clone army units in decisive battles against the Separatists. With a rift growing between Obi-Wan and Anakin (8), Palpatine strengthens his relationship with the young Jedi and appoints him as his personal bodyguard (9).

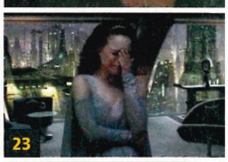
Having traced General Grievous to the planet of Utapau, Obi-Wan lands there (10) and infiltrates Grievous' HQ. Obi-Wan is horrified to learn that Darth Sidious and Palpatine are one and the same person. Against the backdrop of galaxy-wide Jedi-lead attacks against the Separatists (11,12,13) – including Yoda fighting alongside Wookies on their home world of Kashyyyk – Obi-Wan confronts and finally kills Grievous (14). He then contacts Mace Windu and informs him of Palpatine's true identity. Mace immediately heads to Palpatine's chambers with fellow Jedi masters to arrest him (15,16) but underestimates the power of Darth Sidious. Sidious kills all of the Jedis except Mace in an horrific battle (17,18). Anakin arrives and appears to side with Mace, but turns on him instead (19). Surprised, the weakened Mace is killed.

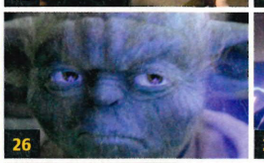
Sidious sends the now fully evil Anakin to the Jedi temple to wipe out all of the Jedis (20). As Anakin slaughters Jedis young and old, Palpatine declares war on the Jedis in the senate and announces the creation of the Empire, declaring himself as Emperor.

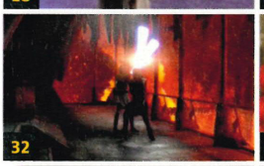
Sidious then triggers a dormant control over all of the clone armies around the galaxy and orders them to kill their Jedi generals (21). Taken by surprise, many of them are wiped out. With the help of Senator Bail Organa, Yoda and Obi-Wan return to Coruscant and learn of Anakin's rampage (22). Believing Padme (now heavily pregnant) might be able to bring Anakin back from the brink, Obi-Wan persuades her to come with him (23) and confront Anakin on the lava world of Mustafar (24). Yoda stays to tackle Darth Sidious (25,26). In a hard fought battle (27,28,29) Yoda is defeated but rescued by Bail Organa. On Mustafar, Padme attempts to persuade Anakin to turn back to goodness (30). Instead he is enraged, and feeling betrayed, Force chokes and nearly kills her. There begins an epic battle between Obi-Wan and Anakin that ends with Anakin falling, mutilated into the lava (31,32,33). Rescuing Padme, Obi-Wan witnesses her give birth to twins, Leia and Luke, shortly before she dies from her injuries. Bail Organa takes Leia to Alderaan (34), Obi-Wan takes Luke to Tatooine, and Yoda leaves for exile on Dagobah. Anakin, meanwhile, has been rescued from the lava and has been rebuilt by imperial droids as Darth Vader (35). Standing alongside his master, Darth Sidious, Vader looks out from the bridge of a star destroyer as construction begins on the Death Star (36)...



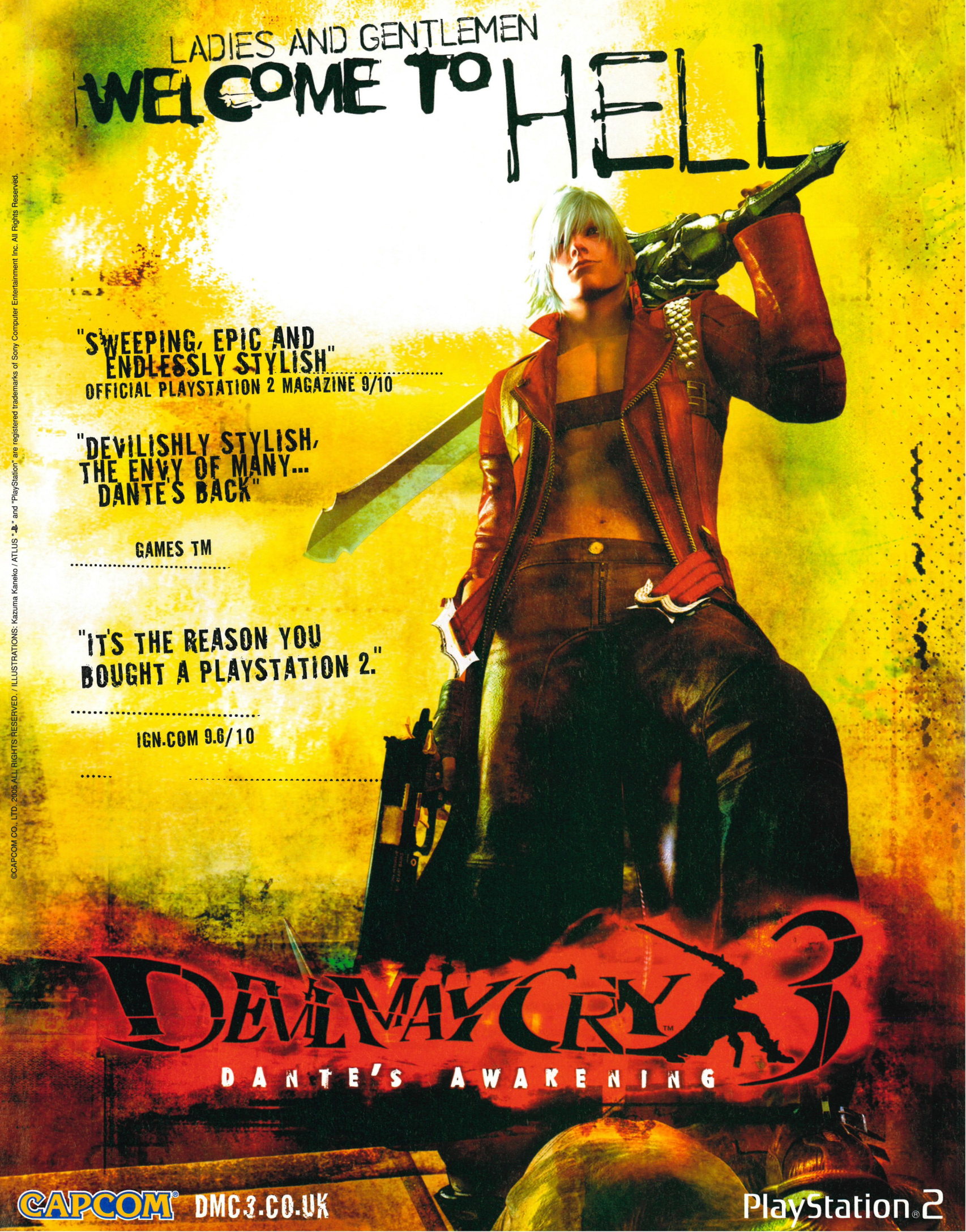











THAT'S NOT ALL FOR STAR WARS, TURN OVER



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review

WHERE EVERY GAME GETS AN OFFICIAL WELCOME (OR A GOOD KICKING)

WELCOME TO REVIEWS

Offering definitive gaming verdicts from players wiser than Yoda

And so our *Star Wars* extravaganza continues with the review of *Lego Star Wars*. Look, I've even dressed up for the occasion. I'd like to say that the gear comes direct from Lucasfilm, but alas I must confess that it's all my own property. They were gifts, mind (honest), but are a good sign of the *Star Wars* love you can expect in my review.

It's been a pretty hectic month outside of the *Star Wars* madness, with a bumper review section. As ever, it was interesting to see some titles dabble with the dark side: *NARC* seems lacklustre, *Juiced* is still a just-plain-average-racer despite six months' worth of polishing, and *Enthusia* doesn't get us as excited as it wants to. But there have been some heroic efforts of Jedi Knight-proportions, including *SingStar Popworld*, *Super Monkey Ball*, *Midnight Club 3* and *Cold Winter*.

With 22 games reviewed, I think you'll agree that the Force really is with us. If you can find me a PS2 reviews section as packed as this one in any other magazine I'll happily eat my oddly-phallic plastic fancy dress hat.

Michael

Michael French,
Reviews editor

LEGO STAR WARS

SMASH THE EMPIRE, THE SITH, AND DROIDS INTO LITTLE BRICKS IN THE BEST *STAR WARS* GAME EVER MADE

080

084 **NARC**
Lay down the law in cities ravaged by an epic drug war. Or give in to the majority and get stoned...

086 **SINGSTAR POPWORLD**
More drunken bellowing beckons, this time with a nod from T4's Simon and Miquita

087 **ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING**
Can this *Gran Turismo* challenger get us revved up? (Clue: the title is a little ambitious)

090 **COLD WINTER**
A fresh new shooter lands on PS2. And it's got *Killzone* and *'Splitters* in its sights...

096 **SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE**
What's better than primates rolling around in balls? Giving them guns maybe, but you get the idea

100 **MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION**
GTA-maker Rockstar ram-raids the *Need For Speed Underground* crowd with a gold-plated Lexus

108 **HAUNTING GROUND**
A frightfest that gives you a dog companion. Let's just hope it's not Scrappy Doo, eh?

PLUS

088 KESSEN III
088 TT SUPERBIKES
095 ALIEN HOMINID
095 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2005
099 MX VS ATV UNLEASHED
102 SPINDRIVE PING PONG
102 GUNBIRD SPECIAL EDITION
104 JUICED
106 TENCHU: FATAL SHADOWS
107 RED NINJA: END OF HONOR
107 PINK PONG
107 ROBOTS
109 TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS
109 MASHED: FULLY LOADED

"No, I have no idea what I am either. Animal, mineral, alien... snot?"

■ This lobby area is where you begin, with each film's levels behind those doors

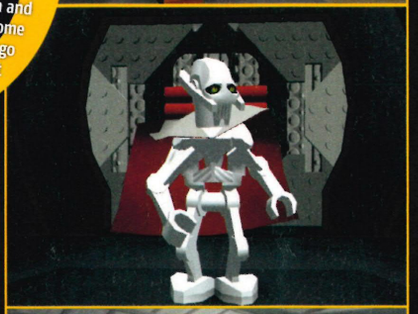
"USE THE ◎, LUKE"

Characters' special abilities are activated by pressing ◎. The abilities vary from type to type. Jedis can use the force to move objects and droids can open locked doors. Meanwhile, most humans have a grappling hook to reach high ledges, while kids (namely Anakin and Boba Fett) can use vents as tunnels. Some characters have unique powers – Jango Fett, for instance, has a jetpack that enables him to hover

bronze

PlayStation 2 official magazine-uk

■ Everything is in dinky form. Even Chewie and Grievous (below)



■ Over 50 characters can be unlocked to play as. Yep, even Yoda and his hovering chair

LEGO STAR WARS

PlayStation 2

Best *Star Wars* game ever? Yes, yes it is

DETAILS

PUBLISHER EIDOS/GIANT INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER TRAVELLER'S TALES
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.LEGOSTARWARS THEVIDEOGAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

The *Star Wars* universe rendered in insanely loveable small-o-vision using Lego men. Run around and fight the Empire while looking after a huge collection of unlockables.

Among the many things said about George Lucas in the articles charting his success is the oft-repeated observation that he has a good head for business. He's the man who understood the value of merchandise spin-offs, creating not just the blockbuster movie but the idea of a lucrative action-figure slurry to go with it. The man has made so much money from films, videogames and associated action figures, bed spreads and toy lightsabers that *Episode I* actor Terrence Stamp accused *The Phantom Menace* of being a jumped-up toy commercial.

From this, maybe we're to think of *Lego Star Wars* as a terrific piss-take; not only does it use toy soldiers to retell the prequel stories but your participation revolves around collecting in-game money to spend on unlocking even more toy men to play with. Okay, it's probably *not* a jibe at Lucas' expense(s), but if it was it would make the following punch line doubly brilliant: the most merchandise-orientated *Star Wars* videogame turns out to be the best title to ever be associated with Lucas' galaxy far, far away.

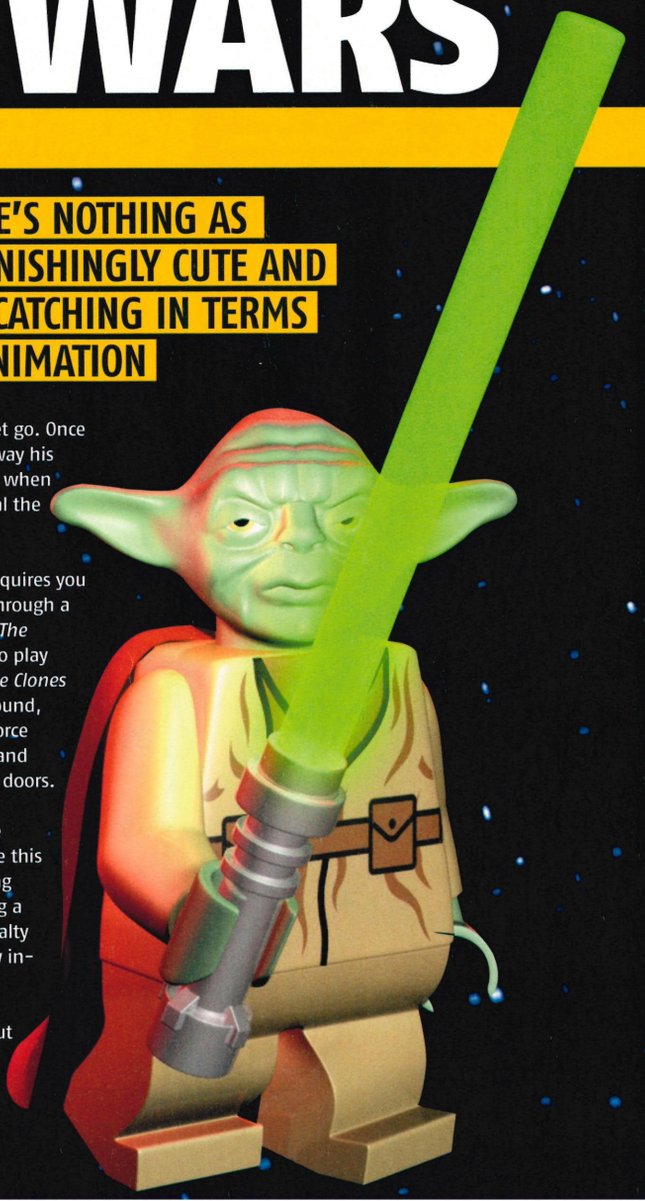
EMPIRE BUILDING BLOCKS

At first, you'll be forgiven for thinking the game is just a simple action title that relives the prequels via a gimmick that has you controlling figurines from Lego's line of *Star Wars* kits. Simple, that is, but staggeringly well drawn. It doesn't take long to realise that there truly is nothing as astonishingly cute and eye-catching in terms of character animation. Characters like Obi-Wan, C3PO and Yoda hop, run and scamper as quickly as their stumpy legs will carry them, and moving them makes for compulsive viewing. Sure, it impresses solely on the basis that the graphics evoke and retain the *Star Wars* feel, even though the characters are pint-sized and plastic, but it's a hook that doesn't let go. Once you've met Jango Fett and seen the way his body moves, the way his body recoils when he fires a gun, the animation will seal the deal on your admirations if other characters haven't already.

THERE'S NOTHING AS ASTONISHINGLY CUTE AND EYE-CATCHING IN TERMS OF ANIMATION

At the very beginning, progress requires you to guide these adorable dinky men through a level themed around the opening of *The Phantom Menace*. (Later on you get to play chapters themed around *Attack Of The Clones* and *Revenge Of The Sith*.) You run around, bash enemies with lightsabers, use force powers to move objects from A to B, and switch from Jedis and droids to open doors. But soon it becomes apparent the gameplay isn't stood in normal game territory – you're most likely to realise this the first time you die. Instead of going back to the start of the level, or losing a 'life', you respawn with the only penalty being that your character drops a few in-game coins.

The twists continue once the first mission is finished – linearity goes out the window and you're given the option to instead dip into the first



■ This spectacular space battle opens *Episode III*

■ This shoot-'em-up styled level is set during *Episode II*

■ This ace puzzle activates a mini-disco the Kamino aliens dance to. It even plays a funk version of the *Star Wars* theme tune!

WHERE NEXT FOR *LEGO STAR WARS*?

Episodes IV, V and VI, that's where!

Max out your Jedi Lego powerbar on each level (by collecting the requisite number of studs) in each of the 17 chapters to unlock a Legoised version of this familiar scenario. Yep, it's the very beginning of *A New Hope*, with you playing as Vader hunting down Leia. More tellingly, completion of this section delivers the message: 'To be continued...' which suggests that an Original Trilogy version of *Lego Star Wars* is on the way. If it's not then we'll be crying ourselves to sleep over the next few months, while wearing our Han Solo pants and wrapped up in our Death Star duvet.

■ Lightsabers are just as deadly in the game as they are on film

■ The showdown between Obi-Wan and Anakin is a highlight

chapters of the other films. There's also the odd level dedicated to other kinds of gameplay, such as the pod-racing from *Episode I* and intergalactic shoot-outs from *Episode II* and *Episode III*. You're also able, via the game's hub area themed around *Episode II*'s Dexter's Diner, to spend the cash (coloured Lego studs) collected in those levels to buy bonus characters or items. Free Play, meanwhile, invites you to revisit chapters with the unlocked characters to reach even more unlockables, and you can plug in another controller so a friend can join in.

It's the wealth of choice available to you from this point onwards that drives you to keep playing. The series of missions are simply a means to keep you earning and saving the in-game currency, letting you pay your way through a beautiful, acre-wide toy box. It's hugely accessible, the rewards being another character to play with. If you're after a quick take on the films that's carried off with more style than any other *Star Wars*-related game, then you've got it. If you're a high-score junkie then there are more than enough things to find and records to max out in the perfectly judged treasure trove of unlockables (these include moustaches – see ''Tache Attack' – and something from the original trilogy – see 'Where Next For *Lego Star Wars*?'). And beneath that shallow surface it works in a variety of ways, with room for you to you dip in for a quick blast or play through with a buddy.

Even the combat has a certain multi-layered complexity – more than some may credit it. Certainly, the fighting is streamlined, and moves are the basic likes of attack and a jump. But it's combining them that counts, especially in Free Play, where you'll find yourself switching between Jedi, humans and droids in order to proceed and find hidden items. Jedi characters (including a certain *Episode III* villain) are a force to be reckoned with once you've mastered how to work their jump/'saber attacks and non-Jedi characters have blasters with auto-aim, leaving you to duck incoming fire. In fact, this is probably one of the most honest fighting systems we've seen. Think about it: other games with their 'deep' combat mechanics may well be hugely enjoyable and satisfying, but the actual act of playing them remains the same – bash buttons to defeat enemies and move on to the next level. So this game's reducing fighting down to its barest is hugely immediate, as proven by the single button press used to activate a character's special ability (see 'Use The ◎, Luke').

'TACHE ATTACK

Unlockable items include Lego cups and broomsticks or better blaster guns. Weirdest of the bunch, however, is the moustaches which, when activated, serve no purpose but to give every character funny-looking facial fluff

NEW FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

新・北斗の拳

NEW STORY!
NEW ANIMATION!
MORE BLOOD!

BELIEVE HIM WHEN HE SAYS

"YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD!"

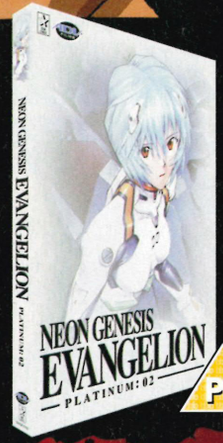
DFNS-001

18

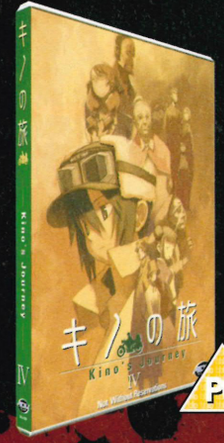
ALSO BUY THESE HOT TITLES COMING OUT IN APRIL

Angelic Layer 7 Seventh Heaven
DAL/007

Azumanga Daioh 5 Seniors!
DAZ-005



Neon Genesis Evangelion Platinum: 02
DNGE-002



Kino's Journey 4
DKJ-004

Last Exile 3
DLX-003

MVC
www.mvc.co.uk

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www.advfilms.co.uk

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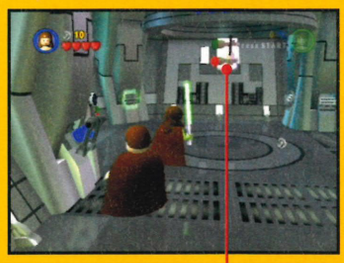
PLAY *LEGO STAR WARS* NOW!

Proving the power of the force with this month's exclusive demo

Our lead demo this month is pretty special – a taster of the game's first chapter, which follows the opening scenes of *The Phantom Menace*. Pop the disc in your PS2 and follow this guide to understand exactly how the game works and what makes it so special

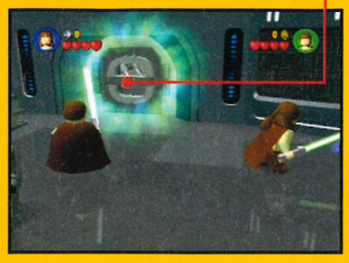
ON THE DVD

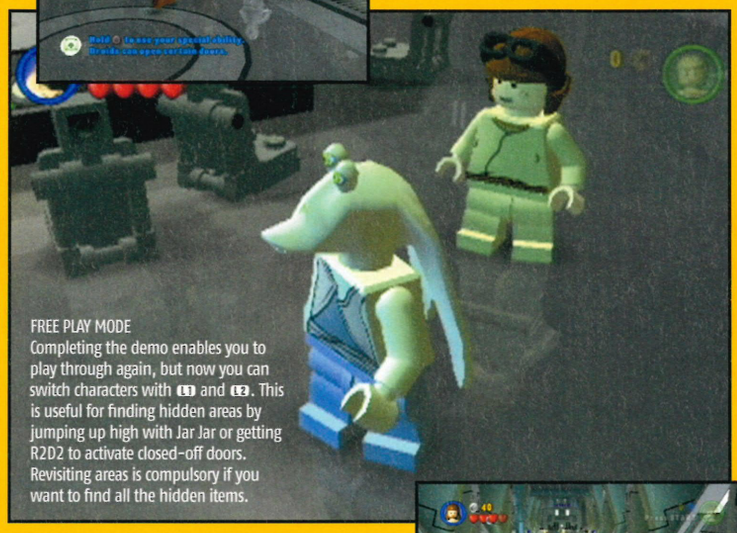
HOTSWAP TO ANOTHER CHARACTER
After soldiering through the first wave of battle droids (using ▢ to swing your 'saber – hold it to block – and ✕ to jump), stand by the friendly female droid and press △. You're now controlling her instead of the Jedi. Use her to open the doors.



COLLECT HIDDEN ITEMS
Find these items by using the force to hit switches and by jumping up to higher levels. When playing through in Free Play mode try to collect all ten hidden around the area – this will give you a secret code to use with the proper game.

USING THE FORCE
Hold down ◎ when objects are surrounded by a shimmering aura – this will apply your force powers to them. It helps move items, knock back enemies, destroy Lego structures and find hidden items. In the demo, using the force on this door causes it to shatter into tiny Lego pieces. Cute!

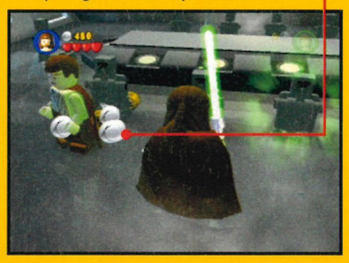


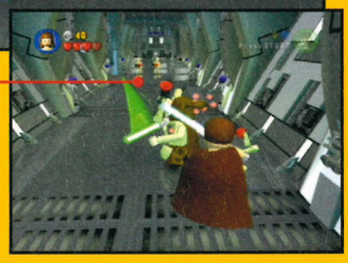


FREE PLAY MODE
Completing the demo enables you to play through again, but now you can switch characters with L1 and L2. This is useful for finding hidden areas by jumping up high with Jar Jar or getting R2D2 to activate closed-off doors. Revisiting areas is compulsory if you want to find all the hidden items.

TWO-PLAYER MADNESS
The game's constant state of multiplayer readiness means that at any time while playing – even in the demo – you can plug in a second controller. A press of START lets your friend take over the other good guy character on screen. They can drop out at any time, too, with another press of START.

COLLECT BITS OF LEGO
These Lego studs are collected and then spent to unlock items and other characters to play with in Free Play mode. In the full game filling up this bar in each of the 17 levels unlocks the bonus chapter themed around the opening of *Star Wars Episode IV*.





FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT
Obviously the driving force in any *Star Wars* story is the conflict between two warring factions, and the battles in *Lego Star Wars* are no different. In the demo you have to fight through the Neimodian's droid control ship as Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Our battle hint: keep pulling off jump and 'saber combos (that's ✕ followed by ▢) to smash down on battledroids.

That said, we're aware that for some the game's many positives could be negatives detrimental to the experience. If you're of the *Devil May Cry* or *Metal Gear* mindset and are looking for an Everest-sized slog, then this isn't for you. Levels are simplistic, easy to complete, and rather sparse in comparison to your typical game. *Lego Star Wars* rewards the clumsiest and most rubbish of gamers, and you can make it through the 17 chapters in hours. But that's the point. This is a game to be replayed quickly by *anyone*, from those who saw *A New Hope* in cinemas when it was released to others who weren't even born when *The Phantom Menace* came out in cinemas. And on those terms, it's hugely successful.

LEGO STAR WARS THINKS OUTSIDE OF THE TOY BOX. IT'S PLAYING WITH THE BIG BOYS

PAY WITH PLASTIC

In the end, it all comes back to the merchandise. And *Lego Star Wars* is merchandise – but it *knows* it's merchandise. Think back on all those other movie tie-in games: they were encyclopaedia generica that ticked every box with the film logo stuck on top. *Lego Star Wars*, on the other hand, is a toy in its own right, giving you the films' qualities and also the look and feel of two otherwise disparate toylines, Lego and *Star Wars*, all at once. Yeah, the low age rating means that it's 'for kids' – but the same could be said for *The Incredibles* (which, ironically, spawned an average game). From the well-animated cut-scenes to the hidden areas in each level, no other game has got a child's sense of adventure so right. Those mature games at the back of the class? They must pay attention. No other tie-in, child-orientated or not, has understood what made its source material so special.

This is one of the most lovingly made, faithfully put together pieces of tat emblazoned with the *Star Wars* logo you can find. Tat? Sorry, slip up there – this one's beyond merchandise.

Lego Star Wars includes all the things you knew from the films: transitional wipes between scenes; the music; villains drawn with the broadest of strokes, including evil sneers and narrowed eyes. Sure, it's a little throwaway, but *Lego Star Wars* thinks outside of the toy box, and plays with the big boys. And if there's a fight in the playground, this lad won't go home with a black eye. ■ **Michael French**

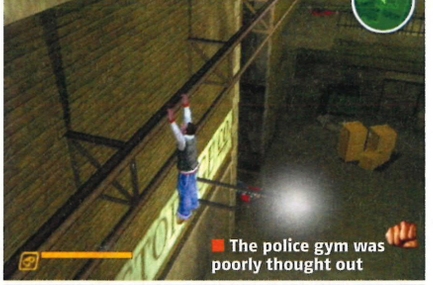
NOW THE CIRCLE REALLY IS COMPLETE

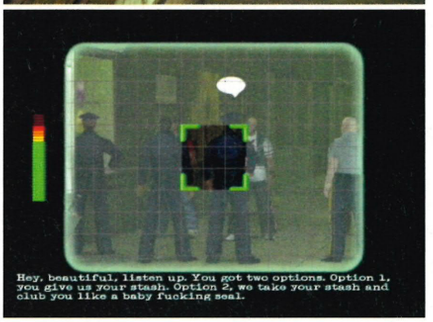
In a so-insane-it's-brilliant-move, a *Lego Star Wars* movie has been made. It should hopefully air on Cartoon Network in May (this clipping promotes the US one) before *Episode III* hits cinemas

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	09	It's *Star Wars*. It's Lego. Cute and polished
Sound	08	Great, accurate music from the trilogy
Gameplay	08	Shallow but toned and hugely entertaining
Lifespan	09	Hours and hours of toy box replay value

It may be shallow, easy, and 'for kids', but that's the point. Lots of charm and fun, making for an irresistible package

8/10


The police gym was poorly thought out



Find drug dealers on the streets and bust 'em

NARC

A policeman's lot, on this evidence, is not a happy one

DETAILS

PUBLISHER MIDWAY
DEVELOPER MIDWAY
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.MIDWAY.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

An update of – or, if you prefer, a homage to – Midway's '80s arcade game of the same name. Rid the world of drugs by busting perps, but feel free to sample the wares, too!

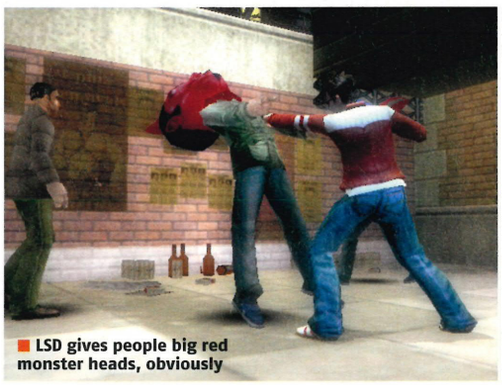
We're not sure, but those *might* be the bad guys

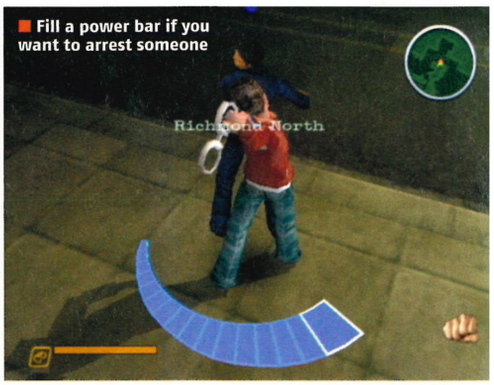
With hindsight, *NARC* sets its stall out within the first minute of play. A well-produced but badly synched intro segues wonderfully into a bullet-filled montage, as The Stranglers' *Golden Brown* fades in, and then out, perfectly. The shooter runs off, the gameplay kicks in and barely is there chance to register the finicky auto-aim before an Uzi-toting badass invites you to "Die, muthaf**ka, die!" You decline, dispense with him and set about doing likewise to his cohort. It's a mixed bag and tries far too hard to be grown up. And rarely does a minute pass without an excellent moment of gameplay, an excruciating moment of frustration, an inventive soundtrack switch or a glaring glitch accompanied by a cringingly forced obscenity.

And as if that wasn't bad enough, a new superdrug has hit the streets. It's called Liquid Soul and needs wiping out fast. So far, so not-so-simple, and things are made even harder by the intoxicating choices on offer. Play it straight, arrest the bad guys and generally kiss the captain's ruby red one, or have some fun, take a toke, let crime ride and merely pretend to be the acceptable face of the long arm of the law...

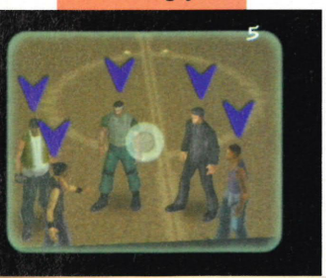
THE COP END

Two playable characters roughly represent 'good' and 'bad', but it's not like a choice at the outset determines a set path. Behaviour can be mixed and matched. Dealers litter the streets of the initial mundane-looking city, and drugs are confiscated and crims busted by a process of unarmed combat and a nifty swing-o-meter reminiscent of – of all things – golf games, pre-analogue swing. Once taken, the drugs can either be handed in as evidence or saved into your inventory for selling to civilians or, get this, taking yourself. Yep, *NARC* lets you take drugs. Weed, E, speed, crack – each has a different effect, and some are even helpful. Michael Madsen who voices – surprise, surprise! – the Bad Cop, is on record as saying the game's drug-taking angle is good because it acts as a deterrent in real life and therefore provides a valuable message. Like arse, it does. It is fun, though.


LSD gives people big red monster heads, obviously



Fill a power bar if you want to arrest someone



Less fun are the somewhat fiddly controls. The *NARC* characters are versatile – they wield weapons ranging from pistols to grenade launchers; they punch, kick, flash badges, arrest, jump, dive, interrogate, chat... and the strain on the controller sometimes shows. Having just offed a goon, our cop needs to search the body, and this is effected by pushing △. However, due to the imprecise commands, what can happen instead is the cop asks the goon: "Do you want some shit?" No, he doesn't. His head looks like an after-party birthday cake and he's floating in a pool of his own pureed giblets – he's had just about all the shit he can take! Turns out what had happened was, after switching back from weapons inventory to manual inventory, the 'weed' icon is displayed by default and pressing △ is the 'sell drugs' button.

Okay, that's an amusing problem, but switching between icons as copper fumbles for his gun amid a hail of bullets is less amusing.

YEP, *NARC* LETS YOU TAKE DRUGS. WEED, E, SPEED CRACK, EACH HAS AN EFFECT

Crocket and Tubbs used to deal with this kind of drug violence weekly in *Miami Vice*. Not once did they compromise their linens with spazzy gun fumbles. Nor should you have to.

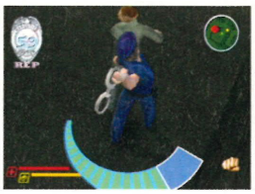
COLOUR CLASH

Also in the not-very-amusing-camp are the bugs and graphical glitches. While never ruining the gameplay beyond repair, a character whose cocked-up colour palette makes him look like the Predator wearing Joseph's dreamcoat hardly enhances the experience, especially when it happens more than once. People frequently fade into walls, and on one occasion a police car disappeared altogether. And yeah, okay, we were shooting it, which is probably wrong, but still.

Most annoying though, is the lack of consistency in the game world. An excellent feature is that too much uncopperlike behaviour sees you sin binned from the main game – a demotion to uniformed beat, from where your reputation needs rebuilding by stopping crimes, to the point where you're back on track and plain clothes worthy. Act up from this position and you'll be stripped of the uniform, though

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

The policemen in *NARC* make a lot of busts, and not necessarily for all the right reasons...



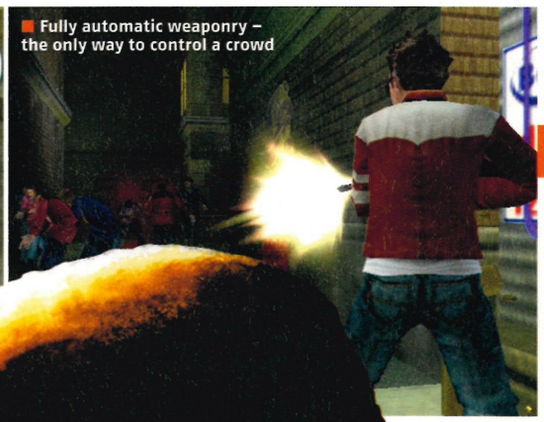
BUST PERPS
Come on sonny Jim, we're cleaning up the streets and you're trash.

OFF BADDIES
If they won't come quietly, a bullet in the face usually does the trick.

SELL DRUGS
If you can't beat them, join them. "Hey meester, you wanna get high?"

TURN ON YOUR OWN KIND
"You're going to the doughnut shop in the sky, pig! "

Busting breakdancers is all in a day's work for our copper



Fully automatic weaponry – the only way to control a crowd

not entirely of your police powers, as the ability to apprehend remains. But you can shoot people, kick them to death and even make police cars explode by filling them with lead, and no one comes a-calling to arrest you. In one instance, a cop walked blithely by a burning squad car as another was being set about. And then in another, we were busted for simply selling weed. What?

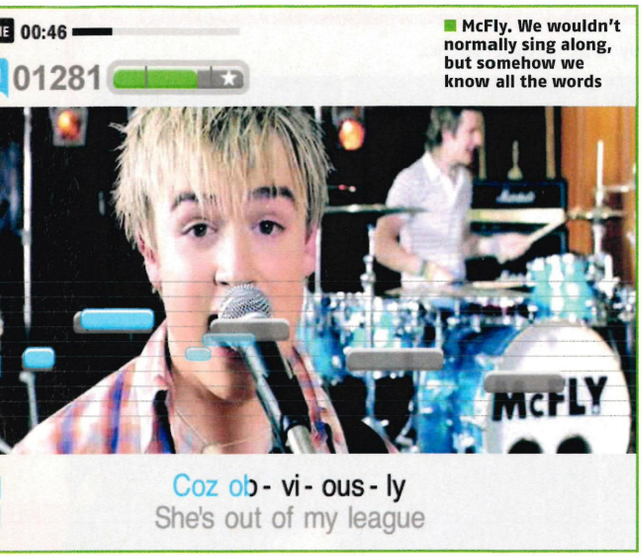
It's this lack of cohesion and consistency that defines the *NARC* experience. It's filled with great ideas and some slick scripting (along with a lot of rubbish scripting), some ace set-pieces and some ridiculously fiddly tasks and an engaging overall premise. Sadly, the gameplay fails to live up to it. It feels, frankly, as if it needed finishing off. But since this is the finished product, alas it's a bit of a stinker. ■ **Paul Roundell**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK — VERDICT

Graphics	04	Average and glitchy
Sound	07	Good FX and appropriate tunes
Gameplay	05	Blighted by bothersome control
Lifespan	06	It's a challenge for those who care

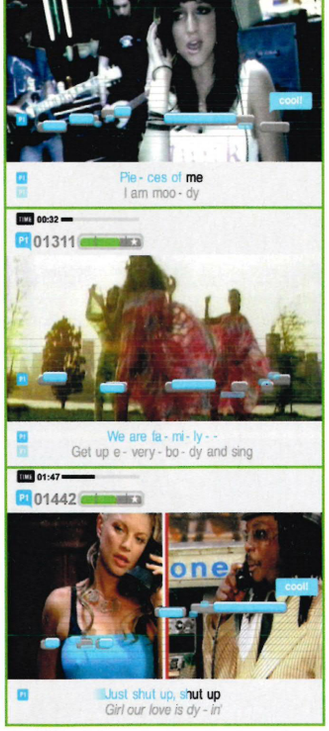
***A great idea that's badly realized, but one that might thrill us if it resurfaced as* NARC 2: Now We've Done It Properly**

5/10



McFly. We wouldn't normally sing along, but somehow we know all the words

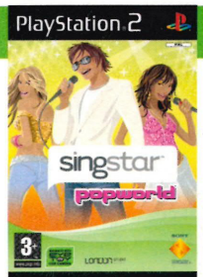
Girls Aloud are one example of *SingStar*'s newfound pop bias



Ashlee, Sister Sledge, the Peas. There's (in theory) something for everyone

SINGSTAR POPWORLD

Has *SingStar*'s bubble gone pop? Not yet, but almost...



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER LONDON STUDIO
PRICE £19.99 (STANDALONE), £39.99 (WITH MICROPHONES)
PLAYERS 1-8
OUT 19 MAY
WEBSITE WWW.SINGSTAR.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO, THANKFULLY. FORCING THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE WITH TO LISTEN IS QUITE ENOUGH

AT A GLANCE

SingStar is back, and has the fuzzy glow of T4's *Popworld* logo slapped on top. The gist still has you attempting to sing well, mind – it's not about conducting sarcastic interviews.

McFly, eh Miquita? I'd rather McDie." "Oooh, Simon you're such a bitch [giggle]." That's what we were hoping for when we discovered *SingStar* was co-branded with T4's *Popworld* (that's fancy talk for free advertising). Sadly not. It just rams home the new game's bias towards bubblegum ear-rot. With the law of diminishing returns – the first game scored 9/10, the second 8/10 – surely it's over for *SingStar*, with a one-way ticket to 7/10sville. Is this the difficult third 'album'? Not quite – but only just.

The crowd-pleasing, playfield-levelling track list of songs bamboozles as much as it entertains. And as the songs are the core of *SingStar*, it's an uncertainty we could do without. Some are a perfect fit, such as Robbie and Kylie's *Kids*, which hits the duet notes; Tom Jones' *It's Not Unusual*, which offers just the right level of cheese and snappiness; plus dedicated Kylie and Robbie tracks (*In Your Eyes* and *Let Me Entertain You*, if you're wondering). Other well-placed maestros include McFly (but don't tell our mates we said that, 'kay), Dandy Warhols, and one-for-the-dads Manfred Man's *Do Wah Diddy*.

The vinyl seems scratched, though, when it comes to the vocal rollercoaster bitches (Natasha Beddingfield, Girls Aloud, Jamelia, Beyonce and Joss 'I'm urban, mum, honest!' Stone). Nothing is more humiliating than trying to mimic them. Number one material they may be, but us oiks don't have the vocal gymnastics (or the help of a recording studio computer) to stay the course. Don't think you should get drunk before attempting them – our experience leans to sobriety. It's the only way to keep up.

WIN WHEN YOU'RE SINGING

You can't help but think that developer London Studio has tried to maintain its "*SingStar* isn't karaoke" maxim so much it's forgotten what social singing is all about. It may be a game with scores, ratings, grades and the buzz of competition – rather than public, badly-bellowed wailing – but you still expect to find songs you either know, like, can tolerate, at least sing regardless of those three, and for some of you a few songs won't tick any of those boxes.

This opening video is all you'll see of *Popworld*'s Simon and Miquita. Look at the pound signs in their eyes

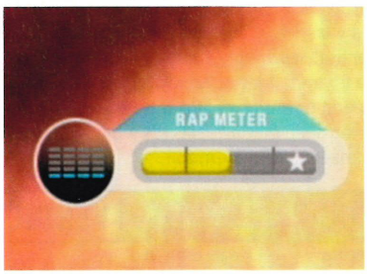
But for now, we'll leave these doubts down to personal taste because, even at its most off putting (a live version of a Good Charlotte track? You are having a laugh, right?) the core of *SingStar* remains unchanged. The brilliant, wonderful core which teaches you to sing by *forcing* you to modulate your voice to hit the notes, unlike the caterwauling of karaoke's social singing. No other game is like it. And by that regard, it's still an 8/10 – although more work needs to go into the songs for the next outing. (Ideally, we'd be happy to never, ever hear another Jamelia song on a music-based game ever, ever, ever again.) **Michael French**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	08 Videos and a coloured bar. It's all we need
Sound	07 Don't try to please *everyone* next time
Gameplay	08 Typical *SingStar* stuff – irresistible
Lifespan	09 For birthdays, weddings and bar mitzvahs

It's still* SingStar*, so it's still brilliant. The track list threatens to derail the soul train, yet doesn't crash the party too much **8/10**

RAPPERS DELIGHT?

How do the new hip-hop songs work?

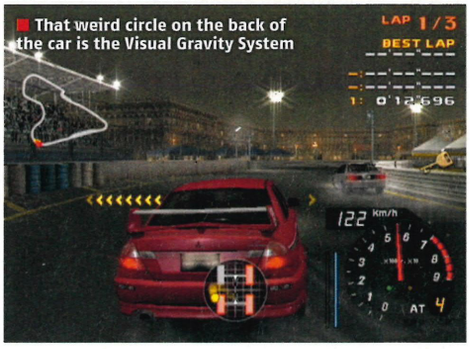


Popworld's biggest casualty is its biggest improvement, a new rap scoring system. This gives you a small on-screen 'rap meter' that individually grades your vocal showboating down to the rhyming couplet. But while it works *really* well there's not enough hip-hop in the game to take advantage of it. One of the rap tracks, 16-year-old classic *Paid In Full* by Eric B and Rakim, feels a bit useless to actually perform. For now, *SingStar* rapping feels undernourished, more *X-Factor* applicant than *Pop Idol* finalist.

More entertaining is the shallow but fun vocalising effects. You haven't heard Ronan Keating and Yusuf Islam's *Father And Son* until you've sung it yourself and added some robotizer effects – it's like some Madonna/Daft Punk vocoder nonsense wet dream.

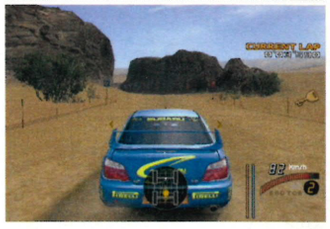
Putting a Lancer Evo through its paces

Hard to believe there's a Nissan in this bunch



That weird circle on the back of the car is the Visual Gravity System

The hard as nails Tsukuba track

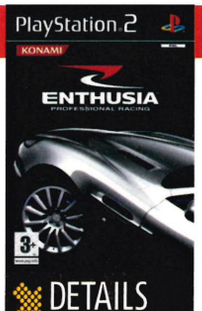


ON THE DVD

ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING

PlayStation 2

Are you ready for another 'real driving' experience? Already?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER KONAMI
DEVELOPER KONAMI
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 6 MAY
WEBSITE WWW.KONAMISTUDIO.CO.JP/ENTHUSIA
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

A selection of real life and fictional tracks on which to drive hundreds of licensed cars in a skills-focused career. *Enthusia* is gunning for the mighty *GT4*.

So you've played *Gran Turismo* and now you want something slightly worse. Of course you do, it's only natural – like when you think about the dog you've had for a while and realise you'd like another, only this time one with just three legs. It would be better. And one lung. And a single red-veined, unblinking eye that gets slightly more insane with every staring, sleepless night.

Wait, some people don't see things that way. How odd! *Enthusia* might not be for them. Bar one fundamental difference, this game is stepping all over *GT*'s toes and simply getting hoofed into orbit. Copying the screen furniture – even some of the lettering and colours – only emphasises the intent but, while reasonably pretty, these car models can't compete. Plus the scenery is unexceptional, except where it's exceptionally bad. We haven't seen flat-packed, x-shaped trees like those on the Autumn Hill track for nearly 1,000 years now. Autumn Hill. No relation to *GT*'s Autumn Ring, then? Oh no.

Even the hilly tracks feel strangely flat as a driving experience, despite taking so many cues from the best motorsport game on PS2. Curves tend towards the basic wiggling of arcade history – there are few really challenging complexes or blind tests of faith. In fact, at times the courses lead across pointless wooden piers and through caves like some kind of comedy karter – serious cars and stupid tracks. It's a strange mix.

VAN? DAMN!

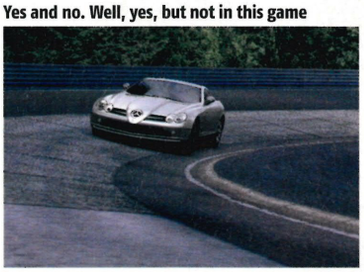
But lordy, is *Enthusia* earnest. That fundamental difference mentioned earlier (just after the weird bit with the dog) is a role-playing structure; a system that sees your car 'level up' to higher tunings as it gains 'experience'. Your own skills increase too, except they don't. In reality, it's the handling that goes from terrible to reasonable. Your skills are actually masked, to the point where a levelled-up van is quicker than the Lancer Evo you've just unlocked. This might work with pixies, but a +1 Van Of Righteous Velocity is a thing of sincere stupidity.

You also have the 'virtual gravity system,' a G-force display that looks like a tennis ball rolling around the floor plan of your car. As with *GT*'s version, it's utterly redundant. You also have a Driving Revolution mode, which turns out not to be a revolution at all, rather *GT* licence test-style challenges. In the end, *GT4*'s brilliance throws *Enthusia*'s flaws into sharper relief. It may be competent as a racer, but that doesn't wash here. It's an also-ran as a racing game, and especially compared with the best driving sim of all time. So you've played *Gran Turismo* and now you want something worse? Here it is. Give our love to Rover. **Steve Williams**

The replays don't challenge *GT4*'s stunning visuals

BEST TRACK EVER?

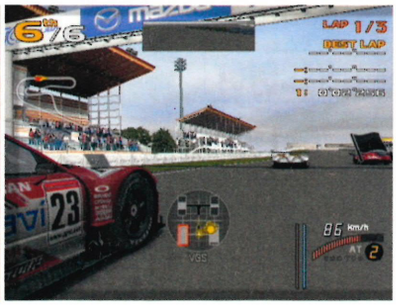
Yes and no. Well, yes, but not in this game



You probably all know about the Nordschleife by now – the mountainous original Nurburgring circuit – due to the fanfare surrounding *Gran Turismo 4*. In real life and, indeed, in *Gran Turismo*, it's one of the most awe-inspiring pieces of road on planet Earth (there may be better roads off the shoulder of Orion... we just don't know). Its extreme length meant games overlooked it for years. Had *Enthusia* been first, this track alone would have been a considerable draw. Sadly, it's not. *Enthusia* is the first to feature 'Speediapolis' however, as everyone else came up with better names for their Indianapolis rip-offs.

Yes, you really do get to drive one of those Smart cars

Desert races feature a random track creator



PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Solid and reasonable, but vaguely bland
Sound	07	Engines! Tyre screech! Exhausts! They're okay
Gameplay	06	A sort of dreary beige with wheels
Lifespan	06	Feels like it lasts forever; not in a good way

Pitches itself against the daddy and fails, ironically bypassing enthusiasm on its way to earnest okay-ness. A missed opportunity

7/10

It might look imposing, but the tactical map is easy to use. It's just not very flexible

It does look good, even with this many soldiers on the screen all at once

Charge in on your own for some personal combat

DETAILS

PUBLISHER KOEI
DEVELOPER KOEI
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 29 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.KOEI.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

KESSEN III

Just 'cos it's simple, doesn't make it fun

Kessen III is a Japanese history textbook come to life. You play as Lord Nobunaga Oda, a legend from Japan's bloody past. It's his aim to reunite the warring clans of 16th Century Japan, and it's your job to accomplish this through a series of large scale hack 'n' slash battles.

You take charge by using a friendly interface for deploying your troops, pointing them at the enemy and ordering them to charge. You directly control one single unit, but you can switch to any of your allies at any time. Despite the many special attacks and abilities that liven up the combat, fights are mere button-bashing affairs. Okay, so you can purchase new kit like armour or weapons to beef up the officers from each unit, but that's about as complicated as it gets.

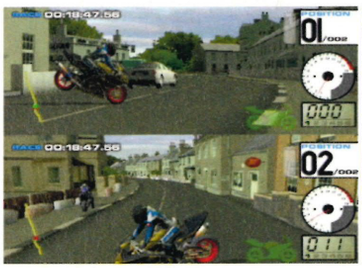
The problem is that *Kessen III* is too stop-start to keep you interested. Assault the leading enemy unit and the game cuts to a movie. Perform a special attack and it cuts to a movie. Choose a location to attack and, yup, another movie. It's more disruptive than the conversations in *MGS3: Snake Eater* but nothing like as compelling to play. And having to make *every* move for the allies often means that, unprompted, your troops will sit, motionless, with the enemy only a few feet away. Frankly, developer KOEI's other historical action series, *Dynasty Warriors*, is much more immediate and enjoyable. ■ **Ben Richardson**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK VERDICT

Graphics	07	Crisp, even with lots on screen
Sound	06	Basic hack 'n' slash noise
Gameplay	06	A deep plot, but no feeling
Lifespan	05	Unite Japan. Then drink tea

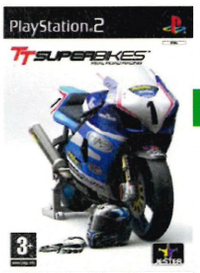
In trying to be accessible, **Kessen III** *ends up being plain and unrewarding. Forget the tactics, KOEI, we just want to fight!*

6/10



Please. Ambulance. Now

The rider's view is best, but annoyingly you lose the track map, which leads to mucho crashing



DETAILS

PUBLISHER BIGBEN
DEVELOPER JESTER
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 22 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.JESTERINTERACTIVE.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

TT SUPERBIKES

The only thing the Isle Of Man is good for?

TT Superbikes will excite bikers in the same way *Gran Turismo 4* electrifies car nuts. Painstakingly reproducing the 37-mile Isle Of Man TT Festival race circuit, there's a possibility it will mean nothing to you, but it means everything to those who like their thrills on two wheels. The accuracy is impressive. Unfortunately, whereas *GT4* engages with its reams of depth, *TT Superbikes* lacks polish and just isn't much *fun*.

The arcade and challenge modes are surprisingly varied considering *TT Superbikes* is focused on one location, and winning races unlocks garagefuls of helmets, exhausts and the like. That said, there's little pre-race tinkering to be done beyond deciding on fuel levels or what colour bike to ride. And what's more, the actual racing grows tedious and frustrating, since the course is mostly a long straight road with a few very tight corners dropped in. Unless you're familiar with the twitchiness of motorbike handling you'll find yourself eating hedgerow in the turns again and again.

The amount of effort that's been put into recreating the event is obvious, and if you've always fancied roaring through the narrow Manx streets then this is for you. But if you've only got the funds for just one bike racer, you might do best to wait for *Moto GP4*. ■ **Ben Richardson**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK VERDICT

Graphics	06	Each bike looks shinier than the last
Sound	06	Raawwwrr...rawwwrr...rawrrrwww
Gameplay	06	Twitchy and slow to reward
Lifespan	06	Lots to unlock for biking fans

The bikers might go mad for it, but anyone who doesn't know what 'pillion' is should really steer clear of this

6/10

Two-player mode is a bit of fun, but after 20-odd minutes the two of you will get distracted

AREA-51™

THE CONSPIRACY IS NO LONGER A THEORY

BATTLE AN ENEMY UNLIKE ANYTHING YOU'VE EVER FACED.

MUTATE AND EXPERIENCE AMAZING ALIEN ABILITIES.

INTENSIFY THE ACTION WITH ONLINE MULTIPLAYER COMBAT.

XBOX PC CD PlayStation 2 XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED MIDWAY POWERED BY gamespy

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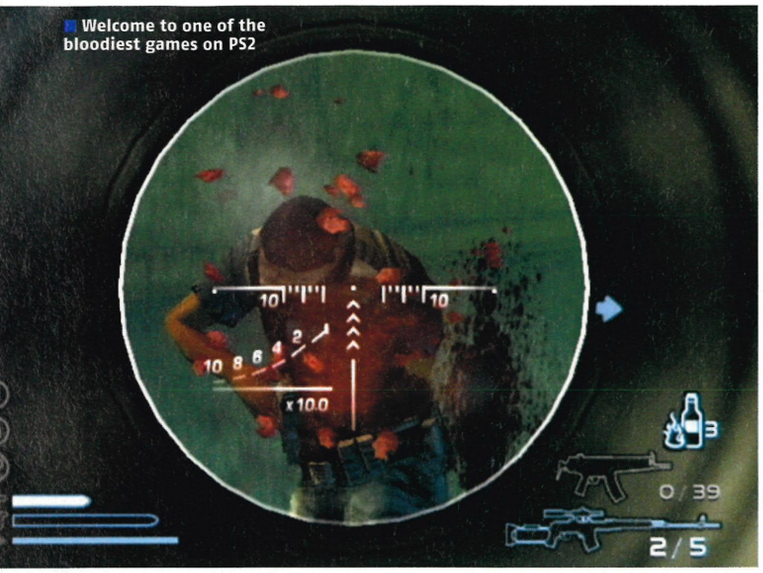

Welcome to one of the bloodiest games on PS2

Violent gunfights are the order of the day

COLD WINTER

It's a tough mission, but don't go to pieces – that's the enemies' job

DETAILS

PUBLISHER VIVENDI
DEVELOPER SWORDFISH STUDIOS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-4 (1-8 ONLINE)
OUT 20 MAY
WEBSITE WWW.COLDWINTER.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE YES

AT A GLANCE

Save the world by blowing it up. As captured spy Andrew Sterling, you'll travel the world to track down international terrorists and then blast them into really tiny pieces.

It's always a good idea to hide *behind* the wall

This is definitely going to leave a stain. If there's one thing *Cold Winter* provides in abundance, it's gore. Shooting people with some of the smaller pistols produces enough blood, but up the calibre by a few mm – an AK-47 for example – and you can take your enemies to pieces. Legs, hands arms, heads... all can be blown off with the sort of arterial splatter that would put *Kill Bill* to shame. It's not big or clever, but by Christ it's fun.

Cold Winter is essentially one of those big dumb action movies full of so-butch-it's-camp heroes and moustachioed evil leaders that shoot their own men for 'failing them'. You know you should be watching a more intellectual film, possibly something that won an Oscar, but somehow the allure of big explosions and endless gunfire just draws you in. *Cold winter* is a similarly dumb, macho-hunk of a game. If it was a film it would star The Rock, have no discernable plot and see the eyebrow-twitching lummox successfully take out a small Third World country with little more than a fruit knife and a tastefully ripped shirt. And nowhere is this action-movie ethic more evident than in the opening level. The hero of the game, a British spy called Andrew Sterling, is a prisoner in a secret Chinese prison awaiting execution for espionage. With most of his teeth on the floor and nothing to look forward to (except a bullet to the back of the head), it looks like the end. That is until – Ta-da – a last-minute rescue saves him. Suddenly, the man who only moments ago was a broken shell tied to a chair, watching his life ebb away, is running around decimating half the Chinese army and a ruddy great attack chopper that just happened to be passing. The only thing missing is a deep, gravely voice announcing: "This Summer, the war on terror gets personal..."

Are you sure he's dead?

THIS GUN'S FOR HIRE

In a nutshell, the appeal of *Cold Winter* lies in running around and shooting people. A lot. Obviously this is in keeping with its action movie roots, so the story also does a ram raid of the various conspiracy and government agency plotlines, as seen in *Spooks*, Bond films and *The X-Files*. A former army pal, now running a private security agency, engineered Sterling's rescue to employ him as an operative. Quite how the agency works is never made clear – like who foots the bill, for example – but the missions consistently embroil Sterling and partner Kim in having to chase terrorists across the world. The only thing less plausible than Sterling's job is that not one single government seems to mind a bunch of freelancers popping in, shooting up their country and then popping out again.

COLD WINTER PIE

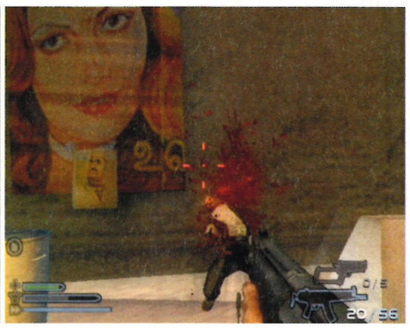
This is what fills *Cold Winter*, cut into slices for easy digestion

- **50%** Shooting the crap out of anything that moves
- **10%** Shooting the crap out of anything that doesn't move
- **30%** Shooting dead people to see how many bits you can blow off
- **5%** Just shooting
- **5%** Following a little blue arrow to find more things to shoot

"I don't know about you but I think it's a map"

HERE'S ONE WE ARMED EARLIER

Not all of the objects that you use in *Cold Winter* can be prised from the stiffening corpses of the fallen or found lying around. Some things you'll have to make yourself by combining objects you find lying around. Here is what you'll need...



She's the female lead? Christ, suddenly we *don't* want to make it back alive

WE LIKE THE UZI, NOT BECAUSE IT SPRAYS BULLETS LIKE A LEAKY HOSEPIPE BUT BECAUSE IT'S FUN

However, picking at the holes, no matter how glaring, would be to miss the point. All this daftness is made enjoyable by virtue of its bombastic, unreal nature. Compared to blockbusters like *Killzone* or *TimeSplitters Future Perfect*, this is the equivalent of an overlooked, if disposable, straight-to-video release. Yeah, the plot is clichéd, the characters are some fraction less than one-dimensional and the villains do everything bar feverishly rub their hands while cackling 'Mwa-ha-ha', but *Cold Winter* is a sensationalist crowd pleaser, full of splattery effects and cheaper-than-chav thrills – and that it sticks two fingers up at our intellect means we're having the time of our life.

The early levels help involve you with baby steps. The presence of a constant objective marker and a never-ending supply of health make the opening a turkey shoot. And as a game that relies so heavily on its trigger finger, *Cold Winter* gives good gun. The weapons feel superb – from the insane chatter of an uncontrollable micro Uzi to the bark of the far more brutish AK-47 – each gun sounds different and there's huge variety in the way they handle. We often find ourselves favouring the Uzi, not because it sprays bullets like a leaky hosepipe but simply because it's so much fun. The big

Explosions: best seen from a distance

IT'S PUMP, AND WE DON'T MEAN THE SHOTGUN

All the ammo-wasting anarchy of the single-player game dies a death when your mates join in

There's no getting away from it: *Cold Winter* has a terrible split-screen multiplayer. Slow characters, poorly balanced weapons and a host of other crimes produce an appallingly dull experience. However, by far the worst cock up is the bright red arrow that points out all your opponents, destroying any potential for surprise or ambush.

■ Despite the violence of the main game, the split-screen multiplayer is more lifeless than that guy's head

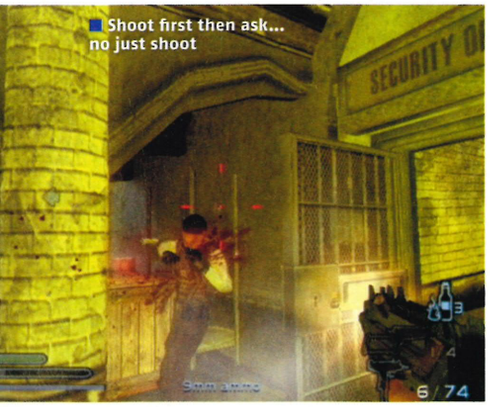
■ That's one point to the free world and a new kidney for Grandpa

chunky satisfaction of the guns also extends to the enemy damage and the in-game physics. As we mentioned before, the bad guys come apart like George Bush being asked to spell his own name. Spray a goon with machine gun fire and watch as his elbows, knees and arms – whatever – explode, similar to a game you might remember called *Soldier Of Fortune*. It's possible (we know this because we tried) to reduce a body to nothing more than a torso, and watching a soldier go down like a sack of shit because his foot is suddenly missing never gets dull. Shallow? Yep, and we're loving it. The excellent physics also mean that cut down a running guard and he'll stagger and slump under his own momentum before collapsing in a heap. We would feel guilty – possibly even concerned for our mental health – about enjoying such gratuitous and visceral displays of death, but like most aspects of the game, it's so over the top it's hard to take it *that* seriously.

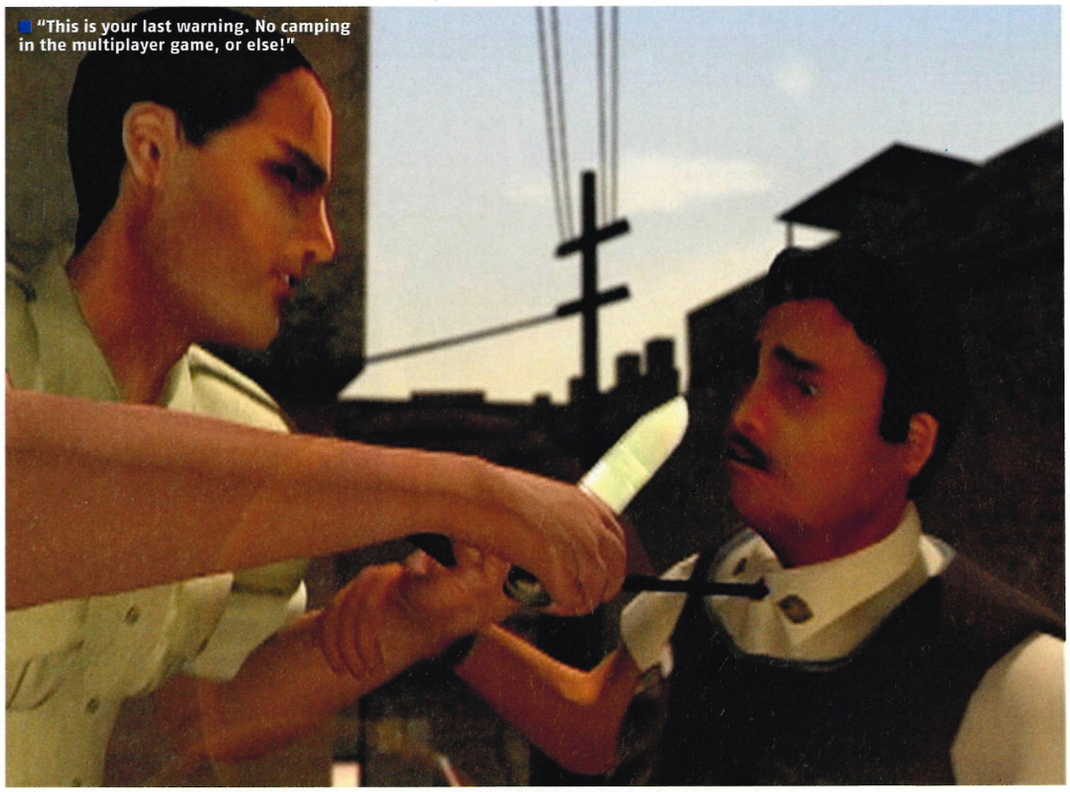
TRIGGER HAPPY

The physics that so joyfully bring dead enemies crashing to the ground also affect practically every object in the game. Ruptured fire extinguishers (again with the fire extinguishers) skitter about the floor from the pressure of escaping gas, explosions send debris flying through the air while tables, chairs and other objects thud and recoil under the impact of bullets. Again it's over-dramatic, but it's also solid and most importantly enjoyable.

Of course, this orgy of blood-letting and box-bouncing would soon get boring if that's all there was to it. And you'd be forgiven for thinking it had shown all its cards in its opening shots. However, after a few hours the action starts to hot up and this otherwise above average shooter turns into an excellent one.



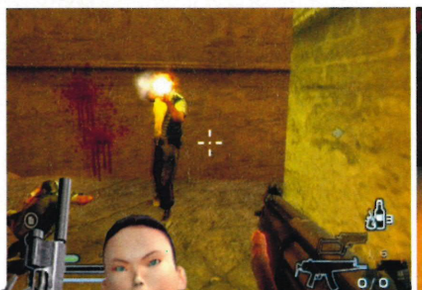
■ Shoot first then ask... no just shoot



■ "This is your last warning. No camping in the multiplayer game, or else!"

The enemies get tougher, more plentiful and suddenly all the over-the-top action elements come together. The explosions, the blood and simplistic shoot-the-crap-out-of-everything gameplay all merge into one great big, grin-inducing, gun-crazy spectacular. Sure, it's dumb as hell and never really gets frustratingly tough, but it's a hugely enjoyable no-brainer romp for all that. If it was an action movie, you'd never openly admit to seeing it but secretly you'd enjoy every minute. Cheering as the hero brings down a nuclear missile with nothing more than a bottle-cap and his girlfriend's knicker elastic or something equally ludicrous (this doesn't actually happen in *Cold Winter*, however, but you can create makeshift weapons from bits and pieces you collect – see 'Here's One We Armed Earlier').

From constant health and the endless ammo to the rush the story takes from one gunfight to the next, *Cold Winter* is desperate for you to enjoy yourself. It may be shallower than the kids' end of the swimming pool, but it's undeniably good fun – and the high-spirited action wins the day. ■ **Leon Hurley**



■ Real spies feel naked without their shiny rubber suit

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Bold and crude, but functional
Sound	07	Great gun noise, rousing music
Gameplay	08	Gleefully preposterous action
Lifespan	08	Plenty to shoot and multiplayer modes

***Cold Winter** may be corny and have all the finesse of a made-for-cable-TV movie, but it's bloodthirsty fun all the same*

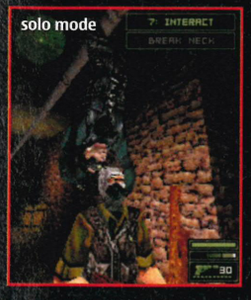
8/10

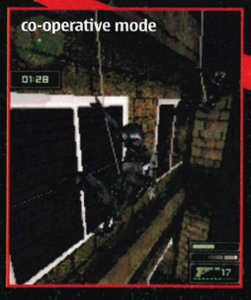
n-gage.com

TOM CLANCY'S

SPLINTER CELL
CHAOS THEORY™

AS THE ENEMY EVOLVES,
SO MUST YOU.





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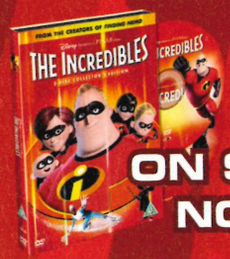

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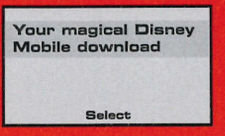
3. 

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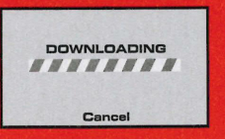
4. 

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63 SYNDROME: "ALRIGHT, FINE! RING... RING... RING! THIS IS STUPID."
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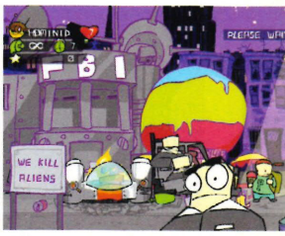
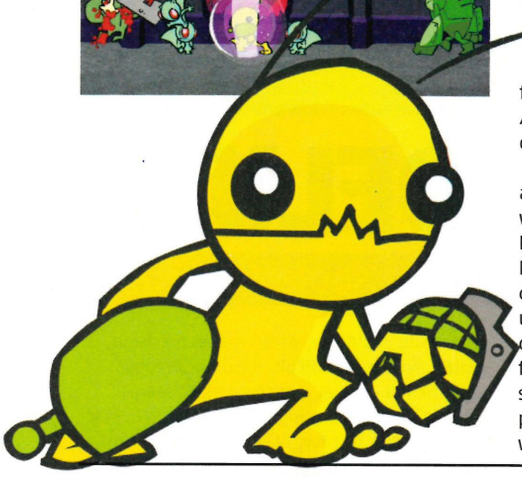


ALIEN HOMINID

Really attractive but a little shallow. The perfect fling



McFly in a clown's wardrobe with five tins of paint and no lids: that's what *Alien Hominid* looks like. A flock of shrieking geese playing cymbals near a crashing sea while walruses honk excitedly: that's what *Alien Hominid* sounds like. So it's a little disappointing that, for all its brash visuals and cacophonous noise, *Alien Hominid* plays like a poor man's version of side-scrolling shooter *Metal Slug 3*.

Only a little disappointing, mind. *MS3* is a fine shooter, and so too, in its own garish way, is this. All the right boxes are ticked. Inconsequential plot? Yep. Cute protagonist? Aye. Power-ups aplenty and comedic foes? Check check. Varied levels, tricky bosses and occasional, unavoidable, unfair death? Yes, yes and most definitely yes. *Alien Hominid* is a madhouse from the first ten seconds of play – enemies swarming the screen from both sides and parascending from, well, it's never made clear what, but that's not the point.

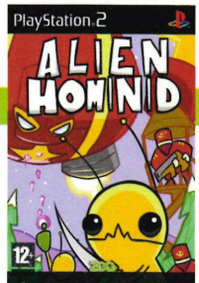
The point is the riotous fun, and there's plenty of it. As well as shooting enemies, you can also bite off their heads and ride them like ponies. Sure, the screen is often so cluttered with action that instances of attempted shooting can result in unintended head-biting and/or enemy riding, and at times this makes *Alien Hominid* feel as if it's trying too hard. But this chaos is what makes it work, turning an otherwise shallow shooter into a frantically enjoyable slice of gaming fun. **Paul Roundell**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	08	Not amazing, but strikingly different
Sound	07	Chucklesome and unrelenting
Gameplay	06	Standard shooter stuff
Lifespan	06	Short but fun

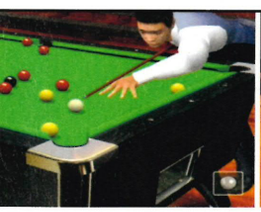
A classic example of style over substance, but there's enough of the former to forgive the lack of the latter. Good fun

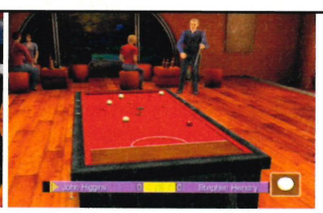
7/10

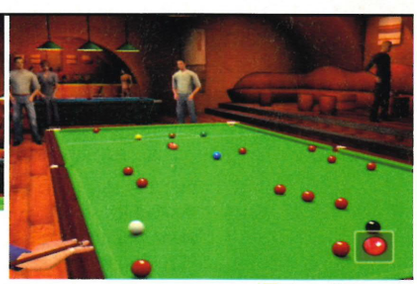


DETAILS

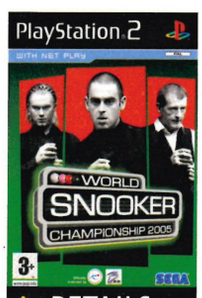
PUBLISHER ZOO DIGITAL
DEVELOPER BEHEMOTH
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 27 MAY
WEBSITE WWW.03ENTERTAINMENT.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO







The table camera angles don't always offer the best view



WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2005

Not a complete load of balls but no Rocket Ronnie, either

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER BLADE INTERACTIVE
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-4
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE YES

Something strange has happened to Steve Davis. No, he hasn't won a tournament, but it's as if, just before taking up his position in the commentary box, he sneaked into The Crucible crèche and tooted on the helium set aside for the kids' and Jimmy White's balloons. His Pasquale-fied tones don't hamper the green baize fare but they are typical of a game that lacks a certain finesse.

Technically, *World Snooker 2005* is a good effort. The variable aiming aid makes lining up shots range from fairly easy to cue-snappingly hard, and the effects of the application of spin, side and top are reassuringly realistic (the over-ambitious will often fluff their shots). The Tour is a welcome career mode, especially since all the real players are present and correct. And it's tough to reach the top – even the so-called easy opponents are apt to rattle off a break of 40 or more, so victories are hard won right from the off, and the experience is none the worse for it.

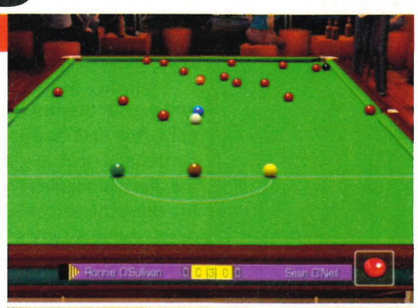
The problems are the average table graphics, limited camera angles and dodgy commentary from Davis and fellow monosyllabics Johns Parrott and Virgo. Its televisual presentation and array of extras – including games of eight and nine-ball pool – could have elevated *WCS* into the provisional number one spot, but the minor niggles combine into a moderate-sized one, meaning if it was a player, this would be Andy Hicks. Remember him? Exactly. **Paul Roundell**

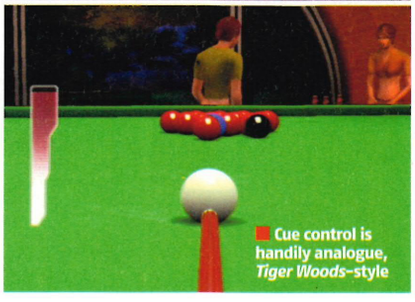
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	06	The all-important table lets it down
Sound	05	The commentary isn't great
Gameplay	07	Contains all the, um, snooker essentials
Lifespan	08	Hurricane Higgins looks on in envy

A perfectly enjoyable and absorbing effort that's frustrating because a little spit and polish would have made it great

7/10





Cue control is handily analogue, *Tiger Woods*-style

Evil track layouts, balls with no brakes. Arrrgh!

Scraping feebly at the glass, he knew starvation was imminent

bronze
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE

How do you make a monkey roll? Hang on, we've got the punchline somewhere...

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER SEGA
PRICE £24.99
PLAYERS 1-4
OUT JUNE
WEBSITE WWW.SUPERMONKEYBALL.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Simple gaming at its best – one control, one monkey and 200 levels of terrain to steer it around. Two classic games and some extra stuff – now that's good value for money.

After a while, it actually starts to get disturbing. Sure, Sega was right to humanise (simianise?) the classic retro ball-roller *Marble Madness* by putting monkeys in the balls – it's a lot easier to get attached to a dancing chimp than a faceless sphere – and yes, they're nicely designed and infuriatingly cute, but do they really have to make that squealing noise *every single time* they plummet into nothingness? We still have nightmares about it.

For the uninitiated, what we've got here is actually one huge bargain bundle of monkey fun: 114 stages from the original *Super Monkey Ball* (which started as an arcade game and then went to Gamecube before sensibly coming to PS2), 140 from the sequel, 46 'Deluxe exclusive' ones and 12 mini-games. The more accessible interfaces used in *Super Monkey Ball 2* have been used to emphasise the party game stylings, with stages divided up by background theme. Finishing ten out of 30 or so unlocks the next set, which reduces the 'getting totally stuck' factor considerably.

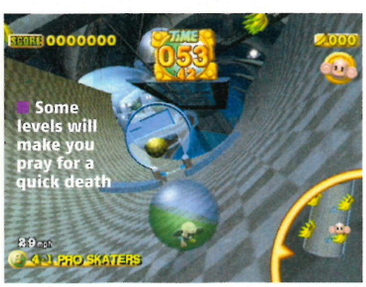
And you *will* get stuck. *Monkey Ball*'s level design goes beyond fiendish and into the sort of twisted brain space usually occupied by particularly creative serial killers. In some stages, the aim's immediately obvious, and it's only trundling the ball along a razor-thin platform or over a series of jumps that's a problem. Other stages, though, seem almost impossible at first, with enormous gaps and disappearing platforms that take a stroke of inspiration and some masterful monkey-ricocheting to tackle. Then there are the 'concept' levels, with firing platforms or bumpers that respond in a certain way to your monkey. To make things more interesting, every level's packed with bananas that can be grabbed en route, usually placed a tantalising whisper outside the route you know you *should* take. Other levels feature multiple exits and routes through that are much faster than the immediately obvious ones – an essential risk for the dedicated time-attack challenger.

CHIMP ROLLING

There's a slight problem here though in terms of how the game's controls have been implemented on PS2. They are a tad unresponsive when compared to the original GameCube version. From a standing start, the ball doesn't even start rolling until you've nudged the stick almost halfway in any direction. When it does roll, it goes fractionally faster than you'd like, which makes precision control extremely difficult. It isn't noticeable until the later stages, but some maps seem actually impossible using the Dual Shock 2 – the analogue stick just hasn't got the feather-light touch required. And no, that's not just an excuse. Less infuriating, but more mystifying, is the elimination of the rolling noise that accompanied your trundling in the earlier games – it was often a valuable indicator of how fast you were going, but now the only noises are the pitiable squeals of your monkey.

The worst conversion gripe has to be the loading pauses, though. Individually, they're nothing to bludgeon Sega employees over, only a couple of seconds either side of each level. But dying in some levels happens within three

MONKEY BALL IS A BETTER SOCIAL INVESTMENT THAN A JUMBO BOTTLE OF TEQUILA



Some levels will make you pray for a quick death

You don't move the ball, but instead tilt the ground under it

■ The latest training ideas were proving unpopular

■ Staring into the abyss in a ball filled with the stench of fear

STRIKE! A MONKEY, THAT IS

Obviously, comparing Monkey Soccer to the majesty of *PES* is like comparing *Subbuteo* to actual football, but one other game doesn't fair so poorly by comparison. Monkey Baseball, thanks to the addition of chimps, ramps, and self-propelled balls that you can speed up after the 'pitch', is about three times more exciting than the actual, proper game. Take note, Americans.

seconds of the opening, and restarting can take as long again. Note that even in Challenge mode, where levels are played in a set sequence, there's none of the streaming that made loading pauses non-existent in the versions on other machines. Add in the fact that even browsing the different maps available comes with constant second-long loading pauses, and you start to realise that *Monkey Ball* is *eating your life*. And not even in a good way.

Redemption comes in the form of friends. In a group setting, a copy of *Monkey Ball*'s like a Mariachi band or a fat man in a Hawaiian shirt – you really shouldn't throw a party without one. It's got everything – cute characters (appeals to girls), easy to grasp one-stick controls (girls again), and monkeys hitting each other with bats (boys, mostly). Of the 12 mini-games on offer, four are furious fun (football, fighting, canoeing, dogfight), five are more competitive stuff (golf, bowling, billiards, tennis, baseball) and only one's completely pointless (the bargain-basement Monkey Shot). Racing's a sadistic experience best compared to a cross between *WipEout* and *Mashed*, and Monkey Target's simply the most addictive thing since downloading grot on a nicotine-infused keyboard.

At this price, *Monkey Ball*'s a better social investment than a jumbo bottle of tequila, and twice as likely to see you awake, alone, sobbing and unable to go to bed at three in the morning. There really is nothing like it on PS2. Just remember to turn the sound down – we're still waking up, screaming... ■ **Joel Snape**

■ Just in case a monkey in a ball wasn't strange enough, they fly too

PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK		VERDICT
Graphics	08	Monkeys, balls, grass, lava. Simple as that
Sound	06	Endearing announcer, odd omissions
Gameplay	08	Brain-fryingly addictive
Lifespan	08	Essential for anyone with a multitap

The implausibility of completing later levels on the Dual Shock takes the sheen off a bit, but at £25, you just can't grumble

8/10

YOU DAMNED DIRTY APE!

Or: The bits of *Monkey Ball* most likely to turn you into a right-wing gun nut

It's the final bend of the Monkey Grand Prix and you're a comfortable pair of balls ahead of the opposition... but you've gone and forgotten about those little bumpers next to the lap marker, haven't you? Fnaaargh!

The Floor Bent level. Like all brain-killers, the layout's deceptively simple – just zigzag round the corners – but each turn gets progressively steeper. Guessing conservatively, this took us about 100 goes.

Monkey Target. You've scooped close to 200 sweet bananas on your inbound flight path, and then you hear it – that 'eep' that means you've stalled. Shouldn't have picked Baby as a character, should you, smartarse. Splosh!

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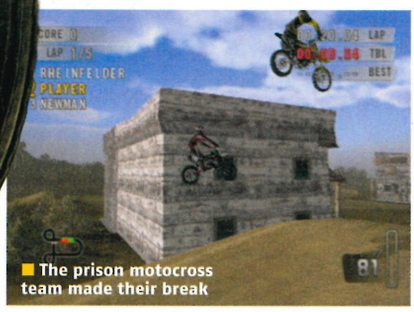
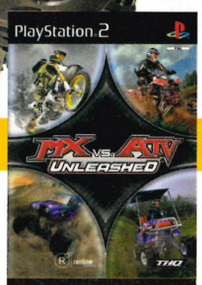
Thought you couldn't pimp a Big Foot? Think again

The attempt to cross Jordan's cleavage by quad was going well



The prison motocross team made their break



PlayStation 2

MX VS ATV UNLEASHED

It's bikes against quads as two filthy racers collide

DETAILS

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER RAINBOW STUDIOS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE THQ.COM/GAME.ASP?1139|46061
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

We've spent many an hour wondering which is better: four wheels or two? Time to settle it once and for all, in a combination of two of the best dirt-hurdlers around.

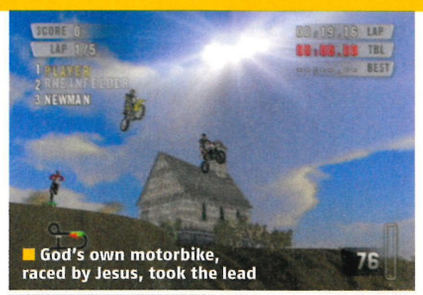
This track is called 'Rhapsody In Brown'

Finally. After nearly three years of playing two slightly different games racing fat-wheeled machines around muddy tracks, THQ has done the sensible thing and combined them in one package. If only all games could do this we'd end the Sam Fisher vs Snake dispute – pocketing an extra forty quid a month to spend on gin and trousers.

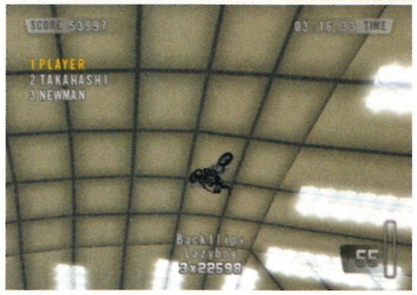
MX Vs ATV does offer a bit more than petrolhead dispute-settling, though, thanks to some impressive physics under its filthy mud flaps. The traditional handbrake turn, for instance, is replaced with the much trickier clutch turn, which involves holding down L1, gently tugging back on the left analogue to keep the back wheel on the ground, and then accelerating out of the bend with your bike squared off. Preloading for jumps involves rapidly tweaking the stick back then forwards on the way up a slope, with 360 twists available for the first time once you've got the hang of getting air. It's initially tricky, but more forgiving than last year's games – there's a greater degree of control in the air, and falling off's not such a frequent occurrence. Crucially, the vehicles feel radically different to control – MX bikes are quicker to accelerate, coping with bends better while ATV quads are more stable and tend to come off best in mid-air collisions.

What's really impressive, though, is the frightening array of options. Apart from racing MXs and ATVs in dedicated supercross events or against each other, it's possible to race them against sand rails and monster trucks. And golf carts. And biplanes. Or in stunt events. Or *Smugglers' Run*-style waypoint races. Or in slightly tedious hill climbs.

Though the longer challenges can be a bit of a slog, there's no need to run the qualifying laps (all you're racing for is a slot in the grid for an advantage you'll probably lose on the first bend), so it's quick enough to zip through and unlock some proper kit via a *Burnout*-style reward system. Chuck in a handful of challenges, and you've got the gaming equivalent of Heinz Breakfast In A Can – there's loads in there and it definitely gets the job done. So with that in mind, why don't games companies set their sights a bit higher after this one? Like, say, on our proposed title *Lara Croft Vs The Fear Effect Lesbians*. It's just as dirty, but in a slightly different way. **Joel Snape**



God's own motorbike, raced by Jesus, took the lead



PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Nice mud, nice physics
Sound	06	The typical mess of sub-par fratrock
Gameplay	07	Tricky but rewarding
Lifespan	08	Will keep dirt-lovers going for ages

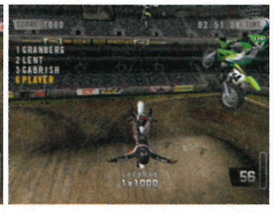
Not as fun as belting a BMX through GTA's badlands, but fans of previous MX or ATV games will be in a hog heaven

7/10

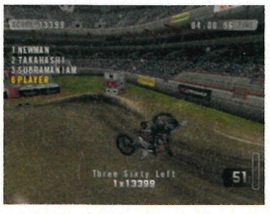
HE'S OKAY, FOLKS!

Putting the 'ag!' in 'ragdoll physics', the new blend of vehicles offers all-new opportunities for face-slamming hilarity when things go wrong – as they do about half a dozen times every event. Observe...

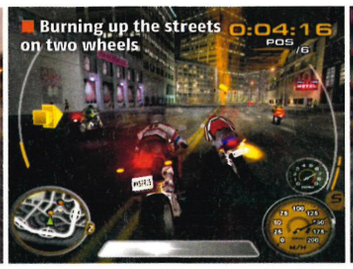
A typical first-jump disaster – you don't preload the suspension enough, everyone else jumps higher than you, and some inconsiderate tool clips you upside the head with his rear tyres. You're gonna need stitches...

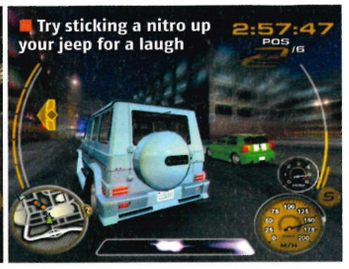


"Look, ma – no hands!" It's all fun and games until you land short, and the force of the impact drives your crossbar up through your pelvic floor. Honestly, you should see the way the little guys wince...



The pièce de resistance, though, is stacking an attempt at a 360 Nac-Nac. You need about half an hour in the air to get it right, and the slightest miscalculation means gravel-rash the size of a pizza.





MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

Street racing done the *Grand Theft Auto* way

DETAILS

PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES
DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-8
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/MC3
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE YES

AT A GLANCE
The third in a series of street racers from Rockstar Games. This version offers better visuals, even more cityscape to explore and a tie-in with US car magazine *DUB*.

Here we are again; one man and his car, an open road ahead of him. An endless supply of fuel and time, his only motivation in life to become the king of street racers and refine his ride until it goes faster than spaceships. It's a sexy proposition and the very heart of *Midnight Club 3*.

It's got appeal for other reasons too though: it's dangerous and mysterious. Street racing is an area of motorsport so underground we've *never* seen it happening. Maybe it's because we don't hang around industrial estates at two in the morning or have never lived in Essex, but it just doesn't seem to go on round our way. So by default our expertise in this field is limited to videogames and magazines.

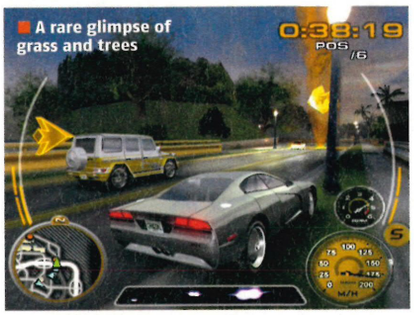
We trust *Midnight Club 3*'s representation is authentic though. Firstly, it's being made by Rockstar, a game maker known for its meticulous attention to detail (it also makes *GTA*), and secondly, *DUB* (a high-brow street racing magazine) has helped out. This relationship means all of the cars and mods have been specially picked out as the best in their field. Anyone versed in the lingo of ECMs, dampeners and vinyls will instantly recognise famous (really?) brands like HKS, AEM and A'Pexi and kit out their vehicle accordingly. The rest of us will just pick the ones that make us go the fastest.

Like every other racer out there, *Midnight Club 3*'s main event is known as Career, a title that always seems slightly jarring – does anyone really make a career out of this sort of thing, and if so, who pays them? After selecting your virgin car from a limited line-up, you're thrown out onto the streets of San Diego, getting in with the local race crews, winning races and earning rep.

The first thing you'll notice is that driving in *Midnight Club 3* is as far from 'simulation' as you can get. We'd call it 'arcade-style handling' if anyone still played arcade games, but as they don't, the best way to imagine it is 'forgiving'. The idea is to make you feel like you're in full control of a very fast car without having to contend with things like G-forces, oversteer, understeer or full braking. Instead, you can do donuts at the press of a button, powerslide round corners with another and plow through trees and plate glass windows without even scratching the paintwork. It is possible to burn out your engine and dent it beyond recognition, but once it's reached insurance write-off level the screen wipes and a pristine model appears before your eyes. This is more about spectacle and excitement than expertise and precision.

DUB BE GOOD

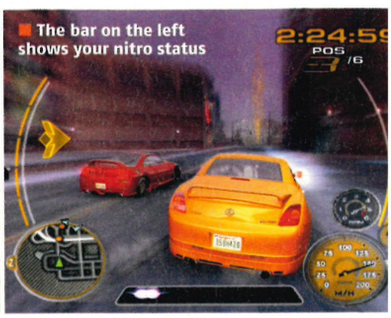
The spectacular becomes the theatrical once you've earned enough cash to start modding up your ride. First through the addition of plastic and carbon fibre wings, oversized bumpers and hideously oversized spoilers, then vinyls and spray jobs, and finally the absurd under-chassis neons, air bags, nitros and hydraulics. It's all rather comical – you roll up to a gathering of street racing sorts in a car that resembles a giant Nike trainer with wheels and then start jumping it around on the suspension like an overexcited poodle. Having impressed the crowd, you pull off a few donuts and rev your engine with the handbreak on, wheelspinning on the spot before releasing the brake and scooting off into the night. Which reminds us: why is it that street racing games are always set at night? The problem this poses is that however detailed the cityscapes are you can only ever see them in half-light. It does allow for some fancy street lighting and more neon but it tends to make all your surroundings look a bit similar. To put it into perspective, picture *GT4*'s masterful visuals, only through a dark filter. Kind of dull, huh?



ROLL UP IN A CAR THAT RESEMBLES A GIANT NIKE TRAINER

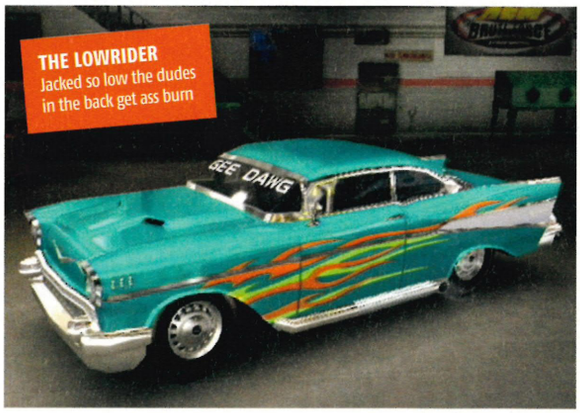
Furthermore, the choice of cities in *Midnight Club 3* may well be authentic to the scene, but they aren't the sexiest of locations. Detroit? If it's a monotonous urban hellhole in real life than the game's interpretation is spot on, but it does make for a bit of a boring drive at times. Where's Miami for the beach-side boulevards, or New York for the towering skyscrapers and long straight avenues? Even better, a few more hills or leafy sections to break up the monotony of the city sprawl.

Midnight Club 3 makes up for its grotty surroundings through speed. We're confident this is the fastest racing game out there. Take the

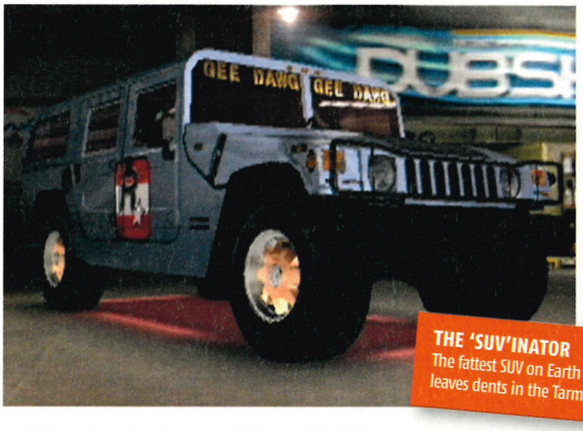


OUR SICKEST RIDES...

Seen MTV's *Pimp My Ride*? Fancy kitting out a car with some serious hardware? So did we. Here are our most expensive efforts...

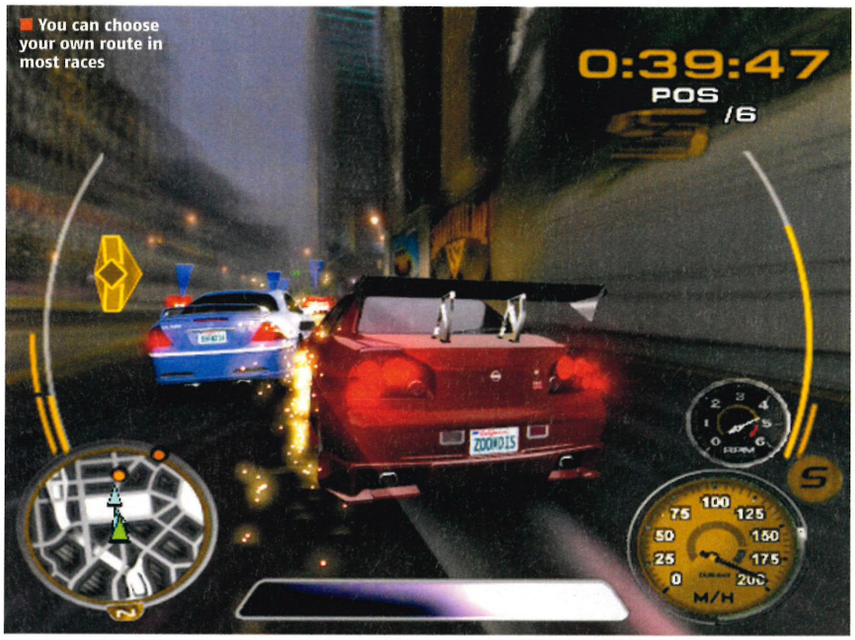


THE LOWRIDER
Jacked so low the dudes in the back get ass burn



THE 'SUV'INATOR
The fattest SUV on Earth – leaves dents in the Tarmac

THE SHIT-OFF-A-SHOVEL
Goes so fast it spontaneously combusts and glows like coal



■ You can choose your own route in most races

McClaren and the Murciealago as examples; they're ludicrously powerful out of the box but mod them and they become the work of the devil. Driving them with any notion of accuracy is like trying to tame a rabid badger. However, after the initial thrill of breaking the speed of sound in a car, you'll realise supersonic isn't always a good thing – unless you're driving in a very straight line, you no longer have any influence on the car's movements and you just bounce off walls and pedestrians as if you were riding a runaway rollercoaster.

Of course, we can't condemn *Midnight Club 3* for this achievement and, in fairness, it's tempered by the Zone power-up that we liked a lot. Clean driving builds up a meter down the side of the screen, and when you've filled it, pressing the analogue stick slows down time for a few seconds. During this moment of clarity you can negotiate a tight turn, a busy junction or an obstruction with Jedi-like foresight. It'll make you feel like God.

In essence there's very little to dislike about *Midnight Club 3* and we haven't even got round to mentioning the motorbikes, SUVs and extensive online mode. It's fast, everything's true to the street racing culture without being too patronising, the career structure is rewarding, the music's fitting to the action, although now just as likely to be heard playing at the trendy bar in any provincial UK town, and yet, somehow, as a whole the game fails to blow us away.

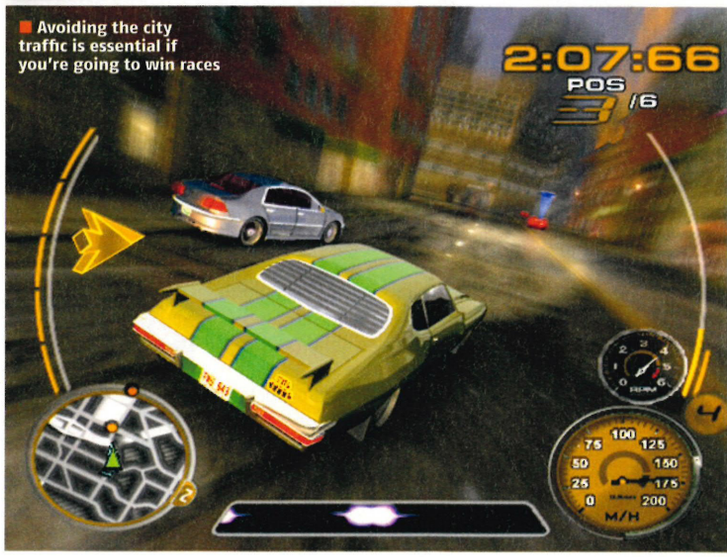
Without a hook – the dramatic crashes of *Burnout* or the 'is this PS3?' quality of *GT4*'s graphics – it lacks a defining spark or must-see factor. Playing through *MC3* we knew from the start this was as good as it could get, *and* we'd seen it before in *Need For Speed*. There were no twists waiting for us; no jetpacks or mid-game revelations that everything to that point had all been a dream. No. We were going to win some races and then make our car better. And maybe add a new spoiler. And then unlock Detroit. What? Is it so wrong to think a game is 'good' but at the same time criticise it for being almost ruthlessly predictable? ■ **George Walter**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK VERDICT

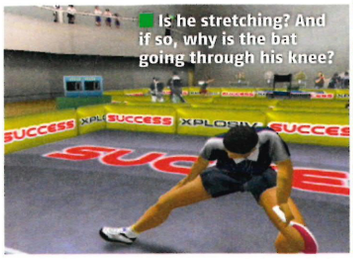
Graphics	08	A glitzy improvement on *'Club 2*
Sound	08	Intelligent selection of beats
Gameplay	07	Sweet racing but that's all it is
Lifespan	07	Big but feels very similar throughout

This is as good a street racer as you'll find on PS2. Strangely, that doesn't make it the most exciting game you'll ever play

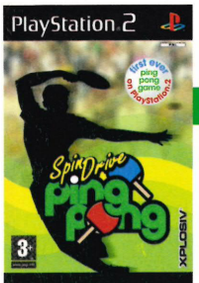
8/10



■ Avoiding the city traffic is essential if you're going to win races


Is he stretching? And if so, why is the bat going through his knee?

You can get good rallies going, but poor opponent intelligence ruins many games



SPINDRIVE PING PONG

More ping and less pong wouldn't have gone amiss

DETAILS

- **PUBLISHER** XPLOSIV
- **DEVELOPER** PSIKYO
- **PRICE** £9.99
- **PLAYERS** 1-2
- **OUT** NOW
- **WEBSITE** WWW.XPLOSIVE.NET
- **60HZ MODE** NO
- **WIDESCREEN** NO
- **SURROUND SOUND** NO
- **PERIPHERALS** OFFICIAL SPIN DRIVE FORCE-FEED-BACK BAT ACCOUTREMENT (NOT REALLY)
- **ONLINE** HEAVENS, NO

Rest easy, the drought is over. After almost five table tennis-less PS2 years, publisher Xplosiv is here to drip the sweet manna of its ping-pongery into our famished mouths. Well, so it thinks. This isn't the 'first ever ping pong game on PS2' as the box claims, that honour goes to *Pink Pong* (pg 103). And, frankly, if this is what heaven-sent sustenance is like, we'd rather eat the rubber off the bat.

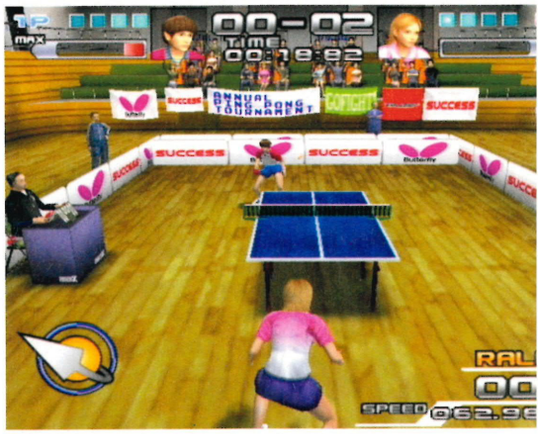
There seems little to get wrong in a table tennis game, and yet wrong *SpinDrive* has gone. Serving is a chore, and while the idea of a press-and-release system to play a stroke is a good one, its execution is clumsy. Anything less than a moderately strong strike will be easily dispatched by the computer opponent: holding down the shot button increases its strength, but you can't move your player while it's pressed, so the game becomes a test of anticipation rather than skill. There's a reasonable choice of returns, and it's possible to build impressive, replay-friendly rallies, but these rely on haphazard computer controlled opponents as much as it does on your skill. 25 shots in, a rival might decide to smash a return right into your face for no apparent reason at all. Ever seen that on Grandstand? No you haven't. And the sliding scale of opponent difficulty seems only to alter the frequency with which serves find the net. *SpinDrive* is slipshod. It's half-hearted. And it's a shame because it could have been a laugh. **Paul Roundell**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK VERDICT

Graphics	03	Might have turned heads in 1996
Sound	01	Almost heartbreakingly bad
Gameplay	04	Lack of attention to detail ruins it
Lifespan	03	Not much fun so not much point

There's a limit to what you can get for a tenner, and a good ping pong game is evidently somewhere beyond this

3/10


Ping pong – the sport of champions, or the sport of people who are crap at *proper* tennis?

Ah, the typical 'Gas-based lady' weapon

GUNBIRD SPECIAL EDITION

Because not everything that's old needs to retire

DETAILS

- **PUBLISHER** XPLOSIV
- **DEVELOPER** PSIKYO
- **PRICE** £9.99
- **PLAYERS** 1-2
- **OUT** NOW
- **WEBSITE** WWW.XPLOSIV.COM
- **60HZ MODE** YES
- **WIDESCREEN** YES
- **SURROUND SOUND** NO
- **ONLINE** NO

After initial disappointment (there's no bird with a gun) *Gunbird SE* soon makes amends. For starters it's not one game but two: *Gunbird* of decades-old arcade fame and its sequel *Gunbird 2*. Two games for 999 pence – what's not to like? Plenty if they're garbage but, happily, neither game is that.

Not that they're pushing any envelopes mind. They're not even pushing the boundaries of your TV screen – the game's compressed into the central half in adherence with the arcade format, and a cheeky widescreen option merely squashes and stretches everything.

The action is less unsettling – frantic shooting at vibrant targets that spew projectiles in hard-to-dodge arcs, a single one of which will kill you. The line between tough and unfair is thin in scrolling shooters but – numerous continues aside – *Gunbird* falls on the right side of it, just. Power-ups are plentiful but are hard to reach due to the unrelenting action. It's risk/reward at its most basic. But with seven difficulty settings, the average family pet could probably manage a few levels with a bit of option tweaking.

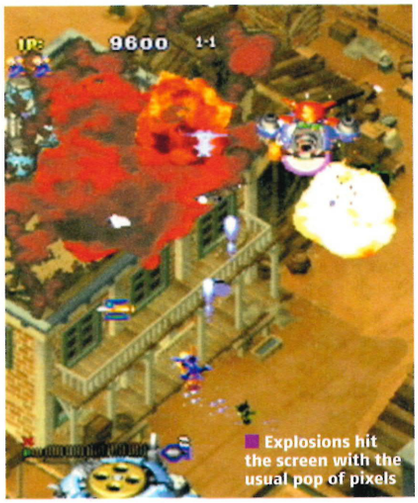
Challenged by today's standards, this hearkens back to a time when people were more easily satisfied. But it's still a good reminder that life before PlayStation wasn't all sackcloth, ashes, hoops and sticks. **Paul Roundell**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK VERDICT

Graphics	05	Dated but not shockingly shabby
Sound	06	Pleasingly cheesy Japanesey
Gameplay	06	You shoots and you dodges
Lifespan	05	Even combined, the games are hardly epic

Far from outstanding games, but good solid shooters and, at a mere ten bucks, certainly outstanding value

6/10


Explosions hit the screen with the usual pop of pixels

The Bard's Tale™

4.5 out of 5
Official U.S. Playstation Magazine

"The funniest game I've ever played, and I've played all the funny games out there." - IGN

OUT MARCH 2005

www.thebardstale.com

12+ www.pegi.info

XBOX PC DVD ROM PlayStation 2 inXile entertainment UBISOFT

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JUICED

Real street racing. But just how real do we want it?

ON THE DVD

DETAILS

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER JUICE GAMES
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2 (1-6 ONLINE)
OUT 13 MAY
WEBSITE WWW.THQ.CO.UK/GAMES/PRODUCT/JUICED?PRODPLATFORM=PS2
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
PERIPHERALS FAT RIMS, RESPECT, GANG AFFILIATION
ONLINE YES

AT A GLANCE

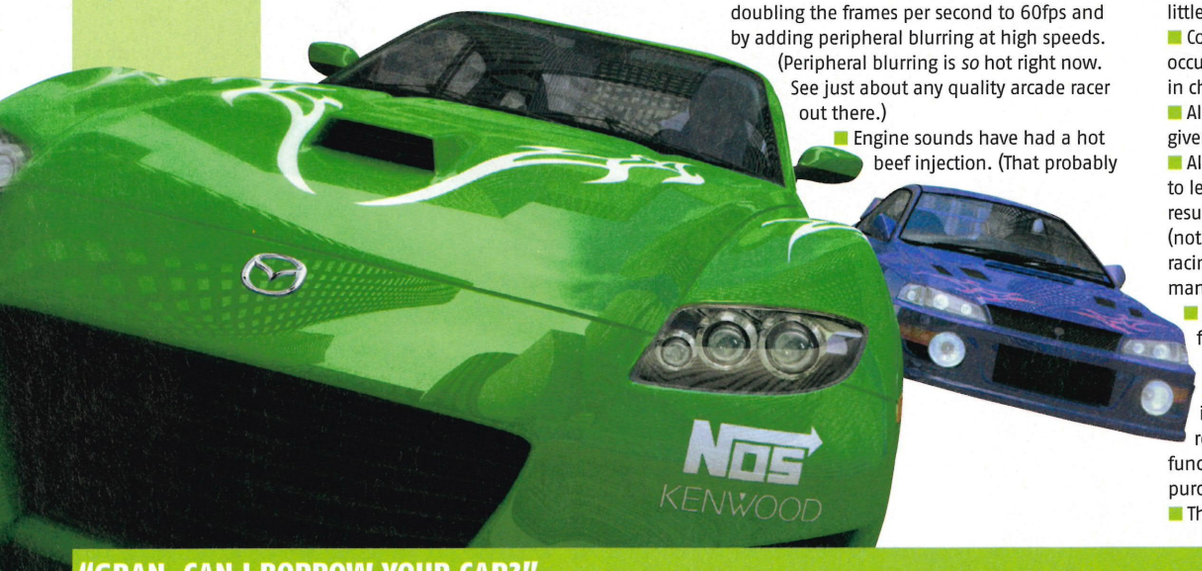
Juiced is a new entry to the illegal street racing grid with the emphasis on pimped rides, showy moves and above all things, respect. Earn it, waste it; it all depends on your racing skills.

As much as worshippers at the temple of 'the fresh' may wish otherwise, *Juiced*, a spunky entry into the increasingly gridlocked world of illegal street racing is not a new game. At least, the chassis isn't. Back in the day (or last autumn, you choose) a slew of games magazines around the world – *OPS2* included, naturally – reviewed a game called *Juiced*. It looked not entirely unlike this one, and for good reason. Dramatically though, virtually on the eve of release, the title's publisher, Acclaim, shut down, leaving this unpolished but genuinely appealing racer languishing in limbo. It was then that THQ spotted *Juiced* across a crowded release schedule and saw a rough diamond winking at them with potential. The game was promptly snapped up and whisked away for an intensive six months of overhaul, refinement and bodywork buffage. Assuming you're down with the idea that pimping rides is the ultimate expression of kerbside creativity, then what *Juiced* has enjoyed leading to this, its proper, first release, is truly life imitating modding art.

Don't worry people. We're not going to subject you to some god-awful extended metaphor where new menus become 20-inch diamond studded rims on *Juiced*'s original chassis. You deserve better than that. What you deserve is a full run down of the improvements that THQ has carefully applied to what was already a pretty decent racer. Cast your eyes over this little lot. We'll be waiting on the other side.

Thanks for the advice but we can't help feeling it's come a little late

- The sense of velocity has been enhanced by doubling the frames per second to 60fps and by adding peripheral blurring at high speeds. (Peripheral blurring is *so* hot right now. See just about any quality arcade racer out there.)
- Engine sounds have had a hot beef injection. (That probably could have come out better.) Think growlier, more intense.
- Handling characteristics have been improved on a car by car basis, from braking to traction control. The original *Juiced*'s handling was a little on the brittle side.
- Collisions have been tweaked to reduce the occurrences of ping-ponging between barriers in chicanes and narrow stretches.
- All the tracks and environments have been given a graphical polish.
- AI has been sent back to street racing school to learn a little humanity and humility. As a result, opponent drivers don't just slavishly (not to mention utterly unfairly) follow flawless racing lines, but will jostle, make evasive manoeuvres and fluff corners under pressure.
- As a result, the system of accruing and frittering away respect depending on your skill (or lack of it) has been improved.
- The entire front end of the game – from intro movie to menus and music – has been reworked, both from a graphical and a functional point of view. That means it looks purdier and is easier to use.
- There's new info on the in-game head

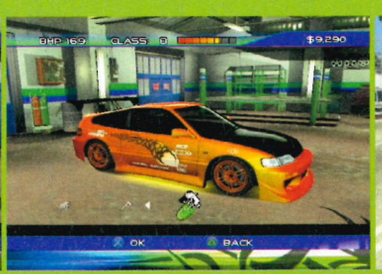


"GRAN, CAN I BORROW YOUR CAR?"

When you start your career in *Juiced*, don't waste money on a new car. Take our advice and go for a damaged classic instead

1. It may not look like much but this knackered CRX has more ponies under the bonnet than its more expensive, forecourt-fresh rivals.

2. Bargain snapped up, use some of the money you saved to repair your shunted baby. Then spend a whole lot more on mechanical modifications from engine management systems to exhausts and shocks.



3. Now the fun part. Time to blow a staggering wad on pimping your ride to within an inch of its oil-pan. Big rims, lowered ride height, fancy decals, paint-job and a traumatising sound system.

4. You're ready. And since you went for bhp over a new model, you'll not only look good, but you'll cream the opposition on the grid too.

Master *Juiced*'s handling and power-slides won't necessarily dent your crumple zones

Somehow, modding up a classic shape like the Dodge Charger's feels like automotive blasphemy

The NSX is stupidly fast as it is. Adding NOS is madness, but fun

Thanks to new FX, the top-end cars appear to bend *time*

up display; trailing car location indicators for instance that helpfully enable you to indulge in, ahem, tactical racing. Otherwise known as blocking faster/better drivers like the mean bastard you are.

The option to have automatic maintenance after races has been included, as has the ability for lazy customisers to auto-pimp their rides.

The career mode has been massaged lovingly to smooth progression, with more open events in the calendar from day one, and greater potential to earn respect from other gangs faster.

A brand new arcade mode based on 12 race series. (Race series are *so* hot right now.)

The full range of licensed 'mod' parts updated.

Four new cars including the new Beetle and Mazda RX8.

Hmm. Pretty impressive tweaking. Given that, first time around, *Juiced* notched up a very respectable 7/10, this would make *Juiced* reborn a 15/10, easy, right? You know something? No dice. Here's why. We like the game's new front end. A lot. It *is* far better looking and easier to use. Street-side, the hike in framerate is a welcome addition too. We're particularly fond of the newly informative HUD, and God knows we appreciate the shot of reality that plausibly fallible AI opponents adds to races. But here's the rub. The majority of what we *profoundly* like in *Juiced* '05 is what we enjoyed about the game before. Pulling boomerang turns in a breathtakingly pimped, entry level Honda CRX. Racing strategically, point-to-point with a member of your crew. Massaging a classic Dodge Charger up through the nitrous-strained gears during a neon-soaked sprint race. Simply earning another crew's respect because you splashed $30,000 on a pearlescent paint job and a fat bore, bespoke exhaust the diameter of the Dartford tunnel.

The thing is, despite the welcome overhaul, the fundamental concern we had about *Juiced* originally is also still present. True, the cars' handling has been massaged to make it more arcadey, but 'more' is a relative term. The business end is racing that continues to sit a little uneasily between the kind of flattering excess that *Burnout 3* dishes up, and the technically exacting demands of driving sims like *GT4*. But can you really satisfy both types of racing game? We're not confident that *Juiced* (or any title for that matter) can, and it's this game's ambitious attempt to straddle these different racing styles that ultimately denies it a higher score. As likable as ever, and definitely more polished for the extra development time, *Juiced*'s 7/10 stands. **Paul Fitzpatrick**

AI HAS GONE BACK TO STREET RACING SCHOOL TO LEARN HUMANITY

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	07 Solid with nice FX. Holds up at speed
Sound	06 Meaty SFX and decent urban soundtrack
Gameplay	07 Love the respect dynamic; handling less so
Lifespan	07 Over the long haul, *Juiced* delivers nicely
A quality street racer with a real edge and cool respect dynamic that's only compromised by handling with a split personality	7/10

FRESH JUICED

Four things we love about *Juiced*

1. THE ARCADE MODE

What you get: 12 race series (each comprising five events) based on everything from Japanese imports, and vintage US muscle cars to night racing and all-wheel drive rides.

2. SHOW-OFF EVENTS

The perfect venue to brag to other crews and gain respect for both your tricksy driving skills *and* modding abilities. It's all about the tricks; donuts, boomerang turns, 180s, 360s and more.

3. THE HONDA NSX

You can keep your Ferraris and Porsches. The NSX is an everyman's supercar packed from nose to tail with driving tech. Frigging fast and great to drive too.

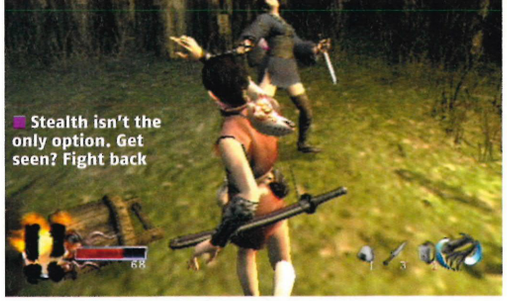
4. TACTICAL DRIVING

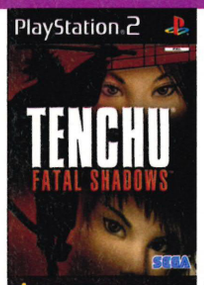
Thanks to the trailing car indicators on the game screen, blocking and frustrating potentially faster cars that want to overtake is a piece of the proverbial. Not fair, but this street racing's *illegal*. Got that?

It's possible to rattle the AI drivers and exploit their vulnerability. Cool

TENCHU: FATAL SHADOWS

Chicks with stealth tricks just don't do it for us any more


Stealth isn't the only option. Get seen? Fight back



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER K2
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

The original stealth game returns for its second outing on PS2. Creep through medievil Japan, slitting throats, fighting evil and looking pretty.

In the good old days all you needed to be a stealth assassin was a bit of enthusiasm, a really good wall-hugging pose and the ability to snap necks like week-old breadsticks. Nowadays it's thermal goggles this, state-of-the-art weapons that and God forbid any self-respecting agent being seen out in last season's kinky rubber suit. *Tenchu: Fatal Shadows*, on the other hand, sticks hard and fast to a stealth formula it established back in 1998 on PSone.

In this latest light-footed ninja outing Ayame, the star of the previous games returns, and with new girl Rin, the pair set out across medieval Japan to right wrongs, slit throats and swap tips on washing blood out of their kimonos. Most of this revenge seeking is accomplished by slipping through locations unseen and sneaking up on bad guys before slicing off the useful bits without being noticed. Successful stealth kills provide quick cut-scenes and unlock further moves, items and magic. This isn't Sam Fisher-style decibel-sensitive stealth or Snake-like camo-index trickery though. You can pretty much do what you like as long as you don't do it in front of a guard – run, jump, tap dance (if that option were available) – you can do it all as long as it's behind them.

A FAMILIAR SHADOW

Compared to other instalments in the series this is the best *Tenchu* yet, but the ideas and execution hasn't changed since the original – move through linear levels, watch enemies stubbornly follow pre-set paths. Once you've jumped out from behind a wall and triggered a stealth-kill cut-scene you've basically seen all the game has to offer. The single biggest innovation is the ability to stealth-kill two people at once, but even this is just a setup, with guard pairings blatantly scattered around all over the place.

The most basic level of stealth possible is further let down by clunky controls, a less than helpful camera and a lack of checkpoints. Learning each level layout results in a severe test of endurance, and feels like the stealth equivalent of *Pac-Man* – move forwards, gobble up an enemy, move forwards again. Even the replay value in the rankings and unlockable extras doesn't pull much more gameplay from this simplistic sneak-'em-up. The *Tenchu* series started so well, it's such a shame it's come to this. **Leon Hurley**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	A slight improvement for the series
Sound	05	The old sounds return, and we mean *old*
Gameplay	05	Simple and lacking in variety
Lifespan	06	Some replay value in unlocking weapons

So old you'll want to help it across the road and pop by its house every now and then to check it's okay

6/10

In true Japanese style there's plenty of blood to accompany a kill. Messy but oh so much fun

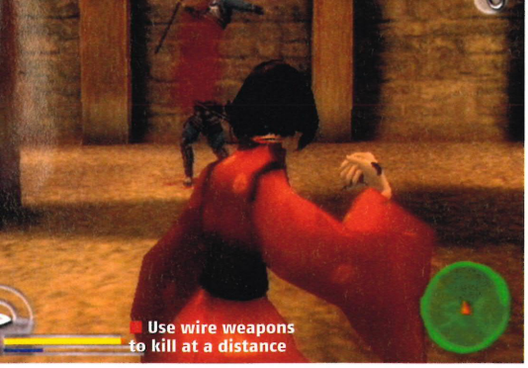
Rin might be small but she can still snap necks

Ayame tried to hide under the bear's paw. It didn't work

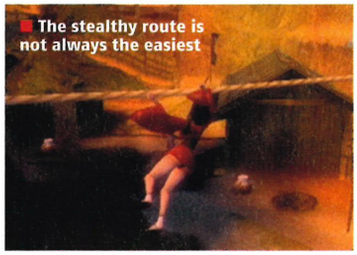
100% EXTRA GIRL

Fatal Shadows is almost identical to all the other *Tenchu* games (four in total, stretching back seven years) with the ability to stealth kill two people at once being the biggest revolution this time. It's not the only new feature though.

Big sweaty Rikimaru from previous games won't be stinking up the place with all that male Ninja odour this time. He's been replaced with the far more fragrant Rin who's definitely prettier, albeit in a looks-like-a-boy kind of way.


Use wire weapons to kill at a distance

Swing over chasms and show your pants


The stealthy route is not always the easiest

RED NINJA: END OF HONOR

PlayStation.2

Slice-and-dice action with a wire-whip and a tiny dressing gown

DETAILS

PUBLISHER VIVENDI
DEVELOPER TRANJI
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.REDNINJAGAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

There are more painful things in this world than playing *Red Ninja* – pushing splintery wooden shards into your stomach, for example – but, then again, you're not likely to pay 40 quid for that. Everything that *Red Ninja* does it manages to do at a substandard level; even as a budget game it would be a serious let down. It's a soulless journey through gaming mediocrity – and it's not even that good at being bad.

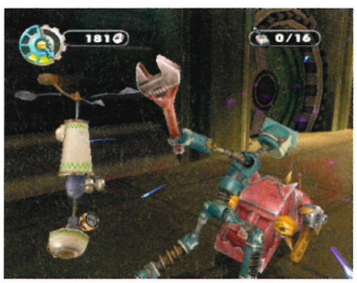
There's a heavy reliance on stealth elements – silent kills, a 'seduction' move to lure foes (although look at her; she's pretty much got them out anyway) – but at no point is stealth properly rewarded. The Tetsugen, a knife on a wire, allows one-hit kills regardless of enemies' alert status. It's therefore easier to charge through levels, slicing up the troops rather than trying to sneak around for the occasional slit throat. And it's also worth noting that the guards' ability to detect you seems to be decided at random. Sometimes you'll be seen from a distance, other times you can walk centimetres from a soldier and escape undetected.

It's a mess of ideas we've seen before, and none of them executed with style. The targeting, camera and controls are imprecise – not totally broken, but unresponsive and awkward. Despite the allure of lady flesh and an interesting weapon, *Red Ninja* is executed with all the elegance and flair of a damp flannel. **LH**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	06 Pretty in places but rarely stands out
Sound	04 Nondescript and uninspiring
Gameplay	04 Repetitive and flat
Lifespan	03 Not a lot to keep you interested

A lacklustre stain on the stealth genre. Repetitive and lacking in imagination,* Red Ninja *is a better idea than it is a game

4/10



Another cartoon film, another childish game

PlayStation.2

ROBOTS

Another movie with a bolt-on game

DETAILS

PUBLISHER VIVENDI
DEVELOPER EUROCOM ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.VUGAMES.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

For every kids' film that comes along these days there seems to be an average, looks-a-bit-like-the-movie platform adventure. Usually it's an inoffensive, item collecting tour of the film. So can *Robots* – a game accompanying the film of the same name – make a difference?

In a word: no. *Robots* is your average, jump about the place, platforming fare. Rodney, the game's star, collects pieces of scrap metal, wanders through locations from the film and meets various characters – usually to be given pointless missions. It might look more polished than other basic platformers but that can't hide its simplistic, jumping roots. **LH**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
Visually accomplished but with far too simplistic find-and-collect gameplay. Despite this,* Robots *will probably do well enough off the back of the film	**5/10**

PlayStation.2

PINK PONG

Talk about desperate

DETAILS

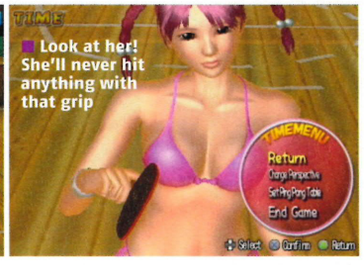
PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER D3
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.505GAMESTREET.IT
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

We always play ping pong in our underwear

Ever secretly desired to challenge beautiful girls at ping pong?" asks the back of the box. Now, it's fair to say that there are *plenty* of things we desire to challenge 'beautiful girls' at, but ping pong is *way* down the list. As you can guess from the shots, accurate representation of an international sport is not the main agenda in this ropey slice of smut.

Where *Spin Drive Ping Pong* (reviewed on page 102) fails as a sports game, *Pink Pong* fails as a sports game *and* a source of titillation. Poorly animated characters lurch around the screen successfully returning shots that they quite clearly missed. Costumes can be unlocked and the girls can be perved at in the 'view' mode, but why anyone would bother escapes us. **LH**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
Wooden and unpleasant to play as a representation of ping pong, the option to ogle the female cast in a variety of poses is poor compensation for the main game	**2/10**



Look at her! She'll never hit anything with that grip

HAUNTING GROUND

PlayStation.2

DETAILS

PUBLISHER CAPCOM
DEVELOPER CAPCOM
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 29 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/DEMENTO
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Run for your life in a deadly game of hide and seek that mixes *Resident Evil* survival with *Silent Hill* horror, where your most powerful weapon is man's best friend.

Meet a lady who really doesn't love the thrill of the chase

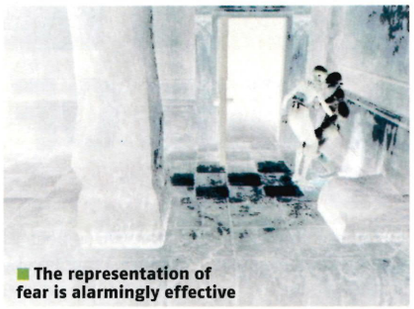
Fiona Belli wakes up in an odd situation. She's locked in a bloodstained kitchen with only a gibbering ogre for company. There's no obvious explanation for this – an uncomfortable feeling, to say the least...

Despite the fact that *Haunting Ground* is forged from the same third-person, fixed-camera mould as *Resident Evil*, this is a completely different experience. Unlike Capcom's zombie holocausts, Fiona doesn't use firearms (her armaments consist largely of exploding aromatherapy crystals) which leaves flight as the only option when threatened. You only face one enemy at a time, and the only effective way of defending yourself comes in the shape of Hewie, your faithful hound. What's left is a violent skew on hide 'n' seek – hide or be killed, basically – and some reasonably engaging puzzles.

DOGGY STYLE

Fiona hasn't got a health meter. Instead, as she gets increasingly terrified (through constantly being chased or hurt) the joypad will throb, the visuals blur and the colour bleeds into monochrome. As things get worse Fiona will trip and fall until, eventually, she's crawling. Get too scared and it's game over, with the point of fatal fear being so imprecise at first that it produces a brilliant level of tension. But even with Hewie around to gnaw at your pursuer's ankles, the relentless pursuit ultimately wears thin. There's nothing like the amount of backtracking in *Silent Hill 4*, but it's not as exhilarating either, and we longed to trade the pooch for a pump-action shotgun. After a while *Haunting Ground*'s weirdness (wood carvings of pregnant women, massive prehistoric fish, suggestions that Fiona's relatives lived in the mansion) begins to grate, along with the game's refusal to explain anything, short-changing your imagination, rather than igniting any excitement.

Instead of keeping you hooked, the bizarre events stop you caring about Fiona and Hewie – and when that happens any remaining tension evaporates, meaning few will bother replaying to see the different endings. There's more appeal than the horror-by-numbers of *Cold Fear* (issue 57, 7/10) but with the uniformly slow pacing there are few proper thrills on offer. Best hang on to your cash until *Resident Evil 4* loads up its boomstick later this year. ■ **Ben Richardson**



■ The representation of fear is alarmingly effective

■ Environments are lush and detailed in true *Resi* fashion

■ Enemies pursue relentlessly until you find a hiding place

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Fantastic looking environments
Sound	07	Disturbing and effective
Gameplay	06	Solid, but too slow to really excite
Lifespan	06	Several endings, but will anyone bother?

Initially intriguing, but too dreamlike and distant to engage for long. Plus there aren't any guns. What's that about then?

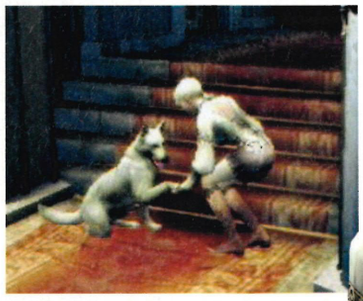
6/10

SIT, DAMN YOU!

Hewie the German Shepherd is your most effective weapon, with Fiona able to give him commands using the right stick

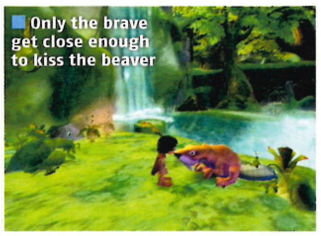
SICK 'IM BOY!
Push ↑ to order Hewie to attack. Press R3 first and he'll sit on his haunches for a more powerful strike.

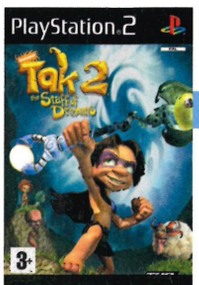
GO! SEARCH!
When there's no enemy to fight, nudging ↑ will send Hewie climbing under fences or jumping walls to get at hard to reach items.



GOOD BOY!
The better you treat Hewie, the better he'll respond – pressing → on the stick will ruffle his ears as a reward for a good job. Bless.

Protect the forest from nasty sprits, like this one


Only the brave get close enough to kiss the beaver



TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS

A reasonable platformer that falls at the last jump

DETAILS

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER AVALANCHE
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.TAK2GAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

Tak 2 is a platform game that does so much right. The controls – especially jumping – feel robust, and, combined with the dependable camera, make leaping about the place a definite and doubt free experience. Combat is a solid affair with a surprising number of attacks and combos to play with. The acting is high quality, with creative characters and cut-scenes taking inspiration from the likes of Pixar rather than other platformers. So why only a 7/10; and why finish the paragraph with a bloody great 'but'?

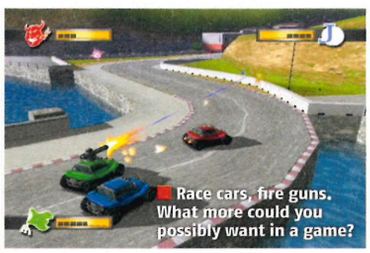
The problem with *Tak* is, for every little comedy touch or nifty little idea, there's an impossible-to-ignore turd bobbing through the creative stream. For example, there are some nice ideas but they're repeated to death. Getting a skunk's stink to move a bear, before using its stomach as a trampoline is fun, until about the tenth go in as many minutes. Also, repeating training levels, which occur in a bland dream world, jars against the breezy main levels as a tedious, dislocated chore.

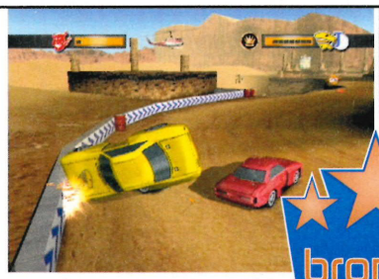
Don't get us wrong, we like *Tak 2*. We played, we laughed – we didn't even mind repeating a large chunk of it after a memory card cock up. But the balance between the good and the ho-hum tips just slightly in the favour of average. A shame, because while it might never have scraped the lofty heights of a 9/10 score, with a bit of a tweak it could have tickled an eight. **Leon Hurley**

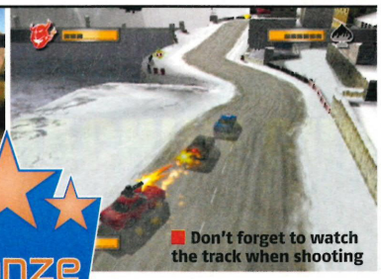
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Good character animation and lush levels
Sound	04	Nasty world music, standard effects
Gameplay	06	Hearty and reliable, but average
Lifespan	07	Lots to do but you've done it before

Gaining a point for the reduced price, **Tak 2** *trips up the final step to gaming greatness through a last-minute lack of effort*

7/10


Race cars, fire guns. What more could you possibly want in a game?




Don't forget to watch the track when shooting

bronze
PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

MASHED: FULLY LOADED

Buy this and your multitap will weep tears of joy

This 'new' edition is more of a remix, with a sprinkle of extra tracks, new modes, challenges and tweaks in graphics and car handling. And with the equivalent of new halogen spots and chrome exhaust trim, *Fully Loaded*'s motoring mayhem revs up the fun engine more than ever. Four of you tear around in tiny cartoon-style cars, trying to take the lead; picking up machine guns, dropping oil slicks; even if you get knocked out there's the option to fire homing missiles from the sidelines.

The single-player still lags behind, wheezing as it tries to keep up with the mutliplayer excellence. There's nothing wrong with playing alone, but without a multitap and a few mates *Mashed* will only ever be half a game. The new challenges go some way to make up for the original's one-player shortcomings. But this is a game that's all about a screaming rabble of mates, baying for blood as a crafty shunt sends someone's car to a flaming end off a cliff edge.

Now the tricky bit. Should you buy it? The original scored a rather nippy 9/10 and if you own that then you're probably better off waiting for the sequel. There's plenty of new stuff, and a bargain price to boot, but it's still the same game. However, if you've yet to dip your spoon into multiplayer gaming, then it doesn't get much better than *Mashed* – the addictive mix of racing and trigger-happy power-ups makes this an essential party purchase. **Leon Hurley**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Plenty of variety shown in the tracks
Sound	06	Vrooms and bangs aplenty
Gameplay	09	Unbelievably addictive multiplayer fun
Lifespan	08	Lasts as long as you have friends

One of the best multiplayer games around with some extras and an attractive price. Perhaps not worth it if you have the original though

8/10

Hounding your mates destroys friendships

DETAILS

PUBLISHER XPLOSIVE
DEVELOPER SUPERSONIC SOFTWARE
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-4
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.SUPERSONIC-SOFTWARE.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

Charts

Ringtoneking

from as low as 30p* in the mobile Ringtoneking clubs

see details below

Give your mobile the royal seal of approval!

	poly	mono
McFly - All About You	Hip8510	Hip8520
Akon - Locked Up	Hip8511	Hip8521
Elvis Presley - Good Luck Charm	Hip8512	Hip8522
Nelly - Over And Over	Hip8513	Hip8523
Sunset Strippers - Falling Stars	Hip8514	Hip8524
Mario - Let Me Love You	Hip8515	Hip8525
Stereophonics - Dakota	Hip8516	Hip8526
Eminem - Mockingbird	Hip8517	Hip8527
Cabin Crew - Star To Fall	Hip8518	Hip8528
Eminem - Like Toy Soldiers	Hip8519	Hip8529

Ringtones

	poly	mono
Britney Spears - Do	Hip8530	Hip8542
G4 - Bohemian Rhapsody	Hip8531	Hip8543
Girls Aloud - Wake Me Up	Hip8532	Hip8544
Jennifer Lopez - Get Right	Hip8533	Hip8545
Kaiser Chiefs - Oh My God	Hip8534	Hip8546
LL Cool J - Hush	Hip8535	Hip8547
MC Hammer - Can't Touch...	Hip8536	Hip8548
McFly - All About You	Hip8537	Hip8549
New Order - Krafty	Hip8538	Hip8550
Phantom Planet - California	Hip8539	Hip8551
Scissor S. - Filthy/Gorgeous	Hip8540	Hip8552
The Bravery - An Honest	Hip8541	Hip8553

Realtone Charts

1) Mario - Let Me Love You	Sound8480
2) Cabin Crew - Star To Fall	Sound8481
3) Fabolous - Breathe	Sound8482
4) Stereophonics - Dakota	Sound8483
5) Usher - Caught Up	Sound8484
6) Britney Spears - Do Somethin'	Sound8485
7) Uniting Nations - Out Of Touch	Sound8486
8) Stereophonics - Dakota	Sound8487
9) L.Park/Jay-Z - Numb/Encore	Sound8488
10) Eric Prydz - Call On Me	Sound8489
11) Ciara - 1, 2 Step	Sound8490
12) Ch. Brothers - Galvanize	Sound8491
13) Faithless - Insomnia	Sound8492

Sound Effects

Ali G**	Big9275	Get Up, Wake Up !	Big9294
Anne & The Ducks	Big9276	Get Your Money	Big9295
Avid Merrion**	Big9277	Happy Celebration	Big9296
Better Pick Up Or...	Big9278	Hey You!	Big9297
Call In The Oven	Big9279	I Have The Power	Big9298
Crazy Frog - Funky	Big9280	Insulting Phone	Big9299
Crazy F. - Psycho	Big9281	KungFu Crab	Big9300
Crazy F. - Teasing	Big9282	Laughing Mobile	Big9301
Crazy F. (Original)	Big9283	Lou & Andy**	Big9302
Crazy F. Is Excited	Big9284	Martians	Big9303
Crazy Frog Is High	Big9285	MelB (Bo Selecta)**	Big9304
Crazy Frog Is Nuts	Big9286	Mind The Mobile	Big9305
Crazy F. Is Puking	Big9287	Old Teleph. Ringing	Big9306
Daffyd** - Only Gay	Big9288	Penguins In Trouble	Big9307
Del Boy**	Big9289	Peter Kay**	Big9308
Emily Howard**	Big9290	Processing	Big9309
Formula-1 Racing Car	Big9291	Sweet Little Yellow	Big9310
Frog In A Blender	Big9292	U Have A Phone Call	Big9311
Get Da Fone...	Big9293	Vicky Pollard**	Big9312

**Celeb sound effects are performed by voice artists.

Sweety

Theme

Sweet5111

Sweet Wallpapers

Sweet5080 Sweet5081 Sweet5082 Sweet5083

Video

Sweet5112

Sweet5084 Sweet5085 Sweet5086 Sweet5087

Game

Sweet5113

Ringtones

	poly	mono	real
Tweet Tweet Original	Sweet5088	Sweet5089	Sweet5090
Tweet Tweet Reamix	Sweet5091	Sweet5092	Sweet5093
Twinkle Twinkle	Sweet5094	Sweet5095	Sweet5096
Little Birds Rock	Sweet5097	Sweet5098	Sweet5099

Videoringtone

Sweet5110

Animated Screensavers

Sweet5075

Sound Effects

I May Be Small...	Sweet5100
Sweety Goes Crazy	Sweet5101
Tweet Tweet	Sweet5102
Please Pick Up The Phone	Sweet5103
Your Phone Is Ringing	Sweet5104
Hi Sweety I Love You	Sweet5105
Ringtone Song	Sweet5106
Sweety Is Stressed	Sweet5107
Tweet Tweet, Telephone	Sweet5108
Tweet Tweet, Text Message	Sweet5109

Sweet5076 Sweet5077 Sweet5078 Sweet5079

Top Wallpapers

Pic6980 Pic6981 Pic6982 Pic6983 Pic6984 Pic6985 Pic6986

Pic6987 Pic6988 Pic6989 Pic6990 Pic6991 Pic6992 Pic6993 Pic6994 Pic6995 Pic6996 Pic6997 Pic6998 Pic6999 Pic7000 Pic7001 Pic7002 Pic7003 Pic7004 Pic7005 Pic7006 Pic7007 Pic7008 Pic7009 Pic7010 Pic7011 Pic7012 Pic7013 Pic7014

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For IRELAND txt 57113

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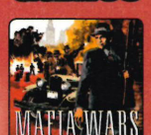
Animated Screensavers

Img5068

Img5069 Img5070 Img5071 Img5072 Img5073 Img5074

Games



Action1157

Mafia Wars is an epic story, set in 1920s New York. You're part of one of New York's mafia families.

Action1158

You are the commander of the sea fleet and your objective is to destroy the entire enemy fleet.

Action1159

Bobby is back again! He must go to winterland to rescue his best friend and you must help him.

Action1160

It's sheep shearing time! Help sheepfarmer Cal push his sheep through more than 50 levels.

Action1161

It's the year 2029 and machines rule the world. Save the future in a dozen different missions.

POLYPHONIC RINGTONES: MOTOROLA: V525, NOKIA: 3200, 3510(i), 6100, 6220, 6230, 6610, 7250(i) SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E800, P510 SIEMENS: C60, CF62, M55, MC60, SL55, SONY ERICSSON: T610, T630 MONOPHONIC RINGTONES: NOKIA: all popular handsets; SAMSUNG: C100, N500, N620, R210, S100, S300, T100 REALTONES: MOTOROLA: V525, V600, NOKIA: 3200, 3650, 6230, 6600, 6820, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E710, E800, P400, P510, V200, X450 SIEMENS: S65 SONY ERICSSON: K700i SOUND EFFECTS: MOTOROLA: V300, V525, V600 NOKIA: 3200, 3650, 6230, 6600, 6820, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E710, E800, P510, V200, X450 SIEMENS: A60, M55, S65, SL55 SONY ERICSSON: GX10i, GX20, GX30, SONY ERICSSON: K700i, COLOUR WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 NOKIA: 3200, 6100, 6220, 6230, 6600, 6610, 7210, 3510i, 7250(i) SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E800, X450 SIEMENS: A60, CF62, M55, MC60 SONY ERICSSON: T610, T630, ANIMATED WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 V600 NOKIA: 3650, 6230, 6600, 7610, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E710, E800, P510, V200, X450 Sharp GX10i, SHARP GX10, GX15, GX20, GX30, SIEMENS: C60, CX65, CX70, CX75, M55, M65, MC60, S65, SL65; SX1, BATTLE SHIPS: NOKIA S40, S60, Samsung E710, P400, X430, X450, MOTOROLA V300, V500, V525, V600, SONY ERICSSON K700i, P800,P900, SIEMENS C60, M55, MC60, S55, SL55, SX1, ALL OTHER GAMES: NOKIA S30c, S40, S60, SAMSUNG E100, E700, E708, E800, E710, P400, X430, X450, E300, E680, MOTOROLA V300, V500, V525, V600 N-Gage (QD), SWEETY THEME: NOKIA: 6260, 6600, 6630, 6670, 7610 SWEETY GAME AND VIDEO: NOKIA Series 30, Series 40, Series 60, Samsung E710, P400, MOTOROLA V 300 e.g. V300, SONY ERICSSON T610, T630, Z600, K700i, T610 PICTURE MESSAGES: NOKIA: all popular handsets; SAMSUNG: A800, C100, N500, N620, R210, S100, T100 OPERATOR LOGOS: NOKIA: all popular handsets, VIDEO RINGTONES: NOKIA: 3560, 3660, 6600, 7610, 7650 SONY ERICSSON: T610, T630, ANIMATED WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 V600 NOKIA: 3650, 6230, 6600, 7610, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E800, X450 SIEMENS: A60, CF62, M55, MC60 SONY ERICSSON: K700i, COLOUR WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 NOKIA: 3200, 6100, 6220, 6230, 6600, 6610, 7210, 3510i, 7250(i) SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E800, X450 SIEMENS: A60, CF62, M55, MC60 SONY ERICSSON: T610, T630, ANIMATED WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 V600 NOKIA: 3650, 6230, 6600, 7610, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E710, E800, P510, V200, X450 SIEMENS: S65 SONY ERICSSON: GX10i, GX20, GX30, SONY ERICSSON: K700i, COLOUR WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 NOKIA: 3200, 6100, 6220, 6230, 6600, 6610, 7210, 3510i, 7250(i) SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E800, X450 SIEMENS: A60, CF62, M55, MC60 SONY ERICSSON: T610, T630, ANIMATED WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 V600 NOKIA: 3650, 6230, 6600, 7610, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E710, E800, P510, V200, X450 Sharp GX10i, SHARP GX10, GX15, GX20, GX30, SIEMENS: C60, CX65, CX70, CX75, M55, M65, MC60, S65, SL65; SX1, BATTLE SHIPS: NOKIA S40, S60, Samsung E710, P400, X430, X450, MOTOROLA V300, V500, V525, V600, SONY ERICSSON K700i, P800,P900, SIEMENS C60, M55, MC60, S55, SL55, SX1, ALL OTHER GAMES: NOKIA S30c, S40, S60, SAMSUNG E100, E700, E708, E800, E710, P400, X430, X450, E300, E680, MOTOROLA V300, V500, V525, V600 N-Gage (QD), SWEETY THEME: NOKIA: 6260, 6600, 6630, 6670, 7610 SWEETY GAME AND VIDEO: NOKIA Series 30, Series 40, Series 60, Samsung E710, P400, MOTOROLA V 300 e.g. V300, SONY ERICSSON T610, T630, Z600, K700i, T610 PICTURE MESSAGES: NOKIA: all popular handsets; SAMSUNG: A800, C100, N500, N620, R210, S100, T100 OPERATOR LOGOS: NOKIA: all popular handsets, VIDEO RINGTONES: NOKIA: 3560, 3660, 6600, 7610, 7650 SONY ERICSSON: T610, T630, ANIMATED WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 V600 NOKIA: 3650, 6230, 6600, 7610, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E800, X450 SIEMENS: A60, CF62, M55, MC60 SONY ERICSSON: K700i, COLOUR WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 NOKIA: 3200, 6100, 6220, 6230, 6600, 6610, 7210, 3510i, 7250(i) SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E800, X450 SIEMENS: A60, CF62, M55, MC60 SONY ERICSSON: T610, T630, ANIMATED WALLPAPER: MOTOROLA: V525 V600 NOKIA: 3650, 6230, 6600, 7610, 7650 SAMSUNG: E600, E700, E710, E800, P510, V200, X450 Sharp GX10i, SHARP GX10, GX15, GX20, GX30, SIEMENS: C60, CX65, CX70, CX75, M55, M65, MC60, S65, SL65; SX1, BATTLE SHIPS: NOKIA S40, S60, Samsung E710, P400, X430, X450, MOTOROLA V300, V500, V525, V600, SONY ERICSSON K700i, P800,P900, SIEMENS C60, M55, MC60, S55, SL55, SX1, ALL OTHER GAMES: NOKIA S30c, S40, S60, SAMSUNG E100, E700, E708, E800, E710, P400, X430, X450, E300, E680, MOTOROLA V300, V500, V525, V600

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Is this guy really the star of the next **10/10** game?

No prizes for guessing that, of the handful of games we've garlanded with a perfect ten, *Soul Calibur II* sold the least copies. Maybe a lack of support from Electronic Arts, its surrogate publisher, was to blame. (Fighting games, like Sushi, should be served by Japanese chefs.) Or perhaps people just felt they were 'over' beat-'em-ups... Either way, after a strong start it was heartbreaking to see the game languishing in bargain bins only months later. But we never doubted that score for a second. More than a year and a half later, we're still discovering new moves and revelling in the most thrilling one-on-one combat of this, or arguably any other console generation. Until now...

I'm Not Being The New Boy

Meet the debutantes in *Soul Calibur III*'s 25-strong cast

ZASALAMEL

Enigmatic, but on looks alone he doesn't appear to be much of a good guy. Unlike most fighting games, SC's larger lads aren't utter crap. Zasalamel's age and origin are indeterminate due to his ability to reincarnate. He's also got a golden eye, but hopefully it won't be 'magic' like in the last Bond game...

SETSUKA

Probably our favourite of the newcomers, if only because she fights using a sword hidden inside an umbrella. Apparently, Setsuka is 24 years old and on a lonely journey to avenge the death of her master. Her 'Ladies Day At Ascot' outfit hardly says grief-stricken though, does it?

The big news is that *Soul Calibur III* will only be coming out on PlayStation 2. In choosing to work exclusively with Sony hardware, Namco is going back to its roots (the series originally appeared on PSone as *Soul Blade*) and for that we couldn't be happier. Due to the vagaries of magazine making, we actually received these screenshots

"this time you can create and customise your own character"

weeks before the game was revealed. Having checked out the new characters (with all the wariness of a son being introduced to his mother's new boyfriend) and soaked up the new, slightly prettier visuals – the picture we had was of a deluxe edition of *Soul Calibur II*, rather than a major reinvention. Certainly that's what's suggested by the arenas, which appear to be tweaked versions of the previous models. With any other game this would inevitably be construed as a criticism. But with something like *Calibur*, where the attraction is its uniquely instinctive combos and freeform movement, our real worry was that they might add something that messed up the formula.

I'VE GOT SOUL BUT I'M NOT A SOLDIER

We should have had more faith in Namco's relentlessly creative team. Having scrutinised the early footage for an obsessive/compulsive amount of time, we're pleased to report that the swordplay looks as gloriously instinctive as ever. And we also know that the game is bristling with new modes and features. Foremost of which is the chance to create and customise your own character. So, the most accurate answer to the question posed on the previous page is: no, you are. Now, initially, the idea of homebrew fighters made us panic. The fantastical 16th Century characters are a huge part of *Calibur*'s appeal – from Cervantes, the crazy old pirate, to Taki, the improbably breasted ninja. Our worry is that most attempts at

Two of the newcomers get it on. Our money's on 'Mr Scythe' triumphing

You're still able to end bouts instantly with a cheeky 'ring out'

Taki the buxom ninja is definitely back

TIRA

She might look like a refugee from a West End musical, but Tira is in fact a 'misguided angel of death' who strikes with 'bird-like grace'. Tira is 17 and certain to be one of the nippier characters. She's armed with what appears to be a sharpened SUV hubcap

Tira's rolls her circular blade around her body to attack

character creation end up looking like a green-haired, bandy-legged, over-tattooed mess. But having seen the process demonstrated, we're now feeling more confident. The most interesting questions are how much scope there is for creating your own fighting style, and whether you can mix and match the moves of the existing 25 characters. Certainly, every visual aspect can be altered: gender, body shape, weapon, costume, haircut... the whole enchilada. You can even choose an occupation to help flesh out your mighty warrior's backstory. "Hmmmm, blacksmith's daughter or erotic dancer..."

So what else? Obviously, you can expect the full gamut of tournament and team-based battles. More interesting is the World Competition mode, which seems to be the equivalent of the encyclopaedically deep Weapon Master mode from *Soul Calibur* – and will see you battling through ranks of rival combatants. Then there's the Lost Chronicle mode, which sounds intriguing, even though the only thing we know is that it will blend 'combat strategy simulation' with 'fighting elements'. (Maybe it's like Chess, but each time you lose a bishop Garry Kasparov punches you in the face.) For fans, the Museum mode will again enable you to pore over the artwork you've collected and now also includes a retrospective look at the entire series. The only notable absentee is online play, which definitely wont be included. But that's small potatoes, really. For maximum bragging rights *Calibur* needs to be played with a roomful of likeminded but, crucially, not-quite-as-good-as-you friends. Expect a massive playtest soon. This soul still burns. ■ TC

CHEAP AS DIGITAL CHIPS

Shop around and you can find *Soul Calibur II* for less than a tenner. Think of it as pre-season training... here's a reminder why you *need* to play it.

Graphics	09	An opulent tray loaded with delicious eye-canapés
Sound	09	Clanging blades and gloriously bombastic music
Gameplay	10	Immediately enjoyable, near infinitesimal depth
Life span	10	You'll still be discovering new moves come Xmas

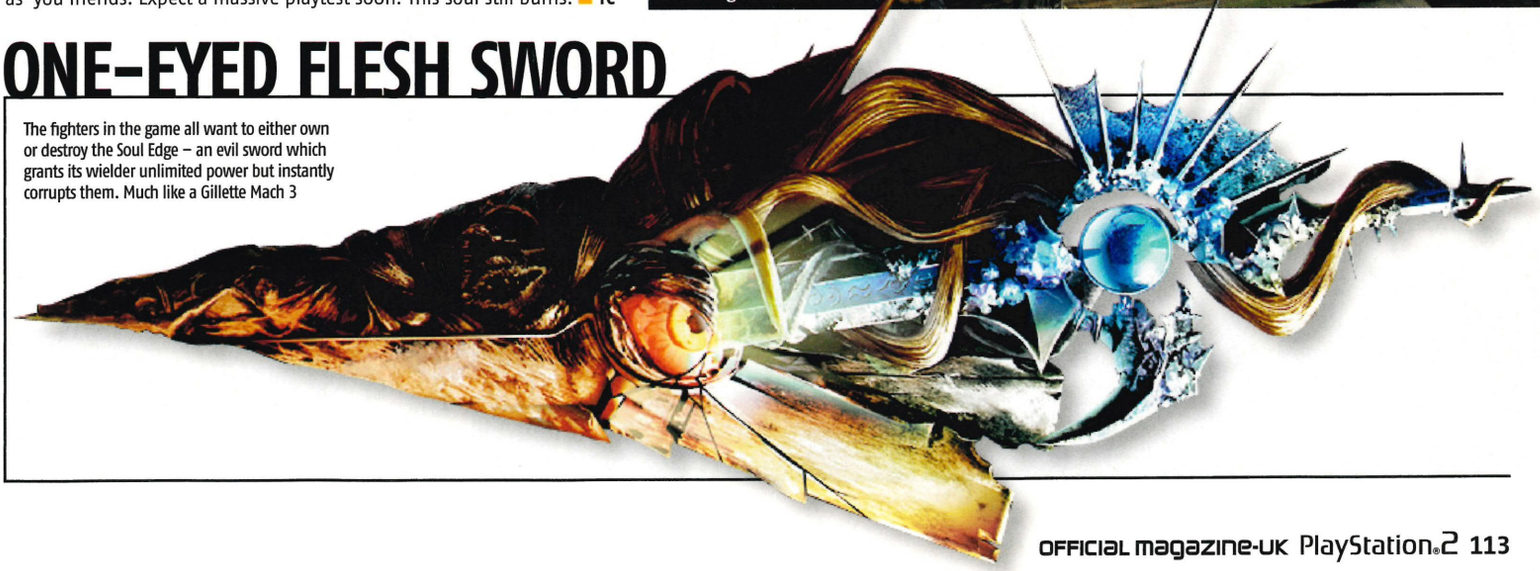
Utterly essential for fight fans and capable of converting non-believers like Jesus on a good hair day

10

Beardy samurai Mitsurugi is one of the returning characters

ONE-EYED FLESH SWORD

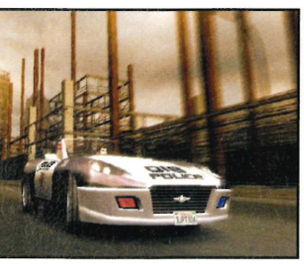
The fighters in the game all want to either own or destroy the Soul Edge – an evil sword which grants its wielder unlimited power but instantly corrupts them. Much like a Gillette Mach 3

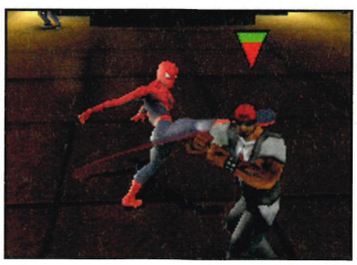


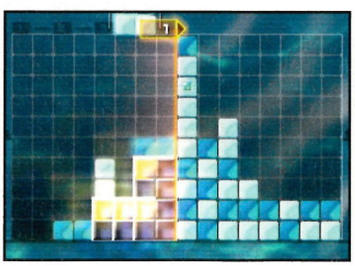
WORDS: MICHAEL FRENCH/LEON HURLEY

HOLDING THE PSP'S HOT HANDFUL

Listen up: We've played the five biggest and boldest games for Sony's handheld and want to tell you all about them. And guess what, not a single one is a racing game...

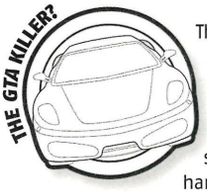






Pursuit Force

Publisher Sony | **Developer** Bigbig Studios



There are a ridiculous number of vehicle-based games set for release alongside the PSP. At the last count, nine were speeding onto the handheld (they are *Ridge Racer*, *WipEout Pure*, *Fired Up*, *Twisted Metal: Head On*, *Colin McRae 2005*, *TOCA Race Driver 3*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Midnight Club 3*, and *Need For Speed Underground Rivals*). So what makes *Pursuit Force*, the tenth game in this genre, worth talking about? Well, for a start, it's got cars in it but it's not a racer. And it's shamelessly arcadey, putting you in the SWAT jacket of a lawman engaged in a series of high-speed chases, hunting down law-breaking, gangland scum.

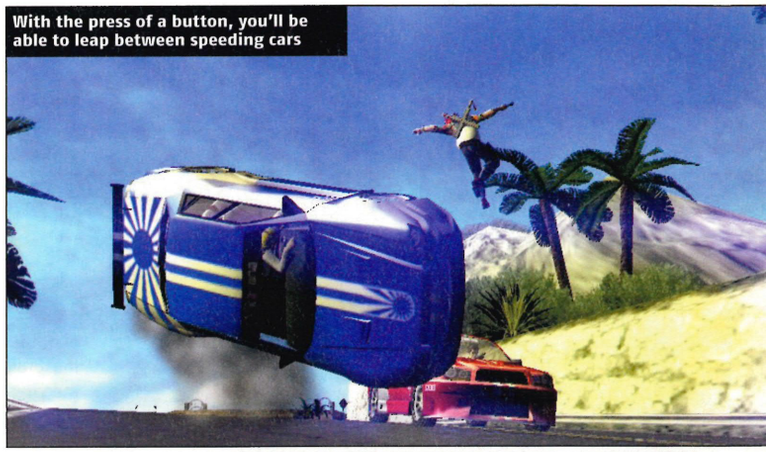
As the shots show, the hook of the game involves tracking enemies and then jumping from your own car to theirs in order to start your arrest. As you drive, icons appear above the cars you can hijack, so you pull up next to them and, with just the press of a button, jump between moving traffic. It's like someone saw the car chase in *The Matrix Revolutions* and said, 'Let's make a game of that!'

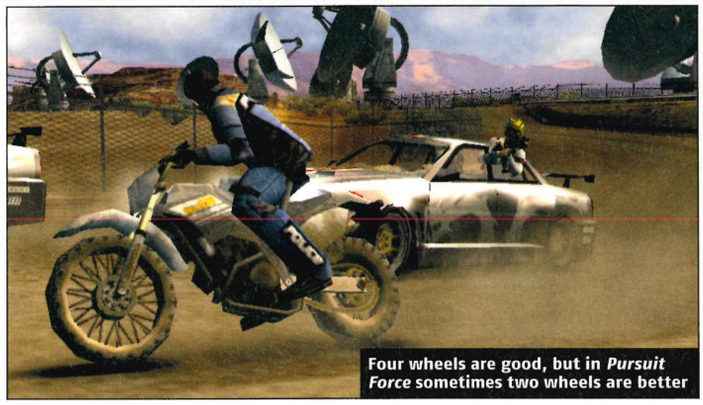
Once on the vehicle you won't necessarily take control straight away – you may be left clinging to the bonnet, hood or back bumper while you try and take out the driver with a well-aimed shot and a lot of dodging. Plus, they'll be firing back, and might even try and squash you between other cars. It doesn't all centre on leap-frogging onto other cars with gun cocked though – you can bash into other cars to damage them, plus jump into civilian cars or other police trucks should your four-wheeled weapon get too damaged.

The game's being developed in the UK but has a slick, American setting that plonks you into a fictional US state to pursue crims through your dangerous driving. The state is divided into five differently themed zones (to help with loading times) that include desert outskirts, city motorways and an industrial district. But will you get to run around them on foot, à la *GTA*? "You aren't tied to the vehicle you drive, and there are some other ways for the player to get around and take down the criminal gangs that are running amok," explains developer Bigbig's boss, Jonathan Webb. "But we're keeping the rest of them under wraps for now." We, however, are confident that these will include not just motorbikes (also pictured here) but also boats and maybe even airplanes (because clinging onto the side of planes is *so* in this year after Clark's *Smallville* escapades).

Later, Webb says, *Pursuit Force* is: "Similar in some respects to games like *Burnout* and *Need For Speed*." But before we tear our hair out at the mention of more racing titles, he adds: "Our game concentrates on the speed and action of chasing down your prey." Ah, brilliant. The last thing we wanted was another identikit racer – and *Pursuit Force* is certainly unlike all other driving games out there. It genuinely gets us excited about the PSP, proving that there are plenty of new titles with gripping concepts on the way.

The game is racing towards a Christmas release, and the wise gamer should expect more reports in the coming months.


With the press of a button, you'll be able to leap between speeding cars


Four wheels are good, but in *Pursuit Force* sometimes two wheels are better

On-car shootouts involve quick button tapping to dodge and fire

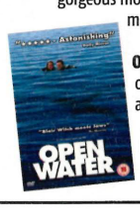
MOVIES ON THE MOVE

The floodgates are opening for films available in the PSP's UMD movie format. A raft of big Hollywood studios have announced their support, with more expected to follow over the coming months. We've divvied up the 25 announced movies into best and worst for your perusal...

THE BEST

Terminator 2 – Robo-Arnie forgets he was the bad guy and saves the world.

Total Recall – Human, memory-wiped Arnie saves Mars and also kills Sharon Stone. Result.



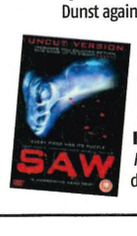
House Of Flying Daggers – Epic, gorgeous movie. The key words are martial and art.

Open Water – Holiday cock-up leaves tourist adrift with sharks.

Rambo: First Blood – Stallone's ex-soldier shoots up small-town USA. Now known as 'the news'.

Saw – Madman imprisons people and forces them to kill each other.

Once Upon A Time In Mexico – Third film for the murdering Mariachi.



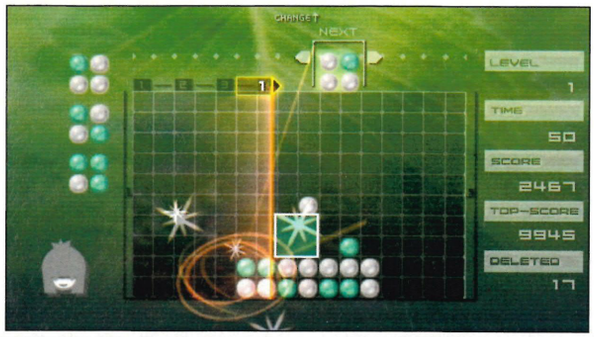
Spider-Man 2 – Superhero sequel. Dunst again fails to get naked.

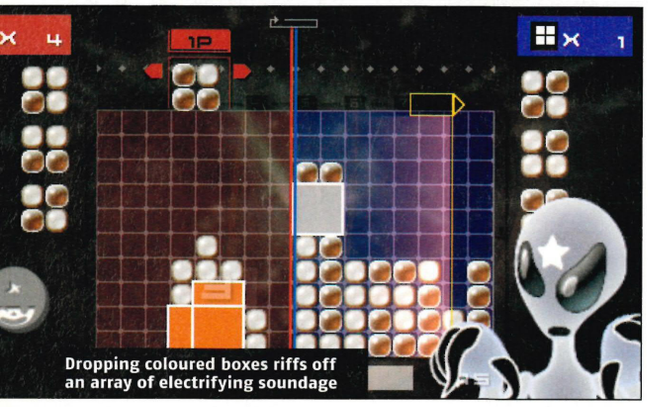
Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children – More CG film nonsense.

Hero – Like *House Of Flying Daggers* but set during a war.

Pirates Of The Caribbean – Pirate fun with buckles being swashed all over the poop-deck.

Kill Bill Vol 1 – Blood and swords and blood and swords and Bruce Lee's tracksuit and blood and swords (repeat). But where's *Volume 2*?





Dropping coloured boxes riffs off an array of electrifying soundage

Lumines

Publisher Ubisoft | **Developer** Bandai/QB games

THE ADDICTIVE PUZZLER!

We know, we know – the words 'falling block puzzle' don't inspire much confidence, especially if you've played more than your fair share of *Tetris* and still have sweat-pouring nightmares about it, but hear us out. *Lumines* is one of the most fulfilling games we've played on PSP yet, merging funky music and building blocks into staggered melodies that sound great.

As the soundtrack plays, a bar sweeps across the grid in time with the beat. In the meantime, blocks fall into the play area, leaving you to place same-coloured parts next to each other. When the beat bar swishes across, those same-coloured squares evaporate into spangly beats, the key being that these beeps and blips accompany the music. It genuinely fuses on-screen action with sound effects and music – far more than the simple 'Simon Says' stylings of the average rhythm-action title. It's also rather gripping. With a bit of planning and the sporadically supplied bonus blocks, you can chain up a line of blocks, which then riff off the screen with the music. It's probably the biggest conjoined audio/visual thrill we've seen in any game.

Of course, a title such as this doesn't just live or die on how well the speedy puzzling works – the associated music has to drive the game forward. Which it does very well, with the electronica (from 'proper' artists that are far too obscure to name here) only very occasionally wandering into nonsense, trance territory.

Lumines is Daft Punk wearing an 'I ❤ *Tetris*' T-shirt. It's truly excellent, and brings a fast, immediate, 'just one more go' game to the PSP table. In fact, it's time to go back and work on that high score a little more right now...

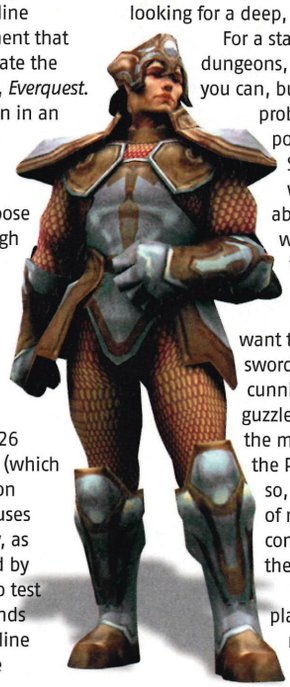
UNTOLD LEGENDS: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE

Publisher TBC | **Developer** Sony Online Entertainment

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME!

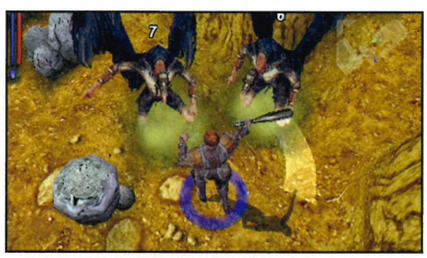
Untold is exactly what you may expect of an action adventure by the team at Sony Online Entertainment that helped create the online RPG, *Everquest*. It plonks you down in an 'olde worlde' fantasy setting and challenges you to save an entire world using an adventurer of your own creation. You get to choose from making a Berserker (the tough fighty one), an Alchemist (the geeky one, good with potions), a Knight (the noble fighty one) or Druid (the short one that no one ever chooses in RPGs).

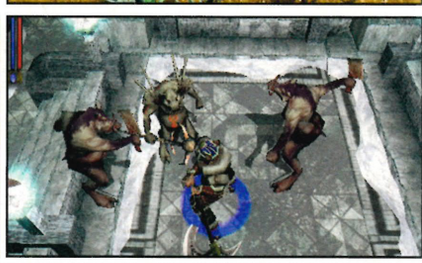
You won't have to go saving the world alone however, oh no. While you *can* tackle the game's 26 main quests and 100 extra levels (which have randomly generated dungeon layouts) solo, the game really focuses on the multiplayer. Unfortunately, as we only had one version supplied by developer SOE, we weren't able to test this core element. Yeah, that sounds laughable, but wait – even in offline single-player it's clear that, while *Pursuit Force* and *Spider-Man 2* may be ideal for quick speedway or Spidey adventures, *Untold* is the game you want to pick if you're looking for a deep, fulfilling adventure.



For a start, you can't run into dungeons, sword-a-swinging. Well, you can, but you'll die quickly, probably punctured by a possessed skeleton's blade. So you have to be judicial with your character's abilities and growth. From what we've played it's clear there's plenty of scope to adjust and modify your character to suit how you want to play it – create a colossal sword-swinging champion or a cunning arrow-firing potion-guzzler. In all, it's looking like the most time-consuming of all the PSP games, and deliciously so, proving that there's plenty of room on PSP for both more complex games like this and the insta-play arcade ones.

Full online, multiplayer play test soon, but in the meantime add this one to your watch list.





Untold's graphics are brilliantly polished and a sight to behold

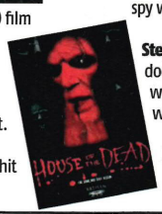
MOVIES CONT...

THE WORST

Stargate – The original (arse) film that inspired the TV Series.

House Of The Dead – Zombies run amok at college party and ruin the mood a bit.

Young Guns – The Brat Pack hit the Wild West.



xXx – Vin Diesel plays a stuntman turned spy who saves the world. Whatever.

Step Into Liquid – Surfing documentary. Full of big boards, waves and people who say 'dude' without irony.

Universal Soldier – Van Damme and Lundgren play super soldiers and argue over who's best. Nobody wins.

Van Wilder: Party Liaison – College-set, party high jinks. Allegedly it's a comedy.

Resident Evil – Zombies escape from game to film. Wish they hadn't.

Resident Evil: Apocalypse – Zombies want to go back to their game. Milla Jovovich asks if she can come too.

Hellboy – Comic-based monster romp where Selma Blair looks gorgeous and Ron Perlman hits stuff.

The Punisher – Dull adaptation of Marvel's most violent character.

National Treasure – American Declaration Of Independence has treasure map scrawled on the back. Riiiiight...

Reign Of Fire – Fire breathing dragons ruin Earth, saving mankind from having to do it themselves. Awful.

SPIDER-MAN 2

Publisher Activision | **Developer** Vicarious Visions

THE SUPERHERO TITLE!

Despite early suggestions from publisher Activision, *Spider-Man 2* isn't quite a direct port of the PS2 game that impressed many last year. Due to the PSP's smaller storage and more slender processing power, the game's been pared down to fit the handheld form. This doesn't mean they've butchered a classic, however. In fact, this is the most carefully conceived remake we've seen, even though you can kiss the free-roaming New York City goodbye.

However, come up and shake hands with a brand new story, levels, missions, cinematic sequences and contributions from the film's cast. Spidey's moves have been modified a little, with the web-swinging cut down to befit smaller play areas, but retaining the 'be Spider-Man' gloss of exaggerated comic-style combat, plus wall clinging and web shooting.

If anything, the streamlined setup reminds us of older *Spider-Man* games. Not the cack game based on the first movie, but the excellent PSone titles cooked up by *Tony Hawk's* development genius, Neversoft. The familiarly strict mission-focused structure and indoor adventures only underline this, as do the brilliantly judged superhero powers. Production values are also quite special – along with the already-mentioned voice work, the graphics offer a much crisper look at Spidey and his environment than even the PS2 brethren.

Our only worry is length – we understand that you might be able to beat this one in a matter of hours. But maybe that will convince Activision to release it at a slightly reduced price? Here's hoping – it would certainly help make it one of the better launch titles and stop it becoming quickly forgotten.

"Hold still, the thread's caught on my Spidey suit. Yes, I realise it's a designer outfit..."

World Snooker Challenge

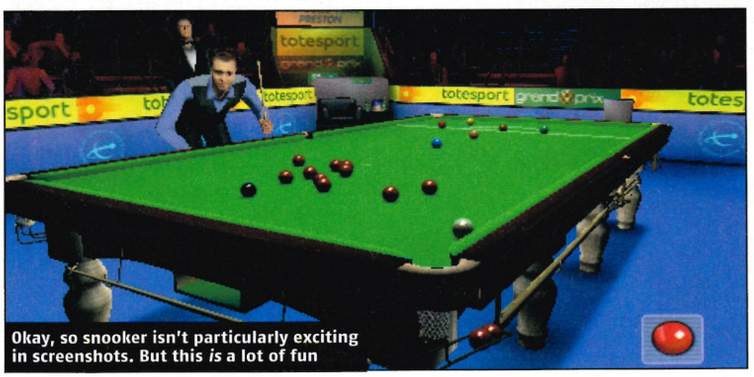
Publisher Sega | **Developer** Blade Interactive

THE LAID-BACK SPORT SIM!

We'd only played *World Snooker Challenge* at Sega's UK HQ for a few minutes before we realise this is one of the most realistic sports sims ever. The reason this PSP snooker game works well is that it captures that down-the-pub-with-your-mates style of play perfectly. We're having a Wi-Fi match; our mate is sat on the other side of the room and we're just shooting the breeze and frames in equal measure. The only thing missing is a pint and the lingering guilt that the missus thinks we're still toiling at work.

Where it departs from playing with mates, however, is that a handful of famous players are on hand to play against in single-player. Elsewhere, you can play snooker, pool, bar billiards or trick shots – although only the former works with Wi-Fi. There's also a new after-shot auto-save feature in keeping with the PSP's 'pick up and play' nature, plus a new story mode which sees you beating challenges to unlock new arenas to play in.

Worries? Not one. Well, except for the fact that if you don't like snooker then this probably won't convert you to its cause. For the rest of us though, it could end up being a godsend.



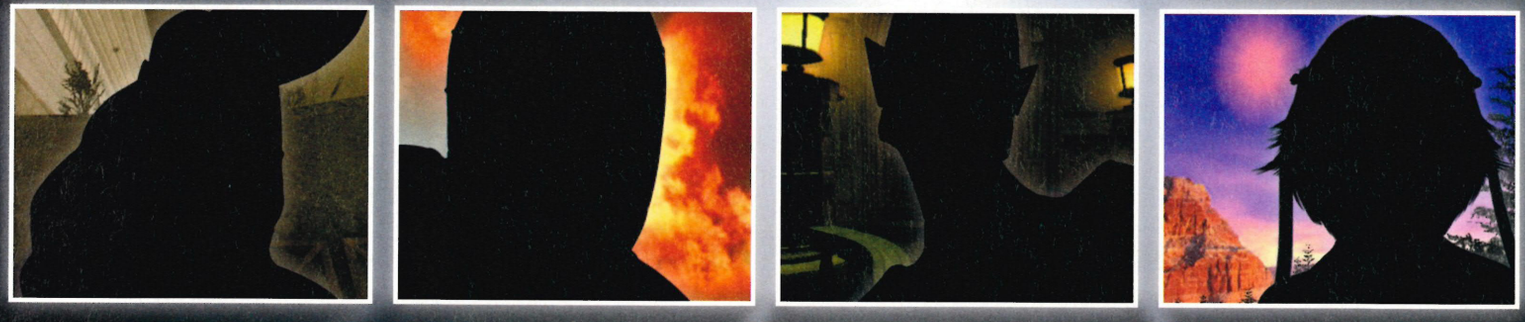
Okay, so snooker isn't particularly exciting in screenshots. But this *is* a lot of fun

And the rest...

A handy list of every game heading to PSP in the near (and not so near) future. When Sony finally spills the beans on the release, tick the boxes for the ones you like, cut out the list and hand it to your friendly videogame shop keeper. After rubbing his hands with glee, he'll hand you an enormous pile of games in exchange for many of your Earth pounds...

- ❑ Advent Shadow
- ❑ Ape Escape Academia
- ❑ Ape Escape: On The Loose
- ❑ Armored Core Formula Front
- ❑ ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails
- ❑ Batman Begins
- ❑ Battlefield
- ❑ Bleach
- ❑ Burnout
- ❑ Bust-A-Move Pocket
- ❑ Coded Arms
- ❑ Colin McRae Rally 2005
- ❑ Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII
- ❑ Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower
- ❑ Death Jr
- ❑ Devil May Cry
- ❑ Dino Dini's Soccer
- ❑ Dynasty Warriors
- ❑ Everybody's Golf
- ❑ FIFA Football
- ❑ Fired Up
- ❑ Formula One
- ❑ Free Running
- ❑ Frogger: Helmet Havoc
- ❑ Gran Turismo 4 Mobile
- ❑ Grand Theft Auto
- ❑ Harvest Moon
- ❑ Infected
- ❑ London Taxi
- ❑ Lumines
- ❑ Madden NFL 2006
- ❑ Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects
- ❑ MediEvil
- ❑ Mercury
- ❑ Metal Gear Ac!d
- ❑ Metal Shell
- ❑ MX Unleashed
- ❑ Namco Museum
- ❑ NBA Street Showdown
- ❑ Need for Speed Underground Rivals
- ❑ NFL Street 2 Unleashed
- ❑ Pro Evolution Soccer
- ❑ Pursuit Force
- ❑ PuyoPop Fever
- ❑ Rengoku: The Tower Of Purgatory
- ❑ Ridge Racer
- ❑ Smart Bomb
- ❑ Spider-Man 2
- ❑ Star Wars Ep III: Revenge Of The Sith
- ❑ Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow
- ❑ Tales Of Eternia
- ❑ Tenchu
- ❑ The Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe
- ❑ The Godfather
- ❑ The Incredibles 2 [working title]
- ❑ The Matrix
- ❑ Tiger Woods PGA Tour
- ❑ Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zone Of Control
- ❑ Tomb Raider
- ❑ Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix
- ❑ Transformers
- ❑ Twisted Metal: Head-On
- ❑ Untold Legends: Brotherhood Of The Blade
- ❑ Viewtiful Joe
- ❑ Virtua Tennis
- ❑ WipEout Pure
- ❑ World Snooker Challenge
- ❑ World Tour Soccer
- ❑ WRC
- ❑ WWE

The most secret games for PS2



We've seen them...
Next month so will you

On Sale Thursday, 19 May

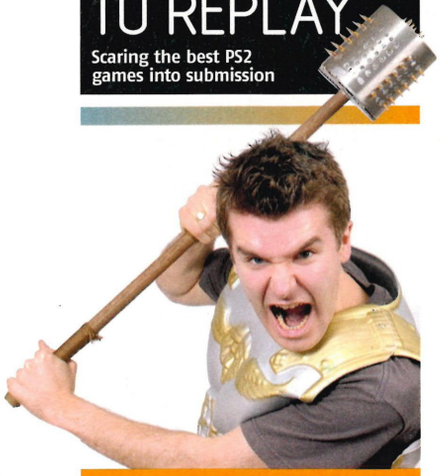
PlayStation®2
OFFICIAL magazine-UK

replay

HELPING YOU GET THE MOST FROM YOUR GAMES

WELCOME TO REPLAY

Scaring the best PS2 games into submission



"Raahhhhhrrrrr!"

Confused? The reason I'm marauding around with a spiky mace is simple: I'm head-over-heels in love with *Shadow Of Rome* and its super-satisfying butchery. I've been playing it hour after hour – its even replaced *PES4* in my lunchtime gaming slot! Flick over the page and see how you can forget about the tedious stealth sections and just get stuck into the fantastic combat.

But this month hasn't just been about hacking my fellow gladiators limb from limb. I've also found time to master those tricky free kicks in *Pro Evolution Soccer 4*, so sprint your way over to the Boot Room on page 124 to see how you can improve your technique. Remember, here at Replay we're always looking to extend the life of your latest purchase. So make sure *you* get involved and send in your own thoughts and gaming discoveries. We're a team after all, right?

Ben Richardson,
Staff writer

THE BOOT ROOM

124

Take our free kick masterclass and you'll soon be knocking 'em in like Figo, Becks and Zidane

120 **...REVIEWED EARLIER**
Episode III is nearly here! We take another look at the interstellar warfare of *Star Wars: Battlefront*

121 **YOUR SHOUT**
You set us straight with hedge-jumper *Gallop Racer* and shooter-fest *Project: Snowblind*

122 **GTA: SAN ANDREAS**
Boring car? Fancy something faster? Try out our personalised rides for some modding inspiration

126 **SURGERY**
Take your seat in the waiting room please... The doctor is preparing your gaming medicine

127 **CHALLENGES**
Try our challenges, show us what you're worth and you could win some fancy garb

128 **CHARTS**
The games people buy, our 'hilarious' cartoon and other games mag's scores for free

122

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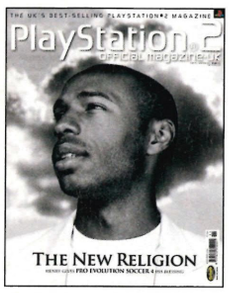
here's one we reviewed earlier...

BECAUSE THERE'S MORE TO THESE GAMES THAN EVEN WE REALISED



ORIGINAL REVIEW *OPS2#52*
SCORE 7/10

It's usually more fun to play as the bad guys

STAR WARS EXPLOSION!
Turn to page 64 for the latest on the new *Battlefront* game

Where's Luke Skywalker when you need him?

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

There's more fun in fighting for the Force than we originally thought...

Samey gameplay, repetitive moves, dispiriting deaths; it's easy to dislike the first *Battlefront*, and these things counted against the title when it was reviewed. But while it can be unrelenting and discriminating, 7/10 be damned – there's an undeniable rush that comes from planning an attack in any game and *Battlefront* doesn't disappoint.

And by that same regard, here's something you might have missed. *Battlefront* gives you a large amount of leeway when it comes to epic battles and you can make your own tactics on the fly.

Take, for instance, the Hoth mission. A common staple in any *Star Wars* game, but given an edge due to *Battlefront*'s freeform nature. The snowy plains are dominated by walking AT-ATs – but if you don't want to face them with snowspeeders and tow cables like Luke did in the film, then here's a trick. Play as a Wookie and, instead of using the snowspeeder to run rings around the legged tanks, fly to the top and jump on an AT-AT's back. From here, you can plant a bomb or, even more ingenious, use this new vantage point to fire on other enemies with a rocket launcher or sniper rifle.

There's an undeniable rush that comes from planning an attack

Try it. Find ways to create carnage that doesn't stick to the rules but makes you feel clever and resourceful, like a true Jedi Master.

That'll teach him to wear a purple wrap with tassels

SHADOW OF ROME

Now available minus the boring bits

ORIGINAL REVIEW
OPS2#56
SCORE 8/10

Shadow Of Rome couldn't be more violent without somehow conspiring to actually spike you repeatedly in the back of the head with a long needle while you're playing. And before you ask, we stand firmly behind our 8/10 score. It's just a shame that the ultra gory combat is spliced with some pretty tedious stealth missions. But guess what? Play through the entire game once and you won't have to suffer the tedium of playing through any of the stealth bits ever again. Good news, eh? And here's how it all works.

Every time you finish a stage as the gladiator, it's added to a list of Battle Selections and is then available from the main menu. Admittedly you need to finish the story game and – pah! – stealth levels once to unlock all of the game's arenas, but the eventual reward is endless amounts of gladiatorial combat and no ultra-slow gameplay. Now that's replay value.

...and your shout

THINK WE'VE GOT IT WRONG? THEN SET US RIGHT

Can't agree with one of our scores? Think we've trashed a winner and hyped a loser? Then write your own review smart ass? Then take picture of yourself, pop it with your review and send it to the following address. Come on, prove we're idiots.

...AND MY SHOUT,
OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE,
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ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk

If we print yours next month you'll get a copy of *Lego Star Wars*

REVIEWER: MORRIS

Too Short? Jim didn't think so

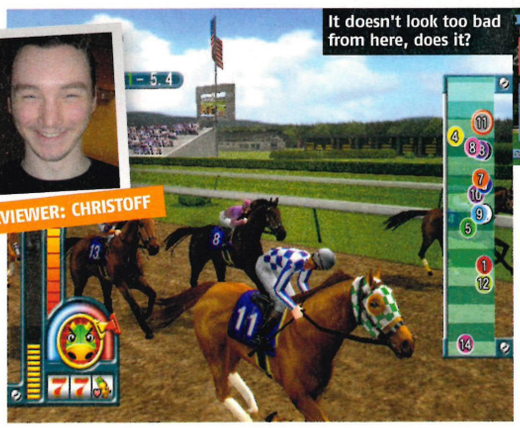
Let's be honest, there *are* better shooters out there

TO GET YOUR SHOUT IN THE MAG YOU MUST SEND A PASSPORT PIC OF YOURSELF

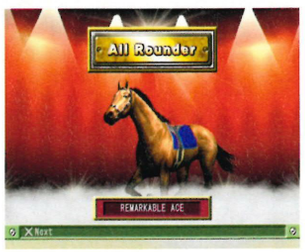
PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

"It didn't leave us cold," you said. "Hankering for much more," you claimed. So, let me get this straight: you enjoyed the game enough to complete it, loved the weapons and the crisp visuals, but gave it a 7/10 all the same? Christ, does a game only get a decent score if it offers so many hours of play that no one but the sad little 14-year-olds locked in their rooms with the game and a copy of *The Daily Sport* – plus tissues – will ever see the end of it? *Project: Snowblind* is, in my most humble of opinions, immensely enjoyable, so give it the score that it truly deserves (that's at least an 8/10 in case you're still confused) and stop moaning about the length!
Jim Morris, Aldershot

REVIEWER: CHRISTOFF



It doesn't look too bad from here, does it?



Jockeys are force-bred to keep them small

No jokes about feeling a little horse

GALLOP RACER 2

Just because it's cheap doesn't mean it's good. And this isn't even budget – it's the same price as *MGS3*. This useless hedge-sim isn't worth more than 3/10. I've no doubt that those who enjoy betting on nags for irreverent sums of money may garner some interest (after losing 30 quid on a complete outsider of a game), but these people are unworthy to be listened to, let alone relied upon for my game-buying decisions. I'll throw my money away on something more useful. Like that chocolate teapot I've had my eye on...
Tom Christoff, Cornwall

offcuts

Still got something to say? C'mon, let it out...

I'm outraged beyond words... although I do have something to say: *Jak 3* is easily the best game ever for PS2. And yes, I have played *San Andreas*. It was utterly disappointing.
Peter Knowles, email

POP: Warrior Within is horrid. The prince has lost all his charm and become a bit dull. And it's buggy. *Really* buggy. 9/10 is a disgrace – it's clearly only worthy of 6/10.
Chris Keane, Birmingham

Killzone and *MOH: Rising Sun* are far too short. I realise they're both online games, but why should this make for a shorter single-player game? Thank God Rockstar don't make online games.
Terence Burton, email

I still don't understand why you enjoy *Viewtiful Joe* and yet at the same time hate *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Joe's in 2D! The Turtles are in 3D! It's very easy to see which is the better game.
Owen Doherty, Epping

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

The Crib

GET YOUR SAN ANDREAS FIX EVERY MONTH

MAKE *SAN ANDREAS* YOUR HOME WITH OUR MONTHLY INFO BURST

BODY MODIFICATION

One of the more overlooked aspects of *GTA: San Andreas* are the extensive car modification options. Nearly all vehicles can be given full open-car surgery, turning boring Sunday drives into full-on studwagons. Anything from paint jobs, spoilers, exhausts, wheel covers, bullbars, wheels, bass boosters, hydraulics and nitrous kits can be fully customised and modified to your personal taste.

The very first mod shop you'll get access to is Loco Low Co in Los Santos. It becomes available once you've completed the 'Cesar Vialpando' mission and will only accept Lowriders. At the same time, the Transfender garages will open in all major cities – these cater for the majority of vehicles in the game. Finally, on completing the Zeroing In mission, the Wheel Arch Angels shop becomes available. It's only at this point that the really swish paint jobs become available. Check out our four most impressive pieces of bodywork to the right...

MODDED AT TRANSFENDERS

Car	Emperor
Paint colour black	$150
Oval hood vents	$150
Up swept exhaust	£350
Round fog lamps	$100
10x Nitro booster	$1,000
Roof scoop	$80
Fury spoiler	$359
Side skirts	$500
Grove wheels	$1,230
Hydraulics	$1,500
Total cost	**$5,419**

MODDED AT LOCO LOW CO

Car	Savanna
Paint job 3	$500
Car colour 2 (white)	$150
Chromer front bumper	$2,200
Slammin rear bumper	$2,095
Slammin exhaust	$1,590
Chrome strips	$830
Classic wheels	$1,620
Hydraulics	$1,500
Total cost	**$10,485**

MODDED AT ARCH ANGELS

Car	Stratum
Paint job 2	$550
X Flow exhaust	$720
Alien front bumper	£1,030
X Flow rear bumper	$920
X Flow roof vent	$180
X Flow spoiler	$530
Alien side skirts	$520
Rim Shine wheels	$980
Total cost	**$5,430**

MODDED AT ARCH ANGELS

Car	Jester
Paint job 2	$550
Paint colour pink	$100
X Flow exhaust	$750
Alien front bumper	$1,050
X Flow rear bumper	$950
Alien roof vent	$250
X Flow spoiler	$550
X Flow skirts	$450
Shadow wheels	$110
Total cost	**$4,760**

How to do GTA the easy way...

MISAPPROPRIATION

WHERE: Tierra Robada

GIST: Tenpenny and Pulaski send CJ to assassinate an agent who's about to pass on incriminating evidence about them to the FBI.

HOW WE DID IT: Like fools we waded into Aldea Molvada, guns blazing and totally unaware of the volume of feds that were there. After nearly dying we were forced into a long-winded helicopter chase and then lost our target in Las Vegas.

THE EASY WAY: Pick up the jetpack from Verdant Meadows, fly to Aldea Molvada and hover above your targets. This takes them completely by surprise, and you can complete the mission much faster.

Ask Professor Frenchipus

Where *OPS2*'s *San Andreas* expert answers your questions

Q. You said that the burglary missions were only available in Los Santos. Are you sure?
A. Well, I was... but further investigation shows that you can go on the rob in San Fierro and Las Venturas, too! The black boxville that initiates the thieving missions can be found behind the fire station in SF and in the NE of Roca Escalante in LV.

Q. I'm in Los Santos – are there any good weapons I can find without buying them?
A. Oh yes! The M4, one of the very best machine guns in the whole game, can be found at the airport at the west end of the runways between the yellow and black striped ramps.

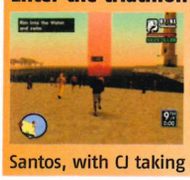
Q. My mate told me that you can get tear gas in Los Santos. Is that true and where can I find some?
A. Your mate's not lying. Find some of the noxious gas at the Ocean Docks in grid reference F6 (on the map that came with the game). It looks like a small aerosol can.

Q. I've read somewhere that you can drive hovercrafts. Can you tell me where they are please?
A. By completing the main story mode of the game, the hovercraft will appear at The Panopticon. In many peoples' opinion, this is the best vehicle in the game.

Things to do if you're still stuck in...

LOS SANTOS

Enter the triathlon



Just east of the lighthouse on Santa Maria beach, walk over a red marker point and you'll start the Beat The Cock! race – and no, that's not a typing mistake. It's a swim, bike and run across Los Santos, with CJ taking on eight other competitors.

SAN FIERRO

Learn to fight

Visit the Cobra Martial Arts center in the Garcia district (it becomes available when you've completed Sweet's The Green Sabre mission) and train CJ to be an expert in hand-to-hand combat. Useful when you're stuck without a gun.

LAS VENTURAS

Play video poker

This simple five-card poker game is great for whiling away time and dirty cash. Try and make the best hand and win modest amounts of money while clocking up a modest gambling addiction. And in another neat touch, the cards are based on *GTA* characters.

I have absolutely categorically no use for a 3G phone. Fact.

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PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

THE BOOT ROOM

IT'S BY FAR THE TOUGHEST *PES* SKILL TO MASTER, BUT YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR STRIKE RATIO TODAY WITH OUR FREE KICK MASTERCLASS

Scored a free kick from further than 30 metres? We want to see it

During one season at AC Parma, the legendary Gianfranco Zola had a strike ratio of roughly one goal from every three free kicks. We can't quite guarantee you those kinds of results straight away, but we can talk you through how free kicks work in *PES4*. Heed our advice, get some practice in and the goals will follow.

1. KNOW YOUR MAN

When picking a kicker, look out for the three attributes that affect your shot the most – Free Kick Accuracy, Curling and Shot Power. The higher the better.

2. AIM

Every player has some natural curl to their shot – you can predict this by looking at the Free Kick Accuracy rating. Beckham's stats are so high that it's possible to score without even touching the D-pad if you get the power right. In short, the higher the player's accuracy, the wider of the goal you should be aiming.

3. DISTANCE

The optimum scoring distance is anything between 23 and 26 metres, but players with higher Shot Power will be able to test the keeper from further back.

4. POWER

To work out exactly where you should be stopping the power bar you'll need to knock the ball around for a while in Free Training's free kick mode. Hey, we never said this was going to be a walk in the park. As a rule of thumb, the worse the player's accuracy, the further under halfway you should fill the bar. Only Becks seems to be able to hit the target at just over the halfway point.

5. PACE

Any further out than 23 metres and you should be pushing ↑ while filling the power bar – this keeps the ball fast and flat. Any closer and you'll have to hold ↓ instead to get the extra loft needed to clear the wall.

6. AFTERTOUCH

Forget about adding left or right curve and concentrate on controlling the dip. After you've held either ↑ or ↓ while charging the power – depending on distance – wait for the player to shape up and strike the ball. The instant his foot touches the ball, take your finger off either ↑ or ↓ and assertively hit the opposite direction button and hold it down. Time it right and your free kick should streak into the goal. Beautiful. ■

WE WANT YOUR TIPS

Send your hints for sure-fire scoring and anything else *PES4*-related to the usual address. We'll be printing the best ones soon

GOING GAY

Low risk alternatives for the faint of heart

CHIP AND PING

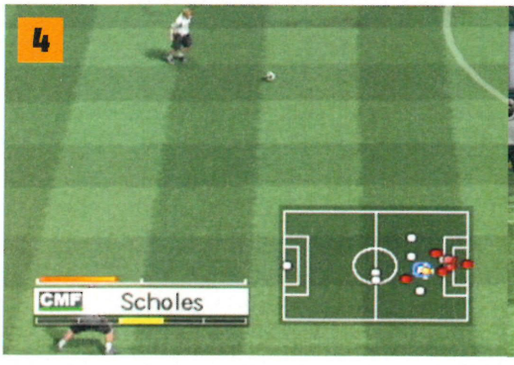
Delicately tap ◎ to chip the ball over the wall before repeatedly hammering ▣ in a cynical attempt to score via your striker's bonce. You girl.

SELECT AND SHUFFLE

Push SELECT until your teammate is out of the path to goal, then simply click R3 gently and collect the ball. Shuffle on a few steps before mindlessly whacking a shot at goal. Pathetic.

DANGER ZONE

Don't aim, just stab ⊗ to create chaos in the box with your effete offensive to squeeze in an unacceptably soft goal. Aggravate the situation by threading through with △ or smashing a low shot straight into the mass of players.



Players like Beckham have enough skill to score all by themselves

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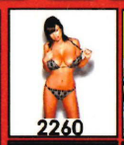
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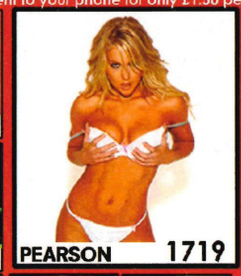
PEARSON 1719

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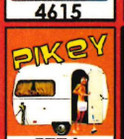

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PINDER 4801

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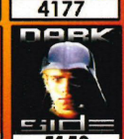

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CHRISTINA 3302

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ANIMATIONS NURSES!!

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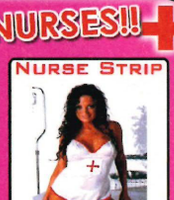

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5662

4162

3168

3192

9960

4291

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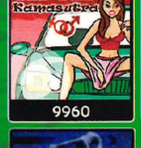

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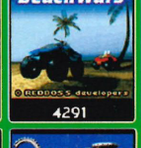

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1146	Jordan	5416	Crazy Frog
2389	Peter Kay	2492	Burp
1106	Avid Merrion	5470	Frog Crash
1071	Bear (Bo)	5565	Kill All Phones
2381	Borat (Ali G)	5557	Can't Go On
1150	Frodo and Gollum	2518	Creepy Door
1143	Kat Slater (Bo)	5095	Scary Voice
1069	Mel b (Bo)	5563	Torture Tone
1067	Michael Jackson	2507	Alien Talk
1159	Ozzy Osbourne	2510	Baby Sound
1151	Alan Partridge	2487	Ambulance
1102	Ali G	2518	Creepy Door
9035	Kenny Craig	2537	Godzilla
9038	Marjorie Dawes	2504	Crazy Cat

Little Britain

9064	Vicky Pollard
1088	Lou and Andy
8515	Biffy Biffy
8537	Daffyd
9052	Michael And Pm
9062	Ray McCooney

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GENERAL BESTSELLERS

All Ringtones are available in mono, and Poly formats

3563	Eminem	*Like Toy Soldiers*	3979	Usher and Alicia Keys	*My Boo*
2317	Green Day	*American Idiot*	4033	Gwen Stefani	*What You Wailin..*
9468	3 Of A Kind	*Baby Cakes*	5533	Maroon 5	*This Love*
1965	Eric Prydz	*Call on Me*	1722	Jo Jo	*Leave*
4658	Nelly ft Tim McGraw	*Over..*	9596	Usher	*Burn*
2587	Jennifer Lopez	*Get Right*	8400	Ultrabeat	*Pretty Green Eyes*
7775	The Streets	*Dry Your Eyes*	1178	Maroon 5	*She Will Be Loved*
2511	McFly	*All About You*	6663	Eamon	*Don't Want You Back*
3394	Khia	*My Neck, My Back*	3997	Girls Aloud	*I'll Stand By You*
3981	Eminem	*Just Lose It*	6481	Eminem	*Lose Yourself*
4698	Mario	*Let Me Love You*	0397	Michael Jackson	*Billie Jean*
8098	XTM	*Fly on the Wings of Love*	3634	Dana Rayne	*Object of My Desire*
9006	DJ Casper	*Cha Cha Slide*	8809	Busted	*Thunderbirds Are Go*
4435	Usher	*Yeah*	6718	D12	*My Band*
5892	Destiny's Child	*Soldier*	9109	D-12	*How Come*
5381	Destiny's Child	*Lose my B..*	2301	Dizzee Rascal	*Stand Up Tall*
2566	Ludacris	*Get Back*	8587	50 Cent	*P.I.M.P.*
2302	Girls Aloud	*Love Machine*	4603	Girls Aloud	*I'll Stand By You*
9469	Natasha Bedingfield	*These..*	3140	Clara	*Goodies*

CLUB HITS AND PRE RELEASE

7165	50 Cent	*In Da Club*	3915	JoJo	*Baby It's You*
5636	Amerie	*Roll Down* ★	3755	Kelis & Andre 3000	*Millionaire*
6603	Anastacia	*Left Outside Alone*	5617	Kings Of Leon	*King Of Rodeo* ★
5710	Anastacia	*Heavy on My Heart*	5725	Kristian Leontiou	*Fast Car*
2333	Angel City	*Sunrise*	5712	Kylie	*Giving You Up*
5201	Ashanti	*Only You*	4675	LL Cool J	*Hush*
5628	Athlete	*Half Light* ★	5615	Lucie Silvas	*The Game Is Won* ★
7687	Avril Lavigne	*My Happy Ending*	5611	Ludacris	*No 1 Spot* ★
8360	Basement Jaxx	*Oh My Gosh*	1474	Mariah Carey	*It s Like That*
5618	Bloc Party	*Banquet* ★	9563	Mario Winans	*I Don't Wanna..*
8412	Brandy	*Who Is She To You*	4253	McFly	*Obviously*
3212	Britney Spears	*Do Somethin*	4724	Natasha Bedingfield	*Unwritten*
9119	Britney Spears	*Toxic*	1627	Nelly	*My Place*
8391	Cabin Crew	*Star to Fall*	4022	Nelly & Christina	*Tilt Ya Head..*
5815	Cassidy	*I'm a Hustler*	5620	Razorlight	*Somewhere Else* ★
6454	Christina Aguilera	*Dirrty*	5872	Scooter	*The Logical Song*
5629	Daft Punk	*Robot Rock* ★	5779	Shapeshifters	*Back To Basics*
3849	Dizzee Rascal	*Off to Work*	1493	Snoop Dogg	*Sign*
5724	Elton John	*Turn the Lights..*	2572	Stonebridge	*Take Me Away*
2541	Elvis Presley	*Jailhouse Rock*	5631	SubForce	*X Ray* ★
5642	Elvis Presley	*Shes Not You* ★	8388	Sunset Strippers	*Falling Stars*
3636	Eminem	*MOSH*	5627	The Gaff	*Weirdo* ★
5788	Estelle	*Go Gone*	4674	The Game ft 50 Cent	*How We Do*
5647	G4	*Bohemian Rhapsody* ★	5623	The Music	*Bleed From Within* ★
2519	Girls Aloud	*Wake Me Up*	1094	Twista	*Hope*
3567	Green Day	*Holiday*	2491	Usher	*Caught Up*
8711	Jamelia	*Superstar*	2726	Usher	*Confessions Part II*
5648	Jem	*They* ★	4670	Verbalicious	*Don t Play Nice*

ROCK BESTSELLERS

4690	Doves	*Black White*	9601	Angel City	*Touch Me*
4722	The Dogs	*She s Got A Reason*	2974	Armand Van Helden	*My My My*
4723	New Found Glory	*I Don t Wanna..*	4601	Fatboy Slim	*Wonderful Night*
2549	Interpol	*Evil*	2965	Dirty Vegas	*Walk Into The..*
2332	Good Charlotte	*I Just Wanna Live*	4704	Mylo	*Drop The Pressure*
6788	Lost Prophets	*Wake Up*	3393	Deep Dish	*Heaven*
4434	The Calling	*Our Lives*	1965	Eric Prydz	*Call on Me*
6719	Him	*Solitary Man*	2528	Chemical Brothers	*Galvanize*
4436	Maroon 5	*This Love*	3925	Michael Gray	*The Weekend*
9283	Jet	*Look What You've Done*	0208	Robert Myles	*Children*
9253	Keane	*Somewhere Only We Know*	5872	Scooter	*The Logical Song*
9246	Kings Of Leon	*California Waiting*	2733	Stonebridge	*Put Em High*

DANCE

REAL SONG TONES

NEW

Turn your mobile into a record player by getting one of these great REAL SONG TONES. You'll hear a real voice and backing track as your ringtone!

*Cover Artists only

2417	3 Of A Kind	*Baby Cakes*	3621	Lemar	*If There's Any*
1259	Akon	*Locked Up*	5503	LL cool J	*Hush*
5196	Ashanti	*Only U*	1469	Nelly	*Over And Over*
2871	Bloc Party	*So Here We Are*	2808	Scissor Sisters	*Filthy Gorgeous*
2787	Dana Rayne	*Object Of..*	8367	Snoop Dogg	*Drop It Like Its Hot*
1557	Destinys Child	*Soldier*	2899	Soul Central	*Strings Of..*
1743	Eminem	*Like Toy Soldiers*	5516	The Game	*How We Do*
1459	Girls Aloud	*Wake Me Up*	2925	The Killers	*Somebody*
3619	Gwen Stefani	*What You..*	1598	U2	*Sometimes You..*
8350	Ice Cube	*You Can Do It*	2090	U2	*Vertigo*
2458	J Kwon	*Tipsy*	1473	Usher	*Caught Up*
5085	Khia	*My Neck My Back*	5215	Xzibit	*Hey Now*

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CRAZY VIDEO

2842	Shower Time	6173	Bird Splat!
5406	Girl Pals	6174	Footie Backflip
5398	Bouncy Melons	6177	Blow Out
5398	Huge Melons	6287	Ski Jump
5400	Girl Mates	6177	Human Cannon
5406	Play Time	5415	Jiggy With Elmo
5409	Tv Flash	5414	Big Melons
5412	Party Time	6174	Goalie Backflip
5413	Meet The Girls	5824	Girlie Games

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surgery

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OFFICIAL PS2 MAGAZINE,
FUTURE PUBLISHING,
30 MONMOUTH STREET,
BATH BA1 2BW

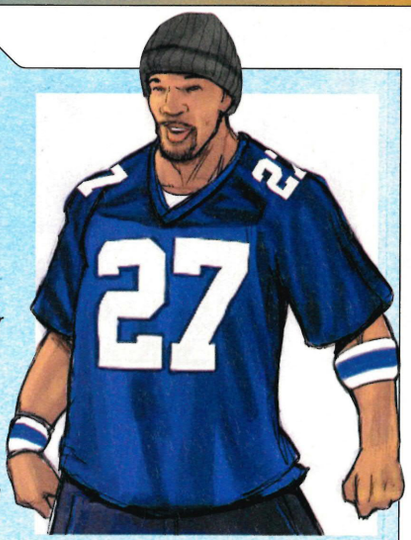
email:
ps2surgery@futurenet.co.uk

DOCTOR'S ORDERS
Unfortunately, we can't reply in person to letters or emails, and cannot answer your questions over the phone

CASE ONE:

BRAN HART, MILMESBURY
Patient: Help Doc! I'm stuck in a handicap match against Pockets, Snowman and House on **Def Jam Vendetta**. I've tried it 24 times but I can't win – nothing I try works. What can I do to beat them?

Doctor: *It's a tough fight that one. Your best bet is to concentrate all your efforts on Pocket – or the wussy one, as we like to call him. As soon as the bout starts, charge towards him and hammer the living bling out of that sucka, using your Blazin' mode to maximise damage. With him out of the way, Snowman and House should be easier to deal with.*



You'll be smiling like Redman here when you learn to open up a can 'o whoop ass

CASE TWO:

LIAM C, DORSET
Patient: I've been playing **Dragon Ball Z Budokai 3** for ages and I love it, but I can't unlock the Dragon Arena no matter what I do. It's driving me mental. Could you please give me a cure?

Doctor: *Unlocking The Dragon Arena takes some hard work. You'll have to complete the Dragon Universe mode at least once with all of the characters. Having done that you should receive the Dragon Arena Ticket and the mode will appear below the options menu.*

Dragon Ball won't be giving up its secrets without a fight

CASE THREE:

LAURENCE LOMAS, CUMBRIA
Patient: I'm stuck on **Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon**. I've saved Bruno in Glastonbury, I have the DVD and diagram with Nico and I've watched the DVD in the apartment. Beatrice has tissue and I've finished talking to her. What do I do next?

Doctor: *Leave the apartment through the kitchen door – mind the car! – and go to Nico's. From there, call André and talk about all the topics on offer. Then phone the newspaper and talk to the secretary about the theatrical mask. Phone André back and talk through all the options. Try and leave the apartment and your boss will call. Talk to him, then leave and go to the old L'Hierogliphe theatre to start the next chapter.*

BLUPA

Don't want to wait in line? Need a quick cheat fix? Then you need to go private...

GOING UNDERGROUND

I'm having real trouble with **Tony Hawk's Underground 2**. Could I have some cheat codes for it please?
James Lovett Turner, Gloucestershire

Cure
Of course you can. At the cheats option try entering 'likepaulie' to max out your Special bar permanently and 'd3struct' to unlock all the levels. Now you can Double Kickflip Varial Indy to your heart's content.

TOO MUCH PUNISHMENT

I'm really struggling with **The Punisher**. Have you got anything that could help?
Christopher Forbey Lancashire

Cure
Try entering 'V Pirate' as a profile name. It will unlock everything except the upgrades. That should make even the most violent of vigilantes happy.

CASE FOUR:

SAM DAY, ANDOVER
Patient: I'm stuck in the bookshop on the second floor in **Silent Hill 3**. There's a door in the back and it has a key code that I can't find. Please tell me where it is or I will go insane!

Doctor: *The correct code will depend on what difficulty level you're playing on – the easy and normal settings are random but the hard level is constant. Either way it'll involve the correct placement of fallen books on a shelf, so find them first. On easy all you have to do is put the books back in the right numerical order, volumes I to V. The correct code should then be written on the spines of the books. On the normal difficulty setting the code number is split across the spines of multiple books, so put them on the shelf until the numbers appear unbroken. The correct code will then be displayed. On hard it's a world of pain to get that code, involving a good knowledge of both maths and* The Complete Works Of Shakespeare, *so just take it from us, the number you want is 8352 (this is only on the hard setting).*

Home Remedies

QUACK: STEPHEN MONTGOMERY, EMAIL
GRAN TURISMO 4: When you get a new car, change the oil straight away to get a little bit more horsepower out of it. It might not help you win a race on its own, but any extra bit of speed has got to be a good thing.

challenges

PUSH THE ENVELOPE, FEEL THE BURN – ARE YOU READY TO BE TESTED?

LEGO STAR WARS

Force us to respect your Jedi skills

ON THE DVD

Here's a treasure hunt of a challenge to get you searching through our *Lego Star Wars* demo. While you play through the level, hunt out the twinkling collectables by force-pulling and bashing everything in sight. We want you to collect as many of the shiny Lego bits as you can, building yourself a big score. Then take a picture just before you finish the level, while you're standing outside the brown APC (see right). We've managed to collect enough for a high score of 12,010, but if you're struggling to beat that, try finishing the game and exploring again with Free Play mode.

This is the end of the level, so take your picture here

CHALLENGE
WHAT: Collect as many Lego bits as you can
HOW: Take a picture of your score before finishing the level
WHEN: By 18 May
WIN: The five best scores win an *OPS2* T-shirt

GRAN TURISMO 4

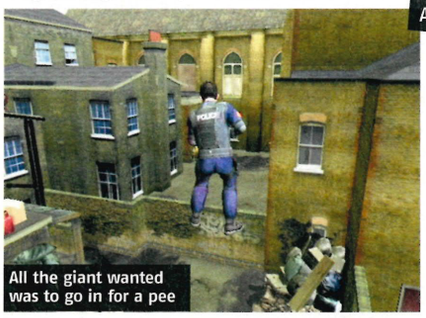
Ring a ring of rubber rings

Rev up a Time Trial in arcade mode and select the Nurburgring Nordschleife – the world's longest and most challenging track. Now hop into the BTR '86, and get racing. We want your fastest lap round the circuit – our current record stands at 7'53.514 in this classic Porsche. Aim to cut the ten-minute mark if you want to stand a chance.

CHALLENGE
WHAT: Beat the Nurburgring in the fastest possible time
HOW: Take a picture of the Time Trial record screen
WHEN: By 18 May
WIN: The five fastest racers bag a *GT4* T-shirt

SNITCH THE GLITCH

Caught a bug? Take a picture and show us...



All the giant wanted was to go in for a pee

TIM, ASS ED

Chris King from Windle has been exploring our *Getaway: Black Monday* demo, and found something rather strange... "Go to the boxing club, up to the room overlooking the ring but stop at the open window halfway up the stairs. Climb out, and as Mitch leaves the stairwell, press ⊗ to roll – if you get it right he'll be standing in mid-air, and you can wander around all you like!"

THE FINISHER
DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING
Blitzed Dante's toughest game already? There are still five difficulty levels to beat before you can call yourself The Finisher

OPS2 TEAM CHALLENGES

GEORGE, DISC ED

Fight Night Round 2
"Pack those gloves with horseshoes and try your hand at this challenge – win a 12 round Heavyweight match, with any character, but only by using jabs."

Playboy: The Mansion
"Constantly good magazining is tough – but can you pump out the best grumble pictures to take your publication to the top of the quality ratings? Get at least a four 'Bunnies' rating for six months worth of your magazine to earn mad mag props."

Champions: Return To Arms
"Evil never prospers – that's the lesson this game taught us anyway. Choose to align with the forces of darkness during the first level and you'll be funnelled towards a terribly difficult boss encounter with four seemingly unstoppable evil Knights. We've still not vanquished them – can you?"

MARCH'S WINNERS

The best challengers, honoured

LEGEND OF KAY
Richest Cats

Kyle Gosselin, Plymouth	67,011 Gems
Ryan O'Connor, email	59,636 Gems
Phillip Hughes, Wales	41,651 Gems
Joshua Lewis, Bridgend	30,215 Gems
David Taylor, Birmingham	18,926 Gems

SHADOW OF ROME
Best Butchers

Oliver Myland, St Albans	14,400 Salvos
Jim Bollings, Derby	10,040 Salvos
Hugh Willis, London	9,000 Salvos
M Howe, Carlisle	6,000 Salvos
Mat Sims, Kent	5,600 Salvos

GOAL OF THE MONTH

WATCH THEM ON THE DVD!

1. Chris Percy, Willingdon
A delicately weighted lob beats the defence, bouncing perfectly for Zola who smacks a looping half-volley over the keeper.
2. Ray Wright, Chatham
3. Ian Thelnell, Marple
4. Scott Fleming, Arbroath
5. Tom Botterill, Mytholmroyd

Keep your goals coming. There's a monthly winner who bags a highly desirable *OPS2* T-shirt and a Goal Of The Season competition for a proper big prize. *Pro Evolution Soccer 4* goals only, please.

technical stuff

If you need to video your challenge proof you'll need to set up your VHS between your PS2 and the TV, and then tune the video into the PS2's channel. Also, make sure the important bit is at the start of the tape. And please note that we can't return your VHS tapes. Sorry. If you send in your memory card with a save on it, make sure you put your name on the memory card and include an SAE with it or we can't return it. All entries to: *OPS2* Challenges at the usual address. Entries by email only with picture proof. Address and full terms and conditions can be found on page 7.

charts

LIKE *TOP OF THE POPS* WITHOUT THE SEXUAL FRISSON

WHAT THE OTHER MAGS SAID WE READ 'EM, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO				
PSM2	"*GT4* occupies the same place in our hearts as *GT3* did in 2001" 92%	"Too knowingly comic and blandly unchallenging to rank as a classic" 90%	"The best of the Bunch yet...absolutely vital" 97%	"It's solid fun – capital punishment indeed" 82%
PSW	"Beautiful, brilliant and breathtaking. The best racing game on PS2" 9/10	"More Austin Powers than Bond, *Future Perfect* is cool in a comic book style" 9/10	"...a premium slice of gaming we can heartily recommend to everyone" 9/10	"...this is a bog standard action game" 6/10
PLAY	"Beautiful to look at, it's as rewarding as ever to play" 96%	"If you like killing people, this is for you" 94%	"The stealth is old fashioned and the control is frustrating at times" 89%	"...you can bet your ass that this is not the last we're going to see of Frank Castle" 87%
P2	"Still the dynamic, high octane racing sim it always was, *GT4* is breathtaking" 8/10	"...wicked weapons, glorious cut-scenes and the opportunity to play with yourself!" 9/10	"A decent title, but overall the experience may disappoint some" 7/10	"Diluted to satisfy censors but still a gruesome comic book adaptation" 8/10
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT	**"Like being the richest man in the world and owning any classic car you desire" 9/10**	**"*Future Perfect* is the best PS2 shooter available" 9/10**	**"...A symphonic adventure that, once it grips you, swallows you whole" 9/10**	**"The most faithful comic to game since *Spider-Man 2*" 7/10**

THE TOP 20 ChartTrack

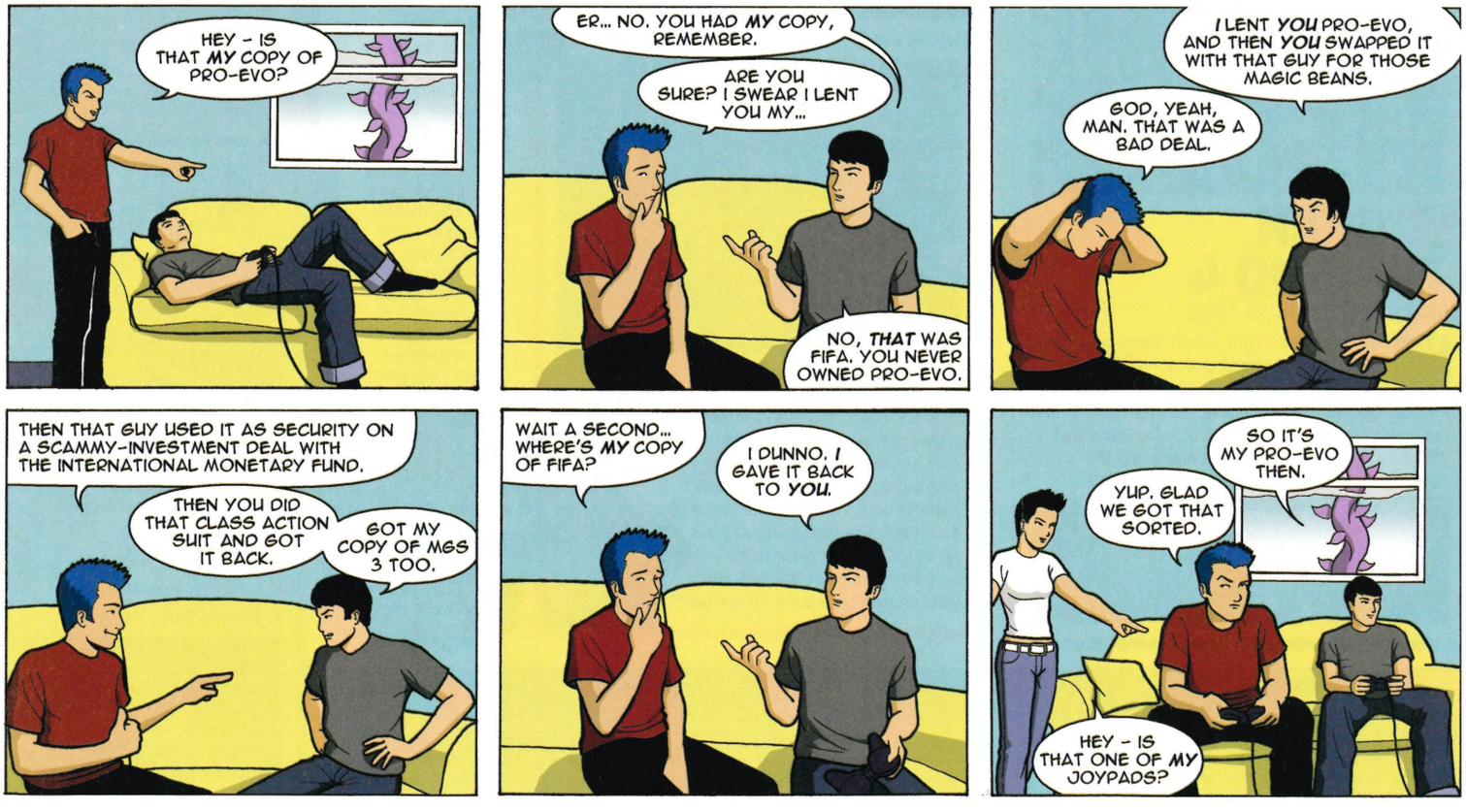
	Game Name	Publisher	Score
1	GRAN TURISMO 4	SONY	9/10
2	FIFA STREET	EA	7/10
3	BROTHERS IN ARMS ROAD TO HILL 30	UBISOFT	8/10
4	DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING	CAPCOM	9/10
5	METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER	KONAMI	9/10
6	TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT	EA	9/10
7	RUGBY 2005	EA	7/10
8	FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2	EA	7/10
9	MERCENARIES	ACTIVISION	9/10
10	THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE	THQ	6/10
11	SONIC MEGA COLLECTION PLUS	SEGA	5/10
12	THE PUNISHER	THQ	7/10
13	GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	ROCKSTAR	10/10
14	THE INCREDIBLES	THQ	6/10
15	ROBOTS	VIVENDI	5/10
16	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	KONAMI	10/10
17	TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2	ACTIVISION	8/10
18	FIFA FOOTBALL 2005	EA	8/10
19	NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2	EA	8/10
20	UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2004-2005	EA	6/10

SLIPPERY SNAKE
It's only just been released and already *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* is losing its grip on the charts. It just doesn't seem possible. Snake? Snaaaaake!

TTFN GTA:SA
It had to happen some time but *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* is finally out of the top ten. It's not surprising really, is there anyone left without a copy?

SAVE POINT TAKING THE LESS TRAVELLED ROUTE TO GAMING WISDOM

WORDS: KIERON GILLEN ART: JAMIE MCKELVIE



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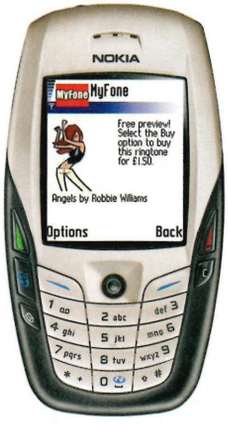

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REAL SOUNDS

Gun Fire - Magnum 44	158001*
The Real PSYCHO ATTACK Sound	158002*
Simpsons - Barney - BUUUURRPPP	158003*
Game Show Buzzer	158005*
House Of Horrors - Haunted Laughter	158010*
Train	158011*
Throwing Up - SPLAT!!!!	158012*
Woman Screaming	158013*
Robo Cop - 20 Seconds To Comply	158014*
Clint - Do You Feel Lucky Punk?	158015*
I Am Surrounded By Idiots	158016*
Ferris Bueller - Life Moves Fast Speech	158017*
Scooby Doo - Shaggy - Spooksville	158018*
It's Classified, I Would Have To Kill You	158019*
Biker Freak (Funny rant about bikers)	158020*
Let's Talk About Masturbation	158021*
Ace Ventura - Alrighty Then	158022*
Austin Powers - Psychedelic, Baby!	158023*
Dr Evil - Throw Me A Bone	158024*
Beetle Juice - A Little Action	158025*
Bugs Bunny - Farting	158026*
Buzz Lightyear - You Don't Want To Be In My Way	158027*
Daffy Duck - Teeth	158028*
Dumb & Dumber - Most Annoying Sound	158029*
Forrest Gump - Box Of Chocolates	158030*
The GREATEST Female ORGASM EVER!!	158031*
Homer Simpson - Doh! Doh! Doh!	158032*
"Hubba Hubba!" (Very Funny)	158033*
John Wayne - Looking For Trouble	158034*
Johnny Bravo - Dreams Come True	158035*
Johnny Bravo - Guy In My House	158036*
Johnny Bravo - Yes I Am Available	158037*
Silence Of The Lambs - Friend For Dinner	158039*
Italian Job - Blow the Bloody Doors Off	158040*
Italian Job - Listen Lads	158041*
Good Morning Vietnam	158042*
James Bond - The Name's Bond...	158043*
Austin Powers - Alota Fagina	158044*
Back To The Future - Serious S**t	158045*
Bo Selecta M Jackson - Where's Ya Daddy?	158046*
Bo Selecta M Jackson - Shaamone	158047*
Billy Connolly - What Women Want	158049*
Phoenix Nights - Heavy Duty Black Bin Bags	158050*
Pulp Fiction - The Path Of The Righteous Man	158051*
Magic Roundabout	158054*
Phoenix Nights - Garlic Bread	158055*
Duck BJ Funny	158056*
Pigs	158057*
Air Raid Siren	158058*
Submarine Warning Siren	158059*
Drum Roll	158102*
Star Trek - They're Hailing Us	158104*
Fire Truck Sirens	158105*
Helicopter	158108*
Houston We Have A Problem	158109*
Indian Drums	158110*
Police - 'Come Out With Your Hands Up'	158118*
Vomiting	158119*
Radio Tuner	158120*
Submarine Sonar Bleeping	158125*
Tony Christie - Amarillo	158137*
Full Metal Jacket - Drill Sargeant "Do You Suck..?"	158138*
Kick Your Ass!	158038*
Max And Paddy - Sing Amarillo	158139*

REAL TXT

Bugs Bunny - 'Message From Mars'	158127*
Snoring	158123*
Austin Powers - You've Got Mail Baby	158061*
Austin Powers - Fat B - Get In Ma Belly	158062*
Friends - Joey - How You Doin'?	158063*
Access Denied	158086*
Baby Laugh	158089*
Bomb Flying Then Exploding	158091*
Bugs Bunny - 'You Got Trouble Mac'	158092*
Cannon Fire	158093*
Car Alarm	158094*
Colt 45	158099*
Monty Python - 'Message For You Sir'	158116*
You've Got A Message	158106*
Dukes Of Hazzard - General Lee	158135*
Car Air Horns	158136*
Red Alert! Red Alert!	158121*
Full Metal Jacket - "You're SO UGLY"	158124*
Budweiser Guys - Waaaasup	158048*
Monty Python - Ecky Ecky	158103*

ANIMAL SOUNDS

Coyote Howl	158070*
Dolphin	158072*
Donkey	158073*
Elephant	158074*
Fly	158075*
Frog Croaking	158076*
Jaguar Growl	158078*
Wolf Howl	158084*

HIP HOP & RNB

Eminem - My Name Is	151024
Coolio - Gangsta's Paradise	151027
Eminem - Without Me	151031
Usher - Cought Up	151197*
Eminem - Like Toy Soldiers	151177*
Eminem - Just Lose It	151169*
Nelly - Over And Over	151202*
Snoop Dogg Feat. Pharrell - Let's Get Blown	151203*

DANCE

ATB - 9pm (Till I Come)	151010
Wamdue Project - King Of My Castle	151015
666Devil	151016
Ultrabeat - Pretty Green Eyes	151194*
Voodoo Serano - Blood Is Pumpin'	151195*
Lost Witness - 7 Colours	151187*
Matt Darey - You Shine On	151188*
Motorcycle - As The Rush Comes	151189*

CHART

Verbalicious - Don't Play Nice	151204*
Stereophonics - Dakota	151205*
Moby - Lift Me Up	151206*
Styles And Breeze - Heartbeatz	151207*
Cabin Crew - Waiting For A Star To Fall	151208*
Sunset Strippers - Falling Star	151209*
Girls Aloud - Wake Me Up	151198*
The Bravery - Honest Mistake	151200*
Jennifer Lopez - Get Right	151201*

TV & FILM

Fawlty Towers	152002
The Lone Ranger	152006
The Muppet Show	152007
Pop Eye	152224

THE 80s

Airwolf	152001
Knight Rider	152005
The Dukes of Hazzard	152057

THE 90s

The Addams Family	152008
Scooby-Doo	152009
Red Dwarf	152225

ALL TIME GREATS

Mc Hammer - Can't Touch This	152003
Spencer Davis Group - Gimme Some Lovin'	152004
The Jackson's - ABC	152010
Queen - We Will Rock You	152012
Madness - Baggy Trousers	152013
Shaggy - Boombastic	152026
Michael Jackson - Billy Jean	152037
Queen - Another One Bites The Dust	152039
Aerosmith - Walk This Way	152059
Babylon Zoo - Space Man	152060*
Bob Marly - No Woman No Cry	152063
Bomfunc Mc's - Up Rockin Beats	152064
Frankie Goes To Hollywood - Relax	152146
Steppenwolf - Born To Be Wild	152148

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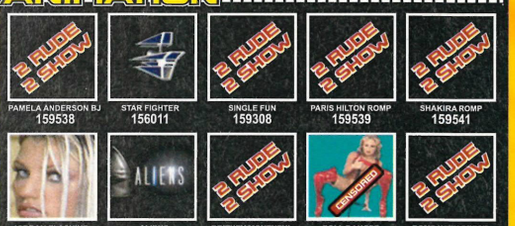

PAMELA ANDERSON BJ 159538 | STAR FIGHTER 156011 | SINGLE FUN 159308 | PARIS HILTON ROMP 159539 | SHAKIRA ROMP 159541
JORDAN FLASHING 156009 | ALIENS 156011 | BRITNEY MOUTHFUL 159534 | POLL DANCER 159535 | ROMP WITH REESE 159540

VIDEO

SKYLINE Vs SUPRA 159676 | SKYLINE RACE 159619 | BEST DRIFTER 159620 | EVO MEGA DRIFT 159621 | McLAREN Vs SUPRA 159675 | ROCK CLIMBING 159844 | TONY HAWKS JUMP 159832 | TRIALS HERO 159838
FROM EVERY ANGLE 159479 | BORED HOUSEWIFE 159482 | FILTHY SELF PLEASURE 159524 | 5 GIRLS TOGETHER 159447 | DIRTY ANNA 159815 | DIRTY DANCER 159819 | ANGEL STRIPS 4 U 159477 | BIGGEST BOOBS 159446

MORE 2RUDES

159478	BRUNETTE FROM EVERY ANGLE
159593	WATCH WHAT I DO WITH MY TOY
159450	LICK HER CLEAN, MAKE HER SCREAM
159597	DOGGIN BY THE ROAD SIDE
159601	GIRLS TOGETHER ENJOY TOY FUN
159615	TAKE CHRISTINA OVER YOUR BONNET
159757	BEACH BABES GET DOWN AND DIRTY
159760	BORED HOUSEWIFE GETS FILLED
159618	GIRLS KINKY STRAP ON FUN
159602	FISTING LESSONS
159605	HAPPY DRILLING
159604	DRUNKEN LESBO FUN
159594	FINGER TEASE
159827	GIRL ON GIRL ACTION

GAMES

PILOT SIMULATOR — STRIKE FORCE 159809
DRIVING — SUPERCHARGED 159808
FIGHTING — JONNY FIST 159811
DRIVING — DRIV3R 159804
PLATFORM — I,ROBOT 159805
FIGHTING — CASTLE NASTY 159810
SPORT — TRACK & FIELD '04 159807
DRIVING — RACING 159806
POOL GAME — POT SHOTS 156003
PLATFORM — WIKKY 156004
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PUZZLE — BRICKS 156006

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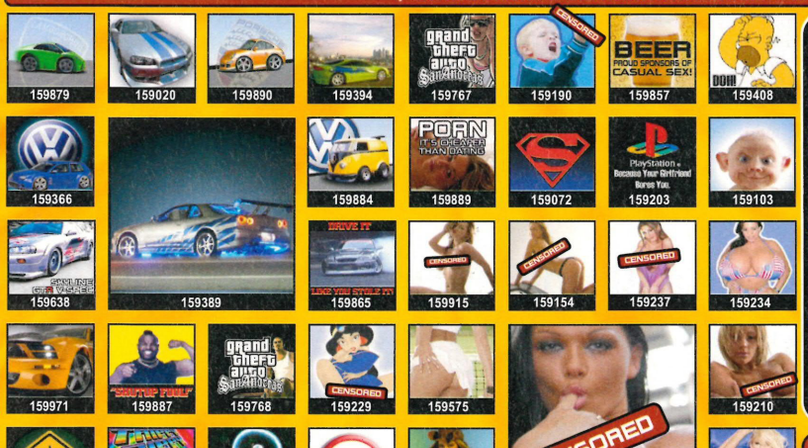

159879 | 159020 | 159890 | 159394 | 159767 | 159190 | 159857 | 159408
159366 | 159884 | 159889 | 159072 | 159203 | 159103
159638 | 159389 | 159865 | 159915 | 159154 | 159237 | 159234
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2 RUDE TAKE A PEAK! 159552	2 RUDE GIRLS JOINED TOGETHER! 159565	2 RUDE READY FOR YOU! 159510	2 RUDE TOY FUN ALONE 159515	2 RUDE CLOSE UP TOY ACTION! 159563
2 RUDE KNICKERS PARTED! 159425	2 RUDE LAID BACK SPREAD WIDE! 159423	2 RUDE UP CLOSE & PERSONAL! 159426	2 RUDE STOCKINGS SPREAD! 159424	2 RUDE BABE WITH KNICKERS TO ONE SIDE! 159429
2 RUDE SHAVED & UP CLOSE! 159379	2 RUDE BENT OVER READY FOR YOU! 159380	2 RUDE GIRL ON GIRL SIXTY-NINE! 159385	2 RUDE GIRLS TOGETHER PLAYTIME! 159387	2 RUDE GIRL ON GIRL LICKING! 159337

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comedown

MOVIES, MUSIC, GAME RELEASE DATES, AND A LITTLE LIGHT RELIEF

WELCOME TO COMEDOWN

There's more to life than games – there's music, films, um... games

dvd

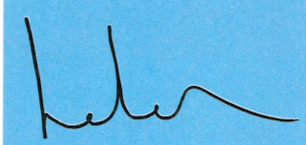
music

incoming

feature

Careful how you handle the pages of Comedown this month; there's peril on just about every page. You've got crazy amounts of pointy-bladed violence in the DVD reviews (page 132) with both *Blade Trinity* and *House Of Flying Daggers*, there are Gorillaz lurking in the music reviews (page 134) and there are bees, locusts and scorpions stinging page 140. It's almost as if people were trying to frighten me away from bringing you all the good stuff this month. But no, I battled on, amidst the insects, apes and spiky things, and managed to escape with only a few minor scrapes and bruises.

So if anyone's got any spare antiseptic, a few plasters, perhaps some kind of bandage and a nice lollipop, send them in to me so I can get myself all patched up. Until next month...



Helen Prior,
Production editor

Blade's back, but has the vampire hunter lost his bite? Find out over the page

132

132 **DVD REVIEWS**
Get acquainted with *Blade Trinity*, *Star Wars: Clone Wars*, *Sideways*, *House Of Flying Daggers* and win a copy of *Napoleon Dynamite*

134 **MUSIC REVIEWS**
Gorillaz, British Sea Power, Brooke Valentine and Lyrics Born all conspire to fill up your ears with their musical sounds

136 **INCOMING**
Clear your diary for the gaming months ahead with our forecast-o-chart, complete with choice selections of our very own

140 ***OPS2* INVESTIGATES**
Bees? Locusts? Scorpions? Enjoy our *Snake Eater* takeaway. A yak with Mr *Metal Gear* himself and loads of tasty *MGS4* secrets

146 **REAR VIEW**
A shocking memory from the *OPS2* archives. A big gay bear on the cover? Whose idea was that?

Achingly cool and oozing style, Gorillaz make a return

134

Suddenly Ryan recalls his full role in the previous night's drunken three-way

"Begone, or face my invisible broom"

BLADE TRINITY

HOPING FOR A MOVIE TO SINK YOUR TEETH INTO? SUCKERS

DIRECTOR
David S Goyer
STARRING
Wesley Snipes, Ryan Reynolds, Kris Kristofferson
DISTRIBUTOR
Entertainment In Video
OUT
25 April
PRICE
£19.99
EXTRAS
Two commentaries, documentary, Goyer On Goyer interview, alternate ending, blooper reel, trailer

FILM: After the success of the previous two *Blade* movies, it's likely that you're all familiar with the drill by now: Wesley Snipes dresses in shiny black leather and slashes up scores of decadent vampires in time to a pumping techno soundtrack. And it's great. Except this time it's not. It's not even good. So what's gone wrong?

The main problem with *Blade Trinity* is the plot, which isn't so much unoriginal as it is creatively bankrupt. A group of vampire misfits – all terrifically badly acted, especially by a demented Parker Posey, who did a much better job in *The Mighty Wind* – decide to resurrect Dracula. Wow, Blade versus

The main problem is the plot, which isn't so much unoriginal as it is creatively bankrupt

Dracula! Not only does this take formulaic filmmaking to new heights, but *Blade: Trinity*'s Dracula isn't even remotely scary, or hard – he's rubbish.

Things are helped slightly by the addition of Blade's new sidekicks, Hannibal King and Abigail, who at least bring some energy to proceedings (Snipes spends the movie looking like he'd rather be asleep). And the action sequences, when they get going, are just as smooth and satisfying as ever. But it's never enough to rescue the film from a criminally obvious choice of villain. Come on. Dracula? Really? Is that the best you can do? **5/10**

EXTRAS: Two commentaries, in-depth documentary, Goyer On Goyer interview, alternate ending, blooper reel, trailer. **8/10**

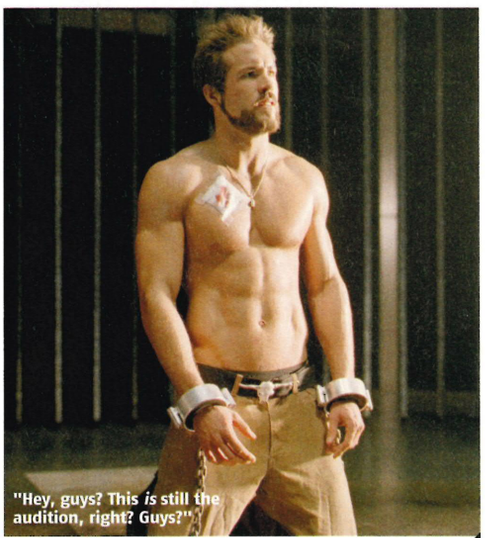
VERDICT: We like stylish violent horror movies as much as the next man, but *Blade: Trinity* is a big disappointment. Uneven and occasionally deranged acting, a script on autopilot and a star misfiring on all cylinders. Forget the garlic and the holy water, this is one harmless creature of the night that's up well past its bedtime. ■ **ND**

TALKING TO MYSELF

Self-indulgence gone crazy sees *Blade Trinity*'s director interview himself...

Not content with simply screwing up what had been a decent franchise, writer/director David S Goyer has gone and put his grubby prints all over the DVD extras as well. In a move seemingly designed to point out just how clever he is for being able to scribble this mess then point a camera at it, Goyer interviews himself for the pretentious-sounding Goyer On Goyer feature. It's maybe the only thing on the disc that's actually worse than the film.

"For God's sake, he's been talking to himself for the last hour. We can't hold this pose forever..."


"Hey, guys? This *is* still the audition, right? Guys?"

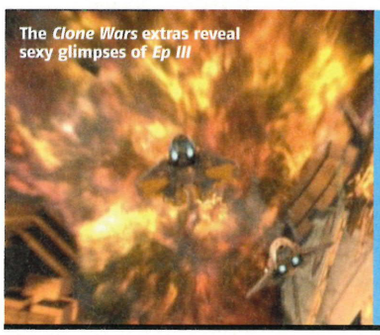
Christopher Lee pretended he hadn't seen Victoria Beckham

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS

'BETTER THAN THE FILMS' SAY THE FANBOYS

DIRECTOR
Genndy Tartakovsky
WRITERS
Bryan Andrews, Mark Andrews
DISTRIBUTOR
Warner Bros
OUT
9 May
PRICE
£10.99

FILM: The webternet is infested with *Star Wars* hardliners and their 'new trilogy is shit' manifestos. Yet this (relatively) humble cartoon series, broadcast originally on Toonami, has united fans young and old under a flag of amnesty. Everyone seems to love it. Filling in the actual '*Wars* bit so effectively built up by *Ep II* and then so neatly stepped over by *Ep III*, this is basically an hour of fighting. Key characters appear, background Jedi from the films get more prominent roles, while acres of Clone and Arc Troopers demolish and get demolished. And if the staccato storytelling jars, just remember that *Clone Wars* is made up of one five-minute and 19 three-minute cartoons, so stop being so critical and just let the darting scythes of colour and shrieking lightsabers put a smile on your face. There's also the now legendary first appearance by the spinny-armed *Ep III* bad-ass General Grievous. Funny.
It's the second time Lucas has premiered his forthcoming baddie on a TV cartoon. The first time (Boba Fett and the *Star Wars Christmas Special*) being much harder to obtain than this. **8/10**
EXTRAS: Audio commentary, featurette, game trailers, poster and artwork gallery. **6/10**
VERDICT: Brilliant. And, for the record, the films are too. ■ **SP**


The *Clone Wars* extras reveal sexy glimpses of *Ep III*

READY THE PAUSE BUTTON!

The bonus material is fine but largely predictable. Lucas and head *Clone Wars* honcho Genndy Tartakovsky tirelessly dribble about how amazing it was to work with each other before, for all we know, nipping off for some heavily-bearded space sex. Phoowy. Real buffs like us will keep 'em peeled for the bits of *Ep III* footage buried in credit sequences and game footage.

HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS

Director *Yimou Zhang* / Starring *Andy Lau, Takeshi Kaneshiro, Ziyi Zhang* / Distributor *Pathe* / Out *16 May* / Price *£19.99*

FILM: 'I'm a ninja, so I can fly, and throw knives round corners'. This common playground boast provides the inspiration for this wire-fu fly-'em-up. Local Chinese guards Leo (Lau) and Jin (*Onimusha*'s Kaneshiro) trail a female assassin they believe could lead them to dangerous rebel faction, The House Of Flying Daggers. Much painstakingly choreographed fight-dancing ensues in locations so beautiful we assume they hired out actual bits of heaven for the movie. All topped off with plot twists that'll leave you shocked and breathless. Or maybe a bit bored. **7/10**
EXTRAS: Commentary, interviews, making of, music video, storyboard comparison. **9/10**
VERDICT: Visually stunning, but a bumpy storyline stops this from topping *Hero*, the director's previous film. ■ **ND**

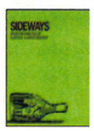
VERA DRAKE

Director *Mike Leigh* / Starring *Imelda Staunton, Richard Graham, Eddie Marsan* / Distributor *Momentum* / Out *25 April* / Price *£19.99*

FILM: This touching, subtle drama is heavy stuff. Set in dirty-brown London just after the Second World War, our hero is Vera Drake (Staunton), a mothering type with a heart of gold. Armed with an endless supply of tea, she comforts the sick, welcomes the emotionally fragile and helps out young ladies that get into 'trouble'. That's right, she's an back-street abortionist. One of the nice ones, mind you. Not that the law cares – once they get wind of her business, Vera finds herself in real trouble. Now sit back and watch the beautifully acted misery unfold. **7/10**
EXTRAS: Cast and crew documentary, trailer. **5/10**
VERDICT: Registers extremely high on the bleak-o-meter, but the performances are fantastic and the family scenes are brilliantly poised, if you've got the stomach for it. ■ **ND**

SIDEWAYS

Director *Alexander Payne* / Starring *Paul Giamatti, Paul Hayden Church* / Distributor *Fox* / Out *16 May* / Price *£19.99*



FILM: This offbeat road movie sees middle-aged best mates Miles and Jack drive out to Californian wine country to spend Jack's last week of unmarried freedom in style. With Miles (Giamatti) the wine-expert holding aging actor and womaniser Jack in check, the scene is set for some touching odd-couple encounters, especially when they meet a pair of unfeasibly attractive wine-loving ladies. Trouble is, it never really comes off – the setup feels a bit forced and potentially stand-out moments fall flat. It doesn't help that Miles and Jack really aren't that nice – failing, aging, emotionally stunted losers are hard to enjoy. **7/10**
EXTRAS: Commentary, behind the scenes, deleted scenes. **8/10**
VERDICT: We wanted to like this. It's different and shows obvious intelligence, but it's not as funny or likeable as it should be. ■ **ND**

coming soon REGIONS 1+2

Go on, be brave – ask a lady to hit you in the face to celebrate the release of Clint Eastwood's Oscar-winning girlie boxing movie ***MILLION DOLLAR BABY*** from 23 May... *Get cultural with the very beautiful and extremely French* ***A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT*** *when it hits the shelves on 23 May. What do we think? Magnifique!...* Stop to point and laugh as Oliver Stone's toweringly awful historical misfire ***ALEXANDER*** makes its way shamefacedly to shiny disc from 13 June. Not even the casting of Jim Carrey could have made this film worse... *Which is weird, because casting Jim Carrey is perhaps the only thing that could have made* ***SON OF THE MASK*** *any good at all. Except not being made in the first place. Anyway, it arrives on DVD from 23 May.* All of this month's titles are region two, which means you'll be able to pick them up in the UK on the dates we've mentioned.

The adopt-a-geek scheme was going very well

NAPOLEON DYNAMITE

Director *Jared Hess* / Starring *Jon Heder, Jon Gries, Efren Ramirez* / Distributor *Fox* / Out *25 April* / Price *£15.99*

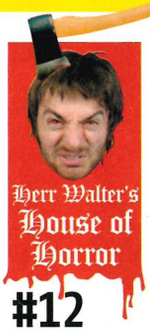
WIN THIS!

We've got ten copies of *Napoleon Dynamite*, and you can win one. Here's how. Dynamite is an explosive. Which of the following can you also blow stuff up with: a) C7, b) C32 or c) C4? Entries to: 'DVD Explosion' (see page 7 for address and terms and conditions).

FILM: Tired of twee-but-charming American indie films with quirky-kid-comes-good storylines and soundtracks so achingly cool they make you want to dig up Nick Drake and take him dancing? Neither are we. Good job too, because after we'd seen and loved *Garden State*, along came *Napoleon Dynamite*. Cripplingly awkward Napoleon and his Mexican friend Pedro try to survive high school and score a date using their 'skills'. Low on plot but full of substance, after a slow start *Napoleon Dynamite* accelerates to a hilarious and emotionally spot-on finish. **8/10.**

EXTRAS: Commentary, Peluca short film, making of, deleted scenes and stills. **8/10**

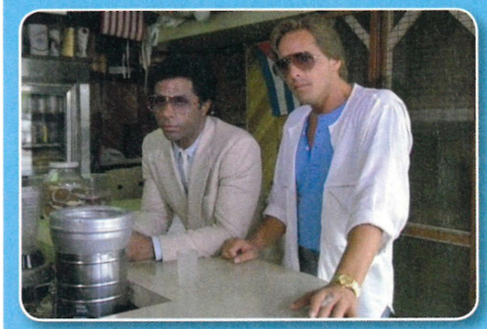
VERDICT: Not for everyone – if you prefer movies with explosions then look away – but handle with care and this is a gem. **ND**



#12 HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER

A serial killer chiller that's so disturbing most people can only bear to watch it once. Based on the life of a real murderer, Henry Lee Lucas, the low budget film values, eery monotone synth soundtrack and emotionless approach to graphic killing just adds to the viewers overall discomfort. Sequel count: 1

tv... quick! TV in your TV but from your DVD



MIAMI VICE SEASON ONE

Starring *Don Johnson, Philip Michael Thomas* / Release *25 April*

Sonny Crockett and Rico Tubbs; Stylish. Maverick. Cool. It seems obvious now, but back in the '80s *Heat*-director Michael Mann was the first to hit on the idea that a cop show with a sense of style would appeal to a fashion-hungry public tired of watching *Columbo* reruns. And he delivered. *Miami Vice* was hugely influential, with young men all over American copying the suits, the stubble and the cars. For all those paying attention, the show itself had real quality, too. Tight storylines and compelling cliff-hanger moments were standard, and although there were occasional style-over-substance problems, the show succeeded because it deserved to. Class and elegance? Oh yes, and perfectly blended. Check it out.

CHANNEL HOPPING

Any television show that can turn James Gandolfini into a sex symbol is pretty special, and ***THE SOPRANOS*** is exactly that. Take care of business when series five is released on 30 May... *Blisteringly accurate cultural commentary to some, superficial trumped-up soap opera to others. Make up your own mind when series two of* ***NIP/TUCK*** *arrives from 30 May...* Check out Michael '*Miami Vice*' Mann's other cop show, when season two of the gritty (and good) ***CRIME STORY*** comes out on 25 April.

music THE TUNES CURRENTLY ROCKING OUR WORLD

Gorillaz DEMON DAYS (VIRGIN)

WHO? Back, and conspiring to drop an anvil on 50 Cent's head – it's Gorillaz, the cartoon hip-hop supergroup cooked up in the mind of Damon Albarn, artist Jamie Hewlett, and rap egghead Dan The Automator. **HIGHLIGHTS:** The loping *Kids With Guns* is absolutely bursting with cartoon menace. And it's always nice to hear Happy Mondays' Shaun Ryder, who helms the electro-tinged *DARE*. **LOWLIGHTS:** At just two minutes, the gorgeous *Don't Get Lost In Heaven* is far too short. **VERDICT:** Roots Manuva, Dennis Hopper, and De La Soul queue up to make this a star-studded return. But Gorillaz specialize in pulling out the red carpet from beneath their guests' feet to create some mad pop juxtapositions. Always unexpected and frequently ingenious, this is pure quality. **8/10**

BRITISH SEA POWER

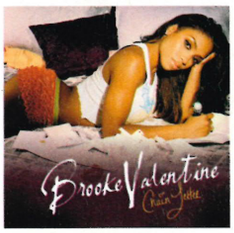
OPEN SEASON
(Rough Trade)

WHO? Elegant, Brighton-based indie-punks who come on rather like The Libertines, but with less drugs.

HIGHLIGHTS: Splendid, heart-in-mouth epic *To Get To Sleep*.

LOWLIGHTS: *The Land Beyond* comes across as somewhere between sweet and simperingly amateur.

VERDICT: They may be a bit limp, but *Open Season* reveals British Sea Power to be excellent songwriters. **8/10**



BROOKE VALENTINE

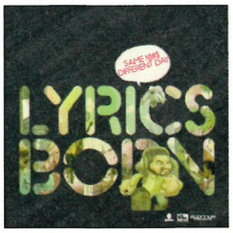
CHAIN LETTER
(Virgin)

WHO? R&B beauty with a dark side. Her album features appearances from Lil Jon and Ol' Dirty Bastard.

HIGHLIGHTS: Mighty crunk-hop number *Girlfight*, starring Lil Jon and Big Boi of rap-duo Outkast.

LOWLIGHTS: The awful saccharine taste of *Dying Of A Broken Heart*.

VERDICT: The rare diva-fronted full-length that won't go any way to damaging your thug credentials. **7/10**



LYRICS BORN

SAME !@#$, DIFFERENT DAY
(Epitaph)

WHO? Rap demi-legend and toast of Quannum Projects, the collective that spawned DJ Shadow.

HIGHLIGHTS: *Do That There (Young Einstein Hoo-Hoo mix)*, a funked-up, maddeningly addictive cut.

LOWLIGHTS: The *Calling Out* remix doesn't measure up to the original.

VERDICT: *Same !@#$ Different Day* is a goofy and enjoyable curveball for anyone burnt out on thug life. **8/10**

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH

Four Tet Everything Ecstatic (Domino)/**Sleater-Kinney** The Woods (Sub Pop)/**The Glitterati** The Glitterati (Atlantic)/**Eels** Blinking Lights And Other Revelations (Vagrant)/**Jin** The Rest Is History (Virgin)

ON THE *OPS2* STEREO

Queens Of The Stone Age Lullabies To Paralyze (Polydor)/**Bright Eyes** I'm Wide Awake It's Morning (Saddle Creek)/**Volga Select Presents...** So Young But So Cold (Tigersushi)

Realtones

Clocks Coldplay	27
Baby Boy Big Brovaz	11
Celebration Kool & The Gang	24
Down Boy Holly Valance	46
Dy-Na-Mi-Tee Ms Dynamite	47
Like I Love You Justin Timberlake	104
Need You Tonight INXS	121
New York New York Frank Sinatra	122
Night Fever Bee Gees	123
Surfin USA The Beach Boys	133

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Ringtones

U2 Vertigo	1
Green Day American Idiot	2
Groove Armada I See You Baby	3
Natasha Bedingfield These Word	4
Maroon 5 She Will Be Loved	5
R.E.M Leave New York	6
Destinys Child Lose My Breath	7
William Shatner Common People	8
Joss Stone Love Machine	9
Ashlee Simpson Pieces Of Me	10
Rachael Stevens More More More	11
Maroon Five This Love	12
Deep Dish Flash Dance	13
Nelly My Place	14
Brian McFadden Real To Me	15
3 Of A Kind Babycakes	16
Punk'd Main Theme	17
Dodgeball/Skatman John Skatman	18
Mase Feat P Diddy Breath S Shake	19
Black Eye Peas Lets Get It Started	20
Snoop Dogg Ft. Pharrel Drop It Like Its Hot	21
Avril Lavigne My Happy Ending	22
Usher & Alicia Keys My Boo	23
LL Cool J Head Sprung	24
Christina Milano Dip It Low	25
Eminem Just Lose It	26
Joss Stone Don't Cha Wanna Ride	27
Britney Spears My Prerogative	28
Christina Aguilera Ft. Missy Elliott Car Wash	29
Ja Rule feat. R Kelly & Ashanti Wonderful	30
Jamelia DJ	31
R Kelly Happy People	32
Paul Weller Thinking Of You	33
Prodigy Hotride	34
ShapeShifters Lola's Theme	35
Estelle Free	36
Christina Milian Whatever You Want	37

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Mobile Games

01 ASPHALT URBAN GT
Gamespot Very Impressive
play 36
You are taken out on 8 tracks inspired by genuine places. Each track is part of a specific graphic universe and includes different tunnels and elevations that enable you to perform impressive jumps, among other things ...

02 VIJAY SINGH PRO GOLF
Best Mobile Golf Game ever
play 34
You'll be playing on a dream golf course: the Harbour Town Golf Links at Seapines Resort in the United States. From total immersion in the universe of professional golf to a "Quick Play" game, a variety of modes are available to you.

03 PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN
Gamespot 9.2/10
play 38
You enter a totally original universe, with 10 levels, on board a pirate ship and within ancient palaces that are swarming with evil forces. You'll have to confront pitiless enemies who each have different combat skills (life points, parade, aggressiveness).

04 RAINBOW SIX 3
IGN 9.5/10 Great Game!
play 37
Tactics and action are at the heart of the explosive mixture embodied by Rainbow Six® 3. You'll have to make the right decisions at the right moment if you want to stay alive and save the hostage victims of a cowardly kidnap plot.

05 VANS SKATE & SLAM
Gamespot 8.4/10
play 35
You're Geoff Rowley, the coolest, classiest skateboarder of his generation. Your objective is to become a real pro and join the highly respected Vans team.

06 SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW
Gamespot 9/10 "Superb!"
play 11
Once again Sam Fisher is sent where no one else can go to do what no one else can do. A riveting new infiltration mission to get to grips with on your mobile phone!

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incoming

Our guide to what's coming your way

MAY	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Area 51	FPS	Midway
Bomberman: Hardball	Puzzle	Ubisoft
Conspiracy: Weapons Of Mass Destruction	FPS	Oxygen
Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	FPS	Novalogic
Ghost In The Shell: Stand Alone Complex	Action	Atari
Gungrave: Overdose	Action	Play It
Monster Hunter	Adventure	Capcom
Pilot Down	FPS	Oxygen
Predator	Action	Vivendi Universal
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Racing	Codemasters
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	Adventure	Activision
World Championship Poker	Sport	Play It

JUNE	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
7 Sins	Adult Adventure	Monte Cristo
America's Army	Action	Ubisoft
Batman Begins	Action/Adventure	Electronic Arts
BloodRayne 2	Horror	Vivendi Universal
Brian Lara International Cricket	Sport	Codemasters
Championship Manager 5	Sport	Eidos
Commandos Strike Force	FPS	Eidos
Dead to Rights 2	Action/Adventure	Electronic Arts
Destroy All Humans!	Action	THQ
Dynasty Warriors 5	Action	KOEI
God Of War	Action/Adventure	Sony
Medal Of Honor: Dogs Of War	FPS	Electronic Arts
Tekken 5	Fighter	Namco
Virtua Quest	RPG	Sega
Worms 4: Mayhem	Strategy	Codemasters

JULY	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Brave: The Search For Spirit Dancer	Adventure	Sony
Darkwatch	FPS	Sega
Gametrak: Real World Golf	Sport	TBC
Ford Racing 3	Racing	Empire
Formula One '05	Racing	Sony

AUGUST	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
25 To Life	Action/Adventure	Eidos
Aquanox	FPS	Koch
Arc The Lad: End Of Darkness	RPG	Namco
Big Mutha Truckers 2: Truck Me Harder	Racing	Empire
Everybody's Golf	Sport	Sony
Guilty Gear Isuka	Action	Sega
Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	Action/Adventure	Vivendi Universal
King Of Fighters: Maximum Impact	Fighter	Ignition/SNK
Kingdom Hearts II	RPG	Square Enix
LA Rush	Racing	Midway
MotoGP4	Racing	Sony
Neighbours From Hell	Puzzle	Koch
Samurai Western	Action	Capcom
Sega Rally	Racing	Sega

SEPTEMBER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	FPS	Electronic Arts
Battlestations: Midway	Sim	SCi
Beat Down: Fists Of Vengeance	Action	Capcom
Fahrenheit	Adventure	Vivendi Universal
Mark Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure	Adventure	Atari
Michigan	Adventure	505 Game Street
Resident Evil Outbreak File #2	Horror	Capcom
Spartan: Total Warrior	Action	Sega

RADAR

Targeting the top titles that are coming soon

OUT NOW

LEGO STAR WARS

Need we say any more after the review and demo? Oh, okay, it's brilliant – go buy it

OUT SOON

GOD OF WAR

The excellent Grecian action game punches through to shops in a just over month

MILES OFF

BURNOUT 4

We had the world's first screen, and we're itching to get in the driving seat

George (disc ed) wants...

BloodRayne 2

"I can't wait to sink my teeth into this gothic bird's adventure jugular."

Starsky & Hutch 2	Racing	Empire
Ultimate Spider-Man	Adventure	Activision
Ys: The Ark Or Napishtim	RPG	Konami

AUTUMN / WINTER	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
187: Die to Drive	Racing	Ubisoft
24	Action/Adventure	Sony
50 Cent: Bulletproof	Action	Vivendi Universal
Ape Escape 3	Action	Sony
Burnout 4: Revenge	Racing	Electronic Arts
Carmaggedon	Racing	SCi
Castlevania: Curse Of Darkness	Action/Adventure	Konami
Conflict Global Terror	Action	SCi
Crime Life	Action	Konami
EyeToy: Kinetic	EyeToy	Sony
Fear And Respect	Action/Adventure	Midway
Far Cry Instincts	FPS	Ubisoft
Final Fantasy XII	RPG	Square Enix
Final Fantasy VII: Dirge of Cerberus	Activision	Square Enix
Harvest Moon: Oh Wonderful Life	Sim	Ubisoft
Hitman: Blood Money	Action/Adventure	Eidos
Ico 2	Action/Adventure	Sony
Iron Man	Action	Activision
Killer 7	Action/Adventure	Capcom
King Kong	Action	Ubisoft
Madagascar	Action	Activision
Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks	Fighter	Midway
New Tomb Raider	Adventure	Eidos
Nightmare Before Christmas	Adventure	Capcom
Okami	Adventure	Capcom
Open Season	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft
Panzer Elite Action	Action	Koch
Resident Evil 4	Horror	Capcom
Rogue Trooper	Action/Adventure	SCi
Roll Call	FPS	SCi
Scarface	Action/Adventure	Vivendi Universal
SOCOM III: US Navy SEALs	Action	Sony
Soul Calibur III	Fighting	Sony
Sword Of Destiny	Action/Adventure	Rising Star
Surf's Up	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft
The Godfather	Action	Electronic Arts
The Matrix: The Path Of Neo	Action/Adventure	Atari
The Movies	Sim	Activision
The Suffering: Ties That Bind	Action/Adventure	Midway
The Warriors	Action/Adventure	Rockstar
True Crime 2	Action	Activision
Without Warning	Action	Capcom

TBC	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Black	FPS	Electronic Arts
Crashday	Racing	TBC
Dawn Of The Dead	Action/Adventure	Hip
FIFA 2006	Sport	Electronic Arts
Free-Running	Sport	Eidos
Genji	Action	Sony
Jaws	Action	TBC
Just Cause	Action	Eidos
London Taxi	Driving	TBC
Madden 2006	Sport	Electronic Arts
Monster Arenas	Driving	TBC
New Shrek title	Action	Activision
Total Overdose	Action	SCi
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Sport	Konami
Rise Of The Kasai	Action/Adventure	Sony
Shining Tears	RPG	Sega
Siren 2	Adventure	Sony
Sniper Elite	FPS	TBC
Star Craft: Ghost	Action/Adventure	Vivendi Universal
Stargate SG1: Atlantis	FPS	Novalogic
The Regiment	Strategy	Konami
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2006	Sport	Electronic Arts
Unreal Championship	Action	Midway

KEY

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AVOID ME!

Leon (staff writer) wants...

Hitman: Blood Money

"Finally, games get a little more free with the offer to pay your way out of difficult situations. Classy."

Michael (reviews ed) wants...

The Godfather

"There's a fear that it could all go wrong at the last minute, but I'm confident they'll get this adaptation right."

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A = 0 1
Ace Combat 5: Sq. Leader
Ace Combat: Distant Thund.
Age of Empires 2
Agent Under Fire
Alias
Aliens vs Predator:Extinction
Alone in the Dark 4
America's 10 Most Wanted
Angel of Darkness
Army Men: Sarge's War
Athens 2004
Atlantis 3: New World

B = 0 2
Backyard Wrestling
Bad Boys 2
Baldur's Gate: D. Alliance 2
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
Battlestar Galactica
BMX XXX
Broken Sword 3 S.Dragon
Brothers In Arms
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Burnout 3: Takedown

C = 0 3
Call of Duty: Finest Hour
Champions of Norrath
Colin McRae Rally 4
Conflict Zone
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Conflict: Vietnam
Constantine
Crash B'coot: Wr. of Cortex
Crash Twinsanity

D = 0 4
Dark Angel, J. Cameron's
Dark Cloud 2
Darkstalker's Chronicle
Death by Degrees
Def Jam: Fight for New York
Devil May Cry
Devil May Cry 2
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3
Drakengard
DRIV3R
Dynasty Warriors
Dynasty Warriors 2
Dynasty Warriors 3
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtr.Leg.

E = 0 5
Eighteen Wheeler
Enter the Matrix
Escape from Monkey Island
Everybody's Golf
Evil Dead: Fist. of Boomstick
Extermination

F = 0 6
FIFA 2004
FIFA Football 2005
FIFA Street
FIFA Street Soccer
Fight Night 2004
Fight Night Round 2
Final Fantasy X
Final Fantasy X-2
Fire Warrior
FlatOut
Formula 1 2004
Freestyle Metal X
Full Spectrum Warrior*

G = 0 7
Getaway
Getaway 2 Black Monday
Ghost Hunter
Ghost Recon 2
Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm
Gladiator: S. of Vengeance
Goldeneye: Rogue Agent
Gran Turismo 3
Gran Turismo 4
Gran Turismo 4 Pro.Edition
Grand Theft Auto 3
GTA: San Andreas
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Grandia 2

H = 0 8
H.Potter & Chamber of Sec.
H.Potter & Philosopher's St.
H.Potter & Pris. of Azkaban
Haunted Mansion
Headhunter
Headhunter: Redemption
Hitman 3: Contracts

I = 0 9
In Cold Blood
Incredibles
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb

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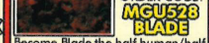
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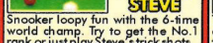
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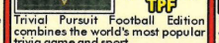
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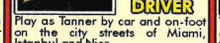
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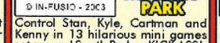
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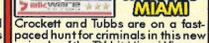
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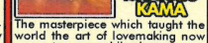
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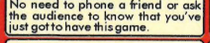
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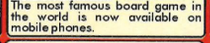
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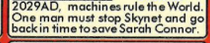
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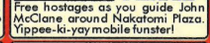
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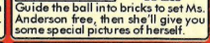
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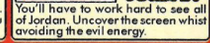
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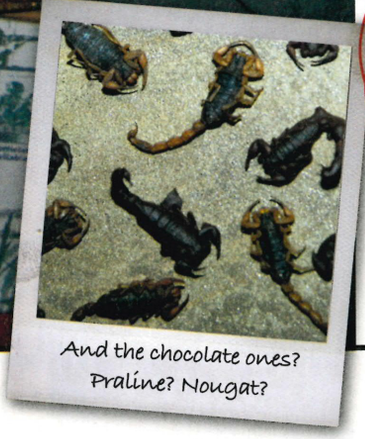
THE DAY WE ATE BEES WITH MR METAL GEAR

Bees. Direct from a window sill to our plate. Yum!

ONE MINUTE WE'RE DISCUSSING PS3 AND *MGS4* WITH HIDEO KOJIMA. THE NEXT WE'RE BEING FORCE FED INSECTS...

WORDS: TIM CLARK/PAUL FITZPATRICK

■ Kojima suppresses gag reflex and makes mental note to fire his PR team



And the chocolate ones? Praline? Nougat?

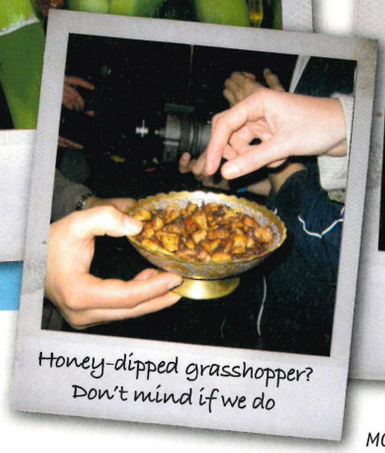
Hideo Kojima is the closest thing we've got to a superstar. Nonetheless, we'd bet our limited edition copy of *Policenauts*[1] that he could walk past most branches of Gamestation without triggering any 'Mum, you're talking to Tom Cruise on my mobile' style scenes. And this is the guy who, way back in 1996, *Time Magazine* was calling 'the Spielberg of videogames'. But although casual players might not care who makes *Metal Gear*, the diehards recognise Kojima as the visionary creative responsible for one of the most consistently entertaining and inventive series ever. So when he invited us for a chat, we were hardly likely to refuse. Although, if we'd known what was going to be on the menu...

OPS2: If you had to boil down *MGS3* to one section that represented your vision for the game, which would it be?
HIDEO KOJIMA: When Snake is battling his enemies in the jungle. Look around and you see frogs leaping, birds flying and fish swimming. Everything abounds with life. There is no other game which gives you this sense of wrongness, because the animals are getting on with living while the humans are killing each other.

OPS2: You previously told us that you wanted to make a 'raw' game, where if the player dies then the actual disc self-destructs. Is this still something you would like to do?
HIDEO KOJIMA: Yes, some day. I included some similar elements in *MGS3*. You know, I think the whole concept of 'continues' in games is totally outdated and unnecessary on home consoles. It all came from arcade games, where you throw in a coin when the game ends. I don't want to imprint children with the idea of virtual worlds where you can just play and die with infinite lives. Even if it is a virtual world, I want people to value their own lives. In that sense, a 'raw' game would be perfect.

Uh-oh, here comes the hippy bit...

OPS2: We've always loved the really playful moments in the *MGS* series, like the way the food rots if you leave it in the new game. What can we expect on the next generation of hardware?



Honey-dipped grasshopper? Don't mind if we do

Swear to god, Kojima put his hand around my waist first

HIDEO KOJIMA: Most games you only play using the TV and a controller. But I think the experience also includes the packaging, the room you're in and everything else. In one of my games, *Snatcher*[2], there's a sequence where you have to pump up the volume on your TV. I'd like to include more things like this in my future games.

***OPS2*:** You must have guessed the inclusion of Raiden[3] in *MGS2* was going to cause a stink? Did you enjoy poking fun at Raikov[4] in *MGS3*?
HIDEO KOJIMA: The masterplan with *MGS2* was to take *MGS1*, destroy everything and then rebuild it from the ground up. That was the concept and it was why I introduced Raiden – this pure, white, empty character – instead of Solid Snake. I guess it was like M Night Shyamalan's approach with *The Village*[5]. Raiden was actually quite popular in Japan and Korea, but people in the United States and Europe weren't big fans. That's why I put the mask of Raiden and the character of Raikov into *MGS3*. So the people who like Raiden can wear the mask throughout the game. But the people who hate him can beat the hell out of Raikov! At the beginning of *MGS3*, if you select the line of dialogue that says, 'I like *MGS2* very much' then you will start out wearing the Raiden mask. I really wanted European gamers to do that and say, "Oh my God, not again..."

***OPS2*:** Were you disappointed that people in the West hated Raiden? We thought it was a great twist but people didn't seem to get the joke...
HIDEO KOJIMA: I put my career on the line with Raiden! [Laughs] I did it to entertain people, by totally destroying what I had built up, earned and achieved with *MGS1*. I really wanted people to be amused by that, but they started bashing him and I guess I wasn't happy. But I shouldn't be saying that... it's for the fans to judge.

***OPS2*:** We understand you only directed *Metal Gear* because nobody else was brave enough to take it on. Now that you're moving away from the series, what do you think the new director, Ken-Ichiro Imaizumi[6], will bring to *MGS4*?
HIDEO KOJIMA: I *want* to keep a distance from *MGS4*... [laughs] I will still be involved, as will Yoji Shinkawa[7], and the team that has been making the series for the last ten years. But, as I said before with the *Zone Of The Enders*[8] series: even if you have the same recipe or the same ingredients, if you have a different chef the meal will be prepared differently. That's what I'm hoping for. We have a great recipe and great ingredients and I'm sure this new chef will maintain the goodness of the *MGS* meal [at this point everyone looks at Mr Imaizumi who makes a terrified face]. But you probably won't find so much wasabi[9] in *MGS4*.

And with that, we're all whisked off to sample the delights of an exotic London eatery. And by 'delights' we mean bees drowned in vodka and tiny scorpions dipped in chocolate. Some try to claim the little beasts taste 'like toffee crunch', but to our spasming tongues the overriding taste is: 'tiny scorpion dipped in chocolate'. Later on, with a stomach full of ants, we reflect on the future of *Metal Gear*. Kojima insists that *Snake Eater* is the end of a trilogy, and although the new game may well star Solid Snake, it will be the start of a fresh journey, almost certainly on a new machine. It's hard not to feel both a little sorry for Imaizumi (the man who will surely be credited with everything that's 'wrong' with the new game) and impressed that he's got the balls to follow Kojima's bravura swansong.

Here's what else we know about *MGS4*: Work has only just begun, but Snake looks likely to star and the game already has a tag line: 'no place to hide'. But this doesn't signify a move away from stealth; it's a hint of the game's apparently revolutionary new setting. According to Kojima, players' response will be, 'how do you expect me to hide here?' Which suggests a modern city, buzzing with thousands of people thanks to the power of PS3. Hopefully the game will be unveiled at the E3 show in May, probably in the form of a trailer. Either way, expect us to be all over it like honey on bees.

and here comes the MGS4 bit...

FOOTNOTES

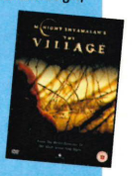
Wondering what the funny words and little numbers mean? Shhh... we won't tell

1. *Policenauts* follows the adventures of a security chief on a gigantic, orbiting space station (hence the title fudge of 'police' and 'astronaut'). This early Kojima game also introduced a certain Meryl Silverburgh, who'd became a pivotal character in the classic *Metal Gear Solid*.

2. *Snatcher* appeared on PSone way back in '96 but was never released in the UK. During the scene Kojima refers to, you enter a building and the sound starts to drop away. Naturally, you then turn up the volume only to hear the ticking of a bomb, which then kindly explodes with speaker-threatening loudness. Cheers for that.

3. Raiden was the surprise star of *MGS2*. Kojima replaced Solid Snake without warning and many fans reacted to this whining prancer with unbridled fury. Perhaps because the newcomer's beautiful hair made everyone feel hot and confused.

4. Major Ivan Raidenovich Raikov was a comedy character included in *MGS3* as a way of poking fun at the bile that Raiden had generated. He gets a very rough ride in the game, not least from Colonel Volgin, his strapping gay lover.



5. *The Village* is M Night Shyamalan's movie about [SPOILER WARNING] a bunch of hicks pretending to live in the olden days, who are also surrounded by a bunch of monsters. Largely because they're scared of getting mugged in the real world. Twats.

6. Ken-Ichiro Imaizumi is pencilled in to direct *Metal Gear Solid 4*. Good luck, pal.

7. Yoji Shinkawa is the artist who does all the sketches associated with the *Metal Gear* games (see our four covers on issue #57) and also designs the big robots.

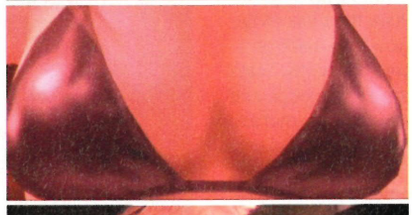
8. *Zone Of The Enders* was directed by Hideo Kojima, before he handed over the reigns for the sequel. It's fairly typical big robots in space action, but the first game was infamously one of the most returned ever because most people only bought it to get hold of the accompanying *MGS2* tanker demo.

9. Wasabi is a spicy condiment traditionally served with sushi and tastes a bit like horseradish.

Apparently they taste like toffee crunch

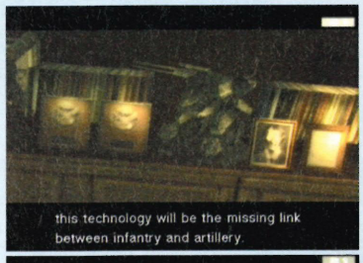
NOW TURN OVER TO SEE THE WEIRDEST SECRETS IN METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

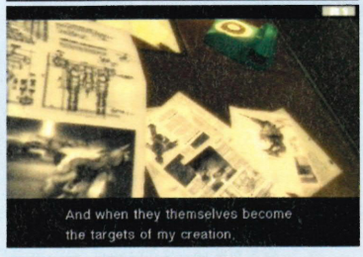
SNAKE EATER'S WEIRDEST SECRETS!



FLESH FEST!

Attention fans of the pixellated lady flesh. Once you've completed *MGS3* once, download the special St Valentine's camouflage and head to the Demo Theatre. Now look at the top right of the cut-scene map and you'll find a pink tinted entry all on its own. Watch this and you'll be treated to a compilation of Eva and Raikov scenes, where pressing R1 at any time will strip them down to their shreddies. Whatever revs your engine, you'll get an eyeful...

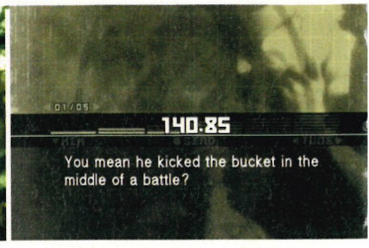




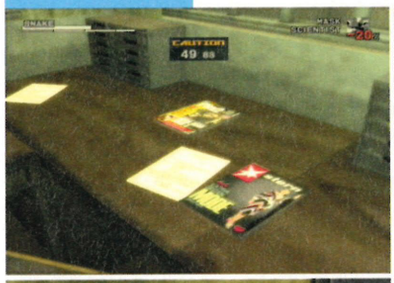
THE FUTURE METAL GEARS

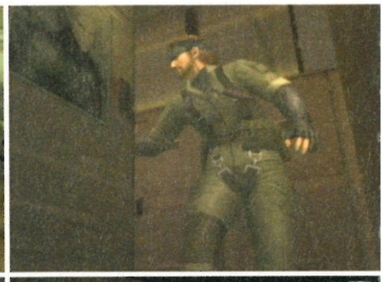
Pay attention during Snake's meeting with Director Granin, and you'll clearly see design models and sketches in the office showing the Metal Gears Rex and Ray from *MGS* and *MGS2*. You'll even see the Jehuty mech from Hideo Kojima's sci-fi side project, *Zone Of The Enders*.

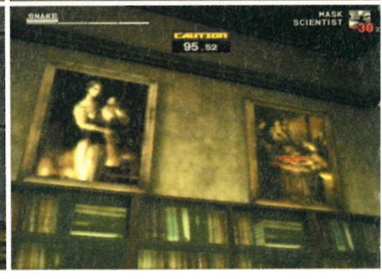
THE END DIES OF OLD AGE



The Boss battle with mouldy master sniper, The End, is one of *MGS3*'s standout set-pieces. It's also arse-spankingly hard. Want to avoid it altogether? As soon as battle starts, save the game and quit. Now, skip your PS2's internal clock forward at least a week, then reload the save. You'll discover The End has died of old age waiting for you to fight him! Want to defeat The End before even this? Check out #2 in 'Six Of The Best' over to the right.







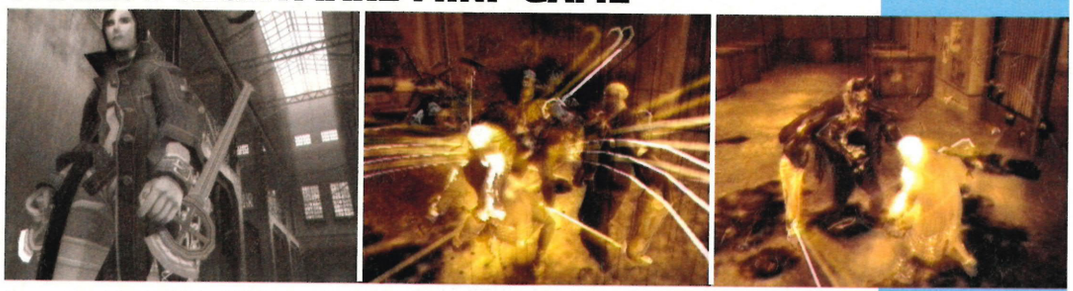
SPECIAL CAMOUFLAGES

You rapidly become aware of the usefulness of good camouflage when playing *MGS3*. But some of the camo patterns you can collect in the game or download from Konami (head to the game's bonus menu to get online) do more than just look good; they give Snake special skills. Or, in the case of one red number with white fur trim, just celebrate a national holiday.

POSTERS/ GAME MAGS

Keep your eyes peeled for pictures, photos and magazines in *MGS3*. There are hidden posters of Japanese starlets all over the place, videogame magazines which you can shoot to at to flip to the *MGS3* features inside, paintings from *Silent Hill* in the Granin Research building library, and last but not least, a photo of Raiden from *MGS2* on the inside of Raikov's locker door.

SNAKE'S NIGHTMARE MINI-GAME



Have you got to the bit in *MGS3* when Snake gets tortured? When the game asks you if you want to save, do so. Now quit the game and reload it immediately. You'll find yourself playing as a character with blades for arms and demonic powers, in an insane, slash-'em-up mini-game. It will end after a few minutes and you'll discover you've been playing Snake's nightmare as he lies unconscious in a cell...

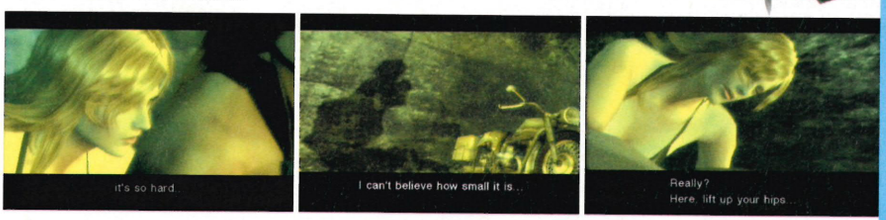
■ When Snake dreams, he sees this. No girls, then

GAME MAKER GHOSTS

During the battle with The Sorrow, use the camera to take snaps of each of the boss characters' ghosts as they approach. Now look at the photos and you'll see members of the development team staring out at you.

FILTHY WATERFALL CUT-SCENE

Once Snake escapes from the torture block, leave the transmitter lodged in his back exactly where it is. Now, when he meets Eva in the area behind the waterfall, you'll get a hysterical, innuendo-filled bonus cut-scene as she takes the transmitter out. Brilliant.



R1 EXTRAS

It's no secret that by pressing R1 during *MGS3*'s cut-scenes you can often see secrets through Snake's point of view (hell, you're prompted to do it). However, there are a number of moments when pressing R1 even when you're not asked to will reveal special views you'd otherwise miss entirely. Very cool.

SIX OF THE BEST

Our top secret tips to beating the odds in *MGS3*

1. KEEPING EVA ALIVE
Once Eva is wounded towards the end of the game, keeping her stamina up is tricky. Get around this by using CQC to knock her out. While unconscious, her stamina won't fall.

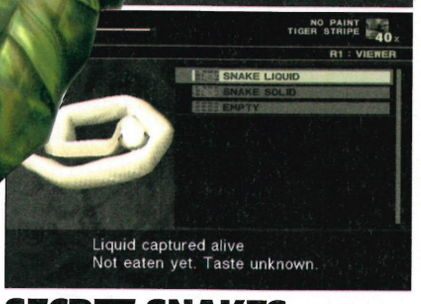
2. KILL 'THE END' EVEN EARLIER
When you reach the Ponizovje warehouse exterior, equip the sniper rifle and wait for the cut-scene to end. If you're quick you can snipe The End and avoid fighting him later on.

3. AVOID TORTURE DAMAGE
When Snake is being tortured, press and hold L2 until the scene ends. You won't take any damage.

4. UNDERMINE VOLGIN
When the first Volgin boss battle starts, equip the Raikov mask. Seeing his dead lover's face makes him distraught and you'll get a clear shot at him. Also throw Russian glowcap mushrooms into the arena. His electrical attacks will be drawn to them, not you. And shoot at the water pipes above. Electricity and water don't mix, y'know...

5. CARDBOARD BOX TRAVEL
Got all the cardboard boxes? Find the truck in the Grozny Grad northeast map. Get on it, equip box B and you'll go straight to the main hangar with the Shagohod inside.

6. SUPPLIES AND DEMAND
Whenever you find a storage shed and have scooped up all the ammo, weapons or medical supplies, blow it up using TNT and you'll wipe out the guards' supplies, softening them up. Cool.



SECRET SNAKES

Heard of the Tsuchinoko? No, we hadn't either. Seems it's Japan's Loch Ness monster/Yeti; a creature that's part myth, part evolutionary missing link. And it's hidden in the game. Snag one alive (lay mousetraps in Bolshaya Past South) and at the end of *MGS3* you'll receive Unlimited Face Paint, so you'll never run out of ammo. Also, during the final battle with The Boss, equip the thermal goggles to find three snakes: Solidus, Solid and Liquid; the names of Big Boss's three clones from *MGS* and *MGS2*. Rare *and* tasty. ■

Maureen's
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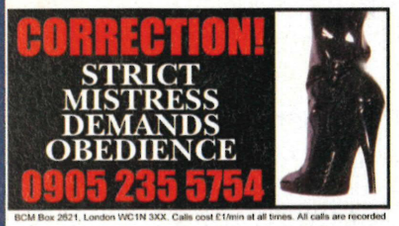
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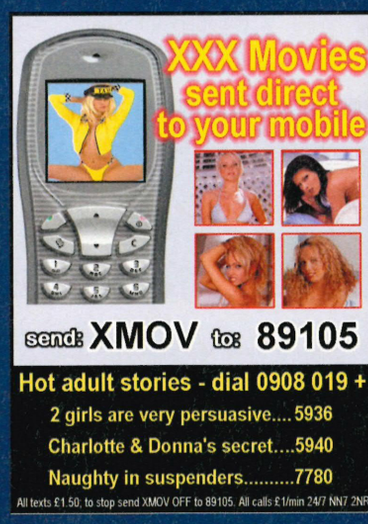
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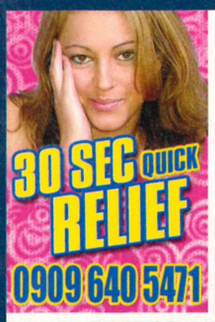

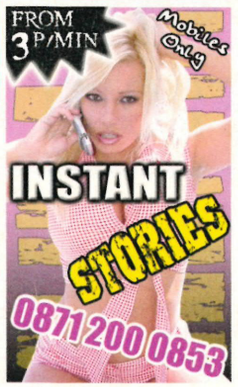

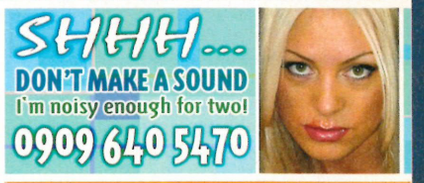

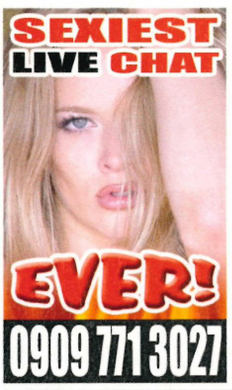

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DID WE REALLY...

PUT *HERDY GERDY* ON THE FRONT COVER?

Let's face it, when it comes to hindsight, everybody has 20/20 vision. Obviously the decision to put a giant pink teddy bear stalking a boy in a skirt on the cover of *OPS2* seems questionable *now*, but back in March 2002? Well, yes, it was a rubbish idea then, too. But give us a break. It was a quiet month. It's certainly not like there were any landmark games up for review that issue. Aside from the undisputed classic *Ico*, obviously. Oh, and *Maximo*. Jesus H poledancing Christ. What *were* we thinking? It was a *shepherding* simulator with a 'delicately balanced ecosystem' and 'quirky appeal' for pity's sake. Kiss of death right there. And check out the quotes torn from the review. When conversation turns to getting 'magical gloves from the carpenter mole' you just know you're skating on thin ice. Perhaps it was the Lara Croft connection (Core Design developed *Herdy Gerdy* shortly before it set to work bollixing *Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness*). Maybe the brilliant 'You *herd* it here first' pun was just too damn good to bury in the middle of the magazine. Or maybe it was just because we couldn't get *Peter Pan: Return To Neverland* or *Donald Duck: Quack Attack 2*.

Pointing at cover line 'you herd it here first' **herd** it? Eh? Brilliant

Ico, the last game in the list? Have **you** played Shadow Man 2? Exactly

Please note **big gay teddy bear**

...ave been herded. ...many a...

After your first successful attempt at Doop-herding, you are given a Herding Stick, a magical bit of wood that can be stuck in soft ground to attract scattered flocks of Doops. The Herding Stick is just one of several objects in th... ...at will help Gerdy int...

...you can return to the level to snap them up. Beyond the tutorial stage, the real core of the game is introduced. In a word: herding. Stick with us, this is actually much more interesting than it sounds. Each of the levels in Herdy Gerdy has its own delicately balanced ecosystem, and is populated by an array of different creatures. The ...els are domin... ...dumb, chick...

Beyond beyond, left of right and just up from down, there is a magical isle of Disneyesque prettiness. Here, vast swathes of fenced farmland lead to moonlit mountain peaks, and a dark haunted forest borders a desert town with an abandoned ...ine. Brooks babble, woodpeckers p...

...platform game. It b...s hero-hating ...es, but there isn't any combat. There are locked doors, yet there are no obvious keys to open them. You could say that this quirky 3D adventure is simply about herding groups of cartoon animals into small enclosures. But *Herdy Gerdy* is more than just a shepherd simulator. It's a series of inventive and organic puzzles that are often beautifully and superbly realised.

The *Herdy Gerdy* story take... ...nd created long ago ... of the ...

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HOTTEST TONES

TITLE/ARTIST	MONO	POLY
LET ME LOVE YOU - mario	115335	125335
BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY - g4	115625	125625
LIKE TOY SOLDIERS - eminem	115265	125265
ON A GOOD THING - c-sixty four	115596	125596
CATER 2 YOU - destiny's child	115599	125599
SPITFIRE - prodigy	115629	125629
SWITCH - will smith	115616	125616
HUNGRY EYES - eyeopener	114945	124945
LOSE MY BREATH - destiny's child	114703	124703
MOCKINGBIRD - eminem	115264	125264
CAUGHT UP - usher	115418	125418
DO SOMETHING - britney spears	115229	125229
GET RIGHT - jennifer lopez	115424	125424
WAKE ME UP - girls aloud	115289	125289
CANDY SHOP - 50 cent	115499	125499
RICH GIRL - gwen stefani feat eve	115506	125506
DISCO INFERNO - 50 cent	115413	125413
GET DOWN ON IT - blue feat lil kim	115328	125328
WRAP MY WORDS - d bedingfield	115280	125280
HOLIDAY - green day	115494	125494
BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE - black eyed peas	115094	125094
SIGNS - snoop dogg ft. j timberlake	115520	125520
ALL ABOUT YOU - mcfly	115549	125549
NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL - jojo	115603	125603
NEGOTIATE WITH LOVE - r stevens	115611	125611
FALLING STARS - sunset strippers	115614	125614
IZZO/IN THE END - jay z & linkin park	115509	125509
GIVING YOU UP - kylie minogue	115245	125245
MUST GET OUT - maroon 5	115655	125655
I BRUISE EASILY - n bedingfield	115409	125409

CHART

	REAL	MONO	POLY
WAKE ME UP	175289	115289	125289
GET RIGHT	175424	115424	125424
FILTHY/GORGEOUS	175319	115319	125319
GIVING YOU UP	175245	115245	125245
YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND		115628	125628
ALMOST HERE	175235	115235	125235
RICH GIRL	175506	115506	125506
DEMONS		115277	125277
CRADLE	175327	115327	125327
THE WAY	175234	115234	125234
WHAT YOU WAITING	174861	114861	124861
IF YOU LEAVE ME NOW		115432	125432
HE WASN'T		115406	125406
IT'S LIKE THAT		115489	125489
I BELIEVE IN YOU	174900	114900	124900
CONFIDENCE FOR QUIET		115651	125651

HIP HOP

	REAL	MONO	POLY
YOU CAN DO IT	174816	114816	124816
HIGH ALL THE TIME		115484	125484
HEY NOW (M. MUGGING)		115463	125463
LET'S GET BLOWN		115444	125444
LIKE TOY SOLDIERS	175265	115265	125265
BRING EM OUT		115619	125619
DISCO INFERNO	175413	115413	125413
IN PUBLIC	175266	115266	125266
MOCKINGBIRD	175264	115264	125264
TURN DA LIGHTS OFF		115644	125644
IN PUBLIC	175266	115266	125266
CAUGHT UP		115648	125648

REGGAE

	REAL	MONO	POLY
ANGEL	171114	111114	121114
TURN ME ON	173100	113100	123100
I'M STILL IN LOVE	173410	113410	123410
GET BUSY	172634	112634	122634
TEMPTED TO TOUCH		114934	124934
DUDE		113702	123702

ROCK & ROLL

	REAL	MONO	POLY
IN THE GHETTO		115470	125470
MARIE'S THE NAME		115471	125471
CRYING IN THE CHAPEL		115659	125659
YOU'RE THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE		115570	125570
SHE'S NOT YOU		115553	125553

NIGHT FEVER

	REAL	MONO	POLY
PUSH IT	172551	112551	122551
YMCA	171435	111435	121435
YOU'RE THE FIRST		111437	121437
DISCO INFERNO		114589	124589

PARTY TIME

	REAL	MONO	POLY
THE BIRDIE SONG		115228	125228
BUILD ME UP B..	173009	113009	123009
CHA CHA SLIDE	173506	113506	123506
SUMMER OF 69	172531	112531	122531

ROCK

	REAL	MONO	POLY
ALL BECAUSE OF YOU		115645	125645
SWEET CHILD O MINE	171258	111258	121258
ELECTRON BLUE		115571	125571
DAKOTA		115572	125572

R'N'B

	REAL	MONO	POLY
USED TO LOVE U		115578	125578
SOLDIER	175236	115236	125236
WHY DO I DO		115615	125615
GOODIES	174599	114599	124599
MY BOO	174730	114730	124730
NEXT TO YOU		115658	125658
HOW COULD YOU		115662	125662
MY NECK MY BACK		112416	122416
BABY CAKES	174427	114427	124427
I DON'T WANT YOU	173519	113519	123519

DANCE

	REAL	MONO	POLY
STRINGS OF LIFE	175313	115313	125313
EVERYWHERE		115627	125627
TAKE ME AWAY	174940	114940	124940
WHEN THE DAWN BREAKS		115253	125253
ROBOT ROCK		115634	125634
DAFT PUNK IS PLAYING		115640	125640
HEARTBEATZ		115643	125643
GALVANISE		115343	125343
CALL ON ME	174436	114436	124436
BELIEVE		115569	125569

SOUND F/X

	REAL	MONO	POLY
MALE ORGASM	221603		
FEMALE ORGASM	221604		
THUNDER STORM	221533		
TRAIN HORN	221532		

WACKY FROG	175423	115423	125423

INDIE

	REAL	MONO	POLY
TIME IS MY EVERYTHING		115415	125415
LOOKING AS YOU ARE		115485	125485
BITTER SWEET SYM..	171292	111292	121292
HOUNDS OF LOVE		115554	125554
SOMEBODY TOLD ME		114459	124459

THEMES

	REAL	MONO	POLY
THE SIMPSONS		111132	121132
FOOLS & HORSES	171369	111369	121369
LITTLE BRITAIN		115607	125607
AVENGERS		115590	125590
DIRTY DANCING		111249	121249
CITROEN ROBOT AD		115641	125641
STARSKY & HUTCH	173736	113736	123736
MIAMI VICE	175630	115630	125630
DUKES OF HAZZARD	175631	115631	125631
PROFESSIONALS	175632	115632	125632
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE		111121	121121
ROCKY		112481	122481
AXEL F		111601	121601
KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND		115252	125252

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	KEYWORD
Powerless - Nelly Furtado	POLY POWER
Flip Reverse - Blazin Squad	POLY FLIP
Me Against The Music - Britney	POLY AGAINST
Are U Gonna Be My Girl - Jet	POLY GIRL
Guilty - Blue	POLY GUILTY
Silence Is Easy - Starsailor	POLY SILENCE

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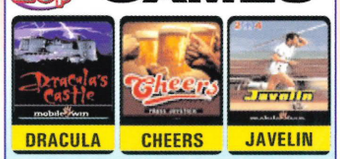

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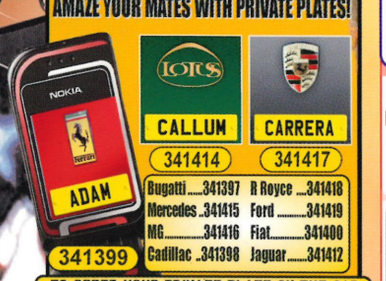

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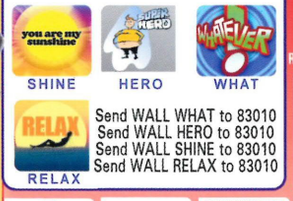

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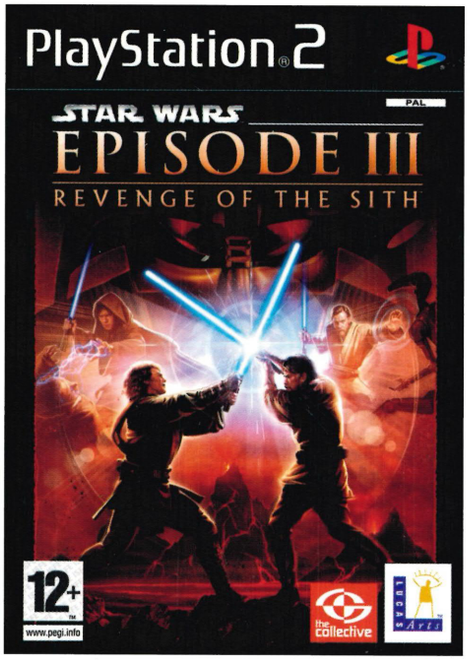

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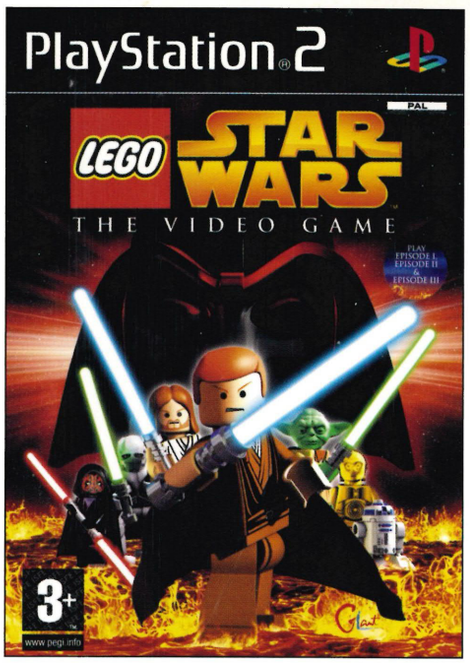

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