

Year 1 Awards and Bold Predictions for Year 2

1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Project Gotham Racing 2
Panzer Dragoon Orta
First News on Halo 2
Over 100 Games Rated!



Official Xbox Magazine



Greg Horn

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11 >

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November 2002
Issue #12

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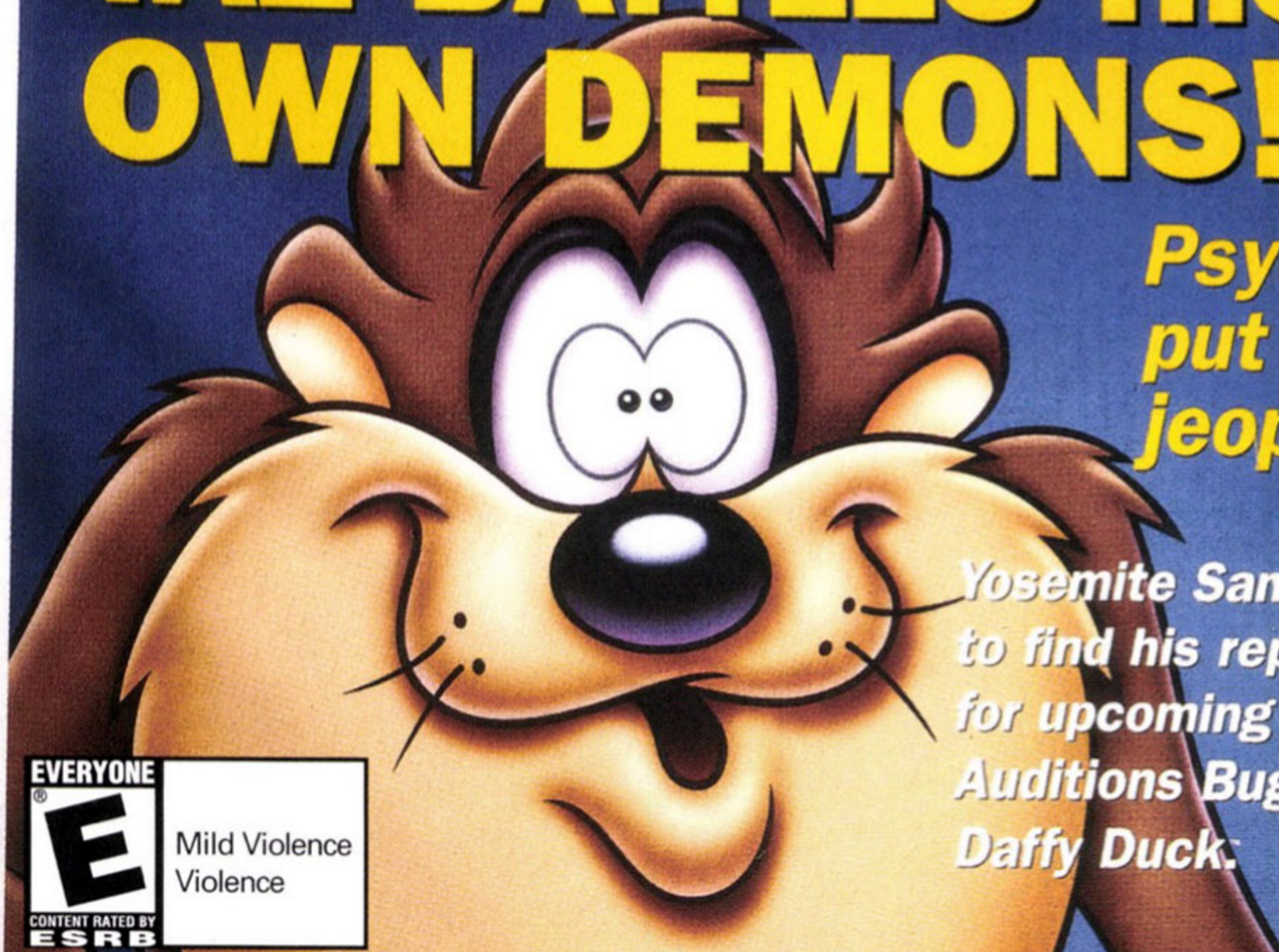
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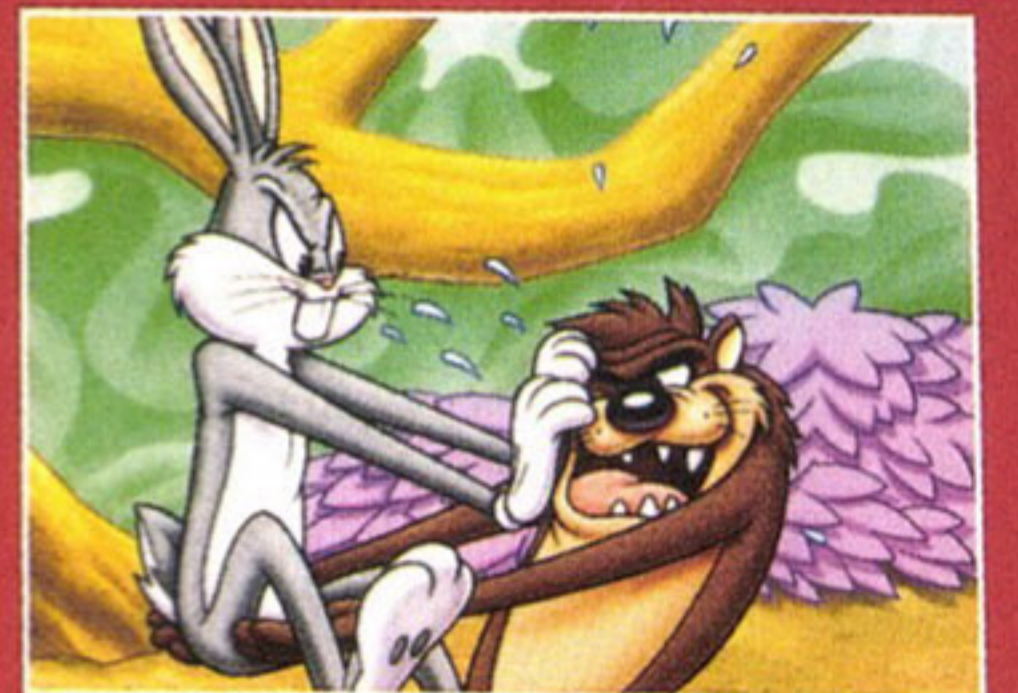


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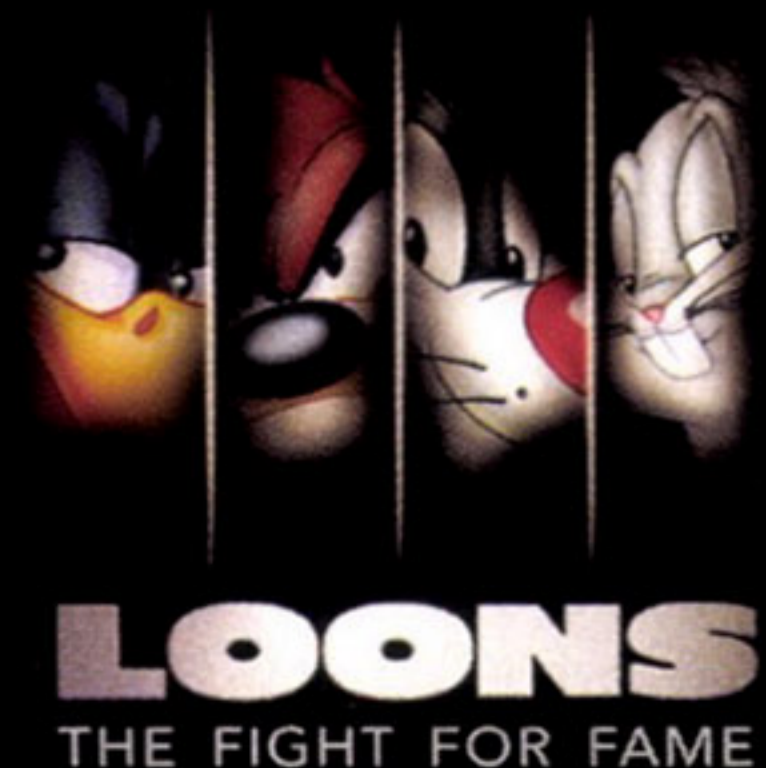
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**TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP ALL YOU NEED IS TALENT,
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Legendary director, *Yosemite Sam*, is casting the lead for his new feature film. Whoever lands the role is sure to become an instant Hollywood icon. But there can be only one. Who will it be? *Daffy Duck*? *Bugs Bunny*? *Taz*? *Sylvester*? Praised for "great graphics, a wacky sense of humor and some frantic multiplayer fun," by XBM, *Loons* is a no-holds-barred, no-rules, anything-goes, free-for-all struggle for stardom. Welcome to the dark side of Hollywood.



Authority ^{2k3}



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PlayStation 2



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Core

First Look

- 19 RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN**
One of the best-looking first-person shooters ever is coming to Xbox. And it is much more than a port.

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Don't know if you care, but we have an interview and some screen shots on the best game ever.
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Hoop dreams come true.
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He's back and he's got a load of new Xbox gossip.

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Previews

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This game title nearly lost its colon (:) in a fatality.
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Take pictures of dead people... before they eat you.
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We're not just here to tell you about games, we're here to make every minute of your gaming life better. Enjoy.

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WOW!

HALO 2 You NEED to read this right now! **Page 24**

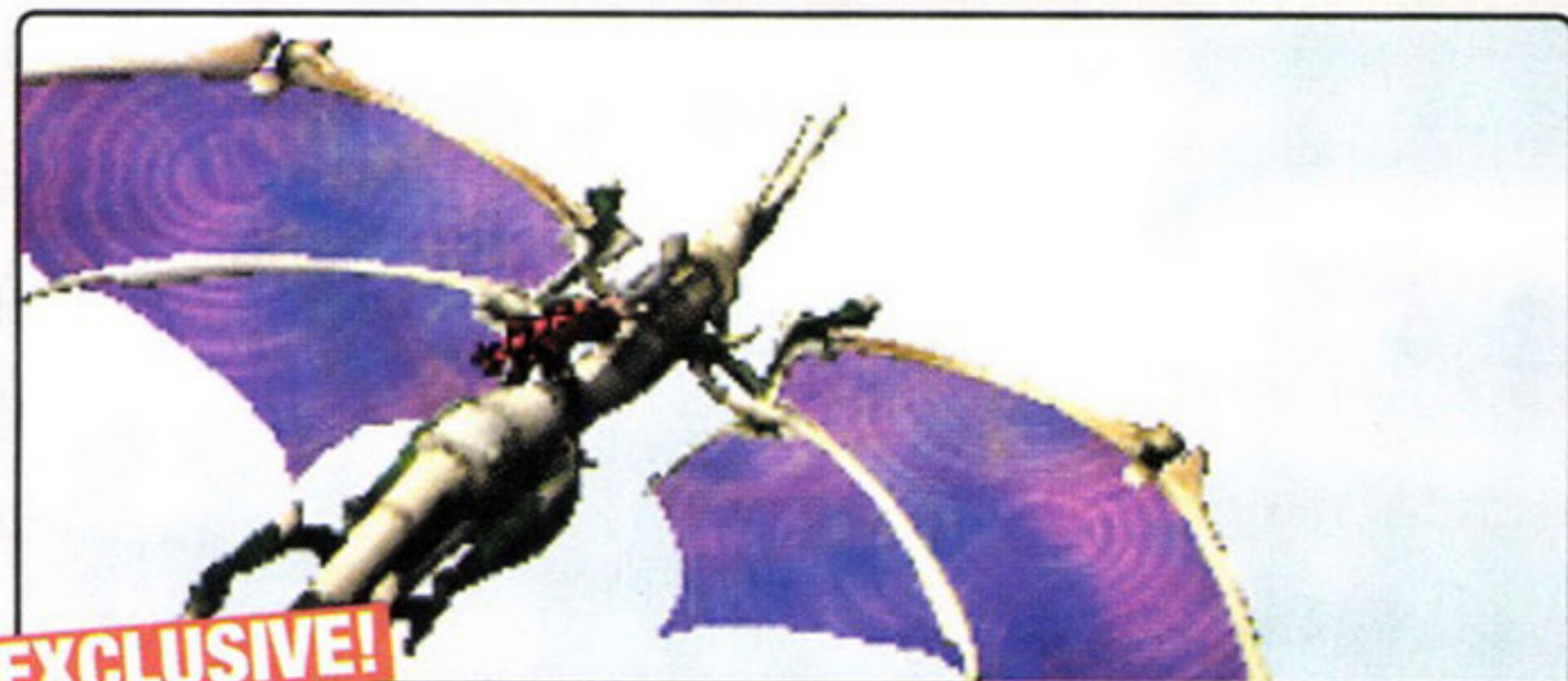


VROOM!

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

Exotic cars, beautifully rendered cities, online play, and an exclusive look at a true second generation racer.

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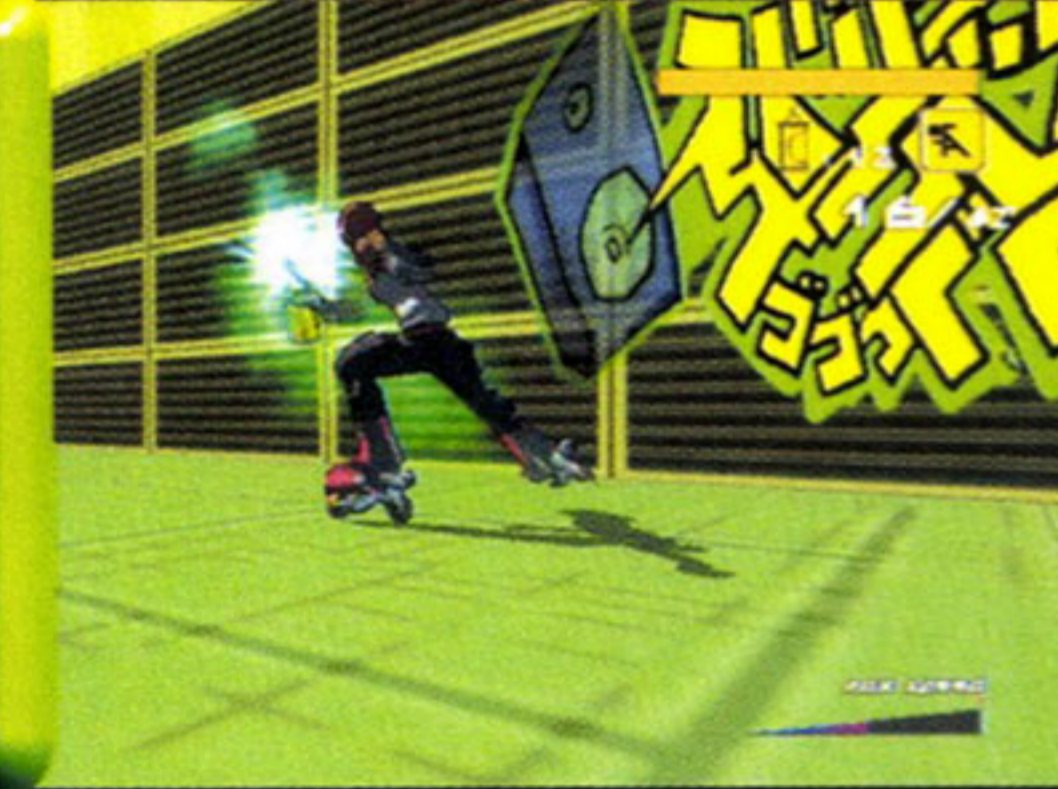


EXCLUSIVE!

PANZER REVIEWED Impressive. **Page 72**



XBOX AWARDS
Official Xbox Magazine
BEST



ONLY THE BEST!

XBOX AWARDS

The best and the brightest gather in one place for the first REAL Xbox awards.

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SUBZERO **SCORPIO**

KWON-DO **HAPK**

SPINE-A-RIFFIC!

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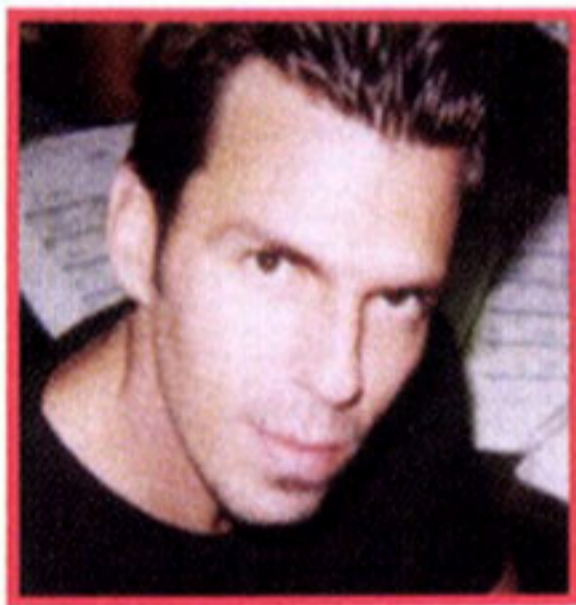
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Moment to moment

Hey, we got him to write his own this month

Great games are all about creating great moments – a single act or event that shocks, awes, or otherwise throws you deep into the game world. Every great game throughout time has had at least one moment that you remember vividly. Remember throwing Bowser off the edge in *Mario 64*? Remember the black ops throwing grenades back at you in *Half-Life*? And who can forget the hell hounds crashing through the windows in *Resident Evil*? How about the first big spell in *Final Fantasy VII*? Or maybe it was getting out of the car in *Grand Theft Auto 3*?

When I look back at the first full year of Xbox I don't see sales numbers, I remember the moments created by Xbox games that actually added enjoyment to my admittedly sad life.

The first time I sat down to play *Halo*, I was preparing for a boring tutorial level, when all hell broke loose, quickly reminding me that this wasn't just a game. Staying up until 4 a.m. holding onto my brand-new baby girl, and trying one more time to get enough Kudos to open up the Ferrari in *Project Gotham Racing*. Getting myself into the Pro Bowl in *NFL Fever*. My first tube ride in *TransWorld Surf*. Beating the rest of the staff in *Fuzion Frenzy* with the ultra-annoying Zak. The first time I knocked an opponent through the glass, the neon sign, and onto the ground in *DOA3*. Pulling out the tank and really destroying Hong Kong in *Wreckless*. Ripping flamenco guitar music to the hard drive and losing all of my rhythm in *Tony Hawk 2x*. Shooting down a Ghost with a Scorpion tank from all the way across the map to save a flag capture. Four of us trying to take down a huge boss in *Hunter: The Reckoning*. The Flood... I'll always remember the Flood.

Did the Xbox have a good year? I don't know about you, but I have plenty of good memories and I can't wait for the next great moment (see our predictions, page 54), whether it is in *Splinter Cell*, *Project Gotham Racing 2* (see cover story, page 58), *Halo 2* (see news story, page 24), or some game we haven't even heard of yet (check out our extensive previews starting on page 80).

Meet the team

This month, we reveal the editors' built-in bias and their very favorite genres.

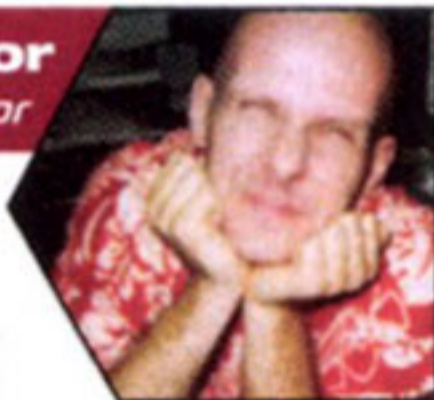
Mike Salmon
editor in chief



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: Shooters and football games. It's hard to pick a favorite between those two, but my game shelf goes: *Halo*, *Fever*, *Quake*, *Madden*, *Unreal*, *NFL 2K2*, *Half-Life*...you get the picture.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: Platform games, although I still play *Mario*. And this is weird, but I'm not a big fan of *Tony Hawk* because I suck at it. Wait a minute – I hate the type of game that I'm not very good at. Is that even a genre?

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Frank O'Connor
executive editor



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: It kind of changes depending on my mood, but overall, I'd have to say platform games. I still love *Mario*, and there's a special place in my heart for titles like *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, *Castlevania*, and even stuff like *Bonk*. I love *Blinx*, want to play *Tork* and *Vexx*, and would've bought a Gamecube if there was anything OTHER than *Mario* worth playing.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: I'm a bit suspicious about the RPG plot. And yes, I mean plot singular.

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Sarah Ellerman
managing editor



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: Adventure is my favorite genre. I really liked things like *Zork*, *Grim Fandango*, the whole *King's Quest* series. I can't aim to save my life and that's the only genre where you don't have to aim at anything.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: Well, duh, shooters. I feel so left out every night when everyone plays *Halo*. There's no hope of me improving, so while they play their reindeer games in Blood Gulch, I just aim a cursor in MS Word and wish I was a player.

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Francesca Reyes
senior editor



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: RPGs, although I'm also partial to survival-horror. On the Xbox right now, there's not too much of the former, although I am looking forward to *Bistro Cupid*, which is like a dating/cooking/RPG game.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: I'm with Holden on this. Not a huge fan of team sports games. Unless there's a dragon guarding the endzone, or some random battle system in hockey (*Actually, there is – Ed.*) you won't catch me within 50 yards of one.

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Holden Hume
art director



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: Any kind of stand-up arcade game from the '80s: specifically, *Space Invaders*. Not a genre, but so what. I loved the bassy analog sounds most of all.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: Team sports of any kind. That counts for videogames and real life. Although I would never ever reveal that in a resume! The one exception would be hockey, if I had to pick one, and for no real reason that I can think of. I just like hockey.

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Juliann Brown
associate art director



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: Shooters. I loves me some shooters. *Halo*, of course, and stuff like *GoldenEye*. I'm really looking forward to *Nightfire* from EA. I also secretly play *Warcraft* and the like on my mega-powerful art Macintosh.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: Fighting games. No, wait, racing games. I don't mind cool snowboarding-racing games, but *Ridge Racer* or *Gran Turismo*? Give me a break. If I want to be in traffic, I'll drive to work.

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Dave Rees
disc editor



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: It's a tie: survival horror and first-person shooters. You'd think my ideal game would be *House of the Dead*, but it's not. My ideal game would be *Halo*, but set in a giant haunted city filled with zombies.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: Puzzle games. I have enough crap to juggle without bringing that feeling into my leisure time. *Tetris* is close to my idea of hell. Only in my vision of hell, the blocks are made of poisoned steel and cockroach feces.

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Matt Leone
intern



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: Fighting games! I love *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken*, but I still have a special place in my heart for any 2D fighter, especially (of course) the Capcom stuff. And I believe that *VF* is superior to *Tekken*. Frank likes *Tekken* better, but Frank also wears vests, so what does he know? I'm outta here, peace out!
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: Simulations. Can you imagine anything more tedious than a realistic train simulator?

goverml@aol.com

Granny D
She's back!



MY FAVORITE GENRE IS: I love party games, like *Canasta* and *shuffleboard*, but the versions available on the Xbox at the moment are disappointing at best. I'm hoping that once he's done with *Doom III*, Carmack gets right to work on a hardcore pinochle title. That would be totally bitch-ass, as they say at my bridge club.
MY LEAST FAVORITE GENRE IS: You can accuse me of being pedantic, but while I love beat-rhythm-panic-action, I hate action-panic-rhythm-dance titles.

Write a letter on paper.



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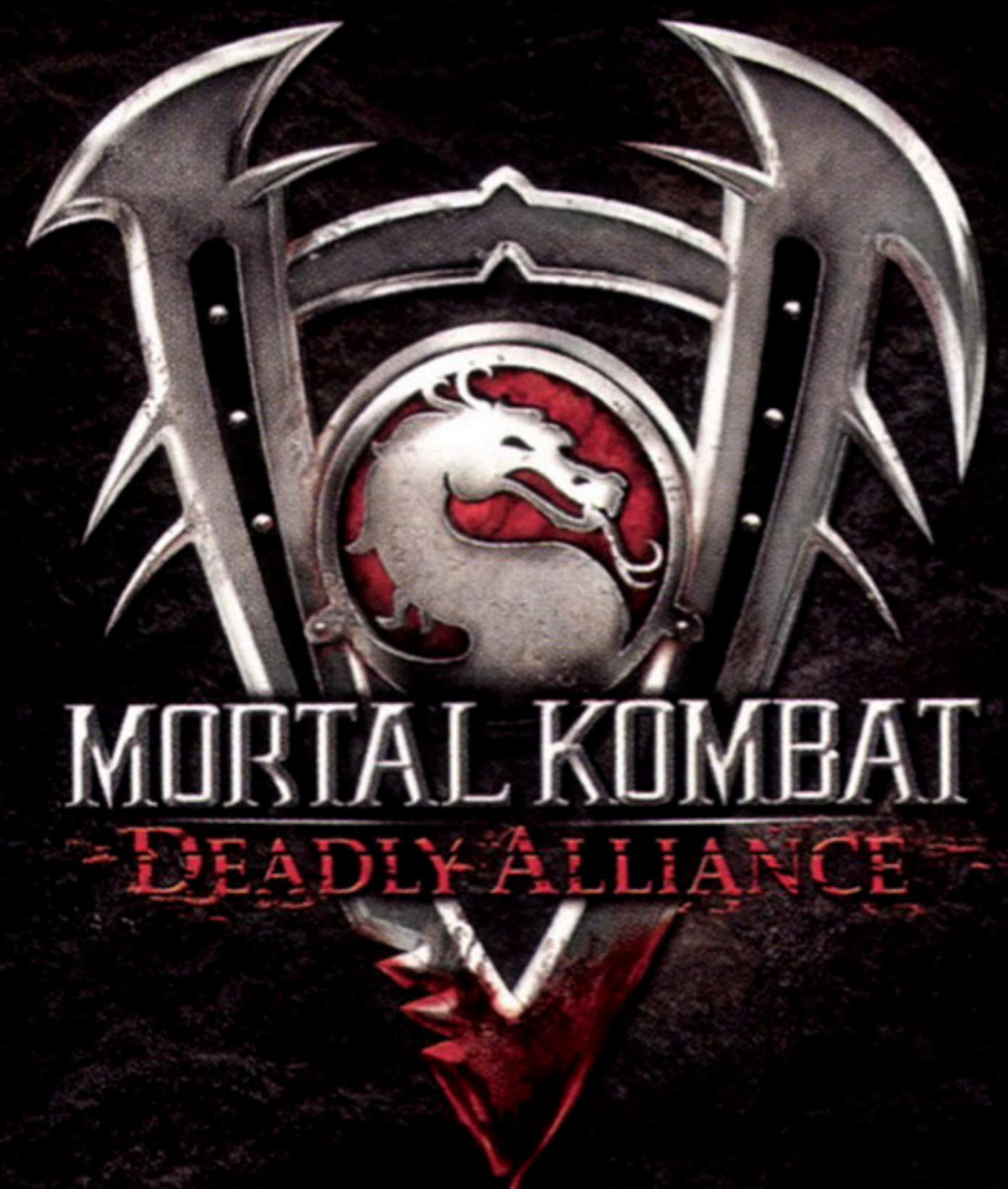


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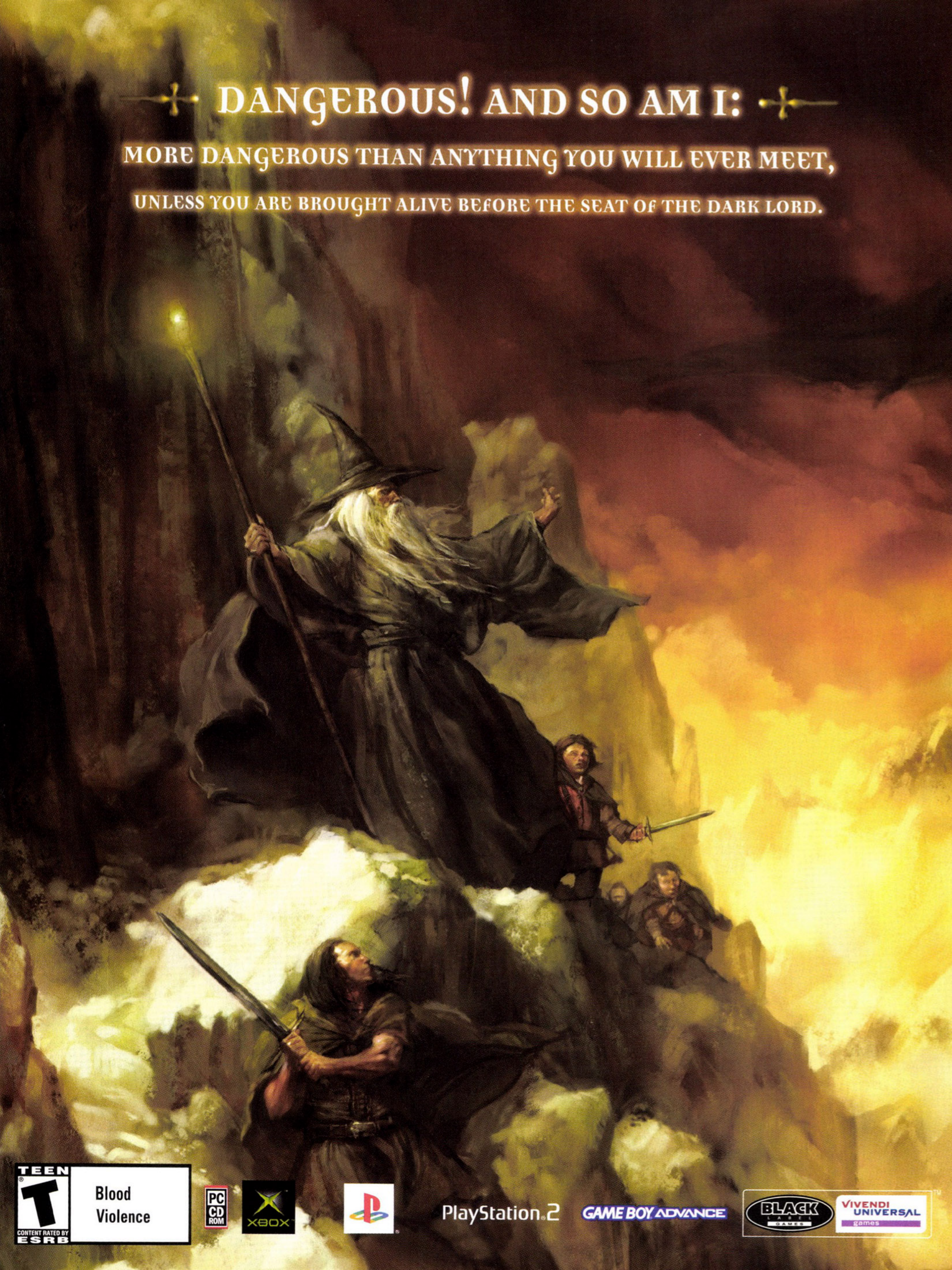
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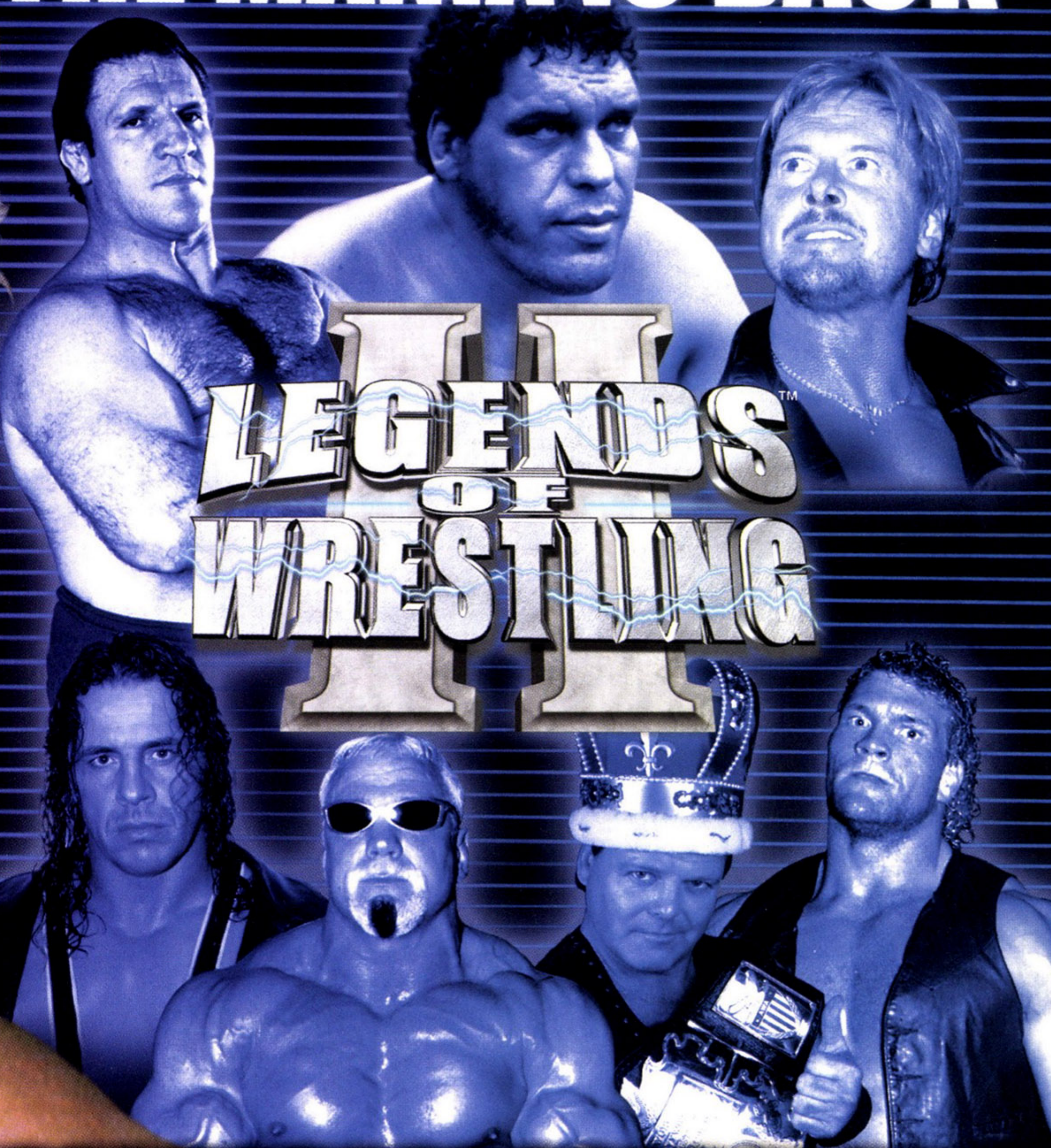


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Screenshots are from the Xbox™ video game system and PlayStation™2 computer entertainment system.

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■ All the particle and volumetric effects have been improved for the Xbox version of *Wolfenstein*.

Return to Castle Wolfenstein

DEVELOPER: ID SOFTWARE/NERVE | PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION | RELEASE DATE: SPRING 2003

Look, let's face it – zombified Nazis need killing.

Activision is showing us what we can expect from Xbox Live games in the future. Far from simply dumping a PC port in our laps, or worse still, a PS2 mirror image, they're turning *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* into a truly Xbox-specific game. In case you're not familiar with *Wolfenstein*, here's a quick digest of the single-player experience: Evil Nazi scientists are creating monstrous supernatural beings – you have to enter the mysterious Castle Wolfenstein, solve the mystery, and kill EVERYTHING.

That's the absorbing single-player adventure in a nutshell,

but the multiplayer game is perhaps even more compelling. On PC, it had the usual features – Capture the Flag, Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, all that stuff. The Xbox conversion will feature all of those modes and more in split-screen, System Link, and more excitingly, via Xbox Live! And rather than simply aping the PC game, the Xbox version will take advantage of the Xbox Communicator, allowing you to taunt rivals, call in airstrikes, or coordinate stealthy assaults on enemy positions.

Fans of the PC version will be pretty familiar with the *Saving Private Ryan*-inspired beach

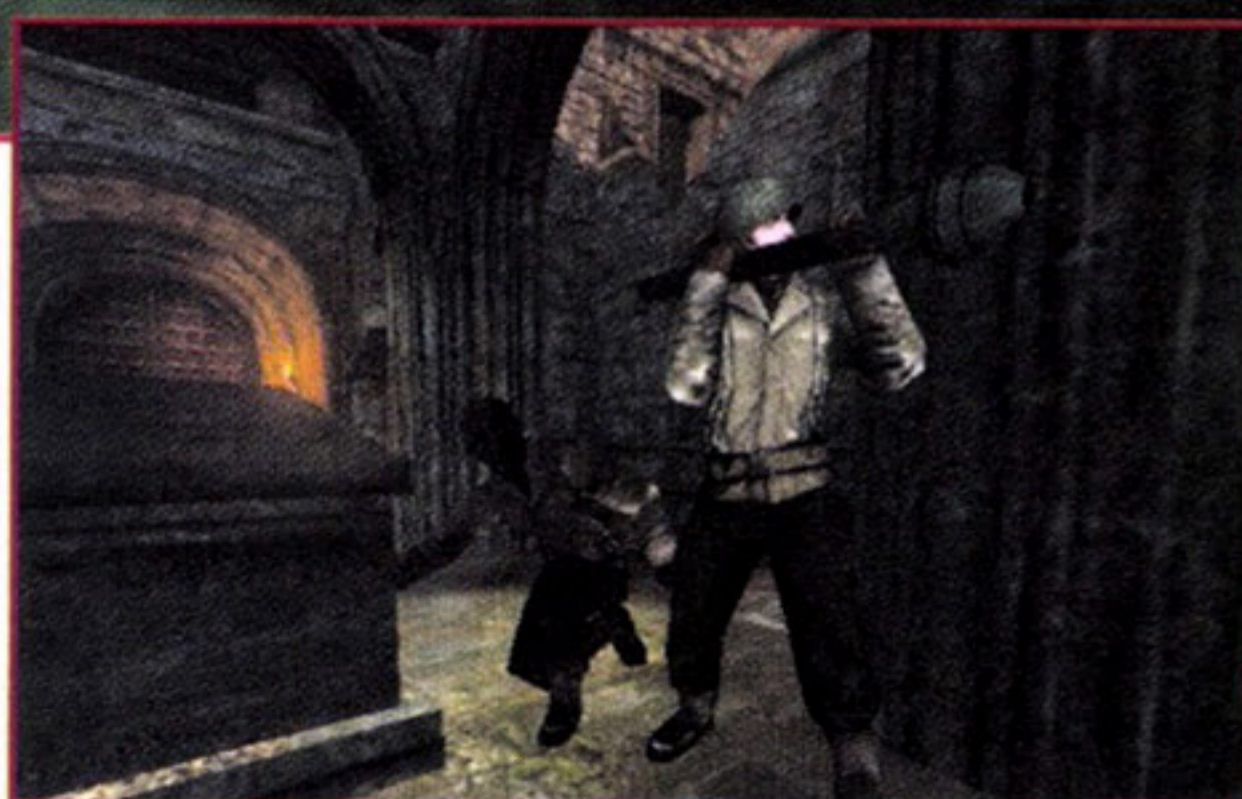


■ Luckily, just as things start getting supernatural in terms of enemies, so do your weapons, which head into sci-fi country.

■ Many of the missions take place against conventional SS soldiers...

■ ...and in multiplayer modes, you'll be mostly fighting Axis versus Allies.

■ The weird mix of supernatural and historical baddies is pretty unique.



assault. Xbox players can battle with up to seven other combatants and relive the experience with Dolby 5:1 surround sound, and improved Xbox graphics. Yikes, we would have taken a port!

Four character classes, tons of weapons (including new ones specifically designed and only

If the machine-gun-toting lunatic is injured, he can literally scream for a medic.

available for the Xbox game), and multiple mission and match modes mean an almost unlimited

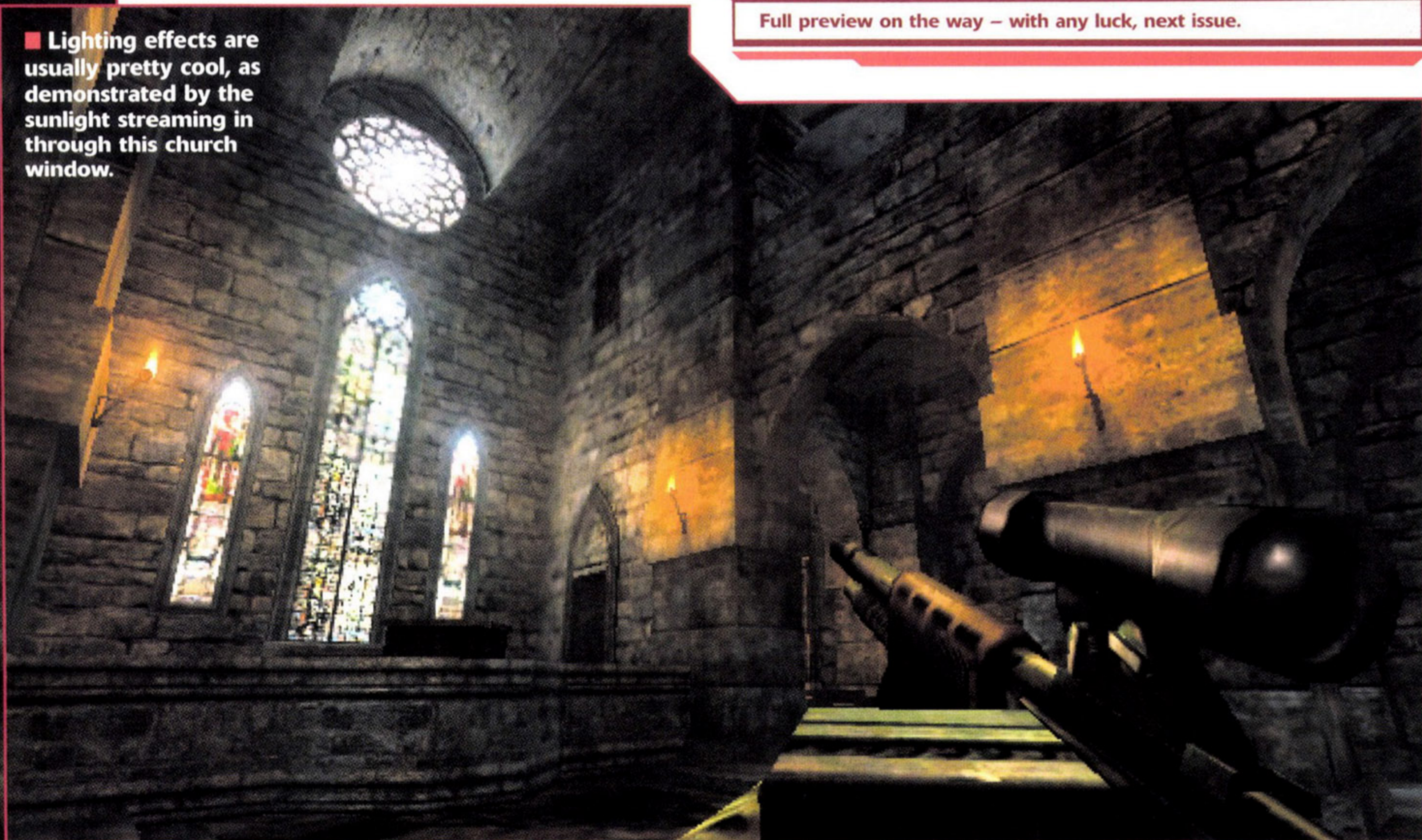
variety of play styles, whether you have Xbox Live or not. A great game gets even better.

What really thrills us about this conversion, though, is that Id and Nerve aren't simply tagging on new modes and weapons, but rather carefully tweaking and adjusting the gameplay to suit the (admittedly brilliant for first-person shooters) Xbox control pad. So the Xbox update will be paced

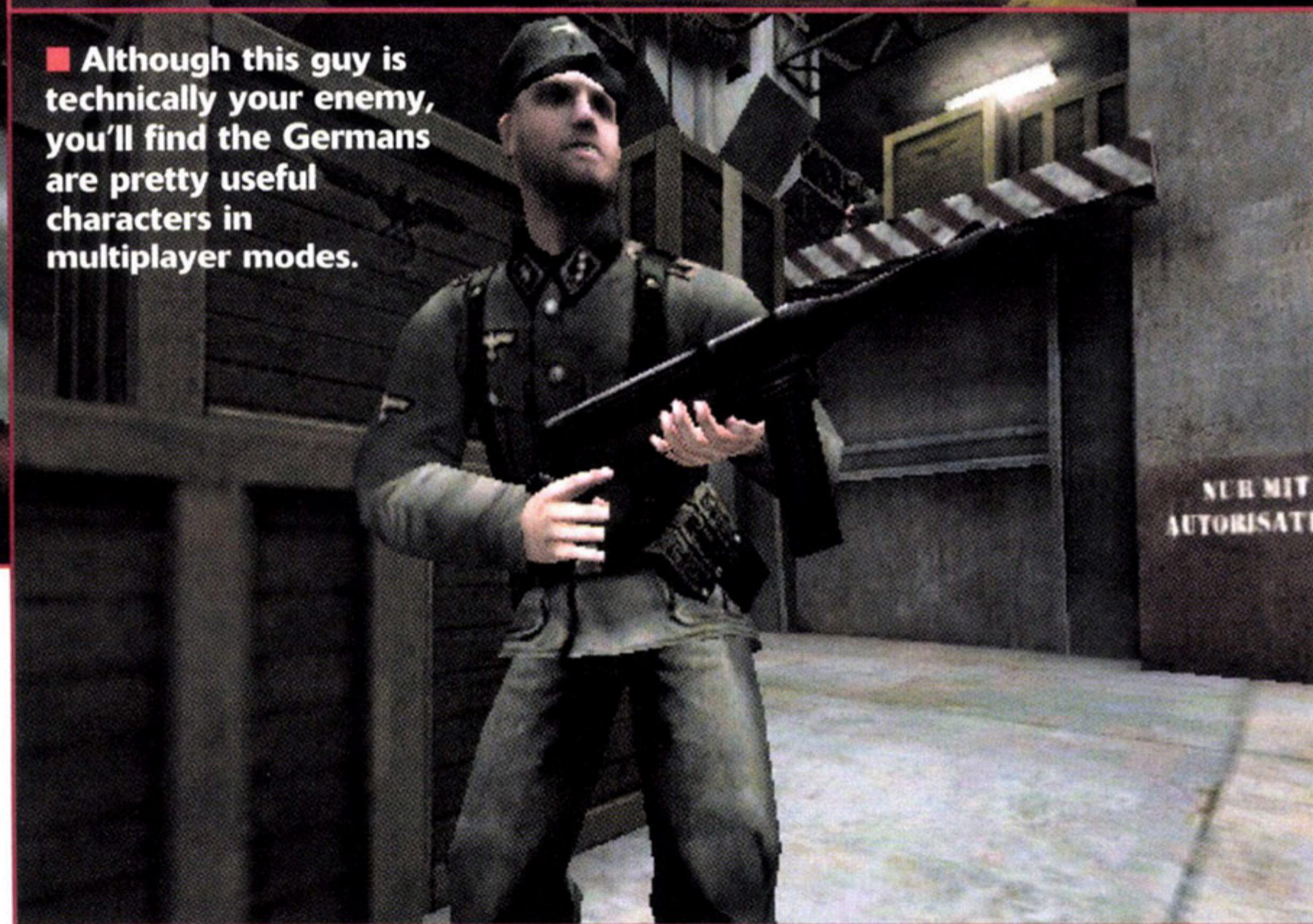
COMING SOON...

Full preview on the way – with any luck, next issue.

■ Lighting effects are usually pretty cool, as demonstrated by the sunlight streaming in through this church window.



■ Although this guy is technically your enemy, you'll find the Germans are pretty useful characters in multiplayer modes.



differently than the original, making it every bit as playable, and with a ton more features, including all-new levels and maps.

We already know that Nerve has utilized a control scheme almost identical to that found in *Halo*, and that a very, very subtle auto-aim feature will help

compensate for the lack of mouselook. The game has been criticized in the past for its shallow single-player experience, but that experience may pan out better as a console game anyway. We're scared, we're excited, and either way, it's time for diapers.

XBOX

Communicate. Eradicate.

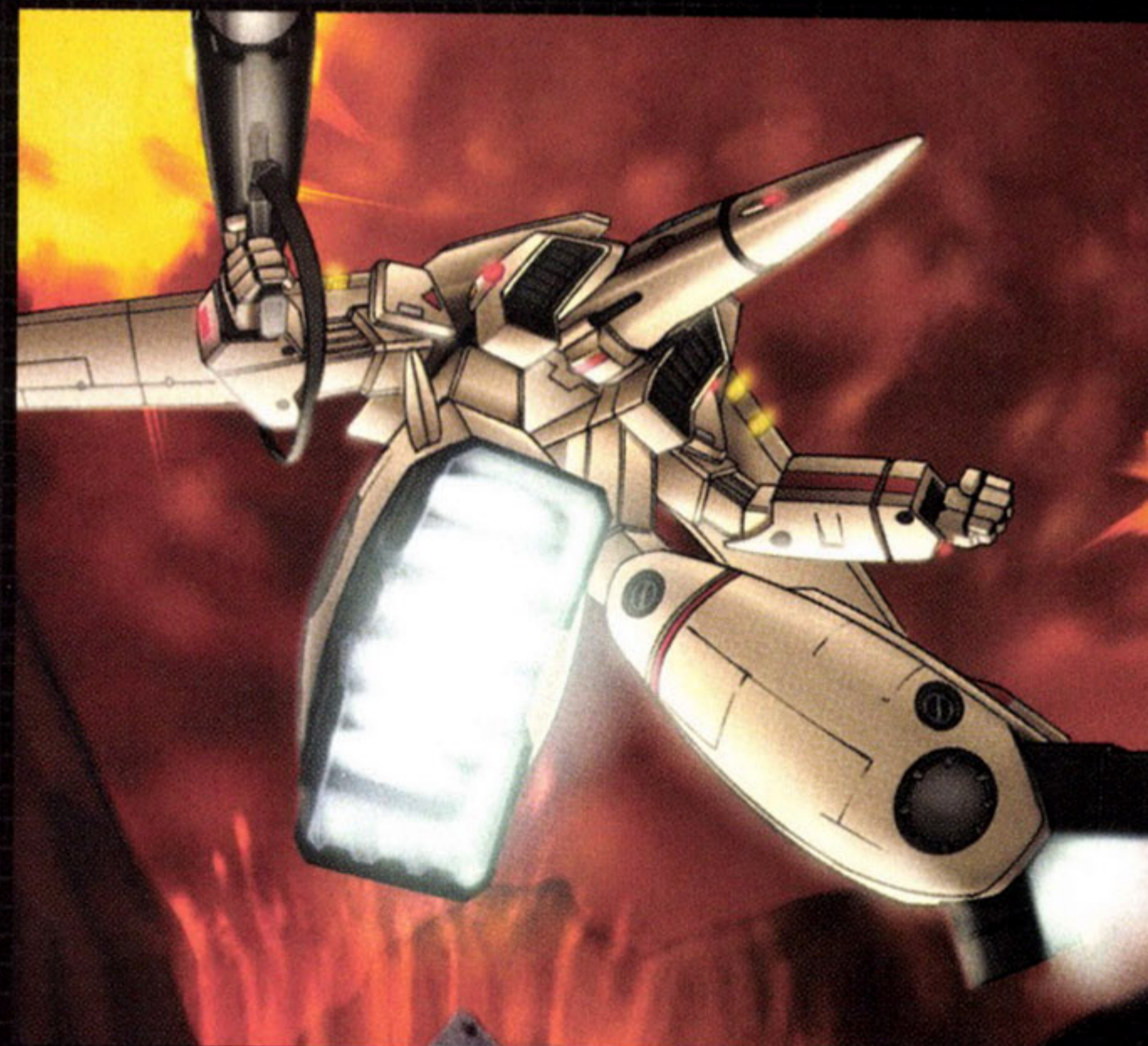
Wondering what the use of the Xbox Communicator (via Xbox Live) will add to an eight-player game of *Wolfenstein*? Wonder no longer, the following is an actual possible scenario:

Two teams – four Axis soldiers, four Allied – find themselves locked in combat. The Allies have an engineer, a medic, a sniper, and a machine-gun-toting lunatic. The Nazis, being Nazis, are all Lieutenants, holed up in a bunker above Omaha Beach. You can (over the Internet) verbally give commands to the rest of the group using the Xbox Communicator, so you could tell the sniper to give covering fire while your engineer runs up the beach (dodging incoming shells) and plants explosives by the bunker door. If the machine-gun-toting lunatic is injured, he can literally scream for a medic. He can relay his position and hope that the medic gets there before death takes him in its velvety embrace.

Meanwhile, the Nazis are all arguing about who has to go downstairs and fight our brave GI boys. Communication. Gotta love it.

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Violence



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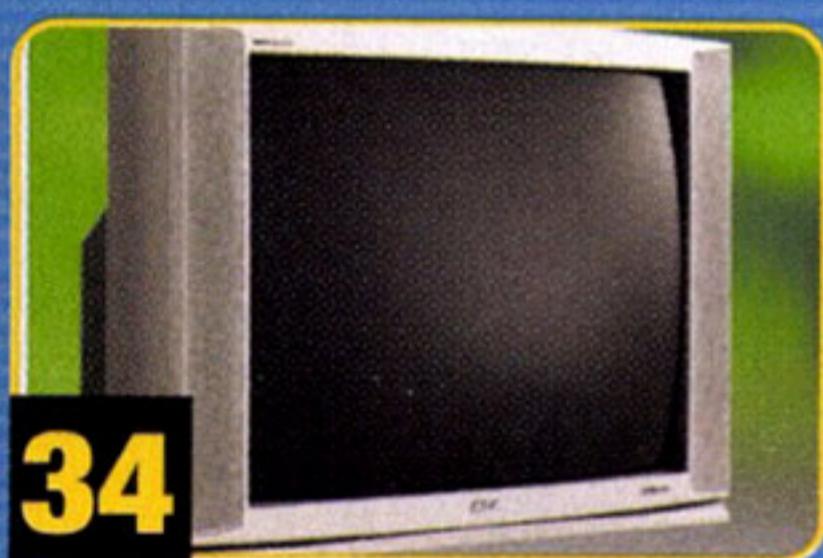
All Access

Xbox news from the source

Halo 2: The Unveiling

Even better than we dreamed...

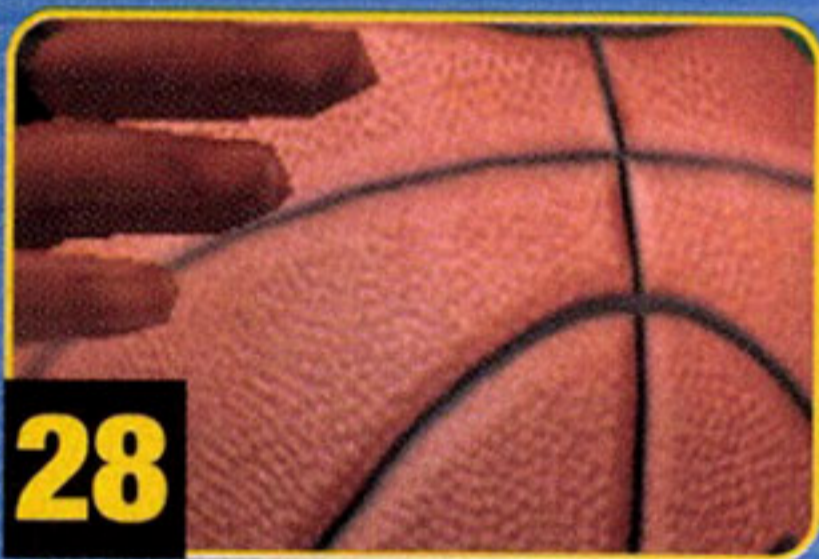
In the News



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Hard Attack

Elitist AV accessories built specifically for Xbox!



28

Armchair Gamer

We're playin' Bas-ket-ball!



40

Secret Society

Koji Aizawa, Ken Lobb, and the Rumor Mole leak info!



■ Master Chief gets ready to dive head-first into the icy vacuum.

■ New lighting effects show off the new graphics engine.

All we wanted was more of the same. Bungie could have used the same graphics, the same locations, even a similar plot. We'd have been happy with a couple of new levels and weapons. But the fact is, *Halo 2* is going to be MASSIVELY different, and much more than we ever could have hoped for.

It's obvious from these screens that the graphics are better, but without seeing them in motion, it's tough to appreciate how much better they really are. The simplest comparison for us is *Doom III*. The lighting, levels of detail, and bump-mapping look frightening similar to Id's latest PC game. And considering that until now, that was the state of

the art, that's a pretty good thing. And perversely, the amazing new build of Master Chief, more

detailed, more impressive, and more *human*, actually uses fewer polys than in *Halo*. Bungie is

Things we learned from a two-minute trailer

Although the trailer was short and saccharine-sweet, we were in fact able to discern a bunch of real facts from both it (well, that and the jet-lagged and gullible Microsoft employees at the *Halo 2* unveiling). Here's what we gathered.

- The game features a brand new graphics engine, with *Doom 3*-quality lighting.
- Master Chief looks much better.
- The Covenant are bringing new types of troops, weapons, and ships.
- A lot of the game will take place on Earth.
- Cortana is definitely back.
- Guilty Spark may or may not return.
- Master Chief's suit allows him to survive in a vacuum.
- Most of Earth's defenses have been decimated.
- Much of the Earth has been ravaged by high-energy weapons.
- Master Chief never misses.
- There appears to be no Tiger Tank. (sniffle)

using a huge array of lighting, bump-mapping, and pixel-shading techniques to get more, using less. This means that not only will every single object look more detailed, awesome, and

"Halo 2 is a lot like Halo 1, only it's Halo 1 on fire, going 130 miles per hour through a hospital zone, being chased by helicopters and ninjas, and the ninjas are all on fire, too."

realistic, there will be more of them, bigger environments, and a lot more action.

What kind of action? Well, apart from an epic one-player game where MC finds himself literally saving the Earth from the invading Covenant forces, Bungie will also reinvent multiplayer modes – the inclusion of Xbox Live means that online play for multiplayer will be the biggest thing to hit Xbox since *Halo* itself. Barking voice commands to your friends into the Xbox Communicator while playing Capture the Flag against an elite squad of Japanese players? It's almost certain that those multiplayer levels will include alien, space-based, and Earth environments, and the trailer certainly hints at a post-apocalyptic planet. *Halo 2* ships next year, only on Xbox.



Inside the Hallowed Halls of Halo

Steve Fowler, *Halo*'s producer at Microsoft, stonewalls us almost completely at every turn, but if you read this Q&A carefully, he does let a few things slip. Hint: "No comment" historically means, "Yes, we're totally guilty." Just ask Martha Stewart.

Us: How does the *Halo 2* graphics engine compare to the first game?

Him: I think Jason Jones said it best with, "*Halo 2* is a lot like *Halo 1*, only it's *Halo 1* on fire, going 130 miles per hour through a hospital zone, being chased by helicopters and ninjas, and the ninjas are all on fire, too." I've seen it, and let me tell you this thing is incredible. A lot of people who have seen our trailer are having trouble believing that it was rendered in-engine. I think that says it all.

Us: Soundtrack! How will it evolve from the last one?

Him: Marty O'Donnell has many tricks up his sleeve. Hopefully by the time you read this, the *Halo 2* movie will already be released on the Internet and will be covermounted on the Official Xbox Magazine disc so you can hear for yourselves. But suffice it to say the [chanting] Monks are back!!

Us: New weapons. Please... give us a few hints. And will the old ones be in there too?

Him: One hint: Battle Rifle. It's in the video and you will want to become intimately familiar with it. Trust me.

Okay, two hints: there will be a lot more than in the original, plus some of the old faithfuls will be back.

Us: Vehicles. Come on, what kind of vehicles can we expect, and will the old ones be there?

Him: Vehicles are a tremendously important part of *Halo* gameplay. You are guaranteed to see some of the old favorites and plenty of new ones to boot.

Us: Will there be any playable characters other than Master Chief?



■ Behind Master Chief, the Earth burns ferociously!

Him: No comment.

Us: It looks like Earth is in trouble, but will we be able to play multiplayer on our beloved planet?

Him: It is way too early to answer that question.

Us: What features of Xbox Live are you most looking forward to taking advantage of?

Him: So the Xbox Live service rocks!!! The ease of use, friends list, Gamertags, the Communicator, and the matchmaking system are all state of the art and have revolutionary multiplayer functions, but if I had to pick one feature I am most excited about, it would be the ability to provide additional content through download.

Us: Guilty Spark, will he return?

Him: No comment.

Us: What's all this massively multiplayer business you guys are hinting at for *Halo 2*?

Him: What is this massively multiplayer you speak of? Not coming from us. I assume you mean team-based multiplayer battles. Oh yes, we will have plenty of that served up on a plate.

Us: Will the new game still support split-screen and System Link?

Him: Yes. Not everyone has broadband, and they should not be denied *Halo 2* multiplayer goodness.

Us: Will it be less fussy in terms of hot-swapping players in and out this time?

Him: We will make every effort to make *Halo 2* as enjoyable an experience as possible.

Us: What single game feature are you personally most looking forward to?

Him: Maybe not a feature, but I'm looking forward to seeing what crazy things our fans do with the *Halo 2* engine that we never thought about or intended. Randall Glass rules. (He's the crazy Warthog-jumping guy featured in our disc production "Dreams of Master Chief" – Ed.)



■ Light and shadow compare favorably with *Doom III*'s.



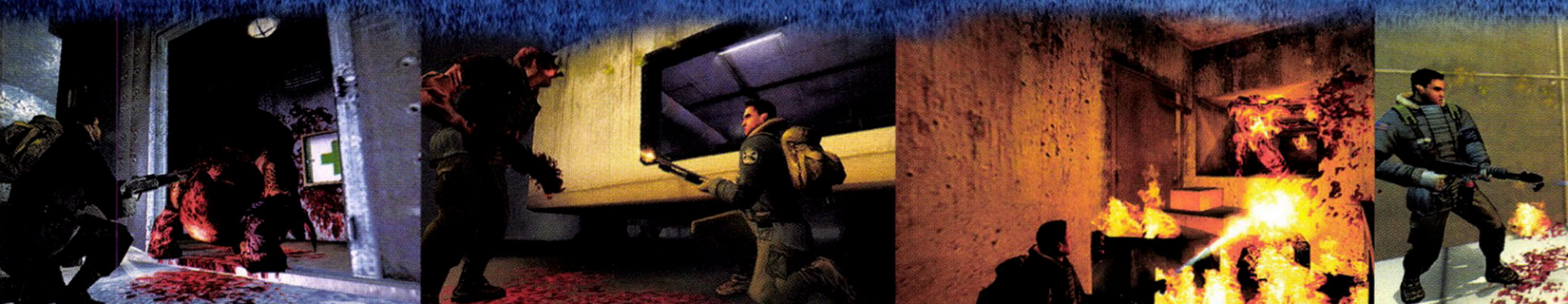
■ Amazingly, the new Chief uses fewer polygons!



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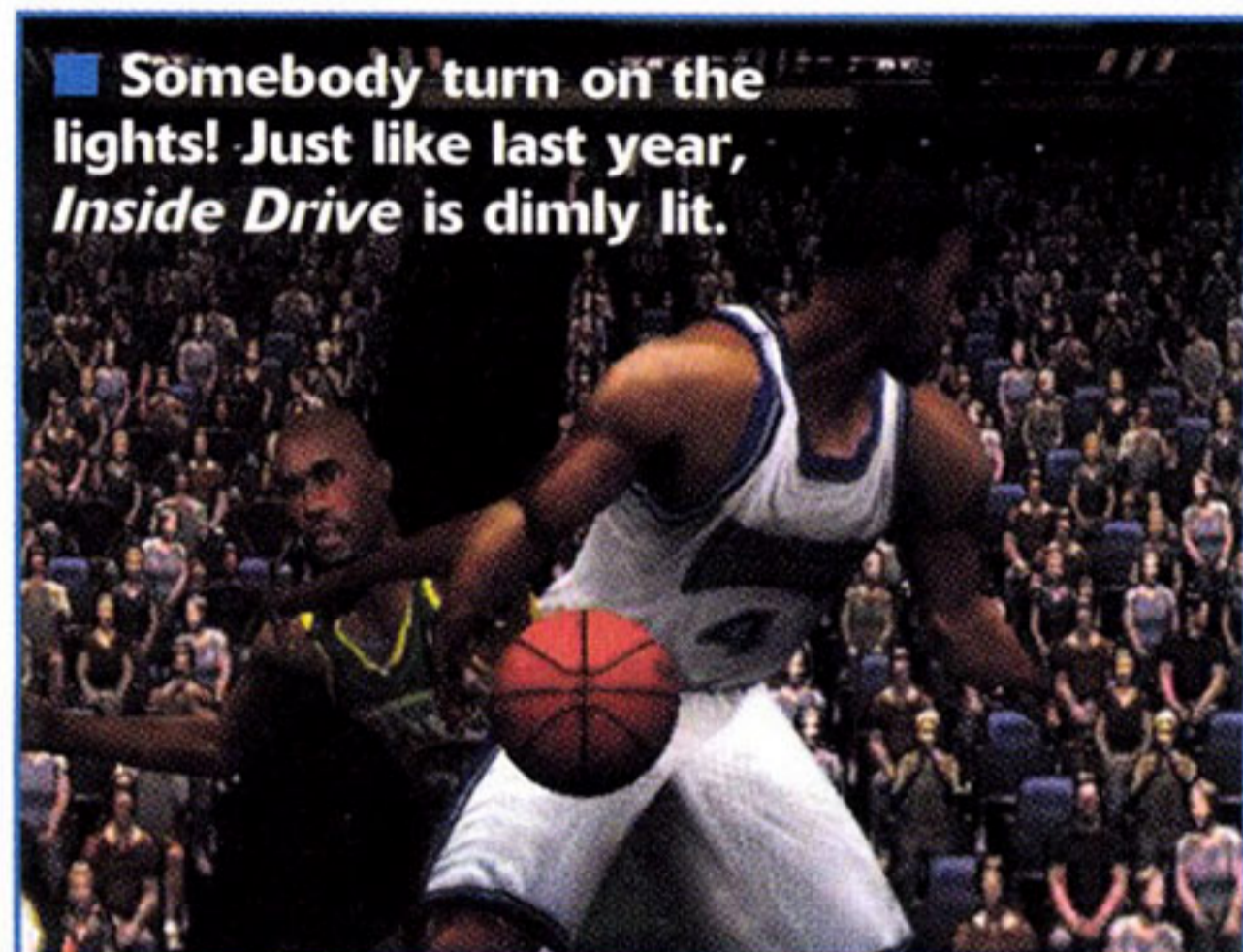


ARMCHAIR GAMER

Taking it to the hole

Being a huge basketball fan and a hardcore gamer hasn't always been a happy combination. Early on, games like EA's *Lakers Vs. Bulls* really delivered a new and different experience. Since those days, graphics have gotten significantly better, but gameplay has been mostly stagnant. Happily, that is about to change on Xbox. Developers are finally putting control back in the hands of players and really working on the one-on-one feeling of the NBA. With three solid titles coming to Xbox, now is a good time to give you the lowdown. — Mike Salmon

THE LINE-UP



■ Somebody turn on the lights! Just like last year, *Inside Drive* is dimly lit.

NBA Inside Drive 2003

Last year's rating: 7.9

What's new? A slightly reworked graphics engine, some new motion-capture, and a deeper coaching and franchise mode. The Dynamic Player Performance stuff is great in *Fever*, and is just as addictive for NBA hoops. Xbox Live support means plenty of trash-talking games over the Internet.

What still needs work? A few slight improvements are normally good enough in videogame basketball, but EA and Sega have really raised the bar this season, and it's not clear whether *Inside Drive* is going to keep pace.

Only on Xbox: This game won't be on any other system, and the graphic touches and Live support make it another sports showcase for Xbox.

Prediction: Still some of the best player models around, but we've yet to see the radical gameplay improvements of the other two hoops games.



■ Is that a fur-shaded Afro? Now that's detail!

NBA 2K3

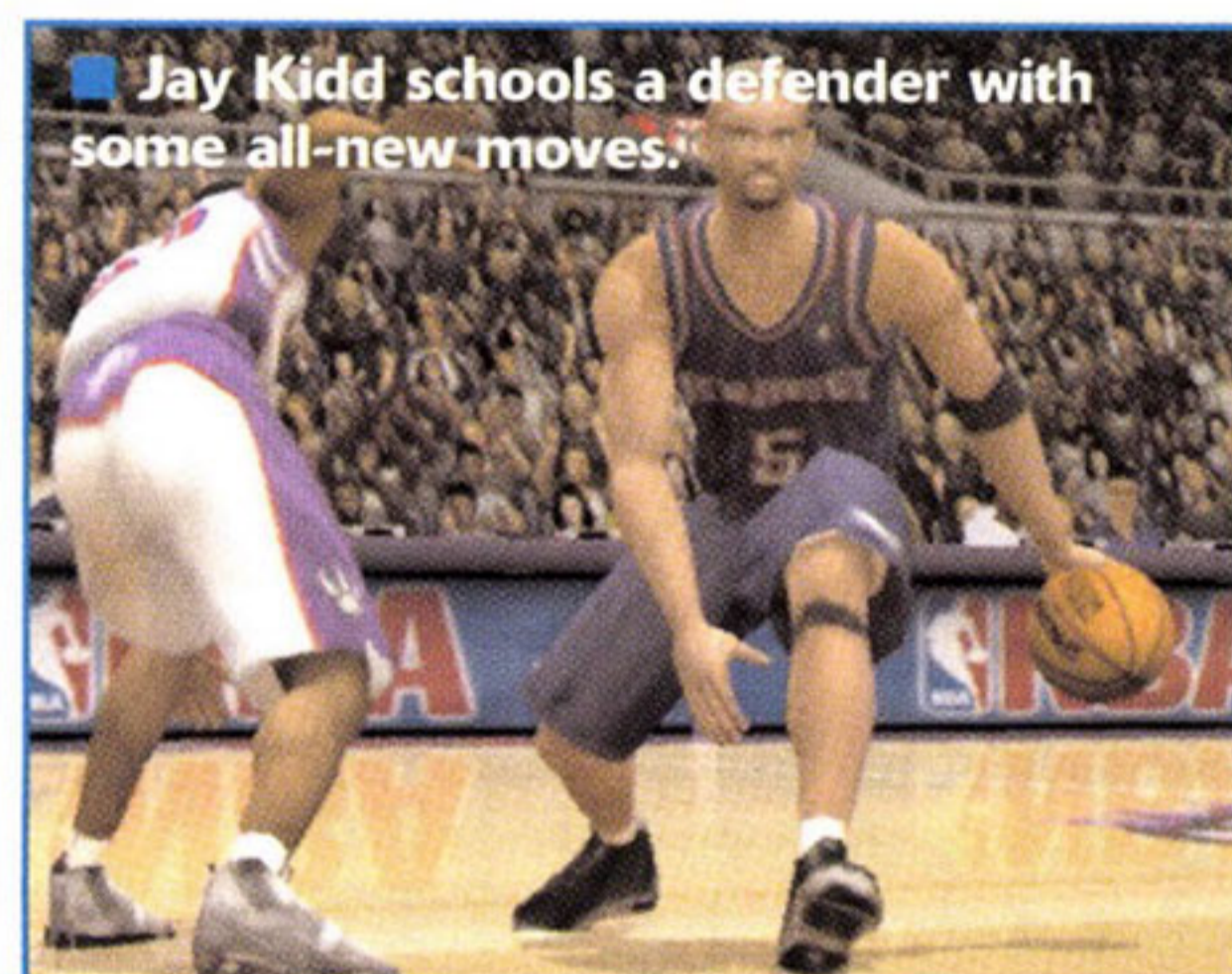
Last year's rating: 9.1

What's new? A totally new graphics engine that features some amazing player faces, bump-mapped uniforms, and easily the best-looking hoops game we've seen. They've also added an arsenal of new moves, better on-the-fly coaching, and some amazing one-on-one match-up moves and animations. You can front defenders, alter your shot, and you are in much more control of the whole experience.

What still needs work? Not much. This game has got it all. Deep franchise mode. Street Hoops game. Stunning graphics. Solid and realistic gameplay. Great commentary.

Only on Xbox: More than any hoops game, *NBA 2K3* really pushes the Xbox. Everything is bumpy and shiny, it supports Xbox Live, and the game plays in 720p mode on HDTV.

Prediction: Been the best for a couple of years and they aren't resting. Could be a showdown with *Live* in the finals.



■ Jay Kidd schools a defender with some all-new moves.

NBA Live 2003

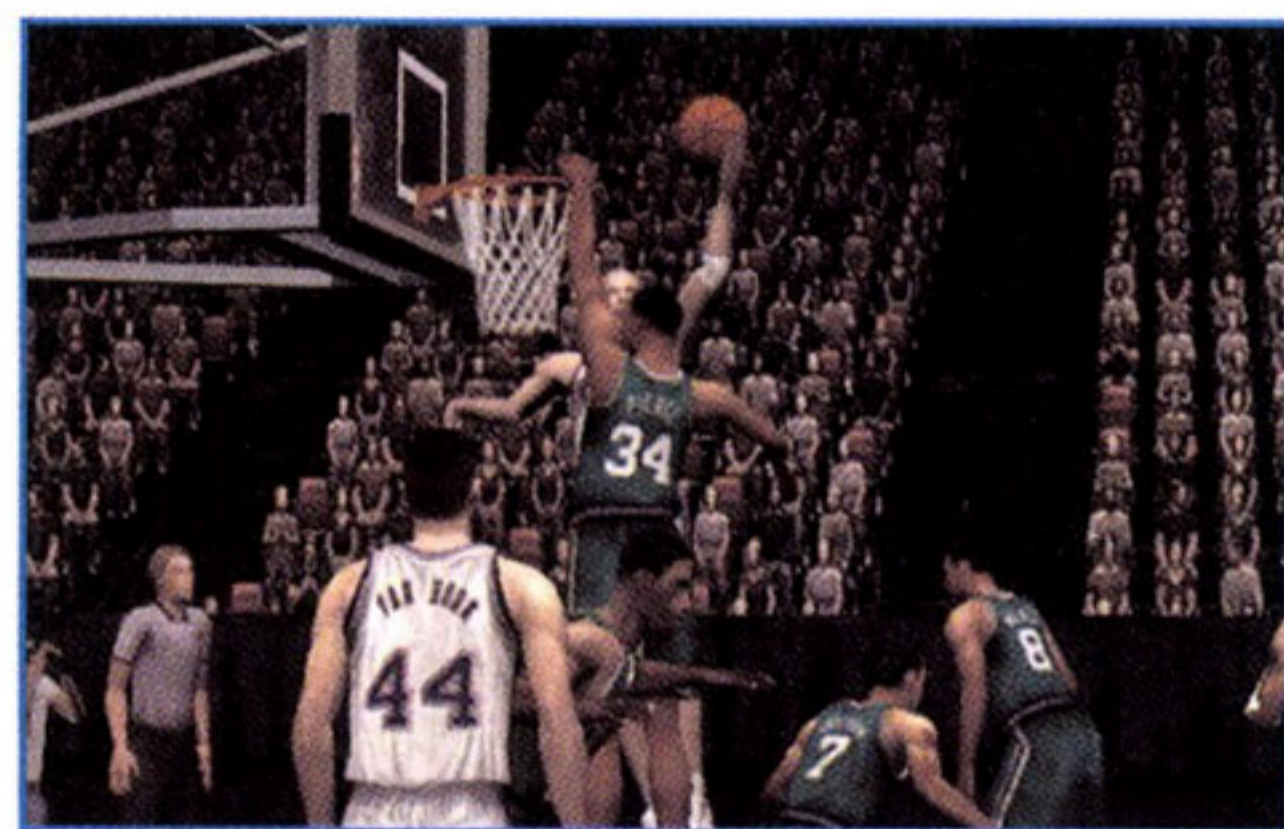
Last year's rating: 7.6

What's new? The most significant gameplay change in sports games since the forward pass. You can use the right analog stick to totally control individual moves. No more pressing a button and waiting for a canned animation, now you really control the player. Cross-over, jab step, behind the back, reverse-pivot, and much more are all at your fingertips. This total control really ups the one-on-one showdowns and makes for even more trash-talking.

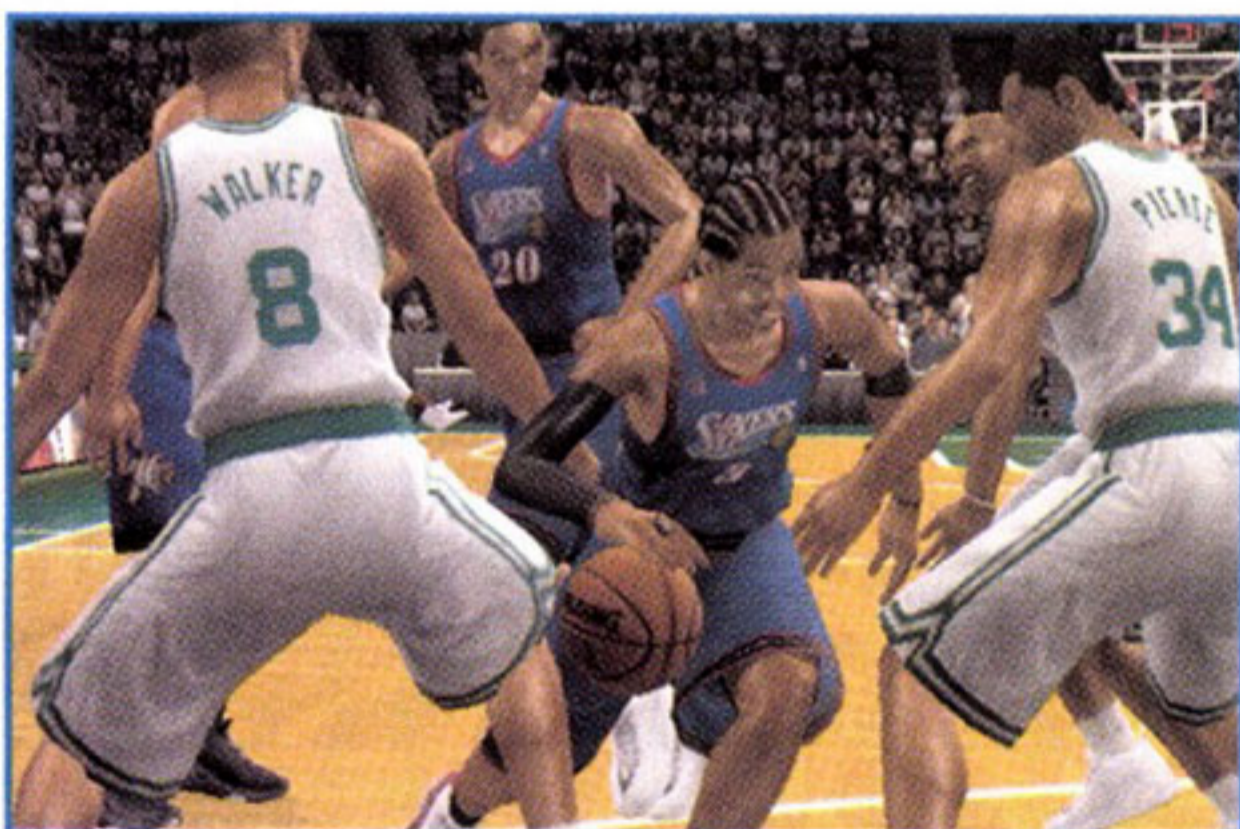
What still needs work? The graphics are nice but still a bit PS2-ish, there is no Xbox Live support, and we're still not sure how the computer AI will handle the new moves.

Only on Xbox: Sadly, this game doesn't take advantage of the Xbox much. It's a bit crisper than the PS2 version.

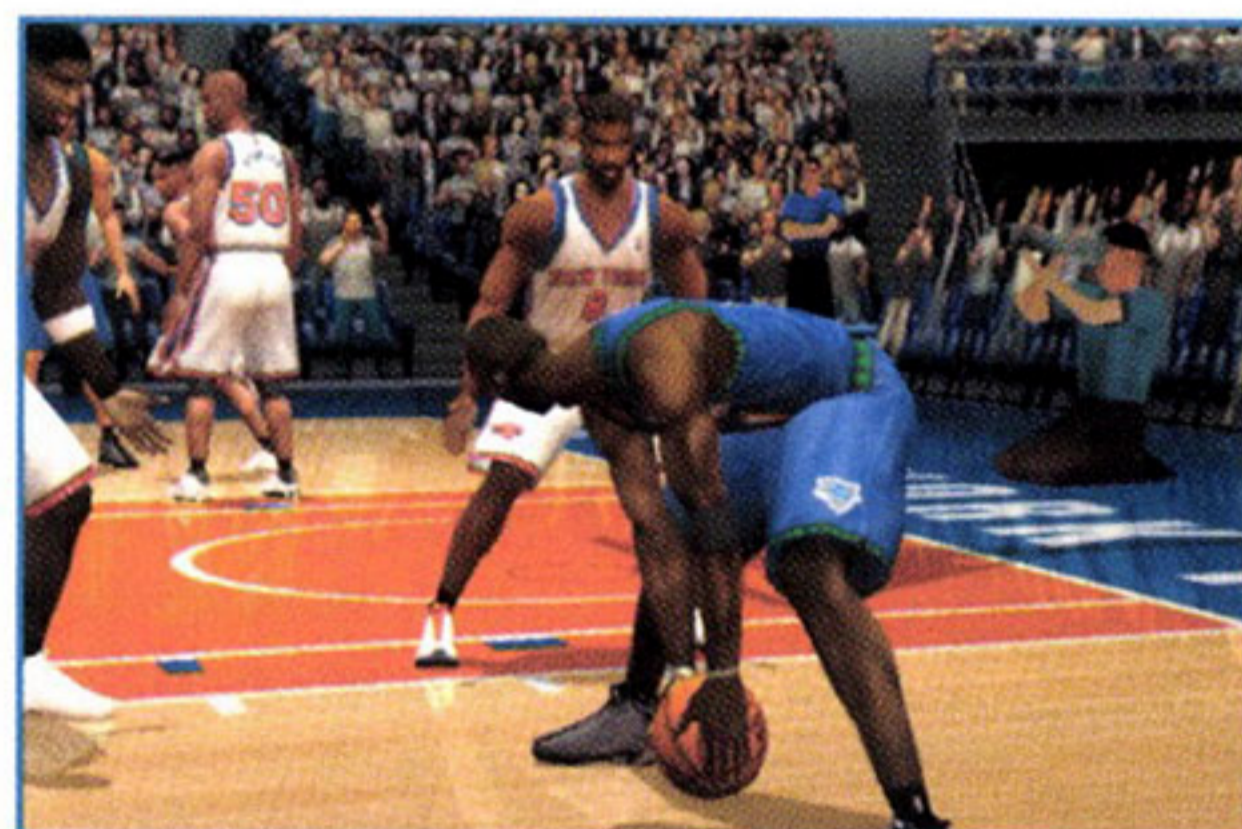
Prediction: A big year gets them into the finals with *NBA 2K3*, we'll see if *Live* can win it at the buzzer next issue.



■ Microsoft looks to improve on its solid rookie effort.



■ Just check out the amazing detail on the players and ball... wow!



■ The new control scheme really delivers the triple threat to the gamer.

GameWatch Kickin' it old school



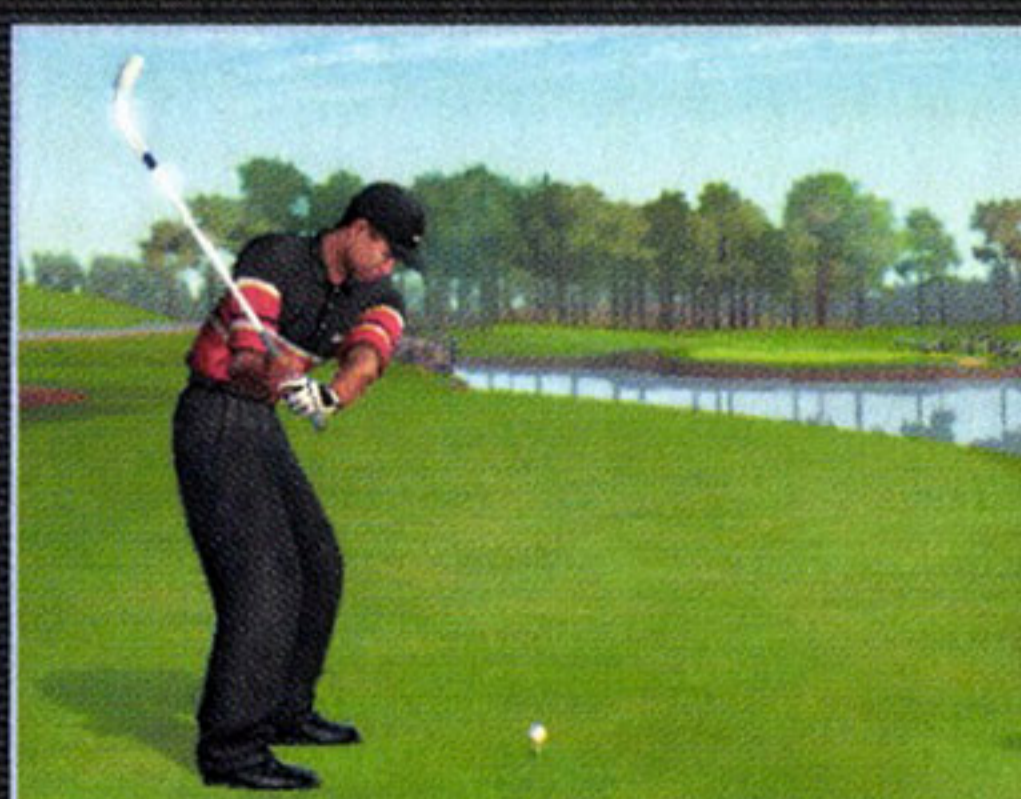
State of Emergency

Publisher: Rockstar

Projected release: Fall 2002

The good stuff: Not only was this violent old-school beat-'em-up massively ambitious when first proposed, it featured unique crowd-physics and technology, and Rockstar has an amazing chance to improve and enhance this for play on the Xbox.

The scary stuff: It was pretty poo on the PS2.



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003

Publisher: Electronic Arts

The good stuff: It's all good. I'm actually really angry that I have to write this little piece because it is cutting into my time playing the game. It's like crack. I must improve my stats, unlock new courses, and get a Nike contract.

The scary stuff: Doesn't take advantage of the Xbox hardware... but it's so fun I don't care.

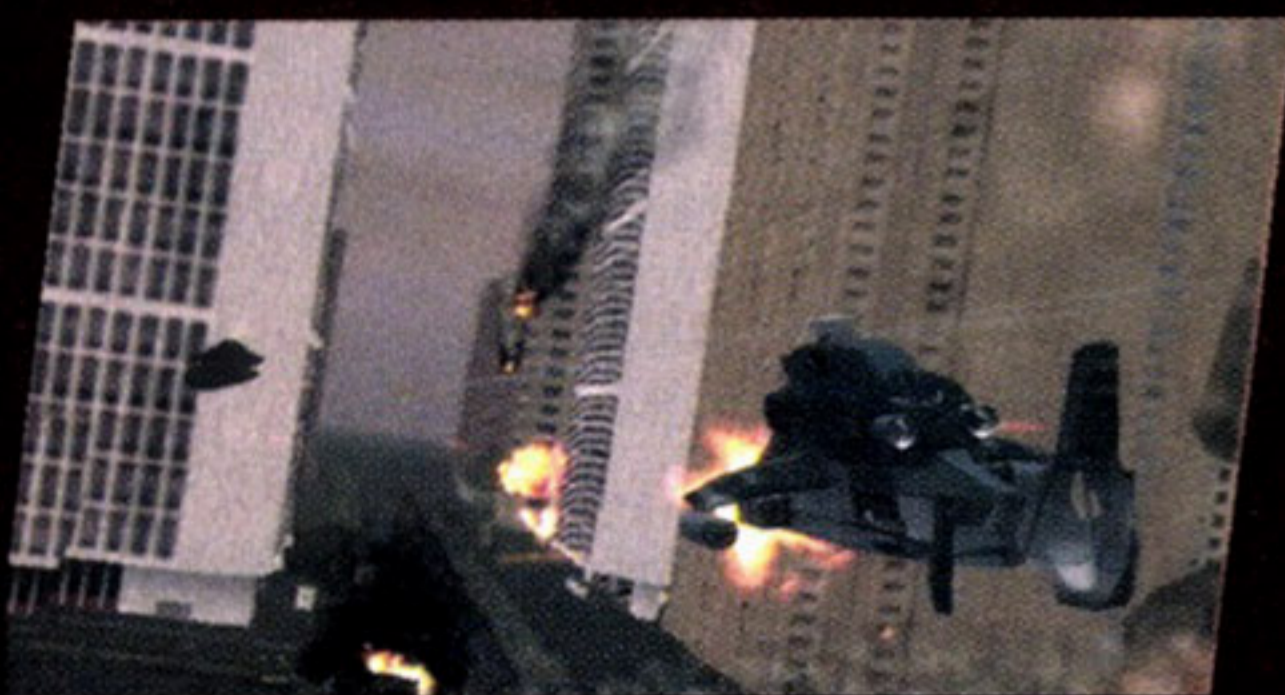


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What to do in OCTOBER

If you suffer from gamephobia, October will be one scary month. With nearly 30 Xbox games releasing, it's your worst nightmare come true. If you have \$1500 you can buy every game coming out – if not, then you'll want to read our reviews and get only the best.

OCTOBER CALENDAR

1

10/1: BLOODRAYNE Vampires and Nazis. Perfecto.

10/1: PHANTOM CRASH See review, page 144.

10/1: FUEL It's a gas... sorry.

10/1: NAMCO MUSEUM – A collection of classics.

10/1: STAKE Futuristic combat from Metro 3D.

5

10/2: PAC-MAN WORLD 2 – Gobble ghosts in 3D.

10/3: V THUNDER RACING WHEEL – Another racing wheel option for Xbox.

10/3: TOTAL IMMERSION RACING – Realistic racing sim with real tracks and licensed cars.

10/3: LYNX WIRELESS CONTROLLER Because nine-foot cords are handy but kinda ugly.

10

10/4: MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER – Shiny and bumpy first-person shooter. No relation to Merv.

10/8: BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER Impressive time-warping platformer. More on page 101.

10/11: NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY Clean your closet.

15

10/12: BORE-TASTIC Tipper and Al Gore co-publish a couple of books. Let's hope their collaboration isn't as deadly dull as the way they kiss on-stage.

10/15: NICKELODEON PARTY BLAST – A party game involving green goo.

10/15: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2 – Old-school wrestlers work it out on the Xbox.

10/15: NBA INSIDE DRIVE – See page 28.

20

10/15: TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARDING A beautiful snowboarder that falls somewhere between *Amped* and *SSX Tricky* in terms of pace.

10/22: NBA 2K3 – See page 28.

10/22: WHACKED! Party game for Xbox Live.

10/22: TOEJAM & EARL III – See page 103.

25

10/22: HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3 – See page 100.

10/26: FATAL FRAME See preview, page 86.

10/29: UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP See page 100.

31

10/23: X-MEN NEXT DIMENSION Non-Capcom *X-Men* fighting game, in full 3D.

10/27: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS ENDS – An hour of your life is gone forever.

10/29: MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE Storm the beaches on Xbox.

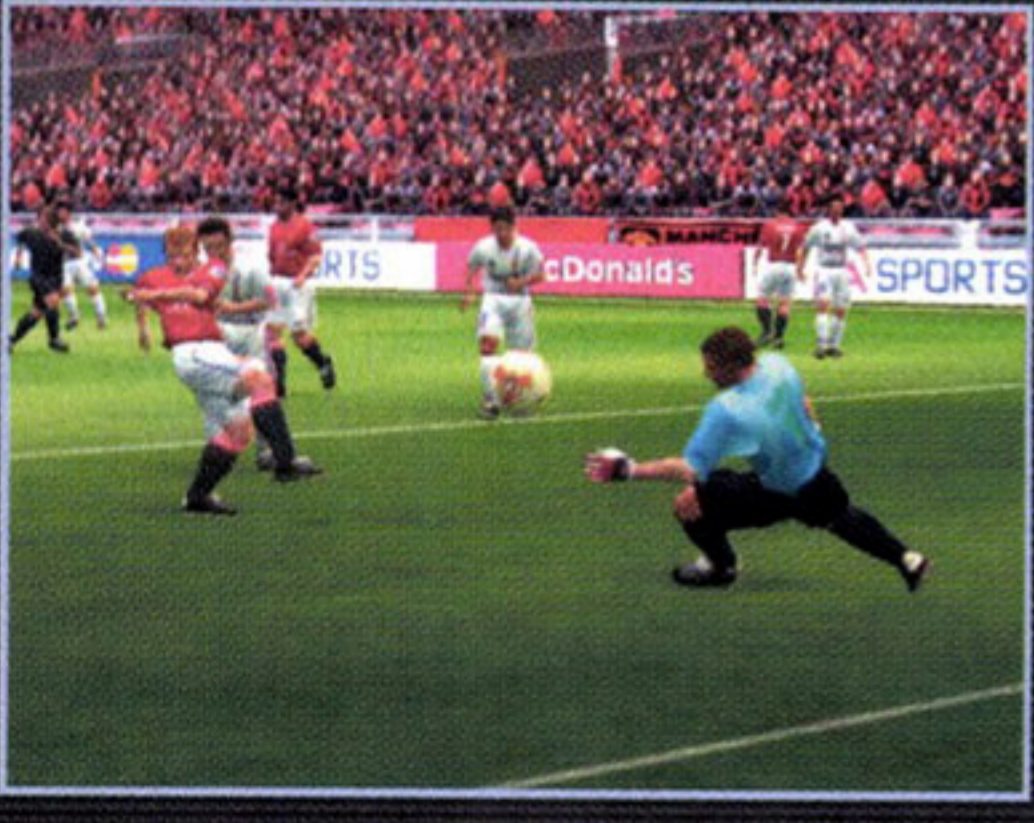
10/29: TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 – New story elements, same addictive gameplay.

10/29: NBA LIVE 2003 See page 28.

10/29: FIFA 2003 The best soccer game is back. See below.

10/31: HALLOWEEN – Dress up like a man-eating belly-button.

GameWatch Smartly defending the World Cup



FIFA 2003
Due: Fall 2002
What's good about it: Tons of modes, almost every National team you can think of, and most of the big league teams from every major league! Add to that the patented *FIFA* magic and you might have the definitive Xbox soccer game.
What's scary: The last *FIFA*, the World Cup edition, was less than stellar, but this one seems to have addressed all the probs.

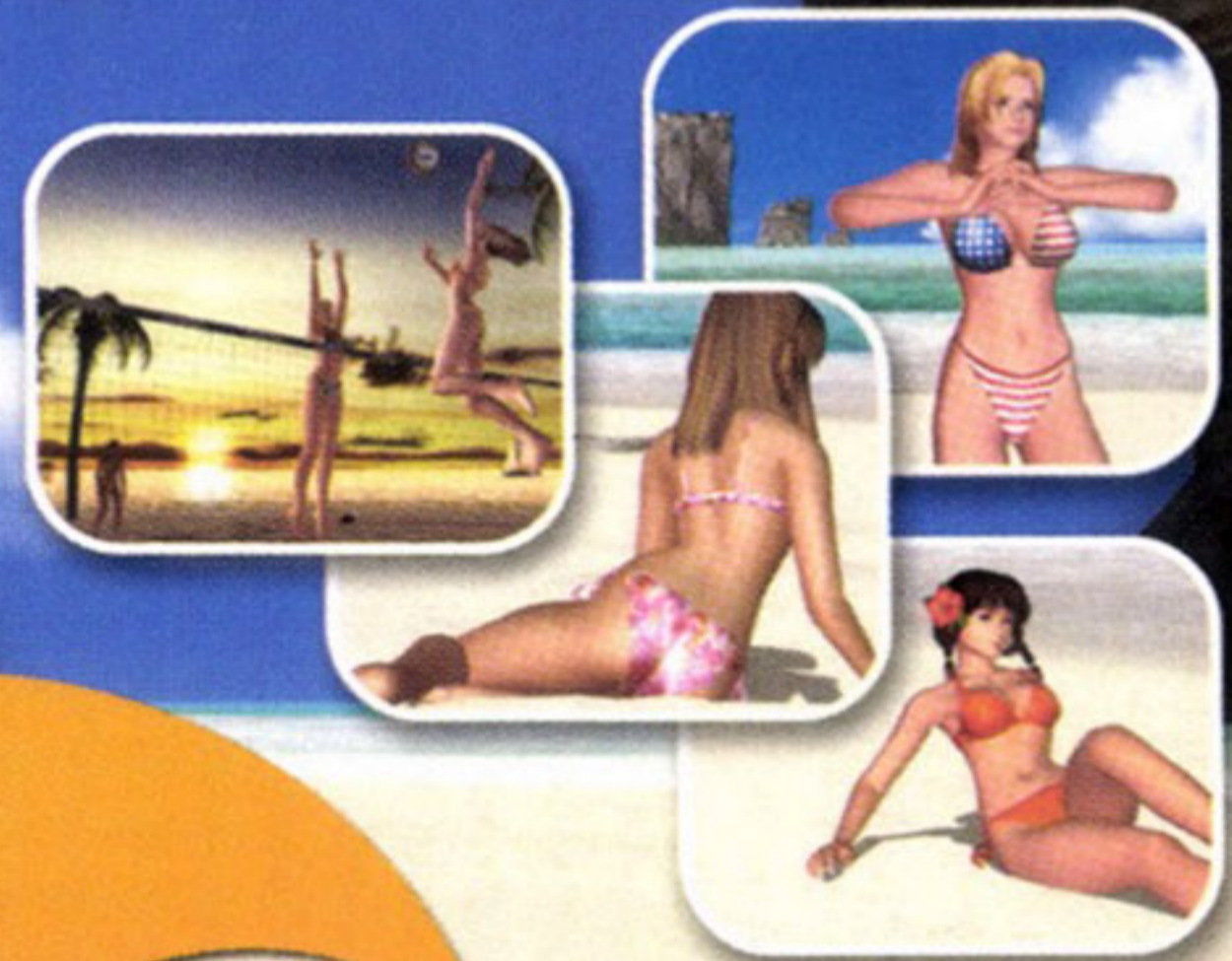
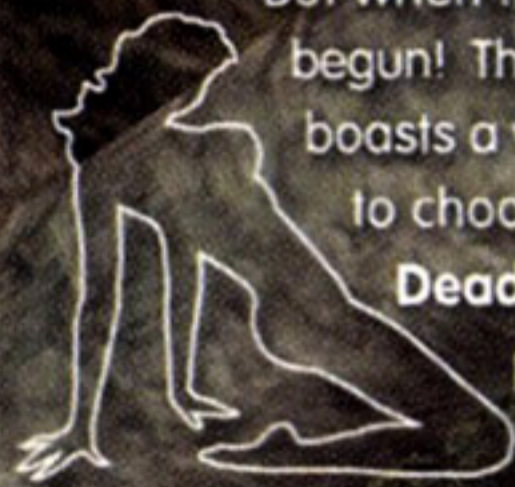


Defender
Due: Q4 2002
What's good about it: You have to hold some fondness in your heart for the game that literally invented the Smart Bomb... and this crazy-looking 3D update for the 21st century (the century the game was originally set in) looks pretty darned smart.
What's scary: 3D updates of 2D classics have a nasty habit of going horribly, horribly wrong.

■ **FUEL, FOOLED?:** Hey, although it's "officially" still coming out in October, rumor has it that *Fuel* may be delayed to introduce a new, fancier aspect. Online, anyone?

Chicks really dig the trees...

and you'll love the scenery too because the babes from the million-selling fighting game, **Dead or Alive®3** are back! This time, they're setting aside their fighting gear for some **fun-in-the-sun** swimwear and turning up the heat in **Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball™**. This is no ordinary volleyball game - this is volleyball to the extreme with **great gameplay** and **mind-blowing realism**. You'll be able to feel the sand between your toes and the gentle ocean breeze as you compete in the **most outrageous beach volleyball** game yet! Points earned on the court allow you to customize your babe off of it, with **over 100 different swimsuits** and **accessories** to choose from. But when the day is done, the fun has just begun! This first ever **"Sports Fantasy Simulation"** boasts a variety of different **nightlife** activities to choose from. Whatever your pleasure, **Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball** promises **extreme action** and a **whole lotta satisfaction!**



Oh baby, I'm waiting...to a store near you this holiday season.



DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL







Hard Attack

The success of the Xbox – and perhaps more importantly, its stunning audio/video capabilities – is making the big consumer electronics manufacturers sit up and take notice. Here's a round-up of some of the amazing new home-theater hardware lined up specifically for your favorite console.

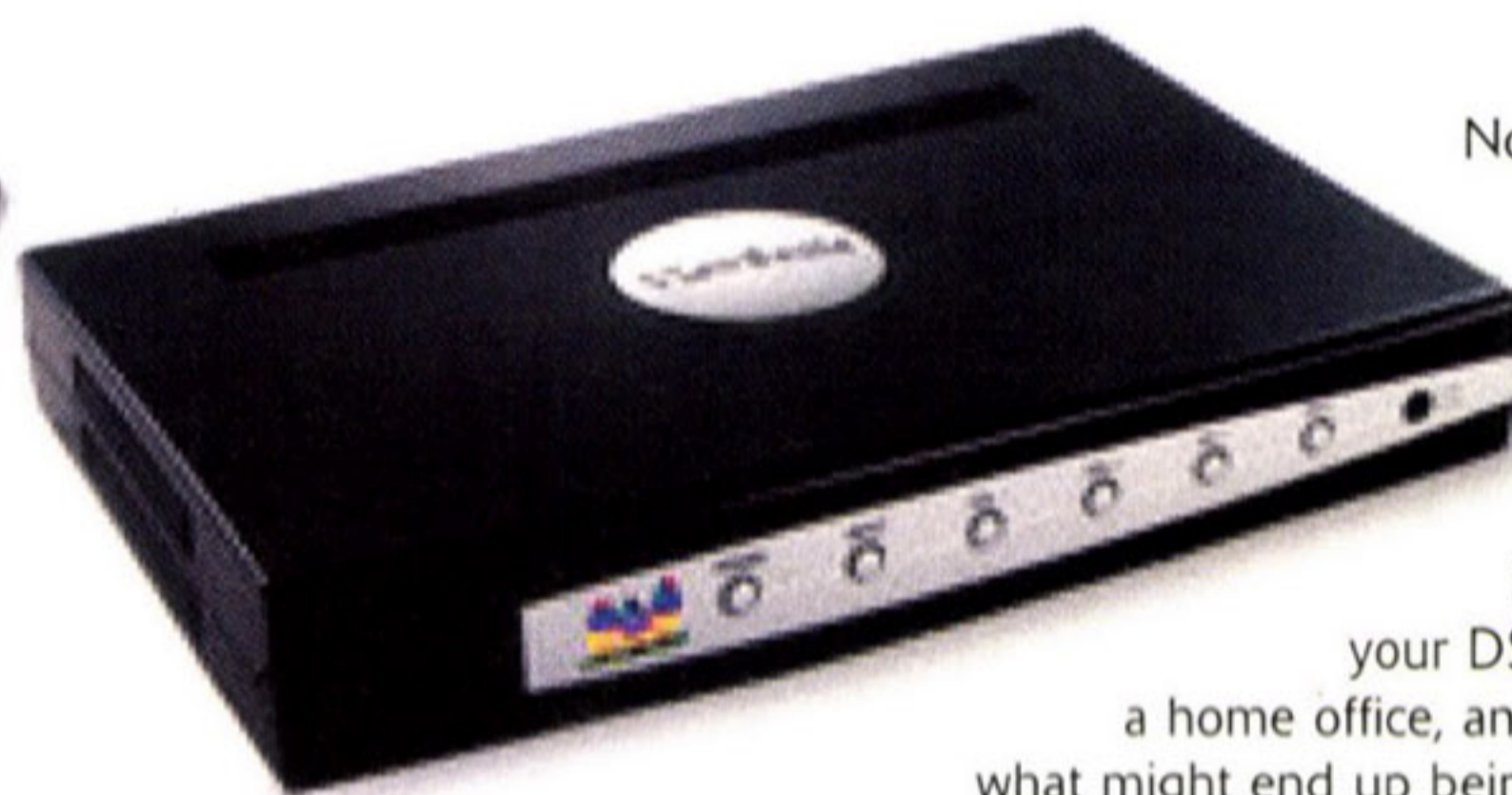
Room for a Viewsonic?

Actually, as cool as the Viewsonic Nextvision 5 is, it's really just a taste of what's to come; namely, the Viewsonic NextVision 6. There are tons of these boxes available from various manufacturers: video processors that turn normal analog video signals into VGA-compatible signals, so you can play games, watch DVDs, or watch TV on your computer monitor. This, frankly, is the first one to ever do it well. Normally, such images are what we'd describe as soft and milky. The NextVision 5's are as sharp as a tack, with inputs for composite RF (it has a built-in TV tuner) and S-Video signals, as well as throughputs for stereo sound.

Naturally, S-Video makes the Xbox look its best, and on a normal 17-inch display, it looks wonderful... as good as, if not better, than most real TV sets. On a bigger monitor, performance decreases almost imperceptibly.

The system allows you to keep your PC and Xbox connected simultaneously and pass-through for sound and other video sources make it almost epically flexible and intuitive. In fact, once your cables are attached, it's unlikely you'll ever need to fiddle with it.

A slim-line remote control and a vertical-stand plinth (like the one for PS2) both add to the NextVision 5 system's overall elegance, as does a cool, but mostly useless, digital freeze-frame facility. A front-mounted headphone socket adds something that both VGA monitors and Xbox systems badly need. And unlike many other similar devices, the NextVision 5 has a row of useful



Now, combine that resolution with the ability to keep your Xbox near your DSL modem in

a home office, and you have what might end up being the ultimate Xbox Live accessory. In the meantime, the NextVision 5 is a highly desirable piece of kit in its own right.

buttons on the unit itself, which means losing the remote isn't quite as disastrous. It's almost perfect at what it does.

Which brings us back to the upcoming NextVision 6. The next iteration of this device, hopefully available this year, will support component video and HD resolutions, which means you can use your Xbox in 480p modes (and above) on a crisp VGA monitor.

VIEWSONIC NEXTVISION 5
WWW.VIEWSONIC.COM
\$199

You'll like this if: You prefer to keep your Xbox near your PC, or if you have a killer PC monitor and a 1957 Motorola Spark-o-vision TV.

Are you ready for Vport?

There are precisely two things wrong with RCA's 32-inch Xbox Ready TV set (known by the glamorous alias F32650), and both are pretty small beans when all is said and done. But

first let's deal with the much bigger list of things that this TV absolutely does right.

This is a fine 32-inch set, but not flat screen, and at a meaty \$650 for

the 32-inch version you're definitely paying at the top of the scale for a conventional TV set. That said, other conventional TV sets don't come with Vport, RCA's component-video-capable video connection port, not coincidentally identical to the video port on the rear of your Xbox.

Through the Vport, the Xbox can supply the TV with a crisp, component video signal, and thanks to an optical "dongle" attached midway along the cable, you can also directly connect it to a digital audio processor. Regular vanilla stereo is also processed through the V-Port, giving Xbox owners something usefully equivalent to the popular European SCART cable, a multi-purpose connection system popular with our garlic-munching cousins. The Vport also functions as a second Component video input, since a YprPb-Vport cable is available, allowing you to attach other devices directly to Vport.

A hefty feature-set adds to the attraction, including a three-line digital comb filter (makes games look especially clear), Picture in Picture, Guide Plus+ Gold (an interactive channel guide service), and a hugely

comprehensive on-screen guide. The stereo speakers have real gravity and don't seem to suffer from the excess vibration found in many sets of this size.

Sleek, silvery gray, and brilliantly equipped, the TV is also available in 27- and 36-inch versions. Naturally, they come with 27- and 36-inch price tags to match. But back to our original caveats; the TV does not come with a Vport cable (you have to order that separately) and although it supports component video for vastly improved clarity and color – it will NOT support the Xbox system's enhanced resolutions. All in all though, it's a remarkable addition to any Xbox gamer's set-up, and which other TV proclaims the legend "Xbox Ready" on the front?

32-INCH XBOX READY TV SET (F32650)
WWW.RCA.COM
\$650

You'll like this if: You are looking for a smarter way to hook up your gaming systems, or if you just can't get enough of the Xbox logo.



■ Big, fully featured, and eminently capable TV fun.

All the world's a videostage

It never rains, but it pours. By the time you read this, Bose will have made available the Freestyle speaker system, another high-end surround system with videogames and Xbox firmly in mind. Bose's reputation is almost legendary, of course, and this is its first videogame-specific application



(although you can attach just about any other component to it just fine).

It consists of simply two speakers and the Bose "Acoustimass" module (a hefty subwoofer/decoder, to you and me) and a small but useful interface module that allows you to attach two other components. Now here's the weird part: Although the system decodes digital 5:1 signals, it uses Bose's proprietary Videostage5 decoding to produce surround effects from just two speakers. Does it work? In short, yes.

The upside is that the warmth, detail, and clarity of sound image are stupendous. The downside is that you aren't physically "surrounded" by the audio. It's an intellectual decision you'll have to make on your own, but we suggest hitting a Bose dealer for a demonstration, since the proof of this pudding is in the listening.

FREESTYLE SPEAKER SYSTEM
WWW.BOSE.COM
\$499

We'll have a full review of this startlingly smart product next issue.

■ **Black, sexy, and totally Acoustimasstic.**

ONLY IN JAPAN!

Phones are where the heart is

If you're in Japan right now – let's say Tokyo, just for good measure – you can walk down to Akihabara and pick up what might be the ultimate Xbox audio accessory, the Pioneer SE-XB1. If you live in North America, you'd better talk to Pioneer and get them to ship this thing over here, because it totally rules.

If it has a fault, it's probably the price. It currently retails for about \$1000 in Japan, which puts it at the high end of the audio spectrum, but luckily it has performance to back it up.

A small-ish decoder/transmitter does most of the hard work, turning Dolby Digital, Pro Logic, or DTS signals into a wireless digital stream that is magically transmitted to the wireless headphones using a miraculous array of multiple infra-red transmitters. This, of course, means you have to be in visual range of the transmitter, but the wide-ranging receivers and large bank of transmitters were pretty hard to foil.

Further magic is performed by the special headphones, which can relay a completely convincing digital surround effect, with sharp high-frequency response, and perfectly acceptable and occasionally impressive bass. *Halo* is the best test for this kind of thing, if only for its familiarity, and the headphones track the surround audio flawlessly. If someone's yelling orders from behind you, you'll hear them behind you. The effect is much more convincing than we've heard on similar systems. In fact, it does a better job of

separating dialogue, music, and effects than this writer's speakered, wired, Dolby 5.1 Boston Acoustics system.

The insane sound quality of these headphones are just another incentive to use your Xbox as a music center as well.

It doesn't hurt that the system is custom-designed to match your Xbox system (it is available in silver as the TRE-D1000) with matching green LEDs and a gorgeous matte and glossy black finish. And while they may look huge, the phones are remarkably comfortable and light.

The headphones use two rechargeable AAA batteries, and charge while resting on the receiver/decoder, which is a nice touch. You can also adjust the base unit so it can be mounted horizontally or vertically. The only complaints, in fact, are the lack of a subwoofer OUT and the lack of availability in the US.

Pioneer is looking at the viability of a US launch, however, and if you think this is the system for you, email them at info@pioneerelectronics.com and mention your interest in the Pioneer SE-XB1 headphones and decoder.

PIONEER SE-XB1
WWW.PIONEER.CO.JP
NOT AVAILABLE...YET

You'll like this if: You love ridiculously crisp audio pumped straight into your cerebral cortex.



■ **Slicker than a heavily buttered ferret being seduced by Bill Clinton in a soap factory, the Pioneer SE-XB1 might be the ultimate Xbox audio accessory.**



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PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



Comic Mischief



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A bit of the old this and that

If it's important to the Xbox, it's important to us

Doom III in 2003!

The news: At QuakeCon 2002 (although we hinted at it in a previous issue), John Carmack, *Doom's* daddy, confirmed that the standard-setting shooter is, in fact, definitely headed for Xbox. The graphic-intensive wündergame will be produced shortly after the PC version is complete, so don't start holding your breath *too* hard, at least not yet.

Why it's important: The two best-looking shooters of all time, *Halo 2* and *Doom III*, are both going to be on Xbox before any other console. It couldn't be more important if it was wearing a tuxedo and riding in the Popemobile.

The Official Xbox Magazine take:

To be honest, the Xbox is the only console capable of reproducing the lighting, pixel-shader, and bump-mapping effects Carmack is including in his long-awaited sequel, so we shouldn't be all that surprised. It was also nice to hear Carmack say he expects the game to look just as good, if not better on the Xbox. Wee hee.

■ Atmospheric lighting effects should look even better on Xbox!



It's A-Live

The news: Microsoft finally announced the release date for Xbox Live. It will go live on November 15th 2002, exactly one year after the console launch. Microsoft also announced that seven titles will be ready for launch. They include: *NFL Fever 2003*, *Whacked!*, *MechAssault*, *NFL 2K3*, *NBA 2K3*, *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon*, and *Unreal Championship*.

Why it's important: Many people wondered if Live was really going to be ready this year. It is, and judging from our early beta testing, it's ready for primetime.

The Official Xbox Magazine take: Launch is just the tip of the iceberg for Xbox Live with some solid games ready for broadband action. However, this is really going to kick off when games like *Halo 2*, and *Project Gotham Racing 2* change the way you think about online games. Weekly updates? It's coming.



DVD – for free!

The news: If you purchase an Xbox console between now and November 2nd (so hurry), you'll receive a DVD Playback kit (already one of the most popular add-on peripherals for the system) absolutely free (via an easy \$30 mail-in rebate coupon). PS2 owners, meanwhile, still have to cough up around \$20 for the Sony remote.

Why it's important: Let's see, shall we? Can you use your PlayStation2 DVD remote while three other controllers are safely plugged in? Not likely, since the PS2 only *has* two controller ports. Can you zoom in on any section of a freeze-frame up to TEN times (kinda like *Blade Runner*, huh?). Nope, you can't. PS2 owners did have one DVD advantage over us, though – they could play DVDs for free, seconds after unpacking their system. Well, relax. Same now goes for new Xbox owners too.

The Official Xbox Magazine take: Microsoft finally realizes that DVD playback *is* important, as proven by thousands of unhappy GameCube players.



■ The Xbox DVD sensor will work in any port.

Steel Battalion sequel is LIVE!



The news: Capcom has revealed that a sequel to *Steel Battalion*, the giant mech shooter with the impossibly huge controller, is not only underway, but will be Xbox Live compatible. This will allow you to run amok in a world filled with real opponents, each with their finger hovering above the eject switch.

Why it's important: It's Japanese, it has charisma, and now it will have a vital online component. This, in some ways, is the ultimate Mech shooter, and the use of the controller should make it even more attractive to *Gundam* and *Robotech* sausages.

The Official Xbox Magazine take: Capcom realizes this is a niche title, and is looking to expand its appeal for a bigger, better sequel.

Unchained malady

The news: Jealous observers of the Nintendo Wireless Wavebird controller have been jonesing for a similar Xbox device since launch. The good news is that it's coming, from third-party joystick maven Logitech.

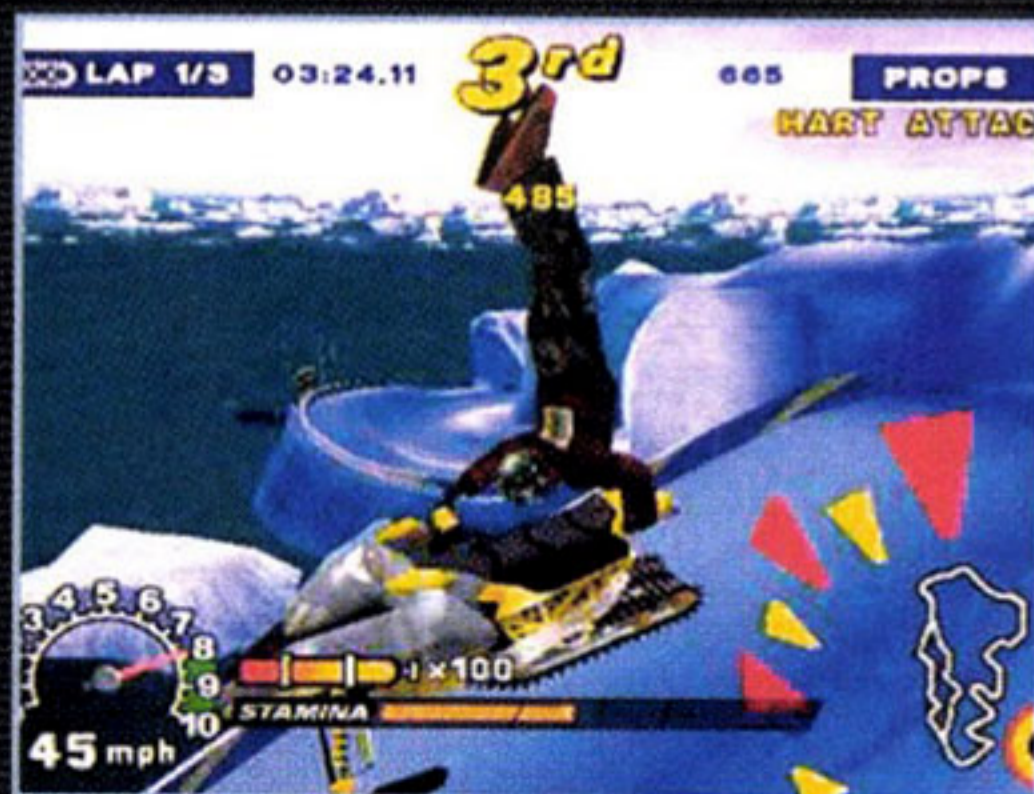
Why it's important: Given that Xbox systems are often found at the heart of high-end home-theater setups, a wireless controller is an ideal solution for an already cluttered setup.

The Official Xbox Magazine take: Four AAA batteries ensure more than 50 hours of uninterrupted 2.4Ghz goodness, but at \$69.95... sheesh!



■ Look Ma, no wires.

GameWatch Fire and ice



Whiteout

Projected release: Fall 2002

The good stuff: Stunt-based snowmobile racing of the type found in the astoundingly good PS2 game *Sled Storm*. Clearly more stimulation than simulation, with slick, colorful graphics.

The scary stuff: Konami has been mysteriously quiet about his one, which is usually a worrying sign.



Fireblade

Projected release: Fall 2002

The good stuff: Heavily armed helicopter combat with laser-guided missiles and tons of explosive action through 18 fun-filled missions. These include the chance to get a railgun add-on that lets you zoom in sniper-style.

The scary stuff: No word yet on any multiplayer modes of any kind, and isn't it weird that there isn't already a game called 'Fireblade'?

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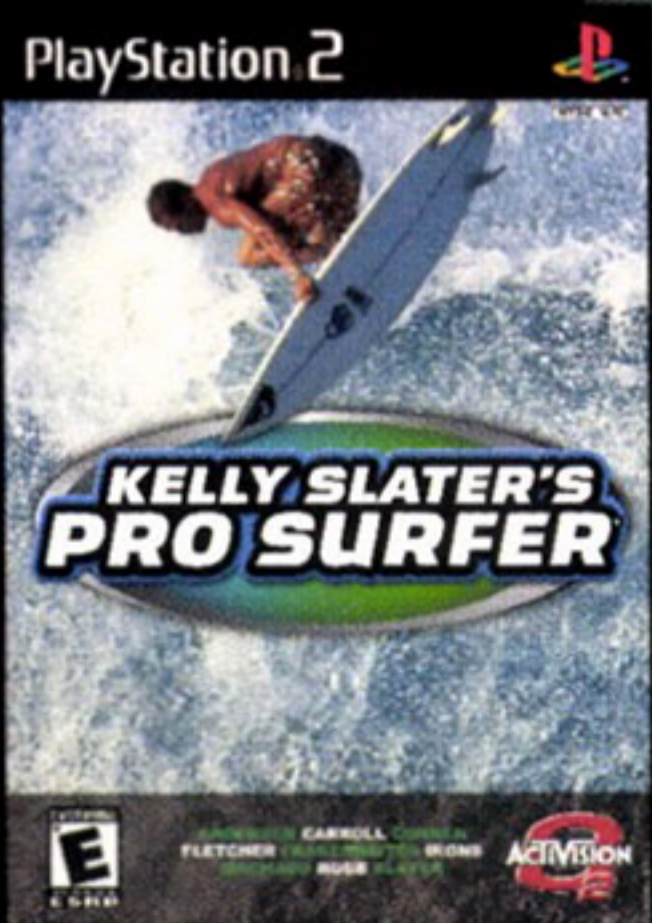


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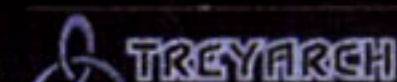
Surf on waves populated with other surfers.



PlayStation®2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



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The Rumor Mole

Back from the dead, with all-new Xbox secrets

The rumors of my death were greatly exaggerated. Last month, my column didn't appear. I wrote one... but it didn't make the magazine. Why? Well, let's just say I exposed some pretty sensitive topics and some pretty powerful people made certain my Pulitzer-Prize-winning column was shelved. I'm not angry, but I'm not scared either. Another batch of rumors I risked my life to uncover... just for you.

The story of Halo 2

When Microsoft wowed the crowd in New York with a brief trailer of **HALO 2**, the one question on everyone's mind was "what's the story for this one." A great testimonial to the story in **HALO** is that anyone even cared. Well, you likely care as well, which is why my spies were sent in to uncover what happens in **HALO 2**. The Covenant are still around, there are still ring worlds, there are at least two entirely new races, and Guilty Spark is just as mysterious and omnipresent as ever. I also hear that there is not one, nor two, but rather three shocking plot twists planned for the game, and the guy I was talking to said, "these twists will make the Flood twist look like nothing... it's that good." Also expect some evil humans to be behind some of this, and it might surprise you which humans are to blame. All right, I've said too much.

BioWarez

Microsoft announced a partnership with RPG developer extraordinaire BioWare on a "secret" new game. Well, what's secret to the rest of the world is common knowledge to the Mole. I was chatting with a couple of BioWare guys who talked about this new game and how it is really a departure for them. Apparently it is a new genre the company has wanted to do for some time. It isn't an RPG, but it certainly uses much of the company's RPG expertise to deliver a truly unique game experience. I could tell you more, but I have to save *something* for next issue.



■ BioWare is quickly becoming an Xbox star.

Overheard

"Nintendo would make a great first-party Microsoft developer, wouldn't they?" – High-ranking Microsoft employee
 "FINAL FANTASY XI would work so much better on Xbox, it's ridiculous." – Sony-fanboy journalist

XBOX INSIDER



HOT NEWS, STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE

Kenn Lobb is the director of content planning for the Xbox and our main man deep inside the big M.

● MUST SEE HDTV

Hello once again. This month, I thought I would delve into the pleasures of HDTV. As many of you likely know, most of the games on the Xbox support 480p progressive scan output. Not sure how many of you have ever seen a game running in progressive scan, but there is a definite difference. There are even some games coming beyond 480p; there are a few games released and coming soon which support 720p (thanks to Activision), and Ubi's **DRAGON'S LAIR**, the world's first 1080i game. When you get to these resolutions, there is a huge difference. Is that difference worth thousands of dollars? For those of us that want our gaming to be as close to perfection as possible – the answer is a resounding yes.

Over the last year, I've been looking into moving up my game room to the glory that is HDTV. I've been playing on a 27" XBR with S-video, which looked great, but in comparison to what I was seeing at work, this TV was getting somewhat dated. After spending time talking to friends and co-workers I stumbled onto a great find – the new Samsung DLP projection TV. DLP is quite an interesting technology, with over a million tiny mirrors (I mean seriously small) to reflect light through a spinning color wheel... okay, a little deep for this article, look it up; that's what the Internet is for! Anyway, this TV is native 720p and makes **STREET HOOPS** and **HAWK 4** (both 720p) look REALLY good, not to mention the other beautiful Xbox games in my collection. The Xbox can put out some really impressive visuals, and it's great to finally enjoy it in its full 16:9, 50" glory!!

● LIVE BETA

Great timing for the new TV, I just received my Xbox Live Beta! I have dabbled with this at

work several times, but there is nothing like taking it home and really experiencing what many will be doing on November 15. Set-up was a breeze, and before I knew it, I was playing some serious **NFL FEVER 2003**. I'm not really a sports-game fan, at least not single player. However, I was instantly hooked to playing online. My wife had to remind me a few times that screaming while playing in a room alone was a little odd, especially with the game room window open at 11:30 at night. I tried to temper my enthusiasm, but with each score/turnover/big play I'd be enjoying vocal volumes once again.

As mentioned, sports are fun, but for me, it's going to be all about the blasting! I've played a bit of LAN **UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP** at work, and I am DYING to play some of this on Xbox Live. Great control, excellent graphics, cool weapons, and a bunch of modes mean that I'll be able to spend some serious time accumulating victories come launch. I can't even imagine how great this is going to be by the time we're all enjoying **HALO 2** next year. Did you see it??? Check out the story on page 24.

However, the game I want to play on Live more than any other this year is **MECHASSAULT**. The speed and power of the Mechs in this game is beyond anything I have experienced before in any game. Sprinting through the hills in a 35-ton Cougar blowing away anything that moves is seriously cool in one player. Doing it with a team, discussing strategy and the latest kill is simply beyond comprehension. You really have to do it in order to understand. Keep an eye out for this one; you'll know what I mean once you get your hands on that much firepower!!

See you next month. For now, I'm back to some widescreen Xbox Live bliss.

Live from Japan



■ Koji Aizawa is the Editor in Chief of Japan's official Xbox magazine and generally a very decent guy.



There are some kinds of games that are selling very well only in Japan. For example, one type is made from popular TV animation, like **GUNDAM WARS** from Bandai or **SUPER ROBOT WARS** from Banpresto. The other we call Gal-Gei (short for Girls' Game) type of appearing the comic touched teenage heroines, as **SAKURA WARS** from Sega or **TOKIMEKI MEMORIAL** from Konami. The above titles have sold 300,000 copies at least; sometimes they become million-sellers. And RPGs from Japan are not selling well in the West except for **FINAL FANTASY** and few Square titles. But

in Japan, they are really popular. The **DRAGON QUEST (DRAGON WARRIOR)** series from Enix has sold around 3,000,000 copies each time.

Why? I guess that Japanese gamers request for games not only interaction; they need dramatic story and attractive characters for it. Maybe the reason is Japan is a country with a special comics and animation culture. In Japan, there are 20 weekly comic magazines and 100 monthly comic magazines. The total copies of comic books and magazines runs to one hundred million every month. Yes, it's crazy. So I believe that Xbox has to get such the titles if it wants to enjoy big success in Japan. However, there are only few titles, like **SHIKIGAMI NO SHIRO** from Mipic or **BISTRO CUPID** from Success, that

are available because Japanese game companies consider Western market when they make Xbox titles. Japanese comic culture is really special situation, but there are a lot of wonderful games in it. The entire Japanese game industry didn't believe that **POKEMON** would succeed in the West. It certainly did, though.

Headquarters of Xbox has to permit for Xbox Japan to make domestic titles with great budgets, I think. I love **HALO**, I love **GOTHAM**. But I daresay as the representative of Japanese gamer, the keywords for conquering Japan are: RPGs and comics!!

Koji Aizawa
Famitsu Xbox



Want to know how realistic NFL Fever '03 is? Take a number.

- 1 - Dramatic camera angles take you all over the field
- 2 - Go from clipboard holder to MVP in Career Mode
- 3 - Someone should've used the bump-n-run
- 4 - Use Hot Routes to exploit the defense
- 5 - Player physiques from L to XXXXXL
- 6 - Tougher AI anticipates your moves
- 7 - Where you sweat — they sweat
- 8 - Helmets that reflect the playing environment
- 9 - Unique player faces
- 10 - NFL newbies, the Houston Texans
- 11 - Shirtless guy with a painted face being loud
- 12 - Take your game into the ultimate broadband arena by playing online with **Xbox Live**
- 13 - Create killer plays and use them to shock the nation on **Xbox Live**
- 14 - **Xbox Live** Opti-Match links up players of equal rank
- 15 - Trash-talk faceless foes with an **Xbox Live** communicator
- 16 - Download updated player rosters on **Xbox Live**



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THE XBOX: YEAR ONE

A look back at the very best of Year One And bold predictions for what's to come in Year Two



It's hard to believe that it's already been a year since the Xbox stormed into our lives. (We get a little teary-eyed just thinking about it,

sniffle.) In that short time, the big green machine torched the expectations of industry critics and found its way into the hearts and homes (sniffle, sniffle) of more than four million gamers

worldwide. And things are just getting warmed up.

Because we're an emotional sort of magazine, we like to look back and reminisce about the year gone by, and because we've

got a couple dozen green statuettes in our back room, we like to give out awards. Thankfully, we can do both. Without further ado, the very first REAL Xbox awards. It's official!



△ Did you ever imagine football games could look so real?

Visual Concepts has a singular purpose that guides its football program – beat the BAM out of *Madden*. And in terms of game quality and innovation, *NFL 2K3* sacked its target thanks to a revamped franchise mode, vastly improved graphics, unbeatable commentary, online play, and the best presentation in the business.

HONORABLE MENTION:

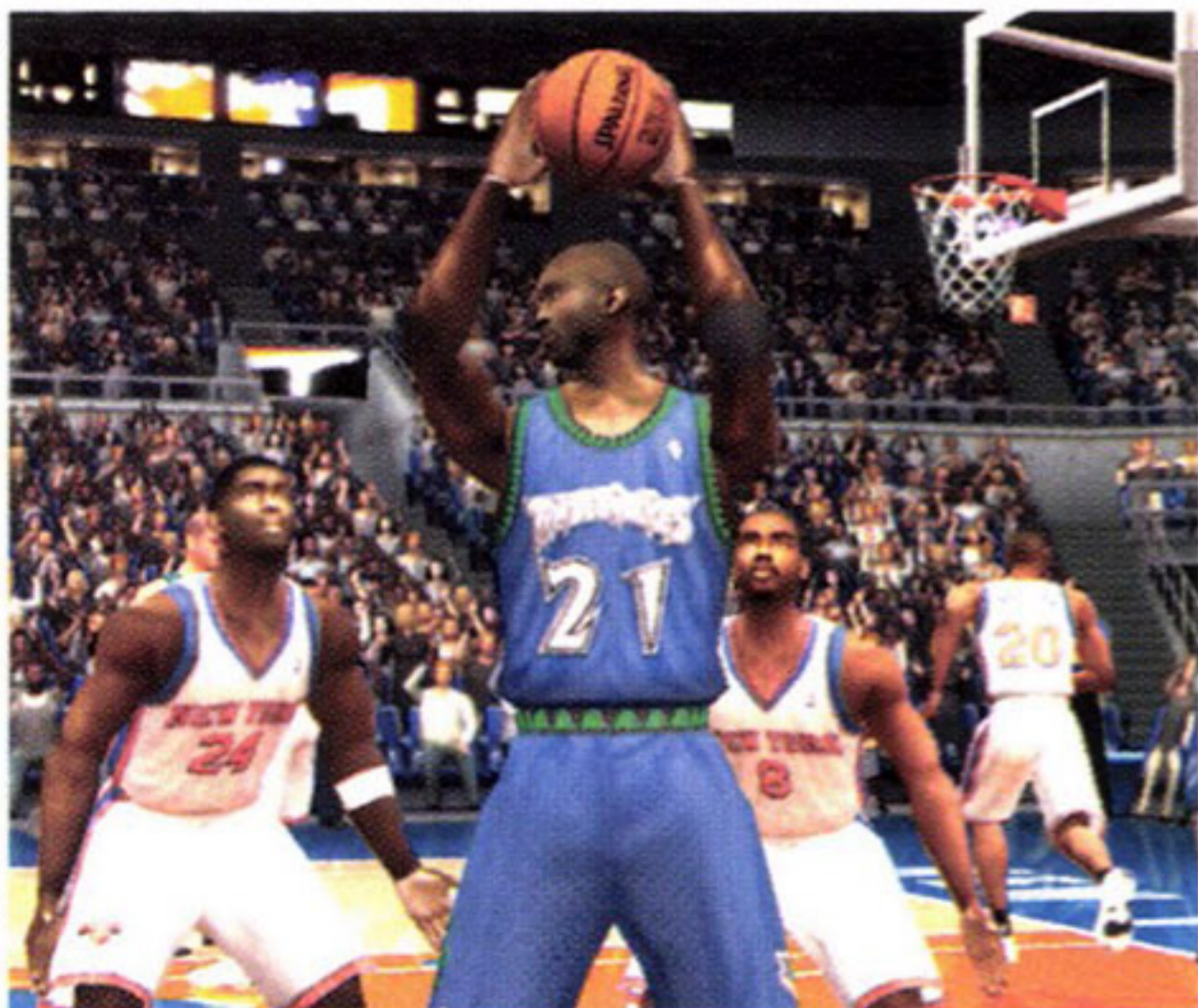
NFL Fever 2002

Microsoft Sports showed that it was a rookie that could play with the big boys. It also gave the first real indication that the Xbox would become the best sports console on the planet today.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

NBA Live 2003

After years of quasi-upgrades, an innovative new control scheme (using the right analog stick to handle ball movement and defensive attacks) has finally made us excited about basketball games again. Oops, how embarrassing... we're dribbling.



△ Jiggle the right stick with style and you'll be on your way to an easy basket.



△ Or as we like to call it, "Best... Game... Ever..."

Some of these categories are easier than others to judge, and when it comes to action games, no other title during Year One comes even close to *Halo*. Merge vista-tastic graphics, superb design, hook-you-for-hours gameplay, and – this is rare – a videogame story that actually matters, and you've got a game that has set a new high-water mark for console action.

HONORABLE MENTION:

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

This game (which pleasantly surprised us) wowed us with its tight control, engaging level design, and true-to-source humor and storyline. Plus, call us crazy, but Xbox Buffy actually seems even hotter than Ms. Gellar herself.

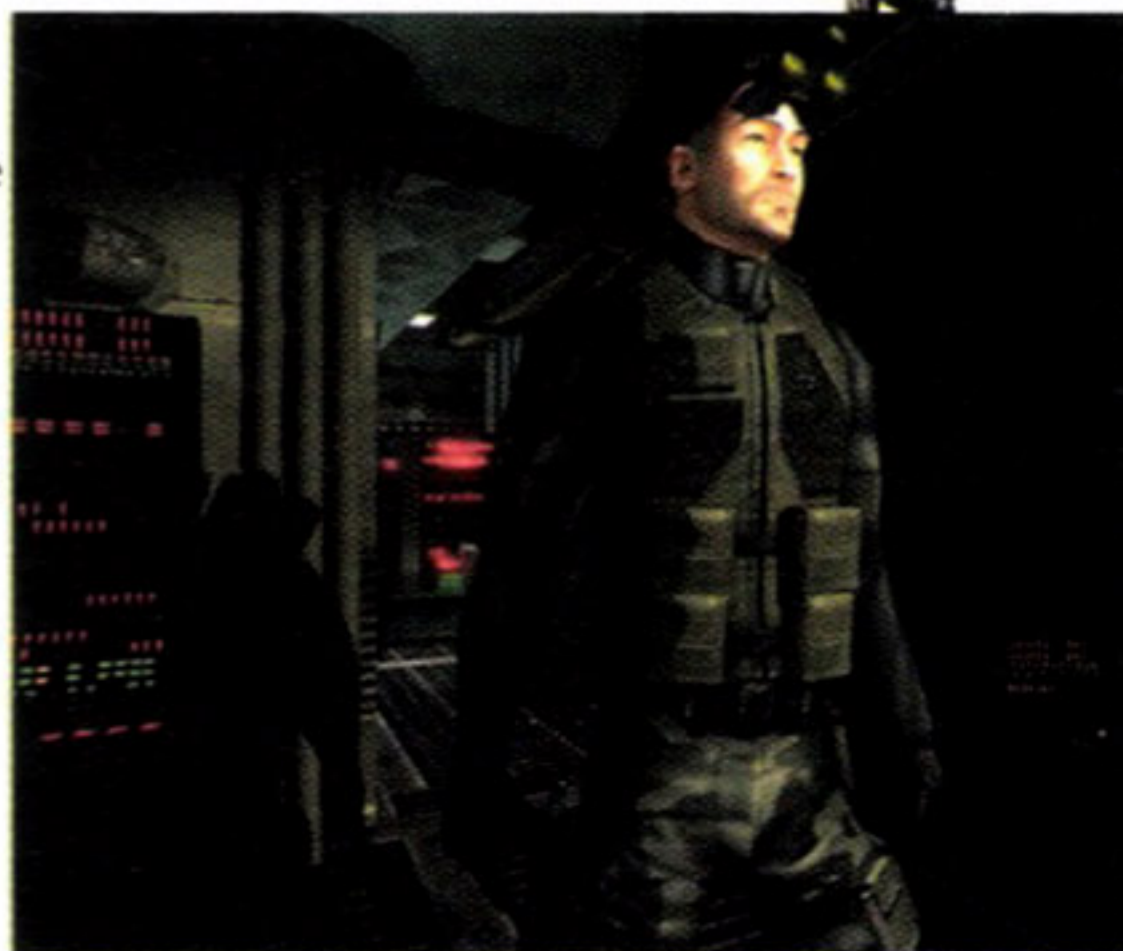


XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

This may end up being one of the best-looking (and -playing) Xbox games of Year Two thanks to a ridiculously gorgeous lighting engine, crazy Clancy hijinks, and more gadgets than you can shake a stick (a nuclear-powered sonic lock-picking stick, that is) at.

△ You've never seen lighting effects quite like this.





PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

⚠ Careful, Kudos go straight to your thighs.

Not only was this one of the best-looking racing games we've ever played, but it was also one of the deepest and most addictive. We shudder to think about how many hours we spent "just one more try"-ing our way to a few more Kudos points.

HONORABLE MENTION:

Sega GT 2002

Sure, it looks sweet and controls like tasty Cool Whip, but what we really like about it is the opportunity to race not only the hottest cars of today, but also some classics (and not-so-classics) of the '70s and '80s. Who can get enough of those burnt-orange Celicas?

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

Ridge Racer Next

Say what you will about the move toward *Gran Turismo* "realism" in driving games, but nothing compares to the simple thrill of good ol' fashioned *Ridge Racer* gameplay juiced up with Xbox graphics.



⚠ This is a picture of *Ridge Racer* on PS2... it'll look much better on Xbox.



THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

⚠ It may not be as lush and spiky-haired as *Final Fantasy*... but you'll still love to visit.

Don't laugh, console RPGers. The guys at Bethesda created an amazing experience with huge worlds, innovative creatures, and the freedom to do absolutely anything you want. Sure there's not a spiky-haired teen or quest for a crystal shard to be found, but you've got to try something new from time to time.

HONORABLE MENTION: None

Sorry, but if we give *Azurik* an award, the accountants of Ernst and Young will walk out on us. Next year we expect this genre to grow a bunch.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

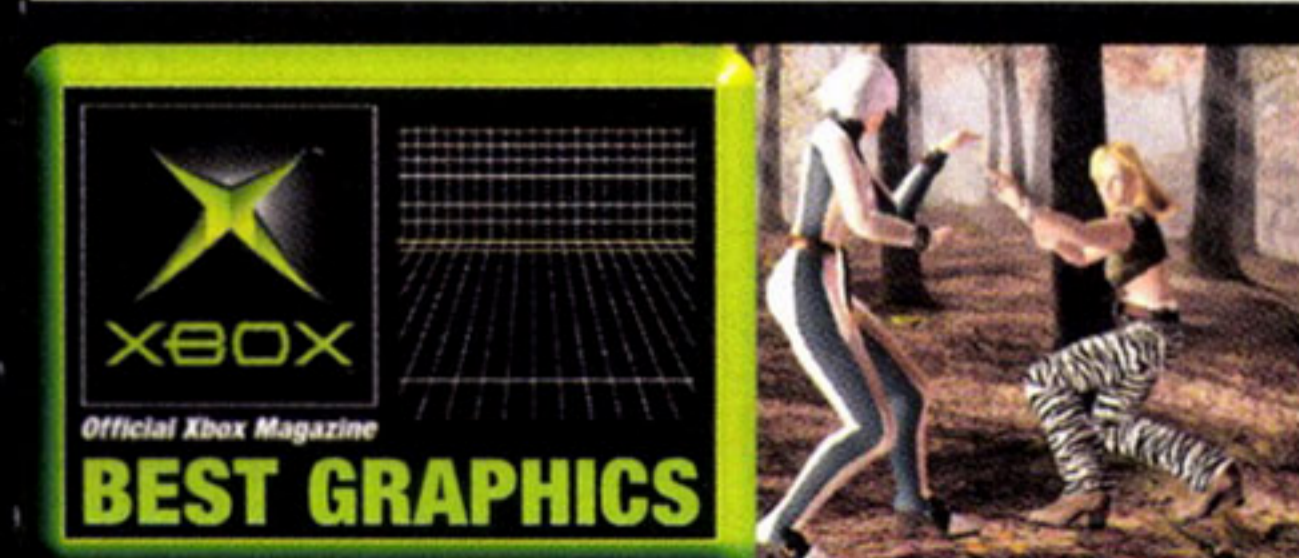
TIE Project Ego and Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic

Project Ego may be the first game, RPG or otherwise, to really test what the Xbox hardware can do, but c'mon, does anyone believe it will really hit Year Two? Good thing one of the world's best RPG makers (BioWare) met the biggest license in games (*Star Wars*), exchanged awkward pick-up lines, and spawned the hotly anticipated *Knights of the Old Republic*.



⚠ Coming to stores by at least Xbox: Year Eight.

THE "OTHER" YEAR ONE AWARDS



⚠ Booty is in the eye of the beholder.

Dead or Alive 3

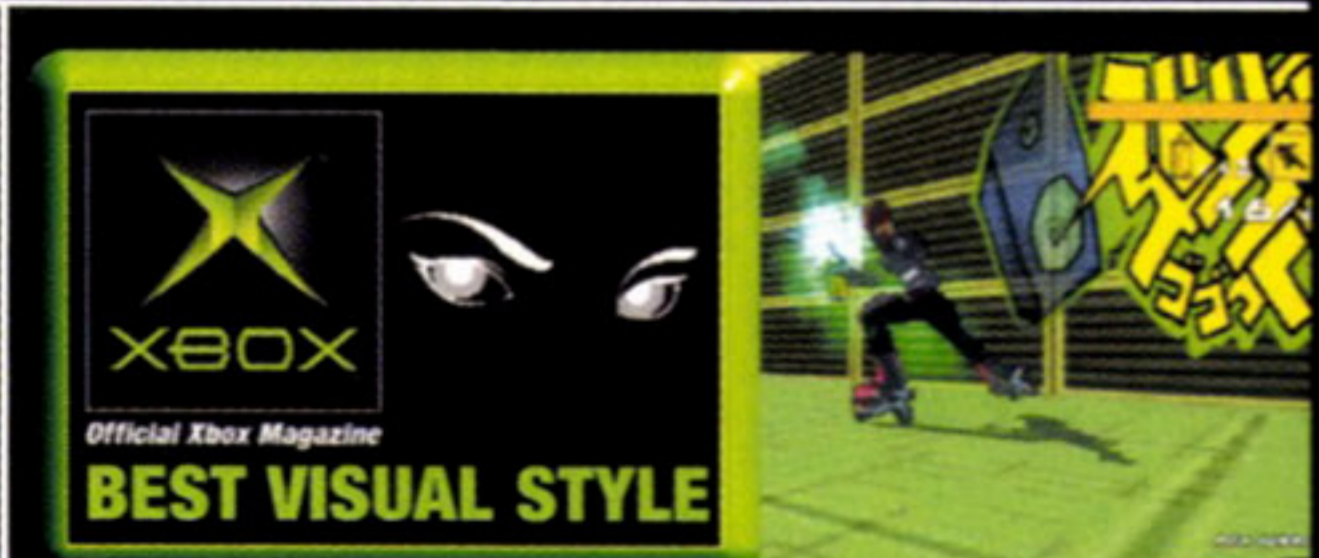
Wreckless may be more technically impressive, but no game looked as smooth or polished as this showpiece.



⚠ Zombie sex is OK, as long as it's essential to the plot.

Halo and Silent Hill

Halo was one of the few titles in which the story actually made the game better. And *Silent Hill* was so creepy and weird, we just had to watch... and then shower.



⚠ Japan is actually a lot like this... only cleaner.

JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future

Sega captured the aura of Japanese geek-cool perfectly, creating a vivid new world that could replace the Godzilla-smashed cardboard-skyline representation of Japan that still reigns in the minds of American gamers.



△ You're destined to be taunted by a 12-year-old wearing this.

Xbox Live wouldn't be nearly as exciting a prospect if not for the Xbox Communicator. Thanks to this headset, you'll be able to talk to anyone else (in wacky, altered voices) on Xbox Live rather than typing awkward mini-messages like GG or U=SUX.

HONORABLE MENTION:

Controller-S

It's good to see that Microsoft can admit when it makes a mistake, and releasing this smaller and better-designed controller was the right thing to do... for girly small-handed people. Like us.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

The Steel Battalion controller

We've never seen anything quite like this massive 40-button controller, but we're more than willing to give it a try. Although its complexity may seem daunting to some, it's a fantasy made real for giant-robot fans and button aficionados with a lot of cash to spare.

△ Go ahead, gawk at it. We're all geeks here.



△ For heaven's sake... put some pants on, girl.

Gorgeous, simply gorgeous. It's still hard to believe that Tecmo was able to squeeze as much beauty and polish from the Xbox so early on in its life. And we're still amazed at how elegant this game looks. Not to mention all those cuties in scuba gear.

HONORABLE MENTION:

UFC Tapout

You don't have to be a fan of ultimate fighting to appreciate the graphics, control, and intuitive fighting system in this game. For some reason it helps, though.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

Soul Calibur 2

Soul Calibur still stands today as one of the best and deepest fighting games ever made. And everything we've seen so far shows that this one could be much better than the original in every way.



THE "OTHER" YEAR ONE AWARDS



△ I'm not hard... I'm just rendered that way.

Enclave

It starts out rather easy, but *Enclave* doesn't take long to ramp up to a difficulty level that will even have long-time gamers ripping out what's left of their long-time gamer hair.



△ Never look directly at the reflection mapping.

Wreckless

No other title takes advantage of the Xbox GPU pixel shaders, graphics effects, and gee-whiz chips as well as this dazzling driving game. It's all about the smashing.

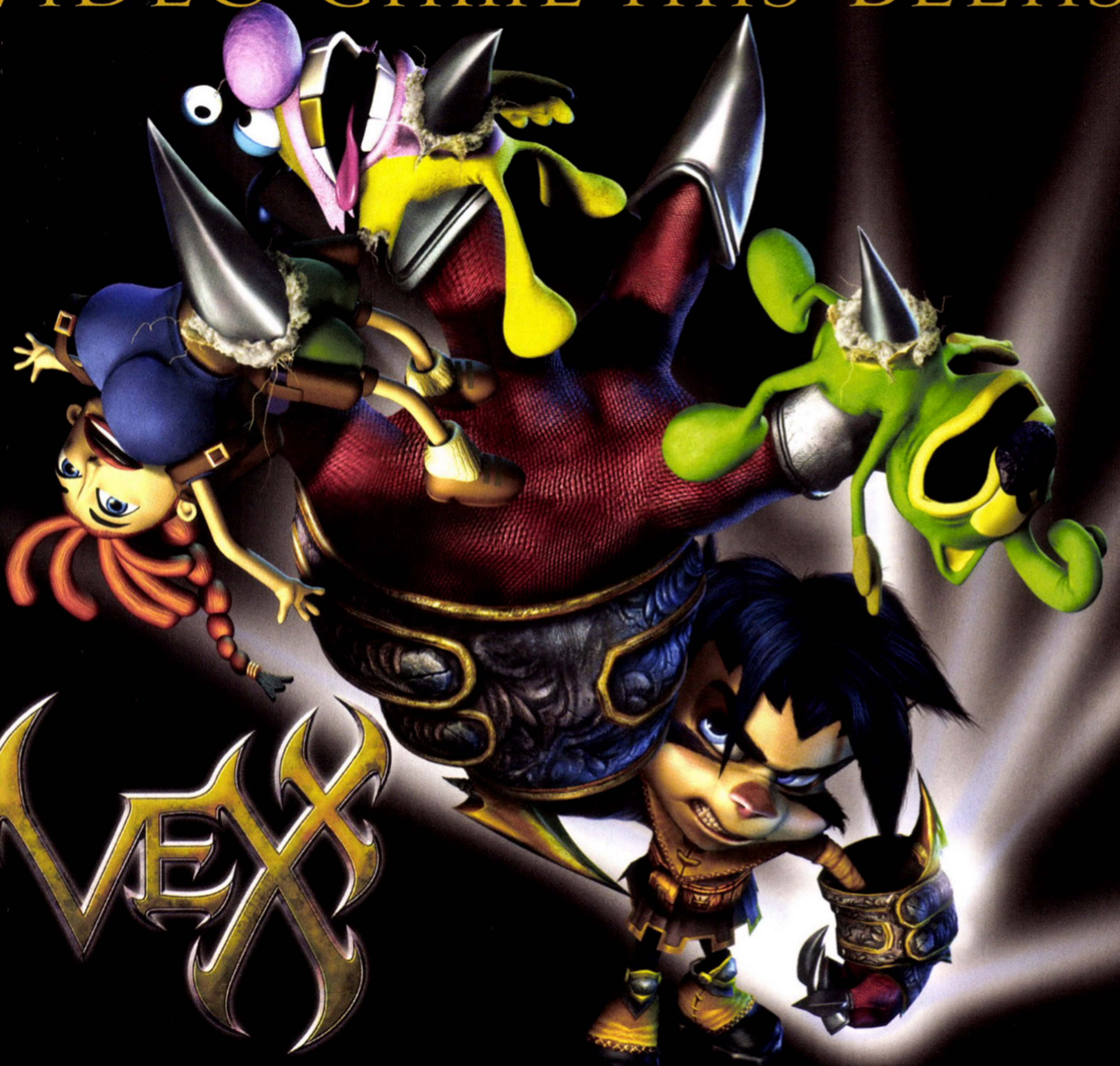


△ A whole new world... without loading.

Halo

By streaming levels off the hard drive, Bungie created gargantuan levels that were worlds unto themselves. The question is, why hasn't everyone else followed suit?

VIDEO GAME HAS-BEEPS

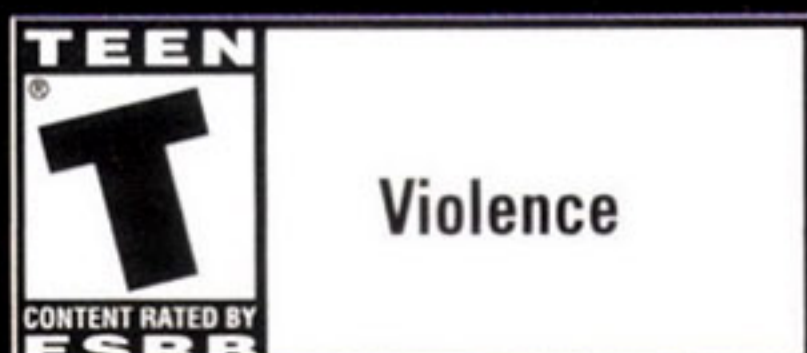


VEXX

BEWARE!

A PEW BAD BOY, GIVING THE FINGER TO LAME GAMES.

IT'S A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM. AND AN ADVENTURE FOR REVENGE!
FEATURING 6 DANGEROUSLY INTERACTIVE WORLDS WITH OBJECTIVES VIEWABLE FROM ANYWHERE IN THE VEXX UNIVERSE! SCALE SHEER CLIFFS AND UNCOVER DEADLY ATTACK COMBOS AND SPECIAL ABILITIES! BUT BEWARE OF NIGHTFALL - YOUR ENEMIES MORPH INTO MORE EVIL FORMS AS THE LIGHT OF DAY WAMES! VEXXTHEGAME.COM



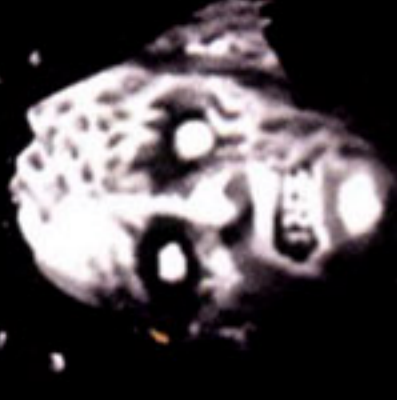
PlayStation 2



**PRESENTED
BY SEGA**



**ZOMBIES
ON THE LOOSE!**



INVADING YOUR LIVING ROOM!

**MORE GORE
THAN BEFORE!**

SPOOKY!

**GET YOUR FINGER
ON THE TRIGGER!**

SHOCKY!

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD™



**DEAD
MEAT!**

RELOAD

**THE HORROR!
SHIVER WITH
SUSPENSE!**

JOIN AGENTS G AND LISA AS
THEY MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH A **BLOOD BATH**
OF UNFATHOMABLE TERROR!



PACKIN' HEAT!



LIGHT GUN
SUPPORTED.



THE ORIGINAL HORROR FILLED LIGHT GUN GAME RISES FROM THE DEAD AGAIN!

The year is 2019. The world is smothered
with the undead and unmentionable horror!
Do you have what it takes to
shoot straight?

SCARY!

DARE YOU TO VISIT WWW.SEGA.COM/HOTD3



SEGA

HIGH-OCTANE COCKTAIL OF ROTTING FLESH AND A POCKETFUL OF SHELLS!



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MUNCH'S ODDYSEE



△ Poor Abe, he doesn't even get top billing anymore.

Although next year will be a huge year for platformers, Year One was a little light on this genre. However, *Munch's Oddysee* is easily the best of what we did get. No platformer has yet to match this title in terms of graphics, gameplay, innovative design, challenge, or gastro-intestinal humor.

HONORABLE MENTION:

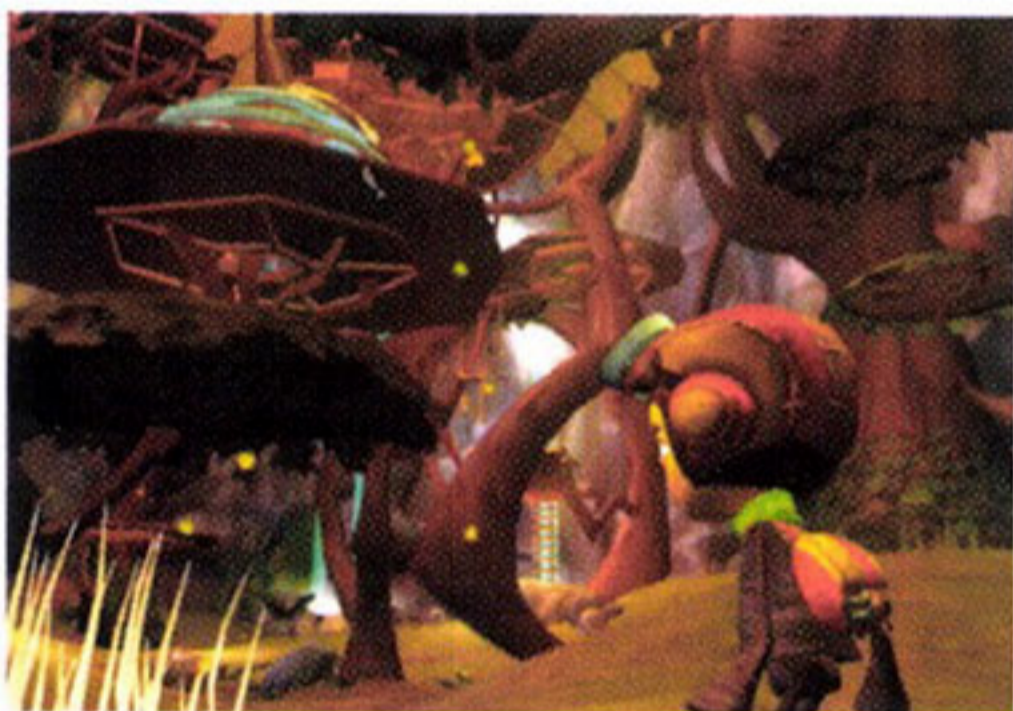
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex

The gameplay was tight, and we squeezed a lot of fun out of this game. And Crash didn't have fleas or nothin', so it was better than the other platformers.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

Psychonauts

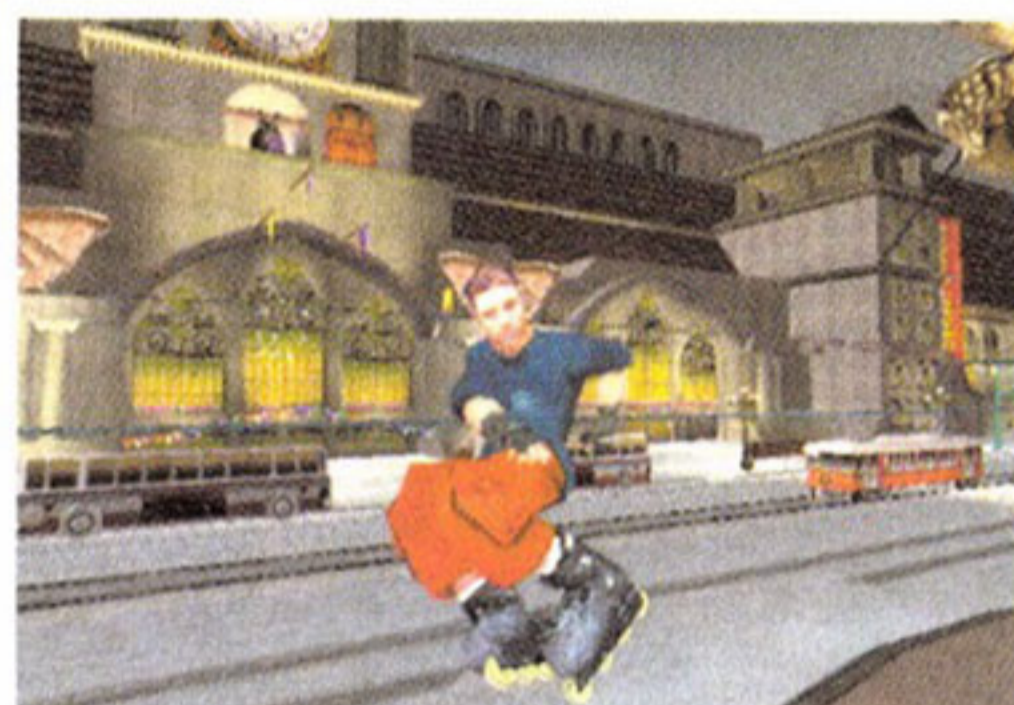
Who says all platform games have to feature cute creatures with "in your face" personas? *Psychonauts* may be the most screwed-up, twisted, and abnormal platformer we've ever seen... and we mean that as a compliment.



△ We're gonna play it just to see how weird it can get.



AGGRESSIVE INLINE



△ "Aggressive" means "proactive" in marketing terms.

Just when it looked like every extreme sports game was another *Tony Hawk* clone, *Aggressive Inline* debuted and took the genre in a cool new direction with huge living worlds, story-based objectives, ultra-tight gameplay, and graphics that'll make Tony and company go back to the drawing board.

HONORABLE MENTION:

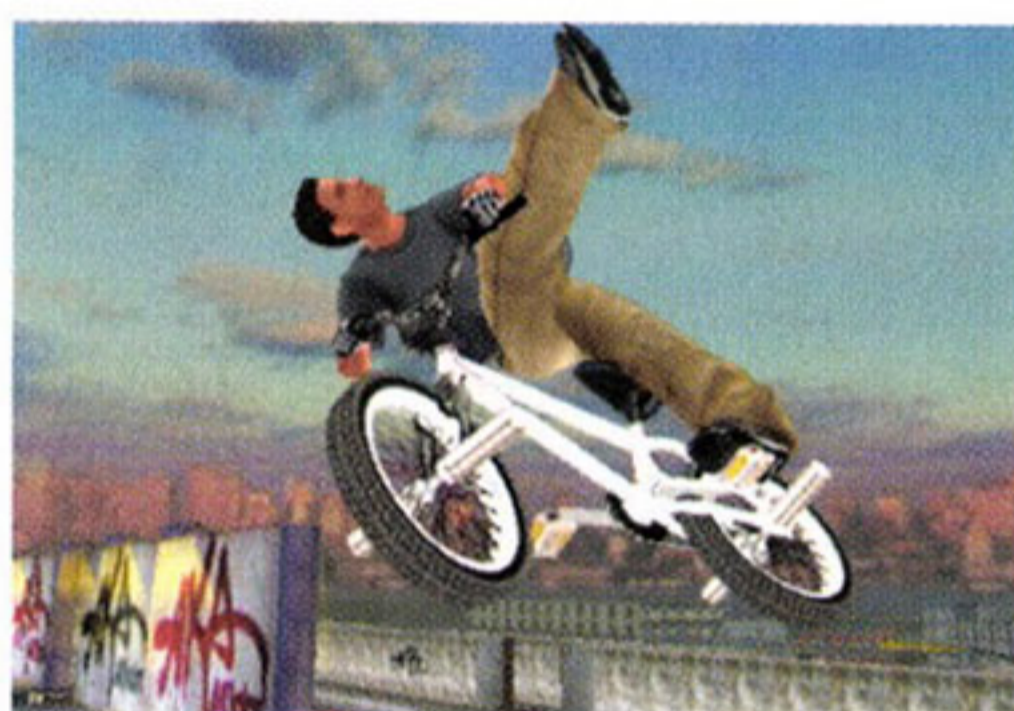
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

Just because *Aggressive Inline* redefined the rules doesn't mean that *Tony Hawk* took the year off. *TH3* was the best in the series by far, and we've got to give credit to Activision for giving Xbox owners an exclusive level to call their own.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

BMX XXX

Everyone already knows that this game may end up being the most boundary-pushing title in the modern console era. What most people don't know, however, is that it's also got a really strong gameplay and graphics engine behind it. Plus: nakedity!



△ It's like *Dave Mirra 2*... but Dave's name is gone, and no one's wearing pants.

FIVE STEPS TO YEAR TWO DOMINATION

We've prepared five easy steps that will lead our beloved Xbox into gaming history this holiday season. Go Xbox!

5 XBOX AT XMAS

The Year One holidays proved that the Xbox was a major player, but Year Two is crucial. Goal: Continue to outsell GameCube and start gaining ground on the PlayStation2.

4 CONTINUED FIRST-PARTY SUCCESS

Microsoft nailed its first-party lineup during Year One, but for continued success they'll need *Crimson Skies*, *Blinx*, *Project Gotham 2*, and (of course) *Halo 2* to be huge hits. We just wish that *Halo 2* and *Project Gotham* were releasing this year, instead of next. Hopefully games like *Brute Force* will really step up.

3 THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT

Developers and publishers love the Xbox, but during Year One, few tapped into the GPU and built-in hardware of the Xbox. More of that needs to happen during Year Two.

2 FOREIGN AFFAIRS

More global success means more globally developed games. Xbox could use a strong outing in Japan and Europe this year.

1 XBOX LIVE

If Xbox Live hits big, Microsoft has a killer app on its hands. Which is likely. No other console can deliver an experience that even compares to the Xbox Live service. You get what you pay for. And just wait until we start getting roster updates, weekly game levels, tournaments, and other goodies. Xbox Live is looking to change how we play our games.

THE "OTHER" YEAR ONE AWARDS



△ Don't make fun, the cab has a serious chemical imbalance.

Crazy Taxi 3

Crazy Taxi 3's Crazy Box mode infuriated us, but always brought us back for more and then infuriated us again... and then brought us back again. Stop us, please.



△ We'd rather be playing right now than writing this capt....

Halo

We still play *Halo* Capture the Flag every single day after work. It's that balanced, that deep, and that much fun. And we'll probably play it until *Halo 2* finally gets here.



△ Check your life at the door.

The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind

The sheer number of hours this game has sapped from our lives is staggering. We would rather not even count how many hours we spent just redecorating our cabin.



HALO



▲ If you have friends and a LAN, kiss your life goodbye.

Nothing, and we mean nothing, compares to a *Halo* Capture the Flag match with all vehicles turned on. The arsenal is perfectly balanced, the design is flawless, and the overall experience is hopelessly addictive. The collective hours our staff has spent on *Halo* multiplayer reaches into the thousands... and we're not sick of it yet.

HONORABLE MENTION: Hunter: The Reckoning

Although not as deep or addictive as *Halo*, *Hunter* captures the classic "kill it all" feel of yesteryear's *Gauntlet* with graphics and gameplay that are as cutting-edge as the best of the Xbox.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

Unreal Championship

We all know what *Doom* and *Quake* did for multiplayer online gaming on the PC. *Unreal Championship* could do the same on Xbox Live.



▲ C'mon, these guys aren't gonna kill themselves.



PANZER DRAGON ORTA



▲ Not dragon. Dragoon. It's like salon and saloon, kinda.

When we first saw this gorgeous shooter, our eyes nearly popped out of our heads... after a trip to the ophthalmologist, the game looked even better. The setting is surreal, the visuals truly remarkable, and the gameplay... well, let's just say that it will keep a smile on the steely-jawed faces of hardcore gamers like us.

HONORABLE MENTION: JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future

Sega is locked onto the wants and needs of hardcore gamers, and *Jet Set Radio Future* proves that again. The game is quirky, deep, challenging, and so unique that it's difficult to explain it to a non-gamer... which, for hardcore fans, is a near-perfect recipe for fun.

XBOX YEAR TWO GAME TO WATCH FOR:

Ninja Gaiden

Tecmo's classic revival is the kind of game that hardcore gamers daydream about. It's drop-dead gorgeous, incredibly ambitious, and all of the elements that made the original a classic haven't been forgotten.



▲ Remember, it's not ninjaphobia if the ninjas really are trying to kill you - and they are.

RANDOM AWARDS

We had some green statues left so we went ahead and made some different awards. After all, everyone's a winner.

MOST AWKWARD GAME NAME

- Azurik: Rise of Perathia

LOWEST GAMEPLAY-TO-GRAPHICS RATIO

- Shrek

UGLIEST COSTUME DESIGN

- Kabuki Warriors

LEAST ADVANCEMENT OVER PREVIOUS INCARNATION

- NFL Blitz 20-03

FIRST ANNUAL ROBIN WILLIAMS FUR-SHADING AWARD

- Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex

MOST MONKEYS

- TimeSplitters 2

LEAST TECHNICALLY ADVANCED

- Smashing Drive

MOST N64-LIKE

- New Legends

MOST ROCKIN' LIKE DOKKEN SOUNDTRACK

- Air Force Delta Storm

MOST GRATUITOUS STRIPPER SPANKING

- Outlaw Golf

UGLIEST STRIPPER

- Dead to Rights

BEST SIDEKICK

- Cortana (Halo)

GAME MOST DESPERATELY IN NEED OF MULTIPLAYER

- Wreckless

BEST OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE (IN THE US)

- Official Xbox Magazine (US edition)

THE "OTHER" YEAR ONE AWARDS



▲ Look Ma, new level!

Activision

It seems that nearly every Activision conversion for the Xbox features extra levels, hidden secrets, and graphics upgrades over the PS2 and GameCube versions. We officially approve.



▲ Hardcore gamers love hard games.

Sega

Jet Set Radio Future, *Crazy Taxi 3*, *Gunvalkyrie*, and *Panzer Dragoon Orta* made gamers glad that Sega gave Xbox its A-list titles. Let's hope *Virtua Fighter 4* makes it in Year Two.



▲ Maybe they just want to be our friends.

The Flood (Halo)

Few moments in videogame history match up to the moment when you first run across this unexpected new foe. If you haven't played the game yet, don't read the previous sentence... oops.

WNW POLL: WHY CLONE WHEN YOU CAN MORPH?

WORLD NEWS

WATCH

WWW.MIDWAY.COM

NOVEMBER 2002

Dr. Muto Revealed!

Meet The Man
Behind The Morph
www.drmutomidway.com

Burnitall Enterprises

Stock Soars On New
World-Domination
Franchise

War Over The Worlds

Evil Genuises Who
Want To Rule It All



RATING PENDING

RP

CONTENT RATED BY
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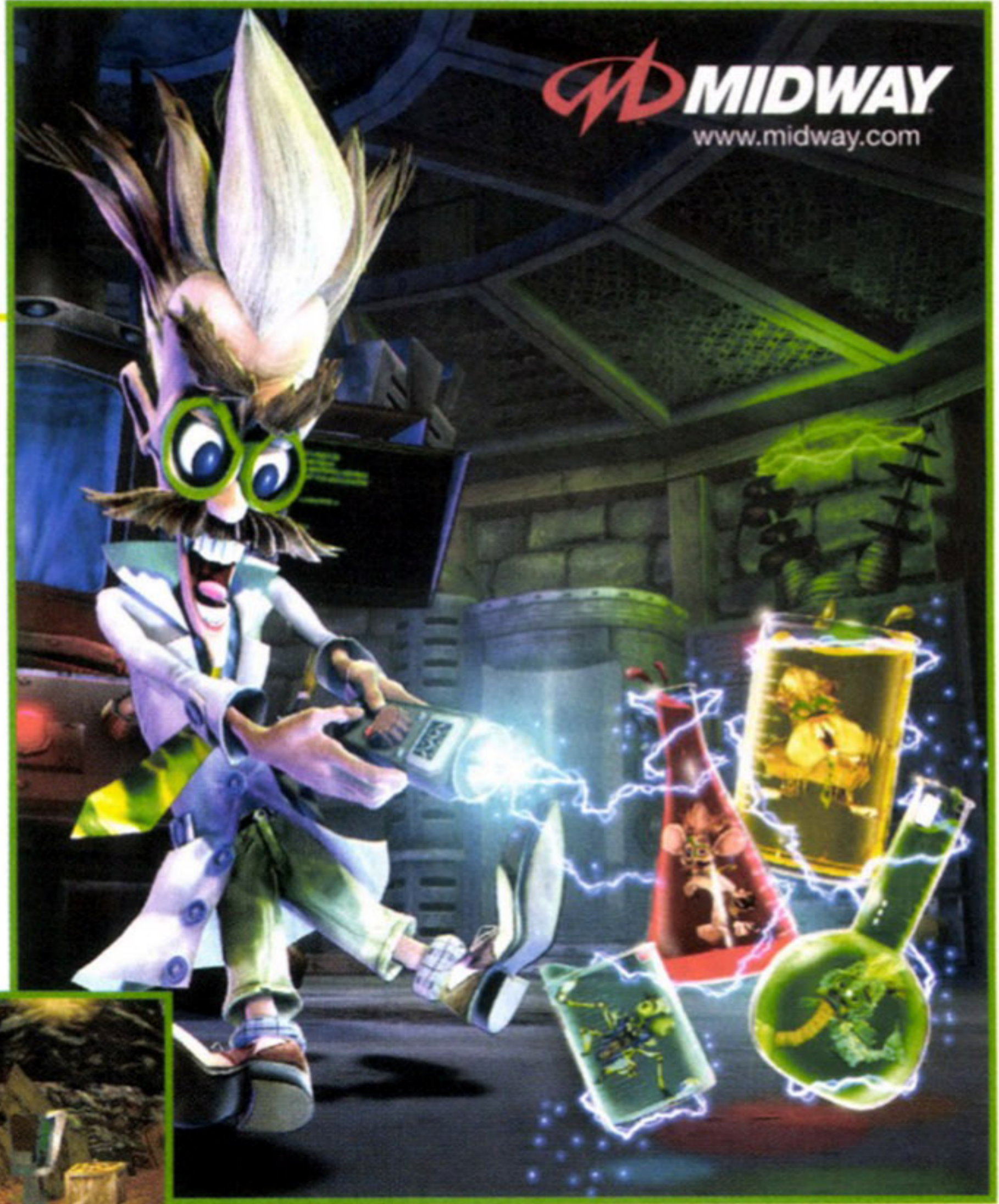
Visit www.esrb.org or
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MAD SCIENCE WATCH

The Doctor Is In

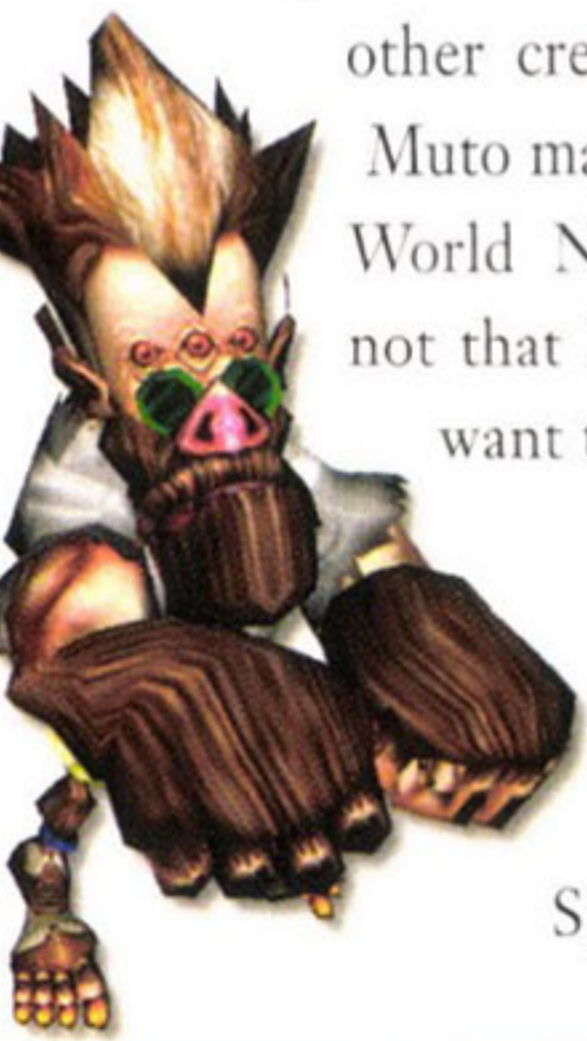


Are You A Man Or A Mouse?
Morph into six strange creatures from a gorilla to a spider using Dr. Muto's amazing Splizz Gun



Dr. Muto, the genius mad scientist whose latest experiment accidentally destroyed his home planet, has been the center of a media frenzy with the unveiling of his amazing new "Splizz Gun" technology. Muto's Splizz Gun enables him to mutate and morph with any living organism in order to accomplish tasks no human could achieve alone.

According to Muto, the Splizz Gun's morphing ability will be key in his attempts to rebuild his world. "I simply sample some DNA and 'BANG,' I morph into a mouse, spider, gorilla or any other creature I see fit to become," Muto madly muttered in an exclusive World News Watch interview. "It's not that I am a megalomaniac, I just want to play God."



Muto's technology is receiving so much attention and interest that he will begin selling the Splizz Gun through TV



Use a wide variety of gadgets only a mad scientist could invent such as Rocket Boots and the Super Baller

infomercials next month. Also, leading videogame publisher Midway has entered into an exclusive deal with the doctor for the release of an action/adventure videogame based on his bizarre and intriguing life and his Splizz Gun technology. Information about Muto's videogame, simply titled, "Dr. Muto," is revealed on www.drmutomidway.com, which is a website devoted to Muto's universe of baffling puzzles,

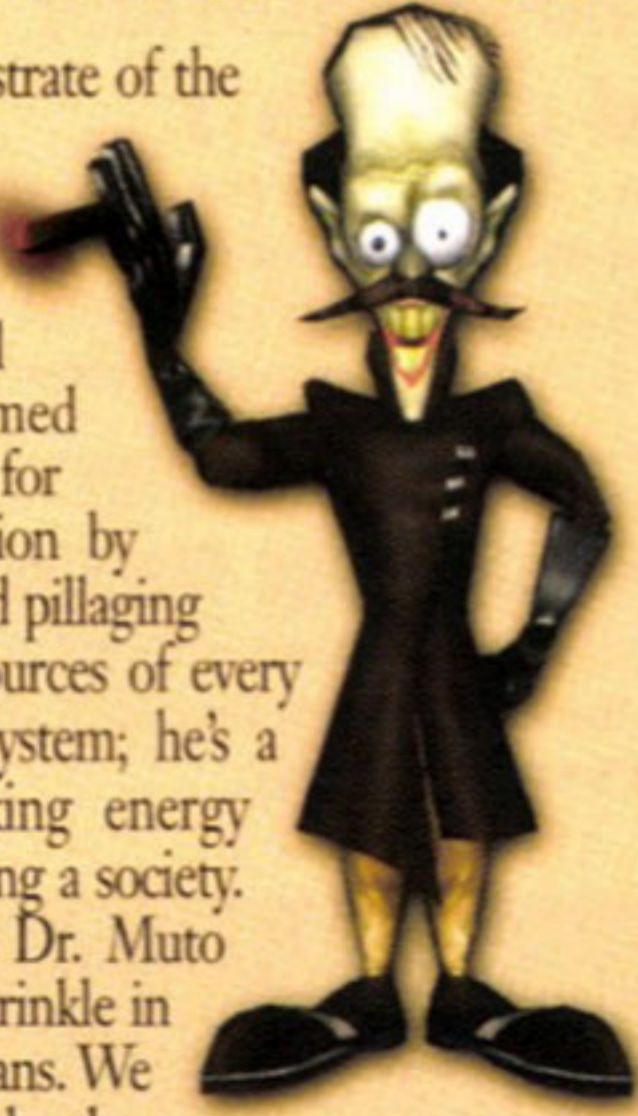


Defend yourself against burly Rent-a-Cops, vicious "Charks," and other benchmarks of your rival, Professor Burnitall

mind-bending devices, freakish monstrosities and twisted humor. Is Dr. Muto the 21st Century's Einstein, or just another madman? Judge for yourself this fall when "Dr. Muto" the videogame releases for next generation videogame platforms.

PROFILE ON...
Professor Burnitall

As energy magistrate of the Centralis solar system, Professor Gunter Burnitall has outperformed all expectations for energy production by strip-mining and pillaging the natural resources of every planet in the system; he's a master at making energy while demolishing a society. But the genius Dr. Muto has become a wrinkle in his expansion plans. We caught up with the professor recently, who told us, "He's a maniac bent on ruining my beautiful energy empire. That ridiculous Dr. Muto believes he can build a planet from scraps of DNA and terra, then steal my energy reserves as the catalysts! PAH!" Burnitall went on to say that Muto is a renegade terrorist and, "My forces will stop at nothing to destroy the horrible little man, no matter WHAT creature he shapes himself into!"



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Fall 2002

Coming Soon

Coming Soon



PlayStation®2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



HALO



This was our easiest call. No game in Year One better epitomized what the Xbox was all about than *Halo*. The graphics were cutting edge, the gameplay beyond all expectations, the story actually mattered, and the multiplayer aspects were the stuff of legend. When we all look back at Xbox: Year One from far in the future, this game will still be the most important Xbox game ever made.

▲ "I came to chew bubble gum and win game of the year...and I'm all out of bubble gum."

HONORABLE MENTION:

Project Gotham Racing

Just about as addictive and refined as a racing game can get. The unique gameplay design, graphics, and Kudos system kept us coming back.

HONORABLE MENTION:

Dead or Alive 3

Hardcore fighting fans may argue that this isn't the deepest fighter on the market, but no one can dispute that this is still one of the most beautiful and bouncy games ever made.



▲ Don't hit me in the face, I'm booked for *DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball*.

HONORABLE MENTION:

JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future

Full of style and packed with substance, *JSRF* is one of those rare titles that we'll still cherish playing years from now.

MOST ANTICIPATED GAMES

Metal Gear Solid 2 Substance

Sure, we've already played through the original, but there is just so much new stuff jammed into this game that it will be like playing it all for the first time.



▲ Now 50 percent Snakier!

Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball

We understand that this game actually has a really solid gameplay engine and could be the best volleyball game ever. It also has girls in tiny bikinis... and less, if you're into that sort of thing.

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

We're still amazed at the graphics, lighting effects, and gadgets in this beautiful third-person action game. Solid Snake might need to go hide in a cardboard box if this turns out as good as promised.

Blinx: The Time Sweeper

Who would have thought that a cat with a time-sucking vacuum cleaner

could be the star of one of the most intriguing games of Xbox: Year Two? Surely not us.

BC

Imagine if you mixed surly cave men, sultry cave women, ravenous dinosaurs, splendiferous graphics, and ultra-realistic violence together with innovative Peter Molyneux design. You'd probably have a classic on your hands - that's our bet.

Unreal Championship

You can bet that as soon as Xbox Live is up and running we'll be on board... and we'll be shouting creative profanities over the Voice Communicator at our opponents in *Unreal Championship*.

Brute Force

It may not be the next *Halo*, but the teamplay elements in *Brute Force* may be so cool that next year we'll be asking about which game will be the next *Brute Force*.



▲ There is no "I" in team... but there is a "me."

YEAR TWO PREVIEW AWARDS

MOST LIKELY TO CHANGE NAME

- Project Ego

MOST LIKELY TO NOT TO MAKE YEAR TWO BY ANY NAME

- Project Ego

MOST LIKELY TO ANGER SENATORS

- BMX XXX

MOST LIKELY TO BEND OUR MIND

- Psychonauts

MOST LIKE GTA 3

- True Crime: Streets of LA

MOST LIKELY TO AWE US

- Ninja Gaiden

MOST LIKELY TO SCARE OUR PANTS OFF

- Doom III

MOST LIKELY TO RENEW OUR LOVE FOR STAR WARS

- Star Wars Galaxies

MOST LIKELY TO MAKE OUR EYES BLEED (IN A GOOD WAY)

- Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

MOST LIKELY TO CHALLENGE HALO AS THE MOST ADDICTIVE MULTIPLAYER XBOX GAME

- Battlefield 1942

MOST LIKELY TO PLAY BETTER THAN ITS PREDECESSOR

- Wreckless 2

MOST LIKELY TO BE ON OUR COVER

- Halo 2

THE "OTHER" YEAR ONE AWARDS



▲ "Hey kids, buy an Xbox!"

Master Chief

MC (as we call him) is the perfect Xbox mascot. He is the Xbox personified. He's big, powerful, green, and if placed incorrectly he could fall and crush small children.



▲ "I'm only doing this to pay my way through college."

Hitomi

So hot, she's getting her own beach volleyball game in Year Two. Well, not her own. But she is in one. Now if she'd just take care of that fe-mullet.



▲ We can't help it, we love the water.

Every game

The Xbox does water better than any other console on the planet, and that's why the phrase "best water ever" is heard nearly every time a new game hits the office.

Make your friends envious!
Make your enemies mutate!

Get Yours Today!
You'll LITERALLY Never
Be the Same!

**ONLY
\$49.95**

**"Dr. Muto's Splizz Gun
is the Coolest Invention
Since the Hydrogen Bomb!"**

**AS
SEEN
ON TV**

"Before I got my Splizz Gun, my studio apartment was way too cramped. Not anymore! Now I just morph with the first spider I see, spin a web in the corner, kick back with a bowl of bugs and watch the tube. Thanks, Dr. Muto. Your fiendish gadgets rock!"

Doug Morris, Modesto, CA

To squeak through the tightest spots, don't be a man - be a mouse.

It **DICES** chromosomes!
It **SPLICES** DNA!

When the situation calls for brute strength, just go ape.



Morph into six strange creatures from a gorilla to a spider using Dr. Muto's amazing Splizz Gun



Use a wide variety of gadgets only a mad scientist could invent such as Rocket Boots and the Super Baller



Defend yourself against burly Rent-a-Cops, vicious "Charks," and other henchmen of your rival, Professor Burnitall



www.drmutomidway.com

RATING PENDING
RP
Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for Rating Information.



PlayStation®2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



sunny today

Dark Tomorrow

coming november 5, 2002





■ *Yellow, as far as car manufacturers are concerned, is the new red, as dictated by Hummer, Lamborghini, Mazda, and now Porsche.*

Project GOTHAM RACING 2

The first *Project Gotham Racing* sold over a million copies. With good reason. Driving games, perhaps more than any other genre, help show off what a system can do, by emulating objects and scenarios we're all intimately familiar with – cars and driving. *Project Gotham* hit all the high notes – graphics, physics, car detail, and most impressively, innovative gameplay.

The Second Generation of Xbox Racing

The sequel, *Project Gotham Racing 2*, will feature all that and more, and perhaps more interestingly, help herald in the onset of the *true* second generation of Xbox games.

What do we mean by that? Well, the first generation of any console's games helps establish roughly what the system is capable of, how the graphics will tend to look, and usually what weaknesses that console has. In the PS2's case, we quickly saw that it was a capable system, with some RAM limitations that really hurt textures. In the case of Xbox, we saw that it was technically superior, but that developers simply weren't using all of the features.

That's set to change with *PGR2*, a game that will use every facility the Xbox has to create a racing and driving experience quite unlike anything that's gone before.

Vehicle Variety

Like players in an NFL game, the car list will be the very last thing finalized in *PGR2*, thanks to the complex vagaries of car licensing. But *PGR2*'s licensed vehicles will be an exceptional bunch, erring on the side of high performance and exotica rather than the boringly pedestrian vehicles found at the outset of rival games.

That means you won't have to do endless laps in a Geo Prizm just to earn the right to do the same in a Hyundai Pony. They'll give you something nice, fast, and shapely to get you started.

Although we can't release the complete vehicle list, we can tell you that there's a lot more cars in *Gotham 2* (well over 50, in fact) and more importantly, a greater variety of car types.

"We've expanded the game's horizons as well, by including different classes of cars, alongside the cars you'd probably expect! So as well as racing sports and supercars such as the brand new Ferrari Enzo and the Porsche 911 GT2, you also get to try out different classes of vehicle," says Martin Chudley, managing director of Bizarre Creations. "For example, the BMW X5 4.4i is just one of the SUVs you can race, and there's also some classics in there to sample, such as the 1955 Mercedes 300SL Gullwing."

This will cheer most fans who simply wanted more, but it has useful implications for multiplayer modes: How will a high-powered SUV fare against a faster, but less predictable, supercar? And *Gotham's* aggressive racing style will no doubt make races more like melees than clean-fought duels. We can't wait to pull off a 360 in a BMW SUV that is usually driven to the mall by soccer moms.

Tracks of my Tears

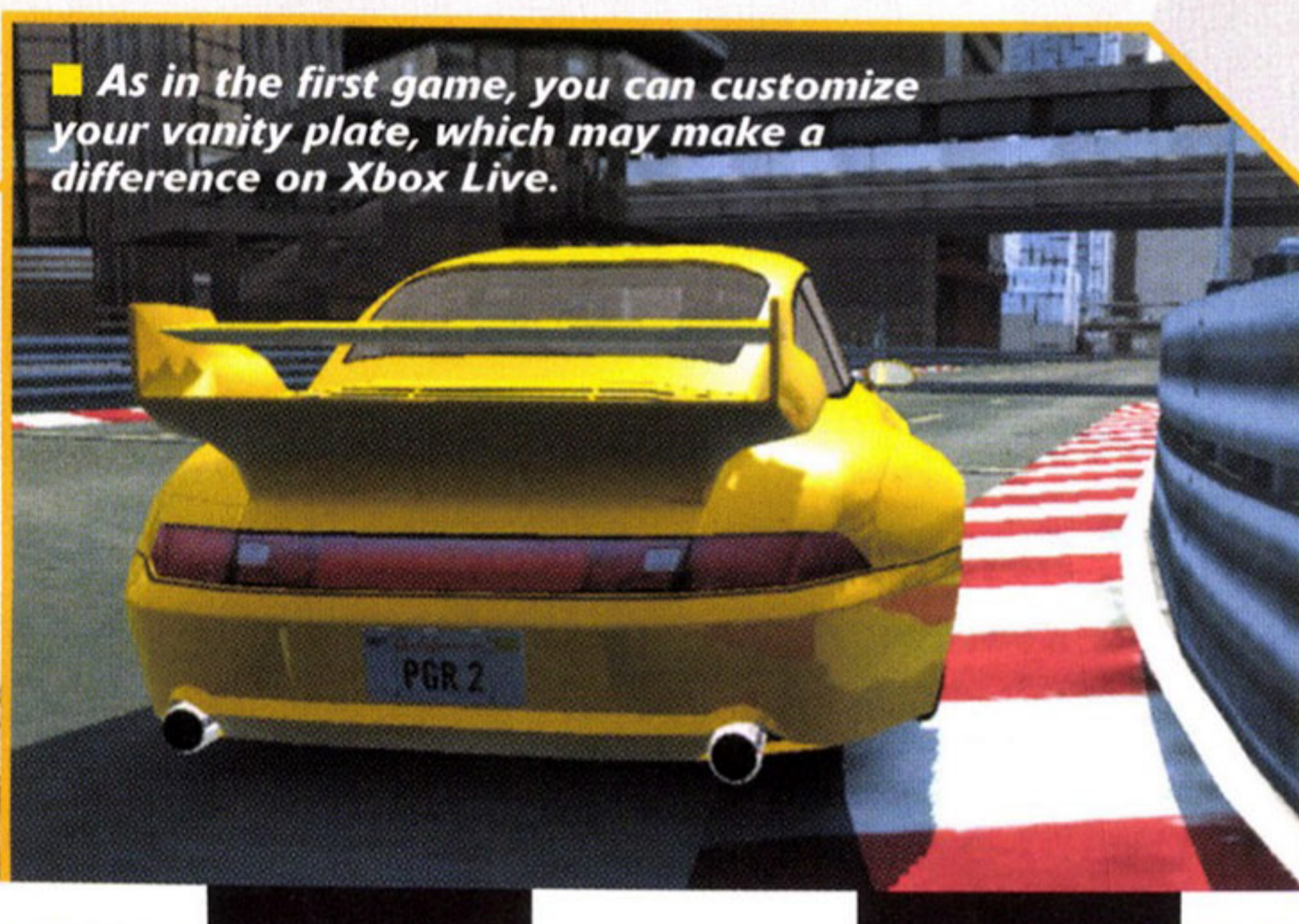
Rumors that *Project Gotham Racing 2* would include the original four cities (Tokyo, London, San Francisco, and New York) have been put firmly to rest. For *Gotham 2* it's all new cities, and lots more of them (Expect *at least* twice the number of cities as *Gotham*! And there's a possibility of one or two surprise additions.), and the new game will keep the multiple routes used in the original.

Chudley explains, "We initially researched a huge number of exotic and familiar locations, listening to feedback from your magazine readers and from the Internet, and honed them down to a great selection of locations that we think should cover all tastes and experiences. We want to make sure there's a great variety too – for example, imagine the difference in racing through Edinburgh's classic architecture when compared with Hong Kong's futuristic skyline!"

So that's what we have confirmed at the moment – Edinburgh (which is hilly, twisty, archaic, and modern in equal measure) and Hong Kong, which is incredibly dense, crowded, and tricky to drive in.

Continued on Page 62

■ *As in the first game, you can customize your vanity plate, which may make a difference on Xbox Live.*



■ *Much of our tax dollars go to removing the bumps from roads... but in PGR2 they've spent the last year getting the bumps just right.*



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Loads of Modes

You can reasonably expect to see all the original game modes to return, and there will be new modes joining the lineup. Many of these will feature or require the online component.

Chudley hedges his bets, saying, "The full game outline isn't finalized as yet, as we've got the all-important play-testing and balancing to do, in order to make sure each mode offers something valuable to all skills and types of gamer."

Online, all the Time

But it's online features that will create the biggest challenge for both players and the game's progenitor, Bizarre Creations. Xbox Live-enabled chat will fill the air (net?) waves with plenty of colorful language, but more likely it will be used almost like a CB radio, allowing racers to chat, challenge, and communicate with each other in meaningful ways. This is a chance for players to really define the experience themselves.

Bizarre Creations also promises downloadable content, but won't elaborate on what that might be. We're hoping for vehicles, game modes, and perhaps even tracks. This would be an epic opportunity to show what the Xbox hard drive is really capable of. Would you pay \$5 for a new *Project Gotham 2* city? Or trade your Ferrari Enzo for a Porsche GT2 and a Mini Cooper-S with some dude in Japan? We would.

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PROJECT GOTHAM 2

Straight from its Parents

We took the unique opportunity to sit down with most of the Bizarre Creations creative staff to discuss the ins, outs, and chicanes of the epic racing sequel. We learned a lot. Now you can, too.

US: What kind of features must a city have to be a great addition to a driving game?

THEM: The artists face a tough challenge here! There's a lot of things that they have to take into consideration, to make sure they're best for the game in every way, for example:

A globally recognized and prominent location – if, for example, Topeka, Kansas, turned out to have the best racing streets of all, it'd be upsetting if, after all the work involved in modeling it, only a few people recognized it. We need to include cities round the world that people may have visited, or at least "know" from TV or movies.

Major landmarks and places of interest or historical importance – I'm sure we are all more interested in seeing buildings and monuments that we may have visited, or at least

heard of, rather than less well-known buildings. We actually consult the tourist guidebooks to make sure that the places you drive past are the ones that visitors to the city will head to see!

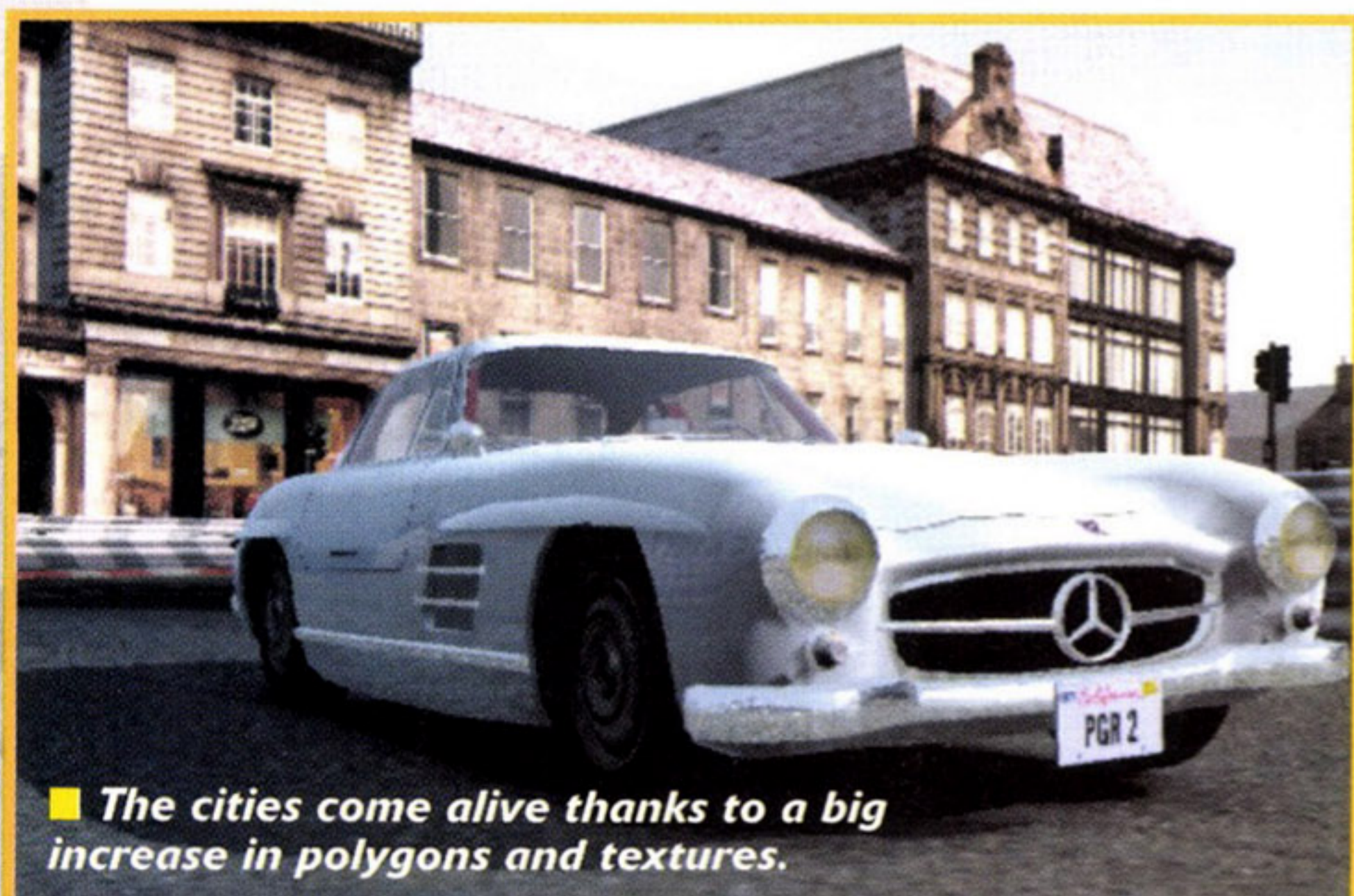
Interesting and varied architecture – as prominent as a city is, if it's all boring blocks with no character, it's not going to be as interesting to drive as somewhere with great and varied buildings. Also, it's easier to navigate with a greater variety of distinctive buildings.

A "flavor" of its own – some cities just have "that certain something" that people can pick up on, either by visiting, or by learning about the city. Our cities all have their own unique flavor, and it's something that the artists try very hard to re-create.

Varied roads, with not too many narrow sections, sharp corners, or boring straights – very



■ The introduction of classic vehicles will add some much-needed car variety to Project Gotham 2.



■ **The cities come alive thanks to a big increase in polygons and textures.**

important for the racing! Uniform, grid-based, narrow roads with sharp turns just don't make for a good city racing game! And even though a few long straights are great to pick up speed, it's essential that you intersperse them with winding or curved sections.

Changes in elevation – these are mostly good, and provide more variety for the physics, and chances to earn Kudos!

Interesting features such as bridges, statues, overhead walkways, railways, etc. – these break up the uniformity of the buildings, and also provide essential points of reference for planning your racing line around the tracks.

Various unique elements and qualities – if there's something that's viewed with special fondness in a city, such as Central Park in New York, we want to make sure it's in there. It's not essential to choosing the city, but it's something we think about when we choose which sections to model.

OUR GUESS: They won't pick Walla Walla as a location. Too many four-way stop signs.

US: The big question: What kind of Xbox Live features are included?

THEM: I'm afraid we're not allowed to tell you about these in detail yet! But as there are quite a few keen online gamers on the team, and we've all been

looking at all the ways we can make this count in a big way. As well as the expected multiplayer action, we want people to be able to experience the single-player game as an online experience, by competing in a whole host of online Kudos challenges across the globe.

OUR GUESS: And what about racing for pink slips... that'd be cool. Voice will be available on System Link as well as Live for some Kudos trash-talking.

US: Have you made any major changes to gameplay?

THEM: The gameplay in *Gotham 2* will feel familiar, but take the idea of Kudos and city racing to another level. We aim to bring more immersion, more challenge, and a wider range of racing, with new and improved rewards for both skill AND style.

OUR GUESS: Most of new modes will be enjoyed online or via System Link.

US: What kind of music features will be found in the sequel?

THEM: We were really pleased with how the radio system worked in *Gotham*, and want to make sure that we keep this, and build on it, for *Gotham 2*. The radio adds a lot to the local flavor of the cities, and we're working to make sure that we do this, and also make the most of the great features Xbox has to offer.

OUR GUESS: More stations for each city, and even more original tracks included.

US: Just how much has the graphics engine changed?

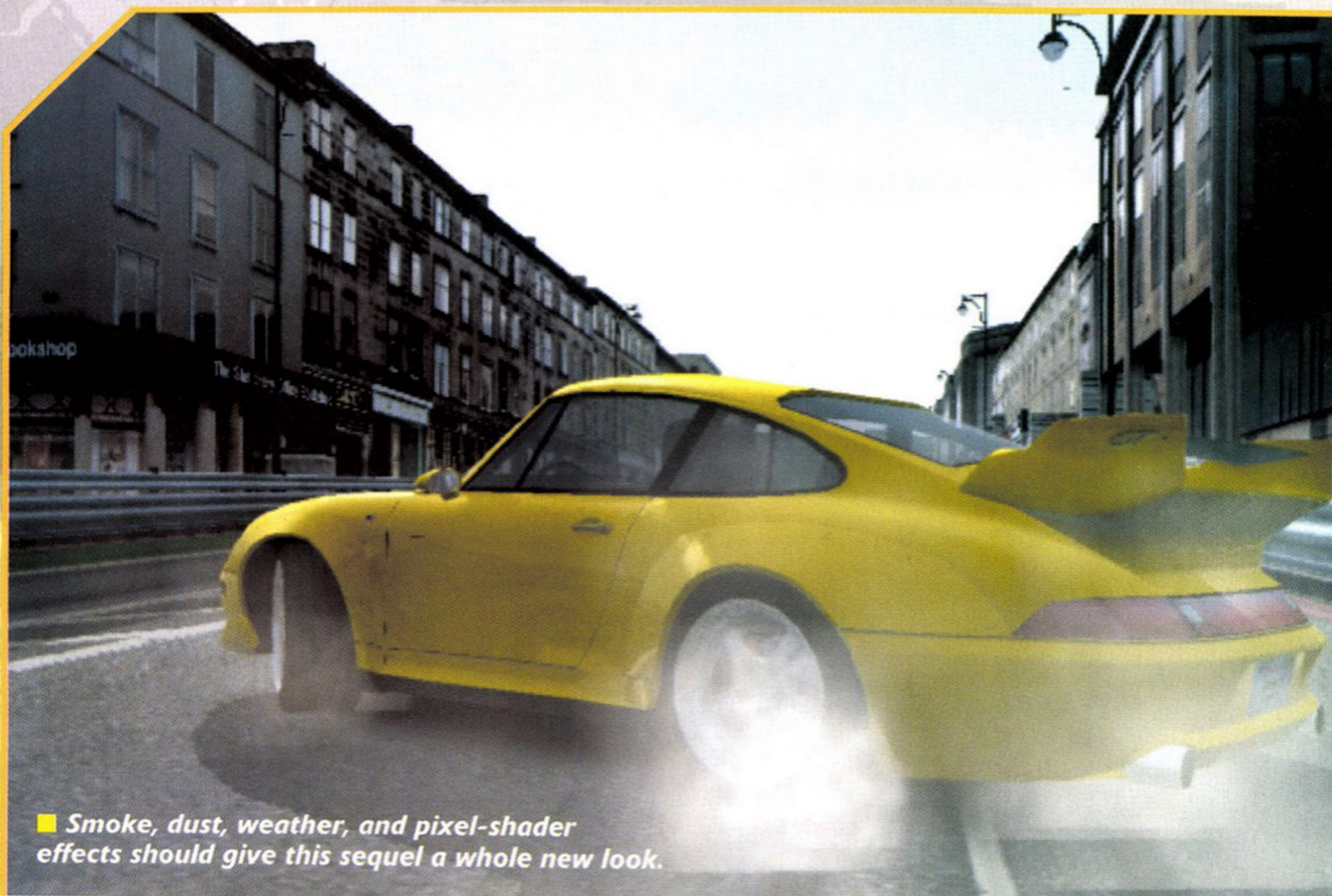
THEM: The graphics engine has received a complete makeover for the sequel. What we wanted to do was increase the detail level that the artists could create in the cities, allowing them to put model doorways, windows frames, etc., and also allowing them to apply multiple textures and bump-maps to the geometry. We've also had more time to play with the Xbox's shader technology now, so that will be used in more places to increase the overall realism of the things we draw.

OUR GUESS: Special effects will be king, with lots of smoke, flame, and weather effects.

US: How does the addition of voice over Xbox Live change the social dynamics of the game?

THEM: Do you ever play network games in the office or at home with your mates? It's never quiet – instead there are the shouts of those who have just lost, cursing

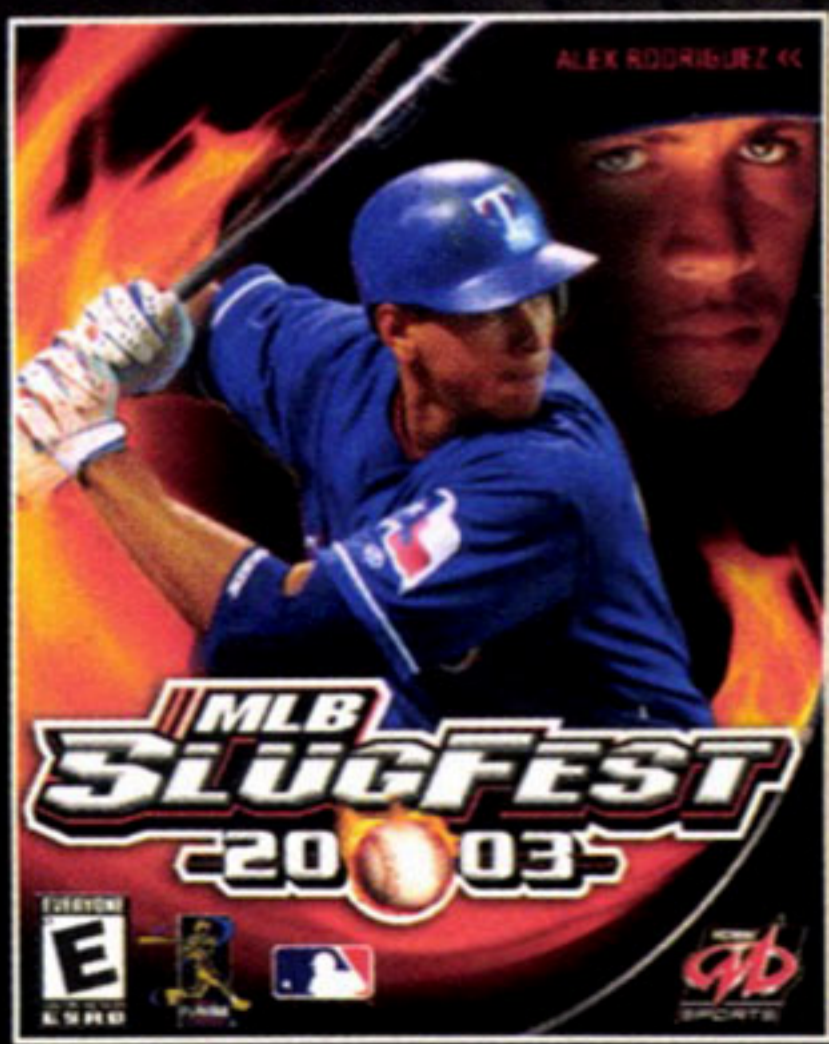
Continued on Page 66



■ **Smoke, dust, weather, and pixel-shader effects should give this sequel a whole new look.**



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PlayStation 2

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Continued from Page 64

the victors; the taunts of those who are winning to those lagging behind; the coded commands of those working together to defeat a common enemy. Xbox voice brings this great and personal atmosphere to your Xbox, adding atmosphere and really increasing the spirit of the competition!

OUR GUESS: *New swear words will be invented, like "Tailpipe-Patrol" and "Fender-Magnet."*

US: **Will players get the chance to trade vehicles over Live?**

THEM: We don't really want to comment on this side of things yet, until we've had a chance to experiment with what works best. Sorry!

OUR GUESS: *No comment = yes. Woo hoo, trading cars!*

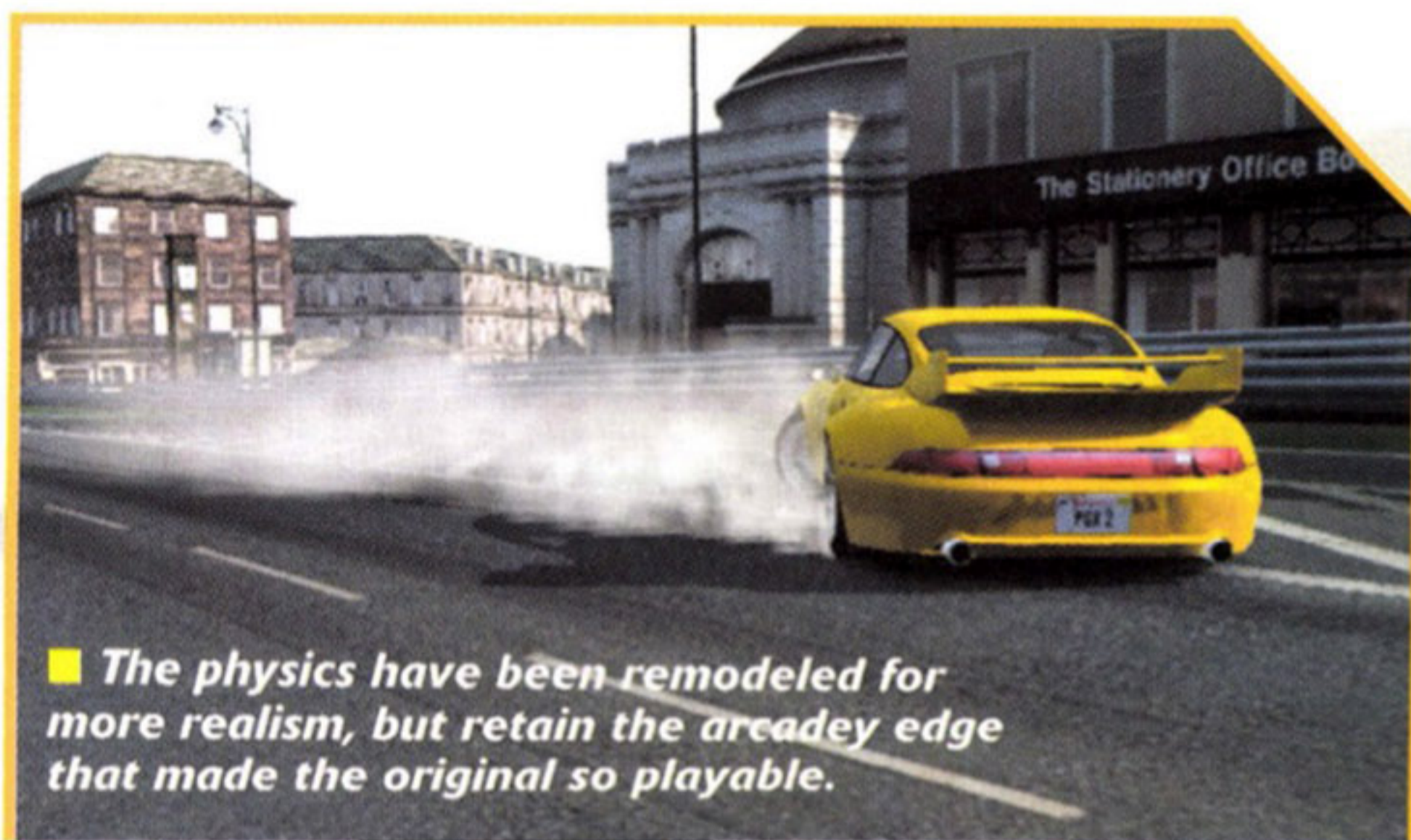
US: **What kind of tweaking and customization is there?**

THEM: As you know, the main focus in *Gotham* is how well you perform on the track, rather than in the garage, so we want to maintain this as the most important priority of the game. There's not much style to be earned by fiddling with your spark plugs, compared with performing cool maneuvers out on the circuit! We do, however, plan to include some cool features in this area, but are still at the planning stage, so can't really commit to details at the moment.

OUR GUESS: *Custom paint jobs, and even decals could be designed, saved, traded, and applied to vehicles.*

US: **What kind of involvement have vehicle manufacturers had?**

THEM: With *Project Gotham Racing 2*, the car manufacturers have given the game even more great support that they did on *Gotham 1*! They were all really



■ *The physics have been remodeled for more realism, but retain the arcadey edge that made the original so playable.*

pleased with the first game, and want to do all they can to make the sequel something really special. We've even had car manufacturers contacting us to ask to be included this time!

The car manufacturers all supply research materials on their cars – which is usually CAD data, blueprints, photos, dimensions, specifications, etc. In some cases, we can get access to the cars themselves, which is fantastic, especially when you get the

chance to visit places like the Ferrari HQ to view the new Enzo at close quarters before anyone else! Obviously, later on, the manufacturers also provide help in checking the models and how they work (e.g. which lights do what) when they're finished and in the game.

Also, a big help is the sound recording. We get to take delicious cars to a rolling road set up in a sound recording

Continued on Page 68



■ *The Mercedes Gullwing pictured here had vertically opening doors for practical reasons – a complex spaceframe simply made regular doors impossible.*



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Blood Violence

PlayStation 2

Continued from Page 66

studio and record all sorts of sounds, from the inner engine sounds, through the in-car sound to the exhaust rumble. Oh, and we have to drive them there and back again, which is an added bonus!

OUR GUESS: *We still can't believe all the manufacturers agreed to let you damage the vehicles. And yes, we realize that isn't a guess.*

US: **What were you unhappy with about the first game, and how have these things been addressed?**

THEM: There's a lot of minor niggles that annoyed us, and many things that people won't have noticed that we want to fix, as we're pretty picky! But the one major thing that we'll be working on is the difficulty and accessibility. This is obviously something we want to address, and so we're currently working on a

progression system that will still provide a challenge for the best players, but let both new and experienced gamers progress at a fair and enjoyable pace.

OUR GUESS: *There will be more modes, vehicles, and locations at the outset.*

US: **Kudos – any big changes to this feature in PGR2?**

THEM: There's some big changes here, with Kudos being used to provide players with an ultimate ranking. Earning Kudos is obviously still the aim of the game, but this time, it's even more important, as it'll affect your online profile as well as your personal pride! Kudos is still earned in all the modes of the game, but there's new ways to earn it and add to your score, whatever your skill or experience.

OUR GUESS: *Players might design their own Kudos challenges for Xbox Live.*

US: **Have you added weather effects? And will it EVER stop raining in Edinburgh?**

THEM: Of course! What would a UK city be like without rain!?!?! But we don't want to talk about the details of the different effects in the game until we've got them nailed, and can show you the screenshots to prove it!

OUR GUESS: *The game will feature rain and groundwater effects quite unlike anything we've ever seen before, as well as snow in more inclement locations.*

US: **How do the vehicle physics differ in the sequel?**

THEM: The cars in *Gotham* tended to have a more arcade-like feel to the way they drove. The main thing we've been working on is to try and get the cars to handle and behave much more closely to their real-life counterparts. We want to get even more of the real numbers

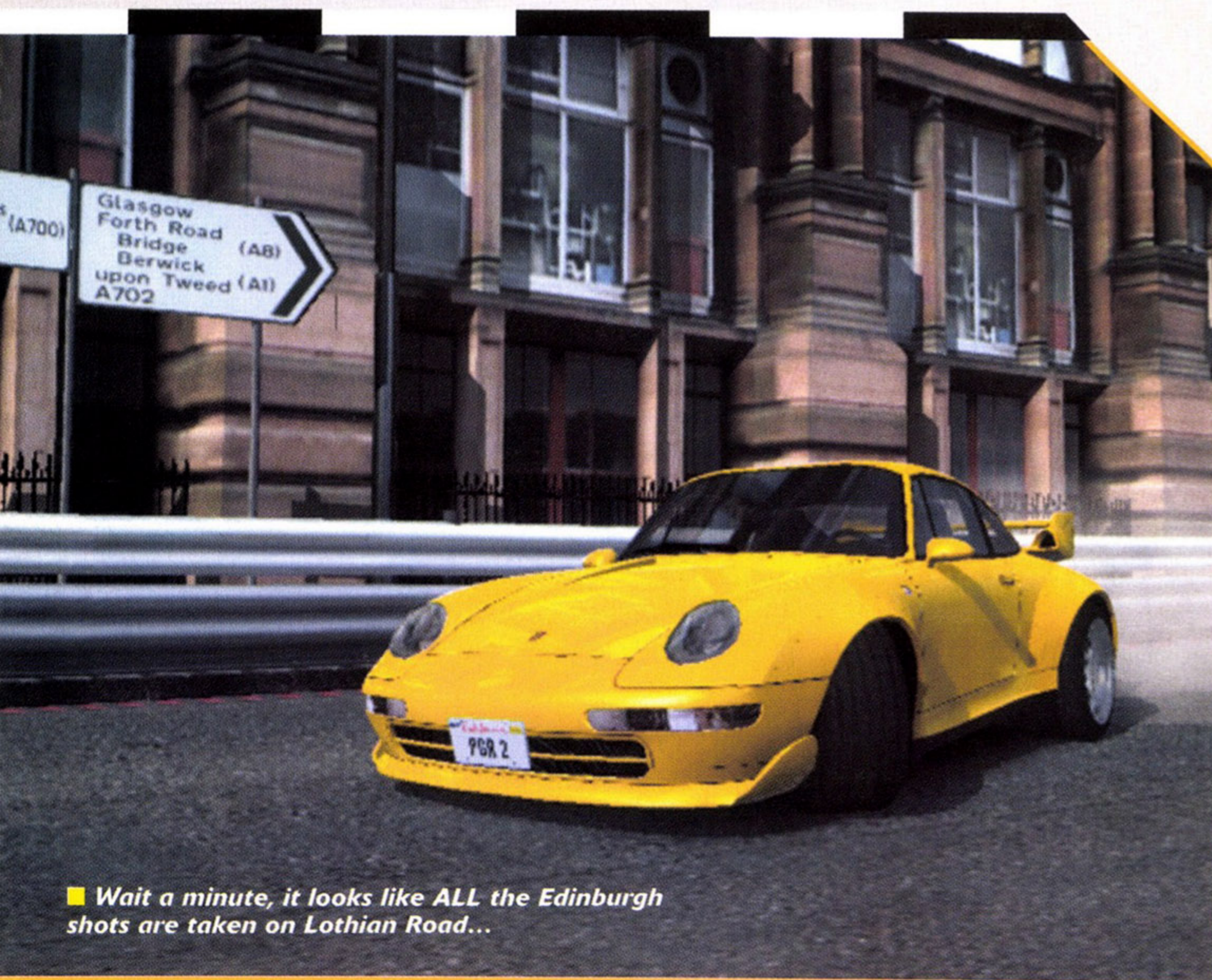
from the real cars, to use that in setting up the cars handling. This should heighten the experience the players get from driving the cars, whilst keeping the accessibility and "fun" handling of the original.

OUR GUESS: *More flipping this time, perhaps? Bigger crashes?*

US: **Which game do you see as your biggest competitor in the Xbox driving game arena?**

THEM: Outside Xbox, it's got to be PS2 *GT4* in terms of quality, although the gameplay experience is different. It's a big challenge and a scary rival, but at least we've got the power of the Xbox on our side! In terms of Xbox games, it's difficult to know what's coming out that would be similar to *Gotham*, but at the moment, we'd probably say *Pro Race Driver*.

OUR GUESS: *Midtown Madness 3 is looking better and better!*



■ *Wait a minute, it looks like ALL the Edinburgh shots are taken on Lothian Road...*

GENERATION NEXT

As you can see from the screenshots, this is truly an Xbox revolution. Between *PGR2* and *Halo 2*, the Xbox is set to wow the gaming world once again. These two games will really illustrate how massively powerful the Xbox is. Even better, they will raise the bar for Xbox games, forcing third parties to spend the time and effort to really take advantage of the hard drive, pixel-shaders, and amazing built-in functionality the Xbox has to offer.

Throw in a commitment to unique online elements and Microsoft is quickly differentiating the Xbox as a completely new type of gaming experience. We officially can't wait to get a taste for ourselves.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Art questions: Derek Chapman, Julie McGurran, and Mark Sharratt
Programming questions: Roger Perkins
Audio questions: Nick Wiswell
Car questions: Ben O'Sullivan

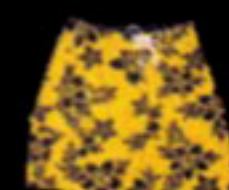
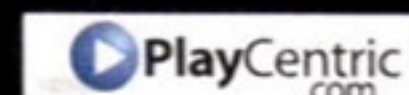
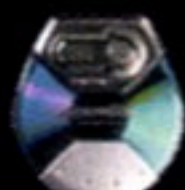
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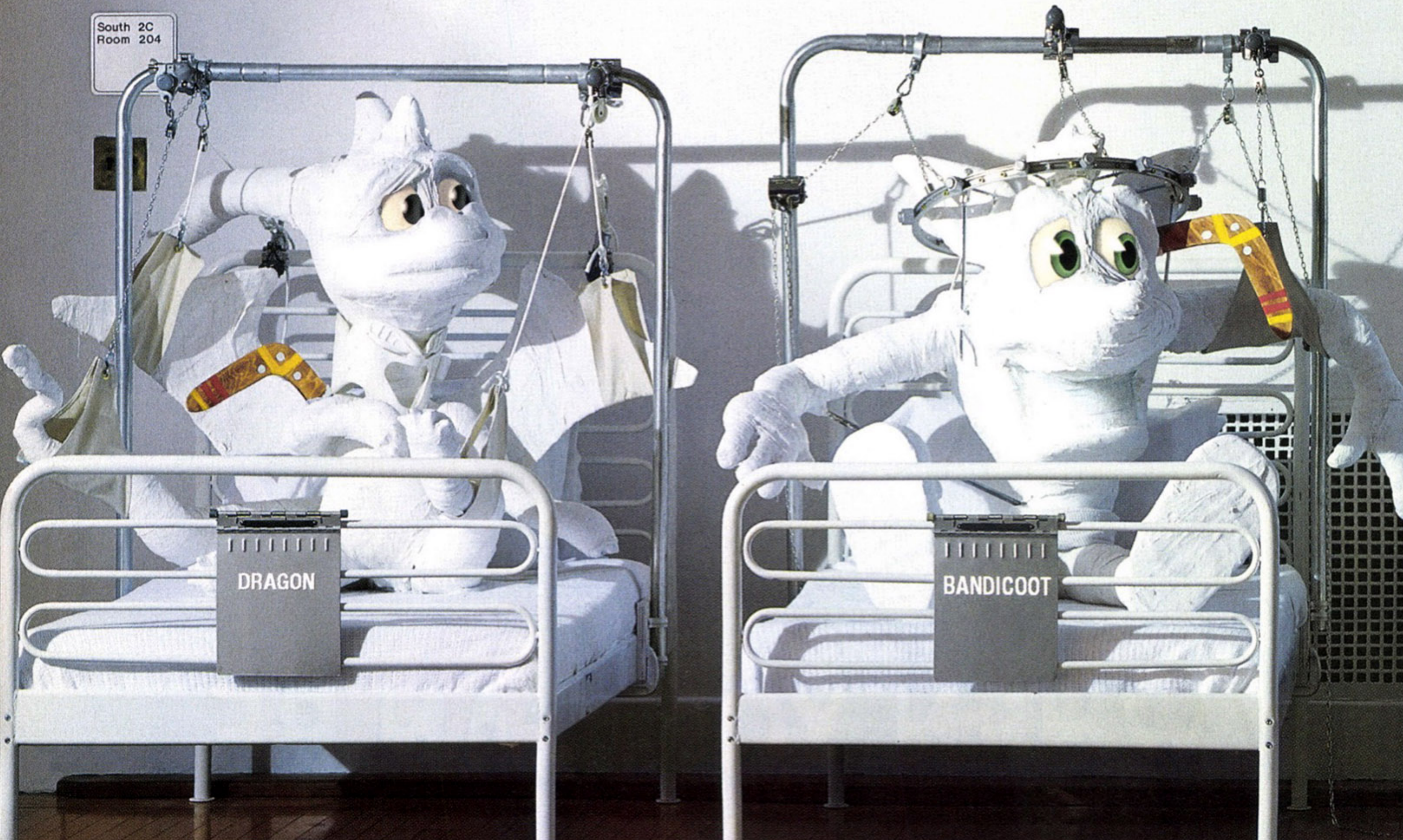
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PlayStation 2



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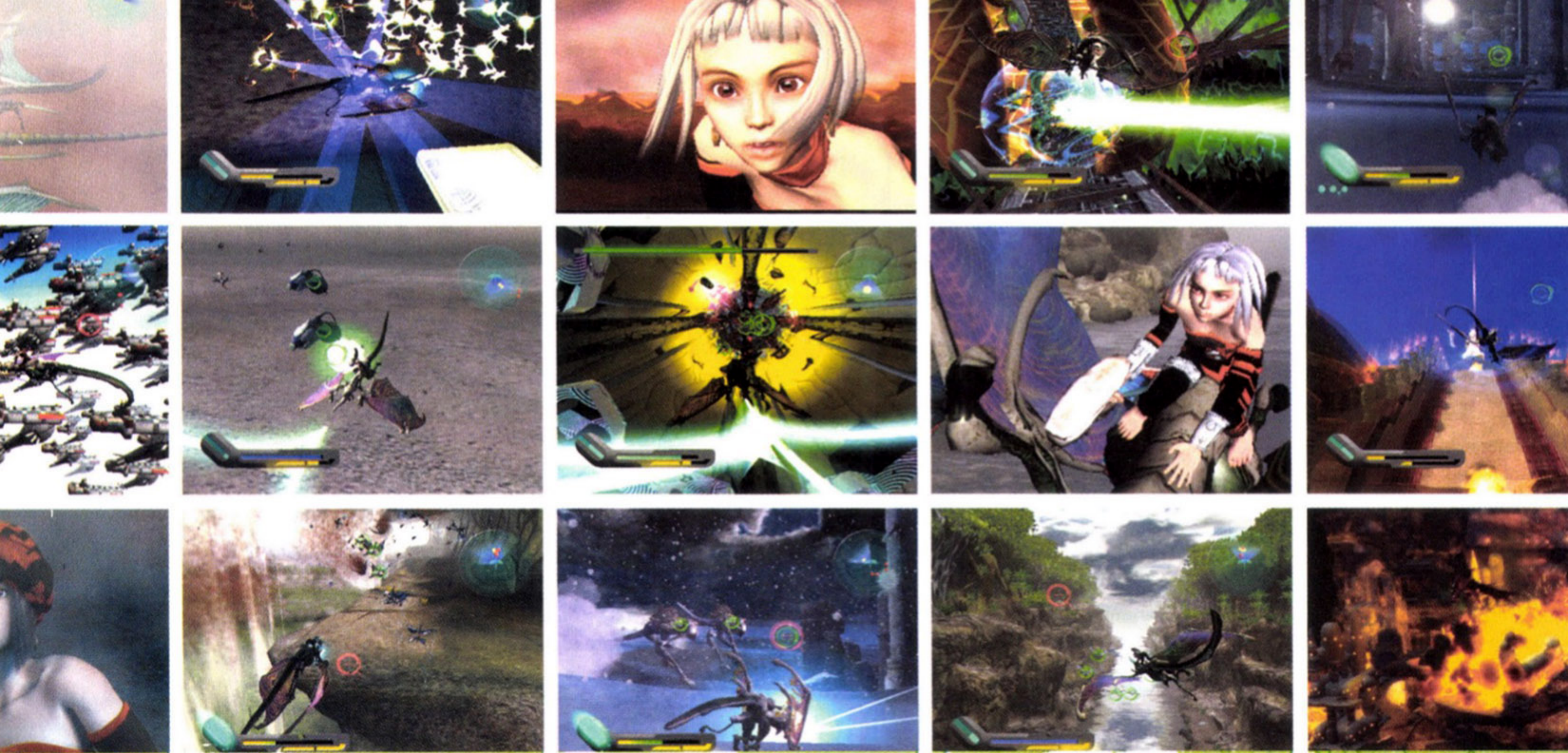
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WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

ENTER THE DRAGOON

Panzer Dragoon

Orta



			<p>DEVELOPER SMILEBIT PUBLISHER SEGA MULTIPLAYER NONE WEBSITE WWW.SEGA.COM</p>		
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		<p>Panzer Dragoon, the series, has always found a way to successfully combine superior graphics, skill-based gameplay, and a spectacularly epic storyline into one game. And now with the arrival of Sega's Panzer Dragoon Orta, the fourth in the series and the first to release on a non-Sega console system, it's difficult to believe that such a seemingly simplistic on-rails shooter could be so deeply involving – and it's even more difficult to articulate why it's all of the above and much, much more. But without a doubt – Panzer Dragoon Orta is definitely an experience.</p>		
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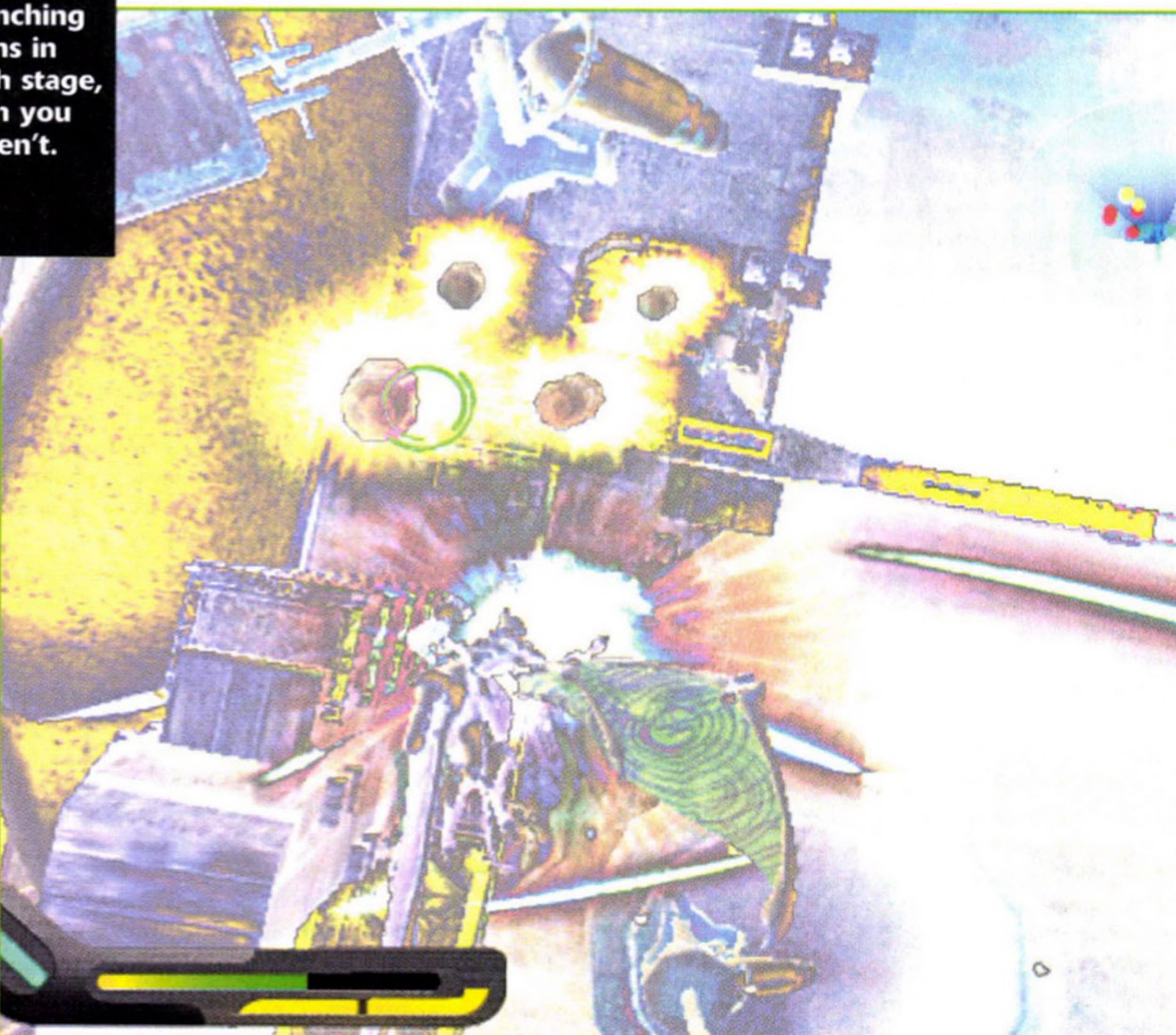
■ Think you've seen it all? Well, until you've found and mastered all the branching paths in each stage, then you haven't.

The opening sequence introduces players to Orta, a mysterious young girl who is freed from a prison cell high atop a dark tower by a powerful dragon. With little to no explanation, she hops on top of the dragon to be whisked straight into the thick of a raging battle taking place in the massive city below.

Players are then quickly thrust into the core of *Orta's* gameplay, having to learn how to control the dragon's flight while mastering the ins and outs of targeting their lock-on missiles and rapidly firing single bursts of radiant gunfire from Orta's handheld lasergun. All of this, because somehow Orta's escape has signaled an all points bulletin to the flanks of Empire cronies looking to keep you from getting away. Who is she? Why did the dragon rescue her? "Headfirst" doesn't even begin to describe it. And this is how the game hooks you – and it doesn't let up.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Stage after stage of the main story mode (there are over nine in all) encompass massive worlds, all fully realized with their own organic environments and creatures culminating in spectacular boss battles – something that the series does better than practically any other. It's scaled perfectly to convey both the size of Orta on her dragon and the lumbering behemoth bosses that threaten to wipe them both from the face of the alien earth. The minute you enter a boss battle you're captivated, a little frightened, and briefly stunned. And this is what the entire game hinges on – the ability to pull the player in for an actual gameplay experience. This is simply not some run 'n' gun action game that relies on mere visceral appeal – *Orta* convinces you that it contains an actual living, breathing world beckoning to you to explore it in full.



■ Once you've powered up your special meter by defeating enemies, you can unleash a dazzling Berserker attack that basically levels everything around you. Smilebit obviously saw it as an opportunity for some serious eye candy.

RE-IMAGINED

Visually, the game puts Xbox through its paces with impressively detailed worlds with massive horizons and beautifully designed creatures, environments, and character models. Regardless, *Orta's* graphics have much more to do with imagination than with mere technology.

Everything is amazing, from the bizarre creatures that hang from vines in the forest level to the gigantic gold statue to the furry, two-legged animals that lope along beside you across snowy fields... The inventiveness and creativity that have gone into building these worlds is staggering. Every stage and every encounter will have you wondering and anticipating

what's around the corner or what you might've missed. And this is a quality in a game that doesn't come along too often.

DON'T CALL IT A SHOOTER

But as much as graphics and presentation have to do with the overall experience of playing *Orta*, the gameplay also does its share. With a few slightly evolved elements from its predecessors, your task is seemingly simple – use your lasers to lock onto targets and fire at will to keep the enemies from shooting back at you. But Smilebit has blended features from original, *Zwei*, and even *Saga* to keep things fresh and, not surprisingly, challenging. In addition to a few levels spent rushing across the terrain on the back of your dragon (a la *Zwei*), you'll also be able to utilize a speed burst (or conversely, a slow-down feature) to either race past lunging danger or get behind enemies for optimal targeting. Some enemies can only be destroyed from certain angles, adding strategy to your attacks. There are also areas where you'll need to dodge environmental objects like walls and spikes which will have you bobbing and weaving in an effort to stay alive or to cash in on the game's numerous branching paths.

PANDORA'S BOX

And it's at this point that *Orta* goes even deeper with a massive selection of secrets and unlockables available to those with the skills to pop the lid on Pandora's Box (the series' trademark name for a menu option to access secret goodies). Based on your

performance in the main game, you'll open up all sorts of wonderful options including a staggering 15+ sub-scenarios that will often allow you to play through new or altered areas as various characters on different vehicles (including *Orta's* desert-dwelling chum, *Mobo*, and even some scenarios from the Empire's point of view). As if this wasn't enough, Smilebit has also thrown in unlockable movies for fans of the series, as well as loads of other valuable treasures.

■ The sense of flight and scale in *Orta* remains astonishing throughout your entire adventure.

STORY-DRIVEN

But for meticulous readers of this review, you'll find that we still haven't let the flying, dragon-shaped cat out of the bag as far as the storyline of *Orta*. And we'll have to let it remain this way. A big part of the thrill of playing through *Orta* is slowly unraveling the reasons and explanations behind who *Orta* is and what role she plays in the war that is tearing up the environment – and we're certainly not about to ruin it. Rest assured, though, that fans will feverishly squeal like schoolchildren when they start to piece the story together and all others will be enthralled by the complexity of *Panzer's* world, politics, and people.

Dragon type

Throughout the game, you'll have your choice of three different dragon types. Each one can be leveled up to receive increased stats, a bigger number of lock-on targets, and a new look.



■ **GLIDE WING:** A smaller, faster dragon without lock-on abilities, but three full speed meters to help you out of a tight squeeze. Best to swap out during boss battles to avoid body attacks.



■ **BASE WING:** Your basic dragon type with balanced abilities, good lock-on functions, and one long speed meter. You'll find yourself using the Base Wing the most during levels.



■ **HEAVY WING:** Exactly what you think it is – a heavily armored dragon without the perks of speed meters, but with some very powerful lock-on missiles. Use during battles that don't require dexterity.

IS IT REALLY ALL THAT?

But *Orta's* still just an on-rails shooter, right? It's more eye candy than actual game – true? Sure, yes, right... But then you're overlooking the reason why we play games in the first place – for escape, for a unique experience, to be transported to a world crafted completely out of imagination. And *Orta* does this better than almost any other game on Xbox to date. It's a game that couldn't work without any of its individual parts. With such a fanatical following of series' devotees, Smilebit and Sega have a lot to live up to with *Panzer Dragoon Orta*. Not only did they have to deliver in terms of graphics, but the gameplay and storyline had to exceed expectations. We're happy to say that, with all of its beauty and inspiration, *Orta* leaves all the expectations in the dust.

– Francesca Reyes

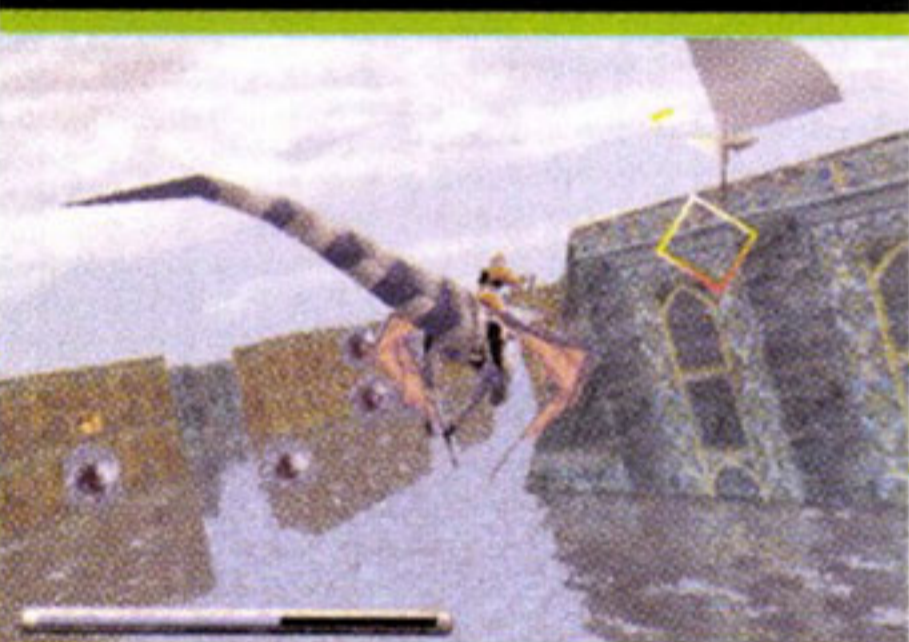


■ *Orta* takes place after the previous games with the Empire trying to rebuild itself.



■ Each new stage is a completely different experience with both ground and air missions.

An original



Just when you think you've played it all, Smilebit goes and sneaks in a full-length emulated version of the original *Panzer Dragoon* in as a secret in Pandora's Box! If you've never had a chance to check it out or if *Orta* makes you all nostalgic for a ride on the blue dragon, then all you have to do is access the game by using your skills. Once you do, prepare for some seriously, um, old-school graphics. But rest assured that the gameplay is still as tight as ever. Just don't try it on an HDTV... ahh, the pixels!



■ Some of the most breathtaking moments will undoubtedly be had during *Orta's* spectacular boss battles.

THE VERDICT

Graphics

Absolutely breathtaking – fully realized worlds perfectly scaled to make boss fights an incredible experience, giving the entire game an amazing sense of wonder.

Immersion

So detailed and well-conceived that every single aspect of the *Panzer* world is re-imagined and perfectly rendered to make the game convincing and completely immersive.

Sound

The sweeping orchestral arrangements of the previous *Panzers* makes a return to welcome fans back, while the garbled *Panzer* language is still intact as well.

Design

Though it's still constricted to rails for the most part, the level of skill expected of players and the layout of stages and boss battles are unequalled for this type of game.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + A wonderfully joyous ride with plenty of memorable gameplay moments.
- + Best. Graphics. Ever. Really.
- + An unbelievable level of imagination.
- + More worthwhile secrets and unlockables than you can shake a stick at.
- You can't help but wonder what it'd be like if it were in complete 3D.
- Cheap shots from enemies and bosses can be frustrating.
- Wish there were more types of dragons to use.
- ? Can we get an emulated *PDSaga* on our *Orta*, please?

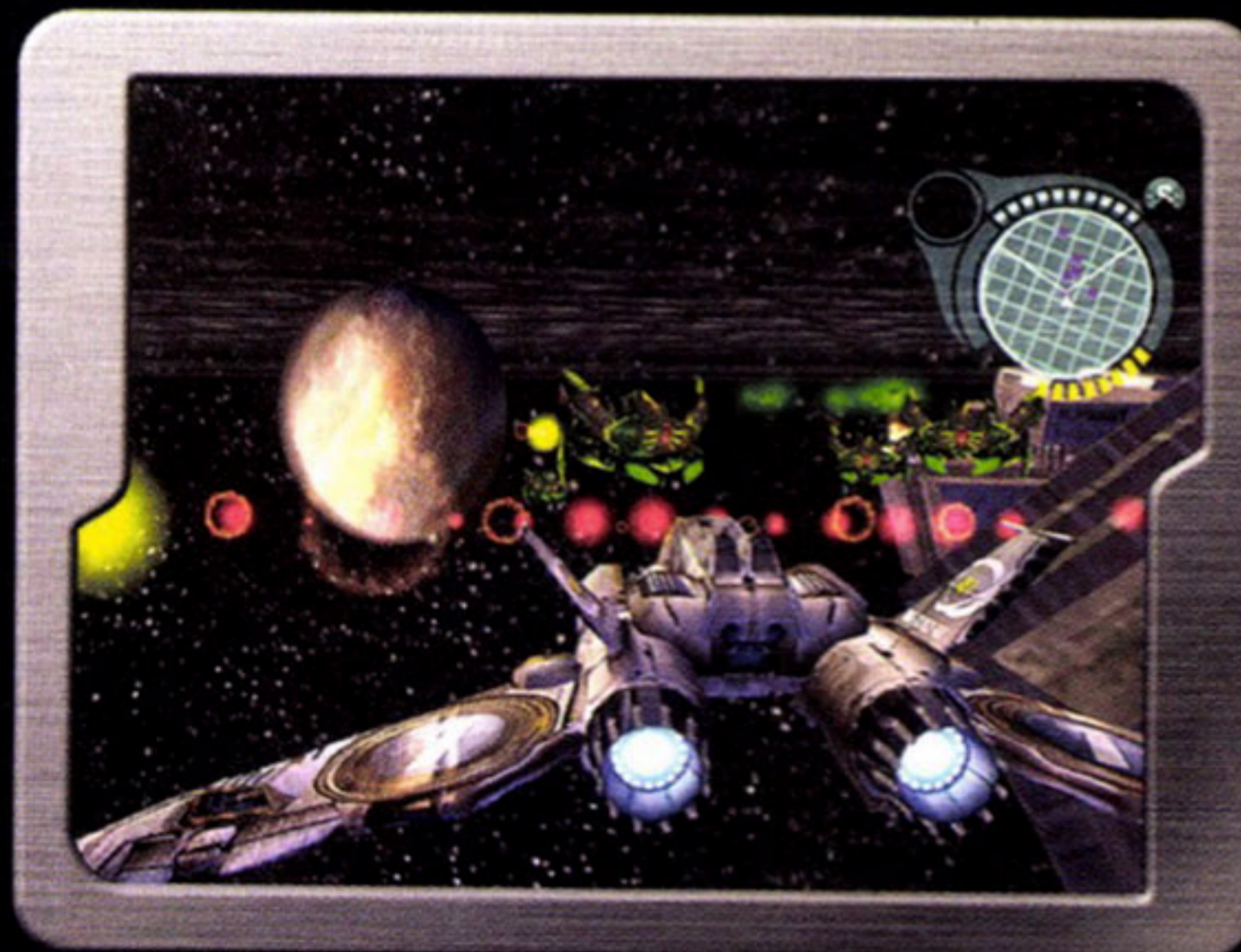
Official Xbox magazine verdict

9.3
10.0

*WHAT ALIENS HAVE
NIGHTMARES ABOUT...*



screenshots from Playstation®2 computer entertainment system



screenshots from Xbox™ video game system



DEFENDER

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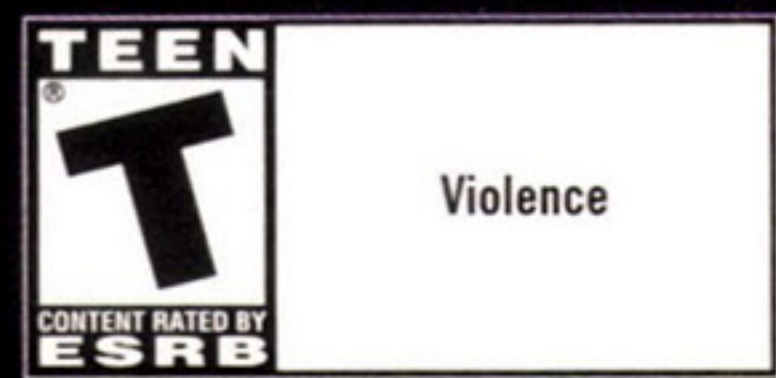
Game preview at www.defender.midway.com



PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



Previews

It's time to **FINISH THEM!**

Mortal Kombat:

Deadly Alliance

Slice and dice!

As politicians and lawyers endlessly debate videogame violence, the game that spawned the controversy is set to return to center stage. After the disappointing *MK4*, the developers at Midway decided to go back to the drawing board. The result is *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance*.

Like the previous games in the series, *MK:DA* doesn't have much in the way of plot. But,

hey, who needs plot when you've got blood, gore, and action? *MK:DA* has it all in spades.

The new game's fighting system is a departure from previous styles, but it's a welcome change. Gone are the pre-programmed combos and 2D fighting styles. *Deadly Alliance* features 3D arenas with full freedom of movement and three distinct fighting styles per character. Since you can switch fighting styles on the fly, it is

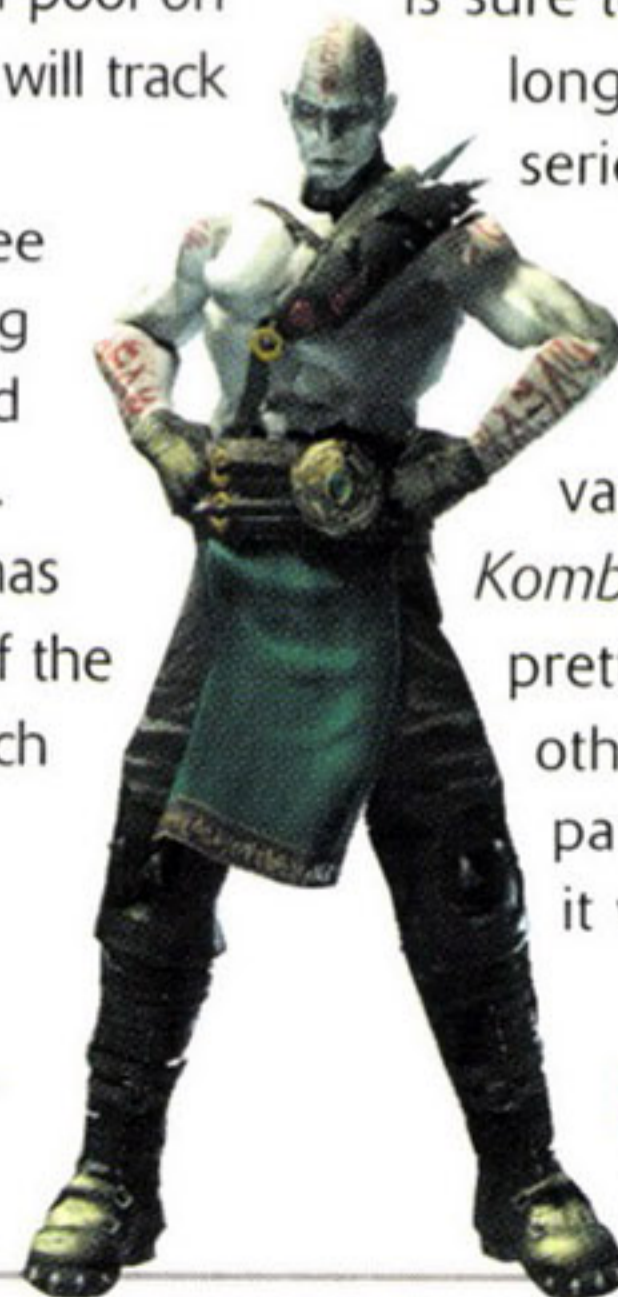
possible to bust out wicked combos to mix it up.

Visually, *MK:DA* is a huge step up from all previous *Kombats*. Everything is rendered in exquisite detail, down to the individual blood droplets running down your opponent's face. If you manage to draw lots of blood, it will pool on the floor and characters will track it around as they fight. Another nice touch is free flowing clothes. Watching a cape flutter in the wind is something to be seen. And just as much care has gone into the creation of the arenas. Old favorites, such as the Acid Bath from *MK2*, have been re-imagined, while others, such as the Lava Shrine, are all new.

While the gameplay is far from complete, the version we saw looked promising. Players are forced to think about their moves, as opposed to simply button mashing their way to the top. Reversals now form an important part of *Kombat*, which is sure to please fans who've long complained about the series' lack of depth.

Another improvement to the game is the player variety. In previous *Kombats*, the characters were pretty much clones of each other. This was done in part to save memory, but it was also indicative of an

■ Meet Shang Tsung groupie, Quan Chi.



TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: Midway PUBLISHER: Midway RELEASE: November 22, 2002

WHO ARE THEY?: Midway's Chicago team may be new to home consoles, but they aren't new to games. Responsible for many key arcade games over the years, Ed Boon and company are making a mighty fine transition to the home market.



■ That's the look that gets the ladies, all right.

Finish Him!

Those two words desensitized gamers across the country when the original *Mortal Kombat* hit arcades. Knowing the movements necessary to unlock

Sub-Zero's spine rip was both a sense of pride and another layer of humiliation for your defeated opponent. Well, the finishing

moves are back with a vengeance in *Deadly Alliance*, and we've got an exclusive first look at Sub-Zero's finishing move. Eat your heart out.



1 ■ Defeated, Scorpion staggers back as the announcer utters those immortal words.



2 ■ Sub-Zero thrusts his hand deep into his victim's back.



3 ■ As Sub-Zero grabs the spine, Scorpion thrashes about.



4 ■ Sub-Zero leans down and starts to lift Scorpion into the air...



5 ■ ...as he uses one hand to rip out Scorpion's skeleton in one smooth motion. Painful.



■ In addition to the brand-new arenas in *MK:DA*, all of the environments are designed to be interactive, as well.



■ A whole new set of individual moves for every character! Booyah!

underdeveloped game. Not so here. Each of the 21 brawlers not only has their own set of moves, but they all play differently to boot.

Hidden goodies were a fan favorite in previous games, and they return for *MK: DA*. Players will earn Kombat

Kurrency as they fight through the game.

Kurrency can be used to unlock items such as secret costumes, hidden levels, and more.

You'll have your chance to check them all out this November.

— Adam Pavlacka

■ Blind Kenshi pretty much says it all.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Visually stunning.
- Depth of fighting provides a lot of variety.
- Oodles of unlockables.

GORE-RIFFIC

If the original game gave Senator Lieberman the willies, *Deadly Alliance* is going to give the poor man nightmares. The game has plenty of gore, and the developers make no apologies for it. As hardcore gamers, we appreciate the fact that developers can make the game that meets their vision, but parents should be aware that *Deadly Alliance* is going to really deserve its M rating.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It's been a long time since *Mortal Kombat* was a serious contender in the fighting-game arena. If our preview copy of *Deadly Alliance* is any indication, *MK* may once again be a household name.

NEEDS WORK

- Has to overcome the stigma of *MK4*.
- Developers might go overboard with the "-alities."

IS THIS AN ARCADE?

Deadly Alliance looks good. Really good. With its fast-moving hi-poly count, it could very well be an arcade game. We wanted to stick an Xbox into a cabinet and sell it on eBay as a "RARE PROTOTYPE." Our lawyers thought it wasn't such a smart idea. What do they know.





WHAT'S HOCKEY WITHOUT HITZ?

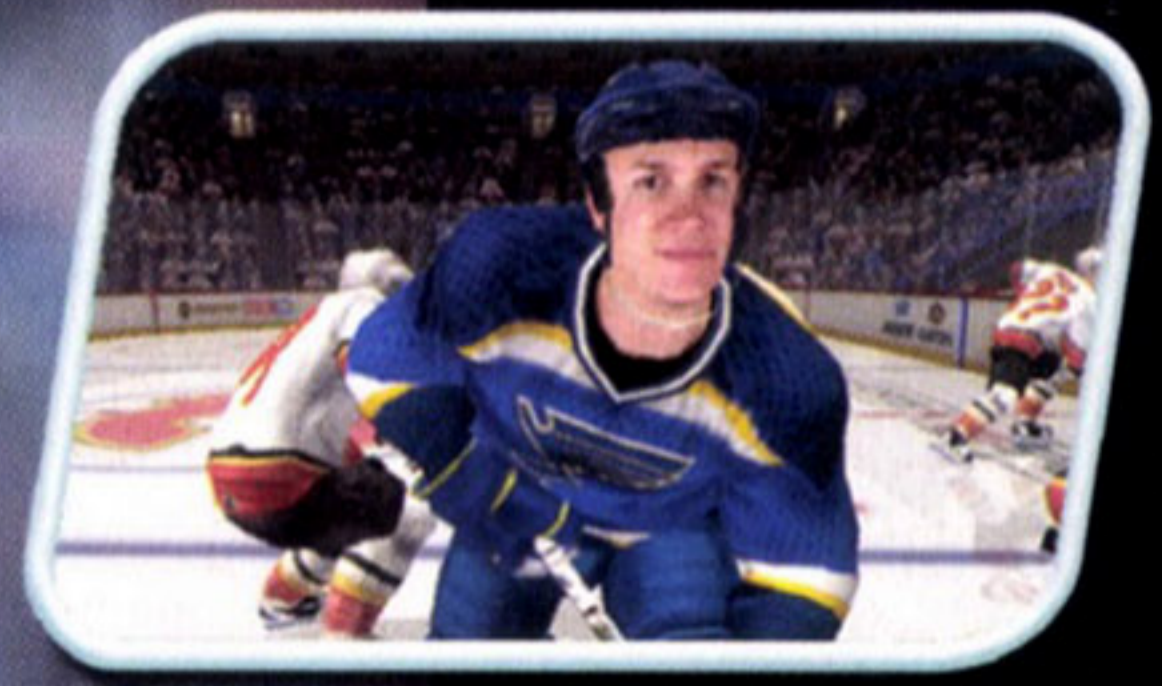
EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY
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Everyone



GAME BOY ADVANCE

PlayStation 2

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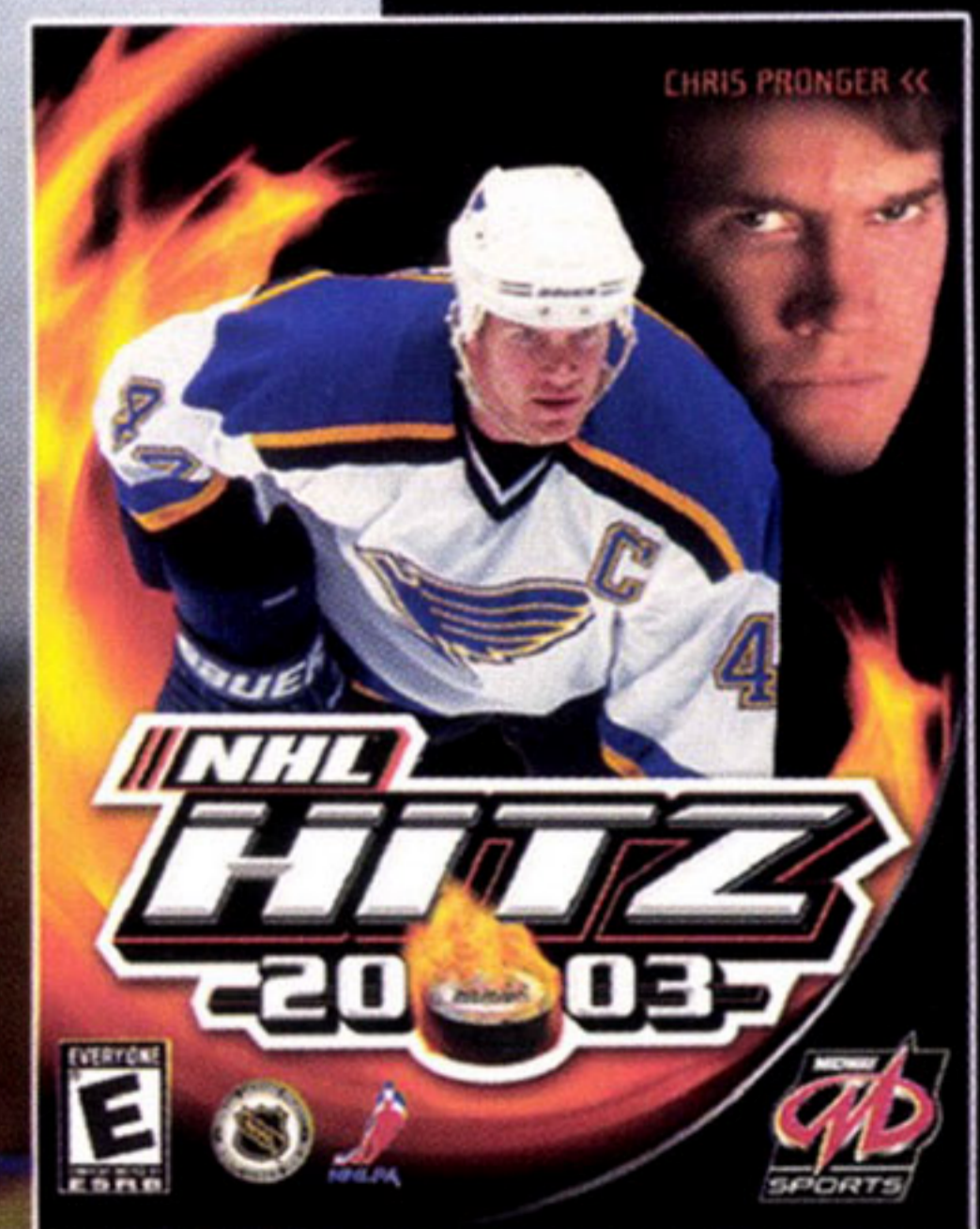


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Xbox screenshots shown



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Fatal Frame

DEVELOPER **TECMO** | PUBLISHER **TECMO** | RELEASE DATE **OCTOBER 31, 2002**

Those special, supernatural moments can now last a lifetime

Fatal Frame isn't your typical "gun down everything on screen until it's dead" type of survival horror game. In fact, it's quite the opposite. The game revolves around a young girl named Miku, who is blessed (or possibly cursed) with a sensitivity to the supernatural. In other words – she sees dead polygonal people. And after her brother goes

missing in a mysterious mansion, she has no choice but to head off after him, while solving the grisly mystery of the house he disappeared in.

And if this were nothing more than a rift on standard survival horror jaunts, like *Resident Evil*, then it'd be easy to blast your way through with a shotgun in one hand and a medicinal herb in the other. Instead, the development team chose to take a different route by making your character face seemingly insurmountable odds with only a

special camera to fend off the supernatural with. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

"Shibata's [the designer] goal was to simply make the scariest game ever made... We came to

Fatal Frame works incredibly well, creating fear through graphics and sound.

the conclusion that you have to encounter a fearful object up close. This made the choice of weapon to be a camera an obvious one," says Keisuke

Kukuchi, producer of *Fatal Frame*.

As Miku makes her way through the mansion, she'll slowly unravel the reasons behind a host of gruesome murders that have occurred in the house throughout history, as well as discovering secrets hidden in her own past. But to do this, the player must survive all the ghostly encounters by capturing the moments on film.

Your camera is the only defense against the enemy and its special abilities and functions are only unlocked once you master its use. Instead of "ammo," players will have to conserve rolls of film – differing grades of film provide more powerful protection against ghosts. And the better your skills

WIRED

Check out the official website for information on the game at www.fatalframegame.com. And don't leave without watching the spooky trailer!

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Xbox needs some good ol' fashioned horror...
- ...and this is one of the scariest on deck.
- Good-looking, good-sounding, good-playing.

NEEDS WORK

- Will the backgrounds be optimized for Xbox?
- Will the enhancements entice those who played the PS2 version?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Scary, scary, scary – and challenging to boot! *Fatal Frame* is for neither the faint of heart nor the novice gamer. But the combination of freaky sights and sounds, along with an intriguing challenge, makes this a definite solid package in the making.



■ One of the new enemies exclusive to the Xbox version – expect a whole host of new apparitions to pop up throughout the game.



■ Your flashlight (a la *Silent Hill*) isn't the most powerful thing in the world, so let's hope you're not afraid of the dark.

are at snapping photos of the undead, the more points you'll be able to amass in order to upgrade your camera's speed, accuracy, and range – which are crucial against some of the diabolical demons you'll be up against.

As a horror game, *Fatal Frame* works incredibly well, creating fear through graphics and sound. Visually, the enemies are startling

with ghastly designs plucked straight out of nightmares. Ghostly female apparitions in white dresses with hollowed-out eyes float through darkened hallways. Bloody, disembodied figures lurk beneath the floorboards. And you'll often catch a glimpse of something crawling out of sight into the black underside of a porch. It certainly isn't a game to play alone. Trust us.

Origin of fear

When we spoke with *Fatal Frame* Producer Keisuke Kukuchi, he cited architecture as an inspiration. "While... researching traditional Japanese architecture for another game, it dawned on me that the characteristics of traditional Japanese architecture would be the best stage for the horror [game] that we were contemplating. For instance, the traditional Japanese architectures provides a lot of spaces under floors, and shadows that are created by the unique [structural] shapes that all work together to create that feeling of 'something scary is lurking in the house.'" Play the game and you'll agree.



The real fear is driven home by the game's excellent use of sound. Upgraded to fully use Xbox's Dolby 5:1 audio capabilities, all the footsteps in empty hallways, whispers in corners, and ghastly screams are pitch perfect to hammer the fear home for surround sound junkies.

But is there any reason to play the game again on Xbox if you've already conquered the PS2 version? According to Tecmo – yes. In addition to new enemies and supernatural photo ops, Kukuchi says, "After defeating [the last boss] you'll experience an ending that I can't tell you now. Additionally, if you shoot certain spots in the mansion, hidden spirits that are only seen through photos will increase in number and variations." We'll be leaving the lights on in our office for *Fatal Frame*'s timely arrival at the end of October.

– Francesca Reyes



TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER **Tecmo** PUBLISHER **Tecmo** RELEASE **2003**

WHO ARE THEY?: Xbox owners know Tecmo best for its skill in the fighting arena with the *DOA* series firmly under its belt. That game was the work of Team Ninja, but there are other developers at Tecmo with more variety in its repertoire (*Monster Rancher*, *Tecmo Bowl*, etc.), and *Fatal Frame* is definitely a good example of this.

GAME:	SYSTEM:	SCORE:
<i>Fatal Frame</i>	PS2	9.0
<i>DOA3</i>	Xbox	9.5
<i>Monster Rancher 3</i>	PS2	7.5
AVERAGE:		8.7

There's one born every minute.

Trust us, this gameplay is way too strong for print. You must see the game in action to fully comprehend the power harnessed within. Check out www.twsnowboardgame.com.



peter line | tina basich | andrew crawford | barrett christy | daniel franck | kevin jones | jussi oksanen | todd richards | wille yli-luoma | nicola thost

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Metal Gear Solid 2 Substance

DEVELOPER **KONAMI** | PUBLISHER **KONAMI** | RELEASE DATE **HOLIDAYS 2002**

Sneaking its way onto your Xbox very, very soon...

This could be the closest an update ever gets to being a real sequel. At the heart of the title is the entire *Metal Gear Solid 2* game, featuring the mysterious adventures of Solid Snake and a couple of other surprising heroes. It's an action/combat/stealth/strategy/adventure game that tries its hardest to defy description. Confusing as that sounds, the game does in fact have something to offer everyone – from frantic shooting to delicate puzzle solving.

In the *Substance* update, there are new characters,

costumes, weapons, and game modes to contend with, as well as some stunning Xbox-related

That's right: 200 training missions, each a separate game in its own right.

enhancements. The game will, of course, now take place in beautiful surround sound, and –

when connected to an HDTV – at a much higher resolution. But it's the new gameplay that will have fans most excited, and *Substance* has it in spades.

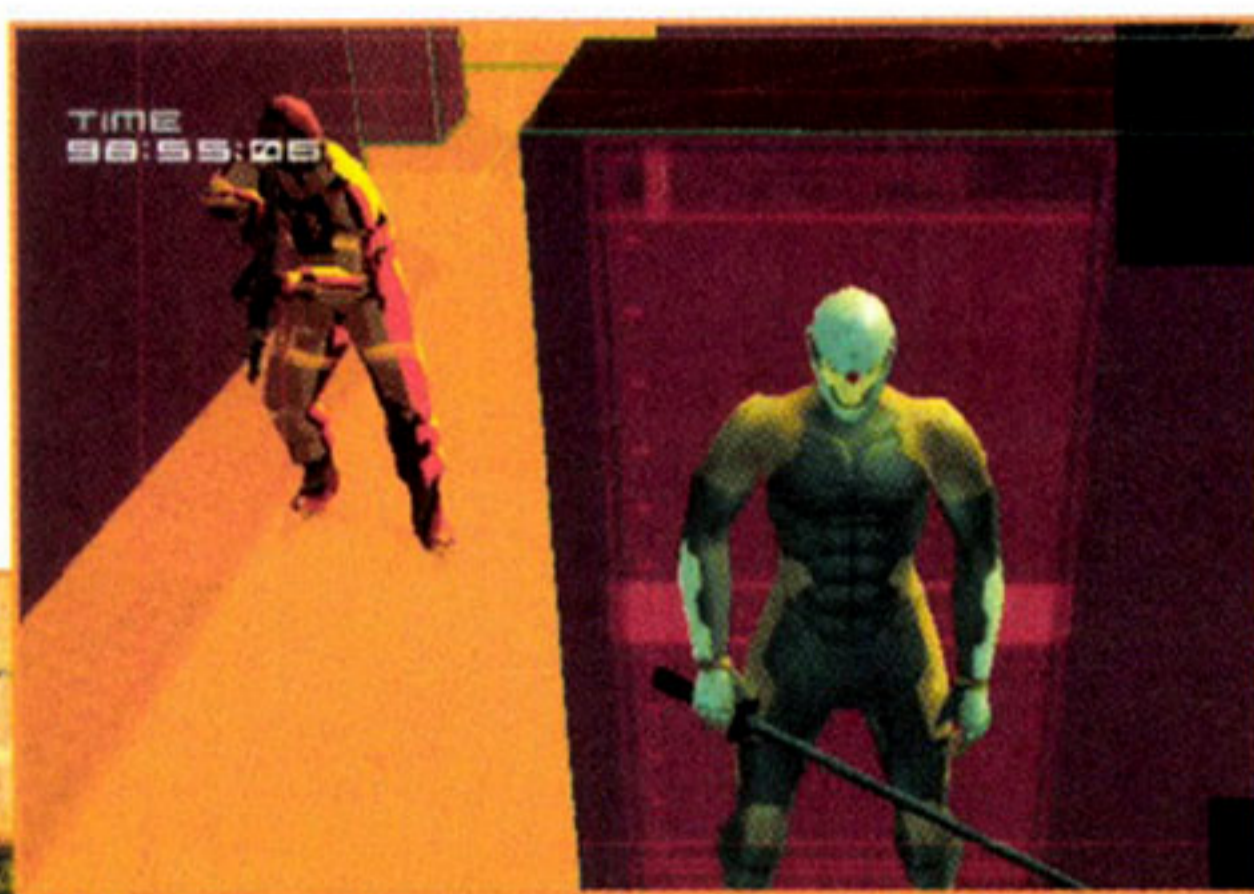
For example, it's possible to skip the missions and fight boss after boss consecutively, just for the heck of it. Or, if you're feeling more like a fashion show, the game gives you the chance to play Snake in a number of new costumes, from Tuxedo to Ninja outfit.

There's weirder stuff still, such as a *Tony Hawk*-style skateboard mode (although that's one of the features that creator Hideo Kojima may include or ditch on a

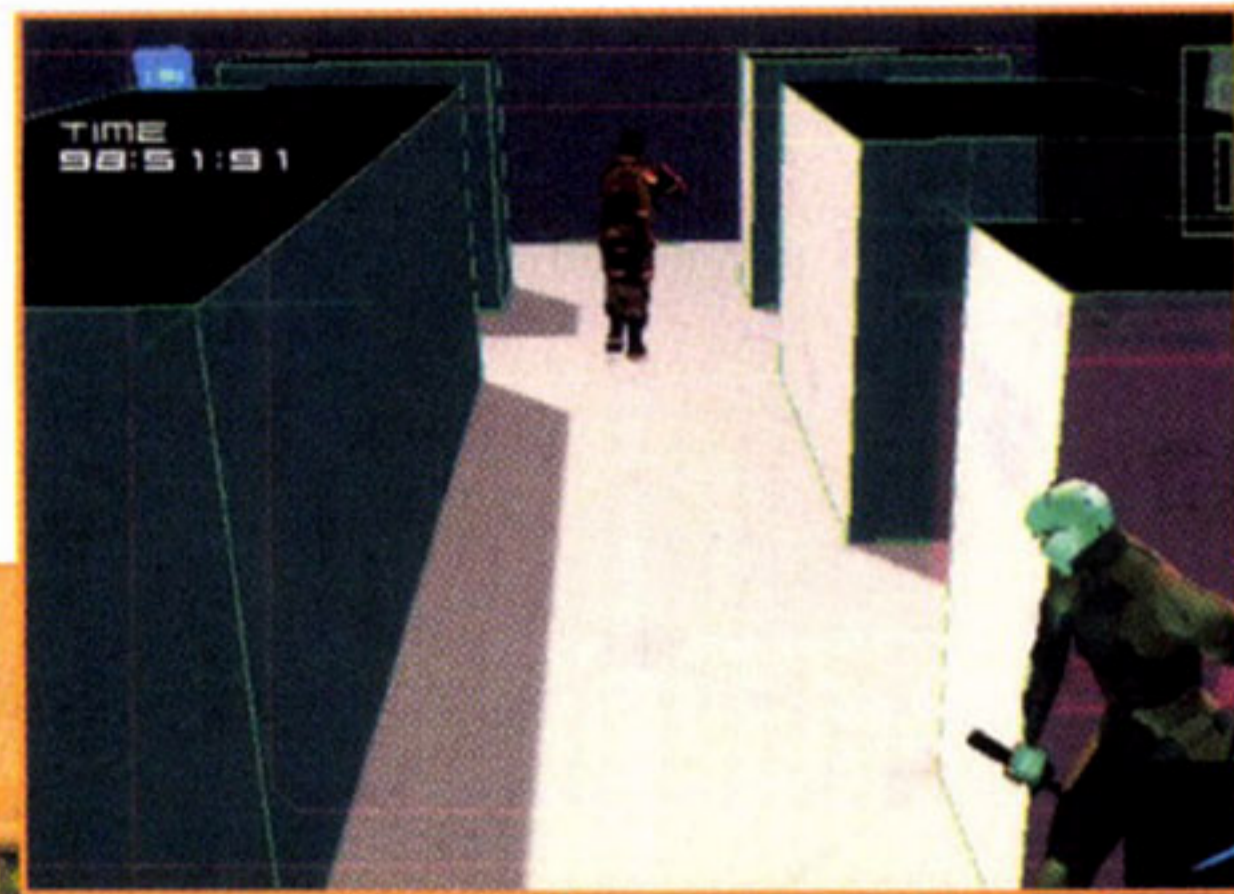
whim!) that lets you soar, grind, and generally abuse the structures of the game's many locations. Or how about a running battle against 50-foot-high Gurlukovich mercenaries? It's all in here.

But the biggest addition of all (if you discount bump-mapping for one second) is the 200 VR missions. That's right: 200 training missions, each a separate game in its own right, with the now-familiar VR environments, puzzles and challenges. Xbox finally gets *Metal Gear*. This is going to be awesome. Genuinely awesome.

– Frank O'Connor



■ Controlling Raiden in a VR Mission mode? Oh yes indeed.



■ These things may look simple, but they're amazingly fun to play.



■ And of course it wouldn't be *Metal Gear* without some complete insanity...

■ So you're hiding in the dark with a silenced pistol, but you're also listening to bangin' choons on your cans.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Stunning new features.
- Sharper Xbox graphics.
- Excellent "VR Missions."

NEEDS WORK

- Just a prelude to *MGS3*.
- Crazy, senseless plot.

SNEAKY

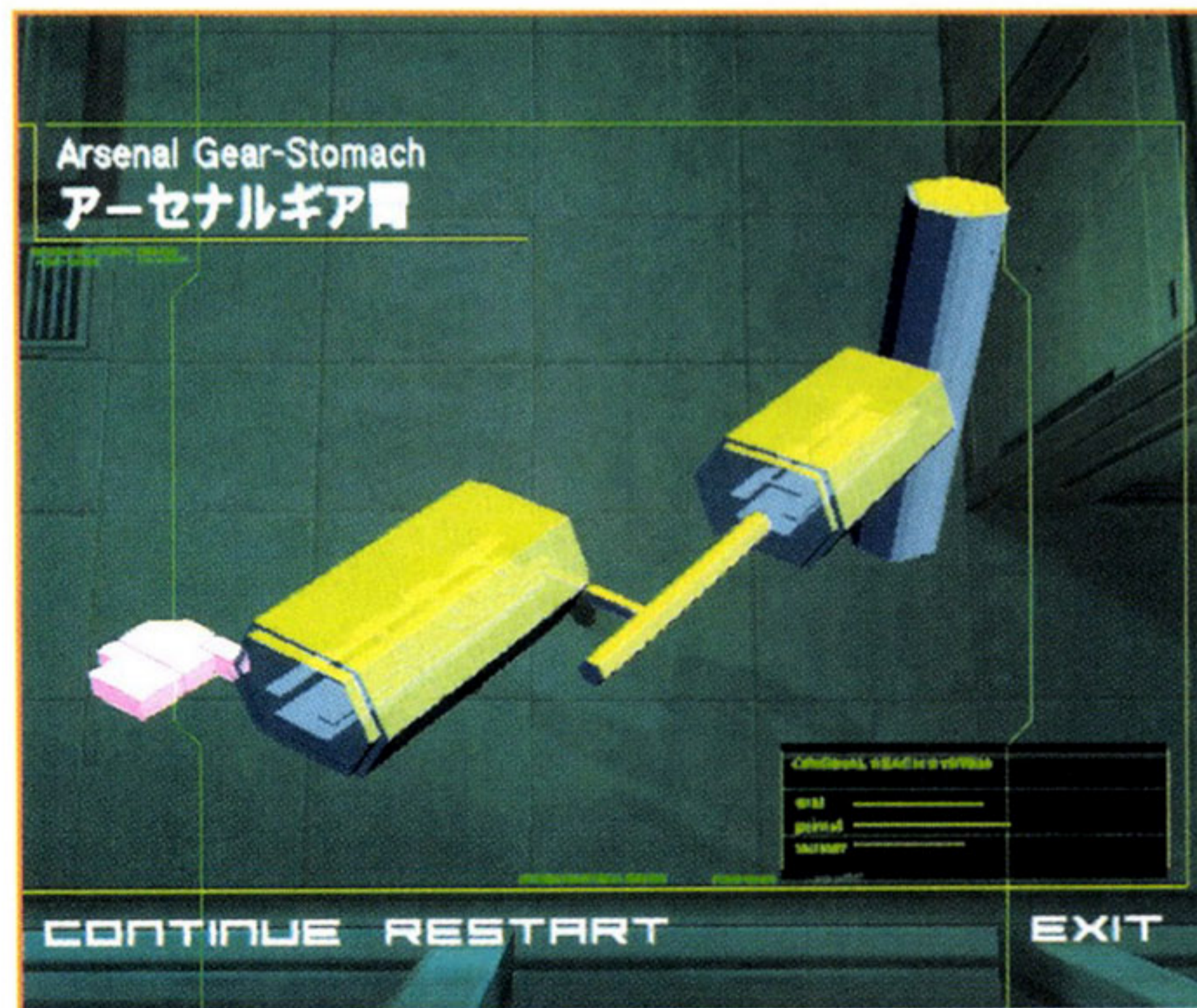
Between this and *Splinter Cell*, the holiday season on Xbox is going to be something else for stealth fans. Even those who've played all the way through *MGS2* on PS2 will find that there's a ton of new stuff to justify the repurchase of an old favorite, and for *MGS* newbies, it's manna from heaven.

AS SEEN ON TV!

For a game that relies on stealth, the *Metal Gear Solid* series seems to make an awful lot of noise! Expect to hear more from Snake and the gang every time you go to a game store, a theater, or a bathroom.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The thought of new levels, new modes, and new challenges for a game that still haunts our dreams, and the addition of Dolby 5:1 and 480p, plus the skateboarding, and... well, frankly, it's all just a little too much for us.



■ Don't worry, the Japanese text will be gone, but the installation will still be called "Arsenal Gear-Stomach."



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PlayStation[®] 2



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■ Chicken Little isn't one to tell you "I told you so," but look at that sky – he totally told you so.

Reign of Fire

DEVELOPER **KUJU ENTERTAINMENT** | PUBLISHER **BAM! ENTERTAINMENT** | RELEASE DATE **NOV 2002**

You take out their heart, you bring down the beast!

With some movies, videogame conversions are a given. *Spider-Man*. *Star Wars*. Bond flicks. These films beg for games because of their huge fan bases, whereas something like *Reign of Fire*, well, doesn't, as it's not one of the big-ticket films in theaters. That may actually turn out to be a hidden blessing, though, since *Reign of Fire's* appeal will likely have to stand more on the game's quality and less on the movie's popularity. Plus, unlike many movie titles, this one actually makes sense from a gameplay perspective because there are so many game-like elements in the film. It's an action movie with numerous enemy drones, lots of explosions, and rugged main characters. The game doesn't have to take a small part of the movie and create a game from that or change the whole storyline

concept to make something play better. It just fits.

The film follows a fantasy plotline where in the future a hibernating dragon is mistakenly unleashed and goes on to breed and create all sorts of havoc. A group of remaining humans living in disaster come together to fight these dragons while saving their fellow man.

As soon as the game starts, the player is presented with a big decision of whether to take the side of the humans or the dragons. If you choose humans, you become a resistance fighter who goes on a hunt for the only male dragon of the bunch, all the while defending your people and villages. Should you be evil and decide to go with the dragons, you'll start as a baby who knows little more than killing people.

This split-gameplay concept is no longer original, having worn out its welcome on games like

Jurassic Park for the Genesis and *Alien vs. Predator* for the Jaguar, but Kuju's emphasis on using this combo to benefit the storyline is unique. Rather than take the easy route of making a pure action game using movie characters, they decided to give each protagonist its own storyline and cut scenes, even going as far as showing the evolution of the player-controlled dragon from youth.

To help level out the playing field for resistance-fighter side, the developers have included a set of vehicles. These include a mini buggy, a jeep, and the

Vehicles

We like vehicles. Especially when a developer throws some guns on top



and puts them in an action game.



Apparently the developers are

focused on making the vehicle physics easy to learn but hard to master – the



biggest



cliché in the book.

obligatory tank. But apparently not all these contraptions are used to take down dragons; they can be defensive as well. One of note is a fire truck that can pick up villagers with a water cannon built in to douse flames.

But enough of this helping people – we really want to see how much destruction we can cause. The developers realize this, promising "reactive fire effects" and huge explosions. How huge? We'll just have to wait and see.

– Matt Leone

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- The license is simply meant for an action game.
- Fire! Fire!
- Vehicles could provide crucial variety.

NEEDS WORK

- Apart from fire effects, graphics seem basic.
- It ships well after the movie.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It all comes down to how well the action is executed. The story should work well enough, and vehicles have been known to help make great games great (memories of *Metal Slug* for the Neo Geo and – you know it's coming – *Halo*), but until we test out the actual combat, it's a tough call.

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Preview

Xbox goes back in time

■ The graphics look nice and are similar to the PC game playing on a high-end computer.

Serious Sam

DEVELOPER **CROTEAM** | PUBLISHER **GOTHAM GAMES** | RELEASE DATE **FALL 2002**

Did somebody say insane scenarios?

Time-Lock: a rare gadget that allows one and only one person to travel backwards through time. Serious Sam: that person.

Earth is under attack in the near future and our hero, known as Sam Stone to his friends, is a legendarily brave fighter, so he is



■ We like fire-based enemies.



■ The scope function succeeds.

sent into battle. He heads back through time to take out the last of the "ancient immortals" called Tah-Um to prevent evil from spreading across the land.

But really, the storyline is not

A hundred and fifty different types of enemies...

what this game is all about; it's just a way for developer Croteam to throw hordes and hordes of enemies at the player, usually in wide-open locations that allow as many grunts on the screen as possible. A hundred and fifty different types of enemies will swarm after Sam on the land, in the air, and in the water, so you can expect a good amount of variety in the combat. Power-ups such as "serious damage" and "serious speed" keep the player from feeling helpless and add

little injections of energy every now and then, as well as keeping the non-stop action from becoming tedious.

As with many first-person action games, especially those where the main concept is to kill everything around, there is the issue of violence. *Serious Sam* deals with this by making the violence more comical, with unusual-looking enemies, over-the-top amounts of blood, and bright, cheerful environments. One of the enemies screams maniacally as he runs at you

carrying a bomb. This is nothing to be taken too seriously.

For the Xbox conversion, Croteam is adding a new comic-book-style interface and a heavier arcade style with an emphasis on scoring points. Most importantly, Xbox owners will also be getting the PC sequel (*The Second Encounter*) attached to the end of the original game to create a much longer adventure. This alone pumps up the value of the game since it combines two popular PC titles. Isn't the Xbox grand?

— Matt Leone

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- The words "pure action" have never been more appropriate.
- A large variety of enemies is always good.

NEEDS WORK

- This Xbox compilation is up against aging PC versions of the same games...
- ...that were budget-priced (\$20) on release.

FINAL THOUGHTS

If you were interested but never had a powerful enough PC, want to support Croatia, or just love lots of killing, this could be a good option for the holiday season.

It weighs 3 tons.

It occupies 100 square feet.

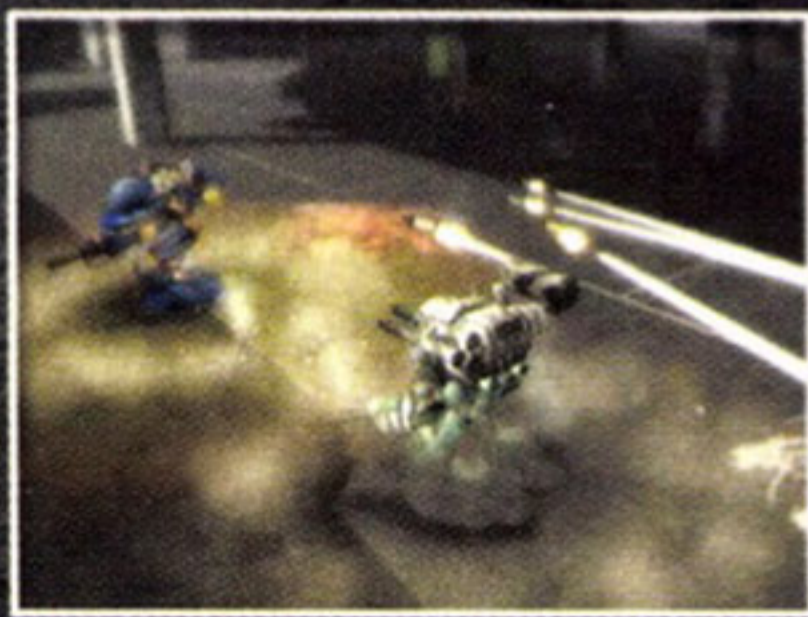
And it's hiding right in front of your face.

new enemy

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Preview

Where there's Indy, there's doom...

■ Rope-swinging segments are reminiscent of the old-school *Indy* adventures of yore.

Indiana Jones & the Emperor's Tomb

DEVELOPER **THE COLLECTIVE** | PUBLISHER **LUCASARTS** | RELEASE DATE **WINTER 2002**

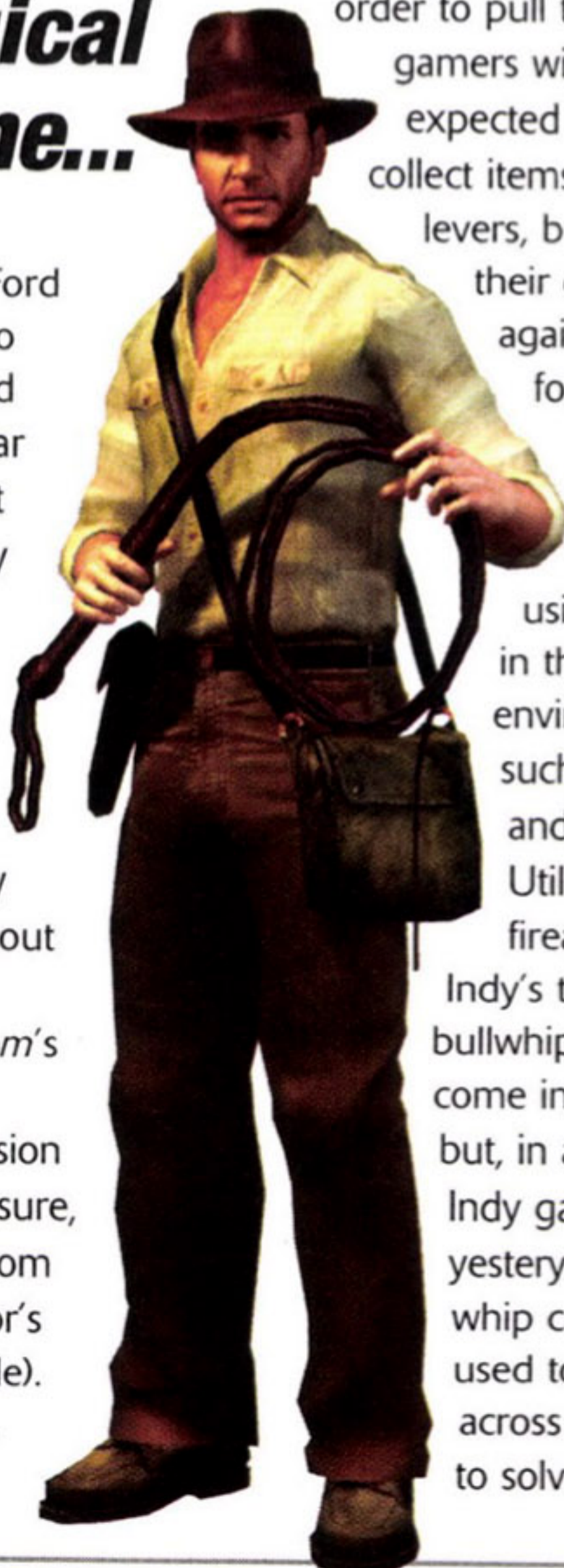
Saving the world, one archaeological dig at a time...

With Harrison Ford now having to blend his food and live in fear of a broken hip, there isn't much hope for a new *Indy* movie, so LucasArts has foregone any film tie-in for this upcoming videogame. *Indiana Jones & the Emperor's Tomb* places the hero in a wholly original story set at just about the same time (but not location) as *Temple of Doom's* far East antics.

Jones undertakes a mission to track down a fabled treasure, the Heart of the Dragon, from an ancient Chinese emperor's tomb (hence the game's title). And in typical *Indy* fashion, he's up against a horde of

enemies ranging from the Black Dragon Triad to German soldiers in a race to see who gets their hands on the treasure first. In order to pull this off,

gamers will be expected to not only collect items and pull levers, but to put up their dukes against multiple foes with fighting combos, as well as using objects in the environment, such as chairs and shovels. Utilizing firearms and *Indy's* trusty bullwhip will also come in handy – but, in a nod to *Indy* games of yesteryear, your whip can also be used to swing across chasms or to solve puzzles.



The adventure takes players through a number of exotic locales that will have you testing out your fighting skills on the streets of Hong Kong or swimming the murky waters surrounding a jungle temple in Ceylon – crocodiles included.

The Collective's recent Xbox outing, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, showed us that lush textures, fast-paced combat, and detailed character models could be done seamlessly in a game with fast, fun, and engaging results. Expect them to give *Indiana* the same treatment when it ships this winter.

– Francesca Reyes



■ We like what we've seen of *Indy's* complex combat engine.



■ The visual detail in-level is surprising, but very welcome.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Hand-to-hand combat looks impressive, already.
- Variety of stages and environments is vast.

NEEDS WORK

- Will all the gameplay elements come together in time for the game's release?

FINAL THOUGHTS

With a solid engine and developer behind the game, there's plenty of promise with *Indy's* impending release. An emphasis on combat and environments already gives the game a good cinematic scope true to the movie franchise.

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Quality Time

As games get closer to release, we often get a chance to sit in a room alone with them for a couple of hours. This is easily the best part of our job, but what good is this to you? Well, what if we share these experiences and get you up to speed on the best new games? Sure, why not. Get ready for some QT.

House of the Dead 3

DEVELOPER **Wow** PUBLISHER **Sega** RELEASE DATE **October 2002**

The experience

With or without a lightgun, this is one fast-paced funfest that had us aiming for headshots and blowing big holes through the waves of zombies with our trusty shotguns. The main survival mode boasts "branching paths" wherein you can choose specific routes to take – though this didn't seem to affect the core gameplay aside from where you might bump into a boss. The overall experience is tight and well-designed to mimic more of an on-rails FPS with arcade leanings, rather than your typical *HOTD* lightgun action... and surprisingly, it suits the game just fine.

There's even the usual bonus items that will net you more points that will go towards your final score to go with rewards for accuracy and quickness. And although Sega touted that *HOTD3* would be "time-dependent" in stages, we didn't notice any penalties for time spent in each

area, as it played pretty much like any other lightgun arcade game.

Graphics in motion

Fast, smooth, and with no severe slowdown (there IS slowdown, but it's not particularly problematic in early versions), everything from the characters to the backgrounds are high on detailed textures and color depth (and gore).

Cool innovations

The ease of play with a controller makes *HOTD3* a brilliant way of letting players decide what peripheral they want to gun down zombies with. Wow has turned this into a fast-paced, on-rails FPS of sorts which results in trigger-happy gameplay.

Nifty extras

For those interested in *The House of the Dead* movie, Sega has included a full-length, behind-the-scenes

■ If you find yourself without a lightgun (like us), it's not a big deal. The game plays amazingly well with only a controller.



featurette showing off loads of the action sequences from the actual film. It may not add a whole lot of gameplay value to *HOTD3*, but series fans will definitely have the option to check it out for themselves.

What we liked best

High-end graphics and fun, frenetic arcade-style gameplay makes this an

ideal pick-up-and-play game for those short on time. So far, it's solid.

Potential pitfalls

Unlike *HOTD2* on Dreamcast, there aren't any cool training modes or extras which made the console version of the previous game so addictive and quirky. Without them, we're afraid it might be too short.

Unreal Championship

DEVELOPER **Digital Extremes** PUBLISHER **Infogrames**

RELEASE DATE **November 15, 2002**

Hands-on

As of right now, this is THE game for Xbox Live. If you are planning on getting Xbox Live, then *Unreal* is a game you MUST get. At a recent press event we were left alone with a copy of *UC*, a server, and a bunch of fodder (read: editors from other, lesser, magazines). The first thing you notice about *UC* is the insane speed of play. If you've been playing *Halo*, you'll need to throw your reflexes into overdrive just to keep up. There isn't anything groundbreaking here, just a fun, balanced game that'll keep you

coming back for more. Some of the aiming was still a little loose, but it didn't detract from a great multiplayer game.

Graphics in motion

It doesn't have the polish of a *Halo*, but the characters are detailed, the backgrounds are varied, and the effects are sharp. It can be a bit jumpy at times due to the blazing speed of play, but overall the game looks and plays just as you'd hope.

■ The variety of levels borders on the astounding.



Blinx: The Time Sweeper

DEVELOPER **Artoon** PUBLISHER **Microsoft** RELEASE DATE **October 2002**

The experience

As one of the more original platformers on Xbox's horizon, *Blinx* sounds a little more complicated than it actually plays. As the time-sweeping cat, you're in charge of cleaning up a series of stages with your trusty vacuum backpack and some resource management in the form of crystals. Collect the color-coded crystals in bunches to access certain VCR-esque abilities such as Play, Rewind, Pause, and Stop, which are mostly helpful to reach new areas and beat tougher enemies. You'll also be able to upgrade your equipment to suck up heavier objects, which can usually be shot straight back out at enemies or cashed in at the end of a level for more gold. Many of the unique gameplay aspects aren't apparent at first, but once you notice some of the more subtle nuances in *Blinx*, it definitely gets more addictive.

Graphics in motion

Fast moving and stylish, *Blinx* may have the required mascot 'tude, but he's also a weirdly appealing creature dropped into a strangely European backdrop packed with enemies that look more like gumdrops than "time monsters."

Cool innovations

The ability to manipulate time, as a concept, is already a cool idea, but in action it adds a certain layer of depth to

early versions of the game. If you see something happen, like a statue crash, you can rewind time or stop it before the event happens to explore the area beneath the statue for secret goodies.

What we liked best

The fact that you can upgrade your equipment and manipulate time to use in earlier levels may not be wholly original, but it gives *Blinx* a good level of depth.

Potential pitfalls

Without some of the trimmings, *Blinx* may fall on the more straight-forward, overly simplistic side with short-ish stages. And that camera...



Multiplayer aspects

Standard deathmatch, capture the flag, and team deathmatch are all there as well as a new game called bombing run (take a ball into the other team's base and score). There are huge maps to play on, classic *Unreal* weapons (flak cannon), and some cool new ones (shock rifle... a killer sniper rifle) add to the carnage.

Cool innovation

It's the only first-person shooter on Xbox Live at launch, and if you've ever played *Quake*, *Unreal*, or *Half-Life* online, then you know it is a must-have experience.

What we liked best

Broadband-only means there is plenty of carnage and literally no lag. Good, mindless multiplayer fun. Also, the inclusion of bots means that you can practice alone before going Live.

Potential pitfalls

The entire game is pretty much a straight-forward deathmatch – the high speed of the game and accuracy of aiming are key to making it work when it releases.



Open spaces are great, but dark corridors are still where it's really at.

Nothing like repeatedly torching rival editors, then taunting them over the Communicator.



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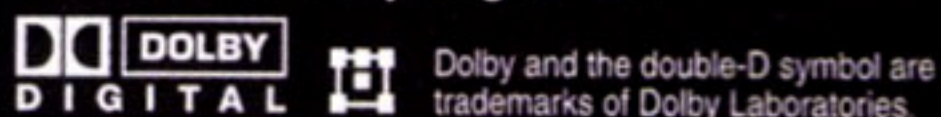


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Fellowship of the Ring

DEVELOPER **WXP** PUBLISHER **Black Label**

RELEASE DATE **Q4 2002**



■ The Tolkien world is not only accurately rendered, but stunning.

The experience

A free-roaming 3D action/adventure with three playable characters (Frodo, Aragorn, and Gandalf) and loads of items and quests to fulfill. Throughout the game, you'll be able to control each of the different characters in different situations. With the Ring in tow, Frodo is able to slip in and out of sight in order to utilize his stealthy strengths (he's not a good fighter) – but use the Ring too much and you'll end up a bad Hobbit and the game will end. It's a cool idea, and you're even able to carry out "good deeds" for NPCs to replenish your Ring's anti-corruption meter. Great way to introduce some RPG elements to what is otherwise a pure action game.

What we liked best

So far, with each character's strengths being played to in the gameplay, with Frodo's emphasis on stealth, Aragorn's forte being action, and Gandalf as the magic caster – there's a wonderful amount of variety.

Potential pitfalls

With the nebulous differences between Black Label's and EA's opposing *Lord of the Rings* game licenses, we're hoping that this won't be overlooked.

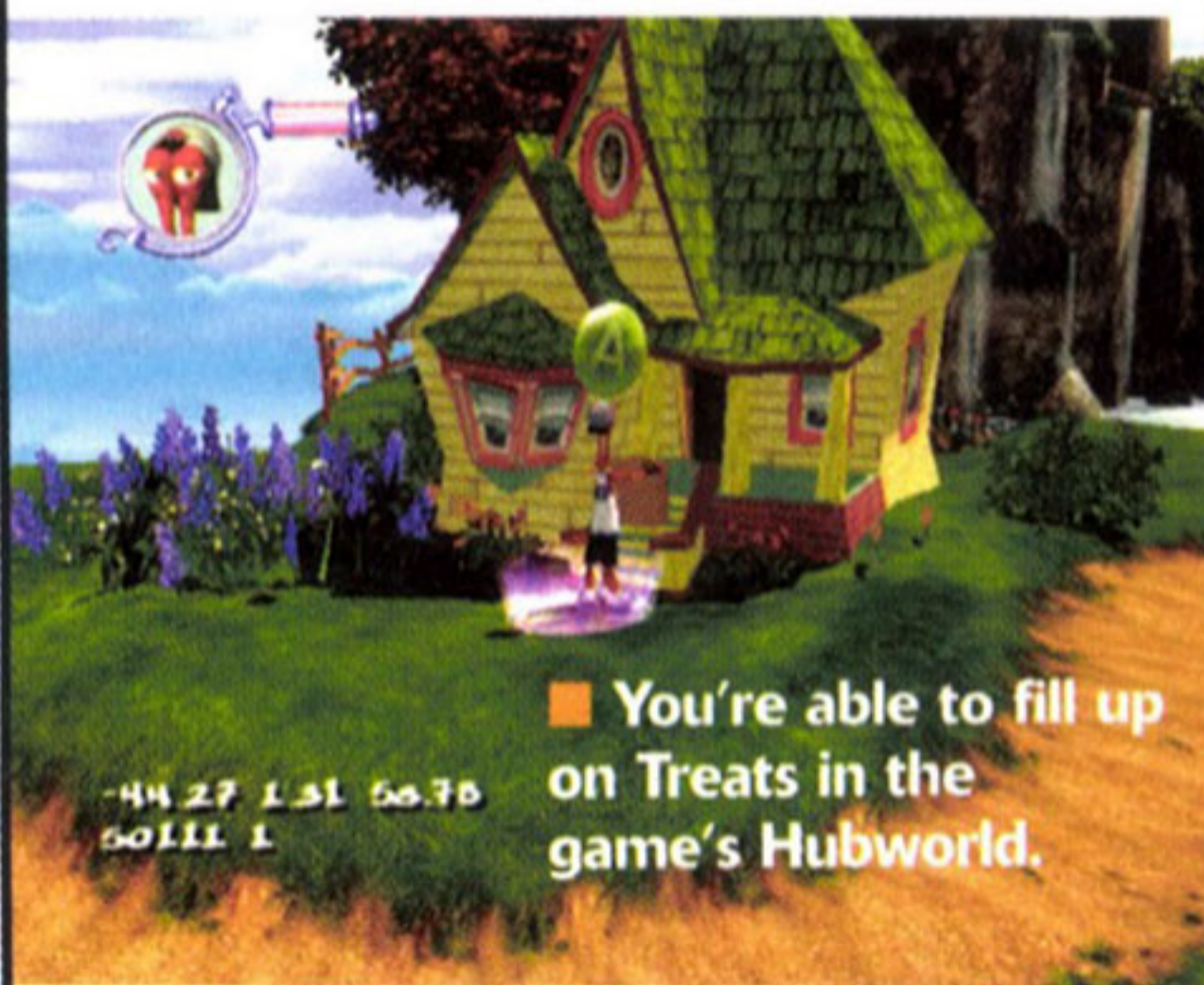


■ Fulfill some good deeds as Frodo to retain the ability to use the Ring.

ToeJam & Earl III: All Funked Up

DEVELOPER **Visual Concepts** PUBLISHER **Sega**

RELEASE DATE **October 2002**



■ You're able to fill up on Treats in the game's Hubworld.

The experience

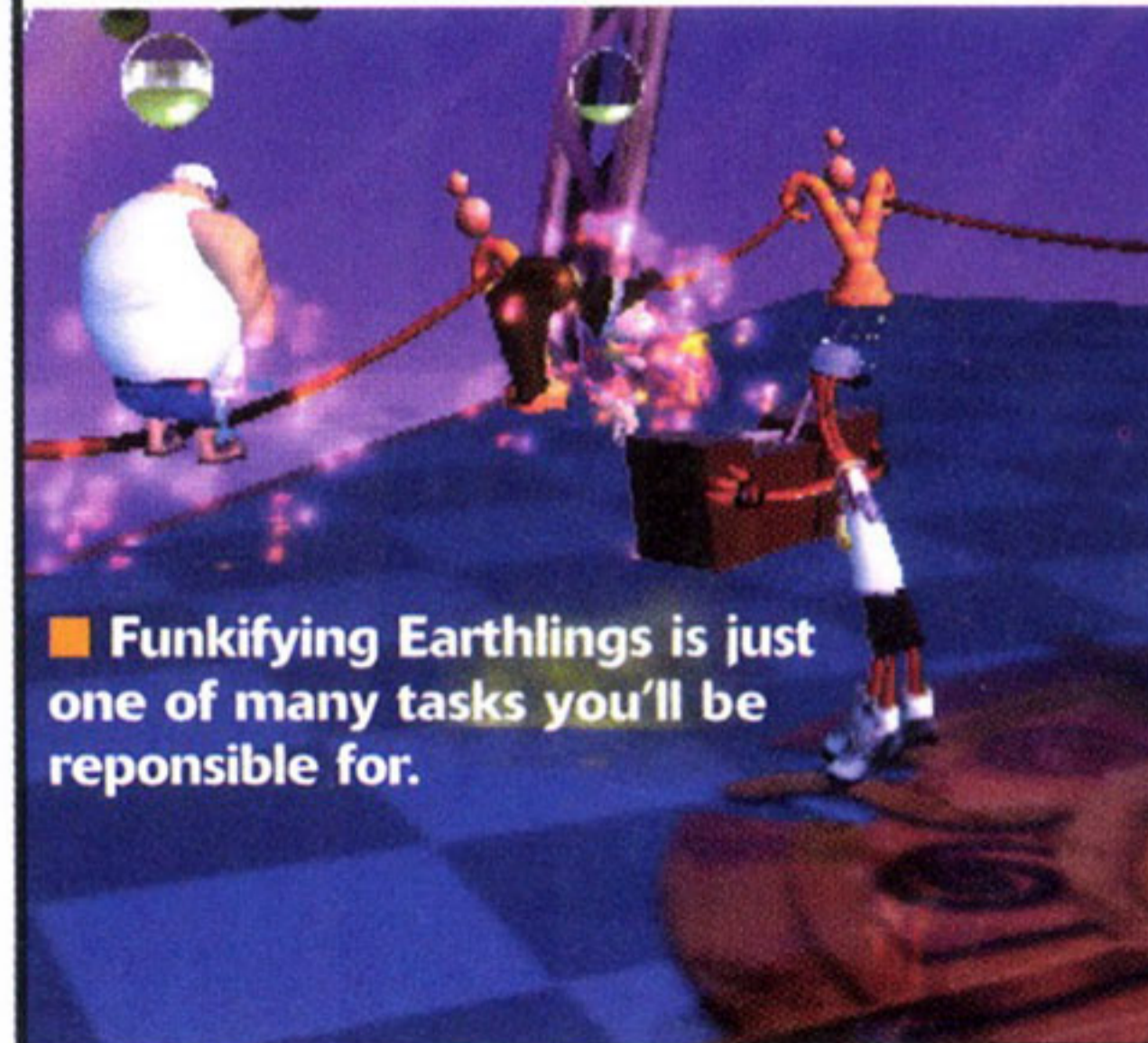
The dynamic duo of 2D multiplayer gaming is now the terrific trio of 3D multiplayer gaming. Each of the three playable characters has his or her own special skill set which focus on either being better able to utilize items, foodstuffs, or funkifying the natives. Every world (which consists of a series of large islands free-floating in the sky) is randomly generated to change up the location of items, enemies and secrets, spanning all sorts of terrain including ice, field, and "urban." Two-player has its own perks with a "dynamically" split screen to follow each character's action.

What we liked best

A game like this all depends on the personality of the characters – *TJ&E III* has this in spades. If you add in all the quirky items and power-ups, there seems to be a surprise around every corner. For old-school fans, this won't disappoint.

Potential pitfalls

The small scope of every stage may feel a little constricting to those used to epic adventure undertakings. Think of this as more of an action game with a focus on humor.

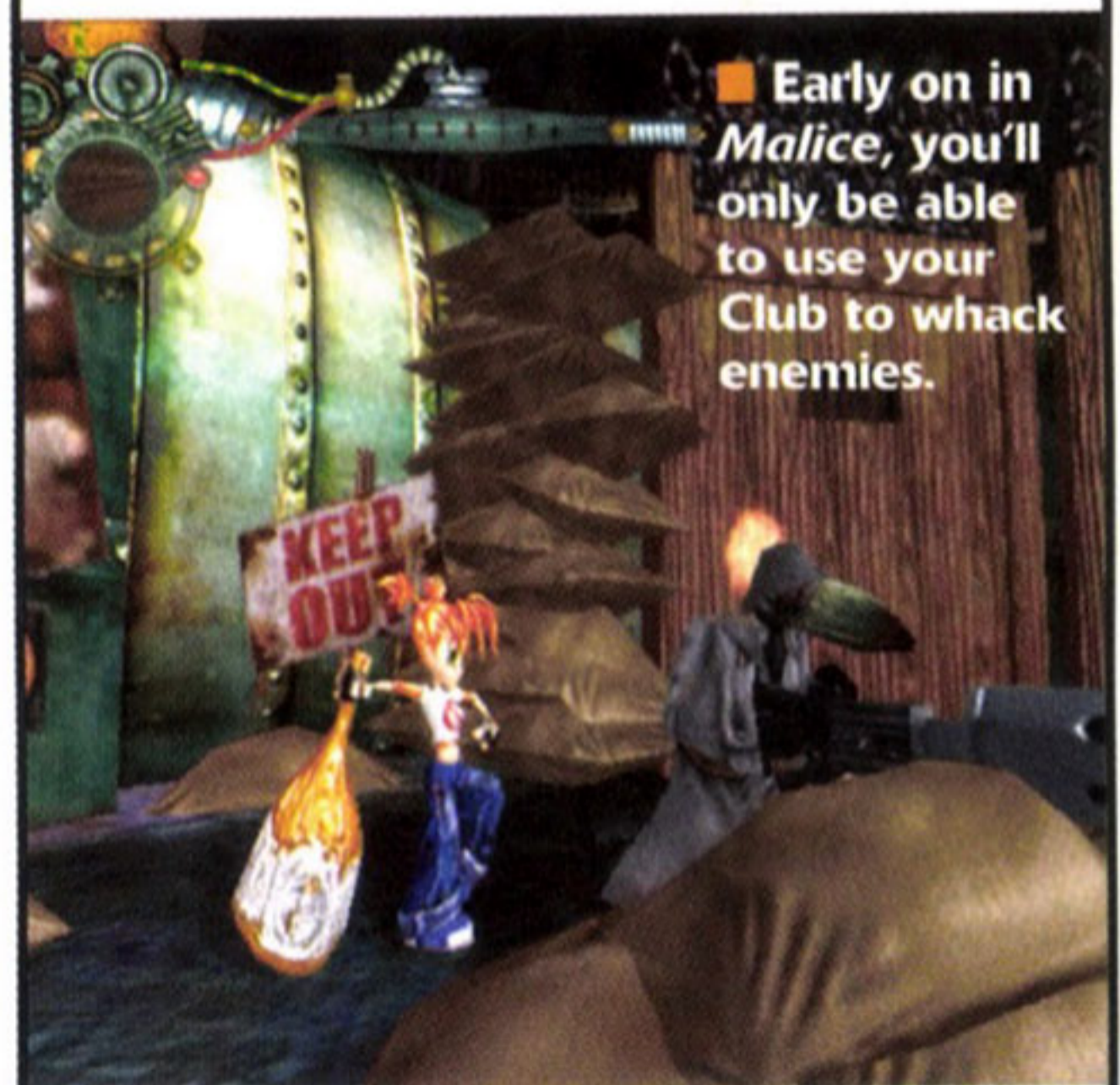


■ Funkifying Earthlings is just one of many tasks you'll be responsible for.

Malice

DEVELOPER **Argonaut** PUBLISHER **Sierra**

RELEASE DATE: **November 2002**



■ Early on in *Malice*, you'll only be able to use your Club to whack enemies.

The experience

A completely 3D platformer with plenty of enemies to bash with your weapon of choice (there are three in the game, including the clockwork hammer) or with elemental magic. Both will help you to solve puzzles that will require some thinking in some spots and simple lever pulling in others. This is a big game with loads of lush, detailed levels that will have you double-jumping and conking enemies left and right.

What we liked best

Good-looking and with personality and storyline to spare, the technical aspects certainly live up to the "wow factor" of early sneak peeks with loads of emphasis on utilizing some nifty Xbox special effects and some dazzling lighting.

Potential pitfalls

The gameplay and details feel a little on the rough side, thus far, but we expect the game to come together a bit more before it is finished.



■ The land of souls is where you'll go if you take too much damage.



It's in the game.



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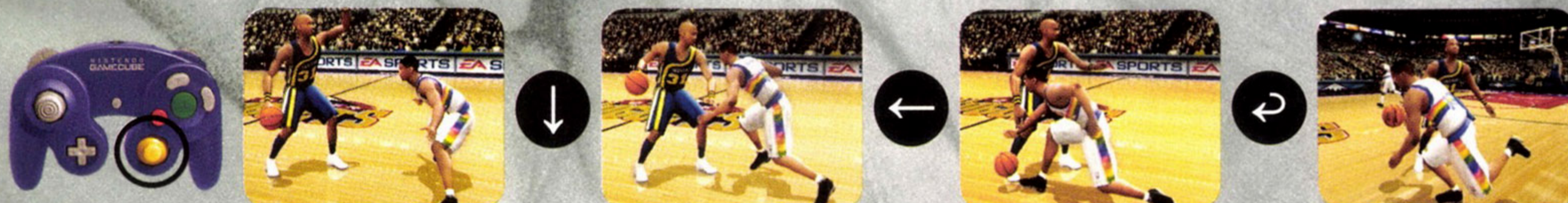
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TIGER  WOODS



**There are many instruments
used to remove a man's heart.
Most notably, the driver.**



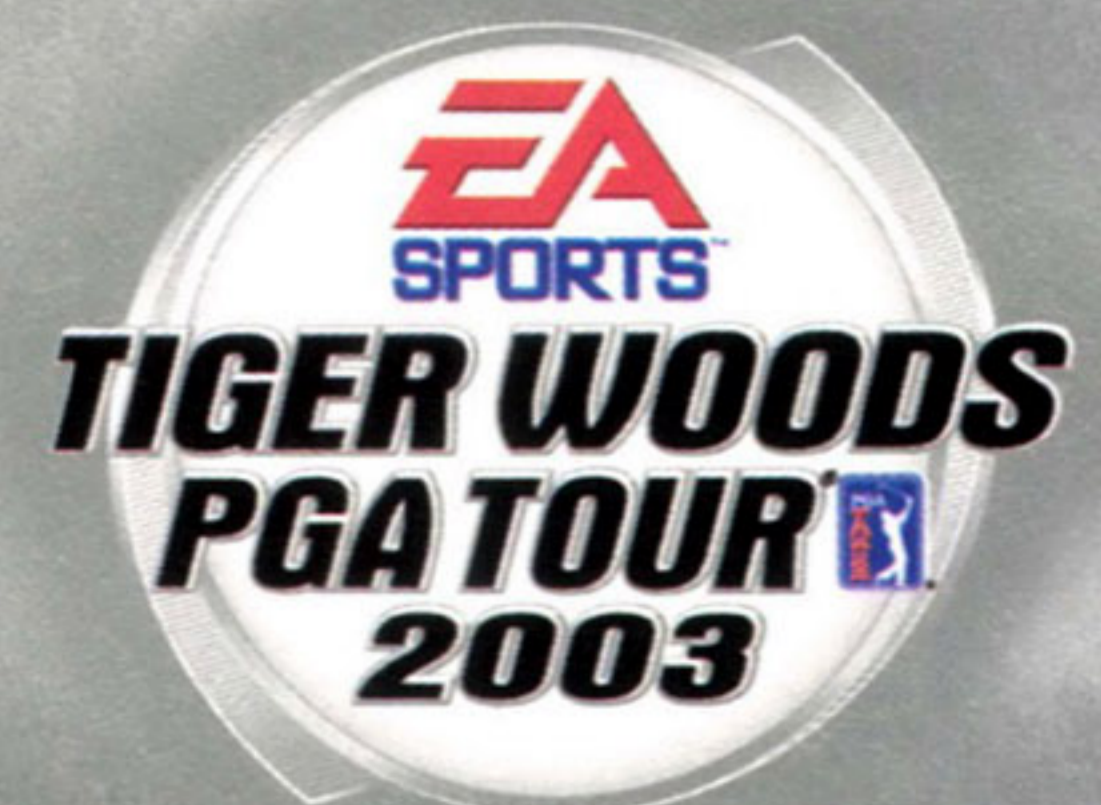
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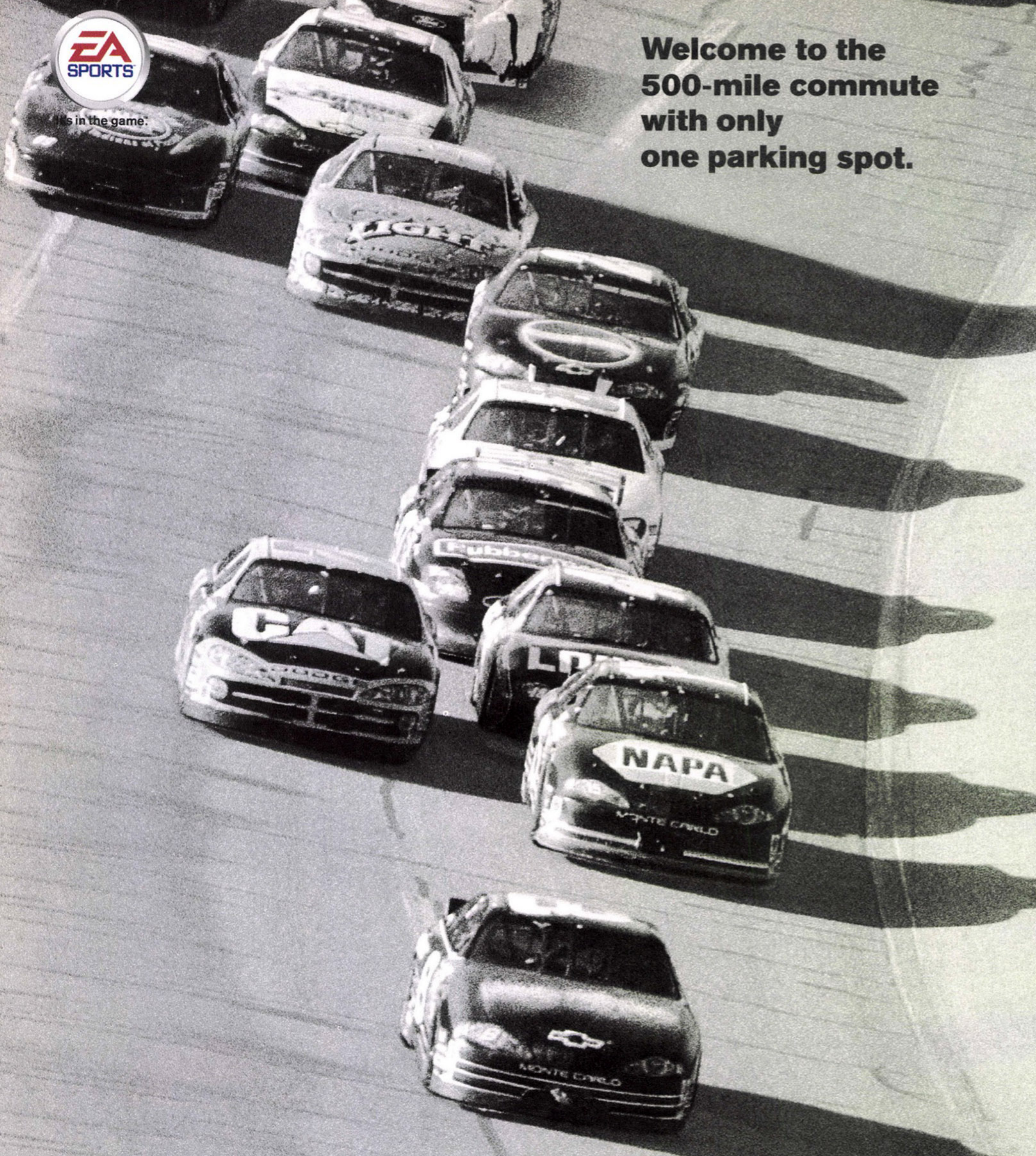
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PlayStation 2

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Reviews

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How we score

10 – 8.5 Only the best and the brightest score in this range. If it scores 9.0 or above, then there's no guessing involved. Buy it, love it, and watch as other games follow in its footsteps.

8.4 – 7.0 Just shy of greatness, but still an exceptional experience.

6.9 – 5.0 There's a bit of entertainment to be found, but something's amiss.

4.9 – 2.0 Rushed, poorly executed, or maybe just tired. Only fools dare tread further.

1.9 – 0.0 Craptacular goodness that is proud to call *Fantastic Four* (PSOne) or *Superman* (N64) its superiors.

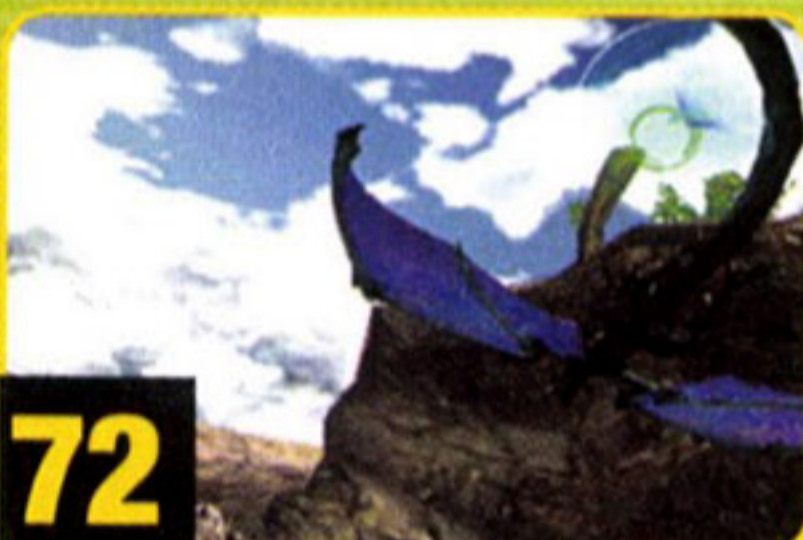


Editor's Choice Award

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contents



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Panzer Orta

Don't forget to read our exclusive review!



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Robotech

The anime world comes to life on Xbox.



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The Thing

Reviews are the warmest place to hide...

Turok or not to rock... that is the question

Turok Evolution

DEVELOPER **ACCLAIM AUSTIN** | PUBLISHER **ACCLAIM** | MULTIPLAYER **1-4 VIA SPLITSCREEN**
WEBSITE **WWW.ACCLAIM.COM** | EXTRAS **DOLBY 5:1**

Whether you are a *Turok* fanatic or you just love first-person shooters in general, *Turok Evolution* will probably satisfy most of your needs. An incredible line-up of weapons, huge environments to explore, tight first-person gameplay, and an excellent split-screen multiplayer mode... there's plenty to love. Sadly, some glaring design flaws and mediocre technology keep it from achieving the level of greatness I was hoping for.

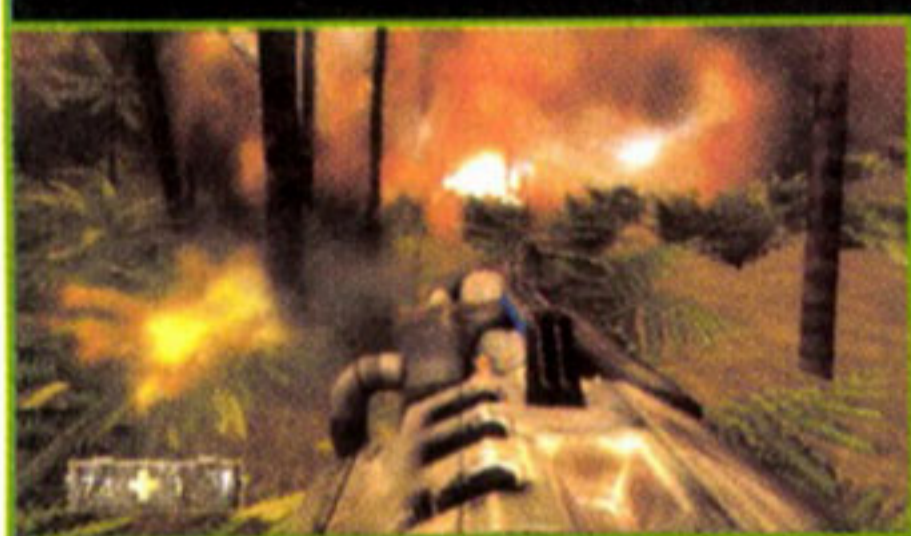
Turok Evolution's biggest strength is in the tight yet diverse gameplay and level design found throughout its sprawling 14 chapters. Early on, you must cut through forests populated by deadly traps, swift Velociraptors, and packs of hungry Compys. You can't always see what's in front of you, but you can *hear* what's in front of you – keeping tension levels high. You'll also find yourself sneaking through futuristic cityscapes picking off snipers, fighting off waves of infantry, and



■ The Anti-Matter Gun sends out a circular wave that will nail anything near you with a deadly wave of anti-matter stuff... whatever that is.

Four memorable moments

Turok isn't perfect, but it certainly provided us with some incredibly memorable gaming moments.



1. TIMBER! Tal 'Set can cut down trees with any weapon. You can actually use falling trees to kill enemies, or anything else in the area for that matter. One of the coolest moments we experienced is when we fired a rocket in the middle of the Shadow Land, taking about ten trees down with it!



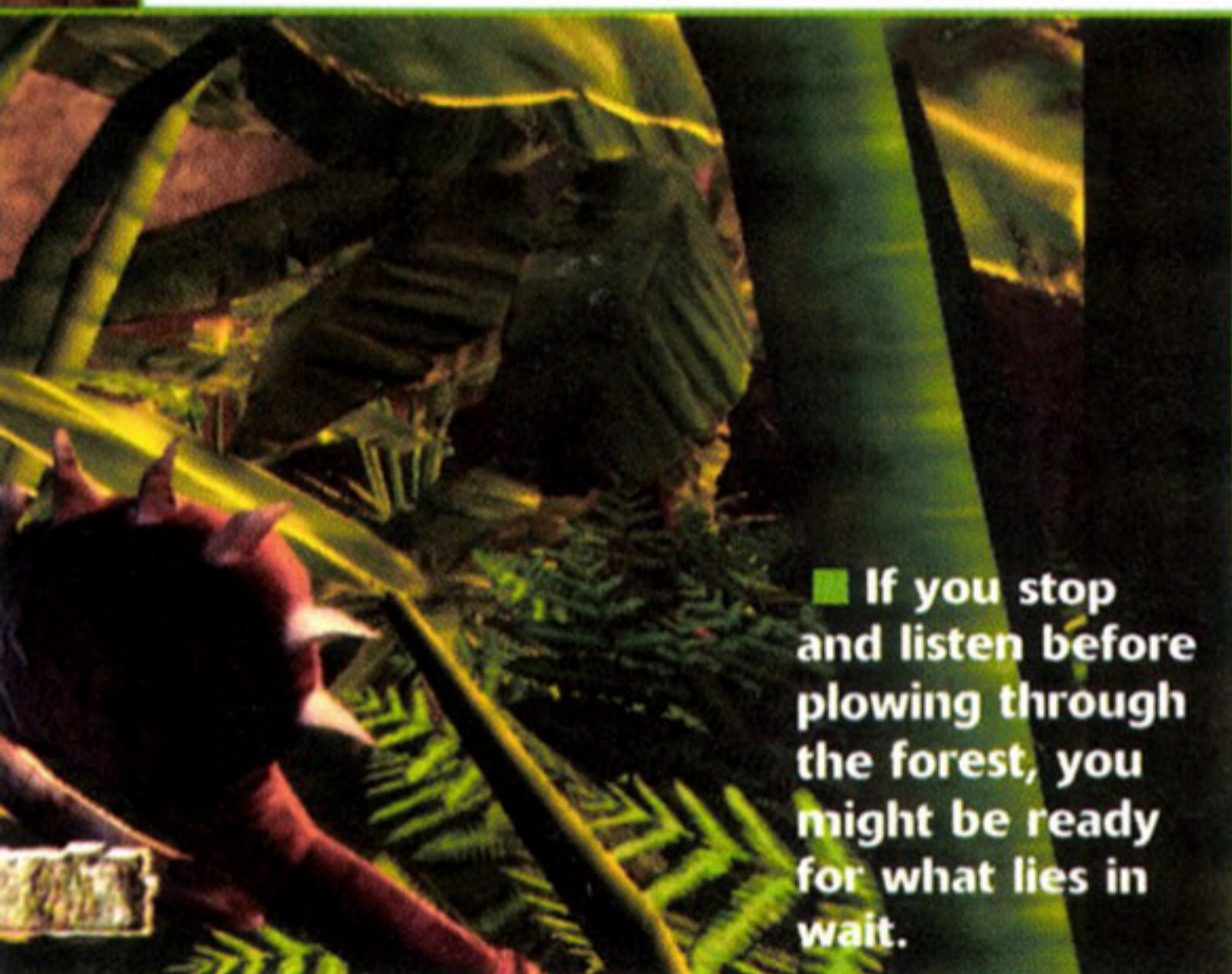
2. WAKE-UP CALL! In Chapter 4, Infiltration, you will get the Dark Matter Cube. There is a room where a group of eight Slegs are getting some shut-eye. Throw the Dark Matter Cube in the middle of the room and watch them all awake into their worst nightmare.



3. BIGGEST... DINO... EVER! Wow, this Sauropod is freakin' huge! At the end of chapter 12, you'll get a Pteranodon's-eye view of this behemoth lumbering across a wide open desert plain. Amazing.



4. PUKE PARTY! When firing poison arrows into some of the stronger enemies, before they die of poison, they will fall to their knees and puke what looks like a disgusting concoction of poisonous juices and bile. Try hitting several enemies quickly and enjoy the gurgling and splattered patterns! Just like college!



■ If you stop and listen before plowing through the forest, you might be ready for what lies in wait.



■ Rat-a-tat-a-splat goes the Minigun as it cuts through armor and flesh at a worryingly fast pace.

THE VERDICT

Graphics

Sweet weapon effects, great explosions, and nicely animated dinosaurs provide the occasional wow factor, but all in all, the visuals here are very average for an Xbox game.

Immersion

It's easy to get sucked in at times, but the lack of transitional cut scenes throughout most of the game feels awkward, and the weak flying levels disrupt the game's overall appeal.

Sound

Great environmental sounds, particularly when in the jungle stages. Music is fitting, but a bit generic.

Design

The first-person mode level design is impressive, especially given the diversity in gameplay, and the huge list of weapons is surprisingly well balanced, but the storyline and flight stages are sloppy and poorly executed.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

+ Unbelievably cool weapons often provide a visually pleasing and fun gaming experience.

+ First-person gameplay is very tight, yet diversified.

+ Frame rate is locked at 30 through most of the game.

+ Great multiplayer feature for splitscreen.

- Storyline is awkward due to a lack of transitional scenes between chapters.

- The flight stages are not nearly as entertaining, pretty, or polished as the rest of the game.

- Overall, *Turok* doesn't pack quite the visual punch that we had hoped for.

? Whatever happened to those Life Force gems found in all previous *Turok* games? See bottom filler.

Official Xbox magazine verdict

7.6
10.0

- Dave Rees

shooting down airships from the sky – you can even man some huge gun emplacements for maximum carnage. Eventually, you'll make it inside a humongous Sauropod, called the "Juggernaut," where you must destroy two massive cannons before flying to your freedom on the back of your trusty Pteranodon. Moments like these make for an irrepresibly enjoyable ride.

At other times, though, the game feels awkward and frustrating. An utter lack of transitional sequences between stages results in a confused storyline that throws you from place to place without any explanation as to how and why you got there. Additionally, the game loses some serious steam when it mounts you on the back of a Pteranodon again and again, pitching through treacherous

enemy camps and narrow caves lined with deadly obstacles. The idea behind this fits the game well enough, but it isn't as well executed as the first-person stages. After about a minute or two of repetitive, difficult-to-control, generally lackluster flight combat, the action abruptly freezes to load a chunk of terrain.

And unfortunately, *TE's* tech doesn't quite make up for these flaws. Small moments of innovation can be found in forests dense with foliage that rustles and sways as you brush by. Many of the weapons produce impressive visual effects, such as convincing heat haze when using a flame-thrower, the black hole effect when using the Dark Matter Cube, and a rocket launcher unequalled in terms of visual impact and sheer power. But for every great effect, there's a hiccup:

clipping issues, AI glitches, muted colors, low texture detail, and a surprising lack of Xbox-specific effects – it looks a lot like a port.

The game does have a very polished split-screen multiplayer option with plenty of game types, excellent maps, many characters to choose from, and a nice selection of modifiers. There's nothing quite like watching a friend get sucked into a black hole or painfully dismembered.

There's no question that shooter fans will enjoy the intense combat, massive environments, and varied weaponry. But anyone looking for a tightly designed, story-driven adventure with Xbox-caliber graphics will be dissatisfied. There are plenty of great moments, but the complete package falls a bit short.



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Violence
Use of Alcohol



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“Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance looks like an absolute must-have game...”

- GameSpy.com

“Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance looks like it's going to blow us away.”

- XboxSolution



Intense battles



Explosive spell effects



Amazing graphics and gameplay



Everything old is new again

Robotech: Battlecry

DEVELOPER **VICIOUS CYCLE** | PUBLISHER **TDK MEDIACTIVE** | MULTIPLAYER **1-2 SINGLE SCREEN**
 WEBSITE **WWW.TDK-MEDIACTIVE.COM** | EXTRAS **NOSTALGIA**

To think that a developer could successfully capture the hodgepodge spirit of the Japanese-American co-creation that is *Robotech* – it's a little shocking. But that's just what developer Vicious Cycle has done. The result is a game that mixes the high drama and suspense of the animated series with some extremely challenging missions for a unique take on a genre.

The developers of *Robotech: Battlecry* have striven to present not only a meticulous representation of what makes *Robotech* unique (transforming robots, intriguing scenario) but many diverse missions that fit this ethos. The graphics are just so-so, but the game is much more visceral than visual. Many

of the missions are similar at first glance, but how you tackle the missions changes rather dramatically from level to level. Your transformable Veritech's

Devotees of the old TV series will be thrilled...

three forms are invaluable, as the game compels you to explore all of your options to succeed.

This forcing of your hand can lead to frustration, though. With few salient hints, it can often be extremely daunting to try and figure out a workable strategy. You'll only realize your approach is invalid when you die

repeatedly. Control can be problematic when trying to switch on the fly – each mode of the Veritech handles differently. Lots of time and effort was clearly put into making sure a variety of strategies are required, but the game's steep learning curve will unrelentingly force you to teach yourself the way to succeed.

Devotees of the television series will be thrilled to see the cameos the original characters play in the game, and novices will enjoy the rich and detailed story that doesn't assume you're a fan. With a smattering of excruciatingly difficult missions, this game is not for the casual. But for a dedicated gamer with a penchant for mechanized action, this is a real gem.

– Christian Nutt

THE VERDICT

Graphics

Another multi-platform game falls victim to lowest common denominator syndrome. Still, the graphics have flair and represent the world of *Robotech* with aplomb.

Immersion

With an original scenario that draws you in, and pulse-pounding gameplay, this one will hook you – until you die a bunch. But once you figure it out, it's back into the fray.

Sound

Great music based on the original series' tunes and superb voice work from the original actors and newcomers alike, this is truly aurally divine.

Design

The game expects you to be able to read its mind, or at least pay ridiculously strict attention. Better hints and an actual learning curve could have helped a lot.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

+ An immersive universe.

+ Variable missions.

- Repetitive waves of the same enemy.

- Insane difficulty

Official Xbox
 magazine
 verdict

8.6
 10.0

■ Choosing the right form at the right time during each mission is crucial to success.

■ The cityscapes are pretty breathtaking with colorful schemes and cool effects.

10 WORLD VERT TITLES. 1 EPIC ROAD TRIP.



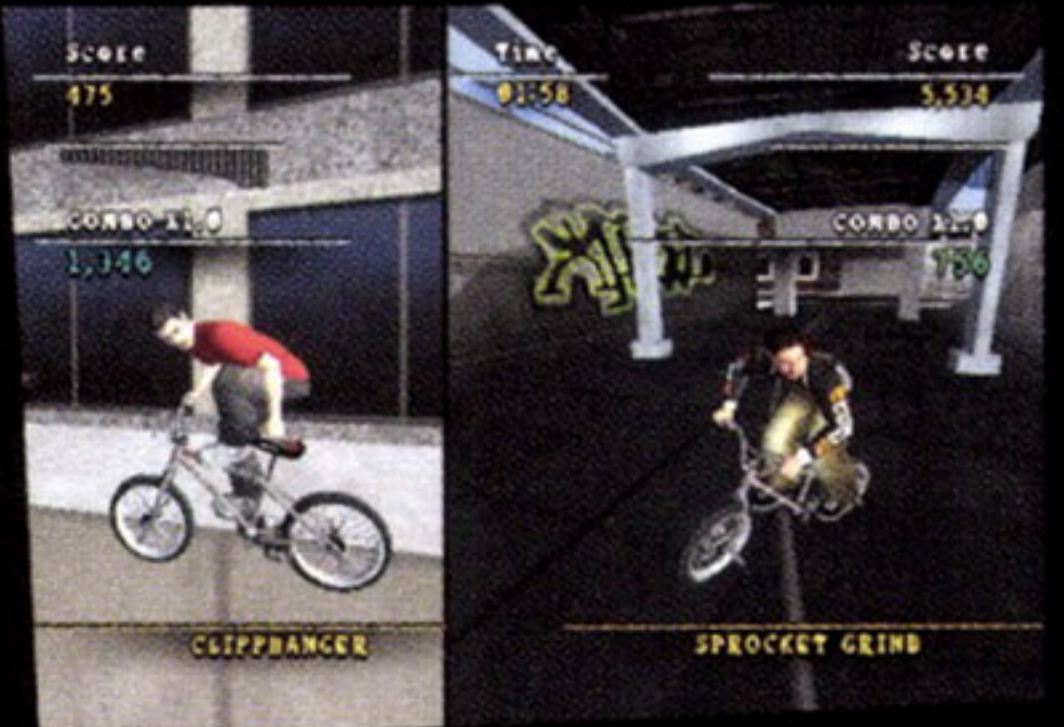
Crank out huge airs like 10-time World Vert Champ Mat Hoffman.



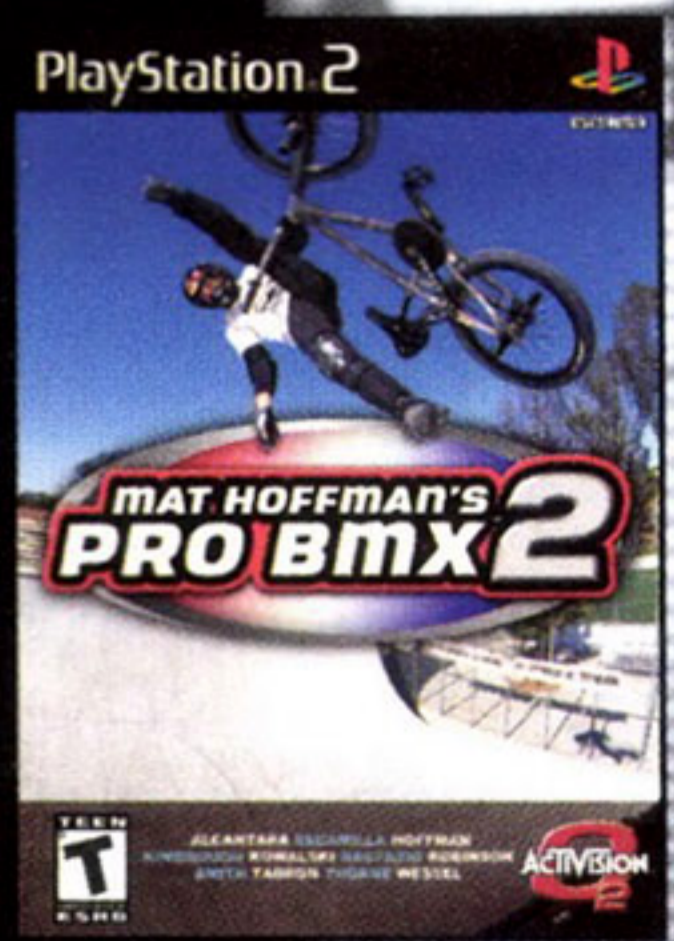
The only BMX game to offer flatland tricks.

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PlayStation®2



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And the Lord replied,

"My child, I was with you

through all your travels,

but along the most difficult paths

when there were no prints in the sand,

that is when I carried you."



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PlayStation 2



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Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer

DEVELOPER **ACTIVISION 02** | PUBLISHER **ACTIVISION** | MULTIPLAYER **1-2 SPLITSCREEN**
WEBSITE **WWW.ACTIVISION.COM** | EXTRAS **CUSTOM SOUNDTRACK**

Sigh. Ever since Epyx hatched the first good surfing game on the Atari Lynx handheld (as part of the *Summer Games* compilation), it's been a struggle to come up with another absorbing simulation of the sport. *TransWorld Surf* came very close, but suffered from repetition. It seems unavoidable in surfing.

Kelly Slater is a surfing god. Good-looking, talented, and charismatic, he's even more of an icon than Tony Hawk. The game follows his groove to some extent,

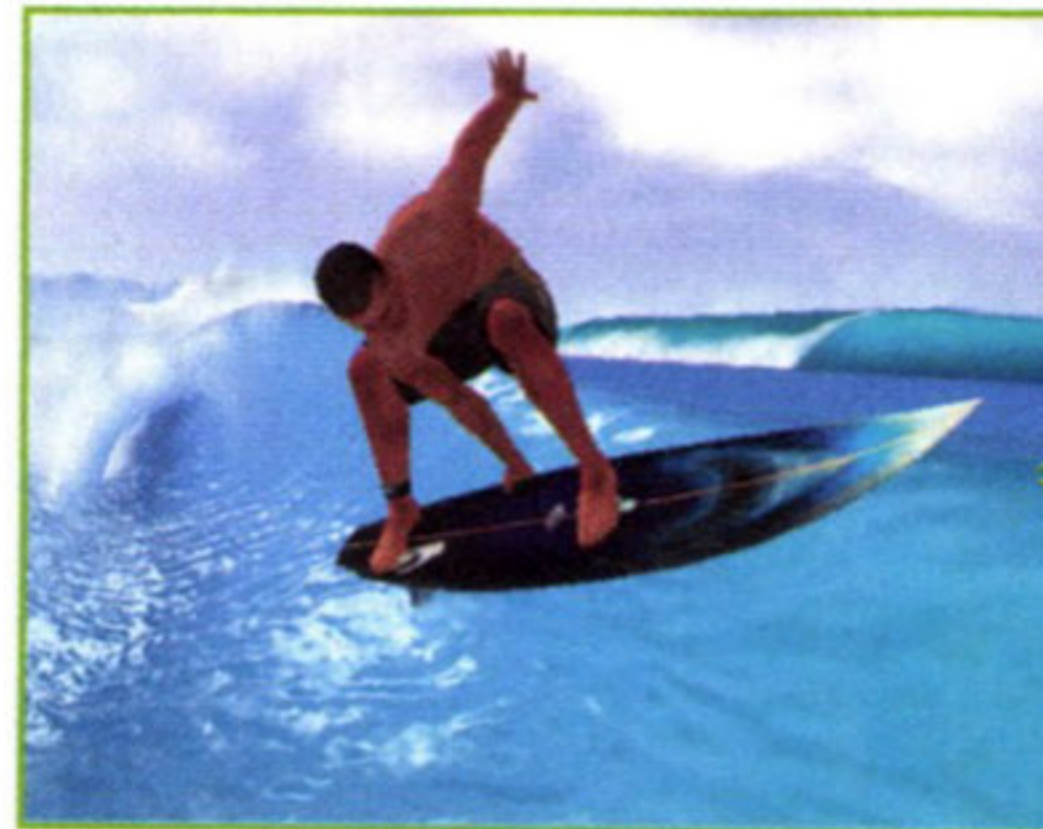
but you can choose from loads of other surfers. Gameplay is set up like *Tony* – multiple challenges per "course" to unlock new levels, surfers, and features.

It's very easy to get up on the board and surf, and a neat control scheme will have you carving and doing stunts almost immediately. The game has no waiting around for a wave, though, which is a bit of a shame since you can't really pick and choose the best wave.

Mellow music provides a nice vibe, but you'll probably use your own tunes anyway. Merely good

graphics don't work the Xbox, and gameplay becomes repetitive very quickly. It's a decent surf sim, but by no means definitive.

– Frank O'Connor



THE VERDICT

Graphics

Reasonable waves, but somehow it all seems a little flat.

Immersion

Haha, immersion. Get it? Absorbing stuff, mostly.

Sound

Good tunes and great commentary during mini-documentaries.

Design

Easier to access than other surf games, with plenty of variety.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Easy, enjoyable.
- + Great cut-scenes.
- Repetitive gameplay.
- Graphically bland.
- ? Little wave variety.

Official Xbox
magazine
verdict

6.9
10.0

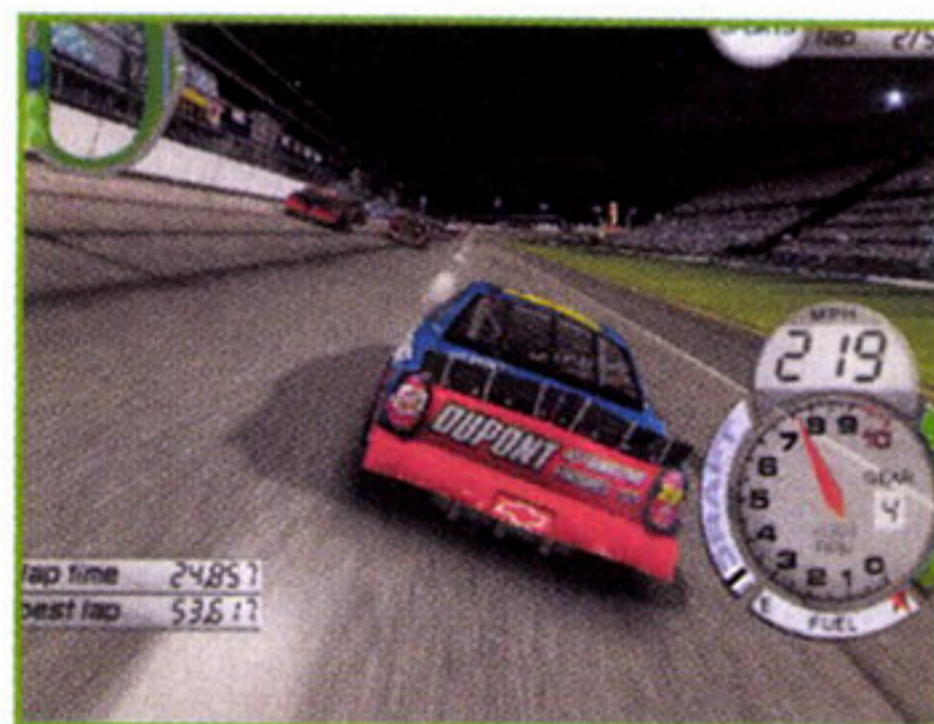
■ How Kelly got his groove back...

Roundy-round racing redux

NASCAR Thunder 2003

DEVELOPER **EA SPORTS** | PUBLISHER **EA SPORTS** | WEBSITE **WWW.EA.COM/E3/EASPORTS/NASCAR2003.JSP**
MULTIPLAYER **1-4 SPLITSCREEN** | EXTRAS **5.1 DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND, CUSTOM SOUNDTRACK**

With 70 licensed drivers, 30 tracks, and a garage-full of new options, *NASCAR Thunder 2003* seems positioned to seize the Xbox *NASCAR* crown.



The only major bump in the road is a skewed new physics engine that compromises the game's driving feel. *NT2003* delivers a highly dubious interpretation of real-world oval-track racing dynamics, and the momentum-killing slides that result from these unrealistic tail-happy physics will have you scampering to the garage in an attempt to find a convenient set-up that works.

■ Although a little more anti-aliasing would help, the graphics are still stunning.

Driving deficiencies aside, *NT2003* remains an A-list racer filled with cool features. From its high-poly cars and beautifully textured tracks to its thunderous audio and informative commentary, the game exudes quality. Toss in a deep 20-season Career mode, 30 new "Lightning Challenges," tutorials for each track, and enough bonuses to keep you turning left for months, and *NASCAR Thunder 2003* ups the ante from its predecessor by a country mile.

– Andy Mahood

THE VERDICT

Graphics

Detailed, high-poly car models and beautifully-textured tracks (albeit with some aliasing) that look almost as though they were stripped straight out of an NBC *NASCAR* broadcast.

Immersion

There's enough depth in the 20-season Career mode to keep serious stock-car fans going for months.

Sound

The Dolby 5:1-enhanced "rolling thunder" audio of 43 V-8 engines blends quite nicely with a high-energy soundtrack and some excellent spotter commentary.

Design

A heaping helping of gameplay depth and variety that is hobbled only by some unrealistic vehicle dynamics.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Superb graphics and sound.
- + Massive collection of licensed NASCAR drivers and tracks.
- + Tremendous gameplay depth.
- Aggravating and unrealistically tail-happy physics.
- ? Your spotter can be pretty thick at times. "You're off the pace!" Yes, I know, you nimrod – I just hit the friggin' wall!

Official Xbox
magazine
verdict

8.0
10.0

This Halloween,

Terror will reveal itself
frame by frame.

"This is by far the scariest game I've ever played." *IGN.com*

"Makes Silent Hill feel like Disneyland." *OPM*

"Will have you paralyzed with fear." *NEW YORK TIMES*

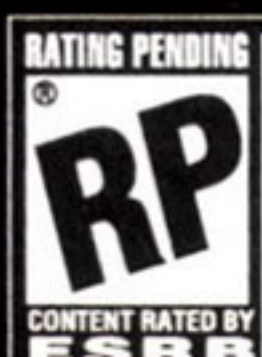
"Scariest game ever." *EGM*

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Musou: Japanese for "repetitive fighting"

Dynasty Warriors 3

DEVELOPER **KOEI** | PUBLISHER **KOEI** | MULTIPLAYER **1-2 SPLIT-SCREEN** | WEBSITE **WWW.KOEIGAMES.COM**

EXTRAS **SOME XBOX-EXCLUSIVE CHARACTER COSTUMES**

If it's a Koei game, there are good odds that it'll have a historical spin, and *Dynasty Warriors 3* certainly follows this rule. The series that has been successful on PS2 as a war-based action game with a little strategy is now on Xbox.

Relative to its prequel, this third incarnation does make incremental improvements such as added depth and the addition of elephants to ride (along with horses), but the gameplay hasn't changed drastically. Players still control an army through the actions of one main character as he or she fights alongside the troops. It's still extremely repetitive, but with a great – though overly simplistic, at times – combat system that will easily have you knocking over hundreds of enemies on each level. Hand-to-hand combat will get you through the bulk of the battles, but you can power up your Musou meter to unleash flashy combos to mow down waves of foes. In a strange way,

the massive number of enemies makes it satisfying when you reach the end of a stage, so while repetitive it's also incredibly addictive.

The added depth comes with two-player cooperative and competitive modes, more levels, more characters, new attacks, etc. Nothing in *DW3* will absolutely knock your socks off, but there's a good amount of content. You can unlock new costumes, collect items to use for your character, and there are enough playable characters to keep you busy for a long time.

Visually, *DW3* looks very plain. Though most of the main characters are well designed and colorfully costumed (and this goes for the main enemies, as well), the environments are more basic looking. But even with these drab-looking backgrounds, there is some all-too-evident slowdown that hurts the single-player games slightly and the two-player modes severely.

Still, the game provides what you'd expect – loads of hacking,



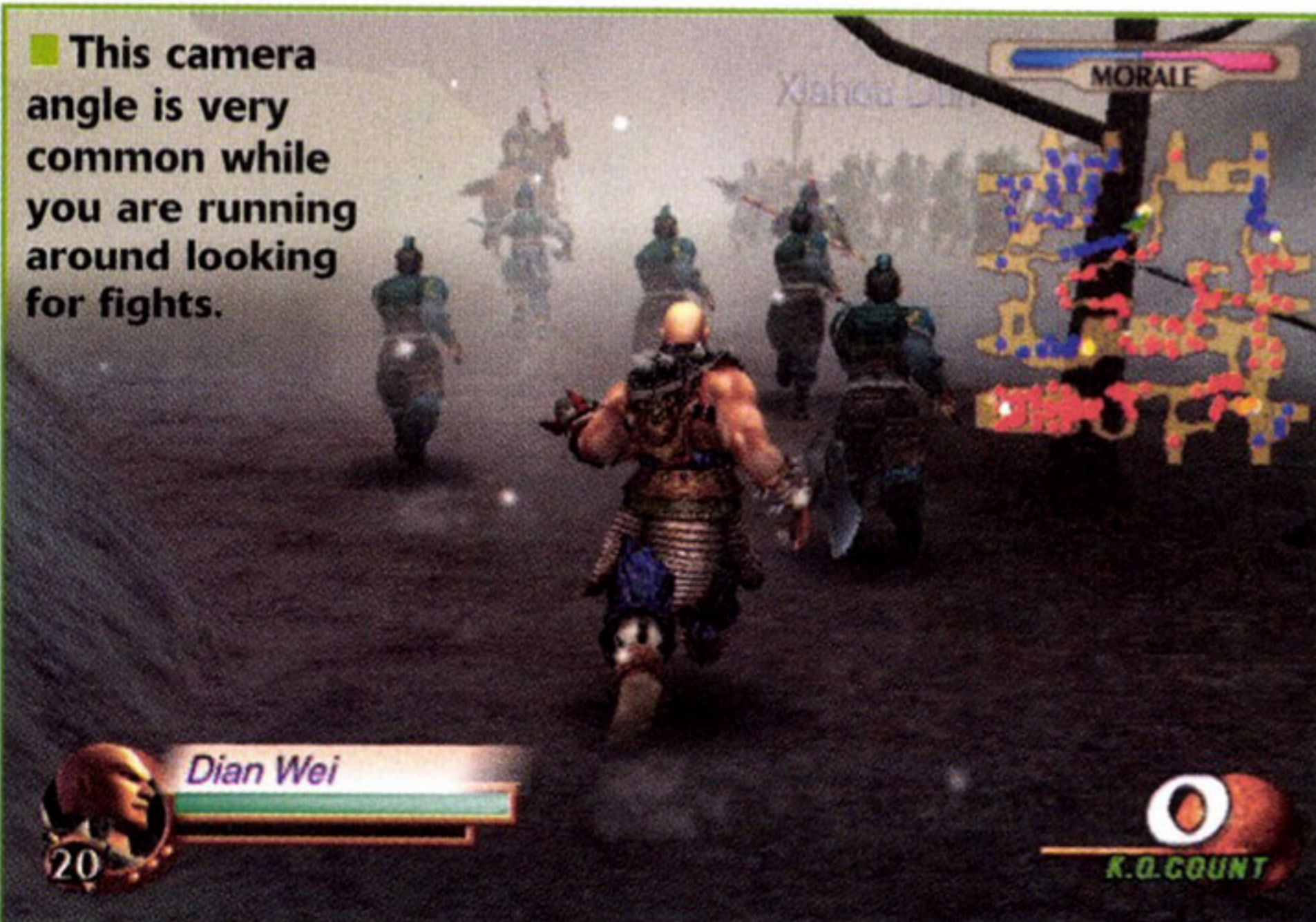
Zhou Yu is about to pull off a super attack; the action pauses right before these are performed.

slashing, and plenty of item collection – with only a few control and graphical issues. As long as you prefer more action and less strategy with a slightly historical background, we are happy to recommend it.

– Matt Leone

Pachyderm power

One of the features that players clamored over in *Dynasty Warriors 2* was that they could find horses and ride them while fighting their battles. *Dynasty Warriors 3* expands this concept and introduces elephants to the series. While we can't say we really appreciate the slightly awkward controls of using these animals, the everpresent appeal of pachyderms remains nonetheless.



This camera angle is very common while you are running around looking for fights.

THE VERDICT

Graphics

Not great, and not much improved over the PS2 version.

Immersion

You'll constantly be engaged in moderate-sized scuffles (the battle), but they rarely feel like part of the bigger picture (the war).

Sound

The soundtrack and effects are fine but the voices don't match up in quality.

Design

The player has more than enough options, but the repetitive nature can be tiring.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

+ Great epic battles.

+ Simplistic but solid controls.

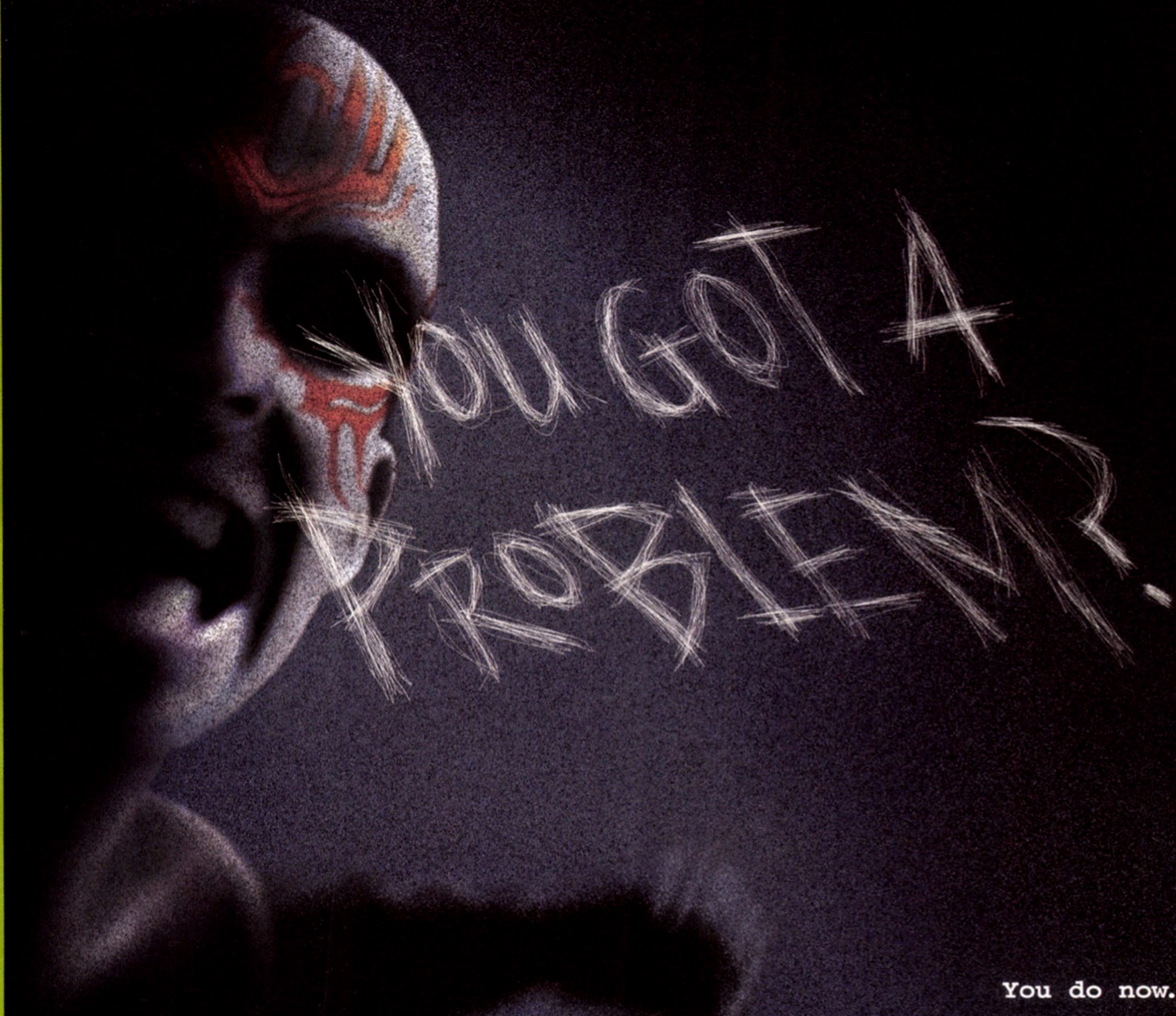
- Repetitive action.

- Visuals could be better or at least have no slowdown.

? Why does English voice dubbing hardly ever work well in a game? It's laughable here.

Official Xbox magazine verdict

7.0
10.0



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Hard as nails

Commandos 2: Men of Courage

DEVELOPER **PYRO STUDIOS** | PUBLISHER **EIDOS INTERACTIVE**MULTIPLAYER **NONE** | WEBSITE **WWW.EIDOS.COM**

If you feel there's just not enough challenge in your life, run out right now and pick up a copy of *Commandos 2*. This conversion from the PC is guaranteed to have you cursing at the screen, at the controller, and even at your family pet as you try to undermine the Nazis' agenda using your squad of nine crack commandos. But amazingly, despite its high level of frustration, it manages to keep you playing, thanks to cleverly designed missions and the

incredibly deep strategic options available to you.

A robust tutorial is included to ease the pain, but it's only after several grueling missions that things will become semi-intuitive. The difficulty is increased by the limited skills of each commando, the grainy graphics, and the enormous battlefields. The presentation, though, is superb and the enemy units behave quite realistically, resulting in a real sense of accomplishment when you finally best them. While the hardcore strategy crowd and anyone who

is into a slower-paced game will love this one to death – it's definitely not for the uninitiated.

– Rob Smolka



■ The level design is fantastic, with an incredibly diverse number of ways available to complete your goals.

THE VERDICT**Graphics**

The architecture looks great, but the soldiers are too small and highly pixelated.

Immersion

This is one of the game's strongest points, as you try and figure out how to thwart Hitler's homeboys.

Sound

Another feather in the cap; the battlefield sounds are awesome, and the voice-over work is professionally done.

Design

This game screams for a keyboard/mouse combo, but the level design and mission structure are pure genius.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Fascinating strategic decisions.
- + The opponents act like real people.
- + Brilliant level design.
- Difficulty level not for the faint of heart.
- Unwieldy controls.
- Grainy graphics.
- ? How come the "normal" difficulty level isn't named "infuriating"?

Official Xbox magazine verdict

7.2
10.0

Heavyweight? Perhaps not

Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing

DEVELOPER **ATOMIC PLANET ENTERTAINMENT** | PUBLISHER **CODEMASTERS**MULTIPLAYER **1-2 SINGLE SCREEN** | WEBSITE **WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/MTHB/USA/Front.Htm**

Back on the original Nintendo, *Mike Tyson's Punch Out* was one of the highest-regarded games of its time for its great controls and creative personality.

Unfortunately, just as Tyson's career has declined (or should we say, "bottomed-out"), so have the games associated with him. The latest attempt has neither of the qualities that served the Nintendo game so well and ends up as an incredibly average title.

The boxing itself is very fast, but partially because of this and mostly because of the design, the

controls are sloppy. This leads players to feel like they are not in complete control of their boxers, making it unnecessarily confusing and difficult to pull off the desired hit.

On the up side, the game options and play modes are presented superbly. The custom boxer options are well detailed and give the player a lot of leeway in changing player model characteristics and then improving him over time. And while this is fun to use, the same can't be said about the actual time spent improving your boxer, since this resorts back to the

main control issues that bring down the whole game. With uneven balance and unwieldy controls, this is a game that could've been a contender, but ends up being only mediocre.

– Matt Leone



■ Iron Mike continues his descent into mediocrity.

THE VERDICT**Graphics**

Characters have a reflective skin tone that makes them look all shiny, but many aspects such as the ring design and the crowd are poorly constructed.

Immersion

The ring girls look so ridiculous that they take you out of the experience every time they show up.

Sound

Some of the punching sound effects get very repetitive, but for the most part the crowd, announcers, etc. aren't too shabby.

Design

Good options and different modes give what you would expect and a surprising amount more, including lots of things to unlock.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Boxer customization options give the player a lot to do.
- + There are enough options to keep you busy for a few months.
- Controls just aren't great.
- ? Why this license? Mike is still more notorious than famous these days.

Official Xbox magazine verdict

5.5
10.0

MAKE YOUR CHOICES. BUILD YOUR CAR.

CREATE YOUR LEGEND.

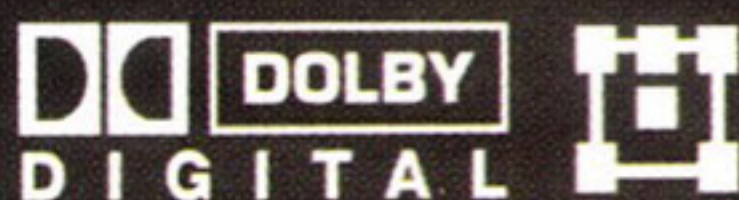


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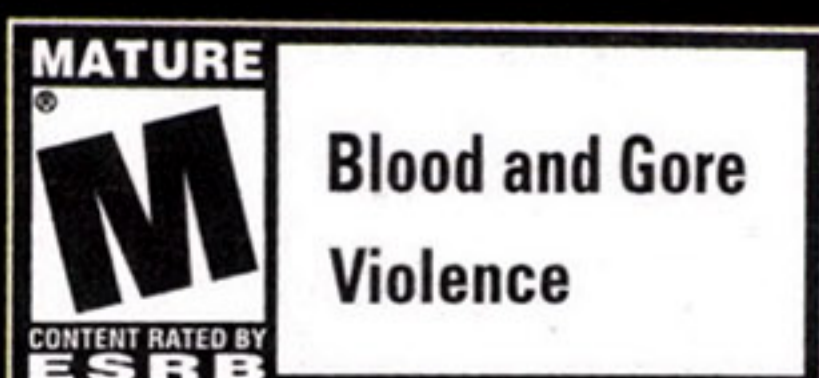


THEY SMELL BLOOD. YOURS



A Savage World So Real... You'll smell the smoke of war-torn cities and burning jungles. See the flaming battlefields below from the saddle of a fully armed, high flying Pterosaur. And taste the white-hot stench of a detonated Baby Nuke. Turok is back for the kill.

WWW.TUROK.COM



GAME BOY ADVANCE



PlayStation 2



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Baseball: to the xtreme!**MLB Slugfest 20-03**

DEVELOPER **MIDWAY** | PUBLISHER **MIDWAY** | MULTIPLAYER **1-4 SINGLE-SCREEN**
 WEBSITE **WWW.SLUGFEST.MIDWAY.COM**

Midway has always been one of the more prolific publishers of "extreme sports" games. But rather than joining the *Tony Hawk* bandwagon, its corner on the market has always focused more on tweaking traditional sports. But one of America's biggest sports had not been "xtremed"... well, until *Slugfest*. Now baseball has a quality game for those who don't take their sports too seriously.

The gameplay elements in *Slugfest*, actually, stand as the

biggest testament to how solid it handles. The game features some of the best humor and announcer banter anywhere, an easy-to-understand pitching/batting set-up, nice graphics, all the necessary play modes, camera options, the ability to punch other players, and – for the most part – very responsive controls.

The main complaint is that the appeal of the game wears off quickly. After the first few games, the animations are not as fun to watch, the game becomes more repetitive and the excitement

Extreme sports done right.

factor dims. And while what's left under the layer of "xtreme-ness" is still a good baseball game, it's one that might not hold up in the long run. Then again, a game this enjoyable isn't easy to come by. Kudos to Midway for creating a game behind the gimmick.

– Matt Leone

THE VERDICT**Graphics**

Player textures are great, and everything else is almost as good.

Immersion

Great commentary and good stadium designs bring everything together nicely.

Sound

Lots of in-depth quotes and sound effects fill the package superbly.

Design

The mandatory cut-off man makes getting the ball in from the outfield a bit annoying since it slows down the pace (the "extreme quotient"), but overall it works well.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

+ The simple batting and pitching design is fantastic.

+ Commentary is significantly above average.

– The laughter and smiles only last a few games. After that, it's all about the baseball.

? Why does the game have its own theme song, complete with music video?

Official Xbox
 magazine
 verdict

8.6
 10.0

Déjà vu all over again**Ty the Tasmanian Tiger**

DEVELOPER **KROME STUDIOS** | PUBLISHER **EA GAMES**
 MULTIPLAYER **NO** | WEBSITE **WWW.EAGAMES.COM**

Ty has grown up believing he's the only Tasmanian Tiger left, until he has a mystical experience and learns that all the other tigers can be released from "Dreamtime" if he can recover five stolen talismans. So, he must use his assorted skills (and his weapon, a boomerang) to recover the talismans.

Ty the Tasmanian Tiger does a lot of things right. It's bright and colorful. Its combination of action, exploration, and (mild) puzzle

solving is played out over a wide variety of locations. The controls are easy to learn, and the overall difficulty level is moderate.

Technologically, its faults are few. The control could be a little more solid, but there's an obvious trade-off with the game's overall speed. Some goals are not initially clear, and certain tasks tend to border on tedious. And, as usual in these types of games, the camera is far from perfect. On the whole, though, it's a decent jaunt.

Among Ty's repertoire is the ability to swim for loot.**Nicely designed worlds abound.**

But strip away the Australian trappings and you could just as easily be playing a slightly less inspired version of *Spyro* or *Sonic*. Collect huge numbers of random objects (in this case, about eight different ones), slide on ice, jump over fire, chuckle at "irreverent" dialogue – you get the idea. Younger gamers will enjoy it – but more savvy veterans should beware of platformer déjà vu.

– William Racer

THE VERDICT**Graphics**

Colorful and varied, although the animation seems a bit stiff.

Immersion

Other than the fact that you're aware you're playing the same game as always?

Sound

One plus: this features the least intrusive soundtrack in ages. Kinda nice.

Design

Just good enough in the details, but practically generic overall.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

+ Competent craftsmanship.

+ Younger gamers will enjoy it.

– You've played this game before.

? There are no less than eight "collectible" objects – why so many?

Official Xbox
 magazine
 verdict

6.9
 10.0

YOU HAVE 60 SECONDS TO SAVE THE WORLD. **GO.**

60:



You'll need a car, a very fast car, **tick**
a V12 Vanquish with tons of gadgets,

RATING PENDING



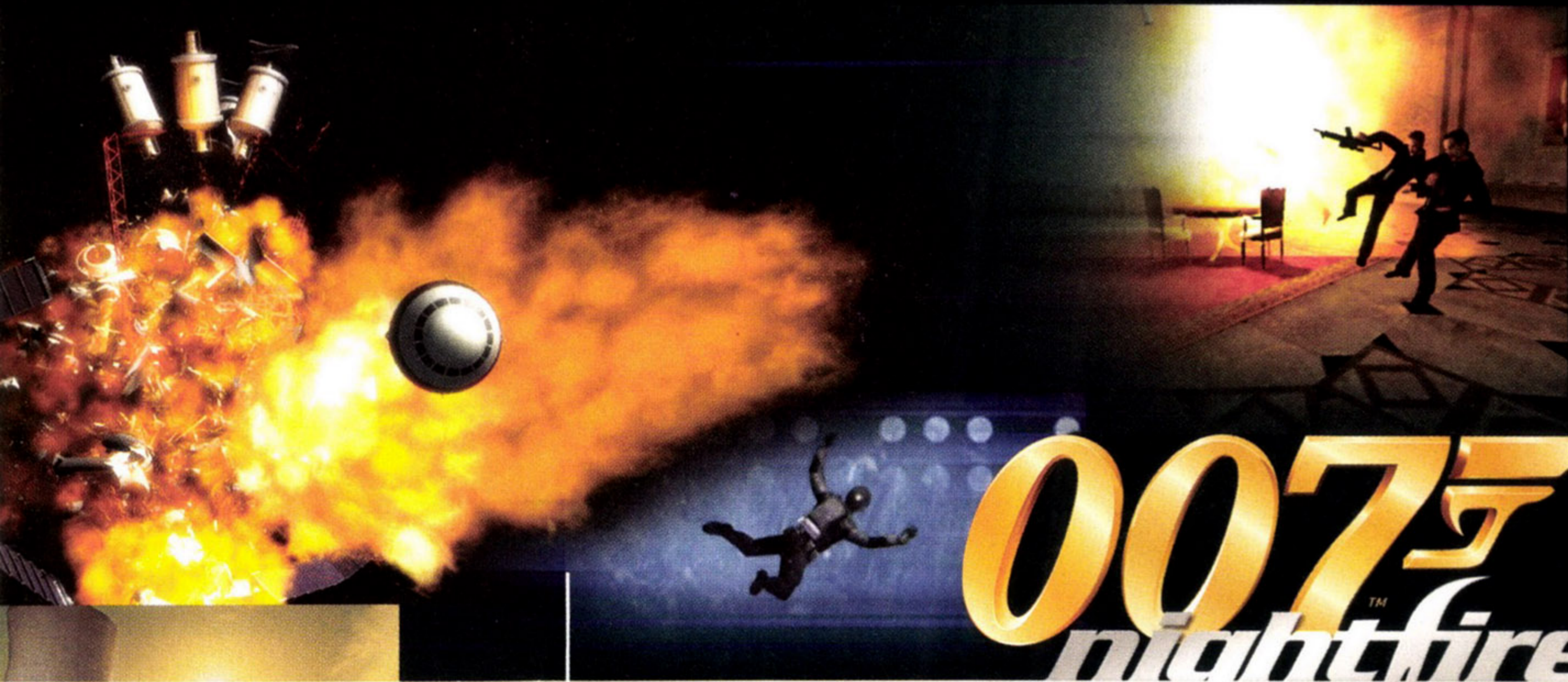
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call 1-800-771-3772
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PlayStation 2



enough gadgets, **tock** to help you blow up a space station,
 or jump out of a plane and **tick** stop a secret military force,
 before breaking into Mayhew's estate,



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007.ea.com

or, engineering a rooftop escape from Phoenix International's Tokyo
 office **tock** then exiting a burning gondola **tick** in the alps all in time
 to rendezvous **tock** with secret agents Zoe and **tick** Dominique

but don't pat yourself on the back **tock** too much
 because **tick** that was only one minute, and there
 are still 1,400 left in the day **tock**.

**Sixty seconds of Bond's world.
 It's more than most people
 do their entire life.**

See **DIE ANOTHER DAY** in Theaters. Coming this fall.



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Grinding my life away

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2

DEVELOPER **RAINBOW STUDIOS** | PUBLISHER **ACTIVISION**

MULTIPLAYER 1-2 VIA **SPLITSCREEN** | WEBSITE **WWW.ACTIVISION.COM** | EXTRAS **CUSTOM SOUNDTRACK**



■ Right off the bat, there are a plenty of playable riders, like Cory Nastazio.



■ Pull off some big tricks to log into the Hall of Fame.

THE VERDICT

Like its predecessor, *Pro BMX 2* is about pulling off the biggest stunts and scoring the most points, but the new game makes the previous version look like one of those old-time tricycles with the huge front wheel by comparison. For creative types, the new stunt system lets you fashion your own tricks and combos. The consistent 60 frames-per-second and the lifelike animations help to sell the action onscreen and make the solid control that much more intuitive.

The number and quality of the extras push the game over the top. The aptly named Road Trip is a unique and interesting take on a career mode. Each stage requires different accomplishments that fit with the environment, and the rewards, in the form of new parks opening up and other goodies, are very well done. The usual single sessions and practice modes are options, as well.

The park builder is fairly simple to use, but is limited to standard features. You can create some elaborate set-ups, but it's

doubtful your work will ever match those of the preset levels. Multiplayer, though, is a highlight, and it works incredibly well.

There are a few other problems: the riders could look better, and the collision detection can be wonky, especially between the rider and his bike. These issues do detract from the game, as they're the main focus of what's happening on-screen, but they're small bumps on the road in contrast to the game's overall playability.

— Rob Smolka

Graphics

The environments and animations look great, but the riders suffer from a bad case of the "blockies," and the clipping between rider and bike is disconcerting.

Immersion

The Road Trip is as good a career mode as you'll find in any game, making you feel as if you're on tour with these kewl d00dz.

Sound

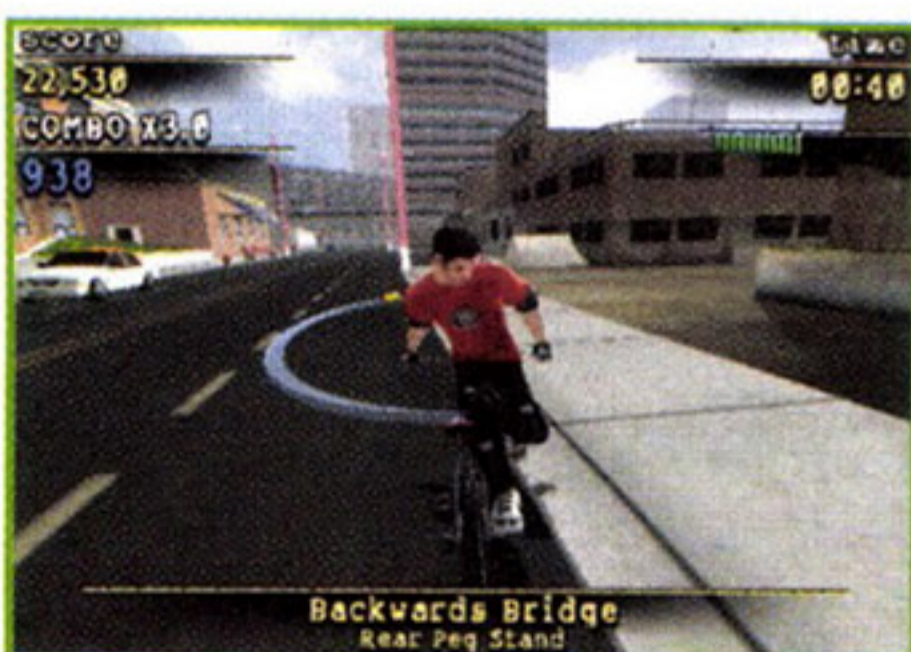
A super soundtrack for the most part, and you can always rip your own. The sound effects get the job done, but seem a little subdued overall.

Design

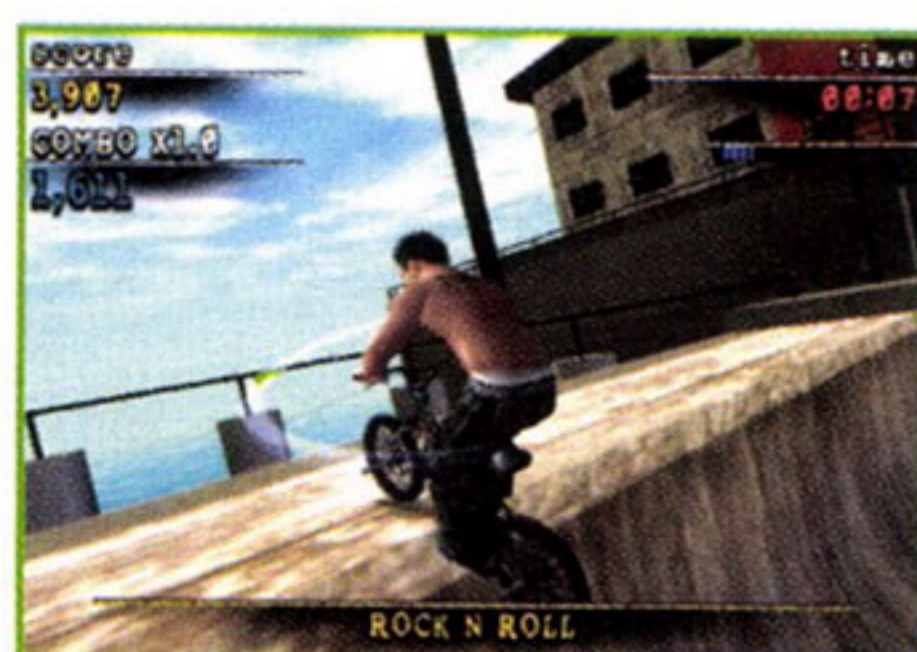
The innovative trick system is outstanding, and the modes of play leave very little to complain about. However, the technical aspects could have used quite a bit more polish on the whole.

(+) Good,
(-) Bad,
(?) Perplexing

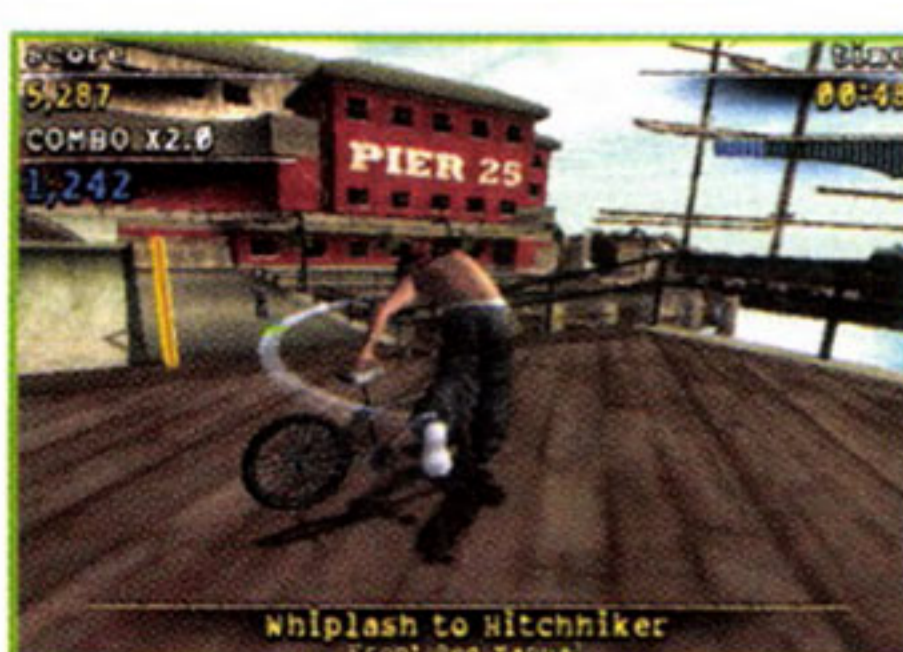
- + Varied and fun challenges in every single stage.
- + Excellent animations do justice to the plethora of tricks.
- + Multiplayer modes are plentiful and plenti-pleasurable.
- The riders are a few polygons shy of good looking.
- Time limits can be frustrating.
- The course creator, while appreciated, is too basic.
- ? Who comes up these ridiculous trick names in extreme sports?



■ A BMX game without strippers! It's BMX PG-13!



■ Do we really need to see his underwear?



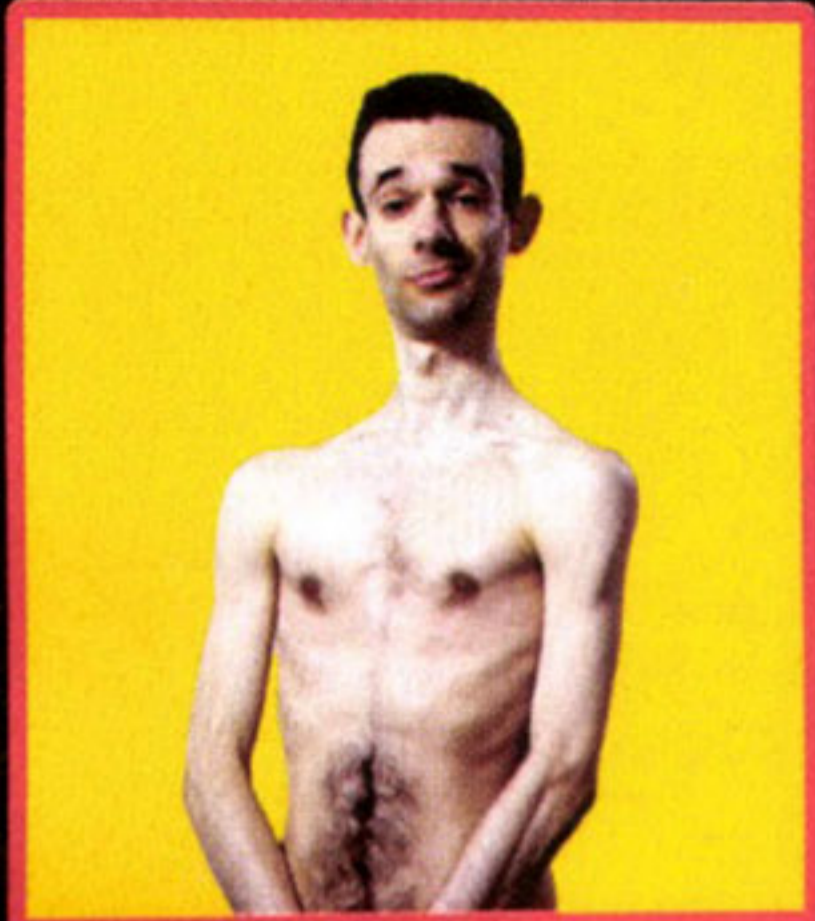
■ Custom soundtracks, custom parks – it's all here.

Official Xbox
magazine verdict

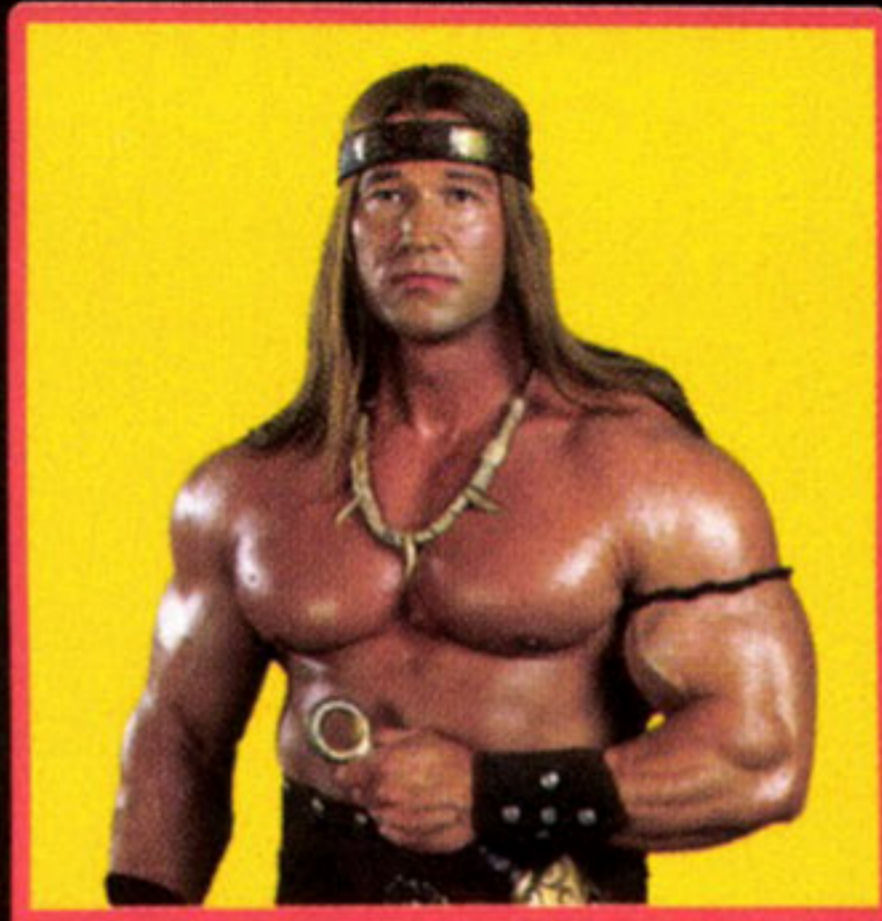
8.4
10.0

"I WAS A 99 LB. BARBARIAN"

- Gothar of Gundria



BEFORE UPGRADE



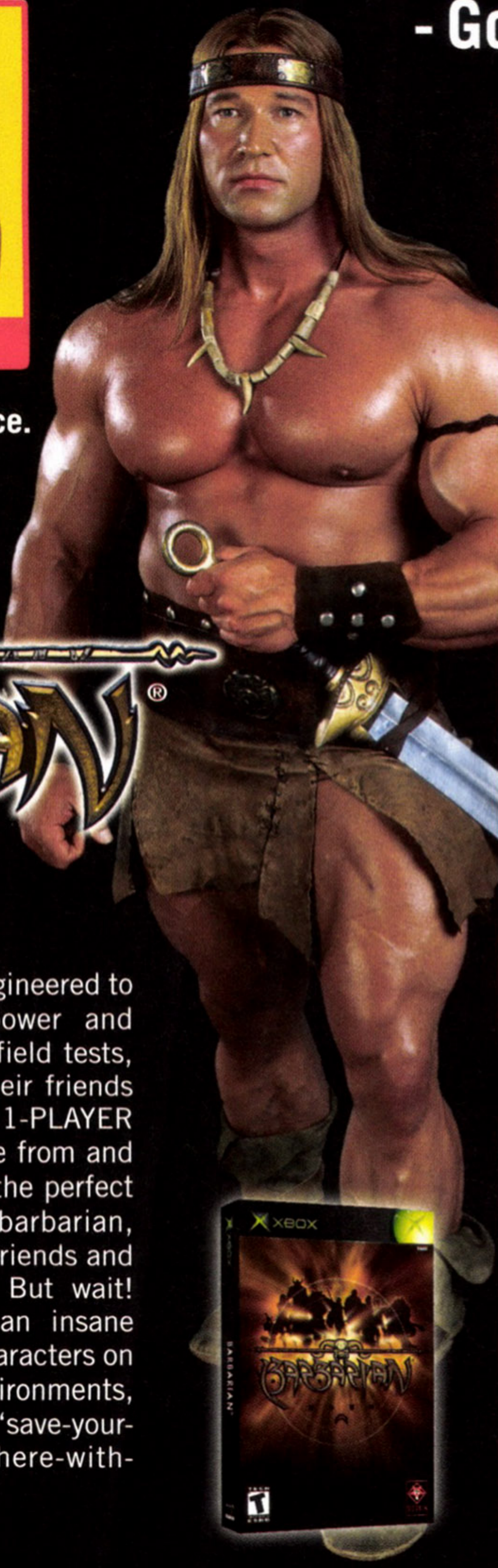
AFTER UPGRADE*

"I used to get molten lava kicked in my face. I was a little girly man, better suited to playing with sissy baby dolls than with battle axes. But then I mastered the **UPGRADE FEATURE** in **BARBARIAN**. Now nobody messes with me... **NOBODY!!!**"

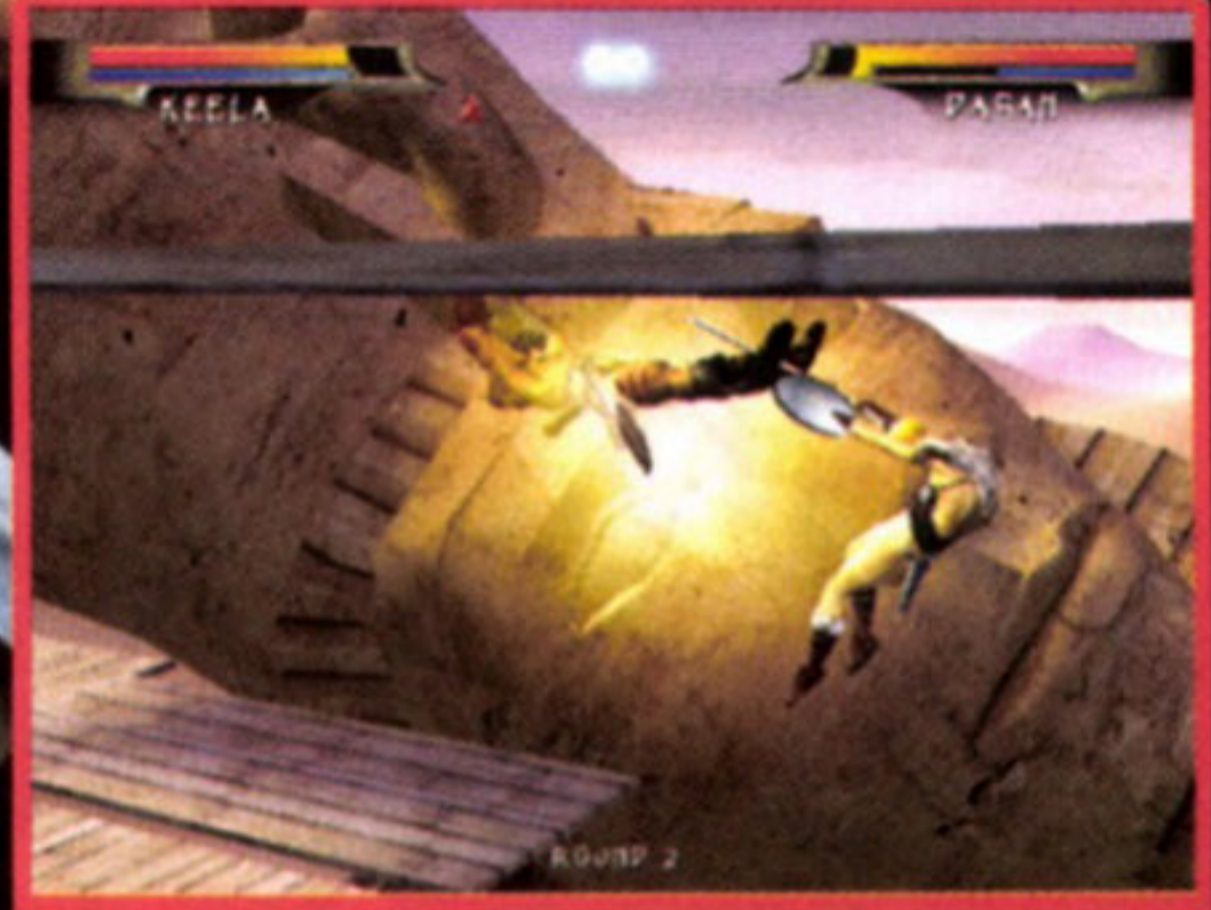


BARBARIAN is a revolutionary new game engineered to increase – and maintain – character power and ferociousness, fast! In recent head to head field tests, even mildly upgraded barbarians crushed their friends and foes without mercy. The MASSIVE 1-PLAYER QUEST mode – with 10 characters to choose from and literally hundreds of adventures to play – is the perfect training ground for customizing your barbarian, increasing strength and magic, and winning friends and influencing people with pure brute force. But wait! There's more: BARBARIAN also features an insane MULTIPLAYER MODE for up to 8 playable characters on screen at once, plus totally interactive environments, and best of all an exclusive ass-kicking "save-your-customized-barbarian-and-take-him-anywhere-with-you" formula!

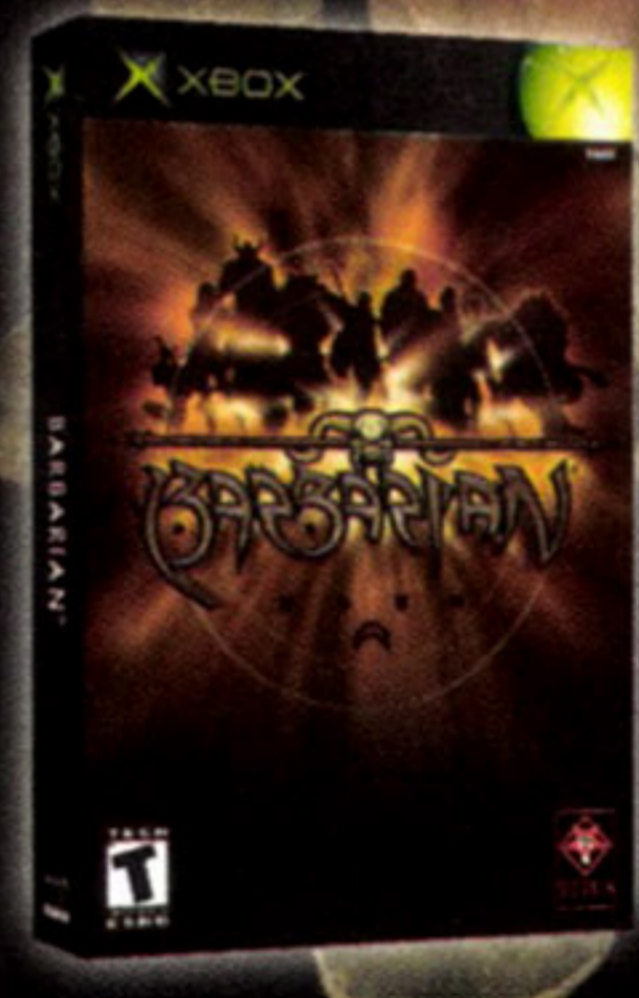
DON'T SETTLE FOR LESSER GAMES. DEMAND BARBARIAN TODAY.



"The 4-player mode is wicked. Now if I could just find 4 opponents I haven't already killed I would show you BARBARIAN's 8 character on-screen mayhem."



"Here I am getting Medieval on Keela. My weapon of choice is usually a tree, or a pillar, or my opponent... but you know me, everytime I can grab onto something and show off..."





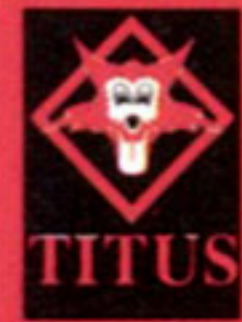
SILVER

SILVER MEDAL
– PSE2 Magazine

★★★★ (out of 5)
– Maxim

www.barbarian-game.com

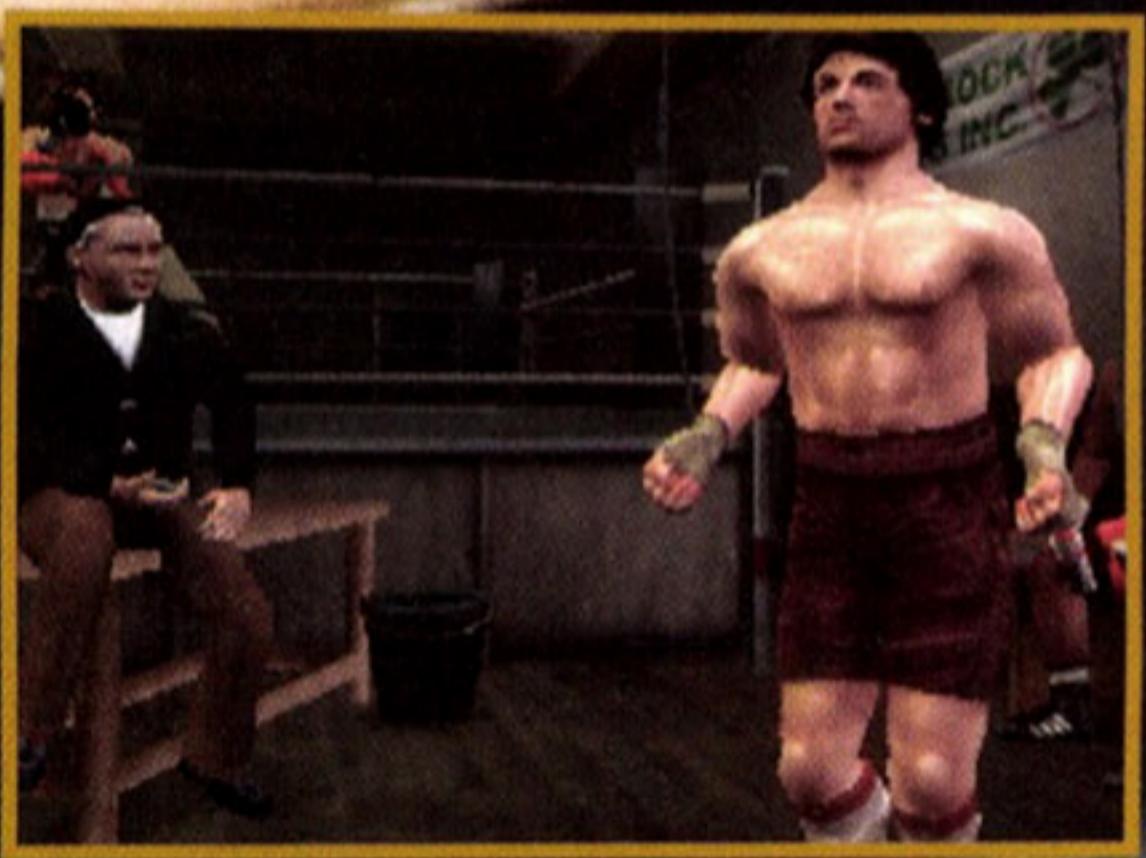
* Your actual results may vary, Mr. Saggy Breasts.



PlayStation 2



IT ISN'T LIKE THE ORIGINAL.



Screens taken from Xbox.

What does it feel like to make a million leisure suits stand up and cheer? Slide your skinny ass into Rocky's shorts and find out as you join his relentless quest for the title. Or take your shot as Apollo Creed, Clubber Lang or 20 others. Start with Training Mode or dissolve to Movie Mode in venues that range from scumbag gyms to the world's most famous arenas. But don't plan on coming out unscathed - the damage is way too brutal. As red-blooded Rocky fans know, sometimes all that's left is: "Cut me, Mick."



Violence



PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE

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Rage

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Letting loose the dogs of war

Conflict: Desert Storm

DEVELOPER **PIVOTAL GAMES/SCI INTERACTIVE** | PUBLISHER **GOTHAM GAMES**
 MULTIPLAYER **1-4 SPLIT SCREEN** | WEBSITE **WWW.PIVOTALGAMES.COM**

Creating an action game based on the Gulf War may anger some (it's not ancient history, after all), but the scenario undoubtedly features some great level design possibilities, and it clearly succeeds on immersion. You feel as if you're really there. Additionally, the game offers four-player co-op (which would be brilliant if not for the problematic frame rate and screen size – it should've been online) and great mission and teamwork strategies. Fantastic voice acting and the ability to switch between team members while telling the others what to do rounds out the highlights of the game.

Unfortunately, a few major obstacles get in the way – namely the graphics, controls, and gameplay. The visuals are strangely bland, the frame rate gets in trouble often, and there's a thick layer of fog blocking out your view of the surroundings. Your character's movement almost feels double-jointed at times, popping in and out of normal animation patterns as he moves in any direction other than a straight line. Aiming your gun is also difficult due to a lack of precision and choppy movement. The story and mission objectives are great, but the game isn't polished enough to let the good points shine.

– Matt Leone



THE VERDICT

Graphics
 Very plain looking and not at all impressive.

Immersion
 Great level design and missions objectives; the feeling of "being there" is the game's strongest feature.

Sound
 Other than a comedic sound when you die, everything sounds pretty authentic with great voices and sound effects.

Design
 Good concepts; not so good executions.

(+) Good,
(-) Bad,
(?) Perplexing

- + You really feel like a part of the missions.
- + All the audio is well done.
- The controls have some significant problems.
- Graphics are lacking attention to detail.
- ? Is the lopsided Gulf War a decent game setting?

Official Xbox
 magazine verdict

6.6

10.0

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HALF-VAMPIRE,
AND ONLY
HALF-DONE
KILLING.

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PlayStation 2



ACTIVISION

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activision.com

PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system and Xbox™ video game system screenshots shown.

Small, yellow, not so different

PacMan World 2

DEVELOPER **NAMCO HOMETEK** | PUBLISHER **NAMCO LTD.**

MULTIPLAYER **NONE** | WEBSITE **WWW.NAMCO.COM**

While the concept sounds like a marketing gimmick, the actual game plays surprisingly like a solid tribute to an old-school hero. *PacMan World 2* (a sequel to the PSOne game in '99) drops the world-famous round protagonist into a new 3D platforming world filled with familiar enemies and gameplay mechanics. He can eat dots, collect fruit, and feast on Ghosts just like he did in his arcade form, but now he butt-bounces, rev-rolls (a la Sonic), and swims like the newer kids on the next-gen block.

PMW2 performs all the platformer standards with the requisite "ice world," "volcano levels," and enough collectibles to put *Mario* to shame (including "Mazes" which transport you to gussied-up pseudo-3D arcade *PacMan* levels). But before you go thinking that this is just another "me too" genre bandwagoner, *PMW2* goes and makes itself enjoyable, clever, and challenging, with an emphasis on "challenging."

Though the quasi-manual camera can leave you in the lurch, and the difficulty level may not suit all those who apply, the game's

solid level designs, simple controls, and familiar gameplay are a good choice for a no-frills platformer requiring some old-fashioned skill.

— Francesca Reyes



■ It may look like it's just for kids, but don't be fooled. This game is challenging.

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Simple, clean, and colorful with minimal effects.

Immersion
A straightforward platformer with few frills, but it's plenty addictive.

Sound
All the old-school sound effects and music give the game a familiar feel.

Design
Camera aside, levels and gameplay are tried and true, but in a good way.

- (+) Good.
- (-) Bad.
- (?) Perplexing
- + A good mix of old and new gameplay.
- + Minimal, if any, load times.
- Camera could definitely use a swift kick to the head.
- Maybe a little too familiar, nothing here is new.
- ? Can't PacMan get a token discount in the arcade from the Mrs.?

Official Xbox magazine verdict

7.1
10.0

Click here

Myst III: Exile

DEVELOPER **PRESTO STUDIOS** | PUBLISHER **UBISOFT**

MULTIPLAYER **NONE** | WEBSITE **WWW.MYST3.COM**

The original *Myst* has both the blessing and the curse of being the first truly mass-market blockbuster back in the day. And because of this, as well as the game's trademark "logic puzzles," it's been generalized as a title for "non-gamers." But most people forget that there's a reason why *Myst* sold so well.

A simplistic mix of first-person point-and-click, gorgeously rendered 2D still-shot environments, and overly complex puzzles makes up the gameplay of *Myst* – and, for the most part, *Myst III: Exile* is no different. The storyline continues

from the previous installments with your character dealing with the aftermath of massive destruction wrought by the last game's villains.

The game itself is only slightly evolved from previous versions with the addition of digitized characters popping in and out to flesh out the storyline and sparsely populate the otherwise lonesome landscapes. Overall, the scurrying from one age to another, reading through dense journals for clues, wandering beautiful (but "flat") worlds – it's all here. And though the outdated technology doesn't really pass muster on Xbox, there's something entrancing

about immersing yourself in the entire *Myst* ideology and allowing yourself to shed any presumptions of gameplay skill or pretenses of being a "hardcore" gamer – and just point and click. *Myst III* certainly won't convert anyone, but it will definitely welcome back those who've been here before.

— Francesca Reyes



■ We wish the "zip mode" was better implemented to avoid some of the back and forth trudging, but oh well.

THE VERDICT

Graphics
Beautifully rendered 2D still shots are marred by outdated technology in the form of grainy digitized characters.

Immersion
About as immersive as a game can be with atmospheric effects and the series' trademark tranquility.

Sound
Sparse environmental sounds coupled with an ambient soundtrack and decent voice acting.

Design
It's its own genre, for crying out loud – so it does what it does very well. Nothing more, nothing less.

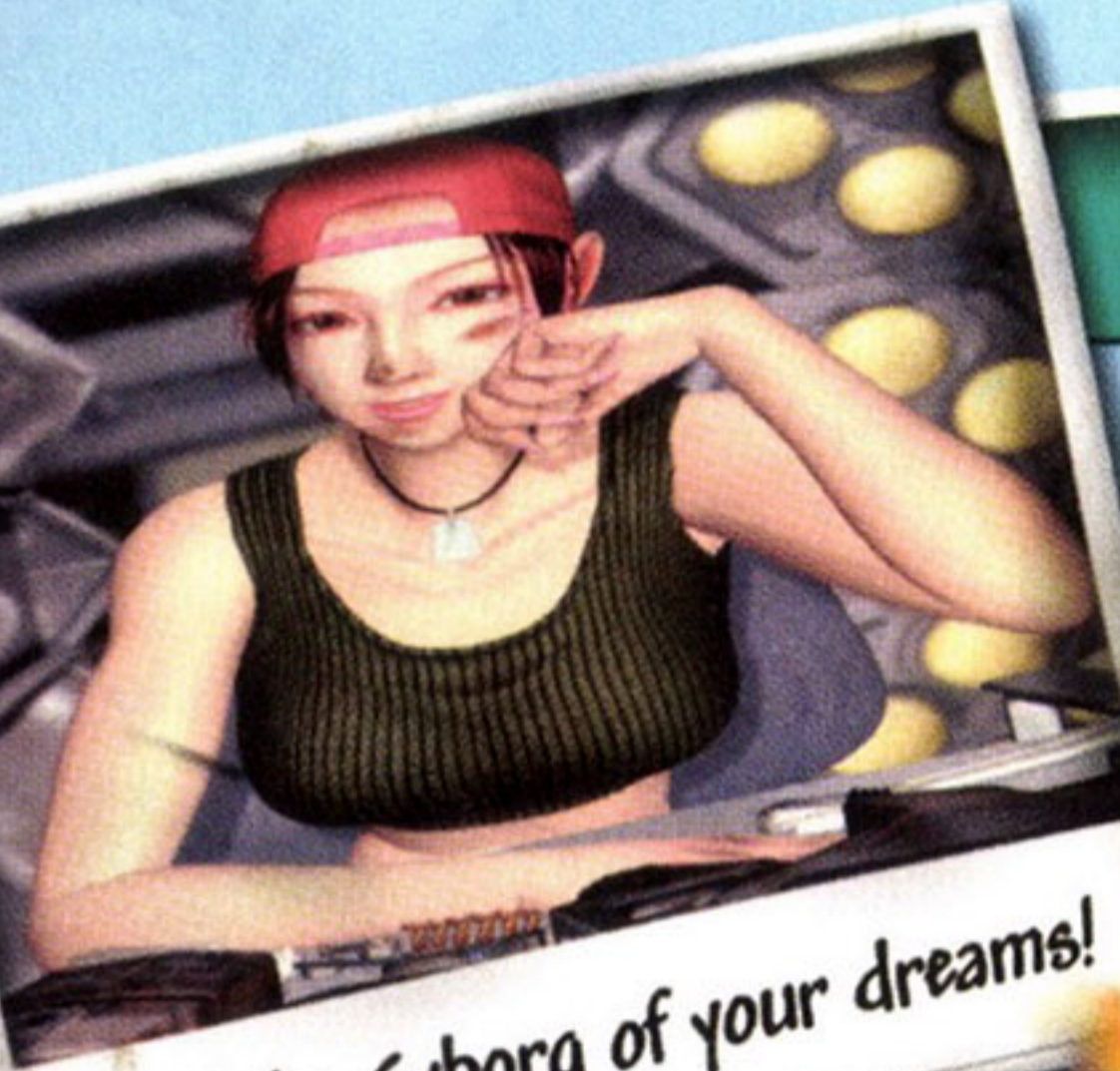
- (+) Good.
- (-) Bad.
- (?) Perplexing
- + Much more organic puzzles and solutions.
- + Still as mesmerizing as ever.
- It's roughly the same game as previous versions.
- Super-outdated Hypercard-esque technology.
- ? When is Atrus gonna update to a word processor?

Official Xbox magazine verdict

5.9
10.0

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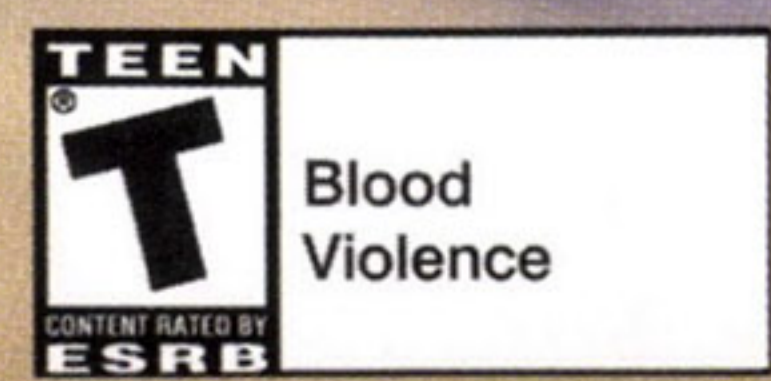
Interact with all the friendly Natives

RPG Resort on your Xbox™

METAL DUNGEON



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Memories That Will Scorch Your Soul!

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IN ONE FIERCE HEARTBEAT
HER MOIST LIPS WERE UPON HIM
'TIL DEATH DO THEY PART



PC
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PlayStation 2



Blood and Gore
Strong Language
Violence



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Who goes there?

The Thing

DEVELOPER **COMPUTER ARTWORKS** PUBLISHER **BLACK LABEL GAMES**
MULTIPLAYER **NO** WEBSITE **WWW.THETHINGGAMES.COM** EXTRAS **DOLBY 5:1**

John Carpenter's 1982 version of *The Thing* quickly gained a cult following that continues to this day. Aside from the authentically blue-collar characters, a setting so frigid you could feel it, and a palpable sense of paranoia, it boasts some of the most disturbing alien transformations on film. So Computer Artworks had a serious challenge: How do you get all the elements that worked on film to work in an interactive game? What they came up with is a game that's rather complicated, a little difficult to get into, and occasionally frustrating.

It will also completely scare the crap out of you.

The "thing" of the title is a shapeshifting alien that can perfectly imitate other organisms, including people. The game exploits this by using a very deep, AI-controlled, squad-based model. You and your team are sent into the Arctic to find out what happened to the characters from the film – of course, with ghastly results.

There are many times when you have to depend on the other members of your squad, any of

whom might actually be an alien. However, you also have to keep them trusting you and, just as importantly, keep them from freaking out in terror – because in either case, they become useless. This takes the form of fear and trust meters (they're not as silly as they sound), and the different actions you can take to keep your squad calm.

Naturally this takes a while to get the hang of, and the controls are a bit convoluted. However, the game eases you into the learning curve, and just as you become comfortable, the events start shifting in some very surprising directions...

The Thing does have its problems. Mainly, the graphics engine stutters and load times are long (although it doesn't load very often). Also, the camera can leave you with a very narrow field of view, especially in tight spaces, making you vulnerable too often. Lastly, team members often "thing out" just because the plotline requires them to – even if you've never let them out of your sight.

However, the developers have also managed build in a genuine sense of dread throughout the

■ Once you step outside, a "cold meter" will appear, giving you only a certain amount of time to spend outdoors before you freeze.



■ See what happens when you don't use quality freezer bags for your meats and produce?

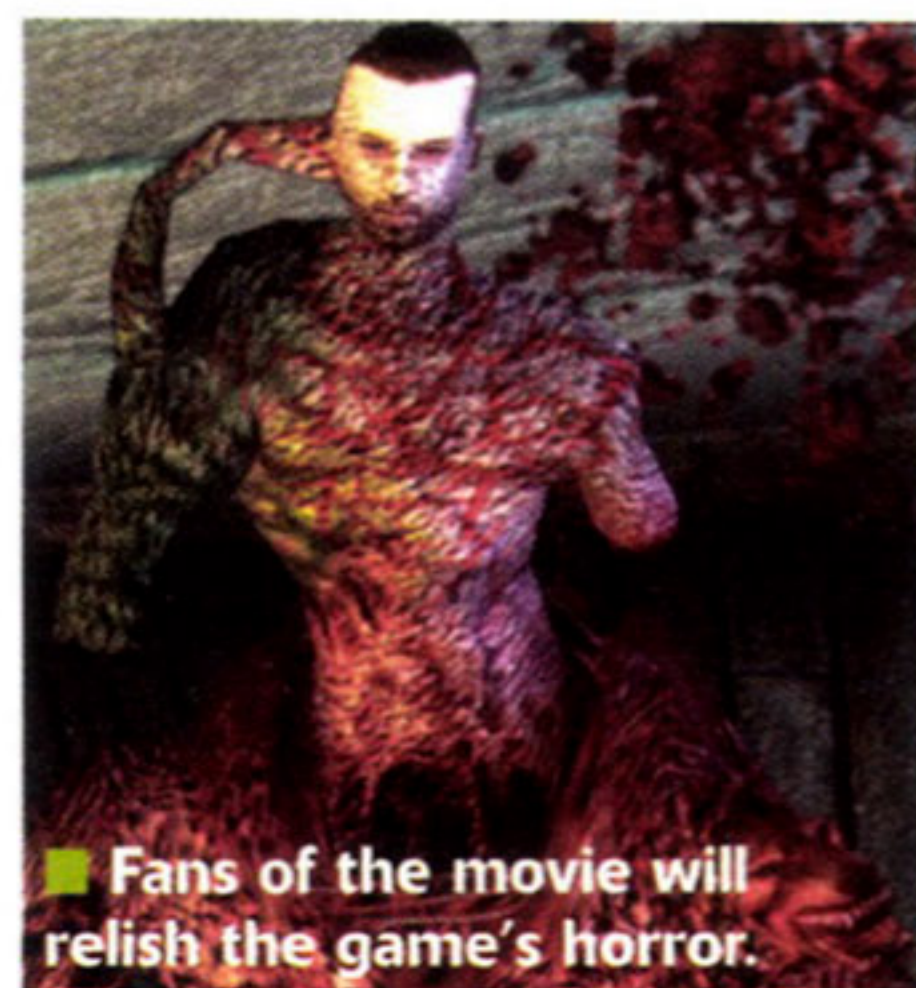
game. Thus, not surprisingly, *The Thing* truly earns its M rating, with gameplay awash in gore and scenes of shocking violence.

The Thing isn't by any means perfect – but its few technical flaws are balanced by its tense atmosphere and unique approach to character. It's also not for everyone, but those who can master its gameplay and stomach its brand of horror will be amply rewarded.

– William Racer

And now, our feature film

John Carpenter's *The Thing* is available on DVD in an excellent digital transfer and amazing surround sound mix. It also includes a very nice set of extras: stills and outtakes, an 80-minute "making of" documentary, and some effects footage that never made it into the movie. Best of all though, is the commentary track by Carpenter and star Kurt Russell; they banter back and forth, with Carpenter supplying details on the filmmaking process while Russell chimes in with anecdotes. It's often hilarious, and the two seem to really love this film – they're also quite possibly a bit drunk. It's one of the more entertaining commentary tracks out there.



■ Fans of the movie will relish the game's horror.

THE VERDICT

Graphics

Simple yet effective; the engine grinds a bit, but not too badly.

Immersion

Excellent – this one will scare you.

Sound

Again, simple yet effective. The voice acting is very good.

Design

It's necessarily complicated, but builds in intensity and doesn't let go.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Incredible atmosphere and no-holds-barred horror.
- + Unique, well implemented (if complicated) character interaction.
- The graphics engine needs further optimizing.
- As always, the camera ain't perfect.
- ? Why do team members "thing out" even after they've been tested?

Official Xbox
magazine
verdict

8.0
10.0

Love and homing rockets

Phantom Crash

DEVELOPER GENKI | PUBLISHER PHANTAGRAM | MULTIPLAYER 1-4 VIA SPLITSCREEN
 WEBSITE WWW.PHANTAGRAM.COM | EXTRAS DOLBY 5.1 SURROUND SOUND



As one of the quirkiest mech games on Xbox, *Phantom Crash* provides players with all the components for building their own fighting mech (called Scoobees). And if you happen to stumble across a love triangle or two amongst your fellow "Wireheads," then even better.

As a novice in the world of mech rumbling for cash, *PC* thrusts players into a community full of bizarre characters, complex

lingo, tons of customizable options for your Scoabee, and some addictive battling. You can tool

Tons of customizable options for your Scoabee

around the Garage with your Scoabee, buy and upgrade parts, or – most importantly – Rumble.

Rumbles pit you against a never-ending stream of multiple opponents in the location of your choice where you'll earn money by defeating other Scoobees. But your main objective is to become good enough to take down the top dog in each class in order to progress to more elite Rumbles.

With names like Lunch and Pepper, fellow Wireheads also add a overall layer of strangeness to the experience. Those accustomed to import-game wackiness will be mesmerized by the love triangles and generally goofy dialogue that flesh out the Wirehead world. It's weird, but charming.

Battles are addicting as your need for cash grows, so it's unfortunate that the game's clunky controls make each fight unwieldy. Since your Scoabee can pack quite a number of weapons, every button on your controller will be used to get the most out of each fight in order to ever hope of taking down the top-tier pilots. And this simply highlights the flawed controls.

Add on some needlessly complex systems for upgrading

your mech, moving around the Wirehead world, and puzzling out how to progress, and *Phantom Crash* isn't a game you can simply pick up and play. But for mech fans and those gamers always up for a singular adventure into time-consuming (but fun) weirdness – this is definitely your ticket.

– Francesca Reyes

Geek dream



If you've ever wondered what a mech fight would look like in the middle of Tokyo, then look no further than *Phantom Crash's* spectacular intro movie. The trailer shows film footage of Tokyo, then plops two hyper-realistic Scoobees in a Rumble right in the center with some of the most convincing, amazing visuals ever. Is it worth the price of admission just to see it? Depends on just how big of a geek you are. Hell, we'd pay it.



■ Though the controls during "Rumbles" are frustratingly clunky, there's something compelling about the fights in the various arenas.

THE VERDICT

Graphics

A mix of rather good 3D with special effects during battle and static 2D screens during downtime make for a quirky, futuristic adventure.

Immersion

Though the controls are cumbersome and the interfaces a bit daunting with so much mech-tastic lingo, this is a strange, but fully realized world.

Sound

With a good selection of various music ranging from techno to fusion to, um, recorder-flute-like tunes, you'll have loads to choose from.

Design

Overly complex mechanics and clumsy controls sometimes detract from the cool appeal of building and piloting your Scoabee.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Loads of customization for your mech.
- + A nice variety of music and options throughout.
- + We love weirdness, and this is as weird as they come.
- Battle controls feel clumsy at the wrong times.
- Some of the systems and lingo are too complicated for their own good.
- ? Why is Pepper considered "old" at only 26?!

Official Xbox magazine verdict

7.3
10.0

Life in the not-so-fast lane

Chase **Hollywood Stunt Driver**

DEVELOPER **I-IMAGINE** | MULTIPLAYER **4-PLAYER VIA SPLIT SCREEN**
 PUBLISHER **BAM! ENTERTAINMENT** | WEBSITE **WWW.BAM4FUN.COM**

Combining stuntman training with video-games would seem to be a perfect fit. Think glamorous movie sets, high-octane stunts involving crashes and explosions, then put all that in a simple, easy-to-play mission-based formula... but something's amiss. Visually, *Chase* suffers from stiff models and oddly missing recovery animations after crashes. The audio is at a similar elementary level, but fortunately that can be adjusted with the custom soundtrack feature.

The game's plot is also strangely uninteresting. There are no movies, aside from one at the very end of the game, to drive the plot along, and close to zero interaction between characters. Each of the 16 levels features a number of objectives to complete. Finishing an objective earns you points, which unlocks more levels. Sadly, each stage is incredibly linear, allowing little to no exploration.

Another issue with the game is the wacky collision detection. Some areas will not allow you to pass although you have plenty of room, while others let you drive through solid objects.

We're always happy to see some new ideas brought to the table, but the implementation of these ideas falls short. This game



■ Pulling off tricks is easy, and good fun... for a bit.

is really exciting in theory, but not much fun in reality. Sadly, with some polish this could have been a really good game.

- Adam Pavlacka

THE VERDICT

Graphics

Visually bland. Lack of detailed textures and sparse use of effects results in a game that doesn't take advantage of the Xbox's power.

Immersion

Very poor. The worlds do very little to make things feel "real."

Sound

One licensed song and a lot of generic loops. Thankfully *Chase* supports custom soundtracks.

Design

Feels more like a series of mini-games than a single experience. Individual tracks do have some high points, though overall quality is uneven.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

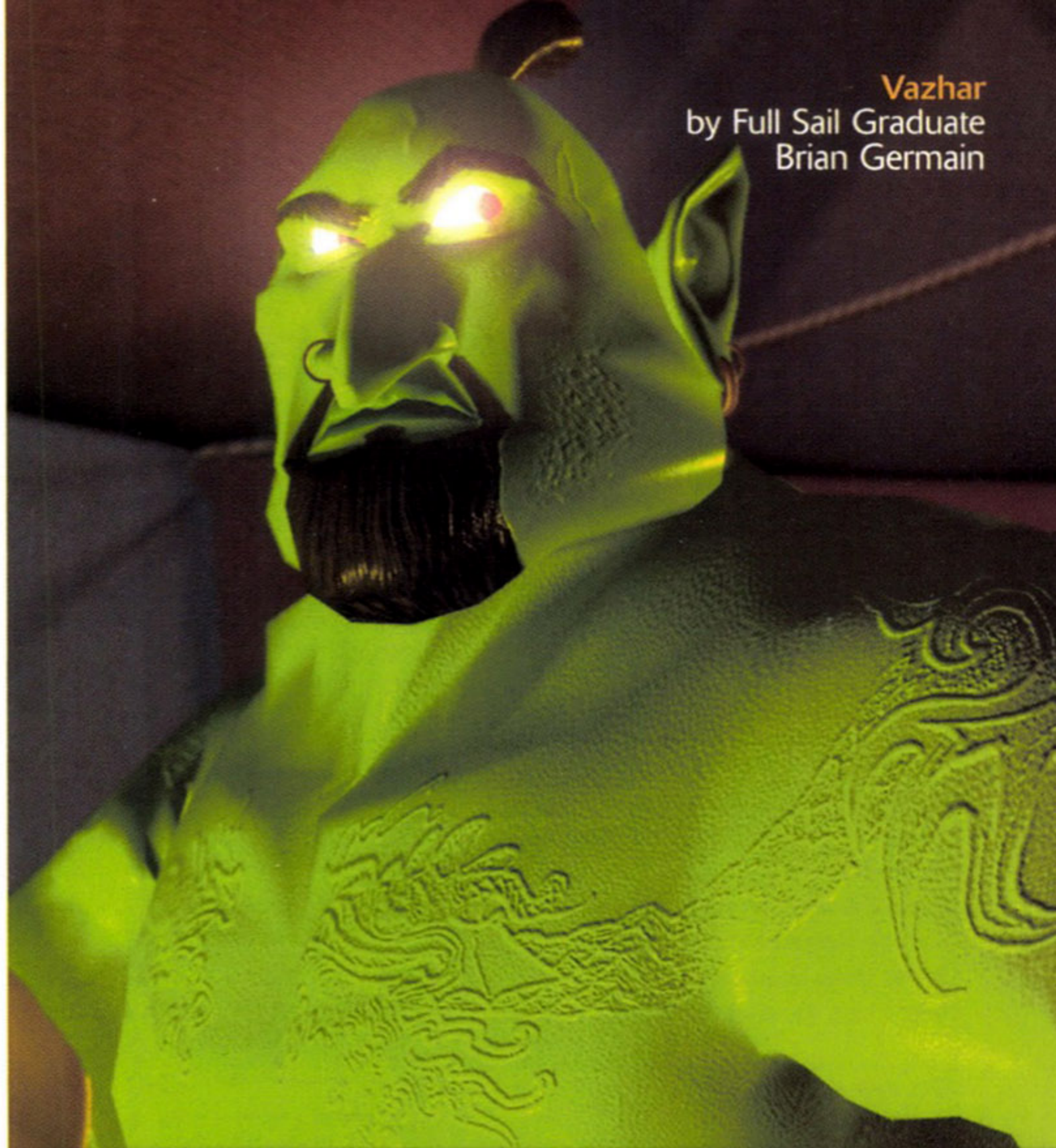
- + Stunts are easy to execute.
- + Chase is a girl, which is cool.
- Not enough replay value.
- Weak story.
- Collision detection is spotty.
- Difficulty level is uneven.
- Control can be erratic.
- ? You can drive into a wall and be fine, but drive into the wrong obstacle and your car will instantly explode. Weird.

Official Xbox magazine verdict

4.1
10.0



■ The movie sets make for some interesting levels.



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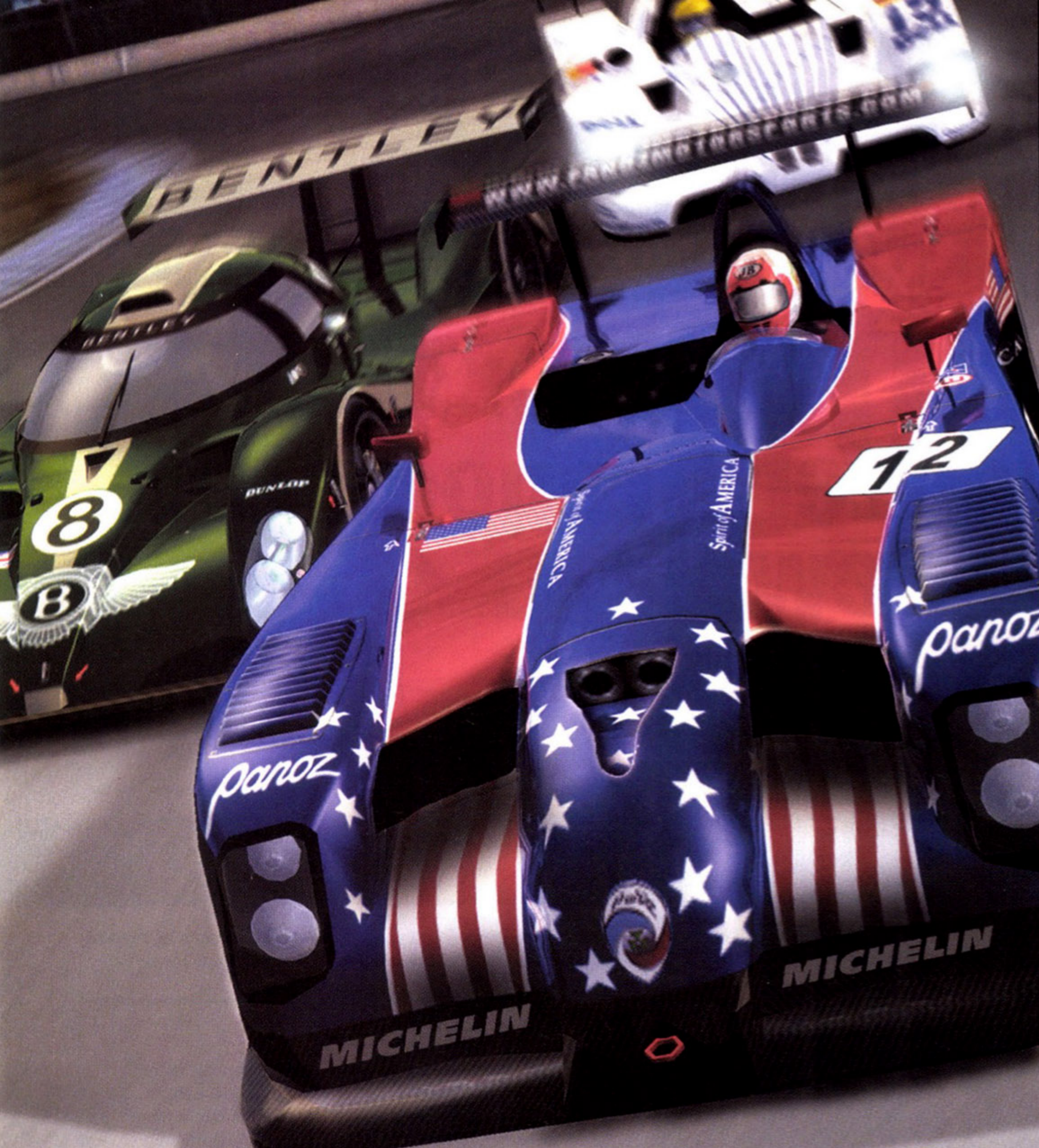
Helping with all of your pre-holiday game-shopping needs

Reviews R Us

Now the big question is – were you naughty or nice this year? Read our list to find out what the Xbox fairy will give you for each category. That's right, it's the definitive guide to every Xbox game ever released!

Game/Publisher	Description	Issue	Rating
2002 FIFA World Cup EA	Fast, pretty, user-friendly footie game. Perfect for Xbox.	July02	8.3
4X4 EVO 2 Take Two	Off-roading made mediocre by bland design and physics.	Dec01	5.5
Aggressive Inline Acclaim	Spot-on action skater to compete with Tony Hawk.	Dec01	9.1
AirForce Delta Storm Konami	Zippy flight shooter sequel – and the only one on Xbox.	Oct02	7.1
All-Star Baseball 2003 Acclaim	Baseball game with very little innovation or polish.	Jun02	6.2
Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding Microsoft	Takes snowboarding into new, fun, freestyle territory.	Jan02	8.4
Arctic Thunder Midway	Snowmobile racer hampered by mediocrity.	Jan02	5.9
Azurik: Rise of Perathia Microsoft	Good ideas constricted by poor graphics and design.	Feb02	3.7
Batman Vengeance Ubi Soft	PS2 port featuring the caped crusader with little perks.	Feb02	4.6
Blood Wake Microsoft	Great-looking but repetitive boat shooter.	Mar02	7.4
Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon Universal	An affront to Bruce Lee with messy controls/bland graphics.	Oct02	3.0
Buffy the Vampire Slayer EA	Fun and true to the series, an action-fest worth playing.	Sept02	9.0
Burnout Acclaim	Unique twist on an otherwise straightforward arcade racer.	Jun02	8.0
Cel Damage EA	Cel-shaded multiplayer shoot-'em-up that bewilders.	Dec01	6.8
Chase BAM!	An unpolished ode to stuntpersons that shows promise but poor execution.	Nov02	4.1
Circus Maximus Encore	Chariot-racing two-player game: quirky, but average.	Apr02	6.4
Commandos 2 Eidos	The PC strategy series arrives intact with incredibly tough missions.	Nov02	7.2
Conflict: Desert Storm Gotham Games	A little rough, a lot unpolished, but still immersive action-squad shooter.	Nov02	6.6
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex Universal	Solid sequel that may satisfy but fails to evolve.	Apr02	7.1
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller Sega	Fun, accessible cabbie action, with bland graphics.	Sept02	8.0
Dark Summit THQ	A good mix of snowboarder and adventure game.	Jan02	7.0
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 Acclaim	Tricks and playability make this a treat for BMX fans.	Jan02	8.7
David Beckham Soccer Majesco	Strangely poor-looking (and sub-par-playing) soccer game.	Sept02	4.2
Dead or Alive 3 Tecmo	Glorious, fast-moving fighter with all the right moves.	Dec01	9.5
Dead to Rights Namco	Quick, linear action with solid storyline, but clumsy lock-on.	Sept02	8.5
Dynasty Warriors 3 Koei	Slay hundreds of historically accurate enemies in near identical PS2 port.	Nov02	7.0
Enclave Vivendi Universal	Semi-flawed medieval action still manages to be engaging.	Sept02	7.4
ESPN MLS ExtraTime 2002 Konami	Smooth tribute to arcade-y soccer shootouts.	May02	8.6
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002 Konami	Zombified NBA shenanigans lacking any real hook.	June02	4.2
ESPN NFL Primetime 2002 Konami	A decent pigskin game, but the competition's better.	Mar02	7.1
ESPN Int'l Winter Sports 2002 Konami	Another Track 'n' Field button-masher that falters.	Mar02	5.9
ESPN X Games Snowboarding 2002 Konami	Smooth snowboarder with amazingly deep career mode.	May02	7.9
F1 2001 EA	Racing port that could've used some TLC, but still shines.	Feb02	8.7
Fuzion Frenzy Microsoft	Four-player party action that somewhat satisfies.	Dec01	7.8
Gauntlet Dark Legacy Midway	Four-player arcade action that needs a face-lift.	July02	6.2
Genma Onimusha Capcom	PS2 survival horror quasi-port featuring tougher everything.	Mar02	7.9
Gun Metal Majesco	Fast-paced and fun, but it falls a little on the generic side.	Sept02	7.9
Gunvalkyrie Sega	Tough but solid Sega shooter with a steep learning curve.	Apr02	8.2
Halo Microsoft	Best FPS. Ever. Okay, change that. Best. Game. Ever.	Dec01	9.5
Hunter: The Reckoning Interplay	Brilliant four-player mayhem with only a few flaws.	July02	8.9
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire EA	First-person Bond sequel that's enjoyable, but with little flair.	May02	7.9
JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future Sega	Cool graffiti-painting rocket-powered inline-skate action!	Apr02	9.2
Kabuki Warriors Crave	Strangely bland fighting game with men in drag.	Jan02	5.9
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer Activision	Tony Hawk for surfers that fails to excite, but is structurally sound.	Nov02	6.9
Knockout Kings 2002 EA	Fast, furious, and amazingly fun arcade boxer.	May02	8.0
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2 Eidos	Bloodsucking sequel with plenty of appeal for fans.	Apr02	8.5
Mad Dash Racing Eidos	Cute but tough multiplayer platformer/racer for all ages.	Feb02	7.3
Madden 2002 EA	Though it's a port, it's a damn good one. A classic.	Dec01	9.0
Madden 2003 EA	It's Madden! It's wonderful! But too many PS2 leftovers.	Oct02	8.8
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 Activision	A good trick system and cool park editor make a good BMX treat.	Nov02	8.4
Max Payne Rockstar	Violent and cheesy – mindless action at its best.	Feb02	8.8
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing Codemasters	Fast-paced, good-looking boxing that suffers from slippery controls.	Nov02	5.5
MLB Slugfest 20-03 Midway	Xtreme baseball done right with humor and witty commentary added.	Nov02	8.6
Morrowind Bethesda	Massive, open-ended roleplaying engages and delights.	Aug02	8.1
MotoGP THQ	A solid moto-racer that needs only a bit of inspiration.	July02	7.9
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael THQ	A mediocre port of a mediocre PS2 motocross racer.	Feb02	6.5
Myst III: Exile UbiSoft	Point-n-click puzzle-solving tranquility with some perks, but little evolution.	Nov02	5.9
NASCAR Heat Infogrames	A few flaws don't dampen the NASCAR fun.	Dec01	8.2

Game/Publisher	Description	Issue	Rating
NASCAR Thunder 2002 EA	Un-enhanced port, but it plays fairly well for NASCAR fans.	Jan02	6.9
NASCAR Thunder 2003 EA	Fun NASCAR hijinks with a flawed driving engine, but lots of extras.	Nov02	8.0
NBA 2K2 Sega	Still the tightest, most complete console NBA game available.	Apr02	9.1
NBA Inside Drive 2002 Microsoft	More arcade-y than NBA 2K2, but with some nice touches.	Apr02	7.9
NBA Live 2002 EA	Strangely immersive hoops action that fares well.	Feb02	7.6
NCAA 2K3 Sega	Looks, plays and feels too much like last year's (old) pro model.	Oct02	7.1
NCAA Football EA	Easily the best college football game ever made. Brilliant.	Sep02	8.8
New Legends THQ	N64-ish action slasher with a solid story, but little else.	Apr02	4.0
NFL 2K2 Sega	Sega's football comes to Xbox without trimmings but flies high.	Mar02	8.8
NFL 2K3 Sega	One of the best football series just gets better every year!	Oct02	9.1
NFL Blitz 20-02 Midway	Hyper-speed-crack-tastic-three-button football action.	Jun02	7.0
NFL Blitz 20-03 Midway	As good as ever, but with little to no changes or innovation.	Oct02	6.5
NFL Fever 2002 Microsoft	Spectacular football that fully exploits Xbox hardware.	Dec01	9.1
NFL Fever 2003 Microsoft	Plays almost exactly like last year's great game... but the competition got better.	Oct02	8.7
NHL 2002 EA	An average-looking PS2 game that still rocks the rink.	Jan02	8.6
NHL Hitz 20-02 Midway	Good looking "extreme" hockey action, done well.	Jan02	8.4
Nightcaster: Defeat the Darkness Microsoft	Gauntlet-esque, single-player spell casting that falls short.	Mar02	4.9
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee Microsoft	A splendid, imaginative romp with plenty of inventiveness.	Jan02	9.0
Outlaw Golf S&S Interactive	Wacky golf sim with solid, standard physics and design.	Aug02	7.9
PacMan World 2 Namco	A blend of old and new in a simple but solid platformer mix.	Apr02	7.2
Panzer Dragoon Orta Sega	Gameplay, graphics, and storyline all blend flawlessly for a grand experience.	Nov02	9.3
Phantom Crash Phantagram	Highly complex systems and wonky controls keep this mech from greatness.	Nov02	7.4
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat EA	Nice-looking, simplistic 3D action game; not much charm.	Jun02	7.1
Prisoner of War Codemasters	Sloppy mechanics mar a Metal Gear contender for stealth.	Oct02	5.9
Project Gotham Racing Microsoft	Spot-on arcade racing with cool kudos and modes aplenty.	Dec01	9.0
RalliSport Challenge Microsoft	Ultra-challenging rally racer; highly recommended.	Apr02	8.6
Red Card 20-03 Midway	Bland and undistinguished, but still packing some fun for fans.	Oct02	6.5
Robotech: Battlecry TDK Mediactive	Anime-licensed mech action with all the trimmings, but a little repetitive.	Nov02	8.6
Sega GT 2002 Sega	Tight controls and 125 cars make a splendid driving game.	Oct02	9.1
Shrek TDK	The ogre hero shows his pretty face but sub-par gameplay.	Jan02	5.3
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams Konami	Super-creepy antics frame a stellar storyline.	Jan02	8.9
Smashing Drive Namco	Arcade port of a fast, furious cab racer that's too short.	Jun02	5.0
Soccer Slam Sega	Fast, wacky, extreme soccer for party players – not sim-lovers.	Oct02	7.9
Spider-Man Activision	Web-slinging hero arrives in a solid, packed, decent adventure.	July02	7.9
Splashdown Infogrames	Lovely-looking water racer with solid gameplay.	Sept02	8.6
SpyHunter Midway	No-frills port of the PS2 update that's fun, but a little rough.	May02	8.1
The Simpsons Road Rage EA	A Simpsons Crazy Taxi ripoff that only amuses.	Jan02	6.2
SSX Tricky EA Big	One of the best snowboard racers comes to Xbox.	Mar02	8.7
Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter LucasArts	Tightly designed Star Wars flight shooter. Boo-yah.	July02	8.1
Star Wars Obi-Wan LucasArts	A decent Tomb Raider-esque romp with Jedi powers.	Feb02	7.0
Star Wars Starfighter SE LucasArts	A super "special" redux of an already solid game.	Dec01	7.0
Street Hoops Activision	All style, could use more substance, but still kinda cool.	Oct02	6.9
Taz: Wanted Infogrames	Spin-happy Taz is too confined by level design to make it work.	Oct02	5.6
Test Drive Infogrames	Fast racer with just enough flaws to make it mediocre.	Aug02	7.2
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open Infogrames	Ordinary off-road racing game with no real high points.	Jan02	5.6
Tetris Worlds THQ	Everything Tetris should be and a storyline, but not much more.	Oct02	6.8
The Thing Black Label Games	Scary and gory, but with gameplay that requires a dedicated player.	Nov02	8.0
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2x Activision	Solid version of an existing game with super cool perks.	Dec01	8.8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision	New goodies added to an already fantastic skater.	Apr02	9.0
Totaled! Majesco	Load-tastic, but okay, racer with an emphasis on big crashes.	Aug02	7.1
TransWorld Surf Infogrames	Possibly the most inventive, accessible, and fun surfer ever.	Dec01	8.2
Triple Play 2002 EA	Arcade-y baseball game for casual fans, not hardcore folks.	May02	6.0
Turok: Evolution Acclaim	Straightforward dino-tastic FPS with minimal frills but solid gameplay.	Nov02	7.6
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger EA	A slightly generic, decently designed, collectible-heavy platformer.	Nov02	6.9
UFC Tapout Crave	Realistic mixed martial-arts fighter with loads of depth.	Apr02	9.0
World Series Baseball Sega	Solid, fun, realistic baseball gaming has finally arrived.	July02	8.8
WWF Raw THQ	Not enough options to justify awkward gameplay. Just for fans.	Apr02	5.7
Wreckless Activision	Car action that's top notch, visually, with only a few flaws.	Mar02	9.1



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PlayStation 2



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Extended Play

Strategy ■ Reader Interaction ■ The Disc

Dragon novices apply within

10 tips for the Panzer Dragoon Orta newbie



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Contents



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Girl power!

The conclusion to our *Buffy* secrets guide has arrived!



162

Girls rule!

Check out all the sexy content on the Game Disc!



165

Girls & toys!

This is your chance to win a copy of *SeaBlade* for Xbox, along with a stash of cool toys! Read up for details...

Become a successful dragon rider in 10 easy steps

Read our exclusive *Panzer Dragoon Orta* review. Go to your local game store. Buy copy of *Panzer Dragoon Orta*. Use our tips to master the game. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done.



TIP: NEED FOR SPEED

► Use your speed and slow down controls to get a leg up on some of the enemies. Unlike earlier *Panzers*, some enemies are only destructible from one side, either the front or the back. The desert level will be a mini-tutorial on figuring out the weak side of every enemy, but after that you're on your own. In some instances, you can use your speed to break through enemy ranks, depending.

■ Your speed builds up over time, so use it wisely.



TIP: LOCK OR LOAD

► Learn to use your rapid fire gun (repeatedly hit the fire button, rather than locking on) against projectile attacks from enemies. When you see a flank of missiles or other objects coming your way, the best thing to do is use your lasers like machine guns to take them down, as your lock-on targeting won't work on some of the objects, like the series' recurring "jelly bombs."

■ Targeting isn't the only way to destroy a threat.



TIP: RADAR LOVE

► Always keep an eye on the radar in the lower corner of the screen to look out for enemies on all sides of you. If you see a fast-moving object coming up behind you, don't bother spinning around, but simply wait for it to reach your front side to attack it. Constantly trying to "face the enemy down" can waste valuable time. You'll often find yourself spinning around, then missing the target.

■ Your radar is your friend.



■ Look for telltale weaknesses on all sides!

TIP: FIRE THE BOSS

► Every single boss in *Orta* has a special weak spot that must be targeted and attacked in order to best it quickly. If you notice that you're only doing very little damage or none at all, then try switching sides. Move to the front, the back, or the side of the boss in order to pinpoint where it's vulnerable, then unleash a Berserker attack to do some serious damage.



■ Try shooting everything that looks like it needs it.

TIP: SHOOT EVERYTHING

► Some shootable objects won't appear on the radar. Case in point: the hives in the river stage along the canyon walls. They won't pop up as red dots on the radar, but they're destructible and contribute to your overall rating at the end of each stage.



■ Remember what type you are to avoid losing speed or lock-on.

TIP: TYPE FINDER

► Figuring out which dragon type to use in each situation is crucial. Your first goal is to get used to the style of each type and use it to your advantage. The Glide Wing is best for quick changes during boss battles to outrun boss attacks, while the Base Wing or Heavy Wing types are good for normal level playthrough.



■ You can't see them, but they're there.

TIP: STAY ON TARGET

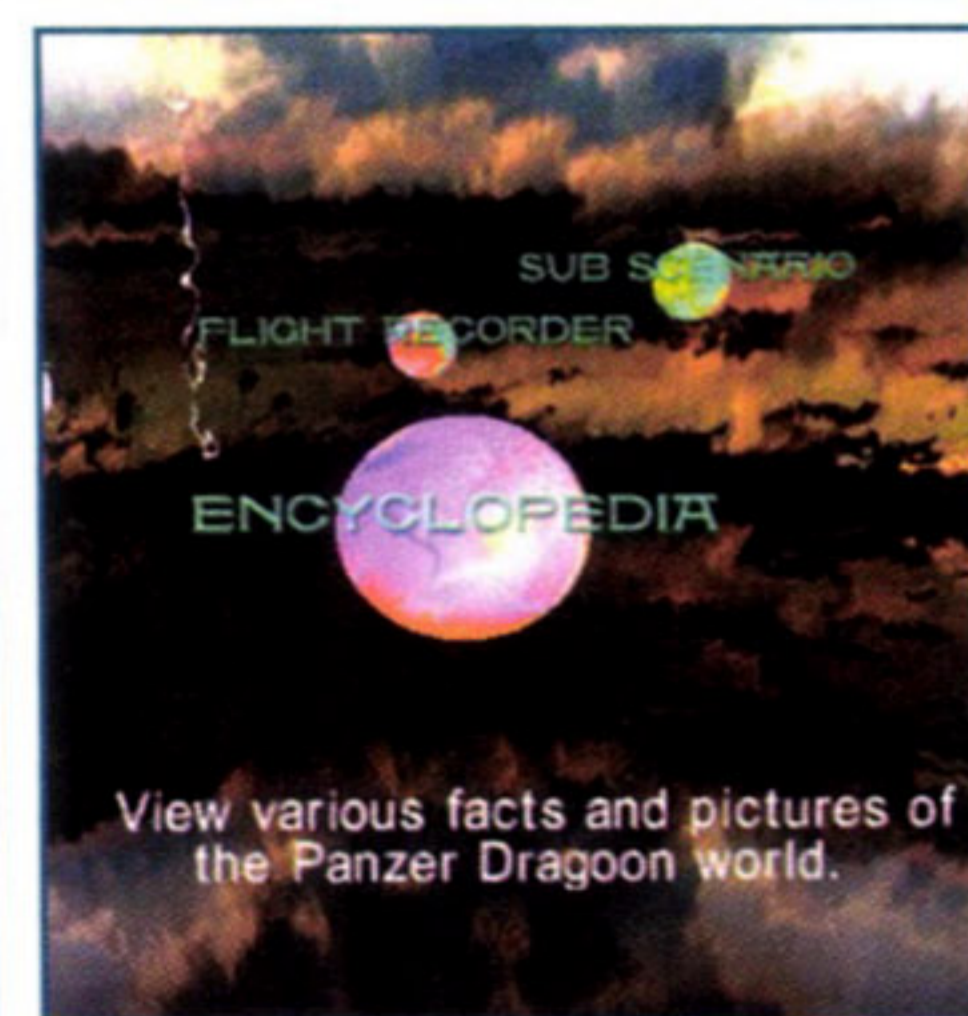
► Most stages have a LOT of enemies that may not necessarily be an immediate threat, but your lock-on can help you highlight upcoming dangers from far away. Keep your finger pressed on the lock-on and keep your crosshair moving at all times.



■ Notice the patterns and hold for an all-out attack!

TIP: KICKING IT OLD-SCHOOL

► As with a 2D shooter, you can highlight and target a string of flying enemies, then simply release the targeting button to let loose a network of lasers. This approach works best in the second stage to rid yourself of multiple enemies as they fly overhead. Plus it saves wear and tear on your thumb.



TIP: YOUR REWARDS

► Perform well on a given stage and you'll be able to unlock all sorts of goodies in Pandora's Box on the main menu. Here's a teaser of what you can expect:

- Encyclopedia
- Box Game
- Flight Recorder
- Sub-scenario
- Appendix

In addition, each option will have numerous sub-options that will have to be unlocked as well.

TIP: IN THE GENES

► Your dragon levels up depending on the type of enemies you collect "genes" from. Your levels dictate your stats and the power of your Berserker attacks, therefore you must use all the dragon types to level up evenly.



REPRESENT

"Rayman Arena is impossible to put down, especially multi-player." -PLAY magazine

"Ubi Soft's limbless hero will soon strong-arm the competition..." -Nintendo Power



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PlayStation 2



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Become a *Buffy* buff

Part two



We promised you closure last issue, and we're delivering it now with the completion of the comprehensive secrets guide for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer!* And you'll be thanking us, as some of the later secret locations are difficult to find on your own. Check it out and get staking!

All the Secret Locations!

(When there is more than one secret in a given stage, we've tried to list them in "chronological" order – therefore, the secrets closer to the beginning of the stage will be listed first and so on.)

MAUSOLEUM, SECRET PASSAGEWAYS (SECRET #1)



- ▶ **Item:** Elixir
- ▶ **Location:** To the right of the first Wall Switch, find the altar. Jump onto the altar and kick through the right-hand wall plate to grab the secret item.

MAUSOLEUM, SECRET PASSAGEWAYS (SECRET #2)



- ▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** From the main room in the mausoleum, hit both switches. Then go down the right-hand passage and you'll find the secret item at the very end of the sunken hallway in the left-hand open coffin.

MAUSOLEUM, SECRET PASSAGEWAYS (SECRET #3)



- ▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** Once you clear the left-hand tunnel, a door will open to reveal a hall leading back to the main room. Down the hall, at the turn, kick through the weakened-looking wall to get the secret.

MAUSOLEUM, THE CATACOMBS (SECRET #1)



- ▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** In the room with the waterfalls, locate the glowing green skull along the underside of the walkways. Shoot it with an arrow and you'll unlock an altar just below where the skull was.

MAUSOLEUM, THE CATACOMBS (SECRET #2)



- ▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** When you near the very end of the stage, when you light the last cinder and ash bowl, look down the middle chasm and you'll see the secret item near the bottom. Carefully pick it up.

SUNKEN CHURCH, BRIDGE (SECRET #1)



- ▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** Located right above the first Holy Water fountain just past the bridge. You'll have to climb up to it using the rocks on the left side of the fountain.

SUNKEN CHURCH, BRIDGE (SECRET #2)



- ▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** Just past the evil spirit barrier, find the small opening leading to a platform below. Drop down and stomp it (Action button) to break through to a hidden chamber with the secret item.

SUNKEN CHURCH, WEST WING (SECRET #1)



- ▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** Near the fallen pillar in the center of the stage, you'll find a statue flanked on either side by crucifix headstones. Smash both headstones and the secret item will fall from the statue.

SUNKEN CHURCH, WEST WING (SECRET #2)



- ▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** Near the second cinder and ash bowl that you light, look behind you. Near the top end of the wide staircase lit by candles, break through one of the side walls to retrieve the secret item inside.

SUNKEN CHURCH, BAPTISTERY (SECRET #1)



- ▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** In the large, moonlit hall off of the entrance area, kick in the light gray stone relief near the bottom of stone pedestal along the wall (near the human corpse) to retrieve the secret item.

SUNKEN CHURCH, BAPTISTERY (SECRET #2)



- ▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** When you enter the hall with the hanging spiders, hit the gray switch near the entrance on the right wall. Press it to reveal a hidden compartment in the staircase with the secret item.

MANSION, MAIN HALL (SECRET #1)



- ▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** On the side patio, clear out the Hanoch Demons first, then hit the white diamond switch near the door to reveal a secret door that will open up to reveal the Health Crystal.

MANSION, MAIN HALL (SECRET #2)



- ▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** At the last door with the three diamonds, hit the blue switch, raising metal shutters on the windows. Hop into the yard. Hit the white switch to raise steps to the item in the first patio near entrance.

DOCKS, LOADING AREA (SECRET #1)



- ▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
- ▶ **Location:** Once you make it into the first cargo bay, head towards the conveyor belt and hit the flammable steel can sitting next to the red freight carrier (next to the water). Inside is the secret item.

DIRTY CHEATS**Aggressive Inline****Unlock Everything and More!**

We've brought home the goods on this game with cheats that not only open every level and unlock all the wacky bonus inline skaters, but also activate gameplay cheats like infinite grinds and super spins.

Cheats are entered into the Cheats screen in the Options menu. Many are made up of directional inputs. These don't actually refer to the directions on the controller, but to the arrows on the bottom row of the keypad on-screen. Select the arrows the same as you would a letter from the alphabet. Once you enter a cheat correctly, the screen will revert to the Options screen. If you mess up, the screen won't change.

Effect
Have All Keys
Unlock All Characters

Level Select

Super Spin

No Gravity Wall Rides

**Juice Meter
Regeneration**

**Invulnerability
Perfect Grind
Perfect Hand Plant
Perfect Manual**

Cheat
SKELETON
DOWN, RIGHT, RIGHT,
DOWN, LEFT, DOWN, LEFT,
DOWN, RIGHT, RIGHT,
RIGHT
UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN,
LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT,
BABA
LEFT, LEFT, LEFT, LEFT,
RIGHT, RIGHT, RIGHT,
RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT,
RIGHT, UP
UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN,
LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT,
ABABS.
LEFT, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT,
LEFT, RIGHT, DOWN, UP,
UP, DOWN, A I
KHUFU
BIGUPYASELF
JUSTIN BAILEY
QUEZDONTSLLEEP

**Legends of Wrestling****Unlock All Wrestlers**

It would take you days to unlock all the wrestlers hidden in the game as each one is unlocked by playing an entire career using a specific wrestler. Forget that nonsense! Just go to the Main Menu and enter **UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, Y, Y, X** and all the hidden wrestlers will become playable. Once unlocked, you'll also be able to save them by making a stop at the Options Screen and choosing the Save Option.

Red Card Soccer**Unlock Everything!**

For a soccer game, *Red Card Soccer* has a lot of hidden goodies such as several hidden teams and stadiums. Most of them are quite bizarre and will breathe new life into this game when you use them. Once unlocked, you can play as a team of penguins or zombies or even samurai on a field in a haunted mansion or on an aircraft carrier.

To unlock everything including the Finals Mode, go to the Main Menu and select the Load/Save Option. From the Save/Load Menu select the Create/Load Profile option and when prompted to enter a new name after selecting a new profile, enter **BIGTANK**. Now when you select a team each country will have one to four new teams, and when you select your stadium you will find several new stadiums to choose from.

DOCKS, LOADING AREA**(SECRET #2)**

▶ **Item:** Power Crystal

▶ **Location:** On the box conveyor belt inside the docking bay, you'll have to be quick in grabbing the secret item from the far end of the belt while outrunning the boxes.

DOCKS, SHIPPING**(SECRET #1)**

▶ **Item:** Health Crystal

▶ **Location:** In the first kitchen you come across, make sure to check out the lower cabinet beneath the microwave. Kick it in to grab the secret item.

DOCKS, SHIPPING**(SECRET #2)**

▶ **Item:** Power Crystal

▶ **Location:** When you reach the large warehouse area, you'll have to hop across the wooden boxes in the water to reach the far platform. Climb up the ladder there to grab the secret item.

DOCKS, WHARF**(SECRET #1)**

▶ **Item:** Health Crystal

▶ **Location:** Once you get out onto the metal rooftops near the beginning of the stage, explore the far end of the outer edge of the rooftop to find the secret item.

DOCKS, WHARF**(SECRET #2)**

▶ **Item:** Power Crystal

▶ **Location:** After defeating the Mutant in the hallway, exit the hall and spot the long dead-end walkway just to your left. At the very end of the walkway, open the grate to grab the secret item.

DOCKS, CRANE**(SECRET #1)**

▶ **Item:** Health Crystal

▶ **Location:** Out on the pier where you fight the three water demons, you'll see the item on an awning. Climb across the boxes so that you can jump onto the awning and fetch the item.

DOCKS, CRANE**(SECRET #2)**

▶ **Item:** Power Crystal

▶ **Location:** After you turn on the sprinklers to short circuit the keylock off the pier, check back in the front room behind the wooden crates that were previously ablaze. You'll find the item there.

LIBRARY, GANG MEETING 5**(SECRET #1)**

▶ **Item:** Power Crystal

▶ **Location:** In the upper level of the library, find the standing bookcase second from the left, hit the action button to pull a book that opens the cage. Inside the cage, you'll find the item.

LIBRARY, GANG MEETING 5**(SECRET #2)**

▶ **Item:** Health Crystal

▶ **Location:** After you fight the Hanoch Demon and you're back in the Library, head into Giles' office to pick up the secret item on his desk.

HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY**(SECRET #1)**

▶ **Item:** Power Crystal

▶ **Location:** Once you grab the Keycard from the basement of the boys' bathroom, make your way back to the entrance hall, and re-enter the bathroom. The item is now inside.

HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY**(SECRET #2)**

▶ **Item:** Hellfire Vial/Holy Elixir

▶ **Location:** In the courtyard, head through the double doors behind the female victim's corpse. Enter the Nurse's Office to get at the supply room through the window. The items are inside.

HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY**(SECRET #3)**

▶ **Item:** Health Crystal

▶ **Location:** In the courtyard, head to the second-floor landing and find the stone awnings along the building wall leading to a small balcony. You'll find the secret item on the balcony.

HIGH SCHOOL, SEWERS**(SECRET #1)**

▶ **Item:** Health Crystal

▶ **Location:** At the very start of the stage, you'll see two large cylindrical tanks on either side of you. Kick in the left side of the left tank to crack it open and reveal the secret item.

HIGH SCHOOL, SEWERS**(SECRET #2)**

▶ **Item:** Hellfire Vial/
Holy Water Vial

▶ **Location:** In the first sewer area, examine the wall along the lower platform and smash through the weakened area near the small ramp leading upwards.

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- Gamers.com

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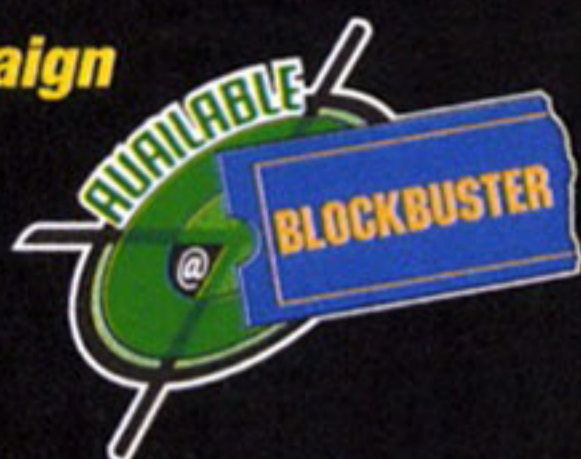
We love secrets!

DIRTY CHEATS

Enclave

Unlock The Dark Campaign

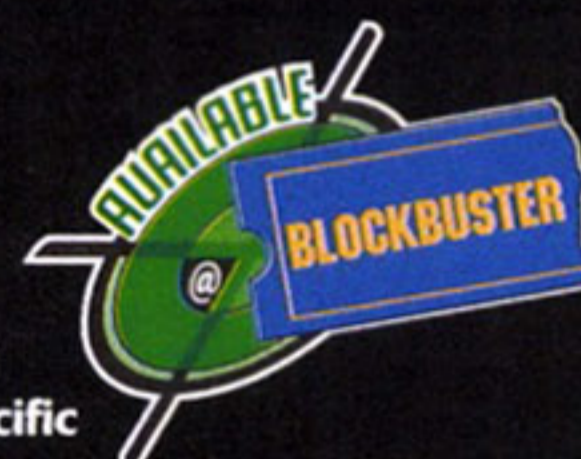
Ordinarily, you have to complete the Light Campaign to be able to unlock the Dark Campaign. But since you're a cheater, you can simply start a new game; at the Episode Selection screen just enter **X, Y, Y, X, X, Y, X, Y** and you will be able to play the Dark Campaign.



Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller

Making Things More Interesting

Ready for some novelty? For each effect, hold down a specific button while you highlight a character and select them for use before a game.



Effect:
Turn Off Arrows

Cheat: Highlight a character and press and hold **WHITE** while you press **A** to select the character.

Effect:
Turn Off Destination Indicators

Cheat: Highlight a character and press and hold **BLACK** while you press **A** to select the character.

Effect:
Turn On Expert Mode

Cheat: Highlight a character and press and hold **BLACK + WHITE** while you press **A** to select the character.

How to Unlock Other Effects

Effect:
All Drivers

Goal To Satisfy: Finish level **S-S** of **Crazy X Mode**.

Effect:
Another Day Mode

Goal To Satisfy: Finish level **3** of **Crazy X Mode** (places fares in different locations).

Effect:
New Maps

Goal To Satisfy: Finish level **1** of **Crazy X Mode** (unlocks Small Apple, Glitter Oasis, and West Coast).

Effect:
New Vehicles

Goal To Satisfy: Finish level **2** of **Crazy X Mode** (unlocks the Carriage, Stroller, and Bike).

FOUNDRY, ELEVATOR

(SECRET #1)



Item: Elixir
Location: In the beginning area where you are attacked by two vampires, make sure to try to open the greenish lockers. Inside one of them, you'll find the secret item.

FOUNDRY, ELEVATOR

(SECRET #4)



Item: Power Crystal
Location: Once you've opened the hatch door, exit the control room and walk across the large pipe at the end of the catwalk to reach a new area. Follow the catwalk to the item.

HIGH SCHOOL, SEWERS

(SECRET #3)



Item: Elixir
Location: In the area where you must fight two water demons and a Hanoch demon, make sure to grab the secret item from the dead-end sewer pipe down at the bottom in the sewer water.

HIGH SCHOOL, SEWERS

(SECRET #5)



Item: Power Crystal
Location: When you enter the small room where you must fight two Hanoch demons, make sure to enter the small area where one of the demons breaks through the wall. You'll find the item inside.

HIGH SCHOOL, BASEMENT

(SECRET #2)



Item: Health Crystal
Location: Once you descend the double staircase, head toward the dead end blocked by tossed lockers and enter the boys' bathroom. Fight the vamp and pick up the item in the stall.

HIGH SCHOOL, SEWERS

(SECRET #4)



Item: Hellfire /Blessed Bolts
Location: In the same area as Secret #3, head to the small landing with two flammable steel barrels. Punch through the long wall on the landing to reveal the secret items.

HIGH SCHOOL, BASEMENT

(SECRET #1)



Item: Elixir
Location: At the start of the stage before you go exploring, make sure to open the double iron-gray doors near the busted Exit doors. The item is just inside.

HIGH SCHOOL, BASEMENT

(SECRET #3)



Item: Power Crystal
Location: In the same area as the bomb you must diffuse, find the wooden box near the double red doors that are locked. Smash it to retrieve the item inside.

FOUNDRY, YARD

(SECRET #1)



Item: Holy Elixir
Location: Cross the narrow bridge. From the first room, find the side room with a ladder leading up to the catwalk. Follow the catwalk to the end and smash open the small wooden box to get the item inside.

FOUNDRY, YARD

(SECRET #2)



Item: Holy Elixir
Location: After you've picked up the Conveyor Key and defeated the demons, make sure to explore the loading bay on the ground level. In one of the boxes you'll find the secret item.

FOUNDRY, YARD

(SECRET #3)



Item: Health Crystal
Location: On the ground level near the far end of the bridge, you'll spot a stack of three wooden crates with one small box on top. Get to the top of the stack and fetch the item inside the small box.

FOUNDRY, YARD

(SECRET #4)



Item: Power Crystal
Location: After you try to activate the conveyor belt, exit the area and examine the exterior of the belt. Look up and you'll see a spinning "biohazard" sign. Shoot it with a crossbow.

FOUNDRY, ELEVATOR

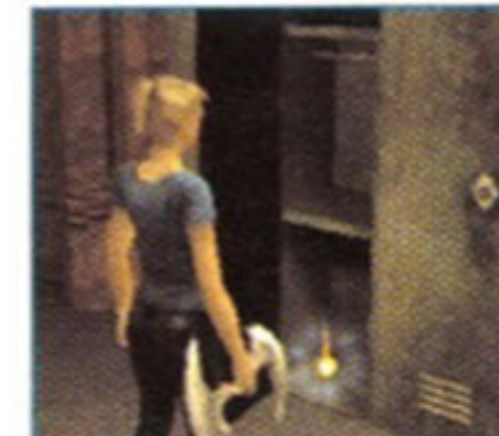
(SECRET #2)



Item: Health Crystal
Location: After you've opened the door blocked by steam, head down the stairwell, and examine the area. Next to the corpse, smash the wall to reveal the secret item.

FOUNDRY, ELEVATOR

(SECRET #3)



Item: Hell Fire Vial
Location: In the room with the lever to open the hatch door exit, make sure to open the lockers to find the secret item.

FOUNDRY, ELEVATOR

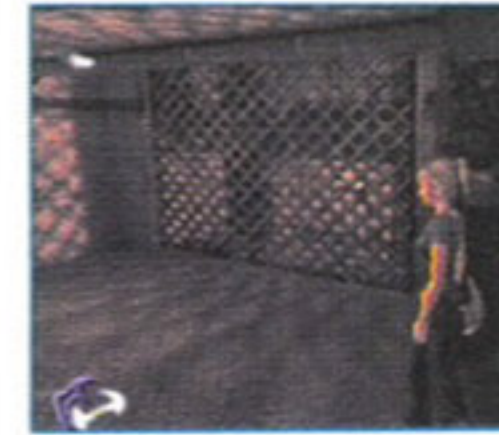
(SECRET #4)



Item: Elixir
Location: On the ground level, after opening the hatch and defeating all the Hanoch demons, you'll find that one of them has created a hole in the stone wall with a secret item inside.

FOUNDRY, CONVEYOR SYSTEM

(SECRET #1)



Item: Health Crystal
Location: Just above the fire pit, near the pouring molten iron, look up. When a boiler passes through the doors, shoot the red and white "Do Not Enter" sign.

TWO PLAYER BUFFY?

Yes, it can be done. And now with the modern technology of cheats, you too can play as the Dark Slayer, access unlimited Slayer Power or have a friend join in as a Hanoch Demon in "Arena Mode." How do you do this?

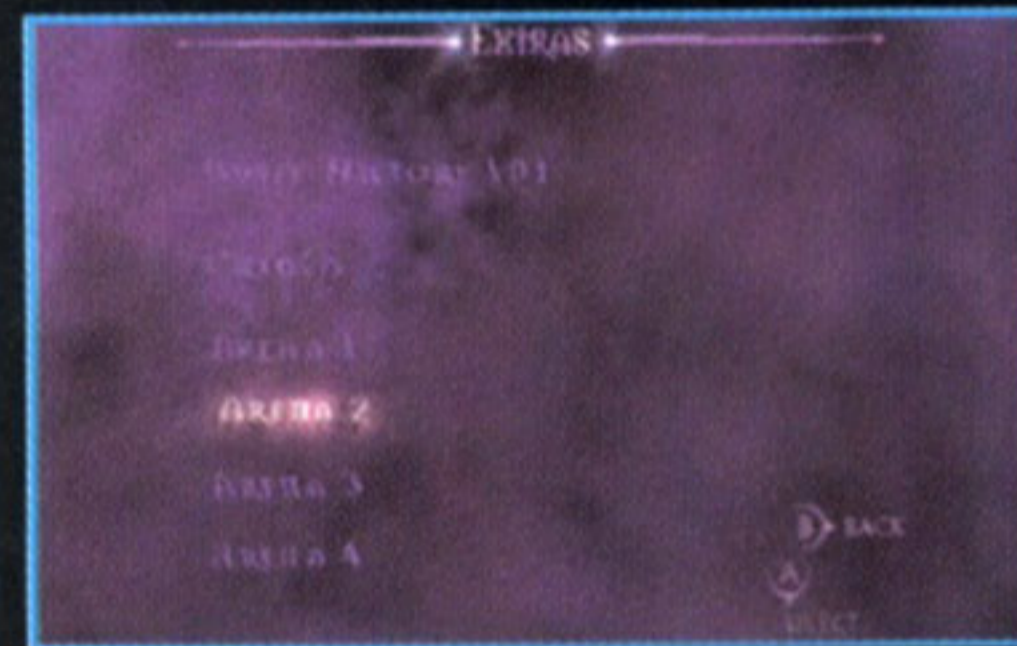
At the Extras menu, enter in any of the following codes. You will hear a noise if you enter the codes in correctly.

Effect	Cheat
Unlock Arena 1	●●●●●●
Unlock Arenas 1-2	●●●●●●
Unlock Arenas 1-3	●●●●●●
Unlock Arenas 1-4	●●●●●●

Play arena maps as Dark Slayer
●●●●●●

Infinite Slayer power ●●●●●●
Infinite health ●●●●●●

Please note that when you have the health cheat activated, you can still die from falls, etc. But you will be immune to damage sustained from enemies through kicks, punches and the like.



FOUNDRY, CONVEYOR SYSTEM

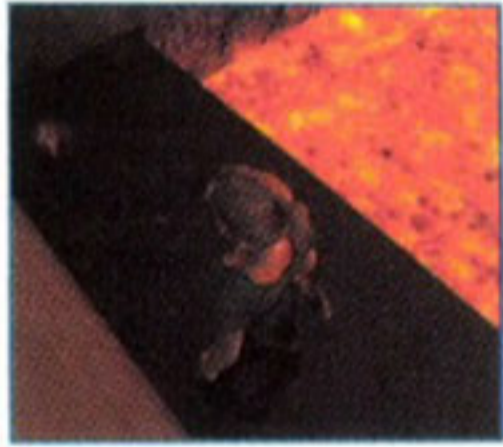
(SECRET #2)



▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
▶ **Location:** In the fenced area facing the long beam leading to the stage exit, make sure to smash through the stone wall nearest to the opening created by the Hanoch demons to pick up the item.

FOUNDRY, ORE PROCESSING

(SECRET #1)



▶ **Item:** Power Crystal
▶ **Location:** In the pipe room with the spiders and Hanoch Demons, climb your way onto the pipes along the wall opposite the entrance and smash through the stone wall to reveal the secret item.

FOUNDRY, ORE PROCESSING

(SECRET #2)



▶ **Item:** Health Crystal
▶ **Location:** Near the elevator on the main floor, there's a slim catwalk to the left of the fire pit. Climb up onto the catwalk, use an arrow on the canisters at the edge of the platform and retrieve the item.

SUNKEN CHURCH, TUNNELS

(SECRET #1)



▶ **Item:** Holy Water Vial
▶ **Location:** In the control area with three switches attached to the giant fan, smash through the stone side of the staircase to reveal the secret item.

SUNKEN CHURCH, FIRE BRIDGE

(SECRET #1)



▶ **Item:** Crossbow Bolts
▶ **Location:** On the right side of the façade of the church, make sure to carefully explore the far-right stone wall. At the corner of the building wall, smash the stone to reveal the secret item.

SUNKEN CHURCH, EAST WING

(SECRET #1)



▶ **Item:** Holy Elixir
▶ **Location:** At the beginning of the stage, head to the wide stone staircase. At the foot of the stair, smash the right-hand wall to uncover the secret item.

SUNKEN CHURCH, EAST WING

(SECRET #2)



▶ **Item:** Elixir
▶ **Location:** Once you cross the fallen pillar bridge, make sure to explore around the far corner, after you clear the Hanoch demons to discover the item in a shallow pit on the ground.

SUNKEN CHURCH, EAST WING

(SECRET #3)



▶ **Item:** Holy Elixir
▶ **Location:** Once you make it into the actual church (past the lava pit area), head down the red-carpeted staircase. Explore behind the staircase by kicking through the wall to find the secret item.

DREAMERS' REALM, MAZE

(SECRET #1)



▶ **Item:** Elixir
▶ **Location:** Once you're able to cross the large hallway gap, make sure to press the green button on the other side to enable a platform to appear in the square hole in the ground. Jump across and fetch the secret item.

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Reader Interaction



You've got questions, and we've usually got answers. But the twain shall never meet if you don't send them in. Ship your questions

postally to: Official Xbox Magazine, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Or do it through the virtual ethos at xboxmagazine@imaginemedia.com.

We thank you, and your fellow readers will too.

Link-free

I have a question about the System Link cable. It's basically an Ethernet cable, right? So can I just use a standard Ethernet cable instead of the official System Link cable? Also, if I do use a regular Ethernet cable, will it do any harm to my Xbox?

Andrew M.
Massachusetts

We say: Actually, Andrew, the Xbox System Link is technically identical to a "cross-over" Ethernet cable. If you have tried to use a regular Ethernet cable in lieu of the Xbox-sanctioned System Link, you don't have to worry, it has no effect whatsoever. The worst that will happen is that it simply won't work. Your safest bet is to pick up the Xbox System Link cable, but if you're not going to – no matter what we tell you – a cross-over Ethernet cable is the only type that works for direct Xbox-to-Xbox System Link. And confusingly, if you're playing multiplayer System Link over a LAN, or eventually through Xbox Live, you will need a "regular" rather than "cross-over" Ethernet cable.

Sound tracking

Can you please tell me the names and song titles of the music that plays on the demo disc during the Top Ten Plays section and during the "Dreams of Master Chief" sequence?

Chris
Via email

We say: The tune is called "Loop 4" and it was produced exclusively for our

disc by Jeremy Williams, ex-Previews Editor from the PC gaming magazine, PC Gamer. If you want to hear more of his work, go to www.jerware.org and you find some of the other tunes that Master Chief didn't select while browsing his Warthog stereo system.

Ring thing

I just sold my PS2 to put a deposit on Capcom's pricey *Steel Battalion* package. I was really looking forward to playing EA's game based on Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film. Can you tell me what the chances are that this title will be available on Xbox?

Mark S. Moran
Sacramento, CA

We say: Good news, Mark! Your patience will pay off when EA releases *LOTR: The Two Towers* on Xbox in early 2003. It hasn't officially been announced, but we're expecting to blow out some big coverage on the upcoming game very soon, so stay tuned.

Picking names

I was just curious if there will be an option to change your name in the future if you find you don't want that name anymore. In my case it would be that I am part of a gaming clan, and I'm not sure if anyone else is going to play. So my first choice might be Creech, but if someone from my clan plays, I might want to change it.

Creech
Via email

We say: Once you sign up for your Xbox Live account under a specific "gamertag," it's permanent and cannot be changed. However, you will be able to choose altered tags in different games, depending on the options for that particular game, but otherwise – if you pick "Creech," it's "Creech" for good.

Saving Shenmue

I've been a fan of *Shenmue* ever since I got it for Dreamcast. When rumors of *Shenmue 2* formulated, I searched for information. Sega said you would be able to use your save file from the first *Shenmue* to use in the sequel. Shortly afterward, Sega cut the plans for Dreamcast. I have a question: Is Sega/Microsoft going to make something to import your save files from Dreamcast to the Xbox?

John DePaul
Via email

We say: Sorry to say, John, but making a Dreamcast VMU save compatible on a wholly different console would be a technical nightmare. It's just not going to happen with the Xbox release of *Shenmue 2* – which is a shame, but think of it as a chance to start anew.

Multi-asking

I've heard some things about *Halo* action figures from another Xbox magazine but I haven't heard anything since, so do you have anything

about that? Also, do you have Bungie's email address? I've wanted to send them a letter but I can't find an address. Lastly, what are the release dates for *Whacked!* and *The Thing*?

Patrick Wilkins
Lake Elmore, VT

We say: While there might very well be something in the works at any number of action figure companies, Patrick, we haven't heard anything official about a line of figures based on *Halo*. We'd be snapping up those *Master Chiefs* in a heartbeat. As for Bungie – your best bet is to visit www.bungie.com and get a hold of them via their contact information there. And to answer your last question: November and September, in that order.

XBOX



Old-school fighting gets a leg up from Capcom, but no word on a KOF for Xbox – sorry, Kyo!

King of fighting

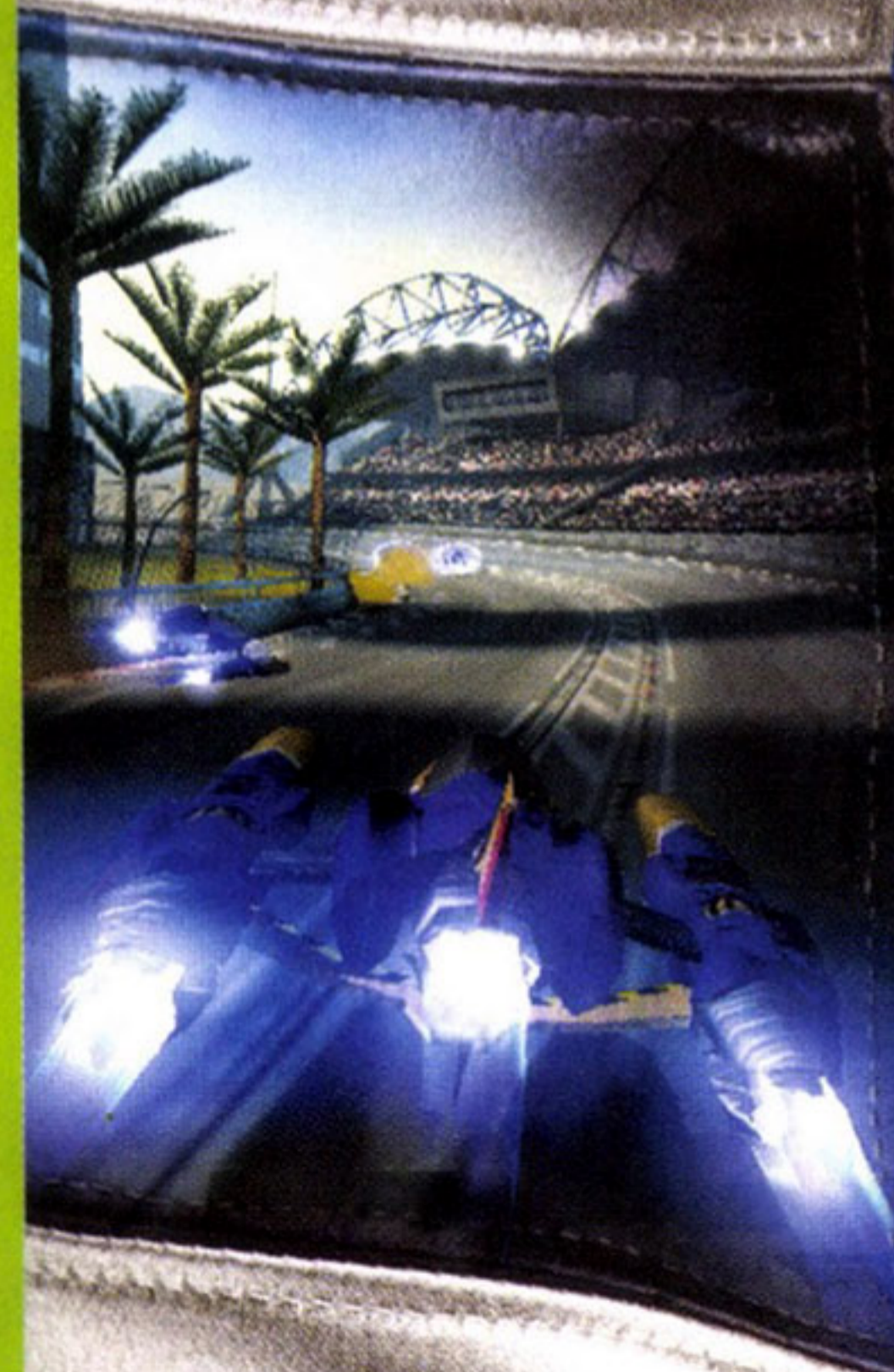
I've heard some rumors on the Internet that a *King of Fighters* game was being made for the Xbox. Is there any truth in that? I'm a big fan of KOF- and DOA-type fighting games (I bought a Dreamcast just so I could play those) so if it isn't true I want my hopes crushed before they raise too high. If the rumors are true, I'd want to prepare for it with strenuous thumb and wrist exercises.

Ian Johnson
Via email

We say: Any rumor about any KOF game coming to Xbox is still just that, Ian – a rumor. We haven't heard a thing – behind closed doors or otherwise – about one arriving in the US or Japan, which is unfortunate. But you'll hear about it here if we do. For now, the closest thing to it (and that's a stretch since it's the only 2D fighting game available for Xbox) is the upcoming *Marvel vs. Capcom 2*, which arrives on shelves next month.



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Demo-tastic!

The holidays are coming, the games are coming, and the demos are here! Strap yourself in and get ready to test-drive five brand-spanking-new demos. Before you blindly run to the store and open your wallet, we suggest you spend some time with our disc to see which game is really worth your greenbacks. If you don't spend at least five hours with our disc, then the only person you are cheating is yourself. Get gaming!

Touchdown!

A pigskin-packed playable trio of the football season's upcoming videogames, including EA Sports' *Madden 2003*, Midway's *NFL Blitz 20-03*, and Microsoft's *NFL Fever 2003*! Test the AI, explore the options, compare the grass textures, and gear up for the football season with the unparalleled opportunity to test out the biggest football games all in one place.

Interfacing

GIANT WALL OF VIDEO: If Xbox had its own TV show on some low-rent cable network, this is pretty much exactly what it would look like – except the hosts would be better looking.

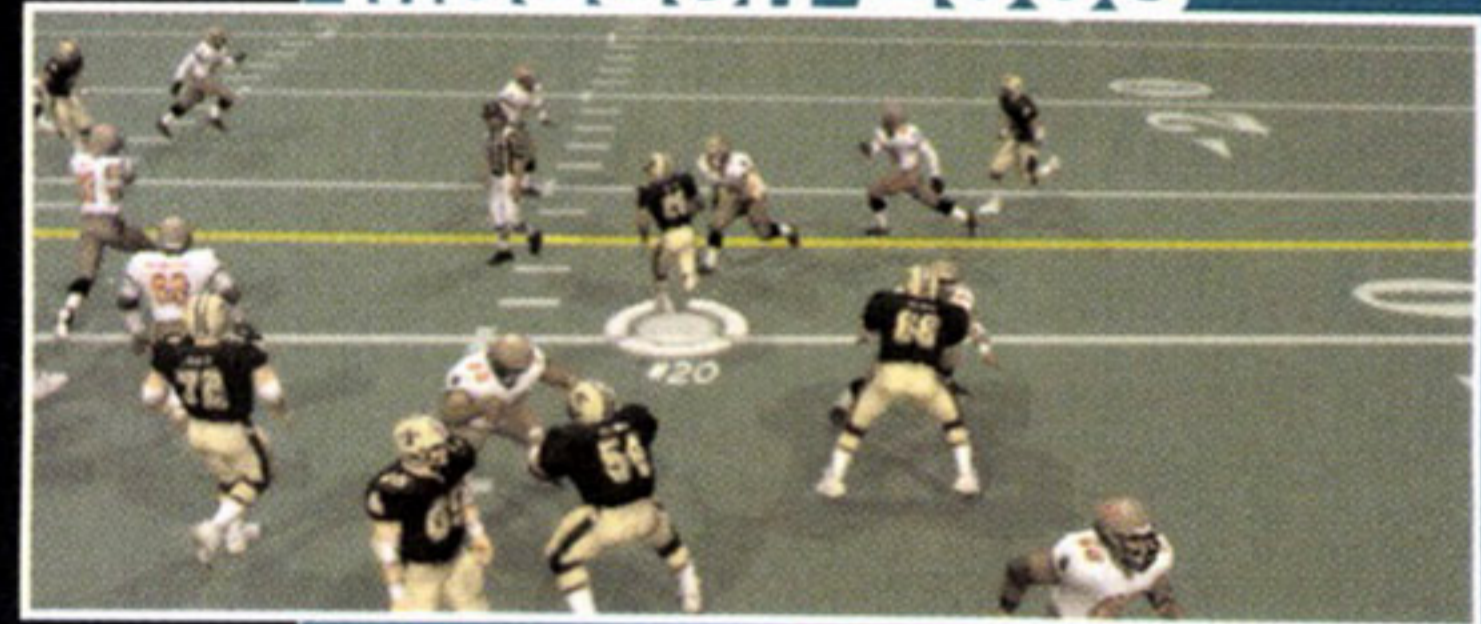
SCROLLABLE MENU SYSTEM: Designed by monkeys, for monkeys. It's simple is as simple does. You move the cursor up or down to select the delightful treat you wish to enjoy next. Voila!

BOTTOM FILLERS: Like the bits on the bottom of each page in this magazine, these are here to give you more information on what you are watching.

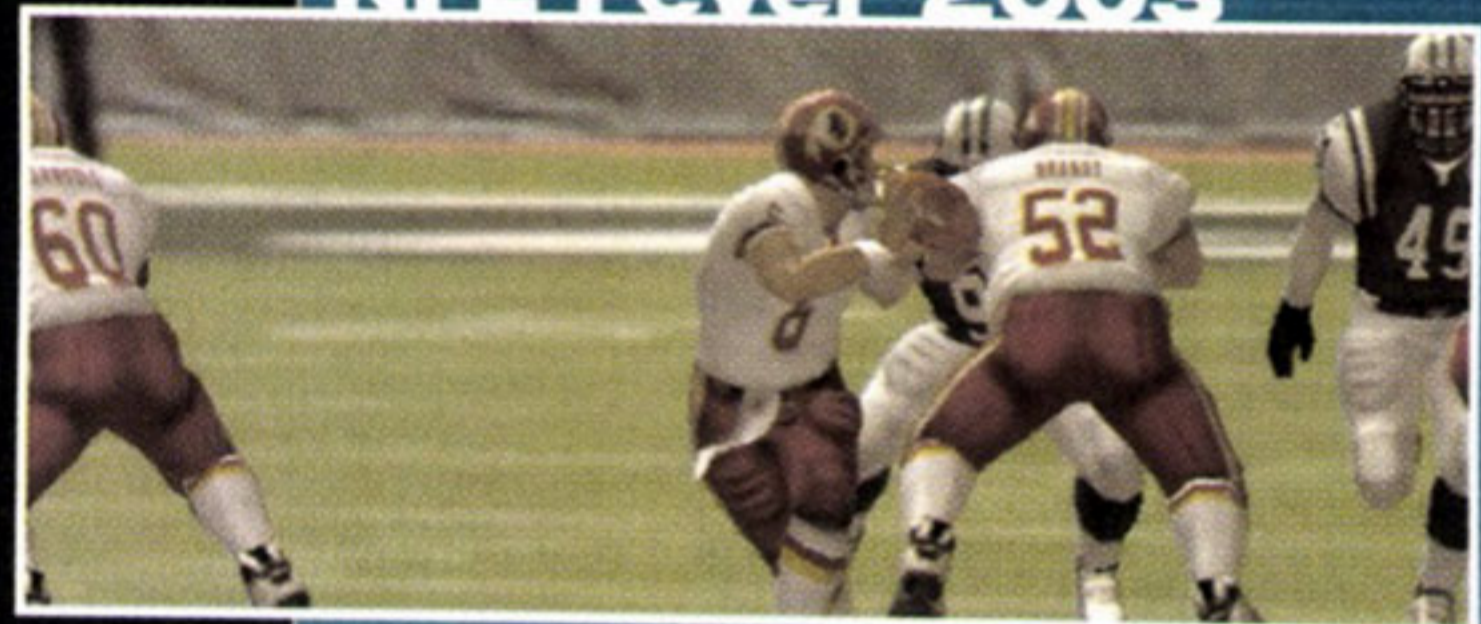
3D – IT'S LIKE, THE FUTURE, MAN: Not to be outdone by million-dollar development houses, we made our disc with not one, not two, but three Ds. Press the white and black buttons to zoom around like a little floating 3D spy.



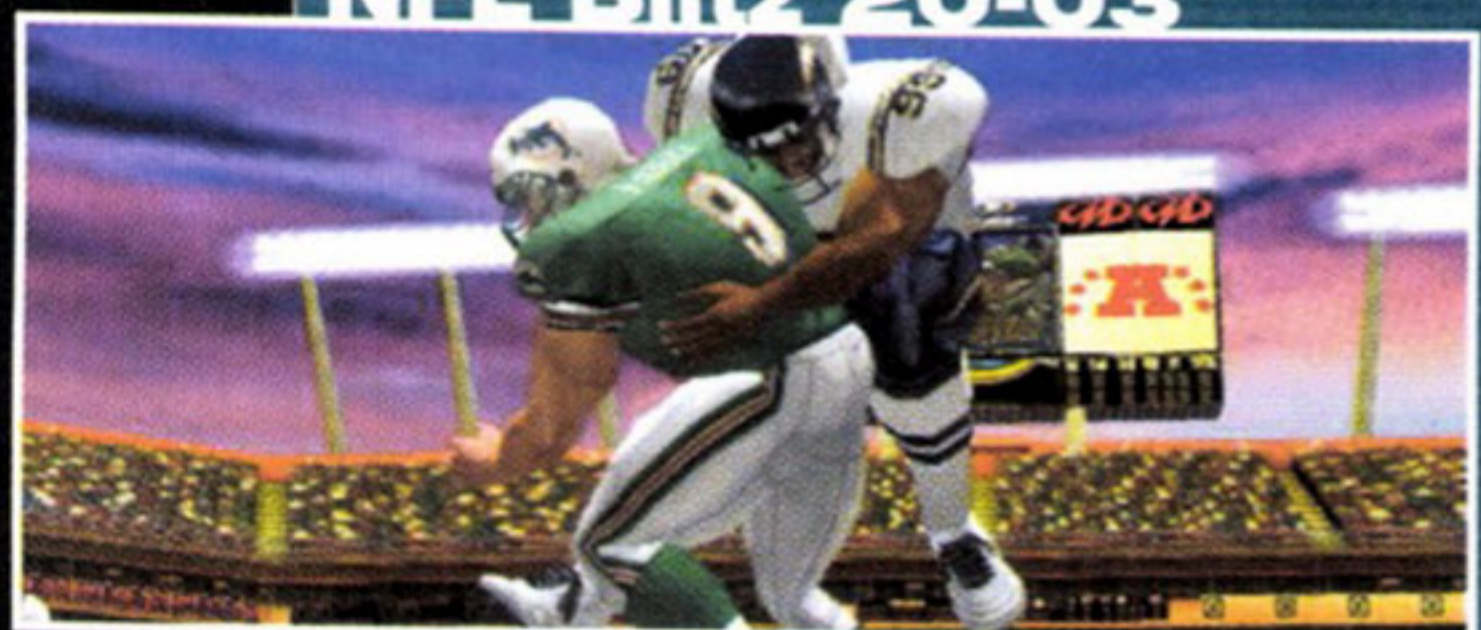
Uses Bink Video Technology.
Copyright (C) 1997-2002
by RAD Game Tools, Inc



Madden 2003



NFL Fever 2003



NFL Blitz 20-03

Ad Index November 2002

The Advertiser Index is provided as a service to our readers, and as such, Imagine Media, Inc., will not be responsible for any typographical errors found within it.

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ON THE DISC

DON'T JUST READ ABOUT THEM, PLAY THEM

■ **Aggressive Inline** – Acclaim
Better than *Tony Hawk*? Yep, that's what we're saying.



■ **Sega GT 2002** – Sega
The best racing game on Xbox? Give it a spin and we think you'll find the only game that can even come close to *Project Gotham*... but *Project Gotham 2*, that's a different story (page 58).

■ **TimeSplitters 2** – Eidos
Back by popular demand, it's the thinking man's first-person shooter. See why we think this is a game you definitely need to add to your Xbox wish list.

■ **FOOTBALL FRENZY** – Multiple
Three new football demos, just for you.

SEXIEST DISC EVER!

Now with 200% more polygonal women in bikinis! Be sure to check out our exclusive *DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball* movie for the amazing animation and supreme storytelling. Also, don't forget to visit the casting couch of *Whacked!* and check out the insane audition tape of Lucy for a bit more scintillation.



■ Some girls will do just about anything to get on TV... anything.
■ This is a serious volleyball simulation... no, really.



FEATURES!

■ Interview: Splinter Cell

What's better than a French accent, new gameplay details, and unbelievable game footage all edited into a snazzy feature?

■ Quick Look: House of the Dead III

Thankfully, the game isn't cel-shaded. See the gore, feel the love.

■ Quick Look: NBA 2K3

What's not shown is that this game also supports 720p... and it looks gorgeous. Even at regular resolutions this game looks nice.

■ Quick Look: Panzer Dragoon Orta

Read our world-exclusive review (page 72), but don't believe us? Just check out the game in motion.

■ Top 10 Plays

Another 10 plays that'll make you go hmmm.

■ Ninja Gaiden

Exclusive video showcases some new moves for an old warrior.

■ The Thing

The scariest game on Xbox... check it out.

PLUS EVEN MORE!

VIDEO VERDICTS

The verdict's in and you can catch up on the scores of Xbox's hottest games. This month's verdicts:

007 Agent Under Fire, Burnout, Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex, Dead to Rights, Gunvalkyrie, Hunter: The Reckoning, JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future, Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2, Max Payne, RalliSport Challenge, Splashdown, SSX Tricky, The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind, World Series Baseball

THE KEY

- = Absolutely guaranteed
- ◐ = Looking good. Let's cross our fingers.
- ◑ = A possibility: if the stars come together.
- ◒ = Highly unlikely

IN THE QUEUE

Here is some inside information on what is coming to an Official Xbox Magazine Game Disc near you!

Game	Dec	Jan
BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER	◐	○
BLOOD RAYNE	○	
DEATHROW	◐	○
DR. MUTO	◐	○
HITMAN 2	◐	◐
HOUSE OF THE DEAD III	○	
KUNG FU CHAOS		◐
MALICE		◐
MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2	◐	○
PANZER DRAGOON ORTA	○	○
QUANTUM REDSHIFT		○
RALLY FUSION	◐	○
ROCKY	◐	○
SPLINTER CELL	○	
SUPERMAN		○
TOEJA & EARL III	○	

CONTEST WINNERS

DEAD TO RIGHTS CONTEST

(July 2002, Issue #8)

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS

- Steve Brown, Duncanville, TX
- Clinton Siu, Sparks, NV
- Jason Keys, Bakersfield, CA
- Jathaniel Velasquez, Las Vegas, NV
- Wes Duellman, Rochester, MN

THE LUCKY FIVE WIN

- A copy of *Dead to Rights* for Xbox
- A *Dead to Rights* t-shirt
- A *Dead to Rights* poster

A NEW YEAR

With the first season of reader challenges finished, we're not wasting our time by taking a month off; we're off and running with Year Two. The rules are the same as before, and all point totals resort back to zero starting with this issue. Challenge entries from prior issues will not be accepted for this year's points ranking. It's a fresh start and a chance to prove you belong as one of the Xbox elite.

XBOX GAMER OF THE YEAR

Our reader challenges for Year One are over. Stop trying. Let go. After many months of labor-filled joy, we have a winner. Edward "Tigger" Glucksman came in safely at first place after leading the rankings for numerous months. Partially because he likes games and partially because he's such a hardcore sausage, Edward was also in the spotlight last November for being the first person in line at the New York Xbox launch event. We got some reactions:

Q: How does this compare with the celebrity of the New York launch event?

A: Being the first to get a Xbox from Bill Gates was cool and talking with Bill Gates and Seamus Blackley was cool too, but I was just lucky that I was first in line. The Official Xbox Magazine Challenges required real skill, not luck. And I proved how much skill I have.

Q: Is your family proud of you?

A: Well my brother is proud of me, but at the same

time he's upset because my Xbox is better than his PS2. And because Official Xbox Magazine is better than PSM.

Q: Any words for the runners-up?

A: Keep playing your Xbox, you'll need to if you want to beat me next year.



THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE CHALLENGES

The Pac is Back

PacMan World 2



ELITE POINTS:
2,000 (3,000)
CHALLENGE:

Unlock the Ms. PacMan mini-game that pops up after you collect a large number of items.

PROOF:

We'd like a picture of the Ms. PacMan game screen, please.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Score 300,000 points in Ms. PacMan and get us a picture of that for the bonus.

Stolen Plates

Nascar Thunder 2003



ELITE POINTS:
3,000
CHALLENGE:

Collect each and every one of the Thunder Plates as you go through the game. It's hard, but it's kinda fun. You can thank us later.

PROOF:

As almost always, we'll accept photo proof, or video if you're really inspired. Make sure you take a picture of the screen that shows you have all of the plates.

Collection Time

Ty the Tasmanian Tiger



ELITE POINTS:
3,000
CHALLENGE:

Max out the game with all seven item categories filled up and the game completion at 100% and we'll toss some points in that Excel file column that stores all your numbers.

PROOF:

The game info screen shows the status of all the categories. Snap a picture of this for us.

DEMO CHALLENGE

Aggressive Inline

ELITE POINTS: 1,000
CHALLENGE: Earn a 100% ranking on the movie lot stage that's open in the demo.
PROOF: Simply send in a picture of the level select screen with movie lot highlighted and 100% complete showing.

Prove it

Send video or pictures (and include your full name and challenges completed) to:

I'm a Legend
C/o Official Xbox Magazine
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005

Or electronically with the header "I'm a Legend" to xboxmag@imaginemediamedia.com.

PS: Use the header *I'm a Legend* or your entry will not make it in.

TEAMXBOX.com

THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE TOP THIRTY

1 Edward Glucksman	117000	11 Billy Horne	48000	21 Kirk Pullen	36500
2 Steve Ericson	99000	12 Jacob McCarthy	46500	21 Kurt Balas	36500
3 Steve Linahan	81000	13 Zachary Toskovich	44000	21 Matt Pye	36500
4 Dan Dalcourt	79500	14 Shad Biltz	42500	24 Eddie Carillo	36000
5 Landon Lindsay	77500	15 Rob Stephens	41500	24 Scott Zmolek	36000
6 John Gordee	75000	16 Jeff Browning	41000	26 Rory Rogers	35500
7 Joe Chooch	65500	17 Jeremy Lee	40000	27 Lance Balcombe	35000
8 Matt Montgomery	61500	18 Zach Fetters	39000	28 Jason Mitchell	34500
9 John Ordog	49500	19 Jason McKinley	38500	28 Michael Berns	34500
10 Mathieu Roy	48500	20 Luke Espe	37000	30 Chris Roy	34000

HOW DO YOU RANK?

Been busting your butt to complete the Official Xbox Magazine challenges? Have no idea if we've even received them? Well, my friend, your troubles are over. We have partnered with Team Xbox to bring you a complete list of every single person who has ever completed a challenge. Want to know your score? Simply log on to <http://oxm.teamxbox.com>, type in your name, and voila!



“CREATE A BUZZ”

SEABLADE

Win SeaBlade for Xbox and loads of other cool toys!

S

&S Interactive is revving up to unleash its premier arcade-style hydro-shooter, *SeaBlade*, for Xbox! We're celebrating the release with a contest that will help you to get your hands on a copy, along with a bunch of cool toys and other gifts that are sure to get you buzzed!

With six massive worlds to explore and blast your way through, *SeaBlade* puts the player in the seat of their own personal jet-powered vehicle. With you at the helm, your job is to liberate the oppressed from a futuristic waterworld filled with corrupt powers planning to exploit the people for their own purposes. You'll smash, crash, and gun against bosses, while unlocking secrets and additional vehicles. And don't forget – you'll be able to have up to three buddies join in on the fun.

So, what's the catch? Nothing! Simply visit the game website (www.seabladethegame.com) and check out the footage of *SeaBlade* on this month's Game Disc, then pick out your favorite vehicle. Send in the name of your favorite *SeaBlade*, along with your name, address, phone number, and age for a shot at the following lovely prizes...

One grand prize winner will receive:

The Grand Prize consists of a huge boatload of goodies straight from Simon & Schuster Interactive and Hobby-Lobby.com!

- One remote-controlled airplane
- One remote-controlled boat
- One copy of *SeaBlade* for Xbox

(both vehicles courtesy of Hobby-Lobby.com)



Ten runners-up will receive:

- One copy of *SeaBlade* for Xbox
- One \$20 gift certificate for Hobby-Lobby.com

HOW TO ENTER

Simply send us a postcard with your name, address, phone number, age, and the name of your favorite *SeaBlade* vehicle to:

SeaBlade Contest
c/o Official Xbox Magazine
Imagine Media
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005

SEND EMAILS TO:
xboxmagazine@imaginemediacom
with "Favorite SeaBlade Contest"
as the subject header.

* The contest deadline is November 15, 2002!

** Please make sure to include the required information and the proper subject headers or your entry may be disregarded.

LEGAL STUFF/CONTEST RULES: No purchase is necessary to win. Entries must be received no later than November 15, 2002. The winner will be chosen on or about November 20, 2002, and will be notified by e-mail or regular mail. The odds of winning depend upon the number of entries received. The contest sponsor cannot be responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or incomplete entries. The prize is nontransferable and no substitutions will be allowed. Winners will be determined by a single random drawing of all valid entries and the decision of the contest sponsor shall be final. You may obtain the name of the winner by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the address above. This contest is open to residents of the United States only. Return of any prize or prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. The winner may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within seven days of receipt; failure to do so upon request will result in forfeiture of the prize. By acceptance of the prize, the winner agrees to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Neither Simon & Schuster Interactive, Hobby-Lobby International, Inc., nor Imagine Media, Inc. (publisher of the Official Xbox Magazine) shall be responsible for any damages or expenses that winners might incur as a result of this contest or the receipt of any prize. Winners are responsible for paying any income taxes on the value of the prize received. Void in Rhode Island, Puerto Rico and where prohibited by law.

ACTIVISION 2 Presents

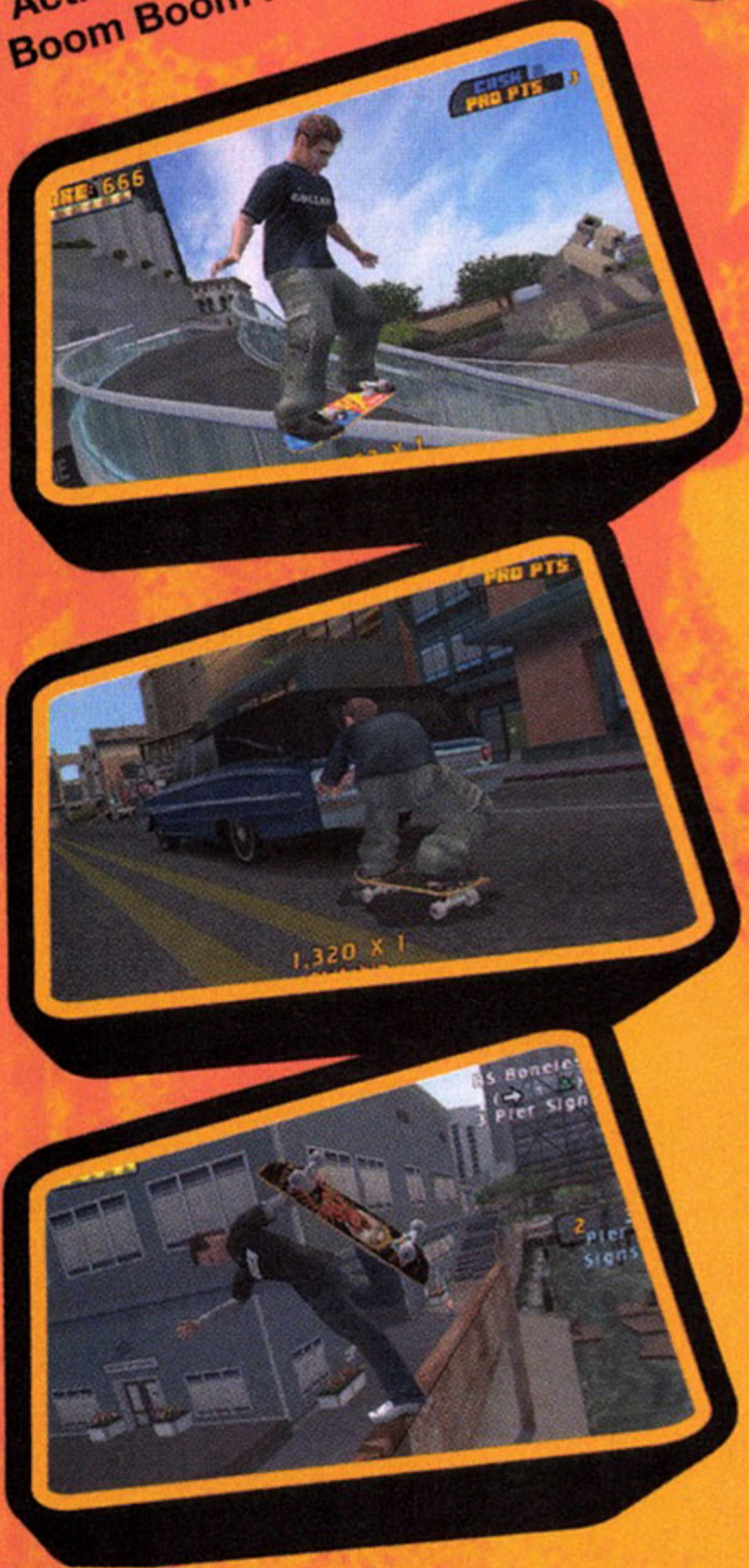


North America Tour 2002



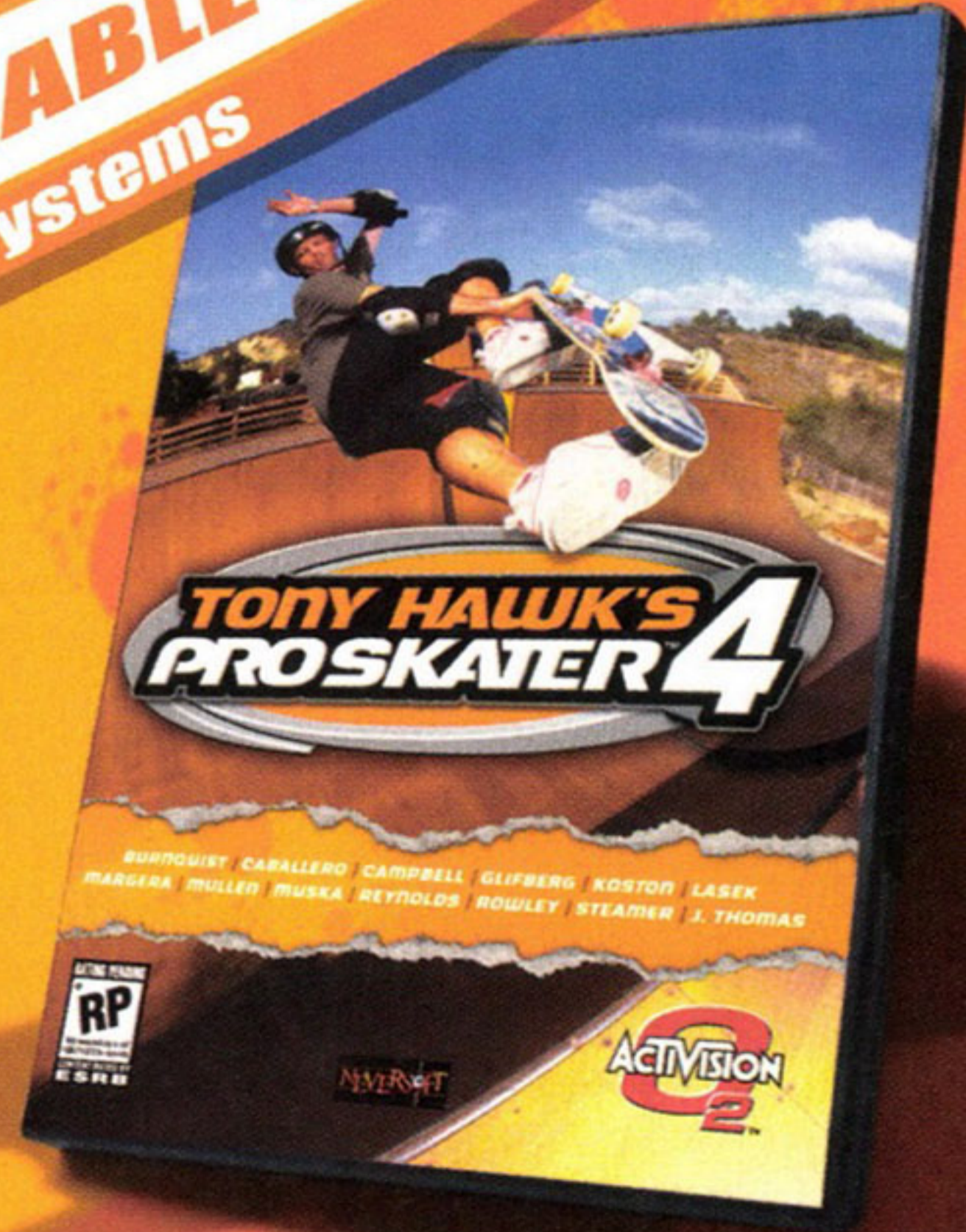
WIN A TRIP TO HANG WITH ME ON TOUR!

Join the best in Skate, BMX, MotoX, and live bands in the only Action Sports show that matters- Boom Boom HuckJam.



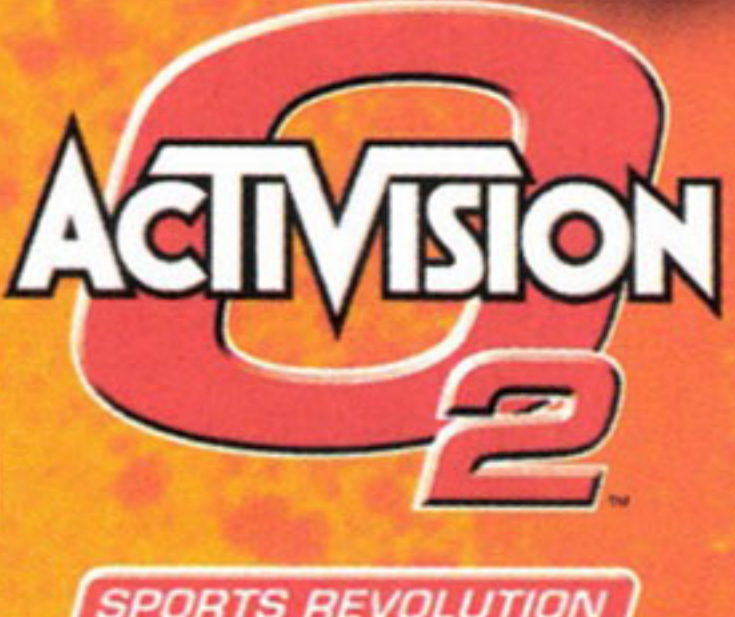
Go to www.activision02.com/hawk and enter the "Tour with Tony" Sweepstakes for your chance to win a trip to meet Tony Hawk at Boom Boom HuckJam and other cool prizes. Register today!

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The Unsung Heroes of Xbox: Year One

What, that's it? Future guy is back... to the future

In our crazy, mixed-up Xbox world, we overuse the word "hero" far too often. It seems like we apply the tag to anyone who can slay couple hundred bad guys, perform a flying dragon kick, or find a lost crystal shard. No, being a hero is much more than that. And some of the biggest heroes of Xbox: Year One are people you may never have heard of... until now.

Unsung Hero: Margaret, Xbox Standards and Practices
Work seen in: *Outlaw Golf, Silent Hill, BMX XXX*



■ Many have accused the Xbox censor of taking a hands-off approach to her job... but someone had to look the other way. Margaret Magoo, we salute you.

Unsung Hero: Sergeant Placeholder, the tragically lost WWII soldier
As seen in: *Halo*



■ Don't ask us how the confused Sarge showed up in our *Halo* strategy. We didn't know he was there until after the mag hit stores. What a brave little guy.

Unsung Hero: Barry, the undead extra
As seen in: *Hunter the Reckoning, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Blood Omen 2*



■ With so much undead slaying going on in Xbox games, finding competent undead extras was difficult... but Barry was chipper and cheap.

Unsung Hero: Dr. Chrissy, eating disorder counselor
Work seen in: *Kakuto Chojin*



■ This fighter was delayed past Year One because the lead character was struggling with anorexia nervosa. Fortunately, he's doing well enough to hit Year Two.

Unsung Hero: Ron, the vampire janitor
As Seen in: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Max Payne*



■ It's his responsibility to keep Xbox bathrooms looking dank. He got the job because he was willing to work nights.

Unsung Hero: Ted, parking valet
Work seen in: *Halo multiplayer*



■ In every *Halo* match, the vehicles are always parked exactly where they should be... so, when's the last time you tipped Ted for doing his job so well?

Unsung Hero: Irwin, Peace Corps speedboat captain
As seen in: *Blood Wake*



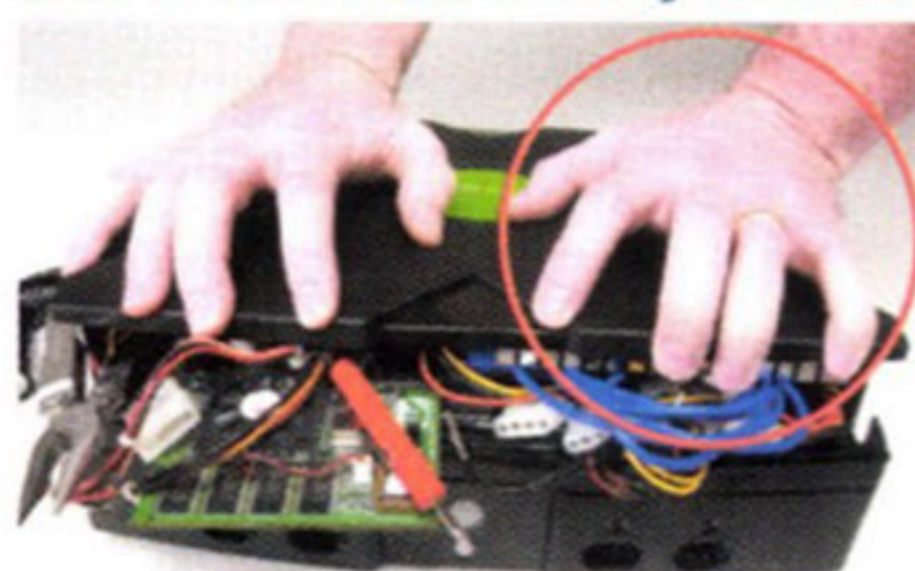
■ Life's ambition: To take crates of medical supplies and ammo-shaped toys via speedboat to sick orphans. But you keep shooting him and taking his stuff.

Unsung Hero: Local Pedestrian Union 646
As seen in: *Wreckless, Crazy Taxi 3*



■ After many tragedies resulted from the filming of *GTA3* on the PS2, the pedestrians of Xbox games unionized and learned how to dodge.

Unsung Hero: Tanya, in-house hand model
As seen in: *Customize your Xbox feature*



■ Some women might be afraid to show off their hairy, meaty paws... but not our Tanya. They're like two bunches of mangled bananas.

Unsung Hero: Dark Earl, real-time shadow
As seen in: *Blood Omen 2, most other Xbox games*



■ Amazing, real-time shadows are one of the things that separate Xbox games from other games... and nobody does them better than dandy Dark Earl.

Unsung Hero: The Anderson clones
As seen in: *NBA Inside Drive 2002, NBA 2K2, NBA Live*



■ When sports developers need to fill stadium seats quickly, they call on the Anderson clones... 48,000 variations of America's flattest family.

Next month Future Guy



Hello everyone, it's me again, Future Guy, covering the world of the Xbox in the future – exactly *one month in the future*. Not much has happened since I last wrote to you, aside from the discovery of Quantestra*, the ultimate food substitute. This thick milky paste comes in four different colors, tastes, and textures. Depending upon how you mix them, you can re-create any food you desire... except chicken... they just can't get it to taste like chicken.

On fast food and reviews

Thanks to Quantestra*, you don't even have to wait in line at fast-food restaurants anymore. You just go to the robo-cashier, drop in a few bucks, and get a plate and a cup. You fill your cup with your favorite extreme soda such as Code Red or Dr. Jar Full of Phlegm, and then push a button and excrete a swirl of burgers and a loaf of fries. You'll need the energy for our world-exclusive review and strategy on *Metal-Gear-killer Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell* and world-exclusive review of *Fellowship of the Ring*.

On kitchens and previews

One advantage of Quantestra* is that you no longer need a fridge, a pantry, or even a kitchen. You just need four tubes running into your house that are connected to your city's Quantestra* canal. You'll be billed for six gallons a day whether you use it or not... so eat up. While you eat, read next month's *James Bond: Nightfire* preview, *Halo 2* update, and game-packed *Holiday Buyers Guide*.

On recipes and Xbox Live

My favorite thing about Quantestra* is that Future Wife really knows how to cook this stuff up right. Her favorite recipe: Add two squirts from Tube A to an inch from Tube B. Shake until meaty lumps appear in a clear liquid. Stir in a pound of Tube C till it smells like bellybutton and here's the secret: scrape 1/8 of a cup of the crusty stuff off Tube D and sprinkle on top. Let it congeal for about six hours and you'll have a rich, creamy flank steak. I suggest you spend that time playing Xbox Live or reading next month's exhaustive hands-on report of the ultimate online gaming experience.

Demo Disc

On an unfortunate and unrelated note, I regret to inform you that because of a minor mix-up at the publisher, 1.7 percent of next month's discs are actually miniature disc-shape Slaybots. They are perfectly safe unless handled or looked at... at that point they decapitate who ever handled them or looked at them. The good news is that the other 98.3 percent will be jam-packed with what may be our best collection of demos ever, including *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*, *Panzer Dragoon (maybe)*, and many more huge titles. If the disc turns bright, fiery red when you look at it or handle it, please pay the cashier as quickly as possible.

*WARNING: Quantestra has been proven to cause anal leakage, oral leakage, optical leakage, nasal leakage, and internal leakage. It's also been known to create new orifices and cause leakage from them.





TEEN
T
 CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Mild Violence



Check out Chase:
www.bam4fun.com/chase

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