

GAMEPRO

WHERE GAMERS GO FIRST!

EXCLUSIVE!

BEST METAL GEAR EVER.

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

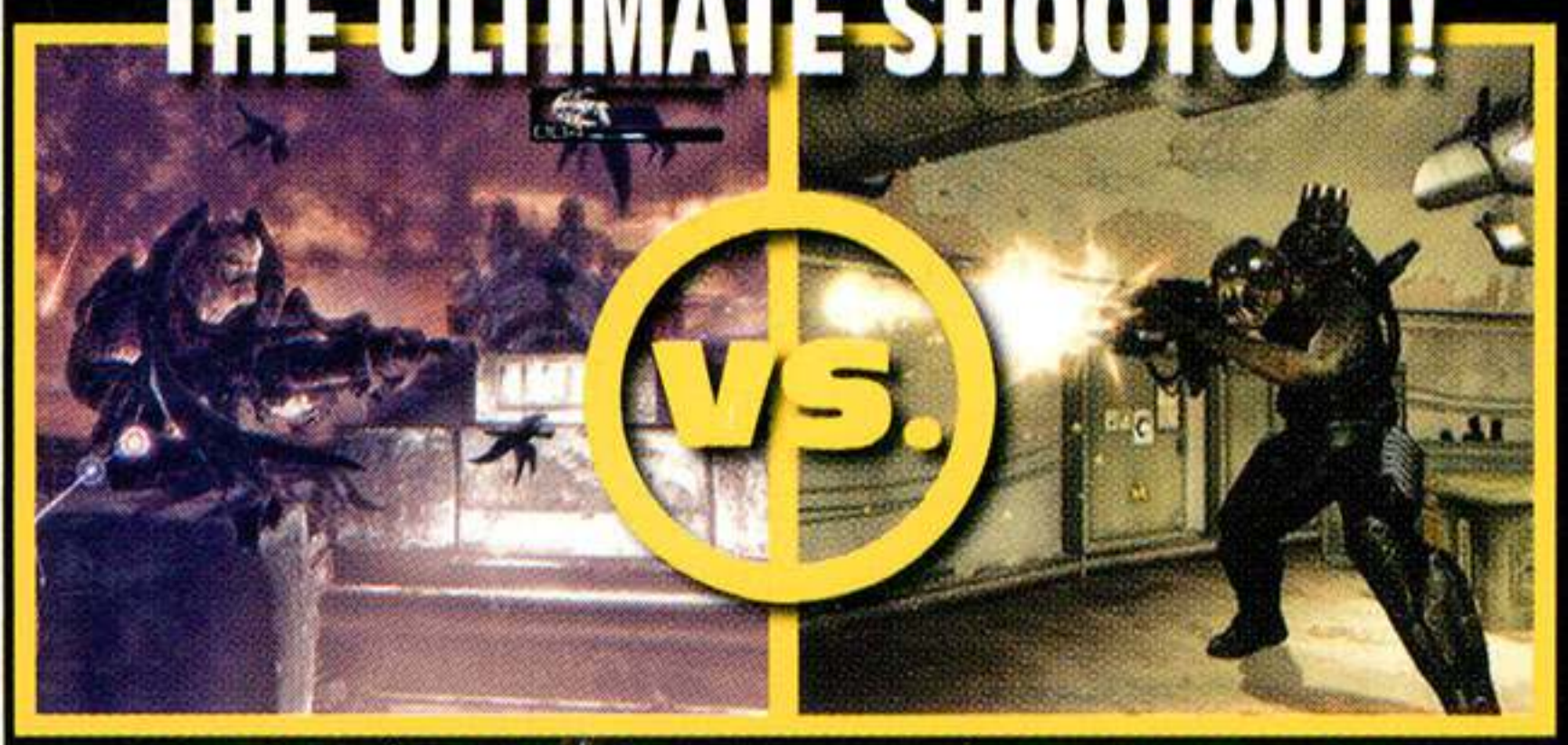
GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

- THE KOJIMA INTERVIEW
- ONLINE PLANS REVEALED
- GUN MODS! OCTOCAMO!
- 360? WII? **AND MORE!**

NO PS3? NO WORRIES!

12 CAN'T-MISS PS2 MINDBLOWERS!

THE ULTIMATE SHOOTOUT!



GEARS OF WAR
XBOX 360
EXECUTION

**RESISTANCE:
FALL OF MAN**
PS3 PWNAGE

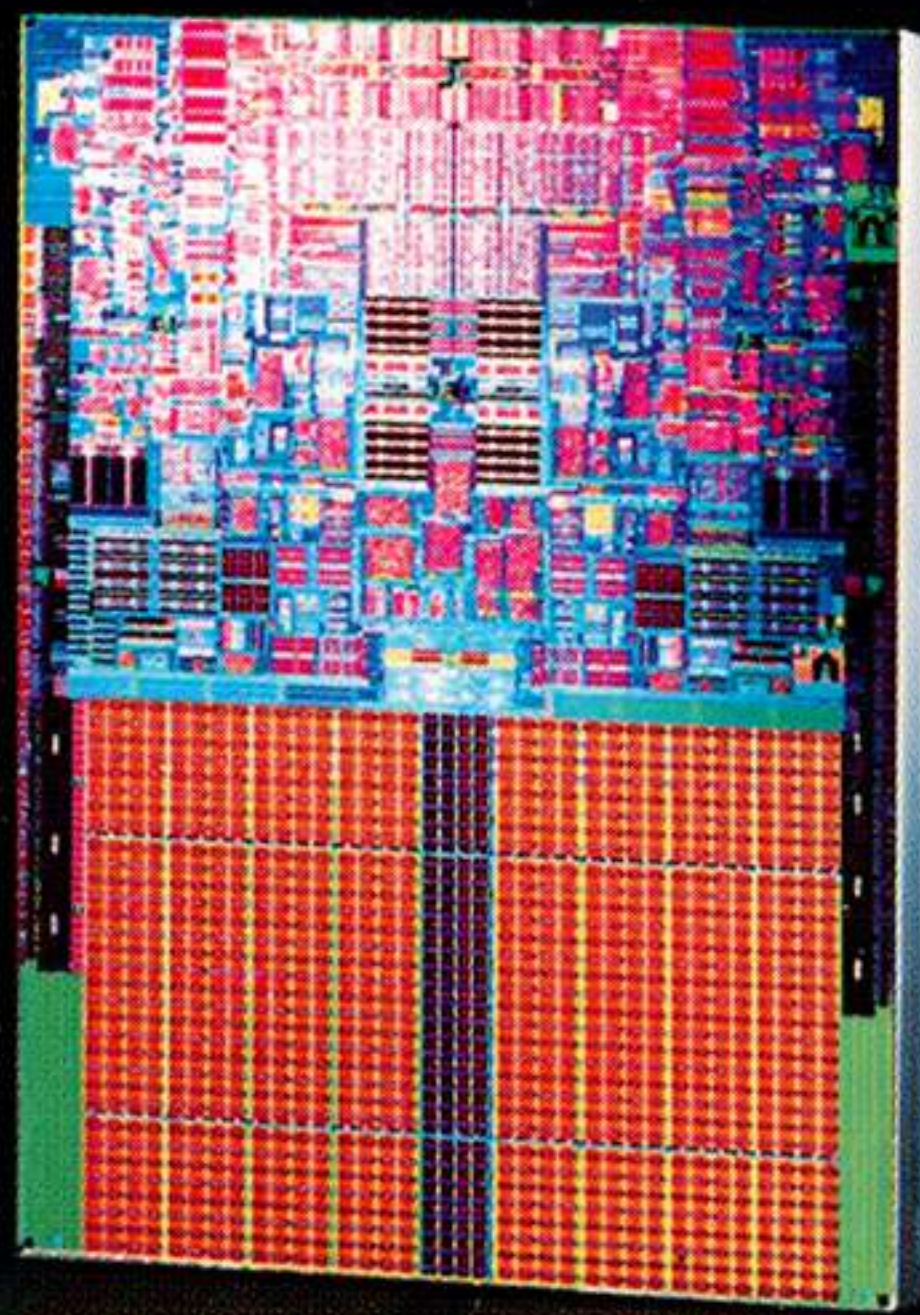
150+
GAMES
INSIDE



OMG!
HEAVY HITTERS:
TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8
LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION
CALL OF DUTY 3 • GOD OF WAR II
WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2007

Issue 220 \$5.99 U.S. \$7.50 CAN







EXTREME.



**INTEL® CORE™2 EXTREME DESKTOP PROCESSOR.
THE WORLD'S BEST GAMING PROCESSOR.**

It's your chance to multiply everything you love about gaming. Learn more and get a **FREE** trial of World of Warcraft® at www.intel.com/go/gaming





LEVEL UP TO CORE™ 2

TEEN TM T	Blood Suggestive Themes Use of Alcohol Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org	

For more information on why Intel® Core™ 2 Duo processors are the world's best overall processors, please visit www.intel.com/core2duo.
World's best gaming processor claim based on 3DMark® 2006 - CPU test results as performed by Intel Corporation, July 2006. Actual performance may vary. See www.intel.com/performance for more information. © 2006 Intel Corporation. Intel, the Intel logo, Intel Core, the Intel Core logo, Intel Leap ahead, and the Intel Leap ahead logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. All rights reserved.
© 2004-2006 Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. World of Warcraft and Blizzard Entertainment are trademarks or registered trademarks of Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries.

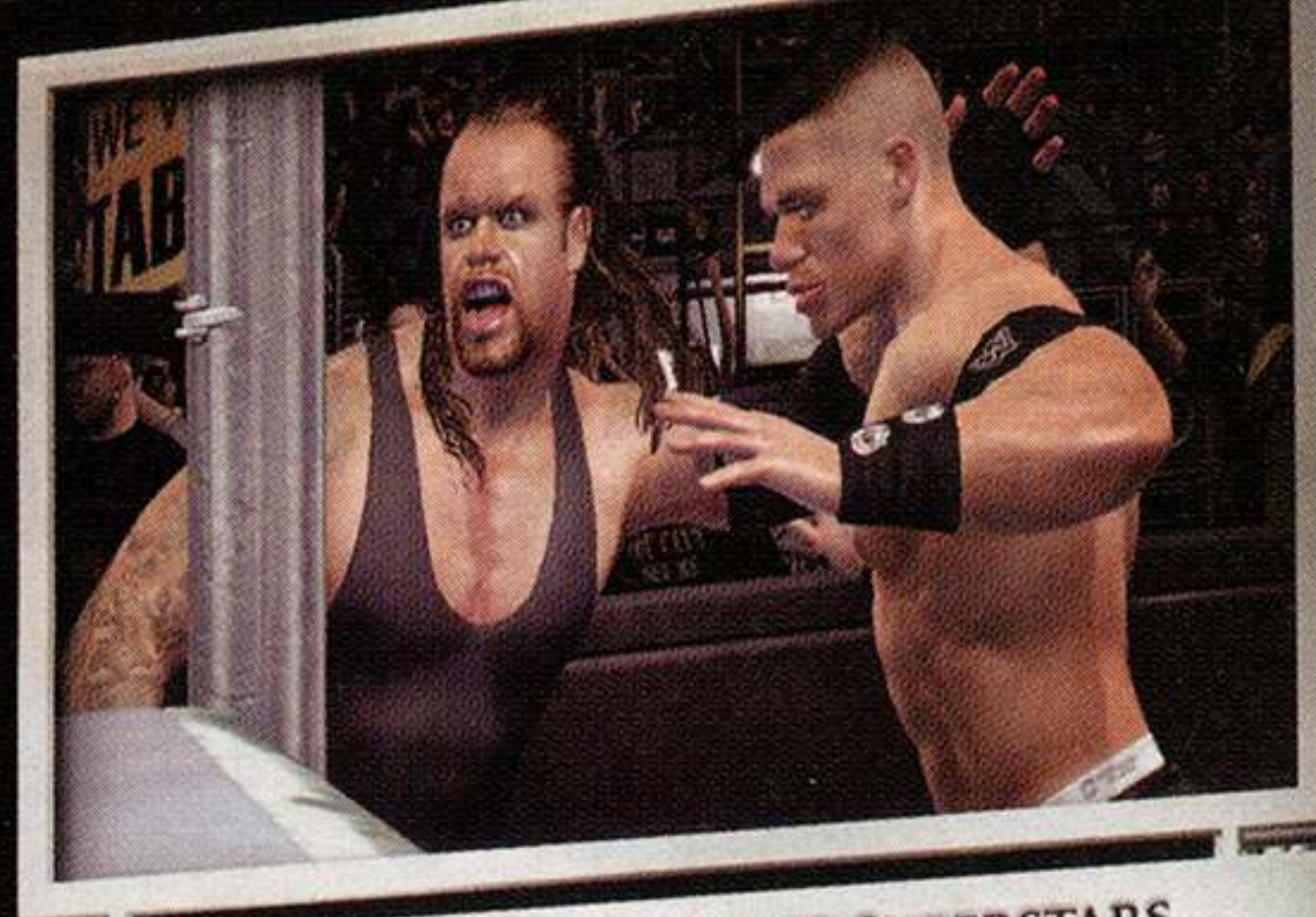


SMACKDOWN **V** **S** **RAW**
2007

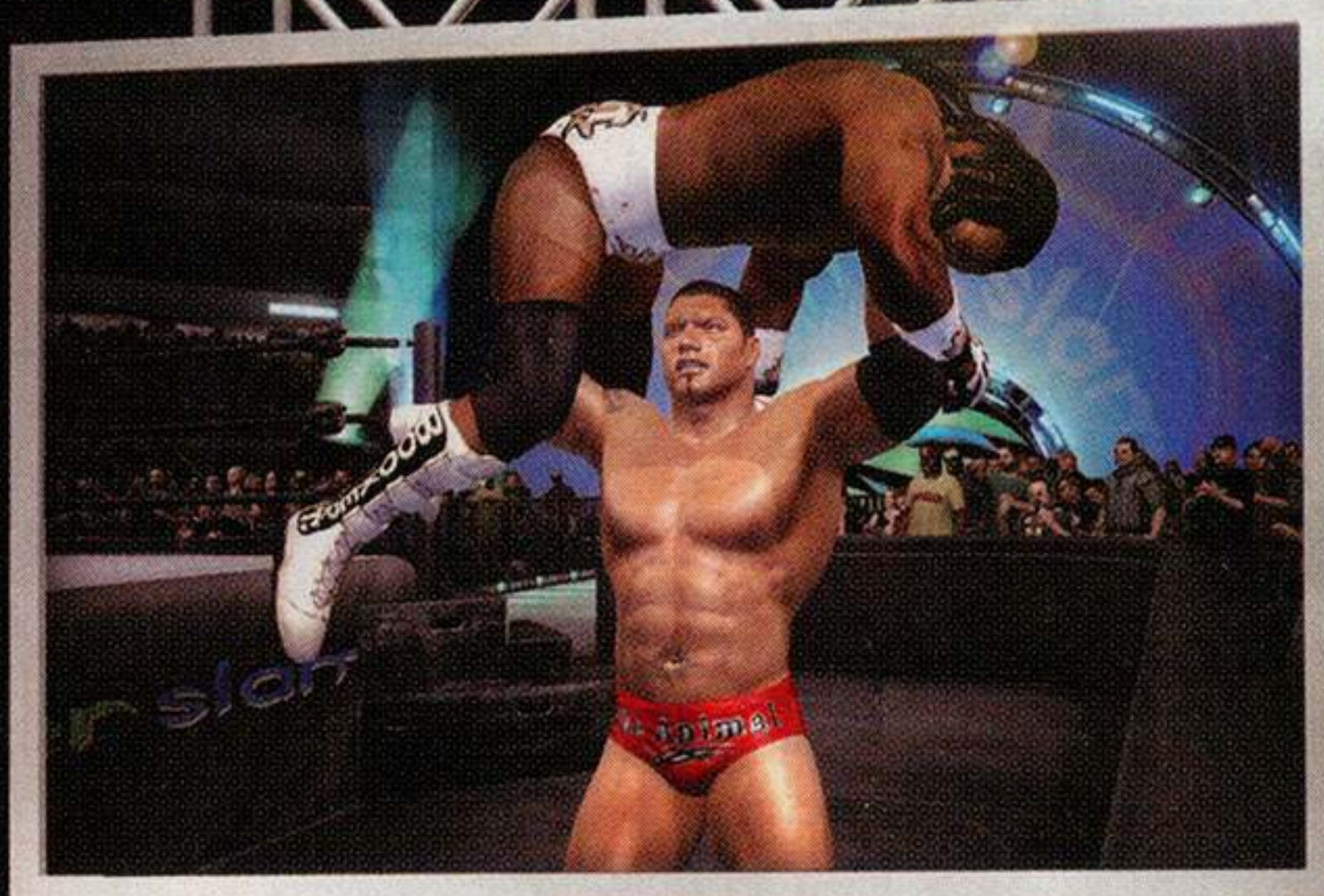
DON'T JUST WATCH IT... LIVE IT!
AVAILABLE NOW

I DIDN'T START OUT
 THE 10-TIME
 WORLD CHAMP.
 I STARTED JUST LIKE
 EVERYBODY ELSE,
 WITH A DREAM.
 I HUSTLED, I TRAINED,
 I FOUGHT,
 I CONQUERED.
 NOW, ONLY ONE THING
 CAN CONTROL ME....

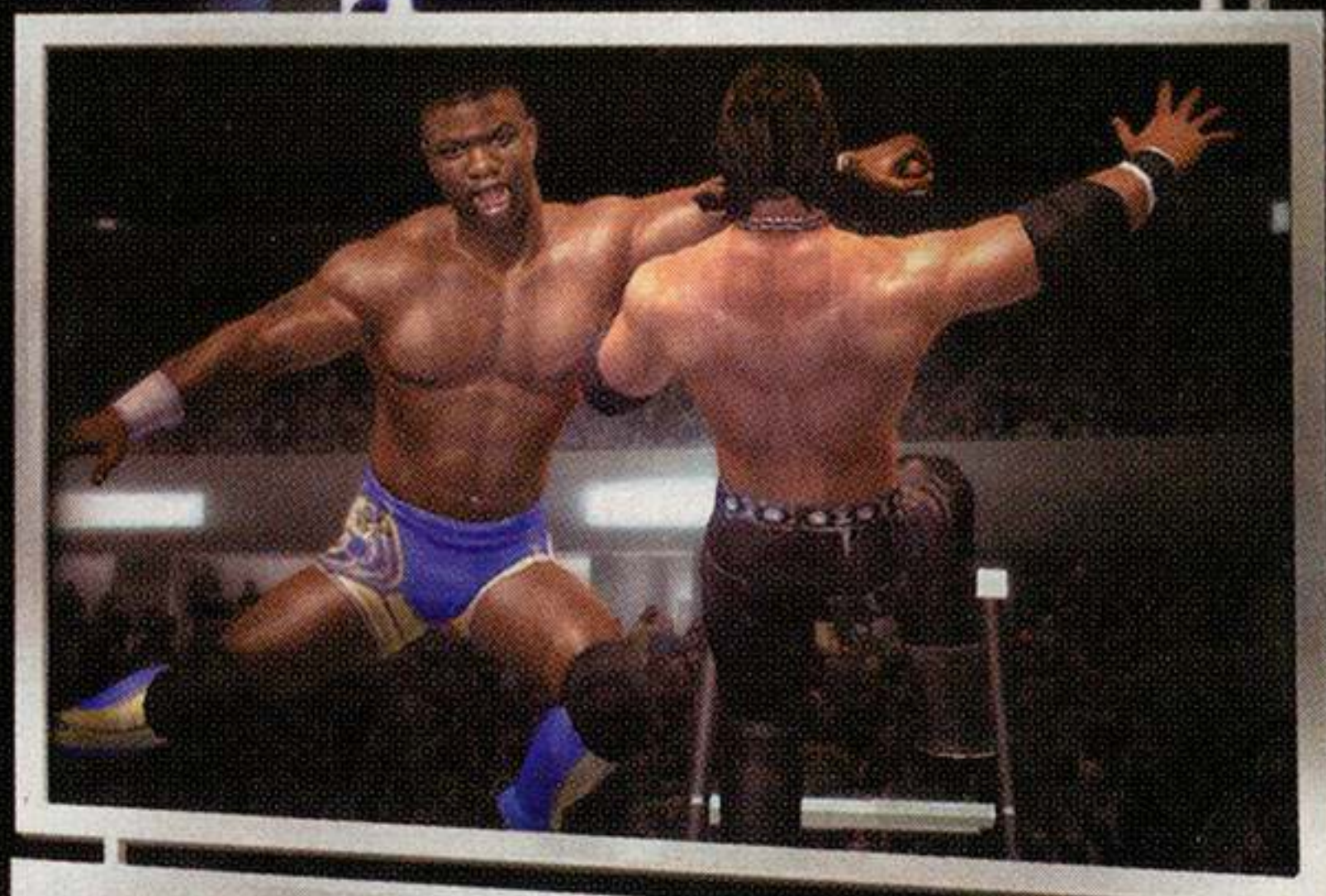
YOU.



TAKE THE POWER OF WWE SUPERSTARS INTO YOUR OWN HANDS WITH NEW ENVIRONMENTAL HOTSPOTS AND AN ALL-NEW FIGHTING AREA IN THE CROWD



GAMEPLAY MORE REALISTIC THAN EVER WITH ANALOG CONTROLS AND ALL-NEW ULTIMATE CONTROL MOVES!



ENHANCED SEASON MODE, UPDATED WWE ROSTERS, WWE LEGENDS, ONLINE MULTIPLAYER, AND MORE!



<http://www.svr2007.com>
<http://www.myspace.com/svr2007>



The names of all World Wrestling Entertainment televised and live programming, talent names, images, likenesses, slogans and wrestling moves and all World Wrestling Entertainment logos are trademarks which are the exclusive property of World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. © 2006 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

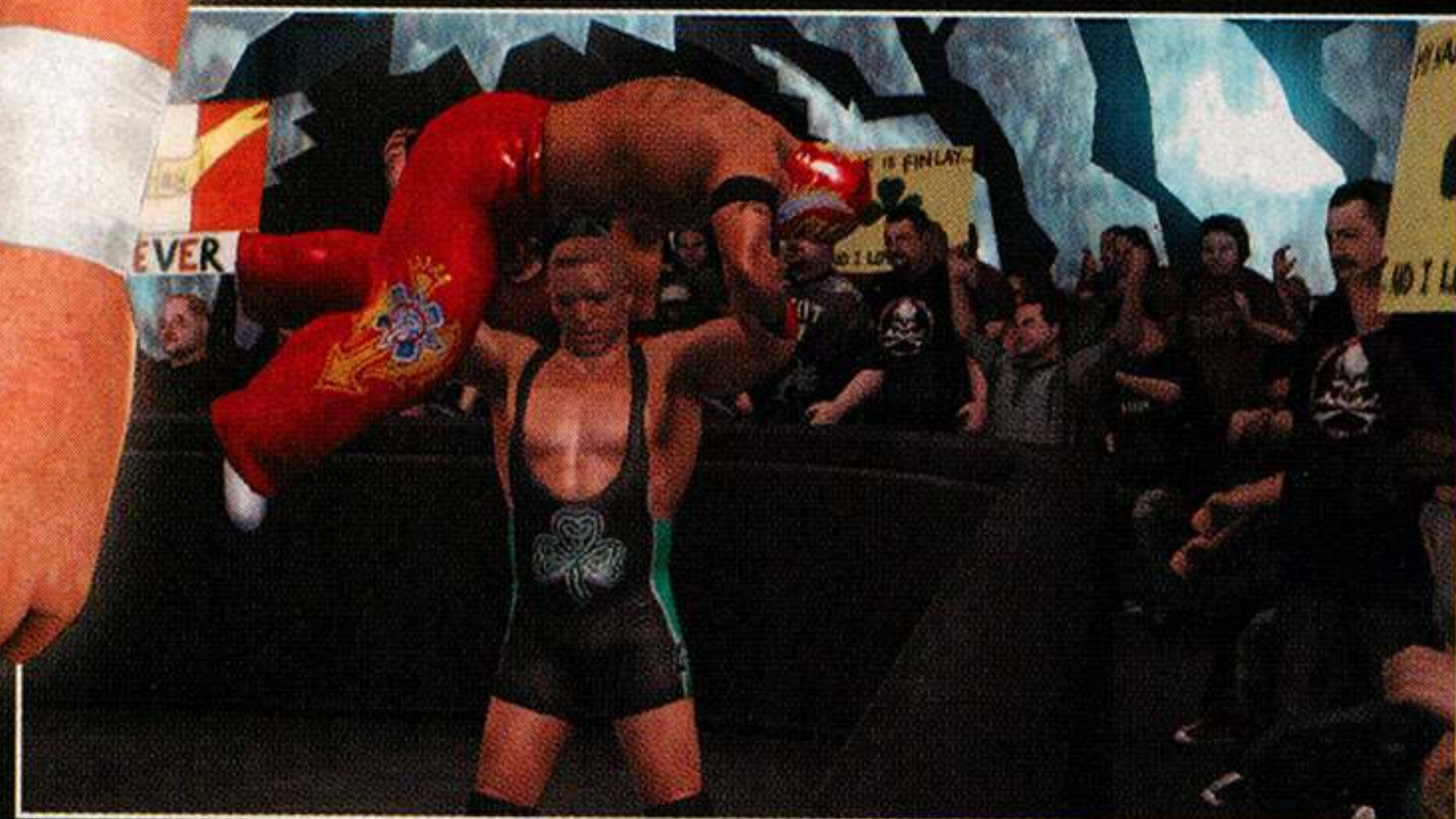
© 2006 THQ/JAKKS Pacific, LLC. Used under exclusive license by THQ/JAKKS Pacific, LLC. JAKKS Pacific and the JAKKS Pacific logo are trademarks of JAKKS Pacific, Inc. Developed by YUKE'S Co., Ltd. YUKE'S Co., Ltd. and its logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of YUKE'S Co., Ltd. THQ and the THQ logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. Online play requires internet connection and Memory Card (8MB)(for PlayStation 2)(sold separately). The Online icon is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. "PlayStation", the "PS" Family logo, and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.

SMACKDOWN vs RAW 2007

It's time to bring the pain with WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007 for the Xbox 360™. And whether you're into the death-defying stunts, over-the-top storylines, or the deliciously-fine Divas, the next-gen debut of THQ's hit sports entertainment title will blow you away. A completely remastered grappling system, stunning visuals, and the most in-depth character creation mode known to man, WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007 for the Xbox 360 is the best wrestling experience to grace any videogame console.

The Biggest and Baddest

With just over 60 Superstars in the game, WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007 boasts the largest selection of WWE superstars to choose from, as well as legends and smokin' hot divas. It's a battle of the giants on the Xbox 360 as each Superstar and arena packs nearly three times as much details than last year's game. Now, with the much anticipated release of this next-gen title, wrestling fans have a chance to experience all the heart-pounding action like never before with life-like graphics and a new, intuitive grappling system that feels like second nature.



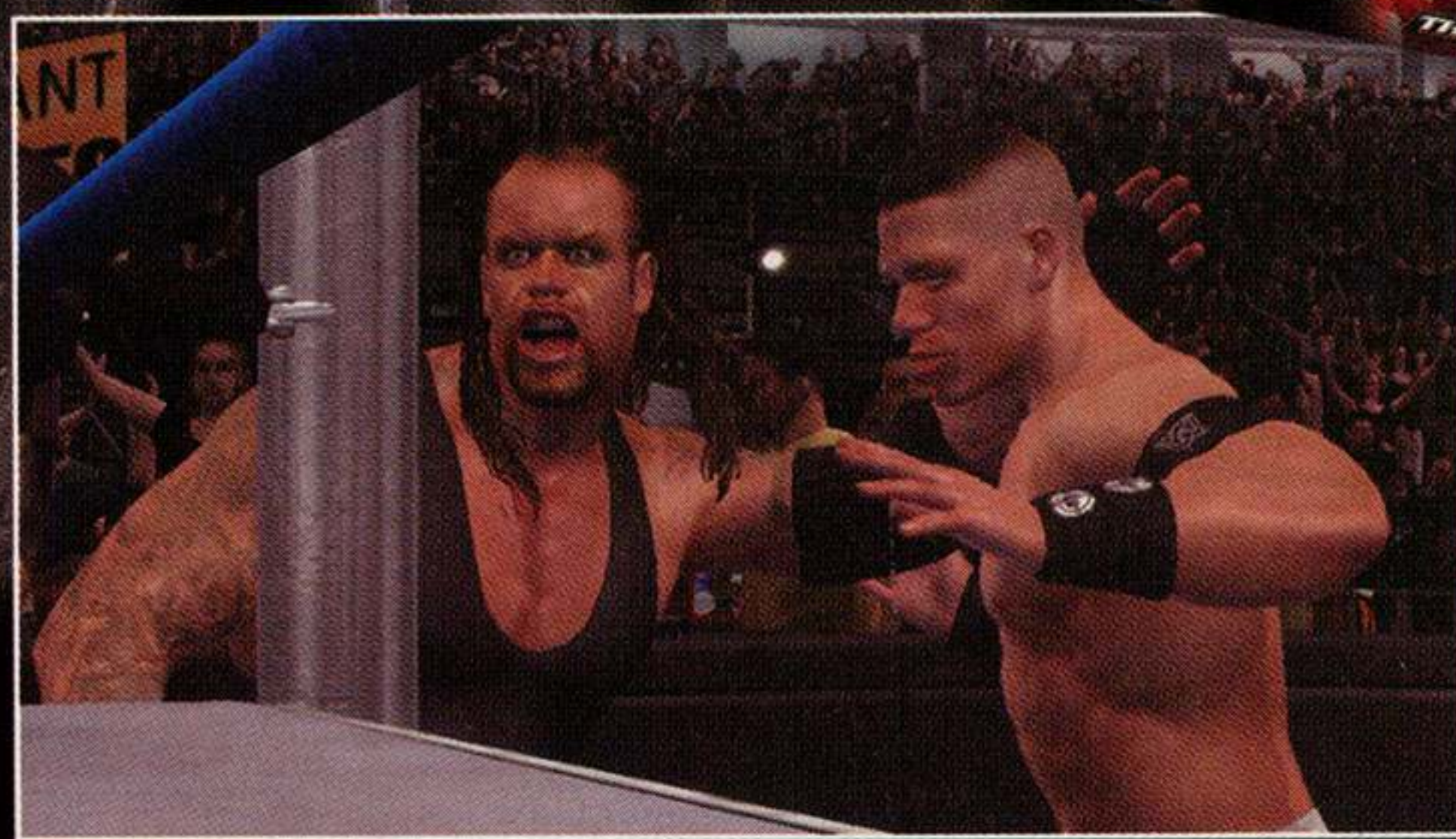
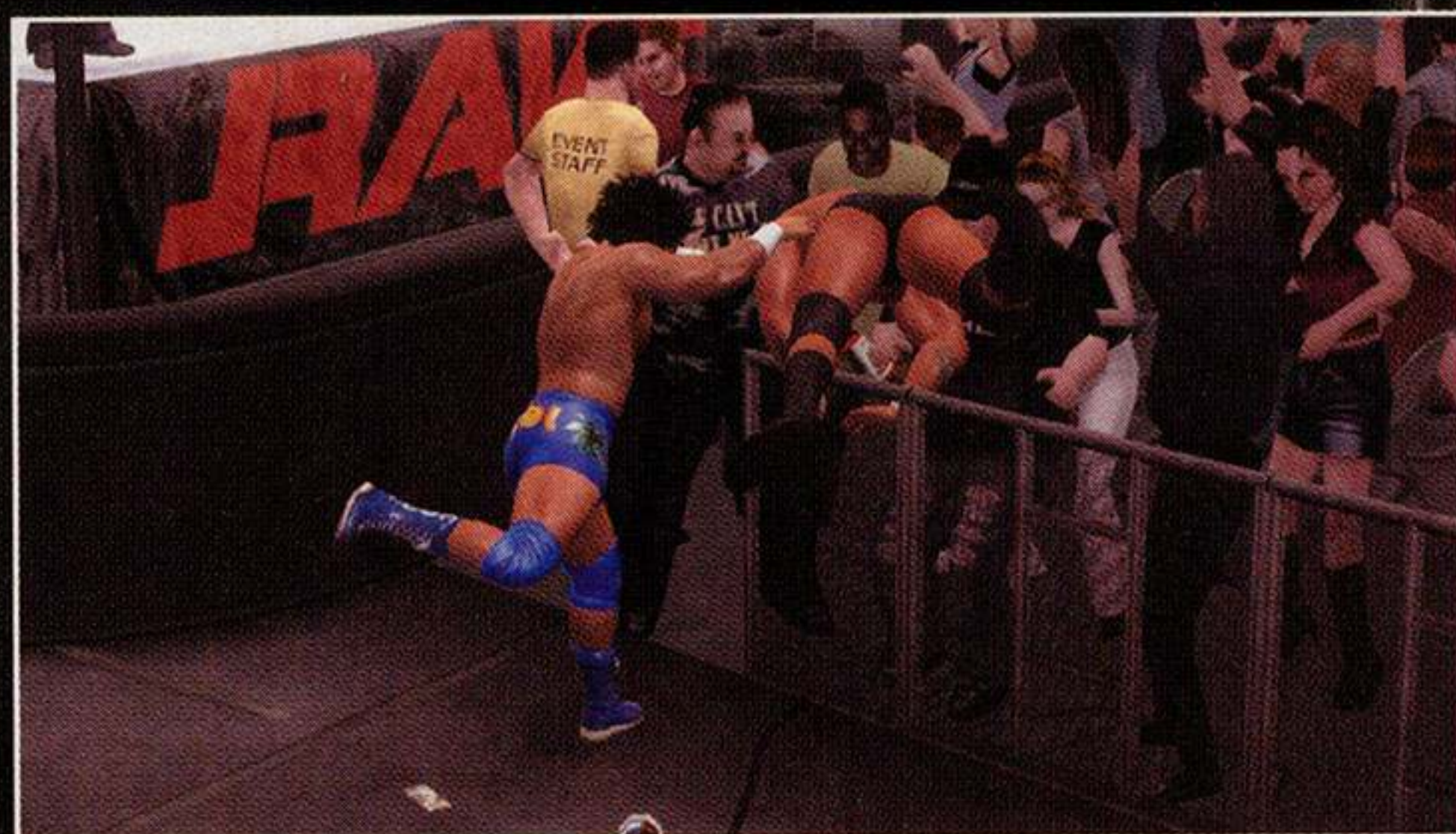
Breaking New Ground

After the acclaimed greeting on last year's WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2006, THQ has yet again upped the ante with a new and improved control scheme, updated Season and General Manager modes, and a character creation mode unrivaled by any other. From the appearance of your dream Superstar to their eccentric entrance, Create-A-Superstar mode will provide you with hours of unadulterated fun.

This year, the action is far from restricted to the ring. Environment hotspots open up a whole new way to play. Fight in the crowd, leap off towering scaffolding, or smash your opponent's face with a multitude of weapons, all of which add up to make WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007 the most intriguing and in-depth wrestling game ever.

Next-Gen Giant

WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007 for the Xbox 360 marks the dawn of a new era. By revamping the control scheme, achieving breath-taking visuals, and slapping players in the shoes of a Superstar in Season Mode, it's easy to see why WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007 has what it takes to attract, and convert, non-wrestling fans and keep the returning veterans pleasantly surprised.



www.thq.com



Blood
Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

The names of all World Wrestling Entertainment televised and live programming, talent names, images, likenesses, slogans and wrestling moves and all World Wrestling Entertainment logos are trademarks which are the exclusive property of World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. © 2006 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

© 2006 THQ/JAKKS Pacific, LLC. Used under exclusive license by THQ/JAKKS Pacific, LLC. JAKKS Pacific and the JAKKS Pacific logo are trademarks of JAKKS Pacific, Inc. Developed by YUKE'S Co., Ltd. YUKE'S Co., Ltd. and its logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of YUKE'S Co., Ltd. THQ and the THQ logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.



NBA 2K7



Heavenly Sword™



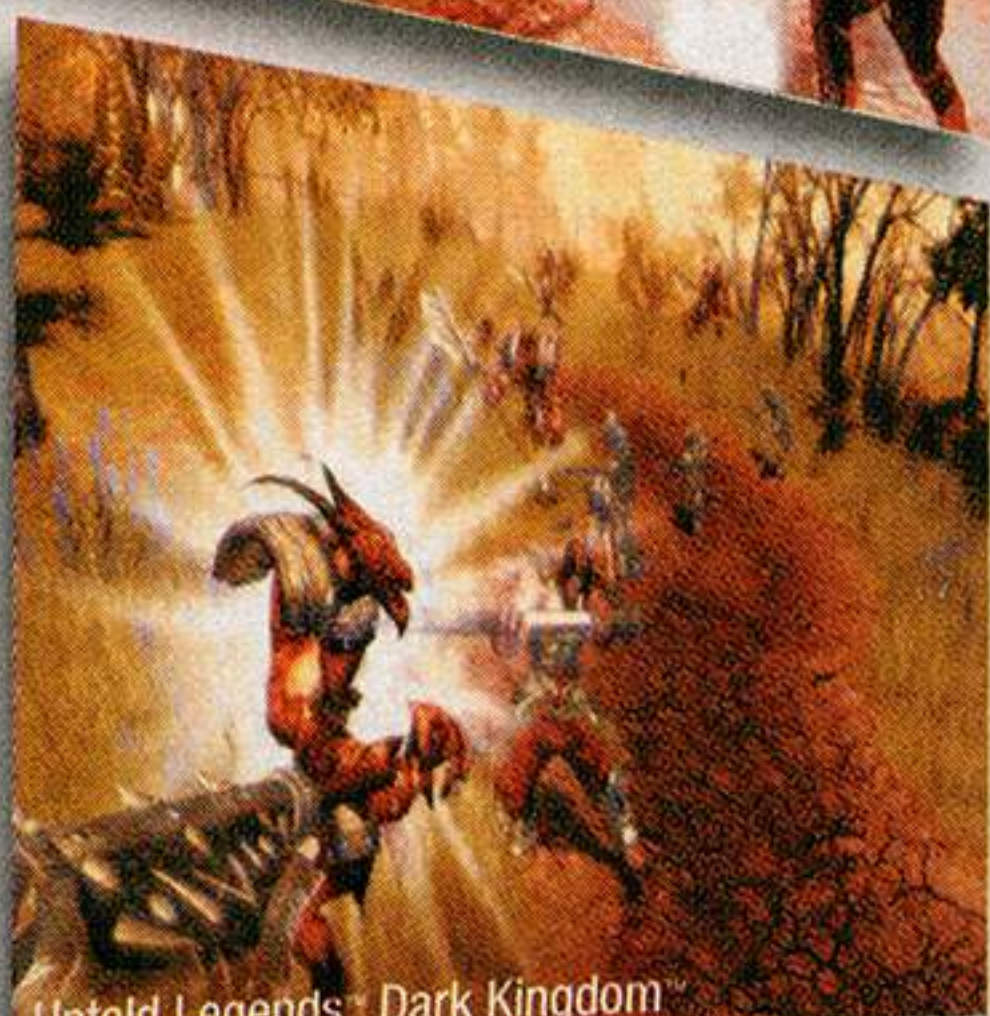
Tony Hawk's Project 8™



Madden NFL '07™



Full Auto 2: Battlelines™



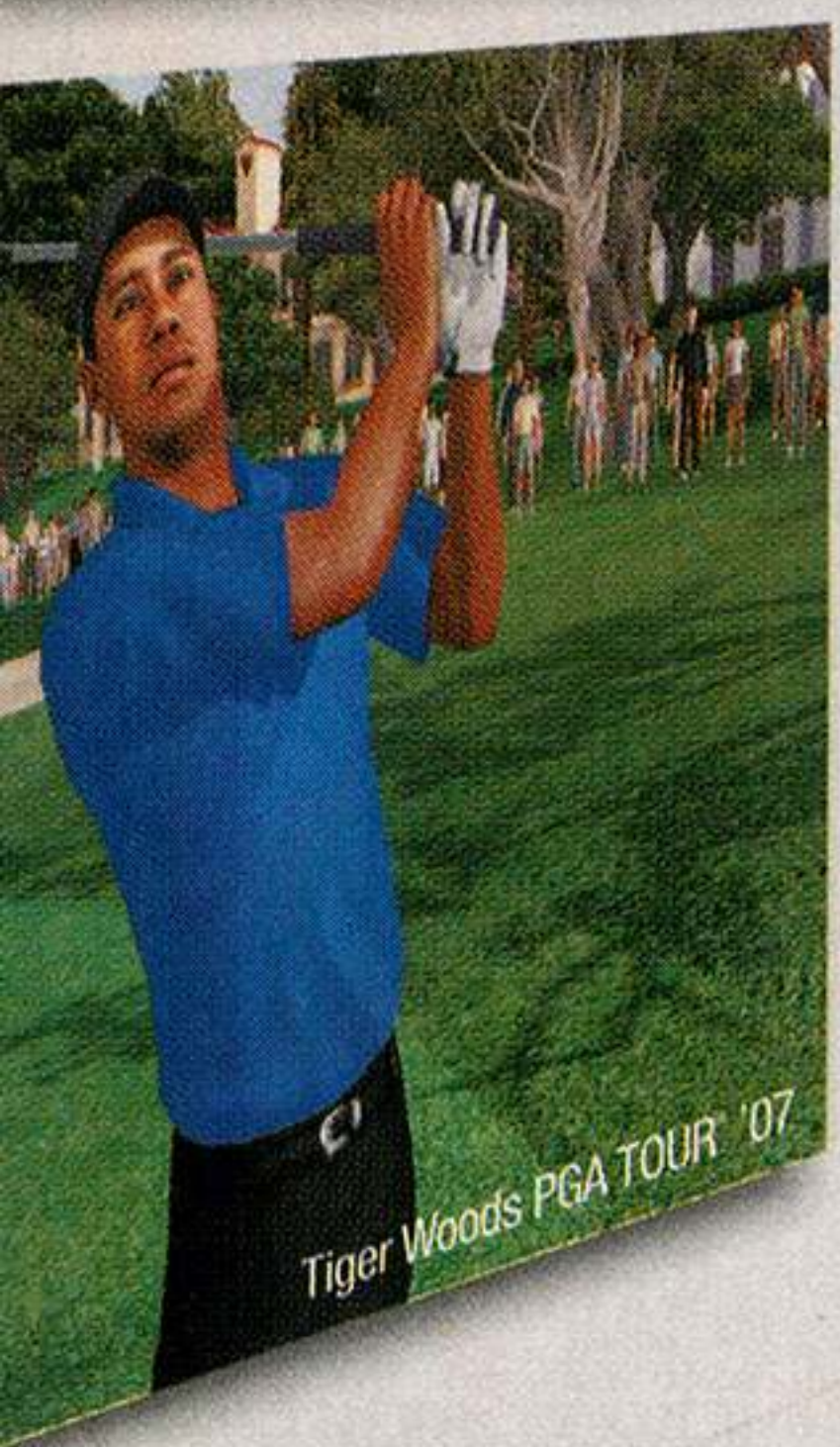
Untold Legends™ Dark Kingdom™



MotorStorm™



Lair™



Tiger Woods PGA TOUR '07™



Warhawk™



Resistance: Fall of Man™



F.E.A.R.™

PLAY BEYOND™

The future of gaming is now. With over 20 titles—spanning a wide range of genres—already available, the potential of the PlayStation 3 system is being realized. It all starts with the PlayStation 3 system's advanced microprocessor, the Cell Broadband Engine.™ It's the very thing that game developers have always dreamt about. A microprocessor so advanced and so powerful, it allows the PlayStation 3 system to process a multitude of tasks all at once. Which means the A.I. acts less predictably, creating game play that is beyond challenging—and beyond believable. Now it's possible for every enemy to have individual A.I. and the laws of physics to determine how bullets spray and how explosions sound. Combine all this digital horsepower with the greater storage capacity and higher-definition image output of Blu-ray and you can see why this system, more than any other, will truly let you play beyond. **Learn more at playbeyond.com.**

Video output in HD requires cables and an HD-compatible display, both sold separately. Copy-protected Blu-ray video discs can only output at 1080p using an HDMI cable connected to a device that is compatible with the HDCP standard. HDMI cable not included. Additional equipment may be required to use the HDMI connector. Cell Broadband Engine: "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Play Beyond is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. All names, brands and associated imagery featured are trademarks and/or copyrighted materials of their respective owners. The NBA and individual NBA member team identifications reproduced on this product are trademarks and copyrighted designs, and/or other forms of intellectual property, that are the exclusive property of NBA Properties, Inc., and the respective NBA member teams and may not be used, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of NBA Properties, Inc. ©2006 NBA Properties, Inc. All rights reserved.

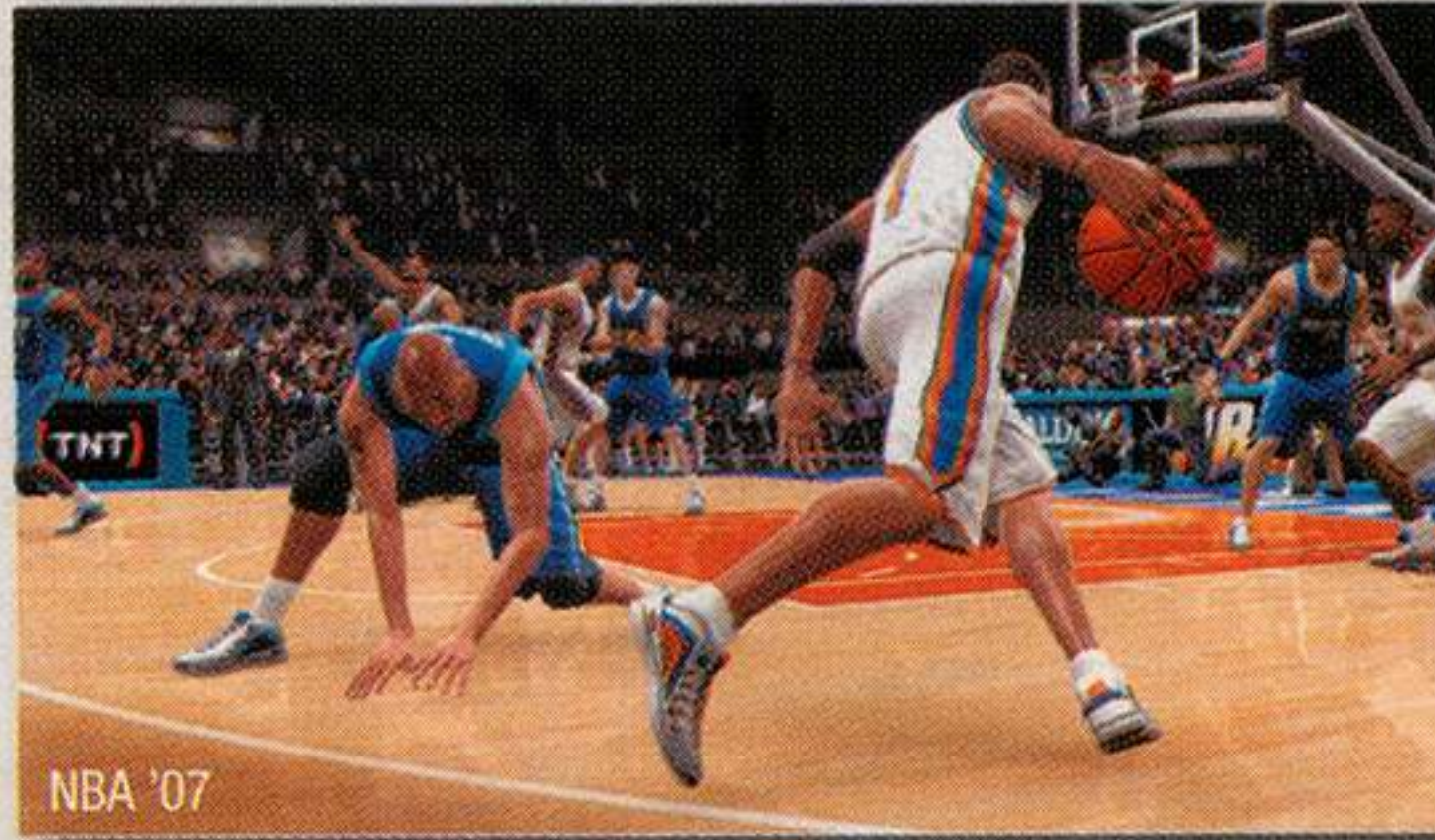
PRODUCTS RANGE FROM
EVERYONE TO MATURE
E-M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB



Genji: Days of the Blade



Call of Duty 3



NBA '07



Ridge Racer 7



NHL 2K7



Mobile Suit Gundam: CROSSFIRE



Marvel Ultimate Alliance



Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas



Sonic the Hedgehog



PLAYSTATION 3



THE COMPUTER IS PERSONAL AGAIN.

the

2006



holiday gift guide

SEE WHAT'S HOT
THIS YEAR AND
ENTER TO WIN

games
music
gear
movies



GAMEPRO
www.gamepro.com

- Publisher Daniel Orum
- Editorial Director George Jones
- Editor Wes Nihei
- Managing Editor Mike Weigand
- News Editor Sidney Shuman
- Previews Editor Chris Morell
- Reviews Editor Tae Kim
- Features Editor Tom McNamara
- Editorial Assistant Travis Moses
- Video Producer WenD Chan
- Video Production Intern Galen Sterling-Smith
- Copy Editor Chenda Ngak
- Editorial Interns Jessica Lu
Amanda Ng
- Director, Creative Services Francis Mao
- Senior Designer George Hu
- Design Interns Desiree Peel
Sean Bledsoe
Jan Salazar
- Contributing Designer
- Director, Production Steve Spingola
- Prepress Manager Michele Nelson
- Director, Online Product Development Craig Eastman
- Lead Web Developer Jason Klingstedt
- Senior Web Developer Justin Lewis
- Web Developer Brian McKenzie
- Associate Web Developers Sui Mak
Lis Mitchell
- Online Editorial Interns Spenser Hall
Patrick Shaw



- President and CEO Daniel Orum
- Senior Vice President Francis Mao
- Vice President, Sales Bob Huseby
- Advertising Director, West Emily-Jane Throckmorton
- Advertising Director, East Rich Commodore
- Director, Operations David Goldberg
- Advertising Operations Coordinators Mary Atchison
Gabe Cera
- Director, Human Resources Lisa M. Hess
- HR & Administrative Assistant Dawnielle Cramblet
- Director, Marketing Simon Tonner
- Marketing Intern Jasper Kwan
- Group Circulation Manager Stephanie Taylor
- Circulation Coordinator Kathryn Washburn Main
- Senior Accountant Susan Bell Nunes
- Information Systems Manager Chris Sipe
- Founder, GamePro magazine Patrick J. Ferrell

Entire contents copyright 2007 by IDG Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without prior written permission by the publisher is prohibited. All submissions, including, but not limited to, artwork, text, photographs, and videotapes, become the property of the publisher. Submissions cannot be returned; senders should retain a copy. The GAMEPRO®, DVDPRO®, and NETPRO® names and logos are Registered Trademarks of International Data Group, Inc. Nintendo, Nintendo 64, Game Boy, Game Boy Color, Game Boy Advance, GameCube, Nintendo DS, Nintendo Wii, and the 3D "N" logo are Registered Trademarks or Trademarks of Nintendo of America, Inc. PlayStation, PlayStation 2, PlayStation 3, PS one, PSP, and the PlayStation logo are Registered Trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, the Microsoft Game Studios logo, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, the Xbox 360 logos, and the Xbox Live logo are Registered Trademarks or Trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries, and are used under license from Microsoft. Nokia and N-Gage are Trademarks or Registered Trademarks of Nokia Corporation. Sega, Dreamcast, and the Dreamcast logo are either Registered Trademarks or Trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All products and the characters contained therein are owned by the respective trademark and copyright owners. GamePro does not claim any copyright in the screen shots herein. Copyright in all screen shots contained within this publication are owned by their respective companies. All materials listed in this guide are subject to change, and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. Printed in the U.S.A.

For subscription problems only, please write: P.O. Box 37579, Boone, IA 50037-0579, or call: 510/768-2767.

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations



Audit Bureau of Circulations

www.gamepro.com/holidayguide/

RIVALRY AT ITS FASTEST!



SONIC RIVALS

Sonic and his top rivals go head-to-head and only one will emerge victorious! With mega Boosts and a bag full of tricks, they launch Fireballs, zap each other with Confusion, or vault over each other as they bolt for the finish line. Compete in multiplayer mode against your own rival to prove who is best!



OUTSMART
MASSIVE BOSSES!



OUTRUN
IN SPEEDY 2D ACTION!



OUTRIVAL
WITH SPECIAL ATTACKS!



IN STORES NOW!

Exclusively for the PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) system

EVERYONE
E
 Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.
 ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org



PlayStation®Portable



SEGA[®]
<http://www.sega.com>

SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA, the SEGA logo and Sonic Rivals are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA Corporation. © SEGA Corporation, 2006. All Rights Reserved. "PlayStation", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are owned by their respective owners.

FEATURES



ON THE COVER 38 | Solid Gold

Each Metal Gear Solid game has been shrouded in secrecy, so to get intel on the first PlayStation 3 adventure in the series, *Guns of the Patriots*, we went to Japan and asked the man himself, Hideo Kojima, what to expect for Solid Snake's latest (and possibly last) mission. Here is all we know (and don't know) about *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*.

Cover art: Konami




54 | Majority Rules

Not everyone was able to get a PlayStation 3 or Wii at launch, but there are plenty of excellent offerings for the PlayStation 2, Xbox 360, Xbox, and even the GameCube. Here are 30 titles that should hold you over until more next-gen systems arrive.



60 | ProStrategy Guide: Gears of War

 BradyGames takes you through some rough spots in this critically acclaimed shooter for the Xbox 360.

EVIL KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES

THE HELGHAST ARE BACK



And they're taking hostages. Set out on an impossible mission to save them. Use the terrain to your advantage, as you navigate the battlefield from a new third-person perspective. The Killzone war rages on. Exclusively for the PlayStation® Portable.

KILLZONE

LIBERATION

KILLZONE.COM



Blood
Language
Violence



PlayStation Portable



Killzone™: Liberation ©2006 Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. Developed by Guerrilla. Killzone is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. All rights reserved. Internet connection and Memory Stick Duo™ may be required. Player responsible for Wi-Fi fees. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

LOADING

28 ProNews: 14 Things You Need to Know About the PS3

Think you know everything about Sony's latest wonder console? How about transferring PlayStation 2 save game data to the PlayStation 3? Or how about downloading all your content to someone else's PlayStation 3? We reveal these wrinkles and 12 more.



36 DVDPro

Although HD DVD and Blu-ray are coming on strong, there are a ton of excellent films in standard DVD format. Here we take a look at the Ultimate James Bond Edition Volume 3 and 4, the unrated version of *The Descent*, and *The Simpsons: The Complete Ninth Season*.

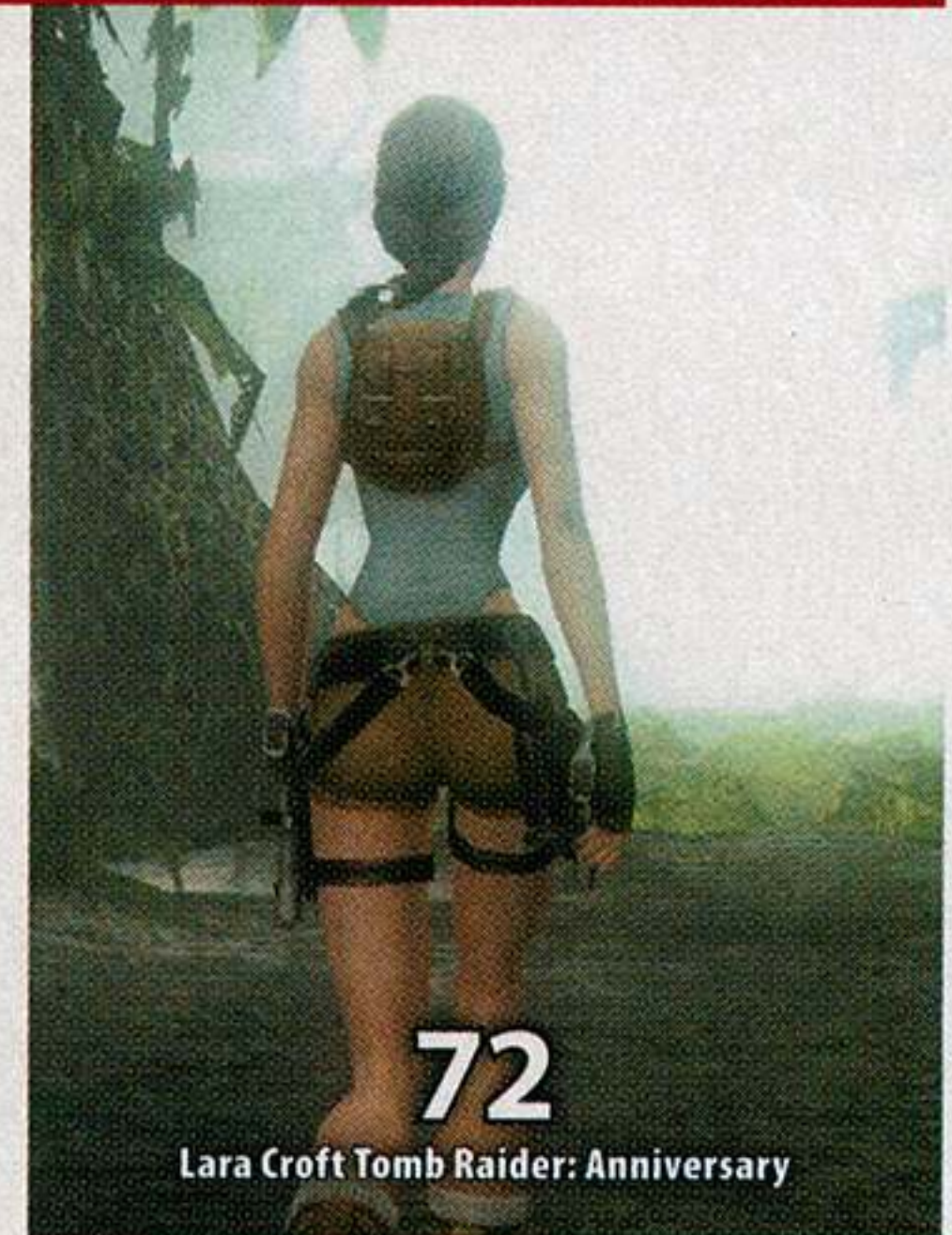
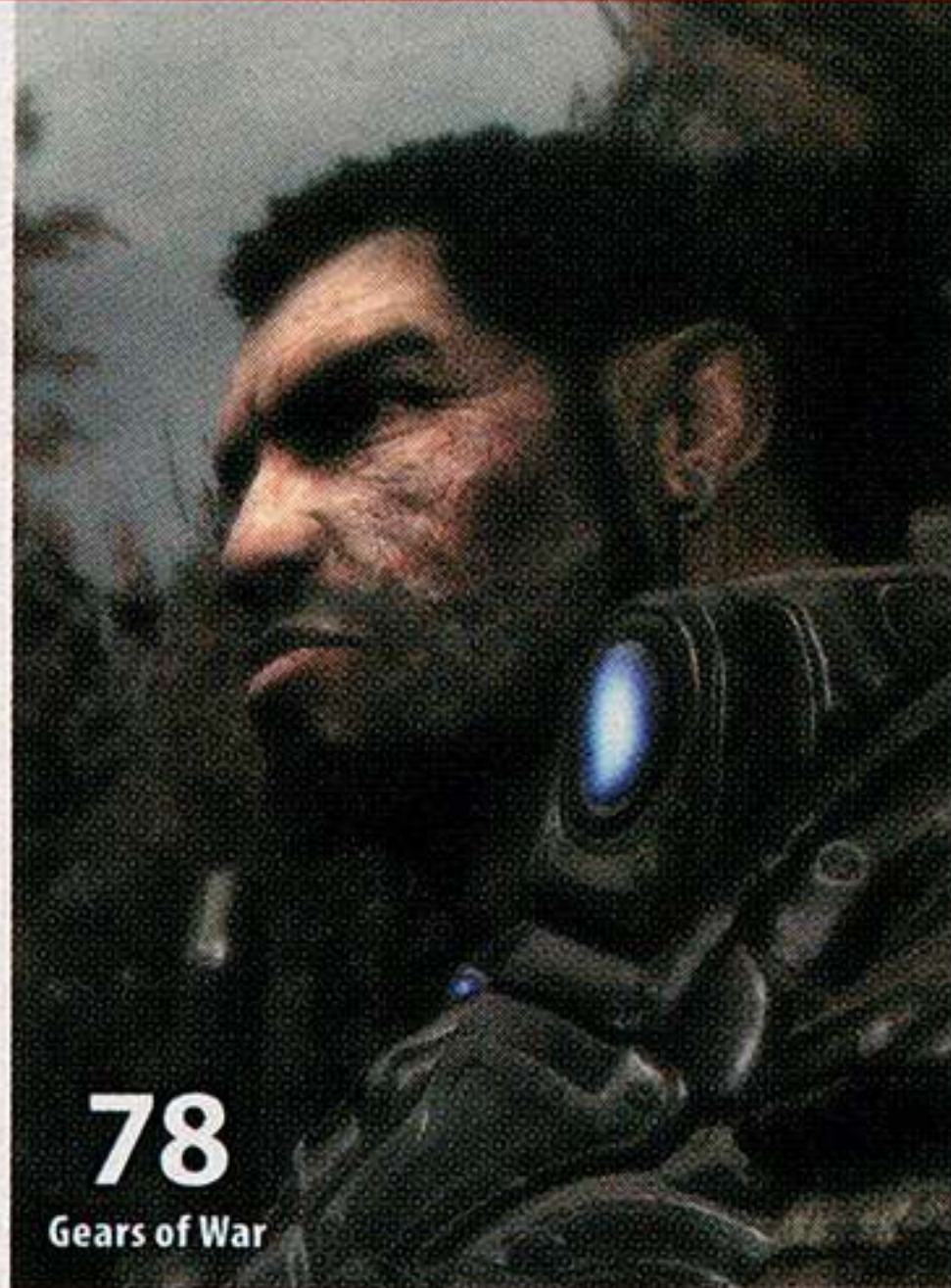


28
ProNews

...And more!

DEPARTMENTS

- 18 HEAD2HEAD
- 26 ASK THE PROS
- 28 LOADING
- 66 PREVIEWS
- 78 PROREVIEWS
- 92 GAMES TO GO
- 98 SPORTS PAGES
- 100 ROLE-PLAYER'S REALM
- 102 CODE VAULT
- 104 GAMEPRO'S BIG LIST
- 106 HYPERCRITICAL
- 107 CHARTBUSTERS



GAME FINDER

Previews

- College Hoops 2K798
- God of War II70
- Lara Croft Tomb Raider:
Anniversary72
- Lost Planet:
Extreme Condition66
- Medal of Honor: Airborne74
- Phantasy Star Universe100
- SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs
Combined Assault76

Reviews

Multiplatform

- Destroy All Humans! 2104, 106
- Justice League Heroes106
- LEGO Star Wars II:
The Original Trilogy106
- Madden NFL 07106
- Mortal Kombat:
Armageddon104, 106
- NASCAR 07106
- Scarface:
The World Is Yours106
- Super Monkey Ball
Adventure106
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07104

PlayStation 3

- Resistance: Fall of Man80

PlayStation 2

- .hack//G.U. Vol. 1: Rebirth101
- ATV Offroad Fury 4104
- Bully104, 106
- Dance Dance Revolution
SuperNOVA106
- Dirge of Cerberus:
Final Fantasy VI106
- FIFA 07104
- Final Fantasy XII104, 106
- Guitar Hero II84
- Micro Machines v4104
- Naruto: Ultimate Ninja104
- NBA '07
Featuring the Life, Vol. 2104
- NFL Street 399
- Okami106
- One Piece:
Pirates Carnival104
- Rule of Rose104
- Super Dragon Ball Z106
- Tales of the Abyss101
- Thrillville86

PlayStation 3

- Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria104, 106
- Yakuza106
- Zatch Bell: Mamodo Fury104

Xbox 360

- Blitz: The League104
- Call of Duty 382
- Dead Rising106
- F.E.A.R.85
- Gears of War78, 106
- Just Cause106
- Madden NFL 07106
- Marvel:
Ultimate Alliance83
- NBA 2K7104, 106
- NBA Live 07104, 106
- Need for Speed: Carbon104
- NHL 07106
- NHL 2K7104, 106
- Prey106
- Saints Row104, 106
- Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
Double Agent87
- Tony Hawk's Project 888
- WWE SmackDown vs Raw 200790

Wii

- Dragon Ball Z:
Budokai Tenkaichi 2104

Xbox

- Crusty Demons:
Freestyle Moto-X104
- FlatOut 2104
- Scarface:
The World Is Yours104

PSP

- Death, Jr. 2: Root of Evil104

Grand Theft Auto:

- Vice City Stories92
- Killzone: Liberation106
- Medal of Honor: Heroes94
- Power Stone Collection104
- Sonic Rivals95
- Work Time Fun104

DS

- Avatar:
The Last Airbender96
- Castlevania:
Portrait of Ruin93
- Children of Mana104
- Elite Beat Agents94

Final Fantasy III93

- Mario Hoops 3-on-3106
- Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2:
March of the Minis104
- Pokémon Mystery Dungeon:
Blue Rescue Team106
- SpongeBob SquarePants:
Creature From The Krusty Krab96
- Star Fox Command106
- Touch Detective104
- Yoshi's Island DS95

PC

- Company of Heroes104

Codes and Cheats

- Mortal Kombat:
Armageddon102
- NBA 2K7102
- NBA Live 07102
- Scarface:
The World Is Yours103
- World Racing 2103

Tired of waiting for your character?



Introducing a blazing fast 8 Mbps connection from Comcast High-Speed Internet, helping make lag a thing of the past. Along with lightning speed you also get full access to Game Invasion™ and exclusive content from IGN, like betas, clips and the latest news. Comcast gives you an incredibly fast connection and content you won't find anywhere else, so you play better.

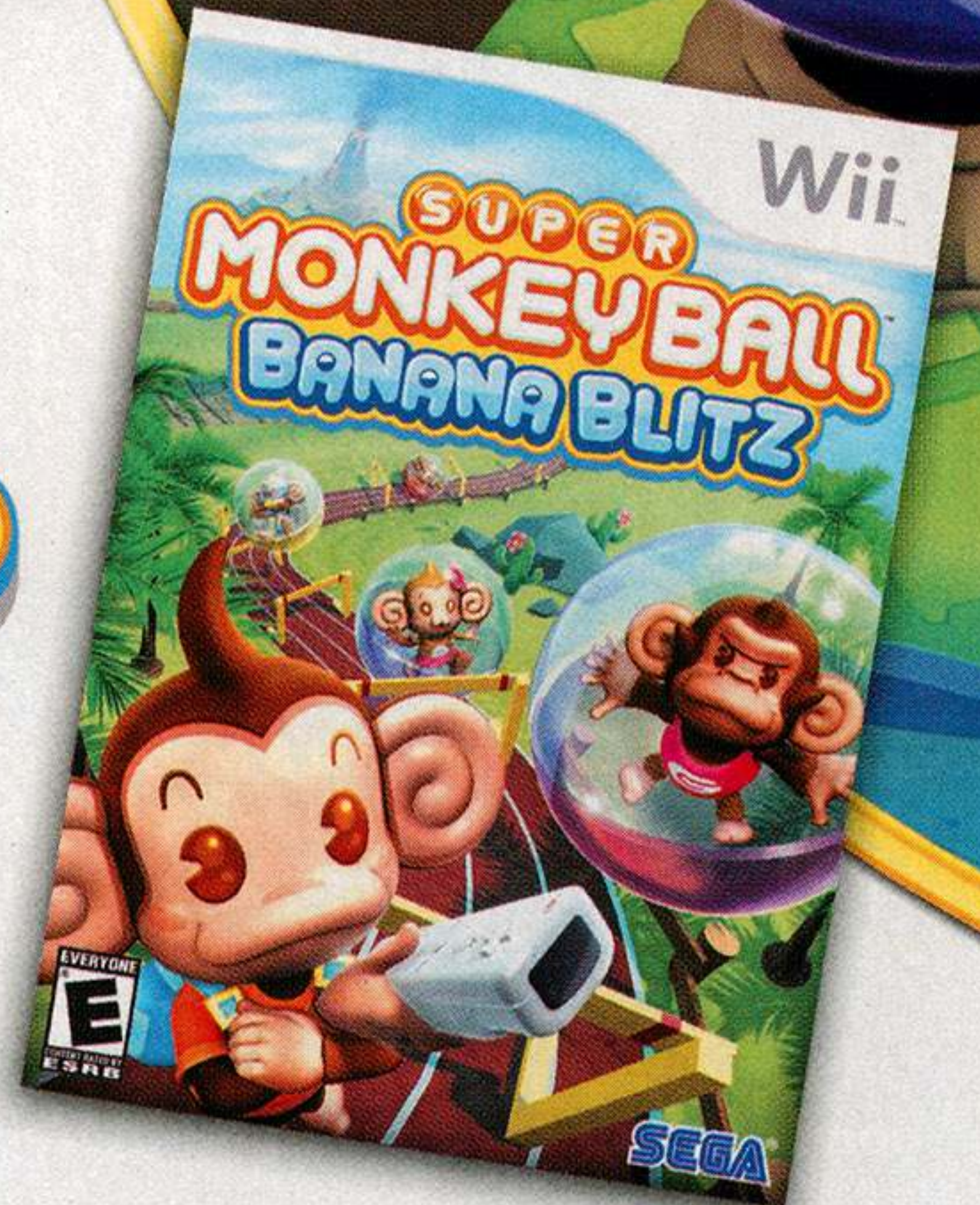
Upgrade today and game like you mean it. **That's Comcastic!**
comcast.com/8Mbps

comcast

8 Mbps speed for downloads only (maximum upload speed 768Kbps). Many factors affect speed. Actual speeds may vary and are not guaranteed. IGN Founders' Club provided with Comcast 8 Mbps speed plan only. IGN Founders' Club supplied by and subject to terms of IGN Entertainment, Inc. Comcast and its subsidiaries are not responsible for any products and services of other participating companies. ©2006 Comcast. All rights reserved.

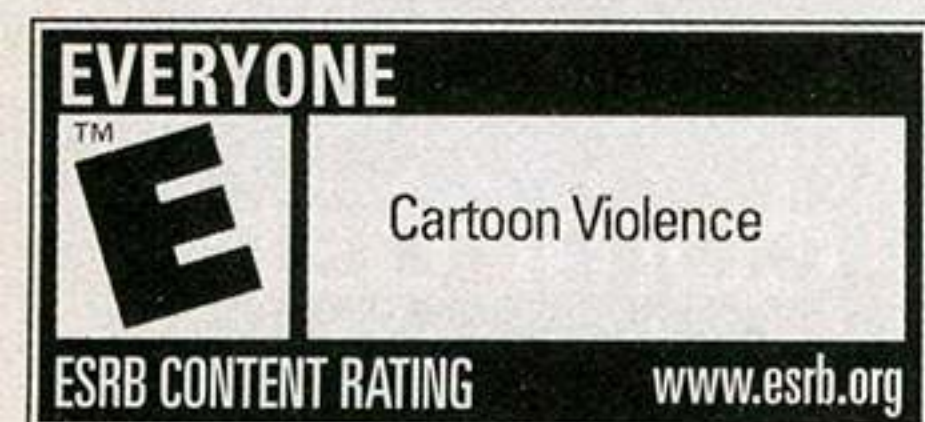
**AiAi and friends
come to the Wii!
An action-packed
extravaganza of
unique new puzzles
and madcap multiplayer
gameplay, Super Monkey
Ball Banana Blitz takes
the ground-breaking Wii
Remote and shows the
world exactly what it can do!**

SUPER MONKEY BALL BANANA BLITZ

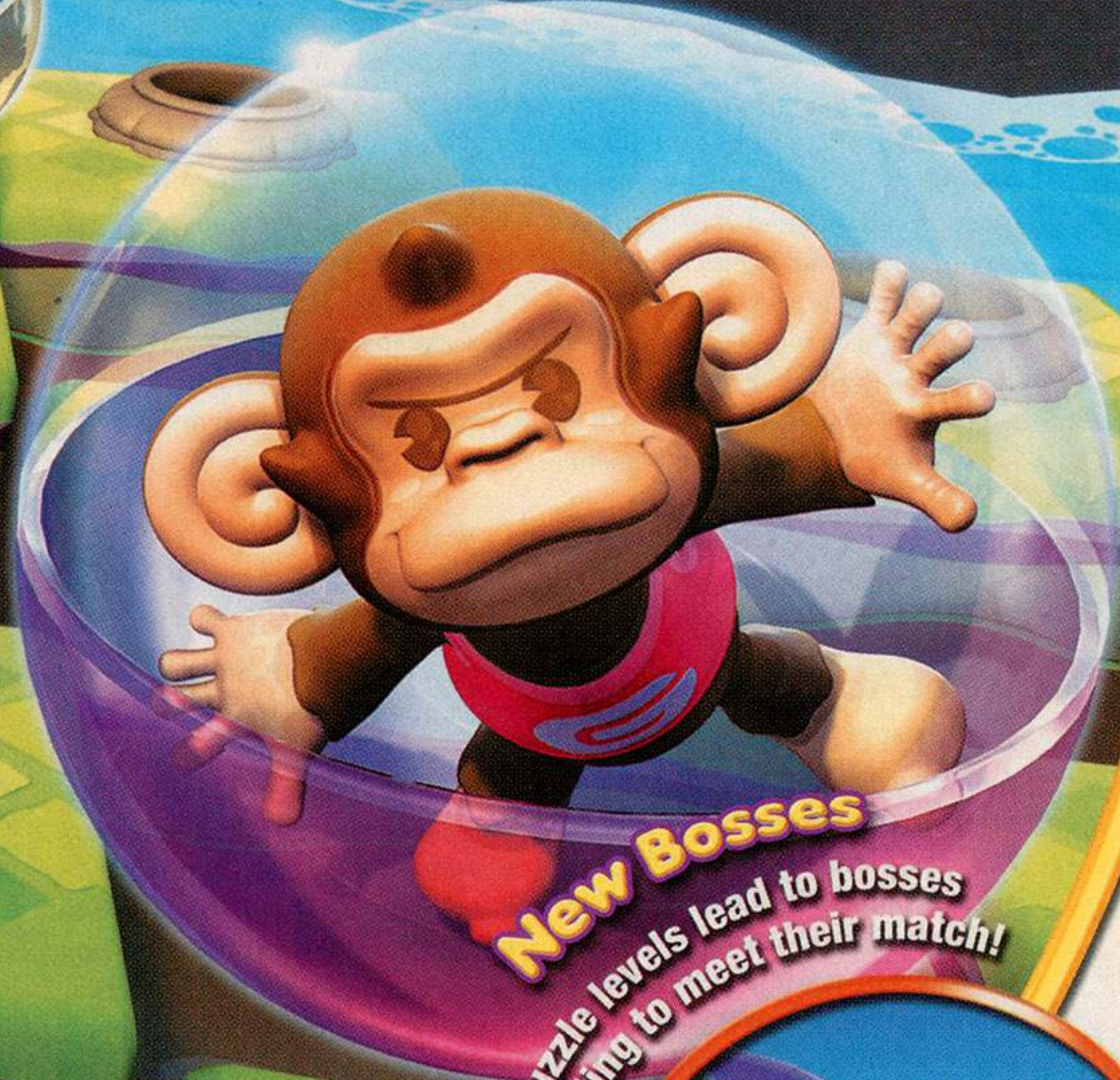


**Exclusively for
the Wii.**

Wii



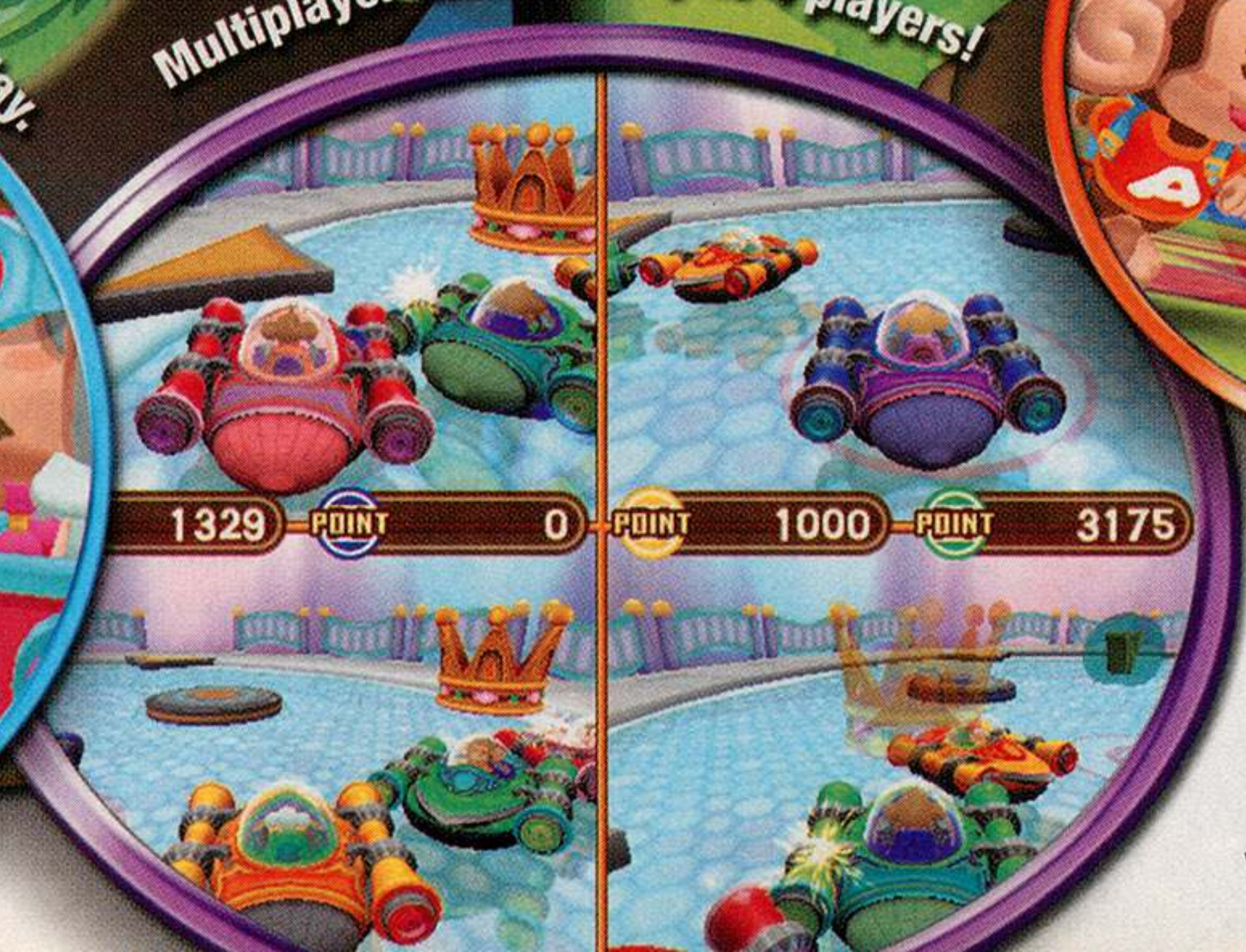
It's A Whole New MONKEY-in-a-BALL GAME!



New Bosses
Puzzle levels lead to bosses waiting to meet their match!

New Characters
Yan Yan and Doctor bring all-new gameplay.

50 Party Games
Multiplayer mania for up to 4 players!



HEAD 2 HEAD

A New Year for a New Generation

2007 has arrived and let it be known as the year that changed video games. Whether you own one yet or not, the PS3, the Wii, and the Xbox 360 are about to set us all on a path to the greater adventures in gaming. Two great technologies are coming together in this console generation: broadband connectivity and high definition television. In the last generation, Xbox and PS2 set off plenty of trailblazing in the area of online console gaming. Microsoft and Xbox Live in particular made a great leap forward. Now online connectivity has become an integral part of the gaming experience. By the end of this current generation HDTV will be just ubiquitous, even regular TV broadcasts are going to be digital. Games will never look the same again.

And of course great software will drive all the hardware. The games are already aligning for the change led by powerful classic game franchises—like Metal Gear Solid.

This issue *GamePro* presents an exclusive look at Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots due out this year for PlayStation 3. Developer Kojima Productions set its sights on great graphics, great gameplay, and great action and targeted 2007 as the year it would all come together. With this special behind-the-scenes glimpse you can see the shape of things to come and hear all about it, too, from Metal Gear creator, Hideo Kojima. The continuing saga of Solid Snake already looks like one of the breakaway hits of the year.

If you haven't crossed over to the next generation, yet, start making your plans now. Good times are here.

The GamePros
Oakland, CA
Letters@gamepro.com

What About Current-Gen?

GamePro, I am outraged at the prices of the Xbox 360, Wii, and PS3. Yes, I know the developers and publishers have to finance themselves, but \$599 for the PS3? Give me a break. Three of my entire Christmas budgets couldn't cover getting the PS3 along with all of the accessories needed. What worries me is that more and more games are starting to lean away from the current-generation console, and instead are starting to lean towards the Xbox 360, Wii, and PS3. Soon, there won't be any games left for me

to buy. I own a PS2, and as everyone knows, the PlayStation systems are quite resilient and last a long time in terms of popularity and game compatibility. However, even the hardy PS2 is starting, slowly but surely, to die. Staring hopelessly at the prices of the Xbox 360 at the nearby Target, I start to wonder, what will happen to me once the PS2 is generally discarded? My hope is that soon, perhaps after New Years, the Xbox 360 will radically drop in price. Where are the good old days? Where are the days where the systems only cost \$100? If all else fails, I will have to rely on my PC. Let us hope that they don't stop making PC games.

► D. Mencha—Via Internet

Maybe it's not as bad as you think. The PS2 is supposed to have a pretty long lifespan, lasting at least another 4 or 5 years, according to Sony. Granted, there may not be as many new releases as there will be on the Xbox 360 or the PS3, but the PS2 isn't going anywhere. Recent and upcoming titles for the PS2 look to be some of the best games ever released, let alone on the console; Okami, Yakuza, Final Fantasy XII, and God of War II are all perfect examples. Don't expect a price drop on the Xbox 360 any time within the next year, but with so many great games for the PS2, you may not need a next-gen replacement for a while.

Wii Can't Take it Anymore!

So now some insider magazines and even Sony's own website are reporting that the \$600 premium PS3 package that is designed to take advantage of my new HDTV with its HDMI ports won't even come with the HDMI cables or any high-definition cables at all. Gee, thanks Sony. If you keep screwing your loyal fan

base, "Wii" will switch to another next-gen system!

► Dallas Bowerman—Via Internet

It does seem odd for Sony to tout the next-gen capabilities of its system, particularly its high-definition Blu-ray player and HDMI ports, and then not include an HDMI cable. But Sony, like the other console manufacturers, isn't known for making the most logical decisions, and this way the company can keep down the costs of an already expensive console package. At this point, it's clear Sony isn't looking at the PS3 as a "value" console. If that's what you're looking for, the Wii seems far more willing to wear that title.

Best of Both Worlds?

I try to get at least one console for each generation, but I usually end up sticking to my computer. I know more and more people who play fewer console games and play online MMORPGs, like Guild Wars and World of Warcraft. I really enjoy both of them, but I'm playing them so much that I'm playing a lot less on the console. If only the Xbox 360 could get games working as MMORPGs. I've tried Xbox Live,

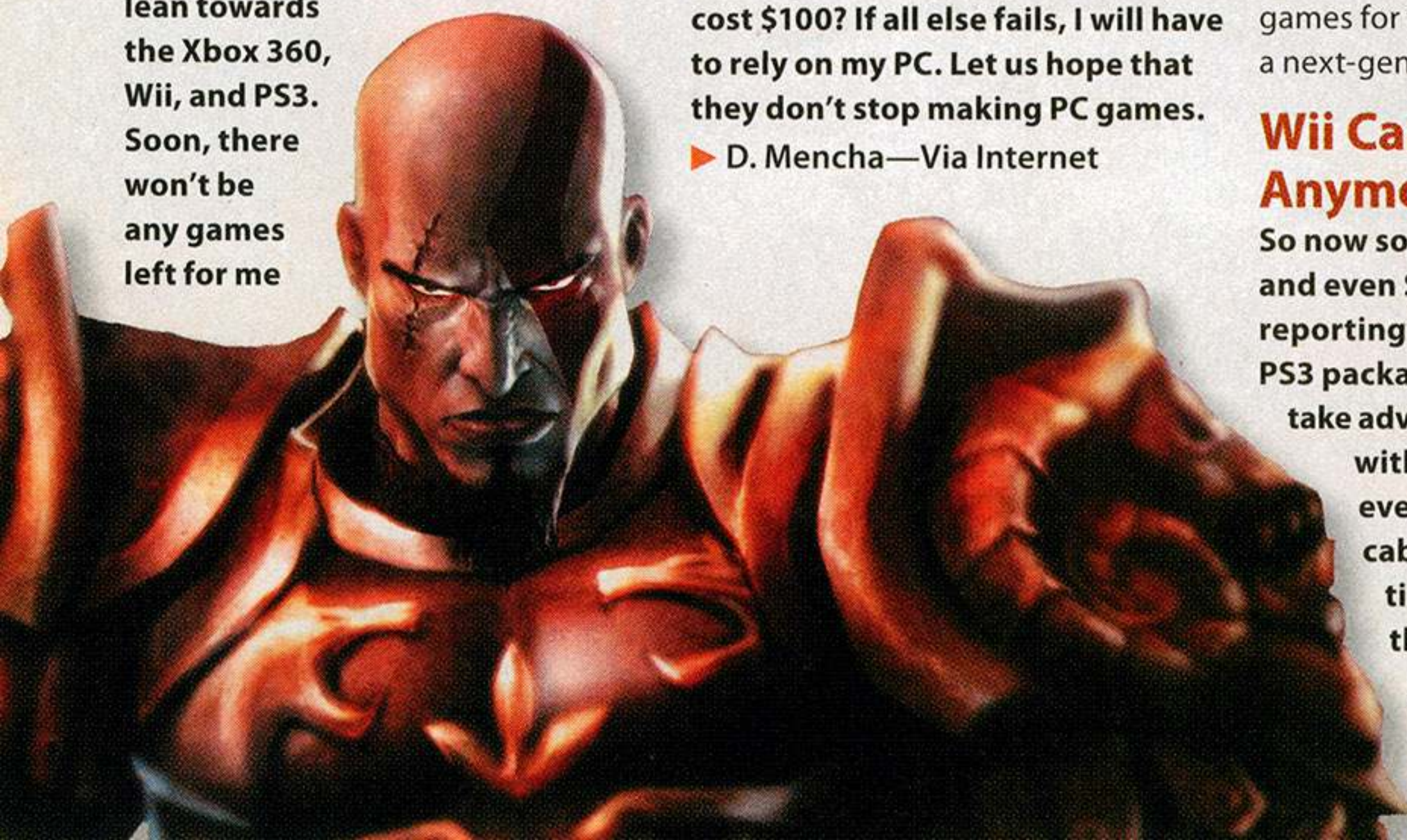
Okay, he tippy toes the fine line between "ranting" and "having a take," but with this being the transition year from one generation of consoles to the next we'll give Kevin props for showing some hard core gamer's spirit. Although we disagree that you need to sacrifice your social life to be a gamer, Kev wins a copy of Eragon for Xbox 360.

True "Gamers"

I've been playing games since the age of 4, and I'm pretty sure you can call me a "gamer." Which brings me to my point. Over the years the word "gamer" has been synonymous with everything that has to do with video games. But lately I believe the term's been misused. I'm tired of people claiming to be "gamers" just because they've played Halo for an hour. That's not what a gamer is. A gamer is someone who devotes his or her life to games, usually at the sacrifice of a social life. A gamer is someone who knows the date that every game arrives at the stores. They know details about all the news systems. They know all the little changes in Resident Evil 4 between the Gamecube version and the PlayStation 2 version.

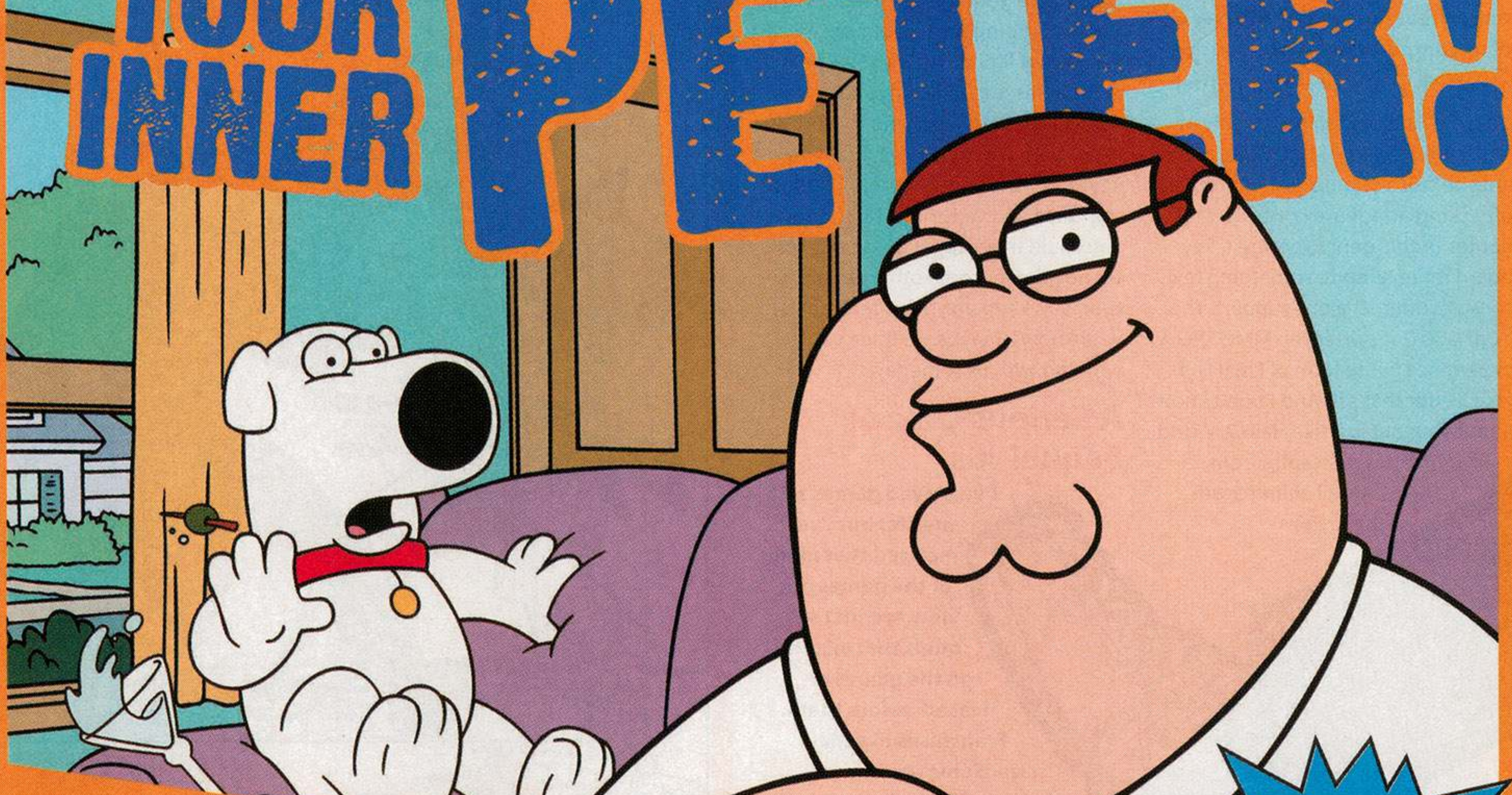
Some people these days use terms like "casual gamer." That's just wrong. Some schmuck was probably sitting around one day and said, "Wow! I love games but I don't want my friends to think I am not cool so I'll call myself a 'casual gamer,' yeah, that's it." To me being a gamer just didn't mean playing the video games it meant living them. It was a life style that should be upheld. Sadly there aren't many true gamers around anymore; our numbers are dwindling. I will always be a true gamer in spite of any names being slapped on this once great life style by new generations. I will always be a true gamer at heart.

► Kevin Poole—Via Internet



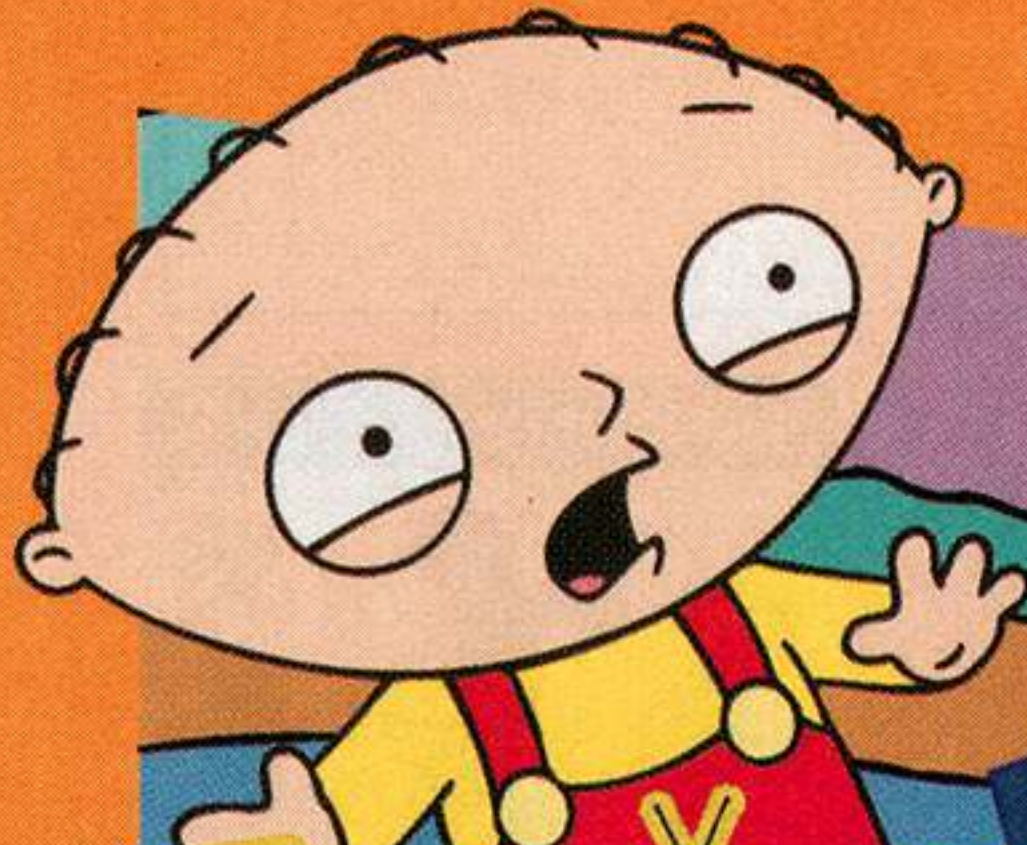
GRAB YOUR JOYSTICK AND GET READY TO...

UNLEASH YOUR INNER PETER!



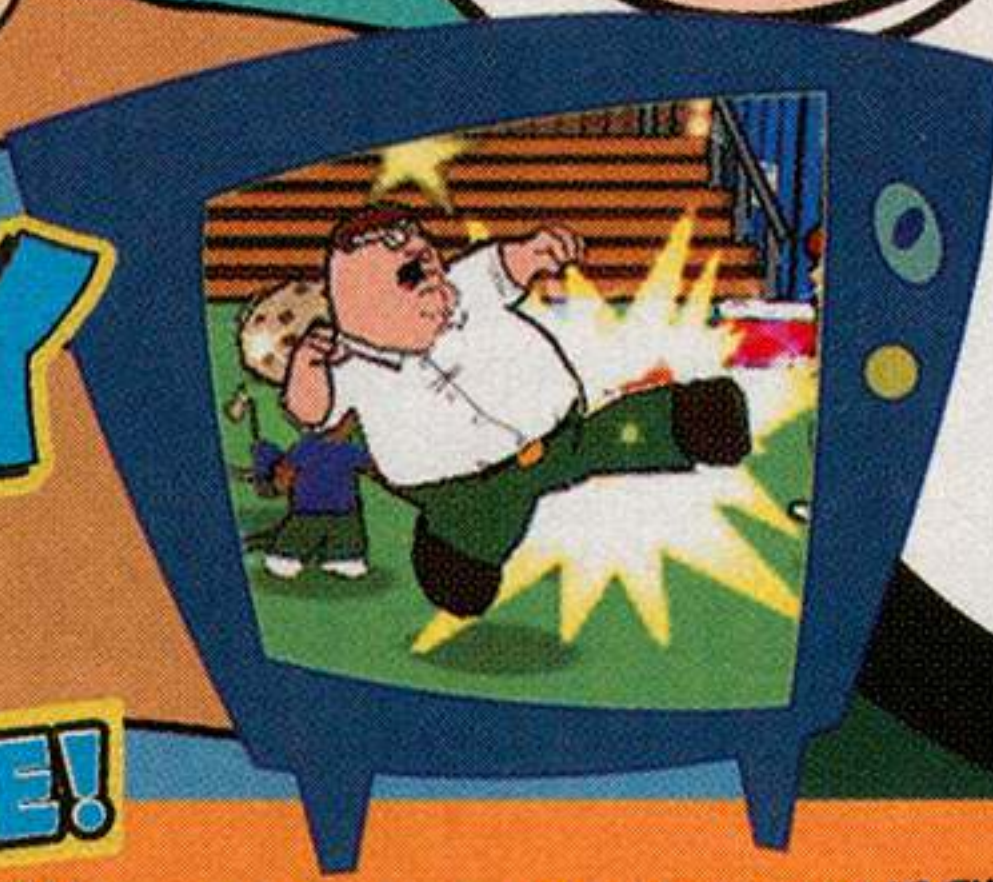
AVAILABLE NOW!

It's too hot for TV!



FAMILY GUY VIDEO GAME!

WWW.2KGAMES.COM/FAMILYGUY



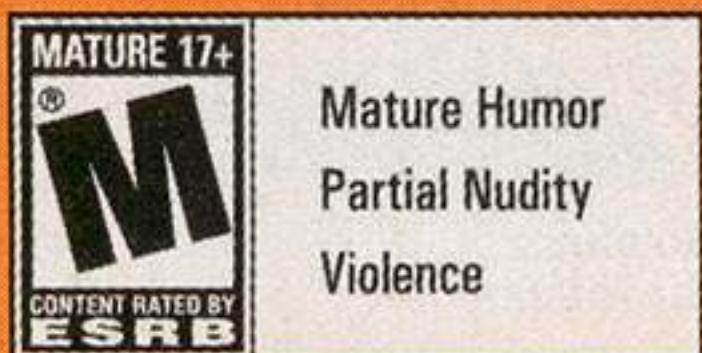
VOICED AND SCRIPTED BY MEMBERS OF THE REAL FAMILY GUY TV SHOW CREATIVE TEAM!



DISTINCTIVE FAMILY GUY HUMOR—RAUCOUS AND RACY, JUST HOW YOU LIKE IT!



HILARIOUS AND ENTERTAINING NON SEQUITUR MINI-GAMES KEEP THE LAUGHS COMING.



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

Family Guy™ & © 2006 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. Twentieth Century Fox Television, Family Guy, and their associated logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. 2K Games, the 2K logo, and Take-Two Interactive Software are all trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Developed by High Voltage. High Voltage and the High Voltage logo are registered trademarks of High Voltage Software, Inc. Microsoft, Xbox and the Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or in other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation", "PS" Family logo, and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All rights reserved.

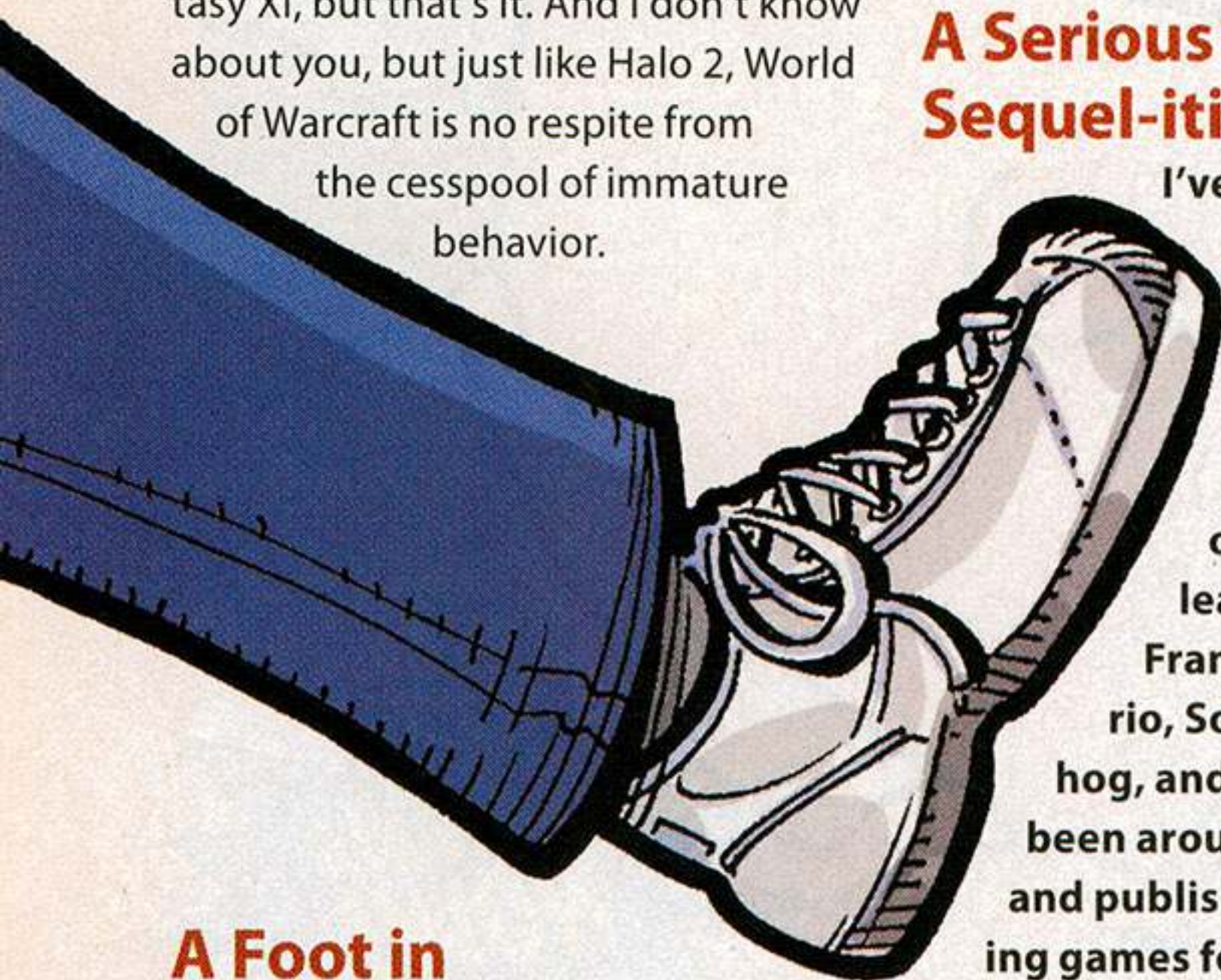
HEAD 2 HEAD

but most games don't have enough players, and there's no real talking. MMORPGs are so fun because people talk and react to you, and in Halo 2 talking is usually cursing and yelling. Why can't Microsoft create some great, huge MMORPG for all of us computer people?

► Patrick Cantwell—Via Internet

Consoles in general don't really offer a cornucopia of MMORPGs, probably because of the age-old problem of lacking adequate controls. Most games in this genre require a keyboard for text input, something few consoles offer, let alone support. The Xbox 360 does offer the MMORPG experience in the form of Final Fantasy XI, but that's it. And I don't know about you, but just like Halo 2, World of Warcraft is no respite from

the cesspool of immature behavior.



A Foot in the Door

Hey, GamePro. I'm 15 going on 16, and I love to play video games just like every other boy (or girl). But the cost of games are going up, and every thing is getting harder to get. So I know I'm not the only one who wants to know this, but can I get some places to send an application to become a game tester or anything? I just love playing all types of games, and it would be a dream to be a game tester, plus I can't make up my mind if I want to get into the gaming industry. Oh, and I would like a job where I can

stay at home since, you know, I'm only 15.

► Johnny Summer—Via Internet

It's good to see you're interested in a career in gaming, and it's just as well that you're getting such a head start. But at 15 going on 16, your options are kind of limited, as most game companies don't hire anyone under 18. You could try applying to work at a local video games store, that way keeping you connected to the industry. Once you've turned 18, though, you could try to apply for a game tester position or some other QA job. Either way, keep up your interest and who knows, maybe we'll see you working with us someday!

A Serious Case of Sequel-itis

I've played games all my life, but I've noticed that many of the games out now are just sequels that expand on the games released before them.

Franchises like Mario, Sonic the Hedgehog, and Final Fantasy have been around for a long time, and publishers just keep making games for them. Why have they not created any new games that are just as good? Publishers should put less effort extend on old games and try to create new games that can live up to or be better than the older ones.

► Jacob Passmore—Via Internet

One word: Money. Video games are a business after all, and when popular franchises sell, which Mario, Sonic, and Final Fantasy all do, you can expect more games in the series to be released, you can be sure. Halo 3, anybody?

ART ATTACK!

PICK of the Month!

Rod Beltran
Newark, CA

Game Pro

Rod BELTRAN
6522 SMITH ST
NEWARK, CA 07102

OAKLAND CA 94623-2210

Send us your art!

This month's winner receives

Dance Dance Revolution SuperNOVA

GamePro magazine • Art Attack
P. O. Box 22210 • Oakland, CA 94623-2210
artattack@gamepro.com

All art becomes the property of GamePro magazine. Sorry, we cannot return artwork. We will accept color photocopies or digital scans.

Communicate!

E-mail the GamePro editors at "editor's name"@gamepro.com or check out their blogs!

mrmarbles
kickthepuppy.com

dr.zombie
drzombie.com

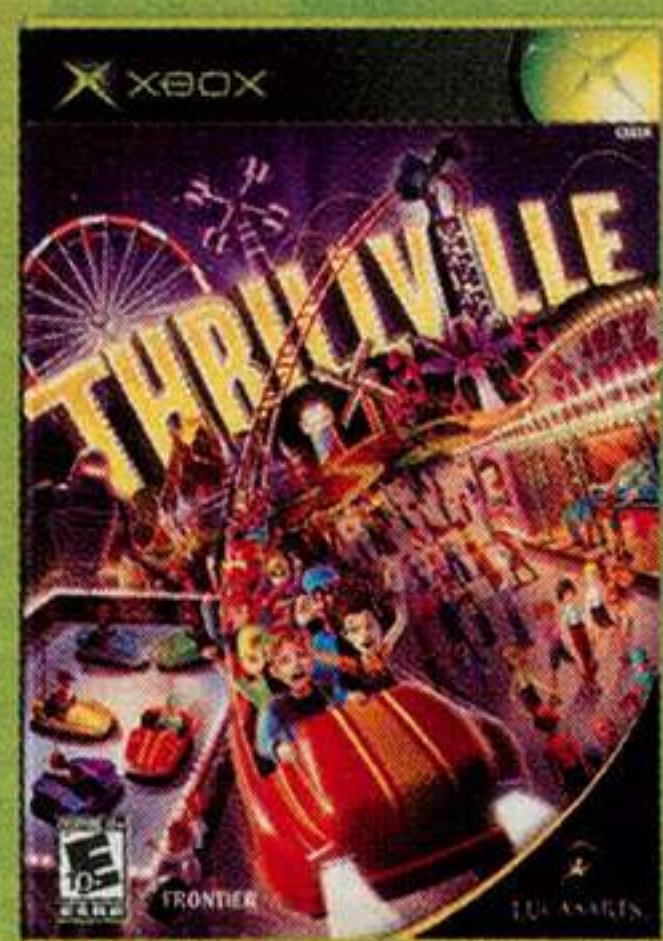
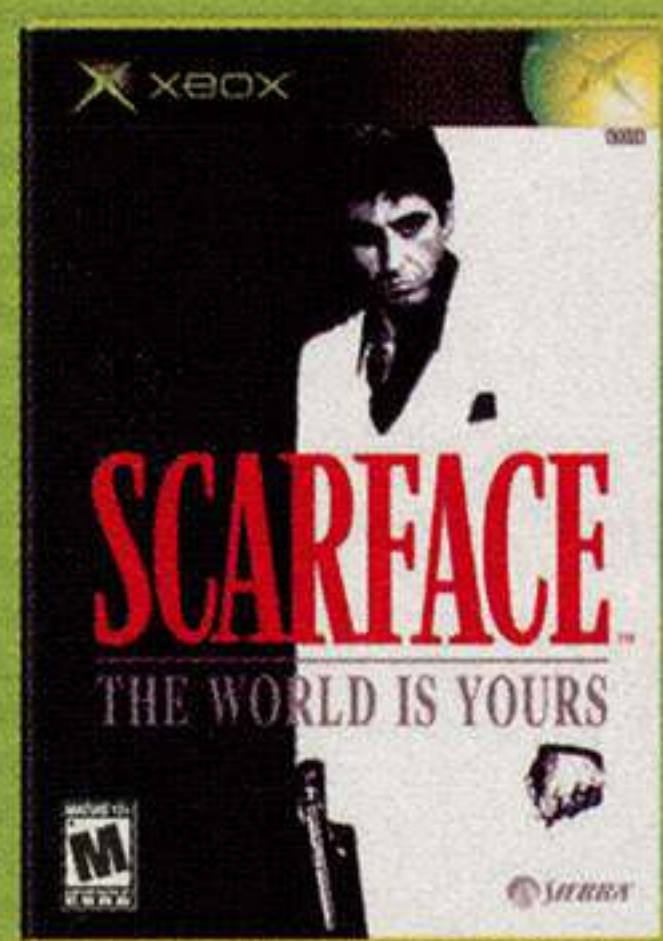
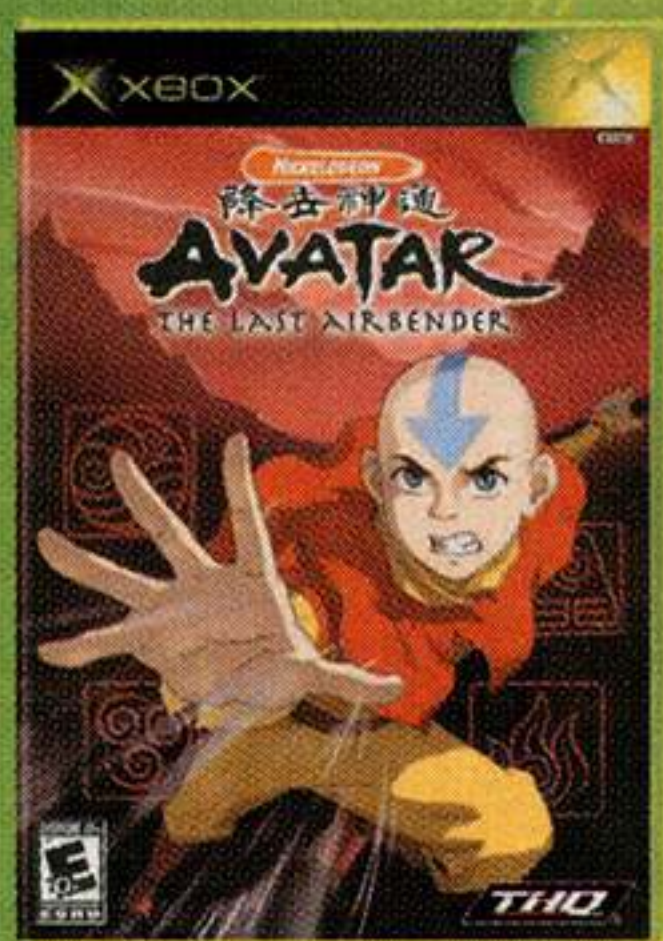
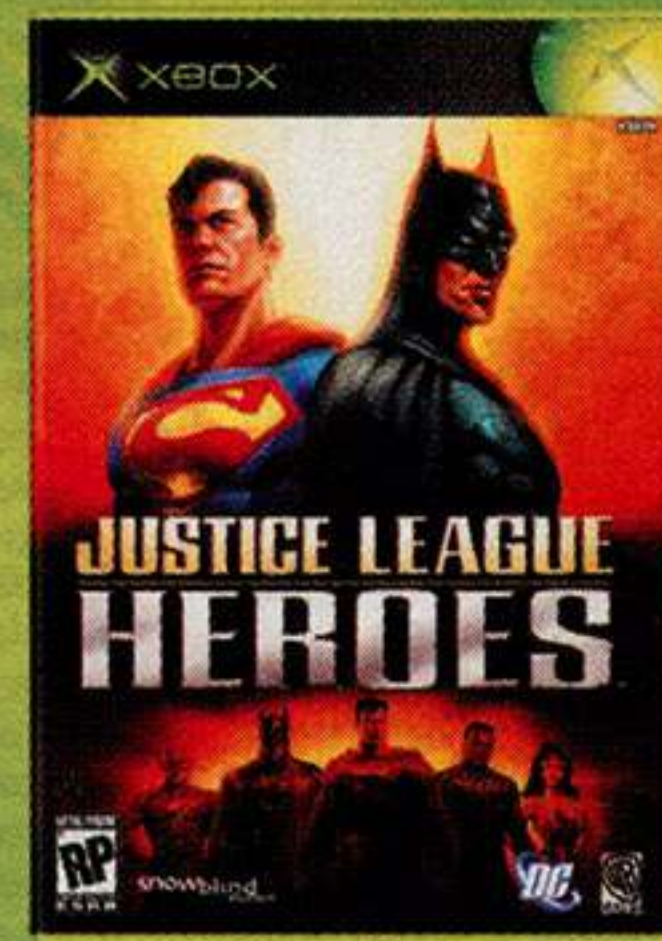
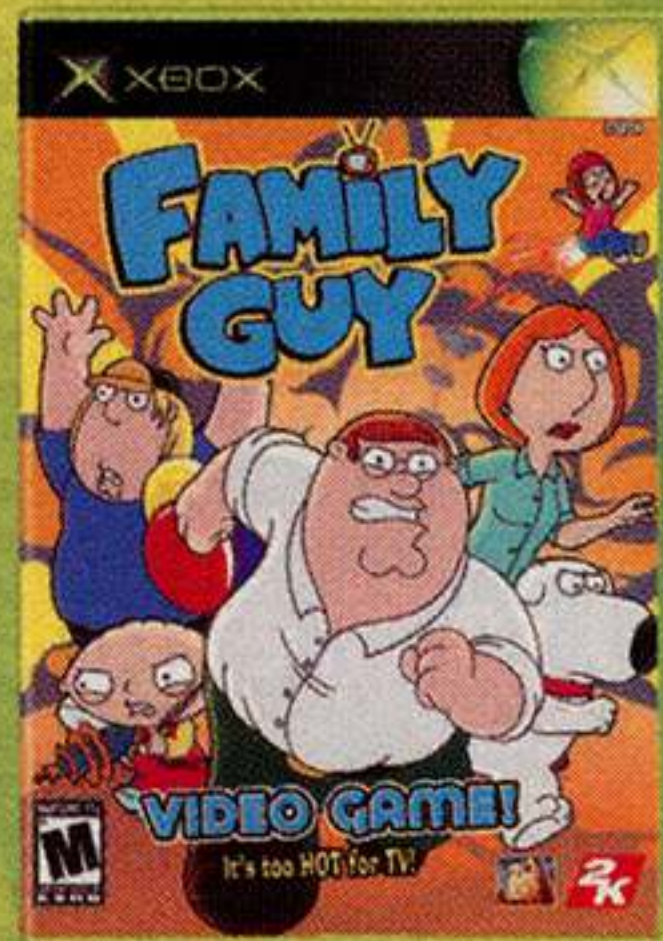
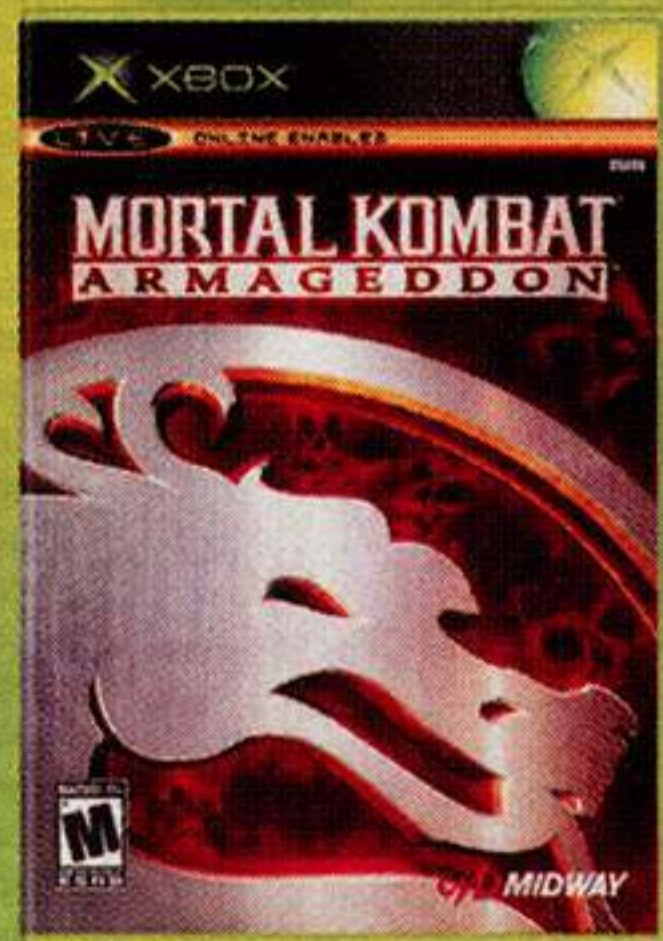
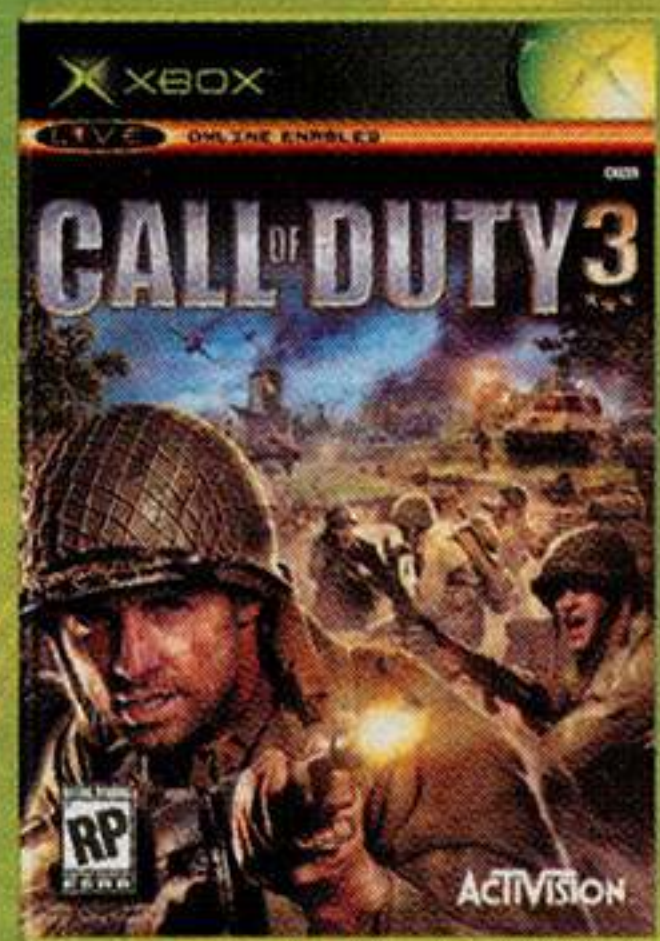
ahoy_and_avast
ahoy_and_avast.com

vicious_sid
blogcore.com

major_mike
gpmajormike.com

brobuzz
brobuzz.com

NEW GAMES. ORIGINAL XBOX.



©2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, the Xbox logos, Xbox Live, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.



www.xbox.com



Introducing the XPS 710, featuring the **world's first** quad-core desktop processor.

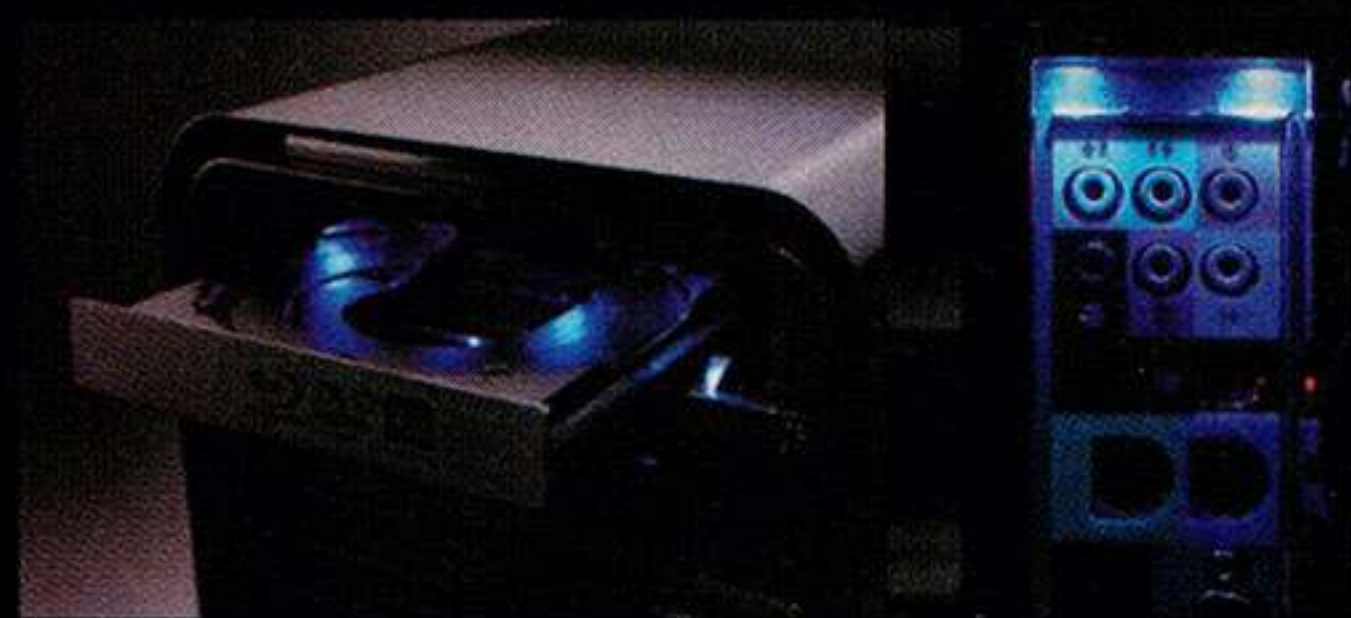
Be the first to see it at
dell.com/worldsfirst

Want to build a gaming system to epic proportions? Look no further than the highly expandable XPS 710. The new Intel® Core™2 Extreme quad-core processor delivers mind-boggling speed and stutter-free performance. This true gaming machine features NVIDIA® nForce® graphics for intensely realistic game play and support for dual or quad graphics cards. Plus, with room for up to four hard drives and up to 4GB* of memory, you can tweak this beast to be exactly what you want it to be. The XPS 710. Performance to the fourth power.

Dell™ XPS™ 710

Starting at
\$3699

or as low as
\$111/mo.△



Both the CD tray and back panel have their own lights, so installing games from CDs or plugging in peripherals is easy.

Take your XPS 710 to the limit.

A.



B.

A. Logitech® G15 Gaming Keyboard
Keep tabs on messages, view game stats and more. 18 programmable macro keys allow you to create up to 54 custom macros.

\$85

SKU: A0523107

B. Logitech G7 Laser Cordless Mouse
Ultra-high-resolution, 2000-dpi laser engine.

\$90

SKU: A0523012



△**DELL PREFERRED ACCOUNT (DPA):** Offered by CIT Bank to qualified U.S. residents with approved credit. Creditworthiness determined by lender. Taxes, fees, shipping, handling, and any other applicable charges are extra, and vary. Monthly payments based upon pre-rebate price. Minimum monthly payments of \$15 or 3% of account balance, whichever is greater.

***PRICING/AVAILABILITY:** Prices, specifications, availability and terms of offers may change without notice. Taxes, fees, shipping, handling and any applicable restocking charges are extra and vary. Offers may be combined with other select offers or discounts. Valid for U.S. Dell Home Systems Co. new purchases only. Dell cannot be responsible for pricing or other errors, and reserves the right to cancel orders arising from such errors. **4GB MEMORY:** The total amount of available memory will be less than 4GB. The amount less depends on the actual system configuration. To fully utilize 4GB or more of memory requires a 64-bit enabled processor and 64-bit operating system. **ESRB RATING SYMBOLS GUIDE:** www.esrb.org. Please be advised that the ESRB rating icons, "EC", "K-A", "E", "T", "M", "AO", and "RP" are copyrighted works and certification marks owned by the Entertainment Software Association and the Entertainment Software Rating Board, and may only be used with their permission and authority. Under no circumstances may the rating icons be self-applied or used in connection with any product that has not been rated by the ESRB. For information regarding whether a product has been rated by the ESRB, please call the ESRB at 800-771-3772 or visit www.esrb.org. For information regarding licensing issues, please call the ESA at 212-779-4372. **TRADEMARKS/COPYRIGHT NOTICES:** Intel, Intel Logo, Intel Inside, Intel Inside Logo, Celeron, Celeron Inside, Centrino, Centrino Logo, Intel Core, Core Inside, Intel SpeedStep, Intel Viiv, Itanium, Itanium Inside, Pentium, Pentium Inside, Xeon, Xeon Inside are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. ©2006 Digital Illustrations CE AB. All rights reserved. Battlefield 2142 is a trademark of Digital Illusions CE AB. Electronic Arts, EA and the EA logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. SoundBlaster and the X-Fi logo are registered trademarks of Creative Technology Ltd. in the United States and/or other countries. ©2006 Dell Inc. All rights reserved.

1470



Purely You

Dell recommends Windows®
XP Media Center Edition.



**Hard core.
Quad-core.**



Battlefield 2142™

\$49

SKU: A0097831



30" Dell™ UltraSharp™
Widescreen Flat Panel

\$1199

with system purchase

Dell™ WL6000 Surround
Speaker System with 5.8GHz
Wireless Rear Channels
and Subwoofer

\$140

Ready to unleash the quad-core power? Call 1-800-528-6156 or visit
dell.com/worldsfirst. (for hearing/speech impaired: 1-877-DELL-TTY toll-free)

XPS
e x p e r i e n c e

**THIS TIME, SPEED
WON'T BE ENOUGH...**



IN STORES HOLIDAY 2006

WWW.SEGA.COM/SONICNEXT



ACTUAL SCREENSHOT

SONIC

THE HEDGEHOG

TM

ACTUAL SCREENSHOT

PLAYSTATION 3



SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA, the SEGA logo and Sonic The Hedgehog are trademarks or registered trademarks of SEGA Corporation. © SEGA. All rights reserved. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

Ask the Pros

You ask, we answer. Here are some key questions on everybody's mind about the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3.



Mr. Marbles
Sony



Ahoy_and_Avast
Microsoft



Rice Burner
Nintendo



Vicious Sid
PC



Bro Buzz
Sports



The Watch Dog
Buyers Beware



Major Mike
Retro

Question of the Month

Xbox 360 Price Cut?

Q: Do you think the Xbox 360 will be cheaper by the end of this year [2006]?—*vialpondo*

A: This being December I'm pretty sure the answer is "No." Here's why. Microsoft's greatest incentive is competition, right? But the problem there is that there can only be about a half million PS3s in our homes by the end of the year. All things being equal, that's a big number—but there are about ten times as many 360s out there already. As for the Wii, it's really targeting a different market, and Microsoft knows this. The 360 and PS3 are more about cutting-edge technology and media center functions, whereas the Wii is a straightforward games platform that emphasizes unique controls over high-res graphics and multi-channel sound. In fact, only the Japanese version will be able to play DVDs, and that flavor will be released in limited quantity. However, expect the 360's price tag to drop by about \$50 once PS3 production punches out mass quantities sometime in the spring.—*TMac*



A: Microsoft doesn't currently have any plans to use the HD DVD drive for video games. The unit will just be for viewing movies, TV shows, and other media on that format. And since Blu-ray and HD DVD are incompatible, you wouldn't be able to use a BD-ROM in an HD DVD drive anyway (although there are some standalone players in development that will be able to play both formats, using multiple lasers). Also, since it sounds like you might be interested in HD DVD and Blu-ray to watch 1080p movies, it's important to bear in mind that the HD DVD player add-on connects to the 360, which does not have an HDMI port. Most TVs currently on the market do not support 1080p through component cables. So if you want to watch 1080p movies on a 1080p-compatible TV, the PS3 and its Blu-ray drive might be a better choice, since it supports HDMI. It all depends on your home setup.—*TMac*

Oh, Canada

Q: PS3 launch numbers dwindled down to just 100,000 in Japan and 400,000 in the US, but how many is Canada supposed to get? I know we only got about 32,000 360s at launch last year.—*russticles*

A: Well, I wouldn't expect much more than 50,000 for Canada, and that's being generous. The truth of the matter is that Sony really wants to combat the Xbox 360 here in the U.S. because, in reality, it doesn't really matter how many are available in Japan. The Japanese will suck 'em up no problem (though 100K at launch caused absolute chaos in Japan).

The 400K unit launch number is for all of North America, so Canada will be included in that number. But, you're not alone; all of us down south are a bit P.O.'d, too. Sony is dedicated to Blu-ray, and this is just one problem



of many that will probably occur adopting to a next-gen disc format. Obviously, Sony doesn't mean to neglect Canadians; but from a company standpoint it's more important to focus on the U.S. market. Things could be worse, though. The United Kingdom launch was delayed until March '07.—*Mr. Marbles*

HD DVD and Games

Q: Will Microsoft's Xbox 360 HD DVD drive play 360 games that come out in HD DVD format and is there a possibility that (like the PS2) there might be an upgraded version of

the 360 with an HD DVD player in it? I'm asking this question for two reasons:

1) Sony's Blu-ray can carry a lot of data so can be there games that are cross platform? 2) I'm buying a 360, and I didn't want to get screwed up in case another version comes out a couple of months later.—*phinx*

PS3 HDMI Explained

Q: If I hook up my PS3 with the HDMI port, will it still send an audio signal via the optical port or does the HDMI port take priority over it?—*TBONE82*

A: HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) is an audio and video format, supporting high-definition video (like 720p, 1080i, or 1080p), as well as 8-channel audio. By definition, an HDMI stream can handle 8 channels of 24-bit uncompressed audio at 192 kHz, easily enough to support Dolby DTS and Dolby Digital...basically any current audio standard.

If your TV accepts HDMI, then you can run the PS3's audio to your TV speakers right from the HDMI connection. But if you want a full, digital surround sound affair, you'll need an amplifier that can process the PS3's audio signal from the HDMI connection. Many new amps should accept HDMI, but don't be surprised if yours doesn't. HDMI is still relatively new.

So if Dolby Digital surround is the way you want to go, I suggest sticking with the standard optical audio cable. It's going to produce the same sound, and it's only one more small cable.—*Mr. Marbles*



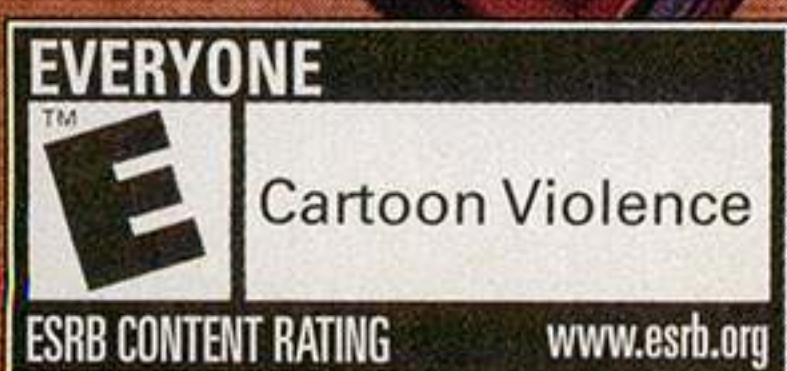
ANY MORE REALISTIC AND YOU'D BE GROUNDED FOR MAKING SUCH A MESS.



Elebits

Exclusively for
Wii™

When you hunt for Elebits you're bound to make a mess. The Wii Remote lets you throw stuff around like crazy while looking for them. So pick it up and go Elebits hunting. And don't worry. You won't get in trouble for trashing the place.



14 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PLAYSTATION 3

You've seen the photos and the videos of the PlayStation 3. But finding an actual unit in the wild is like capturing a Yeti and bumping into Elvis on the same day, thanks to some production line complications. Thankfully, *GamePro* has poked and groped the PlayStation 3 for you. Read on for a list of our insightful observations. Just remember: Yetis are enraged at the sight of flannel.

1. The PS3 isn't just a cheap Blu-ray player.

Nothing about it looks or feels cheap. The build quality of the console itself is sturdy and substantial. The familiar red and blue/green LED lights, which indicate the system status, make a return from the PS2, but look more slick and futuristic.

2. The Sixaxis controller doesn't feel too light.



In fact, it feels just about right; light enough to move easily for motion-sensing controls, but still sturdy enough to withstand some serious grip pressure (we tried). So much for those other reports that called it "cheap, plasticky" and "uncomfortable," huh?

3. The Sixaxis motion sensing takes some getting used to.

Don't get us wrong: it's a blast guiding Lair's dragon around using tilting motions on the controller. But the controller responds better to subtle, gentle motions.

4. The PSP will connect via Wi-Fi to the PS3's hard drive.

You can access the PS3's system menus via the PSP, wirelessly, using a feature called "Remote Play." Sony Big Kahuna Phil Harrison also says that the PSP will eventually be able to access the PS3's hard drive from any Wi-Fi spot in the world. We'll believe it when we see it.

5. The Sixaxis gets roughly 30 hours of battery life...

...though there doesn't seem to be a way to swap out the battery once it's been exhausted. Oh, well—we officially entered the age of "disposable technology" with the iPod anyway.

6. There's no "lag" on the wireless Six-axis controller, either.

Bluetooth technology has come a long way, apparently; just check out Apple's jerky, erratic Bluetooth mouse. But there's no need to worry about the Sixaxis; in our experience, it stayed smooth, lag-free, and responsive in wireless mode.

7. Your PS2 save game files can be transferred to the PS3.

With a \$14.99 adaptor, you'll be able to move over all your saves, something you can't (easily) do with the Xbox 360.

8. The Blu-ray disc drive is slot loading.



When nobody was around, we tried using the PS3 eject button to eject a demo disc (we're naughty like that). It shot right out, MacBook-style, and the game kept right on playing.

9. There's still a hard "power-off" switch on the back of the system, just like the PS2.

We used it at one point to power down the system manually when the unit wouldn't shut down during a loading sequence. It works just like you'd expect.

10. The PS3 is very, very shiny.

So shiny that it's hard to take photos of it without capturing a mirror like reflection of a nearby light source. There's also a hint of translucency if the console is placed in direct sunlight. Either way, this thing looks super sexy.

11. The PS3 is super quiet.

At a rating of just 22 decibels, it's only slightly louder than a human whisper. All we know is that we could barely hear it running. That's definitely worth something.

12. You can plug in a USB keyboard and surf the 'Net.

The PS3 will come packaged with a free Internet browser. The "front end" has been highly customized—you can place multiple Web pages within view and stream media from several Internet locations simultaneously.

13. The power supply is integrated directly into the system.



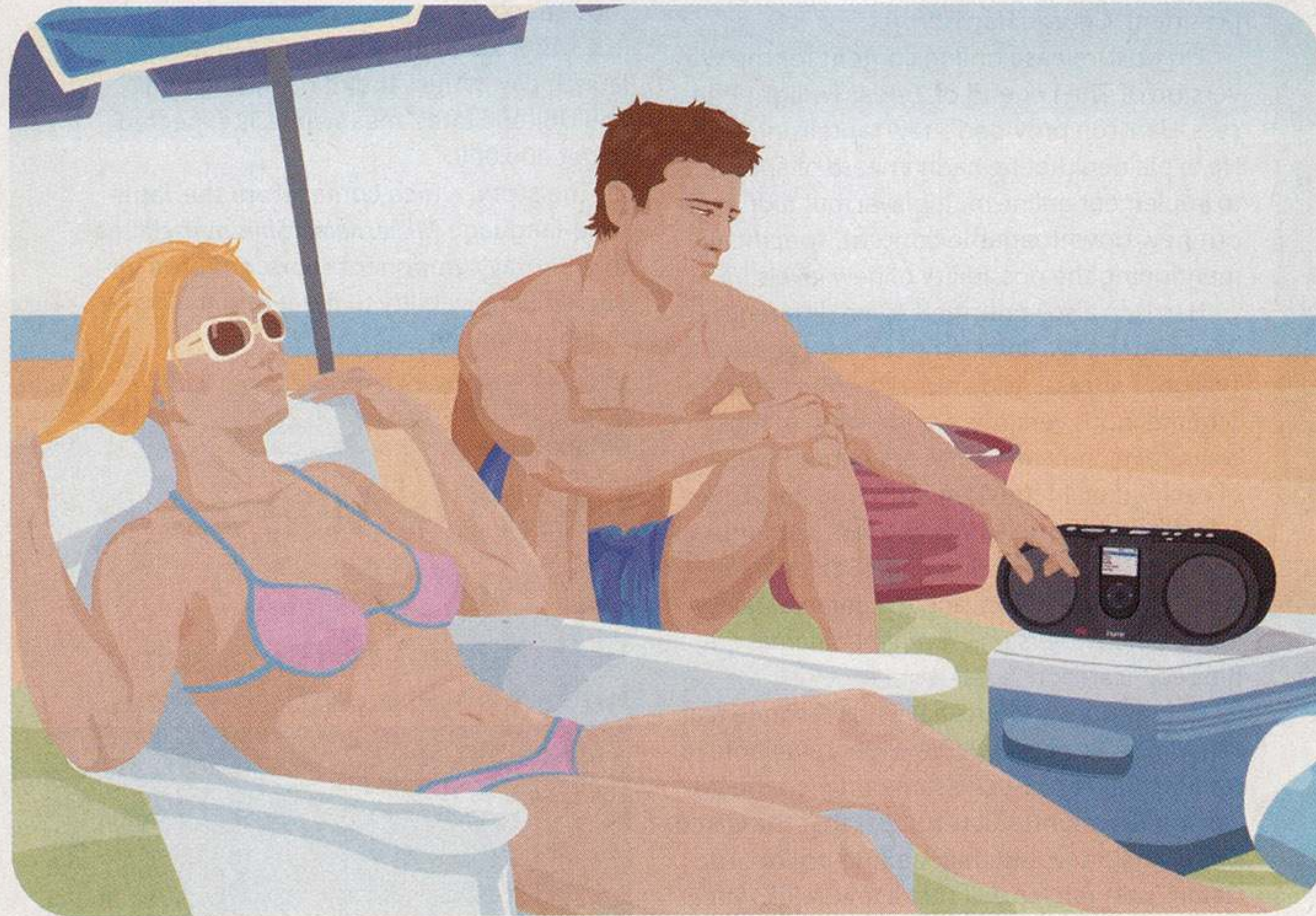
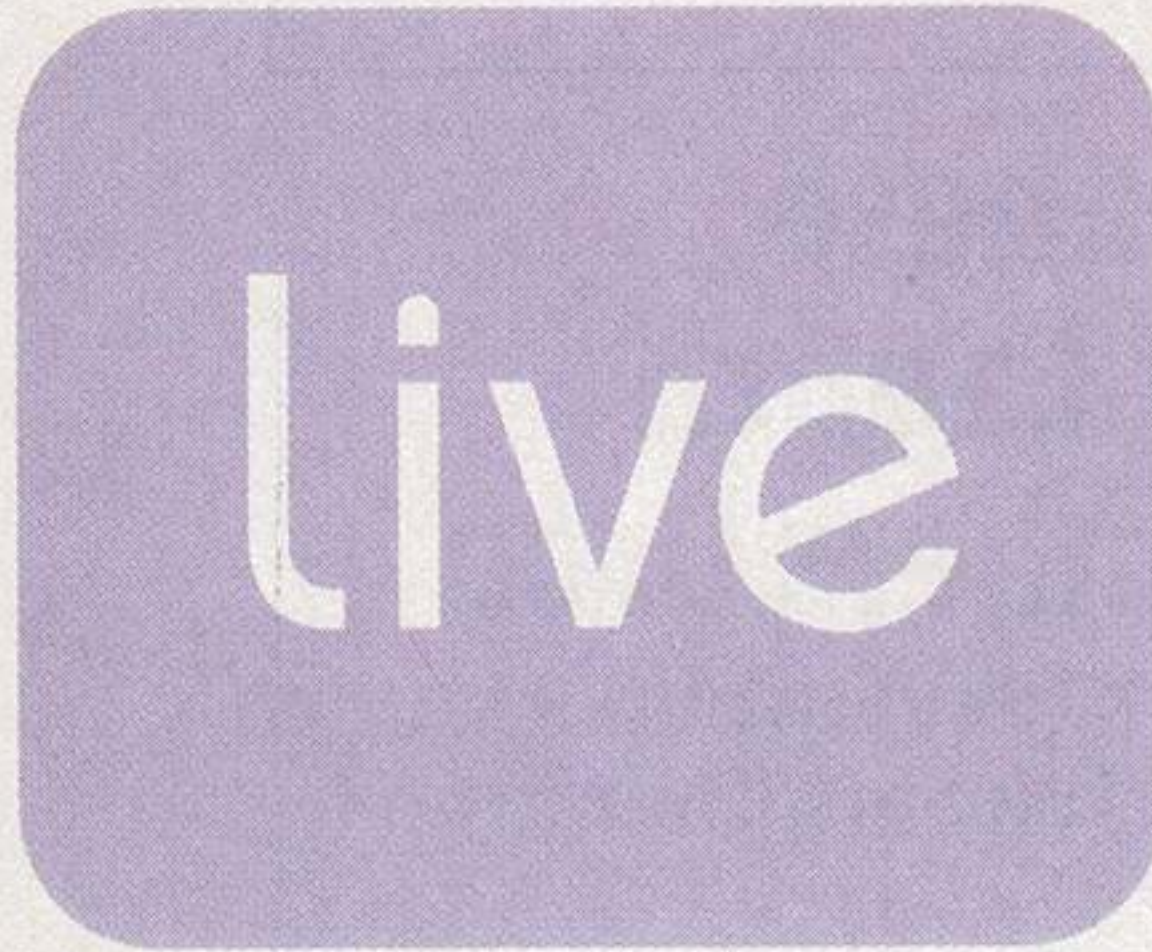
Phil Harrison told us that Sony made this choice for performance reasons, to keep the power supply as close to the CPU chipset as possible. No more "power bricks!"

14. Re-download all your content to someone else's PS3.

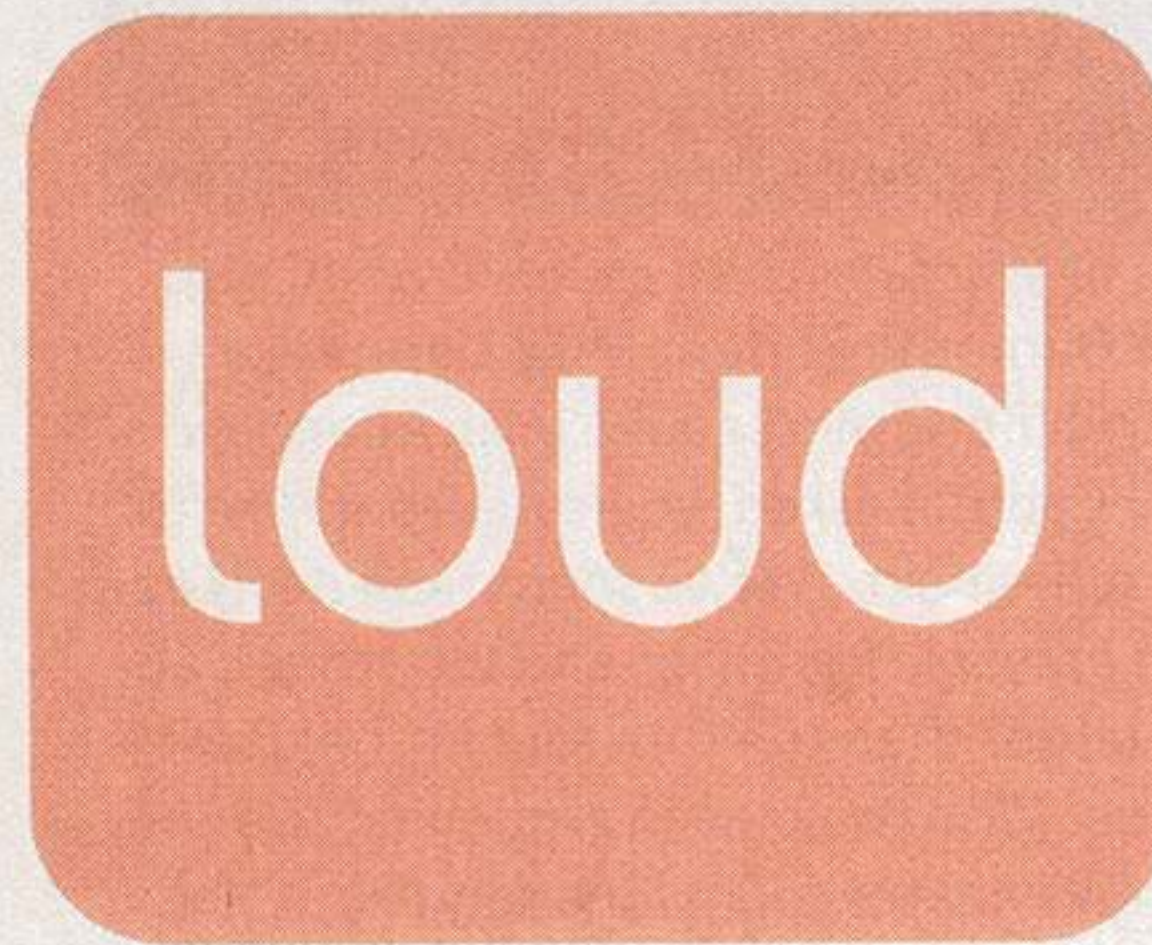
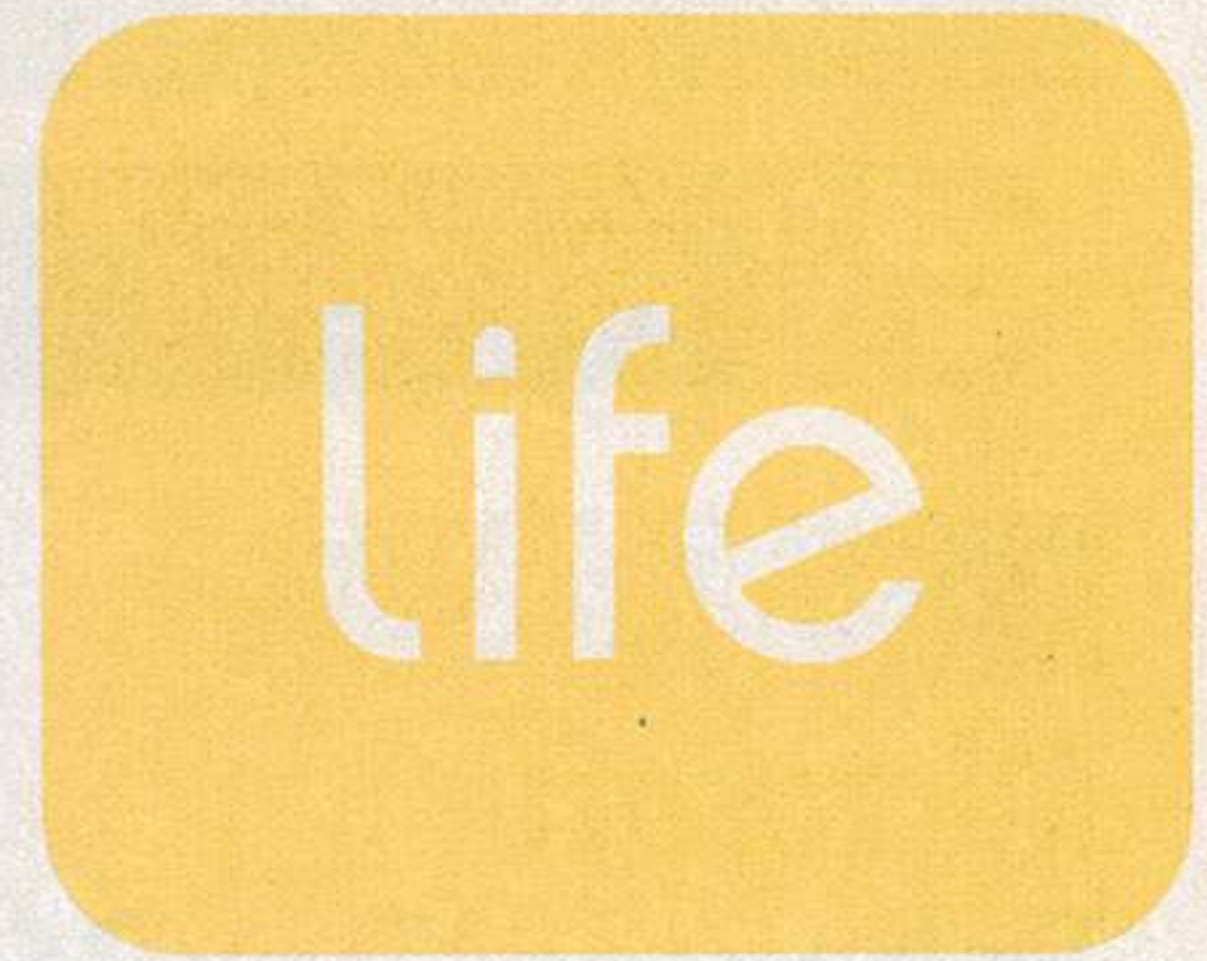
Just log in with your account info on someone else's unit, and you can pull down all your purchase online content. Each item has a limit of five transfers before Sony smacks your grubby fingers with a ruler.



IH5



IH31



small in size and big in sound, all iHome systems reinvent your iPod experience. compact yet sleek, powerful yet astonishingly clear, each iHome system features the crystalline sound of Reson8™ Speakers, a charging dock fit for all docking iPods (including nano), and an individualized design to suit your life-sound-style, at home or on the go.

iH5. clock radio companion with Wake to iPod/Sleep to iPod functionality. moonlights as clever home stereo. **IH31.** grab-n-go boombox. perfect for beach blasting or picnics in the park. sound good? visit ihomeaudio.com for more info.

iHome™
www.ihomeaudio.com

Available at:

Apple Store



TARGET



GamePro Holds PSP Tournament

Top Medal of Honor players compete for fabulous prizes



On Saturday November 11th (Veteran's Day) GamePro hosted a live gaming tournament on the USS *Hornet* aircraft carrier anchored in SF Bay (at Alameda Naval Airstation).

Tournament players competed in Medal of Honor: Heroes on the PSP. Everyone who played won a copy of the game and an official tournament T-shirt.

The overall victor won a Logitech Play Gear accessory package, a SanDisk Gaming Memory Stick PRO Duo 2 GB, Shure E2c-n Sound Isolating Earphones, and a free one-year subscription to GamePro.

G **ONLINE** GAMEPRO.COM/MEDALOFHONOR
TO SEE THE WINNERS OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR: HEROES (PSP) CONTEST

Microsoft Enhances Xbox 360, Adds 1080p

Xbox 360 owners get a taste of "true HD"

The update, released on October 31, includes support for 1080p HD resolutions, HD DVD support, and the ability to play WMV files from a connected PC, disc, or USB storage device (yes, iPods too).

The update also addresses as many as 84 other issues, compared to the 125 fixes in the robust spring update. These updates include automatic Xbox Live demo downloads, Zune media streaming, wireless headset support, XNA Game Studio Express, and multiple improvements to video playback and the interface.

More Twilight Princess Secrets Revealed

Downloadable levels may be in the works

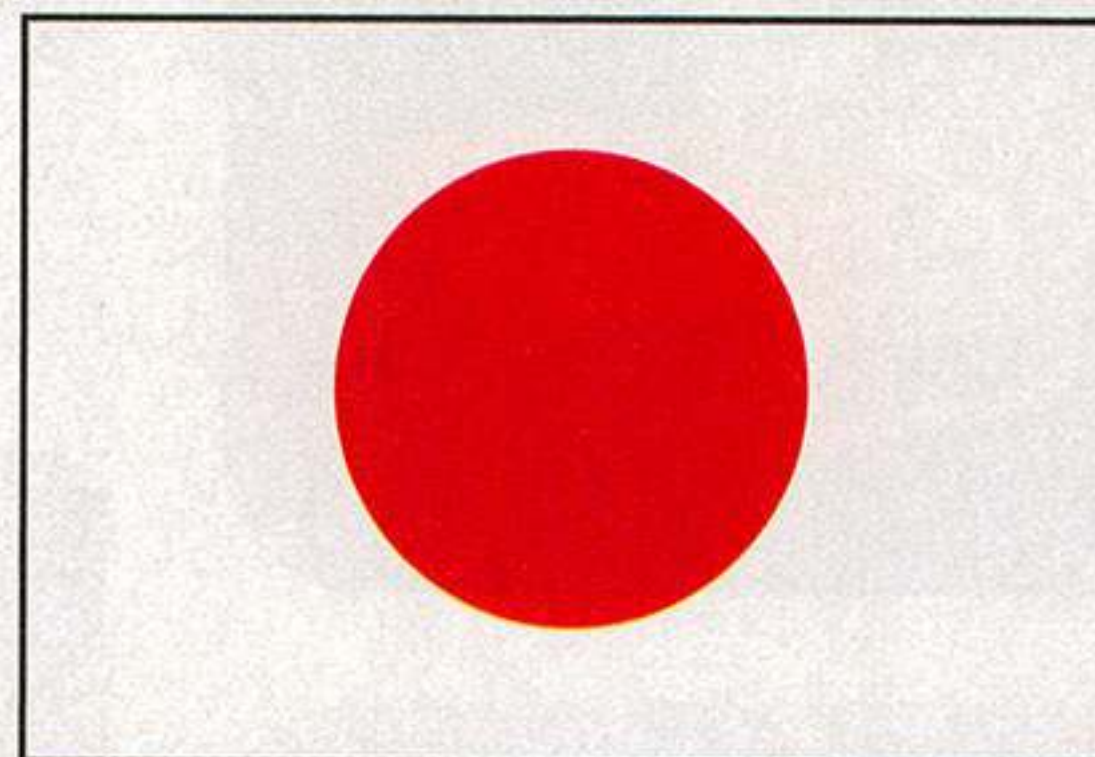


Days before the Wii's launch, GamePro contributor Bones managed to get a few minutes with Nintendo of America's senior vice president, George Harrison.

On post-release online content for the Wii version of *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*, Harrison provided a few tantalizing clues. He explained that he hadn't heard of any plans to implement online multiplayer, but didn't rule out new downloadable content, specifically mentioning the possibility of new levels.

Harrison also confirmed some differences between the Wii and GameCube versions of *Twilight Princess*. Aside from the Wii's control scheme, both versions are identical in most ways, save one: the games are mirror images of each other. In the GameCube version, Link is left-handed; in the Wii version, he's right-handed. "All the fighting and puzzles are reversed because of this, and the game basically mirrors the Wii version—even the cinemas are flipped," Harrison said.

GameCube holdouts have no reason to fear, as *Twilight Princess* will be widely available in retail stores for \$50, the same price as the Wii version. This contradicts rumors that the GameCube version would only be sold online. The GameCube version will ship a few weeks later, however, on December 11.



Japanese PS3 Launch Numbers Drop

Sony's PlayStation 3 launch plans take another hit

The retail allotment for the Japanese market is expected to drop from 100,000 to just 80,000 PS3 units on launch day in the Land of the Rising Sun. The United States, meanwhile, is expected to get 400,000.

The story, which comes from the Japanese-language *Nikkei Keizai Shimbun*, claims that Blu-ray component shortages have impacted Sony's ability to meet targets for the Japanese launch.

Gears of War 2 on the Way?

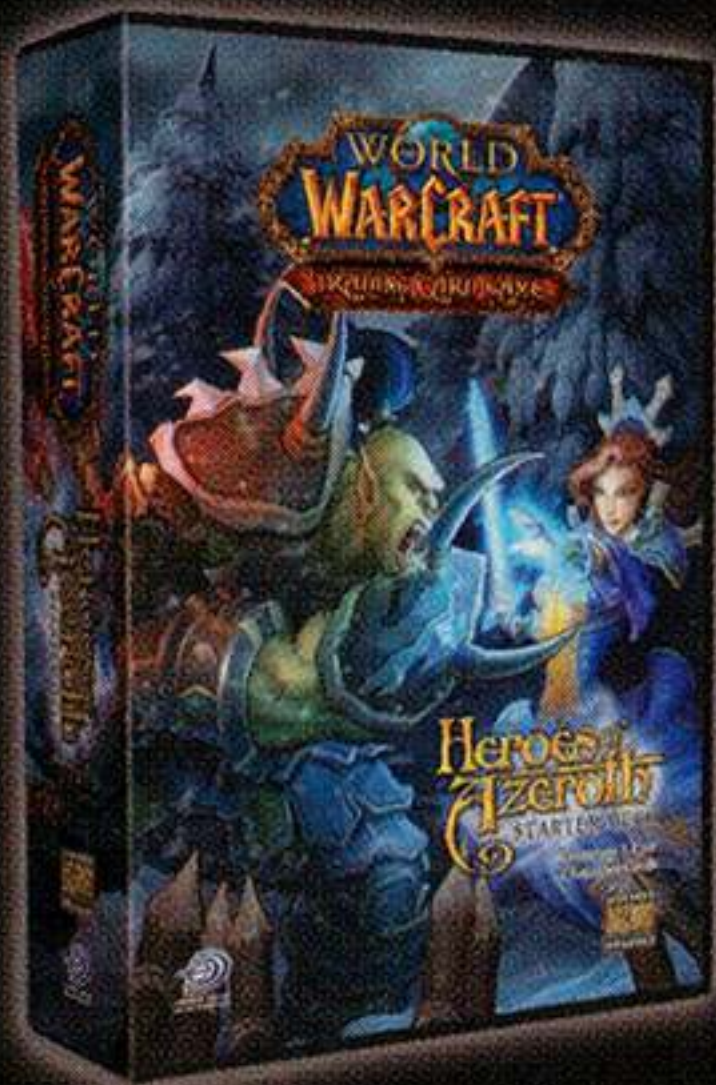
Epic Games starts dropping hints about inevitable sequel



Gears of War launched in November, but Epic Games President Mike Capps is already hinting at a sequel. In an interview with CVG, Capps is asked where he would like to take the series next. "We've spent time developing a rich universe for Gears, and the story is absolutely larger than the one told in the game," said Capps. "One could even argue that the ending cinematic leaves room for a sequel."

In a separate interview with Eurogamer, Epic's Lead Designer Cliff Bleszinski (aka "Cliffy B") has dropped a couple hints as well. "I love the universe and everything involved in it and if the game does amazingly well I wouldn't rule anything out!"

Heroes of Azeroth Unite!



- ◆ Your favorite classes, races, abilities, equipment, and quests!
- ◆ Uniquely coded rare Loot™ cards offering cosmetic online upgrades!
- ◆ Amazing original art from today's top creators!

For more information visit

WWW.UDE.COM/WOW



© 2006 UDC. 985 Trade Drive, North Las Vegas, NV 89030. All right reserved. Printed in the USA. 2006 Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Heroes of Azeroth is a trademark, and Warcraft, World of Warcraft and Blizzard Entertainment are trademarks or registered trademarks of Blizzard Entertainment, Inc., in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other trademarks referenced herein are the properties of their respective owners.



Gears of War Cost Microsoft \$1 Billion

Gears of War team convinced Microsoft to supercharge Xbox 360

Mark Rein, Vice President of Epic Games, has said that Xbox 360 shooter Gears of War convinced Microsoft to upgrade the Xbox 360 from 256 MB of RAM to 512 MB of RAM, a move that cost Microsoft \$1 billion in extra hardware costs.

In an interview conducted by Microsoft blogger Major Nelson, Rein said that the company sent Microsoft an image showing what the game would look like at 256 MB of RAM. Later, Rein recalled, Microsoft's CFO called him and said "I just want you to know you cost me a billion dollars." Rein replied, "No, we did a favor for a billion gamers."

Rein explained the importance of more RAM, adding that "you couldn't do this level of graphics if you had to both write your program and do your graphics in 256 megs. Nothing would really look that HD."

Halo Film Loses Studio Backing; Fate in Limbo

Barely into pre-production, movie loses financial backing

According to *Variety*, pricing disagreements pushed both Universal Studios and 20th Century Fox out of their co-financing agreement with Microsoft. The Halo film's budget was rumored to top off at nearly \$200 million, though the filmmakers insist that the highest quoted budget was under \$130 million.

The Lord of the Rings filmmaker Peter Jackson, attached as executive producer, later issued a statement confirming that the Halo film is essentially on hold. "We deeply regret that both Universal and Fox did not choose to move forward with financing the Halo film under the original terms of the agreement," the release reads. "At this time, [we] have mutually agreed to postpone making a feature film based on the Halo video game universe."

But Jackson's announcement ends on a positive note: "While it will undoubtedly take a little longer for Halo to reach the big screen, we are confident that the final feature film will be well worth the wait."

Phil Harrison Talks PlayStation 3



GamePro editor Vicious Sid spoke with Sony's PlayStation 3 frontman, Phil Harrison. Here are the highlights.

GamePro: There's an assumption among some gamers that the Xbox 360 has more graphical power. It's got 512 MB of dedicated video RAM...and

that somehow the PlayStation 3 is a notch below that.

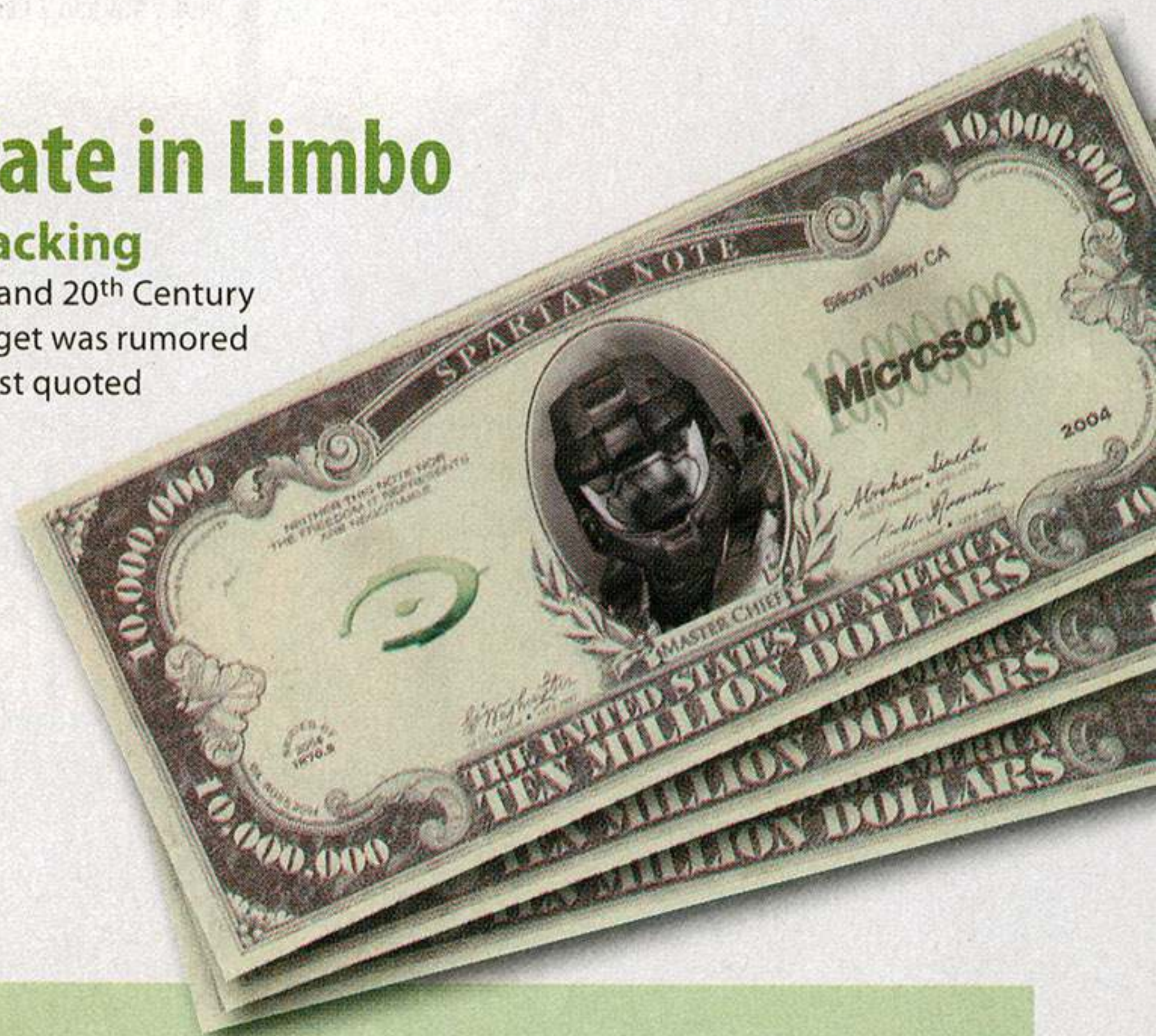
Phil Harrison: That's not true, by the way. The way that Xbox 360 works is that they have 512 MB of memory, the same as PlayStation 3. But they have general purpose memory, rather than system-specified memory. But they only have a 10 MB internal frame buffer and that's why they can't do 1080p full frame. Because the image has to be in the frame buffer and a full 1080p image is 8 megabytes, so you can't double buffer.

Microsoft Already Working on Xbox 3

Company designing next-next-gen CPU internally

Microsoft EMEA (European, Middle East, and Africa) vice president Chris Lewis told online site Kikizo about Microsoft's plans for a next-gen console. "The consumer won't let you [rest on your laurels], the developers certainly won't let us. So that's happening right now," he said. "You'll see more [on a new Xbox] over time...certainly we're not talking about the next version yet," Lewis told Kikizo, "so give us a chance to catch a breath, will you?"

In a related article from *The New York Times*, Microsoft engineer Charles P. Thacker said Microsoft is already exploring CPU designs for the next Xbox. Thacker also explained the possibilities voice recognition will play in the future. "Voice is big," said Thacker, "you can throw as much technology at it as you want to."



GP: Is Sony still holding firm to launch shipment projections?

PH: Yeah. I think that every successful game system has had some challenges in matching demand with supply day one. Sadly, we're going to be no different. But, this seems a very difficult situation now, but in five years we'll be looking back and this will be a tiny little blip on the sales. While it's disappointing for users—certainly disappointing for users in Europe, where we had to delay the launch—but we'll catch up.

GP: Why is the PS3's built-in power supply important?

PH: It's because we have great hardware designers who can handle the functionality. Because of the CPU power and performance of PlayStation 3, we need to have to have the power supply as close to the chip-set as it possibly can be. It's exactly what we did with PlayStation 1 and PlayStation 2, and then you saw later in the platform's life cycle, when the different silicon process are used, you can go to a small external power supply, which allows you to change the form factor...

GP: Is a slim-line PS3 in the cards?

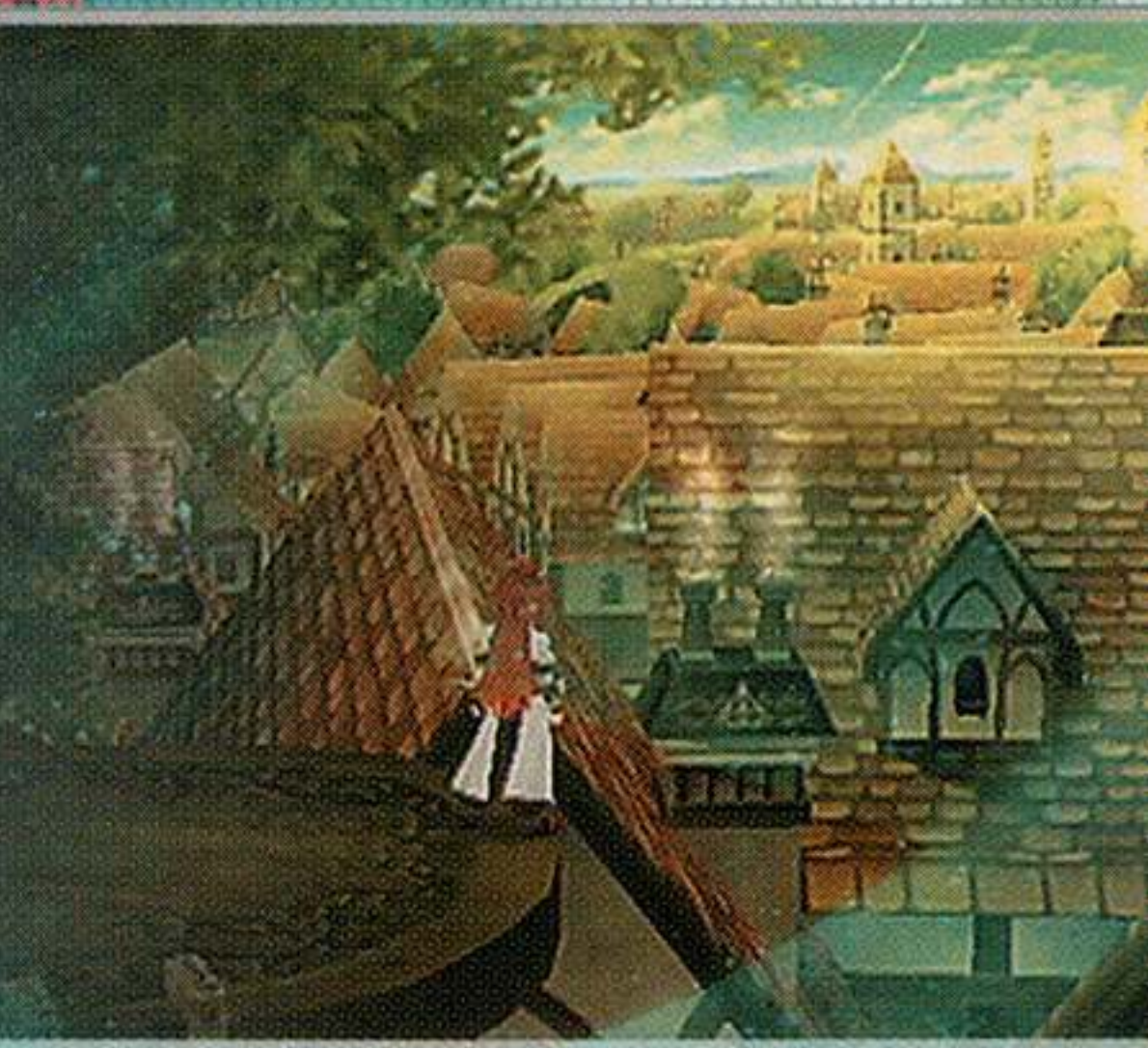
PH: [completely deadpan] I wouldn't even speculate on that.

TALES OF THE ABYSS



**A TALE OF HONOR AND SACRIFICE, DUTY AND CHOICE,
WHAT IS WRITTEN AND WHAT WILL BE.**

Luke fon Fabre, sole heir to a family of aristocrats was kidnapped seven years ago, and the shock left him with no memories of his life before. He has since led a quiet, boring life within the family's residence, learning little of the world beyond the palace walls. Suddenly thrust into the outside world, Luke is caught in the workings of the Order of Lorelei, keepers of the prophecy known as the Score. No longer sheltered by the palace, Luke must get along in the confusing and often hostile world. He knows nothing about those who might be his friends, or those who already are his enemies. He has not yet noticed the evil that is drawing close to him.



Alcohol Reference
Fantasy Violence
Language
Simulated Gambling
Suggestive Themes



PlayStation®2



©KOSUKE FUJISHIMA

Tales of the Abyss™ & ©2005 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.

The 6 Most Popular Stories of 2006

We scoured the GamePro.com online records to find the most-read news stories of the year. Here are the most controversial stories of 2006, in descending order of popularity!

#1: Shock: Sources Say E3 "Finished"

Original publish date: July 31, 2006

A surprise weekend update from Next-Gen.biz described how "all major exhibitors [and game publishers] have effectively pulled their support from the show." The article claims that game publishers have "jointly" decided that the "costs of the event do not justify the returns," and would prefer to spend their E3 booth budgets on "company-focused events" than wider industry spectacles like E3.

#2: Only 400,000 PS3s for US Launch

Original publish date: September 6th, 2006

Only months before the PlayStation 3 launch, Sony Computer Entertainment drastically decreased the number of PS3 consoles it expects to ship in 2006. The cause? Blue laser diodes for the console's high-tech Blu-ray drive. The US will see just 400,000 units this November; Japan, only 100,000 (later slashed further to 80,000).

It's not the first time Sony miscalculated for a console's launch. The company planned to have 1 million consoles in U.S. stores in November 2000 when it launched the PlayStation 2 but component shortages hit those plans and Sony ended up shipping 500,000 units.

#3: PS3 Controller Gains Motion Sensing

Original publish date: May 10, 2006

At E3 2006, Sony announced that the PS3's Sixaxis controller would contain many of the same functions as Nintendo's motion-sensing Wii controller.



A real-time demonstration of the PS3's controller showed that players use the entire controller as a controller by tilting, flipping, and sliding the controller. This is in addition to the controller's standard button functions.

#4: Wii Preorders Sell Out in Minutes!

Original publish date: September 6, 2006

In late October, EB Games and GameStop retailers nationwide opened up Wii preorders to many Nintendo fans anxious to get their \$50 payment down to secure a console when it launches on

November 19. The exact number of Wii preorders varied per store with highly trafficked locations having as many as 30 consoles to reserve.



GamePro editors spread out to several San Francisco Bay Area EB Games locations to get their deposits down, with varying success. Out of four editors, only Vicious Sid was able to (barely) obtain a pre-order.

#5: Full-Length HD Video Content on Xbox 360

Original publish date: November 7, 2006

Microsoft teams up with CBS, MTV Networks, Paramount Pictures, Turner Broadcasting, UFC, and Warner Bros. Home Entertainment to bring full-length high-definition video content to the Xbox 360.

In an effort to rival the soon-to-be PlayStation 3 Online, Microsoft announced it will offer downloads of over 1000 hours of television shows and movies. On November 22, the one-year anniversary of the Xbox 360, a downloadable update marked the Xbox 360 as the first gaming console in history to provide high-definition TV shows and movies.

#6: Xbox 360 Does 1080p: A Microsoft "Surprise" for Sony

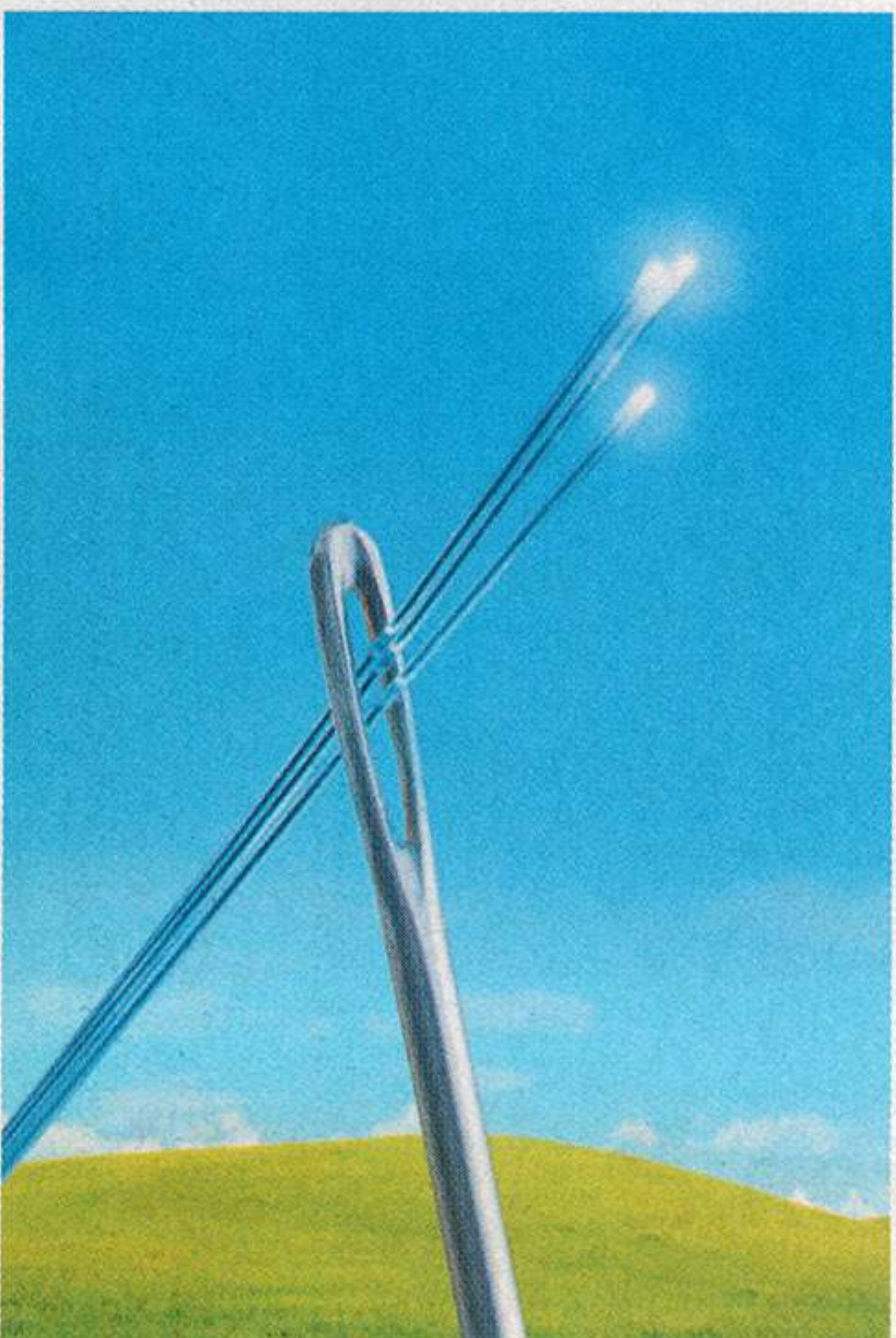
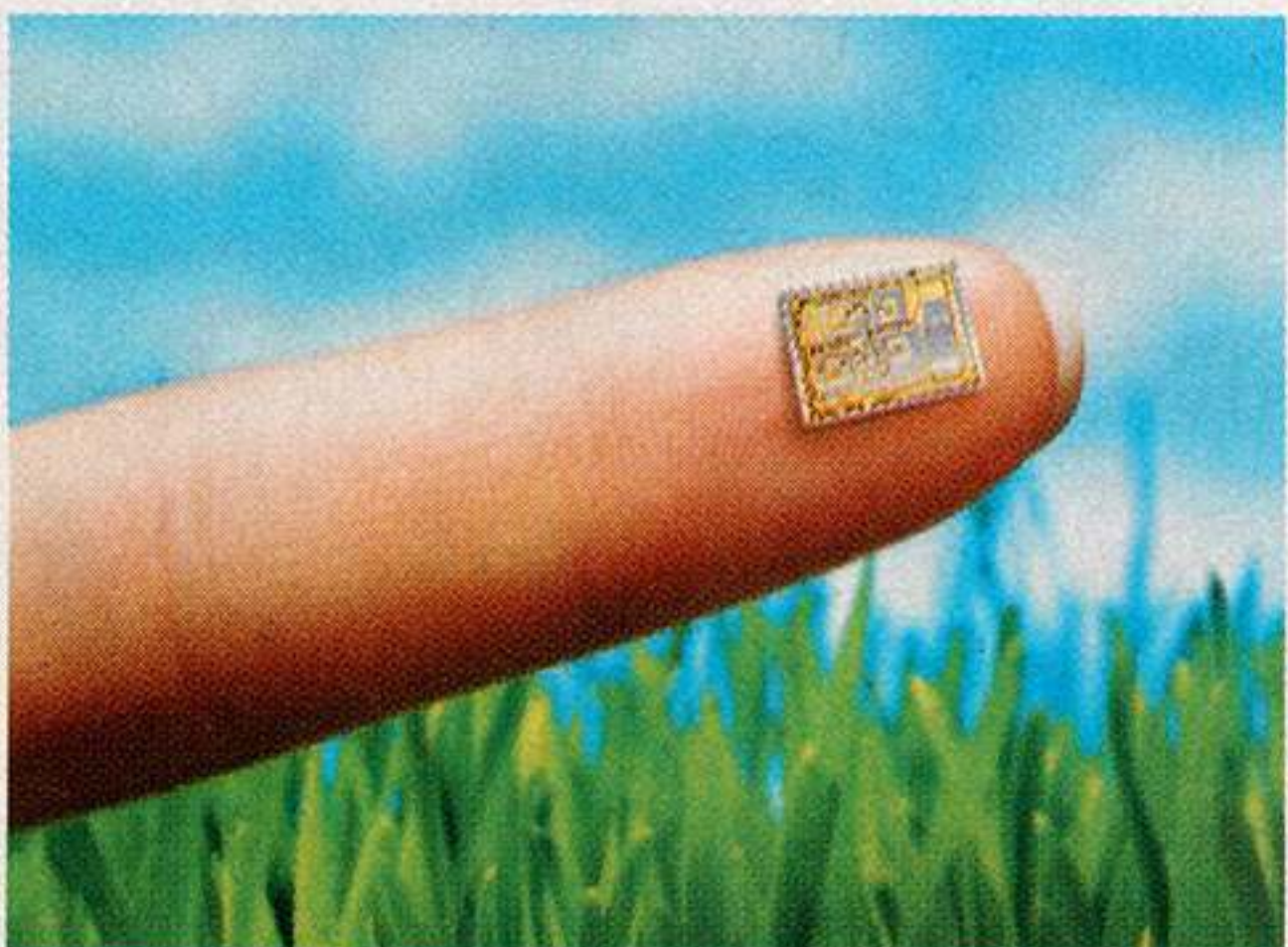
Original publish date: September 9, 2006

The press release from Tokyo Game Show revealed that an upcoming Xbox Live update would allow the Xbox 360 "to output game and movie content in 1080p resolution."

In an interview with gaming blog Kotaku, Shane Kim, VP of Microsoft Game Studios, who clarified that there were no current plans to add HDMI support. But, he added, "we do have the capability to deliver the software and, if needed, the hardware."

"720p is the sweet-spot for high definition," Kim added, explaining Microsoft Games Studios will continue to work at that medium.

Big Technology



★★★★★
"5-STAR SIDE-IMPACT
CRASH-TEST SAFETY RATING"



Big Technology_2.0



Bluetooth® hands-free calling and Intelligent Key technology.** Big breakthroughs in the fight against autoclaustrophobia. Available now in the all-new Nissan Versa. The next generation sub-compact. Learn more at NissanUSA.com.

Versa 36 mpg*
(next generation sub-compact)

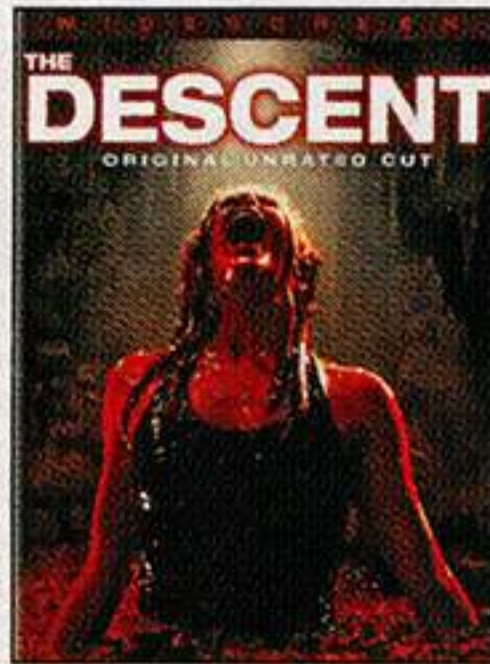


SHIFT_2.0

*EPA-estimated 36-mpg highway mileage for Versa with CVT. Actual mileage may vary. **Optional equipment. Bluetooth® requires compatible cellular phone. Government star ratings are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) New Car Assessment Program (safercar.gov). A five-star rating is the highest government safety rating for front- and rear-passenger seating positions in side-impact crash tests. Model tested was 2007 Nissan Versa 5-DR with SAB. Nissan, the Nissan Brand Symbol, "SHIFT_" tagline and Nissan model names are Nissan trademarks. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2006 Nissan North America, Inc.



DVD Movie Madness

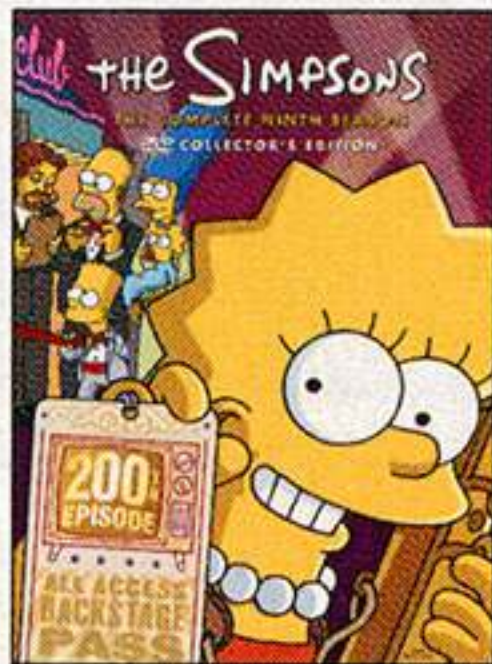


The Descent: Original Unrated Cut

■ 2005 ■ Lions Gate Home Entertainment
■ MPAA rating: Not rated ■ 99 minutes
■ Available December

Hailed as one of the scariest movies in recent years, *The Descent* tells the story of six women who become

trapped in an underground cave...and discover they aren't alone. *The Original Unrated Cut* features an alternate ending to the film that wasn't seen in theatres in the U.S., among other bonus features. The movie will also be available in a Blu-ray version that claims to be the first 50 GB product to be released in that format.



The Simpsons: The Complete Ninth Season

■ 1998-9 ■ Fox Home Entertainment
■ MPAA rating: Not rated ■ 550 minutes
■ Available December

You know you want it.

The Simpsons: The Complete Ninth Season will be a compilation of 26 episodes peppered with commentaries, deleted scenes, galleries, and more. It will also be issued in a plastic package that resembles Lisa's head. Some of the timeless episodes will include "The City of New York vs. Homer Simpson," "Treehouse of Horror VIII," and "The Last Temptation of Krusty."



24: Season 5

■ 2006 ■ Fox Home Entertainment
■ MPAA rating: Not rated ■ 1012 minutes
■ Available December

A big winner at the Emmy Awards, 24's real-time narratives are ideal for the DVD format, as they omit annoying commercial interruptions. The fifth season finds Jack back in action, with people who know of his faked death are being bumped off, one by one. Plus, a big conspiracy is afoot that leads to the highest branches of government, and the cliffhanger finale is a real shocker. This collection includes deleted scenes, commentaries, and other bonus material.

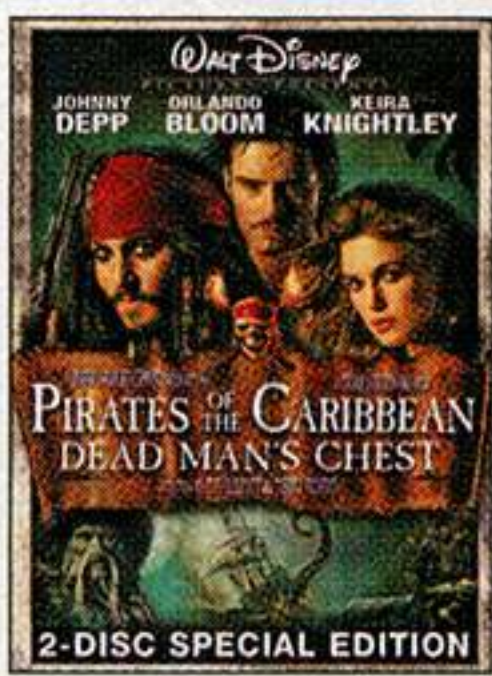


Superman Returns

■ 2006 ■ Warner Home Video
■ MPAA rating: PG-13 ■ 154 minutes
■ Available now

Just as Warner Bros. did with *Batman Begins*, the studio was able to bring a DC comic-book franchise back

to life after several awful sequels: *Superman*. Directed by Bryan Singer (*X-Men*, *The Usual Suspects*), *Superman Returns* finds the Man of Steel (Brandon Routh) returning to Earth after a five-year hiatus, only to find Lois Lane (Kate Bosworth) with a son and Lex Luther (Kevin Spacey) on the verge of executing yet another criminal plot.



Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

■ 2006 ■ Buena Vista Home Entertainment
■ MPAA rating: PG-13 ■ 150 minutes
■ Available December

Who would've thought that a movie based on an amusement park ride would be one

of the top-grossing movies of 2003, but that's what happened when *The Curse of the Black Pearl* hit theatres. *Dead Man's Chest* follows the next adventures of pirate Captain Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp), who finds himself in a bind after making a deadly deal with Davy Jones. Also available in a single-disc version.



James Bond Ultimate Edition

■ 1962-97 ■ MGM Home Video
■ MPAA rating: PG/PG-13 ■ 644/601 minutes
■ Available December

Last month, the James Bond Ultimate Edition Volume 1 and 2 were released; this month, the second (and final) Editions, 3 and 4, hit. Each set has five films (such as *Dr. No* and *For Your Eyes Only*) and each spans two discs. In addition to frame-by-frame restored print elements, these films come with a plethora of extras, including deleted scenes, commentaries, trailers, and, for the first time, DTS 5.1 surround.

Retro Corner

10 Years ago
(January 1997)...

...in GamePro

- GamePro January 1997 was our 100th issue, and what better character to kick-off the festivities than Fwank from **Re-Loaded** (Interplay/PlayStation). We had an exclusive review of the game that consumed two of the magazine's 194 pages.
- **WarZard** (Capcom) and **Scared Stiff** (Midway) were Hot at the Arcades.
- No game received perfect scores; **2Xtreme** (Sony/PlayStation), **Blast Chamber** (Activision/PlayStation), **Destruction Derby 2** (Psygnosis/PlayStation), **Donkey Kong Land 2: Diddy's Kong Quest** (Game Boy/Nintendo), **FIFA Soccer '97** (EA Sports/PlayStation), **MLB Pennant Race** (Sony/PlayStation), **NHL '97** (EA Sports/PlayStation), **Power Move Pro Wrestling** (Activision/PlayStation), **Sega Worldwide Soccer '97** (Sega Sports/Saturn), **Soviet Strike** (Electronic Arts/PlayStation), **Suikoden** (Konami/PlayStation), and **Twisted Metal 2** (Sony/PlayStation) all got high Fun Factor ratings. **Battle Zone/Super Breakout** (THQ/Game Boy), **BrainDead 13** (ReadySoft/Saturn), and **Pinocchio** (Disney Interactive/Genesis) were big losers with poor Fun Factor ratings, but **Battle Arena Toshinden URA** (Saturn/Sega) was the complete loser with a 0.5 Fun Factor rating (had the ratings system allowed it, the reviewer would have given the game a 0.0 Fun Factor).



...in Gaming

- Nintendo claimed that they were the holiday video-game sales winner. The company claimed that between the September 29, 1996 launch and the end of that year, the Nintendo 64 was the fastest-selling video game system in history, selling more than 1.6 million units in North America in the three-month period. Those sales represented more than \$5 million a day in hardware and software sales, a three-month total of about \$500 billion.
- Squaresoft announced that their eagerly awaited **Final Fantasy VII** (PlayStation) wouldn't reach U.S. shores until September 6, 1997.
- GTE Interactive announced that they would get out of the software business. The company made such games as **TimeLapse** (PC) and **FX Fighter** (PC).

...in Sales

Here are the top-five selling games of January 1997:

1. **Super Mario 64** (Nintendo/Nintendo 64)
2. **Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire** (Nintendo/Nintendo 64)
3. **NBA Hang Time** (Midway/Nintendo 64)
4. **Cruis'n U.S.A.** (Nintendo/Nintendo 64)
5. **Tomb Raider** (Eidos Interactive/PlayStation)

Source: The NPD Group/Point-of-Sale



Super Mario 64

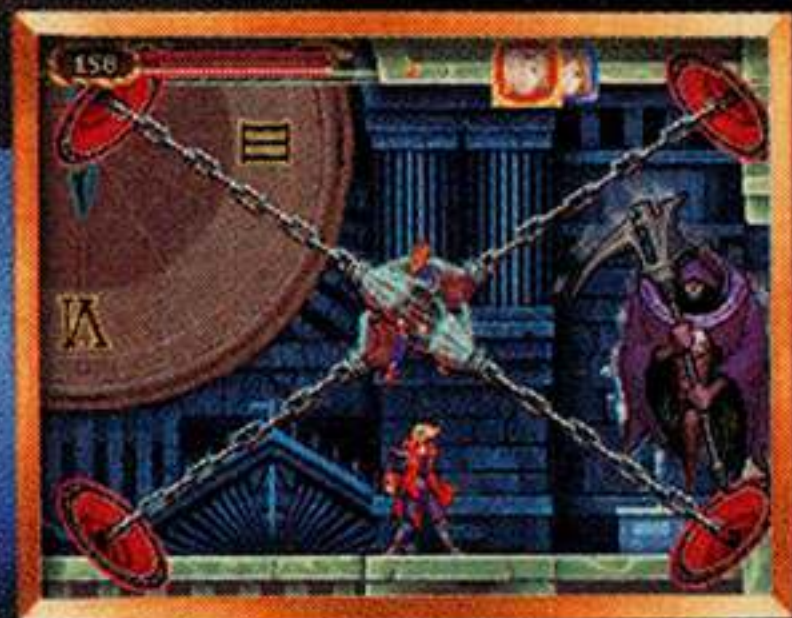
There are two sides to every ghost story.
It takes two to take back the castle.



Castlevania

Portrait of Ruin™

Leather meets magic in the follow-up to the best-selling Castlevania DS adventure, Dawn of Sorrow. Take control of Jonathan, a young vampire hunter and Charlotte, a powerful spellcaster and journey through magical portals created within Dracula's castle. Defeat twin vampire sisters, an ancient vampire lord and uncover the mysteries of a noble spirit trapped within the accursed walls.



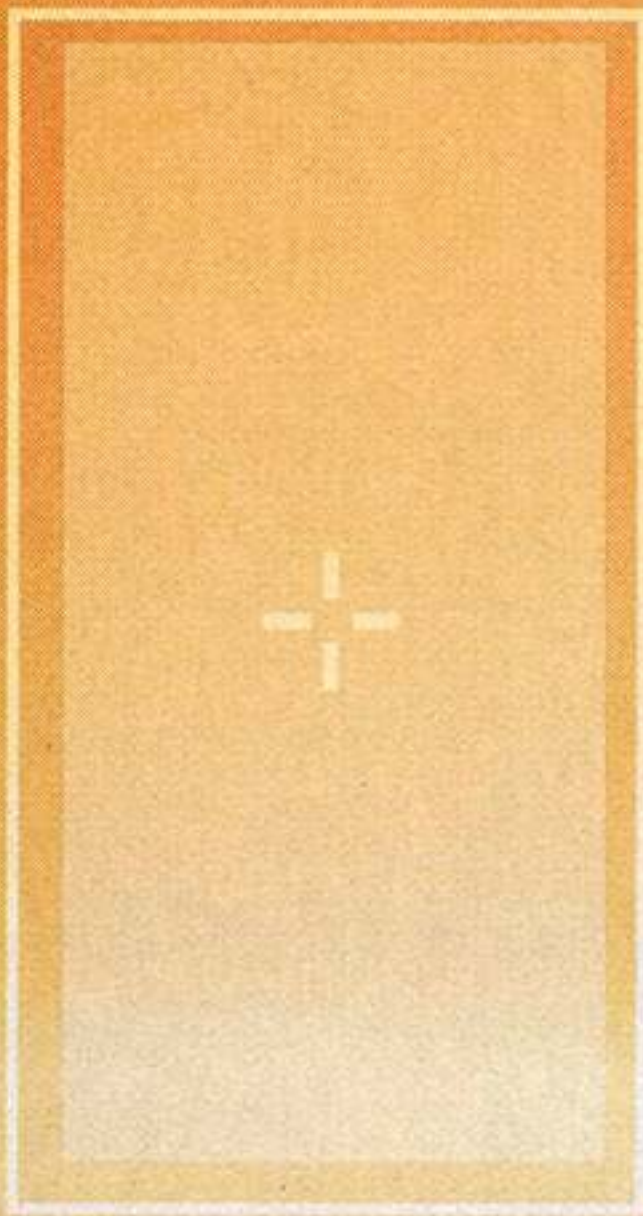
© 1986 2006 Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. "CASTLEVANIA" is a registered trademark of Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. "CASTLEVANIA: Portrait of Ruin" is a trademark of Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. "KONAMI" is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. Published by Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. Developed by Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. All rights reserved.™, ® and Nintendo DS logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. The rating icons are trademarks of the Entertainment Software Association. 1UP Network Best of E3 2006 Award Logo is a trademark of Ziff Davis Publishing Holdings Inc. Used under license. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.



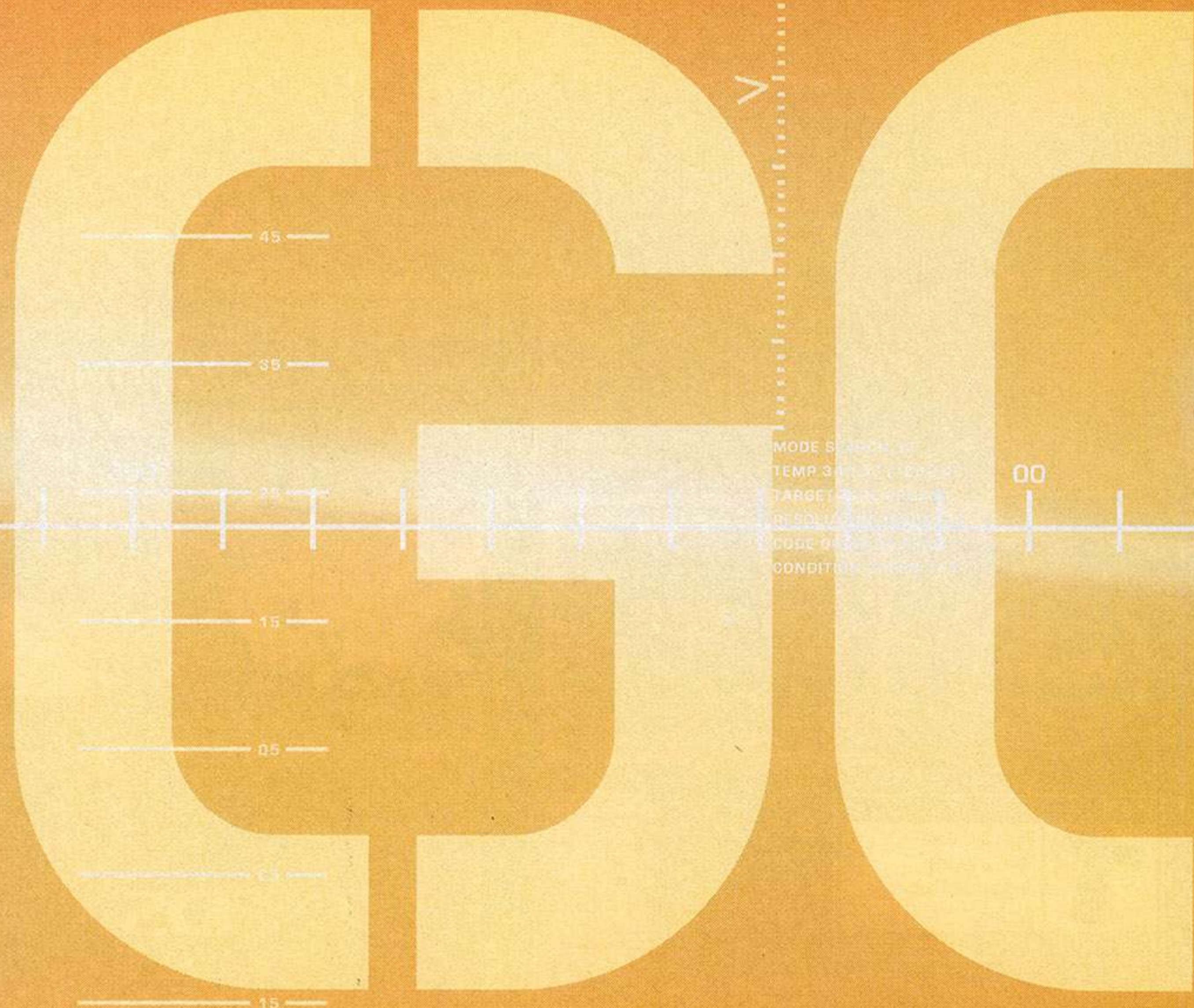
Weapon mods! Online plans! PSP-to-PlayStation 3! With Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots, Kojima's cooking up a whole new batch of stealth genius. *GamePro* has the scoop.

By Vicious Sid and Mr. Marbles

Y 165.04
 130.4680
 12a 1/44
 CONDITION GREEN ++A
 TARGET



1 000 234



MODE SEARCH 03
 TEMP 30.00 C (86.00 F)
 TARGET 00000000
 DE SDIA 00000000
 CODE 00000000
 CONDITION GREEN ++A

234 234

FIND STATES 0020 // FINE FRIEND001 D 344 67 76 B ... A++ A
 FIND STATES 00A0 // FINE FRIEND004 D 244 67 80 3 ... A++ A
 FIND STATES 005A // FINE FRIEND004 D 344 64 70 7 ... B++ B
 FIND STATES 0011 // FINE FRIEND001 D 344 67 32 0 ... ---
 SEARCHING
 FIND STATES 00A0 // FINE FRIEND004 D 255 40 00 9 ... A++ A
 FIND STATES 00A0 // FINE FRIEND004 D 176 23 FF 9 ... ---
 FIND STATES 00A0 // FINE FRIEND004 D 372 71 00 9 ... A++ A
 LOST STATES
 LOST STATES
 LOST STATES
 SEARCHING
 SEARCHING
 SEARCHING
 SEARCH NUMBER IS FULL REST STATES 03
 FIND STATES 0010 // FINE FRIEND001 D 344 71 00 1 ... B++ B



P06186_168_1
4 00 00 11

15
25
35
45



You're very sharp with your questions," Hideo Kojima says with a twinkle in his eye, "but I want you to refrain from sharp questions." Ho, ho, ho. We're sitting in a small meeting room tucked inside Konami's offices in Roppongi Hills. Though we're in Tokyo's party district, we're not here to party. We're here for answers about Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots, the PlayStation 3 game everybody wants but nobody knows much about. Except Hideo Kojima, that is, the long-time director for the series.

In an interview setting, Kojima is a notoriously tough nut to crack. He's known for spinning a delicate spider web of information, sticking to minutia and broad, expansive generalities. In our talk, he sprinkles our

back-and-forth with phrases like "I cannot reveal everything" and "I can't say so much about that." Even our very first question sets the tone. We want to talk a bit about the storyline, we begin. Kojima chuckles knowingly.

Uh-oh.

Thankfully, Kojima quickly warmed up to our questions. Metal Gear Solid 4 is, after all, one of the most-desired games on the planet, and it's hard to keep a secret these days.

"War Has Changed"

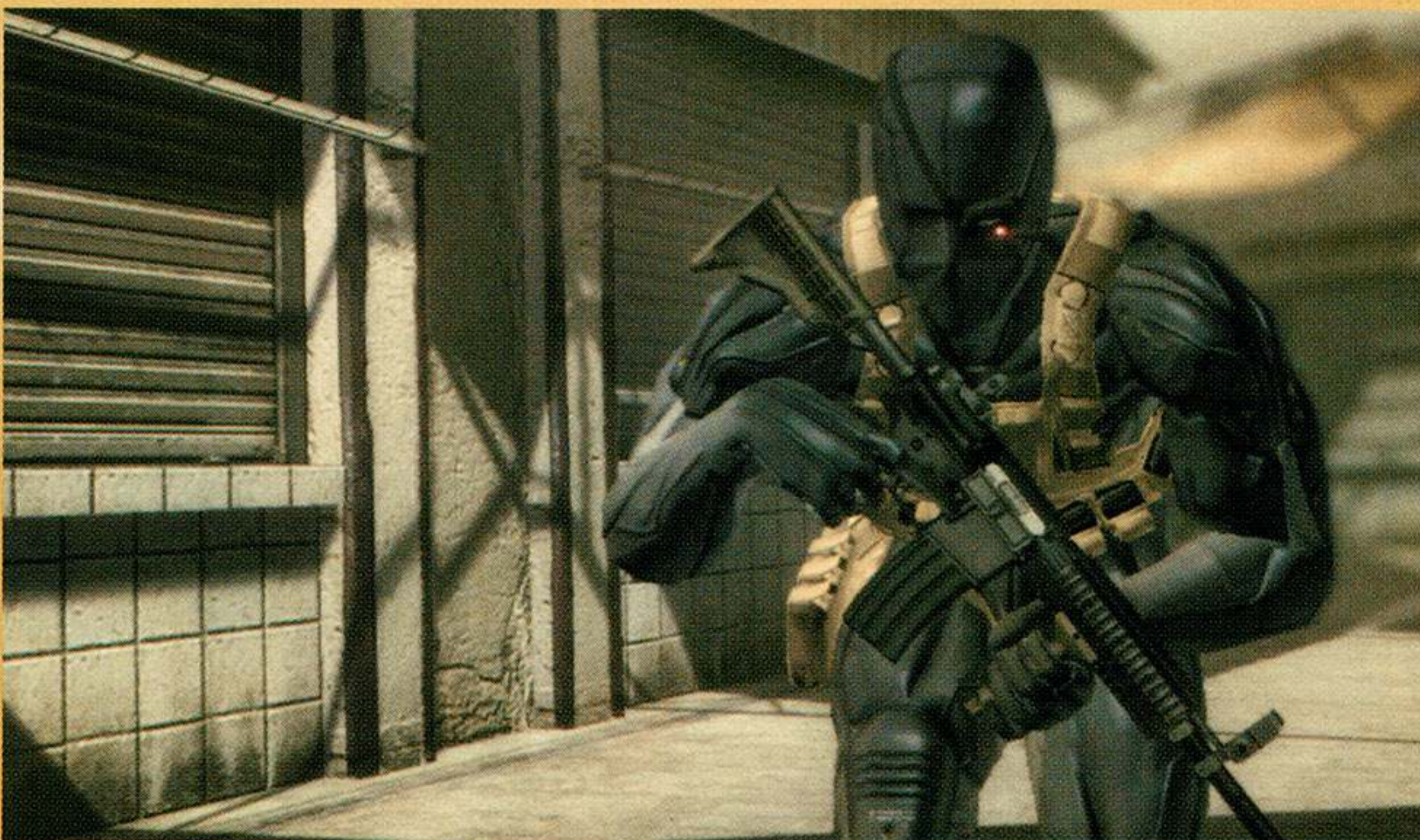
It seems that Kojima's mind is on war. Given the current state of world politics, that's not surprising. "When I was young and I thought about war, it was always about the 1970s and Vietnam. Jungle warfare," Kojima says. "Now it's different for everybody." Hence Metal Gear Solid 4's Mid-

dle Eastern setting, one of many Snake will visit over the course of the game. (Kojima Productions has researched South America and Eastern Europe as well.) Kojima has released only footage from the Middle Eastern segment, but that's because he's deliberately evoking common themes found in countless other first-person shooters. "At first, you may feel [MGS4] is based on the same old FPS scenarios," he says, "but it is not and that is deliberately so."

In fact, Kojima nearly set Metal Gear Solid 4 against the backdrop of a full-blown World War III, which he thought could serve as a suitably big "finale" for the series. But then Kojima wrote off the idea of World War III entirely, switching gears to a new, darker premise that would set Snake amidst a non-stop cycle of war-for-profit fought by private military companies (PMCs). Looking back, Snake's old adventures seem almost laughably cartoonish compared to this game's grim, unrelenting vision of never-ending war. War planes darken the skies, while monstrous bio-engineered bipeds prowl from building to building, looking to crush enemy combatants with their powerful legs. It's into this blighted world that series protagonist Solid Snake returns...but he's seen better days.

"No Room for Heroes"

By now, it's no secret that Snake's physical condition is in bad shape. But making a young stud into an old fart wasn't purely for thematic or aesthetic reasons. Kojima is particularly interested in exploring Snake's deteriorating condition from the perspective of the player. "He's old," Kojima says, "and not as sharp as he was before." That's not to say that Snake doesn't have a few new stealth tricks. Aside from the OctoCam suit (see sidebar), we saw our hero feign death,



FEEL THE INTENSE POWER OF

THE NEXT GENERATION IS OVER A HUNDRED HIGH-DEF GAMES AND COUNTING. Whether you want to shoot or strategize, race or roleplay, play sports or play with your kids, Xbox 360™ has the game to answer your every whim, rush, and glory-soaked desire. xbox.com

HAVING WAY TOO MANY OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM.



PRODUCTS RANGE FROM
EVERYONE TO MATURE
E-M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. All trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Jump in.

 XBOX 360™

wriggle across a raging battlefield, and toss a grenade to wipe out a squad of troops. In fact, many of Snake's new abilities involve him lying on the ground—a highly unusual strategy for a badass action hero. But then that's Kojima's intention. "I want the players to synchronize with Snake's emotions. He's kind of old, he's going to die soon. He has to pretend he's dead, or crawl on the ground...something no typical hero would do. It's taboo."

Even with the expanded range of actions, series veterans should feel right at home with the basic control scheme. Most of Snake's old moves will return, such as hiding inside objects or tapping on surfaces to misdirect guards. But his signature back-to-the-wall stealth pose is gone, making room for more a fluid, seamless system that will allow him to sneak quick peaks while behind cover.

Kojima is heartbroken by the PS3 controller's lack of rumbling ("I already said to [Sony Computer Entertainment president] Mr. Kutaragi that I want the rumble feature back"), but he's already scheming up ways to incorporate the controller's new motion-sensing abilities. How, exactly? Kojima won't say. Our guess: the Six-axis's tilt sensor will be used to lean around corners, or possibly for aiming in first-person mode. It's also possible it will tie into Snake's ground-based maneuvers, but that's little more than conjecture.

Shifting Alliances

In order to keep up with Snake's new suite of unconventional stealth tactics, non-player characters will have to draw upon more advanced artificial intelligence. But if Snake can

hide in broad daylight by using the high-tech OctoCam suit, will his enemies be smart enough to look for subtle clues in the environment? Kojima laughs at this, explaining that his team is currently "adjusting." That's his way of crossing his fingers, we suppose.

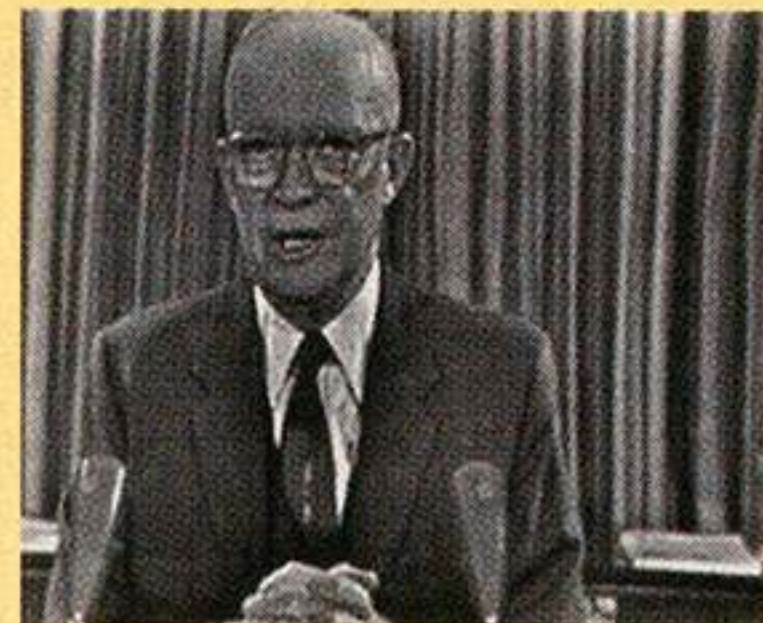
The emotional state of Snake's enemies will also serve as an important battlefield. If an enemy is scared, Kojima explains, he won't spend much time sniffing around for Snake. That's good news for our aging hero. But if the enemy is calm and cautious, he'll take the time to sweep the area. On the subject of enemy emotional states, Kojima gives the example of inducing "panic" in a foe by shooting at the ground near his feet. Another way to trigger panic might be wiping out members of a squad, leaving the survivors to fend for themselves.

But what about the enemies? Here's where it gets particularly sticky. "The enemies are not necessarily always after Snake this time," Kojima cautions. "You're in a battlefield, meaning that Snake can be an enemy or ally to the other characters." What Kojima means is that affiliations will be in constant motion, as Snake can almost instantly swap alliances from one group of enemies to another in the name of battlefield advantage. Judging by our initial peeks at the game, it seems there are two main forces: a rag-tag group of street fighters, and a technologically advanced army of mercenaries.

According to Kojima, you will be able to swap alliances from one army to another at nearly any time. "You look at the circumstances of current events," Kojima explains. So if you don't see any advantage in sticking with your current allies, "you could change that instantly."

Eisenhower?

I Hardly Knew Her!
MGS4's vision of never-ending war may be dark, but it's not as far-fetched as you might think.



In his 1961 farewell address, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower

warned Congress of a "disastrous rise of misplaced power" in what he called the military-industrial complex. Eisenhower was talking about the danger of big weapons manufacturers, the ever-hungry U.S. military, and rubber-stamping politicians to unwittingly perpetuate a never-ending cycle of war for profit. Left unchecked, the military-industrial complex could unwittingly transform the real world into something like Metal Gear Solid 4's war-torn future. For more information, go to www.eisenhower.archives.gov/farewell.htm

TARGET

CONTINUED ►

OctoCamo Revealed

Kojima is fascinated by the octopus, nature's ultimate chameleon. Hence the name of the so-called OctoCamo, Snake's latest high-tech stealth gadget. The OctoCamo suit enables Snake to blend in with the environment, taking on the texture and coloring of surrounding objects automatically. This new gameplay wrinkle means that Snake can hide right out in the open, sometimes right underneath the nose of an enemy.

In recent months, we've read numerous misconceptions about what the OctoCamo is and isn't. Kojima talked at great length about the suit. *GamePro* proudly presents the highlights of that conversation.

What it IS

A valuable stealth tool.

"OctoCamo puts a wide variation of sneaking into the game," Kojima says, "but it's your option as to how you sneak in the battlefield." The suit makes Snake "blend in with the background," whether that's a brick wall, a marble statue, or a burned, bloody corpse.

A new way to personalize Snake.

"You don't have to use it to hide. It's like the camouflage system from MGS3, so players can have fun with it. If you like a particular texture, you could play [while wearing] that texture."



Snake can't change shapes...

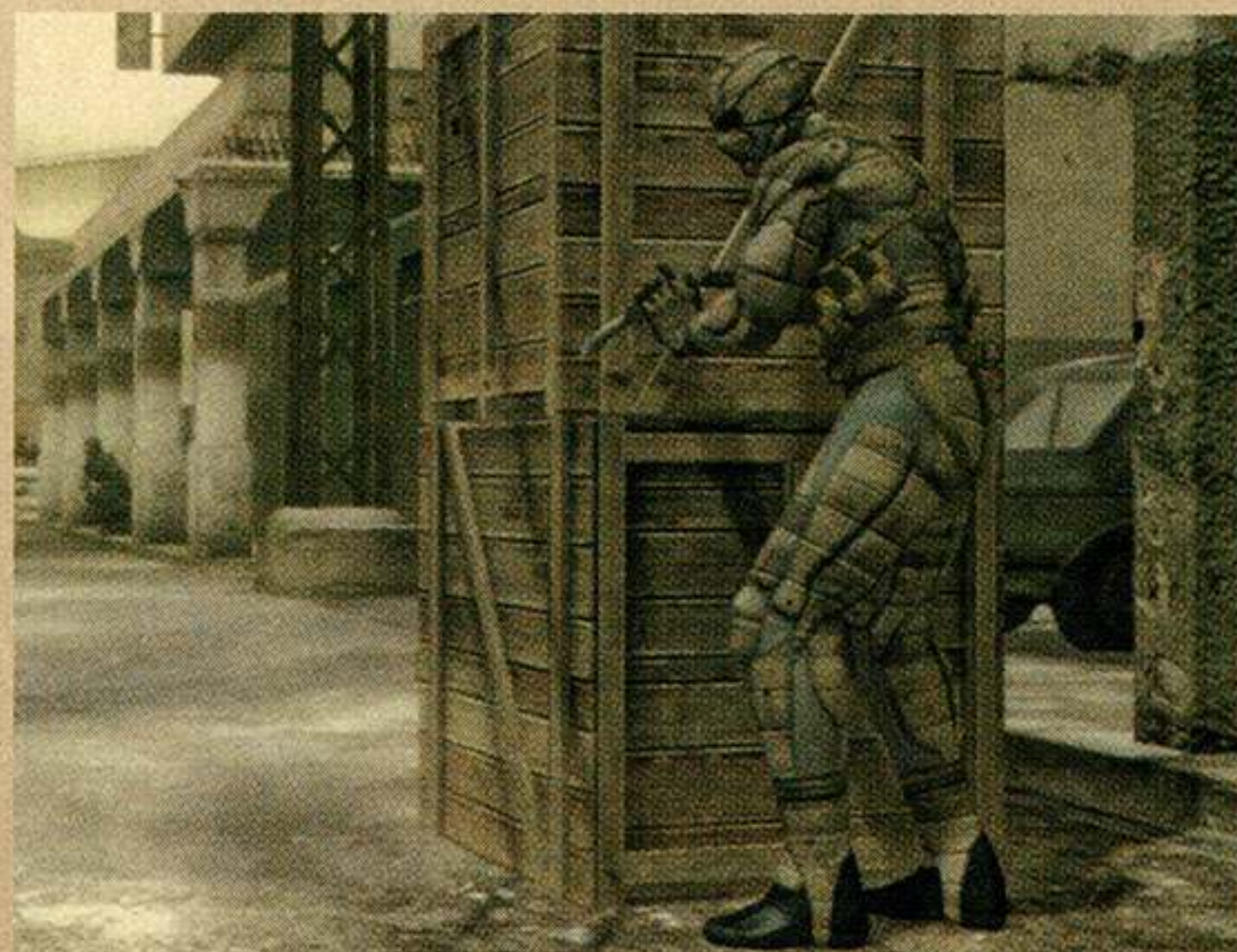
What it's NOT

It won't let you change shape.

"An octopus is an octopus, and it will remain an octopus, so it cannot become a dog. But an octopus might mimic the dog's hair..."

It's not a super item.

"OctoCamo is not an almighty tool...it's not going to make you invisible. If you get spotted once, you're not going to blend in. OctoCamo is not the central gimmick of MGS4, it's just one aspect of sneaking."



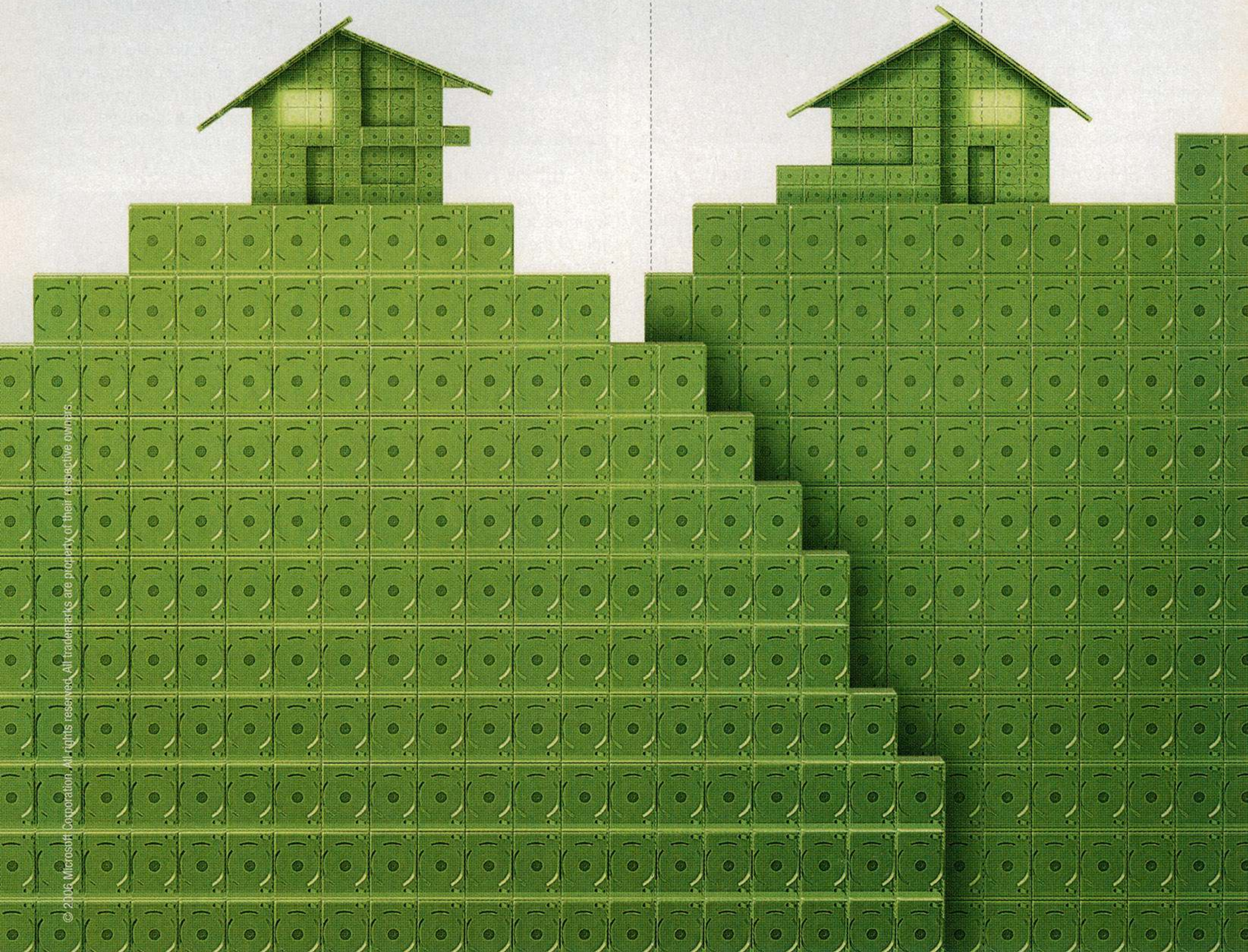
...but he can hide right out in the open.

**THE NEXT GENERATION
IS PLAYING WITH FRIENDS
ON XBOX LIVE.™**

No matter where your friends are, they're still only a corner kick away. Play what you want, with whom you want, on your terms and your couch. Video chat, play, compete, gossip, play, love, play. Enjoy.

xbox.com

**DISTANCE TEARS FRIENDS APART.
XBOX LIVE™ BRINGS THEM TOGETHER.**



© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. All trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Jump in.

 **XBOX 360.™**

Revealing secrets about any new Metal Gear game is hard, sweaty, thankless work. Here's what we know, and what we don't, based off our lengthy chat with Hideo Kojima.

7 Things We Know ...

#1: It's the grand finale of the series!



At least, Kojima claims it is. We're not so convinced, though. Judging by what we've seen, Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots could stand as the crowning achievement in the Metal Gear Saga. Who would want to call it quits after that?

#2: War is being fought between corporations!

Snake isn't up against terrorists or rogue nations this time, but the military-industrial complex itself. In Kojima's vision of capitalism run amok, private military companies (PMCs) and mercenary fighters have amassed more high-tech weapons and bigger armies than even the United States.

#3: You can customize your guns!

Kojima surprised us by confirming one of our all-time dream features for a Metal Gear game: mass amounts of weapon customization. The final roster of upgrades isn't known, but grenade launchers and scopes are definitely in, and laser sights, flashlights, and silencers are safe bets. Multiple mods per gun? You bet.



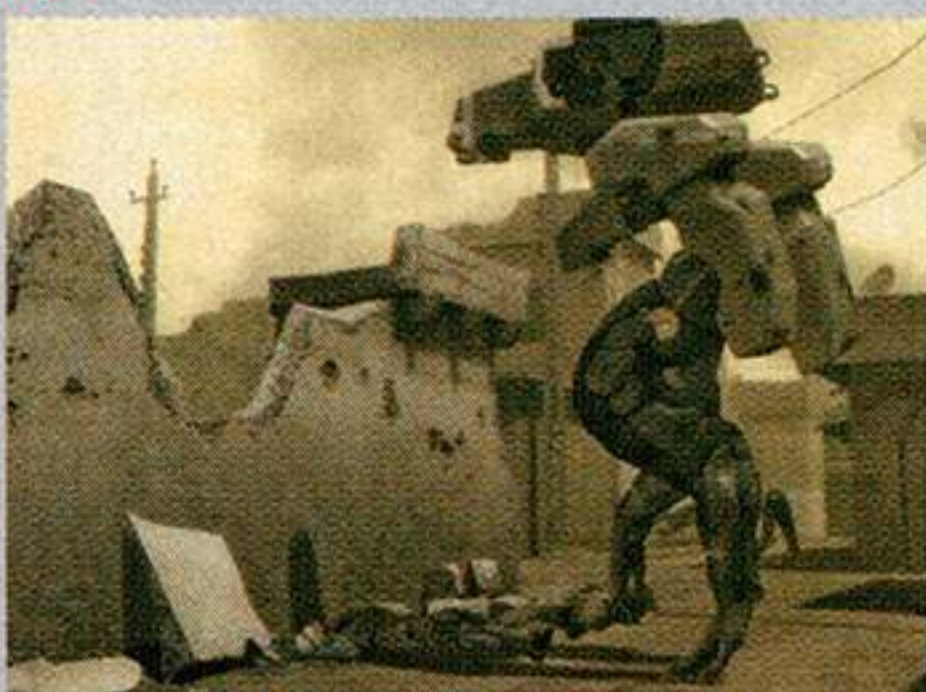
#4: PSP-to-PlayStation 3 interactivity is a go!



Will the new PSP title Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops tie into Metal Gear Solid 4 on the PlayStation 3? "Of course," Kojima says, "but it's very difficult to share [details]," Kojima said. Could the PSP tie into the gun-sharing scheme he also hinted at? Only time will tell.

#5: Snake has new moves!

We saw him play dead and sneakily flop across a raging battlefield—is Snake taking a cue from Tekken's Lei Wu Long? Kojima also confirmed that most of Snake's old moves should make the transition, including tapping on surfaces to misdirect guards. Hiding behind objects and peaking will also feel more "smooth."



#6: You won't play as Raiden...period!



"Are you suggesting that game players should play as Raiden?" Kojima asks, laughing. "I don't want to repeat the same faults from Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, so that [playing as Raiden] will not happen." Raiden was regarded as a wimp by fans of the Metal Gear series, but he did look like a badass in the MGS4 trailer.

#7: Online is in the plans!

Kojima expressed interest in online gameplay as a whole, but the shape of MGS4's online component is as elusive as Snake himself. Some of the onus may lie with Sony: Kojima noted that Sony still hasn't had much to say regarding its own PS3 online plans.

7 Things We Don't Know ...

#1: When is it coming out?

Kojima evaded our best efforts to nail down a firmer release date for the game, which is currently scheduled for an unspecified time in "2007." Judging by the fact nobody has yet played the game, late 2007 (November-December) is our best guess.



#2: What about "young Snake" from the trailer?

We have no clue, Kojima wouldn't budge. Don't bother asking about the injections he takes, either: Kojima toyed with our emotions, jokingly calling them "garlic shots." But we do know that the injections play a critical role in the final game.

#3: How will you earn gun mods?



Kojima says you'll be "really surprised" by the number of gun customizations, but offered little hard data on how you get them. eBay, perhaps or online auction? He is toying with the idea of players sharing them through some kind of trading system, be it online or player-to-player...but, as usual, no specifics.

#4: What happened to [character name]?

Meryl Silverburgh? Naomi Hunter? Kojima's still not elaborating on the role of the returning characters from past games. Believe us: we asked. We do know that mainstays from Metal Gear Solid and its sequel, Sons of Liberty, will be featured prominently in Guns of the Patriots.



#5: How will the motion sensor function?



Motion sensing is definitely in the game, but to what extent, we don't yet know. Tilting the controller to lean around corners, or possibly to guide your aim in first-person mode, seem to be obvious and likely candidates. But that's just guesswork, and the secret remains firmly inside camp Kojima in Japan.

#6: How does it play?

It's hard to say because we didn't play the game (no one has), but Kojima doesn't seem to be interested in drastically changing the core Metal Gear experience. Japanese gaming bible *Famitsu* recently revealed, however, that gunplay will use an over-the-shoulder shooting angle similar to Resident Evil 4.



#7: How will online work?

Kojima may decide that the online component might arrive later, as happened with MGS3: Subsistence. He's interested in the possibilities of online gameplay, but isn't talking specifics at the moment. We do know there will be interaction with the PSP game Portable Ops, however.



FLY AWAY, WIRE.

FLY AWAY.

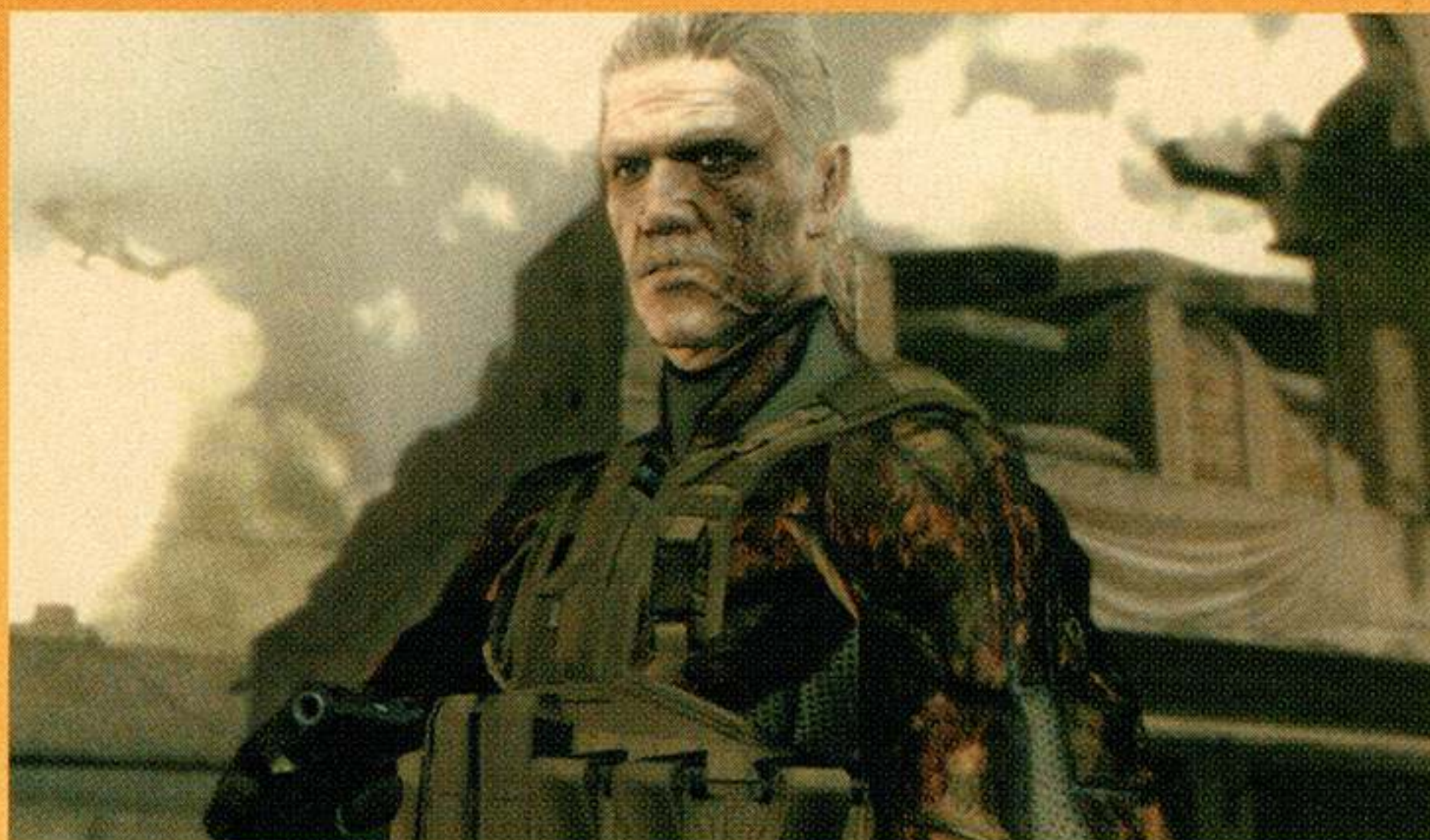
THE NEXT GENERATION IS A WIRELESS WORLD. Stand up for freedom and sit down wherever you want. With the Wireless Headset, Wireless Racing Wheel with Force Feedback, Wireless Controllers, and more, all optimized for the Xbox 360™, you can play around while you move around. xbox.com

© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. All trademarks are property of their respective owners.



Jump in.

 XBOX 360™



As a side effect of genetic tinkering, Snake suffers from accelerated aging. Kind of like Demi Moore.

Kojima also gives a rather obtuse example using placeholder names (enemy details are highly classified, though both man and machine will be foes). In Kojima's example scenario, Snake is sneaking behind Country A's tank in order to pass undetected through a war zone. But since you're using Country A's tank for cover, you'll want to protect it — even if you're not formally allied with Country A. So if Country B begins to attack the tank, you might want to take out their anti-tank launcher. The alliances aren't about politics; they're about survival. Kojima stresses that the tank scenario won't necessarily appear in the final game, but it helps illustrate how players will need to constantly adapt their approach based on the shifting tides of battle.

Whatever strategies you decide to employ, the final decision will always be up to you. More so than in past games, MGS4 will offer a multitude of ways to deal with obstacles,

ranging from pure stealth to head-on gunplay ("you have to be well prepared," Kojima warns). The notion of replay value is "old thinking," Kojima says. "The game will play differently according to the player, is the bottom line."

Deadly Force

Then we hit on an interesting topic: MGS4's arsenal. Carefully

avoiding too many specifics, Kojima mentions that gamers will be "surprised" by the number of weapons Snake can use in the final game. "There will be loads of weapons as we know them today in the military," Kojima says. There will also be prototypes of current next-gen military hardware, as well as some imaginary weapons in the final game. But Kojima wants to keep MGS4's gunplay based at least partially in the near-future real world, and will only deviate for the sake of "interesting game design." Kojima also confirms that hand-to-hand weapons play a big role in MGS4, but declines to elaborate because "that gives away a little bit of how you complete the game, actually."

But the biggest news, by far, is the fact that Snake can now fully customize his weapons with upgrades and attachments. Kojima specifically names grenade launchers and scopes, also hinting at silencers, laser sights, and flash-

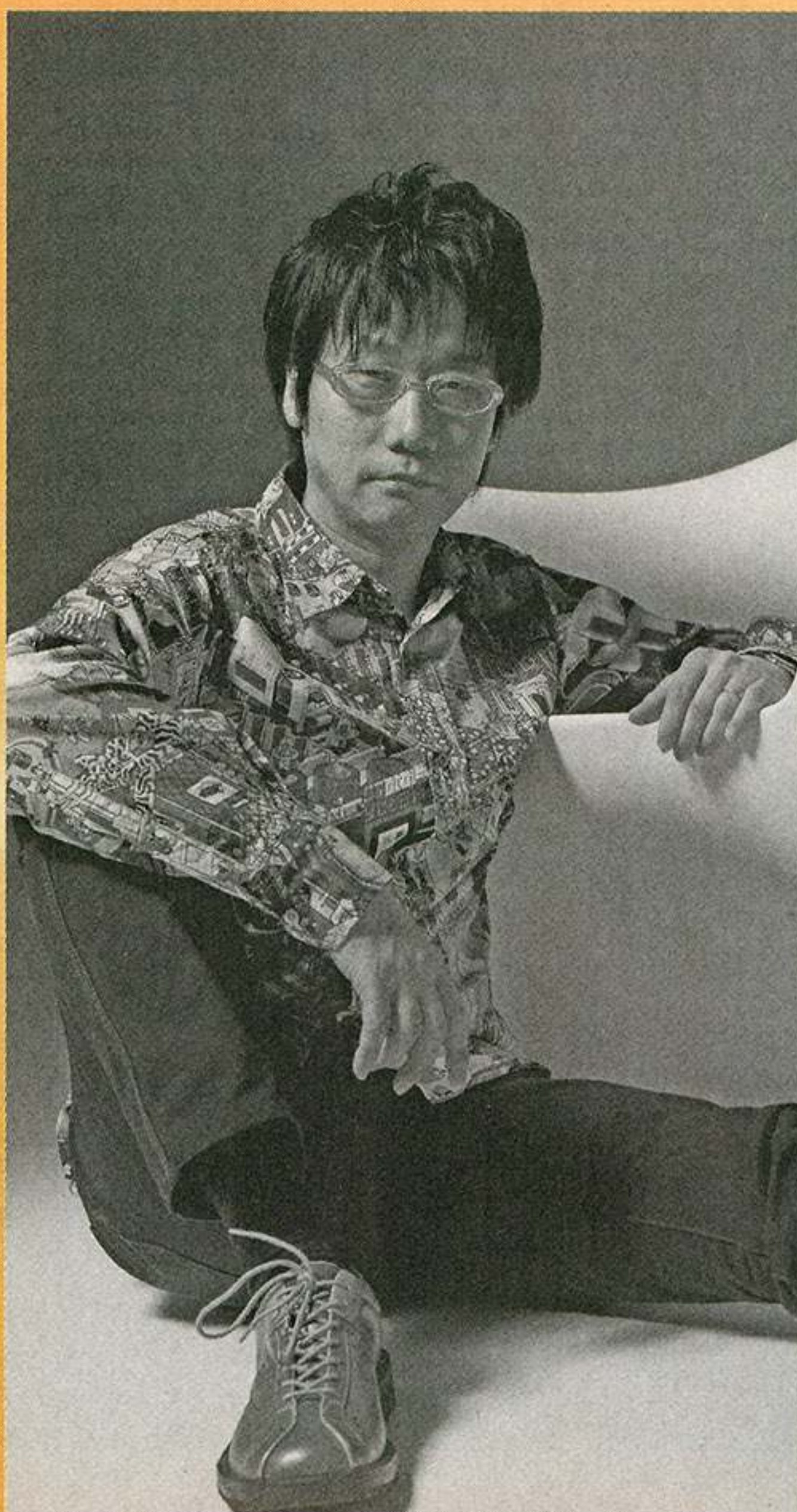


(Actual Size)

The World's Most Interesting Bomb

This tiny MP3 player is guilty of derailing countless *GamePro* interviews. Halfway through our Kojima interview, we swapped out our tape recorder for the mobiBLU (it has integrated voice recording). When we put it on the table, the room fell into shocked silence: Kojima was utterly fascinated by the tiny blue marvel. Castlevania director Koji Igarashi also fell victim. Fear the mobiBLU!

CONTINUED ►



Hideo Out

On cutting Snake's classic pose

"[The signature Snake pose] rarely happens on the battlefield. Nobody is *cool* enough to hide like that. [By eliminating this move,] it's more like in real life. Snake can hide behind something, then sneak a peak and shoot. There are more actions to it, and it's smoother that way."

On the PS3 controller dropping rumble

"I really miss the rumble feature, and I already said to Mr. Kutaragi that I want the rumble feature back."

On MGS4's arsenal

"[The focus is on more realistic weaponry,] but I might throw in a couple of weapons because I think they're interesting game design...like the remote-controllable missile from the first Metal Gear Solid game [on the PlayStation]."

On working with the PS3's Cell CPU

"Overall, I think it is difficult, of course. But if it's easy and simple, then how can you differentiate from other games? We're trying to create something different. If I say too much, Mr. Kutaragi might get really upset. [laughter] I think that the PS3 is difficult to work with... but so was the PS2."

On complaints of long cinema scenes

"I am always influenced by all this feedback, and I personally think that the cutscenes are long as well. But we [didn't make cinemas shorter before] because we might lessen the emotional factor or fail to give enough explanation. This time, yes, I am thinking about making them shorter."

On working with Blu-ray

"You may hear Blu-ray is huge, gigantic, 20 GB or so, but that's not really that big to us. One basic [gameplay] frame with HD visuals and 5.1 sound takes up so much space that the capacity will become too small in no time."

On possibilities with the Wii

"Wii! [laughs] Yes, I want to do it. I'm saying this every day. But first, I have to face this giant that is called Metal Gear Solid 4, so until I'm finished with that, I can't do anything."

On 1080p and HD in MGS4

"We're not the ones who are saying we want HD. I'm not interested, myself, about HD at all. MGS games tend not to care about how clean the screen looks...we deliberately make the graphics look dirtier to give the atmosphere more life."



GAMEPRO.COM TO READ THE FULL 4300-WORD HIDEO KOJIMA INTERVIEW ABOUT METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS FOR PLAYSTATION 3!

ADD HD DVD TO YOUR XBOX 360™

THE NEXT GENERATION IS A MORE BEAUTIFUL MOVIE. Plug in and tune everything else out with the Xbox 360™ HD DVD Player. Experience six times the resolution of DVD at up to 1080p and up to six times the disbelief, for one clearly affordable price. xbox.com

THEN ADD SALT TO YOUR POPCORN.



King Kong on HD DVD and Universal Media Remote included for a limited time.

© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. All trademarks are property of their respective owners. © 2006 Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.

HD DVD

THE LOOK AND SOUND OF PERFECT

Jump in.

 XBOX 360™



lights. Kojima himself isn't much of a gun nut, so the gun modifications are being designed by other team members at Kojima Productions, one of whom Kojima describes as a "geeky maniac" of military tech. "I can't keep up with him!" he laughs. But Kojima clams up when we asked how many mods would be in the final game, again teasing that "you'll be *really* surprised by how many variations are possible."

This leaves a big question—how does Snake obtain weapon mods? Does he find them, buy them, or make them somehow? "Excellent question," Kojima says, chuckling. "And I can't answer it," explaining that gun mods tie too closely into the plot. He also lets slip that weapons and mods may have a collection element: MGS4 may allow players to trade mods with other MGS4 players online or through some other form of player-to-player sharing.

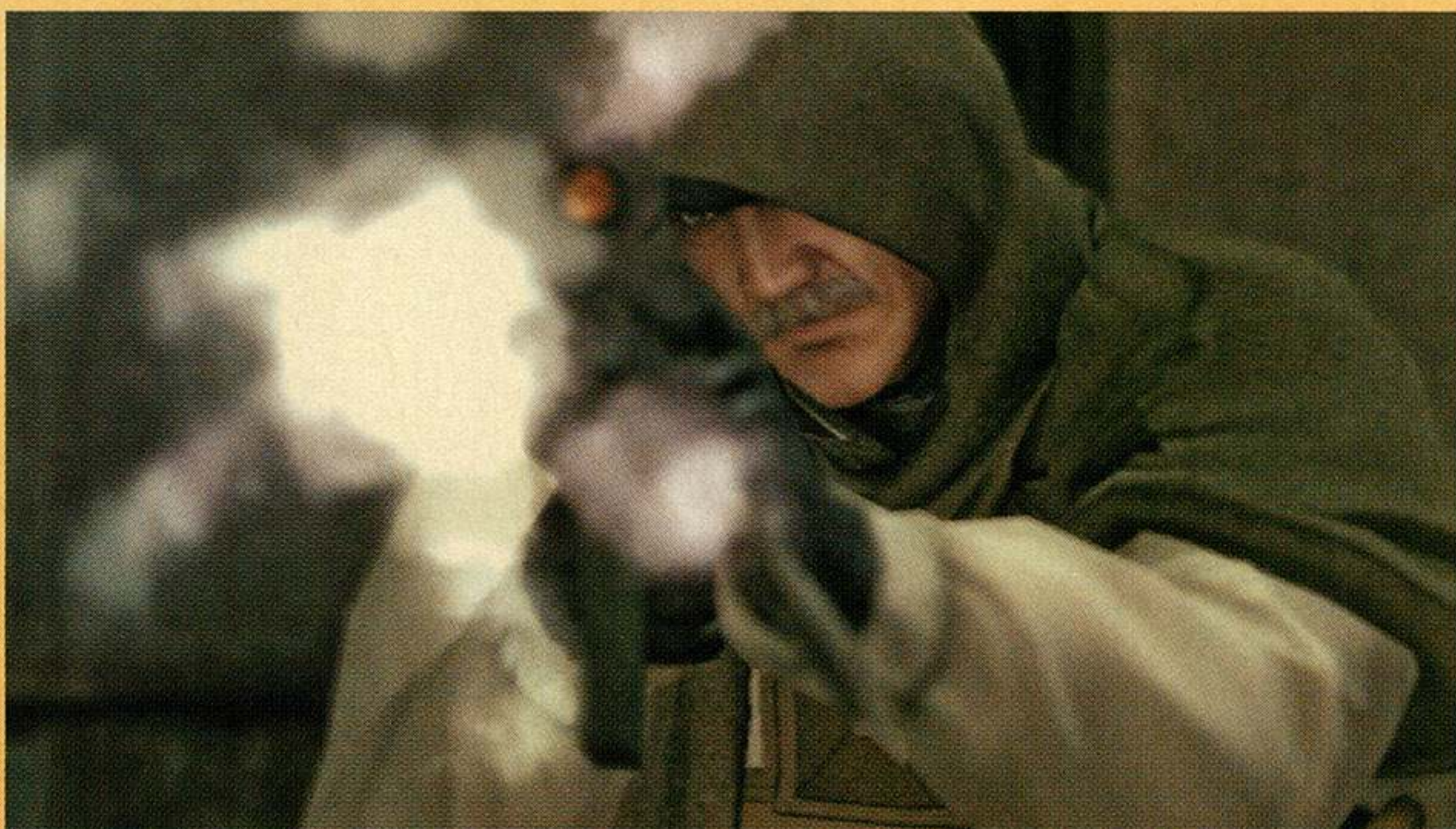
You Can't Spell "Kojima" Without "E-N-I-G-M-A"

There were some questions you just *knew* he wouldn't answer. Would the famous nuke-powered Metal Gear Rex mech make a comeback? How will the PSP game tie into the PS3 one? And what's up with Meryl? "Secret," Kojima beams. We were able, however, to pry out a bit of information on the game's much-anticipated online multiplayer mode. Would Kojima consider bumping MGS4's online segment to a separate release date, as he did with Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence? "I can't say right now," he responds before adding, "We're considering it, actually."

Talk of a firm release date also proves to be a futile effort. At this year's E3, the newest trailer bumped the game to a generic "2007" window,

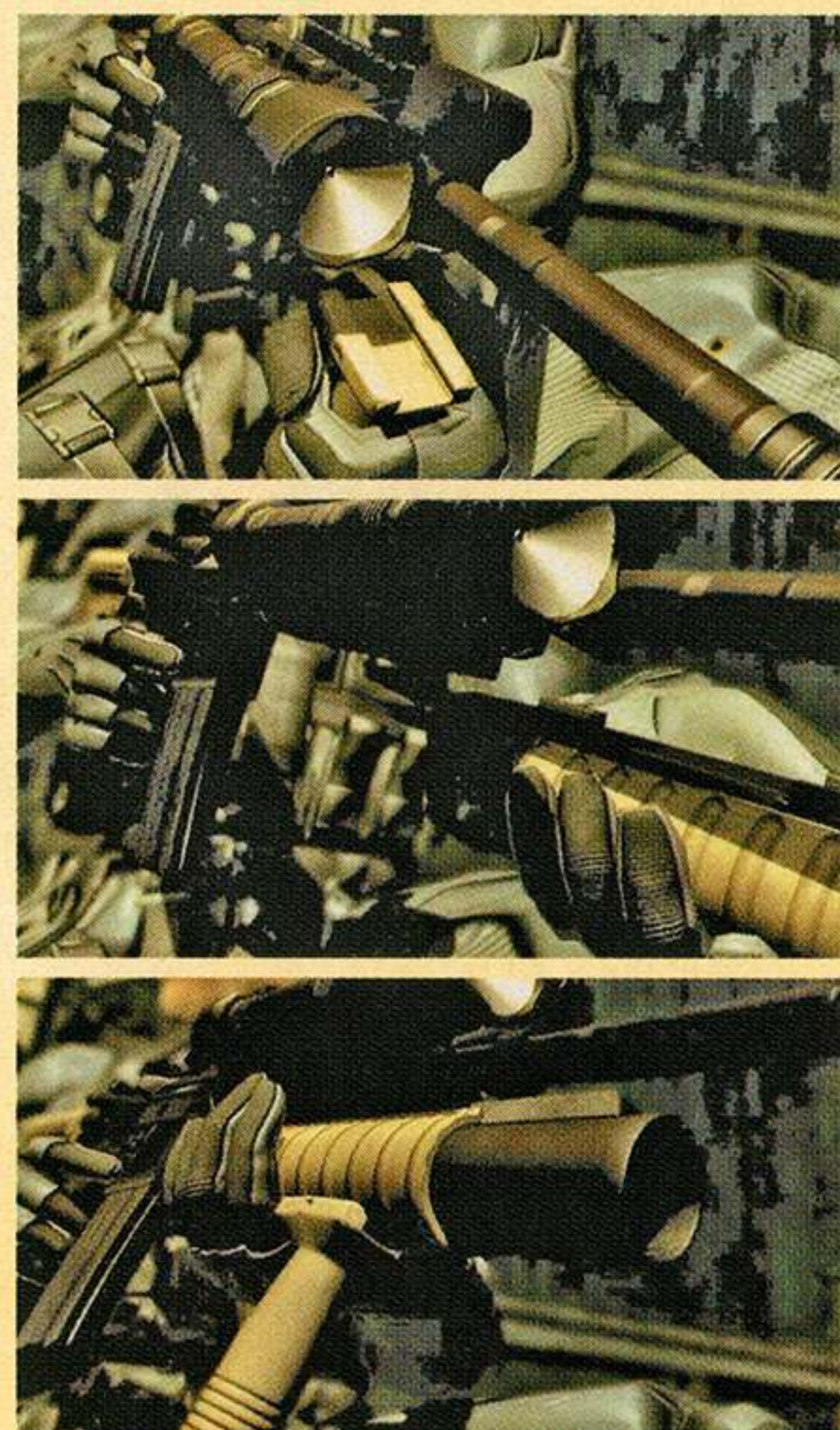
and Kojima feels just fine about leaving that date wide open. "The guy who said 2007 was Raiden, and not me," Kojima jokes.

But if you ask us, the game can't come soon enough. Sony needs a mega-ton hit for the PS3, and Kojima needs a new audience to wow. Sounds like a next-gen party to us.



It's possible to shoot your way through the game, but Kojima warns you to be "well prepared" for the challenges you'll face.

Mods of War



In these early images from the game's 2005 premiere, Snake straps a small grenade launcher onto his rifle. Kojima promises there will be many weapon upgrades in the final game.

EXPRESS YOURSELF THE WAY NATURE INTENDED.

WITH YOUR FACE.

THE NEXT GENERATION IS SEEING FRIENDS FROM MILES AWAY. The future of gaming is here, and it looks like your buddy Keith. Video chat with family. Personalize your gamer picture. Practice your smirks. With the Xbox Live™ Vision Camera, those closest to you get even closer. xbox.com



© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. All trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Jump in.



Class Reunion

Kojima declined commenting on the characters in MGS4, but we do know some key details about who's who

Colonel Campbell

Snake's commander since the second NES game, Campbell charges Snake with defeating his half-brother Liquid Ocelot, who is perpetuating a never-ending war in order to destabilize the world.

Liquid Ocelot

As hinted in MGS2, Revolver Ocelot and Liquid Snake have fused into one personality. Now Liquid Ocelot controls Outer Heaven, as well as the private military companies that perpetuate a never-ending world war. It's Snake's duty to take him out.

Meryl Silverburgh

Meryl is now apparently leading what she refers to as "the new FOXHOUND." Meryl's role in MGS4 is a closely guarded secret, but she has taken great strides as a warrior since her early days as Snake's love interest in Metal Gear Solid.

Solid Snake

With only six months to live, Snake's body is aging prematurely as a side effect of the Les Enfants Terribles cloning project. Now he's inside a raging war zone for one last mission. A mysterious injection sustains him, but for how long?

Otacon

Snake's eyes and ears in the field, Otacon appears much the same, though a bit older and wiser. Otacon arranges a crucial reunion between Snake and Campbell, and appears in the game on a tiny LCD screen wielded by a remote-controlled robot.

Naomi Hunter

Seeking revenge, Dr. Hunter infected Snake in Metal Gear Solid, and was subsequently MIA in the last two Gears (Sons of Liberty and Snake Eater). No word on what her role may be this time, but in the trailers she tells Snake that he has only six months to live.

HYPERSPACE™

THE OFFICIAL STAR WARS FAN CLUB

Get an entire year of:



Members-Only Access at www.starwars.com

- **First news** about Indiana Jones and the upcoming *Star Wars* TV series now in pre-production
- **Video and audio**—new and rare materials from the legendary Lucasfilm archives
- **Star Wars-themed** e-mail address, online profile, and e-mail newsletters
- **Community**—clubs, blogs, forums and events

Star Wars Insider Magazine

- **6 exciting issues** packed with in-depth features
- **Exclusive** fiction and original artwork
- **The latest** on *Star Wars* novels, comic books, action figures, video games, and collectibles
- **Coverage** of all six *Star Wars* films



Fan Club Membership

- **Membership kit**
- **Discounts** and early-purchase rights at www.StarWarsShop.com
- **VIP treatment at Celebration IV**—one day advance entry, exclusive celebrity meet-and-greets, first chance to buy Celebration IV merchandise, and more!



Get it all for
only \$39.95

JOIN NOW at starwars.com/fanclub

BEST BUY

Presents

LEVEL-2

POWERED BY **BEST BUY** reward **zOne** PROGRAM

Exclusively for GamePro readers!

JANUARY 2007 HOT PICKS



Find out more! Visit www.LVL-2.com

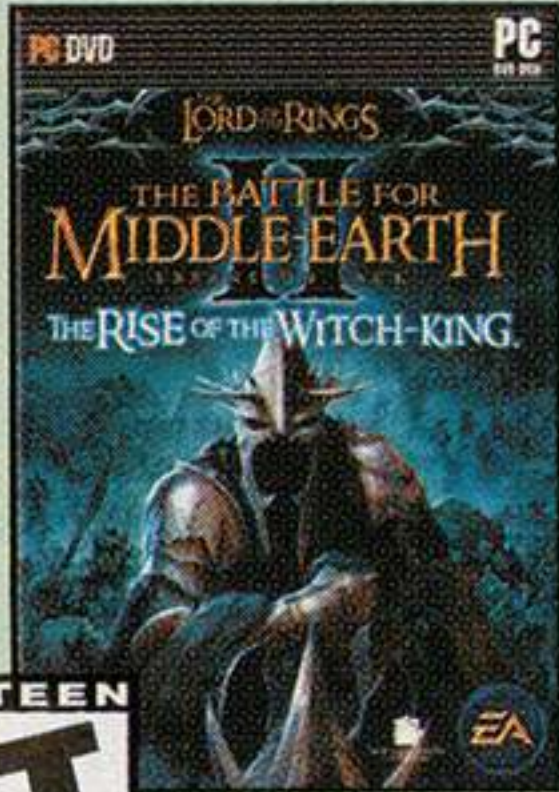
Wii

Nintendo intends to reinvent the way games are played. The core Wii experience centers on the controller. It's comprised of two connected pieces referred to as the Wii Remote and Nunchuk. Both Nunchuk and Wii Remote have built-in motion sensors that translate your hand movements into onscreen action. The controllers each house rumble motors as well. In coordinated action, the two complement each other. In *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*, for instance, the Nunchuk serves as your shield while the Wii Remote acts as your sword. The Wii Remote is wireless, using the Bluetooth standard to send information to the console. Up to four controllers can be connected at any time. The Wii Remote unit also has a built-in speaker. Mated with the rumble function, the purpose of the tiny audio unit is to create what Nintendo refers to as "depth of sound." The unit requires you to connect a separate sensor bar to your TV to accomplish this, but this arrangement works much more fluidly than it may sound. You can aim the remote like a gun, or you can swing it like a baseball bat. You can rotate the Nunchuk or wiggle it from side to side. *WarioWare: Smooth Moves* demonstrates near-endless ways the controller can be manipulated including up and down as you pump a tire or gyrating as you work a hula hoop. Not only does it bring a whole new dimension of gameplay to hardcore gamers, but it's a simple tool to master, which Nintendo hopes will draw in the non-gamers. The Wii is backward compatible with GameCube games and GameCube controllers.



PC GAMES

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE BATTLE FOR MIDDLE-EARTH II RISE OF THE WITCH-KING



The Rise of the Witch-king is an expansion pack that offers you the opportunity to explore your evil side and kick those goody two-shoes of Middle-earth back from whence they came. You play as the Witch-king (he's the one who made Gandalf look like a little girl in Return of the King) and command an army of orcs, evil men, sorcerers and yes, you asked for it, trolls. Build up your armies and territories in skirmish, multiplayer or War of the Rings mode, and soon enough you'll have your very own home away from Mordor.



PLAYSTATION 3

Sony's PlayStation 3 is an always-on, always-connected, living room centerpiece, with a wide range of media support and connection options. Everything from movie and music playback, to browsing family pictures, to high-definition video conferencing via an upcoming EyeToy IP camera will be available. Built-in gigabit Ethernet should allow for easy integration with any existing home network for full Internet access, not to mention compelling PSP-to-PS3 connectivity. The PSP could even be used as a high-end remote control. High-speed USB 2.0 ports open the door for future peripheral expansion fairly wide. An HDMI connection graces both systems, an analog AV Multi port will output to any modern television, and a single optical S/PDIF plug will send Dolby Digital and DTS surround sound streams to capable receivers.

The PS3 features 256 MB of video memory and 256 MB of main system memory. As far as media is concerned, the PS3 has a clear edge with its support for Blu-ray discs, with dual-layer releases that can pack 50 GB of data onto a single slab, as opposed to the maximum of 8.5 GB for dual-layer DVDs. The result should be games with more high-resolution textures, longer HD cut-scenes, and more extensive use of surround sound than the competition.

Sony is promising universal backward compatibility across all 13,000-plus titles, including upscaling to high definition resolutions. Sony's online service offering for the PS3 is designed to meet and exceed the standards of other services, while remaining free for all. Voice chat, game lobbies, friend lists, downloadable content, shopping, score rankings, tournaments, and more are all planned.

www.bestbuy.com/videogames
www.bestbuy.com/pcgames

This Month's Exclusive Best Buy Offers!

\$5 OFF

LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION

for Xbox 360

Offer not valid in combination with any other coupons or offers. Limit 1 per customer. Good at Best Buy stores in the USA only. Markdowns taken from regular prices. Not valid on prior purchases. Valid on in-stock items only. Does not include service or prepaid service cards. Excludes special order, clearance, demos, and open-box merchandise. Selection varies by store. No rainchecks. No dealers please. Coupon must be presented at time of purchase. No copies. Cash value is 1/100th of 1 cent.
Coupon valid 12/12/06-1/31/06.



Cashier Instructions: Scan coupon UPC. Scan qualifying product UPC(s). Scan all other product(s) being sold. Press "Total." Write "VOID" on the coupon and place in the register coupon media file.

\$5 OFF

LORD OF THE RINGS: BATTLE OF MIDDLE-EARTH II RISE OF THE WITCH-KING

for PC

Offer not valid in combination with any other coupons or offers. Limit 1 per customer. Good at Best Buy stores in the USA only. Markdowns taken from regular prices. Not valid on prior purchases. Valid on in-stock items only. Does not include service or prepaid service cards. Excludes special order, clearance, demos, and open-box merchandise. Selection varies by store. No rainchecks. No dealers please. Coupon must be presented at time of purchase. No copies. Cash value is 1/100th of 1 cent.
Coupon valid 12/12/06-1/31/06.



Cashier Instructions: Scan coupon UPC. Scan qualifying product UPC(s). Scan all other product(s) being sold. Press "Total." Write "VOID" on the coupon and place in the register coupon media file.

\$5 OFF

ANY PLAYSTATION 3 or Wii ACCESSORY

Offer not valid in combination with any other coupons or offers. Limit 1 per customer. Good at Best Buy stores in the USA only. Markdowns taken from regular prices. Not valid on prior purchases. Valid on in-stock items only. Does not include service or prepaid service cards. Excludes special order, clearance, demos, and open-box merchandise. Selection varies by store. No rainchecks. No dealers please. Coupon must be presented at time of purchase. No copies. Cash value is 1/100th of 1 cent.
Coupon valid 12/12/06-1/31/06.



Cashier Instructions: Scan coupon UPC. Scan qualifying product UPC(s). Scan all other product(s) being sold. Press "Total." Write "VOID" on the coupon and place in the register coupon media file.

\$5 OFF

ANY VIDEO GAME or PC GAME

Offer not valid in combination with any other coupons or offers. Limit 1 per customer. Good at Best Buy stores in the USA only. Markdowns taken from regular prices. Not valid on prior purchases. Valid on in-stock items only. Does not include service or prepaid service cards. Excludes special order, clearance, demos, and open-box merchandise. Selection varies by store. No rainchecks. No dealers please. Coupon must be presented at time of purchase. No copies. Cash value is 1/100th of 1 cent.
Coupon valid 12/12/06-1/31/06.



Cashier Instructions: Scan coupon UPC. Scan qualifying product UPC(s). Scan all other product(s) being sold. Press "Total." Write "VOID" on the coupon and place in the register coupon media file.

Majority Rules: Best PS2, Xbox, and GameCube Games for the Holidays!



Who needs a fancy, overpriced, hard-to-find next generation console? With some of the best games of the year coming to the PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube; the only gamers left behind this season will be the ones who sold off their current-gen consoles for flashy next-gen bank busters. Suckers! *By Bones*

This holiday season just seems like the last stand for the PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube, but don't get fooled by the next-gen hype. To help you navigate the deluge of games hitting shelves this season, we've assembled a can't-miss shopping list of the top ten games of 2006 for each current generation console.

PlayStation 2



Final Fantasy XII



As part of one of the most acclaimed franchises in gaming history, Final Fantasy XII is a modern masterpiece—and a PlayStation 2 exclusive. No matter what your gaming preference, it's easily one of the best games of the year in *any* genre on *any* system, and a no-brainer buy for anyone with a PlayStation 2 and a pulse.

■ Developer and publisher: Square Enix ■ RPG ■ ESRB: T

Guitar Hero II



This PlayStation 2-exclusive sequel improves on its predecessor's thrashing gameplay with an all-new three-button chord, an awesome co-op mode (where a buddy can join in on rhythm guitar or bass), and a more wide-ranging song selection (including tracks by Nirvana, the Pretenders, Spinal Tap, the Rolling Stones, Van Halen and, of course, Lynrd Skynrd's "Free Bird").

■ Developer: Harmonix
 ■ Publisher: RedOctane ■ Music ■ ESRB: T

NCAA Football 07



In keeping with EA Sports' reputation for unparalleled presentation, NCAA Football 07 oozes style and school spirit, with noticeably improved graphics, all-new gameplay mechanics (like slide protection and analogue kicking controls), and the horribly addictive Campus Legend mode (where you take your custom blue chip from redshirt scrub to game breaking hero). Each year's installment always man-

ages to impress us, but NCAA Football 07 is easily the greatest college football game to date.

■ Developer: EA Tiburon ■ Publisher: EA Sports
■ Sports ESRB: E ■ Also on the Xbox and GameCube

Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence



Subsistence is far, far more than a simple re-packaging of last year's mega-hit, Metal Gear Solid 3. By introducing a new, over-the-shoulder perspective, incredible competitive online multiplayer action, and several bonus game modes (like the Duel Mode boss battles); Konami has reworked this masterpiece to absolute perfection.

■ Developer: Kojima Productions
■ Publisher: Konami ■ Action ■ ESRB: M

Bully



Armed with an arsenal of insults, stink bombs, and your capable fists; you must conquer the bully-

ing cliques at the prestigious Bullworth Academy. This high school fantasy comes to life with plenty of in-class minigames and large free-roaming environments, not to mention oppressive authority figures, heavy make-out sessions, and bare-knuckle brawls.

■ Developer: Rockstar Vancouver
■ Publisher: Rockstar Games
■ Action/adventure ■ ESRB: T

Disgaea 2: Cursed Memories



This quirky game might not have received all (or any) of the hype it deserved outside its hardcore fan base, but Disgaea 2 is well worth tracking down. Borrowing elements from the cult-classic Final Fantasy Tactics, it's a clever and surprisingly deep checkerboard style strategy game—the current king of the genre.

■ Developer: Nippon Ichi Software
■ Publisher: NIS America ■ Strategy/RPG ■ ESRB: T

Kingdom Hearts II



With its blissful amalgamation of authentic Disney style and characters and Square Enix's top-notch game design, Kingdom Hearts II is an easy recommendation for gamers of any age. Picking up where the last game left off, KHII sees Sora traveling from one Disney world to the next to find King Mickey and defeat the Heartless.

■ Developer and publisher: Square Enix
■ RPG ■ ESRB: E10+

Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories



The best open-ended, politician-enraging, criminal adventure series continues with this budget-priced PSP port. Although the multiplayer mode is noticeably absent, this \$20 bargain is a terrific time killer for any gamer with a tight budget or a voyeuristic proclivity for destruction.

■ Developer: Rockstar Leeds
■ Publisher: Rockstar Games ■ Action ■ ESRB: M

Street Fighter Alpha Anthology



The hallowed Street Fighter series has been a huge fan-favorite since its heyday as king of the 1990s arcades. For a mere \$30, you get arcade perfect versions of four of the top titles—Street Fighter's Alpha, Alpha 2, Alpha 2 Gold, and Alpha 3—plus the bonus game Super Gem Fighter.

■ Developer and publisher: Capcom
■ Fighting ■ ESRB: T

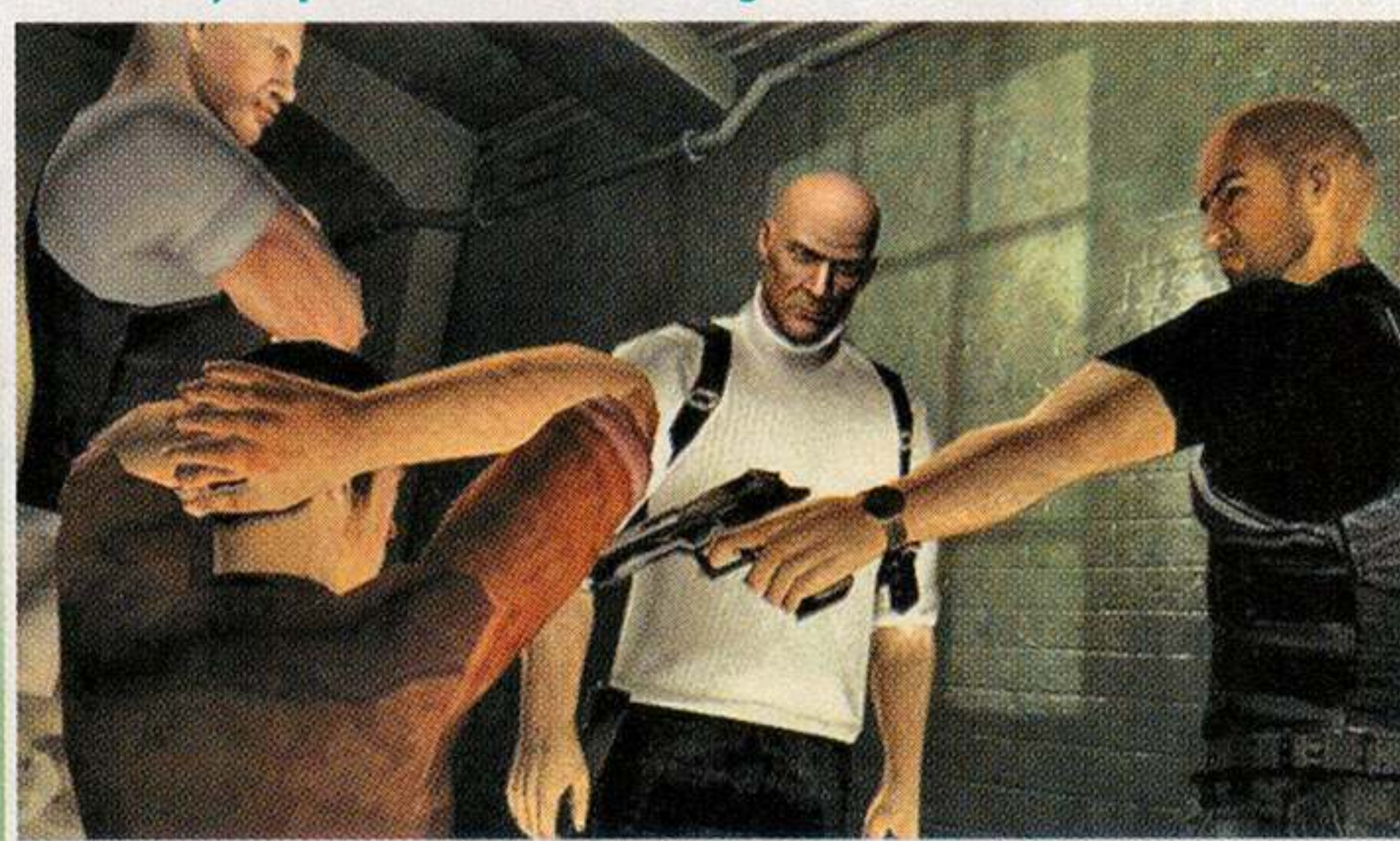
Need for Speed: Carbon



Need for Speed: Carbon features an all-new set of incredibly dangerous and hairpin-turn filled tracks guaranteed to test your skills at the wheel. With an awesome new car customization mode allowing for unprecedented personalization, high-stakes online play, and a rocking soundtrack, this is *the* top racer in 2006.

■ Developer: EA Black Box
■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Racing ■ ESRB: E10+
■ Also on the Xbox and GameCube

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent



Rather than water down the Xbox 360 version to fit current-gen consoles, this version of Double Agent offers an entirely unique set of weapons and levels, with the compelling plot being the only similarity. As a double agent inside a terrorist group, you'll be forced to choose between your allegiance to your country and preserving your life. It's one of Sam Fisher's best missions yet.

■ Developer: Ubisoft Montreal ■ Publisher: Ubisoft ■ Action ■ ESRB: M
■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and GameCube

Xbox

MAJORITY RULES

Call of Duty 3



Call of Duty 2 set a new standard for first-person military combat games, but if any game can beat it, it's this stellar sequel. Call of Duty 3 focuses on the final stages of Operation Overlord leading up to the climactic liberation of Paris, in late 1944.

■ Developer: Treyarch ■ Publisher: Activision
■ Shooting ■ ESRB: T ■ Also on the PlayStation 2

The Godfather



Free-roaming crime games are a dime a dozen these days, but The Godfather challenges the GTA series by going straight to the pop-culture source of gangster mythology. As an up-and-coming soldier in the Corleone crime family, you gain "respect" by beating enemies and intimidating local businesses, while playing through scenarios that parallel the events of the movie.

■ Developer: EA Redwood Shores
■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Action
■ ESRB: M ■ Also on the PlayStation 2

Madden NFL 07



Never has the leap between installments in the Madden franchise been this great. Must-play game modes like the immersive Hall of Fame mode (where you play through the season at any position) and the ball-carrier-specific Highlight Stick (which tailors your evasive moves to your runner's unique style) make Madden NFL 07 the undisputed champion.

■ Developer: EA Tiburon
■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Football ■ ESRB: E
■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and GameCube

Mortal Kombat: Armageddon



As the "last" game in the series, Mortal Kombat: Armageddon is going out with a big, bloody bang. Tons of unlockables, gory online play, a custom Kreate-a-Fighter mode, over 60 playable characters, and a bonus kart racing game (Motor Kombat), and a full single-player adventure make this a must-have for Mortal Kombat fans.

■ Publisher and developer: Midway ■ Fighting
■ ESRB: M ■ Also on the PlayStation 2

NBA 2K7



As good as last year's version was, NBA 2K7 trumps its predecessor with even better graphics and gameplay tweaks and more detailed franchise mode. The biggest draw, however, is the stellar online Xbox Live play. Add the bargain price (\$10 less than NBA Live 07) and this b-baller is a sure-shot from any distance.

■ Developer: Visual Concepts
■ Publisher: 2K Sports ■ Basketball
■ ESRB: E ■ Also on the PlayStation 2

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07



If you've managed to miss the previous games, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07 makes a perfect entry point in the golf series. The Team Tour mode, new minigames, and rock-solid control are great, but it's the Xbox Live component that steals the show with a variety of online competitive modes and a running ESPN ticker.

■ Developer: EA Redwood Shores
■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Golf ■ ESRB: E
■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and GameCube

Hitman: Blood Money



Brutal and bloody to its core, Blood Money is an excellent adult excursion into the world of high-priced contract killing. Impressive controls and a formidable arsenal enable you to dispatch of enemies and clear levels as either a silent killer or a bold one-man army.

■ Developer: Io Interactive
■ Publisher: Eidos Interactive ■ Action
■ ESRB: Mature ■ Also on the PlayStation 2

Fight Night Round 3



There's no question about who rules the ring. With gorgeous graphics (including excruciatingly real facial deformations) and a deep career mode, this fighter is in its prime. Plus, it's also full of legendary pugilists like Ali, Frasier, and Roy Jones Jr., and comes packed with tons of EA extras like ESPN Classic footage.

■ Developer: EA Chicago ■ Publisher: EA Sports
■ Boxing ■ ESRB: T ■ Also on the PlayStation 2

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance



Ultimate Alliance builds on the successful formula of the X-Men Legends games, creating a truly massive, Gauntlet-inspired, multiplayer action/RPG experience incorporating nearly every significant Marvel character. The game stays true to its comic roots and features more than 140 characters from the Marvel universe.

■ Developer: Raven Software
■ Publisher: Activision ■ Action/RPG
■ ESRB: T ■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and GameCube

Xbox

A NUCLEAR-ARMED ROGUE ARMY
THREATENS TO TURN THE COLD
WAR INTO A BLAZING HOT ONE.
INFILTRATE, FIGHT, AND DISMANTLE
A MECHANICAL MONSTER.

TAKE SNAKE ON HIS LATEST
MISSION IN THE SEQUEL TO MGS3:
SNAKE EATER OR BATTLE YOUR
FRIENDS ONLINE IN EXCLUSIVE
MULTIPLAYER MODES.



METAL GEAR SOLID

P O R T A B L E O P S

STEALTH ACTION GOES PORTABLE



GameCube

Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2



This GameCube exclusive sticks close to the mega-hit, cartoon source material with over 20 total playable characters and a story mode that enables you to fight through key moments. But the real star is the hyper-fast multiplayer battles that take full advantage of the pick-up-and-play combat system.

■ Developer: 8ing ■ Publisher: D3Publisher
■ Fighting ■ ESRB: T

LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy



This terrific game follows the winning formula of the first LEGO Star Wars (arcade combat mixed with building block puzzles), but shifts its focus to the original movie trilogy. Don't let the kiddy feeling fool you—LEGO Star Wars II is a great action game brimming with nostalgia.

■ Developer: Traveller's Tales
■ Publisher: LucasArts ■ Action ■ ESRB: E10+
■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox

The Sims 2: Pets



The world's favorite digital dollhouse series ups the addiction factor with funny new pet features, a dizzying amount of customization options, and nearly infinite replay value. The simplistic but enchanting gameplay that made the series

such a runaway hit returns with the hilarious new twists.

■ Developer: EA Redwood Shores
■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Simulation ■ ESRB: E10+
■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox

Baten Kaitos Origins



A prequel to the popular Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean, Origins takes place 20 years before the events of the first game, providing plenty of juicy back-story details. A unique card fighting system distinguishes it from the rest of the RPG pack, and adds a huge layer of enjoyable complexity.

■ Developer: Namco Bandai Games/Monolith Software/tri-Crescendo ■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ RPG ■ ESRB: T

FIFA 07



FIFA 07 actually manages to improve on this year's stellar World Cup 2006, with whip-smart A.I., tremendous crowd noises, realistic passing mechanics, and new ball physics. As the best looking game in the series so far, FIFA 07 is the top *futbol* game of the year.

■ Developer: EA Canada
■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Soccer ■ ESRB: E
■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox

DK Bongo Blast



Bongo Blast puts an interesting spin on the familiar kart racing formula by making the racing airborne with jetpacks and chal-

The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess



As the GameCube's final blockbuster game, Twilight Princess provides a fantastic finale to this era of Nintendo's fantasy franchise. Awesome horse-back battles, myriad puzzles and minigames, cool wolf-transformative powers, and a rich fantasy story assure Twilight Princess instant-classic status. Without a doubt, Twilight Princess is the GameCube's top holiday offering and simply not to be missed.

■ Developer and publisher: Nintendo ■ Action/adventure ■ ESRB: T

lenging you to propel your racer by furiously beating a bongo drum controller (or a standard game pad). Sound crazy? It is, but that's what makes it so much fun.

■ Developer: Paon ■ Publisher: Nintendo
■ Racing ■ ESRB: E

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend



The switch to developer Crystal Dynamics for this latest Lara Croft adventure marks the return to ancient ruin rummaging greatness and makes Legend an important (and damn fun) turning point for the series. With so many vast improvements it's clear Lara is finally ready for the spotlight again.

■ Developer: Crystal Dynamics
■ Publisher: Eidos Interactive
■ Action/adventure ■ ESRB: T

Rayman: Raving Rabbids



The armless adventurer's fourth game pits Rayman against an evil

army of demented, blood-thirsty... bunnies? With gorgeous graphics and whimsical gameplay, this outing recalls a brighter time in the platform genre, and in the absence of any new Mario material, Rayman does a solid job of filling in this holiday season.

■ Developer: Ubi Soft Montpellier
■ Publisher: Ubi Soft ■ Action ■ ESRB: E10+

Resident Evil 10th Anniversary Edition



This awesome testament to zombie blasting greatness isn't so much a game as it is wonderful repackaging of three killer, GameCube exclusive titles: Resident Evil (the remake), the prequel Resident Evil Zero, and the revolutionary Resident Evil 4. But hurry: this gore soaked collector's pack won't last long.

■ Developer and publisher: Capcom
■ Survival Horror ■ ESRB: M

Happy Holidays!

PLAYER 1:

Got the latest tips & tricks
at the AT&T blue room.

PLAYER 2:

Got vaporized
by Player 1.



©2006 AT&T Knowledge Ventures. All rights reserved. AT&T is a registered trademark of AT&T Knowledge Ventures.

Go to attblueroom.com/gaming for the ultimate edge in gaming. Check out the latest content, including tips, tricks, clues and codes. Plus get exclusive previews, promotions and giveaways to help keep you ahead of the game — and your opponent.

The new  **at&t**
Your world. Delivered.™

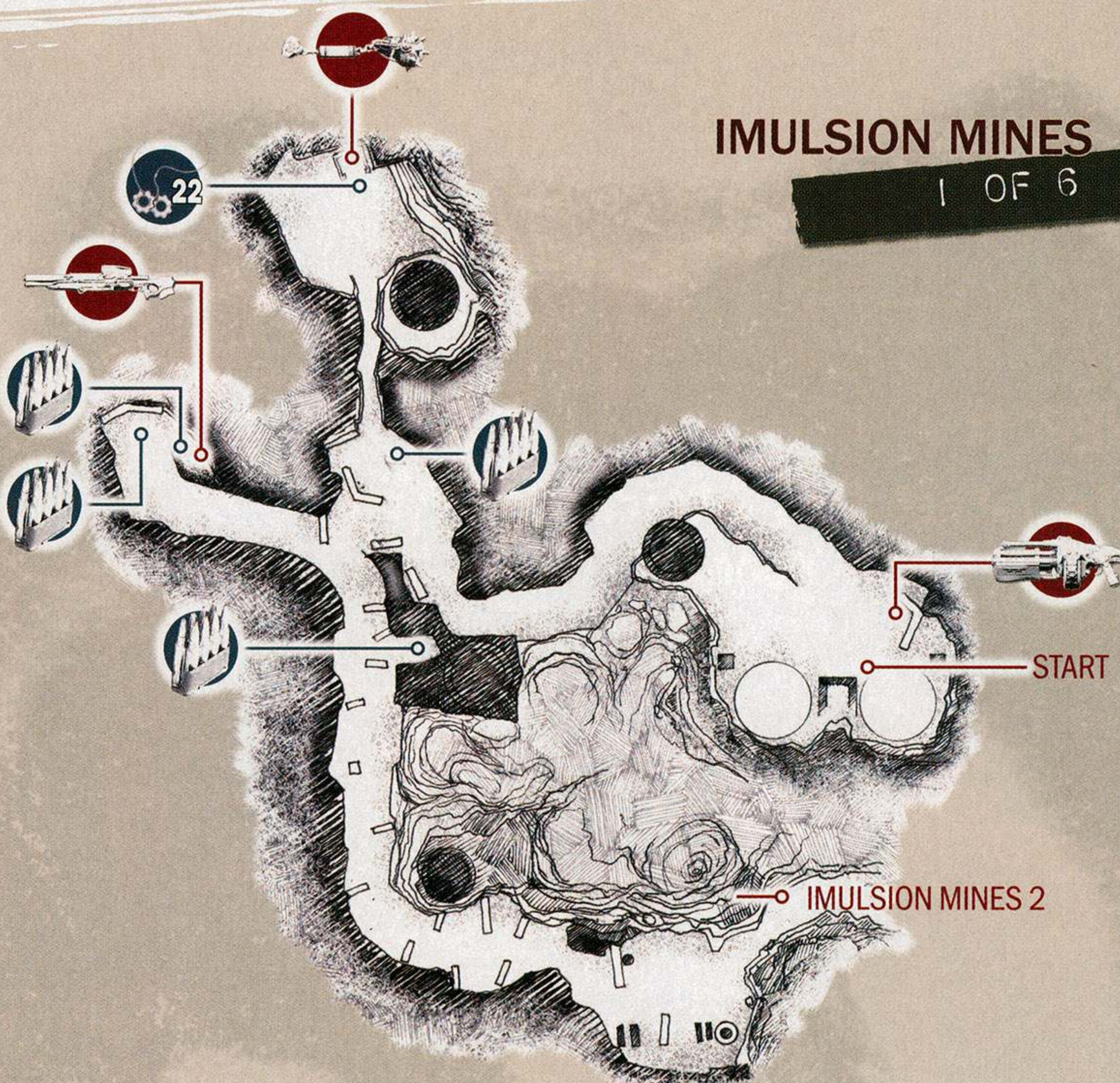


DARKEST BEFORE DAWN

Traverse the caves before the Kryll come home.

IMULSION MINES

1 OF 6



LOCATE THE PUMPING STATION BEFORE DAWN

The drilling platforms don't necessarily let out very close to the pumping station, so Delta Squad has to walk pretty fast to finish the job before the Kryll return. Follow the path leading away from the drilling platforms. Make your way toward the Crimson Omen in the distance. You'll find some Frag Grenades and a COG Tag there.



This COG Tag is on the ground in front of the Crimson Omen, not far from the drilling platforms you ride down into the mine.

Return the way you came, and turn right to descend a steep slope toward a collection of steel drums. You can reclaim the Longshot if you swapped it out earlier. The Longshot definitely comes in handy during Marcus' little spelunking episode, so keep it and the Lancer on hand until we advise otherwise.

Return up the slope with the Lancer in hand and flatten the approaching Dark Wretches. There are only eight of them, but it's enough to make Marcus instruct Baird and Cole to stay behind and guard the resonator—it's just Marcus and Dom from here on out.



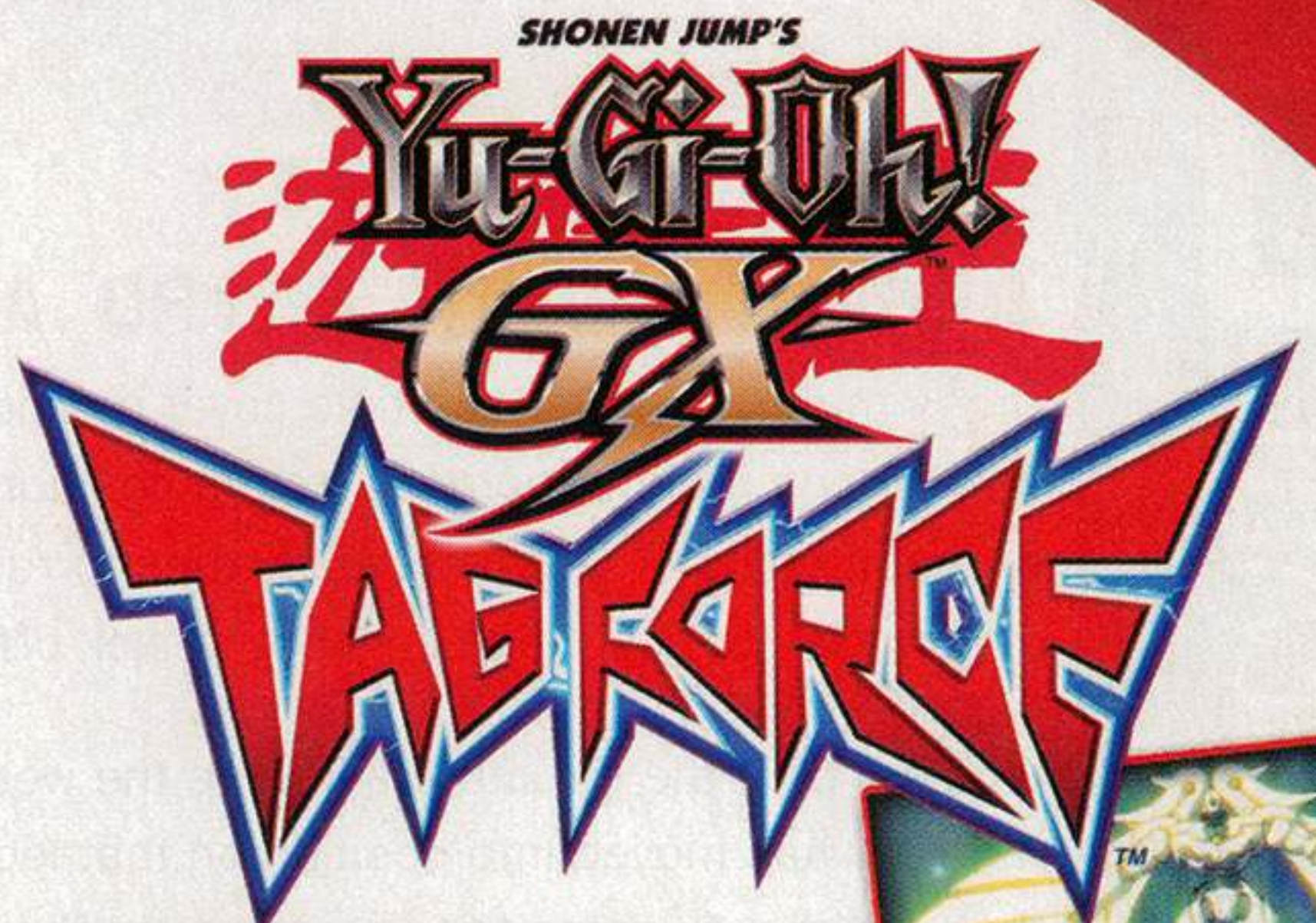
ACT 3 BELLY OF THE BEAST

LIMITED
EDITION
OFFICIAL
GAME CARDS
INSIDE!



THE DYNAMIC DUEL!

In the palm of your hand!



Worldwide online dueling
Create and edit the look of your character
Spirit duelists help develop your skills

Includes over 2,400 cards
Tag team dueling for the first time ever
The first Yu-Gi-Oh! game on the
PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) system



NINTENDO DS™



PSP
PlayStation®Portable

©1996 Kazuki Takahashi
©2004 NAS · TV TOKYO
™, ® and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2004 Nintendo. "PlayStation", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). Developed by Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. "KONAMI" is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. "SPIRIT CALLER" is a trademark of Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. Developed by Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. "KONAMI" is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. "TAG FORCE" is a trademark of Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

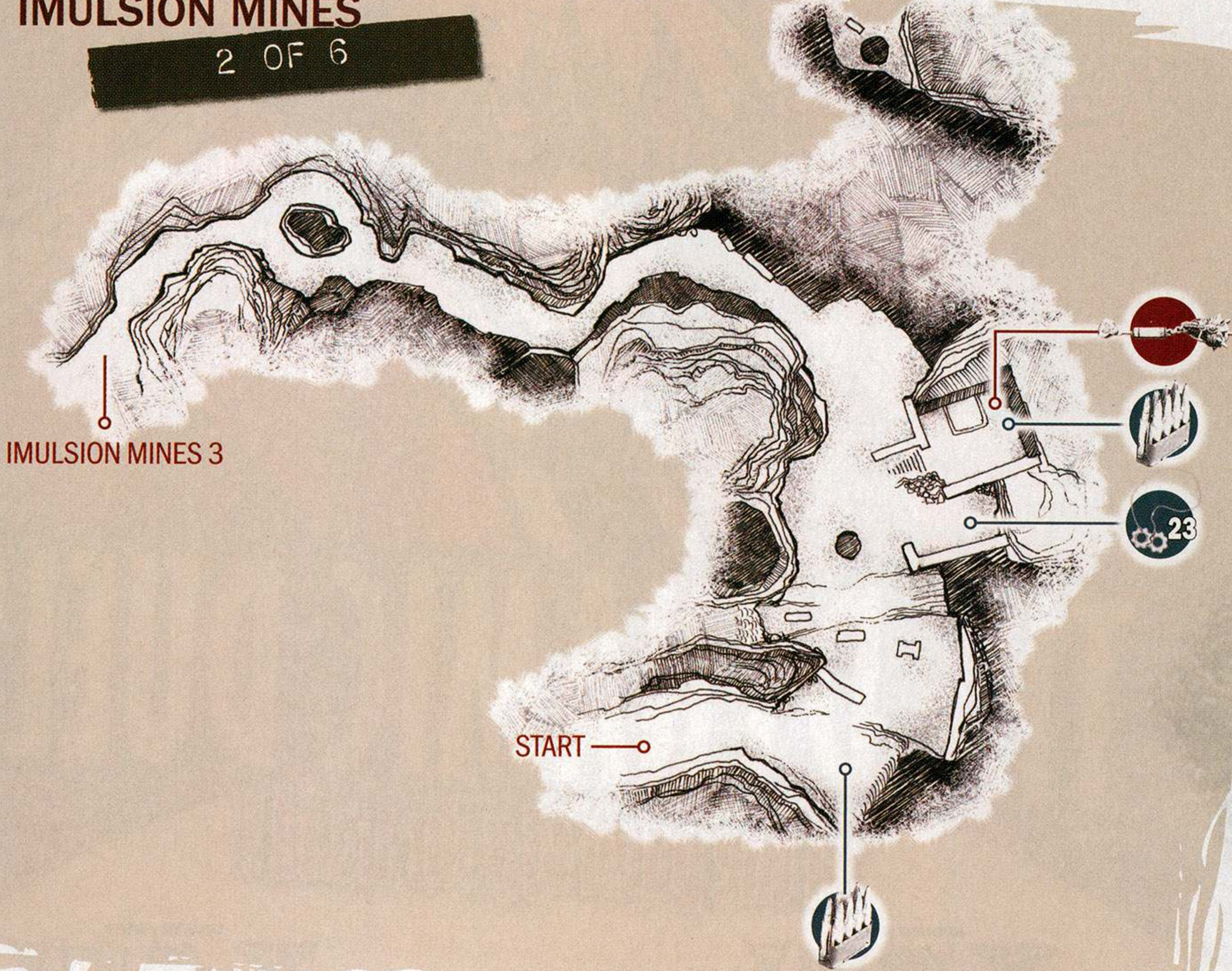
KONAMI
www.konami.com

PROSTRATEGY

Keep moving, and fight through the second wave of Dark Wretches en route to the ledge overlooking the water fall. It's time to take another ride! Marcus and Dom slide down an impossibly slippery slope to a lower level of the mine.

IMULSION MINES

2 OF 6



REGROUP WITH BAIRD AND GUS

Cross the bloody river and take cover behind the rocks ahead. A small squad of Grenadiers and Drones rapidly approach from a position near the structure on the right. Focus on the Grenadier on the right first, as he tries to rush Marcus and Dom's position. Once he's out of commission, use the Longshot to pick off the Drones one by one.

Proceed past the structure and note the weakened column across the chasm to the right. A Sniper has moved into position on that ledge under the column. Marcus can either use the Longshot to snipe the Sniper or use the Lancer to shoot the column, depositing several tons of rock on him. Proceed deeper into the mines.



Approach the area to the right of the stairs that lead up to the small structure. The COG Tag is on the ground near the wall.



THINK IN YARDS. NOT INCHES.



WHY MAKE ANY SIX FOOT FOUR LINEBACKER PETITE? WITH THE SANYO PLV-Z5 HIGH CONTRAST HOME PROJECTOR, EVERY BIG PLAY IS TRUE-TO-LIFE. A 2X OPTICAL ZOOM PROJECTS EIGHT-FOOT IMAGES (THAT'S ALMOST 3 YARDS) FROM A MERE TEN FEET AWAY. SUPERIOR IMAGE BRIGHTNESS PROVIDES YOU THE ABILITY TO SEE EVERY HIT IN HIGH-DEFINITION CRYSTAL CLARITY. THE INDUSTRY'S FIRST TWIN-IRIS SYSTEM BOASTS CRISP, BRIGHT PLAY-BY-PLAY. WITH A THREE-YEAR WARRANTY, WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED. INSTALL IT YOURSELF, THEN LET THE GAMING BEGIN.



SANYO



Want to screen test it yourself? Log on to www.SanyoScreenTest.com/85 and take a FREE test drive on your wall. Plus, get details for a \$200 Mail-In Rebate after purchase from any participating Sanyo dealer. Make your big play today.

For more big play-by-play www.sanyo/LCD.com

©2006 SANYO Presentation Technologies. All rights reserved. Trademarks and logos are copyrights of their respective owners. Photos are simulated and do not represent actual quality.



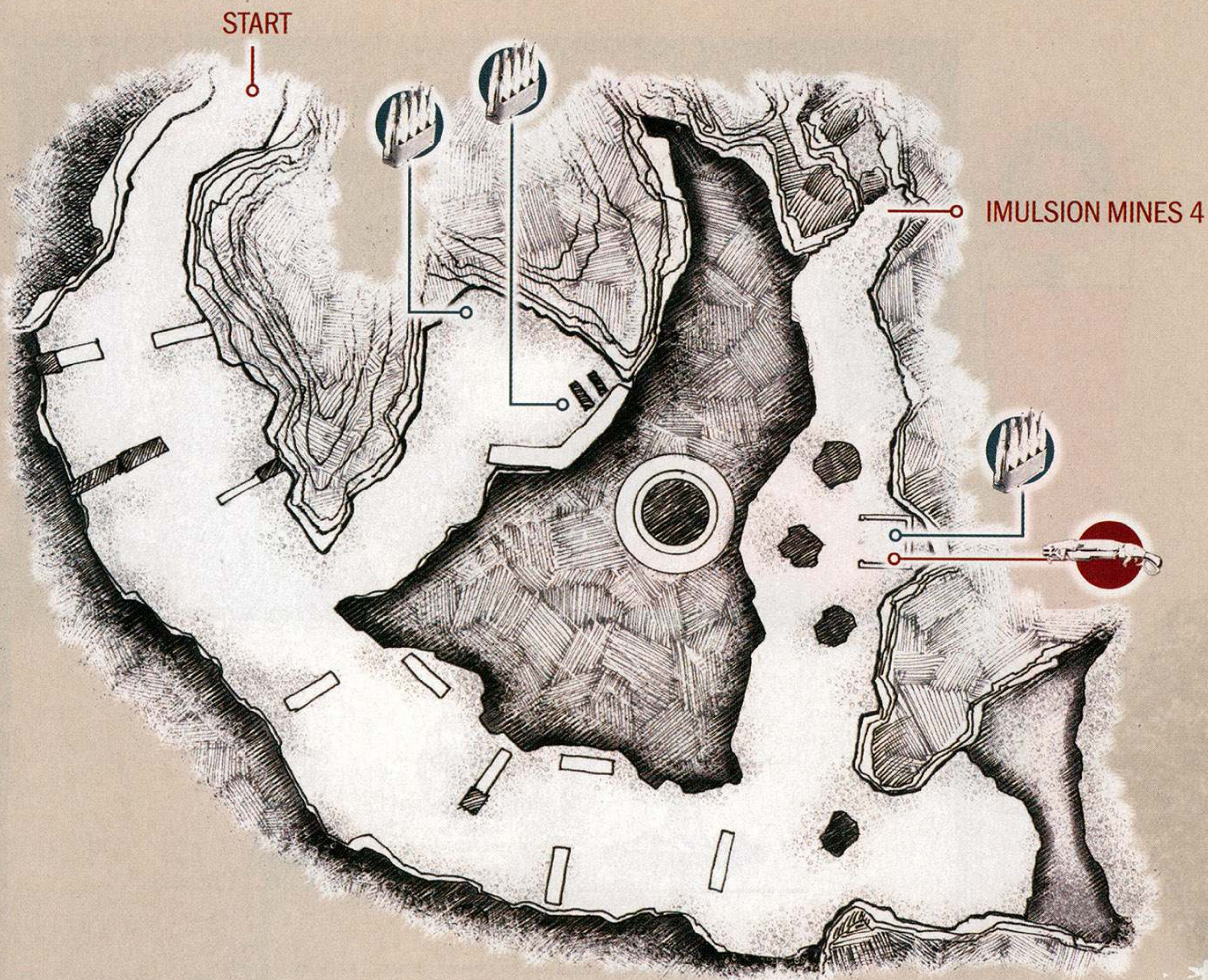
212-444-5000 • 800-947-9910
www.hbphotovideo.com



866-848-4076
www.myprojectorstore.com

ProjectorPeople.com
877-845-0043
www.projectorpeople.com

visualapex
Home Theater
800-883-7495
www.visualapex.com



Fight past the smattering of Dark Wretches ahead, and move into position behind the cover on the left. A Boomer fires his massive Boomshot from across a small canyon in the distance. Shoulder the Longshot and hit him with two or three bullets to the head. Manage this, and the next "boom" you'll hear will be his massive derriere slamming to the ground.

Gather the ammo from this cave section's side areas and continue to the left. Marcus and Dom soon take another nasty spill, this time down the chute of a grub hole. A call into Baird reveals Marcus isn't the only one lost.



NICKELODEON

降世神通

AVATAR

THE LAST AIRBENDER™

THE VIDEO GAME



AVAILABLE ON YOUR FAVORITE GAME SYSTEMS



MASTER THE ELEMENTS



- FULLY CUSTOMIZABLE AND UPGRADEABLE BENDING POWERS!
- JOURNEY THROUGH ALL THE GREAT NATIONS OF THE AVATAR WORLD!
- ORIGINAL STORY WITH NEVER BEFORE SEEN ENEMIES AND CREATURES!

www.avatarthevideogame.com



Available on PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system and PSP®(PlayStation®Portable) system.



NINTENDO DS™

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Wii™



www.thq.com



nick.com/videogames

©2006 Viacom International Inc. All Rights Reserved. Nickelodeon, Nickelodeon Avatar: The Last Airbender and all related titles, logos and characters are trademarks of Viacom International Inc. Exclusively published by THQ Inc. THQ and the THQ logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. "PlayStation", the "PS" Family logo, and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately).™, ®, Game Boy Advance, Nintendo DS, the Nintendo GameCube and the Wii logos are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. Microsoft, Xbox and the Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft.





Fleet of foot and loaded for bear, Wayne's got eye-catching action goods to spare.

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition

Global warming's got nothing on Capcom's latest ice-cold adventure.

Xbox 360

Lost Planet is best known for its thermal energy gimmick, with lead amnesiac Wayne only surviving in the frozen tundra by soaking up pools of heat left behind by Akrid monsters and exploded scenery. Perpetually dwindling warmth is just the beginning.

Selective Service

There may be only 11 missions, each divided into a couple stages, but Lost Planet's icy heart is a fast-paced action shooter with loads of replay value, thanks to dynamic combat that demands quick reflexes and strategic thinking, and a grappling gun you can use to quickly pull yourself out of trouble. The variety of guns, grenades, and mechanical "vital suits" may not be exhaustive, but they've been carefully tuned to enable different approaches while still underlining the need to stay moving.

Mechs have a reputation for being ludicrously slow and unwieldy, but those on show

here buck that trend beautifully, jet-thrusting about the battlefield with an agility that makes each a pleasure to operate. Some can hover briefly, others jump to dizzying heights, and all can latch heavy armaments like gatling guns and rocket launchers onto each arm. If you feel like showing off, each of these monstrous weapons can be hauled around separately.

Frosty the Gunman

Not every area boasts a dormant titanium monster for you to stomp around in, but that doesn't mean you can't wreak plenty of havoc on your own two feet. The standard machine gun is a safe bet, with its medium range and plentiful ammunition, but anything other than squishy human opposition will soak up lots of well-placed bullets. The shotgun, on the other hand, doesn't have anywhere near the rate of fire, but careful aiming will let you dispatch even bigger monsters quickly, though you'll have to get uncomfortably close to them to do it.



The rocket launcher is ideal for blowing apart heavily armored stationary targets like turrets, while the rifle puts slugs through pirate heads from afar. In the early build we played, each aims beautifully, and gives you the option of adopting different viewpoints. The rifle gets a variable scope, while the rocket launcher grants a close over-the-shoulder vantage. You can only carry two at once, so resisting the temptation to play it safe is pretty important to getting the most enjoyment out of each showdown.

Pulling the Pin

Conventional fire is supported by the different explosives you'll find lying about. Hand grenades are reasonably effective, but how much

Freezing/Smashing Enemies

First, line up your enemy's glowing weak spot (A) so each blast does maximum damage. When your chosen creepy-crawly dies, he'll freeze solid (B), and leave behind his remaining thermal energy. Smash your new ice sculpture to bits with a melee attack (C) to mop up the last little bit of energy.





cooler is it to disable an enemy mech with an electrical plasma bomb, chuck a glowing green frisbee shell into an exploding barrel, or smooch a yucky airborne critter with a gum grenade before making a mad rush for the hills? The only drag is that you can't carry more than one type at a time, but this limitation ultimately encourages players to use the damn things instead of hoarding them "just in case."

These weapon choices might not seem terribly inspired, and the truth is they're not. Oddly enough, what gives them their satisfying punch has little to do with the killer pyrotechnics, convincing sound effects, and recoil vibration rumbles. The snowy wastes, forbidding caverns, and rocky mountains you'll traverse may have well-defined entrances and exits, and inescapable boss battles, but the whole adventure winds up seeming less linear since weapon choice makes sure no battle ever goes down the same way twice. Every environment has its share of open areas that can be passed with any approach you're in the mood for: blast a narrow path to the exit, pick off every last enemy one by one, or take control of a turret and turn the whole neighborhood to smoldering rubble.

Unseasonably Cool

Lost Planet may be, at its heart, a relatively conventional run-n-gunner, and a short one at that, but an early look reveals a passion for nailing the details, and a design ethic that milks every environment for its latent thrills, instead of stretching the same lame corridors and boxy warehouse warrens out for hours on end like so

Collector's Edition



Extreme Condition will be available in two units when it's released on January 12. The Collector's Edition has a second disc that's loaded with a host of extra goodies that retails for \$69.99. Content was suggested by fans of the game through comments from Lost Planet's online message boards. Notable features include Battleground, a bonus multiplayer map exclusive to the Collector's Edition (until summer 2007), audio track of select songs from the game, an art book, digital imagery, and much more.



The multiplayer map Battleground will be offered exclusively in the Collector's Edition.

Using the Rope/Grapppling Hook



The grappling hook will not only get you to higher ground quickly, it'll deploy automatically should you drop off the edge of something.

many other titles. The result is shaping up to be a satisfying single-player campaign that you'll actually want to play more than once, with frenzied multiplayer outings to boot. Here's hoping Lost Planet makes good on its considerable potential.—Ouroboros

- Update
- Developer and publisher: Capcom
- Target release date: January

Using the Data Post Beacon



Tapping the B button will deploy Data Post beacons that litter the world, giving you a sizable thermal energy boost, and uploading map data to your PDA.





All the epic, destructive gore of the first game is back in God of War II.

God of War II

Kratos returns for another round of bloody fun

PS2

In 2005, a Spartan warrior of mythic ability climbed the metaphorical face of mount Olympus to challenge Ares, the Grecian god of war, for the rights to his soul. That warrior—named Kratos—found success, thanks to the legions of gamers who played and loved the smash hit, *God of War*. By the end of the game, the mortal Kratos had not only defeated Ares, but became a god in his own right, granted Ares's vacant throne by Athena herself. Now, more ruthless than his predecessor had ever been and yet tortured by the deeds he committed in mortality, Kratos directs the world's warfare from his Olympian perch, destined to fuel in godhood the horrors he perpetrated in life.

This February Kratos's journey will take a sharp turn. At the start of Sony Santa Monica's upcoming sequel, *God of War II*, the new deity will find

himself the target of plotting and subterfuge by his peers. Determined to free himself from their grip, he will embark on a journey to the Island of Fates at the end of the Earth, where the three Sisters of Fate—Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—direct the destinies of mortal and god alike under the protection of an army of monsters. Kratos's goal: to either change his destiny and achieve the life of peace he has been denied for so long, or to find his way to the doorstep of Hades.

It's a fitting plot for an action-adventure game that, like its predecessor, will be story-driven. But a rich story is only part of what Santa Monica plans to deliver in *God of War II*. Here's an update with everything we know so far about the sequel to last year's super-smash, that was a favorite of gamers and the gaming press.


Mythic Mechanics

True to its roots, *God of War II* will be a game centered on action—fast-paced, brutal, bloody, and unequivocally fun. Both story and gameplay will pick up right where the original left off. The controls are being built on the hugely-successful formula used in the first *God of War*. Attacks and simple combos will be easy as button-mashing pie, while more complex combos will require a bit more finesse to execute.

Of course, just as in the first game, *God of War II* will feature contextual attack sequences for the largest enemies: After you deal enough damage to them, pressing a sequence of buttons on the controller according to on-screen prompts will send Kratos through exquisitely animated finishing moves. The format will be second-nature to series veterans, while newbies should be delighted by the ease with which they'll perform such spectacular feats. You'll get lots of practice, too: Contextual battles will have far more gameplay integration in the sequel.

The original's puzzles will also make a return in improved form. Santa Monica has been paying particular attention to ensuring that the environmental mindbenders in the game are not just challenging or engaging but help to drive the story along as well. Rather than simply incorporating puzzles for their own sake, *God of War II* will have puzzles whose solutions are themselves plot elements.





Every pack of Magic: The Gathering®
Comes With 15 Cards.
And Endless Possibilities.

When you open a pack of Magic, you're opening a world of options that go far beyond a mere game.

You hold the keys to a community of players just like you.

The ticket to play in tournaments in town and around the world.

And the chance to grab your share of over \$3 million in cash and prizes, handed out every year.

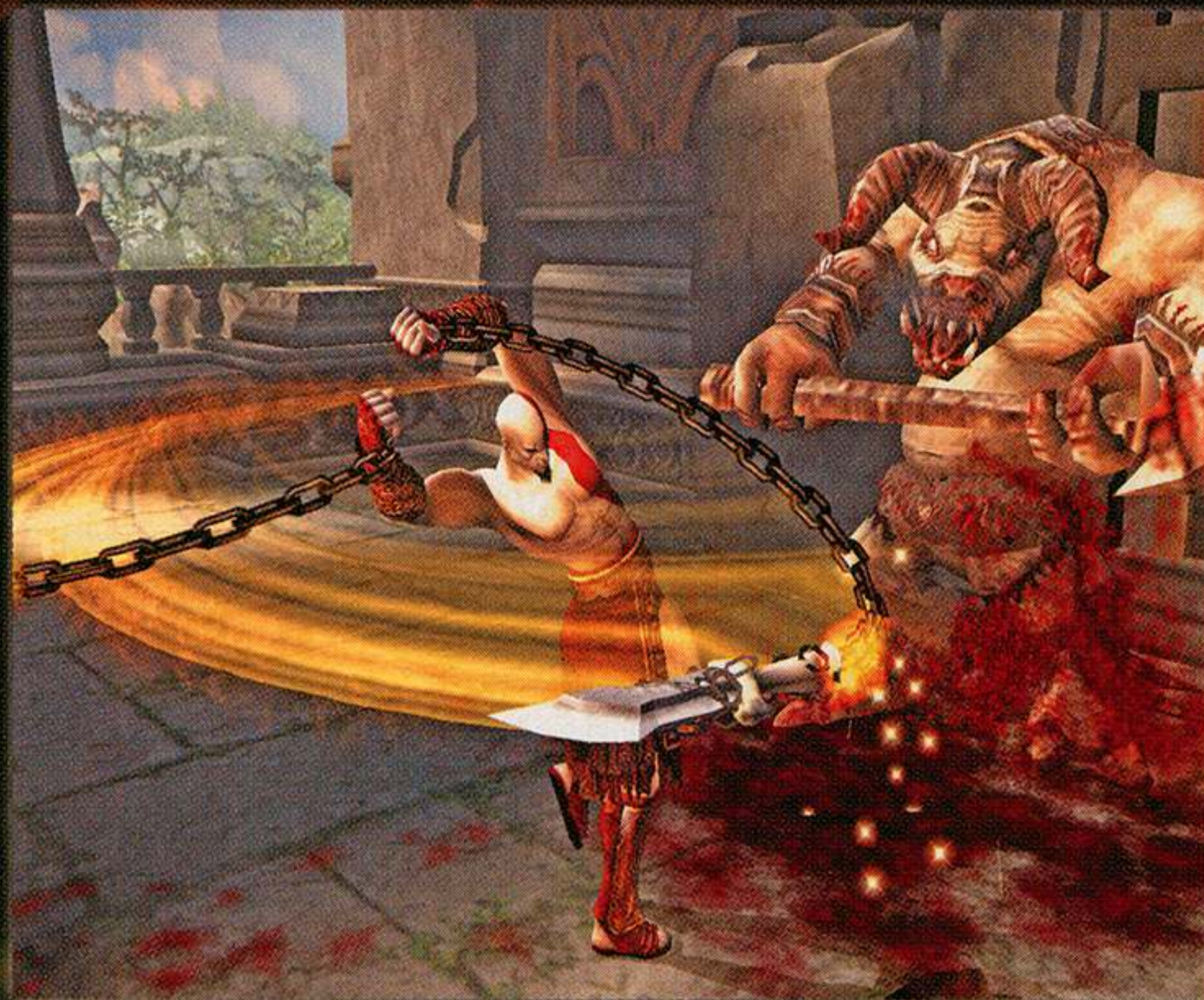
Find out what over 6 million Magic players already know: It's one game with many opportunities.

Download a demo at

playmagic.com

MAGIC
The Gathering®

TRADING CARD GAME



Weaponry of the Gods

It goes without saying that a warrior god is nothing without his weapons, and Kratos has some of the sweetest around. His twin Blades of Chaos—burning swords attached by Ares via chains to his wrists during the events of the first game—make an appreciable return in *God of War II*. Kratos wields them with unmatched skill, hurling them at foes like tethered boomerangs. His new Wind Bow, a magical, almost ethereal manifestation of energy, can be used to down targets at range. Enemy blades are likewise just fodder for Kratos's grip: the aforementioned E3 demo showed him severing the arm of one of the Island of Fates' pig-beast inhabitants, catching the massive axe it was holding, and employing it with deadly force against its former owner.

To Be Continued

God of War II looks to be a true sequel—a near-seamless continuation of the first game along an evolving storyline, with almost identical (and notably proven) gameplay. But Santa Monica is spicing up the original blend with a few new ingredients, too. While grappling, for instance, Kratos can now swing in any direction. He can also lock on to enemies and continue to attack them while he's on the move. And, most notably, he has the added advantage of Icarus wings which grant him temporary flight.

Nevertheless, *God of War II* will be, first and foremost, a continuation of everything the first game was. That goes for the first game's storied embrace of hard-hitting brutality and accompanying gore.—*Daphnicus*

■ **Update** ■ Developer: Sony Santa Monica ■ Publisher: Sony
■ Target release date: February



Live like a mortal. Rock like a God.

GUITAR HERO II™

Mark, 19
Cashier

Stephen, 23
Accountant



www.guitarherogame.com



PlayStation 2



ACTIVISION

HARMONIX



Guitar Hero II™ & © 2006 RedOctane, Inc. RedOctane® is a registered trademark of RedOctane, Inc. and Activision is a registered trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. Game code © 2005-2006 Harmonix Music Systems, Inc. Developed by Harmonix Music Systems. Protected by US Patent No. 6,429,863; patents pending. Gibson®, S.G.®, and the shapes and design elements of the SG Controller and the guitars are trademarks of Gibson Guitar Corp. under license by RedOctane, Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.



Lara's character model has been spiced up in, um, certain areas.

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Anniversary

Here's your heavy dose of
Tomb Raider nostalgia

PS2

We really wanted to make it better," says Jason Bell, the creative director at Crystal Dynamics, the developer behind *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*. And that's really what it's all about: The latest exploits of Lara Croft won't be new at all, but a rehash of the original *Tomb Raider*, a game that, since its release on the PlayStation nearly a decade ago, has become a console classic.

Not Quite Next Gen

Instead of rushing the *Tomb Raider* series, one of Eidos's few remaining big names, into a half-assed next-gen poly fest, Crystal Dynamics is starting from the ground up. Like *Resident Evil's* GameCube rebirth, *Tomb Raider: Anniversary* will be a complete retelling of the original *Tomb Raider* experience. (The original *Tomb Raider* was released for the PlayStation in 1996.) *Anniversary* is a true remake, and nothing is safe. Crystal Dynamics is giving Lara a hot new treatment that ranks up there with the best that current-gen console technology has to offer. In-game environments, too, are getting the hot wax treatment.

Searching for Scion

Just as in the first game, Lara will be on the hunt for the mysterious artifact known as the Scion. But the enemies and environmental puzzles, including the way they interact with their surroundings, will be reworked extensively. To accomplish this, Crystal Dynamics is using the new *Tomb Raider: Legend* engine to power Lara's return to Sony's camp. This means the combat is getting a super-sized boost: Lara's combat mechanics and the diversity of enemy animal attacks have been given a massive face lift.

Puzzles, long a series standard, have also seen big changes. In one scene, a series of gears and cogs block Lara's progression. But rather than just pull a few switches, as in past games, Lara must swing and dodge through the entire three-tiered structure, which is decked out with enhanced physics. And this type of treatment permeates throughout, breathing new life into scenarios that players will recognize from the original.

From the in-depth look we received of the Peru level, we can tell that *Anniversary* is giving the PlayStation 2 a serious workout. And being a seventh-generation PlayStation 2 game from Crystal Dynamics, we'd expect no less. Running in full, glorious 480p, *Tomb Raider* looks better than ever, coming up just a bit shy of the hi-def Xbox 360 experience in *Legend*.

While running us through Peru, Bell showed off Lara's different maneuvers, from basic lock-on and strafe controls in firefights, to pole swinging, to an enhanced grapple that lets her swing and grab objects, just like in *Legend*. The upgraded environments have been recreated to actually make them fun to explore, while feisty



animal enemies are peppered throughout each level to up the action quotient. Expect to see returning favorites like wolves, bears, pesky bats, and even a few deadly dinos.

The Princess of Persia

While at times Lara's travels pin her as the female version of Ubisoft's acrobatic, platform-hopping Prince, her objectives will be more focused on fending off enemies...even the occasional boss battle. But as in *Prince of Persia*, exploration will be the overall goal of Lara's campaign, with huge environmental puzzles to piece together.

Old-school fans will recognize returning flourishes that made the first game so special. Listen carefully for the uber-recognizable "reward" jingle (for successfully solving a puzzle piece), a re-orchestrated version of the original soundtrack, and a circular weapons selection system that instills warm nostalgia. Possibly the most helpful improvement, though, is the ability to control the camera with the right analog stick, a limitation of the original game that frustrated countless players.

When it comes to pricing, Eidos is sworn to secrecy. Will it ship at full price? Considering the effort that Crystal Dynamics has put into it so far, it will probably be bargain no matter what the cost.—*Mr. Marbles*

■ **First Look** ■ Developer: Crystal Dynamics
■ Publisher: Eidos Interactive ■ Target release date: 2007

HP recommends
Windows® XP Professional

DON'T
BOOT.
PLAY.

THE
COMPUTER IS
PERSONAL
AGAIN.

QuickPlay



DVD

Boot time: the black hole of time. Skip it.
Get to your movies and music without booting up,
just by hitting the QuickPlay button. Look for it on
the HP Pavilion dv2000t Entertainment Notebook.

Don't wait. Buy at 1-800-525-MY HP,
hp.com/personal or your retailer.





Everything from graphics to gameplay to controls has been reworked for Medal of Honor: Airborne.



Medal of Honor: Airborne

After a ceasefire, Medal of Honor redeploys into action

PS3

Xbox 360

From the folks that practically invented the World War II shooter comes the long-awaited next-generation version of Medal of Honor. Aptly titled Airborne, Electronic Arts' first crack at swiping a piece of the WWII first-person shooter throne back from Activision and its stable reign with Call of Duty is something altogether different than scripted duck and cover. This installment of MOH allows players to pummel Nazi forces at their own will, and it's all about the air drop.

Air Assault

With WWII shooters a dime a dozen these days, developer EA Los Angeles needs an ace up its sleeve to distinguish the MOH series from the crowded pack. So up, up, and away it is, to dangerous skies above Axis-swarmed European territory. For Private Boyd Travers and Pathfinder Eddie La Pointe, the mission is simple: jump, and jump fast.

Airborne is all about the air drop, and the way the game plays out is set by a single parachute fall into enemy territory. For the most part, WWII FPSs are presented in linear nature with scripted events leading the drive to the fin-

ish. But EA is straying away from the former, striving to create the next-gen version of nonlinear. And the air drop is the entry point.

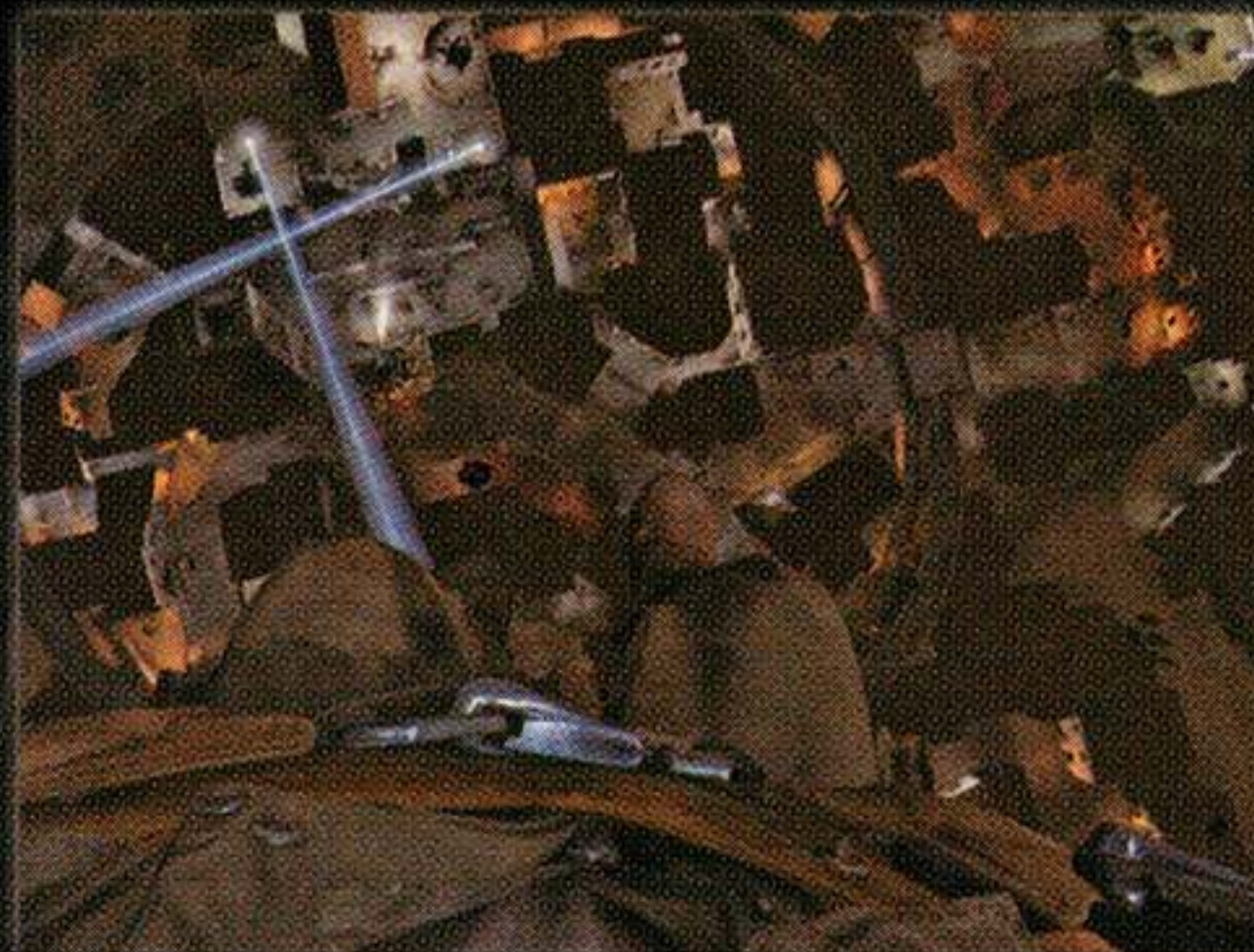
To Each Their Own War

Floating down above the battleground gives the player a bird's eye view of the action, and the strategy begins even before setting your feet down. Landing in the mix of Allied troops would be a safe bet, as would securing a rooftop location as a prime sniper spot. But one could also touch down deep in enemy lines and fight the battle from the inside out. It's completely up to the player.

And as the first next-gen MOH game, there are certainly ample treats. The game engine has been rebuilt for amazing hi-def presentation, and the down-the-sight firearm view is wonderfully detailed and topped off with a sweet motion blur. Typical MOH controls take effect here, with noticeable upgrades including pressure-sensitive, stabilizing sniper controls. Furthermore, modding weapons (realistically) in-field is a must, such as slapping a grenade launcher attachment onto a Garand.—*Mr. Marbles*



■ First Look ■ Developer: EA LA ■ Publisher: EA Games
■ Target release date: First Quarter 2007





MONSTERS ON THE LOOSE!

Get ready to roam, rage and rampage your way through cities of the world destroying all in your path. George, Lizzie and Ralph are back along with 37 new monsters that you can collect and play as. Wander through 30 neighborhoods trashing everything in sight as you uncover hidden monsters and power-ups.

RAMPAGE

TOTAL DESTRUCTION

WWW.RAMPAGEGAME.COM

MIDWAY **Wii**

EVERYONE 10+
E
 10+
 CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
 Violence

Rampage: Total Destruction © 2008 Midway Amusement Games, LLC. All rights reserved. RAMPAGE: TOTAL DESTRUCTION and all characters are trademarks or registered trademarks of Midway Amusement Games, LLC. All rights reserved. Distributed under license by Midway Amusement Games, LLC. All rights reserved. The Wii logo and trademarks of Nintendo. © 2008 Nintendo.



BE BILLY. BE MANDY. BE GRIM.
JUST DON'T BEHAVE!

AVAILABLE NOW!

The Grim Adventures of BILLY & MANDY

WWW.MIDWAYCARTOON.COM

PLAY AS ONE OF 15 CHARACTERS FROM THE HIT CARTOON NETWORK SHOW.

SMASH OBJECTS, DESTROY ENVIRONMENTS AND BATTLE IN 20 INTERACTIVE ARENAS.

DUKE IT OUT WITH UP TO 4 PLAYERS TO BE THE LAST ONE STANDING.

MIDWAY

CN
 CARTOON NETWORK

Wii

EVERYONE 10+
E
 10+
 CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
 Cartoon Violence
 Crude Humor



SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Combined Assault

The PlayStation 2's premiere online shooter returns to settle the score

PS2

The PlayStation 2 and the SOCOM series have been best buddies since 2002, when SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs first exploded onto the Sony platform and created the system's first smash-hit online shooter. Instead of resting on its laurels, developer Zipper Interactive cranked out two feature-packed sequels that both managed to keep the series fresh and nudge even more players into cyberspace. Now, they're at it again with Combined Assault.

Commanding the Operation

SOCOM's online multiplayer mode is already the stuff of legends, but Combined Assault is attempting to up the ante with its single-player campaign as well. The game shrugs off SOCOM 3's linear level structure, giving players more of a choice when it comes to tackling objectives. Rounding out the package is a four-player co-

operative mode, which lets you and three friends search, sneak, and shoot your way through the game's 18 campaign missions as a single unit.

If you decide to go in solo, Combined Assault offers a new method for issuing orders to your squad: the Team Command Action system. Depending on the situation, the TCA contextually highlights the most appropriate options, making it a breeze to bark orders at your team members on the fly. Cumbersome menus are a thing of the past.

Enemy artificial intelligence has also seen a big boost in Combined Assault, so relying on your teammates for survival is more important than ever. Opposing soldiers will switch tactics depending on the type of gun they're carrying, so you'll need to be on your toes.

One is the Loneliest Number

Combined Assault is being released side-by-side with SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs: Fireteam Bravo 2 for the PSP, and this decision is more than just a clever marketing technique. When linked together, the games feature an overlapping story where two SEAL teams are cooperating in order to reach a similar goal. Decisions that you make in one game will have a direct impact on the other, and vice versa. This is just the tip of the iceberg, and will surely lead to more interesting gameplay situations as the story progresses.—*Tim Kinnen*

■ Hands-On ■ Developer: Zipper Interactive ■ Publisher: Sony
 ■ Target release date: Available now



This holiday, give **GAMEPRO**



GIVE THEM WHAT THEY **REALLY** WANT!

A year of GamePro (12 issues) for just **\$19.97**

Order online for great holiday savings:
GamePro.com/give



PRO TIP: The Lancer's chainsaw bayonet gives a splat-tastic melee attack — just press and hold B to let 'er rip. Getting shot will lower the chainsaw.

Gears of War

A brainless plot and god-awful dialogue can't keep this instant classic down.

Xbox 360



With the PlayStation 3 launch in full swing and precious few worthwhile Xbox 360 exclusives on the market, the Xbox 360 needs a mega-hit now more than ever before. Well, the Calvary has just arrived in the form of Gears of War, which is not only the best action game on the Xbox 360 but one of the best action games that we've ever played, period.

The Great (Blood) Red Hope

Although Tenacious Moses assures us that there is a narrative story in place—something about the Pendulum Wars and precious glowing goo and God knows what else—you wouldn't guess any of that by playing the game. What *are* The Locust, exactly? What's their goal? And why do the other soldiers call protagonist Fenix a traitor? These aren't rhetorical questions, folks: even after beating the game, we were still left wondering. That's because the game never gives you any answers.

In fact, it doesn't even *ask* most of those important questions until, oddly, the closing cinema. Instead, you're presented with throwaway plot points involving re-routed coordinates, auxiliary power sources, and a device known as the "resonator." It's nothing you haven't seen

before: ultra-hard marines barking orders at each other, characters screaming "they're everywhere!" and plenty of stuff blowing up real good.



Shifting Gears

But as much as the story stinks, the gameplay is stunning. Gears of War isn't quite a full-tilt shooter—it plays like a witches brew of Resident Evil 4 (the over-the-shoulder precision aiming) and Metal Gear Solid (the stealth and cover dynamic) with a dash of Kill.switch thrown in. The resulting mix is hard to label, but we know this much: it's the best thing to happen to the shooter genre since Half-Life.

The chief accomplishment is a sleeker, more authentic approach to firefights, that force you to stake out strategic squat-and-pop cover positions. Each battlefield plays a bit like an organic puzzle—it's no longer about running





PROTIP: The sniper rifle is almost unstoppable, particularly if you're good with headshots and can nail the Active Reload consistently. Click the Right Thumbstick to zoom in, camper.



PROTIP: General Raam is one tough customer. Torque Bow blasts inflict big damage, but if you're playing in co-op mode, try sending one player behind him to man the gatling gun.



PROTIP: Finding cover is key. Press the A button to "latch on" to any surface or object. From there, you can jump to other cover, blind fire, or lean out to make precise shots.

through corridors while gunning down waves of faceless goons in search of a bigger rocket launcher. In Gears of War, the enemies are out to get you, and you've got to think quickly or pay the consequences. It's an electric experience that makes games like Quake 4 or F.E.A.R. feel like yesterday's newspaper. It's fresh, it's thrilling, and it works, even if the control scheme still needs a bit more tuning.

There's a tricky learning curve to the cover system, so you can expect to spend the first 15 minutes or so watching yourself be blown to smithereens before you learn enough to put up a decent fight. The most confusing part? The way you sometimes "stick" to nearby walls when all you wanted to do was duck behind a handy barricade. The weapon selection system, meanwhile, uses the directional pad to swap between various guns and grenades. It's clunky but serviceable. The shooting and maneuvering, though, is effortless, and the new "active reload" feature is clearly a video game standard in the making.

Destroyed Beauty

The game also raises the bar for graphics on the Xbox 360, so much so, in fact, that it casts serious doubt on Sony's claims of PlayStation 3 graphical superiority. An HD-capable 720p or 1080i TV setup is a must to play the game but cash-strapped gamers can breathe a big sigh of relief as Gears still sparkles on a 480i TV, a serious testament to its outstanding art direction.

Gears' audio prowess also gives the best argument yet for dropping a few Benjamins on a bangin' 5.1 speaker setup. Deep, rumbling explosions supply the wow factor, but thanks to the spatial sound effects, there's actually a distinct gameplay advantage to keeping the volume pumped up. Consider muting the over-the-top soundtrack, though, which threatens to break the game's eerie mood with its overzealous B-movie histrionics. The character dialogue also has the subtlety of a sledgehammer to the face; it's campy to the point of being embarrassing.



PROTIP: Curb stomp fallen enemies by running close and tapping the X button; it's the favored way to finish off foes in Execution mode.

Big Gears Keep on Turnin'

We were also disappointed by the brevity of the single-player campaign. Newbies will blow through the whole thing on Casual mode in under eight hours, and veterans will smash through it in an afternoon. That sucks. But then again, Gears is, um, geared towards online multiplayer. And here it shines brightly, coming within striking distance of Halo 2's benchmark-setting Xbox Live interface. If you're an

Online Opus

Gears of War's multiplayer is a radical departure from the tried-and-true live, die, respawn mentality. Here are the highlights.

Cooperative

Team up with a buddy over Xbox Live, System Link, or split screen to take on the single-player campaign together. Try it on Hardcore difficulty for a real challenge!

Warzone

Warzone is closest to a classic team deathmatch, and supports up to eight players. Four humans compete against four Locusts, and each player has just one life, making for some very intense matches.

Assassination

In this mode, the only goal is to kill the opposing team's captain. Captains, in turn, should stay away from the front lines and use the most powerful weapons, such as the Hammer of Dawn satellite.

Execution

In this mode, you must revive any fallen teammates before another player finishes them off with the dreaded curb stomp. Stick together!

Xbox Live warrior, put Gears at the top of your shopping list. Now.

The cooperative mode finally does justice to the concept playing with a buddy. It's a fantastic experience made all the better by a smart hosting system that allows other players to "drop in" on your single player game without missing a beat. The three tense team multiplayer modes is also amazing—the stealthy gameplay and lack of respawns makes for some incredibly tense matches, and should keep Gears in the Xbox Live spotlight for months, if not years, to come.

Wargasm

Gears of War may be big and dumb, but it's fun—the video game equivalent of a Jerry Bruckheimer film, maybe. The game glows in a revelatory way that we haven't seen since God of War and Resident Evil 4. If nothing else, it's infinitely more engaging and suspenseful than this year's crop of by-the-numbers FPS games, and it's enough to make you wonder whether Epic's other big shooter, Unreal Tournament 2007, has been rendered obsolete before it's even been released.—Vicious Sid



PROTIP: Gears of War can be damned difficult: definitely start on Casual mode on your first playthrough, especially if you like going solo.

	GRAPHICS 5.0		FUN FACTOR 4.75
	SOUND 4.5		
	CONTROL 4.25		

- Developer: Epic Games
- Publisher: Microsoft
- \$59.99; \$69.99 (Collector's Edition)
- Available now
- Shooter
- 2 players; 8 online
- ESRB: M



PROTIP: These Widowmakers are a real bitch. Dodge its goo balls and hammer it with LAARK missiles. Finish it off with a few Hailstorm turrets.



Resistance: Fall of Man

Resistance is exactly what Sony needs: a great PlayStation 3 launch game.

PS3



First off, let's get this out of the way: Resistance ain't no Gears of War. But it's actually somewhat unfair to even compare the two directly (though that won't stop us, *nosiree*). Gears of War is a genre-blending, quasi-experimental approach to duck-and-cover warfare that's closer in spirit to Resident Evil 4 than run-and-gun shooters like Unreal Tournament or Halo. Resistance: Fall of Man, meanwhile, is happier to work within well-established first-person shooter parameters, offering up time-tested FPS throwbacks like health packs and ammo boxes.

Lies My History Teacher Told Me

Resistance does, however, take an unusual approach to its storyline, setting up an alternate timeline where World War II never happened. Instead, a mysterious race of mutant/human hybrids has swept Europe, conquering and converting everything in its path. Though the setup is epic in scope, the game itself shifts to a personal scale as it follows three days in the life of Sergeant Nathan Hale, a U.S. trooper who is infected by the Chimera invaders.

Between-level cinematics are presented in faux-documentary style, complete with gritty

black-and-white photos and a History Channel-style narration that attempts to uncover the real story behind Sgt. Hale's encounters with the beastly Chimera. It's a welcome touch.

As a whole, Resistance's storytelling far exceeds that of the more juvenile Gears of War. The setup is clearer, the characters are likeable, and the dialogue is actually believable. The tale is surprisingly compelling, providing more than enough juice to keep you engrossed right up to the ending credits.

Blu-ray Bruiser

And certainly, that ability to grab your attention is Resistance's single biggest asset. Its fast and ferocious single-player campaign, which should take most gamers about 10 to 12 hours to finish, is a blast and engaging throughout. Where Gears generally pits you against 5 to 10 Locust at a time, Resistance pummels you with entire platoons of Chimera killers, enough enemies to quickly induce panic in even seasoned FPS vets.

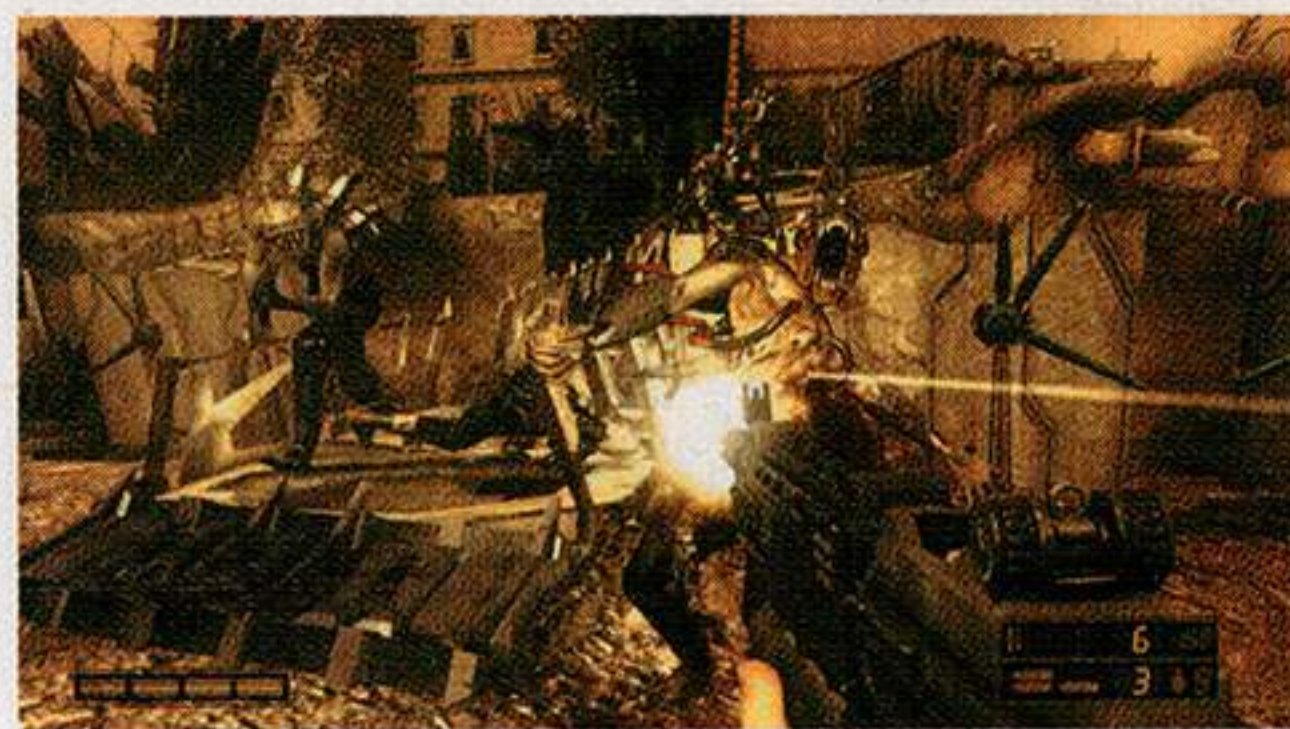
Thankfully, you have access to weapons that more than evens the odds. And rather than rehashing a predictable arsenal of lookalike machineguns and rifles, Insomniac tapped its Ratchet and Clank heritage to create one the wildest, most unconventional FPS firearms seen

yet. The resulting firepower shatters some of the genre's most persistent gameplay formulas and injects a dose of manic genius to the shoot-and-scoot action.

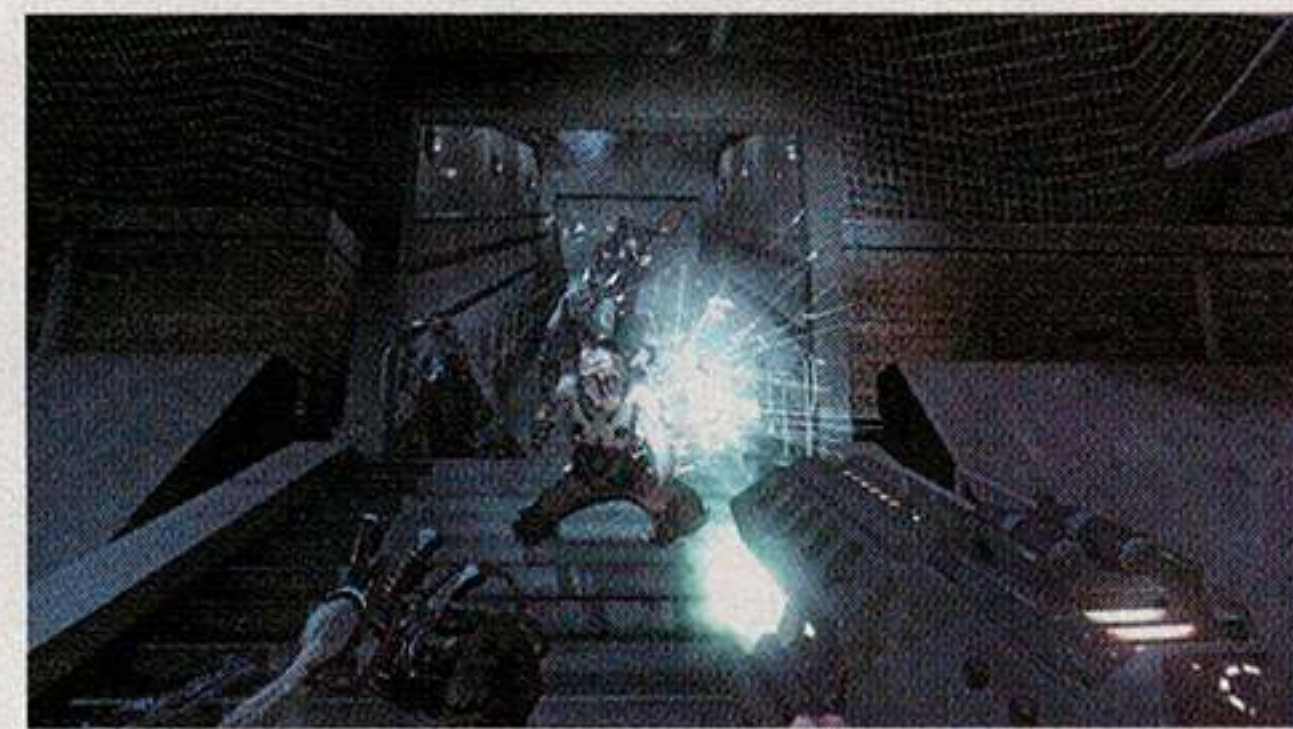
Some weapons are designed to shoot through, or reflect off of, walls and obstacles. Others lay traps, "tag" enemies with magnetic beacons, summon protective shields, or zap entire crowds of enemies en masse. Dual firing modes jack up the offensive (and defensive) capabilities still further. Even the sniper rifle, a straightforward gun if there ever was one, has been given a new lease on life thanks to a new



PROTIP: The Sapper fires mine-like goo balls, which are particularly useful for tripping up big foes like Grey Jacks, Steelheads, and Titans.



PROTIP: Your stock Carbine is one of the best weapons in the game. Save your precious grenades for the Hybrids.



PROTIP: Bounce Hailstorm bullets to boost their damage. Better yet, fire the alternate attack to launch a hovering turret.



PROTIP: In multiplayer mode, only humans are capable of crouching—just press and hold L1. To sprint, tap L1 once.



PROTIP: Auger shots burn through walls—watch for the telltale heat distortion!



PROTIP: Melee attacks often cause your target to stagger for a few precious seconds. Exploit it!



You'll unlock these Reapers, plus four other weapons, when you beat the game on Medium difficulty.



PROTIP: With the Bullseye, try firing a tag (press and hold L1) and firing a swarm of bullets at it. Next, fire another tag at a group of enemies to destroy them all.

functionality that turns headshots into a slow-motion dance of death. The boys at Insomniac have clearly left nothing to stale convention, and Resistance's single-player and multiplayer modes owe a great deal to this ingenuity.

Squad, Fall In!

Resistance's brawny multiplayer mode also deserves special mention. With support for up to 40 players across several game modes and an online community-building component, Resistance will be the key online title for Sony's new console, likely well into 2007. The multiplayer action is fast, visceral, and endlessly replayable, and the addition of species bonuses (Chimera can see through walls, humans have radar) adds a juicy wrinkle not found in other shooters.

In addition to standard deathmatch and capture the flag modes, Resistance also throws in noteworthy team sessions such as Breach, in which teams compete to overload each other's fusion reactors. Our experiences with 40-player battles were smooth and lag free, an encouraging sign, though it's difficult to predict how the performance will be once the game is out in the wild.

Resistance wins another key battle by adopting one of the smoothest control schemes ever seen in a home console game. The increased sensitivity of the Sixaxis analog sticks is especially apparent in Resistance, making the game as comfortable and precise as the best Xbox 360 shooters. The button layout is also clean and responsive, and not overloaded with excess functions. It's also completely customizable.

Creature Comforts

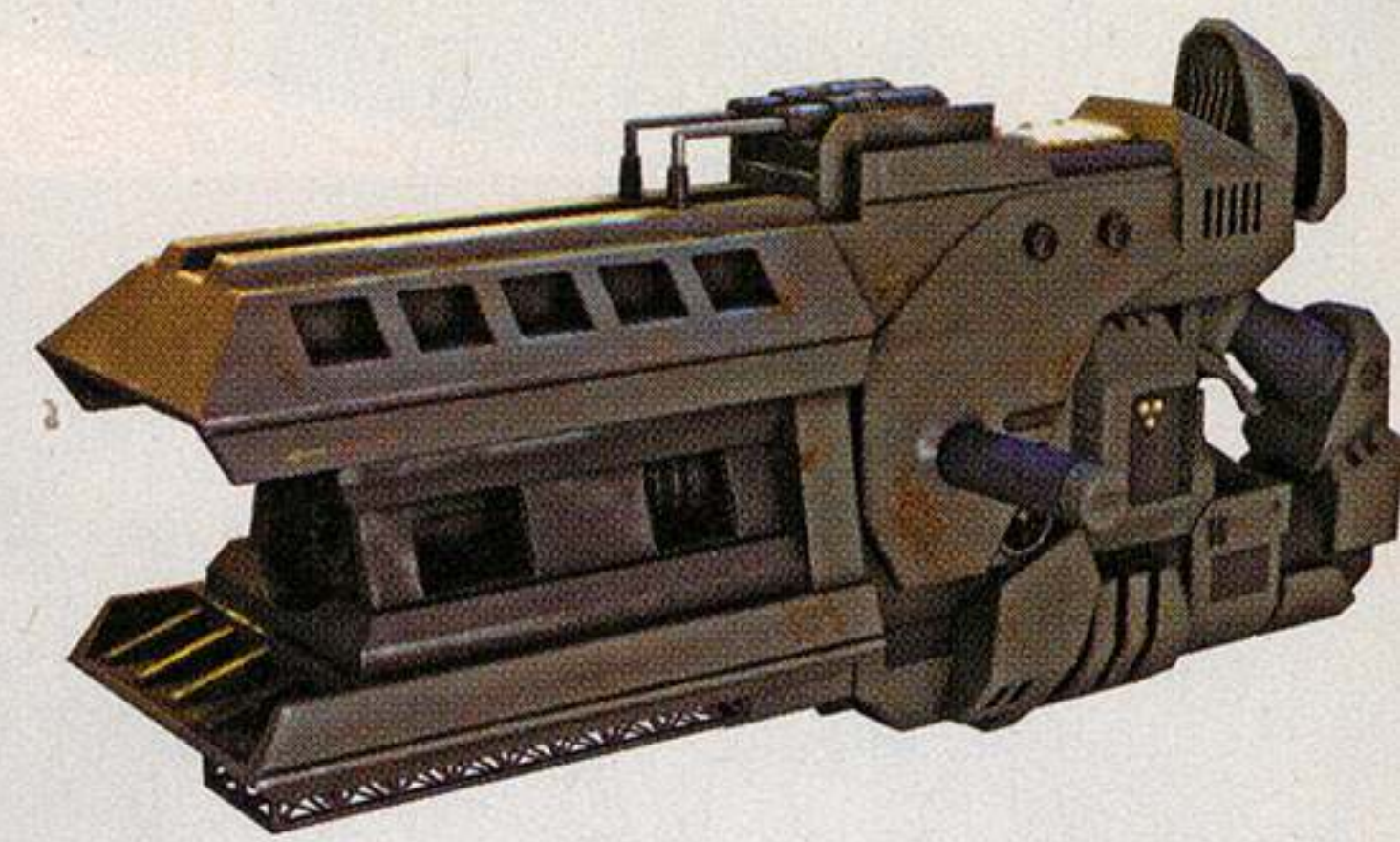
But if there's one core flaw to Resistance, it's this—it just doesn't look like a PlayStation 3 game. Sure, the levels are massive and sprawl-

ing, and the architecture boasts admirable detail but the plain-Jane character animations, low-poly enemy designs and underwhelming weapon effects are undeniably behind the times. There are worse fates, but it's a shame nonetheless, especially when you consider the PlayStation 3's price point and how much Sony boasted about the console's unbeatable visual prowess. On another sour note, the game supports only 720p—1080i and 1080p support are out, barring a post-launch patch.

Some of the presentation, however, still shows that characteristic Insomniac flair. For instance, the first level depicts the Chimera forces shooting down several Osprey-like transport planes. The resulting crashes—the Ospreys whirling across the sky and slamming into nearby buildings—set a wonderfully ominous opening tone. The game is also locked in at a rock-solid 30 frames per second and doesn't sputter once during even the busiest action scenes. Several of the special effects, too, such as flurries of snow and sprays of napalm, show a glimmer of the potential behind Sony's next-gen powerhouse.

Resistance is Futile

Hopefully, gamers will be able to look past Resistance's so-so presentation and see its rich inner beauty. It's easily the best PlayStation 3 game available on launch day, and a highly playable action game that will satisfy even the most demanding FPS junkies. In the end, all the hoopla over Gears of War and Resistance probably isn't worth the fuss. Despite their radically different approaches, they're both great games that fill different niches. And hey, if you're lucky enough to own an Xbox 360 and a PlayStation 3, why not buy both games? Now there's a next-gen war worth talking about.—Vicious Sid



Clash of the Next-Gen Titans

Gears of War. Resistance: Fall of Man. Two great next-gen shooters, but which one to buy? Here's the point-by-point breakdown.

Storyline

Resistance by a landslide. Gears of War's groan-worthy storyline stacks cliché on top of cliché. Resistance has a far more intriguing premise, with better writing, dialogue, and pacing.

Visuals

Gears of War dominates this category handily, blowing away Resistance's PlayStation 2-on-steroids look. Resistance isn't ugly, but its visuals are disappointing for a PlayStation 3 game.

Weapons

Resistance, though it's a close call. Gears of War's sleek guns feel ultra-tight, but Resistance has a bigger, more inspired arsenal, with the added perk of dual firing modes and multiple grenade types.

Single Player

Tie. Resistance has a longer, more satisfying single-player campaign, but Gears packs in more nail-biting intensity and a bit less monotony. Gears gets a special nod for its online cooperative play mode.

Multi-player

Tie. Gears offers ultra-intense survival matches, but supports only eight players. Resistance matches are faster and shallower, but support up to 40 (!) players. Internet performance in both games is exceptional.

Innovation

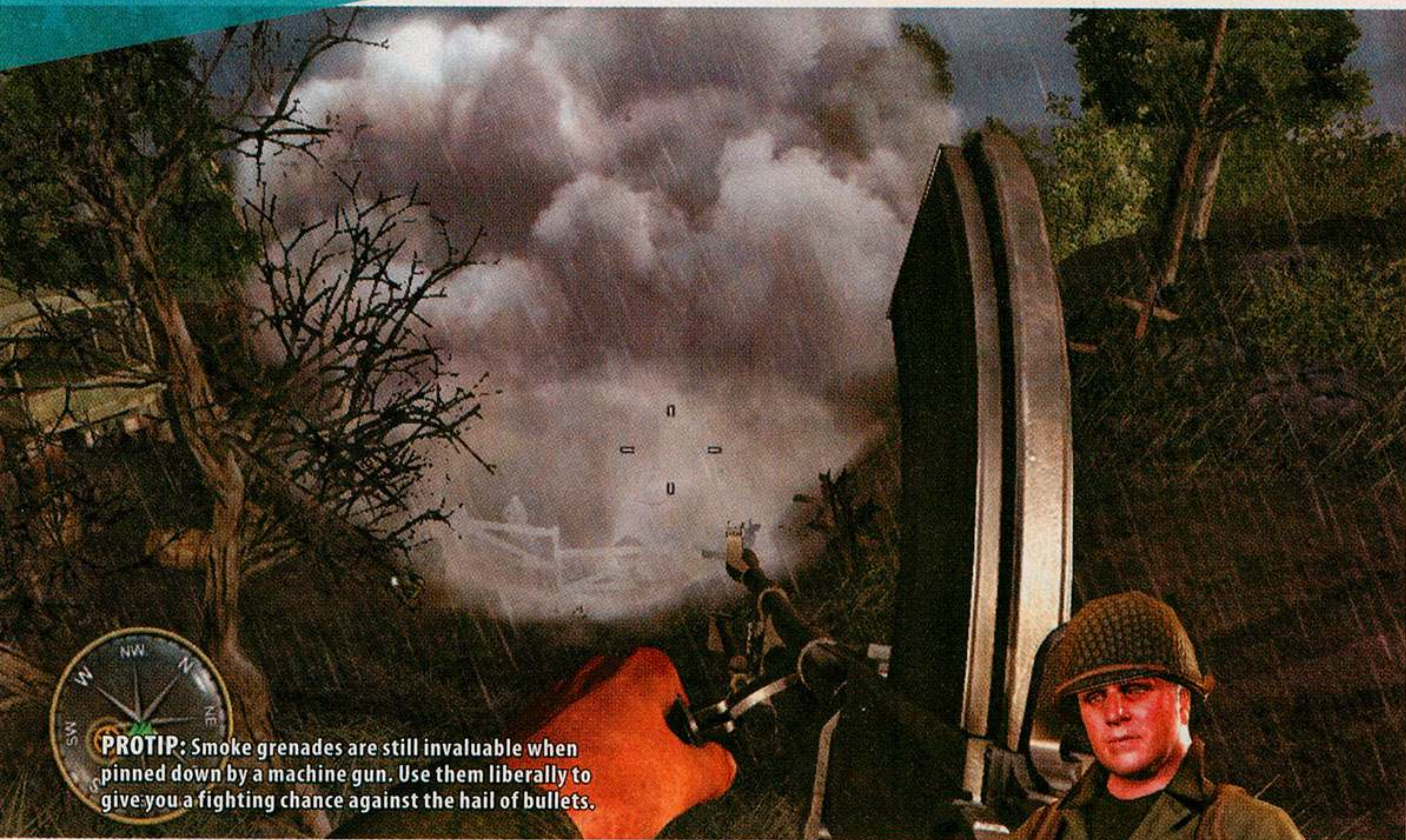
Gears of War implements several new gameplay mechanics that help push the action genre to new places. Resistance is an excellent shooter, but outside of its groundbreaking arsenal, is more predictable in execution.

Final Verdict!

Gears of War takes the overall win thanks to its more ambitious gameplay and its dazzling presentation. Resistance is a fine game, but make Gears your first stop for next-gen action.

PS3	GRAPHICS	3.25	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR	4.5
	SOUND	4.0			
	CONTROL	5.0			

Developer: Insomniac ■ Publisher: Sony ■ \$59.99
Available now ■ Shooting ■ 4 players; 40 online ■ ESRB: M



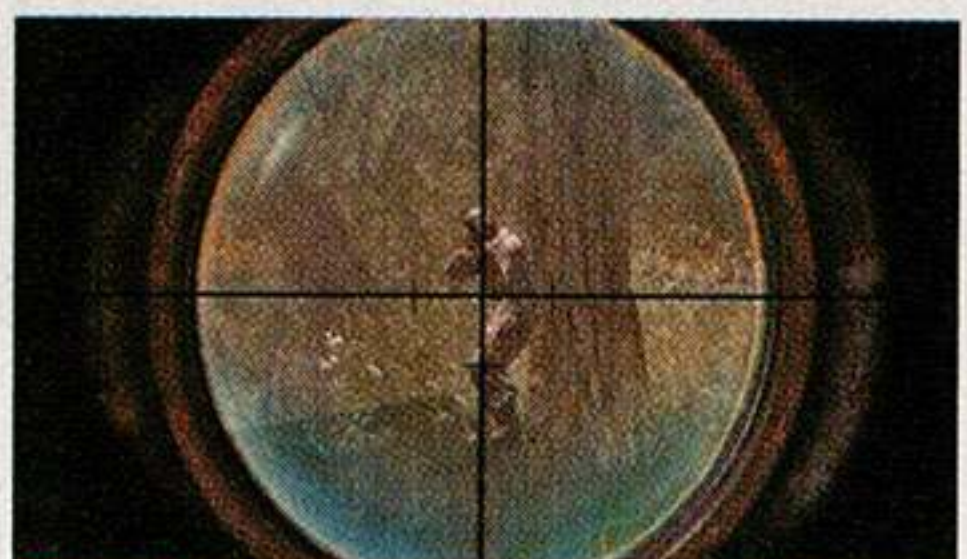
PRO TIP: Smoke grenades are still invaluable when pinned down by a machine gun. Use them liberally to give you a fighting chance against the hail of bullets.



PRO TIP: Just like when you're on foot, it's important to stay on the move, even when you're driving a tank.



PRO TIP: German weapons tend to have better accuracy and rate of fire, so never pass down a chance to pick one up.



PRO TIP: The all-powerful sniper rifle never fails to find its target, provided you've got a steady hand. Don't miss or else you'll just betray your secret position.

Call of Duty 3

Duty calls, but should you enlist for a third time?



The Call of Duty franchise has long held the crown as the king of the World War II shooter, a title it wrested from the hands of EA's Medal of Honor series. And even though the historical time period's been revisited over and over again, developer Treyarch still finds a way to make it all worthwhile.

Germans To The East!

This is an impressive feat considering the fact that Call of Duty 2 was one of the best Xbox 360 titles of last year. So how does Call of Duty 3 improve on the formula? First, it takes the intensity and focus of the first two titles and ratchets it up a notch. The game focuses on the events that lead up to the liberation of Paris after the historic D-Day.

There's also a great sense of cinematic flair evident in the game, which is a vast improvement over Call of Duty 2. The in-game action is definitely pulse pounding and intense and the loading screens, which are masked by cut-scenes of strategic and overviews of the war effort, add a nice historical touch to that puts the action into the proper context.

Make a Decision, Man!

The same can be said, really, for almost every element of Call of Duty 3's presentation. The graphics are still top-notch, the audio is as bombastic and powerful as ever, and the voice-acting is convincingly done, even if some lines of dialogue in combat are overused.

Other additions like the newly added Battle Actions also help keep the game fresh, particularly the close-quarters combat, which adds even more variety and suspense to the already frenetic gameplay. Shooting at an enemy from afar is tactically ideal but there's nothing quite

like getting in the face of an enemy and putting them down with a well-placed blow to the head.

We were put off by the game's lack of lip-synching in the cut-scenes—this broke the strong sense of immersion that the game creates—but beyond that, the production values are noticeably high.

Wrap It Up Soldier!

We should also mention that the multi-player aspect has been overhauled, to the point that it's definitely worth playing. It feels like a large-scale battle should and while it may not be as comprehensive as Battlefield 1942, it's still fun to play.

As a whole, Call of Duty 3 is an impressive achievement. It does what a sequel should: it looks, sounds, feels, and plays better than the preceding title. Treyarch and Activision have done an great job with CoD3, and have created an experience that is at once much the same, but also better than its predecessor.

We can only cross our fingers and hope, though, that the developers of the inevitable fourth installment will continue to find ways to keep the action feeling fresh. You can only trapeze through the rolling hillsides of Normandy so many times before the thrill wears off completely.

—The Watcher



PRO TIP: Battle Actions like this one are straightforward enough, but they get harder depending on the difficult level.



GRAPHICS	4.5
SOUND	4.5
CONTROL	4.0

FUN FACTOR
4.25/5

Developer: Treyarch Publisher: Activision \$59.99
Available now 2 players; 24 online ESRB: T
Also on the PlayStation 3, PlayStation 2, Xbox, and Wii



PRO TIP: Goons with shields are a pain in the neck, so grab them with the X button, and then hammer the A button to take the shield away.



PRO TIP: Be sure to change your tactics as the situation demands: enemies have specific weaknesses and resistances that can be exploited.

18949



PRO TIP: Don't underestimate the damage you can do by simply throwing an enemy around. Get up close and press the X button to get him in your meaty paws.

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance



Grown adults in spandex save the world...again.

Xbox 360



After playing *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance*, it becomes obvious that developer Raven has the superhero formula—which they developed for *X-Men: Legends* and its sequel—down to a science. But as great as *Alliance* is, it proves that there's still some more lab work to be done.

Justice Gets An Upgrade

This time around, you're not just limited to Xavier's crew of miscreants: there are over 140 different characters from Marvel's roster in the game. Only twenty are playable but it's an all-star lineup of heroes, from predictable members like Spider-Man and Captain America, to surprising gems like Doctor Strange and Moon Knight. The remaining 120 characters provide neat cameo moments, especially the villains who star in the thrilling boss battles. There's nothing like going toe-to-toe with ultra baddies like Fin Fang Foom and multiple versions of Ultimo.

The core gameplay doesn't stray far from the path that *X-Men: Legends* forged. You compose a team of four superheroes and use their powers to vanquish arch enemies. There are environmental obstacles to avoid, puzzles to solve and collectibles to collect.

The main campaign, which is composed of five acts, offers a long and satisfying story filled with quests and intrigue but it's still just a prettier dose of the same old, same old.

Party of Four

What really makes *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance* shine, however, are the multiplayer modes—the word "alliance" is in the title, after all. You can play with three friends on the same console or take the action online for co-op and versus play. These modes really break the game wide

open and while the single-player experience is decent, it can't compare to the thrill of fighting alongside a human controlled superhero.

The best example of this is the team-building mechanic. You can pick an existing quartet, like the Fantastic Four, or create your own squad. You can even select a team symbol, name, and vehicle and as your team completes quests, it gains reputation points. Gain enough and you can bestow members with improved stats just for working together.

Finding Flaws

Alliance is far from perfect. For one, the level of environmental destructibility is noticeably weak. You'd think with all the superhero clout, we'd cause more damage to our surroundings. Also, despite the jump in graphics quality, it just isn't enough of a progression; where's the next-gen sheen that so many other Xbox 360 titles have?

And yet, despite these minor imperfections, *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance* is a great action-RPG that should delight both gamers and comic book geeks alike. Excelsior!—*Ouroboros*



PRO TIP: Fin Fang Foom is one tough nut but he can be cracked: wait until he lands and does his fire-breathe, swat him a couple times, and then hop in the anti-aircraft gun.



Xbox 360	GRAPHICS	3.75	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR 4.5
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	4.25		

Developer: Raven Software Publisher: Activision \$59.99
Available now Action/RPG 4 players ESRB: T
Also on the PlayStation 3, PlayStation 2, Wii, and Xbox



PRO TIP: It's all about teamwork in cooperative mode: you share the score, Star Power, and Rock Meter, so learn how to work together or you'll get booted off the stage.

Guitar Hero II

The best rhythm game around is back to rock you like three hurricanes.

PS2



Guitar Hero launched in 2005 and became the biggest rhythm game craze since Dance Dance Revolution; it quite literally blew our socks off. Its sequel, Guitar Hero II, is here and it rocks so hard that you can say goodbye to the rest of your clothing as well.

Goes To Eleven

So how does Guitar Hero II improve on the already impressive original? First, it features 66 tracks spread out over 40 licensed songs and 26 additional bonus tracks—that's 17 more than the first Guitar Hero. The career mode hasn't changed much—you still work your way up the musical ladder in your quest to reach rock-god status—but the songs have gotten much harder. RedOctane did it the right way, however, as none of the songs feel cheap or unfair. The increased sense of challenge comes from the intricately designed button sequences and the overall epic feel of each song; additionally, RedOctane added a practice mode in which to hone your chops. Those who ascended to rock-god status in the original will have to work their way up another mountain, but the view from this peak is much, much sweeter.

We also love the new multiplayer component, that includes cooperative, face-off, and pro face-off modes. Co-op allows two players to tackle songs together; one player takes lead

guitar while the other takes on either rhythm or bass, depending on the track. This mode even requires players to coordinate their moves to activate Star Power, so practice that choreography beforehand. Face-off is the same as before, but pro face-off takes things to another level: both players duel note for note to see who can net the highest score. This mode will definitely distinguish the Zakk Wylde's from the school-band wannabes.

Stage Props

Visually, Guitar Hero II hasn't changed much. A new progressive scan mode sharpens up the visuals and the addition of a lag calibration feature ensures those with high-definition displays will always be on time with the music. RedOctane also upped the number of character and environmental animations. The venues now come alive with laser lights, fog machines, and crowd noise. Your onscreen persona also demonstrates nearly twice the energy as before. No more bopping to the music—now they fly around the stage with a frenetic energy.

We could go on and on about the improvements RedOctane put into Guitar Hero II, but the proof is in the pudding. The word "epic" doesn't even begin to describe how the game plays and feels; it really is something you have to do for yourself. So what are you waiting for? Rock on!—*Tenacious Moses.*

GUITAR HERO II SET LIST

OPENING LICKS:

- Danzig ("Mother")
- Cheap Trick ("Surrender")
- Motley Crue ("Shout at the Devil")
- Wolfmother ("Woman")
- Encore: Spinal Tap ("Tonight I'm Gonna Rock You Tonight")

AMP-WARMERS:

- Kiss ("Strutter")
- Nirvana ("Heart-Shaped Box")
- The Police ("Message in a Bottle")
- Van Halen ("You Really Got Me")
- Encore: Kansas ("Carry on Wayward Son")

STRING-SNAPPERS:

- Alice in Chains ("Them Bones")
- Foo Fighters ("Monkey Wrench")
- Iggy Pop and the Stooges ("Search and Destroy")
- The Pretenders ("Tattooed Love Boys")
- Encore: Black Sabbath ("War Pigs")

THRASH AND BURN:

- Butthole Surfers ("Who Was in My Room Last Night")
- Matthew Sweet ("Girlfriend")
- The Rolling Stones ("Can't You Hear Me Knocking")
- Warrant ("Cherry Pie")
- Encore: Guns N' Roses ("Sweet Child O' Mine")

RETURN OF THE SHRED:

- Primus ("John the Fisherman")
- Rage Against the Machine ("Killing in the Name Of")
- Sword ("Freya")
- Thin Lizzy ("Bad Reputation")
- Encore: Aerosmith ("Last Child")

RELENTLESS RIFFS:

- Allman Brothers ("Jessica")
- Heart ("Crazy on You")
- Stone Temple Pilots ("Tripping on a Hole in a Paper Heart")
- Stray Cats ("Rock This Town")
- Encore: Jane's Addiction ("Stop")

FURIOUS FRETWORK:

- Anthrax ("Madhouse")
- Lamb of God ("Laid to Rest")
- Living End ("Carry Me Home")
- Reverend Horton Heat ("Psychobilly Freakout")
- Encore: Rush ("YYZ")

FACE-MELTERS:

- Avenged Sevenfold ("Beast and the Harlot")
- Dick Dale ("Misirlou")
- Megadeth ("Hangar 18")
- Suicidal Tendencies ("Institutionalized")
- Encore: Lynyrd Skynyrd ("Free Bird")



PRO TIP: That fiddle stick only has four strings! In multiplayer, playing bass guitar is a welcome addition. Could a Bass Hero possibly be in the works?

PS2	GRAPHICS 4.0	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR 4.5
	SOUND 5.0		
	CONTROL 4.75		

Developer: Harmonix | Publisher: RedOctane | \$49.99
Available now | Music Simulator | 2 players | ESRB: T



PROTIP: The shotgun is a versatile killing tool, but it's best used when you're in Focus mode. Zoom in for a narrower projectile spread.



PROTIP: The dual machine pistols aren't very effective, but ammo is plentiful. Unless you're desperate, you're better off using any other type of weapon.



PROTIP: Proximity mines are great in multi-player matches. Try putting them just around corners or on top of items—kaboom!



PROTIP: To take out these Heavy Armors, use grenades or remote bombs. Close-range shotgun blasts also work well, but don't get too close!

F.E.A.R.

Despite being painted with a low-res brush, F.E.A.R. is an Xbox 360 top gun.

Xbox 360



Porting PC shooters to home consoles is a tricky business. There's no replacement for the precision and finesse of a mouse-and-keyboard setup, for one. And most game consoles can't even come close to the visual brawn of a pimped-out PC. But if F.E.A.R. is any indication, that tide may finally be turning. Short for "First Encounter Assault Recon," this shooter blazed onto the PC last fall. Now it's assaulting the Xbox 360, and FPS fanatics will reap all the brutal benefits.

...but F.E.A.R. Itself

F.E.A.R. takes great pains to fashion itself as an intense horror experience but in practice, the game just isn't that scary. It starts promisingly enough, what with the glimpses of half-eaten faces, corridors waist-deep in blood, and a ghoulish little ghost girl spider-walking through air vents, but by the time you make it through the first few hours, you'll find that the game has turned into a paint-by-numbers FPS slog. Oh well. Shooters are a notoriously formulaic bunch, and F.E.A.R. deserves a little credit for stretching, if not breaking, that mold.

The single-player game is good, gory fun but it suffers from oppressively cookie-cutter levels and lame "find the switch" objectives. What is this, 2001? But despite its single-player shortcomings, F.E.A.R.'s core run-and-gun action is simply phenomenal. The weapons are intoxicatingly powerful: assault rifles spew out instant death, shotgun blasts cut enemies in half, and



particle beams reduce targets to charred skeletons. Make no mistake—*this* is how you design an FPS arsenal.

If it Bleeds, it Leads

In a visual sense, the game captures most of what made the PC version so impressive. The special effects are particularly dazzling: seemingly every object gushes dazzling sparks, flaming debris, or streamers of crimson blood. Add in a slick slo-mo effect and some bone-twisting enemy rag-doll physics, and the stage is set for shootouts that make *The Matrix's* lobby scene look like a drunken water balloon fight.



PROTIP: To wipe out these ceiling-mounted gun turrets, activate Focus and run up underneath them while blasting away.

But the other parts of F.E.A.R. have seen better days. In the name of performance, developer Day One Studios has noticeably reduced the resolution of F.E.A.R.'s textures. This makes many surfaces and objects look softer and blurrier than they do in the PC original. On the bright side, F.E.A.R.'s frame rate is generally rock solid, even during intense firefights. All in all, it's a worthy tradeoff, but high-end graphics aficionados familiar with the original game will cluck their tongues and shake their heads.

As a highly competent, technically polished, but otherwise straightforward first-person shooter, F.E.A.R. is a safe bet for the Xbox 360 action fiend. It may not replace Halo 2 in your FPS collection, but it sure as hell beats playing Perfect Dark Zero for the fourteenth time. —Vicious Sid



GRAPHICS 4.0
SOUND 4.5
CONTROL 4.5

FUN FACTOR
4.0

Developer: Day One Studios ■ Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games
\$59.99 ■ Available now ■ Shooting ■ 1 player; 16 online
ESRB: M ■ Also on the PlayStation 3



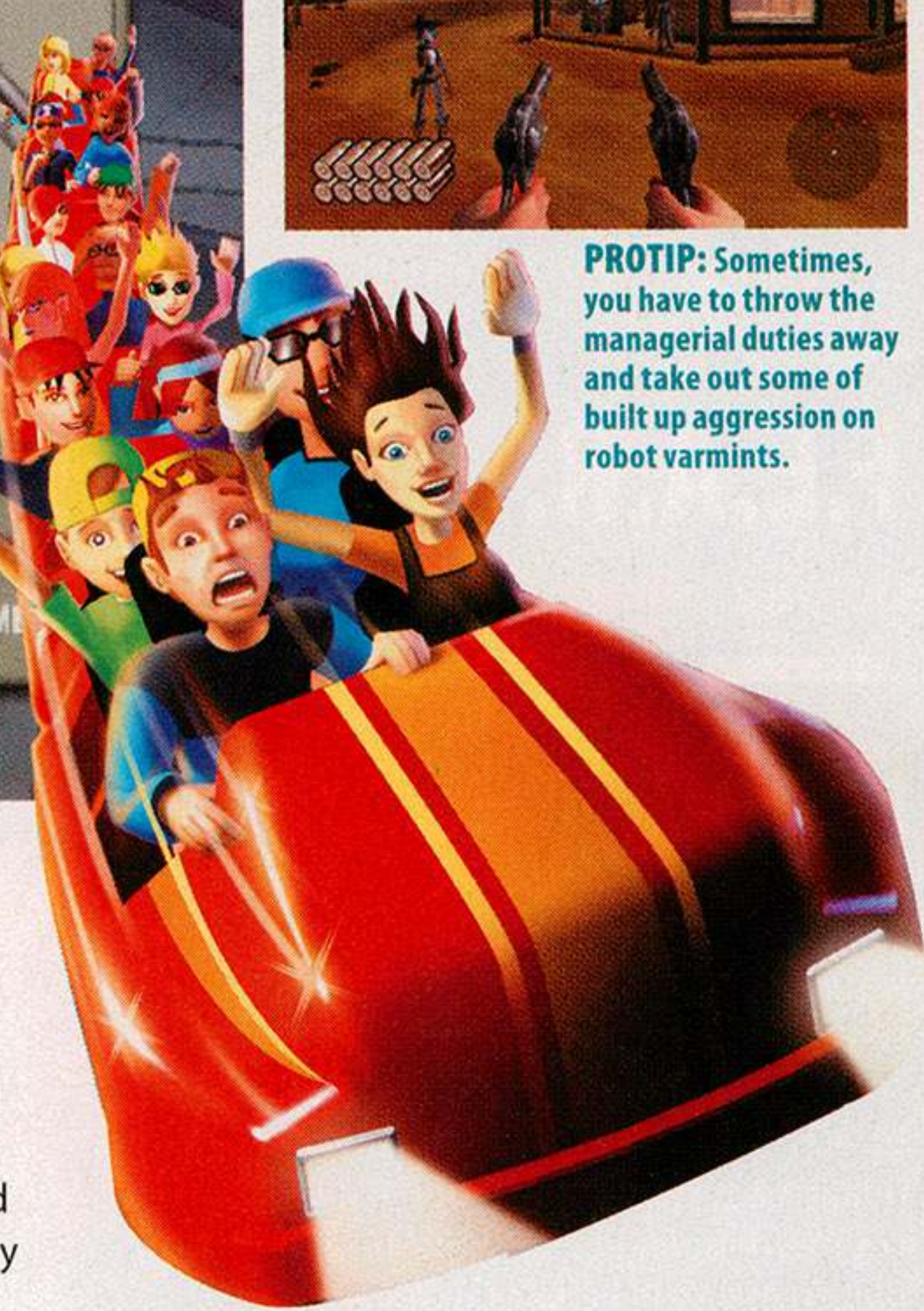
PRO TIP: Pay attention to the colors of the track pieces as you build coasters. Yellow means there's an obstacle that blocks your progress; red means you can't build there.



PRO TIP: Even though it's a pain in the neck, talking to guests can be a useful way to gauge your park's worth.



PRO TIP: Sometimes, you have to throw the managerial duties away and take out some of built up aggression on robot varmints.



Thrillville

The ironically-named Thrillville is one dull ride.

Xbox



The masterminds behind the PC hit Roller coaster Tycoon 3 attempt to bring that formula to the console market with Thrillville. Unfortunately, they stumble out of the game by crafting a game that's too simple for strategy gamers and too convoluted for everyone else.

Not Your Father's Tycoon Game

The concept behind Thrillville is appealing: take an amusement park simulation, marry it to a simple interface and wrap it around a deep

management system. You start out by inheriting a theme park and your job is to maintain and improve it. You can build food stalls, games, and rides, including roller coasters which you can fully customize. You can also run around the park on foot and ride any attraction or play the games.

Unfortunately, Thrillville commits the cardinal sin of simulation games: it makes managing your tasks difficult, to the point that it actually impedes your ability to play the game. The menu layout is frustrating and there isn't nearly enough help text. You'll find yourself constantly flipping back and forth between menus to get the information you need. We also found certain bugs, like items being tagged as researched even though they hadn't been.

Manual Labor

There's also a fair number of boring tasks that you're forced to accomplish. Think vacuuming and picking up trash is boring in real life? It's just as boring in Thrillville. That's because there's no challenge or thought required: you simply point a reticule at the ground and press a button. Worst of all, there is no option to skip these menial chores. You also have to talk to

park guests, which is an exercise in navigating dialogue tree after dialogue tree of boring small talk. Also, you're left to guess whether a specific dialogue choice will result in a positive or negative response.

The title's saving grace lies in the "design your own roller coaster" mode, which is especially well done. Laying down different pieces of track is extremely intuitive and you can create exactly what you want quickly. There is also a handy track-assist feature that automatically fills in any gap at the end so you don't have to tediously line up the final pieces.

Floating In Limbo

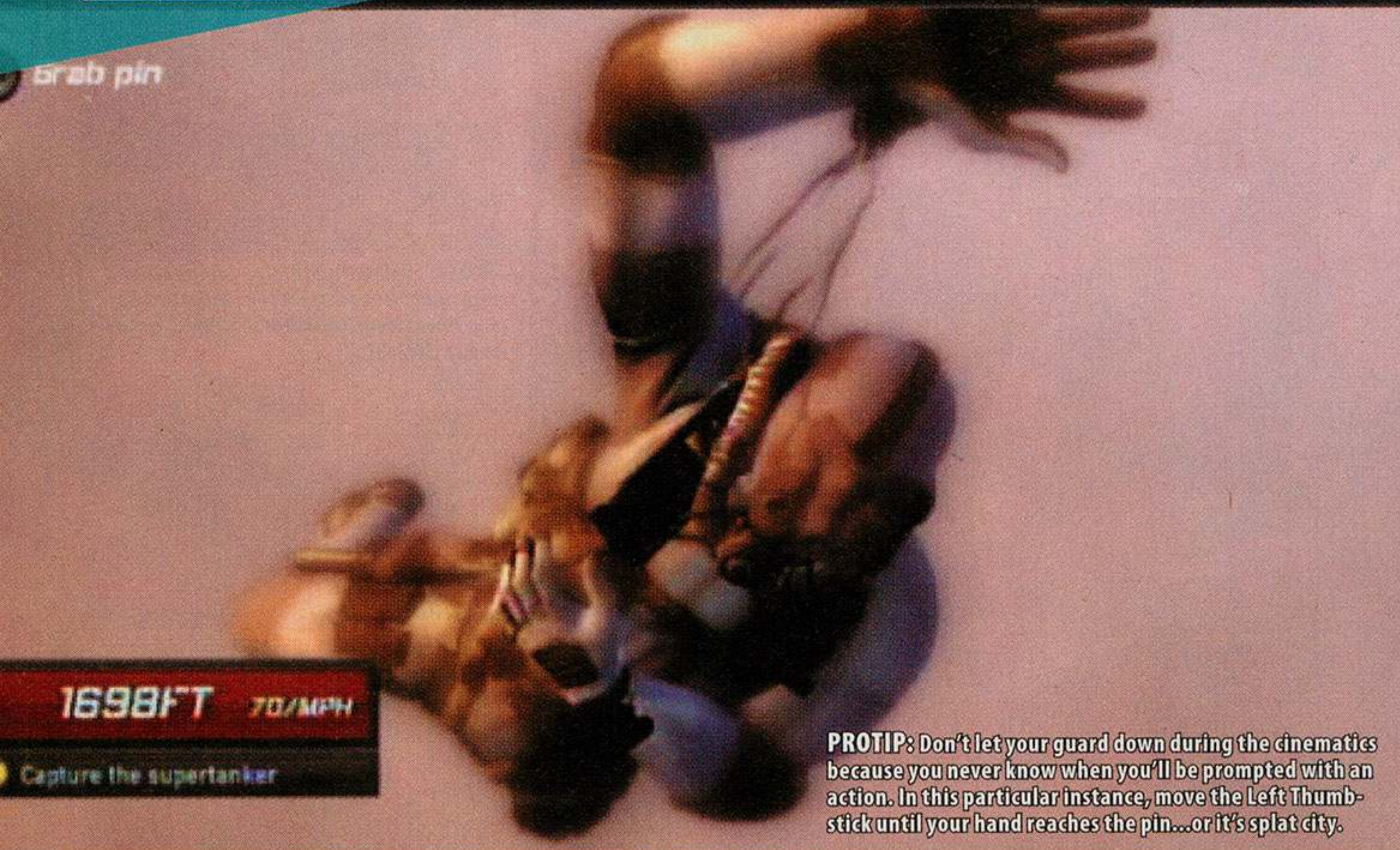
But this isn't enough to save Thrillville. There is just too much wrong with the title to recommend it. It doesn't live up to the Roller Coaster Tycoon pedigree and we're confused as to why LucasArts didn't just port one of those titles over instead of delivering this mess.—*World of Forms*



PRO TIP: A coaster will remain closed until all the track is completely connected so make sure you don't leave any gaps. A closed coaster is useless to you.

	GRAPHICS	3.0	
	SOUND	2.5	
	CONTROL	3.5	

Developer: Frontier Publisher: LucasArts \$39.99
 Available now Simulation 4 players ESRB: E10+
 Also on the PlayStation 2



PROTIP: Don't let your guard down during the cinematics because you never know when you'll be prompted with an action. In this particular instance, move the Left Thumbstick until your hand reaches the pin...or it's splat city.



Yes, we all love Solid Snake but Sam Fisher is just as cool. Tri-optic goggles for the win!



Spies start out next to this R2-D2-like droid in multiplayer. Just don't ask him to shut down all the trash compactors on the detention level.



PROTIP: Trust is a valuable thing but don't be afraid to do things that negatively affect it—you'll have plenty of opportunities to gain it back later.

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent

The neck-snappingly good stealth franchise is back!

Xbox 360



The Splinter Cell series has been thrilling gamers with its potent mix of stealth and action for a while now and the latest installment in the franchise, Double Agent, proves that even the oldest dog can learn the newest trick.

Double-Dipped Agent

Far from being just a play on words, Double Agent perfectly describes Fisher's current status: the game's plot revolves around Sam as he goes deep undercover with a suspected terrorist organization called John Brown's Army. While he attempts to earn the trust of the JBA, he must also work to complete objectives for his handlers in the National Security Agency.

For example, early on in the game, you are ordered by the JBA to shoot a captured helicopter pilot. Performing this ruthless act will gain you trust within the JBA, but will also get you in trouble with the NSA. Choosing to spare the pilot will have an opposite effect. It's a nice change from the norm where pulling the trigger is a mindless act that carries no sense of weight.

Subtle Improvements

The jump to the Xbox 360 also changes the way that Sam interacts with the environment. First, the graphics get a big upgrade and it affects everything, from where you move to how you move. The HUD is also simplified and there's nothing to distract you from the action. The controls, a series hallmark, are also as tight and refined as ever.

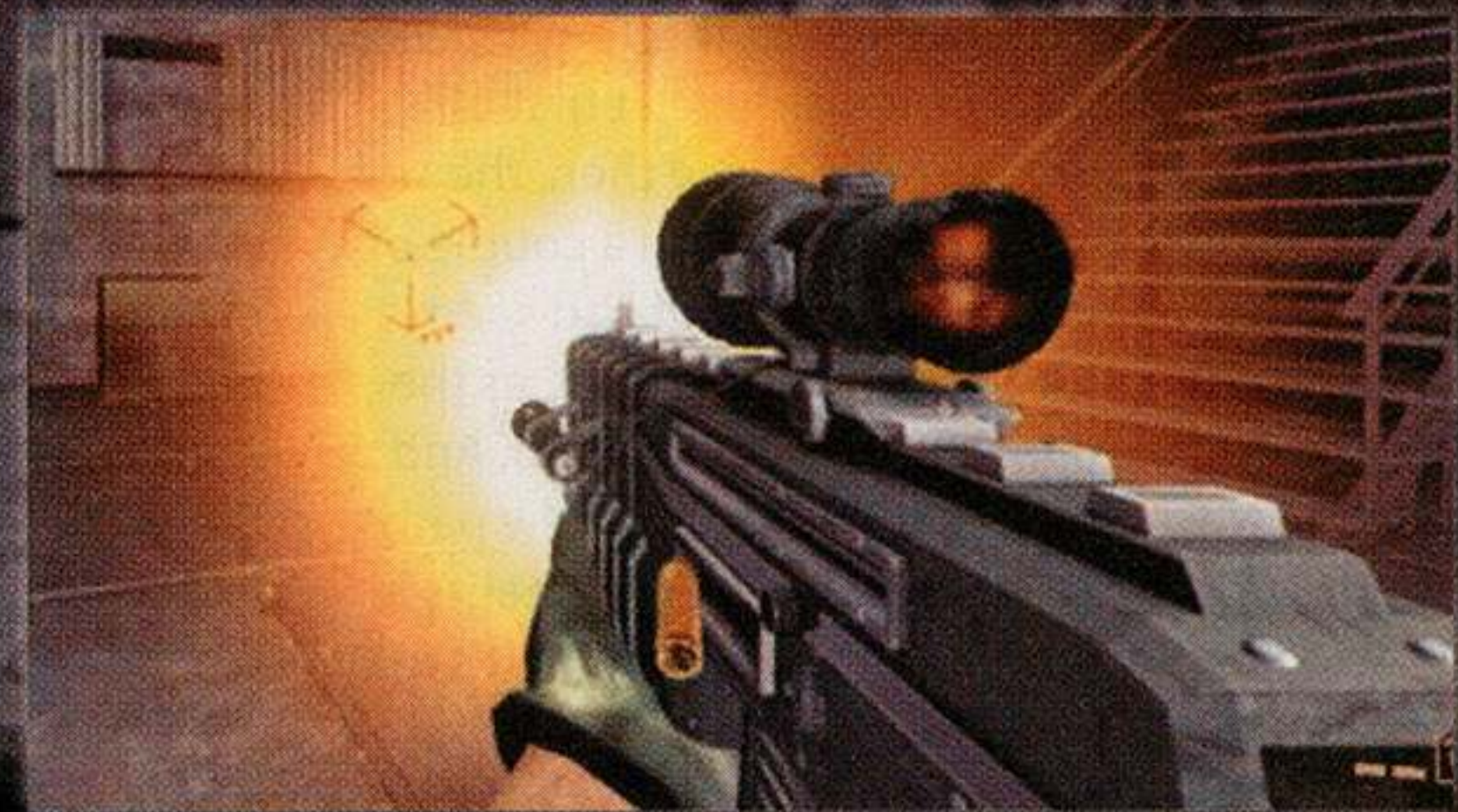
Double Agent also revamps the way Sam stays hidden. Past titles relied on a binary system, in that areas were either completely dark or bright. The new visibility meter is far more dynamic: if you are completely hidden the meter displays green, yellow means you're in a visible spot, and red means you've been detected. Much like in business, it pays to avoid being in the red.

Multiplayer: Upgrading Your Download

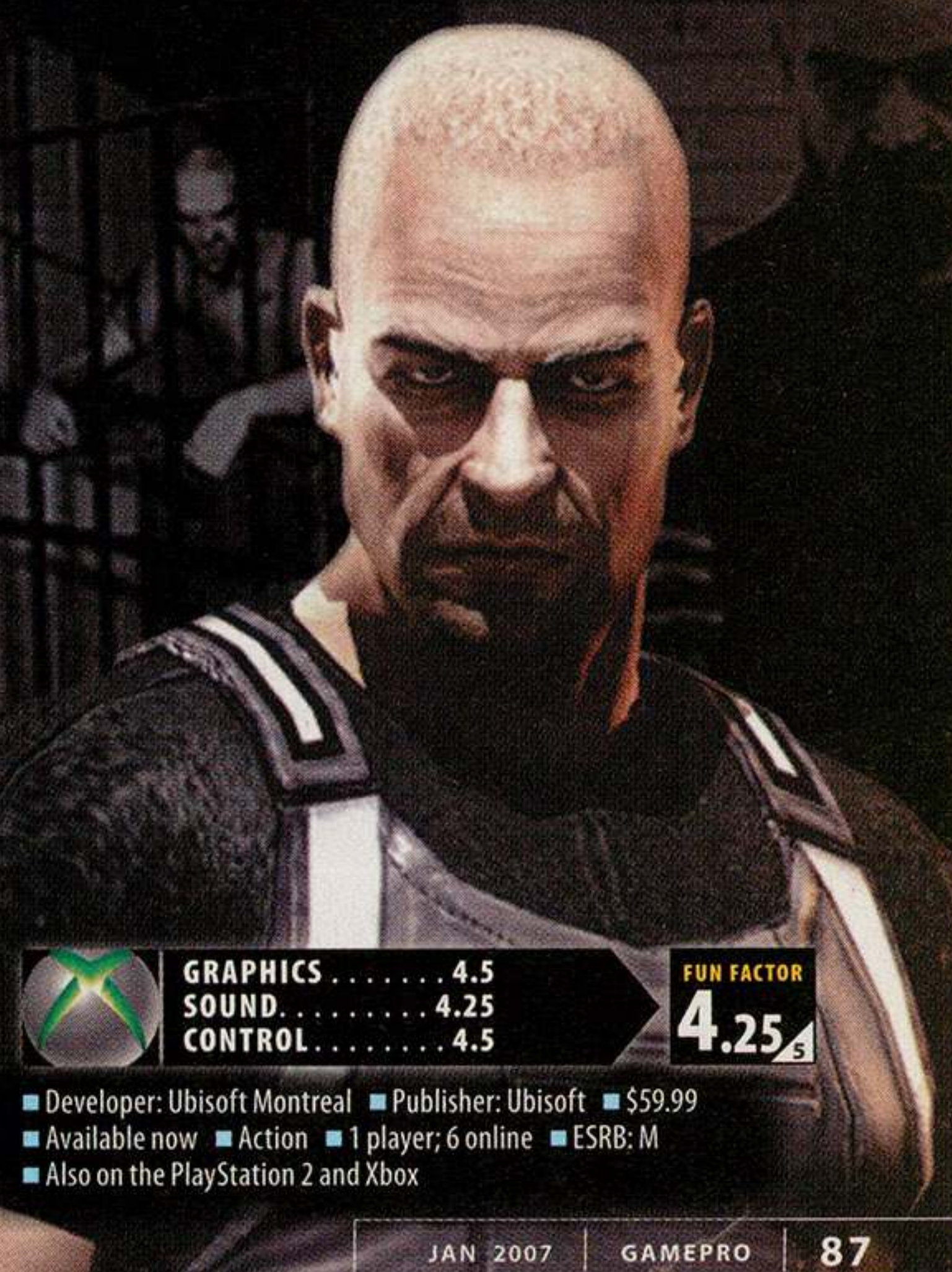
While the single-player game thrills with tense action, the multiplayer portion also shines. Aside from the co-op missions, there is one mode of play: three-on-three, Mercenary versus Spy mode. The ninja-like spies must sneak in and hack four color-coded terminals without getting killed by the gun-wielding Mercs. It's awesome, provided you can get yourself connected and the other players are willing to cooperate and work as a team. As with all online games, the experience can be a mixed-bag but the mode still has the potential to thrill and excite.

When you put it all together, Double Agent is an impressive next-gen debut and re-establishes Sam Fisher's place among the spy elite. The game stands with Chaos Theory as one of the best titles in the franchise and it's a must have for Xbox 360 owners everywhere.

—Mr. Marbles

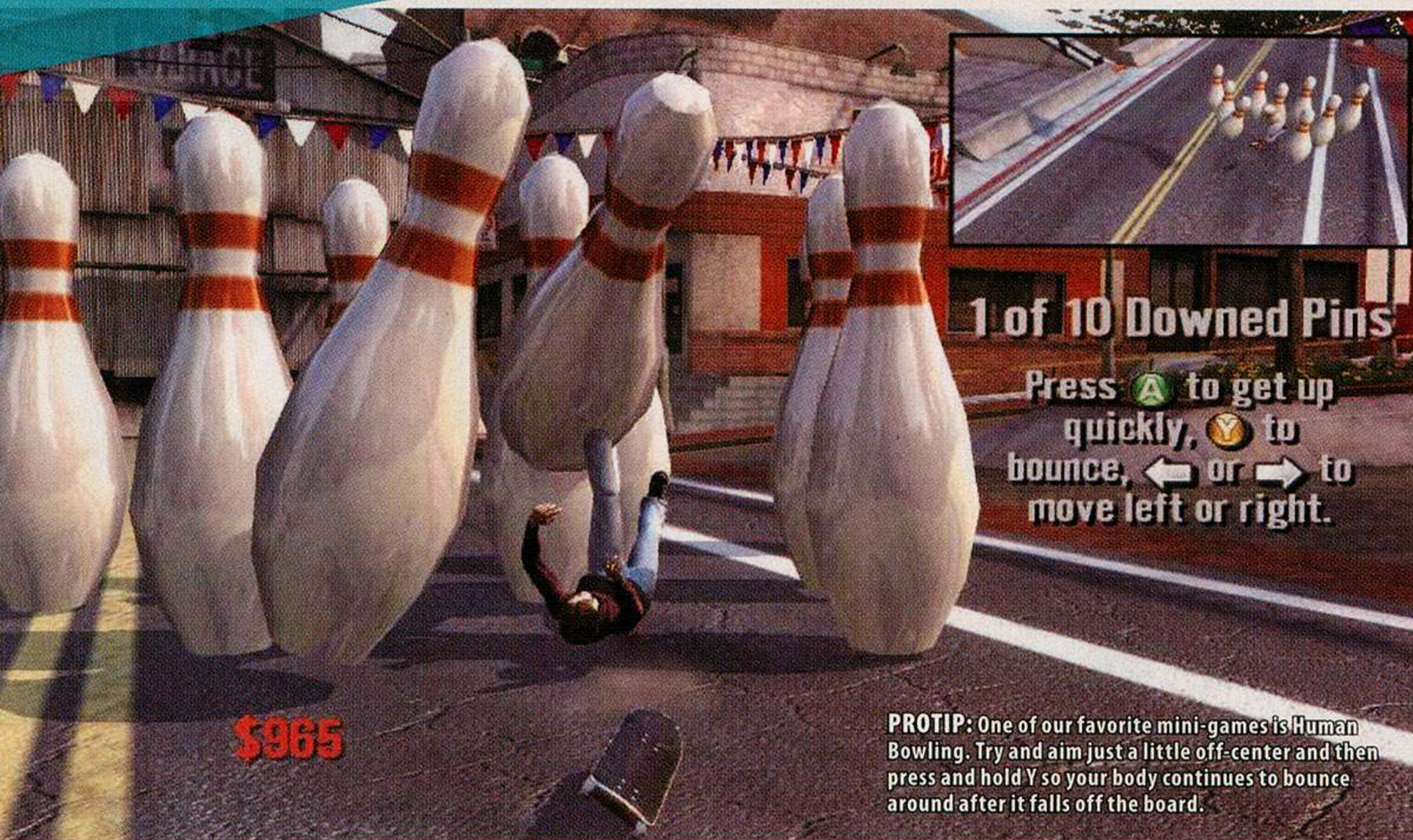


PROTIP: When it comes to multiplayer, everyone wants to be a spy but don't over-



	GRAPHICS 4.5	FUN FACTOR 4.25
	SOUND 4.25	
	CONTROL 4.5	

Developer: Ubisoft Montreal Publisher: Ubisoft \$59.99
 Available now Action 1 player; 6 online ESRB: M
 Also on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox



\$965

PRO TIP: One of our favorite mini-games is Human Bowling. Try and aim just a little off-center and then press and hold Y so your body continues to bounce around after it falls off the board.



PRO TIP: Doing tricks in front of the locals earns you tokens that let you purchase items and videos from the skateshop. Who says you need a day job?



PRO TIP: Remember the old Tron light-cycle game? That's the premise of Walls. Leave a light trail behind and let your enemy run into it.



PRO TIP: Lip tricks—along with flatground tricks—are still the fastest way to build up your score. Do one and combo into the variations to boost your multiplier; just don't mess it up!

Tony Hawk's Project 8

Proving that more of the same is a good thing.



Xbox 360



When it comes to the Tony Hawk franchise, it was love at first ollie for many of us. Since then, the series has gone through a couple of ups and downs and it had seemingly gotten stuck in a rut, as the games began to feel formulaic and tired. And though Neversoft doesn't forge any new paths for their next-gen debut, the improvements in Project 8 are so copious and varied that it's easy to overlook how familiar it all is.

High-Wire Act

Project 8 is, in a way, a Frankenstein monster, built from the various parts of past titles. But unlike Mary Shelley's famous creation, Project 8 is ridiculously pretty. The overall graphics received a significant upgrade, but we were especially impressed with the character animations. The virtual skaters look and move just like their real-life counterparts!

We also love the new Nail the Trick mode that slows down time *Matrix*-style and lets you free-style tricks using both thumbsticks. If you've

ever seen the popular slo-mo intro from Spike Jonze's skate vid *Yeah Right!*, Nail the Trick takes this epic montage to amazing new heights.

The sheer number of objectives and missions in the game further enhance the experience. Each area is jam packed with things to do, running the gamut from major tasks that advance the game's plot to hilarious little mini-games like body bowling. At times, it's almost overwhelming trying to decide what to do with your time. Thankfully, almost every task and mission is challenging and entertaining.

Nearly every challenge is broken into Am, Pro, and Sick difficulty levels, making them easy for newcomers yet taxing for crusty Tony Hawk vets at the same time. And if you ever get tired of playing by yourself, you can always jump online with awesome multiplayer modes.

Broken Bones And Bruises

But Project 8 isn't entirely perfect. The create-a-skater mode feels neutered when compared to past installments. There are only five character types and your ability to customize them



PRO TIP: Try not to get separated from the cameraman or you'll waste time getting teleported around. Also, try and nail tricks in combination to save time.

is rather limited. Also, the world's expansiveness often works against you—completing a timed objective is hard enough without a bunch of bystanders and obstacles getting in the way. It's nice that the world feels so much more open but the design of the goals could have used a little more tweaking. Speaking of

which, goals can also be frustratingly difficult in the early going. Until your skater levels up, you'll find yourself repeatedly attempting the same challenges over and over and over again.

Despite these faults, Project 8 is the best Tony Hawk game since THPS2, and that's saying a lot! Neversoft didn't simply mail-in another yearly update: instead, they brought out the big guns to make sure that the next-gen debut of the perennial skateboarding franchise would live up to the hype. Now, here's hoping they don't just coast on the momentum for the next installment.—*Ahoy_and_Avast*



	GRAPHICS	4.25		
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	4.0		

Developer: Neversoft Publisher: Activision \$59.99
 Skateboarding 4 players; 8 online ESRB: T
 Also on the PlayStation 3

LUMINES™

III

• Nominee, Best Puzzle/Trivia/Parlor Game of E3 2006
- Game Critics Awards

• Nominee, Best PSP Music Game of E3 2006
- IGN.com



FEATURING VIDEOS
& MUSIC FROM

BECH

BLACK EYED PEAS

THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

FATBOY SLIM

THE GO! TEAM

GWEN STEFANI

HOOBASTANK

JUNIOR SENIOR

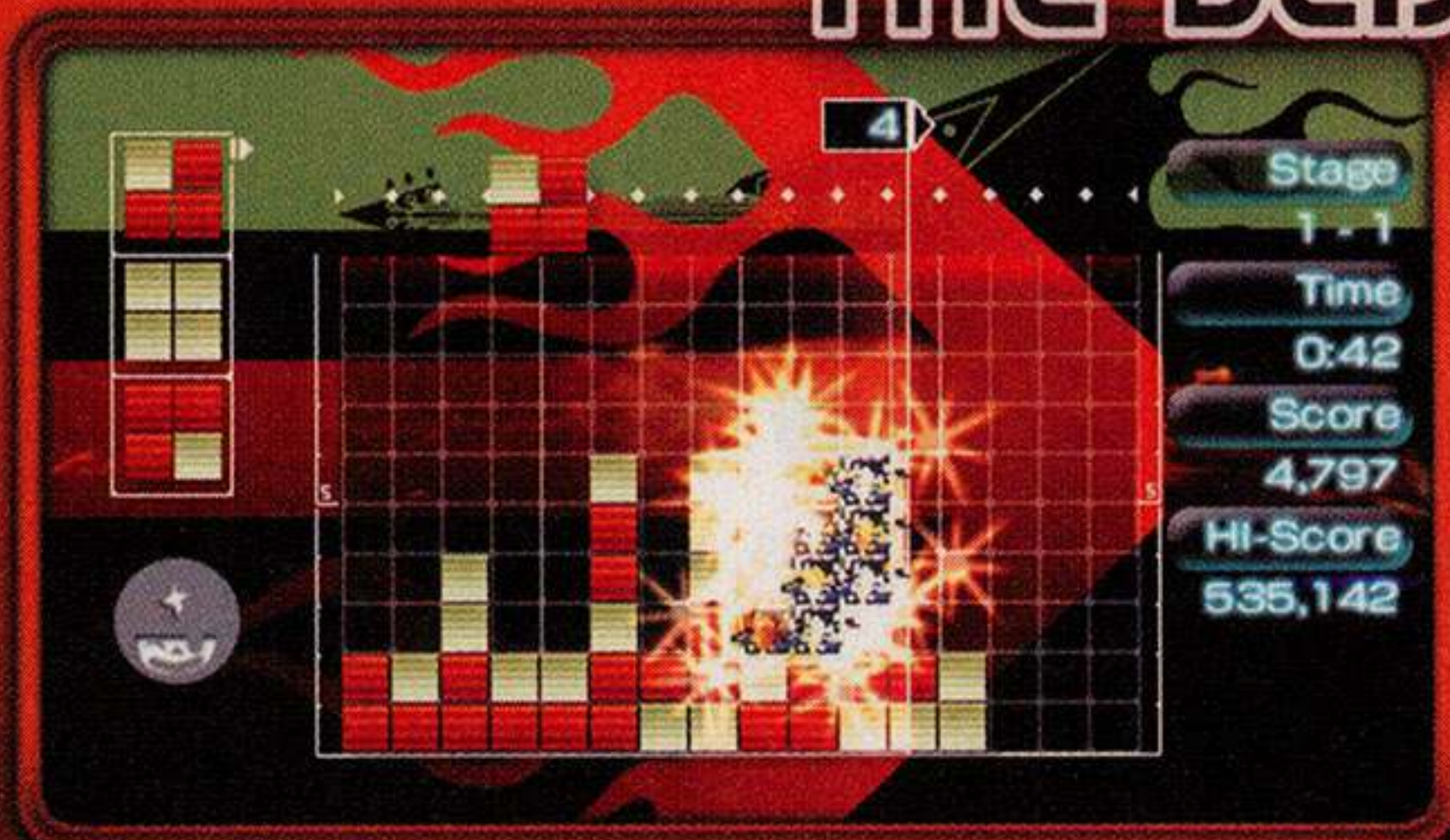
JUNKIE XL

MISSY ELLIOTT

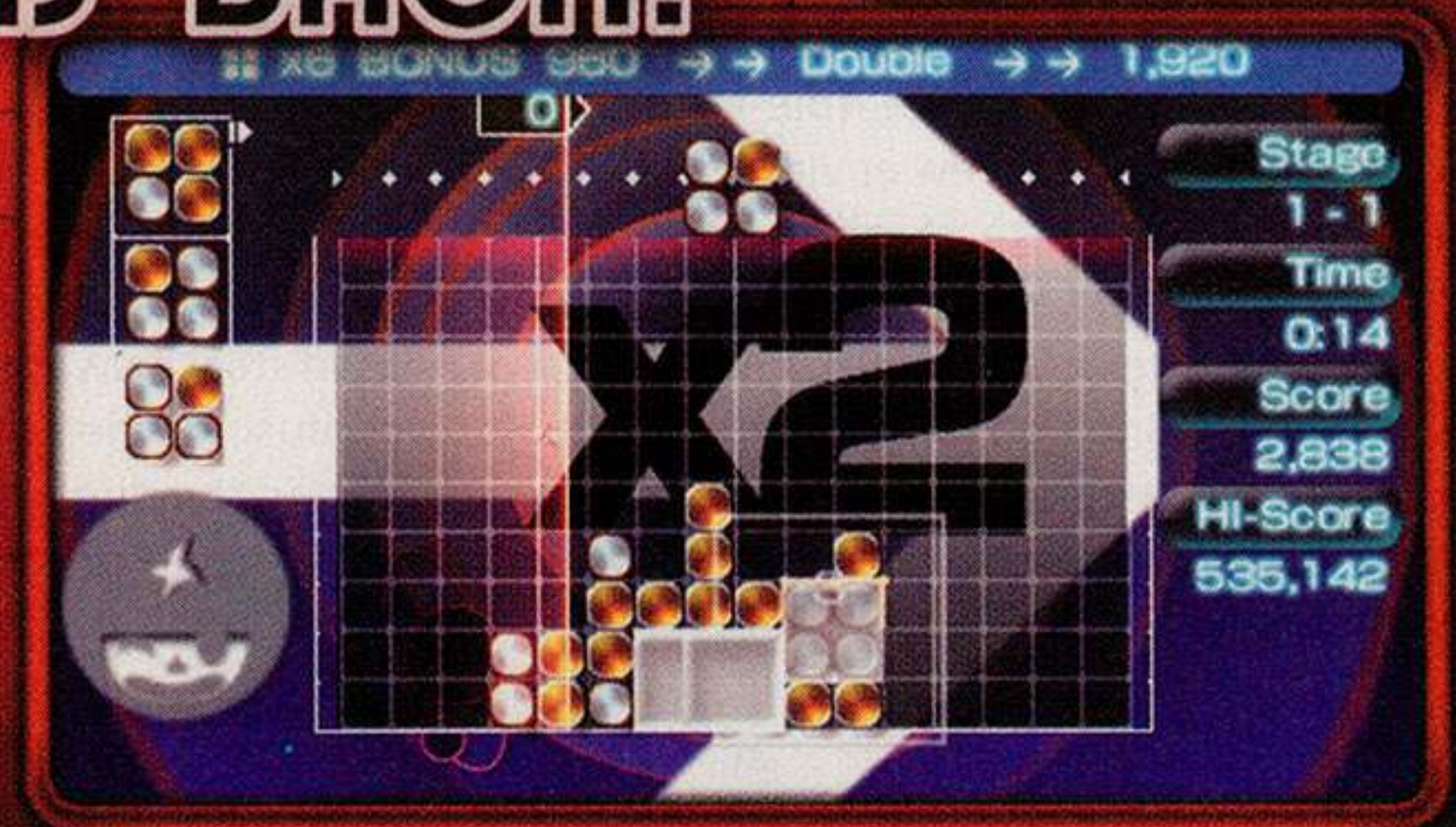
NEW ORDER

STIGMATO INC.

THE BLISS IS BACK!



ALL NEW: STAGES, SKINS, MUSIC AND AVATARS.



ENHANCED GRAPHICS WITH STREAMING VIDEO.

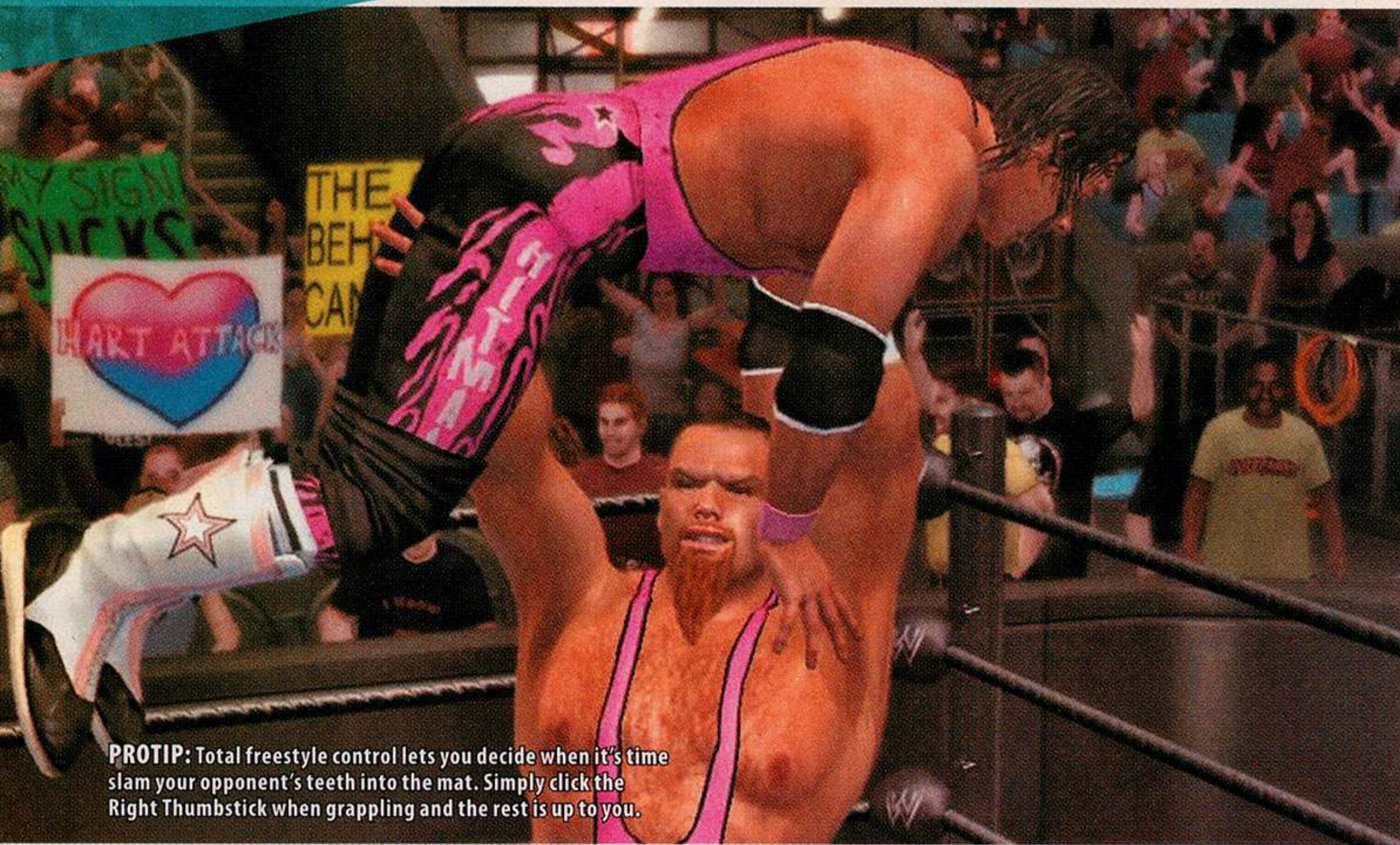
CREATE SPECTACULAR COMBOS IN MIND-BENDING ENVIRONMENTS WITH
CUTTING-EDGE MUSIC FROM SOME OF TODAY'S HOTTEST ARTISTS



www.luminesEEE.com
www.bvg.com



© 2004 BANDAI NAMCO GAMES INC. LUMINES is a trademark of O. ENTERTAINMENT INC. and BANDAI NAMCO GAMES INC. "PlayStation", "PS", "Family logo", and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. Manufactured and printed in the U.S.A. U.S. AND FOREIGN PATENTS PENDING.



PRO TIP: Total freestyle control lets you decide when it's time to slam your opponent's teeth into the mat. Simply click the Right Thumbstick when grappling and the rest is up to you.



PRO TIP: Environmental hot spots let you control how hard you want to smash your opponents lip on the turnbuckles, stairs, metal barricades, or other surfaces.



PRO TIP: The entrances and match win or lose situations are amazing. The team at Yuke's used motion capture to recreate each superstar's entrance, fireworks and all.

WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2007

So real, you can practically feel the sweat!



Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all sizes! Are you ready for the next-gen debut of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2007 on the Xbox 360? You'd better be because this one's got more punch than Andre the Giant's right hand. The pretty face-lift and refined game mechanics are great but they can only mask the fact that SmackDown 07 is still a frustrating button masher.

Blood, Sweat, and Tears

That's not to say it isn't an enjoyable experience, however. SmackDown 07 is an undeniably good looking game. These digital wrestling superstars have never looked more like their real-life counterparts, complete with realistic sweat and muscle bulges. And the facial animations are awesome, so you always know whether that's joy or pain spreading across Triple-H's mug.

In the ring, there's a new environmental hot spot mechanic that's oh so satisfying. Drag your opponent to any turnbuckle, rope, stair set, computer monitor, electrical wiring, or metal railing and let the punishment begin. You can even control the amount of

damage that you dish out. The other key feature is the revamped grappling system, which is exclusively handled with the Right Thumbstick. Pushing the stick up, down, left, or right will perform a quick grapple, usually sending your opponent to the mat. And holding down the RB will enable a strong grapple with even more devastating moves.

Then there's the create-a-character, which is a game in and of itself. We spent more time building a wrestler than maneuvering him in the ring. There really is no limit to this mode and if you can imagine how you'd like your wrestler to look, there's probably a slider bar to make it happen.

Time Out, Ref!

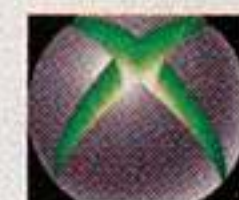
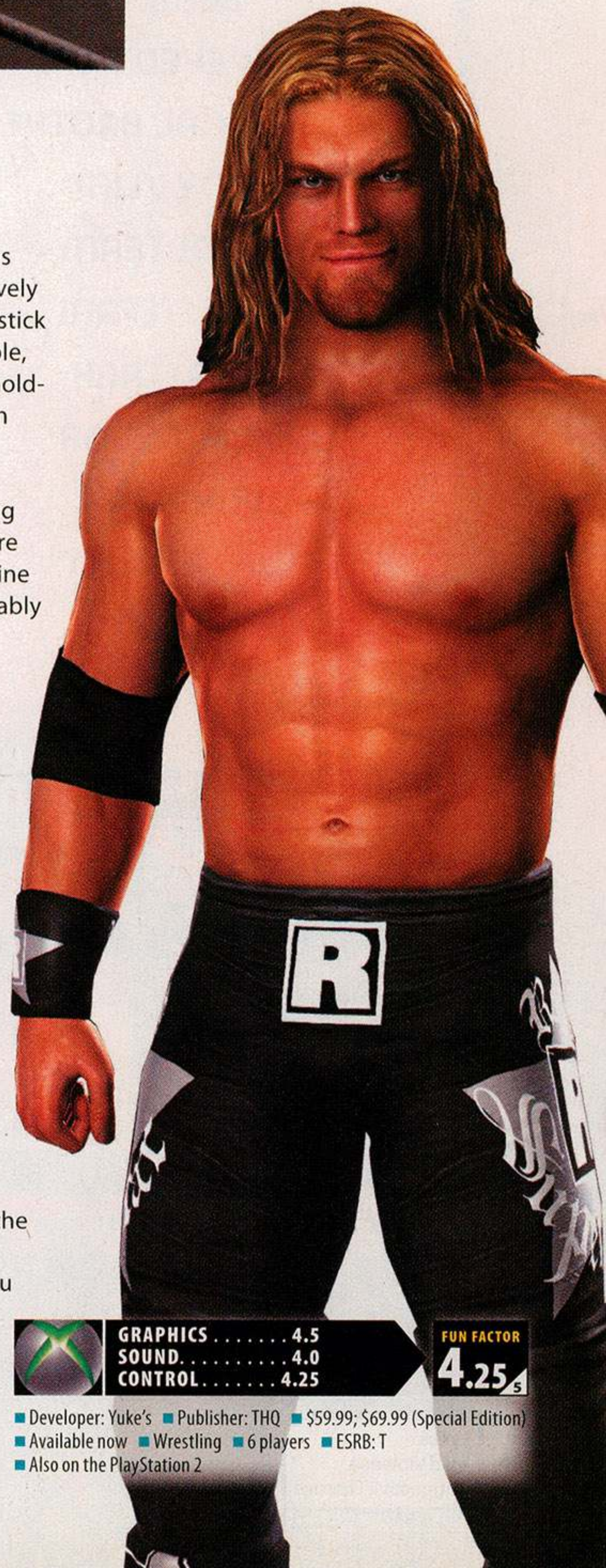
But despite these tweaks, SmackDown 07 still has its faults. There's still a lot of button mashing to contend with and it often feels as if there are times when the computer A.I. artificially gets a leg up on human players. We're familiar enough with real wrestling to know that the tide of match is supposed to ebb and flow but we'd rather our opponent earn the momentum rather than steal it away. Also, the action gets a little confusing when there are more than two wrestlers in the ring, which happens quite often given the anything-goes nature of the sport. And the reversal system is helpful at times, but not nearly enough, plus it's extremely difficult to master.

And yet, SmackDown 07 is easily the best wrestling game to date. There's enough juicy content here to keep you busy for years to come, which is enough time for Hulk Hogan to retire and unretire 12 times.

—Tenacious Moses



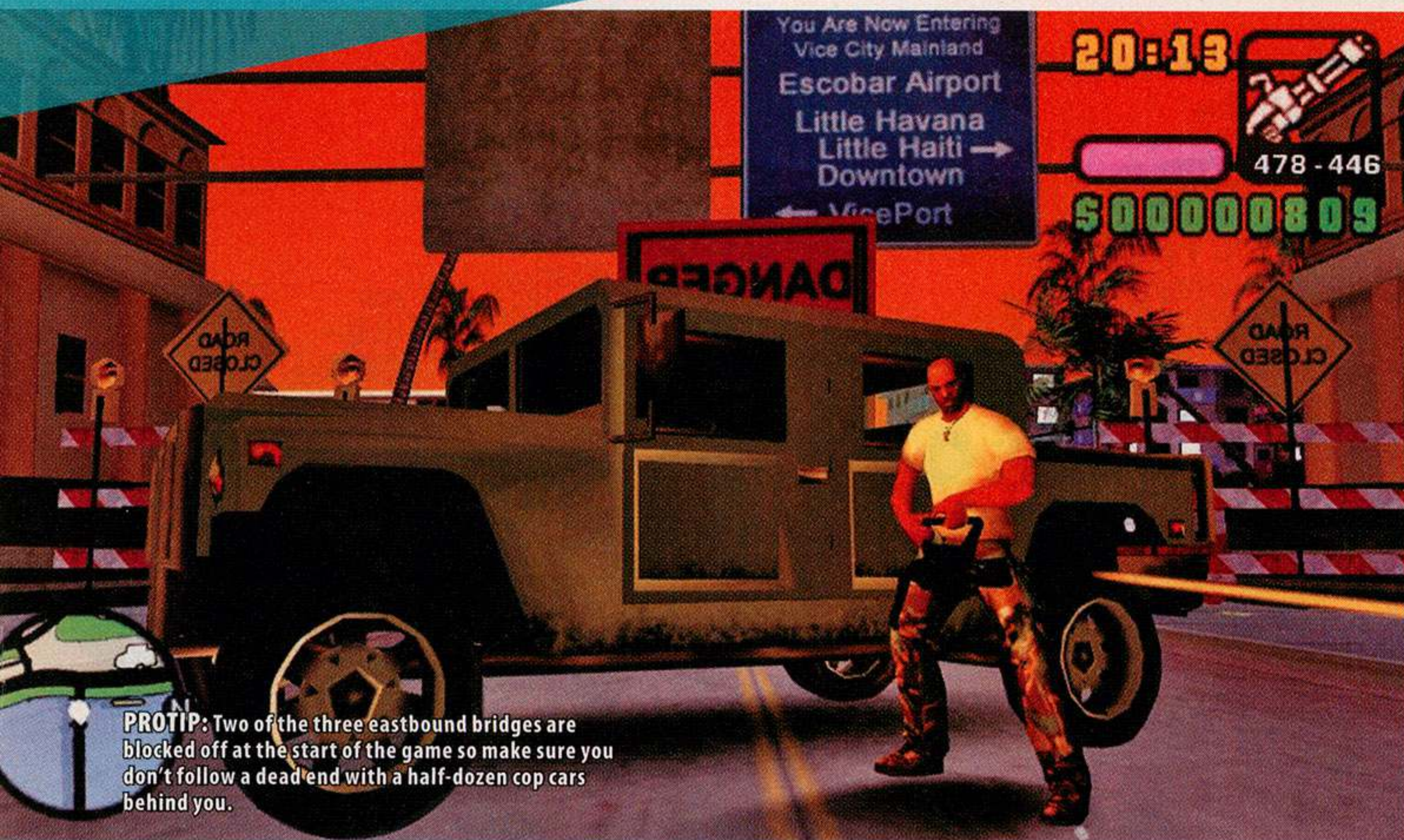
PRO TIP: Taunting is a fast and effective way to build your momentum bar, and the crowd loves it. Once the bar is full, you can perform your special move.



GRAPHICS 4.5
SOUND 4.0
CONTROL 4.25

FUN FACTOR
4.25

■ Developer: Yuke's ■ Publisher: THQ ■ \$59.99; \$69.99 (Special Edition)
■ Available now ■ Wrestling ■ 6 players ■ ESRB: T
■ Also on the PlayStation 2



PRO TIP: Two of the three eastbound bridges are blocked off at the start of the game so make sure you don't follow a dead end with a half-dozen cop cars behind you.



PRO TIP: Sailing over trouble in a chopper is lots of fun, but make sure you scope out a safe landing zone before descending.



PRO TIP: The extra power-ups and vehicles make safehouses a good place to restart a new game session.



PRO TIP: The jet ski might be the smartest choice for getting around on the water. It's fast, accelerates well, and turns much more sharply than the rest of the boats in the game.

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories

The '80s just aren't as much fun as they used to be.

PSP



The original Vice City for the PlayStation 2 was fun for one very compelling reason: the signature Rockstar shootouts and mayhem aside, its true strength was the game's personality and colorfully cartoonish send-up of '80s era pop culture. For gamers who got their start in the 8-bit Nintendo generation, Vice City drew a straight line back through their childhood.

You Can't Go Home Again

So it's a big shame that a lot of that personality has gone missing in Vice City Stories. Maybe it was the jump to a smaller stage that did them in, but the characters and dialogue don't have the same snap nor does the game exhibit the same goofy and utterly lovable '80s style. Instead, the game is gritty and dull to a fault and it doesn't have the same sense of humor that made the past titles so entertaining.

What humor there is tends to be painfully blunt—the first four hours are like one long unfunny redneck joke, for example. And while the

series has made shady characters likeable in the past, none of the goons in Vice City Stories have the flair of Tommy Vercetti.

The absence of a compelling story and cast of characters is especially problematic because Vice City Stories retains the same problems that plagued past titles. The auto-aim function doesn't work well, the A.I. isn't particularly smart, and some missions are completed more through trial and error than anything else.

Cruisin' USA

Thankfully, the famous "go anywhere, do anything" design is still intact and a metric ton of side activities are available to occupy your time. You can even repo cars for the DEA's civil forfeiture program.

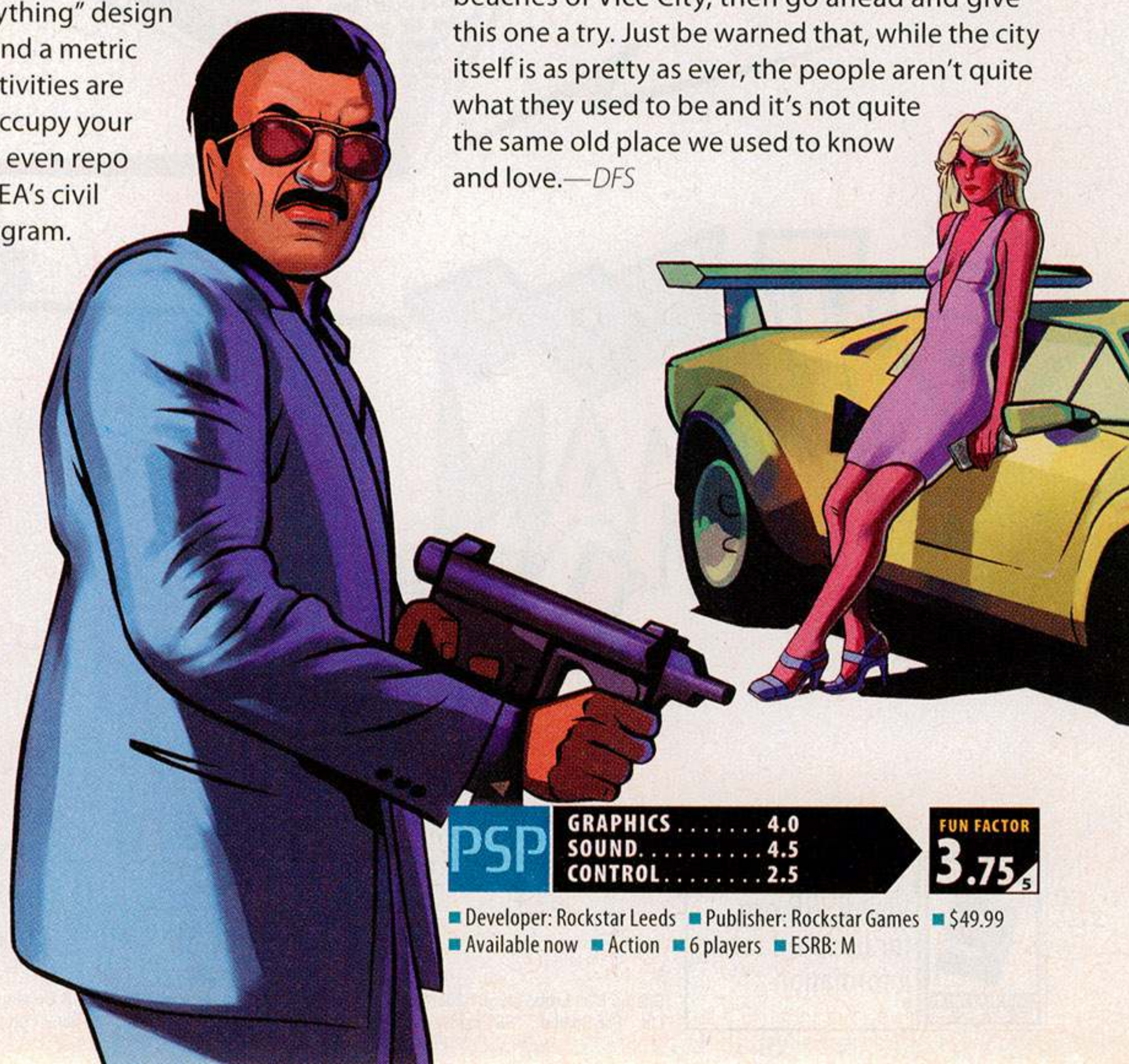
Yep, you can work for the cops in a GTA game, which

is a nice change of pace from all the criminal larceny. Rockstar also hasn't forgotten how to build an awesome licensed soundtrack—there are 10 different stations worth of music and chatter to pick from and it's across the board awesome. Whether you're looking for hard rock, proto-hip-hop, or godawful cheesy pop music, there's something for everyone. We were content to simply sit in our virtual cars and just cruise along the radio dial for a while.

If you want a trip back to the sun-splashed beaches of Vice City, then go ahead and give this one a try. Just be warned that, while the city itself is as pretty as ever, the people aren't quite what they used to be and it's not quite the same old place we used to know and love.—DFS



PRO TIP: The PCJ-900 is fast, but it's not necessarily the best choice for a clean getaway. Motorcycle handling can be twitchy at high speed, and they don't take well to swapping paint. Sometimes it's wiser to jack a slower, less flashy ride with a little more muscle to it.



PSP	GRAPHICS	4.0
	SOUND	4.5
	CONTROL	2.5
		FUN FACTOR
		3.75

Developer: Rockstar Leeds Publisher: Rockstar Games \$49.99 Available now Action 6 players ESRB: M



Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin

Castlevania turns 20 in style.

DS



It's hard to believe Konami's vampire hunting franchise has been around for 20 years. It started as a simple feud—the Belmont clan against Dracula—but it's now evolved into a grand tapestry that comes to a dizzying fruition with *Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin*.

Dracula's Out to Lunch

First things first: although it's a *Castlevania* game, *Portrait of Ruin* doesn't follow in the footsteps of its predecessors. First, Dracula is nowhere to be found—the story is focused instead on another vampire named Brauner. Also, the main characters aren't named Belmont: Jonathan Morris, who is the son of the main character from *Castlevania: Bloodlines*, and Charlotte Aulin star in this title.

Each character possess unique abilities—Jonathan excels in melee combat and Charlotte is a spellcasting wiz—and you can control them one at a time, or have both on the screen at once. It's important to call on the one that not only best suits your objectives but also your style of play.

We should also mention the updated multiplayer mode: you can play co-op locally or through Nintendo's Wi-Fi connection. You also have the opportunity to buy or sell items found in the game through Shop mode. Regardless, the multiplayer component is impressive enough that you'll keep *Portrait of Ruin* in your DS long after you've beaten the game.

Castlevania is King

All these changes make for a better game, but the genius of *PoR* is it retains the elements that

made the previous titles so much fun. Despite the removal of the touch screen functionality, the core gameplay is still a total blast and upgrading weapons and abilities keeps things from getting dull. The only real complaint

with *PoR* is the process of reloading a game once you've died is incredibly cumbersome and inconvenient.

It would have been easy for Konami to lazily release an underwhelming remake or compilation to celebrate *Castlevania's* 20th anniversary. Instead, they released *Portrait of Ruin*, a game that not only reaffirms the series' greatness, but is easily one of the best handheld titles released this year.—*The Watcher*



PRO TIP: Warp points are invaluable in getting you around the castle and other areas, so never hesitate to use them.



PRO TIP: Charlotte's defense isn't as robust as Jonathan's, so always keep her out of harm's way when you can.



PRO TIP: Combo attacks like these are incredibly powerful but they drain your MP bar quickly, so be judicious with their use.

DS	GRAPHICS	4.5	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR 4.5
	SOUND	4.5		
	CONTROL	4.5		

Developer and publisher: Konami ■ \$34.99 ■ Available now
Adventure ■ 2 players ■ ESRB: T

Final Fantasy III

Being doomed to repeat history isn't such a bad thing after all.

DS



Square Enix has been experimenting a lot with its hallowed *Final Fantasy* series lately and one lesson they've learned is you can't be afraid to try something new but you should still stick with what works. Hence, the newly remade *Final Fantasy III* for DS that retains the game's core mechanics but features updated graphics to give handheld gamers the best of both worlds.

game's *Final Fantasy VI*, which Square renamed for its release on the Super NES. Confused? Don't be. Just know that both are great games and let's move on.

The DS version of *FFIII* is a nostalgic throwback to the good old days of role-playing, with its random encounters and turn-based fighting. The game is basically the same as the original 1990 release, but with key upgrades. The most noticeable are the graphics, which are exponentially more detailed and nuanced. Also, the character backgrounds and personalities have been greatly augmented, which adds to the story's depth.

The game is mostly linear, but the dungeon difficulty and the familiar job system keeps things interesting. Characters may switch between jobs at will and as the game progresses, more job classes are unlocked, creating more opportunities to determine what the best team combination is for each area.

Changed For Good

Through and through, this remake of *Final Fantasy III* is a wonderful return to the good old days. Fans of the *Final Fantasy* franchise will definitely enjoy this nostalgic trip to a simpler time, and RPG fans in general would be well served to pick up this fun title. Finally, as an added bonus, if this remake of *Final Fantasy III* sees enough success, it could bode well for the speculative rumors flying about a possible *Final Fantasy VII* remake for the PlayStation 3. How cool would that be?—*T3hPanda*



In contrast to the original game, the party is now comprised of three guys and a girl instead of four guys—although all the in-game characters are pretty feminine looking anyway.



PRO TIP: Quick save is a great option, but perform real saves every now and again just to be sure.



PRO TIP: When your physical fighters aren't getting it done, switch to the many types of mage available to you.

DS	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR 4.0
	SOUND	3.5	
	CONTROL	3.5	

Developer and publisher: Square Enix ■ \$39.99 ■ Available now
RPG ■ 1 player ■ ESRB: E10+



Elite Beat Agents

The beat keeps rolling on

DS



The best DS title you've never played is a quirky Japanese rhythm game called *Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan*. Although it was only released in Japan, the title gained notoriety here in the States as a must-have import title. But if calculating exchange rates aren't your thing, you can still enjoy the goofy fun with *Ouendan's* American brother, *Elite Beat Agents*.

Agents Are GO!

Unlike most titles that undergo localization, the most important elements of the game remain largely intact: the core play mechanic, that requires you to tap on-screen markers to the beat of the music, and the zany and hilarious storylines that are told in a comic-book format. You'll find yourself furiously tapping your DS with precision strikes as you try to stay tuned to the music but even if you fail, your frustration levels won't peak because the game is just too darn fun.

La La?!

What will get your blood boiling, however, is the game's song selection. It's hit-or-miss and the winners—like David Bowie's "Let's Dance"—

can't make up for the ear-deadening losers like Ashlee Simpson's "La La" and Cher's "Believe." It's hard to concentrate on the game when you're forced to listen to such mainstream tripe. We also wish that the original's J-pop soundtrack would have been made available. Although we wouldn't know any of the lyrics, the music in that version was unforgettably catchy.

Also, we found ourselves missing the inherent humor of the original. It felt like something was lost in the attempt to make it appealing to American consumers. Although *Elite Beat Agents* is no slouch in the humor department, we couldn't help but wish that Nintendo had left well enough alone.

But even these gripes can't rob *Elite Beat Agents* of its fun, and those unfamiliar with the Japanese version will have a blast. It's a great title that takes perfect advantage of the DS' capabilities and we can only hope that there are more titles of its ilk on the way.—*The Watcher*



PRO TIP: It's hard to master a song initially, so use it as a chance see where markers are and what sort of rhythm it has.



PRO TIP: Don't get distracted by what's happening on the top screen, otherwise your timing might suffer.

DS

GRAPHICS 4.0
SOUND 4.0
CONTROL 4.25

FUN FACTOR
4.25

Developer: iNiS/Nintendo Publisher: Nintendo \$34.99
Available now Rhythm/action 4 players ESRB: E10+

Medal of Honor: Heroes

Medal of Honor hits the PSP but it's hardly heroic.

PSP



Medal of Honor: Heroes helps dispel the notion that first-person shooters can't work on the PSP. Its intuitive control scheme overcomes the basic limitations of the handheld's single analog stick and makes playing the game a breeze. Too bad the rest of this title isn't as good.

Medal of Dishonor

Heroes has three major faults: first, it's repetitive. The level design is cookie cutter at best and you'll experience a sensation of déjà vu more than once. Second, the computer A.I. is



PRO TIP: The StG44 is the perfect balance of power of a high rate of power. Always try to carry one of these babies into firefights.

horrible, especially your squad mates who like to senselessly spin around in circles, pace back and forth, and run into your field of fire. And lastly, the mission objectives are exceedingly simplistic and fall into one of three categories: guard a specific location, place an explosive, or collect an item.

We're not exaggerating—that's really it as far as objectives go. There are also some other flaws in the game such as enemies spawning out of midair and noticeable load times.

Death Goes Online

Fortunately, the multiplayer mode in *Heroes* fares much better. You can wage war against as many as 31 players online. The best part about this is that you don't have to wait in a lobby until a round ends—you can join a game at any time. There is also a wireless Ad Hoc mode for you and seven of your buddies to host your own frag-fest. And no matter how many soldiers are running around, the 15 multiplayer maps have enough room to accommodate the action.



PRO TIP: If a grenade is ever tossed in your direction, kick it back by pressing up on the directional pad.

But ultimately, it isn't enough to save this title from the depths of mediocrity. If you're desperate for a decent first-person shooter for the PSP, then give it a look. Otherwise, this is one ship that you should let sail on by.

—*Long-Haired Offender*



PRO TIP: Don't rely on your handgun; as it's about as effective as a water pistol.

PSP

GRAPHICS 3.25
SOUND 3.5
CONTROL 3.75

FUN FACTOR
3.25

Developer: EA Canada/EA LA Publisher: EA Games \$49.99
Available now Action/adventure 32 players ESRB: T



Yoshi's Island DS

Getting egged has never been so fun.

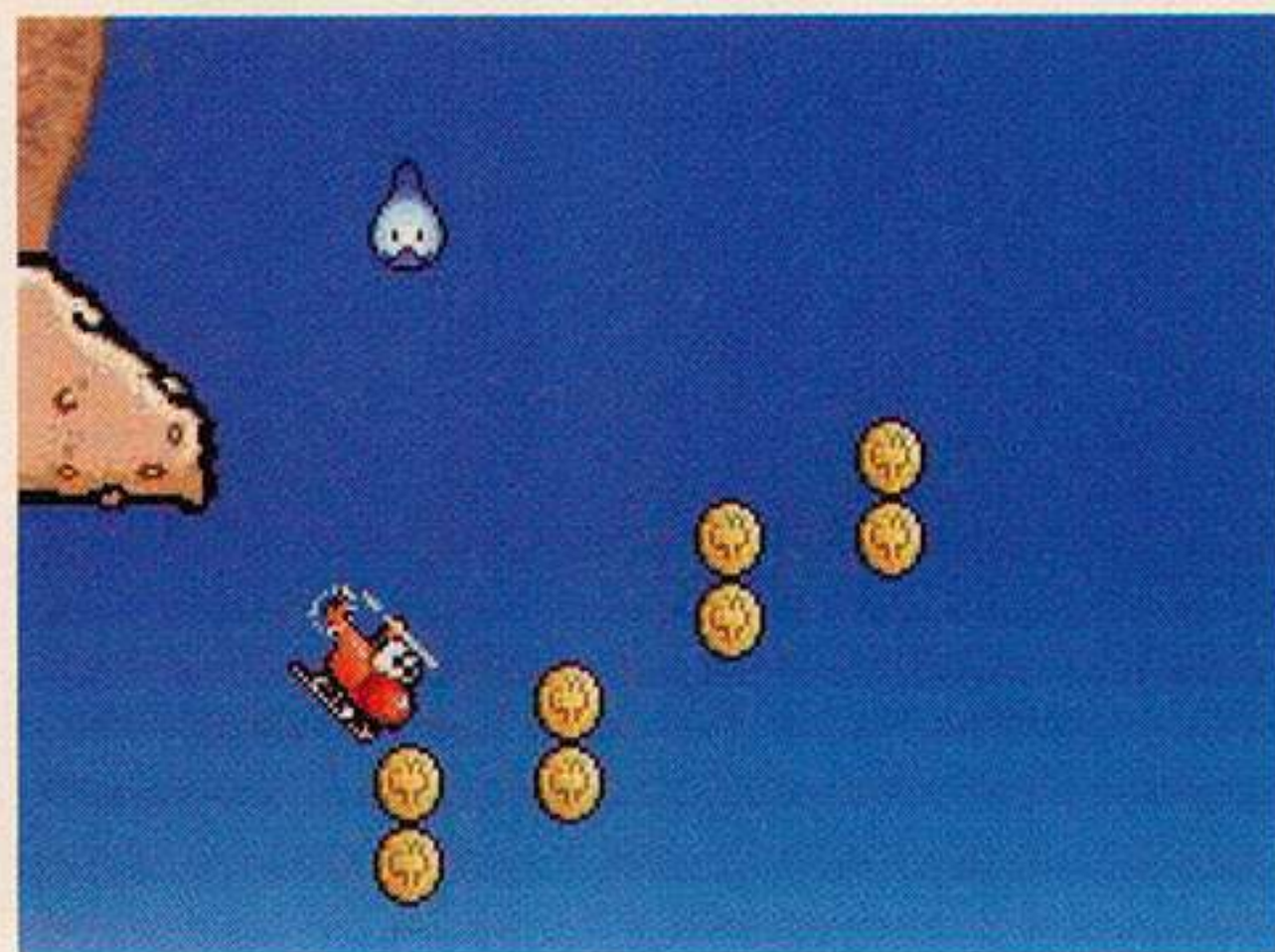
DS



The adorable dinosaur Yoshi and pals hop their way onto the DS with the classic 2D side-scrolling action and colorful pastel artwork for which Nintendo is so famous. Although it isn't perfect, this is one title that can safely be called a "good egg."

Eggs Over Easy

One cool thing about this game is that both screens are linked into one playing field, making the world of Yoshi's Island DS feel much bigger than it ever has before. The game contains five worlds with eight levels each, plus some bonus levels, which equates to a lot of



PROTIP: Yoshi can turn into a helicopter to reach out of the way places; maybe birds are descended from dinosaurs...

real estate for Yoshi to cover. Finding hidden keys also allows you to unlock additional mini-games, including one that requires Yoshi to lay as many eggs as possible within a time-span of 30 seconds. Each level also has a ton of hidden collectibles, which should keep more obsessive gamers busy.

Saddle Up Those Dinosaurs

A spiffy new addition to the gameplay is the ability to switch out the babies that ride on Yoshi's back. And each baby has a special ability: Baby Mario allows Yoshi to dash at top speed, Peach's parasol lets him float, Donkey Kong can break through boulders and climb vines, and Wario's giant magnet grabs metal items. It's a nice change that really adds a bit of strategy and puzzle solving into the otherwise familiar formula.

Speaking of familiar, the one thing we didn't like about the game was the control scheme. It works well enough but we were disappointed that it wasn't updated to take full advantage of the DS Lite's touch screen. Throwing eggs still requires timed button presses, which is strange because using the stylus to aim seems like a no-brainer.

However, despite this small annoyance, Yoshi's Island DS is a fun and light-hearted title that deserves a tongue full of praise.—*ifeelthecosmos*



PROTIP: Donkey Kong can smash through rock-hard boulders and use his strong arms to climb and swing on vines.



■ Developer: Artoon ■ Publisher: Nintendo ■ \$34.99
■ Available now ■ Adventure ■ 4 players ■ ESRB: E

Sonic Rivals

He just keeps going, and going...

PSP



Dr. Eggman is back to cause Sonic more trouble and he must out-race his foes to save his friends. But as fast as the action is, it'll only get your engines revved to second gear.

Speeding Ticket

Sonic Rivals plays much like the old-school Sega Genesis Sonic titles, but with a dash of racing thrown in. You choose from a roster of speed-addicted characters and navigate

them through levels in the three single-player modes: story, challenge, and Cup Circuit. Story mode involves two stages of plain racing followed by a boss battle; challenge mode presents you with various objectives to complete on each track with three levels of difficulty; and Cup Circuit is just straight-up racing against competitors. There's also a multiplayer mode that allows you to connect to a friend through the PSP's built-in Wi-Fi connection.

Regardless, the name of the game is the same: go as fast as you can. But while the theory is simple, it's much more complex in practice. In order to win races, you need to be more than fast. You can rebound off your opponent to gain speed or "jostle" them to slow their progress. There are also a myriad of special attacks and power-ups that can be grabbed as you tear through the race course.



PROTIP: Each race you win or objective you complete unlocks collectible cards and can result in new outfits, skins and images.

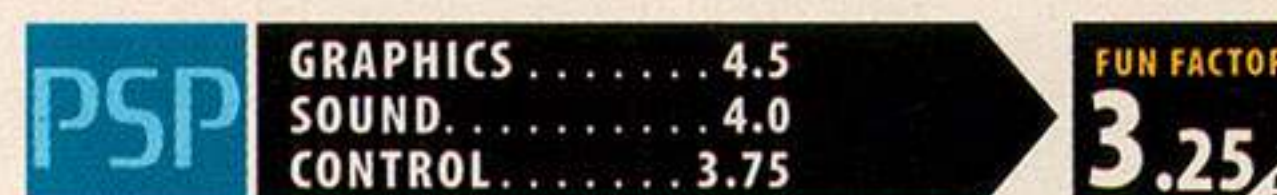
Scenic View

Modes aside, the game excels graphically with sharp, detailed, and colorful visuals; it's by far one of the better looking PSP games we've ever encountered. The background music is also energetic and the voice acting keeps the competitive atmosphere and characters fresh.

Yet, there isn't much substance to Sonic Rivals. It does have a high replay value in the form of challenging objectives, different stories, collectible cards, and multiple course paths, but the game has only a handful of tracks and characters. Those who love to obsessively collect things and meet objectives will have a great time, but for many, Sonic Rivals will be best in quick spurts.—*T3hPanda*



PROTIP: Falling off the course wastes precious time as does hitting an environmental hazard. Avoid both if you want to win.



■ Developer: Backbone Entertainment ■ Publisher: Sega ■ \$39.99
■ Available now ■ Racing ■ 2 players ■ ESRB: E



ONE OF THE TOP FIVE GAME-DEGREE PROGRAMS

—Electronic Gaming Monthly



Student Artwork
Francisco Cruz

FULL SAIL

Real World Education

School of
Game Development

School of
Computer Animation

800.226.7625

fullsail.com

GET STARTED

3300 University Boulevard
Winter Park, FL 32792

Financial aid available to those who qualify
Career development assistance
Accredited College, ACCSCT

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

REVIEWS



GAMES TO GO

Avatar: The Last Airbender

DS



For the uninitiated, you need only know one thing about Avatar: The Last Airbender: it's a great show. This animated series takes the best elements of Japanese anime—colorful characters and exciting action—and marries it with an American storytelling sensibility.

A lot of the series' charm, however, is missing from the DS version of Avatar. The title had potential—we were especially excited about the possibility of using the touchscreen to perform elemental "bending" attacks—but it's about as exciting as sugar-free applesauce. The plot, which is interesting enough, is held back by the repetitive and boring combat; far too often, it degenerates into an exercise in button mashing.

To be fair, the game is obviously aimed at children who will most likely eat this one up like it was sweet, sweet candy. Adults, however, will find it about as appetizing as steamed cauliflower and should definitely avoid it as such.—*Ahoy_and_Avast*



PRO TIP: Aang's air-bending skills make for some impressive attacks. Just make sure you keep an eye on the recharge meter.



PRO TIP: Aang has good reach with his attacks so you can hang back and let your allies run interference on the enemy.



DS	GRAPHICS	3.25	FUN FACTOR 3.0 ₅
	SOUND	2.75	
	CONTROL	3.0	

Developer: TOSE Software ■ Publisher: THQ ■ \$29.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player ■ ESRB: E ■ Also on the Game Boy Advance

SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab

DS



Let us admit something that most adults won't: we love SpongeBob SquarePants. We can't get enough of his nautical adventures. Honestly, we probably appreciate the little yellow guy more than most children do. But as great as the show is, the video games haven't been so great, so we were a little hesitant to give Creature from the Krusty Krab a try.

But, must to our surprise, the game is actually decent. The best part is the control scheme, which takes full advantage of the touchscreen. You swipe the stylus left or right to make the characters move, you swipe down to make them stop and you swipe up to make them jump. You can also interact with the environment using the stylus: for instance, you can pull switches to lower bridges and stun enemies with a quick tap.

It all works quite well and should prove entertaining to the little ones. The quirky humor and gameplay will be a little too simple for more mature tastes but younger gamers should definitely tune into this one.—*Ahoy_and_Avast*



PRO TIP: Plankton finally gets his revenge on the residents of Bikini Bottom. That's what you get for making fun of him.



PRO TIP: At the Restless Sea level, the Kesa are interested only in sinking your ship; use heavy attacks to knock them off the deck.

DS	GRAPHICS	3.25	FUN FACTOR 3.5 ₅
	SOUND	3.0	
	CONTROL	3.75	

Developer: Blitz Games ■ Publisher: THQ ■ \$29.99 ■ Available now ■ Adventure ■ 1 player ■ ESRB: E ■ Also on the PSP





100
A01 0106

AMHC



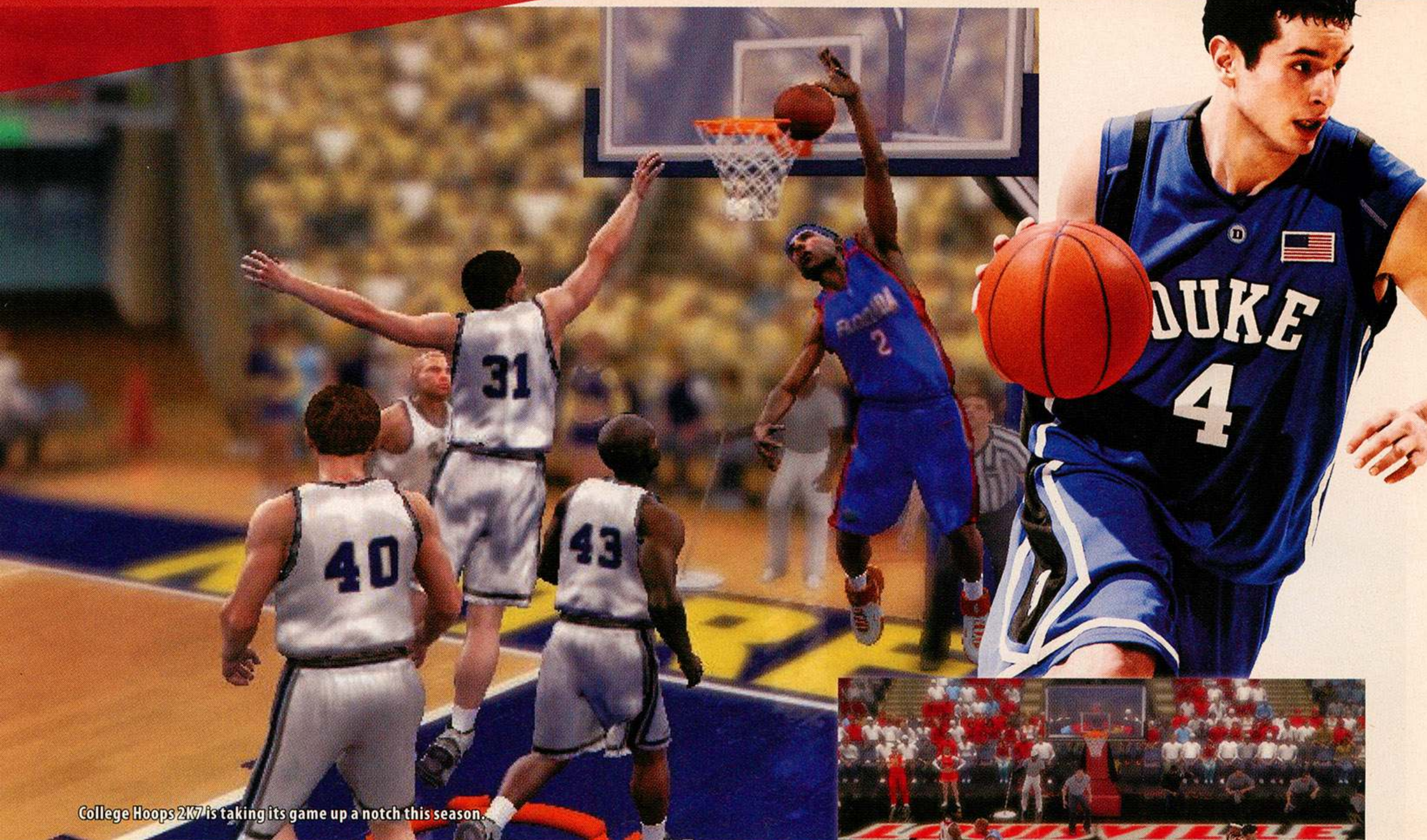
AVIREX

MILE HIGH CLUB TUTORIAL

LESSON 02: KEEP POPPIN' BOTTLES

GAIN ALL ACCESS INSIDE THE AVIREX MILE HIGH CLUB
FEATURING TERA PATRICK AT WWW.AVIREX.COM





College Hoops 2K7 is taking its game up a notch this season.

College Hoops 2K7

Basketball graduates with honors.

PS2

Xbox 360

Xbox

In the real world, college and university basketball programs serve as a sort of farm system and proving grounds for the NBA. Not so in the halfcourt held down by 2K Sports. Ace developer, Visual Concepts, predicts, nay, guarantees that College Hoops 2K7 is a better basketball game than its reigning hoops champ, NBA 2K7.

Schooling NBA

College Hoops uses the core NBA 2K7 game engine as a launching pad for sure but sky rockets from there. First of all, Hoops puts the 2K in 2K7 as in 2000 new animations. New looks are busting out all over the court including on the bench where actual college coaches are now part of the visual show.

Moreover, special moves are now mapped to the buttons rather than the analog stick to make

spins and crossovers easier to execute. Although that scheme potentially tweaks hardcore 2K b-ball vets, Visual Concepts hopes it opens up the gameplay to the masses.

Unified Theory

Probably the biggest innovation for Hoops 2K7 is the Team Unity factor. Since college basketball is as much a game of emotional impact as anything else, Hoops make team chemistry a factor affecting team gameplay. If you play one player as a ball hog or you miss too many easy shots, your teams overall ability drops. If you have experienced upper classmen on the court or your team's on a winning streak, Team Unity is up so your group plays better. In both Legacy mode and quick games Team Unity fluctuates

throughout the game and throughout the season to affect the outcomes.

Sounds like School Spirit

College Hoops gives school spirit major boost, too. Now you can use Chant Creator to produce variations of your school's yells and chants or make up your own. You can alter 15 basic drums by stringing them together or lengthening the intervals between them. There's also a vocabulary list where you can pick words for a custom chant or even sound out your words to your own chants and cheers. (And the answer is "no" those words are not on the list nor will you be able to sound them out.)

When you toss in the NIT tournament and the three newest Division 1A teams (welcome, Central Arkansas, Winston Salem State, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology), College Hoops 2K7 looks set to graduate with honors.

—The Water Boy

■ **First Look** ■ Developer: Visual Concepts ■ Publisher: 2K Sports
■ Target release date: Available now



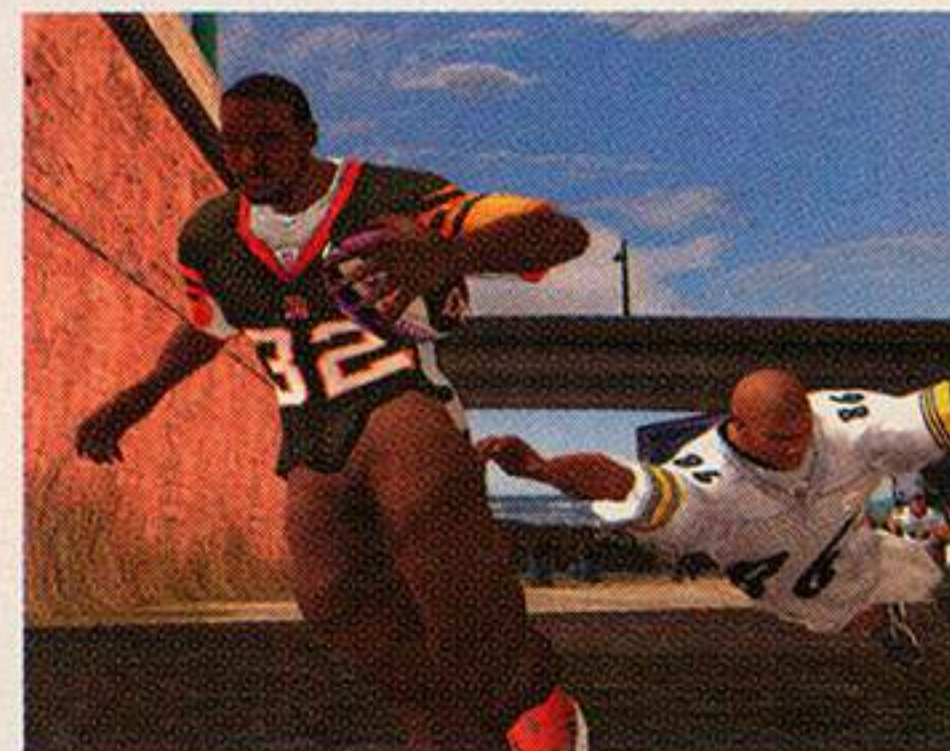
GAMEPRO.COM
FOR COLLEGE HOOPS 2K7'S REPORT CARD



PROTIP: Crush the breath out of a runner with all your energy: not only is it satisfying but it'll earn you some extra juice.



PROTIP: Some icons will be within easy reach, while others will require you to leap off obstacles and walls.



PROTIP: Balls caught off the wall stay in play, so don't give up until the whistle blows!



PROTIP: Somersaulting off walls is fun, but pay attention to your landing. All the acrobatics in the world won't help you much if you drop into a crowd of defenders.

NFL Street 3

If Madden is a football work week, then this is the Saturday pool party.

PS2



No pads, no referees, no kicking—just full-tilt football action. That's the formula that EA has refined over two installments of their extreme NFL Street franchise. Now, the third title is here and it proves yet again that you don't need skills to pay the bills: all you need are a bunch of hyperactive twitch muscles.

Pigskin Powers

That's the theory, anyway, and it works well enough to be an enjoyable, if remarkably cava-

lier, approach to the game. Players can jump like they're on springs, the debris that litters each field is fair game, and large sections of wall turn out-of-bounds stumbles into wall-running feats of athletic insanity, with even the largest players lurching through airborne somersaults with apparent ease.

What's more, style and game breaker triggers let you add flair and power to any movement, from jukes and strong-arms to passing and tackling. Taunt an ineffectual defense with the ball, high-step it to the end zone, slam a bullet pass through interception attempts, or unleash a super-human rib-cracking tackle—it's all there at your disposal.

Rumbling, Bumbling, Stumbling

Unfortunately, for all the ridiculous action, the computer A.I. is permanently out to lunch, and since games are played until a certain score total is reached—as opposed to a game clock—most matches against the computer end far too soon, which, sucks the life out of the career mode. How excited can you get about upgrading your team when there's not much challenge to begin with?

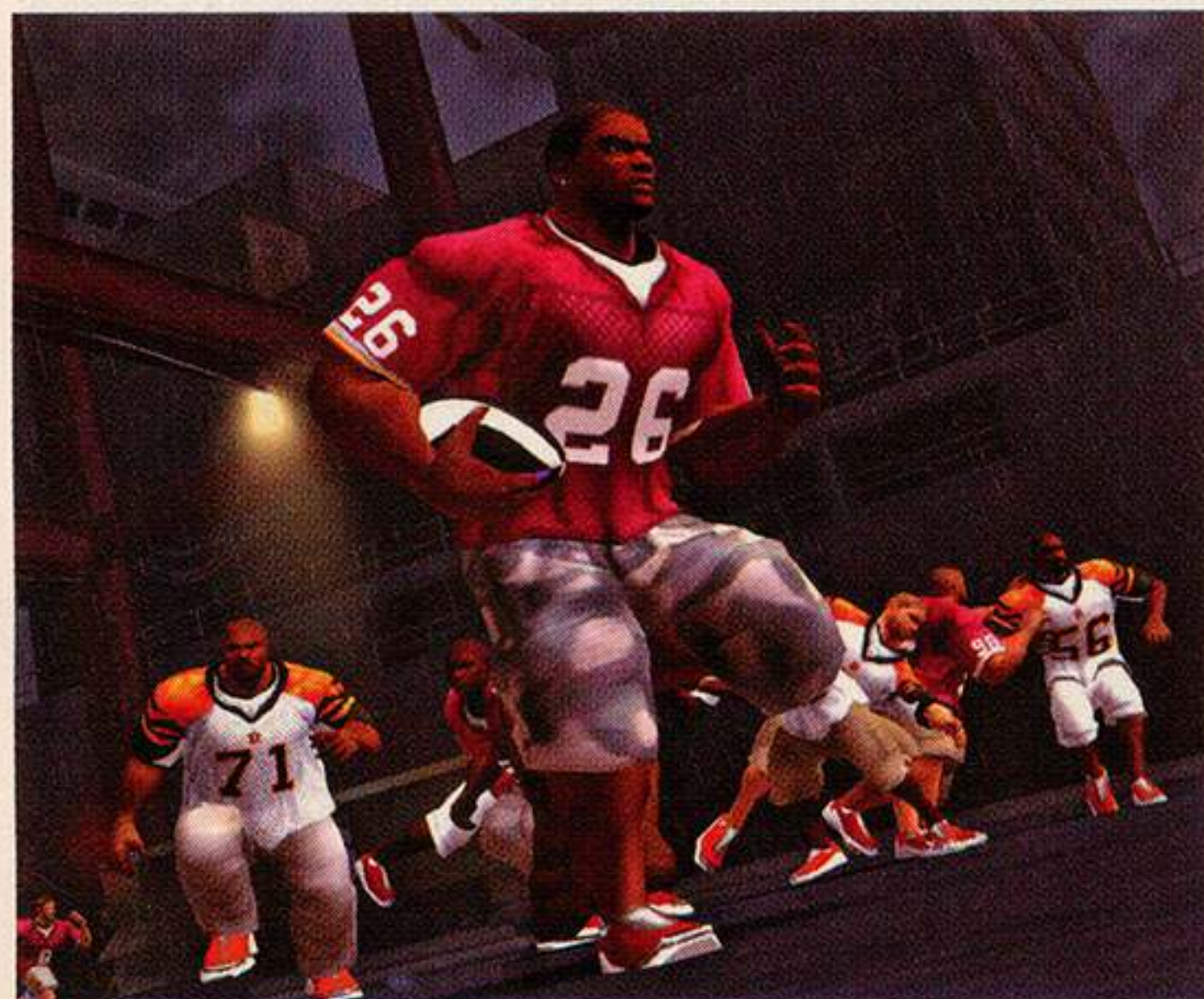
The real fun of NFL Street 3 comes from the various multiplayer modes which all go a long way to giving the

game some legs. In particular, the Playbook Elimination mode demands real thought to excel at, since any time a play doesn't result in gained yardage it disappears from your available options.

Pig In A Prom Dress

Speaking of disappearing, that's what happened to the emphasis that EA usually places on the visual quality of its games. NFL Street 3 doesn't keep pace with its more serious pigskin brother, Madden. There's a decent array of arenas but most of them look grainy and hastily constructed. The player models are decent but clipping issues abound. Aurally, NFL Streets 3 is pretty shoddy, with barely intelligible mealy-mouthed plain read voice-overs and some God-awful tunes. This is, again, disturbing considering the usual care that EA puts into its game soundtracks.

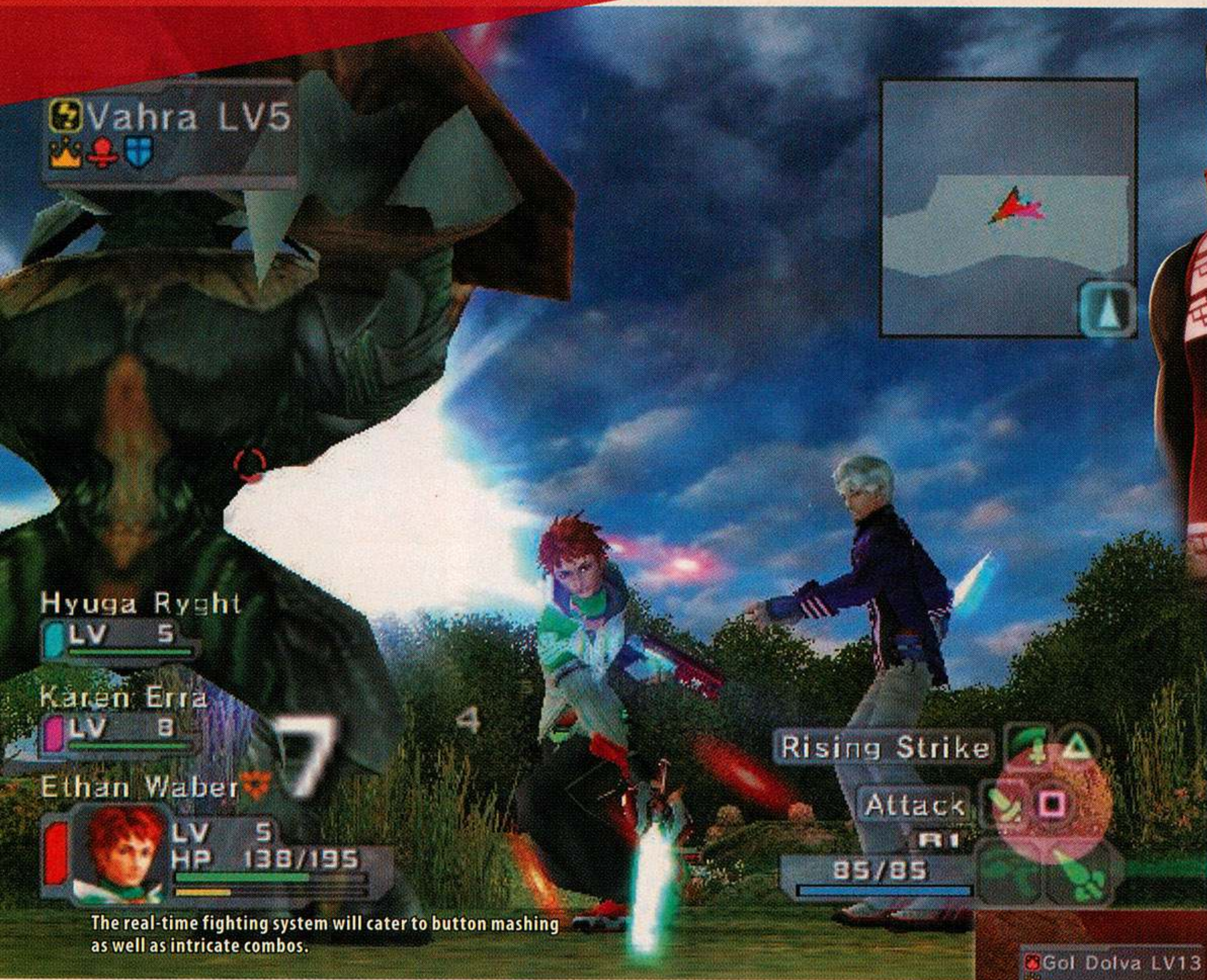
Taken in small doses, NFL Street 3 is an enjoyable diversion, but despite its comic book flourishes and interesting interactive environments, it just can't hold a candle to Blitz's polish. Fans of the series will dig it, but this is one footballer that's unlikely to score any conversions.—Ouroboros



PROTIP: Mastering the timing of your jukes and strong arms can lead to increased yardage gains. There's something very satisfying about watching a guy take a flying dive at you and miss.

PS2	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR	3.5
	SOUND	2.75		
	CONTROL	3.5		

Developer: EA Tiburon Publisher: EA Sports Big \$29.99 Available now Sports 4 players ESRB: E



The real-time fighting system will cater to button mashing as well as intricate combos.



Phantasy Star Universe

Phulfill your Phantasy

When an evil alien race suddenly attacks the multi-storied space station Metropolis in Phantasy Star Universe, a punky youth named Ethan finds himself in a bind; his little sister needs rescuing. So, he sides with the law-enforcing Guardians and commences a serious interstellar ass-whipping.

Star Wars

With the Guardian space colony as your base of operations, you begin each chapter with a mission objective on a different planet, where you'll perform straightforward tasks before finally returning home to close the chapter. The lack of any open-ended structure seems antiquated by modern RPG standards, but it is obvious that PSU still has plenty to offer in terms of exploration, with an entire system of planets at its core.

The real-time fighting uses a pleasantly simple arcadey combat system that allows for success with either unbridled button mashing or skilled combo execution. The latter uses special "photon arts" attacks that draw on the power of equipped weapons to create powerful attacks. Selecting gear and weapons can be done on the fly via the action palette, which lets you swap and use items in the heat of combat to better adjust for changing circumstances.

Phinal Phantasy

As you might imagine, leveling up by defeating enemies will improve your character's personal statistics, but Phantasy Star Universe also allows you to level up your character's class. Simi-

lar to the job system in the Final Fantasy series, PSU offers three distinct classes—changeable throughout the game—with a different set of offensive and defensive attributes for each one. Hunters rely on brute force physical attacks, while Forces act like magicians by casting various "technics," and Rangers serve as the most balanced class.

Phantasy Star Universe also includes a full-fledged massively multiplayer online component that sticks close to the formula of the recent Phantasy Star Online titles, and Xbox 360 gamers will share international servers with Japanese players.

Although some elements of Phantasy Star Universe seem overdone, there's little doubt that this game will be quickly gobbled up by longtime series fans left hungry for another installment in this classic franchise.—*Bones*

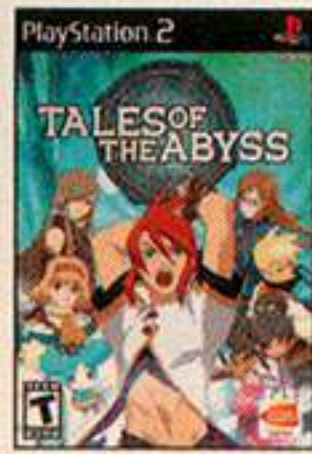
■ **Hands-On** ■ Developer: Sonic Team ■ Publisher: Sega
 ■ Target release date: Available now



Tales of the Abyss

It's not terribly original, but it's fun nonetheless.

PS2



Namco Bandai's Tales series never strays far from familiar RPG conventions in terms of characters and basic narrative. Take, for example, Tales of Symphonia which was guilty of using nearly every clichéd plot point known to man. Tales of the Abyss also relies on similar nuances, but still keeps the action moving with great characters and compelling action. It's not terribly new, but it's fun.

The Power is Yours

The plot of Tales of the Abyss is long and complex, and there are plenty of twists that keep the story moving and the player guessing. Like

past games in the franchise, Abyss is dialogue-heavy, which is unfortunate considering there's no option to speed up the text.

The game's visual style also skews away from the cute cel-shaded style of past titles. Everything is now rendered in realistic 3D and while it's an upgrade, the graphics still fall below the current standard set by games such as Final Fantasy.

Fonon Fun

The battle system hasn't changed drastically from previous installments either. However, the "flexible motion battle system" is an excellent addition that allows you to run freely around the battle field, meaning you can now

maneuver around your enemies, a strategy that is especially important during the many boss battles.

There is also a new feature which involves "fonons", the magic particles that exist in the game. If enough elemental magic is cast, a colored ring will appear on the battle field where the magic landed called a "field of fonons." If you run into the field and execute certain special moves, the move will change into a different, element-specific upgrade.

Abyss maintains the status quo that was set by the previous titles in the franchise. However, there is a sense of refinement inherent in the game that keeps it from feeling stale. It definitely has enough going for it to entertain both series vets and newcomers alike.—T3hPanda



PROTIP: Configure your mages to cast the same elemental magic to create an active field of fonons more often.



PROTIP: Use L2 to run freely during battle to circle around to your enemy's back or to fields of fonons.

PS2	GRAPHICS	4.0
	SOUND	4.25
	CONTROL	4.5
		FUN FACTOR
		4.25

Developer: Namco Tales Studio Publisher: Namco Bandai Games
\$39.99 Available now RPG 4 players ESRB: T

.hack//G.U. Vol. 1: Rebirth

The epic RPG series is back for another captivating installment.

PS2



CyberConnect 2 resurrected the console-based, offline MMORPG with the first volume of a new trilogy in the .hack saga. .hack//G.U. Vol. 1: Rebirth does not continue the storyline of the original games, but instead acts as its hyperactive, yet gifted, younger brother.

Welcome to "The World."

Rebirth adapts a fluid concoction of Japanese animation and cell-shading, which is an immense improvement over previous polygonal rendering. Beautifully executed rendering allows textures to be applied with striking atten-

tion to detail, resulting in attractive scenery and scantily-clad characters.

H4x0red Upgrades!

However, intelligent character design and intelligent voice acting are two completely different things. The shrill character voices will shred your sanity during long-winded "character development" dialogue that does nothing to advance the plot. Haseo (the angst-filled bad-boy the game now revolves around) has a ridiculously uncouth tongue that entertains as he verbally flogs each and every character he meets, though it gets old. The game's audio has one other saving grace: its soundtrack. All around,

from field to town to fighting, the soundtrack is a pure joy to listen to.

The game's other redeeming attributes are new and upgraded features. The controls have been adapted to new skills and moves, helping the fluidity of game play that was sorely lacking in days of the old World. Weapon skills allow you to interrupt opponents' attacks in mid-movement, making the combat feel more like a real-time experience.

With many other battle upgrades and changes to town actions, .hack//G.U. is the metamorphosed caterpillar of the maturing .hack dynasty. Hardcore series fans will appreciate the connections with the original story and the newly released anime in Japan (.hack//ROOTS). Newbies to the franchise can get plugged in with the special edition, which includes a DVD synopsis of the previous plots, and a Haseo action figure.

Though sometimes slow and laborious, .hack//G.U. Vol. 1: Rebirth is a well thought out update to the series, and is a welcome addition to the growing .hack family.

—I Like Pie



PROTIP: Use skills often, especially in the Arena to increase weapon levels. Arenas level up weapons faster.



PROTIP: Characters do not level up as equally as they did in the past; take characters out of battle to keep their levels up to par.

PS2	GRAPHICS	4.25
	SOUND	5.0
	CONTROL	4.5
		FUN FACTOR
		4.0

Developer: CyberConnect 2 Publisher: Namco Bandai Games \$39.99; \$49.99 (Special Edition) Available now RPG 1 player ESRB: T



CODE VAULT

Submit your hottest **Code Vault** tips! In March's issue, the reader with the winning tip will receive a **Halo 2** Action Figure courtesy of JoyRide Studios!

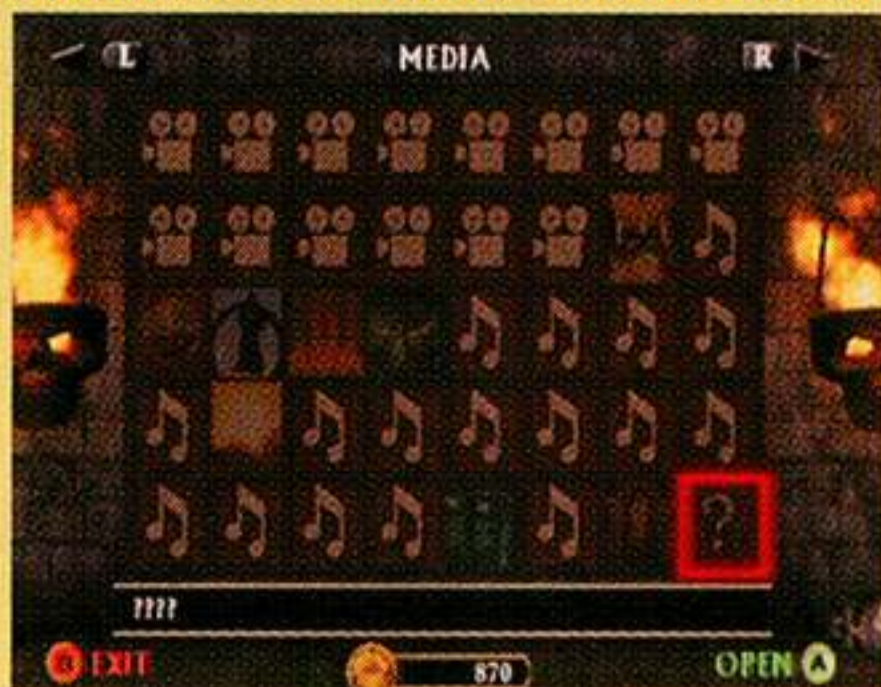
Runners-up receive a **GamePro T-shirt!**

READER TIP OF THE MONTH

PLAYSTATION 2

PS2

MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON



At the main menu, select The Krypt, press any of the shoulder buttons until you reach the Media Content, select the box with the question mark on it, located on the bottom right hand corner of the screen, press X, and then enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a code correctly, you'll see a confirming message onscreen.

- Armageddon Promo Movie:** Press Up, Up, Down, Up, L1, X.
- Armory Music:** Press X, □, Left, △, □, X.
- Blaze:** Press △, □, Left, L1, Left, O.
- Blaze Art:** Press L1, △, L2, L2, R1, □.
- Daegon:** Press R1, L1, △, Down, Down, □.
- Early Taven Art:** Press Up, X, R2, Down, L2, X.
- Ed Boon Drawing:** Press L1, Left, Up, O, R2, L1.
- Falling Cliffs Arena:** Press R2, O, □, X, O, △.
- Firewall Arena Art:** Press Up, □, R1, L2, O, L1.
- Frost's Second Costume:** Press Down, R2, R1, L1, O, L2.
- Krimson Forest Arena:** Press O, L1, Up, □, O, Down.
- Lin Kuei Palace Music:** Press L2, Left, O, X, R2, Right.
- Meat:** Press Up, □, □, O, O, Up.
- Mileena's Car Art:** Press R2, Right, Up, R1, △, Up.
- Motor Kombat Movie:** Press △, Up, R2, L1, R1, R2.
- Nethership Interior Arena:** Press R1, Left, Left, Down, L1, □.
- Nitara's 2nd Costume:** Press Down, L1, Up, L1, L1, Right.
- Pyramid of Argus Arena:** Press R1, L1, □, X, R2, Up.
- Pyramid of Argus Art:** Press △, Left, Left, X, Down, O.
- Pyramid of Argus Music:** Press Down, Left, R2, L2, Up, L1.
- Reiko's War Room Arena:** Press R2, △, R1, Up, X, X.
- Sektor's Blade Art:** Press R2, L1, Left, X, Up, R1.
- Shang Tsung's Second Costume:** Press L1, Left, Up, O, Up, L2.
- Shinnok's Spire Arena:** Press Left, Left, O, Up, △, L2.
- Taven:** Press L2, Left, R1, Up, O, Down.
- Tekunin Warship Music:** Press Up, O, L1, R1, R1, X.
- Unused Konquest Trap Art:** Press O, R2, △, Down, O, Left.

Gilbert Davison—Los Angeles, CA

WIN!

Send tips to:
GamePro magazine
Code Vault
P.O. Box 22210
Oakland, CA 94623-2210

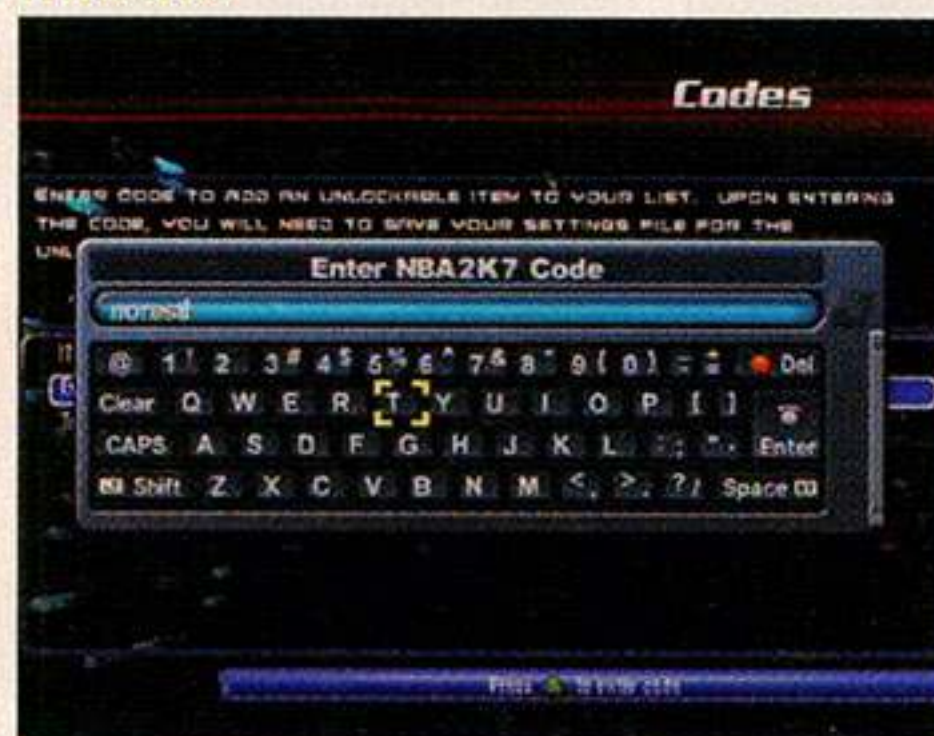
or e-mail them to:
codevault@gamepro.com

Please include your name, address, and phone number so we can award you your prize.



XBOX 360

NBA 2K7

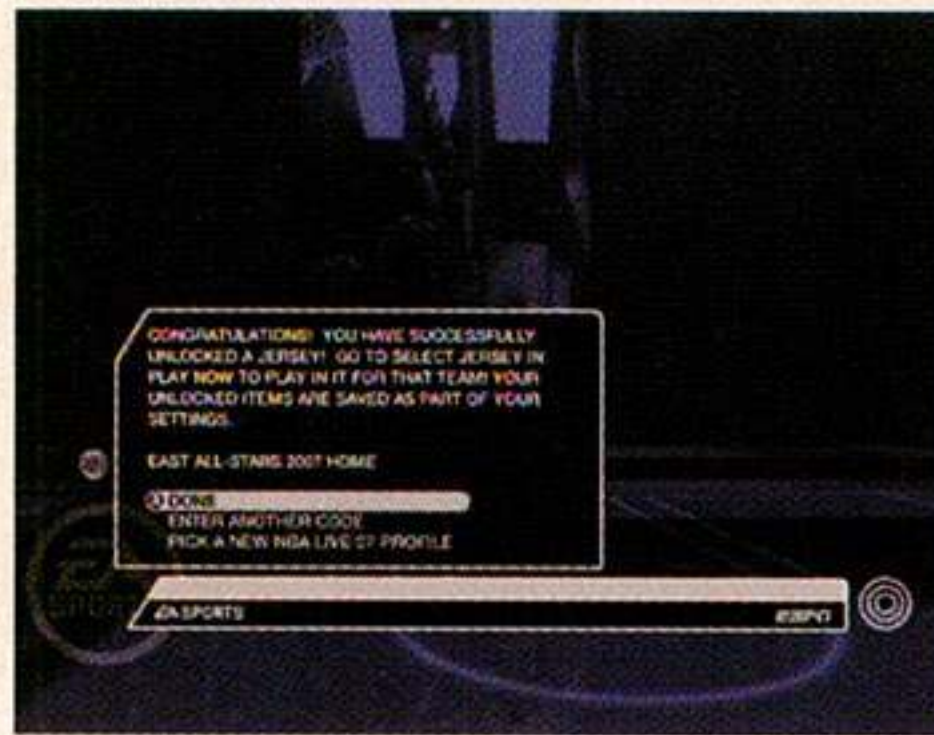


Passwords: At the main menu, select Features, select Codes to enter the password input screen, and then enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a password correctly, you'll see a confirming message onscreen.

Passwords are case-sensitive.

- Max Durability:** ironman
- Topps 2K7 Team:** topps2k7sports
- Unlimited Stamina:** nocest

NBA LIVE 07



Passwords: At the main menu, select My NBA Live 07, select NBA Codes to enter the password input screen, and then enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a password correctly, you'll see a confirming message onscreen.

Passwords are case-sensitive.

- Adidas C-Billups All-Star Edition:** BV6877HB9N
- Adidas C-Billups Vegas Edition:** 85NVLDMWS5
- Adidas Garnett Bounce II-Star Edition:** HYIOUHCAAN
- Adidas Garnett Bounce Vegas Edition:** KDZ2MQL17W
- Adidas Gil-Zero All-Star Edition:** 23DN1PPOG4

- Adidas Gil-Zero Vegas Edition:** QQQ3JCUYQ7
- Adidas Gil-Zero Mid Away Edition:** 369V6RVU3G
- Adidas Gil-Zero Mid Home Edition:** 1GSJC8JWRL
- Adidas Stealth All-Star Edition:** FE454DFJCC
- Adidas T-Mac 6 All-Star Edition:** MCJK843NNC
- Adidas T-Mac 6 Vegas Edition:** 84GF7EJG8V
- Charlotte Bobcats Second Road Jersey:** WEDX671H7S
- Easter Conference All-Star Home Jersey 07:** 5654ND43N6
- New Jersey Nets Second Road Jersey:** D4SAA98U5H
- Washington Wizards Second Road Jersey:** QV93NLKXQC
- Western Conference All-Star Away Jersey 07:** XX93BVL20U
- Western Conference All-Star Home Jersey 07:** 993NSKL199

XBOX

MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON



At the main menu, select The Krypt, press any of the shoulder buttons until you reach the Media Content, select the box with the question mark on it, located on the bottom right hand corner of the screen, press A, and then enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a code correctly, you'll see a confirming message onscreen.

- Armageddon Promo Movie:** Press Up, Up, Down, Up, White, A.
- Armory Music:** Press A, X, Left, Y, X, A.
- Blaze:** Press Y, X, Left, R, Left, B.

Blaze Art: Press R, Y, White, White, R, X.

Daegon: Press R, R, Y, Down, Down, X.

Early Taven Art: Press Up, A, White, Down, White, A.

Ed Boon Drawing: Press R, Left, Up, B, White, R.

Falling Cliffs Arena: Press White, B, X, A, B, Y.

Firewall Arena Art: Press Up, X, R, White, B, R.

Frost's Second Costume: Press Down, White, R, R, B, White.

Krimson Forest Arena: Press B, R, Up, X, B, Down.

Lin Kuei Palace Music: Press White, Left, B, A, White, Right.

Meat: Press Up, X, X, B, X, Up.

Mileena's Car Art: Press White, Right, Up, R, Y, Up.

Motor Kombat Movie: Press Y, Up, White, R, R, White.

Nethership Interior Arena: Press R, Left, Left, Down, R, X.

Nitara's 2nd Costume: Press Down, R, Up, R, R, Right.

Pyramid of Argus Arena: Press R, R, X, A, White, Up.

Pyramid of Argus Art: Press Y, Left, Left, A, Down, B.

Pyramid of Argus Music: Press Down, Left, White, White, Up, R.

Reiko's War Room Arena: Press White, Y, R, Up, A, A.

Sektor's Blade Art: Press White, R, Left, A, Up, R.

Shang Tsung's 2nd Costume: Press R, Left, Up, B, Up, White.

Shinnok's Spire Arena: Press Left, Left, B, Up, Y, R.

Taven: Press R, Left, White, Up, B, Down.

Tekunin Warship Music: Press Up, B, R, R, R, A.

Unused Konquest Trap Art: Press B, White, Y, Down, B, Left.

WORLD RACING 2



Money Passwords: At the main menu, select Create A New Profile, and then enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a password correctly, the cheat will take effect immediately.

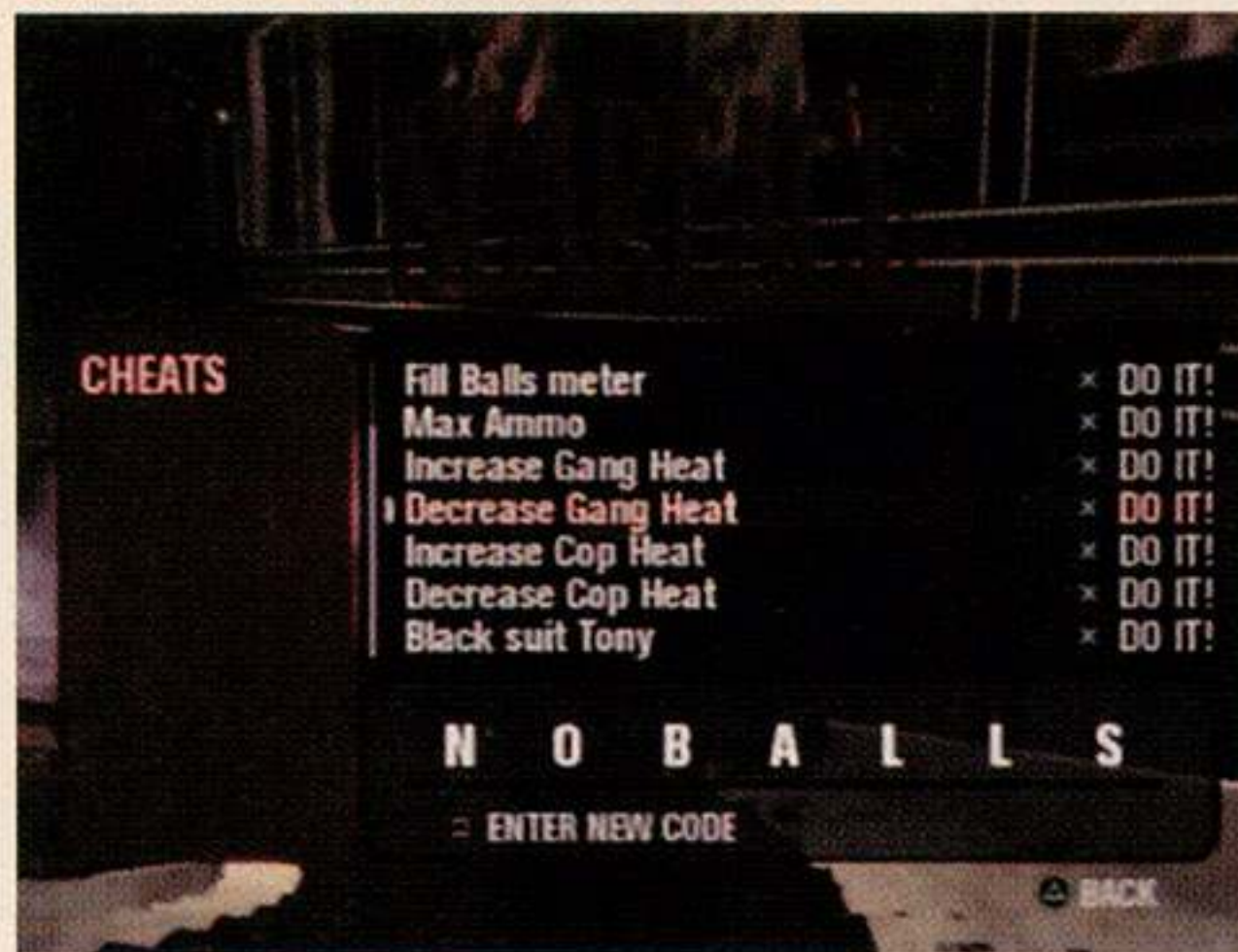
Passwords are not case-sensitive.

\$100:	EC
\$1000:	VISA
\$10,000:	MASTERCARD
\$100,000:	AMEX

MULTIPLATFORM



SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS



Passwords: During gameplay, pause the game, select Cheats, and then enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you enter a password correctly, the cheat will take effect immediately.

Passwords are not case-sensitive.

Black Suited Tony:	BLACK
Blue Suited Tony with Sunglasses:	BLUESH
Change Time of Day:	MARTHA
Decrease Cop Heat:	FLYSTRT
Decrease Gang Heat:	NOBALLS
Fill Balls Meter:	FPATCH
Full Health:	MEDIK
Gray Suited Tony:	GRAY
Gray Suited Tony with Sunglasses:	GRAYSH
Hawaiian Shirted Tony:	HAWAII
Hawaiian Shirted Tony with Sunglasses:	HAWAIIG
Increase Cop Heat:	DONUT
Increase Gang Heat:	GOBALLS
Kill Tony:	KILLTONY
Lighting:	SHAZAAM
Max Ammo:	AMMO
Rain:	RAINY
Repair Tony's Vehicle:	TBURGLR
Sandy Shirted Tony:	SANDY
Sandy Shirted Tony with Sunglasses:	SANDYSH
Spawn Ariel MK III:	OLDFAST
Spawn Bacinari:	666999
Spawn Bulldozer:	DOZER
The World Is Yours Music Track:	TUNEME
White Suited Tony:	WHITE
White Suited Tony with Sunglasses:	WHITESH



[GEEKED AT BIRTH.]



You can talk the talk.
Can you walk the walk?
Here's a chance to prove it.
Please geek responsibly.

- GAME DESIGN
- DIGITAL ANIMATION
- ARTIFICIAL LIFE
- DIGITAL VIDEO
- WEB DESIGN
- COMPUTER FORENSICS
- NETWORK SECURITY
- SOFTWARE ENGINEERING
- TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT
- GAME PROGRAMMING

www.uat.edu > 800.658.5744

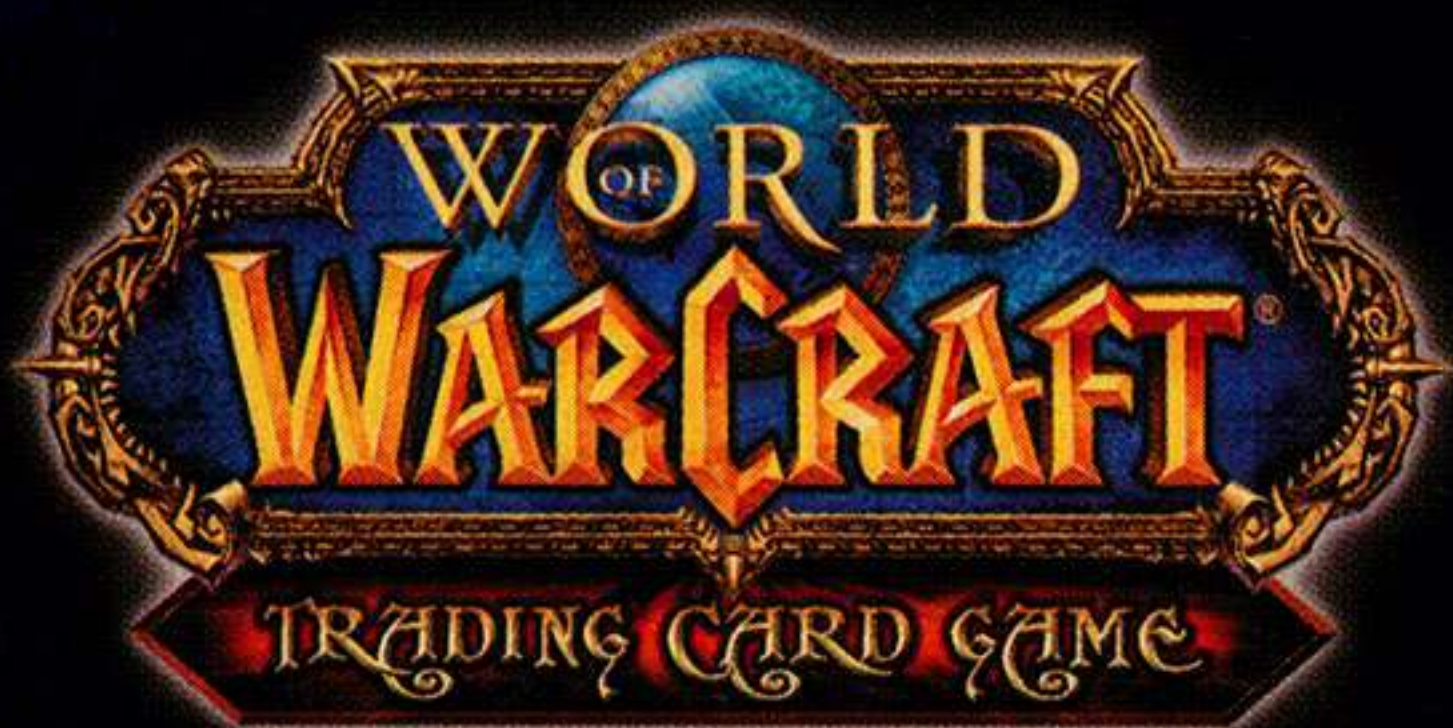


GAMEPRO's BIG LIST

Here's a thumbnail guide to today's hottest games as reviewed by GamePro magazine. For full-length reviews, check out GamePro.com. Games highlighted in yellow represent a GamePro Editors' Choice title.

NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
ATV Offroad Fury 4	PS2	Sony	3.0	E	12/06
Blitz: The League	Xbox 360	Midway	3.5	M	12/06
Bully	PS2	Rockstar Games	4.5	T	12/06
Children of Mana	DS	Nintendo	4.0	E10+	12/06
Company of Heroes	PC	THQ	4.75	M	12/06
Crusty Demons: Freestyle Moto-X	Xbox	Evolved Games	3.0	M	12/06
Death, Jr. 2: Root of Evil	PSP	Konami	4.0	T	12/06
Destroy All Humans! 2	PS2, Xbox	THQ	4.5	T	12/06
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2	Wii	Atari	4.5	T	12/06
FIFA 07	PS2	EA Sports	4.5	E	12/06
Final Fantasy XII	PS2	Square Enix	5.0	T	12/06
FlatOut 2	Xbox	Vivendi Universal	3.0	T	12/06
Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	DS	Nintendo	4.25	E	11/06
Micro Machines v4	PS2	Codemasters	3.5	E	12/06
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	PS2, Xbox	Midway	4.5	M	12/06

NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja	PS2	Namco Bandai Games	4.0	T	12/06
NBA '07 Featuring the Life, Vol. 2	PS2	Sony	3.5	E	12/06
NBA 2K7	Xbox 360	2K Sports	4.5	E	12/06
NBA Live 07	Xbox 360	EA Sports	4.0	E	12/06
Need for Speed: Carbon	Xbox 360	EA Games	4.75	E10+	12/06
NHL 2K7	Xbox 360	2K Sports	4.0	E10+	12/06
One Piece: Pirates Carnival	PS2	Namco Bandai Games	2.5	E	12/06
Power Stone Collection	PSP	Capcom	4.0	T	12/06
Saints Row	Xbox 360	THQ	4.75	M	10/06
Scarface: The World Is Yours	Xbox	Vivendi Universal	3.75	M	11/06
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	PS2, Xbox	EA Sports	3.5	E	11/06
Touch Detective	DS	Atlus	3.5	E10+	12/06
Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria	PS2	Square Enix	4.5	T	11/06
Work Time Fun	PSP	D3 Publisher	3.75	T	12/06
Zatch Bell: Mamodo Fury	PS2	Namco Bandai Games	2.5	T	12/06



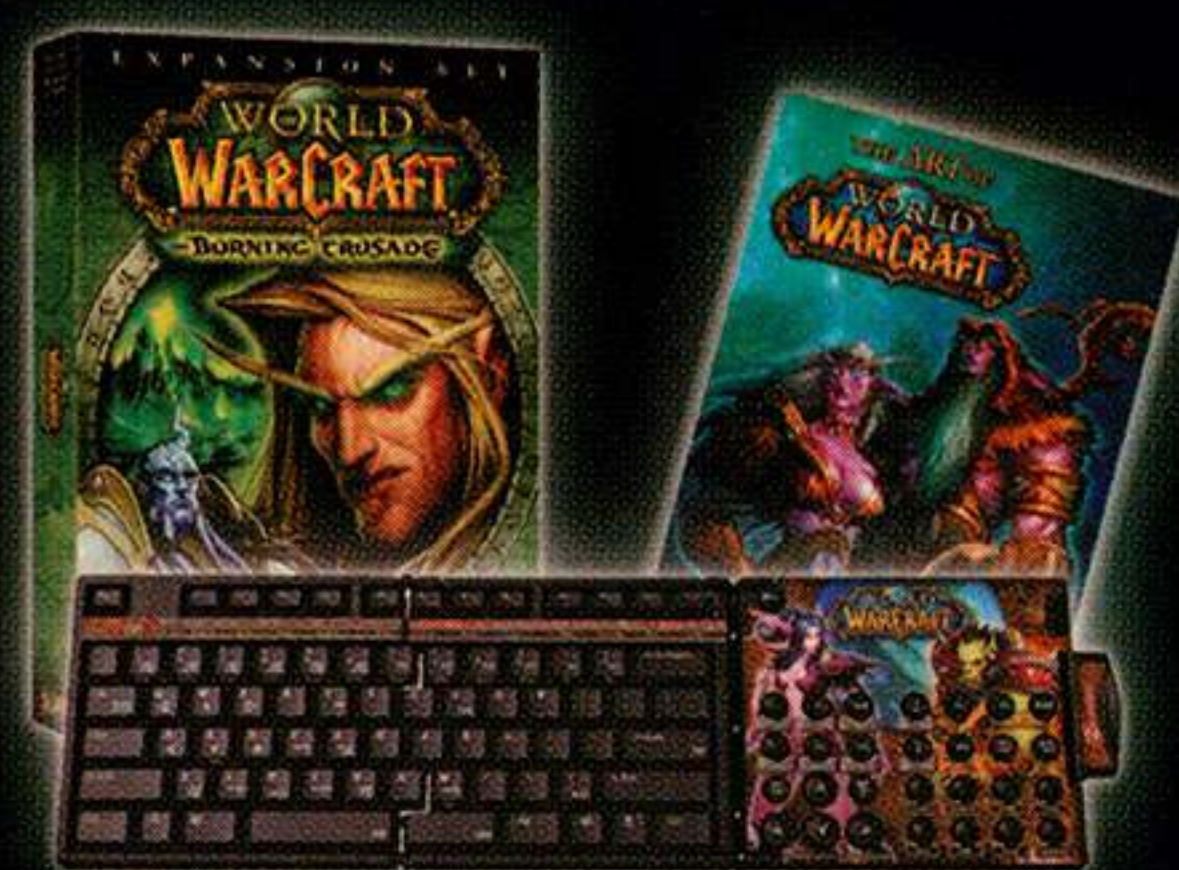
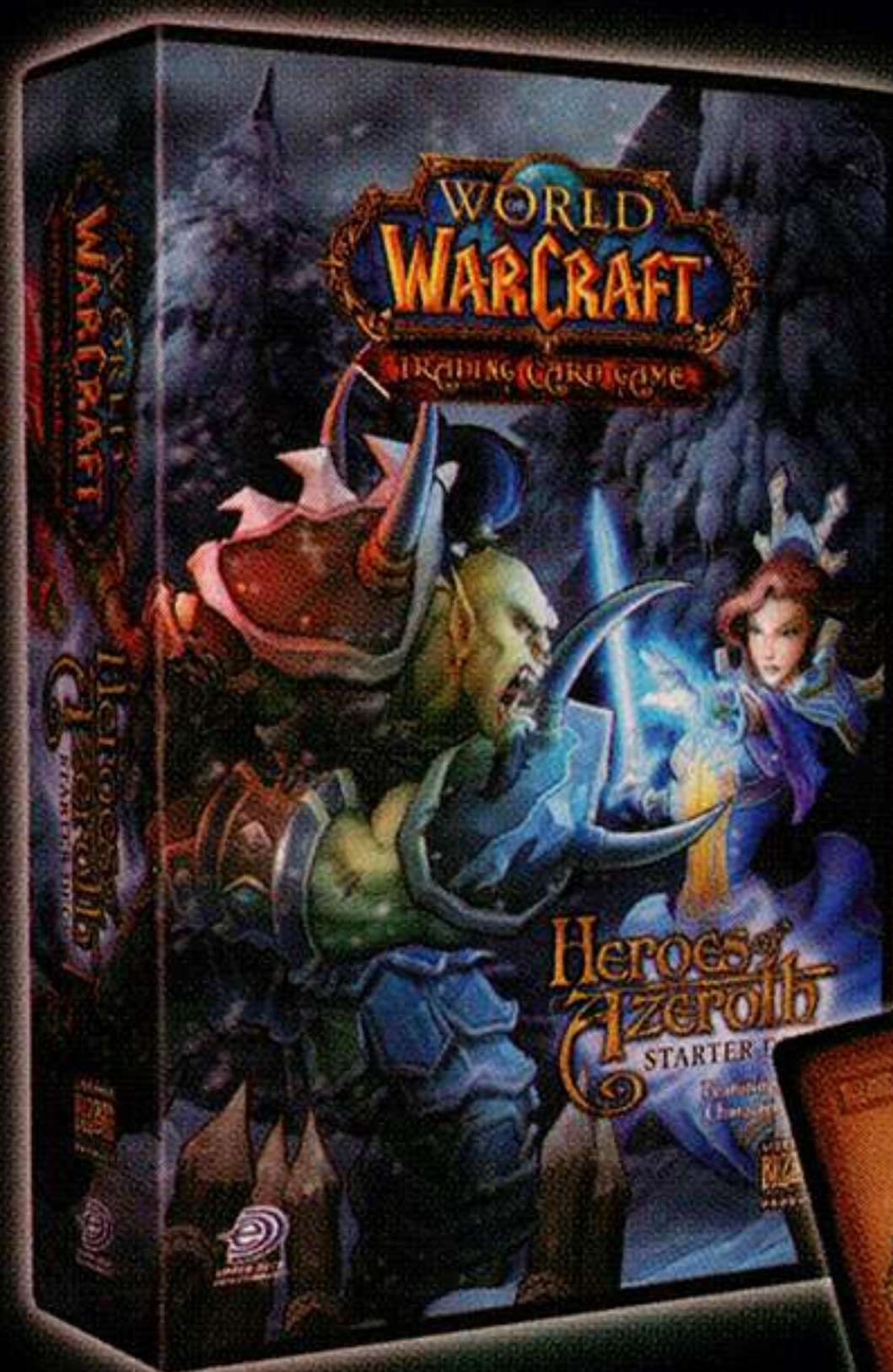
Contest

1 Grand Prize Winner

- World of Warcraft Trading Card Game Starter Set
- WoW Burning Crusade Expansion Pack
- Custom Zboard WoW Keyboard
- "The Art of WoW" Illustrated Book

5 First Prize Winners

- World of Warcraft Trading Card Game Starter Set



Enter online at:

www.gamepro.com/wowcards

Find out more about the World of Warcraft Trading Card Game at:

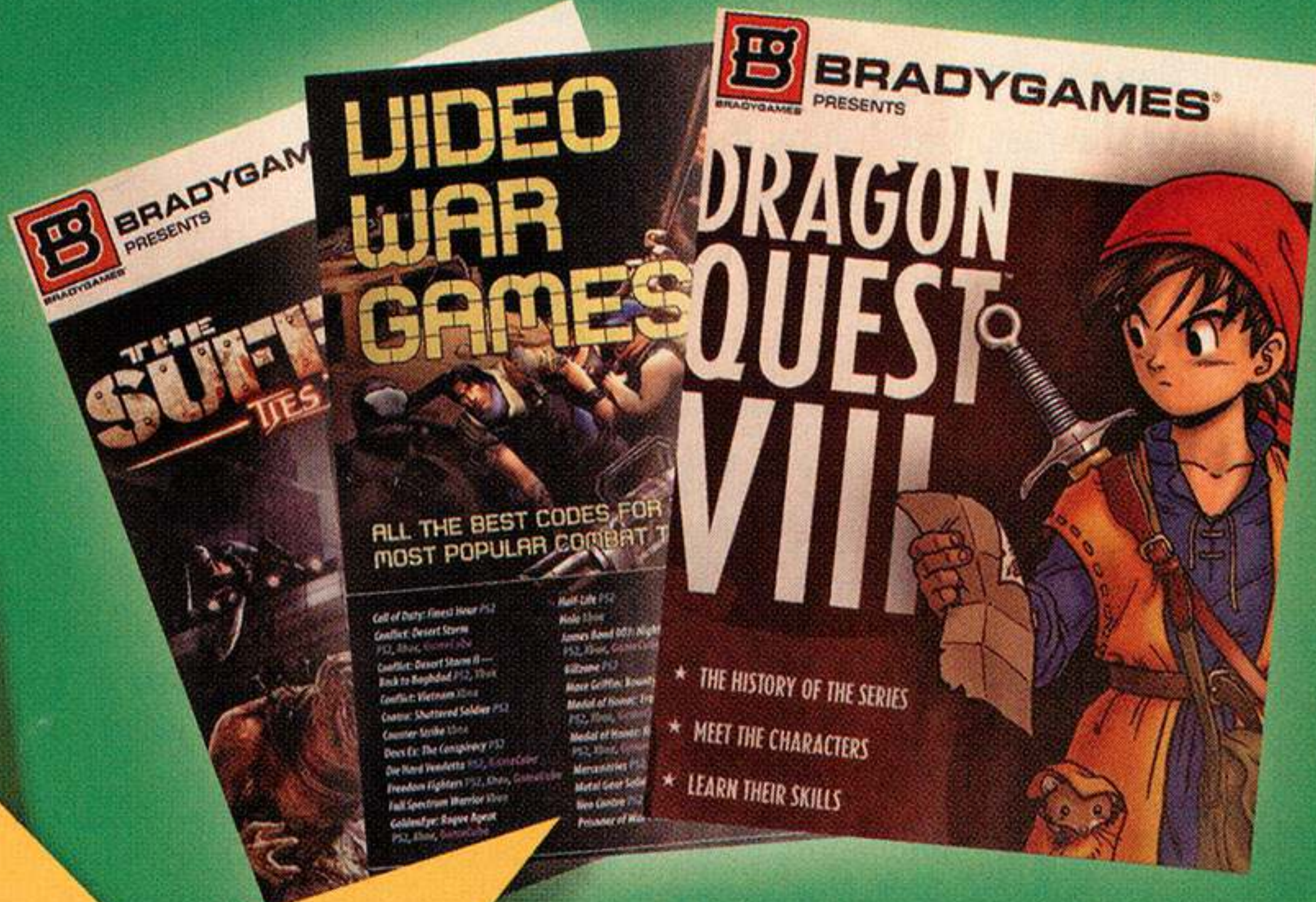
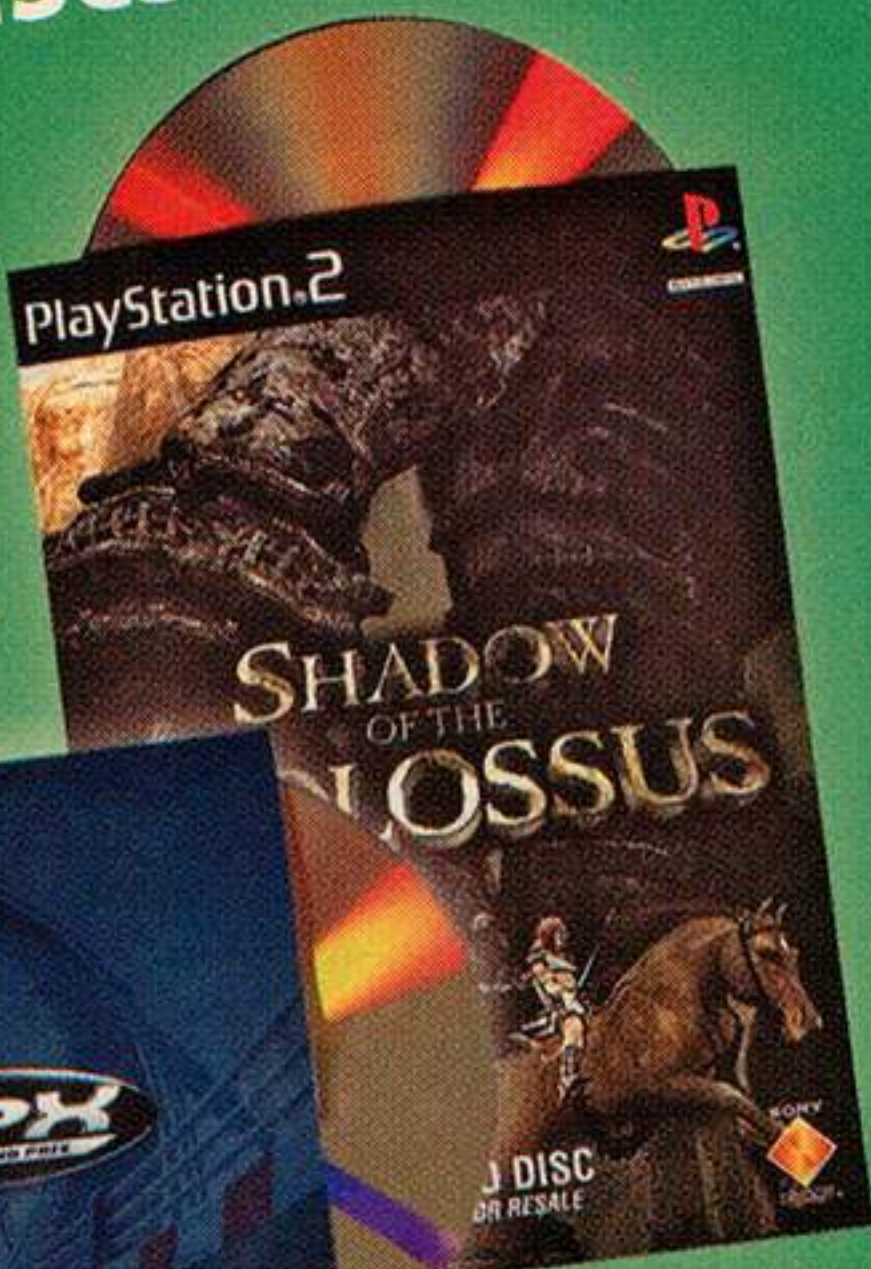
WWW.UDE.COM/WOW



© 2006 UDC. 985 Trade Drive, North Las Vegas, NV 89030. All right reserved. Printed in the USA. © 2006 Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Heroes of Azeroth is a trademark, and Warcraft, World of Warcraft and Blizzard Entertainment are trademarks or registered trademarks of Blizzard Entertainment, Inc., in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other trademarks referenced herein are the properties of their respective owners.

demo discs!

strategy guides!



GET IT ALL!



comics!

other great stuff!

Previous GamePro EX extras shown

Get 12 issues of

GAMEPRO EX

for just \$29.97.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

- Fill out and mail the attached card.
- Call us at 800/678-9097 and ask for extension 901.
- Or order online at GamePro.com.

A subscription to GamePro EX includes exciting extras like demo discs, strategy guides, and comics with each issue!

HyperCritical

Now that you've read the best, check out all the rest. Here's how the "other guys" rated your favorite games.

	GamePro	EGM	Game Informer	GameSpot	IGN	Official PlayStation Magazine	Official Xbox Magazine	PlayStation Magazine	Average
Bully (PS2) Rockstar Games	4.5/5		8.83/10	8.5/10	8.7/10	8.9/10	N/A	N/A	8.7
Dance Dance Revolution SuperNOVA (PS2) Konami	4.25/5		6.33/10	N/A	7/10	7/10	7/10	N/A	7.2
Dead Rising (Xbox 360) Capcom	4/5		7.5/10	9.25/10	8.4/10	8.3/10	N/A	8.5/10	8.5
Destroy All Humans! 2 (PS2, Xbox) THQ	4.5/5		7/10	8.5/10	7.1/10	8/10	N/A	8.5/10	8.0
Dirge of Cerberus: Final Fantasy VII (PS2) Square Enix	2.5/5		4.67/10	6.75/10	6/10	7/10	6/10	N/A	5.8
Final Fantasy XII (PS2) Square Enix	5/5		9/10	9.25/10	9/10	9.5/10	10/10	N/A	9.4
Gears of War	4.75/5		N/A	9.5/10	9.6/10	9.4/10	N/A	10/10	9.6
Just Cause (Xbox 360) Eidos Interactive	4.25/5		6.67/10	7.25/10	7.2/10	6.8/10	N/A	8.5/10	7.4
Justice League Heroes (PS2, Xbox) Warner Bros. Interactive	4/5		6.17/10	7.25/10	7.6/10	6.4/10	N/A	N/A	7.0
Killzone: Liberation (PSP) Sony	3.75/5		5.67/10	7.25/10	8.3/10	9/10	N/A	N/A	7.6
LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy (PS2, Xbox, GameCube) LucasArts	4.5/5		7.33/10	8/10	7.7/10	8.4/10	8/10	8.5/10	8.1
Madden NFL 07 (PS2, Xbox) EA Sports	4.5/5		N/A	8.25/10	8.1/10	8.3/10	9/10	7/10	8.3
Madden NFL 07 (Xbox 360) EA Sports	5/5		7.67/10	7.75/10	7.9/10	8.5/10	N/A	8/10	8.3
Mario Hoops 3-on-3 (DS) Nintendo	4/5		6.17/10	6.5/10	7.1/10	6.8/10	N/A	N/A	6.9
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon (PS2, Xbox) Midway	4.5/5		5.67/10	8.25/10	7/10	8.5/10	N/A	9/10	7.9
NASCAR 07 (PS2, Xbox) EA Sports	4/5		N/A	7.75/10	7/10	7.5/10	7/10	8/10	7.5
NBA 2K7 (Xbox 360) 2K Sports	4.5/5		8/10	8.25/10	8.2/10	8.3/10	N/A	8.5/10	8.3
NBA Live 07 (Xbox 360) EA Sports	4/5		4/10	5.25/10	6.5/10	6/10	N/A	7/10	6.2
NHL 07 (Xbox 360) EA Sports	4.5/5		7.83/10	7.25/10	8.2/10	8.7/10	N/A	8/10	8.1
NHL 2K7 (Xbox 360) 2K Sports	4/5		6.33/10	8.25/10	8.3/10	8.9/10	N/A	7/10	7.7
Okami (PS2) Capcom	5/5		9.17/10	9.5/10	9/10	9.1/10	9/10	N/A	9.3
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team (DS) Nintendo	2.5/5		7.16/10	3/10	5.2/10	6.5/10	N/A	N/A	5.3
Prey (Xbox 360) 2K Games	4.75/5		7.17/10	9.5/10	7.5/10	9/10	N/A	9/10	8.6
Saints Row (Xbox 360) THQ	4.75/5		7.76/10	8.75/10	8.3/10	8.5/10	N/A	8/10	8.4
Scarface: The World Is Yours (PS2, Xbox) Vivendi Universal Games	3.75/5		6.5/10	8.5/10	6.4/10	8.7/10	7/10	4.5/10	6.7
Star Fox Command (DS) Nintendo	4.25/5		6.5/10	8/10	7.5/10	8/10	N/A	N/A	7.7
Super Dragon Ball Z (PS2) Atari	4.5/5		N/A	6/10	7.3/10	7.4/10	8/10	N/A	7.7
Super Monkey Ball Adventure (PS2, GameCube) Sega	2.5/5		4.33/10	4.75/10	5.7/10	4.8/10	5/10	N/A	4.8
Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria (PS2) Square Enix	4.5/5		8.33/10	8/10	8/10	8.5/10	7/10	N/A	8.2
Yakuza (PS2) Sega	4.5/5		7.67/10	6/10	7.4/10	8.2/10	8/10	N/A	7.8

For more aggregate reviews, previews, screens, videos, and more, visit [Games.net!](http://Games.net)



BEHIND THE SCREENS
More than just screen shots, we show you actual game footage from today's hottest titles!



ATTACK OF THE FACTOIDS
Video game footage with onscreen commentaries that are loaded with facts and information.

Bringing you the BEST of the .net every day!



NET NEWS!
Check out the latest gaming headlines from around the Net.

Stay on top of the gaming scene!
Sign up for free weekly newsletters delivered to your inbox!

CHARTBUSTERS

Number crunching was never our strong suit, but then that's why we partnered with the most reputable data company around. The NPD Group provides us with innumerable video-game tidbits, giving you insight into the trends of the gaming industry.

Top 10 Best-Selling Console Video-Game Titles

September 2006

TITLE	PLATFORM	LAST MONTH
1. Madden NFL 07* EA Sports	PS2	1
2. Saints Row THQ	Xbox 360	NEW
3. LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy LucasArts	PlayStation 2	NEW
4. Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team Nintendo	DS	NEW
5. Madden NFL 07* EA Sports	Xbox 360	2 ▼
6. Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team Nintendo	DS	NEW
7. LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy LucasArts	GameCube	NEW
8. Madden NFL 07 EA Sports	Xbox	4 ▼
9. Star Fox Command Nintendo	DS	NEW
10. New Super Mario Bros. Nintendo	DS	6 ▼

*Includes Hall of Fame Edition
Source: The NPD Group/Point-of-Sale

Ten Best-Selling Handheld Titles

1. Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team (Nintendo/DS)
2. Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team (Nintendo/DS)
3. Star Fox Command (Nintendo/DS)
4. New Super Mario Bros. (Nintendo/DS)
5. Mario Hoops 3-on-3 (Nintendo/DS)
6. Madden NFL 07 (EA Sports/DS)
7. LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy (LucasArts/DS)
8. Big Brain Academy (Nintendo/DS)
9. Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day (Nintendo/DS)
10. Mario Kart DS (Nintendo/DS)

Source: The NPD Group/Point-of-Sale

1/5/8

Madden NFL 07



When you're the only player in the game, all you have to compete with is yourself. So even though EA locked up the NFL license for video games this season and beyond, the Madden football franchise isn't just standing on the sidelines. Developer EA Tiburon opened up the hood of its game engine to significantly modify gameplay and career mode. Rookies will have to pay their dues, but veterans get treated to a brand-new challenge. And if you're somewhere in between, you should just enjoy the game.

2



Clocking in at number two, Saints Row is firmly grounded in the groundbreaking GTA series. Only it's better. Much, much better. Unquestionably, irrefutably better in nearly every possible way. Saints Row not only looks leagues better than the latest GTA games, it plays better. It's what you hoped you'd see in the yet-to-be-unveiled Grand Theft Auto IV...only you won't have to wait until late 2007 to play it. Ground-breaking it's not, but for GTA addicts, Saints Row is very clearly The Next Big Thing.

3/7



Star Wars has been licensed to death in the gaming world, with just about every nook and cranny mined dry of any mystery it might've once possessed. How surprising, then, was it that LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy, ostensibly developed with a younger audience in mind, managed to breathe fresh air into an aging epic laden with archetypes and high drama?

Ten Best-Selling Games for the Xbox 360

1. Saints Row (THQ)
2. Madden NFL 07 (EA Sports)*
3. LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy (LucasArts)
4. Test Drive Unlimited (Atari)
5. Dead Rising (Capcom)
6. NBA 2K7 (2K Games)
7. Enchanted Arms (Ubisoft)
8. NBA Live 07 (EA Sports)
9. The Godfather (EA Games)
10. NHL 07 (EA Sports)

*Includes Hall of Fame Edition
Source: The NPD Group/Point-of-Sale



For more information, visit

gamepro.com/chartbusters or npd.com

NEXT ISSUE!

GAMEPRO

February 2007
On sale
January 9, 2007

Mario!

Find out what's next for Nintendo's popular mascot

Readers' and Editors' Choice

Readers get their chance to vote, while the editors give their top picks of 2006!

Grand Theft Auto

We review the 20 greatest moments in the series

Plus

Call of Duty 3 PS3

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition

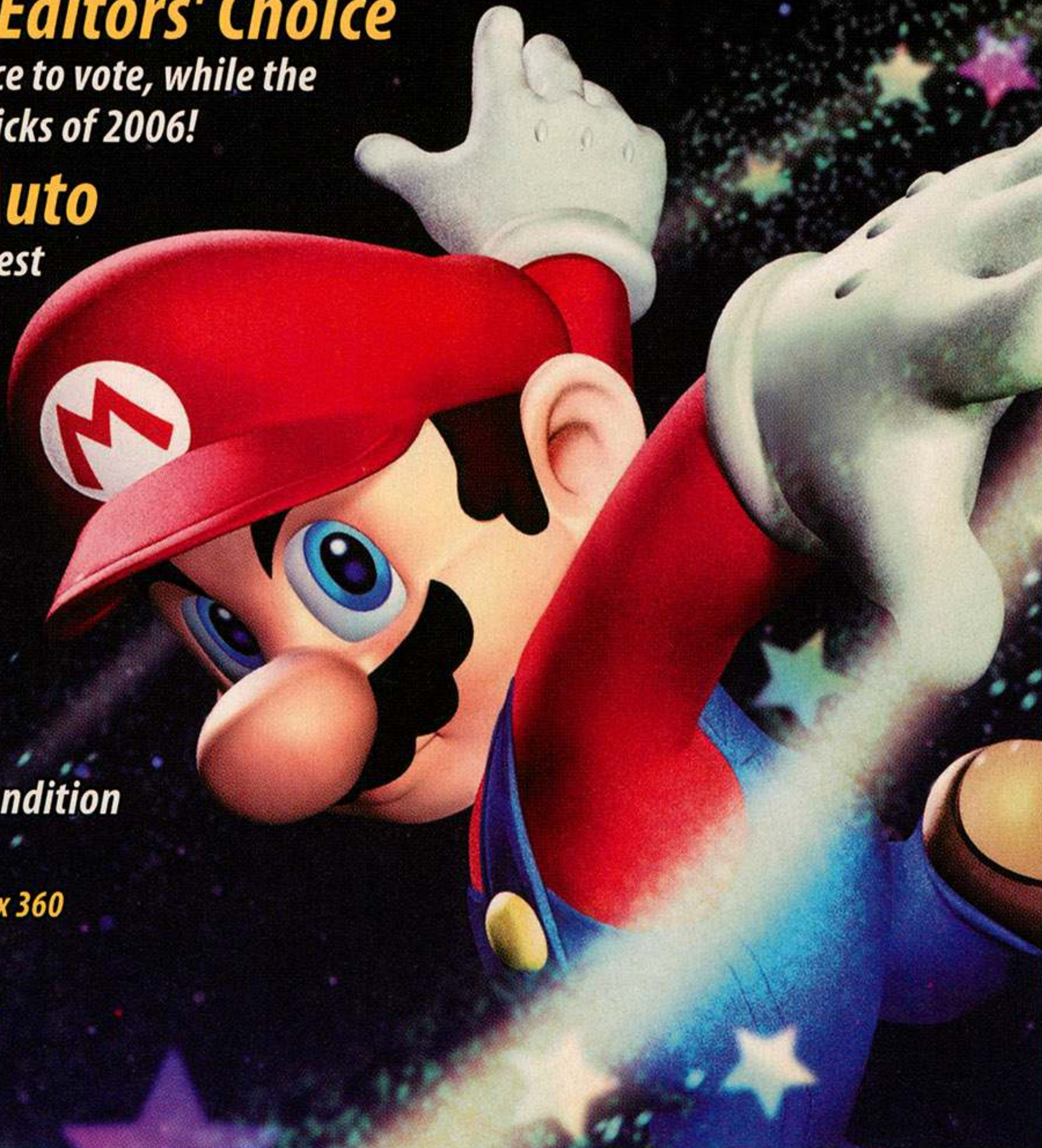
Xbox 360

Sonic the Hedgehog Xbox 360

MotorStorm PS3

Fight Night Round 3 PS3

And more!



INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

This index is provided as an additional service. The publisher does not assume liability for errors, omissions, or additions due to last-minute changes or other contingencies.

2K Games.....	19
<small>2KGAMES.COM</small>	
AT&T Wireless.....	59
<small>ATT.COM</small>	
Avirex.....	97
<small>AVIREX.COM</small>	
Best Buy.....	52, 53
<small>BESTBUY.COM</small>	
Buena Vista Games.....	89
<small>BUENAVISTAGAMES.COM</small>	
Comcast.....	15
<small>COMCAST.COM</small>	
Dell Computer.....	22, 23
<small>DELL.COM</small>	
Full Sail Real World Education.....	96
<small>FULLSAIL.COM</small>	
Hewlett-Packard.....	73
<small>HP.COM/DIRECT</small>	
iHome.....	29
<small>IHOMEAUDIO.COM</small>	
Intel Corporation.....	2 nd Cover, 3
<small>INTEL.COM</small>	
KOEI.....	91
<small>KOEGAMES.COM</small>	
Konami.....	27, 37, 57, 61
<small>KONAMI.COM</small>	
Microsoft Xbox... ..	21, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49
<small>XBOX.COM</small>	
Midway Games.....	75
<small>MIDWAY.COM</small>	
Namco.....	33
<small>NAMCO.COM</small>	
Nissan.....	34, 35
<small>NISSANUSA.COM</small>	
RedOctane.....	71
<small>REDOCTANE.COM</small>	
Sanyo Presentations Technologies.....	63
<small>SANYOSCREENTEST.COM</small>	
Sega of America.....	11, 16, 17, 24, 25
<small>SEGA.COM</small>	
Sony Computer Entertainment America, Inc.....	8, 9, 13
<small>SONY.COM</small>	
Sony Online Entertainment... ..	4 th Cover
<small>SONYONLINE.COM</small>	
THQ, Inc.	2, 3, 6, 7, 65, 3 rd Cover
<small>THQ.COM</small>	
University of Advancing Technology.....	103
<small>UAT.EDU</small>	
Upper Deck Company LLC.....	31
<small>UPPERDECK.COM</small>	
Wizards of the Coast.....	69
<small>WIZARDS.COM</small>	

GAMEPRO
www.gamepro.com

501 Second Street
Suite 114
San Francisco, CA
94107
Tel: 415/243-4112
Fax: 415/974-7304

SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS

P.O. Box 37579 • Boone, IA 50037-0579
510/768-2767

Or click on the Subscriber Services link at GamePro.com

ADVERTISING

Bob Huseby

VICE PRESIDENT, SALES

bhuseby@idg-entertainment.com

ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING SALES
INQUIRIES ONLY, PLEASE.

West Coast Office:

TEL: 415/243-4112 • FAX: 415/974-7304

Emily Throckmorton

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

ethrockmorton@idg-entertainment.com

Michelle Torrey

NORTHWEST SALES MANAGER

mtorrey@idg-entertainment.com

Brett Robinson

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

brobinson@idg-entertainment.com

Jennifer Crist

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

jcrist@idg-entertainment.com

Andrea Mullany

SALES COORDINATOR

amullany@idg-entertainment.com

East Coast Office:

TEL: 212/590-2576 • FAX: 212/590-2508

Rich Commodore

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

rcommodore@idg-entertainment.com

Peter Jallah

SALES MANAGER

pjallah@idg-entertainment.com

Rachel Desjardins

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

rdesjardins@idg-entertainment.com

Ramona Quincey

SALES COORDINATOR

rquincey@idg-entertainment.com

MARKETING/PROMOTIONS

Simon Tonner

MARKETING DIRECTOR

stonner@idg-entertainment.com

LIST RENTALS

American List Counsel

TEL: 800/252-5478 • FAX: 609/580-2864

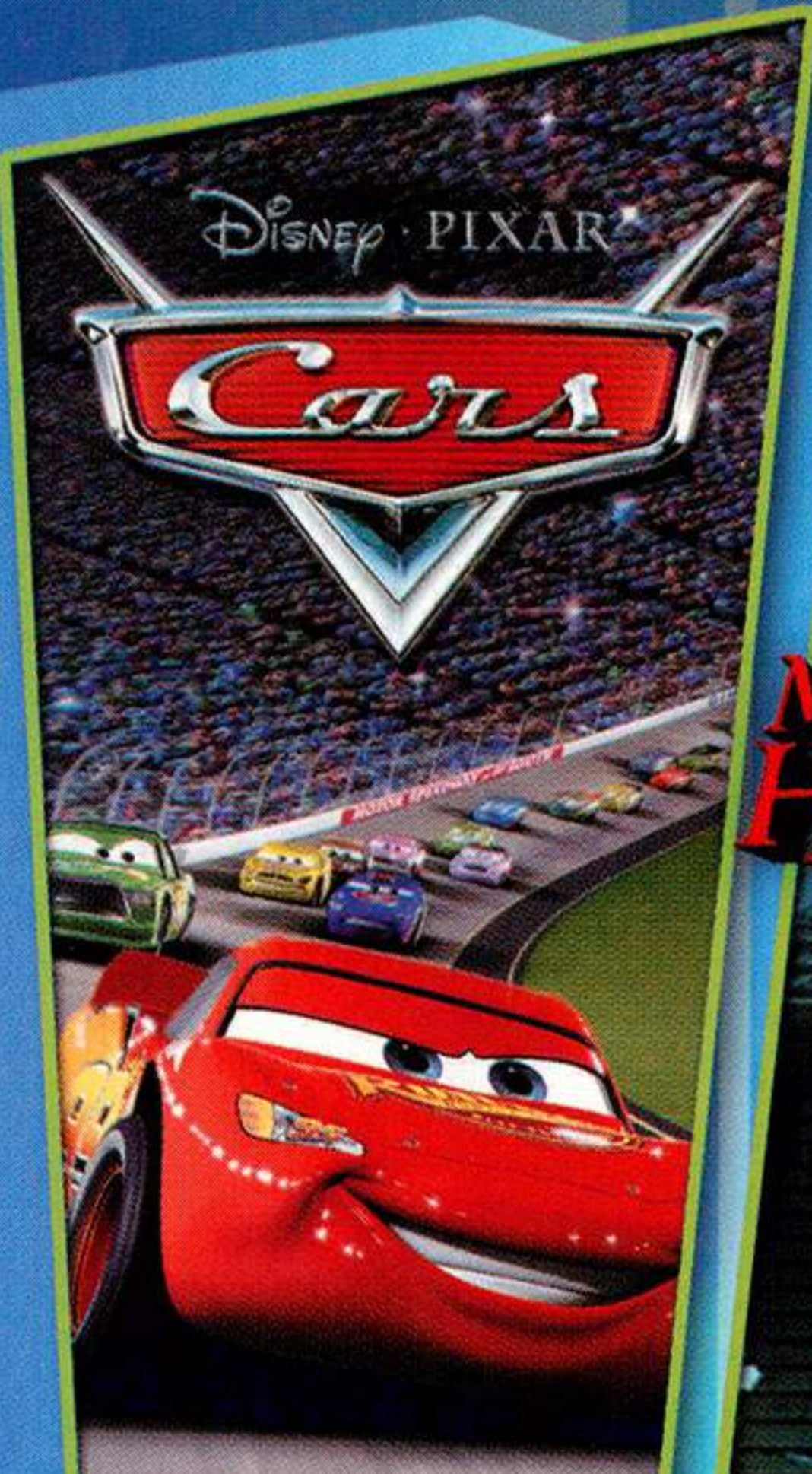
MARKETING REPRINTS BACK-ISSUE COPIES

Kathryn Washburn Main

CIRCULATION COORDINATOR

kwashburn@idg-entertainment.com

Games that will make your thumbs spin!



PC
PlayStation 2 system
PSP system
Nintendo GameCube™
Nintendo DS™
Game Boy Advance
Wii™
Xbox®
Xbox 360™

MONSTER HOUSE



PlayStation 2 system
Nintendo GameCube™
Nintendo DS™
Game Boy Advance

NICKTOONS Battle for Volcano Island



PlayStation 2 system
Nintendo GameCube™
Nintendo DS™
Game Boy Advance



SpongeBob SquarePants

CREATURE FROM THE KRUSTY KRAB



PlayStation 2 system
Nintendo GameCube™
Nintendo DS™
Game Boy Advance
Wii™

NICKELODEON 降世神通 AVATAR THE LAST AIRBENDER



PlayStation 2 system
PSP system
Nintendo GameCube™
Nintendo DS™
Game Boy Advance
Wii™
Xbox®

Go to WWW.THQ.COM for more info



Available on PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system and PSP (PlayStation Portable) system

Cars © Disney/Pixar. Disney/Pixar elements © Disney/Pixar, not including underlying vehicles owned by third parties; Dodge®, Hudson Hornet™, Volkswagen AG, H-1 Hummer®, Model T™, Fiat™, Mack®, Mazda Miata®, Kenworth®, Chevrolet®, Peterbilt®, Jeep®, Mercury™, Plymouth Superbird™, Cadillac Coupe DeVille®, Ferrari®, Fairlane™, Petty®, Sarge's rank insignia design used with the approval of the U.S. Army, Cadillac Range background inspired by the Cadillac Ranch by Art Farm (Lord, Michels and Marquez) © 1974. Game and Software © 2006 THQ Inc. © 2006 Viacom International Inc. All Rights Reserved. Nickelodeon, Nicktoons, Nickelodeon Avatar: The Last Airbender, The Fairly OddParents, Nickelodeon Danny Phantom, SpongeBob SquarePants, and The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius and all related titles, logos, and characters are trademarks of Viacom International Inc. The Fairly OddParents and Danny Phantom created by Butch Hartman. SpongeBob SquarePants created by Stephen Hillenborg. Exclusively published by THQ Inc. THQ and the THQ logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. "PlayStation", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately).

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM EVERYONE TO EVERYONE 10+
E-E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.



PLAYSTATION 3

UNTOLD LEGENDS™ DARK KINGDOM™

THE ULTIMATE NEXT-GENERATION ACTION-RPG EXPERIENCE.



TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Blood
Violence

www.uldarkkingdom.com

Game experience may change during online play.

© 2006 Sony Online Entertainment LLC. SOE, the SOE logo, Untold Legends and Dark Kingdom are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sony Online Entertainment LLC in the United States and/or other countries. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.

SOE
SONY ONLINE
ENTERTAINMENT