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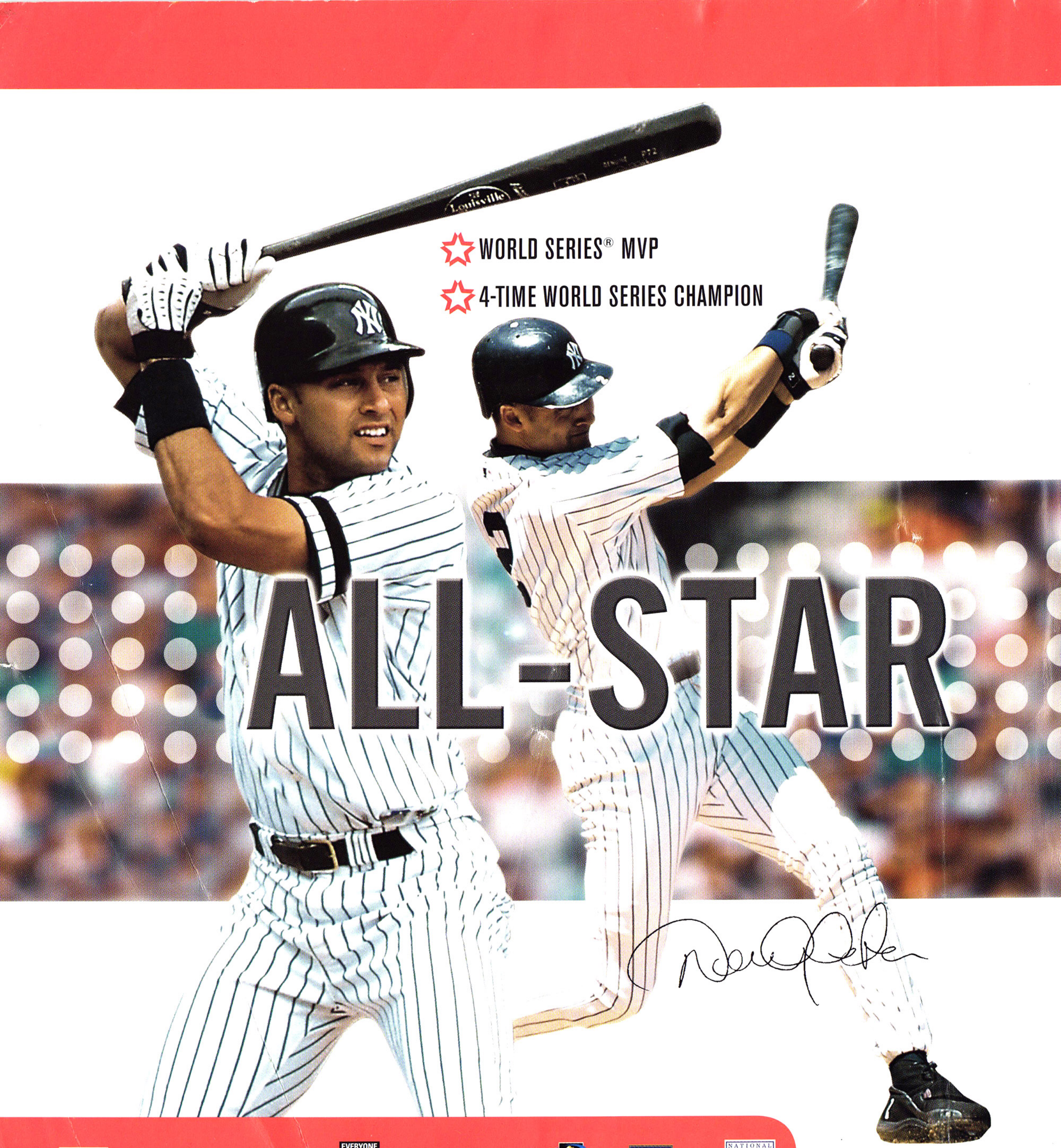

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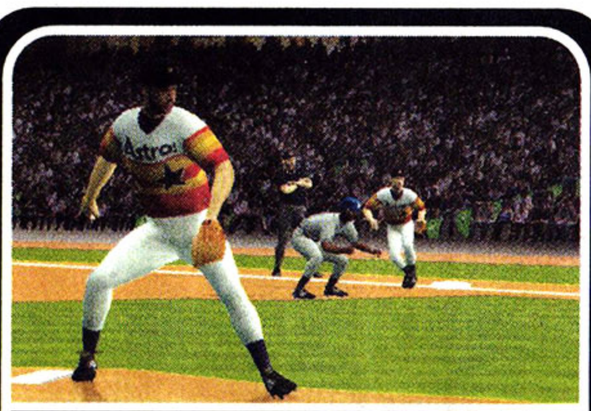

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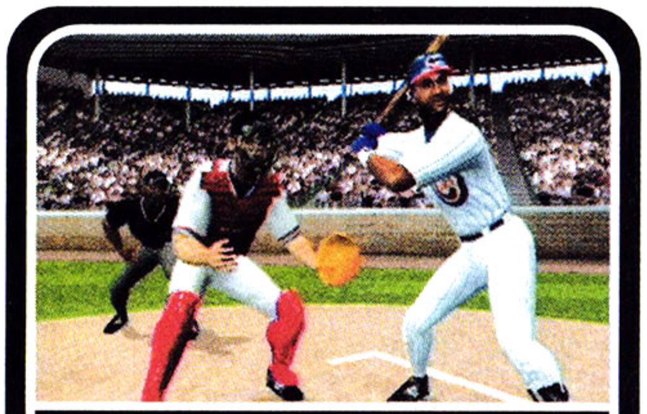

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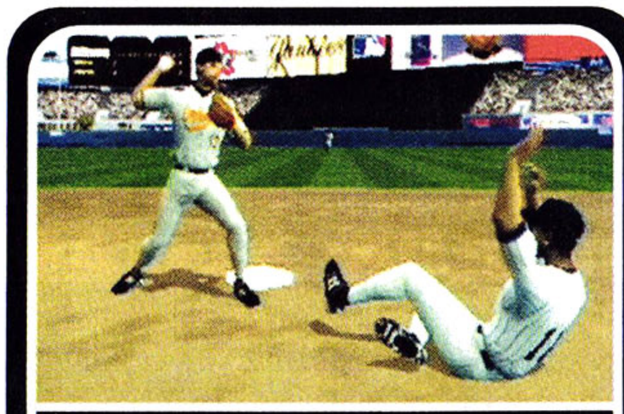

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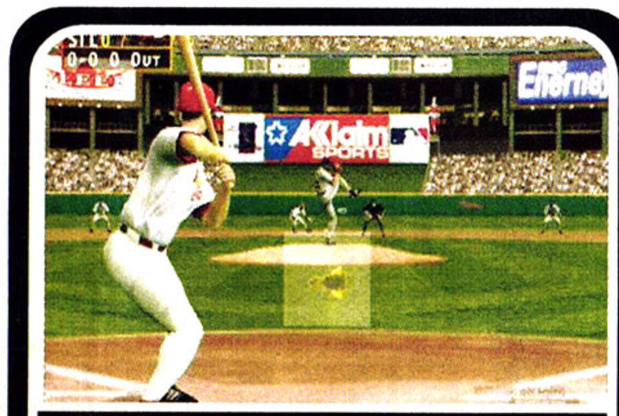

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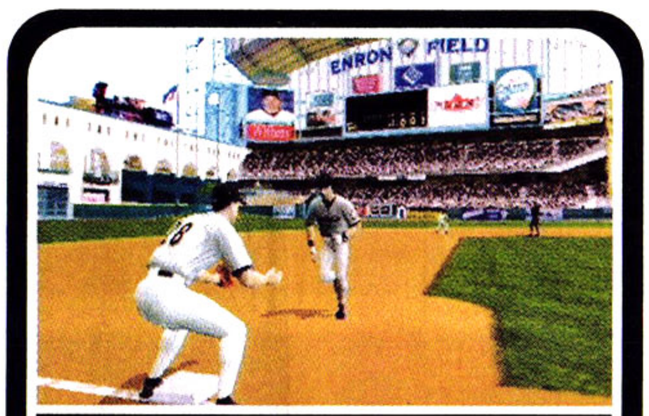

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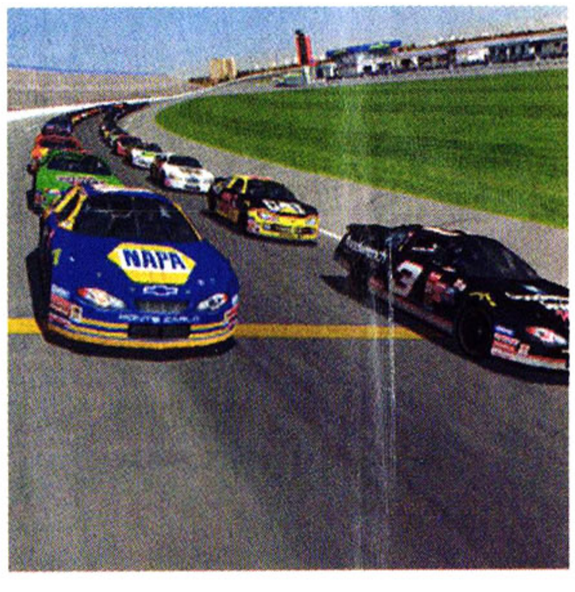

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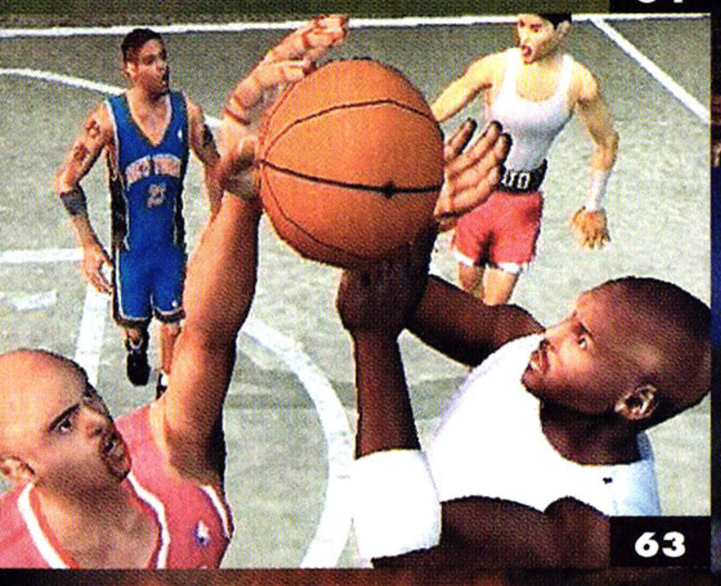

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10 DEAR GI
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96 SECRET ACCCESS
We've got our hands on the enigma machine, and we're churning out secrets at the rate of 100 per day! Don't worry, we made sure to include codes for Star Wars: Starfighter, Knockout Kings 2001, Rayman Revolution, and Oni. We left out the GameBreaker codes. Hope you don't mind.

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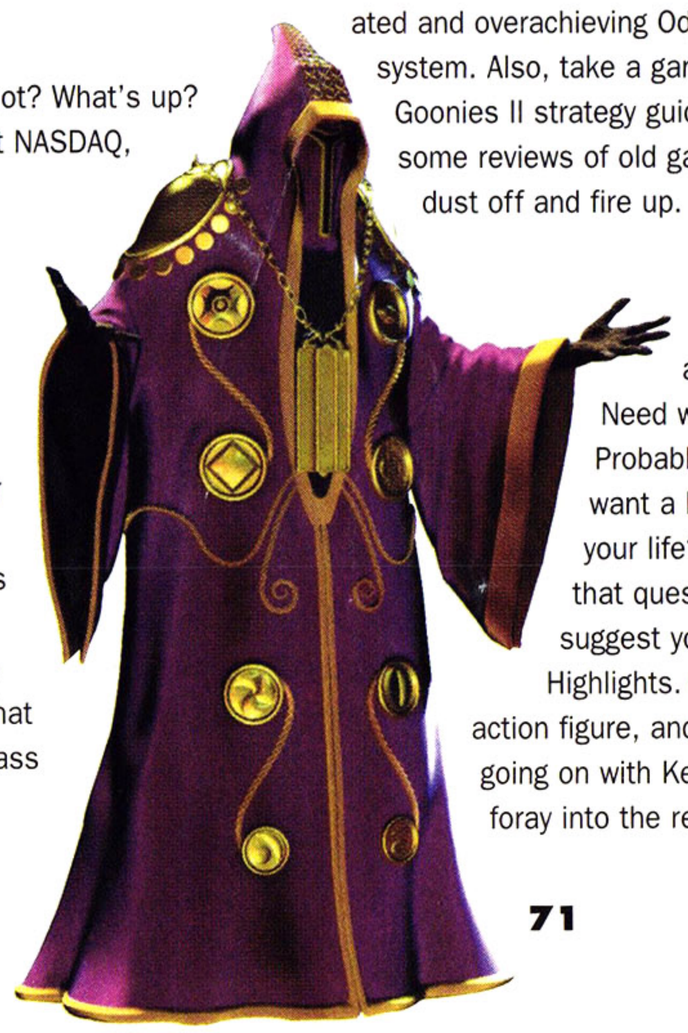
All your base are belong to us. Need we say more? Probably, but don't you want a little mystery in your life? If the answer to that question is no, we suggest you read Highlights. Check out a new action figure, and find out what's going on with Ken and Ryu's foray into the realm of anime.



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- DailyRadar.com, January 2001

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- IGN.com, January 2001

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- Stuff, February 2001

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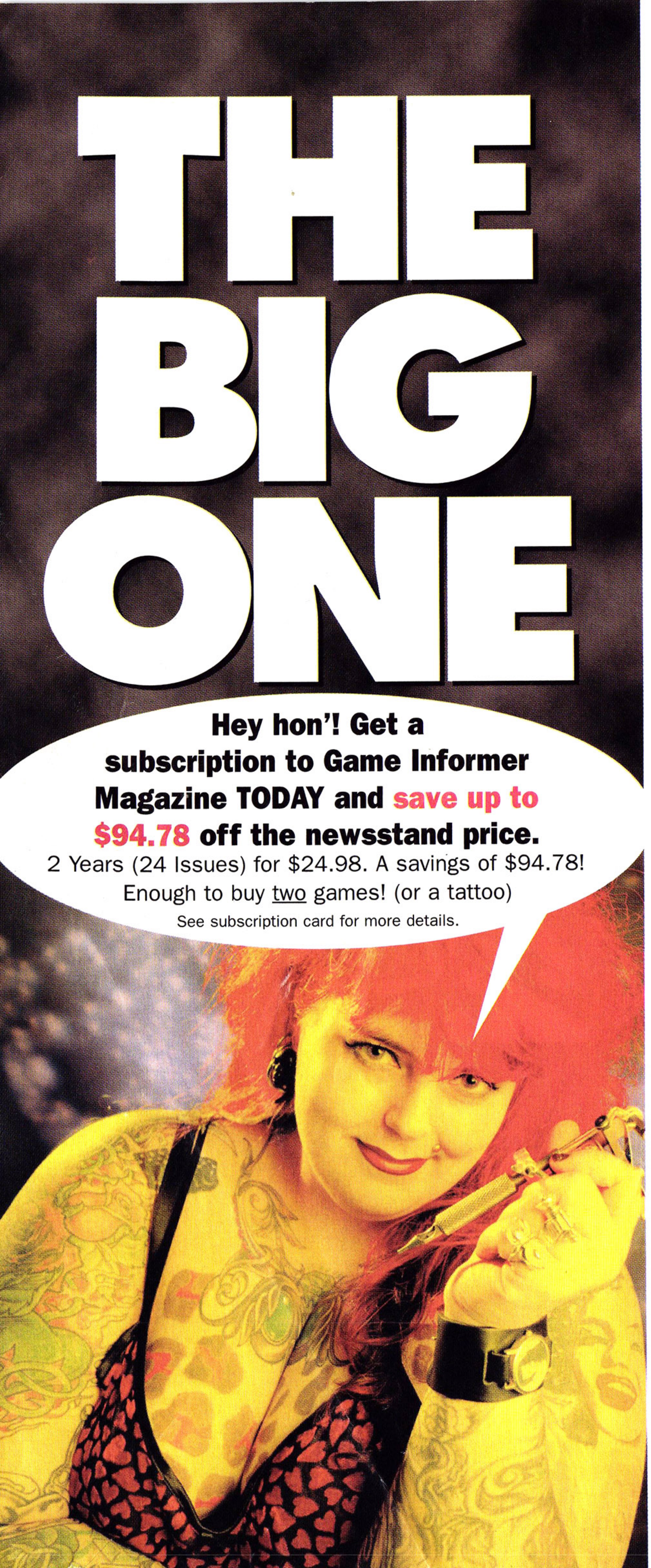

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Cathy Preston

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Andrew McNamara

EDITORS

Senior Associate Editors Paul Anderson • Andrew Reiner

Associate Editors Jay Fitzloff • Matt Helgeson • Kristian Brogger • Justin Leeper

Copy Editors Gabrielle Dane • Sarah Anderson

Mascot Arthur

PRODUCTION

Art Director Thomas Blustin

Production Director Curtis Fung

Production Assistant Rachel Gilles

ADVERTISING

Vice President Advertising

Richard A. Cihak • (952) 946-7256

National Advertising Sales Director

Kimberley Thompson-Benike • (952) 946-8159 • Fax (952) 946-8155

10120 W. 76th Street • Eden Prairie, MN 55344-3728

CIRCULATION

Customer Service Department

For change of address or subscription inquiry only:

(952) 946-7266 Fax (952) 946-8155

or send correspondance to:

10120 W. 76th Street • Eden Prairie, MN 55344-3728 • Attn: CIS Dept

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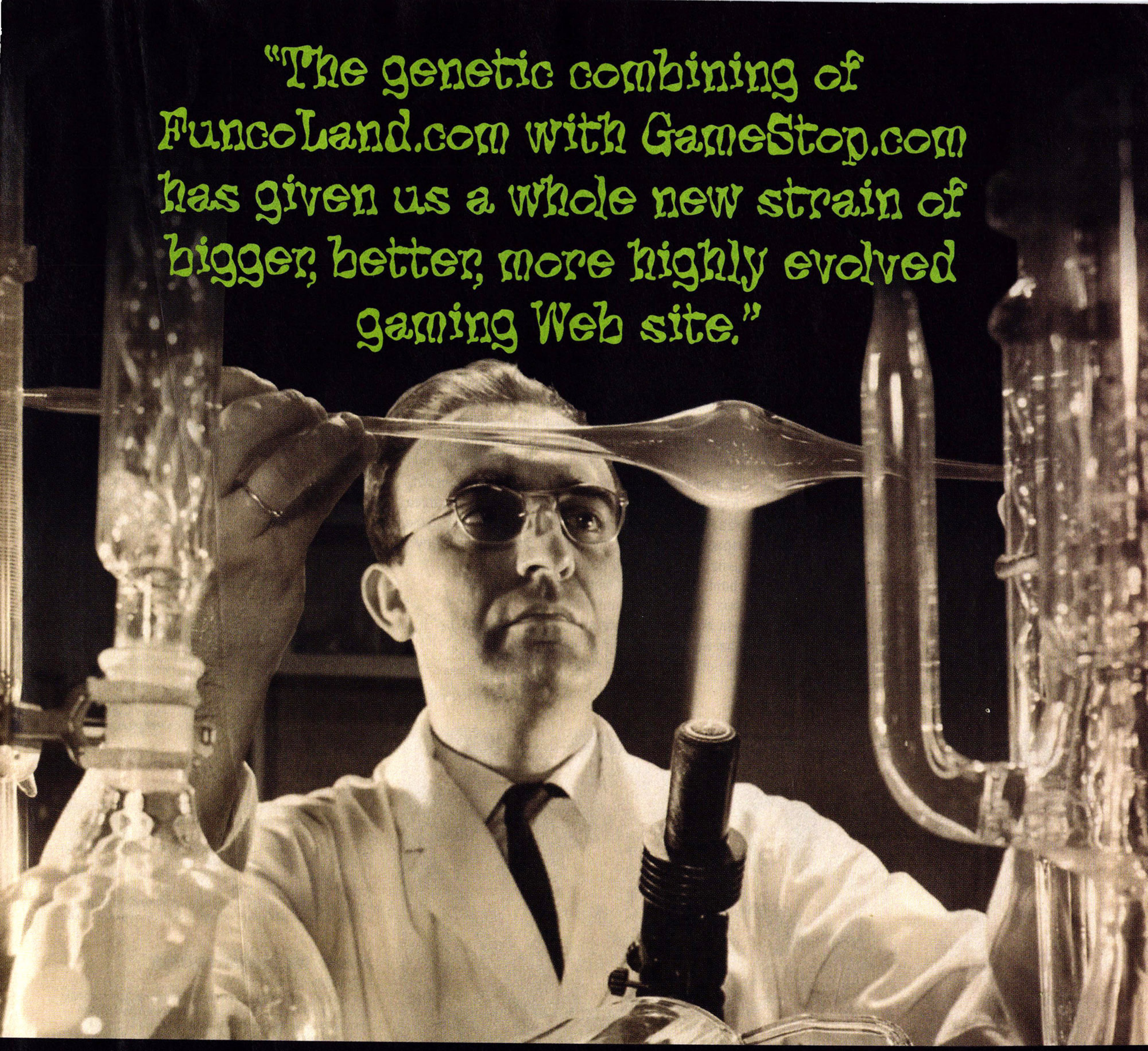

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EDITORS' FORUM

THE GAME IS AFOOT!

With Sega out of the picture on the console side, it makes the race for console supremacy even more interesting. Not so much in that Sega would have won the console wars, but I think that its software will be paradigm, much like Electronic Arts, to a system's success.

At this point in the battle, you can really feel the video game press and hardcore gamer swaying towards Microsoft's Xbox. I am sad to say, however, that I think it's just us buying into the hype that Microsoft has created, as it has yet to prove much of anything other than an ability to one-up its competition on paper. For instance, at the unveiling of Xbox, Microsoft showcased an Argonaut game and the press went ga-ga over it. While I too was impressed by the graphics, I can't help but think about the fact that Argonaut hasn't had a triple A title other than Star Fox – a game that was greatly influenced by Nintendo's über-producer Miyamoto – in all its years of game development.

Basically, at this point all Microsoft has shown me is that it has the ability to get some developers behind it and boast a lot of figures. Nothing has screamed runaway hit to me yet, especially since the support of the Japanese development community has only been second rate at best. Sega did manage to have success with Genesis only being popular in one market, but in today's high-cost development world, I would have to presume it's the world or nothing.

This makes Sega's software-only position all the more interesting. Perhaps Sega still has a slight grudge against Nintendo and Sony, and will put a couple great titles on Xbox, which could sway the Japanese crowd. Or perhaps Sega will put its software out on all three platforms, further solidifying PlayStation 2's hold on the Japanese market. At this point, I still think it's Sony's game to win or lose, but I surely can't count Microsoft or Nintendo out. Next month, Game Informer will visit Microsoft and we shall see what we can dig up, but until then I'm not buying into the hype.

Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com

The Game Dawgs left to right: Paul – lead guitar, Matt – rythym guitar, Krissy – acoustic guitar & vocals, Andy – drums, Jay – bass. Dancers left to right: Justin and Reiner.

PAUL, THE GAME PROFESSOR
paul@gameinformer.com

About 24 hours after penning the words for last month's issue, my new baby boy, Beck, joined the world. He's no loser, baby, as he does show signs of being far less of a geek than me. Right now, I have him on a regimen of sleeping for 18 hours a day. Man, I wish I could get an extended power nap like that. Thanks to some of you who have already sent the congratulatory emails. You can get a peek at him in this month's GI Spy. Beck's grandparents will be so proud when they see him in the pages of GI – or might they be terrified?

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER
reiner@gameinformer.com

Muhahaha! Disorder and chaos loom over this pathetic video game industry. Even in its infancy status, the Dark Informer Empire (DIE) grows strong, and many casualties have already been left in our ultra-powerful wake. What?! You don't fear us? Listen closely, you plump little turdling! Who brought Sega to its knees? Who put Bush in office? Who raided your mother's panty drawer last night? The Easter Bunny? I think not! Let your hatred flow! Join us or forever feel the wrath of the Darkside. DIE rules! Everyone else drools!

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER
matt@gameinformer.com

I'm pretty sick of me. Judging from the letters we receive, so are most of you. In hopes of providing you, our readers, with a reviewer that you can admire and respect, I created the character Scorpio as a way to dispose of my own rather shabby persona. Unfortunately, the powers-that-be swiftly put the kibosh on my brilliant plan. So, to all the people that wrote in saying they liked Scorpio better than the real me – tough titty! I've suffered as a result of my goony personality my whole life – now it's your turn. Besides, as long as the checks cash, I don't really care anyway.

JAY, THE GONZO GAMER
jay@gameinformer.com

It must be really hard for all you readers out there to pick a favorite editor amongst this cavalcade of insipidness. Who do you like more: Paul, the Paternity Professor or Matt, the Guy Whose Alter Ego is Cooler Than Him? Or perhaps you're more partial to Kristian and Reiner, the self-proclaimed Dork Lords. If none of these winning personalities strike your fancy, there's always Andy, Liked Him Better As the Game Dandy, or the new guy, Justin, the Computer Cueball…or Bitstream Baldy…or whatever he is. Of course, if all else fails, there's always yours truly. How I pity you all.

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT
justin@gameinformer.com

Hi, I'm writer Justin Leeper. You may remember me from such alter egos as GWAR slave Taint Monger and pro wrestler Helmut Von Strauss. My past plan for rabid followers and deity status via GameInformer.com fell asunder when people didn't bother to actually visit the site. Thus, I have taken a more active, aggressive role, and will be gracing these pages for years to come, eventually gathering a horde of admirers not unlike Peter Frampton circa 1976. I may be getting nut-shots now, but in time both you and my fellow cunning linguists will hop on the bandwagon. Can you dig it?

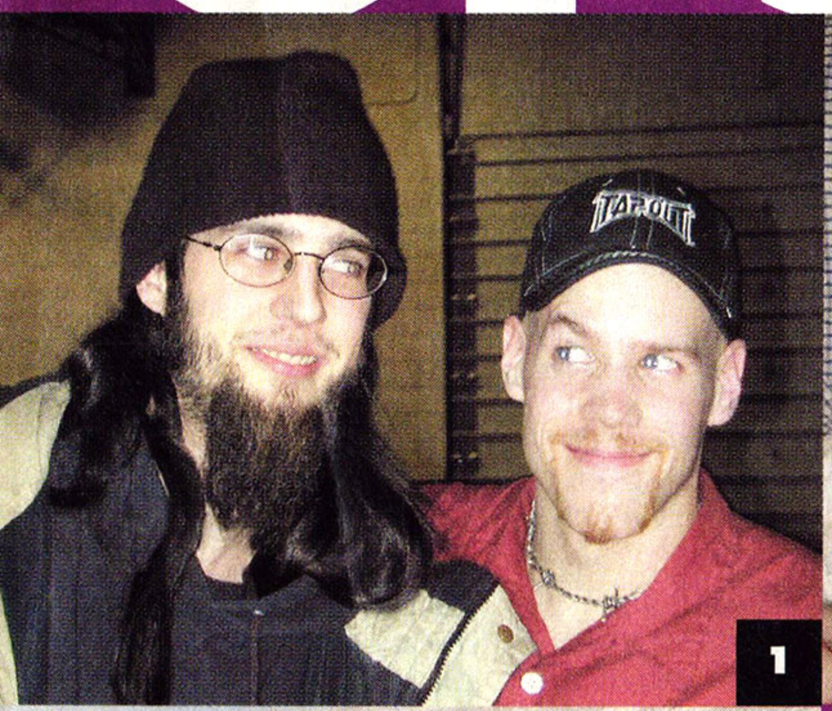
KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG
kristian@gameinformer.com

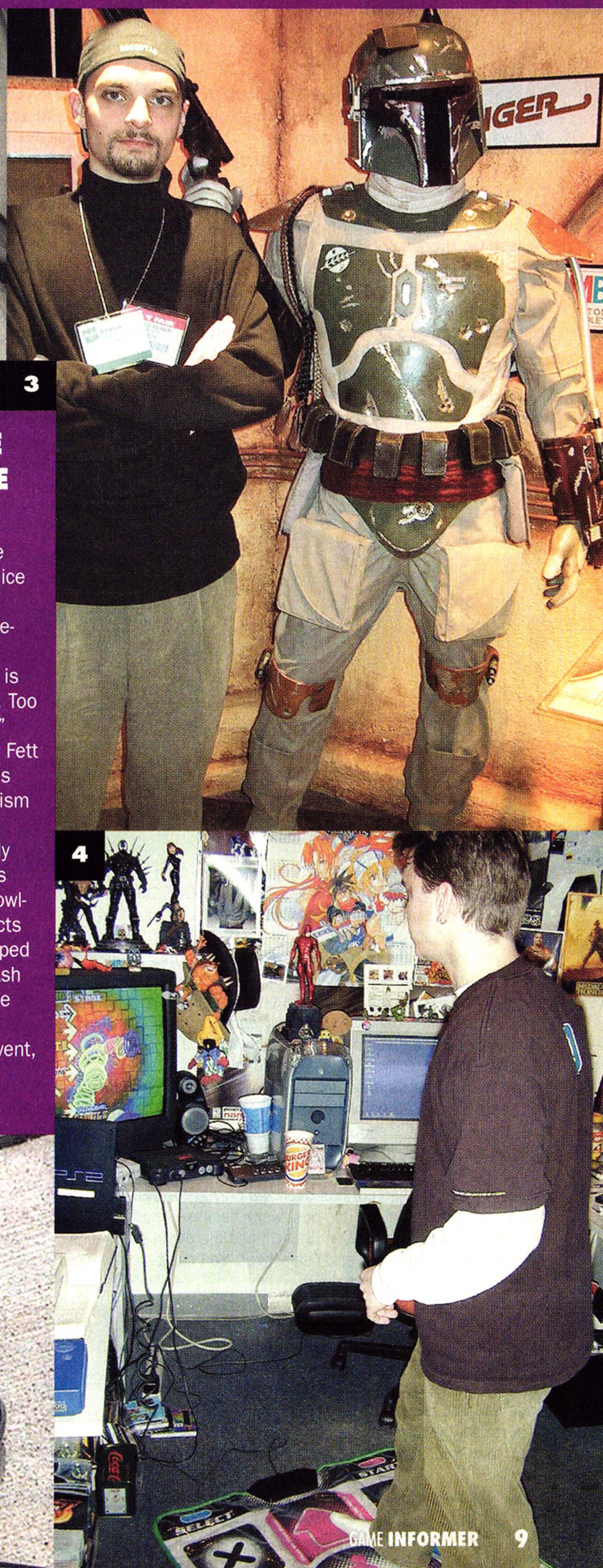
The Dark Informer Empire has been growing exponentially these past weeks. Our ranks now boast numbers over 11, and soon we will rule the world. There have been pretenders to the throne. As you may notice, I look spectacular in drag. When Andy tried to tell me otherwise, Reiner pulled his pants down and made him walk around the office blowing kisses. This morning, Justin made the mistake of asking Reiner a question before noon, and was kicked squarely in the groin. As he lay writhing on the ground, Reiner motioned to me and I immediately poured maple syrup in Justin's keyboard. Long live the Dark Lords.

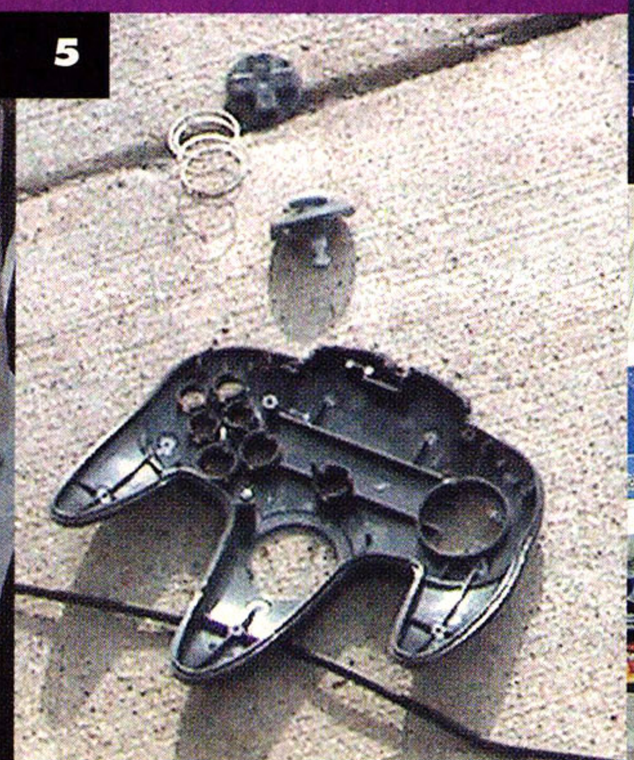
GI SPY

CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 Justin poses with his new "life partner," none other than the legendary Holiday Sam. It's so nice to see young people in love. **2** Sheesh! Paul is spawning like a salmon lately! Ladies and gentlemen, say hello to the newest addition to the GI family – Beck William Anderson. This lil' bugger is as cute as the dickens, and as sweet as sugar. Too bad he'll have to put up with "I'm a loser, baby" jokes for the rest of his life. **3** At Toy Fair, Boba Fett finally got a chance to get an autograph from his hero, the Raging Gamer. **4** "Video game journalism is my profession, but dance is my passion!" **5** Somehow, Jay's N64 controller was mysteriously destroyed while he was working on the Conker's strategy guide. Oddly, Jay claims to have no knowledge of how this happened, although he suspects it might have been a poltergeist. **6** Reiner snapped this shot of Pokémon superstars Pikachu and Ash at the recently held Toy Fair. Later that night, the trio went out for dinner to celebrate Ash's 30th birthday! **7** At Namco's Dead to Rights press event, Justin learns the ways of the commando. Like Chuck D, hizuzi weighs a ton.







DEAR GI

IS THE DREAMCAST DEAD?

Dear GI,

I am the world's biggest Sonic the Hedgehog fan. I just heard about Sega stopping production on the Dreamcast. Will we ever see Sonic Adventure 2?

Your friendly sock thing,
Billy Bartz

Sega may have pulled the plug on Dreamcast, but believe us, there's still life in this dying console. Sequels to existing franchises like Crazy Taxi, Virtua Tennis, House of the Dead, and (ding, ding, ding) Sonic Adventure will all release in 2001. SegaNet customers will be happy to hear that their online community will not be affected in the slightest, either. Despite the news, this should be a fruitful year for Sega and its Dreamcast fan base.

In closing, Billy is the 28th Game Informer reader claiming to be the world's biggest Sonic fan.

FEEDING THE TIGER

Hey, I'm sure people tell you this every day, but I have to tell it to you guys, YOUR MAG IS THE BEST ONE OUT THERE. I know you guys like handheld systems as much as the next guy, but have any of you stopped to look at the handheld system that only 7 or 8 people own in this world? Yes, I can hear you laughing. I am of course referencing the game.com, Tiger Electronics' attempt to make a handheld system that failed miserably. I'm just wondering, did any of you guys bother to pick one up and play it? Or did any of you even buy one? Was it even mentioned in the mag? Well, I did purchase one and I'm sorta ashamed. It was only $10 and the games were $5, so I was like, "What the hell, I'll give it a shot." Hey, it may suck, but at least there's a cool port of Resident Evil 2 for it.

ChroNoS

By the way, game.com has been the only game system I've been able to play for the past week because I had a seizure for some odd reason. Sadly, I had the damn seizure right before I bought Oni and Fear Effect. So I can't play either of them!!! Arghhhh!!!

Given your unfortunate condition, a heart-filled Hallmark quote would seem like the logical response. Unfortunately for you, we're not the logical type. Spock would say, "These earthlings are illogical, Captain." We hope you get better (hugs and wet kisses), but more importantly, you should follow in the scarecrow's footsteps and find a freakin' brain! You actually spent hard-earned cash on a game.com? Hello! What were you thinking?

To answer your questions, yes, we actually devoted precious editorial space to this gargantuan flop, but for good reason – to inform the masses that a great evil was on the way. The torture the Game Informer staff underwent to deliver this message goes beyond explanation. When it came time to review Tiger's product, Reiner was the only one brave enough to touch this handheld device. When he turned it on, urine squirted out of his ears and an army of ants marched out of his mouth. He quickly turned it off, looked around the room in a dazed state, then said, "It's evil." Never e-e-e-ever touch one of these! That goes for all of you! Unless, of course, you want to pick one up just to say you have one, but don't play it!

GI.COM SWIMMIN' WITH DA FISHES

Goodnight, sweet prince. The world was too harsh a place for thee. The name Gameinformer.com shall never again grace the marquee atop my AOL browser, and the world is worse off for it. Your years of loyal service went unrewarded and overlooked by the populous, but know that there were those who loved thee. When Old Yellow died, it was the beginning of the end...I knew. I just didn't want to believe. Now the day of realization has come, but I find solace in the fact that you are at peace now. Maybe one day I shall return to the World Wide Web, but for now, it is just too hard. I cannot look upon my browser without wanting you back, but it can never be. Farewell.....and say hello to Pets.com for me (that sock was funny...he he).

Jon

Gameinformer.com was a love affair for us for many years, and we too were sad to see it go. Your letter, along with thousands of others, has brought a tear to our eyes over this more than once, but the sad fact of the matter was that the time had come to let her go. The dot com business model just sucks and it was decided it was best to just concentrate on what we do best, which, despite what our girlfriends say, is the magazine.

PSYCHIC NUMBERED QUESTIONS

Hey guys (sorry if that word offends any of you),

I have a few questions:

1. In the upcoming console war, who do you think will win?
2. What is the most-played game in the office (if that's what it is)?
3. What is your income and what kind of vehicles do you drive?
4. What are the top ten games of all time?
5. Is there any way to get a PlayStation 2 without paying huge $$$ or waiting for a year?

Kenneth Taylor
Santa Cruz, CA

1. Without the ability to peer into the future, we contacted someone who could. We called Miss Cleo's Psychic Hotline, and asked your question. While our new psychic friend wouldn't give us a straight answer, she gave us a hint: "Who was the first one to have access to the Internet?" That would be...Sega. Incredible!

2. Andy still loves EverQuest more than his family. Reiner is investing serious hours into Phantasy Star Online. Both Paul and Kristian can't get enough of Half-Life: Counter-Strike. Matt's still trying to complete Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2. Justin is fulfilling his hoop dreams with NBA 2K1. Both Jay and Arthur have given up on gaming for the time being. One foolishly chases a laser pointer light around the office, and the other marks his territory on slot machines in Las Vegas.

3. Our yearly wages are comparable to a 12-year-old's paper route earnings. Our transportation is identical as well – bicycles with Pokémon trading cards inserted between the spokes.

4. Why list only 10? In four months, in Game Informer's gala 100th issue – which also marks our 10th anniversary – we'll reveal the top 100 games of all time. You won't want to miss this magazine!

5. The Dark Lords in the office, Reiner and Kristian, say wait until your friend is sleeping, then take it! If he wakes, shoot lightning bolts out of your fingers and fry the nosey nuisance.

THE NAME GAME

1. Where do babies come from?
2. Where did you get the name for your magazine?
3. Why did you guys make up those names? For example, The Game Dawg (which is very dumb)?

Perry Griffin
MSN, COM

1. A sperm whale spits into the eye of a humpback whale, and WHAMMO! A baby is born! You can also find them randomly inserted into cereal boxes. Paul just pulled a son out of a box of Captain Crunch.

2. The same Stupid Name Store you got yours at, Perry!

3. It's kind of like being knighted in the gaming world. Instead

Send your comments to Game Informer. **Snail Mail:** Game Informer Magazine • Attn: Dear GI • 10120 W. 76th Street • Eden Prairie, MN 55344 **Email:** deargi@gameinformer.com **WWW:** www.gameinformer.com

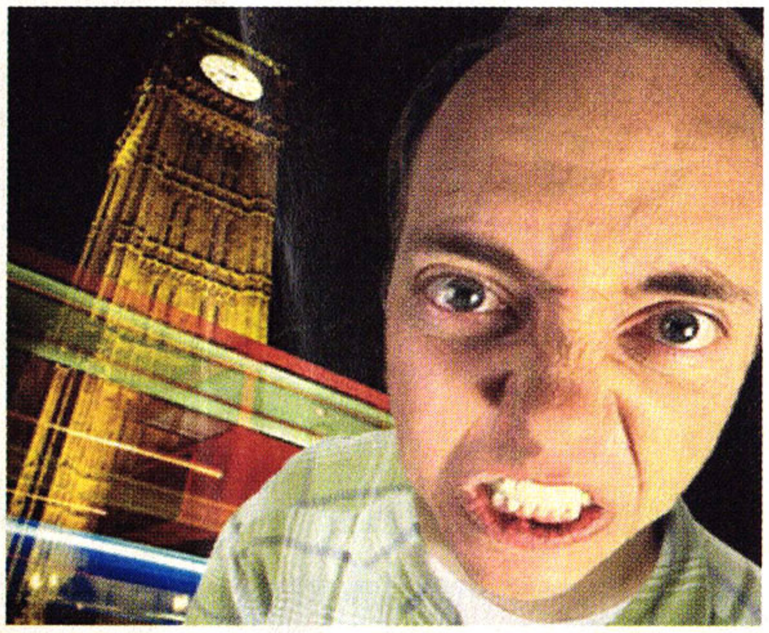
of sticking a "Sir" in front of our names, we end them with a handle that fits our personality.

XBOX HATER #1

Ever since I heard about Microsoft coming into the gaming industry, it has made me mad. They better not try to dominate this industry like they did the computer world. The producers of Xbox also make cocky remarks like they are incomparable to PS2. For anyone who likes Sony or Nintendo, DON'T BUY XBOX!

Jamie Antoniewicz
Marine City, MI

Certainly, Microsoft will play the role of the video game bully, but how can you hate something that isn't even out yet? Calm your fury and at least give it a look before you condemn it. We have no idea who you are, Jamie, but we hate you!



DISGUST FROM ENGLAND

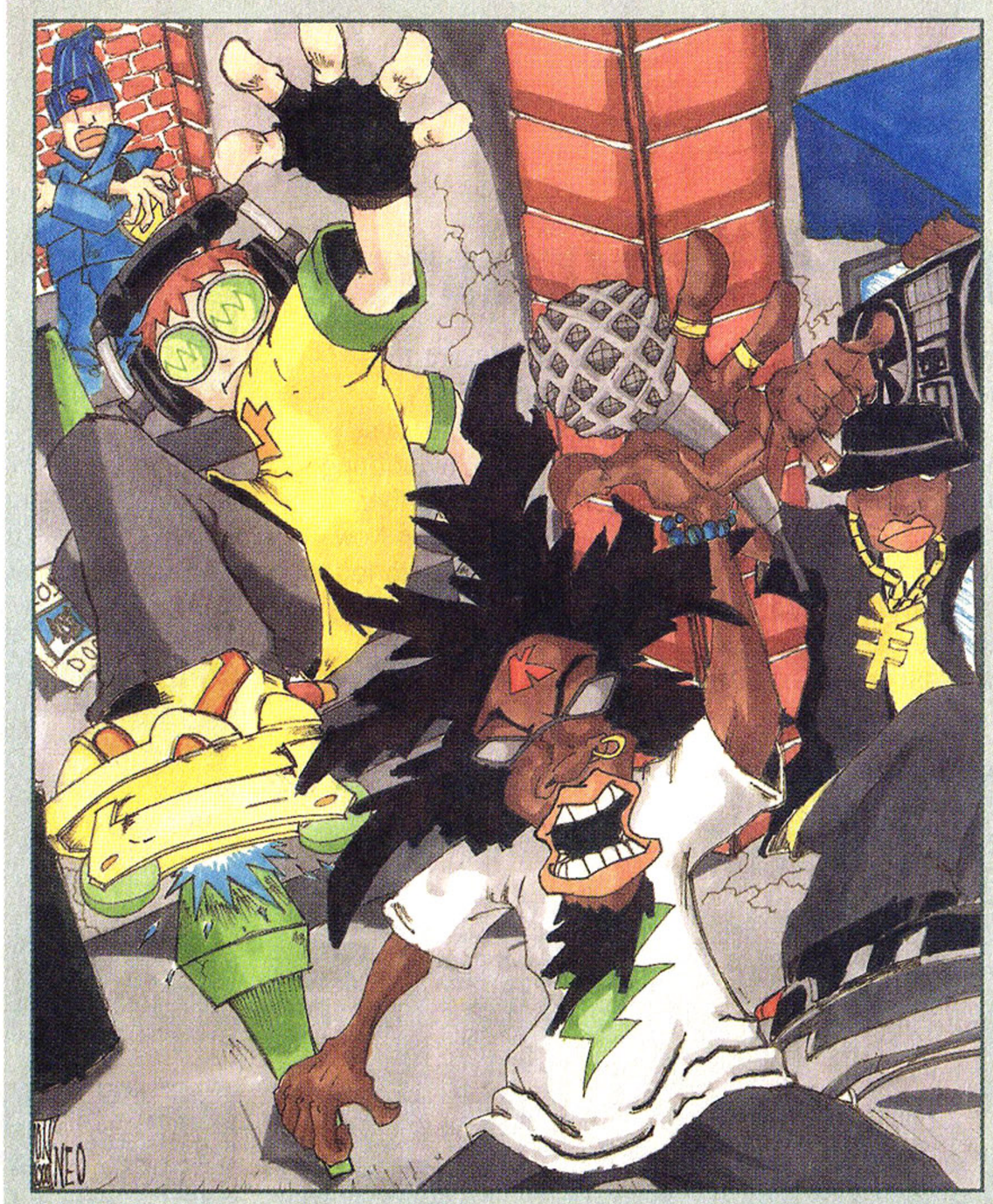
Can I just say how angry I am with Sony? They have brought down an experienced and hard-working game company whose only goal is to make great games. But now, that just isn't possible. Because of Sony, Sega no longer has the money to make the great games it's renowned for. Because of Sony, I can no longer play Sonic or NiGHTS. Because of Sony, Sega can no longer continue to make the brilliant Shenmue. I am from England and it is the same issue over here. For some reason, people won't play the Dreamcast because they remember the Saturn failed miserably, all because the PlayStation was a little bit more powerful. Another thing I can't stand are Nintendo fans. Hell, the only Nintendo game series I ever liked is Zelda. Sure, Nintendo games are more challenging and longer than Sega's, but they're nowhere near as much fun. Finally, can I just ask, what is the big deal with Square Soft's RPGs? You can get all that and more with Sega's RPGs like Phantasy Star, Panzer Dragoon, and Skies of Arcadia. Tell me, when will Sega be back on top like they used to be?

David Charlton
Seaham, England

Hey man, this is a free country, and the spoils go to the company who works the hardest and delivers the best product. Sega made a valiant attempt to redeem itself, but came up short. If we ran Sega, we would have waited for Sony to make a move, then we would have announced that our new console would be 10x more powerful than the PlayStation 2. Microsoft is doing it, and so is Nintendo. Sega may never release another console machine, but its software division will remain a dominant force. There's a good chance all of your favorite games will appear on Xbox, Gamecube, and PlayStation 2.

ENVELOPE ART

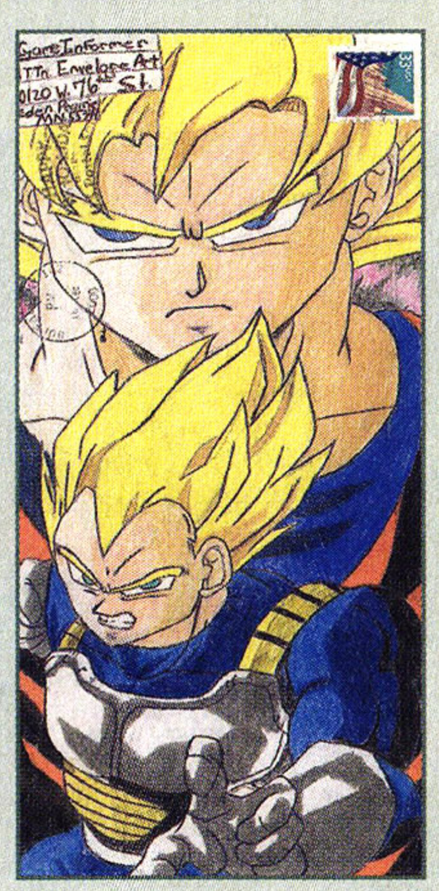
APRIL WINNER!



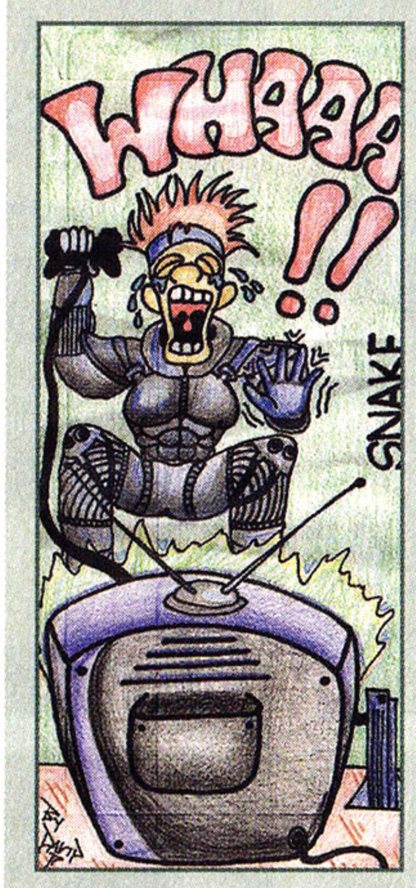
Jonathan Swarte
Is that Coolio?

Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best darn envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault.

Send to:
Game Informer
Envelope Art Contest
10120 W.76th St.
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

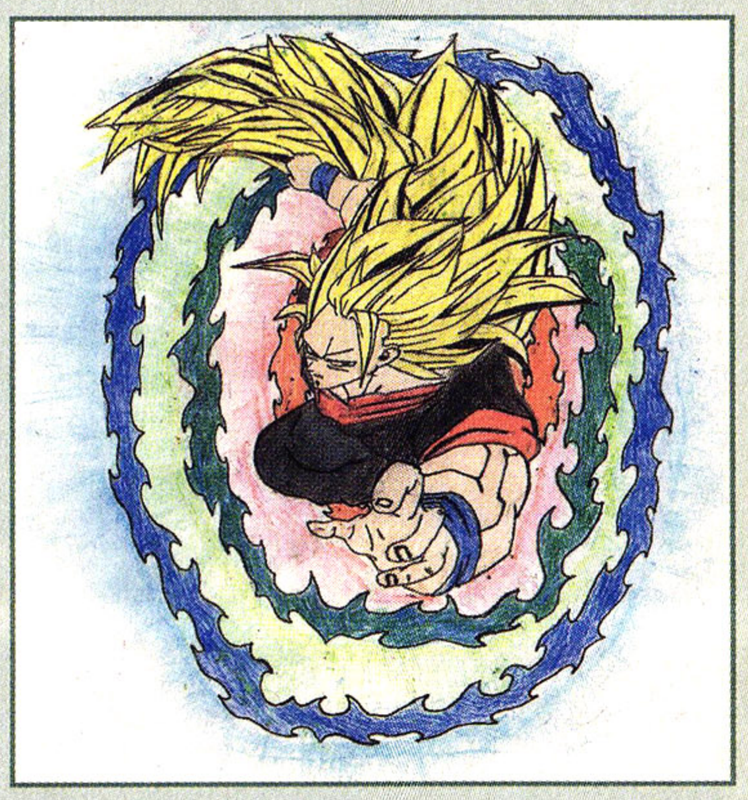


John Flynn
He's got Dragon Ballz.



David Pinero
Snake must be crying because he was playing PS2 and missed the new episode of Temptation Island.

Mario L. Perser II
Ryu falls once again for the classic bunny ears photo prank. God that Ken is funny!



Gary S. Walthall
Insert your own Dragon Ball Z joke here

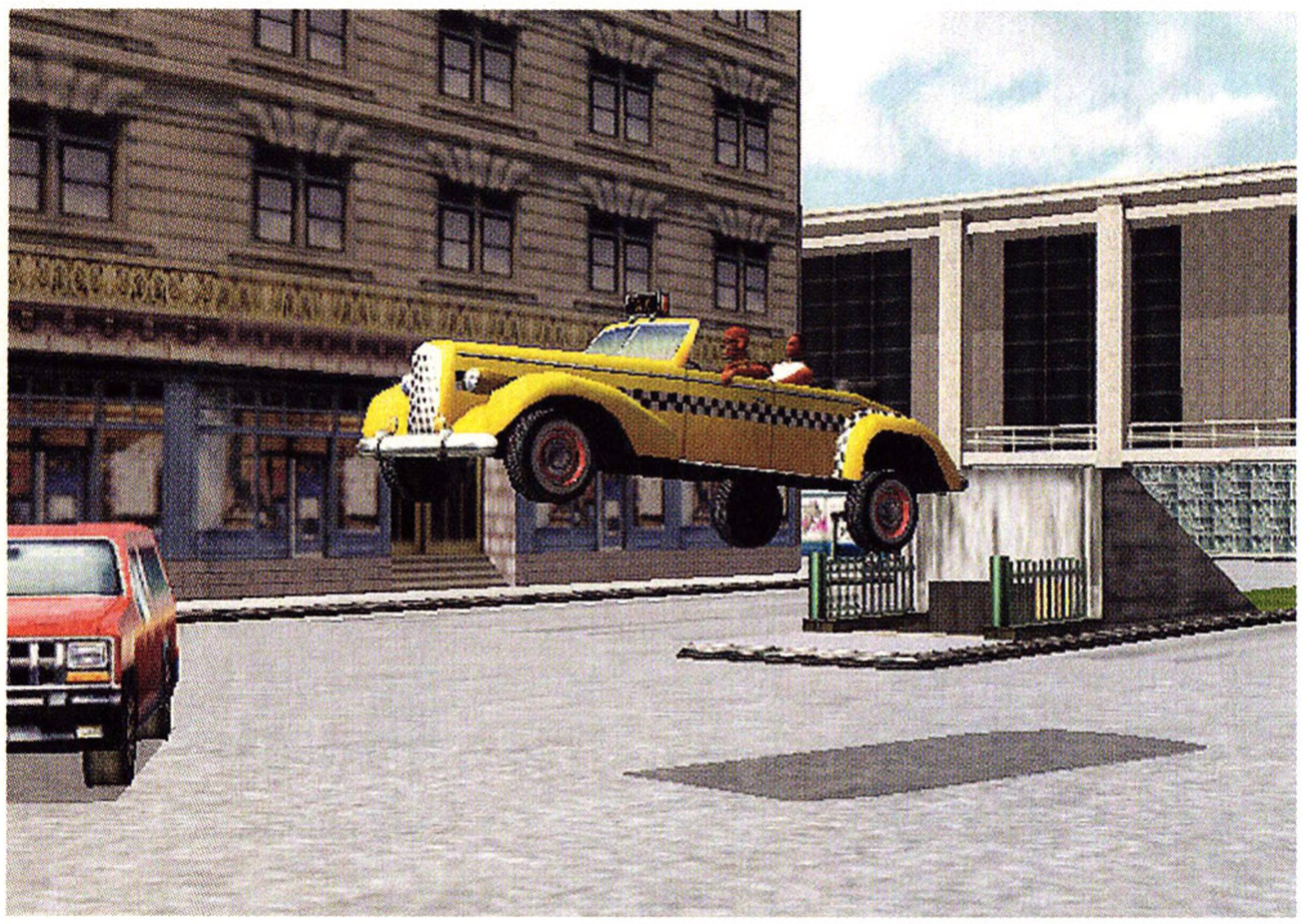
GI NEWS

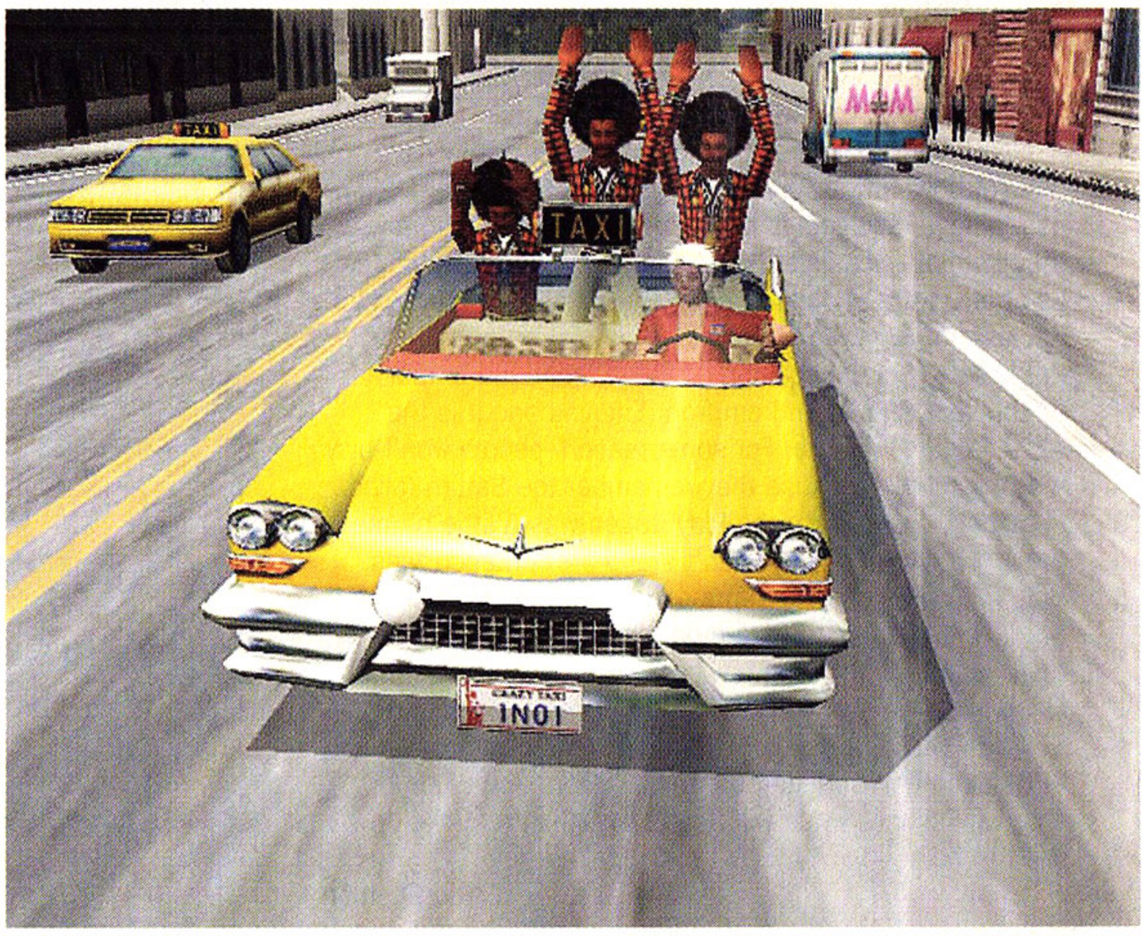
CRAZY TAXI 2 REVEALED!

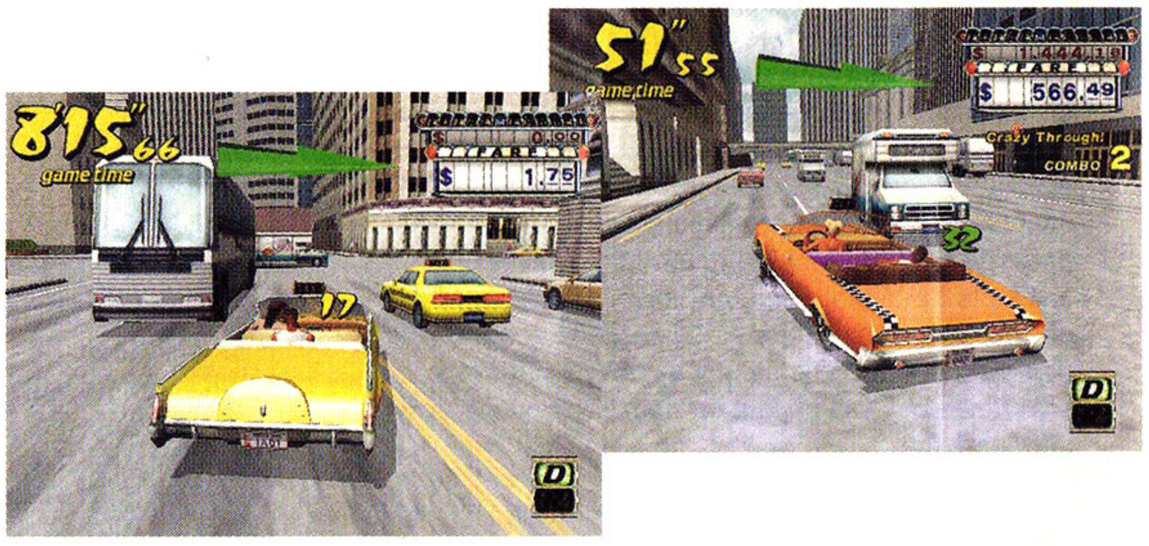
Sega is getting a little crazy again. Mere hours before this issue went to press, the company unleashed the first screenshots of ***Crazy Taxi 2***.

Scheduled for release on **Dreamcast** this summer (and possibly other systems this fall), the game promises to be even better than the original by offering a number of new moves and game modes. As reported back in the November 2000 edition of *GI News*, *Crazy Taxi 2* will incorporate actual city data from New York. It was also revealed recently that the game would introduce players to four new drivers and a new hop maneuver to jump other traffic. Lastly, players will have the ability to pick up multiple passengers.

Don't give up on that Dreamcast yet. *Crazy Taxi 2* should be arriving in the next few months.







GAME BOY ADVANCE RELEASE FINALIZED FOR US

Nintendo of America cemented plans for its next handheld system, the **Game Boy Advance**, by announcing the US release date. Gamers can expect to see the system on store shelves on June 11.

The Game Boy Advance will be available in three different color casings (Arctic, Indigo, and Glacier) and, although not officially announced, should retail for around $90. As previewed in last month's *GI News*, there are a wide array of games planned for the system, including ***F-Zero***, ***Mario Kart Advance***, and ***Mario Advance***.

Since our story last month, new images have also surfaced for Sega's first work on the Game Boy Advance – ***Sonic Adventure Advance***. Likewise, new shots were divulged for a GBA version of the **DC** puzzler, ***Chu Chu Rocket***. **Ubi Soft** also unveiled ***Rayman***.

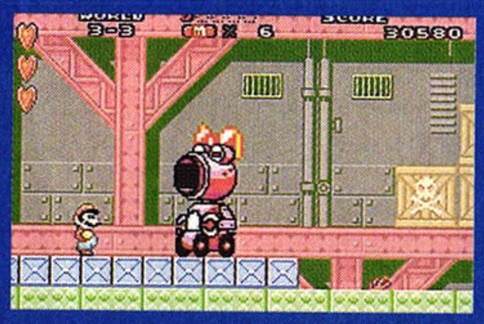
The handheld is compatible with all past and current **Game Boy** and **Game Boy Color** software.

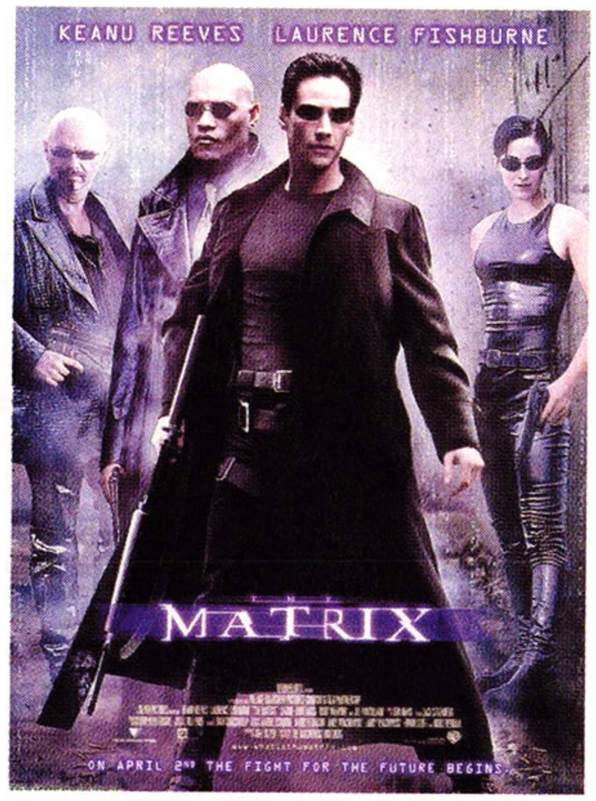
Mario Advance promises plenty of old school gaming and combines elements of three games – Mario Bros., Super Mario Bros., and Super Mario Bros. 2

Sonic

Rayman

Chu Chu Rocket



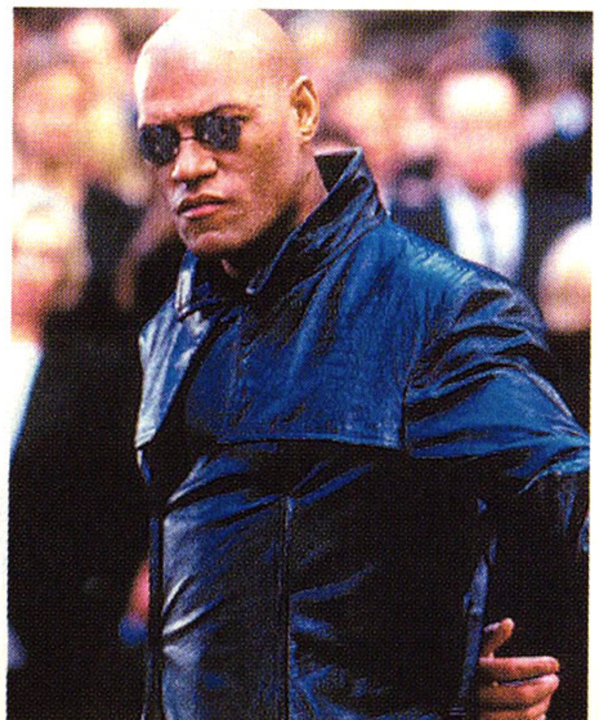


SHINY DOING MATRIX

Interplay has finally come clean and announced that it had indeed worked out a deal with **Warner Bros.** to bring ***The Matrix*** to video games.

Rumors surrounding links to **Interplay** subsidiary, **Shiny Entertainment**, and *Matrix* creators, **Larry** and **Andy Wachowski**, have been circulating for over a year. It wasn't until recently that the official word was handed down via a press release. Shiny Entertainment has already begun development on a **PlayStation 2** and **Xbox** game based on the freakishly popular sci-fi film. In fact, the game(s) will be based on the two Matrix sequels slated for theatrical release in the second half of 2002 and 2003 respectively.

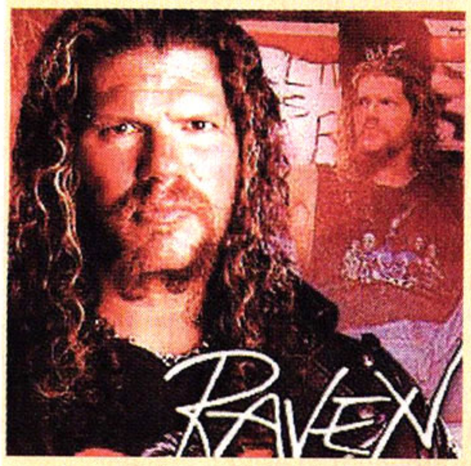
Shiny will be given full access to the film's production materials, as well as creative input from the writing/directing tandem, the Wachowski bothers. Initial word is that the game(s) will closely follow the plot of the films.



WWF ON PS2? IT'S TRUE!

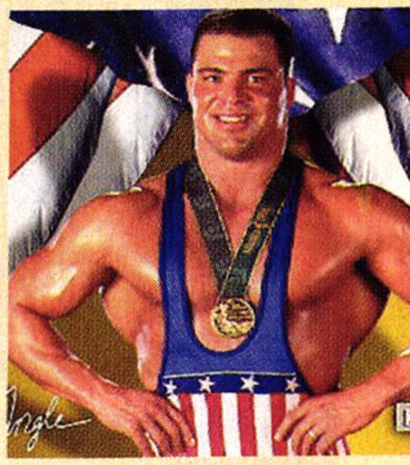
THQ has formally announced ***WWF SmackDown! 3***, the first **PlayStation 2** game featuring your favorite muscle-bound madmen of the **World Wrestling Federation**. The series, which sold millions on **PlayStation**, is taking full advantage of the powerful PS2 architecture to elevate the title further than any wrestling game to date.

Like ***Royal Rumble*** on Dreamcast, *SmackDown! 3*, slated for a fall release, will allow for nine superstars onscreen simultaneously. With this formula, the game will boast a jaw-dropping 78 match styles, including true six-man tag team contests. The roster is said to be in the 35 range. Would we like to see it expanded so lower card talent like **Funaki** and **Justin Credible** are included? Indeed!

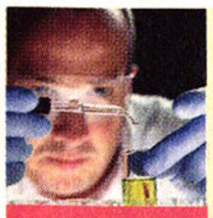


Breaking the silence that has plagued the series will be full play-by-play audio commentary. How long have you waited to hear Lawler shout about puppies every five minutes? To match the ante-up the game's sound will undergo, developer Yuke's will have graphics flowing at a smooth 60 frames per second.

Without improvements to the actual mechanics, though, you couldn't really call *SmackDown! 3* much of a sequel. It will boast over 1000 moves, which gives plenty of space for sick bumps like hangman DDTs and burning hammers, which no real *WWF* superstar would risk his career by taking. Assault won't be held to between bells, as any wrestler entering the arena risks getting jacked. A ref can even be distracted, to execute illicit activities without DQ. If your teammate blows a match, feel free to dish out a dragon suplex and leave the loser for dead.



Also in the works is a **Game Boy Color** title, developed by **Way Forward Technology**, which strays from the lines of wrestling familiarity. The game will be in the action/adventure genre, and feature four *WWF* superstars attempting to rescue a kidnapped **Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley**. (No, this is not a joke.)



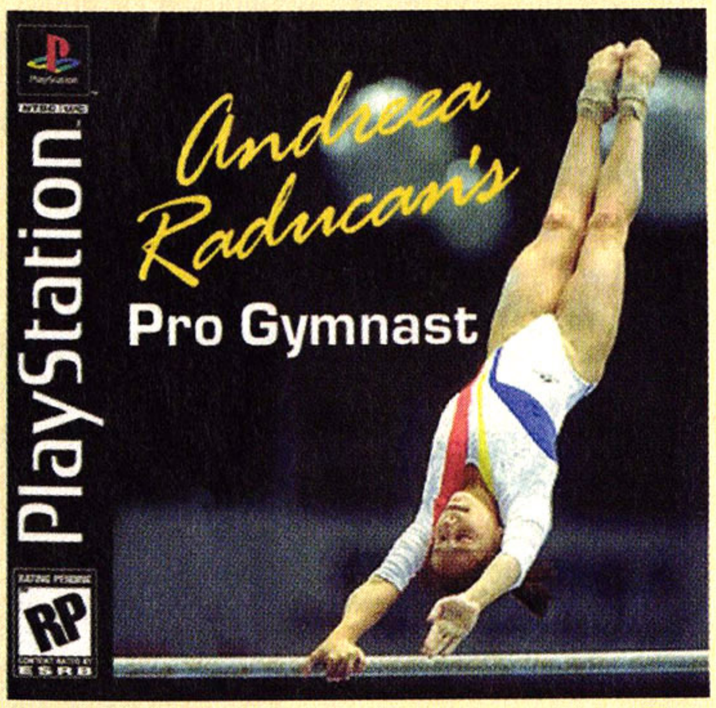
R&D

Game Informer's research and development operatives search the globe, seeking out the untapped licenses that will become tomorrow's killer games. If you have any great ideas for games of the future, be sure to drop us a line. Maybe we'll use our godlike power over the video game industry to turn you into a millionaire – or just steal your idea.

ANDREEA RADUCAN'S PRO GYMNAST

Women gamers are making up a bigger percentage of the gaming populace these days. With the mass-market popularity of such games as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX, why not use this genre to grab girl gamers' greenbacks? Pro Gymnast takes the celebrity status of female athletes like Svetlana Khorkina, Shannon Miller, and Liliya Podkopayeva, and mixes in the engine of an extreme game.

Rather than having multiple courses, you will compete in various Olympic-style events. The floor routine and balance beam will be a more track-based Tony Hawk run, with combos of tumbling and acrobatics to wow the judges, as you get your score, based on a 10-point scale. A fall will not only hurt your pride, but may lead to a career-threatening injury. Other events include the vault and uneven bars. With these, a more fighting game-style control pattern will be present, requiring you execute quarter-circles and charge moves to pull off a variety of tricks. It's time girl gamers get something to play with other than intelligence-insulting fashion show games, and something as cool as Pro Gymnast might even get a few guys to in touch with their feminine side.



NAME THAT GAME

A fixture in nearly every arcade when it was released in 1990, this Atari-built fighting game features digitized characters and an array of special moves. With the occasional spattering of blood, it was a definite pre-cursor to the ultra-violence of Mortal Kombat.

(Answer on page 17)

TOP 10 SIGNS YOU'VE BEEN UP TOO LATE PLAYING GAMES

10 You watch Ab and Psychic Network infomercials during game loading

9 Your mom tries to use the bags under your eyes to pack your school lunch

8 When you finally do go to sleep, you clutch your pillow like a controller

7 It's takes a while to figure out if it's 10:00 AM or PM

6 Your electric bill is more expensive than your rent

5 You can hear odd moaning coming from your parents' room

4 Your bed is just someplace to store your crap under

3 The sound of bacon sizzling makes you drowsy

2 You average one 2-liter bottle of soda for every level beat

1 You're on EverQuest at the same time Andy is

Game Informer is looking for your Top Five favorite games. Please send your Top Fives to:

Game Informer Magazine
Attn: Top Five
10120 West 76th Street
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Everyone that enters every month will be entered in a drawing to win a GI T-Shirt! So get writing!

DEVELOPER **TOP 5**

OWEN JUSTICE
PRODUCER, MONSTER GAMES

1 Ultima III – Commodore 64
2 Race and Destruction Set – Commodore 64
3 Railroad Tycoon II – PC
4 Football Pro '96 – PC
5 Need for Speed – PC

(Juan really, really likes Slipknot)

READER **TOP 5**

JUAN GASPAR
CHICAGO, IL

1 Metal Gear Solid – PS-X
2 Half-Life – PC
3 Unreal Tournament – PC
4 NFL 2K1 – DC
5 Jet Grind Radio – DC

SONY SOLIDIFIES PLAYSTATION 2 RELEASES

After a relatively quiet six months for its **PlayStation 2**, **Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA)** has broken the silence and confirmed the release of several first-party games.

Most notably, SCEA has made public the June release of ***Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec***. This highly anticipated racing game has seen a number of delays and prior to this announcement was slated for an April release.

Another PS2 game that hasn't garnered any attention since last May's **E3** is a rather mysterious game entitled ***ICO***. This action/adventure titles was one of the more promising titles shown nearly a year ago. ICO has been penciled in for a July release.

Here is the rundown on some of the PS2 games in the SCEA stable:

- ***Cool Boarders 2001*** – May
- ***Dark Cloud*** – May
- ***Twisted Metal: Black*** – June
- ***Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec*** – June
- ***Extermination*** – July
- ***ICO*** – July

Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec

Dark Cloud

COMPUTER ANIMATED FILM, SHREK, COMING TO XBOX

New game publishing player **TDK Mediactive** has inked a deal with **DreamWorks Pictures** for rights to the computer-animated movie, ***Shrek***.

TDK announced that it acquired a five-year licensing agreement to develop Shrek video games for all platforms. The first game will be released for **Game Boy Color** in May, with the **Xbox** title arriving in time for the system's launch this fall.

The film, scheduled to release sometime in May, is a computer-animated comedy starring the voice talent of **Mike Myers** (Shrek), **Eddie Murphy** (the Donkey), and **Cameron Diaz** (the Ugly Princess). *Shrek's* story is based on the children's book by **William Steig**.

MEDAL OF HONOR SURFACES ON PC

Medal of Honor, the first-person shooter set in World War II era Europe, is becoming quite a franchise for **Electronic Arts** and **DreamWorks Interactive**.

After two successful versions on the **PlayStation**, *Medal of Honor* is branching out with new versions planned for the **PlayStation 2**, **Xbox**, and **PC**. Here we present a look at some preliminary shots of the PC version entitled ***Medal of Honor: Allied Assault***. The game is under development at Electronic Arts itself.

Built around the technology and game engine used for ***Quake III***, *MOH: Allied Assault* is slated for an October release. The PS2 title, a completely different game, should be released next spring. The Xbox game – based on the PC game – should arrive next spring as well.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

GOOD – A few days after this issue has gone to press, *Game Informer* will be heading to Seattle, Washington for **Microsoft's Gamestock 2001**. This annual event is normally reserved for **PC** games, but this year promises a new selection of **Xbox** games. Playable Xbox games! Wahoo! Look for a full report in next month's issue.

BAD – The downward ratings spiral of **NBC's** broadcast of the **Xtreme Football League** might cause the network to pull the plug. This might also prompt **THQ** to stop plans for a video game version of the league. THQ acquired the rights to the XFL through an agreement with the WWF.

UGLY – **Sega** has filed suit against **Kmart** for alleged non-payment on a **Dreamcast** bill. Sega maintains that Kmart has only paid $23.7 million of the $25.9 million tab.

GOOD – Although it was nearly all but confirmed, legendary game creator **Shigeru Miyamoto** has spoken about ***Zelda*** for the **Gamecube**. Miyamoto stated that the graphics engine was complete and the production team is working on quality checks. Project director, **Mitshihiro Takano**, added that current work is focusing on the storyline and attempts to discover new uses for the Gamecube controller.

BAD, UGLY – "They can say whatever they want, but we have no intention of signing a contract, and there's little chance of one being signed in the future." Said **Nintendo Co.** president, **Hiroshi Yamauchi**, in reference to Square Soft working with Nintendo again. **Square Soft's** president **Takashi Suzuki** responded, "We're not expecting to be accepted by **Nintendo** right away, but we're doing everything to get the relationship positive again."

LOOSE TALK

Wherever there's a juicy rumor in the industry, Game Informer experts are on it like a fly on stink. If loose lips are spraying hot gossip, we're sucking up the secret saliva and drooling it all over this section. Loose Talk exposes inside rumors for all to see. These leads may turn out to be 100% untrue, but then again, they could also be dead honest, and you've just learned about them months before anyone else!

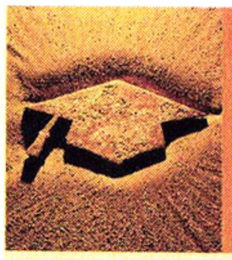
Reports out of **Sega** state the first two chapters of the epic flop, ***Shenmue***, are making way to greener pastures, namely **PlayStation 2** and **Xbox**. Sega spent nearly 70 million on the first title, which only garnered moderate success, so it just seems fitting to try and make some of the deficit back through cheap ports.

Sony and **Disney's** super sexy relationship is expected to continue with a collaborative release of the upcoming **Pixar** film, ***Monsters, Inc.*** When the movie hits theaters, the **PlayStation** and **PlayStation 2** should be graced by monster-infested titles.

Rumors have been circulating throughout the industry that **Retro Studios** is working on a new ***Metroid*** title for **Gamecube**. Rather than continue the side-scrolling adventures of **Samus**, Retro is developing the title as a first-person shooter. Apparently, **Shigeru Miyamoto** was invited to view the product and was very unimpressed with what he had seen.

Oh goodness gracious! ***King's Field IV*** may be delayed!

For uses such as acceleration in racing games, **Sony** has apparently asked developers to not enable the analog functions of the shape buttons (●, ▲, ■, ✖) on the **PS2** controller. Sony fears this may cause undue wear on the controllers.



VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

Who let the dogs out! Woof! Woof! Wo...Ah, screw it! This month in Game Informer's totally spectacular trivia contest your score will determine which rascally little pooch is destined to walk at your side. So guess away, you puppy lovin' freaks!

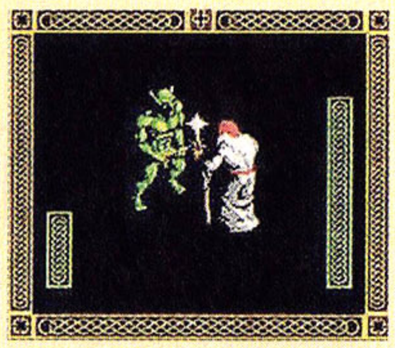
1: In Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, Link was buried up to his hairy armpits in trouble. Which of these scenarios did he actually run across?

A. An orphaned sloth eyes Link as a father figure. Fearing this child would interfere with his quest, Link does the right thing by tossing the slow-moving critter into a molten river.
B. Link battles a vicious horseman who teleports through paintings onto the battlefield.
C. Link must return the Flower of Life to the Fairy Forest before the Dark Swarm engulfs Hyrule.
D. Link's father stupidly chops his son's hand off, then asks him to join his unjust cause.

2: The NES version of Ikari Warriors was insanely difficult, but it did allow players to cheat. What was the cheat used to continue mid-game?

A. Up, Down, Left, Right, B, A, Start
B. A, B, B, A
C. B, A, B, B, A
D. Down, Up, Right, Left, B, A, Up, Left, Right, A, A, Select, B, A, Up, Right, Up, Down, Up, Left, Up, A, A, B, A

3: In the classic PC, NES, and Genesis game, The Immortal, you assume the role of a student training in wizardry. Who was your master?



A. Mordamir
B. Erinoch
C. Eternity
D. Malice

4: What PlayStation title did Insomniac Games develop before Spyro: The Dragon?

A. Defcon 5
B. Rascal
C. Disruptor
D. Space Griffon

5: After Mike Tyson beat the tar out of his loved one, Robin Givens, he was removed from the NES title Punch Out. Who filled his shoes?

A. Ringer Rick
B. Nick Bruiser
C. Buster Douglas
D. Mr. Dream

Question 6: In the Nintendo 64 game, Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire, secret codes allowed you to play as three enemies. Which of these was not playable?

A. IG-88
B. Wampa
C. AT-ST
D. Snow Trooper

7: Game Informer's adorable mascot, Arthur, has trouble going to the bathroom. What is the secret phrase used to make Arthur mark his territory?

A. High On
B. Tinkle Winkle
C. Full Stream Ahead
D. Chocolate Mint

8: What were the two follow-up games to Kileak: The DNA Imperative?

A. Project Overkill, Epidemic
B. Brahma Force, Project Overkill
C. Epidemic, Brahma Force
D. Broken Helix, Brahma Force

9: Who did the soundtrack for Quake?

A. Trent Reznor
B. GWAR
C. Biohazard
D. Ministry

10: Which of these NES games was the first to feature battery back-up?

A. Excitebike
B. Dragon Warrior
C. Zelda
D. Wall Street Kid

Score and Rank

0 Cujo

1-3 Hooch

4-6 Beethoven

7-9 Santa's Little Helper

10 Arthur

Video Game Trivia Answers:

1. B 2. B 3. A 4. C 5. D 6. A 7. A 8. C 9. A 10. C

XBOX SEZ "I AM THE LAW!"

Classic comic character **Judge Dredd** is reportedly coming to enforce his brand of justice on the **Xbox**. According to reports originating from Europe, the game will be a first-person shooter that may appear as early as the end of the year.

CTW, the British video game trade magazine, reports that **Rebellion Software** has secured the *Judge Dredd* rights via its licensing of the 2000 AD properties (a comic in which *Judge Dredd* appears). Rebellion is best known for its **PC** game, ***Aliens vs. Predator***, and the company has aptly titled this game ***Dredd vs. Death***.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 2

Buoyed by the tremendous following of its **Dreamcast** RPG, ***Phantasy Star Online***, **Sonic Team** has given word that a sequel is planned.

At this point the details of ***Phantasy Star Online 2*** have not been revealed, but we suspect that Sonic Team may offer an update for the DC that allows players to continue their quests in new environments. However, a new adventure on a completely different platform is not out of the question.

BREAK DOWN

100% of our letters from prison inmates contained business proposals

16% of workdays at GI are "Goth Dress Up" days

0% percent of GI Editors are scared of the Dark Lords

27% of Paul and Kristian's time this month was spent arguing over PlayStation 2 F1 racing games

78% of Justin's workdays were spent wondering why he finds Solid Snake's mullet so repellent, yet so hypnotically beautiful at the same time

NEW DETAILS ON FINAL FANTASY MOVIE

Gearing up for the summer premiere of **Square's** epic ***Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within***, **Sony Pictures** has been conducting test screenings of the highly anticipated CG animated film. Reports from those lucky enough to take part in these sneak previews have fleshed out some of the picture's plot.

As mentioned before in *GI* (Issue #93), the film's heroine, Aki (Ming-Na) must help save Earth from an invasion of aliens called the Phantoms. Partnered with Aki is Dr. Sid (Donald Sutherland), who has masterminded a plan to defeat the aliens using bio-energy waves that are emitted by all living things. Aki, aided by a troop of marines led by Captain Gray (Alec Baldwin), must scour the barren Earth for the eight Life Spirits she needs before the Phantoms turn out the lights on human life forever.

Attempting to thwart Aki's plans will be General Hein (James Woods), who wants to blow the Phantoms to kingdom come with a giant space cannon called the Zeus project. If that wasn't enough, Aki has been infected by a Phantom and is suffering from bizarre dreams and visions. These intriguing developments have us clamoring for further details, so stay tuned for more on this groundbreaking feature film in the near future.

DATA FILE

➤ **Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. (SCE)** plans to develop methods to distribute game content via fiber optic cables to game arcades owned and operated by **Sega** and **Namco**. The pact may also pave the way for downloadable game content in homes.

➤ **Tecmo** revealed that ***Monster Rancher 3*** is in development for **PlayStation 2**. The previous two installments were released for the original **PlayStation**.

➤ The UK television network, **BBC**, is working on an adaptation of the hit series ***Robot Wars*** for the **PlayStation 2**.

➤ **EA Sports** announced the signing of 2000 American League MVP **Jason Giambi** as the spokesperson and coverboy for **Triple Play Baseball**.

➤ **Sega** has signed an agreement with tennis stars **Venus** and **Serena Williams**. Sega will use their likenesses for its upcoming ***Virtua Tennis*** sequel.

➤ **Infogrames** acquired interactive rights to the popular Charles Schultz comic, **Peanuts**. Plans call for games featuring Charlie Brown and the gang on every gaming platform under the sun.

➤ **Activision** signed eight world class surfers to join the cast of ***Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer***. Lisa Andersen, Tom Carroll, Tom Curren, Nathan Fletcher, Bruce Irons, Rob Machado, Kalani Robb, and "soul surfer" Donavon Frankenreiter will all be joining Slater. Designed in the same vein as ***Tony Hawk's Pro Skater***, this **PlayStation 2** game in being developed by **Interactive Republic Corporation**.

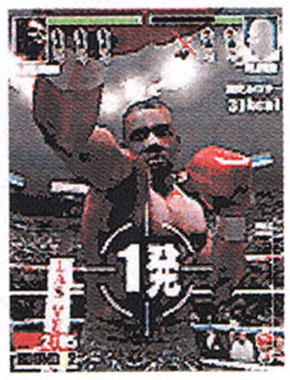
➤ **NYKO Technologies, Inc.** announced it has filed a lawsuit against two companies, **Mad Catz** and **NUBY**, who manufacture products similar to NYKO's patented **Worm Light** accessory. The lawsuit alleges that the technologies used in NUBY's **Cobra Light**, as well as Mad Catz's **Bone Light**, **Mech Light**, and **Wild Thing** are too similar to those protected under NYKO's patents.

➤ **Nintendo 64** players craving a little ollie-action can rest easy. Activision has confirmed plans to release ***Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*** for the cart-based console.

➤ A team that worked on the ***Age of Empires*** series is currently putting together ***Star Wars Battleground***, a **PC** real-time strategy game based in the ***Star Wars*** universe, for **Ensemble Studios**.

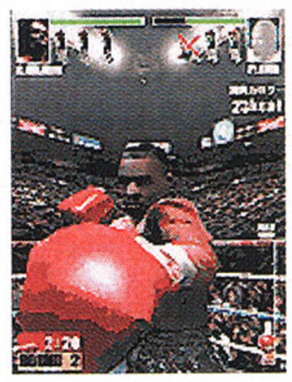
Name That Game Answer:
Pit-Fighter

NEW ARCADE GAMES UNVEILED IN JAPAN



A number of noteworthy arcade titles were introduced recently at the **Japan Amusement Machine Operators' Union (AOU)** annual show in Tokyo, Japan. Big name video game companies such as **Sega**, **Namco**, and **Konami** were on hand to unveil the latest wares – many of which will make their way to home consoles at a later date.

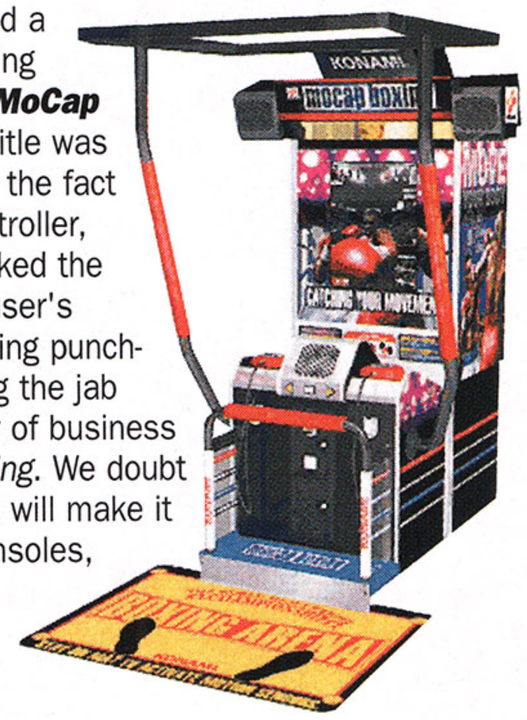
The first public appearance of Sega's ***Virtua Fighter 4*** (previewed on page 50), obviously stole much of the limelight at the AOU. Still, the show did include other bodacious arcade games.



Other than *VF4*, Sega unveiled a number of titles designed on its **NAOMI 2** hardware including ***Cart Club***, ***Super Major League Baseball***, ***Dynamic Golf***, ***Virtua Striker 3***, and ***Wild Riders***.

Namco revealed a new gun shooter, ***Vampire Night***, which utilizes its **System 246** arcade hardware. The game is actually designed and produced by Sega subsidiary, **WOW Entertainment**, which formerly crafted Sega's ***House of the Dead 2***. Since Vampire Night's System 246 architecture closely mimics that of the **PlayStation 2**, this game is almost a definite on the home system.

Konami continued to push its **Bemani** series of games that include ***Dance Dance Revolution*** and ***Guitar Freaks***, but the company introduced a rather interesting boxing game, ***MoCap Boxing***. This title was noteworthy for the fact it used no controller, but rather tracked the inputs of the user's motions. Ducking punches and sticking the jab were the order of business in *MoCap Boxing*. We doubt that this game will make it onto home consoles, but it is cool nonetheless.



FORGOTTEN REALMS

Baldur's Gate

DARK ALLIANCE™

All is darkness. The valley is quiet as you and your family travel toward the town know as Baldur's Gate. You have been driven from your once peaceful homeland by thieves and brigands. You enter a still wood. The sun has sunk for the night, and a pale mist floats low over the damp ground. You bring your caravan to a stop...there is something not quite right, something disturbing the stillness of twilight. Your eyes dance from tree to tree in the woods as the air is suddenly filled with the unsheathing of your blade. In an instant, 20 dark figures are upon you, and as you draw back your arm to spill first blood, Everything goes black. When you come to, things are in chaos. A faint cry can be heard from your family through your murky consciousness. Your sister...they've taken your sister! But why her? Why you? You must seek answers, and to do this, you must complete your journey to Baldur's Gate. You are afforded little comfort for your effort, as there are no answers to be had, and no safety to be found. There are foul things afoot in the streets of Baldur's Gate. Members of the city watch have been found dead, citizens are reluctant to leave the sanctuary of their homes, and frightening plots are being hatched in dark alleys and back rooms. Your steel lost and your will hardened, you begin your quest to find your sister and the band of thieves who took her from you. There are rumors that the Elfsong Tavern has been host to many a thug who wishes to be out of the harsh glare of the streets. Your instincts lead you there, but your now empty sheath is pushing you to the smithy. Your love for your sibling overcomes your sense of well-being as you plunge into the streets and make your way towards what you pray will be the beginning of an answer...

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY
■ **DEVELOPER** SNOWBLIND STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 5

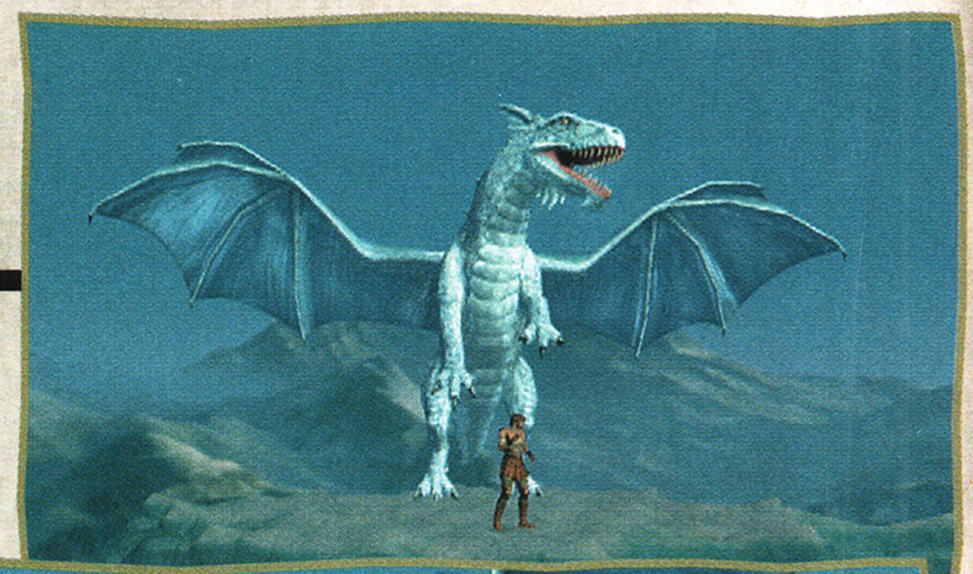
SUMMONING THE LEGEND

The Time Has Come

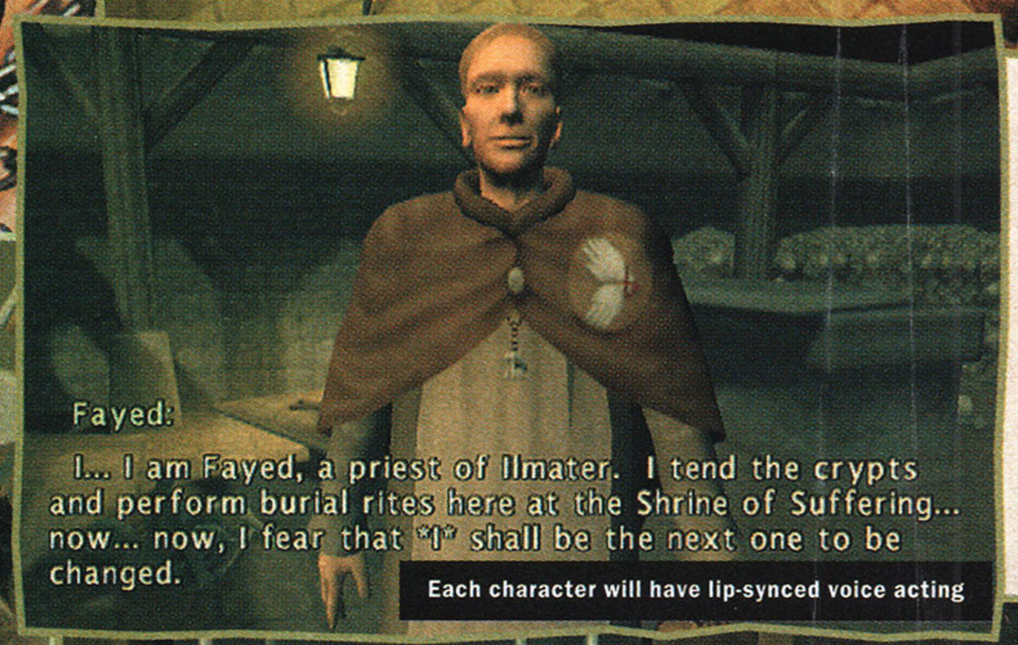
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance is a watermark in gaming history; the first-ever Baldur's game to make the long journey over to the realm of the console. From the vaunted Black Isle brain trust, and in tandem with Snowblind Studios, Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance will attempt to launch an entirely new demographic of gamers into the highly addicting and highly entertaining world of the Forgotten Realms. Many hurdles will need to be overcome to ensure its success.

Players and fans of the Baldur's legend will indeed be finicky when it comes to the presentation of their beloved title to the console community. Black Isle's division director, Feargus Urquhart, has reassured Game Informer and the gaming community that "[Black Isle] is totally committed to making Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance a completely original experience that both console gamers and RPG fans will enjoy."

Game Informer was recently given the opportunity to visit the headquarters of Dark Alliance's developer, Snowblind Studios. In the scenic confines of Bellevue, Oregon, we met with four unassuming, yet highly motivated and talented artists and programmers who are part of the life-blood that runs through every polygon of this game. Upon talking with the team for a number of minutes, it quickly become clear that this game is indeed an action/adventure RPG. There will be no question about that. Why is this important? As lead programmer, Ezra Dreisbach mentioned, "We want this game to be easy to jump into for everyone, not just the hardcore RPG fan."

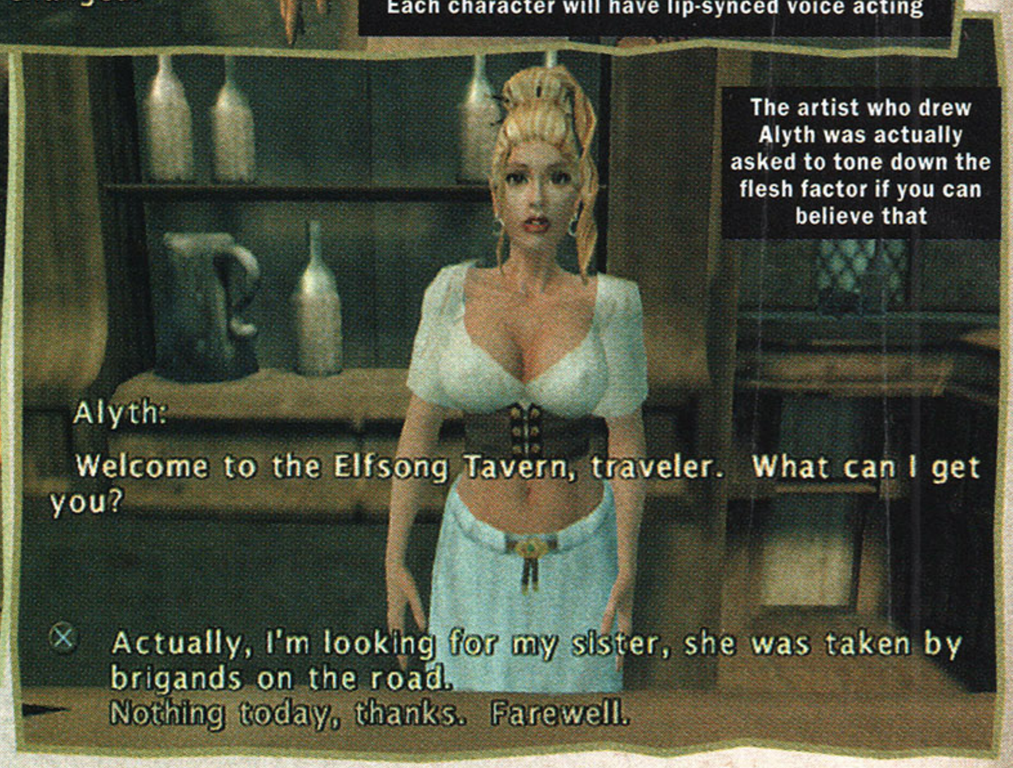


Burning Hands will be one of the first spells you find on your journeys



Each character will have lip-synced voice acting

You'll be asked to use jumping as a way to avoid damage, and navigate around your environment



The artist who drew Alyth was actually asked to tone down the flesh factor if you can believe that

YOUR FRIENDS AND YOUR FOES

Before starting your quest, you will have to choose the identity of the character you'll be taking to meet his or her destiny. Three pre-generated characters will be what you have to choose from as you enter the Sword Coast. While you progress through the game, you'll have control over how your character develops. You will choose between feats, which will aid you on your quest. These range from offensive and healing capabilities to other gifts such as aiming enhancement. Along with this, you will also have access to increasing your stats. Charisma and constitution are among those that can be changed. You will have to decide what kind of adventurer you are, then take steps accordingly.

ALYTH

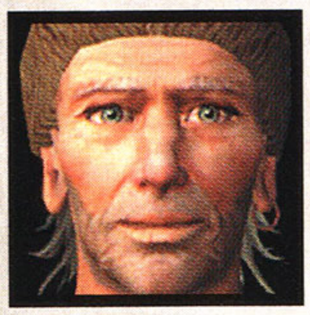
Half-elven, half-heaven. Alyth owns the Elfsong Tavern where you begin your search for information.

FAYED

A priest of Ilmater, Fayed is a newcomer to Baldur's Gate. He has begun work at the Shrine of Suffering, and keeps himself busy arranging funeral services, last rites, and maintaining the crypts beneath the shrine.

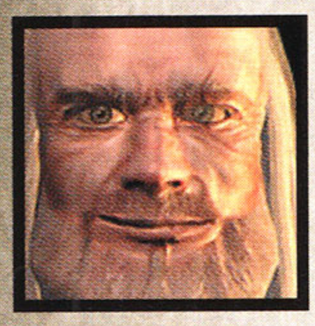
GARIK

A robed mystery. A sharp blade coupled with a sharp wit, Garik is not a figure to argue with.



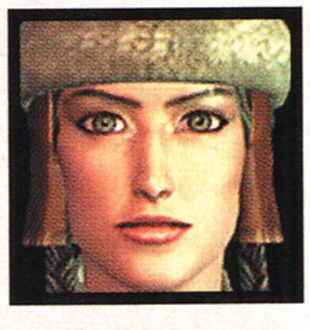
ETHON

A friend of Alyth the bartender, Ethon spends most of his time sitting in a corner of the Elfsong Tavern, watching people come and go – and occasionally playing "gopher" for Alyth.



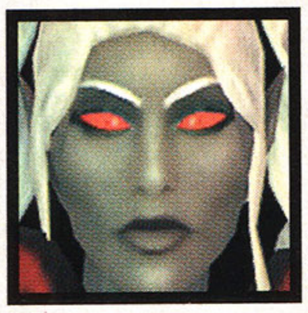
BARTELY

An old soldier who made much of his living scavenging weapons from the battlefield, Bartley is the crusty equipment shop owner of Bartley's Arms.



CARAVAN GUARD

This woman recently came in with one of the merchant trains and has been looking for work this past week without success. She's currently comforting herself with a beer, trying to keep her spirits up.



FEMALE DARK ELF

Also known as drow, dark elves are a depraved subterranean offshoot of surface elves. The drow are a matriarchal society with the female ruling over the males, and some of these women are powerful priestesses in the service of their spider goddess, Lolth.

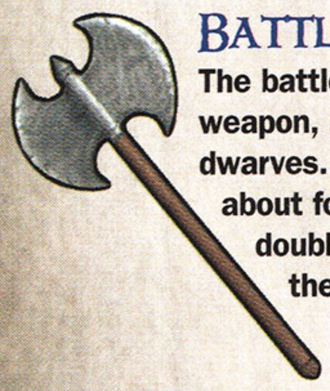
GNOLL

Gnolls are hyena-headed, evil humanoids that wander in loose tribes. Nocturnal carnivores, gnolls think primarily with their stomachs, and prefer to feast on the flesh of intelligent humanoids because they scream more.

BUGBEAR

The biggest and strongest of the goblinoids, bugbears are more aggressive than their lesser cousins. Bugbears have been known to bully lesser creatures, such as kobolds, into their service, making use of them as slaves and food.

WEAPONS

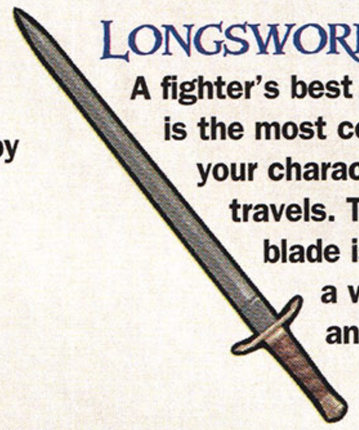


BATTLE AXE:

The battle axe is a powerful weapon, and is commonly favored by dwarves. A battle axe is usually about four feet in length, with a double-edged blade mounted at the end of the staff.

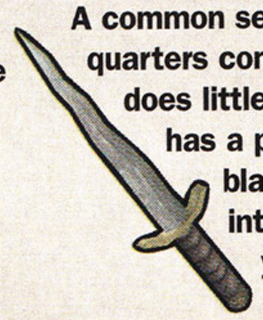
BOW

The best way to cut an advancing horde down to size, the bow can make use of a variety of arrows in the game, and its power can increase depending on which feats you choose.



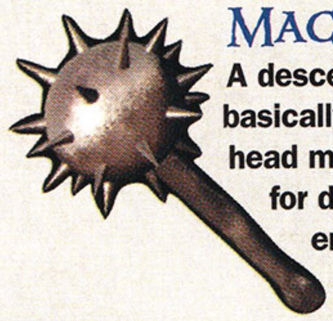
LONGSWORD:

A fighter's best friend, the longsword is the most common type of sword your characters will find in their travels. This classic straight blade is commonly considered a weapon of knighthood and valor.



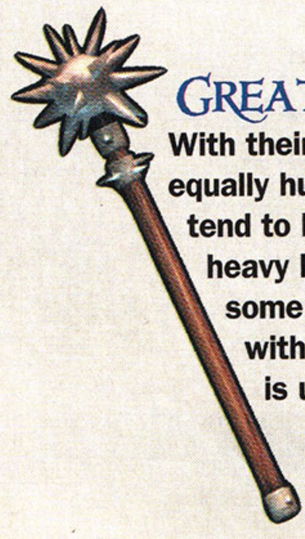
DAGGER

A common secondary weapon for close-quarters combat, the dagger is fast, but does little damage. The typical dagger has a pointed, usually double-edged blade, and can easily be tucked into a belt sheath or boot when you need a spare weapon.



MACE

A descendant of the club, the mace is basically a wooden club with a stone or iron head mounted on one end. Maces are best for dishing out bludgeoning damage to enemies, and are especially useful against skeletons and other creatures who are resistant to other types of attacks.



GREAT MACE

With their great strength and size, bugbears wield equally huge clubs. Crude in design, these maces tend to be made of a stout piece of wood with a heavy head of stone. Occasionally, the heads of some of these great maces will be decorated with symbols of the bugbear's tribe, but this is uncommon.

I Don't Want To Be Alone

In lieu of online play (which was described by Ezra as "really hard to do, and probably not worth it"), two-player simultaneous action will be available to those who prefer to do their adventuring with a friend. Abandoning the split-screen presentation, Snowblind has elected to depict multiplayer action with both characters onscreen at all times. To enhance and aid this side of the game, the screen will pull back when characters begin to separate from each other, thus facilitating easier gameplay and lending a greater sense of independent movement.

Two-player simultaneous action will necessitate dividing the loot from a battle evenly

The lighting effects in this shot show part of the PS2's processing power unleashed

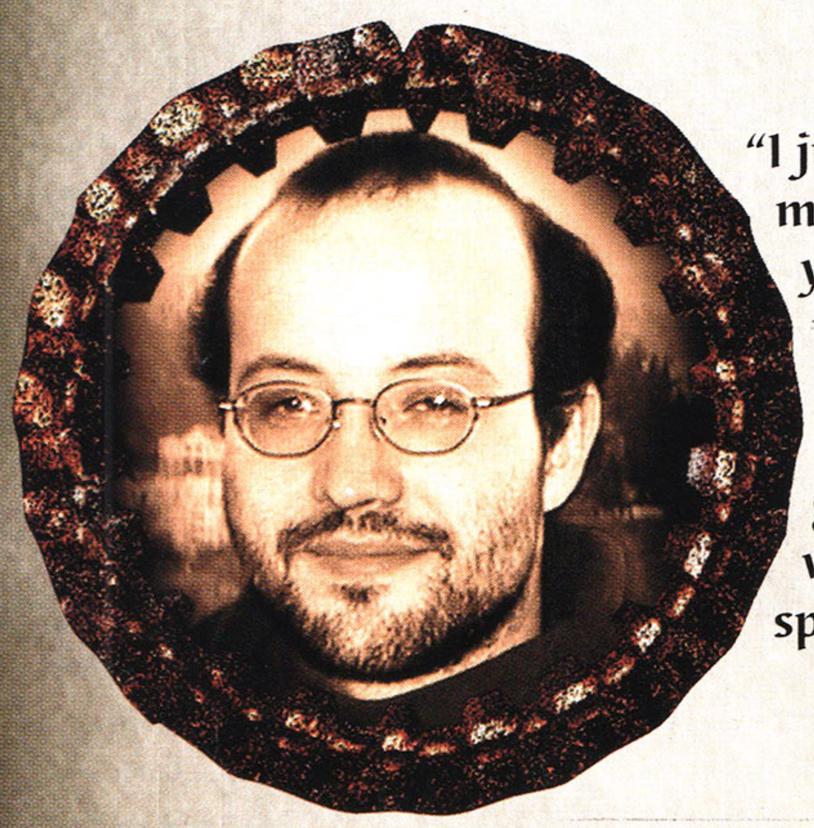
Town scenes will be rendered to breathtaking detail

A feat will allow you to ignite your arrows. The fact that this player is using an enchanted bow doesn't hurt either

THE BOYS AND THEIR TOYS

Game Informer asked Black Isle division director Feargus Urquhart, Snowblind lead programmers Ezra Dreisbach and Ryan Geithman, and lead artist Brian Sostrom what they liked most about their new baby. We also asked them which race would win in a war: dwarves or elves. They came to the consensus that dwarves would win ("Because they're funnier," said Ryan), but they had different opinions about what lit their fire when it came to Dark Alliance.

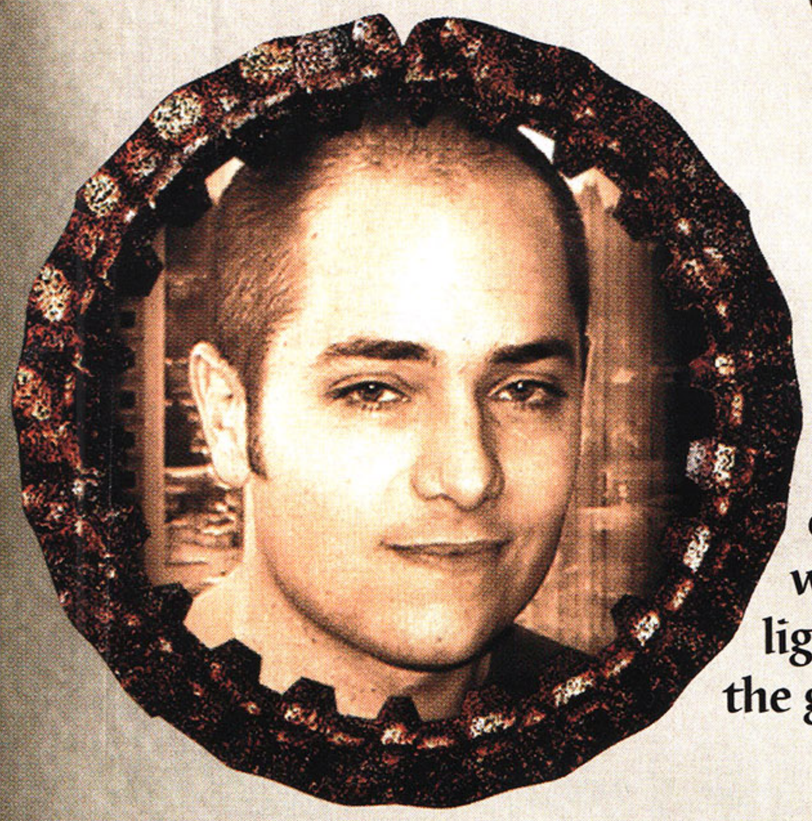
From Left:
Ezra, Ryan, Brian, Kristian, Feargus



"I just had fun the entire time making this game. I can't tell you how liberating it's been working with the PS2. There's just so much more room for creativity and growth without having to worry about running out of space." – Ezra

"The thing that I like the most about this game is that it's not a racing game." – Ryan

"This game is another way to look at Baldur's Gate. Forgotten Realms has this whole timeline of when things have happened, and the Baldur's Gate PC stuff took place within a certain time in Baldur's Gate. [Dark Alliance] is sort of another aspect and another time from the Baldur's Gate PC games." – Feargus



"This is the coolest project I've ever been on. I really like the different characters a lot. I think we've got a lot of cool lighting and spell effects in the game too." – Brian

How It Will Work

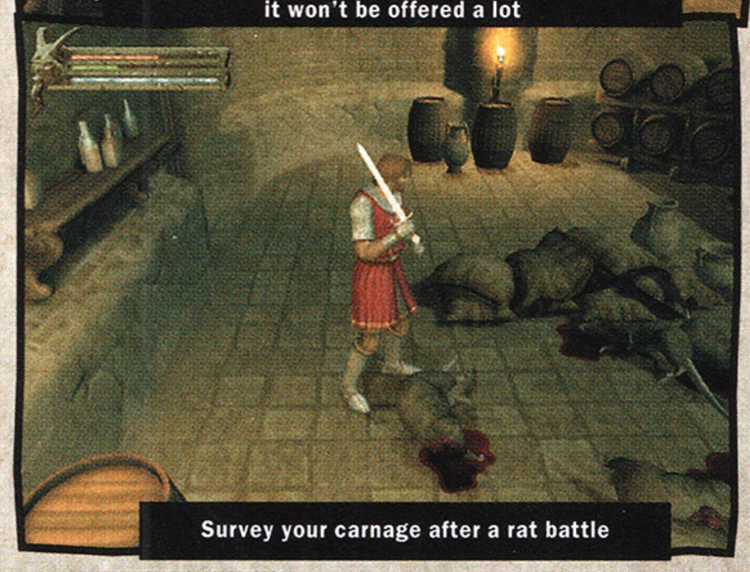
The game itself will take on the personae of a role-playing, action/adventure hybrid. In an extensive walkthrough of the game, Game Informer was treated to a front row seat in what will become the meat and potatoes of Dark Alliance's gameplay. "We will have platforming elements," says Ryan Geithman, another of the title's lead programmers. "You'll have to find switches and solve puzzles to gain access to different parts of the game."

The gameplay takes place from the third-person vantage, and in a beautifully detailed 3D environment. Major effort has gone into making this one of, if not the most visually stunning PlayStation 2 releases to date. Not only will Snowblind attempt to immerse you in the environment of the Sword Coast, but they will do it using the 3rd edition D&D rule set. When we pressed the issue of how closely Dark Alliance will stick to the updated edition, we were told that the rules will be followed, but not to the letter. Some allowances have been made in the interest of smoother gameplay, but it appears the D&D fanatic will be satisfied by what they find.

You'll be able to loot some of your bigger enemies weapons and armour once you're finished dispatching them

Look out! it's the feared and hated gelatinous cube!

You'll need all the help you can get, because it won't be offered a lot

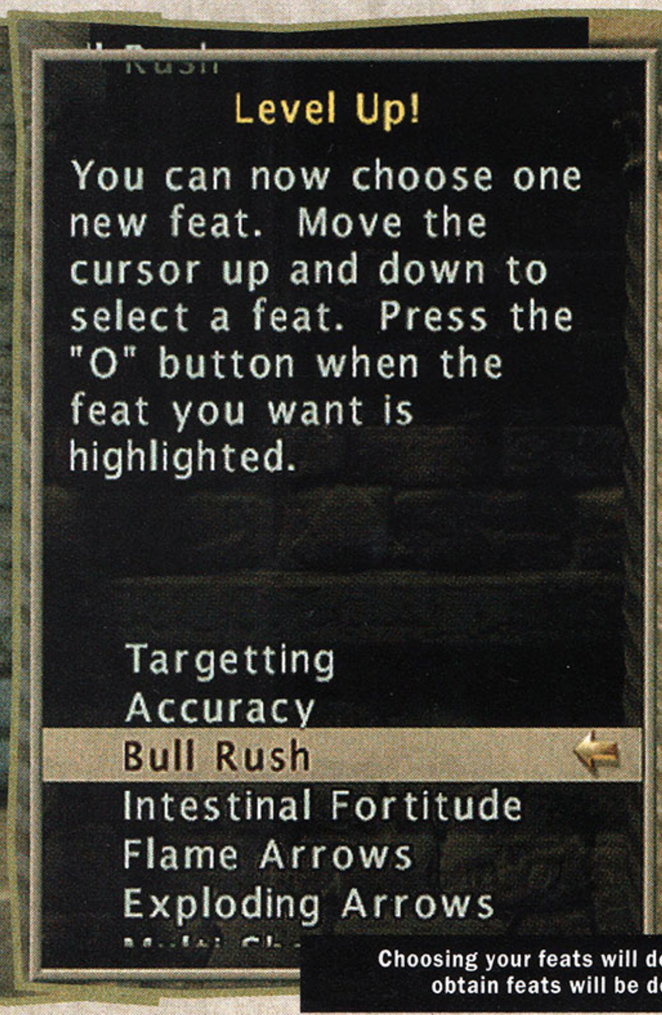


Survey your carnage after a rat battle

Looking To The Future

The development team for Dark Alliance wants to do a number of things before the game starts hitting shelves nationwide. The first thing they want to be sure of is that there will be a minimum of 20 to 30 hours of gameplay. If there wasn't, they'd have just another hack n' slasher on their hands. Black Isle is known for making the right decisions where and when it counts, so we have every confidence that 20 hours will be a number easily eclipsed. Also in the works is a method for importing characters via memory cards to other PlayStation 2s for greater varieties of cooperative play. Whether this proposal will see the light of day could be debated, but it certainly will be noticed by veteran Baldur's players who use character imports in the PC games.

Your equipment will be modified from this screen. Anything you put on or take off will translate to your character onscreen

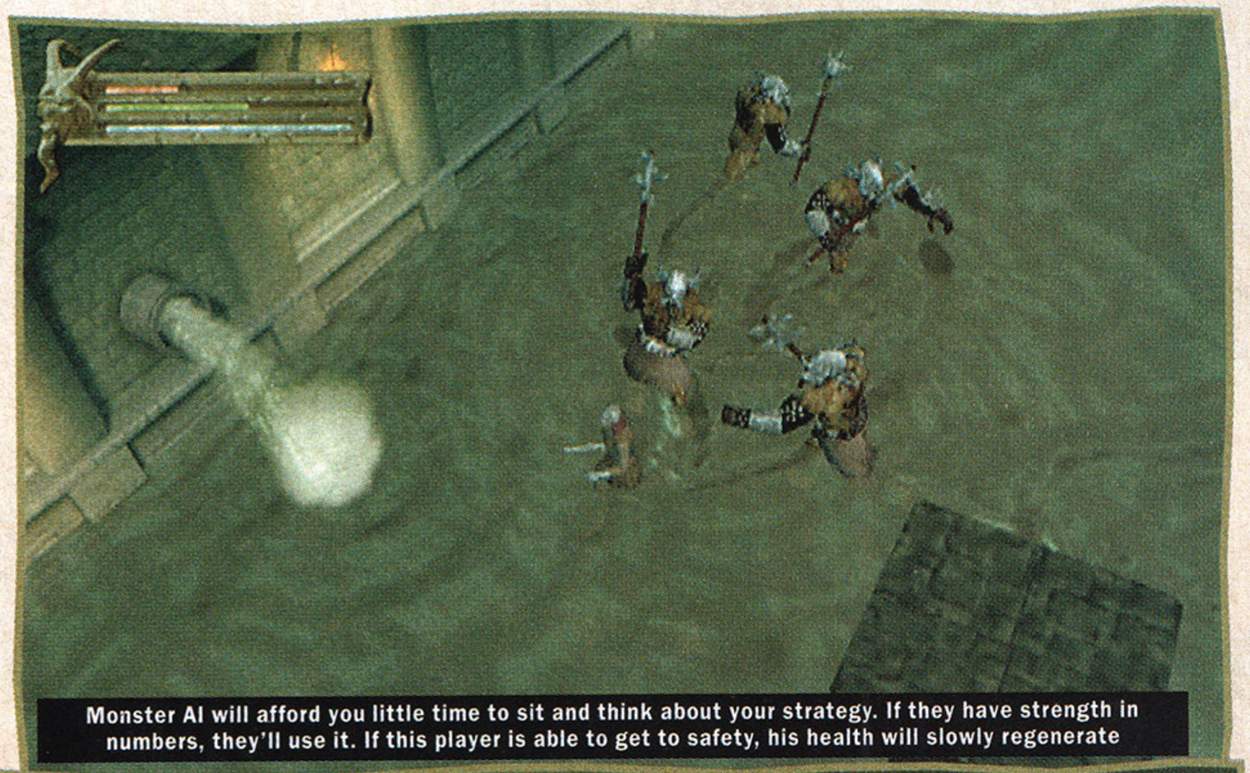


Choosing your feats will determine the outcome of many battles. How often you obtain feats will be determined by what kind of character you choose.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

Dark Alliance is looking to engross you in its unique version of the Baldur's Gate realm. It is important to note at this point that this game is not a port, and was not designed as a port. It is its own entity, and works hard to convince the player of that fact. Intuitive interfaces will allow players to jump right into the game, while serious RPGers will find that, as their character develops, there are more and more options to tweak attributes and abilities. Fully 30 levels of combat and puzzles are promised, as well as an intricate plot which will unfold through three different acts.

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance is a major undertaking from a company built on doing RPGs the right way. If the gameplay is as smooth as we've experienced, the plot as intriguing, and the graphics as engaging, this might become a difficult title for retailers to keep on the shelves. Time will tell whether Snowblind can step up to the plate in an arena that hasn't been built yet.



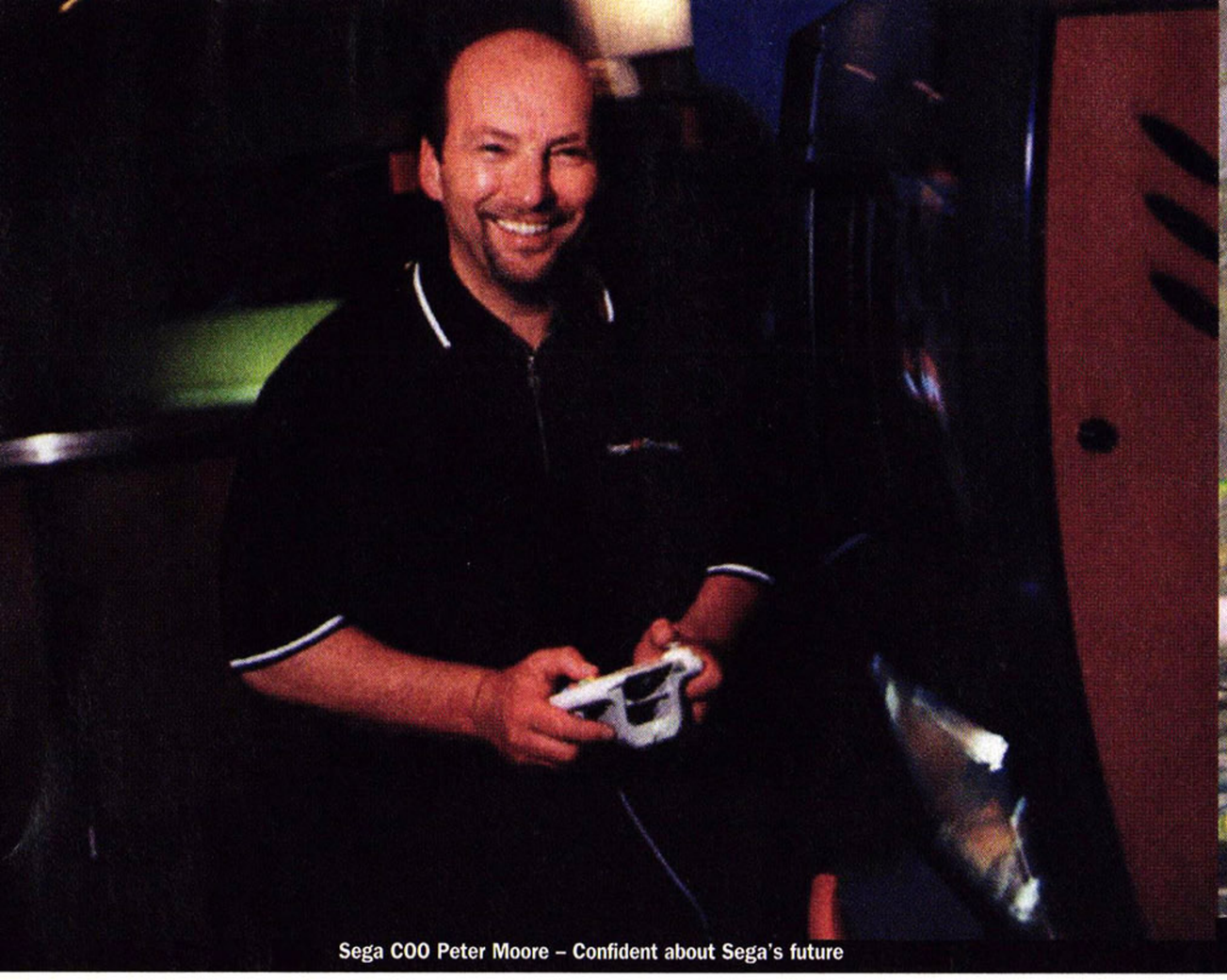
Monster AI will afford you little time to sit and think about your strategy. If they have strength in numbers, they'll use it. If this player is able to get to safety, his health will slowly regenerate

Here's a spell you'll get to know and love. As you gain levels, your spells will increase in effectiveness

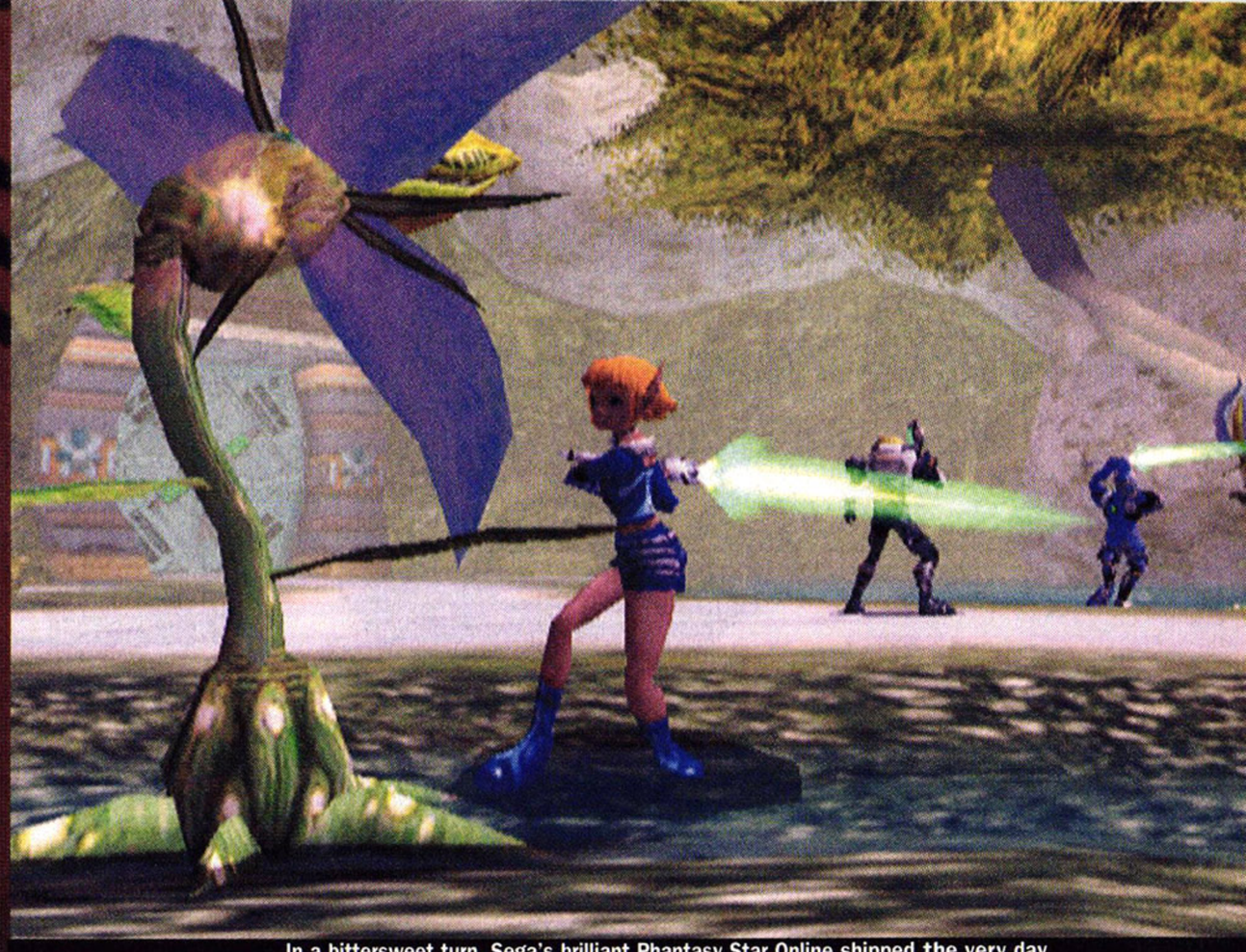
This character is about to level up. You can tell by the green experience bar in the upper left corner

This warrior would be well advised to watch his Arcane Energy meter – It's almost out. When it goes, so does his spell. Not to worry, though. This energy will regenerate at a rate based on your level

Some of the distance and lighting effects are quite detailed. Look at the heat distortion above the flame



Sega COO Peter Moore – Confident about Sega's future



In a bittersweet turn, Sega's brilliant Phantasy Star Online shipped the very day Moore announced the end of the Dreamcast

Requiem For A Dream

The Death of the Dreamcast and the Rebirth of Sega

In the end, it was Peter Moore's job to confirm the worst fears of Sega devotees the world over. After 26 months, a record-breaking American launch, and a $100 million marketing campaign, Sega was ceasing production of the Dreamcast. Moore, a well-spoken Englishman who rose through the ranks to become Sega of America's president and COO after a 15-year career at Reebok, stepped to the microphone and delivered the news. "The video game economy is changing," Moore said, "and it's becoming harder and harder to become profitable in the hardware business." The message was clear – as of March 31, 2001, Sega was out of the game console business forever.

This announcement came on the heels of a spate of heated rumors regarding the future of Sega and the Dreamcast. Speculation had been kicked off by the Japanese news service, Jiji Press, reporting Sega's plans to discontinue the Dreamcast. Fuel was added to the fire by the Japanese newspaper Nihon Keizai Shimbun, which claimed, "Sega has decided to cease production of the Dreamcast game console by the end of March 2001." Although Sega of America steadfastly denied that any decision had been made, soon the Internet was abuzz with gossip, ranging from reports that rival Nintendo was going to purchase Sega outright, to talk that Microsoft's Xbox was going to include a Dreamcast chipset in the final hardware. Most of these reports were utter fantasy. ("It's amazing how the Internet latches onto things that someone dreamt up over dinner," commented Moore when asked about the Xbox/DC chipset story.)

However, it had been clear for some months that all was not well at Sega, which had posted losses of close to $400 million in the fiscal year ending March 2000.

Although the news of Dreamcast's passing was a crushing blow for Sega's legion of hardcore supporters, Moore seemed confident and hopeful as he spoke to the international press assembled for the worldwide teleconference. Moore painted a picture of Sega's future as a "platform-agnostic third-party publisher," now liberated from the tremendous expense of manufacturing console hardware. Sega would continue to produce games for any and all platforms, including the system that the Dreamcast had so relentlessly battled, Sony's PlayStation 2.

While Sega plans to market the Dreamcast at a new price point of $99 to clear out existing stock, and release several high-profile new DC titles through the end of the year (including Sonic Adventure 2 and Shenmue 2), the Dreamcast era is all but over. So, why did one of most innovative console systems ever released fail to win over the American public that once embraced the Sega Genesis? The reasons are many, yet so many questions remain unanswered. Read on as we attempt to shed light on the events surrounding the rise and fall of the Dreamcast, and provide you with a glimpse into the future of Sega.

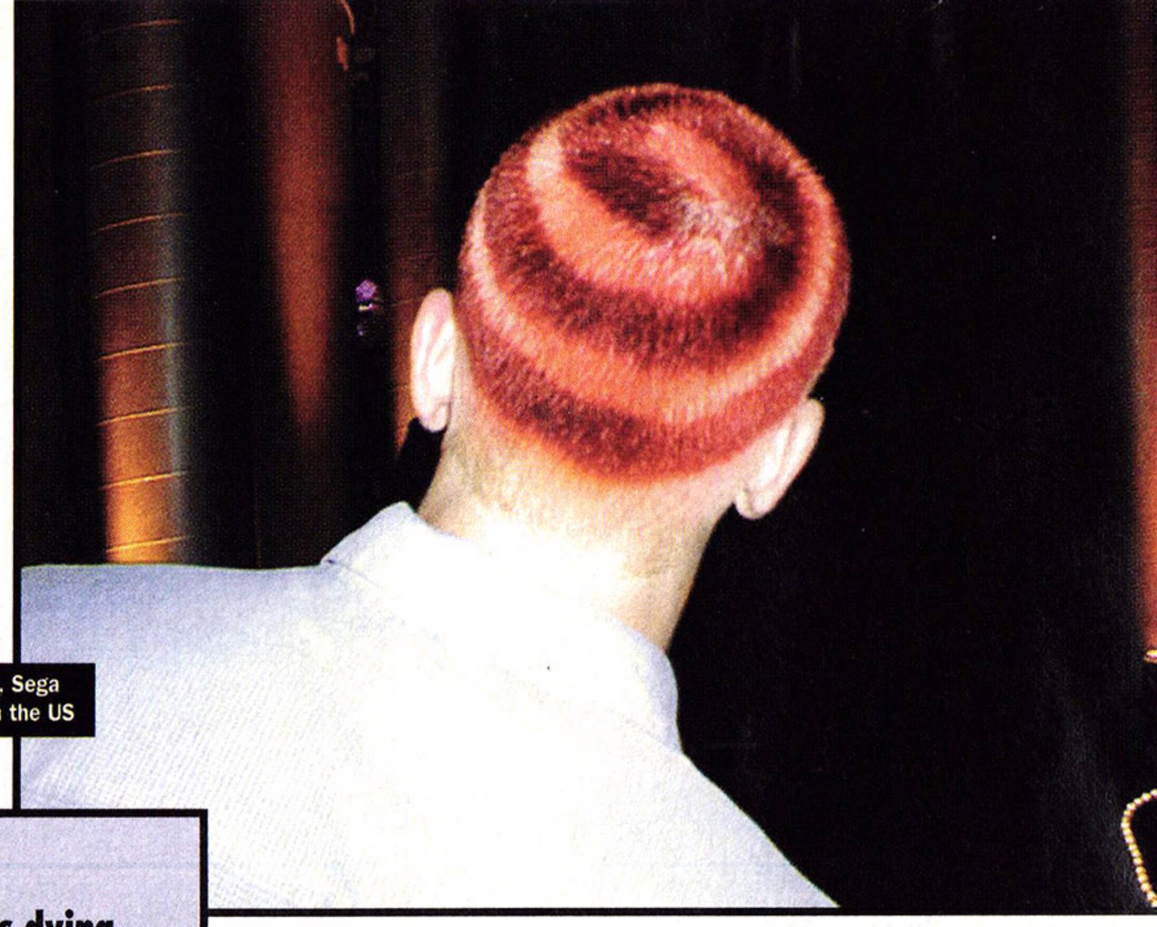
Peter Moore faces the press after the announcement.
Photo courtesy of CBS Marketwatch

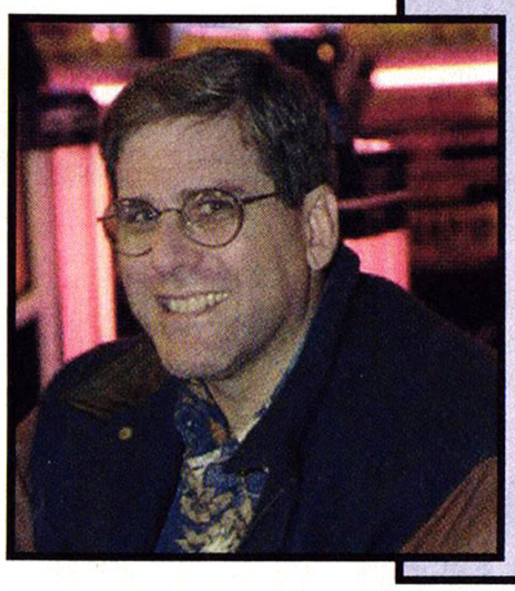
Less than a month after the fateful announcement, Peter Moore remains proud of what the Dreamcast accomplished. In fact, given the chance, he will take the opportunity to play the Dreamcast evangelist, even as the console begins its slow walk into the sunset.

"The Dreamcast made history. It brought online gaming to the console community. I look at the Dreamcast library, and I say, 'Who else would do this?' Nobody has the balls to do this, because it's not always commercially successful to push the envelope. We believe in being innovative. We believe in trying different things. Seaman was risky, and it wasn't a big commercial success in America like it was in Japan. SegaNet was risky, and again, not a huge commercial success. But it brought tens of thousands of gamers together for the first time through their consoles. You can still talk to them today, and they'll tell you there's nothing like it. Everybody said it couldn't be done, but – you know what? – we found a way."

While some in the industry pronounced the system dead on arrival, Moore still seems incredulous at the fact that the Dreamcast isn't flying off the shelves. He continues, "When you look at what that machine can do in relation to everything else that's out there, the content library, the online network, as well as the new $99 price point, I don't know why everyone wouldn't buy it!"

Despite the failure of Saturn, Sega maintained a loyal following in the US





> **Dreamcast has a hell of a library. It's dying now, 18 months old, with a larger library than the five-year-old Nintendo 64. It's a better library than the Nintendo 64. Dreamcast was a wonderful system.**
>
> **STEVEN KENT**
> COLUMNIST FOR MSNBC.COM, AUTHOR

Looking back at the Dreamcast's short but eventful life, it's hard to disagree. Certainly, the thousands that continue to play NFL 2K1 and Phantasy Star Online would concur. Although it fell prey to Sega's increasingly dire financial situation, the Dreamcast might well go down in history as the most sorely underrated console in history. Steven Kent, columnist for MSNBC.com and author of The First Quarter: A 25-Year History of Video Games, echoes Moore's views. "If ever a system deserved to succeed, it was Dreamcast," Kent says. "Dreamcast has a hell of a library. It's dying now, 18 months old, with a larger library than the five-year-old Nintendo 64. It's a better library than the Nintendo 64. Dreamcast was a wonderful system."

In hindsight, the roots of the Dreamcast's demise stem from what is still the company's largest failure – the Sega Saturn. Released in September of 1995, the Saturn was, by most accounts, an out-and-out disaster for Sega. Overwhelmed by the PlayStation and Nintendo 64, the Saturn only managed to sell around 2 million units in the three years it was available in the US. The Saturn left the company swimming in red ink, and severely damaged the company's relationship with the gaming community in the United States, many of whom felt burned by Sega after investing hundreds of dollars in a Saturn. This loss of consumer confidence presented Sega with the first of many hurdles it would encounter in marketing the Dreamcast.

Moore comments, "With the Dreamcast, I think we always knew the challenge was to overcome the Saturn, which had been disappointing across the board. I think walking away from that failed platform had left a foul taste in gamers' mouths. My job was to rebuild that bridge to the gamer."

As devastating as the Saturn debacle was to Sega, plans for the company's next system were already beginning well before the Saturn was finally put to rest. Development of the Dreamcast continued in spite of the fact that many in the company, most notably Isao Okawa, the chairman of Sega Enterprises and CSK (Sega's parent company), already felt that it was time for Sega to reinvent itself as a software-only developer. Kent adds, "Mr. Okawa had long been saying that Sega does not belong in the console business. Okawa had been grousing about wanting to be an Internet company, and David Rosen (cofounder of Sega Enterprises), had said it was time to go software-only after the Genesis."

On May 21, 1998, Sega officially announced the Dreamcast at the New Challenge Conference in Tokyo. The following day Shoichiro Irimajiri (President, SOJ), the man who is acknowledged as the driving force behind Dreamcast in Japan, boasted to Sega Saturn Magazine, "The performance level of our hardware is far superior to PlayStation. The most important thing is that we get the most considerable share of the market before the PlayStation 2 comes out, and then carry on the momentum. That's our basic strategy."

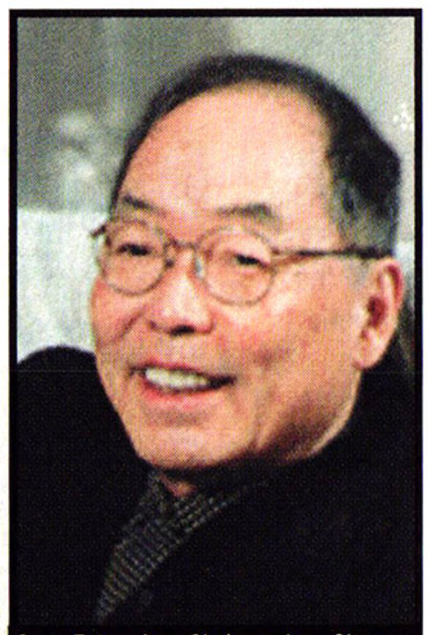
Technically, the Dreamcast was an impressive leap beyond the capabilities of the PlayStation. Powered by a Hitachi 200MHz CPU and an NEC Power VR graphics processor, the hardware was capable of pushing an unprecedented 3 million polygons per second, and delivered CD-quality surround sound. The system used a high-density proprietary disc technology called a GD-ROM, and there were also plans for a 56k modem add-on. A release date of November 27, 1998 had been set for the Japanese launch.

While the Dreamcast initially impressed the members of the press who saw the first demonstrations of the console, storm clouds were already gathering on the horizon. Sony, who had talked about a second PlayStation console since shortly after the US debut of the PS-X, released the first details regarding the PlayStation 2 on March 2 of 1998, a few months before the Dreamcast launch in Japan. Sony's numbers seemed to suggest that the Dreamcast would be technologically outgunned by the PS2. The PlayStation 2 would move a staggering 66 million polygons per second, utilize DVD storage technology, and feature a CPU that ran at 300 MHz. Although its machine was little more than talk at this point, Sony had successfully created the impression among the gaming press that the PlayStation 2, not the Dreamcast, was to be the next big step for video games. According to the Wall Street Journal, Isao Okawa, after seeing the PlayStation 2 for the first time, furiously stormed back to Sega headquarters and informed his underlings that he felt as though a brilliant "architect" had designed the PS2. The Dreamcast, he fumed, was the work of a mere "carpenter."

Even with Sony casting a shadow over the proceedings, the build-up to the Japanese launch of the Dreamcast continued unabated. Unfortunately, this was to be the first of the pivotal moments that contributed to its downfall. Manufacturing problems meant that Sega had only 150,000 consoles available for launch. Even worse, there was only one top-notch game, Virtua Fighter 3tb, available for the Dreamcast's coming out. The other three games – July, Pen Pen Trilcelon, and Godzilla Generations – were mediocre at best, and sold accordingly. In fact, two of the titles (July and Godzilla Generations) were so poorly received they were never released in America.

As time moved on, Sega was never to recapture its momentum in Japan, where Dreamcast sales have stalled out at around a million. Kent elaborates, "They failed in Japan, which meant they had to do twice as well in the US as they had done with the Genesis. But, by the time they got to the US, outside of the hardcore Sega audience, everyone already thought the PS2 sounded better."

Peter Moore downplays how much impact the Dreamcast's disappointing Japanese performance had on America, but admits, "It was disappointing that it didn't get out of the blocks in Japan the way it needed to, in order to build momentum." However, Moore doesn't blame Sega of Japan for sinking the Dreamcast. "I think that Japan had a difficult time at launch because they were the region that went out ahead of everybody and learned by their mistakes. We had a better launch because Japan was eight months ahead of us, and that a lot of manufacturing problems were borne by SOJ, not SOA," Moore commented.



Sega Enterprises Chairman Isao Okawa – Sega's financial white knight wanted the company out of the console business

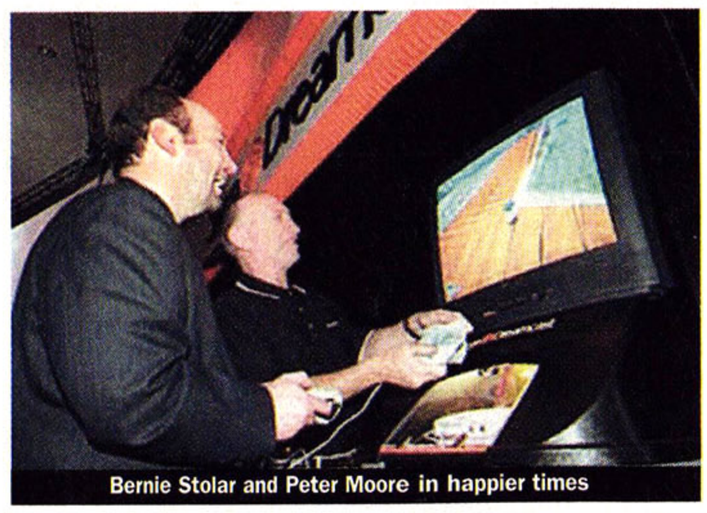
Using the hard lessons taught by the Japanese launch, Sega's focus now switched to the United States. Spearheading Sega's US Dreamcast efforts was Sega of America CEO Bernie Stolar, an outspoken marketing whiz who had been instrumental in the launch of the PlayStation, then left Sony shortly after. Stolar, whose departure from Sony was very acrimonious, was determined to make the Dreamcast a success at the expense of Sony's PlayStation empire. He admits as

much in Kent's The First Quarter, where he plainly states, "People say that I've been driven by vengeance in going after Sony, and I think they're probably right."

Stolar and his team seemed to be doing everything right: persuading third-party publishers to get on board and readying a massive $100 million marketing campaign for the Dreamcast's now-famous 9.9.99 US launch date. Sega was aiming for 15 titles to be available at launch, and had recently announced that the Dreamcast modem would come built-in to the American version of the hardware. Officially announcing the launch, Stolar told the press, "A few years ago, an associate of mine said 'go big or go home.' And that's what we're doing today – we're going big." All signs pointed to a successful launch, as retailers reported strong pre-sale figures, and Sega's "It's Thinking" television ads were generating interest in the Dreamcast among the teenage consumers that Sega coveted.

All the pieces seemed to be in place when, in a bizarre twist, Bernie Stolar suddenly left Sega. Coming just a few weeks before the launch, Sega shocked the industry with the announcement that Stolar was to be replaced by Sega Enterprises co-chairman Toshiro Kezuka. Although details of his departure remain scarce, it appears that Stolar's notoriously brash attitude had angered Sega of Japan on too many occasions. There are two possible (and unconfirmed) reasons for his dismissal that circulated through the industry after his departure. One incident was a Games Business interview in which he termed the Dreamcast a "failure" in Japan. Another was a publicity stunt in which Stolar's minions planted Dreamcast golf balls at a Sony golf event. Unsurprisingly, Sega of Japan executives did not view these events in a favorable light. Although we will never know if these were the real reasons behind the firing of Stolar, it is fair to say that the split was not pretty. Moore, who was hired by Stolar and still considers him a "good friend," dismisses the view that Stolar's exit negatively affected the launch. "Bernie is a warrior, but I think from the perspective of what was left to achieve, Bernie had done everything that was necessary for us to be successful. We all still miss Bernie on a personal level."

Fortunately for Sega, the US launch was to be the Dreamcast's finest moment. Retailers all across the country opened at midnight on September 9, and most were met with long lines of Sega fans ready to buy the Dreamcast. There were 19 games available at launch, most notably the highly anticipated Sega titles Sonic Adventure, House of the Dead 2, and NFL 2K. Also, Stolar's efforts in attracting third-party developers had resulted in A-list launch titles by the likes of Namco (Soul Calibur) and Midway (HydroThunder, Ready 2 Rumble Boxing). In the first week of its release, Sega moved 410,000 Dreamcast units, making it the most successful launch in video game history. Dreamcast games took seven spots in the NPD Group's Top 20 list for games, with Sonic Adventure being the number two title overall. All told, Sega raked in $110 million in gross receipts in one week. Through the end of the fiscal year, Sega would sell more than 1.8 million units.


Bernie Stolar and Peter Moore in happier times

However, in Japan, where the Dreamcast was still struggling, all was not well. Even after the triumphant performance of the console in the States, Sega's financial situation was deteriorating. In November of '99, a mere two months after the US launch, Isao Okawa was already publicly talking about exiting the console business. In an interview with Dailyradar.com, Okawa said, "I will say that the future doesn't necessarily lie in the hardware business. I think in the future there is a possibility of Sega becoming a software-only company." Beset by the heavy losses incurred in developing and marketing the Dreamcast, Sega lost nearly 60 percent of its value in the 1999/2000 fiscal year.

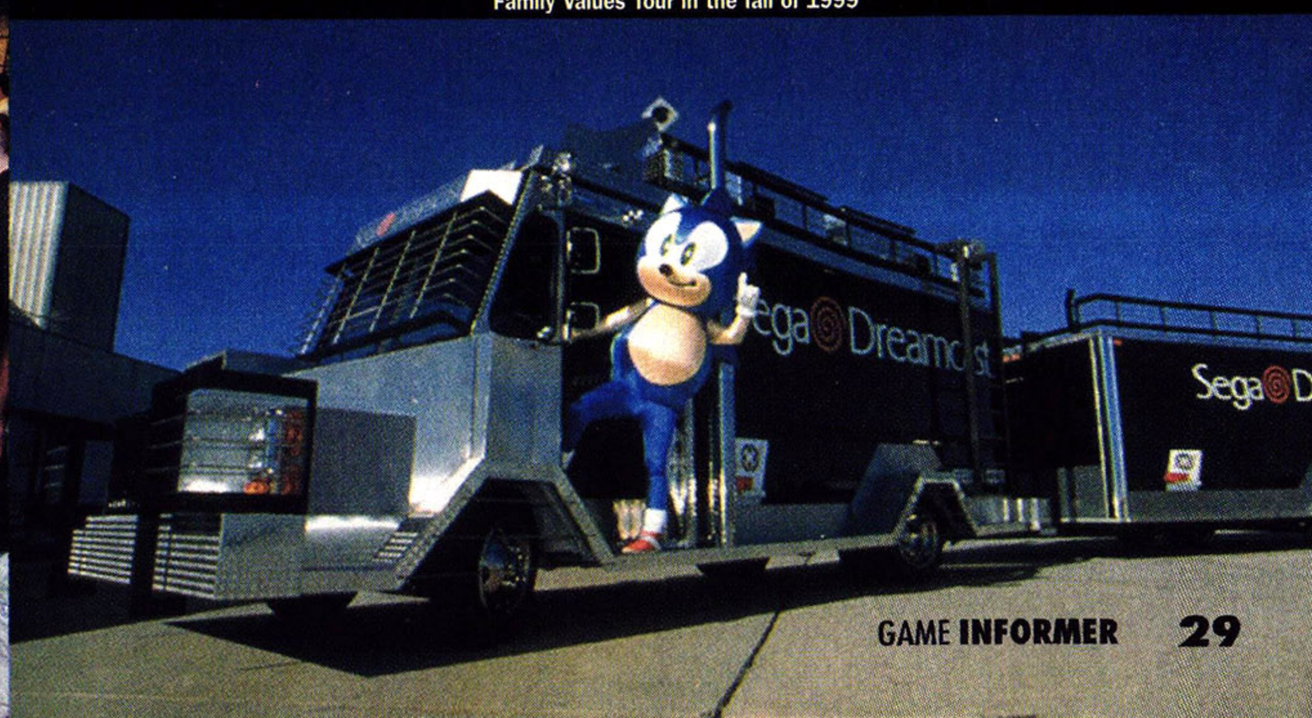
The US launch of the Dreamcast was the most successful launch in console history

Bernie Stolar stumps for the Dreamcast at E3 1999 in Los Angeles

Against this grim backdrop, other chinks began to appear in Sega's armor. After lauding the Dreamcast's built-in modem, gamers quickly began to realize that none of the games available for the system actually supported online multiplayer. Kent comments, "A pivotal moment, which was a terrible mistake, was the delay in supporting the modem. They made all this big noise about the modem, and then they didn't support it for months and months. And when they finally supported it, what did we get? Chu Chu Rocket. It's a cute, fun game, but graphically, it could have run on an NES." This failure to capitalize on the Dreamcast's online capabilities, and a cooling US video game market, cost Sega the momentum it took away from the launch. In the early months of 2000, Dreamcast sales slowed considerably, as consumers and the press began to look toward the launch of the PlayStation 2 in November. To renew interest in the Dreamcast, Sega dropped the unit's price to $149, and even offered a full rebate to anyone who subscribed to 18 months of SegaNet Internet service.

As E3 of that year approached, Sega continued to founder financially. Okawa came to the rescue, bailing out the company with $500 million of his own money. However, with this infusion of cash came the understanding that Sega would have to claw its way back to profitability, Dreamcast or no Dreamcast. As sales in Japan and Europe remained flat, pressure on Sega of America increased. It was clear that the 2000 holiday season would be crucial to the survival of the Dreamcast.

As anticipation for the PlayStation 2 reached the boiling point, Sega finally released the title that would



To promote the Dreamcast, Sega sent its Mobile Assault Tour out on the Limp Bizkit Family Values Tour in the fall of 1999

THE DEATH OF DREAMCAST

The Pace Micro Technology set-top box will be fully compatible with Dreamcast games

be its crowning achievement on the Dreamcast – NFL 2K1. The game, developed by Visual Concepts, brought online multiplayer to the Dreamcast in spectacular fashion. The game, in conjunction with SegaNet, performed near flawlessly when played online, and quickly became a best-selling title. With Phantasy Star Online in the works, Sega hoped that SegaNet would allow Dreamcast to survive the oncoming onslaught of the PS2. While the NFL 2K series was a massive success, other high-profile Sega titles, like Shenmue and Jet Grind Radio, failed to live up to commercial expectations. Although Shenmue sold moderately well, the ambitious, long-delayed Yu Suzuki project reportedly cost Sega upwards of $70 million to produce, a number Moore says is "not too far off the mark."

By fall, Sega's financial crisis had reached critical mass. The Dreamcast's last chance for survival would come in November 2000, when Sony badly botched the US launch of the PlayStation 2 by delivering only half of the million units it had promised retailers. Sega hoped the PS2 shortage would translate into increased Dreamcast sales and allow it to reach its goals of reaching 5 million Dreamcasts sold by the end of 2000. Yet, just as a window of opportunity opened, the red-hot US economy went into a sudden downturn. The 2000 Christmas season turned out to be very disappointing for all retail sectors, video games included. Moore adds, "We had tracked the velocity of sales during the 2000 holiday period, and our great hope was that we would be able to carry what was required on a global basis in terms of sales figures here in the US. Unfortunately, we got caught up in the poor retail holiday period across the board, the recession, and the fall-out from the US Presidential election."

Yu Suzuki's (bottom left) epic Shenmue project reportedly cost Sega more than $70 million to create

After the final post-holiday American sales data was tallied, Sega of Japan was given no choice but to pull the plug. Moore said the decision was hard "on an emotional level," but points out, "Business is business – ultimately you have to provide a number, and you have to deliver to a number, and if you can't do it, someone else has to go and do it."

Despite the painful events of recent months, the outlook for Sega is probably better now than it's been in over ten years. Now entirely devoted to software development, which has always been the company's strong suit, Sega is looking to rocket itself into the upper echelon of the game publishing business. Moore enthuses, "We think the future is taking full advantage of our content, and spreading our content across multiple platforms. Whether it's for consoles, set-top boxes, or wireless phones, content is what we do…Our job right now is to transition this company from being a console manufacturer to a pure third-party software publisher that can challenge the likes of EA, THQ, and Activision."

If you consider this an idle boast, consider this – last year Sega was the sixth-largest game publisher in North America, selling to an installed base of only 2 to 3 million Dreamcast owners. Sega has some of the greatest game creators in the world, including legends such as Yuji Naka, Yu Suzuki, and Tetsuya Mizuguchi. It also has a stable of great franchises like Phantasy Star, Sonic the Hedgehog, Crazy Taxi, and NFL 2K. Delving into its rich history, Sega plans to bring Sega Master System games to cellular phones, Genesis games to Palm Pilot PDA devices, and Sega Saturn games to the PlayStation. Virtua Fighter 4 has already been confirmed for the PlayStation 2, as has Sonic Advance for Nintendo's Game Boy Advance.

Although nothing official has been announced, Xbox and Gamecube titles are almost surely in development as well. Moore confirms that negotiations with Nintendo and Microsoft are already underway, saying, "A company like Sega, with our incredible breadth of characters and licenses, can have an incredible impact on a platform like the Gamecube. With the Xbox, we relish the opportunity to take on our friends at EA in the sports game arena." Just weeks after the end of the Dreamcast, morale is running high at Sega. Greg Thomas, president of Visual Concepts (NFL 2K1), answered our questions regarding the future with barely contained joy, saying, "We love to go head-to-head with other developers…tell EA we're coming in our little Pinto to knock their big BMW out!"

Even the ill-fated Dreamcast will live on, in the form of the Pace Micro Technology set-top box, which will include a Dreamcast chipset and is fully compatible with all DC software. As previously stated, Sega will continue to support SegaNet and the Dreamcast with new titles. Also, the company plans to utilize its SegaNet technology across other platforms, helping other companies get their games online. Moore, detailing these plans, said, "In the future, you will see a platform agnostic network being built by Sega. We'll provide the backend, we'll provide the content, we'll provide our expertise in doing network games. Our experience with NFL 2K1 and Phantasy Star will not be for naught."

As painful as the death of the Dreamcast has been for those of us with fond memories of Sega consoles past and present, one can only regard the decision to exit the hardware business as perhaps the best decision Sega has ever made. Moving further into the new century, we can look forward to more mind-blowing Sega games, available to owners of all systems. As one chapter in the history of Sega closes, a new, more profitable one is beginning. After surviving the storm, Sega is headed for dry land, and a future full of limitless possibility. In the words of Steven Kent, a man who has followed Sega's story for nearly 20 years – "The Dreamcast is dead, long live Sega."

Sega's latest Sonic logo reflects the company's new "platform-agnostic" approach to publishing

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PARODY

EDITORS' FORUM

AWESOME ERUPTION

Do you have an XXXbox? No you don't! Only I have it, and it's awesome! Macrohard sent me the only one they had and said, "You're so awesome, Garnadan, take this and play it, and we'll pay you, like, $10,000 a day." So I said yes.

You wanna see it? Well, you can't because I was sworn to secrecy. Plus if my mom found out I had an XXXbox she'd ground me. Come to think of it, though, being grounded would be awesome! Then I could play games all day and not have to go outside when my mom made me.

I do so have an XXXbox. When I go to E4 this year (if my mom will drive me instead of taking my stupid sister to her dumb dance class) I'll be looking at all the games and be going, "Uh, huh. Uh, huh. Seen it. Played it." But I'll still play them all again and act like I'm all excited because they're all awesome! And on the last day, Macrohard will give me my check for, like, six million-billion dollars and hold a big party where everyone will tell me how awesome I am.

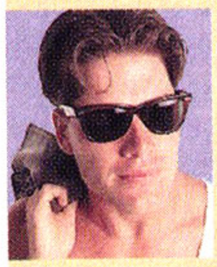
But you won't get to see that because you can't go to E4. This is my magazine, and you can't work for it. And if you call me a liar again, I'll kill your character.

Lord Garnadan

Lord Garnadan
Editor
Liege-Lord of Garnadinia

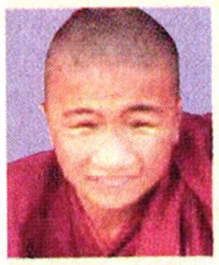
OLLIE, THE COLLEGE BURNOUT

So there I was, having this totally cool conversation with that one big-haired dude about Black Sabbath when out of nowhere his roommate comes in and says his favorite Sabbath song is *Changes*. We both just look at each other and then totally bust out laughing. I mean, *Iron Man* or *War Pigs*, sure. *Sweet Leaf*, absolutely. Even *Fairies Wear Boots*. Anything but *Changes*, y'know? That dude's roommate freaks me out, man.



CHIP, CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

What did I do yesterday? Well, I'm glad you asked. After going to the gym and finishing off my complete body workout by bench pressing 315 pounds eight times – or was it ten? I can do it so easily, I lose count – my girlfriend came over to give me a massage. Oh, you didn't know about my girlfriend? Suffice it to say that she's absolutely gorgeous and quite the minx...um, excuse me, where are you going? There's still quite a bit more about me I have to tell you about...



KHUNG SHU, THE TIBETAN MONK

Ka dar, bka' rgya phebs pa yig lan? Kun chub bkag dkyil byed pa sku? Dpe mdzod khang nyi tshe ba'i sems sgam chung bskor ba rong nge. Dkar sprang bar, byed pa bskyang 'tshal. [Translation: *Do you not understand that you must desist in your mailings? Our limited library space at the temple is becoming cluttered with all the small boxes with circles inside that you send. Please, I beg you, discontinue from troubling my mind.*]

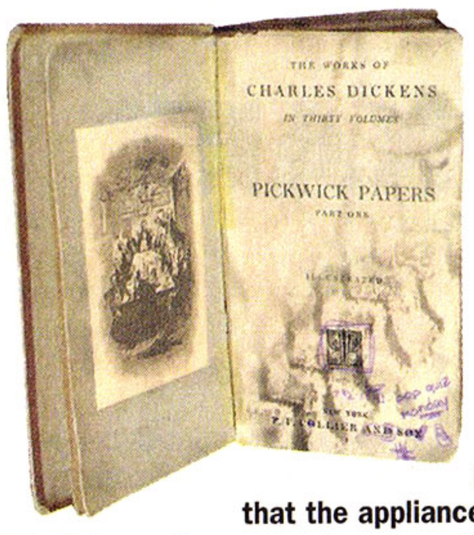
GI SPY

CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 This company regretted hiring Wisconsin models to work its booth, and so did we. **2** See all the fun you can have with a camera and a dead cat? **3** The Earth is on fire!

DEAR GI

DON'T READ THIS



The other day at school, everyone in class was assigned to read this thing called a "book." Our teacher told us that we were going to explore something very exciting, with a great plot and cool characters. For a minute I thought we were going to get to play an awesome role-playing game, but then she handed me the "book." It's this small, square thing filled with all words and no pictures. Have you guys ever read one of these, and are they fun like my teacher said?

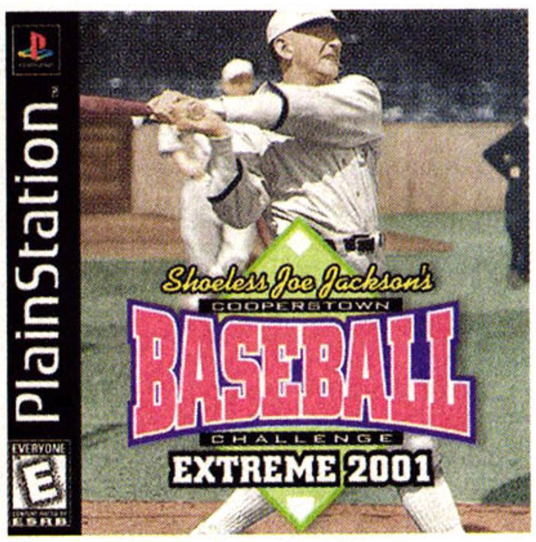
Svetlana Hverslerger
Oslo, TX

Whatever you do, don't get into books. They make your eyes hurt if you read them too long, possibly damaging them in the long run. Plus, if you get hooked on them, you wind up staying awake all night reading in dim lighting, and that only serves to make you too tired to give your top video game performance. Do what we do when we're assigned to read something for school – read the first and last paragraph to get the gist of the storyline, then talk about symbolism in any conversation about it.

EVERYTHING MUST BE DESTROYED!

I recently purchased a used copy of Shoeless Joe Jackson's Cooperstown Baseball Challenge Extreme 2001. When I put it in my PlainStation, it didn't work. The disc doesn't have any scratches, and I lost the receipt so I can't return it. What should I do?

Estaban Kazmikaate
Istanbul, IA



This title has obviously infected every piece of electrical hardware in your house. Throw out the game along with all your other discs, your PlainStation, all the connector cables, your television, and any other device in your home that uses a power outlet. To insure that the appliances don't rise again as power-hungry, artificial insemination robots, you should thoroughly spray them all with any liquid from CFC-heavy aerosol cans and cover them with at least 50 pounds of non-recyclable plastic.

YOU'RE RIGHT

You guys are idiots. Your review of Blatz-Blast was way off! You said the game looked terrible, sounded worse, had cumbersome controls, and the story made absolutely no sense. What are you talking about? I played it for nearly eight minutes yesterday and thought it was tolerable. You should have scored it half-a-point higher.

Flay Ming
Butterball, WY

As soon as we got this letter, a staff meeting was called where everyone sat around and gave Blatz-Blast a critical reevaluation. After four hours, it was deemed that you are indeed correct, Flay. We are currently rewriting said review and reprinting the entire issue, which we will ship to all of our subscribers free of charge. Thanks for the help!

GI NEWS

GAMESPHERE LAUNCHES, ROLLS AWAY

"They were just here a minute ago," said a bewildered video game store manager after cracking open a case of new **Gamespheres**. "Huh, how 'bout that..." he said a moment later.

After waiting in long lines for the midnight launch, reams of anxious **Sintendo** fans were disappointed when every retail outlet across America announced that all the Gamespheres had rolled away. Smart gamers began running downhill. Stupid ones went home and cried.

When questioned about this release day fiasco, Sintendo president **Englebert Madragal** responded, "In retrospect, perhaps a perfect sphere is not the best shape for a video game console. We all just thought it would help it be more compatible with our **Game Bowl Advance**. Regardless, our company still makes more money than any two continents combined. If you don't like Gamesphere, may I suggest that you complain to a filthy rich president that gives a pocket monster's ass."

MEGA BUYS OUT EVERYONE

"Ha, ha, ha! We tricked you all! Who's laughing now, huh? WHO IS LAUGHING NOW?" Gloated **Mauchi Asamasi**, president of **Mega**, **Phony**, **Sintendo**, **Macrohard**, and anyone else even thinking of getting into the console business, at a press conference. After letting loose deep-bellied guffaws, he screamed, "You thought we were in financial trouble, but it was a fake-out! We were making mad-phat crazy amounts of dead presidents the whole time. You all fell for it, and now we own you."

Mr. Asamasi then opened the floor to questions, but refused to answer any of them. While gesturing lewdly toward a formerly-thought defunct Dreamblast unit, he closed by saying, "Suck it! Suck it! Suck it! Suck it! Suck it!"

STILL NO COMMENT ON XXXBOX'S PORTS

With the **XXXBox's** release date quickly approaching, **Macrohard** still refuses to comment on the exact nature of all the unit's ports.

"Let me put it this way, buddy," said **Jimmy Testosteroni**, unit manager of Macrohard, in an exclusive phone interview with *Game Infarcer*. "You'll be real glad that the vibration function is built in. Get it?"

When *GI* revealed that it did not understand, Jimmy went on to say, "Let's just say you'll be inserting a controller of your own into it. Know what I'm getting at?"

After hearing that *GI* was still clueless as to what exactly he was getting at, Mr. Testosteroni asked, "What are you, like 12 years old?"

Upon hearing that we were not 12 years old, but in fact younger, he quickly hung up. At press time, further calls had yet to be returned.

PREVIEWS

PLAINSTATION 2

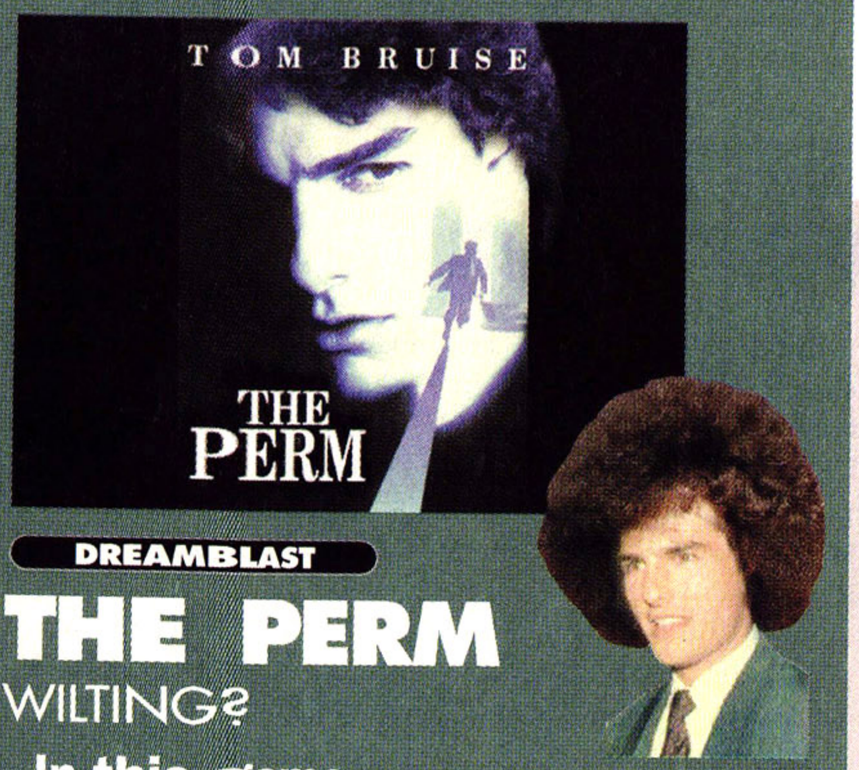
MONSTER GREAT TORNADO NOW!

WACKY PAINTCAN, HMM?

Strong steamroller from Japan, this game very excite America teenage cerebellum! You Riki, sunshine kid go stormy when soul-girl get chase chase chopper gang! Smoochy mademoiselle bleach blonde hot to stop in Bronx rumble! You fanciful?!

Fortuitous dog you got sensational kung fu to go hamburger meat countenance, bully boy! Katana grand dustbin discovery on high superkick in brave lava...if hologram defiant! You want fortuitous attainment? You want, you go Monster Great Tornado Now!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER HAPPY LUCKY DUCK ■ **PUBLISHER** ICHIBINOKUNOBUNGA ■ **DEVELOPER** NAGAMISA BIRUMITAGTAGABUKIA ■ **RELEASE** TICK TOCK TIME TIME



DREAMBLAST

THE PERM

WILTING?

In this game you play Rich McFleer, a young man who was barely able to scrape together the funds to graduate from Harvard Law School. Having received top honors in his class, he gets job offers from law firms around the country, but none offer the kind of money that Lilt, Revlon, and Wella are putting on the table.

Accepting the job after a phone interview, Rich gets picked up by a private jet and is flown to an undisclosed, non-humid place to begin work. When he arrives at the building, he makes a horrifying discovery – every employee has a perm!

It's your goal to use whatever force necessary to escape the Lilt, Revlon, and Wella stronghold without a tight curl. Throw office furniture at file clerks, club secretaries with your briefcase, stab executives with fountain pens – whatever it takes to avoid a twisting of the tresses. Players don't lose the game if they get killed, because even dying is better than having to live with a perm.

■ **STYLE** NOT IF YOU'RE A GUY ■ **PUBLISHER** L'ORÉAL ■ **DEVELOPER** SALONS ACROSS THE WORLD ■ **RELEASE** 45 MINUTES

REVIEWS

DREAMBLAST

KARTOON KART RACER

AWESOME!

Everybody keeps saying that Dreamblast doesn't have any good games or that they're all from other systems, but this awesome racer is the best one I've played today, and I've been awake for over an hour! It's totally different from any of the other awesome kart games based on cartoons because it has all completely different characters that haven't ever been in any other game ever!

This game's so awesome! You get to use the trigger to go fast, and the more you hold it down the faster you go. There's all these funny vehicles to choose from, and tons of awesome power-ups. There's even one that puts you in the lead no matter how far you're behind. That's super awesome because I can always beat my stupid sister who doesn't know anything about games because she's always talking to her stupid friends on the phone. Whenever she says Marcy likes me, I punch her.

– **GARNADAN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RETREAD ■ **PUBLISHER** SHOULD BE MAIMED ■ **DEVELOPER** SHOULD BE ASHAMED ■ **RELEASE** SEEMS LIKE ABOUT EVERY WEEK

THE BOTTOM LINE

DEAD HORSE DH CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

17

- **Concept:** An awesome adaptation of an awesome cartoon
- **Graphics:** The cell animation is awesome
- **Sound:** The way they always say the same catchphrase is awesomely funny
- **Playability:** Quintuple awesome
- **Entertainment:** Way more awesome than that other kart game I played the other time
- **Replay Value:** Awesome!

SECOND OPINION

Dgong Pas Bkag rtse ba. Mkho ba glog Sherpa shes kho cag.

KHUNG SHU – 1

[Translation: The pictures on the paper amused me. I gave all the shiny parts to a group of passing Sherpas.]

PLAINSTATION

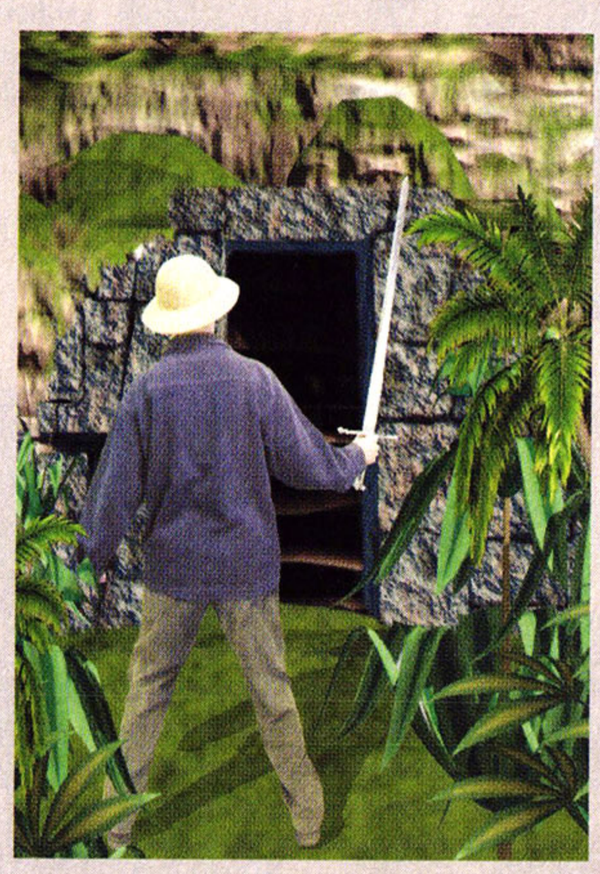
SEQUEL VII

I'M VERY SMART!

This game, like all its predecessors, reminds me of some of the great things I do. For example, it would be quite easy for me to let my body go to rot, much like you do, but I keep myself in tip-top shape. In fact, it would be a shame to let the physical masterpiece that is me go to waste. I could play football at a professional level, you know, but I choose to work for this magazine instead.

I think this game's good, therefore so will you. Mind you, since you're not as smart as I am, you'll probably find it a bit more challenging than I did. This wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing, but you'll probably end up eating even more junk food while playing it. You should eat healthier like I do. Have you considered losing some weight? I made my girlfriend drop a few pounds, and I'm, I mean, she's much happier now – I'm sure of it.

– **CHIP**



■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SOMETHINGOROTHER ■ **PUBLISHER** EVERYONE ■ **DEVELOPER** THEM TOO ■ **RELEASE** ANNUALLY

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

- **Concept:** Good, but I could have thought up something better
- **Graphics:** Better than the previous versions, but still inferior to my paintings
- **Sound:** The voice-overs pale in comparison to my riveting spoken-word performances
- **Playability:** Why yes, I can play the guitar
- **Entertainment:** I like to entertain guests with my riveting stories of my life experiences
- **Replay Value:** Are you flirting with me?

SECOND OPINION

Me and Brad were chillin' out and talking about Phish and stuff, when he says, "On Scooby Doo, what's really in the Scooby Snacks?" That's why I love that guy. He's so deep, dude.

OLLIE – 7.5

P A R O D Y

PLAY TO PERFECTION

FIRST FANTASY

- Watch a cutscene and/or read a bunch of words
- Fight monsters to get money and gain experience
- Go up levels and get new stuff
- Repeat these steps until you get to a town
- Buy more stuff
- Leave town and fight monsters
- Continue in this fashion until you have saved the world and found true love
- Brag to all your friends about how cool the ending is

If you come to a maze, go left. If it turns out left doesn't work, go right.

SECRET ACCESS

NORELCO

Quadra Action Razor 6885XL

Press **Power. Move** contour shaving heads over facial hair. Use the Trimmer to keep sideburns neat. Press **Open** and rinse stubble reservoir out with water.

BETTY CROCKER

Bisquick: Orange-Toffee Pancakes

Heat Griddle over medium heat. **Stir** 2 cups Bisquick, 1 cup milk, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, and 2 eggs until blended. **Gently stir** in 1/3 cup chocolate-covered toffee chips and 1 tablespoon grated orange peel. **Pour** slightly less than 1/4 cupfuls onto the hot griddle. **Cook** until edges are dry. **Flip** and **cook** until golden. Enjoy!

CLASSIC GI

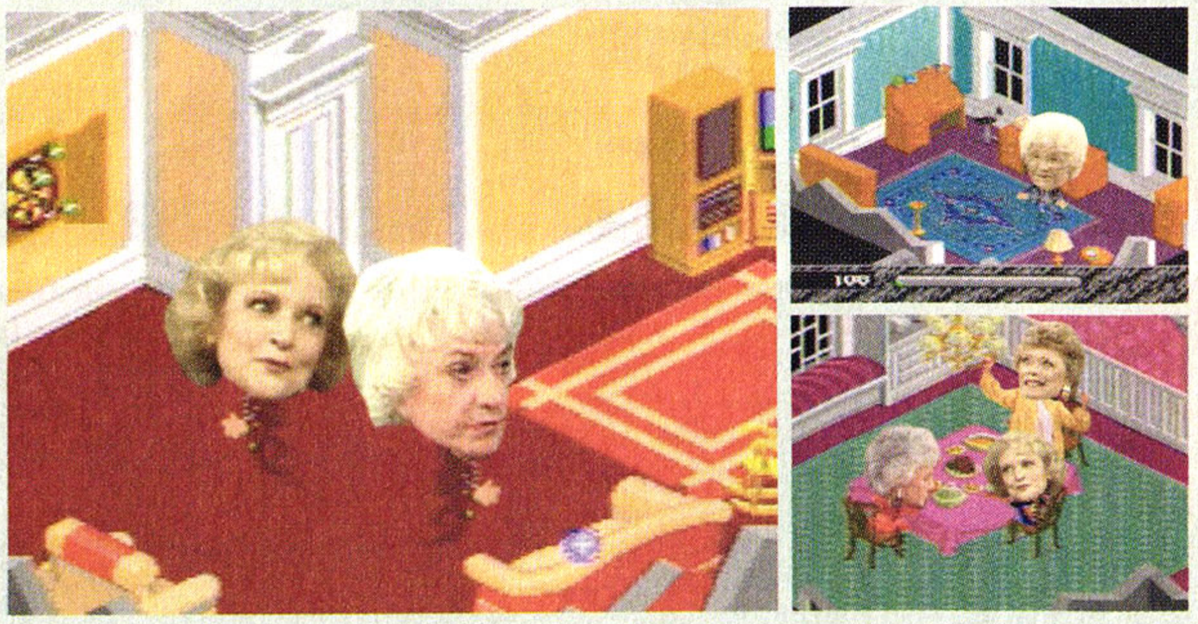
GENOCIDE

LEGEND OF BEA ARTHUR

RETRO RATING 1

Blanche is having hot flashes, Rose is stuck in the hedge maze again, and Sophia needs to be picked up from her colostomy surgery. There's only one person who can solve all these problems and do it with biting wit, and that's Bea Arthur! Released when the Golden Girls were at the peak of popularity, Legend of Bea Arthur challenged players to collect enough estrogen pills, calcium supplements, and herbal enemas to gain entrance to the bondage club where the girls had somehow been imprisoned and forced to wear leather bikinis. Is it any wonder this game wasn't popular? The sequel, Rose's Boring Minnesota Stories, was never released.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE/OSTEOPOROSIS ■ **PUBLISHER** LIFETIME
■ **DEVELOPER** FLORIDA ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1986



TOY FAIR 2001

WHO'S GOT THE KUNG-FU GRIP?

AC/DC may feel safe in New York City, but believe us, the Big Apple is a frightening place – especially when the annual Toy Fair is in town. Imagine if you will, a bum holding a GI Joe action figure (fully equipped with kung-fu grip) chasing after a band of video game journalists, threatening if they ever bump into his cardboard house again, he'll open up a can of whoop ass on them. The sad thing is, he probably couldn't afford a can of whoop ass, so what were we scared of? To say the very least, we were terrified of New York, and we honestly didn't think we'd make it back to the Minneapolis tundra in one piece.

Brave as always, though, the GI gang had a mission to accomplish, and accomplish it they did. Watching our backs every step of the way, we ducked out of the shadows, or crawled out from beneath the stairway we hid under to take a look at the latest goods at this year's Toy Fair. We even built up enough courage to snap a few photos of upcoming toys based on popular video game franchises.

So sit back, grab a Diet Coke, roast a marshmallow, and enjoy Game Informer's first, and hopefully last, editorial on the American International Toy Fair.

For E3 experts, Toy Fair is like Kentia Hall on laxatives

Game Informer flew off the shelves

The creator of Shrinky Dinks shows off the new SD Maker which will debut this September

McFarlane Toys

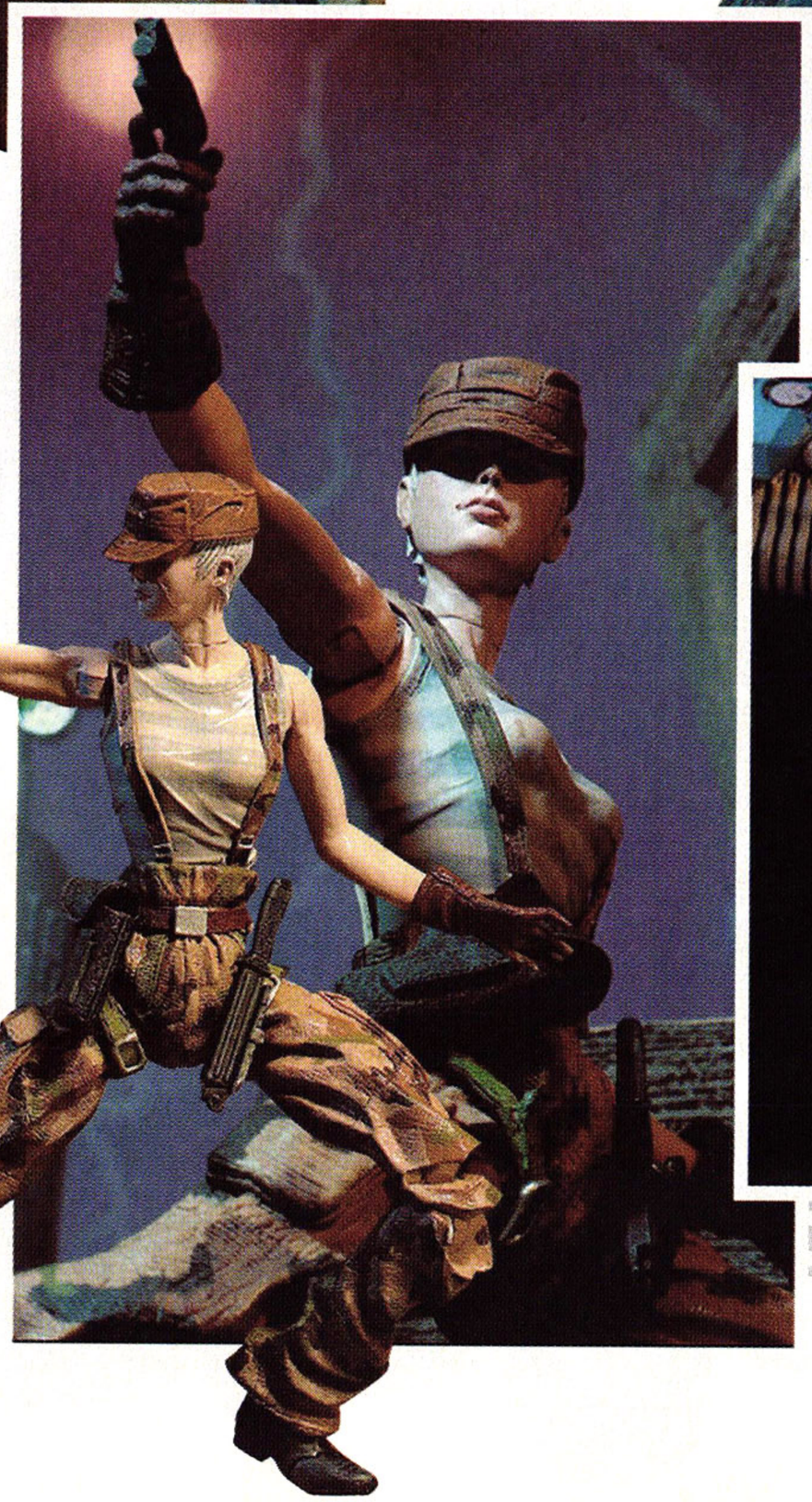
Todd McFarlane may pay big bucks to fondle Mark McGwire's balls, but he is a decent chap. If you overlook his outlandish fetishes and focus on his brilliant product, you'll fall in love with what he's accomplished...just don't let him see your balls!

Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty

If Todd plays his cards correctly, these toys should simultaneously launch with the release of the PlayStation 2 game. Right now, there are seven figures scheduled for the first series. Along with Snake, Olga, Revolver, and Metal Gear Ray, three secret figures, who Konami doesn't want to reveal just yet, will accompany the line.

A serious thorn in Snake's side, Revolver is equipped with his weapon of choice, cowboy boots, a well-groomed mustache, and a fantastic trench coat

Always the gritty type, Snake's face is realistically detailed with morning shadow, beads of sweat, and a raggedy old headband



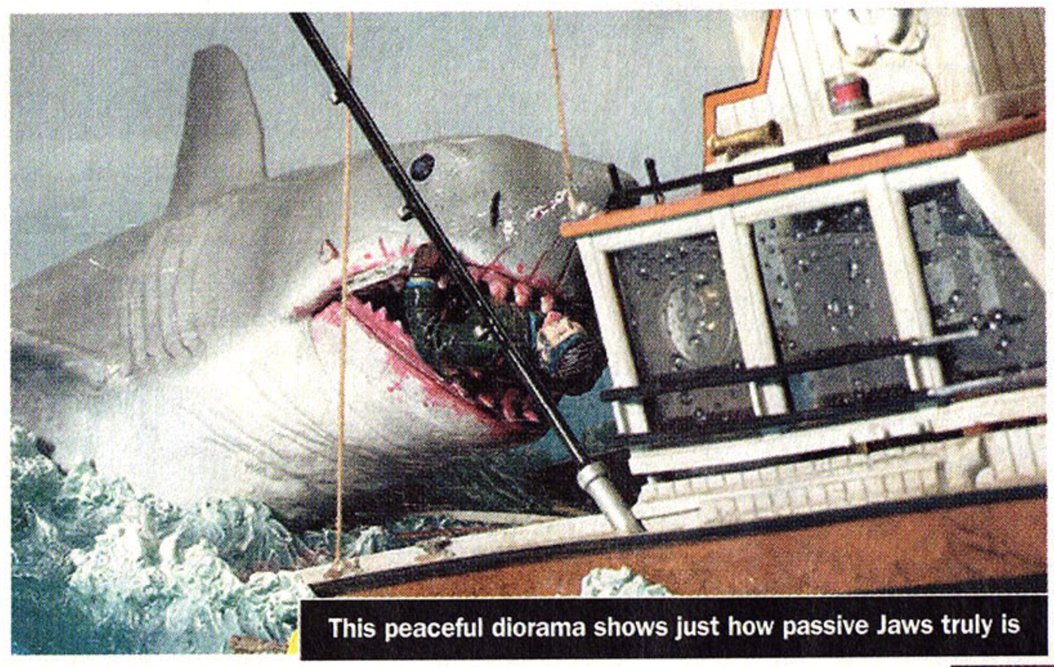
Where articulation is lacking, Olga makes up for it with her tight and extremely sexy camouflage attire

If McFarlane wants to make this mecha to scale, it'll have to be at least two feet tall. While this isn't expected, McFarlane Toys is renowned for surprises

Movie Maniacs

This line started out mostly horror based, but seeing that McFarlane Toys has already tapped all of the gore flicks, the line is no longer Movie Maniacs, but rather something more along the lines of Movie Bad Arses.

I'll be back

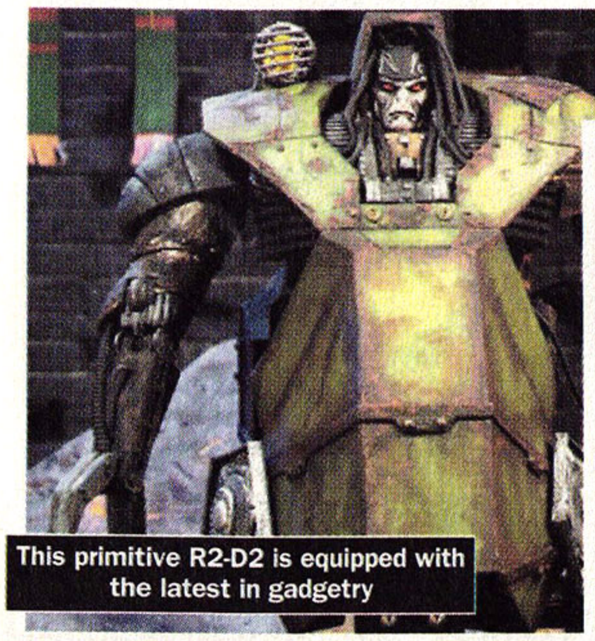


This peaceful diorama shows just how passive Jaws truly is

Army of Darkness' Evil Ash is ready to give his doppelganger brother a razor-sharp enema

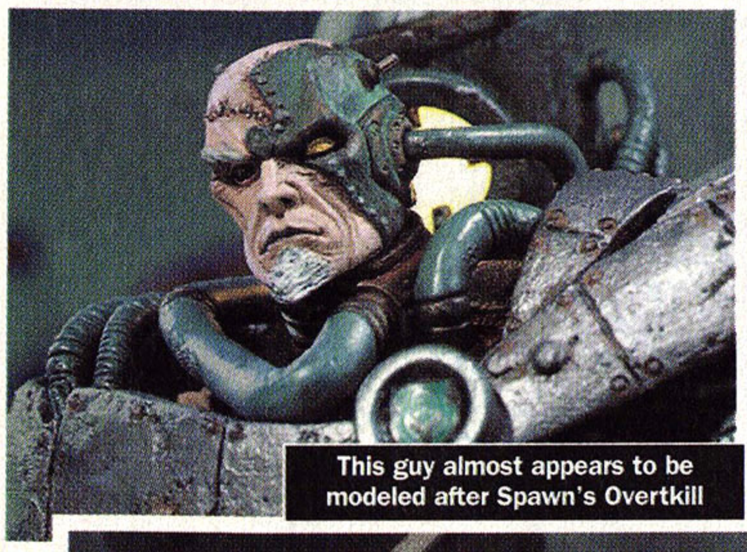
Ultima Online Series 2

When thousands of Ultima Online users aren't logged in, they can always reenact the game through the toy line. Series 2 is loaded with baddies, including the menacing dragon.



This primitive R2-D2 is equipped with the latest in gadgetry

This dragon should be the most sought after toy in the line



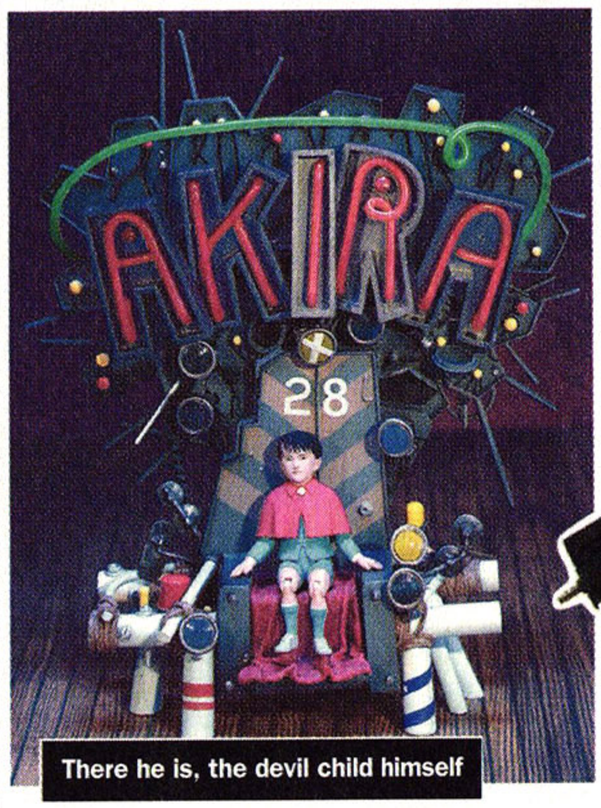
This guy almost appears to be modeled after Spawn's Overtkill

Beautiful...but deadly

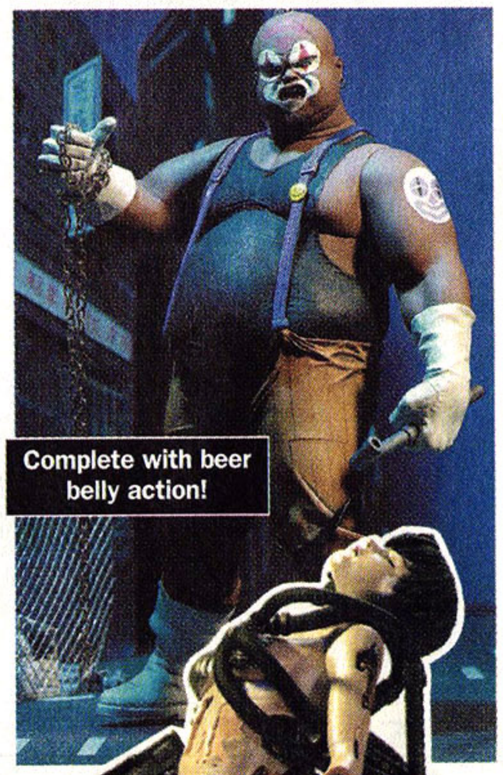
"Damn! I hate it when I stab myself with my staff!"

3D Animation From Japan Series 2

The first line of anime figures sold incredibly well, even though the release was so limited. In the second series, which will more than likely be scarce as well, McFarlane will unleash three new Akira figures and a racy mold of Motoko from Ghost in the Shell.



There he is, the devil child himself



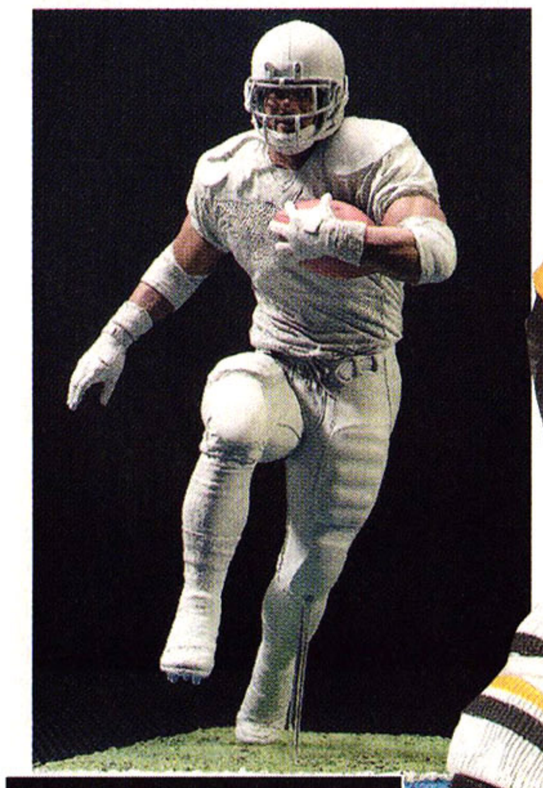
Complete with beer belly action!

The deluxe version of Kaneda comes with the bike, and he can actually sit on it!!!

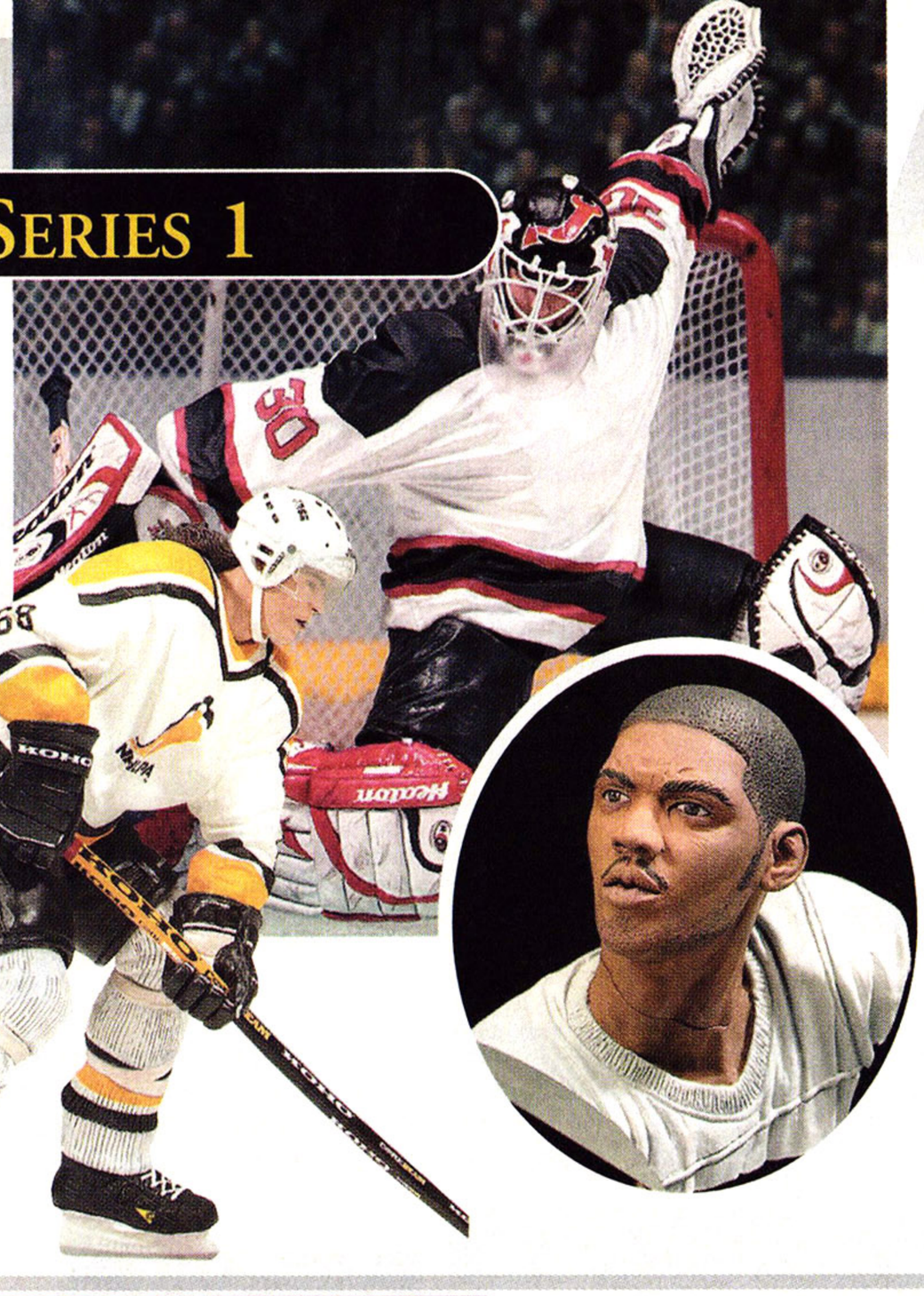
Is she wearing anything?

Players, Inc. Series 1

Finding immediate success with the NHLPA and MLBPA, McFarlane now has football figures in the works. The incredibly detailed first series includes Emmitt Smith, Randy Moss, Kurt Warner, Warren Sapp, Edgerrin James, and Eddie George.

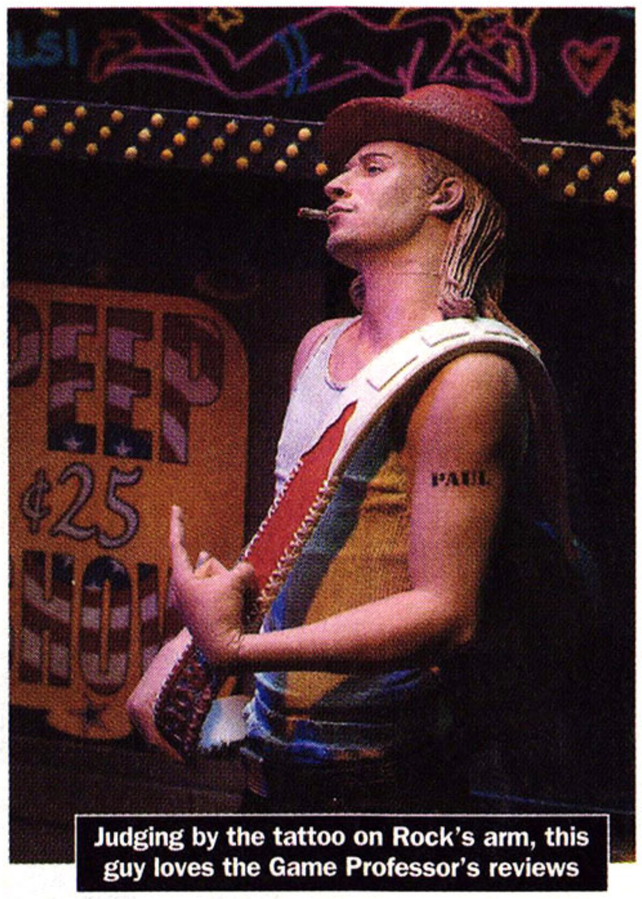


"Hope I don't get a concussion"



Kid Rock

Straight from Detroit comes America's bad ass, Kid Rock. This figure, as we're told, will come with a strip club diorama, and Rock himself will have a blunt in his mouth.



Judging by the tattoo on Rock's arm, this guy loves the Game Professor's reviews

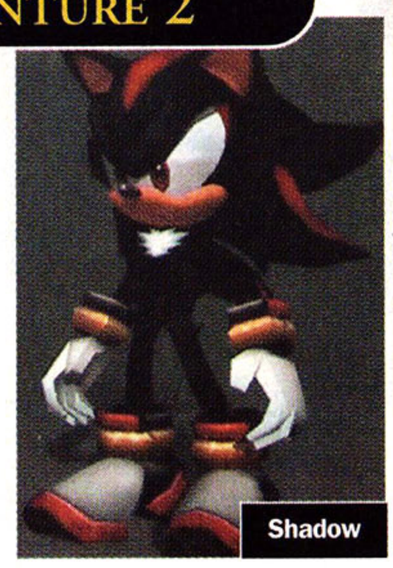
Resaurus

Basically, Resaurus is sticking with its guns, which of course are the Street Fighter and Sonic the Hedgehog lines. New to this year's lineup is MechWarrior.

After series 3, Resaurus wishes to include Yun, Yang, Zangief, and new sculpts of Ken and Ryu in series 4

Sonic Adventure 2

These figures are still a long ways off, as is the game, but Resaurus had some early mock-ups on hand. Interesting indeed. Thanks to Toy Fair, we now know the names of two of Sonic's arch nemeses – Shadow and Rouge.



Shadow

Rouge

Street Fighter Series 3

If you don't like the color schematics, Resaurus is releasing a second edition of repaints for every figure

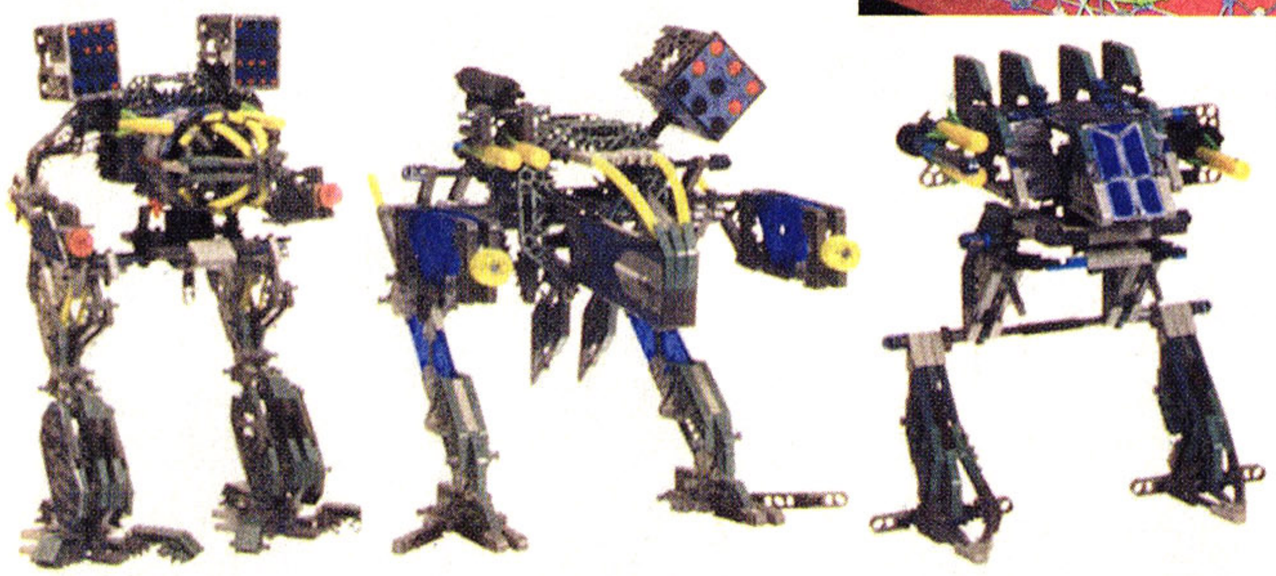
MechWarrior

Words cannot describe how cool these mechs really are. Resaurus will release them in two color schemes so friends can form factions and battle it out on the living room floor

K' Nex

Who would have thought these guys would get involved in gaming? Some people call K'Nex devolved Legos; we think of them as Legos for the gifted. True enough, Lego rocks these guys' world, but come on! MechWarrior rules, and these toys don't look half-bad.

This K' Nex roller coaster has nothing to do with vids, but gosh-darn-it it's cool



The first wave of MechWarrior toys include the Mad Cat, Cauldron Born, and Shadow Cat

Playmates

Tomb Raider

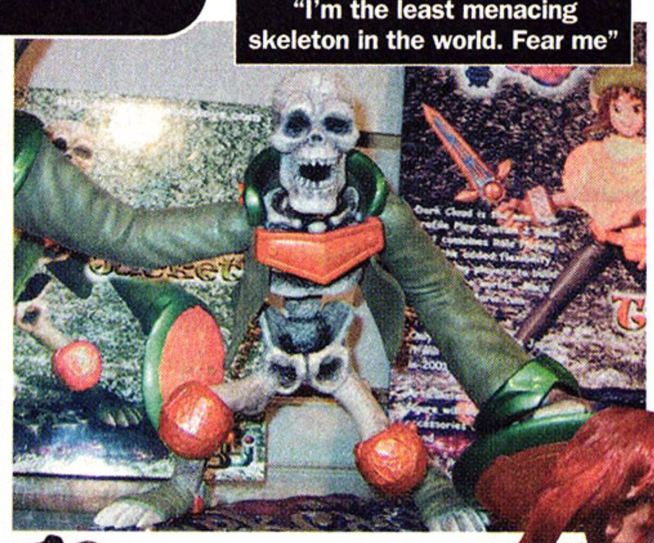
Returning to its bosom buddy, Eidos, Playmates is forging an entire lineup of figures based on the upcoming Tomb Raider movie.

Blue Box Toys

This up-and-coming manufacturer knows where the money is, and that's video games. After taking a hit with the Fighting Force and Omega Boost figures, Blue Box is now focusing on larger franchises like Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, Dark Cloud, and King of Fighters.

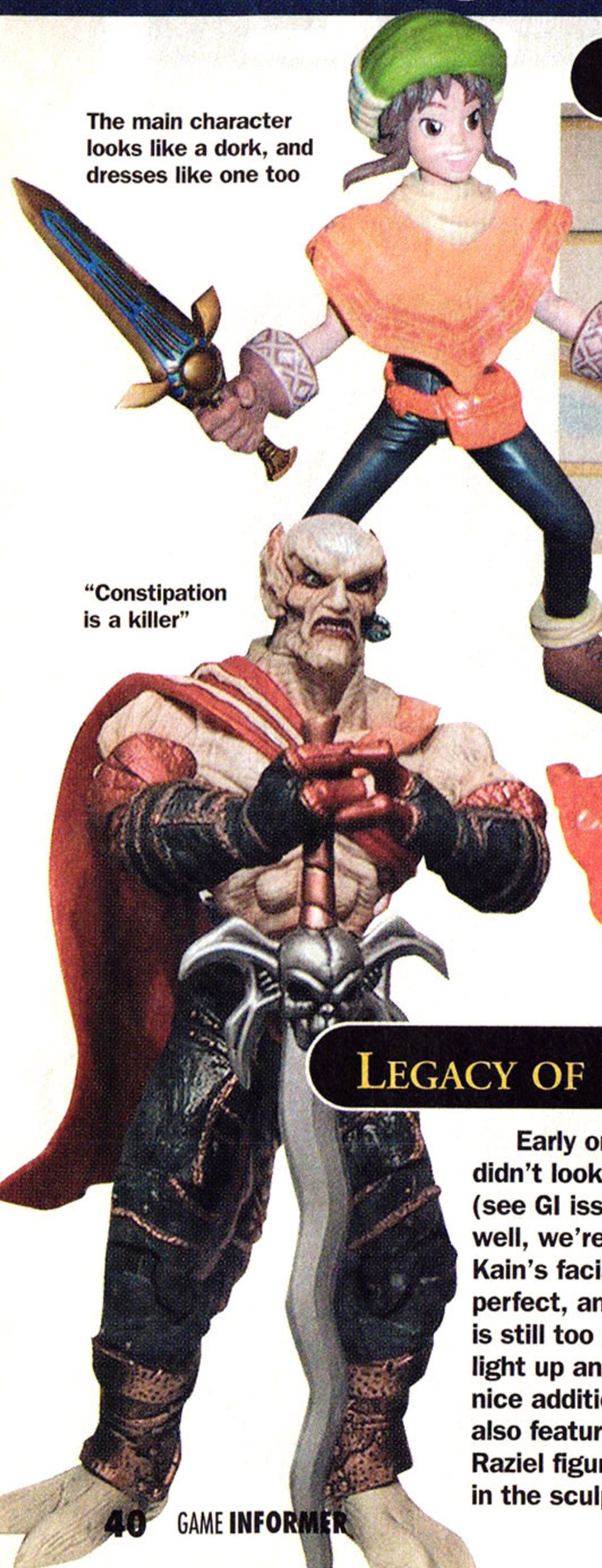
Dark Cloud

This guy fits right into the Final Fantasy lineup



"I'm the least menacing skeleton in the world. Fear me"

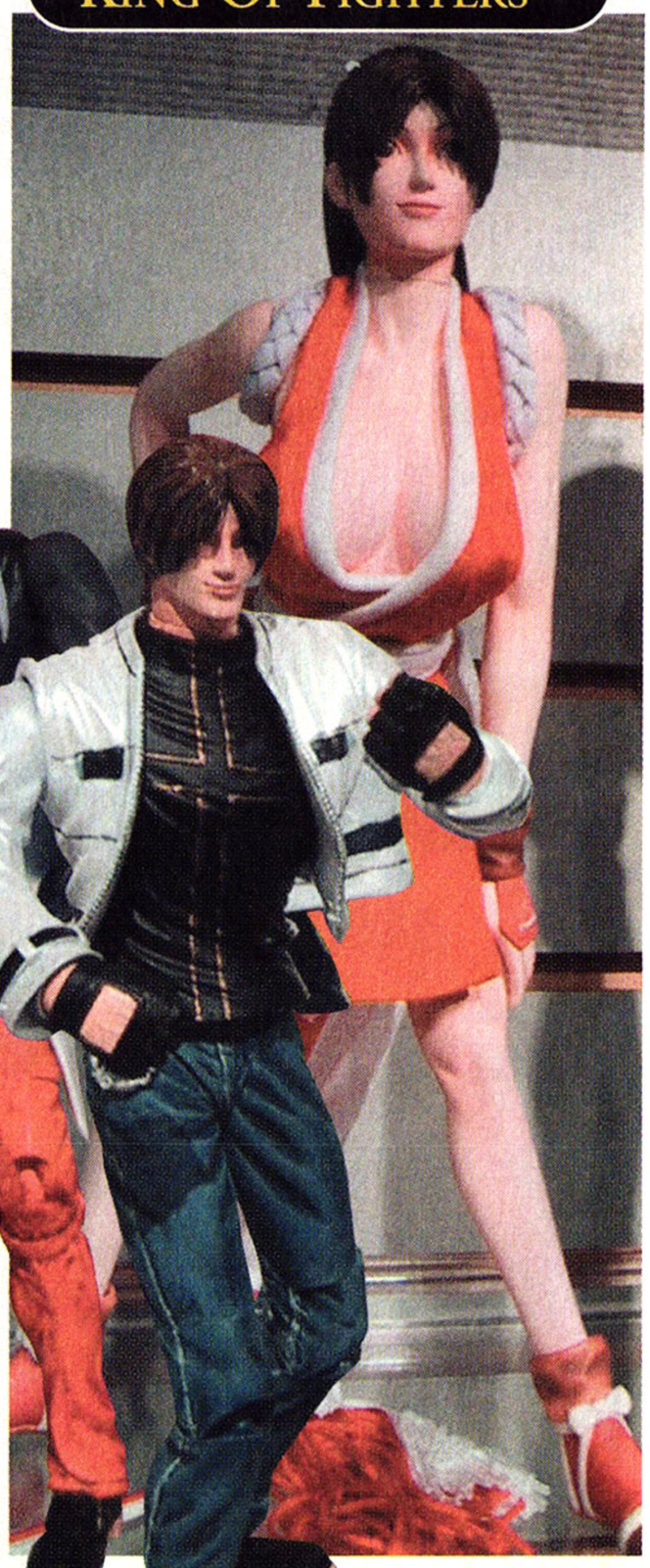
The main character looks like a dork, and dresses like one too



"Constipation is a killer"

"Kain burnt my wee-wee off!"

King Of Fighters



Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

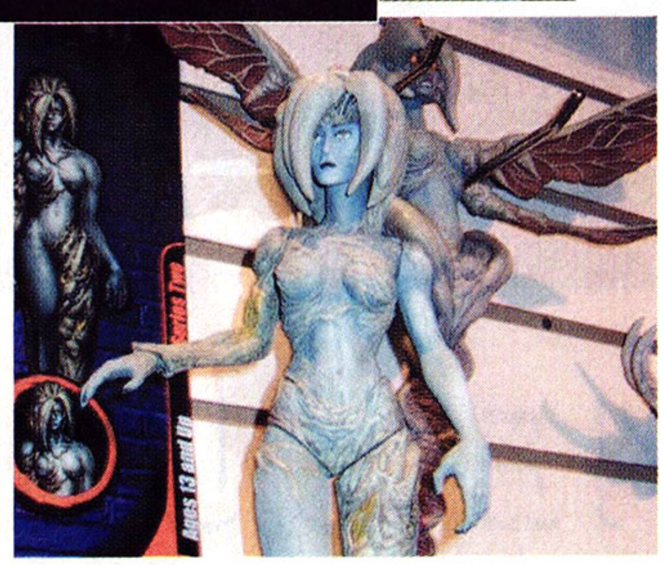
Early on, these figures didn't look all that great (see GI issue 92), but now, well, we're impressed. Kain's facial expression is perfect, and although Raziel is still too shiny, his eyes light up and the cowl is a nice addition. This line will also feature a pre-fallen Raziel figure...which is still in the sculpting stages.

PALISADES

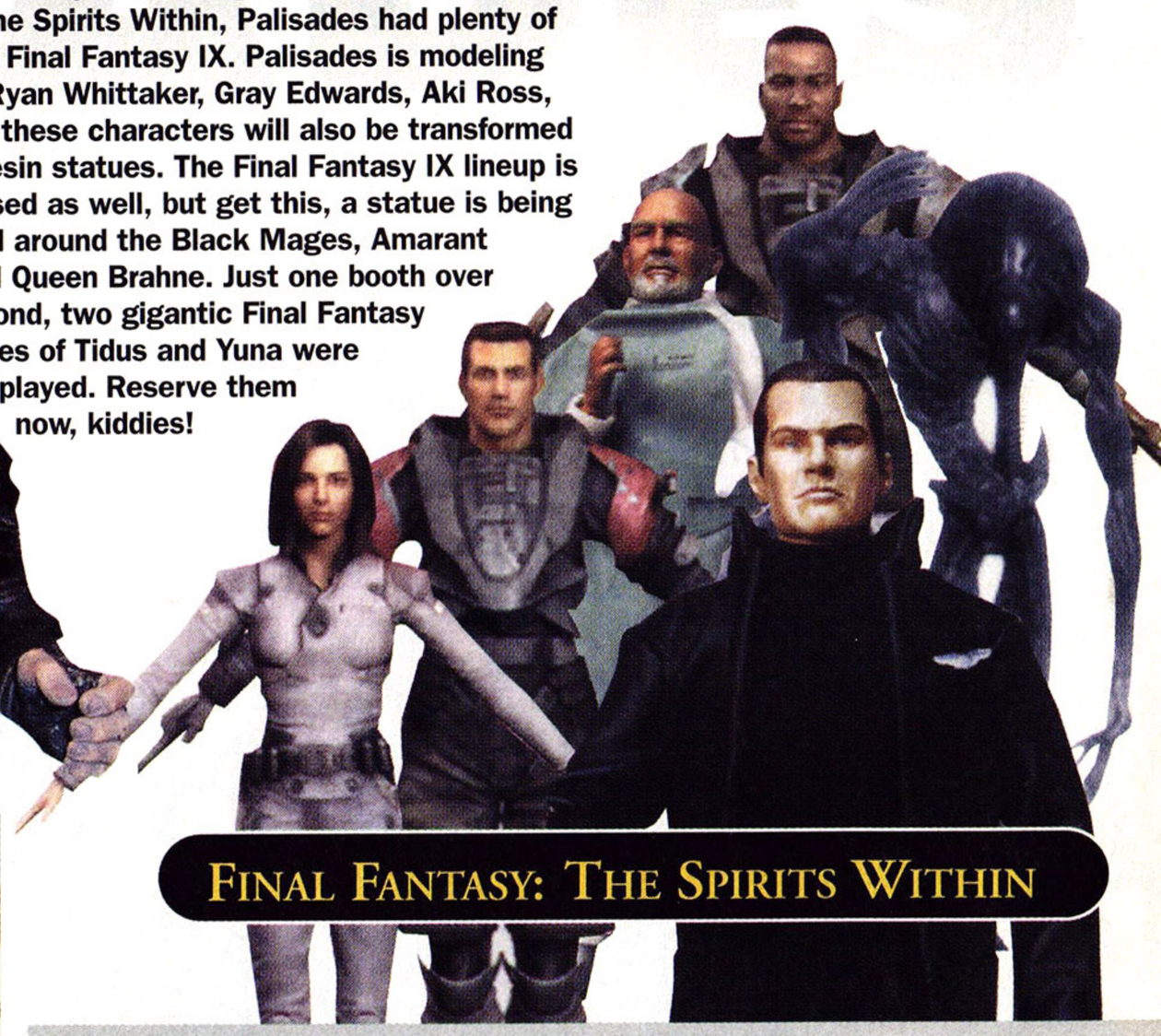
These longtime friends of ours actually had a stellar lineup. Unfortunately, we can't show any of it. Along with figures based on the Final Fantasy movie, The Spirits Within, Palisades had plenty of toys lying around based on Final Fantasy IX. Palisades is modeling 12-inch figures of Dr. Sid, Ryan Whittaker, Gray Edwards, Aki Ross, and General Hein. Many of these characters will also be transformed into mini-resin busts and resin statues. The Final Fantasy IX lineup is mostly statue and bust based as well, but get this, a statue is being constructed around the Black Mages, Amarant Coral, and Queen Brahne. Just one booth over at Diamond, two gigantic Final Fantasy X statues of Tidus and Yuna were displayed. Reserve them now, kiddies!

RESIDENT EVIL

If you didn't like the Toy Biz version of the Resident Evil toys, just wait until you see what Palisades has in store



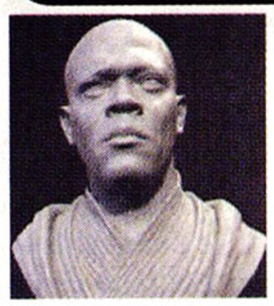
FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN



HASBRO

Hasbro rules the toy shelves, so naturally it had the most product on display. Along with mock-ups of the upcoming Star Wars: Episode II line, a handful of new classic Star Wars figures were shown, and even though it's mostly dead, a vast wave of Pokémon toys are on the way. Hasbro also showed Jurassic Park III, Planet of the Apes, and some updated Transformers action figures.

STAR WARS



Using new realscan technology to capture an exact likeness of an actor's face, all the Episode II figures will be eerily realistic

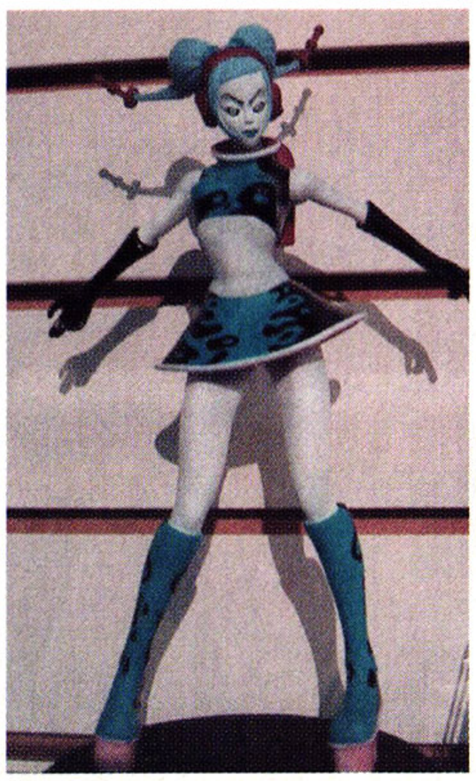
Here's the very first image of Jagano Fett, Boba Fett's poppa

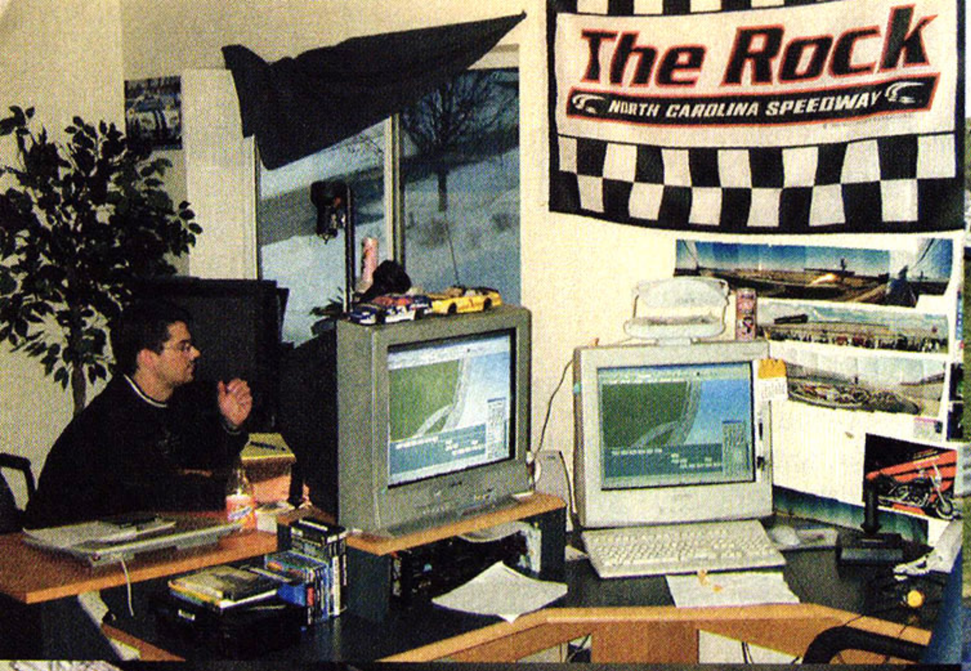
TRANSFORMERS

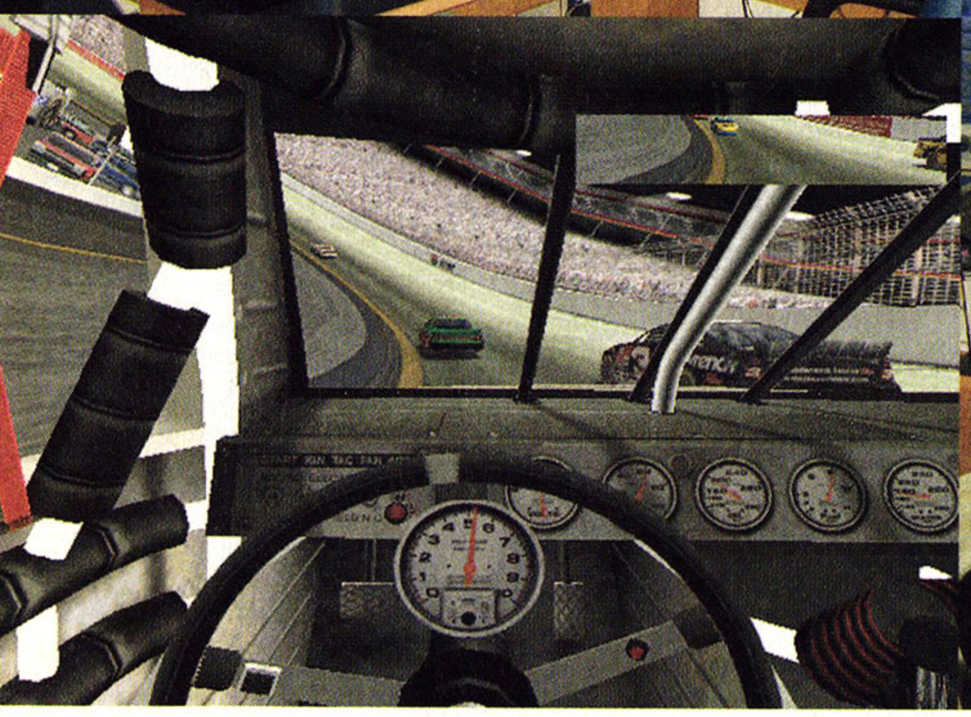
They're baaaaaaack!!!!

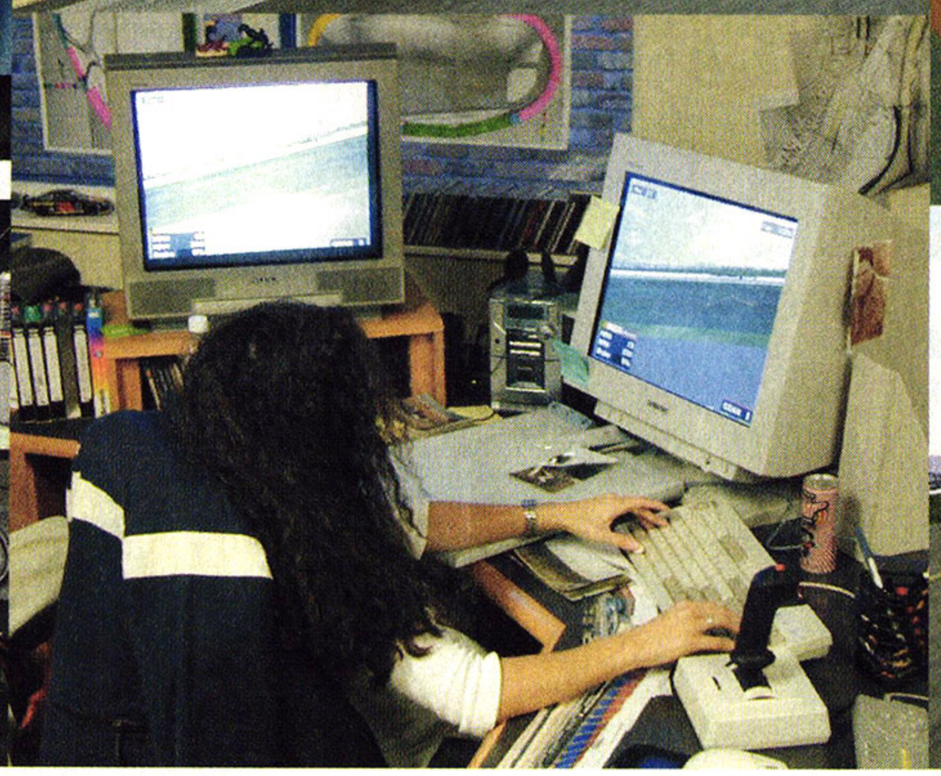
SPACE CHANNEL 5

In issue 92 we showed you mock-ups of the Space Channel 5 figures. Following up, here they are in finished form.









Making The Jump...

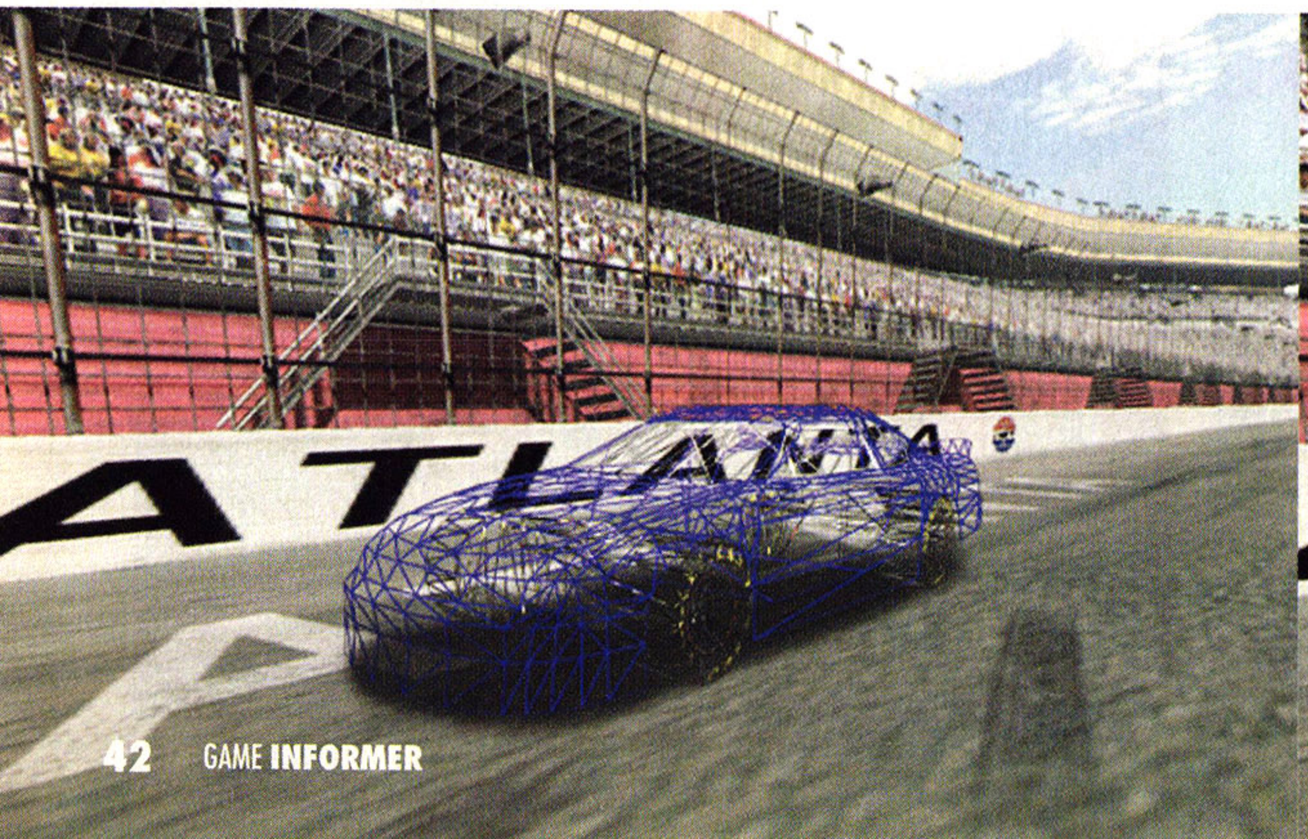
A look at how one game developer is making the switch from PC to console

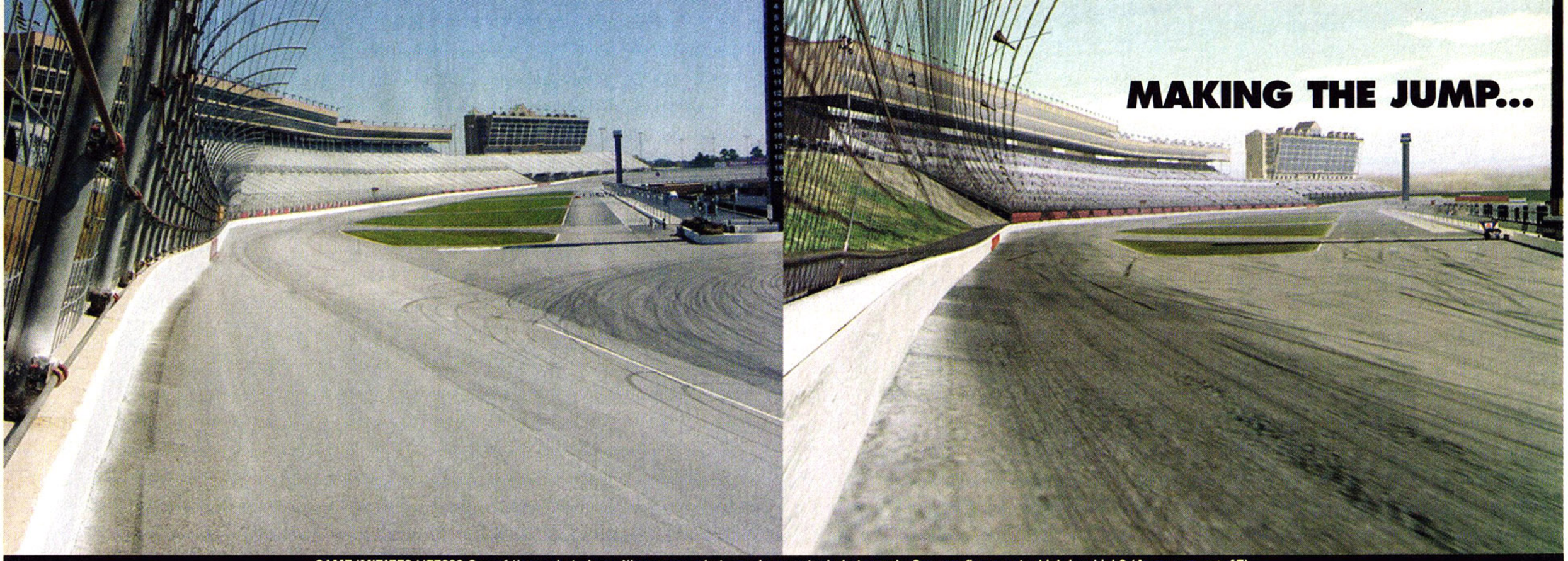
If you travel about 45 miles south of the Game Informer offices, you'll find a small town by the name of Northfield. It is here that hot cereal lovers can find a sight to behold. The air is filled with warm, oaty goodness as you drive in. The road curves, and soon enough it comes into sight – the headquarters for Malt-O-Meal. As good as that may sound; we don't give a rip about toasted oats (or whatever that stuff is). We traveled to this little town to see what was cooking with video games.

You see, Northfield is the home of Monster Games, Inc., a game development studio whose previous works included the PC titles Viper Racing and NASCAR Heat. In the last year or so, the gang at Monster Games have shifted focus away from the sometimes-frustrating world of PC game development and looked to new platforms. "It seems like it's about every five years or so the platforms come close enough together [technically] that the jump can occur," says Monster Games founder, Rich Garcia, in reference to his company's leap from developing for the PC to the Xbox and PlayStation 2.

Don't ask anyone at Monster Games if they might think about doing an action game or an RPG, because racing games are what they know, and they pride themselves at being the best at what they do. Partnering with Hasbro Interactive (which is now controlled by Infogrames), the team at Monster Games is close to completion on its first PlayStation 2 game, a new rendition of NASCAR Heat. They have also started in on another rendition of this racing simulation for the upcoming Xbox.

But what exactly do they do when making transition to a new platform? We aimed to find out what Monster Games has been up to, and get their thoughts on both the technical and design aspect of the PC versus console. We also heard some interesting impressions of the development environments for both the PS2 and Xbox.





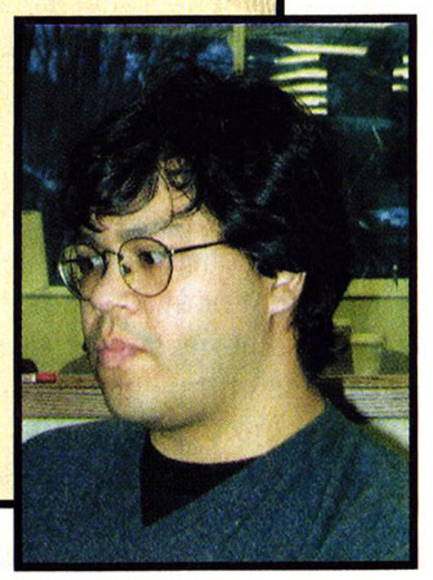
GAME IMITATES LIFE??? One of these shots is an Xbox screenshot, one is an actual photograph. Can you figure out which is which? (Answer on pg. 47)

The Transition...

While it might seem easy enough for a developer to make a video game for any piece of hardware, we have been enlightened to some of the more interesting aspects of game development from both a technical and design point of view.

Game Informer had the chance to chronicle some of the process with Monster Games. We were educated on the numerous issues and challenges that any developer faces when attempting to tackle a new piece of gaming hardware.

> **"Consoles, for me, are really a return to the old days or programming where you are really right down to the metal."**
>
> **RICH GARCIA**
> PRESIDENT, MONSTER GAMES, INC.



Working the Metal...

There are hundreds of game developers across the world trying to compete for their own little piece of the PC gaming pie. Rich Garcia has had his share of slices over the years. Educated as a programmer, Garcia has worked in the industry for nearly 15 years and has had his hand in a number of gaming projects, including work on the highly acclaimed NASCAR Racing Series from Papyrus/Sierra.

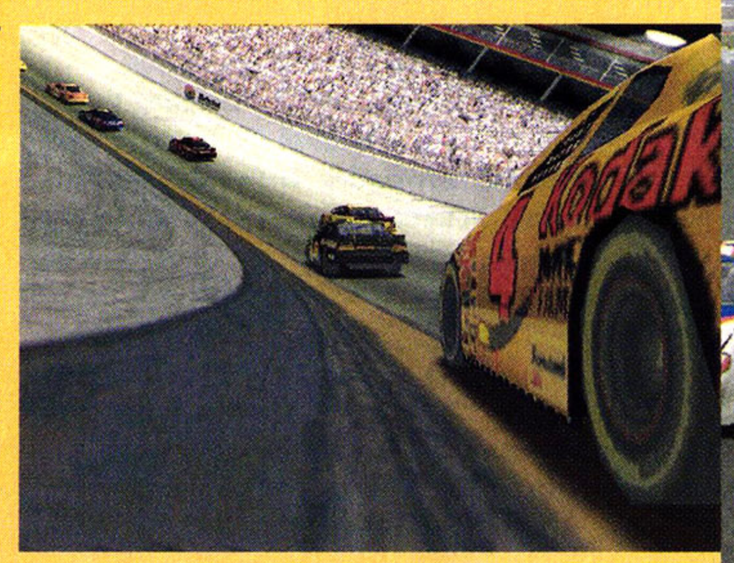
Certainly, Garcia has found the gaming pie very appetizing. In fact, it was so tasty that it has afforded him the ability to make his own recipe. Forming his own development studio, Monster Games, Inc., in Northfield, Minnesota, Garcia's original recipe for gaming was to concentrate on PC games of the racing variety. However, he decided to change things up a little by adding a few new ingredients a few years back – namely console development. Ask Garcia about his new ingredient and he beams with excitement as he starts to talk about pixels, environment maps, polygons, and the good old days of programming.

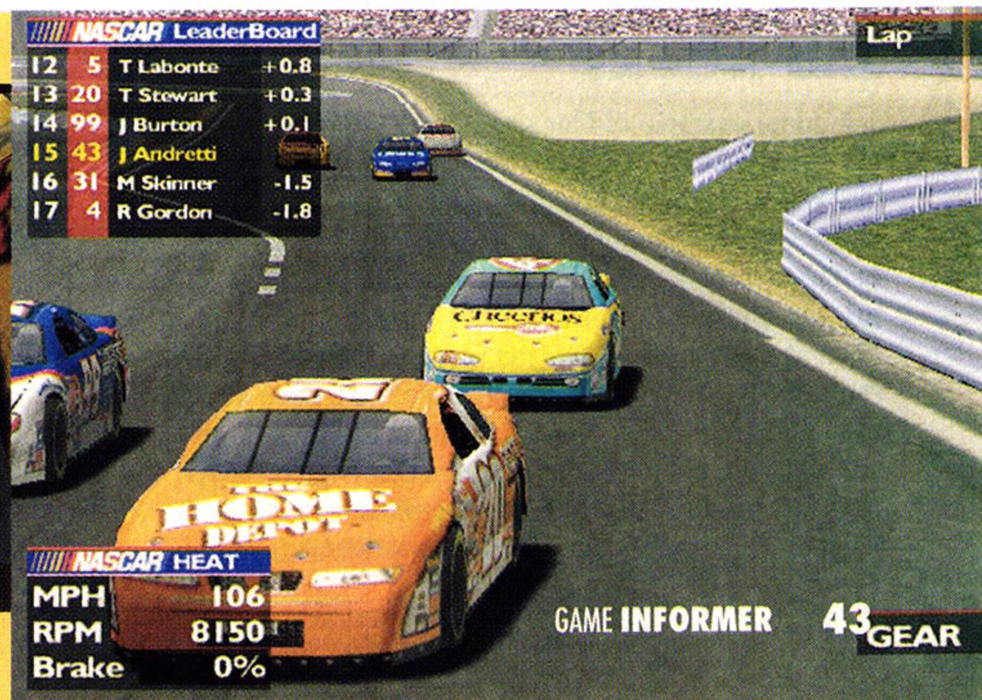
"I started out in '88 on the PC, and essentially you didn't have an operating system and your goal was to write everything from scratch. In the old days, you were trying to pack things into 256K or 64K, depending on the platform. So consoles, for me, are really a return to the old days or programming where you are really right down to the metal – trying just to make things run optimally, which is really fun," says the enthusiastic Garcia. "We've had a code base that we've started from and we're trying to turn it into a console title."

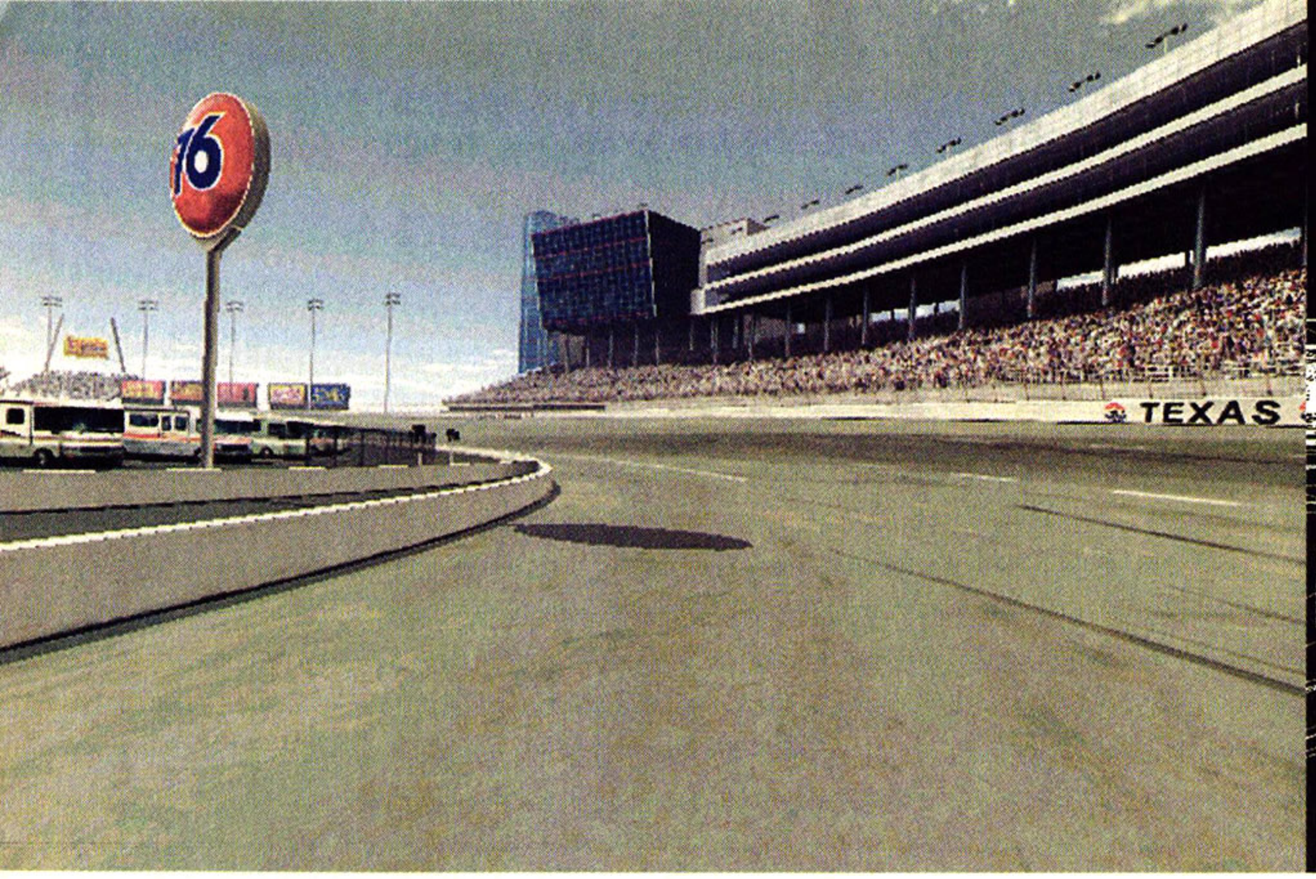
To do this Garcia says that it is a constant challenge of tuning and tweaking the programming code to find the desired result. Getting "down to the metal" and working with the hardware is where Garcia seems to be in his element – something he says is missing from the current state of PC development. With the vast number of CPUs and graphics cards flooding the PC scene, Garcia is glad to be working in an environment where the hardware is the same across the board. In other words, a PS2

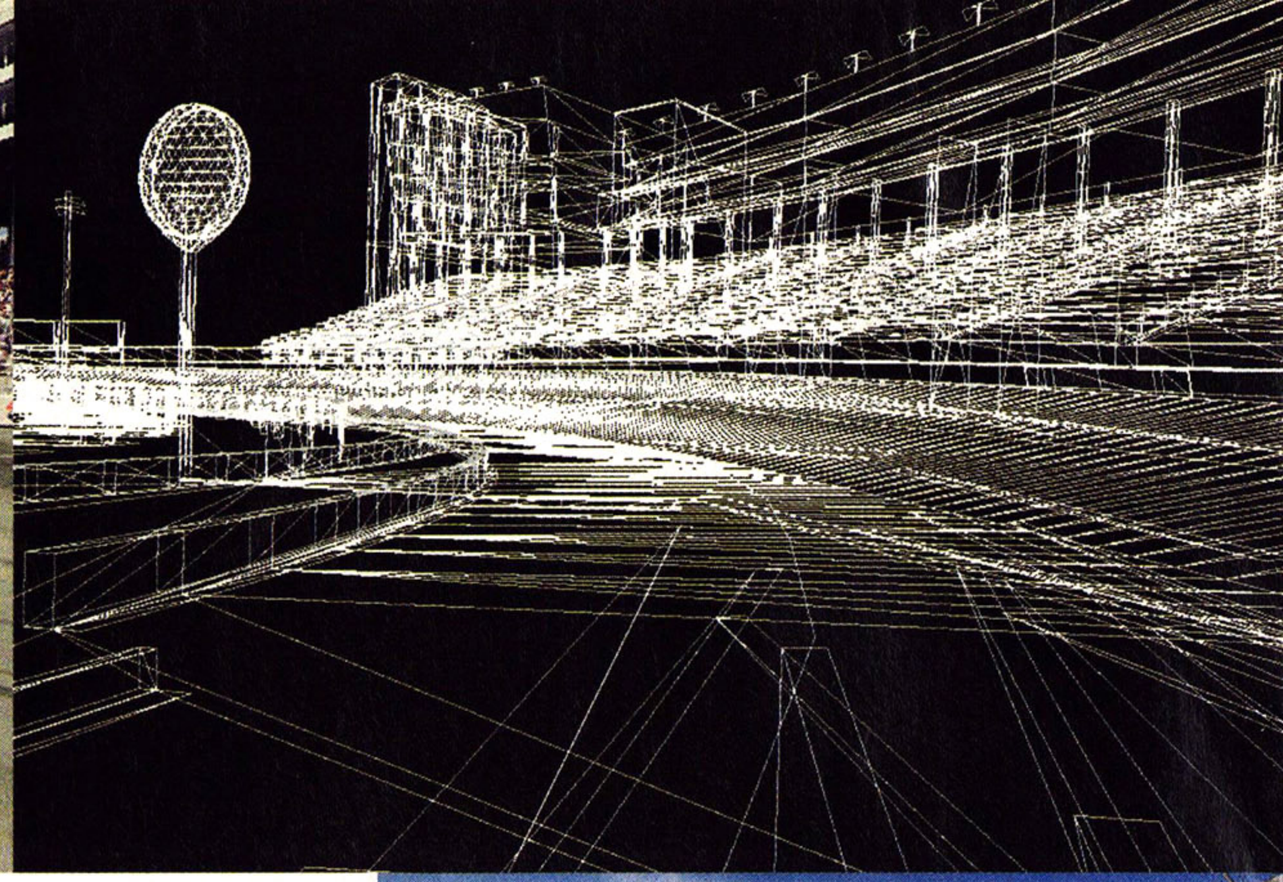
The Game

NASCAR Heat itself (as you could probably guess) is all about auto-racing's most popular series. In many regards, the game is not unlike other racing simulations. It includes all the requisite elements, such as authentic tracks, drivers, and cars. The thing that might differentiate NASCAR Heat from the other games that try to re-create the sport is the painstaking attention to detail. "Our goal is to get the sport right, and the people here love NASCAR," said Monster Games' Rich Garcia. The 12-person team at Monster Games are pure enthusiasts of the sport, and want to create a game that the hardcore fans will appreciate. This means going the extra step to make sure that everything looks and feels right.









player isn't going to swap out his Emotion Engine for a Pentium IV.

"I love the fact that we know exactly what we've got," says Garcia in reference to the PlayStation 2. "We are pushing way more polygons and trying to get in as much detail as we can technically. Every time we can crank it [the programming code] down and make it faster, we can throw more stuff in. That is a rewarding thing we get from console development that normally doesn't get in PC development."

It was obvious to us that Garcia looked at many aspects of transitioning his company from PC development to the console as a tremendous challenge, but it is a duty he relishes. Directing the entire staff with his eyes focused on nearly every aspect of their games' development, Garcia tells us what it's like to bring a platform into the mix.

"When you get a new piece of hardware, what you're trying to figure out is its performance characteristics – you know, what it's really good at. Obviously, you want to do the things that it's really good at and stay away from the things it's bad at. You go in there and it's really not until you get something running that you figure what you should not try. For example, you may find that it's good at really small polygons, big polygons, or whatever," Garcia states.

It's not all smooth sailing, especially when tackling a new project, and Garcia and his team have experienced a number of frustrations and stumbling blocks over the course of the development of their PlayStation 2 game. However, Garcia feels that nearly every developer for PS2 are going through the same trails.

"The set of tools [Sony] gave you made it really nice to make the transformation from the PC to the PSone. So I was hoping for a similar experience when we first got the PlayStation 2 stuff, but I was surprised at how little some key things were documented," admits Garcia.

It is likely this was something that surprised plenty of developers who were so comfortable with the PlayStation development tools and later voiced their displeasure and frustrations at the PS2 development environment to the press. "The initial [programming] libraries for the PlayStation were very general-purpose and easy to use, but in every generation [Sony] stripped away a layer which exposed you more to the hardware. Meaning, you were not using libraries and you were going bare to the metal. That is the progression you want because in first generation you just want to master the hardware and you want help. Then you take some libraries away and go faster, you take more away and go faster," Garcia explains. "You're really starting at ground zero with the PlayStation 2, especially if you were a PlayStation developer, because there were so many parts of the hardware to master."

Yet Garcia sees a bright future in the PS2 despite its steep development learning curve and initial challenges. He sees every generation of software for the PlayStation 2 far exceeding the generation before. "Every generation is gonna get better. This is definitely a piece of hardware with a lot of potential for customizing and making things run even more optimally," he states.

The Tracks

A prime example of Monster Games' creativity and passion for the sport is in the track designs. Garcia has said he tries to hire track designers and artists who have an architectural background and know how to model accurately. This essentially assures that everything looks right and has the proper scale. It also gives the player a better sense of what it looks like when you're down the backstretch in a real NASCAR race. Garcia admits that he's seen some very strange stuff in other NASCAR games. Buildings in the wrong place, completely inaccurate banking on tracks, and even Winnebagos that look three stories high are just some of the things you won't find in NASCAR Heat.

Using track data that is supplied from the various NASCAR tracks is only the beginning of re-creating the tracks. Monster has traveled to each of the tracks to photograph every angle and perspective. They even go as far as to sometimes snap pictures of the texture of the asphalt because every track's surface has a distinct look. Monster Games also revealed a very secretive tool that aids them in the track design – Russian spy photos. It seems the Russian government has declassified thousands of satellite images and put them up for sale on the Internet. It just so happens that nearly all of the NASCAR tracks could be found in the once secret archives of the Russians.

Interfacing With the Player...

As designer and producer of NASCAR Heat, Owen Justice not only has to worry about the business aspects of keeping Monster Games' accounting and payroll, he must also direct the programming staff with issues concerning the U/I [user interface], the AI, and the physics. "That's all Owen's domain," states Rich Garcia, president of Monster Games.

Certainly his domain is a crucial element of NASCAR Heat, as he attempts to put together all the technical pieces from the programmers and artists in hopes of making an enjoyable and very playable game. Already completing work on NASCAR Heat for the PC, his next task was to bring this title to the PlayStation 2. This would seem like a fairly simple task, but Justice brings up some interesting points on what issues game designers face when changing focus from PC to console game design.

"First off, my display is different, my resolution is low, I'm sitting six feet away, and 90% of the people are using the same controller I am," Justice says, in reference to being a console player versus a playing on the PC.

Voicing some thoughts concerning the positives of creating a game for a console system, Justice is glad to have the knowledge that someone playing NASCAR Heat on PS2 or Xbox will all have the same set of tools to do so. It gives him a better understanding of what the player is going to experience. "This is brilliant as a designer because before [on the PC] you could have been on a 14-inch screen or a 21-inch screen; you could be running at 640 or you could be running at 1024; using a keyboard, a number of different wheels, a joystick – you didn't know," declares Justice.

Further comparing the PC and console game design environment, Justice thinks that some PC gamers might be a little too serious sometimes. So much so, that it motivated them to take things out of their PC game. "We worried about it. We thought if someone sees this optional feature in our game, they are not going to take it seriously – it would detract from the realism of the sport," he states.

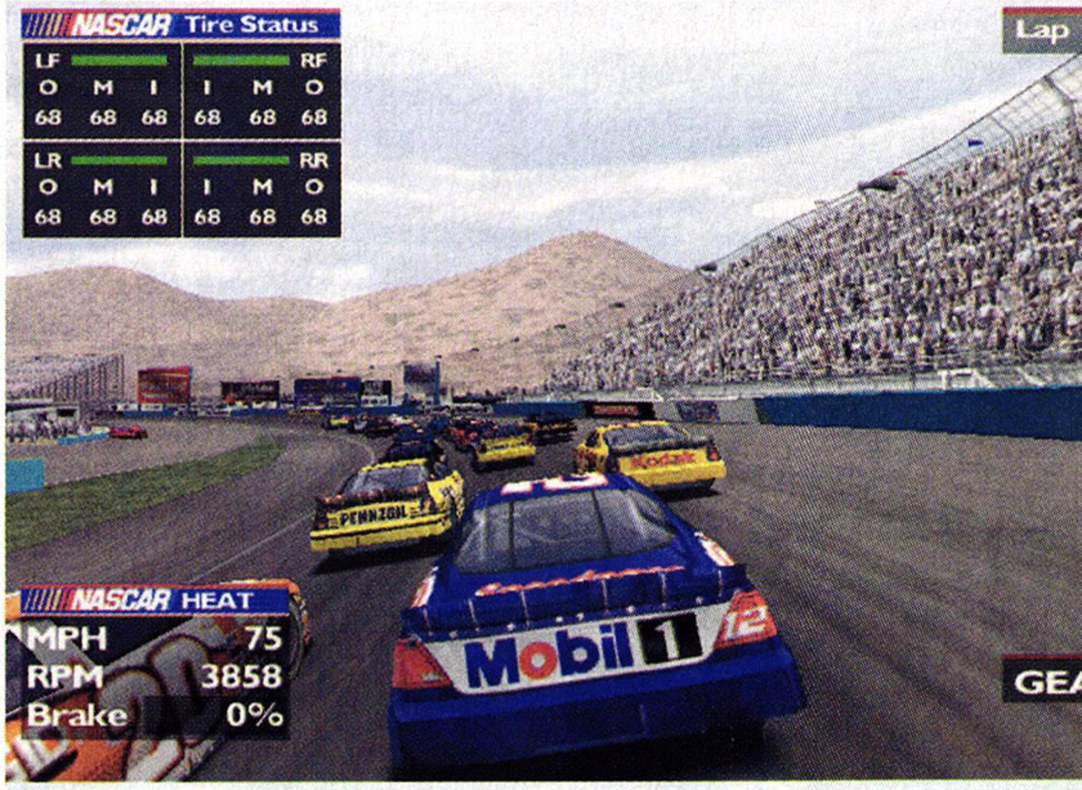
Little minigames and extra hidden modes are often common additions to console games – most of the time they are just fun side projects that programmers throw into a game. Justice admits that re-creating the sport is the obvious objective, but he believes some of the serious nature can be relaxed with a console game. "The hardcore PC market wants the sport and they don't need much else," he remarks. "The console guys, they want breadth of play and want to play it in a number of different ways. They want to play it to make the biggest wreck [laughs]. If I knew a way to score wrecks, I would put that in our game [laughs]."

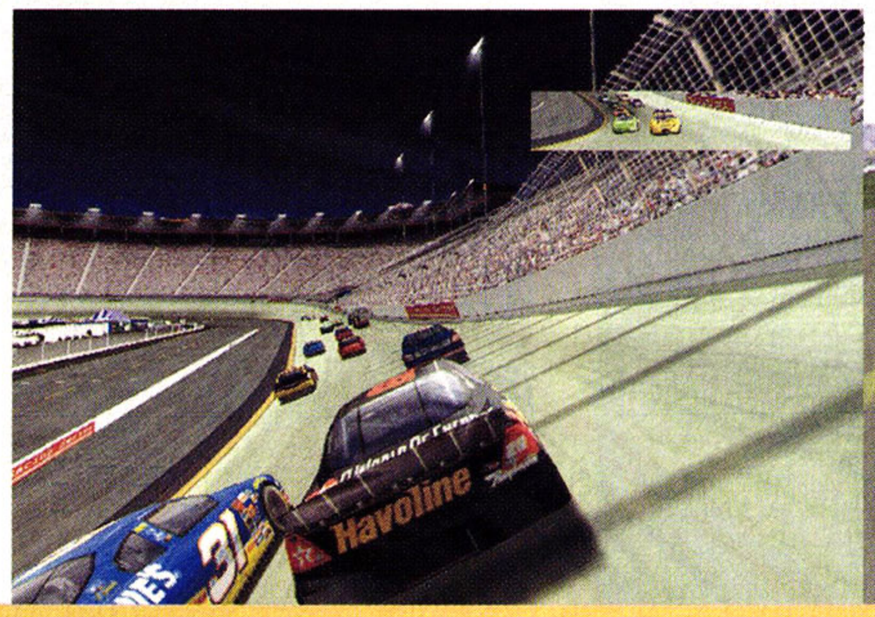
Justice also added that some of his design focuses on tasks involving the reworking of menus and general user interface that gets the player into the actual gameplay. Although Justice thinks that this would be an obvious issue for nearly all designers, most players put little thought into the fact that game designers' work is not just about the actual gameplay.

"We're making a game that is modeled on a sport, so there is obviously going to be a lot of similarity no matter what platform. Like you see Madden on the PC, Madden on the PS2 – there is a lot of similarities in play because you're modeling the same sport," comments Justice.

Even though we have offered a simplified look at Justice's design contributions to Monster Games' projects, you can plainly see there are many issues that surround the design of the game, be it Xbox, PS2, or PC.

> **"We're making a game that is modeled on a sport, so there is obviously going to be a lot of similarity no matter what platform."**
>
> **OWEN JUSTICE**
> PRODUCER, DESIGNER



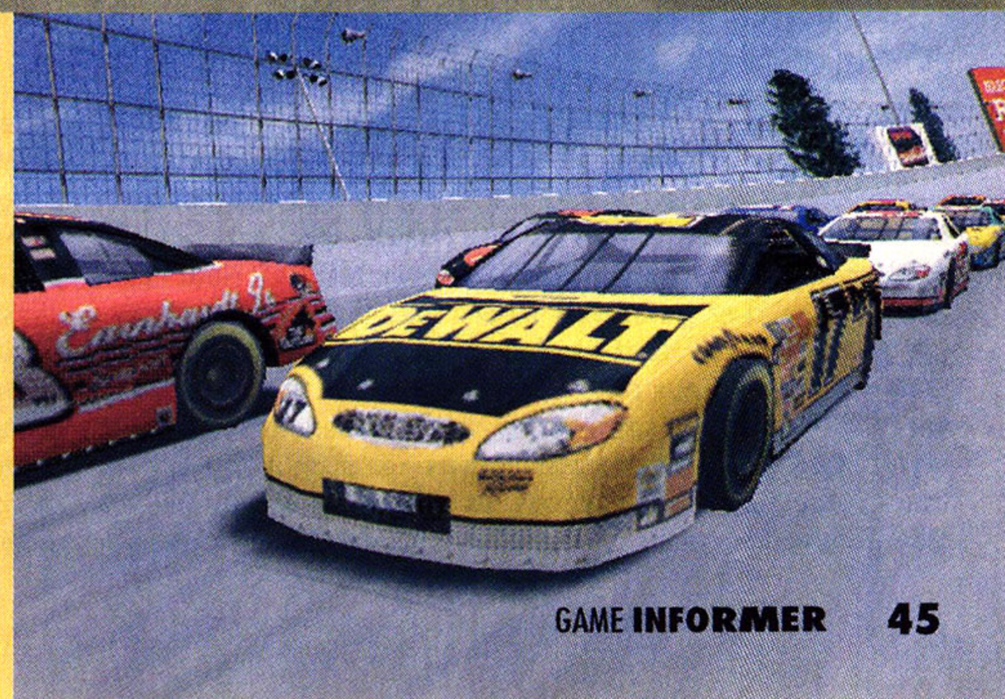


The Cars

For NASCAR fans, the cars are nearly as popular as the drivers are. Sporting eye-catching paintjobs, individual cars are easy to pick out amongst the pack. Of course, these cars are re-created with nearly every detail and it is important to the artists at Monster Games to get every decal placement and insignia just right.

Likewise, the cars' performance on the track is of the utmost importance. Just as in the real sport, Monster Games allows the player to go into the garage and make modifications to help performance on the track. Weight balance, individual shocks and springs, tire pressure, tire camber, gear ratios, and sway bars are a sampling of the components the player will have access to. The interesting aspect of all of these variables is that tweaking often has an impact on other settings. This makes it challenging not only for the user, but it made for plenty of work for the programmers as they had to preset all the variables for each of the NASCAR tracks.

One last thing we must mention about the cars is the wrecks. There are plenty of them in NASCAR Heat. In light of the recent fatal crash involving Dale Earnhardt, we won't go too much into how spectacular crashes are in the real sport. We will just say that mishaps do occur in the game and they are well done.



Tech Talks...

A video game glossary (or the schematics and specs sheets for the PS2 and Xbox) might be in order now. Talking to a developer about the technical aspects of a game is often an adventure in video game jargon; texture maps, lighting models, architecture, and sports cars.

Rich Garcia, president and founder of Monster Games, didn't talk about a sports car because we never asked if he had one. But Garcia knows his stuff, and better yet he doesn't make you go running to the dictionary as soon as he speaks. Take a look at some of his technical observations on the development environments for both the Xbox and PlayStation 2.

On the PlayStation 2...Specialize

→ "It is not at all the same working with the PlayStation 2 and PlayStation. The main thing was just with the simplest thing of just getting triangles up on the screen. Generally this is not a difficult process, but in order to get a high performance triangle – getting the clipping right and getting it to work at the maximum throughput – everybody [other developers] had to go through that work. We didn't have the same base to start as we had with the PS One. You're really staring at ground zero with the PlayStation 2 – especially if you were a PlayStation developer because there were so many parts of the hardware to master."

→ "[The PS2 development library] had a very good low-level description of all the hardware, and then they had a very general high-level description. But in terms of the middle level – as to how all the things interact – is really where the challenge has been."

→ "The biggest problem we had – and you've already seen it in other games – is with the aliasing of the polygons. Right now you can really get a lot of polygons, but if you just put them next to each other you get kind of the steppy edges. It's really a challenge to author your assets to make them look good, especially when you're not used to dealing with so many polygons. Our artists get excited because they think they can do a car in 10,000 polygons, then you show it onscreen and it's all this flickering mess."

→ "Then they make one more [revision] and it looks a little bit better, another rev and it gets better. Every time they go through they learn how to make things looks better and use the polygons more wisely."

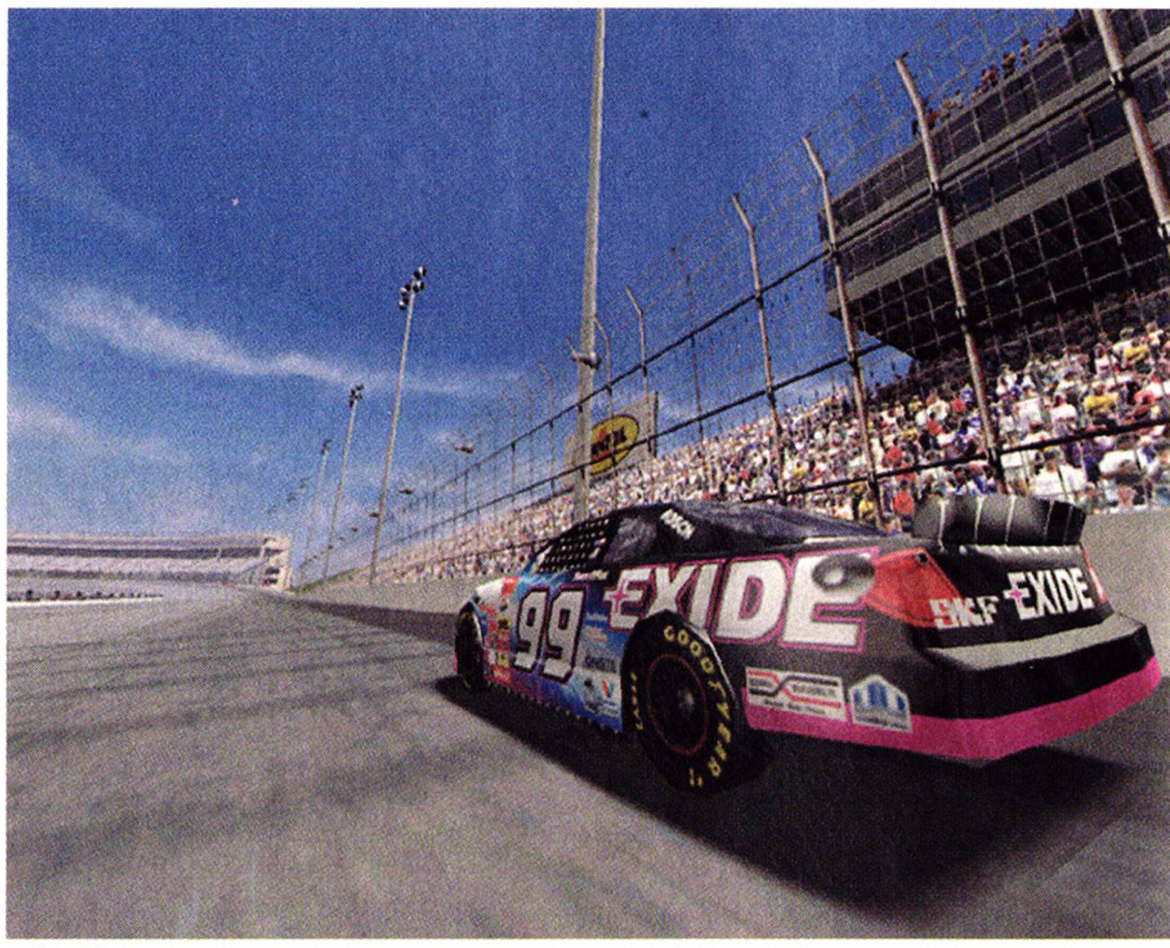
→ "We went through a huge change in performance from where we've started [on the NASCAR engine] until now in terms of trying to get all the processors running in parallel and doing useful work all the time – without it all locking up [laughs]."

→ "The PlayStation 2's graphics unit has this little programmer – a vector unit – inside that can run a little program independent of the main CPU. Maximizing the use of that vector unit is really what it's all about. You want to have that guy start generating polygons on its own and this is the sort of optimizations that we definitely can't get in the first generation, but in the second generation it greatly improves not only the look, but the speed of the game as well."

→ "We can do it, but there is a lot of basic work that everyone has to do to get things running. With the PS One, it was very easy to get things running and then you would crank it up to get things faster by writing specialized code. But with the PlayStation 2, you have to specialize from day one and get the architecture right."

XBOX VS. PLAYSTATION 2

Xbox



PlayStation 2

Modes of Play

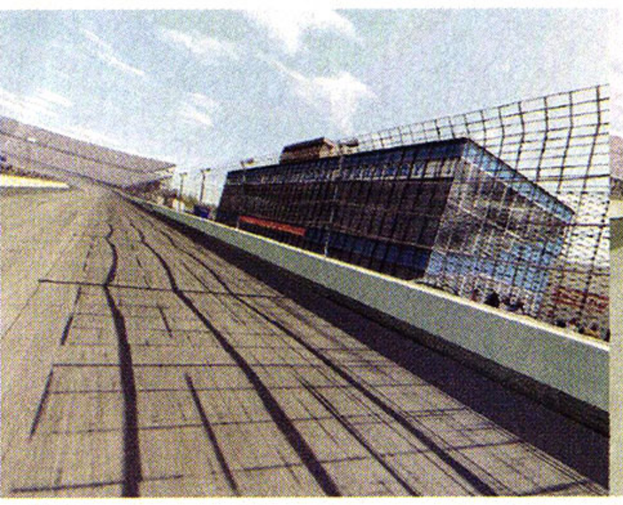
Racing a full NASCAR season or just testing your skills on an individual track is pretty much the norm on any racing sim. Certainly you can fine tune the experience and modify such things as race length, opponent strength, and other options. However, NASCAR Heat has a couple other gameplay modes that make it unique.

The Beat The Heat mode contains 36 short scenarios that will test your driving skills, similar to the license tests in Gran Turismo. Some of the scenarios are as short as 15 seconds, while others can span multiple laps. Real racing situations, as well as other more fictional events, offer plenty of challenge. NASCAR personalities will introduce you to these entertaining events with "The Voice of NASCAR," Alan Bestwick, serving as host.

Another mode is called Race the Pro. Here you pick between nine of NASCAR's top drivers and challenge them on one of their three favorite tracks. You then have five laps to beat the selected driver's lap time. It is not only fun to challenge some big name drivers, since you can see (and often follow) the pro driver, this mode also teaches you the optimal lines and proper speeds to drive on the tracks.

Xbox

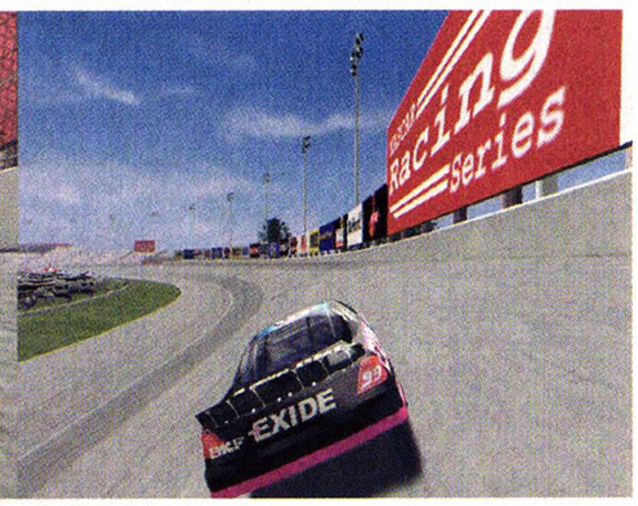
PlayStation 2



Xbox

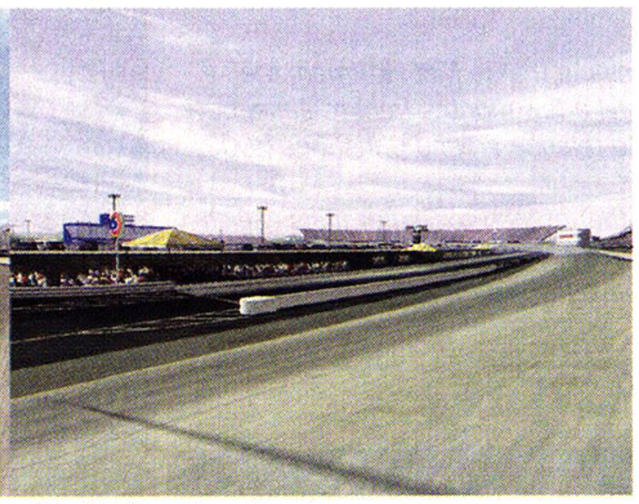
PlayStation 2

Xbox



PlayStation 2

Xbox



PlayStation 2

Coming Soon

The PlayStation 2 version of NASCAR Heat has already reached its beta stage, which means it is likely to be released in May. On the other hand, the Xbox version of the game is tentatively scheduled to arrive this fall.

MAKING THE JUMP...

Tech Talks...(cont.)

On the Xbox...All about the Pixel

→ "Early on [Microsoft] didn't give us a lot of the low-level stuff and they gave us all of the high-level stuff. Unfortunately in this case, we wanted the low-level stuff because the transition from PC to Xbox is fairly easy, so I don't need a lot of help. [laughs] It was only recently when we went to the latest Xbox developers conference where they gave us a lot more of the detailed low-level information."

→ "Microsoft is really adamant about [bringing PC ports to Xbox], and said that they would not approve any title that looks like a PC game."

→ "The big changeover with Xbox is the NVIDIA graphics processor is so much more advanced than the PS2 in terms of how much work it can do on one pixel. The PlayStation 2 is really fast, but it can't do a lot of work on a pixel. With the Xbox, you can run a little program to calculate what each little pixel is going to look like. So we write programs that say this little pixel is going to look like this because I can take a part, multiply it by another...you can do a lot of work. Really the Xbox is about trying to create high quality pixels."

→ "For instance if you have a car on PS2, you draw the car, and if you want an environment map, you draw the environment map. So essentially, you are drawing the car a second time. If you want a damage texture on it, you would draw it a third time. If you want to put a gloss map in it to remove some of the shine, you draw it a fourth time. So you are essentially drawing a car four times."

→ "On the Xbox, you have the ability to draw these four textures simultaneously, blend them all, and draw the car one time. In other words, you take the base texture, add in the environment map texture, subtract out the gloss texture, and then blend it with the damage texture. So you've got really high-quality pixels that you can do. That's the part where some really interesting stuff is going to happen because this is the power that was previously available in the PC, but no one was able to use it yet."

→ "I must say that this NVIDIA graphics chip is really amazing. The GeForce II Ultra runs at a similar speed, but this one will have the four textures, and you can run a program that is executed on every vertex and one that runs on every pixel. The power of the pixel is really where the difference in quality is going to come up."

→ "[Microsoft] is basing it all on the PC API [application programming interface] – the DirectX stuff – so we've seen it all before on PC. Most of our code uses most of this stuff already and then we can really focus on the specialized stuff that the Xbox can do."

Dale Earnhardt's tragic death at Daytona certainly was a blow to NASCAR fans around the world. Monster Games plans to include a special tribute to "The Intimidator" in Nascar Heat.

Answer: The image on the left is the actual photograph.

PREVIEWS

PLAYSTATION

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX

THE NEW EXTREME ICON

Every alternative sports property Activision has touched has turned to gold. With the impending enigma that is Mat Hoffman, the company hopes this game will do for BMX what Tony Hawk's Pro Skater did for skateboarding. It's still a few months from release, but in actuality Hoffman has been basically complete for some time now, and was originally scheduled to release around Christmas 2000. Activision held it off to avoid direct competition with its golden child, Tony Hawk 2.

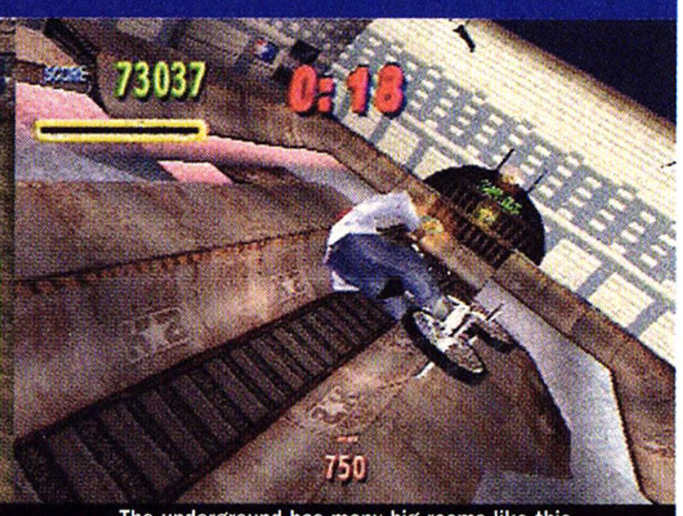
Hoffman blends much of the Tony feel with a two-wheeled slant. If you've put in some time with either of the Pro Skater titles (which we know you have), this game will be a breeze to pick up and play. Having a bike, as opposed to a board, creates some interesting twists, though, which keeps Hoffman from seeming too much like a THPS clone. We take off the training wheels and fill you in on what to expect from your new freestyle friend.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** RUNECRAFT ■ **RELEASE** MAY 15

STAY THE COURSE

The many tracks of Hoffman are designed specifically for bikes. Some are even modeled after real-life locales, and each will have its own set of goals to accomplish in Career mode. The park creator is very similar to the amazing mode in Tony 2, but with new options, themes, and objects. A long list of designer-made levels in this mode almost doubles the course count.

A school-themed created park



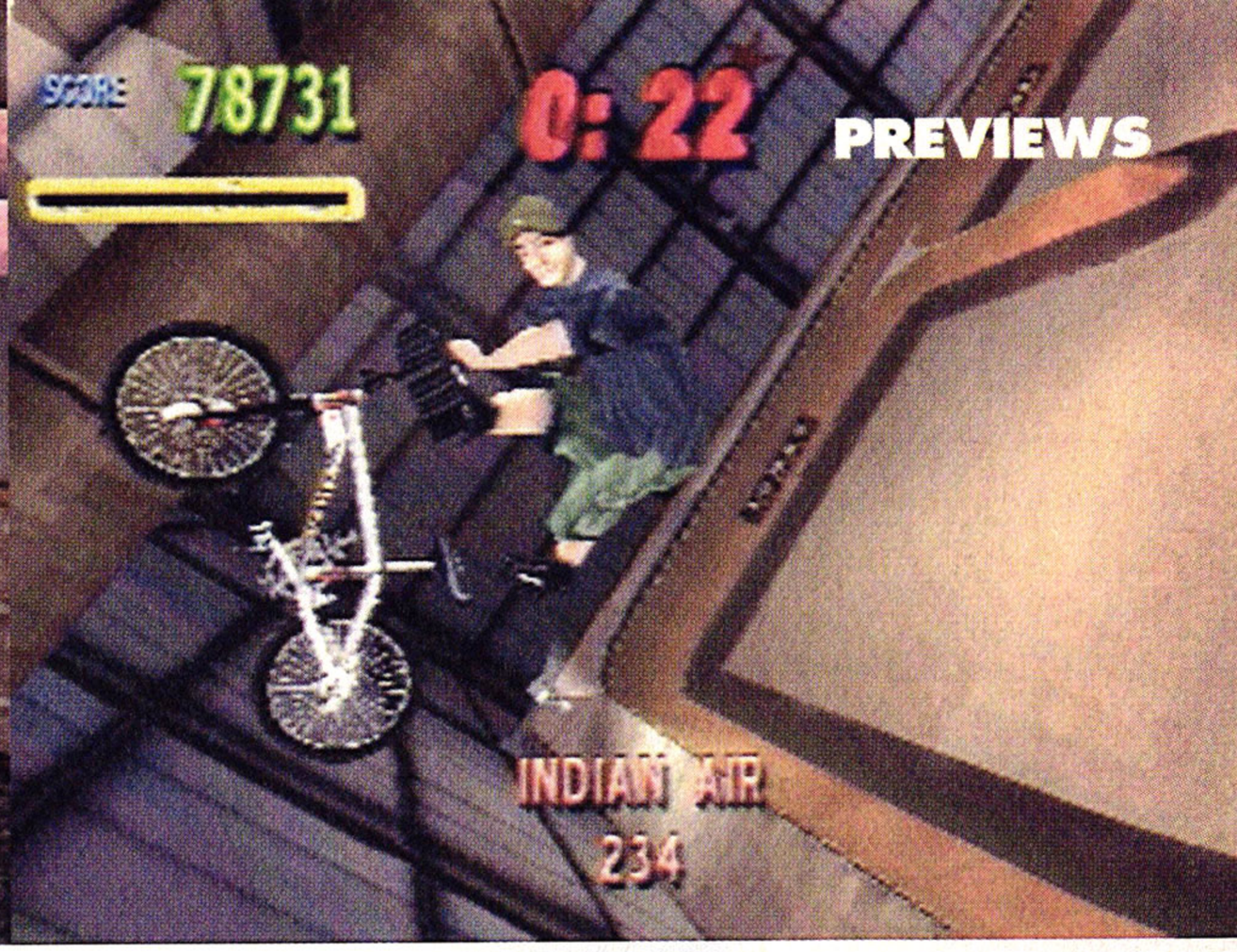
The underground has many big rooms like this

Link together a huge string of grinds for massive points

Grinding is the main way to reach secret areas

THE DAILY GRIND

Amazingly, grinding is even more fun in Hoffman than it was in THPS2. It's easier to balance, leading to longer stretches, and the bike offers access to far more grind points than a board does. Adding to this are lip stalls, which can be bunny hopped right into a grind. Manuals will also play a big role, and coupled with the excellent level design, will lead to some unbelievably long combos.

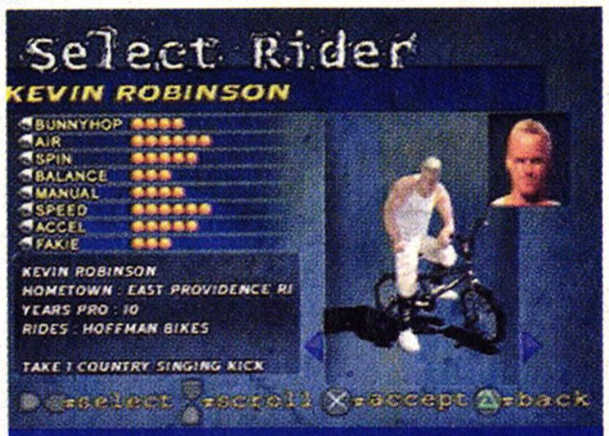


Man and bike separate for a brief moment

Hoffman himself executes a special move

VERTICALLY UNCHALLENGED

Limitless heights can be attained on your aluminum ally. The bikes spin extremely fast, so hitting a 900 is commonplace. Unlike Tony Hawk 2, rider tricks and specials are player-specific, and won't be interchangeable. Thus, you'll have to memorize each person's trick set, much like the first Pro Skater or a fighting game. Each character will have four signature moves, except for coverboy Mat, who will get an extra one thrown in.



NEW CAST OF CRAZIES

As of right now, there are eight professional riders to get to know in Pro BMX. Like the stars of THPS, these guys are sure to attain celebrity status. We don't doubt that beating the game with each one will unlock new options, and there's probably another Officer Dick-type comedy character in here somewhere. Who will be this game's Rune Glifberg? It's a wide-open field.

YOU BETTER SHOP AROUND

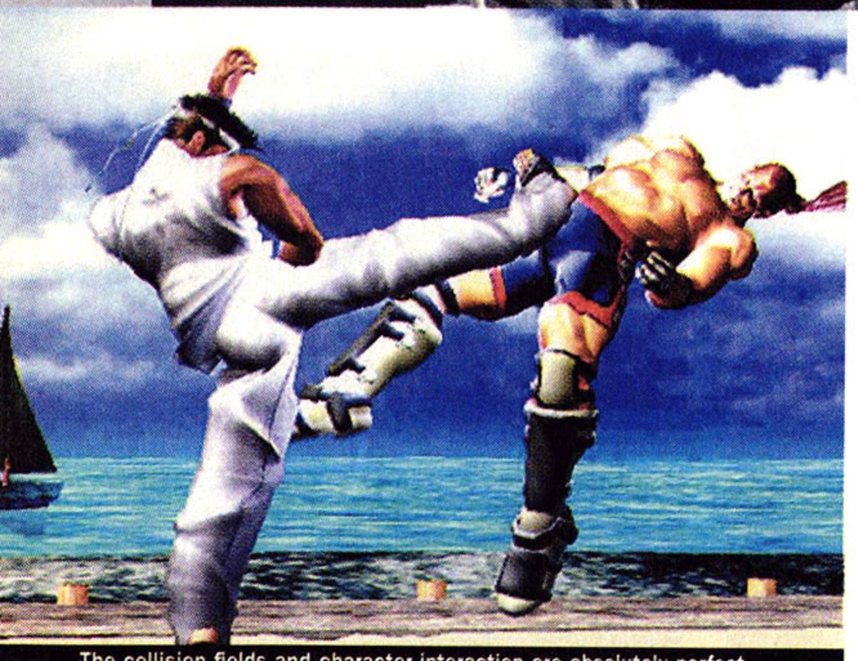
Bicycles are very intricate pieces of equipment, as opposed to some wood with wheels. Each character not only has a slew of signature rides, but they can also customize bars, brakes, etc. to match their biking style. Nothing good is free, so be sure to collect plenty of cash to make modifications possible.

Yes! We've got blood!

You never know how you'll hit pavement

MAKING BAIL

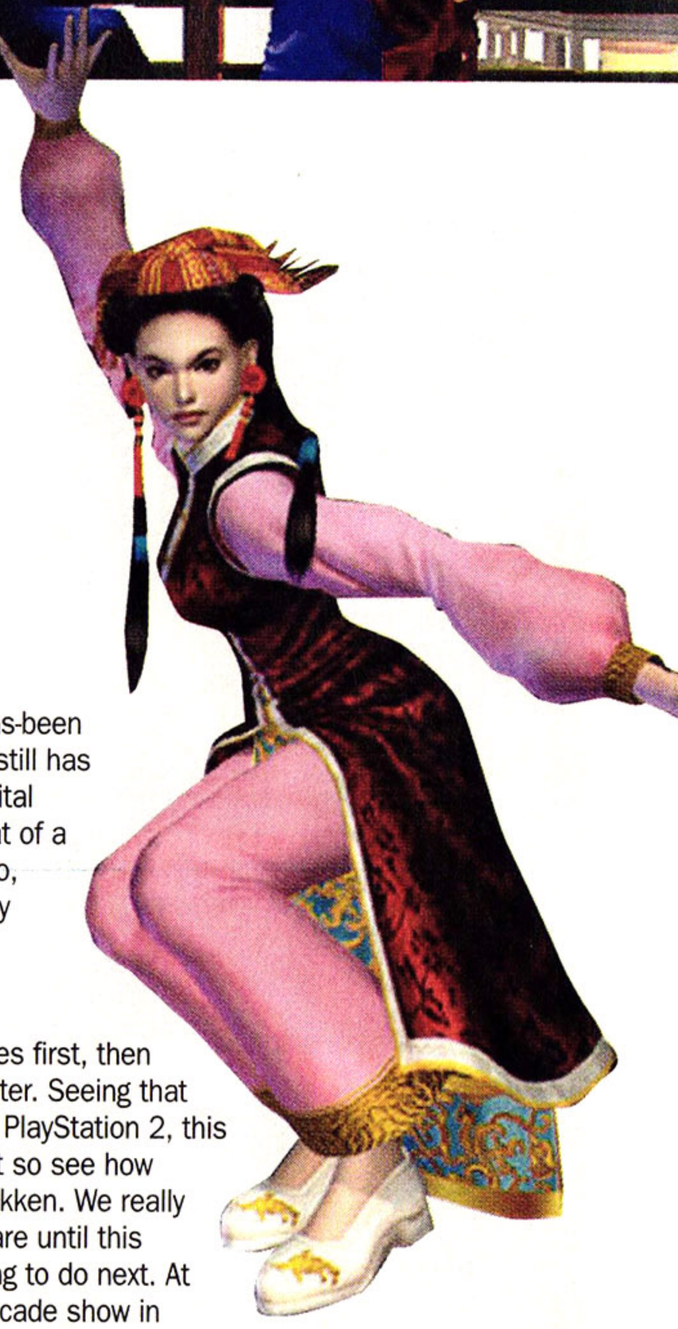
Crash animations are plentiful in Pro BMX. You won't see anything as painful as Tony 2's rail nutter, but the falls these guys take definitely cause some damage. Once bike and rider separate, the vehicle has a mind of its own, and will either fly into the camera, roll around by itself, or just tumble helter skelter. The riders themselves have several unnatural body contortions, though not as freakish as Dave Mirra BMX's skeletal system.



The collision fields and character interaction are absolutely perfect

Check out the cool snow effects

The character models are even more detailed than those in Shenmue



PLAYSTATION 2/ARCADE

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

RISE FROM YOUR GRAVE

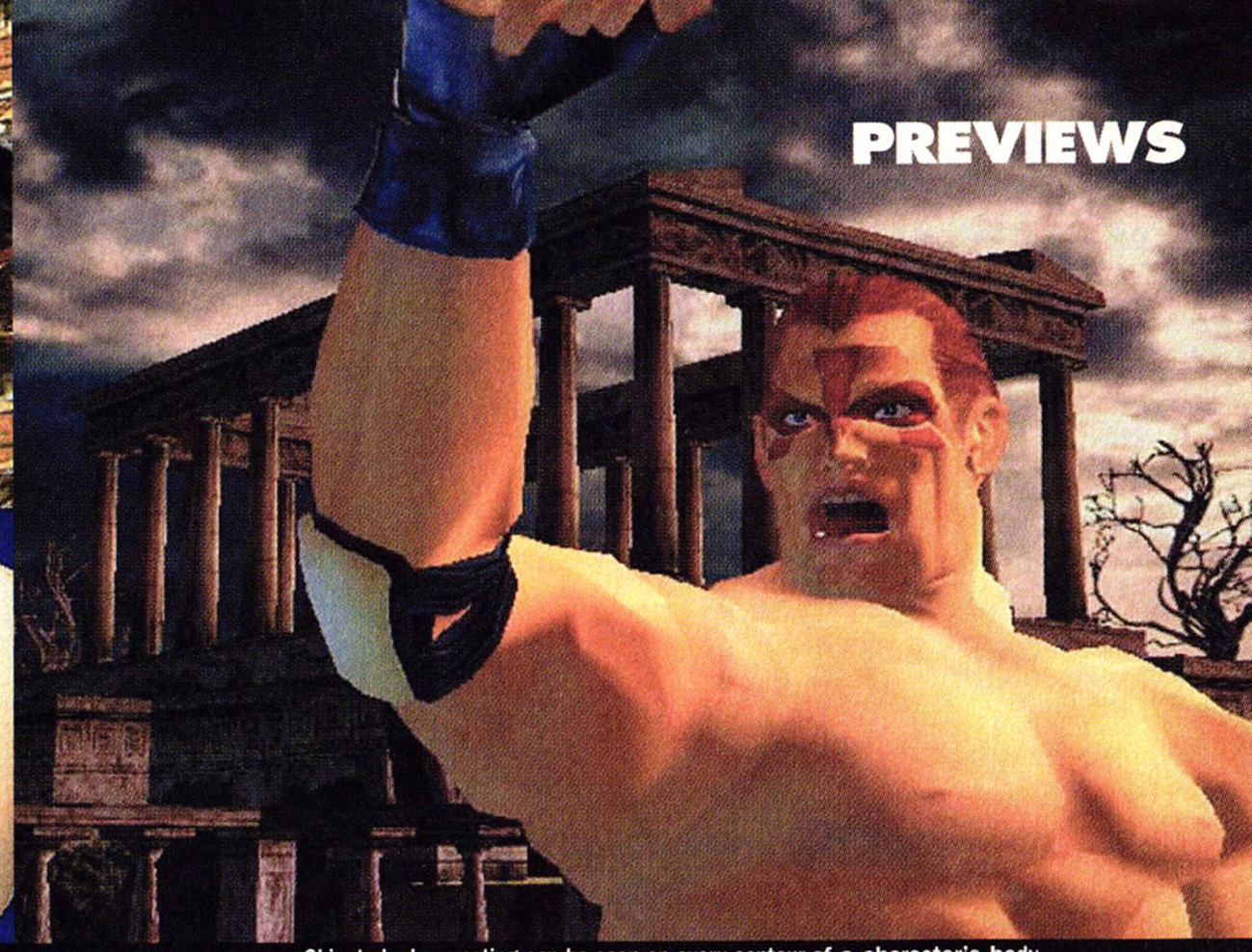
Rather than be martyred and remembered as a legendary has-been who fought valiantly but came up short, Sega is changing its business model, but still has the burning desire to dominate the video game industry. Instead of hunting the digital waters as a bloodthirsty shark, Sega's role has changed to that of a lamprey – attaching itself to larger vessels like Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft. Not wasting any time whatsoever, Sega already has a handful of games in the works for PlayStation 2, Gamecube, and Xbox. The first title which will land on Sony's aspiring console is Virtua Fighter 4.

As always, this title is being developed for the arcades first, then it will be ported down to the PlayStation 2 hardware later. Seeing that the Naomi 2 specs are nearly identical to those of the PlayStation 2, this seems like a perfect fit. Even better yet, we can't wait so see how Sega's fighter fares against Namco's PS2 iron fist, Tekken. We really didn't expect Sega to show any of its third-party software until this summer, but really, you never know what Sega's going to do next. At this year's Arcade Operator's Union Expo, a ritzy arcade show in Japan, Sega unveiled Virtua Fighter 4 to the crowd. While only in demo form, all in attendance were blown away by AM2's latest fighting endeavor. Not only has the graphical prowess been enhanced to a frighteningly realistic state, the gameplay has also transformed to include more grapples and choreographed sequences. Amazingly, the action has the appearance of a Jackie Chan flick. All the movements are smooth and the character interaction is perfect. Of course, some dramatic Matrix effects have been added to give the game a little more flair.

All of your favorite combatants are returning, and to spice things up a little bit, two new fighters have been inserted. One of the most exciting additions is the ability to save your record and transport it from machine to machine. Right now, the plan is for a magnetic card that can be transported to cell phones and external saving devices – one of which we hope is a PlayStation 2. No release dates have been given as of yet, but don't be surprised if it shows up in arcades this fall, and on the PlayStation 2 in the cold winter season.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** AM2 ■ **RELEASE** TBA

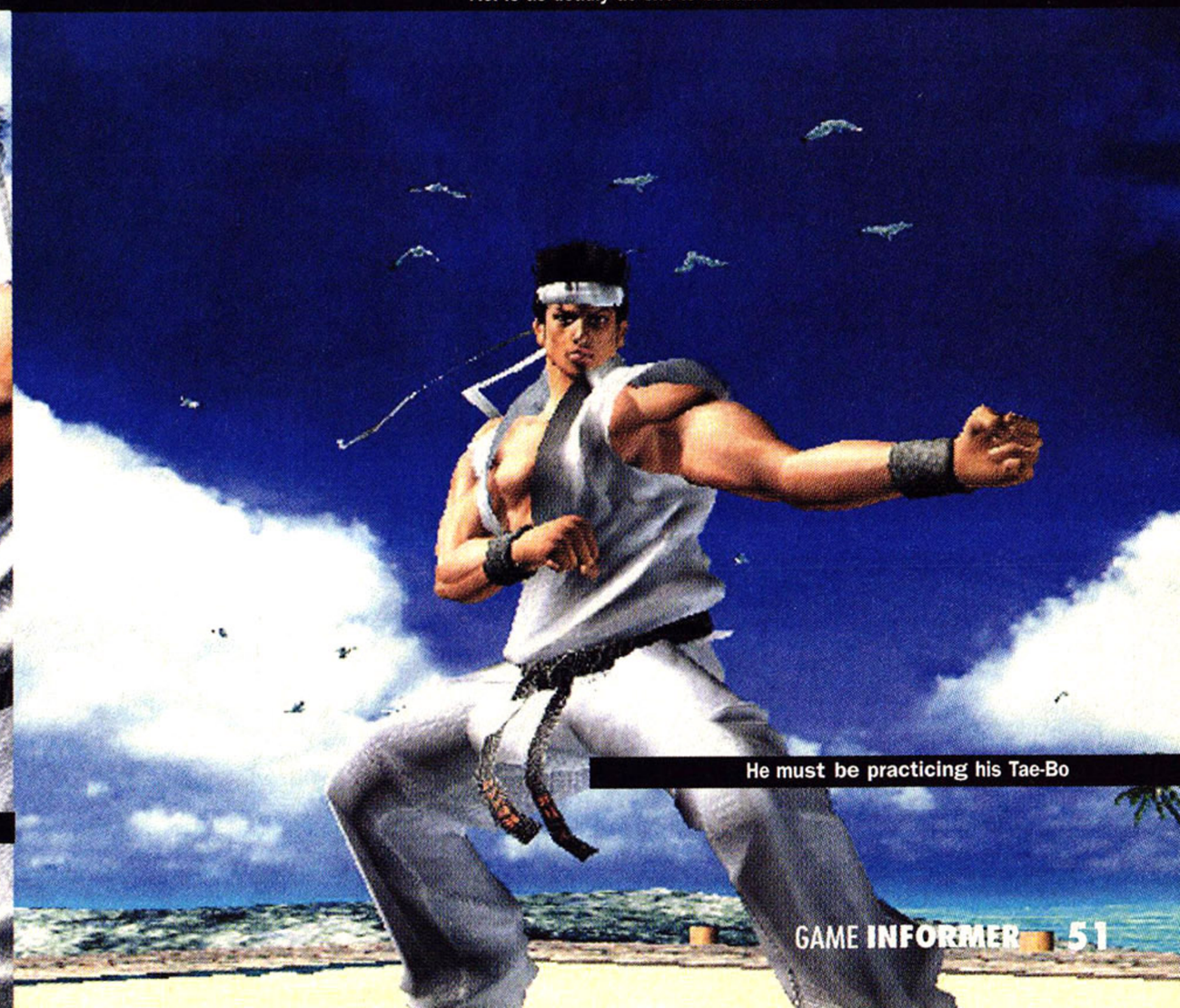
Everyone likes Pai!!!



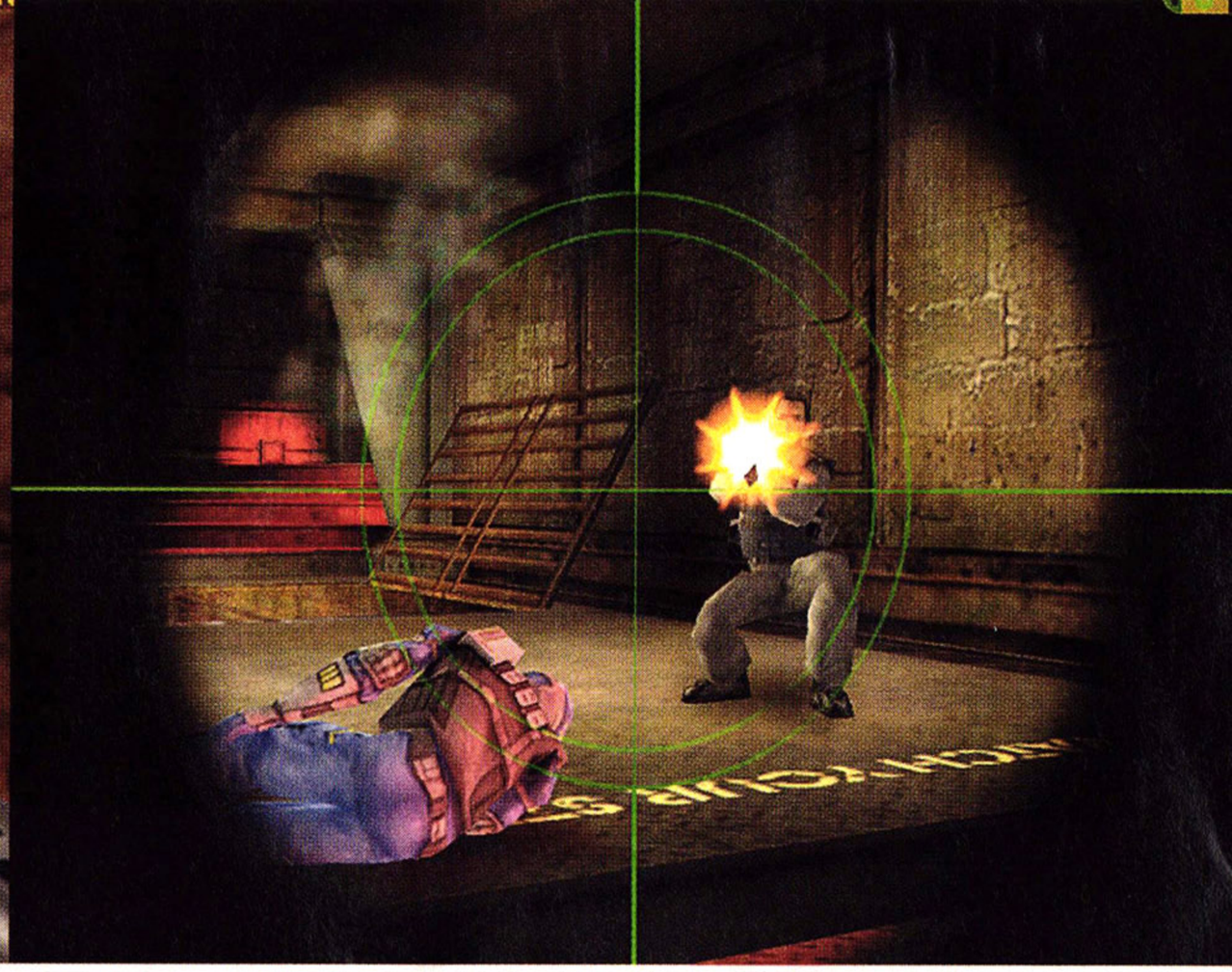
Object shadow casting can be seen on every contour of a character's body

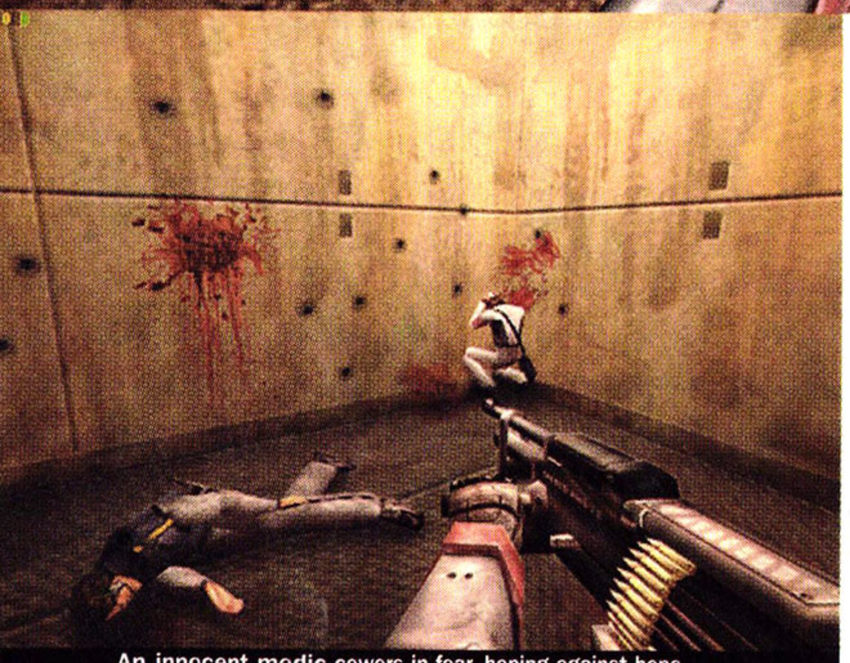
Aoi is as deadly as she is beautiful

Grappling plays a larger role in this sequel

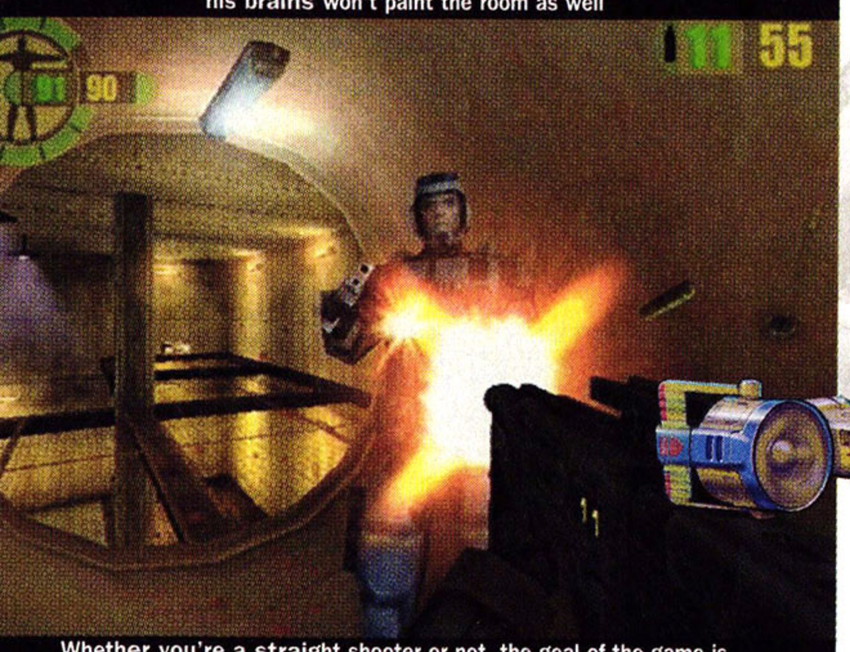


He must be practicing his Tae-Bo

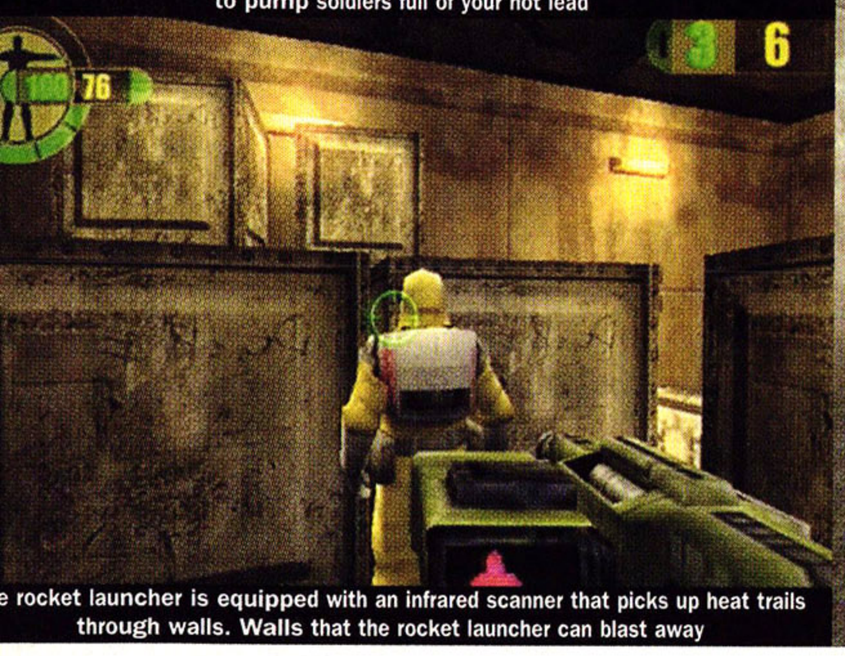




An innocent medic cowers in fear, hoping against hope his brains won't paint the room as well



Whether you're a straight shooter or not, the goal of the game is to pump soldiers full of your hot lead



e rocket launcher is equipped with an infrared scanner that picks up heat trails through walls. Walls that the rocket launcher can blast away

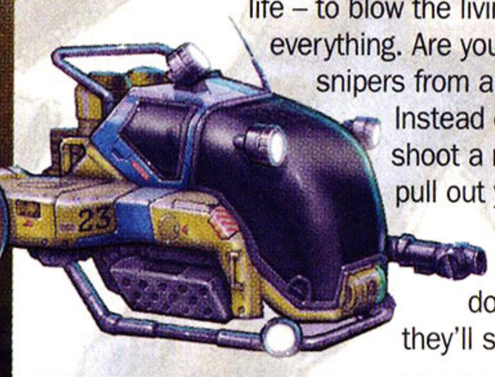
PLAYSTATION 2

RED FACTION

RED LEADER STANDING BY

Red Faction is to the PlayStation 2 what GoldenEye was to the Nintendo 64. This is a big statement indeed, but believe us, this game has more than enough firepower to back it up. Sure, most of you are probably saying, "Big deal! It's just another first-person shooter." True, it does blend in with all the other FPS's out there. However, when you break down this game and focus on its technology, Red Faction towers over all others – mainly because it's the only game to successfully deliver real-time arbitrary geometry modification. Volition may just be an ordinary development house, but we think you'll look up to them as gods after you see this game in action.

With the revolutionary Geo-Mod engine in place, players will finally have the tools needed to accomplish their ultimate goal in life – to blow the living hell out of everyone and everything. Are you having trouble removing snipers from a highly secured bunker? Instead of wasting ammo trying to shoot a needle in a haystack, just pull out your trusty rocket launcher and blow a hole in the bunker. If the debris doesn't crush the enemy, they'll search for alternate cover, which of course gives you the perfect opportunity to fill them full of lead.



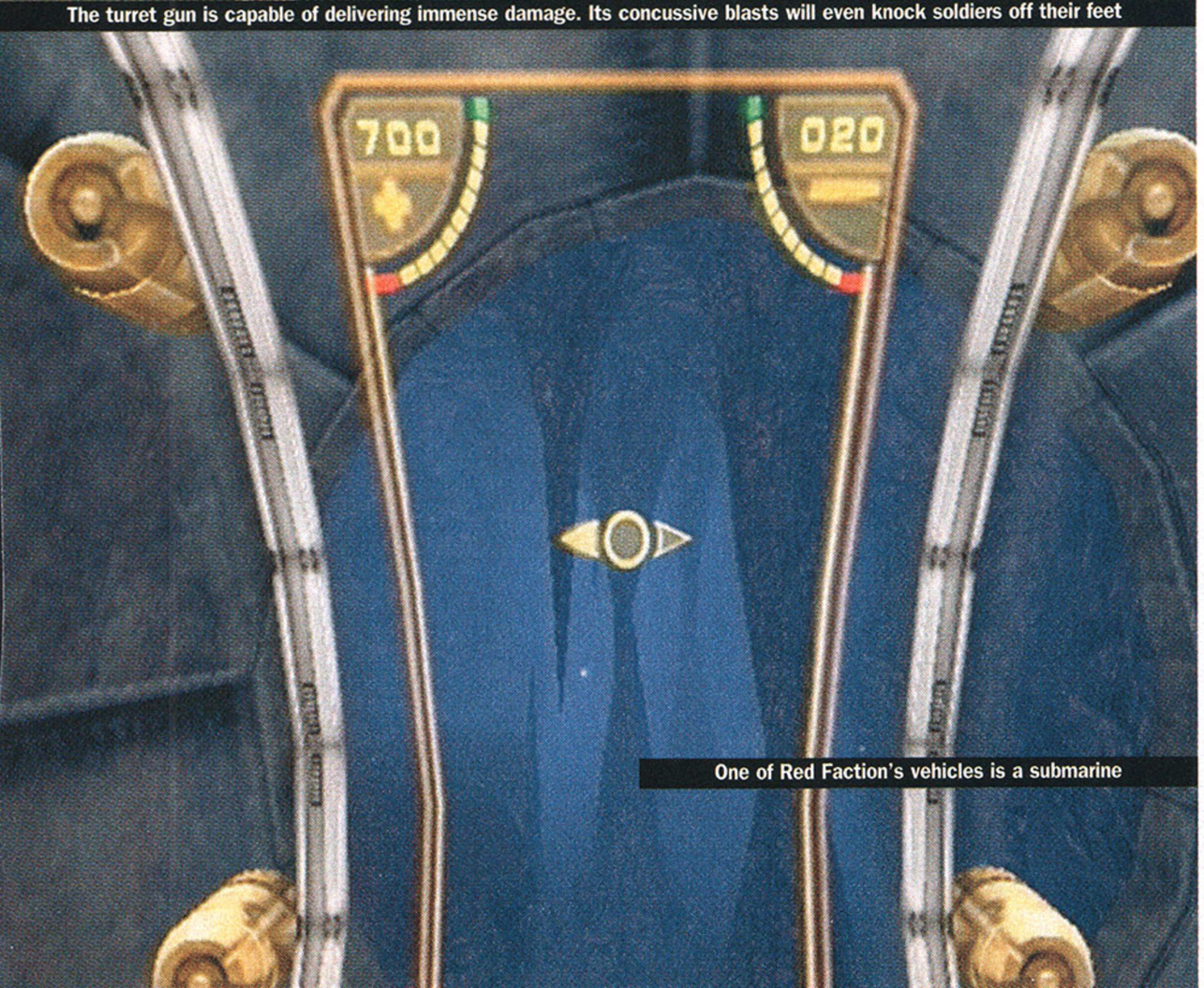
To put the Geo-Mod technology into perspective, every inch of an environment can be obliterated. A good comparison to the sheer magnitude of destruction is the corporate headquarters gun battle in The Matrix. The game actually begins with a similar scenario. Only instead of flipping in-between pillars with a handful of assorted weapons, you remain stationary with your trusty friend, the turret. With this weapon, you can blow away the pillars, shoot out the lights, and if you feel the enemy onslaught is too much, blow a hole through the wall and escape. The Geo-Mod technology actually supports falling geometry, real-time skeletal deformation, animation interpolation, and advanced physics simulation for particles and liquid.

As for the rest of the game, it's just as smooth as TimeSplitters, and loaded to the hilt with interesting action and stealth missions just like Perfect Dark. In many of these missions, you'll even commandeer a handful of land and sea vehicles. Knowing full well what gamers want, the single-player game is accompanied by a stellar multiplayer presentation that allows players to knock boots in two-player split-screen deathmatch and Geo-Mod specific modes. Right now, this title is the forerunner for Game of the Year. Nothing else even comes close.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** VOLITION ■ **RELEASE** MAY 8

If you find yourself trapped, improvise and create your own tunnel to safety

The turret gun is capable of delivering immense damage. Its concussive blasts will even knock soldiers off their feet



One of Red Faction's vehicles is a submarine

Placing specific characters next to each other creates devastating combos

PLAYSTATION 2

SEVEN: THE CAVALRY OF MOLMORTH

FALLING INTO THE PS2 ROTATION

As new role-playing games come and go, gamers continually demand more from the developer. A good portion of Square Soft's lot, mainly Final Fantasy, are packed with so much material that it takes countless hours to figure out how the game actually works. While Square Soft is taking a much needed sabbatical from the RPG front, Namco, yes Namco, is filling its shoes with the title Seven: The Cavalry of Molmorth. If you didn't know who the developer of this title was, you'd swear it was the same Square Soft team that assembled SaGa Frontier II. The artistic direction is nearly identical; presenting a colorful animated world that appears to be more a children's book than a game.

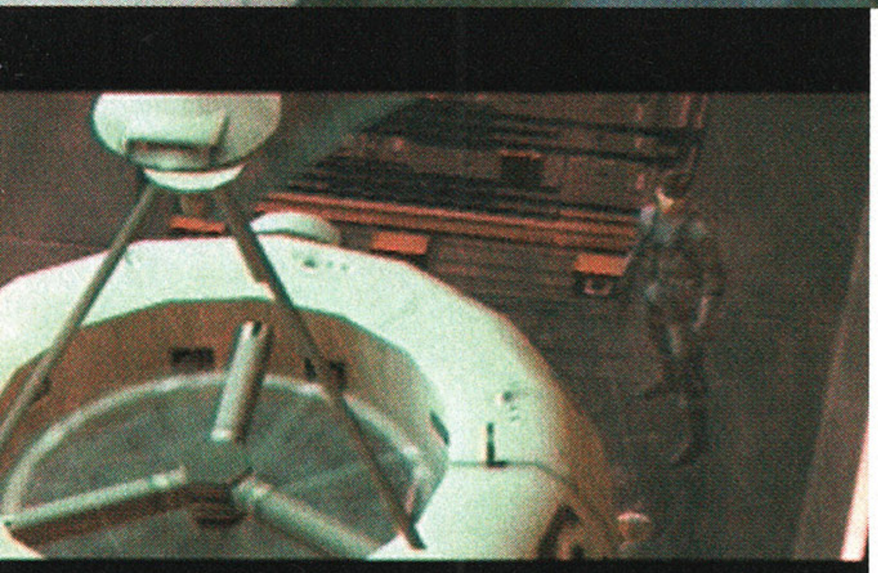
Certainly, the animation and background detailing are praiseworthy. If you look closely, you can see that the little sprite characters' mouths are actually lip-synched with the written dialogue. However, when you start playing this game, the Square Soft charm is quickly lost. Instead of offering a comprehensive option-heavy package, Namco has simplified the gameplay formula, allowing everyone to play.

The combat is stylized much like Ogre Battle, where a handful of warriors are placed on a battle grid. The only technique to this set-up is to position the soldiers in the best formation, then send them into the fray. You don't control their actions, rather, the only interaction you have is to rotate the lines when the troops in front sustain damage. That's it. Your more or less watch the remaining portion of the game.

If Namco wishes to bring this game to the States, some big changes (like the implementation of gameplay) are truly needed. Rotating lines is amusing for uh...hmmm...five seconds tops.

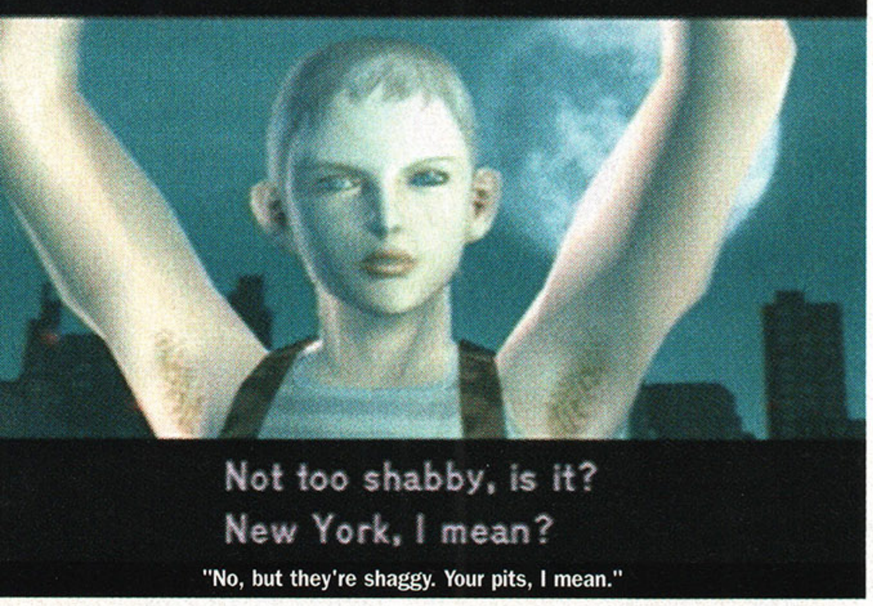
The only combat strategy is positioning troops in battle formations

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO
■ **RELEASE** TBA



Is that an albino probe droid?

He who sneaks away lives to fight another day



"No, but they're shaggy. Your pits, I mean."

PLAYSTATION 2

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

THE SULTAN OF STEALTH

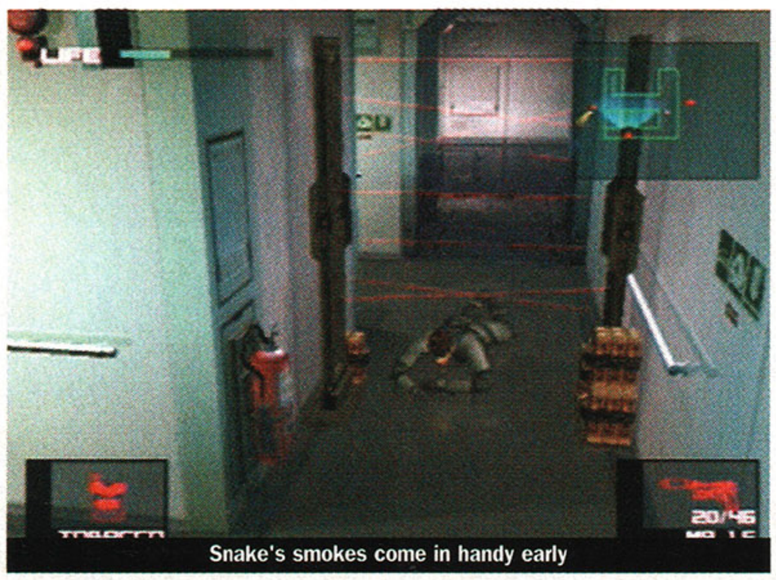
Solid Snake's retirement is over. Duty calls yet again, and the long-haired loner is once again the only man for the job. Thanks to a trial demo which introduced the first scenario of the game, complete with English subtitles, we finally had the chance to go buck wild with the next-gen incarnation of Metal Gear Solid. To recap the game's opening described in our April cover story: Snake has arrived on a huge tanker, followed shortly after by Russian terrorists, who systematically add another orifice to the skulls of every crew member onboard. This makes things exceedingly difficult, but Snake treats adversity as a friend.

Your old geeky associate Otacon is manning the Codec, dishing out advice from afar. He alludes to Mei Ling, and hopefully her cuteness will brighten up later portions of the game. Until then, though, you just have the scientist's long face to stare at, albeit in nice 3D. Russian commandos are everywhere, and it's best to do whatever you can to avoid confrontation. New techniques to assist your non-violent ways include jumping over railings and some acrobatic roll moves.

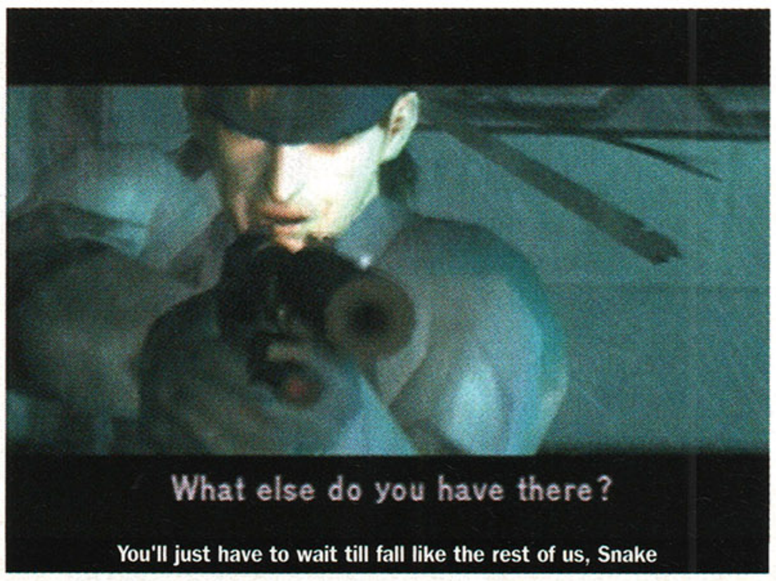
If you have no choice but to fight back, Snake's initial weapon is a tranquilizer gun. It only fires one round per reload, but that single shot could take out a charging rhino. You can either use the normal overhead view's auto targeting or the snazzy new first-person view to take aim. Hand-to-hand combat is still one of Snake's strong points, as well as a mean sleeper hold. Take out enemies quickly, or they may radio for back-up. Drag around your fallen foe like a sack of potatoes, and he might even drop an item or two. Soldiers aren't your only opposition, and far from the most deadly. Security cameras can alert a whole squad of your presence. Infrared sensors are far less subtle, and can be attached to enough explosive to send the whole ship, Metal Gear Ray and all, down to a watery grave. Of course, MGS 2 has a few bosses, and the first one we encountered was Olga Gurlukovich, an independent woman who happens to be the daughter of the Russian commanding officer. This confrontation turned into a gunfight across a dividing barrier, as Olga lamented her childhood until taken out.

Completing this early demo has us chomping at the bit for more sneaky action. We haven't even touched the high-tech weapons in the game, nor have we uncovered much of the story. Still, consider us more than satiated, and more excited than ever. This is just the tip of the next-gen iceberg, and we'll tell you what's next as soon as we find out.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KCEJ ■ **RELEASE** FALL



Snake's smokes come in handy early



You'll just have to wait till fall like the rest of us, Snake

PLAYSTATION 2

EXTERMINATION

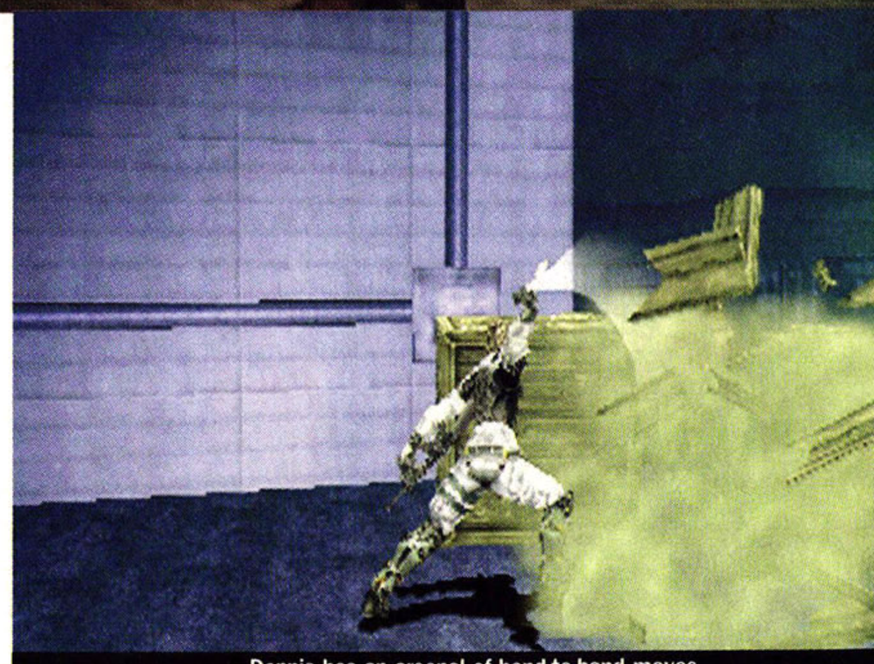
ENTER THE PANIC ZONE

Much in the same way that show dogs are selected by pedigree, it's often instructive to examine the background of the people behind a game when evaluating its prospects. Looking at Extermination in this manner, one would have to assume that it stands a fair chance of making Game Informer's prestigious Games of 2001 list. The driving force behind Extermination is none other than legendary Capcom defector Tokuro Fujiwara, the man who created such masterpieces as Ghosts N' Goblins, Mega Man, Strider, Final Fight, Bionic Commando, Tomba!, and Resident Evil. With a track record like this, suffice it to say that the man knows a thing or two about making games.

With Extermination, Fujiwara returns to the tense, dark action of Resident Evil. However, don't you dare call it a survival horror game, buster! It's a "Panic Action" title – GOT IT? Good. Panic action differs from survival horror in that certain region action events occur throughout gameplay. These events require the player to perform a pattern of controller inputs in a short period of time to save your character. While we're not exactly sure how this will be implemented, reports seem to suggest that these sequences will be similar to Shenmue's Quick Time Events.

Plotwise, Extermination seems to wallow in the same puddle of sci-fi tripe so many of its competitors have been slopping around in as of late. Since we've already called out Run Like Hell in this issue, we might as well scold the Extermination brain trust for a lack of creativity. The game will center on the mysterious events taking place at Fort Stewart, a highly classified US military base located at the South Pole. As is often the case with these top-secret installations, some sort of emergency situation occurred, following which all contact with the base was lost. A supply tanker bound for the base exploded before it reached its destination, killing most of the ship's crew. Following this troubling development, high-ranking Army officials decide to send in Dennis Riley, a member of the elite Red Light espionage unit. Unsurprisingly, upon his arrival, Riley soon discovers that Fort Stewart was decimated, not by some rouge Iraqi terrorists, but a horde of rather nasty undead monsters. Brilliant!

Okay...okay...let's stop tilting at digital windmills for a moment, and remember how silly most of the Resident Evil storylines were. That didn't stop the series from becoming one of the classics of the PlayStation canon. No doubt, with Fujiwara's firm hand at the wheel, Extermination will overcome its shoddy premise and deliver the goods come July. Paul would have loved this game.



Dennis has an arsenal of hand-to-hand moves

"I'm coming for you, Solid Snake!"

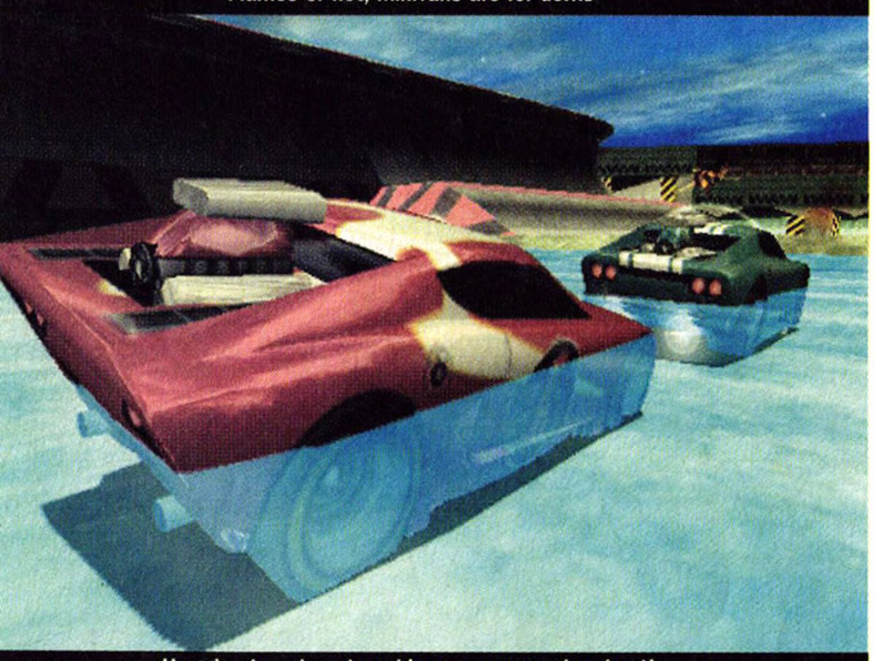
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SCEA/DEEP SPACE ■ **RELEASE** JULY (MARCH 8 IN JAPAN)

The ever-popular sniper rifle

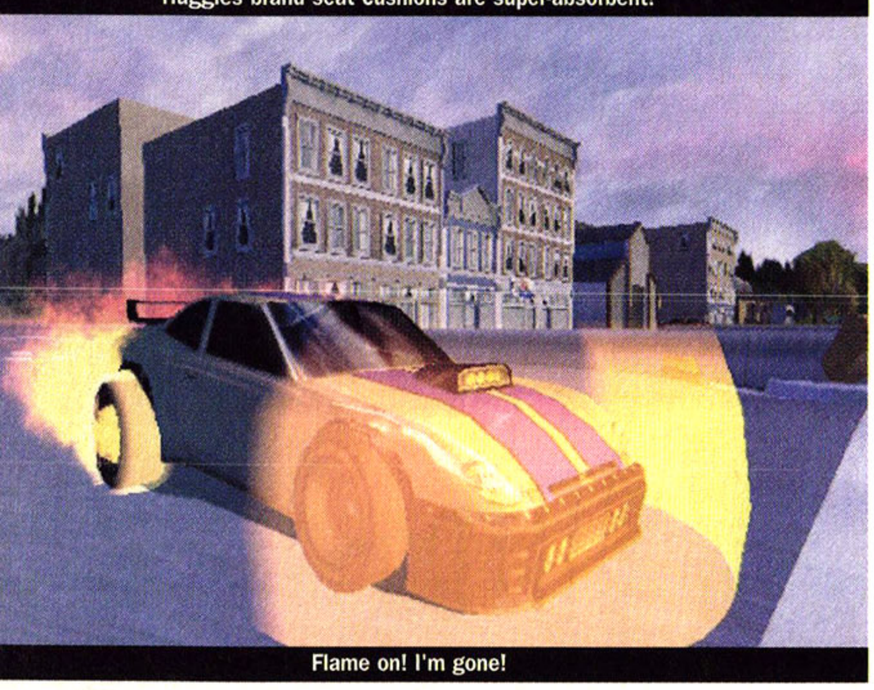
Extermination offers much more freedom of movement than Resident Evil

"Gotcha, Snake! Jeez, you thought you could hide in a box – idiot!"

Flames or not, minivans are for dorks



Huggies brand seat cushions are super-absorbent!



Flame on! I'm gone!

PLAYSTATION 2

RUMBLE RACING

AUTOMOBILI INSANITI

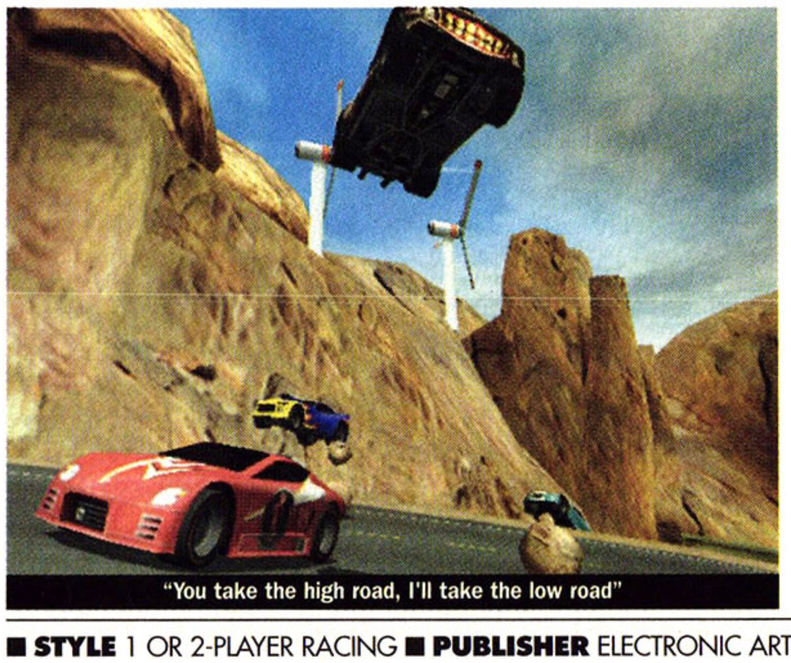
When we were kids playing with Hot Wheels, the more outrageous the vehicles got, the happier we were. Who wanted a boring four-door sedan when there was an alligator with wheels on the K-Mart rack right next to it? If we wanted to see a Ford Taurus, all we needed to do was look in our driveway. EA takes this philosophy of "wilder is better" with Rumble Racing, a non-NASCAR-licensed PS2 sequel to its PlayStation game, NASCAR Rumble.

The vehicles in Rumble are fitted with jacked spoilers, protruding engines, and the ability to soar like a freebird. If you're tooling around in cars with flames and painted-on fangs, you're probably too bad to follow the rules, so Rumble Racing doesn't bother to give you too many. Feel free to smack up the goofy-looking opposition to your heart's content, or use one of the many power-ups to take an unfair advantage over your adversaries. A few of your implements include a massive tornado, bombs, and something called Bad Gas. These are acquired through the same method as games like Mario Kart and RC Revenge Pro.

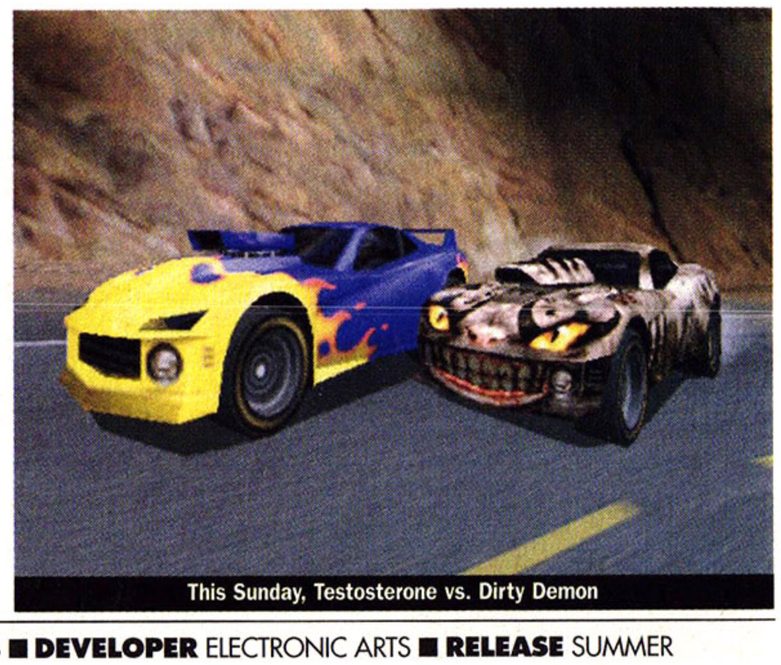
Courses range from mountain passes to picturesque beaches. Taking advantage of the whacked physics, EA designed a trio of tracks solely devoted to stunts. Without worrying about being at the front of the pack come checkered flag, nothing's stopping you from risking life and ride on corkscrew-somersault specials. As you progress through the many gameplay modes of Rumble Racing, you'll have the chance to unlock even more insanely rad rides, like a jet-car or every soccer mom's dream: a tricked-out minivan. These, as well as the default four-wheelers, have three upgrade levels, which raise the bar of extreme even further.

Electronic Arts promises to take full advantage of the PlayStation 2 hardware with eye candy that includes pyrotechnics, smoke, and spark effects. More impressively, all of this will be done with virtually no load time, which is good, considering the target audience has a very short attention span.

Few games define excessive indulgence quite like Rumble Racing. This will be one racer that no one in their right mind will call boring. Whether this shock value can make Rumble hold its own against realistic PS2 sims like Gran Turismo 3 or Driving Emotion Type-S remains to be seen. As long as Sony starts supplying enough PlayStation 2 units to keep up with consumer demand, the system's library has enough room for driving games, true-to-life or otherwise.

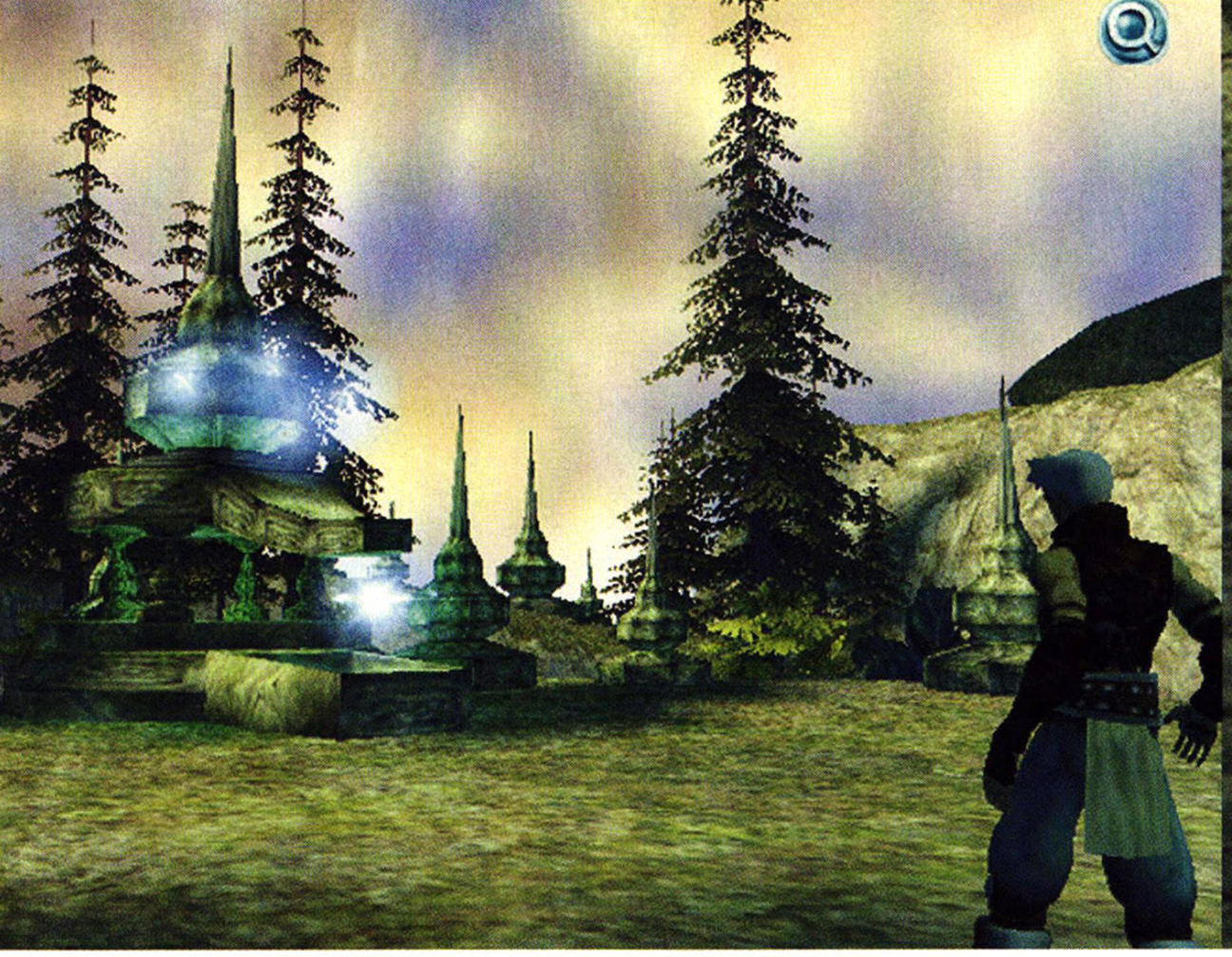


"You take the high road, I'll take the low road"



This Sunday, Testosterone vs. Dirty Demon

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER



PLAYSTATION 2

THE LEGEND OF ALON D'AR

DUDE, WHERE'S MY D'AR?

Last year at the glamorous E3 show, a place where gamers feel somewhat important, The Legend of Alon D'ar made its debut, and what a debut it was. Not only did everyone in attendance completely ignore this title, it was one of what seemed like millions of games debuting with the word "Eternal" in the title. You see, Stormfront Studios original name for this role-playing game was Eternal Blade. After hiding out for a year or so, Stormfront has finally emerged from its development incubation cycle and is ready to shock the world with the catchy new title, The Legend of Alon D'ar. We just love the way Alon D'ar roles off of the tongue.

Since we were one of the "bad guys" at E3, not really giving this title a fair shake, we're here to inform you of what Stormfront has in store for the PlayStation 2 crowd this November. Not only is Alon D'ar a full-fledged RPG, it shares many traits with the wildly popular Diablo series. Up to two players can cooperate to tackle the forces of evil, and get this, for those of you who love to build up characters, Alon D'ar features unlimited character growth with flexible development in skills and powers.

The entire game takes place in real-time, including combat. Procedural effects have been used to create realism within the world. On the organic side, this development tool creates wind-blown grass, animated plants, and flowing rivers. You'll also see a wide variety of ambient wildlife scurrying about. The graphical prowess of Alon D'ar doesn't end here. Doth simulation, full radiosity, particle effects, and an advanced animation system are all in place.

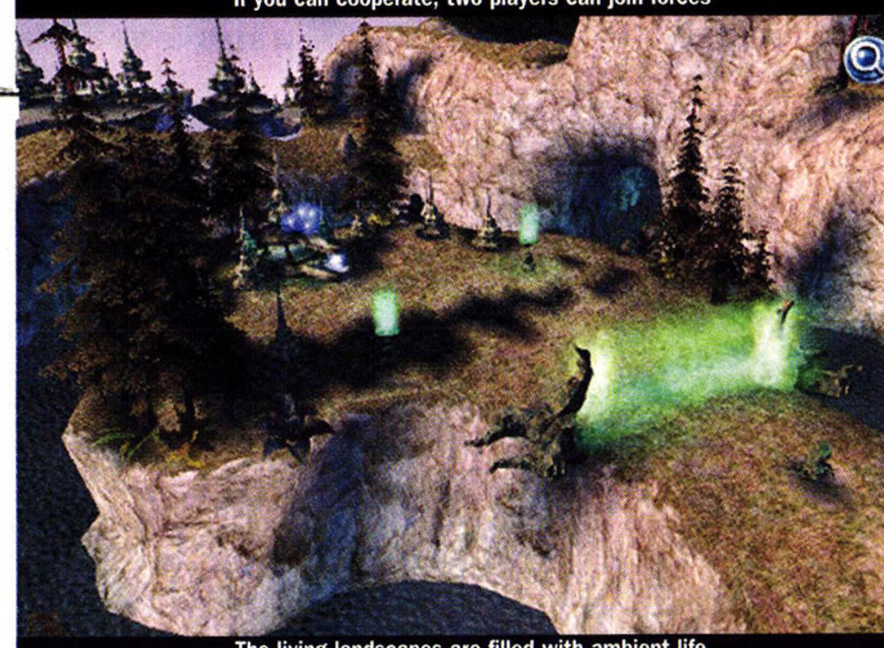
As we said before, the gameplay is similar to Diablo – mainly consisting of nonstop real-time battles. Both swords and sorcery play a large role, and of course, the fantasy angle is presented in the traditional Dungeons & Dragons format. Both the single-player and multiplayer modes offer a little something different, and if Stormfront plays its cards correctly, some subtle changes will be implemented into each adventure.

Alon D'ar is still a ways off, but it's already shaping up to be a must-have release – one that should have the raw power to stand up the immensely popular Baldur's Gate. Keep your eyes on this one, RPGers.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** GAME STUDIOS ■ **DEVELOPER** STORMFRONT STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER

Battles unfold in real-time

If you can cooperate, two players can join forces



The living landscapes are filled with ambient life, flowing streams, and wind-blown grass

PLAYSTATION 2

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN...

In the age of the port, Giants has a lot to live up to. The PC game was, for all intents and purposes, one of the best PC games of the year thus far. Its unique style of role-playing coupled with real-time strategy and a small amount of platforming was a combination not to be missed. In the PS2 version, we are very interested to see what will become of this lovely interface, and if the game will keep its original integrity.

The PS2 is a very interesting system in terms of PC ports. There is a lot of leeway for a developer to come close to what the PC title was trying to do. Indeed, in this very issue, our cover story is all about a game that originated on the PC, and was then given the nod for PS2 development. Although it's not technically a port, Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance would not have come about if it weren't for its cousins on the PC scene. The biggest dilemma lies in how to approach the scope and control of the PC game. Giants for the PC was nothing if not smooth and spacious. The PS2 version will be gunning for this by using highly-detailed character models, as well as organic looking levels and new particle effects.

Not wanting to leave anything to chance, Giants for the PS2 will retain all of the humor and feel of the original game, while simplifying strategy elements to better cater to the console crowd. Building bases and giving orders to allies, along with other gameplay elements, will be streamlined to give the title a more action-oriented feel. Giants fans from the PC may raise their eyebrows at this, but Interplay is confident it will be able to successfully mimic the feel from the original version.

One note of contention from veteran Giants players is that there was really no way to save your game once you had started a mission. What this meant was you could find yourself 40 minutes into a scenario, and suddenly realize that if you didn't complete the task at hand correctly, you'd have to start all over again. The PS2 version will attempt to ease this burden by offering save points during gameplay, eliminating some of the frustration of having to play through entire levels numerous times.

We're very interested to see how this game fares once it hits stores around the country. The life of a port is often a rocky one. What this particular port has going for it is the enormous success of its sister title. If the feel of the original is transplanted with care and talent, we could be looking at another PS2 game bound for the personal libraries of many.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL MAYHEM
■ **RELEASE** MAY 23

Time to do some blastin'

Expansive environments

PLAYSTATION 2

LE MANS 24 HOURS

PS2 RACING'S ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

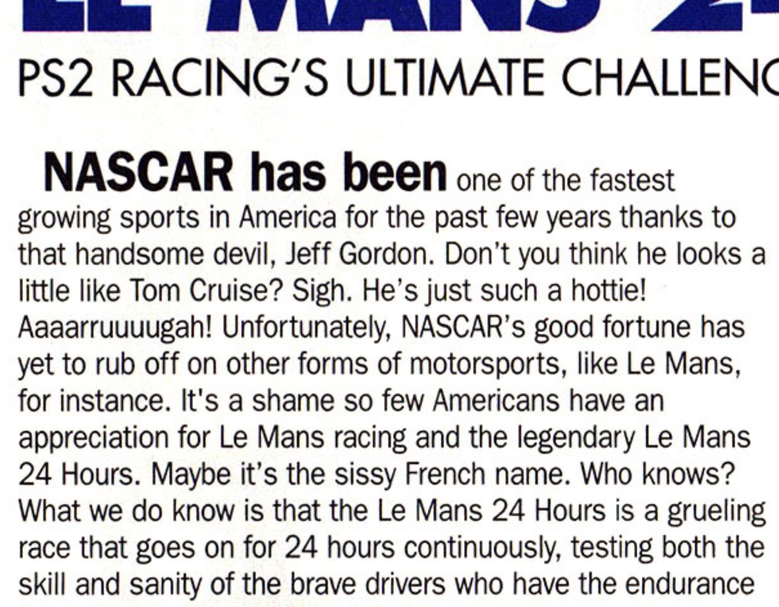
NASCAR has been one of the fastest growing sports in America for the past few years thanks to that handsome devil, Jeff Gordon. Don't you think he looks a little like Tom Cruise? Sigh. He's just such a hottie! Aaaarruuuugah! Unfortunately, NASCAR's good fortune has yet to rub off on other forms of motorsports, like Le Mans, for instance. It's a shame so few Americans have an appreciation for Le Mans racing and the legendary Le Mans 24 Hours. Maybe it's the sissy French name. Who knows? What we do know is that the Le Mans 24 Hours is a grueling race that goes on for 24 hours continuously, testing both the skill and sanity of the brave drivers who have the endurance to make it to the checkered flag.

Le Mans 24 Hours brings this gargantuan race home to the PlayStation 2. The game is basically an enhanced sequel to Test Drive Le Mans for the Dreamcast, and is being developed by the same team that developed that well-received Dreamcast hit. Well received by media outlets other than Game Informer, that is. If you'll recall, GI's very own jaded race vet Paul the PC Professor gave the game a measly 4.75. It seems that everyone else that played the game thought it was the best thing since the invention of the wheel. Hmm...

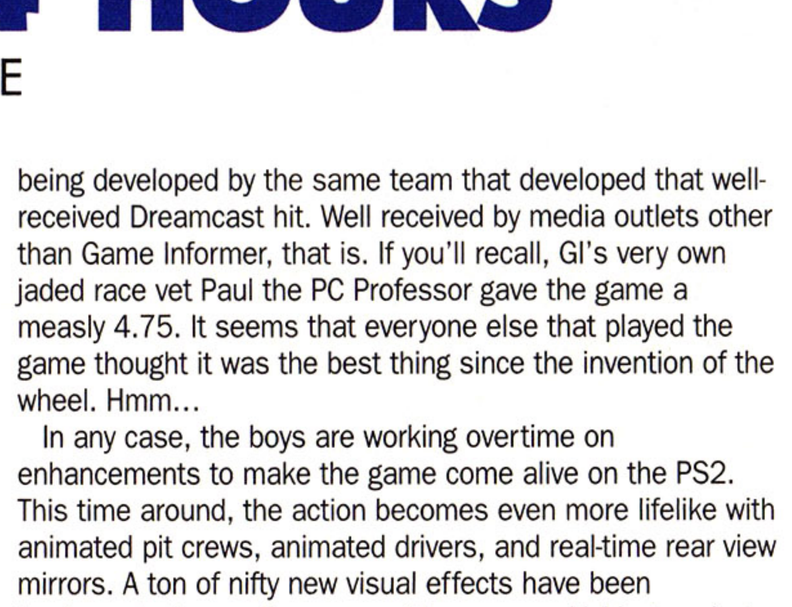
In any case, the boys are working overtime on enhancements to make the game come alive on the PS2. This time around, the action becomes even more lifelike with animated pit crews, animated drivers, and real-time rear view mirrors. A ton of nifty new visual effects have been implemented as well, so expect to see cars kicking up dust, smoke, and sparks, and even casting real-time shadows.

Look for the series' tradition of white-knuckle realism to continue, and, as before, you will actually be able to race the entire 24-hour race if you're absolutely insane. Don't worry – there are also wimpy, abbreviated versions available for the rest of you. Le Mans 24 Hours boasts 12 tracks to choose from, including the series' first American track, the US Road Atlanta (which wasn't in the DC version). In addition, there are some new teams like Viper Team Oreca, Corvette Racing, Team Cadillac, and over 70 licensed vehicles. This summer, strap yourself in for what could be the PS2's wildest ride to date.

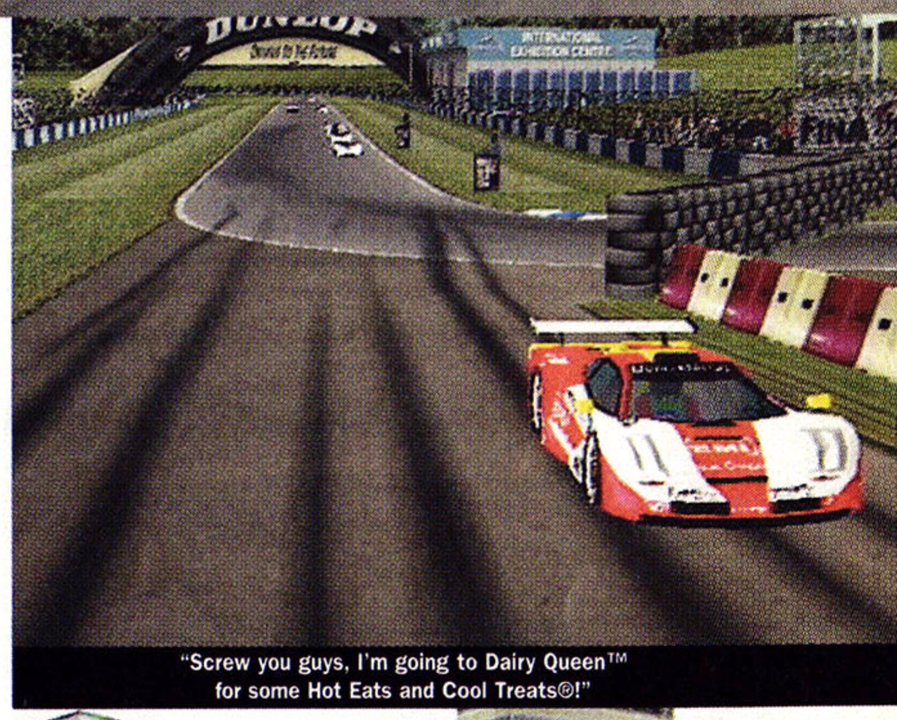
The Corvette Racing team is one of three new teams added to Le Mans 24 Hours



Friends don't let friends drive drunk



New additions include animated pit crews



"Screw you guys, I'm going to Dairy Queen™ for some Hot Eats and Cool Treats®!"

Replay mode features multiple camera angles

The cars are real, right down to the sponsor decals

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** INFOGRAMES MELBOURNE HOUSE
■ **RELEASE** SUMMER

Is this guy related to Merman from the Masters of the Universe?

He's pretty calm for a guy with an alien breathing down his neck

"Now, where did I put that Raid Super Alien Repellent?"

PLAYSTATION 2

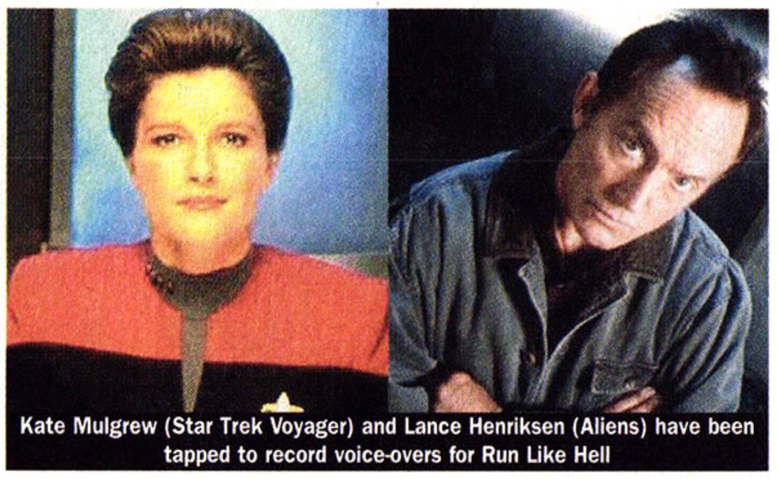
RUN LIKE HELL

THE EAT-YOU KIND OF ALIENS

Ever since video game sales eclipsed the film industry's gross box office receipts a couple of years ago, people in this industry have been spewing speculation that "video games are the New Hollywood." Numerous pundits have predicted that the new generation of video games will be so immersive, so graphically seductive, that interactive entertainment will eventually replace television and movies. To be blunt, this is a load of crap. The fact is that most video games are still rehashing clichés and hackneyed plot devices that even the most inept of Hollywood directors and screenwriters gave up years ago. Case in point: Interplay's Run Like Hell.

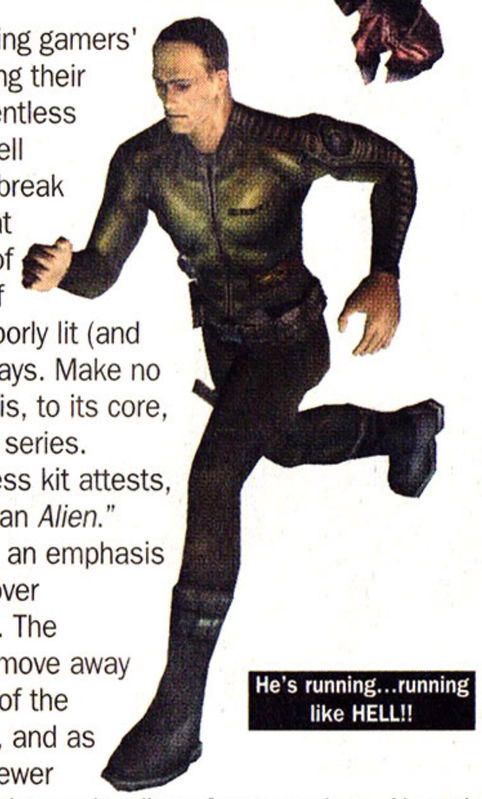
How's this for run-of-the-mill sci-fi horror: You are Nick Conner, an ex-military hero who has been stationed on a remote mining space station. Upon returning from a routine mission, you find that – SURPRISE! – everyone on the station is dead. Even more surprising is the revelation that these people didn't fall prey to high cholesterol or the Ebola virus, but were actually KILLED BY EVIL GIGERESQUE SPACE ALIENS! Jeezo beezo! Talk about groundbreaking.

Luckily, Run Like Hell is a video game, not a movie. As long as Digital Mayhem makes good on its promise of recasting Capcom's survival horror as a more action-oriented, frantic gorefest, it doesn't matter how trite the story is. We're Americans – give us big, phallic weapons, some beasties to shoot, and we're happy as clams.



Kate Mulgrew (Star Trek Voyager) and Lance Henriksen (Aliens) have been tapped to record voice-overs for Run Like Hell

Alternately satisfying gamers' bloodlust and working their nerves raw with relentless tension, Run Like Hell should make many break out in cold sweats at the mere prospect of walking down one of the game's many poorly lit (and alien-infested) hallways. Make no mistake: this game is, to its core, a rip-off of the *Alien* series. Although, as the press kit attests, it is "more *Aliens* than *Alien*." Meaning, of course, an emphasis on blazing gunplay over atmospheric scares. The developers want to move away from the slow pace of the Resident Evil series, and as such, there will be fewer time-consuming puzzles and tedious key searches. Also, the aliens are a good bit brighter than the oxen-like zombies we've become accustomed to, and will pursue and hunt you with preternatural skill.



He's running...running like HELL!!

In keeping with the traditions of the survival horror genre, Run Like Hell will utilize dramatic camera shifts and cinematic techniques within a fully rendered 3D framework. Unlike Res Evil, there will be no prerendered backdrops. Also, the game's interactive soundtrack will heighten the scares by using sudden spikes in volume that react to in-game action. By the time it's released, the game will encompass a respectable 20-plus hours of gameplay, as well as over three hours of cinematics that feature voice acting by sci-fi legends Kate Mulgrew (Star Trek Voyager) and Lance Henriksen (Aliens, Millennium). If the gameplay can overcome RLH's hokey premise, we can look forward to it joining the ranks of the PS2's best action/adventure games.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL MAYHEM ■ **RELEASE** 3RD QUARTER

PC

PLANETSIDE

INTERGALACTIC PLANETARY

Verant Interactive, creator of the underground drug EverQuest, has a new fix in the works for PC gamers. Not only will Verant's upcoming project, PlanetSide, win over the hearts of online role-playing addicts, it will also target the hardcore first-person shooter fan base. With servers holding approximately 3,500 players, PlanetSide will be the first massively multiplayer online first-person shooter – offering the best of both worlds.

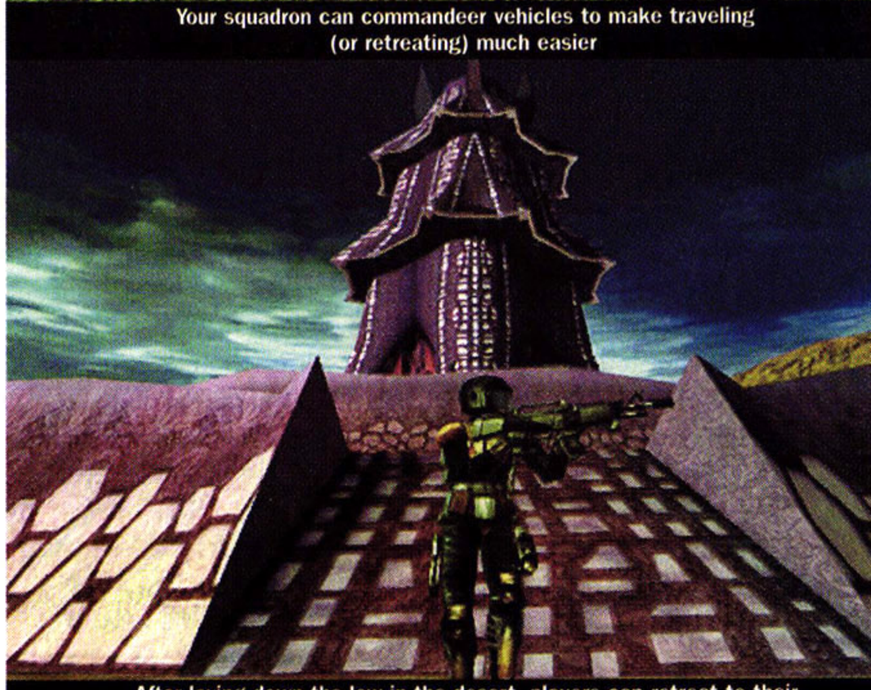
This gargantuan project is running on a new scalable 3D engine capable of delivering seamless gameplay that supports hundreds of players per continent, explosive effects, and the most minimal of loading times. For those of you who are still living in the past, PlanetSide's revolutionary technology supports low-end modem users, so everyone can play.

As the name suggests, PlanetSide's premise is of planetary proportions. Whether you choose to run lone-wolf style or join an empire, the goal is to stay alive and capture as much territory as you can. Much of the gameplay will unfold as a typical first-person shooter; however, vehicular warfare plays a large role as well. The continents are expansive, stretching up to eight kilometers square, and the wars will be enormous. As the game advances, players will gain experience, learn new skills, receive implant upgrades, and rise in rank. Essentially, the more you play, the more powerful your character will be.

To truly succeed, you'll need to form an allegiance with an empire. If players flock to these powerhouses like Verant predicts they will, it's possible that one faction could rule the world. Of course, military tactics and fortified strongholds are available. You can even send out dropships. The factor that adds a little chaos to the mix is the implementation of assigned missions based on real-time conditions. Weather and environmental factors will also come into play.

When you want to take a break from the war, players can retreat to their living quarters for whatever reasons they deem necessary. In your apartment, which is yours and only yours, you can store items and take a breather. Just like EverQuest, you will be charged a monthly fee to compete in this crazy war, but if Verant works its magic, we'd throw down our life savings to play this game.

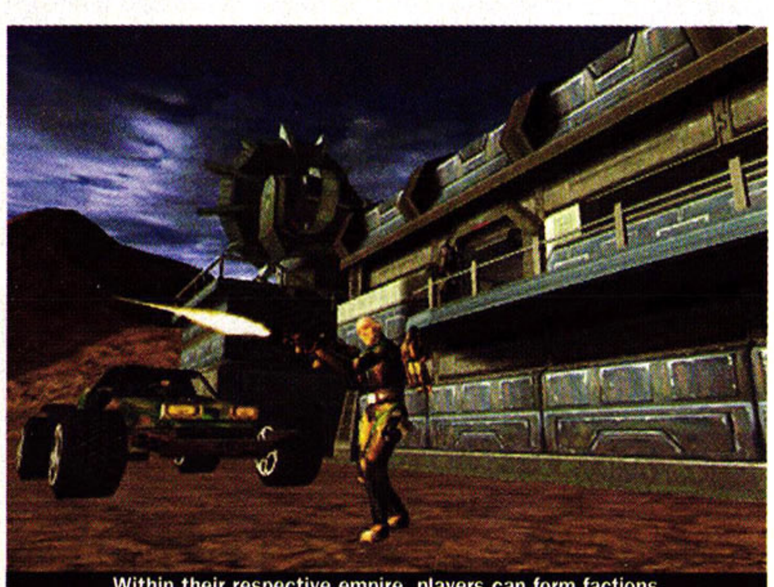
Your squadron can commandeer vehicles to make traveling (or retreating) much easier



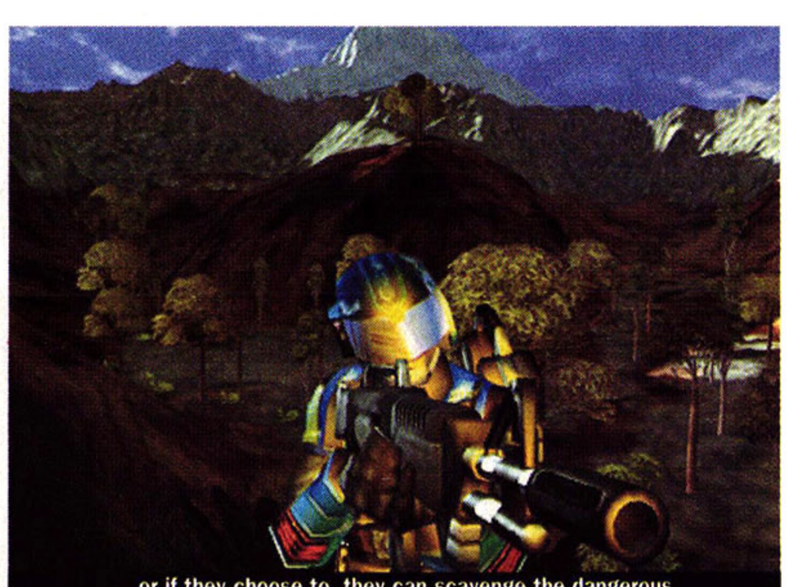
After laying down the law in the desert, players can retreat to their own apartment to rest and store valuable items

Great enhancements and benefits come to players who are brave enough to wear implants

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
■ **DEVELOPER** VERANT INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** 4TH QUARTER



Within their respective empire, players can form factions with a Registered Outfit, a Temporary Outfit...



...or if they choose to, they can scavenge the dangerous plains by themselves

PLAYSTATION 2/PC

PROJECT EDEN

SUBTERRANEAN GUNPLAY BLUES

A string of cookie cutter Tomb Raider sequels has somewhat sullied Core Design's reputation as a cutting edge development house. Although the original Tomb Raider's pioneering use of streaming environments was simply breathtaking when it was released in 1996, few today would place Core in their list of top developers. Looking to reestablish its reputation among gamers that don't breathe, eat, and sleep Lara Croft, the company is branching out with several promising next-generation titles. Of course, Ms. Lara isn't going anywhere, but Project Eden, a tactical squad action game slated for release on both PlayStation 2 and PC, may.

Drawing on well-worn science fiction themes that were used as far back as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and as recently as *The Fifth Element*, Project Eden is set on Earth in the distant future. Overpopulation has caused the inhabitants of the planet to build upward, creating layer upon layer of labyrinthine megalopolis. As is usually the case in these situations, the richest elements of society occupy the upper reaches of the cities, hogging all the sunlight and oxygen. Down on the surface of the polluted planet, a vicious criminal element reigns over the frightened proletariats who slave away in factories and occupy disgusting slums. Due to the lack of sunlight and oxygen, these poor souls have also begun to mutate, creating new and bizarre forms of humanity. Project Eden follows the story of four members of the Urban Protection Agency who are sent down into the bowels of the city to investigate an incident at the Real Meat Factory (*Real Meat – It's What's For Dinner*). Of course, all is not as it seems, and the crew quickly finds themselves faced with grave danger.

In a similar fashion to EA's somewhat disappointing X-Squad, Project Eden's gameplay allows players to command a squad of four commandos trained in tactical combat. You are able to give basic commands to your teammates, and switch between all four at any point during gameplay. Of course, there will be a number of weapons, gun enhancements, and power-ups, all of which can be turned on and off at will. Distinguishing itself from the pack, Project Eden also lets players change the camera from a first to third-person view on the fly. In first-person mode, you can even look down and see your torso and real-time shadow.

Core promises to use the full range of the PS2's graphical capabilities, meaning a ton of cool visual effects and a brisk framerate. The PC port ups the ante even further by allowing four-player cooperative online multiplayer, a feature that will probably be dropped from the PS2 version due to Sony's delay of the PS2's online functions. Even so, we look forward to Project Eden as a welcome change from Core's usual spelunking fare.

"Okay, you two, could you cut out the Robocop jokes already?!"

The levels are filled with swarms of nasty enemies

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CORE DESIGN ■ **DEVELOPER** EIDOS ■ **RELEASE** JULY

Project Eden allows players to switch between first-person...

...and third-person views on the fly

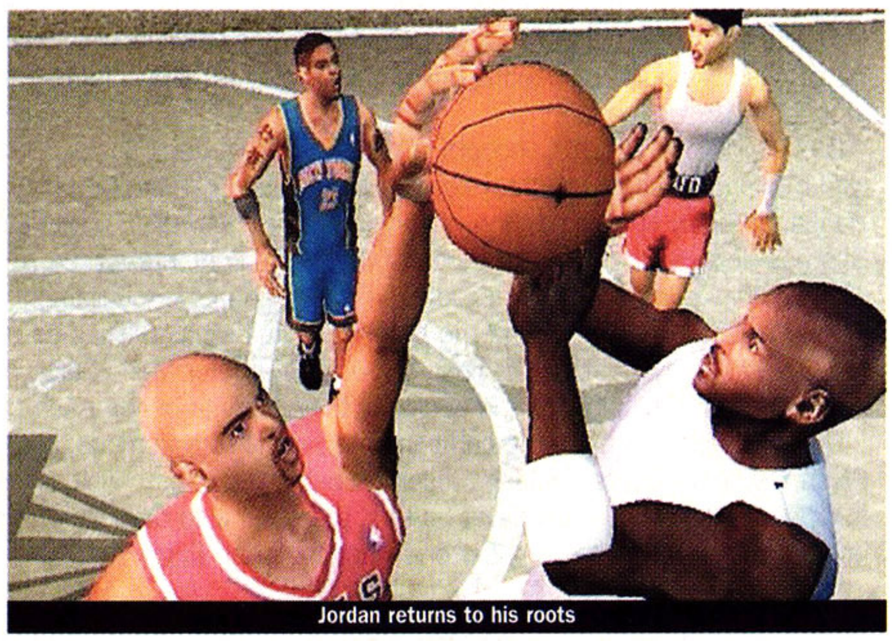
"Now, just hold still whilst I shoot you, old chum. There...that's a sport."

PLAYSTATION 2

NBA STREET

WE CAN TAKE IT OUTSIDE

If you say the words "arcade basketball" to a gamer, they'll get a very distinct picture in their head. It may be Showtime or Jam or Hoopz, but a game by any other name has still been an exact replica of its predecessors. Never one to leave a sports stone unturned, Electronic Arts is using its new Big label to tip-off NBA Street, a game that will shatter your perception of arcade hoops like a flimsy playground backboard.

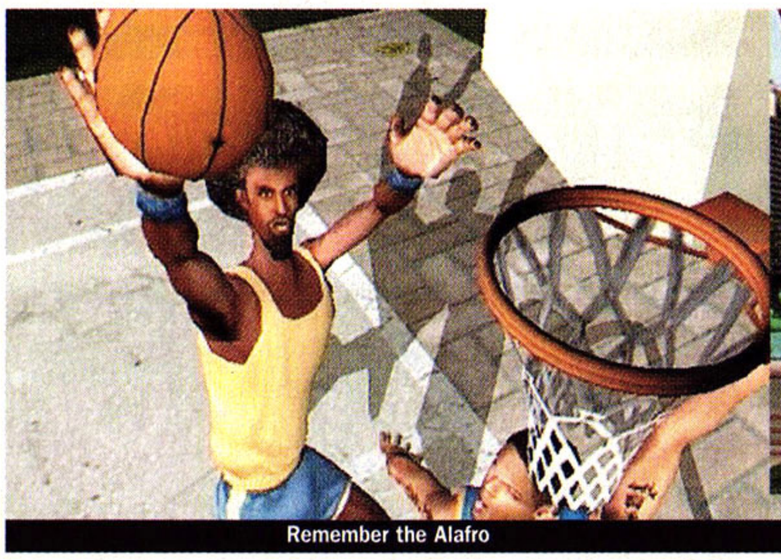


Jordan returns to his roots

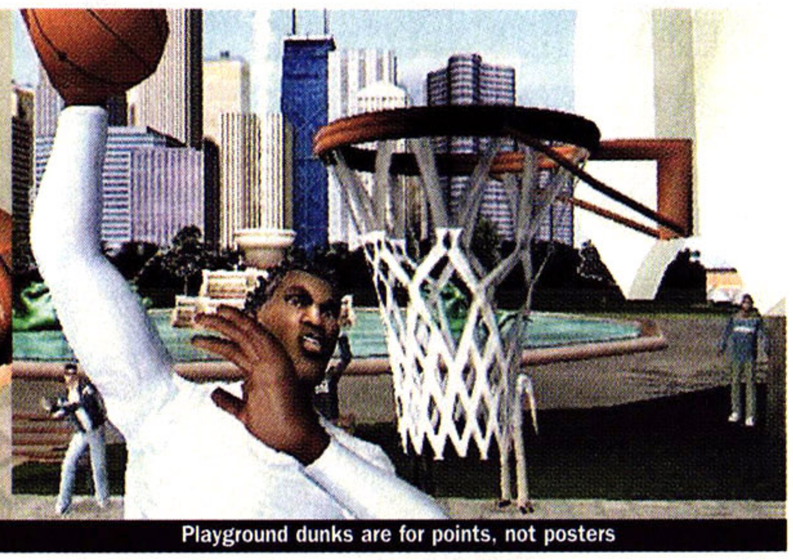
An offensive clinic NBA Street may be, but the strategy doesn't stop there. You're as likely to get your shot slapped against the far fence as you are to get a breakaway slam, so your alphabet had best contain a big "D" in it. Both sides of the ball will get their moment to shine in front of the unforgiving crowd of hard-nosed thugs and sideline coach wannabes. They won't hold back politically incorrect comments. If you can't tell a cross-over from a cross-stitch, they'll be sure to let you know. Conversely, if you can shoot lights out or give the old "no soup for you" rejection, you'll become an urban icon.

The cast of characters includes both fictional and real hoop heroes. No EA title with a court would be complete without Michael Jordan, even if he's become a suit-wearing sellout for one of the NBA's crummiest teams (Washington Wizards). Other blacktop bullies include an afro-sporting old-school superstar, a tattooed trash-talker, and many other unique on-court personalities, each with their own skills and attributes.

NBA Street is the roots of basketball after a strong dose of Miracle-Gro. EA has established an impressive list of PlayStation 2 achievements so far. This summer, NBA Street will exploit the sharp-elbowed, ref-less, and just plain rude underbelly of the NBA's kings of the court.



Remember the Alafro



Playground dunks are for points, not posters

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS BIG ■ **DEVELOPER** EA SPORTS BIG ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER

PC

ULTIMA ONLINE: THIRD DAWN

MOVE OVER EQ! HERE COMES SOMETHING LEANER!

In the mad scramble to gain back some of its original users, Origin has pulled out all the stops and will release Ultima Online: Third Dawn in late March. Seeing the dreaded EverQuest funnel off droves of MMORPG fanatics, one must think things are a bit tense around the Origin offices. But instead of putting their heads in the sand and pretending like nothing is happening, the movers and shakers over at Origin have seen to it that people once again have reason to get excited about an Ultima Online release.

Third Dawn promises new particle systems for magic and special effects, enhanced gesturing, motion-captured animations, and 3D models for all characters and monsters. By the looks of what we've seen in the beta material we were sent, all of these will indeed be implemented into the game. We also noticed much smoother animations for ambient creatures, better sounds and music, and an intuitive interface which will allow people to jump in faster than they have been able to in the past.

Newcomers are treated much better in Third Dawn, as there is a special town just for newbies to catch their breath before plunging into one of the bustling city-centers. Look for this to be snapped up by droves of Ultima fans. We need something after that Ascension debacle!

Conversation will remain the same

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME
■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ORIGIN
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 20

PLAYSTATION 2

QUAKE III REVOLUTION

TWO GREAT TASTES THAT TASTE GREAT TOGETHER

Like you couldn't see this one coming from a mile away. EA Games is moving forward with porting a version of Quake III for the PlayStation 2. It's not a bad deal for players, as Quake is one of the best first-person shooters out there. Since the game is being developed by UK-based development studio Bullfrog Productions – a company well known for its impressive work on such titles as Sim Coaster, Populous, Dungeon Keeper, and Magic Carpet – this could turn out to be an impressive port.

Unfortunately, PlayStation 2 won't feature any online gaming when Quake III Revolution launches, so Bullfrog is working closely with id Software, the game's creator, to ensure a robust single-player experience as well as multiplayer gaming through four-player split-screen.

At this point, little information is available regarding what new innovations this game may bring to the table, if any, but you can rest assured that Quake III Revolution will be an impressive looking PS2 game. Until we get more info, take a gander at the screenshots and plan on taking some time off work with some friends to frag the night away.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** EA GAMES
■ **DEVELOPER** BULLFROG PRODUCTIONS/ID SOFTWARE
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 27

DREAMCAST

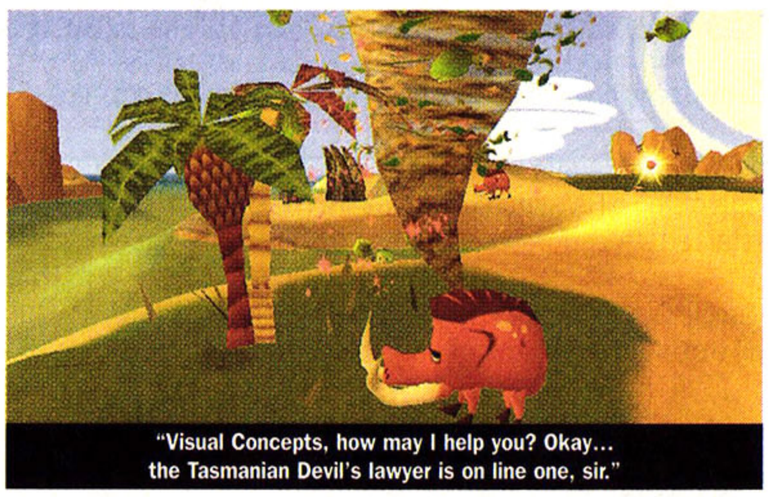
OOGA BOOGA

MEENIE MINIE BINGA BUNGA!

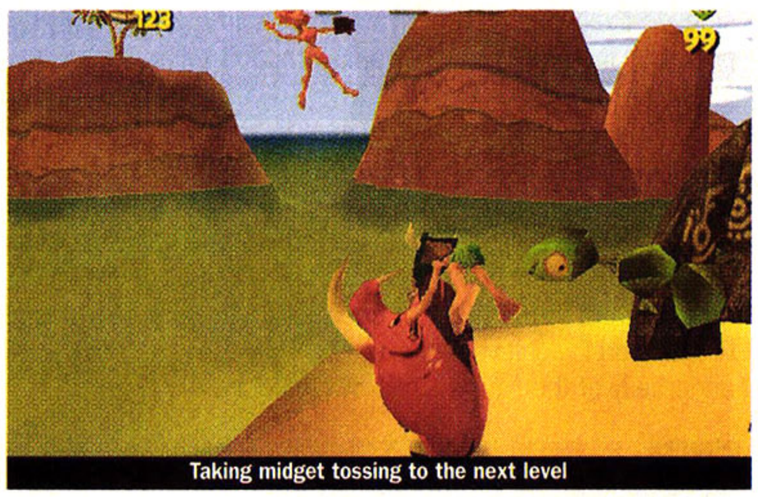
At Sega High School, the buff dudes at Visual Concepts are the jocks at the top of the social food chain. Sauntering through the hallways wearing their NFL 2K1 lettermen jackets, the VC Posse spends its time romancing the ladies, drinking beer in the parking lot, and shoving pencil-necked geeks headfirst into toilets. Frankly, we can't blame them for being cocky. After pioneering online sports gaming, they deserve to be the coolest kids on campus. We just wish they'd stop giving us wedgies!

Don't think that Visual Concepts is just a bunch of dumb jocks. Under the tough-guy façade, they're really sensitive lads with a talent for poetry and developing quirky action games. Coming hot on the heels of Floigan Brothers will be Ooga Booga, an oddly titled collection of minigames. The game is set on a magical island where the Volcano Goddess dwells. She has decreed that the four tribes of the island compete for the Heart of the Ooga Booga. Each tribe must select a witchdoctor (called a Kahuna) to represent its clan in the tournament, which consists of a series of games like Scavenger Hunt, Boar Racing, and King of the Hill. Although it's being billed as an "action/strategy game," we suspect the end product will be more along the lines of Sonic Shuffle or Mario Party. As gameplay progresses, players will be able to unlock hidden characters, islands, and spells as they strive to become the biggest Kahuna of all.

Up to four players at a time can compete in split-screen mode, but the real draw of Ooga Booga is sure to be online play. Given Visual Concepts' faultless record in bringing games online, we expect the four-player SegaNet action to be fast and furious. In addition to multiplayer battles, there will also be online tournaments, which allow players to compete for the honor of being called the number one witchdoctor on Earth.

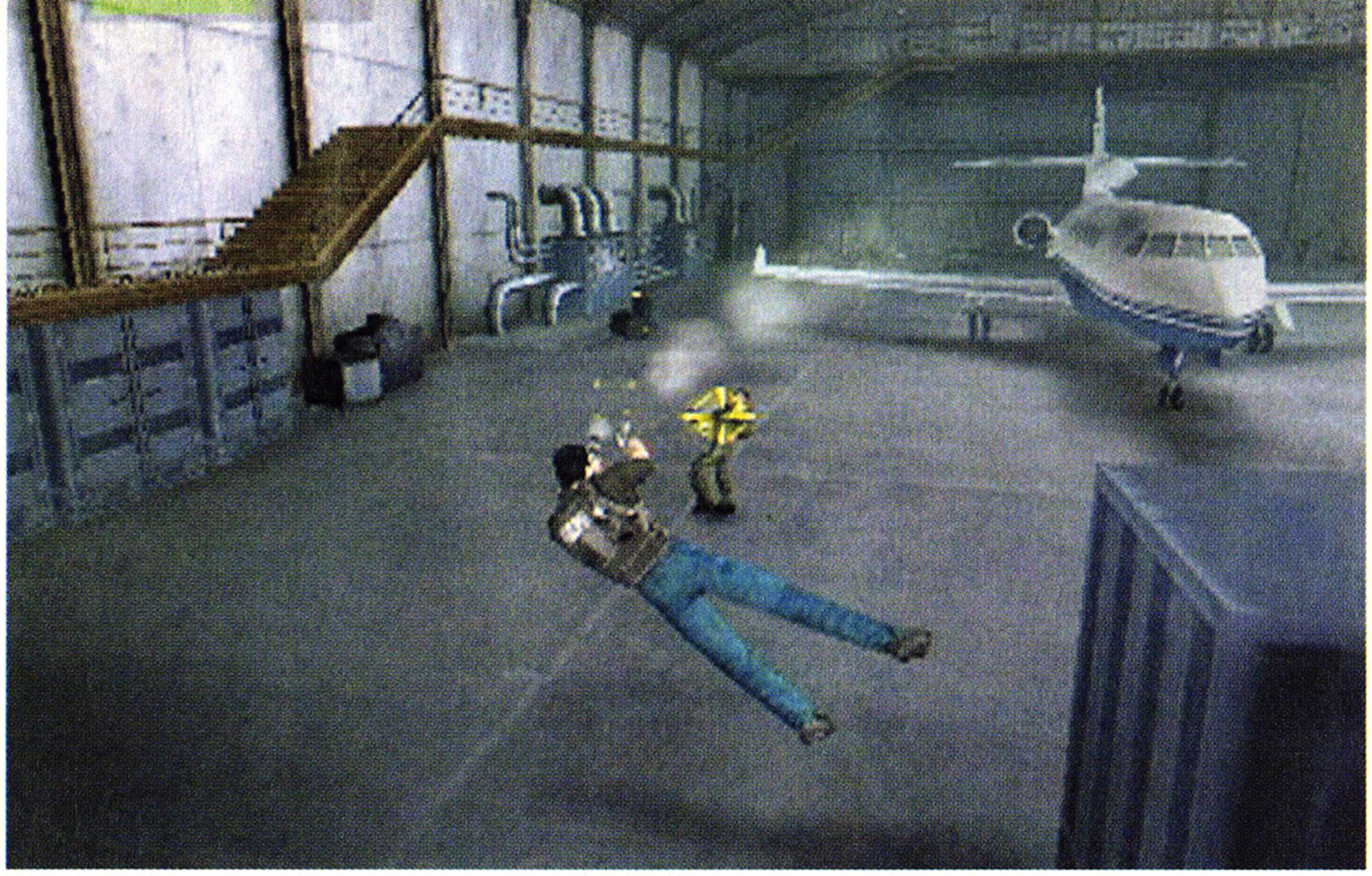


"Visual Concepts, how may I help you? Okay... the Tasmanian Devil's lawyer is on line one, sir."



Taking midget tossing to the next level

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** VISUAL CONCEPTS ■ **RELEASE** SPRING



PLAYSTATION 2

DEAD TO RIGHTS

IT'S LIKE 'WOO'

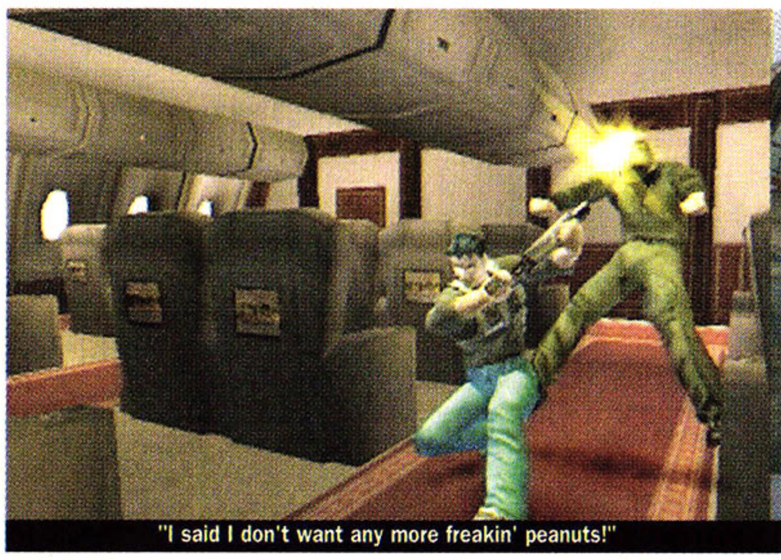
Jack Slade clears the runway

Director/writer John Woo's brand of original fight scene choreography has influenced the action of hundreds of movies. It's about time this unique style spills over into the video game realm, which is just what Namco has cooking in its in-house PS2 effort, Dead to Rights. While in the same genre as Resident Evil, the game appears to be the antithesis of that series, opting instead for fast-paced gunplay and hard-hitting hand-to-hand combat.

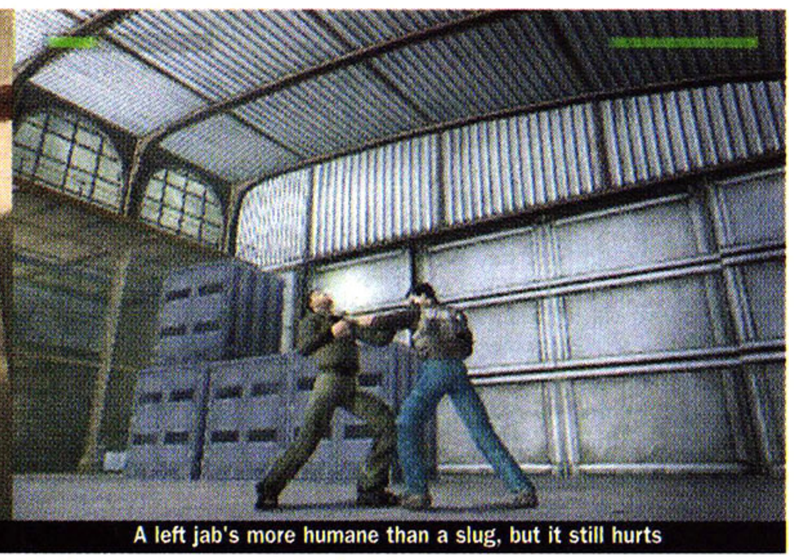
Dead to Rights introduces Jack Slade, a square-jawed protagonist battling for survival in Granite City (someone must watch a lot of Flintstones). Once a law-abiding cop, Slade was convicted of a murder he didn't commit. He fought the law and the law won, so he decided instead to haul ass and fight for his life. The plot is much more intricate than most adrenaline-soaked titles, as the winding trail to the truth is laden with both helping hands and haters.

A plethora of gameplay styles will be used in Dead to Rights, since a balance of both guns and fists is necessary. An arsenal of firearms is included, but acquiring them requires you to handily disarm your opponent rather than find ammo in cracks and crevices. Killing the po-po is a no-no, so non-lethal weapons will stun the men in blue long enough to make your getaway. Namco's fighting engine experience will come into play as well, when Slade punches, kicks, and blocks.

This is a big project for Namco, as it tries to establish both a franchise and a name for itself as a console developer. The company isn't pushing the title for a premature release, and would rather ensure the best game possible. We're all for a mixture of rifles and roundhouse kicks, but the formula brings flashbacks of Fighting Force and Urban Chaos, titles we'd much rather forget. Hopefully Namco will do right by gamers with Dead to Rights.

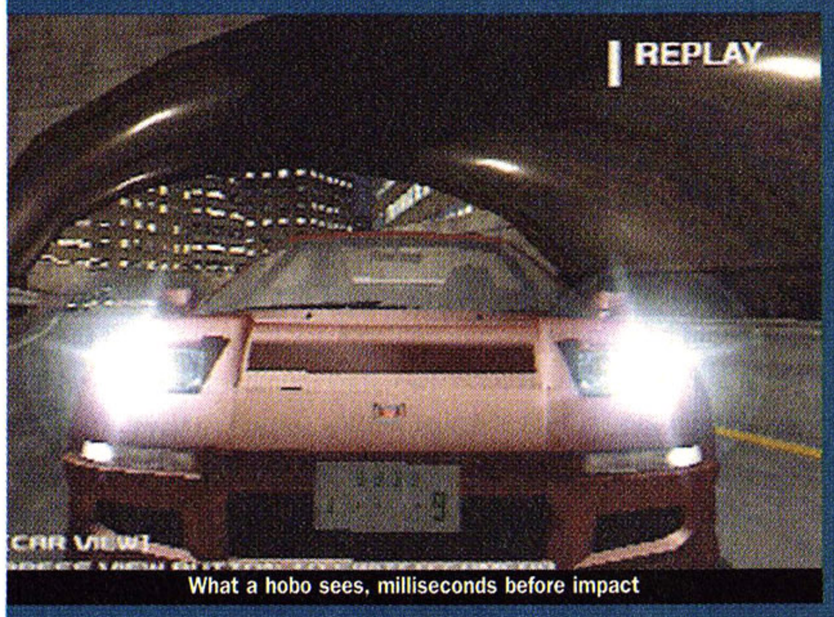


"I said I don't want any more freakin' peanuts!"



A left jab's more humane than a slug, but it still hurts

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO HOMETEK ■ **RELEASE** 2002



What a hobo sees, milliseconds before impact

PLAYSTATION 2

TOKYO XTREME RACER: ZERO

KISS MY ASPHALT

Global warming can be attributed to cow poop and pavement. Covering the world with blacktop causes the surface to absorb heat, and raises the temperature of the planet. Since this is a major downer, the feel-good youth of Tokyo are turning the travesty into a rockin' teen time in Crave's Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zero on PS2.

Use the endless (and repetitive) stretches of big city highway and a souped-up vehicle to go one-on-one with other speed racers to prove who's the automobile alpha male. They'll even assign you a nickname based on your bad-assedness. With enhanced visuals and deeper options than the Dreamcast version, Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zero redefines the term "blacktop bully."

No forests, beaches, or parks, just a lot of highway

Why we hate people who use cell phones while driving

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** CRAVE
■ **DEVELOPER** GENKI ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 24

REVIEWS

Our crack (or crackhead, we can never decide which) review team rates games in a number of categories to help you sort out the great from the stuff you hate. Each game is reviewed by at least two staff members, and you will find both their opinions on each review. To make things a little easier we have put together some definitions of what the numbers mean, what the reviewers are like (so you can find the reviewer most like youself), what we look for in a game, and also a cheat sheet so the newbies can understand our advanced video game jargon. Read on and soon you will be talking FPS and FMV with the best of them.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

Game Informer's rating system ranges from 0 to 10, and is similar to school grading. 7 is average, 9 and above is exemplary work, 5 and below is a failure. Aside from concept, entertainment, graphics, playability, sound, and replay value (all explained to the right), other factors that influence a game's final score are how much game you get for your money and how all the game's elements come together.

10 - Perfection. One of the best games of all time, if not THE best game of all time. This game has no flaws, and thus this rating is rarely given out.

9 - Worth owning. Fans of the genre should definitely enjoy this game, but even those who don't normally like this type of game may find themselves getting hooked.

8 - Worth playing. Still a great game, but arguably so. It may not be the best ever, but there's enough to keep your fingers wrapped around the controller for some time.

7 - Worth renting. Unless you're a fledgling gamer, you've probably seen everything this game has to offer before. Still, just checking it out won't ruin your weekend.

6 - Limited appeal. There are always a few people that will fall in love with a game of this caliber, but for the most part, those playing it will be yearning for something more.

5 & BELOW - Garbage. From this point down, it's just a matter of how much of a failure the game is. The lower the score, the more you're hating life for playing it.

CONCEPT
What new ideas the game brings to the table and how well old ideas are presented.

GRAPHICS
How good a game looks, taking into account any flaws such as bad collision or pop-up.

SOUND
Does the game's music and sound effects get you involved or do they make you resolve to always play with the volume down?

PLAYABILITY
Basically, the controller to human interface. The less you think about the hunk of plastic in your hands, the better the playability.

ENTERTAINMENT
Flat out, just how fun the game is to play. The most important factor in rating a game.

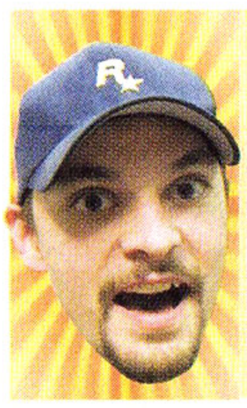
REPLAY VALUE
The longevity of the title.
- **High** - You'll still be popping this game in five years from now.
- **Moderately High** - Good for a long while, but the thrills won't last forever.
- **Moderate** - Good for a few months or a few times through.
- **Moderately Low** - After finishing it, there's not much reason to give it a second go.
- **Low** - You'll quit playing before you complete the game.

ANDY
Handle: The Game Hombre
Expertise: RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, Strategy **Interests:** Backyard Wrestling Videos, Complete Metal Gear Solid Demos **Dislikes:** Ice Dams, Email Spam, Pop-Up, Snow
Current Favorite Games: EverQuest, Conker's Bad Fur Day, Ring of Red, THPS2

When Andy's not yelling at a game for "rippin' him off," he plays drums in Minneapolis indie rock band, Unbelievable Jolly Machine. A longtime fan of Metroid, Andy has been reviewing video games professionally since the days of the 8-bit NES. While a big sports fan in real life, Andy isn't the first to line up for sports titles, but is always willing to put in the extra hours to play a good RPG or strategy game.

PAUL
Handle: The Game Professor
Expertise: Sports, Action/Adventure, Racing **Interests:** Newborns, SCTV, Arcwelder **Dislikes:** 3 AM Diaper Changes; 7 Layer Burritos, Reiner's Sarcasm **Current Favorite Games:** Counter-Strike 1.0, ATV Offroad Fury, Star Wars: Starfighter

Since the days of the Mattel Intellivison, Paul has consumed every type of sports video game imaginable. Not only is he the staff's resident sports gaming expert, he also has authored detailed strategy guides on all of Capcom's survival horror games. A GI Staff member since 1992, Paul has reviewed well over 500 games during his tenure.

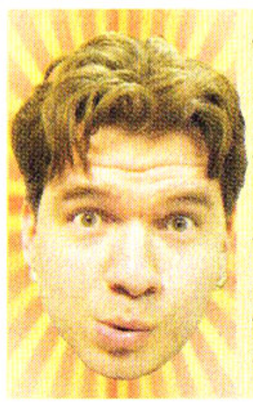


REINER
Handle: The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Sports **Interests:** Corrupting Evil, Comic Books, Little People in Funny Hats, Milk **Dislikes:** The New Republic, New York City, Paul's Stinky Newborn Son **Current Favorite Games:** Conker's Bad Fur Day, Star Wars: Starfighter, Ring of Red

Reiner considers himself the biggest Star Wars fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of Star Wars action figures, he has seen the trilogy 507 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his six years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. Penetrating the pixel boundary, he not only plays games, he's in one, and can be shot daily in the epic N64 release, Perfect Dark.

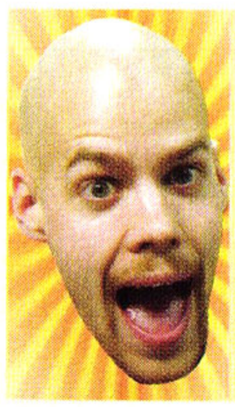
MATT
Handle: The Original Gamer **Expertise:** Racing, Puzzle, Action/Adventure **Interests:** Low's New Record, Weight Watchers Frozen Entrees, Scotch & Sodas **Dislikes:** Action Man, The Dot Com Downturn, Snow **Current Favorite Games:** Metal Gear Solid 2, Virtua Tennis, Road Champs, Space Invaders

While record collecting, watching reality television, and playing video games might sound like a state of retarded adolescence, Matt manages to scrap together an almost meaningful existence out of these activities. His encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture is either amazing or annoying, depending on how close your desk is to his. Less esoteric than his colleagues, Matt prefers traditional action and platform games.



JAY
Handle: The Gonzo Gamer **Expertise:** Strategy, Puzzle, RPGs **Interests:** Dungeons & Dragons, Comic Books, Wrestling, Simulated Strip Bars **Dislikes:** Europeans That Force Americans Out of Their Fake Cities Because They Don't Like Strip Bars. Screw You! **Current Favorite Games:** The Adventures of Cookie & Cream, Conker's Bad Fur Day

Jay lives in his mom's basement just like you. Adding further fuel to his archetypal nerd fire is his love for comic books, metal miniature painting, and twice weekly pencil-and-paper RPG sessions. In fact, he's such a D&D fanatic, he hates professional football simply because it interrupts his Sunday gaming schedule. Par for the course, his favorite games are often obscure ones. He is also one damn handsome man.



JUSTIN
Handle: The Digital Deviant
Expertise: Action/Platform, Fighting, RPGs **Interests:** High-Power Firearms, MPW's New Ring, Care Bears **Dislikes:** Chairshot Hangovers, Icy Parking Spaces, Solid Snake's Mullet **Current Favorite Games:** THPS2, Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX, NBA 2K1

Unlike most gaming jabronis, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He doubles as wrestler Helmut Von Strauss in the Minnesota independent scene, where he violently bonds with other sweaty males – a practice that just gets blank stares when attempted on other GI reviewers. Though the youngest on staff, Justin's tastes are highly old-school, and he plays 16-bit classics as often as he plugs into the latest titles.

KRISTIAN
Handle: The Game Dawg
Expertise: RPGs, Strategy, Sports **Interests:** John Digweed, Money Clips, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon **Dislikes:** His Roommate's New Car, Flying Coach, Black Ice
Current Favorite Games: Counter-Strike 1.0, Ring of Red, Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter

Kristian enjoys opening a can of whoop–ass on his buddies at the ping pong table, then running off to the driving range for a lesson in humility and anger management. The original text-driven Zork started Kristian on the gaming road; Ultima 6, NES Baseball, and Zelda made sure he stayed. Still an avid RPG fan, he can always find time to pound out a good sports game.

NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

For our newer readers, here is a glossary of terms and acronyms that commonly appear in the magazine. Video game veterans should move along (these aren't the droids you are looking for).

Action – A term we use for games like Rising Zan

Adventure – A term we use for games like Myst

AI – Artificial Intelligence. Usually used to refer to how well the computer reacts to a human opponent

Board – A term we use for games like Jeopardy

CG – Computer Graphics

cutscene – A portion of the game where players simply watch as the story unfolds

DC – Sega Dreamcast

E3 – A place where pathetic people jump for hours on end to get free shirts

Fighting – A term we use for games like Street Fighter

FMV – Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated CG cutscene

FPS – Frames Per Second. How many animation frames happen in one second. Also used to denote First Person Shooters like Doom, GoldenEye, & Unreal Tournament

framerate – The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement

frontend – A game's menus and options

GB – Game Boy

GBC – Game Boy Color

ISP – Internet Service Provider. The company that provides you with access to the Internet

LAN – Local Area Network. Connecting computers or consoles together within a small space to allow communication between them. Provides fast, simultaneous gameplay

minigame – A small, simple game within a larger one

motion-capture – Using human models and infrared cameras to record movement for game animation. Also mo-cap

N64 – Nintendo 64

NES – Nintendo Entertainment System

Platform – A term we use for games like Super Mario, and Crash Bandicoot

pop-up – When onscreen objects, usually distant, suddenly appear

PS2 – Sony PlayStation 2

PS-X – Sony PlayStation

Puzzle – A term we use for games like Tetris

Racing – A term we use for games like Ridge Racer

RPG – Role-Playing Game. A game that involves character improvement through collecting and spending points. A term we use for games like Final Fantasy

SG – Sega Genesis

Shooter – A term we use for games like R-Type

SNES – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

Sports – A term we use for games like, well duh, Madden Football

SS – Sega Saturn

Strategy – A term we use for games like Command & Conquer

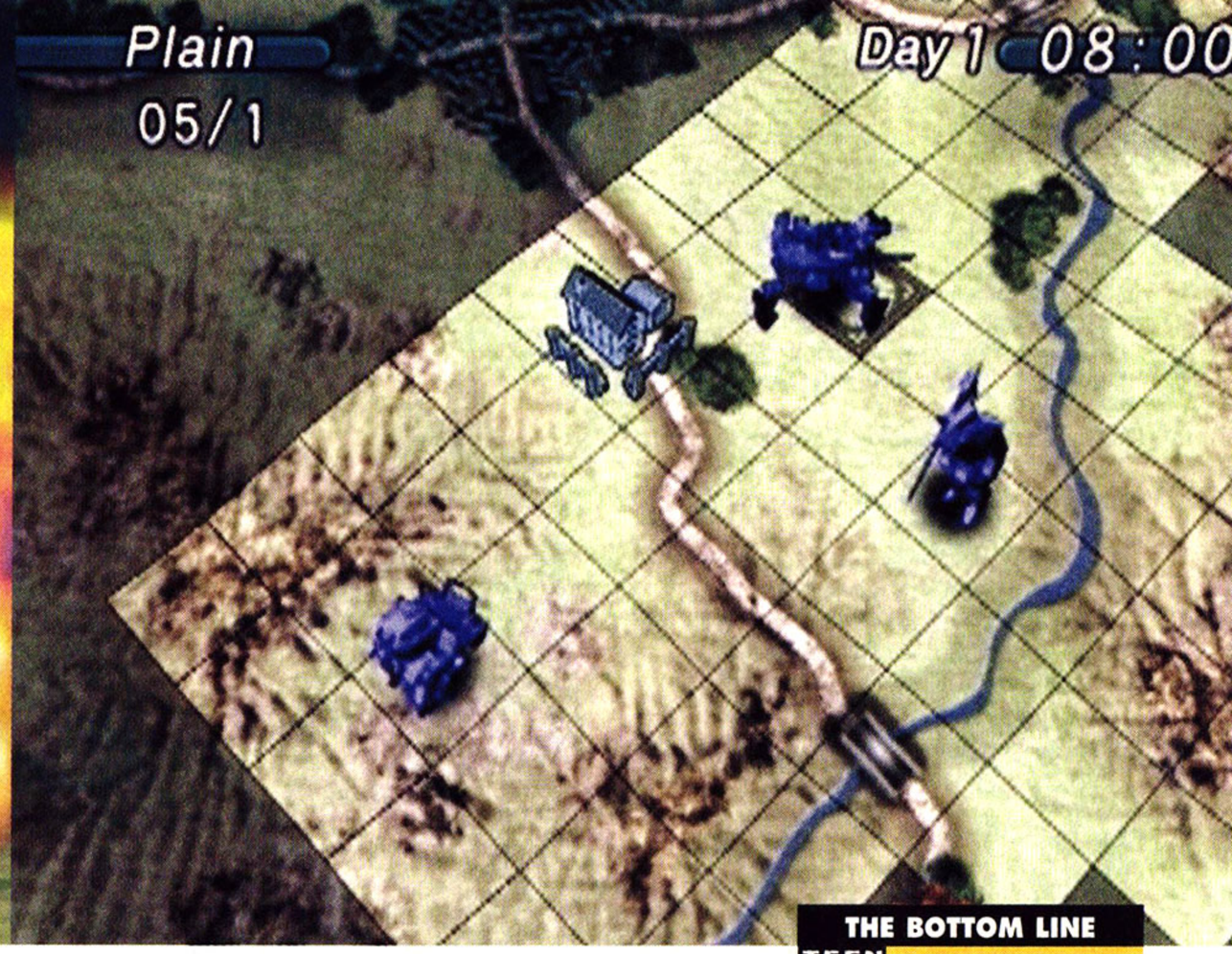
third-party – Something made for a console by a company other than the console manufacturer

yo' mammy – What yo' pappy ain't

GAME OF THE MONTH

CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

He drinks, he drives, he shoots, he scores, and he encourages you to jiggle your stick for a long time. You know you want him, but you better recognize he's more than just a lewd dude with attitude. Conker's Bad Fur Day proves that racy content alone does not a game make. It takes clever design, intuitive controls, sharp graphics, and ingenious sound. Conker's has all this AND mature language. It's not for everyone, and definitely not for young children, but it's a perfect fit for our game of the month. Pg. 82.



THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

- **Concept:** Turn-based strategy set in a fictional 1960s where large mecha trample hippies
- **Graphics:** The level of detail is incredible, and if you look closely, you can actually see gears grinding and steam rising from the engine
- **Sound:** Screeching, bending metal, people screaming in agony...too good to be true
- **Playability:** Strategic in every element, Ring of Red offers a nice blend of turn-based and real-time actions
- **Entertainment:** Slow, but the heart-pounding combat keeps you hooked
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

"Storming the gameplay front with a fiery vengeance, the simulation aspect in Ring of Red is explosive, innovative, and undeniably addictive."

PLAYSTATION 2

RING OF RED

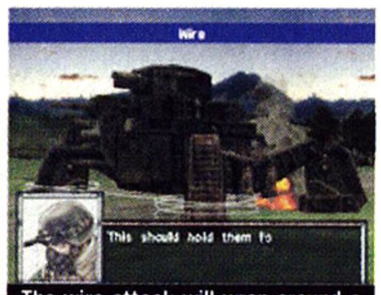
MASTER OF THE DIGITAL BATTLEFIELD

I may have slept through a good majority of my high school history classes, nevertheless, even without knowledge in the field of historical events, I can point out the historical inaccuracies in Ring of Red. This game supposedly takes place in the 1960s. A battle brews within the heart of Japan, and amidst tempered territorial disputes, secret factions are perfecting new war machines – which bear a striking resemblance to the bipedal vehicles in MechWarrior. Ring of Red's fictional work brings to life the essence of the post-WWII era. From streaming video footage to old-fashioned settings and garments, you truly believe you've gone back in time. Yet just as you immerse yourself in the past, a gas-powered Optimus Prime thunders across the screen and blows the heck out of Megatron.

Storming the gameplay front with a fiery vengeance, the simulation aspect in Ring of Red is explosive, innovative, and undeniably addictive. Picture if you will Front Mission 3 with more user interaction and a graphical presentation on a much larger scale. Following suit with every other strategy game on the market, troop movement takes place on a grid, and every battlefield action is turn-based. Instead of sitting back and watching numbers appear as two units clash, all the battles are presented in real-time, with you controlling a fair share of melee. While limited in options, maneuvering the mecha, firing its weapons, and controlling ground troop actions are available and must be commandeered by the user.

Even in basic form, this gameplay package is invigorating and oh so stressful. You don't have complete control, but it is enough to wet your whistle. For example, the computer controls targeting; however, as the crosshairs shake and shimmy across the enemy position, you are asked to pull the trigger at the precise time. This aspect may sound trivial, but it really couldn't be any more entertaining or intense. If your timing is just a second off, you'll miss the target, then get bombarded by a counterstrike. On the flip side, if you become a marksman, you can pinpoint weak zones, blow away a mecha's legs to limit its movement, or even disable its weapon, leaving it completely helpless.

Blowing away all of my expectations, Ring of Red is a rock-solid release that really couldn't be executed any better. The visual presentation is explosive, offering the highest level of detail in its landscapes, mecha designs, and effects. The thrills garnered are top rate, and something strategy fans won't want to miss. – **REINER**



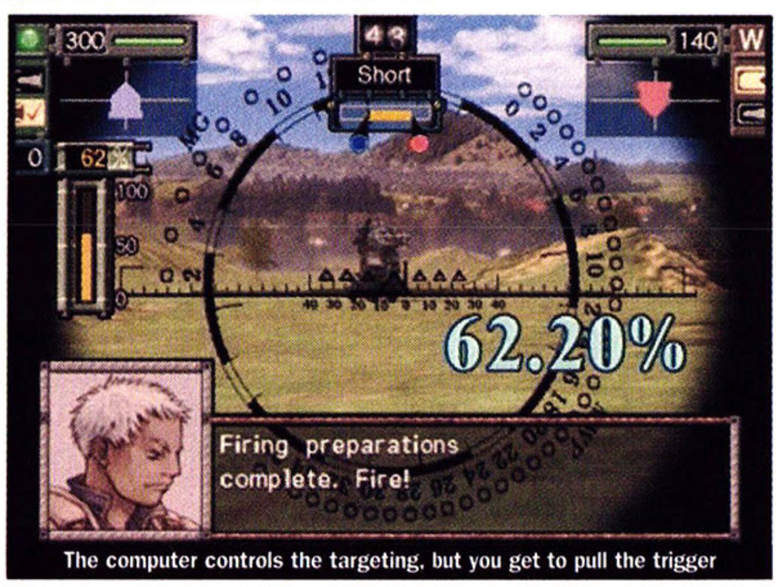
The wire attack will wrap around a mecha's legs and drop it to the ground

Customize your squadrons

Showdown at high noon

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 6

Ground troops will lend support



The computer controls the targeting, but you get to pull the trigger

SECOND OPINION

I'm not sure what just happened to me...I was talking with someone, I think it was Reiner or Andy. I had Ring of Red in my hand, and the PS2 disc tray was open. I must have inadvertently put it in the drive as I was talking. Suddenly, it was three hours later, and I had no idea what had happened. I knew I had a controller in my hand, I knew I was playing a game, and I knew that I had blinked maybe once since the opening sequence. What I didn't know was when or how I was going to be able to walk away from this game. Simply put, Ring of Red is the best PS2 game I've played to date. With wonderfully inventive gameplay, intuitive controls, engaging storylines, and the graphics to back it all up, Ring of Red should be at the top of everyone's must-have list. I know it's going to top mine.

KRISTIAN – 9.25

PLAYSTATION 2

NBA SHOOTOUT 2001

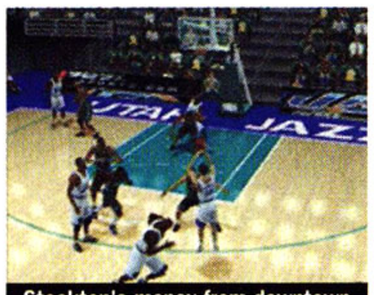
ANOTHER REASON TO SCREAM "98NEIN!"

"[Shootout] hasn't evolved sports games in the way that Live and Sega's NBA series have."

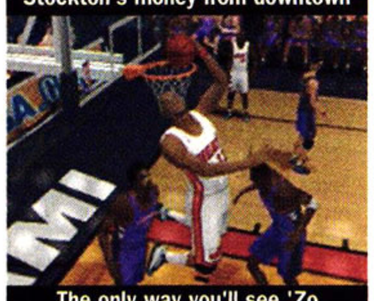
Basketball is my sport of choice. In terms of sales, though, roundball games take a back seat to pigskin titles. However, companies like Visual Concepts (NBA 2K1) and EA Sports (NBA Live 2001) have made b-ball quality paramount. 989 was once in that elite class as well, with its first PS-X efforts earning much praise by both press and public. Then, like Penny Hardaway or Ralph Sampson, ShootOut sustained a big ol' injury, and became a shell of its former self. But this is the PS2, kids, and it's a whole new ballgame. Does ShootOut have skillz? More so than 989's other PS2 games, thankfully. You won't loathe playing it, and hardly ever will you flat-out groan at your TV screen when it's on. Is it going to win the title, or even make it to the video game finals? No, it certainly is not.

ShootOut has some sweet graphics, and each player is realistically modeled. Utah's Karl Malone and Bryon Russell are easily distinguished, even if The Mailman lacks his buff pythons. In terms of play, ShootOut is a sluggish center, lacking in speed and awareness. Most things take far longer to execute than they should, like switching players or jumping. Defense is very steal-oriented, and it almost seems impossible to grab a rebound with the guy you're controlling. Many calls, especially charging, seem almost random, and will have you arguing with the digital referees. Free-throw shooting uses the most original interface I've seen in some time, and, while it takes some getting used to, is very effective.

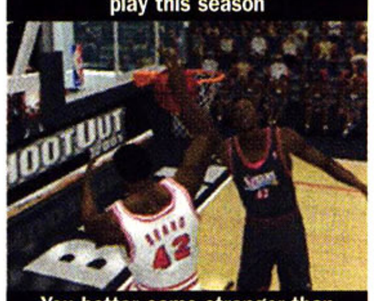
It's little things that make us think of a b-ball title as worthy or not, and this is where ShootOut falters. Players have to chase after dead balls instead of the refs. There's no illegal defense call. You can't view your team's individual ratings during a game. Some last-second shots get interrupted by the score overlay. On their own, these complaints could be overlooked. Lump them together, though, and you have a sloppy game. ShootOut seems to me like an old-school basketball vid. Lots of steals and lots of dunks, but not too much gameplay substance. Remember in EA's old Bulls vs. Lakers when you could just dance to the paint, hit shoot, and score at will? That's how ShootOut feels. It hasn't evolved sports games in the way that Live and Sega's NBA series have. It may be enough for those just seeking some weekend dunkability, but hardcore roundball veterans will definitely want to try it out before they draft NBA ShootOut 2001 onto their PS2 roster. – **JUSTIN**



Stockton's money from downtown

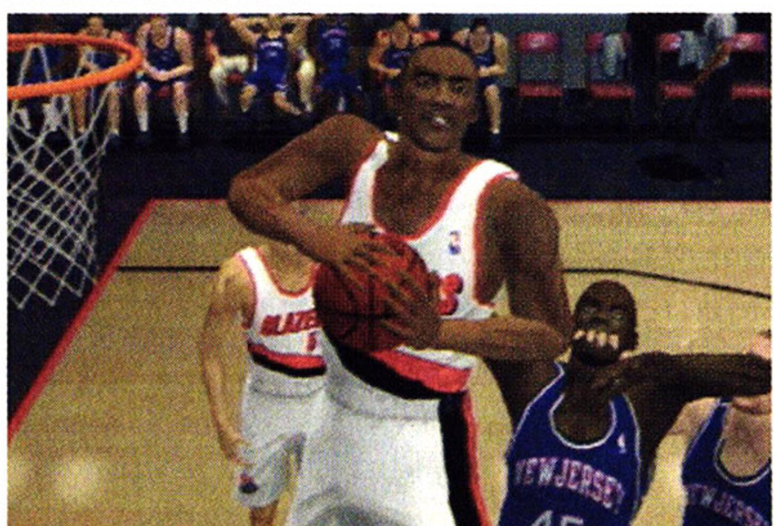


The only way you'll see 'Zo play this season

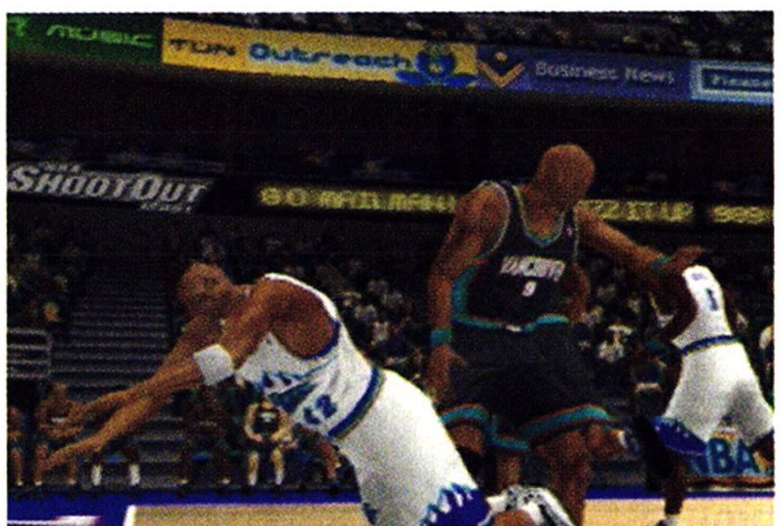


You better come stronger than that against Ratliff

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** 989 SPORTS
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 20



Is there a dentist in the house? #45's got issues



Things can get physical in the paint

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

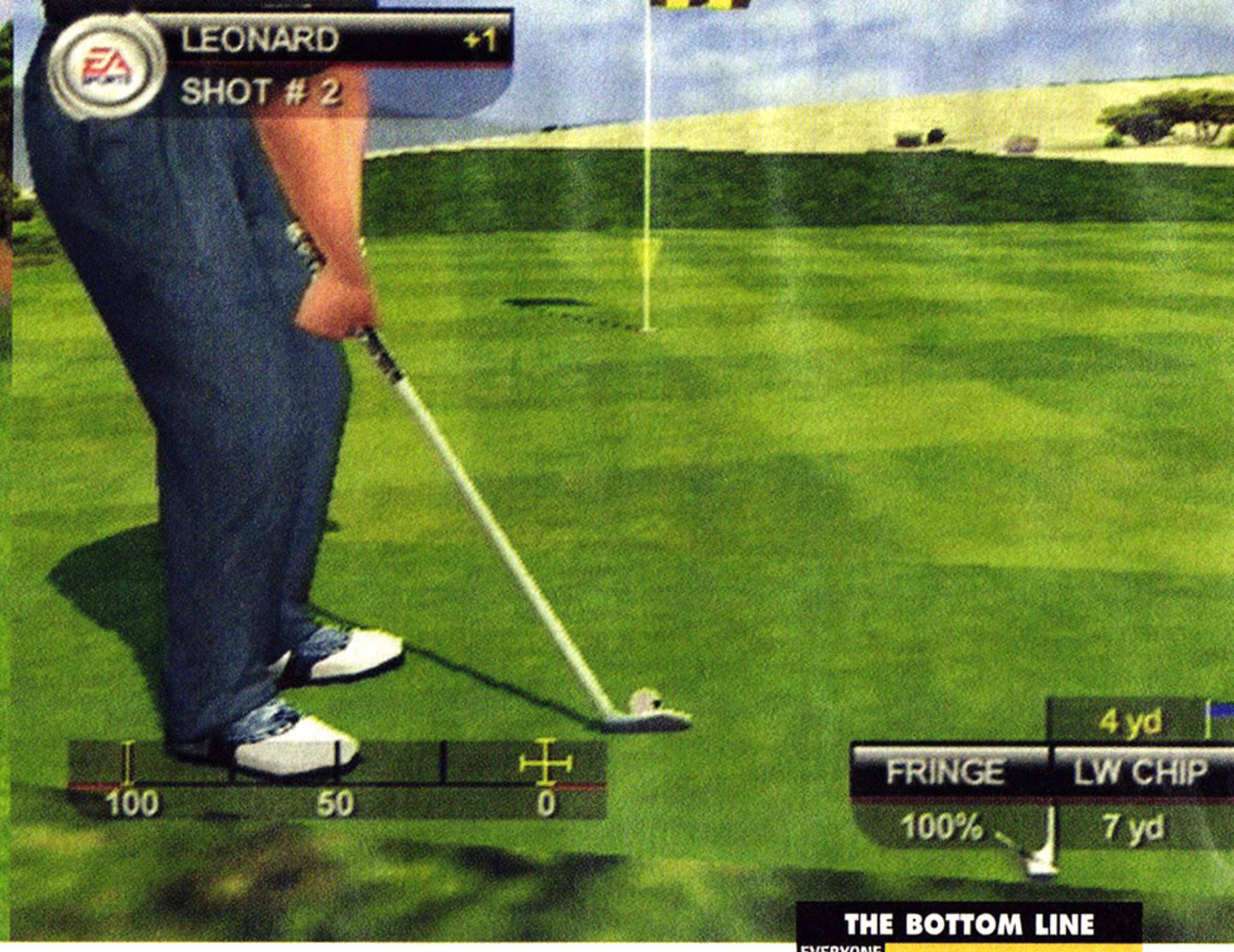
6.5

- **Concept:** Sony starts from scratch on PS2 with its long-standing hoops title
- **Graphics:** Decent and realistic models, but there are definite collision problems
- **Sound:** Same music and dunk commentary over and over, with the rest of the sound being average
- **Playability:** Dunking and stealing is easy, while rebounding and shooting is tough
- **Entertainment:** Comes off rushed and lacking, and can't really compete with the NBA Lives or NBA 2K1s of the world
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

The first thing I do when I get a basketball game is check the Timberwolves' roster. Taking a look at ShootOut's gave me a good indication that this game should not be considered a serious contender to NBA Live. If 989 can't get the rosters right, what else is gonna be wrong? I will give 989 a little credit for not making this a rehash of the PS-X game (like it did with all the other sports games). It plays and looks quite a bit different from its predecessors. This doesn't really change the fact that, for the most part, the playcontrol is fairly unresponsive. The control is further damaged by an inconsistent framerate – especially in the Up Court camera view. Another really quirky thing is the overabundance of offensive charging calls. It's not that big of a deal, but it would have been nice to at least see an animation of me knocking the guy over. I am hard pressed to find anything that this basketball game does better than Live.

PAUL – 5



"...it isn't too exciting seeing the texture map of Mark Calcevecchia's face on a polygonal head."

PLAYSTATION 2

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001

QUADRUPLE BOGEY?

I am a huge fan of the PGA Tour and have played EA's series since the days of the Sega Genesis. EA Sports has always done a great job of including such things as a nice selection of authentic courses and some of the big names in golf. Well, I should say THE biggest name at least. Keeping with its ongoing license with the best golfer in the world, you can obviously play with or as Tiger Woods.

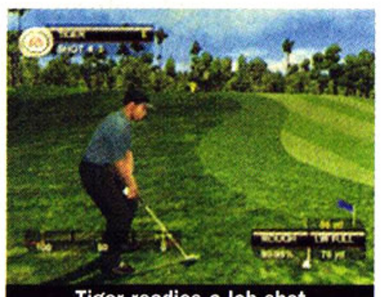
Along with Tiger, there are five other PGA Tour members that complete the stable of golfers. In recent weeks, the names Leonard, Faxon, Damron, Cink, and Calcavecchia have appeared on the Tour's leader boards, but they aren't exactly some of the more dynamic personalities in golf – especially Damron who is a lowly 165th on the money list currently. Also, it is nice to finally see the golfers re-created in 3D as the PS-X version uses the rather outdated digitized golfers. But again, it isn't too exciting seeing the texture map of Mark Calcevecchia's face on a polygonal head. I could really overlook the rather dull roster of golfers if the game included a golfer create option, but it is nowhere to be found.

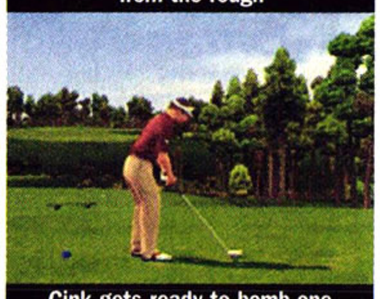
What this game does have is the standard fare of golf modes that includes Skins, Match, Stroke, Tournament, and Practice play. An interesting and rather entertaining addition to the game modes is the Play Now feature that includes 21 different challenge scenarios. The tasks range from making back a match play deficit in a couple holes to winning a bunch of cash in a skins game. Each task is rather challenging and adds plenty to the replay value, even though completing all the challenges will only give you a pumped up version of Tiger. Where's the extra courses and other goodies?

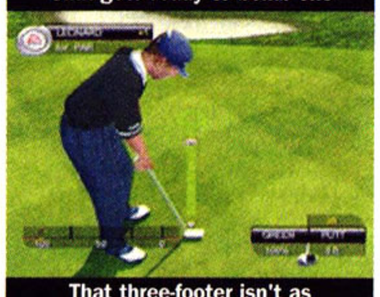
The courses included in the game are from EA's extensive list of Tour licenses, but are limited to the three tracks on California's Monterey Peninsula – Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, and Poppy Hills. The courses are nicely modeled and have some good detail, but I couldn't help but wonder why EA didn't include a more varied selection. TPC Scottsdale or Sawgrass would have been better compliments to Pebble Beach in my opinion.

In terms of playcontrol, the game relies on the analog to control the swing. This is a great feature. However, I am a purist in some ways and was ticked to see that there was no way to toggle the swing control to use the traditional method using three button presses. Additionally, the control of the ball's spin when attempting a fade or draw is either extremely unrealistic (moving the ball in the air) or unresponsive (trying to control it during the swing).

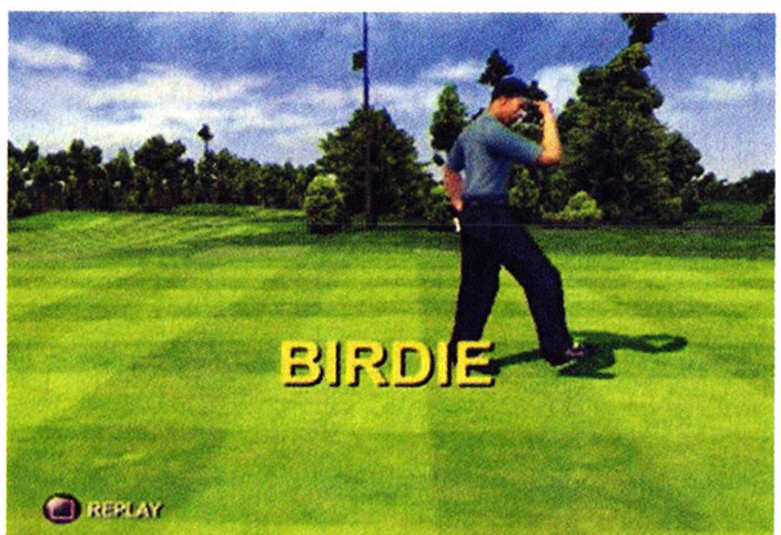
Overall, this game falls way short of my expectations and makes Swing Away look even more appealing. – **PAUL**


Tiger readies a lob shot from the rough

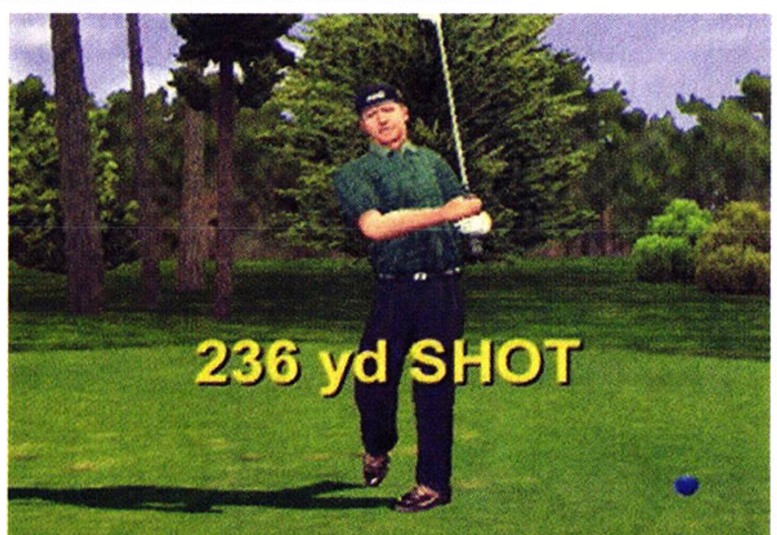

Cink gets ready to bomb one


That three-footer isn't as easy as it looks

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA SPORTS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 6



Tiger sinks the birdie and gives the trademark fist pump



Ewwww...Calcevecchia's face. Look away!!!

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6

- **Concept:** With a selection of only six golfers and three courses, this is a rather no-frills version when compared to other iterations
- **Graphics:** The 3D players are far better than the digitized ones of old
- **Sound:** Listen to Tiger and the gang complain about a poor shot, but the game needs more gallery sounds and commentary
- **Playability:** The analog swing is well done, but the shot shaping functions are horrible
- **Entertainment:** The flashy graphics mask a rather stripped down version of the PGA
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

All of the elements of a cool game are here. The sounds are very authentic (although there is a lot more cursing when I play), the graphics are worthy of the PS2, and the controls...Well, the controls are something else. I can see setting up a shot for a draw or a fade, but being able to do it while the ball is in the air is a little like shooting fish in a barrel. Not only that, but there's no way to change the swing mechanism. You have to use the analog control. That in itself is enough for me to frown. This coupled with the fact that if you don't make a perfectly vertical movement with the stick while swinging, you're either taking a mulligan or you're so far in the rough you need a machete to get to your ball. On the plus side, there is some nice voice work done, and the different challenge scenarios will keep things interesting for you should you tire of the Tour mode. Unless you're a Tiger fanatic, I'd give this one a rent then leave it alone.

KRISTIAN – 6.75

PLAYSTATION 2

WARRIORS OF MIGHT & MAGIC

HACK ATTACK!

After I watched the opening movie where the hero, Alleron, gets this evil mask put on his head and is dropped into a pit of demonic creatures, I must say I was pretty excited about Warriors of Might & Magic. Once the game came up, however, my excitement level dropped like a rock. I just couldn't believe how choppy the animations were, and how nondescript the environments were.

Per journalist rules, I was not able to turn off the game and write the review at this point, so into the adventure I went. Incredibly, I found myself having a pretty good time once I sorted things out and got the lay of the land. There is actually quite a game here. As it advances, new spells and armor become available to you, and the environments and adventure grow in complexity and grandeur as well.

Alleron is a warrior, but he also uses forces of magic. As you progress through the game, new spells and weapons are found (the best stuff being hidden in secret rooms), so you must explore each area thoroughly. The spells are based on the age-old elemental system, so fire is effective on earth, water on fire, etc. Alleron's armor comes with various resists to certain elements or inherent bonuses such as speed, strength, and endurance. He can also equip a necklace and ring to help his stats in various instances.

The best way to get Alleron to kick more butt is to level him up. Experience is awarded for kills, and also for completing quests that you come across as you explore the levels. After each level you are given points to put toward Alleron's various skills, so you can tailor the character to your fighting style.

Gameplay is slightly reminiscent of Tomb Raider, since you explore levels from the third-person view, but the game is more dungeon crawler than that. There aren't many harrowing jumps, mostly just bad guys to hack through. Battle is fairly straightforward as you either block with your shield, use one of your two attacks, or blast from a distance with spells, so it's nothing terribly exciting. However, as the game advances, your use of armor, as well as spells such as silence or self-enhancements, will make for some strategic thinking.

Warriors of Might & Magic certainly isn't an amazing game, but it does deliver what it intended – a medieval action adventure with plenty of places to explore. If you like exploring dungeons and hacking through baddies, I would definitely say you should give this game a try. It worked for me, and there is a lot of game here so you won't find yourself blowing through this one in a weekend. – **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

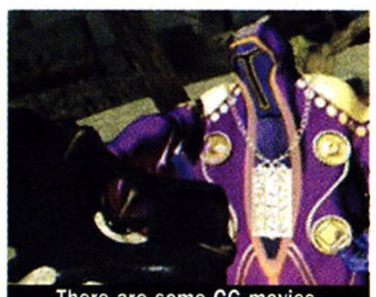
7.75

- **Concept:** Use the Might & Magic universe to create a hack n' slash game with some brains
- **Graphics:** Plenty of good and bad things going on here, but overall the package is acceptable
- **Sound:** Not much of a soundtrack, but there are some cool sound effects. Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of voice-overs, which I think would have helped
- **Playability:** Almost every button on the controller is used, so it's not for everyone, but it is certainly playable
- **Entertainment:** If you can get into the game some, there is an enjoyable adventure here
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Warriors of Might & Magic may not be a killer app, but rest assured, even with a shaky track record, 3DO's work on this title is admirable and a step in the right direction for this legendary series. Right from the get-go, this title sends out a good vibe. I not only found myself fascinated with the introductory FMV, which showcases an interesting origin story for the hero, Alleron, but I also thoroughly enjoyed the first few minutes of gameplay as well. Certainly, this title won't bedazzle you with its graphics, although the volumetric fog and dynamic lighting are quite impressive. However, I do feel gamers will get into the play. The movement is very fluid and the control schematic is simple. 3DO also did a phenomenal job diversifying the makeover of dungeons and missions. All in all, the game does keep you hooked and wanting more.

REINER – 7.75



There are some CG movies, but not many

Many perils await!

Increase skills to tailor your fighter

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** 3DO ■ **DEVELOPER** 3DO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 19

Some rooms have traps while others have secrets

Alleron gets attacked by a band of thieves!

PLAYSTATION 2

RAYMAN 2: REVOLUTION

EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMAN

Taking his first steps into the next frontier of gaming, Rayman's PlayStation 2 debut comes in the form of an enhanced rehash. Spreading like an airborne disease, Revolution is the fifth version of Rayman 2 to grace the gaming scene. The only noteworthy add-ons are two new bonus levels and larger enemy hordes. Naturally, this isn't nearly enough to warrant a purchase for those of you who have already put this platformer through its paces. However, Rayman rookies should get off their butts and immerse themselves in this timeless classic. – **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

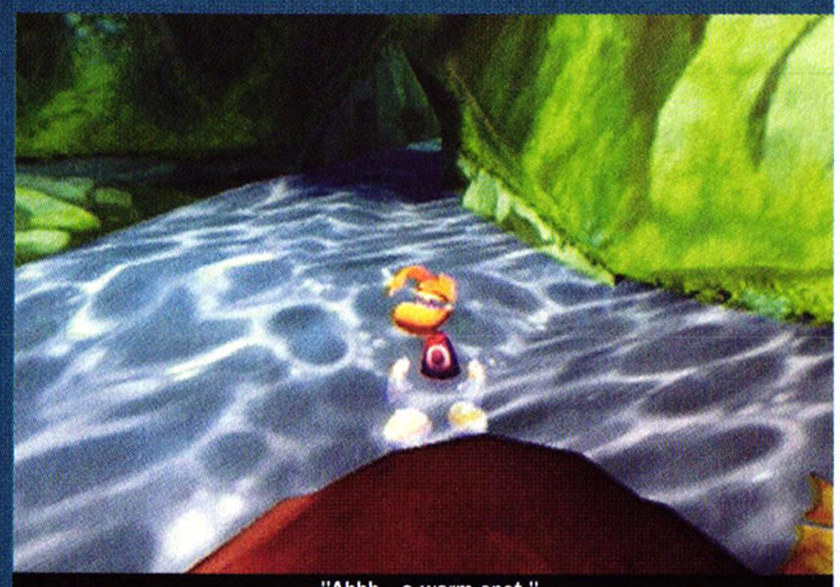
8

- **Concept:** The same N64, PC, PS-X, and DC game retooled with additional material
- **Graphics:** A fascinating, surrealistic world with spectacular animation and gorgeous texturing
- **Sound:** The musical score is fantastic, and the voices lend themselves nicely to the cartoon appeal
- **Playability:** Oddly, the PS2 version is bogged down with long loading times; however, the gameplay is a little smoother
- **Entertainment:** Finding all the secrets is a lengthy, challenging, and enjoyable process
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Nothing really that new here. If you have played Rayman 2 before, there isn't enough here to warrant a purchase; but if you haven't had a chance yet, this action/platformer is worth checking out as it is better than average.

ANDY – 8



"Ahhh...a warm spot."

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29

PLAYSTATION 2

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

DON'T LISTEN TO PAUL

Okay, steady yourselves. Sit down in a chair with arms so you don't fall off your seat, because what I'm about to tell you could lead to massive heart failure – F1 Racing Championship is every bit the equal to F1 Championship Season 2000. That's right. I'll say it again because I think you might not believe me. Ubi Soft's F1 Racing Championship is every bit the equal to EA's F1 release. You may scoff at this. You may say, "Kristian, that's a load of @#$%! Don't you remember that dung heap Pod Speedzone? What are you trying to do to me?" Seriously, if you're a racing fan, you'll love this game.

The level of customization available to you might even surpass that of EA's F1 release. Everything from spoiler angle to gear ratio tweaking will be at your disposal, should you feel the need to delve into your ride that deeply. You'll have numerous car types and drivers available to you when choosing your car, all of which can be adjusted to your liking.

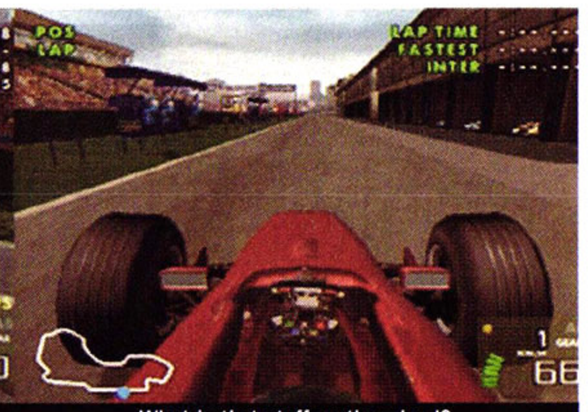
When you finally get around to taking a lap around a track, you'll notice if you're not jockeying the gas and the brake a lot, you're trading paint with the walls. Turning on the braking assistance is a good idea so you can get a feel for your car to start out with. The only thing lacking is the car models. I wouldn't say they look cheap, but they don't look wonderful either. That's kind of a shame when you realize that the backgrounds are particularly well done, and the sounds are some of the best I've heard for a racing title. – **KRISTIAN**

Nice environments

I don't think you're allowed to do that

GO! GO! GO!!

One of these kids is not like the others



What is that stuff on the wheel?

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** VIDEO SYSTEMS ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT
■ **RELEASE** APRIL 12

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

8.75

- **Concept:** Bomb around a bunch of F1 tracks, learn how to turn the braking assist on
- **Graphics:** There are actually some nice background and particle effects that rose my eyebrows
- **Sound:** Your pit crew piping in to keep you updated on your car condition and race status is a cool feature
- **Playability:** There are a ton of features to play with in this one. If you don't care about that, it's easy to jump right in and race.
- **Entertainment:** F1 action. Accurately.
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

I have always liked the F1 games that have come out over the years – or at least liked to check them out. After reviewing EA's F1 game for PS2 just a couple months back, there are plenty of glaring problems that I see with Ubi Soft's rendition of the sport. There are issues with flickering and aliasing of the car models, which really make this game look dated. Additionally, the framerate is sketchy and it detracts from the realism. I am also ticked that there is no way to use the right analog stick for gas and brake. Lame. Yet, it does have some nice options and plenty of settings to tweak your car. I also like the training session. They are probably the highlight of the game. I'll have to say that Kristian is way off on his assessment of this title. If you are interested in F1, you would probably only need one game. This isn't it.

PAUL – 3

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

PLAYSTATION 2

WINBACK: COVERT OPS

DÉJÀ VU WITH A BETTER VIEW

Games of stealth focus on secrecy, cunning, and all-around sneakiness. Koei uses these same techniques by releasing a version of Winback on PlayStation 2 that is an almost exact replica of the Nintendo 64 sleeper from back in 1999. This new rendition blows away the N64 cart, but there's no reason it shouldn't, what with the technological leap between a cart-based system and a next-gen marvel. In most aspects, however, Winback remains unchanged. This means the intense gameplay is back, but the quirky camera and boring level designs return as well.

Controlling the accent-less Frenchman Jean Luc comes with a rather steep learning curve, making the in-game tutorial essential. The PS2 version's enemies will actually shoot at you, as opposed to N64's gasmask-laden dummies, so your life force will be extinguished many times as you struggle to lock onto your target.

There's lots of fun to be had in Winback, despite the lack of innovation. A little more variety in its missions would've been nice, but stealthily busting caps in asses never loses its charm. Mr. Rogers sang, "Let's think of something to do while we're waiting," and Winback will fit the bill until Metal Gear Solid 2 comes out. – **JUSTIN**

Your enemy has a wuss name, too: Crying Lions

Euthanize friends in multiplayer deathmatch

Like shooting halibut in a bucket

"Curse you, my porcelain enemy!"

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI ■ **DEVELOPER** KOEI
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 20

- **Concept:** A spirited game of hide and go shoot
- **Graphics:** Predictable improvement over the N64 original, but bland overall
- **Sound:** Some of the cheesiest voice-overs since Resident Evil
- **Playability:** Takes practice to grasp, especially the camera controls
- **Entertainment:** A good tide-me-over until Metal Gear Solid 2
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Even though there are probably a lot of you who didn't get a chance to play the N64 version of Winback, you PS2 owners out there will now have the chance to play it on your new Sony machines. It sounds strange, but this game has the same quirky controls and strange camera system as the original. With the N64 version I could overlook some of the inadequacies, as it was a nice change from the overabundance of N64 racing games. On the PS2, it's a different story. With some meager graphical enhancements and a couple game modes, the PS2 version is quite sad. There have been no visible changes to the computer AI or game structure. There is really no reason to struggle with the goofy control system – unless you enjoy frustration. I did have some fun with the N64 version over a year ago, but I didn't want to relive the experience on the PS2.

PAUL – 4

PLAYSTATION 2

NHL FACEOFF 2001

FIVE MINUTES FOR SUCKING

When you look at the features FaceOff has to offer, it sounds like a decent game. Not only are the statistical categories and mode selections comparable to EA's NHL 2001, FaceOff's rosters include the latest transactions, and yes, the unstoppable Mario Lemieux is dressed and ready to slap a one-timer through a goalie's five hole. Going the extra mile, 989 has also secured the exclusive rights to NHL legends like Bobby Hull and Gordie Howe. Everyone loves the old farts. So essentially, on paper, FaceOff is the game to get. That is, unless you actually want to play it. In many ways, this title is nothing like hockey. The gameplay is miserable, and the graphics are simply atrocious. Many of the starting lines are messed up, and scoring is as easy as blinking. For a game that sounds perfect, it actually couldn't be any worse. – **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

1

- **Concept:** The goofiest game on ice
- **Graphics:** A laugh a minute
- **Sound:** The two-man commentary isn't that bad, but the game sounds are way off the mark
- **Playability:** The NES game, Ice Hockey, has better control
- **Entertainment:** Yeah right! Olympic figure skating is more like hockey than this game
- **Replay Value:** Low

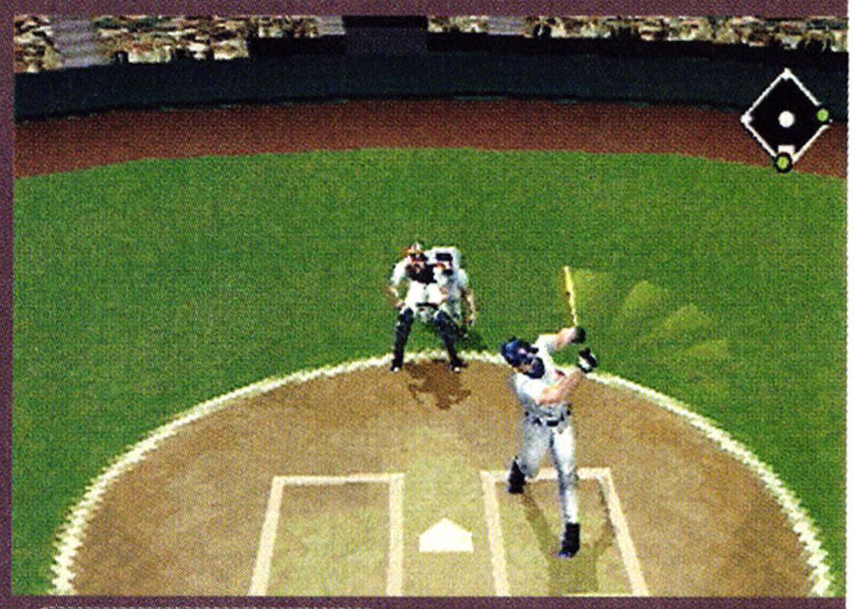
SECOND OPINION

True to its form with football, 989 Sports has just slapped slightly better graphics onto its PS-X game. This equates into a PS2 hockey game that pales in comparison to EA Sports' offering.

PAUL – 3

"How is the back. Super Mario?"

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** 989 SPORTS
■ **DEVELOPER** SOLWORKS ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 11



PLAYSTATION

TRIPLE PLAY BASEBALL

EVEN SLOWER THAN THE REAL THING

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

7

For some reason or another, Electronic Arts hasn't found a groove with the Triple Play franchise. With each passing year, the Madden series continues to improve, but you never know what's going to happen on the baseball diamond. Thankfully, this year's release, which should be the last for PS-X, is a step in the right direction. Fielding is not as troublesome as it was in the previous offering, but the batter/pitcher duel is still too simplistic, and the overall game speed is even more drawn out than an actual game. Not too shabby, but still a far cry from being truly enjoyable. – **REINER**

- **Concept:** At the end of an era, EA's 32-bit finale is as slow as molasses and as boring as one of Andy's reviews
- **Graphics:** With such a high level of detailing, the framerate is low and the perspective changes are sluggish
- **Sound:** The color commentary is excellent, yet the crack of the bat still sounds more like a rocket taking off
- **Playability:** As slow as a grandma driving on a Sunday afternoon
- **Entertainment:** A realistic simulation with average gameplay and extensive loading times
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

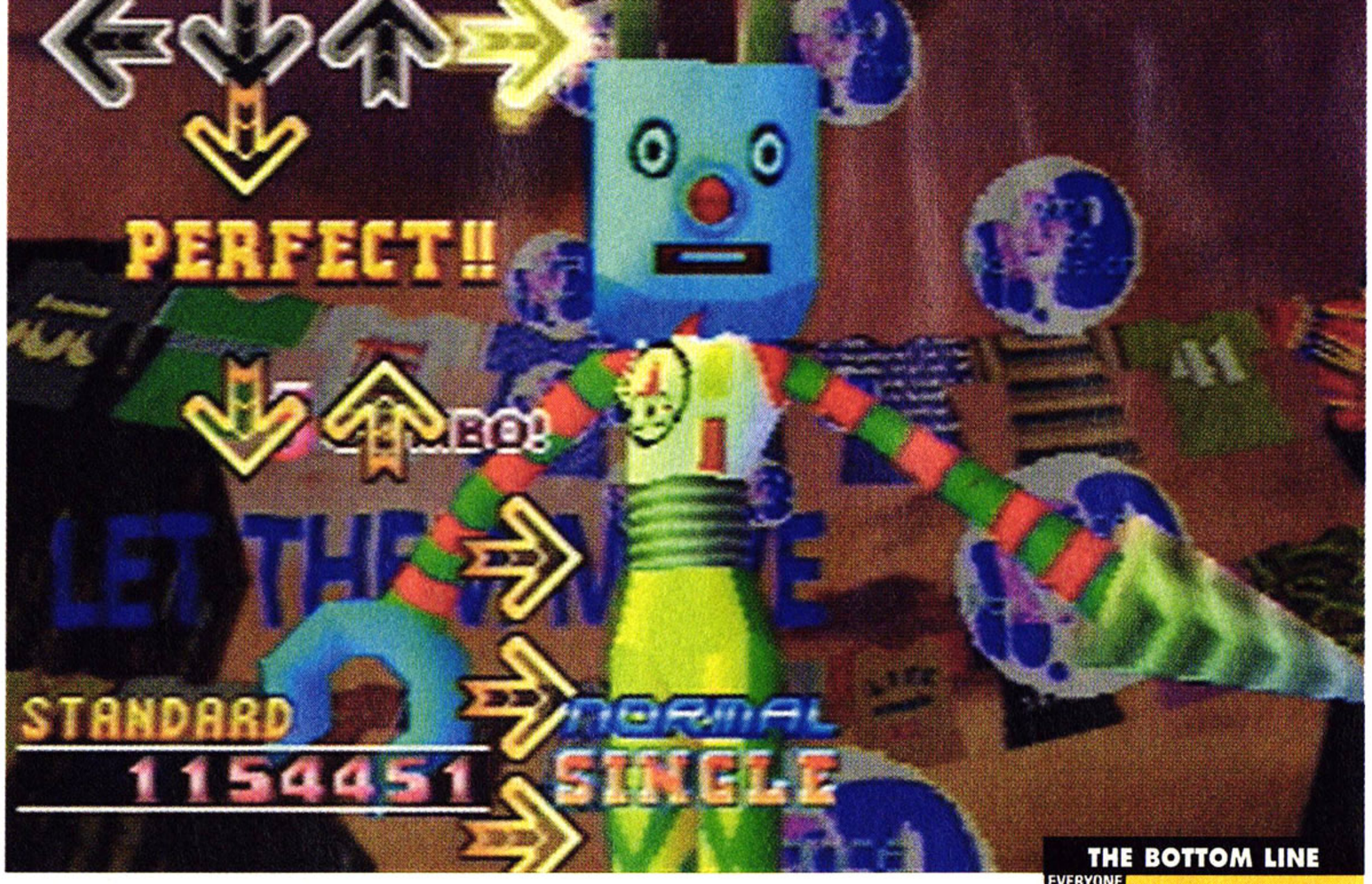
SECOND OPINION

I can't really get into this game. It is just too much like the renditions that were offered the last couple of seasons. In other words, it is solid, but not spectacular.

PAUL – 7

The camera switch between batting and fielding is a tad better, but still incredibly frustrating

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** TREYARCH ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 6



PLAYSTATION

DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION

THE SWEAT-MAKER

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

8.75

Konami's rhythm games are a phenomenon in Japan, but have been kept off US soil until now. You may not like to dance. You may hug the wall like it's your security blankie, but you will get down with Dance Dance. Don't fear the NES Power Pad-like control mat. It will serve you well, unlike other peripherals (cough...Samba's maracas...cough). It only has four places your feet will occupy – up, down, left, and right – but these are more than enough to give you hours of immersive exercise.

Pre-Dance Dance, I thought I had a fraction of flyness, but I was proven wrong and barely passed the first few stages. Eventually, my toes started to tap in time, and I was keeping up with the 1/8th beats and 360° moments of Dance Dance. Unlike PaRappa or Space Channel 5, there are many steps of progression and unlimited replay value here. With many modes, songs, and characters, it'll take some time before you can feel confident you've conquered the game. Just don't use the PS-X controller; it's far too easy to cheat.

I'm not going to star in Breakin' 3: Bikini Boogaloo after playing Dance Dance, but it's a heck of a lot of fun. Millions of Japanese (and this lead-footed white guy) can't be wrong, so you should give this game a serious shot. – **JUSTIN**

- **Concept:** Tangle your ankles grooving to a multitude of songs
- **Graphics:** Like most titles in the genre, you'll be far too busy to watch them
- **Sound:** You probably won't be humming these tunes later, but they're great while you're getting your dance on
- **Playability:** Controller timing is impeccable; you know any missed beat is your own damn fault
- **Entertainment:** It's about freaking time we get this game in the States; it's the grand-pappy of all rhythm games
- **Replay Value:** High

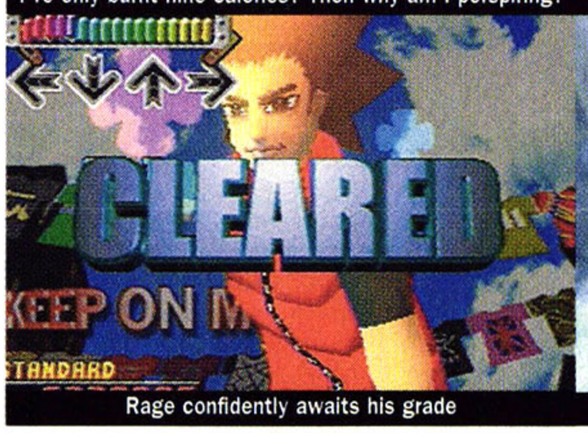
SECOND OPINION

A game like this is especially hard to review. Either you're the type of person who enjoys these video game versions of Club MTV, or you'd rather have bamboo shards shoved under your fingernails before you'd step foot on a modern-day Power Pad. So rather than tell you how it is, it's time for me to put the ball in your court. Do you like dancing games? Do you like other peripheral games like Samba de Amigo or Guitar Freaks? Are you looking for a fun way to get an aerobic workout? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you'll most likely love Dance Dance Revolution, especially if you've got a friend or two to play with. If you're not intrigued in the least, then perhaps your feet would be better used walking to the store and buying something else.

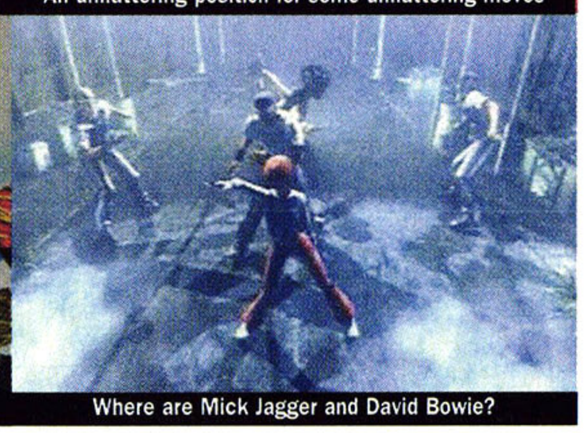
JAY – 7

I've only burnt nine calories? Then why am I perspiring?

An unflattering position for some unflattering moves



Rage confidently awaits his grade



Where are Mick Jagger and David Bowie?

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 21

PLAYSTATION

SUPERCROSS

MAKING GAMERS SUPER CROSS

As the new kid on the GI block, I'm sure I'll become the resident supercross game reviewer. Racing on the curved track against other riders sucks tailpipe, as every other GI review of this genre has told you time and time again. Freestyle mode, though, was actually good for a few laughs. A small trick list and tiny environments give no competition to Tony Hawk or the like, but it's a great alternative to having to play the primary mode in the game. Overall, EA Sports' Supercross is basically a polished version of the turd that was Supercross 2000. – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5.75

- **Concept:** Video game version of the most popular sport of guys with mullets
- **Graphics:** Better than the last EA effort, but that isn't hard to beat
- **Sound:** Decent soundtrack, drowned out by engine humming
- **Playability:** Pulling off tricks can be difficult, but everything else handles fine
- **Entertainment:** I enjoyed Freestyle mode for a while, which was more than I expected
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Like most supercross games, the racing has odd psyhics, but this game does have some redeeming features. For instance, the stunt mode is pretty fun, and the power clutch helps catch some big air.

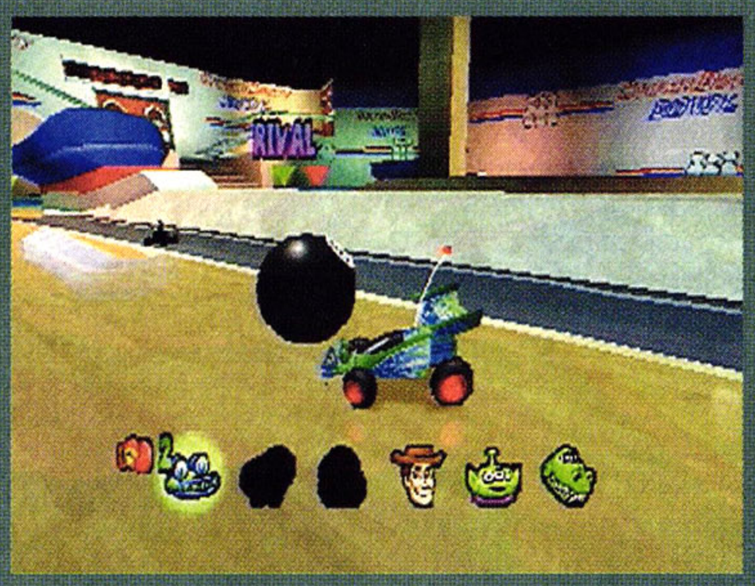
ANDY – 7

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** PAGE 44 STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 1

PLAYSTATION

TOY STORY RACER

ENOUGH TOYIN' AROUND



Either Shigeru Miyamoto accidentally left his top-secret Mario Kart blueprints in a Kinko's copier, or...well, there is no "or." The plumber-lovin' goof messed up, now we gotta pay for it! Punishment #45: Toy Story Racer. As much as it sickens me, I do have to give Traveller's Tales props for the diversity in racing modes. Switching up the racing with battle is a nice touch. The gameplay itself, however, is very generic and lacking in excitement. If you've played Mario Kart or Crash Team Racing, then you've already experienced a game twice as exhilarating as this one. – **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5

- **Concept:** Toys in toy cars. Perplexing, no?
- **Graphics:** Not too shabby, but not too flashy either
- **Sound:** Tom Hanks...Tim Allen...happy-go-lucky melodies...there is no God
- **Playability:** Diversity is offered within a multitude of game modes, but really, what good is it?! The racing and control are poor to begin with
- **Entertainment:** Another day...another kart racing game
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

McDonald's stopped putting cartoon characters in toy cars as the prize for Happy Meals long ago. I wish game developers would follow suit. At least it's not Tony Hawk Kart.

JUSTIN – 6

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** TRAVELLER'S TALES/DISNEY INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 6

The CG dragon sounds just like Jabba the Hutt

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.25

PLAYSTATION

DARKSTONE

DISCOUNT DIABLO

An adventurer enters a medieval world full of peril. This savior battles minions in random dungeons in order to right wrongs and triumph over evil, picking up cash and items along the way. Diablo, you say? Sure, but it's also a summary of Darkstone, Take 2's cheapo action/RPG.

Aside from near-identical gameplay to its forebear, Diablo, there are a few new ingredients added to the formula. You have eight different characters to call your own, in four distinct classes. The overworld is a dungeon itself, and above-ground exploration is required to reach deeper levels. A handy menu option allows you to warp to doorsteps you've already darkened, thus eliminating the need to search again for your town or stairways to Hell.

The same things that made Diablo worth your time will keep you playing Darkstone. Randomly-created dungeons and rare items bring with them limitless replay, and you'll never encounter the same game twice. Boy howdy, the graphics are putrid, though.

Hamburger is kind of like steak, but much easier on the pocketbook. Likewise, Darkstone is a decent, cheap way to satisfy your role-playing hunger, as long as you're not expecting top-notch visuals or unique innovation. – **JUSTIN**

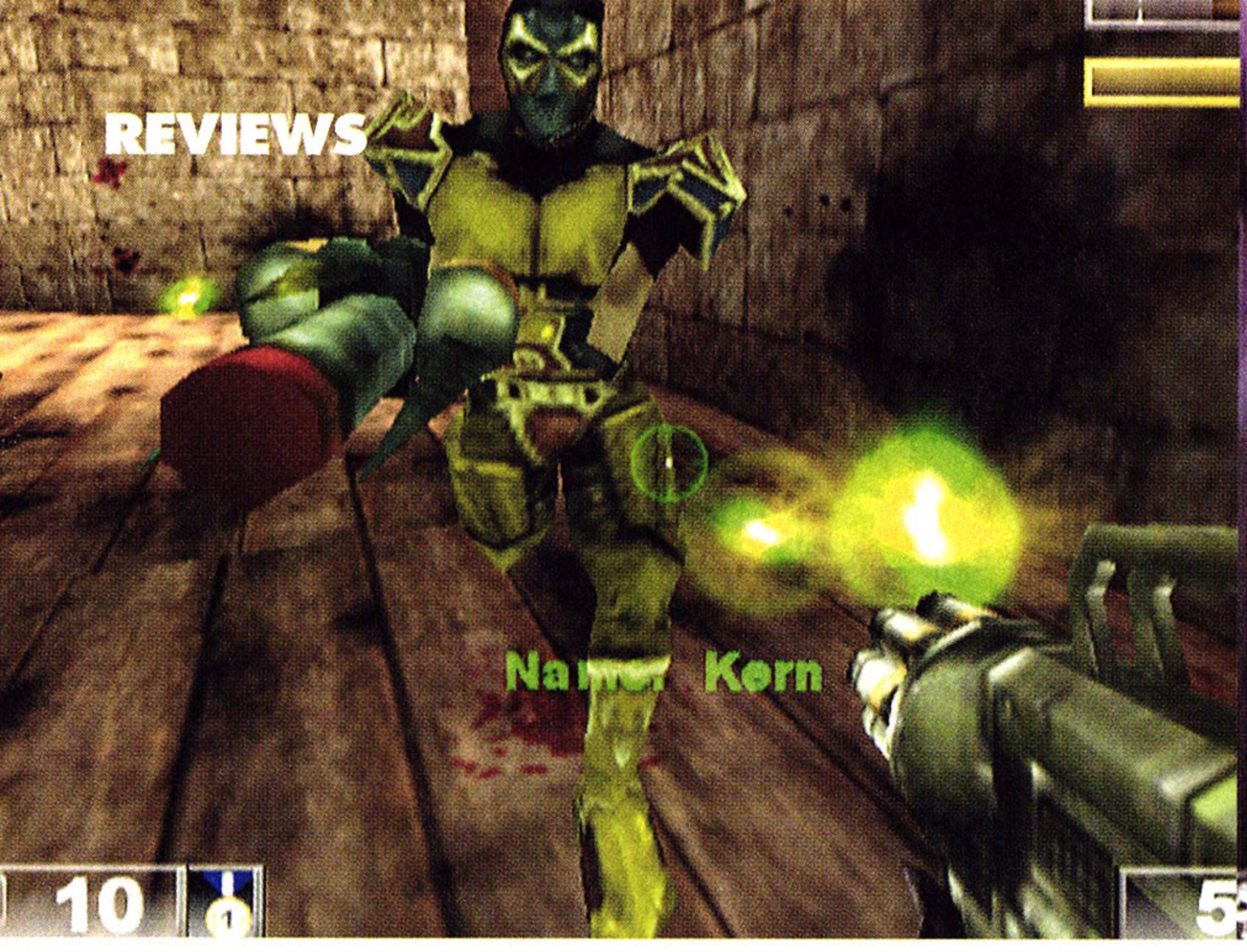
- **Concept:** A mildly extended Diablo clone for under $10
- **Graphics:** Painful polygons and minimal animation say you get what you pay for
- **Sound:** Having ears does nothing to enhance the Darkstone experience
- **Playability:** Simple combat that points you in the right direction, but you may get caught on walls
- **Entertainment:** Lots of variation makes for fun-filled adventuring, but the lack of multiplayer hurts it a tad
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

For 10 bucks, Darkstone isn't a bad waste of time. Once you get past the horrible graphics and horrendous camera, you discover that cruising around killing people, collecting items, and exploring the world is more than enough to keep you playing. Sure, Darkstone may not be the best-looking lady at the prom, but I sure wouldn't kick her out of bed for eating crackers. If you are lookin' for some halfway decent action that won't crunch the pocketbook, Darkstone is it. Compared to many of the cheap titles that have hit the streets as of late, this is definitely one of the best. If this game was full price I would probably give it a 5, but at this price the game is more than worth it.

ANDY – 7

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** DELPHINE ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29



DREAMCAST

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

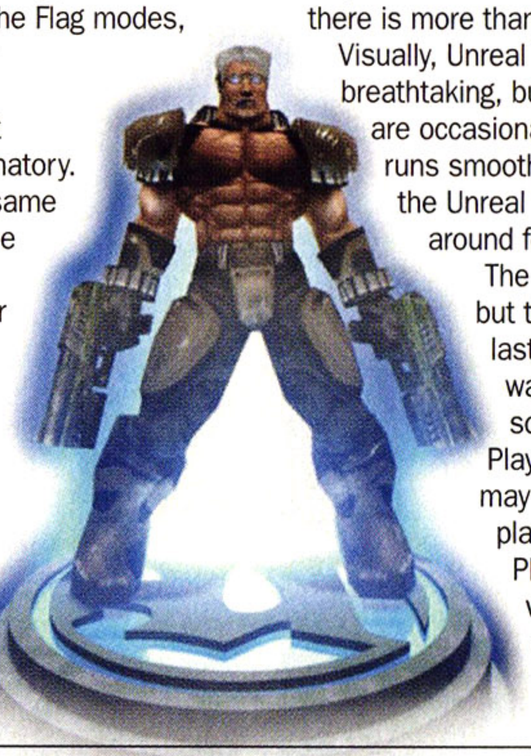
FRAG THE NIGHT AWAY

"...the Unreal Tournament engine is one of the best around for fast graphics and gameplay."

There are Quake players and there are Unreal Tournament players. I am a UT fan, so this game is a treat for me. The single-player offline game features Deathmatch, Domination, and Capture the Flag modes, with the very entertaining Assault mode sadly missing.

For fans of first-person shooters, most everything about this game is self-explanatory. The weapons and rules are exactly the same as all the other versions. I myself find the Capture the Flag mode to be highly addicting, and it can keep you playing for longer than you'd like. Domination is a decent gaming experience, and Deathmatch gets downright boring in single-player, but luckily with the Dreamcast version, you can take the fight online.

Sure, you could use Unreal Tournament's two to four-player split-screen mode to get your Deathmatch groove on, but going online is best.



Up to eight people can participate through either the Dreamcast's built-in modem or broadband adapter. Over 60 maps are available for play, so once you get hooked on UT, there is more than enough here to keep you busy.

Visually, Unreal Tournament on Dreamcast is not exactly breathtaking, but it is solid through and through. There are occasional graphic glitches, but normally the game runs smooth, even online. Proving, once again, that the Unreal Tournament engine is one of the best around for fast graphics and gameplay.

The Dreamcast may not have much time left, but that's no reason to not enjoy it while it lasts. Unless you have a PC, this is the only way to play Unreal Tournament online until some of the newer systems come out or PlayStation 2 gets a modem.Even then, you may not get a chance. If you aren't already playing Unreal Tournament on the PlayStation 2, definitely give this Dreamcast version a test drive. You won't be disappointed. – **ANDY**

Stay on target

Imperial Troops have entered the base!

He sells sea shells by the seashore

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** SECRET LEVEL ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 13

"Kakuschke go baboomschke"

"You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me?"

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** Online and offline fragging to ease your bloodlust
- **Graphics:** Not nearly as impressive as Quake III on Dreamcast, but more than adequate
- **Sound:** The voice-overs are easily some of the best, with lots of obnoxious comments about your playing abilities – "You suck!"
- **Playability:** The targeting assist makes this game very playable with a controller, but it's not as precise as a mouse and keyboard
- **Entertainment:** Although it's missing the Assault mode, there is still plenty of entertainment in the Deathmatch, Domination, and Capture the Flag modes
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

The Quake/Unreal debate continues, with Dreamcast as the battlefield. Quake III Arena appears to hold the initial advantage with better graphics and sound. It's when you actually play the games that you find Unreal Tournament the superior product. Level design, where Quake was lacking, is UT's strong suit, and its stages are filled with more intricacies and niches to explore and exploit. UT also gets the nod in terms of single-player gaming. You don't need human targets to alleviate aggression. It's a hoot just blasting AI drones, since the weapons, control, and difficulty are a near-perfect mix, though there are modes lacking from other UT versions. In other respects (online play, characters, etc.), these two titles are nearly identical, but there can be only one game atop the Dreamcast FPS food chain. That game is Unreal Tournament.

JUSTIN – 9.25

DREAMCAST

KAO THE KANGAROO

THIS MARSUPIAL DON'T PLAY

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7

- **Concept:** Mix Crash, Banjo-Kazooie, and Mario. Add one kangaroo. Blend on high for two minutes. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour. Voila!
- **Graphics:** Crisp and clean, but the automatic camera is painfully slow
- **Sound:** The bubbly lite-jazz soundtrack brings back fond memories of the grocery store
- **Playability:** Adequate, but the more intricate platforming sequences gave me fits due to the sloppy camera
- **Entertainment:** Like a hamburger from Denny's, Kao is mediocre but satisfying
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

As much as I enjoyed playing Kao the Kangaroo, I can't help but wonder how much life is left in the action/platform genre. After Banjo-Kazooie and Mario 64 reinvented it for the last wave of console systems, most of the games that followed were merely refinements of those two classics, if not blatant rip-offs. Kao the Kangaroo doesn't do much to distinguish itself from the pack, but it does get the basics down well enough to warrant a look. Like Crash, it mixes 3D levels with traditional side-scrolling, and the now-infamous Indiana Jones-style running from boulder sequences. There are also some hang gliding and snowboarding levels, and a neat feature that lets you place checkpoints wherever you please. Nothing earthshaking, but I'm as much of a sucker for meat-and-potatoes platforming as the next guy. When it comes down to it, there's just nothing better than a cute little animal jumping around and collecting coins.

If this were a PlayStation game, I'd probably tell you to spend your money elsewhere. However, given recent developments, this might be one of the last decent games of this type to be released for the Dreamcast, save Sonic Adventure 2. Besides, you could count the number of decent DC platform games on one hand and still have enough left over to pick your nose. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

Not a bad platformer here, but it's a little too hard for a younger player – who this game is best suited for – and a little too boring for an older player. The create-your-own checkpoints is a great idea, but I doubt this game will be remembered as much of anything when you look back at the Dreamcast. If you absolutely, positively must play every platformer out there, Kao isn't a bad two-day rental, but I certainly wouldn't buy it.

ANDY – 5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** TITUS ■ **DEVELOPER** X-RAY INTERACTIVE
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 6

DREAMCAST

DAYTONA USA

AN ARCADE CLASSIC GOES ONLINE

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7

- **Concept:** Sega's arcade racing warhorse comes home with SegaNet multiplayer functions
- **Graphics:** Not particularly impressive by Dreamcast standards, but it moves out at a fast clip
- **Sound:** Daytona shares Ferrari 355's affinity for '80s geetar rawk, and Hydro Thunder's booming announcer
- **Playability:** Fast, loose, and fun; but little to keep you coming back for more
- **Entertainment:** Without the online racing, Daytona wouldn't warrant more than a few hours of playtime
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

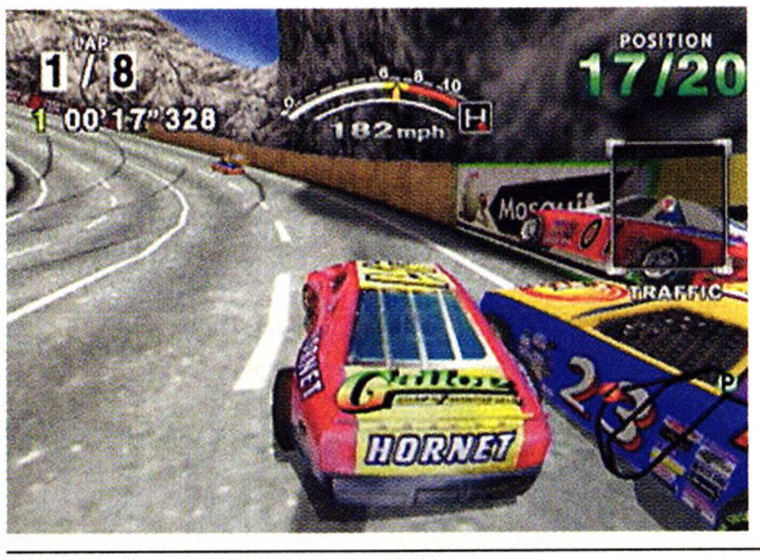
The subtle problem with arcade-to-home ports is that you can always just restart and play again. This tends to diminish the inherent drama of fighting for your life, trying to make it to the next checkpoint for precious new seconds of playtime. Racing games suffer particularly, as they are taken out of beautiful cockpit cabinets equipped with thundering speakers and steering wheels to be plunked down into bland suburban rec rooms. Daytona USA, the latest home edition of Sega's age-old arcade series, shares the same fate as many of its peers, coming off as shallow when compared to superior DC racers like Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2 or 4x4 Evolution.

That's not to say that Daytona USA doesn't offer its share of high-speed entertainment. The physics briefly flirt with reality, but generally offer up the rail-banging, balls-to-the-wall action that arcade fans know and love. The real selling point, of course, will be the four-player online racing, which lifts Daytona away from the pack, lending some serious replay value to an otherwise pedestrian title. No, it's not that ghost car scam that some developers have tried to foist upon the public as actual online play – it's the real deal, something that, until now, only a handful of developers have managed to pull off. This alone makes Daytona USA noteworthy, and worth a look.– **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

The long-standing Daytona series is beginning to sputter like my '86 Grand Am. While this version's looks have improved, and it features more tracks and Net play, the gameplay is definitely showing its age. Those who loved Daytona on Saturn or in arcades will pop a trouser-wheelie over this update, but I found it mediocre by Dreamcast standards. Let me take a moment to bid farewell to NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt. Next time you get gas, pour some on the curb for the lost homies.

JUSTIN – 6.75



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 13

"Sim Coaster is a great game to whittle away the hours when you're in the mood to build something and see what happens."

PC

SIM COASTER

ROLLER COASTER, OF LOVE...SAY WHAT?

Sim City, you've come a long way, baby. I remember the old days, sitting in front of my SNES for hours at a time salivating over the possibilities of residential zones compared to industrial and commercial zones. Then there were parks and streets to worry about! My God, the breadth of gameplay was almost unfathomable. I think I was probably responsible for half of my parent's energy bill with the amount of hours I put in on our basement television. Now, when I look at Sim Coaster, I'm thankful it came out after my childhood years. Otherwise, I probably would have failed to make it to class most days.

If you're a Sim fan like me, you know going into Sim Coaster that your day is going to be sucked dry the second the game is finished installing. This particular Sim is interesting on a number of levels. First, it seems pretty benign at the beginning. The game opens on a park with one ride and about three customers. It's your job as the newly appointed park manager to up attendance and revenues. After fiddling around with different settings and rides, you'll get an idea of how you want your park to look. Second, you'll have to worry about all manner of things as your park expands. Sanitation, worker morale, food and drink availability, ease of access to your attractions...the list gets longer as more people darken your door.

As your park becomes a tourist trap, you'll have to endure employee disputes, ticket price finagling, research organization, and the occasional customer who will need to be escorted from the park due to behavioral problems. What kinds of problems, you ask? Everything from old people spreading nasty rumors about your park because they had to wait in line to get on a ride, to kids setting your trees on fire. Make sure you have enough guards to keep the troublemakers at bay.

Eventually, you'll work your way up to the point where the park's owners will give you challenges to increase your prestige and help your park. Upon completing these, you'll be given golden tickets which you can use to upgrade your park or unlock certain research areas. The problem is the challenges are insanely hard to begin with. The first challenge I accepted I had already lost after only 40 seconds. I wasn't even sure why I had lost. The only thing I knew was that the owners were irritated, and I had some puke to clean up near the bumper boats.

Sim Coaster is a great game to whittle away the hours when you're in the mood to build something and see what happens. More than likely you'll build numerous things over and over again until you've got your park jumping like the Chinese gymnastics team. – **KRISTIAN**

Hooray! Magic sparkle things!

Different zones will give you different rides

If you look closely, you can see vomit on the paths

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** BULLFROG ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 30

This is the view you'll use most of the time

The kids don't like to stand in line

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** Build your own amusement park, try like $%^ to complete challenges the park owners throw at you
- **Graphics:** Standard sim graphics with some interesting twists. Getting a worm's-eye view of your park is a fun feature
- **Sound:** You'll be able to hear the kiddies depositing their hotdogs in the bathrooms after a coaster ride if you want to
- **Playability:** Sim fans will have no problems with this one, newbies will have to concentrate for a couple of hours
- **Entertainment:** It's fun to watch your park expand, it's not fun to fail challenge after challenge and have no idea why
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Sim Coaster, the newest edition in the Theme Park line, doesn't venture into new territory, but improves and streamlines the concept and adds more depth. The game starts off all too familiar for Theme Park fans, but quickly kicks into gear as your park expands and the challenges from management start rolling in. A couple of times, I had to pause just to get away from the nagging management. They had a new challenge every few minutes instead of letting me enjoy the construction of my park, but even for how annoying they were, it does add a lot of urgency and complexity to the game. The coaster construction options are about the same as before, but as new areas open up, some impressive coaster concepts become available. The in-game management may make this game seem like work, but the kids' smiling faces make it all worth it.

ANDY – 8.5

PC

ICEWIND DALE: HEART OF WINTER

THE HEART OF A CHAMPION

"Please believe me when I tell you that if there was ever a must-have expansion title, this is it."

In these days of subpar role-playing games being squeezed out the business end of every developer and their mother, one need not look any further than Black Isle Studios for salvation in the RPG tempest. "Give credit where credit is due," is how the saying goes. Well BI, my hat is off to you. Not only is my hat off, but I often find that I've fallen off my chair after playing one of your titles for 20 minutes, so expect a bill from my chiropractor for spinal adjustments.

In the wildly popular Baldur's Gate and Icewind Dale series, Dungeons & Dragons fans live out their fantasies onscreen with breathtaking gameplay and hundreds upon hundreds of hours of intricate story line and adventuring. In this vein, ravenous fans of Icewind Dale will not only be able to proceed with more adventuring through entirely new sections of the Dale, but will be able to do it with their original party. The new areas of Heart of Winter are added through Hjollder's house in Kuldahar, and the new items and spells will appear as well once you've loaded your characters into the expansion.

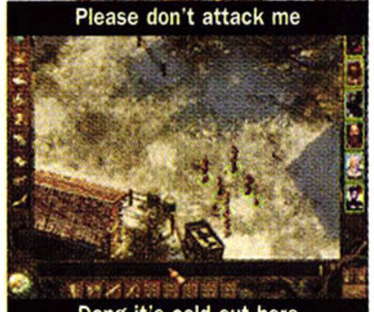
If you elect to play with the characters from your previous Icewind Dale experience (why wouldn't you?), all characters will begin Heart of Winter from the state they were in at the end of the final battle in Icewind Dale. If one of your characters died in the course of the battle, they will be revived for the expansion. This will eliminate the need for you fight the final battle all over again, and will give your party a healthy level boost.

Heart of Winter will also exhibit a number of other updated features. New character portraits and sound sets were implemented for the expansion. For the experience thirsty, the experience cap has been elevated to top out at level 30. With this comes a Heart of Fury mode that increases monster difficulty and experience rewards. Resolution has been bumped to 800x600, there are new Priest, Druid, and Wizard spells, plus new abilities for Paladins, Rangers, Thieves, Bards, and Druids.

That being said, there are a few bugs thrown in here and there, just to remind you you're playing a PC game. You'll frequently have to walk into a doorway twice before activating the transition load. Characters will begin to wander in bizarre paths as you're leading them around a level, but if you spend more than 30 seconds thinking about these things, I would be shocked.

Simply put, if you're an RPG fan you WILL buy this game. If you're a Baldur's Gate fan, you WILL buy this game. If you're an Icewind Dale veteran, you're already on line at your nearest software store. Please believe me when I tell you that if there was ever a must-have expansion title, this is it. – **KRISTIAN**

Please don't attack me


Dang it's cold out here

This place could really use more natural light. Have you thought of skylights?

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 6-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** BLACK ISLE STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 20

This could end badly...

The new character art is quite nice

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

- **Concept:** Dungeon-crawling role-playing at its finest
- **Graphics:** The screen resolution for Heart of Winter has been bumped to 800x600
- **Sound:** The voice acting is some of the best I've heard from this series to date
- **Playability:** Here's a title you'll spend hours learning, and love every second of it
- **Entertainment:** If you've ever played D&D, then you know how truly addicting this title can be
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Black Isle has managed to harvest an incredible amount of gameplay from the Baldur's Gate engine it created a couple years ago, and much of this lifespan can be attributed to its willingness to extrapolate and expand. This winning attitude was best represented in the recent Baldur's Gate II, but it shines through marvelously in Heart of Winter as well. Taking bits of interface from other games in its D&D line, Black Isle has crafted yet another epic tale set in the Forgotten Realms. Whether you've finished Icewind Dale already, or are about to start, I can think of no reason why one wouldn't want Heart of Winter to go along with it. The lone fact that you can get your characters to 30th level seems reason enough to me. It's not as expansive as Baldur's II, and not as role-playing heavy as Planescape, but it's a fantastic way to lose a few weeks of your life.

JAY – 8.5

PC

JAGGED ALLIANCE 2: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN

Unfinished Business. What an aptly named game. Perhaps more to the point would be the title Unfinished Game. It's always interesting to note how a game will give one the impression that what is about to happen will be engaging and fun. Then once the gameplay begins, things turn ugly faster than an Oprah sighting at a beef convention.

If you absolutely have to get this game, you'd better get your needle and thread out, because it's patch time.
– **KRISTIAN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB **5.75**

- **Concept:** Turn-based strategy, bugs, and a fair amount of frustration
- **Graphics:** The graphics show the effect six months of publisher shopping will have on your title
- **Sound:** A lot of voice acting, and not a lot of attention to detail. I didn't know a silenced pistol sounded like a blowgun...
- **Playability:** Relatively easy to pick up if you jump right in
- **Entertainment:** Building your team and your character is fun, then the gameplay begins
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

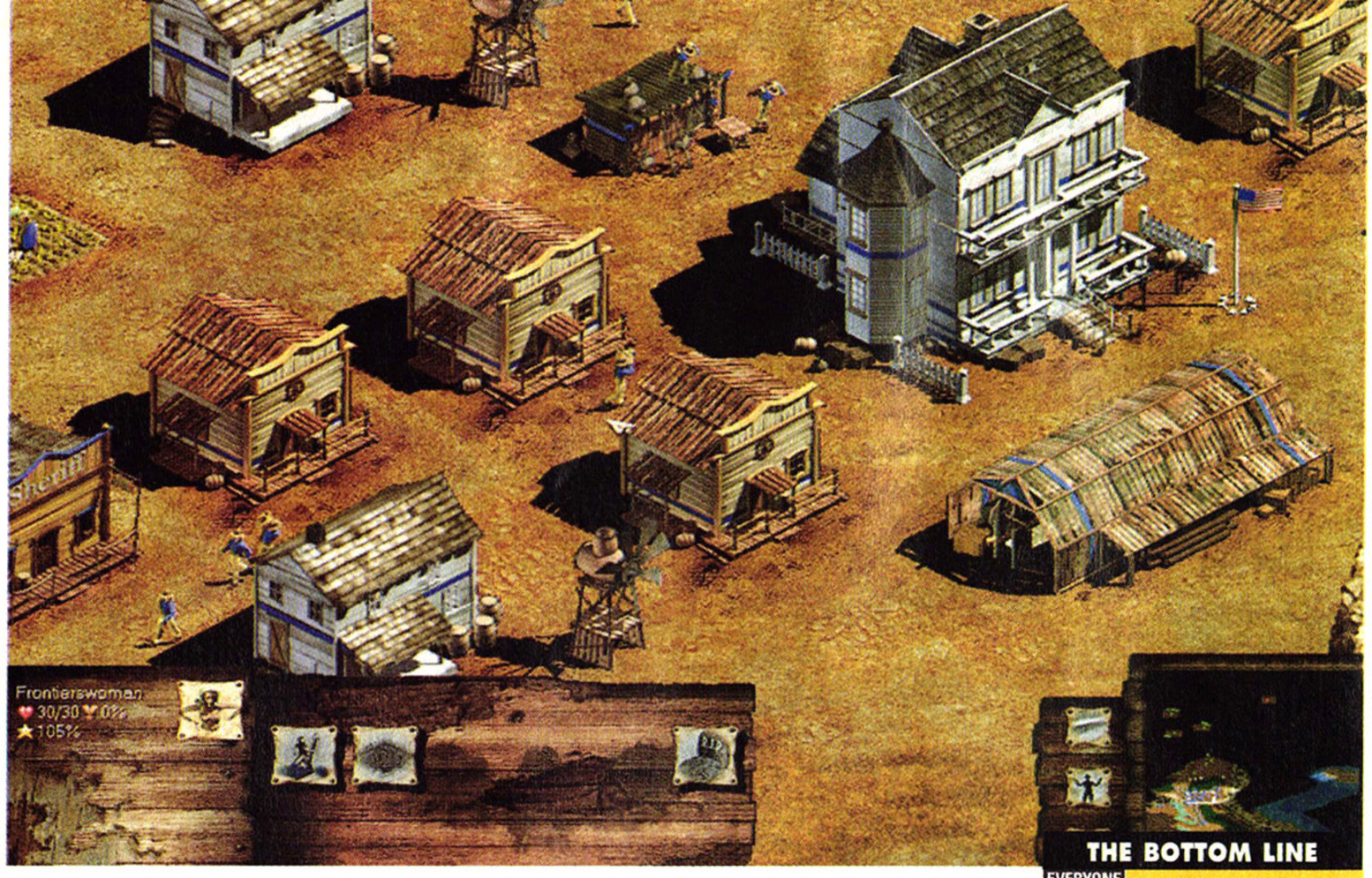
SECOND OPINION

Jagged Alliance 2 does nothing for me. There's not enough action delivered from the turn-based combat to keep my interest, and far too much time spent in setup and execution. Soldier of Fortune subscribers might enjoy this, but I have no desire to complete mercenary missions.

ANDY – 4

Here's a look at a few of the weapons

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY
■ **DEVELOPER** SIR-TECH SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 1



THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB **6.5**

PC

AMERICA

YIPPE KIYAY, MOTHER...

What can be said about a game that is basically a tribute to those that have come before it? There is nothing new here. Now, when I say there is nothing new, I don't mean that there will be a few new variations on the theme. I mean there is absolutely nothing in this game you haven't seen before. Not that that is always a bad thing. Red Alert 2 did it quite well. America, on the other hand, doesn't. Let's explore the reasons why, shall we?

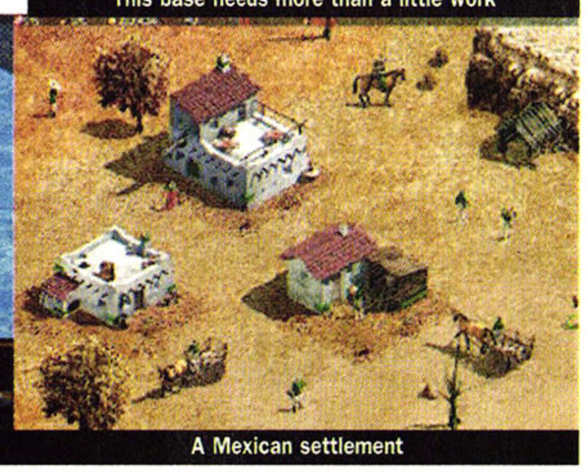
To begin, the resource gathering is your garden-variety farming for food, chopping wood for lumber, and mining gold for money. That's not too terrible, except for the fact that your farms only produce food for a limited time. After the field has expired you have to build an entirely new one. Then there's a little something I like to call the Magic Bullet. You see, you'll be assaulting a base. You'll have your artillery in the rear to cover your infantry in the front. Then suddenly you'll begin losing units at an incredible rate, and there will be no one on the field except your force! It's great fun! You'll be able to hear the enemy fire, but you won't be able to get rid of it! Then on top of it all, the AI will have you screaming at your screen until you go hoarse. You may want your people to go one way, but usually they'll go whatever way they want.
– **KRISTIAN**

A Native American base

Here's what we think of NAFTA!

This base needs more than a little work

Best screenshot ever!



A Mexican settlement

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** DATA BECKER ■ **DEVELOPER** DATA BECKER
■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15

- **Concept:** It's Warcraft set in the 1800s
- **Graphics:** Your usual RTS fare. Don't expect to be blown away
- **Sound:** All of the "Yahoo!"s and "Howdy, partner"s you'd expect from a game set in the Wild West
- **Playability:** RTS gravy. Even newcomers shouldn't have too much trouble getting this one down
- **Entertainment:** There's some in there, but you'll have to dig to find it
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

It's a given that all real-time strategy games are basically created from the same mold, but America is so similar to Age of Empires, I believe Data Becker may have supplied Microsoft with grounds for a copyright infringement case. The only difference between the two is that America is more limited in scope, has less technologies to explore, and isn't put together as well. The interface, although identical to AoE's, isn't as tight and is ultimately just frustrating. To top it all off, America has some pretty annoying, borderline racist voice-overs. The only people I could recommend this to are Age of Empires fanatics that have thoroughly explored every expansion that game has to offer and are looking for something similar but in a different vein. Even then, however, multiplayer is probably the only place entertainment will be found.

JAY – 6

PC

STARPEACE

A CONTROL FREAK'S FANTASY

In the first massively multiplayer online city simulation game to date, Starpeace offers gamers one of the most intricate and fluid online environments ever attempted. Not only will this title demand close attention to detail, but will also require a large time investment from each and every player who wants to be even moderately successful.

The amount of detail crammed into this game is quite staggering at first. If you have a tendency to plow into a game before reading the manual (like me), you'll find yourself floundering before you place your first building. What Starpeace attempts to do is basically simulate a free-market economy. That being said, this release is still quite buggy. Slow servers and unpredictable connections hamper this game from reaching its full potential. If you don't have a DSL and a lot of sim experience, don't bother. – **KRISTIAN**

SECOND OPINION

There's something intriguing about a game that lets you build nudie bars for big profits, but Starpeace needs a better interface and a tutorial for those who aren't macroeconomics majors.

JAY – 6

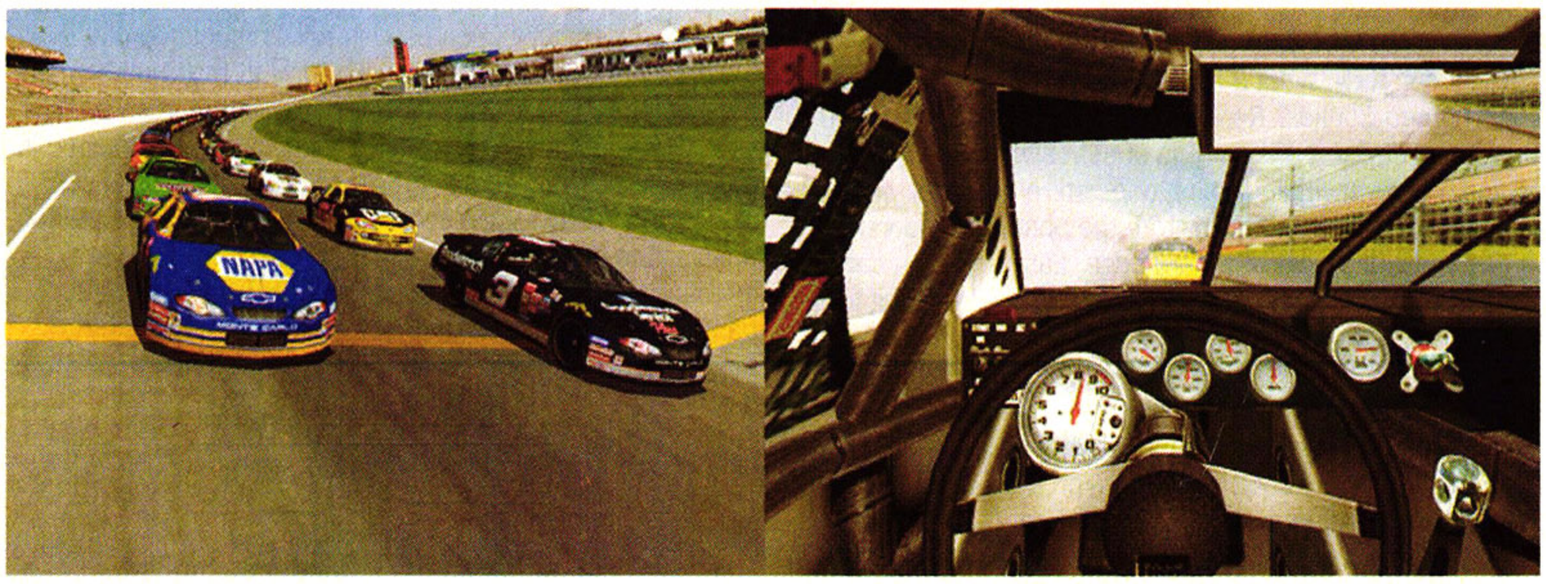
■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** MONTE CRISTO
■ **DEVELOPER** OCEANUS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 15

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

7

- **Concept:** A massively multiplayer Sim City for control addicts
- **Graphics:** Bargain basement sim graphics with little in the way of ingenuity
- **Sound:** If you've played one city sim, you've heard everything this game has to offer
- **Playability:** Expect a learning curve of at least two hours, and that's only for the basics
- **Entertainment:** After you finally figure out what you're doing and how to do it, you might enjoy yourself
- **Replay Value:** High



PC

NASCAR RACING 4

NICECARS

Finally! A PC racer that makes full use of the processing power of the PC. In every other racer I've seen there have been unnecessary shortcuts taken in all manner of ways. Usually it's the backgrounds and environments that look like they were lifted out of an Apple IIe game. Sometimes it's the vehicles themselves. Then again, most PC racers are just ports of console games.

NASCAR 4 has some of the most impressive racing graphics I've seen to date, coupled with incredible sound and replay options. The online play with 43 people is reason enough to buy this game. The Intimidator would have been proud. – **KRISTIAN**

SECOND OPINION

For NASCAR fans, this game is the closest you'll ever get to the track without a pit pass. This game has amazing tracks, solid driving, awesome wrecks, online racing, and more options than you can shake a stick at. Please avoid crashing into the 3 car.

ANDY – 8

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 43-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SIERRA ■ **DEVELOPER** PAPYRUS RACING
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 7

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

8

- **Concept:** Get behind the wheel and race to your heart's content
- **Graphics:** Finally, a racing game for PC with nice graphics
- **Sound:** Your pit crew will talk to you, and you'll hear every nuance of the engine
- **Playability:** Really easy to get into, but near impossible to master
- **Entertainment:** If you're a NASCAR freak, you'll go insane for this game
- **Replay Value:** High

PC

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0

OF DUST AND DRIVING

This is going to sound really bizarre, but the first thing I liked about this game wasn't the gameplay, it was actually the menu structure and interface. It just works really well. I'm not sure why. This is probably the thing I liked the most about this game. Rather unsettling when you realize you only spend 1/20th of the game in the menus.

This title could have been so much better. It's a PC game, for crying out loud. Give me some options for color customization, or let me choose my number. Something! Anything! Racing fans, make sure you have a bunch of friends to race with if you want to see everything Colin has to offer. – **KRISTIAN**

SECOND OPINION

This game is certainly the best rally game on the PlayStation, and it holds its own on the PC. However, I would have liked to see a little bit more from the PC version in terms of car tweaking options.

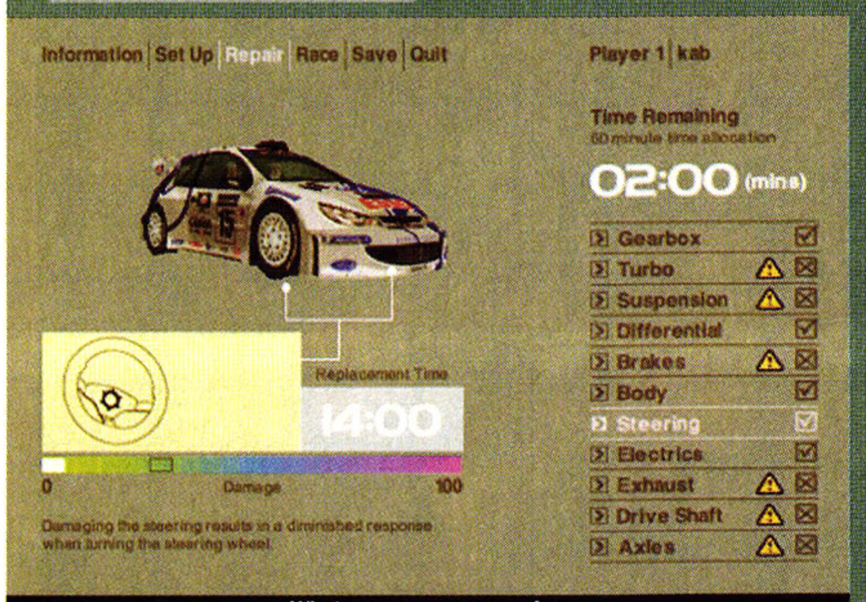
PAUL – 7.75

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

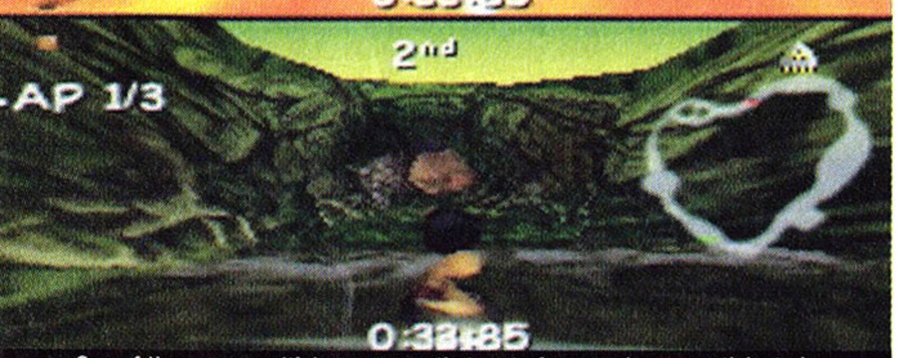
6.5

- **Concept:** Race around a bunch of different tracks in Europe. Try to keep your car on four wheels
- **Graphics:** Some nice lighting effects, but nothing else to make you sit up and take notice
- **Sound:** The tires squeal, the engine vrooms, and the gravel sounds like gravel. What else did you expect?
- **Playability:** The five-key interface is quite easy to learn, but if you have a wheel you'll save yourself some carpal tunnel-related injuries
- **Entertainment:** One-player is pretty fun, online with a bunch of buddies is very fun
- **Replay Value:** High

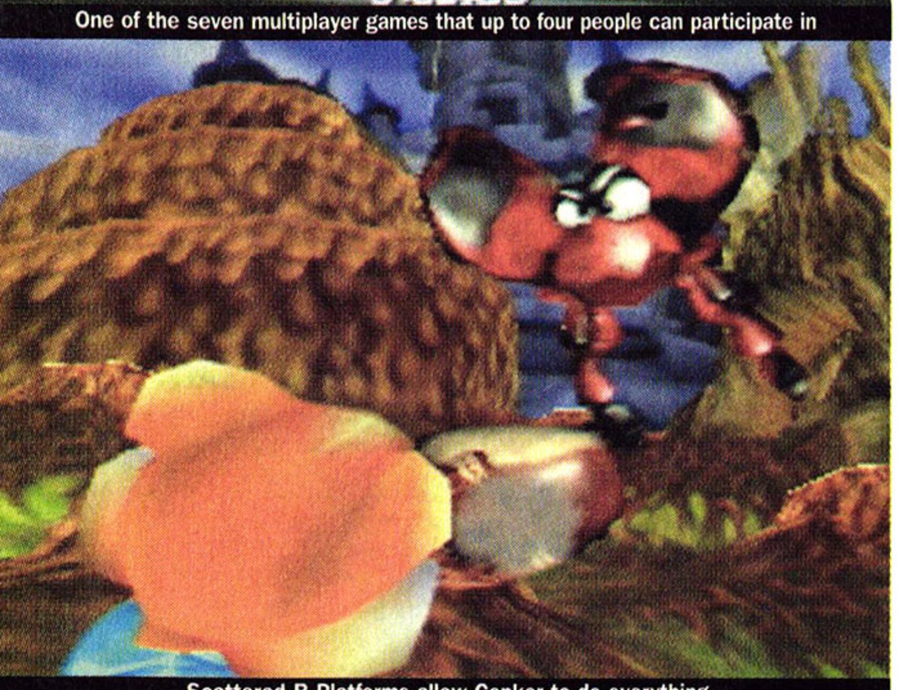


What an awesome menu!

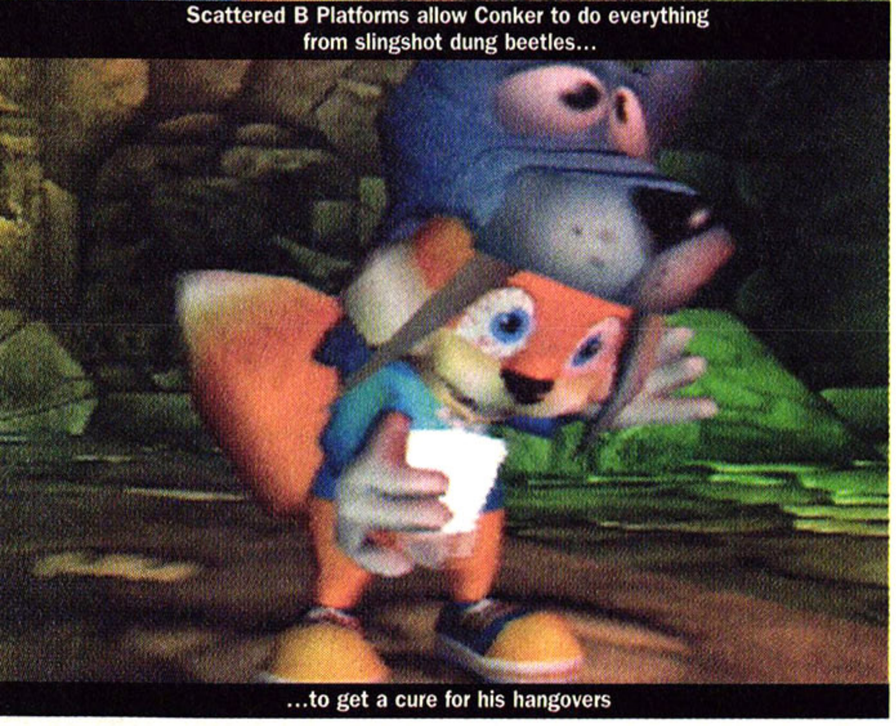
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS
■ **DEVELOPER** CODEMASTERS ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 6



One of the seven multiplayer games that up to four people can participate in



Scattered B Platforms allow Conker to do everything from slingshot dung beetles...



...to get a cure for his hangovers

NINTENDO 64

CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

GET A LITTLE TAIL

He started out cute and cuddly, and ended up surly and greedy. What's happened to the red squirrel named Conker? Rare's newest Nintendo 64 achievement doesn't answer this question within its storyline. However, while playing one gets a sense of where the designers decided to stray from the absolutely adorable and give the game a bit of a hard edge. Later still, you can almost hear the programmers saying, "Well, we're going to get an M rating anyway, let's really earn it."

It's this attitude that's made Conker's Bad Fur Day the talk of the video game town. People didn't give a rip about a happy rodent in a pastel world, but when it was revealed that the adventures of the squirrel in question were as racy as an HBO original series, interest became piqued. I was of these legions that was excited to play simply because I knew urination would be a weapon and blue language the order of the day.

After finishing the game, I'm happy to report that Bad Fur Day has solid gameplay and presentation to back up its charmingly crude humor. The graphics are at least on par with others under Rare's N64 belt, with animation and environment detail reaching new heights thanks to BFD's smaller areas. The audio completely blows my mind. There are more voice-overs and music tracks than many PlayStation games, and all of these sounds will change depending on Conker's situation. If Conker is underwater, the music gets muffled. If Conker is climbing a mountain of crap, toots from the horn section change to toots from the sphincter section.

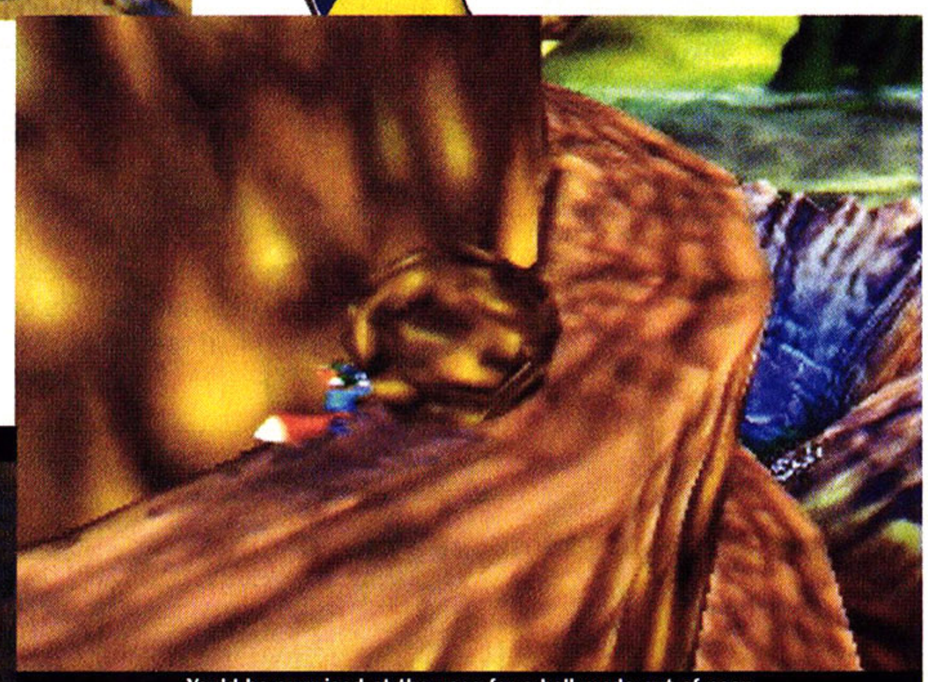
More than anything, however, I'm impressed with the wide variety of game styles that have been successfully incorporated into this cart. Most developers can't even get one genre right, so props to Rare for having success with five-in-one. Bad Fur Day starts out as a platformer, then shifts between first-person shooter, puzzle, driving, and action game on the fly, with the controls always changing to something fluid. Even better, almost all of these styles have been used in BFD's multitude of multiplayer games, which adds life to what might otherwise be a relatively short adventure.

Conker's Bad Fur Day is basically a kid's game wrapped in a profanity-spewing shell. Without the mature slant, it still would have been a good game, but when you experience the anticipation in seeing what Conker will do next, Rare's direction with this one makes sense. Gamers will love it, parents will hate it; and that just makes me like it all the more. – **JAY**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO
■ **DEVELOPER** RAREWARE ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 5

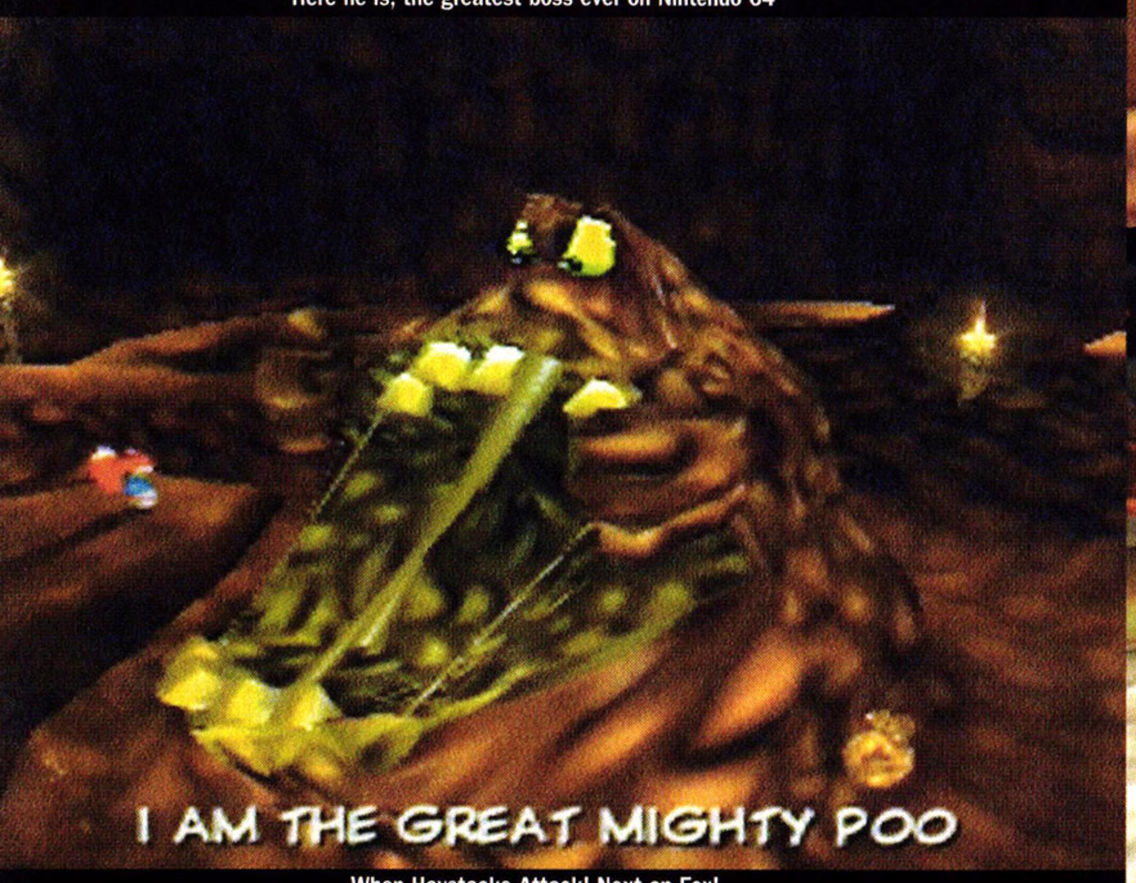
CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

"Bad Fur Day has solid gameplay and presentation to back up its charmingly crude humor."



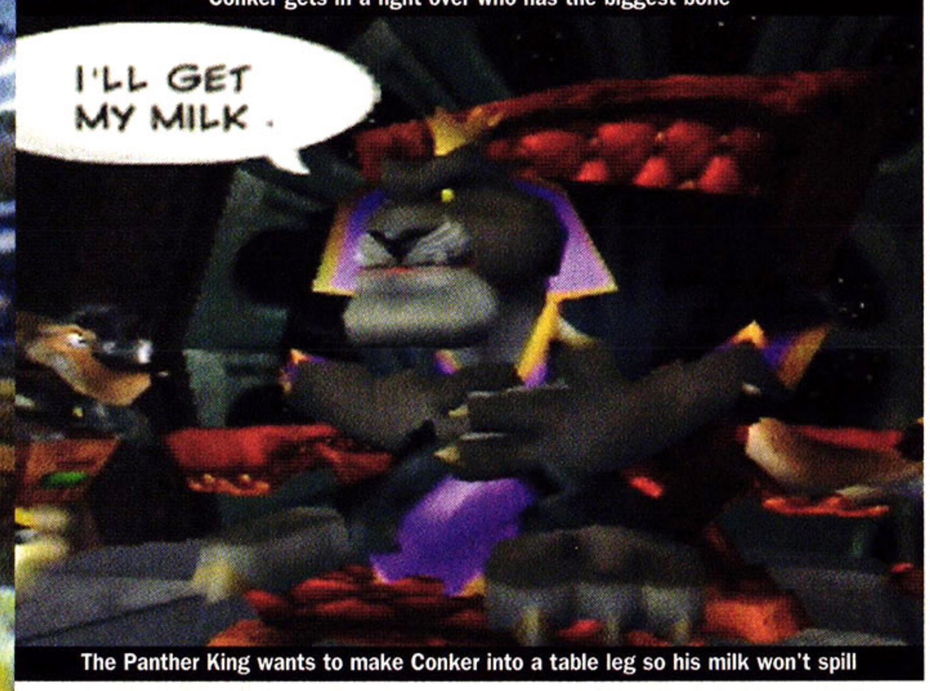
You'd be surprised at the uses for a ball made out of poop

Here he is, the greatest boss ever on Nintendo 64



When Haystacks Attack! Next on Fox!

Conker gets in a fight over who has the biggest bone



The Panther King wants to make Conker into a table leg so his milk won't spill

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

- **Concept:** A cute kids game that grew up and became a violent alcoholic
- **Graphics:** All the artistry, detail, and anthropomorphism expected of a Rare game
- **Sound:** The most amazing aspect of the game. The entire adventure is heavy on voice-overs, and not only are there tons of music tracks, they change according to Conker's situation or state of mind
- **Playability:** The controls always manage to keep up with the wide variety of gameplay
- **Entertainment:** Much of the amusement comes from seeing what Conker will be doing next
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

There are so many wonderful things about Conker's Bad Fur Day, it's hard to fit them all into this small space. Not only is it graphically one of the best N64 has seen, the story is so outrageous and over the top that there is nothing else you can do in life but play and/or dream of playing this game until it is finished. The gameplay itself doesn't break any boundaries (though it does offer some different scenarios, like the impressive racing level or the first-person shooter areas), so all of Conker's entertainment comes from seeing what crazy little adventure the game will send you on next, and what outrageous, disgusting thing Conker will do to get out of it. There is no doubt that this game is not for everyone with its adult themes, but if you are of age I can't recommend it enough. It is one of the funniest gaming experiences I have ever had, and the boss battles are just pure genius. If you sold your N64, do whatever you can to get it back and get yourself a copy of Conker's. You won't regret it.

ANDY – 9.5

In freestyle games, 3D is the better 'D'

GAME BOY COLOR

MTV SPORTS ULTIMATE BMX

I THINK I CAN-CAN

The THQ/MTV Sports fusion has been one disappointment after another. Ultimate BMX is the duo's best effort yet. It obviously won't compare with the big boys of console freestyle, but it does make the most of Game Boy's limitations. You can pick it up and impress the girlies with your trick prowess in no time. I dug the full freedom, and the courses are some of the biggest seen on a handheld. The replay factor is kind of low and the graphics blow, but freestyle fans will get into it, especially once the combos start rolling. – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE – CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

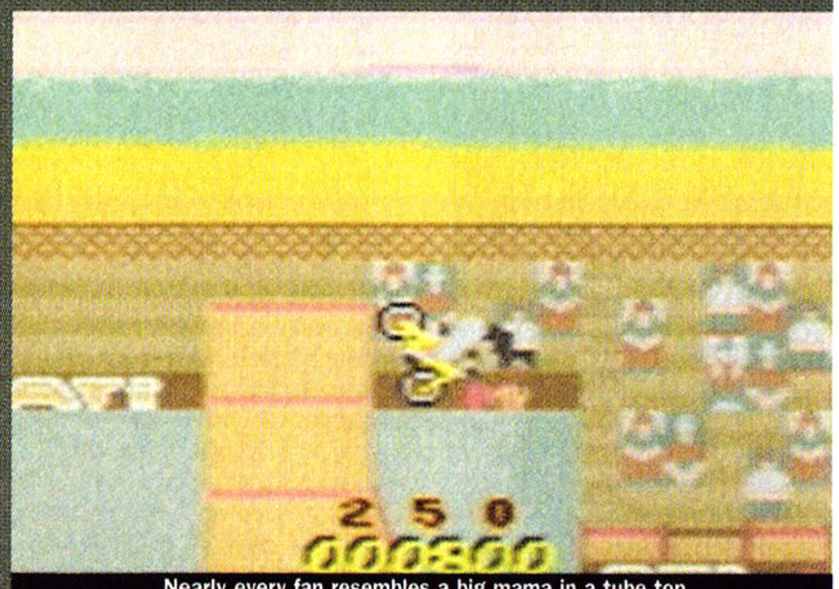
7

- **Concept:** Get your trick on with the BMX pro of your choice
- **Graphics:** Detail is at a minimum, but you see that MTV logo crystal clear
- **Sound:** All I hear is static! Painful, painful static
- **Playability:** Simple trick execution and satisfying combos
- **Entertainment:** Big levels and course selection may keep you playing
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

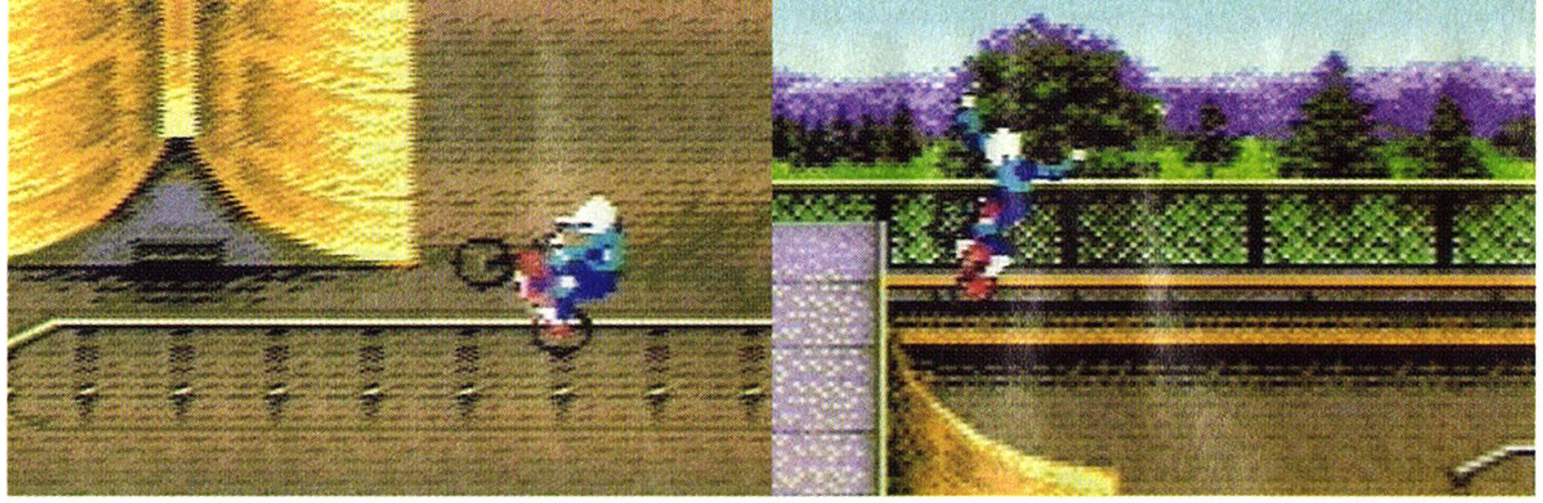
Decent, although sadly hampered by stiff, mechanical-feeling control. Some of the levels are nicely done, but there just aren't enough tricks to keep things fresh for more than a few levels.

MATT – 6



Nearly every fan resembles a big mama in a tube top

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** HANDHELD GAMES ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 27



GAME BOY COLOR

ROAD CHAMPS BXS STUNT BIKING

CRU DAVIS IS GOD!

Well, well, well – I guess the Game Boy Color can handle this type of game. After two disappointing Tony Hawk GBC titles, Activision tapped Hot Gen to create Road Champs, a freestyle BMX game that provides a long and fairly complex gameplay experience. With over 50 tricks at your disposal, you'll find yourself losing some serious hours just learning all there is to do in this game. A warning – mastering all the tricks is a difficult task. In order to force you to learn everything Road Champs has to offer, Hot Gen implemented an extremely long, six-level Training mode that you must complete before you can even begin the Career mode. After a while, this began to test my patience, but in the end I was glad for all the training I had received. Brief moments of frustration aside, Road Champs is a fine game. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

Road Champs' gameplay is deep and anal. As appealing as that may sound to some of you, I suggest MTV Sports BMX instead. This game's pretty, but too high-maintenance.

JUSTIN – 6.5

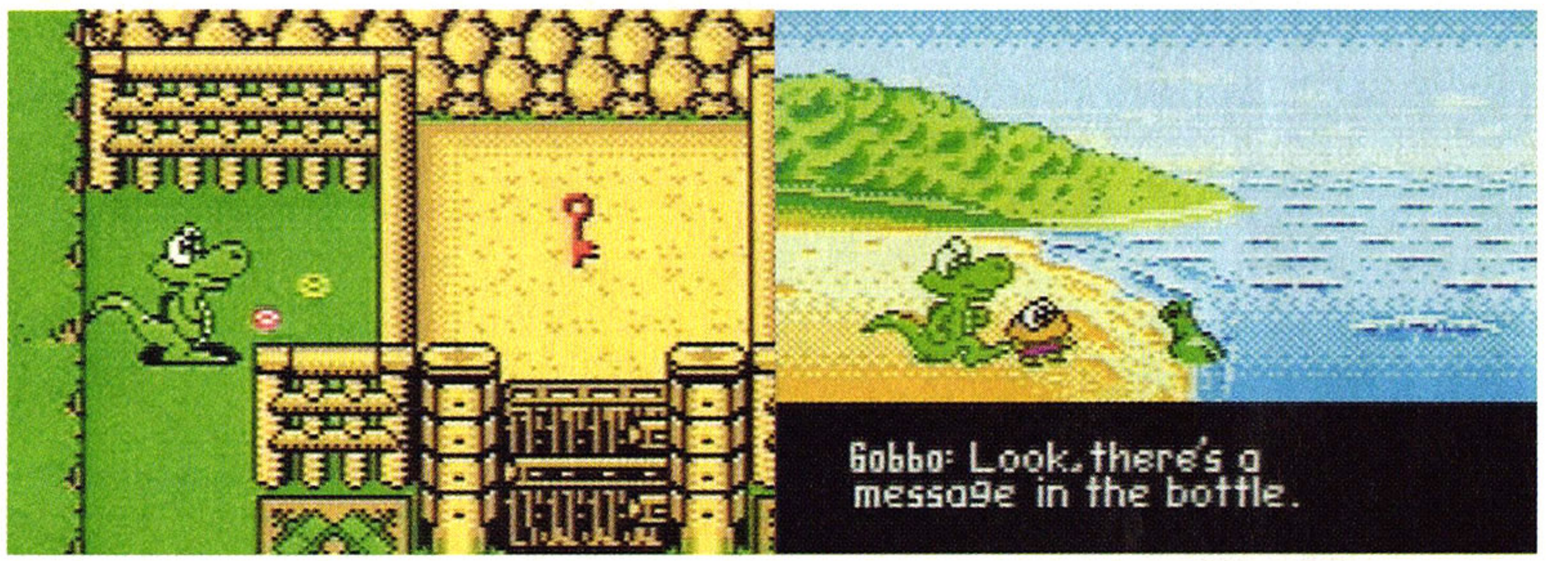
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE – CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** A surprisingly deep handheld addition to Activision's extreme sports roster
- **Graphics:** Excellent; features nicely designed courses
- **Sound:** I'm considering dropping this category from all my GBC reviews
- **Playability:** There is a massive amount of tricks, but many are difficult to pull off
- **Entertainment:** A good bit better than either of the GBC Tony Hawk games
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** HOT GEN STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 10



GAME BOY COLOR

CROC 2

MAKES MICK DUNDEE SEEM FUNDEE

Paul Hogan's blockbuster role as Mick "Crocodile" Dundee might have raised the cool factor on crocodiles back in 1986, but since then, crocs have been on the outs. Apparently no one has informed Fox of this little detail, as the company continues to work on more and more additions to the Croc video game franchise. This latest addition for the Game Boy, while certainly more entertaining than any of the PlayStation versions, is average at best.

Croc 2's control is solid, but platforming from an isometric view is limiting, so the game boils down to a little exploration game with limited environments. In the game's defense, there are a number of items to find on each level, but the slow pace of the action will most likely curb your enthusiasm before you complete every level. I don't hate this game, but I don't like it much either. – **ANDY**

SECOND OPINION

Croc 2's 3/4 perspective makes it slightly better than your average GBC platformer, but Steve Irwin should've hunted Croc down and retired him long ago, by croc'y.

JUSTIN – 6.75

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE – CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.5

- **Concept:** Isometric platformer starring Croc, a character that everyone is supposed to love, but no one does
- **Graphics:** Well-animated characters, with mediocre environments
- **Sound:** Bad lounge tunes that makes you wish someone was playing a didgeridoo
- **Playability:** Explore mazes looking for items, repeat
- **Entertainment:** Average gameplay and graphics make for average entertainment
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** FOX/NATSUME ■ **DEVELOPER** ARGONAUT SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 26

Mr. Action in action

Action Man is tough, but he's no match for gigantic bees

GAME BOY COLOR

ACTION MAN: SEARCH FOR BASE X

WHERE'S THE ACTION, MAN?

Action Man is a grandparent's best friend, and a child's worst nightmare. Remember back in the day when your relatives would accidentally get you a Go-Bot instead of a Transformer? Nowadays, when a child fills out his Christmas list and specifically asks for a new GI Joe figure, he'll probably get a cheesy Action Man instead. The toys are...how can I put this nicely...retarded. The game is...well...even worse. Certainly, there's plenty of action to be had, but man oh man, I'd rather eat a vomit burger with poop sauce than spend another second with this intolerable, asinine, and completely grotesque piece of poo poo. – **REINER**

SECOND OPINION

Action Man is a vile excuse for a video game. Unoriginal, unentertaining, and unbelievably bad, Action Man is worthless in every respect. Think reviewing video games for a living is fun? Think again.

MATT – 1

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

2.5

- **Concept:** Super crazy non-stop side-scrolling action!!!
- **Graphics:** Completely horrid, but action packed!!!
- **Sound:** The annoying soundtrack makes you focus on the action!!!
- **Playability:** Generic as ever, but man, wait until you see the action!!!
- **Entertainment:** If you like to cry, you'll weep buckets of tears when you try to comprehend Action Man's insane action!!!
- **Replay Value:** Low (Action!!!)

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** NATSUME
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 5

GAME BOY COLOR

MARVIN STRIKES BACK!

HAVE SAUCER, WILL TRAVEL

Infogrames continues to surprise with its attempts at originality with its Looney Tunes license. Marvin Strikes Back makes a valiant attempt to balance action with item collection and a bit of platforming, but in the end its heavily menu-laden interface slows things down too much. If switching characters could be done with a single button press rather than having to access a different screen every time, perhaps players wouldn't wind up getting inadvertently hit as often, and maybe I'd be willing to be a bit more generous with my score. – **JAY**

SECOND OPINION

Marvin is one of my favorite characters in the Looney Tunes gang. With him and a ton of other playable characters, the game is fairly entertaining for a cartoon freak like me. It's really a bunch of minigames packed into one.

PAUL – 7

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6

- **Concept:** An actual attempt at something original that doesn't quite deliver
- **Graphics:** Not bad, and the cutscenes are particularly nice
- **Sound:** The music is okay, but terribly repetitive
- **Playability:** It feels like there's too much to do with too few buttons
- **Entertainment:** A game that's applauded for its ideas, but not played for them
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** INFOGRAMES ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 5

GAME BOY COLOR

TOKI TORI

A NEW CLASS IN OLD-SCHOOL

Action/puzzle games are to video game history what alligators are to evolution. They're the basest link we have to the ancient roots of this great hobby (Pac-Man, Dig Dug, etc.). Despite a name that inspires more groans than Andrew Dice Clay, Capcom's Toki Tori represents a thoughtful title in Game Boy Color's sea of pooped-out platformers.

Toki Tori has a good mix of levels, each with allocated power-ups and a time limit. The four separate worlds mean you won't be screwed if you get stuck on one level, and auto-saving battery back-up eliminates the need to take a pen and paper in the bathroom with you to keep track of crummy passwords. The whole experience may be best described as a side-scrolling Lolo, which is quite a compliment. It may not be a breakthrough or a must-have, but Toki Tori represents what a good Game Boy cart should be. – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

- **Concept:** Budget your items to gather eggs in a 2D setting
- **Graphics:** Simple, but clear. You never have to squint, and parallax scrolling is always a nice touch
- **Sound:** Three words: it's Game Boy
- **Playability:** As intuitive as necessary with a puzzle game
- **Entertainment:** The levels are just long and difficult enough to keep you hooked
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

I am a big fan of puzzle games, especially on the Game Boy Color, but even with all the challenges that Toki Tori offers, I just didn't get addicted. Fun for a while, but I had no problem putting it down.

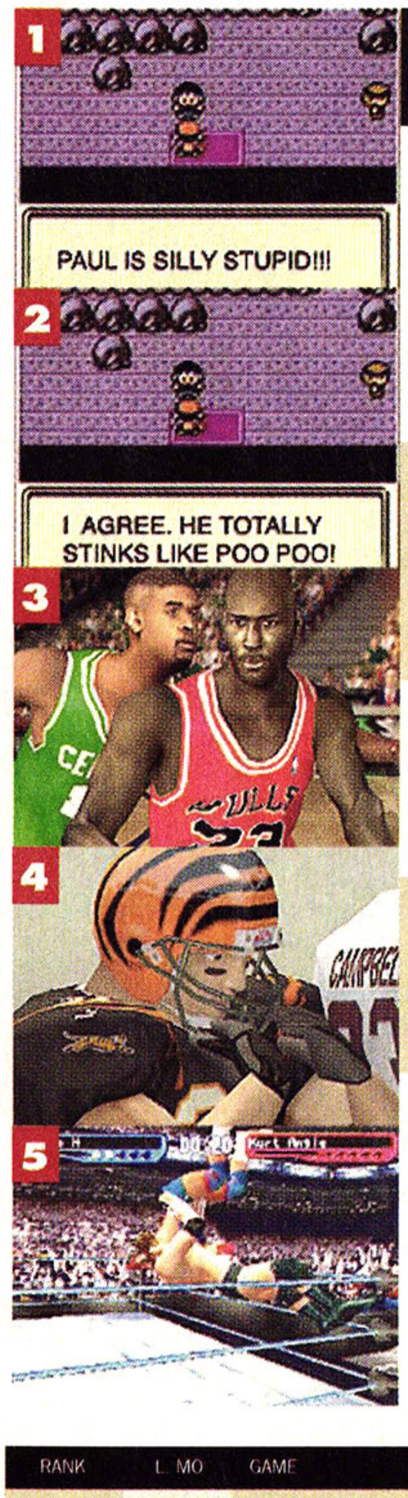
ANDY – 6.75

Sometimes you get on offense with weapons

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 25

CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best selling software on a month to month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also compiled a listing of the top selling Japanese software, and, of course, we included a Top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.



NPD TOP 20

Listings Based Upon NPD Data For January 2001
Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	2	**Pokémon Silver**	GBC	Oct-00	$30

A best seller this month, Game Informer insiders predict that the Pokémon craze is now officially dead. The reason? BattleBots! When Comedy Central started airing this incredible show, everyone lost interest in Pokémon. Really though, why cuddle with a cute critter when you can watch two remote control war machines tear each other to shreds?

2	1	**Pokémon Gold**	GBC	Oct-00	$30

Haaaaaappy trails to you! See you later, Pokédudes! If our assumption is correct, Pokémon Gold and Silver shouldn't even reach the Top 5 next month. Expect to see The Bouncer and Star Wars: Episode I Starfighter near the top of the charts next month. Thank goodness!

3	N/A	**NBA Live 2001**	PS2	Jan-01	$50

Now that people can find PlayStation 2s on retail shelves, the software is starting to sell at much larger volumes. Always a top-seller on PlayStation, NBA Live's debut on the PS2 is accompanied by big numbers. This one should sell well year round.

4	18	**Madden NFL 2001**	PS2	Oct-00	$49

Judging by the poor ratings it's received, the XFL didn't spark a spring interest in football, yet for some reason or another, big ugly Madden can't keep his wide arse on retail. The more he eats, the more games he sells.

5	3	**WWF SmackDown! 2**	PS-X	Nov-00	$41

With all the signings of ECW superstars, wrestling fans have more reason than ever to use SmackDown 2's stellar create-a-wrestler to craft cross-promotion talent like Rhino, Jerry Lynn, Tajiri, and X-Pac's bald bro, Justin Credible.

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	5	**Driver 2**	PS-X	Nov-00	$40
7	4	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2**	PS-X	Sep-00	$41
8	N/A	**Donkey Kong 64**	N64	Nov-99	$40
9	6	**Final Fantasy IX**	PS-X	Nov-00	$41
10	8	**The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask**	N64	Oct-00	$61
11	N/A	**Mario Tennis**	GBC	Jan-01	$27
12	N/A	**Gran Turismo 2**	PS-X	Dec-99	$20
13	12	**Madden NFL 2001**	PS-X	Aug-00	$40
14	N/A	**Super Smash Brothers**	N64	Apr-99	$40
15	13	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater**	PS-X	Sep-99	$20
16	11	**The World is Not Enough**	N64	Oct-00	$50
17	N/A	**NBA 2K1**	DC	Nov-00	$43
18	N/A	**Tekken 3**	PS-X	Apr-98	$20
19	N/A	**SSX**	PS2	Oct-00	$49
20	N/A	**Driver**	PS-X	Jun-99	$20

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan
Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	**Eithea**	PS-X
2	N/A	**Eithea Deluxe Pack**	PS-X
3	N/A	**NBA Live 2001**	PS2
4	N/A	**Macross M3 Shoeisha**	DC
5	N/A	**West Wind Rhapsody**	DC
6	N/A	**Kuusen**	PS2
7	N/A	**Muscular List GB3**	GBC
8	N/A	**Shadow of Memories**	PS2
9	N/A	**Onimusha**	PS2
10	N/A	**Tsugunai**	PS2

GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	1	**Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty**	PS2
2	N/A	**Conker's Bad Fur Day**	N64
3	2	**Phantasy Star Online**	DC
4	N/A	**Ring of Red**	PS2
5	8	**Star Wars: Episode I Starfighter**	PS2
6	6	**The Adventures of Cookie & Cream**	PS2
7	4	**Final Fantasy IX**	PS-X
8	N/A	**Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter**	PC
9	5	**Devil May Cry**	PS2
10	N/A	**Half-Life: Counter-Strike**	PC

PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment
Sevice Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	N/A	**Frogger**	Nov-97	$6
2	1	**The Sims**	Feb-00	$40
3	3	**The Sims: Livin' Large**	Sep-00	$27
4	2	**Roller Coaster Tycoon**	Mar-99	$26
5	9	**Who Wants To Be A Millionaire**	Nov-99	$10
6	N/A	**Diablo 2**	Jun-00	$38
7	7	**Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2**	Oct-00	$40
8	5	**Roller Coaster Tycoon: Loopy Landscapes**	Sep-00	$25
9	10	**Sim Theme Park World**	Nov-99	$19
10	N/A	**Slots**	Nov-99	$13

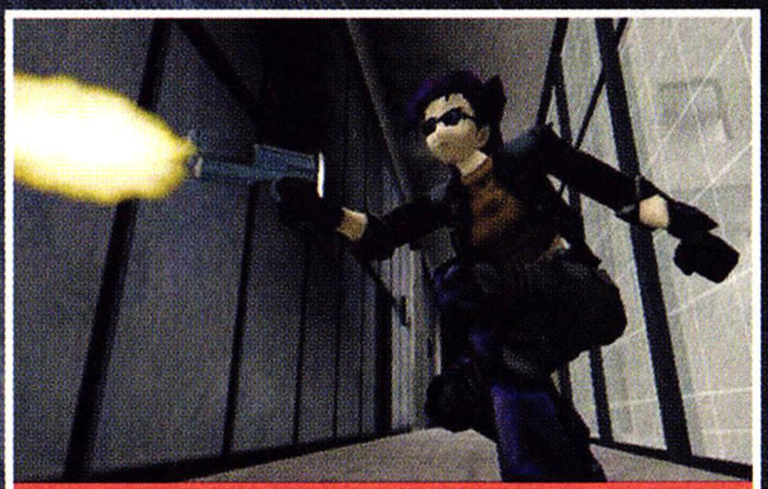
ONI

The Closer You Come, The Darker It Gets.

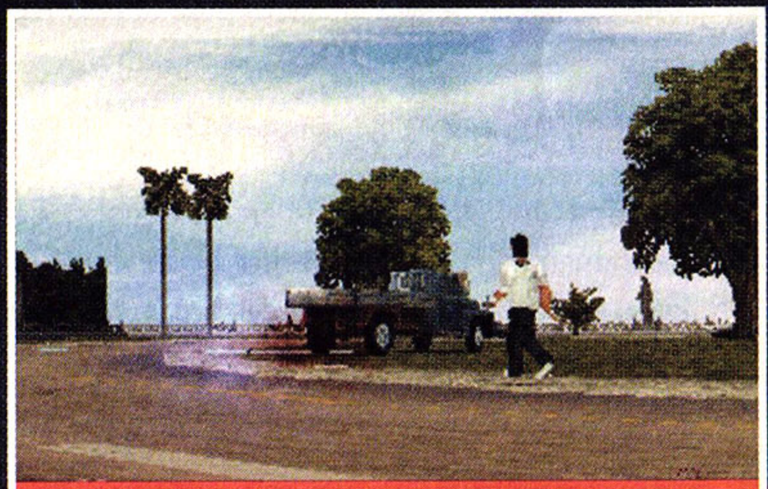
Machine: PS2 **Genre:** Fighting
Publisher: Rockstar **Available:** January, 2001

"Combining hand-to-hand martial arts combat with weapon slinging gunplay, players get the chance in **ONI** to enter a fully realized 3D world, designed by real world architects, to maximize the game's unique realism. Konoko is a feisty hard-nosed policewoman who's capable of a full range of 3D movement and who must confront ghosts from her past while fighting a brutal set of gangs, thugs, and ruthless crooks intent on stomping her pretty head into mush."

Full contact action, weapons combat, or full contact martial arts.



Interpolated animation allows gamers to run, dive, and roll in one smooth motion.



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PLAY TO PERFECTION

Conker's Bad Fur Day has the most hilarious story ever told on a Nintendo 64 cart, and this guide has been made purposefully vague in the attempt to not ruin any of it for you. This PTP is best used for how to get out of a situation when you're stuck, not as a step-by-step walkthrough. Be warned, however; even looking through the pictures on these pages may ruin some of the surprises in store for you. This guide presents the chapters as they are organized in the game's menu screens, even though this isn't the order they are played in. When a jump in the order is made, it's noted at the end of that chapter. We played the game in the way we were led along, but Conker's is relatively open-ended, and there's no reason for you to play it in this order.

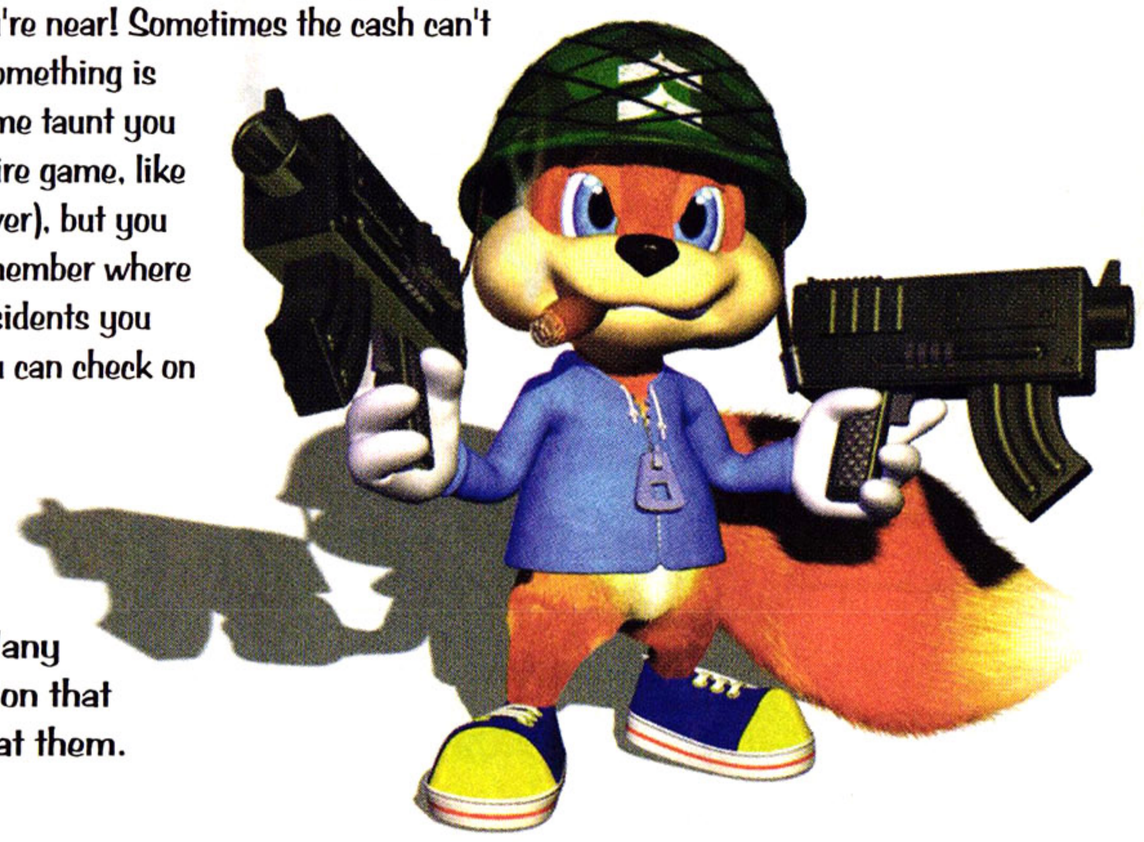
BASIC TRAINING

CHOCOLATE BARS & SQUIRREL TAILS

Death in Conker's is more of an inconvenience than anything else. You'll rarely be flung far back into the game for losing all your lives. In fact, we recommend you die a few times to see the alternate Game Over endings. Both Chocolate and Squirrel Tails respawn, and if you want to stack on some lives, go back and forth between areas. Hungover and Windy are a good place to do this. Note: Squirrel Tails won't start appearing until you've died once.

LOUD MOUTH MOOLAH

There's no excuse for missing out on money – it yells at you whenever you're near! Sometimes the cash can't be reached until something is done first (and some taunt you for almost the entire game, like the bills in Hungover), but you should always remember where you saw dead presidents you couldn't get so you can check on them later.



EASY AS 1-2-3

If you can't figure out how to kill something or why you can't get past a chapter, try doing the same thing again and again. Many of the big encounters are set up so you have to perform the action that hurts the baddie once, then two times, then three times to defeat them.

HUNGOVER

SCAREDY BIRDY

- Talk to the scarecrow in the garden.
- Press B on all the B Platforms.

PAN HANDLED

- Swim to the ledge in the middle of the waterfall.
- Jump up the platforms.
- Pull the lever at the bridge.
- Go into the door that opens.
- Whack the key with the frying pan.
- Pick up the key and bring it to the door.

GARGOYLE

- Hit the Gargoyle on the bridge with the frying pan.
- Jump on top of the boulder.
- Leap over to the wooden platform to the right.
- Use the B Platform.
- Go through the tunnel.

• There's **$100** behind a cage at the bottom of the waterfall. Ignore it for now, you'll get it much later in the game.

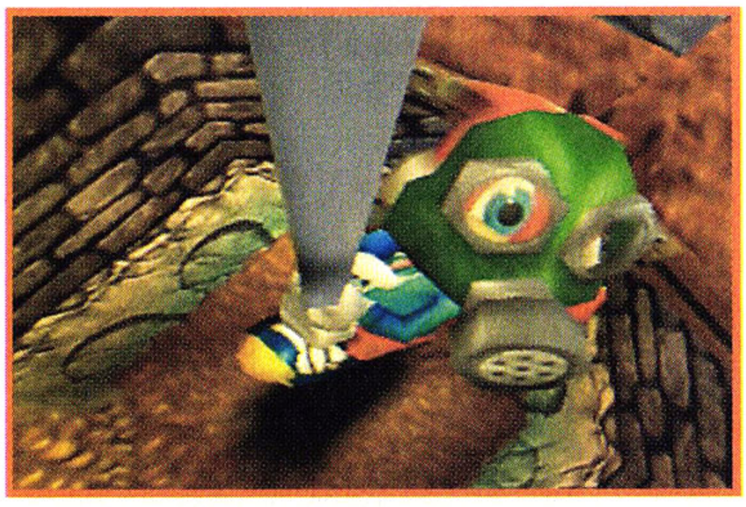
WINDY

MRS. BEE

- Follow the path the Nice way.
- Talk to the Queen Bee.
- Follow the path the Nasty way.
- Pick up the hive.
- Run the hive back to the Queen. Stay on the trail to avoid the sticky thickets.
- Collect your first **$100.**
- Go back down Nasty trail to the bad bees' honeycomb.
- Jump up to the opening on the left and walk through it.
- Jump to the upper center hole for another **$100.**
- Follow Nice path until you meet some trash-talking dung beetles.
- Step on the B Platform and pay Birdy for a manual.
- Use the slingshot to shoot all four dung beetles twice.
- Go up the beetle's hill and through the tunnel to the right.

(Go to Barn Boys – Marvin)

POO CABIN



- Go through the opening that smelled like poo.
- Go in the house and talk to the dung beetle.
- Stand on the trapdoor and press B.
- Maneuver on the ropes and jump on top of the dungfall that has a room beyond it.
- Go through the bright opening.

PRUNED

- Get on the wooden trough and look for a ramp that climbs the edge of the arena.
- Play a little Donkey Kong to get up to a giant wheel.
- Run on the wheel the way the arrow indicates.

YEE HAA!

- Lure the bull into ramming the target.
- Lure the bull to hit the wall with a bull's eye, then jump on its back.
- Guide the bull toward the cow, and press B to charge her.
- Get on the bull's back again, and charge the cow again.
- Use these methods to continue goring cows until three have met their maker.
- Follow the bull through the broken grate.

SEWAGE SUCKS

- Swim around to find a B Platform.
- Use the B Platform to gain confidence.
- Swim through the hole at the bottom to return to the house.
- Swim back down through the trap door to get to **$100.**
- Leave the house to get a ball of poo.

GREAT BALLS OF POO

- Roll the poo ball up the trail that goes over the entrance to this area.
- Eventually, you'll feed it to a giant dung beetle.
- Get another ball, and roll it up the spiral path that goes around the mountain.
- Avoid roaming dung beetles to get to the top of crap mountain.
- Near the peak, use the ball as a platform to get the cash at the top.
- Shove it through the hole at the end of the path.
- Go into the newly opened cave at the base of the mountain.

Continued on next page >>>

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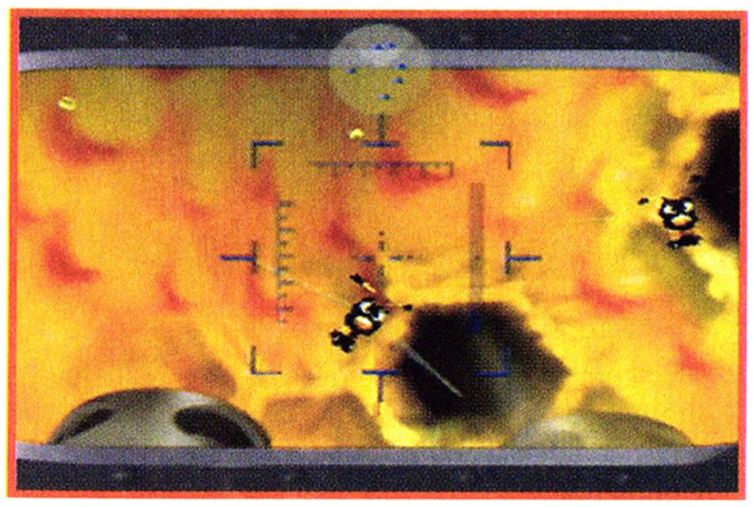
(Go to Sloprano – Corn Off The Cob)

OR...

- Look for a sign near the lake that says, "No Pooballs!"
- Shove a pooball over this ledge.
- Go down, and use B on the button by the mucked up guard.
- Avoid the whirlpool and get in the gate across the lake.

(Go to Bats Tower – Mrs. Catfish)

WASPS' REVENGE



- Go see Queen Bee again.
- Go down Nasty trail and into the honeycomb's central hole.
- Follow the path to the hive.
- Jump in the hive.
- Use Z to fire the machinegun, and the radar to know where bees are.
- After blasting enough bees, use A to exit the hive.
- Pick up the hive and run it back to Queen Bee.
- Collect **$400**.

MR. BARREL

- Head up the mountain to the windmill.
- Jump on top of Mr. Barrel and ride him down the mountain.
- Go in the hole opened at the end of the river.

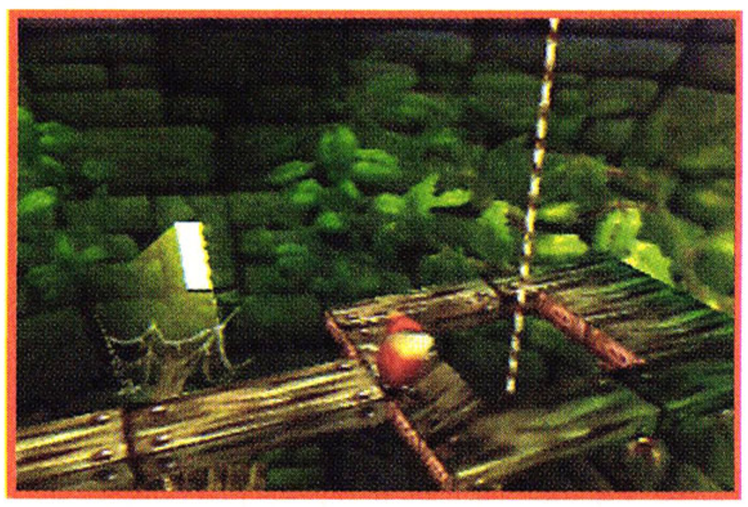
(Go to Spooky – Mr. Death)

BATS TOWER

MRS. CATFISH

- Swim against the river's flow to meet the bullfish.
- Swim through the tunnel below the bullfish.

BARRY'S MATE



- Talk to the angry cog at the top of the short staircase.
- Ride the lowered elevator up.
- Walk across the perilous ledges, pressing B to burn any bats.
- Continue climbing, burning, and crossing ledges until you're near a lever.
- Jump over to the lever and pull it.
- Climb to the top of the tower and walk the ledge right to collect **$300**.

COGS' REVENGE

- Go to the bottom of the tower and swim through the now opened underwater gate.
- Swim through the tunnel to find three cogs gallivanting about.
- KO the cogs, pick them up, and swim them back to the gear room.
- Get all three cogs on their pegs.
- Start running clockwise on the platform in the middle of the gear room.

COMBINATION

- Return to the catfish.
- Lead them back to the safe.

BLAST DOORS

- Enter the safe.
- Use the B Platform to shoot "OPEN" with your slingshot.
- If guards come at you, shoot them to make them back off.

CLANG'S LAIR

- Jump down to the water, and use the B Platform to don a miner's helmet.
- Dive down, avoiding giant fish eyes and getting air by swimming into the alcoves.
- You'll come to a pair of lit passageways.
- The eyes travel in circles through these, use their patterns to avoid them.
- Surface for air between each set of tunnels.
- When there's no B Platform when you surface, look for a lever and pull it.
- Go through the yellow-lit tunnel.
- Swim up the long tube.
- At the top, exit the pool, and drop down into the nearby pit.

PISSTASTIC

- Walk down the metal shaft to meet some hotheads.
- Use the B Platform under the XXX to take a big swig.

- Press B to unleash the fire hose, and Z to give the stream distance.
- Extinguish the fire gremlins until you're out of ammo.
- Go to the first aid cabinet and press B to cure your hangover.
- Keep killing demons until they start up the boiler.

BRASS MONKEYS

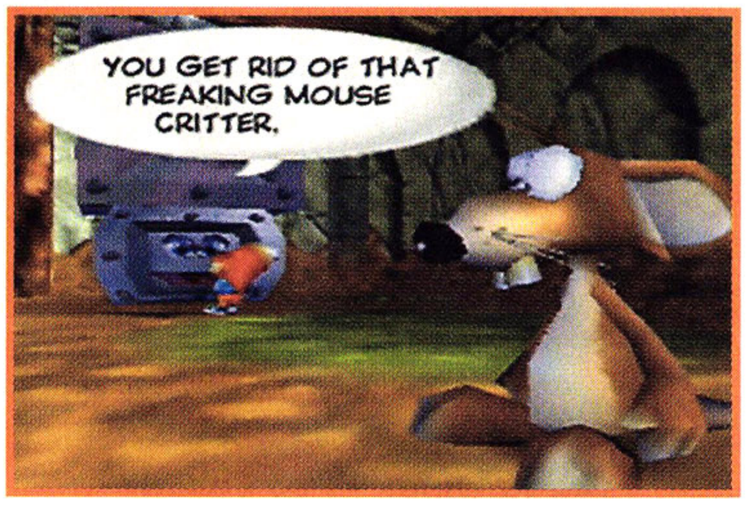
- Lure the boiler to the grates in the corners of the room.
- Pull the nearby chains to rain on its parade.
- While it's stunned, run up to it and press B below it.
- After hitting it from all four room corners, the boiler is defeated.
- Push a brass ball to a depression in the ground near a small gate.
- When the gate opens, push the other brass ball through it.
- Head through the hole to catch the money.

BULLFISH'S REVENGE

- Leave the safe.
- Swim back down the river, using catfish to delay the bullfish.
- Swim to the dock.
- Use the beached bullfish as a platform to reach **$300**.

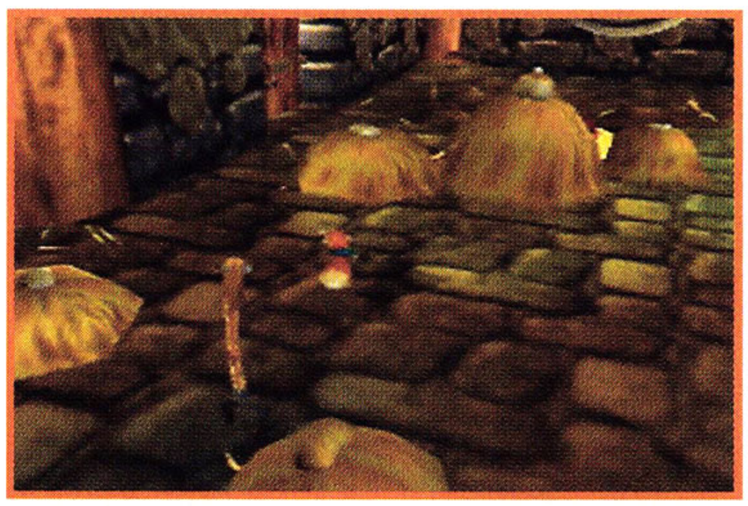
BARN BOYS

MARVIN



- Talk to the trapped box being terrorized by a mouse.
- Get past a pair of bouncing boxes by moving forward when they're leaping at you.
- Talk to Burt at the cheese corral.
- Whack a piece of cheese.
- Pick it up and run it past the bouncing boxes, and to the mouse.
- Go get the mouse two more pieces of cheese.
- Use Jack, the box that was on his back, and nearby pipes to get on top of the barn.
- Look for a large button near a **$100** wad.
- Step on the button to open the barn door.

MAD PITCHFORK



- Go in the barn.
- Talk to the pitchfork.
- Lure the pitchfork into stabbing all the haystacks.
- Pull the lever.

SUNNY DAYS

- Leave the barn and talk to King Bee.
- Talk to the sunflower.
- Go see the Tickly Bees in the circle with the wooden box jumping around it.
- Lead the Tickly Bees back to the sunflower.
- The other Tickly Bees can be found:
  - Near the button used to open the barn door
  - At the entrance to this level
  - On the ledge of the water basin below the high dive
  - On the cliffs around the cheese corral
- When all the bees have been led to the sunflower, she'll offer you a ride.
- Time your jump with her bounce to reach the **$100** above.

BARRY & CO.

- Use the wooden jumping box to get in the open barn loft door.
- Jump across to the B Platform.
- Use throwing knives to kill bats and get the pitchfork down.

BUFF YOU

- Hop on the pitchfork.
- Use B to make a stabbing attack.
- Stab the haystack boss three times.

HAYBOT WARS

- Hide behind a pipe until the haystack boss shoots it with a missile.

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- Lure the haystack boss to the liquid coming out of the broken pipe.
- When the boss backs up, jump up and press B to hit its "Do Not Push" button.
- Have the boss shoot and get electrocuted by all three pipes.
- Press its button three times to defeat it.

FRYING TONIGHT

- When the water level rises, swim to the ladder on the pipe by the Exit signs.
- Use the B Platform throwing knives to down live wires touching the water.
- When the water starts to rise again, swim and climb to another B Platform.
- Down the rest of the live wires.
- Rise with the water to a place where you can get out of the silo.
- Stand on the priest's tablet to get a boost to the loft and **$100.**
- Go out the window.

SLAM DUNK

- Climb up the ladders to the diving board.
- Jump out to the second piece of chocolate and press B.
- A portcullis near the sunflower will open.
- Go through it to find another **$100.**

(Go to Windy – Poo Cabin)

SLOPRANO

CORN OFF THE COB

- Clonk all six pieces of corn and bring them to the jutting ledges.
- Meet the best boss in a video game – ever!

SWEET MELODY

- Dodge The Great Mighty Poo's flingings until he begins to sing.
- When his mouth is open, use the B Platforms to throw toilet paper in it.
- Go to the next B Platform and get two rolls in.
- Go to the next B Platform and throw three rolls in.

U-BEND BLUES

- When Poo's voice breaks the glass, run to the alcove behind it.
- Collect the **$100.**
- Pull the flush lever.
- Venture down the chasm created by the flushing.
- Follow the Exit Signs.
- You'll need to return here after you've collected $1000.

THE BLUFF

- Go down the chasm made by dispatching The Great Mighty Poo.
- Enter the tunnel under the lamp.
- Jump in the pool.
- Dive down, and swim past the spinning blades (one hit and you're dead).
- Head up and go through the pipe entrance jutting from the wall.
- Climb the rope above the spinning blade.
- Jump to the ladder and climb up.
- Cross the wooden bridge to the weasel guards.

(Go to Uga Buga – Drunken Gits)

UGA BUGA

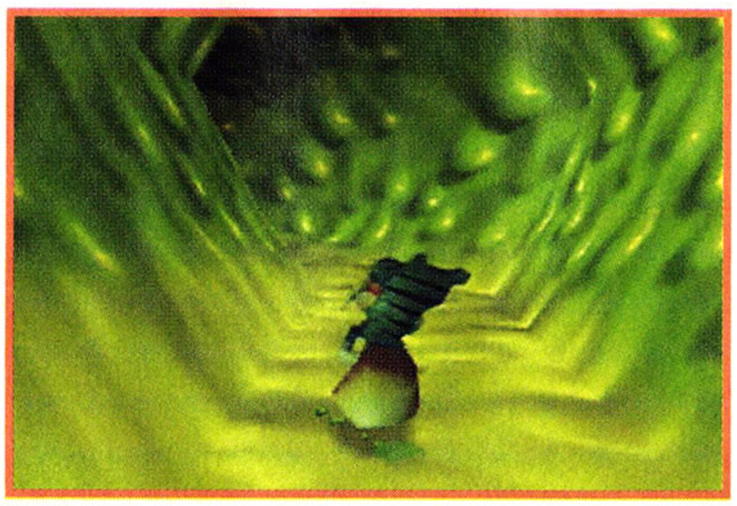
DRUNKEN GITS

- Make your way around the backside of the temple while avoiding dinos.
- Enter the door here to get to the second level.
- Go to the other side to find a door to the third level.
- Grab the **$100** on the roof.
- Get on top of the stone idol.
- Press B three times to shove it down.
- Climb the idol again and press B to open a gate below it.
- Look for the boulder by the Rock Solid club.
- Roll the rock through the gate below the idol and down the ramp on the other side.
- Go through this new door.
- Follow the right edge of the room until you come to a door that slides open.
- Go through this door.

SACRIFICE

- Follow the bridge to the giant egg.
- Get on the monk's tablet to get a boost to the top of it.
- Press B on top of the egg.
- Have the baby dino follow you to the end of the path and out of this room.
- Lead the baby to the B Platform in front of the big dino head.
- Use the B Platform to shoot the up arrow stone on the wall.
- Lead the baby up to the footprints.
- Use the B Platform to shoot the star stone on the wall.

PHLEGM



- Use the monk's tablet to launch on top of the dino head.
- Nab the **$100** up here.
- Drop down into one of the nostrils and press B.
- Get back up and pepper the other nostril.
- Head into the dino head's throat.
- Go left, then right, then left to find a new headpiece.
- Leave the dino head's mouth.

WORSHIP

- Lead your followers back to Rock Solid.
- Give the rock people a whack with your pan, and let your men do the rest.
- Go convince the doorman to let you in.
- Go into Rock Solid.

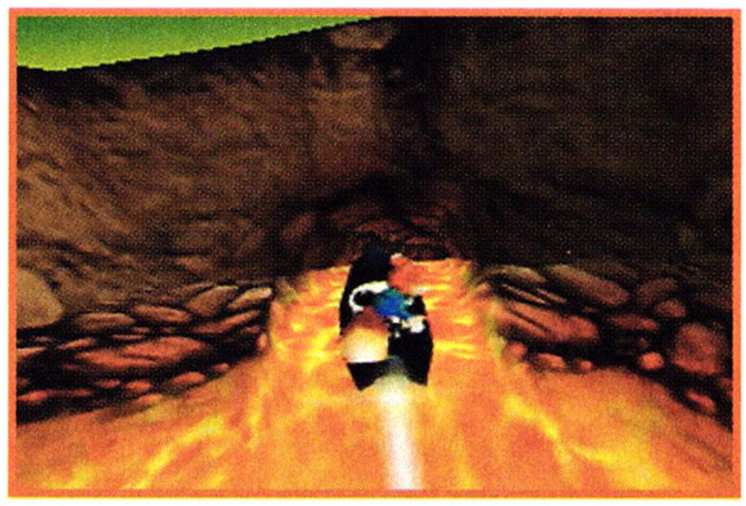
ROCK SOLID

- Go behind the bar to find a rock.
- Roll the rock onto the pressure plate by the club's entrance.
- Use the B Platform by the bar to get Conker drunk.
- Whiz on the rock guy near the open gate to shove him in.
- Sober Conker up.
- Go in the open gate.
- Roll the rock past the fat rock chicks and onto a second pressure plate.
- Get drunk again and urinate a rock guy into each of the two open gates.
- Get up to the dance platform and grab the **$100.**

BOMB RUN

- Try to leave Rock Solid.
- Without taking any big falls, take the bomb into the dino head's throat.
- Go left, then right, then left.
- Walk to the end of the ledge.
- Leap across the floating chunks of igneous rock to the tunnel.

MUGGED

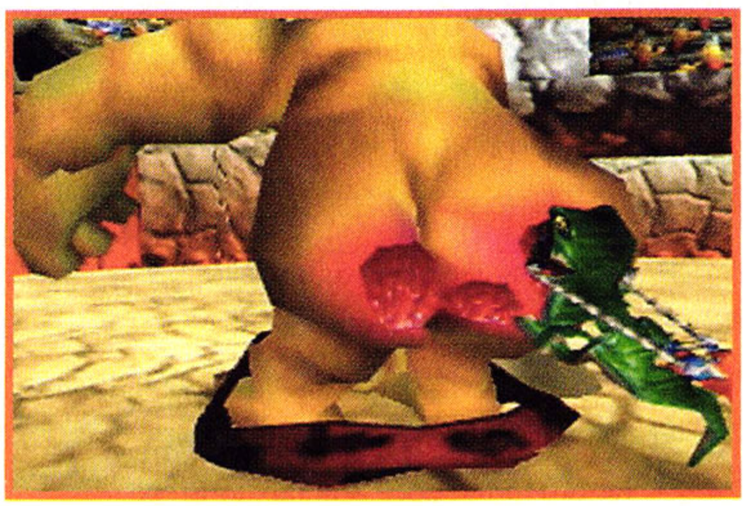


- Run forward in the tunnel to get on the hoverboard.
- Die a few times while learning the track.
- Push forward to speed up, A to jump, B to hit cavemen off their boards.
- After knocking out all three, finish by jumping at the ramp for an extra **$100.**

RAPTOR FOOD

- Head to the door out of the arena.
- Lure Fangy to the B Platform in the center of the arena.
- Use the B Platform to hypnotize him.
- Ride Fangy into cavemen to snatch them up. Press B to swallow them.
- Eat a group of infantry, and two groups of spearmen.
- If you get knocked off, you'll need to re-hypnotize your steed.

BUGA THE KNUT



- Head at this big boy.
- When he lifts his bone to take a swing, press B to knock him in the nads.
- When his pants fall down, go to his backside and press B.
- After three bites in the butt, he's defeated.
- Go through the gate below the babe.
- Chase after the money.
- Take the rock bridge across the chasm.
- Go through the gate to find **$100.**
- Return to the elevator and go down.
- Leave this area.
- Go down by the "Danger Poo!" sign, through the tunnel, and follow the Exit sign.

(Go to Windy – Wasps' Revenge)

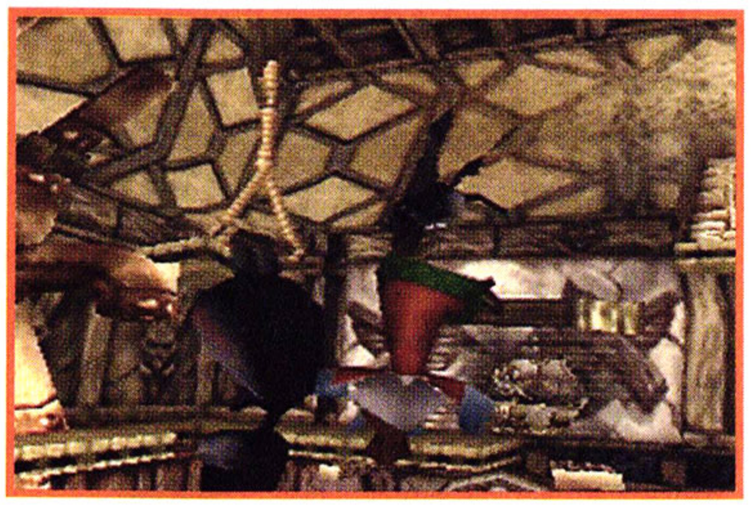
Continued on next page >>>

SPOOKY

MR. DEATH

- Follow the river flow to the lake.
- Talk to Gregg on the dock.
- Follow the water flow through a tunnel.
- Jump to the lever and pull it down.
- Return to the dock and talk to Gregg.
- Learn to use the gun, especially R to aim, and holding Z to get a laser sight.
- Go through the double doors.
- Blast 12 zombies.
- Go through the gates.
- Go into the spooky house at the end of the trail.

COUNT BATULA



- Learn to fly. B moves forward; A backward. Press Z to give the villagers a little crap.
- Conker's sonar flashes when villagers are near, and he squeaks when one has been knocked down from being pooped on.
- Pick up nine villagers and fly them to the grinder.

ZOMBIES

- Go to the library.
- Climb up the ramps on the walls and jump on top of the bookshelves.
- Use the B Platform to shoot the bats as they come at you.
- Continue up the library ramp.
- Go though the hole at the top.
- Follow the ledge around the grinder to another B Platform.
- Shoot the bats.
- Walk along the rafters to a key.
- Bring the key to the front door.
- Go down the hall to the right of the main staircase to get to the dining room.
- Exit through the door opposite the one you came in to get to the hedge maze.
- Get the second key in the center of the maze.
- Bring the key to the front door.
- Go up the main staircase.
- Follow the ledge around the grinder to the ladder that was raised.
- Go the opposite direction of the key and up some platforms to a lever.
- Pull the lever.
- Platform over to the key.
- Take the key through the door that the lever opened.
- Bring the key to the front door.

MR. BARREL

- Tip over Mr. Barrel and get on.
- Roll out of the castle, down the winding path, and down to the bottom of the dock.
- Roll against the water flow you formerly weren't able to swim up.
- When the barrel breaks, walk out the tunnel and collect a bothersome **$100.**

(Go to It's War)

IT'S WAR

IT'S WAR

- Go to Windy.
- Head down Nasty trail.
- Jump over the barbed wire and go through the door behind it.

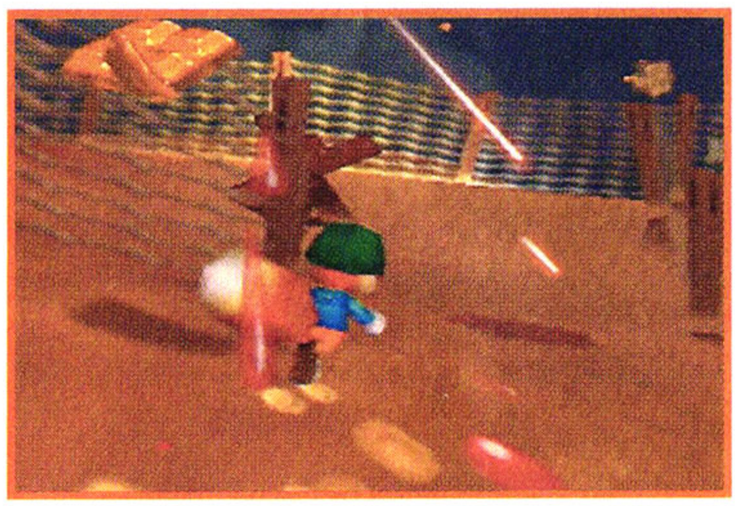
POWER'S OFF

- Go down to the beach.
- Lead the eel through the three underwater nodes.

TNT

- Shove the metal block in front of the bottom of the TNT ramp.
- Go up the TNT ramp and knock on the door.
- Shove the volunteer down the ramp.
- Shove him to one side of the crashed plane.
- Use the B Platform to ignite him.
- Return to the door to get another volunteer.
- Shove him to the other side of the plane.
- Use the B Platform to ignite him.
- Get in the boat at the bottom of the stairs.

THE ASSAULT

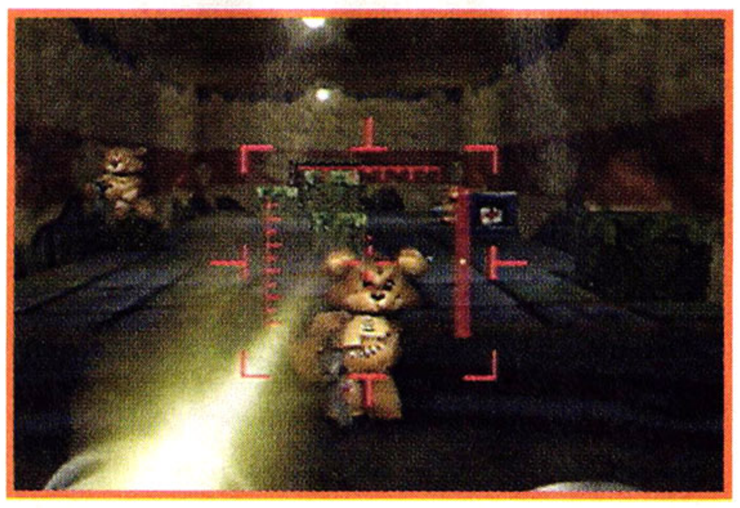


- Run up the beachhead.

SOLE SURVIVOR

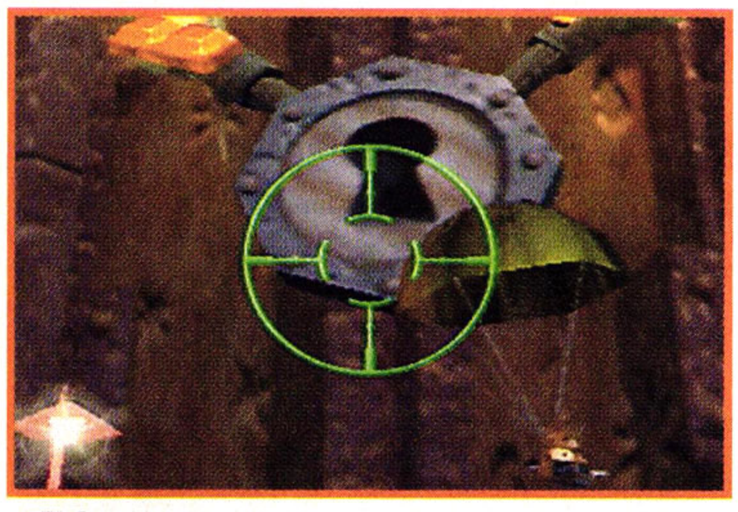
- Press B to arm Conker.
- Shoot the lock off the door and go in.
- Go down the halls, avoiding triplasers and shooting any Tediz.

CASUALTY DEPT.



- Put some lead in the doctors' diet.
- Talk to the guy in the chair.
- Pull a switch.
- Pull the other switch and go through the door.
- Run in a circle around the gun emplacement.
- When it's reloading, climb the rope and run to the B Platform.
- Use the B Platform to blast the gun emplacement.
- Jump in the gun emplacement and blast wave after wave of Tediz.
- When the door opens, go through.

SAVING PRIVATE RODENT



- Rescue the squirrel from the firing squad, shooting the leader first.
- Go up the mud path.
- When a mine comes at you, run behind your shield.
- At the top of the hill, get on the B Platform.
- Use the B Platform to shoot off the four red corners of the lock.
- When the door opens, go in.

CHEMICAL WARFARE

- Get in the tank.
- Use the tank's cannon to blast the biohazard door.
- Get out of the tank and go through the door.
- Go down the hall, jumping behind the pools if a mine comes at you.
- Pull the lever at the end of the hall.
- Get out fast.

THE TOWER

- Get in the tank.
- Go through the gates.
- Exit the tank and hit the B Platforms at the top of each raised ramp to lower them.
- Get back in the tank to shoot grenade wielding Tediz on the way to the next ramp.
- Use the tank to shoot out the yellow and black supports for the tower.
- When the tower falls, get out of the tank and jump in the hole.

LITTLE GIRL

- Talk to the girl in the center platform.
- Go to the B Platform nearest to where missiles are coming from.
- Use the B Platform to blast submarines and missiles.
- After all the subs have been shot from each platform, go talk to the girl.

THE EXPERIMENT

- Get in the tank.
- While driving, use the C buttons to move your turret.
- Shoot off both big guns.
- Use R to snipe the girl.
- Shoot the big Tedi in the back when it goes for the puppet.
- Repeat this until you've shot him in the back three times.

COUNTDOWN

- Don't let the countdown rush you.
- Jump down the new hole.
- Get through the hall filled with triplasers and Tediz.
- It's better to purposefully hit one laser than accidentally hit three.
- Get near the exit door, but don't go through.
- Have a firefight with ambushing Tediz.
- Go through the doors when the blue lasers are gone.
- Make your way back down the beach (it's easier just to run and jump to the end than it is to shoot your way out).

PEACE AT LAST

- Get out of this area.

(Go to Heist – The Windmill's Dead)

HEIST

THE WINDMILL'S DEAD

- Go up the mountain that had the windmill.
- Go down the hole where the windmill used to be.
- Go through the tunnel.

ENTER THE VERTEX

- Go into the Feral Reserve Bank.
- When faced with blue beams and guards, use the dark B Platforms by the pillars.
- Head into the vault and get some cash.

THE VAULT

- Once in control, pull the nearby lever.
- Get in the suit.
- Use A to avoid the tail, Z to block the bite, and press B repeatedly to punch combo.
- When you KO the boss, move to its backside to grab its tail.
- Rotate the analog stick to spin the boss.
- Press B to throw it out the door.
- Once you've thrown it out for the third time, it stays out.

END CUTSCENE

- Sit back and watch the epilogue blend into the prologue.

SECRET ACCESS

PLAYSTATION 2

GRADIUS 3 & 4

After beating the first boss, enter either of these codes at the in-game pause screen.

Double Shot Power-Up – Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, □, △
Laser Shot Power-Up – Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, ✕, ○

Stanley Ferlong
Minchester, FL

RAYMAN 2: REVOLUTION

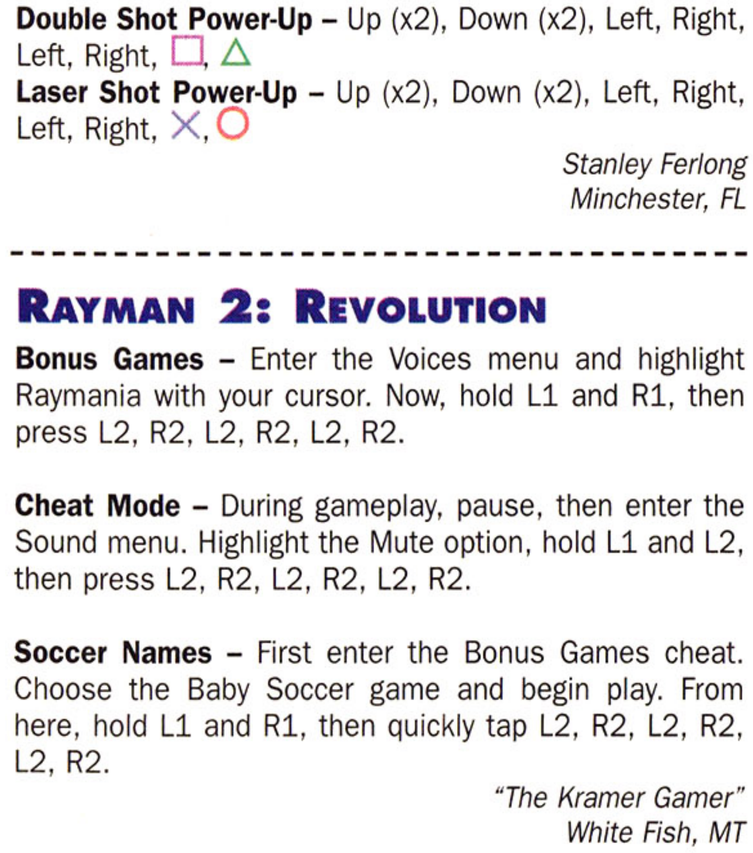
Bonus Games – Enter the Voices menu and highlight Raymania with your cursor. Now, hold L1 and R1, then press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2.

Cheat Mode – During gameplay, pause, then enter the Sound menu. Highlight the Mute option, hold L1 and L2, then press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2.

Soccer Names – First enter the Bonus Games cheat. Choose the Baby Soccer game and begin play. From here, hold L1 and R1, then quickly tap L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2.

"The Kramer Gamer"
White Fish, MT

CODE OF THE MONTH



STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

Enter all of these cheats at the Code Setup screen.

Christmas Video – WOZ
Credits – CREDITS
Digital Director – DIRECTOR
Invincibility – MINIME
Jar Jar Mode – JARJAR
No Heads Up Display – NOHUD
Ship Gallery – SHIPS

Jillian Morrow
Salt Lake City, UT

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

Enter Career mode, then input one of the codes below to unlock a celebrity boxer.

Ashy Knucks – MECCA
Barry Sanders – MRBARRY
Bernardo Osuna – OSUNA
Charles Hatcher – HATCHER
Chuck Zito – ZITO
David Bostice – BOSTICE
David Defiagbon – DEFIAGBN
David DeMartini – DEMART
Jason Giambi – JGIAMBI
Joe Mesi – BAILEY
John Botti – JBOTTI
Junior Seau – JRSEAU
Owen Nolan – OWNOLAN
Ray Austin – AUSTIN
Steve Francis – STEVEF
Trevor Nelson – NELSON

Marco Harris
Tucson, ND

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO

Playable Students – Head to the Character Selection screen, and highlight a warrior. Now, hold L1, L2, R1, and R2, then select the character. Different students are unlocked by highlighting different characters.

Vixie Velvet
Hotchick City, NY

ATV OFFROAD FURY

Expert Mode – Enter Pro-Career mode, then input ALL-OUTAI as your name. After entering this code, you'll be kicked back out to the Main Menu, but the difficulty will be increased.

Jimmy Fangtooth
Salt Water City, NH

THE BOUNCER

Alternate Costumes – In Versus mode, head to the Character Selection screen, then move the cursor over the desired character. Hold R1, R2, L1, or R2, then press ✕ to confirm your choice. Each button will unlock a different guise.

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

PLAYSTATION

COOL BOARDERS 2001

Debug Mode – Enter Career mode and input your name as GIVEALL to unlock every course, character, and board.

Timmy Thomas
Atlanta, GA

CHAMPIONSHIP SURFER

Stage Select & Iceman Surfer – At the Main Menu, press L2, R1, R2, L1, L2. When this code is entered, every beach will become selectable. You'll also get to play as the totally crazy Iceman Surfer. Rad, dude!

Hank Henry
Yellowbrick, WI

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

Enter Career mode, then input the following code below to unlock a celebrity boxer.
The Bulldog – BULLDOG

Saint Margaret Thatcher
Pittsburgh, PA

MEGA MAN X5

X Armor – At the Character Selection screen, highlight X, then press Up (x2), Down (x9). A ringing sound will signal correct code entry.

Zero's Armor – At the Character Selection screen, highlight Zero, then press Down (x2), Up (x9). A ringing sound will signal correct code entry.

Stanley Anderson
Fallfield, IL

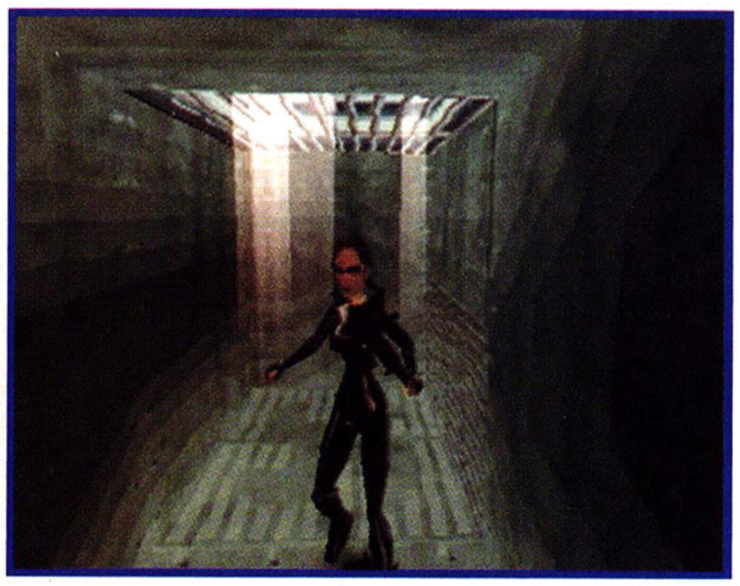
DREAMCAST

Spyro: Year of the Dragon

Enter all of these codes from the in-game pause menu.

99 Lives – Right, Left, Right, Left, Up (x4), ○
Big Head Mode – Up, R1, Up, R1, Up, R1, ○ (x4)
Blue Spyro – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, □, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, ×
Dark Spyro – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, □, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Down
Extra Hit Points – ○, R1, ○, L1, ○, R2, ○, L2, ○
Easy Mode – ○, □, Right, Left, Right, □, ○, ×
Flat Mode – Left, Right, Left, Right, L1, R1, L1, R1, □, ○
Flat Skateboard – Up (x2), Left (x2), Right (x2), Down (x2), ○, □
Green Spyro – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, □, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, △
Hard Mode – ○, □, Right, Left, Right, □, ○, □
Pink Spyro – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, □, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, □
Purple Spyro – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, □, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right
Red Spyro – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, □, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, ○
Sparx Treasure – Right (x2), Left (x2), Right (x2), Left (x2), ○ (x3)
Yellow Spyro – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, □, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up (x2)

"GI Droid"
(location unknown – last seen assembling a Depeche Mode record collection)



Tomb Raider Chronicles

Russian Base – At the Main Menu, highlight the New Game option. At this point, hold L1 and Up, then press ×.

Black Isle – At the Main Menu, highlight the New Game option. At this point, hold L2 and Up, then press ×.

Tower Block – At the Main Menu, highlight the New Game option. At this point, hold R1 and Up, then press ×.

"The Vidman"
Uptown, MN

Razor Freestyle Scooter

Cheat Mode – During gameplay, pause, then press Right, Down, Right, Left, Right, Up, Right (x2). This code unlocks everything.

Marry Jane
Manhattan, NY

NBA 2K1

To enter these codes, head into the Options screen and access the Codes menu. If you're smart enough to find this screen, simply type in the desired case-sensitive cheat.

Big Heads – heliumbrain
Monster Players – alienbrain
Sick Players – tvirus
Taunting Players – sohappy
Wacky Commentary – whatamisaying
Ball Players – betheball
Cool Dudes – radical
Trendy Players – the70slive

"The Evil Banshee"
San Jose, CA

NBA Hoopz

Enter all of these codes at the Versus screen. Note: The first space is changed with X, the second with A, and the third with the elusive B button. After inputting the desired sequence, press the listed direction.

ABA Ball – 111 Right
Away Uniforms – 024 Right
Beach Court – 023 Left
Big Heads – 300 Right
Granny Shots – 121 Left
Home Uniforms – 014 Right
Infinite Turbo – 312 Up
No Fouls – 222 Right
No Goaltending – 444 Left
No Hotspots – 301 Up
Shot % – 011 Down
Show Hotspot – 110 Down
Small Heads – 330 Left
Small Players – 543 Left
Street Court – 320 Left

Regal Richards
Bowling, MT

Sega Smashpack Volume 1

Altered Beast
Beast Mode – At the Title Screen, hold X, A, B, Down/Left, then press Start.

Debug Menu – At the Title Screen, hold A, then press Start.

Free Continue – When you last life perishes, hold X and rapidly press Start.

Sound Menu – At the Title Screen, hold X, B, Up/Right, then press Start.

Golden Axe
9 Continues – Highlight Arcade mode, then hold Down/Left, X, and B. Release this combo then press Start.

Level Select – Enter Arcade mode, then at the Character Selection screen, hold Down/Left and A. Now, just press Start.

Phantasy Star II
Slow Motion Mode – Enter the world map, then pause the game by holding Start and A simultaneously. Hold A to move in slow motion.

Revenge of Shinobi
Infinite Shurikins – Enter the Options menu and highlight the Shurikins icon. Set its number to 00, then wait tenseconds. It will eventually turn into an infinity sign.

Shining Force
Dialogue Sampler – When the annoying girl says, "Good luck!" hold A to view all the text in the game.

Sonic the Hedgehog
Level Select – At the Title Screen, press Up, Down, Left Right. When you hear a bell, hold Start and X to begin the game.

Debug Mode – At the Title Screen, press Up, A, Down, A, Left, A, Right, A, Start. Now, hold A until the game begins.

Streets of Rage 2
Bonus Options – Enter the Options screen, then press and hold X and A on controller two. Now, hold A and press Start.

Vectorman
Debug Mode – At the Options screen, press X, A (x2), X, Down, X, A (x2), X.

Refill Health – During gameplay, pause, then press X, A, Right, A, B, X, Down, X, A, Right, B.

Virtua Cop 2
Big Head Mode – Complete the game on the easy difficulty setting, then when the Press Start Button screen appears, press X, A, Y, B (x3), Up (x5) on controller 4.

Mirror Mode – Complete the game on the easy difficulty setting, then when the Press Start Button screen appears, press L Button, Left, L Button, Right, L Button, Down, L Button, Up, R Button, Left, R Button, Right, R Button, Down, R Button, Up on controller 4.

Random Mode – Complete the game on the easy difficulty setting, then when the Press Start Button screen appears, press B, Left, X, Y, X, Y, B, A, B, A, Right, Left, Right, Left on controller 4.

Luke Ranz
Webville, COM

DREAMCAST

Capcom Vs. SNK

Signature Entrances – Simply select the characters listed to see an amusing, yet brief, entrance for each pairing.

Benimaru and any female character
Cammy and Vice
Chun-Li and Mai
Chun-Li and Yamazaki
Guile and Rugal
Iori and M.Bison
Ken and Terry
Kyo and Iori Intro
M.Bison and Geese
M.Bison and Rugal
Ryu and Ken
Ryu and Kyo
Ryu and Ryo
Ryu and Sagat
Sakura and Yuri
Terry and Geese
Terry and Yamazaki
Vega and E.Honda
Vega and Benimaru
Vice and Rugal
Yuri and Ryo
Zangief and Raiden

Millie Handzus
Washington, DC

Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear

Cheat Menu – During gameplay, hold A, B, X, Y, and the L Button, then press Down to bring up the hidden Cheat Menu.

Joseph Tinkle
JTinkley@bedwetters.com

Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles

Checkpoint Cheat – This code allows you to warp back to the last checkpoint. Simply pause the game and press L Button, R Button, L Button (x2), R Button (x2), L Button, R Button (x2), L Button.

Radar – To reveal enemy locations, pause the game, then press Up, Down, Up, L Button, R Button, L Button.

Donnie Mellanby
Taco City, NM

NINTENDO 64

Star Wars: Episode I Battle for Naboo

Once again, our code crackers have unlocked a handful of new cheats for this stellar game. For a more complete listing, featuring more useful codes, check out the March issue. Anyhow, enter all of these codes at the Password screen.

Wacky Camera – DRJEKYLL
Concert Hall – WAKEUP
Credits – MEMEME!
Advanced Blasters – ADEGAN

"The GI Gang"
Eden Prairie, MN

Cruis'n Exotica

Simply enter this cheat at the Player Name screen.
All Cars & Tracks – HOTRIDES

"Virtual Gap Boy 2002"
Phoenix, AZ

PC PERSONAL COMPUTER

Oni

During gameplay, press F1 to bring up the Diary screen. Now, type "everything" to activate the cheats. At this time, any of the codes below may be entered.

AI Fights AI – reservoirdogs
All Weapons – munitionfrenzy
Big-Head Mode – bighead
Breakable Objects – glassworld
Change Characters – shapeshifter (Press F8)
Complete Stage – winlevel
Developer Mode – thedayismine
Fists Of Legend Mode – fistsoflegend
Full Ammo & Health – fatloot
Gattling Gun Mode – roughjustice
Godzilla Mode – behemoth
Invincibility – liveforever
No Knockouts – canttouchthis
One-Hit Deaths – touchofdeath
Phase Cloak – moonshadow
Regenerate Health – elderrune
Slow Motion – carousel
Super Ammo – superammo
Tiny Mode – minime
Ultra Mode – killmequick

Terrance Demarko
Henderson Village, HI

Colin McRae Rally 2.0

To enter these codes, head to the Create New Driver Profile screen, and simply type in a code for the name.

Aggressive Cars – NUTTYNETS
All Options – LETMEWIN
All Tracks – GREATNEWS
All Cars – ALLTHEBUTTONS
Background Music – TURNONTHEICE
Big Tires – WHEELYBIG
Bouncy Mode – BOINGBOINGBOING
Escort MK1 Car – MORRISMODE
Faster Cars – GOFASTERSTRIPES
Fireballs (Arcade Mode) – EATTHIS
Ford Puma – GARYWILDASS
Lancer Road – EVILEVO
Low Gravity – BOUNCYBOUNCYBOUNCY
Mini Cooper S – MINIME
Mirror Tracks – WAVEYOURLEFTS
Shining Cars – SHINYBUTTONS
Turbo Boost – CURRYFORME

Bryan "Big Fat Poop Head" McCutchan
New Hope, MN

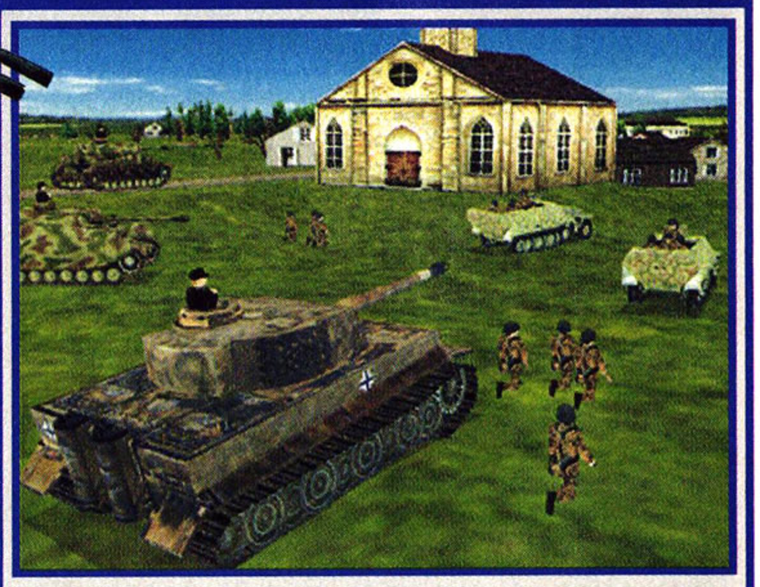
Blair Witch: Volume 3 - Elly Kedward

During gameplay, press F10 to bring up the console window. Now, input any of the codes below.

100 Bullets – iamawimpforthis
All Weapons – getintomybelly
Big Head Mode – bighead
Charge Radiance Emitter – sunofgod
Crossbow – mediumrare
Dark Mode – dark
Dismemberment Mode – gibnplenty
Dynamite – goodtimesman
Easy Mode – combatisscary
Easy Puzzles – puzzlesarescary
Elephant Gun – smileynomore
Flame-Thrower – burnyourassoff
Flaming Ammo – flameonastick
Flashlight Battery – recharge
Gas Mask – thedogfarted
Hard Mode – irule
Invincibility – iworkforgod
Invisibility – nod3d
Lith Bullets – vampbeware
Mercy Bullets – demonbeware
Night Vision – icansee
No Enemy AI – hellfreezeover
Rain – thunderstorm
Refill Health – givemefaith
Shiny Characters – t2000
Shotgun – bigstickofdeath
Silver Bullets – wwbeware
Snow – snowstorm
Time Mode – time
Tommy Gun – meetmypaltommy

Jill Love
Harding Woods, IL

DOWNLOAD OF THE MONTH



Game: Combat Mission: Beyond Overlord
Download: A two-mission demo
Site: http://www.battlefront.com/cmdemo.html
While the rest of the development world seems to be taking a "real-time rules all" stance with war games, the folks at Battlefront.com know that the biggest asset in a war is the brain behind the battlelines. Its newest WWII simulator, Combat Mission: Beyond Overlord, is a turn-based strategic masterpiece that's earning rave reviews from any militaristic-minded person who plays it. Want to see what you're missing? Go to Battlefront.com's site to download a huge 30MB demo of the game for either PC or Mac. If you like what you play, you can order the full game directly from the site. Dismissed!

GAME SHARK

PS2 PlayStation 2

ATV Offroad Fury

Master Code –
ec89866c1456e60a (Must Be On)

Tons of Pro Career Race Points –
3cd901a41456e77b

Knockout Kings 2001

Master Code –
ec8ec8401456e60a (Must Be On)

Infinite Creation Points –
3cb34c881456e733

NHL FaceOff 2001

Master Code –
ec8d15601456e60a (Must Be On)

Home Team Scores 99 Goals –
0c184ce61456b30c
4c18f5581456e7a5
0c184ce61456b30c
4c18f5521456e788 (Press L2 + R2 simultaneously)

Away Team Scores 99 Goals –
0c184ce61456b40c
4c18f5581456e788
0c184ce61456b40c
4c18f5521456e7a5 (Press L1 + R1 simultaneously)

Infinite Creation Points –
4cbf20b41456e6e7

Aqua Aqua

Master Code –
ec88f9341456e60a (Must Be On)

Always Have Shield –
4cb789f81456e7a6

PlayStation

Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix

Infinite Assault Rifle Ammo –
8008bc0c 03e7

Infinite Shotgun Ammo –
8008bc0e 03e7

Infinite Uzi Ammo –
8008bc0a 03e7

Infinite .90 Pistol Ammo –
8008bc08 03e7

NBA Hoopz

Start In 2nd Quarter –
d009d4a0 0000
8009d4a0 0001

Start In 3rd Quarter –
d009d4a0 0000
8009d4a0 0002

Start In 4th Quarter –
d009d4a0 0000
8009d4a0 0003

Score 200 (Away) –
8009d4d0 0032
8009d4d4 0032
8009d4da 0032
8009d4de 0032

Score 200 (Home) –
8009d4b4 0032
8009d4b8 0032
8009d4bc 0032
8009d4c0 0032

Mega Man X5

Invincibility –
d009a100 0000
8009a100 2100

Infinite Lives –
300d1c45 0063

Rapid Fire –
d00d51a2 7fff
800981bc 0022 (Press □)

Unlock Everything –
50001201 0000
300d4f56 0001

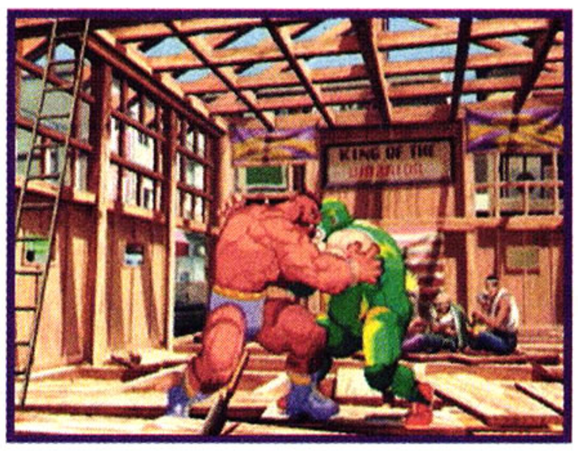
Dreamcast

Kao the Kangaroo

Infinite Coins –
fea995ae00000063

Infinite Lives –
2ea7606d00000063

Infinite Gloves –
4caa1b0800000063



Capcom Vs. SNK

Infinite Health –
5fb77cef00003840

Infinite Health (Player 2) –
f1e99d3000003840

Infinite Time –
23d768fd00000060

Instant Win –
23d768fd00000000
f1e99d3000000000

Infinite Cash –
e607d0d8000f423f

Max Groove Points –
719518b5000f423f

Championship Surfer

Unlock Iceman –
a2d3628b00000008

Vanishing Point

All Vehicles –
4bfa1f050000ffff

All Tracks –
db9883130000ffff

All Mirror Tracks –
135c165d0000ffff

All Movies –
4ba21f050000ffff

All Secrets –
9bb00a3b0000ffff

All Challenges –
1235564d606fb041

Nintendo 64

Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker

Enable Code –
f11942c02400 (Must Be On)

Infinite Health –
802086f20064

Infinite Lives –
802086f00009

Infinite Batarangs –
802086fe000f

Paper Mario

Master Code –
de025c00 0000
f106c6b0 2400 (Must Be On)

Tons of Coins –
8110f29c ffff

All Party Members –
8010f2ac 0001
8010f2b4 0001
8010f2bc 0001
8010f2c4 0001
8010f2cc 0001
8010f2d4 0001

Infinite Hit Points –
8010ef95 0063
8010f292 0063

Max Level –
8010f299 0063

All Spirits –
8010f51e
0007

ENTER TO WIN

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these hallowed pages will receive a Secret Access T-shirt.

Send To:
Secret Access
Game Informer Magazine
10120 W. 76th Street
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
secretaccess@gameinformer.com

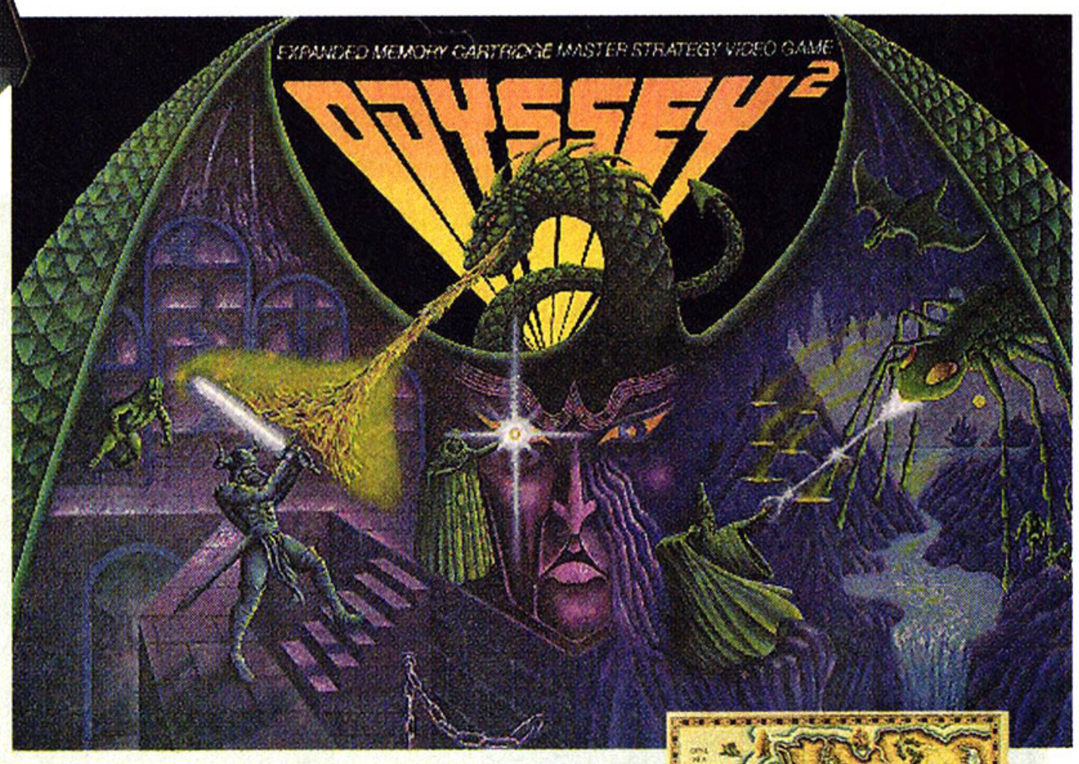
THE MASTER STRATEGY SERIES

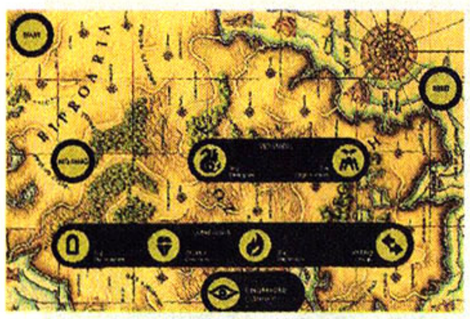
ODYSSEY'S (ALMOST) LAST GAMING GASP

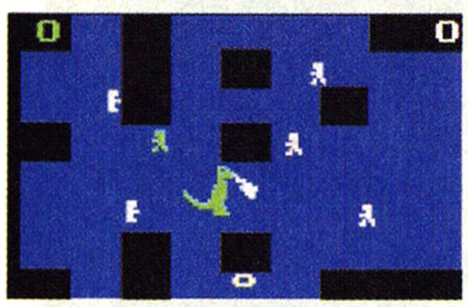
Introduced to the market in 1978, Magnavox's Odyssey 2 home video game system perennially played third banana to the Atari 2600 and Intellivision. Although the hardware was certainly the equal of its competitors, and had the advantage of a built-in keyboard, the Odyssey had many counts against it. Chiefly, Magnavox had only three in-house programmers creating games for its console. To make matters worse, when third-party software companies began appearing, few had any interest in the Odyssey, with only six games being released for the system by outside sources.

In its early years, Odyssey's developers basically aped games being released for the Atari. By 1981, however, it was becoming apparent that if people wanted to play Atari games, they would buy an Atari. Putting a firm exclamation point on this realization was Magnavox losing a copyright infringement lawsuit to Atari claiming that K.C. Munchkin – the Odyssey's fastest-selling cartridge – was too similar to Pac-Man.

Looking to create something completely apart from anything available for the other consoles, the Odyssey development team began putting together what would become the most intricate and grandest games for the system – the Master Strategy series. The titles in this line retailed for twice that of a standard cartridge, but it was always money well spent. Bringing the world of board games and video games together, each of the games in this ambitious trilogy came in a 10 x 7.5 inch box which housed a thick playing board, an array of playing pieces, a beautifully illustrated manual, and an expanded memory cartridge adorned with a golden label. A more beautiful packaging presentation has yet to be seen in the video game realm.





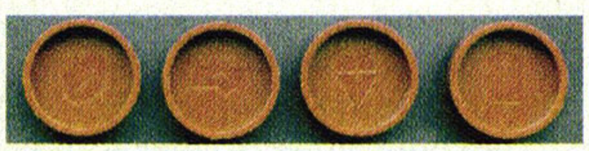


THE QUEST FOR THE RINGS

The Quest for the Rings, the first in the Master Strategy series, was released late in 1981. An obvious derivation of Tolkien's writing and the Dungeons & Dragons game, Quest was ideally played with three players. One player, acting as Ringmaster, placed the castles on the playing board, hiding the Ring and monster tokens underneath. The two players would then choose to play one of four character types: a Warrior armed with a sword and able to slay all but the most powerful monsters; a Wizard whose spells stun enemies for a brief time; a Changeling with the ability to turn invisible to both monsters and the player; and a Phantom able to walk through all dungeon walls except those made of lava.

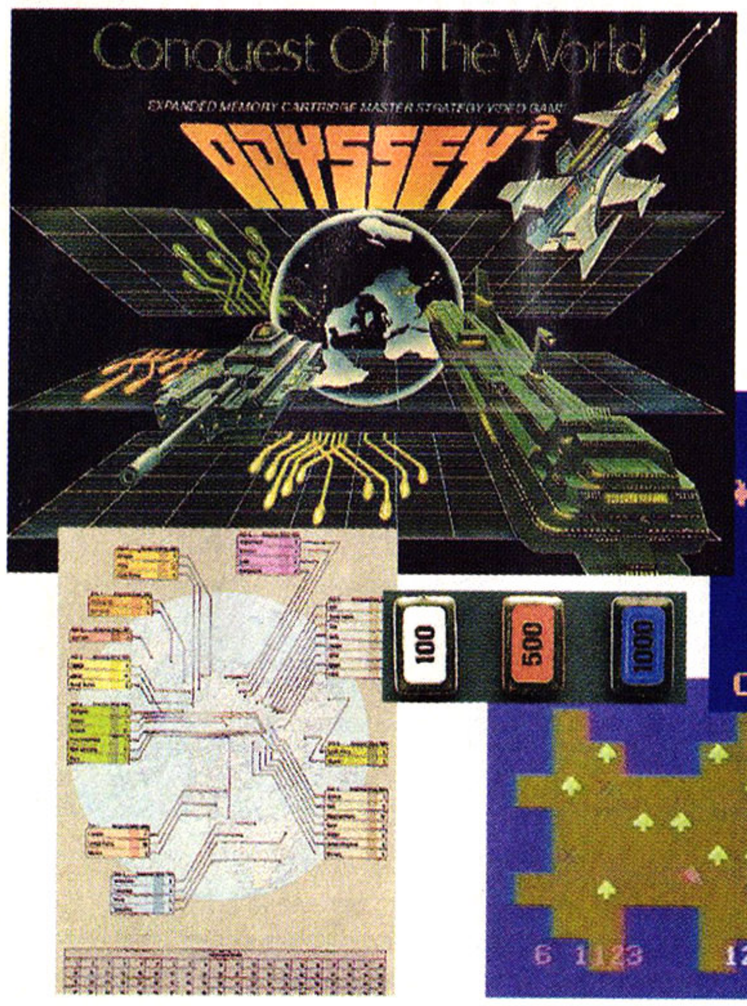
It was the players' task to wander the map and recover the ten Rings in a certain amount of time. To spice things up, the Ringmaster was given a certain amount of Possession tokens. Whenever played, a Possession token allowed the Ringmaster to take the controller from a player and try to kill the other character, hopefully foiling the heroes' quest.

Of the three Master Strategy games, Quest for the Rings was the most graphically attractive. The game was fun to play, with or without the board in conjunction, and was even voted the Most Innovative Game of 1981 by Electronic Games magazine.



GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Greg Richey

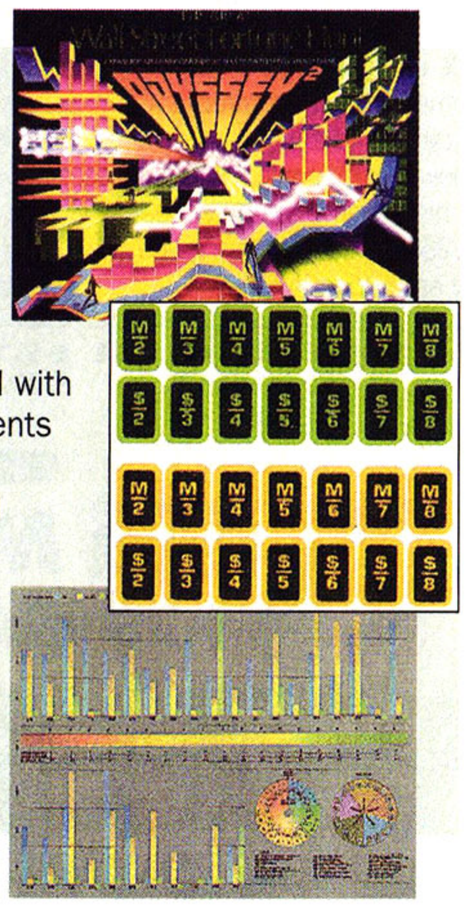


CONQUEST OF THE WORLD

Conquest of the World arrived in early 1982. The cartridge's gameplay was similar to Combat for the Atari 2600, and the board game was reminiscent of Risk. When combined, players were delighted to find an original and intricate strategy game.

Up to six players selected a home country on the world map, then made alliances with surrounding countries in order to collect more Power Base Units (PBUs). Of course, eventually all the land would be called for and war would unfurl. Both attacker and defender decided to use either a jet, tank, or submarine, and the vehicles actually used up the PBUs they had collected in battles. Players had to make quick and decisive strikes in fights or risk ending up in a war of attrition, earning nothing but a pittance in PBUs for all their efforts.

THE GREAT WALL STREET FORTUNE HUNT



The last Master Strategy game was the least graphically intensive and the most complicated of the bunch. The onscreen display consisted basically of a stock tickertape displaying the fluctuating prices of 30 real-world stocks such as McDonalds, Toyota, and IBM. Each player began with $100,000, and the goal was to make the most money in a five-year span.

As the market moved across the screen, players simply bought and sold with their money by typing in the stock codes and the amount to shift. Investments and interest rates were to be kept track of on the game board, and since money was kept track of on the honor system, players were allowed to call audits on one another at any time.

The most interesting thing about The Great Wall Street Fortune Hunt was that it could become as complicated as the actual stock market. Once buying and selling was mastered, rules for interest rates, treasury bills, buying on margin, and stock options could be implemented. The only thing not included with the game was a component essential to play – a calculator.

Odyssey's Master Strategy games were well-received by the buying public, and well on their way to redefining what a video game could be. In fact, Magnavox had a Clue-like fourth in the series, Sherlock Holmes, nearly completed. As is too often the case in Classic GI, however, the resolution of this tale ends with the video game crash of 1983. Not only did Magnavox halt the production of Master Strategy titles, it quit making video games altogether.

Today, all three titles in this illustrious series are sought after collectibles, especially those with all the playing pieces present. If you're ever lucky enough to find one in good condition, make sure to keep it that way. If that just sounds like too big a responsibility, put it in an over-protective package and ship it to us. We won't even charge you a storage fee.

THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

It was in April 1980 that Activision opened its doors for business. Formed by David Crane, Alan Miller, and Bob Whitehead, Activision showed its first products two months later at the summer CES and most thought the idea was crazy. No way was there a market for outside software. Worse, as the upstart company prepared to release its first cartridges in the fall, Atari began suing mercilessly and repeatedly, claiming Activision had no right to make games for hardware it didn't engineer.

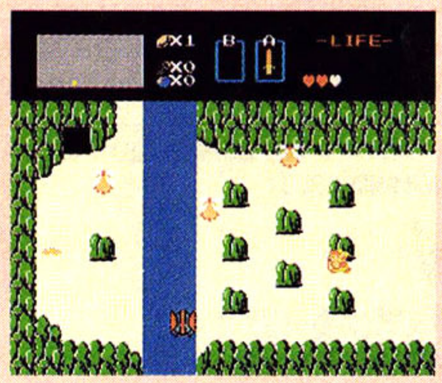
Activision won out in the end, and ended up making some of the highest-quality and best-selling cartridges for the Atari 2600, paving the road for the hundreds of third-party companies that have followed in its footsteps.

ACTIVISION®

Every month one of Game Informer's readers pick their personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.

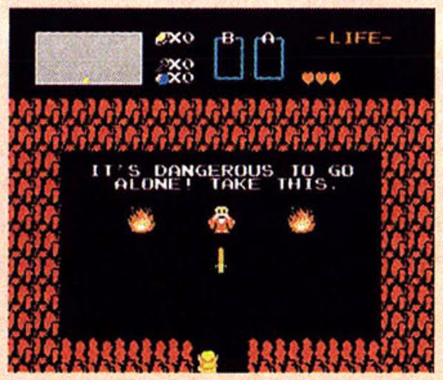
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

■ **FORMAT** NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO



Without a doubt, the greatest game of all time would have to be Nintendo's 8-bit classic, The Legend of Zelda. Ever since I was introduced to the land of Hyrule through that unforgettable golden cartridge, I have been a diehard Zelda fan.

The game pulled players into an immersive and difficult adventure that took an incredible amount of time and brainpower to conquer. Link traveled through eight different dungeons collecting better weapons, getting more hearts, and gathering pieces of the almighty Triforce. The ultimate goal, of course, was to get to Death Mountain, defeat that cold-hearted pig, Ganon, rescue the princess, and save Hyrule from certain catastrophe. The Legend of Zelda is, and will always be, the greatest game of all time.

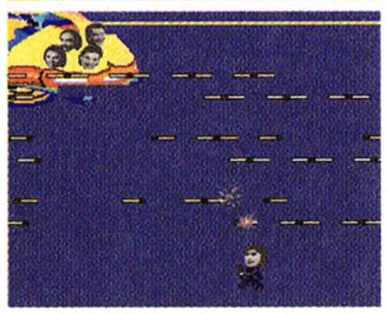


P.S. – I also think that Link would top a Greatest Hero of All Time list.

ARCADE

JOURNEY

RETRO RATING 7.5

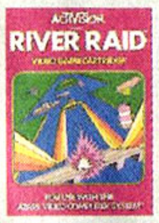


All we ask is that you Don't Stop Believin'. In lieu of Journey's recent comeback tour, we are featuring a video game that was the first of many to be based around a popular rock band. Including all five original members, Journey comes complete with digitized mugs of Steve Perry, Neal Schon, and the rest of the gang. Not to be confused with the rather lackluster Atari 2600 game, Journey Escape, this arcade title is loosely based on the concept and design of Tron. Players choose one of five minigames that star each of the bandmates. With a little bit of shooting, platforming, and general joystick dexterity, players can help the band recover their instruments and make it to the live show. For example, Neal Schon is equipped with a jetpack and must navigate a chasm to acquire his guitar. Once he acquires his axe, he uses it to shoot enemies and escape to the surface. Also included in this game are tracks from some of Journey's hits, such as Wheel In The Sky and Stone In Love.

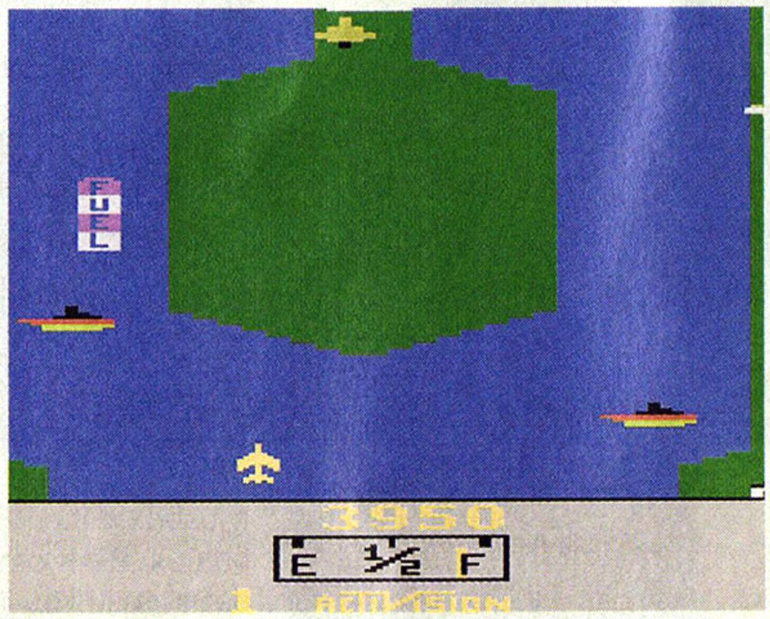
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** BALLY MIDWAY ■ **DEVELOPER** MARVIN GLASS & ASSOCIATES ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1983

ATARI 2600

RIVER RAID



RETRO RATING 9



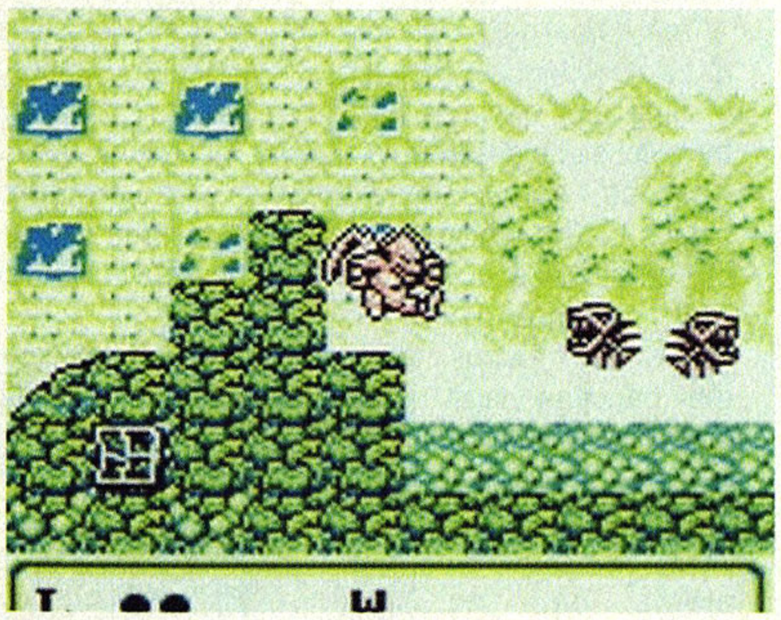
By request, we return to the early days of the Atari 2600 to uncover one of the best shooters ever to grace the system. Activision's River Raid was a huge franchise for the company and garnered a number of iterations on other systems including the Colecovision and Commodore 64. One design element that makes this shooter noteworthy is its vertical scrolling engine. Prior to River Raid, most 2600 shooters did not scroll at all and were confined to one screen. River Raid puts you in the cockpit of a jet and sends you to the "River of No Return" – an ever-changing chasm filled with enemy helicopters, boats, and planes. With control of your jet's speed and direction, as well as some guided missiles, the player progresses through the river while taking down the enemy. Another interesting aspect of the gameplay is that you also have to keep an eye on your fuel and replenish it by maneuvering over fuel depots. A classic in every sense, River Raid holds a cherished spot in the Game Informer Vault

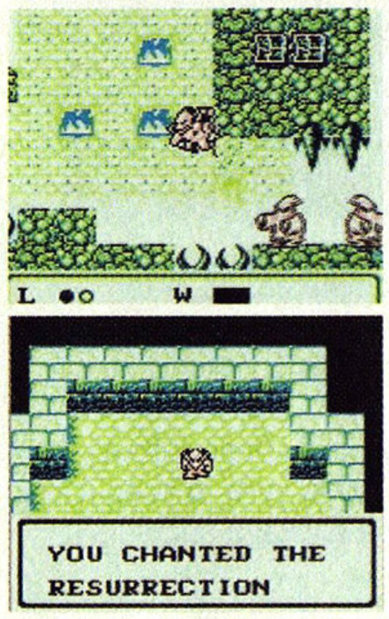
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** CAROL SHAW/ACTIVISION ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1982

GAME BOY

GARGOYLE'S QUEST

RETRO RATING 9.25





This game didn't garner a whole lot of attention when it was released on the Game Boy back in 1990, but it ranks as one of our all-time favorites for the system. As a spin-off of Capcom's popular Ghosts 'N Goblins series, Gargoyle's Quest mixes elements of action from that series along with item collection and leveling up. Taking the role of one of the nemesis characters from the original Ghosts 'N Goblins, you play as a gargoyle with a host of abilities. Spewing projectiles and jumping are the basics, but this critter can also climb walls and fly for short periods of time. Along the way, the gargoyle's abilities can be enhanced, which will assist you in progressing through the game. Even with the gargoyle's changing skills, players will find the gameplay on the difficult side as there are plenty of moves to master. Climbing walls, hovering, and then shooting an enemy will test your skills and also your patience. However, the quest proves to be highly entertaining and well worth the effort.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1990

SNES

MEGA MAN SOCCER

RETRO RATING 5

This game was selected for Classic GI through the painstakingly scientific process known as the "close yer eyes and pick" method. The Game Informer Vault holds many stories amongst its thousands of games, and the tale of Mega Man Soccer is a yarn we cannot resist spinning. Although the exact origins of this game's concept aren't exactly clear, some of the old-timers on the GI Staff have concocted a purely fictional tale of some Capcom developers brainstorming ideas over beers – many beers. It's hard to say how Capcom could besmirch such a loveable and popular character, but beer is the only explanation. Even though the cast of participants are some of the finest action characters in the video game world, seeing them play soccer is laughable at best. If there is any consolation to be found in owning this extremely ill-conceived game, it may be the game's collectible value. In other words, if you want all the Mega Man games in your collection, you need Mega Man Soccer.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1994

NES

KID ICARUS

Secret Continue – To resume play from the same position and with the same implements that you had when your game ended, simply press **B**, **A**, **B** on Controller One before the Title screen appears.

ICE HOCKEY

No Goalies – On the Title screen, hold **A** + **B** on both controllers, then press **Start** on Controller One. To use this trick in a two-player game, highlight the **Two Players** option before entering the code.

HEAVY SHREDDIN'

99 Lives – On the Title screen, while holding **Left** + **A** + **B**, press **Start** for 99 lives.

LYNX

MS. PAC-MAN

Six Lives – Pause the game, hit **Option 1**, **B**, **B**, **A**, **A**. Unpause the game and you should have six lives.

PAC-LAND

10 Lives – To get this to work, you must first get the high score. When you do, enter **330 NE**. As long as this is the high score, you have ten extra lives.

TURBOGRAFX

DEVIL'S CRUSH

Infinite Balls – Enter the password **PPPPPPPPPA** and you will start with infinite balls.

NINJA SPIRIT

Level Select – At the Title Screen, press **II**, **I**, **II**, **II**, **I**, **II**. Hold **Select** while pressing **Run**, then move your cursor to the Stage Select icon.

BLOODY WOLF

Speed-up – When the Title screen appears, press **Up**, **Down**, **Right**, **Right**, **I**, **I**, **II**, **Select**. You'll see a large number 2 appear on the Title screen, and your character's speed will increase.

SIDE ARMS

Black & White – At the Title screen hold **I** + **II** + **Up** then press **Run**.

CHAMPIONS FOREVER BOXING

Enter the following Passwords

1969 - **WMQQ8LQMV7NX**
1970 - **T4Q8QLVQV7NL**
1971 - **JMQKK-VMV77N**
1972 - **W!Q7.P8QF748**
1973 - **SKQN.V8MF7L4**
1974 - **LRQR8P.QF7QC**
1975 - **LMQ!KS.MF7-Q**
1976 - **LJVSCJKQF7F2**
1977 - **G7VD.-KMF7.F**
1978 - **M!88VPPCQF7-C**
1979 - **7M89S!CMF7.X**
1980 - **N7.NX!SQF7T.**
1981 - **DJK4SKSMF7KX**
1982 - **R!CDXJXQF7-8**

GAME BOY

GARGOYLE'S QUEST

Level	Password
2	**MUPP-JMHW**
3	**GJ7Q-KLVO**
4	**SWXE-CBFJ**
5	**BIF8-BRAZ**
6	**FWGG-57CY**
7	**HWTL-90AZ**
8	**N5AQ-9RZF**
End	**WPXF-4BDQ**

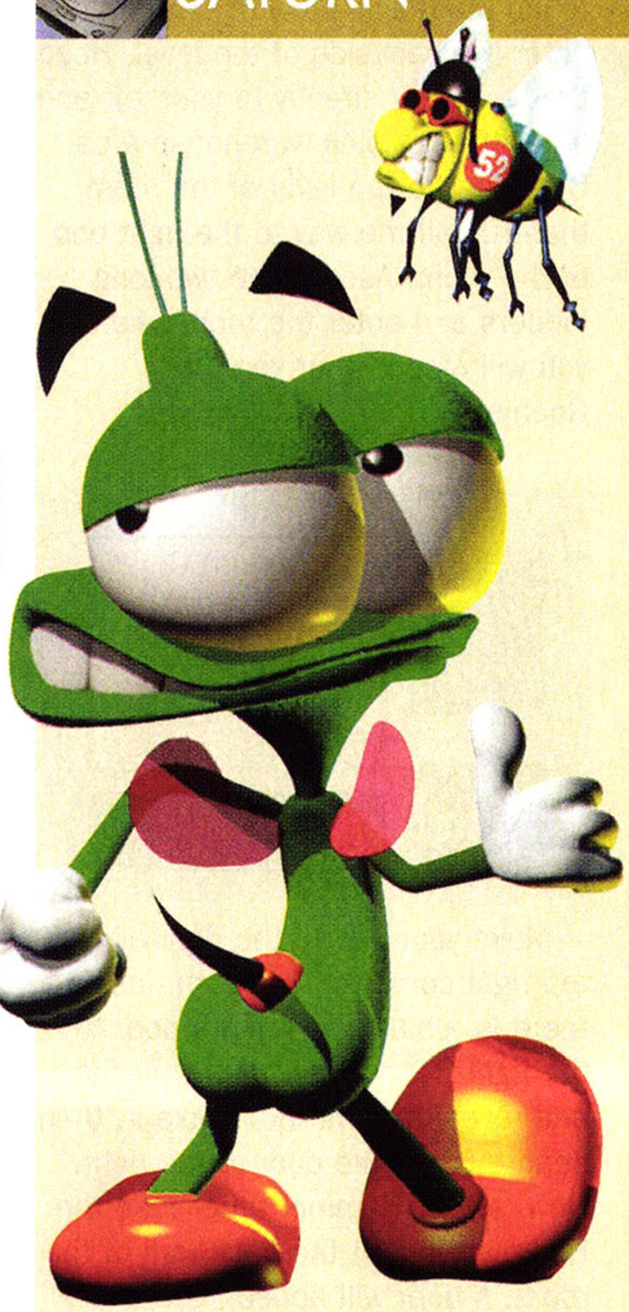
SAMURAI SHODOWN

Secret Characters – For access to Kuroko, Hikyaku, and Amakusa, press **Select** four times on the third screen of the opening.

NEMESIS

Full Weapons and Shields – For the ultimate in shooting satisfaction, pause your game and press **Up**, **Up**, **Down**, **Down**, **Left**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right**, **B**, **A**, **Start**.

SATURN



BUG!

Infinite Lives – At the main menu press **A**, **C**, **B**, **B**, **Down**, **Right**, **Up**.

DOOM

God Mode – While playing, pause the game and press **Down**, **Y**, **X**, **Right Shoulder**, **Right**, **Left Shoulder**, **Left**, **B**.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD

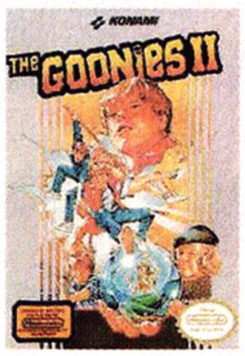
Unlimited Ammunition – While playing, hold **L** + **R** and press **Y**, **Y**, **Y** to eliminate the need to reload.

MR. BONES

Level Select – At the main menu press the shoulder buttons (not the d-pad) in the following order: **R**, **L**, **R**, **R**, **L**, **R**, **L**, **L**, **R**, **L**, **R**, **R**.

DIE HARD ARCADE

Hardcore Mode – At the main menu, highlight **Die Hard Arcade**, then press and hold **X** + **Y** + **Z** + **B**. If you did it right, you'll have four credits and the enemies will be a little harder to defeat.



NES

GOONIES II

BASIC HINTS

HIT WALLS

There are a ton of items buried in this game, most of which are revealed by hitting walls or ceilings with the Hammer or your fist. Try everything!

DON'T WASTE KEYS ON VISIBLE SAFES

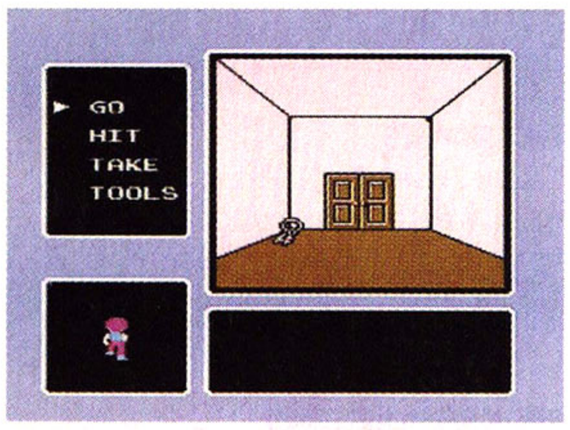
Nearly all these safes contain nothing but useless hints.

KILL ENEMIES WHILE THEY RESPAWN

When enemies start to respawn, use your yo-yo on the cloud of smoke. This is a good way to get keys and health points.

WALKTHROUGH

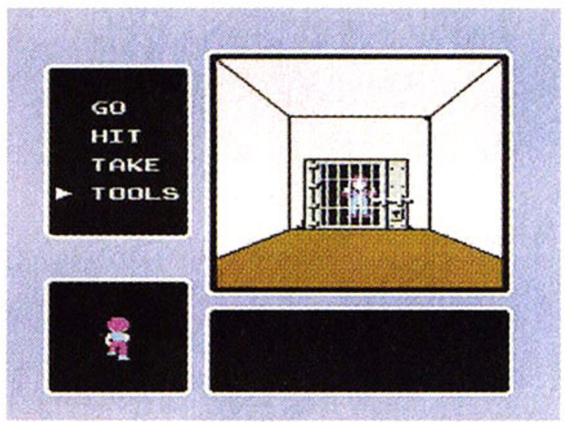
Your journey begins in the warehouse level of the Fratelli's hideout. From the start point, ascend the ladder to your right and make your way along the top level of the room to the first doorway. Enter, and you will find the Hammer. Take the Hammer, then exit the room, and proceed right to the next door on the middle level of the room.



In this room you will find the Key Holder. Forward through the door is a room with a safe. DO NOT waste a key on this safe, as all you will receive is a useless clue. Exit through the door you came in, and proceed right to the end of the room. Here, you must descend the ladder into the basement area.

Once in the basement, head left along the top level to the first wooden door. In it, you receive the Magic Locator Device. Also in the room is a door that leads to the backside of the map. Remember this for later, but for now exit back out the way you came. Next, run left across the two moving platforms and enter the wooden door at the bottom left of the room. Inside, you obtain the Slingshot. Head through the door in front of you, and talk with an old woman who wants you to find her glasses.

Return to the door where you found the Magic Locator Device and enter the backside of the level. Head up the ladder directly to your left and enter the hot pink warehouse area. Climb to the top level of the room, then run all the way to the right end of the room. Ascend the two long ladders and enter the room where you will rescue your very first Goonie!

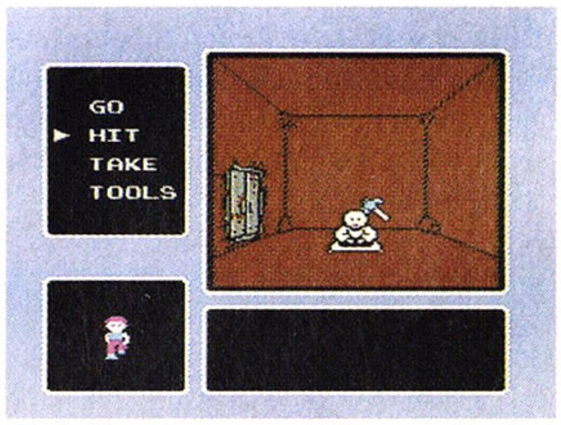


Make your way to the door at the top right corner of the room. Inside, there is a blank wall and a door to the right. Hit the wall with your fist, and reveai a Bomb Box. Take it, then head through the door to the right. Now, stop – Hammer time! Take the Hammer and hit the back wall of the room. A door will appear. Step through, use one of the keys from your tools to open the cage, and you will liberate a Goonie! Yay!

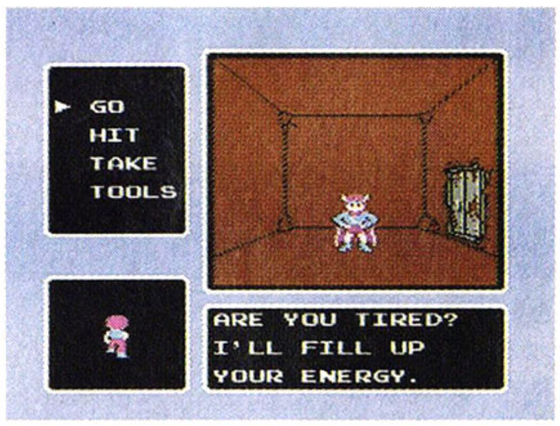
Exit back into the pink warehouse, head back to the bottom left of the room, and climb down the ladder that brought you into the room. In the lowermost pink warehouse room, descend the ladder in the middle of the room. You will find yourself in the basement at the door where you entered the backside of the map (where you found the Magic Locator Device). From here, head right and use the floating platform to reach the ladder at the bottom of the room.

Descend the ladder, jump across two moving platforms, and enter the door at the top right of the room. Inside, there are two doors. Enter the door to your right. In this room, hit the wall directly in front of you to uncover the Fire Box. Ignore the door to the left, as it only contains a safe with yet another worthless clue. Exit back into the level, and return to the door where you entered the backside of the map. Go through to the frontside of the map. From the door, head right until you come to a group of three ladders. Take the middle ladder down to the lower basement. Run all the way to the left and enter the wooden door at the end of the room.

In this room you will encounter an old man who guards the warp zone. Head through the warp zone and you will come out in a dark red cave area. Climb up the long vine to your left and enter the door below the hieroglyphic. Hit the front wall with your fist to reveal the Transceiver.



Through the door to the right is a grumpy old bitty who will tell you to leave. Bash her in the head with the Hammer five times and she will give you the Candle. Return to the first room you entered, and head into the frontside brown cave area. Head left and jump on the moving platform. At the end of its track is a doorway suspended in the rock wall. Use quick timing to enter. It's dark, so pull out the Candle.



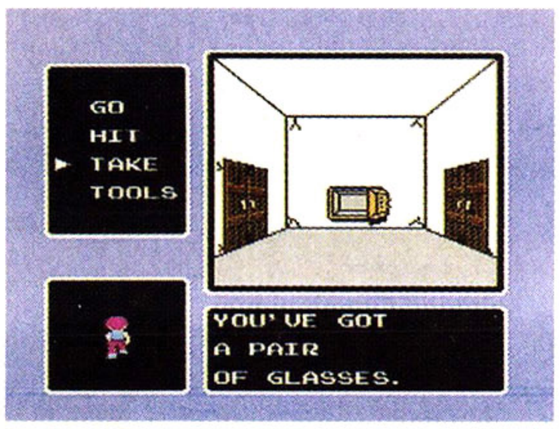
Walk through the door in front of you and Konamiman will fill your energy bar (if you hit Konamiman, he won't restore your health, so be nice). In the room to the right of Konamiman, hit the front wall with your fist and get another Key Holder. Move one room down from the Key Holder to grab the second Magic Locator Device. Now head back out to the brown cave area and return to the red cave area through the hieroglyphic door.

Climb down the long vine into the room where you entered. Run to the

far right end of the this red cave, where there is a door suspended above a moving platform. Once inside, make one move right and one move down, and you will come out in the arctic cave level. From here, head left to the door at the top left of the cave and enter. There is a safe in the room. As always, ignore it and move one room to the right. Hit the wall with the Hammer and proceed through the newly-revealed door. Here, you can use a key to free your second Goonie. Don't you feel good about yourself?

Now, let's head back to the hieroglyphic door. From this high platform, run to the left, avoiding the waterfalls, and enter the room on the left end of the cave. You can use the Candle to illuminate the room. Head forward through the door and you will come out in a frozen cave area. Brrrr! The platforms in this area are slippery, so use caution.

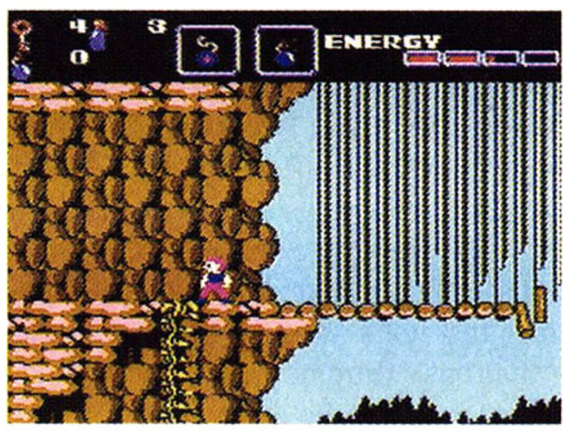
Climb down the ladder at the bottom left of this arctic room, and then head right across the lower frozen cave room to another door. Watch out for falling icicles and walruses! Enter the door, using the Candle to light your way. Enter the first door, and you find a room with doors on the left and right.



Hit the front wall with the Hammer to reveal a safe that contains a Pair Of Glasses. Enter the door to the right and you will pick up the Boomerang. Head back into the second room and enter the left door. Here is a hole in the ice that leads underwater. Remember where this is for later in the game. For now, go back out into the ice cave.

Now head back right to reenter the red cave area. Go left and climb. You will find the door where you originally warped into the red cave. Climb up the long vine to the door with the hieroglyphic above it (this is where you found the old lady and the candle). Go straight through this room and you will come out in a new brown cave area.

Head back left and up one level to reenter the red cave area. Make your way up and right to the hieroglyphic door. Run to the far right end of the room, and enter the door in the lower-right corner. This leads to a second brown cave area. Head right and climb the vine, which leads you to the suspension bridge.



Finally, some fresh air! Plant a Bomb by the rocks to the left of the vine you climbed up. This will reveal a secret screen door. Inside are the Jump Shoes! These will allow you to jump higher and attack the flying heads on the bridge. Remember – don't use your Boomerang here, as the flying heads will steal it. Cross the bridge, climb down the vine, and you will be in a purple cave area. On the left end of the room is a door that can only be reached using the Jump Shoes. Once inside, make one move left and one move up, then punch the wall to reveal another Bomb Box.

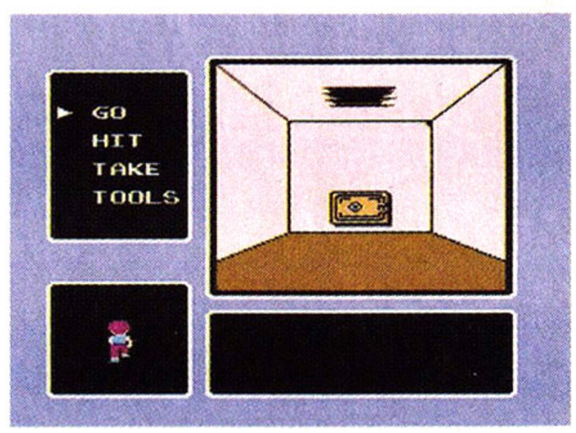
From here, go back out into the purple cave. Head down the vine on the bottom left of the room. There is a door in this room on the right that will take you to the backside of the purple cave. You must go forward twice through the room, using your Hammer to reveal a door. Once in the backside, proceed left into a door, and use your fist to reveal a Fire Box in the second room. Then, take the vine directly above the door with the Fire Box to the upper level of the backside. A little bit up and to the left is a door. Enter, use the Hammer to reveal a door, move, and hit the wall to uncover a Key Holder. Go back out into the level, then go to the left end of the room and enter the door on top of three large rock steps. Inside, move right once, and up twice (you will need use your Glasses). In the uppermost room there is the third Goonie.

Congrats! Now, go back down a level to the door where you got the Fire Box. Head further to the left, and down one screen. Inside, using the Hammer will reveal a door. Your Glasses will allow you to see a safe that contains the Diving Suit. Now, remember the room with the hole in the floor where you got the Pair Of Glasses? Go there, equip your Diving Suit, and go for a dip.

Once in the water, drop a Bomb between the first two coral reefs for a free 1-Up. Now, head down the yellow tube and left into a door. Explore the rooms, hammering the crap out of every flat surface, and you will come away with a Goonie, a Bomb Box, and a Ladder!

From here, go up and right to the door on the end. Look around for a Key Holder and a Magic Locator Device. The left room leads to a new underwater area. If you swim down and left, a Fishman will give you a pair of Jump Shoes. Now, go all the way back to the backside of the first basement (near the door where you found your first Magic Locator Device). At the far left of the second lowest level, there is a Warp Zone with a room to the left. In the room to the left, hit the ceiling with the Hammer to reveal a hole. Use the Ladder to climb up. Move down twice to get out of the room and descend down through three rooms. In the next door is Konamiman to fill your health. Proceed left to the next door and use your Hammer to find a Goonie. Head up and left into the next level, then all the way to the right. Take this door and come out in a new warehouse level.

Go down some ladders, head to the right, and enter the door. You will come out in a brown basement level. Go to the upper right-hand corner and climb the ladder into a house area. A door will lead to a new underwater level. The only other door on this level leads to yet another Goonie. Go back into the house level. The door in the upper left-hand corner of this region leads to a new volcano area. The first door you encounter holds Chunk, the last Goonie you must save. The door at the end of this area leads you through a series of rooms that take you back to the first warehouse level (the start point of the game).



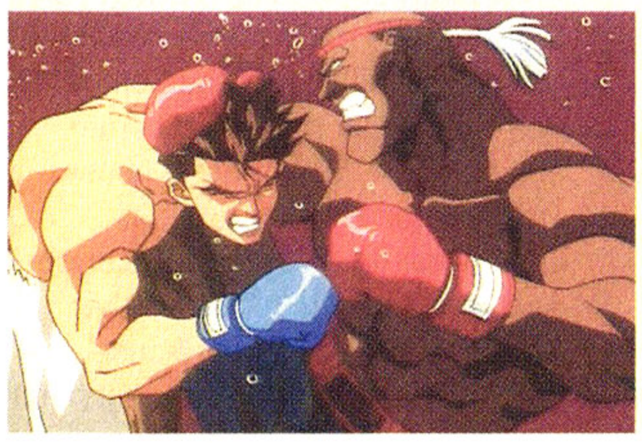
Now, go to the room where you picked up the very first Key Holder. There is a hole in the ceiling in the room with the safe. Use the Ladder to climb up it. Go right, then down through the Warp Zone. In the attic, climb up on the screen and go in the door on the right. Go through another door on your right. Descend the series of ladders until you reach a pair of doors. Go through the upper door, and use your Hammer on the front wall. Explore a little, and you will find Annie and finish the game. Wasn't that fun?

ETC

STREET FIGHTER ANIME ON DVD

Manufacturer: Manga Video • Website: www.manga.com • List Price: $29.95

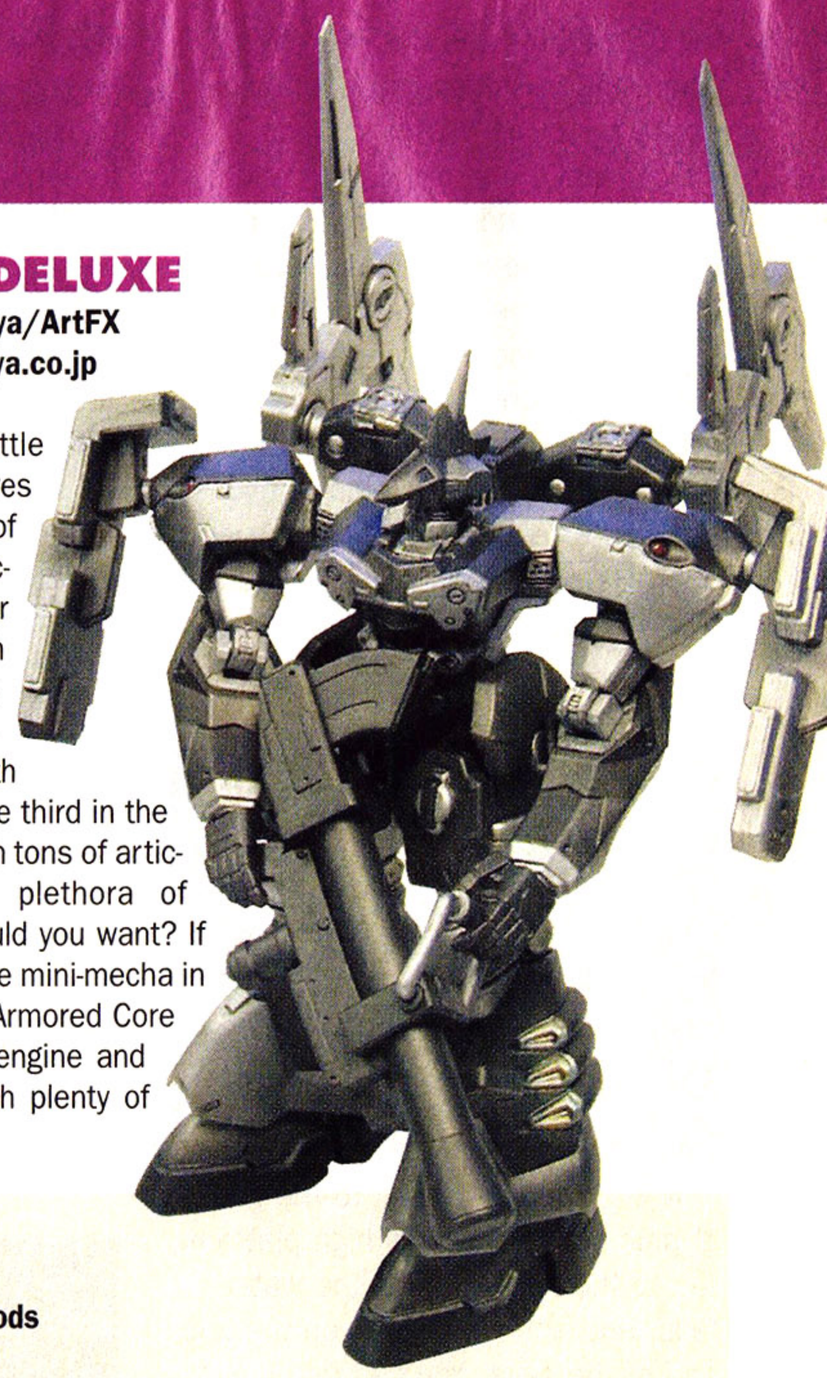
Manga Video is finally getting all its Street Fighter material onto DVD, all with titles that are as long and confusing as the video games! Street Fighter Alpha The Movie, which has been out for a couple months now, follows the adventures of Ken and Ryu after they are brought together by the death of their master. What's most interesting about the movie is that it's actually a sequel to a 29-episode series, Street Fighter II V, all of which are being released on four DVDs. The action can be a little slow on these, with half an episode consisting of conversations in an airport and minute-long staredowns being common, but the payoff is usually worth it. If you're on the fence as to whether you'd enjoy these DVDs or not, check out the movie first. If you enjoy that, go for the series.



ZIOMATRIX DELUXE

Manufacturer: Kotobukiya/ArtFX
Website: www.kotobukiya.co.jp
List Price: $29.99

They may be a little spendy, but these figures will be the centerpiece of your action figure collection, guaranteed. After severing its alliance with Palisades, Kotobukiya is forging ahead with its Armored Core 2 line, with this sweet thing being the third in the series. A great sculpt with tons of articulation points and a plethora of weapons; what more could you want? If you can't find any of these mini-mecha in a store near you, type "Armored Core 2 figure" into a search engine and you should come up with plenty of online shopping options.



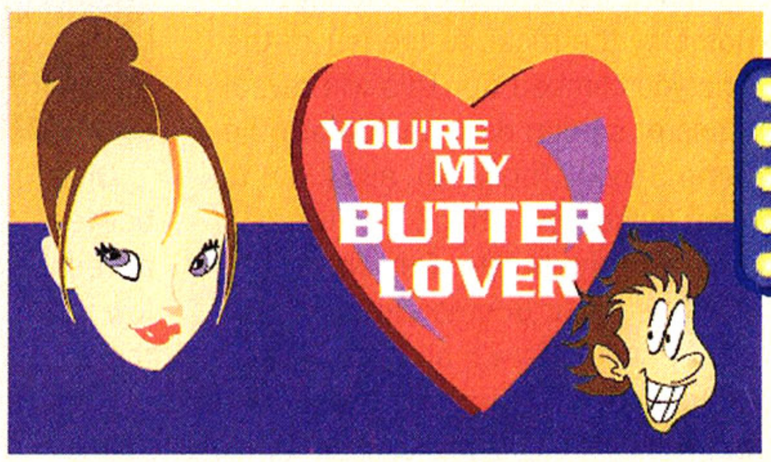
ALL YOUR BASE ARE BELONG TO US

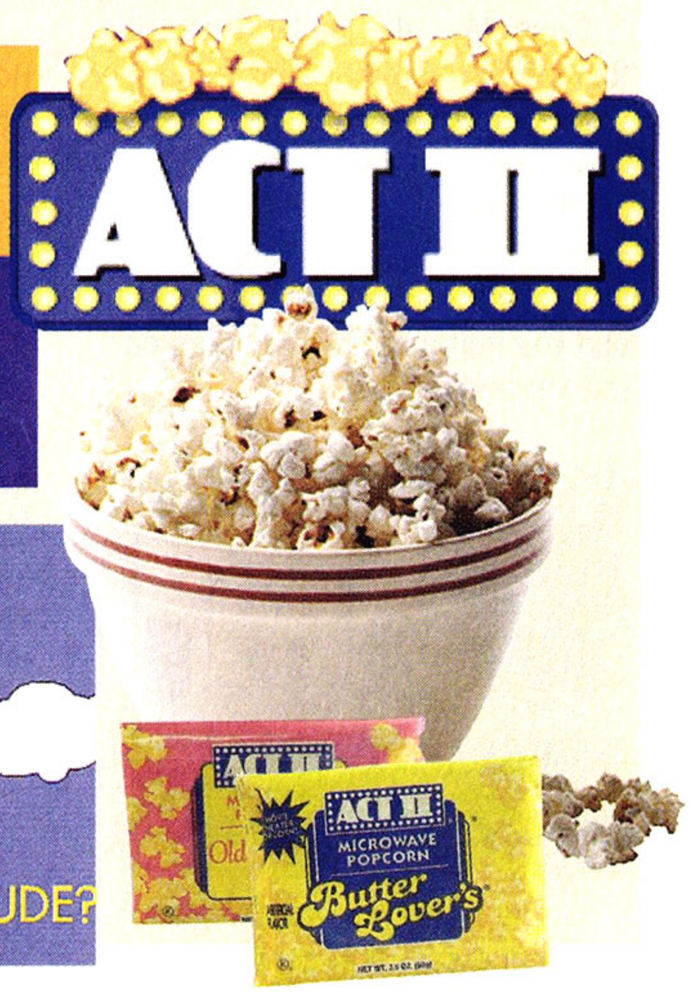
Manufacturer: Toaplan/Sega (Zero Wing)
Website: http://modzer0.cs.uaf.edu/~warbird/movies/AYB2.swf
http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~pyang/base/allyourbase.swf
List Price: Every Zig

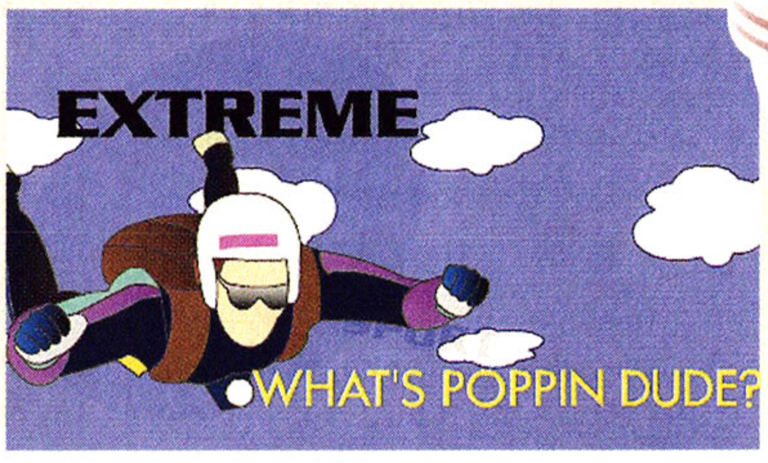
POP-O-GRAMS

Manufacturer: Golden Valley Microwave Foods
Website: www.actii.com • List Price: Free!

As a promotion item for an upcoming Game Boy Color title based on the movie *Shrek*, we were sent a package of Act II microwave popcorn. The interesting thing is that this delicious cinema-centric treat is made here in Minnesota. So, basically, a PR company in California bought it and sent it back home. Ironic and kind of touching at the same time, huh? Anyway, more importantly, you need to go to Act II's website and send out some Pop-O-Grams from the Corn Zone, especially the one that has "Extreme butter for extreme dudes!" We also like the one that claims, "You're My Butter Lover" for the easily misconstrued connotations. Love it!







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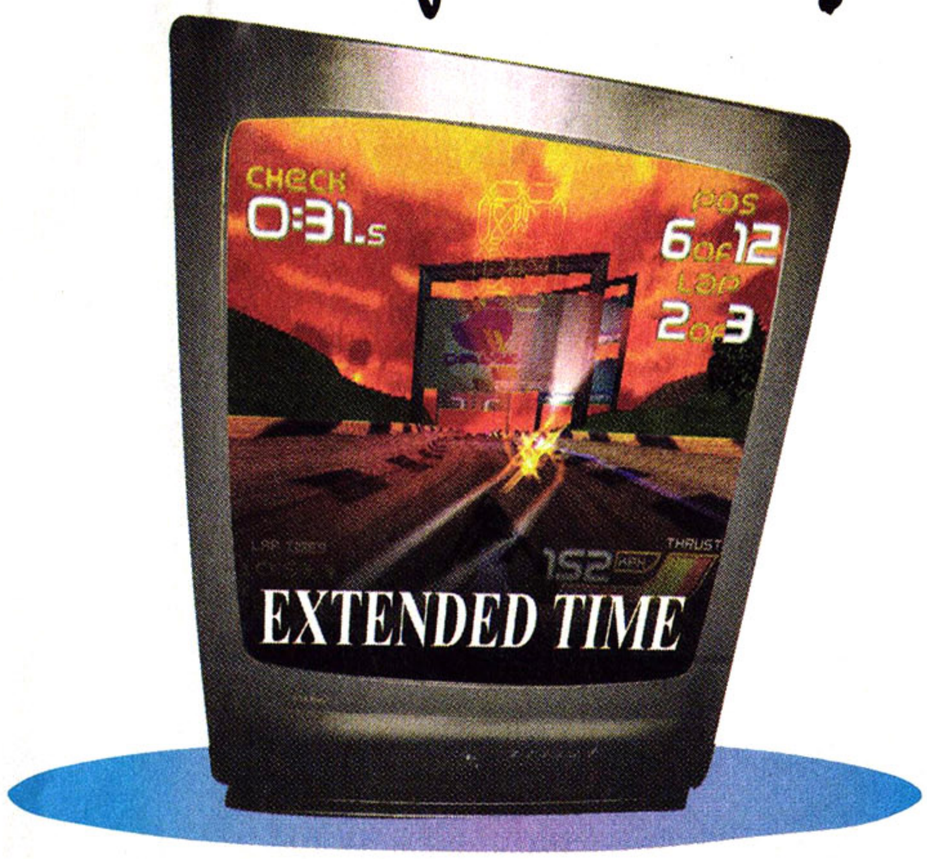
This is your game.



This is your game on the blink.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Dust and dirt can damage your game system. The result? Poor picture quality, fuzzy sound and slow or "buggy" game play. Cleaning your system and games regularly will maintain high quality gaming and ensure a longer product life. Player's Edge cleaning kits will keep you and your system in the game.

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AN EPIC QUEST FOR PEACE.

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NEW RELEASES

ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR MORE DETAILS.

Release Date	Title	Publisher/ Distributor	System
MARCH			
03/14/01	Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	PS2
03/14/01	Ripley's Believe It or Not!	Havas Interactive	PC
03/15/01	Project Justice	Capcom	DC
03/15/01	Anarchy Online	Funcom	PC
03/15/01	$100,000 Pyramid	Havas Interactive	PC
03/15/01	Desperados	Infogrames	PC
03/15/01	MDK 2 Armageddon	Interplay	PS2
03/15/01	Kao the Kangaroo	Interplay	PC
03/15/01	Fallout Tactics	Interplay	PC
03/15/01	Lego Stunt Rally	Lego Media	PC
03/15/01	Shrapnel: Urban Warfare 2025	South Peak	PC
03/19/01	Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	PS2
03/19/01	LEGO Island II	Lego Media	GBC
03/19/01	LEGO Island II	Lego Media	PS-X
03/19/01	Disney's: Goofy's Fun House	NewKidCo	PS-X
03/19/01	Simpsons, The	THQ	GBC
03/20/01	Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	PS-X
03/20/01	Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	PS2
03/20/01	Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	PS2
03/20/01	High Heat Baseball 2002	3DO	PS2
03/20/01	Tech Deck Skateboarding	Activision	GBC
03/20/01	Sega Bass Fishing	Activision	PC
03/20/01	Sega GT	Activision	PC
03/20/01	Sega House of the Dead 2	Activision	PC
03/20/01	Legend of the River King 2	Crave Entertainment	GBC
03/20/01	Ultima Online: Third Dawn	Electronic Arts	PC
03/20/01	Adventure Pinball: Forgotten Island	Electronic Arts	PC
03/20/01	Kasparov Chess	Interplay	PS-X
03/20/01	Winback	Koei	PS2
03/20/01	Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	PS-X
03/20/01	ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	PS2
03/20/01	Smash Pack	Sega of America	DC
03/20/01	Summoner	THQ	PC
03/23/01	Nicktoons Racing	Infogrames	PS-X
03/26/01	Nancy Drew: Secrets Can Kill	Dreamcatcher	PC
03/26/01	In Cold Blood	Dreamcatcher	PC
03/26/01	Mickey's Speedway USA	Nintendo of America	GBC
03/26/01	Pokemon Stadium 2	Nintendo of America	N64
03/26/01	Rocket Power	THQ	GBC
03/26/01	Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage	THQ	N64
03/27/01	Star Trek: Away Team	Activision	PC
03/27/01	Return of the Ninja	Crave Entertainment	GBC
03/27/01	Anachronox	EIDOS Interactive	PC
03/27/01	Triple Play Baseball	Electronic Arts	PS2
03/27/01	Quake III: Revolution	Electronic Arts	PS2
03/27/01	Sims: House Party (Expansion Pk)	Electronic Arts	PC
03/27/01	Sabrina the Teenage Witch	Havas Interactive	PS-X
03/27/01	Mummy, The	Konami	DC
03/27/01	Zone of the Enders	Konami	PS2
03/27/01	ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	PS2
03/27/01	Black & White	Lion Head	PC
03/27/01	Point Blank 3	Namco	PS-X
03/27/01	Outrigger	Sega of America	DC
03/27/01	Batman: Chaos in Gotham	UBI Soft	GBC
03/27/01	Rainbow Six Rogue Spear	UBI Soft	PS-X
03/27/01	F1 Racing Championship	UBI Soft	PS2
03/28/01	High Heat Baseball 2002	3DO	GBC
03/28/01	Armada 2 Exodus	Metro3D	DC
03/28/01	Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	PS2
03/29/01	Legends of Might & Magic	3DO	PC
03/29/01	Tribes 2	Havas Interactive	PC
03/29/01	Dell Crosswords	Havas Interactive	PC
03/29/01	Virtual Deep Sea Fishing II	Interplay	PC
03/30/01	Xtreme Wheels	Bam! Entertainment	GBC
03/30/01	Shogun:Total War Warlord Edition	Electronic Arts	PC
APRIL			
04/02/01	Portal Runner	3DO	GBC
04/02/01	World Destruction League:War Jetz	3DO	PS-X
04/02/01	World Destruction League:War Jetz	3DO	PS2
04/02/01	Portal Runner	3DO	PS2
04/02/01	X-Com: Alliance	Hasbro Interactive	PC
04/02/01	Steel Panthers: World at War	Learning Co.	PC
04/02/01	Myst III:Exile	Learning Co.	PC
04/02/01	Dark Angel: Vampire Apocolypse	Metro3D	DC
04/02/01	Cool Boarders 2001	Sony Computer Entertainment	PS2
04/02/01	Legend of the Blademaster	South Peak	DC
04/02/01	Gorkamorka	South Peak	DC
04/02/01	Shrapnel: Urban Warfare 2025	South Peak	DC
04/02/01	Australian Outback	WizardWorks	PC
04/03/01	Puzzled	Crave Entertainment	GBC
04/03/01	Ultimate Surfing	Crave Entertainment	GBC
04/03/01	Worms World Party	Interplay	PC
04/09/01	Kirby's Tilt 'N Tumble	Nintendo of America	GBC
04/09/01	Dr. Mario 64	Nintendo of America	N64
04/10/01	Exhibition of Speed	Titus Software Corp.	PS2
04/16/01	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision	PC
04/16/01	Star Trek: Bridge Commander	Activision	PC
04/16/01	Digimon World II	Bandai	PS-X
04/16/01	Fly! II	Gathering of Developers	PC
04/16/01	Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing	Lucas Arts	PS2
04/16/01	Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	GBC
04/16/01	Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	PS-X
04/16/01	Capitalism 2	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
04/16/01	Gorkamorka	South Peak	PC
04/17/01	Monopoly Tycoon	Hasbro Interactive	PC
04/17/01	American Pro Trucker: 18 Wheeler	Sega of America	DC
04/17/01	Floigan Brothers	Sega of America	DC
04/17/01	Stupid Invaders	UBI Soft	DC
04/23/01	Star Trek: Deep Space Nine:Domin War	Macmillan Computer Publishing	PC
04/24/01	NBA Street	Electronic Arts	PS2
04/25/01	Toki Tori	Capcom	GBC
04/25/01	Trouballs	Capcom	GBC
04/27/01	Space Ace	Digital Leisure	PC
04/30/01	Tropico	Gathering of Developers	PC
04/30/01	Half-Life	Havas Interactive	DC
04/30/01	Mafia	Talonsoft	PC
MAY			
05/01/01	Razor: Freestyle Scooter	Crave Entertainment	GBC
05/01/01	Mountain Dew Presents Ultimate Sky Surfer	Crave Entertainment	DC
05/01/01	Soldier of Fortune	Crave Entertainment	DC
05/01/01	Tokyo Xtreme Racer	Crave Entertainment	PS2
05/01/01	SimsVille	Electronic Arts	PC
05/01/01	Planet of the Apes	Fox Interactive	PC
05/01/01	Buffy the Vampire Slayer	Fox Interactive	PC
05/01/01	Independence War 2: Edge of Chaos	Infogrames	PC
05/01/01	Duke Nukem Forever	Infogrames	PC
05/01/01	LEGO Stunt Rally	Lego Media	PS-X
05/01/01	Hot Wheels Williams F1 Team Driver	Mattel Media	PC
05/01/01	Freelancer	Microsoft	PC
05/01/01	Mech Commander 2	Microsoft	PC
05/01/01	Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	PS2
05/01/01	Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	Sony Computer Entertainment	PS2
05/01/01	Red Faction	THQ	PC
05/01/01	Batman: Overdrive	UBI Soft	PS-X
05/01/01	Dinosaur	UBI Soft	PS2
05/01/01	Polaris SnoCross	Vatical Entertainment	DC
05/01/01	SeaDoo Hydrocross	Vatical Entertainment	PS-X
05/01/01	SeaDoo Hydrocross	Vatical Entertainment	N64
05/08/01	Rumble Racing	Electronic Arts	PS2
05/08/01	Ooga Booga	Sega of America	DC
05/08/01	Red Faction	THQ	PS2
05/14/01	Hercules: The Legendary Journey	Titus Software Corp.	GBC
05/14/01	Inspector Gadget	UBI Soft	PS-X
05/15/01	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	PS-X
05/15/01	Top Shot 2: Lock & Load	Activision	PC
05/15/01	Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2	EIDOS Interactive	DC
05/15/01	Project Eden	EIDOS Interactive	PS2
05/15/01	Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2	EIDOS Interactive	PS2
05/15/01	Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magic Obs	Havas Interactive	PC
05/15/01	Anteus Rising	Interplay	PC
05/15/01	Klonoa 2	Namco	PS2
05/15/01	Dragon Riders	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
05/15/01	Roswell Conspiracies	UBI Soft	GBC
05/15/01	Roswell Conspiracies	UBI Soft	DC
05/15/01	Dragon Riders	UBI Soft	DC
05/15/01	Roswell Conspiracies	UBI Soft	PS-X
05/18/01	Microsoft Best of Entertainment Pak	Electro Source	GBC
05/18/01	Microsoft Pinball Arcade	Electro Source	GBC
05/18/01	Flinstones: Burgertime in Bedrock	Electro Source	GBC
05/21/01	Silent Hunter II	Learning Co.	PC
05/21/01	Stunt GP	Titus Software Corp.	PS2
05/29/01	Throne of Darkness	Havas Interactive	PC
05/29/01	Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	GBC
05/29/01	Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	DC
05/29/01	Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	PS-X
05/29/01	Moter Mayhem	Infogrames	PS2
05/29/01	Test Drive Off Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	PS2
05/29/01	Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	PC
05/29/01	Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Dranor	Learning Co.	PC
05/29/01	Conflict Zone	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
05/29/01	Conflict Zone	UBI Soft	DC
05/30/01	Destroyer Command	Learning Co.	PC
05/31/01	Baldur's Gate 2 Expansion Pack	Interplay	PC
JUNE			
06/01/01	Startopia	EIDOS Interactive	PC
06/01/01	Project Eden	EIDOS Interactive	PC
06/01/01	Commandos 2	EIDOS Interactive	PC
06/01/01	Cart Fury	Midway	PS2
06/01/01	Time Crisis Project Titan	Namco	PS-X
06/01/01	Dark Cloud	Sony Computer Entertainment	PS2
06/12/01	Emperor: Battle for Dune	Electronic Arts	PC
06/15/01	Digimon Card Battle	Bandai	PS-X
06/15/01	Commandos 2	EIDOS Interactive	DC
06/15/01	Herdy Gerdy	EIDOS Interactive	PS2
06/15/01	Commandos 2	EIDOS Interactive	PS2
06/15/01	Stonekeep 2: Godmaker	Interplay	PC
06/15/01	Superman	Titus Software Corp.	PS-X
06/19/01	007 Racing	Electronic Arts	PS2
06/22/01	Dragon's Lair	Digital Leisure	PC
07/02/01	Twisted Metal: Black	Sony Computer Entertainment	PS2

REVIEWS ARCHIVE

BL = BOTTOM LINE

APRIL 2001

PLAYSTATION 2

TITLE	BL	DATE
Adventures of Cookie & Cream, The	8.75	Mar-01
Armored Core 2	9	Nov-00
Aqua Aqua	6	Mar-01
ATV Offroad Fury	8.5	Mar-01
Bouncer, The	8.5	Feb-01
Championship Surfer	7	Jan–01
Dead or Alive 2: Hard Core	9	Nov-00
Driving Emotion Type-S	8	Feb-01
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7.5	Mar-01
Dynasty Warriors	8	Nov-00
ESPN International Track & Field	6.75	Dec-00
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	8.25	Jan–01
Eternal Ring	7.5	Nov-00
Evergrace	7	Nov-00
F1 Championship Season 2000	7.75	Feb-01
Fantavision	6.75	Dec-00
FIFA 2001	8	Dec-00
Gameday 2001	3	Dec-00
Gradius III & IV	5	Dec-00
Gun Griffon Blaze	7	Nov-00
Kengo: Master of Bushido	7.25	Mar-01
Kessen	8	Nov-00
Knockout Kings 2001	9	Mar-01
Madden NFL 2001	9.75	Nov-00
Midnight Club	7.5	Dec-00
Moto GP	7.5	Dec-00
NASCAR 2001	8.5	Dec-00
NBA Live 2001	8.25	Feb-01
NCAA Final Four 2001	3	Feb-01
NCAA Gamebreaker 2001	3.25	Feb-01
NHL 2001	8.5	Nov-00
Oni	6.5	Mar-01
Onimusha: Warlords	8.75	Mar-01
Orphen	4.25	Dec-00
Q-Ball: Billiards Master	4.5	Jan–01
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2	7.25	Dec-00
Real Pool	5.25	Dec-00
RC Revenge Pro	5.5	Feb-01
Shadows of Destiny	6.75	Mar-01
Silent Scope	7.75	Nov-00
Silpheed	6	Nov-00
Sky Odyssey	7.75	Dec-00
Smuggler's Run	8.5	Nov-00
SSX	9.25	Nov-00
Star Wars: Starfighter	9.25	Mar-01
Street Fighter EX3	6	Nov-00
Summoner	8	Dec-00
Super Bust-A-Move	7	Nov-00
Surfing H3O	3	Jan–01
Swing Away Golf	7.75	Nov-00
Tekken Tag Tournament	8.5	Nov-00
TimeSplitters	9.5	Dec-00
Theme Park Roller Coaster	7.5	Jan–01
Top Gear Dare Devil	2	Dec-00
Unreal Tournament	9	Dec-00
Wild Wild Racing	7.5	Nov-00
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	7	Mar-01
X-Squad	7.5	Nov-00

PLAYSTATION

TITLE	BL	DATE
007 Racing	7	Jan–01
102 Dalmations: Puppies to the Rescue	6.5	Feb-01
Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere	7.75	May-00
Action Bass	7	Sep-00
Alien Resurrection	6	Nov-00
Alundra 2	6.5	May-00
Armored Core: Master of Arena	7.5	Apr-00
Armorines	5	Jul-00
Army Men: Air Attack 2	1	Dec-00
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes	5.5	May-00
Army Men: World War	2	Aug-00
Army Men World War: Land, Sea, Air	1	Dec-00
ATV: Quad Bike Challenge	6	Nov-00
Ball Breakers	3.5	Sep-00
Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker	0.5	Dec-00
Battle Tanx II: Global Assault	7	Apr-00
Bedrock Bowling	3.5	Oct-00
Blade	4	Jan–01
Blaster Master: Blasting Again	5	Dec-00
Breath of Fire IV	8.5	Dec-00
Bugs Bunny & Taz: Time Busters	8.5	Feb-01
Builder's Block	8.25	Aug-00
Bust A Groove 2	7.25	Sep-00
Buzz Lightyear of Star Command	5.5	Dec-00
Championship Bass	8	May-00
Championship Surfer	7	Jan–01
Championship Motocross 2001 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	6.5	Feb-01
Chrono Cross	9.5	Aug-00
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	7.75	Jan–01
Colony Wars: Red Sun	8.25	Apr-00
Cool Boarders 2001	5	Dec-00
Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn	7.75	Jul-00
Crash Bash	6.5	Dec-00
Countdown Vampires	6.5	Aug-00
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	7.75	Nov-00
Deception III: Dark Delusion	6.25	Apr-00
Destruction Derby Raw	7.5	Oct-00
Digimon World	5.25	Jul-00
Dino Crisis 2	8.75	Oct-00
Dinosaur	2.25	Sep-00
Disney's The Emperor's New Groove	8.25	Dec-00
Dragon Valor	7.5	Nov-00
Driver 2	8.75	Jan–01
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7	Jan–01
Ducati World	5.5	Feb-01
ECW Anarchy Rulz	4	Nov-00
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	8.25	Mar-01
ESPN MLS: Game Night	8	Aug-00
Eternal Eyes	7.75	Dec-00
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	4.5	Feb-01
Expendable	3.5	Jul-00
Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix	8.5	Mar-01
FIFA 2001	7.5	Dec-00
Final Fantasy IX	9.75	Dec-00
Freestyle Motocross: Mcgrath Vs. Pastrana	3	Jan–01
Front Mission 3	9	Apr-00
Galerians	8	Jun-00
Gauntlet Legends	6.5	May-00
Gekido: Urban Fighters	4.5	Jul-00
Golden Tee Golf	5	Jan–01
Grinch, The	5	Feb-01
Grind Session	6.75	Jun-00
Grudge Warriors	5	Aug-00
Harvest Moon: Back to Nature	6.75	Dec-00
HBO Boxing	3	Feb-01
Hydro Thunder	7.75	Apr-00
Incredible Crisis	7.5	Nov-00
Jarret & Labonte Stock Car Racing	7.75	Jan–01
Jedi Power Battles	8	May-00
Jeremy McGrath	4	Oct-00
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure	8	Apr-00
Knockout Kings 2001	7.5	Dec-00
Koudelka	4.5	Sep-00
Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed	2.5	Jun-00
Legend of Dragoon, The	9	Jun-00
Legend of Mana	8	Jul-00
Lego Rock Raiders	1.5	Oct-00
Looney Tunes Racing	6.25	Dec-00
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	7.5	Jan–01
Madden NFL 2001	8.75	Sep-00
March Madness 2001	8.25	Feb-01
Medal of Honor: Underground	9	Nov-00
MediEvil II	7.75	May-00
Mega Man Legends 2	8	Nov-00
Mega Man X5	7	Feb-01
Mike Tyson Boxing	5	Dec-00
Misadventures of Tronne Bonne, The	7	May-00
MLB 2001	7.75	Jun-00
Mobil 1 Rally Championship	5.75	May-00
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces	1.75	Sep-00
Moto GP World Tour	7	Jan–01
Mr. Driller	8	Jun-00
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	8.25	Aug-00
MTV Sports Skateboarding featuring Andy Macdonald	3	Nov-00
MTV Sports: Pure Ride	6.5	Nov-00
Mummy, The	0.75	Feb-01
Muppet Racemania	5	Nov-00
NASCAR Heat	6.5	Feb-01
NBA Live 2001	8	Dec-00
NBA ShootOut 2001	5.5	Nov-00
NCAA Final Tour	5.5	Jan–01
Need for Speed: Porche Challenge	7.75	Jun-00
NFL Blitz 2001	5.5	Nov-00
NFL GameDay 2001	7	Sep-00
NGEN Racing	7.25	Sep-00
NHL 2001	7.75	Nov-00
NHL Face Off 2001	6.5	Nov-00
Nightmare Creatures II	5.25	Jun-00
Parasite Eve II	8.75	Sep-00
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	8	Feb-01
Polaris Snocross	5.5	Nov-00
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	5	Jan–01
Railroad Tycoon II	7.5	Apr-00
Rampage Through Time	4.75	Sep-00
Raycrisis: Series Termination	7.25	Nov-00
Razor Freestyle Scooter	8	Jan–01
RC De Go	7.5	Jan–01
RC Revenge	5.5	Oct-00
Reel Fishing II	6.5	Jul-00
Resident Evil Survivor	4	Nov-00
Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	6.75	Jul-00
Road to El Dorado, The	1	Feb-01
Rock the Rink	8	May-00
Rollcage: Stage II	7.25	Apr-00
RPG Maker	7.75	Aug-00
Sammy Sosa High Heat 2001	3.75	May-00
Sammy Sosa Softball Slam	5.75	Jun-00
Silent Bomber	7.75	Mar-00
Sim Theme Park	7	Jul-00
Smurfs, The	5.5	Mar-00
Sno Cross Championship Racing	6	Nov-00
South Park Rally	4.5	Mar-00
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol	6.5	Aug-00
Speed Punks	7	May-00
Spider-Man	8.25	Oct-00
Spin Jam	3.5	Oct-00
Spyro: Year of the Dragon	8.75	Nov-00
Star Trek Invasion	8.5	Oct-00
Star Wars: Demolition	7	Jan–01
Street Fighter EX2 Plus	7.75	Jun-00
Street Sk8er 2	7	Jun-00
Strider 2	6.5	Jul-00
Superbike 2000	4	Jun-00
Supercross 2000	4	Oct-00
Surf Riders	6.75	Oct-00
Sydney 2000	2.75	Oct-00
Syphon Filter 2	9	Apr-00
Team Buddies	7.25	Oct-00
Tenchu 2	8.75	Sep-00
Test Drive Le Mans	3.75	Jul-00
World is Not Enough, The	7	Dec-00
Threads of Fate	8	Jul-00
Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf	8	Feb-01
Tomb Raider Chronicles	7	Jan–01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	10	Nov-00
Torneko: The Last Hope	2.75	Dec-00
Triple Play 2001	8	May-00
Ultimate Fighting Championship	7	Jan–01
Urban Chaos	2.75	Jun-00
Vagrant Story	9	May-00
Valkyrie Profile	7.75	Sep-00
Vampire Hunter D	5.25	Sep-00
Vanark	7	May-00
Vanguard Bandits	7.75	Jun-00
Walt Disney World: Magical Racing Tour	6.5	May-00
WCW Backstage Assault	3	Dec-00
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire: 2nd Edition	6.5	Aug-00
Wild Arms 2	8.5	May-00
Woody Woodpecker Racing	3	Jan–01
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3	Dec-00
WWF Smackdown	9	Apr-00
WWF Smackdown 2: Know Your Role	9	Dec-00
X-Men Mutant Academy	7.5	Aug-00
You Don't Know Jack: Mock 2	5	Mar-01

NINTENDO 64

TITLE	BL	DATE
All-Star Baseball 2001	7.75	May-00
Army Men: Air Combat	7.5	Jul-00
Banjo-Tooie	9	Jan–01
Bassmasters 2000	8	Mar-00
Battlezone: Rise of the Black Dogs	3.25	May-00
Castlevania: Legacy of Darkness	5.25	Mar-00
Cruis'n Exotica	6	Feb-01
CyberTiger	7.25	May-00
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7.5	Feb-01
Duck Dogers	3.5	Oct-00
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	8	Mar-00
Excitebike 64	7.25	Jun-00
Fighter's Destiny 2	2	Sep-00
Gundam Side Story 0079	7.75	Jul-00
Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	4.75	Feb-01
Harvest Moon 64	7.25	Mar-00
Hey You, Pikachu	4	Jan–01
Hydro Thunder	7.5	May-00
Indiana Jones: The Infernal Machine	6.75	Jan–01
Indy Racing 2000	8	Sep-00
International Track & Field 2000	7	Apr-00
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000	5	Apr-00
Kirby: The Crystal Shards	7.5	Aug-00
Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask, The	9.75	Nov-00
Madden NFL 2001	8.75	Sep-00
Mario Tennis	8.25	Oct-00
Mega Man 64	7.25	Dec-00
Mickey's Speedway USA	6	Jan–01
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	7.5	Dec-00
Ogre Battle 64	9	Oct-00
Paper Mario	7.5	Feb-01
Perfect Dark	9.25	Jun-00
Pokémon Puzzle League	8.5	Dec-00
Pokémon Stadium	8	May-00
Quarterback Club 2001	4	Nov-00
Rally Challenge	4.5	Sep-00
South Park Rally	4.5	Apr-00
Star Wars: Episode I Battle for Naboo	8.5	Jan–01
Spider-Man	8	Jan–01
Tarzan	7.25	Mar-00
World is Not Enough, The	9	Nov-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	9.25	Mar-00
Turok 3	8	Oct-00
Walt Disney World Quest: Magical Racing Tour	7.25	Oct-00
WCW Backstage Assault	3.5	Dec-00
WWF No Mercy	9.5	Dec-00

DREAMCAST

TITLE	BL	DATE
4 Wheel Thunder	7.25	Jun-00
4X4 Evolution	8.75	Dec-00
AeroWings 2: Air Strike	7.5	Sep-00
BANG! Gunship Elite	8	Jan–01
Cannon Spike	7	Sep-00
Carrier	6.75	Apr-00
Championship Surfer	5	Mar-01
Chicken Run	5	Jan–01
Chu Chu Rocket	8.75	Apr-00
D2	4.75	Oct-00
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	8	Feb-01
Dead or Alive 2	9	Apr-00
Deep Fighter	6.75	Jul-00
Demolition Racer: No Exit	8	Nov-00
Dino Crisis	6.5	Jan–01
Draconus: Cult of the Wyrm	7.75	Jul-00
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	7	Oct-00
ECW: Anarchy Rulz	3	Mar-01
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	7.75	May-00
Elemental Gimmick Gear	7	Mar-00
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	4.5	Mar-01
Evolution 2: Far Off Promise	6	Jul-00
F355 Challenge: Passione Rossa	7.5	Dec-00
Fighting Force 2	5.25	Mar-00
Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	7	Dec-00
Fur Fighters	7.75	Aug-00
Gauntlet Legends	7.75	Jun-00
Giga Wing	7.5	Mar-00
Grandia II	8	Jan–01
Gunbird 2	5.5	Oct-00
Grand Theft Auto 2	7.5	Jul-00
Hidden & Dangerous	7	Oct-00
Incoming	5.5	Mar-00
Jeremy McGrath's Supercross 2000	3.75	Nov-00
Jet Grind Radio	8.25	Dec-00
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure	8	Mar-00
Kiss Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child	4.5	Feb-01
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	8	Mar-00
Looney Tunes Space Race	7	Jan–01
Maken X	7.75	Jun-00
Marvel Vs. Capcom 2	8	Aug-00
Metropolis Street Racer	9	Dec-00
MDK2	8	Jun-00
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	8	Jan–01
Namco Museum	7.75	Sep-00
NBA 2K1	9.5	Jan–01
NFL 2K1	9.5	Nov-00
Next Tetris: On-Line Addition, The	7	Dec-00
NHL 2K	8.25	Apr-00
Nightmare Creatures II	5	Sep-00
Omikron: The Nomad Soul	5.5	Sep-00
Phantasy Star Online	9	Mar-01
Plasma Sword: Nightmare of Blistein	7.25	May-00
Pod: Speedzone	3.5	Jan–01
Power Stone 2	8.5	Aug-00
Project Justice	7	Feb-01
Quake III Arena	9.25	Jan–01
Quarterback Club 2001	2.5	Nov-00
Railroad Tycoon II	5	Nov-00
Rayman 2: The Great Escape	8	Apr-00
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2	7.5	Jan–01
Red Dog	7.75	Dec-00
Resident Evil 2	8	Jan–01
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	8	Jan–01
Resident Evil Code: Veronica	9.5	Apr-00
Roadsters	5.5	Jun-00
Royal Rumble	6.75	Sep-00
Rush 2049	7	Oct-00
Samba De Amigo	5.5	Dec-00
Seaman	7	Sep-00
Sega GT	9	Oct-00
Sega Marine Fishing	8	Nov-00
Shenmue	6	Dec-00
Silent Scope	7.5	Jan–01
Silver	8	Sep-00
Skies of Arcadia	8.5	Jan–01
Sonic Shuffle	7	Jan–01
Space Channel 5	7.75	Jul-00
Spawn: In the Demon's Hand	6.5	Nov-00
Speed Devils Online	7.5	Jan–01
Starlancer	7	Dec-00
Star Wars: Demolition	7	Jan–01
Star Wars Episode I Racer	8.75	Jun-00
Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles	8	Jan–01
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike	8.25	Nov-00
Street Fighter III: Double Impact	7.75	Sep-00
Street Fighter Alpha 3	8.75	Aug-00
Striker Pro 2000	6.75	Aug-00
Super Magnetic Neo	8.5	Aug-00
Super Runabout: San Francisco Edition	8	Jan–01
Surf Rocket Racers	5.5	Feb-01
Sword of the Berzerk	8	Apr-00
Sydney 2000	3.5	Oct-00
Tee Off	6.25	Apr-00
Tech Romancer	8.5	Aug-00
Test Drive Le Mans	4.75	Jan–01
Test Drive V-Rally	1	Jan–01
Time Stalkers	6.5	May-00
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2	8.5	Nov-00
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	7.75	Jun-00
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	7	Feb-01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	9	Jun-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	9.75	Jan–01
Toy Story 2	7	Sep-00
Typing of the Dead	9	Feb-01
UFC	8.5	Oct-00
Vanishing Point	7.5	Mar-01
Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense	8	Mar-00
Virtua Athlete 2000	7	Oct-00
Virtua Striker 2	5.25	Mar-00
Virtua Tennis	9.25	Sep-00
Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram	7.25	Aug-00
Wacky Races	6	Sep-00
Wetrix+	5	Mar-00
Wild Metal	3	May-00
World Series Baseball 2K1	5.75	Sep-00
Xtreme Sports	7	Jan–01

PC

TITLE	BL	DATE
Age of Empires II: The Conqueror's Expansion	9	Nov-00
American McGee's Alice	9	Feb-01
BANG! Gunship Elite	7	Oct-00
Baldur's Gate II	9.5	Nov-00
Blair Witch Volume One: Rustin Parr	6.75	Dec-00
Breakneck	6.25	Oct-00
Call to Power II	6	Jan–01
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2	9.5	Dec-00
Crimson Skies	8.25	Nov-00
Escape From Monkey Island	8.25	Jan–01
Everquest: The Scars of Velious	9.5	Jan–01
Freedom: First Resistance	5.75	Mar-01
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	9.25	Feb-01
Gunman Chronicles	8.25	Feb-01
Half-Life: Counter-Strike	9.75	Jan–01
Heavy Metal: FAKK 2	6.75	Oct-00
Hitman: Codename 47	6.75	Feb-01
Homeworld: Cataclysm	8	Nov-00
Insane	7.25	Mar-01
Kingdom Under Fire	6.25	Mar-01
Mechwarrior 4: Vengeance	8.75	Jan–01
Midtown Madness 2	7.75	Dec-00
No One Lives Forever	7.75	Dec-00
Project IGI: I'm Going In	3.5	Mar-01
Quake III: Team Arena	3.5	Mar-01
Rainbow Six: Covert Ops Essentials	8.75	Dec-00
Rune	7.75	Dec-00
Sacrifice	8.5	Jan–01
Sanity: Aiken's Artifact	5.25	Nov-00
Sea Dogs	8.5	Mar-01
Sheep	7.5	Feb-01
Sims: Livin' Large, The	7	Nov-00
Soulbringer	6.5	Oct-00
Squad Leader	6.25	Jan–01
Starship Troopers	7.75	Jan–01
Star Trek New Worlds	5	Nov-00
Star Trek: Starfleet command Vol.2	8.5	Mar-01
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	8.25	Dec-00
Timeline	5.75	Feb-01
Tomb Raider Chronicles	4	Feb-01
Warlords Battlecry	8.75	Oct-00
Wizards & Warriors	5	Dec-00
You Don't Know Jack: 5th Dementia	8	Jan–01
Zeus: Master of Olympus	8.5	Jan–01

GAME BOY

TITLE	BL	DATE
1942	5.5	Aug-00
Aladdin	7	Feb-01
Batman: Chaos in Gotham	6	Mar-01
Bionic Commando: Elite Forces	8.25	Mar-00
Blaster Master: Enemy Below	8.25	Apr-00
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	2	Dec-00
Chicken Run	4	Jan–01
Croc	5.75	Aug-00
Crystalis	8.5	Aug-00
Dinosaur	3.75	Aug-00
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7.5	Jan–01
Donkey Kong Country	8.75	Jan–01
Dragon's Lair	6	Dec-00
Dragon Warrior I & II	7	Dec-00
Dragon Warrior Monsters	8	Mar-00
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	2	May-00
Frogger 2	7.5	Dec-00
Galaga Destination: Earth	2	Feb-01
Gex 3: Deep Pocket Gecko	7.5	Mar-00
Hoyle Card Games	9	Mar-01
Inspector Gadget	6.5	Jan–01
Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure, The	7	Mar-01
Little Mermaid II: Pinball Frenzy	7.5	Dec-00
Looney Tunes Racing	4.25	Mar-01
Mario Tennis	8.75	Feb-01
Mega Man Xtreme	7	Mar-01
Metal Gear Solid	9.25	Jul-00
Metal Walker	7.75	Dec-00
Mickey's Adventure Racing	8	Mar-00
Micro Machines 1 & 2	8	May-00
M&M's Minis Madness	6	Dec-00
Monster Rancher Battle Card	6.75	Jul-00
Monster Rancher Explorer	7.5	Nov-00
Mr. Driller	8.25	Jul-00
MTV Skateboarding Featuring Andy Macdonald	6.75	Dec-00
Perfect Dark	4	Nov-00
Pokémon Puzzle Challenge	8.5	Feb-01
Pokémon Silver & Gold	9	Dec-00
Pokémon Trading Card Game	7.25	Jun-00
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	6.5	Jan–01
Q*Bert	6.5	Feb-01
Rayman	8	Jun-00
Road Rash	6	Feb-01
Road To El Dorado	4.5	Sep-00
Spider-Man	4	Nov-00
Star Wars: Episode I Racer	8.25	Mar-00
Star Wars: Episode I Obi-Wan's Adventures	8	Mar-01
Tomb Raider	8.25	Aug-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	3.5	Jun-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	6	Jan–01
Toonsylvania	7	Sep-00
Triple Play 2001	4	Aug-00
Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion	3.5	Oct-00
Wario Land 3	8.75	Aug-00
Warlocked	8	Sep-00
WCW Mayhem	7.75	Jul-00
Wings of Fury	7	Mar-00