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THIS RATHER SPEEDY fellow to the left is none other than Silver the Hedgehog, a fresh addition to the Sonic universe, and he can be found in the brand new *Sonic Rivals*. This title is the first appearance for the spiny, blue mammal on Sony's portable console, and we have an exclusive look at the game this month. Not only that, we also have an exhaustive history of every Sonic game reminding you what he's been up to over the last 15 years.

Some of you may be slightly more interested in the other logo featured on the cover. Yup, the next *GTA* is on the way and we've seen it in action. To say it looks awesome is an understatement, but don't take our word for it, flick through the mag and take a look at the screenshots for yourself.

We haven't scrimped on reviews either and this month bring you two of the biggest PSP releases of the year in the form of *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* and *Gangs Of London*, both of which should reignite your passion for PSP after a quiet summer. As we reach the end of the warmer months (and, boy, have they been warm) you'll be looking to curl up with your PSP next to a cosy log fire (perhaps). Fortunately, there are plenty of games on the way - with *Killzone*, *PES6*, *Metal Gear Solid* and *Silent Hill* all due in the next few months things are certainly looking up.

We're not all about the games here at **Go>Play**; we've also taken a look at LocationFree from Sony. This clever box of tricks allows you to watch TV on your PSP from anywhere in the world. Sounds great, but how does it work in practice? Read on to find out. Anyway, enjoy the issue!

Simon Griffin, Deputy Editor

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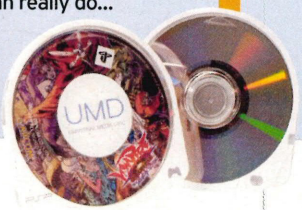

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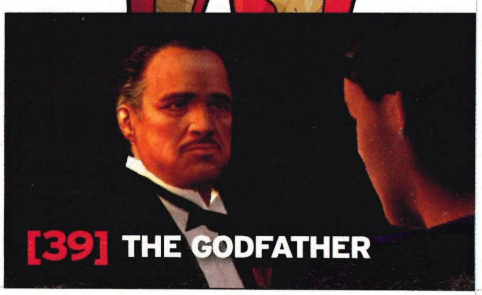

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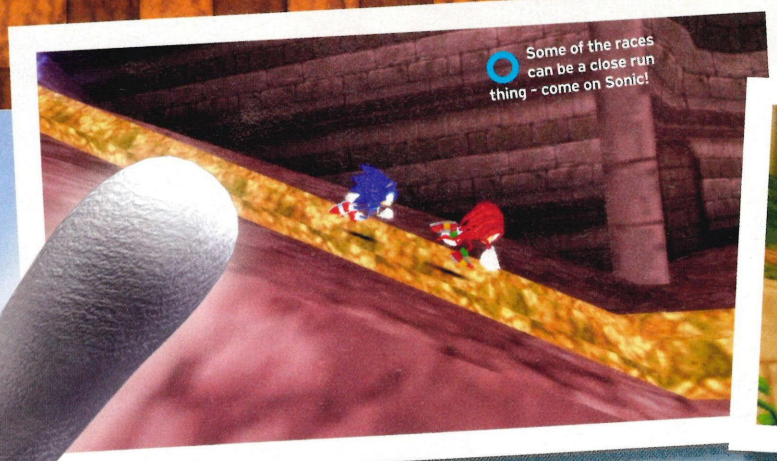
WHEN RIVALRIES IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM REACH FEVER PITCH, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SETTLE IT...

SONIC RIVALS™



Some of the races can be a close run thing – come on Sonic!

Sonic – he's a speedy little fellow, despite the fact that he's a hedgehog, a species not known for their quick footwork. Even though he's now celebrating his fifteenth birthday he shows no sign of slowing down and as well as a shiny new outing on next-gen consoles, he is pitting himself against friend and foe in *Sonic Rivals*.

The game features a number of levels based around classic *Sonic* locations such as Green Hill Zone and Hill Top Zone and blends classic 2D action with fancy 3D environments. Rather than being the classic platform adventure that *Sonic* is renowned for, *Rivals* takes the form of a high-speed race that incorporates all the familiar Sonic actions of running, jumping, ring-collecting and attacking. Four *Sonic* characters are included and besides Sonic himself you'll find Knuckles, Shadow and new kid on the block, Silver the Hedgehog.

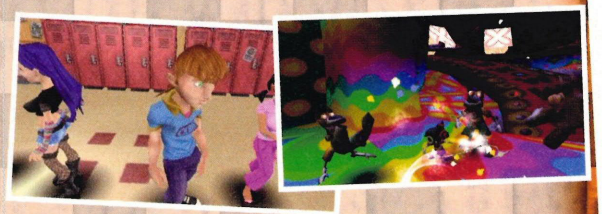
The races between these characters pit them against each other two at a time and you are able to challenge the CPU or another player via Wi-Fi. The aim is obviously to cross the finish line first but this isn't just a straight run and you'll need to navigate your way past enemies, traps and, of course, your rival. The levels have multiple tiers that can be reached by using jump pads and learning where these are and which route is the best is the key to getting ahead of your opponent. The levels also include all the classic *Sonic* staples in the form of loops, sheer upward climbs and big speed-boosting hills. Each character has a specific attack that when available can be used to slow down your opponent's

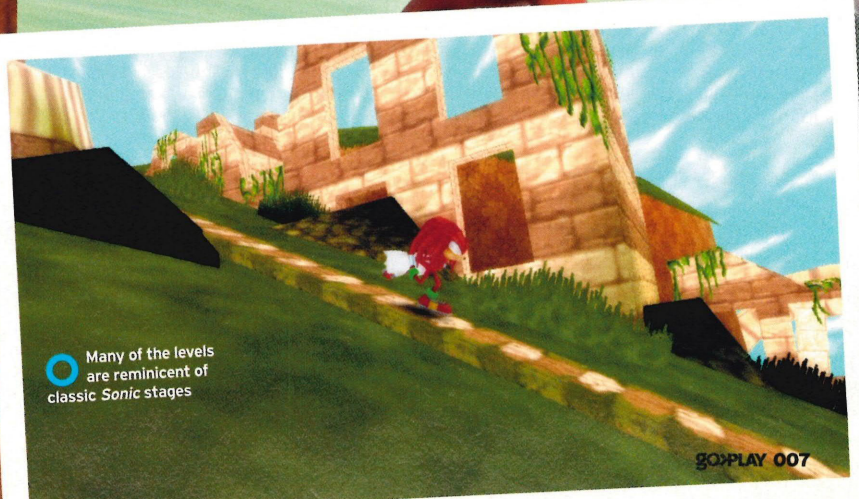
Developer History

BACKBONE ENTERTAINMENT

Backbone Entertainment

A division of Foundation 9 Entertainment, which is the largest independent game developer in North America, Backbone have developed for a number of systems and are familiar with the PSP having developed *NBA Ballers* for Midway plus *Death Jr, Death Jr 2: Root Of Evil* and *Brooktown: Senior Year* for Konami. They have studios in Emeryville, California; Vancouver, British Columbia and in Charlottetown, Price Edward Island all of which have been in existence since 1992 when the company was called Digital Eclipse, which is now another part of Foundation 9.



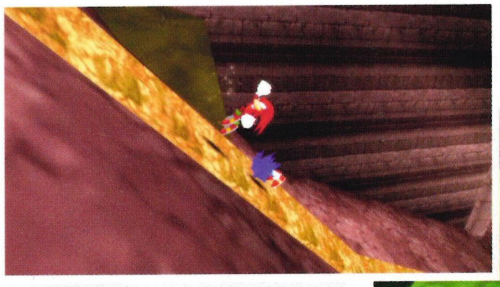


Many of the levels are reminicent of classic *Sonic* stages

progress. Of course they can do the same to you so learning to jump out of the way of incoming attacks will be essential. These power-ups come in the form of fire, ice and speed and vary depending on what character you're using.

Rather than just being a straight racing game, *Sonic Rivals* also has a specific storyline for each character, which unsurprisingly involves the evil Eggman getting up to his usual dastardly tricks. What form these stories will take is unknown at the moment but they are bound to throw up some boss battles at some point.

What we've played so far provided a fast-paced slice of action, which made a nice change from the adventure-heavy *Sonic* games of recent years. Everything moves along at a decent pace and the racing element is great fun and looks like it should offer some enjoyable multi-player action. Despite the fact that the gameplay is thoroughly 2D we didn't really notice and it's not like that's a real problem anyway – just look at *LocoRoco*. We're looking forward to getting our hands on a more complete version of the game soon and we'll keep you informed on how it's shaping up ahead of its release later this year. ■

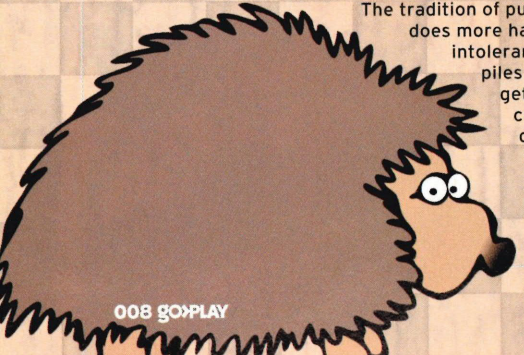


Knuckles seems to be punching Sonic here, the dirty cheat

Hedgehog safety

Real hedgehogs are slow – fact!

Quite how Sonic The Hedgehog can move so fast is a mystery, as in reality while not the slowest creatures roaming our countryside, hedgehogs aren't renowned for their speed. Not only are they slow but also rather dim, putting themselves in mortal danger at pretty much every turn. If they do manage to cross the road without becoming roadkill they are then faced with all manner of life-threatening hazards, most of which are found in the common garden. Being of the stupid persuasion, hedgehogs often fall into swimming pools and with no means of escape the poor little blighters often drown. The tradition of putting out milk and bread for hedgehogs ironically does more harm than good, as the critters are lactose intolerant – d'oh! Hedgehogs also like to burrow into piles of leaves for a kip, which often results in them getting burned alive or impaled on a garden fork by careless gardeners – nasty. Slug pellets are also deadly but hedgehogs like to eat slugs, need we say more? Let's not even go down the lawnmower and strimmer road, it's just too painful. Just keep an eye out for our spikey friends next time you fancy getting your fingers green, okay?



Silver Lining

Sonic makes a new friend

Silver the Hedgehog is the latest addition to the growing roster of characters in the *Sonic* universe. Having travelled back in time from the future he is something of a mystery although his unique ability is telekinesis, which allows him to hover in the air for short periods allowing him to reach certain platforms. This ability also makes it possible for him to pick up objects with his mind and propel them at enemies. How much this power is to be exploited in *Rivals* is yet to be revealed but no doubt his power-up with have some sort of telekinetic attribute.

Save 'em or trade 'em

Lay your cards on the table

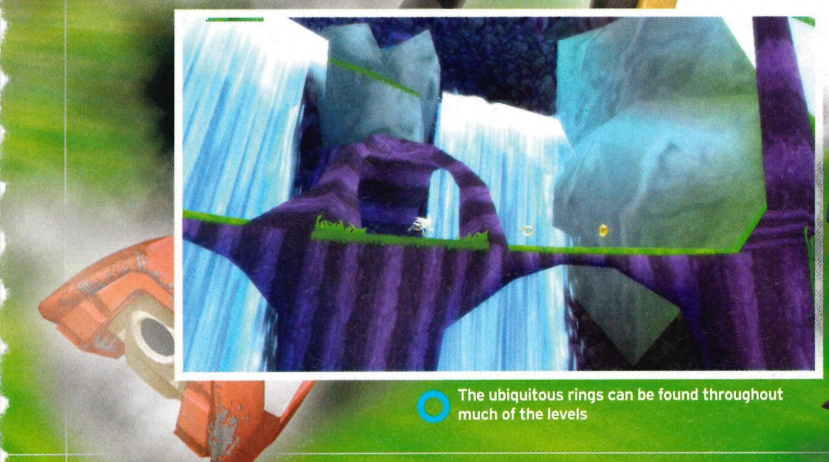
In a similar style to the collectible cards in Sega's *Super Monkey Ball Adventure*, there are 100 unlockable cards available in *Sonic Rivals* that can be obtained by completing certain challenges. These cards can then be traded or even wagered in Wi-Fi races with other players. Some of these cards are incredibly tough to unlock so you'll need to make sure you have confidence in your ability before risking them on a race. These cards also open up new challenges and allow for expansive character customisation. Exactly what form this customisation will take hasn't been revealed yet but we're guessing it will be skill-based as well as aesthetic.

Not only do you have your opponent to contend with but all manner of nasties too!

Next Gen Sonic

Sonic legs it onto PS3

If you didn't know already, the other big *Sonic* game out this year is the next-gen *Sonic The Hedgehog*, which will be available on PS3 and Xbox 360. The game couples classic *Sonic* gaming with fantastic new graphics and speed, made possible by the new consoles. Silver makes another appearance in this game and helps (or perhaps hinders) Sonic tackle Eggman yet again. The plot sees the evil genius kidnapping a young princess by the name of Elise. She is the protector of a secret in the seaside town of Soleanna and that secret is something that could dramatically affect the world. Whatever it is, Eggman wants to use it, so Sonic and the rest of the gang must do everything to stop him.



The ubiquitous rings can be found throughout much of the levels

HEDGEHOG HISTORY

Ever wondered exactly how many games Sonic has appeared in and when they were released? Fear not intrepid reader, simply turn the page and all will be revealed.

Anniversary.2006
15th
SONIC
THE HEDGEHOG

SUPER SONIC

IN THE NINETIES, THERE WAS A GAMING ICON THAT MADE SEGA A HOUSEHOLD NAME. THAT CHARACTER WAS SONIC THE HEDGEHOG. NOW 15 YEARS YOUNG, KIM WILD TAKES A LOOK AT THE HEDGEHOG'S LEGACY

When Sonic first hit the Mega Drive in 1991, he was an unknown entity. What made him stand out was his incredible speed. His success was ensured with *Sonic 2*, but branching off into the world of karting, racing, pinball and board games didn't always work as intended and the 3D versions have received mixed reactions.

Yet despite some rather dubious games, Sonic remains a popular icon. Yuji Naka thinks his image plays a key part. "I think it's his characteristics of speed and coolness that make him as popular now as in the past," he explains. "No other character really has his traits and that's what makes Sonic so special."

As for Sonic's transition from 2D to 3D, Naka feels that there's no reason why the two styles can't co-exist side by side. "If there is something to gain, there is also going to be something to lose," he cryptically begins. "There are pros and cons to both 2D and 3D. I think it is what kind of enjoyment the player gets from the various forms that actually matters."

Naka was keen to tell us about the new 360 and PS3 title that will be available towards the end of the year. "We're planning to release *Sonic The Hedgehog* for Sonic's 15th anniversary, which has the same name as the first Mega Drive title," he proudly tells us. "Timed with this special occasion of 15 years, and the transition to the new next generation of consoles, we are trying to create a title with the basis being that *Sonic* is going back to the basics of 'speed' but will still be full of surprises." ■

1991
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG (MEGA DRIVE)
The game that kick-started it all and made Sonic the superstar he is today. Here the formula for the series is set: collecting 100 rings rewards Sonic with an extra life (over 50 accesses the Special Stage), finding all the Chaos Emeralds unlocks another ending and the end of each act sees Sonic against either Dr Robotnik or one of his cronies to complete the world. Green Hill Zone is a constant source for familiarity of the series, reappearing under different guises. Defeating the robot enemies means that the animals are freed from their metallic prisons, creating joy for animal lovers everywhere. The Special Stage of the original game consisted of a frustrating rotating maze where Sonic had to be steered to the chaos emerald.

1991
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG (GAME GEAR/MASTER SYSTEM)
No, you're not hallucinating; *Sonic* on Sega's Game Gear was an entirely different game to the Mega Drive version, which proved disappointing for those expecting a straight conversion. At the time, the visuals were a great showcase for what the handheld could do and although it has been surpassed technically, it still remains very playable today. This time around, the special stage saw Sonic bouncing on springs collecting as many coins and continues as possible in the bumper-filled environment. Chaos Emeralds were instead hidden around the levels so searching every nook and cranny was essential to locate them all. A few months later the game was converted to the Master System, which is the same, with some of the sprites made slightly larger for a big screen.

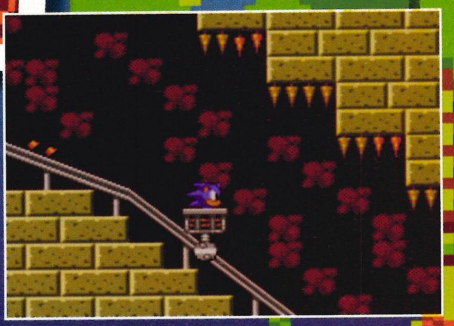
Sonic The Hedgehog's bonus stage may have looked amazing, but it was a bitch to play through

1992
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2 (GAME GEAR/MASTER SYSTEM)
Contrary to opinion, the Game Gear version of *Sonic 2* came out first although again is a different game to the Mega Drive. Tails made his debut here but unfortunately this was solely in the introduction, which saw Dr Robotnik abducting him, leaving Sonic to come to the rescue. Again, Chaos Emeralds had to be found hidden in the levels. A slightly wayward camera made boss battles trickier than they should have been, something remedied in the Master System conversion. No Special Stages.

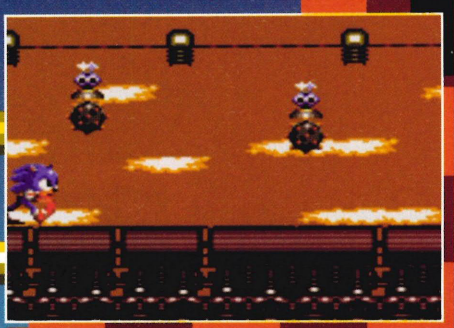
1992
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2 (MEGA DRIVE)
With Sonic's popularity cemented, Sega went all out on a huge marketing campaign, naming the release date Sonic 2sday. This time, Tails (known as Miles Prower) accompanied the hedgehog and could be controlled by a second player. The game also included a two-player mode, competitive mode and introduced for the first time seven Chaos Emeralds over the standard six. The Special Stage, which consists of Sonic and Tails racing down a chute collecting rings, is the best of all the games, although Tails does get in the way of the bombs. *Sonic 2* was also the first appearance of Super Sonic. After collecting all of the Chaos Emeralds, getting 50 rings would enable Sonic to transform into a yellow invincible hedgehog and the rings acted as a timer, only increasing with the collection of additional rings. Interesting fact: foxes in Japanese legend are magical and mystical creatures that sometimes grow two tails.

1993
SONIC CHAOS AKA SONIC & TAILS (GAME GEAR/MASTER SYSTEM)
For some reason, the games had their names changed with America and Europe knowing the game as *Sonic Chaos* and Japan calling it *Sonic & Tails*. As a first on the Game Gear/Master System, it was possible to play the game as Sonic or Tails, although with the latter you couldn't collect Chaos Emeralds or see the ending. After collecting 100 rings, you were warped to the special stage.

1993
SONIC CD (MEGA CD)
Sonic CD was the only game to be released on Sega's failing add-on yet its impressive size and unique gameplay meant that it still managed to impress the hedgehog's fan base. For a long time before release, the game was rumoured to be a remake of *Sonic 2* with added animated sequences but this wasn't the case. As a first, the game features an extensive animated introduction showcasing the power of the CD format although the opening tune differs depending on whether you own the Jap or European version. Sonic has the ability to warp into the past and the future using designated signposts, the state of which will differ depending on whether or not Robotnik's roboticizer is destroyed in the past of each act. Several new characters were introduced including Amy Rose, the obsessive pink female hedgehog infatuated with our hero, and Metal Sonic, a metallic robot with the skills that Sonic possesses. It's also the first game to feature multiple endings, with the good ending taking place if all time stones are collected and all the roboticizers are destroyed. The Special Stage is in complete 3D, the objective being to destroy the alien spaceships within the time limit while running along a track and avoiding the various hazards that occur..



Sonic takes a rest and decides to bomb around in a minecart. Watch out for those spikes!



1993
SONIC SPINBALL (MEGA DRIVE/GAME GEAR)
As a concept this really should have worked, especially after the superb Casino Zone of *Sonic 2*, but the controls were not as responsive as they should have been. The Game Gear version was a condensed port of its big brother but the smaller screen meant that it was difficult to see what was going on.

1993
DR ROBOTNIK'S MEAN BEAN MACHINE (MEGA DRIVE/MASTER SYSTEM/GAME GEAR)
If you've ever played this and thought it bore a striking resemblance to the *Puyo Puyo* series then you'd be right; it's the same game repackaged for the Western audience. The aim is to align four beans of the same colour together to make them disappear, creating chains of combos until your opponent's screen (or your own) overflows. The animation style is based on the cartoon series *The Adventures Of Sonic The Hedgehog* back in the Nineties, which is why Dr Robotnik appears to have had a makeover. Luckily, *Puyo Puyo* is a decent game to start with and as a result, *Mean Bean Machine* is as addictive as ever. It's worth noting that the Game Gear version (available on Tec Toy for Master System) is superior due to the inclusion of a puzzle mode.

1994
SONIC DRIFT (GAME GEAR)
Although this game was conceived and released before the SNES's *Super Mario Kart*, the fact that it was only released in Japan and was also utter tripe, meant that very few gamers paid it any real attention. Playable characters include Sonic, Tails, Amy and Dr Eggman himself who all have special abilities on the track when more than two rings are collected. A rather poor game that even the most ardent *Sonic* fan may find hard to enjoy.

1994
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3 (MEGA DRIVE)
Back to what he does best, *Sonic 3* is a mammoth platform game that first introduces Knuckles, who to begin with is on Dr Robotnik's team. Although there are only two acts, the levels themselves are larger in scope and include plenty of mini-bosses to ensure that the action stays as fast paced as ever. The Special Stages take on a different guise having you travel along a grid collecting only the blue spheres, with contact with a red sphere throwing Sonic back onto the main level. A strong adaptation of the series that proved that Sonic Team was more than willing to explore new avenues for its cherished mascot.

1994
SONIC & KNUCKLES (MEGA DRIVE)
Essentially more of the same in comparison to *Sonic 3*, this game had the added bonus of Lock-On Technology, enabling gamers to add new features to other *Sonic* titles. Plugging in *Sonic 2* or *3* into the top of the cartridge meant it was possible to play as Knuckles in those games. With *Sonic 3*, it doubled the size of the game by adding seven Chaos Emeralds, bringing the total to 14. While it's seen by many as Sonic's greatest Mega Drive outing we still prefer the amazing *Sonic 2*.

1994
SONIC TRIPLE TROUBLE (GAME GEAR)
The best in the series for the Game Gear, *Sonic Triple Trouble* once again sees Sonic or Tails trying to beat Robotnik at his own game. Ramps, springs, carts and jumps were more prominent than in any other Game Gear/Master System title with varied bosses to tackle. It was the first game on the handheld to see the character Nack the Weasel (also known as Fang) who appears at the end of Special Stages and must be defeated to gain a Chaos Emerald.

1995
KNUCKLES CHAOTIX (32X)
The concept of team play was introduced here although the game was not favourably received by the public. Characters from the arcade game such

as Vector the Crocodile, Charmy the Bee and Espio the Chameleon appeared and each partnership was joined together by a ring. Each character differed in ability: Knuckles could climb walls while Charmy could fly in the air. Sonic fans may want to track it down, but it's no traditional Sonic title.

1995
TAILS SKY PATROL (GAME GEAR)
Tails gets to star in his first stand-alone title, which was only ever available in Japan at time of release. It's a strange addition to the Sonic canon, with Tails carrying a ring across the levels, which has to be used to defeat enemies and progress through the game. Awkward controls and a weird camera angle make it difficult and frustrating to play.

1995
TAILS ADVENTURE (GAME GEAR)
Another variation on the Sonic franchise, this one (also featuring Tails) is more of a puzzle game with the emphasis on collecting items. Despite the change in style, it's a remarkably playable title that's becoming increasingly difficult to find at a decent price. Instead of Dr Robotnik, an army of strange-looking birds have invaded Tails Holiday Island and set it on fire, leaving it to Tails to rescue his friends.

1995
SONIC LABYRINTH (GAME GEAR)
Sonic returns in yet another twist to the platform formula, this time in the vein of a *Marble Madness* clone. The fight against the time limit means that you constantly have to use Spin Dash to get anywhere, taking care not to go too fast as death lurks around every corner. Not a great game, but it has its moments (plus a great soundtrack).

1995
SONIC DRIFT 2 (GAME GEAR)
Mario Kart style racing returns but this time round everything has been greatly improved. Better

The visuals don't do the game any favours at all

The Master System version of *Spinball* suffers from poor visibility. Shame

controls, a more advanced Grand Prix mode and a nifty two-player link-up option make this a worthy game in the series. Hell, we'd take an update of this over *Sonic Riders* any day of the week.

1996
SONIC BLAST/G SONIC (GAME GEAR)
Sonic Blast (*G Sonic* in Japan) is a 2D-style game that was let down badly by poor controls and bland level design. It was the first and only Game Gear game to allow you to control Knuckles. In a bid to push the boundaries, all characters have been created with pre-rendered graphics and look appalling – too imposing for the small screen. The special stages were in full 3D and were visually impressive for the Game Gear.

1996
SONIC CHAMPIONSHIP/SONIC THE FIGHTERS (ARCADE)
A primitive fighting game in the *Virtua Fighter* mould, this arcade title only appeared in a few European arcades, although *Sonic* devotees can now play it on the *Sonic Gems Collection* that's available for the GameCube and PlayStation2. Its simplicity meant that it never really garnered much of a following outside of native Japan and is best viewed as a curio item only.

1996
SONIC 3D FLICKIES' ISLAND/ SONIC 3D BLAST (MEGA DRIVE/SATURN/PC)
Developed by Traveller's Tales rather than Sonic Team, *Flickies' Island* stood out by having a 3D-overhead perspective. Although the basics of *Sonic* remain, this time round the Flickies (the cute birds in the arcade and Mega Drive title *Flicky*) have been scattered across the levels and have to be rescued. The Saturn and Mega Drive games are similar apart from the former boasting enhanced visuals and a far superior soundtrack.

A bit more thought was required to get through the levels

Sadly, the only racing game featuring Sonic that gets it right

1997
SONIC R (SATURN/PC)
The only racing game that makes the *Sonic* name proud, this effort also came from the heart of Traveller's Tales. Although short, there are six unlockable racers including Doctor Robotnik, Metal Sonic, Tails Doll, Metal Knuckles, Egg Robo and Super Sonic, all of which handle differently. And the soundtrack boasts some of the best music that Richard Jacques has ever composed. If you haven't got a large grin on your face while listening to Can You Feel The Sunshine? then we reckon you're probably already dead.

Sonic gets to spin a lot in this world

New girl Cream gets into as much trouble as Amy

1997
SONIC JAM (GAME.COM)
Not to be confused with the compilation of the same name on the Sega Saturn, *Sonic Jam* on Game.com threw in elements from *Sonic 2* and 3 but was a complete travesty. Monochrome screen aside, speed of gameplay was sluggish, rendering Sonic's speed down to a snail-like crawl. One of the worst Sonic games we've ever been unfortunate enough to play.

1998
SONIC ADVENTURE (DREAMCAST)
As the first true 3D title, Dreamcast owners were wowed by the sheer speed and graphical trickery that was contained in a shiny disc. *Sonic Adventure* was released three times in all; the first edition in Japan, the second a limited edition released in selected areas of the US, while the third, *Sonic Adventure International*, was released worldwide. Aside from being able to play the game with each individual character (and collect emblems), a virtual pet Chao was introduced that could be transferred to a Dreamcast VMU card. In 2001, *Sonic Adventure DX* was released: a port of the original for the GameCube including new mission modes, 12 unlockable Game Gear games and the ability to transfer a Chao to the Game Boy Advance; amazingly, the main game was a poor port, meaning that the Dreamcast version is still the one to own.

1999
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG POCKET ADVENTURE (NEO GEO POCKET COLOR)
A port of *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* minus Tails, this is an excellent conversion and although the levels are visually toned down, everything is intact including the tunnel Special Stage. Features included a picture puzzle section where pieces could be collected across the levels and time trials for each stage. It was possible to link up with another machine for two-player races and was originally intended to make use of the NGPC to Dreamcast cable, but sadly this didn't get implemented in the final version.

2000
SONIC SHUFFLE (DREAMCAST)
A spin-off board game copying the *Mario Party* series, *Sonic Shuffle* was a poor effort that combined copious mini-games around the *Sonic* universe. Playing as either Sonic, Tails, Amy or Knuckles (Big the Cat, E-102 Gamma, Super Sonic and a Chao can be unlocked), you must travel around the board and then, depending on where you land, collect rings, play a game or battle with the eventual aim to collect as many precious stones as possible. The cel-shaded visuals worked well, but the mini-games weren't much fun to play and the slow movement of other characters dragged playability down considerably.

2001
SONIC ADVENTURE 2 (DREAMCAST)
Even bigger than before, *Sonic Adventure 2* abandoned the exploration elements of the original and stuck to speed, shooting and hunting for emeralds. It was the first game in the series to introduce Hero and Dark sides to play with, the latter allowing you to play as the infamous Shadow the Hedgehog and Eggman. Chao mode was also back with added features. To tie in with Sonic's 10th anniversary, a special pack was released in Japan including a commemorative book, gold coin and soundtrack. In 2004, the game ported to the GameCube as *Sonic Adventure 2: Battle*, with an enhanced Chao mode and extra multi-player modes.

2002
SONIC ADVANCE (GAME BOY ADVANCE)
The first outing on Nintendo's handheld; Sonic Advance is a decent effort although it pales in comparison to the Neo Geo Pocket title. It's certainly a colourful game and is miles better than the more recent 3D efforts, but it still falls short of the original 16-bit classics.

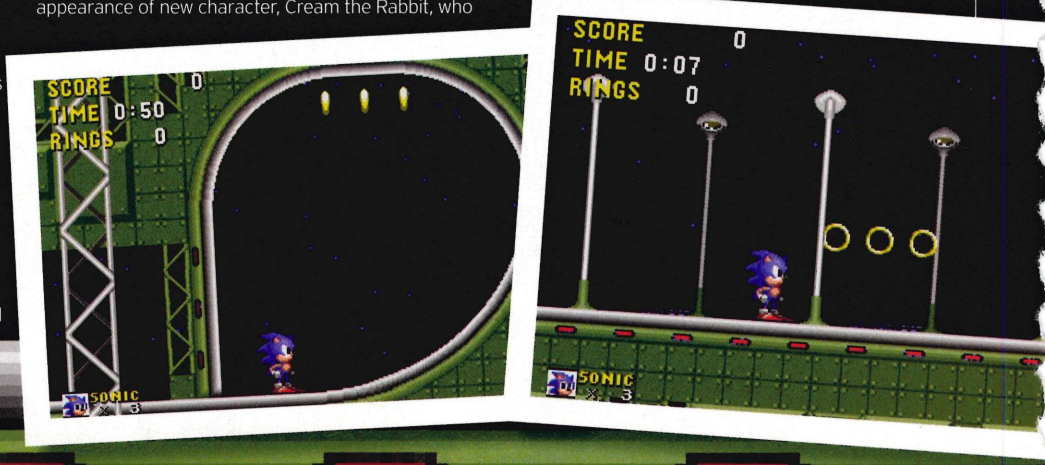
2002
SONIC ADVANCE 2 (GAME BOY ADVANCE)
Much improved over the original, this sequel sees the appearance of new character, Cream the Rabbit, who appears in the storyline of *Sonic Rush* on DS. Special coins have to be collected to activate the Special Stage and although the game doesn't add anything new, all the trademark material is here.

2003
SONIC N (N-GAGE)
This isn't really a new game as it is essentially a port of *Sonic Advance* but we're mentioning it here for completion reasons. Unfortunately, it took away any good aspects by not converting it properly to the smaller screen and omitting multi-player options. Oh and having to play it on a keypad doesn't help matters either. A decent effort, but stick with the original Game Boy Advance version.

2003
SONIC PINBALL PARTY (GAME BOY ADVANCE)
After a failed attempt with *Sonic Spinball*, Sega managed to get the formula right this time with *Pinball Party* on the GBA. Featuring three tables, Sonic, Samba (based on the Dreamcast game) and Nights (focusing on the Saturn original), a certain number of rings have to be collected before Eggman can be taken on and defeated. The Sonic table is based on the zones featured in *Sonic Advance*. A solid game that will please pinball and Sonic fans alike.

2004
SONIC HEROES (GAMECUBE/PS2/XBOX)
Much like Knuckles Chaotix, *Sonic Heroes* used a tag-team system between three characters. The three characters between them had the ability of speed, power or flight on their side. Clumsy control and an obstinate camera meant it was a frustrating experience, although not completely without merit.

2004
SONIC ADVANCE 3 (GAME BOY ADVANCE)
Here the partner system returns, but with each



character adding and taking away abilities; plenty of combinations need to be used to locate all the secrets. Chaos Emeralds are trickier than ever to collect, with all 70 Chao hidden in the game needing to be found to unlock the keys to the special stages. By far the best *Sonic* title currently available on the GBA.

2004
SONIC BATTLE (GAME BOY ADVANCE)

Another fighting game, this time in the style of *Smash Bros*, only nowhere near as impressive. Horrendous controls, appalling visuals and some questionable collision detection means that *Sonic Battle* is a travesty of a game that should be avoided at all costs.

2006
SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG (GAMECUBE/PS2/XBOX)

Again not really a Sonic game but it's officially part of the canon so it's getting included here. Yuji Naka went on the record as saying Sega "wanted Shadow to be a different character to Sonic as it also allows us to expand the possibilities for Sonic titles". Despite guns being available, they weren't as prominent as implied but the generic gameplay and uninspiring level design meant that Shadow really was lingering in Sonic's wake.

2006
SONIC RIDERS (GAMECUBE/PS2/XBOX)

To commemorate the 15th anniversary of our beloved hedgehog, Sonic Team released *Sonic Riders*. Although visually it plays the part and features the frantic speed one expects from the series, the controls are poor, plus the blur effect while racing at high speed makes it incredibly difficult to enjoy. One for the younger fans only we're afraid.

2006
SONIC RUSH (NDS)

A 2D Sonic game that takes advantage of both screens, *Sonic Rush* is a blinding return to form and recaptures the magic of the earlier iterations. *Sonic Rush* introduces a new character called Blaze the cat, who handles in a similar way to Sonic and has a different storyline. Although only the touch screen is used in order to collect Chaos Emeralds, all the classic ramps, springs and loops are back in a superb platform outing.

2006
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG (PS3/XBOX 360)

Currently under development for the PS3 and Xbox 360, Sonic is set to reinvent his image. All the usual rings, pinball bumpers, rails and enemies are here, only this time round, two additional hedgehogs are in town: the annoying Shadow, who bizarrely tears around in a jeep and Silver, who amongst other things, uses telekinesis to hover mid-air and can grab far away objects all with the power of his mind. Has a surprising amount of potential.

2006
SONIC WILDFIRE (WII)

Hopefully due for release later this year, *Sonic Wildfire* nevertheless looks set to make good use of the Wii's innovative controller. By tilting the controller horizontally, Sonic can be steered left and right to avoid obstacles while moving it forward allows the hedgehog to attack enemies and barriers. A variety of mini-games adapted for the controller are also set to be included.

Will the 360 *Sonic The Hedgehog* be a return to the *Sonic* of old?

NOTABLE OMISSIONS

There are some titles that weren't listed in the main article so here goes:

Sonic appeared in educational titles including *Sonic Schoolhouse* on PC and on Sega Pico in *Sonic The Hedgehog's Gameworld*. *Sonic Eraser* had a limited release via download with the Mega Drive modem Meganet in Japan. There's also the unreleased *Sonic Xtreme* and *Sonic Crackers*, a prototype that was supposedly *Sonic 4*. More information on this can be found at: **http://sonicology.fateback.com/beta/crackers/index.html**

Oh and there's also *SegaSonic*, a cool arcade game that's now extremely hard to track down... but we've run out of space. Bye!

Sonic Rush is a real return to form and plays like a dream

INSIDER

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PSP GAMING

PLAYSTATION SPOT LANDS IN GAME

Sony starts to roll out Spots...

As we reported back in issue 4, the PlayStation Spots have been in operation in Japan since February. They allow PSP owners to enjoy all manner of content including game demos, movie trailers, music tracks, video content, image galleries and other content for free – all beamed to your console via the wonders of Wi-Fi.

Last month the first major promotion for UK PlayStation Spots was held in the Oxford Street and Milton Keynes branches of GAME. To get these free goodies all you need to do is flick your WLAN switch to on and hover around one of the Spots while you're waiting for your chosen content to download.

To celebrate the launch, the Milton Keynes branch held a *LocoRoco* Funday with a Ceramic White PSP and loads of games to give away. 'Spot Staff' were on hand to guide customers through the download process.

Anna Macario, Marketing Director for GAME had this to say about the PlayStation Spot service – "Through the PlayStation Spot initiative, our PSP owning customers can gain free access to a rich collection of diverse content when they come into one of our 'spot' locations. It offers customers an opportunity to try out games before they buy them and the incentive to keep coming in-store to get the latest content and offers available for download."

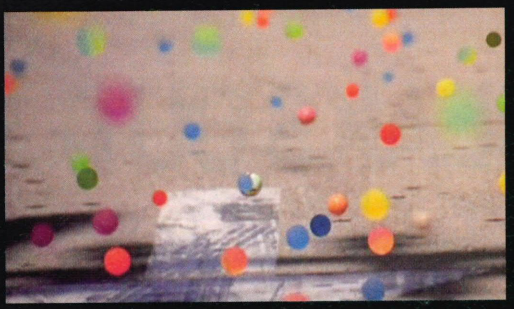
The only drawback of this service is that the content is not saved to your Memory Stick and is therefore lost once you turn off your PSP. This also means that only one piece of content can be held on the PSP at a time. However, it's all free so what do you expect?

This looks like it's just the beginning of the PlayStation Spot roll-out and should it prove successful we will undoubtedly see more of them appearing in GAME stores up and down the country. PlayStation Spots have also been popping up at festivals and in branches of HMV, Virgin and Gamestation. For more information browse **www.playstationspot.co.uk** and see if there's a Spot near you.

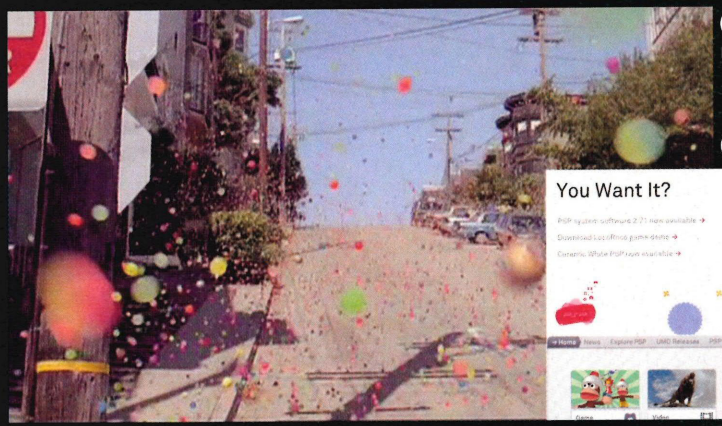
SPOT THE BALLS

Free ads

Exclusive ad content for PSP owners



Fans of TV advertising may well be familiar with the 'balls' advert for the latest range of Sony Bravia LCD TVs. Sony are now planning to make exclusive free downloadable content for the PSP to support the highly-anticipated follow-up ad. This content will consist of video blogs from the set of the ad, podcasts of interviews from the makers, written blog entries, behind-the-scenes footage and high-quality photography. All this will be available for download from **yourpsp.com** in the coming weeks. The advert has received and extraordinary amount of interest on the web, with most people trying to find out if those balls really did bounce down the streets of San Francisco or whether some of it was computer-generated trickery. The site **bravia-advert.com** has attracted more than 1 million views alone and third-party sites have had over 7 million. We don't know about you but we certainly want a new telly now. ■



The ads have been a roaring success on both TV and the Internet, mmmm LCD

Content will be available for download from **yourpsp.com**

SPECIAL READER OFFER

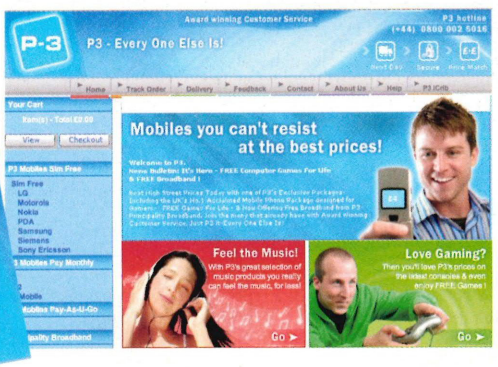
FREE GAMES FOR LIFE!

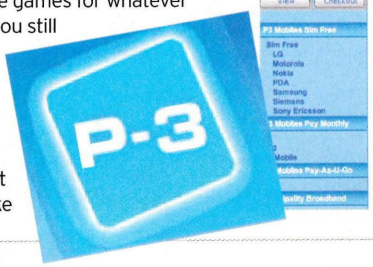
Nope, you're not seeing things, that really says 'Free Games For Life!' Sounds too good to be true doesn't it? Never having to pay for games ever again is a dream come true for every gamer. Thanks to our friends at P3 Mobiles this is one dream that has become reality. We've teamed up with them to give every single **Go>Play** reader an exclusive offer.

P3 is the only mobile phone company with packages designed exclusively for gamers, and its latest deal is fantastic - one free game a month, any game on any format. These aren't just mobile phone games either, they're proper console games for whatever format you fancy. Whether you still haven't got your hands on *LocoRoco* or you simply want the latest PS2 release, P3 will be able to supply it.

No doubt you're thinking there's a catch but there isn't one. All you need to do is take out a mobile phone contract through P3 and then you can have a game for every month that you keep the contract. Not only that but P3 is doing a special offer for all **Go>Play** readers - half-price line rental on all Free Game Packages. Bargain!

To apply for this amazing deal simply surf your way over to **www.p3mobile.com** or call **0800 002 5016**. ■





STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

Every month we be posting polls our forum for yo to vote in (play-magazine.co.uk/forum Internet fans!)

GAME SERIES MOST WANTED ON PSP

The horror franchise wins out - come on Capcom, the public has spoken!

UMD MOVIES...

PSP owners are clearly divided when it comes to the merits of watching a movie on a UMD...

MOST WANTED PSP GAME

No real surprise here, of course *GTA* was going to get more votes, why wouldn't it?

INTERVIEW

CAROL SPEAKS OUT

The most famous PSP owner we know chats about the console and her love of Sudoku...

CAROL VORDERMAN'S SUDOKU

Go>Play: What is it about the PSP that makes it your console of choice?
Carol Vordeman: The fact that it is so small and fits into my handbag – that it's easy to use, so simple to work. I can play films and music so it's great for people on the move, like me.

G>P: What was the first game you got for your PSP?
CV: Well my son is crazy about his PSP so the first game I tried was one of his racing games. But for myself I like puzzle-based games, *Lumines* was my first PSP game.

G>P: If you were to have a *Sudoku* play-off with any four people in the world, who do you think would be the hardest opponents?
CV: Gary Kasparov, I think it would be a tough battle.

G>P: What are your favourite PSP games, apart from your own of course?
CV: I don't have a favourite, but I am looking forward to *Lumines II*.

G>P: What made you get that particular game?
CV: It was given to me as a present.

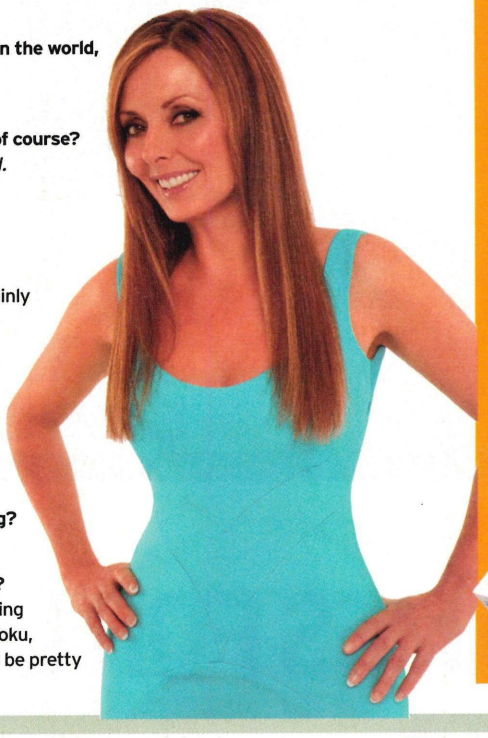
G>P: Do you play a lot of computer games?
CV: I would like to play more but I don't have much spare time, mainly when I am travelling.

G>P: You must be one of the cleverest women around, so do you prefer puzzle games or a good beat-'em-up to relieve stress?
CV: I prefer puzzles, they are good stress relievers to me.

G>P: Do you use all the aspects of the PSP?
CV: I mainly use it for playing games and watching movies.

G>P: What do think it is about Sudoku that makes it so appealing?
CV: It's relaxing and also it is really good to exercise your brain!

G>P: Why should people buy *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku* on PSP?
CV: It's the best *Sudoku* game available and its the perfect travelling companion on the PSP, its got so many different ways to play Sudoku, you can even play against me in the game, to beat me you have to be pretty good at Sudoku!



NEWSFLASH

Score!

Footy download now up

With England's tragic, but inevitable, failing in this year's World Cup we realise there probably won't be many folk out there interested in replicating the miserable event with *World Tour Soccer 2*. For those currently playing Sony's reasonable attempt at creating a footy title however, we have good news. Head down to **www.yourpsp.com** and grab yourself a whole new game mode, called Ole. Go on, it's quite fun.

Iron fist

Sexy new box art for PSP

Tekken: Dark Resurrection, no doubt one of the finest titles to grace the PSP, is getting its very own Gigapack, much like the *LocoRoco* one we reported on a few months back. The only difference appears to be some funky box art, but while many will be able to dismiss the pack as nothing more than a grasping attempt at rinsing the public (at just over $370), just have a look at the packaging.

THE HOURS

WHAT'S BEEN EATING OUR LIVES, AND FOR HOW LONG

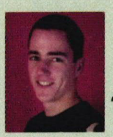
SIMON

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

"Christ this is dreadful. One of the worst combat systems I've had the displeasure of suffering through for some time. The multi-player just about makes up for it though." 06 hrs

SMELLING VINEGAR

"After that **PowerStation** lot spilt vinegar over on the **Go>Play** side of the office, all I can smell is mouldy condiments." 30 hrs



ANDY

LOCOROCO

"Tom's just given me his copy, as he said it was making him go insane. Hopefully it won't have the same effect on me, wibble, wibble." 12 hrs

LOOKING INTELLIGENT

"There's no better way of attracting the ladies than reading one of those intellectual books (y'know, the ones without pictures) in the park." 02 hrs

TOM

SYPHON FILTER

"This just gets better and better. Great story, fantastic control and excellent gameplay reminiscent of the original batch on the PSone." 16 hrs

ABSTAINING FROM THE OPPOSITE SEX

"This is the only way I'm going to manage to keep my sanity intact. I'm booking myself into the vets – I think I'd make a pretty good eunuch." 10 hrs

HENRI

YAKUZA

"Hey, this is great, I get to beat people up, swear at them, hit on girls and wear loincloths as underwear. One of the best games on the PS2 for a long while." 19 hrs

GOING SWIMMING

"After work, every day. I love going for a swim in the sea. There's only one drawback though, I do keep almost chocking on used condoms." 10 hrs

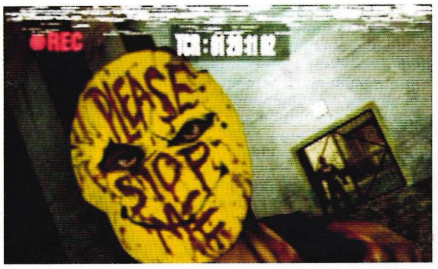
LAW GAMES

University raises the bar on law and order

Like law? Love games? Well we've got the answer. Well, we haven't really got the answer, but we needed an introduction to this news piece. La Verne College of Law in California, having included elements of videogame law for some years, are set to offer an entire course dedicated to the subject. This seems pretty sensible given the amount of legal actions currently taking place at the moment, and something that's only likely to get more intensive with the next generation of consoles.

In charge of the project is Professor Ashley Lipson, a chap well experienced in the field of both playing and developing games. Having taught law for a good few years, Professor Lipson has created a fair amount of supplementary software including *The Objection! Series* and *SivPro!* titles designed to enhance both students' awareness of the legal system and courtroom etiquette. "This is the first generation of students raised on computer games, and with the explosion of interactive technologies impacting just about every facet of life today, these courses have tremendous relevancy for today's law students," enthused Lipson when questioned about the validity of the course. He also went on to mention the modules included in the studies, which include 'Multimedia Law', 'The Law of Cyberspace' and 'The Law of the Computer Games Industry'. Entertainment law and lectures on intellectual property have also been included in the studies, which commence next semester in California.

Whilst the course doesn't solely concentrate on the industry completely, there will be a textbook *Computer Game Law* made exclusively available to students at the La Verne, which will cover a range of related topics such as content regulation, product rights and licenses as well as acquisition and Internet property rights. We don't know about you, but we don't have any objections to this course, as long as it simplifies what seem to be particularly involved cases to do with videogaming. ■



A dedicated law course should help cut down on the legal grey areas of wrangles over titles like *Manhunt*

Pirates invade Brighton beach

Wi-Fi hotspot gets a taste of the Caribbean...

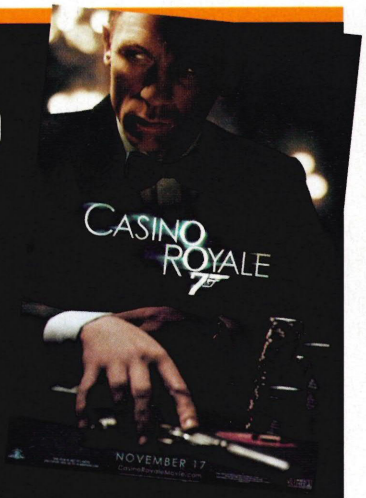
In a publicity stunt to promote the release of *Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*, Buena Vista Games weighed anchor in Brighton in full pirate garb, much to the surprise of sunbathers, shoppers and tourists. As you may or may not know, Brighton beach is filled with Wi-Fi hotspots that enabled plenty of multi-player fun between passers-by who were a mixture of amused and shocked at the sight of Jack Sparrow look-a-likes marauding up and down the promenade, PSPs in hand.

The event was a roaring success and even managed to get a mention in local Brighton rag, *The Argus*. Well, shiver me timbers! ■

TREYARCH FORMS A BOND

Developer dilemma over

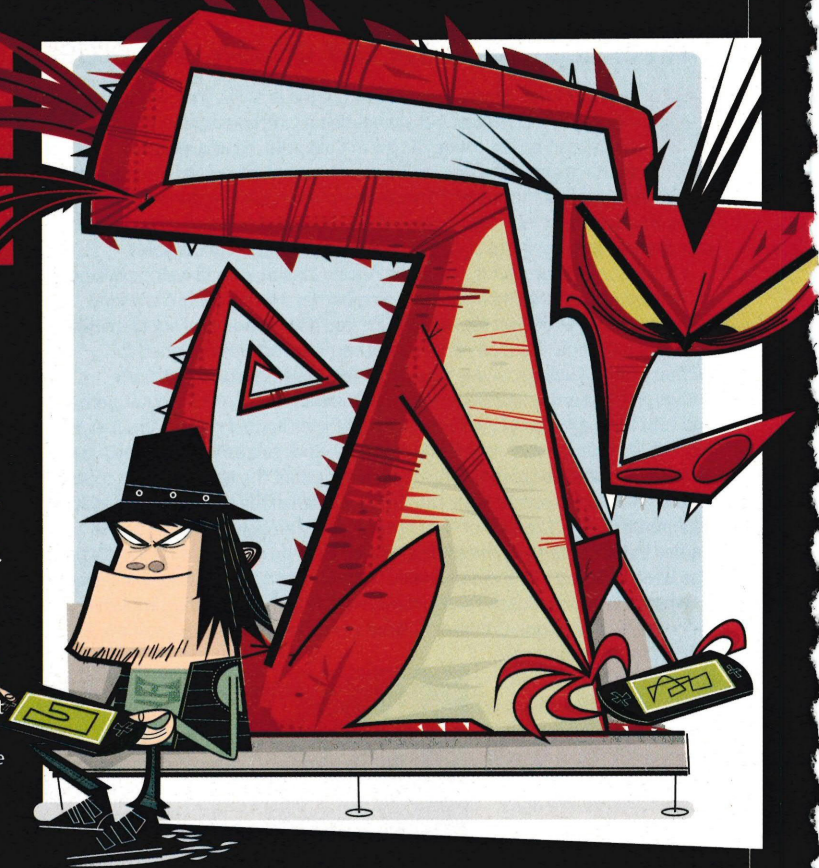
Activision has finally confirmed who will be developing its first James Bond title after the recent acquisition of the franchise. This came after an advert from Treyarch looking for a game designer for their upcoming Bond title let the cat out of the bag. Treyarch has had a successful relationship with the publisher after developing a number of titles including *Ultimate Spider-Man* and *Call Of Duty 2: Big Red One*. Currently finishing off *Call Of Duty 3*, their next big project will presumably be the super spy's next adventure. Whether this will be a game based around the forthcoming *Casino Royale* or be an original story is unknown, but we're rooting for an original story. Of course, it might not even see the light of day on PSP but we reckon that's probably unlikely. ■



TAKERU AMAZAWA'S TOKYO TITTLE TATTLE

GAME OF LIFE

An insight into the world of Japanese PSP-ing by our man in Tokyo - Takeru Amazawa



A few months ago I told you about *Portable Island* for PSP. I think I might have kind of gotten angry at the game, and maybe said some really mean things. I'd like to just let you know, first and foremost, that I'm not taking any of those things back. I still think the game is a bizarrely insulting, poor substitute for a vacation. In addition, it's not much of a videogame. In fact, now that I've actually had time to sit down with it and see how it plays, I hold even more vague contempt for the motives of its production.

I'm writing this column on a brisk summer morning when I was, believe it or not, actually slated to be out in China surfing with my girlfriend and her father. Instead, the weather forecasted rain, so the trip got cancelled. I awoke to find an email in my cellular phone saying, "Hey, it's supposed to rain, so my dad doesn't think we should bother going to the beach". The sky is a weird grey color, though it looks friendly to me. I was sitting in, playing *Brave Story* on my PSP while lying on my sofa, when I realised this column was due. It's the yearly, week-long summer vacation at my company (you don't even want to know what my company does), and all it does is make me wish I didn't have a job.

Vacations kind of do that to people. You know what kind of modern age we live in? I'll tell you - an age where people will only ever use their paid vacation days right before a scheduled company-wide vacation week, and a society where people will only ever play their portable videogame systems indoors. We're a soup of contradictions.

Having a week off work for the first time in half a year really puts things into a weird perspective. I fire up the Internet and look at the best-selling games on Amazon, thinking it'll give me something to say to you all. It seems that Namco is putting out *Tales Of Phantasia* for PSP, just a year after they put it out for Gameboy Advance. Only the PSP version is going to be fully voiced, which the original Super Famicom version most certainly was not.

Yet I've also heard rumours that Namco (or, uh, Bandai-Namco, as it were), seemingly the most prolific supporters of PSP, is pulling out of the system. I wonder why that is. Namco's *Ridge Racers* was the game that sold the system to a lot of people, for example. *Ridge Racers 2* is coming soon, even.

> Why the hell would you want a **portable planetarium** on PSP?

The most interesting game I come across today has to be *Homestar Portable*, by Sega. It's based on a home planetarium system Sega released last year. You sit in the middle of the floor and it casts little stars on your ceiling. It wasn't extremely popular. You can find them discounted in certain electronics stores. I mean, who really wants a talking home planetarium? Who wants to look at an imaginary sky, these days, when they have otherwise exciting videogames or movies to look at?

That this planetarium is now for PSP strikes me as almost as bizarre as Namco's *Portable Island*. Why the hell would you want a portable planetarium on PSP? A starry sky is black and white; the dark background would really reflect the player's face if he played it on, say, a train. And if you played the game at home, under the covers - I mean, how would that be a game? You're just looking at stars. There's a "trivia mode" to answer questions about stars, though really, that you're playing the game on a PSP in your bed should probably shed some light on how little those stars have to do with you. No offence to astronomers or anything.

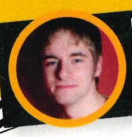
Just the other night, my girlfriend was showing me a video of fireworks on her cellular phone. Her phone is equipped with a 2-gigabyte Memory Stick PRO Duo, so she was able to get a good 30 minutes of a fireworks show in low resolution. I could hear her and her friend chatting about how amazing the fireworks are. I'm just standing there in the middle of my living room with this phone in my hand, wondering when it's going to end. See, fireworks are a big deal to Japanese people, in the summer. There's something great about walking down a street packed with people lined up to watch the fireworks. Everyone thinks they've come out of the way, and gotten a better seat than everyone else. Everyone thinks they've avoided a crowd. When really, they haven't. They are the crowd. And they're usually nice crowds. They wear kimonos, drink beer, and stare at the sky. I'm just wondering, after the other night - when is someone going to make a PSP game wherein you co-ordinate a fireworks show and then force other people to watch it via Ad Hoc mode?

It seems to me that a lot of developers just... aren't using the PSP the right way. They're taking its graphical processing power for granted, and letting the creativity fall behind. There may be people who say something like *Homestar Portable* is "creative", though, really, wouldn't lying on a blanket next to your significant other and staring up at stars somewhere out in the country be more "creative" than playing a game about it? It's a bizarre society we're turning into, where "contrived" and "creative" mean the same thing. Quite frankly, it's a little tacky.

And another popular game is *Bleach: Heat The Soul 3*, by Sony Computer Entertainment. It's a multi-player VS battle game, the third released in two years, in which players attack other players with RPG commands. What the heck? You say, "Attack!" and your guy attacks the other guy? It's not even an action game? Why don't you just punch each other in the face for real? ■

FIVE ST★R

Each month, someone picks their five fave PSP games

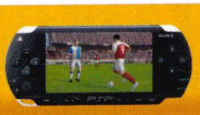


Dave Shaw
Staff Writer
(PowerStation)

LOCOROCO
Who doesn't love this amazing Japanese game? If you don't, you have no love in your soul.

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR
Some developers say the PSP is limited. This proves them all wrong. Ha!

ME & MY KATAMARI
Still one of the best titles around for the PSP and, like *LocoRoco*, is filled with joy.



WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2
I wear football shirts to work every day, so this is the perfect choice for me.

FOOTBALL MANAGER
The better of the two management titles. I'm already into my 50th year.

SONY DUMP UMD?

Movies on Memory Stick

In a surprising move, Sony in the US has started to put movies onto Memory Sticks. However, at the moment this is a marketing ploy to encourage consumers to buy 1GB and 2GB Memory Stick Duos ($60 and $100 respectively) by showing how you can watch movies on a PSP without having to buy UMDs.

The Memory Stick Entertainment Pack comprises one of the above sizes of Memory Stick and a DVD that can be used in your PC to unlock, with a supplied code, one of four PSP-formatted Sony Pictures movies. The choice of movie is between *Hitch*, *SWAT*, *The Grudge* and *XXX: State Of The Union*. Once your choice is made you simply transfer the movie to the Stick and away you go. However, the code only allows one download and after you've made your choice you're stuck with it, which is crazy if you ask us.

Despite being a tool to sell more Memory Sticks, it still shows that Sony might finally be conceding that UMD movies, while a novel idea, are overpriced and are now redundant. SCEE have not announced whether the same packs will be made available in the UK but we'll certainly endeavour to find out. ■

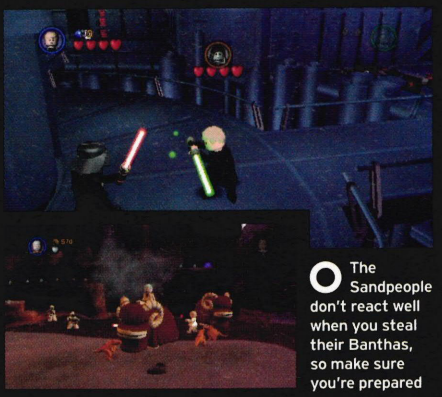
UMDs Targeted

Retail giant strikes a blow against beleaguered format

In a sudden move, giant US department-store chain Target has removed UMD movies from its shelves in some, if not all, of their stores. The store's website still has them for sale at almost full price, although until the warehouse is empty that will probably remain the case. Rumours are abound that Toy R Us has also stopped ordering any new releases and are simply waiting for the stock they have to sell. With two such important and large retailers dropping their support for the format it seems like yet another nail in the coffin for the doomed disc. It doesn't really come as much of a surprise to most of us; who wants to buy a movie they can only watch on one device for double the price of a DVD? Not us, that's for sure. With Sony's track record on its proprietary formats, the future looks bleak for Blu-ray. ■

THESE ARE THE BRICKS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...

After months of waiting we've finally got our hands on some screenshots for the eagerly awaited *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy*, and rather nice they are too. Hopefully we'll get our hands on the game next month and give you the full lowdown. For now, enjoy the screens. ■



The Sandpeople don't react well when you steal their Banthas, so make sure you're prepared

OUR MAN ON THE CLAPHAM OMNIBUS

TRAVELLING COMPANION

It's just you, me and my PSP...

It's been over a year, the PSP is very much in the public eye – all over the tube network at least – even more so recently with Sony's current marketing campaign and the upcoming PS3 mega console, yet sometimes us PSP owners encounter folk with such little media awareness it almost makes us laugh. Almost.

How am I? Oh yes, sorry, I'm doing just fine. After my previous two months' niggling RSI, and subsequent relationship problems, I'd simply had enough and decided to work through my pain. The mental immobility was getting to me, and what I had previously seen as just a job, namely my little columns here and there, I now realise to be more of a psychological outlet. Anyway, having braved the worst of it, it seems that the whole phenomenon of RSI is something of a fallacy. Apologies to any genuine sufferers out there, but I suspect it was simply a case of getting a little overexcited with that irritating little nub and pulling a muscle. Still, it did display, just how important it is to keep games and girlfriends as separate as water and gremlins. Anyway, back to my point: the mindless, unfriendly, antisocial arrogance of some folk. I'll give my counterpoint first – I'm a bit like that, you see.

Making my way through town, merrily Tube-ing it up to Liverpool Street, I felt there was something different before I saw it. Taking stock of my steamy underground carriage I notice some tramps, an odd young lady of considerable note and a bunch of mid-twenties' man-bag toting travellers each with dipped heads, slightly protruding tongues and a look of concentration that screamed – to me, as someone who's been there – PSP puzzling. Judging from the subconscious PSP tilting going on, there was some furious *Mercury* action happening in my carriage. At a suitable lull in proceedings, I made my way over to the trio and offered them a mini Wi-Fi LAN party on *Capcom Classics Collection* which they gladly accepted, and it turned out that one of them had a copy of said aged assemblage, cutting all that disc swapping time in half. I shan't linger on the particular joys of a four-way retro rumble – that job's better left to other parts of the mag. Anyway, my point – counterpoint actually, but who's counting? – is that this is exactly what the PSP is for: making friends and having a good time. Pure and simple.

So when I join my train at Liverpool Street, en route to Norwich for an uninteresting reunion with some old school friends, I'm in a rather chipper mood. Actually managing to get a seat on the rather overcrowded train ups my mood more, leaving me feeling better than I have in some time. Sadly, as it turns out, a particularly sour-faced suit plonks himself down next to me. Grey pinstripe? Check. Slightly balding grey hair? Check. Obtrusive laptop loaded up with excel sheets, pivot tables and numerous colourful pie charts? Check. Considered grey beard grown in an effort to make himself look distinguished, manly and in possession of the respect of his underlings? Most certainly check. I thought middle management at the time. Turns out he's just a mean old sod. Being in a rather jolly mood, I decided to play a little *LocoRoco* – through my earphones I might add. About half an hour through our journey I sensed an air of malevolence, shortly before a terse tap on the arm. "Shouldn't you turn that thing off?" the soulless grey utters with barely concealed irritation, "you've been playing that for hours". All I could manage at this point, given his stunning rudeness, was a monosyllabic "Whaaa?". "I never let my children play those horrible things for more than a hour, it's not good for you." You can probably imagine just how much this damaged my innate trust in the goodness of the human race, especially after my happy experience on the tube that morning. "Some of us have work to do, you know, and that isn't really helping me," he slimes, slipping from irritated to patronising, clearly confusing my shocked silence with submissiveness. Oh dear, I feel like an NBL pitcher winding up to launch a handful of turd at a six-foot fan. Oh boy, is this going to get messy. I was going to allow the old giffer the indignity of being cut off by my passionate diatribe of now well-percolated bile, but suddenly a better, more passive method of retribution occurred to me – Ghandi would be proud. "This is very important work I'm trying to concentrate on here..." the suit rattles on, now firmly in patronising mode. "Hang on a minute sir," I calmly exclaim, shoving my best talk-to-the-hand gesture into his face before unplugging my headphones and treating the git to a dousing of *LocoRoco*-happy tunes and one of the most gleeless smiles in my facial repertoire. The poor sod clearly suffered for the remainder of the journey under the oppressive joy of both Locos and myself as I bounced around relentlessly in my seat for the remaining hour and a half. Dunno about you, but I make that checkmate. ■

MUSIC MAESTRO

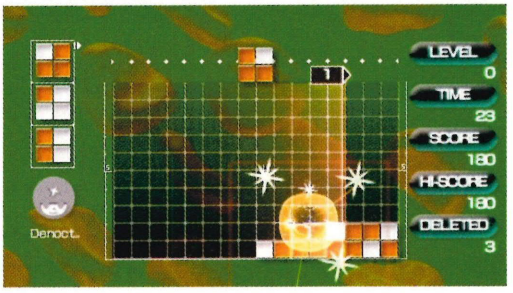
Lumines II track listing announced

Getting the tunes right on any puzzler is a hugely important part of development, and with that in mind Buena Vista Games has recently announced the track listing for its awesome puzzling sequel *Lumines II*. Speaking at the Develop Conference in early July, lead designer of the title, Tetsuya Mizuguchi said that whilst the tunes on offer were something of a departure from the previous title, they all have "just the right tone, mix and energy to incorporate into the game".

Whilst the original game featured the electro stylings of Japanese musician Shinichi Osawa, AKA Mondo Grosso, this iteration will include a more Western flavour with licensed tracks from numerous big names such as The Chemical Brothers, Beck, Gwen Stefani, New Order, the ubiquitous Fatboy Slim and The Go! Team.

For all those Mondo Grosso fans there'll be plenty of exclusive tracks from the popular Japanese artiste, as well as music supplied by fellow Japanese music mixers Ken Ishii and TECHRIDERS. That's just the music though, we can expect a great deal of gameplay from *Lumines II* with over 60 new skins, wireless multi-player, all new battle modes and streaming video. ■

The awesome *Lumines* gameplay will now be joined by some fantastic tunes... and the Black Eyed Peas



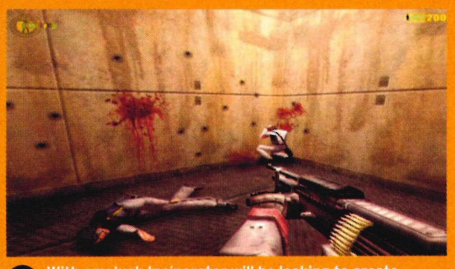
The full track listing:

Beck - Black Tambourine
Black Eyed Peas - Pump It
Chemical Brothers - Star Guitar
Fatboy Slim - Gangster Trippin'
The Go! Team - Bottle Rocket
Gwen Stefani - Hollaback Girl
Hoobastank - Born To Lead
Junior Senior - Take My Time
Junkie XL - Breezer
Stigmato Inc - Reality Check
Missy Elliot - Lose Control
Ken Ishii - Various
Mondo Grosso - Various
New Order - Various
TECHRIDERS - Various

Burnin' down the house

THQ start up new dev team

THQ has set up a new in-house development company to deal with the increased demand brought about by next-gen consoles. Incinerator Games, based in Carlsbad, California comprises talent from right across the development world with designers, coders, and producers from such respected companies as Rockstar and 989 Studios, the team responsible for the truly brilliant *Syphon Filter* series on the PSone. Having worked on some of the most impressive titles on the current generation of consoles with titles like *Twisted Metal*, *Midnight Club* and *NFL Gameday*, Incinerator Games will be primarily focused on the Xbox 360, PS3 and Wii titles. Commenting on the strength of THQ's internal development strength, Jack Sorensen, executive vice president of THQ worldwide said: "The addition of Incinerator Games is another example of our dedication to enhance and expand our internal development capabilities" before suggesting a glut of original titles. Incinerator Games is currently working on the Pixar tie-in, *Cars*, and with that much talent will no doubt be putting out a scorching new IP sometime soon. ■



With any luck Incinerator will be looking to create quality titles with new IPs, just like THQ has previously done with *Red Faction*

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PS2 SPY

There's life in the old girl yet so we examine which games are worth a look on the ageing system...

God Of War II

Publisher: SCEE
Release: Jan 2007

Kratos is back and he's a little ticked off. Tricked into giving up his newly acquired God-like powers, Kratos must travel to the far end of the earth and defeat many foes along the way in order to reclaim his throne. Filled with yet more Greek mythology and fantastic action, this sequel looks to improve on the already fantastic original. With new magic and brutal new moves, Kratos is now even better equipped to face the mythical beats that hinder his progress. What we've played so far looks amazing and *God Of War* looks like it will reaffirm that the PS2 is still a console to be reckoned with.

Jaws Unleashed

Publisher: THQ
Release: Out now

Something of a bizarre concept for a game but one that, surprisingly, works quite well. Amity Island's economy has grown and with that the population has risen. All these extra bodies in the water make an attractive prospect for the great white shark. You take control of the savage beast as you try to dodge hunters and researchers while causing as much havoc as possible to the sleepy town. Developed by the team behind the somewhat gentler *Ecco The Dolphin*, there's plenty of fish-based gory fun on offer including a dismemberment engine that provides multiple points of disconnection – lovely.

Even other sharks aren't safe from the gaping jaws of death!

Ford Street Racing even includes the 1975 Torino Sport made famous by a certain Starsky and Hutch

Models from present-day supercars and classic muscle cars will appear

Fords Xplode onto PSP

Any make, as long as it's Ford that is

Xplosive is currently putting the finishing touches to its PSP conversion of *Ford Street Racing: LA Duel*. The game features a unique 'team' feature that puts you in control of your own Ford racing team. With 24 tracks based on the streets of LA you can switch between your three cars during the race and issue a range of commands from blocking to drafting. Featuring 18 officially licensed Ford vehicles from the 1970 Mk1 Capri RS2600 to the 2007 Shelby GT500, *LA Duel* is sure to be all the Ford racing action you could ever want and will arrive in shops some time this October. ■

MICROSOFT HANDHELD REVEALED?

Could this be the Xboy?

The rumours circulating about a Microsoft handheld console have died down slightly after the giant corporation revealed details on its forthcoming gadget. The device, codenamed Argo, is billed as a competitor to not only the PSP and Nintendo DS, but also to Apple's iPod. Looking very similar to the iconic Apple MP3 player, the Argo will not only be able to play MP3s and videos, but also games. The device will also have Wi-Fi connectivity; something which the iPod is distinctly lacking.

However, with buttons in short supply (as far as we can tell) the games on offer will probably be more akin to those on mobile phones than anything approaching PSP quality. We'll go out on a limb and suggest that the games will be downloadable from Microsoft's iTunes-like online media service. Of course, Microsoft could have another handheld device up its sleeve, who knows? ■

PS3 UPDATE

Delay for the PS3?

With both Sega and THQ venting their anger at Sony for not releasing final specs for the PS3, along with Ubisoft and Activision similarly berating the PS3 manufacturers for setting the price of the console too high, Sony seems to be taking it from all sides. Of course, this is something they won't really want at the moment, if recent reports of a possible delay of the PS3's launch happen to be anywhere near the mark. Whilst these rumours are just that, it's difficult to completely dismiss the suggestion that the PS3 may not be scheduled for a 17 November launch. So where do these reports stem from? First, a spokesperson for the producers of the console rather worryingly stated that "We're waiting for [Blu-ray input and output technology specifications] until the last possible minute, but the launch date could be pushed back if we don't get them soon". Second, similar reports have come through from numerous sources indicating that the diodes used to read Sony's proprietary Blu-ray storage medium are in very short supply.

A recent study by financial management company Merrill Lynch has – as well as indicating a delay of the console – concluded that each unit produced will cost upwards of $800 to produce, something that, should PS3 sales go as planned on the launch day, would mean Sony taking a giant hit of over $1 billion dollars. Now we all know that manufacturers always make losses on hardware, but is this a step too far for Sony?

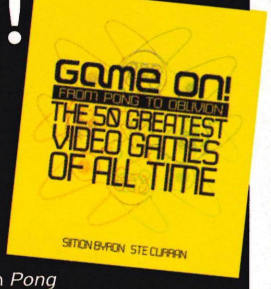
Apparently, if the Tokyo stock exchange is anything to go by, yes. With shares falling 3.6% in reaction to the analysis, it's easy to imagine Sony getting into trouble with the PS3, should Microsoft take advantage of this moment of weakness to raise the Xbox brand above PlayStation.

Many other analysts see PlayStation as having too strong a presence in the console market for it to be shaken by speculation, however, and whilst there does seem to be credence in the rumours, Asian console producers AsusTek – one of the largest console and computer plants – has reportedly begun production on the PS3. If these reports are true, the company has already begun shipping over 200,000 units and will be in full flow by October, with the ability to produce over a million consoles per month. These figures are in line with Sony's promise of 2 million units on launch day (our best guess would be anywhere from 130,000 to 200,000 for the UK), 4 million by the end of the year and a further 2 million by March the following year. We're convinced Sony will be able to produce the goods by November, but their suggested losses on each unit seem too sizeable to ignore. Looks like we'll have to wait and see. ■

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Don't worry it's got pictures

If you've ever wondered what the best game is of all time is then you'll want get a copy of this forthcoming book. *Entitled Game On! From Pong To Oblivion: The Greatest Games Of All Time*, the publication focuses on what the authors, Simon Byron and Ste Curran, believe to be the 50 greatest video games since they first appeared all those years ago. Not only is there in depth information on each game but *Game On!* also tells readers where to find the games so they can play them now; most handy.



Judging by the title we're guessing both *Pong* and *Oblivion* feature somewhere in the line-up but we'll have to wait until the autumn when the book is released to find out which game hits the top spot. ■

PS3 SPY

With so many PS3 games in the pipeline we take a look at which ones are worth keeping an eye on...

MotorStorm

Publisher: SCEE
Release: TBA

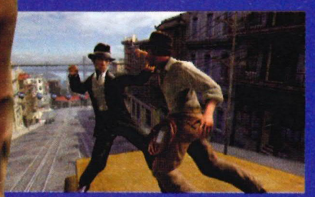
This caused quite a stir at last year's E3 with some mighty fine screenshots that most onlookers assumed were doctored in some way. Now we have what is purportedly in-game screenshots and it doesn't look all that different. The detail doesn't look quite as high but this still looks like a quality slice of off-road fun.

The basic premise is simple – race across various unfriendly terrains in a choice of off-road vehicles, including dirt bikes, ATVs, sand rails, rally cars, monster trucks and many more. With impressive damage models and realistic dirt covering the cars this looks like it might just be the definitive all-terrain experience we've been waiting for.

Indiana Jones

Publisher: LucasArts
Release: Summer 2007

Set in 1939, this original story sees Indy globetrotting once again in search of ancient artefacts. Under the direction of George Lucas, the game features revolutionary euphoria technology from NaturalMotion, which gives characters amazingly lifelike action and awareness. The technology allows characters to change their behaviour on the fly and react to different situations. Rather than just have the same animation repeated during fights, Indy's enemies will stumble then balance themselves, brace themselves for falls and even reach for ledges when falling. All this creates a realistic and varied performance from every enemy encountered. The spectacular chase sequences promised mean we can't wait for this to arrive.



NEWSFLASH

Law breaker

Take 2 in trouble again

Take 2 Interactive has had it pretty rough of late, what with numerous legal actions flying in the company's general direction. It doesn't look like things are going to get much better soon either, with news that the publishing giant is under investigation. The Securities and Exchange Commission have announced that it's conducting an 'informal, non-public investigation into stock option grants made from January 1997 onwards'. Sounds ominous.

Cancer hope

Re-Mission set to help cancer sufferers

It's good to hear that gaming is helping fight cancer, with a new title designed to help young patients come to terms with their illness. Re-Mission, created by a team of commercial developers sees gamers take control of Roxxi, a female nanobot, blasting cancer cells to bits. "[It gives] kids a tool to fight the disease, a sense of power and control," says Pat Christen, president of HopeLab, designers of the game. Thank you HopeLab.

Sell out

Lara and Agent 47 selling like hot cakes

Tomb Raider and *Hitman*. Two games recognised as truly great entries in the genre, but both ones that, at one point or another, looked to be going down the can. According to Eidos however, both franchises are going strong with Lara selling 2.9 million copies with her latest outing, and *Hitman: Blood Money* not doing too badly either with a pretty sizeable 1.5 million. Not bad guys, keep up the good work.

NFL Street 3

Sequel on the way

In an unsurprising move, EA is bringing another sequel to the PSP. *NFL Street 3* sees the popular series bolstered with new aerial moves that allow you to show off your style, boost your score and reach special items and game modifiers that hover in the air above the field. The Gamebreaker can be controlled and allows you to pull off new power moves that are available to both offence and defence.

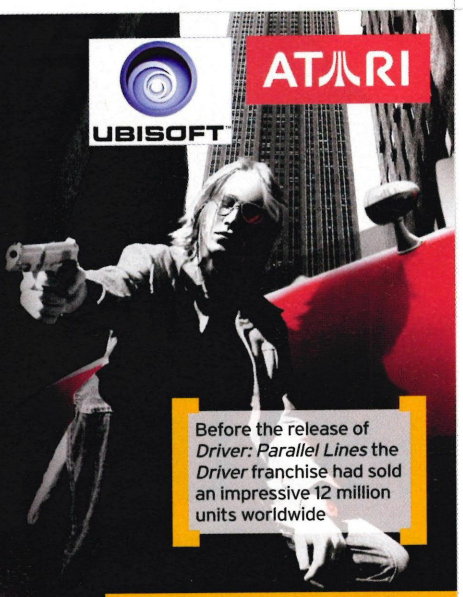
Atari driven off

THQ start up new dev team

In a shock announcement made on 14 July, Ubisoft announced it has acquired the intellectual property and technology rights to the *Driver* franchise from publishers Atari and developer Reflections. The agreement reached by the companies also saw Ubisoft obtaining most of the assets and all of the personnel of Reflections Interactive Limited. The whole lot cost Ubisoft a not insubstantial 19 million Euros (approx. £13million). Atari claims the sale is part of a plan to refocus its portfolio of franchises and streamline its cost structure. *Test Drive Unlimited* is considered the key franchise at the moment and all possible resources are being put into that.

Whether the sale has anything to do with the drop in revenue over the past year for the company Atari isn't saying, but we'd be surprised if the two weren't related.

When work on the next *Driver* game will commence is unknown (perhaps it's already started) but Ubisoft are sure to want a return on their investment sooner rather than later. Could a PSP port be in the pipeline? We hope so. ■



Before the release of *Driver: Parallel Lines* the *Driver* franchise had sold an impressive 12 million units worldwide

SONY RELENT ON 'RACIST' ADS

Campaign branded "insensitive"

Sony has withdrawn an ad campaign in Holland that was designed to promote the arrival of the ceramic white PSP, due to some deriders claiming it was overtly racist. The offending images contained a black woman dressed in black and a white woman dressed in white, obviously representing the different colours of the PSP. While all the images showed the ladies tussling in some way, none caused more offence than the image of the white woman gripping the black woman by the jaw and looking down at her.

While little stir was caused by the campaign in its native Holland, once the images found their way to California Assemblyman Leland Yee he branded the ads as "insensitive at best and racist at worst".

Sony claimed the ads had no other message but to promote the ceramic white PSP but after pressure they relented and withdrew the ads. It conceded that: "People have a wide variety of perceptions about such imagery and we wish to apologise to those who perceived the advert differently to that intended." ■

This was the image that caused the most offence

Dodge this

Atari is picking up more official licences for its forthcoming *Test Drive Unlimited*, which is due for release on PSP in the autumn. This time it's the turn of American manufacturer Dodge. Possibly better known for trucks, Dodge also has a reputation for putting its truck engines into cars and creating absolute monster vehicles in the process. The Viper is one such car and both the SRT-10 and SRT-10 coupe will feature in the highly anticipated driving game. The SRT-10 is a heavily restyled model of the classic Dodge Viper and features an engine that has been enlarged to 8.3(!) litres. This increases the output to 504bhp and gives the car a ridiculous 525lb-ft of torque. All in all it's a damn fine addition to the vehicle roster.

The SRT-10 can reportedly do 0-60mph in less than four seconds. We want one!

STOP PRESS!

EA GOES BACK TO WAR

Medal Of Honor announced for PSP!

MEDAL OF HONOR HEROES

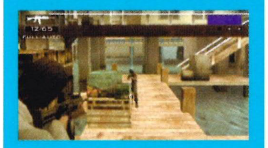
Just as we were about to go to press some news landed in our inbox that was too good to leave until next month. It's the news we've been waiting to hear – EA's *Medal Of Honor* franchise is heading to PSP.

With a brand new storyline and PSP-specific feature set, this latest addition to the franchise has been designed specifically around the console rather than being a standard port of the PS2 games. With both a single-player campaign and 15 multi-player maps that will allow up to 32 players via infrastucture and eight on ad hoc, this looks to be a pretty special FPS for PSP. Let's just hope it gets the controls right.

We should have more info on this next month, but for now you can enjoy these rather nice looking screenshots. ■

Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

Brief flashes of fun and a decent bit of multi-player don't stop this from being any more than an utterly average experience.



Miami Vice: The Game

Not the greatest game ever made, but there are enough little touches to make it better than the average. The multi-player is particularly good fun.

Field Commander

We waited ages for this to come out, but it was worth the wait. A strategy game that's in-depth enough for enthusiasts, but accessible enough for newcomers to the genre.

UK CHARTS

We've been keeping an eye on...

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	BUENA VISTA	The power of the movie licence propels another average game to the top of the charts.
02	CARS	THQ	Oh look, another movie-based game climbs to the top, how very surprising.
03	FORMULA ONE 06	SCEE	Racing round a track obviously appeals to you lot and now you can recreate Button's first F1 win!
04	TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND	EIDOS	Lara loses her grip on the top of the charts, but still manages to stay in a respectable position.
05	MIAMI VICE: THE GAME	VU GAMES	Despite being based on a movie this is actually a solid little game and deserving of its position.
06	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	KONAMI	The mighty *Pro Evo* still refuses to succumb to the marketing power of *FIFA*.
07	DAXTER	SCEE	The furry fellow falls a few places, but manages to hang around in the top ten for another month.
08	FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY 2006	EA	*FIFA* finally loses out to *Pro Evo* now World Cup fever has died down. About time too.
09	GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES	ROCKSTAR	Expect this to stick around in the charts even after *Vice City Stories* is released.
10	LOCOROCO	SCEE	We're so disappointed that this fantastically original game didn't hit the top spot.
11	JUICED: ELIMINATOR	THQ	Pimping your ride is clearly high on PSP owners' lists of priority. See that bling shine.
12	LEMMINGS	SCEE	The suicidal critters take a plunge out of the top ten, but are still sticking around.
13	BURNOUT LEGENDS	EA	A dramatic return to the charts for EA's smash-'em-up and well deserved it is too.
14	FIELD COMMANDER	UBISOFT	Moving into position to blast the opposition out of the way en route to the top.
15	VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR	SEGA	Wimbledon creates renewed interest in Sega's tennis sim. Perhaps Henman should get a copy.
16	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006	SEGA	A dramatic drop for *Football Manager* after the World Cup ends with another England bapping.
17	PURSUIT FORCE	SCEE	Absolutely rock hard but definitely worth a go if you've got plenty of patience.
18	TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: ESSENTIALS	UBISOFT	Sam Fisher is still lurking around the bottom of the charts waiting to infiltrate the top ten again.
19	MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES: EXTENDED PLAY	MIDWAY	Retro gaming is popular on PSP, as this release clearly proves.
20	SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE	SEGA	The irritating difficulty of the simians' latest exploits isn't enough to keep it out of the charts.

Formula One 06

Your opinion of this really depends on whether you enjoy the sport or not. Either way it's still a quality racer with some great multi-player options. Can you beat Alonso?

LocoRoco

Maybe this is just too cute for the majority of PSP owners, but even grumpy Dep Ed Simon liked it and he hates pretty much everything that's even remotely cute.

Splinter Cell: Essentials

Too many old missions make this a somewhat pointless purchase for *Splinter* fans. It does give a nice preview of *Double Agent* if you can't wait for it.

RELEASE LIST

THE LIST OF FORTHCOMING TITLES JUST KEEPS GROWING WITH ALL MANNER OF PORTABLE GAMING GOODNESS. BRING 'EM ON WE SAY, THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM FOR MORE!

SEPTEMBER

B-BOY
SCEE

THE CON
Southpeak

HOT **GANGS OF LONDON**
SCEE

GRADIUS COLLECTION
Konami

GUN: SHOWDOWN
Activision

LA RUSH
Midway

HOT **LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY**
LucasArts

ANDY'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

■ I loved the first one and this is based on three awesome films rather than three rubbish ones so it's bound to be great.

MERCURY MELTDOWN
Ignition

PASSPORT TO...
SCEE

PILOT ACADEMY
Rising Star

POCKET RACERS
Konami

PROSTROKE GOLF: WORLD TOUR 2007
Oxygen

RENGOKU 2
Konami

TAITO LEGENDS POWER UP
Xplosiv

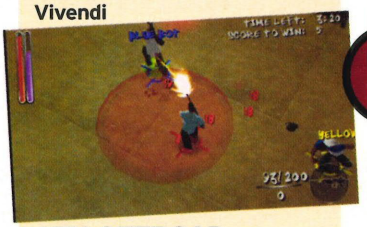
HOT **TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION**
SCEE

ULTIMATE GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS
Capcom

WTF
D3Publisher

OCTOBER

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF - G-UNIT EDITION
Vivendi



ATV OFFRODAD FURY PRO
SCEE

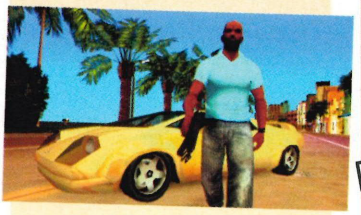
BLADE DANCER: LINEAGE OF LIGHT
Ignition

DAVE MIRRA BMX CHALLENGE
Crave

DUNGEON SIEGE: THRONE OF AGONY
2K Games

FORD STREET RACING: LA DUEL
Xplosiv

HOT **GTA: VICE CITY STORIES**
Rockstar



KAZOOK
Xplosiv

NBA 07
SCEE

PLAYWIZE POKER & CASINO
505 Gamestreet

POWER STONE COLLECTION
Capcom

HOT **PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6**
Konami

SIMON'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...

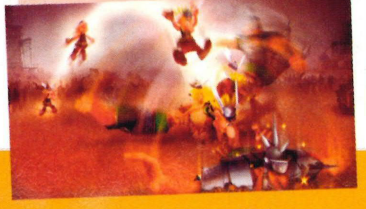
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6

■ After the last one was a bit of a let down I have high hopes that Konami has fixed all the problems – don't let me down!

SCARFACE: MONEY. POWER. RESPECT.
Vivendi

NOVEMBER

ASTERIX & OBELIX XXL 2: MISSION LAS VEGUM
Atari



CAPCOM CLASSIC COLLECTION RELOADED
Capcom

ERAGON AND SAPHIRA
Vivendi

HOT **KILLZONE: LIBERATION**
SCEE

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE
Activision

NEED FOR SPEED CARBON
Electronic Arts

PAINKILLER: HELL WARS
DreamCatcher Interactive

HOT **TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8**
Activision

HOT **WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007**
THQ

TBA

300: MARCH TO GLORY
Eidos

ACE COMBAT X: SKIES OF DECEPTION
SCEE

APE ACADEMY 2
SCEE

ARTHUR AND THE MINIMOYS
Atari

AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER
THQ

BATTLEZONE
Atari

BLACK & WHITE CREATURES
THQ

BLISS ISLAND
Codemasters

BLITZ: THE LEAGUE
Midway

BOMBERMAN
Konami

HOT **CALL OF DUTY 3**
Activision

CHESS BATTLE
Konami

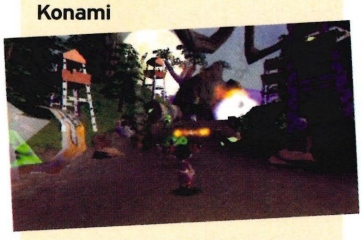
CODED ARMS: CONTAGION
Konami

CRASH DUMMY VS THE EVIL D-TROIT
Schanz

CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII
Square Enix

DEAD HEAD FRED
D3Publisher

DEATH, JR 2
Konami



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: TACTICS
Atari

DUNGEON EXPLORER
Hudson Entertainment

EARACHE EXTREME METAL RACING
Metro3D

EARTHWORM JIM
Atari

HENRI'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...
EARTHWORM JIM

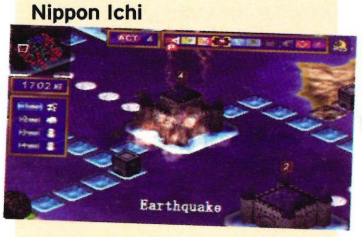
■ The last time I played this was on Mega Drive so I just can't wait to get my hands on Jim again to see if he still has what it takes.

EVERY EXTEND EXTRA
Buena Vista Games

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
Electronic Arts

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2007
Sega

GENERATION OF CHAOS
Nippon Ichi



GHOST RIDER
2K Games

THE GODFATHER MOB WARS
Electronic Arts

HOT **GRAN TURISMO 4 MOBILE**
SCEE

GUILTY GEAR JUDGEMENT
THQ

HELLBOY
Konami

HOT PXL
Atari

JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES
Eidos

LUMINES II
Buena Vista Games

MARVEL TRADING CARD GAME
Konami

METAL GEAR SOLID DIGITAL COMIC
Konami

HOT **METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS**
Konami

METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY
SNK

MLB '06: THE SHOW
SCEE

MORTAL KOMBAT UNCHAINED
Midway

TOM'S LOOKING FORWARD TO...
MORTAL KOMBAT UNCHAINED

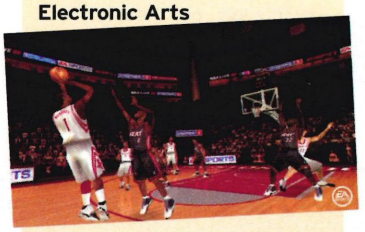
■ FINISH HIM! Does gaming get any better than that? I don't think so. This better be good or I'll be performing some fatalities of my own.

MOTOGP
SCEE

MYST
Midway

NASCAR 07
Electronic Arts

NBA LIVE 07
Electronic Arts



NHL 07
Electronic Arts

OPEN SEASON
Ubisoft

PUZZLE CHALLENGE: CROSSWORDS AND MORE!
Crave

HOT **RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS**
SCEE

HOT **SILENT HILL ORIGINS**
Konami

SIMS 2 PETS
Electronic Arts

SOCOM US NAVY SEALS FIRETEAM BRAVO 2
SCEE

HOT **SONIC RIVALS**
Sega

SPINOUT
Ghostlight

STAR TREK: TACTICAL ASSAULT
Bethesda Softworks

STEEL HORIZONS
Konami

STREET SUPREMACY
Konami

SUPERMAN RETURNS: THE VIDEOGAME
Electronic Arts

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED
Atari

THRILLVILLE
Atari

HOT **TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07**
Electronic Arts

TRAXION
LucasArts

WINX CLUB
Konami

WORLD OF POOL
Ghostlight

WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2007
Sega

YS: THE ARK OF NAPISHTIM
Konami

YU-GI-OH! GX
Konami

PSPOST

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When it comes to PSP accessories, no one does it quite like JOYTECH. JOYTECH makes a whole range of PSP gear that's always high on quality and easy on the pocket. The Media Amp is simply one of the best accessories around and essential for every movie-lovin' PSP owner! Check out the full range at **www.joytech.net**. Plus, we've got a sensational Media Amp to give away every month to one lucky reader...

Got something on your mind? Let us know! We might be able to help. Or you might just want to tell us an interesting story. It doesn't have to be PSP related (although it helps), simply make us laugh and, you never know, your letter may well have the honour of being printed...

Super fan

Grand Theft Auto is my favourite gaming series ever and I really can't wait for *Vice City Stories*. What I really want to know is whether Rockstar have a San Andreas Stories planned. Running around that huge open world would be fantastic on the PSP, please say it's going to happen!

Gary Harper, Chertsy

Give them a break Gary, *Vice City Stories* isn't even on the shelves yet and already you're clamouring for the sequel! Unsurprisingly, Rockstar has nothing to say about San Andreas Stories, probably because they don't know what they're doing next with the series on PSP. Somehow we can't see it happening; the map is just too large – perhaps we'll see a trio of titles featuring San Fierro, Las Venturas and Los Santos, though that is unlikely too. Your best bet is to just enjoy *Vice City* when it's released, then wait and see what Rockstar has in store next. They do have another PSP title in the works but haven't released any info yet. We're hoping for a *Smuggler's Run* conversion, but hey, that's just us.

In the meantime check out the new screenshots and information in this issue then come back next month as we report on our in-depth hands-on with *Vice City Stories*.

Homebrew hater

Firstly a bit about myself. I am one of those 'older' generation games players, that's played everything from the fantastic ZX81, right up to present day, and the phenomenon that is PSP. I have written the odd letter to games magazines in the past, usually when something gets my back up, and I'm afraid that's just what is happening now. Well not got my back up as such, it's just that I feel the time is right to ask you guys some important questions, both about the mag and the PSP itself. I only started from Issue 3, as I didn't even know of its existence until then; anyhow, the first two mags I got together, and in fact read both from cover to cover, on the first day, and was blown away by the quality not only of the magazine itself, but indeed the maturity of the writing, which, as an oldie myself, I can relate to a little better.

But anyway, onto the bad stuff: I have just this minute finished the somewhat skinny Issue 7, and for the first time I found myself skipping a hell of a lot of stuff, to the point that always makes me question is the mag worth buying any more?

While I was an assistant sports editor in the past (now sadly unemployed due to a long term sports injury), I am fully aware and appreciate just how hard it can be to get the 'filler stuff'. I don't know but I got the feeling that this month must have been a terrible grind for you guys, as the quality of the stuff this month was poor to say the least, and I am guessing the release of *LocoRoco* came along to save your bacon big time.

However, was it really necessary to have that many pages on *Metal Gear Solid*? Although interesting, no way was it worth 12 pages!

Now on to what is probably the biggest debate: homebrew. Firstly I am on 2.71, and can I try and say here without hanging myself, that in my long gaming history I haven't been a stranger to Warez and that kind of stuff, if you get my drift. Anyway, the PSP is the only console I have stayed legit with. I can't help thinking homebrew will continue to struggle and to be honest I am actually on Sony's side here for the first time ever, because quite simply I don't care what any of you say out there, you are not using homebrew for just home made software. You know it and I know it: ISOs are the sole reason folks have homebrew or firmware hacks and I'm sorry but

F.A.Q.

Mail to: goplay@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Putting out the fires of those burning PSP questions

> Why are PSP games so bloody expensive? I can't afford to shell out £35 on a handheld game! They don't seem to crop up in sales very often either – are we likely to see a price drop soon?

Steve Finch, Basingstoke

You must be looking in the wrong places; we've seen plenty of PSP games in sales in places like HMV, Gamestation and online at Play.com. Platinum releases are also appearing now, although that's not really any help if you're after new games. It's always the case with new consoles that the games are expensive at first. Just look at the Xbox 360 – do you really think the games will remain at £50 for the life of the console?

> When can we expect a significant price drop for the PSP? I want to buy one for my son for Christmas but I just can't help comparing the price to the DS, which is considerably cheaper. Obviously I'd rather get my son the console he wants but I want to get him some games too, which is a much more wallet-friendly option with the DS.

Gary Collins, Oxford

There hasn't been an official price drop yet but if you shop around you can save yourself a few pounds. Places like GAME and Amazon.com also do deals with games that can sometimes save you some cash, although you rarely get to choose

STAR LETTER

STAR LETTER
Joytech Media Amp for every star letter

Hit parade

What the hell is up with the PSP charts at the moment? How does a game like *Pirates Of The Caribbean* get to the top and stay there for a couple of weeks? I almost bought it thinking that achieving the top spot meant it was a quality title. Fortunately a mate had taken the plunge first after reading a favourable review in another magazine so I had a little play on it. Suffice to say I was massively underwhelmed by the experience and was relieved not to have parted with my £35. Instead I picked up a copy of *LocoRoco*, which my mate had told me received a disappointing score in the only review he'd read. That coupled with the fact that it was languishing in the middle of the top ten put me off at first. As you can imagine I am incredibly pleased with my purchase and my mate is now begging for a lend.

I don't know what publication my mate has been reading but surely they got the scores topsy-turvy and that seems to have been reflected in the charts.
Jon Higgs, Kent

The massive hype surrounding the *Pirates Of The Caribbean* movie is undoubtedly what sent the game rocketing to the top of the charts and with barely any reviews around no one knew what the game would be like until they bought it. It's not completely without merit, but it is fair to say, as you do, that it is not deserving of the top spot.

***LocoRoco* may not be filled with fancy 3D graphics, but it's one of the most original titles we've seen in years. Anyone who doesn't reward it for that clearly has a cold black heart made of stone.**

Hopefully the state of the PSP charts will improve over the coming months with some quality titles on the horizon. Hopefully *Syphon Filter* will shift plenty of copies and obviously *Vice City Stories* and *Pro Evolution Soccer 6* will sit in the top ten for months. Anyway, for your astute game buying we award you with a Joytech Media Amp, enjoy!

whenever that is within the grasp of people Sony will fight tooth and nail to keep its integrity, and why shouldn't it?

Also I think it's fair to say that now even the games are affordable, even for me who's registered disabled – I bought *Micro Machines v4* and *Daxter* today for £17.99 each; now that is affordable to all.

So forgive me if I think the whole homebrew thing is somewhat sugar-coated. Yes folk may give radio and the odd nostalgic game a run for five minutes, but there's no way on earth people are using homebrew just for that. Sorry but I have done that kind of stuff for years and I know exactly what goes on. As for the release of this chip – why do you think that's happening? Are some doe-eyed people out there actually going to claim it's so they can play their homebrew radio on old firmware. Well excuse my sarcasm here, but yeah right!

My final statement here may sound a bit patronising given my gaming past, but I think its high time now we all took a long hard look at ourselves and ask why the gaming side of the PSP has been so dire in the past 12 months. You know why? Because the companies are getting pretty sick of investing millions into a game, only to see it on some torrent site the day (sometimes even before) of its release, and quite simply, the only way to play the ISOs is through homebrew, a chip or game exploit.

Judging by your mag's content over the past two months, surely you have to agree here, this simply cannot go on, both for yourselves and the PSP in general.

Sorry for the rant, but I get the feeling that the younger gaming generation has no clue as to what this is going to do to gaming in the end and is saying "well they make enough money anyway". This isn't going to work for much longer.

Anyway, I feel the sheer lack of content in your magazine now is just showing the very poor state of gaming today, and promoting homebrew as such, although it has good intentions, we all know what it's really used for.
Julian Toseland, Derbyshire

Well Julian, you sure do have a great deal to say. Firstly we're glad you enjoy the magazine, well a couple of issues anyway. Sorry the games. Perhaps once the PS3 is released the price will drop to encourage owners of Sony's newest arrival to pick up PSPs too. For now all you can do is shop around for the best price.

› What's up with all these peripherals that keep getting released for the PSP? It's a sleekly designed portable piece of kit, so what's the point of all these devices that make it the complete opposite? Whether it's some monstrosity to sit the PSP in so you can watch movies or a case with a ludicrous number of pockets, they all seem to go totally against the styling of the PSP!
Keith Davis, Exeter
It always seems to be the case for handheld consoles that the market is flooded with a ridiculous amount of accessories. Just remember that you don't actually have to buy any of them, so just chill out!

› After your Wi-Fi World Cup result I went and put a bet on England to win the tournament. Cheers for losing me 20 quid Go>Play!
Angry gambler, Wigan
Hey, don't blame us for England's utter rubbishness when it comes to penalties. We can't help it if Deputy Editor Simon (Imagine *Pro Evolution Soccer 5* champion) Griffin is a master of all football games and took England through with his unrivalled skill.

HOT TOPIC

What's been happening on the forum?

Who wants to see...

Posted Mon Jul 31, 2006 12:14PM
Akuma
... the (amazingly named, I take all rights) 'Dreamcube'?
Yes, yes I know the name is amazing no need to congratulate me, but what happens if this is the big N's last home console, (which I doubt because of the hype the Wii is getting), how about Nintendo and Sega team up and make an uber-console that incorporates the amazing game and character design of Nintendo and the graphical power of Sega?
Would you like to see this happen? Opinions please.

Posted Mon Jul 31, 2006 4:53PM
Raine
I'd rather see Sega keep making games in all honesty.
Although I have to say that top of my list would be to time travel back to 1991 when the *Sonic* games started.

Posted Mon Jul 31, 2006 9:25PM
NaughtiusMaximus
Nintendo are a tired company when it comes to game design these days and Sega are better off sticking to making the quality games they've come out with in recent years, considering what a flop the Dreamcast was. A great console, sure enough, but it couldn't have been released at a worse time.

Posted Mon Jul 31, 2006 10:48PM
whinham
I think Nintendo could team up with a better console manufacturer than Sega. I mean the Mega Drive wasn't exactly good in competition with its rivals was it? I don't think the Dreamcast was up to much either, for that matter.

to hear you didn't like Issue 7 as much but as for *LocoRoco* 'saving our bacon', we'd have to disagree. The number of reviews was exactly the same as the previous issue so we weren't exactly scraping the barrel.

As for *Metal Gear Solid* - we know that not everyone is going to be interested in it but many people would be. Seeing as it's one of the biggest franchises to hit PSP we thought it was worth dedicating that amount of pages to, especially as we put it on the cover. Personally we hate it when we buy a magazine based on what's on the cover only to find there's only a couple of pages, or less, about it inside.

On to your main bone of contention: the apparent evil that is homebrew. While you're absolutely correct that certain people do use it to play pirated games, we have never, nor will we ever, promote that side of homebrew. We feel that Sony is being a little too heavy handed in its quashing of applications with firmware upgrades. People will always want to hack consoles and hampering their progress simply makes many of them more determined to succeed. Not only that, but people who want to make the most of a PSP by playing both new games and homebrew are put off even buying the console in the first place and when the line-up of games on the PSP is so weak that's not really something Sony can afford. Piracy certainly harms publishers financially but let's not forget that one of the reasons the PSOne was so popular was because the games were relatively easy to pirate and look how many quality games were released on that.

Anyway, we hope you'll stick with us while the PSP finds its feet in the gaming world. Hopefully things will get better once the PS3 arrives.

Screw Santa

I am planning to buy myself a PSP for Christmas this year but I have a few questions before I do...

1. If I buy Region 1 or 3 UMDs or games will I be able to play them on my PAL PSP?

2. If I have the normal 1800mAh battery, how long will it normally last if I play games or listen to MP3s for around 8 hours a day? Are there any longer lasting batteries?

3. Are the online firmware updates really safe and bug free and is it easy to update?

4. I've heard the Japanese PSP has better picture quality - is that true? Can it also play PAL UMDs and have English menus?

Angelito Guillermo, London

That's the spirit, if no one else will buy you one treat yourself! On to your questions - PSP games from anywhere in the world will play on any PSP, however UMD movies are a different matter and are region coded like DVDs. Unfortunately a UK PSP will only play Region 2 UMDs and at the moment there's no way around this. Bear in mind that as the PSP is a handheld there is no PAL or NTSC format for it, as that is a television standard and doesn't actually apply to handhelds.

You should generally get around four hours of gaming out of your battery depending on brightness and volume settings. Just listening to MP3s should give you a little longer. There are a number of different battery options though and by the time you have your PSP, Sony should have released a double capacity one, which might even come with the PSP as standard after its release. Currently Datel sell a normal size battery that you can simply swap over once one runs out of power. They also do a double capacity battery but it's somewhat ugly and ruins the sleek lines of the PSP.

Updating the firmware couldn't really be easier and we've certainly never experienced any problems. It's worth remembering that some games come with firmware updates on the UMD, so you don't necessarily have to download them from the internet.

There are no differences in picture quality between PSPs from different countries but if you do decide to go for a Japanese one you'll be pleased to hear that not only can you set the menus to English but you will also be able to play Region 2 UMD movies as Japan and the UK are in the same region code.

We hope you get hours of fun from your PSP and make sure you stick with Go>Play for all the best in PSP gaming.

GO>PLAY

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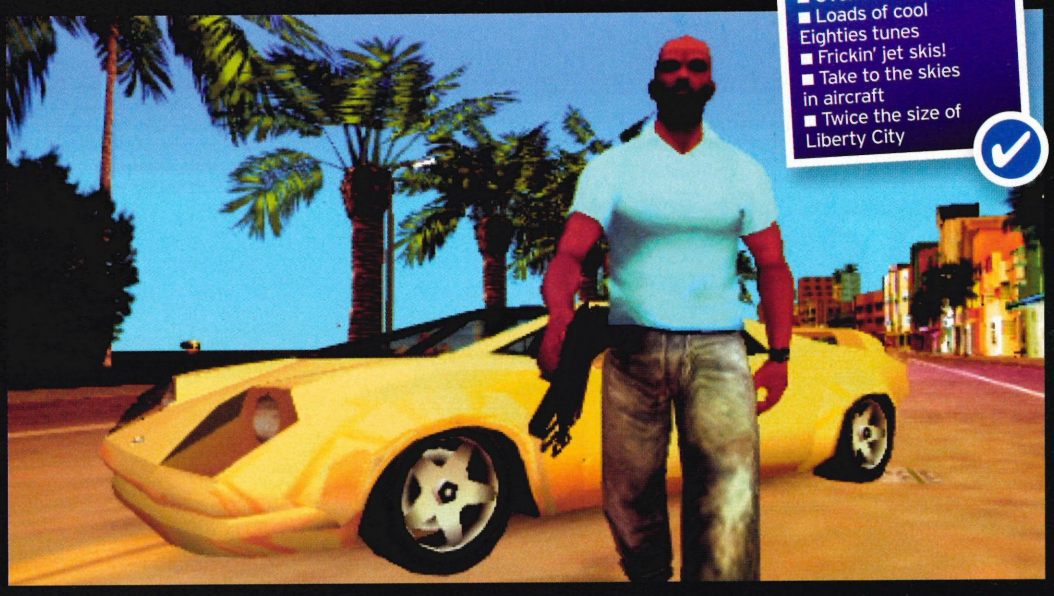
EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Over 70 missions
- Loads of cool Eighties tunes
- Frickin' jet skis!
- Take to the skies in aircraft
- Twice the size of Liberty City



It's back to the Eighties for another slice of GTA

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES

OUT: 20 OCT

Publisher **Rockstar** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-4**

WHAT IS IT?
Sequel to the biggest selling PSP game yet. Set in the sun-kissed Vice City, it's bigger, better and badder than Liberty City.

Could *GTA* be the biggest gaming franchise of all time? With *Liberty City Stories* still riding high in the PSP chart, it looks like nothing will be able to elbow it out of the top ten, except perhaps another *GTA* game. Chart watchers rejoice then, as *Vice City Stories* will soon be here and it promises to be bigger and badder (in a good way) than its predecessor. Even before it was announced at E3 we all knew this was coming, but little did we expect it would be as good as this. We've seen *Vice City Stories* in action and it looks truly stunning.

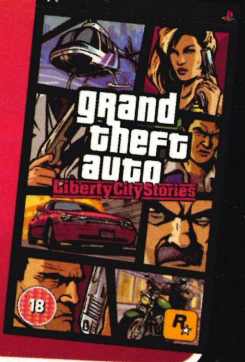
Set two years before the original *Vice City*, *Stories* resurrects a major character in the form of the treacherous Lance Vance who was blown away by a vengeful Tommy Vercetti. Lance plays an even more important part this time around, as the character you control is Vic Vance, his brother. A 28-year-old marine who is enjoying an easy posting in Miami before being shipped out to Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. Of course, this being the world of *GTA*, Vic will have anything but a quiet life in Vice City, especially if his brother has anything to do with it. As far as any other characters go, we saw Phil Cassidy briefly on a loading screen, so presumably he's in there somewhere. We'd be surprised if other characters like Candy Suxxx and Ken Rosenberg didn't at least make cameos. Voice talent for the characters is yet to be confirmed but we do know Phillip Michael Thomas will return as Lance Vance.

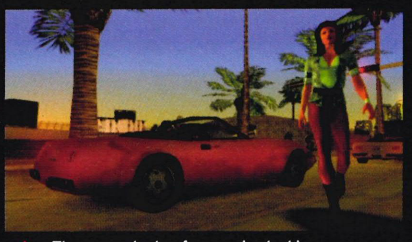
Liberty City Stories was an amazing accomplishment and we'll admit to harbouring some doubt as to how Rockstar could better it in

The jet ski has to be the coolest new addition to the series

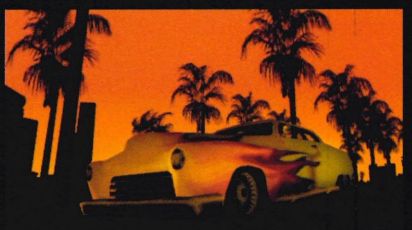
Selling like hot cakes!

We all know there are approximately 1 million PSP owners in the UK. Did you know that half of those owners also have a copy of *GTA: Liberty City Stories*? That's a pretty impressive statistic we think you'll agree.





There are plenty of expensive looking vehicles to steal and trash



Is this a *San Andreas*-style custom paint job? Probably not, unfortunately

any way. Looking back at the PS2 Vice City game, the map was twice the size of *GTAIII* and it introduced us to the pleasures of flying across the game world in both helicopters and planes. We didn't think there would be any problem squeezing the city onto PSP, but flying over it was something that we thought might never happen. Thankfully, we've been proved wrong and not only does *Vice City Stories* actually have more polygons than its PS2 predecessor, but helicopters are present and fully functional. The seaplane is yet to be unveiled but we wouldn't be surprised if that made an appearance too. As you fly over it you can see that Vice City is in a period of change with construction going on in many places and some landmarks that you may remember not actually being finished yet. One new landmark is the Chunder Wheel, a ferris wheel that's an homage to the Wonder Wheel in *The Warriors*. The wheel isn't there for show and you can actually ride it - no doubt it makes for a great sniping point. To make sniping even more effective the draw distance has been dramatically improved from *Liberty City Stories* and looks impressive.

Not only does *Vice City Stories* look great, but also it has practically done away with those irritating load times between islands. They're still there but are drastically shorter than any other *GTA* game.

Another big addition to *Vice City Stories* is the ability to swim, which is most welcome and somewhat necessary with the inclusion of jet skis - awesome eh? This also helps to bring some variety to the missions, which is something Rockstar is keen to do throughout the game. Many of the missions will see you transitioning from sea to land, land to air or any number of combinations in an effort to keep the missions as varied as possible. Of the two missions we were privy to, the first showed Vic performing stunts on a jet ski then switching to a motorbike to finish the mission. The second saw Vic piloting a chopper while Lance manned a gun and mowed down bikers. The mission then continues on foot as you enter the biker's compound to finish them off.

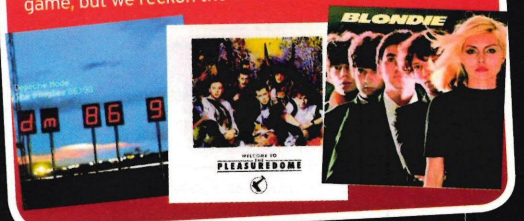
We should get our hands on the game soon for a massive preview next month so stick with us for all the latest Vice City info. ■

Simon Griffin

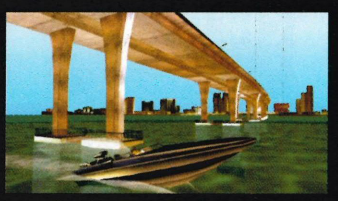
We've seen *Vice City Stories* in action and it looks stunning

Grand Theft Tunes

Much like the rest of the game, the soundtrack is yet to be finalised, but we did hear the Eighties sounds of Blondie, Frankie Goes To Hollywood and Depeche Mode. We don't know if those tracks will make the final game, but we reckon the chances are good.



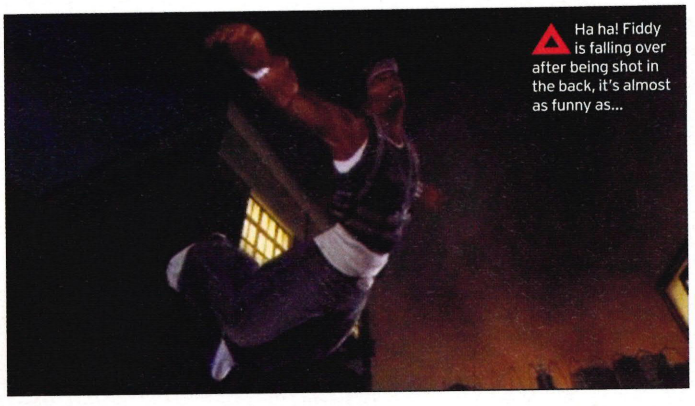
WE SAY This can't come quick enough. Guaranteed to be better than *Liberty City* and that was an absolute corker!



Cruising around the bay in a speed boat is pure pleasure

Motorbikes make a welcome return and will be one of the fastest ways to get around the city and outrun the law

This guy clearly doesn't want his car stolen, and who can blame him? It's a beauty



Ha ha! Fiddy is falling over after being shot in the back, it's almost as funny as...

Lick on my lollypop it's shaped like a... nevermind

50 CENT BULLETPROOF: G-UNIT EDITION

OUT: 22 SEPT

Publisher **VU Games** / Developer **High Voltage Software** / Players **1-4**

WHAT IS IT?

Watch loads of videos and listen to the tunes of 50 Cent and G-Unit, then shoot up loads of thugs as Fiddy himself! Terrific!

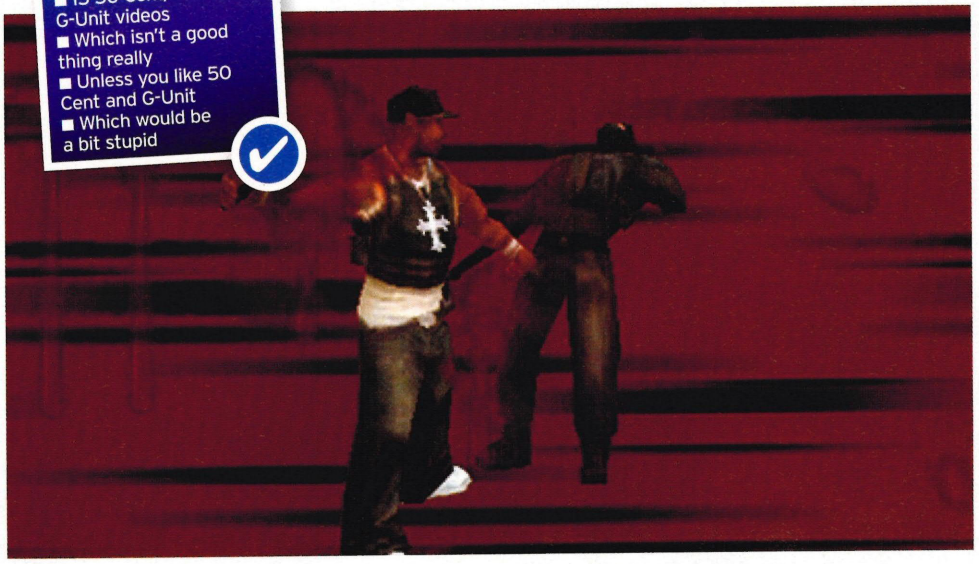
EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- 160 50 Cent/ G-Unit tunes
- 15 50 Cent/ G-Unit videos
- Which isn't a good thing really
- Unless you like 50 Cent and G-Unit
- Which would be a bit stupid

It's been nearly a year since the release of *50 Cent: Bulletproof* on the PS2 but *G-Unit Edition* is almost complete. Complete balls, that is. Now we know we're not really supposed to point out how awful a game is at the preview stage, considering that the games aren't finished and still have a bit of work to go on them, but please forgive us if we make an exception this time.

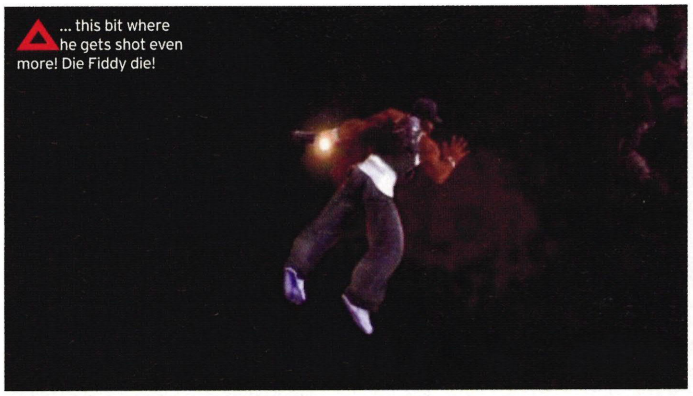
On the PS2 *Bulletproof* was a horrible third-person shooter with extremely graphic but so, so shallow gore. It was panned by critics everywhere and yet it went on to sell well over a million copies world wide. Fortunately we can't see that same success happening for *G-Unit Edition*. As you can see from the screenshots, Fiddy's perspective has changed, no longer do we have to stare at his pants sticking out of the top of his stupidly low-slung jeans because now we get treated to a lovely top-down view and no matter what way you make ol' Fiddy run about you can't see his face! Result! Except for the fact it now feels like you're playing a Game Boy Advance game. It's this zoomed-out almost isometric view that makes it feel like a game from a much simpler time, not a time when Rockstar has managed to cram all of the epic *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City* and soon-ish even *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* onto a UMD.

At least it's different from the PS2 version. It's no standard port of that game, oh no, it's much less than that. The cutscenes remain the same and tell the same story, and it still includes the best ever excuse for being late to a meeting : "S*** got ****ed up." But with such simplistic gameplay and the general nonsense of the story, it becomes difficult to think of something positive that will make you wait in

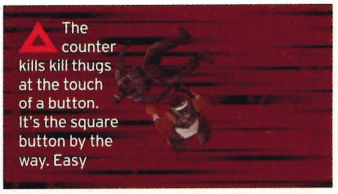


Here's Fiddy shooting the numbers out of someone. 23! Good shot Fiddy!

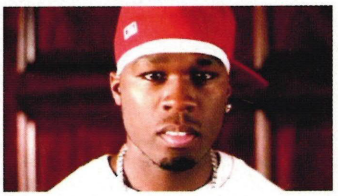
Every thug carries money, jewellery, painkillers, and ammo. It's all very flashy indeed



... this bit where he gets shot even more! Die Fiddy die!



The counter kills kill thugs at the touch of a button. It's the square button by the way. Easy



anticipation until we get to review it properly. So far the levels seem to follow a set routine: Fiddy goes to a building, crazed hoods and tooled up gangstas attack, Fiddy locks on and shoots numbers out of them until they're dead, Fiddy kicks their bodies to reveal money and other flashing icons. And repeat. It's pretty simple really, just hold down R1 then ⊗ and circle strafe around them; the numbers flying out are supposed to represent their health dropping (a bullet from a Mac does 3 damage if you're interested), but on the later levels you can empty a whole clip into them and they'll still be running at you. They must have hundreds of health! Every so often a boss battle occurs but these, so far, have degenerated into standing in front of the boss emptying clips into them while tapping down on the D-pad to fill Fifty's health back up. There's no skill involved and none really allowed by the fluffy controls and the lock on that sometimes refuses to lock on.

The Counter Kills return but these ones have all been specifically designed for the PSP – with just a touch of □ a disarming animation pops up which sees Fiddy take their weapon and kill them in a violently pointless manner. There are 36 of these for your viewing (dis)pleasure once you've made the mistake of buying them in the shop.

Ahh shopping, retail therapy if you like, or if you're Fiddy, over-saturation of a brand. There's a lot of shopping in *G-Unit Edition*, the aforementioned Counter Kills, new songs, new videos, a ridiculous amount of 50 Cent/G-Unit clothing (which doesn't do anything like add more power to your attacks or boost defence, it just makes 50 Cent look like a different coloured blob in the game) and all the guns and grenades you can carry. Which is why mugging... err searching the bodies for valuables is so important.

Maybe the space on the UMD is being put to good use elsewhere. Suppose it is, depending on how you look at it, as the finished version will have over 160 50 Cent and G-Unit tunes, 15 videos and even a documentary on the gang. Crew? Posse? Whatever. It's starting to feel like the game is peripheral to the hip-hop and pomp of these other features. That's not a real surprise though to be honest. ■ **Tim Empey**

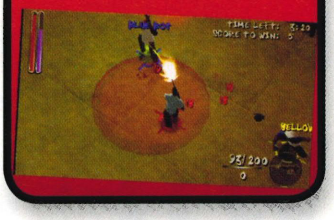
[On the PS2 Bulletproof was a horrible third-person shooter]

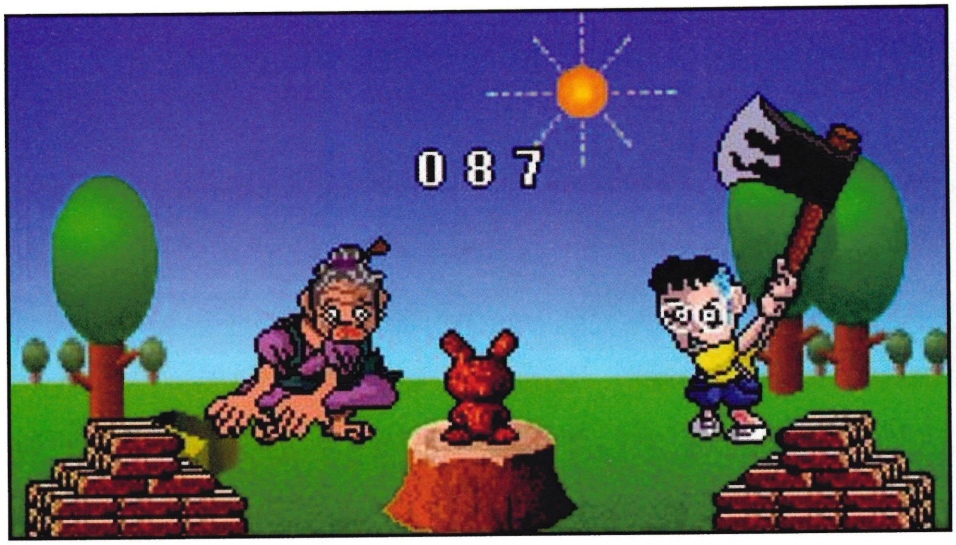
WE SAY **We played it for a while and hopefully something good will be added right at the last minute in order to make it actually enjoyable.**

I'm 50 Cent!

No! I'm 50 Cent!

The multi-player option wasn't available on our preview code but here's a screenshot of it anyway. What we can gather from this is that the multi-player will take the form of a bot-filled deathmatch. So it's really just a big race against the other players to shoot the numerals out of the bots until the kill count is reached. This is what 50 Cent thinks you'll enjoy playing. Is 50 Cent correct? Or is he a few cents short of a dollar!? Ha ha ha!





The most boring game since *Ally McCoist's Director Of Football*

"That's what it really stands for, your honour"...

WTF: WORK TIME FUN

OUT: 26 SEPT

Publisher **D3Publisher** / Developer **SCEI** / Players **1-8**

WHAT IS IT?

A quirky Japanese gem, not too dissimilar to Nintendo's *WarioWare* series, that challenges your dexterity, timing and above all patience with over 40 mini-games

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Start off with four mini-games
- Perform well in order to buy more
- A nice handful of game-sharing multi-player stages
- Non-game extra 'tools' to collect
- Pointless or genius - you choose!

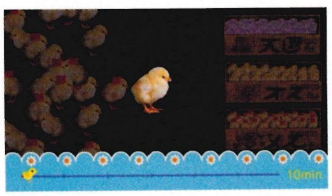
There's never been a more poetic critique of the life of your average human being written, than a few minutes playing *WTF* can depict at a stroke. This is the untold tale of the McJob worker, who toils away for hours on end only to fritter away their earnings on a handful of meaningless trinkets and the opportunity to start all over again in some other soul-crushing pursuit.

After loading up, you're presented with a choice of four possible openings by your friendly Job Demon. After choosing one, it's time to get to work diligently sorting groups of chicks into 'female', 'male' or 'to be slaughtered' depending on how they look, or perhaps fielding baseballs in a home run derby, or maybe trying to cut a ceremonial ribbon as a hopelessly inebriated mayor. Some games even require you to rotate the PSP by 90 degrees before progress can be made. Whilst this may all sound just a little bizarre, some games show craziness in their complete monotony. For instance, the soon to be infamous pen cap mini-game sees your on-screen self slotting caps onto the end of pens rolling off the production line, using separate buttons to move the line along, cap the pens and flip the few that land disorientated around. This continues for as long as you don't chew your own face off with boredom.

[The untold tale of the McJob worker who toils away for hours]

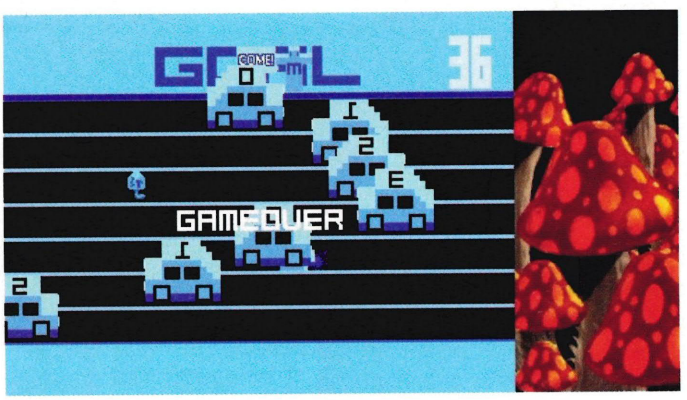
Once the working day is done, a fat pay cheque will come your way, making a trip to the capsule dispenser the next priority. Inside there's a whole heap of useless rubbish to be found; vehicles, spinning tops, thongs, and more jobs to add to the randomised Demon temping agency pile. The juiciest rewards to be found at the capsule machine are the tools, however. A dozen life-enhancing add-ons await, including a set of googly screen-bound eyes that can be placed in front of the head and manipulated to comic effect, and an instant noodle timer that passes the time with a greased-up Japanese man or woman. So, if you're a fan of all things quirky, this is one to watch. ■ **Dave Shaw**

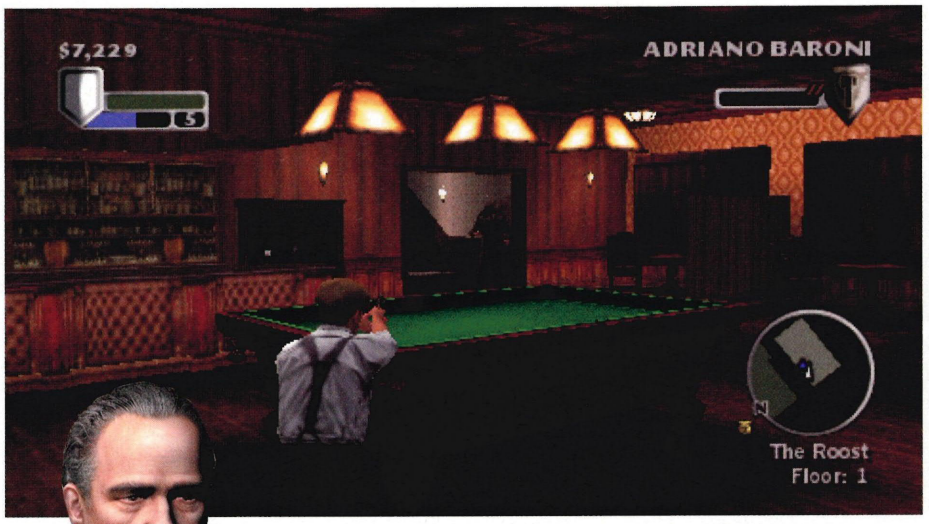
WE SAY **An absolute wilful waste of time, but when it comes to games that's not always a bad thing. You'll need a sports psychologist to get to the end, though!**



Killing blue chicks is apparently an act of mercy

Well, it's better than having Alan Sugar as your boss we suppose





Another offer, can you refuse it this time?

THE GODFATHER: MOB WARS

OUT: Q4 '06

Publisher **EA** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
The PS2 version of *The Godfather* with an extra mode to make up for it coming out that much later.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Numerous top-notch voice talent from the original films
- A unique fear/respect system to aid you in your city-wide takeover
- Based on one of the very best movies of all time

We've never been too sure about the whole PSP game title thing. We suppose it's only sensible to name the handheld titles differently to the home console versions – wouldn't want us idiot gamers to walk out of a shop with the wrong format game now would you? Anyway, most of the time this doesn't matter, but every now and again you get the horrible feeling that PSP titles have received less consideration from those behind them than they might. This is most easily conveyed in a name. Whereas the PS2 version was cleanly monikered *The Godfather*, what we get is a suffix that smacks of some suited grey uttering what he thinks is the best idea ever: "Yes! Let's call it *The Godfather: Mob Wars*. That way, the kids will not only know it's a handheld game, but mob also has something to do with gangsters, doesn't it?"

Anyway, rant over. You've probably all managed to get a look at *The Godfather* on the home consoles, but what can we expect from the handheld version? Take a moment and think. Yup, you got it, a new game mode where you have to take control of New York by strategically placing and moving your goons around a board and playing the right cards to seize territories. Guess what it's called. Yup, Mob Wars mode. Past that, with technical proficiency on the handheld growing daily, you can pretty much expect the entire game from other versions, meaning taking control of a small time crook and working your way up the ranks of the mafia to become Don. With the voice talents of the late Marlon Brando as Don Vito Corleone, James Caan as Sonny and Robert Duvall as Tom Hagen it'll no doubt be quality, but we're still a little concerned about how much justice it'll do the films. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

[With the voice talent of Marlon Brando it'll no doubt be quality]

Mob Wars is a lovely looking game so far, just look at these particle effects

Look, Mob wars in action. Let's take over New York – first drinking dens!

WE SAY **In terms of gaming, it should offer just what wannabe gangsters are after, with a whole decade of cheek-pinching and horse-beheading.**

Chocks away! Flaps down! Gear up! Let's fly!

PILOT ACADEMY

OUT: SEPT 06

Publisher **Rising Star** / Developer **Kuju Entertainment** / Players **1-8**

WHAT IS IT?

It's a realistic flight that won't bore you with technicalities. Chock full of diverse missions that are easy to pick up in a few minutes.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Over 20 different planes to unlock
- Dogfights and crop dusting
- 64km square of mapped land
- Fly up to 30,000 feet
- Up to eight-man dogfights

Let's get straight to the point, flying isn't easy. There's no inch perfect steering as there is in cars. No zero gravity like when you're piloting a warp-injected, nuclear-assed space rocket, and you've always got stalling, wind speed and that big flat thing called 'the ground' to contend with. Because of these troublesome factors, flight sims can end up spiralling to the earth on the wrong side of boring. But *Pilot Academy* will attempt to redress the balance with a healthy amount of fun missions set within a realistic flight sim.

The version we got our flying mitts on featured a very relaxing woman who told us not to panic as we were hurtling a rather flimsy plane towards the runway. The soothing music was meant to ease the pain but the tension made our teeth grind as we pulled the nose up and made a not so perfect landing. You don't feel that you're risking the lives of the public playing *LocoRoco*!

Steer a hefty passenger 747 around a cluster of tornados

Pilot Academy seems to fit the PSP very well. It's a collection of short missions and challenges that are designed to be played in under ten minutes each. And as far as we could tell, they couldn't be more varied. One minute you're showing tourists around a Taj Mahal lookalike, while being judged on how excited they are. The faster and lower you fly, the more they'll pay you! And the next you're steering a hefty passenger 747 around a cluster of tornados trying not to let anyone in first class spill their caviar and champers. There are also dogfights with Spitfires and Red Barons, and modern day fighter craft such as the F-14 Tomcat, complete with flaming blue afterburners. Tom Cruise, eat your heart out.

Tornados were actually created on a Sunday after God and Jesus's heavy Saturday night out, finished off with a curry

Destroy pieces of national history by flying a crap plane into them

One of our current favourites is the wildlife level where you have to fly close to certain animals and birds while your passenger takes photographs of them.

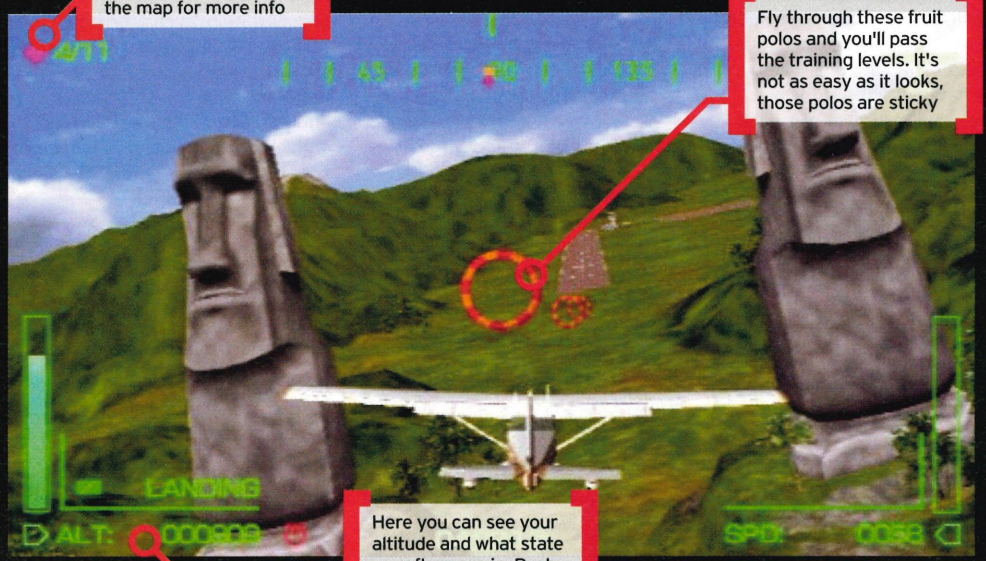
Visually it's looking impressive; flight sims can looks dull with repeated textures and a low draw distance. However *Pilot Academy* looks like it's going to shake off these clichés by not bothering too much about the ground and concentrating on recreating familiar but, nonetheless, striking scenery. They've taken inspiration from around the world by including Easter Island giant heads in a tutorial, a massive statue on a hill mimicking Christ The Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, along with cable cars, imposing mountains and sky blue clear sea shores.

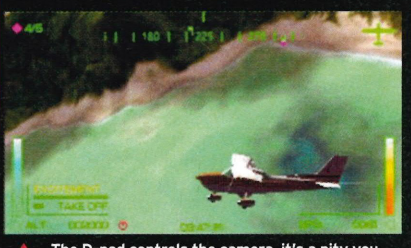
At this stage of development there are issues with the controls and communicating what the hell they are in the tutorials. They're meant to train you, but no one tells you which buttons to push to set your flaps to 'take off' – it took us a day to figure out how to extend the landing gear. But these are minor problems which should be smoothed out as we approach its release. Let's not forget, flight sims are tricky, and you'll be spending a lot of time viewing the, unfortunately not-that-impressive, crash animation. Some planes, such as the modern day fighters, handle like Michael Schumacher gliding around a particularly easy chicane, whilst others, like the tourist sight seer, feel like you're guiding a sozzled stoat through thick, sticky molasses.

[It took us a day to figure out how to extend the landing gear]

There's no autopilot like Otto in *Airplane!* who can fly you out of danger and be perked with a swift blow to his crotch tube. It's all down to your flight skills, and you're going to need them for multi-player. Our version didn't appear to have gameshare, but we're promised it'll be in the final version. We can't wait to start up dogfights between the plethora of aircraft included. And in 'Timeslip' mode you can pit generations-apart aircraft against one another. Battle a modern day stealth bomber against a Sopwith Camel! It's the David and Goliath of the skies. If the tutorials are sorted out, this is looking to be a poppy flight sim that anyone can play anywhere, that doesn't compromise on any of the scary realism the genre should contain. Now fasten your seatbelts, swig some duty free, extinguish all cigarettes and most of all... don't panic! ■ **Henrietta Rowlatt**

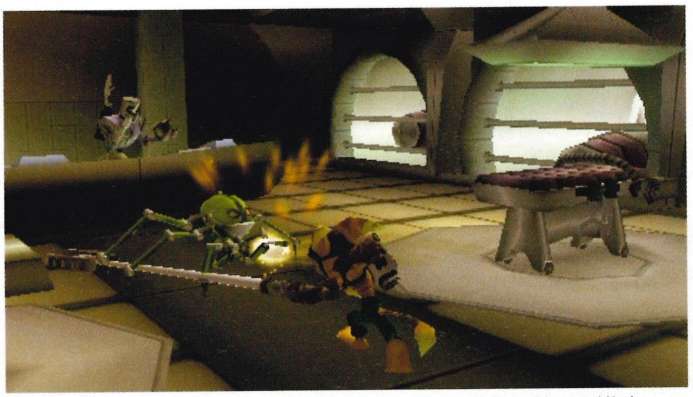
WE SAY **It's looking very tidy; only the tutorials and controls need tweaking slightly for a smoother, less bumpy ride.**





The D-pad controls the camera, it's a pity you can't change it to move the plane instead

There's got to be some passenger shaving in the toilet getting blood all over the towels



They may be green, they may be made of steel, but they look like spiders and that makes them evil

There's nothing quite like the rustic charm of the humble flamethrower

The masters of the crass subtitle return...

RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- A platformer once more. Hooray!
- Features four-player Wi-Fi battles
- Clank-only levels make a return
- Tactically customise your armour
- Controls streamlined, in a good way

OUT: Q1 '07

Publisher **Sony** / Developer **High Impact Games** / Players **1-4**

WHAT IS IT?
The handheld off-shoot of one of the PS2's best-loved platform series, marking a return in style to the good old days of 2002

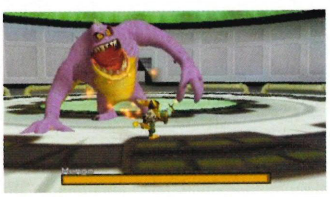
Fear not, *Ratchet & Clank* fans; High Impact Games, which here makes its debut, was formed by a number of ex-Insomniac employees, guaranteeing that the people behind the vibrant visuals you see before you have put blood, sweat and tears into our furry friend and his robot sidekick.

This fresh adventure sees the two protagonists taking some well-earned R&R after the closed-circuit, high-octane antics of *Ratchet: Gladiator*. On their secluded desert-island location they chance upon eager student Luna, who by chance happens to be studying superheroes. The titular pair need little persuasion in agreeing to be subjects, but before long Luna is kidnapped by a lost race of genius inventors named the Technomites. So, as so often happens during platforming superstars' holidays, it's time to set off across the universe in pursuit of a damsel in distress. Ibiza will have to wait until next year then.

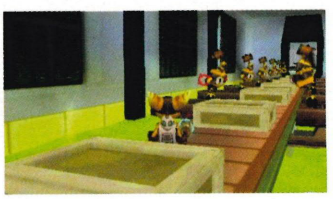
[The series' slip towards blast-happy action has been halted]

The embryonic visuals show a smoothness of animation and level of overall detail that will surely rival the benchmark *Daxter* upon release. Elsewhere, the series' slip towards blast-happy action has been halted somewhat in the single-player adventure which, with its planned Clank-only missions and set of weaponry upgrades, might even be termed 'platformer' once more and blast fans will be fully catered for, however, by the deathmatch-style battles that can be played out wirelessly by up to four players, allowing you to feel the business end of the pair's futuristic arsenal.

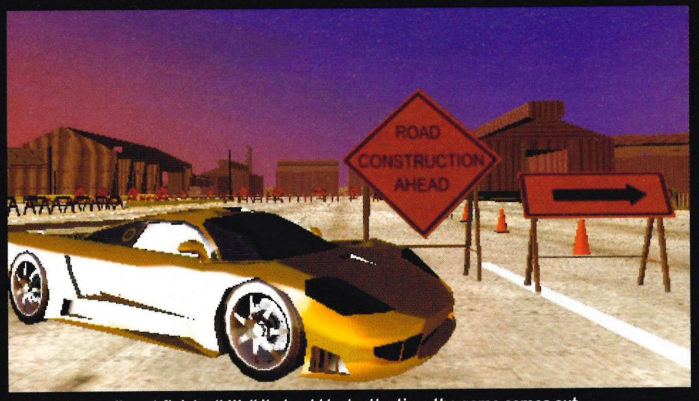
Some interesting changes have been made, though, adding chains to your metaphorical corduroy trousers. Although downing each baddie still brings a stash of bolts to use as in-game currency, you can now level up your weaponry and your armour to fit certain situations; choosing from a number of helmets, gloves, boots and torso plates. The control system has been quietly overhauled, allowing Ratchet to strafe around his enemies at the touch of a D-pad, plus we're even promised that established staple of platform outings - vehicle races - for the more thorough player. Should be enough to keep the most fidgety gamer entertained and so we await, impatiently. ■ **Dave Shaw**



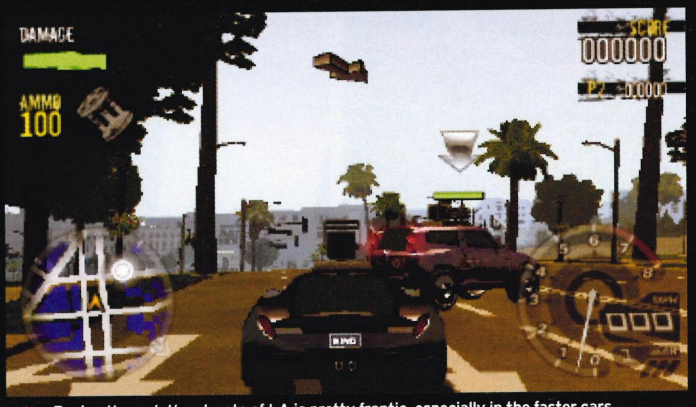
Ratchet's ability to strafe quickly will prove handy against such behemoths



WE SAY **Still a long way off, but looking every inch the accomplished modern platformer. Bearing arms against three wireless opponents has us salivating to - quite possibly - medically dangerous levels.**



The road's not finished! Well it should be by the time the game comes out



Racing through the streets of LA is pretty frantic, especially in the faster cars

Racing history repeats

L.A. RUSH

OUT: SEPT '06

Publisher **Midway** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?

Quite a bit like *Juiced: Eliminator, Need For Speed, Burnout, FlatOut, OutRun* and *Midnight Club* all rolled into one big squishy ball

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Over 50 cars to pimp and ride... in. Ahem
- Mental stunt area for jumping about in
- Exclusive tunes from Twista and Lil' Kim, hmm...
- Yeah - Twista and Lil' Kim, hmm... dunno
- Spend your money pimping your ride at *Pimp My Ride*'s West Coast Customs

L.A. Rush on the PS2 wasn't exactly very well received, in fact it only ever got scores of around 70% and some way lower than that even. Hmm, hardly ground-breaking. It seems that most of the problems came from the fact that it came out a while after the *Burnout*, *Need For Speed: Underground* and *Midnight Club* series had already got their sequels and it didn't offer anything new to the urban racing/pimping genre. So can porting it on to the PSP really help the series find a home? Or are we going to be standing at the door, looking at our watches and tutting: "You're late again *L.A. Rush*," since the PSP is already full of more popular ports of PS2 racing games?

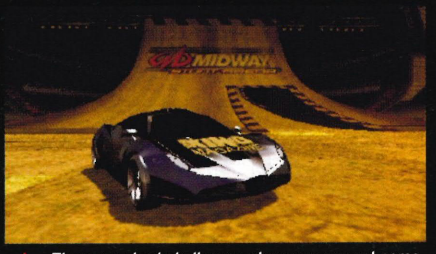
This PSP version of the game doesn't really seem to be that much different either, even though there are a few new modes and of course the Wi-Fi multi-player (which only supports one other player). You still have to win races to earn money, which you then spend on better cars and having them pimped out by *Pimp My Ride*'s West Coast Customs. Xzibit - host of the MTV show - isn't in it though, and this feature only amounts to driving into a garage and all the pimping is done automatically. You can tune the car however, just the insides not the outsides, with some officially licensed car parts if that's your thing, though you can do that in a host of other PSP racing games too.

[Standing at the door, tutting: "You're late again L.A. Rush"]

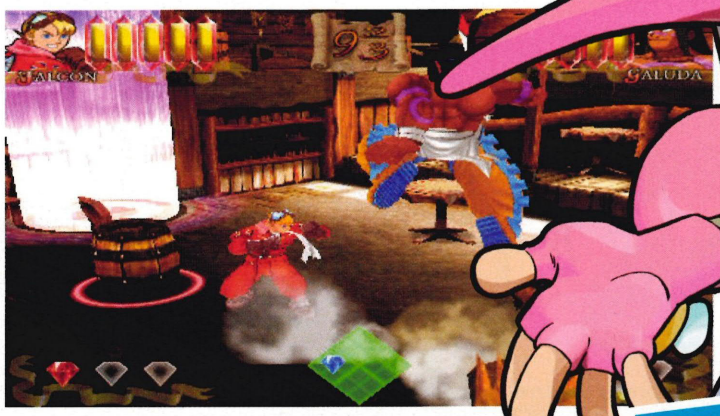
The best thing about the series though, has to be the recreation of Los Angeles, which is pretty accurate and when racing around Hollywood or any of the other four districts, there are numerous short cuts to take advantage of. Unfortunately, the betting structure remains and if you mess up the last corner of a race you could find yourself penniless and having to race multiple times just to get back to the amount of money that you had before.

We'll wait until we have the finished game before we pass too much judgment, but we have to say we're not that excited about *L.A. Rush* just yet. ■ **Tim Empey**

WE SAY **We're a bit unsure about this one, it wasn't very good on the PS2. But it is just what the PSP needs: another racing game... yeah, not tired of those at all...**



There are stunt challenges where you can get some serious air and flip your car



I... Have... The Power! Or Capcom does, anyway

POWER STONE COLLECTION

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Contains both *Power Stone* games
- Features up to four-player Wi-Fi action
- All 16 characters from both games
- Create your own weaponry
- New mini-games for PSP version

WHAT IS IT?
It's *Power Stone*! And the sequel! All squeezed down onto the PSP with virtually no changes whatsoever! Whether you think that's good or not depends entirely on how easily pleased you are...

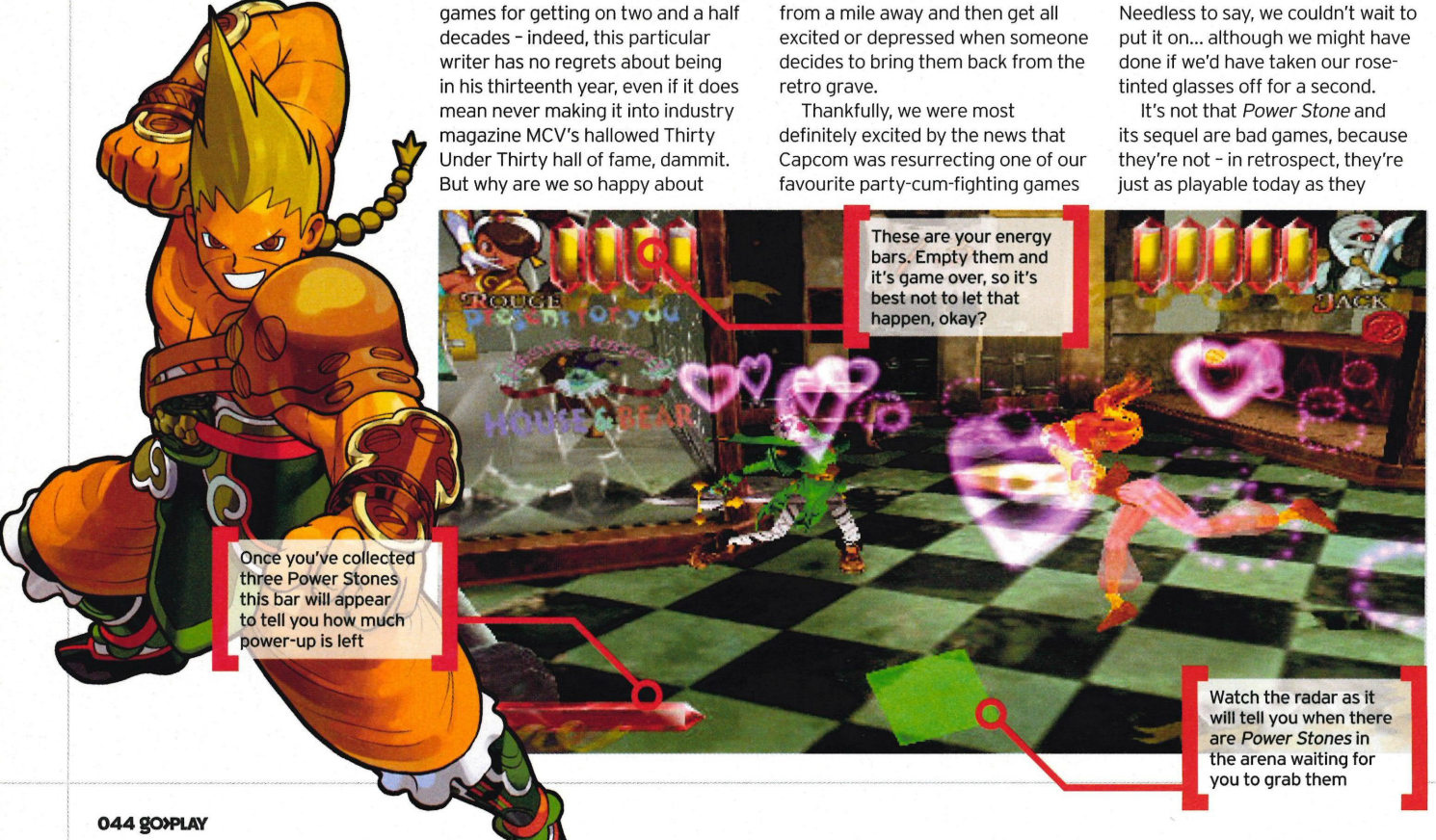
OUT: 13 OCT

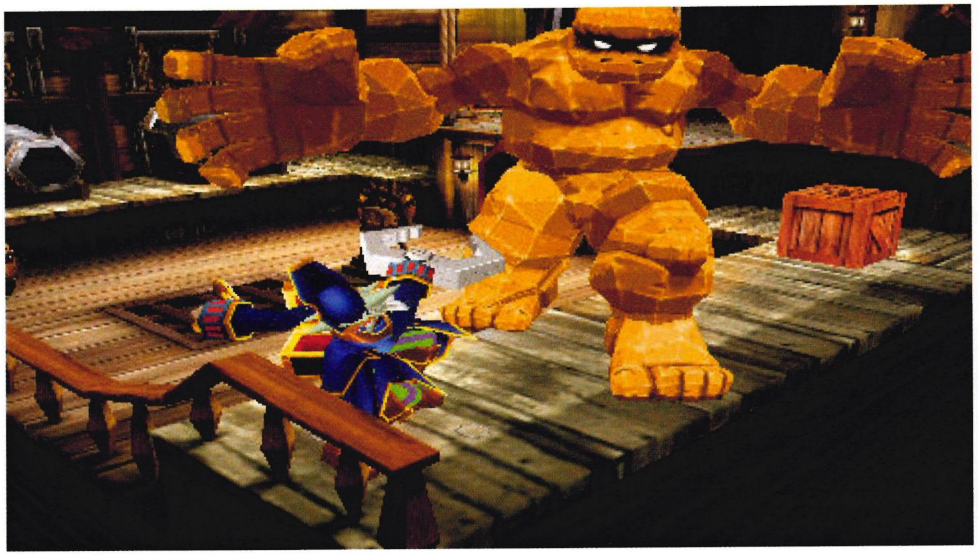
Publisher **Capcom** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-4**

It's no secret that we're getting on in years. Many of us here at Go>Play Towers have been playing games for getting on two and a half decades – indeed, this particular writer has no regrets about being in his thirteenth year, even if it does mean never making it into industry magazine MCV's hallowed Thirty Under Thirty hall of fame, dammit. But why are we so happy about reaching this great age? Probably because with age comes wisdom... or, at least, the gift of hindsight (which isn't exactly wisdom, to be honest). Being able to look back on years of gaming experience means we can point out the classics, the mediocre and the absolute howlers from a mile away and then get all excited or depressed when someone decides to bring them back from the retro grave.

Thankfully, we were most definitely excited by the news that Capcom was resurrecting one of our favourite party-cum-fighting games from our youth, *Power Stone*, on the PSP. But then, we were even more excited when a nice shiny disc landed on our desks waiting to be played. It's *Power Stone*! And *Power Stone 2*! Exactly as they used to be on the Dreamcast! But with some new bits! Needless to say, we couldn't wait to put it on... although we might have done if we'd have taken our rose-tinted glasses off for a second.

It's not that *Power Stone* and its sequel are bad games, because they're not – in retrospect, they're just as playable today as they





Special moves are suitably... er, special – plus they cause a hell of a lot of pain

The boss battles are suitably bizarre

ever were back on Sega's great white hope and things have hardly changed at all. However, what we seemed to have forgotten is how basic the original games actually were; coming from Capcom, the king of the beat-'em-up genre, we'd got it into our heads that *Power Stone* was a veritable game of combat chess, but with fists instead of pawns and throwable furniture in place of knights. Unfortunately, we were somewhat off in our judgement. The truth is that *Power Stone* is a frantic scrabble of a fighting game where players spend more time racing round the levels trying to collect three magical gems (the Power Stones of the title) than they do smacking each other. If one player gets all three, they turn into a super-powered version of themselves for a limited time with several special moves at their disposal, while the other player generally runs away as much as they can to avoid getting pummeled. And if the gems get split between the two? Then it's simply a case of who can throw the most furniture at the other person until someone gets cracked in the head and drops said gem, leaving the opponent clear to pick it up. Doesn't sound like great fun to us...

[It's the sequel that kept us coming back for more]

And, to be honest, it's not – at least not as far as the original *Power Stone* goes. With only two players in any one fight, it's a fairly stagnant affair that usually plays out in the same way over and over again. However, things change once you move onto *Power Stone 2*. Why? Because the sequel allowed for up to four people to play in any one arena, turning the battles into something far more frantic and madcap, with more possibility for variation. With some genuinely bizarre weapons on offer to lay the smackdown with, much more interesting level design that threw in multiple floors and intricate interactive detail to make use of and, of course, more *Power Stones* to keep players squabbling over, it's the sequel that kept us coming back for more. It's not a fighting game so much as it is a party game with combat – exactly what the PSP needs considering the lack of decent Wi-Fi based games available.

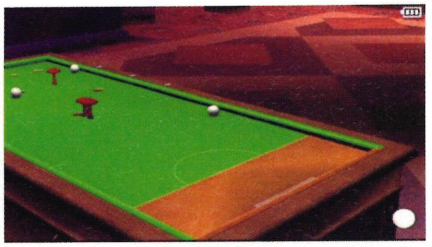
Of course, the fact that Capcom has ignored the PSP's widescreen capabilities is a bit of a crime – instead, you've got a stretched image that looks rather awkward – and the PSP's analog does leave a bit to be desired, but, as it stands, *Power Stone Collection* is something we could certainly see ourselves getting into. Well, one half of it, at least. ■ **Martin Mathers**

WE SAY **It plays just like it used to, although the lack of a true widescreen option (it's all stretched) is a bit disappointing – we hope Capcom changes that...**

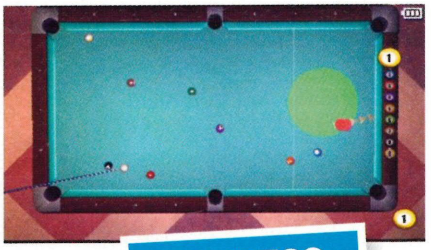
The sequel's multi-tiered levels make for some particularly frantic and chaotic battles

Surviving that many missiles is tough but not impossible in *Power Stone*

Sudden Death is exactly what it sounds like, death... suddenly



Fancy going Snooker Loopy? Then why not try a game of billards, it's like snooker but weirder.



A game of chess played out on the green baize...

WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2007

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- 104 of the world's best players
- 10 official tournaments
- Improved create-a-player mode
- Includes both 8 and 9-ball pool
- Trick Shot Championship

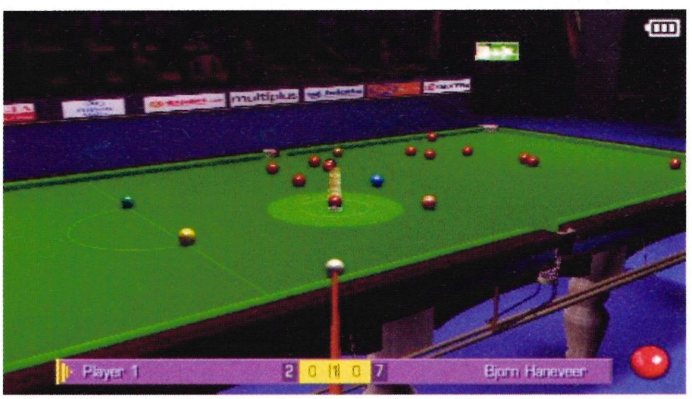
OUT: Q3 '06

Publisher **Sega** /
Developer **Blade Interactive** / Players **1**

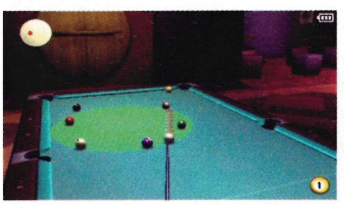
WHAT IS IT?
You've seen snooker, right? Chalk your cue, pot some balls and top it all off by treating yourself to a new bow tie.

Each and every snooker game preview deserves a bevy of hilarious double entendres about fiddling with your balls through the pocket or maybe taking wood in hand and giving it a good thrust, but as we only have a few pages to get the job done we'll forgo such frivolity and give you the cold, hard facts. If you want to read about potting the pink or the brown then go read Jordan's book, you'll find no such churlish behaviour here. What you will find here, however, is a sense of genuine excitement about *World Snooker Challenge 2007* the PSP counterpart to the hugely successful PS2 *World Snooker Championship*. In our opinion, the 2005 edition was one of the unsung heroes of the PSP launch almost a year ago, but, with another 12 months' work, what has developer Blade Interactive done to ensure we won't be splashing out 30 notes for the same game? Well, this iteration still walks to the same beat, but that's no bad thing as the *WSC* games seem to have the snooker formula perfected – in no way arcadey or lightning fast in terms of action, it does genuinely recreate the atmosphere of a few frames of snooker. And besides, we wouldn't want them adding snooker trax, dancing girls or EA-style break-breakers in an effort to be down with 'da kidz'. What the team has done though, is add a whole new range of extra match set-ups and game types to make it a much broader experience, in fact the various versions of pool and billiards have just as big a part to play in game as the snooker.

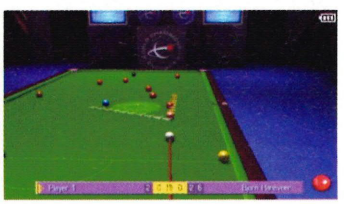
Alongside the vast array of new games, what you're really paying for here is the updated roster of professional players (of which there are over a hundred), as well as new venues and official tournaments all modelled with the 2007 season in mind. In terms of visual style, there aren't too many changes, things have been tweaked and tightened in places to make the game that much smoother – the character animations deserve special mention for being ridiculously authentic. Far from being merely functional, the visuals actually seem like they were made with the PSP in mind and are, at this stage of development, out-performing the console cousin.



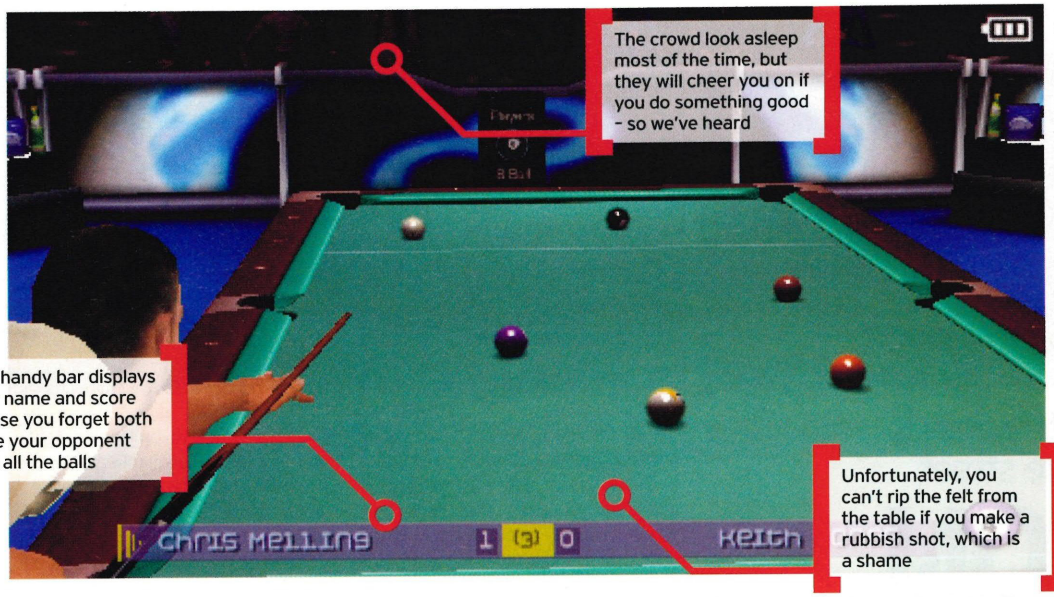
With the shot assistance turned on, the game can sometimes be a little too easy

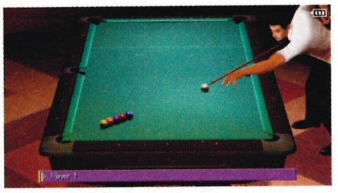


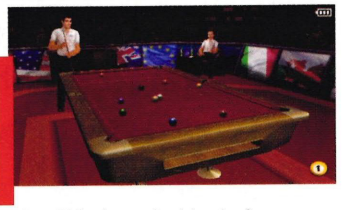
It's nice to play on a pool table that isn't covered in beer stains and vomit



If your snooker skills have deserted you, just turn on the aiming aid







If you have played any of the recent *WSC* games on either PSP or PS2, then when you get to the table you'll find that the actual game mechanics haven't changed too much. That doesn't mean you have to be an experienced cue-clutcher to enjoy the action; the basics are extremely simple with you simply choosing how hard you want to hit the cue ball and then hitting another button (or the analogue nub) to send it on its way. Of course, there are more advanced options to choose from for each and every shot if you want to get a bit more technical, but the point is that all of these can be addressed as and when you're ready - *WSC* neither over-complicates things for beginners nor restrains the pros. An element which should be useful to all players is the new positional play feature which allows you to position the cue ball with much greater accuracy than before, helping you to make more advanced safety shots for better defensive play. If you're not worried about defensive play and simply want to sink balls at a rate of knots, then the aiming aid can be called into play. This helps to give you a much better indication of where your target ball will eventually end up.

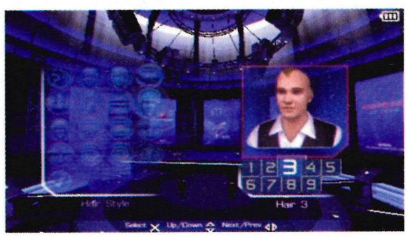
[The visuals seem like they were made with PSP in mind]

These gameplay elements aren't limited to the stuffed shirts and hushed whispers of the snooker hall because as we've mentioned both 9 and 8-ball pool make up a large part of *WSC 2007*. If things aren't going your way on the snooker circuit, simply undo that top button, lose the geeky bow tie and waltz on over to the pool table where you can play as or against many of the world's best pool players and compete in ten major tournaments including the Mosconi cup. If you're luck really has deserted you, you can always do a John Virgo and attempt a few crowd pleasers in a trick-shot competition - you never know, for the price of a service station pasty you might even be able to tempt Jim Davidson's big broke ass over to provide a running commentary for you. Unlike big Jim, if fortune decides to favour you and you start seeing more pots than the *Ground Force* team, you can enter the new Golden Cue tournament which allows you to mix all the different cuesports within one match.

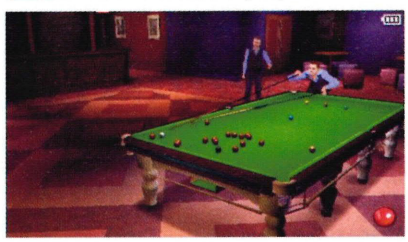
While Sega has decided to give this version of *World Snooker* the moniker 'Challenge' if the development team continues to work hard, this could end up proving a PlayStation Portable champion. Not that there's any competition in the snooker genre. ■

Keith Hennessey

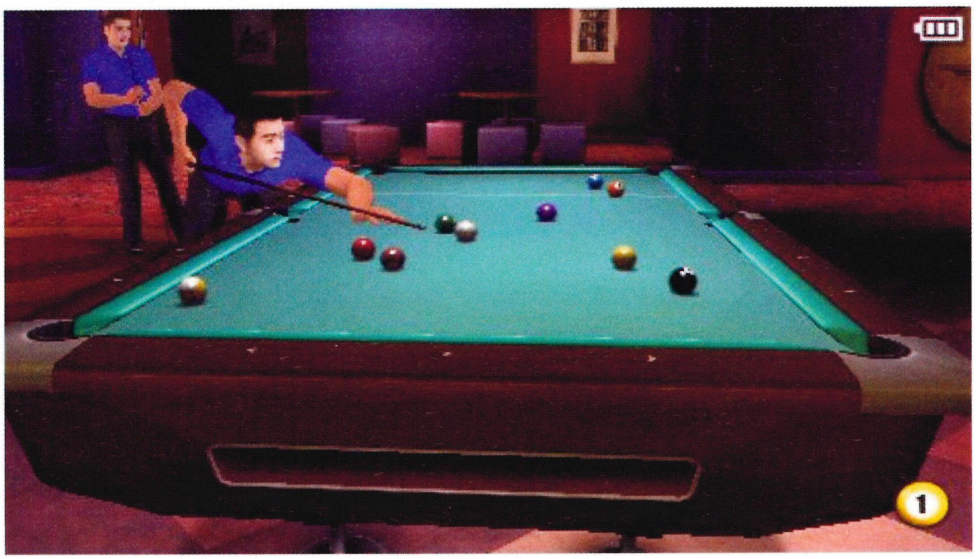
WE SAY ***World Snooker Challenge 2007*** **is like Coke Zero, it's the same familiar taste, but much better for you - tighter gameplay, plenty of updates and more modes than you can shake a chalked-cue at.**



Now you can create a custom character, we went for the mohawk... very original



If all the excitement of potting balls has tuckered you out you can always take 'a rest'



Who cares what fighting style you use when you have massive fists?

Summer's here and the time is right for fighting in the street

THE CON

OUT: OCT '06

Publisher **SouthPeak Interactive** /
Developer **Think & Feel Inc.** /
Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
Throw street fights. Earn cash on the results. Move up the rankings

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Ad-hoc multi-player fighting
- In-depth customisation
- Game-share with friends
- Five fighting styles

Having received a somewhat lukewarm US response back in October, we were rather surprised to hear that this street brawler was getting a release on these shores a whole 12 months later.

The basic premise sees you trading blows with opponents in a variety of 'street' locations. However, these brawls aren't simply for fun, and you can put money down on the result of the fight and thus work that result in your favour, whether that means winning or losing. You might be thinking that to lose a fight all you need to do is not touch any of the buttons and the money will come rolling in. It's not that easy though, as you'll need to convince the punters that you can really put up a fight otherwise you won't see any of the winnings. How you perform in the fight will also change the odds as you and your opponent pound each other. This gives you plenty of scope to work the crowd by losing convincingly until betting closes then turn the fight around and win.

kickboxing, Tae Kwon Do and Jeet Kune Do are all available and an in-depth character creation mode allows you to assign your favourite style to your created fighter.

With ad-hoc multi-player and game share in the package too, *The Con* looks to provide a complete fighting package, let's just hope that

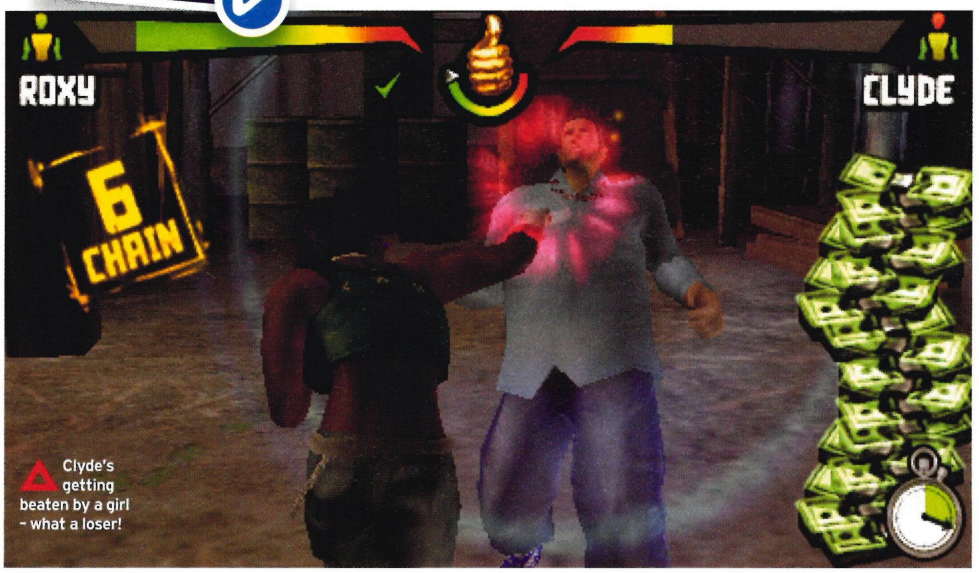
How you perform in the fight will also change the odds

This interesting element was warmly received by critics, but the dodgy controls were not. Slow reactions to button presses are reportedly what held the game back and stopped it from being anything more than average. SouthPeak claims that improvements have been made to the game and we haven't seen enough yet to report whether that is the case or not, but we sincerely hope it is.

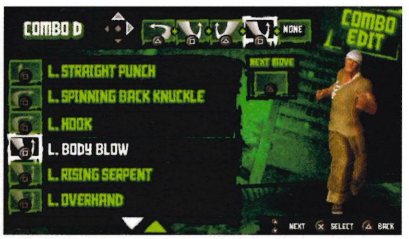
One thing that hasn't changed is the selection of five different fighting styles. Boxing, wrestling, the improvements that have been made are enough to elevate this to a title worthy of your attention and not another brawler that will join the other unplayable beat-'em-ups on PSP, all of which are outshined by Tekken. However the final product shapes up there are definitely some good ideas in there here's hoping they come to fruition. ■

Simon Griffin

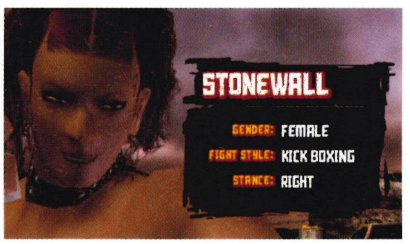
WE SAY **There are some nice touches, but will it be enough to stop this getting a beating come review time?**



Clyde's getting beaten by a girl - what a loser!



Edit your combos until you're happy with them, then unleash them on your opponent



Would you take Stonewall home to meet your mum? No, neither would we

Slam dunk the funk!

NBA LIVE 07

OUT: Q4 '06

Publisher **EA** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
Another EA Sports franchise makes its way onto PSP, finally with loads of new features

Pretty much all we've seen so far in the way of basketball titles on PSP are those that take a 'street' view of the sport. While that's all well and good, it's nice to have a normal view of sport every once in a while.

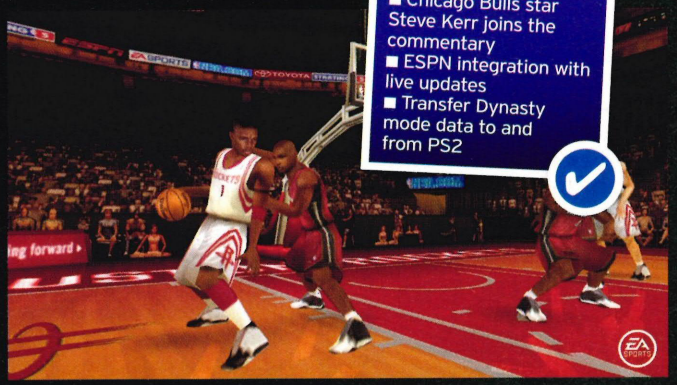
NBA Live does just that and offers all the options you'd expect and host of new features for this latest iteration. The big new feature that EA is shouting about at the moment is the Total Freestyle Control. This allows you to perform Freestyle Superstar moves with certain NBA superstars. These true-to-life moves elevate the game to the next level by also allowing you to change skills on the fly, opening up a greater range of moves with which to dunk that ball.

You don't have to be on the court all the time and Dynasty mode lets you manage your team from the sidelines. Trade players and ensure the team's at its best for every game up to the final. The option to transfer this data to and from your PS2 also means you can continue your career wherever you are.

With a wealth of mini-games to keep you busy *NBA Live 07* looks like it will be the most comprehensive PSP basketball game yet. ■ **Simon Griffin**

WE SAY ***NBA Live*** **has always been a strong basketball simulation and there's no reason why that shouldn't continue on PSP.**

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- New Total Freestyle Control
- Loads of mini-games to test your skills
- Chicago Bulls star Steve Kerr joins the commentary
- ESPN integration with live updates
- Transfer Dynasty mode data to and from PS2



Scoring one from 'downtown' is always a pleasing experience

The arenas look rather nice although we reckon Gretzky just has the graphical edge

The puck is still loose!

NHL 07

OUT: Q3 '06

Publisher **EA** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
EA's popular hockey franchise finds a new home on the PSP and lets you link up to your

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Link up with your PlayStation2 in order to transfer data
- Multi-player both on and offline
- Controls customised for your PSP
- Six different player types
- Blissfully short load times

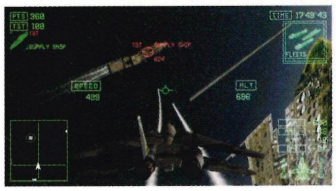
You demanded it and finally EA has listened and seen fit to bring its NHL franchise to PSP. What do you mean you didn't demand it? Oh well, it's coming out anyway and to be honest it's not exactly a sport that is overflowing with titles on PSP. *Gretzky* is the only ice hockey game we can think of on PSP, and while it's a decent game, the Canadian superstar never saw his game hit the shelves in old Blighty.

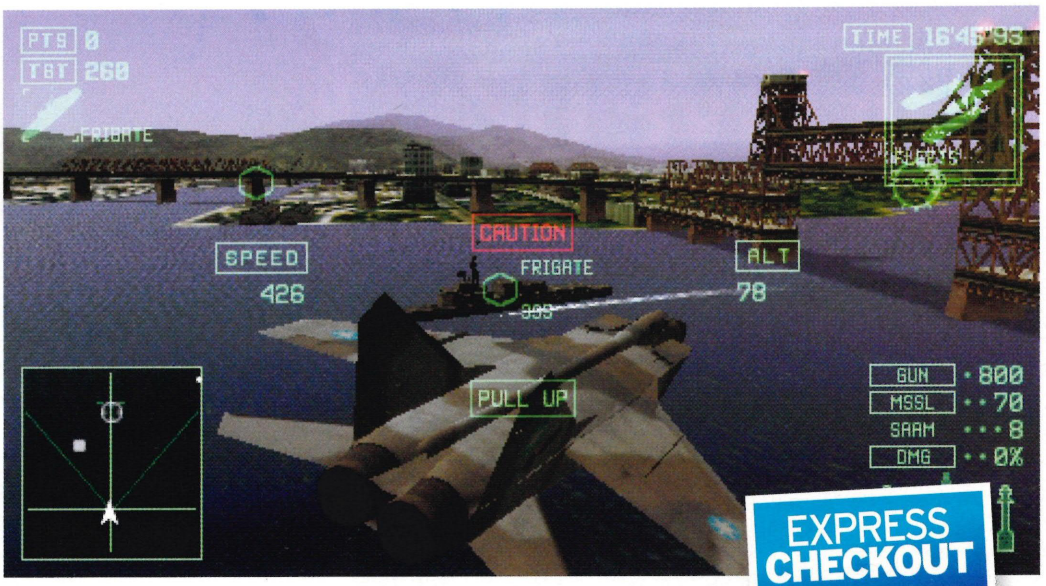
So, *NHL 07* is going to be the first bit of ice hockey to hit PSPs over here, and with that in mind EA has packed it to the brim with features. Comprehensive Season and Dynasty modes allow you to build team chemistry, buy and sell players, negotiate salaries and purchase upgrades for the team. All your Season or Dynasty files can be moved to and from your PS2 so you can continue playing with your team anywhere.

Along with quality graphics and AI you can also expect both ad hoc and infrastructure multi-player modes allowing you to challenge players on the other side of the world if you think your skills on the rink are up to it. ■ **Simon Griffin**

WE SAY **EA claims this is the best handheld hockey experience ever. We're not totally convinced about that, but it certainly has potential.**

Somehow we don't think that shot is going to find the back of the goal





Has Namco's aerial adventure got the X factor?

ACE COMBAT X: SKIES OF DECEPTION

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Exclusive maps and storyline created specifically for PSP
- Multi-player dogfights via Ad Hoc mode
- Extensive range of customisable aircraft
- New strategic AI system
- Realistic pilot-licensed planes

OUT: Q4 '06

Publisher **Sony** / Developer **Namco Bandai** / Players **1-4**

WHAT IS IT?
The first in the hugely popular *Ace Combat* series to make it to PSP is probably best described as *Top Gun* without all the homoerotism

If you ask any man with a healthy number of years under his belt to delve deep into the dark reaches of his mind and recall his fondest gaming moments we're pretty sure that playing a little game called *After Burner* would be up there with the *Golden Axe*s and *Super Mario*s of this world. However, ask a fresh-faced whippersnapper what *After Burner* is and they'll probably stare blankly back at you, after they'd dished out the obligatory happy slapping of course. If we'd mentioned the name *Ace Combat* instead then we probably could have avoided such unpleasantness. Namco's series has long been a favourite with PlayStation's flying-game faithful and now gets its very own outing on PSP.

Unlike the PS2 versions, *Ace Combat X* takes place in a new world that's completely removed from previous games in the series. Set in the year 2020, you take on the role of a rookie pilot in the Gryphus Squadron of the Federal Republic of Aurelia who must defend his country from the invading Leasath. While a great many threats will emerge during the game, this iteration is not as story driven as the console games, but instead plays to PSPs strengths and shifts focus to all-out action. It is made all the more immersive by the user-friendly control system that sees the analogue nub used to manoeuvre your aircraft, and the shoulder buttons to control speed. The face buttons allow you access to your various guns and heat-seeking missiles, and you'll need to be quick on the draw as you're all alone up there owing to the fact the wingman feature has been omitted.

[Playing to PSP's strengths this shifts focus to all-out action]

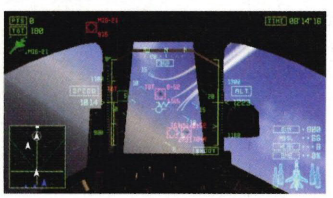
While play includes plenty of the aspects we've come to expect from these aerial arcaders, such as escort missions, eliminating bogeys and taking out enemy strongholds, there are also plenty of branching objectives for you to complete which often lead to unlocking new items with which to modify your plane. However, you must always be mindful of exactly which objectives you choose because *Ace Combat* now boasts a system called Strategic AI which involves the enemy responding to the decisions you make and launching its own counter-attacks. If the enemy attacks are too much for you, you can always try to unleash hell on human foes in one of the five multi-player modes that include a mix of deathmatches and co-op shootouts.

With the attention focused more on frantic action than laboured storyline, an effective control system and additions like multi-player modes and customisable crafts, *Ace Combat X* should really 'take off' on PSP when it's released. ■

Keith Hennessey

Once you have a target locked you can unleash your armoury on them

WE SAY **Already Top Gun on PlayStation2, *Ace Combat*'s debut on PSP should be a memorable one.**



The cockpit view provides plenty of first-person thrills and spills

The puzzle game that genuinely kicks ass...

CAPCOM PUZZLE WORLD

OUT: Q4 '06

Publisher **Capcom** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
A compilation of five classic Capcom puzzle games each offering unique ways to bust blocks, team up and personalise play

With God's gift to puzzle-solving, Richard Whitely, so cruelly snatched away from us in his prime, it's time to take up the fight and put the testosterone back into testing.

One way of doing so is to play *Capcom Puzzle World* - a collection of brain-teasing mini-games drawing from the many puzzlers the company has released over the years. It includes five titles including *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo* which mixes *Tetris*-style block falling with one-on-one street fighting; *Block Block*, a conversion of the *Break-Out*-style arcade game; and *Buster Bros Collection*, which is a trio of games that put you in control of two balloon-popping siblings.

While the games play as well as we remember them, they look even better with the visuals optimised for PSP's shrunken screen. Above all, the onus here is on personalisation and interaction as each game offers a range of multi-player modes and options to customise your experience by uploading personal pictures to use as backgrounds. It's also the first PSP game to include a Screenshot mode so you can stop the action at any time and capture your finest moments - quite why this is necessary we're not entirely sure, but we like it anyway.

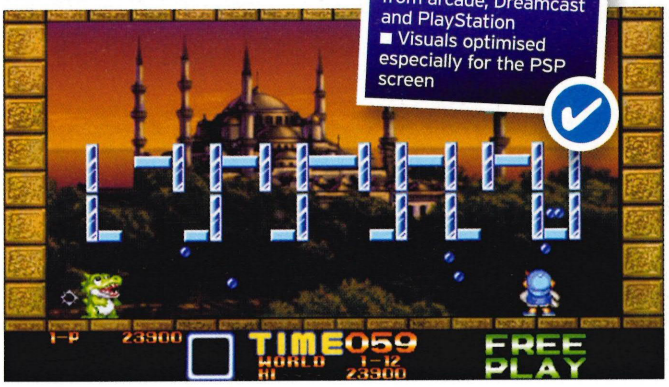
People like to do puzzles while travelling, it's a fact (something about keeping the mind active) and PSP is the perfect travel companion, throw in the fact that this is dripping in retro Capcom cool and it doesn't take a genius to work out that *Capcom Puzzle World* should be a big hit. ■

Keith Hennessey

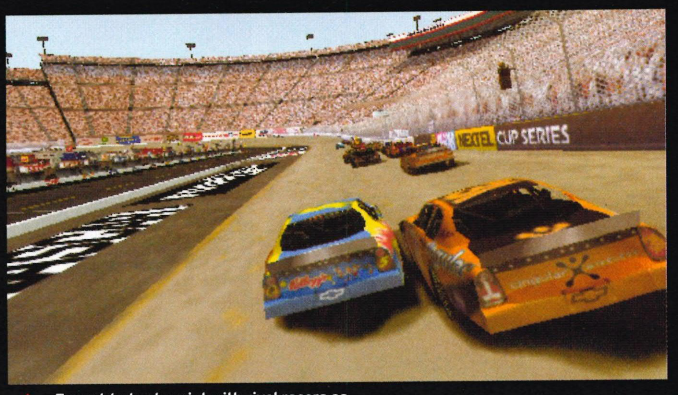
WE SAY **With plenty of puzzle games all vying for your cash, this faces stiff competition. But by cramming in so many games, this has every chance of flummoxing the rest.**

Ahh, look at those cute little *Street Fighter* characters

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Never-before-released gameplay styles
- The first ever Screenshot mode
- Upload pictures, and customise backgrounds
- Includes conversions from arcade, Dreamcast and PlayStation
- Visuals optimised especially for the PSP screen



Buster Bros lets you pop balloons. What more could you really want from a game?



Expect to trade paint with rival racers as you speed round the track

Time to get your race face on and test your mettle

NASCAR 07

OUT: 15 SEPT

Publisher **EA** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-4**

WHAT IS IT?
Build a team and then compete in a series of gruelling races in order to prove your skill

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Four-player Wi-Fi racing
- Instant Rewind feature
- Speedzone mode for advanced drivers
- 31 different Lightning Challenges
- Unique driver attributes

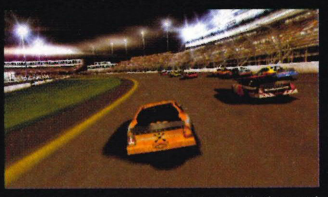
With Disney cranking its hype machine into overdrive and shoving a cutesy race car into your face wherever you turn now is probably the best time to capitalise on all that publicity and release a car game of your own. Not that we're suggesting that EA's new *Nascar* game is a half-arsed effort aimed at making a quick buck, far from it in fact because with myriad different race modes, over 30 individual challenges and the ability to choose from a range of teams and drivers all boasting unique traits and performance skills, this could be in pole position to grab your cash when its takes its place on the gaming grid later.

One of the game's biggest draws has got to be the expanded Season mode that allows you to compete wirelessly in a four-player racing season. Form a team with up to three mates, fine-tune your machine and challenge for the title over a series of taxing races. However, if your team-mates' skills aren't up to scratch and their grandma antics on the course are costing you valuable points in the standings, you can choose to implement the Instant Rewind feature and rectify their mistakes. Away from the main season there are plenty of different challenges to keep your motor running, most of which hold the key to unlocking hidden drivers, tracks and paint jobs. *Nascar 07* should have more than enough in reserve to compete with Team Disney/Pixar. ■

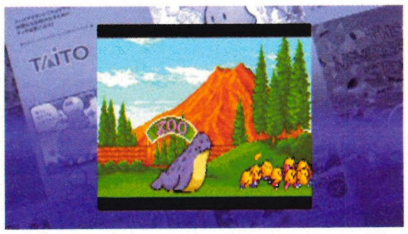
Keith Hennessey

WE SAY **While *Nascar* might not be as popular here as it is across the pond, we're sure it will have enough to satisfy race fans everywhere.**

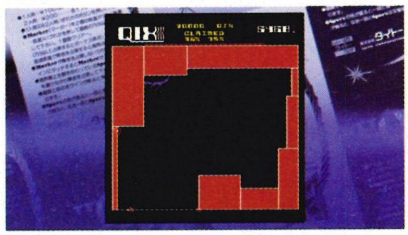
Banked curves are a common sight on the NASCAR circuit



Races take place during both day and night, fact fans!



The beginning of *The New Zealand Story* – quite possibly the cutest game ever made



Qix (pronounced 'kicks', fact fans) is a superb puzzle game and works brilliantly on PSP

Can Taito steal Capcom's compilation crown?

TAITO LEGENDS: POWER-UP

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Four enhanced games with improved graphics
- It has *The New Zealand Story* on it
- No *Bubble Bobble* or *Rainbow Islands*. Boo!
- 20 classic games to choose from
- Taito's first PSP compilation

OUT: SEPT '06

Publisher **Xplosiv** / Developer **In-House** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
***Taito Legends Power-UP* is a re-jigged version of Japan's *Taito Pocket Memories* which is essentially a handheld version of the popular compilations that are currently available for PS2. Phew.**

Considering it's capable of state-of-the-arts graphics, sublime stereo sound and looks sleek as you like, there's a surprising amount of retro games currently appearing on Sony's handheld of late.

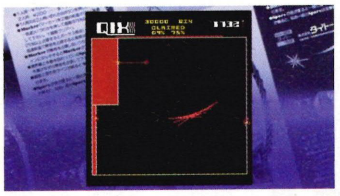
While Xplosiv has pretty much sewn up the PS2 market with its two *Taito Legends* compilations, it's going to have a much tougher time on PSP – mainly because Sony's machine is swimming in the damn things. *Gottlieb Pinball Classics* and the rather spiffy *Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed* are the most worthy of your attention, although *Namco Museum Battle Collection* is just as likely to please anyone who doesn't think that 2D is actually a dirty word.

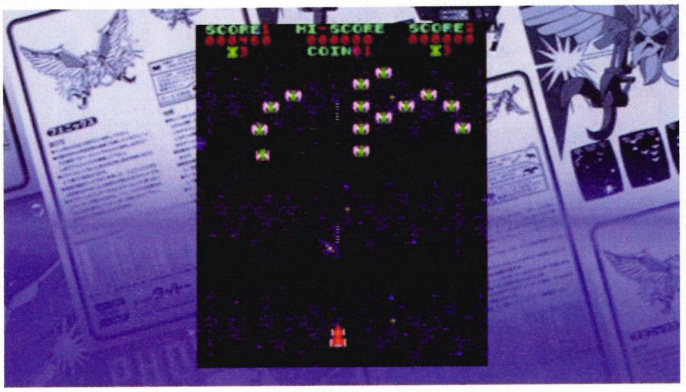
A surprising amount of retro games currently appear on PSP

It may not be due until September, but Xplosiv's first PSP compilation is already showing a fair amount of potential, and while the games aren't as strong as we'd expect, there are still some pretty good titles included, although nothing that really stands up to a lot of the games on Capcom's recent UMD. Titles like *The New Zealand Story*, *Qix*, *Lunar Rescue*, *Cameltry* and *Rastan Saga* are still a joy to play (providing you like this sort of thing, of course), but they still don't

Crazy Balloon has been given a facelift and now looks miles better

Rumours that *Rastan* was based on *Conan The Barbarian* are just that, rumours





Cameltry 2005 (top left), *Qix* (top right) and the awesome *Phoenix* (bottom). You can almost smell the retro love

hold a torch to the likes of Capcom's *Strider*, *Final Fight* or *Black Tiger* Still, it's a little churlish to complain about the games because what we've played so far suggests that the emulation of each title is spot on and, in some cases, it appears to be far better than those seen in the PS2 compilations.

Interestingly, Taito has also included some new arranged modes of four of the available games: *Crazy Balloon*, *Balloon* Bomber, *The Legend Of Kage* and *Cameltry*, so if your eyes can't tolerate basic 2D, then you appreciate them on a brand new scale complete with nifty extras. It's disappointing that the space hasn't been put to better use by including some other retro classics. It's not like these new versions are terrible; we just prefer the true retro experience.

If we were to be cynical we could suggest that the reason so many classic hits don't appear – *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands* or *Zookeeper*, for example – is because Xplosiv is already sitting on a sequel for next year. Good job we're not cynics, eh? In short, this is looking like a rather decent compilation. ■

Darran Jones

[Interestingly, Taito has included some new arranged modes]

WE SAY **There's no denying that there are some solid games to choose from, but Capcom's recent *Remix* collection has really upped the ante and is now the benchmark against which all future compilations will be judged.**

Cameltry is yet another Taito classic that has been given a 2005 update

Mr Tomohiro Nishikado talks about his experiences creating Space Invaders...

Go>Play: When you created *Space Invaders*, what sort of success did you expect it to achieve?
Tomohiro Nishikado: I anticipated it would be a hit, but never thought it will be so huge. I was delighted to see it became popular.

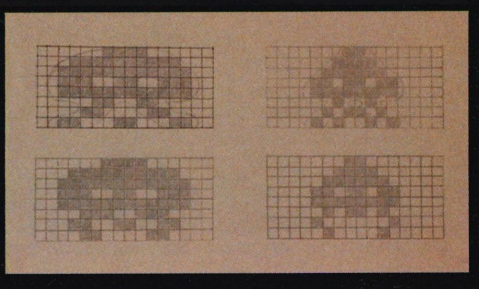
G>P: How long did it take to come up with the designs for the invaders themselves, and what was your inspiration for them?
TN: It was not an easy job. First, I thought of making tanks or airplanes as the targets to shoot, but it was technically hard to make airplanes look like they are actually flying. Human movement would have been easier, but I felt it would be immoral to shoot humans, even if they were bad guys. Then I heard about a movie called *Star Wars* released in the US, which was coming to Japan next year, so I came up with a game based in space and that had space aliens as targets. The alien design was inspired by *The War Of The Worlds* by HG Wells. In the story, the alien looked like an octopus. I drew a bitmap image based on that idea. Then I created several other aliens that looked like sea creatures such as squid or crab.

G>P: How long did the game take to actually create from conception to completion?
TN: Nearly one year. Although developing the game only took three or four months, developing the programming environment alone took almost six months.

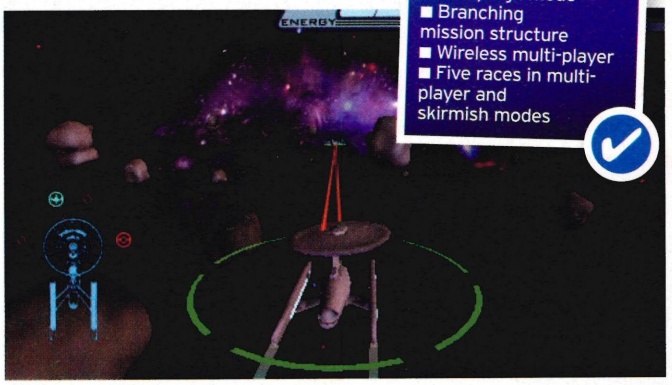
G>P: Was *Space Invaders* a difficult game to make?
TN: It was very a difficult process. The hardest part was the development of a micro computer. I had to create everything by myself. I created a development device, wrote a part of the game that runs on it, and then created more devices along the way.

G>P: What are your strongest memories from the time when you were making these games?
TN: I never had a bad time during game creations. There were some difficult times such as creation of a development environment for *Space Invaders*. But I rather enjoyed it.

Above: The creator plays his legendary game



Right: Who would have thought that such simple designs could become so iconic



EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- It's based on the original series.
- Campaign mode
- Branching mission structure
- Wireless multi-player
- Five races in multi-player and skirmish modes

Bethesda prepare to engage...

STAR TREK: TACTICAL ASSAULT

OUT: Q3 '06

Publisher **Bethesda** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?

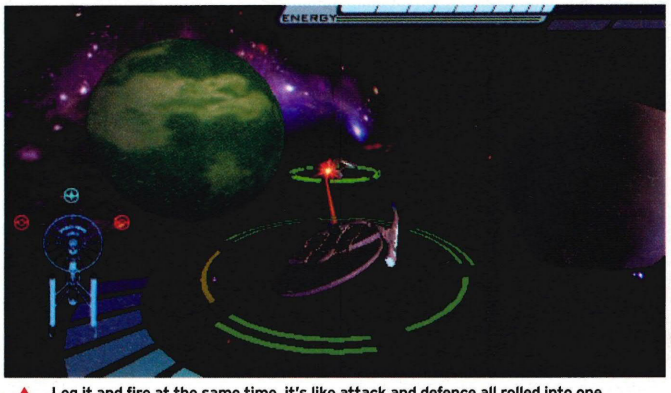
Go star trekking across the universe in ships from the original series.

The original series of *Star Trek* was better than any follow-up that the TV networks could churn out these days. Okay, so the sets wobbled, the aliens look a bit rubbish and Shatner overacted something rotten. However, that's what made it so endearing and for that reason we were glad to hear that *Tactical Assault*, the first *Star Trek* game on PSP, would be set during the original series rather than its sequels.

Setting the game in this period also means that the Klingons are the bad guys, which is just as it should be. Anyway, enough about when it's set, you're probably wondering what the game actually involves. Real-time space combat is on the menu, with you acting as a Federation or Klingon Captain depending on your disposition. It's your job to guide ships through the vast emptiness of space in search of other ships to throw your arsenal of proton torpedoes and phasers at. The campaign mode will see you fighting to control the universe with branching missions that provide multiple outcomes.

Along with the single-player experience is a multi-player mode that gives you a choice of five races all with their own strengths and weaknesses. With plenty of playability and strong visuals *Tactical Assault* looks far from being 'illogical'. ■ **Simon Griffin**

WE SAY **It's been a while since the last decent *Star Trek* game and we're glad to see this is coming to PSP. "Khaaaaaaaaan!" Sorry.**



Leg it and fire at the same time, it's like attack and defence all rolled into one

Insert 'Eye of the Tiger' quip here

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

OUT: 7 OCT

Publisher **EA** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?

The inevitable yearly update to the long-running EA franchise with a few new bells and whistles thrown in for good measure.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- Brand new mini-games
- Wireless multi-player
- Plenty of real-life pros to control
- Improved graphical presentation
- New PGA licensed courses

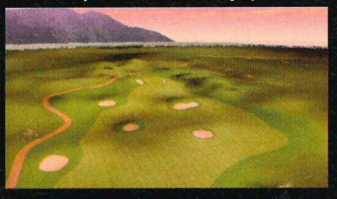
It's that time of year again and the ubiquitous Mr Woods has lent his name and likeness to EA's golf franchise for the ninth year in a row. How many millions do you think he gets each year for doing it? We reckon it's a few, the lucky sod. To be fair though he is bloody good at golf so he probably deserves it.

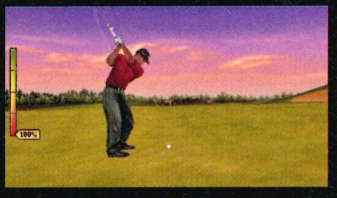
Anyway, here we are with another update of the popular series and this one is throwing a few new features into the mix. Exclusive to the PSP (hooray!) is the new Shooting Gallery that joins Putting Frenzy - both of these are designed to help you master different facets of your game.

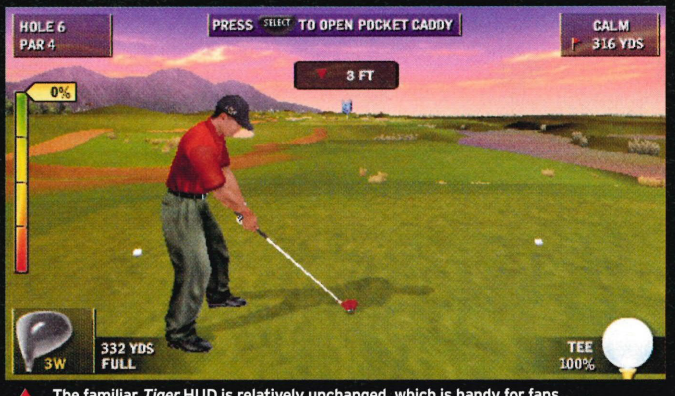
Shot enhancements have also been added to aid you in the form of the Swing Path Meter and Power Boosts. The meter displays shot type and shot accuracy information while the boosts give far more options when trying to pot a difficult shot from distance. We're a little bit disappointed to hear that the game will now give you even more assistance, which in our opinion only serves to distance you more from the actual sport.

That said, *Tiger Woods* games always manage to be fun regardless so there's no reason why this should be different. ■ **Simon Griffin**

WE SAY **We enjoyed last year's installment, but with new kid on the block, *ProStroke*, vying for attention, EA needs to pull off something special.**







The familiar *Tiger* HUD is relatively unchanged, which is handy for fans

PSP
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BANDAI NAMCO Games

ATARI

REVIEWED

WE PLAY 'EM, WE RATE 'EM

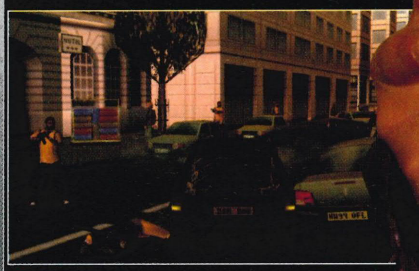
HIGHLIGHTS

"Games? at **3am in the morning**? That's not why God invented sleep.

Just **how addictive** is the mighty *Tekken: Dark Resurrection*? **Insomnia-inducingly** so by the sounds of it. Take a look at the verdict on **Page 58**"

"As far back as **I can remember** I always wanted to be a **cockney geezer.**

Does *Gangs Of London* fulfil that **mockney dream** or are we left still wanting **more from the capital**? Find out what we thought of it on **page 62**"



"The controls **aren't perfect** but it honestly takes very little away from such a **superb title.**

Could *Gitaroo Man Lives!* overcome **control issues** unlike **so many other ill-fated** PSP games?"

1 Tom dyed his hair the other day. When we asked "why?" he replied "I might have been drunk." No surprise there then. Bloody booze hound.

2 Tom went to Specsavers but was asked to leave after he tried chatting up the optician. Tom couldn't tell it was a man without his glasses... or maybe he could.

3 This grin was the other way up when Simon bapped Tom in the *Pro Evo* office final. Oh, the score was 3-0 by the way and he had nothing to offer.

4 The jacket Tom is sporting was put on especially for this photo. Look at him, he really thinks it makes him look cool.

5 Tom sports the traditional two-gun Go>Play salute in honour of all you lovely readers. Of course, now he's left the mag he's not allowed to do it any more. Bottler.

6 These look like the nails of a man who bites them. Not that we're particularly bothered but it's a disgusting habit that makes you look like an idiot.

REVIEWER OF THE MONTH

(As picked by us, out of a tool box)

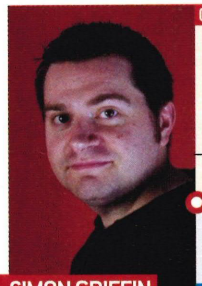
REVIEWER: Tom Leclerc

SUBJECT: Deserter

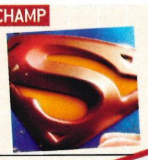
CHAMP OR CHUMP?

So, what exactly have the hard-working, hot-to-trot **Go>Play** crew been up to this month? We ask them directly...

SIMON GRIFFIN



CHAMP



19 July
Went to see *Superman Returns* - better than I was expecting.

21 July
Went back home to be in my mate's no-budget zombie movie. I was awesome, Hollywood here I come!

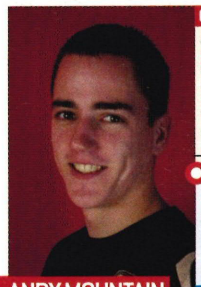
1 July
Watched England get knocked out on penalties... again.

28 July
Went back home again and sat on the M25 for two hours. I hate that road.

24 July
Popped into the Rockstar office to take a gander at the new *GTA*, which was nice.

CHUMP

ANDY MOUNTAIN



CHAMP

6 July
Destroyed all my tastebuds with a phaal curry. Won't be doing that again in a hurry.

28 July
Hung around in trees for the afternoon doing a high-ropes adventure course.

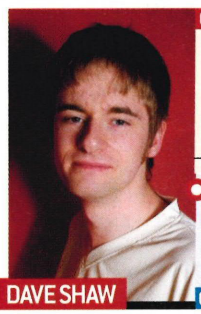
29 July
Spent a large part of the weekend battling with a 200ft beast in *Shadow Of The Colossus*.

14 July
Had an absolutely brilliant night at Hardcore Heaven vs Slinky.

21 July
My birthday. Spent the day queuing for seven rides at Thorpe Park then stumbled into Bournemouth for a great night out.

CHUMP

DAVE SHAW



CHAMP

7 July
Swapped my old DS and 60 quid for a DSlite - my best decision of the year so far. I don't get out much.

27 July
Went down to the seafront and saw a mate stung by a weaver fish. Other people's pain is funny.

11 July
Spent a week in an air-conditioned caravan in Crowborough, Sussex. It's nothing like Jeremy Clarkson's description - it's worse.

29 July
Discovered AFC Bournemouth is but five minutes from my house. Saw them get trounced 4-0.

31 July
Put an order in for a brand new HDTV after months of slotting pennies into the ol' piggy bank - woo hoo!

CHUMP

KEITH HENNESSEY

CHAMP

13 July
Spent the rest of my holiday constructing garden decking... kill me, kill me now.

17 July
Started work on Next3, a brand new PlayStation 3 magazine - it's the only way I could afford the console.

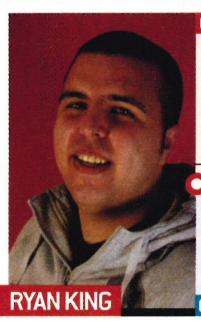
11 July
Went camping in France and decided to adopt their funny little ways. That meant headbutting everyone in the chest.

16 July
A random cat jumped through my bedroom window and scared the bejesus out of me... Why? I live on the fourth floor!

28 July
Celebrated the end of the month by risking life and limb 40 feet in the air - I didn't even get a banana.

CHUMP

RYAN KING



CHAMP

4 July
I remember Americans getting really excited about some fireworks or something. Forget why.

15 July
Went to a *Third Stike* session. Won 12 matches in a row with Chun-Li! Then lost. And again. And again. And again...

28 July
Bournemouth Council demand I pay them £903 council tax. Huh? That can't be right. Appparently it is.

20 July
Had a booze-inspired eating competition with the man they call Murray. I won! Then I went home and nearly died.

29 July
I'm still ****** off about it the next day. Stay in and drink. Lots.

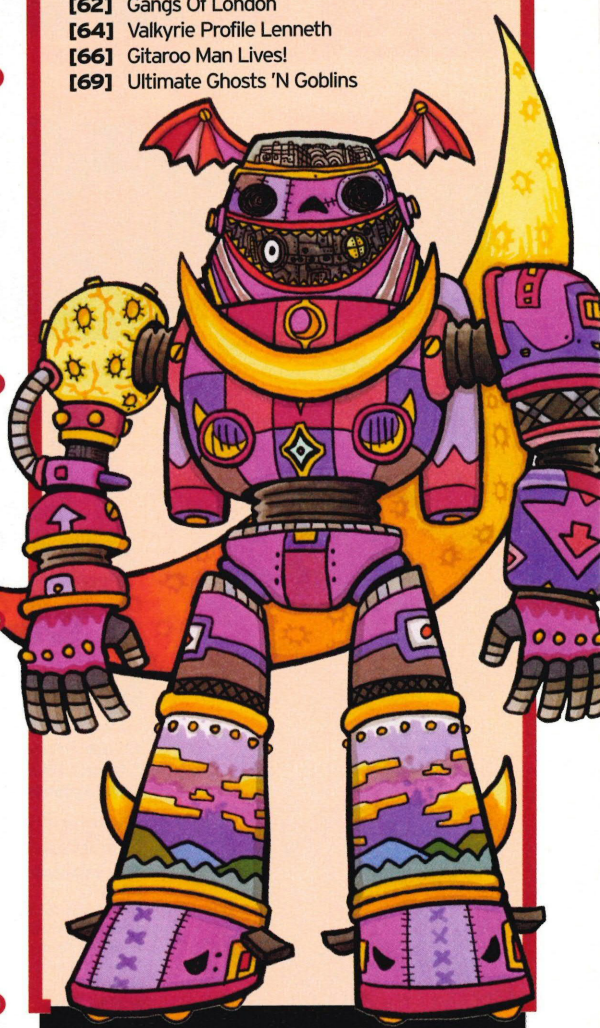
CHUMP

Reviewed this month

[58] TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION
The gang's all here for the best brawling action to grace the PSP yet

HIGHLIGHTS

[62] Gangs Of London
[64] Valkyrie Profile Lenneth
[66] Gitaroo Man Lives!
[69] Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins



How we review

The Big Question

Even the fairest-minded reviewer makes assumptions. How good have the developer's other games been? How good are the games this is up against? We outline The Big Questions...

Percentage Score

It's a games mag tradition to score out of 100 per cent, and who are we to break with tradition? Chances are you know how these work, but in case you don't:

Under 30% = atrocious
Under 60% = pretty damn poor
Around 70% = now we're interested
Around 80% = well worth buying
Around 90% = fantastic - sell your gran to get it

Summing-Up Line

The whole game boiled down to 15 or so words.

Jinpachi isn't as cheap now. If you really try, it should only take about 50 attempts to beat him!

Ladies and gentlemen, meet Raven In A Hat. It's the spiritual sequel to *Snakes On A Plane*!

Resurrecting the fighting game scene on PSP

TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION

OUT: 8 SEPT

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **Namco Bandai** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player, Wi-Fi Internet Multi-player**

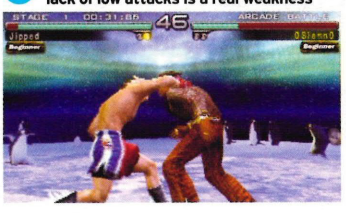
THE Big QUESTIONS

How balanced is this?
Unlike *Tekken 5*, which suffered from the Holy Trinity (Steve, Nina, Bryan) knocking the balance completely out of whack, *Dark Resurrection* does a good job of bringing the rogue characters back in line with the rest of the cast.

How does it manage this?
Well, Steve's utterly ridiculous down-towards + right punch launcher has been toned down, so it only launches on counter-hit while Bryan's wall combos have also been watered down. Nina? She's still as hardcore as ever. Damn.

This review was tough to write. Not due to writer's block or anything that fancy, so don't dream up images of an overworked writer dribbling over his keyboard trying to conjure magical word play to weave around the review. No, the truth isn't anywhere near that sexy. This review was tough to write because *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* is simply that damn good and **Go>Play** has spent many a night until 3am, playing the damn thing, trying to unlock Wang's Bruce Lee outfit, leaving brains fried (not good for thinking) and fingers sore (not good for typing) the next morning. Is this just another form of writer's block? Probably, but it could just as easily be described as stupidity on our part. Games? At 3am in the morning? That's not why God invented sleep.

"Is *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* really that good?" you ask. "Hey, thanks for asking," we reply, as you've given us something to talk about in the second paragraph (take that, writer's block). And yes, it is. First thing you notice, you graphics whore you, is how damned gorgeous it looks. Christie is lickable, Paul is punchable, Jin is damn cool. Able.



No longer the best character, Steve's lack of low attacks is a real weakness

It's funny because he says fear the wrath of God but you don't actually fight God! You fight Devil Jin! The man is an idiot! He has absolutely no idea what he's talking about!

The backgrounds look lovely. Rare is there a game that looks so nice it moves anyone to use the words "the backgrounds look lovely" but they really do look lush. Bar a few textures and the occasional scar betraying the otherwise clean operation undergone to resize the behemoth arcade brawler for the dinky PSP, you really could be forgiven for thinking this was running on PlayStation2.

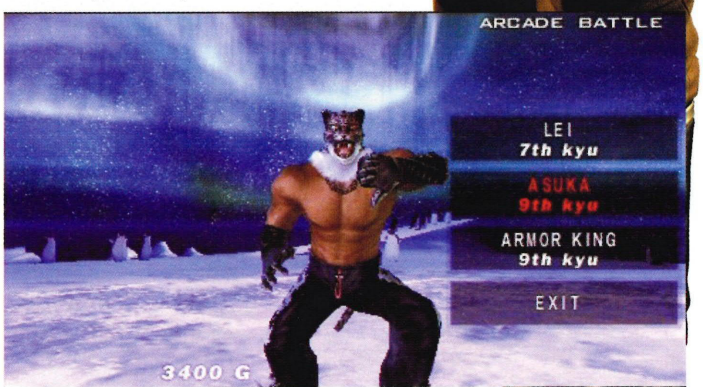
Tekken: Dark Resurrection also controls like a dream. This proves *Guilty Gear* on PSP was no fluke – fighting games can work on Sony's handheld providing developers do more than just throw their game in the PSP's general direction and hope something sticks. In this case, the D-pad inputs are lenient enough that you can pull off ridiculous juggle combos while some moves have just been made plain easier (Wang's leg tackle throw only requires two buttons pressed rather than three). Unlike *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and Darkstalkers, you forget the D-pad is even there after a while as everything becomes second nature and you focus on battling your opponent rather than wonky PSP technology. That, fellow developers, is how you make a fighting game work on PSP.

[Christie is lickable, Paul is punchable, Jin is damn cool...]

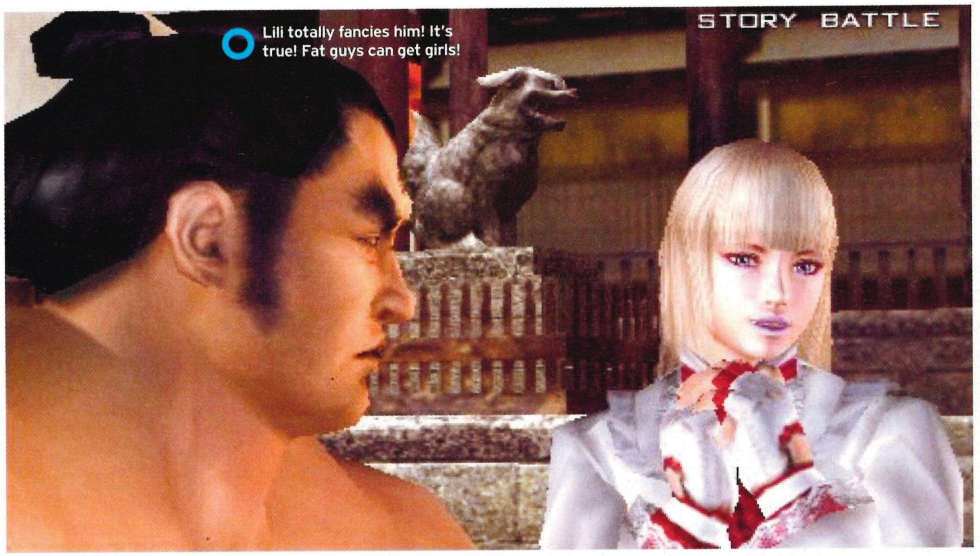
Granted, while it comes damn close to perfection, the control still isn't perfect as some moves are still a bitch to pull off. For the pros wading through the text, the bad news is advanced stuff such as wave dashing (cancelling crouch dashes into each other) is too much for the poor D-pad to handle, which struggles to keep up and starts crying when battered with the incredibly quick D-pad inputs. Low parrying can also prove tricky too, for reasons we can't quite fathom. Still, it's not that big a problem, given those who practise those techniques would rather be seen slumming it out in arcades anyway. Meanwhile, pressing square and circle at the same time seems down to luck as much as anything else, which rules out most characters unblockables as a viable move in the heat of battle. Even so, providing you're not an Asuka player, this is only a fraction of your moves list. And if you are an Asuka player... we're sorry. Have you tried *Guilty Gear* yet?

In any case, Asuka players don't have to sweat too much as there are three new faces to get stuck into. Well, two new, one returning. Armor King has jumped back into the fold after approximately 500 hundred years away from the series. >

New faces Lili and Dragunov in the middle, returning face Armor King on the top-right, old faces everywhere else, burnt-and-slightly-melting faces all over the background



Armor King doesn't have King's cool little dance he does after a win. That, by default, makes him worse. Boo!



Lili totally fancies him! It's true! Fat guys can get girls!

This aerial kick is by far Lili's best launcher. Learn it and abuse it. Cheap!

The dojo battles attempt to recreate arcade atmosphere, minus chavs

Asuka no longer saves a cat in the CGI intro. For shame

Storyline wise, he makes no sense but fighting wise, he's essentially King with less throws and more power moves. A nice addition. Then there are the new faces. Lili is, as suspected, a girl. We really are the masters of research! Lili being a girl means Namco Bandai has gone crazy with floating hearts, cutesy pop music and frilly pink clothing because, you know, that's what girls are like. Lili also has the most elegant moves set of the entire cast, flowing from one strike to another with ridiculous mix-up options and dazzling combo possibilities. Even better than that, Namco Bandai has pinched a leaf from *Virtua Fighter*'s bluntly, he sucks.

Another reason why few people will unlock Dragunov's ending is they'll be too busy unlocking everything else *Tekken* throws your way. Not the usual tosh like unlockable artwork or whatever else the developers have kicking around on their PCs that they want to get rid of but genuine, honest-to-goodness, interesting unlockables. You can unlock Tekken Theatre, which lets you see the CGI endings you've unlocked without having to run through the entire cast in Story Mode again. This is a good thing. You can unlock further items for customisation, such as Soul and Life

[Lili is, as suspected, a girl. We really are masters of research!]

book, with Lili's "please don't tell my father" followed by a patronising shush every bit as cool as Sarah's infamous "go easy on me." Fighting game fans will immediately pick up on the similarities but for everyone else, Lili has more sex and sass than most fighting games can muster throughout an entire roster. As if to compensate for this, Dragunov is rather rubbish. We've tried to think of a better way of putting it but that would involve time and effort, something Namco Bandai hasn't invested in this bizarre Russian soldier. There's nothing particularly remarkable about him, from his fighting style (some weird bar-room brawl/wrestling hybrid) to his actual character (some weird Ivan Drago/ Michael Jackson hybrid). We haven't unlocked his ending yet because, well, it's Dragunov and to put it

Auras. Also a good thing. Finally, you can unlock Tekken Bowl. You don't need to be told that this is the Best Mini-Game On Any Game Ever™.

If that's not enough, then you're spoilt, you're greedy and your parents didn't bring you up properly but no matter. Namco Bandai has also included Tekken Dojo, a loose attempt to recreate the arcade tournament scenes that originally brought *Tekken* to life, minus the chav boys drinking cans of Stella and their Essex chip-shop chav girlfriends. You travel to a new dojo, start at the bottom and work your way up through the rankings by beating local players in the area until you're good enough to compete in the actual tournaments. Each character has their own funky username and costumes, with supposedly a unique fighting

He said this two pages ago! We know your name already!

style too but any individual flair the AI shows tends to get lost under the deluge of juggle combos. Regardless, you'll have fun battering the likes of Michig@n Asuka.

What's the point of all this? Money. Money buys costumes, costumes buy respect, respect buys nothing so you get depressed, mope a bit, then go back to playing *Tekken* to earn more money. The customisation hinted at in *Tekken 5* has been built upon, so there are now even more outlandish options for dressing up your character. Lili can be transformed into a gothic schoolgirl, Asuka can be transformed into a fully fledged geisha, Panda can be transformed into a pink bear with Elton John sunglasses and, if you really fancy it, every character can be transformed into a mess of weird colours and eccentric items that only you could love. This is the real hook behind *Tekken: Dark Resurrection*. You can progress through the ranks until you earn the title of Grandmaster and deck out your favourite characters in funky gear along with weird items (electric guitars, sickles, monkeys and so on). That's all the fancy extras covered. There are a lot of bells and a lot of whistles here and with them, *Dark Resurrection* makes one hell of a racket. Even without them, this is still classic *Tekken*. It retains the series' trademarks of long juggle combos, as you delicately balance your attack (landing your launcher, so you can go into a combo), defence (avoiding your opponent's launcher) and mix-ups (doing unpredictable moves to confuse your opponent).

[Deck out favourite characters in funky gear and weird items]

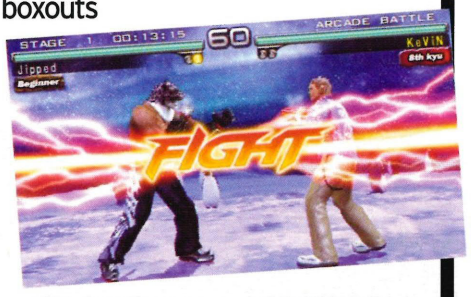
The only gripe we have about *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* is there isn't a reliable way of getting multi-player up and running without some sort of lag barging into the equation. Fighting games need a connection smoother than a baby's bottom to run properly, as a single frame of lag is enough to see you miss braindead combos, lose the match then swear. The baby's bottom is rather stubbly on this one – not smooth at all. Even so, there's more than enough meat on the single-player bone to ensure you never get hungry for multi-player action and that, more than anything else, ensures that *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* muscles its way into the essential collection of games for your PSP. Now excuse us, if you don't mind we'll be getting back to nabbing Wang's Bruce Lee outfit... ■ **Ryan King**

Absolutely fantastic and by far, the best brawler on PSP **94%**

Wang, with his brow furrowed, his face stony and his concentration fierce, attempts to harness the power of mystical and lost art of Being Cheap for the long battle ahead

Multiplicity

We've run out of decent headlines for multi-player boxouts



Tekken is a series based on multi-player mash-ups, so it was disappointing to see that there was no one-size-fits-all answer to the problem of lag. The first way of tackling multi-player is Wi-Fi, which has a delicate whiff of lag, hanging in the air and doing just enough to ruin the delicate, dainty scent of *Tekken*'s brilliance. Shame. The other option is to download a 'ghost', which doesn't mean a vaguely see-through apparition waving its arms about going "woooo" but an AI likeness of your opponent's fighting habits. This option is probably better, as there's no lag, but that still leaves the you-can-beat-my-ghost-but-you-can't-beat-me argument. Sigh.

As far back as I can remember I always wanted to be a cockney geezer

GANGS OF LONDON

OUT: 1 SEPT

Publisher **Sony** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-5** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Is it better than *GTA: Liberty City Stories*?
No, but it does have a real-life city to explore rather than a fictitious one and it's always fun when you recognise a building or a street you've been to.

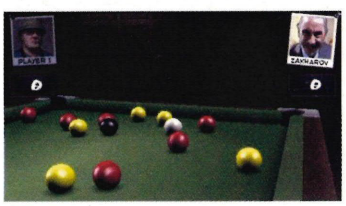
There are a lot of things to do in the game, which bit is the best?
The main story really, but all the other stuff, such as the pub and other mini-games, are a worthy distraction when you get tired of pulling jobs.

The presentation of *Gangs Of London* is amazing, as soon as you load it up you know there has been so much work put into this game and then so much squeezed onto the UMD that you can't help but feel impressed. You've got a massive Story mode, loads of fun mini-games and stuff to do that you know you've got great value out of your 35 quid. It puts a smile on your face, and smiling's great! Just ask dep ed Griff.

The main Story mode sees you picking a cosmopolitan group of gangsters each with their own strengths and weaknesses, and then you have to take your ragtag bunch on various missions to become the kings of the underground. No not the Tube, the criminal underground – geezers who think they are above the law. Each mission you embark on is preceded with an incredibly cool-looking comic strip with excellent voice acting explaining the events leading up to what you're about to play. They really set the scene and are something Guy "Madonna's bitch" Ritchie could definitely take note of.

Aside from the story, you've also got fun wee mini-games in the pub (see the boxout), a Tourist mode where you travel through London taking photos of the city's famous landmarks, The Knowledge – a test where you drive a taxi, and of course you have the city itself to drive around in the free roaming mode. Just the fact that the whole place is here on the PSP and on a UMD is a feat itself, and certainly we're very impressed by it.

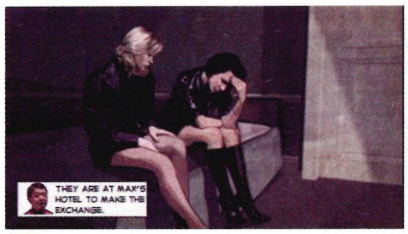
However, while it's true that *Gangs Of London* looks pretty good, has great features and the presentation is amazing, it is let



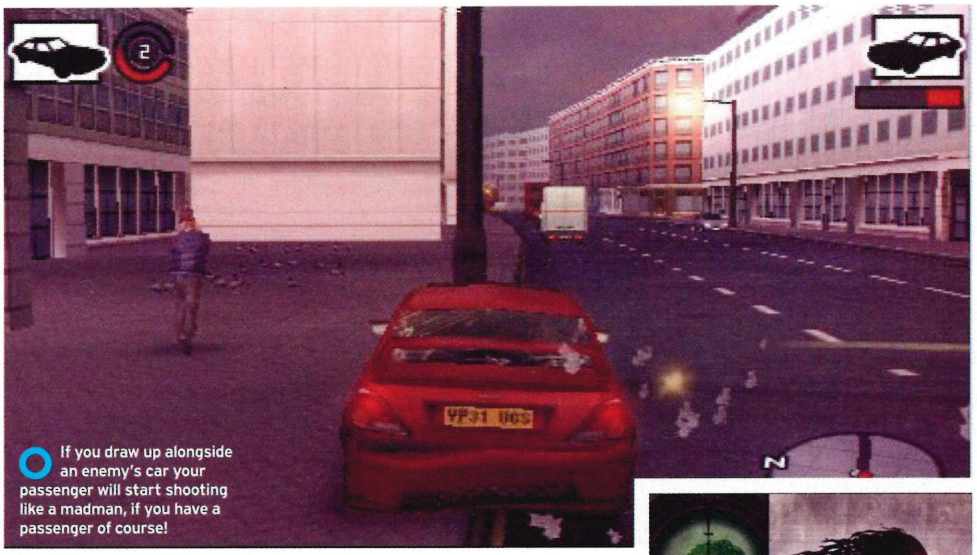
A couple of guys up to no good started making trouble in my neighbourhood

Cut-scenes just consist of pictures, but they do have a certain artistic flair

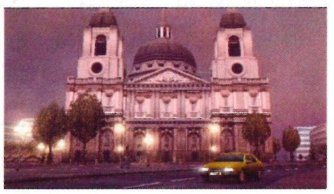
Infiltrating a rival gang's base is risky, so make sure you're tooled up with the best guns



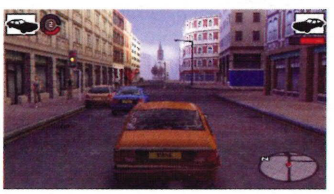
In this mission you have to rescue some prostitutes, like Richard Gere in *Pretty Woman*!



If you draw up alongside an enemy's car your passenger will start shooting like a madman, if you have a passenger of course!



Obviously there are all the famous landmarks in London, here's St Paul's!



down by a few things. Thing 1: dodgy controls when you're out and about shooting gangsters. Thing 2: London looks way too clean and like some sort of prefabricated pretend city (which it is if you want to be technical about it). Thing 3: the repetitive nature of the missions.

In the Story mode you can select various different missions to do, but in fact they all boil down to either driving missions or ones where you have to fight with the controls while trying to shoot other gangsters in the face. *GTA: Liberty City Stories* retained the controls from the PS2 versions, but *Gangs Of London* unfortunately hasn't done the same. Instead you have to put up with a rather fudgy method that makes the usually simple act of turning around annoyingly slow and difficult. It's like the characters have a bigger turning circle than a lorry and it sees you having to make three-point-turns when you're chasing down an enemy. This slows your progress and easily leads to your death when you're getting shot in the side of the head. At least now you can lock on to opponents by using the K button though; this used to just bring your gun up and you had to strafe left or right to line up the shot, but now this only works if they are in your view already. So if you're surrounded you're a bit screwed, as you can't just snap round and let off a shotgun blast. Instead you have to start the forwards-backwards reversing thing and you half expect an alarm to beep along with a warning that "this player is reversing" to start sounding in your ear.

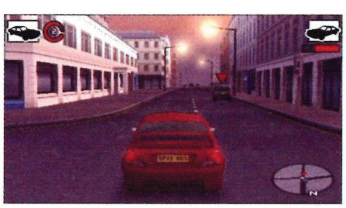
[Something Guy "Madonna's bitch" Ritchie could take note of]

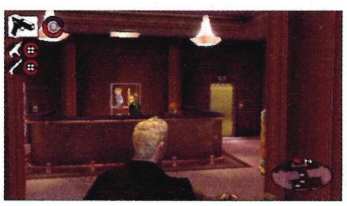
The city itself is impressive in its size and accuracy, but it does tend to look like a film lot when you're racing through its streets and back alleys as the same colours are used throughout. It also looks flat, as if a layer of textures was never applied.

The Story mode unfortunately doesn't have much replay ability. You might think that with five different gangs to choose from you'd be getting widely varying stories to play through, but that's not the case at all. You see, many of the missions are the same just with the different colour-coded gangs taking the lead role. Each and every one of them will have some dumbass who leaves a briefcase full of money in an unattended car, which then gets stolen and you have to chase down the thieves in order to get it back.

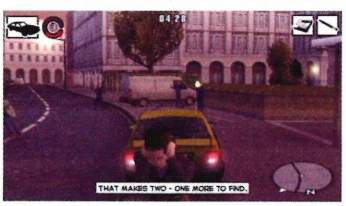
While *GOL* is impressive, it does have its letdowns and you'd probably be better off with *Liberty City Stories*, or *Vice City Stories* when it arrives. ■ **Tim Empey**

Huge number of things to do, but let down by wonky aiming 80%





Lock on to someone and they start glowing red, like Ready Brek adverts!



Ha ha ha! Totally going to reverse over that pedestrian, that's always fun

You can find me in the pub

Lots to see and do in London, even tramps!

Well, maybe not tramps, but there are loads of other things to play about with. The pub for starters has a few fun mini-games, including skittles, pool and darts; the difficulty of the computer opponents goes up as you beat them, but you can also play against a friend. Elsewhere is a Risk-style strategy game, which is fun for a while, as you try to take over a map of London by deploying troops of Cockneys. You can also take the Knowledge test where you drive a black cab around London and pretend to have an opinion on everything. There's even a mode where you eradicate the city of zombies, it's called 4 Weeks Later. Ho ho! A rubbish pun!

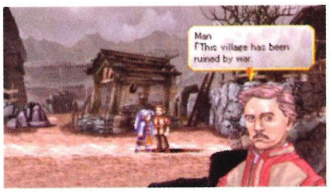
Some enemies will block you, so use a combo to break through. Don't worry, it's incredibly intuitive

Be sure to explore every scene fully, since most areas have concealed treasures

Nothing is as it would seem. Be prepared for some emotional losses later on

Finally, the re-release of a sorely overlooked classic

VALKYRIE PROFILE: LENNETH



OUT: NOW (USA)

Publisher **Square Enix** / Developer **tri-Ace** / Price **£39.99 (Import)** / Players **1** / Supports **N/A**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

So basically it's an old game, is that right?
Technically, yes. But that old game was so ahead of its time, that it still feels innovative and fresh today.

Valhalla's not religious is it?
No, not at all! The scripting, though melancholy, is mature and far superior to the majority of other RPGs. Trust us!

Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth is the port of the same named (sans 'Lenneth') seven-year-old PSone game, which for whatever reasons, received only a limited release in America and none at all in Europe. Like so many games with a low production run it gained cult popularity some time after release, resulting in resale prices that now top £100. For those who astutely follow RPGs, *Lenneth* has caused much rejoicing, since it now means that everyone can affordably enjoy what many proclaim as one of the greatest RPGs ever.

Not that the uninitiated would think this upon starting! Make no mistake, this is not the RPG that will convert die-hard haters and neither is it easy even for veterans to get into. It initially requires some hard work - the game begins with an inescapable and almost useless two-hour tutorial that barely covers the basics. But if you have even a vague interest in adventuring then don't let this dissuade you, because once finally unleashed into its free-roaming world, you will discover one of the most satisfying and innovative RPGs around - one that practically reinvents the genre.

Unlike other Japanese RPGs, you're not in control of a stereotypically hormonal and angsty teenager with spiky hair, but rather the titular Valkyrie goddess of Norse myths and legends. Her task in the game is to seek and recruit the souls of fallen warriors, train them up against all manner of demons, and then send them off to Valhalla to fight alongside Odin in the eternal and Sacred War of the gods. Weaving a tale from something that originated in Scandinavia is highly unique and helps avoid the tired clichés normally peddled by Square Enix. The scripting is excellent and

That's it! Now strike and unleash another massive combo on the enemy! You can even chain them together

Every recruitable character has their own hand drawn portrait and also fluidly animated sprite. It's 2D, but give it a chance

Juggling chained combos

Battle system like no other

Battles involve either casting magic, using an item, or pressing the face button that corresponds to certain characters (Triangle will make the upper one attack physically, for example). Although the system is turn based it features a unique twist: by timing when certain people attack it's possible to combo enemies and juggle them (even if they're already defeated). When the gauge reaches 100 you're able to quickly pull off devastating Special Attacks, which if timed correctly can be chained together for massive damage. This gives a real-time tactile quality to fights, granting far greater control. Almost resembling beat-'em-ups, battles are supremely enjoyable.

Enemies wander the dungeons, and if needs be, can be avoided entirely

Forget pathetic airships, in this you can fly anywhere you like at anytime!

incredibly sincere, especially when dealing with death and sorrow. Each character you recruit (of 24) has a personal story leading to their demise. The deaths are frequent but they all weave together wonderfully into a saga of genuine sadness. It doesn't hide the relentless misery brought about by the brutalities of war, which combined with the fact that you actually take control of the souls of the slain in preparation for the ultimate ethereal war makes for a rousing and sobering adventure. Meanwhile the text localisation from the original Japanese is exquisite - you would almost think its initial drafting was actually in English, not Japanese. Undeniably you will be moved when playing this game, otherwise there's likely to be something wrong with you.

Thankfully the excellent narrative is backed by solid and refined gameplay, which is quite honestly unlike anything else seen in more hackneyed RPGs - to the point where it almost but not quite defies classification. Once released from the confines of the opening tutorial, our Valkyrie is able to fly freely around the entire map, examining areas and choosing destinations in a non-linear fashion. Time constantly moves on, regardless of what you're doing, in both the human world and that of the gods with their Sacred War. This adds not only a sense of urgency but also tension to proceedings. For those concerned about time limits, Normal difficulty is quite manageable.

> The **excellent narrative** is backed by refined gameplay

Pressing START initiates Spiritual Concentration, which allows you to listen to the final words of the damned before they perish (thereby making them easy to find), and it also automatically locates nearby enemy concentrations. Villages and dungeons take the form of a 2D-platformer (with basic puzzles), featuring delicate sprites overlaid onto CG. It honestly works better than one imagines. Best of all is there are no random battles in these areas, enemies can be seen and avoided if desired.

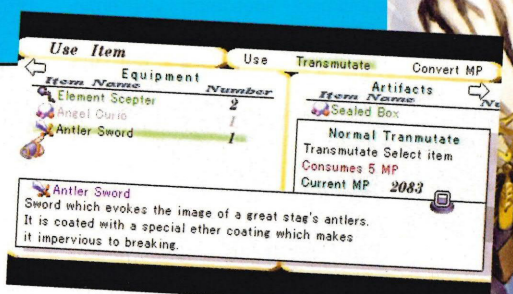
Clearly the original was impeccably crafted, but herein lies the main flaw with *Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth*. In terms of being an RPG it is second to few, but it's wholly unsuited to PSP gaming. It was never intended for short bursts of play and the possibility of the battery running out or bus stop coming up. Of course this doesn't detract from the actual game, which is without doubt an excellent example of the genre, or the fact that it's much cheaper than the original. For people who are both RPG and PSP inclined, this is an essential videogame and certainly sets a precedent for all future PSP RPGs. ■ **John Szczepaniak**

Epic, unique, and stunning, but more suited to a console **89%**

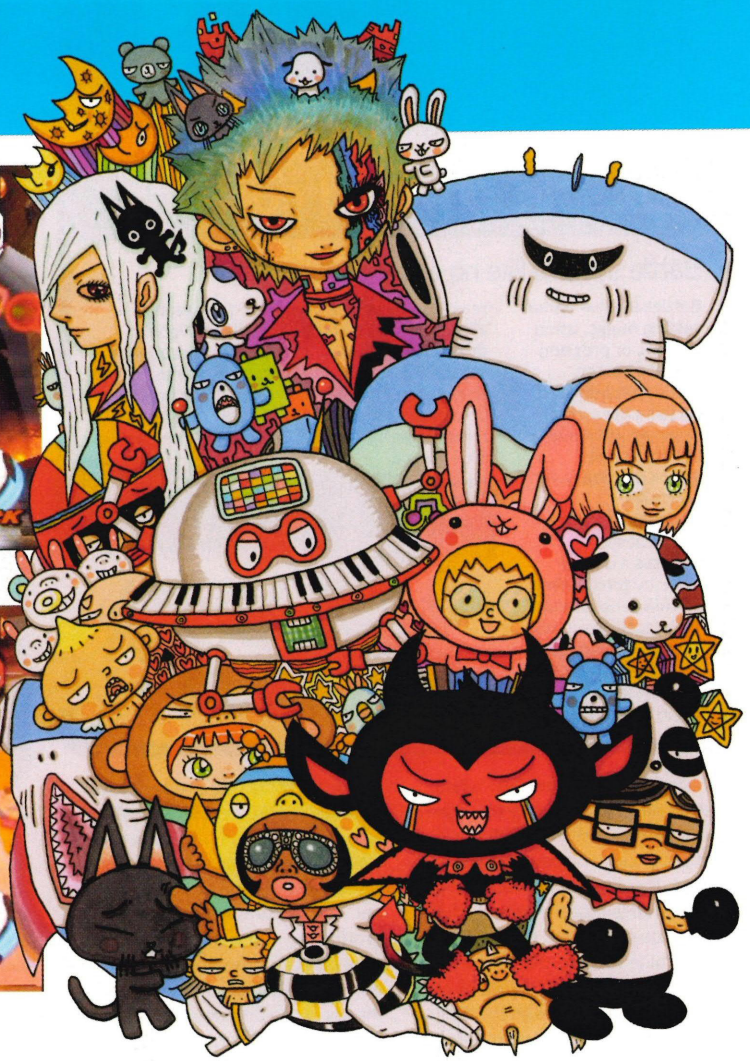
Down with Capitalism!

An RPG with no shops? Is it possible?

VPL entirely abandons the archaic concept of gold and shops (and therefore endless battles to collect gold), instead inventing something entirely unique and innovative. By using Materialise Points (MP) you can create items from nothing, and also convert junk into something useful. MP are earned during certain events, and can also be created from excess items. You'll also find items in dungeons and during battle.



You'll find yourself whistling many of these tunes and annoying your friends. Be warned



We're definitely not gently weeping

GITAROO MAN LIVES!

OUT: 1 SEPT

Publisher **Koei** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

It all sounds a little bizarre, is it?
Well yes, but think about it, since when has surreal actually meant a bad game?

Okay, but it also sounds pretty easy, is it?
Nope – you'll be in for a whole lot of punishment once you get on to Master mode.

Learning to play an instrument is extremely tough when you don't know how to play one. It sounds a bit stupid, and a mite obvious, but it's true. It's one of the many things in life that, as you watch a true player indulge in whatever musical act they are well trained in, looks to be a relatively simple task, but the banshee-esque screeching and wailing that your own attempts achieve – after spending x amount on lessons and equipment – soon inform your brain of the truth. You're not going to be able to do this.

Obviously, in some cases, mastering an instrument is achievable – otherwise nobody would be able to play – but for some of us the understanding and lack of finger dexterity lets us down and we are forced to accept that its an area in which we are not going to be able to compete. Thankfully there are others that realise this. The chaps at Harmonix – most recently applauded for *Guitar Hero* on the PS2 – make a point of creating music/rhythm-based videogames that allow anyone to make beautiful music with anyone else. Thanks to this they managed to control the rhythm/action genre, unrivalled, on the PS2 for years. Well, apart from when *Gitaroo Man* turned up... When it first arrived a good few years ago now, most who got to

Dancing frogs are mildly better than everything else in the world

If we had a robot it would definitely be named Woofer-Mazing. Yes

Just look at all the pretty colours. Wow, now that's what we call distracting

If you actually get through Master mode, please write in and tell us all about it

play were hooked immediately. With stylish visuals and catchy tunes, the game managed to worm its way into our hearts and now it's been brought to the PSP – thankfully it's lost absolutely nothing in translation and this is as good as it ever was. Unfortunately, *Gitaroo Man* was one of those titles that didn't really catch on at the time of release and so it never received the praise it truly deserved, many corrected this as time went on though, so we sincerely hope that more people pay attention to the PSP port.

Story-wise, it's nothing too special. It's weird, but not special. A guy called U-1 is informed by his talking dog that he's actually a legendary hero called Gitaroo Man. He has to head out into space and round up all the parts of his legendary weapon from various musical villains so he can play the Legendary Theme and save everything and everyone from the evil Zowie. While he's doing this, he's trying to get two different laydees to like him. They both look the same though. And the evil Zowie looks like his bully back on Earth. Maybe the story is special after all... it's certainly legendary.

[Mojo King Bee – a trumpet-playing chap in a bee costume]

The game is basically a series of battles where you have to out-play Zowie's minions in order. Be it Gregorio III, the Sanbone Trio or Zowie himself, these are some of the most memorable villains ever put into a videogame. Our personal favourite, Mojo King Bee, is a funky trumpet-playing chap in a bee costume. He lives in a swamp. To beat your foes you have to perform a combination of track following with the analogue stick to play your guitar at the enemy (attacking) and hitting the four face buttons in rhythm to fend off their music (defending); the routine continues until a winner is found. Easy, right? Well, sort of. It's certainly easier. Something that's instantly noticeable to anyone who played

We always thought getting the girl was tough – all you have to do is turn into a guitar-playing superhero

Tune up and move out

Now we're really jammin'

The multi-player in *Gitaroo Man* really takes a back seat to the single-player campaign, just because it's simply not as fun. It's not bad though and is still pretty good if you just want to prove that you're better than your friends at a game that you've been playing lots and they haven't. Also, in general, the person playing the enemy musical parts is at a disadvantage anyway, due to you not being used to playing them. We enjoyed playing as Carrot from the Sanbone Trio. He's a xylophone-playing skeleton, but we wonder why he's called Carrot?

the PS2 version for any real length of time is that some of the more demanding button sequences have been toned down a little for the PSP version. This by no means makes the game too easy – just actually possible. Once again the limits of the PSP hardware have proven to be a problem – it's something we've seen in many fighting titles – but at least this time it's been realised and addressed in a way that only those with a great knowledge of the original will spot. To those who are discovering the title for the first time, this will make no difference due to it being impossible for you to notice. And as far as the game being over-simplified, erase those thoughts from your mind – Mojo King Bee on Master difficulty is still one of the most difficult things we've seen in a videogame.

Where *Gitaroo Man* really stands out is with the selection of music that's been chosen for each battle. Whereas most games have a set theme for music, *Gitaroo Man* jumps around the musical genres to provide something different every time you progress. Jazz, Rock, Acoustic, even a reggae-spewing robot shark turns up at one point, and we can't tell you how much we like the final track. It's a bit like Radiohead's 'Just', but we're sure if lawyers were going to get involved it would have happened the first time around. Koei is probably in the clear.

Okay, the controls aren't perfect but it honestly takes very little away from such a superb game. Until this title turned up the other week, we were still playing the original, so that says quite a lot about the longevity of appeal we're talking about here. Unfortunately, as far as the Rhythm/Action genre goes, this is likely to be the best we're going to get for a while. *Gitaroo Man* manages to be doable with a few amendments to the game and the odd control tweak, but if the likes of *Amplitude* and *Frequency* see ports on the PSP we would truly fear for our digits. Those shoulder buttons just aren't going to let it happen. ■ **Rick Porter**

[Even a reggae-spewing robot shark turns up at one point...]

A hugely enjoyable musical romp of a game **89%**

We see lots of high grades because we're really good at *Gitaroo Man*

Name that tune

You can't have everything

Although a port of this classic title is fine by us, we were really hoping that the PSP version would contain at least some decent original content. Don't get us wrong, the original content is there – in the form of two all-new multi-player songs – but we'd struggle to name them 'decent'. With the rest of the tracks in the game being so great, we can't figure out why these two are so horribly pap. Oh well, as they're tucked away in the multi-player mode, at least they're easily avoided, we suppose.

Beating some of these characters is quite tough, your reward? A sore finger

The knight in shining boxers returns

ULTIMATE GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Capcom** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1** / Supports **N/A**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Isn't this just a remake?
No. Members of the original *Ghosts 'N Goblins* team have been working on the game, but what you have here is completely new content and a fresh title. The style remains the same, but there are many new challenges in place to test your skill.

So it's just another linear platformer then?
Not really. There are loads of secret areas to be found and if you are set on completion you're going to have to put in lots of hours to unlock everything this has to offer. It's definitely not a straightforward A to B platformer.

There is one problem with bringing a game like *Ghosts 'N Goblins* to the PSP: the notorious level of pain involved. Once you get past the beauty of it all you realise this is an incredibly difficult and frustrating experience. One you'd quite happily put up with on an 8-bit console, but not necessarily on a portable system. The developer knows this and has, thankfully, toned down the difficulty. More impressive than this however, is the fact that the hardcore gameplay still remains for those who want the challenge.

You get the best of both worlds here, and then some. For those after a quick dip you've got the easy mode, infinite continues and the ability to save between stages. For the hardcore you've got the Ultimate mode and the 25 hidden rings that need to be found. Believe us when we say finding all of these is as painful as trying to dig out a piece of hay in a needle-stack using your bare feet. You won't even be able to reach half of these until you've leveled up your fearless knight.

Yes, this now includes an upgradeable Arthur. As you play through you pick up new items that allow you to advance your abilities. These range from weapons and so on to more extreme alterations like a double-jump. We're not entirely sure how we feel about such a big feature being added to our childhood memories, especially since this has been chosen over diagonal fire, but it does allow the developer to be a little more creative with the level design. The stages and the creatures that inhabit them all look fantastic, the developer has done a great job of creating a 2D game on a 3D engine.

This is everything you could want from a *Ghosts 'N Goblins* game on the PSP. Despite the added features and fancy visuals this feels like the eighties classic; even the musical score is true to the original. A delight for both those old enough to remember and newcomers alike. ■

Mike Richardson

[Despite the added features... feels like the eighties classic]

Much more than a retro classic – not to be missed **91%**

The game throws sub-bosses at you multiple times on each stage

One feature this is definitely lacking is the ability to shoot diagonally

Humiliation

From hero to zero

Forget the ghosts, goblins, ghoulies and whatever else this promises. We can assure you that this is definitely not a horror title. The developer enjoys making fun of you at every given opportunity, none more so than with the new cauldrons. If you're unfortunate enough to fall into one of these (or get thrown in as is more often the case) you'll be transformed into something suitably stupid that in no way helps your quest to save the princess. Be it a cricket, miniature version of yourself or an old lady... either way you have no choice but to run away until you revert to your knightly form. Of course, the inimitable heart-decorated boxer shorts are also still in here to tickle those who aren't skilled enough to keep their armour on.

WIDESCREEN

AARON ASADI REVIEWS THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST UMD RELEASES...

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Your UMD guide at a glance...

★★★★★	Excellent
★★★★	Must Buy
★★★	Average
★★	Fair
★	Don't Bother

UMDs

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V FOR VENDETTA

A For Alright

OUT: 9 OCT

Director: **John McTigue** / Starring: **Hugo Weaving, Natalie Portman, John Hurt** / Price: **£20.99**

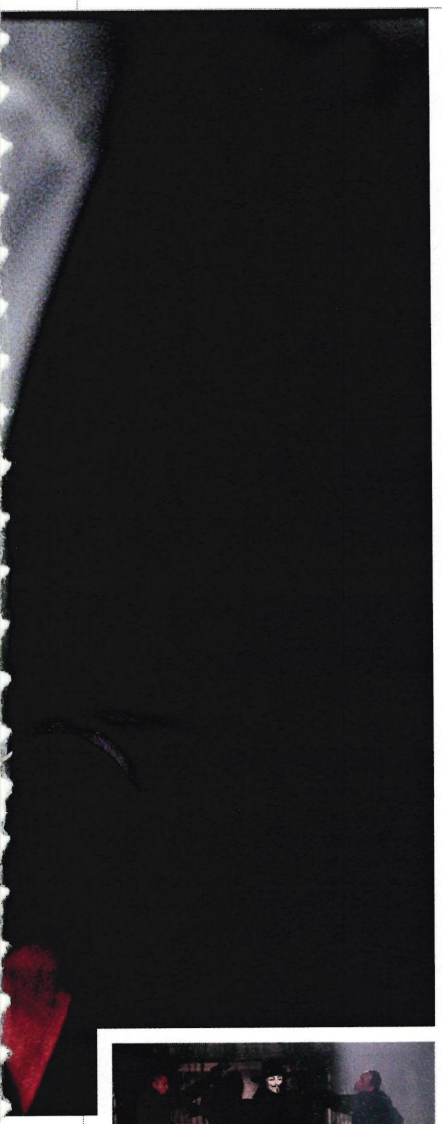
★★★

Superhero movies can be sneered at by the more pompous critics. This is possibly because they are often derived from comic books, which are seen by the same groups of snobs as reading material for those afraid of pages with nothing but words on. Indeed, the only time said group can bear to consider comics as anything more than just ink-smothered pap is when they're written by Alan Moore or Frank Miller. This in turn influences their consideration of superhero movies, meaning that *Batman Begins* (heavily, but not directly inspired by Miller's *Year One*) was taken seriously last year and that the adaptation of Moore's *V For Vendetta* was viewed with similar interest this year. The problem with this is that it assumes Moore is actually any good and that an adaptation of his work would naturally carry merit.

Now whilst far from the worst comic book writer, Moore is still a hugely overrated author, his comics so dense with drivel and so free from decent drama that you wonder why he doesn't just bog off and write bad novels for a living. *V For Vendetta* is a great example of Moore getting too much credit, with the tedious premise of a fascist British government being terrorised by a lone vigilante so unbelievably routine you think that you must be missing something. You're not. Famously precious about his reputation, Moore refused to have his name endorse the film, which would at first imply that he had been appalled with its treatment, but further examination might lead you to believe that he just didn't want a wider audience to have the chance to judge his tale directly.

As it turns out, it probably wouldn't have been a bad career move for Moore to stick his name above the title though, *as V For Vendetta*, despite retaining much of the comic's derivative dystopian ramblings, is actually okay. On the whole it's a slickly crafted flick that certainly works better than many of the recent comic book adaptations, the dark tone and thick style working in its favour throughout. Even the action, whilst never quite

SHOCK FACT!
Natalie Portman didn't actually shave her hair for this film – it was all CGI. That was a lie.



Is Hugo Weaving under the mask for the fight scenes? Who knows

bold enough to be memorable, is executed with a degree of precision and confidence.

The film is, however, far from perfect, with Natalie Portman's violently inconsistent accent a constant reminder of this. It doesn't help that she's given some of the most irritating dialogue we've heard since *The Matrix* sequels (incidentally, the screenplay for *V For Vendetta* was handled by the Wachowski brothers). On top of this, it lacks the pizzazz of *Spider-Man 2* or *Batman Begins* and we can only hazard a guess that this was down to a more miserly budget than it perhaps deserved. As it is, it's just about okay. ■

SHOCK FACT!
The 'stranger' is actually played by two actors – one for the voice and one for the body.

Don't run up the bloody stairs... *groan*

WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

OUT: NOW

Director: **Simon West** / Starring: **Camilla Belle, Tommy Flanagan, Katie Cassidy** / Price: **£19.99**

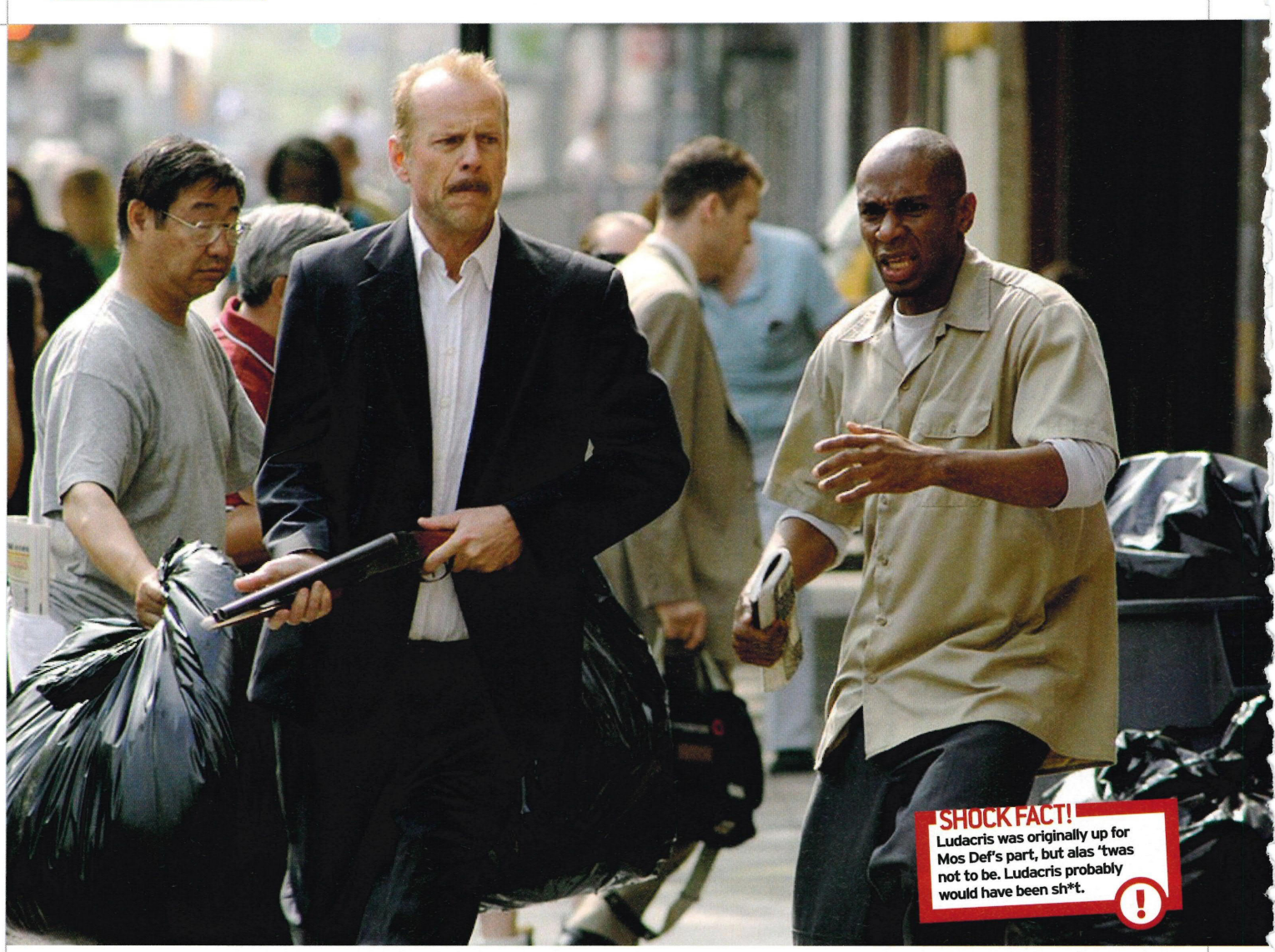
★★

We remember when we first saw the trailer for this one. We were at the cinema about to watch *Slither*, a surprisingly decent horror-comedy starring *Serenity*'s excellent Nathan Fillion. The trailer started out as any trailer would for a made-for-sleepovers horror – there was a long shot of a car approaching a house in the middle of nowhere, a shot of a teenage girl looking all innocent... something else, and something else (we'd stopped paying attention by then). Anyway, just as we were about to completely switch off, a voice in the trailer shouts out "We've traced the call! It's coming from inside the house!" Bloody hell. The knife-wielder is actually in the very same house that the teenage housesitter's staying in. This is a nice twist, good enough, in fact, for us to remember this film's name for when it comes round on DVD.

Predictably though, the film never lives up to its gimmick and consequently *When A Stranger Calls* just feels like a poor excuse to retread old ground. It's all very well having an interesting idea sit at the centre of the movie like this one does, but you have to be able to back it up with fresh characters, exciting set-pieces and more surprises. It's just so unrelentingly familiar that you never feel as though the heroine is in any real danger. The times that she seems cornered or definitely in for it, you're left feeling distinctly unperturbed. This isn't because she's a detestable character, but because the moments of suspense are near-shameless rehashes of ones that have plagued our screens for decades – you know how they end before they've even begun. Now it could be argued that criticising a horror movie for knowing that the heroine isn't going to die halfway through is a tad harsh, but it's the job of the film to convince you of the peril and that there is a real threat here.

Wonder if we should write some sort of 'poke-her' joke here...

Ultimately, this is something that *When A Stranger Calls* just fails to do, and for that reason alone, it doesn't work. Still, it's got an okay trailer and the lead isn't exactly bad to look at, not that we rate movies on such things, not at all. ■



16 BLOCKS

It's Bruce Willis as a New York cop with a hangover? Waitaminute...

OUT: NOW

Director: **Richard Donner** / Starring: **Bruce Willis, Mos Def, David Morse** / Price: **£20.99**

★★

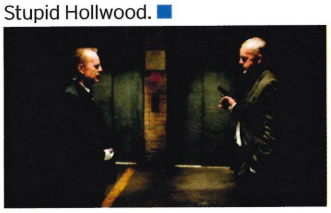
It wasn't too long ago that the Internet was buzzing with the news that *Die Hard 4* was finally on its way, with Bruce Willis reprising his most famous role as the very unlucky but double-hard John McClane, last seen saving all the money in the world from Jeremy Irons' clutches. Few things, it seems, are as appealing as Bruce Willis playing one of New York's finest... or so we thought. In Richard Donner's *16 Blocks*, Willis again plays a downbeat member of the NYPD complete with attitude and drink problems, but we feel compelled to warn you that it will serve as nothing but indisputable evidence that such a prospect isn't necessarily one to get excited about, and may even be one to fear.

First the good: the plot is relatively simple, with the grizzly (and, if we're honest, aged) Bruce Willis escorting an eye-witness from jail to a courthouse 16 blocks away. It transpires that some corrupt cops want the witness dead, and only Bruce Willis stands in their way. The film is shot with that gritty feel we've grown accustomed to, but is no less stylish because of it, and there is always going to be something quite cool about cops with a penchant for shady dealings. It helps that the majority of the supporting cast give some well-measured performances.

Now the bad (you'll notice that this section is longer): It was widely reported how woefully misjudged Mos Def's performance is, and by and large the condemnation is fair. It's a fact made all the more disappointing by the rapper-turned-actor's promising turn in *The Woodsman*, and whilst you can eventually get used to his character's fast-paced, high-pitched squeal, his cartoon mannerisms and incessant ramblings are far more difficult to ignore. However, this is not the worst performance in the movie: that honour belongs to Mr Willis. Perhaps because of his familiarity with the type of role, Willis thought he could just sleepwalk through it. Oh the irony. He genuinely looks like he's sleepwalking in this film, even when he's shooting a gun. And when he doesn't look like he's about to nod off, he looks like he's about to sneeze. His portrayal of a drunk cop is terrible to the point of accidental hilarity, and with this at the film's core, nothing could have saved it, not even some astounding action sequences. Not that we can substantiate that, of course, as

the film is devoid of these. You'd be forgiven for thinking that with Donner at the helm there would be some moments of real adventure, but there isn't, only shoot-outs and chases that belong in a long-forgotten Seventies TV show.

Were we not living in a world that's flooded with the likes of *NYPD Blue*, *CSI*, *The Shield* and *24*, this might actually have had some appeal, but alas that's not the case. Still, roll on *Die Hard 4*, or *Live Free Or Die Hard* or whatever stupid name they've given it this week. Stupid Hollwood. ■



One lives, one dies. Can you guess which? We did

And all this from a man who married Zoe Ball

FATBOY SLIM: WHY MAKE VIDEOS

OUT: NOW

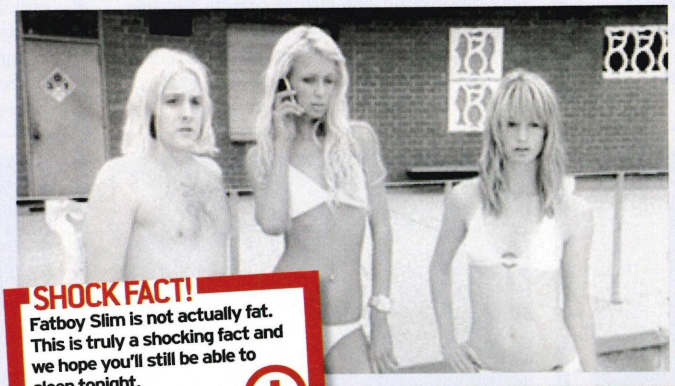
Director: **Various** / Starring: **Christopher Walken, Spike Jonze, Norman Cook** / Price: **£14.99**

★★★

Music has become a rather disposable pleasure, with bands coming and going before they've even had a chance to complain about people pirating their tracks. This throwaway climate we've created for the musicians of today means that we can like and hate bands and DJs for what would otherwise seem the silliest of reasons. The Kings Of Leon seemed okay, but it was better to detest them for having stupid hair, and although we're told this problem of theirs has been solved, it's too little too late. Skinny ties, fuzzy mops, white, tight jeans, rude fringes, odd socks, crooked teeth – all now acceptable reasons to hate or like a group of people, or indeed a person on his or her own, who are determined to go to the best rehab clinic money can buy.

This all makes someone like Norman Cook, aka Fatboy Slim, a bit of an oddity. Whilst his music has for the past decade or so been greeted with interested ears, his appearance is that of a British Gas employee on holiday in Ibiza. And even though he himself is about as stunning to look at as a bowl of Ready Brek, his singles are often as memorable for their visually-striking video accompaniments as they are the energetically-manipulated beats. It arguably all started with a collaboration with director Spike Jonze. Praise You was an okay track, upbeat but forgettable, but the video was anything of the sort, peculiar enough to seem intelligent but funny enough to appeal to many more people than the song itself would. The idea of a new wave dance group doing their thing in the most unlikely of places is just inspired and is the highlight of this UMD as it might well have been on most other music video compilations. The partnership with Spike Jonze continued with Weapon Of Choice, a video that saw Christopher Walken break out his tap dancing shoes to simply stunning effect.

The only problem with Jonze's efforts is that they set a standard for the other videos that proves too high to reach, and as a result they come across as either unimaginatively outlandish or stale. Demons and Going Out Of My Head are probably the best of the rest, but again aren't alarmingly good enough for them to be essential viewing. ■



SHOCK FACT!
Fatboy Slim is not actually fat. This is truly a shocking fact and we hope you'll still be able to sleep tonight.

TOP 10 MOVIES

WITH UMD PRICES FALLING WE LOOK AT THE 10 YOU NEED IN YOUR COLLECTION...

GHOSTBUSTERS

Director: **Ivan Reitman** / Starring: **Bill Murray, Dan Ackroyd, Harold Ramis** ★★★★★

Will there ever be a blockbuster as easy to love as this one again? Probably not. Gone in Hollywood now is that rare courage and rarer foresight to put some middle-aged slobs at the heart of a mega-budget affair and let the magic happen. No longer will the most successful movie of the summer also be written by two of its stars. A ghost named Slimer, a villainous Stay Puft Marshmallow Man, checking to see if poles still work, librarian ghosts, gate keepers, key masters, voices crying out Zool, proton packs, Ecto 1, Dr Venkman, a couple of wavey lines, the hazards of crossing the streams – it just doesn't get better than this. ■

SPIDER-MAN 2

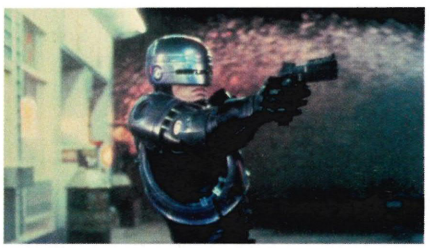
Director: **Sam Raimi** / Starring: **Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst, James Franco** ★★★★★

The first *Spider-Man* was good. It wasn't brilliant, but it told a decent enough origin story and was funny and sad in all the right places. Watching it now, however, seems like a stupid thing to do, as *Spider-Man 2* is quite clearly superior in every respect, and not just to its series predecessor but to just about every summer blockbuster of the past ten years. Superbly crafted with electric effects, this tale of Spidey battling against his lack of personal fortune as well as the ruthless Dr Octopus is one that's not likely to be bettered by other superhero movies for some time yet. ■

FIGHT CLUB

Director: **David Fincher** / Starring: **Brad Pitt, Edward Norton, Meatloaf** ★★★★★

Let's get this straight before we go any further: *Fight Club* isn't saying that in order for you to get over your Ikea obsession you have to fight with someone in your office any more than it's saying neo-fascism is a good thing. Like all intelligent films, *Fight Club* raises questions not answers, and that's something those who dismiss the film as a patronising mess would do well to remember. This is nothing less than a brilliant black comedy, stuffed with original ideas and tremendous imagery. On the DVD's commentary, Ed Norton rightly concedes that he's never starred in a better film. Amen to that. ■



ROBOCOP

Director: **Paul Verhoeven** / Starring: **Peter Weller, Nancy Allen, Kurtwood Smith** ★★★★★

Sci-fi is often just an excuse for special effects, silly stories and a toy line. It's not always like this though, 1987's *RoboCop* being a prime example. Sophisticated, deeply satirical and visually stunning throughout, *RoboCop* is as complete a sci-fi as you're ever likely to see. On a more superficial level, its rough, tough action sequences still hold up nearly 20 years on, whilst the design of both the supercop hero and his mechanical nemesis, Ed-209, have achieved iconic status. Bolstered with excellent performances from both Weller and Smith, *RoboCop* succeeds where so many fail and consequently deserves to be considered as impressive a piece of science fiction as *Westworld*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and *Metropolis*. It's also really good for a laugh. ■

BATMAN BEGINS

Director: **Christopher Nolan** / Starring: **Christian Bale, Michael Caine, Liam Neeson** ★★★★★

There was no question that Warner Bros had to pull something out of the bag with this one, not only because the last lot of Bat-flicks turned miserably camp, but because the Marvel heroes were swinging merrily away with the box office receipts. After hiring *Memento*'s Chris Nolan to direct, however, there was little chance that this would ever be anything but tremendous, with Christian Bale in fine form as the cape-wearing vigilante. Everything from the overall look of the film to the choices regarding the Dark Knight's wheels is bloody perfect. Tonally it's more adult than some may have preferred, but it works so well here, only an arse would count that against it. Indeed, it's so successful it even makes Alfred the butler seem interesting. ■

DIE HARD

Director: **John McTiernan** / Starring: **Bruce Willis, Alan Rickman, Blond Henchman** ★★★★★

Only the other day Go>Play got into a discussion about *Die Hard*, with Mr Griffin harping on, as he often does, about how it's the greatest film ever made. Then someone said that he thought it might be a little long. Griffin went nuts. Blood was shed. It's understandable though, because for men *Die Hard* is more than just a film – it's a realisation of every dream of heroism they've ever had. It's the movie they can watch with their dad, and share a smile over. It's the movie that means that no matter what happens, if you act like John McClane, everything will be alright. It's also a great action movie. It's also one of those rare films that has not one but two great sequels, with a fourth possibly on the way. ■

HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Director: **David Cronenberg** / Starring: **Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello, Ed Harris** ★★★★★

From the casually terrifying opening sequence to the subdued, heartfelt climax, Cronenberg's movie is a masterclass in pace and revelations. The slow trickle of detail about a coffee shop owner's gory past is perfectly controlled, as is the downward spiral of his once stable family. And it's here that the movie really feels special, the family's abrupt descent into a world of lies and fear made all the more emotional by some superbly understated performances, with Viggo Mortensen balancing the caring father and cold-hearted killer parts of his character's persona with consummate ease. Blistering stuff. ■

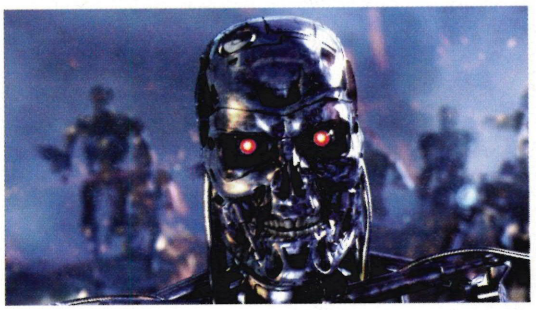
KILL BILL VOLUME 1

Director: **Quentin Tarantino** / Starring: **Uma Thurman, Lucy Liu, David Carradine** ★★★★★

Regularly cursed by cynics who feel that the splicing of *Kill Bill* was down to money rather than art, the first volume is sometimes hard to watch without feeling weighed down by the debate that still surrounds the film. Still, that doesn't stop this from being a terrific martial arts movie from start to end/middle. Again, Tarantino turns what is essentially awful cinema into a thing of excellence. Featuring both captivating cinematography and a central performance that should have been rewarded with the most coveted awards, *Volume 1* is a dazzling work that's unrelentingly enjoyable and creative. ■

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY

Director: **James Cameron** / Starring: **Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Edward Furlong** ★★★★★



Making a sequel better then the original has become the true test of the action director, and with that as the barometer, it's clear that James Cameron is one of the most successful of all time. An improvement on the first in just about every way, *Terminator 2* broke all box office records back when it first hit the screens, and it's not hard tOo see why. Terrific effects, a genuinely exciting plot with brilliantly cast heroes and villains, *T2* develops everything that was great about the first and still finds a way to feel fresh and iconic all on its own. It's also Arnie's best film, which isn't exactly hard, but is worth mentioning all the same. ■

THE OFFICE: SEASON 2

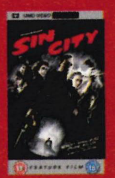
Director: **Ricky Gervais & Stephen Merchant** / Starring: **Ricky Gervais, Martin Freeman, Mackenzie Crook** ★★★★★

Here's a series of quotes from our full review for you: "*The Office* is a wonderful piece of observational comedy and we should remember and cherish it for this reason – and not just for that dance." "It's an incredibly well made piece of television, using that mockumentary format better than anyone has does before it (and yes that includes *Spinal Tap*)." "It's the embarrassing familiarity of his mannerisms, tone, insecurities and relationships that made a nation giggle and cringe at the same time." We don't really have much else to say about it, other than if you don't own it, you're a bit silly. ■

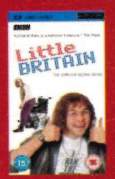
TOP FIVE BEST-SELLERS

[1] THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN
Connery and crew somehow make it to the to p spot.

[2] PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
The new movie reignites interest in the original.



[3] SIN CITY
Quality comic book fare that is pleasingly faithful to the source material.



[4] LITTLE BRITAIN SERIES 2
Another helping of the bizarre freaks that inhabit our country.

[5] THE PINK PANTHER
If you bought this then hang your head in shame, you fool.

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH

Doctor Who (New Series 2) Volume 1
28 August
The new Doctor is in.

Not Another Teen Movie
28 August
Yes it's another teen movie - how droll.

Silent Hill
4 September
A videogame movie that's actually okay.

Little Britain Series 3
11 September
Walliams and Lucas are back with more disturbing characters.

If you're getting your face beaten into a bloody pulp each time you enter the ring, our guide's the perfect battle companion!

鉄拳 TEKKEN DARK RESURR

PANDA/KUMA

Whilst there are no secret characters as such, you will still find it useful to know that pressing △ or □ on Kuma will pick the brawling bear, whilst pressing ✕ or ○ will select his female body-double, Panda.

LESSONS LEARNT

Pressing L to select Ling Xiaoyu sees her donning a schoolgirl outfit for the rest of your game. Similarly, after completing 'Story' mode with Asuka, select her with △ to see her schoolgirl outfit.

THEATRE MODE

Completing the game's 'Story' mode once with any character will see 'Theatre' mode added to the title screen. Here, you can purchase any in-game movie, or listen to the extensive sidetrack accompanied by a dancing Panda. You can also unlock movies by completing 'Story' mode with each character.

GOLD RUSH

After completing 'Story' mode for a second time, 'Gold Rush' will make an appearance on the mode select screen. Once selected, prepare to beat the opposition silly in pursuit of some sweet, sweet currency!

TEKKEN BOWLING

Completing 'Story' mode for a third time opens up Tekken Bowling, a veritable compendium of ten-pin tomfoolery, with a variety of gameplay modes guaranteeing hours of fun for all.

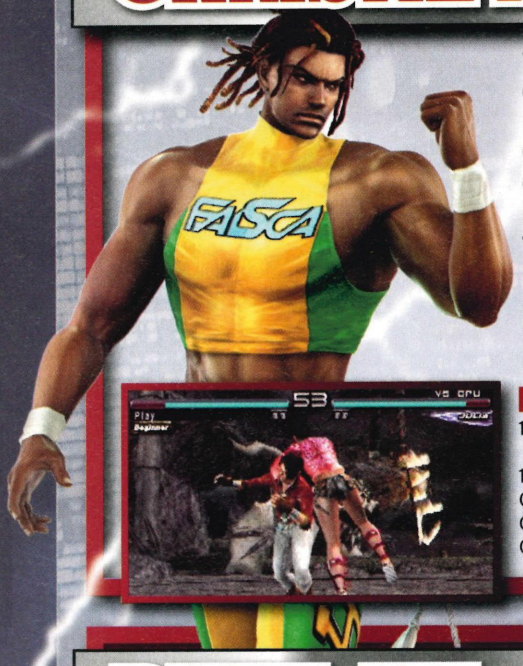
COMMAND ATTACK

Becoming champion of the first ranking tournament of 'Tekken Dojo' mode is rewarded with the appearance of 'Command Attack' mode, in which you must master each mode in turn to again bring about large financial gain.

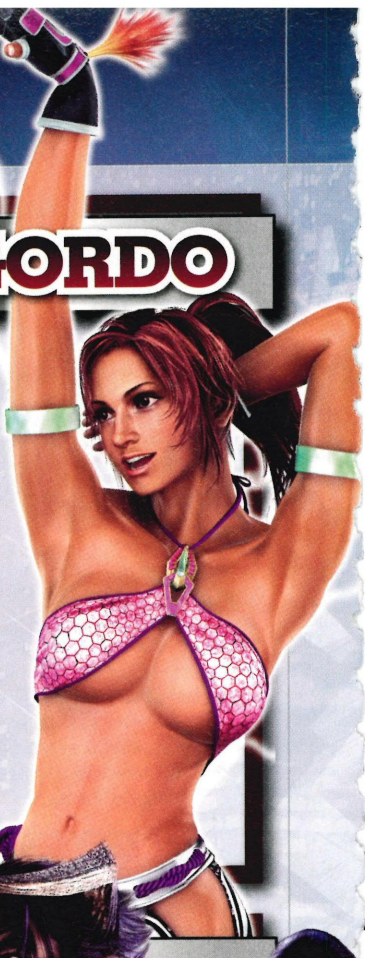
CUSTOM TIPPERY

Customised costume items can be bought from the Customise section of the Profile menu. Obviously, you'll want to accumulate the greatest amount of Gold in the shortest possible time. The best method for this by far is entering into 'Tekken Dojo' mode. The regular league match fights therein are worth but pennies, but emerging victorious from each dojo brings a large reward, often with the bonus of an aura (which turn your character into a living glowstick, besides doing little else).

CHRISTIE MONTEIRO/EDDY GORDO



With their unpredictable Capoeira fighting style, Eddy and his protégé Christie look the perfect choice for any button-bashers. Taking the time to study their movements prior to attacks, however, will soon bring justice for such cheap-ass tactics.



THROWS

Caranguejo	□+⊗
Cabra Macaco	↘+□+△
Rodeo Spin	↓, ↘, →+□+△
Adeus	↓+□+⊗ (ducking opponent)
Role	→+□+△ (from opponent's left)
Garganta	□+△ (from opponent's right)
Air Mail	□+△ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Fruit Picker	↙+⊗+○

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	○,⊗,○,△,○,○,⊗+○,⊗+○,⊗+○,↙,⊗+○, ↗, ⊗+○
10-Hit Combo 2	○,⊗,○,△,○,⊗
Combo 1	○,⊗,○,△,○
Combo 2	⊗ (following Combo 1)
Combo 3	○,⊗+○,⊗+○,⊗+○,↙+⊗+○,↗+⊗+○ (following Combo 2)

DEVIL JIN

THROWS

Bitch Kicks	□+⊗
Shoulder Reverse	△+○
Stone Head	→, →+□+△
End of Dreams	→, ←, ↙, ↓, ↘, →+□+△
Complicated Wire	↓,↙,←+□+⊗
Wrist Chuck Slam	↘+△+⊗
Shoulder Flip	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Over the Limit	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Chicken Butcher	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)
Ultimate Tackle	↙+□+△
Ultimate Punches A	□,△,□ (during Tackle)
Ultimate Punches B	□,△ (during Punches A)
Cross Arm Lock A	□+△ (during Punches B)
Cross Arm Lock B	□+△ (during Arm Lock A)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Thunder Crimson Beam	□+△
Thunder Crimson Blast	↑+□+△
Demon Destruction	↑+□+○ (tap ↑)
Lightning Demon Destruction	↑+□+○ (hold ↑)
Infernal Flight	⊗+○
Infernal Destruction	⊗+○, □+△
Cross Infernal Destruction	⊗+○,→+□+△

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	⊗,△,○,⊗,□,△,△,□,△
10-Hit Combo 2	⊗,△,○,⊗,□+○,△,□
10-Hit Combo 3	←,△,○,○,○,○,△,□+○,△,□
10-Hit Combo 4	←,△,○,○,○,○,△,□+○,△,↓,⊗+○
10-Hit Combo 5	←,←,△,□,△,△,⊗,○,○,□,△,□
10-Hit Combo 6	→,→,△,□,△,△,⊗,○,○,⊗,△,□
10-Hit Combo 7	→,→,△,□,○,○,△,○,⊗,△,□

The devil gene is truly powerful stuff, dragging Jin out of the *Tekken 5* doldrums to become one of the strongest fighters available. A string of devastating combos do the business time and time again, though their difficulty may put off some newcomers.

FENG WEI

One of the less strong mid-range fighters, a select few of Feng's attacks have been weakened since *Tekken 5*. Whilst combos still land satisfyingly, they deal less punishment – some of his cheaper blows have been ironed out, too.

THROWS

Divine Palms	□+⊗
Serpent Slayer	△+○
Kunlun Fall	↘+□+△
Jaws of Death	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Wandering Soul	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Violent Storm	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Death Palm	↖+□+△

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	→,□,□,△,□,⊗,○,△,△,△,△
10-Hit Combo 2	→,□,□,△,□,⊗,○,△,○,⊗,□+△
Combo 1	←,△,⊗,○,△
Combo 2	↙,△,△,△
Combo 3	→,△,□,△

RAVEN

Our secretive government agent falls somewhere approaching halfway when it comes to battle competence, thanks to punishing juggle combos and a generally tight defensive game. Remember to hold back from time to time and you'll be kicking ass in no time.

THROWS

Grave Digger	□+⊗
Salamander	△+○
Curse Shoot	↘+□+○
Vampire Touch	→,↘,↓,↙,←,→+□+△
Neck Ringer	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Swift Assassin	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Dark Matter	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)
Ultimate Tackle	↙+□+△
Ultimate Punches A	□,△,□,△,□ (during Tackle)
Ultimate Punches B	△,□,△,□,△ (during Punches A)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Blind Vampire A	□+△
Blind Vampire B	↘+□+△
Summon Force	↓+□+△
Dead End	↓,↙,←,↖,↑,↗,→+□+△ (during Summon Force)
Summon Mirage	←,→,↑,↓+⊗+○ (after Dead End)

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	↖,□,△,△,△,○,△,⊗,○,△,□+△
10-Hit Combo 2	△,△,□,△,○,△,⊗,○,△,□+△ (facing away from opponent)
Combo 1	←,○,←,○,⊗,○,△
Combo 2	←,○,←,○,⊗,⊗+○
Combo 3	←+⊗+○,⊗,○,○ (facing away from opponent)

ASUKA KAZAMA

THROWS

Aiki Nage	□+⊗
Katanuki	△+○
Destabilizer	↙+□+△
Cherry Blossom	←+□+△
Falling Rain	↘,↓,↓+□+△ (from crouched position)
White Mountain	↘+△+⊗
Spider Entwine	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Wind Wheel	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Twisted Limbs	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)
Ki Charge	□+△+⊗+○
Ultimate Tackle	↘+⊗+○, ⊗+○, □+△ (after Ki Charge)
Ultimate Punches A	△,□,△,□ (during Tackle)
Ultimate Punches B	△,□,□,△ (during Punches A)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Spinning Heel Drop	→+⊗ (hold ⊗)

Asuka makes up in tactical thoughtfulness what she lacks in attacking flair. Very few of her hard-hitting moves leave her vulnerable to a blocking opponent. One of the few characters with whom you're more likely to win on time than a knock out.

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	△,□,□,□,△,□,○,⊗,⊗+○ (after releasing crouch)
10-Hit Combo 2	△,□,□,□,△,□+○,□,⊗+○ (after releasing crouch)
10-Hit Combo 3	△,□,□,⊗ (after releasing crouch)
Combo 1	↙,○,□+○,△,↓,○
Combo 2	□+○,△,↓,○

GANRYU

Our Julia-fancying Sumo retiree has one or two tricks up his sleeve when he enters the ring, including the always irritating and potentially infinite Kabuki Palm. Powerful as you could ever wish for, but the sport's athletes aren't known for their speed.

THROWS

Body Slam	□+✕
Sumo Scoop	△+○
Tsuridashi Lift	→, →+□+○
Jizo Hug	→, →+△+✕
Upper Stream	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Crotch Slam	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Okurigake	→+□+✕ (from behind opponent)
Reverse Chock Slam	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Hammer Sumo Tackle	□+△, ←+□+△
Fake Tackle Upper	△ (during Hammer Sumo Tackle)
Splits	↓ (hold, during Fake Tackle Upper)
Splits Side Step	↓ (during Splits)
Sumo Tackle	↙+□+△
Fake Tackle Upper	△ (during Sumo Tackle)
Splits	↓ (hold, during Fake Tackle Upper)
Splits Side Step	↓ (during Splits)

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo	□,□,□,□,△,△,✕,○,○,□+△ (during crouch)
Combo 1	□,□,□,△,↘,□ (during crouch)
Combo 2	↘,△,□,△ (during crouch)
Combo 3	↓,△,△,△,△ (continue pressing △ indefinitely)
Combo 4	↘,□,△,□,△,□,△,□,△
Combo 5	□,△,□,△,□,△,□,△

MARSHALL LAW

The set of scars across Marshall Law's chest make him look like he's had a heart-bypass operation. Quite something for an 'expert chef'. In battle, that blasted overhead kick returns – use it sparingly though, or opponents will cotton on.

THROWS

Dragon's Fire	□+✕
Hopping Frog	△+○ (facing away from opponent)
Chastisement Punch	↘+□+△
Bulldog Drop	□, △, □+△ (during Chastisement Punch)
Run Up Drop	→+↓+↘
Dragon Knee	→, →+✕+○
Headlock Kick	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Nut Cracker	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Dragon Bites	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Dragon Fang	↙+□+△

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	↘,□,△,△,□,✕,✕,✕,○,✕,○
10-Hit Combo 2	↘,□,△,△,□,✕,✕,↓,✕,○,○,○
10-Hit Combo 3	↘,□,△,△,□,✕,✕,↓,✕,✕,○,○
10-Hit Combo 4	↘,□,✕,△,△,✕,✕,✕,○,✕,○
10-Hit Combo 5	↘,□,✕,△,△,✕,✕,↓,✕,○,○,○
10-Hit Combo 6	↘,□,✕,△,△,✕,✕,↓,✕,✕,○,○

WANG JINREI

THROWS

Headlock Toss	□+✕
Body Slam	△+○
Waning Moon	↘, ↘+△+○
Dragon Thrust	↘+✕+○
Crushing Dragon	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Golden Mountain	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Reverse Neck Toss	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Heaven Cannon	→+□+○
Seiran Fist	←,←+□+△

One of the weaker characters overall, with a name to match. Wang is far too prone to lumbering attacks that, when avoided, can result in quite a severe kicking. If you must persist, keep it nice and simple, and ground-based.

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	△,□,□,○,○,□,□,✕,○,△
10-Hit Combo 2	△,□,□,○,○,□,△,□,○,△
Combo 1	○,○,↓,○
Combo 2	△, △, △ (after releasing crouch)

HWOARANG

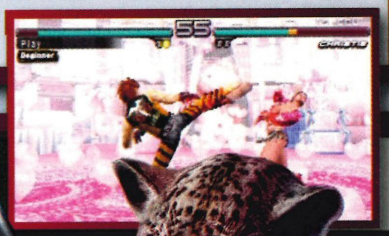
Clearly one of the top ten fighters in all of *Dark Resurrection*, Hwoarang is nonetheless deceptively slow in delivering some of his most powerful attacks. For this reason, he's not the ideal beginner's choice - best stick to the likes of King, Nina or Bryan.

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	→+✕,△,△,✕,○,✕,○,○,○,○,✕
10-Hit Combo 2	→+✕,△,△,✕,○,○
10-Hit Combo 3	→+○,□,△,✕,○,✕,○,○,○,○,✕
10-Hit Combo 4	→+○,□,△,✕,○,○
Combo 1	→+✕,✕,✕,○,○

THROWS

Pick Pocket	□+✕ (left foot forward)
Falcon Dive Kick	△+○ (left foot forward)
Anti Sub Rocket	□+✕ (right foot forward)
Roll & Choke	→, →+△
Door Mat	↓, ↙, ←+✕
Leg Hook	↓, ↙+□+✕ (hold ↙)
Human Cannonball	→+△+✕
Overhead Strike	↘+✕+○
Dead End	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Neck Snapper	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Slaughter House	□+✕ (from behind opponent)



ARMOR KING

Looks like King, moves like King, probably smells like King but, unfortunately, plays nothing like his doppelganger. Simply put, it seems every move you attempt to pull off has such a skewed risk/reward ratio that starting is almost pointless. One for the brave.

THROWS

Coconut Crush	□+✕
Brain Buster	△+○
Steiner Screwdriver	↓, ↓, ↓+↙+↓ (during Brain Buster, hold 3rd ↓)
Armor King Swing	→,←,↙,↓,↘,→+□
DDT	↙, ↙+□+△ (hold 2nd ↙)
Armor King Driver	↙, ↓, ↙+□+△ (from crouched position, hold 2nd ↙)
Tombstone Piledriver	↙,→+△+○ (hold →)
Shining Wizard	△+○ (whilst running)
Demon Bomb	↓+□+✕ (ducking opponent)
Spinning Leg Lock	↓+△+○ (ducking opponent)
Muscle Driver	→,←,↙,↓,↘,→+□ (opponent in air)
Running Cross Bomb	→,→,→+△+○ (opponent in air)
Reverse Death Valley Bomb	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Vertical Reverse DDT	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Reverse DDT	□+✕ (from behind opponent)
Ultimate Tackle	□+△ (whilst crouching)
Ultimate Punches A	□,△,□,△,□ (during Tackle)
Ultimate Punches B	△,□,△,□,△ (during Punches A)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Green Mist	→,↓,↘+□+△
Pushing	←+□+△
Burning Knuckle Bomb	↗+□+△,↓ (hold ↓)
Jumping Burning Knuckle Bomb	↗, □+△, ↓ (hold ↓)
Jump Moonsault Drop	□+○ (opponent grounded, face down)
Moonsault Drop	□+○ (facing away from face down opponent)
Dark Venus	→+△+✕ (from behind opponent)
Darkness Kick	→, ↓, ↘+✕

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	↘,△,□,✕,△,△,○,△,□,✕+○,△
10-Hit Combo 2	↘,△,□,✕,△,△,✕,○,□+△,△,↓,↘,→,□+△
Combo 1	→, ↓, ↘+□+○
Combo 2	✕+○,✕+○,□+△ (during Combo 1)
Combo 3	✕,○,□+△,✕+○ (during Combo 2)
Combo 4	△,□,□+△ (during Combo 1)
Combo 5	✕+○,△,□,□,□+△ (during Combo 4)

CRAIG MARDUK

King's embittered rival takes to the arena once more after his crushing defeat in *Tekken 4*. As far as gameplay goes, he's your typical fighting game lumbering giant, lacking in pace but making up for that fault in his power and reach.

THROWS

Rolling Splash	□+✕
Knee Crusher	△+○
Northern Lights Suplex	↓, ↘, →+□
Mount	□+△ (during Northern Lights Suplex)
Left Melon Masher	□ (during Mount)
Neck Lock	□+✕ (during Mount)
Right Melon Masher	△ (during Mount)
Knee Bar	△+○ (during Mount)
Mount Mongolian Chop	□+△ (during Mount)
Skull Crusher	✕+○ (during Mount)
Jack Hammer	→, ←, ↙, ↓, ↘, →+□
Atomic Buster	→, →+□+△
Back Freaker	↓, ↙, ←+□+△
Power Slam	↓, ↘, →+△
Mount	□+△ (during Power Slam)
Power Bomb	↓+□+✕ (crouching opponent)
Ultimate Knee	↓+△+○ (crouching opponent)
Air Suplex	→, →+□+△ (mid-air opponent)
Gator Slam	□+✕ (mid-air opponent)
Olympus Screw	△+○ (mid-air opponent)
Hercules Toss	↙+□+✕ (grounded opponent)
Reverse Head Crusher	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Lift Drop	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Back Drop	□+✕ (from behind opponent)
Reverse Air Splash	△+○ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Craig Cannon	←+△+✕

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	△,□,□,□,△,□,○,✕,✕+○ (after releasing crouch)
10-Hit Combo 2	△,□,□,□,△,□+○,□,✕+○ (after releasing crouch)
10-Hit Combo 3	△,□,□,✕ (after releasing crouch)
Combo 1	↙,○,□+○,△,↓,○
Combo 2	□+○,△,↓,○

KING

With a wide range of powerful, relatively easy to execute attacks, the Mexican pro wrestler is an ideal fighter to introduce anyone to the world of *Tekken*. His multiple throw combos offer a way to gain greater enemy damage from any silly mistakes, too.

THROWS

Giant Swing	→,←,↙,↓,↘,→+□
Figure 4 Leg Lock	↙+□+△
Rock Bottom	↙, ↓, ↙+□+△ (whilst crouching)
T-Bone Power Bomb	↓,↙,←+□+△
Tombstone Piledriver	↙, →+△+○
Coconut Crush	↘+△+✕
Frankensteiner	↘+✕+○
Jumping Power Bomb	↓+□+✕ (ducking opponent)
V Driver	↓+△+○ (ducking opponent)
Swing Power Bomb	→, ←, ↙, ↓, ↘, →+□ (airborne opponent)
Double Heel Hold	↓+□+✕ (airborne opponent)
Flap Jack	□+△, □+△ (during Double Heel Hold)
Giant Swing	△, □, ✕, ○ (during Flap Jack)
Running Jaguar Bomb	→, →, →+△+○ (airborne opponent, hold 3rd →)
Stretch Buster	←, →+□+△ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Jaguar Lariat	→+□+△ (hold →)
Burning Knuckle Bomb	↗+□+△ (hold △)
Atomic Blaster	□+✕ (facing away from opponent)
Moonsault Body Press	□+○
Jaguar High	✕+○, ○ (hold 1st ○)

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	□,△,□,□,△,○,○,○,□,✕
10-Hit Combo 2	□,△,□,□,△,○,○,○,□,□
10-Hit Combo 3	□,△,□,□,✕,✕,○,○,□,✕
10-Hit Combo 4	□,△,□,□,✕,✕,○,○,□,□
10-Hit Combo 5	□,△,□,□,✕,✕,○,✕,△,□+△
Combo 1	✕+○,□+○
Combo 2	□,○,△,✕ (during Combo 1)
Combo 3	△,□,□+✕ (during Combo 2)
Combo 4	□+△,□,△,△+□+✕ (during Combo 3)
Combo 5	✕+○,□+△ (during Combo 4)
Combo 6	□+△,✕,○,□+✕ (during Combo 5)
Combo 7	△+○,✕+○,□+✕,□+△,△+□+✕ (during Combo 6)

LILI

***Dark Resurrection*'s oil heiress newcomer may have flashy, street-influenced moves, but they're all easily readable given time. Simply taking a step or two to the left or right is adequate enough defence. Select only if you fancy a challenge.**

THROWS

Devotion Kiss	□+✕
Soul Sweep	△+○
Rafflesia	↘+□+△
Bounce Swing	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Snap Crush	□+△ (from opponent's right)
Judgment Signal	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Final Spine Shot	←+□+○

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	○,□,✕,○,○, ✕,○,○,✕+○
10-Hit Combo 2	○,□,✕,✕+○,✕,○,✕,□,✕+○,○
10-Hit Combo 3	○,□,✕,✕+○
Combo 1	↓+△,△,○
Combo 2	→+✕+○,✕,○

DRAGUNOV

The silent Russian's Sambo wrestling technique may seem powerful when he connects, but getting him to do so is the problem. If we ever mistakenly perform his somersault kick again, we can't be held responsible for our actions.

THROWS

Volk Clutch	□+✕
Purge Slam	△+○
Reverse Victor Clutch	□+○
Victor Clutch	△+✕
Blizzard Rush	→, →+□+△
Feint & Catch	→, →+□, □+△
Cold Fate	↓+□+✕ (crouching opponent)
Tarantula Twist	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Reverse Arm Bar	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Absolute Silence	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Sub Zero	←+△+✕

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	□,✕,□,△,□,□,○,□,✕,△
10-Hit Combo 2	□,✕,□,△,○,□+△
Combo 1	↓,↘,→+○,□,✕,○,△ (press □ as punch lands)
Combo 2	←+△,□,✕
Combo 3	→,→,→+○

HEIHACHI MISHIMA

We all knew it: just like Johnny Cage, Coca-Cola and Bullseye, Heihachi Mishima lives once more. He's risen to quite a height from his cold, cold grave too, becoming arguably the game's strongest character alongside style stablemates Devil Jin and Kazuya.

THROWS

Neck Breaker	□+✕
Power Bomb	△+○
Broken Toy	↓, ↘, →+□
Stone Head	→, →+□+△
Head Butt Carnival	→, →+□+○
Tile Splitter Guillotine	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Free Fall	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Atomic Drop	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Demon Tile Splitter	↓+□+○
Lightning Bolt	↓+✕+○, □

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	→,→,△,□,△,△,✕,○,○,□,△,□
10-Hit Combo 2	↘,✕,△,△,○,○,□,○,□,△,○
10-Hit Combo 3	↘,✕,△,△,○,○,□,○,□,△,□
10-Hit Combo 4	↘,✕,△,△,○,○,□,△,□,△,□
Combo 1	→,↓,↘+○,□
Combo 2	→,↓,↘+○,○,○

LEI WULONG

Another fancy-pants character whose moves leave him relatively open to attack. The Chinese cop enters the King of Iron Fist Tournament 5 on the trail of international dojo-trashers, whom he certainly isn't going to take down with [illegible] back turned to them, oh no.

THROWS

Sky Kick	□+✕
Sleeper Hold	△+○
Thai Trip	→, →+□+△
Dragon Falls	↗+□+△
Out of Control	→+✕+△, □+✕
Sailboat Stretch	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Closing Fan	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Wild Spin Dance	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

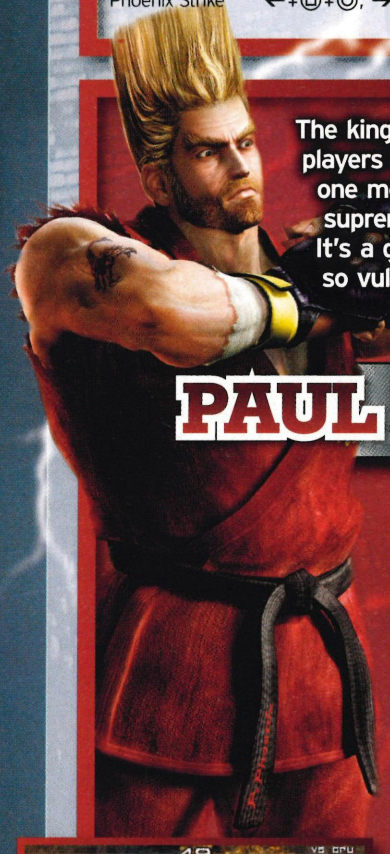
UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Phoenix Strike	←+□+○, →+○

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	←,□,△,□,✕+○,△,□,○,□,△,✕
10-Hit Combo 2	←,□,△,□,✕+○,△,□,○,△,○,○
10-Hit Combo 3	←,□,△,□,✕+○,✕+○,✕+○,□,□,△
Combo 1	→+△+✕,↓,↓,✕,○,△,✕
Combo 2	→+△+✕,△,△,○,✕,✕
Combo 3	→,○,□,△,△,○,✕,✕

PAUL PHOENIX



The king of cheese returns, ready for players up and down the land to use one move and proclaim themselves supreme ruler of all things *Tekken*. It's a good job he can leave himself so vulnerable to counter-attack, or we'd all be stuffed.

THROWS

Over the Shoulder	□+✕
Shoulder Pop	△+○
Kajou Palm	△+○, ←
Foot Launch	←+□+○
Twist and Shout	↘+□+△
Shoulder Ram	→, →+□+△
Dragon Screw	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Fall Away	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Reverse Neck Toss	□+✕ (from behind opponent)
Piggyback Ride	△+○ (from behind opponent)
Ultimate Tackle	↙+□+△ (whilst crouching)
Cross Arm Lock	△,□,△,□+△ (during Tackle)
Ultimate Punishment	△,↓+□,□, ○,□,□+△ (during Tackle)

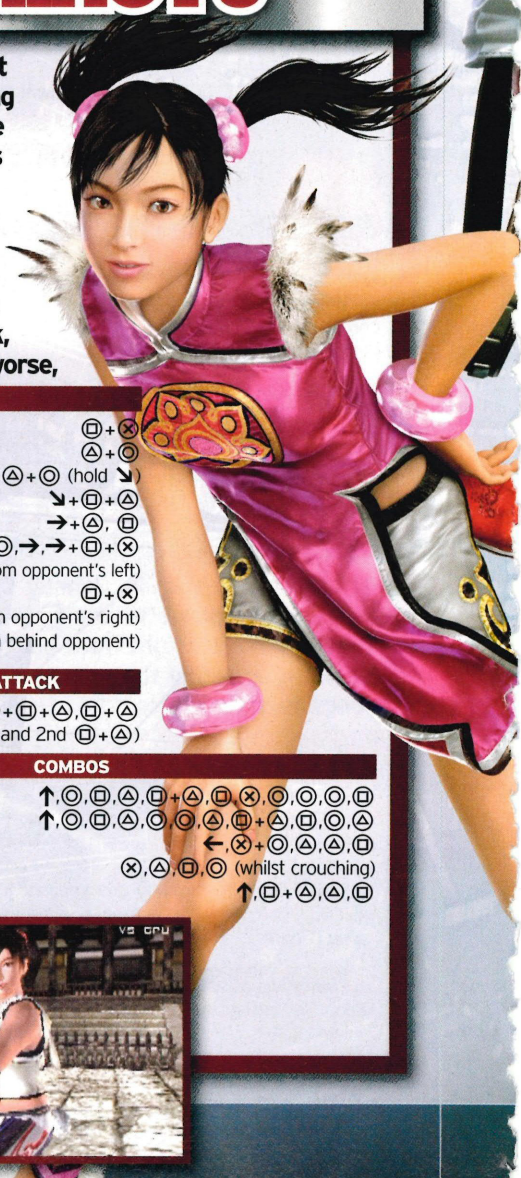
UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Burning Death Fist	←+□+△

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	□,△,✕,△,□,△,□,○,△,□
10-Hit Combo 2	□,△,✕,□,○,△,□,○, △,□
10-Hit Combo 3	□,△,✕,□,△
Combo 1	↓,↙,←,✕,△,△
Combo 2	↓,↙,←,✕,△,□

LING XIAOYU



You'll be lucky to hit the floor at all during a bout, such are the strength of Xiaoyu's juggles, which drag her otherwise poor attack strength back into mediocrity. If you're after someone quick, you could do a lot worse,

THROWS

Jade	□+✕
Ruby	△+○
Dragon Fall	↘+△+○ (hold ↘)
Dislocator	↘+□+△
Human Hurdle	→+△, □
Hop 'n Throw	←,✕+○,→,→+□+✕
Arm Flip	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Dump the Bucket	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Crank Up	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Phoenix Strike	←+□+△,□+△ (delay between 1st and 2nd □+△)

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	↑,○,□,△,□+△,□,✕,○,○,○,□
10-Hit Combo 2	↑,○,□,△,○,○,△,□+△,□,○,△
Combo 1	←,✕+○,△,△,□
Combo 2	✕,△,□,○ (whilst crouching)
Combo 3	↑,□+△,△,□

STEVE FOX

A product himself of the Mishima Zaibatsu, Steve enters the tournament to destroy his creators. His lack of the ability to kick certainly doesn't hinder him, making it almost impossible for opponents to counter his blows. Unusual, but effective.

THROWS

Gut Wrencher	□+✕
Brain Pulverizer	△+○
Swordfish Stretch	→, →+□+△
Eagle Elbow	↓, ↙, ←+△+○
Griffon	→, □+△, →+□+△
Choke Slam	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Hip Sweep	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Hellfire Rage	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Hellfire	↓, ↙, ←, →+△

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	→,□+△,□,□,□,△,□,□,△,□,△
10-Hit Combo 2	→,□+△,□,□,△,□,□,△,□,←,△
10-Hit Combo 3	→, □+△,□,□,△,□,□,✕,△,✕+○
Combo 1	→,←,□,□,△,□,← (Hold 2nd ←)
Combo 2	→,✕,□+△,□,△,□,△,□,△,□,△,□

NINA WILLIAMS

The elusive assassin returns to become one of the strongest characters around, again perfect for beginners. Her natural speed combined with a plethora of hard-hitting juggle combos make her a tough prospect whether she's controlled by human or machine.

THROWS

Arm Grab Flip	□+✕
Lifting Toss	△+○
Embracing Elbow Strike	↘, ↘+□
Neck Throw	↗+□+△
Revolving Elbow Strike	↘+□+✕
Rolling Triangle Lock	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Swinging Toss	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Triangle Hold	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

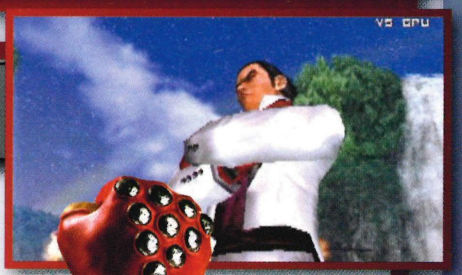
UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Hunting Swan	↙+□+△
Evil Mist	↓, ↘, →, ↙+△+✕

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	□,△,□,△,✕,✕,△,□,△,○
10-Hit Combo 2	↘,□,△,□,△,✕,✕,△,□,△,○
10-Hit Combo 3	□,△,□,△,✕,✕,△,□,○,✕
10-Hit Combo 4	↘,□,△,□,△,✕,✕,△,□,○,✕
10-Hit Combo 5	□,△,□,△,○,✕,○,△,○,✕
10-Hit Combo 6	↘,□,△,□,△,○,✕,○,△,○,✕
Combo 1	↘,✕,□,△,→+□+△
Combo 2	□,△,□,△,→+□+△

KAZUYA MISHIMA



Heihachi's son enters the championship once more, determined to take revenge on those who left him to die with his father at the cold steel hands of a Jack-4 squad. As ever, he's very useful indeed in the ring.

THROWS

Bitch Kicks	□+✕
Hip Toss	△+○
Stone Head	→, →+□+△
Gates of Hell	↘, ↓, ↘+□+△ (from crouched position)
Steel Pedal Drop	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Skull Smash	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Reverse Neck Throw	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Lightning Godfist	←+□+○
Lightning Screw Godfist	←+□+○ (hold ←)

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	→,→,△,□,△,△,✕,○,○,□,△,□
10-Hit Combo 2	→,→,△,□,△,△,✕,○,○,✕,△,□
10-Hit Combo 3	→,→,△,□,○,○,△,○,✕,△,□
Combo 1	↗,○,○,○,○
Combo 2	←,✕,□,○,✕

JIN KAZAMA

Since *Tekken 3*, it's been all downhill for Jin, who has become considerably slower and podgier without making any significant power gains. It's the devil gene that does it, y'see. Ah well – he'll soon be consumed by it and end this nightmare!

THROWS

Bitch Kicks	□+✕
Thunder Reverse	△+○
Throat Smash	↗+□+△
Oar Crush	↓, ↙, ←+□+✕
Scales Flip	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Shoulder Helix	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Hip Dislocator	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Eighth Gate of Hell	↖+□+△

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo	→, △, ✕, ✕, ✕, △, □, △, ✕, ○, △
Combo 1	←, →, △, □, △
Combo 2	→, →+✕, □, ✕, △, □, ○
Combo 3	↙, △, △, ✕
Combo 4	□, ✕, △, □, ○

ANNA WILLIAMS

Anna's ability to take full advantage of cornering an opponent makes her one of the most formidable fighters around, and one of the best with which to use aggressive tactics. You will find that keeping your enemy pinned back is the best strategy.

THROWS

Cruel Punishment	□+✕
Losing Face	△+○
Embracing Elbow Strike	↘, ↘+□
Neck Cutter	↗+□+△
Torso Splitter	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Serpentine Arm Snap	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Triangle Hold	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

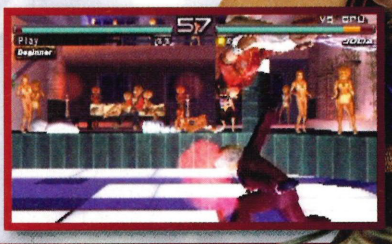
Hunting Swan	↙+□+△
Bloody Scissors	↓+□+△

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	□, △, □, △, ✕, ✕, △, □, △, ○
10-Hit Combo 2	□, △, □, △, ○, □, △, △, ✕+○, △
10-Hit Combo 3	□, △, □, △, ○, □, △, △, ✕+○, ✕
10-Hit Combo 4	□, △, □, △, ✕, ←
Combo 1	↗, □, ✕, ✕+○

LEE CHAOLAN

Another character whose juggle combos will leave you begging for mercy, Lee's quest to claim the Mishima Zaibatsu might just prove successful. There's good scope for throwing a bit of variety into your play – another reason he's an excellent choice.



THROWS

Neck Fracture	□+✕
Neck Axle	△+○
Knee Driver	→, →+✕+○
Harassment	□+✕ (from opponent's left
Stunner	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Bulldog	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Silver Demon Fist	↙+□+△
Silver Cyclone	↓+✕+○

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo	↘, □, △, △, □, ✕, ✕, ✕, ○, ✕, ○
Combo 1	✕, ✕, ↓, ✕, ✕, ✕ (after releasing crouch)
Combo 2	↓, ○, ○, ○, ○ (hold ↓)
Combo 3	↓, ○, ○, ✕, ○
Combo 4	→, ✕, ○, ○

JULIA CHANG

Too many moves offering a cheap counter and/or the opportunity to sidestep and do worse damage make Julia the game's weakest character after Roger Jr. Doesn't look like the forest will ever be rejuvenated, after all...

THROWS

Death Valley Bomb	□+✕
Side Buster	△+○
Arm Lock Suplex	↘+□+△
Waist Suplex	□+✕,↘+□+✕
Seasaw Whip	↓,↙+□+✕ (hold ↙)
Cross Arm Lock	↙,↓,↙+□+△ (from crouched position)
Mad Axes	↓, ↙, ←, →+△
Outrigger	↓+□+✕ (ducking opponent)
Bulldog	↓+△+○ (ducking opponent)
Running Bulldog	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Twisted Sister	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
German Suplex	□+✕ (from behind opponent)
Spinning Air Neckbreaker	△+○ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Heaven Cannon	→+□+○

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	△,□,□,△,✕,✕,✕,○,○,□
10-Hit Combo 2	△,□,□,△,✕,✕,△,✕,△,□
10-Hit Combo 3	△,□,□,△,✕,✕,△,□,○,✕
Combo 1	△,□,○,✕ (whilst rising from crouch)
Combo 2	↘,○,△,←,→+□
Combo 3	□+△,○,←,→,□+△

JACK-5

Immensely powerful but insanely slow, Jack-5 can be a force to be reckoned with in the right hands. For the rest of us, it's just too difficult to escape enemy attacks to make the automaton any kind of serious prospect.

THROWS

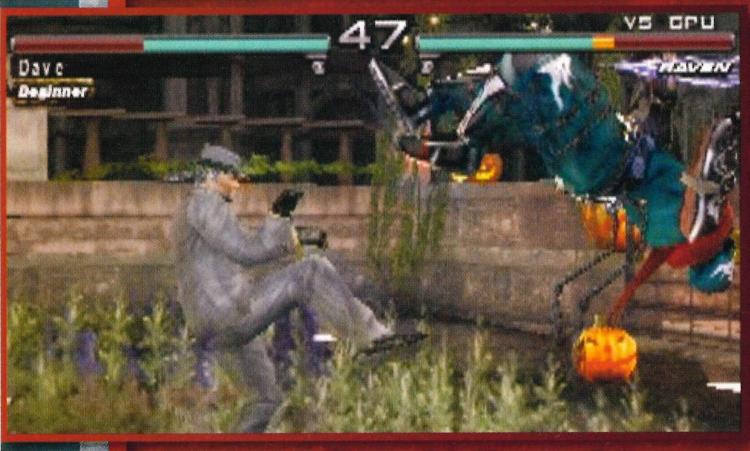
Cyclone	□+✕
P Bot Dynamic	△+○
Ground Zero	↗+□+△
Gigaton Punishment	↓, ↘+△ (during Ground Zero)
Piledriver	↙, →+□+△ (hold →)
Body Press	↘+□+✕
Face Bash	□+△ (during Body Press)
Backbreaker	↓, ↙, ←+△
Face in the Dirt	↙+△+✕
Catapult	↘+△+○
Modified Catapault	↘, ↘+△+○
Gun Bomb	↓+□+✕ (crouching opponent)
Iron Gunman	↓+△+○ (crouching opponent)
Hanging Neck Throw	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Flipping Choke Slam	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Spinal Crush	□+✕ (from behind opponent)
Death Shot	△+○ (from behind opponent)

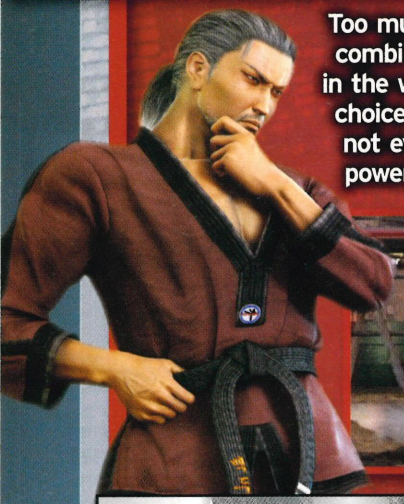
UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS

Gigaton Start Up	←, ↙, ↓, ↘, →
Wind Up	←, ↙, ↓, ↘, →, ↗, ↑, ↖ (after Gigaton Start Up)
Gigaton Punch	□ (after Wind Up)
Gigaton Stomp	✕+○
Dark Greeting	→+○, □

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	↓,△,□,□,□,△,□,△,□,□+△,□+△
10-Hit Combo 2	↓,△,□,□,□,△,□,△,□,↓,□+△,□+△
10-Hit Combo 3	↗,□,□,○,✕,○,□,△,□,□+△,□+△
10-Hit Combo 4	↗,□,□,○,✕,○,□,△,□,↓,□+△,□+△
Combo 1	□,□,□,△,→,□ (whilst crouching)
Combo 2	↗,✕+○,△,□,△,□
Combo 3	↙+✕,○,✕,○,✕,○





Too much in the way of sharp, weak combination moves and not enough in the way of power makes Baek the choice of the professionals only. It's not even like he possesses the raw power of Hwoarang, so steer clear!

BAEK DOO SAN

THROWS

Hammer Head	□+⊗
Blue Shark Claw	△+○
Swordfish Catch	↙+□+⊗
Cobra Bite	→, →+△
Human Cannonball	→+△+⊗
Snake Revenge	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Hunting Serpent	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Triple Pain	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Heel Explosion	↙+□+○
Last Needle	←, ←+⊗+○

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	○, ⊗, ○, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ○, ⊗
10-Hit Combo 2	○, ⊗, ⊗, ○, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ○, ⊗, ⊗
Combo 1	□, △, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ○
Combo 2	□, △, ⊗, ⊗, ○, ○, ○
Combo 3	⊗, ⊗, ○, ○, ⊗
Combo 4	←, ⊗, ⊗, ○, ○, ⊗
Combo 5	↗, ⊗, ↓, ○, ⊗

ROGER JR

As a piece of comedy: genius. As a fighter: absolute garbage. Roger Jr's kicks stand up to scrutiny okay, but the arm span of his mother leaves a lot to be desired. Best keep your hands off.

THROWS

Head Stomp	□+⊗
Tasmanian Doormat	△+○
Animal Driver	↓, ↘, →+□
Animal Swing	→, ←, ↙, ↓, ↘, →+□
DDT	↙, ↙+□+△
Tombstone Piledriver	↙, →+△
Frankensteiner	↘+⊗+○
Running Bulldog	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Swinging DDT	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Reverse Neck Toss	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK

Animal Gigaton Punch	←+↙+←

COMBOS

10-Hit Combo 1	□, △, □, ○, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, ○, ⊗, △
10-Hit Combo 2	□, △, □, ○, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗+○, △, □+△
Combo 1	↙, ○, ⊗, ○, ⊗, ○
Combo 2	↓, □+△, □+△, △
Combo 3	→, □, △, □, △, □

BRYAN FURY

One of the strongest characters in the game, pound for pound, Bryan is capable of devastating anyone, on his day. He's been weakened slightly since *Tekken 5*, but only in as far as his most powerful moves are now harder to perform.

THROWS	
Bryan Crusher	□+✕
Gravity Brain Buster	△+○
Meat Grinder	→, →+□+△
Chains of Misery	↘, ↓, ↘+□+△ (from crouched position)
Gravity Blow	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Knee Blast	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Hummer Neck Ringer	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS	
Meteor Blow	→+□+○
Meteor Smash	←+□+○

COMBOS	
10-Hit Combo 1	←, ✕, ○, □, △, □, ○, △, □, ○, △
10-Hit Combo 2	←, ✕, ○, □, △, □, ○, △, ○
10-Hit Combo 3	←, ✕, ○, □, △, □, ○, ✕, ✕, △
Combo 1	□+✕+○, →, △, □, ○, △, □, ○, △
Combo 2	←, ✕, △, □, △
Combo 3	←, △, □, ○
Combo 4	□, ○, △, □, △

KUMA/PANDA

Both Heihachi's pet grizzly bear Kuma, and Ling Xiaoyu's bodyguard Panda share the same roster of moves, and are actually of quite some use if you ensure you keep your opponents at a distance. Just don't try to kick, whatever you do!

THROWS	
Bear Bite	□+✕
Bear Hug	△+○
Circus Hug	↓, ↙, ←, →+□+△
Mauling Bear	✕+○, ←+□+△
Stone Head	→, →+□+○
Choke Slam	□+✕ (from opponent's left)
Rag Doll	□+✕ (from opponent's right)
Bear Swing	□+✕ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS	
Deadly Claw	←+□+△
Salmon Hunter Claw	←, →+△+✕ (hold ✕)

COMBOS	
10-Hit Combo 1	↘,△,□,□+△,✕,□+△,□+△,□+△,□,△,□+△ (from crouched position)
10-Hit Combo 2	↘,△,□,□+△,✕,□+△,✕+○,□+△,△,✕,□
Combo 1	↓+□+○ (whilst enemy is down)
Combo 2	↘,□,△,□,□ (from crouched position)
Combo 3	□,□,□,△,↘+□ (from crouched position)

YOSHIMITSU

This benevolent ninja is sadly let down by his vulnerable move set: he has practically no attacks and they have no serious repercussions if blocked. If picking Yoshimitsu is a matter of life and death, try to hang back and pick off your opponent's mistakes.

THROWS	
Devious Plot	□+⊗
Sword Face Smash	△+○
Rainbow Drop	↓, ↙, ←+□+△
Soul Siphon	↓, ↘, →+△
Possession	↓, ↙, ←, →+△ (hold →)
Wheels of Hell	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Bulldog	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Tornado Drop	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACKS	
Sword Impale	←, ←+↙
Thunder Blade	←, ←+□+△
Deathcopter	↗+□+△

COMBOS	
10-Hit Combo 1	□,△,□,○,○,○,□,□,□,□
10-Hit Combo 2	□,△,□,○,△,△,△,○,□,□
10-Hit Combo 3	□,△,□,○,○,○,□,⊗+○
10-Hit Combo 4	○,○,△,△,○,○,□,□,□,□
10-Hit Combo 5	○,○,△,△,○,○,□,⊗+○
10-Hit Combo 6	○,○,△,△,□,□
Combo 1	→,→+⊗+○,□+△,⊗+○
Combo 2	↓,□+○,←,□,□,□ (hold ←)
Combo 3	↘,□,□,□,□

BRUCE IRVIN

The problem with Bruce's kickboxing fighting style is that it presupposes the ability to counter attack. Sadly, this is something Bruce is rubbish at and, as such, hampers his entire game. Shame that, really...

THROWS	
Knee Face Bash	□+⊗
Rib Crusher	△+○
Annihilator	→, →+△+⊗
Head Breaker	□+⊗ (from opponent's left)
Face Breaker	□+⊗ (from opponent's right)
Reverse Neck Fracture	□+⊗ (from behind opponent)

UNBLOCKABLE ATTACK	
Sidewinder	←+△+⊗

COMBOS	
10-Hit Combo 1	□,□,△,□,○,⊗,○,⊗,△,□
10-Hit Combo 2	□,□,△,□,○,⊗,○,⊗,○,⊗
Combo 1	←,○,⊗,○
Combo 2	←,□,△,□
Combo 3	⊗,△,□,○

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Avian Master of Jungle	Encounter Yian Kut Ku	Great Jungle Kut Ku
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Cornered Monoblos	Encounter Monoblos	Horn of the Monoblos
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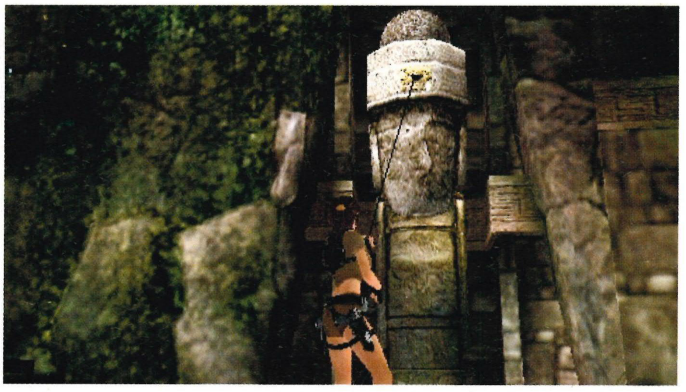
Divine Providence	Encounter Rathalos	Rathalos Urgent
Dragon of Jagged Rocks	Encounter Azure Lao-Shan Lung	8 Star 'A Giant Dragon Invades'
Gravios Ecology	Defeat Gravios	The Terror of Gravios
Khezu Ecology	Defeat khezu	Attack of the Cave Wyvern
King of the Heavens	Encounter Rathalos	One Star Egg Carry
Lao-Shan Lung	Encounter Lao Shan Lung	N/A
Legend of Black Dragon	Encounter Fatalis	N/A
Menace in the Sand	Encounter Cephladrome	Land Shark
Plesioth Ecology	Defeat Plesioth	Water Wyvern of the Desert
Poison of the Swamp	Encounter Gypceros	The swamp
Rathian Ecology		Complete 'The Fierce Flaming Rathian'
Shepard	Encounter Velocidrome	The Formidable Velocidrome!
Supreme Ruler Inferno	Encounter Gravios	
The Lone Black Wolf	Encounter Yian Garuga	Slay 20 Velociprey
The Phantom Beast	Encounter Kirin	N/A
The Ancient Piscine	Encounter Plesioth	N/A
White Shadow Darkness	Encounter Graviouc	Complete 'Bring me a Khezu'

Tomb Raider: Legend

CODES

You have to unlock these codes before using them. Hold L then enter the following codes during gameplay.

Code	Effect
⊗, R, △, R, □, R	Bulletproof
□, ○, ⊗, R, R, △	Draw Enemy Health
⊗, ○, ⊗, R, □, △	Infinite Assault Rifle Ammo
L, △, R, ○, R, □	Infinite Grenade Launcher
R, ○, □, R, □, ⊗	Infinite Shotgun Ammo
○, △, R, R, ⊗, ○	Infinite SMG Ammo
△, ⊗, △, □, R, ○	One Shot Kill
△, ⊗, ○, R, △, R	Wield Excalibur
⊗, R, ○, R, R, □	Wield Soul Reaver



Field Commander

FREE STRATEGY HINTS

Save the game during a difficult mission, then select 'Surrender' from the main menu and the general will give you hints on how to complete the mission. Afterwards, simply load to restart the level.

REVEAL ENEMIES IN STEALTH MODE

Move a truck or scout near a tank or rocket launcher, keep it moving until you find the enemy, then take it down with the rocket launcher or tank.

Juiced: Eliminator

EASY MONEY

When there are races available, create and enter a 'Sprint' race. Use up all your nitro and keep pressing L near the red line. This way you'll win nearly all of your races and make a stack load of cash.

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

NESTERJ

Console History

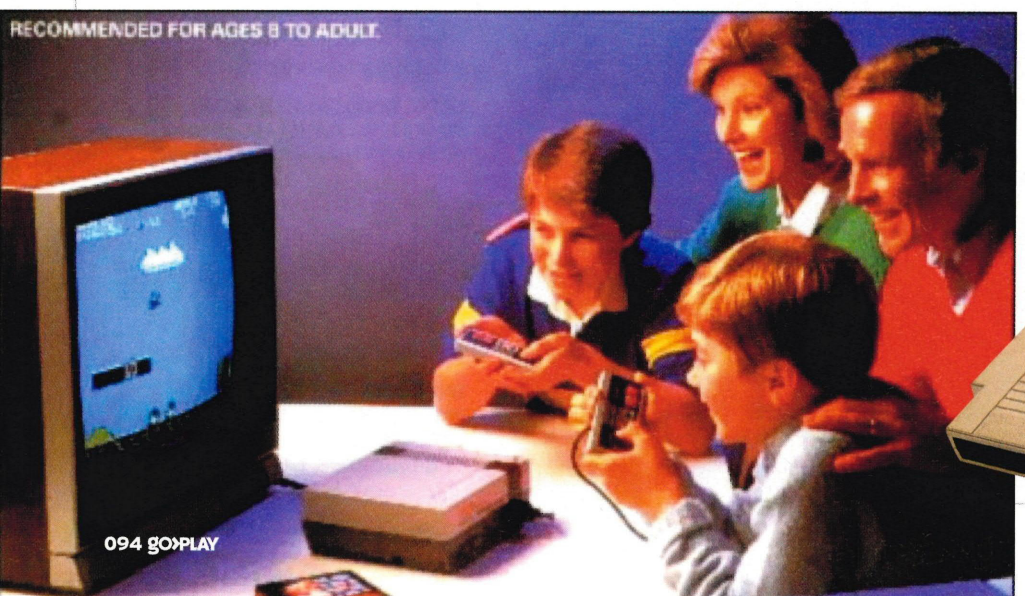
In the early Eighties, Nintendo was on a roll. Fresh with the success of arcade hits such as *Donkey Kong*, it decided that the time was right to release a home console. Atari and Mattel had already had huge success with the likes of the Atari 2600 and ColecoVision and Nintendo was determined to follow suit.

Designed by Masayuki Uemura – who also went on to create the NES's bigger brother, the SNES – the Nintendo Family Computer (or Famicom) debuted in Japan on the 15 July 1983. Sadly, for Nintendo, early builds were riddled with problems and design issues and the system was eventually recalled and re-issued with a brand new motherboard. The newly designed board did the trick and the console quickly became a huge hit.

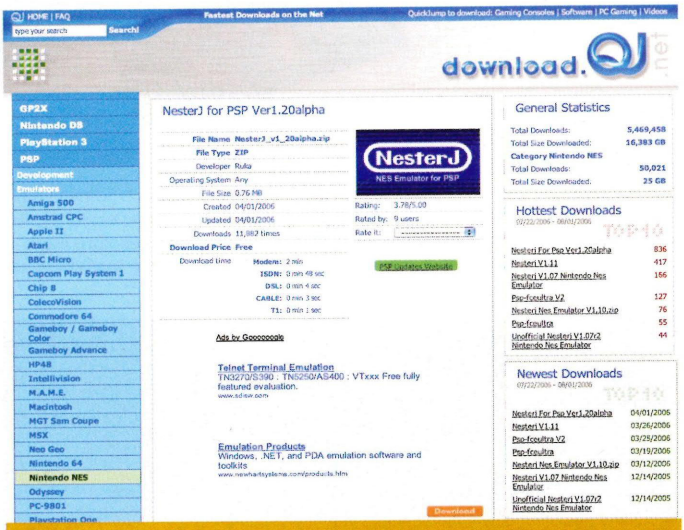
Keen to build on the machine's reputation, Nintendo looked toward the US and entered into a series of negotiations with Atari, who had already had astounding success with the aforementioned Atari 2600. With Atari wanting to focus on its own system (Atari 7800) Nintendo decided to go it alone, and, after deciding against releasing a version of its machine that would feature a tape deck, keyboard and wireless controller, it renamed the machine as the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES for short) and released it on 18 October 1985. Although the initial launch was confined to New York (where it shifted an impressive 50,000 units), NES was such a success that it received a nationwide release in February 1986.

For $199 you could pick yourself up the 'Control Deck' pack, which featured the machine itself and the excellent Super Mario Bros. Those with a little more brass could buy the 'Deluxe' set for $249. A far better deal as it came with two games, *Duck Hunt* and *Gyromite*, a lightgun called the NES Zapper and two joypads (a rarity these days as most new consoles just have one). The most interesting part of the bundle, however, was a cute little Robot called R.O.B. (Robotic Operating Buddy) which was supposed to play games with you – unfortunately, only two titles were ever released for it.

While it went on to dominate the US and Japanese markets, it never managed to achieve the same success in Europe which enabled Sega to gain a foothold with its Master System. Still, NES went on to become one of the most successful consoles of all time and ended up selling over 60 million units and established Nintendo as a worldwide player in the console market, a position it still holds today. ■



Setting up the emulator in five easy steps



STEP 1

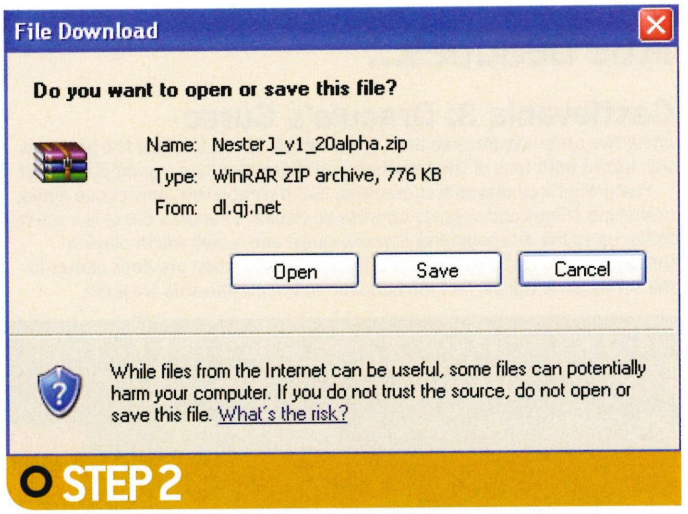
So you know a little bit about Nintendo's first 8-bit console, but how on earth do you manage to shrink it into a PSP? Simple. Just make a note of the following instructions and you'll have a portable NES in the palm of your hand before you can say Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. Okay, maybe not that quickly, but it'll be pretty damn quick.

Your first port of call is to head over to a reputable site that's full of PSP homebrew goodness. As always, point your mouse towards the rather excellent PSP Updates and use the following weblink: http://dl.qj.net/NesterJ-for-PSP-Ver1.20alpha-PSP-Emulators/pg/12/fid/5912/catid/127 **(Step 1)**.

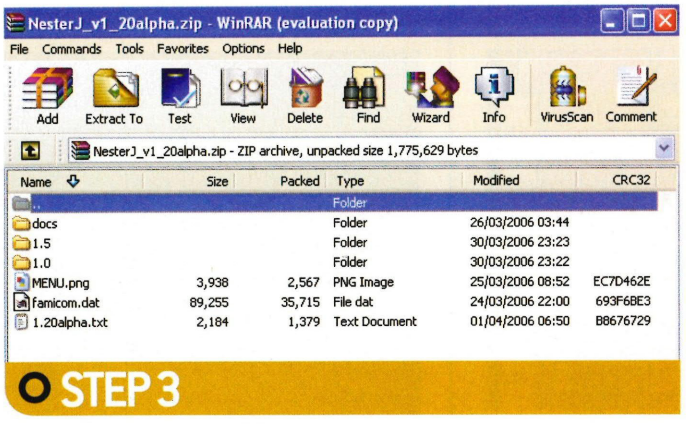
We're mainly using NesterJ version 1.20Alpha because it will work with the wonderful GTA eBoot Loader, so will be usable by most of our readers. Save the required file to your desktop **(Step 2)** and open it up with a program such as WinZip **(Step 3)**. If you're using the GTA method then you need to use Version 1.5, so make sure you select the right version, otherwise nothing's going to happen.

Now that you've selected the correct version, there's the small matter of getting it onto your PSP, so grab your USB-to-PSP cable, link everything up and open your PSP's details via My Computer. As always, you need to search through your PSP folders until you find one named PSP **(Step 4)**. Open it by double clicking on the folder – if you don't have one already, create a folder called Game **(Step 5)**. Once you're done, open up the NesterJ 1.5 folder and place the two folders it contains (NesterJ and NesterJ%) inside. If you've done everything right then you have created the impossible and placed an 8-bit console inside your PSP. If nothing happens then you've obviously done something wrong (after all, we're professionals... apparently).

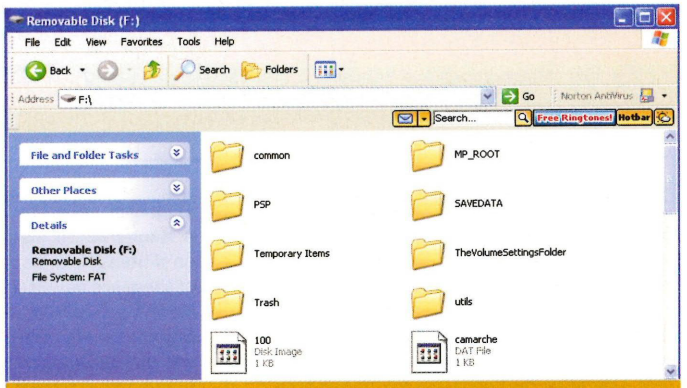
Of course, you're not going to get far without some games, so be sure to place any legal ROMs you own in the NesterJ folder (and not the NesterJ% one). As always, we're not going to tell you where to obtain any illegal ROMs, as we don't want to go to hell when we die, so don't even ask us. And there you have it: another all-singing, all-dancing emulator for your sexy PSP. ■



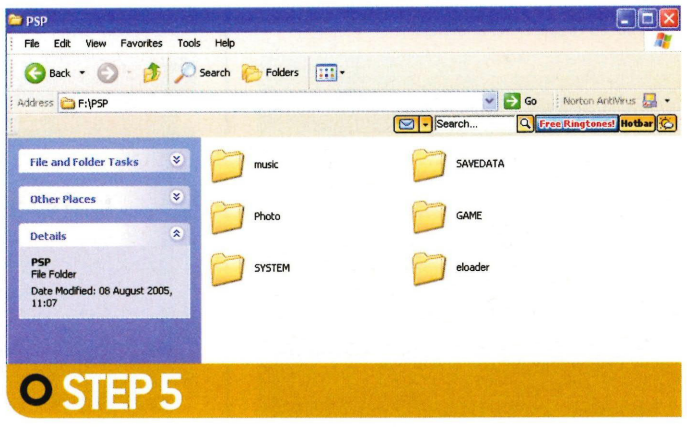
STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



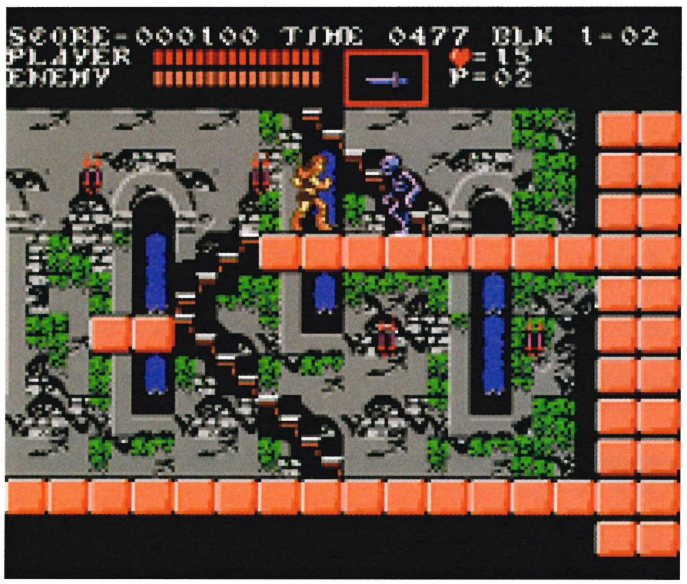
STEP 5

So your emulator is up and running, but what games should you pick up? Check out these little beauties...

Castlevania 3: Dracula's Curse

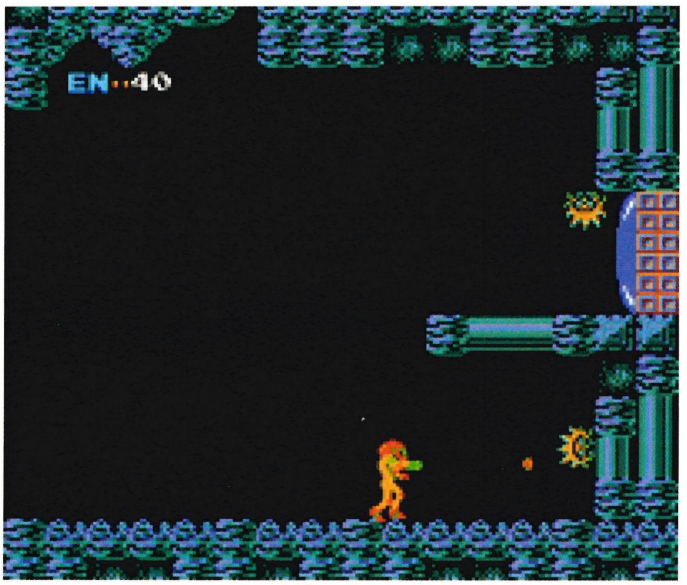
While two other *Castlevania* titles are available for NES, this is the best and will delight both fans of the franchise and those that love a good platformer.

Featuring three playable characters, 15 different levels, impressive audio, branching stages and suitably oppressive visuals, *Dracula's Curse* is a worthy follow up to the disappointing *Simon's Quest* and is well worth playing through. It also features a better difficulty balance than previous games in the series, so is the perfect introduction to the *Castlevania* universe.



Metroid

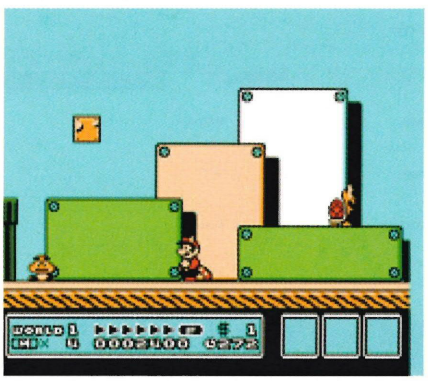
While *Metroid*'s visuals are rather basic looking, the gameplay itself is second to none and you'll be gob smacked by how much gaming goodness Game Boy creator Gunpei Yokoi was able to cram into the original NES cart. Samus starts off her adventure with just a straightforward blaster, but as she explores she gradually gains new suit abilities which, in turn, enable her to explore more of the hostile planet she finds herself on. A cracking adventure that shouldn't be missed under any circumstances.



Super Mario Bros 3

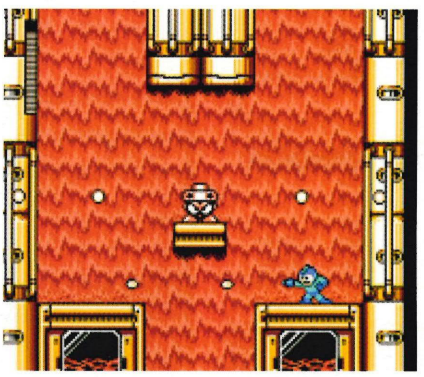
Before *Super Mario World* on the SNES came along and stole its thunder, this was easily the best game that Nintendo's resident plumber had appeared in.

Beautifully crafted levels, glorious looking visuals, magic whistles, Mario's third NES adventure had it all. Not only does *Super Mario Bros 3* introduce the Koopa Kids for the first time, it was also the first Mario game to supply the moustachioed one with a variety of useful suits, and the first to enable him to return to previously completed stages. A true classic.



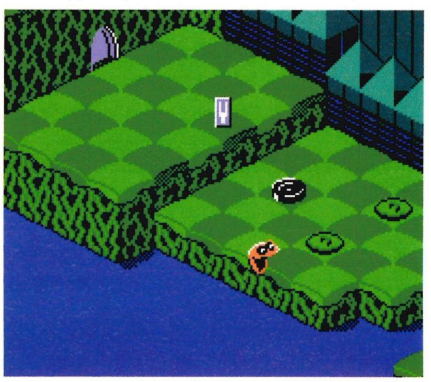
Mega Man 3

A staggering six Mega Man games appeared on Nintendo's 8-bit console, and while several of them are now starting to show their age, Mega Man's third outing (like Mario's) remains as good as ever. It's a tough little game, but the well designed stages, decent visuals and tough-as-nail bosses will constantly pull you back for just one more go. Featuring plenty of new additions to the series (including Mega Man's dog, Rush) *Mega Man 3* is a fantastic yet hard platformer.



Snake, Rattle 'N Roll

Before it was bought by Microsoft, Rare was firmly in Nintendo's camp and created over 50 games for its 8-bit console. *Snake, Rattle 'N Roll* is easily one of its most memorable titles and is a beautifully crafted isometric adventure that stars two very hungry snakes. The two reptiles must eat strange creatures called nibbley pibbleys, which will allow them to gain weight. Once enough pibbleys have been eaten you can advance to the next stage. A wacky adventure that's typically Rare.



CAPCOM CLASSICS GO PORTABLE

Capcom's CPS1 arcade port gets emulated on PSP

While we've greatly enjoyed playing the likes of *Strider*, *Forgotten Worlds*, *Final Fight* and *Magic Sword* on our PSP's, we can't help but notice that many Capcom classics still aren't available yet. We're unlikely to see traditional scrolling brawlers like *The Punisher*, *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs* and *Willow* due to licensing agreements.

Help is at hand though, as a coder named NJ has been steadily tweaking his very own Capcom Play System 1 (CPS1) emulator, and ruddy good it is to. Currently on version Beta 2, NJ's emu is already receiving a number of fans on various homebrew forums that can't sing enough of his praises. The emulator has moved incredibly quickly since it was first announced on 19 July, and it would appear that NJ is prepared to go without food, sleep or drink in order to ensure that his emu is finished as quickly as possible.

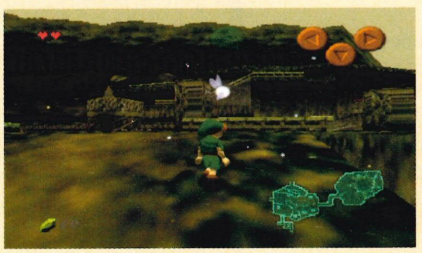
Of course, while this emulator is more than likely to be a godsend for those that want to return to the over-the-top violence of *The Punisher*, or play through *Willow* again, it does throw up a fair few questions. Will NJ be working on a CPS2 emulator which would feature even more games; will it impact on sales of *Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed* and will Capcom be pissed off? Have no fear, we will bring you the answers as and when we get them. ■

ALMOST THERE

Progress on PSP's N64 emulator continues

You may have remembered that we recently (well, last month actually) told you about an exciting N64 emu that was running a select few games at full speed. Sadly, we've yet to hear any more about this exciting breakthrough in N64 emulation, so we've been hunting around for the best alternative - and at the moment that would appear to be StrmnNrmn's Daedalus.

While the emu is still a long way from being perfect, it's come quite a long way in the past few weeks and now boasts a greatly improved speed of around 10fps. Admittedly, this is still far from perfect, but it's at least a huge jump up from the initial 2-3 frames per second that it was first running at. In fact the only downside at the moment is that *Mario 64* now refuses to run, and that many of the games are still very, very glitchy. Still, it's an impressive effort, and at the rate StrmnNrmn is going it will only be a matter of time before it's as good as it can be. ■



POKÉPENGUIN

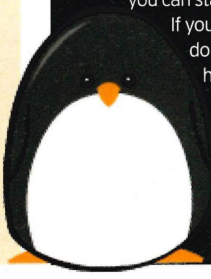
A new homebrew game for those that hate penguins

Penguins eh? They're lucky little buggers. When they're not regurgitating fish for their young ones, or marching through the inhospitable snowy wastes that they call home, they're appearing in bloody documentaries and starring on their own biscuits.

So if, like us, you're feeling a little mad with all the attention that these stupid, pointless birds - any bird that's forgotten how to fly is clearly stupid and therefore pointless - are receiving, then you may want to check out the rather nifty *Poke The Penguin*.

This cool little homebrew title features an adorably cute penguin and two giant hands. When you're feeling stressed, simply use the hands to poke at the penguin. The little guy won't retaliate - unlike the original PC version - so you can keep on poking away until the bugger keels over and dies. Then you can start all over again. Excellent.

If you're looking for a little penguin domination then head on over to http://pspupdates.qj.net/index.php?pg=49&aid=41471 just don't tell the RSPB! Learn more about PSPupdates below then browse the site to see if there are any more animal abusing games. ■

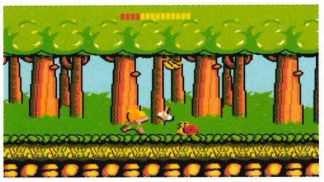


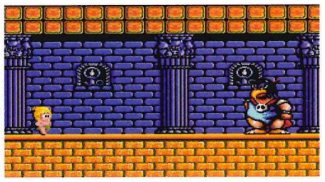
PSP UPDATES

Best PSP mag (that's us) teams up with premium PSP website

PSP Updates, the flagship blog of QJ.NET, has been the ultimate PSP resource for over a year. Nowhere else will you find a PSP website updated 24 hours a day, seven days a week with all the latest news, hacks, exploits, and homebrew releases as they happen. It's the one-stop shop for all your PSP needs. Get the latest info and screenshots on upcoming PSP games, download the latest homebrew releases at DL.QJ.NET, or get help from a forum full of experts and enthusiasts. Add in exclusive interviews, contests, and editorials and PSP Updates has everything you could want from a PSP site. And the good times don't stop there, branch out with QJ.NET to find the latest information on all the next-gen consoles, technology, gadgets, games, and more... ■

In keeping with our themed trilogy of reviews, this month we'll be taking a look at the Wonder Boy games – our emulator of choice? The rather wonderful PSPMaster.





WONDER BOY

Wonder Boy

Originally Released **1987** / Emulator Used **PSPMaster**

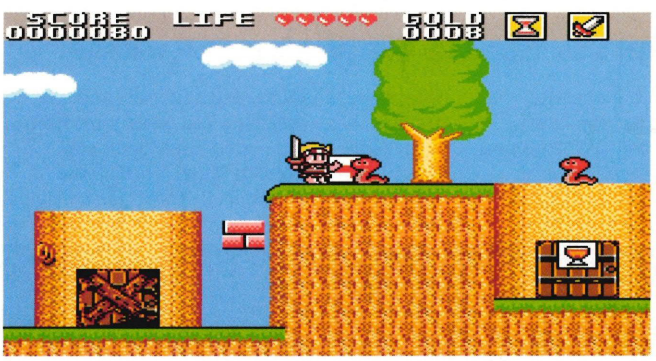
THE MASTER SYSTEM'S first *Wonder Boy* title was a surprisingly accurate rendition of the original arcade game that had appeared in 1986. Unlike its later peers, *Wonder Boy* was a straightforward scrolling platformer that required you to simply make it to the end of the level before your energy ran out. Collecting fruit would boost your vitality, while a handy hammer could be used to kill the game's many cute enemies. Best of all though was the nifty skateboard that allowed you to move through the stage at an incredibly fast rate. Whilst the graphics are rather flickery, the Master System port is otherwise very impressive and perfectly captures the spirit of the original coin-op hit. Fans of retro platforming action and cute snails will be in seventh heaven. ■

WONDER BOY IN MONSTER LAND

Wonder Boy In Monster Land

Originally Released **1988** / Emulator Used **PSPMaster**

WHILE THE SECOND *Wonder Boy* game was also originally released in the arcades (this time in 1987) it was vastly different from its older brother. For starters it was now possible to collect coins that could then be used to buy drinks, or kit yourself out with a variety of different equipment and magic. Wonder Boy was now equipped with a sword and shield, and as he collected money and faced off against nauseatingly cute bosses his armour and weaponry could be constantly upgraded. With a slower pace and a far greater emphasis on exploration, *Wonder Boy II* is a worthy follow-up that cleverly builds on the first game and introduces plenty of new game mechanics. A must play for retro lovers everywhere. ■



Wonder Boy is so good that Jack Black band, Tenacious D, wrote a song about him – that's how good *Wonder Boy* is, so there

WONDER BOY III: THE DRAGON'S TRAP

Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap

Originally Released **1988** / Emulator Used **PSPMaster**

We've not got the space here to review the Master System's fourth *Wonder Boy* title – *Wonder Boy In Monster World* fact fans – but don't worry as Wonder Boy's third outing on Sega's 8-bit console is easily his best. In fact, we'd go as far as to say that in our opinion it's probably one of the greatest Master System games ever and if you've never played it then you deserve to be strung up by your danglies while weevils burrow into your arse cheeks.

Continuing the theme of *Monster Land*, *The Dragon's Trap* is an amazingly ambitious adventure that sees the boy wonder starting off his quest by destroying the dragon featured at the end of *Monster Land*. Unfortunately for the ambitious hero, the dragon leaves behind a parting gift that turns Wonder Boy into a fire-breathing Dragonman. Thus begins Wonder Boy's new quest to regain his human form and hopefully find a cure for his dragon halitosis breath.

Following a similar theme to *Monster Land*, the main difference here is that defeating the main bosses sees you being bestowed with a new animal form that can then be used to reach new areas of the huge game world – most handy. Each new form comes with its own unique ability, so Mouseman can cling to walls, while Lionman's overhead swing is useful for reaching difficult-to-reach blocks.

With loads of secrets to discover, beautiful cartoony visuals and some catchy tunes, *The Dragon's Trap* is simply unmissable, even if you're new to the *Wonder Boy* series. ■

PLAY

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LocationFree

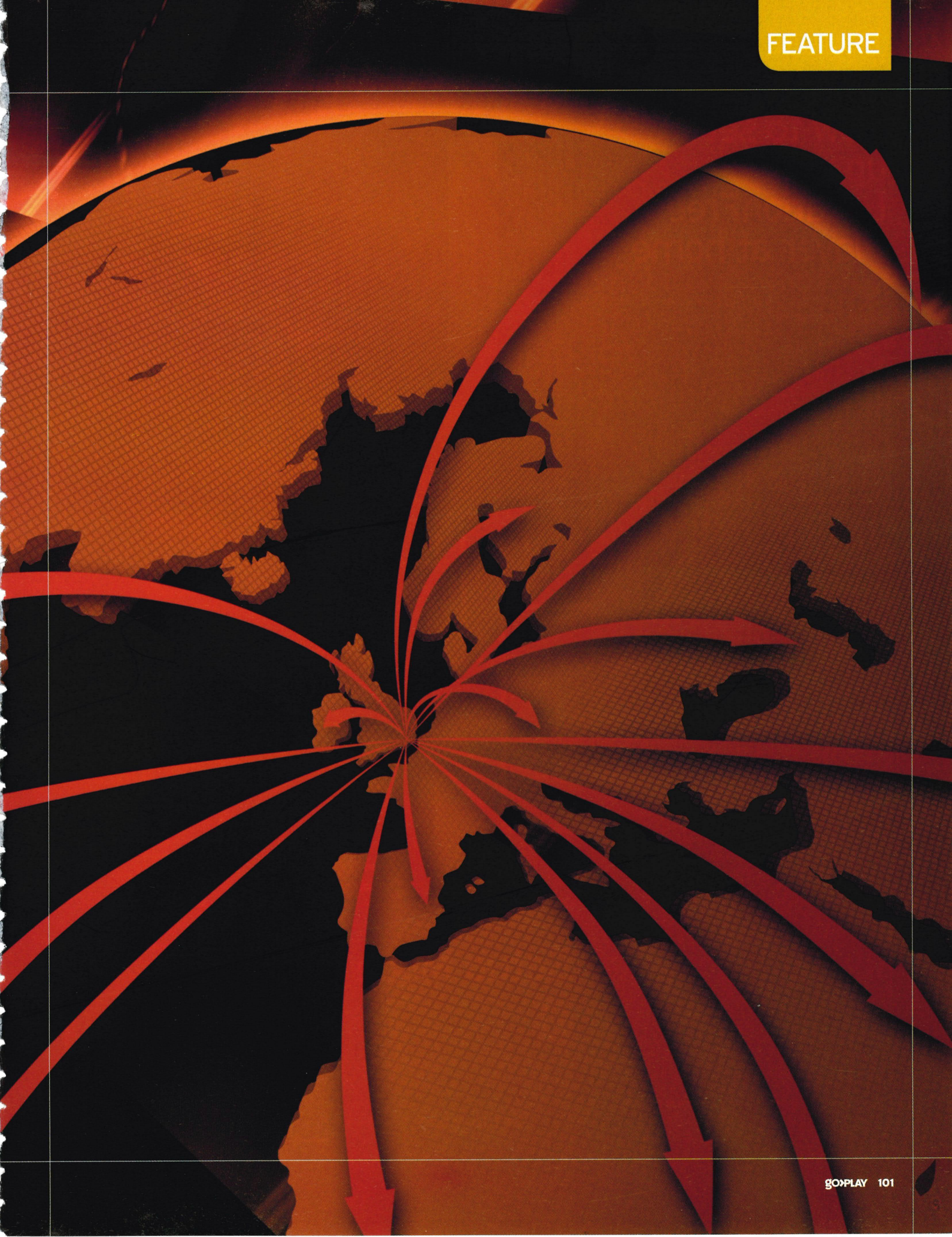
Go>play takes a look at Sony's magic black box that lets you watch what's on your telly, anywhere around the globe. Gimmick? Essential purchase? Easy to set up or unnecessarily complicated? We put the system through its paces

Have you ever felt annoyed that you're missing *Eastenders* while backpacking in Thailand? Or wanted to watch *Big Brother*'s eviction night while sunning yourself in Barbados? No, us neither, but Sony's LocationFree Player can make this a reality... of course, it does have better uses. For instance, you can watch a choice of two video streams anywhere around your own house on your PSP. So if your housemates have decided to have a *Soul Calibur* marathon and you want to watch the London Marathon instead, just fire up your PSP and load up the LocationFree Player.

The unit will also allow you to control your output device like a remote control using the PSP. You'll have to download control settings to a memory stick, but we'll show you how later. You can also connect to the Internet, control the input via a universal remote and see what's in your DVD player anywhere around the world where you can access a Wi-Fi hotspot.

The device is not without its problems - as we frequently found out. The most annoying and pointless part of its design is the fact that it cannot connect to the Internet wirelessly. Bizarre, since it clearly has a transmitter inside that can communicate with any PSP within a hundred feet of it. Instead you have to plug the box directly into a router. This poses more difficulties than you'd expect. In our test, the router wasn't in the front room along with the DVD player, cable receiver and so on. No, it's upstairs attached to bundles of wires that no one wanted to move. So if and when you buy one of these, be prepared to uproot your Internet connection or buy a really long Ethernet cable and bury it under the carpet on the stairs.

And the most important question? Is it worth the £230 price tag? It is amazing watching television on your PSP in the garden, even telly on PSP in the front room had us tingling with excitement. Despite having been in awe of its capability to broadcast and control TV around the house, its flaws, such as limited remote control support, lack of wireless Internet, and generally being a pain in the arse to view video on the net with might make it too pricey to be worth it. ■

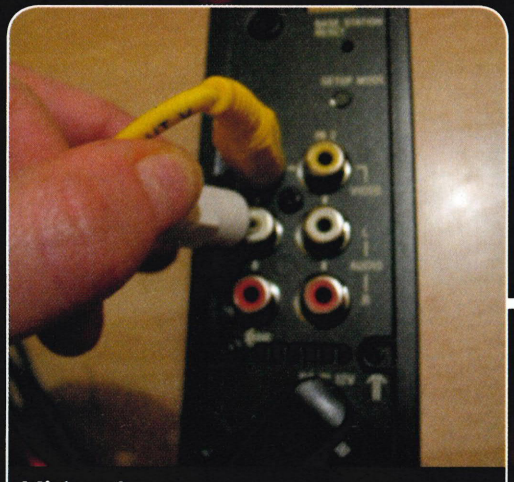


How to set up your LocationFree Player at home

The device itself is pretty light and small. It'll fit beside most DVD players and consoles. It has two rear inputs and you can switch between the feed while using LocationFree. On the back are two inputs where you can plug in a DVD player, satellite, cable, digital TV receiver or even a PS2. You can't plug a telly in directly as this won't output any signal to the LocationFree box and you'll be stuck with a blank screen while out jet-setting in Milton Keynes. ■

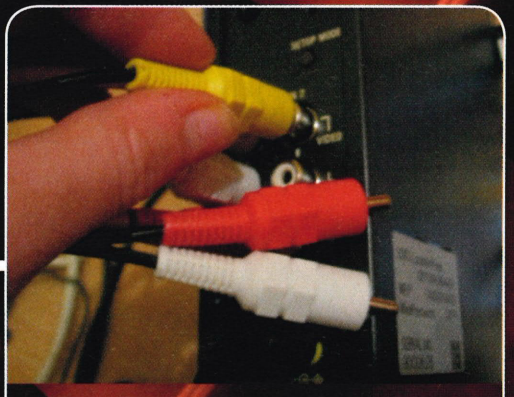
Plugging it in

First make sure the thing is plugged into the mains and is close to all the stuff you usually plug into your telly.



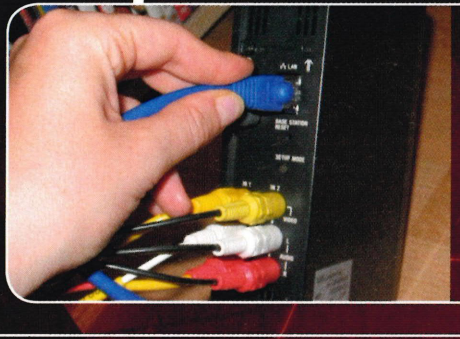
Video 1

Attach the composite cables to the output of either a DVD player, cable, satellite or Freeview receiver.



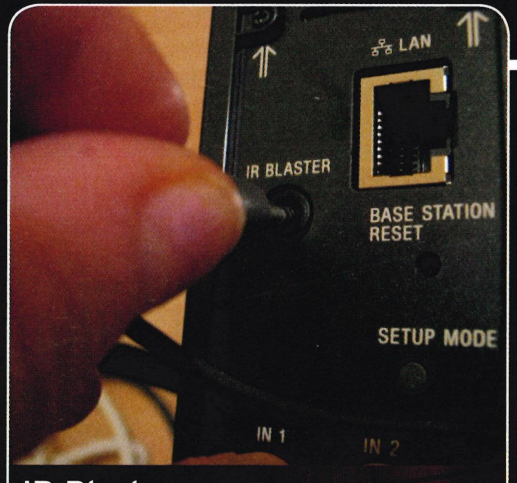
Video 2

Attach another device as you did with Video 1 to this input.



LAN

Since you can't use wireless, you'll have to attach this directly to your router using a patch lead. You can pick these up off eBay for a couple of quid, Sony doesn't provide you with one.

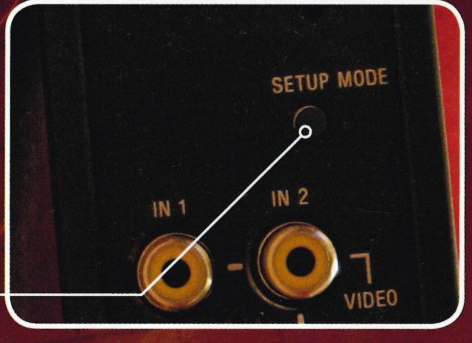


IR Blaster

Place the Remote Blaster into this socket and put the other end right by your video sources.

Setup Mode

Once everything is plugged in, you'll have to press the 'Setup mode' button. Do not do this yet, you'll need to fire up your PSP first, so check out the next tutorial in this guide. ■



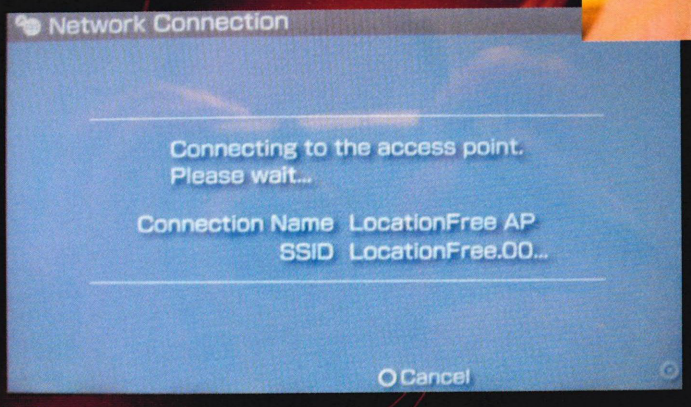
Setup Mode

Connect your PSP

In order to use LocationFree, you'll need PSP firmware of 2.70 or above. You'll need 2.8 if you need to download extra remote settings. Download the software before proceeding.

1. Turn on your PSP

Flick on the WLAN switch and select LocationFree from the network menu, then start.



2. Setup the LocationFree

Hold down the Setup mode button on the back until the orange light on the front of the unit begins to flash. Your PSP should respond after a while and will start talking to the black box... well, not literally.

3. Choose LocationFree

Select LocationFree AP from the menu after the PSP has done its work and input the password. With any luck you'll be viewing exactly what's on your telly, in the palm of your hands.

Remote Blaster

With the base station happily broadcasting video feed around your home, you'll want to be able to change the channel while sitting on the loo. Also included in the lovely bundle, is a 'Remote Blaster'. This handy little gadget acts like a universal remote, controlling both inputs, but instead of a handset, you'll be using your PSP. We used a standard Pace NTL cable receiver, but despite downloading additional remote codes, we couldn't get it to work with the LocationFree. Neither did our Bush DVD player. The only thing that would work, surprise surprise, was our Sony PS2. Here's how we did it...

Set up the remote control

Place the little black box with the small clear blob on it by the IR receiver on your DVD player or digital box, after plugging the other end into the small headphone-like socket on the back of the base unit.

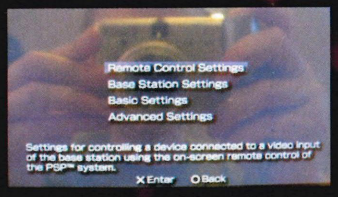
The panel should look like a clear piece of black plastic stuck on the front of your gadget. If you're not sure where it is, try looking in the manual or cover up what you think it is with your hands and then use the ordinary remote control. If nothing happens, you've found it, or you've run out of batteries.

Keep both of your sources' remote receivers close to the IR Blaster to make sure the signal reaches them both.

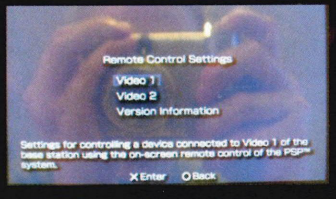
Usually, the receiver will look like a small shiny black plastic panel on the front of the DVD player. It may be marked with an 'IR' symbol.

Download remote data

With the blaster positioned, fire up your PSP and the LocationFree Player software. Now connect to the unit and you should see streaming video. Hit △ to bring up the menu and select 'Settings' and then 'Remote Control Settings'.



Then select the video stream you want to control. For instance, if your DVD player is connected on the left side at the back of the box, select 'Video 1'. Answer 'Yes' and select how you would like to access the net.



Pick 'Europe', then click on 'Remote Control Data: Version 1.00' in the centre. Accept the file and wait for it to download. Push ◎ to go back to the LocationFree software and connect back to it from the main menu.

Test the controller

Once you have all the data, you can test it out. Pick the video stream that you want to control and then select the manufacturer of your DVD player or digi-box. You'll now see a nondescript list of settings, such as 'cable_1_eu" or "DVD Player'. They're not much use, and from now on it's a case of trial and error – if you only have a DVD player, do not pick one that says DVD recorder.

It will now ask you to test if the power can be switched on and off. Test it and wait to see if anything has happened. If the device doesn't switch off within the next 10-15 seconds you can safely say it hasn't worked, and move on to the next. Keep going through the list until your tests do work – although they probably won't.

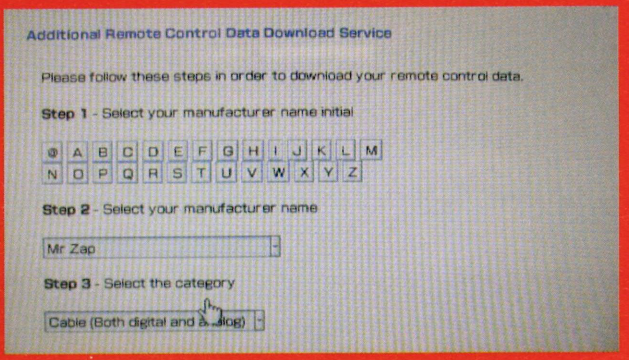
Using the remote control

Phew, with all that set up you can actually switch the channels from another room. Each remote setting is different, but all you have to do is connect to the base unit and watch some telly, and when you want to change channels, bring up the menu by pressing △ and then select 'Remote Control.'

If you can't find your remote settings

So you've managed to get this far, but Sony hasn't catered for your Tesco bargain bucket DVD player from Matsukacki. It's time to get back on the net. Go back to 'Remote Control Settings' and select 'Version Information', now you'll be asked how you want to go on the web. Select your connection and wait for the page to load.

Click on 'Europe' with ⊗ and then 'Additional Remote Control Data' – for this you'll need the latest PSP firmware 2.80. If you haven't already, download and install it. If you do have it, hold down ◎ and pull the analogue nub down until you reach the bottom of the page. Now click on 'Download Additional Remote Controls'.



Step 1

Select the first letter of the make of your item, so it's 'S' for Samsung, that's right kids.

Step 2

Now click on 'Select Your Manufacturer Name' and use the D-pad to scroll down. Pressing ⊗ on the name a couple of times will load the next step.

Step 3

Click on 'Select A Category' and pick the nearest matches to your system.

Step 4

You should now have a list at the bottom with 'Accept And Download' buttons at the side of each one. We recommend downloading them all so you don't have to do this again.

With the additional data on your memory card, you can return to the LocationFree Player and select and test it as you did before. Just don't expect many of them to actually work.

What you can do around the house

The LocationFree base unit, even when not connected to the Internet, can transmit the video inputs around your house. So anywhere you can switch on your PSP, you can watch TV, catch a DVD while taking a bath, or maybe even check if your housemates are watching porn

You can also use it to watch another channel while everyone else is watching something else. So if, for some bizarre reason, you really wanted to watch *Coronation Street*, but everyone else you lived with wanted to watch *Evil Dead 2* on VHS, you could sit right beside them and tune your PSP into the unit and watch it that way.

We wouldn't recommend playing any games using LocationFree as the lag is quite a few seconds behind, which isn't a problem for viewing films, but you'll be dying mighty fast on *Grand Theft Auto*.

Once you're connected, you should be able to view the two video streams and the analogue one too. ■

Broadcasting on the net

Despite having a wireless transmitter, the LocationFree base unit cannot use it to connect to the Internet; you have to physically plug it in. As we've mentioned already, our TV, DVD and NTL box were downstairs and the Internet router was upstairs – highly irritating. We were lucky enough to have a secondary router which we uprooted and dragged downstairs. Not everyone has this 'luxury' and after paying over £200 for the box, it seems crazy to plug a wireless-capable unit into the Internet.

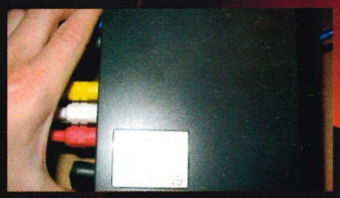
With your PSP already connected to the unit, in theory you can now go to any Wi-Fi hotspot and connect to the player. However it's not that simple as we found out many a time. The first thing to worry about is your upload speed. It must be over 300kbps. The easiest way to check this is to phone up your ISP and ask them. Once you've confirmed that it is over 300kbps, you can test it out.

Just go to LocationFree in network, scan for wireless networks and connect to one. In a café, you may have to use the web browser to connect, then enter your credit card details to pay for the service, but we recommend testing this out at a friend's house before paying for it.

So before embarking on a backpacking tour around Mongolia, keep a mate stuck on the other end of the phone at home, plugging and unplugging stuff in. This part of the system really isn't user friendly and we can't even fill you in on what the streaming was like because we simply couldn't connect to it.

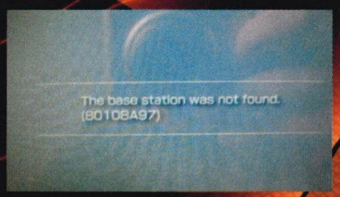
How to get it on the net

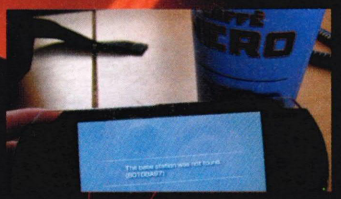
After setting it up with the base station, you'll need to set up your PSP with the LocationFree Player to use it online. While still at home, go to settings and select 'Base Station Settings'.



Enter the username 'lfx' and the password printed on the silver sticker on the side of the box. It should be four digits. Click on 'Easy Setup' and then continue through the tests. After it's all finished pop over to the house of a friend who has Wi-Fi and test it out by opening up LocationFree and using their Internet connection to get online. With any luck it should work...

At this point we'd like to say we didn't actually get it working properly, despite testing it out a variety of hotspots and having someone at home fiddling with his unit... ahem. It kept throwing up an error which the Sony website (and the entirety of google) knew nothing about. Our base station was not found. In theory, wherever your PSP can access the net, it should be able to access the base unit, but it seems you'll need a slightly advanced understanding of IP addresses, DNS stuff and network malarkey in order to get it working. Plug and play this ain't...





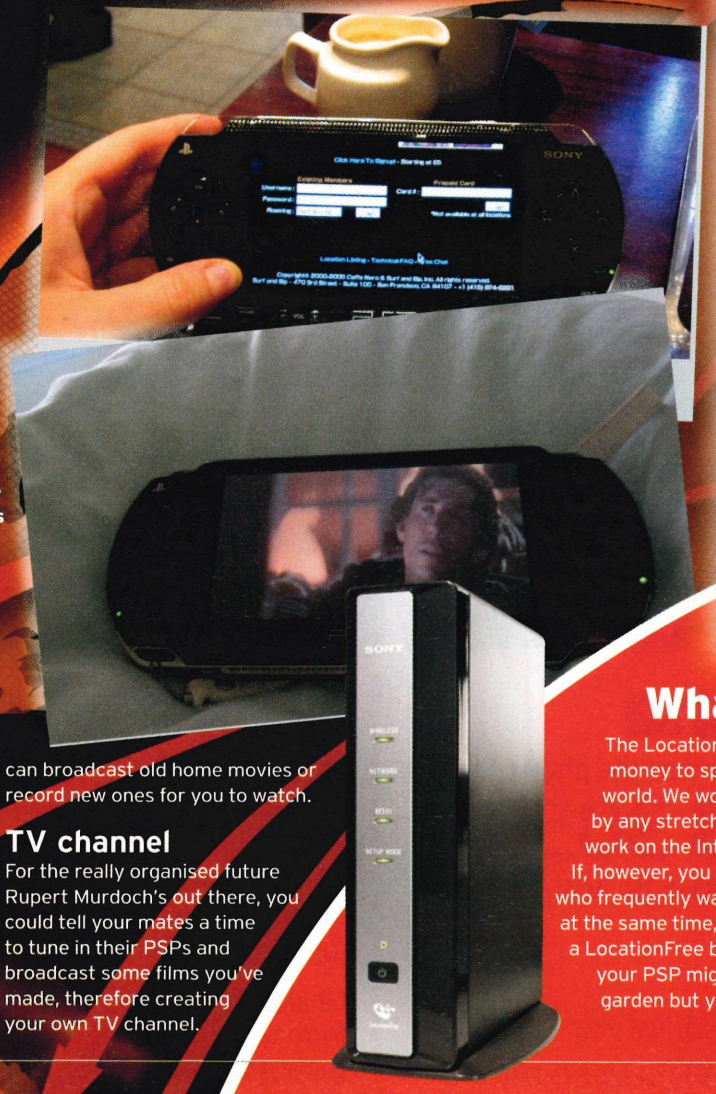
Places you can go

If you do manage to get it up and running on the net, there are a number of places you can watch your telly out and about. Most Costa Coffee houses have what are known as 'surfandsip' Wi-Fi connections which cost around a fiver for 24 hours. Connect to the Internet as normal and it'll redirect you to a payment page. Enter your credit card details before loading up the LocationFree player. Check out www.jiwire.com to see where your nearest or furthest hotspot is.

TOP TIP!
In order to scroll down the remote blaster download pages, hold down ⊡ and pull the analogue nub downwards.

Steal TV

If you're feeling particularly cheeky, you can wander down any high street and see if anyone living on it has an unprotected Wi-Fi router. When you scan for new connections, the second column should say 'none' meaning you don't need a WEP password key to go online. Most of the time there won't be enough signal, but when there is you could be watching the match while your other half dives into River Island for the latest togs. Typical!



Other uses

Instead of just watching films on the net there are a number of other uses for the LocationFree Player.

CCTV

You can connect it to a CCTV camera and keep an eye on your house while on holiday.

Baby cam

Set up a video camera in your child's room and then relax in front of the telly downstairs while still able to see that the kids are okay upstairs - great for peace of mind.

Universal webcam

If something important is happening at home while you're abroad, or you just want to reminisce, give you LocationFree to the rest of your family. They can broadcast old home movies or record new ones for you to watch.

TV channel

For the really organised future Rupert Murdoch's out there, you could tell your mates a time to tune in their PSPs and broadcast some films you've made, therefore creating your own TV channel.

What it will do

- Let you watch TV on your PSP anywhere around your house
- Let you watch TV and DVDs anywhere around the world where there's a Wi-Fi hotspot
- Use your PSP as a remote control all over the world
- Connect to your PSP wirelessly
- Allow you to push the Record button on your DVD recorder on the other side of the world, or down your local pub.
- Use your laptop to watch TV in the same way you can use your PSP
- Let you watch TV on certain Wi-Fi-enabled planes

What it won't do

- The remote control won't work with all makes of DVD or cable boxes. (In fact it didn't work with any we had available, apart from PS2.)
- Allow you to control and watch more than two video inputs
- Let you watch analogue TV on a PSP
- Connect to the Internet wirelessly
- Change DVDs from another country, you'll be stuck with whatever's in your player for the journey, unless you have a multi disk DVD changer
- Allow for people changing channels on the other side of the planet in your front room
- Let you watch Location Free on more than one computer without buying more software
- Let you use the system if your upload speed is less than 300kbps - so check your ISP
- Make you can steaming hot cup of tea in the morning

What we reckon...

The LocationFree base unit is great if you have money to spare, and like jetting off around the world. We wouldn't call it an essential purchase by any stretch of the imagination as getting it to work on the Internet is quite frankly a nightmare. If, however, you are a member of the kind of family who frequently want to watch different things on TV at the same time, you might be inclined to consider a LocationFree base unit. You never know, you and your PSP might not only venture into your back garden but you could potentially both end up in China or perhaps Timbuktu.

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DIRECTORY

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE NOT-SO-UGLY LIST OF PSP GAMING

Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed

A top-notch bunch of classic Capcom games along with a few suspect titles. Fortunately, most of the games are good enough to keep you amused on that boring train journey.

Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower

A valiant effort for one of the first beat-'em-ups on PSP, but sadly the D-pad just isn't good enough to give you the proper control over it, which makes for a pretty frustrating experience.

FIFA World Cup Germany 2006

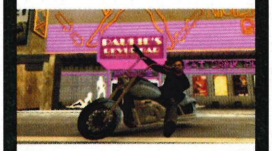
We certainly had plenty of fun playing this in the office, but it's far from perfect. Controls are unresponsive, especially in multi-player, but, as we proved, England can actuallly win stuff in it. Which makes a change.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Ape Academy	SCEE	1	85%		Simian silliness of the highest order and tremendously enjoyable to boot.
Ape Escape: On The Loose	SCEE	1	62%		Do we really need this old PSOne game on our shiny new PSP?
Ape Escape P	SCEE	5	74%		A port of the old PSOne version with virtually no improvements at all.
Archer Maclean's Mercury	Atari	1	82%		A tough challenge but there's no way you'll be able to tear yourself away.
Armored Core: Formula Front - Extreme Battle	505 Gamestreet	5	56%		Great for hardcore mech fans; impenetrable to everyone else.
Astonishia Story	Ubisoft	7	61%		Pretty outdated as far as RPGs go, this will struggle to hold your interest until the end.
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails	SCEE	2	70%		Fun for a while, but only if you don't mind a rather limited experience.
Burnout Legends	Electronic Arts	1	71%		The lack of draw distance ruins the fun, but *Legends* is still worth a play.
Breath Of Fire III	Capcom	4	76%		A decent effort but starting to show its age now.
Bust-A-Move Ghost	505 Gamestreet	5	85%		Hugely playable and addictive, though the 'spooky' treatment does nothing for the game.
Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed (Import)	Capcom	6	81%	N/A	Well, here's a mixed bag of retro gaming where the good outweighs the bad.
Carol Vorderman's Sudoku	Xplosiv	6	69%		Better than *Go! Sudoku*, but it's still just a Sudoku game.
Championship Manager	Eidos	2	80%		Addictive but there's plenty of room for improvement.
Championship Manager 2006	Sega	5	81%		A little shy of *Football Manager*'s greatness but not far off.
Coded Arms	Konami	1	64%		Okay attempt at an FPS but not quite okay enough.
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	Codemasters	1	83%		Just like the PS2 version but a bit smaller in size.
Crash Tag Team Racing	Vivendi	2	77%		*Bandicoot* fans should find this funny, innovative and perfect for the PSP.
Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower	Capcom	1	79%		A good game and a good port, but the controls are far from perfect.
Daxter	SCEE	4	89%		Not overly original but manages to be an addictive platformer all the same.
Dead To Rights: Reckoning	Electronic Arts	3	63%		Reasonable blasting action that quickly gets repetitive.
Def Jam Fight For NY: The Takedown	Electronic Arts	8	81%		Smashing the crap out of rappers is fun if repetitive.
Cars	THQ	8	71%		Not a particularly demanding title, but it's certainly not a terrible game.
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai	Atari	5	69%		Too much button mashing mars what could have been a decent beat-'em-up
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	1	70%		Fun at first but even fans will be a little bit disappointed.
Everybody's Golf	SCEE	1	91%		Fun, addictive and perfect golfing in almost every way.
Exit	Ubisoft	3	83%		Enjoyable puzzle action that can get a bit frustrating.
F1 Grand Prix	SCEE	1	81%		Spot-on adaptation of the sport, worthy of a decent place on the grid.
Field Commander	Ubisoft	8	81%		Quality strategy game that offers engrossing gameplay on and offline.
FIFA 06	Electronic Arts	1	76%		Possibly the best footy game on PSP (after *Pro Evo 5*).
FIFA Street 2	Electronic Arts	4	76%		PSP is clearly the best place for *FIFA Street* - it's actually quite good.
FIFA World Cup Germany 2006	Electronic Arts	6	72%		A solid footy experience but it lacks the flair to make it great.
Fight Night Round 3	Electronic Arts	3	93%		You need this absolutely fantastic boxing simulation in your collection.
Fired Up	SCEE	1	59%		Just about playable, but not worth anything more than a passing look.
Football Manager Handheld	Sega	4	88%		A cut-down version of the game that is still just as compelling as ever.
Formula One 06	SCEE	8	77%		A decent Formula One sim that has some impressive online capabilities.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
From Russia With Love	Electronic Arts	4	62%		A poor PS2 game that's even worse on PSP. Goodbye, Mr Bond.
Generation Of Chaos (Import)	Nippon Ichi	7	73%		A strange mix of RTS and RPG that sort of works. Good but not great.
Go! Sudoku	SCEE	2	40%		An expensive way to play a game that really only needs a pen and paper.
Gottlieb Pinball Classics	System 3	4	86%		Well-crafted and the provider of hours of enjoyment.
Gradius Collection (Import)	Konami	8	76%		A solid collection that's sadly missing the fifth game in the series.
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	Rockstar	1	97%		Quite simply the best there is. If you only buy one game, make it this one.
GripShift	Ubisoft	1	69%		An interesting kart-based game with not enough racing.
Guilty Gear XX #Reload (Import)	Sega	7	89%		Plays far better than *Street Fighter* and *Darkstalkers* – the 2D beat-'em-up of choice.
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	Electronic Arts	1	70%		It's good for the fans, but sadly not many others.
Infected (Import)	THQ	4	77%		A gory horror-fest that gets slightly repetitive. Great multi-player, though.
Juiced: Eliminator	THQ	7	77%		Not the best looking 'pimper' but definitely more fun to play than its rivals.
Kao Challengers	Atari	2	55%		Surprisingly good multi-player, but everything else about this is so, so bad.
Key Of Heaven	SCEE	4	80%		Looks lovely and plays well too, unfortunately it's just too damn repetitive though.
Koloomn	505 Gamestreet	5	70%		Best played with a friend as the single-player isn't particularly engaging.
Lemmings	SCEE	2	82%		The suicidal critters are back and they're just as good as you remember.
LocoRoco	SCEE	7	95%		If this isn't in your collection you don't really deserve to own a PSP.
The Lord Of The Rings Tactics	Electronic Arts	1	74%		Decent effort from EA, but it falls short of its potential.
Lumines	Ubisoft	1	88%		Delightful to watch and addictive to boot – this really is puzzle heaven.
Madden NFL 06	Electronic Arts	2	76%		Too much is missing from the PS2 version for this to get top marks.
Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects	Electronic Arts	1	73%		A reasonable beat-'em-up, but flawed and nowhere near as good as it sounds.
Me And My Katamari (Import)	Electronic Arts	3	91%		Quirky, crazy and bizarre, but you'll love it.
MediEvil: Resurrection	SCEE	1	67%		Big on personality if not on gameplay. A disappointing return for Sir Dan.
MegaMan Maverick Hunter X	Capcom	4	82%		Rock hard, but great fun once you get to grips with it.
MegaMan Powered Up	Capcom	3	79%		This valiant effort isn't the best *MegaMan* game on PSP.
Metal Gear Ac!d	Konami	1	82%		Tough to learn, but an original slice of action for fans.
Metal Gear Ac!d 2 (Import)	Konami	5	91%		Fixes all the flaws of the first game – essential!
Miami Vice: The Game	Vivendi Universal	8	76%		While not a classic, this decent shoot-'em-up still contains some nice touches.
Micro Machines V4	Codemasters	7	80%		A rather tricky difficulty level slightly mars an otherwise fun game.
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Rockstar	1	70%		If 'pimping rides' is your thing then look no further.
Midway Arcade Treasures Extended Play	Midway	4	77%	N/A	A strong compilation with some real classics on board.
Monster Hunter Freedom	Capcom	5	79%		There's some frustration and boredom at first, then it becomes an ultimately great adventure.
MX Vs ATV Unleashed: On The Edge	THQ	5	65%		A so-so racer that is fun for a while but ultimately an unfulfilling game.
NBA Ballers: Rebound	Midway	5	88%		Nice to look at and fun to play, a great b-ball game.
NBA Street: Showdown	Electronic Arts	1	87%		Great conversion of a solid game – truly excellent in multi-player.
Need For Speed Most Wanted	Electronic Arts	1	68%		Not particularly good, but adequate all the same.
Need For Speed Underground Rivals	Electronic Arts	1	61%		'Pimped' to the post by the superior *Midnight Club*.
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	Electronic Arts	1	76%		Fun but still plagued by the flaws of the PS2 version.
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	Sega	3	93%		Looks amazing, plays even better. Yet another great PSP racing title.
Pac-Man World 3	Electronic Arts	7	40%		As generic as they come despite a few stolen moments of fun.

Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories

This obviously needs no introduction seeing as half of all UK PSP owners have a copy. If you don't have it then you're probably too young anyway, so wait until you're old enough and play *Daxter* instead.

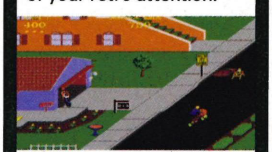


Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects

'Utter rubbish' is the only way to accurately describe this. While it's based on a decent premise, the actual game plays like a bag of old spanners, only not as fun. Avoid at all costs!

Midway Arcade Treasures Extended Play

One of the better retro compilations around that is bolstered by the inclusion of the first three *Mortal Kombat* games – almost worth the asking price on their own. Worthy of your retro attention.



Quick, turn the page for more great games!

KEY

Racing
Platform
Beat-'em-up
Shoot-'em-up
Sport
Puzzle
Action/Adventure
RPG/Strategy

TOP FIVE SPORTS GAMES

1

Virtua Tennis World Tour

Looks great and plays great. If any game is perfect for the summer then this is it. Multi-player is great fun too, as long as you win, of course.

2

SSX On Tour

Being out on the piste has rarely been as fun as this. With skiing thrown into the mix this time too, *SSX* provides the complete winter sports package.

3

Pro Evolution Soccer 5

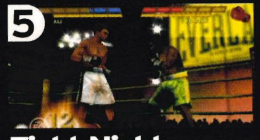
Despite not being as polished as the PlayStation2 version, *Pro Evo* on PSP still provides the best footy experience on the handheld.

4

Everybody's Golf

While *Tiger Woods* might provide a slightly more realistic simulation, *Everybody's Golf* is both great fun and a quality golf game to boot.

5



Fight Night Round 3

This isn't the best boxing game just because it's the only one; the control system is perfect and it looks ace.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Buena Vista Games	8	59%		Has its moments but ultimately just isn't that fun.
PoPoLoCrois	Agetec	3	69%		Far too simplistic to satisfy the majority of RPG fans.
PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient	D3Publisher	4	75%		An original piece of brain-bending puzzle action that can get frustrating.
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	2	79%		The best footy game on PSP, but a few flaws hold it back from classic status.
Pursuit Force	SCEE	1	89%		High-speed hi-jinks that really show off PSP.
Puyo Pop Fever	Sega	6	68%		Not the best puzzler on PSP, but still a decent effort.
Ridge Racer	SCEE	1	92%		*Ridge* is back on form with a truly fantastic PSP debut.
Samurai Warriors: State Of War	Koei	4	75%		Provides a decent slice of hack 'n' slash fun, but it's nothing particularly special.
The Sims 2	Electronic Arts	2	86%		*The Sims* is always great and that doesn't change on the PSP.
SOCOM US Navy SEALs: Fireteam Bravo	SCEE	4	91%		A few control problems don't mar this excellent tactical shoot-'em-up.
Spider-Man 2	Activision	1	47%		Spidey's latest outing sadly pales in comparison to the PS2 version.
Splinter Cell: Essentials	Ubisoft	3	80%		Not a bad first outing for Sam Fisher, but we were expecting more.
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	THQ	6	52%		Buy the movie on UMD instead; it's cheaper and a lot more fun.
SSX On Tour	Electronic Arts	4	87%		Great single-player, great multi-player, and looks to die for.
Star Wars Battlefront II	LucasArts	2	80%		Controls take getting used to but still an absolute blast.
Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX	Capcom	3	80%		Arcade-perfect port let down by the awkward controls.
Street Riders	Ubisoft	5	56%		*187 Ride Or Die* with a different name but, in reality, still just as rubbish.
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Sega	7	78%		It's *Monkey Ball*, which is great, but it's too hard, which is bad.
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	SCEE	6	93%		A fantastic game on nearly every level, miss this at your peril.
Tales Of Eternia	Ubisoft	3	84%		Despite offering little that's new, it still manages to be highly addictive.
Talkman	SCEE	6	72%		A great idea but there aren't enough phrases to make it an indispensable buy.
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	Sega	8	60%		Camera problems and a terrible draw distance mean this hasn't got much going for it.
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	1	81%		Carbon copy from PS2, but it does manage to impress.
Tokobot	TakeTwo	3	72%		A nice idea that doesn't really work as well as it should.
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	6	78%		Some control issues let Lara down, but this is still a solid adventure.
Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix	Activision	1	70%		More of the usual boarding antics let down by some rather dodgy controls.
Twisted Metal: Head On	SCEE	2	70%		Fun in multi-player but this game is plagued by annoying control issues.
Untold Legends: Brotherhood Of The Blade	SCEE	1	73%		A button-bashing RPG that unfortunately doesn't quite make the grade.
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code (Import)	Ubisoft	6	78%		Offers nothing particularly original but fans will enjoy it.
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	5	85%		A little mad on the eyes but still a great deal of fun.
Virtua Tennis World Tour	Sega	1	90%		One of the most addictive games on the PSP to date, an essential buy.
WipEout Pure	SCEE	1	88%		Fast, beautiful and intense futuristic racing game.
World Poker Tour	2K Sports	5	81%		Great poker for both poker veterans and newcomers.
World Snooker Challenge 2005	Sega	1	89%		Filled with content, and plays surprisingly well.
World Tour Soccer 2	SCEE	7	74%		A worthy effort to take the genre in a new direction. Arcadey but fun.
World Tour Soccer: Challenge Edition	SCEE	1	71%		No trailblazer, but worthy of Premier League status.
Worms: Open Warfare	THQ	5	84%		Worms, back to its 2D best with a solid single-player experience and a fantastic multi-player.
WRC	SCEE	1	65%		Solid but lacklustre racing coming a firm second place to Colin.
WWE Smackdown Vs RAW 2006	THQ	2	90%		A perfectly formed miniature version of the PlayStation2 grappler.
X-Men Legends II: Rise Of Apocalypse	Activision	2	69%		Fun for fans of the super-mutants but far from perfect.

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NEXT MONTH

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN THE NEXT PACKED ISSUE OF **GO>PLAY**

PLUS

- Medal Of Honor: Heroes
- Pro Evolution Soccer 6
- LEGO Star Wars II
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315442 Shaft Sharp Shooter

316804 Public Sex Kamasutra

315448 McLaren Mercedes

314571 Rambo On Fire

314552 Die Hard

314614 Mafia

314636 Stargate SG1

314598 Carmageddon

315038 Blade Trinity

315039 Fantastic 4

314583 The Fast & The Furious

314550 Colin Mcrae 2005

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Voodoo Child	313160	-----	311723

REAL SOUNDS	REAL
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Elephant	318074

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