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N64



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INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

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TIMESPLITTERS 2

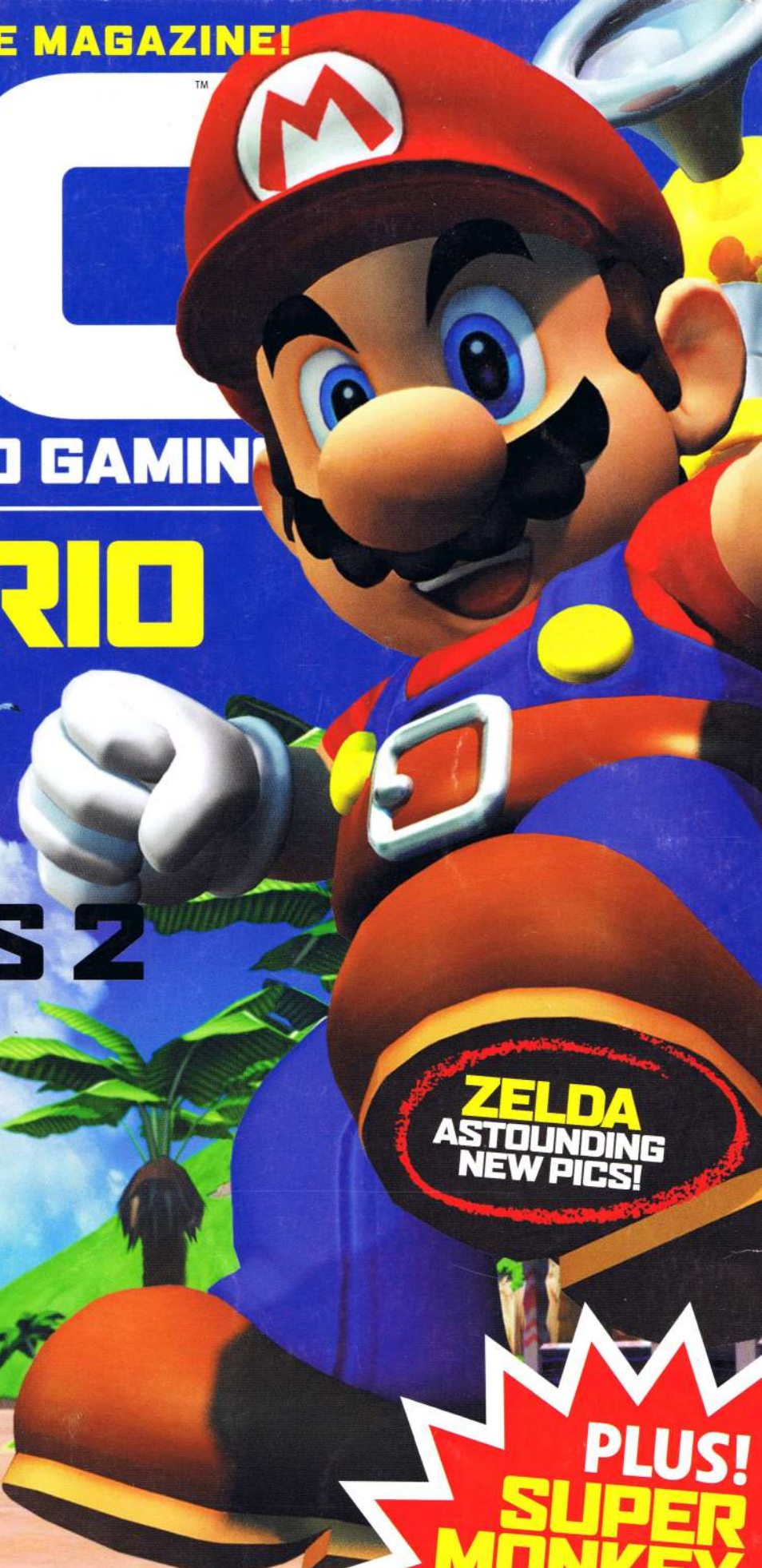
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TUROK EVOLUTION

HUNTED DOWN! Guns, dinos and plenty of blood...

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- Resident Evil Zero
- Starfox Adventures
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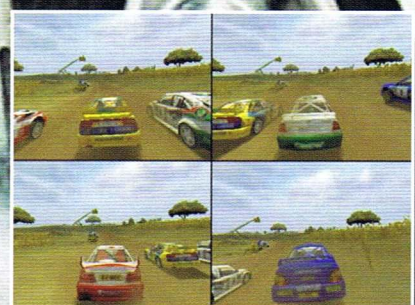
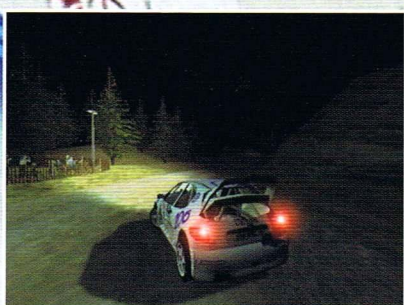
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FREE GAME RACK!

Rackety-rack! For putting your games in – nice, huh?

TURN TO PAGE 42...

... For our giant review of *Timesplitters 2*. GIANT!

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NICE TO SEE YOU!

Hello. As I write this, close to deadline, the rest of the team are peering over my shoulder to see if – and I quote – “You look as stupid as Tim”. Charming. (Hopefully I don’t. Not that he looked particularly stupid, you understand, but, well, you know). Anyway, as you may have guessed, it’s fallen to me to take the tiller and sweep up the mess Weaver left behind. And quite frankly, despite the unpleasantly sticky desk and disconcertingly hairy keyboard, there couldn’t be a better time to do it. (Take the tiller, that is. Perhaps the cleaner can do something about the rest.)

TIME OF YOUR LIFE

If you own a Gamecube, you should be *hugely* excited. *Super Mario Sunshine*, which you absolutely *must* own, is out in the UK (and check out the first part of our mammoth Shine guide for any help you need), the summer games drought has officially ended, and there’s so much good stuff on the way, you’re going to have a cracking Christmas. And it won’t just be Nintendo themselves responsible for the very best stocking-fillers. Just take a look at *Timesplitters 2*; coded by ex-members of Rare – people who worked on the legendary *GoldenEye*. It’s a sublime piece of work, a magnificent shooter that’s been expressly designed with multiplayer shenanigans firmly in mind, and it’s so much fun that it’s just managed to oust *Smash Bros Melee* as our lunchtime game of choice.

It’s a shame the same can’t be said of *Turok Evolution*; we were looking forward to this hugely, but the final game could really have done with a few more months development time. Hopefully the next *Turok* will fulfil the promise *Evolution* initially showed.

RACK ONCE AGAIN (DIES)

Well, that’s about it – it’s back to all the mess for me. I hope you enjoy the issue, and do let me know what you think at the email address below. Have a good month – oh, and make sure you enjoy your free games rack.

Jes Bickham Editor
ngc@futurenet.co.uk



WHAT'S IN THE MAG?

PREVIEWS

- Resident Evil Zero
- The Legend of Zelda
- Starfox Adventures
- Metroid Prime
- Batman: Dark Tomorrow
- Micro Machines
- Wario World
- Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters

- Page 6
- 8
- 10
- 14
- 15
- 20
- 21
- 24

NEWS

- ECTS 2002
- Rare Gone?
- Final Fantasy Tactics GBA shots
- Gamecube compo
- Medal of Honor: Frontline shots
- Win shirts, watches, Cubes
- No price drop for Gamecube?

- Page 26
- 27
- 29
- 29
- 30
- 30
- 31

REVIEWS

- Turok Evolution 34
- Timesplitters 2 42
- Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer 50
- Super Mario Sunshine 52
- Smuggler's Run: Warzones 60
- Tetris Worlds 64
- MX Superfly 65
- Mickey's Magical Mirror 66
- UFC Throwdown 68
- GBA reviews round-up 70
- Super Monkey Ball 2 74

EXTENDED PLAY

- How To... Master Mario Sunshine! 88
- Tips Extra 96
- I'm The Best 100
- Mailbox 106
- NGC Compendium 110
- Gaming Planet 112
- EndGC 114

NGC'S
**FIVE
 STAR**
 GUIDE TO WHAT'S
**UNMISSABLE
 THIS ISSUE!**



PAGE
42



TIMESPLITTERS 2

The team that made *GoldenEye*, back on a Nintendo console. Their hot new shooter, reviewed here!



**SUPER MARIO
 SUNSHINE**

Whooping it up with the biggest game of the year – out now in the UK, and reviewed in NGC.



PAGE
52



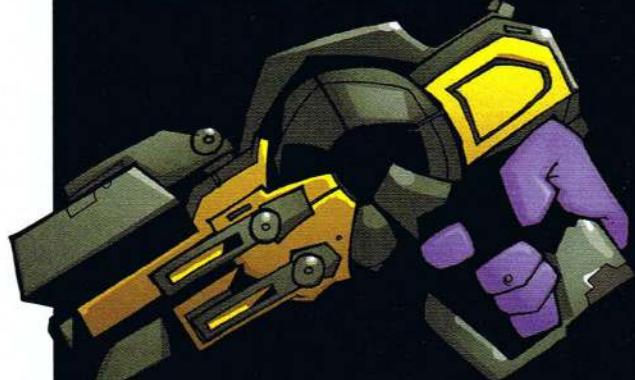
TIMESPLITTERS 2

REVIEWED AND RATED

The new kid on the block squares up to *Turok* for a shootout at the Gamecube corral...



PAGE
42



MEET ENJIKI

➔ Geraint might be the Tom Jones of NGC, with his lady-pleasing whale song and intimate knowledge of council estate back alleys in Newport. But ask him to show you around a copy of the magazine while looking good in a skin-tight body suit, and he'd be sweating like a Scouser in Dixons, which is why we've got the lovely Enjiki for that little job instead. If she could make the tea, we'd sack him as soon as look at him. No, really.

3

PAGE 34

TUROK EVOLUTION

TUROK EVOLUTION

Does the dino hunter still have what it takes, or is he heading for extinction?



SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

Party on, monkeys! Can you say Ei-Ei-Poo?



4

PAGE 74



MARIO MASTERED

Grab all the Shines in the first half of our massive Mario guide.

5

PAGE 88



PAGE 10



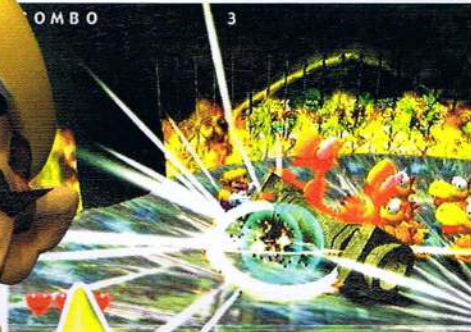
PAGE 50



PAGE 60



PAGE 21



SEE MORE EVIL!

Yup, our Yakuza spies have managed to get their mucky three-fingered paws on one of the Japanese preview discs for *Resi Zero* – and now we stab you in the eyes with its razor-sharp visual amazings! LOOK!



THE KNOWLEDGE

- *Resident Evil Zero* was originally coded for the N64
- Control two characters simultaneously for the first time in *Resident Evil's* history.
- At least two brand new characters; Billy Coen (your tattooed friend, skilled in murder), and the mysterious Man in White (played by Jon Bon Jovi wearing a smock).
- It's a prequel, which allows all sorts of scope for clearing up plot points in existing games.
- You can strategically swap items even when separated!

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- *Resident Evil* (PlayStation)
Groundbreaking survival horror game with genuinely scary bits.
- *Resident Evil* (Gamecube)
The same game, but different, polished up six years on...



△ That knife makes its presence known every so often by glinting prettily as light outside intermittently strikes it. Beautiful.



△ It's a good thing bullets come in cheerful, bright-red boxes. Grab 'em!



△ Those frickin' mutts are back again, often attacking from offscreen.



Can you zap me, dar?

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

"Ladies and gentlemen, we regret to announce the 18:56 to Raccoon City is delayed due to slight zombie infestation..."



Welcome to the Ecliptic Express, where tickets are one-way only, and you ARE the buffet car. Yes, we've got our mitts on the Japanese *Resident Evil Zero* demo, and we're well chuffed. As it turns out, this prequel is every bit as gasp-worthy as *Resi 1*.

There are few dramatic departures from the winning Capcom formula – roam an atmospherically dingy, pre-rendered environment with detailed backgrounds, ears trembling for the tell-tale shuffle of nearby zombies. The graphics and sound are stunning, but more on that later.

The biggest difference is the brand-new character management

system. You control S.T.A.R.S. rookie Rebecca Chambers and murderer Billy Coen, but this time they can team up and go zombie-bashing together.

Yes, together! You can switch between characters at any time, and

but it does take some getting used to. In every prior *Resi* game, a second set of footsteps is usually your cue to ease the safety off and aim between the eyes. Using, combining swapping and dropping items is all there, too –

YOU CAN SWITCH BETWEEN CHARACTERS ANY TIME, AND SET LIMITED AI COMMANDS

set limited AI commands for them in the Start menu. It's actually rather comforting having someone else sneaking along behind you, ready to blow a zombie's head off if it decides to lunge out of a cupboard at you,

but this time, dropping unnecessary junk can be crucial, since the huge storage boxes are a thing of the past.

Tiny, subtle animations bring every scene to life – and we use the word scene advisedly, because while

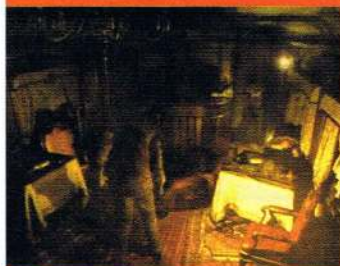
A freshly fleshy chunk from the new *Resi* demo...

THE SMELL OF FEAR

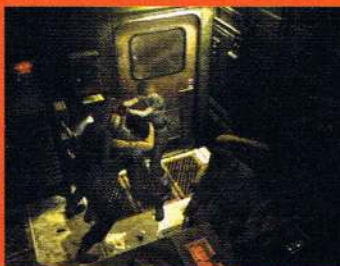
As even your granny knows by now, the tasty meat in the *Resident Evil* pie is the atmosphere, or 'ambience,' if you will – creepy noises, photo-realistic environments, and the kind of tension you can chew like a Boost bar...



■ The greatest fear is that of the unknown, and the *Resi* games are filled with dark shapes lurking in corners you just have to investigate. But *Zero* takes things to a whole new level with moving light and real-time shadows. Urk!



■ Strange noises: are they zombie related? Turn the corner to see...



■ Brilliantly timed set-pieces that make you leap from your skin: Agh!



■ Inventory management: one bullet; one dagger; six zombies. Hm.

Resident Evil was incredibly cinematic, with *Zero* you could be forgiven for thinking you were actually watching a horror film. Chandeliers swing and creak, chains clink softly against the wall, and bottles roll listlessly around on table tops. The lighting adds to the doom-laden atmosphere, too. Both characters cast realistic real-time shadows, and as for the way light flickers through the half-shuttered train windows, briefly illuminating the blood-soaked scenes of carnage...

In a game like this, sound effects are just as important for maintaining suspense. Is that the chugging of the engine, or a heartbeat? And just what the hell is that banging sound on the roof of the freight car? Everything is

KILLER BILL



In *Zero*, Rebecca Chambers is the familiar face – here an 18-year-old medic on her first mission with S.T.A.R.S. In the demo she starts with a pistol, six inventory slots, but no special item. Billy Coen is the wild card – a tattooed ex-Marine with a dark past. He's a new character, so anything could happen to him, and probably will!

judged perfectly to keep your adrenaline levels high and eyebrows higher. The puzzles we encountered were unobtrusive, mainly involving finding keys to locked doors. We'd be lying if we said that we didn't get horribly stuck at least once, though.

The game takes place the day before the events of *Resident Evil*, as six S.T.A.R.S. members are deployed to investigate a series of ghoulish murders just outside Raccoon City. Their chopper's engine unexpectedly fails, and after they crash the team splits up to investigate the strange train and the burning wagon. What happens next? No-one knows, but we're looking forward to getting the finished code and finding out...



△ The shotgun is easily the most powerful weapon in the demo, but only houses two cartridges at a time. It's also found in a room crammed with undead – ulp!

DEVELOPER FACTION!

Mr Minami, the brains behind *Resident Evil Zero*, is apparently a big fan of both Jon Woo and Luc Besson films. And Shinji Mikami, the creator of the *Resident Evil* series as a whole, recently went slightly bonkers at a press conference and claimed that Sony deliberately make PS2s defective so they have to be replaced. What a crazy pair of guys.



△ Wander around mashing A to get flavour text – except in Japanese...

NGC VERDICT

Resident Evil Zero uses a fresh system implemented into a tried and tested formula, and the early indications are that Capcom have come up with the goods yet again. One of the most popular game franchises of all time gets a brand new baby, which promises to be every little bit as nerve-jangling and bowel-loosening as all the others – we didn't think we'd see a better looking game than *Resi 1*, but this has upped the stakes and then some. The chance to control two characters at the same time throws up a whole coffin-load of interesting possibilities, and should ensure sufficiently different gameplay to lure even the most jaded *Resi* veteran into just one more purchase...



UK 2003 US DEC JAPAN JAN

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- A plot that would make a corkscrew look straight, with loads of revelations and references to future events.
- Cool weapons. All that's in the demo are the pistols, a double-barrelled shotgun and a long-bladed knife – but we can't wait to see the heavier kit.
- New monsters – something with as dramatic an entrance as the zombie dogs.

ANTICIPATION RATING



SHOVE THESE IN YOUR EYES!
 Another month, another huge truckload of brand-new shots from *Zelda* trundles up to our door and gets dumped directly onto these very pages.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- The latest in the line of *Legend of Zelda* games.
- Rather than a game set in a self-contained kingdom, the adventure takes place over a series of islands, with distinct quests for each, as well as several over-arching main plot threads.
- Features intriguing GBA link-up modes – a GBA player can help the Gamecube player out by playing along on their handheld system.
- Incredible control system – featuring many of the same elements found on the N64 *Zeldas*, but refined and expanded to include more stealth-based movement.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Mario Sunshine** (Reviewed this issue)
 Nintendo's other big mascot, in an utterly classic game that you really shouldn't be without. Go and buy it – now!



△ The evil bird that kidnaps Link's sister.



△ The combat system is hugely polished.



△ Obviously pig-carrying is an important mini-quest in *Zelda*.



△ The new Link is remarkably expressive, proving that the cartoon visuals actually work.



△ Where could this tunnel lead? Does it bridge some islands?

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA



Link overload! Even more new screens of Nintendo's legendary classic-to-be. Get drooling...

Ask anyone who owned an N64 what their favourite game was, and the chances are that the answer would probably be either *Super Mario 64* or *Ocarina of Time*, or, in a few cases, the time-mangling semi-sequel, *Majora's Mask*. The *Zelda* games have long been held in high regard – even the various Game Boy iterations have been held up as gaming classics – but it was *Ocarina of Time* that really allowed *Zelda* to fly. Featuring a gorgeous, fully-realised world, and stunningly inventive gameplay elements that were used once and then discarded for something even better, it regularly features on Best-

Game-Ever lists, and it didn't score 98 in **NGC/24** for nothing.

This latest *Zelda* might well have controversially ditched the 'serious' graphics that the N64 games were famous for, but it's looking like it

of a clutch of brand-new screenshots that tantalisingly let slip a few more hints and promises of the no-doubt epoch-defining game to come.

The new shots seem to be of a new environment – a village

THE GRAPHICS AREN'T REALLY 'CEL SHADED' - THEY'RE SOLID AND THREE-DIMENSIONAL

could be the best *Zelda* yet. While Nintendo are still remaining tight-lipped on the concrete gameplay details – and the game doesn't yet have a confirmed European release date – we have managed to get hold

populated at least partly by children, with some pig-collecting involved at some point (possibly a similar activity to collecting the cuckos in Kakariko Village in *Ocarina of Time*). Veteran *Zelda* players might be excited to see

DID YOU KNOW? When he originally reviewed it for **NGC/24**, Jes had a mere two weeks to complete *Ocarina of Time* and write the review. He did it by not sleeping. He's also willing to do it all again for the Gamecube *Zelda*, such is his childlike excitement. Bless.

New shots of stunning all-new locations!



△ A new village area for Link to explore.



△ Ask the children for info and sub-quests.



△ One of the kids has a charmingly elastic length of nose-snot.



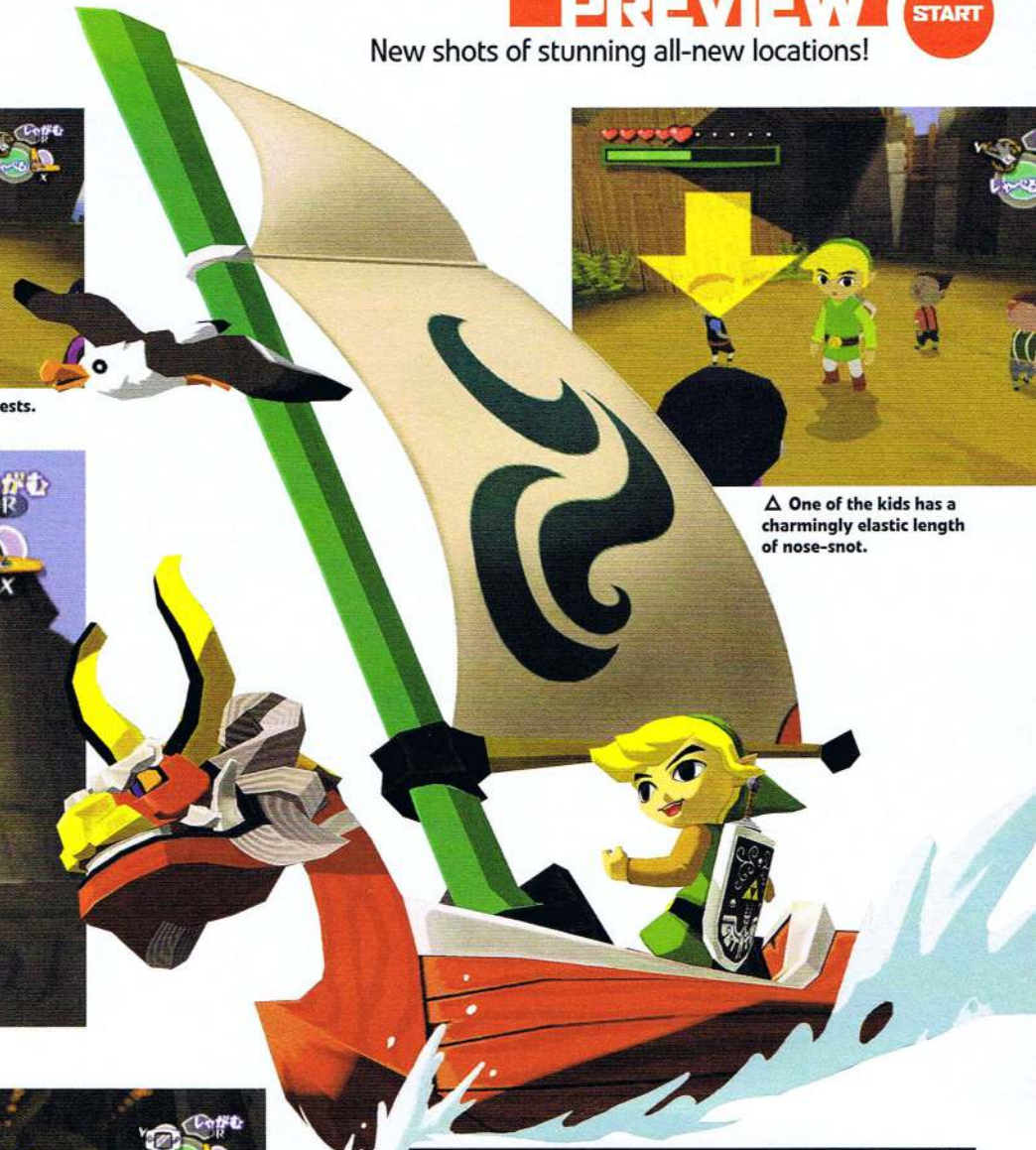
△ Yet another glorious new location for *Zelda* – we simply can't wait.



△ If only we could read Japanese, eh?



△ The smoke and dust effects are gorgeous...



NGC VERDICT

Now that *Mario Sunshine* is out and we've played it to death, we can finally devote all of our anticipation to *Zelda*. And frankly, we can't wait – and our frustration has been made all the more agonising as there's no official PAL release date as yet. However, having had the opportunity to play the game again at ECTS (the E3 demo was present at the 'Nintendo Breakfast', Ninty's pre-show press conference, along with *Metroid* and *Starfox*) we can confirm that everything is shaping up beautifully. Sure, if you've ever played the N64 *Zeldas* then many elements – most obviously the controls – are going to be familiar, but the brave new aesthetic means this is going to be an utterly singular experience. It's what your Gamecube was made for.



UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- Some eye-stunning sunsets – we're hoping that the day-to-night system of *Ocarina of Time* and *Majora's Mask* has survived intact.
- We've already seen shots of the boat-sailing, but will there be the opportunity to ride other modes of transport, such as the trusty Epona? Or, better yet, will there be a flying mount?

ANTICIPATION RATING



LINK-UP!

Brilliantly, if you hook up a GBA to the Gamecube *Legend of Zelda*, the handheld player can affect the Gamecube game. One definite detail we know is that you'll be able to rain bombs down to help the Gamecube player, via a primitive-but-helpful GBA display. Not half bad, eh?

the presence of a windmill, too – remember the musical Windmill Man, who teaches Link the Song of Storms (which, when played on the ocarina, created rain)? *Zelda* games have often retained links (no pun intended) with each other – such as the previously-mentioned cuckos – so it'll be interesting to see if the Windmill Man makes an appearance (and if music plays as significant a part in the new *Zelda* as it did in the old).

VILLAGE PEOPLE
And overall, it certainly seems that the cartoony graphics are doing what Shigeru Miyamoto designed them to do – to allow a more expressive Link, and to render emotion and reaction

as plainly as possible. And the graphics aren't 'cel shaded', as the term goes, because cel-shaded graphics are basically two-dimensional, framed by a black outline, like a cartoon (think *Jet Set Radio* on the Dreamcast). Here, the visuals are solid and three-dimensional, but very stylised.
With the Japanese release on the horizon – all signs point towards February or March at the time of writing – hopefully a PAL release can't be too long after (we're betting on the spring). In the meantime, we'll just have to look at the screenshots and dream of the delights that *The Legend of Zelda* will no doubt deliver. That, and play *Ocarina of Time* through for the umpteenth time...

LAST EVER PREVIEW!
 Because next month's review. Get low-down and dirty with our final look at the preview version of *Starfox Adventures* – and why not try these new shots on for size too? Mmm.



△ The battles in *Starfox* are a beautiful thing, taken from *Zelda* and then beefed up reeeeeee nice.



△ The scale of *Starfox* is immense.



△ Fox has another prehistoric pal.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- The first *Starfox* game to take Fox and the crew on walkabout.
- 3D adventuring combines with more traditional space scrapping – and all under the watchful gaze of *GoldenEye* coders Rare.
- New characters are introduced to the *Starfox* world for the first time: evil lizard General (sigh) Scales, Navi-style buddy Tricky the (eurgh) Triceratops, Krystal the female fox and Nintendo's own R.O.B. the Robot. Nice, that.
- *Zelda*-like battle system, which allows you to lock on to, and hammer sticks into, enemy faces.
- Unparalleled use of Gamecube hardware with astonishing environments. The music's good. And there're regional accents.



△ Tricky's ace when it comes to melting ice.



△ General Scales. A nutter *par excellence*.

STARFOX ADVENTURES

NGC PICTURE EXCLUSIVE!
 You heard: new pictures shoved into your eyes like digital needles. Only NGC provides you with this sort of service...

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- *GoldenEye* (NGC/9)
 The best first-person console shooter ever made. Damn right.
- *Banjo-Kazooie* (NGC/18)
 The original – and best – *Banjo* adventure for N64. Glorious.

More shots and info on Rare's first Gamecube title, delivered direct to your skull. Get involved...



Despite the game being only a matter of weeks away, Rare's first Cube game actually remains a sweet little mystery. Apart from brief spells under the harsh light of public opinion at this year's E3 in LA and – behind closed doors, anyway – rubbish London games show, ECTS, most of the game's levels, characters and structure have been kept locked up inside the padded walls of the company's top-secret Twycross HQ. Still, we haven't let that prevent us from dishing the dirt on *Starfox*'s progress. Thanks to our network of bug-eyed spies, we've managed to uncover some interesting new titbits

SCALES!



So, what's going on with the plot? Well, it's you (and your buddies – including bleeding Slippy) versus the evil General Scales, a lizard intent on ruling Dinosaur Planet. Knows how to look after the ladies, too, by the looks of things – during one section of the game, he hoists Krystal up by the neck and lets her hang there. Nice touch.

about the game ahead of our review next month, as well as dig up some brand-new screenshots, which underline even further the progress the *Starfox* universe has made under the guidance of the boffins at Rare. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of *Starfox* – at least, initially – is the way it looks. Worlds stretch off for miles into the distance with no hint of fogging, the levels are stashed with graphical effects (wait until you see the rain) and characters are sharp and beautifully designed. Fox gets the kind of attention Nintendo could never lavish on him on the SNES and N64, with stunning animation and convincingly-rendered fur. His pals aren't too shabby either – each one

It's almost here! We take one final look at *Starfox Adventures*



LOCATION, LOCATION

Graphically, Starfox Adventures pushes the boundaries further than any Gamecube game yet. Textures are rich and detailed, the frame-rate is fast and smooth and, more impressively, every character moves supremely, reacting incredibly to the environment around them. The extra development time has obviously paid off.

ACTION JACKSON

All four action buttons - A, B, X and Y - give you access to different parts of your inventory, and also allow you access to Fox's arsenal of moves. Throwing, picking up, fighting - they're all accessible via this simple Zelda-like process.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

This incredible T-Rex was doing the rounds when Starfox Adventures was Dinosaur Planet on the N64. Since then, he's been beefed up and his role expanded. Now he's looking scarier than ever.

MOVE AND USE

Starfox tosses some traditional platforming elements into the mix. Throughout the game, cunningly-placed barrels and solid objects will help you open up newer and bigger areas. All you have to do is find something like a barrel and then find a pressure switch on which to place it.



RARE WHERE?
 We're all itching in anticipation of *Starfox* - but what are Rare doing next? At the time of writing, it looks like they're going to be bought out by Microsoft. Ah well - no more Perfect Dark for us.

has been worked on so lovingly that even the most minor detail is accounted for. It's fair to say *Starfox* is the most potent demonstration of Gamecube's hardware yet, even surpassing Factor 5's *Rogue Leader*.

controls that mimic the C-Button arrangement from *Zelda 64*, as well as some familiar automatic climbing. Like Link, Fox doesn't leap around - if you want to jump or climb, you just walk up to the object you want to

STARFOX IS THE MOST POTENT DEMONSTRATION OF THE GAMECUBE'S HARDWARE YET

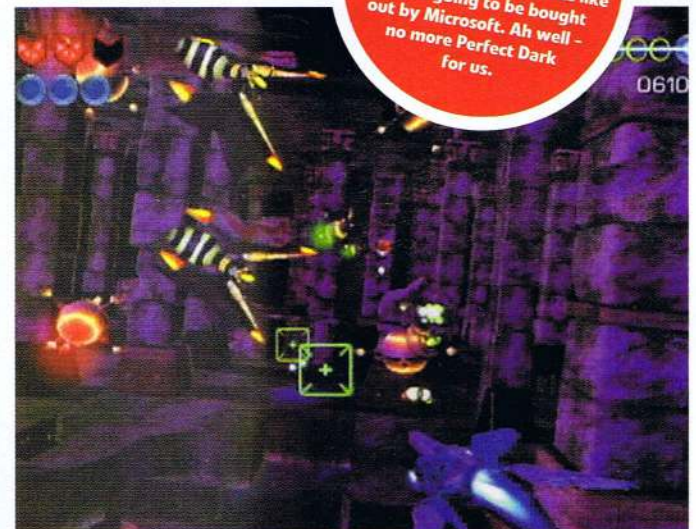
In terms of gameplay, *Starfox* has yet to show what it's really capable of. The battle system - as has been well documented - is half-inched from *Zelda*, with a lock-on function (and black borders) for fighting, and

make use of. The most notable achievement is the introduction of Tricky. Using the dopey dino in the right way can open up vast new areas, and solve some of the game's more

ACCENTS!



One thing that's likely to divide opinion is the regional accents in *Starfox*. Like your secondary characters sounding like farmers? Then you'll love it! Interestingly, characters like Krystal and Scales speak in their mother tongue, warbling on with the use of subtitles. The effect is... amusing. Should be fun to see more of it.



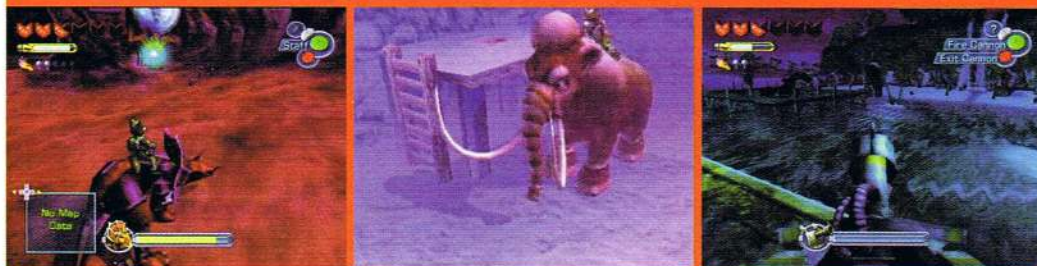
"Rare are ready to reward long-term play with collectables"

THE FANTASTIC MR FOX

When Nintendo were making use of him, Fox McCloud could only fly the Arwing and roll about in the Landmaster. Now he's joined Rare, he's dealing out the animal magic...



■ Any *Starfox* game should come complete with space flight – and *Adventures* isn't likely to disappoint. All the best bits from the previous games are correct and present, but now they come complete with some Gamecube sheen.



■ It's a dinosaur planet – so you get to ride around on prehistory's finest.

■ A woolly mammoth? Might as well. Fox uses him to cross the ice world.

■ Take over stationary weapons like this cannon. Beautiful.

difficult puzzles. This adds some interesting new elements to a game that otherwise appears to rely heavily on wandering and collecting. Boring? No way. This world is so exquisitely put

are ready to reward long-term play with collectables scattered far and wide, encouraging the scouring of every inch of scenery.

And then there's the flying. In truth, even less has been seen of this

glory, with fantastic battle sequences to rival the N64 title. Maybe you won't be facing off against Andross, but sliding into the cockpit of the Arwing, swooping down to narrowly miss the pillars of a stone temple, and blowing enemy installations to bits is right up there with anything Skywalker and his X-Wing had to offer. And with the added power of Cube, everything hangs together so much more convincingly: locations are expansive and solid, but also much more varied.

Next month: the review. Oh yes.

NEXT MONTH: THE REVIEW!
In 30 days, we finally get our hands on the finished version of *Starfox*... and, finally, **EVERYTHING** will be revealed. Do not miss it.

THE FLYING IS RIGHT UP THERE WITH ANYTHING SKYWALKER AND HIS X-WING HAD TO OFFER

together that a detour from the beaten track opens up oodles of new things to see and do, with the worlds stretching effortlessly off into the distance. Much like their earlier efforts in *Banjo-Kazooie* and its sequel, Rare

than the adventuring. In their very earliest form, the flying sections seemed lightweight and devoid of atmosphere, but Rare have really come up trumps since E3, replicating the thrill of *Lylat Wars* in full next-gen



▲ As well as the normal collection of kicks, punches and stick-jabbing, Fox can also pull off specials, such as this one where he rams his staff into the ground.



▲ Boy oh boy – just look at that level design. Simply staggering amounts of detail have been shoved into *Starfox* and, best of all, you can see for absolutely miles.

NGC VERDICT

It's possibly the most delayed Rare game yet, it's been chopped and changed around more than is healthy, and it's got terrible 'comedy' regional accents, but did you ever think *Starfox Adventures* would be anything less than superb? Well, if you did, prepare to be disappointed: sublime pacing, stunning level design, multiple characters, heart-stopping flying sections, a control system ripped from *Zelda* – you name it, Rare have dealt you in with it. Admittedly, the secondary characters look to be a bit, well, watery, but then using the principal cast from one of Nintendo's finest seems to have halted any attempt by Rare to incorporate Terry the Table or Derek the Desk Fan. Review next issue.



UK NOV US OCT JAPAN NOV

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- We've seen a bit of it – and we like it. Plenty of freedom to go off and explore for yourself. Like *Banjo*, we want to be coming back to *Starfox* in six months' time and still finding stuff we didn't know about before.
- Big old boss fights. You can see the massive, corridor-filling T-Rex for yourself in this very preview and, maaaaaaan, is it great. We'll have a few more o' them, ta.

ANTICIPATION RATING





BELIEVE THE HEIGHT!

The Ultimate combination of...



Motocross



Supercross



Freestyle

MX SUPERFLY
FEATURING
RICKY CARMICHAEL



PlayStation 2



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MAXIMUM METROID
 Retro's blaster heads towards completion, and we've got a handful of more incredible shots to shove down your yiddies like an ocular wedding cake made of pâte de fois gras. It's an eye-orgy like no other!



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Next-gen update of one of Nintendo's best-loved franchises, which last appeared way back on the Super Nintendo.
- A heady mix of exploration and shooting, enhanced by novel uses of new technology, such as scanning and the use of an in-helmet viewscreen.
- New abilities such as morphing and double-jumping make for a new type of FPS.
- Beautifully animated and astonishingly presented.
- Roll into a ball and access new levels via enemy-strewn tube-rolling sections.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Raven Blade (Unreleased)**
 Appeared as an impressive video at last year's E3, and was then promptly canned...



△ Blasting the hootin' heck out of a big, bad bug.



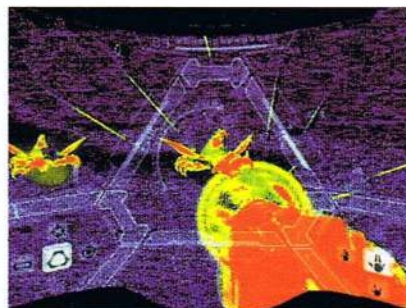
△ The snowy levels look absolutely jaw-dropping.



△ Fiery worm-beast ahoy - let's hope Samus' suit is cool.



△ The bosses in *Metroid Prime* are incredible - not since *Ocarina of Time* have we seen such big 'uns.



△ More Predator-style scanning. Expect plenty of different scanning 'modes'. Pretty nifty, no?



△ *Metroid Prime* certainly runs the gamut of environments - this arboreal area is a real treat.

METROID PRIME

New shots of Samus' return!
 Blasting never looked so good...

If there one game we really can't wait for - if you exclude *Zelda*, *Starfox Adventures*, and the rest - then it's got to be *Metroid Prime*. Amazingly, there's not been a *Metroid* game released since *Super Metroid* on the SNES, years and years ago. The game skipped a generation to Gamecube (possibly due to the sad death of the man behind it, Gunpei Yoko), but the time is fast approaching when a next-gen *Metroid* will be with us.

The move from third-person to first-person has always been a contentious one. Many believe that this signals a drastic sea-change in *Metroid* - the series was always about exploration, and the FPS

standard is one more suited towards combat. However, what we've seen of the game makes us believe that developers Retro Studio, along with Nintendo's assistance, are using the first-person view to enhance the feeling of discovery, and there's been plenty of instances of using technology and brains to get ahead, rather than simply shooting everything (the constant use of the scanner, for example, or turning into a ball to access new areas). New abilities such as a double-jump - something previously unheard of in a FPS-style game - should hopefully mean that there's much, much more to this than just blowing Space Pirates to smithereens, no matter how much fun that might be.

NGC VERDICT

It would be self-indulgent to heap yet more praise on *Metroid Prime*, but after a shoddy start, this really does look like doing the business. First-timers Retro Studios, having been made a second-party developer by the Big N, have waded through rumours of *Metroid's* 'difficult' development, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating, so to speak - and this looks like it's going to be amazing. Hopefully, it won't be the victim of yet more delays.



UK
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ANTICIPATION RATING



Bat in Black! The miserable superhero gets yet another game...



△ The environments, while detailed, didn't show that much diversity, while the camera proved quite disorientating. Thankfully, the map in the corner is on hand to help you out.



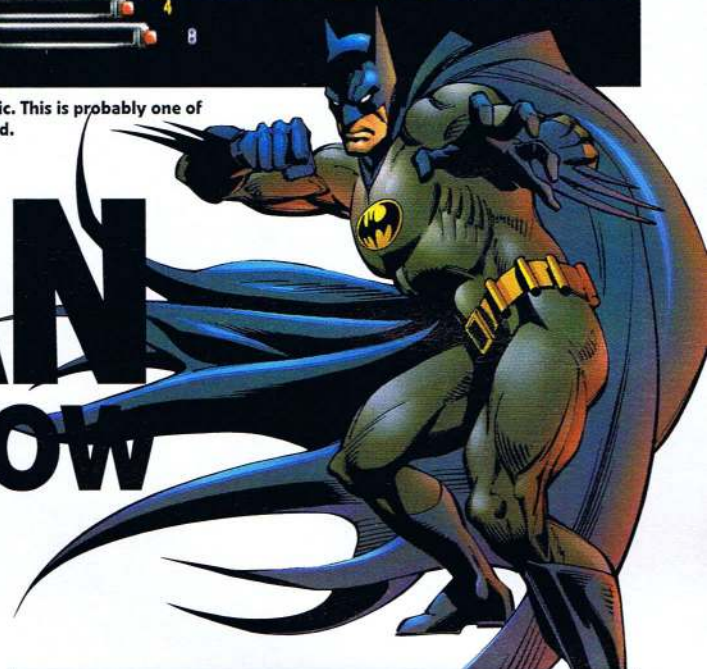
△ It's clear that a lot of time has been spent on Batman himself. His cape has a lovely flowing effect, while the animation on his movements is spot on.



△ Avoiding enemies proves problematic. This is probably one of the first things that needs to be balanced.

BATMAN DARK TOMORROW

Can the rubber-masked recluse raise the bar for Bat-battling?



NGC VERDICT

There are some smart touches, but *BDT* has a long way to go before it shapes itself into an essential purchase. In its defence, the game is vastly improved over the E3 version. Kemco have done away with the horrible rotational control system for starters, so they're clearly working at polishing things up. If things have improved this much in a short space of time, we're sure the other problems are undergoing a similar overhaul. Here's hoping...



UK WINTER US WINTER JAPAN UNLIKELY

ANTICIPATION RATING



Apart from the mediocre *Batman Vengeance*, fans of the Dark Knight have had little to satisfy them. *Batman: Dark Tomorrow*, on the other hand, has been waiting in the wings for some time to fill that particular bat-void. Better yet is the promise that – working so closely with Batman franchise owners DC – Kemco are set to bring us the 'definitive' Batman game.

Good news this may be, but after having the pleasure of sitting down with the game, we're still not totally convinced. In their favour, Kemco have done a remarkable job when it comes to getting the atmosphere of the comics right. All the villains (along with some who've never appeared in any games before) have been included in the game. The environments are suitably dark and brooding renditions of Gotham, while

the caped crusader himself looks sufficiently mean and has all but lost his idiotic mincing run from Ubi Soft's effort. Batman's cape has also undergone some serious work so it now flows beautifully as he wanders around – so far so good.

Unfortunately, from what we saw, *BDT* still has some way to go gameplay-wise. Underneath the admittedly rather tasty visuals lies a beat-'em-up that seems worryingly formulaic, an annoying frequency of unavoidable life-sapping booby-traps, and a fixed camera that switches from position to position as you navigate the levels. Furthermore, there seems to be a worryingly heavy tendency to rely on long-winded FMV to tie all the action together and deliver most of the best bat-moments. There's still plenty of time to improve on matters – but we wouldn't hold our breath until then.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- All-new original story, artwork faithful to the comics and hours of pre-rendered FMV.
- Six levels to explore, including skyscraper rooftops, a mental asylum and croc-infested Gotham sewers.
- Battle bosses such as Poison Ivy, Mr Freeze, and the Joker.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Eggo Mania (NGC/72)**
Tetris puzzler reviewed last month. We didn't like it much.
- **Universal Studios (NGC/67)**
Awful launch game where you get to pick up rubbish.

UNDER THE BOARDWALK

Thankfully, Bruce Willis doesn't sing in this game. He doesn't even speak, because his part has been taken by a lesser actor. But whoever he is, this new guy can kick ass and chew bubblegum with the best of them.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- John McClane's back, and he likes his killing every bit as much as he always did. Yippie-kay-ay, melon-farmer, etc!
- Switch between 'action' and 'stealth' controls depending on the situation.
- Relax and have a nice natter with any character you meet during the game.
- Featuring the voice of professional rent-a-cop actor Reginald VelJohnson, reprising his role as Sgt Al Powell.
- Loads of disguises for Inspector McClane.
- Disguise yourself as a filthy tramp, and dance for change.*

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- Warlocked (NGC/48)
Outstanding GBC real-time strategy game with a GBA sequel currently in production.



△ You need to talk to characters like these cops, otherwise you won't know what to do.



△ We're fairly sure this bloke works the night shift at our local kebab emporium.



△ They should make Sgt Al pop up whenever you press the Z-button. He could tell a joke, then you could stuff him back in your pocket.



△ Ay caramba! Looks like Sgt Al has booted one of the terrorists straight in the kumquats. Remember kids, when you're taking hostages, never, ever forget to tie their legs, too.



△ You can pick up that smart weapon after you've laid this here armed nutter to waste.



DIE HARD VENDETTA

Renegade cop in foul-mouthed Gamecube adventure shock.

M eet the game that likes to say ****! Not to mention ****, ****, and even *****! It's the rudest thing ever seen on a Nintendo console, although the recent German version we've been playing has had some of the more adult stuff edited out.

Mature content or otherwise, *Die Hard: Vendetta* is a hardcore sort of game in most respects. Make a mistake and it's all too easy to find that the terrorists and bank robbers you're after will waste their hostages, causing you to fail the mission.

You need to use a bit of cunning, as well as the weapons you pick up off the many corpses you leave in

your wake. Using a suitable disguise can get you past certain situations, and you can enter stealth mode to creep up behind guards and use them as human shields. If the bad guys don't particularly like the man you've captured, they'll probably just shoot straight through him, so you have to listen to their conversations to figure out which one is the leader.

The levels we've seen so far include a bank heist, an assault on a museum, a gunfight in a Chinese theatre and a prison break-out, all of which show plenty of promise. Other levels will be set in places as diverse as a tuna cannery, a warehouse and a flashy apartment. No sign of dear old Hans Gruber though.

NGC VERDICT

The many small details are very impressive, such as the way bullet casings bounce down stairs, and a superb water effect. The story sounds good too, and it's all told during conversations with the characters you meet during the game. But the last version we played had a fairly shaky frame-rate, which could spoil things if it isn't fixed before release. Still, that's slipped to next year, so there's plenty of time to sort out any technical issues.



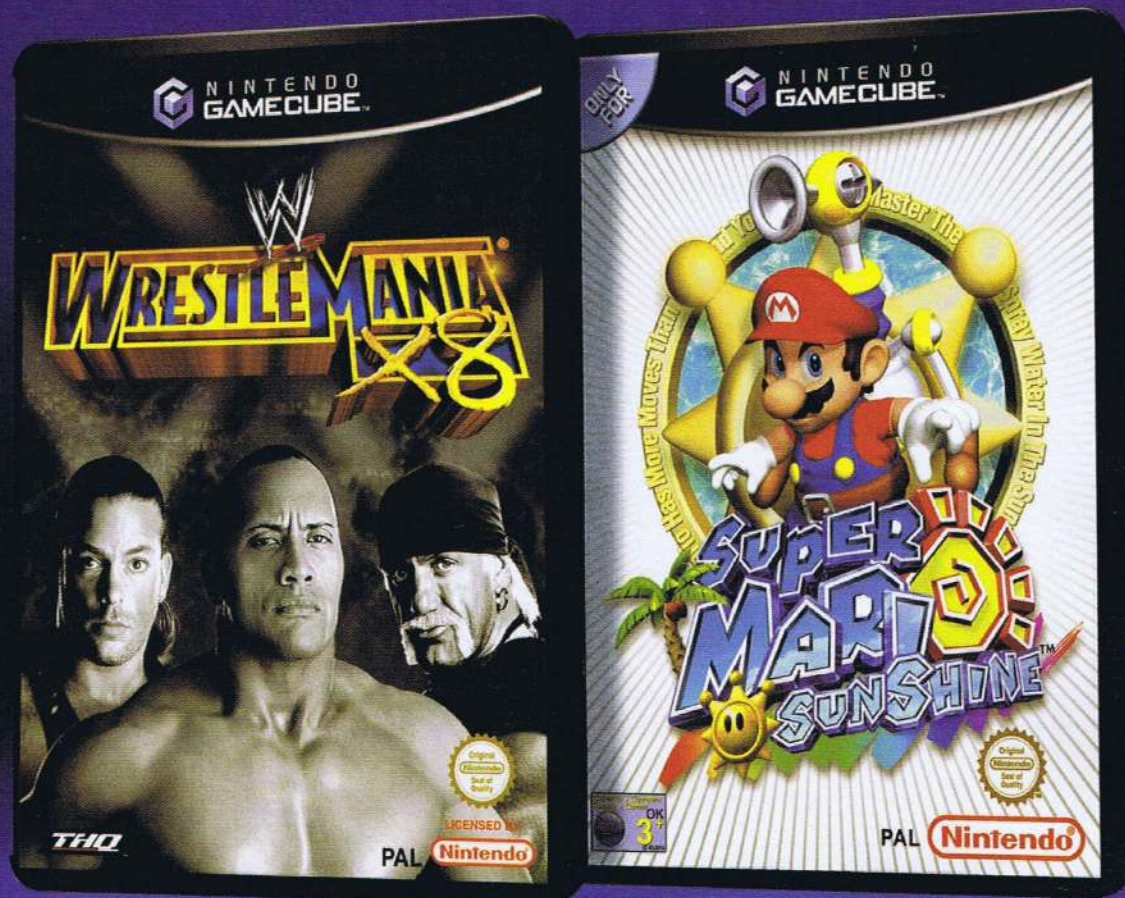
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN UNLIKELY

ANTICIPATION RATING



*Note: tramp-dancing feature is a fib.

We've got them both pinned down at £3.75.



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CLUBBED TO DEATH
 We take a closer look at Eidos' intriguing new golf sim, which looks all set to take Mario's putt-fest outside and give it a nearby repeated kicking in the face.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Cartoon-styled club-swinging gameplay conceals a serious golf game that traditionalist duffers and dads can enjoy.
- Multiple characters to select along with unlockable super-caddies that not only give you hints and tips but actually 'enhance' your performance too. Sounds dodgy...
- Club and clothing upgrades that somehow 'power-up' your character's abilities.
- Innovative new control method, never before seen in the world of console golf sims, that will bring a new lease of life to turgid club games.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Timesplitters 2** (NGC/73)
 The Gamecube's stunning first-person shooter, reviewed on page 42.



△ The cartoon-style visuals add a lovely touch of personality to the proceedings.



△ You certainly can't fault some of the stunning locations for the courses.



△ You also get to choose different caddies - they not only give you friendly advice, but also power-up your chosen golfer.



△ Despite having slightly 'crazier' presentation style, the developers have taken great pains to keep the golfing physics as they should be - so purists needn't be put off too much.



△ Using different characters gives you slightly different skill strengths in terms of technical ability, power and accuracy.

ACE GOLF

Golf war! GC's first sticksie-ball title could be well above par...



We sat down with this for a little while when we went over to Eidos to check out *Timesplitters 2*, and although it was overshadowed by Free Radical's shooter, we were still impressed by what *Ace Golf* had to offer.

After looking at the shots, you'd be forgiven for thinking this is some kind of dumbed-down golfing experience. True, the characters have a cutesy anime feel to them, but the actual *golfing* itself is spot-on. But the one thing that really sets this apart from bog-standard golf games is the control method. Doing away with the normal swing-o-meter approach of other titles (press a button to start the

swing and again to stop the meter), *Ace Golf* uses the C-stick to measure power and accuracy. Basically, you pull the stick back and then flick it forward to club the ball. It's a system that works extraordinarily well, giving play a more tactile quality than usual, and it does away with tedious pixel-perfect timing.

On top of that, *Ace Golf* has a number of great gimmicks, such as different caddies that enhance your performance, various weather effects, special power shots, and different clothing and clubs that power-up your golfer. More than enough to suit both enthusiasts, and those who couldn't give a monkey's where they stuck their mashie niblick.

NGC VERDICT

It probably not going to be at the top of everyone's list, but this could well turn out to be something of a sleeper hit. There are loads of imaginative touches and a genuinely impressive control system that enhances the game no end. Best of all, though, the developers haven't strayed too far from the sim-side of things either, delivering a game that will be enjoyable to anyone picky about the realism. We'll have a review next month.



UK NOV US NOV JAPAN OCT

ANTICIPATION RATING



THE POWER IS BUILDING



STAR WARS™

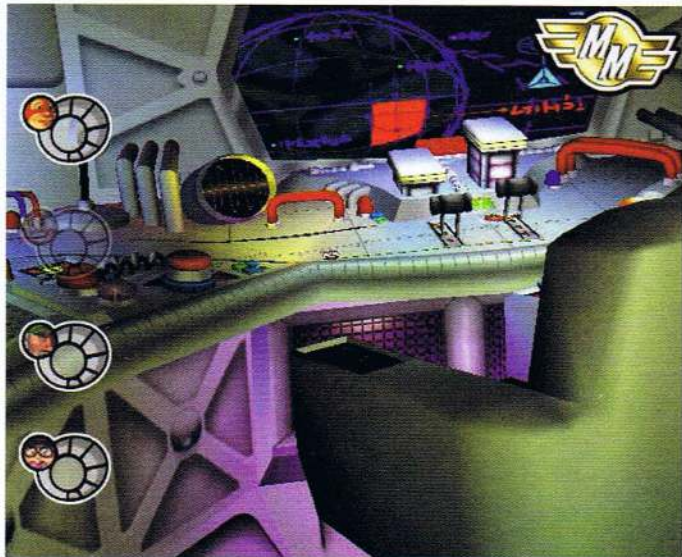
Now you can build the excitement of *Star Wars*™ Episode II *Attack of the Clones*™ and save the Republic from the evil Count Dooku™. So whether you're in a speeder chasing bounty hunters on Coruscant™ or in a Gunship ready to defend the Jedi™ on Geonosis™, LEGO® *Star Wars*™ has got you covered.

So before you find yourself cruising through an asteroid field with Jango Fett™ on your tail, you'd better build a Starfighter worthy of a Jedi™ Knight. In a snap you'll feel the power of the brick.

just imagine...

MICRO MAYHEM

The novelty-surface miniature racing classic, now updated for Gamecube! Wallow in nostalgia at these tantalising pics - tiny-car-driving has never been such fun...



△ More crazy racing around domestic areas. Although we doubt that the bridge of a spaceship could be called 'domestic'. Unless it's a hyper-modern bathroom.



△ It's good to see a pond level again. As soon as your cars hit water, they turn into boats - unless they start in the water, in which case they're boats already. Yes.



THE KNOWLEDGE

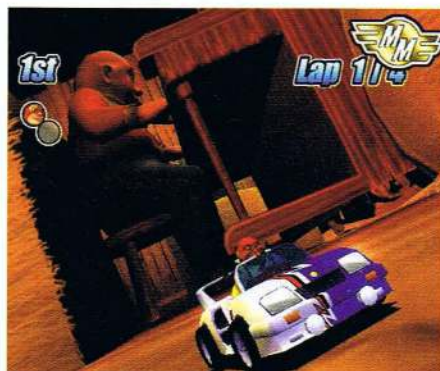
- Up to eight players, sharing pads, can indulge in multiplayer mayhem, in a variety of modes.
- New modes, such as bomb tag, playable against the computer or your chums.
- Eight characters to choose from, all of whom have different handling.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- Super Monkey Ball (NGC/67)
- Developed by Sega, published over here by Infogrames.



△ Once again, there are power-ups aplenty in *Micro Machines*. Watch out for this electricity shock.



△ At the end of each race, you'll get a tiny replay of the winner gabbing their 'hilarious' catchphrase.



△ A factory? Or something more futuristic? Whatever it is, you'd better watch out for gaps...

MICRO MACHINES

Small is beautiful and size doesn't matter...

Remember *Micro Machines*? It's been a while since we last played the venerable title - not since *Micro Machines 64*, in fact, which we reviewed waaaay back in *NGC/25*, itself a belated re-port of the PSone's *MM3*. Based on the range of tiny toy cars, *Micro Machines* has endured because of a reputation for top-notch multiplayer laughs rather than canny licensing. So it is with large grins and back-slapping good cheer that we impart the news that a brand-new *Micro Machines* will be pootling its way to a Gamecube near you soon.

Featuring, as it does, inch-long cars (and boats, and planes), the courses you race around in *Micro Machines*

are terrifying inflated versions of domestic familiarity. Think skidding over tables strewn with breakfast materials, or garden ponds transformed into giant lakes, complete with huge frogs. *MM* has always revelled in this kind of detail, and the latest iteration doesn't disappoint. The good news is that on Gamecube, it all looks great - the watery levels, in particular, are refreshingly well-implemented, with the water sloshing and churning as it does in *Wave Race*, with the teeny boats skipping along the surface.

And the all-important multiplayer mode is shaping up nicely too, meaning that, in *Mario Kart's* absence, the Cube has some top cartoon racing up its purple sleeve.

NGC VERDICT

It's great to have *Micro Machines* back - previous versions allowed up to eight players, each sharing a pad, and this new one looks set to offer the same laugh-out-loud thrills. But, despite having a graphical overhaul and looking rather nice, this is almost the same *MM* we all know and love - it's so familiar it's like nothing's changed. Sure, there's the likes of the entertaining Bomb Tag, but we can't shake the feeling that the developers have just upgraded *MM64*...



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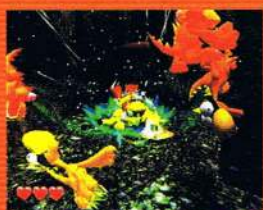
ANTICIPATION RATING



You can't keep a bad villain down...



△ So, can Wario use objects from the surrounding environment to knacker his enemies? Here, he appears to be using a stone pillar to crump the living daylight out of some unassuming and big-nosed cuddly dino-types. He's a really, really, bad man.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Developed by the highly-regarded Treasure, the people behind the N64's brilliant *Mischief Makers*.
- You get to play as the bad guy – the game features, as you'd expect, the evil Wario, Mario's dastardly alter-ego and general nuisance.
- 3D platformer with 2D sensibilities – a static camera and linear path make for focused gameplay.
- Plenty of Mario-style moves; and expect some treats from the Game Boy *Wario Land* games to pop up, too.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Sin and Punishment (NGC/51)**
Stupendously amazing on-rails shooting game.
- **Mischief Makers (NGC/8)**
Platforming gone mad, but utterly sublime.



△ Some kind of swampy area, and some soon-to-be-nobbed natives...



△ Wario causing mayhem, as usual. The pesky swine.

WARIO WORLD

Heart of a fiend, nose of a boozier.

Mario's evil alter-ego has long enjoyed a career on the Game Boy – originally in monochrome and latterly in colour on GBA. Despite looking like a wetbrain (it's the red nose), the portly fiend's claim to fame was that he couldn't be killed; the Game Boy Advance *Wario Land* changed all that, but introduced a Wario who could be changed into different forms.

It's not yet clear whether any similar gimmicks are present in *Wario World* on Gamecube. From what we've seen, the game looks like a distinguished 3D platformer – it's full of character and charm – but Ninty are keeping any concrete details under wraps. What we do know, from our extensive playtesting of the game

at E3 in May, is that Wario has most of his signature moves, from his shoulder-rush and butt-stomp, to a devastating triple-punch. Intriguingly, the camera is fixed in *Wario World* – unlike *Mario Sunshine's* free-roaming, customisable camera, this one's static and keeps Wario at the centre of the screen at all times. It makes the game seem almost 2D; it's only when Wario can grip onto and shimmy around objects that the game truly seems to employ 3D gameplay.

So while it looks like being a good romp, at the moment *Wario World* appears a little basic. Interestingly, though, the game is being developed by Treasure, the folk behind N64's terrific *Mischief Makers*. And that, more than anything, is a sure sign that *Wario World* will be fun indeed.

NGC VERDICT

We've always loved Wario on Game Boy and GBA. However, despite looking fantastic – Wario himself is hilariously animated, and the levels look solid and colourful – there's little as yet to mark *Wario World* out from the legions of other 3D platformers doing the rounds. Currently it needs a substantial gameplay 'gimmick', such as the ones in the Game Boy games, to make it truly unique. Hopefully we'll know more as the release date approaches.



UK 2003 US DEC JAPAN DEC

ANTICIPATION RATING



"Impossible game to put down"

C&VG On-Line

"One of the best puzzlers
on the PS2 to date"

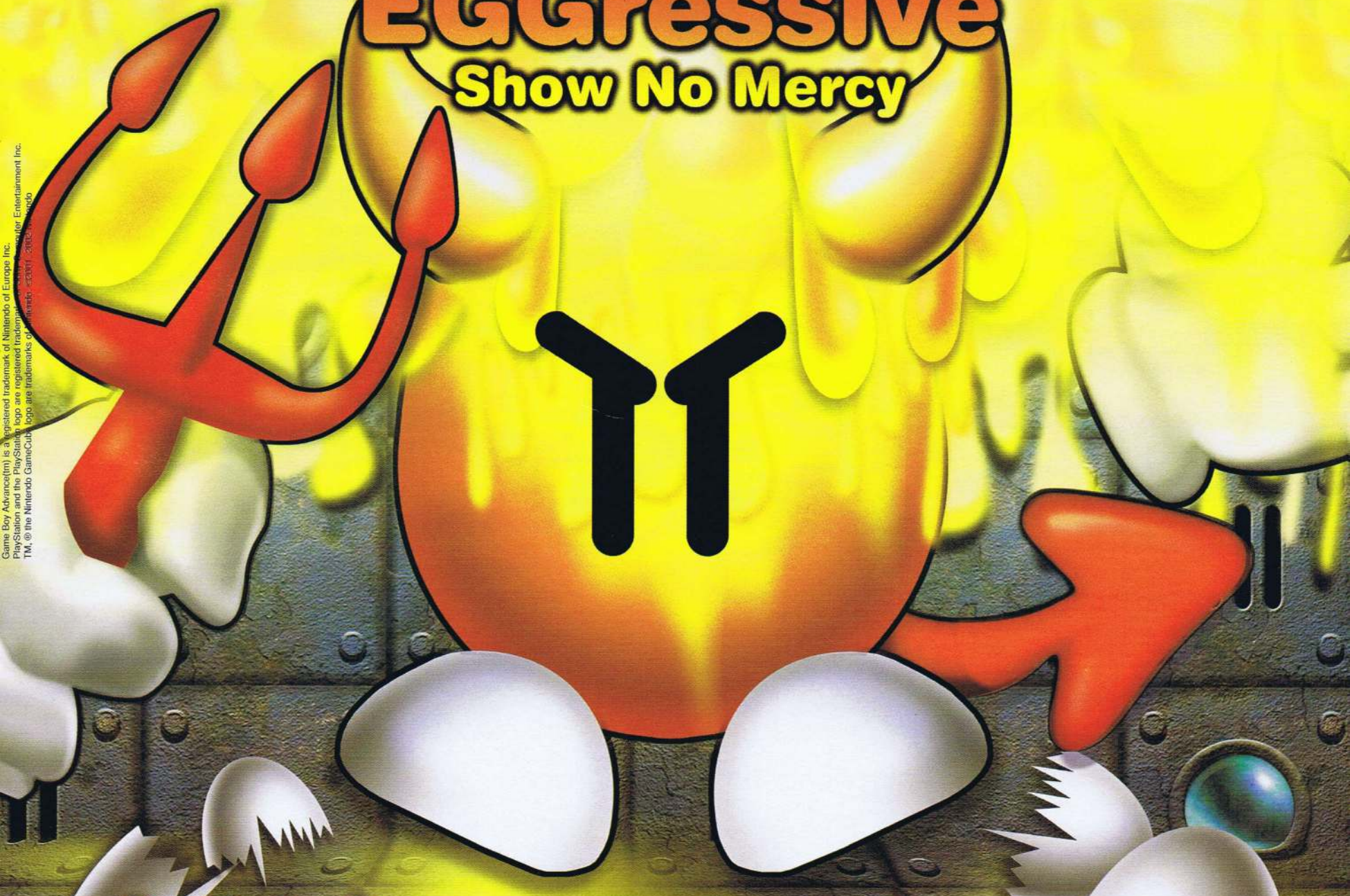
"Probably the coolest puzzle
game we've seen"

IGN.com

Play

EGGressive Show No Mercy

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**EGGO
MANIA**



**NINTENDO
GAMECUBE**

GAME BOY ADVANCE



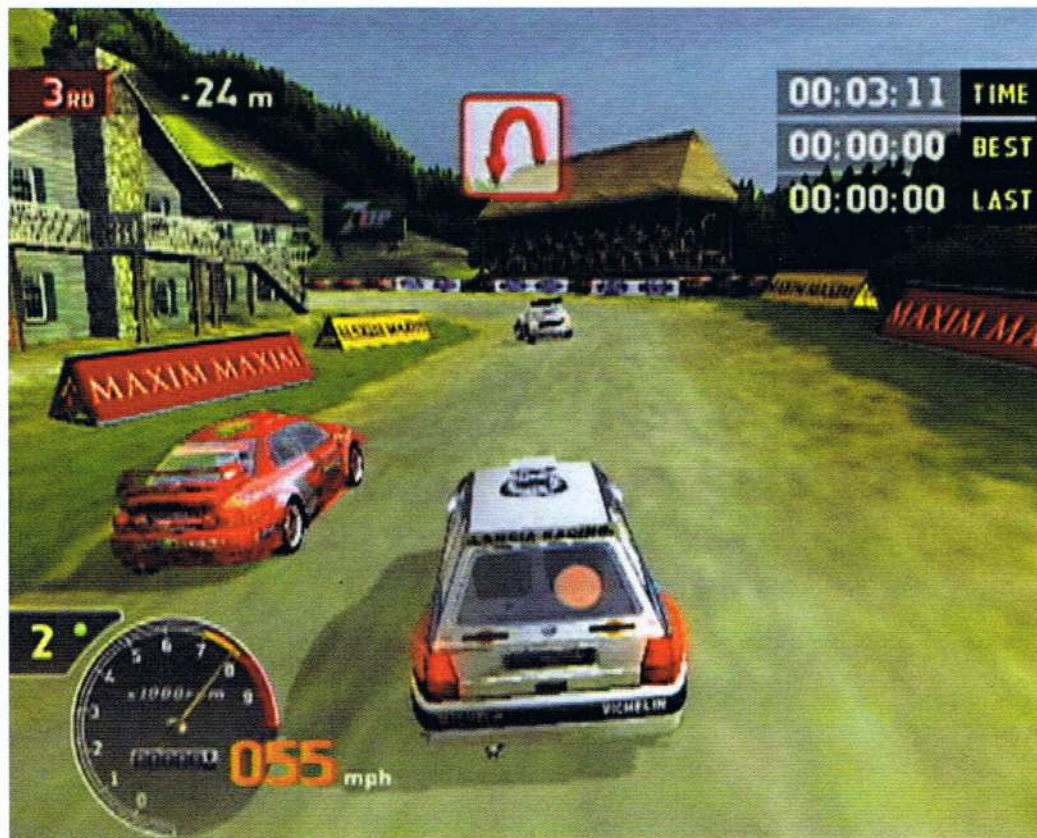
XBOX PlayStation.2



**bigben
interactive**



Knockabout fun with expensive cars



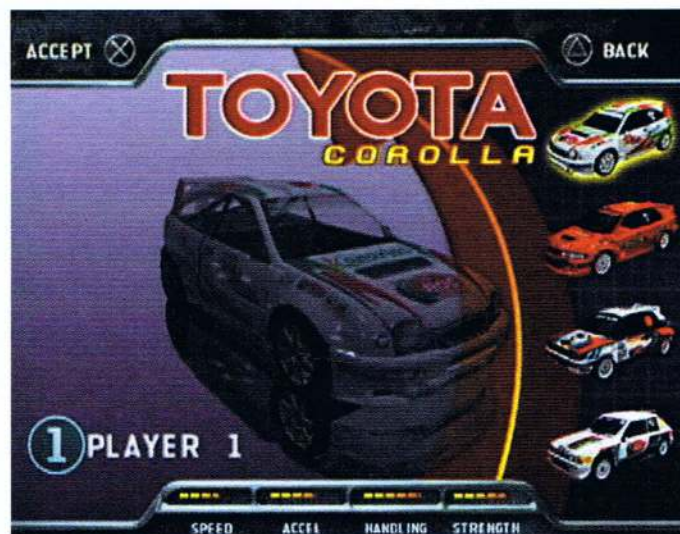
△ This is the extreme hill-climbing mode. Fall off the side of the mountain (there are plenty of opportunities to do so) and that'll be the end of your race.



△ Two parallel tracks means two cars can compete in a head-to-head race.



△ Accidents like this will make all sorts of bits start falling off the car.



△ The PlayStation buttons at the top of the screen will be changed before the game goes into production. Your gran's old Toyota won't be in there, either.



RALLY FUSION

Like atomic fusion, but without the radioactivity. Or the fusion.

One of the problems with rally games is that the nature of the sport is a race against the clock. So any rally game with a dose of realism is just a time-trial, with even less overtaking than an average Formula 1 Grand Prix.

Rally Fusion, however, is based on Michelin's Race of Champions event, which pits drivers in a head-to-head contest around a two-lane track. There's no contact, as the tracks run side-by-side, separated by a barrier, but you can always see how well you're doing without relying on the timekeeper's watch.

Because a game with just one course might be a little dull, the

developers have thrown in various other modes, including a four-way race that's a bit like *Sega Rally*, and a hill-climbing mode – also with three competitors. Hardcore drivers can opt for the 'extreme' version of the hill climb, in which a single misjudged slide results in a one-way trip down the mountain (the fast way) and an instant Game Over.

The cars are the familiar selection of real-life favourites that always figure in this sort of thing, divided into three classes. They get nicely damaged during the course of a race, losing windscreens, body panels and even wheels after heavy collisions. For a non-contact sport, it's bone-shaking stuff.



△ Slam on the handbrake and send your car hurtling sideways.



△ Rallying on super-slippery ice is a very low-friction experience.

NGC VERDICT

We could have a long wait before we see *Colin McRae* on Gamecube, so rally fans should be interested in this one. The early version we played lacked certain courses and graphical effects, and the handling was a bit solid and clunky, but it should be more polished by November-time. The twin-track format is certainly unusual, making a change from the standard races through forests or desert that normally characterise rally games.



UK NOV US NOV JAPAN TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING



THE KNOWLEDGE

- A total of 19 rally cars, spread over three different categories.
- Car damage makes doors, exhausts, bumpers and other important parts of car drop off.
- Nine courses, including indoor and outdoor ones.
- 'Follow the leader' mode. Each driver has a health bar that depletes when he isn't in the lead.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Battlezone 64 (NGC/40)**
Conversion of a PC strategy game that looked rough on N64.
- **Spongebob Squarepants (N/A)**
GBA platformer that we couldn't bring ourselves to review.

MONSTER MASH!

More pictures and first-play details of the stomp-em-up where you can smash up real-life cities and punch your mates in the gob with world-famous landmarks. Class.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Based on the old Japanese Toho films, not the recent(ish) Hollywood remake.
- Features Godzilla and 13 of his giant monstrous chums – including winged bug Mothra and the three-headed King Ghidorah – not to mention the robotic Mechagodzilla.
- Sprawling 'real-world' levels such as Seattle and Tokyo, all of which are completely destructible.
- Four-player multiplayer melee modes.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

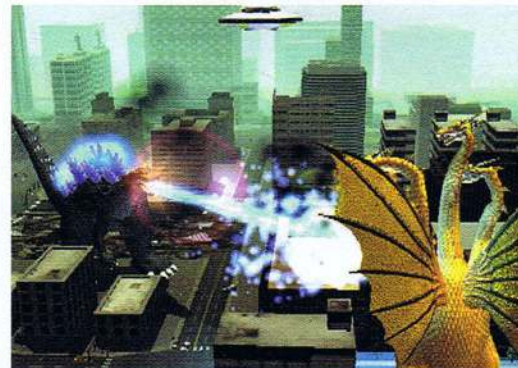
- Tribes (PC)
Very well-received multiplayer-only team-based blastathon, complete with vehicles.



△ A giant four-way scrap between city-dwarfing monsters. You don't see that every day.



△ The chap that looks like a giant mutated beetle is Megalon.



△ King Ghidorah is the three-headed fellow on the right.



△ The camera pans out quite a way.



△ Godzilla's breath weapon in effect.



△ Ouch – that's got to hurt plenty.



△ Each beast has special attacks.

GODZILLA DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE

Twenty stories high, and there's no sign of Godzuki. Thankfully.

A tremendous idea, this. Take the old Toho Godzilla movies – famous for men in rubber suits hitting each other – and turn them into a four-player beat-'em-up (hey, it worked for Nintendo and their mascots in *Smash Bros*). Throw in some cityscape levels, complete with buildings that can be knocked down and scenery that can be picked up and chucked, and you've got a sure-fire recipe for some nostalgic knockabout fun.

The preview code we've had in the office is a little rough around the edges, but it certainly seems 'faithful' enough to the old films – each monster has its own roster of recognisable moves, although of

course they look far better than they ever did in the films. There's even some cheap-looking flying saucers hovering about, too. Magic.

There's also a selection of power-ups, as you'd expect – our favourites being the ones that call in assistant monsters to do a little knacking on your behalf. Other than that, there's the usual selection of modes, from Versus to Survival, with the Adventure mode starting off on Godzilla's home – Monster Island itself.

Despite looking like a fancy 3D update of *Rampage*, this is a nonetheless intriguing slice of chopsocky fun, and it's certainly much, much better, even at this early stage, than the dismal *Godzilla Generations* on the Dreamcast.

NGC VERDICT

Despite unpleasant memories of *Rampage*, we were pleasantly surprised by *Godzilla*. It's pretty slow, sure, but then giant skyscraper-sized monsters aren't going to move swiftly. It's great fun seeing all those old movie monsters have at it, and being able to pick up various pieces of city and chuck them around is surprisingly good fun. However, it has to be said that at the moment it's more beat-'em-up novelty than life-devouring gaming experience.



UK NOV US NOV JAPAN NOV

ANTICIPATION RATING



"This Mario Party has re-awakened our excitement"

METROID FUSION

After *Super Metroid*, Samus' suit was penetrated by the X-Parasite and now it lives within her. To save herself, she must return to planet SR388 and do battle once again.

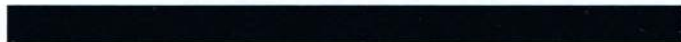
Samus can now use the parasite's energy to help boost the abilities she has to earn as she progresses. Much of the game is very similar to the SNES adventure, with exploring and battling – but this time around the controls have been enhanced for ease of play. Also, like *Zelda*, *Metroid* will link up to its big GC sister.



ZELDA: LINK TO THE PAST

Taking the familiar top-down perspective of the ancient Game Boy/NES *Zelda* games, you once again do battle with Ganon across light and dark renditions of Hyrule.

Not only does this version offer plenty of exploration, puzzle-solving and dungeon-battling, it also has a superb competitive and co-operative four-player mode to go with it. Furthermore, it'll link up to enhance the forthcoming *Legend of Zelda* on Gamecube. Needless to say, this one is already at the top of our GBA most-wanted list.



IKARUGA

Due in January 2003, *Ikaruga* is a 2D shooter with a bullet-absorbing twist and a chain-combo system that requires you to blast black and white ships in triplicate to enhance your score. Boasting great in-game artwork and frantic, twitchy gameplay, this looks like being one of the finest games of the year.



MARIO PARTY 4

Like an S-Club party, only more so.

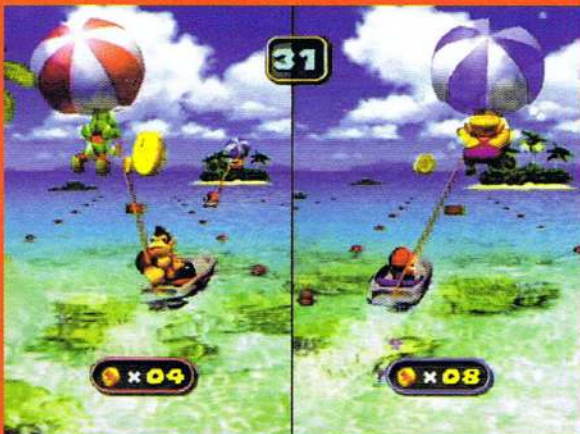
To be honest with you, we're not exactly *Mario Party*'s biggest fans. We suffered three of them on N64 and breathed a sigh of relief that we wouldn't have to endure another for a while. That said, this new next-generation instalment has re-awakened a little of our excitement.

Despite what Hudson would have us believe though, the 50-plus new games still involve button-mashing, stick-wiggling and timing, so it falls to the boards to throw up new surprises.

Far bigger than we previously envisioned, there'll be more secret areas accessible by picking up power-ups. There are more opportunities for stealing coins and, crucially, the speed of movement has been increased significantly – doing away with all that god-awful, dribble-inducing tedium. Hooray. No, really.

NGC BRAND NEW SHOTS!

Straight from Nintendo's mouth to your brain, the brand-new Mario Party 4 shows off even more of the minigames you can expect.



OUR PROMISE
 We've spent years securing the biggest and best contacts inside the world's most important companies. Our news is properly sourced, expertly written and thoroughly researched. That's why what you read here – that's why Newsdesk is the best magazine news service on Planet Earth.

NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST NEWSDESK



IN NEWS THIS MONTH



FF TACTICS FIRST FINAL FANTASY GBA SHOTS! P29



MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE HITS GC! P30



COMPOSI! WIN CUBES AND MORE! P29 & P30

THE BIG Q NO GAMECUBE PRICE DROP? P31

PLUS!
 Yu-Gi-Oh GC
 Most Wanted
 Mario sells out & MORE!



△ Earls Court, in swanky Kensington, where this year's ECTS junket was 'at'. Man.



△ Glazed of eye and vacant of brain, these 'games journalists' drift like sleepy fish.

ECTS 2002

THE UK'S VERSION OF E3 CAME AND WENT ONCE MORE. BUT IS ECTS STILL RELEVANT? BY JES BICKHAM

Once a year, London plays host to Europe's very own E3. This year, the (yawn) Electronic Consumer Trade Show – or ECTS – was held at Earls Court, after last year's unsuccessful sojourn to the Docklands-based Excel centre. Unfortunately, despite a strong showing from a few software companies – most notably Sony – ECTS 2002 simply signposted its own irrelevance rather than offer a genuine alternative to the LA-based E3.

CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

Ostensibly a chance for publishers to show off their wares for the upcoming year to the rest of the industry (much like E3), ECTS nonetheless seems to be becoming less and less important with every year. The main problem with this year's show was that a lot of the bigger software companies simply didn't bother to use ECTS

at all, despite having a captive audience that consisted of the majority of the European videogames industry. There's been a trend in recent years for the larger softcos to ply their trade

an evening cinema showing of The Thing, to celebrate the imminent release of their PC/PS2/Xbox game, and EA had an 'EA Play' evening at their HQ in Chertsey the night before the show

A LOT OF THE BIGGER SOFTWARE COMPANIES SIMPLY DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO USE ECTS IN ANY WAY

elsewhere (such as Activision's Activ8 expo, held in Dublin the week before ECTS), meaning that the show proper is left fairly devoid of big names. Vivendi Universal, for example, took a whole day out at their own venue, culminating in

started. That said, some biggies made the effort, and Acclaim and Ubi Soft were the most visible among them. However, it was telling that hardly anyone had Gamecube software to show off – in the case of multi-format



△ ECTS may have been rubbish, but at least we got to play on Monkey Ball GBA.



△ Monkey Ball is a thing of wonder on Gamecube, and is similarly great here.



EARLY RESI FOR THE STATES!
 Blimey! Not content with getting Super Monkey Ball 2 before Japan,

America has scored another big release victory with Resident Evil Zero. At the time of writing the

game looks set to hit yankee shores in late November/early December, with Japan remaining Zero-less

until January 2003. Lucky old Americans, eh? Now, if only the UK could get treatment like that...

WHO ARE WE? This month's news is written and researched by Jes Bickham, Geraint Evans and Martin Kitts. Able to emit a lengthy ululating howl he likens to the mating call of the Welsh Minke Whale. Geraint is, for some reason, a big hit with the ladies.



THE NINTENDO BREAKFAST

At 8.30am on Thursday 29th August, prior to the doors opening at ECTS, Nintendo held their own press conference (and provided the assembled throng with bacon bagels, orange juice and croissants) at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. In the past, luminaries such as Shigeru Miyamoto have made appearances at Ninty's pre-ECTS shows to underline Europe's importance to Nintendo, but things weren't quite so impressive this year.

IT'S-A-ME

David Gosen talked, once again in very general terms, about Gamecube and GBA's success, mentioning nothing of note and successfully dodging the issue of a Gamecube price drop. Finally, a 'mystery guest' was revealed - Charles Martinet, the voice of Mario. Charles was very entertaining, but even his unbridled enthusiasm couldn't detract from the fact that Nintendo really didn't have very much to say, apart from reiterating their success, and focusing on *Metroid*, *Zelda* and *Mario*.

REVIVAL

Thankfully, there were playable demo pods of upcoming GC games present, including *Zelda* and *Metroid*. Although the lack of substantial announcements may have had more to do with the



△ Noted character actor, and voice of Mazza, Charles Martinet. It's-a-he!



△ 'Smiling' Martin Kitts gets to grips with the magnificent *Zelda*. Yes.

decline of ECTS in general, Nintendo at least made an effort to put on a professional, relevant face to the press. Next year's ECTS and attendant press conferences require more substance if Europe is to escape its videogaming 'third-world' status. JB

titles such as *Turok Evolution*, the PS2 versions were shown instead. Given the lack of Cube titles on show, it was just as well that Nintendo had some playable code at their Nintendo Breakfast.

MONKEY BUSINESS

The lack of big-name game publishers meant the show floor was awash with third-party peripheral manufacturers - there was a booth on every corner advertising pads, steering wheels and arcade sticks. However, the very lack of domination by the big names meant that the smaller companies got a chance to show off - such as a stand that showcased Korean developers, complete with the brilliantly-named *Cutie Fattie* arcade game and handheld GP32 console. While this made things pleasantly diverse, however, there was little in the way of real interest, although - brilliantly - *Super Monkey Ball GBA* developers Reality were there, with their baby installed in two linked arcade cabinets. (It played magnificently, by the way, especially in multiplayer mode).

EVOLVE OR DIE

Sony, on the other hand, pretty much used ECTS to the full. Their PlayStation Experience was a tremendous success, as it was open to the public and featured playable versions of all the



△ *XIII* - one of the few forthcoming Gamecube titles we actually saw at ECTS.

biggest games coming up for the PS2, such as the new *Tomb Raider*. Even the elusive *The Getaway* was shown, a game that, until now, has been more famous for how much it's cost to develop than anything else.

And this, perhaps, is a signpost for the way that ECTS has to go to remain an important staple of the gaming calendar. E3 might be on the other side of the world, but it's bigger and better, and ECTS is struggling to keep up. But as a gaming showcase for the public, it can offer a valuable service. How good would it be next year if anyone could walk into ECTS and play the next *Mario*, or *Zelda*? Let's hope the show evolves, and that Nintendo take notice. the GC might be selling well, but given the ever-dropping price of the competition, a little hands-on promotion can't hurt.



△ *Donkey Kong Racing* features Nintendo-owned characters, so we won't see that.

RARE GONE?

It looks like all those rumours might have been true after all...

Of course, by the time you read this, it will probably all have happened, and you'll know exactly what the situation with Rare is. But at the time of writing, there's more evidence than ever concerning an apparent move on Rare's part away from Nintendo... and towards Microsoft.

It's long been known the company has been up for sale, with (allegedly) potential buyers Activision backing off because of the prohibitive asking price - anywhere from £250-£350 million, depending on who you believe. But ultra-rich Microsoft - who, it might be argued, could do with another high-profile Xbox developer - apparently have no qualms, as sources within the company have hinted that an internal announcement has already been made, and various noises from other sources all seem to confirm this. An insider also told **NGC** that, although they couldn't tell us anything, there'd

be little point in us following up the *Perfect Dark* Ideas Factory feature...

If the Microsoft deal comes to fruition, it's probable that Nintendo will have sold their stake in Rare as part of the deal, leaving the much-anticipated *Starfox Adventures* as the last Rare game to appear on a Nintendo console (and existing Nintendo-owned titles, such as *DK Racing*, will have been canned). There have, of course, been many mutterings on the subject of *Perfect Dark Zero*, the most prominent rumours being that it will become an Xbox exclusive. Given that other existing in-development Rare titles (such as *Kameo*) are unknown quantities, this is quite a blow to Nintendo fans, as anticipation for the as-yet unconfirmed title is huge.

An announcement is expected to take place at the X02 event in Seville, which will have happened by the time you read this. JB



△ *Diddy Kong Pilot* looks like it's probably been canned too. Ah well.



△ *Kameo* gone? It depends, like *Perfect Dark*, on who owns it - Ninty or Rare.

SHORT CUTS

MARIO FLIES!
... Off the shelves, that is. The US launch of *Super Mario Sunshine* has been absolutely phenomenal, with the game selling upwards of 350,000 units in its first ten days on sale. To put things in perspective, Nintendo's computer-brained number-people quantify that as selling 36 per cent more than *Super Mario 64*, in the same on-sale period, when it was launched six years ago. There's also been an average 50 per cent increase in Gamecube hardware sales in the US, showing that Mazza still has immense pulling power as a gaming mascot. Let's hope he repeats the trick when *Super Mario Sunshine* is released over here, right about now.

GOOD GREECE!

Confusion reigned this month as news spread of Greece banning gaming entirely - some internet rumour-mongers going so far as to suggest that you'd get arrested for bringing a GBA into the country! Utter poppycock, of course; the reality has to do with gambling laws, and 'gambling machines' in arcades have been outlawed. Also, certain arcades that ignored government warnings have been closed down, but it seems that home consoles are hopefully unaffected. A triumph for common sense, then, and a stick in the eye for internet gossip silliness.

SELLING OUT

Pah - Sony and Microsoft can keep their price drops (although,

obviously, it'd be nice if we got one - see The Big 0 for more on this). It seems that the Gamecube

has officially passed the million units sold mark in Europe, which isn't a bad achievement at all, all

things considered. Nintendo expect to have sold 3 million units in Europe by the end of the year, and

16 million units worldwide by March 2003. And given *Super Mario Sunshine*'s sales figures, along

with impending releases for The Legend of *Zelda* and *Metroid Prime*, they may just do it yet.



"One of those games that has to be played to be believed"

DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at ngc@futurenet.co.uk or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.

MOST WANTED!

Quite simply, the 25 most anticipated games on the Cube (in your opinion)...



THIS MONTH

Your most-wanted games, right here in the magazine! For reviews of *Timesplitters 2* and *Super Mario Sunshine*, turn to pages 42 and 52 respectively. There are also previews of both *Resident Evil Zero* and *Starfox Adventures* on pages 6 and 10. Get to it!



1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

Even if you whipped off his tights and spanked the pixie-boy's bare behind with the back of his spiral belt buckle, he wouldn't budge. Almost all the Most-Wanted mail we get in votes Link as your most desirable plaything – and after seeing more gorgeous new screenshots (see page 8), we're with you on that one...

UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN Dec 2002



2 MARIO SUNSHINE

OUT NOW OUT NOW OUT NOW
If you're reading this on the day the magazine hits the shelves, go seek out the nearest games shop and have a look at the Gamecube section. *Mario Sunshine's* out today, and at long last summer is finally here. This month we've got a UK review and a playing guide too, so start getting those Shines!



3 MARIO KART GC

UK 2003/04 US 2003/04 JAPAN 2003/04
We want this so badly we've considered Kittys' idea of racing around our local karting centre 'equipped' with some of the world's most endangered shell-backed marine life. We didn't though – apparently, the staff there don't want 'children skidding on the mess'. More fool them.



4 METROID PRIME

Yup, Jo's gone. *Gone* we tell you. In her place we've got another athletic woman who'll only strip for you if you successfully explore the inner depths of planet SR388 or have access to a crowbar and industrial-strength can-opener. Sounds like one of Geraint's 'romantic' dinner dates to us...

UK 2003 US DEC JAPAN 2003



5 STARFOX ADVENTURES

UK NOV US OUT NOW JAPAN OCT
O! Foxy is getting so close we can almost smell his rancid bone-breath. In the absence of *Zelda*, we reckon *SFA* will fill the adventuring void nicely. And when we say 'fill the void', we mean stuffing it like a hot, wet dachshund into a Mini Cooper's glove compartment. (See page 10.)



6 TIMESPLITTERS 2

UK NOW US NOW JAPAN TBC
It's another one that's out there already – and an absolute blinder of a game it is, too. One part Quantum Leap, one part *GoldenEye* and about 37 parts multiplayer heaven, this one should be at the top of your shopping list... well, after you've bought *Mario Sunshine*, anyway.

UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003



7 FINAL FANTASY

UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003
Confirmed as *Crystal Chronicles* last month, we've had loads of mail about this one. Since then, news has been pretty thin on the ground, but you can bet your filthy stat-crazed, exp-hungry brains you'll be chowing down on more FMV than your eyes could possibly hope to digest. How. Lucky. You. Are.



8 SOUL CALIBUR 2

UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003
Another non-mover this month. *Soul Calibur* is one of those games that we're desperate for. The GC needs a great beat-'em-up really badly. More to the point, it needs a beat-'em-up where you can dish out vicious afters to grounded opponents as well as using the replay to look up lady's skirts. Oh yes.

UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003



9 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

UK 2003 US DEC JAPAN OCT
Dress up as a girl and bash monsters in the face with magic sticks. It might sound a bit weird, but it's one of those games that has to be played to be believed. Communicate with players all over the world, do battle together in glorious surroundings. Shame it's already been on Dreamcast for years...

UK 2003 US DEC JAPAN OCT

10 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO
Has 'Zombies' in it, apparently.
UK 2003 US NOV JAPAN OCT

11 JAMES BOND: NIGHTFIRE
Another EA Bond-based blaster.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

12 PROJECT BG & E
Kooky French adventuring.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN DOUBT IT

13 F-ZERO GC
Falcon's back – with gold nipples.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

14 TONY HAWK'S 4
More skaters. Bigger parks.
UK XMAS US NOV JAPAN DOUBT IT

15 1080° 2
Snow. Speed. 'Gnarly' hats. Boards.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

16 MARIO TENNIS
Will do exactly what it implies.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

17 XIII
Cel-shaded FPS. Looks good, too.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN UNLIKELY

18 DRIVER 3
A future Gamecube classic?
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

19 STAR WARS: CLONE WARS
PC *Battlezone* with clone troopers!
UK WINTER US AUTUMN JAPAN TBA

20 DIE HARD: VENDETTA
Bruce. With guns. Lots of them.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN TBA

21 SONIC MEGA COLLECTION
Old Sonics. Again and again...
UK TBC US NOV JAPAN OCT

22 MEDAL OF HONOR
Spielberg-esque WWII shooter.
UK NOV 22 US OCT JAPAN UNLIKELY

23 MARIO GOLF
Like tennis but with, er... golf.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

24 STARFOX GC
Already in the works from Namco.
UK 2003 US 2003 JAPAN 2003

25 NAZI HAT MAKER 2.0
Helmets like you wouldn't believe.
UK IF HELL US FREEZES JAPAN OVER

WRITE TO... MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

DID YOU KNOW? *Phantasy Star Online* should be available on Japanese import about now, bundled with a hybrid joypad/keyboard and a modem that plugs into the bottom of your Gamecube. At the time of writing, it appears you can only get online, though, with a Jap or US Gamecube.



▲ Fina, Aika and Vyse's adventure is definitely one of our favourite RPGs of all time.

FANTASY ADVANCES

Tactical details emerge regarding Square's handheld *Final Fantasy*...

Square's eagerly awaited GBA follow-up to PlayStation's *Final Fantasy Tactics*, cunningly titled *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance*, is being kept under wraps in Japan, with tidbits of info leaked to satisfy impatient fans.

What we do know is that it's a proper sequel, and not simply a remix of the PlayStation version. There are new characters, locations, and a totally different plot – although whether this follows on from the ending of the original, or just ignores previous events like the main *FF* series, is unclear.

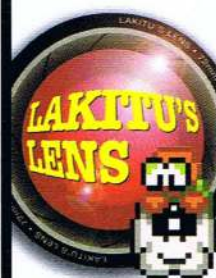
If you never saw the PlayStation version of the game, you might at least

be familiar with *Ogre Battle 64*, the strategy RPG which scored 87 per cent back in issue 50. The *Ogre Battle / Tactics Ogre* series is where *Final Fantasy Tactics* was spawned, sharing several of the same designers and musicians. It's really nothing at all like the 'normal' *Final Fantasy* titles, and bears a closer resemblance to stuffy old turn-based wargames, with a much more involving combat system.

We particularly enjoyed *Ogre Battle* in the office, so we're really looking forward to this one. But we're unlikely to see it in this country until well into next year, after *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles* for Gamecube. **MK**



DID YOU KNOW? *Final Fantasy* has appeared in handheld form before, as the three *Final Fantasy Legend* titles for Game Boy. A fourth GB outing, *Final Fantasy Adventure*, originally known as *Mystic Quest*, had a classic SNES sequel called *Secret of Mana*.



DONKEY KONG MENTIONED ON CRIMEWATCH? MARIO GUEST STARRING IN THE SOPRANOS? LET LAKITU KNOW!



PLANET NINTENDO

So who watches *Futura*? Not nearly enough people, judging by the show's recent demise. However, James King from *Tring* is one of them, and he noticed Mario and Donkey Kong in the episode entitled *Anthology of Interest 2*. Earth goes to war with "Planet Nintendo 64", Donkey Kong assaults President Nixon's severed head, then turns the UN building into the first level from his original game, while Italian ambassador Mario makes a passionate speech to the assembled politicians. There's only one word to describe this sort of thing – wick.

WRITE TO:
LAKITU'S LENS, **NGC**,
30 MONMOUTH
STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

Entries sent with picture evidence will win a Gamecube game

NEWSDESK

The best Nintendo gaming news, first

WIN!



BOMBERMAN

One Gamecube, four pads, five Bombermen!

We've got a Gamecube with four pads and a copy of the explosive *Bomberman Generation* for one lucky reader, plus four copies of the game for the runners-up. Just answer this simple question...

- A) Japan**
- B) Brazil**
- C) Italy**

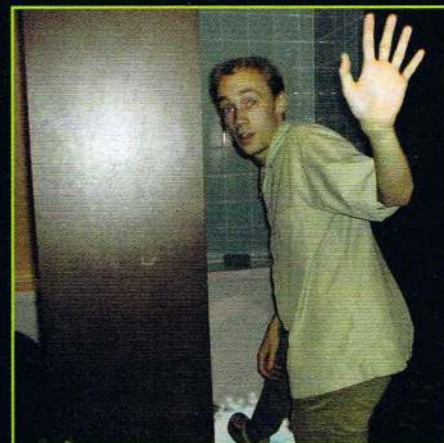
Which team did Bomberman support at the World Cup (the fool)?

Answers on a postcard to Ahn Jung-Hwan Forever, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Multiple entries will be fed to the vampire monkeys.

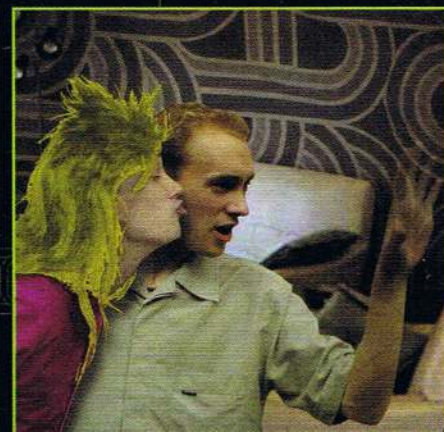
VIRTUAL REALITY

NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.

THIS MONTH A fatal paradox, Timesplitters-style...



THE TEST
Geraint steps into the time portal and prepares to travel to the Wales of the past, in search of time crystals and, quite possibly, lurve.



RESULT
No time crystals, but a nice stroke of luck on the lurve front...

But wait... He's fading out like Marty McFly... You mean, they were actually related? And now Geraint is his own father? Disaster!



"Nintendo's only reaction has been typically lacklustre"

SHORT CUTS



KIRBY CASH COW

Kirby's getting a \$10 million cash injection to finance his rise to megastardom over the next two years. Non-software related sales for Kirby merchandise in Japan reach an estimated \$120 million a year, and Nintendo are looking to emulate that success in the US and Europe. 'Kirby: Right Back at Ya!', a Kirby anime, is currently running in the US, and will duly follow in this country once it's nicely established over there. Expect a deluge of marketing to hit these shores fairly soon then. Gotta catch him all!

YU-GI-OH CUBE-BOUND

Entitled *Yu-Gi-Oh: Falsebound Kingdom* this complex strategy RPG sees you battling for supremacy against your rival in a simulated medieval world. The game will, much like *Pokémon TCG* on GBC, revolve around card battling and adventuring – It's based on the popular Japanese card game (and anime) after all. But don't let that put you off. If it's anywhere near as good as the excellent GBA game and you enjoyed *Lost Kingdoms*, you'll be in for a real treat.



△ Achtung Spitfire! Phone in for air strikes to flatten Fritz real nice.



△ Storming a Nazi-occupied beach in World War II was not fun. At all.

HONORABLE MENTION

First Gamecube shots from EA's WWII shooter. It's A-OK!

S torming the beaches like Tom Hanks and his merry band of cannon fodder, EA have only gone and released the first batch of screenshots for tense war-based FPS *Medal of Honor: Frontline*.

The World War Two shoot-'em-up has already gone down a storm with PS2 gamers, and the Gamecube version, due to be released on 22nd November, boasts a mighty zero enhancements over the original. Oh well.

Not to worry, though, because – like most of the other *Medal of Honor* titles, it's actually a very good game anyway – a violent yet surprisingly bloodless adventure that borrows heavily from the movie *Saving Private Ryan*. In fact, Steven Spielberg himself was called in



△ *Frontline* is a pretty linear adventure, but it's as gripping as the other *Mohs*.

to supply expert input on the opening beach-assault sequence, and the results are eye-wateringly effective. Later on in the game there's an equally nerve-racking recreation of the movie's



△ Make stupid Nazis pay for voting for Hitler with the Springfield sniper rifle.

pitched battles that take place in and around a ruined French town. Anyway, check out these shots – okay, so they look totally identical to the PS2 version. Still nice, though. **MK**

WIN! CONSOLES AND STUFF!

Gamecubes, watches and *Rally Championship* gear up for grabs...

T hose nice people at SCI have supplied us with a big box of goodies to give away to some lucky readers. We've got two black Gamecubes, two rather odd Storm watches, 20 sets of *Rally Championship* T-shirts, hats, keyrings and pens, plus 20 copies of the forthcoming *Rally Championship* game. To get your share of the bounty, simply answer this question:

Which weighs more – the chunky box of prizes or miniature leek-muncher Geraint Rice-Ifyans?

Answers on a postcard to: Welsh my Weight, **NGC** Magazine, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

First two correct answers win the consoles and watches, next 20 win the games, and the last 20 get the 'merch'.



RIDING THE WAVE
Following Nintendo's successful innovation with the Wavebird wireless controller, it

comes as no great surprise to find that third-party peripheral makers are hard at work on their own Wavebird clones. Genius!

ZELDA RELEASE DATE?
Although Nintendo's PR people refuse to confirm a UK release date for *Zelda*, the

Japanese version is still slated for a December release, while Amazon Japan currently has the official *Zelda* strategy

guide listed for release on 31st March. Judging by previous *Zelda* form, that means we'll see it in the UK around September.



HOW LONG CAN NINTENDO AFFORD TO WAIT BEFORE JOINING THE XBOX VS PS2 PRICE WAR?

Which do you think sounds like the better deal – a games console for £130, or a games console that also plays DVDs for £30 or £40 more? That's the question gamers are being asked every day as they walk past shops emblazoned with ads for the newly cheapened PS2 (£170) and Xbox (£160), following yet another round of savage price-cutting.

But instead of maintaining the Cube's status as the kind of bargain you can't afford to miss, Nintendo are sitting on their hands and refusing to get drawn into a battle that's great for consumers, and costly for the companies involved.

In fact, Nintendo's only real reaction has been typically lacklustre. On a document simply headed Nintendo

WE'D BE SURPRISED IF THE UK PRICE DOESN'T DIP BELOW £100 WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

Statement, a nameless company spokesman poured scorn on the PlayStation 2's price cut: "It is a surprising move and may indicate that Sony is feeling the pressure from the recent platform launches."

The statement went on to boast: "Nintendo Gamecube had an extremely successful launch, selling a million in just 11 weeks, and its installed base is continuing to grow rapidly."

And that's all they wrote.

Microsoft's immediate reaction was to hack



▲ Ladies and gentlemen, Mr David Gosen – good with bland PR spiel, less handy when it comes to cold, hard facts. Also Greener's best friend since he joined Nintendo.

another £40 off the Xbox, at which point a second Nintendo Statement floated into our inbox.

CUT THE CRAP

"This is obviously a reaction to Sony's recent price cut but is less surprising as reports show their sales in Europe are disappointing," proclaimed the stern voice of Nintendo.

Very astute, but what are they going to do about it?

For the time being, absolutely nothing. Nintendo Europe MD David Gosen clumsily drowned the question with PR speak, talking up previous sales figures while skirting around the fact that they were achieved when the Gamecube was as little as half the price of the competition.

Recent figures from the US showed a huge increase in Gamecube sales around the launch of *Mario Sunshine*, and it's this kind of monster hit that Nintendo's bosses are banking on to help shift the console. *Zelda* and *Metroid* will probably have a similar effect, but Nintendo is the

only company actually making these killer titles for Gamecube.

If Nintendo won't act aggressively when Sony and Microsoft start upping the stakes, there's a real risk of developing another N64 situation here. That console sold 28 million units and made a fair bit of money for Nintendo, but can anyone honestly say they were happy playing just one or two new games every year while all the best third-party titles went to the more lucrative PlayStation market?

As Mr Gosen and friends are fond of reminding us, Nintendo machines are indeed the only place you can play Nintendo games. But without such a big price differential, that's becoming the only reason punters will choose Gamecube over PS2. From past experience, we'd suggest that Nintendo need something else.

Despite Nintendo's repeated denials, we believe a Gamecube price cut will be in place before the Christmas console season. At the time of writing, a Japanese machine costs the equivalent of £106 – we'd be very surprised if the UK price doesn't dip below £100 within the next couple of months.



DISCOUNT MANIA

Do you think consoles are overpriced? It's a curious fact that almost every console you're ever likely to have bought, even the Xbox when it cost £300, was subsidised to a certain degree by its manufacturer. The companies effectively pay for you to have their high-tech hardware at a massive discount, in the hope of amassing such a large user-base that they later cover their costs and rake in enormous profits through software sales alone. It's known as the Gillette business model, after the company that pioneered the sale of cheap razors, safe in the knowledge that, once they were installed in the bathrooms of hairy men, they'd be able to bank on a regular income from the sale of expensive blades designed to fit only their handles. Genius...



SOUL NO SHOW
Namco's all-formats best-of Soul Calibur 2 will not be

displayed at the Tokyo Game Show, said rumours that one of the three console manufacturers is about to

buy the rights to a long period of exclusivity on their particular machine. Interesting.

BUMPER HARVEST
The brilliant farming RPG Harvest Moon is on course for a Gamecube

debut in Japan this winter, alongside a brand new Game Boy Advance version. The two games,

subtitled A Wonderful Life, will link up for a spot of portable agricultural fun.

OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS

IN REVIEWS THIS MONTH

TETRIS WORLDS
TERRIBLE PUZZLE-CLASSIC UPDATE **P64**

MX SUPERFLY
DIRT BIKING THAT'S NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING AT ALL... **P65**

P70 BALLISTIC: ECKS VS. SEVER

P71 GBA TUROK EVOLUTION

P71 WORMS WOLRD PARTY

P73 MCRAE 2.0

WHAT IS PAL?

PAL is the UK's broadcasting standard. When you buy a Cube here it will be PAL. When you buy a Cube in the US or Japan it'll be NTSC – a different broadcasting standard, and the reason the two don't mix. Import games are NTSC games.



MARIO SUNSHINE

AT LAST! Mario finally lands in the UK, and his latest game is nothing short of magical. Read our review and buy the game. Quickly, now! **P52**



WARNING!
SPOILERS AHOY!
OUR REVIEWS
CONTAIN
SENSITIVE INFO!



TIMESPLITTERS 2

It's the best shooter on the Cube! And that's a cast-iron FACT. Find out why in our definitive eight-page review **RIGHT NOW!** **P42**



TUROK EVOLUTION

The dinosaur hunter returns – but is he fighting fit or almost extinct? **P34**



SMUGGLER'S RUN

Get on the wrong side of the law and drive anywhere... **P60**

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the biggest, most comprehensive on Planet Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you more detail than anyone else. And in the new **NGC** things have just got a whole lot better: our Field of Play and Event-o-meter regulars will pinpoint exactly when and where games get good, and yet our verdicts remain the most honest and most stringent around.



KELLY SLATER

Tony Hawk's on the high seas, or something much better than that? Watersports get extreme...

P50



MONKEY BALL 2

We review the US version – more monkeys, more balls, and a whole load of new minigames.

P74

1 GET INTO THE GAME

■ The quickest and smartest way to get started...



2 FIELD OF PLAY

■ The game's best bit taken apart and analysed...



3 EVENT-O-METER

■ The good bits, the bad bits – all in a handy graph...



4 THE SCORE BAR

■ The verdict explained for you...

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with plus and minus points.

■ Mmm, lovely hair.
■ Finger-fanglingly good.
■ Sounds like all the money in the world looks.

■ Wears sandals ALL THE TIME.
■ Never has Frome looked less civilised, or less interesting.
■ A bit of a one-topic game.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Wave Race
Nintendo
NEC/64 91%
Wetter than a wet weekend in wet old Frome.



8 VISUALS

Never have a woman's hands been more accurately represented. Lovely cuticles.

6 SOUNDS

Random ululating whale-mating howls and Faltermeyer's synth skills.

8 MASTERY

The only way it could be more real would be if you lived in a small west-country village.

7 LIFESPAN

Utterly absorbing until it starts droning on about camper van engines and other such guff.

VERDICT

As a game, Camper Van Maintenance: Oil Storm succeeds admirably, despite being based on an activity that, in reality, could only bore your workmates rigid.

NGC

88

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure...

VERDICT

We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict on whether you should purchase a game.

5 OUR SCORING SYSTEM

■ What those scores mean to you...

0-24

■ Crushing awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.

25-49

■ Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short of any quality.

50-74

■ Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89

■ Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

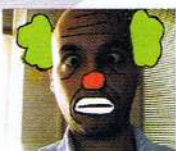
90+

■ Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is absolutely essential.



MEET THE NGC TEAM

Inspired by *Timesplitters*, the team embark on their very own historical adventures...



JES

Bickham's time-travelling jaunt landed him at unpleasant circus Barnum and Bailey's. "I'm crying on the inside", he said.



JUD

Webfrey got stuck in 18th-century Transylvania. Unfortunately, Glocks are no good against vampires.



KITTSY

Martin materialised inside lumpen Victorian curiosity John Merrick. "You've all been so kind," he burred.



GERAINT

Travelling with Jud, Geraint was also vampirised. He's now starring in the Welsh remake of Nosferatu – "Gimrootu".



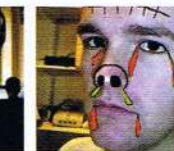
PAUL

Swept up in nostalgia, surfing dullard Shedwards hit 1983 with a severe E.T. fetish. The finger, he said, was "useful".



DAN

Camp Hitler-alike Geary washed up in 1977, ready to dance, dance, dance. "I'm the funkiest chicken you ever did see. Treacle."



TIM

Pig-faced farmer boy Weaver's simple genes just couldn't take the mental or physical strain of time travel. "Ooo-arr", he noted.



MARK

At last, the history book mystery of "Hernando Cortez, the sexiest conquistador in Spain" has been solved.



BLACK

"Everyone will die."

"shear off heads in a welter of blood, bone and glistening mucus"

MONSTERS

Most of the time you'll be facing the Sleg, evil lizard-men with a dastardly agenda. However, you'll also run across more awe-inspiring enemies and wildlife – there are plenty of huge dinosaurs to get in your way...



BLOOD AND GUTS

There's plenty of this in Turok Evolution, so you'd better get used to being awash in warm, sticky giblets and slimy headguts. Revolting – but fun.

WEAPONRY

Not for Turok boring real-life guns – no, here you'll be treated to the delights of the Flechette Gun, Flamethrower, Spider Mine and Plasma Cannon. Not all the weapons are particularly useful, but they're laugh-out-loud fun and gruesomely effective.

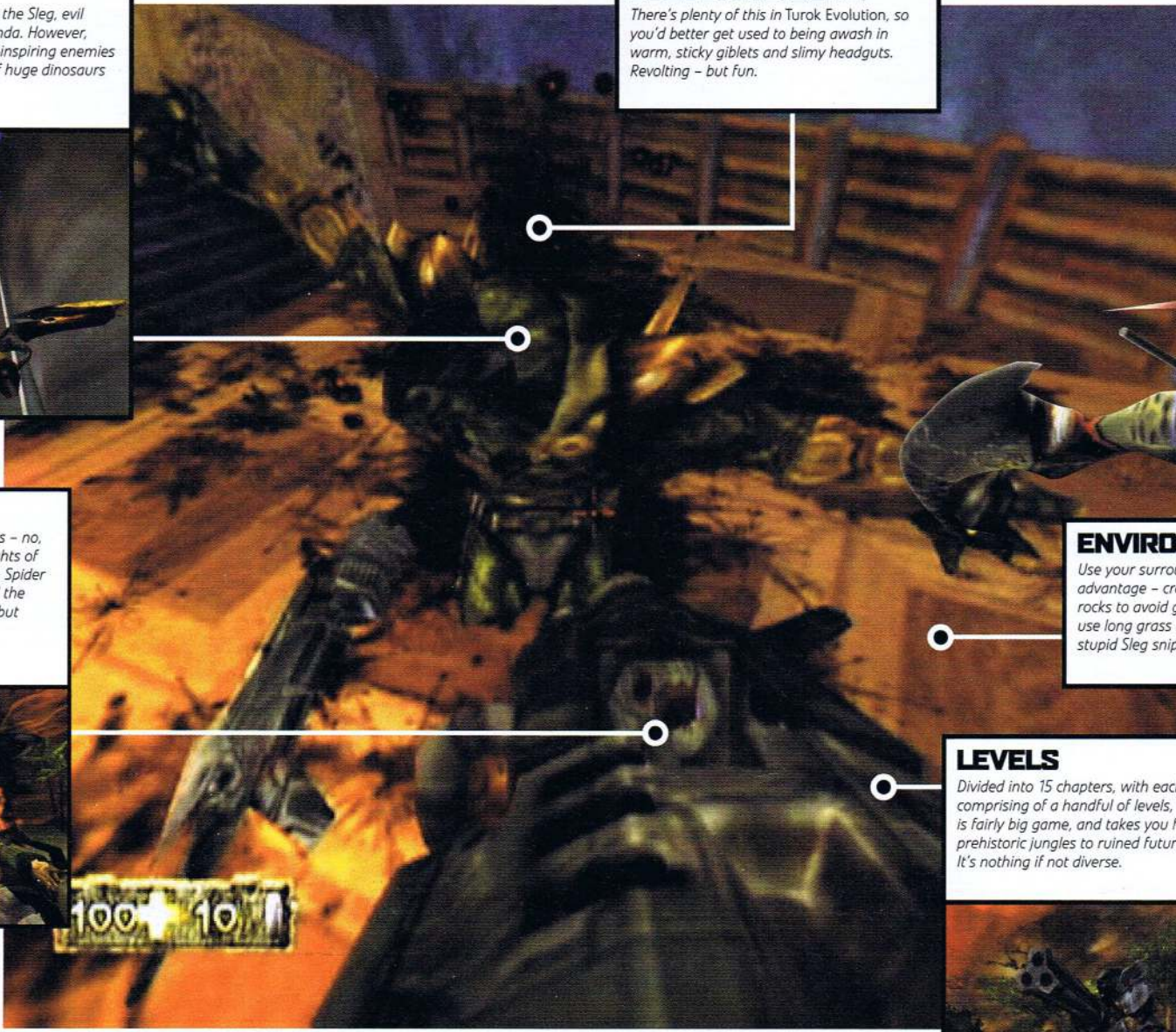


ENVIRONMENT

Use your surroundings to your advantage – crouch behind rocks to avoid grenades and use long grass to hide from stupid Sleg snipers.

LEVELS

Divided into 15 chapters, with each chapter comprising of a handful of levels, Turok Evolution is fairly big game, and takes you from steaming prehistoric jungles to ruined futuristic warzones. It's nothing if not diverse.



INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM
PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?

Turok Evolution will be out by the time you read these words. Well, these words, then.

COST: £40



TUROK EVOLUTION

Jurassic larks! Is the return of everyone's favourite dinosaur hunter good enough to avoid extinction, or just a mouldy old FPS fossil?

TUROK EVO

Pure, no-frills killing with Gamecube's Mr T



△ The plasma cannon has three different uses. Here, the Chain upgrade fries a group of Sleg assault troops.



△ The shotgun is devastating in close-quarters combat.



△ The trusty Plasma Cannon once again saves the day.



△ The Minigun attachment is great fun. Consisting of a mighty eighteen barrels, it makes a right mess out of enemy monsters, shredding them into a fine red mist. It's an upgrade for the Flechette Gun, itself quite effective.



△ Take off an enemy head and this is what you get...



GET INTO THE GAME

Let the slaying commence!

LEVEL ONE

There's no training mode as such in *Turok Evolution*, although the first level is designed so as to give the player a chance to get to grips with the controls (which are tight and well-implemented), and is fairly simple and easy. There's even a spot of platform jumping to get you in the mood – and a smattering of enemies to take out with your bow or pistol. You can even take pot-shots at the pteranodons, but just watch out for the triceratops – she'll charge you go if you go near her or her baby.



If it's gratuitous violence you're after, you've come to the right place.

More than anything else – and *Turok* has given us plenty to enjoy, over the years – it's the guns that the series is famous for. Over four games on the N64, and now this, *Turok* has been a byword for stupidly entertaining weaponry and ludicrous amounts of overkill. Not for our dinosaur hunter the subtle delights or stealthy shadow-play of *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*; rather, there's a preoccupation with giant saurian beasts, nuclear-powered munitions and the ability to shear off heads in a welter of blood, bone and glistening mucus. The *Turok* series has always been a champion of bigger and brasher over refinement and finesse, and *Turok Evolution* is no



"The killer baboons aren't particularly inspiring"

SHOOT YOUR FRIENDS

As is traditional for *Turok* games, *Evolution* features a four-player blastathon...



OPTIONS

With plenty of game modes on offer – including old favourite Monkey Tag – there's death aplenty for up to four players to visit upon each other to get your teeth into here. It's tragic that there are no bots, though – something that *Turok: Rage Wars* on the N64 managed to effectively employ.



LEVELS

Thankfully, the multiplayer levels aren't ripped straight from the main game – rather, they're "inspired" by the areas you'll uncover in the single-player as Tal'Set. It's nice to have some lush jungle levels to play in – although the addition of player-baiting raptors is an annoyance.



WEAPONRY

Brilliantly, you can start a game with each player tooled up with all the weapons for maximum carnage. However, some of them don't work so well in multiplayer (such as the Spider Mine), although the Swarm Bore forces the victim to sit and watch its effects take hold...



FLYING

You can even boot up an air-based multiplayer game, with players swooping around the place on enormous pteranodons shooting seven bells out of each other. As good as it might sound, though, it's slow and sluggish and none too thrilling at all – a missed opportunity if ever there was one.



△ Sentry guns can take quite a pasting.



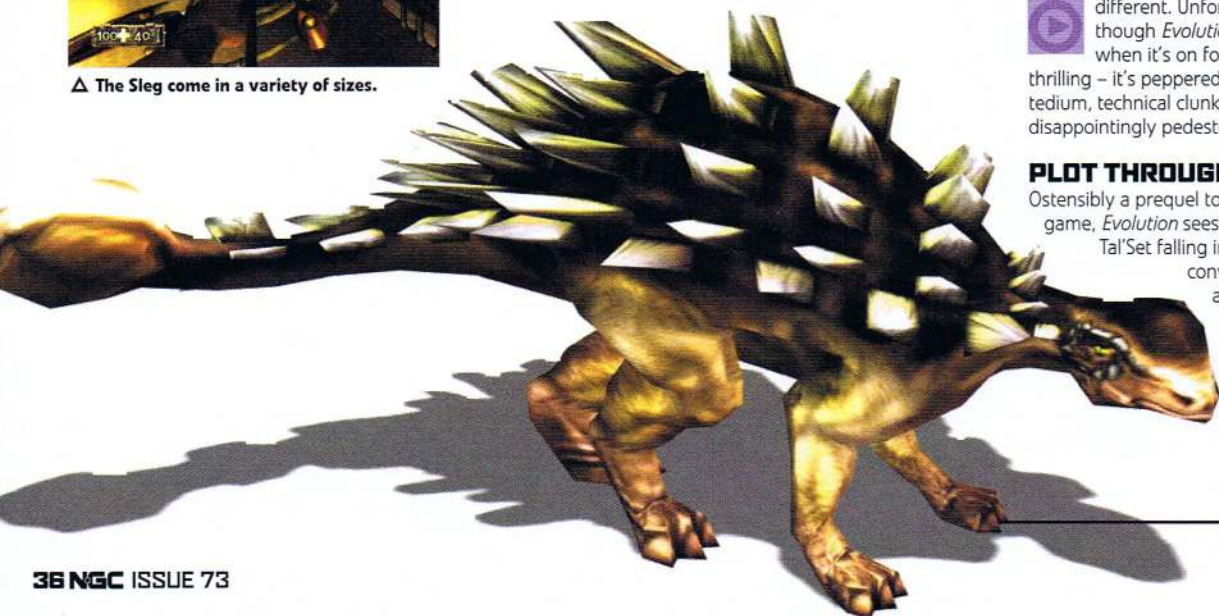
△ The Sleg come in a variety of sizes.



△ The levels that see you advancing up a mountainside are rather fun.



△ This fellow isn't too happy at having his dinner interrupted. No, he's not.



different. Unfortunately, even though *Evolution* does a lot right – when it's on form, it's downright thrilling – it's peppered with moments of tedium, technical clunkiness and some disappointingly pedestrian gameplay.

PLOT THROUGH THE HEART

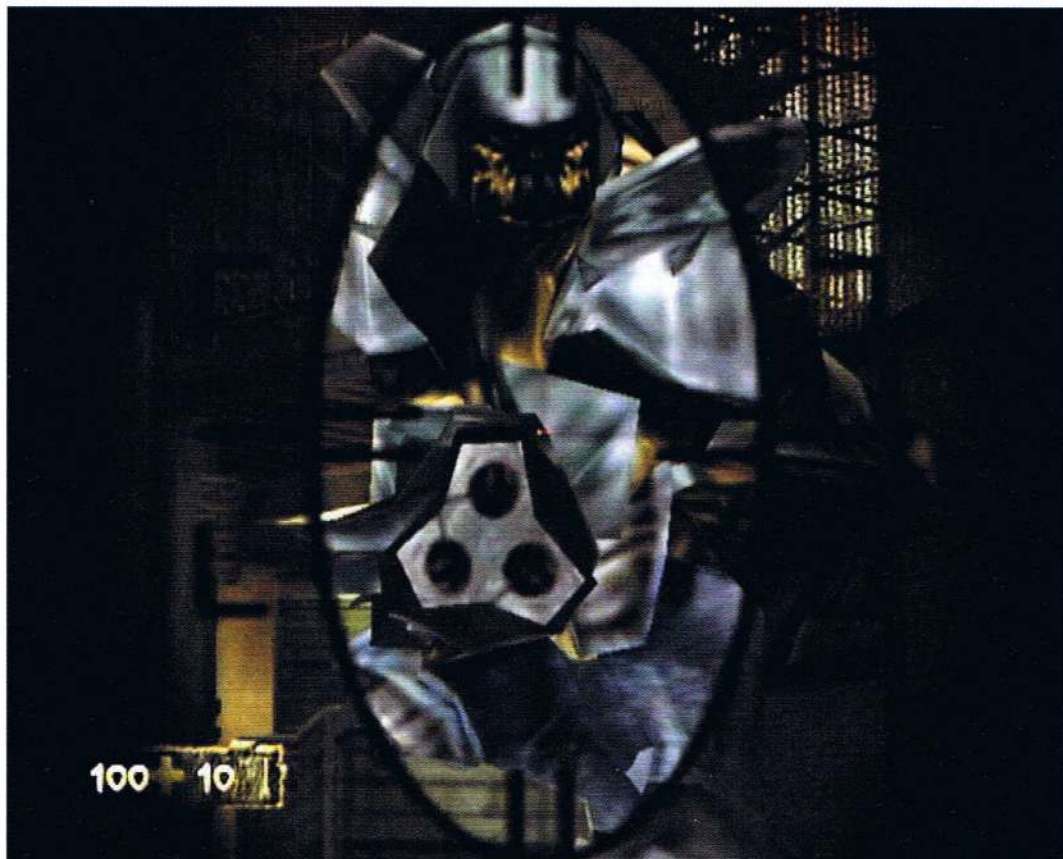
Ostensibly a prequel to the N64's first *Turok* game, *Evolution* sees Native American Tal'Set falling into the Lost Land (a convergence of worlds and collision of prehistory and futuristic technology) in pursuit of the genocidal Captain Tobias Bruckner.

Our hero is then thrown into conflict with the dinosoid Slegs, who wish to conquer the Lost Land, and assumes the mantle of Turok.

That's about it for plot – which is, frankly, more plot than the four N64 games put together – as *Turok Evolution* is more about mowing down legions of bad guys than indulging a well-wrought narrative. From here, the game follows a trajectory familiar to players of the previous games – it starts off in lush Jurassic jungles populated by a variety of wildlife (including impressively-rendered and imposingly large dinosaurs) before straying into sci-fi territory and discarding giant reptiles for endless waves of identikit lizard-men soldiers. The change in tone leads to some alarmingly generic levels later on; for instance, the Assault chapter, which is an otherwise tremendous

TUROK EVOLUTION

Pure, no-frills killing with Gamecube's Mr T



△ Sniping in *Turok Evolution* is an utter joy – the humble pistol has a great scope, but the Tek Bow is more effective.



△ Once again, the delightful shotgun takes out a Sleg.



△ The grisly after-effects of the Swarm Bore. Not pretty.



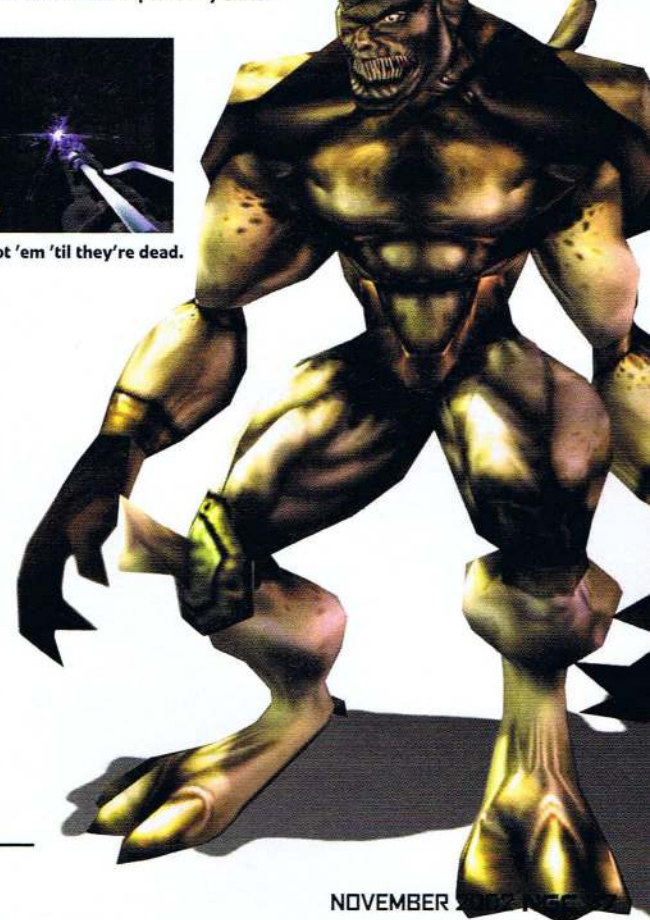
△ Deep inside the Juggernaut, you'll be up against the odds and no mistake.



△ You'll often be accompanied by allies.



△ Shoot 'em 'til they're dead.



DIFFERENCES

Turok, for the first time, is now available on multiple consoles. The GC version is pretty respectable, while the PS2 version suffers terrible jerkiness and muddy visuals. The Xbox version, it has to be said, is the best of the lot, with some stunning sound, a consistent frame-rate and improved visuals.

storming-a-city scenario, is marred by segments of seen-it-all-before firefights in featureless rooms and courtyards. But for each slip into generic FPS fare, there's something else chock-full of atmosphere.

awful water and jarringly primitive-looking climbing-vines are two minor examples – detract from the whole. The killer baboons aren't particularly inspiring, either, and the fact that Sleg soldiers are hidden by the

TUROK EVOLUTION IS MORE ABOUT MOWING DOWN LEGIONS OF BAD GUYS THAN INDULGING SOME SORT OF WELL-WROUGHT NARRATIVE

The opening levels make for a decent start. Acclaim have tried to make them as teeming and arboreal as possible, with Raptors slinking through the undergrowth, and Stegosaurus grazing the tall grass. It's lovely stuff, even if certain details – the

copious flora is either hugely annoying or a good reason to play the game with a certain amount of care and observation.

THE FLYING GAME

The gradual move into the more



TUROK VS TUROK

With a long history of stupidly big guns, how does *Turok Evolution* stack up against past glories?

ENERGY WEAPONS



Turok Evolution's Plasma Cannon has three different uses, the best of which fires an energy blast that arcs from one enemy to the next. Highly useful if you find yourself in a crowded room.

The original Turok's Particle Accelerator could be charged up – and at full power froze enemies to the spot, shortly before exploding them in a shower of charcoal chunks and blinding light. Excellent.

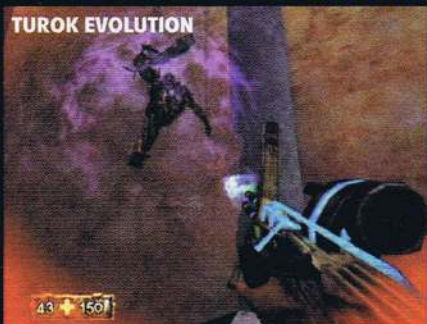
BURROWING WEAPONS



The Swarm Bore, of course, is Turok's most recent piece of grisly hardware, taking enemies apart in several places at once as tiny drill-bits home in on an opponent's body. Bloody.

The infamous Cerebral Bore was simpler but arguably more enjoyable – siphoning the blood from an enemy in a sticky fountain, complete with runny brain-juice and a pleasant final explosion.

UNUSUAL WEAPONS



GRAVITY DISRUPTOR

This personal tractor beam allows Turok to 'capture' an enemy and bash him into walls, ceilings and his mates. What's left afterwards isn't a pretty sight at all, with limbs missing and plenty of blood.

PFM LAYER

Lays mines that, when tripped, leap up and explode, neatly scything enemies' legs off at the knees. Turok 2's predilection for showing bone poking through shattered flesh was exemplified here.

VORTEX WEAPONS



DARK MATTER CUBE

Thrown like a grenade, the Dark Matter Cube emits a churning, seething mass of light and energy – any nearby enemies will be sucked into it, expiring shortly after. Great fun in multiplayer games.

PSG

Short for Personal Singularity Generator, this precursor to the Dark Matter Cube utilises a similar 'sucking' effect, with the added bonus of nearby scenery – and you – being drawn into a mini black hole.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS



FUSION CANNON

Sends a giant ball of death rolling slowly into the distance, where it explodes in blinding light, sending back devastating shockwaves. Turok 1's high point.



NUKE

Simply and logically titled, Turok 2's biggest gun was a more extreme version of the Fusion Cannon, and was just as stupid a case of overkill. Great fun.



NUKE 2

Turok Evolution's ultimate weapon is also simply titled 'The Nuke'. We won't spoil it for you, but it's the second upgrade for the rocket launcher...

TUROK EVOLUTION

Pure, no-frills killing with Gamecube's Mr T



△ The Gravity Disruptor sends enemies flying backwards – handy when you're being crowded.



△ The Flamethrower's secondary function sends three balls of sticky napalm a-flying. Ouch.



NGC FIELD OF PLAY

Enter a world of pain and giant lumbering lizards with *Turok Evolution*...

MONSTER WORLD

Like the *Tyrannosaur* in the main picture, there's plenty of indigenous wildlife in *Turok Evolution*. The very first levels contain stegosaurus, triceratops and giant lowering brachiosaurus. Although the T-Rex must be felled with a few judicious shotgun blasts, his larger brethren shrug off gunfire like light rain. Don't bother wasting ammo on them.



EYES OPEN

The enemies in *Turok Evolution* aren't too dumb. They'll use scenery to hide behind – a prime example being crouching behind a rock and chucking grenades at you – but the environment can also obscure them due to visibility reduction. The long grass in the first few levels is a case in point. So be careful, and use your sniper scope when you can.

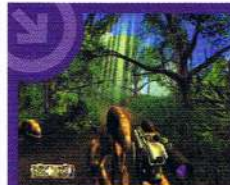
industrial areas of the game – and the ultimately, and disappointingly, generic sci-fi emphasis – is handled well. Unfortunately, you've got the much-mooted flying levels in between; it's not that these are bad, rather that they're not a hugely exciting novelty and are horribly

and targeting enemies is fiddly. That said, there are moments of genuine awe – swooping over a herd of herbivore dinosaurs, Jurassic Park-style, or, in one particularly memorable moment, destroying a dam and hurtling almost vertically down over white-water rapids and jagged rocks.

TUROK OFFERS BOG-STANDARD FPS THRILLS ENLIVENED BY GIANT GUNS AND HORRIFIC DEATH ANIMATIONS

overused (the initial levels drag on for far too long, culminating in a tiresome fight against a giant airship). Controlling your prehistoric mount is predictably loose – you have a huge turning circle so you've got to react pretty far in advance of any obstacles,

There are also attempts to introduce a little variety to the rest of the game, which offers fairly bog-standard first-person shooter thrills enlivened by giant guns and horrific death animations. You can smell *Halo* all over *Turok Evolution*; given that the



CONTROL

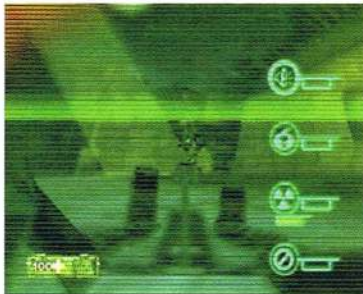
Unlike the wildly swinging gunsights of *Turoks 2 and 3*, *Turok Evolution* is tight and responsive with some excellent analogue stick control. However, there's a definite lack of options, with only two control types available, that simply swap the analogue and C-stick functions. It's hugely disappointing if your preferred method isn't catered for.

Xbox-based shooter is widely hailed as the best thing since *GoldenEye*, it's no surprise that Acclaim would take some inspiration from it. For instance, there are many appearances of military vehicles (which unfortunately you can't control), and levels where you're accompanied by CPU-controlled soldiers. There's also a token stealth level – the Infiltration chapter – which sees you sneaking into a Sleg compound. It's fairly unsurprising stuff – avoid the soldiers and shoot out searchlights – but it's well implemented and refreshing when compared to the unrelenting gunfire that typifies the later levels of the game.

MY IDEA OF GUNS

Which brings us, unavoidably, to the weapons. Previous *Turoks* have all excelled in imaginative ways of

"Evolution is both a joy to play, and a chore"



△ The Spider Mine is absolutely great.



△ Slegs with flamethrowers aren't nice.



△ The standard Rocket Launcher is immensely destructive.



△ The Gravity Disruptor in full effect. That Sleg will be on his back in a few seconds.



△ The Tek Bow comes with three different types of arrows.

COME FLY WITH ME

The flying levels make a welcome change from the relentless shooting and jumping, but they're overused and aren't brilliantly implemented, due to the fact that pteranodons aren't the most responsive of 'vehicles'. After the first set of levels, culminating in you reaching a cliff-top station where your saurian mount awaits, you're ensnared in an over-extended flying sequence that has its moments but is far too long. The loading times are annoying, too.



dismembering enemies, and *Evolution* is no exception. Although some of the guns have little in the way of practical applications – the Swarm Bore is great for a laugh, but hardly helpful when you're facing a Sleg platoon – there are others which prove to be surprisingly tactical. The Gravity Disruptor utilises a shockwave that throws enemies backwards, which is incredibly helpful. Even some of the more outlandish weapons are useful. The Spider Mine can scuttle off to distract enemies with audio recordings, emit lethal gas, or explode – great for disposing of sentries. Nothing, however, can quite beat the Antigrav Beam, which allows you to ensnare an enemy in a tractor beam and then use him as an ersatz



MONKEYS!

Those of you with longer memories may remember the scampering monkeys from the original *Turok*. Try as we might, they just couldn't be shot. However, you're in luck this time around, as all manner of wildlife can be eviscerated – even the tiny frogs explode with a scarlet splat. Pleasing.

club on his buddies. Hysterical. The weapons, however, wouldn't be half so much fun if their effects weren't so graphically evident. Take off a head with the pistol's sniper attachment and there's a gout of blood; pellets of flesh fly when a Sleg is disposed of at point-blank range with the shotgun; the air is filled with a claret mist when the Chain Gun lets rip. It's wonderfully gory, although some of the invention from previous *Turok* death-animations is missing. The Swarm Bore, as fun as it is, really just creates more blood – *Turok 2*'s Cerebral Bore was arguably more gleeful in its application, where liquefied grey matter accompanied the inevitable blood-fountain. It's all perfectly serviceable, and disgustingly fun to watch, it's just that

TUROK EVOLUTION

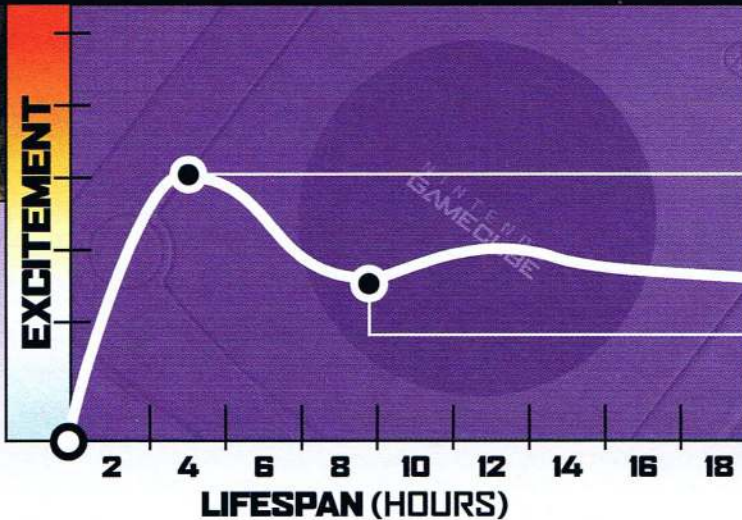
Pure, no-frills killing with Gamecube's Mr T

NGC EVENT-O-METER

Saurian slaying presented in a handy visual aid



Turok Evolution is all over the place – it starts off OK, then seesaws from there, with great set-pieces alternating with dull shoot-outs and tedious flying, and there's far too many generic SF-style levels. The dinosaurs are good, though.



HIGH POINT
Shootin'
When Turok is on top form, during some great action sequences, there's loads happening and there's plenty of blood.



LOW POINT
Generic
Some dull, identikit levels that could have been plucked from any old shooter. Where's the old Turok individuality?



▲ The Infiltration level isn't too bad, but a little relentless. You'll be bored by the end.



▲ Setting fire to enemies and surroundings is a noble pastime in *Turok Evolution*.



▲ See those headguts fly! You can pump up the shotgun with the alternate fire button, allowing you to let off four shots in one go when you've found the appropriate upgrade. Painful.

there's a nagging feeling that things were more dramatic before; the first *Turok*'s human warriors would stumble back, gargling and holding their necks as blood spurted – here, Slegs clutch a bloodied stump and just slump to the ground.

The enemy AI also suffers by comparison. There's manifestly less wit on show than in, say, *Turok 2* again. Slegs cower and retreat when shot, and they often use scenery to

hide behind. All well and good given the leaps and bounds taken by videogames since – however, in *Turok 2*, an embattled Endtrail would stand up and engage a cloaking device, but not before looking directly at you and cheerily waving goodbye. It was much more cinematic, and much more fun. *Turok Evolution* lacks this twisted good humour, and without it, it comes off as po-faced as any other serious shooter, adding to the game's sometimes generic nature. *Evolution* simply isn't as individual as its predecessors.

SHOOT TO ILL

Evolution is ultimately a disappointment. The parts you'd expect to be fun – the silly guns, the ability to dismember enemies – are highly enjoyable, and there is certainly a lot



SNIPING

Any shooter worth its salt these days features a sniping mode, and *Turok Evolution* is no exception. Indeed, sniping is one of the best things about the game – both the pistol and Tek Bow can zoom in, and it's brilliantly executed. Perfect for those all-important head shots.

to love here. But taken as whole, the game is uneven. In places it's quite ordinary – it could be just another first-person shooter – and by turns, you'll find *Evolution* both a joy to play and a chore, with decent levels spoiled by yet more flying, or another lazy shoot-out, punctuated by some shockingly long loading times and a distinct lack of polish. Indeed, technically, the game is pretty ragged, but when it wants to, it runs smoothly and quickly. The multiplayer is perfectly serviceable but undistinguished, and it's an unforgivable sin that it's not as good as *Turok: Rage Wars*.

Acclaim is synonymous with *Turok*, and as their major franchise, it's inevitable that another sequel will appear. Here's hoping that the next *Turok* is better than this one.

JES BICKHAM



- Fantastic weapons.
- Hectic, gore-filled blasting action.
- Plenty to see and do.



- Occasionally tiresome.
- Can be very bland and ordinary at times.
- Horribly repetitive.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Agent Under Fire
Nintendo
NGC/70 70%
Not-bad Bond shooting, with smart driving bits too.



7 VISUALS

Clean, but lacking in lighting and texture detail. A bit flat.

8 SOUNDS

Great music and sound effects (and surround sound, too).

6 MASTERY

Technically ragged, but nonetheless fairly smooth and fast.

7 LIFESPAN

A meaty single-player game, plus extensive multiplayer options.

VERDICT

A frustrating mix of the good and the bad, the first next-gen *Turok* is something of a disappointment. Better luck next time.

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

71



"The artistry behind the characters and environments is fantastic"

HEALTH AND ARMOUR

Looks very similar to the GoldenEye HUD. The blue bar is your armour gauge, the orange your health. Run out of both and it's curtains.

ENEMIES

There are loads of different kinds in TS2 because of the different time lines. Gangsters, cowboys, aliens and robots all make an appearance to make your life a time-travelling misery.

SIGHTS

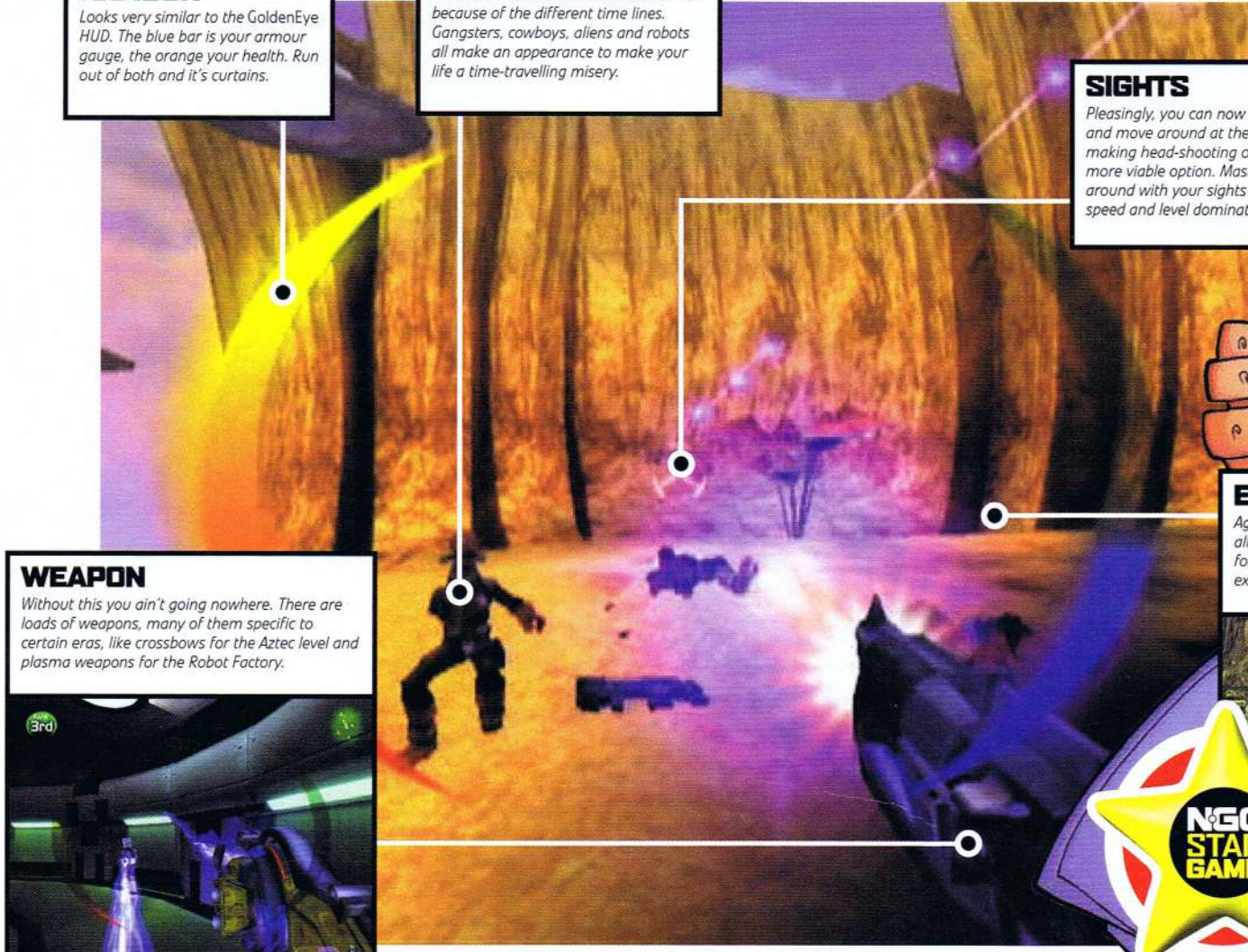
Pleasingly, you can now bring up a sight and move around at the same time, making head-shooting on the move a more viable option. Master running around with your sights on for ultimate speed and level domination.

ENVIRONMENTS

Again, thanks to the time-travel element they're all wildly different. Get used to using your terrain for the best possible advantage - scenery, for example, protects you from gunfire. Yes.

WEAPON

Without this you ain't going nowhere. There are loads of weapons, many of them specific to certain eras, like crossbows for the Aztec level and plasma weapons for the Robot Factory.



TIMESPLITTERS 2

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	FREE RADICAL
PUBLISHER	EIDOS
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	8
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
24th October in the UK - in other words, around about the time you're reading these very words...

COST: £40



Splitting heirs! The son of *GoldenEye* does Poppa Bond proud in this year's most essential shooter...



△ The Atom Smasher opens in typical cheesy Bond-movie style. Wait for the laser to swing around so you can make your escape.



△ You can grab fire extinguishers off the wall to douse flames. If you shoot the metal casing it will spin around jettling foam. Neat!



△ There's no denying that, while fairly small, the environments are very impressive.



△ Shoot monkeys with crossbows? Oh yes...



△ Mind you don't get outgunned there...



△ Each weapon is appropriate for the era of level you're in. In this case, the robot-paralysing Electrotool.

MAGIC MOMENTS

Timesplitters 2 has more great set-pieces and features than we dare mention...



OGRE BATTLE

Just when you think the action is going to let up, this screen-filling boss ambles through the cavernous interior of Notre Dame and shoots neon death at you.



BREAKOUT

This ace set-piece has you blowing your mate out of prison by wheeling a cartload of TNT to the back wall and igniting it with a trail of gunpowder.



ALIEN ATTACK

We love this kind of thing. After being stranded on a mysterious alien planet, you have to fend off a sustained wave of bug-eyed aliens with gun turrets.



MONKEY MADNESS

Simian maiming reaches new heights - like in this Dambusters-style minigame that involves ripping exploding chimps apart with 4,000 rounds a second.



FOUR-PLAYER FUN

You can't beat sitting around with three of your mates for a spot of slaying. There are loads of original minigames to keep you playing into next year.



GET INTO THE GAME

Haven't we been here some time before?...

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Story mode is where you'll want to start off. There are three levels of difficulty, with each offering a slightly different take on the level you're playing. The opening dam-based level takes you gently into the game. Giving you a sniper rifle from the word go (sound familiar, anyone?), so you can have the satisfaction of popping the skulls of patrolling guards right from the start. If you've ever played GoldenEye - and we assume you probably have - you'll feel right at home.



In light of this month's *Turok Evolution*, one thing has become abundantly clear. When it comes to successfully combining imagination with sheer quality, not all developers are capable of delivering. In this respect, Free Radical deserve a round of applause. Not only has *Timesplitters* improved substantially over its predecessor, it has actually surpassed some very high expectations.

Taking the original *Timesplitter's* time-travelling premise, this new instalment answers the criticisms levelled at the first game, and expands the idea further to offer a meatier single-player adventure. You take control of one of two marines. After chasing the *Timesplitters* to their station in the far reaches of space, the 'Splitters divide up the time crystals between them and jump into

their portal, sending them to different points in time and space. It's up to you dive into the portal after them and chase them down to retrieve the crystals before it's too late.

FREAK OR UNIQUE?

Unlike in the first game, the Story mode is just that - a story. Before the game begins, and between every mission, you're treated to cut-scenes that utilise the in-game engine and it's here that you begin to realise just how accomplished and stylish the game really is. Free Radical Design's talent for, well... design, is nothing short of exceptional. The artistry behind the characters and environments is fantastic. Underneath all the slick animation and technical mastery lies the kind of raw, creative talent that we love to see in games, but rarely do.





"There are loads of on-the-spot objectives to keep you on your toes"



NGC FIELD OF PLAY

Each level brings a refreshing change of pace and unique atmospherics – this is our favourite...

STEALTH AND STALKING

The opening section sees you following a girl to her hideout. Using the tracking device, you have to avoid the gaze of the police cars and the street cameras. The final information-finding 'puzzle' at the end of your trek is especially smart.



MUSIC TO OUR EARS

The brooding atmosphere in this level is wonderful – mainly because of the excellent music in general. With more than a passing resemblance to the likes of *Blade Runner* (scored by Vangelis, fact fans), this level is one of the most memorable in the game. Utterly lovely.

SHOW REEL

Many of *Timesplitters 2*' cut-scenes owe a great deal to films and ropery old TV series. From *Blade Runner*, *The Matrix*, *Bond* and various unmentionable 60s-style sci-fi and espionage flicks, there are loads of cheeky parodies of the game's many influences... some of which will have you regularly chuckling to yourself. Top stuff.



Timesplitters 2 has a unique, comic-book look that pervades every level. Yet despite each location and theme being wildly different, everything is consistently stylised – no one level ever feels as though it doesn't belong in the game. Whether you're infiltrating the opening dam level, sneaking around the rainy streets of Tokyo or disarming bombs in the Atom Smasher, the subtle blend of gangster chic, cheesy sci-fi, 70s spy movies and cyberpunk remains throughout. This, combined with a fantastic score, results in an absorbing game dripping with atmosphere that is a genuine joy to experience.

GOLDENEYE-SPY

Given Free Radical's pedigree, comparisons to *GoldenEye* are, legitimately or not, bound to be made. Despite the different underlying theme and design of *Timesplitters 2*, there

are still plenty of parallels that can be drawn with regard to Rare's N64 classic. There are some obvious visual similarities, such as the health and body armour gauges that curl around the centre of the screen and flash up every time you're hit. The in-game pause menus are also reminiscent of *GoldenEye*, as is the bullet quota in the bottom right-hand

side of the screen.

Other similarities, however, are much more subtle. The smooth pacing of your movement for one, feels very similar. The behaviour of the CPU opponents – while obviously more intricate – are also quite

GoldenEye in terms of their reactions to hits and their evasive manoeuvres. Furthermore, the clean (almost simple) textures on the environments and the spooky variations in the score and spot-effects all combine to give *TS2* a comfortably familiar feeling.

The general structure of *Timesplitters 2*' missions is also quite familiar – but there are

THERE'S A SUBTLE BLEND OF 70S SPY MOVIES, GANGSTER CHIC, CHEESY SCI-FI AND CYBERPUNK

a number of interesting differences. While each level has a set number of primary and secondary goals to achieve, which end with you retrieving a time crystal – there are also a number of on-the-spot objectives to keep you on your toes. Take the Chicago level as

3 TIME YOU GOT A WATCH... A bright-red 'Time Ball' on top of Flamsteed House in Greenwich drops daily at 1pm. It's one of the world's earliest public time signals, 'distributing' time to ships on the Thames.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

Shoot your way through time with the GC's heir to *GoldenEye*...



DODGE AND WEAVE

Enemies can prove very tricky to hit. Not only can they run and turn their torsos to shoot, they (successfully) use walls to shield themselves, hold defensive positions, and roll and sidestep effectively to avoid well-aimed shots. Their aim is also pretty nasty – especially on Hard mode – so don't expect these guys to be a pushover. There is one gripe with the enemies, though. For some reason, especially when they crouch behind corners, some shots to their body don't seem to register from time to time. Odd, that.



an example. When you start off, your main objectives are to drain whisky barrels and minimise civilian casualties, but as you work through the level you'll be required to turn your attention to more pressing matters. Like gunning down an escaping vehicle Buggy Malone-style, answering a payphone for a mid-level rendezvous, and then protecting your informant from waves of nasty gangsters.

STAY FOCUSED

Each of the ten main levels are actually quite linear. There's very little in the way of freedom to explore, or means of approaching situations in a variety of ways (although there is some scope for tackling things differently). Instead, levels are tightly focused journeys through a variety of involving mission objectives and smart set-pieces. In some, you may just have to gun



CUSTOMISED CONTROLS

The default controls aren't as good as we initially thought. The fire button – R-button – sits directly above the C-stick, which is used for aiming. Unfortunately, when you shoot, you can't help but move the C-stick, putting your aim off. As a result, you'll probably have to customise the controls – which can take some getting used to initially.

down any opposition that stands between you and your destination. Other missions require you to flip switches, collect keys, protect mission-critical characters from enemies or – better yet – sneaking your way into sensitive areas by avoiding cameras, or wasting hordes of approaching baddies with handy gun emplacements.

As well-worked as many of these moments are, they certainly aren't without their faults. For some reason, they don't seem quite as free-form as those found in the likes of *GoldenEye*. Not that *GoldenEye* was particularly free-form itself, it's just that *Timesplitters 2* feels that little bit more scripted. What's more, while *TS2* has a number of great set-pieces, it lacks the kind of defining moments that made *GoldenEye* so memorable – such as shooting the toilet-based guard's hat off from the vents of the Facility,

TEST THE BEST

Too easy for you? Try these extra challenges on for size...

MONKEY

Devilishly difficult. Loads of monkeys run in and out of cubby holes and in between crates. Armed with a sniper rifle, you have to shoot the fruit out of their hands without killing them, intercept them from blowing up your dam with an enormous chain-gun, or even blast them out of the air with a shotgun in a clay-pigeon style shootout. Excellent stuff.



GLASS SMASH

You can't beat a bit of senseless vandalism. In this challenge you have to leg it around throwing bricks through as many windows as you can as quickly as you can. There's also a challenge that allows you to run around Notre Dame launching glass explosives through the stained glass windows – one of those challenges you can waste many, many hours on.



UNDEAD

One of the more satisfying aspects of *Timesplitters* is blowing the heads off zombies. In these challenges you get to waste increasing hoards of undead that shuffle slowly towards you in greater volumes, and from varied directions. Things can get pretty frantic after a while, but you can't beat these when it comes to total beheading pleasure.



BANANA CHOMP

Brilliant! It's like Pac Man – except in 3D, and er... with a tracking device, and with bananas replacing the pills. Using your tracker, you have to navigate the mazes and nab all the bananas in the allotted time, while avoiding the prowling enemies. Sounds easy, but with zombies and the like blocking your path, you'll certainly have your work cut out.



INFILTRATION

Again, armed only with a tracker, you have to sneak around to your objective by avoiding enemies and cameras. Your tracking device shows the viewing cones of cameras – much like in *Metal Gear Solid* – but this is still no pushover. Some sections are particularly dense with surveillance equipment, and only a keen eye and perfect timing will see you through.



STORY

These challenges are a little more wide-ranging, offering little mini-scenarios with objectives to beat, such as this 'hospital' one, where you have to 'take out' undead 'patients'. Others include taking on the role of a nutjob who thinks he's a robot and a guy who has to fetch his bus pass and respirator, while whacking a load of crack troops with a sniper rifle. Odd.





"You can save your levels on memory card to frag mates on later"



LONE WARRIOR

If you haven't got any friends, you can still indulge in a spot of deathmatch action against bots of varying difficulty levels. All the multiplayer games can be played solo, and setting up matches for play on your own is a good way of practicing for your next multiplayer session. It's also a good way of testing out any arenas and challenges you've created yourself - allowing you to tweak them to perfection before smacking your mates on them.



SECONDARY TACTICS

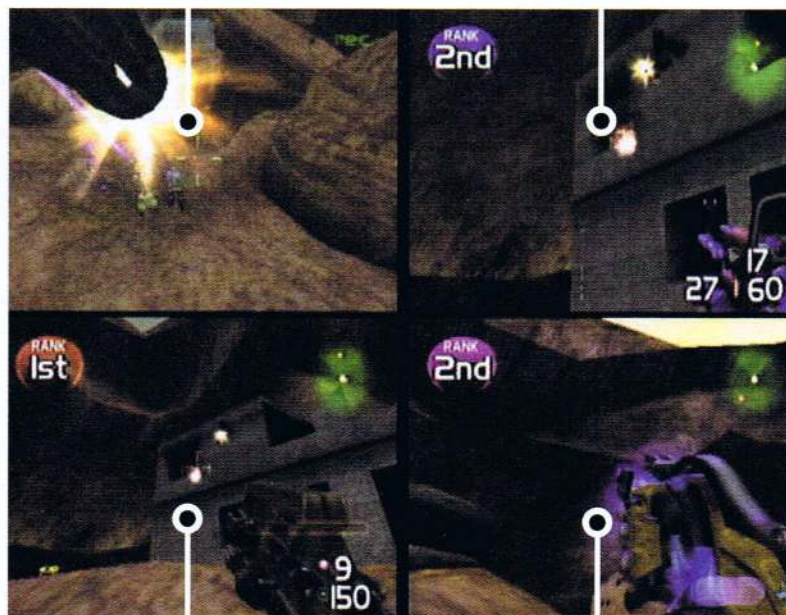
For those special moments when a high-speed barrage of 7.62 ammo simply won't cut it...

HAPPY CAMPER

Okay, so it's not a secondary fire option. But it's worth mentioning. Dotted around some levels are remote gun turrets connected to console screens, that allow you to safely take part in a battle raging elsewhere in a level.

GRENADE LAUNCHER

Check for any skirmishes going on around a corner or in a pit below you, and bounce these explosives into the fray. With practice one well-placed grenade can take out multiple opponents in one go. Priceless.



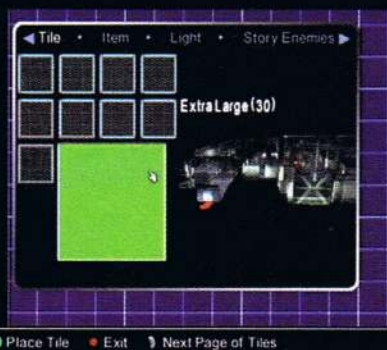
STICKY PLASMA PAIN

Being chased? Do a cheeky 180-degree turn and lob one of these in your pursuer's face. It'll stick to him until it, and they, explode. If you're on the receiving end, chase down your opponent and catch him with his own blast.

ELECTRIC STREAM

If there's anything that will annoy and demoralise your opponent, it's this. Not the most powerful secondary weapon, but it will paralyse your enemy in a constant stream of life-draining lightning. Slow and painful.

BUILD YOUR OWN BUNKER



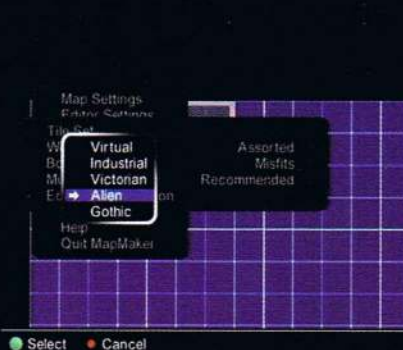
TILE TIME

You start with a blue grid - maps are made from tiles which you piece together. Here's one of the bigger pieces - but to begin with, it's best to start off with basics like corners, corridors or small rooms. Piece them together to build your level.



PILLAR PROBLEMS

Starting with the large room down the corridor from the prisons (left), we found getting the basic layout was pretty simple. Trouble is, a lack of simple options means that pillars fill the corner of every basic tile you've placed. How annoying.



WALLPAPER

Once you've got a substantial portion of your map made up, you may like to select a wall texture for the levels. Unfortunately, there aren't very many textures to choose from, which tends to make your levels seem rather uniform.



FIRST LOOK

You can preview the level and have a wander about to check your handiwork from a first-hand perspective. In this instance, we're walking down the corridor to the stairs leading to the main control room where all the monitors would be.

NEW WAYS TO DIE

Timesplitters 2 has more than enough minigames to keep you shooting into the AM...



THIEF

A bit like the Dreamcast's *Outrigger* - frag someone and they drop an icon that gives you all their kills.



LEECH

A smart idea - you can only heal yourself by inflicting damage. If you're dying, you have to fight.



MONKEY ASSIST

Brilliant! If you're languishing in last place a gaggle of monkeys steam in to help you out!



SHRINK

You can't beat a good leveller in games. The lower your rank, the smaller (and harder to hit) you get.



FLAME TAG

If you're on fire, tag someone as soon as you can, to take the heat off yourself. Insane.

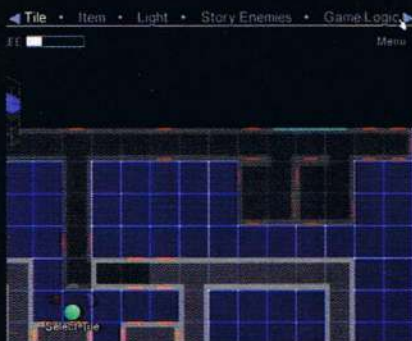


ZONES

Pass over the marked zones and then defend them from others for as long as you can.



Check out the basics of the Mapmaker as we try to create Goldeneye's Bunker.



UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

Including stairs (or in this case, ramps) allows you to create levels with more than a single floor. The stack on the left indicates which level you have selected for editing. Lower levels are subsequently blacked out as you move up.



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Once you've finished your level, it's time to light it. This is one of the most comprehensive features of the editor, allowing you to phase, flicker and colour lights at any speed or intensity you please - instantly adding oodles of atmosphere.



FINISHING TOUCHES

To finish up, choose where the respawn points are, add extraneous items such as crates, barrels and so on, and throw in some weapon pick-ups. If you want to create a single-player game, you can also put in guards to patrol the level.



LEVEL OUT

Once you're satisfied it's time to test your level. There's so much scope with this feature that it'll entertain you for hours. You can even save your levels to memory card and take them round your mate's house for a spot of fraggagge. Genius.

"There are loads of bang-sticks to get to grips with"



△ Chicago. Far and away one of the most stylish and atmospheric levels.



△ By the look of where that barrel's pointing, you might as well give up the idea of producing any future offspring.



△ With one robot already giving you grief and four more beaming in to finish you off, we'd say your days are numbered. Still, with seven plasma grenades left, you're gonna go out fighting.



△ This is one of those points in the game that you'll have trouble getting through without losing too much health, as you get caught in a skirmish between two groups of aliens.

or blasting enemies in the face from point-blank range in the claustrophobic Train section. The result is a series of levels that will entertain you in *exactly* the same way every time (depending on the difficulty setting), which makes us wonder whether or not the single-player will hold your interest for as long as *GoldenEye's* did. But it's not worth dwelling on – aside from that, *Timesplitters 2* is a brilliant shooter.

STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

But enough of the *GoldenEye* comparisons. There's plenty on offer in *TS2* that sets it apart from every other FPS available. First off, a special mention has to go to the weapons, insofar as they're *really* satisfying

to use. Whether it's a basic pistol or a double-barrelled shotgun, you always have the impression that you're wielding something with real power behind it – which is a lot more than can be said for certain other shooters we can think of. The

FROM ANTIQUE PISTOLS TO SPACE-AGE PLASMA RIFLES, THERE ARE LOADS OF WEAPONS TO PLAY WITH

range on offer is also very impressive. From antique pistols and rifles to space-age plasma rifles that send energy beams bouncing around corners, there are loads of bang sticks to get to grips with, and many

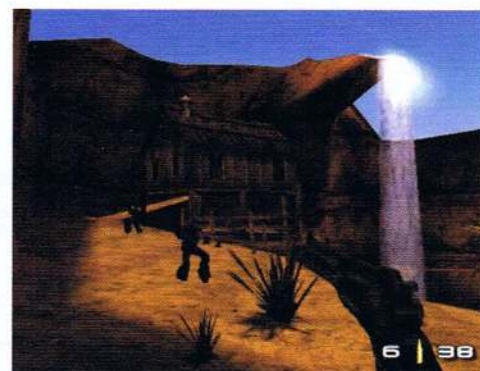
come with secondary functions that offer a genuine tactical alternative.

As far as the single-player is concerned, one more aspect really did it for us, and that's the level of difficulty. Normal mode itself offers a meaty challenge – especially

on the later stages – but hard mode will really test your abilities to the full. Demanding pinpoint accuracy against some punishing opponents, together with extra mission objectives, you'll be tested at every



△ You can't argue with stills like that – just look how well designed it is. LOOK AT IT! Beautiful stuff indeed.



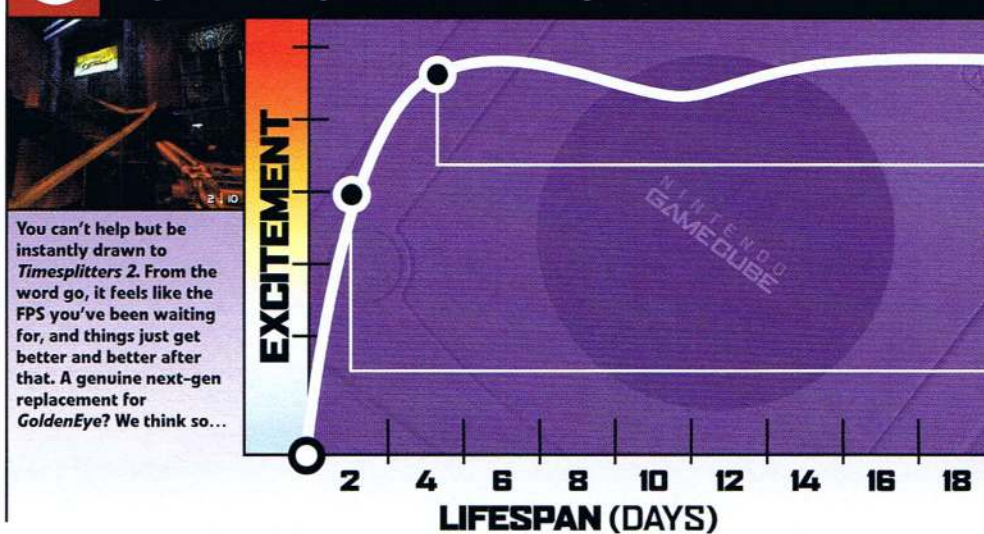
△ The Wild West level uses old-style pistols, rifles and shotguns – each level's weapon styles are appropriate.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

Shoot your way through time with the GC's heir to *GoldenEye*...

EVENT-O-METER

The highs and lows of being an international time-travelling assassin...



You can't help but be instantly drawn to *Timesplitters 2*. From the word go, it feels like the FPS you've been waiting for, and things just get better and better after that. A genuine next-gen replacement for *GoldenEye*? We think so...

HIGH POINT
Cyberpunk
Reaching Neo Tokyo and realising, you've half the game left to play, and heaps of challenges waiting for you once you're done.

LOW POINT
Too... hard...
Moments of minor frustration, where missions lapse into insanely difficult sticking points that you just have to trudge through again and again.



▲ Shoot the barrel near the bottom to empty it.



▲ Fight your way past these fellas to beam aboard that crashed UFO... easier said than done, that.

turn. More importantly, the game is rarely unfair, so the scope for improving your skills (to be used in multiplayer) is ever present.

Which brings us, finally, to *Timesplitters*' finest hour. Not content with a few tacked-on afterthoughts, Free Radical have also included a fun-packed hoard of extra goodies. The unlockable challenges alone, are superb and perfectly pitched towards that inescapable "just-one-more-go" syndrome – making them even more addictive than those found in *Perfect Dark*. There's also the all-important multiplayer, a brilliantly accessible map editor, and a two-player co-operative mode available on any level you've completed. These additions in themselves are worthy of release on their own, and will consume your gaming hours



CHECKPOINT GNARLY

There are some specific points in *TS2* that are exceptionally tough and frustration can set in quickly. Thankfully, there are checkpoints to help matters somewhat, but failure for the umpteenth time still means trekking through certain sections for the umpteenth time. On *Hard* mode this can get pretty demoralising.

long after you've destroyed the Story mode. But out of them all, it's the multiplayer that really got us excited. This is the only four-player split-screen shooter that even comes close to the kind of experience *GoldenEye* provided on N64. All the maps are well-designed and thought out, offering wide open spaces, maze-like corridors, fixed gun turrets, killer sniping points and environmental features ripe for insane running gun-battles. Everything, as you'd expect, is customisable. From the weapons you use, to the skill levels of the bots, there's enough tweaking potential here for you to tailor the experience as you want it. But the crowning achievement is the smoothness, speed and intensity with which it all runs. The frame-rate, no matter how much

insanity is taking place, very rarely jars or ever threatens your enjoyment.

Timesplitters 2 has delivered, and in more ways than one. The team behind it have obviously thought long and hard about every facet of the game and haven't stopped for tea until they've tweaked it to near perfection. The single-player, the deathmatches, the extra modes, the challenges and the Mapmaker all combine to create a game so comprehensive that it grabs you by the lapels and screams "buy me!" in your face. It's rare that any one game can offer so many hours of entertainment on the one disc – and it's for this overarching reason that you can't afford to miss it. Outstanding.

GERAINT EVANS



- Superbly designed.
- Well-focused levels.
- Brilliant multiplayer.
- Great map editor.



- Single-player can be quite linear.
- Why can't you shoot lights out any more?!



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Turok Evolution
Acclaim
NGC/73 71%
The second-best FPS on Cube – but lame compared to this.



9 VISUALS

Brilliantly designed characters and truly original environments.

8 SOUNDS

Atmospheric music and meaty FX appropriate for every level.

9 MASTERY

A brilliant take on the FPS genre making full use of GC's hardware.

10 LIFESPAN

You'll still be playing this one six months down the line.

VERDICT

A challenging single-player, stupidly addictive multiplayer and a whopping-great lifespan. Buy this game right now!

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

92

"It's like pulling stunts on an endless half-pipe"

THE SCORE

Works much like other extreme sports games. Includes combo scores and bonuses for hitting a perfect landing straight down the wave.

YOUR BOARD

Starting with the kind of basic bit of wood that surf parents probably let their kids mess around on, you can upgrade to all sorts of fancy new boards.



THE TIMER

Counts down the time left until the wave hits the shore. You never actually reach the beach though – instead the game just stops when the time limit expires.

THE TUBE

The hollow inside of the curling wave is a good place to carve out the kind of tricks that are sure to look spectacular in the replay mode.



INFO BURST

DEVELOPER TREYARCH
PUBLISHER ACTIVISION
PLAYERS 1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES 14
GBA LINK-UP NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
WIDESCREEN NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?

Kelly should be riding the Gamecube wave in the US right now, and over here from October 27th.

COST: £40



KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

Sun, sea and stunts as Kelly Slater makes a bid to become the Tony Hawk of surfing.

Being a professional surfer is a tough old life. You've got all sorts of things to worry about, such as who's going to look after the condo in Florida while you're spending a couple of weeks at the beach apartment in Hawaii, and whether it's time to trade in the Ferrari for something more practical, like a helicopter.

Here's the game that gives you a chance to live out the sun-kissed dream, without any of that day-to-day pressure. You get a very nice boat, an assortment of watery locations, and gameplay that's effectively like pulling loads of stunts on an endless half-pipe while being chased by the world's most powerful toilet flush.

There have been plenty of surfing games in the past, with various unsuccessful attempts at designing a workable surfing control method. *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer* consigns all those plastic fingerboards and fiddly, dual-analogue systems to history's dustbin, demonstrating that all you really need to do to make a decent stab at any extreme sport is adapt the tried-and-tested *Tony Hawk's* technique.

POINT BREAK

The game drops you in a calm area of water, where a magical swell is about to rise. You stand on the board, catch the wave, and spend the next couple of minutes swooshing through the surf in a pleasingly



SURF TUBES

Tubes, see, because they're surf dudes and there's two of them, and... Anyway, you can play three different modes against a friend, if you fancy some simultaneous surfing. You can't knock each other off though, and all the games are about getting high stunt scores.

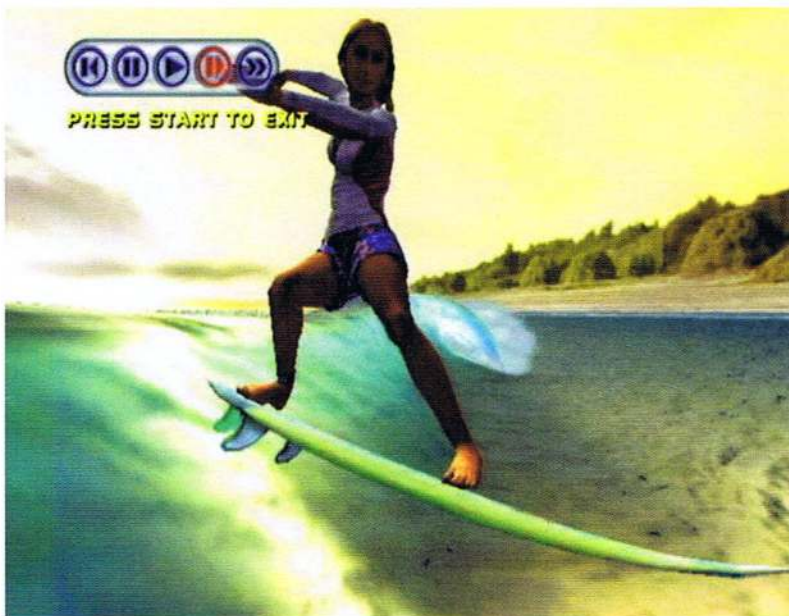
controllable sort of way, dipping in and out of the onrushing tube when you start getting confident.

You can launch clean off the top of the wave to do aerial stunts, or try riding right inside the tube, pulling kickflip-style moves that would plainly be impossible on a real-life surfboard, but do look suitably stylish when you've got a Gamecube controller in your hands.

The stunts are reasonably simple, and anyone familiar with the standard skateboard way of doing things won't have any trouble setting some decent early scores and unlocking the first few locations. The softness of the water makes a welcome change from the clatter and drone of wheels



▲ You don't have to balance on the board, so the challenge is in performing big tricks.



▲ The best thing about the game is when you put together some stunts, maybe dip in and out of the tube a few times, then sit back and listen to the music as you admire the slow-mo replay.



▲ Sometimes, just sometimes, this game looks really spectacular.



▲ Hold Z to get this dramatic camera view looking behind your surfer.

KELLY SLATER'S

Gamecube waits for the perfect wave...



- Very smooth and easy to play.
- Relax and watch the half-speed replays.



- Grainy video clips.
- Water effects aren't the greatest.
- A bit limited.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Aggressive Inline
Acclaim
NGC/72 81%
Or roller-skating, as we used to call it in the pre-Tony Hawk days.



6 VISUALS

Not bad, but the water looks like jelly compared to *Wave Race*.

7 SOUNDS

A surprisingly mellow and varied soundtrack, with 24 songs.

5 MASTERY

Doesn't look as wet as it should, and there are some dodgy effects.

7 LIFESPAN

You'll probably come back to it just to chill out on the ocean.

VERDICT

A stylishly presented, liquid take on a very familiar genre. Hardly the deepest, but certainly the coolest game of its type.



75

BLUE JUICE

The ways of the wave, according to Kelly Slater and his pals...



AYE AYE, CAP'N

Kelly and the gang travel the world on a multicoloured hippy boat, sailing to the far corners of the globe in search of waves.



VIDEO NASTIES

There are loads of video clips to unlock, with commentary by Kelly himself. Sadly the grainy picture is a long way from DVD quality.



BOARD STIFFS

There are several genuine stars of the surfing world available for your pleasure, including one tramp and a woman made of plastic.



WATER RUDE BOY

Surfing etiquette means nothing here. If you want to rake your fins over swimmers and windsurfers alike, you're more than welcome.

on concrete, encouraging experimentation with new moves and playing techniques.

However, because it's just set on a great big wave there aren't very many of the

WIPING OUT

Surprisingly for a game that's based entirely on the sea, the water effects aren't hugely impressive. The surface looks like plastic and

YOU CAN LAUNCH CLEAN OFF THE TOP OF A WAVE FOR AERIAL STUNTS, OR RIDE RIGHT INSIDE THE TUBE...

extra distractions you'd normally associate with this sort of thing. Other surfers do crop up from time to time, as do obstacles such as piers and buoys, but *Kelly Slater's* is essentially a long ride towards a beach you never actually get to see.

the spray kicked up by the board looks angular and artificial, nowhere near as good as *Wave Race*. Wiping out produces a chunky, low-res splash effect and bubbles that don't behave like bubbles should.

Having said that, it doesn't require much



WHO HE?

Kelly Slater is the most famous and arguably the best surfer around, having made millions of dollars from the sport. NGC's resident surf boy Paul gives Kelly a big thumbs-up, but expresses his disappointment that the hero of extreme off-shore surfing, Laird Hamilton, is not in the game. Bogus.

suspension of disbelief to make *Pro Surfer* look extremely good in the replays, and the soundtrack suits the action down to the ocean floor.

Surf enthusiasts will appreciate the video clips, revealing Kelly's insights into the locations you're about to surf, although the low-quality compression used makes them look rough around the edges.

Other unlockable extras include hidden boards and areas, plus there are two-player contests and a comfortably paced tutorial mode that's sure to send you out onto the 'real' waves with a decent range of skills.

It's the best surfing game ever, if that means anything. Have a go for yourself.

MARTIN KITTS

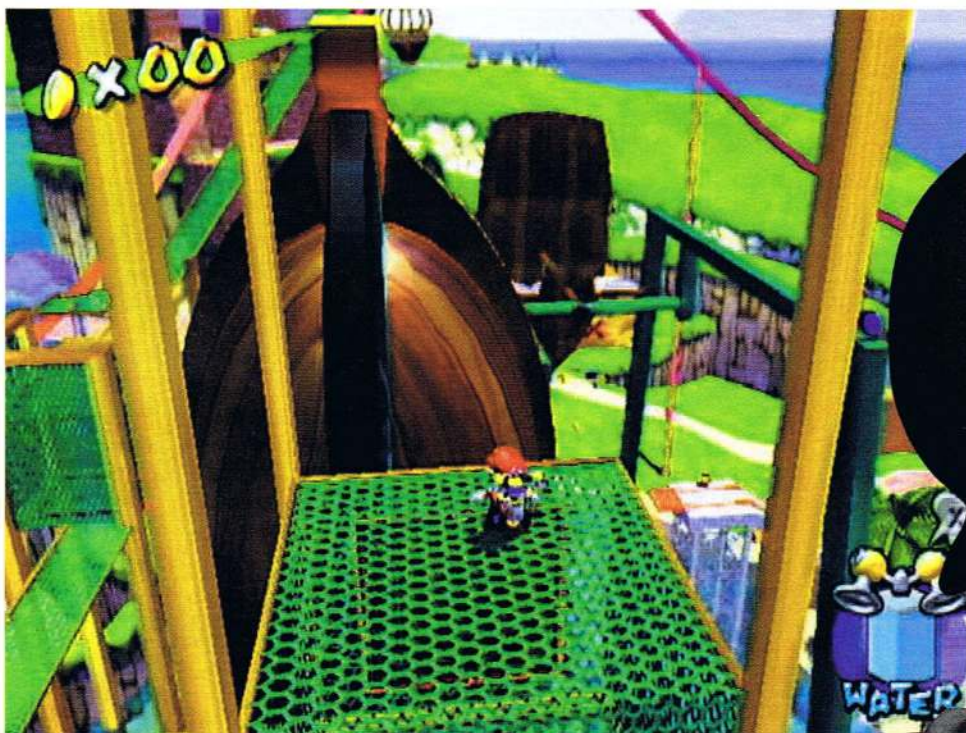
"Mario is a tool so flexible that he can do virtually anything"



△ The game is full of brilliant, throwaway touches, like this swing – use your backpack to make it move.



△ This gorgeous sun-blessed place is Sirena Beach. *Mario Sunshine* sure is a beautiful game indeed.



△ You'll have immense fun working your way around Pinna Park – it's the Alton Towers of Isle Delfino. The two huge swinging ships can help you grab hard-to-reach coins.



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	NINTENDO
PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	7
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?

October 4th in the UK - that'll be right about now, then. What are you waiting for?

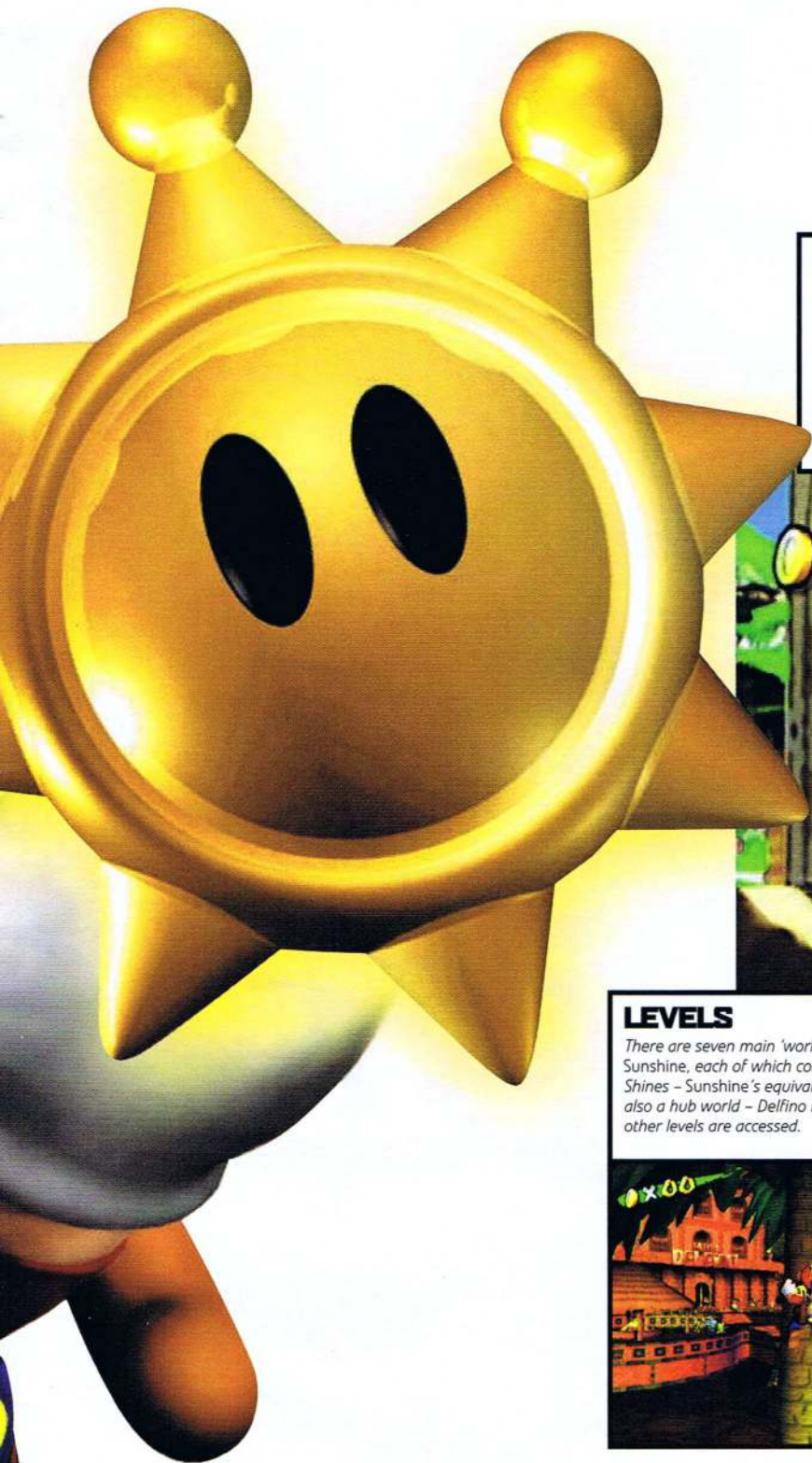
COST: £40



Shine on! Summer might be over, but the sun always shines in Mario's latest classic adventure...

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

The six-year wait is finally over...



MOVES

Perhaps more than ever before, Mario is truly an extension of the joystick. As flexible as you want him to be, the exhaustive and inventive controls enable staggering permutations of the run/jump combo.

SECRETS

There are secrets galore in Super Mario Sunshine. Beyond completing the more obvious objectives in return for Shines, constant exploration brings great rewards – if you want to truly finish the game there's plenty to find.



LEVELS

There are seven main 'worlds' in Super Mario Sunshine, each of which contains a number of Shines – Sunshine's equivalent of stars. There's also a hub world – Delfino Plaza – from which the other levels are accessed.



BACKPACK

Unlike previous Mario games, our hero is equipped here with a water-powered backpack; there are four different nozzles available, each of which has a specific function. All are invaluable throughout the game.



GET INTO THE GAME

Become a Mazza Master in no time at all...

SHINES

Get running and jumping and find those Shines. There's no training mode in Mario Sunshine – rather, it's just a case of jumping in at the deep(fish) end. As with most Mario games, you're eased into the game – and the first 'level', which sees Mario's holiday-destined plane and sets the scene for what's to follow, is designed specifically to help you get used to Miyamoto's latest epic. You're also free to pootle around the hub, a great way to explore your abilities and try things out.



Imagine this. You find yourself in the maze-like streets of a seaside town, and you need to get onto a rooftop. Do you wander around, looking for a ladder? Wonder if there's a staircase hidden away that you can use? Or do you, unfettered by such a pedestrian line of thinking, find an alleyway, leap straight at a wall, kick yourself away, bounce off the wall opposite and propel yourself upwards to the top of the building, pausing only to get your bearings before long-jumping over to the next house and back-flipping up to the tower beside it?

Mario knows the answer to this. He knows that a dizzying and daunting degree of freedom is infinitely preferable to doing the sensible, boring thing. That running and jumping and pushing the boundaries of

what's possible is the only way to live. Mario's back, and suddenly everything else doesn't really matter.

It's been six years, of course. Six years of pretenders trying to grab a foothold on the pedestal of platforming excellence, six long years only made bearable by such distinguished efforts as *Banjo-Kazooie* and its sequel, and the collection-gone-mad of *Donkey Kong 64*; but for every demi-classic like these there's been a raft of misbegotten abominations that thought copying *Super Mario 64* was the way forward, that simply being three-dimensional would work. They were wrong because they didn't understand what made *SM64* so stratospherically excellent. It's not just a case of making the player jump and spin towards an obvious objective. It's about making the player think.



"SM64 was simply preparing us for the 'purity' of these sections"



△ Cleaning up graffiti is just one of many activities you'll be enjoying in SMS.



△ Yoshi is great fun, although underused. Eat different fruit and he changes colour.



△ *Mario Sunshine* is incredibly difficult at times, mostly when it comes to these super-hardcore pure-platforming levels. However hard it gets, though, you'll still come back for more.



△ Mario 'disassembles' when you enter a world. Pretty.



△ Noki Bay is simply brilliant, and huge – definitely one of our favourite levels.

▶ About making their minds perform that jump to understanding movement in three dimensions, about effectively using movement within those dimensions, and realising that Mario is a tool

were placed just so? It was like seeing for the first time. *Super Mario Sunshine* knows that we've been educated and conditioned enough, that we're no longer the callow youths floored so effectively by the shock of the new. So it does the only thing it can; it

SMS KNOWS WE'RE NO LONGER THE CALLOW YOUTHS FLOORED BY THE SHOCK OF THE NEW. SO IT MAKES EVERYTHING MUCH MORE DIFFICULT

so flexible that he can do virtually anything. Remember when you first realised you could wall-jump? How it suddenly 'clicked' and you started looking at how the objects in this dayglo world fitted together, the relationships between them, and why they

makes everything much harder. If there's one thing about *Super Mario Sunshine* that really sticks, aside from the beautiful worlds and constant surprises, it's that it's often brutally difficult. Sure, it features a well-oiled learning curve, but

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

The six-year wait is finally over...



△ The haunted hotel is great fun – squirt the pink boos to make platforms upstairs.



△ This giant Chomp needs cooling down and dragging into a pool of water. Tricky.



△ The underwater levels often feature tricky movement – but they're jolly good fun.



△ The hover nozzle is essential for extending jumps and reaching high areas.

BRAND NEW, YOU'RE RETRO

Astoundingly advanced three-dimensional thinking required...



Many Shines transport you to weird hanging-in-space levels – and your backpack is stolen, leaving you to your platforming skills alone.



These levels are incredibly hard, and require spectacularly crafted 3D movement, with crazy multi-wall jumps and backflips required.



Many levels recall past glories – listen to the swing-style Mario theme and see the crayon-coloured Yoshi's Island-style backgrounds...



Revisit many of these levels and you get a second chance at Shine glory – hit a switch for eight collectable red coins and a Shine...

when it gets challenging, it's *challenging*. This is most obvious in the hanging-in-space 'void' levels. All you have to do is get from A to B, in order to grab that all-important Shine, but you'll need to use every trick in the book and invent some new ones as well. You'll have to employ spectacularly advanced three-dimensional thinking which, as well as demonstrating that trigonometry is still a valuable skill, demands that you're both able to understand what you have to do and be skillful enough to do it.

THE COLOUR OF MONEY

It's like *Super Mario 64* was simply preparing us for the 'purity' of these sections, which are so focused on the mechanics of three-dimensional movement that they hark back to the pixel-perfect finesse required in the old 2D Mario games. They're quite



YOSHI

Hurrah! You couldn't ride him in *Super Mario 64*, but here he is. You don't get him from the start, though – he'll appear eventually and demand to be fed a certain type of fruit, that makes him the same colour. He's essential for getting access to Sirena Beach and each world features a Shine that you need to use him for.

magnificent, if trying, but are nonetheless only a small part of something that is overwhelmingly rich in the gameplay stakes.

Once again, collecting is the main objective – in this case, 'Shines', *SMS*'s equivalent of stars. In each of the game's seven main worlds, there are eight to find; plus some hidden Shines and an extra garnered from collecting 100 coins, and the hub world (a gorgeous seaside town, analogous to *SM64*'s castle) hosts its own hoard as well. In terms of sheer size *SMS*'s game world may be slightly smaller than *SM64*, but *Sunshine* asks you to do far more as regards exploring and trying everything out. For instance, a large part of the game concerns the collection of blue coins – these can be traded in, ten at a time, for a Shine. Once you've exhausted the main worlds, it's the



"Each of the sun-kissed levels is a paragon of eye-massaging beauty"

SHINE ON

It's all about collecting the Shines. And while Mario Sunshine delights in throwing you the odd curveball every once in a while, you'll find yourself indulging in the odd repeated activity in each world you visit...

NEMESIS

The bad guy behind Super Mario Sunshine – the evil genius who is despoiling Isle Delfino with the demonic graffiti that Mazza has to clean up – appears to be a watery version of Mario (we're not going to tell you his 'real' identity). During each level you'll have to chase him down and squirt him until he gives up a Shine – and he pops up several times in the hub, too...



COINS

Ah, coins. Where would a Mario game be without coins? Nowhere, that's where. As well as replenishing Mario's health, coins can also bestow Shines – manage to collect the full 100 on a given level and you'll add a Shine to your total. However, as you can revisit given Shines within a level, it pays to see which one contains the easiest-to-get coins...



BLUE COINS

Another form of currency, but one that, again, ultimately garners you Shines. A large part of Mario Sunshine involves uncovering Blue Coins – you can exchange ten of these for a Shine in the bear's shop, which you'll find under the entrance to Ricco Harbour. There are hundreds of blue coins in the game, urging you to put your exploration hat on and get out and find them.



BOSSES

Naturally, there are bosses within each level to defeat, but they're different every time. Bianco Hills sees a giant flying Piranha Plant that needs to be brought down to earth; Ricco Harbour has a troublesome squid; Gelato Beach a giant centipede; and Pinna Park a giant mechanical Bowser that needs to be shot while riding a rollercoaster. Really.



△ There's a variety of indigenous beasts to dispatch in Super Mario Sunshine – and since Mario can no longer use his punch, increasingly inventive use of the FLUDD backpack is the only way you're going to get rid of them. You can still butt-slam, though.



△ Yoshi's 'squirt' ability can turn enemies into floating blocks – essential for the tricky eighth Shine on Ricco Harbour.



△ Some of the 'void' levels feature easy-to-reach extra lives, meaning that you can keep yourself going for a little while.



hunt for coins that consumes you – and they're hidden everywhere, in every crevice of the game.

This time around you've got some new equipment to use. Wrongly accused of despoiling Isle Delfino with demonic graffiti, Mario has to clean up the mess with a water-squirting backpack (dubbed FLUDD). While this may not sound particularly exciting, backpack-use is so brilliantly executed that it's always a joy to employ. The default nozzle enables you to squirt water directly ahead while on the move (by depressing the R-trigger fully, you remain stationary but can direct the stream), and the three extra nozzles enable you to, respectively, hover and 'fly' for short distances, rocket straight up or zoom at high

speeds over land and water. Each nozzle is essential for solving various puzzles. As well as adding to the arsenal of moves, the nozzles also act offensively – interestingly, Mario can no longer punch enemies, rather the water blast is his main weapon.

feel is fear. How are you going to survive without it? It's like Mario is suddenly naked – and taking the backpack away from you is another stroke of genius on SMS's part. You're forced to fall back on Mario's innate abilities, dusting down those skills you

THE BACKPACK IS SO BEAUTIFULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE GAME THAT, WHEN IT'S TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU, THE FIRST THING YOU FEEL IS FEAR

PACK FOR GOOD

The backpack is so beautifully integrated into the game that, on the levels that it's taken away from you, the first thing you

mastered six years ago, remembering when exactly to backflip or triple-jump, aware that you've no longer got a well-timed blast of water to recover from a missed jump. It

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

The six-year wait is finally over...



NGC FIELD OF PLAY

There's more than meets the eye in *Mario Sunshine*...



UNDERSEA

While you'll brave the depths to gain coins, there's two Shines that take you deep below the sea surface, and see Mario donning a diving helmet. Grabbing coins keeps your air supply healthy, but the water pressure restricts movement – tricky when you're trying to clean an inky leviathan's teeth...



NOKI BAY

Noki Bay is an utterly beautiful coastal area, situated around a sheer cliff face, and it's a brilliant example of how SMS uses both morphing landscapes and secret areas. It's deceptively small – Noki Bay is an enormous place to explore, and the views are dizzying from the top of the cliff.



WALL MAZE

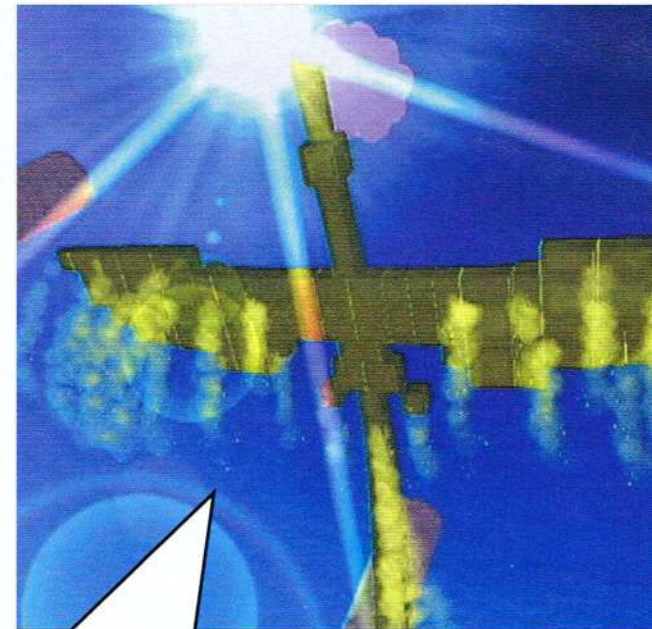
Hit the 'switches' with a water burst and the walls recess and change, leaving vertical gullies expressly designed for some expert wall-jumping. Noki Bay is riddled with these – some are used for specific Shines, others are there for you to explore...



△ Gelato Beach is an utterly beautiful sight to behold. It's here that you'll meet the giant Wiggler.



△ Here's the entrance to the excellent Pinna Park rollercoaster, which you get to ride on twice.



BIG BIRD

Mario Sunshine excels in surprising you at every turn by throwing you into entirely new and unexpected activities. Here you have to collect red coins off the back of a giant stone bird – who starts to flip over in mid-air, necessitating some skillful and well-timed jumping and clambering. The wind whistling around you is a superb touch, as is the dust whipping off the bird's 'wings'.



feels dangerous, and therefore thrilling.

The backpack makes up for the disappointment of the missing wing cap – there's no graceful swooping through the sky in *Mario Sunshine*, which is a shame. But the backpack is more useful than the wing cap, and adds more to Mario's repertoire than you might believe. The fact that it becomes second nature so soon is testament to how well the developers have meshed Mario's new abilities with level design and objectives. You take it for granted, which is why things get so scary without it.

GET EVOLVED

But as good as *Mario Sunshine* undoubtedly is, it's safe to say that it's indeed a case of



SWIMMING

The swimming in *Super Mario Sunshine* has divided the NGC office. Some of us think that that the new system, with A and B making you ascend and descend respectively, is perfectly workable. Others, however, think that it's awful in comparison to SM64's graceful 'flying underwater' system, and can't understand why it's been changed. What do you think?

'evolution, not revolution'. Those expecting a quantum leap in gameplay since *Super Mario 64* will be disappointed; this is rather a refinement of what's gone before, exploring new avenues with the introduction of the water-spray, and following a strong, single graphical theme. The game is singularly gorgeous (those that bemoan the lack of detail are missing the point – Mario doesn't need realistic textures), with each of the sun-kissed levels a paragon of eye-massaging beauty. The water, in particular, is amazing, and not since *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* have we felt so transported to a virtual environment. But the tropical theme, while making *Mario Sunshine* feel unified and complete,

ON THE LEVEL

All the worlds in the game are accessed from Delfino Plaza, the central hub. They're not all available immediately, though – some only appear as you progress through the game...



GELATO BEACH

In the left-hand 'corner' of Delfino Plaza, an enormous lighthouse will rise out of the ground. Butt-slam the top of the lighthouse for a chance to get an extra Shine...



SIRENA BEACH

You'll need to find Yoshi to get access to this gorgeous sunset-dappled area. It contains a haunted hotel, among other things, and is the final 'proper' world.



BIANCO HILLS

The entrance to this level is directly ahead of you when you start the game (after the initial 'level' where the plane lands). Simply jump into the shimmering 'M'.



RICCO HARBOUR

The entrance to Ricco Harbour rises from the jetty near the bell tower. It's not immediately accessible, and is another example of Sunshine's morphing landscapes.



PIANTA VILLAGE

You can't get to Pianta Village until you've caught Water Mario running around with the rocket nozzle. Boost up to the top of the giant structure and pop down the pipe.



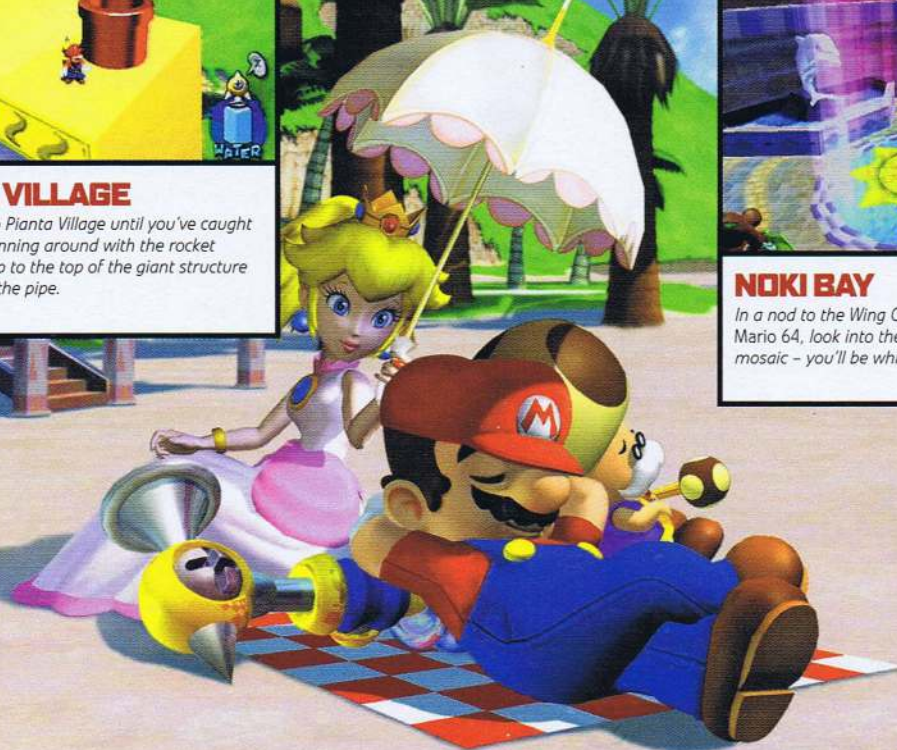
NOKI BAY

In a nod to the Wing Cap Switch Palace in Super Mario 64, look into the sun while standing on this mosaic – you'll be whisked to the level.



PINNA PARK

The cannon on the opposite side of the island will eventually be fixed by the little fellow inside it – get inside and it'll fire you over to the amusement park-style level that is Pinna Park.

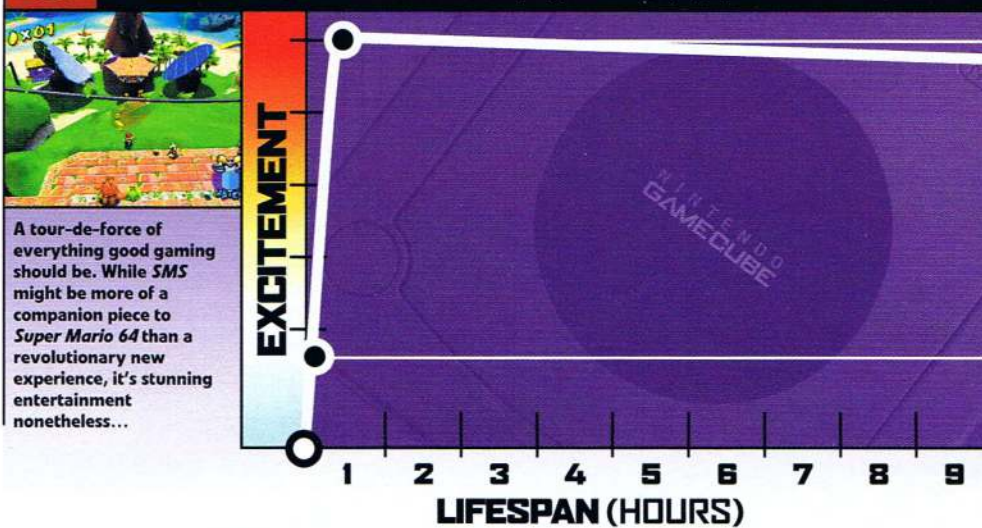


SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

The six-year wait is finally over...

NGC EVENT-O-METER

Mario's insane 3D trickery slapped into a simple graph.



A tour-de-force of everything good gaming should be. While SMS might be more of a companion piece to Super Mario 64 than a revolutionary new experience, it's stunning entertainment nonetheless...



HIGH POINT

Freedom!
When you realise the exhilarating-yet-daunting amount of freedom you've got. The most responsive videogame ever.



LOW POINT

Camera cock-up
The accent on manual camera correction can get irksome. But it's nonetheless flexible enough to not be too much of a problem.



▲ Ricco Harbour is a daunting seaside maze of girders and vertical platforms. It's a real test of your skills, although the rocket backpack makes things much easier indeed.



▲ One Shine is inside that yellow tube – it's a swine to get to, but there's an easy way...



▲ The game's bad guy – but who is he really? We're not saying...

means that the game lacks the abstract inventiveness of Super Mario 64, although the move away from the lava-ice-forest world tradition to a more singular environment is refreshing.

There are other little disappointments, too; many activities are repeated (chasing Water Mario, for example). Yoshi isn't used as much as he could be. Swimming has been needlessly tampered with. Enter a world with, say, the rocket nozzle, and you automatically revert to the hover nozzle when you re-emerge. It's sometimes terrifically hard (although it's hardly ever unfair). And the camera can sometimes give cause for concern, simply because there's more emphasis on manual control here than in Super Mario 64 – the C-stick enables you to rotate and pull out/zoom in the focus, and much of the time you're tweaking the

view, although tapping the L-trigger centres the camera behind you, Zelda-style. Plus, occasionally, it gets stuck behind a piece of scenery and won't budge until you move. And if you've ever played the game in Japanese, you'll realise that an element of mystery is lost in the English translation.

A KIND OF MAZZA

But, ultimately, these are little irritations. We haven't been so absorbed in a game in years, and there are moments that genuinely made us laugh out loud in delight (when you first ride the blooper, for example, or discover you're on the rollercoaster). The key word here is magical, we think – and that's a strange thing to say, as it can't be qualified, or codified, or given a score. Super Mario Sunshine is a genuine, utter delight to play, and with the



THE MYSTERY

As of the time of writing this, there's an unsolved mystery in SMS. On Noki Bay, Shine 3 (where you're in the bottle full of water), you'll find a book lying on the ground, behind the door. What could it be? Does it do anything? If you know, or you've discovered something equally as mysterious in SMS, write in or email us at the usual address.

scope for exploration, discovery, the sheer, giddy freedom to do what the hell you want, and the surprises around every corner... it's breathtaking. And while SMS will never floor you quite like its predecessor, because of our familiarity with everything that's happened in the intervening six years, it's brilliant enough to stand side-by-side with Super Mario 64 and hold its head high. And when was the last time you played anything that could claim that honour?

It took Nintendo themselves to make a game that lives up to Super Mario 64; let's just hope it doesn't take six years for them to come up with something as good again.

JES BICKHAM

+

- Laugh-out-loud, play-all-day fun.
- Gorgeous worlds.
- Responsive controls.
- Tons of new activities.

-

- Occasionally irksome camera controls.
- Unforgivingly hard in certain places.

😊 IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Luigi's Mansion
Nintendo
NGC/67 90%
Class adventure starring Mario's greener brother.



9 VISUALS
Not hugely detailed, but breathtakingly colourful and simply lush.

10 SOUNDS
A perfect sonic jigsaw, from the spot effects to the compositions.

10 MASTERY
Huge game that's meticulously presented and constructed.

9 LIFESPAN
Just finding all the blue coins in the game will take you weeks.

VERDICT
Renders the opposition utterly irrelevant and re-introduces a genuine sense of wonder to the videogame world.

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
96



"Owing to the nature of your work, the rozzers quickly get interested"



△ The Russian hilltop villages provide some cover for your illicit deliveries. Expect a few niggly moments, though, when you're belting along and suddenly smash into a lorry that appears from out of nowhere.



△ Each new level brings with it a new prize: vehicles are the cornerstone of the game's secrets. Like this Honda 5.



△ See the red flare? That's where you're headed with the contraband – and you've only got 14 seconds left.

SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES

Deliverance! Break laws, destroy cop cars and tape illegal goods to the hairs on your chest in Rockstar's staggeringly *huge* racing game...

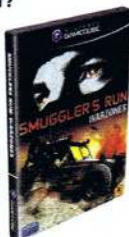
INFO BURST

DEVELOPER ANGEL STUDIOS
 PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR
 PLAYERS 4
 MEMORY CARD PAGES 6
 GBA LINK-UP NO
 SURROUND SOUND YES
 WIDESCREEN NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?

This beauty's out just about everywhere just about now. Handy, that. If you want to buy it.

COST: £40



GET INTO THE GAME

The quickest way to get driving...

JOYRIDE MODE

It's worth having a quick squint at the Joyride option. With no mission objectives and no timer, it gives you a good opportunity to get a feel for the way the environment works, where it goes and how you can use it.

SMUGGLERS MODE

If you were planning on seeing a lot quickly, you'll be disappointed with this mode. But at least it makes your decision easy when it comes to the game proper: you start with the Georgian training missions with the rubbish – and slow – default buggy.



launch game for PlayStation 2, *Smuggler's Run* was an impressive demonstration of what Sony's hardware could handle. With staggeringly

expansive environments unfurling in front of you for miles and miles, and realistic, deliciously bouncy physics, the first game – and, to a lesser extent, its sequel – managed to succeed in fusing what was essentially a technical demo with fast-paced, effective gameplay. The result wasn't perfect but, while it lasted, it was good entertainment.

It follows, then, that this third sequel (of sorts) should up the ante even further running, as it is, off the Gamecube's superior chipset. But, while the environments are still as impressive as ever, and the physics offer arguably even more realism and freedom, you definitely get the feeling while playing



WHAT'S THE FUZZ ABOUT?

You're alerted to the presence of the coppers and/or the army by a stupid robotic voice-over, and it's here that the radar on your vehicle becomes essential. Enemies hide out behind bumps in the terrain and, especially during 'copter drop-offs, it's important to keep an eye on the radar to see where they're going to launch from.

SMUGGLER'S RUN: WARZONES

Drive fast – and illegally – in Rockstar's racer

PLAYING FIELD

In Warzones, fog is used for effect, not to smooth over the hideous sight of pop-up and clipping. When things are clearer, you can see for miles in all directions – and you can probably go there too.



BUGGY BOOGIE

The choice of cars on offer is extensive enough, but it's not necessarily this aspect of the game that will impress the most. Instead, you can marvel at some of the most incredible physics ever committed to videogames. Well, they're very good, anyway. Especially on bumps and hills.

DON'T DROP OFF

In many of the game's missions, you're required to seek out these black helicopters, as they're used to ship and drop off the contraband.



POLICE STOP

These people are not your friends. Er, unless you're playing as a cop in multiplayer. They'll come after you, try to shunt you, try to push you off edges – all in an attempt to stop your illegal pursuits.



ENFORCEMENT DETECTED
CONTRABAND DELIVERED
LAW ENFORCEMENT DETECTED

COUNTER ATTACK

This is where Smugglers Run gets good: once you've seen off a couple of missions, you get to add countermeasures to your vehicle – a push word for weapons and extras, changing the nature of the game.



MOST NOTABLE AMONG THE GAME'S ACHIEVEMENTS ARE ITS LEVELS. THEY ARE HUGE. SEE A MARK ON THE HORIZON? YOU CAN GET THERE

that Warzones that it could – and should – have been much more than it is.

FAR AND AWAY

The game sets you down in the middle of a succession of tasty international hot-spots, including the US-Mexico border, Vietnam and Russia, and sets you the task of finding and 'redistributing' contraband – illegally, of course. Owing to the nature of your work, the rozzers quickly get interested, and so begins the game's chief premise: you must

smuggle packages while avoiding arrest. If the coppers catch you, it's mission over. If they don't, you win the day. It's fairly simple stuff, although additional elements such as helicopter drops and timers are there to spice things up and ensure that, in practice, the game is a lot more taxing than just firing the accelerator and heading off for the hills.

Most notable among the game's achievements are, as mentioned earlier, its landscapes. They are huge. If you can see a mark on the horizon, no matter how far



PLOT THROUGH THE HEART

There's nothing like a good plot – and Warzones' is nothing like a good plot. Told through some truly terrible cut-scenes, where real-life 'actors' put on excruciating Russian accents and comedy Chinese moustaches, it tries to add some flesh to a game that plainly doesn't need a story. Still, it'll keep you entertained. For a while, at least.

away, chances are you'll be able to get up close and personal with it by simply heading in that direction. Only a few games have so successfully created the sort of seamless landscape on offer here. Being able to drive in one direction and not reach an invisible wall is an unparalleled experience. Superbly, this area of the game can be exploited to your heart's content thanks to the game's Joyride option – basically a free ride, where you can choose any of the levels you've unlocked and belt around happily without fear of having your collar felt.

UNLOCK AND ROLL

With each successful mission comes a world of unlockable features. Most notable are the countermeasures, attachments that can be added to your vehicle in order to give you an

DID YOU KNOW? The UK's most renowned smuggling hot spot is The Jamaica Inn on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall. It was later made famous in Daphne du Maurier's yawnsome novel of the same name.

"You will find yourself blessed with – incredibly – the ability to fly"



NGC FIELD OF PLAY

So, how do Warzones', er, warzones work? And what's the best bit?

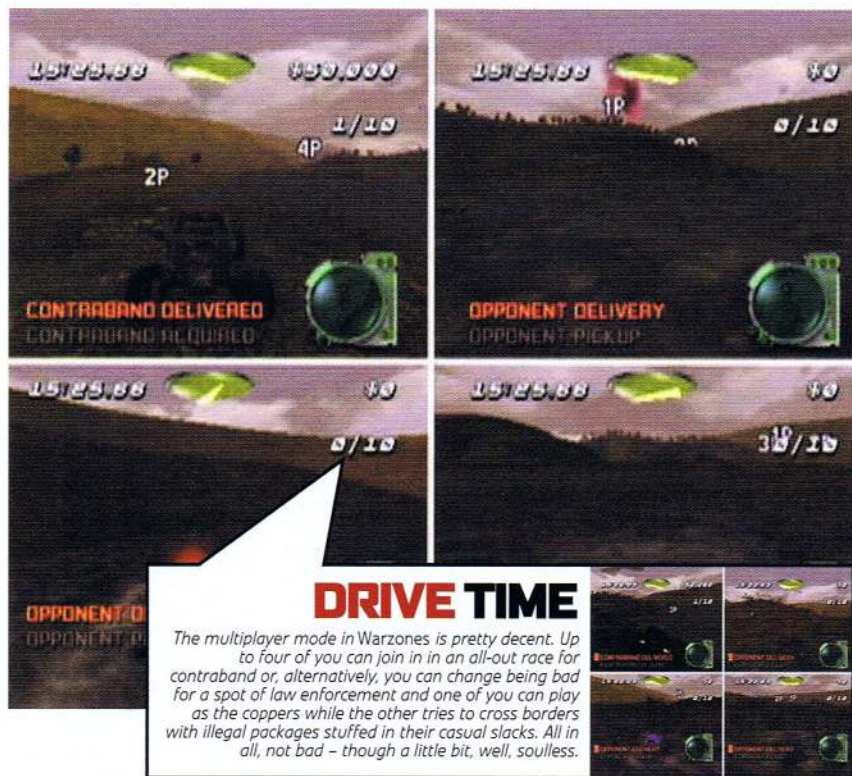
FROM A DISTANCE

See this? See how far away it is? You can drive there. Of course, on the way you're likely to find yourself pre-occupied with some law-related problems, but you can drive to any landmark you see. Incredible stuff.



CHOPPER ATTACK

Despite it looking slightly heroic – like, say, Airwolf – the choppers are actually your mates. Look for them on the radar as these are the places where you pick up 'goods'.



DRIVE TIME

The multiplayer mode in Warzones is pretty decent. Up to four of you can join in in an all-out race for contraband or, alternatively, you can change being bad for a spot of law enforcement and one of you can play as the coppers while the other tries to cross borders with illegal packages stuffed in their casual slacks. All in all, not bad – though a little bit, well, soulless.



▲ Notch up too much damage and you'll find yourself with less control over the vehicle.



▲ This bike (of sorts) is fast as you like, but scrimps a bit on the handling – it's a 'mare.

▶ advantage over your pursuers. Each vehicle gets two countermeasures, operated via X and Y, though you tend not to get them at the same time. The more you play, the more you get. Make your way far enough into the game and you will find yourself blessed with – incredibly – the ability to fly (for a brief period of time, anyway), but the initial batch of countermeasures are much less spectacular, and include things like oil slicks and bombs. These need to be used at the right time and

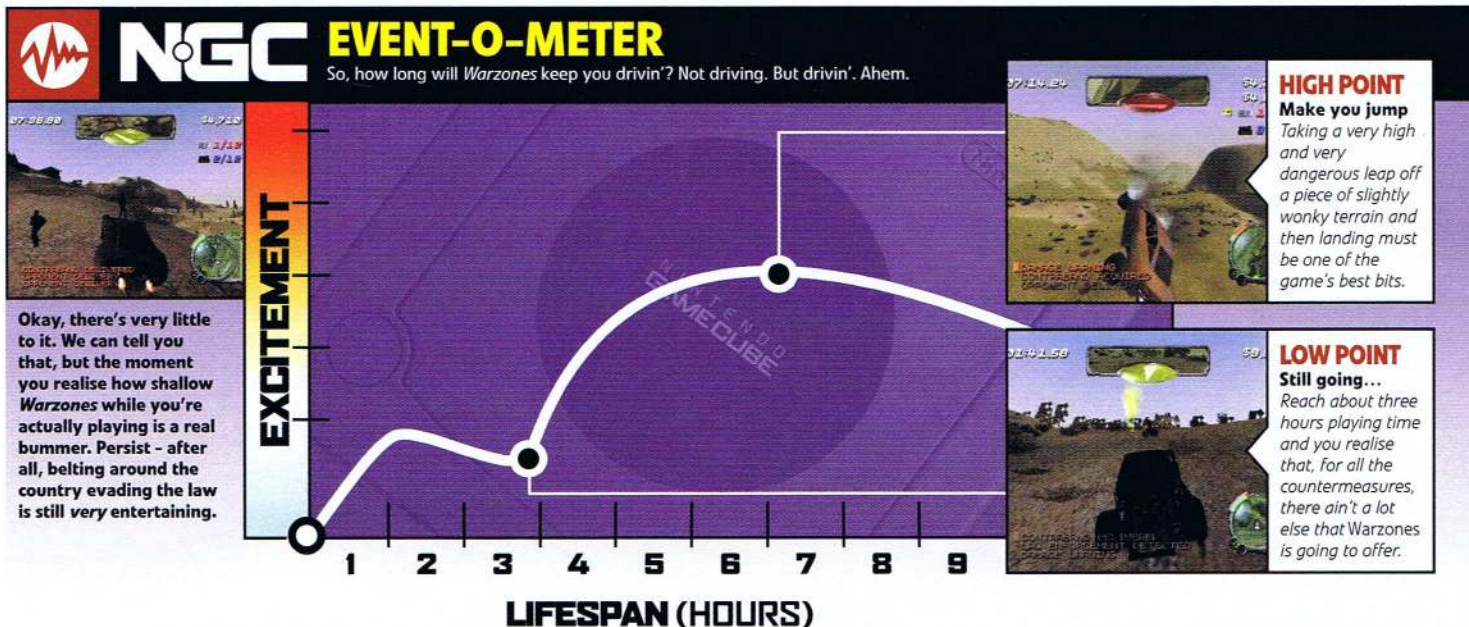
in the right place in order to fend off enemies who, as the game progresses, become increasingly clever, attempting to rear-end or slam into you as you head for a contraband drop-off.

As an idea, the countermeasures offer a nice addition to what's essentially a pretty basic – and repetitive – game. In practice, their use feels totally random and too much of a hassle. Certainly, you'll hardly even bother with the first few you nab (unless the game sets you a mission objective where

IF YOU BUY WARZONES EXPECTING IT TO BECOME MORE COMPLICATED THE MORE YOU PLAY, YOU'RE LIKELY TO FIND YOURSELF DISAPPOINTED

SMUGGLER'S RUN: WARZONES

Drive fast – and illegally – in Rockstar's racer



▲ If you leave the 'copters hanging around for too long, they'll kiss you goodbye and fly off. The blighters.



▲ Each successful mission means more money earned. For you.

you're required to use them). If an enemy is in hot pursuit right on your back bumper and you lay a couple of bombs, it'll blow both your enemy and you up, flipping you over onto your roof. By the time you've recovered and reset your vehicle, the place is crawling with foes, all reversing and accelerating into you. Admittedly, not all the countermeasures are so ineffectual, but then you can get away with not using them ever, which tells you a lot about the game and their place in it.

DRIVE TIME

As a concept, *Warzones* is thin, but – oddly – works best when it strips everything away and just lets you drive. The missions where you have to outwit and out-manoeuvre cop cars are the best, allowing you to pull turns



BOSS SIDE

Bosses in *Warzones* tend to be of the spindly buggy variety rather than the screen-shaking, multi-armed type. Reach the end of a particular zone and you'll be given the chance of some one-on-one time with that area's most feared adversary. In Georgia, for example, you have to pursue and take out another buggy.

and make jumps straight out of Hollywood. *Warzones'* claim to fame is its locales, and when you're allowed to make use of these, you'll enjoy the game the most.

There are flaws in the level design, as you'd expect from a game that relies heavily upon the strength of its play areas. Chief among these must be the coronary-inducing prospect of driving for miles at three-figure speeds, knocking down fences, bushes and unsuspecting pedestrians, and then hitting a tree that, you quickly find out, isn't knock-downable. This happens a lot in *Warzones* – there appears to be little distinction made between what you can hit and what you can't, resulting in crucial seconds being wasted as you attempt to remove the front of your car from a solid object that didn't look quite so solid when you were

approaching it at 150 miles per hour. A nasty side-effect of this is that reversing is a slow and frustrating process, and by the time you've repositioned, you're surrounded.

If you buy *Warzones* expecting it to become more complicated the longer you play, you're likely to be disappointed. The objectives you fulfil in the early training levels are the sort of thing you're still doing as the game reaches its conclusion. If that doesn't bother you, it's difficult to feel let down by what's on offer: fast, tense, skilful driving combined with expertly-recreated chase sequences and some excellent – and, decisively, different-feeling – vehicles. It is a little bland, and it's definitely repetitive, but *Warzones* is always suitably entertaining.

TIM WEAVER



- Amazing landscapes.
- Superb physics.
- Stacks to unlock.
- Decent multiplayer.



- Basic and repetitive – what you see is what you get. For the whole game.
- Random trees.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

SSX Tricky
EA
NGC/67 87%
Similarly undulating environments, but traversed on a board.



7 VISUALS

Pretty bland, but each level is lovingly recreated in terms of terrain.

2 SOUNDS

Robotic voice-overs and some of the worst music ever in a game.

8 MASTERY

A technical triumph. The warzones are lovely and the physics superb.

7 LIFESPAN

Fairly easy early on, a bit more difficult later. Plus a solid multiplayer.

VERDICT

Superb environments help to paper over what's essentially a pretty basic game – though undoubtedly an entertaining one.

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

78

Classic puzzler in regressive shocker!

SHAPE QUEUE

This indicates what shapes will drop next. Unlike the GB version, you get plenty of warning about what's coming.

SHAPE

Rotate this and send it to the bottom of the trough to fit snugly (if you can) with the shapes already in place.



COMPLETED LINE

This is your main goal. Get as many of these as you can, as quickly as you can, to progress.

TROUGH

The shapes fall into this. Try to get as few gaps as possible. Once you fill it up it's game over.



BACKGROUND

As you level up the backgrounds change gradually. Like we actually care.



TETRIS WORLDS

Take the best puzzler in the world ever. Add new modes. Watch it devolve into a load of old blocks.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	RADICAL
PUBLISHER	THQ
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Need another Tetris game? Tetris Worlds is out now, as are numerous better versions of Tetris.

COST: £40



Now we've seen it all. According to the horrid, grainy FMV at the start of *Tetris Worlds*, "The future of mino-kind (?) depends on you, brave Tetrions!" Oh really? Do we actually care? Does anyone honestly give a flamin' tetrierion if some pathetic third-rate intro sequence tells you that squares – *SQUARES* for God's sake! – are going to perish in the fiery aftermath of a sun going nova? Of course not – it's completely pointless, more than a little irritating and hilarious for all the wrong reasons. Still, this *is* Tetris and no-one in their right mind could mess that up, right? Er... right?

Wrong. Radical Entertainment have, believe it or not, taken a step backwards when it comes to this latest version of *Tetris*. How? Well they've somehow forgotten to

include the 'proper' version of the game. You know, the perfectly good one that didn't need fixing, cause it wasn't broke in the first place. Now call us idiots, but the one thing that made *Tetris* great was this simple premise. You have an empty trough into which shapes fall. Your task is to create as many horizontal lines as possible. The more lines you get, the faster the game becomes, until you reach either a shape-shuffling, Zen-like state, or you have a mental breakdown, making coping with the dropping shapes too much to bear.

The simple beauty of this concept won *Tetris* universal respect. Shame that in this version, there's no cumulative line counter. Yes, you heard right. In *Tetris Worlds* you have to clear the requisite number of lines before the game stops. Stops? Are they *insane*? If you choose to continue, your

trough empties and you're raised up a level, making the shapes come slightly faster. This might sound like a trivial jibe but it's not. There's no flow to this game. There's no intensity. You no longer have the incentive of watching your score balloon to 170-plus lines while your brain reaches melt-down. In one swift, stupid move, *Tetris* has changed for the worse.

Okay, so the *basic* premise is still the same, but this really doesn't feel anything like it should, and no amount of 'imaginative' modes or 'flashy' (and just plain rubbish) special effects are going to change that. If you're one of the 100-odd million people worldwide who have a copy of *Tetris* on Game Boy, play that instead (or the countless free versions on the Internet), and forget this even exists.

GERAINT EVANS



- The basics are still there... somewhere.
- Four-player mode is okay... sort of.

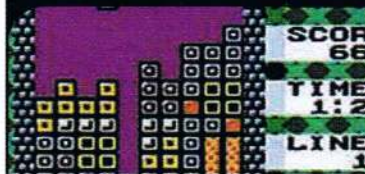


- No 'marathon' mode.
- 'Enhancements'.
- Appalling effects.
- Not like *Tetris*



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Tetris DX
Nintendo
NGC/26 96%
No enhancements, no 'minos' – just plain old *Tetris*.



5 VISUALS

Blocks, a trough and ropey backgrounds and special effects.

6 SOUNDS

Soothing ambient and minimal trance spliced with crap FX.

1 MASTERY

Hello? Helloooo?!?
Anyone?
Heeeeeelllllooooooo!

4 LIFESPAN

You'll play it, take it back and dig out your Game Boy instead.

VERDICT

The basics are there – but it's been changed into a tired, cynical puzzler lacking any of the magic that made it truly special.

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

38



△ Power-sliding feels as though your bike is floating about an inch off the ground.



△ Falls like this should leave your rider decapitated.



△ Gotta love them real-world physics... gnurk!



MX SUPERFLY

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	PACIFIC COAST
PUBLISHER	THQ
PLAYERS	2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	8
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Desperate for a taster of some off-road dirt-bike action? *MX Superfly* is in the shops now.

COST: £40



Yet another bump-riding, spud-crunching waste of time, on bikes...

Cast your minds back a few months (well, four to be precise) and you'll remember the diabolical skid-mark that was *Jeremy McGrath Supercross World*. Weighing in at an abysmal 20 per cent, you'll understand why we weren't exactly busting to play THQ's latest bike-game effort. *MX Superfly* is thankfully, a lot more accomplished. Accomplished insofar as it's actually playable. To start off with, you have to customise your racer and bike (choosing helmet colour, leathers, and so on), before embarking on your career. After a few tutorials you should have earned enough money to enter a competition and from

there on in, it's the usual case of speeding around tracks trying to get as high a placing as possible (to earn as much money as possible) in order to smoothly progress to the next stage. As you'd expect from a Moto Cross game, the usual options are available, such as freestyle courses where you attempt to get as much air as you can in order to bust as many trick combos as your height will allow. There's also the mandatory two-player for you to get stuck into, as well as a track editor you can create your own stunt courses on. But while all the ingredients are in there, there's just something that's not quite right with *MX Superfly*. To start with, the bikes are ridiculously floaty. While not as

bad as *Jeremy McGrath*, the handling is still a little weak – giving the impression that you aren't properly grounded on the track – and every time you launch yourself in the air it all feels a bit too anti-gravity to take seriously. Get enough height and you can get your chosen racer to pull off ridiculously over-the-top moves before he lands – about ten minutes later. Okay, so we exaggerate (a little), but the fact remains – for a sports game so heavily reliant on realistic physics for it to play as it should, *MX Superfly* simply doesn't cut it. Yes, it is relatively entertaining, but that doesn't mean you have to go out and spend 40 quid on it.

GERAINT EVANS



■ Quite good fun at first.
■ It's not as bad as *Jeremy McGrath*.



■ Floaty handling.
■ Unrealistic physics.
■ Feels a little slow.
■ *Excitebike's* better.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Excitebike 64
Nintendo
NGC/43 90%
The pinnacle of MX gaming – way better than this effort.



6 VISUALS

Solid environments that chug happily along at a smooth frame-rate.

5 SOUNDS

Engines sounds like wasps trapped in biscuit tins. Poor.

5 MASTERY

Okay, but far more could have been done with this.

6 LIFESPAN

Will keep you occupied for a couple of months if you enjoy it.

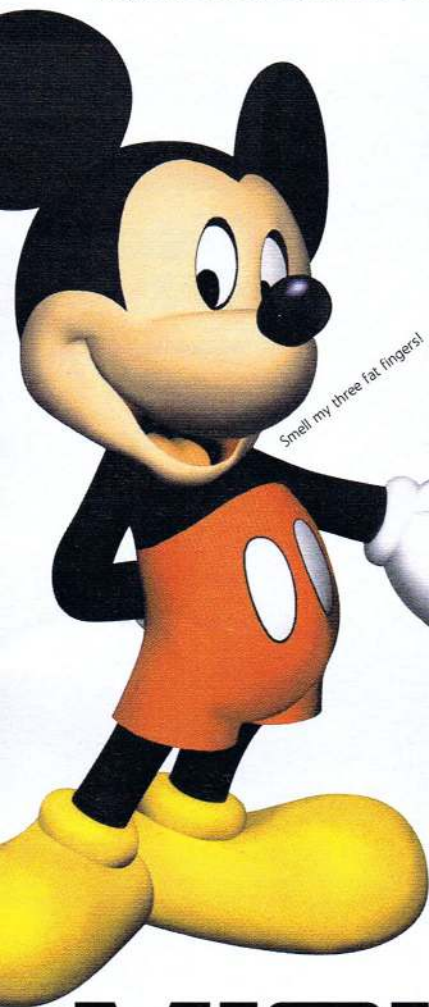
VERDICT

Not particularly offensive – but it's got a long way to go before it's worth considering. Our advice? Rent it first.

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

63

"Why should kids have to endure this patronising rubbish?"



Small my three fat fingers!



△ You like gold don't you, you filthy, perverted, capitalist rat...



△ See that hand? Move it. Follow it... and that's it.



△ Tired, Mickey? You should try playing your pathetic games yourself.



△ We so wanted to jam this plane up Mickey's...



△ A 'trick' in action... yeah, like we actually care.

MICKEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR

Return of the Mick! Walt's sinister, three-fingered talking rodent welcomes you to his stupid new game...

This isn't a game – it's just total *crud*. We weren't expecting much – just another average (albeit nice-looking) 3D platformer. But what did we get? An utterly lamentable approximation of what Disney consider to be 'fun' and a complete waste of valuable gaming time.

Gameplay-wise (if you can call it that), it's a very crude point-and-click adventure. You can't actually move Mickey around with the analogue, but are forced to point a finger-cursor at areas of interest and press A – he'll then move to it. If the object can be manipulated, the cursor changes and you simply press A again to interact with it – and that's it. Not that we have anything against point-and-click – the genre's produced its fair share of classics. We do, however, hold a

grudge against rancid pieces of software that cynically rely on celebrity licence alone to sell by the truckload.

Sorry Disney, but *Magical Mirror* is surreally dull. The game simply consists of pointing your 'finger' around until you find a hot spot, pressing A and then watching Mickey go through a lengthy animation so inexorably tedious that you can feel your beard-hair going grey as Mickey performs his tiresome routines. Once you've exhausted all the things to do in one room, you move on to the next, or return to another room to manipulate something that, previously, you couldn't. Great.

Okay, so what if it's intended as a kid's game? There's a difference between aiming a title at younger gamers and just making a rubbish game – Nintendo games are famous

for their accessibility and universality, so why on earth should pre- and primary schoolers have to endure this kind of patronising rubbish? Yes, it's simple – mind-numbingly so – but that doesn't mean it has to be boring. It's not even that interactive. You just watch one cringe-worthy cut-scene after another before moving the cursor to the next glaringly obvious hot-spot and pressing the A-button again – that's essentially all there is to it.

Kids aren't stupid – if you're after a game to keep them occupied, you need look no further than titles such as *Mario Sunshine* and *Luigi's Mansion*, both far more engaging (and consequently beneficial) pieces of software to introduce them to gaming than this load of old dreck.

GERAINT EVANS



- It looks quite nice.
- Simple enough for infants. Or trained spider monkeys.



- Painfully dull.
- An insult to any human's intelligence.
- That mouse is in it.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Luigi's Mansion
 Nintendo
 NGC/69 90%
 An endearing, fun, simple adventure. Far, far superior.



8 VISUALS

Very accomplished. Smooth animation and clear presentation.

7 SOUNDS

Everything you'd expect – sickly, sweet and immensely irritating.

5 MASTERY

There's no game to speak of and it hardly stretches the GC.

4 LIFESPAN

Even for a child, this will become dull and frustrating after a day.

VERDICT

Unless you have some kind of freaky Disney fetish, you'll loathe every single minute. Utterly pointless, even if you're three.

NGC
 INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

26

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
PUBLISHER	DISNEY
PLAYERS	INTERACTIVE
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	3
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?

Magical Mirror is out now, if such information remotely concerns you.

COST: £40



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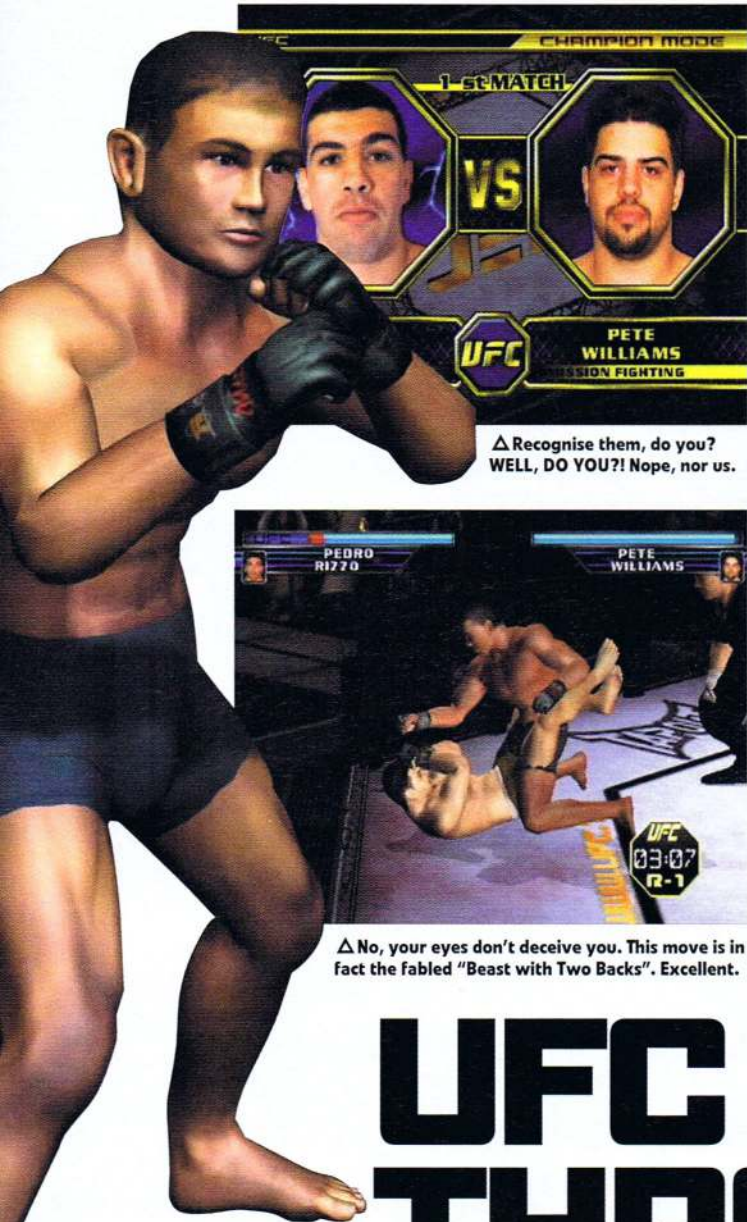
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

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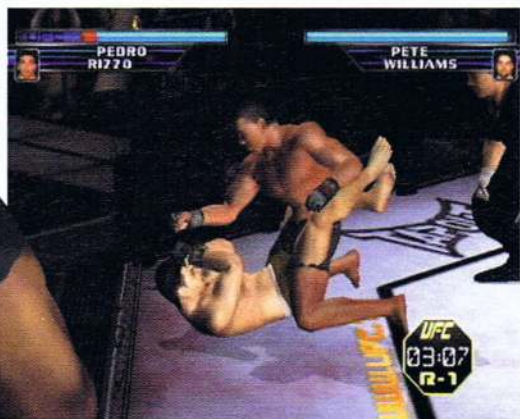
Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

EDGE

"It goes: Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y... KO!"



△ Recognise them, do you? WELL, DO YOU?! Nope, nor us.



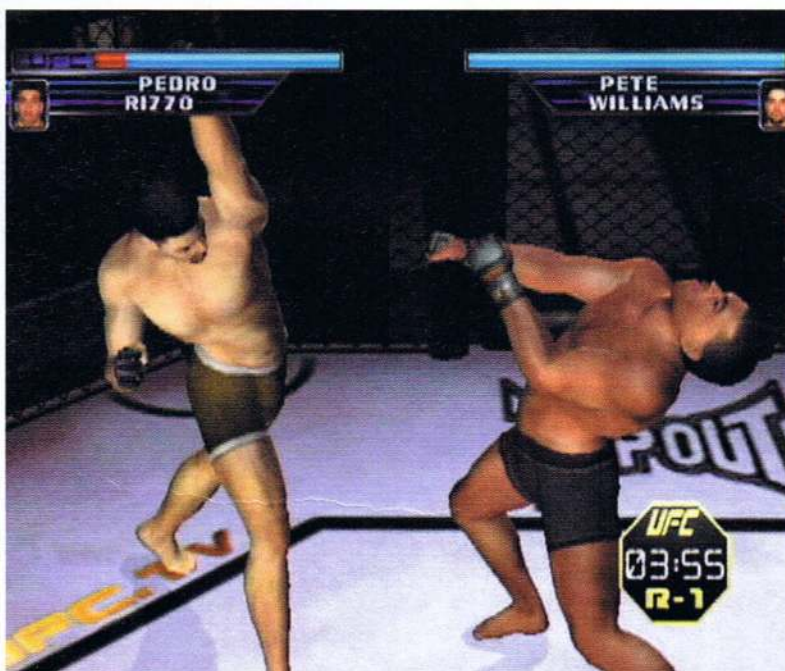
△ No, your eyes don't deceive you. This move is in fact the fabled "Beast with Two Backs". Excellent.



△ "Cry like the nappy-wearing girl you are. Go on cry... CRRRRYYYYY!" Oh, it's us.



△ Career mode lets you build up your own fighter, which is where most of the fun is.



△ Despite this being one of the bloodiest, most violent sports in the world, fights do little to convey the sheer nastiness of the actual event. If anything, it'll just make you cry with laughter.

UFC THROWDOWN

Time for punch! We dish out the dirt on Gamecube's most dishonourable scrap-fest...

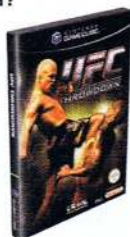
INFO BURST

DEVELOPER CRAVE
PUBLISHER UBI SOFT
PLAYERS 1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES 5
GBA LINK-UP NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
WIDESCREEN NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?

No-rules scrapping between two oily men? *UFC Throwdown* is in the shops right now!

COST: £40



Let us fill you in on the first five minutes of *UFC's* gameplay, shall we? It goes something like this: Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y... KO! Second round goes like this: Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, X, X, X, X, X, X, X... KO! Stunned by the utter button-mashiness of it all, we made Geary have a quick go – it went something like this: A, A, A, A, A... You get the picture. The various thugs you face in Arcade mode do gradually get tougher, but it is a clear indication as to the complete lack of subtlety or finesse with the fighting system – which we suppose might be the point with *UFC Throwdown*. Might... Get beyond the poor front-end and the rubbish visuals, though, and there is some

enjoyment to be found. To its credit, there are plenty of moves to master in *UFC*, the countering system is well implemented, and your ability to fluidly writhe around the floor to gain the upper hand over your opponent is quite smart. There's also a comprehensive Career mode, where you create your fighter and pit yourself against the rank-and-file, building up points in sparring matches, à la *Rocky*. There is also, however, one major problem. If you couldn't care less if 'Tito Ortiz' swallows all his teeth in the third round, this probably won't excite you. The lumbering apes who shuffle around the rings – which incidentally, have even less atmosphere than those in last month's *Wrestlemania X8* – are not only relatively

unknown, but are utterly devoid of charisma. The many fighting styles don't add as much diversity to the gameplay as they ought to, and the character models themselves are ridiculous. For some reason, they've been modelled with oversized, er, 'packets', and very greasy skin, which in the midst of one particularly humorous 'grapple' had the entire office in stitches. You can't really take *UFC* seriously. If you're a big fan of the 'sport' itself, then you might get a laugh from seeing your fave scrappers pummel each other on Gamecube, but *UFC Throwdown* just doesn't reflect the pace or atmosphere you'd expect from Ultimate Fighting itself.

GERAINT EVANS



- Great Career mode.
- Hilarious fighting.
- Make a man... with a lady's voice!



- Shoddy presentation.
- Slow, repetitive gameplay.
- Hilarious fighting.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

WWE *Wrestlemania X8*
THQ
NBC/72 70%
Okay for fans, but still disappointing.



5 VISUALS

Not badly animated, but there's little detail on the fighters or arenas.

4 SOUNDS

Grunt, moan, grunt, smack, moan – to the sound of thrash metal.

3 MASTERY

There's very little to impress here... in fact, there's nothing at all.

6 LIFESPAN

If you are a fan, the Career mode will keep you going for a while.

VERDICT

Any game that has you laughing to tears after a mere five minutes of play can't be that good – and this isn't.

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

51

COMPLETE COMPUTER COVER



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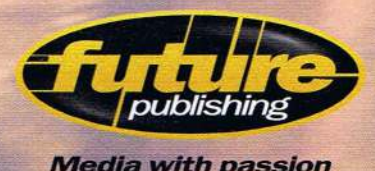
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OUR PROMISE
 Although the main focus of NGC will always be Gamecube games, we take all Nintendo formats seriously - and that includes Game Boy Advance. So, every month we will cast our critical eye over a select band of the highest-profile GBA games available. If we score them highly, you'll know they're worth investing in...

NGC GAME BOY ADVANCE REVIEWS THIS MONTH

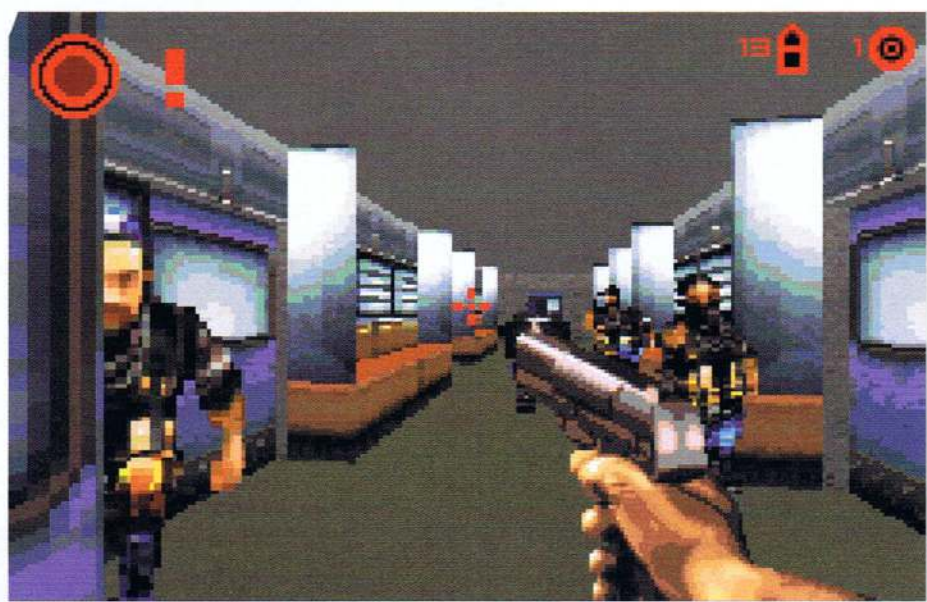


COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0
 CLASS MINIATURE OFF-ROAD ACTION P73

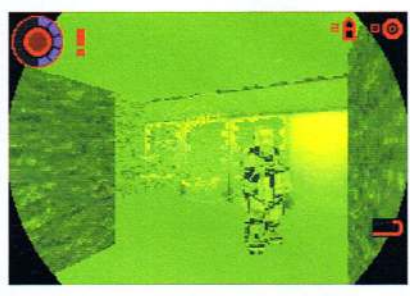
AGGRESSIVE IN-LINE
 BETTER THAN TONY HAWK'S? OR NOT? P72

P70 BALLISTIC
P71 TUROK EVOLUTION

PLUS... GEAR
 ARCADE STICKS AND GBA BACKLIGHTS! P84



△ The visuals are much improved over the previous game, the predictably-titled *Ecks Vs Sever*. Yes.



△ Grenades add a welcome touch to things.



△ The sniping action is deliciously implemented.



△ It looks a lot better in motion, believe us.



△ One of the best GBA games money can buy.

INFO BURST	
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	BAM!
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	PASSWORD
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

BALLISTIC ECKS VS SEVER

A well-timed return of the GBA's best FPS?

The *Ecks vs Sever* franchise is slightly bizarre for a number of reasons. Firstly, the game is based on a multi-million dollar Hollywood movie - but have you seen it?

the sequel is even better. Like the first game you get to control either agent Ecks or agent Sever in a number of espionage encounters. Though the gameplay fundamentally remains the same, there are lots of neat tweaks and

warehouses and grey buildings. There are gardens, ponds, sewers, mansions and high security facilities to explore at your leisure. Add to this improved AI and you have a very comprehensive package. In fact, the only problem with the game is down to the diddy buttons on the GBA. Controlling your character can be a little on the fiddly side, but that's hardly developer Crawfish's fault.

Ballistic: Ecks vs Sever is great in single-player mode, but the excellent multiplayer also returns. The maps are intricate and there are several play styles, including Deathmatch and Bomb Kit to get your teeth into. Top stuff.

THE GAMEPLAY REMAINS THE SAME AS BEFORE BUT THERE ARE SOME TWEAKS AND TOUCHES

Of course not, because publisher BAM! seem intent on bringing the games out before anyone has had a chance to get caught up in the film's hype. Weird. Secondly, *Ecks vs Sever* was strange in that it offered a sterling FPS package on the humble GBA. The good news is that

touches to make this version shine even brighter. The missions are more diverse and you will even have access to neat gadgets such as trip wires, jetpacks, aqualungs and proximity mines. The game also contains more varied scenery, so you don't just experience

DID YOU KNOW? That the film version of *Ecks Vs Sever* - on which the GBA games are based, even though it's not out yet - will star Lucy Liu and Antonio Banderas as the titular spies. True, cold, hard faction, that. Yipper.

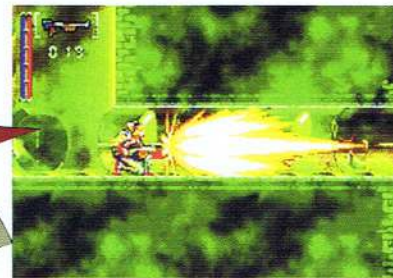




GBA action shoved in your face until you puke



△ Worms are disgusting things. DISGUSTING.



△ Not a bad little shooter at all. No sir. No.



△ This is much better than the Gamecube one.



△ A welcome return to a long-lived franchise.



△ A crack team of mercenary worms, indeed.



△ Just like its big Gamecube-based brother, lil' *Turok Evolution* features some extra-sized dinosaurs. Luckily, you've got some equivalently extra-sized guns to take 'em down with.

INFO BURST	
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	UBI SOFT
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

WORMS WORLD PARTY

Little worms, big guns and a whole lot of fun – cool!

There's nothing quite like watching a bunch of developers beating the carcass of a horse repeatedly with sticks. *Worms*, conceived in 1994 by Team 17, has been translated in one guise or another to every videogame format known to man. But why change a winning formula? Surely there can't be

anyone left who hasn't experienced one of the *Worms* games? But just for Barry Killingworth of Chipping Norton, here's a summary. You control a crack team of mercenary worms with the sole intention of annihilating any rival race of worms on the map. The game is strictly a turn-based 2D affair and you can move and jump your worms around the landscape to a limited degree. But the satisfaction comes from using the mad weapons on offer, and there's nothing quite like watching an enemy explode after you've beautifully arced a grenade over a hill to his location. *Worms*, then, is still as simple and fiercely addictive as it's always been, but surely there can't be much life left in this horse?



TUROK EVOLUTION

INFO BURST	
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	ACCLAIM
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	PASSWORD
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

Monster weapons, monster enemies. It has to be *Turok*.

The SNES was host to some of the greatest side-scrolling shoot 'em ups of all time. *Contra III* and *Super Metroid* immediately spring to mind, especially as they're about to be updated for the versatile GBA. So *Turok Evolution* has a lot of competition. But the truth is, this just isn't in the same league, much like the lacklustre Gamecube version. The sprites are bold and colourful, the action is pacy and well balanced, but there's little in the way of true imagination on show. Enemies appear with disarming predictability and their attack patterns show little in the way of sophistication. Indeed, once you've played the

game for a while, simply keeping your finger down on the fire button and moving and jumping will get you through most of the early levels, and such tediously prehistoric gameplay doesn't hold the attention for very long. There are one or two nice touches: the perspective alters slightly for boss encounters and the level backdrops are varied enough to keep you interested. Yet while all these elements add up to a decent effort - and this is by no means a bad game - this is inevitably side-scrolling shooting very much by the numbers. A shame.





"It's easy to forget how much fun pinball games are"



△ One pinball table looks very much like another. There's only so much you can say.



△ The GBA can certainly pump out some tidy little images when it wants to, yes indeed.



△ Ever wanted to play pinball on your GBA? Well, now's your chance, if you can keep yourself away from *Advance Wars*, or *Doom*, or *Mario Advance 2*, or all the other top-notch GBA classics.

INFO BURST	
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	ZOO DIGITAL
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	PASSWORD
OUT	OCTOBER
COST	£35

PINBALL ADVANCE

Let's play... pinball! Or maybe something else instead!

In the videogame age it's easy to forget how much fun pinball machines are.

That moreish twinge as you pump another coin in the slot and gun for the high score, that sense of half-agony, half-hope as you bang the flipper towards the speeding ball...

Sadly, such joys are utterly absent from *Pinball Advance*, a game built on sound ball physics, but which lacks the sort of speed that could make it thrilling in any way. There's

plenty of frustration to contend with too, as a gaping hole between the flippers and a tendency for the ball to drift down the channels and out of play resulting in all-too frequent Game Over warnings.

There may be 40 tunes to take your mind off things, but they'll soon grate and only add to your annoyance. Luckily the sound can be turned off. Sadly, the pain can't.



△ The graphics are very polished, bringing to mind the excellent *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*.



△ Skates aren't quite as 'hip' as boards. Man.



△ Ah, the good old Moon Raker. Very nice.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

INFO BURST	
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	ACCLAIM
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	PASSWORD
OUT	OCTOBER
COST	£35

Inline skating is the new skateboarding! Possibly.

In years to come we'll still be battering joypads like mad-folk, squeezing out results on the videogames of the future. But will we still be playing these damn *Tony Hawk's* clones? Make no mistake: extreme sports games are class, but some are forgettable. Enter: *Aggressive Inline*.

It's not that the game is bad. A decent soundtrack backs the usual mix of grinding, grabbing and flipping as you undertake mission goals to unlock new levels. When you gather speed and whizz around the large street locations you'll build up a

grind bar, which allows you to skid along kerbs and rails like a crazy maniac.

Sadly, the skaters are averagely animated, making it tough to land a trick straight, and the repertoire of moves is pretty limited, to boot. You can, however, create some impressive combos by swinging on horizontal and vertical bars to access hard-to-reach areas.

Aggressive Inline is good enough, fun in fits, but ultimately it won't have you gasping for one more go. No sir.





GBA action shoved in your face until you puke



△ The way your car responds to every bounce and dip is mind-boggling. It's beautifully done.



△ Lovely snowy levels. Lovely.



△ Some full-on replay action of men in cars. Best hope your driving's good to skip embarrassment.



△ Mmm, engine parts. Paul is very excited indeed.



△ We probably didn't want to do that.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0

Tweak your engine, hit the road, and cringe at the replay. Prepare for a harsh driving lesson...

INFO BURST	
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	UBI SOFT
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	ON-CART
OUT	OCTOBER
COST	£35

You belt around the rugged course. The silence is only fractured by the occasional crack of the exhaust and the steady voice of co-driver Nicky Grist. As he warns of loose rocks, hairpin bends and taxing corners you focus on the track ahead. You're *in* that car. You *are* that driver...

Yep, this is an intense game alright. Luckily, the graphics are good, and each of the nine cars is nicely modelled in 3D, because you'll be staring at the screen for hours, eking out better times in multiple

stages. What really makes the game so attractive, though, is the way your motor skids and scrapes around the track in response to over-compensating yanks on

What's more, the late-appearing scenery on tougher races is more frustrating still, and means you'll often get stuck because you can't see what's

WHEN YOU'RE IN FULL FLIGHT, PULLING OFF HIGH-SPEED SKIDS, THE GAME IS UTTERLY BRILLIANT

the virtual steering wheel. At times your car will teeter on the edge of flipping, forcing you to improve your skills quickly. Now that's classy.

Sadly, and despite neat features such as car repairs and the chance to race in Arcade mode against three other motors, *CMR2* can prove frustrating. One major cock-up on a corner will slam you into the trees and put you back so far you may never catch up. A blunder on the sixth leg of a six-race rally could well have you chucking your GBA out of the bus window. Very annoying indeed.

around the bend, despite the assurances of Mr Grist and simple on-screen prompts. Worse still, a glint of light on the screen at the wrong moment and it's curtains for you, and your car's bodywork.

That said, when you're in full flight and pulling off high-speed, controlled skids, the game is brilliant. When you crash it sucks, and only a master of concentration with extreme patience will drain every ounce of pleasure from *CMR2*.



DID YOU KNOW? On the more grown-up consoles, *Colin McRae* is now on this third rallying game. The latest edition is making a multi-format leap, and will eventually come to Gamecube, which is very good news indeed.



"Sega have actually made the sequel easier than the first game"

THE GOAL

Way off in the distance, of course. Use your monkey brain and a rock-steady left thumb to roll all the way to the finish.



BACKGROUNDS

You should admire Sega's artwork during the flyby at the start of each level, as there's no time to indulge in an 'eye feast' while you're actually playing.

LIVES

Play the Story mode and you'll find that the number of lives you have really doesn't matter. You only have to worry about that if you opt for the Challenge mode, which is a lot harder.



NAMED

Instead of the old 'Expert Extra 4' or whatever, every level now has a proper name. Sometimes it's actually a subtle hint.



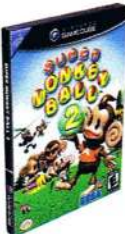
INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	AMUSEMENT VISION
PUBLISHER	SEGA
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES

WHEN'S IT OUT?

Out now on US import, but no UK release date at the time of writing.

COST: \$50



SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

A second helping of monkey magic with Sega's spherical apes.



GET INTO THE GAME

Monkey see, monkey do, the magical spell is Ei-Ei-Poo (apparently)...

STORY MODE

It's Monkey Ball the easy way. No more worrying about how many lives you've got, or how many continues you can use - just roll and go. Or, more likely, roll, fall off, roll, fall off, roll, and fall off as many times as you want until you get it right.

PARTY GAMES

The six multiplayer games from the original Monkey Ball have been tweaked and updated, and they're all available right from the start. Grab some friends, plug in four controllers, and away you go.



SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

Return of the monk...

IT'S MY PARTY...

All six of the original multiplayer games have been updated for this sequel, and there are also six brand new ones for you to buy. At 2,500 play points each, you'll probably unlock them all in your first weekend with the game...



MONKEY BOAT

Float through the rapids, mashing the shoulder buttons to work your paddle. Dipping the paddle to the left makes the boat go to the right, which gets very confusing when trying to go round corners.



MONKEY SHOT

A basic shoot-'em-up in which you use a target to pick off enemies as they fly around the screen. This is certainly the least interesting of the games, and not worth wasting your first 2,500 play points on.



MONKEY DOGFIGHT

Free-flying shooter, a bit like the multiplayer mode in Lylat Wars for the N64. You get homing missiles as well as standard guns, and a four-player battle gets totally chaotic when everyone manages to find each other.



MONKEY SOCCER

A very simple game of football played on a five-a-side pitch. Because the monkeys are so big, there's sure to be a lot of physical contact, and battering your way to goal doesn't work. Pass and move, pass and move.



MONKEY BASEBALL

Probably not the kind of baseball game you were expecting. You have to whack the ball into scoring holes around the edge of the field. If you're pitching, you are the ball and you have to swerve to confuse the batter.



MONKEY TENNIS

Quite nice, really. You get three types of shot, and the monkeys roll around the court at a sedate, solid pace. There's room for some tactical play as well as good old power-hitting, making this the best new game.

Do you still have a working Gamecube controller after playing the original *Super Monkey Ball*? That game was so deviously difficult, yet horribly compelling, we hold it indirectly responsible for the fact that two of the office pads now creak whenever they're squeezed, and another only works after banging it on the edge of the desk a few times – the same treatment that put it in the sick ward to begin with.

Super Monkey Ball 2 is essentially more of the same kind of precision gaming that made the original such a huge hit among the first wave of Gamecube titles. But having listened to the cries of pain and

anger from gamers unable to squeeze past such challenges as the eye-popping, joypad-wrecking Master Level 3, Sega have actually made the sequel slightly easier than the first game, and reduced the skill factor involved in many of the puzzles.

Which will come as a great delight or a crushing disappointment, depending on how you felt about it all last time around.

HIGH ROLLER

The 100 new levels include plenty of the familiar twisty mazes, high-speed slopes and tilting bridges, all with the same bottomless drop waiting to punish the slightest mistake. But the big difference is in the number of levels that require little more



SPOILSPORTS

The new *Monkey Target* game has been the most significantly changed, and we don't think it will go down too well with fans of the original. Now there's a magnet power-up floating in the sky. Collect it and you stick to the target every time, removing the need for accurate flying and precise control.

than brute force and dogged persistence to reach the goal. There's a handful that look virtually impossible, but can be beaten by waiting for the appropriate moment, then jamming the joystick towards the goal. Others require precise bounces which, because of the often wayward camera, can be more down to pure luck than precision and judgement.

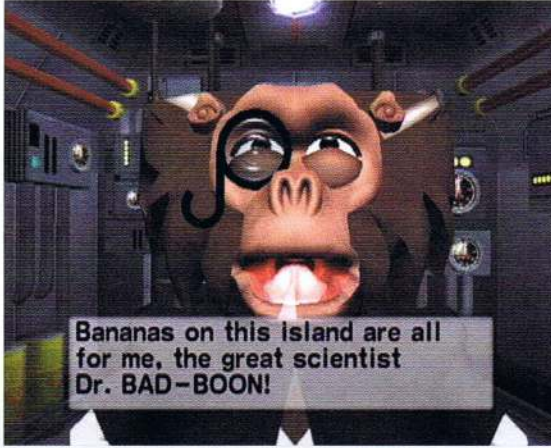
This time the structure of the main game is different, so as well as the old challenge mode that tests how far you can get on a limited number of continues, then chucks you back to



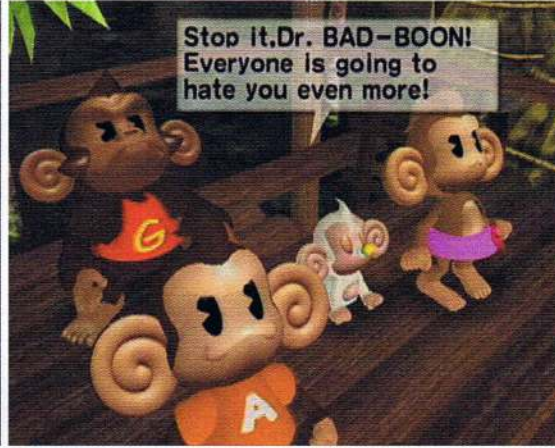
"All the original party games have new features and extra modes"

MONKEY TALES

Who would have thought monkeys lived in villages? Well, they do. No harder to accept than the concept of monkeys sealed in balls, fighting an airship-flying ape called Dr Bad-Boon...



Bananas on this island are all for me, the great scientist Dr. BAD-BOON!



Stop it, Dr. BAD-BOON! Everyone is going to hate you even more!



Magical spell is Ei-Ei-Poo!

"Ha ha! I am the evil Dr Bad-Boon, and I'm going to vacuum all the bananas from your poxy straw huts, you disgusting little monkeys. I'd quite like to marry that pretty little Meemee too, ho ho! Of course when I say 'marry' what I really mean is 'eat', for I am a monkey-eating baboon!"

"No, no, Dr Bad-Boon! There's no need for all this nastiness, We peaceful monkeys would happily share our bananas with you, if only you'd ask nicely. And if you let us ride in your brilliant flying airship, we'll let you do anything you want with Meemee. She isn't much of a looker, you know."

"No deal? Okay then, Mr Horrible Ape, you leave us with no option but to unleash the power of... The monkey chant! Here goes: Hop, step, jump-jump, pool! Let us co-operate, yeah, yeah, woo! Magical spell is Ei-Ei-Pool"



△ The sudden-death matches are usually over in a few seconds. If you stay on the platform for much longer, it starts to crumble like *Mario 64*'s Bowser stage.



△ Should you go for the bananas at the risk of getting thwomped by moving objects? Depends if you want a better score than our pitiful 177 here.



At the start, you get a Story mode divided into ten sets of ten levels. The only way to move on to the next set is to complete all of the current levels, but you get as many attempts as you like. You can also save your progress and return after taking a break, which is a welcome feature, and the only way trial-and-error tasks like the Launchers level become remotely tolerable. But it also means that you'll complete the game much faster than you did (or would have) the original. Of course, hardcore *Monkey Ball* experts can always stick with the updated Challenge mode, featuring various combinations of the Story mode levels, with new backgrounds.



SWITCHES

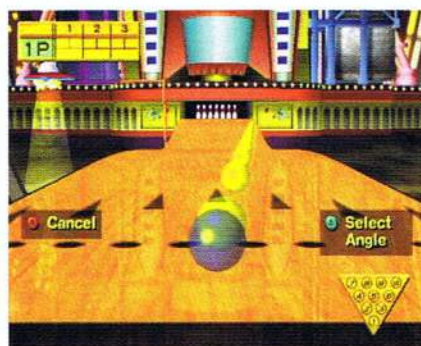
Switches control the speed of the moving objects in certain levels. Occasionally you'll find a whole set of VCR-style controls that must be manipulated to pause parts of the level at the right position so you can roll across. Whenever you start on a Fast Forward control, a normal speed switch can usually be found nearby.

PARTY ANIMALS

The best thing about the first *Monkey Ball* was always its potential as a multiplayer favourite, thanks to its six well-designed party games. They've all been dusted down for an updated second outing, along with six brand new ones – Monkey Tennis, Soccer, Baseball, Boat, Shot and Dogfight. Of those, Monkey Tennis is by far the best – three courts, three types of shot, doubles, computer-controlled players... It isn't in the *Super Tennis* or *Mario Tennis* league, but it makes a great bonus freebie. The five-a-side frenzy of Monkey Soccer is plenty of fun too, and Monkey Dogfight brought back fond memories of chasing down the Star Wolf team in *Lylat Wars*. The



△ This must be what it feels like to get locked inside a washing machine (except without the pleasant smell of Persil).



△ This level keeps its meagre supply of bananas on the edge of a wobbling, spinning thing in the distance. Mess up an attempt to grab them and you'll go flying.



NGC FIELD OF PLAY

How to get ahead of the game in one particularly crazy challenge...



THE RIGHT WAY

Just jamming the stick forwards and hoping for a bit of monkey fortune often pays dividends, as in this Arthropod level. Watch for the goal as it rises on the last of the rotating rings, then roll, roll, roll, and bounce into it. If you're a bit of a monkey master you could try balancing on the rings to show off. Just don't get trodden on by the giant mechanical insect.



THE WRONG WAY

This level's rated at a maximum ten out of ten for difficulty. It looks so hard, you'll want to try inching your way across the rings, but a swift demise is the inevitable result.

others aren't so hot. Monkey Boat looks a lot better than it actually plays, and we found both Monkey Baseball and Monkey Shot very unappealing next to all the other

collecting bananas as you fly, rather than making a perfect landing on the target zone.

The new Monkey Billiards offers many more rule variations and is set in a Wild West

MONKEY GOLF IS NOW A REAL, FULL-SIZE, 18-HOLE GOLF GAME, INSTEAD OF JUST A CRAZY-GOLF PUTTING SIM

options on offer.

All of the original party games have new features and extra modes, some of which work better than others. The developers have messed with Monkey Target to an almost fatal extent, as it's now more about

bar with a snazzy background of a cowboy monkey drinking milk.

Monkey Golf is now a real, full-size, 18-hole golf game, instead of just a crazy-golf putting simulator – whacking monkeys around will keep you busy for hours.



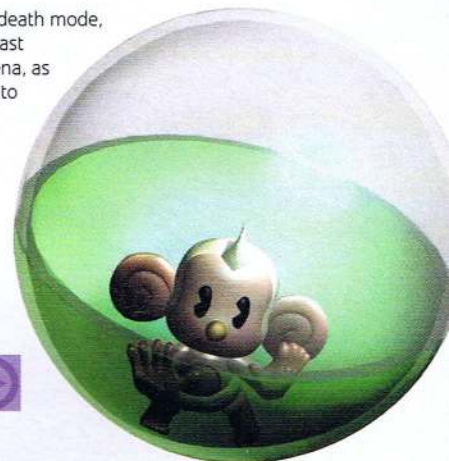
SHORTCUTS

Many Monkey Ball levels have more than one possible solution. The designers often include alternative routes, with extra bananas to tempt you towards the more difficult ones. Other times, the 'secret' routes involve jumping between corners of platforms, or falling into space and trying to hit solid ground below.

Monkey Fight has a sudden-death mode, where you aim to become the last monkey left on a crumbling arena, as well as a handful of new floors to battle on in the normal mode.

Monkey Bowling boasts rippling floors, banked curves and some strange new bowling alleys, and there are brand new courses and seven computer competitors in Monkey Race.

Absolutely loads to be getting on with, then. So many minigames, in fact, you'll spend ages trying to figure out which one



ROLLING, ROLLING, ROLLING

With 100 different levels to play through, *Monkey Ball 2* has its fair share of goodness, badness and ugliness. Check out four of the more interesting early levels...

LAUNCHERS



IS IT POSSIBLE? On this level the goal rotates around the side of a huge tower in the centre of the level. There are four launch pads situated at the bottom. Good luck!

PRECISION ROLL Get in front of one of the launchers as it draws back, and align your monkey with the exact centre. Anywhere else and you'll spin off the side of the tower.

SPACE MONKEY You'll believe an ape can fly! The monkey soars up the tower, missing the million-to-one chance of blasting through the goal on the way up. The camera goes nuts.

HEAVY LANDING And down he tumbles. If you can hit the goal on the way down, you're a genius. The only realistic option is to land on top of the tower, then drop off the side.

FOLDERS



FLIP-FLOPS This one has hinged floor panels that drop out in a fast sequence. It looks like you should be able to roll over them all at high speed, but the sequence is too quick.

OH, RIIIGHT! Rather than take your chances with the floor panels, you should squeeze your way onto the rail where the hinges are. A typically sneaky monkey puzzle.

FEEL THE WIDTH The rail is so wide, you can't possibly fall off. The original *Monkey Ball* would probably have put moving bumpers or something all over the rail. This one's easier.

JOURNEY'S END The final floor panel holds the goal. If you timed it right, you'll be able to roll straight through without stopping. Otherwise, you'll have to wait for the panel to pop up.

COIN SLOTS



WHAT THE? This level has a series of slots with a goal bouncing down the slopes towards each one. There's little chance of you managing to hit a goal by aiming for it, so...

ON YOUR MARKS You'll have to watch the timer rather than what's happening in the crazy slots ahead. From the start, wait until the clock hits 56.90, then jam forwards.

EYES WIDE SHUT You can do this one without even looking at the screen. In fact, if you do look, you'll probably have a lot more trouble hitting the goal as it drops through the slot.

CAN'T GET NO... Satisfying? Well, after 20 or 30 attempts at doing the level the 'right' way, it was just a relief never to have to see this one again. Except in Challenge mode. Gah!

TOTALITARIANISM



THUMPING A series of giant saucers that rise into the air and pound the ground in unison. Getting hit by one of them propels your monkey into the void at deadly speed.

TURN IT DOWN If you're not bothered about getting a quick time, simply turn around and roll over the switch behind the starting position to slow the saucers.

ROLL ON After that, it's simply a matter of picking your way between the saucers and keeping an eye on the shadows so you know when they're going to come crashing down.

GOAL IN If you're fast and have nerves of steel, you can roll all the way without stopping. You just have to use the map to find the spots where the saucers won't hit you.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

Return of the monk...



△ Just a hunch, but we'd say it's probably not too smart to try collecting the bananas while the oscillating strips are in this particular position. There are some control switches nearby which let you stick them in reverse and pause at the right moment.



△ On this one you have to drop miles onto platforms below.



△ Maybe the next *Monkey Ball* will let you ride one of those rollercoasters.



△ All the computer monkeys get an incredibly fast start that we just couldn't figure out how to do. Is it possible?



△ By the time you get to the bottom of this spiral you'll be pushing 180mph. Now that's serious monkey speed.

deserves the most of your multiplayer time.

Sega even went as far as making another minigame out of the end credits sequence, which is a variation on the *Monkey Shot* shoot-'em-up. You can buy it after using your play points to purchase all six new games.

LOOKING GOOD

Coming less than a year after the first *Monkey Ball*, it's no surprise to see the same graphics engine make another appearance. The checkerboard levels are no more or less detailed than last time, with the same silky, stutter-free movement, and no jagged polygon edges to spoil the stylish look.



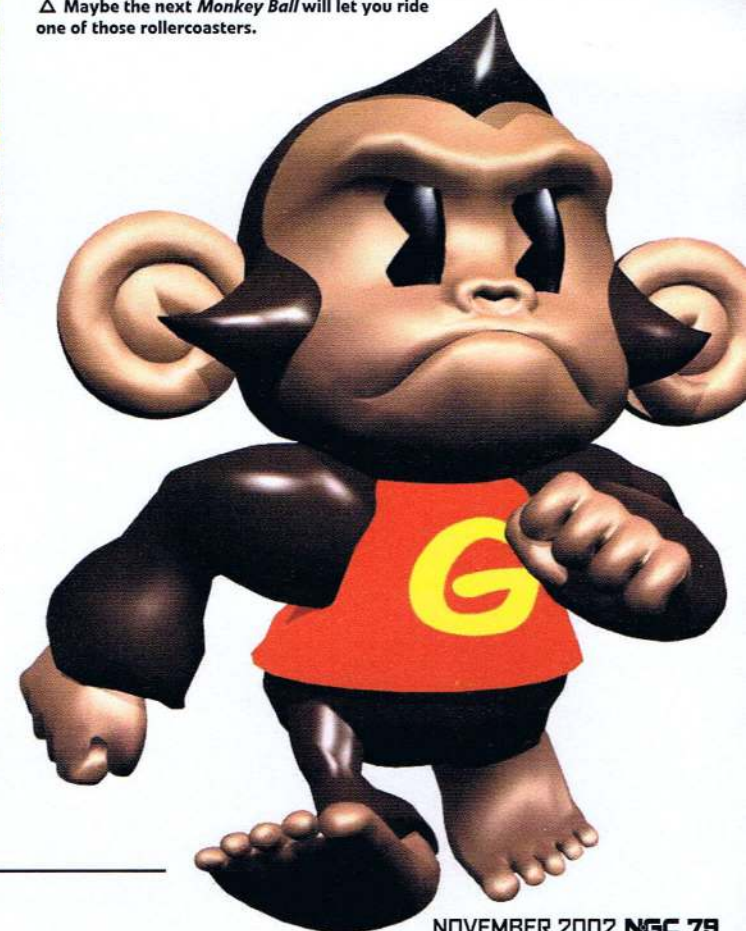
BONUS

This time the inter-level bonus floors aren't so simple. They're more like smaller, banana-stashed versions of proper levels, with ramps and bridges to contend with. They also have a goal, so you can just roll straight through if you not bothered by all those fruity treats.

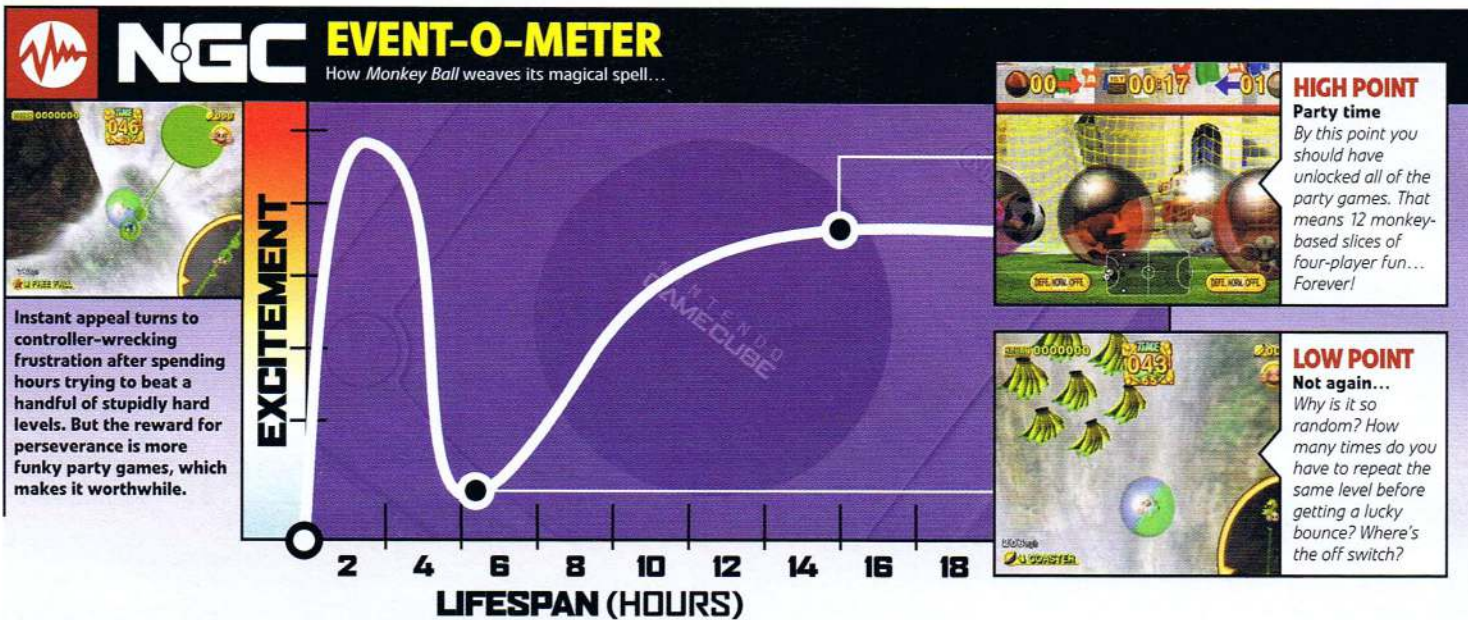
There's a lot more animation going on in the backgrounds, though, and a far bigger variety of visual themes.

One thing we really wanted to see fixed in this sequel was the camera. Sadly, it's still useless. The way it only re-centres behind your monkey when you start moving means it's annoyingly hard to get a good view of the where you're supposed to go in a level if you're facing slightly to the side.

When you get bounced into the air or have to drop off the side of a platform, which is a far more common occurrence than it was in the first game, the camera can go totally haywire. You often have to make subtle adjustments while in the air, but



"There's an uncomfortable amount of luck involved in landing"



Instant appeal turns to controller-wrecking frustration after spending hours trying to beat a handful of stupidly hard levels. But the reward for perseverance is more funky party games, which makes it worthwhile.



▲ Looks nice, right? Don't start holding your breath for the PAL release for a while yet, though.



▲ Get off your horse and drink your milk.



without the option to lock the camera or shift it using the C-stick, there's an uncomfortable amount of luck involved in landing where you need to.

On the plus side, getting put back to the start of the level whenever you fall off isn't so much of an issue, because most of the levels are more compact and puzzle-based. Either you get them right first time or you might as well restart anyway.

CALCULATED JAPLISH

Of course, it's an absolute must for anyone who completed the original *Monkey Ball*. We'd advise avoiding the Story mode if you want the maximum amount of challenge out of the game, but then you'd miss out on



WARP ZONES

The warp portal is a new feature for *Monkey Ball 2*. It's just like the portals in *Quake III*, allowing a misty glimpse of the area it will warp you to. There's usually no way back other than to drop off the platform, so warp portals are really there for cosmetic effect. Still, it's a nice thing to have.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 IS BIG, VARIED, FLAWED IN SOME PLACES, AND OUTSTANDING IN OTHERS. YOU CAN'T FAIL TO ENJOY SOME OF IT //

some very odd cut-scenes. Admittedly, they look and read like they were designed specifically to make the American market think they're genuine 'quirky' translations from the Japanese (Ei-Ei-Poo? For heaven's sake...), but they're probably worth a quick smirk and a chin-scratch anyway.

Super Monkey Ball 2 is big, varied, flawed in some places, outstanding in others. There's simply so much packed into the disc,

you can't possibly fail to be entertained by some of it, and that's what a decent Gamecube title should be all about.

It would have been nice to see something entirely new in the main game, like maybe some complicated maze levels with enemies to avoid, or a rival monkey that acted like the black ball in *Marble Madness*. And a better camera. But we like it all the same.

MARTIN KITTS

- 100 levels.
- Six new party games.
- Crisp graphics.
- Smooth controls.

- Some levels are just plain rubbish.
- Six old party games.
- Camera's still dodgy.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Super Monkey Ball
Sega
NGC/67 88%
Slightly less of the same monkey-rolling, four-player fun.



7 VISUALS

Simple levels with impressively detailed animated backdrops.

7 SOUNDS

The music's a bit love-it-or-hate-it, and you can't turn it off. Ever.

7 MASTERY

It's almost exactly the same game as before, except not as hard.

8 LIFESPAN

After the original party games, the new ones aren't quite as exciting.

VERDICT

Great stuff if you liked the original game, and the one to go for if you missed out on it first time around. Solid puzzle action.

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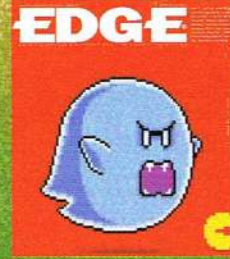
85

DID YOU KNOW? *Monkey Ball* is created by the same Sega development studio currently working on the Gamecube and arcade versions of *F-Zero*.

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Also this month: *TimeSplitters2*, *Super Monkey Ball 2*, *Ikaruga* and *Burnout 2* reviews

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FIVE GAMECUBE GAMES... WITH MONKEY!

Nintendo games are the best around when it comes to sheer playability and fun, and for some reason, many of those games happen to feature monkeys. Here's a few...



SUPER MONKEY BALL



TIMESPLITTERS 2



TUROK EVOLUTION



SUPER SMASH BROS



TARZAN FREERIDE



1 MARIO SUNSHINE

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

96

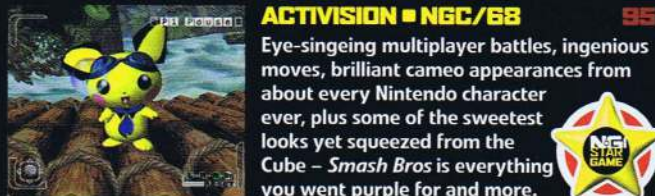
The wait may have been long, but by Mike was it worth it. Mazza makes his first proper appearance on a Nintendo console in the follow-up to *Super Mario 64* – this time he's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island and trying to find out what evil villain put it there. With the same pick-up-and-play intuitiveness, polished Nintendo visuals, and sense of pure fun, this one pushes all the right buttons.



2 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

95



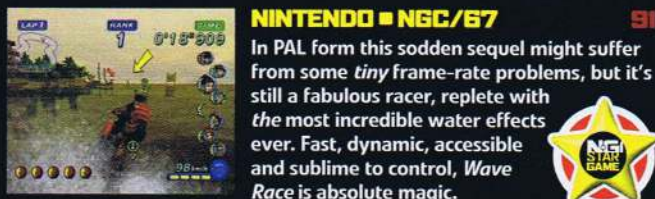
Eye-singeing multiplayer battles, ingenious moves, brilliant cameo appearances from about every Nintendo character ever, plus some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube – *Smash Bros* is everything you went purple for and more.



3 WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

91



In PAL form this sodden sequel might suffer from some *tiny* frame-rate problems, but it's still a fabulous racer, replete with the most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control, *Wave Race* is absolute magic.



4 RESIDENT EVIL

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72

89



The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Shame it still has the old-fashioned rotate-and-shoot control system from the dark P5one days, mind...

5 LUIGI'S MANSION

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

90



Mazza might have been late to the party this time round, but brother Luigi managed to ease the pain with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and *Ghostbusters*. It's maybe a bit short, but still ace.



6 SUPER MONKEY BALL

SEGA ■ NGC/67

88



Ingenious update of *Marble Madness*, with simians rolling around strange landscapes trying to collect 'nanas. Chuck in a monkey version of *Mario Kart*, pool, some golf and a tilting boxing ring with springy boxing gloves and you've got the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube game out.

7 STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

87



One of the best-looking console games ever made (well, so far), *Rogue Leader* also happens to be one of the slickest, most memorable *Star Wars* games of all time, bolting eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky smooth space battles. Get it in now.

8 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67

87



It's clearly a no-brainer of a PS2 conversion, but *Tony Hawk's 3* is so good it hardly seems to matter. Packed with unbelievable grinds and stunts, backed up by a mountain of hidden extras, and benefiting from vast skate parks, if you haven't tried *Hawk's* on for size before, now's the time.

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CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO



BEACH SPIKERS

- Capcom vs SNK 2 EO **NGC/72, 79**
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 Top Gun: Combat Zones **NGC/72, 71**
 WWE Wrestlemania X8 **NGC/72, 70**
 Barbarian **NGC/72, 70**
 Batman Vengeance **NGC/67, 70**
 Driven **NGC/68, 60**
 Cel Damage **NGC/68, 60**
 Tarzan Freeride **NGC/67, 59**
 Spy Hunter **NGC/68, 55**
 Taz Wanted **NGC/72, 52**
 The Simpsons Road Rage **NGC/68, 52**
 Dark Summit **NGC/69, 51**
 Virtua Striker 3 v2002 **NGC/69, 50**
 Eggo Mania **NGC/72, 49**
 Legends of Wrestling **NGC/69, 47**
 ESPN Winter Sports 2002 **NGC/67, 37**
 Donald Duck Goin' Quackers **NGC/68, 32**
 2002 FIFA World Cup **NGC/69, 30**
 Gauntlet: Dark Legacy **NGC/68, 25**
 Universal Studios **NGC/67, 24**
 Jeremy McGrath Supercross World **NGC/69, 20**

9 SSSX TRICKY



EA SPORTS ■ NGC/69 **87**
 Like *Tony Hawk's*, this has got PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but it still manages to perform wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, brilliant shortcuts and secrets and some timely mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

15 EXTREME G 3



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67 **85**
 A bit of an underrated gem, *Extreme G 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, sprawling, well-designed tracks, some ingenious – and surprisingly tactical – weaponry and eye-spanking visuals. It's a tiny bit soulless, and the multiplayer's somewhat rank, but this is good stuff.

10 BURNOUT



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67 **86**
 On the N64, we had to wait three years for a driving game. Now we've got a killer racer from day one: with lightning-fast, spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and one of the smoothest, most impressive engines around, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

16 BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68 **74**
 Okay, so *Smash Bros* pummels it so hard it's about ten feet into the canvas, but *Bloody Roar* still manages to offer some quick, exciting punch play, and comes with the added bonus of some dual-action characters. One of which changes into a rabbit. And another into a Gecko.

11 PIKMIN



NINTENDO ■ NGC/69 **85**
 Dreamily created using textures from Shiggy's own garden, *Pikmin* is a genius real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetables, beautifully simple controls and expansive, tactile worlds. It's over a bit quickly if truth be told, but don't let that put you off: this is Nintendo brilliance.

17 SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/69 **72**
 A brain-bendingly *terrible* camera threatens to do more than make your Spidey sense tingle, but this 3D adventure grows on you the more you play it, and for fans of the comics there are some really neat little touches, as well as timely comebacks for the likes of Scorpion and The Vulture.

12 ISS 2



KONAMI ■ NGC/68 **83**
 This once-untouchable football giant makes its debut on Gamecube sporting a few nasty cuts and bruises, including a lack of pace, huge turning circles and 'sweet spots'. Even so, it still rates as a majestic example of footie in a disc, even though an *ISS* with faults is hard to stomach.

18 AGENT UNDER FIRE



EA ■ NGC/70 **70**
GoldenEye's reputation as one of the best shooters of all time is... totally unscathed by EA's latest average 007 shooting game. Mainly comprises stodgy, good-enough FPS levels featuring boring guns, stupid enemies and stock Bond-by-numbers clichés. The driving levels are ace, though...

13 AGGRESSIVE INLINE



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72 **81**
 Pleasantly surprising roller-skating game from the same stable as *Dave Mirra*, that sensibly uses the tried-and-tested *Hawk's* formula, while remaining more accessible than it. Massive, challenge-filled arenas, no time limits, and unique, 'jiggling' physics make this a real alternative to *The Tonester*.

19 SONIC ADVENTURE 2: BATTLE



SEGA/INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/67 **70**
 It moves like greased weasel-turd, it looks beautiful, it's solid enough – but this sequel is underwhelming, dressed in next-gen gear but sporting Mega Drive-era ideas. It offers some intriguing GBA connectivity – shame more isn't made of this part of it.

14 LOST KINGDOMS



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70 **86**
 Nerdy CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this surprisingly accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts. Try it and you just might get hooked.

20 CRAZY TAXI



SEGA/ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67 **70**
 It's as good as it was on Dreamcast and PS2, but that's just the point: *Crazy Taxi* is *old*, and nothing's been done to update it for its Gamecube release. Shame, because with a bit of polish this could have found a new lease of life – as it is, it's still excellent fun, if a little elderly.

GEAR

Kittsy gets busy with a GBA lighting solution – and a load of other stuff, too!

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Every month we'll pick out one piece of kit that stands head and shoulders above the rest and award it our coveted Best Buy badge. A Best Buy will combine superb quality with fantastic value for money – when we hand something a reward like that, you know it's worth investing in.

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AFTERBURNER INTERNAL LIGHT

FROM TRITON LABS • £35

The GBA's dark screen is undoubtedly a bad thing, but not quite as bad as the plethora of hideous plastic lights that grip, limpet-like, to the console, ruining its pocket-size shape. Not only are they ugly, they never really work, unless you don't mind having only half the screen lit, and a nasty reflection obscuring the rest.

The only real solution is the Afterburner internal light, which is several times as expensive as any clip-on tat, but does actually work. It's a flat glass panel that sits inside the GBA, right on top of the LCD, and supplies a crisp, even light that's bright enough to let you play in a pitch-black room.

No reflections, no glare, and no extra batteries – it sucks power from the GBA, and the makers claim it only reduces battery life from 14-plus hours to around 9 hours, which sounds reasonable to us. It isn't quite perfect, as the glass adds a faint prism effect to the screen when viewed from certain angles, but it's more than good enough to make us wonder why Nintendo didn't include something like this in the GBA from the start.

However, the drawback is that it's very difficult to install correctly. It comes in kit form – the glass panel, an anti-reflective plastic film, a couple of wires, a resistor and a brightness dial. Dismantling the GBA, cutting away chunks of the plastic casing to make room for the Afterburner, and making six solder joints – two straight onto the circuit board – are the easy parts.

The hardest thing is putting the glass panel and AR film onto the GBA's LCD without getting particles of dust on either of them – particularly the adhesive-backed AR film. Even the most microscopic blemish will be very obvious once the light is switched on. Unless you're a student with access to one of those fume hood cabinets you find in science labs, there's little chance of getting a perfectly clean screen.

If you mess up the AR film you can buy replacements for £2 each, but the more you keep opening your GBA and trying again, the more dust will be attracted to other parts of the console, especially the clear plastic screen cover.

Various online retailers will professionally install an Afterburner for around £45, and if you can afford it, it's really the only option to go for. It's a superb invention that's a big improvement to the standard GBA. But don't try it at home!

BETTER THAN...

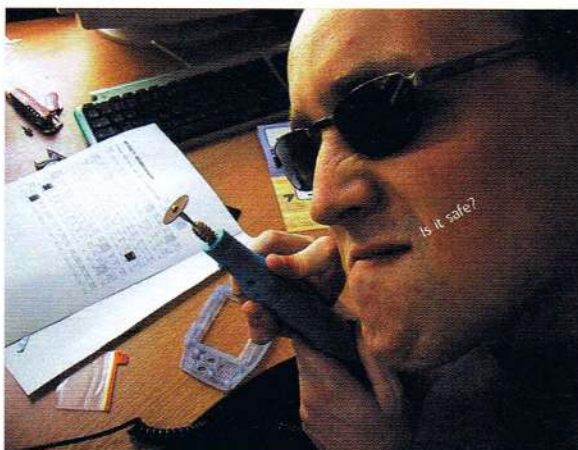


GAMESTER FLO-LIGHT

FROM WILD THINGS • £14.99
Not really any competition in terms of lighting quality – but the Flo-Light's cheaper and easier to install.



△ Go to www.tritonlabs.com and check the forums to find the cheapest or most reliable UK-based importers and installers.



△ As well as the £35 lighting kit, you'll need a soldering iron, a Dremel-style multi-tool, some glue, and a dust-free room. Whoops.

GAME DOCTOR

FROM DIGITAL INNOVATIONS • £29.99

Fed up of having wonky scratched games that won't work? Then this nifty device ought to help matters somewhat. Basically, you put your damaged GC disc into the bottom tray and then turn the crank to 'sand off' any problematic blemishes from the disc's surface. Worryingly, once you've put your discs through the wheel, they come out looking horrendously scuffed up, but it does actually seem to work. Some words of warning, though – don't put a disc in and clean it without water because you'll mess it up it like you wouldn't believe. It works with CDs, too – but to use it with GC discs, you'll need a separate adaptor which costs an extra fiver.

BETTER THAN...



SCRATCHED DISCS

You could try the age-old method of breathing on the disc and wiping it with your shirt tails, or even with a piece of emery board – neither are as effective as the Game Doctor, though.



TWIN ARCADE STICK

FROM XGAMING • £129.99

When they say this is built with 'commercial grade' arcade-style buttons and joysticks, they aren't joking. Granted, it's something of a luxury item, clocking in at a scary £129.99, but this is undoubtedly the best that your money can buy. Built into the weighty wooden case are two arcade-quality sticks with 16 main concave buttons – eight on each side. Add to this a programmable memory, easy upgradeability, and the kind of durability that'll survive a road accident, and you've got one nice piece of retro kit.

BETTER THAN...



ANYTHING ELSE

This is a first for GC, but knowing most of the other arcade stick manufacturers, it won't budge off the top spot for some time.



GAMECUBE PAD

FROM NAKI • £14.99

How can the same company make one pad that's very good and another that's complete rubbish? Perhaps the Spider-Pad department ate in a different canteen at lunchtime. The buttons are poorly placed, the D-pad is spongy, and the whole unit feels like it came out of a cracker. Do not buy this.

WORSE THAN...



ADVANCE CONTROLLER

FROM JOYTECH • £9.99

This pad was pretty grim itself, but at least Joytech did a half-decent job with the button placement – it certainly didn't feel quite so naff as this botched job.



SPIDER-PAD

FROM NAKI • £14.99

Okay, so it looks ugly as sin. In fact, it's possibly one of the most repulsive pads we've ever had the misfortune to clap eyes on – but, believe it or not, it's also one of the better third-party controllers we've used. It's not in the same league as the official pad, but in terms of the feel of the thing when you're playing, it's as close as a third-party pad can get without attracting the attention of Nintendo's lawyers. Our only problem with it is the C-stick, which feels a little on the spindly side. Other than that, this is something of a pleasant surprise. Not a bad effort at all.

AS GOOD AS...



PRO PAD

FROM LOGIC3 • £14.99

Another great third-party option – although this one won't actually make you physically sick by merely looking at it.



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JOYTECH • £99

The sharpest, cheapest, biggest and best screen around so far. Absolutely no contest whatsoever (not that there's much).



PRO PAD

LOGIC3 • £14.99

So far, the best third-party controller around – we'll be surprised if anyone beats it. It's sturdy, the analogue is almost perfect, and it's comfortable to hold. Lovely.



XA 3021 GAMING THEATRE

ALTEC LANSING • £79.99

The design might not be to everyone's tastes, but there's no arguing with the sound quality. So far, this is the best system money can buy.



GTZ 500 RACING WHEEL

SAITEK • £30

Not great, but still the best wheel available for the time being. Saying that, it's robust, and it handles well, although the button placement leaves a lot to be desired at times.



AFTER-BURNER

TRITON LABS • £35

Most GBA lights don't require sawing, gluing and soldering to install, but once fitted there's no better lighting alternative to this.

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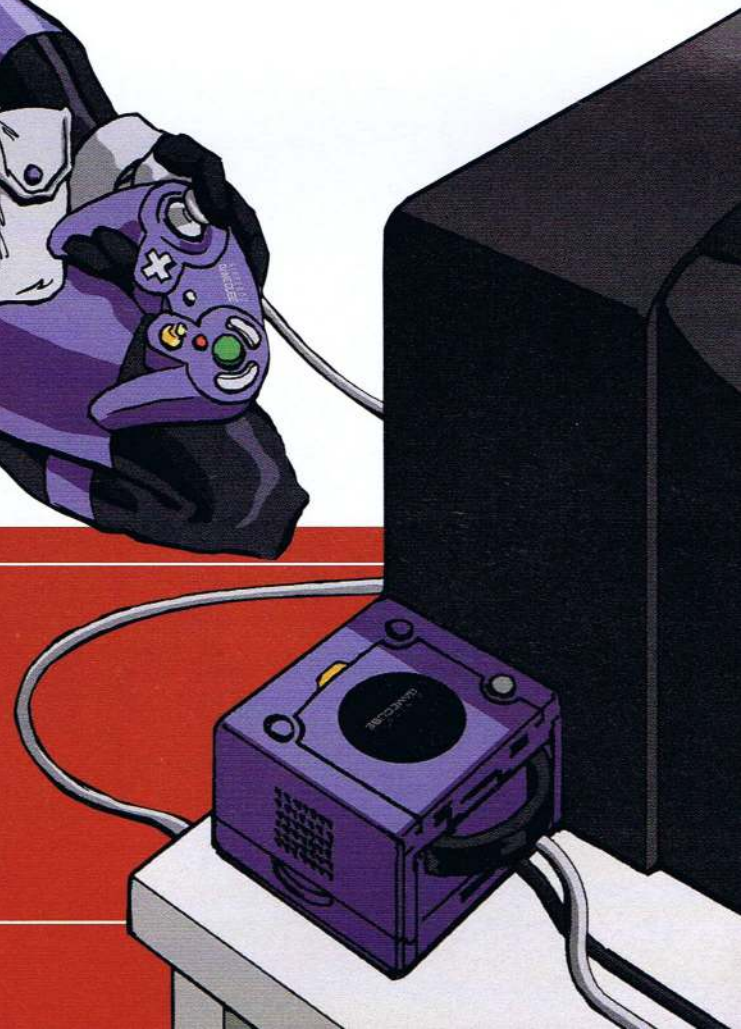
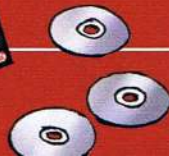
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CONTENTS

■ How to... Master Mario Sunshine	88
■ Tips Extra	96
■ I'm The Best	100
■ Subscriptions	104
■ Mailbox	106
■ Next Month	109
■ NGC Compendium	110
■ Gaming Planet	112
■ EndGC	114



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MARIO SUNSHINE

NGC GUARANTEES
GRAB EVERY
SHINE



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Mazza goes on a well-deserved holiday, but ends up having to clean up dirt. Much more fun than that sounds. The much-anticipated follow-up to *Mario 64*, *Sunshine* is more polished and more of the same – which can only be a good thing.



WHAT WE SAID IN THIS ISSUE!

"Super Mario Sunshine is a genuine, utter delight to play, and the scope for exploration and discovery, for experimenting with the huge amount of moves and flexibility at your fingertips... it's breathtaking."

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
96



Welcome to part one of our massive *Mario Sunshine* guide. Grab those Shines!

In total, there are 120 Shines to collect in *SMS*. Use the Z-button's Travel Guide to keep track of your coin counts and click on the Shine logo to compare your current rating to our handy breakdown.

Main Worlds

There are seven distinct worlds, each of which hides 11 Shines. This is comprised of eight episode Shines, two hidden Shines, and a 100-coin Shine. Each world also contains 30 blue coins to trade in.

Delfino Plaza

This is the hub world, from which all other worlds are accessed. The Plaza contains 16 Shines and 20 blue coins.

Minor Areas

Delfino Airstrip contains two Shines, including the first Shine of the game. Corona Mountain contains one Shine and ten blue coins but doesn't show up on your Shine list. Confusingly, trading blue coins for Shines always takes place in Delfino Plaza – they'll be listed there.

IF YOU'VE PLAYED MARIO 64...

...Then there are some points of finesse to bear in mind. The inclusion of the spin jump has made the cartwheel jump – the pro player's favourite – less responsive in *SMS*. The key to mastering the spin jump is that

it doesn't matter where you start spinning the stick, and you only need little more than a half-rotation: at first, just be sure to finish with the stick pushed straight forward before pressing A and you'll move predictably enough

to start picking it up. The hover nozzle effectively replaces the long jump, with the advantage of letting you steer around corners. Learning to tag a hover onto the end of every jump is your first priority.

There are also many more opportunities to wall-jump, with the added advantage of being able to do it at any time when sliding down walls that you're pressing into. If one jump misses, you can keep trying.



DELFINO PLAZA



SHINE 1 Beach

Spray the sand around the lighthouse and look for a tell-tale yellow flash on the ground. Then bombard this spot with water until you uncover the Shine logo. The Shine itself will appear on a cluster of rising pillars in the waters nearby, so jump across and then keep hovering from one to the next until you reach it.



SHINE 3 Dirty Bells 1

There are two towers in town whose bells are covered in goop. Reach the first by climbing the nearest building and spraying it from below. To collect the Shine, look for a manhole on a nearby rooftop and ground-pound it – the sewer takes you to the tower.



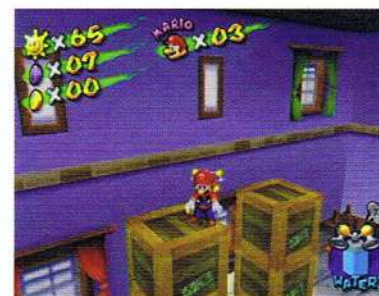
SHINE 2 Coastal Pipe Warp

At the far end of that sea-bound cluster of pillars is a familiar green pipe, so make your way over and drop inside it to warp to a wooden slide challenge. Bump yourself left with the stick when you hit the steps, but remember to jump to get yourself over those dizzying drops. Stopping dead at the end can be a problem, so be sure to time your leaping correctly.



SHINE 4 Crate Smashing 1

After opening Bianco Hills, a doorway will appear in a building in the café section of the plaza – look for the tables and sunshades. Talk to the proprietor and butt-slam all of the crates within the time limit to receive your Shine.



SHINE 5 Crate Smashing 2

The same challenge as before, except this time the crates are stacked higher.

MARIO SUNSHINE

All Shines accounted for in the first massive SMS guide...



SHINE 6 Chuckster on the Roof

On the roof directly above the Crate Test is a Pianta man who'll throw you into a nearby building for a yellow coin. The Shine's inside.



SHINE 7 100 Coins

This is only possible once the plaza's boats have begun to ply the waters, as the Shine must be collected from a high offshore platform; alternatively, leave it until you have the rocket nozzle. Ground-pound the manhole covers and look for coin stashes in the sewers. One lone manhole cover is hidden on the beach, near the sunshades, and will reveal its outline when you run over it. Also, spray water over any Wanted posters, hanging shop signs, open windows, and green birds. If you complete a Shine within Delfino Plaza or (later on) the Airstrip, your coin count will remain intact and so you can build to a 999 high score here.



SHINE 8 Bagatelle Red Coin Warp

From the centre of the plaza, leap onto the roof of a departing boat and look for a yellow coin when you pass under the building over the exit. There's a secret entrance above you right here, and jumping up inside it will warp you to the giant Bagatelle game.

Three red coins sit in the feeder tube and five are on the board, where the Shine also appears near the bottom. Steering after launch doesn't give you quite enough control to stop this being a big game of luck, but you can increase your influence with some deft handling of the hover nozzle.



SHINE 9 The Golden Bird

On a tiny southern island just off the beach is a Pianta trapped by his inability to swim (extinguish his campfire for a 1-Up). On your arrival, the yellow bird you'll see will begin to circle. Hose it until it surrenders a Shine.



SHINE 10 Yoshi's Coastal Voyage / Leaf Warp

On the same island as Shine 9 is a green pipe, covered in goop that only Yoshi's vomit can remove. There are three boats operating a relay from Delfino Plaza to the pipe, but you can skip the first by taking Yoshi through the sewers to the western island with the Pianta woman and her fruit basket. Eat coconuts from the palm tree to maintain Yoshi's health until the second boat turns up, then jump on top. It will take you as far as Shine 7's ocean platform, where you get off. Again, eat the bananas to keep Yoshi alive until boat number three arrives for collection. If you fall in the water, you'll need to start again.

Collecting all eight red coins in the leafboat challenge requires a daring jump and hover to the narrow bank for coin seven – the toxic water is fatal to the touch. If you miss one you can walk back along the sides of the river for another go, but hopefully you brought enough lives. Die and repeat rather than take the pipe at the end, or you'll be forced to repeat the Yoshi voyage.



SHINE 11 Door Smash Turbo

Yoshi's egg sits on top of a building with a thin saloon door. The saloon door can be

smashed open by powering into it with the turbo nozzle – do this and you'll discover a Shine hiding inside.



SHINE 12 Courtroom Waterslide Warp

Those same thin doors can be found on the local courtroom, so turbo straight between the two policemen to break through to the warp. Once inside, just keep R held all the way to the Shine. Red lines on the platforms mark your jumping points but try not to overshoot at the end of the course.



SHINE 13 Clean the Shine Gate

Once you have the rocket nozzle, you can head to the waterfalls behind the Shine Gate and boost upwards to reach the giant Shine. Spin it around with a good hosing to clean it off. It may look as if your Shine reward vanishes off to Corona Mountain, but it's actually right above the Shine Gate, a mere rocket boost from the centre of the rooftop.



SHINE 14 The Lighthouse

Use the rocket nozzle to get right up to the roof of the lighthouse that contains the entrance to Gelato Beach. That symbol on the stone cap indicates that you need a special technique to break through it, one that has to be far stronger than a regular butt slam, so don't waste time bruising Mario's bum. Rocket-boost again, then ground-pound with L at the height of your burn to see Mario's butt 'attempting re-entry', complete with flames. One final rocket boost will take you to the Shine.



SHINE 15 Dirty Bells 2

Now you can reach the other oily clanger, give it a rinse and rocket up for the Shine.



SHINE 16 The Red Bird of Happiness

Jump into the sea next to the Pinna Park cannon access and follow the coast northwest. Past the first few jutting palms there's a platform sitting high in the cliff face – a rocket boost will take you from here up to a green pipe warp. To get the red coins, you must use your water supply sparingly. Defeat two enemies by hosing them into a wall. Stun the other two by jumping and squirting over the top of the grass (which seems to protect them from your jet), then dive straight at them. Put out the burning man for a red coin reward, then use the overhead view to look for a small watermelon block in one corner that can be butt-slammed to find a coin below. Then climb a tree and start spraying the red bird until it surrenders its coin. The last two coins are on top of the wooden blocks.



SHINE 17 Finish the Game

When the flood washes over the Plaza, chase Shadow Mario to Corona Mountain and complete the basic game for this Shine. The cave entrance is up in the waterfalls behind the Shine Gate.

SHINE 18 41 Blue Coin Trades

All Shines purchased with blue coins will show up on your Delfino Plaza score.



THOSE SECRET SHINES

With a couple of exceptions, the extra Shines hidden on each world involve repeating the warp levels therein and ground-pounding the red switches to open up a red coin challenge.



BIANCO HILLS



SHINE 1 Road to the Big Windmill

Like all Gooper Piranha Plants, the trick to dispatching this fairly easy boss is simply to soak his hiding place until he materialises. Then wait until he opens his big plant mouth, and start squirting water into it. Three hits will do for him.



SHINE 2 Down with Petey Piranha!

Petey lives at the top of the big windmill, so follow the arrow path (using the hover nozzle to avoid gaps and stems), then ride the sails to the roof. As soon as he opens his mouth, aim your jet down his throat, and ground-pound his belly button three times.



SHINE 3 The Hillside Cave Secret

The hillside is to the far right of the level as you enter – get over the centre wall and negotiate the tightropes to enter the cave. The trick with the sliding cubes is to get a sideways view. Grab the 1-Up on the spinning stars every time and you can't lose.

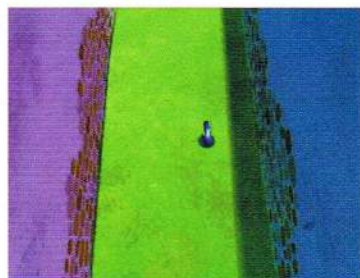


SHINE 4 Red Coins of Windmill Village

The extended walkways in this area can be rotated by squirting their sails with water, which will make your jumping a lot easier. To uncover the final coins, take a look inside the archways of the white wall that divides this level.

BLUE COINS

Once you've opened the entrance to Ricco Harbour, you can also enter the building at the end of the jetty and buy Shines from the raccoon shopkeepers. There are 240 blue coins to find in SMS, and you'll get one Shine for every ten coins that you trade in. Keep a look out for symbol graffiti – rinse off the red symbols to make coins appear.



Blue butterflies Use Yoshi's tongue to eat the whole swarm.
Blue birds Keep spraying them with water, or get Yoshi to eat them.
Bees' nests Aim Yoshi's spit to rock the nest from its perch, then eat all the bees.



Good deeds Always try and help the people that you meet – this usually involves rescuing them from goop and spraying them clean.
Miscellaneous If it looks interesting, try spraying it with water.



SHINE 5 Petey Piranha Strikes Back

That odd swarm of pink blobs in the hills isn't harmful, despite its rush to engulf you – these Kirby-alikes happily attach to your squirt nozzle, turning it into a long-range water-bomb launcher with which you can

interrupt Petey's island slumber. Climb the grassy steps to catch a glimpse of him. They also give you the range you need to shoot Petey out of the sky when he wakes up. Once he's grounded, outrun his whirlwinds until you can use the same techniques as your previous encounter.



SHINE 6 The Secret of the Dirty Lake

There's another warp cave entrance to the north here and, though you could try to improvise a shortcut with rocket boosts if



they are open to you, the default route is to jump on the lake's leafboats and use your squirt as a jet-propulsion system. Keep jumping from leaf to leaf, as the boats only last a short time before dissolving. Make for



MARIO SUNSHINE

All Shines accounted for in the first massive SMS guide...

YOSHI

Yoshi only appears after you've completed Episode 5 of Pinna Park. To wake a Yoshi egg, bring it the fruit you can see in its thought bubble. The type of fruit he eats will change his colour and his seed spit. The rumoured Green Yoshi only appears as a warning change of colour when he is running out of juice. His Juice meter runs out slowly over time, and quickly if you spray lots of juice around, so you need to keep feeding him fruit to top it up. He will also disappear if he falls into deep water.



B Button: Yoshi can eat birds and butterflies. When looking for 100 Coin Shines, note that eating enemies with Yoshi's tongue normally produces less coins than if Mario fought them alone.

L Button: Yoshi's ground-pound cannot flip swivelling panels. If he gets stuck in a pit, spit juice until he vanishes and return



to the egg for another go.

R Button: Yoshi's juice spit will dissolve the harmful yellow goop covering some entrances. It also has a strange effect on some creatures, turning them into useful platforms. The type of fruit juice you spit can determine how the platforms will move.

the logs at the far end to reach the cave. Once inside, watch the spinning platforms beforehand to gauge the right red/blue timing (you can stay on them when they flip if you're careful, though – useful for getting the red coins later). The rotating star is

placed there to force you into a timed triple-jump to the first cube, but a sneaky wall-jump off the blue side panel works just as well. The best way to gauge the rotating cubes is to zoom out and swivel the camera so you can see from behind and to one side.



SHINE 8 The Red Coins of the Lake

When double jumps fail you on this one, make use of the rocket nozzle to move from one tightrope to a higher one.



SECRET SHINE 1 Repeat Shine 3 as a Red Coin Challenge.



SECRET SHINE 2 Repeat Shine 6 as a Red Coin Challenge.



SHINE 7 Shadow Mario on the Loose

Follow our general tips and spray, but don't try to catch him. Eventually he'll fold.



RICCO HARBOUR



SHINE 1 Gooper Blooper Breaks Out

Get onto the boat and follow the arrows to the Captain. Use the Y view to precision-aim your jet and spin the propeller to raise the yellow submarine, making a temporary bridge over the oil slick. The crane will lift you up to the quayside.

To wake Gooper Blooper, grab the tentacle snaking from the cargo containers with the B-button and keep it held while you give it a good pull. You'll be using this technique often, and it's important not to run at it or you'll dive with B instead. Blooper attacks with tentacle lashes, but if you stand still and spray water in his eyes then they'll always crash down on either side of you. Cruelly, the idea is to grab each tentacle and keep pulling until it snaps off. Repeat until he's limbless, then spray his face clean and pull the cork from his nose.



SHINE 2 Blooper Surfing Safari

A few tips will make this challenge much easier. The first is that the colour of Blooper determines its speed, with green slowest and purple fastest. Once you step onto a Blooper, keeping the L-button held down will give you a fixed 'behind-the-squid' view so that you don't need to worry about the camera spinning out. Finally, note that you can jump with the A-button. The secret to beating the course time limit is to make jumping shortcuts straight over the hairpin walls on the final stretch.



SHINE 3 The Caged Shine Sprite

This time, board the other vessel and jump to grab hold of the pole on the loading hook. You'll always jump backwards off a pole, so you need to swing around while it's moving and line yourself up ready to disembark. The other new item introduced for this obstacle course is the trampoline. As soon as you reach a rocket nozzle box, though, it doesn't matter if you fall off at any point: sneakily, there's a flip-gate in the bottom of the tall yellow cage that you can rocket to from the green arrow platform below.

SHADOW MARIO

Surprisingly, the idea is not to catch up with your evil clone when chasing him because the slightest touch will harm you. He will only drop when you've hosed him with plenty of water, so keep R lightly held and try to stay on his tail. If you want to make it really easy then just wait for him to stop at one of his regular resting spots, edge in close enough to spray him from the Y button view, and repeat.



SHINE 4 The Secret of Ricco Tower

This episode is easy to reach if you have the rocket nozzle, but you can make it up to the warp entrance at the top of the tower just as easily by jumping and hovering from the ship's smokestack. Obviously, this appears more skilful and will impress people far



more. Yes. The rolling platforms are quite generous if you keep moving to the centre line and don't dive or slide. A wall-jump will secure you a 1-Up here, as well as two red coins on the Secret Shine challenge. On the last stretch, watch out for a perspective trick that means you have to run further than usual.





MARIO SUNSHINE

All Shines accounted for in the first massive SMS guide...



SHINE 5 Gooper Blooper Returns

Cross over to the quayside as usual, and then drop down to the speedboats moored underneath the helipad with the hover nozzle. Break open the nozzle box and rocket straight upwards to grab hold of the underside, and then just flip right up onto the helipad.

Gooper Blooper manages a second bout here after covering the decks in oil, but the technique remains the same.



SHINE 6 Red Coins on the Water

The hardest part of this challenge is actually claiming your Shine at the end of it without dying. You'll still be riding your Blooper after the clock stops, and you need to jump back onto the jetty without crashing into it or landing on another Blooper. Sounds easy, but it's a pain. Aim for the space that you left from.



SHINE 7 Shadow Mario Revisited

Another chase episode, this time across the high girders.



SHINE 8 Yoshi's Fruit Adventure

The two silos on the quayside marked FRUIT have switches on top that you can ground-pound in alternation until they deliver the fruit needed to hatch your Yoshi egg. Then ride him to the edge of the dock and spit seeds at the fish to turn them into moving platforms. Jump on and travel all the way out to the tall sea rigs. See the coconut palm tree to your left? The best way to tackle this section is to feed Yoshi a coconut, because the type of juice he spits determines how the platforms will move. Use coconut juice and the fish/platforms will become elevators, providing the best route up to the Shine cage. Yoshi's spit will dissolve the yellow goop blocking the cage's flipgate.



SECRET SHINE 1

Repeat Shine 2, but finish the course in under 40 seconds.



SECRET SHINE 2

Repeat the warp level from Shine 4 as a Red Coin Challenge.

FLUDD NOZZLES

To use the rocket boost while treading water or when you're walking on a tightrope, you need to start powering up with the R-button, and then jump clear with A so that Mario is in the air when the boost kicks in, as you can't jump or boost when you're actually in the water. In later levels you'll often find that the rocket can't quite reach some platforms, quite deliberately – such as getting to the top of the lighthouse in Delfino Plaza – so perform a cartwheel or spin-jump while it's building up power to add some height. Just dandy, no?



NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!
HOVER CRAFT
Though you can only hover only once per jump, you can hit the R-button for the hover nozzle at any time to break falls.



GELATO BEACH



SHINE 1 Dune Bud Sandcastle Secret

To trigger a Dune Bud, keep watering it until you see an orange bulge, then stand well back. The one you need reveals a giant sandcastle warp entrance that you must reach before the timer runs out.

Once inside, run across the sandblocks before they disintegrate. They'll reappear afterwards, so retreat to a solid wooden block if you screw up. Double-jumps are treacherously slow so use the cartwheel and spin-jump.



SHINE 2 Mirror Madness! Tilt, Slam, Bam!

Your goal here is to remove all of the Giant Cataquacks from the mirrors. The Cataquacks can't be shifted while they have both suckered feet on the mirror, but if you continuously water-cannon them to the very edge then they will teeter on one leg. This is your brief opportunity to ground-pound the opposite side of the mirror and propel the Cataquack into the air see-saw fashion.

Clear all three mirrors so that the reflected rays of the sun converge on the Wiggler at the top.



MISTER SHADES

Talk to this recurring moustachioed Pianta guy for some holiday accessories. You'll get the shades after claiming all of the FLUDD nozzle attachments from Shadow Mario and a little something extra once you've beaten the final boss.



SHINE 3 Wiggler Ahoy! Full Steam Ahead!

Watch the route that the Wiggler follows, as it will change slightly whenever he speeds up. Your first move is to de-rail him by watering a Dune Bud in his path, timing it to appear so that he runs over it and rolls off. You then have a brief moment in which to look for a red arrow, indicating the section of Wiggler's body that must be butt-slammed before he gets back up. Stand well clear and pound his belly two more times to finish him off.



SHINE 4 The Sand Bird is Born

Slide down the brown path at the top of the level and jump onto a canopy that will launch you onto the broken roof of the egg tower.

There are a few tricks to staying on when the Sand Bird banks, such as climbing onto its neck as it turns, but if you jump to a cloud platform, you can stay on and watch him circle until he comes around again.

There are only seven coins on the Sand Bird's back. The last coin is right on top of the central tower, so you'll need to jump from the bird near the height of its climb to claim your Shine.



SHINE 5 Il Piantissimo's Sand Sprint

This becomes much easier when you've learned some of Mario's more advanced moves. On a long straight, use the waterslide by lightly pressing R as you run and then B to dive. In shorter stretches, just keep hitting B to chain together a series of speedy bellyflops. The advantage of the latter is that you can mix in jumps to clear any obstacles in your way, or just turn sharply.

Ignore the upper paths and take a shortcut straight up the grass after your wall-jump. Be sure that you're standing right on the flagpole at the end or the clock may not stop ticking.

MARIO SUNSHINE

All Shines accounted for in the first massive SMS guide...



SHINE 6 Red Coins in the Coral Reef

If you can grab a turbo nozzle for this episode, all the better. The challenge involves a large fish hungrily circling the

reef, so a speedy escape can be useful. Most of the coins are simply hidden among the corals, but two move with the shoals of red fish, offering perfect camouflage – easier to spot if you're below the surface.



SHINE 7 It's Shadow Mario! After Him!

Yet more Shadow-Mario chasing – much the same as all the others, you've just got some

pretty new surroundings to run around. An added threat in this chase is that your evil clone may try to lead you straight through a bees' nest, which should be avoided.



SHINE 8 The Watermelon Festival

To earn this Shine, you have to win the Festival by rolling a winning specimen all the way to the proprietor of the juice bar on the pier. Unsurprisingly, then, the largest, juiciest watermelon of the lot is the one sitting right at the top of the hill (other melons will simply earn you coins). The melons grow back if they burst.

Long drops, crushers, and sharp beaks can all pop your melon, so roll it down the long path to the side of the blue fruit hut and take the long flat route over the beach. Use your spray to stun the Cataquacks ahead, clearing a safe route through. You have to push it all the way along the pier too, so bear in mind that a hose spray is as good as a light push when correcting it.



SECRET SHINE 1

Go to where Shine 1 is, but look out for a Dune Bud high up near the base of the Sand Bird's egg tower. When you splosh it, you should see it become a set of steps descending towards four yellow coins. Before it closes, quickly hose down the wall at the bottom to reveal a Shine logo.



SECRET SHINE 2

Repeat Shine 1 as a Red Coin Challenge.



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THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



YOUR MOST WANTED TIPS

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

In Super Smash Bros Melee, tapping the C-stick performs a weak Smash attack – but if you quickly tap Z immediately afterwards, you charge it up.
 Shane Rynhart, Dorset

Then check that the card it's transforming into isn't actually weaker – it can happen. Often the new card will be a different element, too, so plan ahead.

STAR RATINGS

The first time you go through a level, open as many chests as you can, pick up all the red fairies, capture lots of cards, work out exactly what needs to be done to finish it, then abort. You lose nothing from aborting, and the next time you enter you'll zip through and have a much better chance of getting a high star rating, and thus getting the rare card. It's even worth saving just before going in, and reloading if you don't pick the rare one out of the five cards.

MAGIC STONES

Even if your magic stone meter is full, it doesn't mean you should stop picking up the ones dropped by fallen enemies (and smashed scenery). Why? Well, every card in your deck (even the ones you didn't use) will get an amount of experience at the end of the battle equal to the number of stones you pick up. Goblin Lords can be helpful with this, as they roam around the

landscape plucking small- to medium-sized stones out of the ground.

CARD ASSETS

Cards like the Skeleton and Red Lizard are good at the beginning but soon get overpowered as the enemies get stronger. Don't forsake them, however. The Skeleton can transform into a Demon Skeleton with 3,000 experience, a Berserker at 4,000, and a Steel Skeleton at 5,000, while the Lizard Man becomes a Scythe Beast at 1,000, a Venom Lizard at 3,000, and a Red Dragon at 6,000. If they're struggling to kill anything normally, use them to capture a strong enemy when it has one or two hit points left – full experience for defeating it will be earned, and you'll get the card too!

GURD'S APOTHECARY

Always go back to Gurd's Apothecary after completing a mission. Not only will she often have new cards to buy, but you can check which cards are newly available to copy/transform, and talking to her occasionally gives you bonus side missions.



LOST KINGDOMS

EXTRA FLOORS

Even though your deck has a thirty card maximum, anyone who has played *Magic: the Gathering* will know that the smaller a deck is, the more focused it is, and often more effective too. However, to prevent yourself running out, you'll need some way to get back used cards. There are four cards that can do this: Sea Monk, Rheeбус, Mind Flayer and Unicorn. Use the first two in a small deck of about ten powerful cards until Unicorns become available, then get yourself as many Unicorns as possible. Ignore Mind Flayers – while they're very powerful, their cost is prohibitive.

MONEY MATTERS

Remember that there's no point saving money – the only purpose for it in the game is in Gurd's Apothecary, so if you see a cool

card you don't have (or even one you reckon you could do with more of), and you can easily afford it, go for it.

LIFE-SAVING TACTIC

When you're casting a card, you're temporarily invincible, so you could use this strategy if you're just about to be whacked by something big and nasty – bung out anything, sharpish, and avoid the damage.

CARD COLLATERAL

If an enemy dies through poison damage, no-one gets any experience from it, which means that cards which deal that kind of damage (such as the Hydra) struggle to get experience on their own. Try using them to Capture, instead.

TRANSFORMATION

If you're going to transform a card, first check that you've got more than one of that card, or that you can buy another one easily.



READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

So here it is: tippage by you lot. Top Tip wins a game from The Drawer – simple as that. Got an original tip? Use the form on the next page, then!



1. FIFA 2002 WORLD CUP

Target Practice

During play press Start, select a side, choose your opponents, then let the other team get the ball. Hold down Z (the keeper comes out) and press Start, then let go and go back to your team. Every time you get the ball you'll be left with an open goal.

Kris Healey, Kent

2. SSX TRICKY

Snow scene

On the title screen, hold L + R, press A, B, Z, X, Y, Z, B, Y, Z, X, A, Z then release L + R to unlock nearly everything.

Nicholas Westwood, Telford

3. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Card sharp

To unlock all cheat modes type MARKED CARDS on the cheat screen. You will then find all of the cheats on the cheat menu that appear during a run.

Michael Taylor, West Midlands

4. WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM

The magic circle

If you go to Dolphin Park on Free Roam (you get free boosts that way), if you look carefully, there's a secret course to play on. Start circling, and you should see some red buoys in the distance – drive out to them (use your boost so you get there before your timer runs out), and you'll find yourself in a secret circular course that's filled with nothing but massive waves. Excellent!

Sean Larkin, Essex

5. SSX TRICKY

Trick style

To fill your boost bar quickly in race mode, use the C-stick to knock down another racer. This instantly fills your boost bar and enables über-tricks.

Iain Gear, Essex

6. SUPER SMASH BROS

Rest in pieces

You may think Jigglypuff's Rest move is rubbish – think again. When almost covering an opponent, use Rest (B + Down) to unleash a deadly explosion, making your enemy fly sky-high.

Jason Leeming, Lancs

7. SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

Ball control

As Barney on the Entertainment District, knock over the silver globe near the brewery – see how far you can push it!

Chris King, Lancs

8. SUPER SMASH BROS

Bag on the run

On Home Run Contest, with Donkey Kong, pick up the bag (push back and press Z). Now run as far as you can and then throw it by pressing A.

Kyle Turner, Lancashire

9. WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM

Dolphin hitching

In the option menu press Z + X + Start to bring up the passwords screen, then enter DLPNM0D to ride a dolphin.

Michael Radford, West Midlands

10. ROGUE LEADER

Ace mode unlocked

Instead of getting Ace Mode the (very) hard way, enter this code: U!P!VW2C then put in GIVEITUP to get it unlocked.

Michael Corker, Sheffield

TIPS EXTRA

The injection of help you need to ease your gaming pain



Not to be taken internally, in case of swelling or explosive splattering.



Dr Kitts,

Could you tell me how to unlock Mewtwo on *Super Smash Bros Melee*? I can't be bothered to play 700 Versus mode matches, or play versus mode for 20 man-hours. I have not got many friends to play versus mode with for five hours! Is there any other way? A cheat, maybe?

Tim Waring, Staffs

Dr Kitts invents a strange new system of mathematics – two plus two now equals lime marmalade...

You youngsters today with your long hair, playing gang star rap on your boom boxes – no patience! And, apparently, no friends, either. Either you should get out more, possibly bribing your way into friendships using shiny trinkets and gewgaws, or at a push simply follow this advice, kindly provided by James Harley of Surrey. Start a versus match on Hryule Temple, and leave it running overnight (well, for 20 hours). Come back, and finish Mewtwo off, and he's yours.

Dr Kitts,

No matter how hard I try, I just can't beat the Final Destination match in *Super Smash Bros Melee*! Are there any characters that are better than others, and if so, who? Thanks for saving my life.

Alex Kaufmann, Denmark

Dr Kitts doodles a cure for amnesia on a napkin then forgets about it...

The stage itself is in fact one of the simplest in the game, but the opponents therein are, of course, less than easy to deal with. Jumping around is to be avoided, since there's little advantage to be gained, but you should watch out for wide area moves



– without any obstacles to limit them, they can become a lot more dangerous than usual. Jigglypuff's rollout is one such move (hint hint).



Dr Kitts,

I am stuck on event match 51 for *Super Smash Bros Melee*. Can you give me any advice for completing this task?

Kevin Bestwick, Cheshire

Dr Kitts works his seventh 12-hour shift in a row and starts talking to a tiny penguin called Brian...

Sometimes the path to glittering success leads through the dark woods of unexpectedness, as my dear old pater used to say. He was quite, quite mad of course, but in this instance his words are particularly appropriate, because the character with the best chance of defeating Bowser, Ganon and Mewtwo is... Jigglypuff, using the otherwise hopeless Rest move (down and B). With enough practice, and assuming you get close enough to them, you should be able to take two of the three out pretty consistently, and fight the third more conventionally, man to... well, pokémon.

CODE BANK

With his gaming Enigma machine, **NGC's** Alan Turing gets cracking...

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

Enter the following codes at the cheat screen for a huge great tottering heap of bonus modes:

- **SKELETON** All keys
- **BAKABAKA** Juice bar always full
- **BIGUPYASELF** Perfect grinds
- **JUSTINBAILEY** Perfect handplants
- **QUEZDONTSLLEEP** Perfect manuals

Fancy getting your mucky paws on some secret characters? It's real easy, man! If you manage to finish all of the normal and hidden challenges on each level, you will unlock someone else to get aggressive with. Here's the full list... Grrrr!

- **Movie Lot** – The Bride
- **Civic Center** – Goddess
- **Industrial** – Junkie
- **Boardwalk** – Captain
- **Cannery** – Diver



NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

To do lots of amazing moves (including your finisher) in Bloody Roar: Primal Fury, swirl the control stick around really, really, really fast when on Beast or Hyper mode and keep pressing X.

John Beard, Gloucestershire

- **Airfield** – Bombshell
- **Museum** – Mummy

WWE X8

Here's how to unlock extra arenas in *WWE Wrestlemania X8*:

- For the Original *Smackdown!* Arena, win the Undisputed Championship while using The Rock.
- For the *Wrestlemania X7* Arena, use every arena at least once in Exhibition mode.
- For the *Royal Rumble 2001* Arena, win a 30-man, single-player *Royal Rumble* with any superstar.

And if you've exhausted what's on offer (it won't take long), here's some unlockable characters:

- **Chris Benoit** – win the *WWE Undisputed Championship*.
- **Vince McMahon** – win the *WWE Intercontinental Championship*.
- **Ric Flair** – wing the *WWE European Championship*.
- **Rhyno** – win the *WWE Hardcore Championship*.
- **Raven** – win the *WWE Light-Heavyweight Championship*.
- **Stacy Keibler** (mmm... oily wrestling lady) – win the *WWE Tag Team Championship*.



BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY

Not a bad little battler, this – and the more you persist the more you'll unlock. Beating *Bloody Roar's* Arcade mode repeatedly allows you to unlock various secret modes, as well as an extra character you can use – here's how...

- Beating Arcade mode once – unlocks Ganesha, the elephant man.
- Beating Arcade mode twice – unlocks *Com Battle*.
- Beating Arcade mode three times – unlocks *Super Deformed* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode four times – unlocks *Big Head* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode five times – unlocks *Big Arms* mode.

- Beating Arcade mode six times – unlocks *Change Boundaries* (no walls).
- Beating Arcade mode seven times – unlocks *Weak Walls*.
- Beating Arcade mode eight times – unlocks *Change Boundaries – Final Round* (walls are only breakable in the final round).
- Beating Arcade mode nine times – unlocks *Slow Down* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode ten times – unlocks *Speed Up* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode 11 times – unlocks *No Blocking* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode 12 times – unlocks *Max Difficulty* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode 13 times – unlocks *Knock Down Battle* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode 14 times – unlocks *Human* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode 15 times – unlocks *Beast* mode.
- Beating Arcade mode 16 times – unlocks *Hyperbeast* mode.

NGC YOUR TOP TIPS

YOUR TOP TIPS Share the knowledge and bag yourself a prize...

Found an interesting cheat, tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Then send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our *Readers' Tips* section. In return, if your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a Gamecube game of your choice. Sound good? Then don't hesitate – DO IT!

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS



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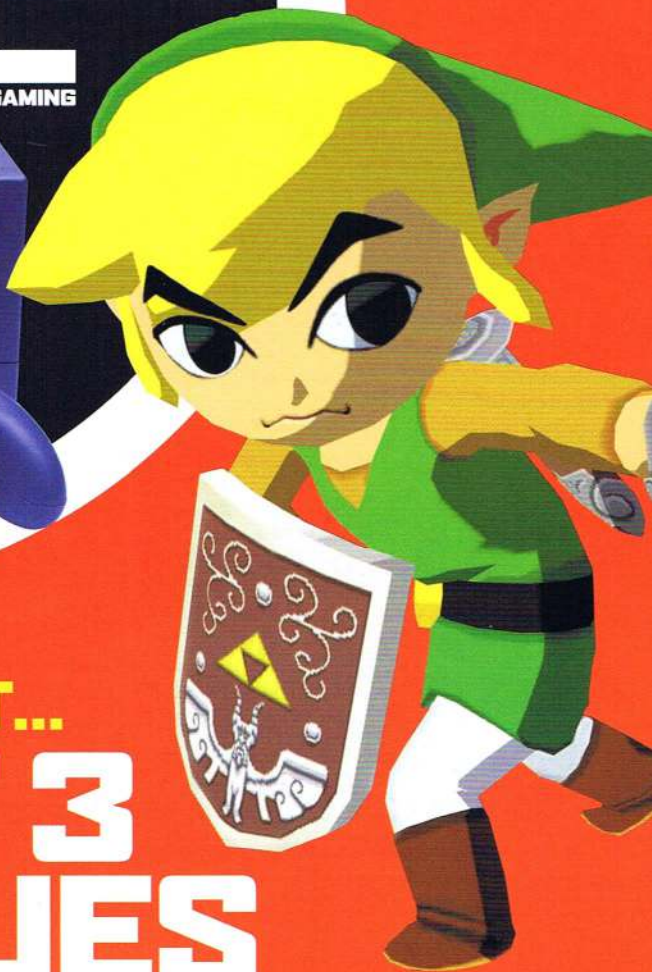
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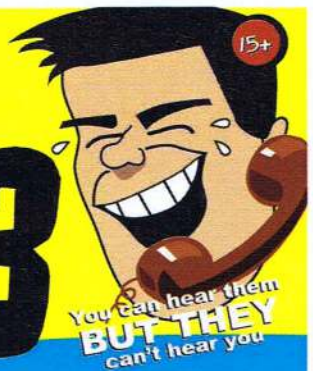
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LUIGI'S MANSION



See how many Gs you can notch up at the end of the game.

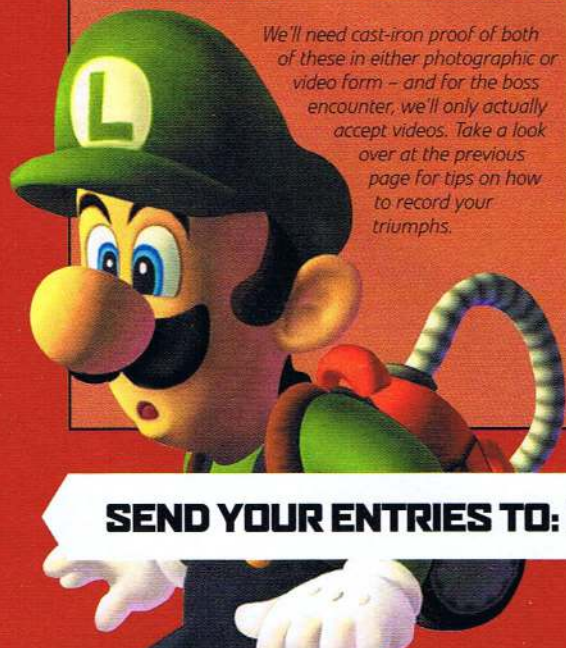
1	Sean Hinton, Kidderminster	184,860,000G
2	Daniel Mitchell, East Sussex	184,440,000G
3	Jamie Butters, East Sussex	184,060,000G
4	Jack King, Brentwood	179,345,000G
5	Maico Höke, Netherlands	173,360,000G



See how long it takes you to dispose of the final boss.

1	Tim Wingate, Tyne & Wear	122 secs
2	Grover Mitchell, Newport	139 secs
3	Alex Gough, Rochdale	142 secs
4	Jonathan Bisaby, Leicester	144 secs
5	Kelvin Murphy, Taunton	151 secs

We'll need cast-iron proof of both of these in either photographic or video form – and for the boss encounter, we'll only actually accept videos. Take a look over at the previous page for tips on how to record your triumphs.



STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER



Most kills on Battle on Endor (you must win at least a Bronze medal).

1	Joe Newman, London	191
2	Robert McGuire, Co Dublin	169
3	Simon Thomas, Solihull	111
4	Daniel Ashmore, Cheshire	86
5	Ben Laine, Barnet	85



Highest accuracy on Death Star Attack.

1	Chris Fletcher, Stockport	86%
2	Jack Gill, Northallerton	83%
3	Thomas Scoffham, Nuneaton	80%
4	Dave Every, Cheshire	78%
5	Jacob Cannon, Pontefract	75%

Fastest time achieved taking out the Star Destroyer in Razor Rendezvous.

1	Simon Thomas, Solihull	0:22
2	Simon Martin, Cambridge	0:38
3	Robert McGuire, Co Dublin	0:40
4	Chris Fletcher, Stockport	0:41
5	Thomas Scoffham, Nuneaton	0:42

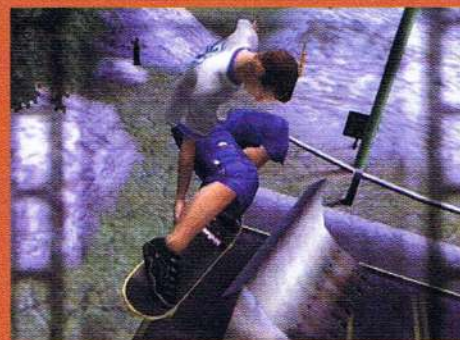
On Death Star Attack, we don't want to see you shoot three TIEs with homing torpedoes for 100 per cent accuracy – that's for maggots. We want to see video footage of REAL skill. Pics are fine for the other two.

TONY HAWK'S 3



Highest point score on The Foundry level.

1	John Copeland, Co Durham	4,203,016
2	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
3	Richard Springbetti, Huntingdon	2,254,730
4	Francis Gover, London	1,530,200
5	Alex Costello, Coventry	962,243



Highest trick combo on the Canada level.

1	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
2	Gary Lord, Hull	2,173,200
3	John Copeland, Co Durham	1,879,038
4	Michael Ejih, Netherlands	1,264,190
5	James Bergerac, Richmond	900,334

Highest score on the Rio level.

1	David Bennett, Isle of Man	4,095,129
2	John Copeland, Co Durham	3,283,355
3	David Peacock, Co Durham	2,574,133
4	Richard McCord, Norwich	2,478,920
5	Conor Shea, Cork	1,936,700

Remember, Tony Hawk's 3 is blinkin' hard, so you'll need to put in the hours – once you have, get us your proof of the end screen in either photographic or, preferably, videographic form. Ta very much.

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WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM



Your best race time on Aspen Lake in Normal mode.

1	Daniel Dunn, Boston	1'01"633
2	Robert Watson, Renfrewshire	1'04"176
3	Ben Tatlow, London	1'05"381
4	Jonathan Mace, Hants	1'05"969
5	Colin Charles, Ayrshire	1'08"879



Your best stunt score on Lost Temple Lagoon.

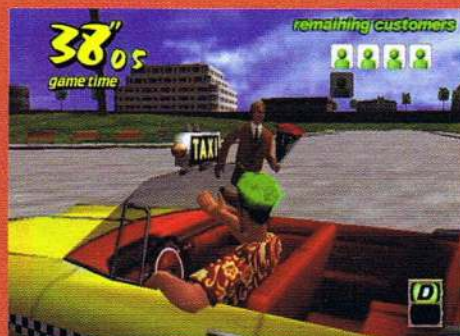
1	Steven Lockwood, Bradford	35,545
2	Ben Tatlow, London	33,160
3	Jon East, Manchester	26,254
4	John Copeland, Co Durham	10,624
5	Gary Lord, Hull	9,556

Your best lap time on Southern Island in Normal mode.

1	Daniel Dunn, Boston	0'16"587
2	Dave Every, Cheshire	0'18"926
3	Matt Mennell, Somerset	0'20"263
4	Janne Kaitila, Finland	0'20"761
5	Colin Charles, Ayrshire	0'20"969

Fancy some? Again, we'll need cast-iron proof of your achievements - video is our choice medium, although we may also accept some photographic evidence, provided - of course - that it hasn't been altered or messed with in some way.

CRAZY TAXI



How much money you can nab in the Ten Minute Mode.

1	Alistair Kendall, Bristol	\$12,340
2	Billy Keach, Essex	\$11,693
3	Steven McKeon, Middlesex	\$9,875
4	Karl Davies, Lanarkshire	\$9,520
5	Mark Grafton, Ayrshire	\$9,147



What your longest jump in Crazy Jump is.

1	Alistair Kendall, Bristol	351.63m
2	Jonny Elstree, Nottingham	346.98m
3	Billy Keach, Essex	339.81m
4	Nicky Day, Chester	339.73m
5	Steven McKeon, Middlesex	337.60m

What's your highest Crazy Drift combo?

1	Anthony Henderson, Manchester	58
2	Mark Grafton, Ayrshire	31
3	Billy Keach, Essex	19
4	Nicky Day, Chester	17
=	Steven McKeon, Middlesex	17

For this one, we'll accept photographic or video evidence, but we won't accept 'fiddled-with' photos and we won't accept bribes, either. You know who you are... Well, on second thoughts, it depends how much you're offering.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2



How many rings you can get at the end of the Juggernaut chase section.

1	William Thomas, Shropshire	440
2	Adam Ely, Weybridge	437
3	Robert McGuire, Co Dublin	334
4	Steven McKeon, Middlesex	307
5	Jason Roberts, Stockport	87



What time you can notch up on Escape from the Military Base.

1	Barry Templeton, Kilmarnock	01:43:57
2	Thomas Sherwood, Cheshire	01:44:00
3	Sam Ely, Weybridge	01:45:90
4	Nicholas Gill, Exeter	01:47:59
5	Jason Roberts, Stockport	01:51:43

Only the Fastest need apply for this challenge. And we'll need video evidence for both of these beauties, too.



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Mountain Biking UK

The image displays two covers of Mountain Biking UK magazine. The top cover is the Autumn 2002 issue, priced at £3.50, featuring a cyclist in a red jersey and the headline "WORLD WINNERS OZ CHAMPS REVEALED". The bottom cover is the August 2002 issue, priced at £3.50, featuring a cyclist in a red jersey and the headline "THE BEST!".

Below the covers is a sheet of stickers with the following logos and text:

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STAR LETTER

WIN YOURSELF A BRAND-NEW GAMECUBE GAME!

'Five out of five'

Joe Taylor's point is interesting (that games should be more original), since, when it comes down to it, we all seem to be attracted to that which we find more familiar. For example, *Mario Sunshine* (a sequel that shares a lot of its mechanics with its predecessor), *Zelda* (likewise), *Timesplitters 2* (a sequel), *Super Monkey Ball 2* (sequel), *Resident Evil Zero* (prequel), *Soul Calibur 2* (sequel). All scored five out of five in anticipation, and most GC gamers would be proud to have at least three out of those six on their shelf, but not a single one could claim to be original by any means.

But is this lack of innovation in our games a bad thing? Some of the best games I have ever played have been sequels or retakes of popular games. Tim's response to Joe's letter posed the question "If the game's quality is high, will a lack of originality stop you buying it?". While I agree with him that it's becoming extremely difficult (if not impossible) to create an original game, I still think the question should actually be, "If the game's quality is high, will a high degree of originality stop you buying it?". Given that most 'original' games don't sell as well as the tried-and-tested sequels, I think it's time that we all answered "No"...

Matt Dillon, via email



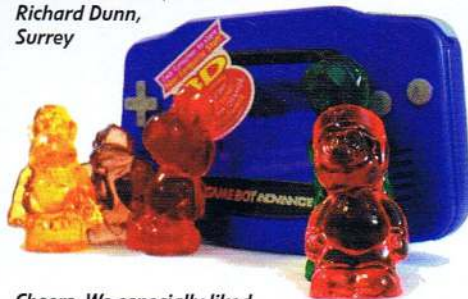
△ If shooters were sweets, *TS2* would be Revels.

Hear, hear. *Mario Sunshine* is sky-scrapingly excellent, but it's nonetheless a case of 'evolution not revolution' when compared to *Super Mario 64* – and let's face it, publishers like to play it safe, hence the interminable FIFAs we face every year. Which isn't to say that all sequels are bad, as you suggest – but the world would be a better place if more people took a chance on something like (for example) the *N64*'s *Body Harvest* or *Blast Corps* – both highly original and brilliant games that sold two copies and sank without a trace. Ed

'On a P&O ferry'

I decided to bag my own console to ease the long summer hours – I chose the Gamecube, and soon found that I had made a good decision. But I still found that I could not conquer the boredom of long car, train or plane journey, and so I asked my mum for a GBA for my birthday. The glorious day arrived but you can imagine my HORROR when she produced this, a novelty sweet holder in GBA form, bought on a P&O ferry! (Or so she told me.) I can't repeat what I said. The sad thing is, she actually thought it was a GBA and that she was getting a good deal for 99p. I have sent it in for you and the NGC team's pleasure.

Richard Dunn, Surrey



Cheers. We especially liked the sweets in the shape of Link, Mario and Donkey Kong, although Kittsy ate some and said they "taste like death itself". Ed

'Letter'

Look at this letter I got from Rare – their address is in Warwickshire, but Twycross is in Leicestershire, so both you and Stephen Carvell are right. (I wrote in to get Wil Overton and the *Perfect Dark* team's autographs).

Robert Cashman, Coppoquin

Aaaargh! Let that be an end to it. (If you didn't get Wil's autograph, there's still some lank strands of his 'hair' stuck to the office ceiling, and a copy of Rick Wakeman's *Journey To The Center Of The Earth* that he left behind.) Ed



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HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Thanks to everyone else who wrote, emailed and texted us this month.

You included; Albon de B, Barry Lewis, Scott Russell, Adam Snape, Ruariah Henderson, Iwan Smith, Martin Hearty, Daramaras Ioanniss, James Smith, Don Henley, Stevie

Nicks, Steve Bowman, 'Evil Deeky', Ian Timlin, Susanne Kaufmann, 'Jolly' Roger, Chris Johnson, Shaun Laird, Teddy Meow, Barney Howes, Mark Cookney, Albert Todbringer, Jerry

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de Pessemer, Paragon Foe, David Cuthbertson, Michael Luckett, Ciara Fitzroy, Peter Gale, Wilfredo Grizzly, Joe Chaytor, Chris Hill and Adam Quinn, Robert Mercieca, Rob Neal.

Bonus Letters

I suspect he may be able to fry eggs in seconds. Superwrig the 22nd, Wakefield
'Superwig? Riiiiight'. Ed

Congratulations on a dope magazine. Harold Rooney-Nugent
Is that a compliment? Ed

WE CALL IT: the jello... Joseph Denman
We call it: worrisome. Ed

Yoshi always did seem like one of those edible characters, didn't he? Liam Tomaszewski
Mmm. Yoshi. Ed

It's not the only game that's fallen foul of this trap-o'-pants. Christof Hart, via email
Presumably they're pretty large pants. Ed

I demand you increase *Monkey Ball*'s score. NOW! 'Ants', via email
Isn't there enough monkey-love in the world? Ed

'Pathetic use'

While flicking through the latest Index catalogue, I found two good examples of a company trying to fool the public. In the first picture a Gamecube and screen seem to be floating eerily on a kid's leg, while a kid is playing *Mario Sunshine* with a PlayStation controller. Come on! It's a pathetic use of camera trickery. The second picture is one of those GBA TV tuners – but it's a fake GBA and the picture of Beckham has been scanned in! This gives us no idea of the sort of picture you can receive. Index, don't give up the day jobs!

Adam Startin, Birmingham

We applaud the ingenuity of simply plonking a picture of a Gamecube over a PSone; applaud it, before laughing heartily and shaking our heads in total disgust. Ed



URTXTS

Is Dr Kitts a real doc? Aaron MC
SACRIFICE KITTSY 2
THE SHIGSY GOD
Jes U R A shiny headed fool!

'Really big'

...It has recently come to my attention, something that Isaac Asimov once told me, "the idea to keep our heads down, to avoid scandal and let (people) do their diplomatic dance, is both the gracious and noble thing to do in said situations". Mario sucks, you see, and in an impetuous moment of delirium I thought I should bring this to your attention. His head is too big in comparison with the rest of his body; his eyes are blue yet his hair is brown – a mark of genetic misfits – and he also has a really big moustache...

John Nicholas George, Somewhere

Here's some excerpts from the rest of this letter: "a tattoo of an aeroplane on my buttocks"; "Did we fight the second world war against Hitler?"; and "I encountered no such circular ghosts". We could have printed the rest of this letter. We could have printed it in its insane entirety. But we didn't. Ed

'Sanitary needs'

I usually take your mag to the loo (to read, not for 'sanitary needs'). While I was doing my business and flicking through your pages I began to ponder over something. How exactly do you get the screenshots off the TV and onto your pages? Tell me. Oh, go on, you know you want to.

Sean Hinton, Kidderminster

Thanks for that. Could you perhaps keep your 'business' to yourself in future? Ta. Anyhoo, we have our Gamecubes hooked up to a PC, which contains some 'grabbing' software; we can simply play games through the PC and take screenshots with but a keystroke. Good, eh? Ed



△ Veteran grabber Kittsy settles down with 'ORAC' for another exciting image-capture session. Bleep. Blorck.

Debating'

I bought a Gamecube the day it came out - I got *Wave Race*, *Super Monkey Ball* and *Luigi's Mansion*. They're excellent games but *Luigi's Mansion* disappointed me hugely - it's just too short. When I finished the game I felt like I'd been conned - no way was this game worth £35. I've been debating whether to get *Pikmin* or not, but have decided against it; I think that it's another short gaming experience not worth the money.

Martin Bickle, Kettering

Fair point. However, while it's always nice to feel that you're getting something substantial for your money, we reckon that the enjoyment you get out of a game far outweighs the sheer size of it; for instance, *Fellowship of the Ring* the best film ever made just because it's nearly three hours long? If you don't buy *Pikmin* because it's short, then you're missing out on a truly magical game. Sure, it's fairly brief, but while it lasts, it's one of the most absorbing games we've ever played - it's certainly a much better investment overall than many 'bigger' games. But the brevity of some of Nintendo's recent output is, indeed, a sticking point for some of our readers - but do you really want another N64-style situation where we're starved of games because the company is working solely on time-consuming *Zelda*-sized epics? Ed

'Monkey Slave'

Hello! I know this may sound a little strange but I'm doing an art project for school and I have to choose a handful of different artists (any I want) and draw stuff in their style. I really want to do Shigsy as one of my

Bonus Letters

My name is TOM DILLOW and I am from GRIFFYDAM. Tom Dillow, Griffydham
Excellent. Ed

Keep my frickin' address frickin' private. Andrew Pinnington, via email

Kittsy has stored it away for a 'special occasion'. Ed

If I had an obsession with endless menus, I'd go and live in a restaurant. Alun McRae, via email
Endless, huh? Big restaurant, is it? Ed

My noggin can't take much more scratching. Jon Lenton, via email
Nasty things, fleas. Ed

Don't try to impress me with your fancy education. Brett Smith, via email
Right you are. Ed

It's like you're firing golf balls. Harry Rowe, via email
Been playing *Agent Under Fire*, have we? Ed

I call the Xbox the Gruel Box. No name supplied
Absolute genius. Ed

URTXTS
Where's da mas U
Dwans = Mazza nuff
said Andy = A
Yamauchi turned
psycho Robocop
would be
amazin!

artists but I can't find any of his original pictures anywhere on the Net (I take it the new *Zelda* and *Mario* drawings aren't his). If you could send me any of his pics or a link to a site with his pics and some background info on him I'd be both extremely grateful and your eternal monkey slave.

Jonathan Mathews, via email

Monkey slave, eh? Intriguing, but nonetheless disturbing. As for Shigsy, a good place to start - if you've got an internet connection - would be www.miyamotoshrine.com, as it's a site with plenty of info on the man himself. And here's a picture of when Shigsy came round mine for dinner. He ended up getting drunk and throwing up on the begonias. (Note: this may not be true). Ed

'Imagine it'

I've just been playing *Smash Bros Melee* and a great idea crossed my mind. Sega should definitely take this into consideration because they're developing the next *F-Zero* game. I was fighting on the *F-Zero* stage (the one with all the cars passing you underneath). Wouldn't it be great if you were racing along the track trying to get into first position and suddenly saw Mario delivering a killer blow to Link, sending him flying over the edge of the track? Or seeing Kirby turning into a Thwomp and crushing Bowser? Imagine it.

Marc Jones, via email

That'd be real sweet, Jonesy. Real sweet indeed. Ed

'The feeling'

I saw this at some run-down fairground when I was on holiday in France. I have the feeling that it might not be authorised. Do Nintendo really give their mascots out to tacky dodgems rides?

Tom Derrick, via email

Who knows? Maybe Yamauchi's going to try his hand at being a carnival barker when he 'retires'. Ed



△ Mazza Dodgems: only ever released in France.

'Coincidence'

Two islands in the Caribbean, named St Martin and St Kitts, right next to each other. Coincidence? Or has Kittsy been wheeling and dealing?

Elliot Ridgeon, via email

Kittsy's mum actually once went to St. Kitts, just before little Martin was 'born'. She said it was "very nice", and although "the weather was lovely", it seems that "there wasn't a lot to do". More of a rich old person's holiday retreat, apparently. Ed



△ Shigsy, just after downing a bottle of Buckfast and playing the solo from *Jump* on his banjo. Well, not really.

CORRECTION CORNER

So, you spotted our 'deliberate' mistakes...

In *NGC/71* you fooled the nation into believing limbless buffoon *Rayman* was made by Infogrames, when he is actually made by Ubi Soft. I am awaiting a written apology for the trauma this has caused.

Lewis Greenshaw, Midlothian

Ah, Infogrames... Ubi Soft... Quelle difference? Ahem. Ed



In issue 67 Keeley Wilson sent in a letter about GBA in *Crossroads* - above it you said that it was GBA and GC but Keeley was talking about GBA and GBC. Who's fault was this? Come on, own up.

Jonathan Challinor, Stafford

Oh, probably Geraint's. Or Kittsy's. Or it may have been Dan. Yes, he'll do. But, let's face it, they're all wet-brained monkeys anyway. Ed



MAILBOX

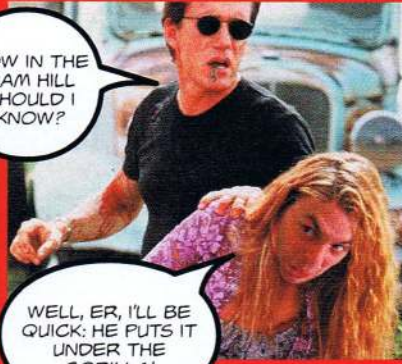
Your emails, letters and texts answered in a 'funny' way

Grintendo!

EVERY MONTH, WE'LL TEST YOUR JOKES ON A FAMOUS CELEBRITY. IF THEY GIVE IT THE THUMBS UP, YOU WIN A GAME OF YOUR CHOICE. DEAL?
THIS MONTH: LAURENCE TURPIC, WALSALL

WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

NGC
SPECIAL GUEST
JAMES WOODS (in
John Carpenter's
Vampires)



URTXTS
r rare still alive?
tone = i got da same
shirt as tim = brill
new mas. luv the new
size = got resi on
us import. its
fab!



▲ Wario floors Link with his 'beer fart' move (L+A).

'Blow bubbles'

As much as I go on about how *Smash Bros.* is the best thing about the Gamecube to all my friends, I'd just like to question the choice of Nintendo characters on offer. I mean, what's with all the Pokémon? Surely Pichu, who does basically everything Pikachu does, could have

been replaced with a more renowned character, such as Wario, for example? And Jigglypuff? All he does is blow bubbles. Couldn't Toad have been given one of the secret character slots? I'm not complaining. Just saying.
Micky Leronymides, St. Albans

Given that Pichu, Falco, Ganondorf and others are simply clones of the characters that are initially available, we reckon it was simply a case of making development easier (so they didn't have to come up with all-new moves for brand-new characters). But you're right - we'd have loved to see Wario instead of, say, Dr. Mario. Although it was nice to see such golden oldies as Roy and Marth. Ed

'Early 80s'

Can you possibly settle an argument? I believe that back in the early 80s there was a *Zelda* TV cartoon. My daughter Casarnya (possibly your most loyal fan, which my wallet will vouch for) says that there was not, and that I am making it all up. If I am right then could you PLEASE find some info on this cartoon? Many thanks for any help you can give in getting her off my back.
Dad Talman, via email

Don't worry, you're not going mad - there was indeed a *Zelda* cartoon. It's also one of the funniest things we've ever seen - Link acts like a petulant teenager, complete with an awful catchphrase; "Well exccuuuuuse me, princess!" and suchlike. Rubbish. But priceless rubbish nonetheless. Ed

'Really sorry'

We read Harry Watts' letter ('Grenade' NGC/71), and the problems he experienced with his 4Gamers memory card. Firstly, can we extend our sincere apologies to Mr Watts. We at 4Gamers take great pride in our products, but like all manufacturers, occasionally rogue examples slip through our net. That doesn't excuse the faulty memory card, though, and we take our commitment to our customers very seriously. So, if Harry Watts would like to return the faulty card to 4Gamers (the address is: 4Gamers, Bigben Interactive Accessories Division, Borough Mill, Neild Street, Oldham, OL8 1QG), we would like to send him a replacement card.

Also, just to say that we're *really* sorry, if Harry wants to choose a 4Gamers Gamecube product from our website and include this request with his memory card, we'll send that to him as well as an early Christmas present.
Caroline Denham, 4Gamers

Blimey. That's not half bad, is it? Just goes to show that it's the squeaky wheel that gets oiled. Or something. But surely, if it's an early Christmas present, you were going to send it anyway. Ha! Cough. But still - a jolly good show from 4Gamers, there, it has to be said. Ed



SO TELL ME THIS... Pure NGC brainpower, directed like a laser at your questions.

1. What's the chance that Nintendo will make another 'true' Mario platformer, given how accomplished *Mario Sunshine* is?
 2. That said, any idea of when *Mario Sunshine*'s PAL release is?
 3. Any chance of an original Mario platformer on the GBA?
 4. Any chance (again) of a Triforce-based *Super Smash Bros* game?
- Allesandro Shephard, High Wycombe**

1. We'd be very surprised if Nintendo weren't beavering away on one now. SMS was, apparently, developed quite swiftly, and Shigsy has recently made comments concerning future Mario games.
2. It should be out by the time you read this.
3. There's quiet speculation that the fifth Mario Advance game

might be all-new, but all signs point towards it being the N64's *Yohsi's Story* (which, you may recall, was seen running on GBA dev kits before the GBA was actually released).
5. Let's hope so, eh?

1. When's *Banjo-Kazooie* coming out on GBA?
 2. Is it and *Banjo-Tooie* coming to the Gamecube too?
 3. Can we ask Dr Kitts about GBA games, or does he only know his Cube games?
 4. Why did you use an N64 instead of a Gamecube in your comic in issue 70?
- Cedric Van Rossem, Belgium**

1. As with most Rare games, Grunty's Revenge is taking the usual 'finished when it's finished' line. But it might not appear at

all if Micosoft buy Rare.
2. Not that we know of. Recently, stills taken from the *Spaceworld 2000* showreel, which featured *Banjo*, have been popping up on the net, with people claiming them as 'Banjo Three-ie' shots. But they're not - the video was put together to simply show Gamecube footage with established characters.
3. Dr Kitts knows all.
4. Because the N64 makes a better pillow. "It has fewer sharp edges", said a hideously deformed Geraint.

1. Will *Metroid* make its December release date?
2. Whyohwhyohwhy are Nintendo not doing anything to stop Rare going multiformat? WHY?
4. When is *Dragonball Z: Super Saiyan Warrior* coming out?

1. Nope. It's slipped now to early 2003 in the UK - although it should still make it in time for Christmas in the States.
2. Who can say if Nintendo have or haven't done anything to prevent any movement on Rare's part? We're not privy to what goes on at Ninty and Rare's HQs. But Rare are up for sale for a silly amount of money, and perhaps the Big N feel they can better invest it elsewhere. At the time of writing (and remember, the magazine is written weeks before it goes on sale), it looks like Rare are about to be snapped up by Microsoft - see this month's news for more...
4. We don't know. But the GBA-based *Dragonball Z: Legacy of Goku* is out on 11th November. Will that do for you?

NEXT MONTH

If you thought *that* was good, get some of this...



THE GANG'S ALL HERE...

Next month: ***Starfox Adventures***.
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TALK TIME

Want to know what it's like to work in the games industry? We give you an inside look with just a mobile phone and a spot of verbal stalking...



WHO IS... JIM O'BRIEN

A 33-year-old Yorkshireman, Jim is not only short but he's also the lead artist working on *Paris Dakar 2* at Acclaim Studios Cheltenham – and a very friendly chap he is too! His past exploits include *Forsaken* on N64 and *Shadowman* – a game he still has very bad dreams about today...

9.00AM

Morning?

Morning Jim! NGC here. You okay to speak?

Yeah, I've just arrived at the office, fired up the PC, the dev kits and my stereo – I need to have some decent tunes at high volume late at night, though I have to keep it fairly tame during normal office hours. Can you call me back? I'm gonna go and get the coffee on...

Okay then. We'll bother you later...

10.30AM

Hi Jim! It's your stalkers again. What are you doing now? Right this very second?

Just had a quick meeting to update on the progress with the art schedule... so far so good... ahead with some things... slightly behind on others... on target overall.

Er... glad to hear it. It doesn't always run that smoothly, does it?

Heh. Not always, no.

What's the hardest thing about your job?

The problem I encounter on a daily basis is balancing the deadlines with our resources and then achieving the standards required to be competitive. We get more polygons and more textures with the new consoles, but we have to be smart to get the best out of them. Other problems include the eternal struggle between Art, Code and Design in the end-phase of a project. Design ask for far more than Art can provide, which is restricted by what the Coders are either able or prepared to do... (Silence.)

Jim?... Er, Jim? JIM! ARE YOU OKAY, JIM?

Listen, I gotta go. (Click.)

11.50AM

Hiya Jim. Everything okay?

Yeah, I just had some urgent stuff to get sorted.

How do you find your job? Do you enjoy your work?

Absolutely. I genuinely enjoy my work. I enjoy being part of a team – when it works and you get all the team spirit and banter going you can

get a great vibe in the workplace and produce better results. I find I enjoy work the best when the deadlines are upon us and the pressure is on. I like to be in the thick of it. That's when there's a real buzz about the place and people start to shine. My favourite part of the job, though, is building levels. The satisfaction comes from creating an environment and then being able to run or drive around it. Sounds simple and maybe a bit sad but to go through a long process from that first polygon to having an environment that is pleasing to the eye is really satisfying.

Cheers for that! We'll let you get on with some work for a bit then, eh?

Heh. Yeah, better had.

3.46PM

Hi Ji-

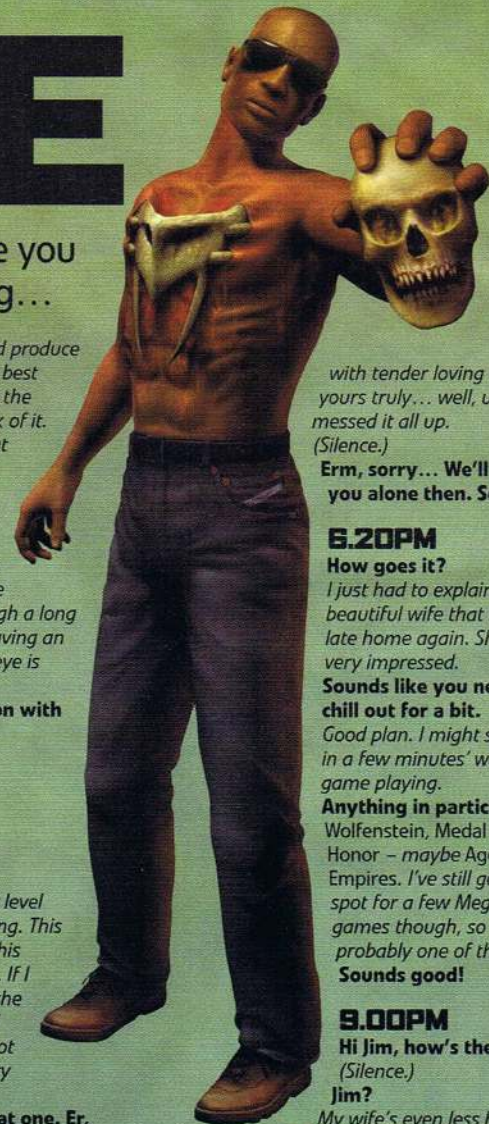
AAAARGGHHH!

AAARGGHHH?!

Sorry (sighs) – I've moved part of my level geometry in 3ds MAX without realising. This is a right pain in the arse. MAX has this automatic Select-and-Move function. If I move some vertices about, collapse the stack and then select an object, MAX defaults to Move and then like an idiot I accidentally shimmy some geometry about. Nnnnngh!

Amazing. You totally lost us on that one. Er, what was all that again?

I'm using 3ds MAX – along with Photoshop and a host of in-house mapping and events tools. We've got some nice technology going on here but I can't talk about it. You'll have to trust me. Anyway, I'm currently working on an African level with guys on the team assisting with textures and objects. I'm really concentrating on the main shell of the level and all the object placement. This includes thousands of scrub bushes, rocks and trees, all individually placed



with tender loving care by yours truly... well, until I messed it all up.

(Silence.)

Erm, sorry... We'll leave you alone then. Sorry.

6.20PM

How goes it?

I just had to explain to my beautiful wife that I'll be late home again. She's not very impressed.

Sounds like you need to chill out for a bit.

Good plan. I might squeeze in a few minutes' worth of game playing.

Anything in particular?

Wolfenstein, Medal of Honor – maybe Age of Empires. I've still got a soft spot for a few Mega Drive games though, so probably one of those.

Sounds good!

9.00PM

Hi Jim, how's the wife?

(Silence.)

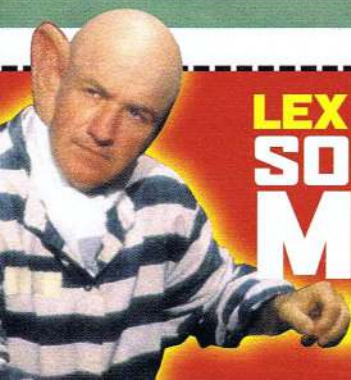
Jim?

My wife's even less happy,

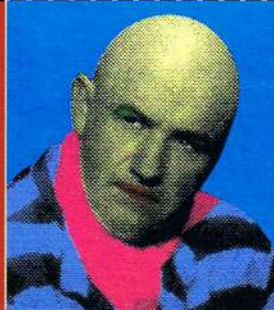
as it's likely to be a late, late

finish. It's hard in this situation. I need to make some changes to the terrain that will improve the look of the level and add to gameplay. If this change is to go in, it must be done tonight, so that there's no impact on anyone else's schedule. But I still want to get home to see the missus and my 20-month-old son.

Who are we to stand between a man and his family? Pleasure talking to you Jim – and good luck with everything!



LEX LUTHOR'S SOLVE MY MAZE



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Last month's winner: Leigh Madden, Hull

THE EVOLUTION OF... MONKEYS

One day, man will cower before Earth's merciless monkey rulers, hunted for the sport of apes...

1 DONKEY KONG

The original videogame ape, and still the most dangerous. His rap sheet



includes rebelling against his human master, kidnapping a human female, and developing a coconut gun that 'fires in spurts'. Menacing.

4 MONKEY ISLAND

The first example of monkeys becoming so ingrained in human culture, that their sinister influence went almost



unnoticed. Witness the horror of the 50ft robotic death monkey in the fourth game in the series. Poor, poor Guybrush.

7 SEA MONKEYS

A diversionary tactic - they're not actually monkeys. And they don't live in the sea, either - a bowl of dirty tap water will keep these feeble prawns alive for months, until they're eventually buried under a vast pile of their own green poo. They certainly don't pull the wool over our eyes.



2 MINKY MONKEY

Minky Monkey is sadistic evil of the purest kind. This arcade ape taunts a young boy, forcing him to climb ropes and perform pointless tasks according to his precise instructions. Make a mistake and the penalty is unequivocal: certain death.



3 CONGO BONGO

After setting fire to a holidaymaker's tent, this Kong-like beast instructs hordes of smaller monkeys to chew the face off the hapless human. Some can be booted off the side of a mountain, in which case the enraged ape lord simply unleashes poisonous snakes.



6 MONKEY PUNCHER

As any Pokémon master knows, making animals fight can be a lot of fun. But there's something a little unwise about training monkeys in the combat arts, and a petulant bite on the hand from a rebellious beast may soon turn into something more sinister...



5 STRANDED KIDS

You're a small child, shipwrecked on a desert island. You're hungry, frightened, and utterly alone, but your backpack contains the basic essentials needed for survival, at least until help arrives. Or it would have, if it hadn't been



ripped from your unconscious, half-drowned body by a thieving monkey.

8 TIMESPLITTERS 2

Intelligent, gun-toting monkeys. One more time, just in case you missed the implications there:

Intelligent monkeys. With guns! Short of filling the skies with cyber pigeons that crap plutonium dust and cough bullets out of their mouths, could science possibly have devised a more lethal, uncontrollable force?



9 SUPER MONKEY BALL

Perhaps the highest level of monkey evolution, the Monkey Ball apes exist for the sole purpose of pushing humans to the brink of insanity. Like sugar-coated heroin,

their cuteness masks dangerously addictive, psychologically ruinous properties. Once the world has succumbed to Monkey Ball 2, we'll all be living on Monkey Island.



MINI GAMES REJECTED FROM MONKEY BALL 2 That we've made up.

1 Monkey Snack

Use the analogue stick to dip a long piece of twig into an ant nest, then hammer A to eat them before your mates do!

2 Monkey P.E.

As a P.E. teacher, find the fattest monkey in school and run him until he pukes. Then run him some more.

3 Monkey Zoo

Amuse visitors by flinging half-eaten food, half-eaten poo, and half-eaten other monkeys through the bars.

4 Monkey Knife Fight

Inside a cage. With big rusty spikes on the walls. Two monkeys enter, one monkey leaves.

5 Monkey Pool Sticks

Throw monkeys off a bridge and see which one floats downstream the fastest.

6 Monkey Toast

Place some bread in the toaster, select your preferred level of brownness, and press the lever. Toasty breakfast fun!

7 Monkey Orienteering

Hours of fun as you study your compass and hike across hundreds of miles of woodland.

8 Monkey Hangman

Weigh your monkey, tie your noose, then hang him by the neck until he be dead. Who will get the cleanest kill?

9 Monkey Tramp

Dress your monkey using a colourful selection of urine-soaked rags. Can you be king of the monkey tramps?

10 Monkey on the Orient Express

Is it the monkey missionary, the monkey princess or the monkey maid? Intriguing...

Your guide to the Nintendo world's most exotic games.

MUTSU TONOHONON



FACTS FOR THE TRAVELLER

GETTING THERE Travel packages available online, or via specialists such as the Japan Centre, London
CURRENCY ¥6,800 (approx £35)
LANGUAGE Japanese
ELECTRICITY Japanese Gamecubes (100V; 50Hz) only
POPULATION Mainly mutant fish with mammalian heads and brightly coloured jellybaby men
DEVELOPMENT Tomy
HEALTH RISKS Severe headaches are an everyday hazard

Explore the world of the virtual pet on your Gamecube.

HISTORY

Mutsu Water Loopers are a breed of plastic fish, previously thought to be entirely fictional. Recent Gamecube sightings have proved that the creatures do exist, and are far more widespread than anyone imagined. Naturally found only in areas such as Japan and Hong Kong, primitive Water Loopers have travelled as far as North America, where they are known as Curious Fish.

EVENTS

Different types of Mutsu enjoy swimming in different ponds. First-time



travellers will find only two ponds available, with more becoming accessible over the course of a longer stay. For this reason it's worth investing plenty of time in the Mutsu experience. The longer the holiday, the more there will be to do, and the dullness of the early days of your sojourn will seem like a distant memory.

ATTRACTIONS

Water Looper evolution can be a fascinating process. The creatures begin life in Michi form, little more than a yellow tadpole with black eyes and a pink nose. Blessing a Michi with an appropriate charm transforms it into a larger fish-like creature with the head of a completely unrelated animal. For example, Konmutsu looks like a penguin, Chamutsu looks like a dog, and Aprimutsu looks like a hamster. Other varieties include rabbits, turtles and bulbous-headed robots.

TRAVEL TIP The more you feed a Michi, the more likely it will be to find

the charm needed for Mutsu evolution.

CULTURE

Treasure-hunting, a popular pastime among Mutsu aficionados, can seem like possibly the dulllest activity on earth if you're an outsider. However, participation is strongly advised. Ignoring a Water Looper's desire to spend half an hour swimming slowly



around a treasure chest will offend the poor creature, possibly causing it to devolve to Michi form. Which you definitely don't want.

TRAVEL TIP Nobody can force a Mutsu to do something it doesn't feel like doing, but it's acceptable to offer suggestions about where to dive and when to return to the surface. Such actions can greatly reduce the tedium of a lengthy search for treasure.

CUISINE

Food plays an important role in Water Looper culture. There are just three traditional dishes, representing precisely none of the essential food groups needed to sustain human life, and Water Loopers thrive on this simple diet. Vitamin C is the staple foodstuff, presented in appetising triangular yellow tablets. Pink iron pills provide a deliciously metallic supplement, and green calcium pills ensure that, if





nothing else, Water Loopers have strong bones, bright eyes, and never catch colds or flu.

The latest 'real-world' Water Loopers no longer eat anything, having evolved to a level whereby they can gain all the energy they need via a remote control clicker. But Gamecube Water Loopers are based on the older types, and so need regular feeding.

ACTIVITIES

Water Loopers are fascinated by music. They delight in dancing to original compositions played on an instrument that sounds like a mobile phone, and will be devoted to anyone whose music

manages to hit all the right notes.

Some Mutsu varieties also keep a diary of their activities. It's possible to annotate entries and read a full history of each Looper's development, but in the absence of any translation guides, knowledge of Japanese is essential.

FURTHER READING

- As a comprehensive guide to all things Mutsu, you can't beat the official site at www.mutsu-web.com, which contains everything you need to know about these delightful and exotic creatures. It's entirely in Japanese.
- For an enthusiast's view of the various varieties of Mutsu, have a look at tinkerville.com/mutsu.

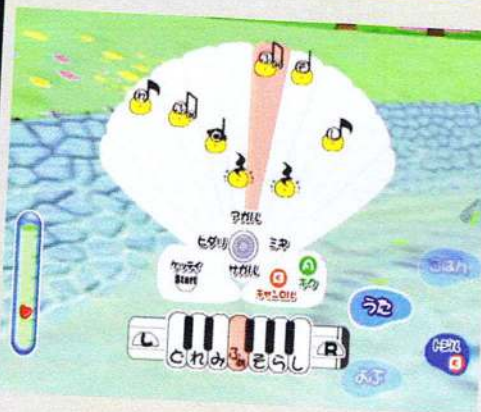


USEFUL PHRASES

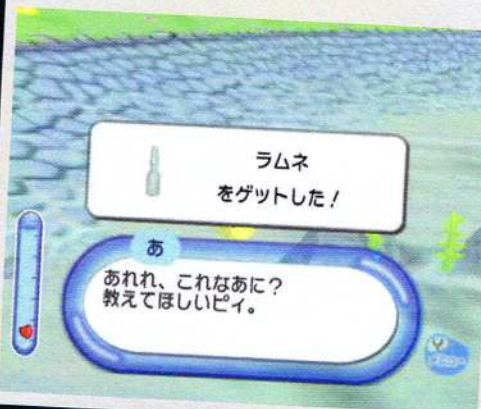
The world of the Water Looper involves a lot of watching, waiting and possibly falling asleep through boredom. But occasionally you will be able to interact.



1. Water Loopers like to know the names of the many things they find during their slow, slow travels around the ponds. English names are perfectly acceptable.



2. The strange musical notation used in the Mutsu world is easy enough to understand. Each position that's closer to the edge of the shell raises the pitch of the note by an octave.



3. When something useful has been found, it can be presented to the Water Looper by using a simple menu system. There's usually an appropriate moment for presenting certain special items.

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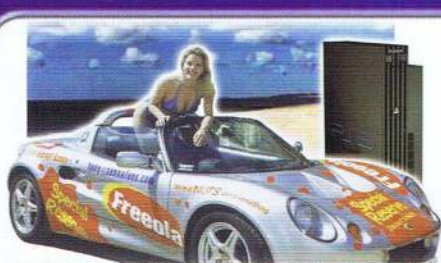
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