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XI: GET READY FOR AN ONLINE FANTASY

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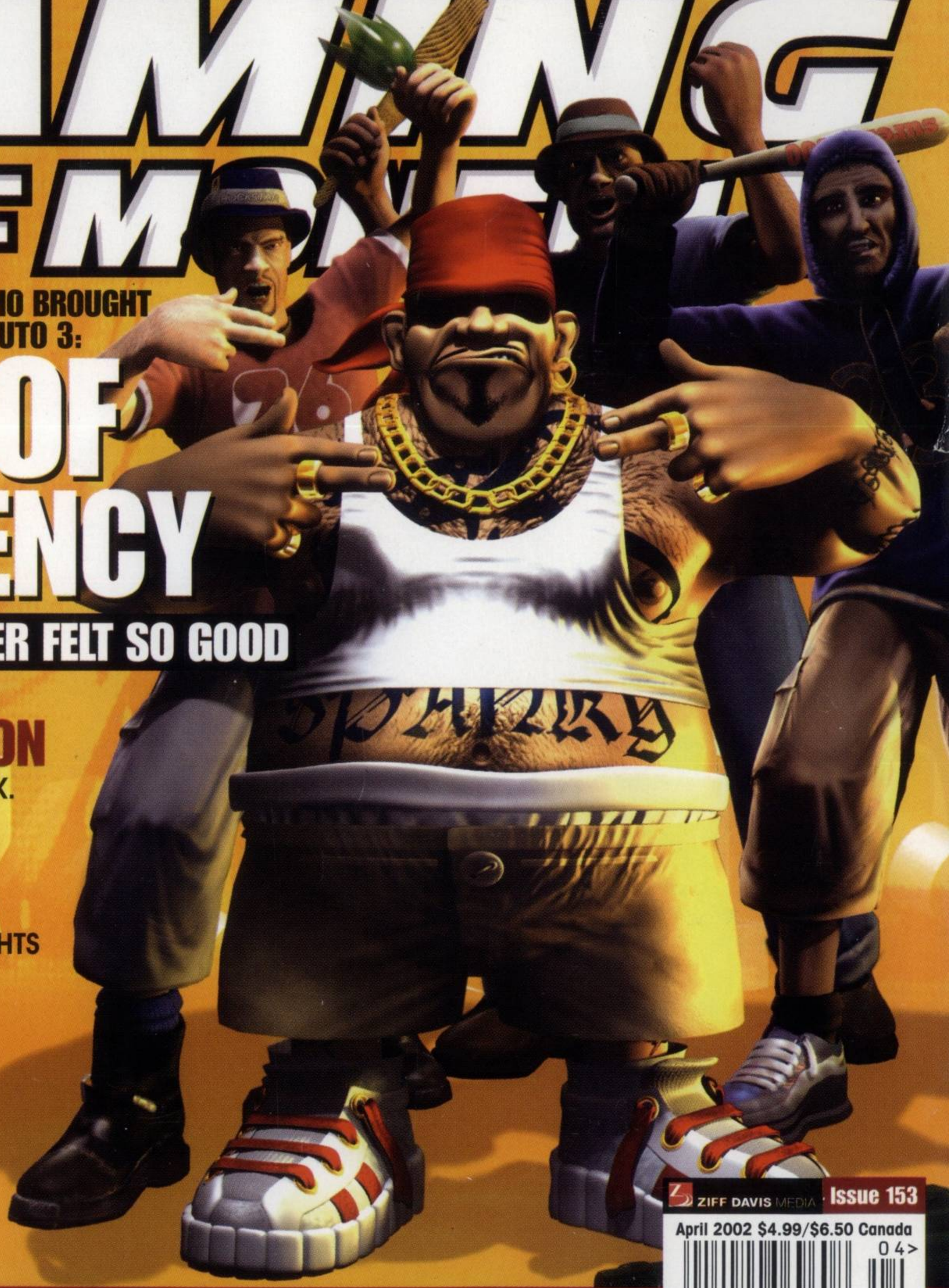

REVIEWED:
- WWF Raw (Xbox)
- Star Wars Racer Rev. (PS2)
- Bloody Roar (GameCube)
- Jet Set Radio Future (Xbox)

PREVIEWED:
- Turok: Evolution (GC)
- Tomb Raider (PS2)
- Bloodrayne (Xbox)
- WWF Wrestlemania X8 (GC)

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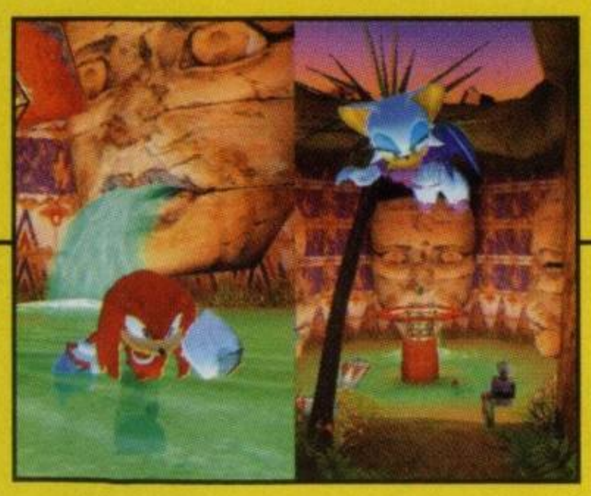

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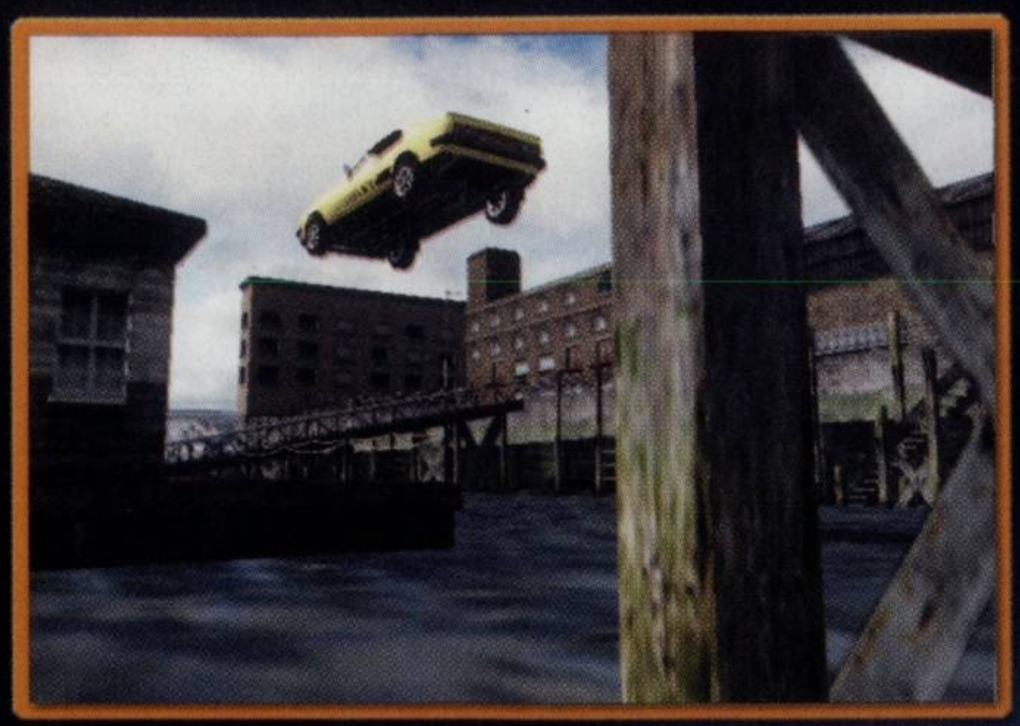

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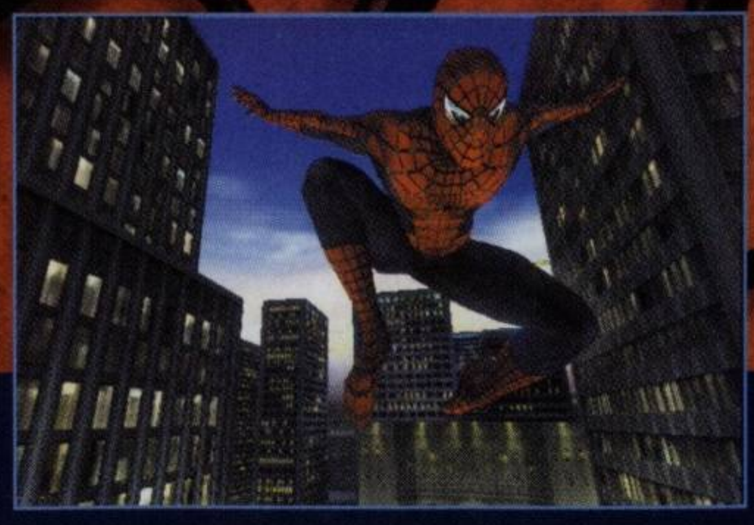

Screen shots taken from PC gameplay.

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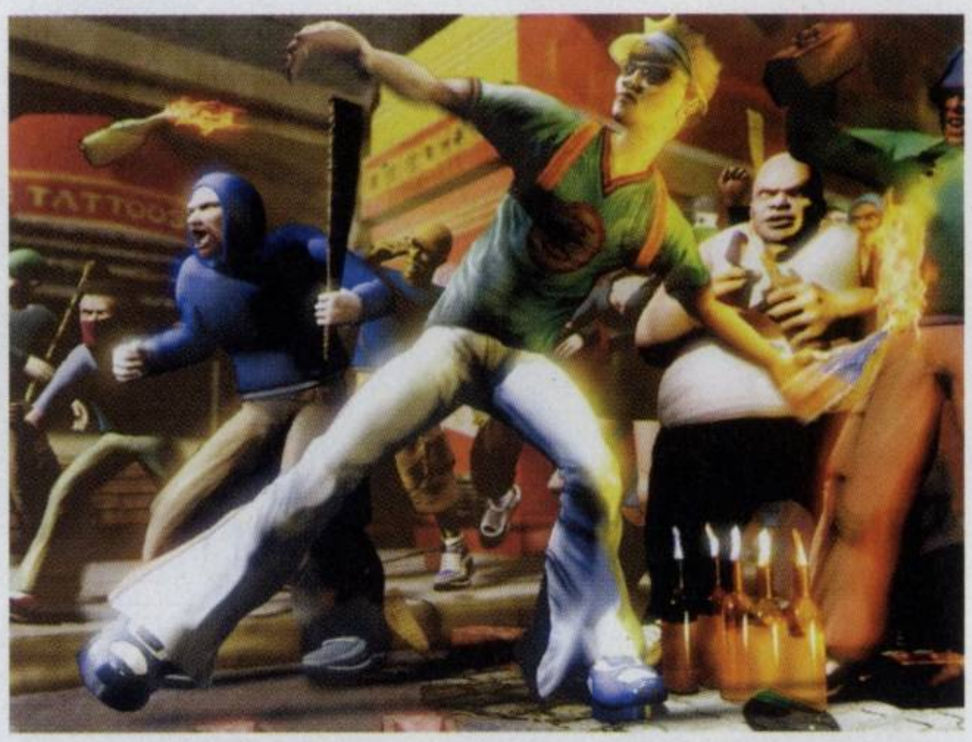

Snap on your helmet, pick up your club, and think of something that pisses you off (our pick is the Best Buy extended-service plan). Urban chaos awaits! Turn to **page 120** to see why ***State of Emergency*** makes the L.A. riots look like an ice-cream social.

Samus Aran is taking forever to roll her cute lil' butt on over to the GameCube, but we've got screens of her new adventure, ***Metroid Prime***, on **page 38**.

Find out how much gore you can stomach in one month by checking out our double dose of ***Resident Evil*** for GameCube and the movie based on the spooky franchise. **Pages 34 and 108** have the full scoop.

Believe it or not, the big PS2 online game isn't *Mavis Beacon Touch Typing*; it's ***Final Fantasy XI***. Get the lowdown on **page 74**.

You voted, we voted. And there weren't any hanging chads. We reveal the video games that *EGM's* editors and readers chose as the winners of our annual **Gamers' Choice Awards.** Oh, the drama! Turn to **page 128** and see who hauled in the coveted robotic statues. (Hint: none of the winners have "*GameDay*" in the title.)

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We've heard of Special Edition DVDs, but how about a Special Edition Xbox? It's alive and kicking, but it's only in Japan. Don't fret. We'll make it up to you by revealing some little-known *Final Fantasy X* and *Max Payne* tidbits in Afterthoughts.

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Cross-platform craziness! See how Sega's wave of Xbox games and *Crash Bandicoot* on the Game Boy Advance fared. Also, see the fallout of two big sports showdowns: PS2 *Hot Shots Golf 3* vs. *Tiger Woods 2002*, and Xbox's *NBA 2K2* vs. *NBA Inside Drive 2002*.

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Cheat on *Bloodwake's* shores, the rolling hills of *4x4 Evolution 2*, and *NFL Fever 2002's* gridiron for Xbox. Also: this month's top five tricks for PS2 and the newest installments of Halo's Inner Circle and Smash Bros. Academy.

The Final Word 154

SYSTEM KEY

- PlayStation 2
- GameCube
- Xbox
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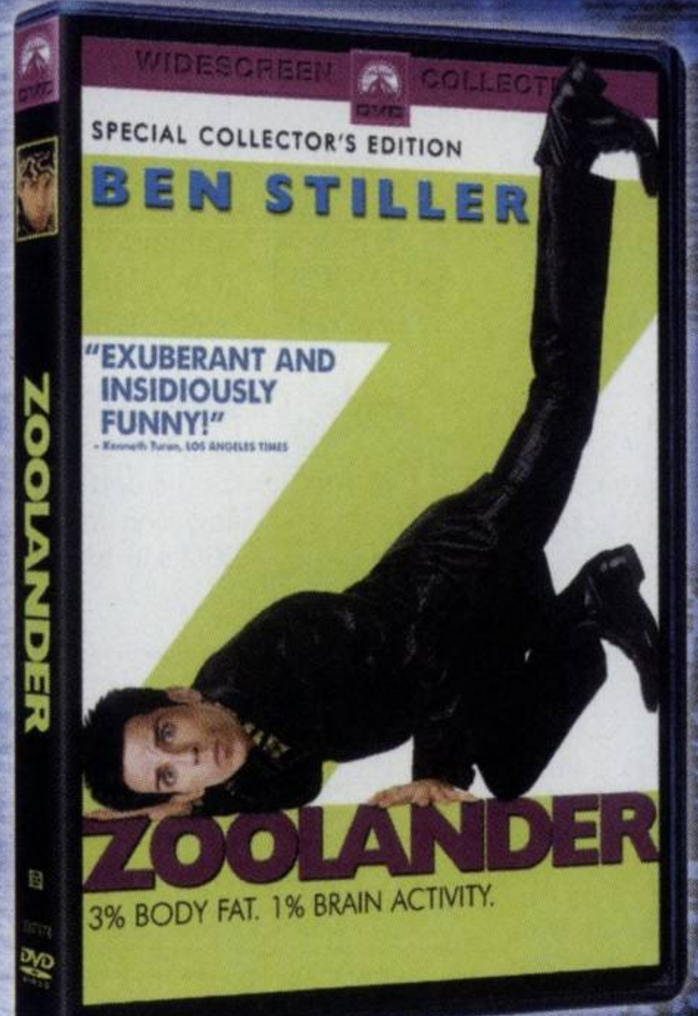

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EDITORIAL

Change is Good

By Dan "Shoe" Hsu • shoe@ziffdavis.com

I have to apologize. In *EGM* #152, we told you we'd have the world-exclusive scoop on the new *Mortal Kombat* (subtitled: *Deadly Alliance*) for this issue. We were supposed to expose the goods for this month's cover feature, but it didn't happen. Long story short: We ended up getting some horribly lame screenshots that didn't show anything of real interest. No new characters, no special moves, no nothin'.

We didn't want to mislead you by falsely advertising the new *MK* on the cover and making you think we had something substantial in here for you to check out. The result: We ended up pulling the plug on the whole article. You readers are our friends, and we want you to trust that if you buy an issue of *EGM* for its cover story, you'll be getting your money's worth.

Everything worked out for the better, though. Our main feature is now (in case you skipped right past the cover and straight into this riveting editorial) *State of Emergency*, the newest do-naughty-things game on the block that everyone is buzzing about. This may end up being a three-peat for Rockstar Games, the hip publisher who brought out *Grand Theft Auto III* and *Max Payne*. If sales are of any indication, the gaming audience is pretty keen on this new rash of Mature-rated experiences.

Games have officially grown up now. Are you down with that? Whether you're a youngin, a teen, or an all-growed-up adult...whether you're a parent or (shudder) a politician, drop us a line at egm@ziffdavis.com or stop by our message boards (http://egm.gamers.com). We want to know what your feelings are on these matters.

Shoe

Contributors

Michiko Stehrenberger

Famous for her tricked-out, graffiti-like illustrations, Michiko contributes her funky style to our 2001 Gamers' Choice Awards feature this month.

Jeremy "Norm" Scott

"Born from darkness, forged from steel, filled with nougat, Norman Von Scott is the mastermind behind *Hsu and Chan*, and is—attention ladies—quite available. Grrowl!"

Axel Strohm

Though his name may have you believe otherwise, Axel isn't a heavy-metal star. In fact, when he's not reporting for *EGM* and *OPM*, he's off skiing Switzerland's slopes.

Todd Zuniga

Official PlayStation Magazine's sheepish Associate Editor contributes to *EGM's* previews section this month. He also sends a shout-out to all his NYC homies.

Shane Bettenhausen

When he's not playing RPGs or *Soul Calibur*, Shane lends *EGM* a hand with previews and reviews. His wit also overflows into *GameNow* and *Pocket Games*.

Gary Mollohan

Gary has written for an eclectic mix of publications. Subject matter includes video games, large appliances and various power tools. Hmm, should we be worried?

Peter Felonk

To celebrate Pete's third issue as *EGM*'s Tricks Editor, the staff took him out for a Spam dinner. Hopefully that won't scare him away. Everyone likes Spam, right?

John Ricciardi

John has been writing about video games for the better part of the last decade. He now lives in Japan, where he works as *EGM's* International Editor.

Eat My Shorts!

Look around this issue for quotes from The Simpsons or a famous movie. Find one, e-mail it (and your mailing address) to us at EGM@ziffdavis.com (subject: Eat My Shorts—EGM #153), and you may be one of five lucky winners (chosen at random) who will win a copy of this month's Game of the Month.

No purchase necessary. For full legal crap, go to egm.gamers.com.

Just a few of the quotes from the issue #152:

- "I can say without hyperbole that this is a million times worse than all of them put together." (*The Simpsons*, pg. 146)
- "Yes, Hudson,...is a bug hunt." (*Aliens*, pg. 96)
- "This...is so money." (*Swingers*, pg. 138)
- And that *First Blood* stuff from the Game of the Month write-up on pg. 134.

Issue #151's winners of *Super Smash Bros. Melee* (GameCube):

- Derrick Orr—Dickinson, ND
- Blake Mielke—Wawautosa, WI
- Julianne Stanton—Fairview Park, OH
- Neal Singley—Harrison Twp., MI
- Tyler Medley—Leavenworth, WA

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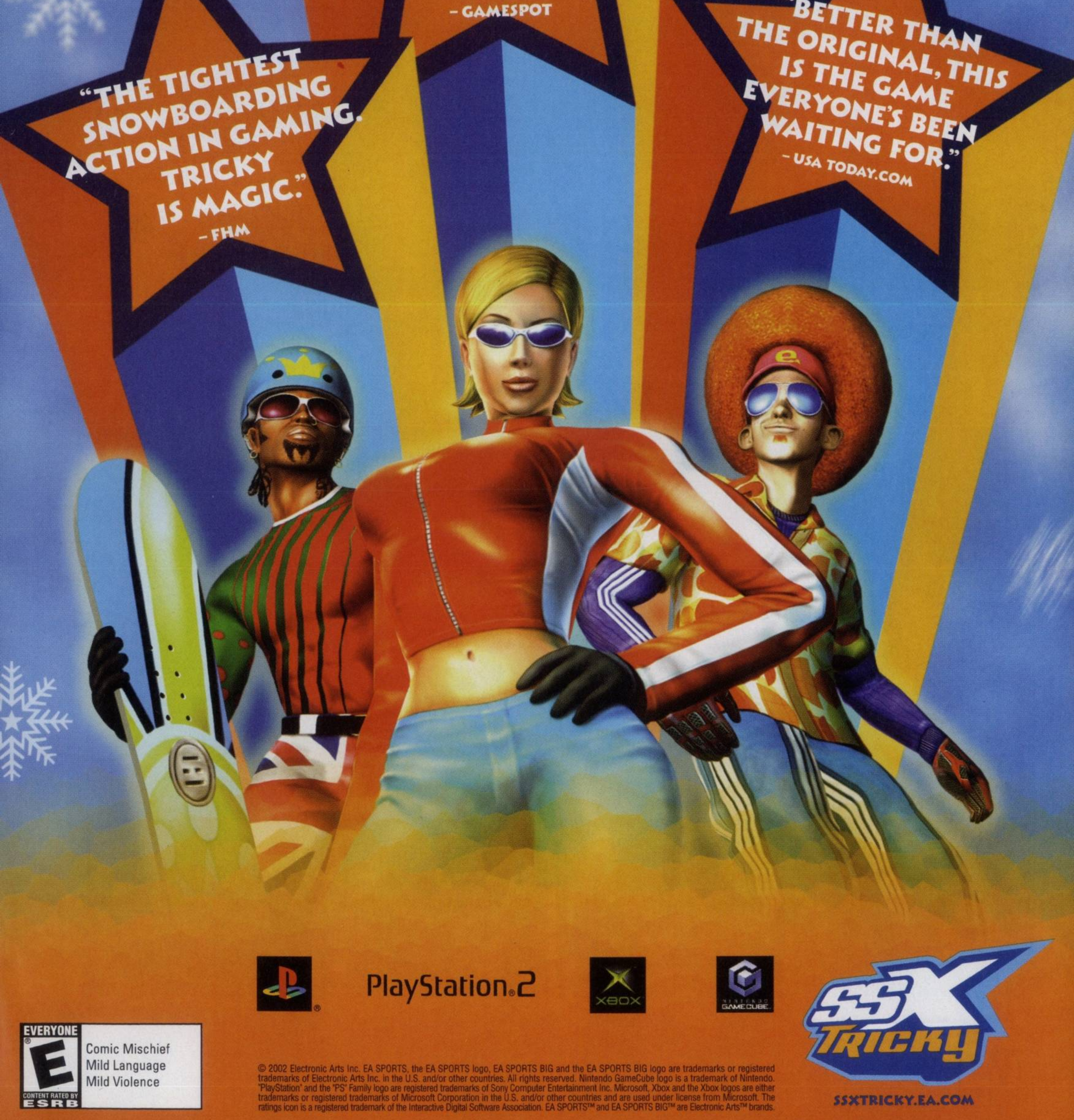

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PlayStation 2

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Hackers, rejoice. The game of golf just got more interesting. Welcome to Hot Shots Golf®3. Play a whole round from sun up to sun down with realistic atmospheric conditions, fairway lies and ball spins. Or, compete against players from around the country in National Tournament mode. All without finding yourself waiting to hit behind plaid pant wearing, slow moving rich guys named something-something the third ever again. A place where caddies talk trash on the greens and no tee times are ever required. Hot Shots Golf 3. Golf for the people.

HOT SHOTS GOLF 3

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UNIVERSAL

UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE

www.universalinteractive.com

Vicarious Visions inc.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Crash is going small in a huge way.

Crash makes small look good in his big debut for Game Boy® Advance. In a world shrunk to the size of a wumpa fruit by the evil Dr. Cortex, this Bandicoot is in for a huge adventure. Literally.

"Handheld Crash is just as awesome as his console adventures." – IGN.com

CRASH BANDICOOT The HUGE Adventure

thehugeadventure.com

EVERYONE

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

"YOU ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK UPON THE GREAT CRUSADE."

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, D-Day.

PARACHUTE INTO THE WAR as Lt. Jimmy Patterson of the Air Transport Corps in Medal Of Honor: Frontline for the PlayStation®2 Computer Entertainment System. After taking part in the largest aerial troop drop in history, you'll fight the Axis Powers as an agent of the OSS. Battle on the front lines or go it alone behind enemy lines using over 20 authentic WWII weapons to bring down the Third Reich. Survive the first deadly mission and you're only 17 more away from victory.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE

You don't play. You volunteer.

www.moh.ea.com

PlayStation®2

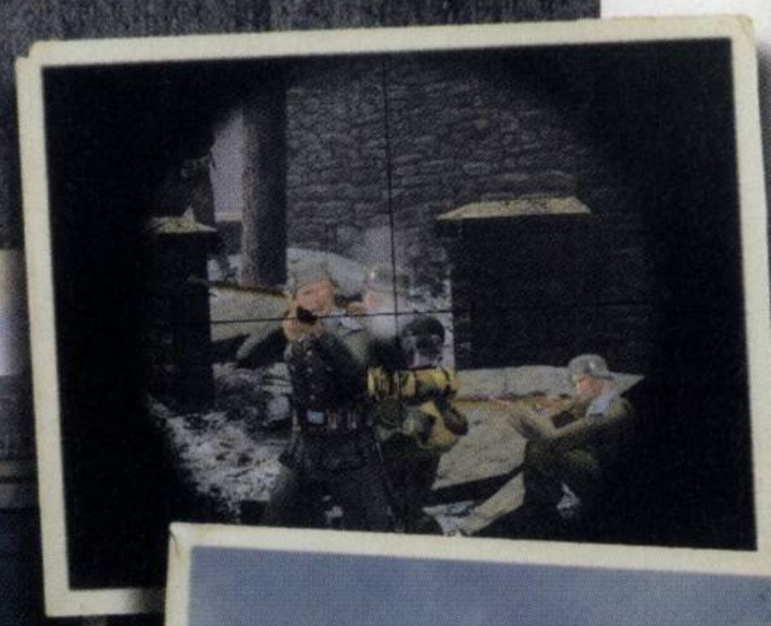
PRODUCTS RANGE FROM RATING PENDING TO TEEN

RP-T

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

EA GAMES

EAGAMES.COM



gamespy Best of E3 2001 Action

STEP INTO THE BOOTS of Lt. Mike Powell of the First Ranger Battalion in Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault for your PC. Join the 'special infantry' as an elite soldier trained to execute covert missions in advance of major Allied offensives. Fight with a crack unit or go it alone using over 20 authentic WWII weapons to defeat a vicious, motivated enemy. But remember with six harrowing campaigns, the only reward for victory is another deadly mission.

MEDAL OF HONOR ALLIED ASSAULT

You don't play. You volunteer.

www.moh.ea.com

PC CD ROM

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Letters to the Editors

FAST FEEDBACK

You know who you are. You asked for these in your letters this month and we're givin' 'em to you.

Trophies in *Super Smash Bros. Melee*: Nearly 300
Who won the big *EGM* contest? You'll find out by March 15
My friend says he got a flame-thrower in *Halo*.... He's lying
What's an IROC? A special model of Camaro from the '80s.
Can I work for *EGM*? No, sorry. Not right now, anyway.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Square Roots and Pong Paddles

While other people were hard at work in my math class, I decided to have some fun. I took my TI-85 graphing calculator and learned to program for it. After a few days and failed games, I finally got the hang of it. So far I've programmed four games and three applications for it. I got so into it that I took my dinky 4-inch link cable and "modified" it to reach roughly 40 feet. I then used it to distribute my games to the other people's calculators and play them in my two multiplayer games: *TI-Checkers* and *Arena*. The game-playing has gotten so out of hand that my math teacher has banned the calculators from her class! Now we can only take them out if we have explicit permission to do so. Also, we can't use them on tests anymore because of a program that lets you solve any quadratic equation instantly.

I was just wondering if anybody there at *EGM* had ever used one for gaming, or even heard of using one for gaming.

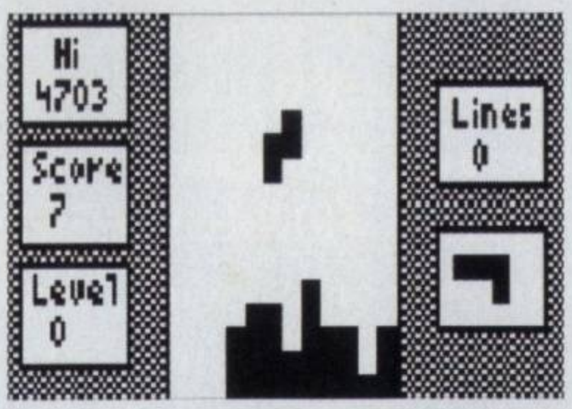
lord_ginsu@hotmail.com

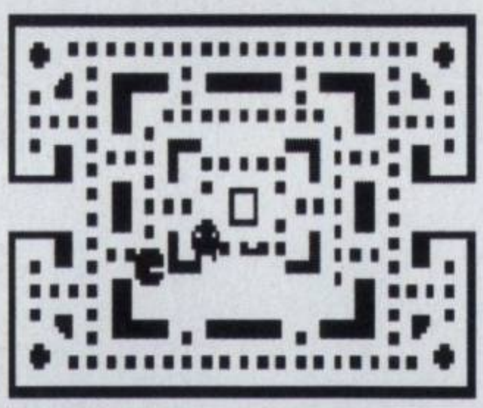
Hell, yeah. Associate Editor Jonathan Dudlak's formative years were largely spent in the hallways of Maine South High School rather than in the classrooms, thanks to the TI-85. Even the clever guise of a calculator can't keep you from getting kicked out of classes like English and Gym....

Programs such as the ones you mentioned were certainly around back then; you didn't have to go and program them yourself, but it's cool that you did. Several Web sites nowadays feature games and programs you can download for Texas Instruments calculators. Or you could have just tossed us one end of that massive link cable, and we would have hooked you up.

We're glad you found an alternative console to the GBA for portable gaming. Sure, we'd probably all prefer to play *Circle of the Moon*, but it's hard to convince a suspicious Trig teacher that you were actually calculating the cosine of an angle when you've got a GBA in your lap.

Congratulations **lord_ginsu@hotmail.com.** You win an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 or Game Boy Color.





User-made versions of classic gaming mainstays *Tetris* (left) and *Pac-Man* for the TI-85 calculator.

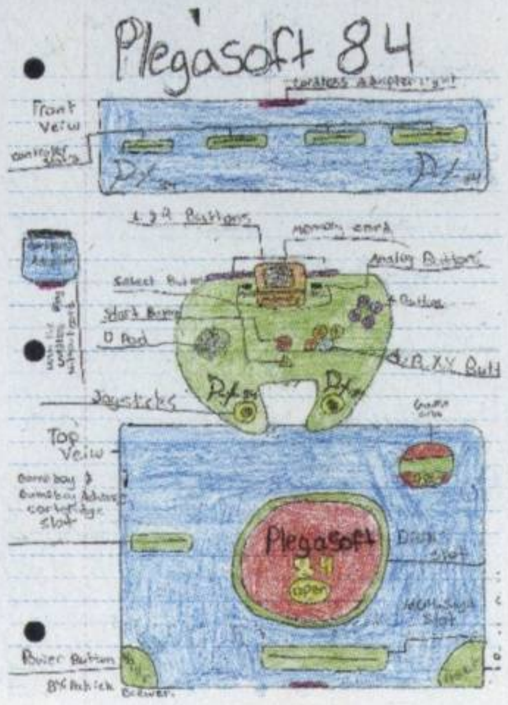
PlegaSoft 84

The PlegaSoft 84 uses the most advanced technology to let you play PlayStation, PS2, Xbox, Dreamcast, GameCube, N64, Game Boy and Game Boy Advance games. The PlegaSoft 84 is 11 inches long and seven inches wide, and it is produced by Sony and Microsoft.

Sincerely,
Patrick Brewer

P.S. Please try to make the PlegaSoft 84.

Though your preliminary sketches are thorough and your idea would certainly save gamers a lot of money and space, making consoles isn't really our bag over here.... We definitely think you should send it along to Sony and Microsoft, though, as per your prospectus. We hear they're dying to work together on a new console.



Mightier Than The Digisword

I just recently read your article about DigiPen, and I believe I have found a new calling. I have made it a personal goal to attend this most prestigious of colleges one day. I want to make the world's most ultimate game, and it's all thanks to you guys. Keep on writing stuff like that; who knows whom you might one day inspire.

Redhotdannyboy19@aol.com

Thanks, man. It was a fun feature for us to run, as well. We get lots of people wondering how to get involved in the gaming industry, and we figure the more there are of us, the better. Just promise us that if you succeed, you'll never use your powers for evil, like making a *Temptation Island* game.

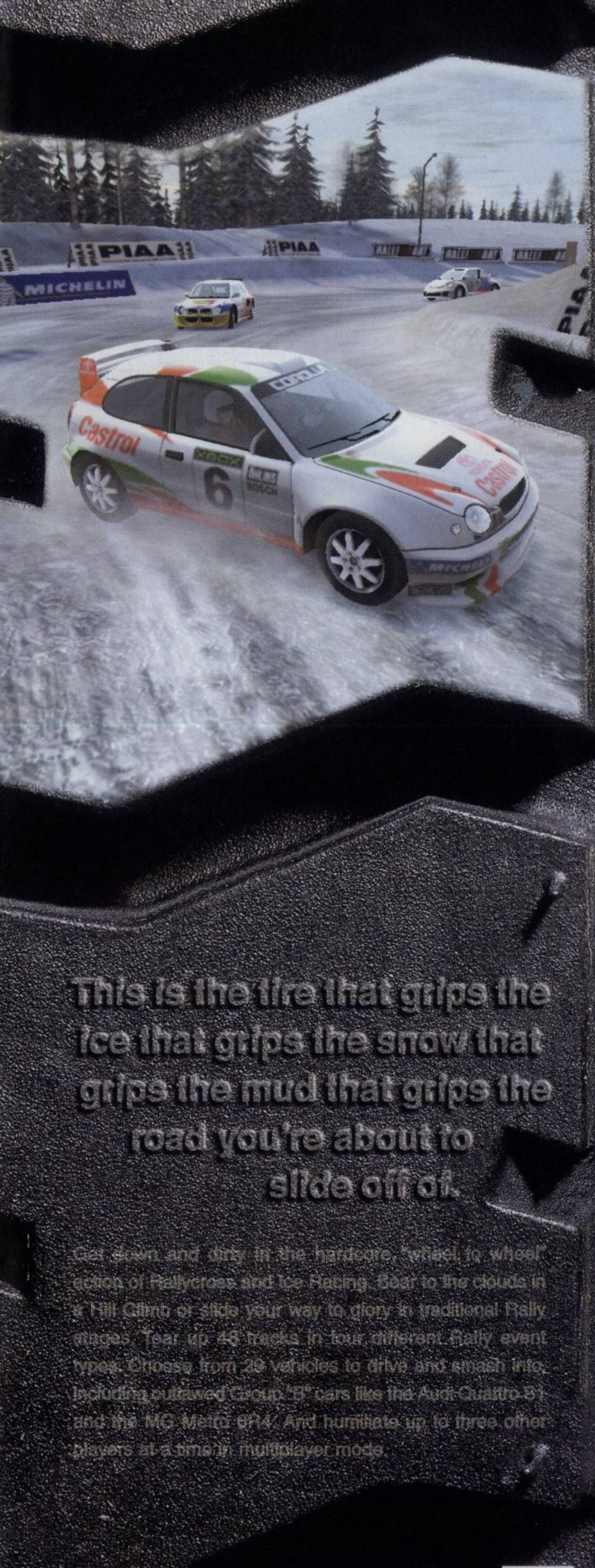
Live Wires

I'm pretty sure I'm being haunted by some kind of ghost by way of video games; weird stuff keeps happening to me. The worst instance took place several months ago. I went to Radio Shack to get a replacement for my broken PlayStation A/V cord. I returned, hooked it up, and turned on the PS1 to see if the new cable worked. The start-up screen showed up, the game booted, and I was happy. But then my mom came in and said that the game was showing up on the TV in her room as well, interrupting *Oprah*. I couldn't believe it, so I checked it out, and she was right! I bought some new wires and everything was fine again. What the heck's going on?

Kpoodiddy@aol.com

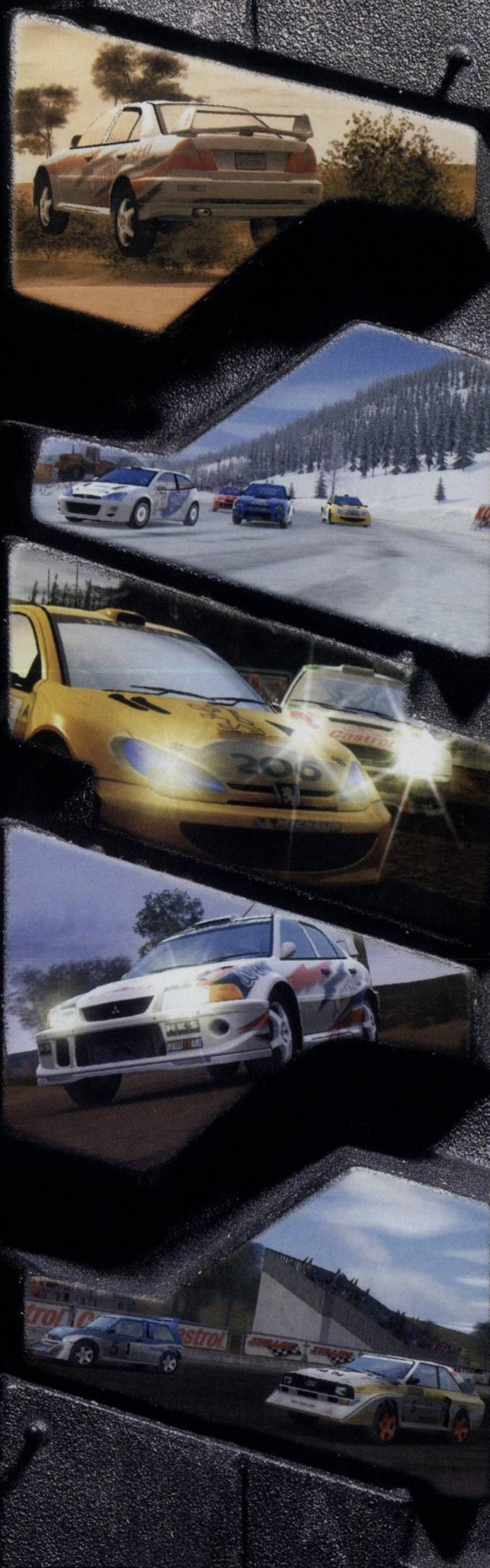
You went to Radio Shack!? Man, talk about taking your life into your hands...we're pretty sure you need a history of mental illness just to *qualify* for a sales position. The possessed-cord thing sounds like the least of your worries, but hey, it's your nickel.

Did you check to make sure your house isn't built on an ancient



This is the tire that grips the ice that grips the snow that grips the mud that grips the road you're about to slide off of.

Get down and dirty in the hardcore, "wheel to wheel" action of Rallycross and Ice Racing. Soar to the clouds in a Hill Climb or slide your way to glory in traditional Rally stages. Tear up 48 tracks in four different Rally event types. Choose from 28 vehicles to drive and smash into, including outlawed Group "B" cars like the Audi Quattro S1 and the MG Metro 6R4. And humiliate up to three other players at a time in multiplayer mode.



RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

Where the rubber leaves the road.

dice

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

XBOX

ONLY ON XBOX

WWW.XBOX.COM

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SHORTS

Fortified with 10 essential vitamins and minerals

In the *Circus Maximus* ad in issue 152, I noticed that while the ad is labeled with the "only on Xbox" logo, the two over-enthusiastic kids and gladiators are definitely not playing with Xbox controllers. They are way too small and thin. I just found that interesting....

D12Rabidpanda@yahoo.com

Dropping the ball on details like that is pretty common when it comes to ads, TV shows and movies, actually. Our favorite is the obnoxious kid in *Rumble in the Bronx* feverishly playing an empty Game Gear while random bleeps and blips pepper the audio track. Real smooth.

Is it just me, or is *Star Fox Adventures* not getting the coverage it deserves?

DOHnuts730@aol.om

It's not, you're right, but tell it to our friends at Nintendo. We'd have better luck re-creating the game in our offices using nothing but pipe cleaners and lemon Pledge than we would getting assets from them. Sorry.

Indian burial ground? No sisters named Carrie-Ann attracting poltergeists to your house? Recent offspring of Satan born into the family? Well, then we're out of ideas. But hey, if you don't want the darn cable, send it over here. We've got some girlfriends that could do with an *Oprah* outage.

Mario's Day Job

I found this ad on the back of a church bulletin. The area code is enclosed if you want to call them.

mewsix_6_6@hotmail.com

When we first saw your clipping, Mew, we thought it was pretty sweet. So we called up Mario's Plumbing to get some answers. Suffice it to say that after a long line of questioning involving fire flowers, spiny shells and raccoon tails, the only connection we made with this Mario was when we started talking about big green pipes. He suggested we had spent a little too much time in this "mushroom kingdom," then offered to show us a particularly unorthodox use for a 2-inch iron pipe fitting, which is when we politely declined and left him to his devices.

Re-Awarded

The first thing I do when I receive your magazine every month is flip through to the review section to see what the Game of the Month is, which I'm sure a lot of readers do. I was surprised to see that *Super Mario World* won Game of the Month in issue #152. I really liked the game on the Super Nintendo, but shouldn't there be some sort of law prohibiting a previously released game being brought to a different system winning the Game of the Month?

mdschultz_73@yahoo.com

Post Office

If you haven't visited the *EGM* message boards online yet, you're missing out on all sorts of meaty gaming chat. Go forth and contribute at egm.gamers.com (look for the link that says, "Talk to the *EGM* editors online now!"). Your post could be in next month's *EGM*!

POSTMASTER GENERAL

TheMaine: "My Review(s) of the Review Crew"

Well, he wasn't quite spot-on with all the reviews (Sewart still thinks he got gypped on "visuals"), but TheMaine obviously put a lot of effort into analyzing the Review Crew's idiosyncrasies. Attracting several dozen responses from readers and staff members alike, the series of posts taught us a little something about ourselves: That we should all start using assumed names. Congratulations, Maine, you're the first Postmaster General of the *EGM* message boards.

Honorable Mention—Slickest Signature: MPMike

Check out MPMike's graphical treatment of Mark's Game of the Month text in issue #152, which was inspired by a very moving oration from *Rambo*:

You are dealing with a man who is an expert with fireballs, with turtle shells, with his bare hands. A man who's been trained to ignore pain, to ignore weather. To live off the land and eat things that yould make a billy goat puke. In vietnam, his mission was to dispose of enemy personnel. To kill period. Win by attrition. Well, Mario was the best...

Question of the Moment

What are you looking forward to most when the next-gen systems go online?

Online *Halo* multiplayer, what else?

frozengray@home.com

A multiplayer, multi-genre battle simulator. Imagine a whole city at war with players fighting each other in tanks, choppers, jets, subs, jeeps, etc., or in teams fighting together against a computer opponent. That would be so swank!

proto35@mindspring.com

I, for one, would like to flex my *Street Fighter* skills against real-life Japanese competition.

loosefromthenoose@yahoo.com

I'm looking forward to games that will allow you to play in clans with other gamers, like you see on many PC titles. I want to be able to own things with my clan, such as an island in an online, multiplayer RPG world.

phantasyx@teamkatana.net

First and foremost, I want to see the PS2 actually GO online! No more of this, "November...er, January...er, sometime in spring..." crap! I've been waiting since November to show off my mad *Tony Hawk* skills!

metalgearevan@home.com

I would really like to see some good real-time strategy games for Xbox or PS2 go online. Nothing is better than playing a good RTS! I'd trade my mom for a good RTS!

fiftylashes4u@yahoo.com

Being able to download expansion packs and levels for games, mainly new *Armored Core 3* missions.

one_gundam_war@hotmail.com

An online utopian world, and the ability to play against PC opponents like Dreamcast was able to do.

lrm012001@yahoo.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

How do you feel about remakes of old games for today's consoles?

Send your short but sweet responses to: EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject heading:

Encore

THE KING OF FIGHTERS NEOBLOOD EX

Introducing the sequel to a fighting dynasty.

Once more, invitations to the King of Fighters Tournament have been sent to the legendary fighters of the day by an unknown host. Despite their suspicions of an evil scheme brewing behind the event, the fighters are ready to enter the arena…prepared to determine who the true King of Fighters will be.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Violence

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Marvelous Entertainment Inc.

Sammy

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EXTREME SOCCER

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NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

EVERYONE

E

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Violence

Six international teams clash in the most punishing, pumped-up version of three-on-three soccer ever. Unlock secret codes, power ups and bonuses in five brutal, fast-paced modes. Experience the depth of Quest Mode as you battle for the Continental Cup. Easy to learn. Tough to master. Hard to put down. Can you take the heat?

Our players are different.

SEGA®

LETTERS

You can write EGM at:

EGM Letters
P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL
60522-3338
E-mail: EGM@ziffdavis.com

Please note: We reserve the right to edit any correspondence for space purposes. If you don't want your name, city/state or e-mail address printed, tell us so (but please include your phone number, mailing address and system preference for Letter of the Month prize consideration).

Also note: Although we can't respond to every letter, as far as you know, we do read them all. Also, everything you send us is ours to keep!

Well, the real answer is that Game of the Month is typically determined by overall score, and *Super Mario World* scored the highest in issue #152. But remember that our scores are just a reflection of how great, terrible or mediocre we think a game is, so it's just a hard-and-fast way to make sure our endorsement hits its mark. Besides, *Super Mario World* rocked when it came out for the Super Nintendo, and we figure many of today's younger gamers weren't necessarily able to play it on the ol' 16-bit console. Here's their chance to play a very well-designed game, and what better endorsement from us than Game of the Month?

Look Out, GameCube

I know there are a lot of new systems on the market lately, but you guys are missing out on at least one! I noticed the ad below in one of my news magazines, but I never saw you guys review this thing. What's the deal?

Jason Kubelle
Holtsville, NY

hundred-dollar bills to evil game-store owner; star-wipe to "Game System"™ controller spinning toward you on-screen, making kid happy again) It's basically 50 Nintendo games built into a generic controller, then renamed and resold with questionable legality. If you consider bootlegged versions of 15-year-old games coming to you in glorious monaural sound competitive with the Xbox and GameCube, then you've got yourself a real deal!

You Talkin' to Me?

When I log onto gamers.com, there is a button that says, "Talk to the *EGM* editors online now!" I never know how to tell if any of the editors are on or not, or if someone's just impersonating one of you. I see lots of people creating chats dedicated to talk to you, but they are usually unsuccessful (at least the ones I see). Can you tell me what time of day you are usually on, and what your screen names are on the chat so I can find you guys?

thewilltrix700@mediaone.net

SHORTS PLUS

I was watching music videos and Radiohead's "Paranoid Android" came on. In the video, two people are riding in a taxi. They go past a wall covered with graffiti, and *EGM* is scrawled on the wall! Did you know about that? Maybe you could sue!

gtrftbl@hotmail.com

We would, but those guys in Radiohead probably don't have much money. They're always wearing thrift-store clothes and look so underfed....

All of the editors have screen names in the same format on the message boards: EGM-[name]. Usually we use our first name and last initial, but you'll know one of us when you see us. After about 9 or 10 o'clock (central) at night is the best time to find us. We answer as many posts as we can, but we also try to maintain lives outside of work, so it's not always a quick process, sorry....

Oops

We inadvertently played a trick on ya'll in the Tricks section last month. The GameShark codes listed under *Grand Theft Auto III* were actually for *Golden Sun*; they were just labeled wrong. So hey, if you're looking for Golden Sun codes, just check under *GTA3* in issue 152!

One of these days, we're going to get this *Ninja Gaiden* thing right. Tecmo has not officially announced a platform for the game at all, so never mind everything we said before. As soon as they announce it, we'll tell you for real.

The obviously high-budget ad should tell you a lot about the quality of the Game System. Act now, and we'll personally slap you in the eye.

Yeah, you'll see these little numbers at church raffles and late-night infomercials that go something like this: "Tired of throwing away your hard-earned money on all those expensive video games?" (video clip of distraught kid forking over

LETTER ART: MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM XEROX

Letter Art of the Month WINNER

Lauren Monardo • Staten Island, NY

Congratulations, Lauren Monardo! You've captured Tidus's only manly side. Your prize is on the way—an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 or Game Boy Color.

GAMESHARK

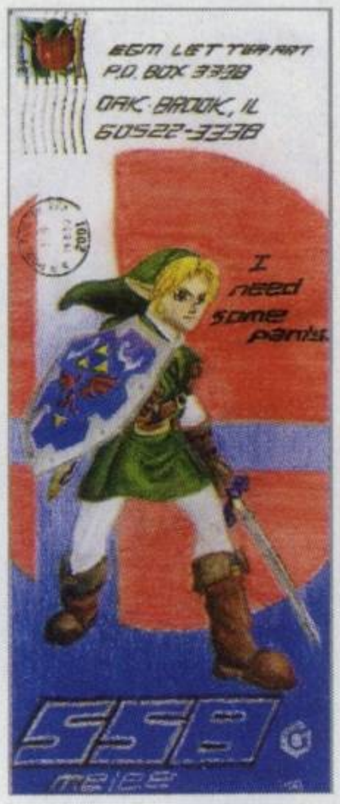
Put your creative skills to the test by decking out a #10 envelope (the long, business type) with your own unique touch. Send letter art to:

EGM Letter Art, P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338
(or E-mail EGM@ziffdavis.com)

Be sure to include a mailing address, and tell us what system you'd like your prize for. All entries become the property of Ziff Davis Media Inc., and will be shredded once we've had our way with 'em.

Not quite Sharkworthy...

Close, but no frittata. Better luck next time.



Nathan Trafford
Lake Jackson, TX

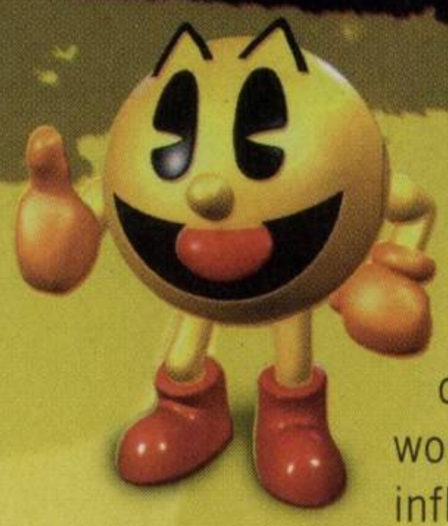
Jorge Yanez
Riverside, CA

For Letter of the Month and Letter Art of the Month contests, no purchase is necessary. If you're a glutton for punishment and want to read the complete contest legal rules, please visit egm.gamers.com or write us at: EGM Contests-Legal Rules Request, P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338. We'll do everything in our power to make reading the rules difficult, so good luck. Oh, and don't forget to give us your address and tell us what system you'd like your prize for. Otherwise you're just getting coal.

BLABACPHOTO CAR COURTESY OF 310 MOTORING

DC APPAREL

Pac-Man's back, and everybody's feeling it.



Who can blame them? It's Pac-Man's most incredible adventure yet — with over 20 treacherous levels of Free Roaming landscapes to fight through. And with dozens of new enemies lurking around, Pac-Land isn't just a Ghost town anymore. But no worries. Using a few old tricks — and some new ones — you'll be feeling Pac-Man's influence for a long time to come.

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Violence

namco®

WWW.NAMCO.COM

PlayStation 2

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

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TM, ® & the Nintendo GameCube logo are trademarks of Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.
Screenshots from the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system version.

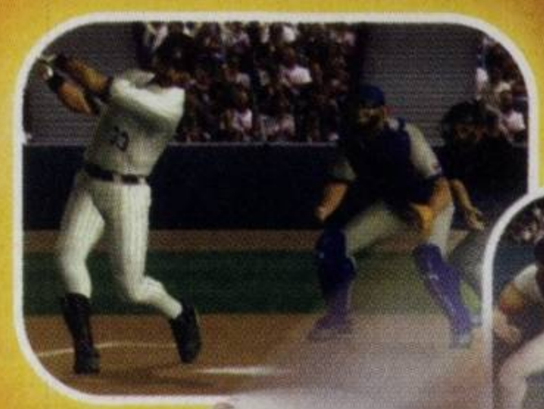
The Man's got talent! He ice skates, inline skates and even pilots a sub!

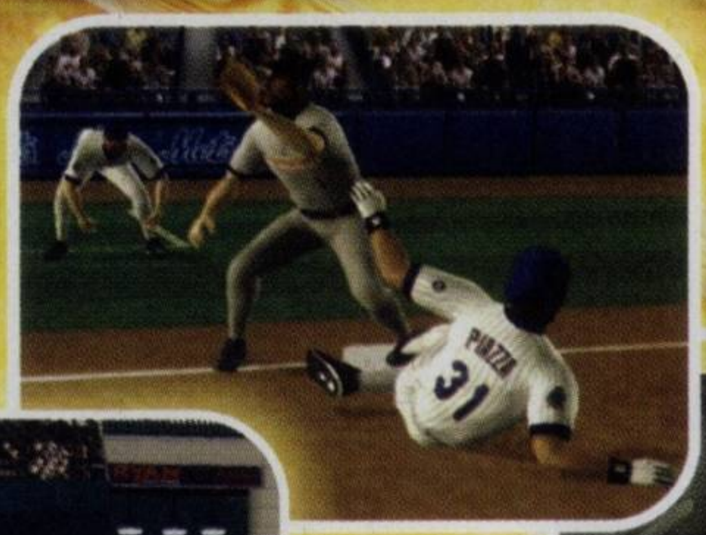
From fire to ice.
Six unique worlds to explore.

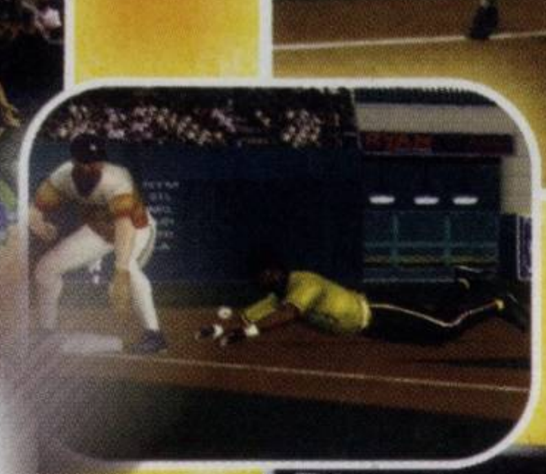
PAC-MAN WORLD 2™

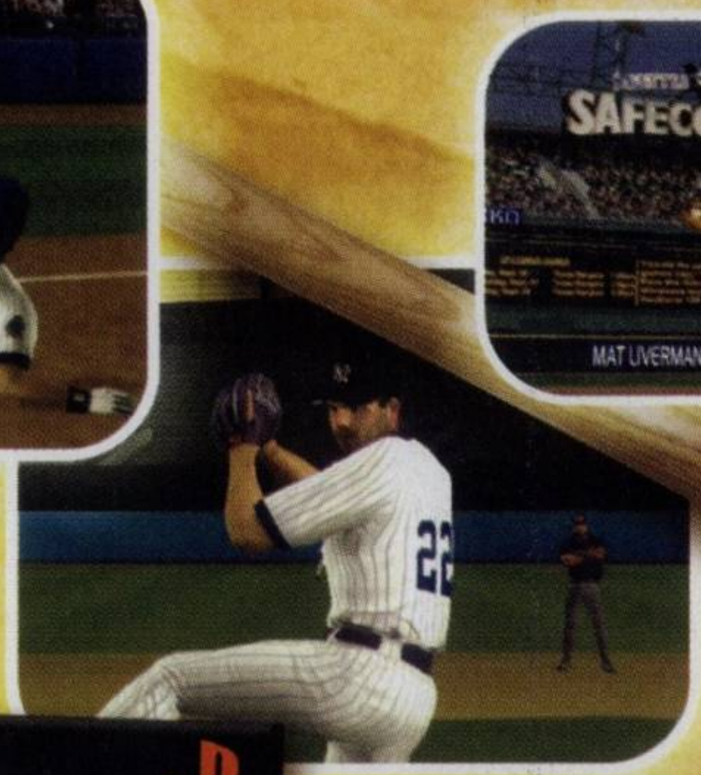
Great new 3D Pac-Mazes and bonus arcade games!

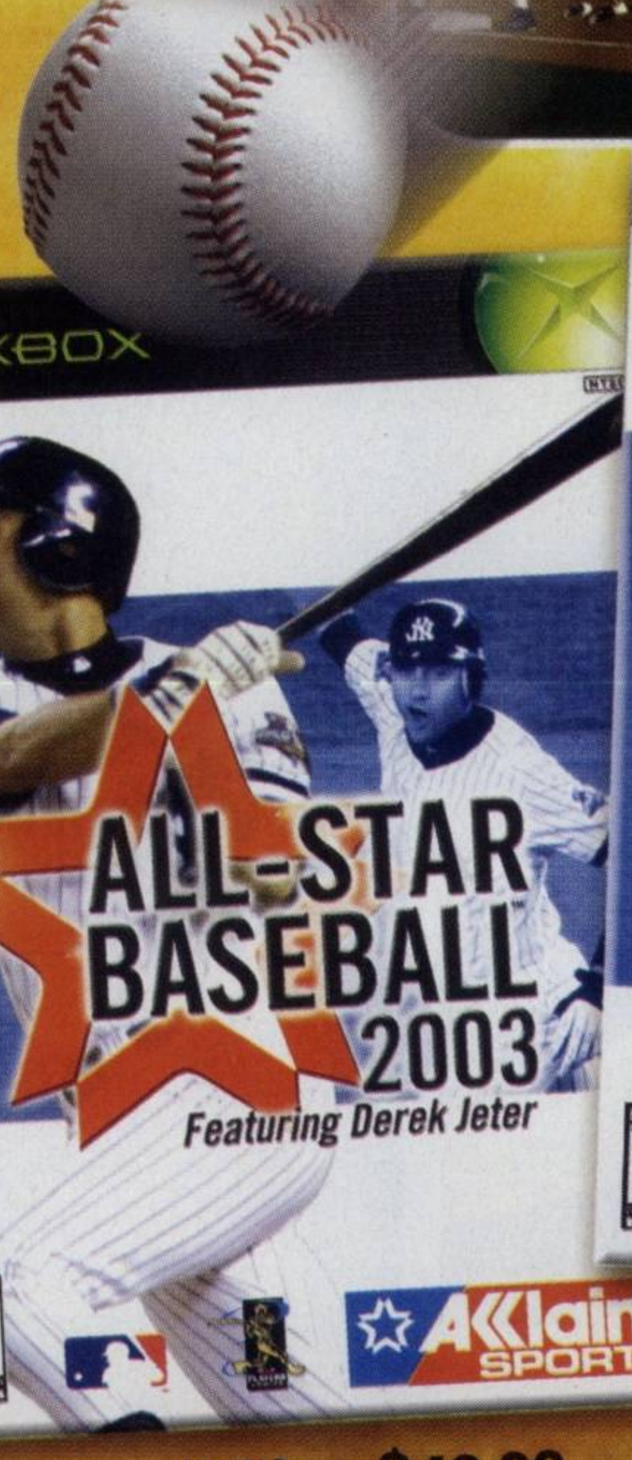
EB MASTER











ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003
XBOX
ACCLAIM
#215082-9
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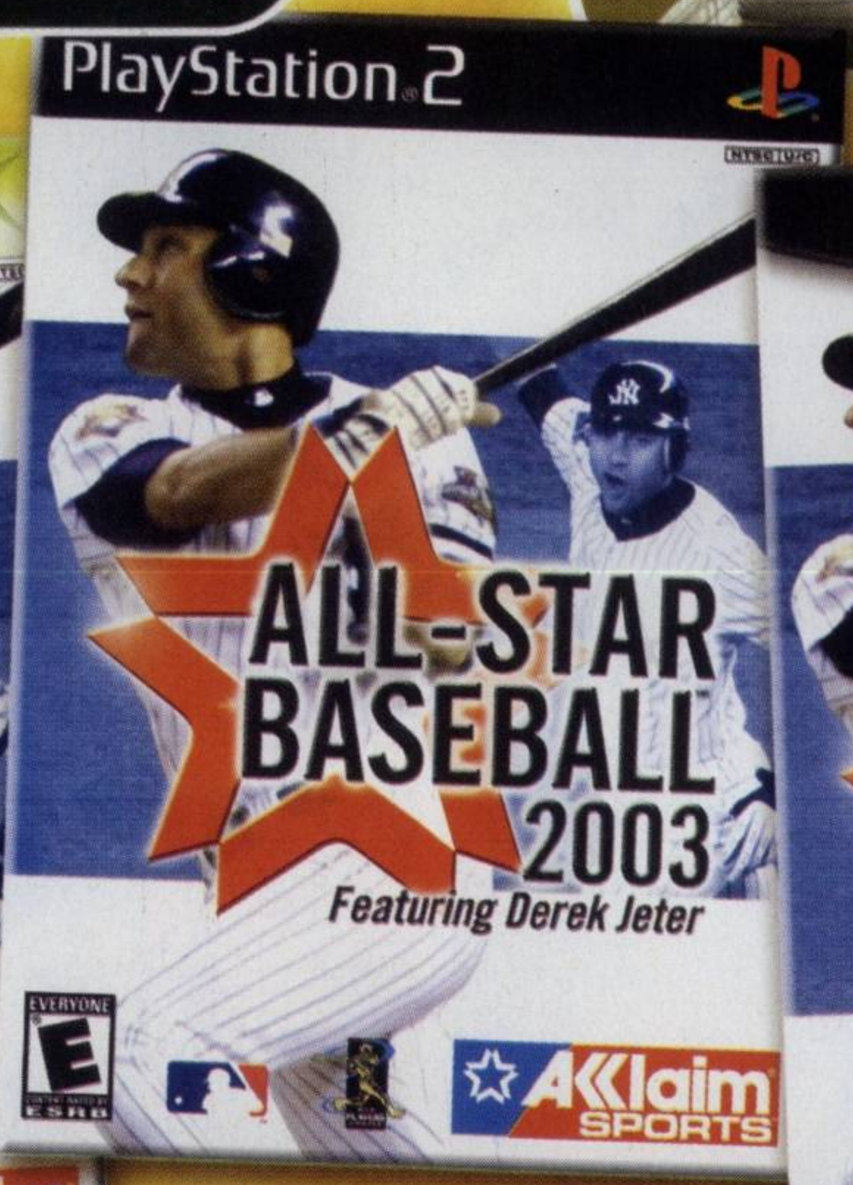

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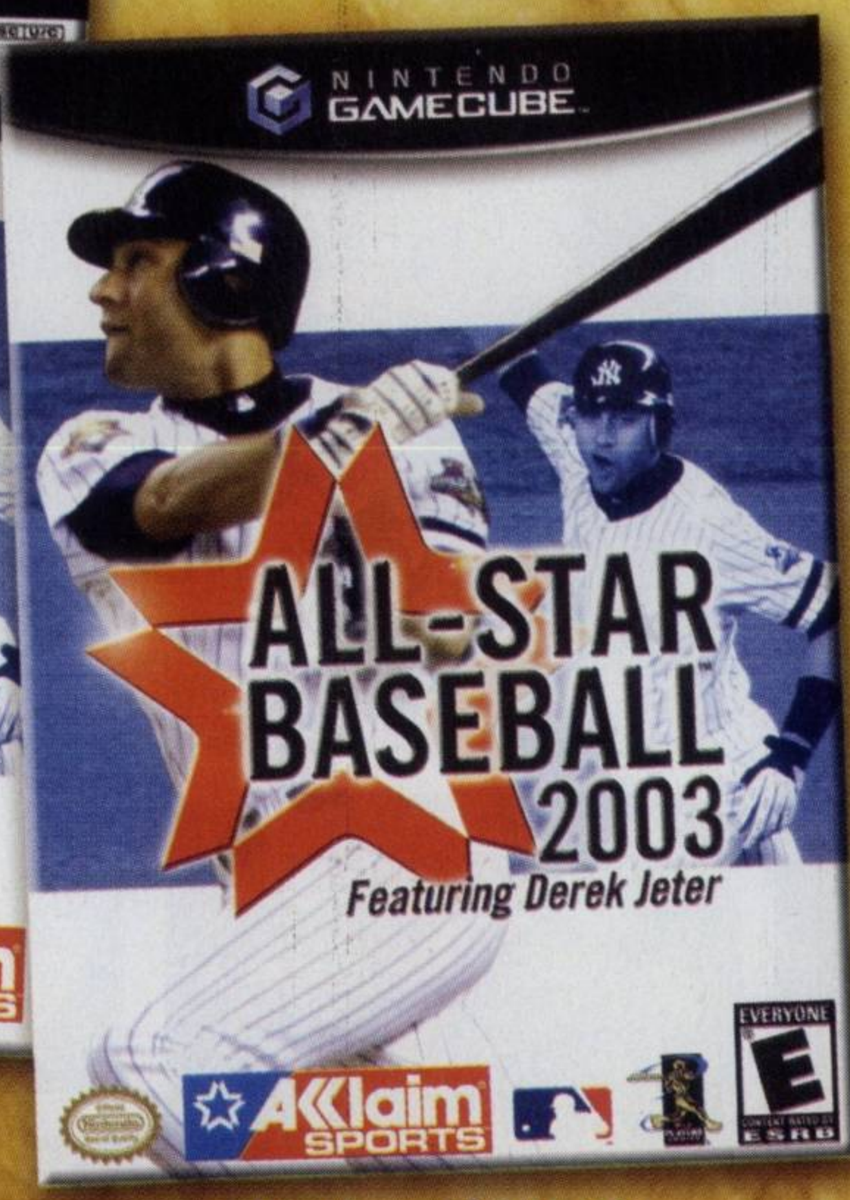

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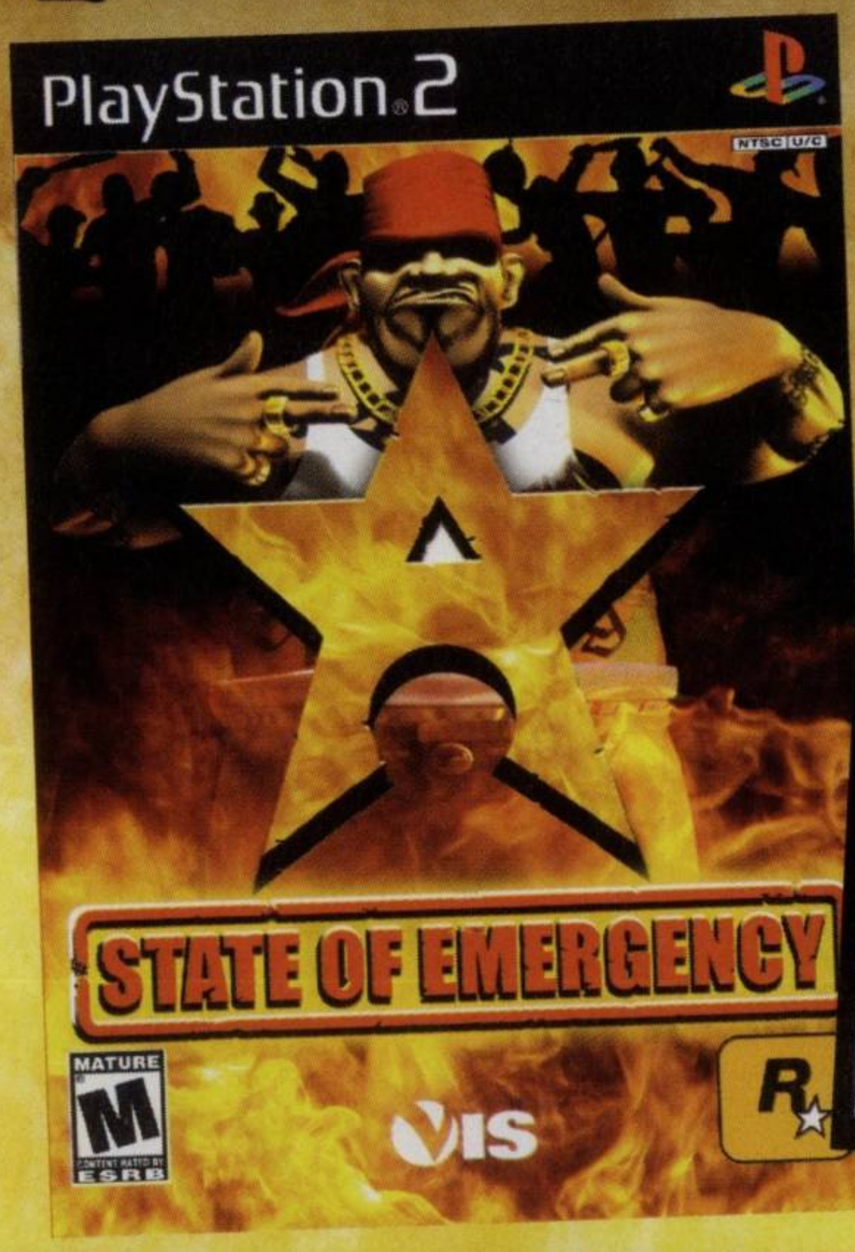

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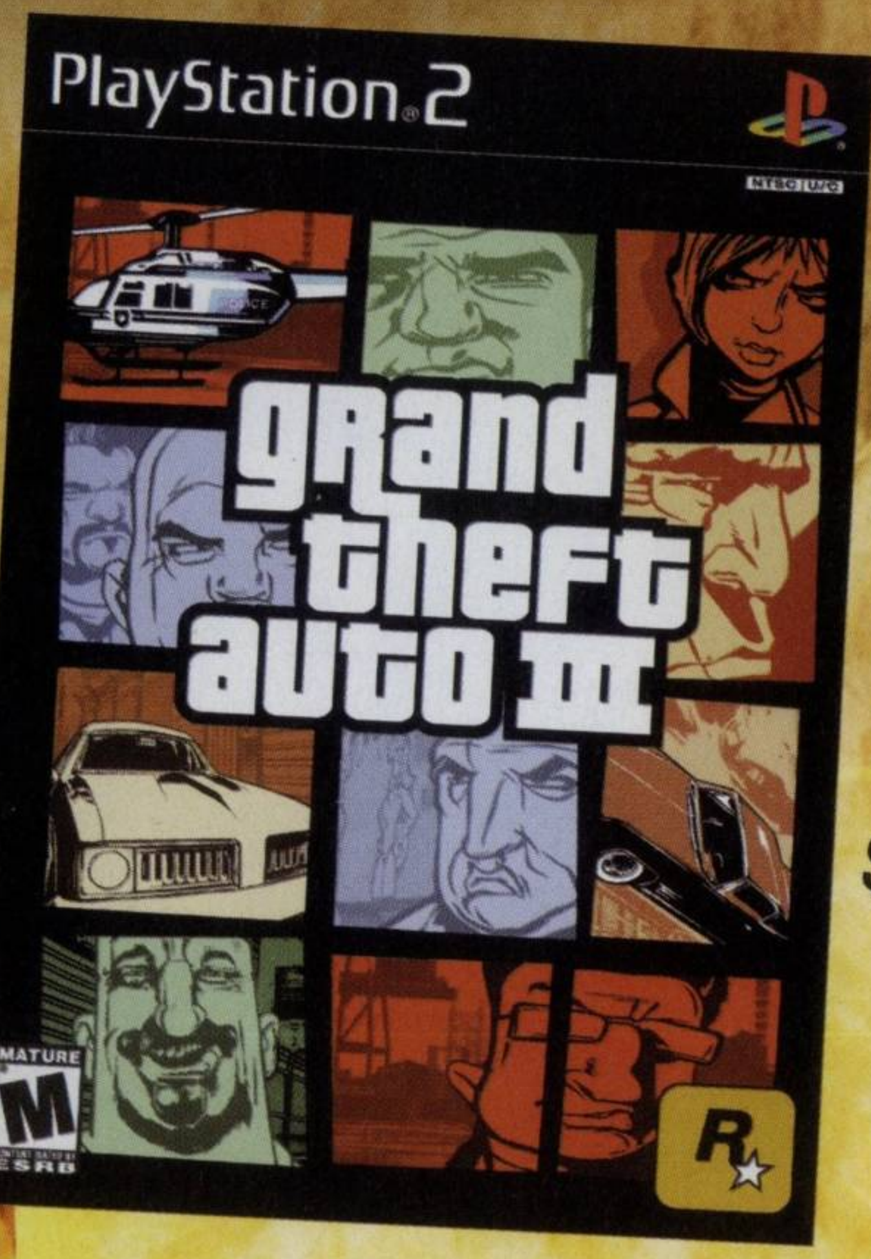

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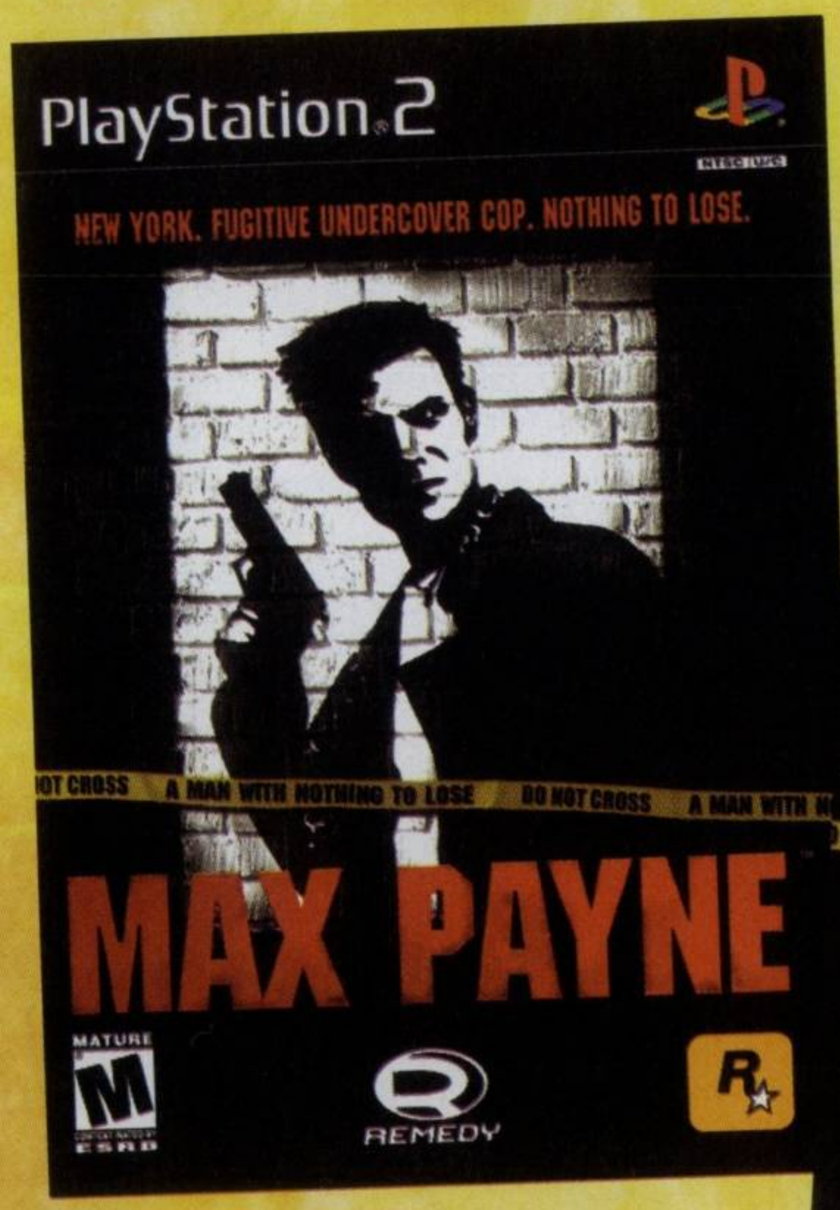

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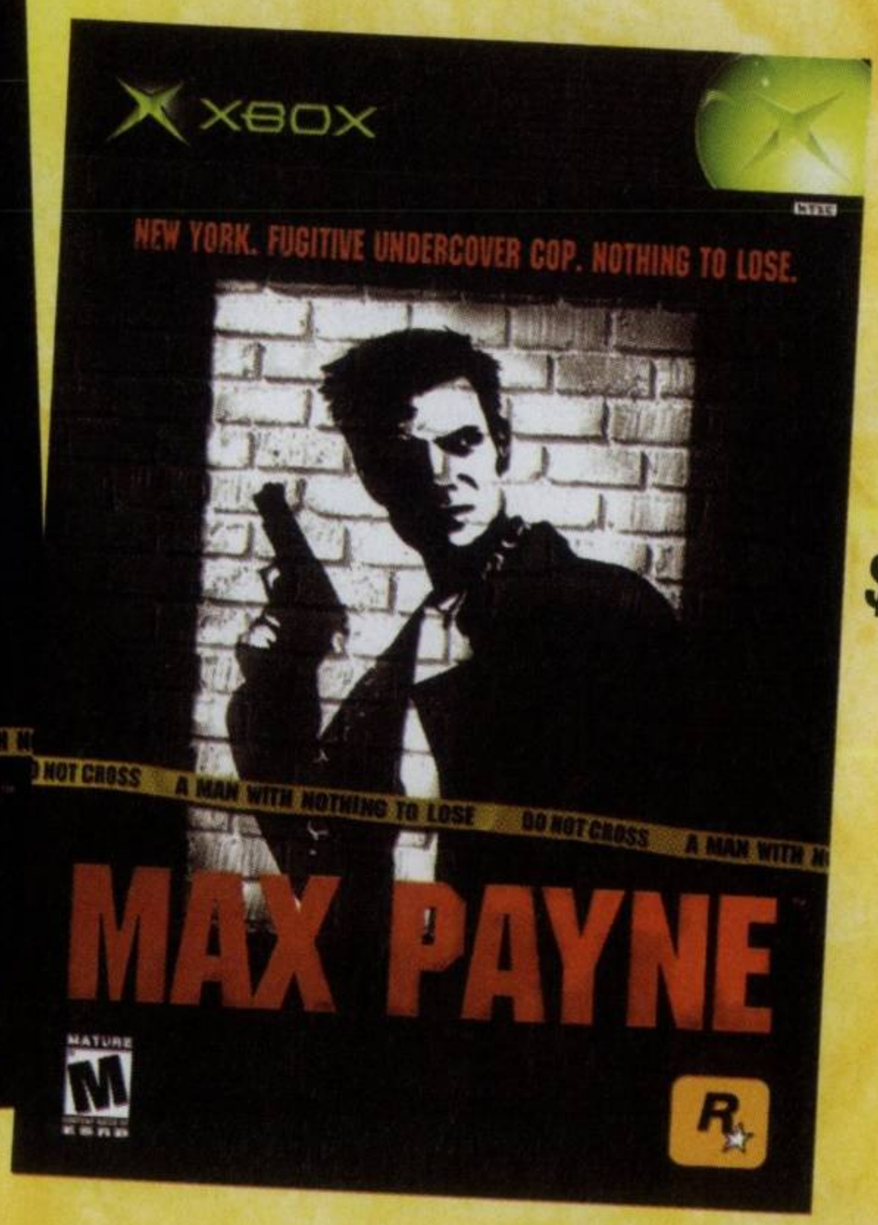

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By Chris Johnston chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com
& Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

Press Start

The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

Evil Invades Theaters

Resident Evil: survival horror comes to the big screen

Imagine this setting: The Hive—Umbrella Corporation's hi-tech research facility. Inside, an unseen figure carefully places a series of delicate glass vials into a secure carrying case. Leaving the containment room, the mysterious shape flings one of the stolen vials to the ground. Upon impact, its contents spill across the floor. That's where *Resident Evil* begins....

What? Don't remember that scene from any of the games? That's because this ain't no game, baby. It's the opening scene of *Resident Evil* (the movie), which opens in U.S. theaters on March 15.

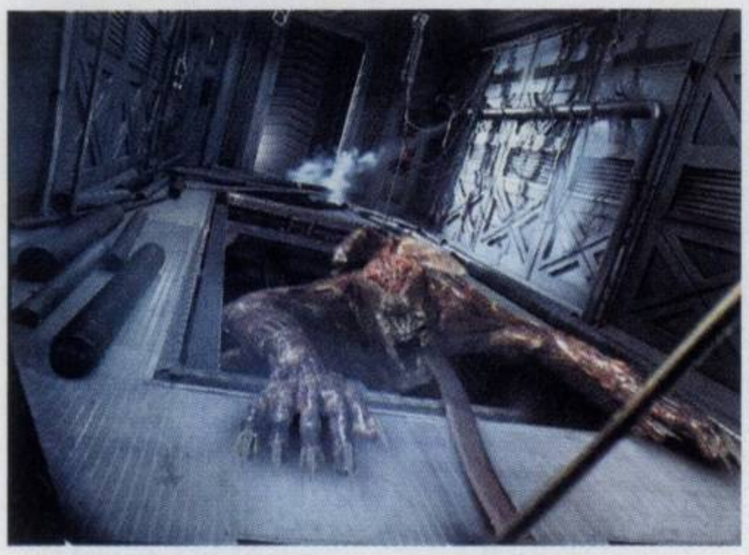
Getting to opening day was no easy task. After numerous script problems and false starts, Germany-based Constantin Films settled on director Paul Anderson to helm the project. It was slightly familiar territory for Anderson, who directed the first respectable movie based on a game, *Mortal Kombat*. "*Resident Evil* was the first video game since *MK* that I thought would make an exciting and thrilling movie," he told us.

Excitement and thrills come at the price of an R rating. But it's not all blood 'n' guts. Visual Effects Director Richard Yuricich describes one of the flick's beheadings: "Because *Resident Evil* isn't an old-fashioned gore movie, there's no blood involved because the laser would cauterize the wounds as it sliced through One's (Colin Salmon) body. But when the laser triangulates his head, a piece of it slowly slides off and his eyeball rolls out." Cool.

Enough with the gore—is this going to be a movie for the fans, or another *Final Fantasy*? Anderson is on the gamers' side. "I'm a huge fan of the *Resident Evil* games and have played all of them. I wanted [to make] a movie version that is respectful of it, builds on its premise, and delivers on its promise. I felt this idea was the correct approach for both people who had never heard of the game and for the avid players who will get all the references included just for them." Mansion in the woods? Check. Umbrella Corporation? Oh yeah. And how about monsters? "A host of creatures from the game are also featured in the movie: the Undead *[ed. note: That's what*

What is your favorite movie based on a video game?

Source: gamers.com poll 1/30/02



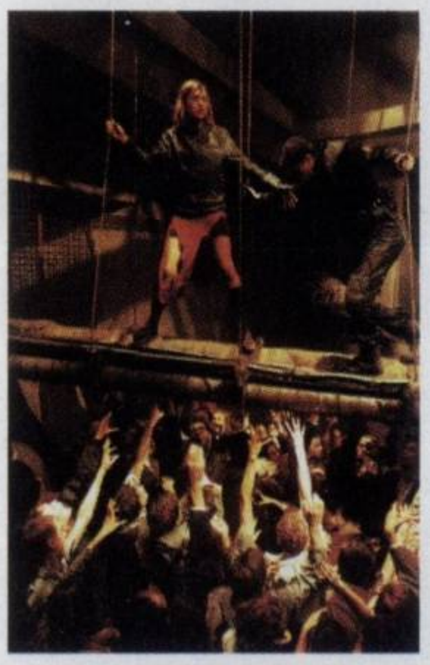
Zombies are dandy, but Lickers are quicker. A CG version of the most infamous of *Resident Evil* monsters plays a major role in the movie.

they're called in the movie—zombies to you and me], the Licker, the crows and every game player's favorite, the zombie dogs."

Unfortunately, you won't find any Chris Redfield, Jill Valentine or other recognizable characters (besides the aforementioned monsters) from the games in the film. Wipe away those tears, though—there's a reason. Anderson explains, "To be scary you have to be unpredictable, and that's why I wanted to use a set of fresh characters. We couldn't use Jill for example, as fans would know she wasn't going to be killed because she pops up in the later games. The suspense dynamic of who is going to live, who is going to die, and what people's allegiances are was only going to work with new characters."

As more of a prequel to the first game, the movie quietly answers many of the noggin' scratchers that have perplexed gamers for years. Like what led the Undead to the mansion? And how did the deadly T-virus escape into the underground laboratory?

At the center of all this is Milla Jovovich (*The Fifth Element*, *The Messenger*) as Alice, who wakes up in a secluded mansion (you-know-where) with a case of amnesia. As she tries to get her head straight, she finds herself in the Hive with a group of commandos trying to isolate the T-virus. Things go from bad to worse as scientists turn into zombies and the remaining survivors try to get out alive. And that's if the Red Queen (a super-computer that controls the Hive) hasn't killed everyone first.



"Resident Evil was the first video game since Mortal Kombat that I thought would make an exciting and thrilling movie."

—Paul Anderson, director, Resident Evil

Jovovich actively pursued the role after being sucked into the games. "I would play the game for five hours every day with my brother and I thought it was so terrific that I wanted to produce a movie version through my own production company. I soon found out the film rights had already been snapped up and that Paul Anderson was directing. So I met with Paul and said, 'Look, I love the game and you won't find anyone better.' Luckily I convinced him to let me read for the Alice part and I worked hard to make sure he wouldn't even consider anyone else. And he didn't! I wanted to make the movie even more when I first read the script. I remember screaming, 'Yes, they got it right!' Paul has captured the spirit of the game in a highly intelligent and unique way and I know the game fans are just going to love it." We hope she's right. A sequel—appropriately called *Resident Evil: Nemesis*—is already in the works.

—Axel Strohm

Lesson one: When you lose some fingers, don't freak out about it. That's not going to make the doctors reattach them any faster.

Left to right: Alice (Jovovich), Matt (Eric Mabius), Spence (James Pruefoy) and Rain (Michelle Rodriguez) survey the area for Undead.

Well, well...if it isn't the Red Queen herself. The supercomputer-gone-mad shows her face through the holographic image of a little girl. Spooky.

TEEN
T
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VIOLENCE

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PRESS START

PLAY TO WIN

Have your parents (or significant other) ever told you to stop playing those damn video games because they'll never get you anywhere? Behold, Cyplex—a new video-game-competition TV show where it pays to be a pro. (Think *Monday Night Football* gone video games.) The first run, to air later this year, will pit 16 competitors against each other, profiling them and highlighting their gaming prowess. If you think you're a potential contestant, go to www.cyplex.tv and give them your contact info.

METROID PRIMETIME

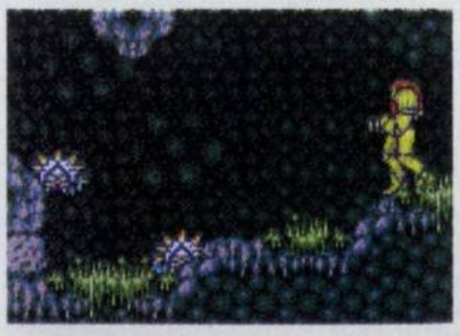
You're sick and tired of waiting. We're sick and tired of waiting. Ever since Nintendo announced a GameCube sequel for their beloved *Metroid* series last summer, we haven't seen or heard jack about the game—a handful of screens, a five-second movie or two, and that's it. It's so bad we just about threw a party when the few new screens on this page were quietly released. So like a starving man in the desert who comes upon a cracker, we're going to savor every morsel and then lick our fingers clean here in *Metroid* Primetime. We kick it off by going over everything we know so far, and then checking in on rumors and speculation.

PIXEL-BY-PIXEL ANALYSIS

Your view is from inside Samus' helmet, complete with heads-up display and visor-shaped screen

DEVELOPER: Austin-based Retro Studios (retrostudios.com) are handling all the primary work on *Prime*, though Shigeru Miyamoto (of *Mario* and *Zelda* fame...but you knew that) and other game gurus at Nintendo's Japanese HQ take part in bi-weekly meetings to shape and tweak the game.

RELEASE: Sometime 2002—that's as specific as Nintendo will get. Unofficially, Miyamoto has said the game is almost finished and will be ready this summer, with mostly sound and gameplay issues remaining. Our guess? The only appearance *Metroid* will make this summer is at Nintendo's booth at the E3 game show in May. Our money is on a fall release (Sept.-Nov.).

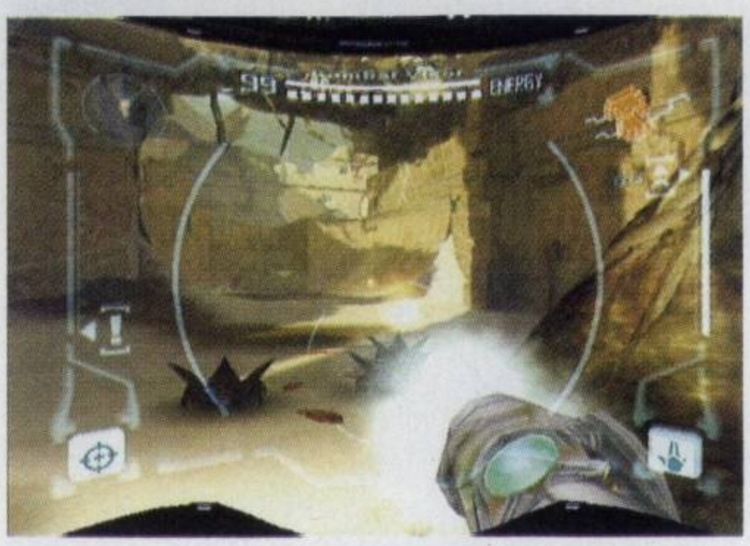


THE GAME: Although mainly a first-person shooter (our ears are still ringing from all the fans screaming in anger when that was announced) where you see through the eyes of bounty hunter heroine Samus Aran, a couple screens (below) show exterior views. We're assuming this happens automatically under certain circumstances (kinda like in *Halo*, when you jump into a vehicle) to give you better control over the action. Two examples from the older games that would benefit from this alternate view are while using the Morphing Ball to, well, morph into a ball and quickly roll around (below, picking up energy balls), and the Grapple Beam (no word if it's in *Prime*) which let you swing over gaps in *Super Metroid*.

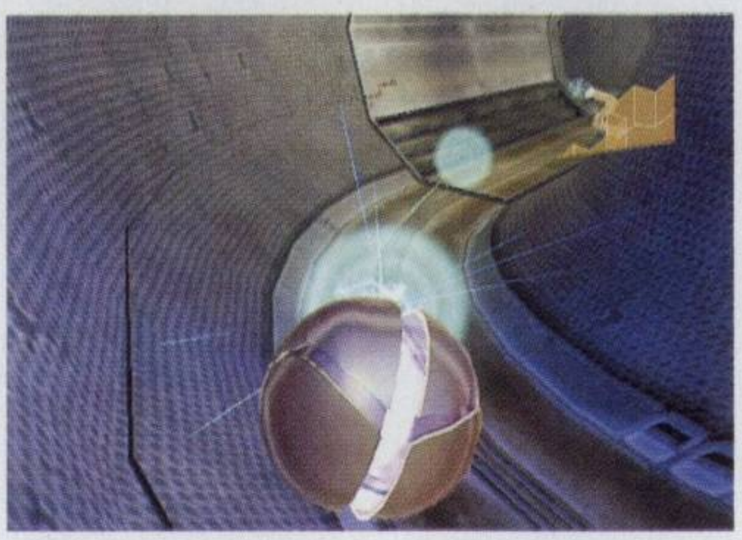
THE RUMORS: • The game will once again begin in a space station that soon explodes. • An updated version of the X-ray Scope will allow Samus to see through walls for secrets. • *Metroid Prime* will be compatible with the upcoming Game Boy Advance game, *Metroid IV*, and will give Samus the powers she has in the handheld game (like the ability to walk on walls and ceilings). Only time will tell...

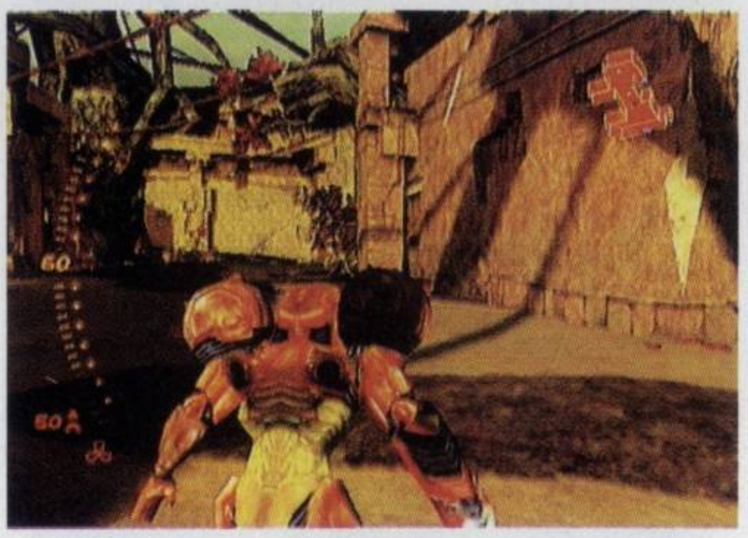
Damn, that was one tasty cracker! What was that, a Ritz? Mmm! That's it for this issue; check back in the months to come, and send your thoughts, rumors or playable versions (hey, we can dream can't we?) to egm@ziffdavis.com, subject: Metroid Primetime.

—Mark MacDonald



Could these spiky nasties burrowing up from the dirt be updated zoomers (top)?





***Prime* might primarily be a first-person shooter, but as these two screens demonstrate, the game switches to a third-person perspective when the action calls for it.**

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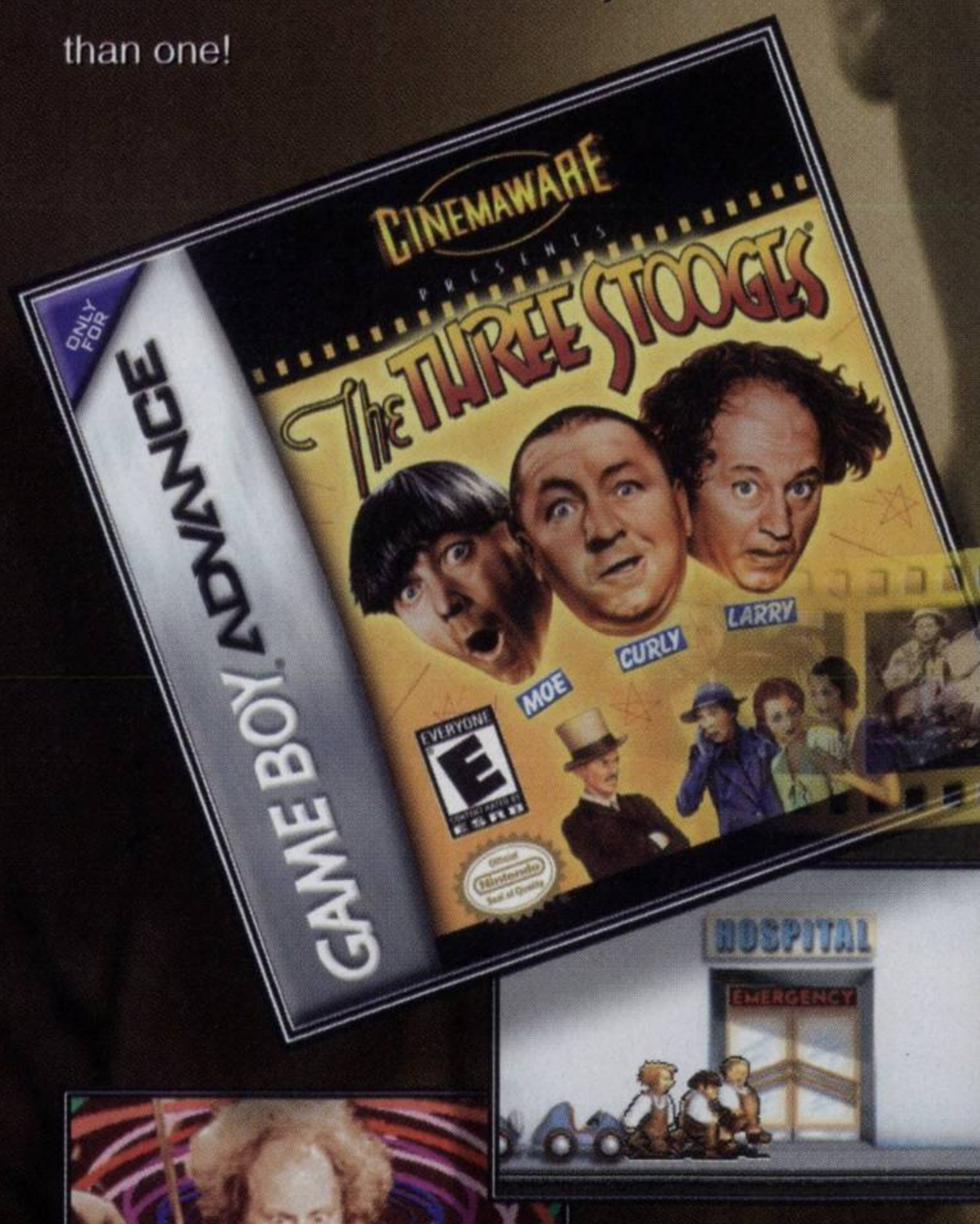

- *Funny and frantic action, including pie throwing, prizefighting, and hospital hi-jinx!*
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Screen shots taken from PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system game play.

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PRESS START

"I am satisfied with how the product came together seamlessly, combining high-quality graphics, a dramatic storyline and an excellent battle system."

—Yoshinori Kitase, producer, Final Fantasy X*–Square Co., Ltd.*

fterthoughts: Final Fantasy X

You've made your way through *Final Fantasy X* and saved the world (again). Now check out what producer Yoshinori Kitase has to say about its development, post-release, in this month's Afterthoughts.

EGM: Is there a lot of pressure to come up with innovations for each new *Final Fantasy* to avoid stagnation?

Yoshinori Kitase: No, I don't think the pressure's there. Actually, I enjoy it. Think of it this way: If we got rid of "new innovations for each installment," the challenge and excitement of making games will disappear.

EGM: What was the goal behind *Final Fantasy X*'s battle system?

YK: I wanted the battle system to incorporate the character's job functions, instead of just hitting for more damage. I also wanted to give the players freedom to customize their characters, which lead to the development of the Sphere Grid.

EGM: What advice would you give players who aren't sure which direction to go on the Sphere Grid?

YK: I recommend upgrading the attributes associated with each character. For Tidus and Auron, I recommend upgrading their Strength, and for Lulu and Yuna, Magic. Upgrading your HP will come in handy, too.

EGM: Many of the later bosses are really tricky. Did you set out to create encounters that would require the player to use the new battle system?

YK: Precisely. I wanted each character to have his or her own unique roles. The conversations during battle will help you figure out which characters are suitable for what boss.

EGM: Did the PS2 hardware allow you to do everything you wanted?

YK: Since it was our first time working on the hardware, there were some difficulties during the initial designing phase of the game.

EGM: Why did you make Blitzball so difficult? Poor Wakka has had enough hardship in his life!

YK: Once you get the hang of it, it'll become easier. I wanted to incorporate the old-school gaming style, where it starts off difficult, but gets easier as you gain more and more experience.

EGM: Do you have any tips for creating a successful Blitzball team?

YK: You don't have to stick with the original team members, so try recruiting players with good attributes early on. I recommend recruiting a good goalie, like Jumal in Luca.

EGM: What's the meaning of the final image? The one with Tidus swimming after the credits?

YK: I would like to leave that up to the player's imagination. There's a hint in the actual game dialogue, and Tidus' expression tells it all.

DESIGN-IT-YOURSELF

Think you've got what it takes to be the next Hideo Kojima, Shigeru Miyamoto or Yoshinori Kitase? Then a good starting place might be checking out Macmillan Software's updated book/software package, *Game Programming Starter Kit 5.0* (available now at fine book and software stores everywhere). You bring the game idea, and the included set of PC tools will give you what you need to learn an intimidating programming language like Visual C++.

Final Fantasy X International: The Version You Haven't Played Yet

Japanese gamers returned for a second helping of Square's smash hit on Jan. 31. The accurately titled *Final Fantasy X International* features the English voice-overs from the U.S. game and some jealousy-inducing new features exclusive to this version. Unfortunately, Square has no plans to release *International* in the U.S., so the only way to get it is to buy the import. Here's a look at what we're missing.

Revamped Sphere Grid

In the normal game, character customization is an arduous process. You must spend serious time and waste valuable Key Spheres to take characters far from their pre-set paths. In the new build, all the characters start out close to the center of the Grid, so it's a snap to turn Lulu into a violent fighting machine or Wakka into a gentle healer.

New Bosses

As if the game didn't already feature enough optional bosses, Square adds a few more to challenge buffed-up characters. One entirely new boss, Dea Richter, fights your party atop the airship near the game's end. He tosses unique special attacks like Catastrophe and Providence at your party under a urine-yellow sky. The other added foes are really just revamped versions of Yuna's Aeons. Return to Remiem Temple after attaining all eight to fight stronger, bizarre-looking versions of your favorite summons.

New Mini-Scenario

Warning: Spoilers Ahead!

A second disc of interviews and previews also houses "Eternal Peacetime," a new epilogue scene that takes place two years after the normal conclusion of *FFX*. It's not a playable scene, but rather a lengthy cinema. It contains some totally shocking stuff. Yuna's fame has made her a powerful, respected figure in Spira, and many suitors attempt to woo her into marriage. A slightly chubbier Wakka appears to be the father of Lulu's unborn child. Rikku shows up with a surprising gift from Kimahri: a sphere recorded by Tidus...from beyond the grave! The team reassembles and embarks on a new, very personal adventure to find out the truth behind this sphere.

This epilogue strongly hints at a possible sequel to *Final Fantasy X*. It would be a truly unprecedented move for Square to make a direct continuation, but one that would please millions of fans.

A chubby-in-the-off-season Wakka catches up with Yuna near Besaid. Spira may be at peace, but her heart still aches for Tidus.

Shockingly, Rikku arrives with unbelievable news: a grainy, mysterious video sphere of Tidus. Where is he? Who has imprisoned him?

Yuna decides to go after him. Wakka protests her decision, but Rikku talks some sense into the big lug. A new adventure awaits...we hope.

Stuff In The U.S. Version That You May Have Missed:

Affection

Unbeknownst to most players, *FFX* keeps a secret "affection rating" that reflects how much each party member likes Tidus. Certain scenes change depending on who's feeling buddy-buddy with old wacky-pants. For example, after leaving Macalania, Tidus can ride a snowmobile with Lulu, Rikku, Auron or Kimahri. Also, this rating determines which character throws the ball during the Blitz Ace Overdrive. How do you affect the affection? Make a certain person like you by always speaking to them first, protecting them with the Guard ability and healing them with Tidus. Likewise, you decrease it by never talking to them, keeping their HP really low and by killing them intentionally.

Breaking limits

Throughout history, 9999 has been the insurmountable maximum for HP and damage in Final Fantasy. Well, the times are a-changin', thanks to the Break HP Limit and Break Damage abilities. To bust out extreme damage, equip a character with his or her Ultimate Weapon after finding its Crest and Sigil. Insane HP totals require you to outfit armor with 30 Wings of Heaven. Your best bet for these is to win them in the Chocobo race near Remiem temple. You can also bribe them out of Malboros in the Calm Lands. 99999 HP, here you come!

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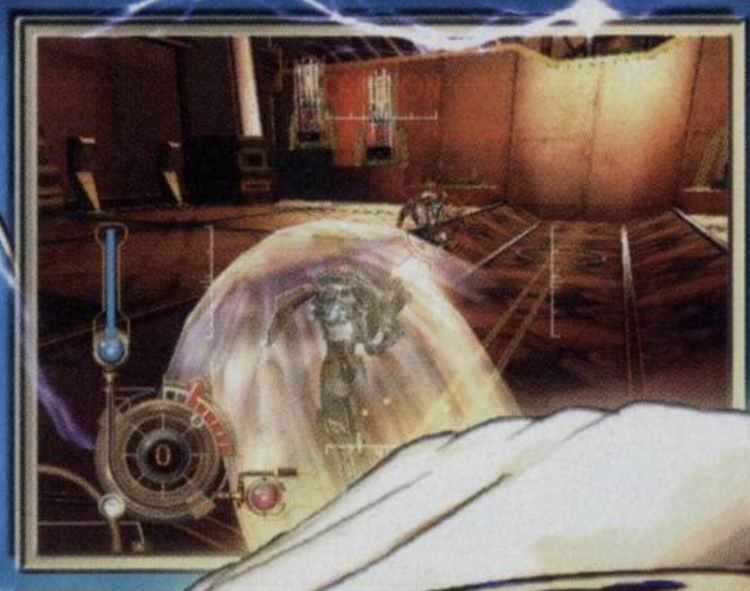

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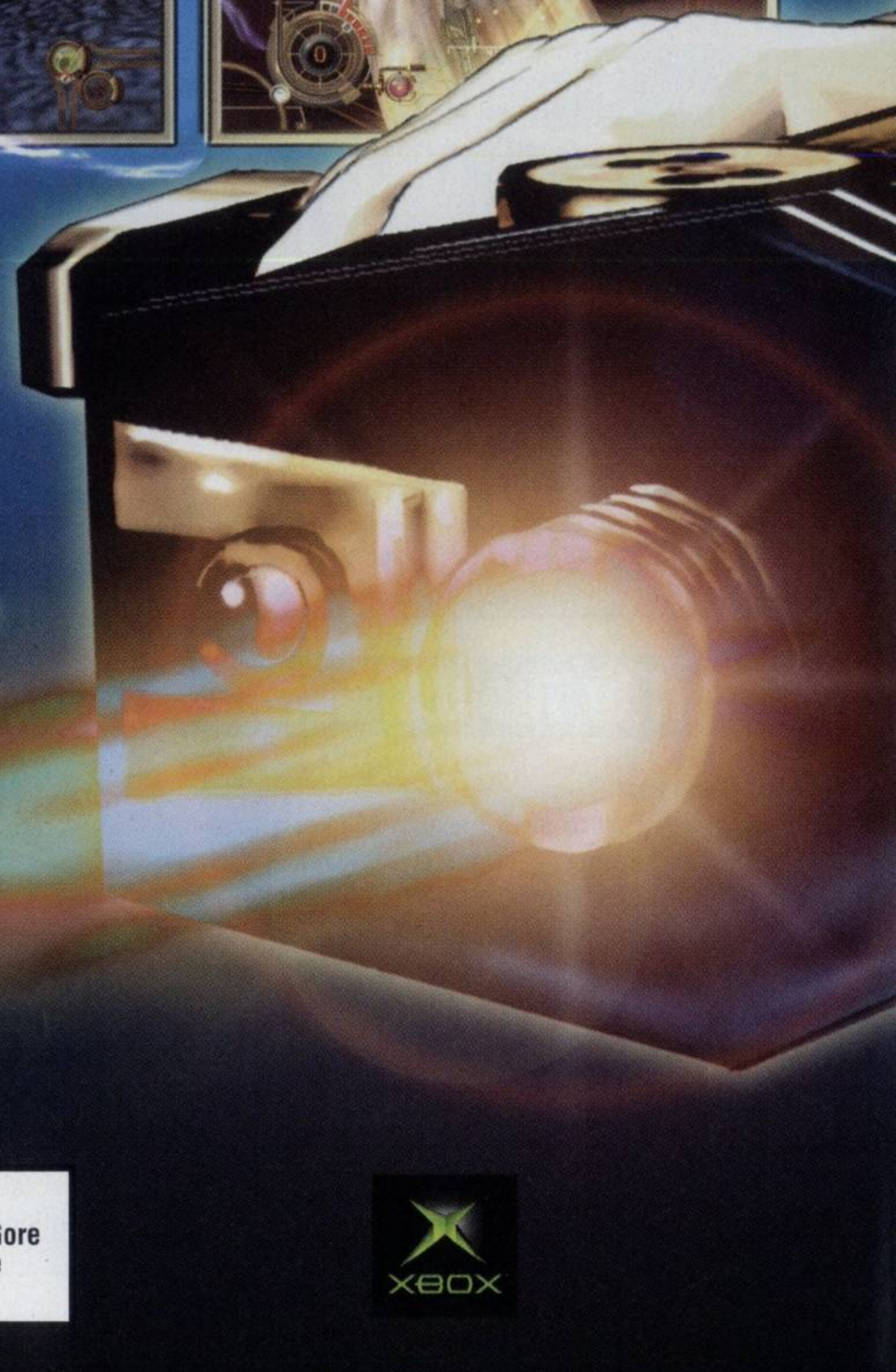

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Violence

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COOL BY DESIGN

Project lead Petri's favorite stage in the game for cool cinematic shoot-outs: "Pretty much any level toward the end of the game. At that point we don't have to hold anything back and can throw everything at the player."

Coolest scenario for Bullet Time: "When the enemies are equipped with the Colt Commandos and Jackhammers. That way there's always loads of lead in the air and having Max weave his way through the hail of bullets just looks outstanding."

Afterthoughts: Max Payne

Rockstar's *Max Payne* brought comic book noir-style action to gaming, becoming a best-selling PS2 and Xbox title. So we sent a few questions to Petri Jarvilehto, project lead for Remedy Entertainment, *MP*'s developers, to get his post-release thoughts:

EGM: Did you ever think that the game was a little too melodramatic?
Petri Jarvilehto: Hell no! I think the drama is one of the key points in the game. Even if it comes through as too melodramatic to some players, I'd still err on the side of drama rather than giving a sterile game. We wanted to evoke emotions in the players, and I think we managed to do that even if we went a little over the top every now and then. That, and it was also a simple question of the style we wanted to use.

EGM: What were some cool things you guys had in earlier versions that you dropped because of time or they just didn't work out?
PJ: Some of the weapons were changed to get better gameplay. For example, in the early days we had Max using a Tazer to stun the enemies, but as the story developed we came up with the baseball-bat scene where Max gets badly beaten. After that we decided that Max needs to use the baseball bat to get even, and we took the Tazer out since the baseball bat was much more fun to play with.

EGM: Was it a constraint having to stick to real-world weapons, locales and enemies?
PJ: It was certainly more challenging than working with a sci-fi or fantasy setting. Trying to sustain the suspension of disbelief becomes much more demanding when working with realistic environments and creating challenging gameplay. Then again, I think the realistic environments really add to the overall experience.

EGM: How long did it take to perfect the Bullet Time gameplay to your liking?
PJ: About two years. We tried many, many different variations on the Bullet Time to find the right gameplay balance. Basically, we knew that we wanted to have Bullet Time as a central gameplay element, but finding the best way for the player to use it and a good resource balance for it took a lot of time.

To give you an example, we spent a lot of

"Hi, would you like to subscribe to...aaaaiiiiii!"

time trying to tie the Bullet Time into locations. That was working so that some of the combat scenes would trigger it automatically—which is pretty much how it works in the movies—and although it was pretty cool at the time, it just didn't feel right. Having the Bullet Time as a player-controlled resource feels so much better.

EGM: What inspired the level with the crazy walk through one's insane psyche?
PJ: Adding the dream sequences was a lot of fun. We wanted to get inside Max's head and show the player how much the things that he's had to face have affected him. In hindsight, I think we should've added more gameplay into them, but the overall effect turned out to be pretty spooky and memorable.

EGM: What cool little secrets or Easter Eggs can we look for in the game?
PJ: There are loads and loads of different secrets in the game, hidden movie references and so on. Sometimes they're in plain view, sometimes you need to explore a little to find them. Let's just say that Dopefish makes an appearance too. Players who spend time exploring the game and listening to the conversations will find a wealth of secrets.

EGM: Who'd win in a fight? Duke Nukem or Max Payne? (*Duke* creators 3D Realms assisted with the development of *MP*.)
PJ: Both characters certainly have plenty of better things to do and other things to worry about. Maybe it would be a drinking contest. The more drunk he would get, the more Duke would focus on the strippers, whereas Max would start to talk only in melodramatic metaphors, grimly reflecting upon his dark fate. Who would win? No idea, but the contest would certainly last for a long time.

TIDBITS

New Pokémon Details

While U.S. Pokéfreaks await a release of the fourth *Pokémon* movie (that focuses on Celebi), Japanese gamers are preparing for the fifth film, *Pocket Monsters: Water City God: Latias and Latios*. It's set to open in Japanese theaters this July.

Who the hell are Latias and Latios? They're two monsters from the new as-of-yet-untitled GBA game scheduled for release in Japan at the end of 2002. (Because of that late release we can only assume then that the U.S. version of this "Pokémon Future" title won't hit until 2003.) The other character unveiled at the movie announcement is Sornano. This cute lil' blue dude with the bulbous growth on his head also appears in the flick. Over 100 new monsters will debut in the game, including these three and the four introduced last summer.

Latios (top), Latias (center) and Sornano (left) join Pikachu and his pals in the latest *Pokémon* movie and in the new GBA game.

MIDWAY

4-PLAY AT ITS BEST

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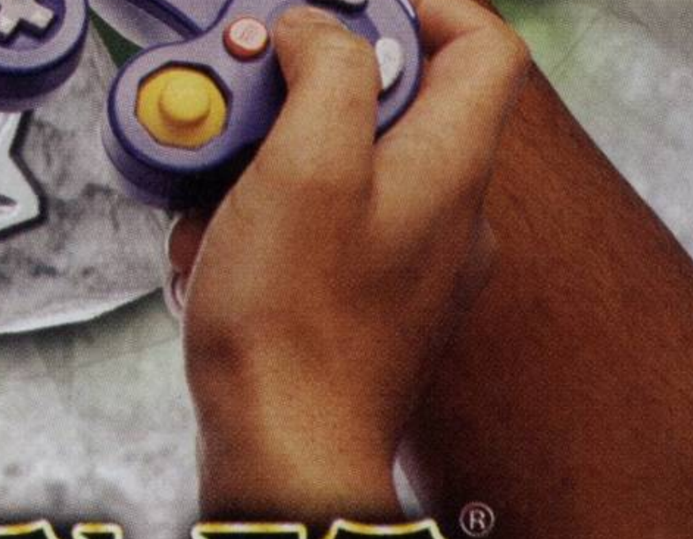

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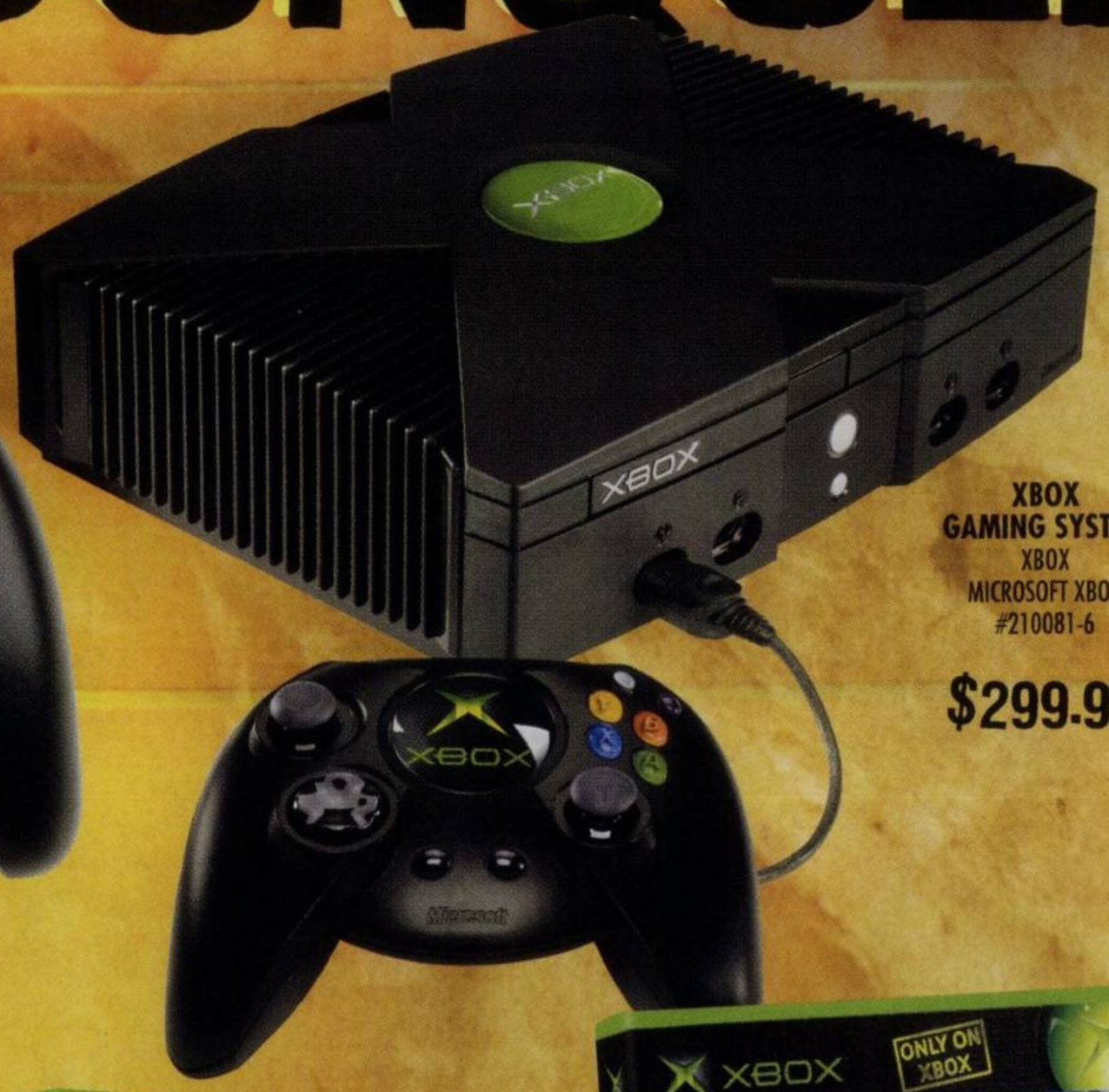

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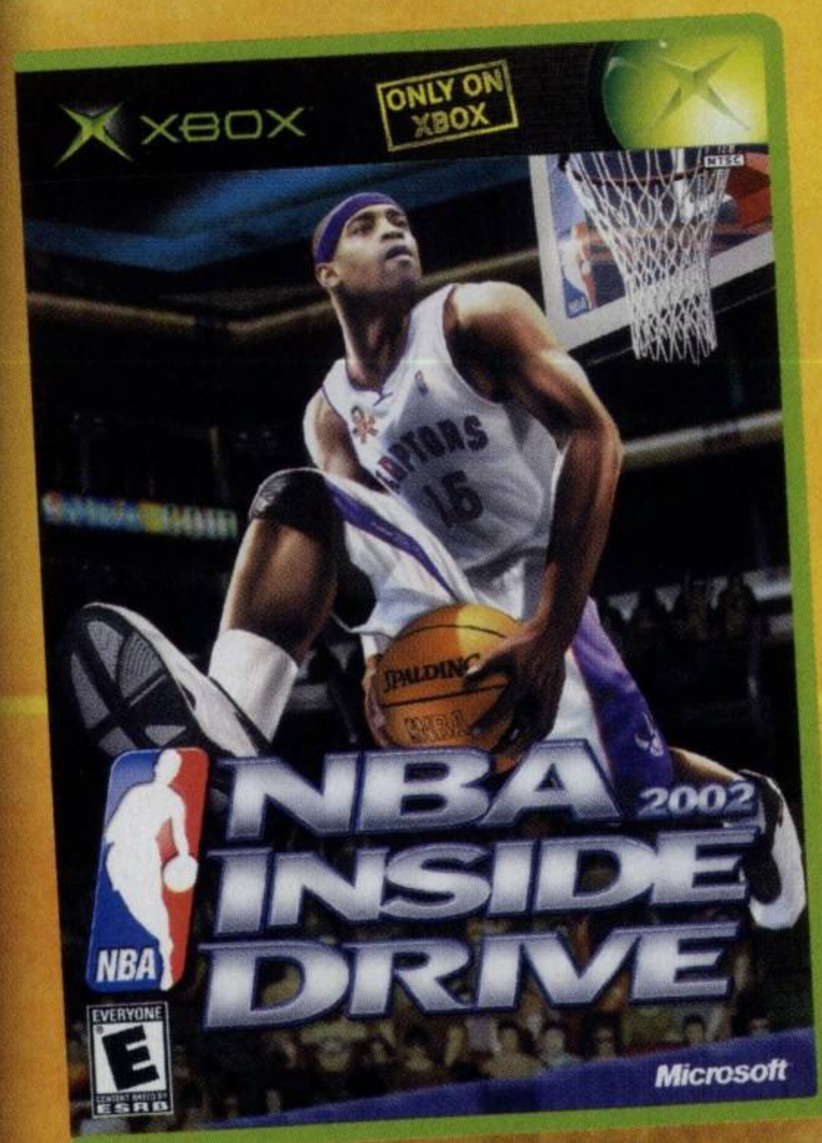

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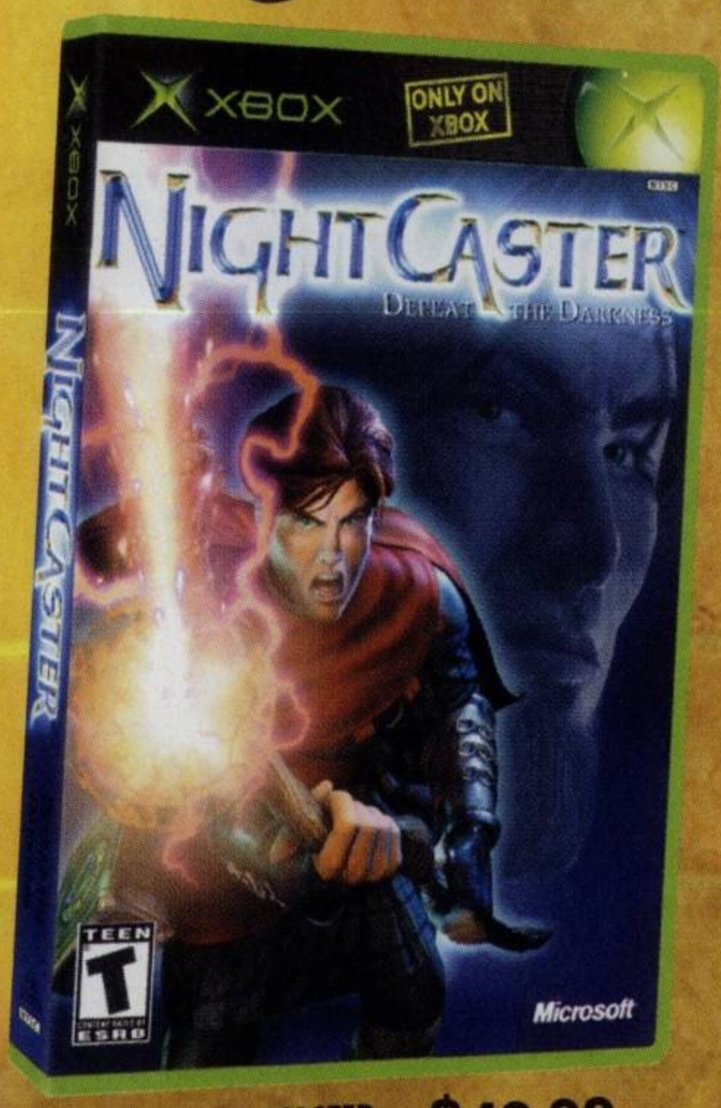

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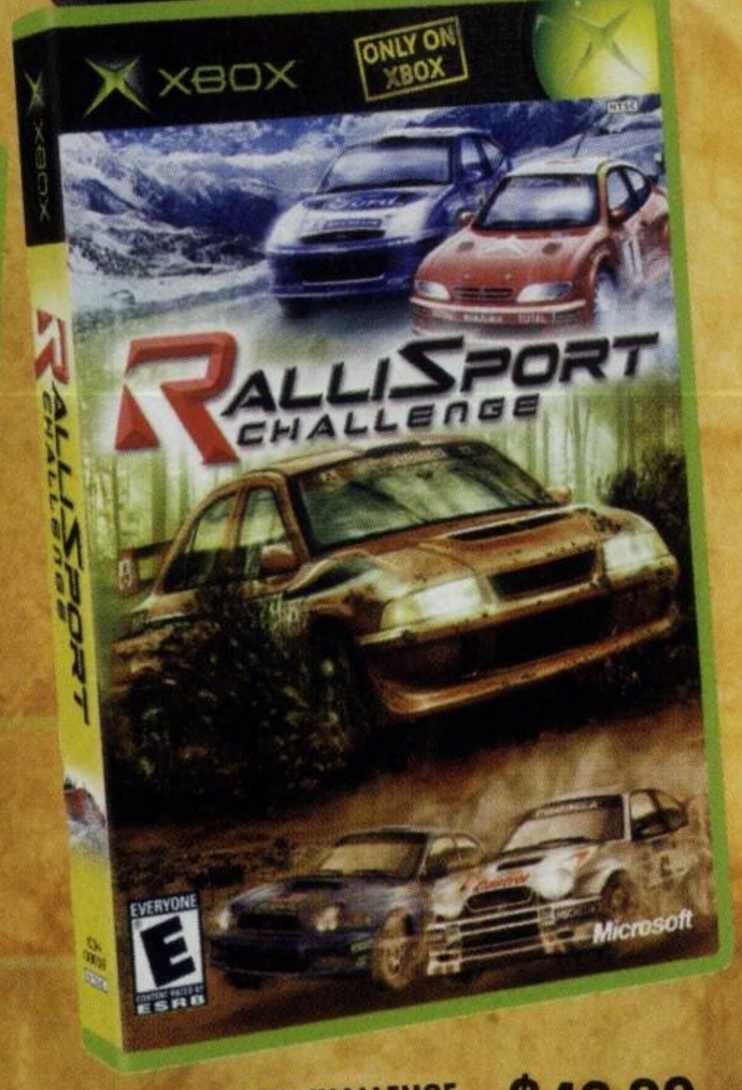

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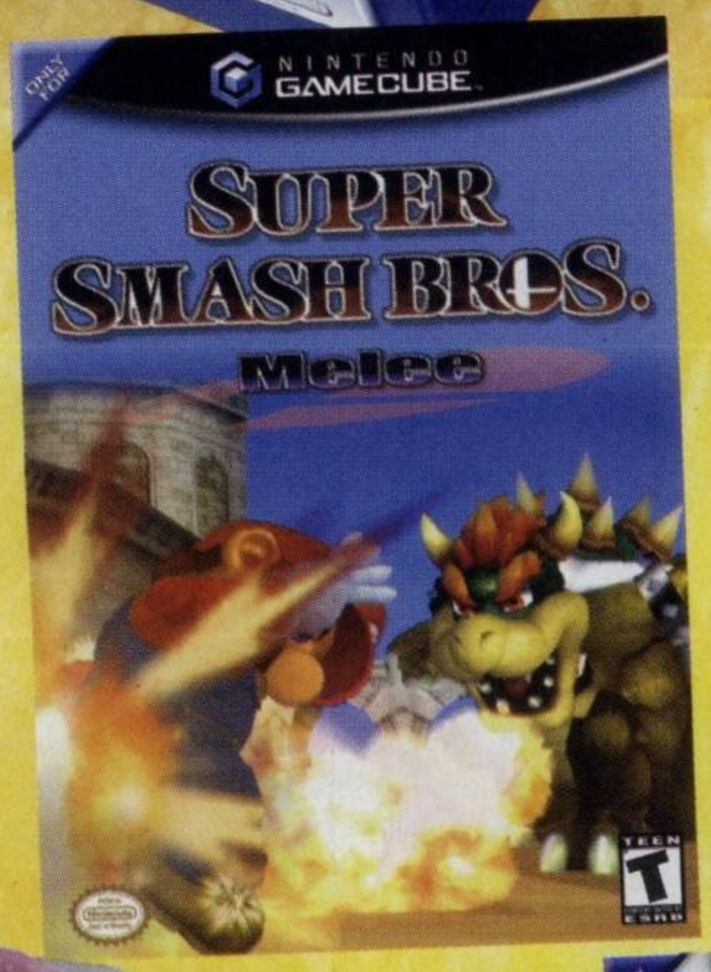

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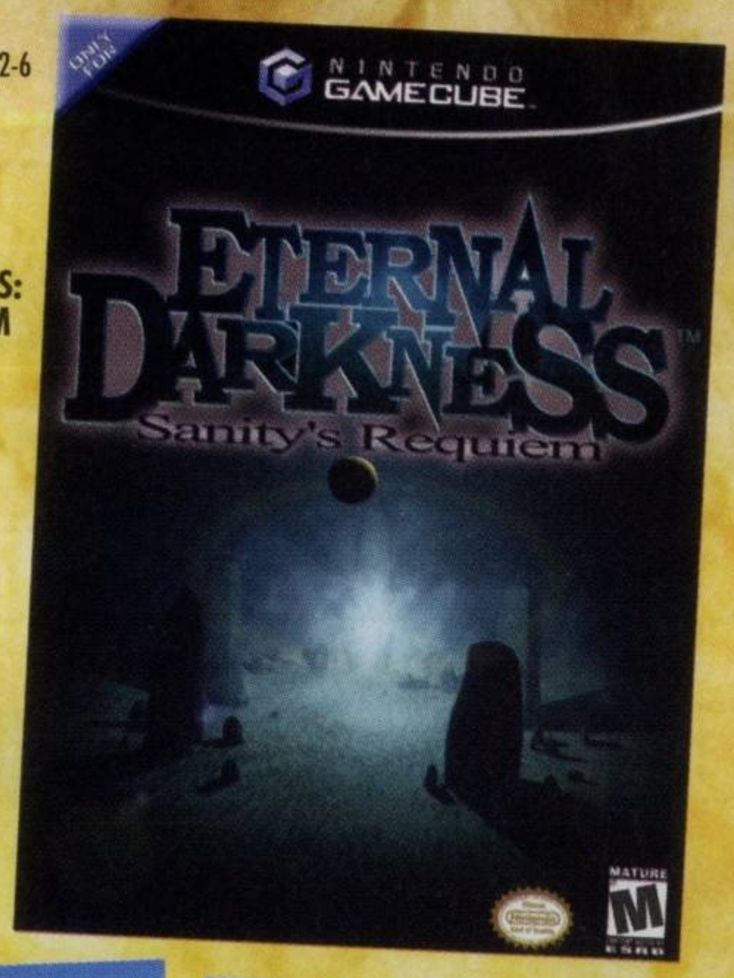

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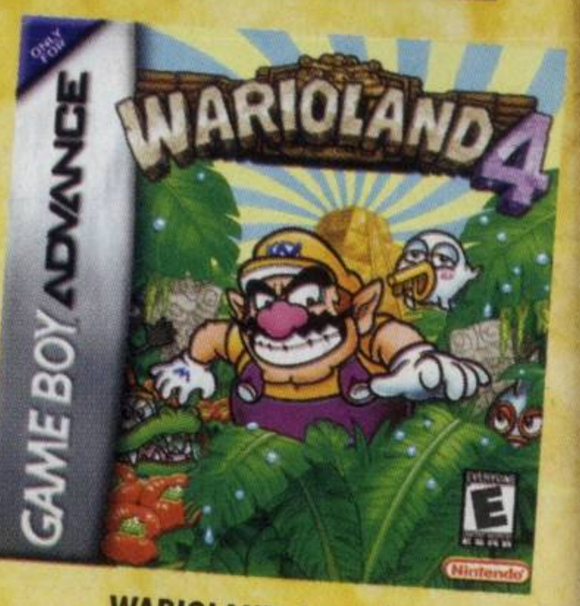

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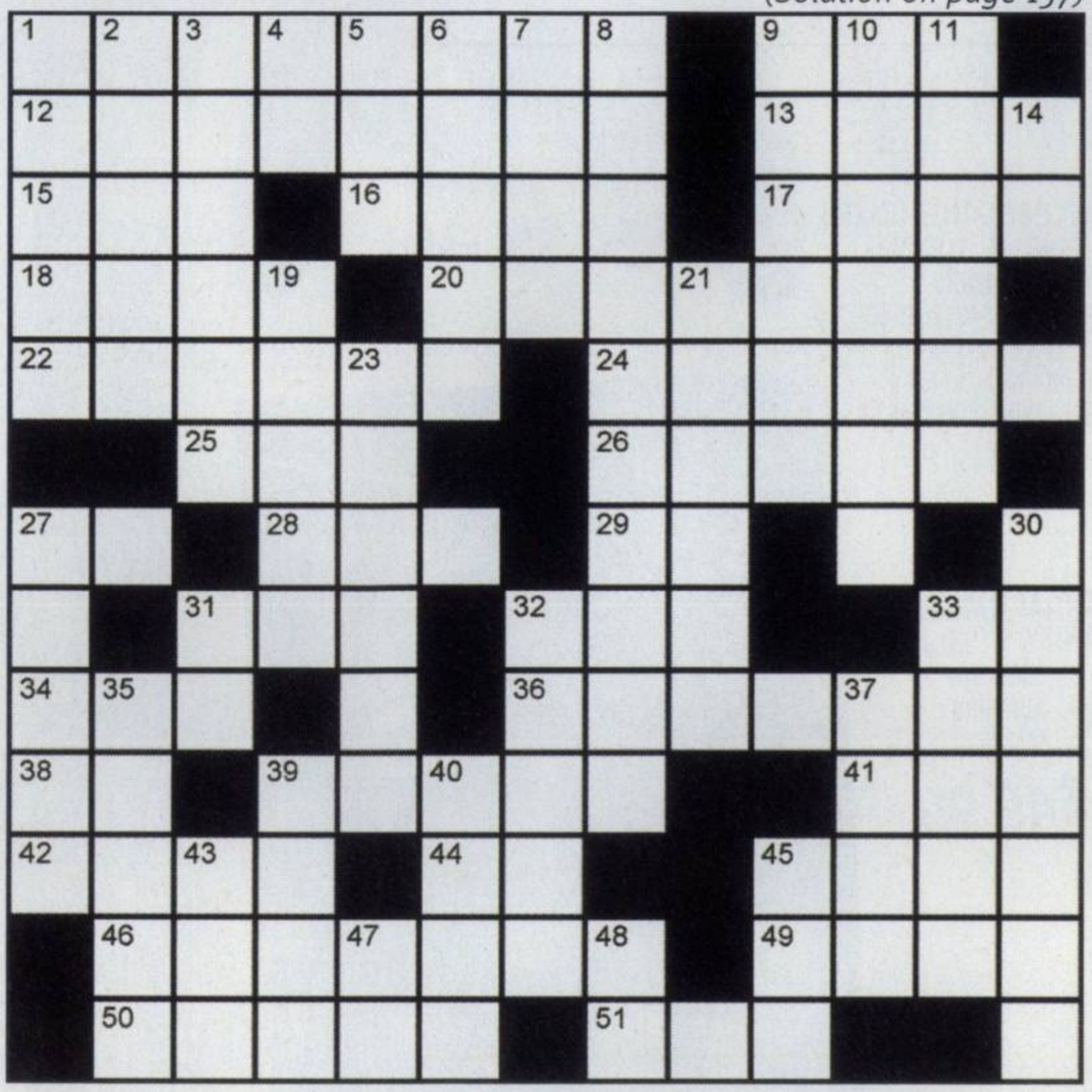
JUST CAN'T STOP DANCIN'

Another installment of Konami's dance/music game *Dance Dance Revolution* is headed to U.S. shores. Called *DDR Konamix*, it will feature over 50 songs, new play modes and the ever-popular Workout mode. Mark your calendars—it'll be released April 23.

Best of 2001

(Solution on page 157)



ACROSS

1. 2001 PS2 Game of the Year contender
9. GameCube fighter, for short: _ _ B _
12. (Ir?)Responsible for PS2 Game of the Year
13. RPG consumable
15. Draw
16. Sabin's _ Bolt in *Final Fantasy III*
17. Cyrax launches them from his chest
18. New feature to *Street Fighter Alpha 3*
20. Up for an award
22. Fanboy
24. Liquid Snake lent him a hand
25. *Mortal Kombat Advance* is neither *Mortal Kombat _ Advanced*
26. Attacks your X-Wing in *Rogue Leader*
27. Astaroth's tool in *Soul Calibur*
28. *Hot Shots Golf* standard
29. Domino or Do
31. Akuma's *Street Fighter* nemesis
32. Pai's *Virtua* father
33. The last *Mega Man* game on the NES
34. Placed on Chocobo races in *FFVII*
36. Really big "gear"
38. *Skate _ Die* (NES)
39. The Xbox-version prefix to 1 across
41. Starred in a boxing title for the 3DO
42. *Legend of _* (NES)
44. When your day starts in *Pikmin*
45. Reptilian 3D platformer
46. "frag," relative to "kill"
49. *River City Ransom* power-up _ Circus
50. Link's Horse in *Ocarina of Time*
51. Pixel, in layman's terms

DOWN

1. UFC spokesfighter Tito _
2. Slang for video-signal degradation
3. Parka-wearing boss of *Mega Man*
4. Boon/Tobias co-developed fighter
5. *Maximo* was made here
6. _ *GP* (PS2)
7. Mat Hoffman-endorsed bike line
8. *Syphon Filter* bad girl's phone-book listing
9. Dropped Moses in *Bible Adventures*?
10. Jerome Bettis in *Madden NFL 2002*
11. _ *Defense* (Atari 2600)
14. Feminine Pac-Man's prefix
19. *Steep _ Sliders* (Saturn)
21. This Kid really hates Eggplant
23. Dreamcast's swirl color
27. Pokémon #24
30. Valley of the game developers
31. Dreamcast racer *Sega _*
32. She came between *Parappa 1* & *2*
33. Namco's *Dragon _* (PS1)
35. Overwrite a saved game
37. Junkie-busting anti-drug shooter
39. _*-cide* (Turbo CD)
40. Half of the *Ice Climber* duo
43. $60 for N64 *Superman*?
45. *Felix the _* (Game Boy)
47. *Virtual _* (Saturn)
48. Doctor Mario's formal title

Ever Wondered?

Gaming has many mysteries. Some, like "why do the football players in Atari's first football game look like aliens?" will never be answered. These, however, will:

Don't Look! I'm Justin Bailey!

Q: What is the story behind the Justin Bailey code in *Metroid* (Nintendo Entertainment System)?

A: First, let us explain the code: Inputting "JUSTIN BAILEY" with dashes or zeroes on the second line (and a few other variations) as your password lets you play as Samus without her power suit (at right). Justin Bailey might be someone's name somewhere, but that's not what it's being used for here. In certain circles (pinned as an Australian or Euro-phrase), "bailey" refers to a swimsuit. So the code means that you play with Samus only in her swimsuit, or "Just in bailey." Hubba hubba.

A-Yorda-Says-What?

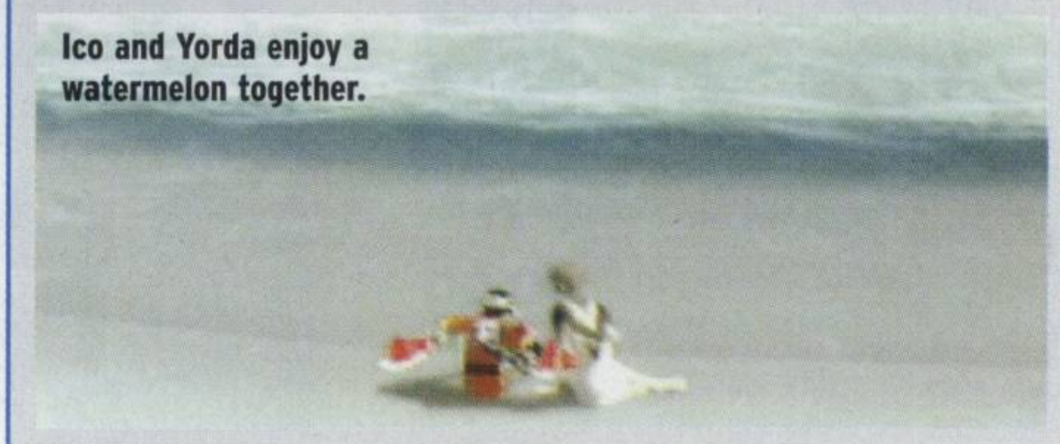
Q: What is Princess Yorda saying in *Ico* (PS2)? Her dialogue's all gobbledeegook!

A: Glad you asked. In the Japanese version, her dialogue is subtitled in a more understandable language the second time through. For some reason, they didn't include this translation in the U.S. version. So here ya go (Spoiler Warning!):

- When you free Yorda from the cage: "Who are you? How did you get in here?"
- Shortly after meeting the Queen for the first time, still at the front entrance: 'We've made her angry..."
- After opening the front doors for the second time: "Just a little bit more..."
- Right before Ico falls from the bridge: "Thank you..."
- When Yorda pushes Ico off in the boat: "Goodbye..."

Her final bit of dialogue is untranslated, even in the Japanese version of the game. But if it's anything like the rest of the dialogue listed above, we're guessing it's some profound, life-changing statement, like "What?"

Other stuff the U.S. missed out on: a noise filter similar to *Silent Hill 2* that gives the graphics a grainy quality, a two-player mode (second player controls Yorda), a different weapon in the Mace side quest, and at the end, a delightful little scene that involves Ico, Yorda and some watermelons (see below).



Ico and Yorda enjoy a watermelon together.

Got a gaming mystery? Send it to us at egm@ziffdavis.com, with "Ever Wondered?" in the subject line.

SPECIAL-EDITION XBOX

If you've got 39,800 yen (about $300), you could get this Special-Edition Xbox released in limited quantities for the Japanese Xbox launch on Feb. 22. It's smoke-black (see-through), comes in a white box, and includes the High-Definition A/V Pack, smoke-black controller, and a keychain that's numbered and embossed with Bill Gates' signature. Darnit, Japanese gamers get all the cool gear even when the system's from the U.S. Importers be warned: Shipping's gonna be expensive on this bad boy.

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Spring is the season The Q loves best. That's because the holidays are done with and everyone begins focusing on their projects for mid-year and beyond. And that, my friends, is when the rumors start flyin'. So let's kick off this fantastic voyage, shall we?

...We've all been calling it ***Mario Sunshine*** for months, but it's definitely **not going to be the final title** of Miyamoto's next ***Mario*** for GameCube. Not in the U.S., at least.... Speaking of mascots, we haven't heard much from Sega's rappin' duo **ToeJam & Earl** lately. The third game in this funkified alien adventure is still on the way, only this time it's for **Xbox**. Do I hear online play? Yes, yes I do....

...It's time to enter The Twilight Zone for this next rumor, kiddies. **Capcom**'s next team-up in their popular Vs. series? ***Capcom Vs. Dragon Ball***. Far-fetched, yes. That's in addition to ***Marvel Vs. Capcom 3***, which is already in development. All I'm gonna say is, what kind of bizarro world are we living in when the World Warriors and Super Saiyans can battle each other in mortal combat? And don't most of the DBZ dudes have the same darn attacks anyway? It'd be a fireball fest, that's for sure....

...The future of ***The Matrix*** game is in jeopardy with all the chaos going on internally at **Interplay**. It may be a while before we all get to jack in.... Here's an interesting lil' anecdote. **Namco** originally planned to put some of its signature characters in the upcoming PS2 tennis game, ***Smash Court***. But real-life court superstars got all miffed that they'd have to share the spotlight with these polygonal newbies. So to keep it the "serious" tennis game that it is, Namco had to remove the likes of **Heihachi and Paul Phoenix**. Man, are those tennis stars a buncha bums or what? And while we're on the topic of sports, how come no one does them with a first-person view? I wanna crack some heads!

...And finally, let's wrap things up with a couple tidbits. **Namco**'s got a port/remix of their arcade-gun game ***Ninja Assault*** on tap for PS2. That'll be the second game to make use of the **GunCon 2** you bought.... **Electronic Arts** is toying with the idea of getting New Corp. (the group that developed *Victorious Boxers* on PS2) to help revitalize its ailing ***Knockout Kings*** franchise...and lastly, a sequel to the lackluster **Sony** CEI RPG ***Legend of Dragoon*** is coming before the end of the year. Did anyone ask for that? No? Good....

On that note, it's time to say toodle-oo. I hope this darn snow has melted by the time we meet again. If ya want, E-mail me at quartermann@ziffdavis.com. Ciao! —*The Q*

Controller Freak: *EGM* Tests Out the Japanese Xbox Control Pad

The U.S. Xbox controller: doubles as an anchor for seaworthy vehicles.

John Ricciardi, International Editor: "This pad is infinitely more comfortable than the U.S. one, and almost every aspect of it is better-designed. Like the U.S. controller, the Black and White buttons are awkwardly positioned, but they're no harder to access on the Japanese pad than they are on the U.S. pad. Unless you've got ape hands, you'll definitely find the Japanese controller to be more comfy and user-friendly. I don't think I can ever go back."

Yutaka Ohbuchi, Japanese Correspondent: "It's smaller than the U.S. controller, making this pad so much easier to hold. The buttons are better spaced, too. I always thought the oval buttons on the U.S. pad felt too stiff. The tops of the analog sticks are also different. The dimple on the top is bigger. And there are four, braille-like dots on their surface. They're small but you can feel them when you touch it. It gives the sticks a better feel. The surface of directional pad (D-pad) is different, too. While the U.S. one is weird-looking, this one's more conventional. Overall, Japanese Xbox controller is an excellent one. It's like an amalgam of existing controllers, but that's not a bad thing. I already like it more than the Dual Shock."

The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of December 2001

It looks like the big winner this past holiday season was Rockstar's ***Grand Theft Auto III***. We're not surprised. Nothing says "Merry Christmas" quite like jacking some poor schmuck's car and driving over every innocent bystander in sight. God bless America! Not surprisingly, **PlayStation 2** games dominated sales in December, making up half of the top 20. And what about the **Xbox**? A lack of killer titles after launch has relegated it to temporary one-hit-wonder status, with the **GameCube** not far behind. Let's hope Nintendo and Microsoft have a little more up their sleeves for the first half of 2002.

1 Grand Theft Auto III
Rockstar

9.0 Crispin	9.0 Greg	10 Milkman	EGM GOLD

2 Final Fantasy X
Square Electronic Arts

NEW!	9.0 Greg	9.5 Milkman	9.5 Shane	EGM GOLD

3 Super Smash Bros. Melee
Nintendo

NEW!	9.5 Chris	9.5 John R	9.5 Shoe	EGM GOLD

4 Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty
Konami

9.5 Che	9.5 Jonathan	9.5 Mark		EGM GOLD

5 Madden NFL 2002
Electronic Arts

9.5 Dan L	9.5 Dean	9.0 Kraig		EGM GOLD

6 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Activision

9.5 Che	9.5 Dean	9.0 Gary M		EGM GOLD

7 Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
Electronic Arts

4.5 Crispin	6.5 Mark	6.0 Shane	

8 Halo
Microsoft

10 Che	10 Jeanne	10 Kraig		EGM PLATINUM

9 James Bond in Agent Under Fire
Electronic Arts

4.0 Jeanne	5.0 Jonathan	5.5 Kraig	

10 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Activision

7.0 Che	7.0 Crispin	7.0 Gary M	

11 Pokémon Crystal — Nintendo — GAME BOY COLOR

12 Max Payne — Rockstar — NEW!

13 WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It — THQ

14 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 — Activision — EGM PLATINUM

15 Gran Turismo 3 A-spec — Sony CEA — EGM PLATINUM

16 Super Mario Advance — Nintendo — EGM SILVER — GAME BOY ADVANCE

17 NBA Live 2002 — Electronic Arts

18 Pikmin — Nintendo — EGM SILVER — NEW!

19 Mario Kart: Super Circuit — Nintendo — EGM SILVER — GAME BOY ADVANCE

20 Driver 2 — Infogrames

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Kristin Barnett-von Korff at (516) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list. Chart description written by *EGM* staff. Congratulations! If you can read this, you do not require corrective eye surgery.

JAPAN TOP 10

1 Gran Turismo Concept 2001 Tokyo — Sony CEI

2 Gundam: Federation Vs. Zeon DX — Bandai

3 Dairantou Smash Bros. DX — Nintendo

4 Momotarou Railway X — Hudson

5 Winning Eleven 5 Final Evolution — Konami

6 Dragon Quest IV — Enix

7 Shin Sangoku Musou 2 — Koei

8 Animal Forest + — Nintendo

9 Pikmin — Nintendo

10 Magical Vacation — Nintendo — GAME BOY ADVANCE

The allure of driving the Pod (the car that shows feelings...no, really!) was so strong that Japanese gamers descended on game shops en masse to pick up *GT Concept 2001 Tokyo*. The rest of the chart this week is taken up by oldies-but-goodies, including *Smash Bros. DX* (*Melee* in the States), the remixed PS version of Enix's RPG *Dragon Quest IV* and Nintendo's *Magical Vacation*.

GT Concept 2001

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 1/13/2002

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Compiled by Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

PRESS START

Coming Soon

March

PlayStation 2	
Britney's Dance Beat—THQ	Music
Eve of Extinction—Eidos	Action
Fatal Frame—Tecmo	Adventure
Herdy Gerdy—Eidos	Adventure
Hidden Invasion—Conspiracy	Adventure
Hot Shots Golf 3—Sony CEA	Sports
King's Field 4—Agetec	RPG
Knockout Kings 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2—Eidos	Adventure
Monsters Inc.—Sony CEA	Action
Pac-Man Fever—Namco	Action
Pocky & Rocky—Crave	Action
Pryzm: The Dark Unicorn—TDK Mediactive	RPG
Shifters—3DO	Adventure
Sled Storm 2—Electronic Arts	Action
Smash Court Tennis—Namco	Sports
Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter—LucasArts	Action
Tetris Worlds—THQ	Puzzle
The Lost—Crave	Adventure
The Weakest Link—Activision	Misc.
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Transworld Surf—Infogrames	Sports
Triple Play 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Virtua Fighter 4—Sega	Fighting
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars—Infogrames	Racing
Worms Blast—Ubi Soft	Misc.
GameCube	
007: Agent Under Fire—Electronic Arts	Action
Bloody Roar: Primal Fury—Activision	Fighting
Donald Duck Goin' Quackers—Ubi Soft	Action
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy—Midway	Action
Home Run King—Sega	Sports
James Bond: Under Fire—Electronic Arts	Action
NBA Street—Electronic Arts	Sports
NFL Blitz 20-02—Midway	Sports
Pac-Man World 2—Namco	Action
Spy Hunter—Midway	Action
Tetris Worlds—THQ	Puzzle
Virtua Striker 2K2—Sega	Sports
Xbox	
007: Agent Under Fire—Electronic Arts	Action
Buffy the Vampire Slayer—Electronic Arts	Action
Circus Maximus—Encore	Racing
Crash Bandicoot: Cortex—Universal	Action
Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind—Bethesda	RPG
ESPN Int'l Winter Sports 2002—Konami	Sports
ESPN Winter Snowboarding 2002—Konami	Sports
Knockout Kings 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2—Eidos	Adventure
Gun Valkyrie—Sega	Action
NBA 2K2—Sega	Sports
NFL Blitz 20-02—Midway	Sports
Pirates: Legend of Black Kat—Electronic Arts	Adv.
Smashing Drive—Namco	Racing
Spy Hunter—Midway	Action
Test Drive—Infogrames	Racing
Tetris Worlds—THQ	Puzzle
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3—Activision	Sports
Triple Play 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Game Boy Advance	
Atari Anniversary—Infogrames	Misc.
Britney's Dance Beat—THQ	Music
Colin McRae Rally—Ubi Soft	Racing
Grand Theft Auto III—Destination	Action
High Heat Baseball 2003—3DO	Sports
Jungle Book—Ubi Soft	Action
Major League Baseball 2003—THQ	Sports
Mike Tyson Boxing—Ubi Soft	Sports
Moto GP—THQ	Racing
NASCAR Heat—Infogrames	Racing
NHL 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Ripping Friends—THQ	Action
Scorpion King—Universal	Action
Smuggler's Run—Rockstar	Action
Space Invaders—Activision	Action
Tom Clancy's Rogue Spear—Ubi Soft	Action
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3—Activision	Sports
Worms Blast—Ubi Soft	Misc.
Zone of the Enders: Fist of Mars—Konami	Strategy

April

PlayStation 2	
Barbarian—Titus	Fighting
MLB 2003—Sony CEA	Sports
No One Lives Forever—Sierra	Action
Slugfest—Midway	Sports
Trophy Bass—Sierra	Sports
Virtua Tennis 2K2—Sega	Sports
GameCube	
Burnout—Acclaim	Racing
Star Fox Adventures—Nintendo	Adventure
NBA 2K2—Sega	Sports
Xbox	
Burnout—Acclaim	Racing
World Series Baseball 2K3—Sega	Sports
Game Boy Advance	
Ice Age—Ubi Soft	Action
Motocross Maniacs Advance—Konami	Racing
Power Pro Tennis—Konami	Sports
Street Fighter Alpha 3—Capcom	Fighting

May

PlayStation 2	
Armada 2—Metro 3D	Action
Chris Edwards Aggressive Inline—Acclaim	Sports
Conflict Zone—Ubi Soft	Strategy
Evil Twin—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Freekstyle—Electronic Arts	Sports
Gravity Games BMX—Midway	Sports
Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius—THQ	Action
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur—Midway	Strategy
Looney Tunes Space Race—Infogrames	Racing
Need for Speed: Pursuit 2—Electronic Arts	Racing
Rally Simulation—Ubi Soft	Racing
Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
RLH: Run Like Hell—Interplay	Action
Simpsons Skateboarding—Electronic Arts	Action
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Test Drive—Infogrames	Racing
UFC Throwdown—Crave	Fighting
GameCube	
Eternal Darkness—Nintendo	Adventure
Gravity Games BMX—Midway	Sports
Legends Of Wrestling—Acclaim	Sports
Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Zoo Cube—Acclaim	Misc.
Xbox	
Gravity Games BMX—Midway	Sports
Hitman 2—Eidos	Action
Legends Of Wrestling—Acclaim	Sports
Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
Sega GT 2002—Sega of America	Racing
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon—Ubi Soft	Action
Game Boy Advance	
Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku—Infogrames	Action
Defender of the Crown—Metro 3D	Action
Mega Man Battle Network 2—Capcom	Action
Pinball of the Dead—THQ	Pinball
Spider-Man—Activision	Action

IMPORT CALENDAR

Sakura Taisen Complete Box

Import Pick of the Month: Gamers with a penchant for the collectible gear, listen up. To celebrate the release of the fourth installment of ***Sakura Taisen*** (Sega's last big Dreamcast game in Japan), the company's releasing a special box set containing all the games (*1-4* and a special bonus disc) in this dating sim/mechanized combat RPG series. This *Complete Box* will run you nearly $200, so the less-than-über-geek may just want to pick up *Sakura Taisen 4* instead.

PlayStation 2

2/21 ***Akira Psychoball***, Bandai (Pinball)
2/28 ***Xenosaga Episode I***, Namco (RPG)
3/7 ***Onimusha 2***, Capcom (Action)
3/14 ***Wild Arms Advanced Third***, Sony CEI (RPG)
3/20 ***Tekken 4***, Namco (Fighting)
3/28 ***Kingdom Hearts***, Square (RPG)
March ***Suikoden III***, Konami (RPG)
April ***Galerians: Ash***, Enterbrain (Action)

Dreamcast

3/21 ***Sakura Taisen 4***, Sega (RPG)
3/21 ***Sakura Taisen Complete Box***, Sega (RPG)

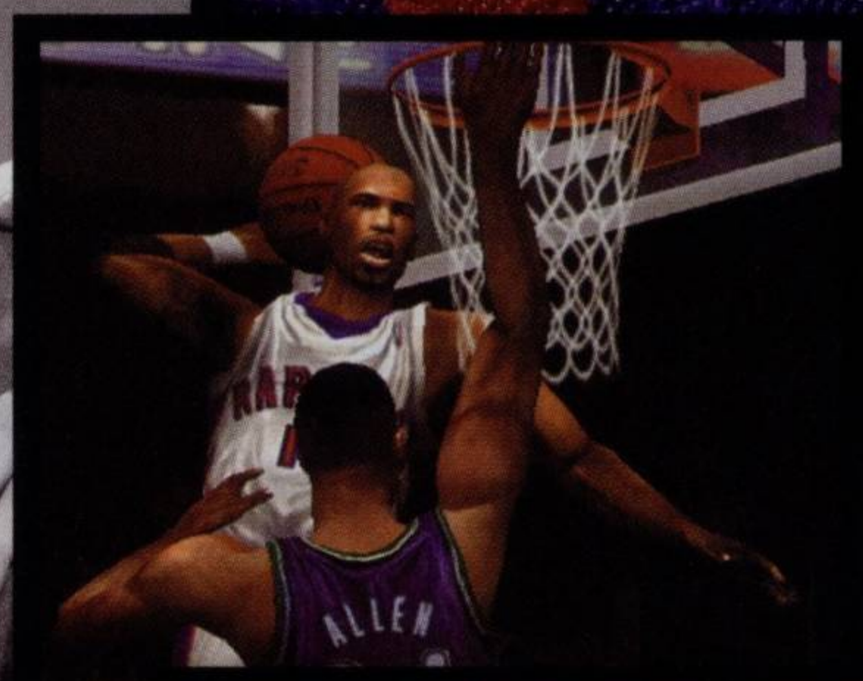
Game Boy Advance

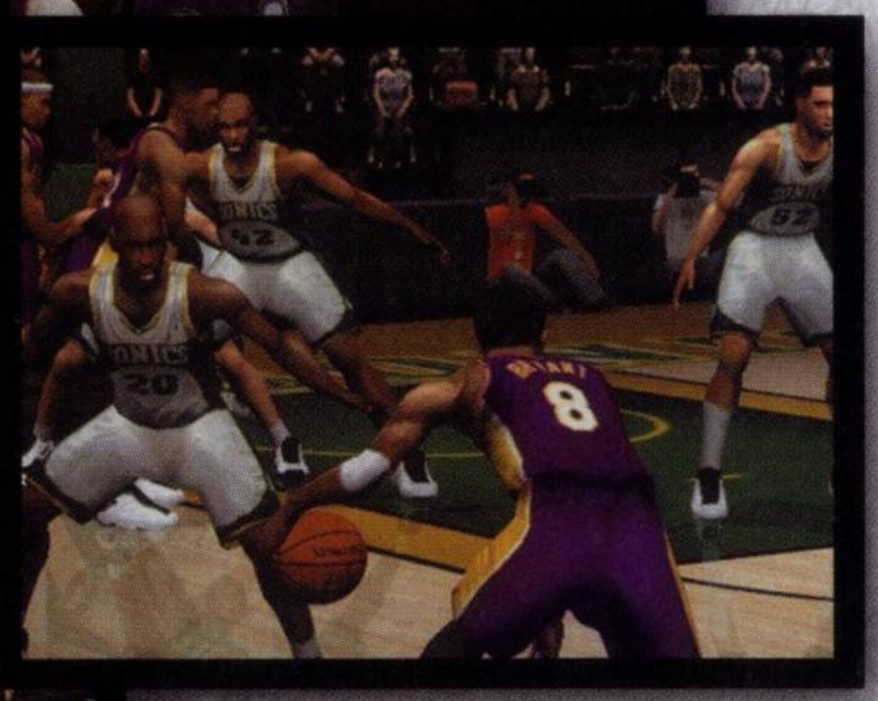
3/8 ***Happy Panechu***, Nintendo (Puzzle)
3/28 ***Shining Soul***, Sega (RPG)
3/29 ***Fire Emblem***, Nintendo (RPG)
March ***Lunar Legend***, Media Ring (RPG)

GameCube

2/21 ***Animal Leader***, Nintendo (Simulation)
3/15 ***Doshin the Giant***, Nintendo (Simulation)
3/22 ***Biohazard (Resident Evil)***, Capcom (Survival Horror)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import game store for the latest release info. Caution: prolonged exposure to Japanese dating sims may result in profuse sweating and irregular heartbeat.





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PlayStation.2

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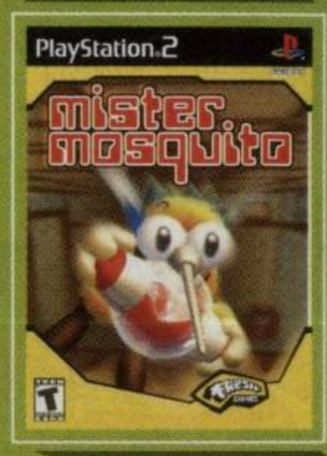
PlayStation 2



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WE SORT OF PROUDLY PRESENT...

HSU AND CHAN'S BEST OF 2001 ROUND-UP!

WE'VE MOVED ON.

WHY CAN'T YOU?

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! THE SUN IS SHINING, THE AIR IS CRISP, AND IF ANY OF YOU ARE STILL IN DOUBT, LET MY BROTHER CHAN AND I CLARIFY A POINT FOR YOU..

2001 IS OVER.

IT'S DEAD! GONE! BURIED, IF THAT WERE POSSIBLE IN THE REALM OF INTANGIBLE CONCEPTS!

ALL OF YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS FOR 2001 -- DASHED!

NO FLYING CARS!

NO HYPER-INTELLIGENT ROBOTS!

NO PIXIE-LIKE SPACE GIRLS IN SHINY SILVER MINISKIRTS!

"DARN" ON THAT LAST ONE, BY THE WAY.

IT'S OVER!

AND YET, THERE ARE STILL THOSE WHO CAN'T LET GO.

THE POPULAR PRESS, FOR INSTANCE, OR... UM... DISTRIBUTORS HOLDING MASSIVE BACKLOGS OF UNSOLD 2001 CALENDARS... THEY'RE PRETTY PATHETIC.

AT ANY RATE, IT'S TIME TO ACCEPT REALITY, AND WE TWO ARE PUBLIC-SPIRITED ENOUGH TO HELP THE PROCESS ALONG.

IN THE FASHION OF GREATER MEN WHO HAVE DREAMT UP UNDERHANDED SCHEMES TO SQUEEZE SOME CASH OUTTA THE DEAD BEFORE US, WE'VE COMPILED A SORT-OF "BEST OF 2001" AWARDS LIST SO YOU CAN REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES, AND SAY GOODBYE IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER, AT WHICH POINT WE CAN DRIVE A STAKE INTO THE BLACK HEART OF THIS MONSTER ONCE AND FOR ALL!

ALL READY BACK THERE, HSU?

ONE SECOND, BROTHER!

I AM HAVING SOME TROUBLE WITH THE CLIP-ON!

ARR!

AHEM! TO START, I WILL EXPLAIN OUR JUDGING GUIDELINES.

BEING AS THIS IS A "BEST OF 2001" ROUND-UP, ITEMS ELIGIBLE FOR NOMINATION ARE RESTRICTED TO THOSE THAT WERE KNOWN TO EXIST, IN SOME FORM OR ANOTHER, IN THE YEAR 2001, WITH THE UNDERSTOOD IMPLICATION THAT WE ARE DOING NO RESEARCH ON THE SUBJECT, WHATSOEVER.

WE ARE BUSY MEN!

QUITE.

THERE ARE A COUPLE PAGES OF GUIDELINES AFTER THAT -- SOMETHING ABOUT JUDGING FAIRLY, AND HOW OUR OWN GAMES ARE DISQUALIFIED ON ACCOUNT OF POSSIBLE BIAS, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? IT'S 2002!

I SHALL NO LONGER LIVE MY LIFE RULED BY WORDS ON PAPER! LET'S JUST RUN WITH THIS BABY!

AH! THAT TAKES THE PRESSURE OFF!

WE START THIS FIASCO WITH OUR FIRST AWARD, "OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A WHINY GIRLY-BOY VIDEO GAME HERO."

THE NOMINEES ARE MGS2's RAIDEN...

EEK!

THAT ONE KID FROM "ZONE OF ENDERS..."

HALP!

TIDUS FROM "FINAL FANTASY X"...

AND STEVE FROM "RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA."

MOMMY!

THIS IN PARTICULAR WAS A DIFFICULT ONE TO CALL. WE HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED THE MATTER BE SOLVED BY HAVING THE NOMINEES DUKE IT OUT IN A DEATHMATCH AGAINST JERRY LEWIS, CIRCA 1960, BUT THAT FELL THROUGH.

AT ANY RATE, AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THE 2001 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A WHINY GIRLY-BOY VIDEO GAME HERO GOES TO...

...FFX's TIDUS, WHO, IN ADDITION TO DRESSING IN CHICKEN-YELLOW, HAS ALSO THE INHERENT INCONGRUITY OF BEING A NATIONAL SPORTS HERO WHO AT ALL TIMES LOOKS AND SOUNDS AS IF HE HAD JUST BEEN HELD UPSIDE-DOWN OVER A TOILET BOWL BY UPPERCLASSMEN.

HUZZAH TO YOU, FEATHERY-HAIRED CHICKEN BOY!

NEXT AWARD!

MOVING ALONG, WE HAVE THE "SMUG JACKASS AWARD," WHICH GOES TO THE MAKERS OF "DEVIL MAY CRY'S" MOVE-RANKING SYSTEM...

...WHEREIN MOVES MADE ARE IMMEDIATELY RANKED BY HAVING THE WORDS "COOL!" OR "LAME!" APPEAR ON THE SCREEN, CLEARLY IMPLYING THAT THE AVERAGE GAMER IS TOO DUMB TO FIGURE THAT OUT ON HIS OWN.

WE APPRECIATE THE CONFIDENCE EXUDED BY THE GRAND FUNK-MASTERS AT CAPCOM, BUT MAY WE SUGGEST THAT ESTABLISHING STANDARDIZED GUIDELINES FOR HIPNESS IS A TAD PRESUMPTUOUS FOR ANYBODY.

EVEN GEORGE CLINTON.

NEXT UP, THE 2001 AWARD FOR "CRUELEST THING SNUCK INTO A BEST-SELLING VIDEO GAME." TOO MANY NOMINEES TO LIST ON THIS ONE, BUT THE WINNER, HANDS-DOWN, IS "BLITZBALL" FROM "FINAL FANTASY X"!

TAKE A DASH OF BASKETBALL, ADD A PINCH OF WATER POLO, MIX IT WITH TURN-BASED STRATEGY, AND WHAT DO YOU GET? A STIFF FINE, IF THERE WERE ANY JUSTICE IN THE WORLD, BUT ALSO BLITZBALL, AN EXERCISE IN TEDIUM SO BORING AND FRUSTRATING THAT NAZI SCIENTISTS ARE STILL KICKING THEMSELVES FOR NOT INVENTING IT!

WORSE STILL IS THE IMPLICATION MADE BY THE CHARACTERS IN THE GAME WORLD THAT "BLITZBALL" IS THE ONLY ENTERTAINMENT THEY HAVE! A PERSON COULD MAKE A FORTUNE THERE SELLING COPIES OF "CHUTES AND LADDERS."

OUR NEXT AWARD IS FOR "BEST USE OF AUSTRIAN PRINCE NIKOLAUS ESTERHAZY IN A FIGHTING GAME."

...

UM... THE NOMINEES' LIST WAS ACTUALLY KIND OF DRY THIS YEAR.

WE BRIEFLY CONSIDERED "SUPER SMASH BROTHERS," BUT THAT TURNED OUT TO BE LUIGI...

AT ANY RATE...

AH, WHO ARE WE KIDDING? NOBODY CARES! BESIDES, EVERYONE KNOWS THIS WHOLE THING IS RIGGED, ANYWAY!

ON TO THE SWIMSUIT COMPETITION!

WOO!!

TILL NEXT TIME, VIDEO GAMERS, THIS IS HSU TANAKA REMINDING YOU THAT IT'S AN HONOR JUST TO BE NOMINATED, EVEN IF YOU'RE STILL TECHNICALLY A LOSER!

G'NIGHT!

YOW! SHAKE IT!

THE END.

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PlayStation 2

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Toxic Grind

Game Boy Advance

119 Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku

WARNING: Previews marked with international symbols may or may not be released in the U.S. They are designed to run on Japanese or European PAL systems. Import at your own risk.

This Month in Previews

We're finally getting some GameCube coverage to speak of in Previews this month. In fact, this is the biggest GC section we've had thus far. Thankfully publishers like Sega and Acclaim are willing to go that extra mile to get us some play time with their games despite Nintendo's best efforts to lock out the media at every turn.

And for all you *Phantasy Star Online* junkies out there, clear your calendars. Your next social-life-killin' addiction is nearly here! Turn to page 74 and take a gander at *Final Fantasy XI*—the first fully online installment of the hit series. Now we have to convince Square to start up a U.S. beta test like they did for those lucky Japanese gamers.

Sure, we said this last month, but we totally can't wait for *Virtua Fighter 4* to hit the PlayStation 2 this year. In fact, we've got a blowout on Sega's latest brawler this month. Get over there and check out the game that some staffers are saying might even unseat *Soul Calibur* (DC) as the official office fighting game. Or if you're not a *VF* fan, we've got a whole bunch of new *Tekken 4* shots for ya on page 86.

***Soul Calibur*, *Tekken* and even *Dead or Alive* owe a lot to *Virtua Fighter*, the grandaddy of the 3D brawler. Check out the fourth installment on page 68.**

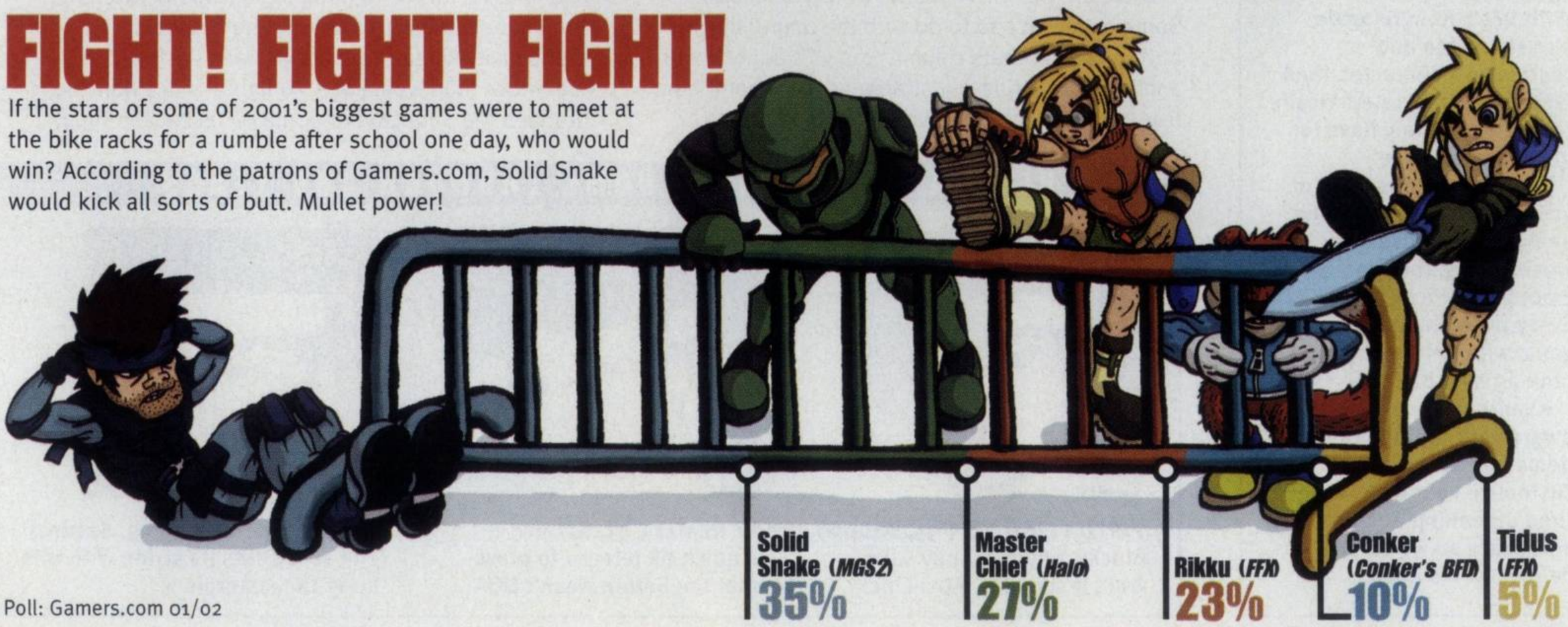
Oh, and fans of vampire-killing vixens should be happy to see some *Buffy* love this month. As for us? We wanna see Sarah Michelle Gellar in a *Cruel Intentions* game. Think of the possibilities! Incest, action and addiction to illegal substances. It's got million-seller written all over it.

TOP 5 Preview Picks

1. Virtua Fighter 4	PlayStation 2, March 2002
2. Final Fantasy XI	PlayStation 2, TBD
3. Turok: Evolution	GameCube, September 2002
4. Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku	GBA, May 2002
5. The Fellowship of the Ring	Xbox, October 2002

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

If the stars of some of 2001's biggest games were to meet at the bike racks for a rumble after school one day, who would win? According to the patrons of Gamers.com, Solid Snake would kick all sorts of butt. Mullet power!



Poll: Gamers.com 01/02

PS2

PREVIEW

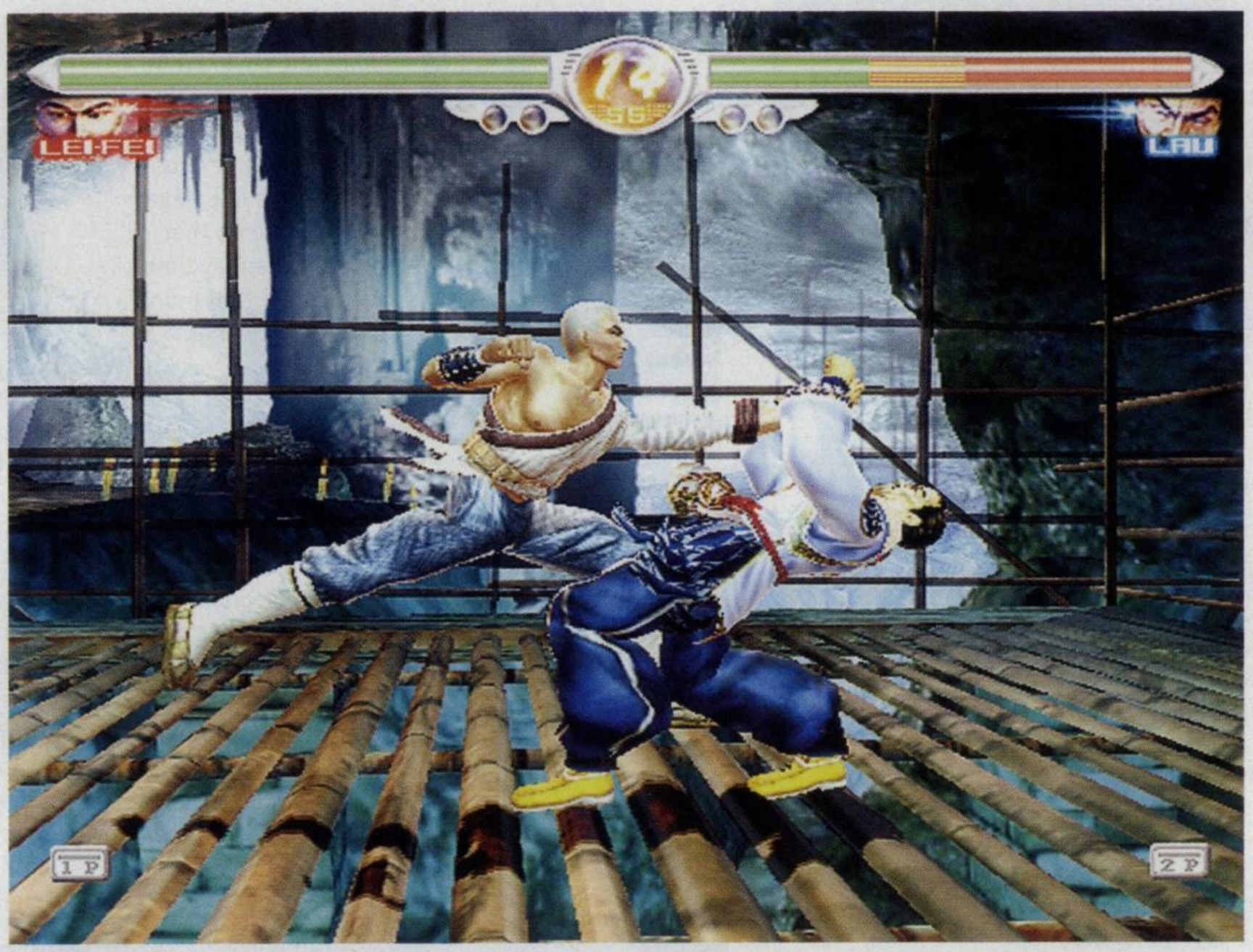
Virtua Fighter 4

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	AM2
Players:	1-2
Genre:	Fighting
% Done:	85%
Release:	March 2002
Also On:	Arcade
Web Address:	www.sega.com

The Good: Deep and addictive kung-fu action everybody can enjoy.

The Bad: The Satriani-esque soundtrack makes our ears bleed.

And The Ugly: Those PS2 jaggies are back and uglier than ever.



When *Virtua Fighter* swaggered into arcades way back in 1993, it revolutionized chop-socky gaming for a generation of 2D fighting pups weaned on years of *Street Fighter II*. So it's ironic, then, that the *VF* series, which paved the way for the popularity of 3D fighting games, never did hit the same level of success of imitators like *Tekken*, *Soul Calibur* and *Dead or Alive*.

There are theories as to why this was the case. Some believe it had to do with the unintuitive block button, while others claim it was *VF*'s floaty jumps and frustrating ring-out strategies that kept it from true accessibility. Whatever the reason, *Virtua Fighter 4* is clearly Sega's attempt to give the franchise that beginner's hook it's consistently lacked, while maintaining its hardcore pedigree.

So have they finally done it? Is this the *Virtua Fighter* game for the Everyman? Well, after seeing John "Everyman" Davison, the big boss of our sister book *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine,* dedicate a part-time job just to mastering *VF4*, we'd have to say yes. But the game's also a goldmine of depth and finesse; for the fighting freaks among the staff, 10-minute sessions often turn into two-hour productivity killers. We haven't been this deep in the throes (and woes) of a 3D fighter since Namco dropped the *Soul Calibur* bomb on us back in 1999.

KUMITE

King of Fighters

One thing that's always eluded the home fighting game is the thrill of defending your win streak against random challengers. With *VF4*'s Kumite mode, players create and customize a character, then take it to a simulated arcade circuit where they have to guard their throne.

The game keeps track of your total wins and losses, analyzes your strengths and weaknesses, then ranks you among 22 official titles. Every five-win streak gets you a winner-takes-all ranking match.

Kumite mode will also award your fighter with items you can use to customize your look. We got tired of looking at Lion's smug face so we stuck a helmet on his head.

VIRTUA FIGHTING AT HOME THROUGH THE YEARS

VIRTUA FIGHTER **('95, Saturn)**
Blocky, hot 'n chunky. Like *Tron*, it screams retro-chic.

VF REMIX **('95, Saturn)**
A quick-fix release to prove that the Saturn wasn't DOA.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 **('95, Saturn)**
The series hits its stride with this kung-fu masterpiece.

PROJECT BERKLEY

Initially, *Shenmue* (DC) was to be a *VF* RPG of sorts. While it's strayed from Yu Suzuki's (creator of both series) original concept, you can still see *VF*'s influence on *Shenmue*, including main man Ryo's uncanny resemblance to *Virtua Fighter* poster boy Akira. They even share the same fighting techniques!

What keeps us coming back to *VF4* are, of course, the significant gameplay changes since *VF3*. The series has always been daunting—legendary for being a showcase of true skill, a real test that weeded out the scrubs among the hardcore. With *VF4*'s quicker recovery times, free-roaming 3D movement, smaller chance of ring-outs and extensive system tutorials, beginners will actually feel like they have a snowball's chance of mastering this kung-fu behemoth. Plus, the new characters Vanessa and Lei-Fei, one a kickboxer and the other a Shaolin monk, also welcome novices with their button-mashing friendliness. Returning alumni from the school of *Virtua Fighter* will appreciate the replay incentive with the Kumite, A.I. training and character-customization modes (see sidebars).

VF4 completes its superlative package by proving that you don't need the muscle of an Xbox to pull off huge, gorgeous backgrounds. I'll let the screenshots do most of the explaining, but know that none of the details you see in these shots are fudged in any way. Each character is full of the sort of realism you commonly take for granted, like dynamic facial expressions, or the natural flow of clothing and robes. Take the beatdown to a winter wonderland and see the virgin snow beneath your feet deform in real time, or battle in a pool of water and lose yourself in the chaotic swirls of its movement.

No doubt there will be nitpickers who will obsess over the graphical differences between the arcade and PS2 versions of *VF4*. Still, even with some of the visual excess toned down in the conversion, the PS2 game remains one of the best-looking console fighters yet. Tired of waiting for *Tekken 4*? Start the party a little early with this awesome game.

—Che Chou

A.I. TRAINING

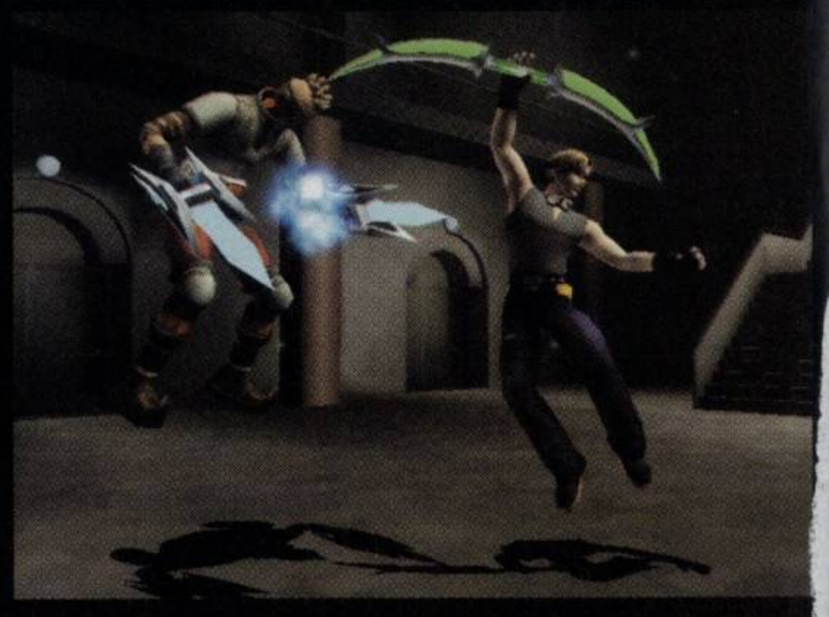
Virtua Pet

_VF4_'s artificial intelligence system lets you "raise" a computer character to do the fighting for you, based on how well you've trained it. In a recent conversation with Japanese magazine *Dengeki PS2*, series creator Yu Suzuki said that the A.I. mode "involves more thought in terms of coaching the fight rather than just straightforward action." If your pet warrior pulls off something good, you press a button to give it a pat on the back. Or if it screws up, you can let it know that too. It's like having your very own ass-kicking Tamagotchi.

***VF KIDS* ('96, Saturn)**
Yu Suzuki experiences a momentary lapse of reason.

***FIGHTERS MEGAMIX* ('96, Saturn)**
Yes, the game was this ugly. But damn, was it ever fun.

***VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB* ('99, DC)**
Doesn't he look like Bert from *Sesame Street*?



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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Violence

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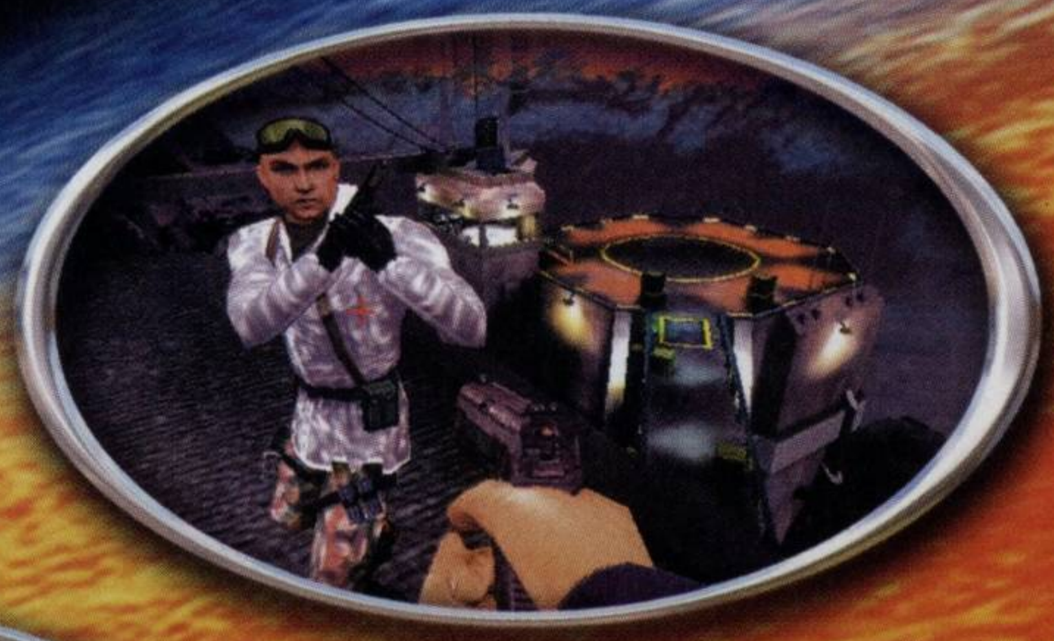
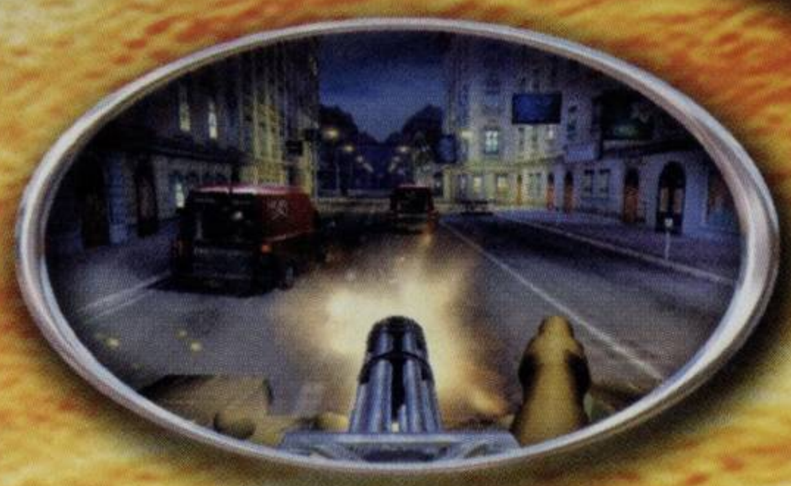


All-new, Original Storyline



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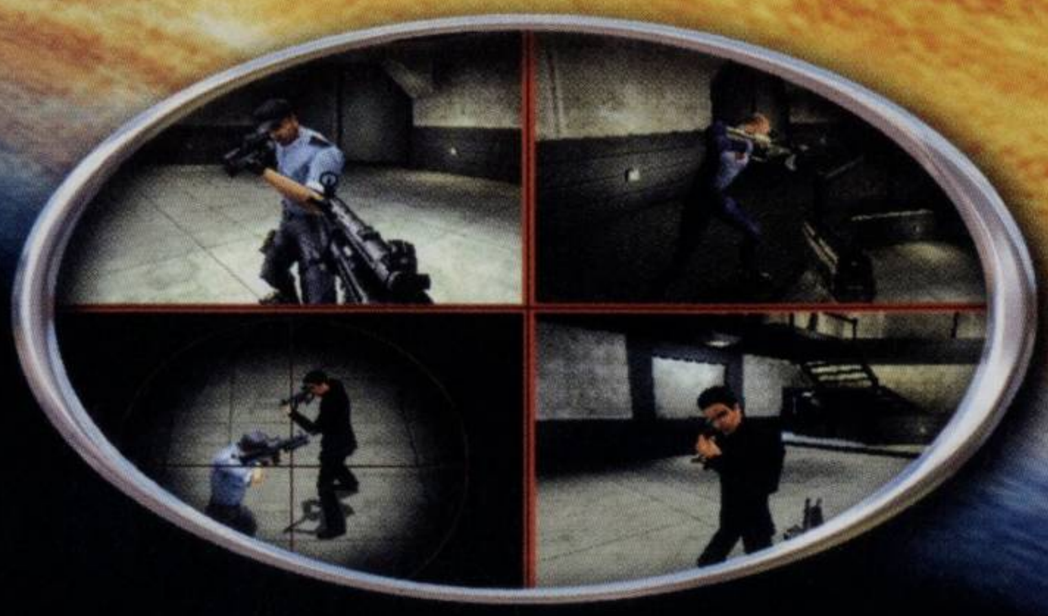

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TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Violence
Suggestive Themes

PlayStation®2

XBOX

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PS2

FINAL FANTASY XI ONLINE ファイナルファンタジーXI

PREVIEW

Final Fantasy XI

Publisher:	Square Electronic Arts
Developer:	Square
Players:	A whole lot
Genre:	RPG
% Done:	75%
Release:	TBD
Also On:	PC
Web Address:	www.playonline.com

The Good: It's the first massively multiplayer Final Fantasy.

The Bad: You've gotta shell out for a modem to play it.

And The Ugly: What's with all the creepy furries? We want to play as a cool warrior, not some dorky Ewok.

THE BETA CLUB

In Japan, a few lucky gamers started playing *FFXI* on Dec. 7, 2001. These beta testers are helping to ensure that everything's kosher when the game hits shelves in Japan this spring. Sadly Square has yet to announce a U.S. beta test.

FINAL CHATROOM

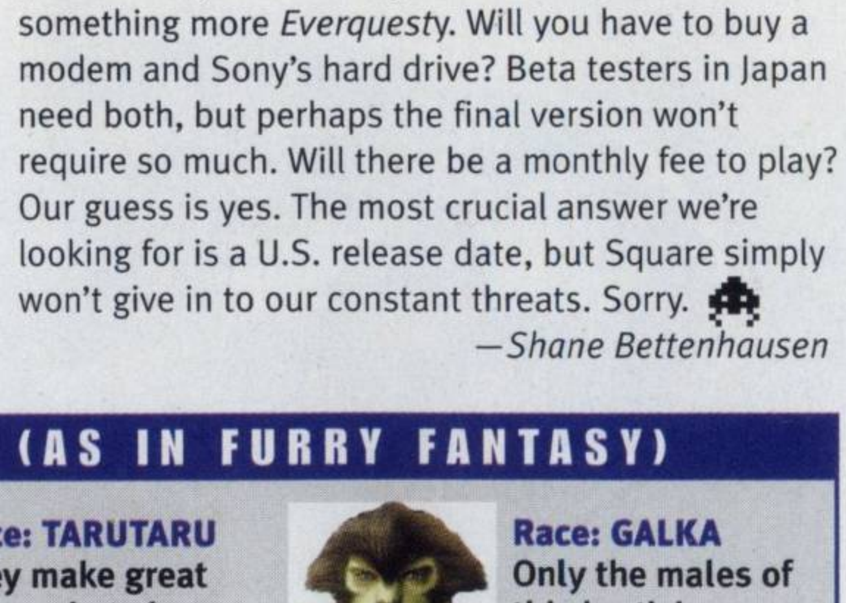
Talk the Talk

***FFXI*'s world is Vana D'iel, a medieval land that boasts great telecomm options. Players can speak, tell and shout. "Speaking" is seen only by nearby players, "telling" messages a specific player from any distance, and "shouting" is seen by everyone in an area. If you buy an item called a Linkshell, you can create private chatrooms.**

It's odd to be talking about *Final Fantasy XI* so soon after the release of *FFX*. Remember when we had to wait at least a year or two between sequels? These days, Square's on the ball—both *FFXI* and *FFXII* are in the works, and we might even be experiencing the former by year's end.

Change is good, as the many successful tweaks to standard RPG-dom in *FFX* prove. Will even more change prove to be better? *FFXI* doesn't simply alter the *Final Fantasy* formula—it utterly reinvents it. With this game, Square transforms its flagship series into a MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game). PC gamers spend oodles of money and time on MMORPGs like *Everquest*, *Ultima Online* and *Asheron's Call*. Like these titles, *FFXI* boasts a persistent world in which a great number of players can talk, fight and quest together.

Plot details remain sketchy, but we've scavenged some character-creation information. In addition to selecting from among multiple races (see sidebar), you'll be able to customize the appearance of your alter ego with clothing and hairstyles. More importantly, you can select a character class for your hero. Old-school *Final Fantasy* fans will swoon with nostalgia—classes include Fighter, Monk, Thief, White Mage, Red Mage and Black Mage, just like in the original NES game. In addition to your main Job, you



can assume a secondary class. That way, your Monk can learn a few white magic spells on the side.

It all sounds quite promising, yet many questions linger. What's the battle system like? Early reports point to a hybrid of the good-ole *FF* system and something more *Everquesty*. Will you have to buy a modem and Sony's hard drive? Beta testers in Japan need both, but perhaps the final version won't require so much. Will there be a monthly fee to play? Our guess is yes. The most crucial answer we're looking for is a U.S. release date, but Square simply won't give in to our constant threats. Sorry.

—Shane Bettenhausen

MEET THE RACES OF FFXI (AS IN FURRY FANTASY)

Race: HUME
An average, 100% normal race with balanced stats.

Race: TARUTARU
They make great mages, but also look kinda dippy.

Race: GALKA
Only the males of this brutish race are playable.

Race: ELVAAN
Yep, they're snooty, but they make great swordsmen.

Race: MITHRA
A race of lithe and agile female cat-fighters. Rrrow!

Race: FURSUIT
OK, we made this one up. Don't cross this line, Square!

PS2

PREVIEW

Gran Turismo Concept 2001 Tokyo

Publisher:	Sony CEI
Developer:	Polyphony Digital
Players:	1-2
Genre:	Racing
% Done:	100%
Release:	Out now (Japan)
Web Address:	www.scej.jp/gtc

The Good: You get a chance to drive concept cars that may never be available at retail.

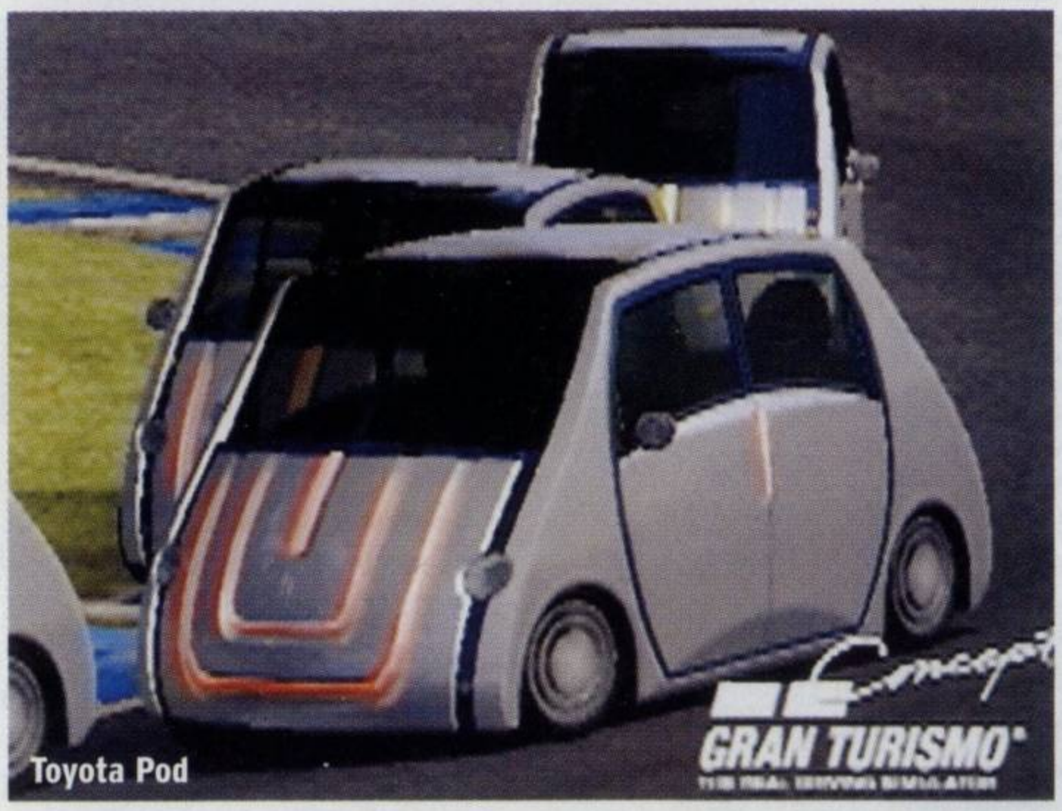
The Bad: This is basically *Gran Turismo 3*-lite.

And The Ugly: *GTC* is way, way too quick and easy to finish.

Honda Dualnote

The Dualnote is pretty cool. The front wheels are run by an electric engine (hence the power bar), while the rear have a gas powerplant.

Meet the Toyota Pod. It's the first car that comes complete with emotions (red is angry, blue is happy, etc.) and a tail.



Toyota Pod

SETTING THE PACE

Web Warrior

A cool, hidden feature of *Concept Tokyo* is a Web-ranking mode. Simply go to the URL above to check out which track and car the current challenge is for. Once you've run a time trial following all the criteria, hit the "R1" and "o" button in the best-times screen to get your Web-ranking password.

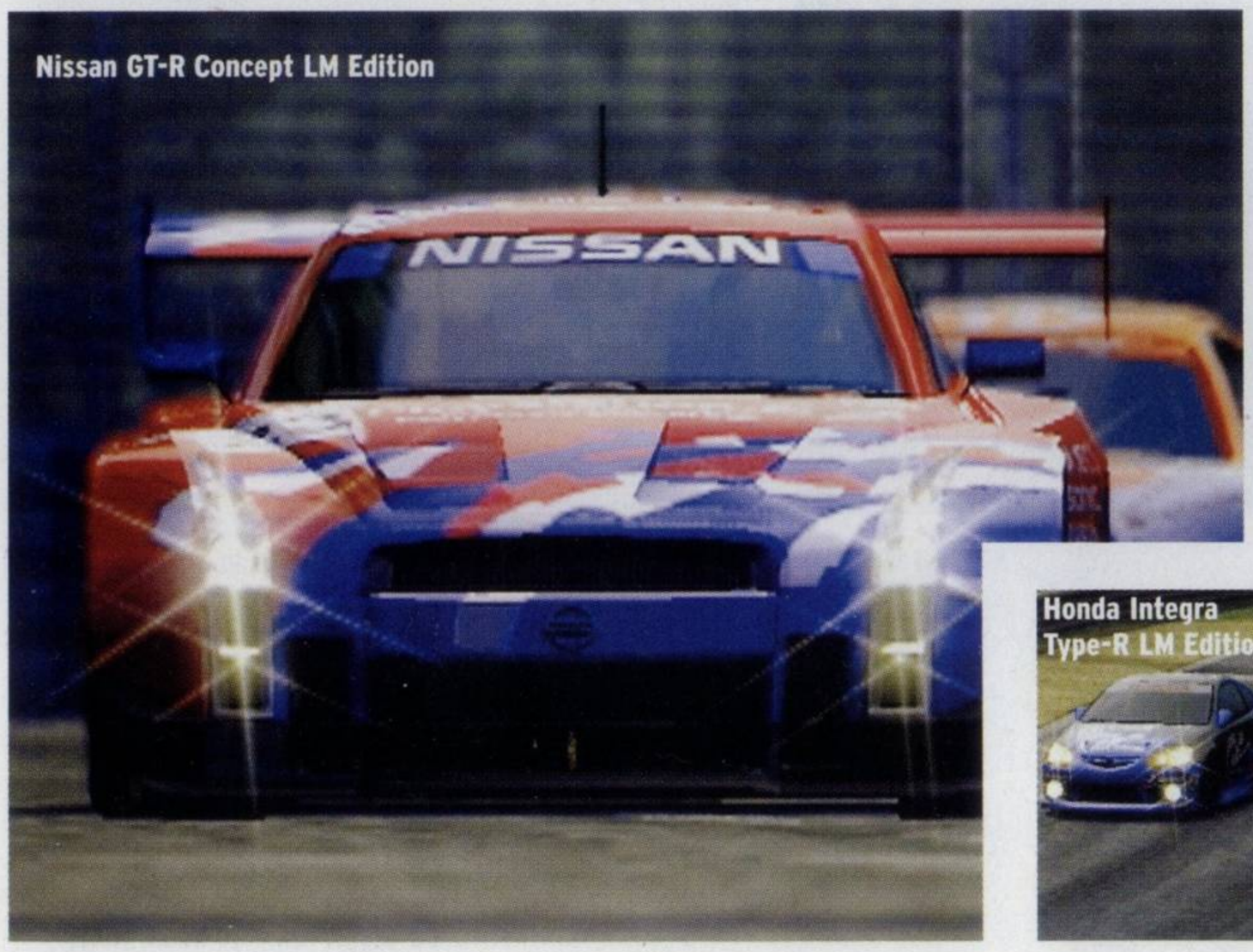
Concept cars are almost always just display models: never to be mass-produced, never to be driven by the general public. As most car junkies will tell you, that just sucks. But Kazunori Yamauchi and his development group Polyphony Digital have had enough.

Concept Tokyo is the first in what will hopefully be a series of *Gran Turismo* spinoffs. It's basically a stripped-down *GT3*—you won't find any simulation mode here—and only consists of around 50 cars as opposed to the couple hundred you'd normally find in this series. The catch is that most of said 50 cars are concept vehicles or entirely new designs of existing models. Considering most of them will never be released anywhere, let alone North America, their inclusion immediately makes this game worth importing for car nuts everywhere.

Concept also reveals a few things that Polyphony probably meant to get into *GT3* but couldn't. Replays now feature a zoom command, plus a lot of dramatic, panning shots. Old-school *Gran Turismo* fans will also be happy to know that the classic Autumn Ring track from the first two games in the series makes its PS2 debut on *Concept Tokyo*.

The bad news is that Sony told us there's no way this game is coming to the U.S. Take heart, however, as they won't deny the possibility of future installments—maybe manufacturer-specific versions—hitting our shores sooner or later.

—Greg Sewart

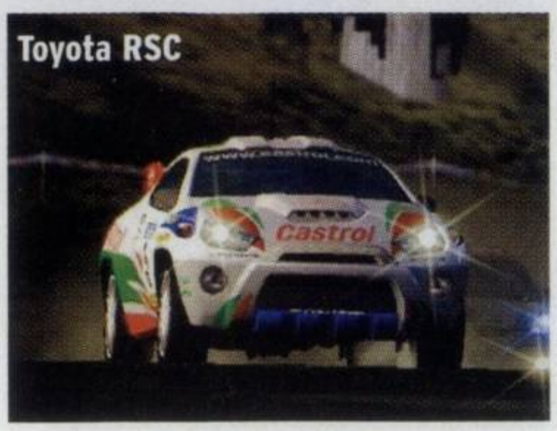


Nissan GT-R Concept LM Edition

Suzuki GSX-R/4

Honda Integra Type-R LM Edition

Nissan Skyline GT-R V-spec



Toyota RSC

PS2

PREVIEW

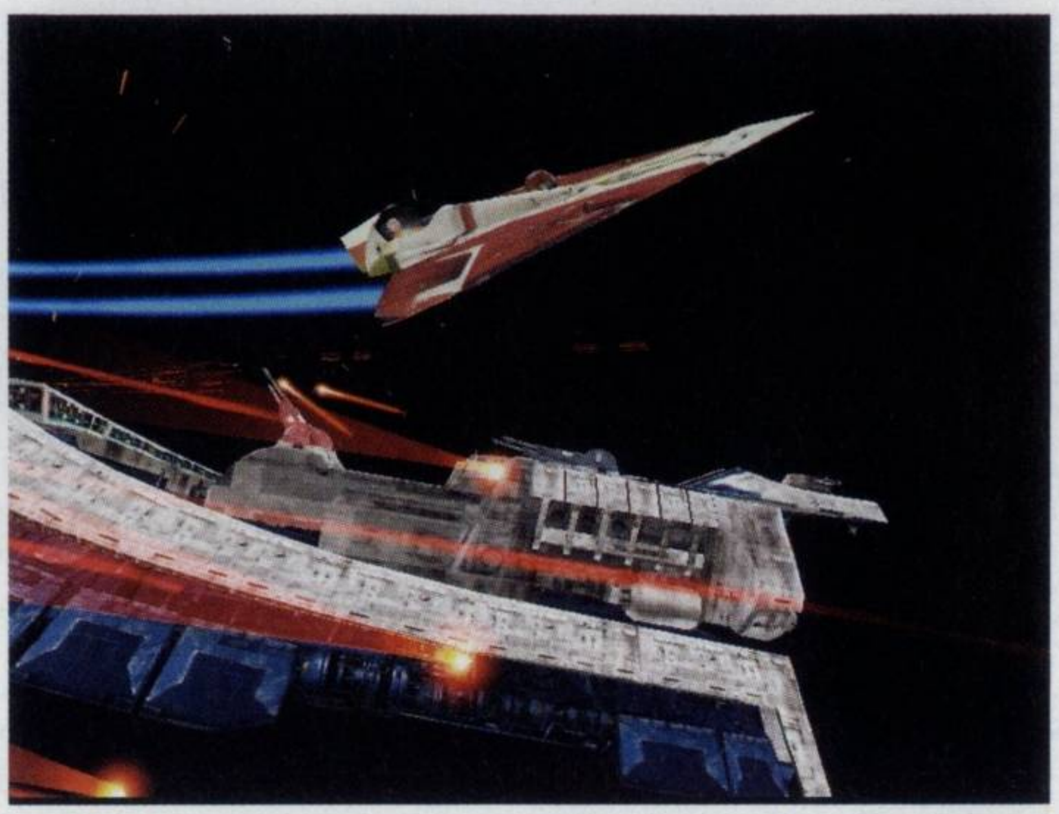
BYE, BYE, BYE

Fans can actually make a difference in a *Star Wars* movie. Despite Jar Jar surviving a fan onslaught, N'Sync's cameo in *Episode II* has not. In a recent interview, Joey Fatone sounded annoyed when he admitted that "they dropped it because a lot of people made a big deal out of it." Are we supposed to feel sorry for those bratty millionaires, or what?

Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter

Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: LucasArts
Players: 1-2
Genre: Action
% Done: 80%
Release: March 2002
Web Address: www.lucasarts.com
The Good: We're not sure, but some of the cool tunes we didn't recognize might be from *Episode II*.
The Bad: Enemy ship A.I. They like to sit and take it in the tailpipe. Just like in the movies.
The Ugly: Let's just pray that *Episode II* isn't.

Lots of pretty effects light up deep space during battle. Just don't spend too long gaping at them if you want to stay alive.



The sheer amount of adversaries and laser fire during some dogfights is enough to make most jedis soil their robes.

Star Wars games are almost as common as porn Web sites these days, so it's hard to get fired up when a new one arrives. *Jedi Starfighter* is the latest of the LucasCrop, and it comes with a unique reason to cheer: It's the first game to dive into *Episode II*.

The game's story follows Nym, a squawky rebel leader from the previous *Starfighter*, and Adi Gallia, a girly Jedi who is dispatched by Mace "I'm a bad-ass mothaf*cka in another movie" Windu to stop a massive fleet of ships that could destabilize the region. The chain of events that follows provides oodles of target fodder for your prototype Jedi Starfighter, and better yet, they unveil parts of *Episode II*. One of the missions is even named "Attack of the Clones."

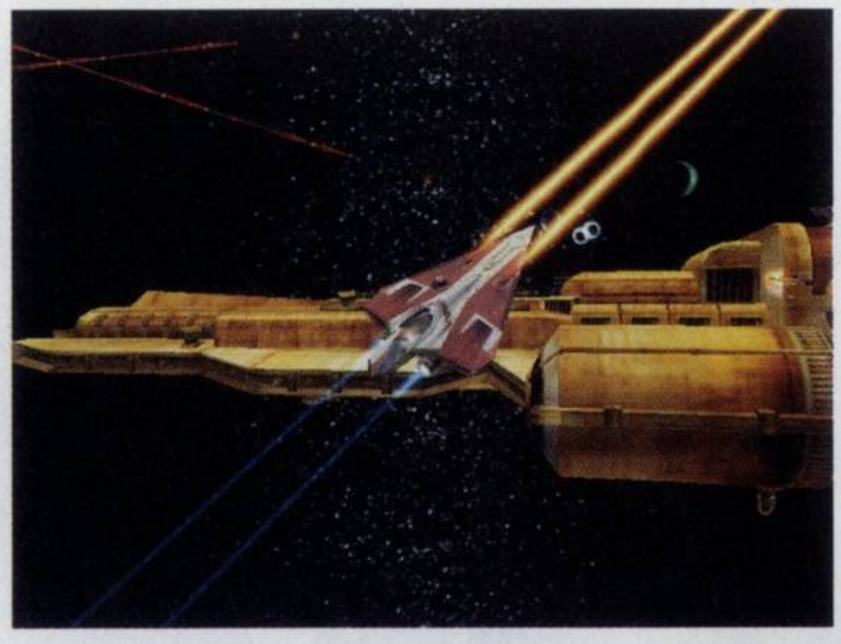
For those of you familiar with the first *Starfighter*, you'll know what to expect: massive space and land battles where you're outnumbered 100-to-1 by brain-dead adversaries. To even the score a bit, you can now dip into the Force to fry groups of ships in electrical storms, erect defensive shields, or use Jedi awareness that slows the game down, *Matrix*-style, while you move at full speed. And if that's not enough, you can play the game cooperatively with a buddy. After all, if Obi-Wan had Qui-Gon at his side while fighting the Dark Side, why not have your lazy friend at yours?

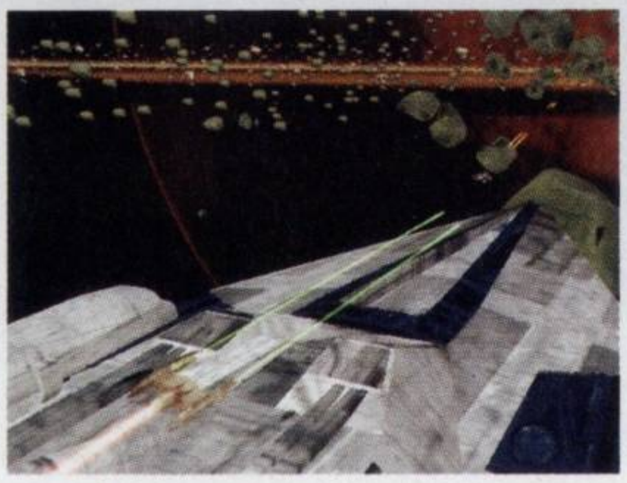
—Kraig Kujawa

STAY ON TARGET

Cover My Six!

You may be a bad-ass Jedi, but you can't do everything alone. *Jedi Starfighter* puts an emphasis on teamwork, whether you're commanding A.I. wingmen or yelling at your buddy to cover your tail during a bombing run in the split-screen cooperative mode. A handful of missions even turn the tables by having you hop into the cockpit of a defensive turret while a PS2-controlled pilot gets all the glory. It can be tough on your ego.



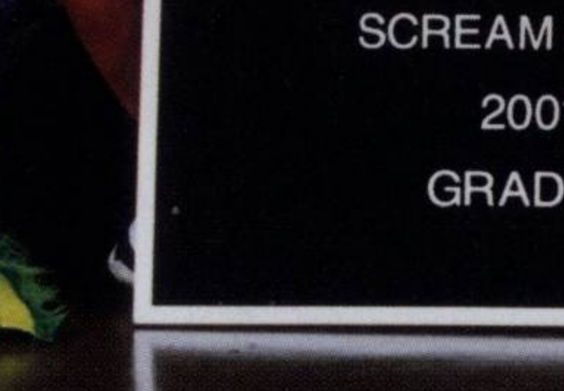


Gandalf would be envious of your Force Lightning storms that instantly fry squadrons of enemies to a crisp (above).

Expect lots of capital ships during your firefights. They literally dwarf your fighter. But the bigger they are, the bigger they go boom (left).

PlayStation

MONSTERS, INC.
SCREAM TEAM
2001
GRADE 4



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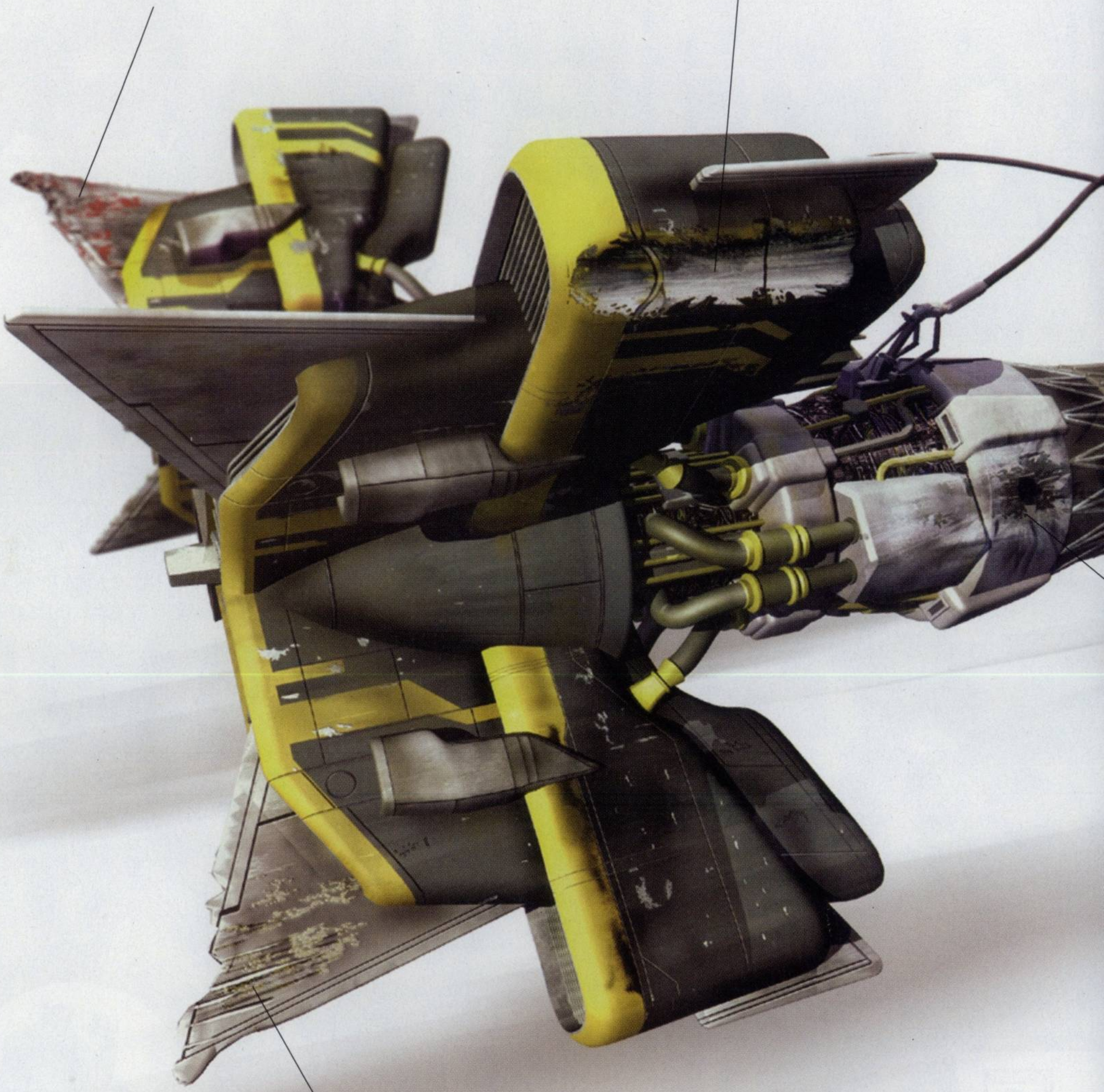
Scream Team

Shrapnel impact at 600+mph.
Mon Calamari.

Swapping paint with Skywalker.
Tatooine.



Turbo-boost slice between canyon wall and Oud Bolt.
Sullust.

PlayStation 2

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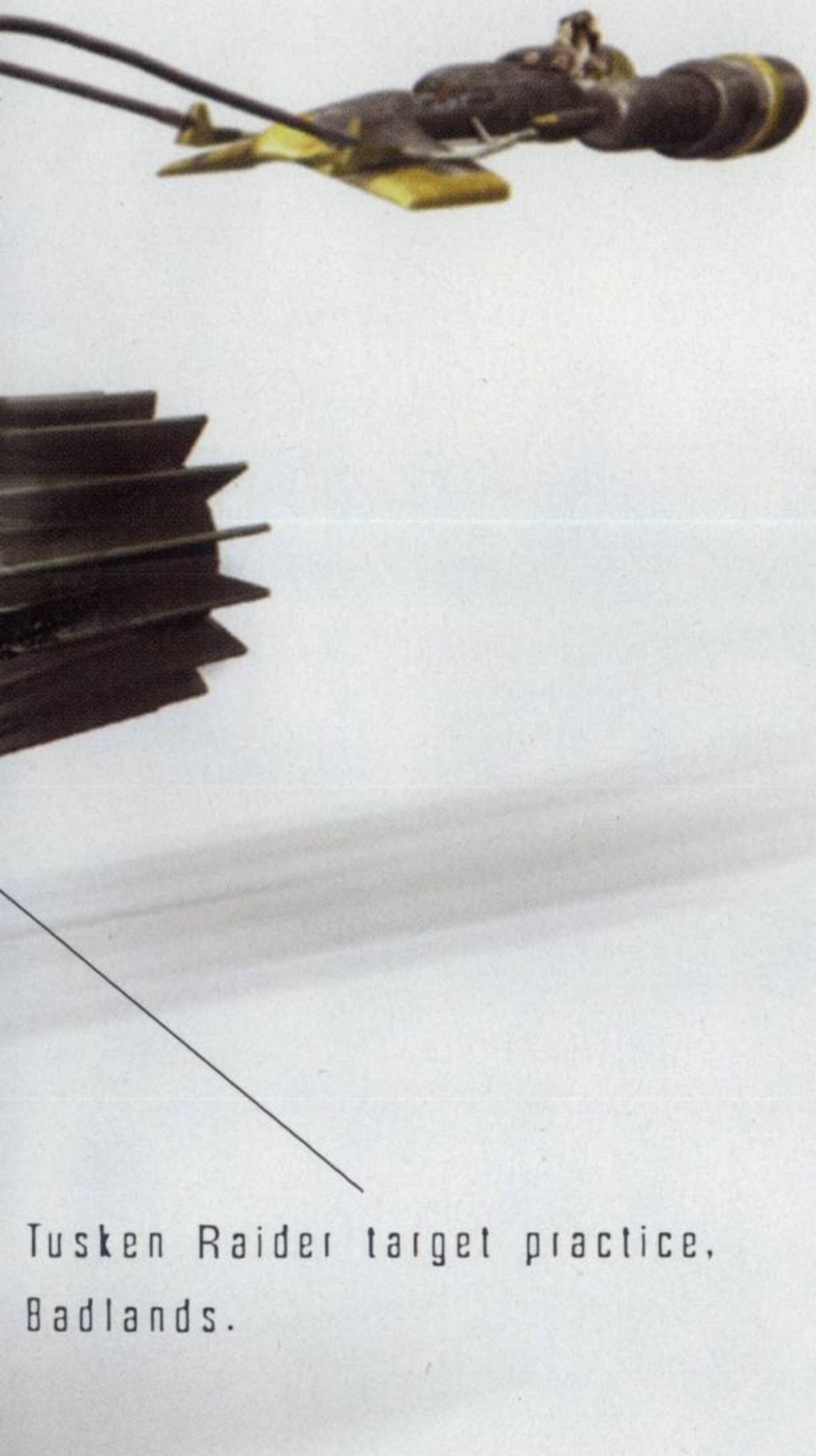

Tusken Raider target practice,
Badlands.

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CORE

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Comic Mischief

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February 2002

PS2

PREVIEW

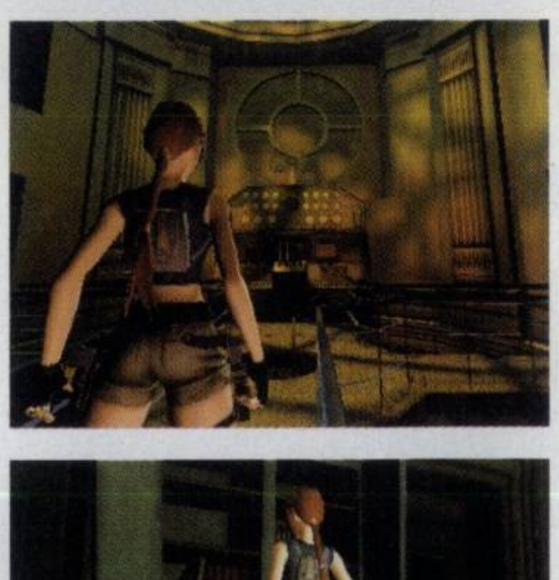
Tomb Raider: The Next Generation

Publisher:	Eidos
Developer:	Core Design
Players:	1
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	55%
Release:	November 2002
Web Address:	www.tombraider.com

The Good: The developers know Lara has a lot to make up for, and they assure us that this is an entirely new *Tomb Raider*.

The Bad: Nightmares of oddly proportioned video-game vixens.

And The Ugly: The look on most gamers' faces when you tell them a new *Tomb Raider* is on the way.



If the mere thought of another *Tomb Raider* title makes you wince...trust me brother, you ain't alone. This series is so played out, even developer Core admits that it should have ended about three games ago.

Keeping that in mind, the only real option left is to re-create the franchise. And to do that, you need to redefine the main character. Unfortunately, in Lara Croft, Eidos basically created a monster. Her foolish rich-girl-goes-treasure-hunting background is simply too limiting to base a serious story on. So what's Core doing? First they're going to frame Lara for a crime she didn't commit, then use her notoriety against her as she's forced underground in order to evade the fuzz and attempt to prove her innocence.

So far so good. But the greatest story in the world won't help if the gameplay sucks. So next on the agenda is a radical departure from the step-step, *Prince of Persia*-in-3D play mechanics of the old games. *Tomb Raider: TNG* will play more like the *Zelda* and *Mario* titles on the N64 and—at least in the first part of the game—will feature an unarmed Lara who must rely more on stealth than acrobatics in order to survive her various predicaments.

Finally, Core will introduce a second playable character by the name of Curtis Trent. The developers are so confident in this guy that his own spinoff game is already being planned.

Curtis and Lara will have to team up in certain levels in order to progress through the game. From what we know, it sounds like swapping between the players a la *Munch's Oddysee* (Xbox) is probably how the whole thing will work.

Tomb Raider: TNG marks the first of five planned episodes in this new storyline. While we still have some major reservations, who knows? Maybe this new twist on the series might just make us fall in love with Lara all over again. —*Greg Sewart*

DESIGNING WOMEN

Tomb Raider (PS1/Saturn, 1996)

Tomb Raider II (PS1, 1997)

Tomb Raider III (PS1, 1998)

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (PS1/DC, 1999)

Tomb Raider Chronicles (PS1/DC, 2000)

Tomb Raider: The Next Generation (PS2, 2002)

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Virtua Fighter 4™

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PS2

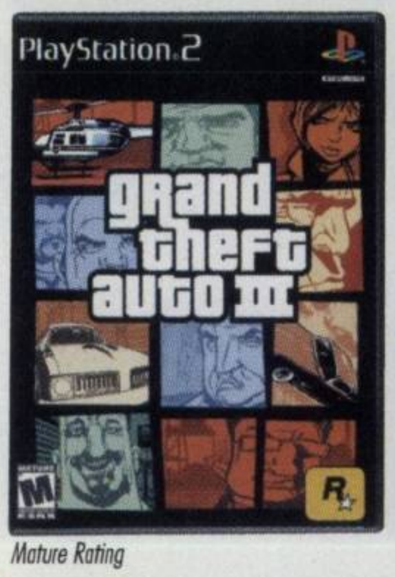
PREVIEW
GALLERY

Tekken 4

As fans of **Namco**'s games will attest to, not an arcade-to-home port comes out that isn't enhanced by the inclusion of an extra mode or two, and *Tekken 4* is certainly no exception. Fighting-game veterans familiar with the progression of the series will recall the Tekken Force mode included in the PlayStation version of *Tekken 3*. Tekken Force let you pick any of *T3*'s characters and sent you on a side-scrolling *Final Fight*-style beat-'em- up adventure. Movement into and out of the 3D plane was featured but extremely limited.

In *Tekken 4*, Namco continues the theme with the Tekken Force Assault mode, but this time the battle is fought in full 360-degree 3D. As evidenced by these screens, over half a dozen enemies will attack you at any given time, unlike the one or two opponents who would pester you in *Tekken 3*. Once you've beaten down the waves of hooligans on each level, you'll encounter a boss who's waiting around to hand you your ass and show you the door. Naturally, your only recourse is to kick boss butt and emerge victorious. *Tekken 4* comes out in Japan this March, and the U.S. later this **fall**.

Get more bang for your buck.



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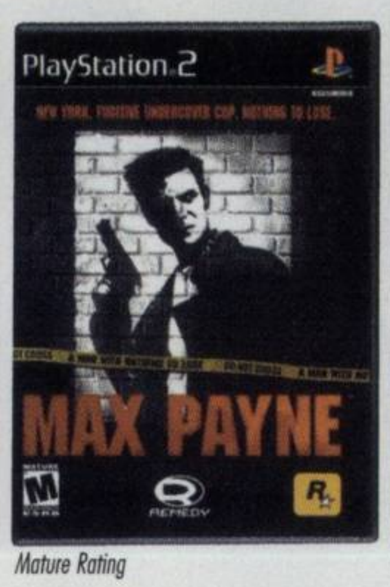

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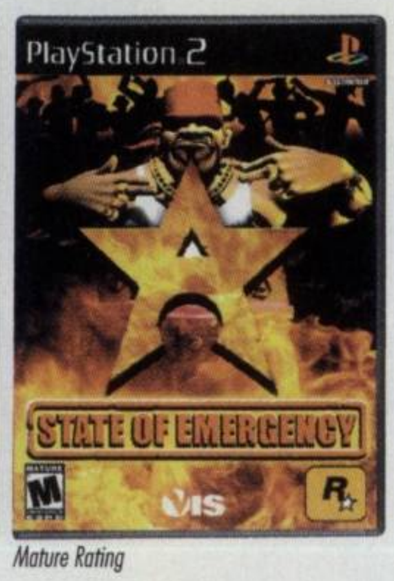

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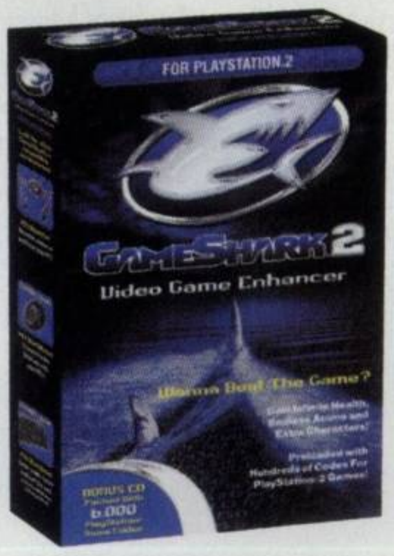

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PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY

PUMP UP THE VOLUME

Japanese gamers once again receive a bonus that U.S. fanboys can only dream of. The Dreamcast release of *Space Channel 5 Part 2*—which, itself, is not coming to the U.S.—is available in a limited edition with a pair of silver SC5 headphones. Ooh-la-la.

Space Channel 5 Part 2

Using superior rhythm (aka pushing the right buttons in time with the beat), retro/futuristic roving reporter Ulala eradicates aliens wherever they may be. Her latest adventure hit PS2 on Feb. 14 in Japan (**Sega** still says a U.S. date is **TBD**). This time around she dances, sings and plays instruments against baddies like the black-and-red dudes below. Rounding out the additions are two-player and battle modes. Groovy.

Auto Modellista

What with games like *Gran Turismo 3* and *Project Gotham* on the market, anyone going for the whole Japanese-sports-car-racing-sim thing better have a hook. **Capcom**'s solution? Give the game a cartoony look reminiscent of *Jet Set Radio*, but retain all the licensed cars to keep the gearheads happy. Looks freakin' cool to us. Now let's just pray the online play from the import makes it to these shores this **fall**.

Pride FC

This **summer**, **THQ** and **Anchor** (creators of *UFC* for DC and *WWF Raw* for Xbox) will bring the "realistic-fighting" craze to the PS2 in the form of *Pride FC*, based on the real-world Pride Fighting Championships. Featuring combatants of various fighting styles—wrestling, karate, kick-boxing, judo, etc.—and the usual host of gameplay modes and features, it should make for an interesting take on the hardcore fighting genre.

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Violence

PlayStation®

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PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY

BLOODSUCKING LITTLE #%@!

While Eidos' new bloodsucking game is called *Mr. Mosquito*, that's impossible. Only female mosquitoes are capable of sucking the life juice from humans. Perhaps the person in charge of the name change didn't pass high-school bio...or maybe it was a malaria fever dream.

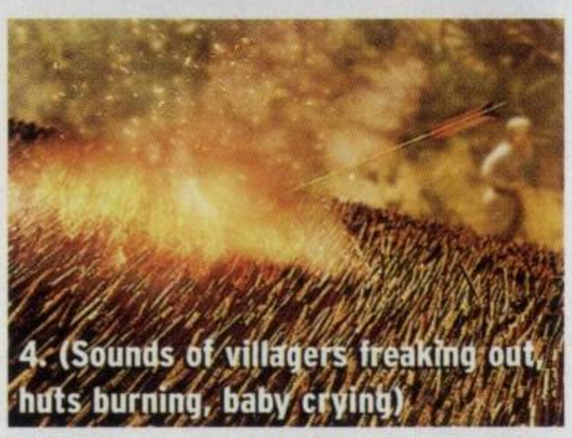
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny

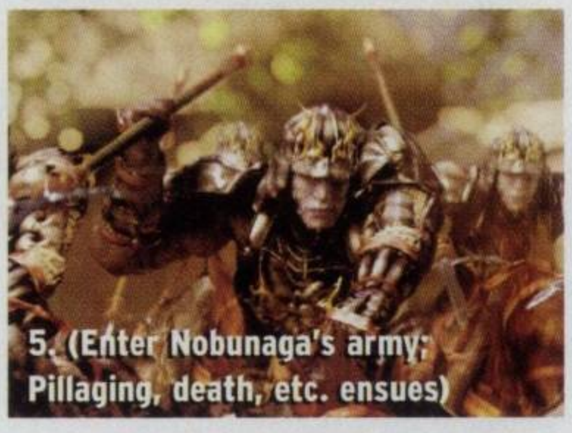
"*Oni*" is Japanese for demon. "*Musha*" is what you, as 16th-century samurai Jubei Yagyu, do to said demon's nuts in this sequel to **Capcom**'s hit adventure game, due **this summer**. Assisting you are four sidekick characters (whom both you and the computer control at different times), and of course plenty of weapons, including swords, spears, a bow and guns. Controls feel identical to the last game—sidestep, block, slash and slice—but with added moves including special attacks activated with fighting-game-style motions (down, left, button). And we've already seen a few cool new graphical surprises, like heavy rain (pictured right) that causes ripples in all the puddles on the ground.

1. (Voice-over): "A foreign land, a simpler time..."

2. "...all was peaceful..." (Sound of child's laughter)

3. "...THEN CAME NOBUNAGA!" (Cue booming war drums)


4. (Sounds of villagers freaking out, huts burning, baby crying)


5. (Enter Nobunaga's army; Pillaging, death, etc. ensues)

Mr. Mosquito

Remember when we said "there's no chance in hell of Sony flying [*Mr.*] *Mosquito* over to America" back in our preview of the Japanese version? Well, we were half-right (some might say half-wrong): It's not Sony, but rather Eidos' new **Fresh Games** label who has the stones to bring this quirky...uh, make that *bizarre* mosquito life-simulator to the US of A in **March**. Swoop around the (relatively) gigantic rooms of a typical Japanese household as one of the teeny buggers, searching for power-ups and waiting for an opportunity to feed. Once you find an opening, suck your victims dry by twirling the analog stick. But suck too long (heehee) or too hard (baahahaha) and you risk getting swatted, or entering Battle mode against a very itchy and very annoyed family member about 10,000 times your size. Fa-ree-kay.

Mad Maestro

You've rapped cool and samba'd the night away, but you hunger for a different kind of music game. Well, dust off those periwigs and batons, folks, and get set for *Mad Maestro*, coming this **March** from Eidos' **Fresh Games** label.

You've been recruited to prevent the town's prestigious concert hall from shutting down by turning the people on to classical music. To "perform," you press a button (sometimes with a directional) in time with the music and use varying degrees of pressure on the PS2's analog buttons. Bravo!

PlayStation 2

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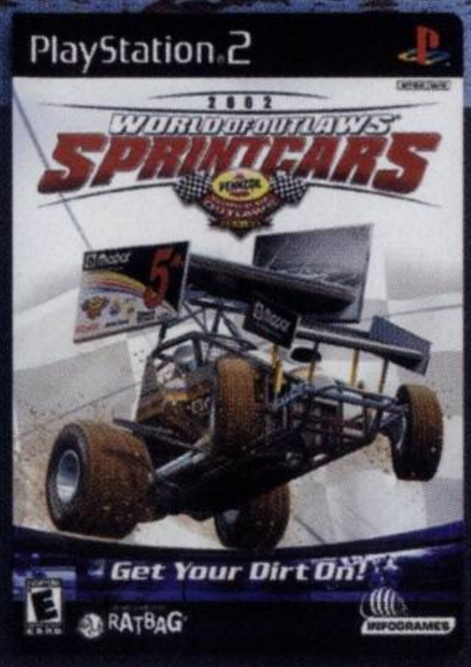

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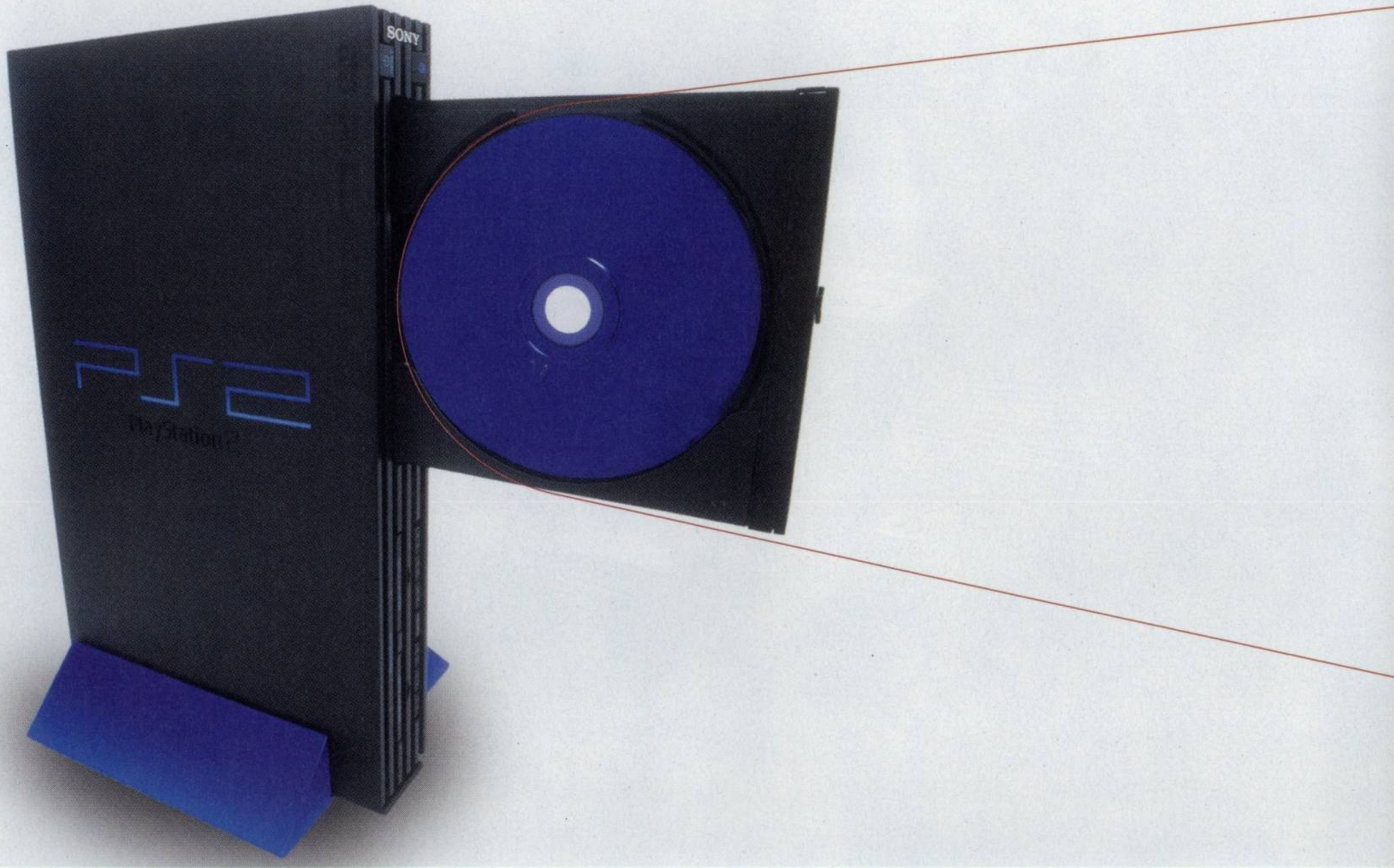

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PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY

PARTY (RE)-MIX

Soon after *Wipeout 3*'s launch in Europe, a special edition of the game was released which included a number of remixed tunes from the first and second *Wipeout* titles. Unfortunately, due to *WO3*'s lackluster performance in the U.S. market, the package never came out here.

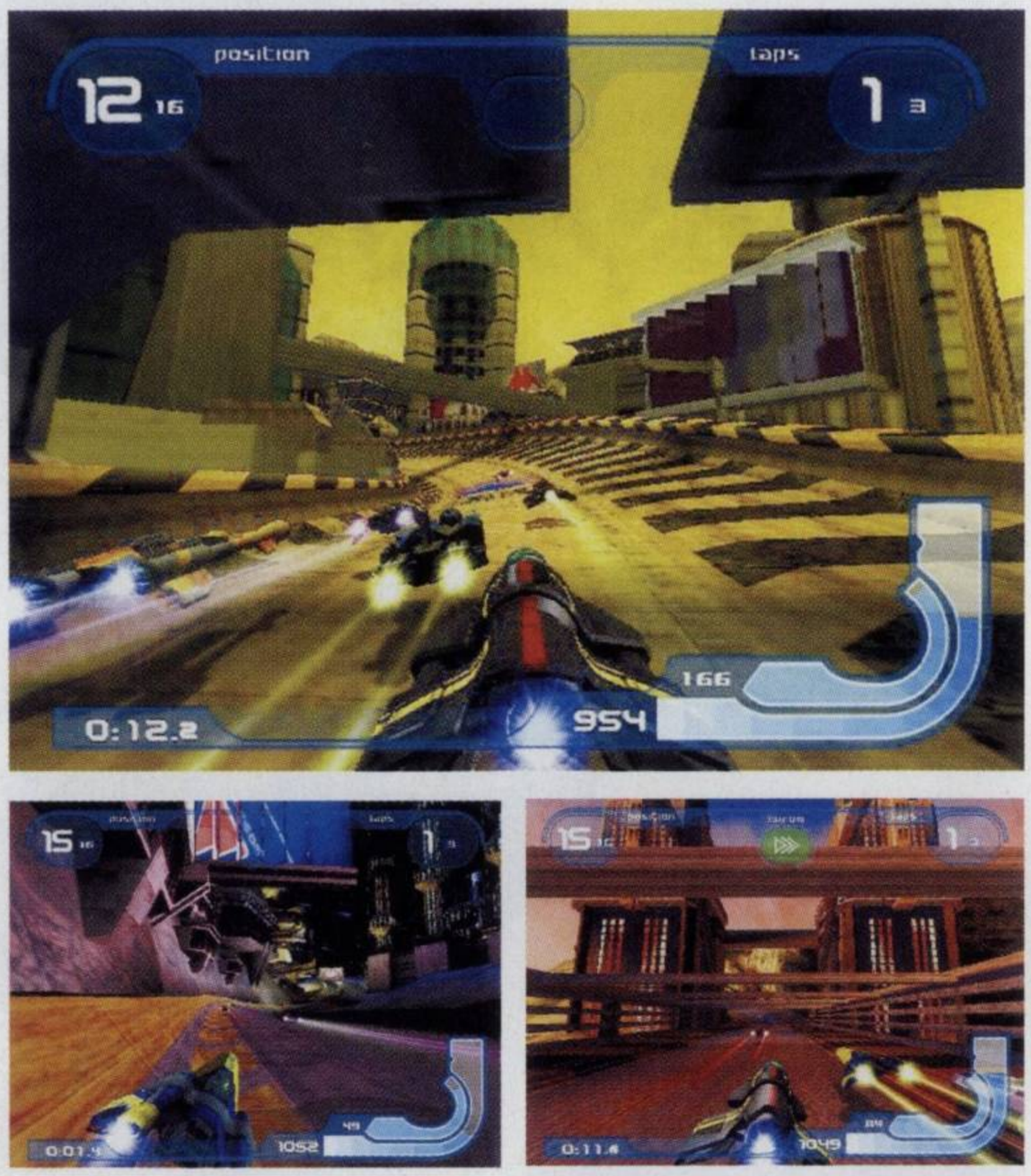
Wipeout Fusion

After a depressingly lengthy wait, fans of the *Wipeout* series now have their next fix in sight. *Wipeout Fusion* is almost here, and it's shaping up to be everything promised.

Fusion is a tremendous showcase for the PS2's 3D power, and its lighting effects are some of the best yet seen on Sony's hardware. The attention to detail and sheer scope of the track environments will leave onlookers gasping. And that's before thrust is engaged—as is *Wipeout*'s trademark, *Fusion* is insanely quick. Another staple of the series is also present and correct: the all-new soundtrack features 19 tunes from celebrated dance acts, most of which live up to the pedigree of series highlights like Prodigy's "Firestarter."

Thankfully, *Wipeout Fusion* is every bit as playable as it is delightful to look at and listen to. The craft handle smoothly and responsively, and, despite the speed of proceedings, laps can be completed without any collisions whatsoever—with enough practice, of course. *Fusion* offers an expansive AG League. A two-player split-screen option complements this, while Challenge mode provides a bevy of scenarios to tackle. Arcade and Time Trial round out the package.

We got to play a pretty early version of *Fusion*, so there were a few technical issues that still need to be resolved. Assuming the developers can iron that stuff out, *WF* looks to make up for the less-than-stellar *Wipeout 3* that most of us would just as soon forget. As for an American release date, well, **Sony** still won't admit to one, though we're all but positive it's going to happen.



Medal of Honor: Frontline

You probably won't find anyone named Jimmy Patterson in this day and age, but that's what they call your hero in the sequel to **EA**'s World War II blast-fest. Seems the lieutenant has to complete five missions (with three levels each) in order to find a HO. Don't get too excited—we're talking about the HO-IX, the experimental German equivalent of the Stealth Bomber. At least you don't have to go at it alone. Seems good 'ol Jimmy can radio orders to a squad of his drinking buddies while he fights on notable fronts such as Omaha beach and Nijimen Bridge. The Nazi killin' begins this **summer**, so cut that vacation to Cozumel a couple days short.

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OR SIMPLY CAUSE COMPLETE MAYHEM

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FILL THE SCREEN -
EACH CITIZEN REACTS DIFFERENTLY TO EVENTS

WATCH YOURSELF - DEATH SQUADS PROWL
THE STREETS LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

MATURE
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Blood and Gore
Violence

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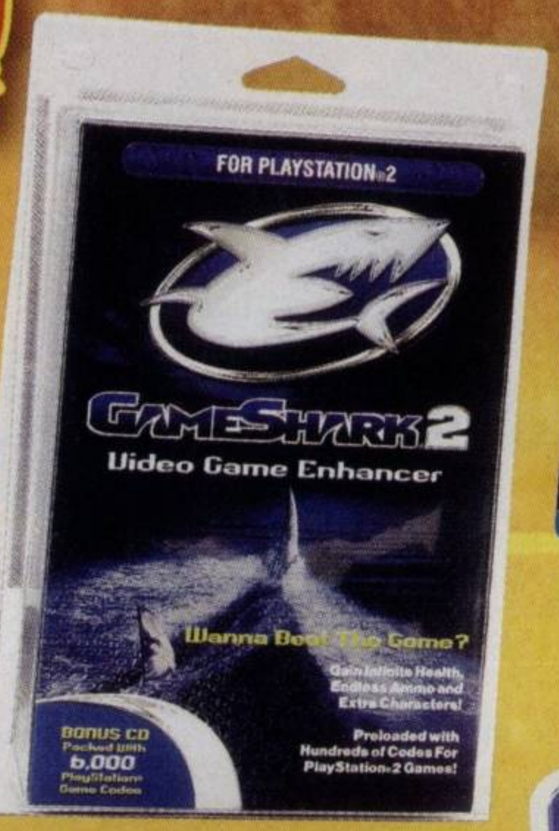

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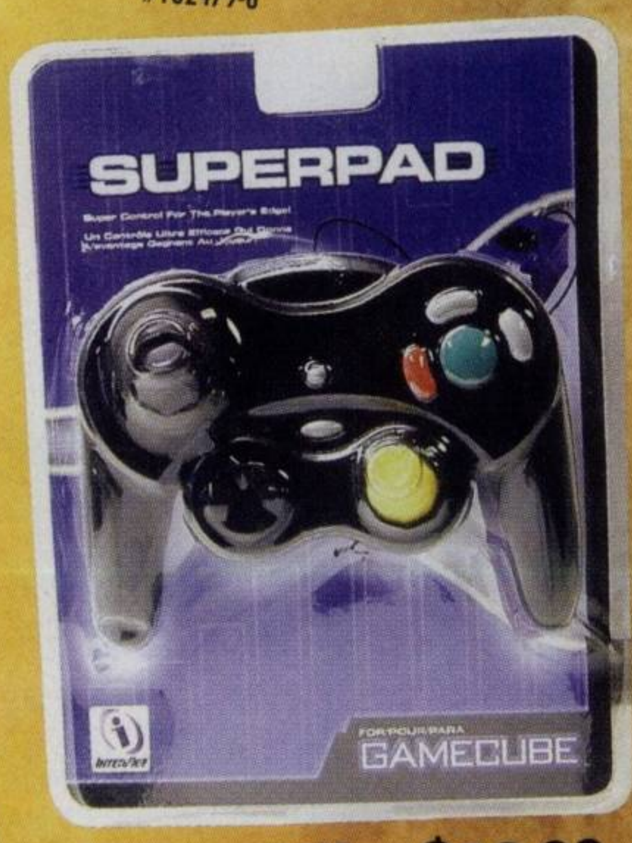

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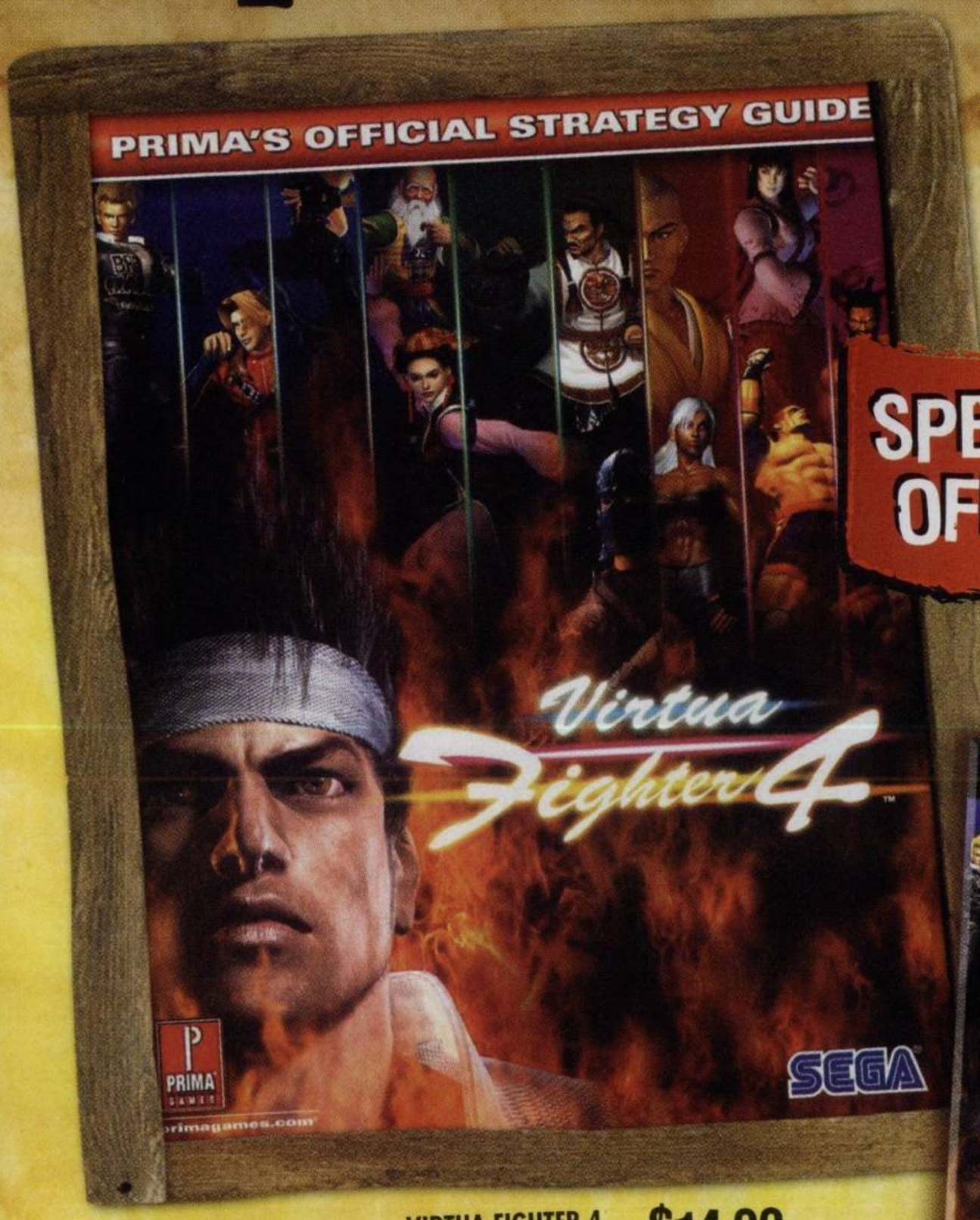

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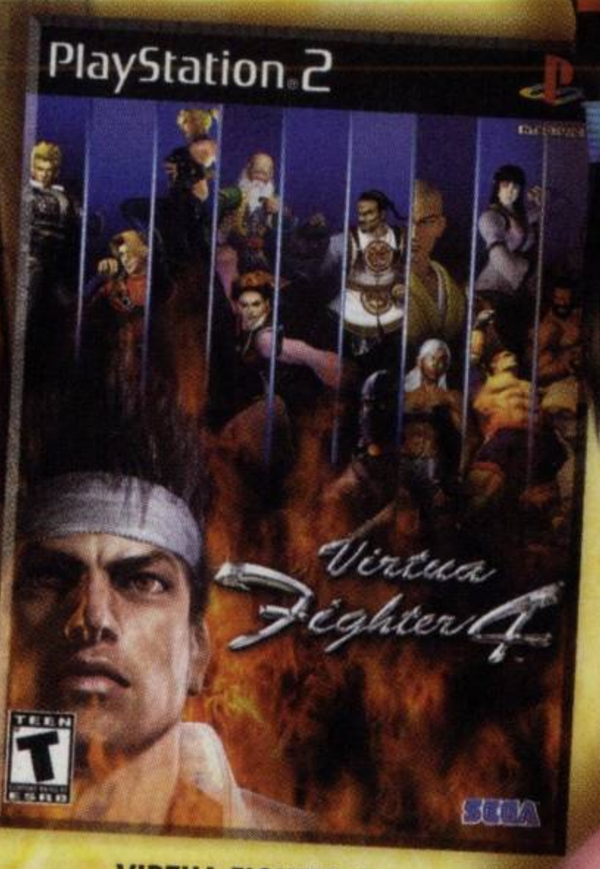

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PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY

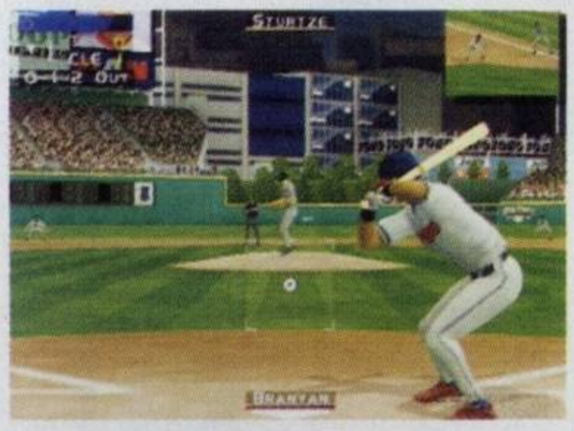
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure

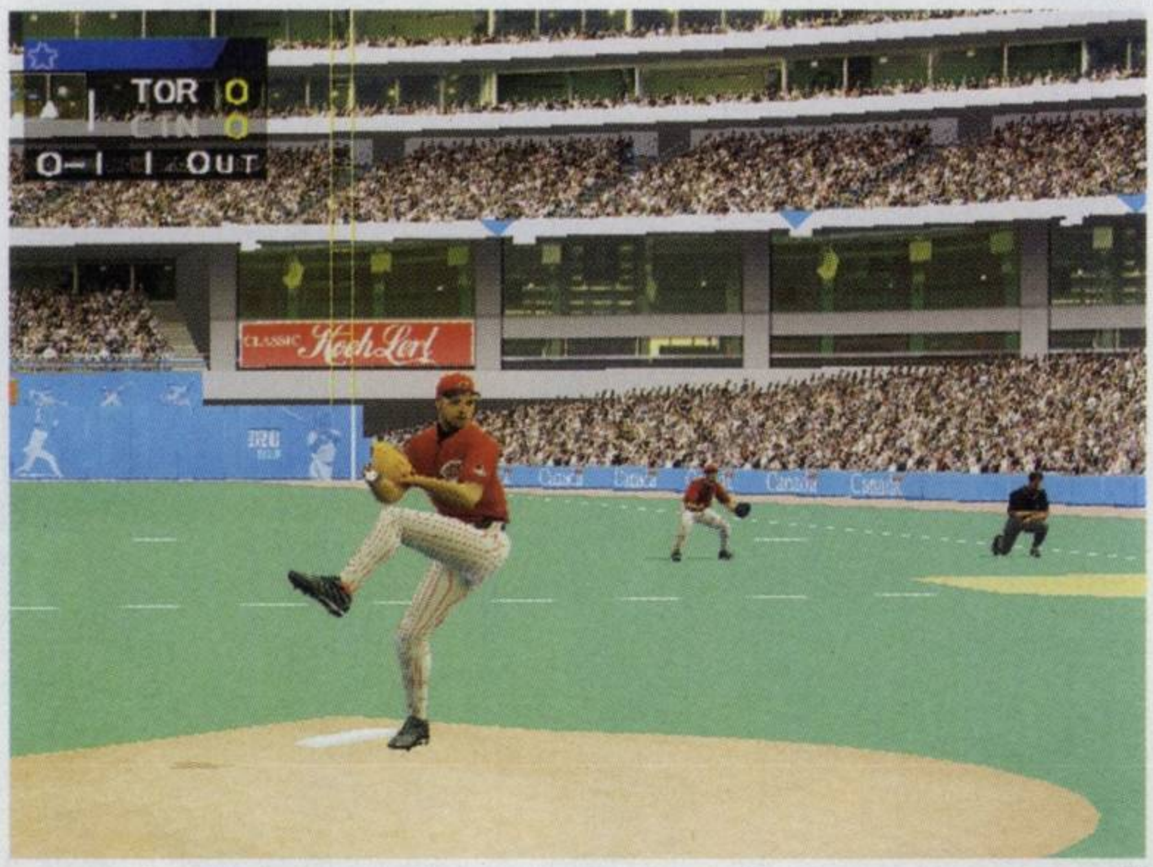
BIZAROO MAN

Those of you with an interest in anime will be glad to know that the video series *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*, which is based on the same comics as the PS2 game, is going to be released in the U.S. Check out www.synch-point.com for info.

All-Star Baseball 2003

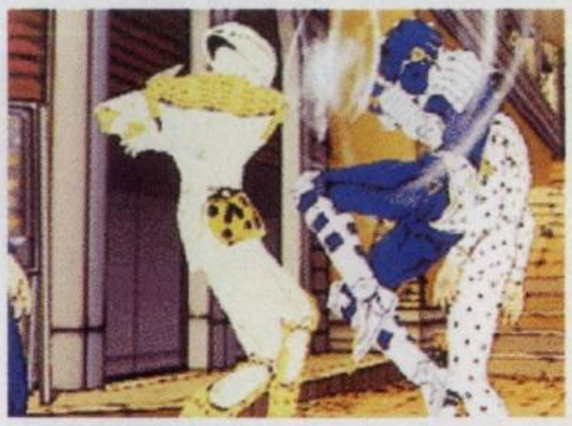
The batting gloves are off in the PS2 baseball war, and **Acclaim**'s *All-Star Baseball* has shown up standing tall. Last year's glitches are cleaned up, and there's a score of extras. Besides the Franchise mode which features minor-league systems, the Create-A-Team should inspire wannabe GMs to start their Alaska Beluga Whales from scratch. *ASB2003* should be out **now**.





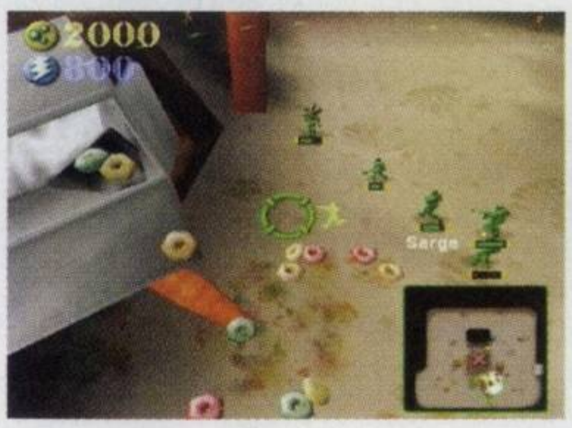
Jojo's Bizarre Adventure

The Dreamcast *Jojo's* collection zoomed beneath the radar of most gamers, offering a bewildering amalgamation of *Darkstalkers*-style gameplay and flamboyant characters. **Capcom** cleared the slate for this equally weird sequel, a 3D action game with slick, cel-shaded graphics. You won't spy any returning characters either, as it takes place many years after the first. Just like in the last game, each character can summon a Stand, an otherworldly friend to help with the fight. Stand names include White Album, Sticky Fingers and Sex Pistols, so it's obvious that the creators' music fetish hasn't changed either. Headbang along with Jojo later this **fall**.



Army Men RTS

Five years ago, a strategy game starring plastic army men became a sleeper hit on PC. **3DO** has since piled shooters, action games and lion-filled adventures on us, but no console *Army Men* game mimicked the series' progenitor...until now. The warfare wizards at **Pandemic Studios** hope to revitalize the franchise. All the way-points, tank rushes and deep strategizing of the genre gets put through the plastic filter this **April**.



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PREVIEW

Turok: Evolution

Publisher:	Acclaim
Developer:	Acclaim Studios Austin
Players:	1-4 (maybe more)
Genre:	Action
% Done:	50%
Release:	September 2002
Also On:	Xbox, PlayStation 2
Web Address:	www.turok.com

The Good: The weapons. *Turok* has been known for its big gaudy guns, and this game won't disappoint.

The Bad: The Turok team fired small arms at huge slabs of beef to nail down the sounds.

And The Ugly: Afterward, they gathered the shredded beef bits and made sandwiches. OK, so we might be lying about the last bit.

"[Turok] really likes a good bowl of chili."

—Dave Dienstbier, Creative Director, Acclaim Studios Austin

Every first-person shooter has a sniper mode, but there's an extra-special feeling you get from taking down a 2-ton lizard with one shot.

They may not look that bright, but these reptilian pains in the butt will take cover during firefights.

Turok is a Texan. Well, technically he isn't, since "the tribes of the Southwest were here before Texas existed," Dave Dienstbier, creative director at Acclaim Studios Austin, tells us. But let's cut the crap. No matter how you spin it, our fabled hero is from the state that houses Houston, winner of the prestigious Fattest City in America award for the last two years. With that in mind, maybe we shouldn't have been that surprised when Dienstbier revealed Turok's darkest secret: "He really likes a good bowl of chili."

The fun starts in 1886 when Tal'Set (that's Turok's old-school tribal name, or something) fights his nemesis, who sports an equally cool name: Captain Tobias Bruckner. A few words of advice: Never screw with a cap'n. Tal'Set probably wished he knew that when Tobias tossed him into a mysterious rift that teleported him to a dino-infested Lost Land. It sucks when that happens. But not for us gamers.

This rift conveniently gives Acclaim the ability to transport *Turok* back to the hostile jungle environments that made the original game so popular. Or "back to its roots," as Dienstbier puts it. This isn't your grandfather's digitally desolate jungle, however. It's a living, breathing, smorgasbord of shrubbery and trees that sway, swing and best of all, get blown away. Remember the rustling of the brush that preceded a raptor jumping out to snatch up a two-legged snack in *Jurassic Park*? You'll experience it here, and more. In the jungle level that I tried,

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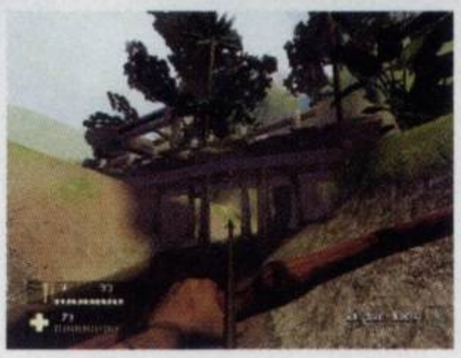
Pay two bucks and masquerade as a Texan. The Texan card, given to newborn Texan babies, states that "...the bearer of this card has consistently demonstrated the true spirit of Texas in thought, word and deed...and is duly entitled to enjoy the many wonders of the Lone Star State." Purchase it at www.cowboysncadillacs.com.



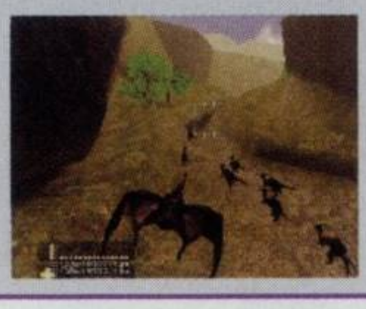
Make the battlefield look like the end of a frat party with these nifty poison arrows (above).

Tur...er...Tal'Set was surrounded by the beasties. Instead of plugging them one by one, I was told by the Acclaim guardian angel to plug away at the trees instead. "Hell no, the trees ain't got teeth!" I replied. The steady voice of the Acclaim angel persuaded me otherwise. To humor him, I shot the trees. And... timberrrrr...they fell...on top of my head. Game over. My peers mocked me. I cried. You see, what I was supposed to do is shoot them from a different angle so that they would fall smack down on top of the dino baddies. The guardian angel demonstrated the error of my ways by effortlessly cutting down half the forest with a minigun, thus squashing the reptiles with enough falling timber to fill 10 Home Depots.

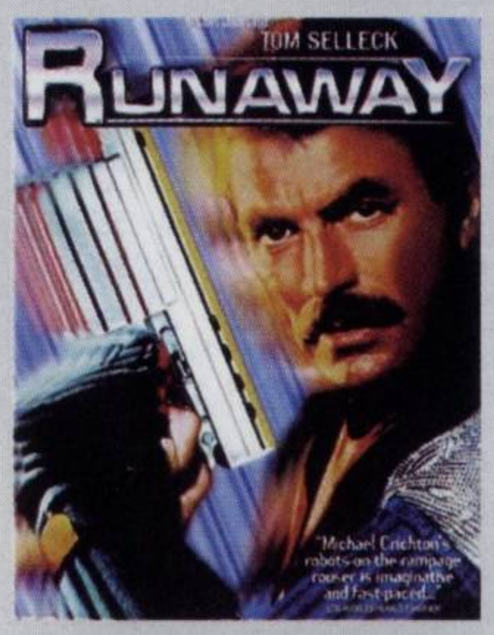
Most of the beasts won't sit and take a beating like the forest dinosaurs (who have brains the size of cashews, so you'll have to excuse their natural stupidity). Human-dino hybrids and other evolved enemies (usually the ones that shoot their prey instead of biting it) are much more clever. Think *Halo* and you know what Acclaim is aiming for. The early version already had bad guys intelligently diving for cover and flanking their targets, making me wonder how smart the finished game will be. Whether it will surpass the fantastic artificial intelligence in Microsoft's game is anyone's guess at this point. I can tell you that *Evolution* will put up a spirited fight. Just make sure that you don't forget to say "Don't mess with Texas" after each frag. Tal'Set wouldn't have it any other way. —*Kraig Kujawa*

FLIGHTS OF FANCY

Talk about getting back to its roots. *Evolution* has flight levels that were slated to go into the first game years ago, but were scrapped due to system limitations. Suffice it to say, dive bombing dinos to bits provides a nice break from arrow slinging.



ARACHNOPHOBIA



Unless you're a student of fine cinema, chances are you haven't seen the '80s futuristic thriller *Runaway*, starring a manly Tom Selleck. The movie, directed and written by writer John Crichton, depicts a battle where machines turn against their human masters. It probably should have been called *Terminator for Dummies*. The evil nemeses of the picture? Small, deadly, robotic spiders similar to the ones you use in *Turok: Evolution* to remotely poison and distract enemies. We suggest you watch and learn from the movie so that you don't repeat the mistakes made by Tom Selleck and his spider-fighting comrades. God bless their heroic souls.

PREVIEW

Soccer Slam

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	Visual Concepts
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Sports (Action)
% Done:	80%
Release:	April 2002
Teams:	Six
Web Address:	www.sega.com

The Good: Even in its current state, the backbone of the game (gameplay and A.I.) is solid.

The Bad: Over-the-top, silly animations may be too much for older gamers to stomach.

And The Ugly: There's nothing ugly here. In fact, it's quite attractive.

"In between the body slamming, you'll probably want to score a goal or two as well."

Players resemble thugs, video game vixens and even cross-dressers. Oh wait, it's just a Scotsman. Sorry.

Underneath its cartoon exterior, Soccer Slam is actually deep with gameplay and strategy. Don't judge a book by its cover.

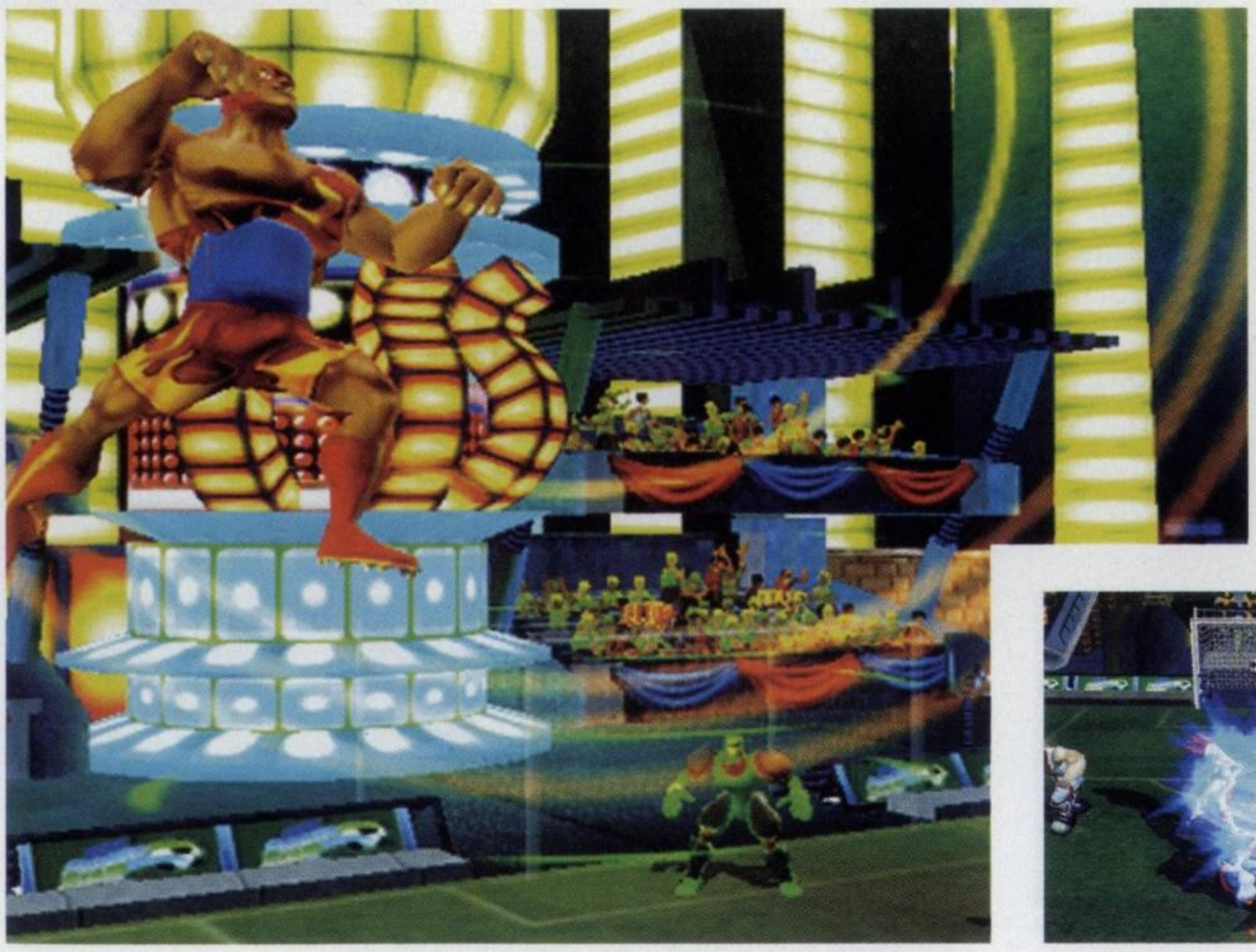
To borrow a line from the movie *Spinal Tap*, *Soccer Slam* walks a fine line between clever and stupid (I mean that in the nicest way possible). On one hand, it takes Midway's arcade-sports formula to the next level with innovations like team power-ups and special spotlight moves. On the other, its cartoon sensibilities and dramatic slow-motion clips cater straight to the younger crowd. Whether you interpret that as clever or stupid is none of my business.

As a three-on-three contest based loosely on soccer, the game boils down to your ability to stay upright on a hostile, anything-goes playing field. In between the body slamming, you'll probably want to score a goal or two as well. It's that simple.

A variety of special moves help you weave through the ranks unmolested (if you're lucky)—dekes, speed bursts and spins, to name a few. The real challenge, however, is putting the ball in the net. Each character is capable of powering up and delivering signature strikes, with the best moves displayed in slow motion, a la *The Matrix*.

On the other side, defense consists mostly of tripping up your opponents with slide-tackles, or by simply smacking them across the head and body (penalty-free, of course). The longer you play, the more you build up your team's abilities, and unlock new and interesting power-ups.

Visual Concepts has this unique soccer title squarely on the right track. —*Dean Hager*



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GAME BOY ADVANCE

PREVIEW

WWF Wrestlemania X8

Publisher:	THQ
Developer:	Yuke's
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Wrestling
% Done:	50%
Release:	Summer 2002
Also Try:	*Legends of Wrestling*
Web Address:	www.thq.com

The Good: Includes WWF newcomers Rob Van Dam, Booker T, DDP and the Hurricane.

The Bad: Looks a heck of a lot like the *WWF SmackDown!* series. But maybe that's a good thing.

And The Ugly: Do we really need a new *WWF* game every six months?

Unlike *WWF Raw* for Xbox, *Wrestlemania X8* includes all the gimmick matches wrestling fans have come to expect.

The "American Badass" performs his patented rope walk.

Has it really been 18 years since the first Wrestlemania?! Things have certainly changed over the years; kid-friendly, muscle-bound cartoon characters like Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior and Brutus "The Barber" Beefcake have been replaced by a beer-swilling, trash-talking redneck named "Stone Cold" Steve Austin and a crotch-chopping hardcase named Triple H.

Wrestling video games have changed a lot, too. Cartoony, 2D graphics and crude sound effects have given way to photorealistic grapplers, intricately detailed 3D arenas, and TV-style camera angles and replays. The current game to define the state of the art—until the next *WWF* game arrives, that is—is *Wrestlemania X8*.

Created by the developers of *WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It* for PlayStation 2, *Wrestlemania X8* has all the bells and whistles WWF fans have come to demand in a wrestling game: 40 match types, a detailed Create-a-Superstar mode, backstage combat zones and a 35-character roster—including ex-WCW wrestlers Rob Van Dam, DDP, the Hurricane and Booker T. (Finally, video-game fans can thrill to the spectacle known as the Spin-a-roony!)

Wrestlemania's all-new engine focuses on simulation, reversals and momentum shifts instead of timing and button mashing, and the interactive crowd reacts to the action with cheers, boos and chants of varying intensity.

The game ditches *SmackDown! Just Bring It*'s ultra-short Story mode in favor of a more traditional Championship mode, in which players take their rookie jobbers up the ranks on a quest for the Heavyweight Championship Belt.

Of course, you also get all the usual eye candy, like pyrotechnics, full TitanTron videos and changing crowd signs—in other words, all the things that make a *WWF* game a *WWF* game. You may already own a wrestling game or two (or 12), but this one is still worth a look.

—Gary Mollohan

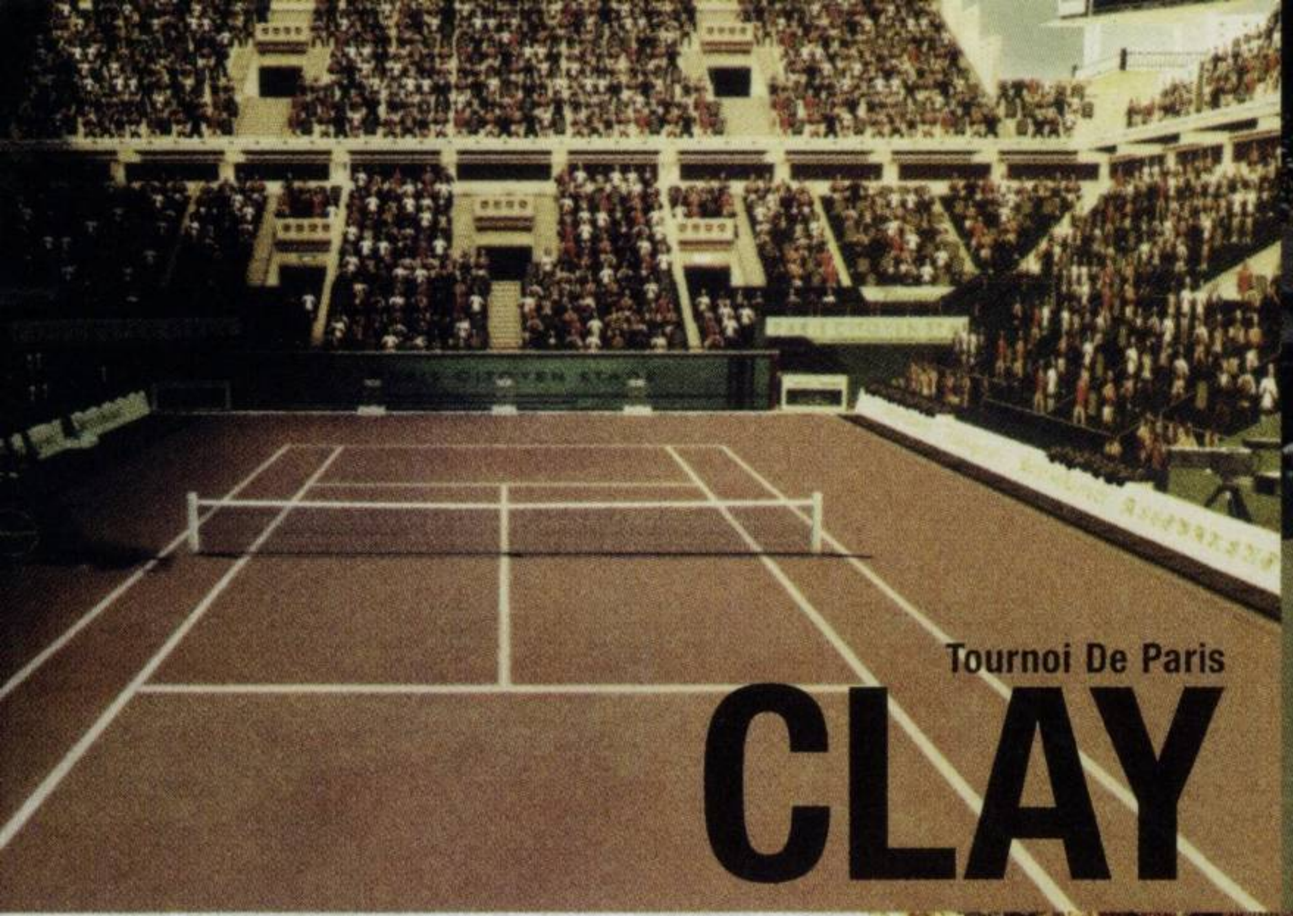
WHATCHAGONNADO?

Rumor has it former WWF superstars Scott "Razor Ramon" Hall, Kevin "Diesel" Nash and Hulk Hogan will be back in the federation by the time you read this.

WRESTLEMANIA

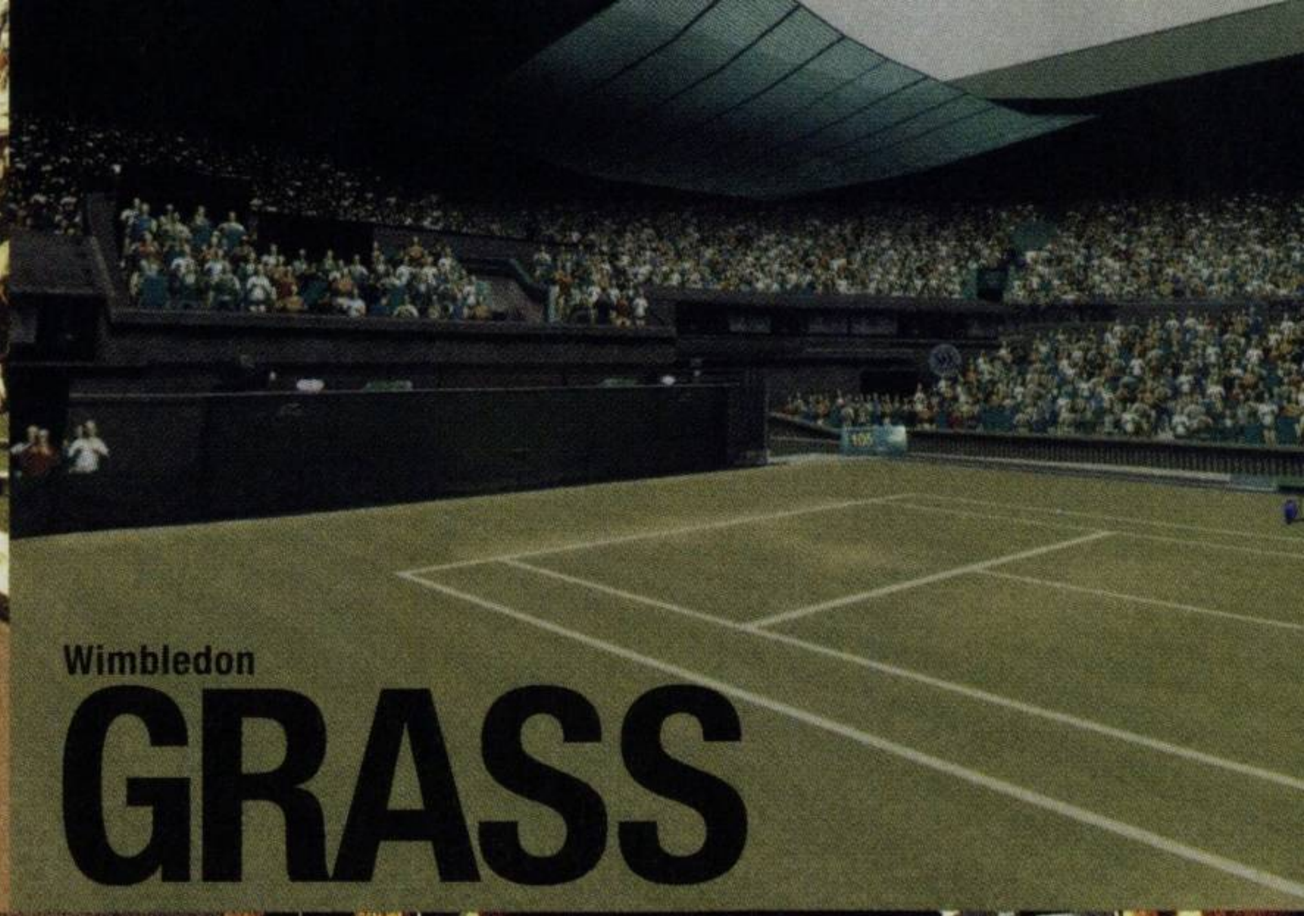
Fast Facts

• The first Wrestlemania took place on March 31, 1985 at New York City's Madison Square Garden.
• The first match in Wrestlemania history was Tito Santana versus The Executioner.
• The main event at the first Wrestlemania was Hulk Hogan and Mr. T versus "Rowdy" Roddy Piper and Paul Orndorff.
• Shortest Wrestlemania match: Diesel defeats Bob Backlund for the WWF title in just six seconds.
• Most Wrestlemania appearances: The only person to appear at all 17 Wrestlemanias isn't a wrestler; he's ring announcer Howard Finkel.



Tournoi De Paris

CLAY



Wimbledon

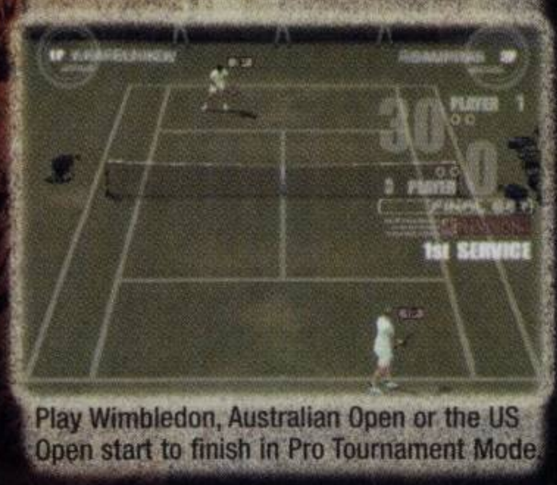
GRASS

PLUSH

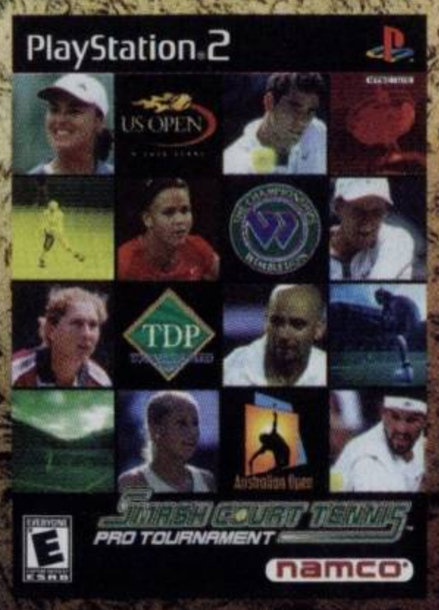
470 Murray Lane

Five game modes, including Pro Tournament Mode and Time Attack.

Play with up to four players with Multitap (for PlayStation®2).



Play Wimbledon, Australian Open or the US Open start to finish in Pro Tournament Mode.



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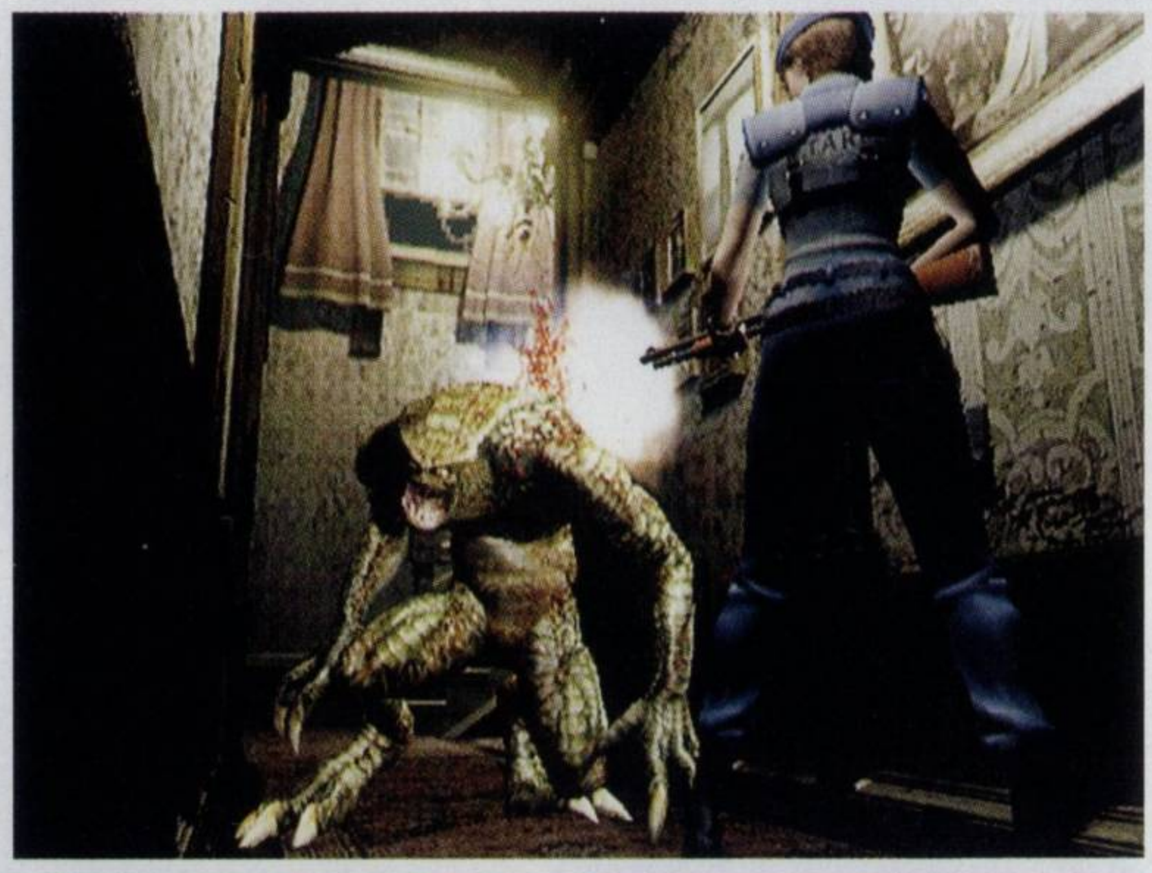
PREVIEW GALLERY

OVERKILL

Resident Evil **may be the most remade PlayStation game ever. After the original hit the PS1 in 1996, we saw *Director's Cut* ('97) and *Director's Cut-Dual Shock* ('98). The Sega Saturn and PC both saw ports of the game as well. Not to mention the final, "Greatest Hits" version released even later on the PS1.**

Resident Evil

Chris and Jill/went up to kill/some zombies Umbrella disturbed/ Wesker went nuts/and Barry, the putz,/ran off with all their green herb. Did ya understand all of that old children's tale from the sea? No? Consider yourself lucky—**this summer** you can experience the creepy action of **Capcom**'s original *Resident Evil* for the first time. All the (deep breath) head-explodin', ammo-reloadin', dog-chewin', blood-spewin', puzzle-solvin', magnum-revolvin', storage-boxin', shotgun-cockin', crow-flockin', master-of-unlockin' (phew) gameplay that put this game in our top 100 of all time now comes with some of the best graphics we've ever seen. Even those who know the mansion floorplan by heart will enjoy the new areas, puzzles, rendered movies, a revised combat system and more (we'd bet on a few new weapons at least).



FLAME BROILED

"How do ya like ya ribs?" Hopefully this kick-ass flame-thrower will have a larger role than its oh-so-brief appearance in the original *RE*. And the cutscene dialogue (below) is no longer completely ridiculous.

Scooby-Doo!

If ever a game screamed out to be made fun of, this would be the one. But surprisingly, *Scooby-Doo!* is turning out better than expected. As the bumbling pooch, you explore smartly designed levels, solve mysteries, and interact with the old gang. Because it's based on the classic version of the cartoon, you can expect cameos from Don Knotts and Tim Conway (yes!). **THQ** is bringing out *Scooby-Doo!* this **October**.

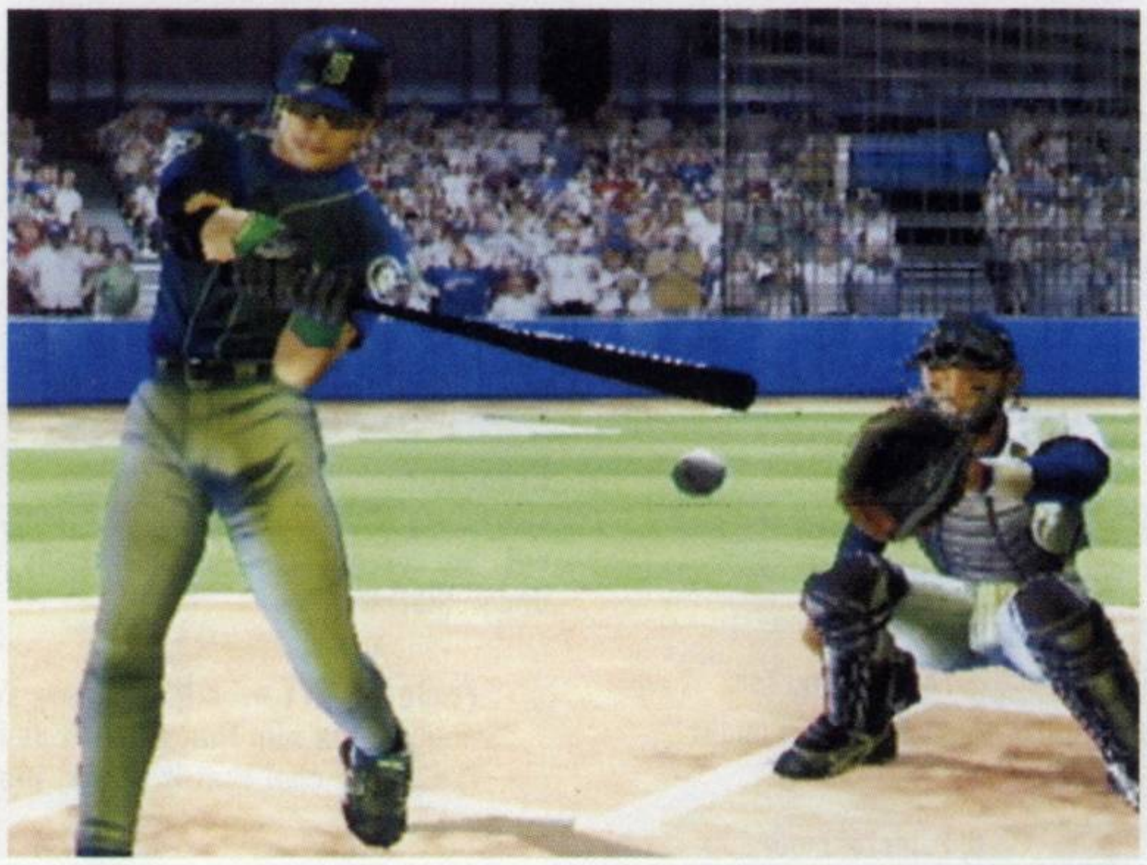
VOCABULARY 101

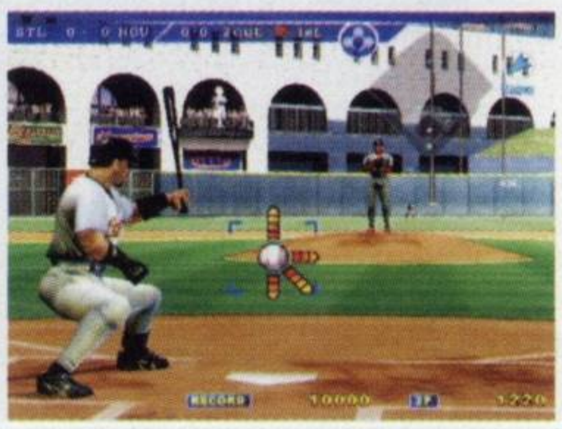
vex (veks) *tr.v.:* 1. To annoy, as with petty importunities; bother. 2. To cause perplexity in; puzzle. 3. To bring distress or suffering to; plague or afflict.

What a great title for the game! It sounds fun already.

Home Run King

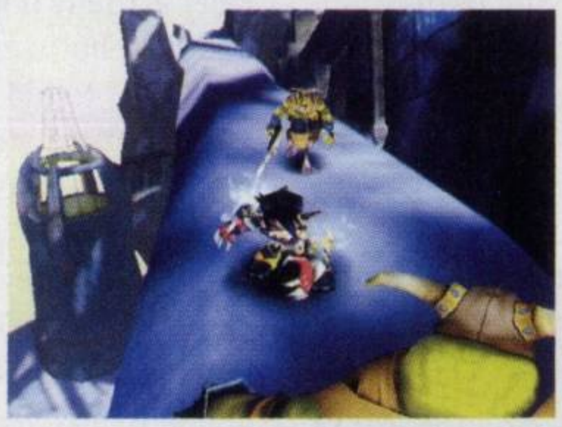
This **Sega**-published ditty may seem like a stick-up-the-butt sim (look at that detail), but it's actually as arcade as they come. Big ol' towering home runs and a spirited game pace are *HRK*'s calling cards. All the proper MLB licenses are in order, plus developer **Wow Entertainment** took pains to get Jeff "squatty" Bagwell's batting stance just right (center picture). 'Cube jocks can check it out this **March**.





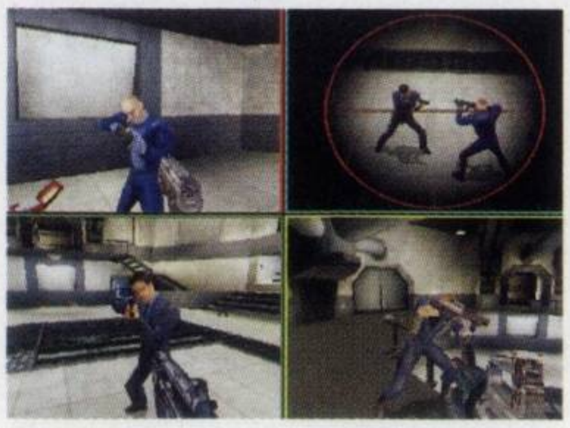
Vexx

Picture Mario with big claws, a spunky attitude and nasty attacks (the shoulder buttons control his arm weapons), and you'll have an idea of what **Acclaim**'s new platformer (due in **October**) is all about. The developers aren't shy about the similarities. In fact, they likened the action in *Vexx* to *Banjo-Kazooie*'s item gathering, but they have also taken the genre to the next level with enormous "if you see it, you can get to it" worlds and stunning visuals. The detail is something they can be proud of. Even at this early stage, the intricate inner clock level had more moving gears than a NASCAR race.



James Bond in Agent Under Fire

No, we're not screwing up and previewing the latest Bond title from **Electronic Arts** again. Even though these shots look no different, we promise they're GameCube screens—honest! Now you can execute sly break-ins with Q-lab toys, leave thugs choking on your BMW dust in the game's arcadey racing levels, and mack on chicks Bond-style on your GC. Set for release this **spring**.



PREVIEW

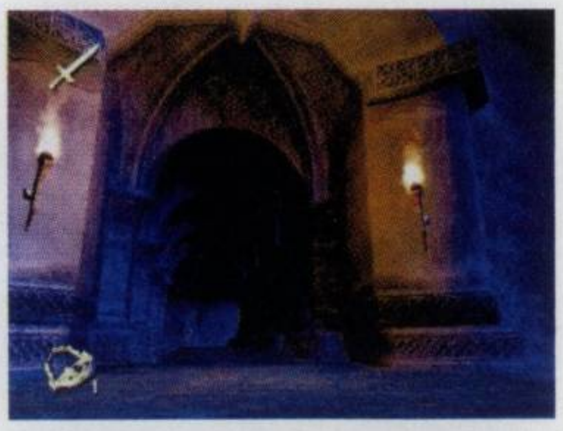
The Fellowship of the Ring

Publisher:	Universal Interactive
Developer:	WXP
Players:	1
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	33%
Release:	October 2002
Also Try:	EA's *LOTR* game (PS2)
Web Address:	www.lotr.com

The Good: Includes all the scenes cut from the film. Tom Bombadil is in the hizzouse.

The Bad: Fans hoping for design like that of the film might be disappointed.

And The Ugly: Painstakingly rendered hobbit feet.



Expansive environments faithfully reproduce Middle-earth, indoors and out. So, can a Balrog fit comfortably under that arch?

Frodo doesn't need his glowing sword "Sting" to tell him that this Orc is near. It's pretty cool that it works, though.

Once in a while, you'll play a game with a really cool story. But only one game can honestly boast having the best story...ever. Universal's *The Fellowship of the Ring* holds exclusive rights to J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Book of the Century." Sure, EA's *LOTR* game might be based on the hit movie (see sidebar), but this one stuffs in all the Tolkientacular details that the film grossly omitted.

Fans of the book will know precisely what to expect, as the game truly mirrors the plot of the beloved tome. You're playing the part of Frodo Baggins, the brave yet diminutive hero who must dispose of the all-powerful One Ring. The developers borrow a few pages from the Nintendo 64 *Zelda* games in terms of presentation and gameplay, but hey, we're not complaining. Since Middle-earth is so huge, *Fellowship* divides it into 24 more manageable chunks. Even so, some of these stages contain half a mile of terrain to explore. That means that Frodo and friends won't always have to fight their way through every situation. The option of avoision (it's a word, look it up) is always there.

As you progress through the narrative, you'll amass the titular Fellowship of the Ring. While you can't actually impale orcs as Aragorn or summon lightning bolts as Gandalf, you can call upon your comrades to aid you in combat. Actually, lil' Frodo himself might surprise you in the combat department. Hobbits appear timid, but this furry-footed fury really does a number on the monsters in the game. Who knew he had it in him?

Hardcore *LOTR* fans are a picky lot. They want no detail spared in the transition from page to screen, and in this game, they'll get it. Tom Bombadil, the merry, all-powerful man of the woods, shows up to save the hapless hobbits. Frodo and Co. deftly escape being devoured by Old Man Willow. Crusty Gandalf even slices some fools with Glorfindel. Also, the original text serves as inspiration for the game's visual style. Tolkien's dense description painted a verbal picture of his realm, and developer WXP has faithfully transferred that imagination to the graphics. The whole spectrum of super-high-tech

TOO MANY GAMES!

Ring X 2

This fall, two different sets of *Lord of the Rings* games debut. Universal Interactive will unleash the Xbox title previewed here and a GBA game. Both of these are based directly on the books, not the recent movie. Electronic Arts scored the official movie license, so it plans to spread games across several platforms around the same time. How did this happen? Well, two separate parties control the rights to the movies and books, so now we must contend with dueling products. It's kind of like the *Real Ghostbusters* cartoon and that other *Ghostbusters* that starred a dorky ape. Except this time, hopefully both competing series will be good.

$500 million

MAD LETTUCE

That's the worldwide gross of Peter Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* film as of January 2002.

Sorry, ladies—these boys are evil: Middle-earth's most despicable denizens such as trolls (seen here and to the right) and orcs (the two smaller shots below) come in several nasty varieties, as described in Tolkien's trilogy.

Xbox visual effects combine to make one hell of a pretty game.

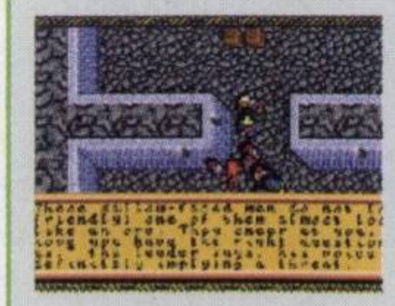
With both Universal's and EA's *Rings* games slated for release this fall, we may be in for some hot hobbit-on-hobbit action in the pages of *EGM*. Development of this version has been under way for well over a year now. It was actually demoed at the Electronic Entertainment Expo trade show in 2001. In fact, when Elijah Wood, the actor who portrays Frodo in the film, first played Universal Interactive's game last year, he gave it this glowing one-word review: "wicked!" Whether or not Universal's *LOTR* game ends up being the best of the litter remains to be seen, but its adamant reliance to the source material is admirable.

—Shane Bettenhausen

LOTR: A GAMEOGRAPHY

Several titles based on Tolkien's trilogy have emerged over the years. How does this one compare to its brethren? Favorably, methinks.

***The Lord of the Rings*, 1985**
From: Beam Software
System: Commodore 64
Four-color graphics and boring gameplay isn't exactly hobbit-forming.



***The Lord of the Rings*, 1990**
From: Interplay
System: IBM PC
Imagine all of the *LOTR* characters in *Ultima IV*. Or better yet, don't.

***The Lord of the Rings*, 1994**
From: Interplay
System: Super Nintendo
This crappy action-RPG started life as an NES game. Man, did it suck.

***LOTR* Drinking Game, 1999**
The most fun to be had with a deck of Middle-earth Collectible Cards is fan.theonering.net/morgulrats/metdg.html

PREVIEW

Bloodrayne

Publisher:	Majesco
Developer:	Terminal Reality
Players:	1
Genre:	Action
% Done:	20%
Release:	Fall 2002
Also On:	PS2, PC, GameCube
Web Address:	www.majescogames.com
The Good:	Superhuman senses.
The Bad:	Chopped-up Nazis shooting you from behind.
And The Ugly:	No corpse buffets. Bloodrayne only gains health by sucking the blood of the living.

WIN A BLOOD BANK

Who's that Vampire?

Put your blood-sucking skills to the test. Name each of these (in)famous vampires (without cheating) and claim "Vampire Trivia Whiz" status...oh, c'mon, just try it!

Legendary 15th-century Prince of Transylvania. Nickname: "Vlad the Impaler"

Being obsessed with counting got him a job with *Sesame Street*. Nickname: "Count Unibrow"

Anime bad boy who lusts for blood and the occasional blonde. Nickname: "The Hunter"

Known and loved for rebelling against Daddy. Nickname: "Dyslexic Dracula"

Famous for his Saturday-morning TV spots. Nickname: "Franken-berry's bitch"

Silent-film character in 1922 adapt. of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Nickname: "Toothy"

Answers:
1) Count Dracula; 2) The Count; 3) Vampire Hunter D; 4) Alucard; 5) Count Chocula; 6) Nosferatu

Sucking blood has never been so en vogue since Winona Ryder got S&M saucy with vampire Gary Oldman in 1992's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Nowadays, if you don't have a movie, TV show or vid coming out where no drop of blood goes unswallowed, like get with it already!

Looks like Terminal Reality got with it just in time with their latest action title, *Bloodrayne*. Not only does '*Rayne* serve up every goth boy's dream girl, Nazis and a shady occult underworld, its "*Indiana Jones* meets *Blade*"-inspired gun-fu action rivals big names like *Max Payne*.

Set sometime in the early 1900s to 1930s, Bloodrayne, a covert operative of an unnamed organization specializing in the paranormal, is the only one standing between Hitler and an artifact harboring tremendous power. But Hitler couldn't have asked for a more lethal blockade.

Heightened touch, taste, smell and sight, as well as superhuman strength and agility come naturally to this half-vampire, thus allowing her to pounce off and up virtually anything that stands still for a second (including a Nazi shooting right at her). John Woo-style mid-air side-shoulder slides, cartwheels and more acrobatic finesse quintessential in today's action hero, Bloodrayne sports a slick repertoire the Wachowski Brothers would be proud of.

Bloodrayne's svelte body also lets her carry all manner of drop-dead gizmos—up to eight different weapons ranging from rocket launchers to a *Mortal Kombat* "get over here" spear—on her back, hips

"We like to describe [*Bloodrayne*] as *Indiana Jones* meets *Blade*... think-on-your-feet-type action"

—David Elmekies, Director of Game Development, Majesco

VAMPIRE HUNTER

Due for release on March 22 this year, *Blade 2* promises more blood, more black leather, and of course, more flashy action sequences. Check out the trailer, get info, and glimpse shots from the movie at www.blade2.com.

A hazy blue fog signals Bloodrayne's Aura ability, which lets her scope out which victim's got the juiciest blood content.

and ankles. And yes, double fisting *any* pair of weapons at once is another one of her specialties. And if Bloodrayne's mobile arsenal isn't enough, piss her off good and an ability called Bloodlust kicks in, which lets her choose whether she wants to slow time down (Slow Mo), sniper-zoom in on an enemy (Zoom), or scan who in the vicinity's got the most nutritional bang for their blood (Aura).

The last of this trinity, Aura, is an essential feature in '*Rayne* since drinking blood is Bloodrayne's sole source of health. No medical packs or painkillers for this sister. She'll only drink the hot liquid of the living, even if the living happens to be missing half his body and is smart (or dumb) enough to crawl desperately away from his slasher. This point also brings up another impressive touch to '*Rayne's* overall gameplay. Smart Nazis.

Nazis will struggle to release their necks from Bloodrayne's sticky fangs, call for reinforcements, continue shooting even while lying in a blood pool, or crawl away in cowardice. So needless to say, Bloodrayne will be up to her neck in killer opportunities. OK, guilty for excessive use of puns, but you get the picture.

With four expansive locales spanning Louisiana to Argentina, fully destroyable environments, hidden passages, some secret drivable vehicles (Terminal Reality's real hush-hush about this), *and* at only 20 percent complete with ample time for tweaks, '*Rayne*'s set up for success. So keep those fangs sharp and shiny. Expectations will be high this fall, and Bloodrayne doesn't wait for anybody.

—Jeanne Kim

CALLING ALL TECH-HEADS

For all you graphic whores and audiophiles, *Bloodrayne* sports some impressive specs. Terminal Reality's proprietary "Infernal Engine" supports streaming geometry, super-detailed environment and character texturing, dynamic lighting and shadows, and a skeletal animation system which shows a stomach bulge as an enemy swallows a victim. Dolby 5.1 Surround is also supported and will work to bring '*Rayne*'s twisted world to life.

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

THE FORGOTTEN LEGACY

Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain **was originally developed for Sega's Saturn console, but never came out. So Activision ported it to the PlayStation hoping for better sales. Sadly, it actually ran better on the Saturn.**

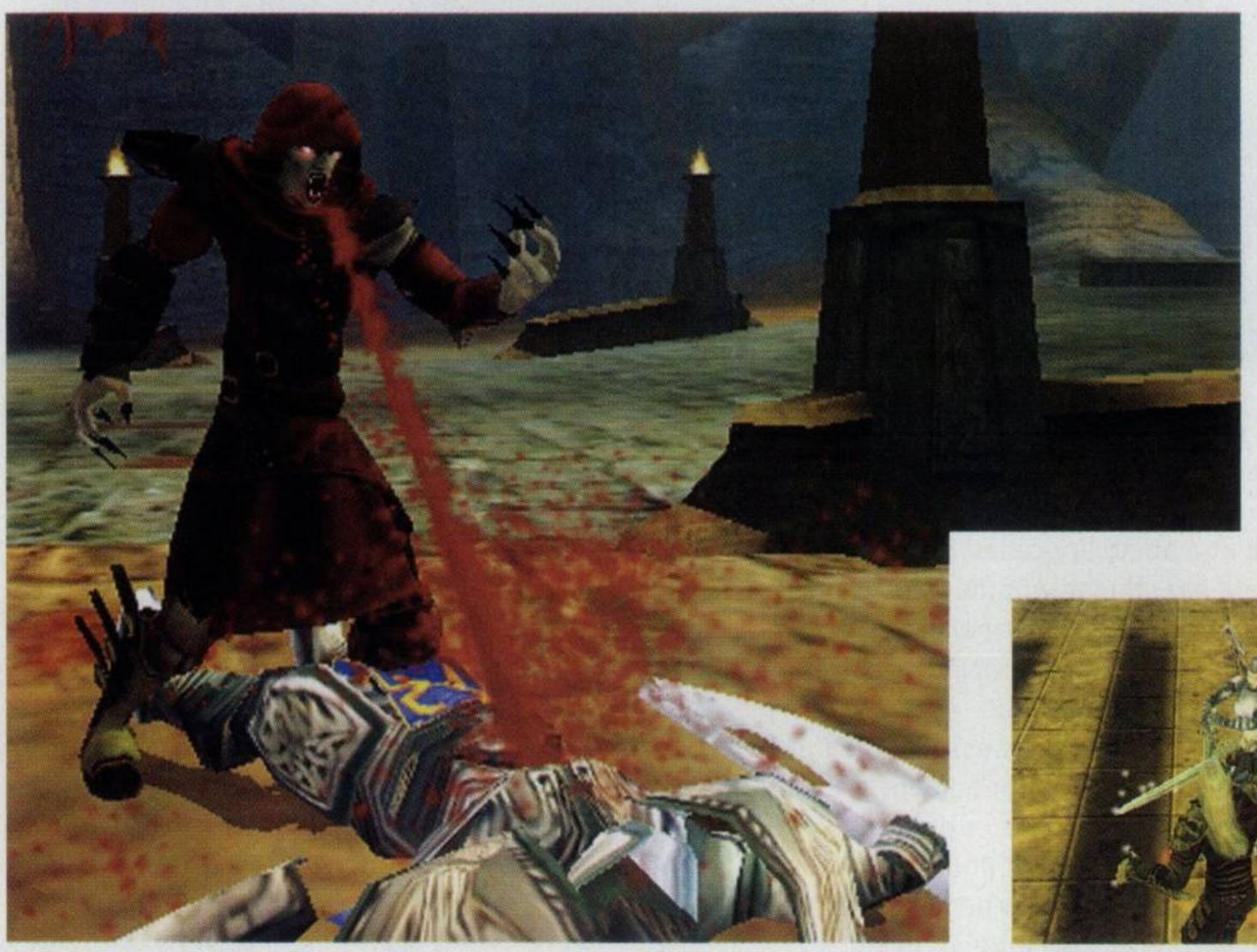
Blood Omen 2

Publisher:	Eidos
Developer:	Crystal Dynamics
Players:	1
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	75%
Release:	March 2002
Also On:	PlayStation 2
Web Address:	www.legacyofkain.com

The Good: Kain makes most game heroes look wussy.

The Bad: Are there enough vampire games coming out or what?

And The Ugly: Accidentally walking through an airborne blood cloud.



You know you demand respect when even the *blood* of your victims does your bidding (left). Kain needs to feed like this constantly throughout the game to keep his mystical powers charged.

CHOOSING SIDES

PS2 vs. Xbox

PlayStation 2 owners craving a tasty blood cocktail are also in luck. Eidos plans to ship *Blood Omen 2* for Xbox and PS2 simultaneously. However, Microsoft faithfuls appear to have the upper hand—with more detailed textures and a Dolby 5.1 soundtrack, the Xbox version taps a tastier vein.

Above, Kain glows with evil energy while a drunk clown lies face down in the mist...or something.

Like all good video-game heroes, *Blood Omen 2*'s star, Kain, brutally slaughters innocent townspeople, drinks the blood of his foes, and is maniacally blinded by vengeance. Actually, come to think of it, those aren't very heroic traits at all. Hey, who needs valor when you can be a bad-ass anti-hero? For the first time since the original *Blood Omen* game, Crystal Dynamics puts you in control of Kain, the deposed king of the undead, and the *Legacy of Kain* series may never be the same.

Chronologically, this title takes place 400 years after Kain's first appearance and 1,000 years before Raziel's adventure in the first *Soul Reaver*. The last few centuries have been rough, and Kain's power and influence have eroded. Angry, bitter and vengeful, he sets out to regain his lost powers, the Soul Reaver weapon and control of Nosgoth.

BO2 fuses action/adventure gameplay with standard RPG elements. You'll do your share of grisly murdering, but you must also chat up the locals in the pub to gain information. In combat, Kain's hand-to-hand fighting skills shine, and he can skillfully wield any weapon dropped by an adversary. However, these weapons can only sustain so much wear and tear before breaking. After felling a foe, Kain can heal himself by sucking his prey's blood. An impressive cloud of crimson spray flies from their corpses directly into his mouth. In addition to murderous moves, you'll also command abilities like shape-shifting and high jumping once you begin to amass the missing Dark Gifts.

Visually, *BO2* sports amazingly ambitious graphics. Exploring a crowded, medieval city and underground maze is entirely seamless, so there is no loading as you enter and exit buildings.

Kain's resurrection as the series' star is truly a grandiose one, and fans of the series will likely eat it up.

—Shane Bettenhausen

WHICH LEGACY OF KAIN HERO IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

PERSONALITY	FIGHTING STYLE	GOAL	VOICE ACTOR	FITNESS SECRET
As the fallen king of the vampires, **KAIN** bottles up a lot of animosity.	**KAIN** wields any blade around, but specializes in sucking blood.	**KAIN** wants revenge and to reclaim the Soul Reaver.	Might kill your pets.	AM/PM workout for **KAIN**.
RAZIEL took lemons and made lemonade, channeling his rage into heroism.	Old **RAZ** swings Soul Reaver and enjoys slurping up souls.	**RAZ** seeks Kain's head, but first wants to save the world.	Voiced Lazy Smurf. Really.	**RAZIEL** doesn't have abs due to a flesh-eating water "accident."

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activision.com

PREVIEW

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Publisher:	Electronic Arts
Developer:	The Collective
Players:	1
Genre:	Action
% Done:	50%
Release:	March 5, 2002
Web Address:	www.ea.com
Also Try:	*State of Emergency* (PS2)

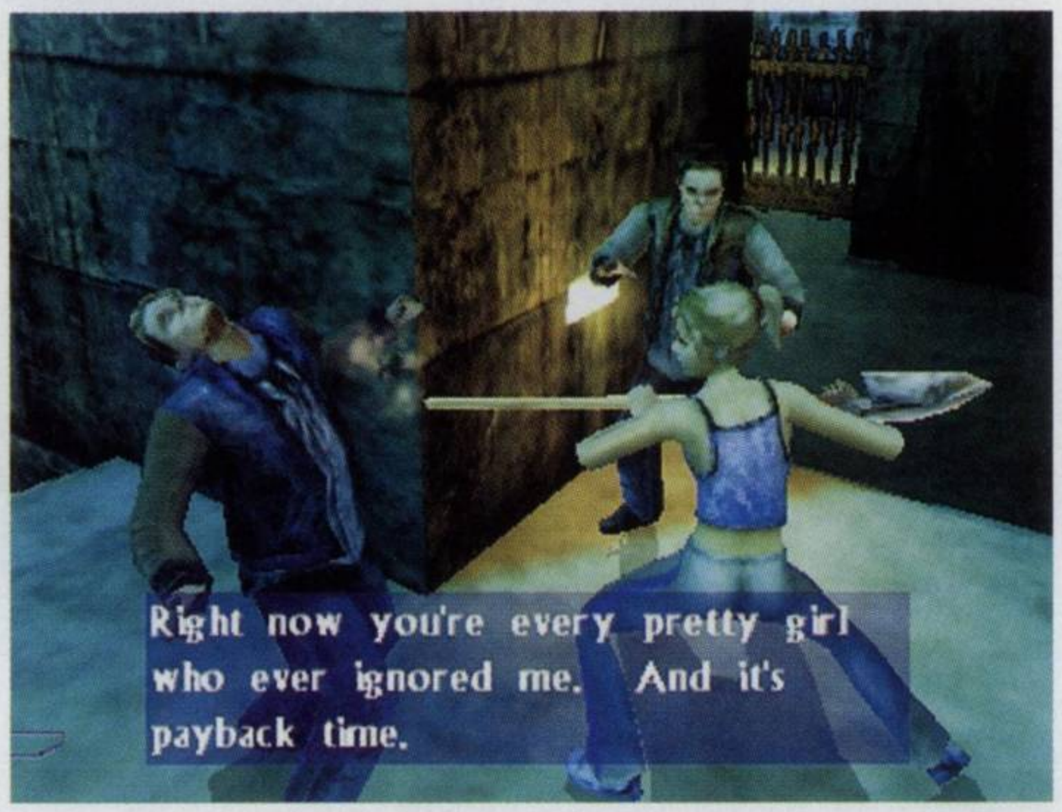
The Good: A strong graphical presentation, spot-on control.

The Bad: No two-player action; the show's cast members don't handle any of the voice acting.

And The Ugly: A vampire's face when he gets kicked in the 'nads.

With enemies like this, why would you even want friends? As long as you don't mind the whole blood-sucking thing.

The thing with most teeny-bopper vampires is that they can't stop spewing one-liners before they attempt to kill you.



Video games based on television programs are usually disasters (think *V.I.P.* or *The Dukes of Hazzard* on the PS1), so *Buffy*'s smooth transition from broadcast signal to interactive entertainment stands out as a true anomaly. I expected the game to look good—we've been getting great-looking screenshots from EA for a while now—but what took me by surprise is how fun this preview build is to play. So far, we've only gotten to go hands-on with a couple of levels, but those offered enough bang to sufficiently excite me about the potential of the finished package.

Take *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*, substitute shotguns and knives with *Charlie's Angels*-style chop-socky balletics, add a dash of sly humor, and you get a game that's surprisingly hard to put down. Buffy's movements are fluid and graceful; like Max Payne, her attacks are as fun to watch as they are to perform. And if you learn how to pull off any of the game's flashy combo routines, you'll be able to show off big time—few things impress onlookers more than a roundhouse/uppercut crossover topped off with a backhand impalement.

Buffy actually performs that move in the show, too. Pretty cool, eh? The Collective (the guys responsible for developing this) clearly understand what makes the television series tick, and that knowledge is reflected in all of the game's little nuances. For instance: The dialogue is all spot-on; just as in the source material, Buffy's enemies are caustic and witty, prone to blurting out amusing pop-culture riffs before baring their fangs. Not that Buffy is ever taken off guard; she's always prepared to deliver catty comeback lines of her own.

A special note to Sarah Michelle Gellar fans: This disc's cyber babe is a surprisingly good replica of your favorite television blondie. In fact, all of the character models look great: Willow is a dead ringer for Allyson Hannigan, and the polygonal Angel capably retains David Borneaz's smoldering expressions. All said, this is turning out to be a pound-the-joypad-'til-your-fingers-bleed thrash-fest, and I mean that in the best possible way.

—Ethan Einhorn

TRAINING CAMP

Learning From the Best

Everyone knows Buffy learned most of her combat routines from Angel and the English dude, but did you know she also trained with:

Name: Mike Haggar
Last Seen in: *Final Fight One* (GBA)

Haggar was the one to teach Buffy how to slam enemies into walls and concrete floors with style.

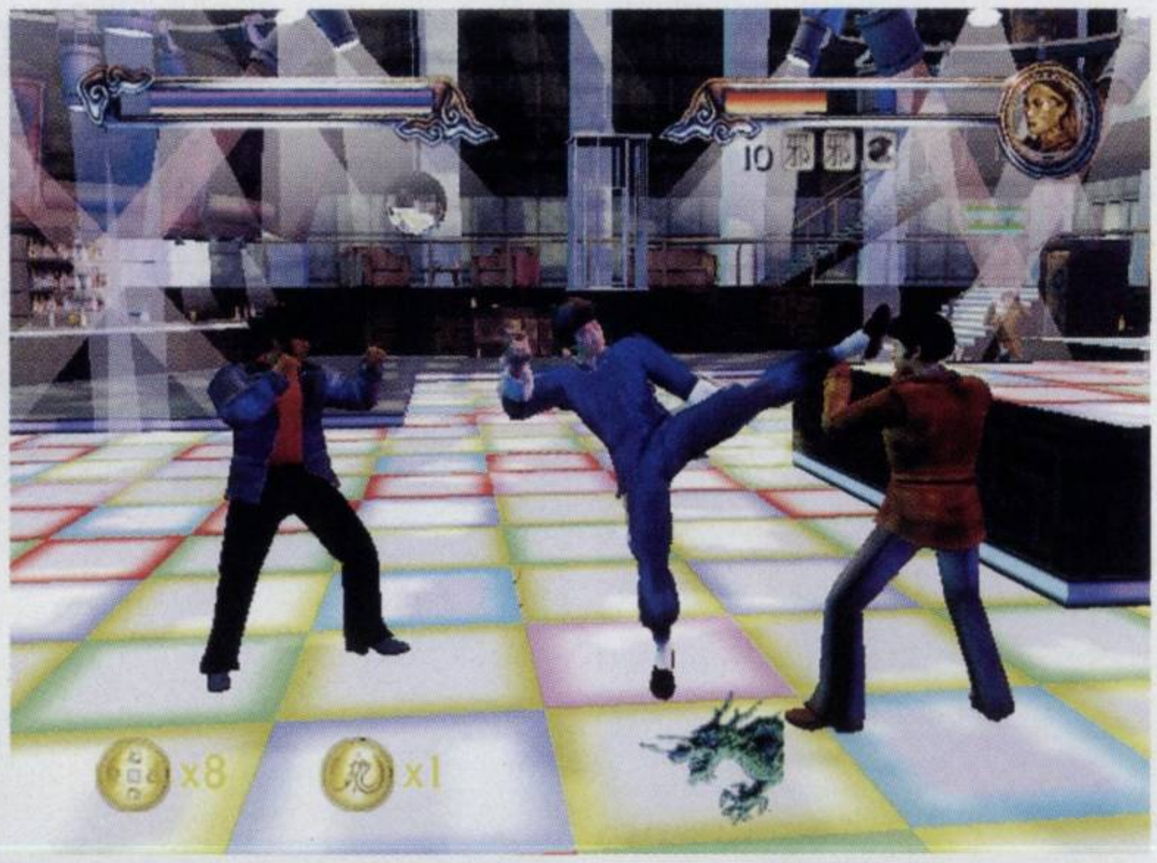
Name: Jill Valentine
Last Seen in: *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* (PS/DC)

Jill gave Buffy pointers on handling the undead, stressing the value of good, solid decapitations.

Name: Lara Croft
Last Seen: *Tomb Raider Chronicles* (PS/DC)

Who better to teach Buffy poise, patience and puzzle solving than Lara?

Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon



Legendary martial-arts master Bruce Lee is about to make a return to the video-game world in **Universal**'s upcoming *Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon* (due this **summer**). An action-based fighting game along the lines of *The Bouncer* (or *Final Fight*, for you old geezers out there), it tells the story of Bruce's journey to find his kidnapped father and retrieve the Golden Relic, the key to ancient secrets of the martial arts.

The action spans different locations around the globe including Hong Kong, England and Lee's birthplace, San Francisco. Developer **Ronin** is promising unique personalities for each of the game's enemies, making for more interesting action than your typical beat-'em-up. In addition, eight different martial-arts styles will be represented, including Lee's own Jeet Kune Do. A unique lock-on targeting system will allow you to take on several enemies at once, as only the master could, and besting enemies will net you tokens which can be used to purchase new moves.

Malice

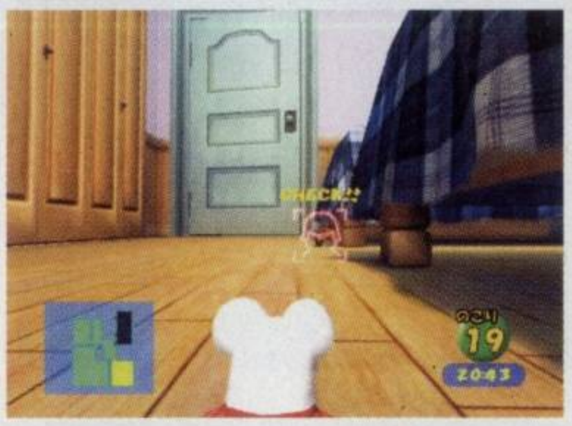
Created by **Argonaut** (the developers behind the *Croc* series, the new PS1 *Harry Potter* game and the original *Star Fox*), *Malice* is the tale of a young girl in a not-so-wonderful land, armed primarily with a big stick. The huge 3D levels provide plenty of space to fight bad guys with magical weapons like the Mace of Clubs, the Clockwork Hammer and the Quantum Tuning Fork. **Sierra** will publish *Malice* this **October**.

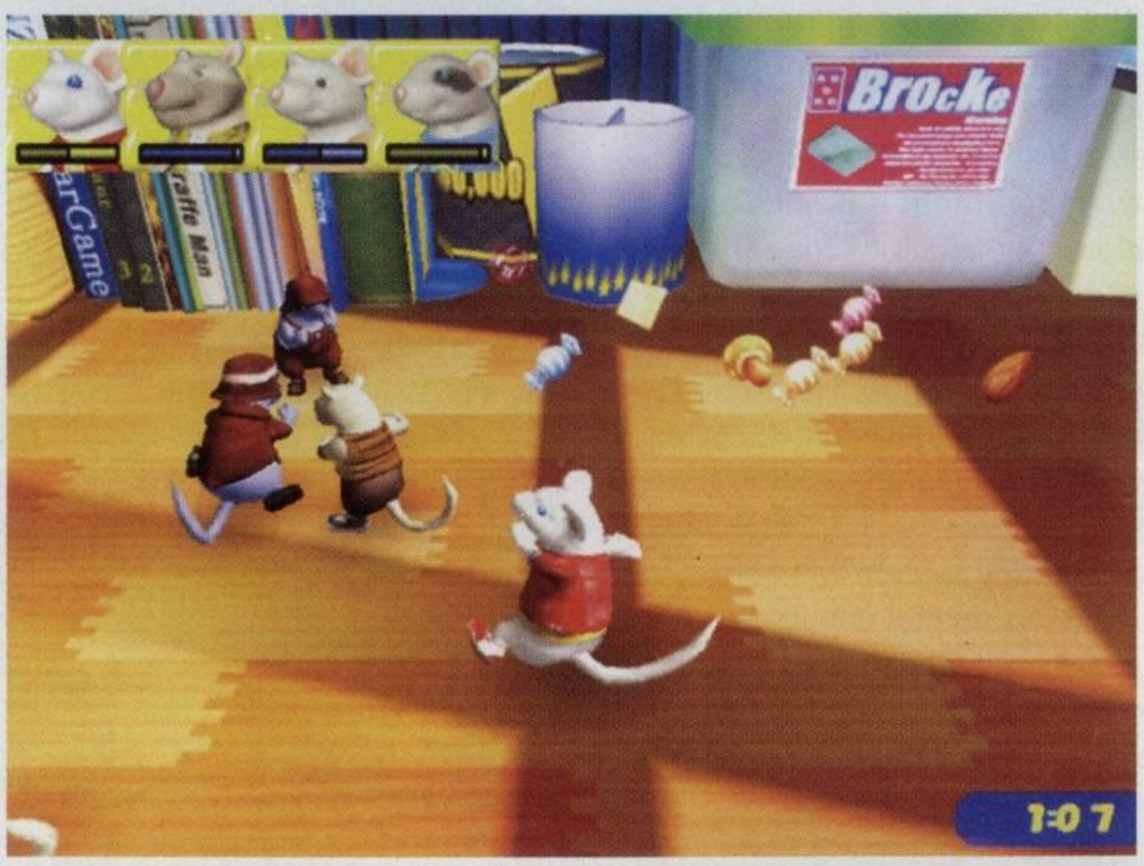
MotoGP: Ultimate Racing Technology

Xbox owners longing for a Moto Grand Prix game to call their own (Namco's *MotoGP 2* is PS2 only) can rest easy. **THQ** is picking up the slack for the big black box this **summer** with the release of *Ultimate Racing Technology*, a title that pays homage to the elite 500cc class of the MotoGP championship. Developed by **Climax**, *MGP:URT* features the complete selection of motorcycles and teams from the Honda, Yamaha and Suzuki stables, while offering arcade-style control, realistic vehicle physics, customizable riders, and 10 real-world tracks (but not the full 16-course circuit). A four-player, split-screen mode rounds out the package.

Sneakers

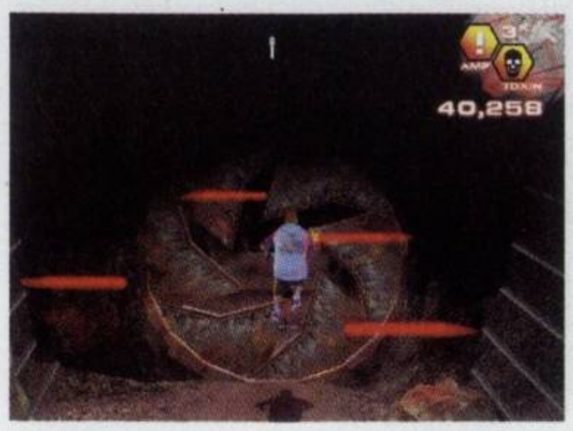
Sneakers is both the name of **Microsoft**'s rodent politique simulator and its red jacket, gym shoe-wearin' lead character. But this ain't no *Stuart Little*. Your job as this defiant lil' mouse is to recruit and lead an army of like-minded micronauts against a group of dark-furred ruffians hell-bent on taking over your town. It's also the first game from MS's Japanese development studio. Expect a U.S. release later this **spring**.





Toxic Grind

THQ's story-based BMX game (due **August**) was born out of a nutty dream or a madcap development meeting; we're not sure which. It's the year 2097, and BMX riding is outlawed. Offenders are injected with toxic juice and forced to survive several killer (literally) BMX courses. Some time travel and a fella named Jason Hayes are in there as well. Whoa, that's messed up, man.



Dragon Ball Z:
The Legacy of Goku

Over the years, hundreds of letters have stacked up in the *EGM* offices begging and pleading for one thing: a *Dragon Ball Z* game. Behold, **Infogrames** has granted your wildest wishes! [*Ed. note*: *Now please stop. You got what you wanted. You happy?!*] The first of their *DBZ* games (scheduled for release in **May**) is *The Legacy of Goku*, an action-RPG which puts you in the role of the legendary Saiyan to save the world and protect the seven Dragon Balls from evil. The action starts at the beginning of *Z* and includes the Saiyan, Namek and Frieza chapters.

You'll have a variety of attacks at your disposal—punching, kicking and (of course) the mighty Kamehameha!—to send your enemies flying. And just like the TV series, there's no shortage of bad guys. After all, isn't *DBZ* all about over-the-top fights with otherworldly foes?

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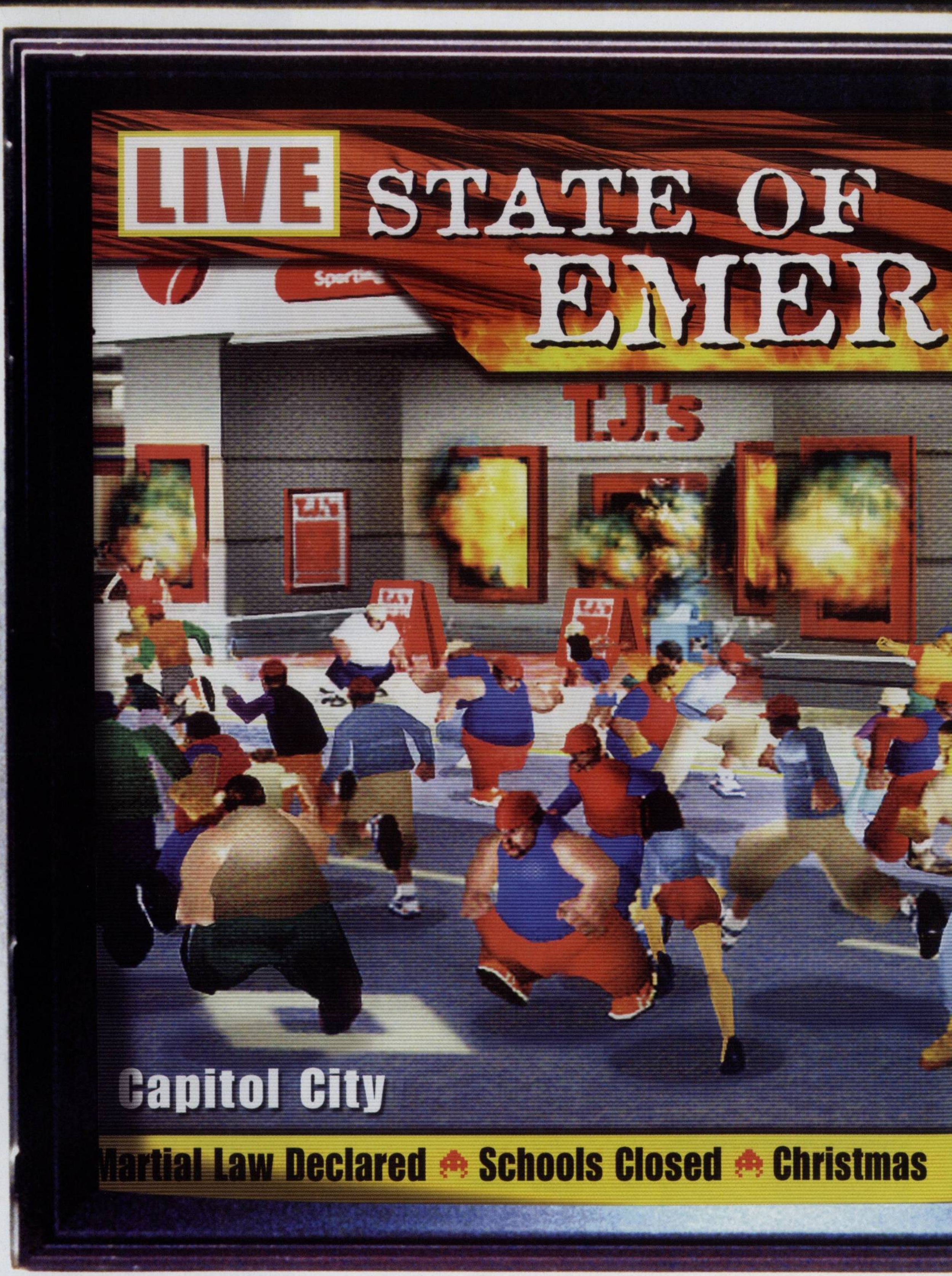
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Martial Law Declared
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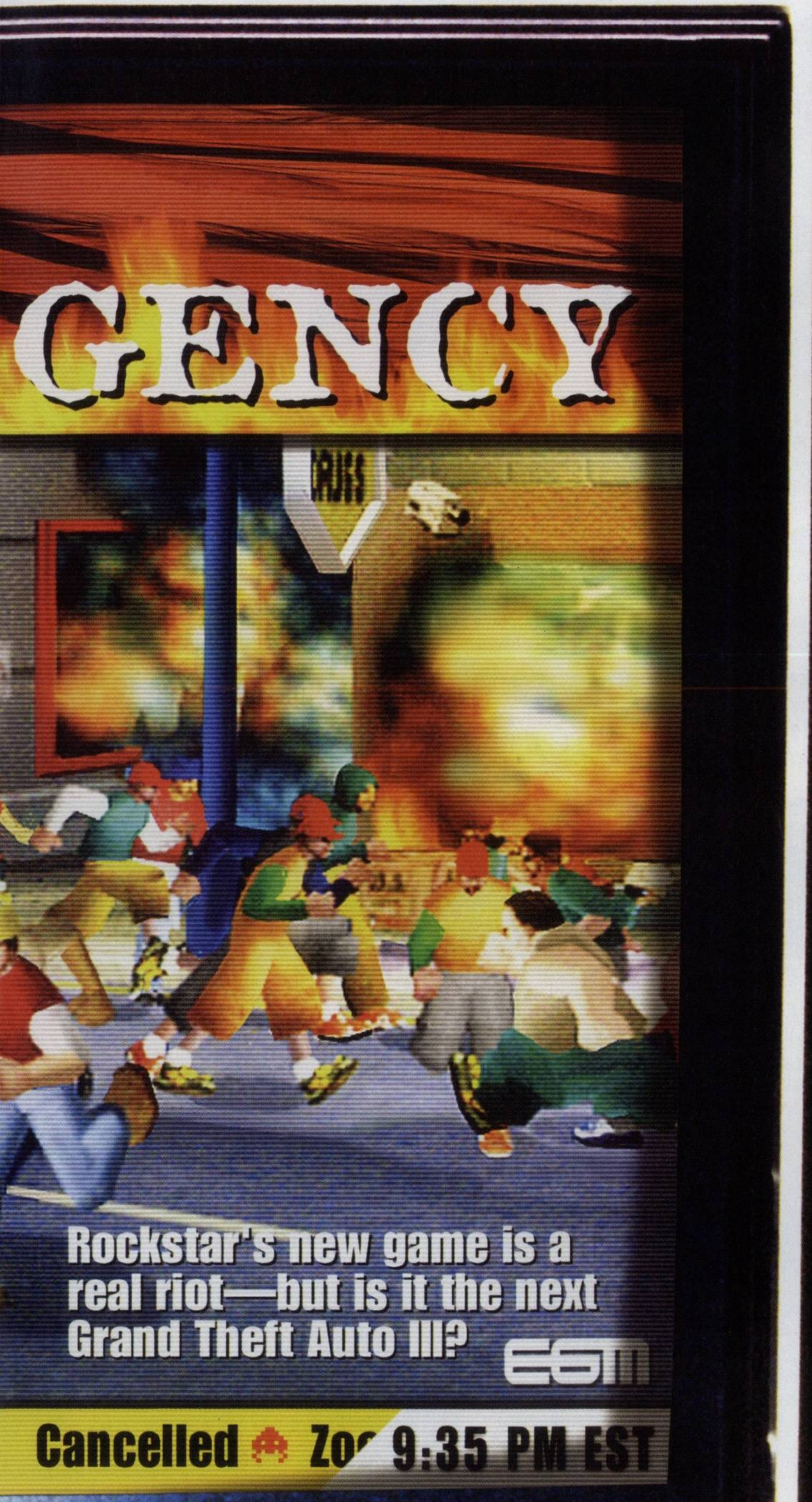


We haven't seen anything about it on the 11 o'clock news just yet, but we figure there's gotta be something in the water in Scotland. Exhibit A: It's the country where developer DMA Design crafted the brilliantly chaotic *Grand Theft Auto* series, which just exploded in popularity (you voted it Game of the Year) and ignited worldwide controversy (Australia banned it) on PlayStation 2 with its newest installment, *Grand Theft Auto III*.

And now Exhibit B: Developer VIS Entertainment, also based in Scotland, has just finished up the PS2 rowdy-crowd brawler *State of Emergency*, also brilliantly chaotic—and also not without controversy (last year, a few overeager journalists reported incorrectly that the game was based on real-life Seattle riots). Both titles, which are published by envelope-pushing Rockstar Games, pack the kind of guilty-pleasure gameplay—broken laws, big guns, bigger 'splosions—your mom warned you about. "I guess we [Scots] are more in touch with our darker and most passionate side," says Craig Hunter, *Emergency*'s producer at VIS. "Living next to the English means we need a well-developed sense of humor."

We'll buy that. After all, *GTA3* has sure put a smile on enough gamers' faces (it was last year's best-selling game). And now its fans are looking to VIS' *State of Emergency*—due out in mid-February—for a follow-up dose of free-for-all gameplay and guilt-free ultra-violence from the land of kilts and bagpipes. But if you think this game's gonna dole out the same style of carnage as *GTA3*—not so fast. "*Grand Theft Auto III* has [boosted] awareness of Rockstar's games," says Jamie King, the company's director of development, "but because *State of Emergency* is hitting so soon after *GTA*, a lot of people are thinking this game will be similar or just as

good or just as bad. It's very different, so it's unfair to put both games in the same basket."

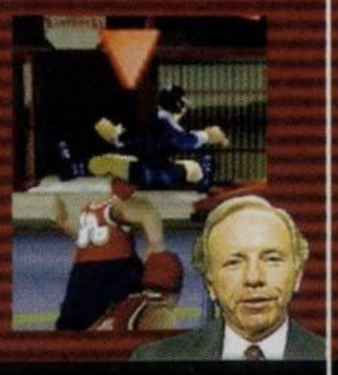
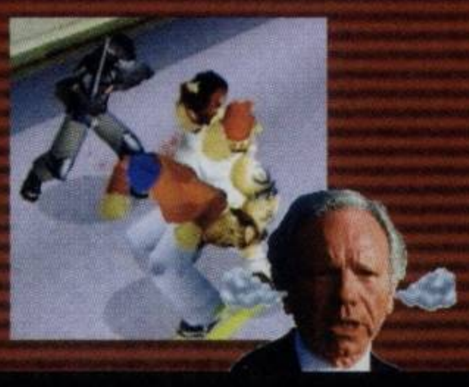
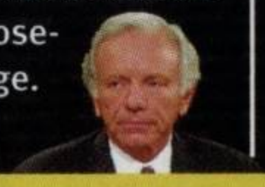
Fair comparison or not, we have to say *Emergency* just isn't as good as *GTA3*—head to our review on page 140 to find out why. But as for how the game is similar or different...that's easy. *Emergency* does have sprawling city environments that pop with color ("I'm tired of gray games," King says), gangs eager to hand out beatdowns, and authority figures who shoot on sight if you break enough laws. That's where the similarities with *GTA* end. *Emergency* doesn't let you carjack hot-rods (we kept wanting to climb into the game's stationary vehicles). It doesn't pack realistic violence (you'll see buckets of gore, but it's more *Beavis and Butthead* than *Reservoir Dogs*). And the game doesn't have nearly as much gameplay variety.

Hundreds Involved in Mall Riot

Instead, the real star of this show is the scrambling mass of rioters and the ruckus they create. Watching this game in motion is to watch mayhem: as many as 250 rioters on screen at once, stirred up like ants in an 8-foot African anthill, many hauling loot, all reacting to your actions. In 1998, VIS came up with the idea of a game based on urban riots. Back then, only the PC platform was able to pump out the seething crowd visuals. Then VIS guys got their hands on the newly unveiled PS2 development kit, took the box apart, and wrote the game engine from scratch particularly for the powerful system. "*SoE* was made very specifically for the PS2," King says. "It's a little bit rough around the edges, but I think it shows off the raw, guttural power of the PlayStation 2." Meanwhile, *Emergency*, which was originally conceived as a top-down real-time strategy game, evolved into something more console-friendly: a heavy-on-action 3D beat-'em-up with entire regiments of enemies

Evil Twins: SoE vs. GTA3

We know you can't help but think of *Grand Theft Auto III* every time you hear about *State of Emergency*. So let's compare the games' most controversial aspects, as well as predict how hot under the collar they might make our favorite senator, Joseph Lieberman.

	CLOSE-QUARTERS COMBAT	BADDEST-ASS WEAPON	MOST DESPICABLE ACT	HEALTH RECOVERY METHOD	COOLEST GAMEPLAY FEATURE
STATE OF EMERGENCY	Libra's "muff attack." We think the picture speaks for itself. 	Shotgun: It can lop off heads, take out a car's windows bumper to bumper, or drop a crowd of pursuers, and still leave you 11 shots to mess with.	Beating a civilian to death with the charred head of his expired friend, whom you recently blew apart. 	Killing people you don't like (unless they happen to be civilians) will score you lots of health bonuses. Just like in real life.	Getting surrounded by 20 rival gang members and working them over one at a time with your bare hands or the potpourri of weapons they drop.
GRAND THEFT AUTO III	Punching an old man in the neck, then watching him turn and kick your ass. Apparently in his day, he never took no guff from no one.	Rocket launcher: Know how quickly you can clear out a city block with this thing? Also handy for teaching very memorable lessons at close-range. 	Running over a young woman, getting out of the car and grenading the ambulance that comes to help her, stealing the fire truck that comes to help the ambulance, and parking the fire truck on top of the woman you originally ran over.	Propositioning a hooker; also just like real life. Be sure to take back any money you might have given her after you kill her.	Firing at the Feds from a stolen tank as they pursue you down a busy city street, while your gun recoil propels you across a broken bridge.

"It's a little bit rough around the edges, but I think it shows off the raw,

on screen at once.

VIS set the game in a future world, where a Big Brother-like Corporation is cracking down on a fed-up public, hence all the rioting and carrying on and your own character's freedom fighting. "We've picked up on themes from books like *Catch 22* and *1984*, books that show us the worst-case scenario that we know we'll never have," says King, adding that England's infamous post-game soccer riots also served as inspiration. Uh, whatever—all we know is sometimes we gamers just want to blow stuff up and kick some ass, and *Emergency*'s simple beat-'em-up gameplay more than delivers those cathartic thrills. We'd even go as far as to say this game is the ultimate stress-reliever.

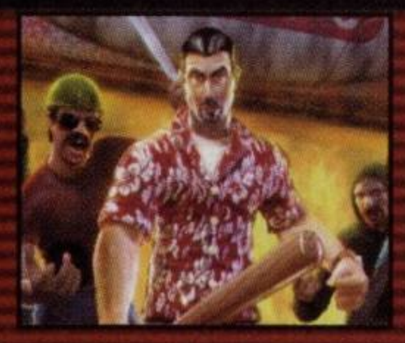
Officials Authorize Deadly Force

In fact, if you find yourself instinctively searching your linty pockets for a quarter every time you snuff it in *SoE*, there's a logical explanation. "I was 13 years old, stuffing my bed with pillows and sneaking out to the local arcade at night," King

THE RIOT ACTORS

Let's have a meet and greet with the four gruff hombres (and one tough chica) who do your dirty work in *State of Emergency*. Note that you can pick Mack and Libra from the get-go; the other three characters become available after clearing later levels of the Revolution mode.

Mack



WHO HE IS: A cop who was canned for refusing to fire at a group of rioters who were looting a grocery store.
WHAT'S HIS DEAL: Cops stick together (we know this from watching *CHiPS*), and when police got the 411 on Mack's dismissal, they started an urban squabble of their own. After all, if you can't shoot the rioters, you might as well join 'em.

Libra

WHO SHE IS: The female version of Tom Cruise's character in *The Firm*.
WHAT'S HER DEAL: Libra was a brassy Corporation lawyer who grew weary of their scheming ways (they didn't recycle paper, stuff like that). When she gave her two-week notice, they car-bombed her family, so Libra didn't take her case to court—she took it to the streets.

Spanky

WHO HE IS: A charismatic ex-gangbanger who doesn't like how his neighborhood has gone downhill. How about that—a punk worried about property values.
WHAT'S HIS DEAL: Spanky turned his street cred into a license to revolt. If his 'hood is gonna be torn to shreds, he'd rather it be because of drug deals and gang violence, not some Big Brother corporation.

Freak

WHO HE IS: An orphan turned hacker turned freedom fighter.
WHAT'S HIS DEAL: Taking down mainframes from the safety of your own living room doesn't impress the chicks as much as giving someone a beatdown with a VCR, so Freak decided to get his hands dirty.

Bull

WHO HE IS: An ex-Army football player who was well on his way to become a professional Hall-Of-Famer. Until the drug suspension hit him.
WHAT'S HIS DEAL: Seems 'ol Bull didn't want to rig football games for the Corporation, so they punished him with a tainted urine test. Now he wants to knock the piss out of them to even the score.

guttural power of the PlayStation 2." *—Rockstar's Jamie King*

reminisces, "That's the side I'm coming from: more arcadey [games]." And everything about *SoE* lets you know it. You won't see any inventory or save points here. Weapons are found or awarded, not purchased, and are meant to be wielded one at a time. Lose all your health and the game will forgivingly restart you at the most current mission, a convenience worth about 25 cents to most coin-ops. "We've been inspired by some cool fighting and arcade games," Hunter adds. "The action is fast and furious." We can't argue with that. Think of *Final Fight* as Bruce Banner, and *Emergency* is the Incredible Hulk. It's got screenloads of goons to beat up, and seeing as how civilization in the game has come unhinged, you might as well smash while the smashing's good.

Freedom Fighters Exposed

But if you're gonna break stuff, you might as well do it for a reason. At least in Revolution mode—the mission-based meat of this game—you should. That's where you join up with Freedom, an underground movement made up of anti-Corporation zealots dressed suspiciously in face-masking kerchiefs. They've got 175 unique missions planned for you, divided between four sections of the city—the Capitol City Mall, China Town, East Side and Corporation Central. Like *GTA3*, you branch out to new regions each time you've devastated a substantial portion of the old. What does that entail? Sometimes it's covering an ally's back while he hacks into the Corporation's information network. Other times you'll be sent to pick up or deliver a package under heavy enemy resistance. Hunting down heavily guarded Corporation bigwigs is one of the more popular mission types. No matter what you're doing in *SoE*, staying in motion is critical. If you're not dead when you stop moving, you will be. Or at least you'll lose that early jump on an informant who is beating a hasty retreat to an exit or safe house. The huddled masses won't impede your progress (you simply bump them out of your way), but after several attempts at some of *SoE*'s more frustrating missions, clocking a random stereo thief can be very therapeutic.

If you're getting cold feet about signing on with the revolution, several quick-fix skirmishes are available in the game's Chaos mode. A ticking clock is your real enemy in most of them. Games like Last Clone Standing (K.O. hundreds of Corporation-engineered targets as fast as you can) and Kaos (jack up your score by completing computer-directed bonus objectives until time runs out) put a premium on efficient

"We've picked up on themes from books like *Catch 22* and *1984*, books that

killing. If you're not big on score-driven gameplay, Unlimited mode gives you the same kid-in-a-candy-store feeling with access to *Emergency*'s comprehensive arsenal of miniguns, hatchets, rocket launchers, tasers, molotov cocktails, uzis and shotguns, minus the pressure of passing time. Whether you prefer to be under the gun or just behind it, these supplements are a welcome change when you're just looking to go nuts for a while without hitting the power switch.

Dozens Maimed in Chinatown Massacre

Oh, and did we mention you can blow up civilians and use their severed heads as weapons? In case you hadn't guessed, *Emergency* is rated with a capital M by the Entertainment Software Rating Board, meaning that if you wanna buy this thing, you have to be 17 or older. "Show us your I.D., kids," King says. "This game is not for you." Still, despite the M rating and violence that's offbeat rather than realistic, *Emergency*

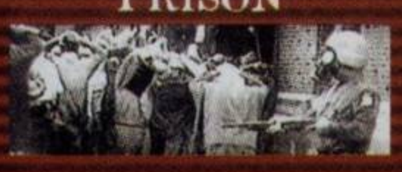
will likely become the target of even more media attention. King says he doesn't mind the controversy as long as it helps fuel continued debate over the value of good parenting, the important role of the ESRB, and the necessity of keeping the game out of kids' hands. "What

you do in this game is not something that you'd do in real life," he reminds us. "That's what video games are good for."

Especially, it seems lately, a couple of brilliantly chaotic video games made in Scotland—games likely due for more air time on your local news. Film at 11.

When History Attacks

Although *Emergency*'s maelstrom of hyper-active humanity is not (and, Rockstar repeats, *is not*) inspired by any real-life riots, we figure a little perspective never hurt anybody. So we've wasted hundreds of hours of research at the library (or maybe we just did a quick Google search on the Net) to compile this comprehensive look at million-man horseplay of the lethal variety.

FAMOUS RIOT	WHEN IT HAPPENED	WHERE IT WENT DOWN	BODY COUNT	WHY ALL THE FUSS?	MORAL OF THE STORY
OCTOBER DAYS	Onset of the French revolution, October 1789	Royal palace at Versailles	Two of King Louis' Swiss Guards	A motley crew of irate wives wanted cheaper eats so they exercised some vigilante justice by kidnapping the royal family.	Don't screw with a French lady when she's hungry or wielding a baguette.
VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE	Height of Prohibition, Feb. 14, 1929	2122 Clark Street, Chicago, Ill.	Seven well-dressed men	Another bloodbath that arose from Al "Scarface" Capone and George "Bugs" Moran's feud for control of Chicago's streets, but this time the victims were fellow mobsters.	Don't keep people from getting piss drunk. Life's just better when you got a brew in your hand, not someone's guts.
BLOODY SUNDAY	During Irish Catholic unrest, Jan. 30, 1972	Bogside, Derry, Ireland	14 civilian demonstrators	British paratroopers opened fire at ground level on peaceful Irish Catholic demonstrators. Famous Irish rock idols U2 wrote a song about it on their *War* album.	Don't let the bastards drag you down. Fight the power! Viva la revolución! Go Bears!...wait...
ATTICA PRISON 	Jan. 30, 1971, at the peak of '60s unrest in the U.S.	Western New York State	43 people (prisoners and guards)	Over 1,500 prisoners revolted and took 40 guards hostage in exchange for better living conditions, including showers and vocational training.	Don't deny prisoners a good washing. Extremely not-so-fresh armpits could make anyone go ballistic.
QUIET RIOT	Formed in 1977 by Kevin DuBrow and Randy Rhoades	Los Angeles, Calif.	Countless high school kids who burned their fingers trying to weld steel masks in shop class	Glam-metal fans went bonkers over the 1983 album *Metal Health*. Today, statistics show 99 percent of fans either became Nova Scotian hermits or suffered irreparable hair damage from O.D.'ing on AquaNet.	Don't let a tight butt in vinyl pants and 2 feet of perma-fried hair trick you into future harassment and lifelong shame and denial.

show us the worst-case scenario that we know we'll never have." *—Rockstar's Jamie King*

STREETSMARTS: A RIOTER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

It's a mad, mad, mad, mad world in *State of Emergency*, where life is cheap and—even worse—Freedom missions can be darn frustrating. So why not build your street cred with these tips for the game's more perilous points....

PROTECTING THE GOOD GUYS

It won't take you long to loathe escort missions, the toughest duty you can pull in *State of Emergency*. If the person you're protecting spends part of the mission standing still (say, 'cause he has to hack a computer or give a protest speech), make sure you have a blunt weapon handy. Any park bench or garbage can will do. Then stand right beside the good guy and use the Square button to conk any Corporation enforcer or gangbanger who comes within spitting distance. Striking with blunt weapons knocks opponents to the ground in one crunching hit (thus letting you stomp away the rest of their hit points), while guns might miss and hand-to-hand combos waste too much time and let too many bad guys gang up on the person you're protecting.

When you have to escort someone from point A to B, you'll need to use the speed dash to run ahead and intercept any bad guys who will be waiting along that path. Tangle with these enemies before they see the person you're escorting, and they'll focus their assault on you instead, leaving your charge free to walk on by.

SHOOTING YOUR DAMN GUN

Gunplay in *Emergency* suffers from a few of the same control hang-ups as the bang-bang action in *GTA3*: namely, jittery aiming and the tricky business of running and shooting simultaneously. To these problems we say, "Strafe, strafe, strafe." Holding the L1 or R1 buttons locks in your gun's direction, while the analog stick still lets you move in all directions. So you can simply face a cluster of oncoming bad guys, lock your direction, then shoot while strafing left and right. It's a more satisfying—and much easier—way of mowing down groups of enemies than trying to aim at individual targets. Also, keep in mind that bullets from automatic weapons pass through enemies, making it easy to drop a whole squad of goons when they come at you in a nice and neat single-file line.

PICKING THE RIGHT CHARACTER

The differences between *Emergency*'s five heroes go beyond their basic moves and grapples. Freak, for instance, is the most fleet-of-foot dude in the game, making him perfect for Chaos mode. Tough-lawyer Libra is second fastest but the easiest to get knocked down. Mack is average in all departments. Spanky is strong but with a plodding waddle. Bull is strongest of all but also the slowest. Keep these attributes in mind as you go through the Chaos mode and encounter the trickier missions. Escort duty got you frustrated? Save the game, quit out, and try it again with the fastest available character. Actually, speed counts in this game. Always go with the fastest available character.

BLOWING STUFF UP

Some missions have you firebombing buildings, but that ain't so easy if you only have access to lobbed explosives such as grenades or molotov cocktails (the rocket launcher is another story: Just point, shoot and kablooie!). Our advice: Resist your first instinct to try to toss grenades and petrol bombs into store windows from afar; squeezing just the right amount of X-button pressure is tough business, making it easy to lob your bomb too hard and overshoot the storefront, wasting good explosives. Instead, just mosey right up to the store's windows, jab the X button, and your bomb will break through the glass and fly right in every time. Oh, and don't forget to take a few steps back so you can enjoy the fireworks without becoming part of them.

STAYING ALIVE

Spend much time in Capitol City and you will take your lumps. Fortunately, your health bar recharges every time you complete a mission in Revolution mode or a goal in Chaos mode. If you find yourself within inches of croaking mid-mission, however, there's only one thing you can do: find the nearest lone Corporation guard (avoid the squads and guards with guns) and beat the tar out of him with your bare fists. He'll spit up health power-ups. Be sure to engage in hand-to-hand combat only, though, as you'll knock more potent power-ups out of guards that way. It'll take you twice as long to build back your health if you take the easy road and just shoot 'em.

"Show us your I.D., kids. This game is not for you." *—Rockstar's Jamie King*

IT'S UNREAL.

Issue 2 of XBOX NATION On Sale 3.26.02

XBN

XBOX NATION INDEPENDENT XBOX MAGAZINE

200 GAMERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Our awards robot is back (with a hot date) to celebrate our and your picks for 2001's best. So get your best designer outfits ready and let's mosey up the red carpet...

"Shutout" and "upset" are hefty words to haul out in a fancy awards feature like our annual Gamers' Choice gala, but we're tossing 'em around anyway. Why the big guns? We'll let you figure that out as you cruise through the next seven pages of our picks and yours for 2001's top stuff. Let's just say that one 2K1 mega game didn't score any awards, and you readers' pick for Game of the Year came as a small wallop of a surprise.

But shutouts and upsets are to be expected from a year that brought us almost more golden games than we had time to play. Before we get on with the show, though, let's recap the rules and regs behind the pomp and circumstance. Just like last year, we've taken the title that nabs our Game of the Year award out of the running for all the other categories. That way, you won't see one game monopolizing the editors' side of the awards. Of course, that rule doesn't apply to you readers who rocked the online ballots at egm.gamers.com—how were you supposed to know which game we would pick for our top slot? And while we're on the subject of reader votes, you may notice we've put a lot more emphasis on your picks this year, giving them equal space (not to mention room for peanut-gallery comments) alongside the editors' choices. This is your magazine after all.

So let's join hands and see which games won our coveted Robot awards, while his robo-date here gets dolled up for the big night.

WHY ALL THE ROBOTS?

'Cause the winners of our Gamers' Choice Awards receive these fully functional 'bots, that's why. Winners also fly courtesy of Delta Airlines. Accomodations provided by Motel 6.

DREAMCAST GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK PHANTASY STAR ONLINE VER. 2 ■ SEGA

RUNNER-UP: NBA 2K2 ■ Sega

We like it 'cause: Online co-op play, fun dungeon-explorin' and hot Hunter on Ranger cybersex—yep, *PSO* and its tweaked *Ver. 2* gave console gamers the perfect first go at online role-playin'. *PSO* is also referred to around the *EGM* offices as "digital crack."

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2	1025 votes,	31%
Sonic Adventure 2	809 votes,	24%
NBA 2K2	720 votes,	21%
Crazy Taxi 2	282 votes,	8%
Tennis 2K2	251 votes,	7%
Bomberman Online	113 votes,	3%
Daytona USA	83 votes,	2%

YOUR PICK PHANTASY STAR ONLINE VER. 2 ■ SEGA

RUNNER-UP: Sonic Adventure 2 ■ Sega

Paul Gale of Winnetka, Calif., says: "*PSO* and Sega have upped the ante for multiplayer games by going online. If you just bought a $50 DC and are looking for a solid title to have hours of fun with, then there is no mistake in purchasing this...title."

GAMECUBE GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Star Wars: Rogue Leader ■ LucasArts

We like it 'cause: Part button mash-fest, part technique-laden hardcore brawler, *SSBM* is bursting with hidden goodies and Nintendo in-jokes. Whether it was solo or multiplayer, this Nintendo smorgasbord kept us coming back for more. A must-buy for GC owners.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

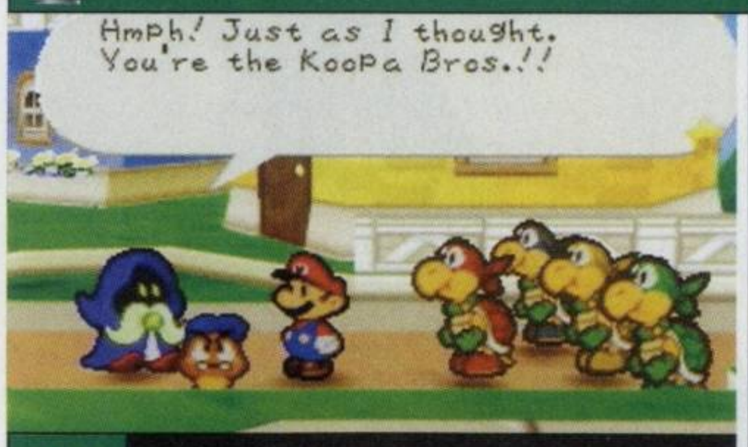
Super Smash Bros. Melee	2186 votes,	53%
Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader	1084 votes,	26%
Pikmin	295 votes,	7%
Super Monkey Ball	154 votes,	3%
Luigi's Mansion	128 votes,	3%
SSX Tricky	119 votes,	2%
Madden NFL 2002	75 votes,	1%
Wave Race: Blue Storm	38 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Star Wars: Rogue Leader ■ LucasArts

Kayla Peters of Temple, Texas, says: "You'll spend weeks, even months, trying to get all the extras. [It's] a virtual Nintendo museum."
Chris Buehler of Frisco, Texas, says: "It's just fun to play as Peach or Zelda and pause the game at 'just the right time.'"

NINTENDO 64 GAME OF THE YEAR



OUR PICK PAPER MARIO ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Conker's Bad Fur Day ■ Rare

We like it 'cause: An unofficial sequel to *Super Mario RPG* on the Super Nintendo, *Paper Mario* is a first-party swan song for the departing N64. *PM* combines all that we love about Mario's world, with a fun and lengthy quest. Magic mushrooms not included.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Conker's Bad Fur Day	1654 votes,	46%
Paper Mario	1037 votes,	29%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	361 votes,	10%
Mario Party 3	240 votes,	6%
Pokémon Stadium 2	131 votes,	3%
Madden NFL 2002	110 votes,	3%

YOUR PICK CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY ■ RARE

RUNNER-UP: Paper Mario ■ Nintendo

Sergio Ruiz of Santa Ana, Calif., says: "*Conker's Bad Fur Day* is a good first step for Nintendo to show people that it's not just a kiddie company."
Nathan Drews of St. Paul, Minn., says: "The game was crude, rude and totally bad@$$!"

THE TOP 10 NEWS STORIES OF 2001

10) METAL GEAR SOLID 2

After all the hype, was *MGS2* worth the wait? You bet'cher stealth camouflage it was. We won't be forgetting this heady sequel anytime soon.

9) ONLINE GAMING

Online gaming on consoles got a kick in the pants in 2K1 with *Phantasy Star Online*, *Outtrigger*, Sega/Visual Concepts' sports games.... The Dreamcast was just hitting its online stride when the system stalled for good.

8) THE LEGEND OF "CELDA"

Whether you're for, or against, *The Legend of Zelda's* makeover, you've got to admit that its new Looney Tunes look threw you for a loop. More than a couple fist fights have already broken out here at *EGM* over this very controversy.

7) GAME BOY ADVANCE

As much as we love the GBC, it was *so* overdue for a retirement. Enter the GBA, with its hard-to-see screen and library of SNES rehashes, here to save the day. Just kidding. We really do love this lil' bundle of joy.

6) CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

Second-party developer Rare's drinkin', swearin' and money-grubbing sonuvabitch named Conker flushed Nintendo's family-friendliness down the toilet, and was a sales disaster on the dying N64.

5) RESIDENT EVIL MAKES JUMP TO GAMECUBE

One of the shockers of 2001 was Capcom's announcement that the *RE* series was going GameCube-exclusive. Good news for mature 'Cube owners who want more than just the usual kiddy stuff.

4) SEPTEMBER 11TH

Just as American life changed dramatically after the events of Sept. 11, so, too, did the video games we play. Some games were cancelled, while others underwent last-minute changes before their final release.

3) XBOX AND GAMECUBE SYSTEM LAUNCHES

When the Xbox and GameCube launched three days apart (on Nov. 15 and 18, respectively), our wallets were begging for mercy. Oh sweet mercy.

2) VIDEO GAMES GO TO THE MOVIES

Video games hit the theaters big time with *Tomb Raider* and *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*. For 2002 and beyond, we'll see flicks like *Resident Evil*, *Crazy Taxi* and *Duke Nukem*.

1) SEGA GOES MULTI-PLATFORM

"The world of games is changing, so Sega must change, too." With that statement, Hideki Sato, Sega's chief operating officer, made it official: Sega was leaving the hardware business to publish software on all systems. After this bombshell, we were too distracted to notice that hell had frozen over.

IT WAS A GOOD YEAR FOR...

PLAYSTATION 2 OWNERS: Just look at what they got this year: highly anticipated sequels like *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Gran Turismo 3* and *Final Fantasy X* that actually lived up to the deafening hype. Breakout titles like *Grand Theft Auto III* and *Ico* that absolutely no one expected to be quite that good. And just about the best crop of sports games anyone could ask for.

NEW SYSTEMS: While the beginning of the year marked the premature death of the Dreamcast, 2001 also ushered in the era of Nintendo's GameCube and Microsoft's Xbox, each with a handful of awesome games. Now the only question is whether the market can sustain three systems, or if Nintendo or Microsoft have what it takes to topple Sony's reign.

INDUSTRY NUMBERS: All that great PS2 software and the success of the Xbox and GC led to a much-needed sales surge this year. According to the NPD Group (a leading market research firm), almost 2.6 million next-gen consoles (Dreamcast, PS2, GC and Xbox) were purchased in the U.S. in the month of November alone! That's around a 624 percent increase over November 2000.

RPGS: RPG fanboys had reason to cream their jeans this year as excellent titles hit major console platforms. We got *Final Fantasy X* on the PS2, *Dragon Warrior VII* on the PS1, and *Golden Sun* for the GBA; and as if that weren't enough, we were graced with rereleases of *Final Fantasy IV* and *Tactics* on the PS1. If you read our RPG feature a couple issues back, then you know it's only gonna get better in 2002!

PLAYSTATION GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK DRAGON WARRIOR VII ■ ENIX

RUNNER-UP: Final Fantasy Chronicles ■ Square EA

We like it 'cause: How many RPGs do you know promise 100 hours of gameplay and actually deliver? *DWVII*'s antique look may not turn heads, but its addictive gameplay, charming story and massive quest reminds us never to judge a book by its cover.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

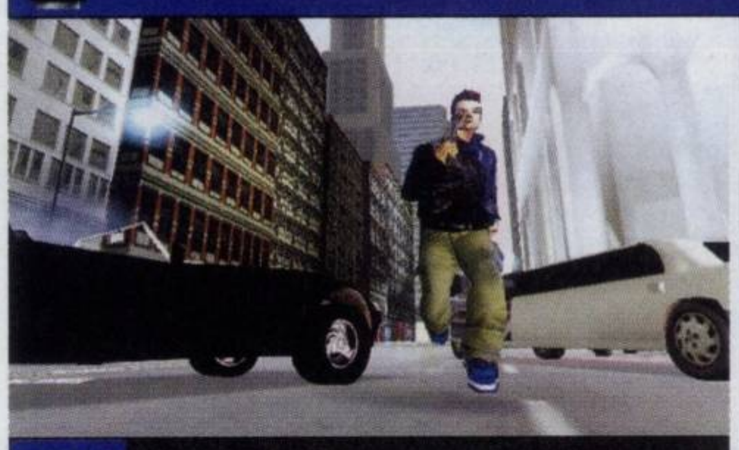
Final Fantasy Chronicles	1513 votes,	43%
Dragon Warrior VII	677 votes,	19%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	515 votes,	14%
Syphon Filter 3	325 votes,	9%
Metal Slug X	320 votes,	9%
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	89 votes,	2%
Tales of Destiny 2	76 votes,	2%

YOUR PICK FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES ■ SQUARE EA

RUNNER-UP: Dragon Warrior VII ■ Enix

Bobby Michael of Royal Oak, Mich., says: "*Final Fantasy Chronicles* boasts the dramatic story of *Final Fantasy IV* and the wonderful characters in *Chrono Trigger*. It's an excellent tribute to these masterful games and a great parting installment for the PlayStation."

PLAYSTATION 2 GAME OF THE YEAR



OUR PICK GRAND THEFT AUTO III ■ ROCKSTAR

RUNNER-UP: Metal Gear Solid 2 ■ Konami

We like it 'cause: Think running over prostitutes with a tank is wrong? Well, it is. And we don't wanna hear another word about it. But *GTA3* isn't just about running over prostitutes. It also proved that you can have controversial content *with* good gameplay. Who 'da thunk?

Grand Theft Auto III	1694 votes,	33%
Final Fantasy X	1341 votes,	26%
Metal Gear Solid 2	1202 votes,	23%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	179 votes,	3%
Gran Turismo 3 A-spec	177 votes,	3%
Devil May Cry	167 votes,	3%
Ico	101 votes,	2%
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	77 votes,	1%
Twisted Metal: Black	42 votes,	0%
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	32 votes,	0%
Red Faction	23 votes,	0%
Onimusha: Warlords	15 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK GRAND THEFT AUTO III ■ ROCKSTAR

RUNNER-UP: Final Fantasy X ■ Square EA

Tom Valentino of Arlington Heights, Ill., says: "*GTA3* does what video games were meant to do: lets normal people do things they never would have dreamed of."
Andrew Joe of Vancouver, Canada, says: "This is a made game."

XBOX GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE ■ MICROSOFT

RUNNER-UP: Project Gotham Racing ■ Microsoft

We like it 'cause: What? Are we nuts? Giving the Xbox's top award to a game starring a one-flippered critter and a stitch-mouthed hero in a loin cloth? That's right—*Oddworld*'s that good. Plus, we couldn't give it to *Halo* 'cause...well, you'll find out why later.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Halo	3056 votes,	78%
Dead or Alive 3	344 votes,	8%
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee	127 votes,	3%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X	91 votes,	2%
Madden NFL 2002	89 votes,	2%
NFL 2K2	80 votes,	2%
Project Gotham Racing	76 votes,	1%
NFL Fever 2002	50 votes,	1%

YOUR PICK HALO ■ MICROSOFT

RUNNER-UP: Dead or Alive 3 ■ Tecmo

Jacob Wilke of Atlanta, Ga., says: "The A.I. is so good I had it write an essay for me."
Clinton Fowles of Olathe, Kan., says: "I've been hyped since *Halo* was first announced. Three years later it's in my living room with friends who won't leave 'til their parents call."

DRESSED FOR EXCESS: Illegal Liberty City plated-skirt ($1595) by Versace; Diablo "Succubus" boots ($565) by Prada.

FIGHTING GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK CAPCOM VS. SNK 2
■ PS2 ■ CAPCOM

RUNNER-UP: Fatal Fury: Mark of the Wolves ■ DC ■ Agetec

We like it 'cause: All the showy graphics and effects you can add to a fighter don't mean nothin' without good gameplay. Capcom proved it by capturing the subtleties of six distinct fighting styles spot-on in *CvS2*. A perfect collection for the 2D devotee.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Dead or Alive 3 (Xbox)	2080 votes,	58%
Capcom vs. SNK 2 (PS2)	952 votes,	26%
Guilty Gear X (PS2)	265 votes,	7%
Fatal Fury: Mark of the Wolves (DC)	261 votes,	7%

YOUR PICK DEAD OR ALIVE 3
■ XBOX ■ TECMO

RUNNER-UP: Capcom vs. SNK 2 ■ PS2 ■ Capcom

SnideDude on the *EGM* message boards says: "*DOA3* might not have the replay value (i.e., Mission Battle Mode) of *Soul Calibur*, but the graphics are friggin' beautiful."
Nik Bennett of Grand Rapids, Mich., says: "*Virtua Fighter 4* has some tough competition."

THE FANBOY HEART-BREAK AWARD: STRETCH PANIC

While the return of fan-favorite developer Treasure was greeted with feverish joy, their newest PS2 (and first free-roaming 3D) game left much to be desired. We are, of course, referring to the titty-obsessed, gameplay-poor, tech-demo called *Stretch Panic*. While this elastic pinch-fest was neat to putz around with, anyone who came to the party seeking the second coming of, oh say, *Silhouette Mirage*, went home 50 bucks poorer in both riches and spirit. Pinch a titty? Boo, Treasure, boo!

ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK ICO
■ PS2 ■ SONY CEA

RUNNER-UP: Munch's Oddysee ■ Xbox ■ Microsoft

We like it 'cause: It's a love story. You guide Ico and his waify heroin-chic friend on an epic quest through the ruins of a mysterious castle. Fend off shadowy fiends, uncover ancient secrets, and get the girl in the end, all in the comfort of your sweat pants.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Ico (PS2)	1444 votes,	40%
Silent Hill 2 (PS2/Xbox)	942 votes,	26%
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee (Xbox)	533 votes,	14%
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance (PS2)	448 votes,	12%
Soul Reaver 2 (PS2)	241 votes,	6%

YOUR PICK ICO
■ PS2 ■ SONY CEA

RUNNER-UP: Silent Hill 2 ■ PS2/Xbox ■ Konami

Nick G. of Springfield, Ore., says: "For those who've never had a girlfriend—let alone seen a female besides their mom or a collection of polygons—*Ico* is capable of showing what it's like to have a female that seemingly cares for you and relies on you. It's quite the rush."

ACTION GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK GRAND THEFT AUTO III
■ PS2 ■ ROCKSTAR

RUNNER-UP: Metal Gear Solid 2 ■ PS2 ■ Konami

We like it 'cause: You can say it's too violent. You can say it's too lowbrow. But there's no denying that *GTA3's* huge go-anywhere cityscape and mobster-in-training gameplay makes for one hell of a game. Plus it didn't feature any whiny, blond pretty-boys.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Grand Theft Auto III (PS2)	1434 votes,	32%
Metal Gear Solid 2 (PS2)	1048 votes,	23%
Halo (Xbox)	996 votes,	22%
Devil May Cry (PS2)	632 votes,	14%
Max Payne (PS2/Xbox)	139 votes,	3%
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil (PS2)	54 votes,	1%
Spy Hunter (PS2)	46 votes,	1%
Zone of the Enders (PS2)	41 votes,	0%
Red Faction (PS2)	28 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK GRAND THEFT AUTO III
■ PS2 ■ ROCKSTAR

RUNNER-UP: Metal Gear Solid 2 ■ PS2 ■ Konami

Joe Heller of Portland, Ore., says: "A vast number of oddities are at your disposal. Take a taxi and pick a fare. Then don't let him get away before smackin' his head with your bat."
Levi Liner of Wapakoneta, Ohio, says: "I can't even believe it's legal to play."

HANDHELD GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON ■ GBA ■ KONAMI

RUNNER-UP: Zelda: Oracle of Ages ■ GBC ■ Nintendo

We like it 'cause: Epic bosses, a mess of different attacks, plus the jump and whip action that is *Castlevania*—you just can't stop playing 'til you explore all 100 percent of Drac's castle (or go blind from squinting at the screen.) The first, and still the best, reason to own a GBA.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Golden Sun (GBA)	1008 votes,	29%
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon (GBA)	812 votes,	23%
Advance Wars (GBA)	417 votes,	12%
Mario Kart: Super Circuit (GBA)	374 votes,	10%
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages (GBC)	364 votes,	10%
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons (GBC)	208 votes,	6%
Pokémon Crystal (GBC)	112 votes,	3%
Mario Tennis (GBC)	110 votes,	3%
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (GBA)	22 votes,	0%
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (GBC)	12 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK GOLDEN SUN ■ GBA ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Castlevania: COTM ■ GBA ■ Konami

Travis Bolek of Phoenix, Ariz., says: "This is exactly what the 16-bit golden age was about: classic heroes and villains, plus a great story tied together with a balanced system."
Pat Streber of Clinton, N.J., says: "I've yet to see a handheld game with better graphics."

THE DREAMCAST PURPLE-HEART AWARD: SHENMUE II

One of the worst casualties of the Dreamcast's decline in 2001 was *Shenmue II*, the anticipated sequel to AM2's big-budget adventure that was cancelled just weeks before its slated November release. The only consolation for all those patiently waiting for the further adventures of Ryo Hazuki was news that the series was uprooting to be an Xbox exclusive. Still, that didn't stop some of us (ahem, Previews Editor Greg Sewart) from snagging an English version of *Shenmue II* from the U.K.

MELEE CHIC:
Bootcut plumbing overalls ($85) by Diesel; felt-lined Mario hat ($25) by Benetton; Pikachu (not for sale)

ONLINE GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK PHANTASY STAR ONLINE VER. 2 ■ DC ■ SEGA

RUNNER-UP: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 ■ PS2 ■ Activision

We like it 'cause: *PSO* and *PSO Ver. 2* gave console users a beautiful, futuristic world to explore...with other gamers online. Hook up with a party, gang up on alien creatures, then get pissed off when your buddies horde all the good booty. It's a wonderful experience.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2 (DC)	1515 votes,	48%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (PS2)	1013 votes,	32%
NFL 2K2 (DC)	256 votes,	8%
NBA 2K2 (DC)	175 votes,	5%
Bomberman Online (DC)	127 votes,	4%
Daytona USA (DC)	47 votes,	1%
Ooga Booga (DC)	18 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK PHANTASY STAR ONLINE VER. 2 ■ DC ■ SEGA

RUNNER-UP: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 ■ PS2 ■ Activision

Ben Kowalchuk of Ontario, Canada, says: "It took away 1,000 hours of my life."
Cory Adams of Oak Lawn, Ill., says: "I was hooked like a drug addict."
Snarkteeth on the *EGM* message boards says: "Props to Sega for starting this entire genre."

MULTIPLAYER GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE ■ GC ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2 ■ DC ■ Sega

We like it 'cause: *Melee* lets you duke it out in Nintendo-themed environments with the most famous (and obscure) characters from the company's long and colorful history. You won't find a nuttier or more enjoyable four-player brawlfest anywhere.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Super Smash Bros. Melee (GC)	1546 votes,	40%
Halo (Xbox)	1189 votes,	31%
Twisted Metal: Black (PS2)	476 votes,	12%
Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2 (DC)	247 votes,	6%
Red Faction (PS2)	109 votes,	2%
Super Monkey Ball (GC)	108 votes,	2%
Mario Party 3 (N64)	59 votes,	1%
Worms World Party (DC)	58 votes,	1%
Bomberman Online (DC)	32 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE ■ GC ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Halo ■ Xbox ■ Microsoft

Yoshimitsu15 on the *EGM* message boards says: "There's nothing like using Donkey Kong to pick up Peach and seeing her pink und...er, I mean throw her to her doom."
James Vrgin of Wenatchee, Wash., says: "You can beat the living snot out of Pikachu!"

PUZZLE GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK SUPER MONKEY BALL ■ GC ■ SEGA

RUNNER-UP: Dr. Mario ■ N64 ■ Nintendo

We like it 'cause: We spent 2001 playing with monkey balls more than any other, um...kind of balls. Combine colorfully stylized visuals, and easy-to-pickup gameplay, and watch as the deceptively simple *SMB* gets its infectious hooks in everyone around you.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Super Monkey Ball (GC)	1947 votes,	67%
Dr. Mario 64 (N64)	297 votes,	10%
ChuChu Rocket (GBA)	286 votes,	9%
Tetris Worlds (GBA)	249 votes,	8%
One Piece Mansion (PS)	126 votes,	4%

YOUR PICK SUPER MONKEY BALL ■ GC ■ SEGA

RUNNER-UP: Dr. Mario ■ N64 ■ Nintendo

Rob Turner of Tacoma, Wash., says: "I got hooked to this game at a friend's house and couldn't move from their GC for four hours."
J-Zilla of Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, says: "Any game that lets you play with monkeys gets a big thumbs up in my book."

RACING GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK GRAN TURISMO 3 A-SPEC ■ PS2 ■ SONY CEA

RUNNER-UP: Project Gotham Racing ■ Xbox ■ Microsoft

We like it 'cause: You don't need to be a total gearhead or know what the hell "camber" is to get sucked into *Gran Turismo 3*'s automotive paradise. We'd like to say it was close, but *GT3* had no trouble racing rings around *Project Gotham* in 2001.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Gran Turismo 3 A-spec (PS2)	2280 votes,	65%
Project Gotham Racing (Xbox)	454 votes,	13%
Mario Kart: Super Circuit (GBA)	364 votes,	10%
Wave Race: Blue Storm (GC)	228 votes,	6%
Daytona USA (DC)	78 votes,	2%
NASCAR Thunder 2002 (PS2/Xbox)	66 votes,	1%
Le Mans 24 Hours (PS2)	12 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK GRAN TURISMO 3 A-SPEC ■ PS2 ■ SONY CEA

RUNNER-UP: Project Gotham Racing ■ Xbox ■ Microsoft

Kevin Park of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., says: "I failed school tests because of *GT3*."
DeShaun Harris of Indianapolis, Ind., says: "*GT3* makes you earn every red cent you make in the game. Those endurance races were no laughing matter."

FANTASY STAR: Low-cut "Phoenix Down" dress with head piece ($3685) by Dolce & Gabbana; "Firaga" corsette ($125) by Givenchy; "Shiva" platform sandals ($185) by Fendi

STUFF THE INDUSTRY LIKED IN 2001...

JAMIE KING, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, ROCKSTAR

1) Grand Theft Auto III: I deliberately didn't play this game while it was in test and waited for a finished copy. Even I was surprised at how incredible this thing turned out to be.

2) Onimusha: Very slick production. I liked it a lot.

3) Madden 2002: I have never experienced such competitive desires to understand American football or thoroughly thrash my fellow American work mates.

4) Max Payne (PC): It was the first PC game in a long time where I immediately wanted to play it all over again on a harder setting after finishing it.

5) Stronghold (PC): Perfect game for when you just want to "tune in and drop out."

ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK FINAL FANTASY X ■ PS2 ■ SQUARE EA

RUNNER-UP: Paper Mario ■ N64 ■ Nintendo

We like it 'cause: The sweet new battle system has us giddy with glee, and the ill-fated romance story still keeps us up late at night. *FFX* snuck in at the very end of 2001 to snatch our coveted RPG of the year award. Go ahead, take the quest. You'll thank us for it later.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Final Fantasy X (PS2)	3019 votes,	79%
Paper Mario (N64)	422 votes,	11%
Final Fantasy Chronicles (PS)	122 votes,	3%
Dragon Warrior VII (PS)	95 votes,	2%
Pokémon Crystal (GBC)	82 votes,	2%
Dark Cloud (PS2)	40 votes,	1%
Tales of Destiny 2 (PS)	12 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK FINAL FANTASY X ■ PS2 ■ SQUARE EA

RUNNER-UP: Paper Mario ■ N64 ■ Nintendo

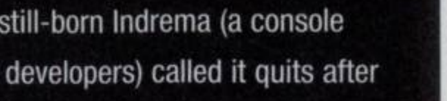
Johnny Ellsworth of Sacramento, Calif., says: "The new combat system is brilliant. I actually had fun during the random battles."
Clayton Bassett of Ontario, Ore., says: "Every once in a while you just have to stop and look at the scenery for a few seconds."

IT WAS A BAD YEAR FOR...

OLD SYSTEMS: Sega kicked off 2001 by pulling the plug on its Dreamcast system after only a short two-year run. Overshadowed by the GameCube launch, the Nintendo 64 had slim pickin's for games this year. The PS1 didn't fare much better software-wise either, although gamers were given a couple of quality RPGs (*Dragon Warrior VII* and *FF Chronicles*) to chew on.

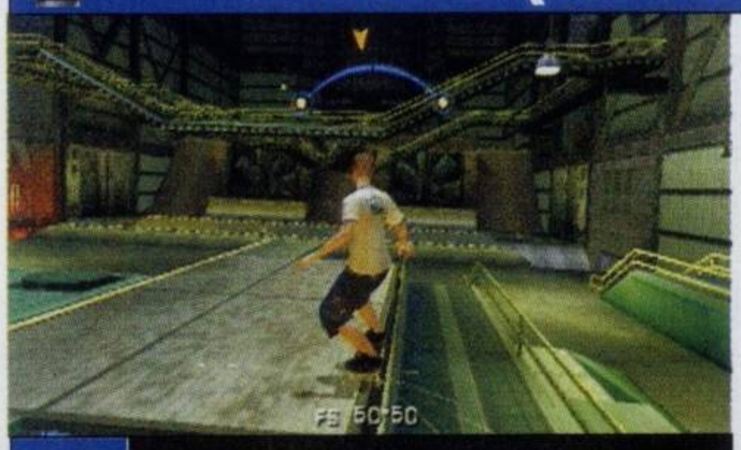
NON-SYSTEMS: The still-born Indrema (a console aimed at independent developers) called it quits after realizing gamers couldn't give a crap about which operating system their consoles ran on—even if it is the all-powerful Linux. And just as we were about to give up hope, the Nuon game console finally saw light of day. The bad news? Nobody wanted to play another variation of *Tempest* on a DVD player.

BLEEM!: So much for David and Goliath. Independent developer Bleem!, the company that strived to emulate PS1 games on the DC, finally closed their doors after years of haemorrhaging money out of their behinds, no thanks to Sony's relentless legal tactics. In retrospect, maybe playing PS1 games on our DCs wasn't such a good idea after all.



SQUARE PICTURES: Even Squaresoft's movie-making division was unable to squeeze through the round hole of success. *Final Fantasy: The Spirit's Within* was quickly shown the door to massive financial loss by the lethal combo of public apathy and an over-the-top budget ($140 million and change). Don't expect a sequel any time soon: Squaresoft sold off the division soon after.

SPORTS (ACTION) GAME OF THE YEAR



OUR PICK TONY HAWK 3 ■ PS2 / GC ■ ACTIVISION

RUNNER-UP: SSX Tricky ■ PS2/Xbox/GC ■ EA

We like it 'cause: Wacky new objectives, clever level designs, and the best controls to date keeps Tony reeling in them awards faster than Tom Hanks at the Oscars. Whatever stuff they're putting into the water coolers over at Neversoft still seems to be working its mojo.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (PS2/GC)	1699 votes,	49%
SSX Tricky (PS2/Xbox/GC)	771 votes,	22%
NBA Street (PS2)	656 votes,	19%
NHL Hitz 20-02 (PS2/Xbox/GC)	222 votes,	6%
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 (PS2/Xbox/GC)	55 votes,	1%
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX (PS/DC)	16 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK TONY HAWK 3 ■ PS2 / GC ■ ACTIVISION

RUNNER-UP: SSX Tricky ■ PS2/Xbox/GC ■ EA

Shawn Passow of Clare, Iowa, says: "*THPS3* beats out the competition by a long rail combo. Multiplayer, single player, park editor, create-a-skater—it's all there."
Alain Seraphin of Flushing, N.Y., says: "I got so excited I popped 16 boners."

SPORTS (SIMULATION) GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK MADDEN NFL 2002 ■ PS2 / XBOX / GC ■ EA

RUNNER-UP: NBA 2K2 ■ PS2 / DC ■ Sega

We like it 'cause: When it comes to hard-nosed, realistic football, nothing tops the latest edition to this benchmark franchise. A decade of experience has helped EA Sports refine this granddaddy of the video gridiron into a remarkably deep and striking game.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Madden NFL 2002 (PS2/Xbox/GC)	1469 votes,	47%
NFL 2K2 (PS2/Xbox/DC)	464 votes,	14%
NBA 2K2 (PS2/DC)	421 votes,	13%
NHL 2002 (PS2/Xbox)	292 votes,	9%
Tennis 2K2 (DC)	275 votes,	8%
NCAA Football 2002 (PS2)	189 votes,	6%

YOUR PICK MADDEN NFL 2002 ■ PS2 / XBOX / GC ■ EA

RUNNER-UP: NFL 2K2 ■ PS2 / DC ■ Sega

Mrshady4 on the *EGM* message boards says: "The controls are simple, the graphics are awesome, the cheerleaders are pretty good-looking. What more can you ask for?"
Jeff Mishou of Orrington, Maine, says: "It is the king of football games. It always has been."

STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR

OUR PICK ADVANCE WARS ■ GBA ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Pikmin ■ GC ■ Nintendo

We like it 'cause: No thanks to *AW*, turn-based junkies clocked more time under a lamp and on the can this year than they care to remember. Don't let its cutesy graphics fool you though; *AW* is easy to learn, yet tricky to master. Think war is hell? Better think again.

HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Pikmin (GC)	1374 votes,	45%
Advance Wars (GBA)	1088 votes,	35%
Kessen 2 (PS2)	396 votes,	13%
Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth (PS)	188 votes,	6%

YOUR PICK PIKMIN ■ GC ■ NINTENDO

RUNNER-UP: Advance Wars ■ GBA ■ Nintendo

Ryan English of Denver, Colo., says: "I brought my GameCube to a friend's house one night and we ended up playing *Pikmin* all the way through that night. I have beaten it about five or six times now and still get a different experience each time."

STUFF THE INDUSTRY LIKED IN 2001...

GREG THOMAS, PRESIDENT OF VISUAL CONCEPTS (DEVELOPERS OF THE NBA AND NFL 2K SERIES)

1) GTA3: I just loved cruising around..., doing things, without worrying about getting on with the "game."
2) Metal Gear Solid 2: Wow! So much attention to detail, so many cool things in the game. It wasn't perfect, but what a ride it was while it lasted!
3) Gran Turismo 3: With all the proper hook-ups (steering wheel, etc.) *GT3* took racing onto another level for me. Plenty of challenge and beautifully implemented.
4) Pikmin: Innovative, and oozing with personality.
5) Zelda: Oracle of Ages: Never before has a game with such awesome scope been brought to a handheld so successfully. Had me glued to my GBC.

GAME OF THE YEAR ALL SYSTEMS

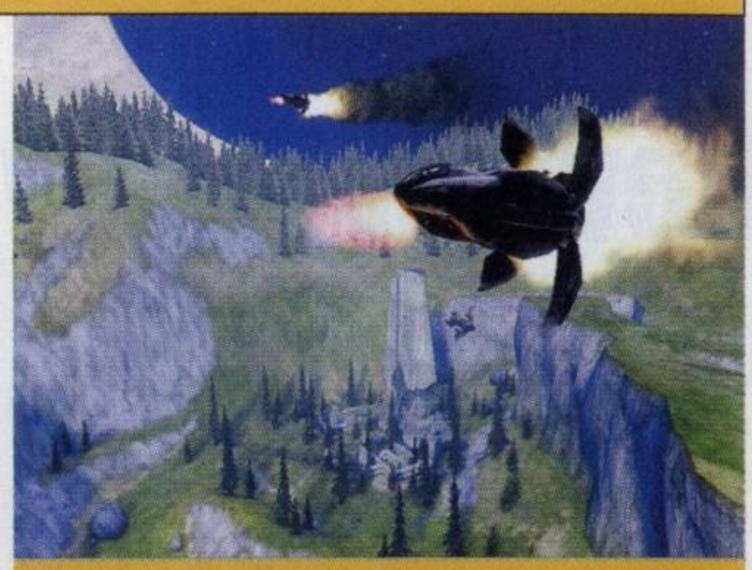
OUR PICK HALO
■ XBOX ■ MICROSOFT

RUNNER-UP: Grand Theft Auto III ■ PS2 ■ Rockstar

And on the first day the Xbox did launch with a *Halo*, and we looked upon it, and we saw that it was good. For it produced many weapons, each strong and weak according to its kind, so that we may blow our enemies—and each other—to tiny bits, in His mercy. And the land did teem with a great multitude of living creatures, both good and evil, and

"...And for 40 more days and nights we played together, and then still more."

vehicles to drive along the firmament and fly across the expanse of the sky. Such was the power of *Halo's* glory that for 40 days and 40 nights we played alone, on difficulties low and great. Then we said, "It is not good for the player to be alone," and behold! Cooperative and multiplayer modes were brought forth. And for 40 more days and nights we played together, and then still more. Then we said, "Blessed is the Xbox owner, for the Game of the Year is his." And the people did rejoice.



HOW YOU VOTED
EGM.GAMERS.COM POLL

Grand Theft Auto III (PS2)	946 votes,	20%
Final Fantasy X (PS2)	867 votes,	19%
Halo (Xbox)	863 votes,	19%
Super Smash Bros. Melee (GC)	703 votes,	15%
Metal Gear Solid 2 (PS2)	685 votes,	15%
Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader (GC)	130 votes,	2%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (PS2/GC)	76 votes,	1%
Gran Turismo 3 A-spec (PS2)	71 votes,	1%
Devil May Cry (PS2)	56 votes,	1%
Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2 (DC)	41 votes,	0%
Madden NFL 2002 (PS2/Xbox/GC)	34 votes,	0%
Luigi's Mansion (GC)	24 votes,	0%
Twisted Metal: Black (PS2)	18 votes,	0%
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X (PS2)	10 votes,	0%

YOUR PICK GRAND THEFT AUTO III
■ PS2 ■ ROCKSTAR

RUNNER-UP: Final Fantasy X ■ PS2 ■ Square EA

Jaime Abarca of Redlands, Calif., says: "I lost my game save when I was 52 missions into *GTA3*. Normally this would make me swear like I was quoting from *Scarface*, but I just started over and enjoyed the game all over again. It's that much fun to play."

HALO-LICIOUS: Alien ring world dress ($6385) by Chanel; Covenant body decoration (war trophy) donated by the Master Chief; Game of the Year Award Robot (priceless) by *EGM*

Review Crew

Our Philosophy

EGM rates games based on how they compare with other titles on the same system. The highest score we'll give a game is a 10. When a game receives a 10, you can rest assured it's one of the best games ever made—a revolutionary title that truly stands above everything else in its genre for its time. At the other end of the spectrum sits the lowest score a game can receive: a 0.0. This is the kind of game you want to avoid at all costs. It's pure crap. In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We repeat: 5.0 IS AVERAGE. Simple, ain't it?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Our Awards

Platinum Awards go to games that get all 10's, the best and rarest review a game can get.

Gold Awards go to games whose average score equals 9.0 or higher.

Games that average at least an 8.0 (but lower than 9.0) receive **Silver Awards.**

Game of the Month

Hot Shots Golf 3 **pg.138**

Big or tall, short or small, you will all have a ball with *Hot Shots 3*. Its polished gameplay, wacky courses, and hippo-sized caddies make everyone—from cinderella-story groundskeepers to masters champions—feel welcome on its greens. Even if you don't give a spit about the sport, this one's just plain fun—try it.

The Crew

Crispin Boyer
Features Editor

Cris spent half this month goofing off in the Caribbean, where it was no shoes, no shirt, no problem. Hey, just like the *EGM* offices! He woulda stayed longer but the only game he could find was *Golden Tee '95*.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: *Hot Shots Golf 3, Tony Hawk 3*

Dan "Shoe" Hsu
Editor in Chief

After months of being chained to his desk, Shoe was finally allowed outdoors for some fresh air and natural lighting. The brisk winter wind, however, frightened him, so he donned his fabulous "E-Sak coat."

Favorite Genres: The "Video Game" genre
Current Faves: *Tony Hawk 3, Top Shop* (PS1)

Mark MacDonald
Executive Editor

Mark was sad to learn from *Jet Set Radio Future*'s intro warning that, although graffiti is art, it is often also considered vandalism. Could this mean local businesses don't appreciate his "surprise gifts"?

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG
Current Faves: A new online PS2 game (wink)

Che Chou
West Coast Editor

Che (and his GBA) took a tour of the drizzly northwestern states this month in search of spatial-rock formations and the music they make. And that slippery granite path was where he kicked out the jams.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Racing, RPG
Current Faves: *VF4, GT Concept, Nausicaä*

Chris Johnston
News Editor

Inspired by the number of fighting games throughout the office, Chris has decided to learn some moves of his own by renting every *Karate Kid* movie in existence. Hi-ya! Take that Ralph Macchio! Wax on, wax off!

Favorite Genres: Puzzle, Adventure, Music
Current Faves: *Halo, Super Mario World*

James Mielke
West Coast/Web Editor

Kicking everyone's ass at *Virtua Fighter 4* this month has raised Milky's stats up to Ethereal Level. Now whenever Che or Johnny U.K. tries to take a swipe at him, their blows pass harmlessly through him.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, RPG, Action
Current Faves: *VF4, Pac-Man World 2*

Jonathan Dudlak
Associate Editor

Ever since he heard Che was coming to town, Jon's been preparing the office for a ceremonial *VF4* throwdown. If anyone ever tells you that acquiring 80 pounds of goat hair is easy, he's DEAD WRONG.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Action, Adventure
Current Faves: *Virtua Fighter 4, GTA3*

Jeanne Kim
Associate Editor/Art Director

Jeanne's been absolutely obsessed with *Pokémon Puzzle League* lately ever since she cracked out the ol' N64 for fun. Now her primary goal in life is to beat Shoe in an all-office tourney. I'm comin' for you, Shoe!

Favorite Genres: RPG, Shooters, Adventure
Current Faves: *PPL* (N64), *Sims: Hot Date* (PC)

Greg Sewart
Reviews/Previews Editor

Sewart's been paintin', skatin' and generally tearin' up the streets of Chicago with a funky style all his own thanks to *Jet Set Radio Future*. Look for this free-spirited individual on an upcoming episode of *Cops*.

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action
Current Faves: *GT Concept 2001 Tokyo, JSRF*

Team EGM

These are the sports nuts on the Crew, but that doesn't mean they're not into all types of games. It just means you can be sure that sports reviews are being done by the sports enthusiasts and not by some schmucks.

Dean Hager
Managing Editor

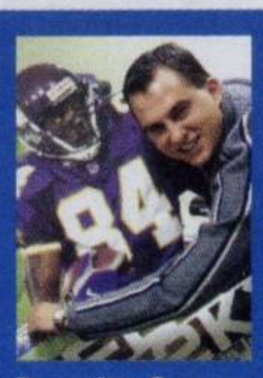
New car, new glasses...For a guy who hates spending, Dean sure is abusin' his wallet. Luckily, he gets to play the latest games at work; otherwise, he'd be scouring yard sales for Super Nintendo carts.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Racing
Current Faves: *NFL 2K2* (Xbox), *MotoGP 2*

Kraig Kujawa
Senior Associate Editor

"Hey," said Kraig, "Dean got a new car, but how about my '97 Integra, ladies!" His attempt to woo the skirts in the parking lot didn't work, but the photo got him a centerfold in *Videogamer Hot Rod* magazine.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy
Current Faves: *NBA 2K2, NBA Inside Drive 2002*



Dan Leahy
Editor in Chief, *GameNOW*

Distraught over Randy's subpar fantasy season, Dan's decided that some off-season tackling drills are in order. After every hit, Leahy screams "Whooaa, slaughtered dem brains, fool!"

Favorite Genres: Sports, Action
Current Faves: *NBA 2K2, Hot Shots Golf 3*

Bloody Roar: Primal Fury

Publisher:	**Activision**
Developer:	**Eighting**
Featured In:	***EGM* #152**
Players:	**1-2**
Encourages:	**Lycanthropy**
Best Feature:	**Great graphics**
Worst Feature:	**One-dimensional fighting engine**
Web Site:	**www.bloody-roar.com**

Lions, tigers and bears, oh my! Originally unleashed on an unsuspecting public back in 1997, the *Bloody Roar* series took PlayStation owners by surprise with its flashy graphics, solid gameplay and gimmicky transforming man-beast theme. Developed by Eighting, a company known in Japan for its 2D shooters (*Soukyugurentai*, *Battle Garegga*), no one expected these guys to forge a 3D fighting game that could compete with the likes of *Tekken* or *Virtua Fighter*. And while *Bloody Roar* didn't top the big boys, it did carve itself a respectable niche in the genre. Now, five years and several sequels later, the series makes its Nintendo console debut with *Bloody Roar: Primal Fury*.

Featuring two new characters (Ganesha the Elephant and Cronos the Phoenix) and a Hyper Meter that adds to the pyrotechnics, *Primal Fury* contains enough new stuff to be considered a true sequel. Visually the game ranks with the likes of *Tekken Tag Tournament*, including sharp graphics and speedy combat, but as the fourth game in the series, the gameplay is long overdue for an overhaul. At best, *Primal Fury's* shallow move list and primitive combos make it a button-masher's dream, but until Eighting focuses more on the substance and less on the flash, *Bloody Roar* will always be a pretender to the throne.

Busuzima prepares to give newcomer Xion a serious gut-check. The fighting is fast and furious. Perhaps "fur-o-cious"? Ouch!

The key to success in *Primal Fury* is knowing when to use your Beast Meter and then the Hyper Meter. Your transformational abilities work best when you're cornered, as they blow your opponent back, giving you precious breathing room to regroup and kick his tail in. Meow!

I have really mixed feelings about *Primal Fury*. On the one hand I really respect its super-sharp presentation, ripe with beautiful lighting, large characters, busy 3D backgrounds and an orgy of special effects. Sure, it's no *DOA3*, but no one can accuse *Primal Fury* of being a visual slouch. However, graphics don't tell the whole story, and that's where the game stumbles. Since the analog stick is too "soft," precise manipulation of your character necessitates the use of the overly tiny D-pad. I'll go ahead and warn you now that **feverishly pressing on a D-pad the size of a piece of Lucky Charms cereal gets tiring quickly**. Furthering the dysfunctional controls are the stiff shoulder buttons used to achieve 3D movement. Can't we get some decent 8-way run up in here? Still, the biggest issue is not the controls, but that the series hasn't evolved a step in five years. While *Primal Fury* was never going to challenge *Virtua Fighter*'s play mechanics, it still reeks of wasted potential. The all-offense, no-defense moves list degenerates most matches into a button-mashing circus from hell. So instead of neutralizing your opponent with skillful parries or reversals, victory usually goes to whomever can corner the other guy with a flurry of punches and sweeps first. It's not that *Primal Fury* is a total waste of time, but the series has a long way to go before it can hang with the big boys. Above average? Sure. But hardly great. **Milkman**

To me, *Bloody Roar* embodies the cheesy yet fun wackiness of a classic B-movie. While the game lacks the complexity and depth of a *Virtua Fighter* or *Soul Calibur*, you'll discover that pummeling a 5-foot penguin as a sultry bat-woman has its charms. Deep down, *Primal Fury* is basically *BR3*, but the immense enhancements (new characters, tons of new stages and improved graphics) render it **far superior to its PS2 cousin**. Even the oddball GC controller functions admirably, proving that it can work well with normal genres. Gamers lusting for an arcade-style 3D fighter on the 'Cube won't be disappointed. Gamers lusting for sexy cat-girls will be enraptured. **Shane**

Eighting's mighty-morphin' animal-fighting game is back on the GameCube with better graphics, a couple of new characters and minor tweaks to its frantic gameplay. But these so-called improvements don't really change the fact that *BR:PF* still **plays out like a spazzy button-mash contest**, where the winner simply jams on the combos as fast and often as possible. What contributes to the scrub vibe is the roster of characters who all attack with approximately identical speeds and priorities. But even while *Primal Fury* will do nothing for hardcore fighting fans, casual gamers will get a kick out of its superb graphics, special effects and over-the-top action. **Che**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	5	6

ANIMAL SHMANIMAL

Remember *Manimal*? This kindred spirit to *Bloody Roar*, which ran on TV for eight episodes in 1983, centered around Professor Jonathan Chase's freakish ability to turn into a variety of animals. How nice of him!

Hot Shots Golf 3

Publisher:	Sony CEA
Developer:	Klap Hanz
Featured In:	*EGM* #152
Players:	1-4 (with Multi-tap)
Online:	Compete in tournaments
Best Feature:	Pace of play
Worst Feature:	Screech-like taunts
Web Site:	hotshotsgolf3.scea.com

Hot Shots Golf was a welcome surprise back in the early days of the PlayStation. Immensely playable, self-effacing and brilliantly paced, *Hot Shots* nearly invented and perfected the "cutesy" golf genre all in one stroke.

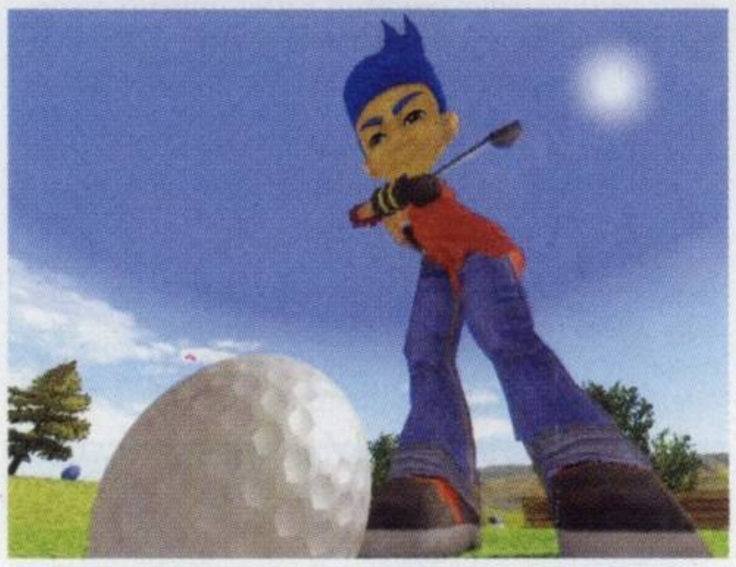
Fans of the series will be happy to know that little has changed. Klap Hanz, developer of *Hot Shots 2*, hasn't missed a beat in bringing the series to the PlayStation 2. Gameplay-wise, this remains true to its PS1 days. And that's a good thing.

The look of *Hot Shots*, however, has been completely revamped to meet next-gen standards. Detailed characters, lush, contoured courses and delightful touches (flying sand, thick divots) help this game shine. Ambient sounds punctuate the immersive "I'm on the course" feeling, as you'll hear gentle breezes, chirping wildlife and more.

Putting is an equal opportunity score-spoiler. Lose concentration on the greens and your score will go through the roof.

Beyond the great looks, sounds and play mechanics is a deep golf game which should sustain even avid gamers for some time. Varied pin locations and custom weather setups ensure that you'll never play the same round twice. We like that.

This is a gamer's game. Challenging, full of unlockables and modes, and great to play with friends. *Hot Shots 3* is an early contender for any 2002 "Best of" list.



MODUS NETTUS

***HSG3* will be supporting online play, of sorts. The game will feature a password-based ranking system. Here's how it works: Go to *hotshotsgolf3.scea.com*, get a password, and input it into the game. Play the round and mark down your personal code. Upload that to the Web site and it will translate your score to a national ranking. Cool, huh? You have no idea. See ya there.**

Scenic vistas abound in *Hot Shots 3*. Just about all the stock locations are represented, as tropical, desert, oceanside and woodland courses are there for the taking. Don't be fooled by the game's cutesy look. There's some serious golf here, dude.

I know...you don't like golf. You don't even want to like golf. That's fine. You can still like, or even get downright cozy, with *Hot Shots Golf 3*. I can't remember a game with almost nothing I would change. Sure, the characters can be a little corny-looking. I'll forgive that minor quibble for the abundance of gaming goodness offered here. Anyone familiar with the series will feel right at home with the game's look and feel. Quick, easy controls offer gamers unmatched course management options. You can check out an overhead view, line the shot up, plan where the next shot will be, and check your lie, all in the blink of an eye. **No other golf game keeps the action moving so well from one shot to the next.** You don't even have to watch the full flight path of the ball if you're a speed freak. Just hit it, tap circle, and see where the ball has come to a rest. *Hot Shots* offers tons of play modes and menus full of customizable options. Mix and match clubs, course length, balls, weather settings and players to your liking. One of my favorite options was the ability to play a short course consisting of nothing but par-3 holes. The other completely cool option is the Net-ranking feature. Aside from having three other friends to play with, this is as good as it gets. Keeping track of how you stack up nationally is addictive, egotistical, sometimes depressing, but always hella fun. Buy this game. **Dan L.**

The ultra-fun *Hot Shots* games have always had more in common with *Happy Gilmore* than the PGA Tour—and that hasn't changed at all just 'cause the series is landing on souped-up hardware. You get the same simple swing meter and ball-finesse options, as well as a roster of the goofiest golfers this side of *Caddyshack*. But don't expect a golfbag full of tweaks. Aside from some subtle use of the Dual Shock's pressure-sensitive buttons and snazzier on-screen aids, this is the same gameplay as last time. Hey, that's fine with me. The mountain of unlockable gear and extras means you'll wanna **keep this game handy for lazy weekend afternoons.** **Crispin**

This game is so damn adorable it hurts. I want to nurture my golfer and give him the equipment I dreamed of having when I was young. Erm, wait, I didn't give two s***s about golf. Anyhow, it still amazes me how realistic-yet-accessible *Hot Shots* is, and the improved graphics make it even moreso. I've never seen a game display the curves and elevations of a course this well. It makes it easier to nail great shots, and you'll be consumed with getting better. (Or at least watching your caddy's ass—baby got back.) The prizes alone kept me wanting more. My favorite is a crab "with saber-like" spikes that stalks course five. What could be more rewarding? **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	8	10

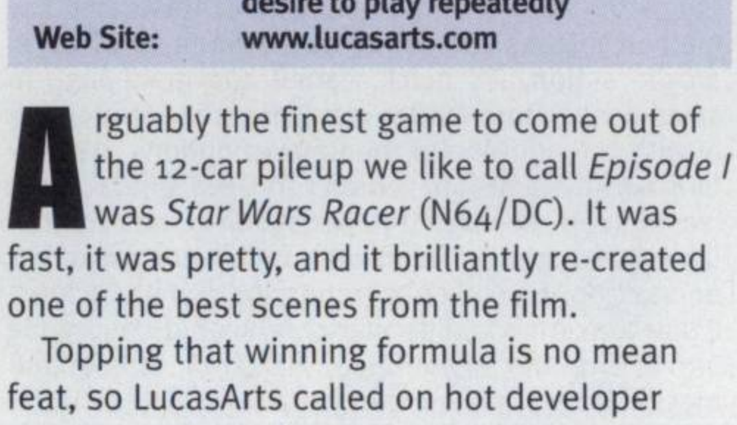
Star Wars Racer Revenge

Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: Rainbow Studios
Featured In: *EGM* #152
Players: 1-2
Best Feature: Fast and furious racing
Worst Feature: Bland track designs give you no desire to play repeatedly
Web Site: www.lucasarts.com

Arguably the finest game to come out of the 12-car pileup we like to call *Episode I* was *Star Wars Racer* (N64/DC). It was fast, it was pretty, and it brilliantly re-created one of the best scenes from the film.

Topping that winning formula is no mean feat, so LucasArts called on hot developer Rainbow Studios (*ATV Offroad Fury, Splashdown*) to do the honors. The result is a fast, pretty, but ultimately less-satisfying game.

Racer Revenge does a lot of things right, until you run into problems with the game's length and replay value. Once you've experienced every race a few times, chances are you'd sooner believe Greedo actually did shoot first than bother picking up this game for another play-through...that is, unless you're such a *Star Wars* freak you just *have* to unlock the cool, hidden characters. Otherwise, *Racer* is about a six-hour ride.



After you've turned an opponent into bantha poodoo, relive the carnage in Replay mode. Sardonic grin optional.

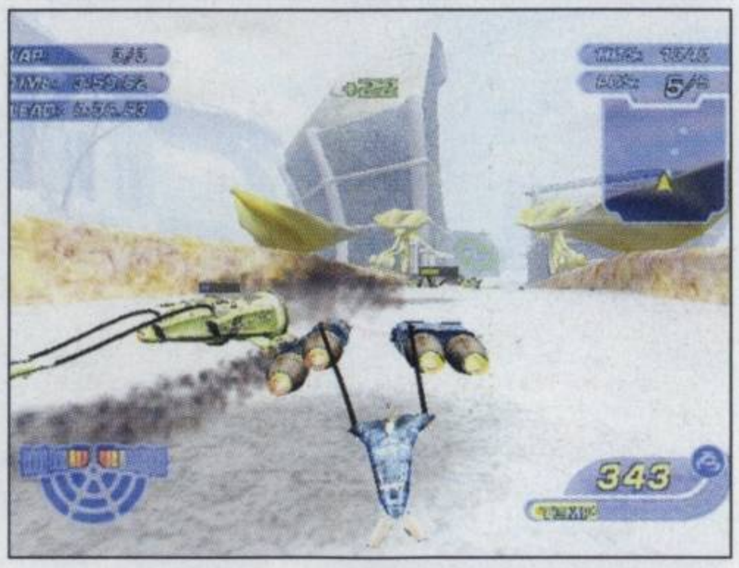
EXTRA CONTROL

Double-Fisting

If you remember the pod race in *Episode I*, you know that the way to drive one of these bad boys is to have a separate throttle control for each engine. Now, thanks to the double-stick setup of the Dual Shock 2, *Racer Revenge* comes one step closer to the "real" thing.

To go straight, simply push up on both sticks. Turn left or right by pulling down on either. To brake, pull down on both. Above we see our lovely hand model, Greg "nerf-herder" Sewart, banking left. Ladies, check out those thumb muscles.

Notice the life bars over the other podracers in the screen below? Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to ram those ugly mother-scratchers into oblivion and subsequently collect a nice, juicy bonus from Watto. He does need lots of extra parts, after all.



Since I was a big fan of the first *Star Wars Racer*, I was really excited to hear that Rainbow Studios would be developing the sequel. And for the most part, that excitement was warranted: *Racer Revenge* controls well, runs really fast, and features all the pod-upgradin' fun of the original N64 title. Plus, **I really dig the new battle aspect of the game**. Since damaging other pods to the point of destruction is obviously an integral part of the fictional podracing circuit, why not reward players for doing so? All that dough you earn for dishing out the big hurt can be used to buy a bunch of pod-parts from Watto. That's important, since a tricked out racer can mean the difference between winning and losing the prestigious Boonta Eve Classic at the end of the season. Of course, in the midst of all this you need to keep an eye on your own pods, and slow down for repairs should you notice the telltale smoke billowing out. Unfortunately, *Racer Revenge* suffers from short, boring tracks. Relatively speaking, the courses in the original game were much narrower and generally more risky, which added to the whole "very fast, very dangerous" vibe that's supposed to accompany these races. Because of this lack of excitement, the only incentive I had to go back and play again was when I learned of the hidden characters. And let me tell you, running every race over and over again was more than a little tedious. **Greg**

While the *Episode I* movie was a suckfest, that pod race inspired my favorite *SW* game ever. Two years later, the action's still warm in the sequel. The sense of speed—especially with a built-up racer—is amazing, but it comes at a price: boring, repetitive textures. As a result, some of the track environments look too bland. Aside from that minor hang-up, I really dig the fast, combat-heavy races. The tracks are long and have plenty of alternate routes to keep the action frosty, but it's a shame that **winning is so easy**. Multiplayer's fun for a little while (if you can stand the fog), but sadly, the one-player party only lasts a few hours. **Chris**

After playing this game, I know why nine out of 10 Jedis recommend using the Force to win pod races. How else could you win a race at speeds of 500 m.p.h. while Vaseline is smeared across your windshield? Well, the blurry graphics make it *look* like it is whenever you hit the turbo; a handful of dark tracks even gave me a headache, but luckily those are the exception. Most of the courses are bright enough to navigate well, and ramming fellow racers into the walls while careening down them is pretty damn intense. *Revenge* provides enough thrills for a rental, but **I can't recommend buying a racer that blinds you when you put the pedal to the metal.** **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	7	6	4

State of Emergency

Publisher:	Rockstar
Developer:	VIS Entertainment
Featured On:	Page 120
Players:	1
Don't try:	This in real life
Best Feature:	Destructive freedom of Chaos mode
Worst Feature:	Dull story mode
Web Site:	www.stateofemergency.com

Some hopeful fans consider it a potential *Grand Theft Auto III*-killer. Rockstar claims that it "reinvents the old-school street brawler genre." *EGM* even deemed it "most controversial game ever." As the clouds of prerelease hype dissipate, what's left behind is a funky, bloody cocktail of different genres that never quite comes together.

As the first game to focus on riots, *SoE* re-creates the frenzied, insane atmosphere of the real thing. Hundreds of crazed rioters run amok in the game's urban environments. Looters make a break for it with TVs, stereos and cash registers atop their heads. Warring street gangs fight to the death. The sheer chaos occurring in these environments takes your breath away.

On the gameplay front, it's truly a piecemeal product, snagging various aspects from other games. The underworld theme, excessive violence and mission structure is straight outta *GTA3*. Hand-to-hand combat lifted from antique beat-'em-ups like *Final Fight* and the fast-paced, arrow-guided urgency of *Crazy Taxi*. This blend of beatdowns and run-'n-gun tactics works well in the arcade-style Chaos mode, but the longer Revolution mode bogs down with slower, less exciting missions. Making it through this story mode requires extreme patience—you'll likely spend over 20 hours running around the game's four areas.

***SoE* packs big guns and lots of 'em, but you'll wield plenty of funkier weapons too, like benches, broadswords and even-gasp!-severed noggins.**

Although *SoE* doesn't offer the captivating missions and freedom of GTA3, it sets the new watermark for gore. As you play, limbs fly, heads tumble to the ground, and crimson pools fill the gutters. It's excessive, brutal and hilarious. Sure, the intended bad guys are "Corporation Cyborg Enforcers," but when the bullets start flying, innocent civilians tend to get in the way. Concerned parents should definitely heed the ESRB rating on the box, because this will undoubtedly be the hottest topic on the playground.

You can mow down innocents if you wanna (and we won't hold it against you, sicko), but it's the Corporation, its buildings and its goon squads (below) that are supposed to be the focus of your abuse. But hey, sometimes you gotta break a few eggs to make an omelette, know what we mean?

Boot it up, jump into Chaos mode, and unleash your pent-up rage, but be forewarned: These first 30 minutes of playtime will probably be the most fun you have with *SoE*. After the blood-soaked honeymoon is over, you'll see the game in the harsh morning light and wonder if it was really worth it. **Revolution, the game's interminably long story mode, suffers from a dire fun shortage.** Its four levels seem awfully small when you're forced to run 50 dull, repetitive missions in each one. After escorting 37 helpless gang members, delivering 28 documents and defending 31 storefronts, I began to seriously question my future as a freedom fighter. Riots shouldn't be boring, right? Thankfully, the aforementioned Chaos mode offers more enjoyment. This gameplay method ditches the dopey quests in favor of pure, arcade action. It's quick, carnal and gratifying—in small doses. Both modes would benefit exponentially with the addition of multiplayer options. It's baffling why the developers didn't conceive of making at least one of the other 250 people on screen controllable. Inexcusable. Technically, I must commend VIS on stuffing the screen with hundreds of characters. It's a neat trick, but similar care should have gone into fixing the seam-filled, flickering floors and messy camera angles. But gamers seeking an ultra-violent stress reliever should still bloody their hands with *SoE*.

Shane

The first time you see this game's seething mass of humanity in motion, you will giggle, gather your buds around the tube to oggle the mayhem, then grab a rocket launcher and blast everything in sight. Hey, we don't blame you—chaos is fun. But *State of Emergency*'s "Whoa, lookit all the people!" gimmick wears a little thin about a halfway into the game's mission-based Revolution mode. That's when you notice the rough edges: maddening escort missions, tricky aiming controls, and beat-'em-up gameplay that gets repetitive. Still, the cathartic play modes make this **a handy game to have around after rough weekdays in the real world.**

Crispin

Society blows, especially for the residents of *State of Emergency*'s Capitol City, so you feel pretty good playing the instrument of its very collapse. And VIS' technical achievement in re-creating a riot scene is second to none, delivering simple, fast arcadey fun that's a great way to mindlessly let off some steam. But people expecting more than shades of *GTA3* will be sorely let down, basically because **your relationship with every part of the SOE world is relegated to destroying it.** Sadly, no real exploration, strategy or character interaction exists. Even if you haven't tried Rockstar's other controversy magnet, you're bound to find *SOE* pretty shallow.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	5	7	7

Pac-Man World 2

Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco
Players: 1
Also try: *Pac-Man World* (PS), *Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness* (N64/PS/DC)
Best Feature: Good level design
Worst Feature: Slight camera problems
Web Site: www.namco.com

When I think *Pac-Man*, I think of wandering through mazes, gobbling dots, and chomping ghosts, not the running and jumping usually found in a 3D platform game. But *Pac-Man World 2* successfully mixes these polar-opposite genres into an enjoyable lil' 21st-century brew. Most of the game looks and plays as if our yellow friend's been caught in the latest *Crash Bandicoot*. You progress through all the typical areas: forests, frozen tundra, a volcano and underwater. The level design is **straightforward and challenging (especially later stages) but relatively low on surprises**. The thing that makes *PMW2* really different and fun is the way classic *Pac-Man* touches have been added. A maze here and there, *Pac* arcade games to unlock, fruits to collect, dots to gobble up, ghosts to chomp—the old elements are always there but never overpowering or too out of place. The same can be said for the visuals. They're good but not so mind-blowing that you want to stop and admire them. And surprisingly, Namco got the camera right. Like a few other games of this type (ahem, *Sonic Adventure 2*), it'll occasionally force you to look a certain way. But where *Sonic* forced you to make blind jumps, the camera here always picks a good angle. The only trouble spot comes during boss battles, where your view just doesn't flip around fast enough. Despite that, this simple, fun platformer is worth a look. **Chris**

Colorful characters, butt-stomps, spin attacks, lava and ice worlds, random crap to collect—the Pacster's new outing packs the same ol' stuff you've seen in a million 3D-platform games before. But fortunately, **everything here hangs together reasonably well**. Control is darn good, and that counts when you find yourself getting into a comfy laid-back platform-hopping daze—until the camera is knocked goofy by some background obstacle and you lose concentration. Talk about a buzzkill. The levels themselves are fun if uninspired, although cheap deaths abound in later stages. Just accept the fact that the game likes to kill you out of the blue sometimes. **Crispin**

Some mascots age more gracefully than others; on one hand you've got your Marios and Sonics, on the other you've got your 7-Up Cool Spots. Pac-Man still has a few lives left, despite a rocky 20-year history, and *PMW2* tastefully continues his trademark dot-harvesting model in 3D. It's obviously skewed toward a younger crowd, but **cool gameplay ideas inspired by *Klonoa 2* squelched my guilt for enjoying a "kid's" game so much**. If only the camera didn't feel like a drunken film student's first project—it would rarely show me what I needed to see, and preferred to lock down rather than negotiate simple objects. *PMW2* is still worth a rental. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	4	5

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts
Featured In: *EGM* #151
Players: 1-2
Violent cursing? Unfortunately, no
Web Site: www.easports.com
Best Feature: The analog swing works surprisingly well (that ain't no lie)
Worst Feature: Putting game

No longer saddled with an antiquated swing meter, *PGA 2002* has gone fully analog. Don't let that scare you—it's an improvement. And the stick is just one part of the new *Tiger Woods* experience. Ya see, EA has rebuilt the game to be totally immersive. Stay with me here—that's a fancy way of saying they want us to feel the emotions, as well as the mechanics of golf. I'll admit that sounds like marketing hype, but they really did a decent job. Take the aforementioned analog swing. The draw and timing of your stroke directly affect where the ball goes. **So once you catch on, using the stick feels fluid and natural**—thus, more immersive. Get it? Toss in a thumping heartbeat and other emotion effects, and you're swearing like a real golfer in no time flat. I applaud EA for taking *Tiger* in this new direction, but there is one thing I don't like: The contour of the greens can be hard to judge (the old grids have been removed in the name of realism). Now you depend on your caddie for tips on where to aim, making the putting game a bit awkward. Otherwise, it's good. **Dean**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	7	7

EGM GOLD EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD

NBA 2K2

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Featured In: *EGM* #149
Players: 1-4
I wish: My Rockets didn't suck so bad
Web Site: segasports.com
Best Feature: Superb computer intelligence
Worst Feature: Menus are hard to navigate

I was hoping Visual Concepts would improve the Xbox version of this game as much as they did with *NFL 2K2*, but this is only a minor upgrade (the crisper graphics aren't that big a deal). I can't really complain, though. **This is the best hoops game I've ever played.** Yes, even better than *Barkley Shut Up 'N Jam*. If you haven't read my previous rants about why I love *NBA 2K2* (look under "S" for Spooged), I'll give you the abridged version. It goes something like this: If you know anything about hoops, you'll appreciate the attention to detail that was put into recreating the nuances of the sport. You know, the way players post-up, the way they fade back for a shot, and my favorite, the way they slash easily to the basket whenever a slow, white guy is guarding them. I hate hoops games that don't challenge me or look like the real thing. This accomplishes both. And let me give you a few words of wisdom: Don't play against the Lakers. With this game's smarts and their talent, you'll be *2K2*'s bitch. But at least you'll love every minute of it. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	8	7	9

Circus Maximus: Chariot Wars

Publisher: Encore
Developer: Kodiak Interactive
Featured In: *EGM* #151
Players: 1-4
Should be: Sent to the glue factory
Best Feature: Co-op multiplayer mode
Worst Feature: Ultra-lame controls and graphics
Web Site: www.encoresoftware.com

A word of warning to all Xbox owners: **This is one of the worst racing games I have ever played.** Part *Road Rash*, part *Ben Hur*, this combat chariot-racer is the pits. Whoever decided that using every damn button on the controller (including pressing down on the analog sticks) makes for enthralling gameplay needs to have his or her head checked. Trying to 1) control the chariot and its driver while 2) whipping your horses to keep them at maximum speed, and 3) manipulate your co-pilot in chariot-to-chariot combat (all at the same time) is so comprehensively unintuitive it's ridiculous. If you think that sounds wacked, factor in the need to have your co-pilot helping you out in the curves by leaning left or right (using the right analog stick), and you can see why this is a problem. But wait, it gets better! Bumping into a wall, or taking too sharp a turn (which you're usually doing to avoid bumping into the wall), will flip your freaking chariot and put you back a few places. Another constant chore is keeping your horses/zebras/unicorns from running into walls while you lunge for power-ups. In case you're wondering if there is a bright side to this game, know now that the muddy quality of the sound and visuals matches the wretchedness of the control scheme blow for blow. Slightly more fun can be found in the Multiplayer modes (particularly Co-op), but overall I cannot recommend this game. **Milkman**

Warning: Do not play this game's single-player mode. If you were to attempt such a task, you'd be forced to use every button and stick on the complex Xbox controller to steer, power and defend your chariot. I'm talking about driving the chariot with one dude and fighting with another at the same time. **Trust me, the controls are sheer, unadulterated nonsense.** Luckily, the two-player Co-op mode justifies a lark rental for this turkey. With you at the reigns and your friend slicing from the back, *Maximus* manages to actually be entertaining. It still looks like a chunky, amateurish Dreamcast game, but you'll have a three-legged-race kind of fun with it. **Shane**

Good luck finding anyone who's ga-ga over chariot racing, but for the select few, *Circus Maximus* to the rescue! At first, you may find yourself giggling profusely at the sheer silliness of watching gladiators try to knock heads with each other while trying to keep balance on a bouncy chariot, but lightheartedly play *CM* and it actually does entertain. Serious bummers arise, though, due to controls designed for folks with 12 fingers, and a high learning curve which makes a win in even the beginning stages of single play a chore. Multiplay's where *CM's* got a chance, but it won't be easy coaxing your buddies into it. **Novel idea, but inadequate execution.** **Jeanne**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	4	5	4

Jet Set Radio Future

Publisher:	**Sega**
Developer:	**Smilebit**
Featured In:	***EGM* #152**
Players:	**1-4**
Best Feature:	**Gorgeous graphics and huge areas**
Worst Feature:	**Bad level design hampers what should be a great experience**
Web Site:	**www.sega.com**

Sega's reputation for releasing quirky, unique-looking games certainly hasn't diminished during their transition from first- to third-party publisher, thanks to titles like *Super Monkey Ball*, *Rez* and now *Jet Set Radio Future*.

Of the games on that list, *Future* is definitely the prettiest. But like that hottie you lusted after in high school, once you peel back the outer layer (and we're not talking about her clothing, you perv), there's distressingly little substance.

Jet Set starts out just fine. Various missions—including everything from racing against other skaters, painting rival gangs, and leaving your artistic mark on every flat surface in sight—keep you busy and interested. But then you slowly start to realize you're being forced to play the same few missions over and over again on slightly different,

The beautiful, massive levels serve to impress and aggravate all at once. Wait 'til you've fallen off the Skyscraper District for the 50th time.

increasingly difficult levels.

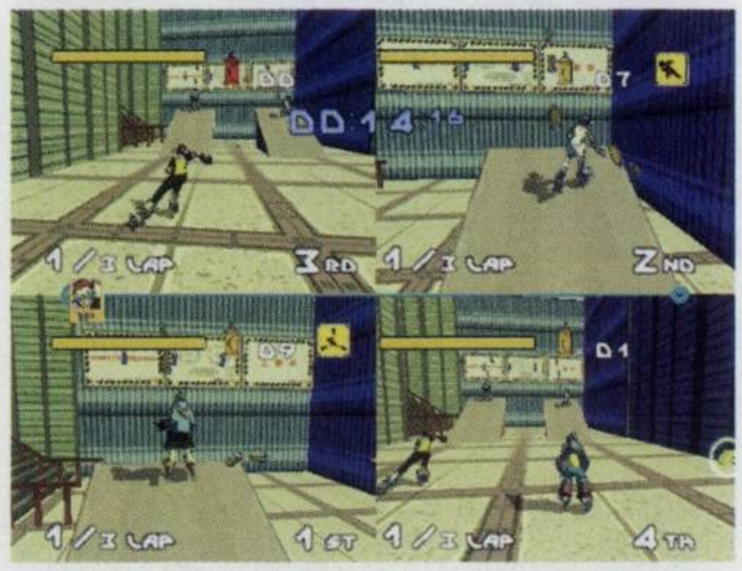
That wouldn't be so bad, except that the later levels are so unforgiving you can easily spend a half hour on even the most menial task. And once you finally, say, get to the top of a skyscraper to spraypaint one tiny square, you feel little sense of accomplishment.

But once you resign yourself to that, what's here is very well-done. Finding different ways to grind around all the huge levels is very engaging and super-cool to watch. And with the single-button trick system, it's incredibly easy to pull off all those sick moves.

Since linear games like *Jet Set* don't normally come with loads of replay value, Smilebit's also thrown in a small collection of multiplayer challenges. You—and up to three friends—can do everything from a straight race to seeing who can tag the most walls within a certain time limit.

In the end, the various problems seriously diminish but don't destroy this stylish and unique experience.

Grinding any edge you can find is usually the only way to find every secret in each level (left). The multiplayer games in *Jet Set* leave a lot to be desired (below). None of them are compelling or competitive enough to keep you coming back after a couple of plays.



Jet Set Radio is a beautiful game; there's no denying that. The cool, stylized graphics and the breathtaking size and scope of most levels make for a lot of gee-whiz moments. And when you look beyond the pretty graphics and funky music, you'll find some decent gameplay underneath as well. While *Jet Set* is basically a standard action romp, being able to grind—and trick off of—just about every edge in the game means you can tackle every level in a variety of ways in order to finish all the mission objectives and unlock the entire group of playable characters. The problem, though, is that **Smilebit is guilty of design overkill, and it negatively affects the overall experience**. Yes, the huge areas are amazing to look at and offer a lot of opportunities for exploration, but various camera problems can make them a nightmare to navigate. Falling to your doom over and over again, or being forced to grind your way up a massive building for five minutes just to get back to where you were because you can't make a particular jump are good examples of the problems found within. Plus you have to keep completing a lot of the levels—and therefore the same frustrating leaps and grinds—two or three times apiece. I found myself wishing the missions would just end in the hopes of something a little more fun to do on the horizon. These flaws keep an otherwise solid game from achieving greatness. **Greg**

Wow. In *JSRF*, Smilebit re-creates the intricate maze of a bustling metropolis, as seen through the eyes of a skate punk on drugs (my grandma says they all do drugs): A slightly surreal, completely awesome mish-mash of hip kids, panicking pedestrians, and criss-crossing highways of rails, benches, and phone wires to grind. But after **the buzz of the stylish look and excellent soundtrack wears off**, you're left with the gameplay, which is almost exclusively running around the gigantic levels (suddenly not such a great feature), looking for spots on a map subscreen. *Future* has the delicious candy coating, but there's no Tootsie Roll center to this Tootsie Pop. **Mark**

I'd like to send a "thank you" note to Smilebit for crafting the vivid world of *JSR*—a land where I can skate to my heart's content, a place that is unlike any other. As I grind up streetlights and over telephone lines, jacket rippling in my wake, I marvel at the ease of the dramatically improved (over the Dreamcast prequel) controls and the ease with which I can bust out phat graffiti tags. While the camera can be a trip, bugging out every now and again, the block-rockin' soundtrack keeps me focused while I jet through Tokyo. You can't download your own tags off the Internet anymore, but that's a small price to pay for nirvana. Go experience this game now. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	9	5	6

GunValkyrie

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	Smilebit
Featured In:	*EGM* #152
Players:	1
Worthless:	GV Napalm "special" attack
Best Feature:	Breathtaking graphics
Worst Feature:	Control takes hours to adjust to
Web Site:	www.sega.com

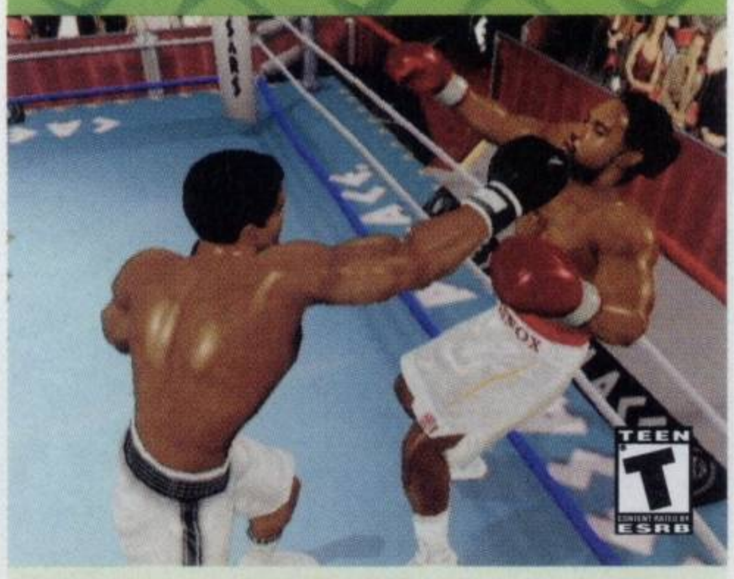
This is one of the most frustrating games I have ever considered snapping in two...and I like it anyway. Perhaps my notes will help explain this schizo analysis: [one hour in] Ugh. **How can such a stylish and *gorgeous* game control so horribly?** Left stick to move, push in to "boost" dash (big deal), right stick to look around—but why can't I turn as I look (like *Halo*)? [two hours] Argh! Tired of constantly checking map to hunt down *every single* stupid enemy and complete levels. Boosting is starting to make sense, but still, these controls...why does the crosshair re-center after every shot? Didn't anyone play-test this game? Can't beat the third level. I wanna quit. [four hours] Damnit! Naglfar's Pit stage is insane! Shooting and precise platform jumping, all while under attack? With these controls? [six hours] SCREW THIS GAME! *Still* on Naglfar's Pit. Please...kill me. [nine hours] I'm finally mastering these flawed controls—combo-ing boosts to move around quickly...cool. Bought shield and weapon upgrades. Hmm. [11 hours] Yes! I can boost, flip and zoom in any direction at will—I never touch the ground! And I like these tough boss battles. People stop by just to watch me play. I am god here! [end] So will I argue with most gamers who, tired of lame level objectives and overwhelming controls, throw down the Xbox pad? No. But for the niche of hardcore types with the patience and the willpower, a prize lies at the bottom of *GunValkyrie*. **Mark**

GV is so visually imaginative, it's hard to give it a low score and not come out looking like the enemy of art. But no amount of graphical frosting can save *GV* from its terrible, overly complex controls. If you just want to fly around, take in the scenery, blow stuff away, and look cool doing it, ***GV* will frustrate the hell out of you** with its unbelievably steep learning curve. It takes hours just to learn how to fly efficiently, and then once you do, mastering the jetpack means constantly pushing in on the analog sticks (as if they were buttons) to boost around. My thumbs were practically raw halfway through the game. All this incredible potential spoiled by rotten controls. **Che**

Some games are easy to pick up, hard to master. This ain't one of them. *GunValkyrie*'s convoluted control scheme means newbies'll have a tough time just scooting in a straight line, let alone dealing death to the insectile swarms. And wait until you zip through platform-filled areas, where false steps lead to spastic dashes to avoid the void below. To get your money's worth, **you gotta learn to boost with scientific precision**, never letting your feet touch soil. Persist and ye shall find a satisfying in-the-zone feeling (clearly Smilebit's intention), although I just as often zigged when I shoulda zagged and wondered, "Uh, so this is supposed to be fun?" **Crispin**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	8	7	5

Knockout Kings 2002



Publisher:	Electronic Arts
Developer:	Black Ops
Featured In:	*EGM* #152
Players:	1-2 (1-8 Tournament mode)
Also on:	PlayStation 2
Best Feature:	Fast gameplay
Worst Feature:	Limited modes
Web Site:	www.easports.com

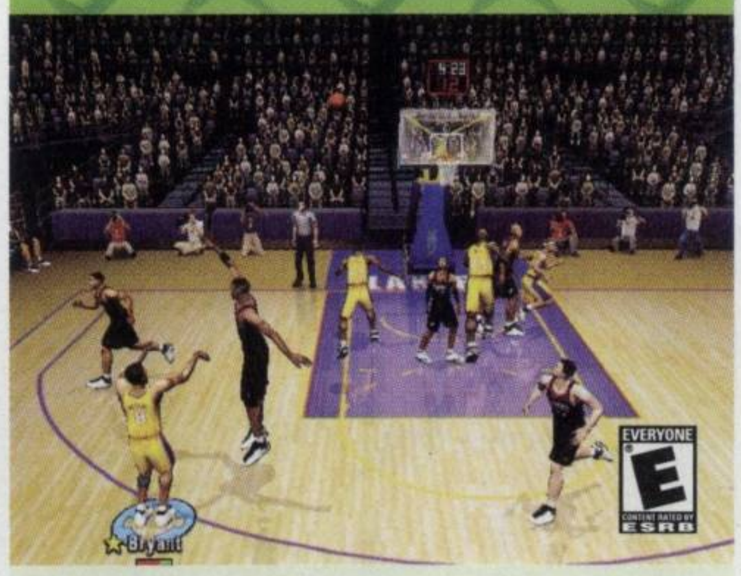
When you're making a new sports game every year, it's easy to simply reuse the same sloppy engine and update the rosters. That's why **I am astounded that EA Sports completely retooled *KO Kings 2002***. Forget about the unresponsive, sluggish punching and blocking in past versions. Now you can unleash a flurry of jabs and hooks with blinding speed. Your only obstacle is the ill-shaped Xbox controller. If your fingers accidentally land on the white button, you'll execute a low blow that will likely get you disqualified. Aside from that small nuisance, the control is razor-sharp. The visual enhancements achieve a similar level of success. Facial animations and motion-captured movement create eerily lifelike boxers. You can even see real-time reflections in the sweat on the boxers' backs—creepy. If only the same care went into the spectators. How many crowds full of poorly animated cardboard cutouts do I have to see? Hip-hop tunes about boxing serve their intended purpose on the soundtrack, but the repetitive commentary grates after a few rounds—turn it off. OK, so we have tight gameplay and improved graphics—what's missing? Options. The Exhibition and Tournament modes deliver quick thrills, but the Career mode is sorely lacking. The game desperately needs more options for customizing your personal prizefighter. Features from last year's game, like female boxers and interactive training, are mysteriously absent. **Shane**

Just like in real boxing, the basics in *KK2K2* are simple, but the subtleties (punch selection, manipulating the analog stick to bob and duck) require practice and patience. Options and single-player modes meet the status-quo, but like any one-on-one fighting game, the real fun only comes against a friend to torment with smacktalk and the taunt move. Graphics are nice (though I hoped for better), and **the overall presentation is slick**. My biggest problem is that defense needs a boost—try to play a more realistic, balanced match and you'll end up eating your mouthguard. Still, KK is a winner for boxing fans, even if it's not a knockout. **Mark**

When I play this game, I always trot into the ring with a plan in mind: "OK, *this* time I'm going to block, then hit with my special," but it always degenerates into a pathetic "Oh crap! Oh crap!" after the initial volley. That's where I just wail on buttons, then curl up into the fetal position. This lame "technique" works too well against many boxers, since your fighter doesn't get tired based on total punches thrown. They may not wear down, but they sure get roughed up, thanks to the **huge improvement to this series' graphics**. The brutal black eyes and bruises make putting a shiner on someone's mug a blast. Yes, even if you do it by blindly hitting the jab button. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	5	8

NBA Inside Drive 2002



Publisher:	Microsoft
Developer:	High Voltage
Featured In:	*EGM* #152
Players:	1-4
Afro graphics:	Highest quality
Best Feature:	Intuitive gameplay
Worst Feature:	Too many blocks and steals
Web Site:	www.xbox.com

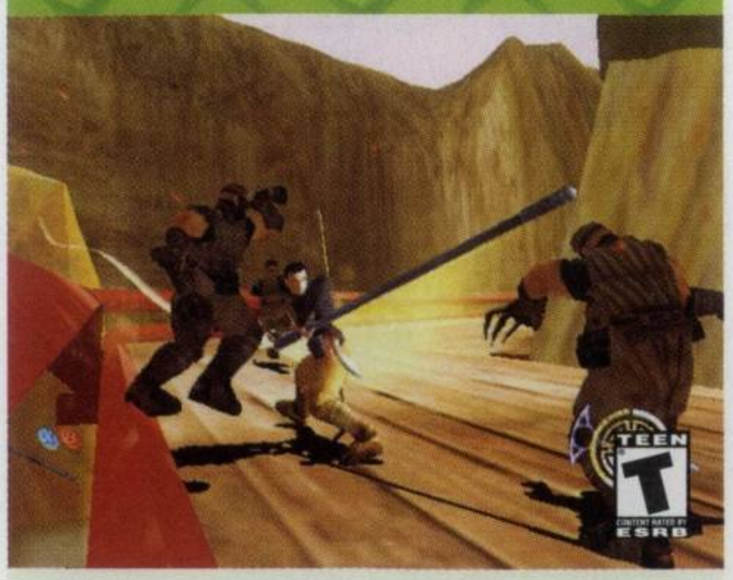
Uh oh. It looks like *NBA 2K2* has some competition (I don't care what Dan Leahy says). *Inside Drive* may not be as refined as *2K2*, but what it lacks in realism, it makes up for with fun. So be warned: If you like your b-ball true to real life, you're gonna scoff at this one. The first thing that pops up is the frantic pace of the players and fast-breaks. These boys move quicker than a pack of cheetahs chasing down a tasty gazelle. (Well, maybe not that fast, but you get the idea.) Second, sometimes your guys appear to have 60-inch vertical leaps. I'm all for hops, but what's the deal with the bionic legs? The last sim-buster is the rather obvious momentum swings; you can count on big comebacks and wild, last-second buckets. But again, all this stuff is only a problem if you're hellbent for realism—the rest of the game is super-fine. The computer offense is particularly adept at making you pay for playing dumb defense (double-teaming is risky). **And contrary to the game's name, driving the lane is a challenge.** That's OK though, because it feels great once you finally crack it open and dunk hard. I also dig the brightly lit, hot and cold icons (to name a few) displayed next to the players when they get pumped or hit a slump. Now, if you're waiting for me to say this game is better than *NBA 2K2*, I can't. But I most definitely think it belongs in your sports library. Who knows? Next year it might take the top spot. **Dean**

Pro basketball is fast, but this is a little extreme. To produce players that move and cut at this scorching speed, the NBA would have to breed them with greyhounds weaned on crack. **While this hectic pace isn't realistic, it does make your palms sweat.** At first, you'll give up tons of points while trying to corral dribblers that turn on a dime, but you can temper the onslaught with some sweet defensive moves: Swats look and feel better than in any other hoops game, and you can easily pick off lazy passes. The abundance of big plays on both sides of the ball may annoy die-hard fans, but there's no doubting the fun and excitement they generate. **Kraig**

Microsoft has taken the safe route with its first Xbox sports releases: Match easy-to-play, almost 16-bit gameplay with dazzling visuals and voilá—instant winner. *NBA Inside Drive*, like *NFL Fever* before it, impresses upon first glance. Dagger-like jump shots and thunderous slams will have you nodding and muttering, "Hells yeah." Soon, however, an insane amount of blocked shots and steals will have you crying, "Hell no!" Defenders tip and block LOTS of balls they shouldn't. **Rick Fox should not have nine blocks in a game—ever.** Other gripes include dark arenas (pay the damn electric bill) and a lack of modes to choose from. **Dan L.**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	6	8

New Legends



Publisher:	**THQ**
Developer:	**Infinite Machine**
Featured In:	***EGM* #142**
Players:	**1**
Fave Glitch:	**The amazing floating monk**
Best Feature:	**Big spread of weapons and attacks**
Worst Feature:	**Do I have to pick just one?**
Web Site:	**www.new-legends.com**

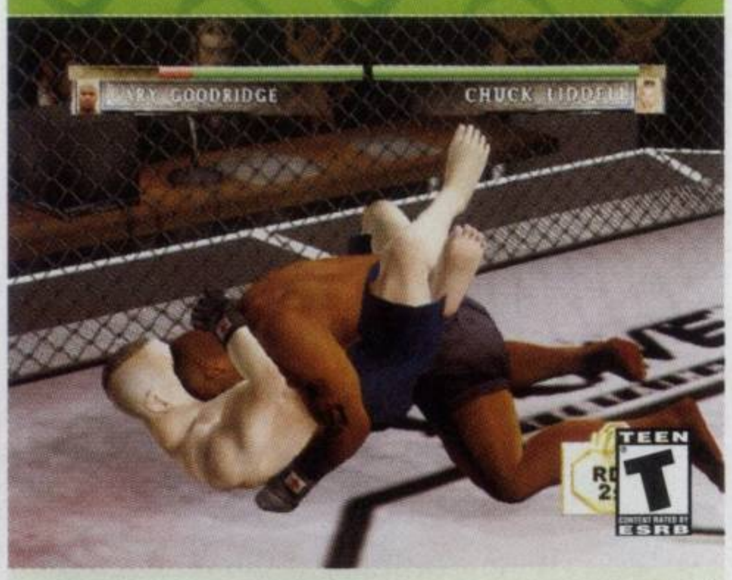
Some veterans have flashbacks of Vietnam; I have flashbacks of *Azurik*. Months ago, after forcing myself to slog through that agonizingly dull action/adventure for a review, I promised myself "Never again," threw the game into a volcano, and wept. Then came *New Legends*, or as I like to call it, *Azurik: The Legendary Chinese Journeys*. The list of problems between the two games is so similar I began to question the existence of a god who would put me through this twice: Massive, sprawling levels that often leave you no idea where to go next; lackluster visuals, including crude backgrounds (complete with entire mountains suddenly popping in and out of view) and bland or non-existent effects; bugs and glitches (enemies appear and disappear, friendly characters jump happily off cliffs only to zoom back) that make you wonder **who decided this game was finished**; there's even a blue, pointy-eared hero! Nooooo! (Well, he's purple actually, but you get the idea). As with *Azurik*, I must begrudgingly admit *NL* isn't all bad: Combat is simple—block then attack—but sometimes fun in a *Final Fight*, mindless beat-'em-up kinda way. A huge cache of weapons you can equip in one or two hands and a couple decent bosses help as well. And friendly characters who chat and fight alongside you as the battle rages is a cool idea, if only they didn't behave like headless chickens. Never again—and this time, I mean it. **Mark**

First of all, **slapping an Asian face on any piece of crap will *not* keep it from stinking if it's a piece of crap to begin with**. Sure, a few fancy martial-arts moves here, a dab of warring Asian clans there, and a scoop of overdramatized honor-upholding for good measure, and aw yeah, we're talkin' winning adventure-game formula, uh-huh! For the love of all that is holy, no! Non-existent enemy A.I. which puts fighting on the same entertainment level as cleaning toilets, shameful graphical glitches, a totally unintuitive inventory system, and a completely banal clunky storyline within a world you literally get lost in, nothing, let alone Asian cheese, is saving *NL*. **Jeanne**

New Legends is an epic game. But like other grand-scale projects, say the movie *Waterworld* for example, **it ends up spreading itself too thin for its own good.** The sheer length, the tiring hack-and-slash battling, and the constant running remind me of a PC action game circa 1995. The sound quality (both the effects and the voice acting) could be better as well. Yet even with its obvious flaws, if *NL* succeeded in letting me sneak around and inflict covert damage (ala *Metal Gear Solid 2*) as it attempts to, I'd add a point to the score—but no such luck. The clunky camera and a main character with only two speeds (stand and run) won't allow it. **Dean**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	4	4	4

UFC: Tapout



Publisher:	**Crave**
Developer:	**DreamFactory**
Featured In:	***EGM* #149**
Players:	**1-2**
Whispered:	**(above) "Hold me closer, tiny dancer"**
Best Feature:	**Variety of grappling positions**
Worst Feature:	**Similar characters and moves**
Web Site:	**www.ufcvideogame.com**

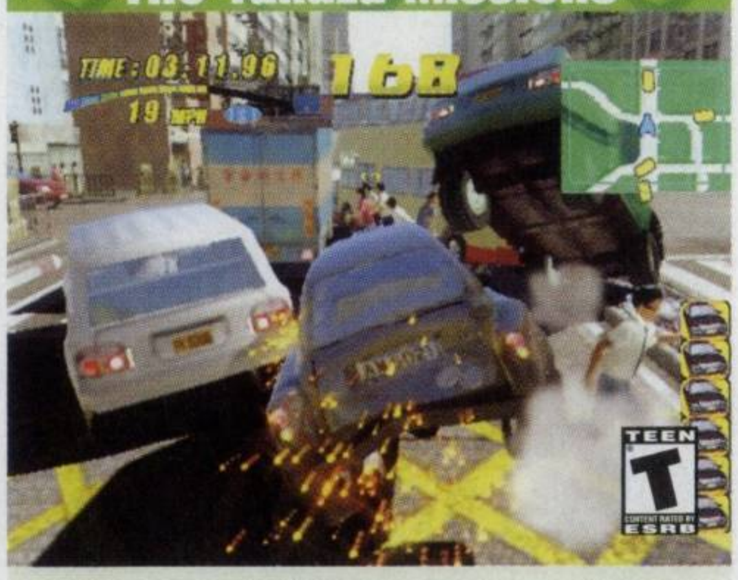
Wanna enjoy *Tapout*? First, you need at least one other willing gamer, 'cause **the A.I. is pathetic**. It's barely bright enough to serve as a punching bag while you learn the controls, and the game unfortunately lacks any Practice mode or tutorial. Once you adjust, the fighting system is solid: Nothing too complex (combos are limited), nothing too simple (several positions and counter-moves). But back to what you'll need: Second, all players should be collectible-trading-card-carrying members of the UFC fan club. You need some love of the league for the patience and desire to learn the game, and to appreciate the convincing faces (and tatoos) of your favorite badasses. Which brings us to the big problem for the rest of us: *Tapout* has over 30 fighters to choose from, and after playing it for days the only guys I remember are Tito Ortiz, Ice-T and Gary Goodridge. Too many similar characters, plus too many similar moves, equals too many forgettable matches. I don't need WWF-calibre antics, but it'd be nice to see different outfits, more recognizable signature moves, dialogue between bouts—*something* to make those of us who don't have pay-per-view on speed-dial *care* about who's fighting, or at the very least, be able to tell them apart. Overall production values could also use a punch to the back of the head: The bare minimum set of modes and *one* background (complete with frozen audience) won't make new fans. **Mark**

If real UFC matches played out like they do in the game, no one would want to order the pay-per-views. The word that describes this game the best: bland. Matches against the computer are too short, very repetitive and devoid of excitement. Most of the fighters are so similar (in both look and control) that after a while I couldn't tell my Jens Pulvers from my Jeremy Horns. And **the bland combat and simplistic Create-A-Fighter mode fail to infuse any personality**. Fighting a friend is a lot more exciting, but weighted against novices. With two experienced players, it quickly turns into a counter-fest of ridiculous proportions. **Chris**

Not much has changed in *UFC* since we played the Dreamcast version: Some new combatants, mild visual primping and a Create-a-Fighter mode that gives you a more realistic chance are the major additions to *Tapout* (actually, my home-brewed Jonny Sizzler dethroned Mark's cheap Gary Goodridge on more than one occasion). Because the game is so dependent on counters and the enigmatic submission-hold success rate, **I've never taken UFC very seriously as a "fighter."** It's more fun for folks who just want to remember two or three key moves and make those last through a night of clunky combat with a few buddies. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	4	6

Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions



Publisher:	**Activision**
Developer:	**Bunkasha Games**
Featured In:	***EGM* #150**
Players:	**1**
Gimmick:	**Sweet interchangeable visual filters**
Best Feature:	**Stylish and seamless graphics**
Worst Feature:	**Low replay value**
Web Site:	**www.gowreckless.com**

Drowning in recently murky water with the *Azuriks* and *Nightcasters*, Xbox needed something fresh to save it from the post-holiday software lull. *Wreckless* may be the chosen one. It's kind of like ***Grand Theft Auto III* if your character was Krazy Glued to his car seat**. Like *GTA3*, *Wreckless* has the uncanny ability to change its personality mid-game. One mission you're just trying to bash into as many mob cars as you can; the next you're street racing with the local juveniles. Later you'll have to negotiate narrow indoor ramps to rescue a trapped comrade. The variety is excellent, and while I'd only touch this game again to mess with the quirkier unlockable vehicles, it was challenging enough to last me a few days. *Wreckless* makes up for its slash-and-burn gameplay in the visual department, though. Through what I have to assume is some kind of mystical voodoo magic, the game cleanly details every frame of a 100-mph car chase without batting an eye. You also have a choice of 16 visual filters that range from black-and-white to mock-cel-shaded. Style is obviously high on *Wreckless*' priority list, and that attitude carries into the gameplay, so those who are expecting a tight racer, be warned. It feels like every vehicle's tires are jacked with helium—a stray wedge of Swiss cheese in the street would easily send you rolling over. Maybe it's not a fault, maybe it's just part of the style, but I could live without it. **Jonathan**

It's weird—I like to go fast, blow crap up, and drive on the sidewalk, but for some reason doing so in this game isn't quite the same. Seriously, ***Wreckless* will dazzle you at first**. The scenery is like nothing I've seen before; it's photorealistic at times (especially when using the black-and-white filters). And the sheer amount of chaos and destruction you can cause makes *Crazy Taxi* look mild. That stuff is amazing. What isn't: the sloppy-handling vehicles and limited number of missions. Half are comprised of nothing more than ramming enemy cars into submission. More of everything (I'm greedy) would be nice, but it's still a good time. **Dean**

Being a fan of the *Runabout* games on the PS1 and Dreamcast helped prepare me for the similar traffic-causing chaos of *Wreckless*. While the goofy characters are nothing more than plot-fodder to further the mission-based adventures, I ate it up like candy. Whizzing past crowded streets and plazas, crashing into double-decker buses, running down Yakuza escorts, and plowing through streetside cafés is my idea of a swell time. Though some levels are straightforward search-and-destroy missions, others have you doing *Crazy Taxi*-esque jumps and stunts. The visual filters make for a psychedelic treat, but **at its core this is just good, mindless fun**. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	6	3

WWF Raw

Publisher:	**THQ**
Developer:	**Anchor**
Featured In:	***EGM* #152**
Players:	**1-4**
Best Feature:	**Easily the best graphics we've ever seen in a wrestling game**
Worst Feature:	**Severe lack of options**
Web Site:	**www.thq.com**

The Rock and company are finally making an appearance on the Xbox, and at the very least, these brutish men and sultry women are looking better than ever.

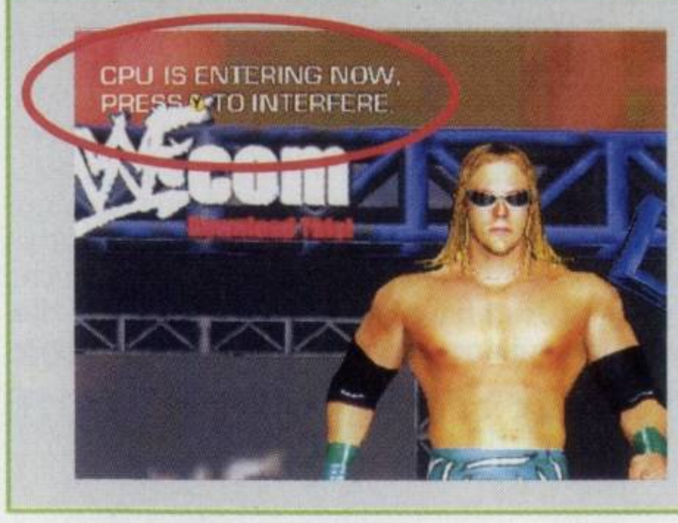
But all is not happy in the house that Vince built. It seems that the trip to a new system had an adverse effect on his wrestlers: Everyone moves really slowly, walks kinda funny, and never seems to have the energy to get up from a fall. Well, scratch that. They will get back on their feet, but only after a maddening delay and the most insane amount of button-mashing you'll ever do.

It's a shame, too. The developers really have something here. Not content with the timed button-pushing formula every wrestling game has used since the beginning of time, Anchor has thrown the concept of stamina into the mix. Meaning if you're the type who just stands there beating on an opponent, you'll tire out quickly and soon be on the losing end of a three-count.

Anchor's first wrasslin' effort on the Xbox just doesn't deliver like Yuke's awesome *SmackDown!* on the PS2, or even as well as Acclaim's *Legends of Wrestling*. With a little more speed and way more match options, *Raw* could have been a contender. Unfortunately, being rushed out the door relegates it to mere jobber status.

***WWF Raw* features full bios and stats for every wrestler in the game. From this screen you can even view the entrance video for each fighter.**

AIN'T NOTHIN GONNA BREAK-A MY STRIDE



One of the biggest events in any wrestling match is the pyrotechnic-filled entrances of each of the fighters. It's really the way each wrestler is identified, his or her chance to play to the crowd. So what better way to ruin your buddy's buzz than to interrupt said entrance and get a quick, dirty hit in on him?

The entrance interference is a totally cool move that should be in more wrestling games. Especially since it serves to piss off the people you're playing against.

The character models in *Raw* look so good, sometimes you'll think you're watching a television broadcast...in slow-mo. It's upsetting to waste these great graphics on a game with so many issues. Somehow the dreaded Stone Cold Stunner just isn't as impressive at half-speed.

Raw on the Xbox is a classic case of a game that never rises above being simply the sum of its parts, and pretty much every aspect of this title suffers some sort of flaw. Take the graphics: excellent for the most part, but damaged by some really weird animation (everyone walks like they've got a stick up their butt, even the women) and a couple faces—especially Triple H and Chris Benoit—that look absolutely wrong. Next on the list is gameplay. *Raw* features an innovative new stamina-based fighting system that rewards you for pacing yourself during a match. But some more play testing was definitely required before this product got pushed out the door. Oddities abound (sometimes your attack doesn't appear to connect, but your opponent reels), and it takes forever to recover from a fall (resulting in countless cries of "Get up!" from our reviewers). Those who poo-poo wrestling might find this hard to believe, but the flow of a match is very important. This weird inability to recover from a fall completely ruins that. Finally, *Raw* is woefully short of match options. Hell in the Cell, Cage, Ladder and just about any other gimmick match you've come to expect from a *WWF* game are nowhere to be found. Anchor has laid the basic groundwork for a game that could one day compete with *SmackDown!* Unfortunately, right now it's just **a bare-bones brawler with too many problems to be forgiven.** **Greg**

Imagine playing a game where giant men are nearly naked and wrestling with each other, only instead of your typical fast-paced WWF action, you get guys grappling as though they were stuck in some sort of permanent slow motion. In *Raw*, **The cast moves around as though they were at the bottom of a swimming pool on Jupiter**, instead of in some stadium in Middletown, USA. It's especially bad when the wrestlers are getting up from being knocked down. Are these guys so old now that there's no more spring in their steps? Too bad. These slumberous high-gravity physics weigh down an otherwise fine (though light on modes) game. **Shoe**

Wrestling is one of those genres that I can only enjoy playing in a group, 'cause smack-talking the computer is unsatisfying. And even for multiplay, I have a few requirements: The fighting has to be fast, fair and easily picked up. *Raw* definitely fits that bill. The combat system is very intuitive and the action is smooth and realistic, with excellent presentation (including picture-in-picture replays when playing solo). It unfortunately **lacks the crazier WWF matches, but what's here is done well**. My only gripe is that it takes a bit too long to get up if you find yourself on the canvas (even if you just executed an attack). Good, clean wrasslin' fun. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	5	3	6

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

EGM GOLD EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft
Featured In: *EGM* #152
Players: 1-2 (1-4 Network)
Supports: Custom soundtrack
Web Site: www.activision.com

Best Feature: All-around solid, addicting gameplay
Worst Feature: Cramped hands from hours of play

To see if *Tony Hawk 3* Xbox is right for you, see which category you fall into: **1.) Never played *Tony Hawk* before.** Aw, give it a try. All the fuss and hype over this series is there for a reason. The games are seriously dope, and you'll be hooked before you know it. Great controls, solid game design. **2.) Really liked *Tony Hawk 1, 2* or *2X*; haven't played any version of *Tony 3* yet.** Well, I don't know what you're waiting for (unless you don't own a PS2 or GameCube), so when this game comes out, get it right away. *Tony 3* has more personality, moves and creative stages than you'll know what to do with. This is not your typical, rehash sequel. **3.) Played *Tony 3* already on another system.** You may dig the Xbox version for its network play (it's less of a hassle to set up than going online with a PS2), the slightly smoother graphics, and the new stage. But these minor upgrades aren't worth the time, energy or money to give *Tony 3* another run. You probably don't want to play it with the Xbox controller anyway, with its made-for-NBA-players size.

Shoe

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	8	8	9

Motocross Maniacs Advance

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Players: 1 (1-4 Linked)
Not as good as: The two prequels
We Want: *Excitebike* GBA
Web Site: www.konami.com

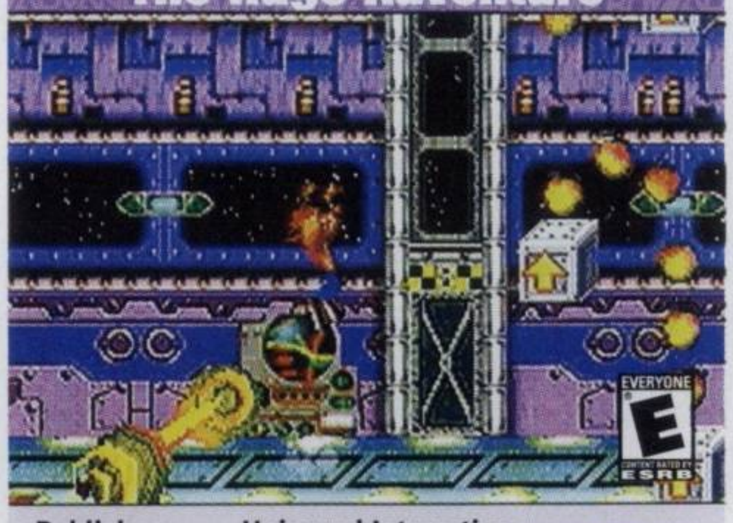
Best Feature: *Excitebike*-style controls are great
Worst Feature: Too many obstacles ruin the experience

If you've been a Game Boy player since 1989, chances are you've already experienced this franchise once or twice in the past decade. All you really do is drive from left to right, using the odd nitro-boost and doing a bunch of jumps and loop-de-loops on your way to the finish line. At least, that's how it used to be. With *MM Advance*, you now have to worry about firing various weapons at your opponents and even avoiding oddly placed obstacles like octopi and dogs on each track. Since the game moves pretty fast and the screen is so small, seeing these obstacles in time to jump or break them eventually becomes a big problem. It doesn't help that winning usually comes down to who can hit the boost button the fastest, since there's really no shortage of nitro for anyone in the race. I will give Konami some credit for adding a few minigames to the package this time around in the name of replay value, but they're uninspired at best. *Motocross Maniacs* is **fun for about an hour**, and after that I doubt you'll ever pick it up again.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	2	8

Crash Bandicoot: The Huge Adventure



Publisher: Universal Interactive
Developer: Vicarious Visions
Featured In: *EGM* #146
Players: 1
Also Try: *Rayman Advance*, *Sonic Advance*, *Super Mario Advance 2*
Best Feature: Classic *Crash* platforming fun with interesting level variations
Worst Feature: Too much trial-and-error gameplay
Web Site: www.universalinteractive.com

***Crash* for the GBA is what the PS2 game wanted to be.** No excessively long load times, straightforward platform action varied with air missions and front-camera-view races, and some engaging, albeit frustrating level design make *Crash* a perfect family-road-trip friend. But as the saying goes, "no pain no gain." *Adventure*, like the problematic PS2 *Crash*, still relies too heavily on trial-and-error gameplay. Dying every two seconds for either jumping into a void or a layer of spikes, or running for dear life without being able to see what the heck is coming at you during the front-camera-view missions happens consistently throughout, and is only just bearable due to the availability of extra guys within the level and bonus stages. This is not to say that those 1-ups just fall at your feet, though. In fact, more times than not, after yelling "Cheap! Cheap!" for the zillionth time, you'll probably want to do one of two things: Either calmly turn the game off and go beat up your little brother, or tear the game out of the GBA and throw it against your Britney poster on the wall. Now add the cause of this emotional outburst with some already established antagonizing features in the *Crash* mold, i.e., death by your toe nipping an enemy, and *One Life to Live* flashing on your TV starts looking mighty inviting. Needless to say, don't go out of your way to buy *Crash*—rent or borrow it instead.

Jeanne

Back on the PlayStation, this marsupial ran the show, but now that he's showing up on a console with games like *Super Mario Advance 2* and *Sonic*, his mediocrity crashes the party. By combining boring gameplay, derivative level design and a remarkably short quest, Vicarious Visions has transformed *Crash* into **just another ho-hum platformer**. Even *Crash*'s trademark graphical splendor has been toned down to merely average. The occasional pseudo-3D stage looks hot, but the side-scrolling sections are nothing special. Also, any game that heaps on the extra lives to balance out the endless one-hit deaths becomes quickly tiresome. You can do better.

Shane

After playing with *Crash* on the GBA, I am now of the opinion that Vicarious Visions can do no wrong. Throughout the colorful, detailed neo-3D platforming adventure, **I felt like I was playing the original PlayStation games**. That's how successful this version is at squeezing the essence of bandicoot onto the GBA. The controls, graphics and level-design are sweet, and they've even managed to implement the flying and diving levels from Crash's recent PS2 game. However, I did not enjoy the one-hit deaths. Some might think they're "hardcore," but I find it simply annoying. This is a good game for younger gamers in particular.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	3	3

Zone of the Enders: The Fist of Mars

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CEJ East
Featured In: *EGM* #148
Players: 1
Also try: *Advance Wars*
Best Feature: An epic story with a large cast of characters and plenty of twists
Worst Feature: Combat is bogged down by the annoying targeting mini-game
Web Site: www.konami.com

Instead of rocking out with the hot mech-on-mech action you'd expect after playing *ZOE* on the PS2, *TFOM* kicks you in the noggin with old-school turn-based gameplay. For fans of the strategy/RPG genre, this game will invoke déjà vu. You lead a band of anime stereotypes (unrelated to characters in the PS2 *ZOE*) through a series of story-driven missions. Movement and combat takes place over a grid map, where you and the computer take turns beating the crap out of each other. But unlike, say, *Front Mission 3* or *Hoshigami*—two PS1 strategy games whose battles often boil down to pure mathematics and attrition—*Fist of Mars* has you play a minigame where you move a targeting cursor around to get a bead on your opponents. When you're on defense, you dodge the enemy's crosshair. Sound exciting? Well it isn't. These targeting sequences (especially the dodging bits) are so mind-numbingly easy, they end up being more repetitive than fun. Sure, you can bypass this crappy minigame, but then you get bent over by the computer since you no longer dodge all the attacks. As annoying as the combat can be, though, *TFOM*'s political-intrigue storyline and light RPG trappings kept me coming back for more. Be warned, **this isn't a pure tactics game, nor is it as deep or as replayable as *Advance Wars***, but there's definitely enough meat here to satisfy gamers looking for a lite strategy/RPG.

Che

Stomach *ZOE*'s interpersonal melodrama and get to its gameplay guts, and you're in for a GBA treat. *Fist of Mars*' Interactive Action System (IAS)—a targeting game which puts successful attack and defense in your hands by challenging your motor coordination skills—puts a nice spin on typical turn-based strategy gameplay. A diverse set of LEVs (mechs), each with specialized upgrades, also adds another layer to gameplay depth. *ZOE* does tend to lose momentum, though, due to repetitive visuals and a drawn-out story that gets in the way of all the action. But **for strategy buffs looking for a brief diversion from *Advance Wars*, it's worth a go**.

Jeanne

ZOE certainly sounds enticing on paper: an involving anime-style storyline (well, involving for a GBA game, that is), turn-based strategy with customizable mechs, etc. Well, I went into the thing really excited and left feeling like I got burned on a bad used-car deal. *ZOE* is a sound game, no doubt. But it has so much more potential, enough to where it should've made *Advance Wars* look like *Chutes and Ladders*. *ZOE*'s combat is very straightforward and requires relatively little strategy and thinking, which kills the whole point of this being a *strategy* title. As such, this game **doesn't have enough to truly satiate the very target audience it was meant for**.

Shoe

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	6	5

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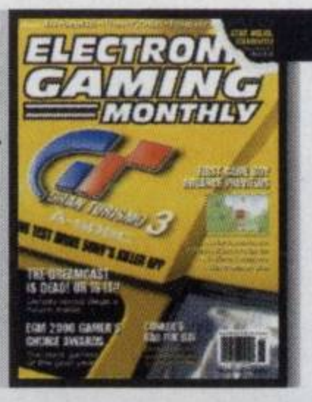

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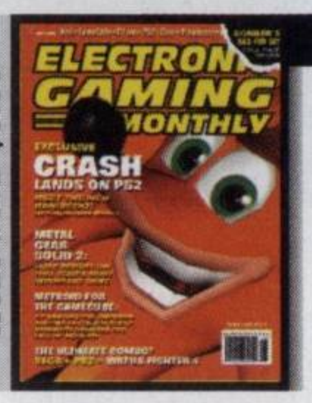

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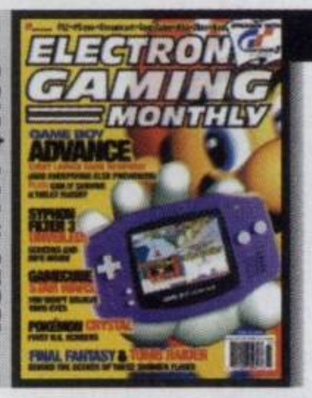

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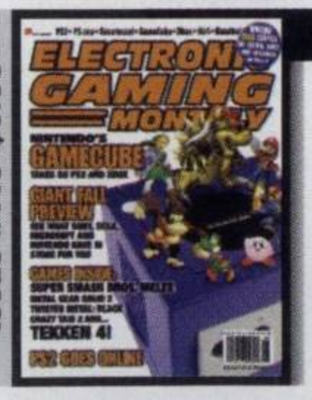

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Tricks of the Trade

By Peter Felonk

Did last issue's tricks keep you busy enough? This month Peter has a slew of new PlayStation 2, Game Boy Advance and Xbox codes just for you. Enjoy...and join Pete next month for even more tricks!

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Splashdown

PS2

DROP THESE IN

Enter the following codes in the Options screen to open a cheat password screen. Press and hold R2 and press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Square, Circle, Square, Circle.

Enter the following cheats to unlock the corresponding action. NOTE: All cheats are case-sensitive.

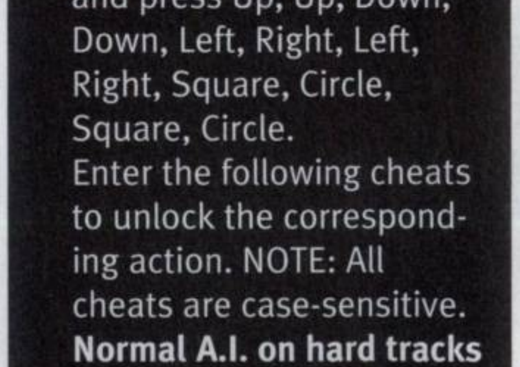
Normal A.I. on hard tracks
Hobble

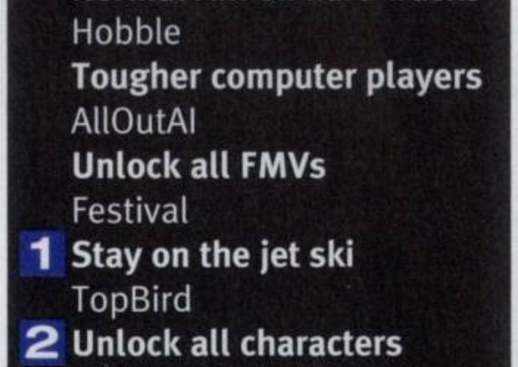
Tougher computer players
AllOutAI

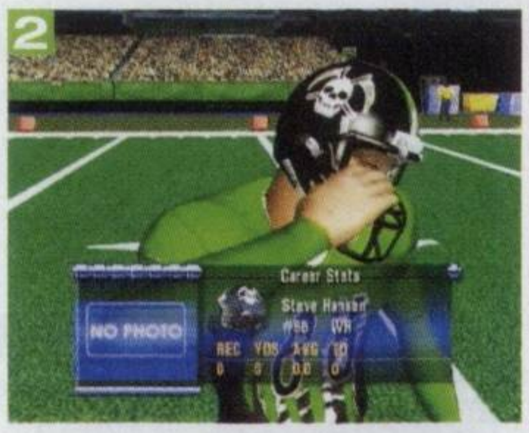
Unlock all FMVs
Festival

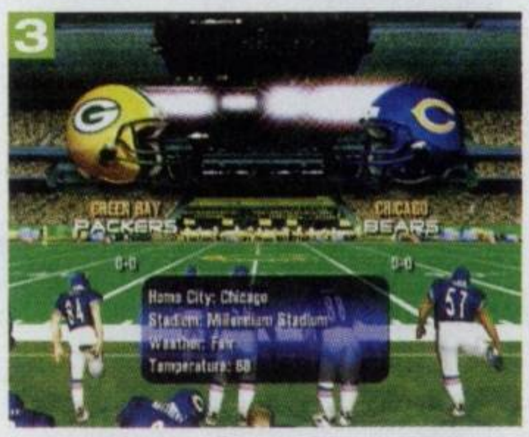
1 **Stay on the jet ski**
TopBird

2 **Unlock all characters**
AllChar









XBOX

Bloodwake

GUNS, HIGH SPEEDS AND ADRENALINE. WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED?

Finish the listed stage with the named rank to open up the hidden boats and modes.

Protection Racket - Captain
Basalisk

1 **Fish in a Barrel - Ensign**
Salamander

A Friend in Need - Ensign
Lightning

Assault on Black Moon - Ensign
Jackal

Sampan Surprise - Ensign
Tigershark

Payment is Due - Ensign
Pike

The Gladiator - Ensign
Hydroplane Switchblade

Up the Nagau - Ensign
Fireshark

Protection Racket - Ensign
Guncat Catamaran

The Gauntlet - Ensign
Hellcat Catamaran

Ships in the Night - Ensign
Gunshark

Baptism of Fire - Ensign
Kingdom Come Battle Mode

A Poke in the Eye - Ensign
Clanbake Battle Mode

Hurricane of Fire - Ensign
Metal Massacre Battle Mode

NFL Fever 2002

HOLY CODES BATMAN

Create a profile with each of the following case-sensitive names to unlock each item.

Note: You will have multiple profiles if you wish to enable all of these codes.

The Commandos
Camo

The Cows
Milk

The Gladiators
BigBacks

The Chromides
Regulate

The Crocks
Crikey

2 **The Skeletons**
Stone

The Monks
Robes

The Hackers
Axemen

The Pansies
Viola

The Spies
Target

The Samurai
Slasher

The Tumbleweeds
Dusty

The Wildcats
Kitty

The War Elephants
Horns

3 **Millennium Stadium**
Odyssey

Abyss Stadium
Odyssey 2

Roman Stadium
LionPit

Practice Stadium
Dome

New Seattle Stadium
SeaTown

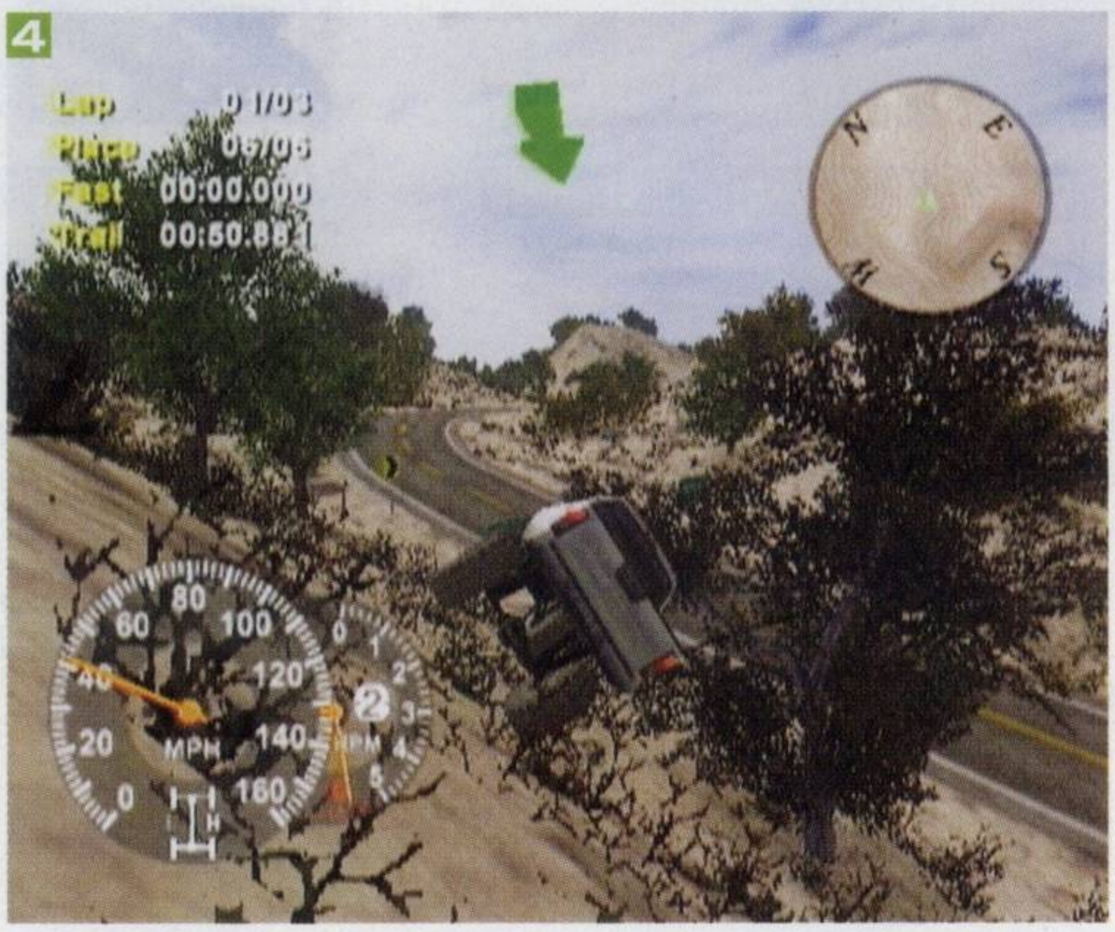
4x4 Evolution 2

GIMME, GIMME, GIMME

4 At the Press Start screen enter the following button combos. A sound will confirm code entry.

More money
Y, X, White, Y, X, White, X, X, Y, White, X, Y

Increase reputation
Y, Y, White, X, X, White, Y, Y, Y, X, X, X



Open all missions
X, X, White, White, Y, Y, White, X, Y, Y, X, White

F1 2001

LOTS OF WORK TO DO

To unlock the season 2001 review video you must win all trophies, including those for Custom GP, Championship Teammate Challenge, Domination, Full Championship and all 17 single GP mode trophies.

NASCAR Heat 2002

CREATIVE WAYS TO PLAY

Enter these codes at the main menu screen. When the codes are entered properly, the options on the screen will scroll to the left and then back into view.

Hardcore Realism Mode
Up, Down, Left, Right, White, Up, Down.

High Suspension
Up, Down, Left, Right, White, Left, Right.

5 **Mini Cars**
Up, Down, Left, Right, White, Down, Up.

Wire Frame Cars
Up, Down, Left, Right, White, Right, Left.

View Credits
Up, Down, Left, Right, White, Left(2).

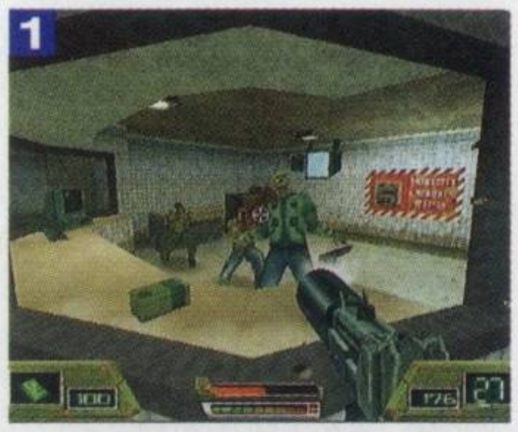
Race as Richard Petty
Successfully complete all heat challenges with a bronze or higher rating to unlock Richard Petty.

PLAYSTATION 2

Victorious Boxers: Ippo's Road to Glory

BUST THEM UP

To earn additional Versus Boxers, defeat them in Story



mode. Once defeated they will appear in the VS Character Selection screen.

Soldier of Fortune: Gold Edition

HELP ME OUT MAN

Anytime during gameplay hit the select button to bring up the Objective screen. Then enter the following button combinations. If entered correctly, the text describing the cheat will appear in the top-left corner of the screen after you escape the Objective screen. To disable them just re-enter the code. Note: These codes do not work on Unfair or Hard difficulties.

1 **Unlimited Ammo**
Hold R1 + Square and press Left on the D-pad

Invincibility
Hold R1 + L1 + L2 + R2 + Square and press Left on the D-pad

2 **Super Weapons**
Hold R2+L2+Square and press Left on the D-pad

No Target
Hold L2 + R2 + Square and press Left on the D-pad

Project Eden

TEAMWORK PAYS

To open the cheat menu during a game, pull up the Team screen by pressing X. Hold the Select button, then use the left analog stick and push Up. Rotate it clockwise three times. Immediately after you finish the third clockwise circle, rotate the stick three times counter-clockwise (opposite direction). A new icon will appear at the bottom-right corner of the screen. Select it to access the cheat menu.

The following cheats are available:
Max energy
Invulnerability on
Team invulnerability on

Team invulnerability off
Infinite weapon energy on/off
All weapons
Access all levels
Skip level

Star Trek Voyager Elite Force

I'M GIVING YOU ALL THE CODE I CAN, CAPTAIN

To enable any of these codes, pause the game and then press and hold the following combination of buttons. You will hear a voice confirming the code has been entered properly.

3 **Invulnerable**
R1 + L1 + R2 + L2 + R3 + Select

Refill ammo
R1 + R2 + Select
Note: Keep in mind this only refills the currently selected weapon. If you wish to refill the others you will have to switch weapons and enter the code for each corresponding weapon.

Heal to 999
L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 + Select

Armor 100
L1 + R1 + Select

Jeremy McGrath's Supercross World

FLYING HIGH AGAIN

At the main menu, enter the following codes:

Unlimited Turbo
R2, L1, Square, Circle, Circle, Circle

TOP 5 TRICKS

The top 5 games of the last month for your tricked-out pleasure:

1. Max Payne PS2

Selectable levels
To unlock all levels, play through subway A1 then return to the main menu via soft reset (hold Start and hit Select). Enter the following button combination: Up, Down, Left, Right, Up, Left, Down, Circle. This will open all levels and chapters. Choose any one of them in the load levels selection. Then, choose Continue and load away.

More cheats
While playing the game, pause it at any point and enter these codes to enable them.

Invulnerability
L1,L1,L2,L2,R1,R1,R2,R2
NOTE: Invulnerability doesn't always stay on. Watch your health after an auto save. This can get you killed.

All Weapons, Full Ammo and 8 Painkillers
Press L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle, Circle, X, Square.

2. Amped XBOX

Helpful cheats
All text is case-sensitive. Input codes into the Cheats section of the options menu. After entering the code, choose Done and you will hear a swooshing sound confirming the code has been entered properly.

Opens all levels to play
GimmeGimme

Easier landings on jumps
StickiT

Opens Steezy character
ChillinwSteezy

Increased speed
ZiPster

Turns tree collision off
buzzsaW

Perform higher jumps
MegaLeg

3. Legends of Wrestling PS2

Open all wrestlers
To get all those sweaty wrestlers at your disposal, go to the main menu. Press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Triangle, Triangle, Square.

TRICKS

Moon Gravity
Up, Up, Up, Up, R1, Square, Circle
Unlock the Bikes
Beat the hardcore part of Career mode

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

4. Extreme G3

X-treme cheats
If you entered the code correctly at the Press Start screen, a message will appear telling you what you have enabled. Note all L and R references are to the shoulder buttons, not the directions on the pad.
Infinite shields and turbos
L + R, Z, L + R, Z.
Note: The effects of this code only last for one race and must be re-enabled before the start of the next race.
Infinite ammunition
L, R, L, R, L + R, Z.
All teams and tracks
L(2), R(2), Z(2), L + R + Z.
Double prize money
L, R , Z, L, R, Z, L + R.
Extreme lap challenge
L, R, L, R, L, R, Z, L + R.

5. NBA 2K2

Interesting extras
Enter these passwords at the Code Selection screen. Please note that all codes are case-sensitive.
Hidden Team
vc
Extra Players on Hidden Team
Marrinson (Note: Be sure to enter the hidden team code first.)
Big Heads
heliumbrain
Monster Players
alienbrain
Infected Players
tvirus
Extra Taunting
sohappy
Freaky Commentary
whatamisaying
Ball Perspective
betheball
Cool Looks
radical
Groovy Clothes
the70slive

GAMECUBE

NFL Quarterback Club 2002

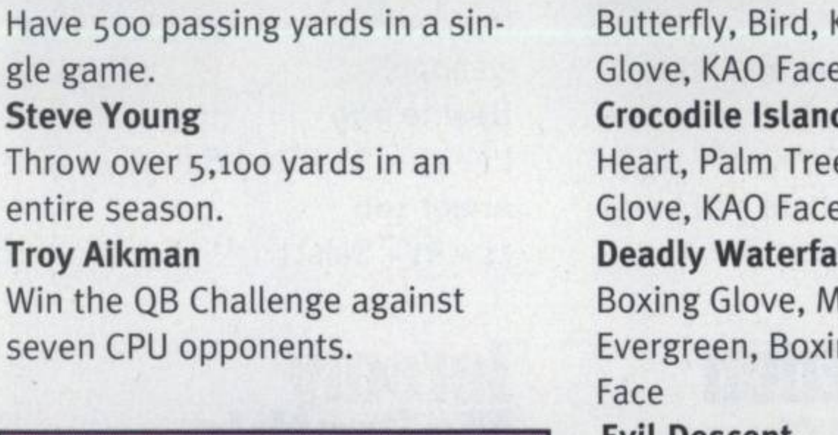
ARE YOU UP TO THE CHALLENGE AHEAD?

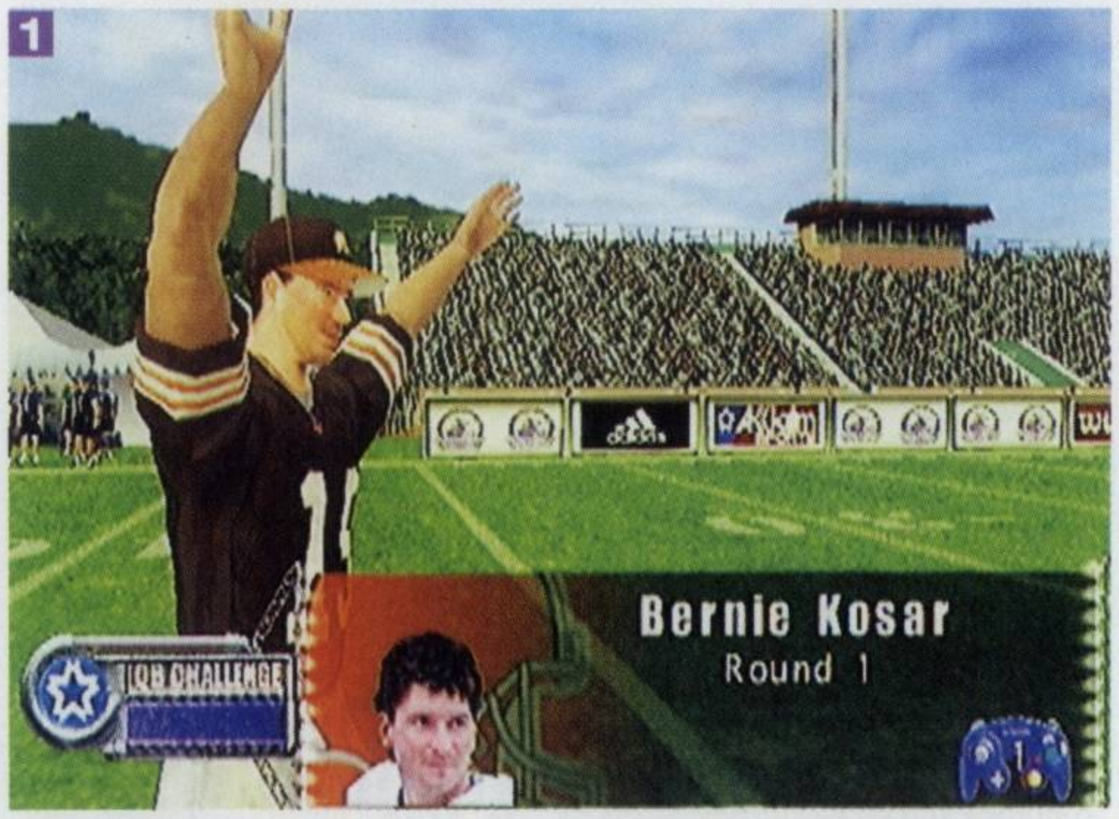
1 Bernie Kosar
Use the same quarterback to throw five touchdowns in one game.
Boomer Esiason
Throw 15 passes to the same receiver in a single game.
Dan Marino
Throw 50 touchdowns in a season.
Jim Everett
Break any record in the Quarterback Challenge.
Jim Kelly
Have at least 20 pass attempts and a 105 Quarterback rating in one game.
John Elway
Rush for 2,000 total yards in a single season.
Phil Simms
Have 500 passing yards in a single game.
Steve Young
Throw over 5,100 yards in an entire season.
Troy Aikman
Win the QB Challenge against seven CPU opponents.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Kao the Kangaroo

HIPPITY HOP IT UP





Enter the corresponding symbols to warp to that level.

1 Island Shores
Coin, Heart, Palm Tree, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Lightning Speed
Palm Tree, Heart, Coin, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Frozen Lake
Bird, Key, Frog, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Holy Temple
Bomb, KAO Face, Boxing Glove, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Megasaurus Ferocious
Fish, Owl, Butterfly, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Mythical Caves
Mushroom, Evergreen, Fish, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Little Valley
Butterfly, Bird, Key, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Crocodile Island
Heart, Palm Tree, Lamp, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Deadly Waterfall
Boxing Glove, Mushroom, Evergreen, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Evil Descent
Owl, Butterfly, Bird, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Never-Ending Slide
Flag, Coin, Heart, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Hunter
Palm Tree, Lamp, Frog, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Hypnodjin
Bomb, Flag, Coin, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Ice Caves
Key, Key, KAO Face, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Ancient Ruins
Flag, Bomb, KAO Face, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Bear Peak
Frog, Frog, KAO Face, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Big Blizzard
Lamp, Palm Tree, Heart, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
Lost Village
Evergreen, Fish, Owl, Boxing Glove, KAO Face
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Halo's Inner Circle

By Mark MacDonald

Welcome to Halo's Inner Circle, where we delve into the secrets and strategy that will help you get the most out of *Halo*. If you've got a tip, game setup or anything else *Halo*-related, E-mail it to us at egm@ziffdavis.com (subject: Inner Circle). For more cool stuff like how to get the tank *into* a base on Blood Gulch, how to climb to parts of levels you aren't supposed to see, secret easter eggs, and more, check out our new Halo Inner Circle page online at egm.gamers.com. Cya there.

TIRED OF SLAYER? NEW MULTIPLAYER GAME IDEAS:

DEMOLITION DERBY:
Setup: Team Slayer, a larger level (Blood Gulch), Warthogs and infinite grenades. **Rules:** Players try to crash into and flip their opponent's Warthog, then run them over. No firing weapons or the turret—the only fair kills are by grenade or by Warthog. 3rd and 4th players can toss grenades from the passenger seat; any other players must remain on their team's base and wait their turn, but can also lob grenades at will. Thanks to bwfrevenge@aol.com.

PREDATOR
Setup: Oddball, a medium-sized level (Battle Creek), Ball Type: Juggernaut, Trait With Ball: Invisible and Speed With Ball: Fast. **Rules:** Kill the Predator! Truly frightening since only the fast and invisible "predator" (or the one who kills him) can score kills. **Suggested Smacktalk:** "I ain't got time to bleed", "If it bleeds, we can kill it", or our personal favorite: "I don't care who you are back in the world; you give away our position one more time, I'll bleed ya, real quiet. Leave ya here. Got that?" Thanks to Andrew White.

HELPFUL TIP—WIPE THE DIRTY DISC ERROR AWAY:
If you've been trying System Link Play—over a LAN or online (www.gamespyarcade.com/support/tunnel_xbox.shtml for more info), you've probably run into that annoying dirty disc error that resets the game. Here's how to avoid it: Start a regular, split-screen multiplayer game first, then quit. Bingo. When you go back to System Link Play it will work fine.

Smash Bros. Academy

By Chris "CJ" Johnston

BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD...

✖ Play as Sonic or Tails: Sonic Team's two stars make cameos as warriors in SSBM. Here's how you get 'em: Achieve a high score of 20 KOs with any one character in Cruel Melee. Sonic and Tails will then both challenge you (yes, at the same time). Beat 'em and they open as playable characters. Finish Classic mode with either for a special surprise.

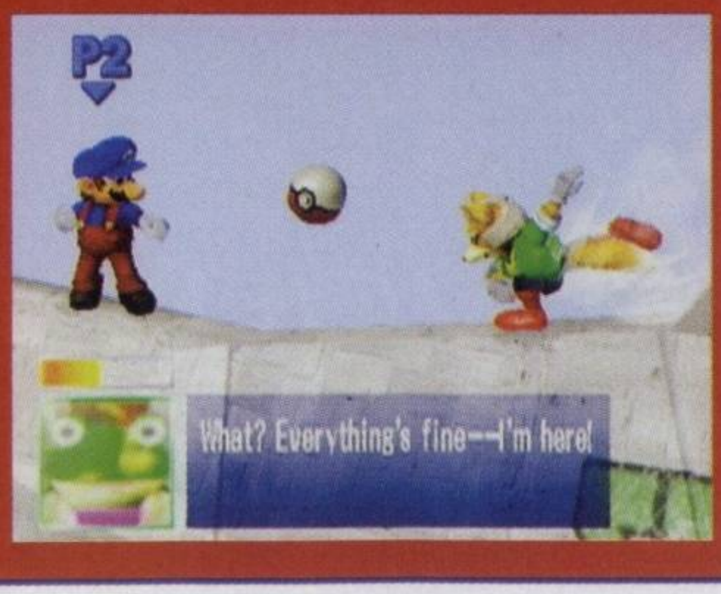
✖ Play as Ditto: Well, not really *as* Ditto, but as a random character. Go into Tournament Melee and start a Winner Out/Loser Out tournament. If you hold down L and R while selecting your character, you'll select Ditto, indicating your choice to play as a random character.

✖ Arrange your trophy collection: Before you select "Collection" from the Trophies menu, hold down L, R or Y and press A to enter your Collection and view them in one of five different arrangements (L and Y have two layout styles, determined randomly).

✖ Select your victory pose: You can choose your character's victory pose by holding down B, X, or Y after a match. Be sure to mimic the move in real life for extra effect.

✖ Listen to transmissions from Corneria: First, you have to play as Fox McCloud or Falco and be on any Lylat System level (Corneria or Venom). Then quickly tap Down on the control pad. If done right, your character will crouch and hail transmissions from your wingmen (see screen below).

Found a cool trick, strategy or match setup in *Super Smash Bros. Melee*? Send it to egm@ziffdavis.com (subject: Smash Academy).

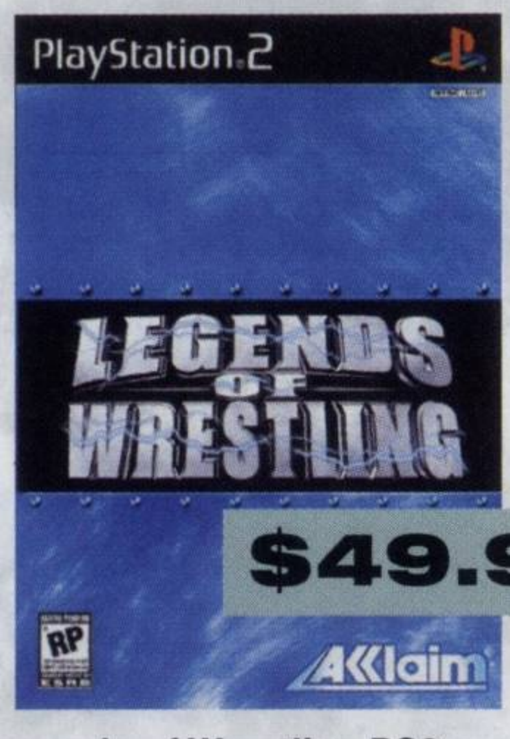


CHIPS & BITS

Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty PS2
Konami

Jak & Daxter: Precursor Legacy PS2
Sony

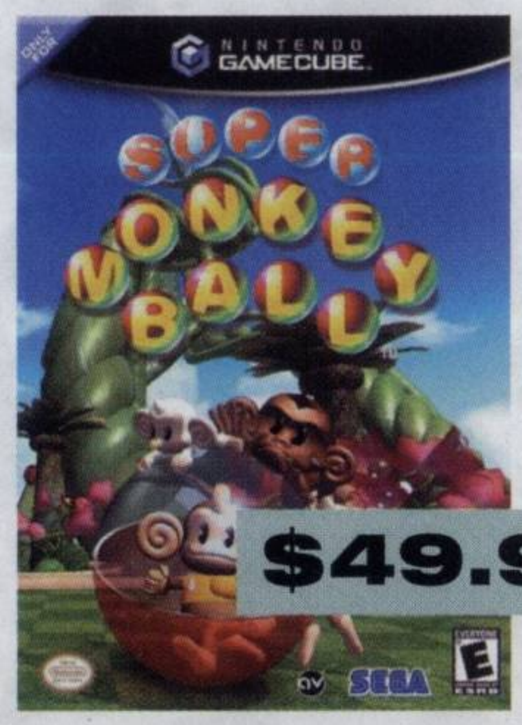
Final Fantasy X PS2
SquareSoft



Legends of Wrestling PS2
Acclaim

Dynasty Warriors 3 PS2
Koei

Grand Theft Auto 3 PS2
Rock Star



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Sega

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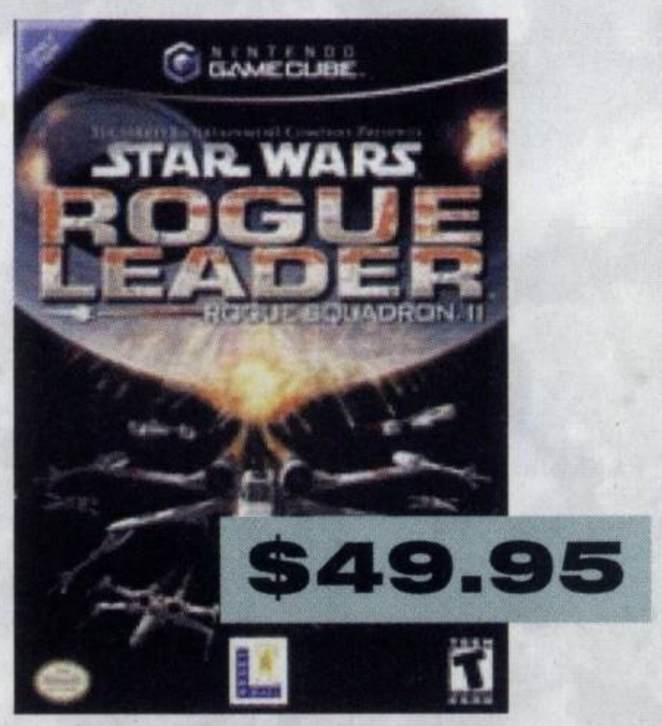
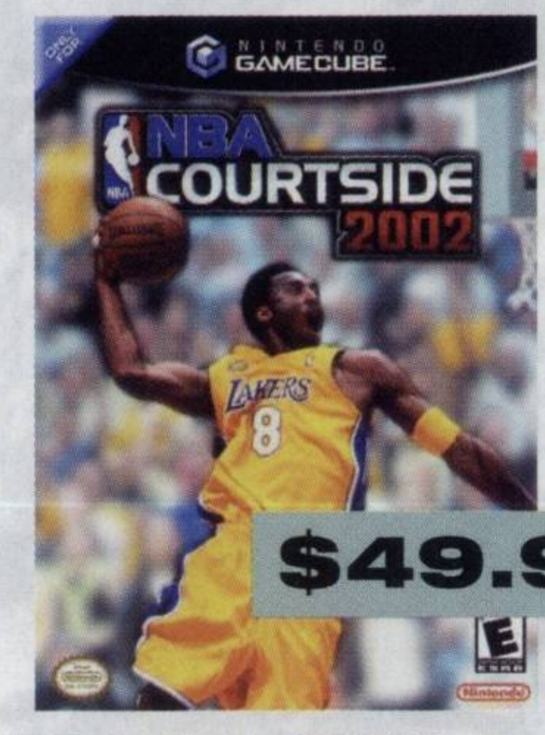
EA



Star Wars Rogue Leader GC
Lucas Arts

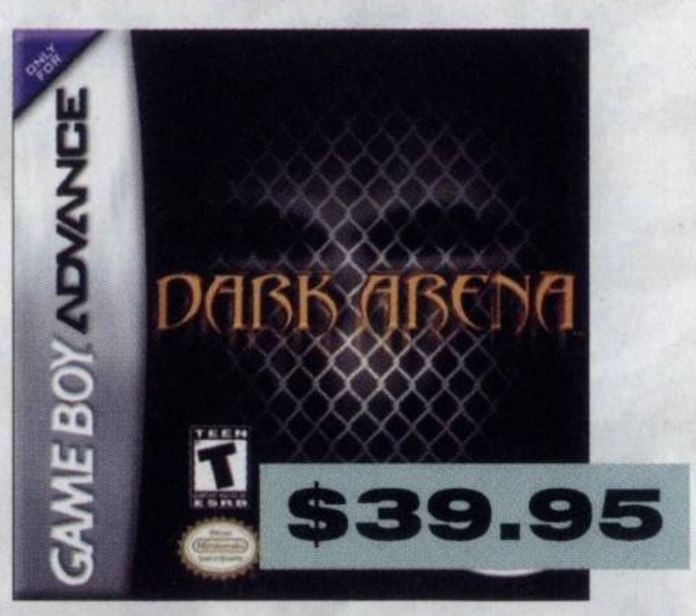
Eternal Darkness GC
Nintendo



NBA Courtside 2002 GC
Nintendo

Mario Kart Super Circuit GBA
Nintendo

Wario Land 4 GBA
Nintendo



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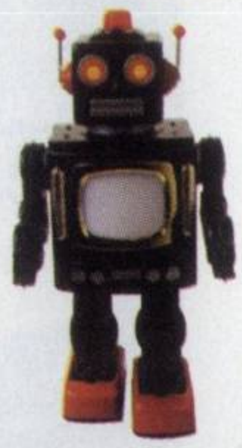
FINAL WORD

Editors' Choice Awards...Take Two!



Shoe: Now that the 2001 Editors' and Readers' Choice stuff is over with, let's get to the "real" awards, just like Hsu and Chan did this month. I give my "Most Nauseating Dialogue" award to, who else? Raiden and Rose in *Metal Gear Solid 2: Listen to This Crap Every Time You Want to Save*.

Crispin: I'm giving the "Edutainment of the Year" award to *Grand Theft Auto III*. That game showed me how to drive a cab, be a chauffeur, deliver pornos, taxi an airplane, get my car up on two wheels, make citizens' arrests, steal, extort and survive in the mob. If only it taught VCR repair and speed reading, my education would be complete.

Che: I'd like to give the "Bittersweet" award to *Dead or Alive 3*. I fell in love with the game's huge, detailed backgrounds but *DOA3's* imbalanced characters and penchant for reversal abuses left me with a sour aftertaste. Also long overdue is an imaginary "Gold" award for *Advance Wars*. Not to question the scores of my peers, of course, but if I were on the review, it would have gotten a 9.

Kraig: I have a few. I'm still smarting from the NFL playoffs, so let's start with the "My Packers Suck, But Not in this Game" award: *Madden NFL 2002*. That should lead right into the "Only Game To Upstage the Super Bowl" award: *Halo*, and then finally the "I Used to Be a Contenda" award: *NFL GameDay 2002*. And I'll finish up with two bombs: "The Series We'd Like to Send to the Taliban" award: *Army Men*, and the "Saline Implant" award: *Stretch Panic*.

Greg: Hey, what about "The Series Mark MacDonald Just Doesn't Appreciate" award for *Sonic The Hedgehog*? Or the "Song We're Most Glad Didn't Make it Into 50 Games" award to Rob Zombie's "Dragula"? And let's not forget the "Least Smilin' Editor" award for the lovely and talented Che Chou.

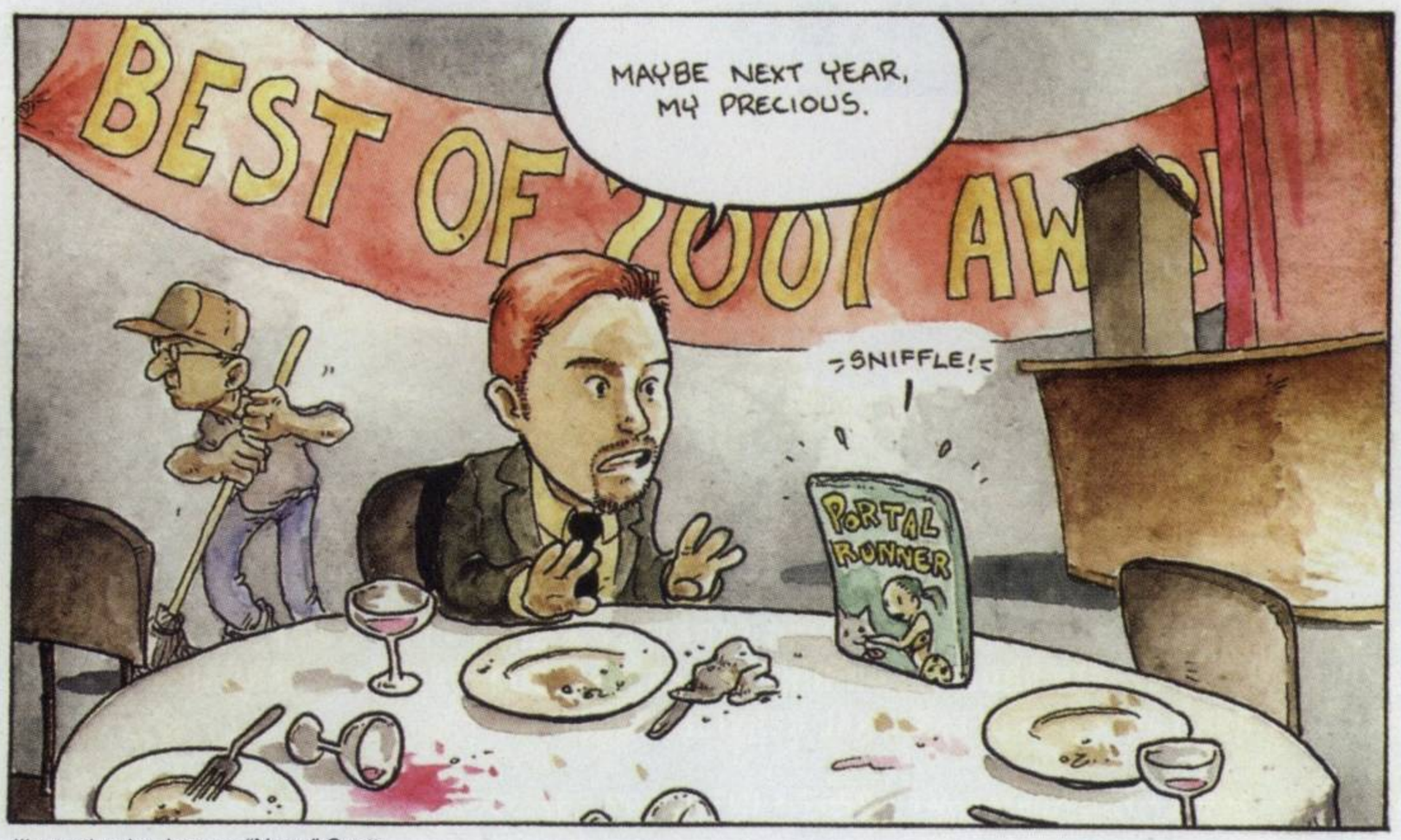
Jeanne: I'm going to start with the "Should Be Made Into Cute Japanese Stationery" award to *Pikmin* (*onegai shimasu!*), the "Quality Assurance" award to Microsoft for their defective Xboxes, the "What Were They Thinking?" award to *Floigan Bros.*, or wait, maybe that should go to *Mortal Kombat Advance*. Oh, and last but absolutely not least, the "Biggest Message Board Brownie" award to Che. Take that! (lots of kung-fu-punch sound effects in the background)

Chris: This award is personal. The "This is the Last Time I Buy the Same Game Twice (or Thrice)" award goes to *Pokémon Crystal*. OK, so I'll admit I got suckered in and bought the same game three times (*Gold*, *Silver* and *Crystal*). But darnit, it's *Pokémon* and I have to catch 'em all. This is the last time I'm gonna fall for it...I swear. The honorable mention for this category goes to *Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2*. (Yeah, I'll probably be suckered into the Xbox and GC versions, too.)

Dean: Hmm, oh, I have one. How about, "The Best Game to Play While Slightly Buzzed"? That has to go to *NCAA Football 2002*. Once you understand the blueprint of college ball, a little buzz only makes you more aggressive on the ol' gridiron. Of course, know when to say when. I mean that, kids.

Cyril: The "I'm Better Than Sewart at Racing Games" award goes to me. "Best *Halo* Player next to Mark, Shoe, Jon, Greg, Mike, Chris, Jeanne, Crispin and Kraig" award—also me. The "Most Unclear on the Award Concept" award? Yup, me.

Mark: I got a few: the "I Guess I Just Don't Get It" award to *Ico*, the "Sometimes I Really Hate this Job" award for *Kiss Psycho Circus*, the "Really Deserves an Award" award to *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, and finally, the prestigious "Let's Stop Writing About These Stupid Awards and Go Play This Game" award: *Halo*.



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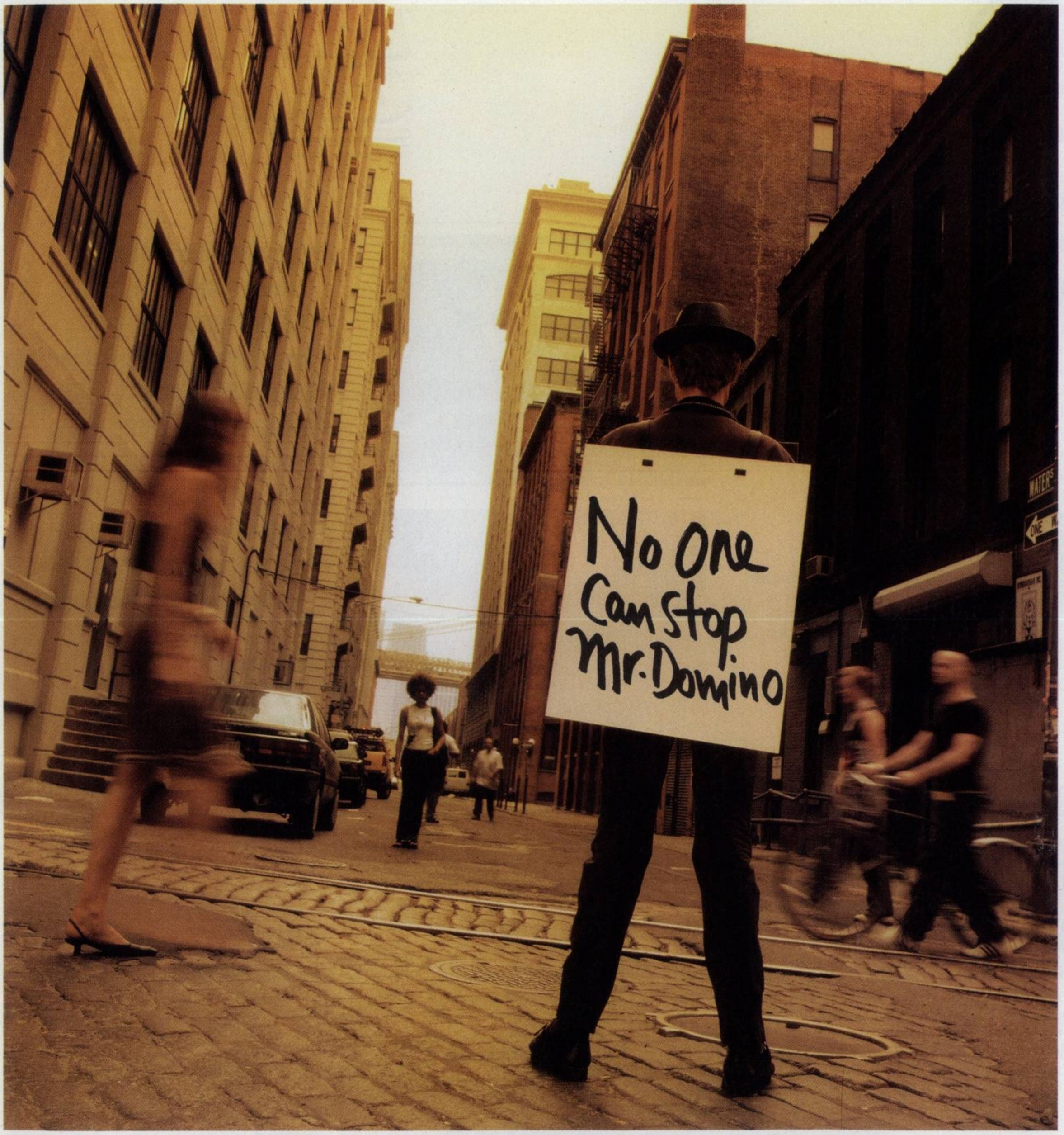

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NEXT MONTH

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

May 2002 (Issue #154)

On sale April 2

Next Month

From *Spider-Man* to *Star Wars*, our next issue has got something for everyone. Could we interest you in *Resident Evil Gaiden* for the Game Boy Color? Or maybe something cooler, like *SledStorm 2* on the PS2? Still not happy? How about a *Virtua Fighter 4* review and strategy combo? And expect the unexpected: We'll teach you how to make your GBA translate Spanish, check your spelling, and organize your life!

Look out! *Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku* and *Dragon Ball Z: Collectible Card Game* coming your way next month!

Reviewed Next Month:

- Virtua Fighter 4 (PS2)
- NHL 2K2 (DC)
- Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter (PS2)
- Soccer Slam (GC)
- Blood Omen 2 (PS2)
- Resident Evil Gaiden (GBC)

Previewed Next Month:

- Spider-Man (PS2/Xbox/GC)
- Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 (PS2)
- Shadowman: 2econd Coming (PS2)
- Robotech: The Macross Saga (GBA)
- Mike Tyson Boxing (PS2)

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Playables

- Drakan
- Shaun Palmer
- Guitaroo Man
- PaRappa 2
- Maximo
- Frequency
- Soul Reaver 2
- Airblade
- High Heat MLB 2003

Videos

- Herdy Gerdy
- Grand Theft Auto III
- Smuggler's Run 2

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

Sega's fighting franchise kicks its way onto the PS2, but does it have the guts to take on *Tekken*? Find out next month! Also featured: *Maximo*, *High Heat MLB 2003*, *Drakan*.

GAMENOW

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- Tiger Woods PGA 2002
- Hot Shots Golf 3
- New Legends
- State of Emergency
- Wreckless

JET SET RADIO FUTURE

What's the next big game to buy? Check *GameNOW* for the verdict on two of the spring's hottest titles, *Virtua Fighter 4* (PS2) and *Jet Set Radio Future* (Xbox). The sports scene is heating up again and they weigh in on a heap of baseball and golf games. If you haven't had a chance to get through two of the bigger, and better, games of the season, be sure to check out *Final Fantasy X* and *Jak & Daxter* guides.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

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Reviews

- EQ: Shadows of Luclin
- Serious Sam: 2nd Encounter
- SimGolf
- Op. Flashpoint: Red Hammer
- Battlecruiser Millennium

Previews

- SWAT 4
- The Sims: Vacation

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

Kate Archer's back, baby! An exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the sexiest shooter you'll ever play. Plus, we've got our Game of the Year Awards feature that pits top games like *Civ III*, *Max Payne* and *Aliens vs. Predator 2* in a heated race for the coveted winner slots. Come join us as we pick the very best (and worst) of 2001. Also check out our strategy super guide! Tons of tips and tactics for *EverQuest: Shadows of Luclin*, *Ghost Recon*, *Wizardry 8*, *IL-2 Sturmovik* and more!

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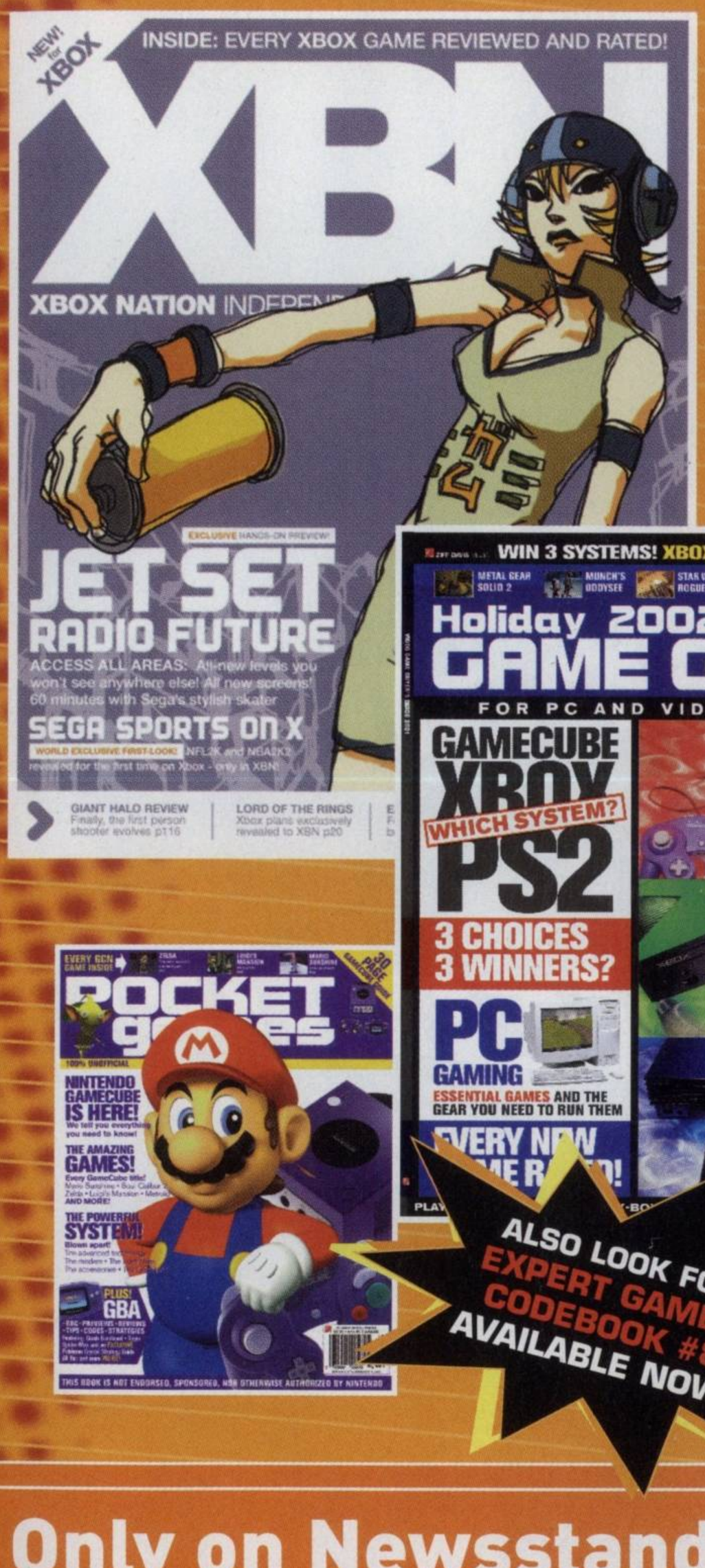

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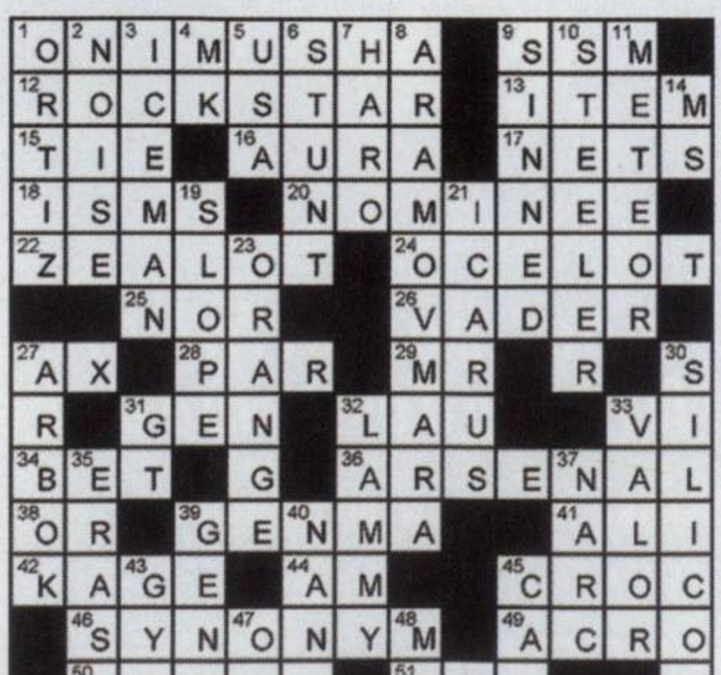

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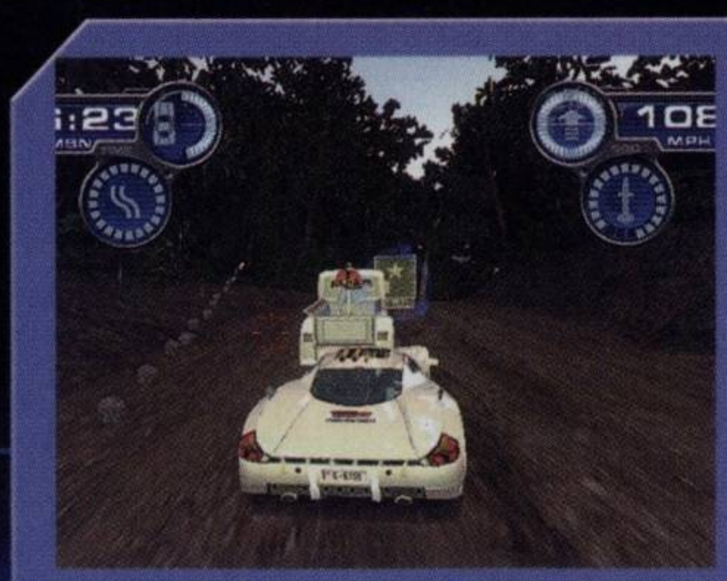

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