ZIFF DAVIS

N64 • Game Cube • PS one • PS2 • Xbox • Dreamcast •

PS2

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GRAN TURISMO 3 A-spec

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4. Watch for signs of stray flowers
5. Kill stray flowers
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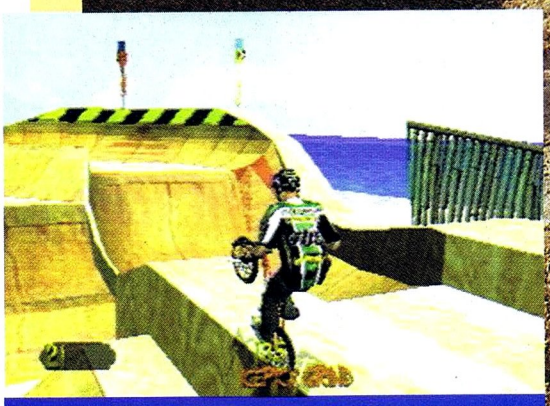

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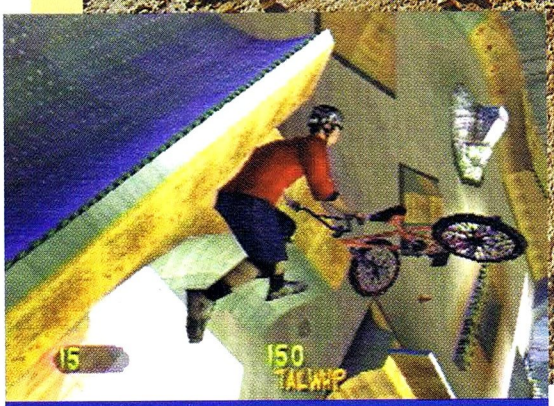

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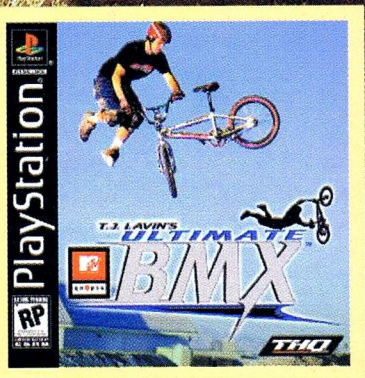

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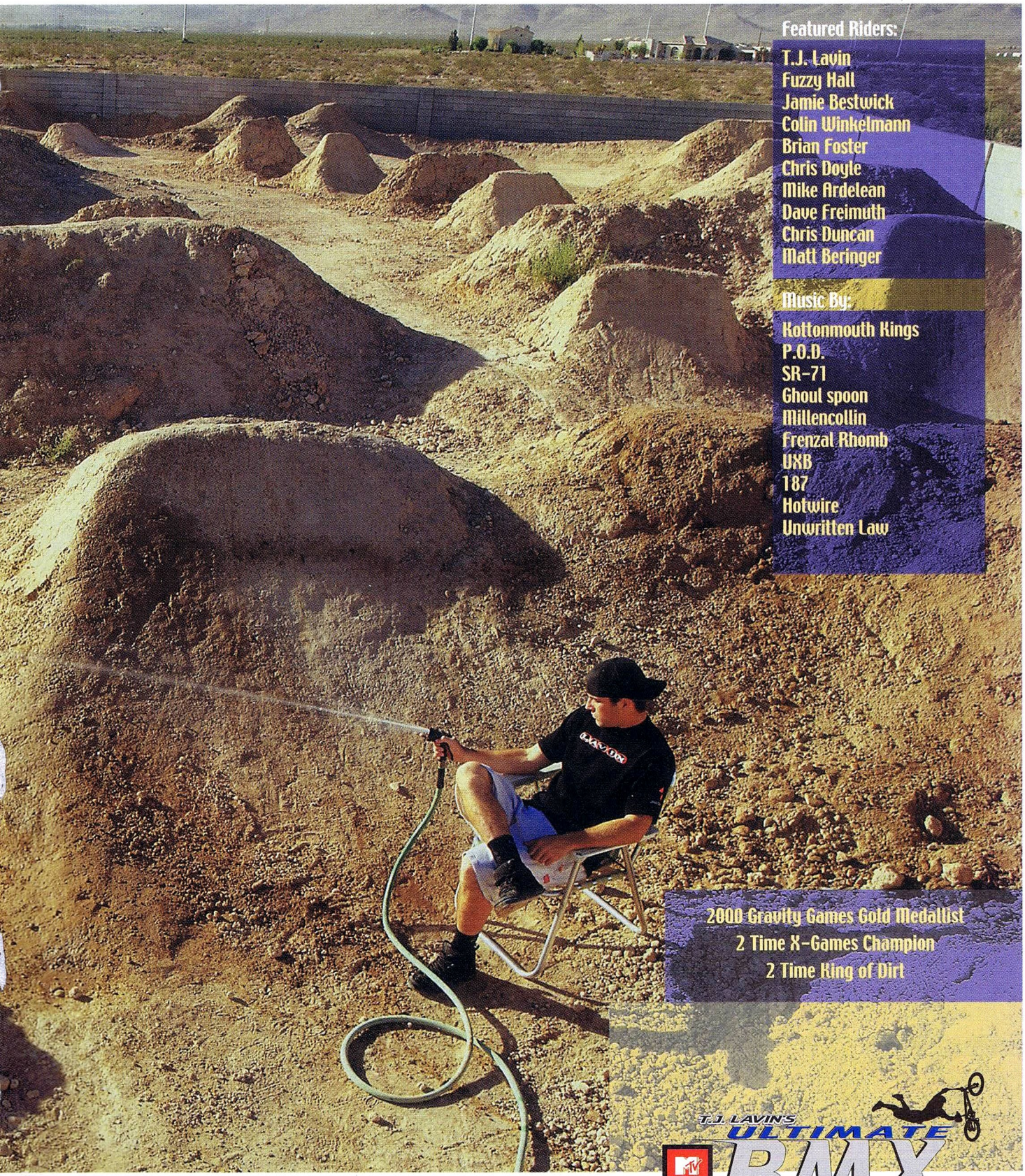

T.J. Lavin's actual backyard

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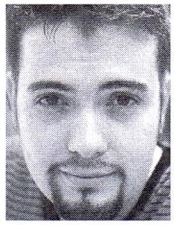
EDITORIAL

By John Davison • john_davison@ziffdavis.com



Bow Your Head For Sega

The emotions around here were pretty high when the Sega announcement happened this last month. I would say that the majority of people on *EGM* feel more strongly about the Dreamcast as a system than just about anything else. In fact, I'd say that our feelings about Sega generally are the forgiving and fuzzy kind that are reserved for, oh I dunno, your best friend from school who's made some dumb decisions later in life. Or your first girlfriend. Or your first car. Sure, Sega has clearly taken some wrong turns over the years—need we remind you of the 32X? Sega CD? Saturn? And they've been mercilessly abused for dumb decisions and bad concepts both by the press, and by their fans when they gather in chat rooms or on newsgroups. Despite this though, we love them. Hardware is clearly not "where it's at" for Sega, but the reason we forgive them of pretty much any crime is that they gave us Sonic, Ecco, Shinobi, Chakan, Streets of Rage, Phantasy Star, Virtua Fighter, Daytona, Crazy Taxi, even Alex frickin' Kidd...the list goes on and on and on. If you look at Sega's catalog they have proportionately more great games than any other publisher out there. They just know how to push our buttons, and that's why I think this move away from hardware is the greatest thing that could've happened for them. Now that they can focus solely on the great games franchises, they can sell these games on whichever format is most popular or most suitable. Already we know that we're going to see Virtua Fighter 4 on PS2, and that Sonic will make an appearance on Game Boy Advance—but imagine the potential the future brings. Are you excited yet? If no, why not?

As this issue of *EGM* goes to press, there are still many unanswered questions. What, if anything, will they do for Game Cube? Will Sonic become the mascot to end all mascots and appear on every system? What is going to happen with Sega.com? What about the 2K1 sports games? Will we seem them on PS2? Or Xbox? We'll keep digging on these issues and we'll hopefully be able to bring you answers over the next few months.

"Hardware is clearly not 'where it's at' for Sega, but the reason we forgive them of pretty much any crime is that they gave us Sonic, Ecco, Shinobi..."

In the meantime, take a good, long hard look at our Gran Turismo 3 feature this month. If this isn't one of the most incredible games ever made I don't know what is. Originally intended as little more than a demo of what the future could hold for the franchise, the third game in the series is truly an amazing thing to behold. It has all the best bits of GT2, but it looks and feels astounding. Sorry to gush quite so openly, but every time I see this thing my jaw just drops. It's a reason to invest in a PS2. It's a reason to take a week off, just to play it. Check it out. Go on...go and read the feature now.

John Davison

Contributing Writers

Ethan Einhorn

By using *EGM*'s own cheat guide, Ethan finally completed Majora's Mask, and has now launched into Final Fantasy IX. Thus far, it's the best software he's played on the PS2. So many cool games, so little time...when Phantasy Star Online ships, he may have to give up on the notion of sleeping and eating altogether.

Todd Zuniga

In between embarrassing sessions of skateboarding posing and tending his *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine* duties, Todd was kind enough to lend *EGM* his questionable (yet priceless) expertise on baseball and quirky women. In other words, he covered High Heat Baseball 2002 and Fear Effect: Retro Helix for us.

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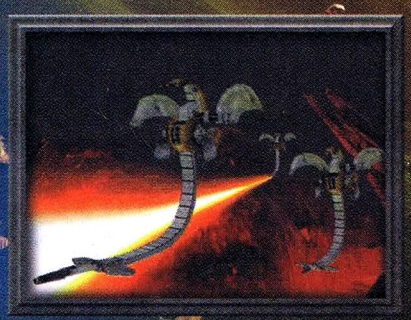

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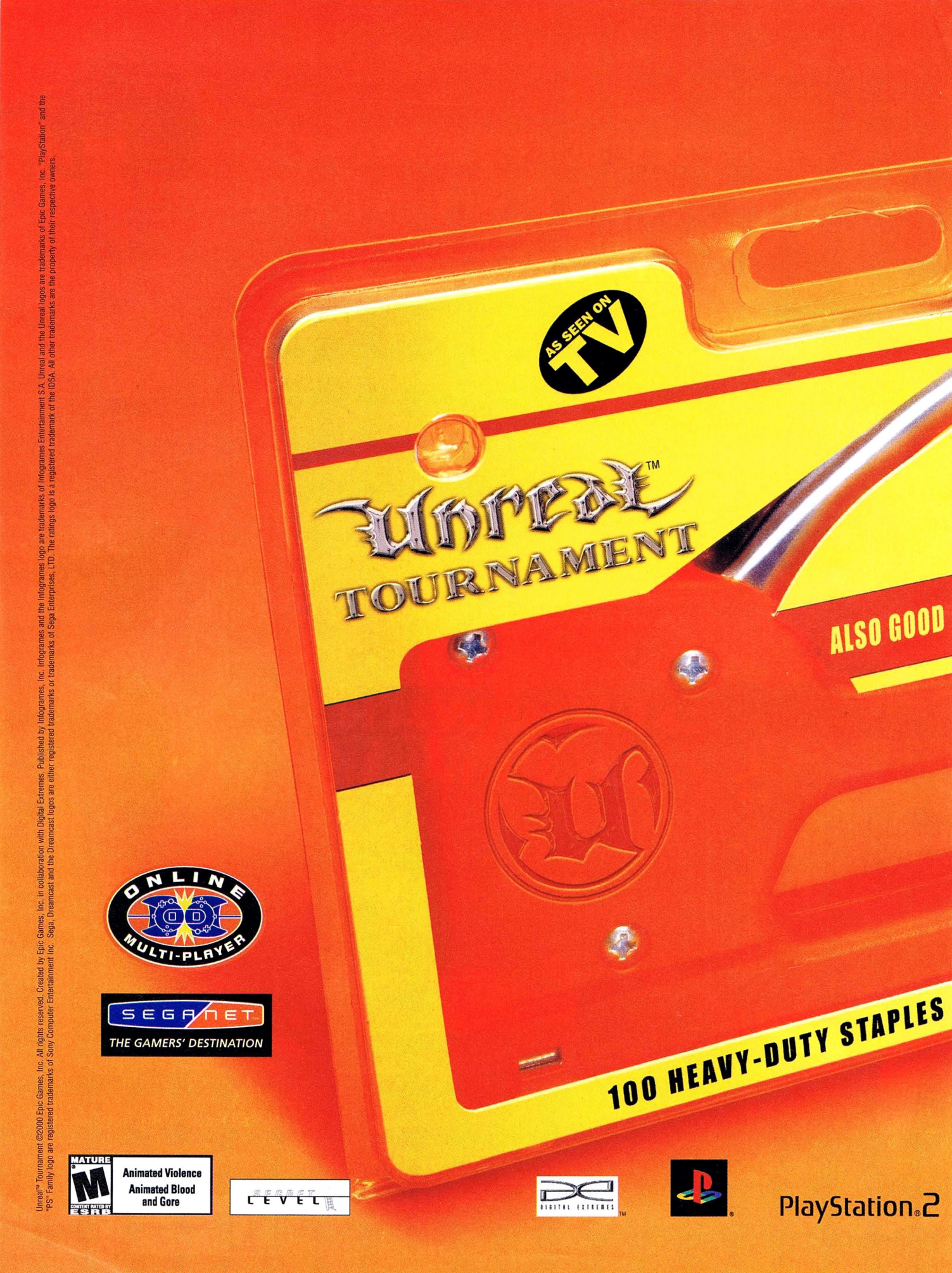

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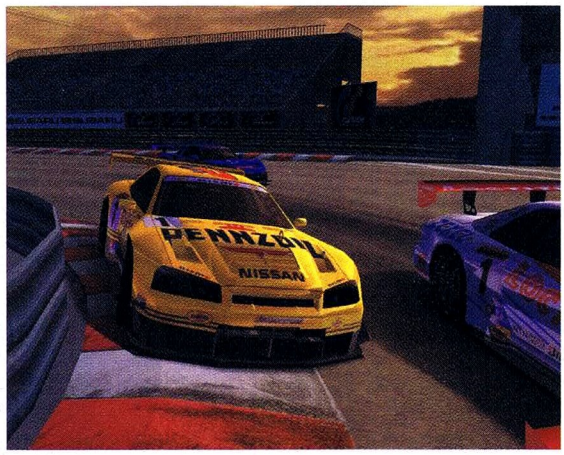

Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec What's faster than GT3? Why, Kazunori Yamauchi, the legendary car fanatic who serves as the game's director. We sit down with Yamauchi-san for the exclusive scoop on the PlayStation 2's first killer app. Oh, and we learned a few things about cars, too. Buckle up—it all begins on **page 82.**

EGM's 2000 Gamers' Choice Awards
We've cast our votes, eyeballed chads, held at least one recount, and locked up the U.S. Supreme Court—all without the help of Florida. Our picks, and yours, for the best of last year begin on **page 92.**

Half-Life PS2
PC gamers know it as the game that started a first-person shooting revolution. Will Sierra's smash hit be nearly as groundbreaking on the PlayStation 2? Find out all about it on **page 56.**

Game Boy Advance Preview Blowout
Nintendo's new handheld is right around the corner, and the veil is being lifted off a handful of new games for it. Check out our previews of Mario Advance, Mario Kart Advance, F-Zero Advance, Pitfall, Earthworm Jim, Fire Emblem, Tactics Ogre Gaiden and more. **Pages 72-74.**

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We've debated Sega's possible salvation for a long time—now we talk about their decision to focus on what they've always done best: making great games.

SYSTEM KEY

- Dreamcast
- Nintendo 64
- PlayStation 2
- PlayStation
- Game Boy Color
- Game Boy Advance
- Xbox
- Arcade

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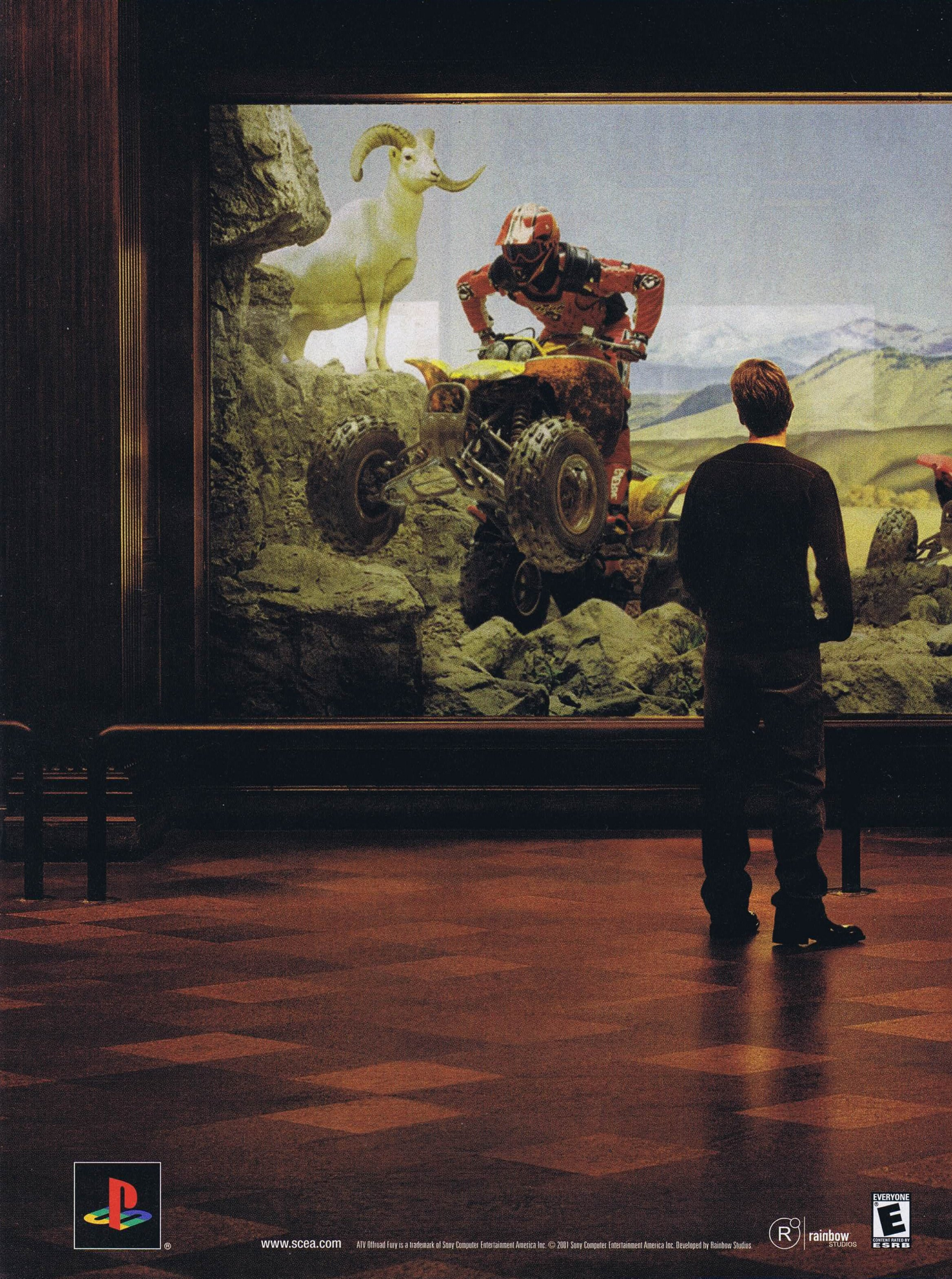

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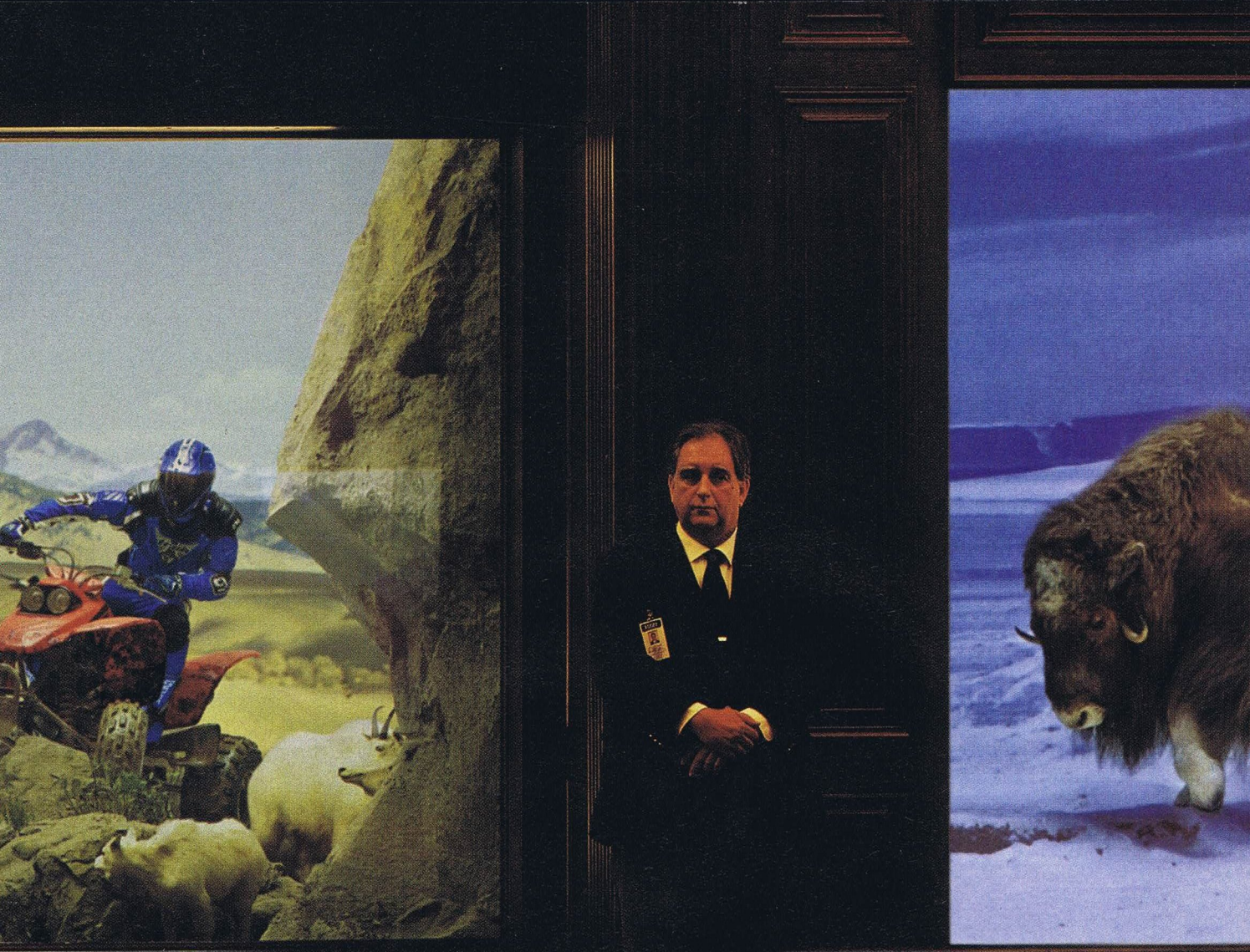

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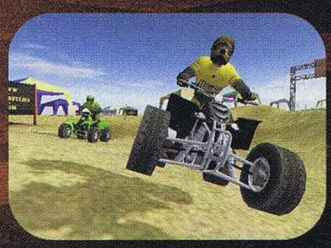

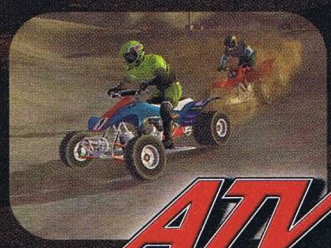

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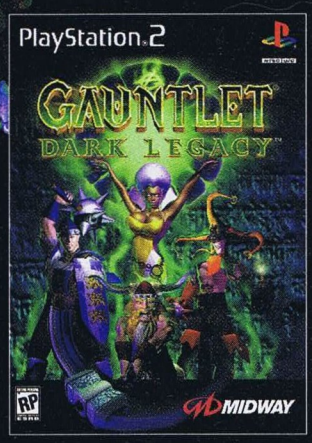

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Video Games: Enemy Of Literacy?

Hello respected editors. Recently, a television advertisement for a certain product to aid children in reading has come to my attention, which has disturbed me and other fellow gamers greatly. In the commercial a young boy is seen playing on his favorite game system intensely when his mother walks in. The woman asks her son to work on his reading since he isn't doing well in school. (The child can't read.) The boy explains that the stories are of no interest to him and that reading is too difficult. He then resumes his gameplay while his mother stands staring in a sense of distress. What agitates me the most is that the commercial seems (purposely) to be portraying video games as the enemy to reading, literacy and even intelligence. What the advertisers failed to acknowledge was the fact that the boy could have been engaging in an activity such as football, or riding a bike. The message I felt they were expressing was that video games are a sign of laziness and the point when you have given up. This obviously isn't true. Video games often take great levels of dedication, critical thinking and creativity. I feel gaming should be looked upon as an activity of higher intelligence. I don't think this company was necessarily wrong, they just need a better sense of understanding. The boy even said that the stories didn't capture him, which might prove that the quality of game story lines can be compared to those of books. Final Fantasy VIII to *War and Peace*?

"The message I felt they were expressing was that video games are a sign of laziness and the point when you have given up. This obviously isn't true."

Educated gamer guy, Kelly Gates
Lionhartboy@cs.com

Congratulations. You win an InterAct controller. You will be receiving a Barracuda (PS), an Alloy Arcade Stick (DC) or a SharkPad Pro 64² (N64).

See page 120 for official rules.

Well said, educated-gamer guy. We agree that commercial panders to some common misconceptions the public has about video games. It's irresponsible at best, and down-right misleading at worst. It goes back to the parental-responsibility theme so often brought up in the gaming-violence debate. How uninvolved would the parent have to be for their child to be illiterate at such an advanced age? They must live in another state or be unable to read themselves. Seems like another case of video games being used as a scapegoat for society's ills. Sad part is, somebody's grandma is sitting somewhere saying, "I always told little Johnny those games are evil..."

We got a ton of letters asking about Microsoft's indie game-development programs, but all Microsoft has said is to stay tuned to www.xbox.com for more details. We'll pass along new info as soon as it's available—maybe they'll announce something this month at the Game Developers Conference in San Jose. In the meantime, budding game designers should watch for the results of our RPG Maker contest next issue.

Reader Talks To Mag; Disturbs Family

I was skimming through your Xbox feature in issue 139, and I came across the section entitled, "Wanna Make an Xbox Game?" I answered aloud, "Yes! Please tell me more." After my family looked at me weird for talking to my magazine, I moved into the next room to avoid their disturbing glances. I read about Microsoft's great idea and wanted to find out where I could get my hands on one or both of these fine programs. I went on the Internet to www.xbox.com, and the only link that may have led me to the information I so desired was dead. So, I thought I'd ask you: Where can I get my hands on one of these programs? How much will it cost me?

Thanks in advance for all your help; you guys rock!

Andre Linoge
linogeo069@yahoo.com

"I can't shoot worth a darn and I constantly forget to reload, but boy can I type!"

Wife Beats Husband

I first ran into Typing of the Dead in my local Dave and Buster's and I was immediately hooked. I can't shoot worth a darn and I constantly forget to reload, but boy can I type! I thought it was really great that Sega put out an arcade game for someone who wasn't coordinated enough to shoot or punch five buttons at once. I was very excited to hear it was coming over to the Dreamcast—now I hope I can find a keyboard for it. I am a video game-playing girl and now there's a game I can finally beat my husband at!

Jennifer Morales
jen@jenorama.org

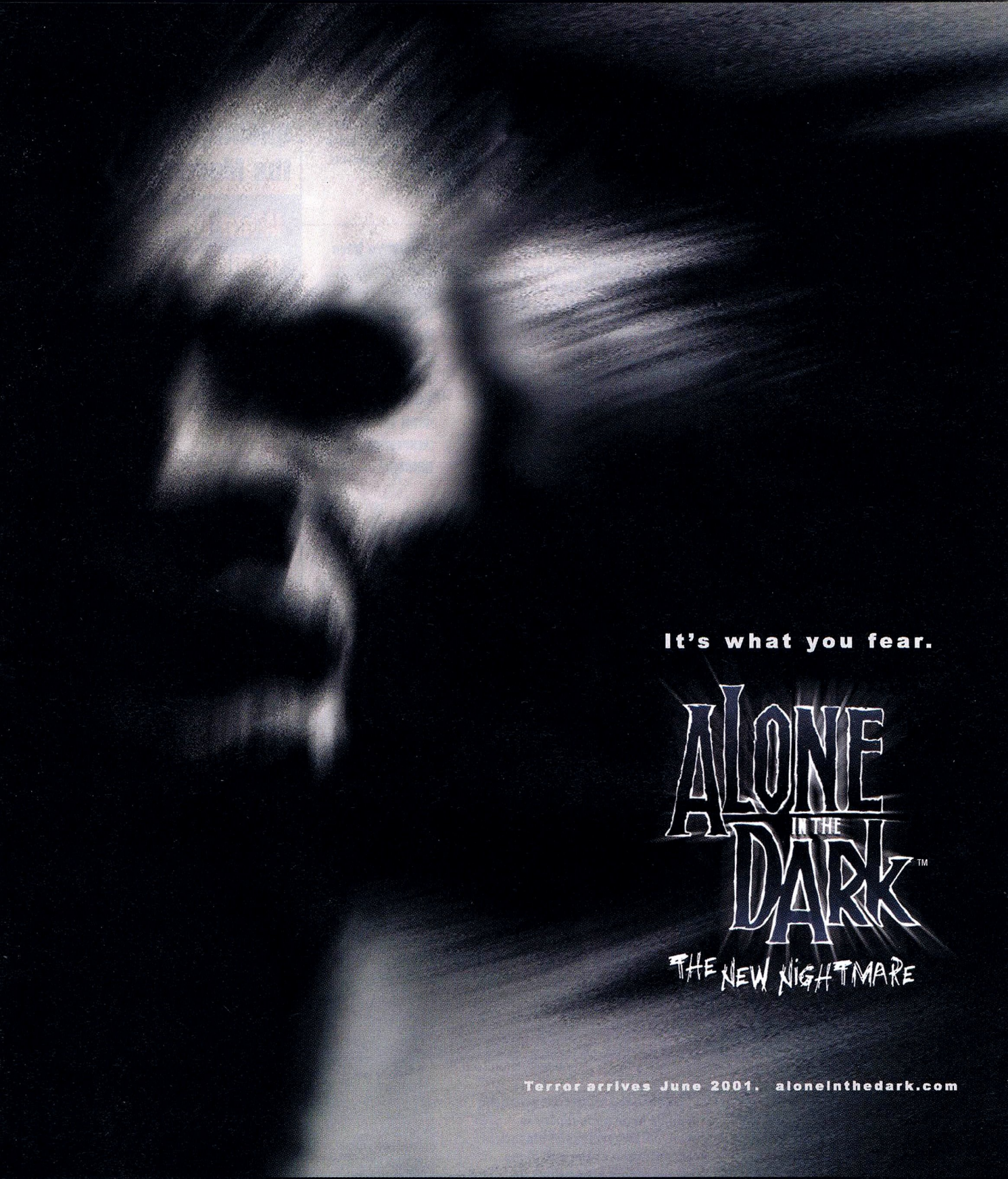
We were equally amused at Sega's choice to bring this quirky title to the U.S. We're glad that you found your gaming niche—Typing of the Dead was quite popular in Japanese arcades, and several me-too titles are on the way, including a typing fighting game for the PS2.

Papaya vs. Papaya

When you reviewed Dance Dance Revolution for the U.S., you mentioned a group called Papaya that was in the Japanese versions. Is that the same Papaya as the Korean dance group that does "Smile Smile"?

Mike
mikeszekely@collegeclub.com

Our resident dancin' machine, Chris Johnston, replies: "No, it's not the Korean dance group. It is none other than Scandinavian Records' artist Miss Papaya. She's cut such



RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD ROM

PlayStation

GAME BOY COLOR

DARKWORKS GAME DEVELOPMENT STUDIO

INFOGRAMES™

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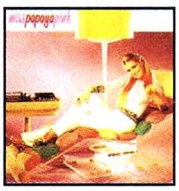
EGM@ziffdavis.com

Send us your thoughts, your wishes, your innermost weirdness...your pictures, crazy screenshots or photos of bizarre game-related moments.

infectious dance tunes as "Operator," "Hero," and "Pink Dinosaur." Dance Dance Revolution fans can't get enough, but her quirky Euro-dance-pop sound might be too much for some. Her album *Pink* is only available as an import either from Europe or Japan. Now if you'll excuse me, I must continue my reign as Lord of the Dance! HEHEHHAHAHA!"

Hmm, ya that Chris fellow can be outlandish. For our foreign friends and those of you who can't read, here's a visual comparison of the Papayas in question:



Miss Papaya...

Papaya

Reader and Friends "Curious" About John

I am kinda confused on your employment, disappearance and then reappearance of the main guy in charge, John Davison. Not too many issues ago, he disappeared, and I don't remember ya'll saying anything about it (well, maybe you did), but I read each issue very closely as any devoted *EGM* fanatic would do, and I couldn't find anything on why he was off the editorial staff. I might just be too nosey, but I'm the kinda guy who is interested in the reasons a "professional" gamer/editor leaves and reappears. My friends are curious also. Thank God he's back though—he's always been the best.

Carl Cramer
cosmo@merchant2ooo.com

We're not really supposed to talk about this, but you and your pals seem genuinely concerned about ol' Johnny England, so we'll let you in on a little something: He's a shape-shifting interdimensional troll, and he can't be held down in one place too long, or he'll spontaneously combust. HA! Just kidding, he's actually a member of Mi5, Britain's equivalent of the CIA, so occasionally he disappears for a couple months—and pow!—the Berlin wall is down—or zap!—Communism collapses in Russia. See? It all makes sense. Hope that helps.

Young Pill-Counter Defends *EGM*'s Honor

Well, it's been a long time coming. I've been with you guys since about issue five or something, but I finally had to send you a letter. Every month you guys have a Letter of the Month that features some tissue-spined brat complaining about how you "mis-graded" this and "misquoted" that. The very next month, someone will enlighten us with his/her video gaming wisdom bestowed upon them by God himself. Meanwhile, your staff has to figure out how to defend, support or wittily obliterate all of the commentary that comes across your desk. My point? Every day I work my 12 hours of counting pills (I'm a 25-year-old pharmacist) and deal with other people's commentary about how I should perform my job just so I can come home, relax and take in your great mag. But sometimes all I see are readers bashing your efforts. You guys have more fair-weather fans than the NY Mets. I'm here to applaud the 10's and the 1.5's that are dealt to deserving games. Without your appraisal, and even moreso your ruthlessness...

Josh Kanode
jkanode@yahoo.com

Ol' Josh seems to trail off at the end; we hope no foul play is involved. Regardless of his lack of concentration at the end of his correspondence, he brings up something every gaming magazine has to deal with: accusations of bias for or against certain companies. We receive letters every month from readers claiming we are pro- and

"You guys have more fair-weather fans than the NY Mets. I'm here to applaud the 10's and the 1.5's that are dealt to deserving games."

EGM WANTS YOU...

...but not in a creepy, touchy-feely kinda way.

We want to learn what you readers are doing to foster online communities that revolve around console gaming. You say you've formed an NFL 2K1 league? A Dreamcast-specific Quake III Arena clan? An e-business built on trading items from Phantasy Star online? E-mail us at egm@ziffdavis.com with the words "Meet me online!" as your subject header, and tell us how you're bringing us console gamers together. Act now—we need your responses ASAP.

Question of the Moment

What upcoming game are you most excited about?

Well, there's, uh, SOUL CALIBUR 2 OF COURSE. Also, Crazy Taxi and Shenmue look mighty tasty.
sirsly83@yahoo.com

Legacy of Kain Soul Reaver 2. The day I sold my PlayStation I felt I would never be able to experience the Eidos masterpiece. Now I laugh at all PlayStation owners. On Dreamcast this game looks super sweeeeet.
the_super_squid@hotmail.com

I'm most excited about Resident Evil Code: Veronica on the PS2!
STEVEBAYNE436@cs.com

Do I even have to say this? Metal Gear Solid 2, of course.
cyberadam44@hotmail.com

Half-Life for Dreamcast!
Eugene4968@msn.com

The game that I am waiting for after reading your preview is Red Faction. It seems like the next best thing. Everything about the game sounds and looks great!!!
tyler_leb@hotmail.com

I can't wait to get my hands on Dance Dance Revolution for PS. Only thing I worry about is looking like an @$$ dancing around on the floor mat.
nemutai_senshi@sailormoon.com

I think I speak for everyone when I say Metal Gear Solid 2.
bobafett@micron.net

That foul-mouthed rodent game, Conker's Bad Fur Day.
Kgdillman54@aol.com

Next month's question of the moment:

What are your thoughts about the death of the Dreamcast?

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

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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 and mailing address for Letter of the Month consideration). **Also note: although we can only respond to a few letters each month, we read and appreciate (most) all of them. So keep 'em coming, eventually you might see your handy work turn up here!**

LETTERS

anti-Sega, Nintendo, Sony, etc. All we can say is we are fans of video games, not companies. We just ask that you read the mag for a few months before judging for yourselves.

Canadian Lovefest Gains Momentum

I wrote in last month about Sewart (spelled correctly); after reading the issue I began to think that maybe I was wrong, maybe he is just misunderstood. So I decided I would learn a little bit more about that strange place called Canada. I looked for a while and I found a good site. But when I entered I saw something that words cannot describe. So I included what I saw at the bottom of this letter.

Dusty Costein
beagles_gay@hotmail.com

Nice. You got in again, even though your letter isn't so great this month (though we are glad to see you got his name right) and we've never run letters from the same reader in back-to-back issues. The truth is, your portrait of the lad is inspired. You have truly captured our hearts and minds with your passion for young Sewart. In fact, he's so popular with you and scores of other readers that we are toying with the idea of a sort of "Kanadian Korner" sidebar in the letters section each month, where all things Canadian and Sewart-y will be posted. And in the event that anyone writes a letter in his defense, we could put that there too.

You Say Goodbye They Say Hello

Is this the end? Or just the beginning? To the untrained gamer Sega appears to finally lost its grip in the gaming world and will finally bow to the powers of Sony, Nintendo and the Xbox. Ahhh, but all is not what it seems. There is no use in trying to explain this to the legions of Sony and Nintendo fanatics, who for years have shunned everything that is Sega, so I hope all the hardcore gamers out there will understand.

When I first heard the news of the Dreamcast's end I was, to say the least, disappointed. But upon deeper examination of the situation, I finally realized the genius of Sega's plan.

What Sega is doing is probably their smartest move yet. Sega is not dying—rather "it's thinking." Like a virus Sega will infect every system until you can't get away from them, focusing on software and increasing its market share, ruling the gaming industry.

I applaud Sega and will stick by them in their new era of glory. And for all of you who think Sega is dead, I wish I could see your faces when every good game on PlayStation, Nintendo and Xbox has a Sega logo after it. Take that you titans of hardware! The Sega software revolution is about hit.

Derek Bamford
Methuen, MA

Maybe now great games like Jet Grind Radio will get the attention they deserve.

We agree this move by Sega seems like a good one, especially if the only other option would be trying to support hardware until they went out of business. (See news this issue for full details on all their upcoming plans.) Loyal Dreamcast owners will have new games for at least another year, and Sega's fantastic titles will eventually reach a much wider audience through all systems now on the market and those in the foreseeable future. In one quick move, Sega has moved from the bottom of the console hardware heap to the very top tiers of the world's software developers. Huzzah!

SHORTS

From those with very little on their minds.

Have you ever been playing a game, and get that unfresh feeling? Do they have a cream for that?

dragoneyez2
@hotmail.com

Yes. it's called a shower. Go take one.

Sometimes when I'm alone, late at night, my hampster talks to me. He says he wants to know why there aren't more hampster-themed games out. What do I tell him?

name withheld
by request

We suggest moving to Japan, as long as the doctors tell you it's OK.

LETTER ART

WINNER Joshua Ensley
Hollsopple, PA

Congratulations! Your prize is on the way—an ASCII Specialized Control Pad for the PlayStation. It features rapid-fire controls for all buttons and slow motion for those intense moments.

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

EGM Letter Art
PO Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL
60522-3338

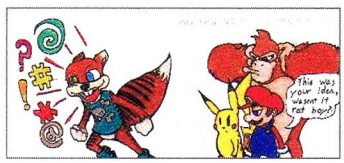
(All entries become the property of Ziff Davis Media Inc. and will not be returned!)

Close, but no controller

Bad luck to these guys... better luck next time. Feel free to e-mail us artwork as well.

Edwardo Mejia
Atwater, CA

Samuel M. Lewis
Atlanta, GA



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Animated Violence
Mild Language
PlayStation 2
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PlayStation 2

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Violence

SQUARESOFT
PICK A WORLD
WE'LL TAKE YOU THERE

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

Press Start

The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

SEGA: Dead or Alive

Sonic on Game Boy Advance? DC production halted? We make sense of Sega's uncertain future.

On Jan. 31, the day Phantasy Star Online hit store shelves, Sega finally admitted to the restructuring plan we reported back in *EGM* #139—they will make games for rival consoles. So is it all over for the Dreamcast? Is there a Mario & Sonic game on the way? What's it all mean? Now just hold your horses—releasing games for the PS one, PS2 and Game Boy Advance is just one aspect of Sega's radically new strategy for 2001 and beyond. Here's the full story on what's in the cards for Sega in 2001 and beyond:

Death

Yes, the Dreamcast's days are numbered. "The hardware business is not profitable," Sega of America president and COO Peter Moore explained. "The average loss on a piece of video game hardware is between $50-200. By the time the system hits shelves, most hardware companies are in the hole due to warehousing, shipping and marketing costs." So the first big step in Sega's attempts to cure their financial woes is to stop making Dreamcasts and get rid of those already in made. To wit, no more DC systems will be produced after March 31. The price of the roughly 2 million units left over—spread between on-hand stock at retail, in distribution warehouses and still in transit—dropped to $99.95 ($119.95 for the Smash Pack set) on Feb. 4. A similar price drop will take effect in Japan on March 1.

But DC owners take heart: This doesn't mean the flow of DC games will shut off like a faucet. Sega's got 70 more Japanese releases and over 30 more U.S. releases on the slate for the next year (see sidebar for recently announced titles from Japan and the U.S.). "We will continue to market Dreamcast content for as long as gamers want to buy it," Moore said. SegaNet will continue and is even planned in games for other platforms. Online DC game servers will remain active as long as there's demand.

Sega of America estimates the final tally of Dreamcast systems in the U.S. will be in excess of 4 million units. Worldwide, Sega will have sold between 8 and 8.5 million units.

Here is the first screenshot of Sega's ChuChu Rocket for GBA.

Rebirth

"The world of games is changing, so Sega must change, too," said Sega Corp.'s chief operating officer Hideki Sato.

To that end, Sega has made it official that they are developing for PS one, PS2 and Game Boy Advance. Other platforms will follow—Sega's in negotiations now to publish on Xbox and Game Cube. Sega's first PS2 games in Japan will include Virtua Fighter 4, a game in the Space Channel 5 series, two titles in the Let's Make a Sports Team series and a game in the Sakura Wars series. Sega of America confirmed that VF4 will come to the U.S., and that Space Channel 5 is also a possibility. Their first Game Boy Advance games include Sonic the Hedgehog Advance (July), ChuChu Rocket (March in Japan) and the puzzle game Puyo Puyo (May in Japan). Sonic and ChuChu will be ready to go for the U.S. GBA launch. On the PS one, Sega already has plans for another Sonic title and several ports of Saturn hits. The first titles will be released late summer across the Pacific, hitting the U.S. between August and November of this year.

Moore commented that Sega has had PS2 development kits for "several months" prior to

Do you think Sega made the right decision in becoming a third-party software publisher and cancelling Dreamcast production?

Source: GameSpot Video Game Poll, 1/31/01

FIRST LOOK AT VF4

Yu Suzuki's latest Virtua Fighter title made its first appearance at the Arcade Operator's Union Show in Japan at the end of February. Here's a quick glimpse of Akira and Pai's new look.

"The world of games is changing, so Sega must change, too."

-Sega Corp. COO Hideki Sato

the announcement and the games are "further along than most people would realize." More titles are expected to be announced in the months ahead, with a strong possibility that Sega's sports line will make the jump to other platforms. They are also looking into the option of keeping certain titles platform-exclusive or exclusive for a certain period of time, a common negotiating tactic for any third-party publisher. All told, Sega is planning to create 20-25 titles for other platforms between April 1, 2001, and March 31, 2002.

How good will Sega games look and play on other systems? Moore seems confident. "We have a group of developers that managed to program for Sega Saturn, and if they can program for Saturn they can program for anything." Sega's even planning on selling their expertise on rival systems: Two middleware tools, named Shinobi and Ninja, are under development at Sega, to be licensed to other developers for use on PS2 and other platforms.

Some are skeptical that Sega will be able to deliver the goods once they're not working on hardware they designed. "It's not quite as though this is GM saying we'll make BMWs, but it's the same kind of proposition," said John Riccitiello, president and chief executive of Electronic Arts. "They may look like BMWs, but I doubt if they'll drive like BMWs."

Additionally, Sega announced two new alliances with other companies that will bring their titles to non-traditional gaming platforms. The first is an agreement to bring Sega games to Palm's line of PDAs beginning later this year. The other is a deal with Pace Micro Technology to allow users of their set-top boxes to download and play Dreamcast games online or offline via broadband or satellite connections. The first boxes integrating the DC technology will begin hitting the market in 2002. These announcements add to Sega's already-announced partnership with Motorola to provide games on cellular phones.

Prior to this announcement, one report claimed that even the Xbox would include a chip for DC compatibility, but Moore dismissed this as a rumor. "There is absolutely no truth to the fact that Xbox will contain a Dreamcast chip. Absolutely not."

Fortune

"With years of continued losses, Sega is today announcing a new focus, one directed towards its core competency—game content—and also radical new plans to reach the path to profitability as quickly as possible," Moore said.

There's plenty of reason why Sega would need to make quick cash. They'll take a $689 million hit phasing out Dreamcast. Sega president Isao Okawa donated $730 million of his own money to cover the losses.

But overall the future looks bright for Sega. Although their hardware record has been mixed, Sega has always made excellent software, and now they'll be selling it to a much larger audience. "They always say you make money on the blades, not the razors," Moore said. "Right now, our games are the sharpest blades we have." Wall Street is certainly optimistic about the new focus: Sega's stock has risen nearly 900 yen since rumors of their plans first began circulating, jumping 80% in the following week.

DREAMCAST IN 2001

The list of Dreamcast titles due between now and March 2002 reads like any Sega fan's wish-list. Check it out:

No Date

The House of the Dead 3
K-Project (tentative title) - Shooter from United Game Artists (Space Channel 5).
Space Channel 5 2
NFL 2K2
NBA 2K2
NHL 2K2
WSB 2K2
Bikkuriman 2000 (Japan)
Daytona 3 - Not Daytona Online, but a whole new racing game from AM2.
Jet Grind Radio 2
Confidential Mission - Another of Sega's arcade gun games comes home.
Ooga Booga - Visual Concepts' voodoo-themed online action-strategy game.
Beach Spikers - Beach volleyball game from Yu Suzuki's AM2 team.
Bomberman Online - Up to 10 players can blast each other in this classic.

Summer 2001

Dynamic Golf (Japan)
Get Bass 2 - Sequel to Sega Bass Fishing.
As Snow... (Japan) - FMV drama produced in association with a Japanese TV station.
Derby Tsuku 2 (Japan) - Horse racing.
Guru Guru Onsen 2 (Japan) - A new collection of simple online mini-games.
Farnation - Sega's new massively multiplayer online RPG.

2001

Alien Front
Outtrigger
Shenmue II
Project Propeller Online - An online shooting game from AM2.
Derby Owners Club Online (Japan)
Power Smash 2 - Virtua Tennis sequel.
Crazy Taxi 2
Let's Make a Monster! (Japan)
Sonic Adventure 2
Floigan Brothers - Visual Concepts' buddy action platform game.
ToeJam & Earl III

BLUE BOX SPECIAL

While it may look like a scene from *Braveheart*, this pic was taken at the Virgin Megastore in Paris during the European PS2 launch. Several French folks were trampled and injured as the tower of PS2s was unveiled and everyone charged the podium to get theirs. Standing in line overnight doesn't look so bad now, does it?

PS'd Off

Retailers, publishers and developers all have problems with the PS2—but you won't hear them say that.

Gamers who waited in lines for hours at the PS2 launch only to turn wind up empty-handed aren't the only ones unhappy with Sony. Despite plenty of public praise over the PS2, privately we've been hearing grumblings from developers and publishers about many aspects of Sony's new machine.

The one complaint with Sony's new system many are anxious to vent about, even on the record, is the challenge of developing for the PS2. One of the most outspoken critics, even before his Munch's Oddysee project moved from PS2 to the Xbox, has been Oddworld Inhabitants President Lorne Lanning. "Intelligently designed hardware tries to consider the needs of the developer," Lanning laments. "Sony's position was basically: You'll figure it out." Other developers agree—some even compare making games for the PS2 to developing for the notoriously difficult Sega Saturn.

Publishers, as well, have reason to complain. As companies disclose their earnings for the fiscal year, many are left trying to explain huge losses. Big names like Electronic Arts are expected to post earnings well below their initial goals, and most analysts blame lower-than-expected PS2 sales as the primary cause. "We're not outside of the range we had planned for, but on the low end of it....We wished they had installed 50 million by Christmas!" quips EA spokesperson Jeff Brown. Even Sony themselves blamed a 13 billion yen deficit on problems with the PS2's sales, and has lowered its forecast of total units shipped before March by 1 million.

Of course, much ire stems from Sony's late-September announcement of a chip shortage, which caused the initial U.S. PS2 shipment to be halved and caught publishers and retailers just as off-guard as gamers. One publisher reportedly produced nearly twice as many copies of one title as there were PS2 systems in the market at launch. Even smaller companies, like Working Designs, felt the pains of a modest launch. President Victor Ireland explains, "I wish we would have had more notice on cutting the allocation. We got it, like, a day before everyone else did. They had to have known earlier than that."

"Sony threatened several major retailers with reduced PS2 allocations if they didn't remove materials for Microsoft's Xbox from their stores"

Many have problems with what's happened since the launch as well. Small shipments of PS2 hardware trickled out, but multiple sources claim Sony hadn't always met its 100,000-units-a-week promise. Another startling coincidence critics point to is the December relaunch of the PS2 in Japan, just as the U.S. and European markets were starving for systems. Sony CEA couldn't comment on the rationale behind the Japanese re-launch, but the fact that a PS2 sells for about $100 more in Japan than in the U.S. has led to plenty of speculation.

EGM was also able to confirm through multiple sources that Sony CEA threatened several major video game retailers with reduced PS2 hardware allocations if they didn't remove marketing materials for Microsoft's Xbox from their stores. Naturally retailers complied, temporarily shelving pre-order campaigns. Russ Howard, Vice President of Brand Marketing for specialty game stores like Babbages and Gamestop, blames Sony's shortages for prompting demand for early pre-order campaigns in the first place. "We're trying to appease customers at the end of the day, regardless of what manufacturer is out there selling what product...the big [PS2] shortages scared them into wanting to get on a list." Needless to say, Sony's move to discourage Xbox preorders even while they were coming up short on hardware shipments didn't win many fans in retail.

Still, the PS2 did enjoy the biggest launch of any console in U.S. history, and the future for Sony seems bright for the foreseeable future. GT3 and other huge first-party titles are just around the corner, and PS2 hardware supplies seem to be finally catching up with demand. And it's not as if the development community is jumping ship en masse—with almost every major company on board and plenty of PS2 games on the way, expect smooth sailing for the time being. But it's also important to remember that the PS2 is currently the only major system in town—once Xbox and Game Cube systems are in full swing publishers may not be so quiet about, or loyal to, Sony. "Some people think there can only be one winner," EA's Brown muses. "We have no idea of the upper limit of what the market can support."

Japan Prepares for Game Boy Advance

Game Boy Advance, the next generation of Nintendo portables, launches in Japan on March 21, for 9800 yen (about $85). The company had already received orders for 2.7 million systems by Jan. 29, far exceeding their initial plan to ship 1 million units on the first day of availability. Along with the system, there will be 21 games available at launch (see list below). Games will reportedly retail for around 4800 yen (about $42). The system will be available in three colors (shown here). Demo systems may begin arriving in U.S. stores a few months before the planned July release date (although we've learned it may launch in late June).

Developers and publishers are jumping aboard the Advance bandwagon in droves, and almost all the big names are already on the GBA bandwagon—all the companies, that is, except for Square. Nintendo Co. Ltd. President Hiroshi Yamauchi revealed there's been no deal inked with Square to bring any Final Fantasy title, or any other games, to the GBA, and likely will not be in the future.

Yamauchi also confirmed that a new Pokémon title for GBA is in the works and will be released in Japan this summer.

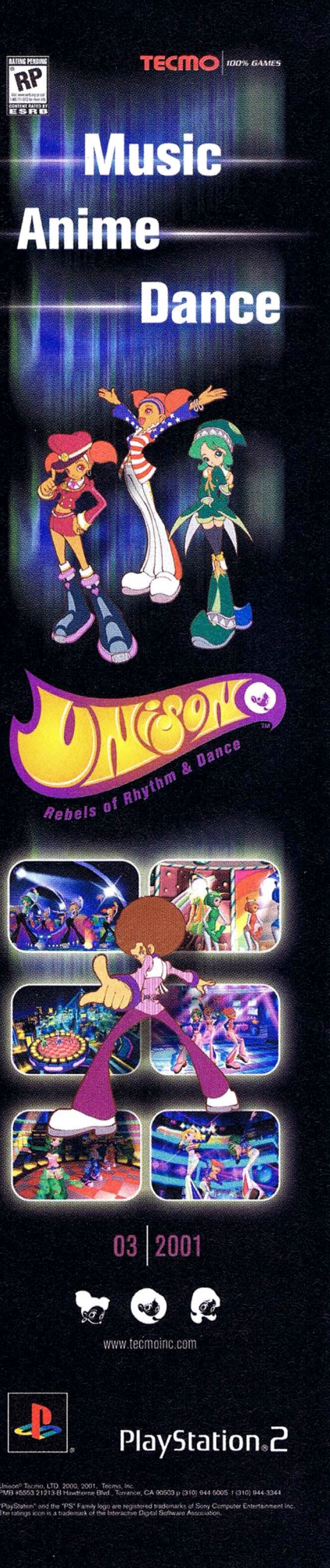
An interesting side note to the launch is the hesitance with which developers are approaching the system's ability to play link games with only one copy of the game. We are starting to receive word that multiplayer play between GBA will not always be possible with just one copy of the game. Many speculate that being able to play with just one copy of the game would cut down on sales, but it's also a question of technical limitations: The GBA has a limited amount of RAM to work with, so delays while you the link reads data from one copy of the cartridge could interfere with gameplay.

We'll have more on the launch of Game Boy Advance in Japan in the coming months.

Kuru Kuru Kururin

Japanese GBA Launch List

Advance GTA (MTO)
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon (Konami)
All Japan GT Championship (Kemco)
ChuChu Rocket (Sega)
Fire Pro Wrestling A (Spike)
F-Zero Advance (Nintendo)
JGTO Golf Master: Japan Golf Tour Game (Konami)
I'm an Air Traffic Controller (Tam)
Konami WaiWai Racing (Konami)
Kuru Kuru Kururin (Nintendo)
Mail de Cute (Konami)
Mario Advance (Nintendo)
Momotaro Festival (Hudson)
Monster Guardians (Konami)
Mr. Driller 2 (Namco)
Napoleon (Nintendo)
Pinobee's Adventure (Hudson)
Power Pro-kun Pocket 3 (Konami)
Silent Hill (Konami)
Tweety's Hearty Party (Kemco)
Yugioh: Dungeon Dice Monsters (Konami)



PRESS START

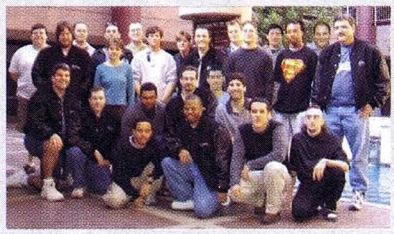
"We do not have a contract with Square, and do not plan to even consider a contract in the future...[Square] is free to say whatever they want, but we have no intention of signing a contract, and there's little chance of one being signed in the future."

–Nintendo Co. Ltd. President Hiroshi Yamauchi, in an interview with Bloomberg Japan, on the possibility of Square's return to a Nintendo system for GBA versions of Final Fantasy

DEVELOPER PROFILE

Rainbow Studios

Developer Profile: Rainbow Studios
Year founded: 1986
Location: Phoenix, Arizona
Web site: www.rainbowstudios.com
# of people: 75



Previous games: Air Havoc Controller, The Hive, Ravage, Microsoft Deadly Tide, Microsoft Motocross Madness, EA Tiger Woods 2000, Microsoft Motocross Madness 2

Current project(s): ATV Offroad Fury (PS2) and other undisclosed projects.

Most exciting aspect of working on the PS2: Developing for a platform that doesn't come in 57 flavors of hardware and 119 driver versions. The singular configuration of the PS2 combined with its raw processing power made it very appealing.

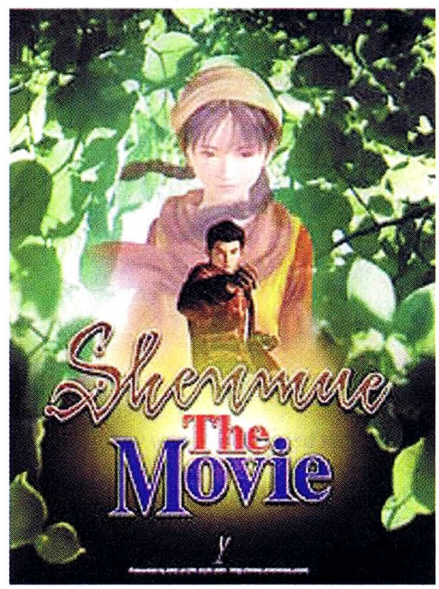
Example of an idea we had that didn't end up in the finished product: "Heli-Hoops"—we prototyped having these floating rings up in the air that were going to be used in the Freestyle mode as part of the level's objectives. The consensus was that it was a bit too arcadey so we took them out. I still think it's a cool idea.

Most difficult aspect of making an ATV racing game: One (of many) difficult development tasks was getting the AI bikes to have enough smarts to deal intelligently with the sophisticated terrain data sets. Motocross and ATV racing is a very technical experience that requires not just top-speed, but in many cases the correct speed combined with copious amounts of suspension pre-load, mid-air leaning and a lot of bike banging. ATV Offroad Fury is as much a flying game as it is a driving game.

Story behind our name: Full-spectrum entertainment ? Digital cures for the doldrums of analog life ? Maybe no one knows. Oh no!

Final Fantasy Remakes Coming From Square

Square announced that it has bumped the release of **Final Fantasy X** in Japan back to July to allow more time for polishing the much-anticipated PS2 title. Square also announced PS2 remakes of **Final Fantasy VII, VIII and IX** with souped-up graphics and 5.1 Dolby Digital sound. Expect FFX in the States as early as Q4 2001. The first online game in the FF series, FFXI, will be simultaneously released on PS2 and PC. FFXII has also been announced, and won't be an online RPG like XI, instead returning to its traditional, one-player roots. Presumably still coming to PS2 are a Disney RPG, two online games (one strategy, one RPG) and three sports titles.



Sega Debuts Shenmue The Movie

Special screenings of the first chapter of Shenmue (cinemas from the game condensed into movie form) were shown in Japan in five different locations around the country throughout January. Strangely enough, the dialogue in the movie was in English with Japanese subtitles. As a special treat, the audience was shown a new four-and-a-half-minute trailer for Shenmue II, scheduled for release later this year in both Japan and the U.S.

Farscape Game Not Far Off

Based on the Sci-Fi Channel's popular series, Red Lemon Studios' *Farscape* titles will arrive on the PC and a yet unconfirmed next-gen console in Q1 2002. You'll be able to play as all of the main characters from the show, each with his/her own special abilities.

PaRappa to Debut on PS2, TV

A new PaRappa game has been confirmed as coming to PS2. Not much is known about the game itself, but it will likely once again star PaRappa (instead of Lammy from UmJammer Lammy). The first glimpse of the game will likely be at Spring TGS, held March 30-April 1 in Chiba, Japan. Additionally, the Hip-Hop Hero will star in his own anime TV show on Japan's Fuji TV starting April 1.

Capcom and Bandai bring Gundam to DC

Capcom is porting the arcade game Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon to the DC and probably the PS2 under Bandai's name this summer in Japan.

Video-Game Violence In Spotlight Again

After the release of the National Institute on Media and the Family's annual video game industry report card, Senators Joseph Lieberman, Herb Kohl and Sam Brownback said they would introduce legislation as early as February that would punish companies that market violent games to kids. Retailers got a failing grade on the report card for selling mature-rated games to minors (which isn't illegal, but has raised moral issues in the past). It's interesting to note that the new legislation could go into effect right around the time when Rare's new N64 title, Conker's Bad Fur Day, hits stores.

Hint on Onimusha Sequel

Players who finish Onimusha can find a special treat: a video teaser for Onimusha 2, starring a new eyepatch-wearing samurai. Apparently work on the sequel is already under way—no wonder the first game is so short.

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PRESS START

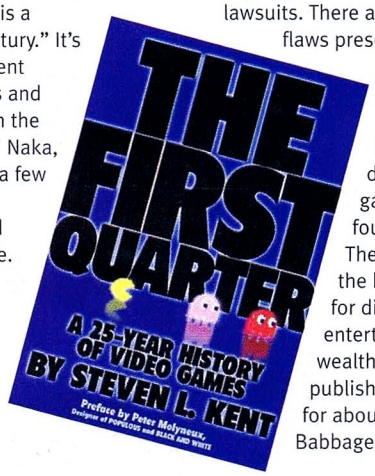
RESIDENT EVIL ARCADE

By the time you read this, Bio Hazard Fire Zone will have been played by at least a few Japanese gamers. Fire Zone is a joint arcade release from Capcom and Namco on test now in Japan, and it stars Claire Redfield. Hopefully it'll be better than Gun Survivor.

Looks At Books: A Review of *The First Quarter*

More than a decade ago, electronic-entertainment journalist Steve Kent set out to chronicle the tumultuous growth of the video-game industry. Over 500 interviews later, he has written *The First Quarter*, one of the most comprehensive texts ever on the subject.

"I'd like people to see this wonderful evolution," the author told *EGM* when asked about his motivation for composing the book. "The video-game industry is a microcosm of the 20th century." It's a far-reaching claim, but Kent backs it up with anecdotes and recollections from giants in the field—Nolan Bushnell, Yuji Naka, and Hideo Kojima are just a few of the many noteworthy pioneers whose words and thoughts are captured here. Structurally, *The First Quarter* starts off compelling with the first and second acts—the birth of the industry is given exhaustive coverage, and the introduction of the NES is colorfully documented. But upon reaching the Genesis era, Kent's book begins to lose its balance.



The controversy of Mortal Kombat and video-game violence receives more attention than the 16-bit system war does; Sony's entering the console business is scarcely mentioned, yet multiple pages are devoted to copyright protection and reverse-engineering lawsuits. There are a few unfortunate technical flaws present as well: Punctuation errors pop up frequently, and some of the objective data is inaccurate (Sonic the Hedgehog is erroneously described as a two-button game, Nintendo of America's founder is misnamed, etc.). These issues notwithstanding, the book remains a must-have for die-hard gamers: It's an entertaining read and offers a wealth of fascinating, never-before-published information. You can find it for about $19.95 now at Amazon.com, Babbages or Funcoland.

LAST-MINUTE UPDATE

Sega's Neptune Finally Surfaces

Sega Corp. recently discovered approximately 10,000 already-manufactured Sega Neptune systems in a soon-to-be closed warehouse. If you remember, the Neptune was the all-in-one Genesis/32X system (pictured here) that was originally to be released in 1995. Sega pulled the plug on it, but not before 10,000 units were already manufactured. They are available for sale (limit one per customer) for $199.99 at **www.seganeptune.com.** The system bundle also includes two unreleased 32X games—X-Men 2 and Virtua Hamster.

Old School: Previous Game of the Year Winners

Because this is the awards issue of *EGM*, we got to thinking about previous Game of the Year award winners. Two of our all-time favorites are Strider and Double Dragon.

Strider
Sega/Capcom (Genesis)
Released: 1990
Why it was cool: Strider was one of a series of nearly perfect conversions of Capcom arcade games on the Genesis. It was easily the most impressive-looking action game on the system to date, with relatively huge characters, lush background graphics and some really huge bosses. The experience rounded out excellent music and surprisingly good voice samples for the Genesis. Strider showed off just how powerful Sega's hardware was.
How *EGM* rated it: 9.0, 9.0, 9.0, 9.0
Comments: The biggest problem with Strider is its length. With only five levels, the experience is over almost before it begins. But even in the wake of the arcade perfect PS one version of Strider released last year, this old Genesis cartridge really holds its own. In some ways it's a better game than the sequel. *—Greg Sewart*

Double Dragon
Tradewest (NES)
Released: 1988
Why it was cool: This port of American Technos' side-scrolling arcade beat-'em-up was missing some things from the arcade version (good graphics, two-player simultaneous mode), but it was still really fun. Sega's Master System version (available only as a mail-away game due to legal wranglings) was superior in both the graphics and gameplay department (plus it included two-player simultaneous play), but the NES version was still great—although playing it now it's hard to ignore all the severe flicker. Just the word "Abobo" struck fear into the hearts of many a gamer.
How *EGM* rated it: We never reviewed Double Dragon because it came out before *EGM* #1!
Comments: Some of my fondest NES memories are from playing this game, even though I never actually finished it. Its simple looks hid some darn innovative gameplay. A true classic. They don't make games like this anymore. *—Chris Johnston*

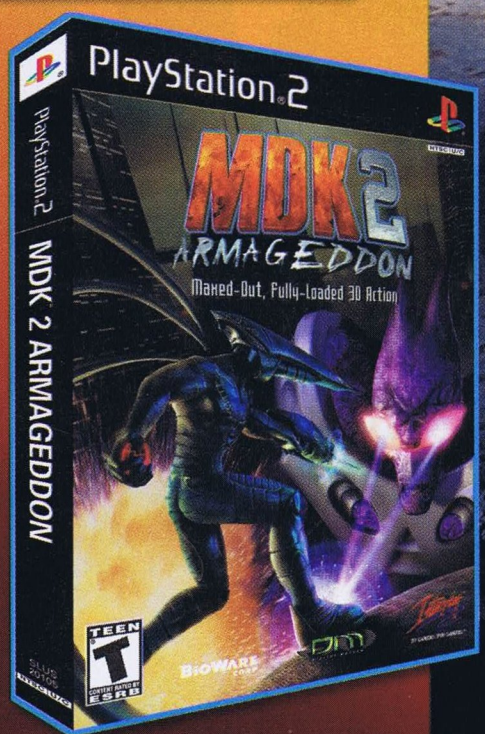
WITH ENEMIES
LIKE THIS...

...WHO NEEDS

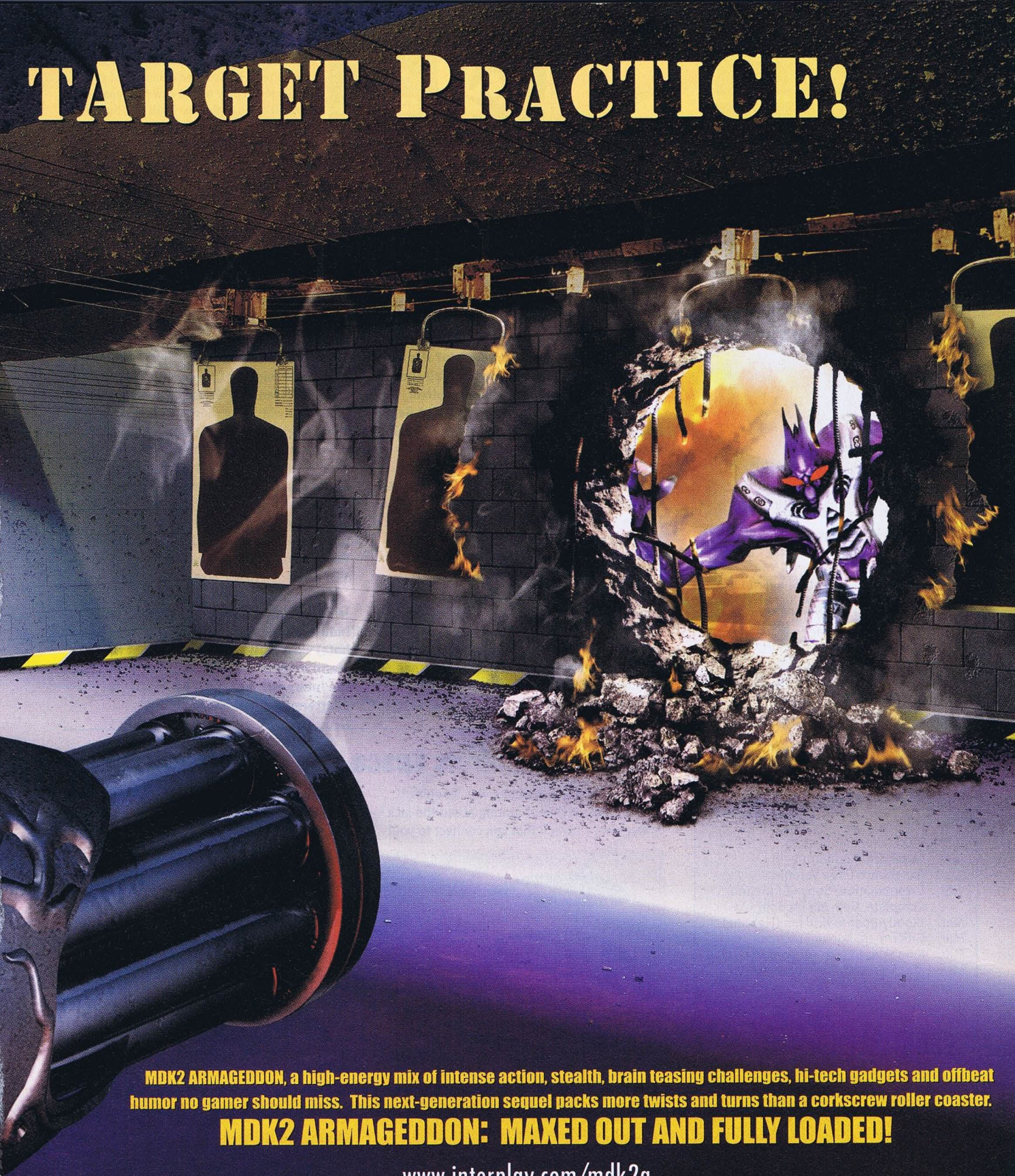
100

30

160
A1007a


PlayStation.2
MDK 2
ARMAGEDDON
Maxed-Out, Fully-Loaded 3D Action
BioWare
TEEN
T
ESRB

TARGET PRACTICE!



MDK2 ARMAGEDDON, a high-energy mix of intense action, stealth, brain teasing challenges, hi-tech gadgets and offbeat humor no gamer should miss. This next-generation sequel packs more twists and turns than a corkscrew roller coaster.

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON: MAXED OUT AND FULLY LOADED!

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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Animated Blood

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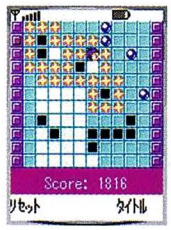
Q-Mann



SONIC CAFÉ

Sonic Team has created a handful of games designed to play on the new Java-enabled I-Appli cellular phones. NiGHTS, ChuChu Rocket, ChuChu Rocket Edit and Samba de Amigo are available for play with a monthly fee of about $2.50. For now, these games are only available in Japan.

IMPORT CALENDAR

Akumajou Dracula

Import Pick of the Month: Konami's PlayStation **Akumajou Dracula** is a port of their 1991 game for Sharp's X86000 line of computers. It's very similar to the original Castlevania, but with a bit more graphical flair and a few changes. This one probably won't come to the U.S. so if you want it, you'll have to import.

PlayStation

2/22 Volfoss, Namco (RPG)
3/15 Dance Dance Revolution 4th Mix, Konami (Music)
3/22 Akumajou Dracula, Konami (Action)
3/29 Ganbare Goemon, Konami (Action)
Mar. Beatmania: The Sound of Tokyo, Konami (Music)

PlayStation 2

3/1 Z.O.E., Konami (Action)
3/8 Kessen II, Koei (Strategy)
3/22 Bio Hazard Code Veronica
3/8 Extermination, Sony CEI (Action)
Complete, Capcom (Action)
Mar. Bloody Roar 3, Hudson (Fighting)
Mar. Guitarman, Konami (Action)
Mar. Klonoa 2, Namco (Action)
Mar. Monster Farm, Tecmo (Action)
Mar. Shutoku Battle Zero, Genki (Racing)

Dreamcast

2/22 Macross M3, Shoeisha (Action)
3/1 Fire Pro Wrestling D, Spike (Sports)
3/22 Bio Hazard Code Veronica Complete, Capcom (Action)
3/22 Sakura Taisen 3, Sega (RPG)
3/29 Sega Gaga, Sega (Simulation)

Game Boy

Feb. Legend of Zelda: Mystical Tree of Fruit, Nintendo (RPG)
3/30 Street Fighter Alpha, Capcom (Fighting)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import game store for the latest release information.

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Happy ho-hos Quarter-fans. 'Tis I, the guru of gaming—back once again from the dark side with arms loaded down with the hottest insider dirt money can buy. Did I really used to write that kinda thing in Gaming Gossip? It's been a bit dry on the rumor scene since all the Sega rumors The Q was going to deliver became fact. Remember reading about Sega games on the PS2 here almost a year ago? Enough talk! On to the rumors!

...Ninja Gaiden PS2 will be shown for the first time **on video at E3.** Can't wait to be **up against Jaquio** again...oh baby...What's this **map** doing on **enix.com?** Could it be?...could be a good November...Know what's great? **ToeJam & Earl III** on Dreamcast **is an online game.** What a concept!...A bit of a **mix-up** caused Nintendo of Europe to confirm **Metroid** as a **Game Boy Advance** title a bit earlier than they should have. They later retracted the statement, but there's a **strong indication that we may see Samus** struttin' her stuff against Mother Brain **on GBA** eventually.

...On the **Sega** front, yours truly can share a few ripe and juicy rumors. **Visual Concepts** is gearing up to convert **all the 2K sports series' games to PS2.** Gee, feeling any pressure EA? Now that Sega's opened the door to putting their titles on other systems, we've heard **Working Designs** is looking into licensing **Sakura Taisen for PS2 in the U.S.** If you're unfamiliar with the dating sim/mech battle strategy game, you're not alone. Sega hasn't brought it over because they didn't feel it had legs (though it does have **a small cult following in the U.S.**). And on that note, here's the juiciest rumor of all: **Sega's first PS one games** will be ports of some of the **Saturn's** best titles, which may include...a **Panzer Dragoon** title! VF4 may be on PS2, but **VFX** is headed to **Mr. Gates' new box...**

My time's already up! Hey, now all you industry-types can send me your love (or hate) via e-mail and become one of the Q-Mann's spies like Terry Aki...I will soon rule the Internet! Just send it to quartermann@ziffdavis.com.

Game Boy Controls Space-Age Sewing Machine

Well, apparently someone was listening when you gamers kept ranting about the lack of a sewing machine that can connect to your Game Boy. Singer, no doubt after extensive market research, has released IZEK, an iMac-styled sewing machine that just so happens to connect to your Game Boy. Enter in the stich, press a few buttons, and bingo bango bongo—you're sewing. Those tricky stitching patterns we all hate to struggle with but can't afford to live without will plague the gaming world no more! This handy peripheral is available at your nearest specialty sewing shop for a mere $700. This is no April Fool's joke: Check it out at meetizek.com.

In honor of this textile triumph, we've come up with a couple of other devices below that we feel might interface just as nicely with the Game Boy. Enjoy...

Other Imaginative Ways For Better Living Through Game Boy

Game Boy Grille—Grill all your tasty assorted meats with the GBGrille! Broil, poach, roast, broast and fricassé mouth-watering dishes all by selecting them from menus on a special cartridge! MSRP: $900.

Interactive Tie Rack Organizer—Got so many ties you just can't keep track of them all? Then this dandy device will help you sort and catalog up to 100 ties of all colors and designs. The ladies love an organized man! MSRP: $600

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PRESS START

Compiled By Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

Coming Soon - April 2001

March

Game Boy Color

Aliens: Thanatos Encounter - THQ	Action
Army Men Arcade Blast - 3DO	Action
ESPN National Hockey Night - Konami	Sports
Indiana Jones - THQ	Action
Inspector Gadget - Ubi Soft	Action
Jimmy White's Cue Ball - Vatical Ent.	Sports
Legend of the River King 2 - Natsume	Action
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX - Activision	Sports
Portal Runner - 3DO	Action
Puzzled - Natsume	Puzzle
Return of the Ninja - Natsume	Action
Rocket Power - THQ	Adventure
Simpsons Treehouse of Horror - THQ	Action
Sponge Bob Squarepants - THQ	Adventure
Tech Deck Skateboarding - Codemasters	Action
VR Sports: Powerboat Racing - Vatical Ent.	Racing

PlayStation

Alone in the Dark 4 - Infogrames	Adventure
Blaster Master: Blasting Again - Sunsoft	Action
Bombing Islands, The - Kemco	Action
Dance Dance Revolution - Konami	Misc.
Digimon World 2 - Bandai	RPG
Disney's Aladdin - Sony CEA	Action
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX - Activision	Sports
Metal Slug X - Agetec	Action
Point Blank 3 - Namco	Shooting
Rainbow Six Rogue Spear - Red Storm	Action
Simpsons Wrestling - Fox Interactive	Sports
Triple Play Baseball 2002 - EA Sports	Sports

PlayStation 2

All-Star Baseball 2002 - Acclaim	Sports
Army Men Air Attack 2 - 3DO	Action
Army Men Green Rogue - 3DO	Action
Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2 - 3DO	Action
Bouncer, The - Square EA	Action
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse - Metro 3D	Action
Dark Cloud - Sony CEA	RPG
Dinosaur - Ubi Soft	Action
ESPN MLS Extra Time - Konami	Sports
ESPN National Hockey Night - Konami	Sports
Heroes of Might & Magic III - 3DO	Adventure
Ico - Sony CEA	Adventure
MDK2 Armageddon - Interplay	Action
Off Road Thunder - Midway	Racing
Onimusha Warlords - Capcom	Adventure
Quake III: Revolution - Electronic Arts	Action
Red Faction - THQ	Action
Ring of Red - Konami	Strategy
Shadow of Destiny - Konami	RPG
Tiger Woods PGA Tour - EA Sports	Sports
Triple Play Baseball 2002 - EA Sports	Sports
Twisted Metal Black - Sony CEA	Action
Warriors of Might & Magic - 3DO	Adventure
World Is Not Enough, The - Electronic Arts	Action
Zone of the Enders - Konami	Adventure

Nintendo 64

Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage - THQ	RPG
Conker's Bad Fur Day - Nintendo	Action
Pokémon Stadium 2 - Nintendo	Misc.

Dreamcast

Alone in the Dark 4 - Infogrames	Adventure
Armada II - Metro 3D	Action
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse - Metro 3D	Action
Daytona USA Network Racing - Sega	Racing
Ducati World Racing Challenge - Acclaim	Racing
Half-Life - Sierra	Action
Mummy, The - Konami	Action
Project Justice - Capcom	Fighting
System Shock 2 - Vatical Entertainment	Action
Unreal Tournament - Infogrames	Action
Worms World Party - Titus	Misc.

April

Game Boy Color

Batman Racing - Ubi Soft	Racing
Frisbee Golf - Vatical Entertainment	Sports
Hercules - Titus	Action
Land Before Time, The - Natsume	Action
Monster Force - Konami	Action
Razor Freestyle Scooter - Crave	Action
Trouballs - Capcom	Puzzle

PlayStation

WDL War Jetz - 3DO	Action
Kasparov Chess - Interplay	Misc.

PlayStation 2

Cool Boarders 2001 - Sony CEA	Sports
Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec - Sony CEA	Racing
Roadster Trophy - Titus	Racing
Star Wars: Starfighter - LucasArts	Action/Sim
Stunt GP - Titus	Action
Supercar Street Challenge - Activision	Racing
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero - Crave Ent.	Racing

Nintendo 64

Dinosaur Planet - Nintendo	RPG
Eternal Darkness - Nintendo	Action
VR Powerboat - Vatical Entertainment	Action

Dreamcast

18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker - Sega	Racing
Exhibition of Speed - Titus	Racing
Floigan Brothers - Sega	Action
Playmobil Hype - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Soldier of Fortune - Crave Entertainment	Action
Stunt GP - Infogrames	Action
Stupid Invaders - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Woody Woodpecker Racing - Konami	Racing

May

Game Boy Color

Kirby Tilt n' Tumble - Nintendo	Misc.
Playmobil Hype - Ubi Soft	Action
VIP - Ubi Soft	Action
Xena - Titus	Action

PlayStation

Batman: Gotham City Racer - Ubi Soft	Racing
Inspector Gadget - Infogrames	Action
Roswell Conspiracies - Red Storm	Adventure
Sheep Dog & Wolf - Infogrames	Action
VIP - Ubi Soft	Action

PlayStation 2

Champs F1 Racing- Bam!	Racing
Commandos 2 - Eidos	Action
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy - Midway	Action
Giants: Citizen Kabuto - Interplay	Adventure
Herdy Gerdy - Eidos	Adventure
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 - Eidos	Adventure
Portal Runner - 3DO	Adventure
Project Eden - Eidos	Action/Strategy
Rock and Roll Racing - Interplay	Racing
Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing - LucasArts	Racing
Ultimate Sky Surfer - Crave Entertainment	Action
WDL War Jetz - 3DO	Action

Dreamcast

Commandos 2 - Eidos	Action
Conflict Zone - Ubi Soft	Action
Crazy Taxi 2 - Sega	Action
Dragon Riders - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Evil Twin - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Gorka Morka - Ripcord	Action
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 - Eidos	Adventure
Ooga Booga - Sega	Strategy
Sonic Adventure 2 - Sega	Adventure

June

PlayStation

Rayman 2: Back to School - Ubi Soft	Action
Time Crisis: Project Titan - Namco	Shooting

PlayStation 2

Barbarian - Interplay	Action
Bloody Roar 3 - Interplay	Fighting
Clive Barker's Undying - Electronic Arts	Adventure
Ephemeral Fantasia - Konami	RPG
Lotus Challenge - Interplay	Racing
Seven Blades - Konami	Adventure
Top Gun - Titus	Action

Dreamcast

Heroes of Might & Magic III - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Outtrigger - Sega	Action
World Series Baseball 2K2 - Sega	Sports

"...INSTANTLY INTELLIGIBLE, MIND-BOGGLINGLY VAST, AND A TOTAL GAS TO PLAY....MAKES FOR ONE HELLUVA VIDEOGAME" - GAMER'S REPUBLIC, SEPT 2000

"MUST BUY PLAYSTATION 2 LAUNCH GAMES LIST" - NOV 2000 EGM

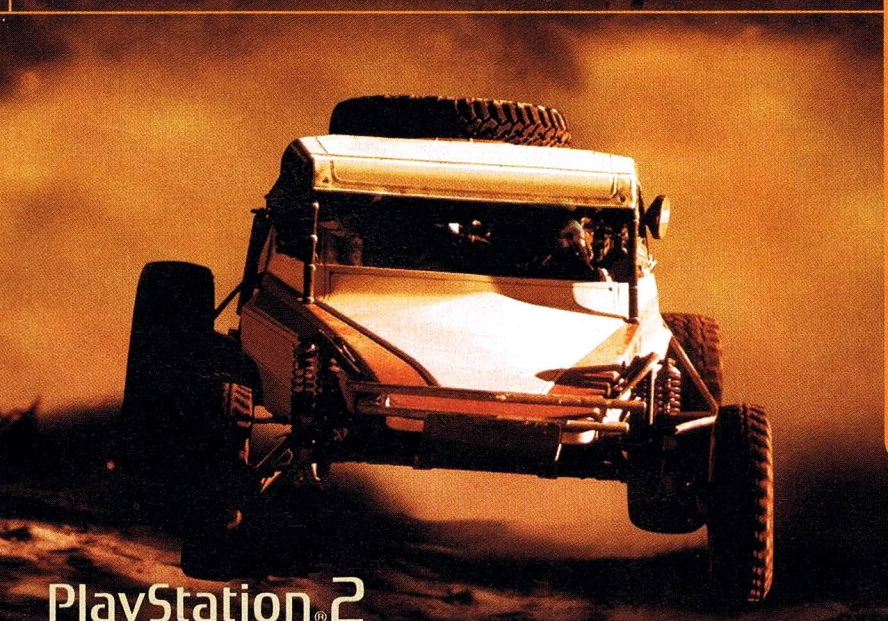
"DRIVING THROUGH THE SPECTACULAR TERRAIN IS A BLAST" - EGM OCTOBER 2000

"A - ...THE BEST DISPLAY AND TRUEST TESTAMENT TO THE PROCESSING POWER OF THE PS2 TO DATE." - GAMERS REPUBLIC OCTOBER 2000

98% PLATINUM - "THE BEST OFF-ROAD EXPERIENCE YOU'VE EVER HAD" ... "ONE OF THE MUST - BUY LAUNCH GAMES" - PSE2 NOVEMBER 2000

FINALIST EGM 2000 GAMERS' CHOICE AWARD

SMUGGLER'S RUN



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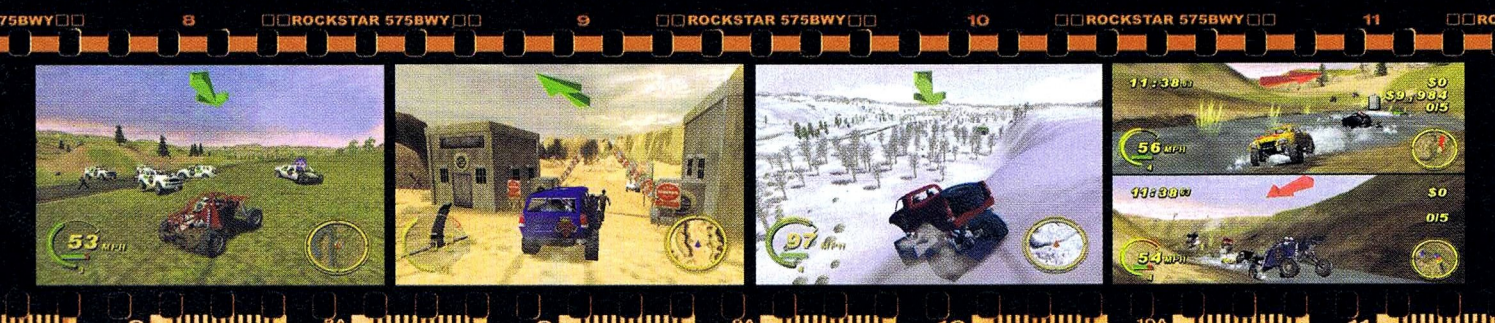

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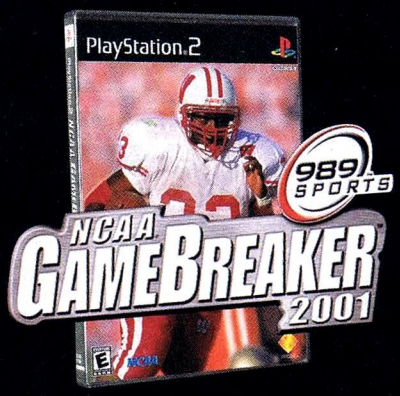
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB — Animated Violence

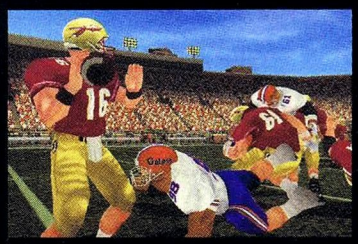
guidance recordings

Angel STUDIOS



New Millenium Player Models

115 Division 1-A Teams and Stadiums



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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PRESS START

The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of December, 2000

1 - Pokémon Gold

Sequels were big sellers in December, claiming all but one spot on the Top 10. Not surprisingly, **Nintendo** stays at the top for yet another month. Will the madness never end? The Magic 8 Ball says, "Not bloody likely."

LAST MONTH: 1

Mark	Chris	Crispin
8.5	9.0	8.5

2 - Pokémon Silver

With the strong showing from **Nintendo** and a bunch of PS one games, once again the Dreamcast and PS2 were shut out. Heck, the Dreamcast didn't even make the Top 20 this month. Meanwhile Madden flounders at the bottom.

LAST MONTH: 2

Mark	Chris	Crispin
8.5	9.0	8.5

3 - WWF SmackDown! 2

Looks like you jabronies can't get enough of large sweaty men and busty babes beating the living crap out of each other for the sheer sport of it. **THQ**'s more than happy to deliver just that. God bless America.

LAST MONTH: 14

Todd	Greg	Milkman
9	8.5	9

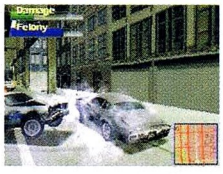
4 - Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

After a somewhat off-month, **Activision** climbs back into the Top 5 with Tony Hawk. No surprise there, we expect to see this PS one game near the top all year. At least until Tony Hawk 3 becomes a reality (more on that soon).

LAST MONTH: 6

Crispin	Dean	Greg
10	10	10

5 - Driver 2



Driver was probably the best thing to come from **Infogrames'** acquisition of GT Interactive a couple of years ago. Will Driver 2 have the staying power of the insanely popular original? Watch this page to find out.

LAST MONTH: 9

John	Ryan	Milkman
8	7.5	7.5

		LAST MONTH
6	Final Fantasy IX Square EA	4
7	WWF No Mercy THQ	5
8	Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask Nintendo	3
9	Donkey Kong Country Nintendo	NEW
10	Banjo-Tooie Nintendo	NEW
11	The World Is Not Enough Electronic Arts	7
12	Madden NFL 2001 Electronic Arts	13
13	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Activision	12
14	Rugrats in Paris THQ	NEW
15	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision	NEW
16	Crash Bash Sony CEA	NEW
17	Super Mario Bros. DX Nintendo	10
18	Madden NFL 2001 Electronic Arts	16
19	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Activision	20
20	Spyro: Year of the Dragon Sony CEA	15

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Kristin Barnett-von Korff at (516) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list. Top 5 game descriptions written by the *EGM* staff.

JAPAN TOP 10

1	Onimusha Capcom
2	Donkey Kong 2001 Nintendo
3	Yu-gi-oh Duel Monsters 4 Konami
4	Pokémon Crystal Nintendo
5	Exciting Pro Wrestling 2 Yuke's
6	Mickey's Racing Challenge USA Nintendo
7	Metal Slug X SNK
8	Ultimate Fighting Championship Capcom
9	Hajime no Ippo: Victorious Boxers ESP
10	Dragon Quest III: To be a Legend Enix

Weekly Famitsu, week ending 1/28/2001

Capcom's survival horror game set in samurai-era Japan claimed the number-one spot by a long shot in this, its first week of release. All told, it sold over a half million units—giving it an over 450,000 unit lead over DK 2001 at number two.

Exciting Pro Wrestling 2...not a very "exciting" name, is it. Yet that's the name of SmackDown 2 for the PlayStation in Japan, landing at number five.

PlayStation.2

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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB — Animated Violence

DARK HORSE COMICS

HSU AND CHAN IN... "THE SUSHI SAGA!"
PART ONE: "ROBOTS SUCK."
HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M HSU TANAKA, THAT'S MY BROTHER CHAN, AND WE ARE VIDEO GAME DESIGNERS!
YOU MAY WONDER WHERE GAME DESIGNERS SUCH AS WE GET THE IDEAS FOR OUR UNIQUE AND INNOVATIVE GAMES. THE ANSWERS ARE MANY AND VARIED! SOMETIMES WE CAN DRAW INSPIRATION FROM CINEMA OR LITERATURE! SOMETIMES WE CAN FIND OUR GAME WITHIN A SPORT! EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, AN IDEA COMES TO US IN A DREAM AFTER INGESTING SIX TACOS AND A DOSE OF NY-QUIL!
BUT MOST OF THE TIME, WE FIND OUR IDEAS THROUGH THE SIMPLE OBSERVATION OF EVERYDAY HUMAN LIFE.
OR, IN THIS CASE, THE OBSERVATION OF HUMAN LIFE AS IT REACTS TO HAVING A WATER BALLOON TOSSED UPON ITS HEAD.
HEY! LOOK! A MONKEY!
WHERE?
DARN, BUT WE'RE PROGRESSIVE THINKERS, CHAN!
I'D SAY THIS SUBJECT IS WORTHY OF FURTHER STUDY!
HAND ME ANOTHER BALLOON!
HUP! QUICK, CHAN! GUY WEARING A SUIT, ONE O'CLOCK!
©2000 J.Scott
SPLOOSH!
GOOD SHOT, BROTHER!
LET US NOW OBSERVE THE WORKINGS OF THE HUMAN SOUL!
TOSS ME A SANDWICH.
CLIK CLIK CLIK
SHRAKK
BOO
YOU'D THINK PEOPLE WOULD BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO A BREAK IN THE MONOTONY OF THEIR DAY!
THAT GUY'S SOME KIND OF ROBOT!
HIGHLY UNORIGINAL! BOO!
AAIGH! HOW DO WE STOP IT? THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN FIGHT THAT THING! LOOK, HE'S SCUFFING UP THE LINOLEUM!
AAIGH!!
I SAID WE SHOULD GET THE GIANT VAT OF BOILING LEAD, BUT NO, YOU WANTED THE AIR HOCKEY TABLE...
WAIT! I HAVE AN IDEA!
QUICK, GET CHERNOBYL THE RADIOACTIVE CHIPMUNK AND THE POTATO CANNON!
GET WHAT?
CHERNOBYL, OL' BUDDY, YOU WANNA DO ME AND HSU A BIG FAVOR?
CHERNOBYL!
GOOD BOY!
BRAVE CHIPMUNK! WE SALUTE YOU!
GRUNT!
STUFF
CRAM
FIRE IN THE HOLE!
BOOM
PHOOMF!
ZING!
!
OW.
I... UM... I GUESS WE'VE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON FROM THIS EPISODE, HUH?
RIGHT. WE NEED A VAT OF MOLTEN LEAD. I'M CALLING THE GUY ON TUESDAY.
BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN, LIKE WHO BUILT THIS THING, AND WHY?
I THINK I CAN ANSWER THAT!
--WHO?
COME NOW, SURELY YOU RECOGNIZE THE VISAGE OF...
SUSHI-X!
NEAT, HUH? TO BE CONTINUED! NOW YOU HAVE TO BUY THE NEXT ISSUE! MA-HA!

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Previews

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Trouballs

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.

Game Boy Advance has finally infiltrated *EGM*'s Previews section, bringing the total system count up to a whopping seven! That's critical mass, boys and girls. Something's got to give.

But until it does, we'll continue to cover the latest and greatest games on every system we can find. And lately, most of said games seem to be headed to PlayStation 2. You've probably noticed over the last couple months that the PS2 section has been steadily growing while everything else is on the decline. Looks like the botched launch hasn't worried most game publishers about the system's viability in the least.

Unfortunately, it looks like the first casualty in all this is the Dreamcast. With the flurry of announcements regarding Sega's future in the hardware business, developers are scattering, as they have been for the last few months.

It leaves one wondering what Sega has to do to catch a break. They released a kick-ass system, which sold respectively. They developed and released some great titles: sequels, sports titles and incredibly innovative new franchises. The Dreamcast easily had the strongest year of any console in 2000. The mind wobbles.

But fear not, dear readers. With new Dreamcast titles at least through 2001, and development under way for systems like PlayStation 2, Game Boy Advance and Xbox, Sega games will likely grace these pages for years to come. Thank goodness for small miracles.

Now the only real problem is how much longer the N64 will remain a force...

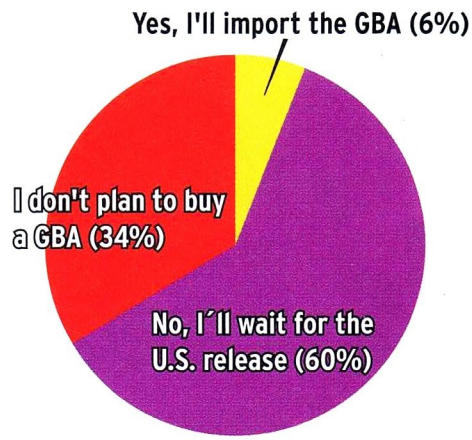
It's finally happened. The Game Boy Advance previews start on page 72, including an exclusive look at five new games from Majesco!

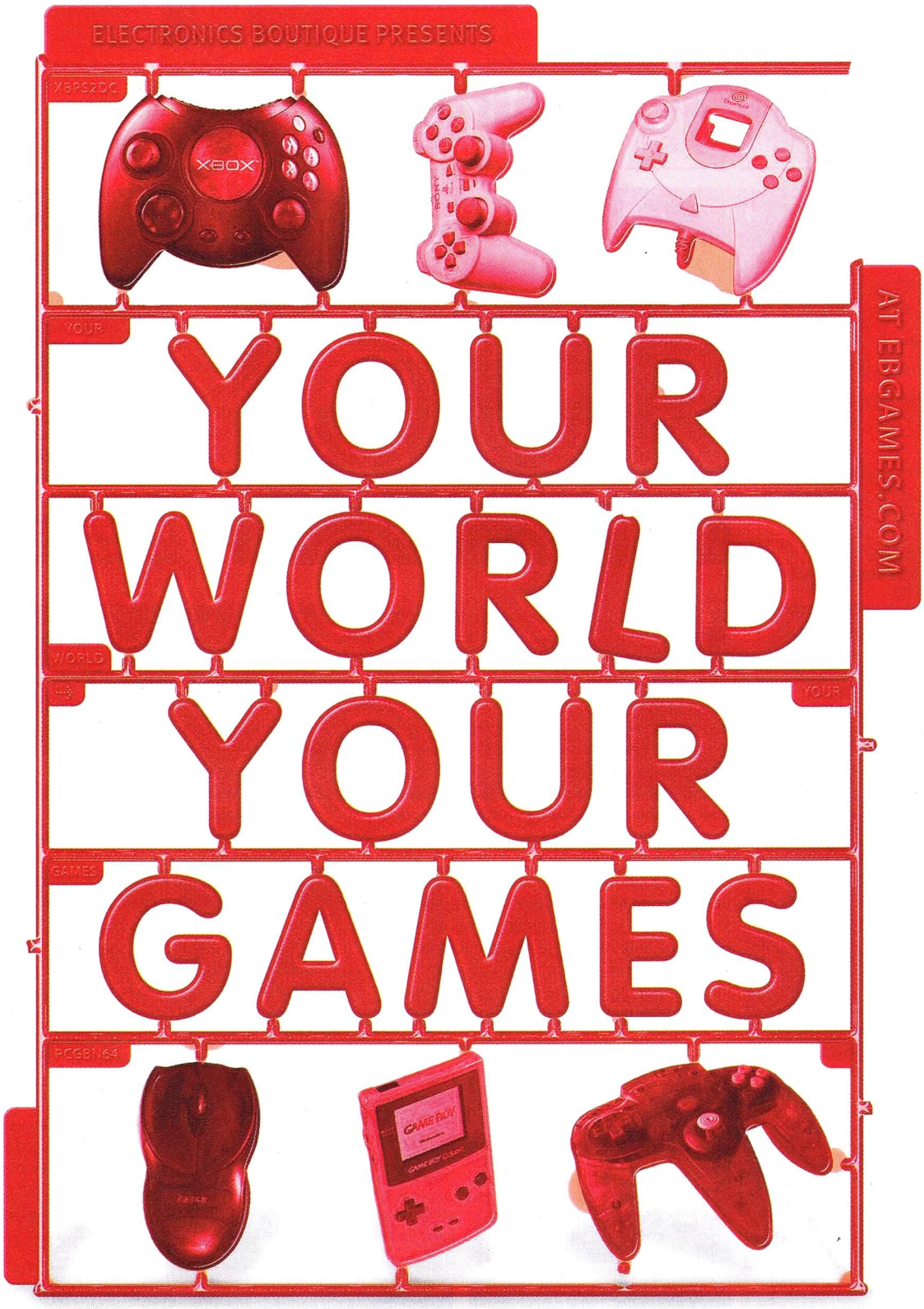
TOP 5 Preview Picks

1. Conker's Bad Fur Day	Nintendo 64, March
2. Half-Life	PlayStation 2, Summer
3. Fighting Vipers 2	Dreamcast, March
4. Shenmue II	Dreamcast, 2001
5. Extermination	PlayStation 2, Spring

You damn, dirty liars!

A recent poll on gamespot.com asked readers if they planned on importing a Game Boy Advance after the March release in Japan. Keeping in mind that the original Game Boy and Game Boy Color have no regional lockout, we were surprised how many people said they'd wait for the U.S. release. Even more shocking, though, is that 34 percent of the voters said they didn't intend to pick up a GBA at all. Liars! You need the Game Boy Advance, you know you want it. Denying it isn't hurting anyone but yourself. Everyone who lied on this poll is hereby issued 100 demerits and sentenced to 40 lashes. Shame on all of you!





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Fighting Vipers 2

Publisher: Sega
Developer: AM2
Players: 1-2
Genre: Fighting
% Done: 95%
Release: March
Web Address: www.sega.com
The Good: The home version fans have been waiting for since the Saturn.
The Bad: New graphics can't hide the fact that it's based on a dated game.
And The Ugly: Have you seen Sanman without his armor? Ugh.

Characters start every round with armor above and below the waist. As it's damaged, armor weakens and breaks, leaving combatants more vulnerable to attacks in that area. Once it's all gone, death is but a moment away, but stripped characters gain power and speed.

ABUSE OF POWER

Sudden Death

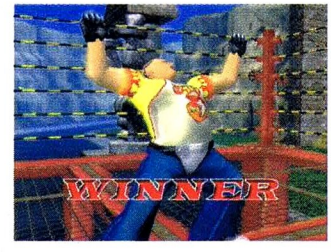
Those who were big into the original Fighting Vipers will no doubt remember Bahn's fence throw/bodycheck one-hit kill. While handy for beating the CPU, its power was often horribly abused: Many arcade goers would challenge newbies, play like an idiot, then suddenly and utterly destroy their opponents with the move in the final round, a phony "what the hell happened?" expression on their face as they choked back the laughter (don't try to deny it, you know who you are). Unfortunately for those of us who enjoyed this little ritual, Sega has more than halved the damage inflicted by the move in the sequel. Guess we'll have to learn how to fight fair.

Way back in 1996 Sega released Fighting Vipers, an arcade title based on the razor-sharp fighting engine of Virtua Fighter 2. Sega took eight funky characters, suited them in armor, and encased them in a steel cage. The result was a highly addictive but relatively shallow game, a sort of Virtua Fighter Light. Controls were easy, counters were a cinch, and the joy of breaking off an opponent's armor then smashing them through a steel cage was unprecedented. Fans clamored for a sequel and five years later, it's finally here.

Fighting fanatics have good reason to salivate until this disc hits North America. The graphics are superior to VF3: The polygonal curves of Honey, Grace and Jane rival those of Kasumi, Tina and Lei-Fang of Dead or Alive 2—but you can intentionally blow off their clothes in this game. Raxel's default stance has him strumming a perpetual air guitar; Jane's dropped her *Aliens* uniform for one a bit more, uh, "feminine," and Sanman now resembles a steam engine instead of a contestant in RollerDerby. Two newcomers include Emi, an anime-inspired little girl who zips around the ring on a jet pack and the BMX-riding Charlie, who wields his bike as efficiently as Picky does his skateboard. Character design hasn't been this bizarre since George Lucas thought Jar Jar Binks was a worthy addition to *Episode I*. Three hidden fighters have been planned, but Pepsiman is a confirmed no-show.

Though combat is based on the same engine as the original, many gamers will recognize touches that were clearly inspired by Virtua Fighter 3. Throws can be escaped, side throws have been added, and attacks can be reversed as well as countered. Sega's even tossed in a two-round winning "Super K.O." technique, a move that can only be used when all of one's armor has been destroyed—but it's not an instant kill. Despite multiple modes of play (Team Battle, Versus, Survival and Arcade), the fighting scene has changed significantly since the original Fighting Vipers was released. Does this updated version of a rather old game contain enough original material to compete with the likes of DOA2 or Soul Calibur? We should know as soon as next month when we get our hands on the U.S. final.

Fighting Vipers 2 is all about over-the-top action in the friendly confines of the steel cage. No wimpy ring-outs here, buster.



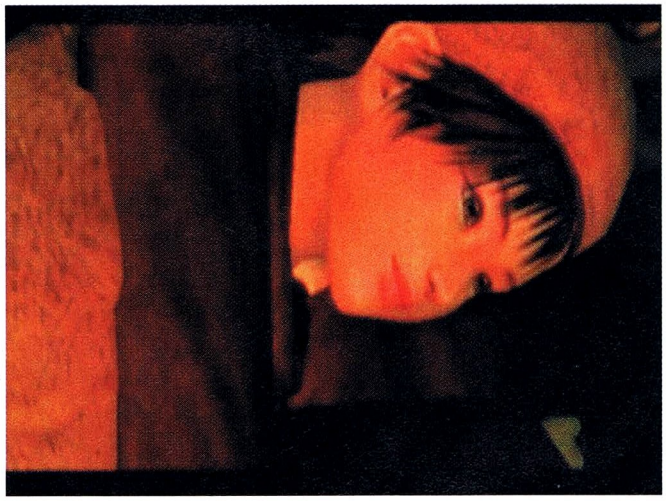
SPACE INVADERS

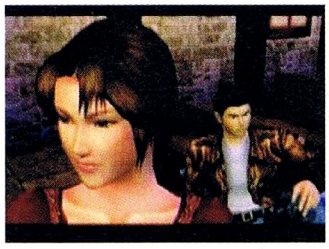
Did you know that Stupid Invaders is based on the Gaumont/Saban show called *Space Goofs*? It first aired back in the late '90s.

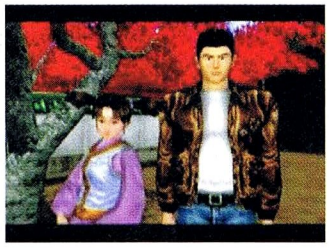
Shenmue II

Ryo's quest to track down Lan Di, his father's killer, has lead him to China in Shenmue II. For **Sega**'s ambitious sequel, Ryo will travel to and explore four real locales in China: Aberdeen, Kowloon, Wan Chai and Guilin. He'll also finally come face to face with Ling Sha Hua, the mysterious girl who haunted his dreams in the first game.

From early screens and movies, Shenmue II will feature a lot more people on screen at once. A particularly cool section is when Ryo walks through a crowd of students practicing martial arts in unison. The towns themselves are much more impressive than the slightly small Yokosuka from the first game as well. What little else we know is that Shenmue II will hit **sometime in 2001** in Japan (no U.S. date has been announced), and that Ryo will meet three new female companions. We don't know if characters like Chai or Nozomi (Ryo's love interest from the first game) will make an appearance. None of the QTEs or fighting events have been shown, either, but we bet they'll be back.





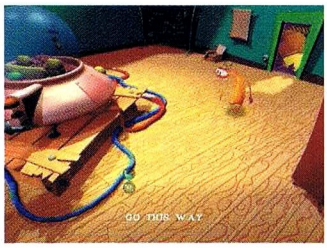


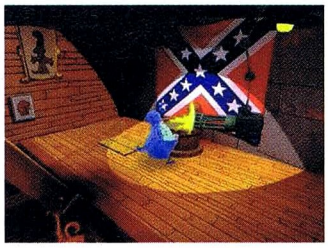
Stupid Invaders

This odd adventure game from **Ubi Soft** should be **available now**. It's the story of five stupid aliens who've crash-landed on earth. Dr. Sakarin, an evil scientist at Area 52, discovers them and sends a hitman out to seize them at all costs. Basically, it's up to you to guide each alien through a myriad of weird puzzles and traps in order to repair the spaceship and rocket to safety.

Stupid Invaders is a point-'n'-click adventure game reminiscent of old LucasArts and Sierra PC games. It's compatible with the Dreamcast mouse (thank god), and mainly aims to gross you out at every turn. We especially like the room full of cows whose only reason for living is to constantly poop. Who wouldn't love that?

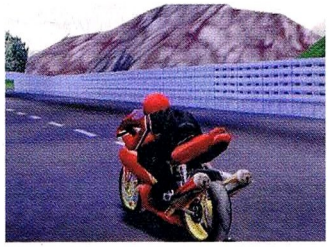
The game is also written by Jim Gomez, better known for the *Ren and Stimpy* show.

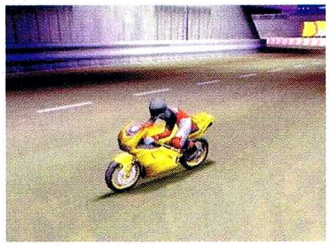


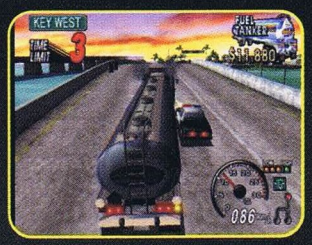


Ducati

Not much has changed here—**Acclaim**'s Ducati DC is identical to its PS offering—just better-looking (obviously). This **February** release features 40 Ducati bikes, eight tracks (several more if you count variations) and a License Mode similar to that in Gran Turismo. We haven't received a playable yet, but we're hoping the extra power will smooth out the framerate and bump up the speed. Toning down the erratic behavior of the AI bikes and widening the tracks wouldn't be a bad idea either.







GOOD OLE AMERICA: Land of open roads and bastion of Big Rigs! But what with high gas prices and the steely grip of the law, what modern gearjammer has the money or persistence to cruise in style nowadays?

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Dreamcast™

EVERYONE
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GENERAL: All federal, state, provincial and local laws and regulations apply. No purchase necessary. Odds of winning depend on the number and quality of entries received. Potential winners must respond to any required Affidavit of Eligibility/Release of Liability Form within 14 days of attempted delivery of same. Noncompliance within this time period will result in disqualification and forfeiture of each prize. The winner will be notified by mail sometime after MAY 15TH, 2001. One entry per person. Late, lost, misdirected, illegible, or mutilated entries will not be eligible. No substitution or transfer of prize permitted, unless prize is generally unavailable at sweepstakes' end, in which case a prize of comparable or greater value will be substituted. All federal, state and local taxes are the sole responsibility of winner. Acceptance of prize offered constitutes permission to use winner's name for advertising/trade purposes without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MAY 15TH, 2001, with the winners being announced on or around June 1st, 2001. The drawing will be held and the entries will be judged by Sega of America, Dreamcast Inc. Judges decisions are final. By entering this contest, you agree that Electronic Gaming Monthly, Ziff Davis, and the other contest sponsors may use your name and information for promotional purposes without further payment. All prizes will be awarded and no minimum number of entries is required. Prizes won by minors will be awarded to their parents or legal guardians. Neither Sega of America nor Ziff Davis is not responsible for damages or expenses that the winners might incur as a result of receipt of the prize, and winners are responsible for income taxes based on the value of the prize received. If, for any reason (including infection by computer virus, bugs, tampering, unauthorized intervention, fraud, technical failures, or any other cause beyond the control of Sponsor which corrupts or affects the administration, security, fairness, integrity or proper conduct of this contest), the online portion of the contest is not capable of being conducted as described in these rules, Sponsor shall have the right, at its sole discretion, to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the sweepstakes. Winner assumes liability for injuries caused or claimed to be caused by participation in this sweepstakes or the use or misuse of any prize. A list of winners may also be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to P.O. Box 7639, San Francisco, CA 94120-7639. This contest is limited to residents of the United States. No purchase necessary; void in Arizona, Maryland, Vermont, Puerto Rico, and where prohibited by law.

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www.sega.com

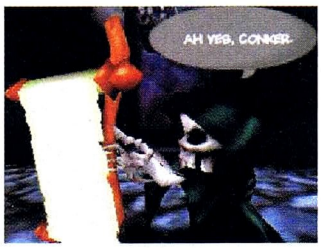
under the hood

Conker's Bad Fur Day

Publisher:	Nintendo
Developer:	Rare
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	100%
Release:	March 5
Also Try:	Banjo-Tooie
Web Address:	www.nintendo.com
The Good:	Insane humor, great graphics, fun gameplay.
The Bad:	The obscenities might not bring laughs to all.
And The Ugly:	The Great Mighty Poo. 'Nuff said.

This is your foe. Yup, take a close look at this milk-guzzling beast. He's going to make your life miserable.

The story of Bad Fur Day is exactly that: the tale of a single bad day. Conker starts the game drunk, but with your help he'll end it as king of all the land.



Death comes to us all, but for a squirrel named Conker, he comes in a slightly more humorous fashion. Oh, and he's named Gregg.

Conker is rude. He's crude. And he's starring in one of the must vulgar, shocking and disturbing console games ever. At least that's all you've probably heard about Conker's Bad Fur Day so far, but now that we've had the chance to sit down and get some serious playtime with Rare's rodent, we can tell you something else about the game too: It might also be one of the most visually impressive, intelligent and fun Nintendo 64 games yet.

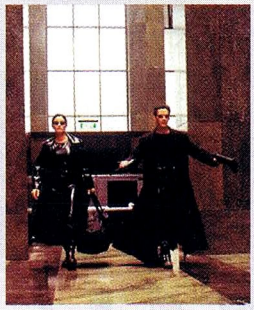
Conker has had a troublesome past: First announced at the same time as the original Banjo-Kazooie, Twelve Tales: Conker 64 was a keen-looking action/adventure game—the kind of cute platformer that Rare was becoming known for—featuring a squirrel with super-expressive facial animations. In the years since we've seen new release dates come and go, a few screenshots leaked here and there, and then nothing. New announcements from Rare about other games filtered out, but nothing about Conker. And in the jumble of Donkey Kong 64, Perfect Dark and Banjo-Tooie, it almost seemed like all we'd ever see of Conker was his minor appearance in Diddy Kong Racing and as the star of a children's Game Boy title. Then, a few months ago, Rare released a video of a new Conker—one full of blood, over-the-top violence and urination. This was certainly not the Conker we saw a few years ago.

Reaction was swift by both the media and Nintendo. Magazines either loved or hated this bold new move, but the actions by Nintendo were the most startling. Apparently unsure what to do with their new "bastard child," Nintendo seemed to show little interest or support, announcing they would make less than a half million copies of Conker—a small number relative to most Rare titles. Why? Maybe because, unlike other adult-oriented N64 games such as Perfect Dark, GoldenEye or Turok, which are mature games for mature people, Conker seems more like an immature game for mature people—one that could potentially appeal to kids as much as adults. A major problem, especially when you consider the close eye the government is keeping on the entertainment industry. To combat

MOVIE INFLUENCES APLENTY

Follow the white...squirrel?

Raise your hand if you don't like movies. Right, you're a liar. Conker is just packed with references to your favorite flicks—everything from *Reservoir Dogs* to *Saving Private Ryan* to *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Wizard of Oz* to...well, *The Matrix*, have been included for your playing pleasure.



He sings. He doesn't smell good. And he has corn for teeth. Behold one of the coolest bosses ever!

CONKER FOR THE LITTLE 'UNS

So, you're under 17 and still want to partake in the joys of Conker? Got a Game Boy Color? Well then, take a look at Conker's Pocket Tales, but don't expect any of the raunchy fun—or much fun at all. This is a kid's game, pure and simple, and not a very good one at that.

Even though Conker is filled with voice bubbles, it also features...voices! Nearly every character you run into speaks in an often humorous dialect, and you'll run into dozens upon dozens of chatty folks throughout your adventure.

this possibility, Nintendo is being careful to market Conker to an adult-only crowd; advertisements will appear in *Maxim* instead of *EGM*, commercials will play late night instead of Saturday morning, and the packaging will clearly state its intended audience. Which is really too bad, because this is a game anyone with an open mind could enjoy.

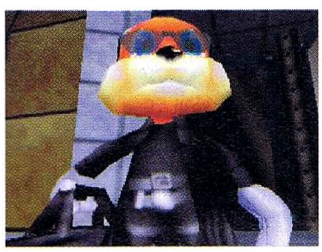
If you take out all the bad language, blood and that giant piece of singing poo, Conker is actually a very solid game—clever, incredibly well-designed, and one of the best-looking Nintendo 64 titles yet. Really. The levels are vast and beautiful, with an amazingly far draw distance. Near the beginning you cross a gaping canyon, and you can see so far down it's dizzying. But the environments aren't the only impressive aspect of the graphics; one of the big features touted in the original Conker was its unbelievable facial expressions, something that has carried over to Bad Fur Day. He smiles when happy and rolls his eyes when pissed. The emotion on Conker is amazingly realistic.

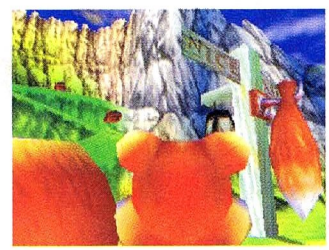
Gameplay-wise, Conker is thankfully not just a scavenger hunt like many of Rare's other cartoon platformers. In fact, Conker is a far cry from what you'd expect from Rare, in other ways than just the vulgar content. You do have to collect chocolate pieces (for life, of course) and money (which, naturally, is alive and calls you a greedy bastard, not to mention allows you to buy new moves and bribe characters to open new areas), but aside from that you'll be exploring huge worlds and trying to figure out how to pass puzzling obstacles. While most levels can be accessed from the first stage, there's not a central hub in the traditional sense—you'll just kind of run into new areas after completing events.

Controls, however, are what you'd expect from a Rare platformer, with the addition of an "action button." When prompted (by a light bulb appearing over Conker's head), hitting the A button performs any of a number of different special actions—such as jumping in slow motion in the *Matrix*-inspired sequence shown below. It's just like the button in Zelda, changing according to the situation.

The silly part though, is the exact thing that will hurt Conker's sales is also its greatest asset: humor. We've seen it in games before, but never like this. The amount of movie references, British jargon and in-jokes is almost staggering. It will take a hard, hard man to make it through this game without cracking a smile, and those with a keen eye will notice the little things, like Banjo's stuffed head on the wall of the bar or the Kazooie umbrella.

There was a time when we were a bit worried that Conker's Bad Fur Day might just be a mediocre game that relied on its "shock value" alone, but after some quality playtime, we're happy to report that's not the case. Get your fake IDs ready—one of the last, great N64 games is almost here.

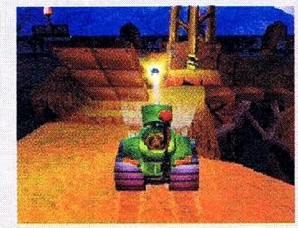




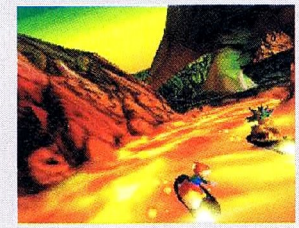
ANGER YOUR FRIENDS

Multiplayer Madness

Whenever you find a new Rare N64 game, chances are it'll include a multiplayer game or two—Perfect Dark, Banjo Tooie, Donkey Kong 64, etc. But with Conker, Rare went totally nuts and included a whole mess of mini-games, everything from racing to straight deathmatch. Here's a small sample of what's in store:

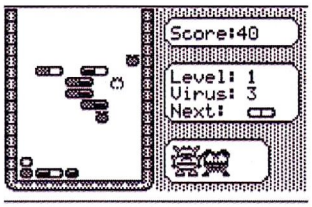


Tank: Take control of large army vehicles and blast the crap out of your foes.



Race: Two players dash for the finish line—Diddy Kong eat your heart out.

Deathmatch: Not much needs to be said here. Kill or be killed. Have at them!



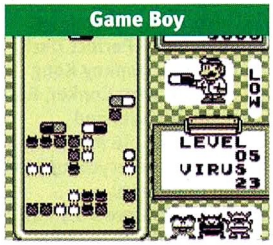
PLAY AT SCHOOL

If you're a lucky enough student to have a TI-89 graphing calculator, you can download a version of Dr. Mario for it. Just make sure you pretend like you're really graphing out those math problems. Dr. Mario and other games for the TI-89 can be found at: http://www.ticalc.org/pub/89/asm/games/

Dr. Mario 64

First **Nintendo** revives Tetris Attack as Pokémon Puzzle League, and now Dr. Mario returns to the N64 on **April 9,** for an attractive, under $30 price. It looks pretty much like the same old game we've seen thrice before (see below), outside of a new four-player mode. The idea is simple: Put the right color pill on top of the same color virus to make it disappear. The higher the level, the more viruses you have to clear.

Game Boy



NES

Super NES

The original Dr. Mario for Game Boy got mixed scores from the Review Crew—a four (from Steve), two sixes (from Ed and Martin) and a seven from Sushi-X. It's gone on to be a NES game and on a SNES cartridge along with another classic puzzle game, Tetris.

PlayStation®2

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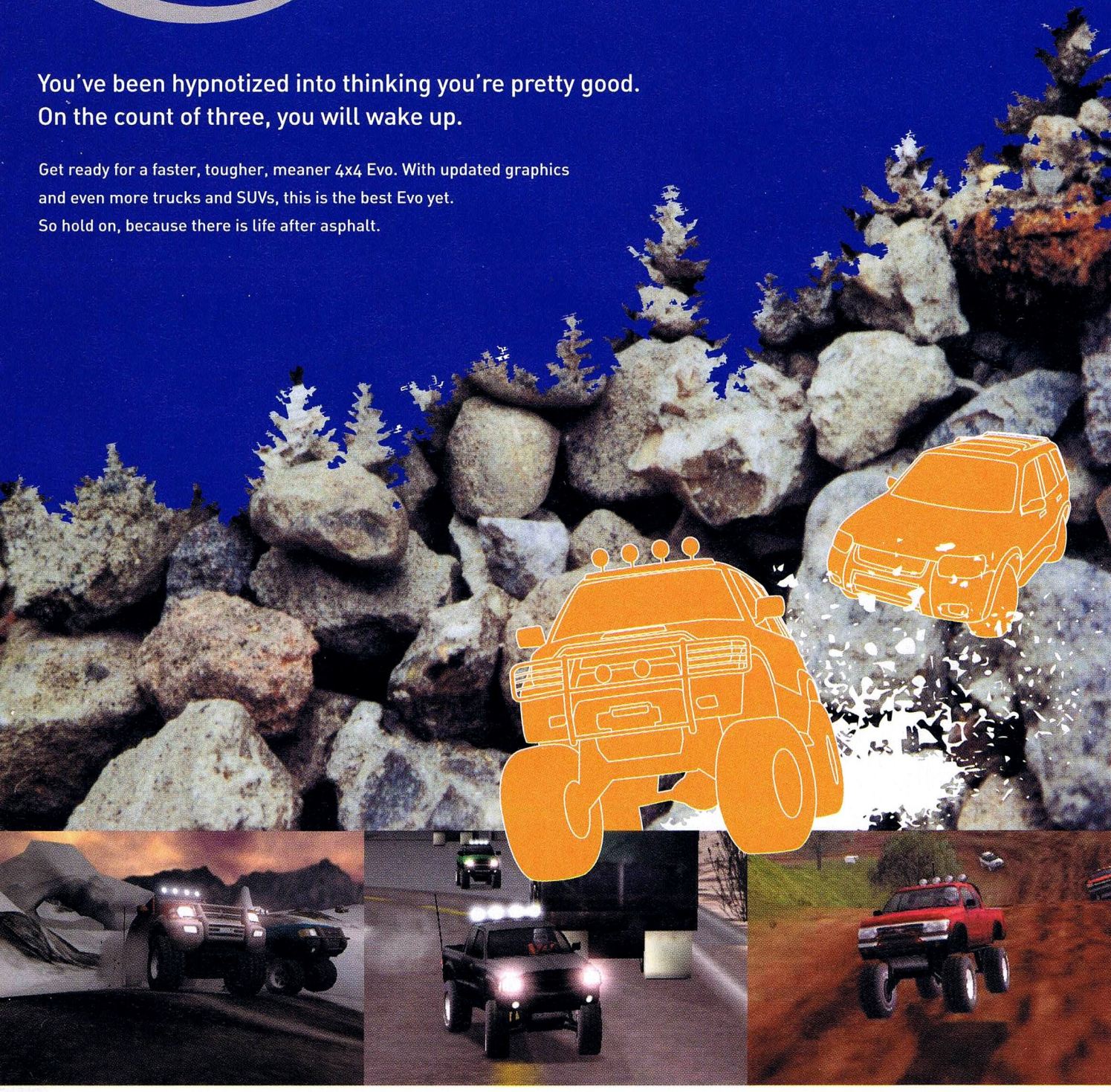

ALL THE TOP SUVS AND TRUCKS FROM LEADING MANUFACTURERS TO CUSTOMIZE • 15 MERCILESS OFF-ROAD COURSES, EACH WITH THEIR OWN ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT, MUSIC SCORE AND DIFFICULTY • GO ANYWHERE GAMEPLAY — NO PREDETERMINED TRACK • ACCURATE PHYSICS, PHOTO-REALISTIC GRAPHICS, AND UNFORGIVING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Developed by TERMINAL REALITY™

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A magical new adventure takes off on PlayStation®. The evil sorceress, Nasira, has returned to Agrabah, seeking revenge for her brother, Jafar. Join Aladdin and friends in a frantic battle between good and evil. Run and swing your way through mystical landscapes. Ride The Magic Carpet across the Cave of Wonders. Treasure hunts, puzzles and mystical challenges await you. Need directions to this enchanting world? Just follow your imagination.

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Disney Interactive

PlayStation

PS2

PREVIEW

Half-Life

50+

HIGHER PRAISE

More than 50 PC game publications rated Half-Life PC game of the year in 1998.

Publisher:	Sierra
Developer:	Gearbox Studios
Players:	1-4
Genre:	First-person Shooter
% Done:	80%
Release:	Summer
Also On:	Dreamcast
Web Address:	www.sierra.com

The Good: One of the most highly rated PC titles of all time makes its way to a console.

The Bad: There's no word about online play yet.

And The Ugly: The puss these aliens spurt out after being shot–eeew!

Gearbox states that much PC code was ported to the PS2, but the team has written new rendering code to leverage the system's strengths.

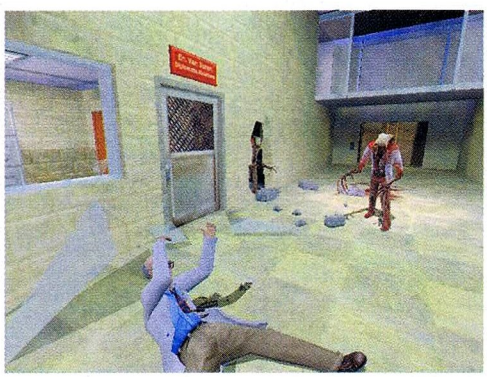
Half-Life's story revolves around an experiment gone wrong at an underground lab in New Mexico.

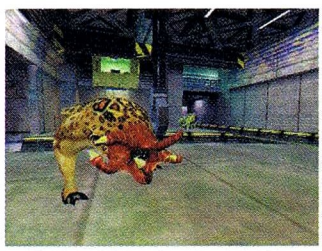
Let's face it, crappy ports of PC games are just about the last thing any console gamer wants to see. Yeah, sure, it can be nice to check out PC titles you might've missed out on before, but if the port isn't good, most of the time it's not even worth bothering. The folks at Sierra know this and are taking the necessary steps to ensure that the PS2 version of Half-Life will be every bit engrossing as the PC original. They've given the project a healthy development cycle (over a year) and placed it in the hands of a talented crew (Gearbox Studios, made up by members who have previously worked on such titles as Duke Nukem 3D and Quake). What's more, the company is allowing Gearbox to develop a new multiplayer game that will take place within the Half-Life universe.

"Since it's being designed with the PS2 in mind, the new content and gameplay is focused on the experience people will have on the console," says Randy Pitchford, Gearbox co-owner. "The game design encourages people to get together in the living room and really enjoy the Half-Life type of quality experience as a team." Huge first-person shooter fans, Gearbox team members intend to deliver a split-screen multiplayer experience that rivals stuff we've seen from outfits like Rare.

As for how Half-Life translates onto a console, Pitchford is very optimistic, especially in the area of control. "I like the PS2 controller a lot. It's a nice combination of comfort and utility. My fingers always seem to be able to find the keys I want and none of the buttons and sticks feel cramped or out of the way." He proves this with an example: "Long before we even started real work on the project, one of our designers rigged a couple of Dual Shock controllers to work on the PC and used it to play against the rest of us in multiplayer games. The surprising thing was that right away, it was fun."

Rated with topnotch scores by possibly every PC game publication on the planet, Pitchford knows that he's sitting on a potential PS2 hit. "Nothing I could say could promote the Half-Life experience as well as what's been said by the people who have gone through it." He couldn't be more right.





BETTER DETAIL

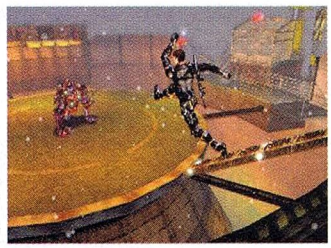
PS2 Style

Thanks to the power of Sony's new platform, Gearbox has gone back and added in more detail to a lot of the characters and backgrounds. "Aside from the dramatically increased polygonal detail, the characters now feature fully articulated hands and fingers and articulated facial features through which they can express emotions like fear and anger," Pitchford explains. He goes on about a particular scenario. "It's really intense to finally see a scientist who is expressing relief get quickly overcome with a look of fear and horror when he realizes that he's probably not going to make it." That's what we love, to witness terror in the eyes of the doomed.

RINGS OF RED

Guess what this planet is, kids. Nope, not Saturn, that burned out a few years back. It's Jupiter! Unlike Saturn's icy satellites, Jupiter's rings are believed to be comprised of dust, most likely created when Space Pirate ships collided with its many moons. The lesson here is never mess with Space Pirates, boys and girls.

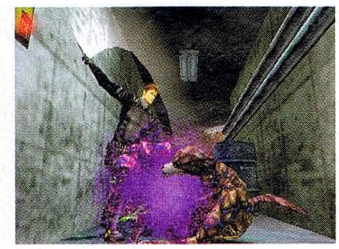
Extermination

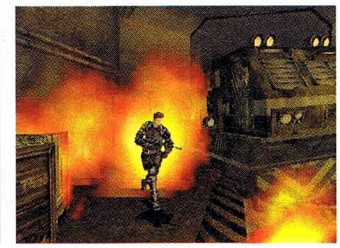


With interest in survival-horror games at an all-time high, Sony now enters with its take on the genre. Developed by **Deep Space**, a joint effort between **Sony** and **Woopee Camp** (Tomba!), Extermination looks to mix traditional survival-horror elements with more action and a movie-like plot.

The game takes place in the year 2005. A special U.S. reconnaissance team is called to a facility based on the South Pole to investigate a state of emergency. Unfortunately, their transport inexplicably explodes just before they reach the facility. All but two of the team members—Dennis Reiley and Roger Griggman—die in the accident. The two survivors eventually make their way to the base and enter through a ventilation duct, but they soon find that they might have been better off dying in the crash—the base has been overrun with nefarious mutant creatures.

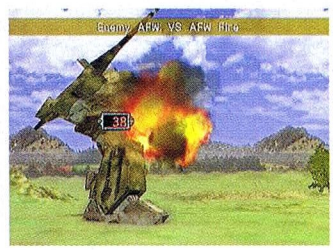
Producer Tokuro Fujiwara (Resident Evil) states that his goal for the game is to make it feel like you're controlling an action movie. His experiment hits **Japan in March** and should make it stateside this **summer**.





Ring of Red

Despite being a decade-old game on a very dead console, Military Madness seems to still be influencing strategy games today. **Konami**'s latest plays a lot like that old favorite, but with more interactive combat and an extensive story line. Battles take place on a field with terrain effects, fought between armored mechs and troops whose skills evolve over time. RoR looks great, and it's all set for a **March** release.



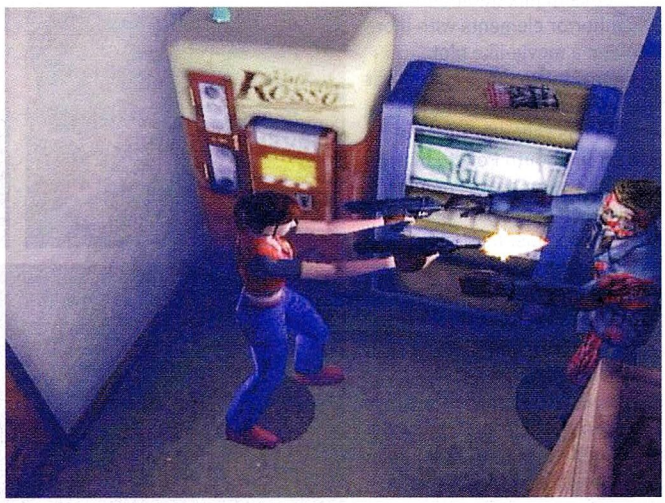
BONE JARRING

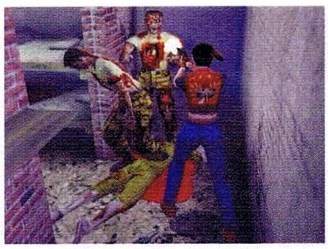
Officials are reviving Skeleton racing for the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City. It's basically Luge, but riders hurtle down the icy courses at around 80 mph...head-first. Skeleton hasn't been an Olympic event for 54 years. Gee, wonder why.

Resident Evil Code: Veronica X

Sega fanboys have one less Dreamcast-exclusive game to taunt PS2 owners about come this **May.** That's right, **Capcom**'s latest (if you don't count RE Survivor, and we don't) and arguably greatest sequel in the Resident Evil "survival-horror" adventure series is on its way to Sony's big black box this summer.

So why the added "X" in the title? 'Cause it's not a straight port—more like a Director's Cut. Added goodies include nearly 10 minutes of new footage (mostly cutscenes involving the villain Wesker; Wesker meeting Claire, more of Wesker fighting with Chris, etc.) and other new features still under wraps. Maybe the in-game first-person view cut from the DC version? Super-obsessive RE freaks (like us) will also notice that even Steve's hairstyle has been altered (our guess: Capcom got a call from DiCaprio's lawyers). But the best new addition would have to be the playable demo of RE creator Shinji Mikami's next title, Devil May Cry, that will come with REC: VX in Japan, and hopefully here too.



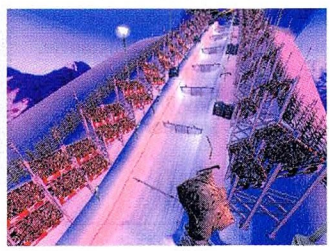


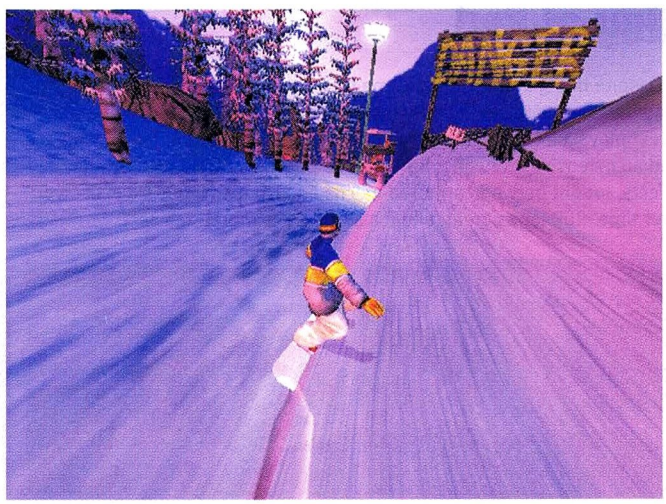
SSX: DVD

You guessed it, this isn't really a sequel. It's more of a Director's Cut. Featuring evolved tracks, music and some scripted elements, SSX: DVD will iron out the problems of the first game and go for more character development this time around.

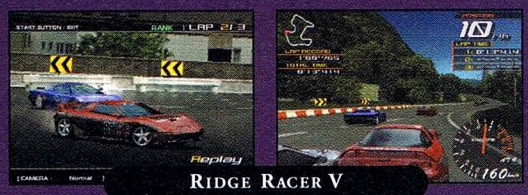
EA Big realized that some of the tracks in SSX were too difficult too soon. Case in point: The panes of glass on the Elysium Alps course. Most people didn't get that you had to slalom that section to get by. But everything will change for a reason. "We want to provide a sense of time," says Producer Larry LaPierre, "A sense that we're returning to the same locations maybe a year later." Of course, that means old areas may be cut off while new areas will open up.

Something else EA wants to do with this **fall** release is develop some rivalries between the characters. Since they feel the characters in SSX will come to identify the Big brand, some long-standing ill will between certain boarders should add longevity to this excellent series.





TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT



RIDGE RACER V

MOTO GP

Look within. Find that part of you which knows no surrender. Because Namco has issued the greatest challenges for the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system. Whether it's the furious Tekken Tag Tournament, the flat-out Ridge Racer V, or the heart-pounding MotoGP, victory won't come easily — if at all. But when you finally seize it, you will discover your inner champion.

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FINALIST EDM 2000 GAMERS' CHOICE AWARD

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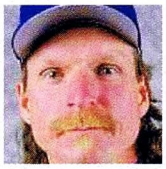
PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY



UNPRECEDENTED REALISM

Acclaim Studios knows what kind of realism baseball fans are looking for, and they plan on delivering video gaming's first fully rendered 3D mullet in a sports game. We're not talking about a simple texture slapped on the back of a head—we're talking about Randy Johnson with a fully polygonal mullet made possible by the power of the PS2.

Le Mans 24 Hours

No, this is not exactly the same game released under the Test Drive label last year. **Infogrames** has made a variety of changes and upgrades to be sure that PlayStation 2 owners get their money's worth this **summer**. Developed by **Melbourne House** (the guys who did the DC version), Le Mans 24 Hours will feature over 70 licensed cars, 30 of which are the new 2000 models that weren't featured in the earlier game. Players will also be able to race on Road America in the U.S., experience the 2000 24 Heures du Mans race, and play with their car settings in even more ways.

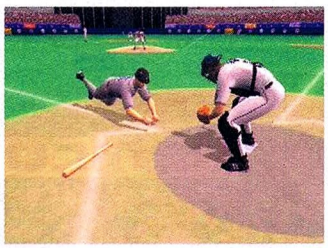
What's more, the drivers in each car will now be animated, as will the pit crews. Melbourne is reportedly tweaking the AI for opposing drivers to make the game even more challenging. Finally, as you can tell from the title, Infogrames has decided to drop the Test Drive name from this sequel. We feel that's probably a good idea, since the franchise's reputation is spotty at best.

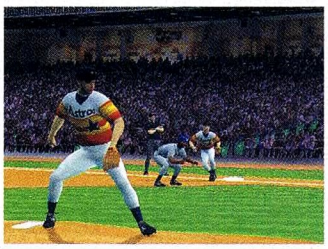
Motor Mayhem

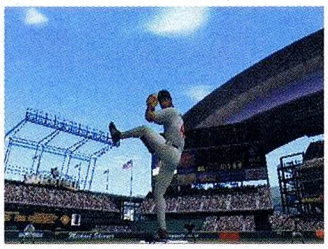
Twisted Metal Black may have some competition this **summer** when **Infogrames** unleashes its vehicular combat title, Motor Mayhem. **Beyond Games** is placing a lot more emphasis on the characters behind the wheel, allowing you to clearly see and perform moves with the driver himself. Racing-style tracks and controls add a cool new dimension to the competition—MM just may raise the bar on this genre.

All-Star Baseball 2002

Acclaim has been working on this one for almost two years and the results are evident on the playing field. The unfinished version we played was a few months from completion (due out in **April**), but already boasted over 5,000 polygons per player (rendered to weight and height) and animated with over 100 batting stances. The realistic stadiums are impressive: Pitchers warm up in the bullpen, scoreboards update in real time, the crowd animates, and almost every nook and cranny in the ballparks have precise collision detection, making for wicked ball bounces. This didn't appear to tax the game engine either, as almost everything moved briskly. In fact, the developers are adamant on having the action move at a silky-smooth 60 frames-per-second—something they think rival baseball titles will never reach. For hardcore fans, the gameplay is being infused with deep "PC-like" stats and number-crunching that games such as Tony LaRussa Baseball had. Hopefully this marriage creates a great sim that's also fun to play.







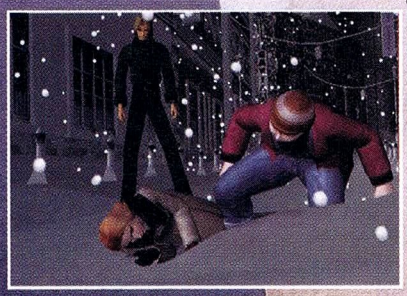
Registration Number 15724

Certified Entry of Death

Location of Death:	Lebensbaum, Germany
Name:	Your name here
Sex:	Male
Age:	Your age
Occupation:	Gamer
Cause of Death:	Murder
Coroner's Notes:	Victim found in the streets, lying in a pool of blood. He must now travel back in time across five different centuries to pursue his murderer and alter the course of events that led to his demise.

DA 210567

Certified to be a true copy of an entry of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned. Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, LEBENSBAUM, GERMANY, under the Seal of the said Office, the 6th day of June 2001



Shadow of Destiny™

PlayStation®2

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB — Animated Violence

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PS2

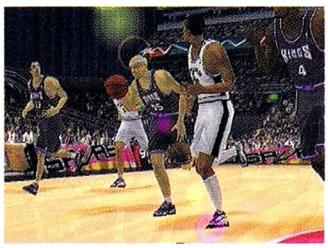
PREVIEW GALLERY

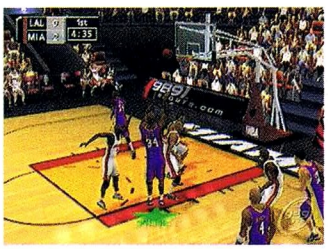
BETTER LATE THAN...

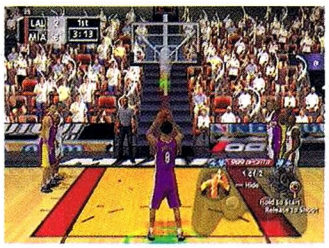
To some, EA entering the action-sports fray comes as no surprise. Ever since Acclaim lit up the 16-bit sales charts with NBA Jam, they've been hankering to get into the genre. As early as 1996 they considered rolling out an entire lineup of the games (including baseball, hockey and basketball) on the Genesis, but scrapped it because the games were horrible and the 16-bit market hit rock-bottom. Oh, and other cross-genre games such as Shaq-Fu (pictured) and Michael Jordan and the Windy City didn't help either.

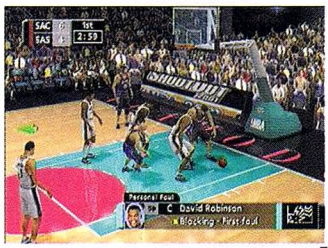
NBA ShootOut 2001

Due in **February**, this is the first game with **989 Sports'** new engine under the hood, and the results are promising. The tight, responsive controls are most noticeable, but the player animations (great running jumpers and fadeaways) and a unique free-throw meter are also cool. It is surprising that the series' signature Create-a-Dunk is absent, but it's hard to argue with getting the fundamentals squared away first.



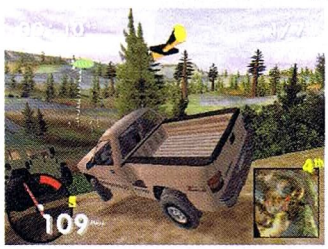


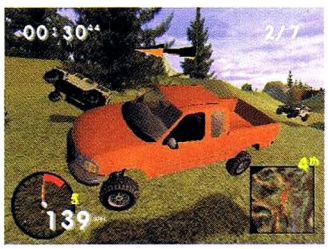




Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open

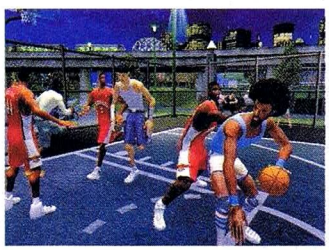
Infogrames poaches the excellent Smuggler's Run engine (dialed-in for racing and enhanced for your pleasure) as **Angel Studios** brings you what could be the defining specimen of the off-road genre. Featuring Hummers, Dodge Ram 2500s, Ford Broncos and Jeep Wranglers, this is an off-road enthusiast's wet dream. Plow through the Moab, Yosemite and the Big Island of Hawaii in this dirt-tracker. The game features fluid control, the vehicles are highly customizable, there are tons of shortcuts, and terrain plays a big role in how you race. Get ready for some truly rockin' muddy fun when the game ships this **June**.

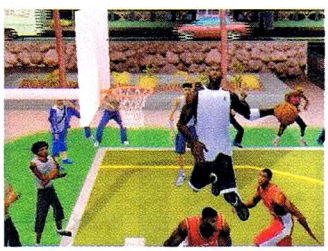


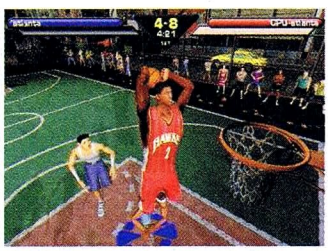


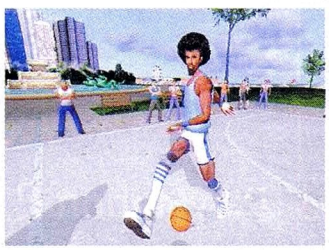
NBA Street

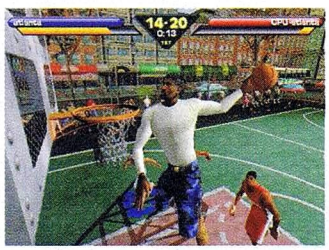
While Midway's Hoopz series brings streetball to the NBA, **EA Big** is bringing NBA players to the street (literally) in **April**. Your goal in this three-on-three game is to tour the States and dominate the asphalt (such as the infamously tough Harlem Rucker Park) with a mix of streetballers and NBA stars, including M.J. If you win, they join you, if not, you gotta hone your roughhouse defense and shoulder-charging drives until you do.

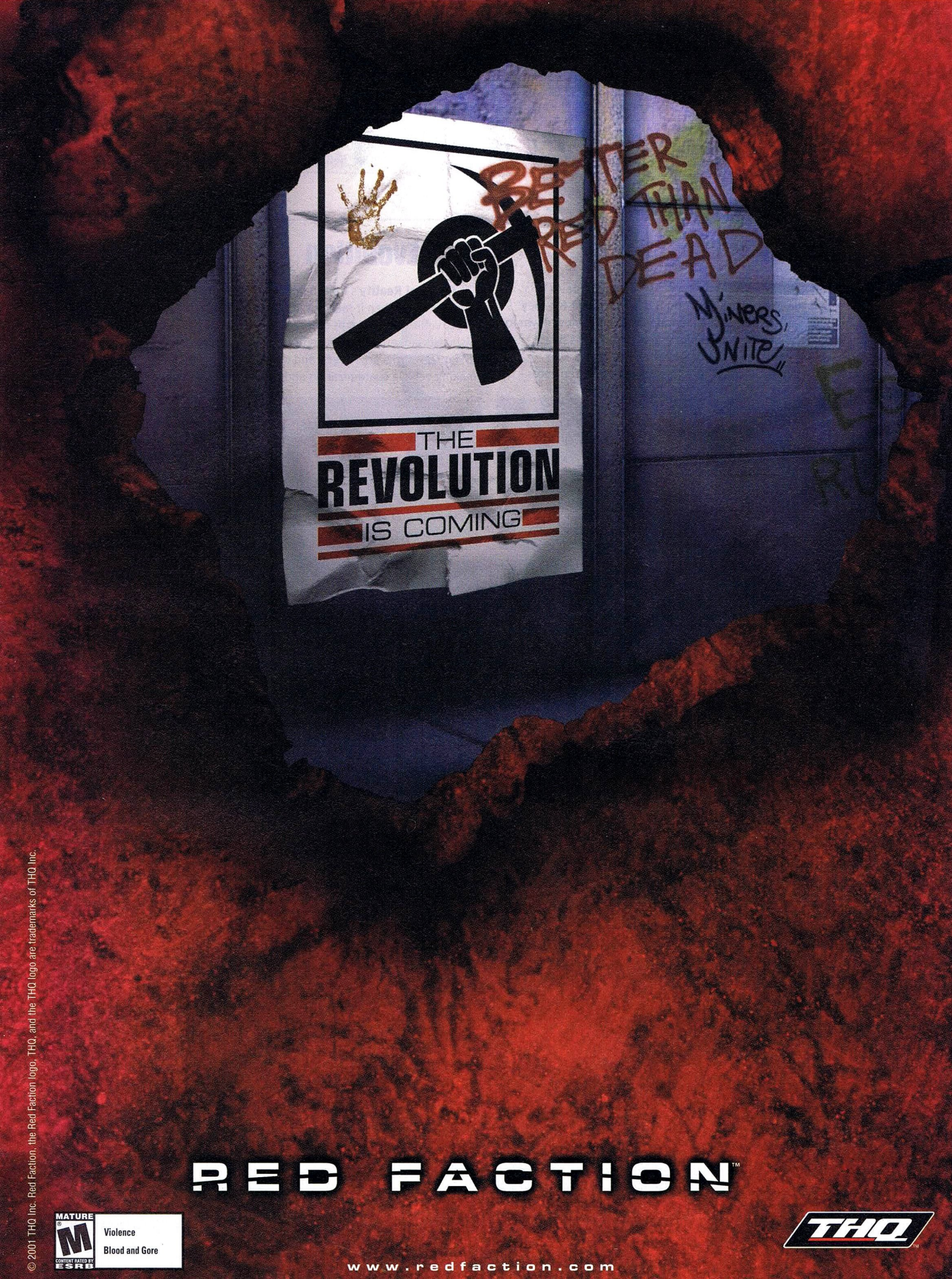












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PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY

Cough, wheeze!

RUN LIKE HELL, KIDS!

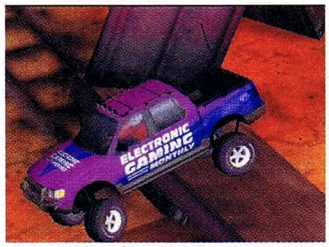
Aliens trying to eat your brain is a pretty crappy fate in life, but so is cystic fibrosis. If you live in the Pennsylvania area you should put the PS controller down, get off your butts, and check out the annual Run Like Hell marathon they hold every year.
http://www.realpittsburgh.com/community/groups/cff/Run_Like_Hell_5K.html

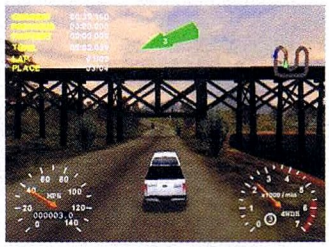
Run Like Hell

A mix of *The Thing* and *Aliens*—that's what **Interplay** hopes it's achieved with Run Like Hell. Featuring top-flight voice talent (so they say), the game focuses on Captain Nick Conner, who can't slow down for a second, lest one of the rather intelligent aliens slice off his head. Featuring 3D environments, cinematic camera angles, and seven grueling chapters, your **springtime** should be a horror-filled place.

4X4 Evolution

Terminal Reality's free-roaming racer could be the SUV equivalent of Gran Turismo when it rolls out in **March.** You can drive more than 100 utility vehicles from eight different manufacturers (Chevy, Ford, Mitsubishi, Nissan, etc.) and abuse them on 15 courses. Don't expect a Sunday drive: The tracks are rugged and can be muddy, wet, snowy or dusty, making vehicle customization and upgrades key to keeping the pace.





MTV Music Generator 2.0

Whether you're a tone-deaf half-wit or a seasoned studio pro, you'll have a blast with this second installment of **Codemasters'** music-maker, which hits in **April.** The closest thing yet to a sound-design workstation for a game console, 2.0 lets you sample your own sound clips for use in huge 48-track mixes. The clean, basic interface makes it easy to track like a pro, so go ahead and lay down them phat beats, yo. Um, yeah.

Monster Rancher 3

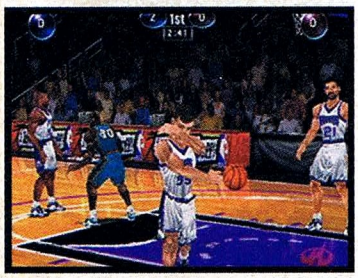
The third installment in **Tecmo**'s CD-swappin' monster battle game lands on the PS2 this **July.** Judging by these early screens, they're going for the cel-shaded look. Suezo, Mocchi and all your favorite characters are back for more and we wouldn't be surprised if there are some new faces along for the ride. The method for creating monsters is unknown right now—maybe you'll be able to use DVDs?

THE RESULTS DON'T SHOW UP ON A SCOREBOARD.

TRY THE RICHTER SCALE.

90° 85° 80° 75° 70° 65°

3-ON-3



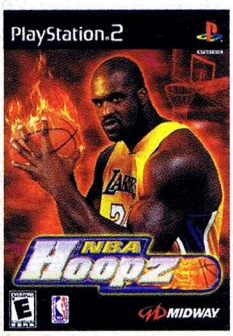
Torment friends with our revolutionary new savable instant replay feature.

Get skillz playing in mini-games like Hoopz Practice and 2ball.

We motion captured Shaq-Diesel's MVP moves for your rim-rattling pleasure.

Use the new Hoopz button to make sure the rock will end up in your hands.

The only dedicated 3-on-3 EXTREME-STYLE BASKETBALL GAME this season.



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PS2

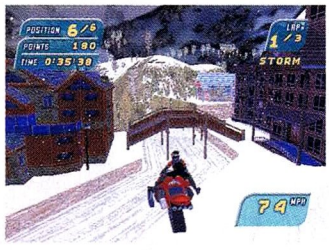
PREVIEW GALLERY

WINTER WIZARDS

EA Canada is *the* hot developer when it comes to winter sports. Their successes include the killer NHL Hockey series, SSX, SSX: DVD (in progress), Sled Storm and now Sled Storm 2.

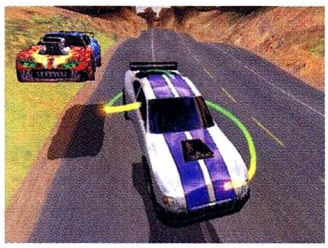
Sled Storm 2

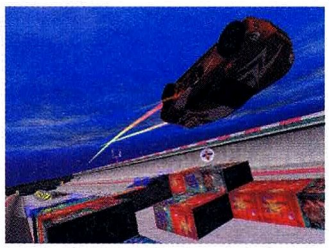
It's still early but we couldn't wait to show you how **EA Canada**'s SS2 is shaping up. The philosophy behind the **fall** release sequel is simple: "Go anywhere, smash anything." All the environments sport multiple shortcuts, secret areas and loads of stuff to destroy (including entire buildings). The fun doesn't stop there. Mingling too roughly with AI sleds results in impressive sled-flipping, smoke-belching, debris-chucking crack-ups. Riders don't stay stationary either—they're thrown as far as the crash dictates. More tricks, improved snow effects and better night lighting are on tap as well. We can't wait to get our hands on this one.

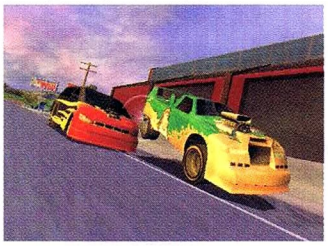


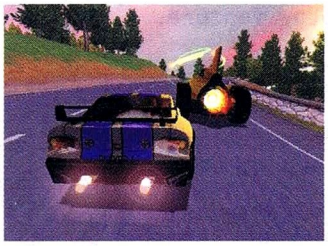
Rumble Racing

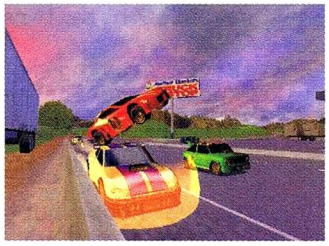
Lots of muscle cars, plenty of tracks, plus power-ups like shields and bombs—this is NASCAR Rumble for the PS2 sans license. New to the series is a collection of stunt tracks and commentary by Jess Harnell (voice of Wacko from *Animaniacs*). If this upgrade plays anything like the original, expect a lot of insanity on the track this **summer** from **Electronic Arts**.

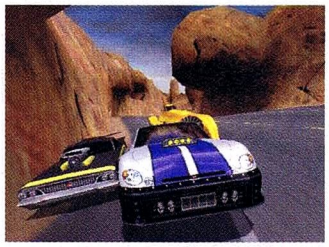








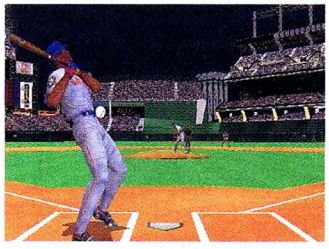


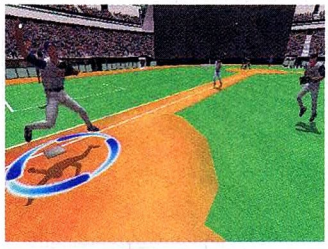


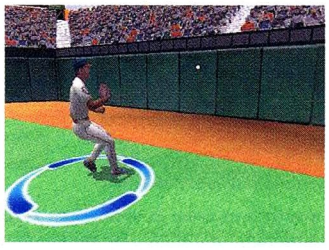
High Heat Baseball 2002

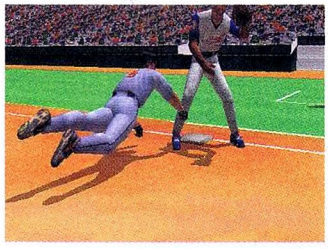
High Heat on PlayStation was a huge disappointment visually, especially considering its award-winning PC credentials. But don't expect the rag-tag graphics to hold it back any longer. On the PS2, **3DO**'s latest baseball incarnation is gunning for the big boys. First off, know that Slammin' Sammy Sosa ("It's so reeeeal!") isn't the cover boy this season. They've gone with Montreal Expos' five-tool superstud Vladimir Guerrero who actually uses the game, according to a *Sports Illustrated* article, to scout opposing pitchers. That definitely speaks to the realism. Other promising notes: Expect mapped faces from the biggest stars (think Nomar, Jeter, ARod, Big Mac, Sammy), and every MLB stadium in full detail, including Milwaukee's new Miller Park and Pittsburgh's throwback beauty, PNC Park.

Probably the sweetest part of HH2002 is the attention the rosters are getting. Every trade up until training camp will be accounted for, and expect the minor-league standouts to be good enough to call up from Triple A. This one has all the promise of Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki. Look for it in **April**.









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PREVIEW

Time Crisis: Project Titan

Publisher:	Namco
Developer:	Namco
Players:	1
Genre:	Shooting
% Done:	90%
Release:	May
Also Try:	Point Blank
Web Address:	www.namco.com
The Good:	Time to dust off the ol' GunCon!
The Bad:	No two-player love.
And The Ugly:	12 dozen freaks after a good cappin'.

You should never have sent the meatloaf back to the kitchen.

In certain countries it's a crime to wear Hawaiian shirts. Show the clown on the right the grave error of his ways. Bang bang!

POP SHOTS

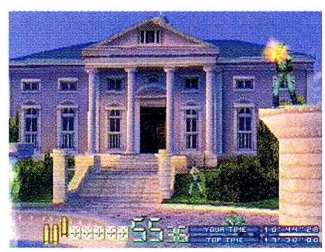
Safety?

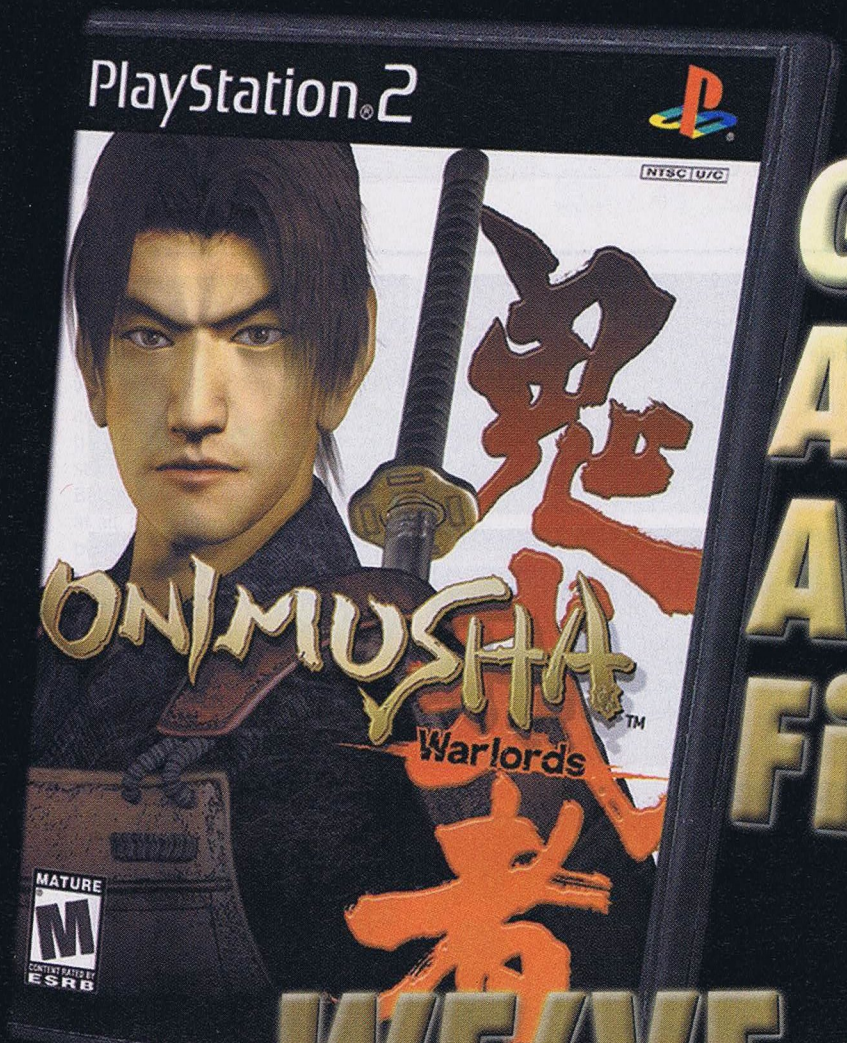
You're all stoked for Time Crisis: Project Titan, because shooting balloons isn't your cup of tea. The problem is you don't have any of the older GunCon games, and therefore you don't have a GunCon. You silly wabbit, it's your lucky day! Your prayers have been answered, because good ol' Uncle Namco will be bundling the GunCon along with Time Crisis: Project Titan *and* Point Blank 3. So, whatever your tastes in shooting games are, you won't be left out in the cold. Thankfully, for the felony-conscious, the GunCon is a nice neutral gray color, for those numbnuts who would go and wave the damn thing at someone. Do everyone a favor and keep it connected to your PS one, OK?

It's been a few years since you last saved the world from total destruction, super-secret agent Richard Miller! Everything seems peaceful and dandy, when lo and behold, someone's assassinated the president of Caruba! Ironically, you have been framed for the murder. Oh, the humanity! Graciously, the super-secret agency you work for (N.A.M.C.O.?) has given you 48 hours to clear your name. Not a lot of time, but better than a firing squad, that's for sure. Fortunately, you have some clues, and they lead you to the mastermind behind this insidious plan, a not-so-nice woman named Kantaris, who is bent on destroying the world (naturally). The super-secret plan you systematically uncover is code-named Project Titan. As with the previous Time Crisis episode, your goal is to accurately cap-cap-cap the bad guys, using the duck/reload button on the side of the GunCon to avoid catching a hot one to the cranium. This time around, there is a "multi-angle-attack" you can use to hit the bad boys where it hurts, namely, the knee, head, arms, chest, family jewels or shoulder. As with the previous episode, accuracy is a plus, with headshots making for one-hit kills.

Supplementing the gameplay are cutscenes which slowly unveil the story line, using the in-game engine in lieu of prerendered CG graphics. Besides the story mode, for those of you who have no need for silly little things like narrative and motivation, there's also a time-attack mode where you can test your skills against the clock. This *is* a time crisis after all. No rest for the wicked.

The only obvious downside to the game at this point is that it's a single player-only experience. This is kind of unfortunate, since they had worked a way around that with the arcade-only Time Crisis 2. However, to emulate that sort of gameplay would require two television sets and two PS ones, and we all know how likely that scenario is. Still, a link-cable option (just in case!) would have been neat. As it is, the four areas and 15 stages will have to suffice for all the super-secret junior agents out there. Time Crisis: Project Titan is due out this May, so now all we need Namco to do is port Crisis Zone to PS2! Hint, hint!





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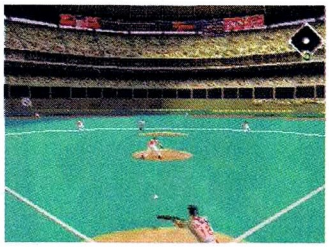
PREVIEW GALLERY

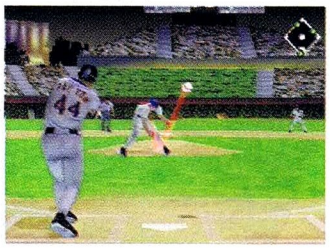
HOLY CHICK MAGNET BATMAN

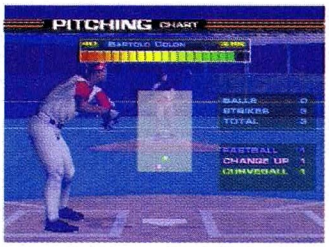
Sure, it's fun to speed around with the Batmobile in a video game, but what about in real life? Several companies are offering high-quality replicas of the "real" Batmobile (the swanky '60s one, of course) starting at the low, low price of $50,000. Grab a boy wonder and head over to: http://www.islandserve.com/~dc99/umcp3.htm

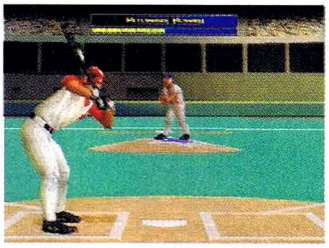
Triple Play Baseball 2002

As you probably guessed, not much has changed in the last Triple Play scheduled for the PS one. Outside of roster updates, a pitching strength meter, a strike zone map and a few other bells and whistles, it's the same as last year. Gameplay leans toward the arcade side with emphasis on towering home runs, missile sound effects and lots of unique camera shifts. Look for **EA Sports'** fan favorite in **March**.









Digimon World 2

Kiss those high-maintenance monsters goodbye and say hello to the potty-trained critters of **Bandai's** Digimon World 2. DW2 disposes of the tedious training aspects of the previous game and to focus more on the role-playing aspects. Command up to three of your favorite Digimon in your party for this fully 3D, turn-based adventure. Raise your rank and command more powerful digimon when DW2 ships this **spring**.

Batman: Gotham City Racer

The latest Batman game from **Ubi Soft** (it's *gotta* be better than the last one) is a mission-based driving title developed by **Sinister Games**. Based on the *New Adventures of Batman* cartoon, Gotham City Racer features all the villains you'd expect from the series, not to mention 24 actual clips from the TV show. Race as Batman in the normal mode, or just go cruisin' as a villain for fun. The two-player mode allows one person to take the role of the caped crusader (using the Batmobile or Batcycle), with the other playing one of the villains in his/her specialty car. Expect it this **May**.

ATTACK FROM HOLLYWOOD!

1942 was a bad year all around. Not only was that nasty war business going on, Hollywood was going crazy, making "hot" movies like *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Woman of the Year*. Yet another reason why peace must last!

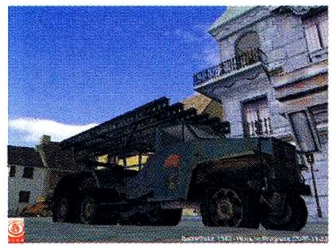
Battlefield 1942

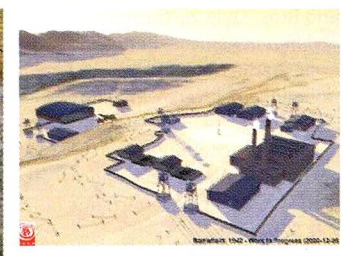
It's like Vigilante 8, but based in World War II, with way more advanced gameplay, and graphics that are nothing less than stunning. Well, OK. Perhaps Battlefield 1942 really isn't like V8 at all, other than the fact you can blast at each other with vehicles.

Developed in Sweden by **Digital Illusions** and set to be published in the states by **EA**, Battlefield 1942 puts you in just that, a battlefield. Players take control of dozens of WWII-era vehicles—everything from tanks to battleships to warplanes—enabling some epic-looking battles that span over land, sea and air.

While the vehicle-based combat gameplay is the focus, it's hard to ignore Battlefield's graphics. Everything's packed with detail, and the texture work is incredible.

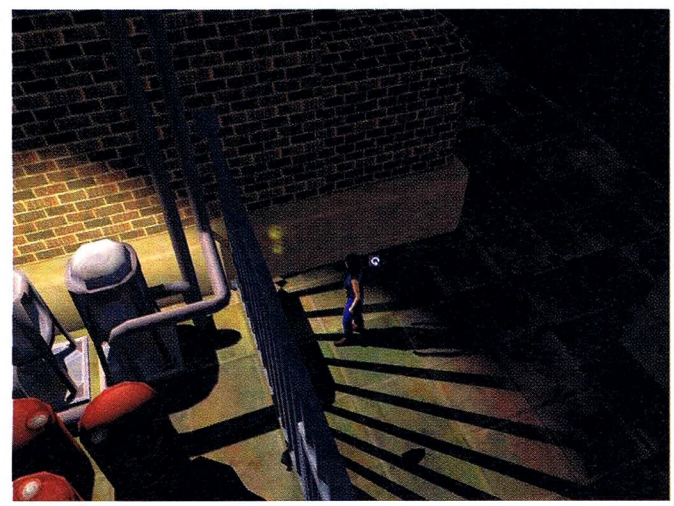
The coolest news is Battlefield 1942 will include not only a strong single-player experience, but also multiplayer modes in both the Xbox and PC releases (although it's unknown if both versions will be able to play against each other), which means you and a friend can re-create your favorite WWII battles from your couch as early as **later this year**.





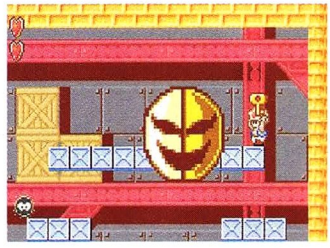
Project Dragonfly

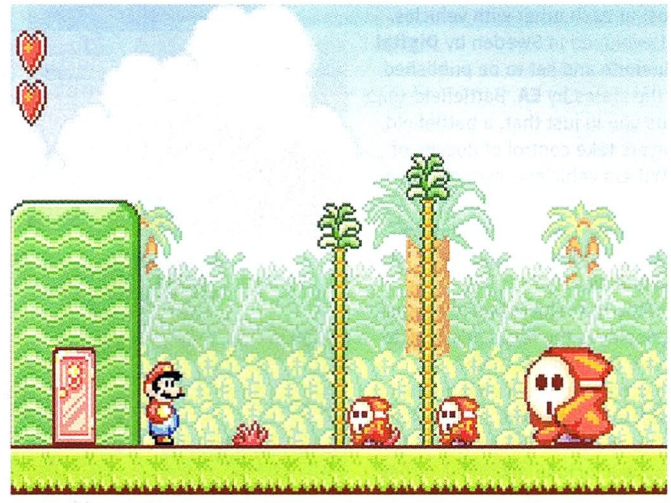
Designed as an action/RPG, Project Dragonfly is **Lost Boys Games'** first Xbox title, coming here thanks to **EA**. Sporting a very deep story line, Project Dragonfly is set in 2050, where a mysterious string of disappearances is taking place in southern England. Young women are vanishing nightly, usually on their walks home from bars and such, leaving no clues to what could have happened to them. Fear quickly takes over the towns in the southern English districts, and the locals can feel the presence of a great evil. You play Angel, a female member of a special-operations unit dispatched to uncover what's going on, and you quickly discover the kidnappings are only a prelude to a much greater threat, one that quickly turns you from the hunter into the hunted. Utilizing a combination of stealth and action, Project Dragonfly should fill the niche until Metal Gear Solid X hits Microsoft's machine (if it ever does). This game is still a ways off though; it's currently scheduled for **summer 2002**. Watch for more on this one soon.



Mario Advance

Whenever **Nintendo** launches new hardware, you can bet there's a Mario game to go with it, and Game Boy Advance will be no different. Mario Advance will launch with the system on **March 21 in Japan**, and if you're a longtime fan of the series, there's probably something very familiar about these screenshots. That's because Mario Advance is based on Super Mario Bros. 2 (known as Super Mario USA in Japan), with a few small tweaks and changes. For example, bigger Shyguys, giant POW blocks and scaling Phantos. It's also got a Mario Bros.-style Versus mode with two different games—Battle and Classic. Battle can be played by two or four linked players with only one copy of the game. For Classic mode, all players (one to four) need a copy of the game. Expect Mario Advance to be a GBA launch title in the **U.S. in June**.





Mario Kart Advance

Nintendo's Mario Kart Advance will surely make every gamer's list of must-have GBA games, even though there's no set release date (our fingers are crossed that it makes launch). Up to four players can pick from their favorite Mario characters and race head-to-head or challenge Battle mode. Tracks include Princess Peach's castle, a Ghost House and a desert track, among others (can't be a Mario Kart game without Rainbow Road!). A U.S. release shouldn't be far from launch.

Mr. Driller 2

The sequel to **Namco**'s addictive arcade puzzle game hits GBA at the system's **Japanese launch.** New special blocks give you new abilities like flipping the stack and turning sections 90 degrees.

Pinobee: Quest of Heart

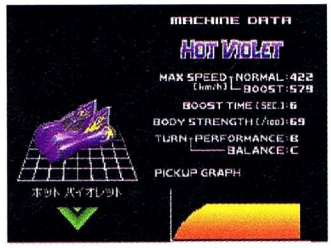
Artoon (formed from ex-Sonic Team members) produced this platformer starring a bee, for the **Japanese launch** from **Hudson.**

Fire Emblem

Nintendo's strategy RPG series Fire Emblem never came to the U.S., but it's mighty popular in Japan. This is a new version of the game, planned for release on GBA this **spring.**

F-Zero Advance

Set 25 years after the Super NES game, **Nintendo**'s F-Zero for GBA features new cars, tracks and a blistering four-player mode. Look for it at both the **Japanese and U.S. GBA launches**.



Tactics Ogre Gaiden

Developed by **Quest,** Tactics Ogre Gaiden is a strategy RPG to be published by **Nintendo this spring** in Japan (hopefully the U.S. too).

Monster Rancher Mania

Still early, **Tecmo**'s monster training and fighting game will be coming to the GBA this **summer.** Looks like a faithful translation of the PS game.

Magical Vacation

From new developers **Brownie Brown,** made up of ex-Square employees who previously worked on the Secret of Mana series, comes the action RPG Magical Vacation (to be published by **Nintendo**). After being attacked by monsters, three magic school students are transported to a different world called the Plain of Light. There they'll hone their magic skills while battling evil. It's due **this year in Japan**.

F14 Tomcat

Using scaling sprites instead of polygons for a 3D effect, **Majesco** plans to have Tomcat walk the fine line between fast-action arcade game and flight simulation—you might be dodging machine gunfire and missiles one minute, then have to pull off a realistic carrier landing the next (remember Top Gun for the NES?). One to four players can link up for co-op or head-to-head dogfighting when F14 ships this **fall**.

Fortres

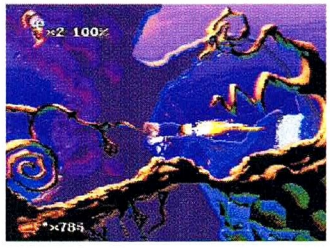
Welltris? Hatris? Forget about all those lame Tetris clones—**Majesco** is working on the first truly interesting take we've seen on the classic puzzler, in time for GBA **launch** (PC version shown here). One to three players each build a fortress from the same five Tetris pieces we all know and love, but can also place weapons to attack rivals' structures, and amass a small army to repair their castle or sabotage their enemies'.

Iridion 3-D

Majesco has teamed up with German development group **Shin'en** for one of their first Game Boy Advance **launch** games, and the results are looking wunderbar! Iridion harkens back to earlier shooters like Afterburner, with enemies, obstacles and bullets scaling into the screen, but also includes awesome effects (including the incredible pseudo-3D levels and bosses you see in the screens to the far right) and crisp graphics well beyond what you'd expect from a first-generation GBA title. The first level alone, which has your ship flying into a long hallway, looks better than anything we've ever seen on the Super Nintendo. What about Iridion's gameplay? Our brief hands-on experience left a good impression—control was smooth, with plenty of power-ups and different weapons.

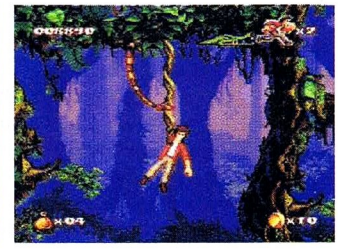
Earthworm Jim

As the Game Boy Color inherited a large number of 8-bit NES ports, it looks like the Game Boy Advance will be receiving plenty of old Super Nintendo favorites, starting off with this rerelease of Dave Perry's classic platformer. Although it's based on the SNES version, **Majesco** is trying to tweak Earthworm Jim GBA to play more like the Genesis game, which had slightly superior controls. Everything looks great so far, right down to the udder on the flying cow. Look for it at **launch**. Groovy!



Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

Another Super Nintendo title resurrected by **Majesco** for the Game Boy Advance **launch** this summer is one of the biggest names of video games past: Pitfall. The Mayan Adventure is a run-and-jump platformer, not too different from Pitfall Harry's humble roots on the Atari 2600—in fact, that ancient classic was included in the 16-bit version as a hidden bonus. New for the GBA is a tic-tac-toe-style mini-game.



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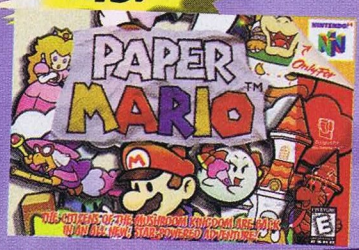

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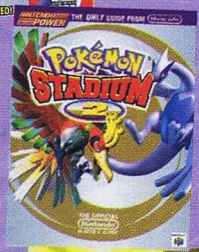

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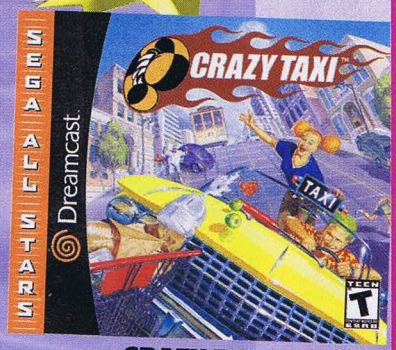

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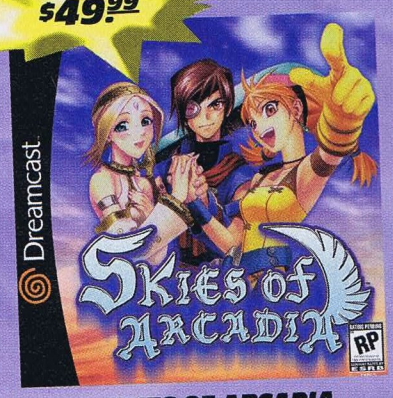

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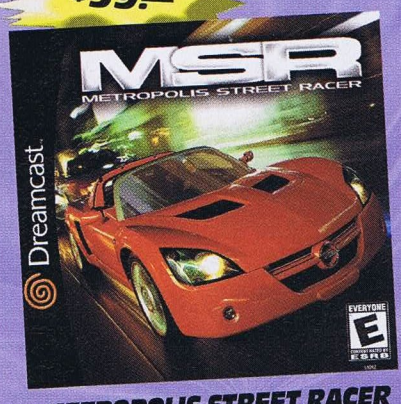

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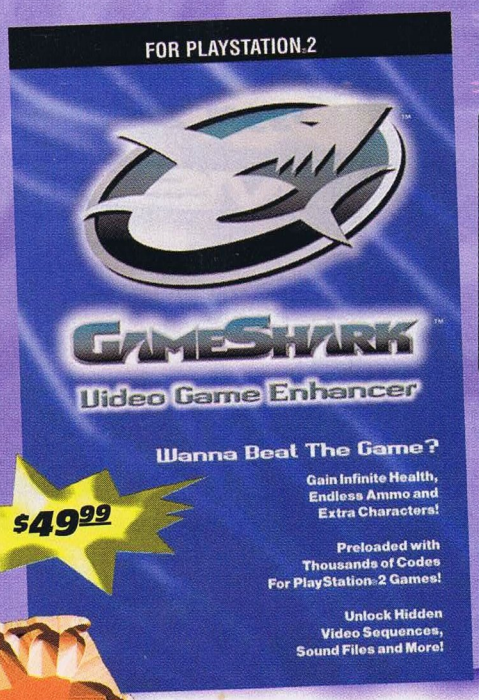

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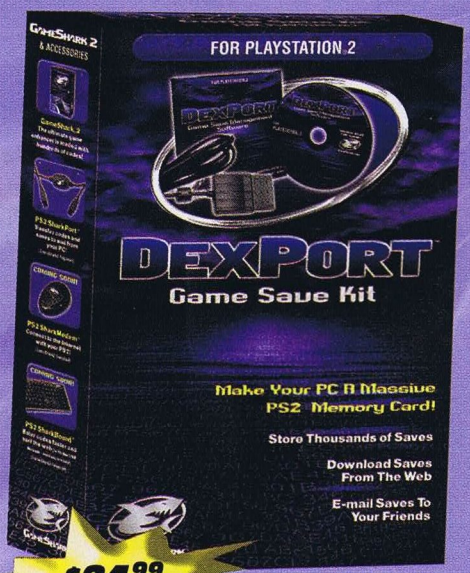

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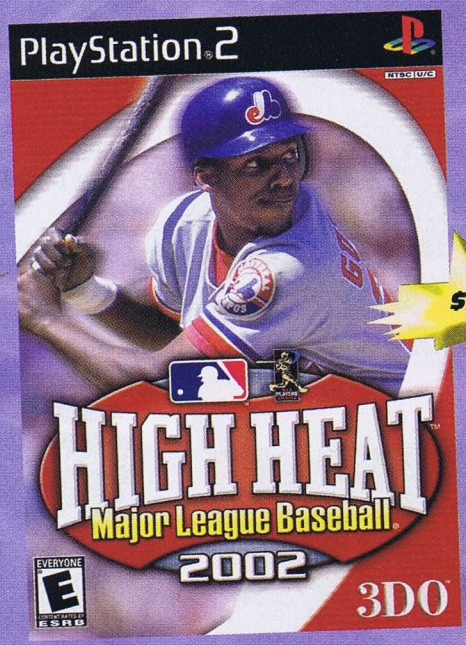

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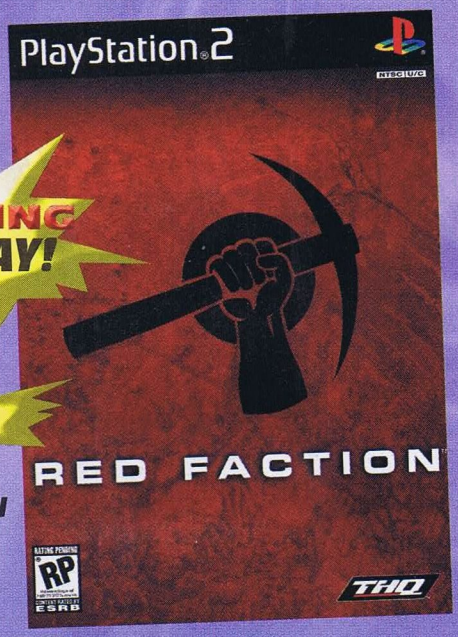

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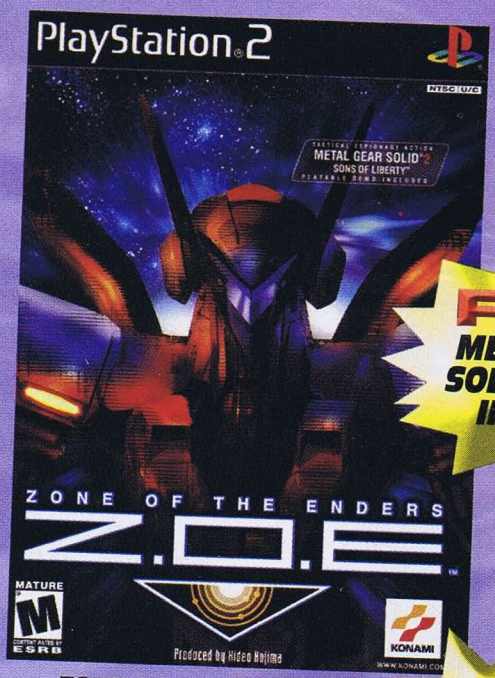

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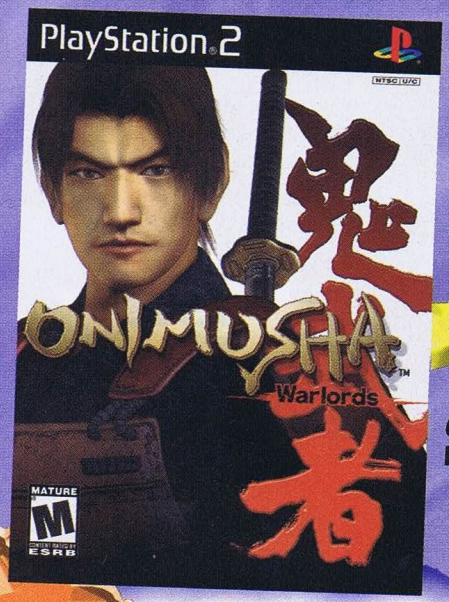

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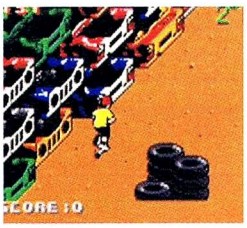
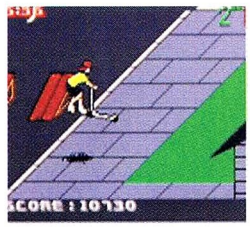
Razor: Freestyle Scooter

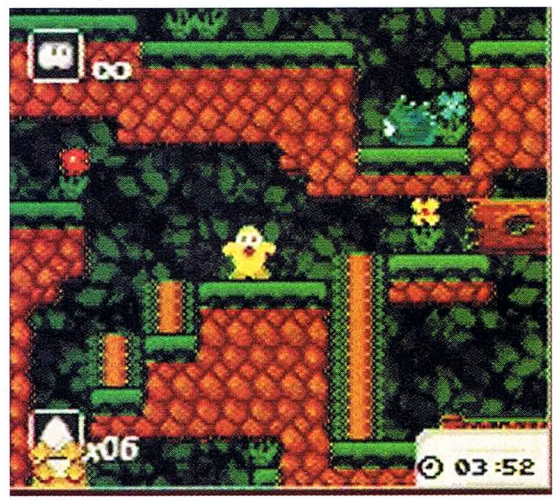
Razor was a blast on the PS, and things are looking good for this GBC port. In terms of gameplay, a strong emphasis is placed on tricks and combos. For those with the need for speed, good news: A race mode will also be packed in. The action takes place over seven different terrains; each stage will feature different ways to flip and grind. **Crave** releases it in **April**.

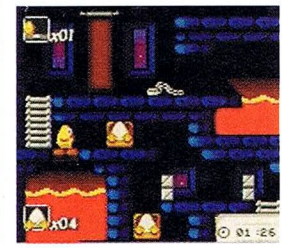




Toki Tori

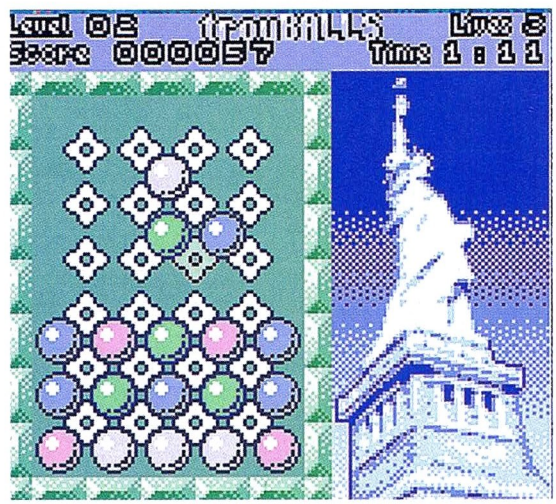
Meet **Capcom**'s newest character: Toki Tori. This little bundle of joy's debut adventure is a puzzle game, making for a perfect fit on the GBC. Using different tools and weapons, our hero must retrieve a set of eggs, which have been scattered over more than 60 levels. Sounds like a fun time killer to us. It should be on store shelves **this winter**.

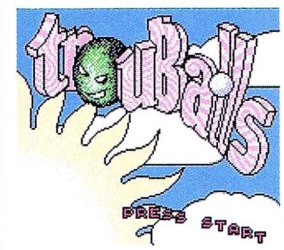




Trouballs

Tired of Pokémon Puzzle Challenge yet? We aren't, but there's already more GBC puzzle action on the way. Looks like **Capcom**'s going to grace us with yet another Tetris/Puyo Puyo-inspired puzzler **this winter**. The goal here is to manipulate falling orbs as they reach the bottom of a well, ultimately creating a 2x2 square with balls of the same color. You get to do that over 100 levels of play. We don't know yet if you can create even bigger combos somehow. Plus there's going to be an extra bonus stage in the game that is "unique for most puzzle games" according to Capcom. Finally, they're being very vocal about the five full-length songs that have been composed exclusively for this Game Boy Color title. There are currently no plans to port this to any other system.





speed
GRAN TURISMO 3
A-spec

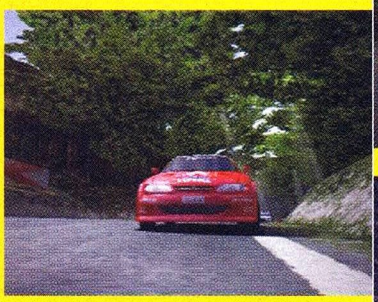
by crispin boyer and greg sewart

demon

Kazunori Yamauchi—Polyphony Digital's car-freak president—is unstoppable, and his latest installment in the Gran Turismo series proves it. Buckle up.

It's not the best place for an interview. Every five minutes, a train trundles just feet above the roof of Detroit's airy and bright COBO Center, directly over the Mazda booth, where we're trying to chat with Kazunori Yamauchi at this year's North American International Auto Show. Yamauchi is the director of the Gran Turismo series, including Gran Turismo 3 A-spec, due in late-March/early-April and widely regarded as the first big PlayStation 2 game to get excited about. He's here for the unveiling of Mazda's sleek RX-8. It's the most recent car Yamauchi added to the game. Kiosks containing playable versions of GT3, complete with the new RX-8, stand in the Mazda booth not far from the just-unveiled car.

This auto show is the biggest of its kind in North America. Manufacturers from all over the world come here to announce their new cars, usually one per hour. You thought the gaming industry's Electronic Entertainment Expo was big? NAIAS dwarfs it. Its booths and displays easily out-pizazz



E3's. Jeep's booth, for instance, features a massive waterfall that spells out slogans and logos in torrents of falling water. But it's not this high-octane atmosphere, the maddeningly repetitive Mazda theme tune, the camera crew here to film Yamauchi for Japanese TV, or the overwhelming din of passing trains overhead that's making our interview so difficult.

It's our guilty conscience. Yamauchi is a legendary car freak, and this show is his playground. It's obvious he can't wait for a break in this interview so he can zip back to the show floor and breathe in as much of the atmosphere as possible. We're standing between him and auto nirvana, and we feel bad about it. Sure enough, as soon as we're through with our photos and questions, Yamauchi grabs a camera from an associate and disappears into the show-floor throng for 45 minutes. "He's been doing that all day," says

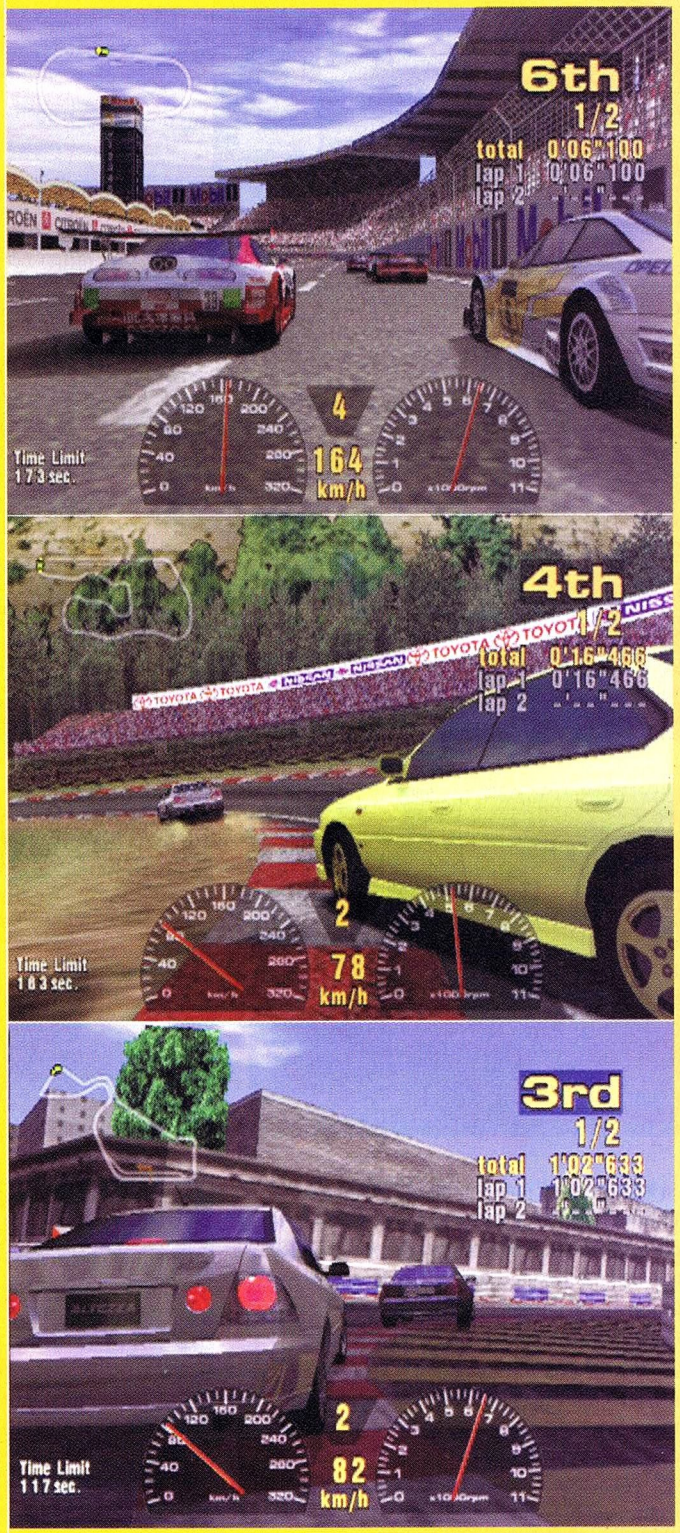
When the GT team gathered the game's cars in Tokyo, they drove them all to get a hands-on feel for their handling. Needless to say, this was their favorite part of the development process. "It was like working in a valet parking lot," producer Imasaki says, "a hundred cars with keys."

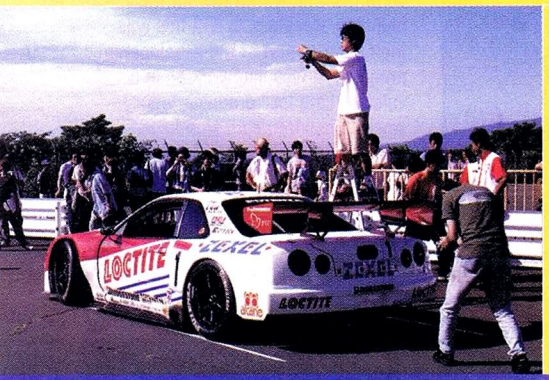
Taku Imasaki, the U.S. producer of GT3 and our translator for the interview. "We've lost him for hours at a time." According to Imasaki, Yamauchi is a skilled photographer, especially when it comes to cars—and that skill, he says, comes through in the sleek, artistic presentation of the vehicles in GT3.

Without a doubt, the "artistic presentation" of this game blows the doors off anything we've seen so far on the PS2. You probably know all about the real-time lighting, shadows and environmental mapping on the game's cars; drive under a bridge and you see it reflected in your glossy paint job. And you've no doubt seen the stunning detail of the car models—so detailed, in fact, that you can see engine parts beneath hood mesh.

But you haven't seen the heat haze that hangs above the track. You haven't seen the focus effects in action. During replays, the camera keeps your car in sharp focus, while objects and autos in the distance blur slightly. ("It's hard to tell if you're watching a real TV broadcast or not sometimes," Yamauchi says.) And you haven't witnessed the newly included weather effects, which add reflective puddles and blowing mist—not to mention an element of slippery-when-wet danger—to the game. Despite all these effects, and despite the game's vertical resolution being twice that of any PS2 title so far, GT3 runs at a flawlessly smooth framerate.

"Notice how the brake discs heat up and glow," Yamauchi says, fresh from his wanderings of the show floor. He's back at the Mazda booth playing his game at a PS2 kiosk. We give him room so he can show off for the Japanese camera crew. (We're aching to challenge him to a race, but the two-player mode hasn't been

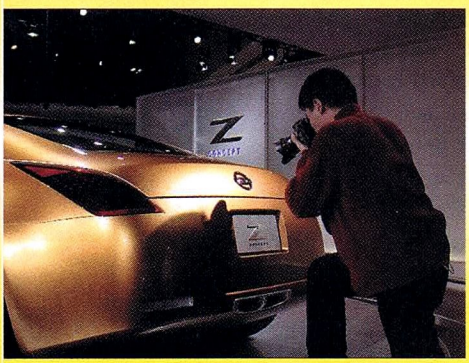


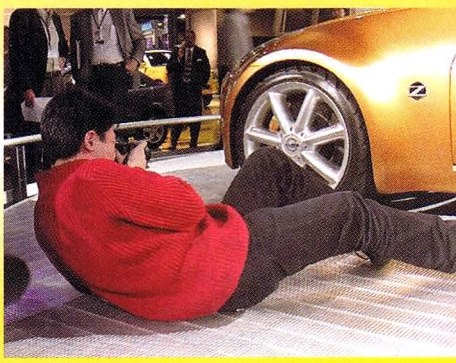


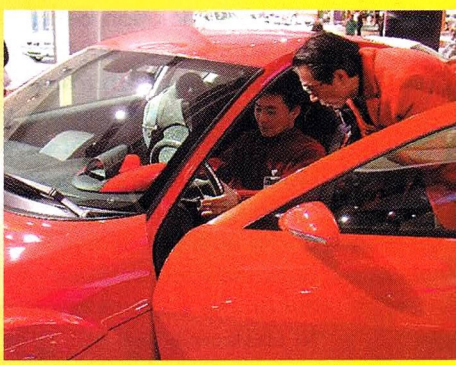
It's a dirty job: The PS2's pumped-up specs meant Yamauchi's team needed more detailed source material this time around, so they ramped up their photography and recording efforts. Even cars from the previous games had to be re-photographed.

implemented in the version he's playing.) Yamauchi's screwing around with different cars, experimenting with their handling, burning out, slamming on the brakes, laying circles of charred rubber on the track. He's having fun, oblivious to the spectacle of the auto show and the rattling trains above that are so loud we have to re-ask questions after they pass. Grinning, he launches his car head-on into a crush of oncoming racers.

It's obvious that Yamauchi's favorite element of GT3 isn't the actual racing gameplay or lush visuals—it's the religious attention to detail paid to each vehicle's road handling. In fact, Yamauchi says that although it's possible for future iterations of the GT series to feature better graphics, he doubts they'll surpass the realism of GT3's physics model. "In terms of using the PS2 hardware to its maximum," Yamauchi explains, "I feel we have done so on the programming side..." That goes for the A.I., too—the GT3 team says opposing racers are extra tenacious this time out and will even remember your actions if you,







Kid in a candy store: Yamauchi came to Detroit's North American International Auto Show to help unveil Mazda's RX-8 (right), show off the latest build of GT3 (above) and—to Sony's chagrin—check out new car models to add to the game. An enthusiast and perfectionist to the highest degree, the guy has a tough time knowing when to stop. His interests go beyond pure sports cars, too—he can't get enough of vehicles of all varieties. "It was quite a unique experience to take a luxury car like the Mercedes CL-600 on a track and have fun with it," Yamauchi says. "You never get to do that kind of stuff."

Yamauchi's personal Lancer Evolution V (above) and Honda S2000 (inset) appear in GT3. Still, he doesn't have all the manufacturers he wants—namely, Ferrari and Porsche. "We definitely want to go after them and put them in the series," he says.

say, cut one off in a turn. Drive defensively, although don't worry about scratching your paint job—as in GT 1 and 2, the car models here won't take damage if you bash them around. Too many of the car manufacturers wouldn't allow it.

When it came to capturing every nuance of every car in GT3, Yamauchi and his team did the same thing that worked so well for the first two games: They headed to the race track. Last summer, at Tokyo's Motegi circuit, the team gathered more than 100 vehicles from international auto manufacturers. They photographed the cars and recorded their revving engines and gear transitions. "Included in those cars were some that were also in GT1 and 2," Yamauchi explains, "but we had to re-record and re-photograph those cars because the PlayStation 2 hardware specs are so high that the data we had for GT1 and 2 was insufficient. We had to take higher-quality engine sounds and more accurate pictures in order to match up with the PS2 hardware specs."

All told, GT3 will pack more than 150 cars. Yes, that's far fewer than the

Shop Talk

GT3 Director Kazunori Yamauchi is famous for his fanatical interest in fast cars. So we sat our most car-crazy editors down with the man and picked his brain on things that go vroom.

EGM: What year and make was your first car?
Kazunori Yamauchi: It was a 1985 Toyota Corolla.

EGM: What sparked your obvious love of sports cars?
KY: My passion for art and speed—it's part of my nature.

EGM: We've heard you race. Do any of your cars appear in GT3?
KY: I don't actually compete, but I run a racetrack a couple of times every month—almost every week. My personal cars are in the game. They're the Honda S2000 and the Lancer Evolution V.

EGM: Which is your favorite?
KY: The great thing about the Lancer is that it's invincible. It's got four-wheel drive, has a torque-full turbo engine with a wide power band and very good breaks. I like the fact that it's so stable in various conditions such as high-speed corners, low-speed corners, in the rain or in the snow. The feature I like with the S2000 is not the absolute speed but the feel when you drive it. This car provides very accurate steering, along with solid brakes and gearbox. The engine revs up to 9000 rpm. It's just a fun car to drive, even when you're not competing with others. If I had to choose between these two cars, I'd choose the S2000.

EGM: We heard you call your S2000 "your wife's shopping car."
KY: Yes, that is correct. With the exception of the circuit, her driving skills are better than mine.

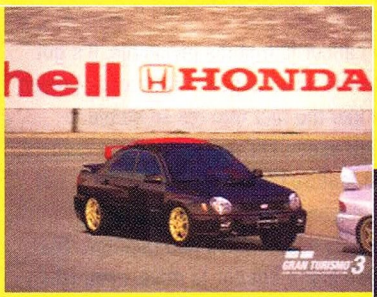
EGM: What dream cars would you own if you could?
KY: If I could choose from some years back, the Ford GT40 and the Ferrari 330 P4 are good examples. These two cars performed extremely well in their day.

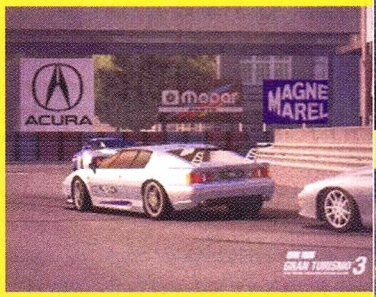
EGM: What's your favorite kinda racing? Road course? Oval? Rally?
KY: I enjoy all those racing categories, but if I were to enter one, I'd like to challenge Rally.

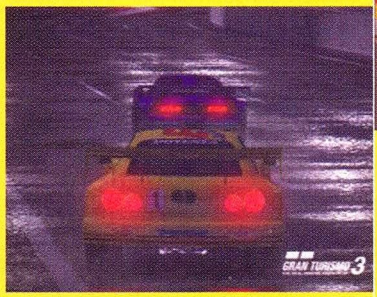
EGM: Who is your favorite racing personality?
KY: Ayrton Senna

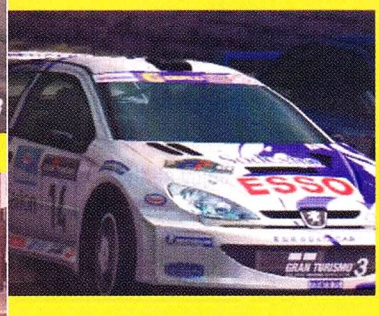
EGM: Do you think the GT series' attention to detail is affecting the entire racing genre, changing game designers' emphasis from arcade-style exhilaration to pure realism?
KY: In my mind pursuing realism doesn't necessarily mean you lose fun. I don't think that way. I think there's a good way to do both at the same time. I always want to make the games more realistic and at the same time make them more fun. I never forget that this is entertainment, after all.

GT3 looks better every time we see it. Check out the rally shot below. See how your car kicks up dust? Wait 'til you tear through mud—and wait 'til you see this game in motion.









400-plus offered in GT2, but the team is quick to point out that nearly all the manufacturers from the last game are represented here. New cars such as the Toyota MR2 have been added, as well as a few 2002 models like the Lancer Evolution VII and, of course, the RX-8 unveiled here at the show. Yamauchi said one reason the game has fewer cars is so his team can focus on making the included vehicles as true-to-life as possible. Quality over quantity, he says.

Nevertheless, Yamauchi has made no secret that—RX-8 unveiling aside—the main reason he's come to this auto show is to scout for new vehicles to add to GT3. Sony isn't keen on any more additions, however, since the game's ship date is looming and development is already coming down to the wire. It is interesting to note that GT3 was recently delayed in Japan for unknown reasons, but Sony assures us it's not because Yamauchi won the fight to stuff more cars in at the last minute.

Still, Yamauchi has been able to jam a surprising amount of stuff into GT3. Back when the game was first announced as a PS2 launch title, under the name "GT2000," it was supposed to be nothing more than a stopgap installment in the series—a demo, more or less, to tide fans over until a full-fledged PS2 sequel could be developed. If all had gone according to Polyphony Digital and Sony's original plan, GT2000 would have

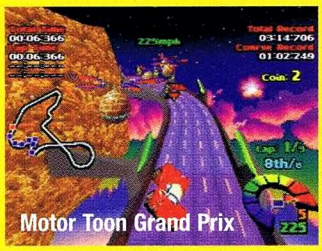
launched months ago and Yamauchi would be working on a proper sequel right now.

But Yamauchi's sensibilities and devotion to the series got the better of him. He couldn't bring himself to launch the scaled-down GT2000, which was only supposed to feature about 50 cars and four tracks. He kept adding to the game, tuning the physics and improving the graphics, until it was worthy of the name GT3. Yamauchi admits that the next installment in the series will look even better and may carry some form of online component, but GT3 definitely offers enough improvements to be considered a bona-fide sequel.

What you get is a game with all the modes you're familiar with. You'll find the Arcade Mode, which offers split-screen, two-player racing. And you get the comprehensive Simulation Mode. For the uninitiated, this mode has you passing driving tests, earning licenses, competing in races, and

More than just gearhead sim stuff...

The Gran Turismo games aren't the only projects to reach U.S. shores from Polyphony Digital, Kazunori Yamauchi's development house. The first title was Motor Toon Grand Prix, released in 1996. The game was actually based on the Japanese MTGP2, and not the first Motor Toon title, which was never released here. It featured loads of cartoon cars racing around fantasy courses. They would morph and deform as they navigated turns or got attacked by other drivers. MTGP is widely considered to be one of the best kart racers around, probably second only to Crash Team Racing on the PS one. Early on there were even rumors of an updated Motor Toon GP being included with Gran Turismo 3.



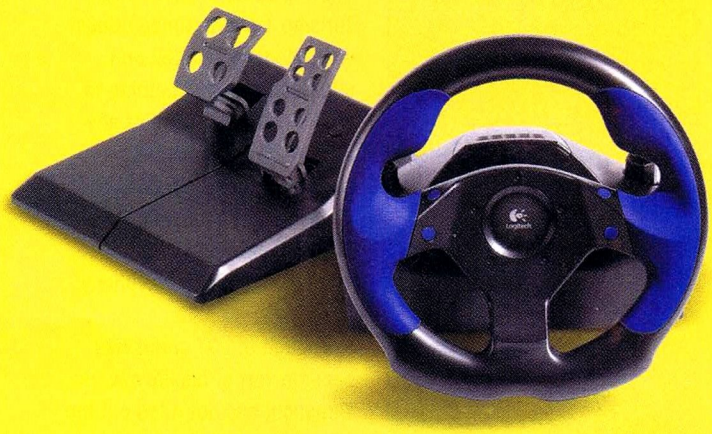
Polyphony's second oddball offering came between Gran Turismo 1 and 2. Omega Boost was released in 1999, and surprisingly, it had nothing to do with cars or racing of any kind. A 3D mech-based shooter and cult hit, Omega Boost packed the cinematic look and attention to detail that has become a Polyphony trademark.

Though the GT series has become sort of his life's work, Yamauchi has not ruled out the possibility of dabbling in other genres in the future.

The Wheel Deal

"Gran Turismo has so far aimed for complete realism and simulation of the visual and audio aspects, but it's about to add the sense of feel," Kazunori Yamauchi says of the force-feedback steering wheel Logitech is designing exclusively for GT3. Long known for its quality PC game controllers, Logitech is definitely taking the GT3 wheel in the right direction. Rubber grips, butterfly shifters and a set of pedals (which will likely be different from what you see on this page) will bring unparalleled control to an already realistic game. Better still, the wheel offers true force feedback; motors inside make it fight your grip in tight turns, for instance.

Unfortunately, as of press time, Sony Computer Entertainment of America has not decided whether it will release Logitech's wheel in the U.S. Don't expect it to be cheap if they do. We expect the price to be between $80 and $100.



buying and tweaking your autos. "It will have the same amount of features, the same amount of depth of customization as we had in GT2," Yamauchi says of the sim mode. "But the way we present it in the game, because of the new DVD media and the improved hardware, allows us to put a lot of dynamic movies and animation on the menu screens. It makes the user feel like he's constantly moving." (Car makers are providing footage to help jazz up the menus.) And if the series' challenging sim stuff scares you, fear not: As with GT2, you can switch from Drift Mode to Racing Mode to get more relaxed, arcade-like control.

GT3 will offer 15 courses in all, including the off-road rally tracks first seen in GT2. New tracks include Monte Carlo's F1 course and another set in downtown Tokyo, complete with real landmarks like Sony's HQ. The rest of the game's batch of courses—such as Laguna Seca, for instance—come from the first two games.

We want to tear into the Simulation Mode and as many courses as possible, but unfortunately much is still missing from the version here at the show. Just as well—it's 5 p.m. and the crowd is thinning. It's time to leave the Mazda booth and head to dinner. Together with Yamauchi and the camera crew, we hop one of the trains that have been making so much racket all day. Yamauchi falls dead asleep as soon as he sinks into his seat. As the COBO Center and its exhibition of 700 exotic new cars rolls away beneath us, we think we know what he's dreaming about.

Get off my Planet!

DIGITAL DIGIMON MONSTERS

DIGIMON WORLD 2

200 DIGITAL MONSTERS! 120 More Digimon than Digimon World! FIGHT FOR YOUR OWN PARTY! Defeat Digimon in battle and they are added to your party!

IMPROVE YOUR GAME PLAY! Escape to a safe place if you're in danger! You can do anything when it's your turn!

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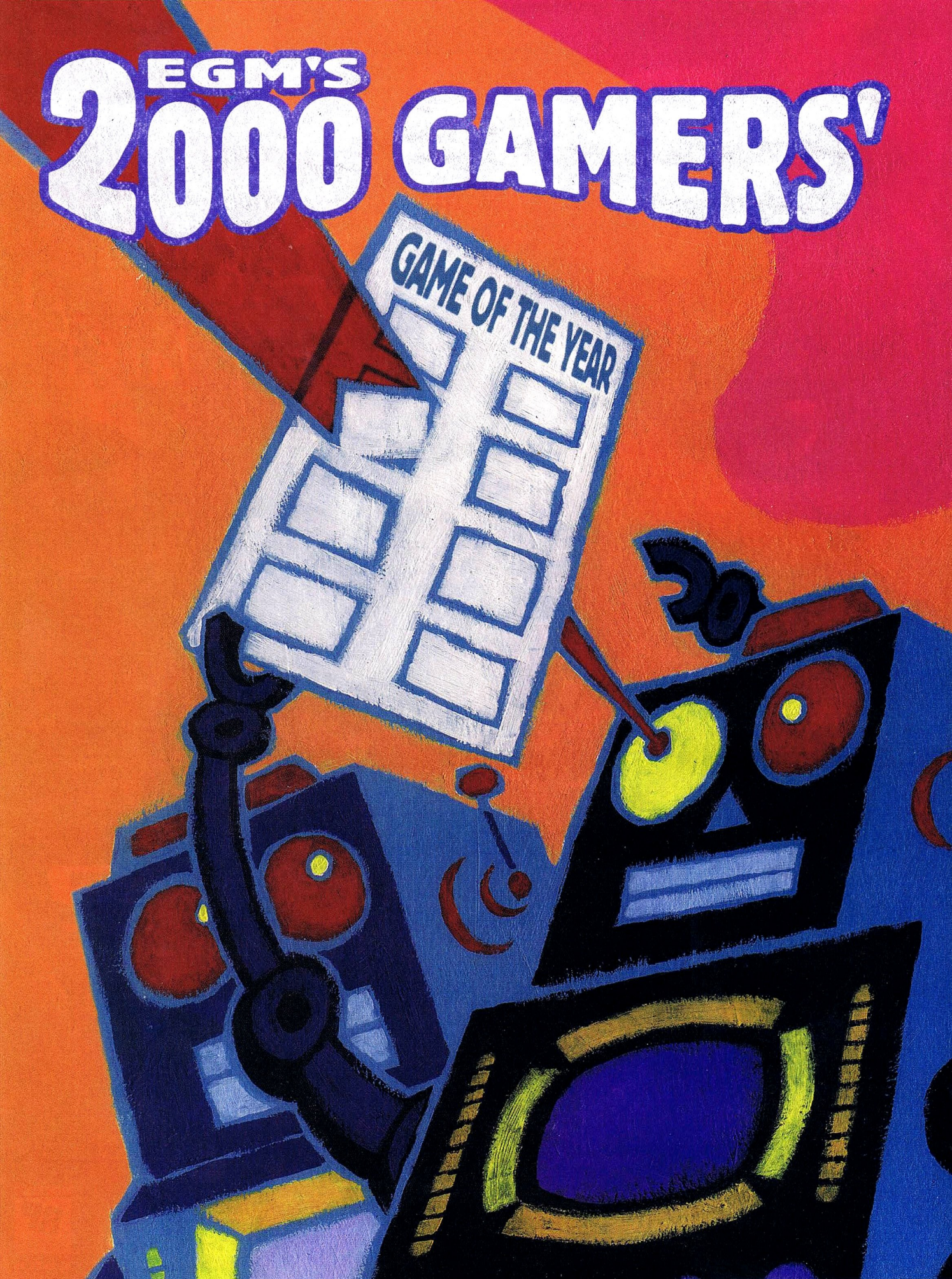
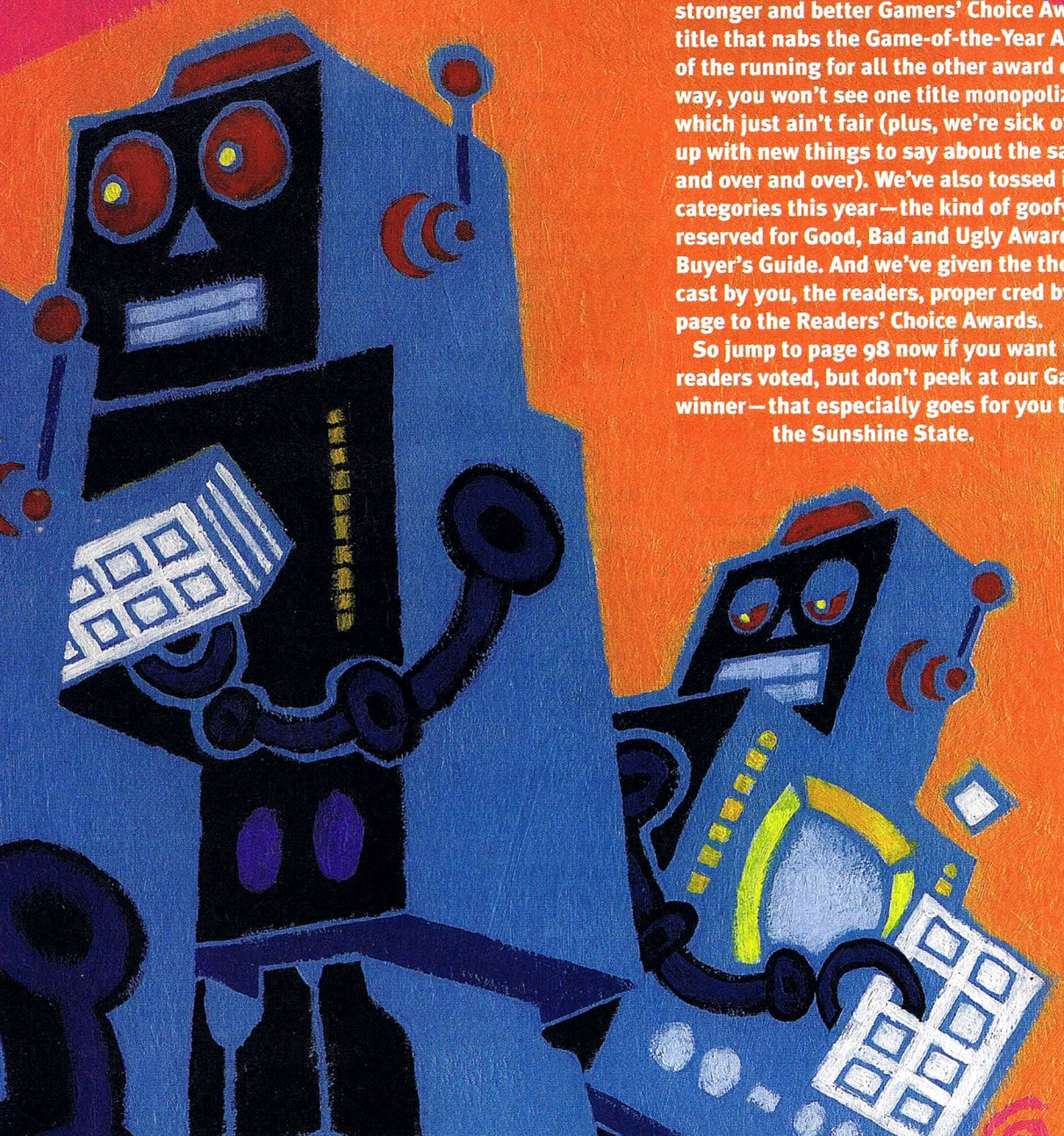

EGM'S
2000 GAMERS'
GAME OF THE YEAR

CHOICE AWARDS

If we learned one thing from the year 2000, it's that we should stay away from anything that involves voting. But alas, our annual Gamers' Choice Awards have crept up on us yet again, and—common sense be damned—we can't turn our backs on what's really the most important ballot battle of the year. That's not to say we didn't take precautions when the *EGM* staff rocked the vote this month for the best games of 2000. For starters, no editors from Florida were allowed to participate (sorry, Crispin), and anyone who uttered the word "chad" was given a severe beating about the face and neck with a T-bone steak.

More importantly, we made a few changes to this year's undertaking that we think make for a faster, stronger and better Gamers' Choice Awards. Now, the title that nabs the Game-of-the-Year Award is taken out of the running for all the other award categories. That way, you won't see one title monopolizing the awards, which just ain't fair (plus, we're sick of trying to come up with new things to say about the same game over and over and over). We've also tossed in a few oddball categories this year—the kind of goofy stuff usually reserved for Good, Bad and Ugly Awards in our annual Buyer's Guide. And we've given the thousands of votes cast by you, the readers, proper cred by devoting a full page to the Readers' Choice Awards.

So jump to page 98 now if you want to see how you readers voted, but don't peek at our Game of the Year winner—that especially goes for you troublemakers in the Sunshine State.



Dreamcast Game of the Year: NFL 2K1

Runner-up: Jet Grind Radio

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
The first of the true online console games to bring gamers together in a meaningful, sweat-filled yet entirely cybersex-free fashion, NFL 2K1 was the shot heard 'round the Net, as thousands of virtual pigskins were heaved through the air when SegaNet took flight. This is the game that made people finally forget the name Madden.

We hate it, we really hate it 'cause:
No one except reviewer Dan Leahy seems able to go online and score so much as a touchback or a safety. Can you actually score in the negatives? The Milkman, for example, went online and got dusted 78-0 in his first game out, and his nemesis was being merciful. The Jets can't be *that* bad! You players out there are just that good.

Nintendo 64 Game of the Year: Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

Runner-up: Banjo-Tooie

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Are you kidding? It's a Zelda game, for crying out loud. And not just any Zelda game but one that actually tops Ocarina of Time, something gamers and scientists alike swore wouldn't happen for years. Not surprisingly, another major sequel almost made the cut, but neither bear nor bird could stand up to Link's sword.

Tonight on Fox: When bunnies attack...
Link is a boy with many faces. Actually, he's a boy with many masks, but who's counting? Majora's Mask has one of the coolest gameplay features ever: Putting on masks allowed you to change your form, collect new items, or just freak out the local townsfolk. Best of all, it's just fun hacking through enemies wearing the mask of the dreaded bunny.

PlayStation Game of the Year: Final Fantasy IX

Runner-up: Chrono Cross

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
It's all thanks to Vivi. Square knew what they were doing when they redesigned the Black Mage for 2000. That droopy, mysterious look pioneered by the ol' "BlMage" of the first FF and Orko of He-Man fame is currently paying FFIX's rent on store shelves everywhere. Aesthetics aside, IX kicked the Phoenix Down out of our other entries 'cause it achieved the ideal balance of story, battle system, and characters that FF fans have long stood divided over. Square's taking the golden goose that is Final Fantasy into double digits this spring, but it's got a tough act to follow. We'll be watching...

Our favorite quotes from the reviewers of FFIX:

- "Damn, Zidane's 'bout to get his level-up on!"—Milkman
- "Whoa! Dagger's hotter than Celine Dion!"—Greg

PlayStation 2 Game of the Year: SSX

Runner-up: Madden NFL 2001

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
If you would've told us a year ago that a snowboarding game would win an award, we'd have beat you to a bloody pulp while screaming, "No, no, God no—not snowboarding!" But, unlike the presidential election, SSX won by a landslide, thanks to its intense graphics, surreal ambience and sweet gameplay. What'll win next year? Perhaps a wrestling game?

Second best ain't bad...
After all the anticipation and hype surrounding the release of Madden NFL 2001 for the PS2, it's no wonder it didn't quite live up to expectations. Don't get us wrong—Madden's a mighty fine game, but it needed a touch more speed and harder-looking hits to drive it to the top spot.

THE TOP 10 NEWS STORIES OF 2000

10) Bleem!cast

Play PlayStation games on your Dreamcast? As of this writing it's still not a reality, but it was big news the day Bleem! announced a DC version of their PC PlayStation emulator. We're still waiting...

9) SNK USA RIP

We were all saddened by the early demise of SNK USA, and it happened just as their Neo•Geo Pocket Color handheld was becoming a promising system.

8) Nintendo Grows Up

We all thought it was a joke when Nintendo said the wholesome Conker from Conker 64 had morphed into the foul-mouthed, beer-guzzlin' squirrel of Bad Fur Day. The move, along with Perfect Dark and Eternal Darkness, was part of Nintendo's new plan to reach older, mature players.

7) Unveiling of Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty

To give it a Hollywood feel, Kojima & Co. showed MGS2 to the American press at a theater in Universal Studios' backlot. We're still reeling.

6) PlayStation 2 Launch

Gamers lined up for the PS2 in Japan...then a few months later they lined up overnight in the U.S.—something that's never happened before for a stateside system launch.

5) Game Cube

Star Cube? Nintendo Cube? Nintendo 128? Nintendo's Game Cube went by many names before its unveiling. The system represents a huge step for Nintendo into the CD format.

4) Game Boy Advance

The Advance is the first new iteration of the Game Boy hardware that significantly changes the way Nintendo's portable looks and feels.

3) The Launch of SegaNet

A year after the Dreamcast first launched on American shores, Sega's online gaming strategy became a reality with the release of NFL 2K1.

2) Xbox

Five years ago, Microsoft was busy distancing itself from anything having to do with consoles. In 2000, Microsoft did a 180, announcing it was indeed developing a console system called Xbox at the 2000 Game Developers Conference.

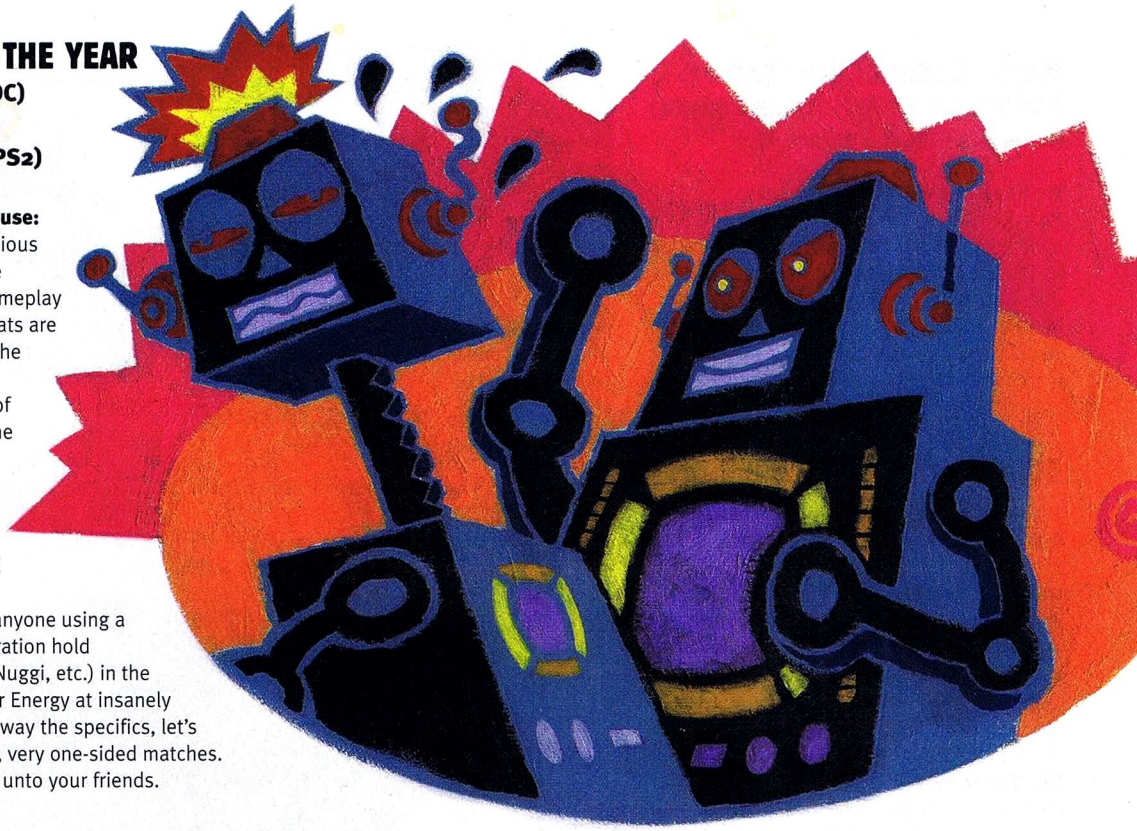
1) Sega Develops for Other Platforms

Sega's only confirming now what we reported last year. First came the rumors that Sega was working with Acclaim to bring Crazy Taxi to PS2. Then came the press conference where Sega of Japan's top brass layed out a plan to develop for other consoles. Everyone downplayed the announcement, saying Sega was developing only for cell phones and set-top boxes. We told you what was really going on.

FIGHTING GAME OF THE YEAR

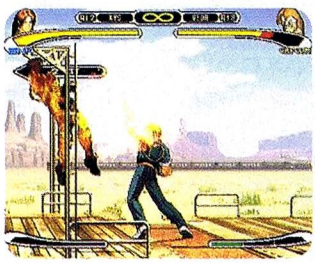
Capcom vs. SNK (DC)

Runner-up:
Tekken Tag Tournament (PS2)



We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Never before have two scrumptious series melded so smoothly. The fresh combination of classic gameplay and spankin'-new graphical treats are why this baby triumphed over the newest 3D fighter fave, TTT. Maybe it's the adverse effects of too many dragon-punches to the face, or the aftershocks of PS2 buyer's remorse talking, but man, it seems that folks still do care about rippin' it up 2D style! Take that, technology!

The cheapest trick ever...
A neat little glitch here allows anyone using a character with an extended-duration hold (Blanka's bite, Dhalsim's Yoga Nuggi, etc.) in the Capcom Groove to regain Super Energy at insanely unfair speeds. Without giving away the specifics, let's just say the result is very short, very one-sided matches. Go figure it out—and be cheap unto your friends.



Racing Game of the Year:

Test Drive Le Mans (DC)

Runner-up: Excitebike 64 (N64)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Lightning speed, loads of cars, awesome control and graphics that left our editors flushed with excitement—what red-blooded race fan wouldn't like this game? So convinced are we of TD Le Man's superiority that it won by a huge margin over the almost as impressive Excitebike 64. God bless Infogrames for not simply porting the mediocre Le Mans game from PS one.

Better break out the Depends...
For the truly insane gamers out there, Le Mans lets you race the actual, 24-hour event in real time. We suggest you hit the Pause Button for pee brakes, though—unless you fancy wearing an adult diaper like the hardcore pros.

Handheld Game of the Year:

Metal Gear Solid (GBC)

Runner-up: Mario Golf (GBC)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Shrink Solid Snake down to portable proportions and what do you get? No, not the world's tiniest, most adorable murder simulator. You get a Konami game that packs all the fab sneak, shoot-'n'-strangle gameplay of the NES original. Yep, just like your girlfriend tells you—size doesn't matter.

IR goggles? Check. Grenades? Check. Carton of Lucky Strikes? Check. What's this? Smoking in a Game Boy game? When Solid Snake lights up in MGS, it's more than just one more macho display from this bad hombre—it's a first for a U.S.-released game on a Nintendo system (unless you go way back to when Duke Togo lit up in Golgo 13 for the NES). And after seeing how filthy Conker gets in his new game, we wonder what's next...a level where Mario trades Camels with the bad kids at the teen center?

What's With All The Robots?

Don't know the deal behind our feature's robot theme? Shame on you—you must not be a regular reader. Instead of the humdrum plaques and lame-o crystal paperweights other mags send to winners of their annual awards, we send our winners the fully functional 'bot you see here standing proud. Why? Our award robots come alive at night and traipse through the winning companies' offices, sending back photos of their secret games, but—ahem—don't tell anybody.

Puzzle Game of the Year:
Pokémon Puzzle League (N64)
Runner-up: ChuChu Rocket (DC)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
No other game came as close to almost destroying the very fabric of reality as we know it; *EGM* was almost late to the printer more than once thanks to the editors' nightly antics of slamming down bricks and hearing Pikachu squeal. Yes, it's Pokémon, and yes, it's little more than a re-colored Tetris Attack, but Puzzle League is good. Very good. Not to mention very addicting.

I choose you Pikachu, you damn yellow rodent!
Even though Pokémon titles are fun and all, they're hard to get really excited about. We are older, more mature gamers, dammit. We demand more out of our games than a little yellow electricity-spitting mouse, no matter how cute he might be. We want blood, violence, a strong story line and...and...crap. Maybe just one more quick PPL game before dinner. Maybe two.

ACTION GAME OF THE YEAR
Jet Grind Radio (DC)
Runner-up: Quake III Arena (DC)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Weird and hip, JGR reminds us that graffiti is art and wearing roller skates doesn't mean you're a sissy, no matter how tight your unitard. Sega took flak from law-and-order types for releasing this game here, but we're thankful for SoA's nose-thumbing attitude.

Oh, that song again...
Being one of the only developers left to take the plunge, Sega finally included the tune "Dragula," by Rob Zombie, in one of its games. Dig through the ditches and burn through the witches and *shut the hell up already!*

The EGM-Cover-that-Should Have-Been Award:
Skies of Arcadia (DC)

Sometimes we make a bad call when we choose games for the cover-story treatment (Driver 2, cough, cough), and sometimes we plain ol' miss out. In hindsight, Sega's excellent Skies of Arcadia deserved a cover spot last year. The most significant RPG on the Dreamcast this year (Grandia II notwithstanding), Skies touched the inner-pirate in all of us.

Adventure Game of the Year:
The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64)
Runner-up: Shenmue (DC)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Miyamoto's legacy lives on, and while the master wasn't directly responsible for this sterling follow-up to the Ocarina of Time, the overall quality could not be denied. Majora's Mask was considered by many to be superior to its predecessor.

It's not just a job—it's an adventure game...
Runner-up Shenmue was a remarkable technical achievement, offering possibly the most beautiful graphics yet seen in a video game, but the stodgy gameplay (at one point you actually have to get a job and earn a living) couldn't quite keep up with the agile Link and all his mask-wearing shenanigans. Sure, you could drive a forklift in Shenmue, but could you time-travel and save the world from destruction?

Multiplayer Game of the Year:
NFL 2K1 (DC)

Runner-up: Quake III Arena (DC)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
We love shoving our pigskin down a stranger's throat as much as we do our friend's, and NFL 2K1 is the only football game to let you use your phone lines to reach out and crush someone. Racking up the wins one-on-one is amusing, but *EGM* staffers have been known to hook in a few controllers and team up on many unsuspecting SegaNet players. There's nothing like a good ambush.

The quickest way to get on our bad side:
Dropping out of an online game while we're administering a good butt-whuppin' is a sure-fire way to win our (and anyone else's) ire. But we're not hypocritical—if you're good enough to make us take our medicine, we'll stay and take our lumps until the bitter end.

Sports Game of the Year:
NFL 2K1 (DC)

Runner-up: Virtua Tennis (DC)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Visual Concepts' stunning, Internet-ready pigskin title has dethroned and depantsed Madden, slapped it in the face, and sent it on its merry way. No doubt Madden will strike back with a vengeance, but in 2000 it was all NFL 2K1.

You got game? Well prove it, Skippy...
Never before have so many had the chance to play so many more. Diving into the pool of Internet challengers has proved one thing—some people really suck, while others just kick ass. We'll see you NFL 2K1 jockeys on SegaNet. Just expect no mercy.

EGM's First Annual Award for the Best Award:
The Trophy from Unreal Tournament (PS2)

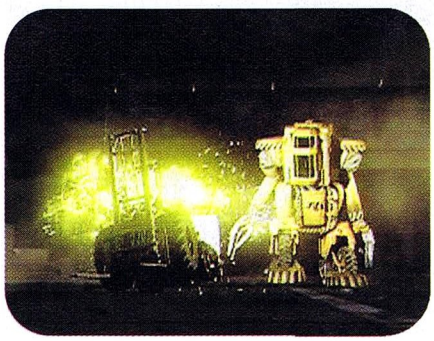
That titanic trophy you nab after beating UT is more than just a bad-ass brass tchotchki: We figure crazed deathmatchers could stick this thing upside down in the ground and use it to hold the blood of enemies—or pack it with potato salad for a post-fragfest picnic.

Role-Playing Game of the Year:
Final Fantasy IX (PS)

Runner-up: Chrono Cross (PS)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
It's a throwback to Final Fantasies of old, with more of a sword-and-sorcery theme running through the game rather than the detached mature direction FFVIII adopted. Go scratch, Squall! We like our Mogs and stuff all super-deformed and whatnot. We also like Yoshitaka Amano's designs and were glad to see him behind the drawing board again. The story line was poignant, funny and well-written.

Wait—didn't Chrono Cross score higher?
Yes, picky reader, Chrono Cross did nab slightly higher review scores, but only three editors reviewed it while all the editors voted for our awards. FFIX brought back warm and fuzzy feelings from the series' good old days.



Strategy Game of the Year:
Front Mission 3 (PS)

Runner-up: Ogre Battle 64 (N64)

We like it, we really like it 'cause:
Hey, you got your big robot in my strategy game! What could be better than that? While the strategy cupboard was a little bare this year, that doesn't detract from the robo-customizing joy of Square's newest Front Mission masterpiece.

We've never really gotten over the Transformers have we?
If we did, then maybe Ogre Battle woulda won this award. Optimus Prime, Decepticons—oh, how we miss you so. You too, Voltron. Ogre Battle 64 was pretty swank, and old-school to boot (a plus in some cases), but who wants to deal with swords and loincloths when you can lob ground-to-air missiles?

Stuff the industry liked in Y2K...

J Allard

General Manager, Xbox Platform

1. THPS2: Super control and trick system, super gameplay mechanics, super level design, super fun.

2. Virtua Tennis: Awesome play mechanics and good use of "this generation" graphics.

3. GT2: OK, so it came out in late '99, but this is the literature of console racing titles, period.

4. Fantavision: Still the best PS2 title on the market. It reinforces that gameplay is more important than technology.

5. Jet Grind Radio: Forget cel shading—this is going to give a kick to urban-themed titles in the years ahead.

Cliff Bleszinski

Lead Designer of Unreal Tournament

1. Pokémon Puzzle League: It's the ultimate reminder that it's not always about graphics. PI-KA-CHU!

2. Lunar 2: Sometimes, old-school RPGs are far better than the latest ones.

3. Samba de Amigo: It's just so damned outrageous and I can play it with my wife.

4. Jet Grind Radio: No one has the kind of art direction and wackiness that Sega has.

5. SSX: Fast, addictive and pretty—a must-have for those lucky enough to find a PS2.

Victor Ireland

President of Working Designs

Of course, after Silhouette Mirage, Vanguard Bandits, Gungriffon Blaze, RayCrisis and Lunar 2 would come:

1. Medal of Honor
2. SSX
3. Banjo-Tooie
4. Skies of Arcadia
5. Tekken Tag Tournament

Hideo Kojima

Director of Metal Gear Solid 2

I didn't get to play that many video games in 2000, but one I'll highlight is **Pokémon Gold/Silver**. I started to play it to bond with my son, but I actually stuck with the game. It ended up being one of the few games that I played to the end all by myself—perhaps it was the first one since the original Bio Hazard. I even played the game for my son's friend to advance the game at his request. I think I've played the game through year end to summer. Right now I'm playing Pokémon Crystal.

2000 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Enough of our horsing around. Let's get to the votes that really matter—yours. Tens of thousands of you responded to our online and mail-in polls, and—surprise!—your picks matched ours in only half the categories. Go figure.

Game of the Year:
Final Fantasy IX (PS)
Runner-up: Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64)

Dreamcast Game of the Year:
Shenmue
Runner-up: Resident Evil Code: Veronica

Nintendo 64 Game of the Year:
Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask
Runner-up: Perfect Dark

PlayStation Game of the Year:
Final Fantasy IX
Runner-up: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

PlayStation 2 Game of the Year:
SSX
Runner-up: Madden NFL 2001

Handheld Game of the Year:
Metal Gear Solid (GBC)
Runner-up: Pokémon Puzzle Challenge (GBC)

Action Game of the Year:
Perfect Dark (N64)
Runner-up: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (DC/PS)

Adventure Game of the Year:
Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64)
Runner-up: Shenmue (DC)

Strategy Game of the Year:
Ogre Battle 64 (N64)
Runner-up: StarCraft 64 (N64)

Multiplayer Game of the Year:
Quake III Arena (DC)
Runner-up: Mario Party 2 (N64)

Sports Game of the Year:
NFL 2K1 (DC)
Runner-up: Madden NFL 2001 (PS2)

Racing Game of the Year:
Ridge Racer V (PS2)
Excitebike 64 (N64)

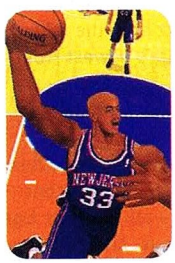
RPG of the Year:
Final Fantasy IX (PS)
Runner-up: Skies of Arcadia (DC)

Puzzle Game of the Year:
ChuChu Rocket (DC)
Runner-up: Pokémon Puzzle League (N64)

It was a good year for...

• Dreamcast owners
Did you play Shenmue, Skies of Arcadia, Quake III, Jet Grind Radio, NFL/NBA 2K1, Code: Veronica, Test Drive Le Mans, Virtua Tennis, DOA2, Ecco, SNK vs. Capcom and Grandia II? We thought so.

• Online gaming
SegaNet was the pied-piper of the gaming world this year, bringing gamers from all walks of life together online at last.



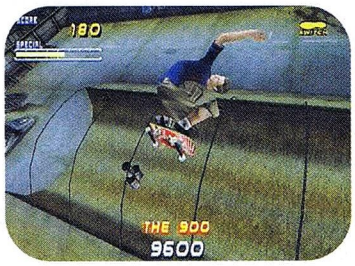
• Extreme games
Often considered a weak genre, this year's crop sprouted THPS2, Dave Mirra, Xtreme Sports, Jet Grind Radio, and of course, SSX. Not bad, and there's more to come.

• Peripherals
Maracas, DDR pads, light-guns, keyboards, mice, drum kits, digital guitars, microphones and even digital cameras all wound up connected to our Dreamcasts, PS2s and N64s last year.

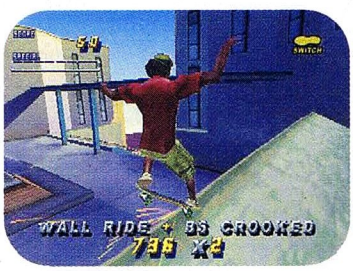
• Rumor-mongering
Nintendo to buy Sega, DC-chip in the Xbox, Infogrames to buy Eidos, Ubi Soft to buy Eidos, Eidos to buy game editors' lunch, Game Cube to launch this year, Game Cube delayed, GBA really a toaster, Sega to develop for other consoles, Sega to leave hardware market, Dreamcast 2, Shinjuku Happy Jumpers—pretty much any rumor you can think of was out there in 2000.

GAME OF THE YEAR

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (PS/DC)
Runner-up: NFL 2K1 (DC)

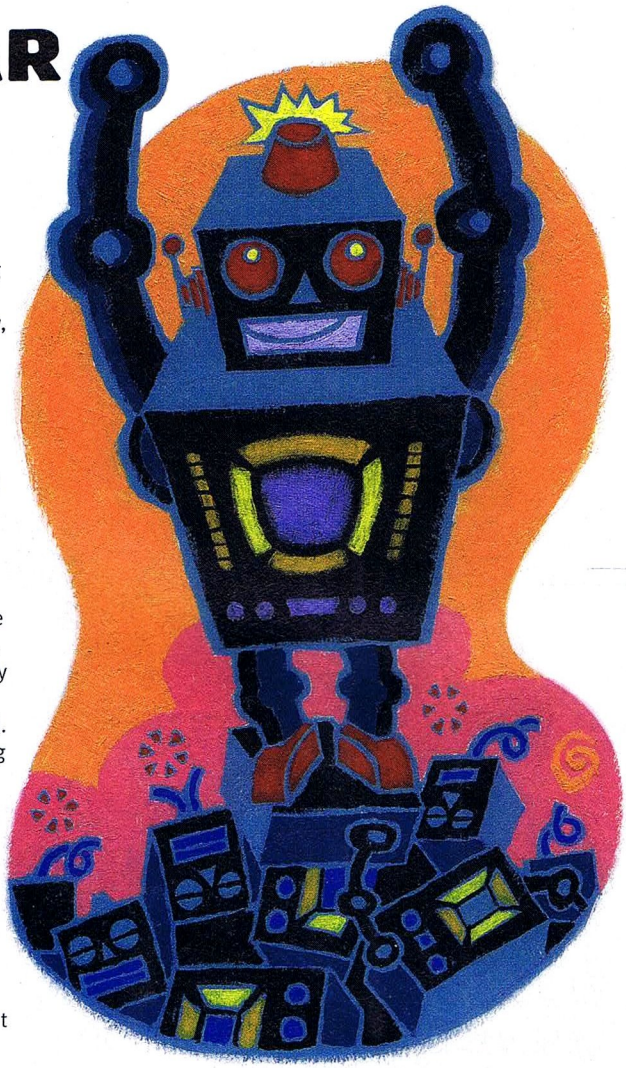


We like it, we really like it 'cause: It lets you coif your custom skater with a glorious mullet 'do, but that's barely half the reason we crowned Neversoft's stellar sequel the king of last year's royal court of outstanding games (and note that we're choosing both the PS and DC incarnations; they're identical). This was no landslide win, though—THPS2 licked NFL 2K1 by just one vote (after a recount), with Majora's Mask and Jet Grind Radio also in close contention. In the end, Tony Hawk 2's freestylin', do-your-own-thang gameplay and unlimited customization options make it a game everybody loves to play. Especially Billy Ray Cyrus' hairstylist.



Five other extreme sports that Neversoft prez Joel Jewett says he would like to see made into next-generation games:

- **Snow Skiing**—This sport is making a huge resurgence. Since we don't have the manpower to do it right now, I can't wait until someone else does. Of course, then I plan to kick their butts at it. Someday Neversoft will own snow skiing, so all you skiers should sign short-term contracts...
- **Surfing**—Growing up in Montana, I didn't paddle out very often, but I have been going out every weekend this winter along the Ventura coastline. So far, stories of me getting slammed far outnumber stories of me getting great rides, but surfing is still fun as hell. Rumor has it that the Kelly Slater game is sweet....
- **Wakeboarding**—I don't wakeboard. In fact, those guys generally make big waves and screw the water up for us traditional slalom skiers, but I have to say wakeboarding will make a cool game.
- **Snowmobiling**—I don't get the opportunity to do as much snowmobiling as I would like to, living 15 minutes from the ocean, but if I am going to advertise for another company, Sled Storm kicks ass. I can't wait for the PS2 version.
- **Fighting Golf**—If the other player gets a stroke up on you at the end of the hole, you get the chance to brain him with your putter. Someone will eventually make this game.



Mini-Game of the Year:
Shenmue's combo of Space Harrier and Hang On (DC)

From FFIX's card game to the skill-building bonus stuff in Virtua Tennis, we found plenty of fun little diversions last year—but these mini-games all paled in comparison to the perfect ports of Space Harrier and Hang-On you find in Yokosuka's arcade in Shenmue. See? Not everything in the '80s sucked.

It was a bad year for...

• PlayStation 2 owners
Did you play Shenmue, Skies of Arcadia, Quake III, Jet Grind Radio, NFL/NBA2K1, Code: Veronica, Test Drive Le Mans, Virtua Tennis, DOA2, Ecco, SNK vs. Capcom and Grandia II? We didn't think so. Heck, were you even able to find a PlayStation 2?

• Sega
Name one other company that can do so much good and receive so little compensation for its efforts.

• 989 Sports titles
Three words: NFL GameDay 2001.

• Puzzle games
Eventually someone will figure out a new way to approach the puzzle game, but that certainly didn't happen in the year 2000. Fantavision? Feh. Pokémon Puzzle League? OK, a great game, but nothing we haven't seen before. Intelligent Qube Remix (Japan only) was pretty snappy-looking, but played like crap. Oh well, here's to a fresh start.

• The bean counters
The game industry saw a 5 percent decline in sales in 2000. Total hardware, software and accessory sales totaled $6.5 billion in 2000, compared to $6.9 billion in 1999. Fear not—industry experts say the dip is due to 2000 being a "transitional" year. Things will pick up once all the new hardware hits.

Power Tools

Peripheral Reviews

Game Screen

Company	System	Price
Pelican	PS one	$129.99

This screen has a nice, large surface and doesn't blur all that much even during really fast games. RPGs are a little difficult to play because of the small text, but otherwise this baby is pretty nice. A dual-power DC adapter makes the PS one a must for long car trips, though you need to find a place to sit the whole unit while you grasp the controller. Unfortunately, the speakers are really tinny, ruining most music. Worth it for a hundred bucks or less.

www.pelicanacc.com

DC Twin Joystick

Company	System	Price
Blaze	DC	$69.99

Street Fighter fanatics know well the frustration of trying to pull off half-circle movements and three-button combos on the standard DC pad. This new piece of gear makes for a much smoother fighting game experience, but a note of warning: When sitting on a couch, you and your pals are gonna have to sit... um...*very* close together to play. And the peripheral is anything but slick—who thought pink buttons would look cool? This is a rugged, responsive controller, but picking up two Ascii sticks is a better bet.

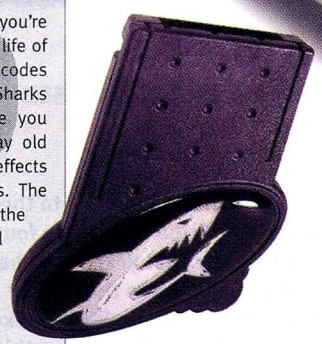
www.superufo.com

GameShark 2

Company	System	Price
InterAct	PS2	$49.99

This is a definite purchase if you're interested in prolonging the life of your old games. The weird codes that you can find on GameSharks are often enough to make you want to go back and replay old classics just to see the new effects or moves this device offers. The PS2 version works just like the PS one CDX version: a small GS memory card in your card port and a CD with the graphic interface. The PS2 GS even comes with an extra disc full of PS one codes.

www.interact-acc.com

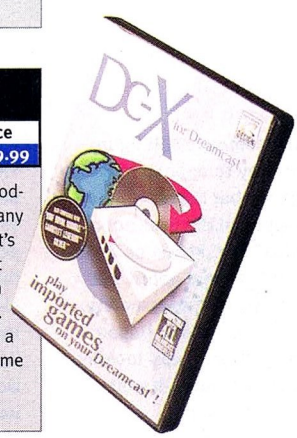


DC-X

Company	System	Price
Blaze	DC	$29.99

Faster and cheaper than a mod-chip, the DC-X lets you play any import (Japanese or European). It's really simple to use—just insert the disc, turn on your DC, then place any game into the system. Voilá! Unless you already own a GameShark (which serves the same purpose), get one of these.

www.superufo.com



Mobile Monitor

Company	System	Price
InterAct	PS one	$129.99

InterAct's Mobile Monitor and Pelican's Game Screen are identical, except for the logo. They have the same decent screen and same crappy speakers, and neither is worth the current asking price. It is nice, however, to have a firmly attached (with two screws), folding screen on your PS one. Makes for a convenient, travel-sized package. Again, if you can find this product on sale for less than $100, it's worth a purchase. Otherwise, we'll wait for Sony's screen.

www.interact-acc.com

VIPER 2

PlayStation®

nYko

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Review Crew

This Month...

Well it was slim pickin's in reviews this month, outside of a few standout titles (notably Onimusha and Fear Effect 2, which both lost Game of the Month honors by a nose). Of course this shouldn't be any big surprise—as the number of new titles on the shelves slows to a trickle following the holiday season, so too do the number of quality new releases. In fact, not one game earned higher than an *EGM* Silver Award this issue—including Game of the Month. The last time Game of the Month received less than a Gold Award? *EGM* #122, September 1999, EA's Sled Storm. Frankly, a temporary lull in games to play is A-OK by the Review Crew—it gives us a chance to spend quality time with some older favorites, and build up our PSO characters.

The Crew

Crispin Boyer

In a move that sparked no controversy whatsoever, Cris proclaimed that cover game GT3 is at least three times as realistic as Grand Prix for the Atari VCS.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure

Dan Leahy

Dan broke his hand playing that 1980s blood sport known as racquetball. He learned two things: not to punch walls, and how to play video games one-handed.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Rage

Jonathan Dudlak

Jon's put in a bid at Sega to buy all the left-over DC parts for his "project." He's leading the bidding with an offer of eight cents, a yo-yo and a half-eaten Krispy Kreme.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Action

Ryan Lockhart

Ryan turned 25 this month, decided he was too old for video games, and almost went off to missionary school. Then he saw Onimusha. Crisis averted.

Favorite Genres: Adventure, RPG

Dean Hager

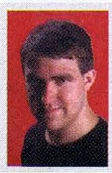
After playing several hours of Knockout Kings 2001, Dean went berserk and challenged the entire office to a bare-knuckle boxing match. He got beat up pretty good.

Favorite Genre: Sports, Racing

Mark MacDonald

Mark swears he is the "black Mario" mentioned in Jay Z's song "Big Pimpin'." despite the fact the lyric is "black bario," and Mark is very clearly white.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure



Chris Johnston

CJ's been mumbling something about defending the secrets of Castle Greyskull this month. We have no idea what he's talking about.

Favorite Genres: Adventure, Puzzle

James Mielke

A nymphette named "Tasha," a PSO player named "Jesus," Sam K's 22nd birthday, a trip to Scotland and a new tattoo. It's been a lovely month for Milky.

Favorite Genres: Action, Fighting

Kraig Kujawa

During the third quarter of the Super Bowl, Kraig booted up NFL 2K1 to simulate his own Super Bowl and wondered aloud which systems NFL 2K2 will end up on.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy

Greg Sewart

Sewart's been taking a lot of the anti-Canada mail pretty hard lately. Won't any of his countrymen rush to his defense?

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action

Our Awards

Platinum Awards go to games that get three 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 receive **Silver Awards.**

Additional Contributors

Ethan Einhorn — Ethan has been creeping around the office with his back to the cubicle walls all month, responding only to the phrase, "That's good, Jean-Luc." A little WinBack goes a long way...

John Davison — Our esteemed leader didn't have time to review anything this month—he was too busy crushing our enemies, driving them before us, and hearing the lamentations of their women.

Todd Zuniga — Todd took time out from his busy schedule of interviewing sports stars and racking up massive Spectravision bills for our sister mag *OPM* to review Fear Effect 2 for us this month.

Our Philosophy

10 9 8 7 6 **5** 4 3 2 1 **0**

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, as our scale (above) explains. In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We repeat: 5.0 IS AN AVERAGE GRADE. Simple, ain't it?

Game of the Month

ATV Offroad Fury **Pg.106**

After all those RPGs winning Game of the Month for the past few issues, we figured it's time you racin' fans get something to cheer about. After five months of PS2 reviews, one of them had to come out on top sooner or later. Sony's shutout slump has finally been broken.

EDITORS' CURRENT FAVES

1	Phantasy Star Online Sega	
2	ATV Offroad Fury Sony CEA	PS2
3	Onimusha: Warlords Capcom	PS2
4	Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix Eidos	
5	Star Wars: Starfighter LucasArts	PS2
6	Metal Slug X Agetec	
7	NFL 2K1 Sega	
8	NBA 2K1 Sega	
9	Jet Grind Radio Sega	
10	Pokémon Puzzle Challenge Nintendo	GAME BOY COLOR

NBA Hoopz

Publisher:	Midway Games
Developer:	Eurocom
Featured In:	*EGM* #139
Players:	1-4
Supports:	None
Best Feature:	Great mini-games
Worst Feature:	3-on-3, but only four human players
Web Site:	www.midway.com

It's taken three name changes for Midway's basketball franchise to get 3-on-3 play, but **it doesn't make this arcade sports game much better—just different**. Although there are more scorers on the floor, points are actually much harder to come by. There's just not as many easy dunks and lay-ups because at least one defender is usually back to make a last-ditch swat at the ball, forcing you to play more half-court offense (including post-up moves that let you back up a defender for the score). This shouldn't scare you into thinking that Hoopz is turning into a simulation; it's not. When it comes to mixing arcade gameplay with a twist of realism, Midway has performed a Cirque Du Soleil-esque balancing act to keep the gameplay fun but reminiscent of the NBA. The players aren't super-detailed, but they move fast and animate fluidly. You can still push players to the floor, catch "on fire" with three consecutive baskets, and rip off highlight reel dunks with ease. Surprisingly, the best thing about this new Jam session are the mini-games. A few games of Around the World, 2 Ball and 21 make for a welcome break from the Season Mode and it also makes the single-player mode nearly as fun as the multiplayer ones (the strength of this game). If you like action-sports games, NBA Hoopz is one of the best. At the very least, it's good enough to hold your interest until Midway decides to take the next step, and make a 4-on-4 game. **Kraig**

If you like NBA Showtime, you'll like NBA Hoopz, because essentially it's the same game only with an extra player on each side. **It seems like a half-ass upgrade but it really makes a big difference in how you play the game**. The big men can hang out under the hoop and fight for rebounds while your sharp shooters snap off three-pointers. The ol' Pick-and-roll plays a prominent role as well. One thing isn't so great however—at times players get tangled up, especially near the top of the screen (not sure why that is). But in light of the trademark Showtime gameplay, great mini-games and decent multiplayer action, I can overlook that one little flaw. **Dean**

Pop in your favorite Rock N' Jock™ CD and get ready to jam. NBA Hoopz is one continuous, gratuitous highlight reel, **packed with enough sick dunks and alley-oops to make even the most cynical gamer smile**. As a fan of the Showtime series, I had plenty to like about Hoopz right off the bat. The addition of a third player per team crowds the action, but that minor gripe aside I really dig this game. Midway added some replay value with cool mini-games like 21, around-the-world and 2-ball, but I still would love this game online. Hoopz, or Blitz for that matter, plus a broadband adapter plus SegaNet would equate to a lot of fun. **Dan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	6	8

Surf Rocket Racers

Publisher:	Crave Entertainment
Developer:	CRI
Featured In:	*EGM* #138
Players:	1-2
Supports:	Jump Pack
Best Feature:	Decent water effects
Worst Feature:	Little variety
Web Site:	www.cravegames.com

The first Wave Race clone on the Dreamcast leaves a lot to be desired. Although the game boasts 15 different tracks, most of them are just variations on about three different courses. While that's not really a big deal, the problem is that all of the courses are boring and a pain to navigate. And even if you can navigate them well, the opponent AI gets an obvious speed boost once you're in the lead, often streaking by you at unattainable speeds. No worries, though. Most of them are so stupid they'll run into almost every obstacle on the course at some point, pretty much guaranteeing you a good finish. The other racers aren't the only things that get caught in walls and such, either. The camera following your character frequently stops for no reason, mostly in tunnels, completely disorienting you as your alter-ego drives right out of the screen. Unfortunately there aren't even any cool tricks to learn that might give this game a little more replay value; riders can only do flips while in the air. In fact, you're likely to tear through the entire game in a one-night rental, and be left wondering if you can get your three bucks back. What's really insulting, though, is knowing that **Nintendo did this game better about five years ago** on a system not nearly as powerful. If you have to play this, simply rent it. If you really must own a game like this, find a used copy of Wave Race 64 and save yourself some money. **Greg**

This thing tries to combine the wet-and-wild gameplay of Wave Race 64, the arcade simplicity of Hydro Thunder, and the splashy presentation of a Sega game. Too bad it fails at all these things. Surf Rocket Racers comes across as too bare bones. The courses are dull, with few shortcuts, **and the gameplay feels like it's lacking something**. It's almost as if the developers meant to include a lot more technique to the control but in the end just said, "Aw, it's good enough," and shipped SRR as is. Better tricks, power-ups, more control finesse—this game needs all these things. Even its little bonus challenges aren't enough to make SRR interesting. **Crispin**

Surf Rocket Racers has everything it needs to usurp Wave Race 64 as the king of the jet-ski crown. It has a few tricks, 15 courses, different riders with various strengths and weaknesses, and, most significantly, it's running on superior hardware. Then why aren't the graphics and the wave effects as good as those on the N64? Why then, does the AI seem cheap? No particular strategy enables you to get an honest lead. The CPU overtakes you at will and then recedes for no apparent reason. For this specific reason, **SRR remains unexciting and annoying**, when it could have been so much more. Maybe we'll get a worthy Wave Race follow-up on Game Cube. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	4	5

Kao the Kangaroo

Publisher:	Titus
Developer:	X-Ray
Featured In:	N/A
Players:	1
Supports:	Jump Pack
Best Feature:	Considerate camera
Worst Feature:	Chattanooga-choochoo framerate
Web Site:	www.titusgames.com

Kao (pronounced "K-O" not "cow") the Kangaroo may seem like a kid's platformer, but that's because it is. In spite of that, the game manages to do a number of things right: The camera is placed at a logical vantage point (although too much environmental foliage tends to get in the way). The controls are responsive enough, giving you free and easy access to Kao's one-two boxing punch, tail whip and kangaroo-jump; digital and analog control are supported, which is good since analog can sometimes be a little too loose for some of the more treacherous platforming; there are a good number of ways Kao can get around beyond merely being on foot, such as riding an alligator or a scooter, using a hang-glider, etc. But bringing the game down to earth is the occasionally draggy framerate, simplistic character models and environments, and an overall derivative feel of having been here and already done that. **It's like a slower-paced Crash Bandicoot**. Still, for younger gamers (under 10 years old) who own a DC, this is just about the right speed. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	5	7

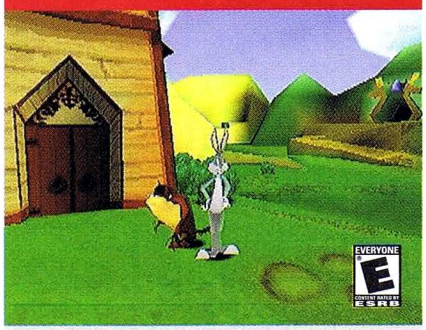
Polaris SnoCross

Publisher:	Vatical Ent.
Developer:	Vicarious Visions
Featured In:	N/A
Players:	1-4
Supports:	Rumble Pak
Best Feature:	Fast-paced gameplay
Worst Feature:	Tons o' draw-in
Web Site:	www.vatical.com

Think of this game as the ugly stepchild of Wave Race 64 and 1080 Snowboarding. Horrendous draw-in problems, a choppy framerate and blurry textures make it clear that Polaris has not sprung from the same gene pool as these extreme-sports classics, despite the presence of a few superficial similarities. Undulating 1080-style terrains make for some exciting twists and turns, but there is little strategy involved in maintaining your balance and avoiding obstacles. When you're first learning how to play, that's fine, but hours into the game, when the difficulty level should be ramping up, you'll still be blasting through courses with the greatest of ease. The snowmobiles are similar aesthetically to the jet skis in Wave Race, but sadly, they don't control with the same grace or agility. Turning is sluggish, and the brake button is useless. The split-screen multiplayer experience is not very satisfying, either—a severely limited depth of field makes this mode more of a "let's try it once" novelty than a legitimate play option. C'mon, the N64 deserves better. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	4	6	3

Bugs & Taz in Time Busters



Publisher:	Infogrames
Developer:	Artificial Mind + Movement
Featured In:	*EGM* #136
Players:	1-2
Supports:	Dual Shock
Best Feature:	Incredible co-op play
Worst Feature:	Graphics are a little dated
Web Site:	www.looneytunes-games.com

This package stands as the pinnacle of cooperative multiplayer gaming on the PlayStation. Surprised? I know I sure was—but let me tell ya, when I started playing this with a buddy, we both became one with the television for two days straight. Playing this action/platformer solo is OK, but tackling it with a friend makes for a gaming experience unlike any you've had before (solving puzzles with a teammate is a blast). Each player takes control of one of the title characters, each with his/her own separate set of abilities. This 2P mode is not presented in split-screen, but instead players alternate camera control. Such a setup may sound limiting, but it's really quite intuitive, and once you adjust to it you'll wonder why other exploration games haven't done this before. In terms of presentation, everything is done right: The animation is topnotch, the cinemas are very funny (as you'd expect from a cartoon-based game), and the camera is easy to control. Mini-games feature prominently in this title, and all of them are well-designed—you'll get to try your hand at Looney Tunes renditions of hockey, plate spinning, carpet riding, etc. Clever, elaborately composed boss fights make reaching the end of a stage a treat. And as icing on the cake, the game is half the price of most new PS releases! Bugs and Taz isn't perfect—the graphics aren't exactly cutting-edge, and an extra world or two would've been nice—but for two-player action, it simply can't be beat. **Ethan**

From the same developers as The Grinch (gag) comes this strong platform game. To get the most enjoyment out of it, definitely play with a friend—it's one of the few platformers to offer good two-player simultaneous play. Playing by yourself it's still a darn good game, although it does **suffer from an extreme case of item collecting-itis**. For four levels, there are *thousands* of gears to collect—isn't that a bit much? And like The Grinch it's got serious texture pop-in and clipping which really hurt the graphics. Level design and the mini-games are excellent, though. If you and a buddy are in the mood for a good platformer, check it out. **Chris**

Considering you can buy this game at most places for 20 bucks, you could do a lot worse. Bug & Taz is **a solid, 3D platformer** that has a pretty imaginative two-player mode. Since Bugs has different abilities than Taz, teamwork is key to complete any stage (like Taz needs to dig holes so Bugs can burrow around, stuff like that). The animation is decent, the jokes are good, and there's a lot of nice voice acting. As a single-player game, where you're constantly switching from one character to another, B&T gets a little tedious, and honestly, each level doesn't have too much originality. Still, this is a worthwhile experience if you're dying for a respectable platformer. **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	8	7

Darkstone

Publisher:	Take 2 Interactive
Developer:	Delphine Software
Featured In:	N/A
Players:	1
Supports:	Dual Shock
Best Feature:	Solid gameplay
Worst Feature:	Horrid Graphics
Web Site:	www.take2games.com

If Take 2 Interactive's $10 line of PlayStation games has taught us anything, it's you get what you pay for. But with Darkstone, you actually get quite a deal—that is, of course, if you can get past the hideous graphics. **Darkstone is a surprisingly solid action/RPG, a 3D Diablo of sorts, but my god, is it ugly**. The visuals are strictly first-generation (if not worse), and they get so messy at times it's almost shocking. Thankfully the camera can be rotated and such, but that's not half as helpful as it should be in most areas. But after a good three hours I became numb to Darkstone's horrific graphics (they caused me physical pain), and I've got to admit, there is some definite fun to be had if you have the patience. The combat with its auto targeting is simple, you level up quickly, and the story line isn't too shabby. I like the fact you can play as eight different characters and the overworld is huge and fun to explore. The dungeons are a pain to traverse though, mainly because the lighting is so horrible it's almost impossible to see where you're going. There is an automap (thankfully), but it does little to subdue the annoyance. Darkstone is an awkward port of the PC game by the same name, and it's cool that Take 2 is bringing this solid (if uninspired) title to the consoles, but its shortcomings are hard to ignore—especially if you're looking at the screen. All in all, Darkstone's still worth the $10 price tag, if you're desperate. **Ryan**

The monsters resemble poo with legs, the walls look like they were drawn with crayons, but **I still dig this game that looks like Diablo on a bad-hair day.** I'm not a masochist, but there's something about this that game that made me want to keep trudging on to the next dungeon. Maybe it's because I want to see how silly the next monster looks, or how sophomoric the next bit of dialogue is, but it's more likely that I'm a sucker for finding and gathering items and then sorting out which ones work best together. There's also lots of characters, towns and quests to jump into, making this an epic scavenger hunt that's actually bigger than Diablo. Just not as pretty. **Kraig**

Wow. Even for $10, **I wouldn't touch this game**. I just cannot get into its Diablo-style gameplay. This game only reminds me why I didn't like RPGs before I played Final Fantasy III on the Super NES: I don't want to have to worry about a slew of menus right from the get-go, or need to read the instruction manual just to start the game. There's too much setup involved. The graphics are atrocious, even compared to first-generation PS one games. Character animation is so choppy and herky-jerky, it's sickening to look at. I suppose if you liked Diablo, Ultima, Wizardry and those types of games, you'll like this a little more than I did. Otherwise, avoid. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
1	4	4	4

Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix

EGM SILVER — EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD

Publisher:	Eidos
Developer:	Kronos
Featured In:	*EGM* #137
Players:	1
Supports:	Dual Shock
Best Feature:	Fantastic puzzles
Worst Feature:	Trying every item at a spot
Web Site:	www.feareffect.com

Sex, murder, suicide, drugs, prostitution, an AIDS-like disease—and that's just the intro movie. Fear Effect 2 definitely doesn't shy away from taboo subjects, and the result, helped quite a bit by some outstanding voice acting, is one of the most compelling and interesting adult stories I've played in a long time. Only those who have seen the ads for this game and are expecting some hot girl-on-girl action will be disappointed. Graphically FE2 hasn't changed much from the first game—the backgrounds are again moving video, which means they look grainy but are capable of some awesome animation as you play (I can't wait to see this series on the DVD systems). Controls and gameplay are also just like the original—basically a loose copy of the Resident Evil schemes. Luckily the bosses this time around are easier (maybe a bit too easy) and the previously long loading times after you die are almost nonexistent. I can't stress how important that is, 'cause even though FE2 doesn't feature nearly the amount of quick and rapid deaths as the first game, it still has its share. Which brings us to my favorite aspect of FE2: Most adventure games are lucky if they manage two interesting puzzles—**this game has almost two dozen *great* puzzles**; they are challenging, clever and perfectly woven into the levels. Simply put, they are the best bunch of brain teasers in any game I've ever played, and reason enough to love FE2. **Mark**

Having never played Fear Effect before, I wasn't sure what to expect from this FMV-laden action. If it didn't have the gameplay to back it up, it would be nothing more than an excuse to serve up heavy doses of violence and sexual innuendo. Without question **the FMV makes the game look better, but also makes it look very grainy**. Good thing the load times are quick. The control scheme takes some getting used to, but once you do it's really handy to be able to switch weapons, bust up some enemies and reload all while running. It reminds me more of Out of This World than Resident Evil, maybe just because of the frustrating style of some of its puzzles. **Chris**

There's some hype surrounding FE2 since it features two pretty ladies playing a brief game of tonsil hockey. And besides that, there's profanity, lots of bullet-to-the-brain gruesomeness, and **a story that entertains, surprises, shocks and unravels into plenty of surreal weirdness**. But shock value isn't the reason you should unload your pocket at the corner gaming store; Buy FE2 because it's awesome. For adult gamers this foray into the dark underbelly of fantasy/reality (can you smell the oxymoron?) appeals on all carnal levels. The visuals are so crisp and imaginative you'll want to get to the next area just to see them. Don't miss this one. **Todd**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	8	6

Metal Slug X

Publisher: Agetec
Developer: SNK
Featured In: *EGM* #140
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Great gameplay
Worst Feature: White blood
Web Site: www.agetec.com

One of the last, great Neo•Geo games has made the trip over to the PlayStation in surprisingly fine form. Sure, Metal Slug X is nothing more than a recolored, slightly revamped version of Metal Slug 2 (a remix of sorts), but **it's still one of the best games in its genre**. You know, the 2D hand-drawn side-scrolling shooting/action one. Sure, the game doesn't exactly push the PlayStation to its graphical limits—even though the animation is damn nice—but really now, these kinds of games aren't about the visuals. Instead Metal Slug X concentrates on delivering fun chaos, the kind normally reserved for overhead shooters and the like. It's an arcade game, one that has you (and a friend, if you want some crazy two player action) leaping like mad over enemy fire, gunning through hordes of foes, and fighting bosses so huge they often fill the screen. You can pick from four main characters, use over five different weapons, and ride in four different powerful vehicles, otherwise known as Metal Slugs. And man, is it fun—not to mention hard. Thankfully there are unlimited continues, which, I'm not ashamed to admit, I used often. Fans of the Neo•Geo original have plenty of reasons to check this version out also, thanks to exclusive features like an art gallery, a Combat School where you'll be graded on your skill, and extra training missions. Great stuff, even moreso if you enjoy classic gameplay and visuals. **Ryan**

Metal Slug was one of the best reasons to own a Neo•Geo back in the day. Its high-speed mayhem coupled with cartoony looks and subtle humor made it an instant fave, and X keeps most of that intact for the PS. The Neo•Geo version handled the graphics and animation a little better, but it's hard to fault this cool port to the PS much beyond that. For newbies to the series, think Contra Hard Corps/Gunstar Heroes with a more military feel and tons of junk flying all over the screen—and with little to no slowdown! Yes, it rocks, especially when you get two players involved. With the PS on the outs, MSX is an **awesome way to milk that 32-bit baby a little longer**. **Jonathan**

I'd love to say this is a perfect port of the original Neo•Geo version, but the animation and explosions just don't measure up. Luckily the same frantic old-school action/platformer gameplay (think Contra) that made the series a fan favorite remains. Fun weapons, cool vehicles, simultaneous two-player play, and **a wicked sense of humor**—Metal Slug is a nice package. Unfortunately the unlimited continues start you back right where you left off, making MSX a quick rental for most gamers. But if you're a true die-hard game fan and suddenly find yourself with lots of time on your hands, you can spend plenty here mastering all the levels on all four difficulties. **Mark**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	6	8

Bowling

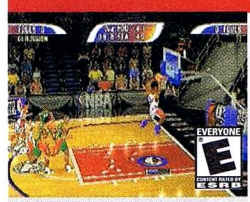
EGM SILVER EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD

Publisher: Agetec
Developer: A1 Games
Featured In: *EGM* #140
Players: 1-4
Supports: None
Best Feature: Great gameplay
Worst Feature: Sparse graphics
Web Site: www.a1games.com

Good news, sports fans! Unlike Spec-Ops—the first PS game to hit the magic price point of $10—Bowling doesn't suck. Granted, there isn't much to see here, just a single lane set in the middle of a pitch-black background. But with a decent number of play options (including a fun multiplayer mode and a special 45-pin stage), an exceptional interface, and lightning-fast load times, **it's better than most full-priced PlayStation releases**. Believe it or not, this stands second only to Ten Pin Alley as the most entertaining representation of this sport on the console. The package is instantly accessible to gamers and non-gamers alike (your girlfriend and her gal pals will dig it), and doesn't require a multi-tap for four-player action...just a single control pad will do ya. When it comes down to it, a title's lasting appeal is contingent on its gameplay, and that's where Bowling excels. This is the kind of game you'll still pop in your deck and play months after you've plunked down your cash when you have 15 minutes to kill. Well worth it. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	8	9

NBA Hoopz



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Eurocom
Featured In: *EGM* #140
Players: 1-6
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Six players at once can play
Worst Feature: Six people won't want to play it
Web Site: www.midway.com

The big hook of Midway's sports games have always been their fast-paced, balls-to-the-wall gameplay and flashy moves, but NBA Hoopz on the PS is as sluggish as the Miami Heat's offense. The players look like they're running on a court polished with molasses and the ball even slows down as it's traveling toward the basket. Slowdown problems like this are often caused by the developers sacrificing speed for eye-candy, but sadly, that isn't the case here. The lackluster 3D players have a smudgy look that makes your eyes feel dilated, and there's a lot of choppy animation during the best part of the game—the dunks. One second the players are in the paint, and a moment later they are magically stuffing the ball down. For even more evidence of this lackadaisical effort, look no further than the omission of the great mini-games that grace the DC edition. There's no reason why Midway couldn't have included these (it might have salvaged it), unless they just didn't give a damn. **And if they don't care about their own game, why in the heck should you?** **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	4	4	4

Puzzle Star Sweep

Publisher: A1 Games
Developer: Axela
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: An English translation so bad it's good
Worst Feature: Garbage blocks fall during play
Web Site: www.a1games.com

After the price, **the best thing about Star Sweep is the translation. It's so bad, it's good**. Especially the manual—tears were streaming down my face as I read the game's story. It's hilarious. Of course if I'd paid any more than $10 for this game (yes, I bought it) I'd be railing it for the stunted translation. Characters are all cute anime-style good and bad guys. The game itself is a tame puzzler with a few big gameplay problems. First of all, garbage blocks drop while you're placing pieces; that can suddenly make areas where you were going to put a piece inaccessible. Since all the pieces are the same size, you'll be stuck with lots of areas too small to put a piece. Then the screen fills up and—bam!—you're screwed. You can't move the stack up from the bottom to possibly give you more places to put them, either. It moves up by itself and not at a constant rate. So you might be ready to place something at the bottom that'd make stuff disappear, only to have the stack move up at the last second. A decent puzzler that's frustrating on higher difficulty levels. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	6	5

Racing

Publisher: Agetec
Developer: Tamsoft
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: It's only 10 bucks
Worst Feature: It's not worth 10 bucks
Web Site: www.agetec.com

Agetec's A1 series is probably the first instance where the $10 game program hasn't been totally abused—There are actually some games in the series worth owning. Unfortunately, Racing isn't one of them. The thing that kills this game isn't the exceptionally poor graphics or the very limited selection of cars and tracks. For 10 bucks I can deal with all of those problems as long as I enjoy the experience. But the control in Racing is extremely touchy, and the wheels don't seem to have much traction either in Drift or Grip modes. Playing through and beating the Novice setting isn't too tough, since the speeds are so low. But once you get to the higher settings, be prepared for endless frustration. Whether or not the game costs less makes no difference—I don't like paying anything to be exasperated like this. I also think it's kinda funny that Racing features a rally car on the cover, even though trying to do anything like a powerslide in the actual game usually lands you in the weeds or in the wall. **With GT currently at $20, Racing just isn't worth it.** **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	3	2	3

Shooter: Starfighter Sanvein

Publisher: A1 Games
Developer: Success
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Some good music
Worst Feature: Severely limited gameplay
Web Site: www.a1games.com

If it's one genre where presentation and production values are easily forgotten in the heat of white-hot gameplay, it's in the dodging and blasting action of a good shoot-'em-up. So I thought the shooter edition of this new $10 series might stand a chance—unfortunately **this game has less ambition than an unemployed 35-year-old living in his parent's basement**. It's a "shooter" not really in the classic 16-bit sense of the word, or even 8-bit...more like Atari 2600. There are two kinds of stages: normal levels, where you blast what look like big hunks of garbage, and boss levels, where you blast bigger hunks of garbage. In both stages the playfield is limited to a hexagon barely larger than the screen, where you bounce around trying to take out the baddies. And that's it—that's the entire game. Five levels made up of those two kinds of stages over and over. There's three ships and special weapons to choose from, but it's not enough. Not a *completely* horrible game, but so limited and lacking any kind of variety that you'll be bored in five minutes—and that's $2 a minute. **Mark**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	7	3	3

Snowboarding

Publisher: A1 games
Developer: Atelier Double
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Really low price of admission
Worst Feature: Worst control ever
Web Site: www.a1games.com

If I strapped two honey-baked hams to my feet and launched myself willy-nilly down a mountain, I reckon I'd have better control over my speed and direction than what's offered in this game. Your character here feels less like a snowboarder and more like a pinball, careening off ridge after ridge as he speeds down the slopes. In fact, I pretty much just let my snowboarder bounce his way through the course, which was easier than using the tight-turn buttons to try to steer. The weak control makes life bad enough in the bare-bones Race mode, but Trick mode is even more annoying. Although you can do basic grabs any time you want, you can only pull off spectacular stunts by hitting the X button at exactly the right place and time (arrows point to spots in the course where you can do tricks). Special tricks are more trouble than they're worth, though—you have little control over your spin rate, and landing a trick is more a matter of luck than skill. I guess I shouldn't expect much from a $10 budget title like this, but then would you pay 10 bucks for a turd? **Crispin**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	2	1	2

ATV Offroad Fury

EGM SILVER

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Rainbow Studios
Featured In: *EGM* #140
Players: 1-4
Supports: None
Best Feature: Supercharged physics engine
Worst Feature: No first-person view
Web Site: www.playstation.com

Who would've thought quad racing could be so darn fun? Not me, that's for sure. But soon after I fired ATV up I knew I'd be hooked for hours—it's that good. Unless you've played Motocross Madness for the PC, you've never experienced an off-road racer like this. **The sense of space is simply awesome**. You can literally see for miles into the clear (just a touch of fog) rolling landscapes. It's very impressive. And, to their credit, Rainbow Studios pulled it all off without sacrificing graphic detail. The colors are sharp and vibrant, the shading expertly done, and the textures very realistic. But as good as they are, the graphics are only part of the story. Racing the quads over the dynamic terrain is the real treat. It doesn't matter if it's a snow track or one of the desert courses, the monstrous hills and valleys are the perfect catalyst for incredible high-flying maneuvers. The physics are only semi-realistic—in other words, launching your quad 300 feet over a giant hill is no problem. I spent hours perfecting the art of jumping for distance and placement (the free-roaming environments provide plenty of terrain to practice). In the game the key to keeping your momentum on multiple jumps is landing on the down-slope of the next hill. It's obvious the developers did this to reward good jumping technique. Aside from the lack of a first-person view I couldn't be happier with this one. Oh, multiplayer (up to four player) is fantastic as well. **Dean**

A quality PS2 game from Sony? Yeah, I'm shocked too. But that's what ATV is. With an awesome physics model and beautiful, open terrain that puts Smuggler's Run to shame, **every racing fan who owns a PS2 should buy this right now**. What's more, the AI is tough, but not impossible. That means learning the setup and practicing each track is the only way to win in ATV. Problem is, rookie drivers might get so frustrated they'll give up on the game early on. I think Rainbow could have been a little more forgiving, or added a difficulty option. Despite the fact it gets a little repetitive after you've completed most of the races, ATV is solid. **Greg**

Man, the PS2 is where it's at for all things extreme. Slap this title right up on the shelf next to SSX and you'll have two of the best racing/trick hybrid games of recent memory. **The emphasis here is definitely on the racing, which draws you in with brilliantly conceived courses and fiendish A.I.** Any game that has me swearing as I slip just out of third place, only to immediately restart the race, is great in my book. My only complaints are that there could be more modes and more unlockable features. The multiplayer and cross-country modes are just a touch on the light side, and could've been deeper. But who doesn't want more of a good thing? **Dan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	8	8

F1 Racing Championship

EGM SILVER

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Video System
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Steering Wheel
Best Feature: Excellent control
Worst Feature: Little bit of slowdown
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com

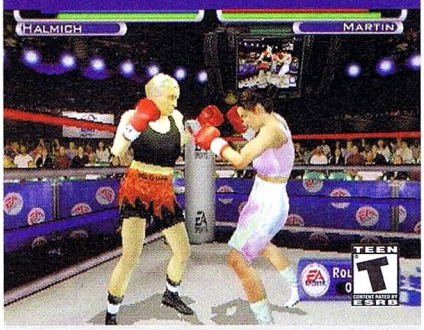
This is a very respectable F1 game—definitely much better than the EA Sports offering a couple months ago. F1 Racing Championship contains all the licensed cars, drivers and tracks you'd expect. Unfortunately, since this game is based on the '99 season, no Indianapolis course here. But all the other tracks are present and accounted for, and look great. From the tight quarters in Monaco to the wide-open racing of Hockenheim, the level of realism is wonderful. Heat waves blur cars ahead of you, and roadside objects are reflected perfectly in the glossy paintjob of each car as they scream around the courses. It all comes at a price, though, since the game does suffer a little slowdown once in a while. I also wish there was a real race commentator and that more stats would scroll across the screen during each event. I hate not knowing who's the fastest or how far I am from the leader during a race. Still, F1RC has setup options out the wazoo, and a very cool Scenario mode where you get placed in different situations real drivers had to face at one point or another. It could be holding your position on old tires for three laps or overtaking a teammate before the end of the race. Best of all, **the control is superb** and the opponent vehicles react realistically to your presence. If you out-brake someone into a turn, they won't just hold their line and ram you, they'll get out of the way. Good job by Video Systems. **Greg**

With GT3 still a good way off and the PS2 giving up the racing scene to the DC, it's good to see it hosting a **simple, fast-paced racer that you can just sit down and play the heck out of**. F1's controls are easy to pick up—it's a great game for beginners. Flip over to the Grand Prix setting, though, and a host of dialable settings opens up for the pros. From weather conditions to racing parameters to detailed car customization, there's an exhaustive array of tweaks. Graphically it's a little washed-out and isn't even in the same hemisphere as GT3 in terms of detail, but the focus seems to be on the art of racing, not the look, and F1's pretty much nailed it. **Jonathan**

Video Systems is known for their detailed racing sims—they go about as deep as any console F1 game dares to tread. **Their latest is no exception: You can tweak just about every stinking thing** including the gear ratios, toe/camber, engine rev-limits, and so on. I found the extensive adjustability quite useful. On the other hand, the sensation of speed is not the best and there's a bit of slowdown here and there. The handling takes some getting used to as well. But overall, the good outweighs the bad. The opponent AI is, well, intelligent (they actually get out of the way when you pass). The difficulty levels are set correctly and last but not least—it's lots of fun. **Dean**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	7	8

Knockout Kings 2001



Publisher:	EA Sports
Developer:	Black Ops
Featured In:	*EGM* #139
Players:	1-2
Supports:	None
Best Feature:	Realistic
Worst Feature:	Collision detection is a bit spotty
Web Site:	www.easports.com

If you're looking for a fisticuffs game in the vein of Ready 2 Rumble, keep looking—KK 2001 is best suited for hardcore boxing aficionados. Not that the average player couldn't pick it up and have fun, but the strain of learning actual boxing strategy might spook quick-fix gamers. As long as you're a fan of the series, or you just like realistic sports sims, you won't be disappointed. The format is similar to the PS version: Tons of pro fighters from the past and present, same training rounds, same arenas, etc. Everything is the same except for a couple major points. First—and most importantly—it's fast. Not fast like Ready 2 Rumble, but quick enough to make dodging punches, backing away, and throwing combos much more effective. That alone opens up a whole new level of strategy. The second, it's mighty sharp-looking. Yeah, some of the characters and referees look like zombies, but for the most part they appear close to their real-life counterparts. **Essentially the things I thought held back the PS version (lack of speed, stiff animation, etc.) are fixed**. Unfortunately the collision detection is still a little sketchy. Some body shots appear to pass through the front of the abdomen. But it's the kind of problem that seems more severe than it really is—in other words, it doesn't hurt gameplay all that much. If you're the least bit into boxing (and you have patience) you should buy this game. **Dean**

About half of EA's PS2 games deliver hype and presentation while offering stunted gameplay. Luckily, Knockout Kings 2001 falls into the right half, with **gameplay firmly at the forefront of the experience**. I love training for the big fight, and KK2001 faithfully re-creates the lengthy process of becoming #1. I still find the controls a little sluggish, with a minor delay between button-press and the resulting action. This hampers the "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" approach, but it does makes counter-punching and blocking more important. Visually, the game is pretty average for the PS2. It's not Madden, but it's not as bad as Live or NASCAR. **Dan**

The scope of the title is amazingly encyclopedic, and educated me about the past and present of the sport as much as it did entertain me. The sheer number of punches, combos and fighting styles is dizzying, but the graphics are not. EA focused on making the boxers resemble the real thing, but some of their heads look weird and don't fit their bodies. Punches look fine when thrown, but fighters often act like they're lifeless sandbags when hit, and sometimes even the collision detection seems suspect. These problems shouldn't scare boxing fans away, though. **Even if Knockout Kings has its knocks, it's still easily the best boxing game out there**. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	7	8

NHL FaceOff 2001

Publisher:	989 Sports
Developer:	SolWorks
Featured In:	N/A
Players:	1-8
Supports:	Multi-tap
Best Feature:	Great skating
Worst Feature:	Ugly graphics
Web Site:	www.989sports.com

FaceOff 2001 is **definitely a step in the right direction**. This game still suffers from a few problems, most notably the questionable performance of some goalies when there's a crowd in front of the net. Some of the worst shots seem to go in on a regular basis, but one-on-one a lot of the goalies are like a brick wall. It could be they don't deal well with a screen. The computer players don't seem to hustle back out of the zone to avoid offsides, either. I've played games where there were literally six offside calls in less than a minute. And the fighting looks just ridiculous. The two players will stand there, and sort of wave their hands at one another, apparently beating each other senseless. Nonetheless, playing two high-rated teams against each other usually results in a good game, and I think the skating feels almost perfect here—that's no mean feat in hockey games lately. It's too bad the graphics, actually the entire presentation, is pretty ugly. The players look horrible. Luckily the camera needs to be so far off the ice during play that it's easy to overlook during a game. But even the transitions, the times between a whistle blow and a faceoff, could have been done better. There's absolutely no color commentary, hardly any stats flashed on the screen or anything. It makes every game feel like a non-event. Still, this is a sign that 989 Sports games on the PS2 are getting better. I can't wait to see next year's FaceOff. **Greg**

It's not the prettiest hockey game I've seen. The players are bulky and a bit on the bland side and, aside from the faces, look like clones. So in that department it doesn't score too well. **Thankfully it does score big in the gameplay arena**. It's as smooth and fast as its PS cousin. That may not sound like much, but apparently it's much harder to pull off those traits on the PS2. And while I'm not the biggest hockey fan, I had a lot of fun with the game overall. The body-checking is pretty darn effective as are the speed burst and directed passing. It does seem, however, that the goalie AI is a little weak—I had several high-scoring games. Still, it's worth a look. **Dean**

With such experience at making hockey games, **it boggles my mind that 989 can put out a product with such obvious flaws**. For starters, the graphics in this game are so uninspired that I wonder if they realized the PlayStation they were programming for had a "2" after it. I mean, even the menus suck. Sure, the players animate smoothly, but my lawnmower would cut grass faster if it had a Ferrari engine under the hood, too. The gameplay isn't bad—it delivers the same fast-paced action (with tight controls) that the previous game did. In fact, were it not for the braindead goalies, this would be a very realistic hockey game, even if it didn't look like one. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	6	7

Oni

Publisher:	Rockstar Games
Developer:	Bungie
Featured In:	*EGM* #139
Players:	1
Supports:	None
Best Feature:	Wide range of attacks
Worst Feature:	Tie between control and targeting
Web Site:	www.rockstargames.com

With all the pomp and circumstance surrounding this title during its long years in development, one might assume a pretty impressive game would emerge from all that work. But no, no it hasn't. It seems the team spent 90% of their time thinking of new wrestling moves to give Konoko and the enemies and only 10% on the targeting, control, level design, and balance. The backbone of any third-person shooter is in the movement and combat systems, and both are just a bear to deal with in Oni. At first, it seems like you're able to lock on to a target if he's close enough. But as soon as you move or fire, everything falls apart, and you're shooting frantically into the air, analog sticks akimbo in a laughable attempt to refocus on your rapidly moving foe. This makes the game **inconceivably frustrating**. Close combat's no better—while you have a ton of cool moves, it's amazingly difficult to get in position to pull them off. The balance is impressively skewed too—apparently three shots from a rocket launcher are only as strong as a trio of punches. Oh, and don't be surprised if an enemy pile drives you. It seems to be the preferred attack method of evil syndicate cronies everywhere. Be prepared for thankless, repetitive gameplay; as in find a "console", push "x" next to it, then go to the door it opens and fight some people. Killer load times, too. Don't get lured in by Oni's shiny foil label, the game inside is a lot duller. **Jonathan**

I had high hopes for this game. It's animé styled, it's an action game—by all accounts I should love it. But I'm not a fan of Oni's "move with one analog, aim with another" PC-esque control scheme. It could've benefitted from a more console-style setup—or at least an option to set it up differently. Where's my Z-targeting, dagnabbit?! It's too easy to lose track of enemies this way. The environments are large (maybe too large) and there are a lot of repeated textures. **It's too bad the animé theme is so underused**. Too many times you're reading tiny blocks of text off of menu screens. Oni has my vote for least exciting action game of the year. **Chris**

Oni had so much potential when we first saw it. A nice, free-roaming adventure game with a cool story line. Unfortunately, the final product reveals Oni as **one of the most infuriating games yet** released on the PS2. The control is needlessly frustrating, there's no multiplayer mode, and it's next to impossible to aim your weapons with any precision. Of course, Konoko's enemies can aim with sniper-like accuracy at all times, meaning the only way to beat them is to rush them and take a few rounds. You guessed it, that leads to death more often than not. I can't count the amount of times I've wanted to destroy my controller in this game. **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	4	5	4

EGM SILVER

Onimusha: Warlords

Publisher:	**Capcom**
Developer:	**Capcom**
Featured In:	***EGM* #135**
Players:	**1**
Supports:	**None**
Best Feature:	**Graphics are insane**
Worst Feature:	**Short playtime**
Web Site:	**www.capcom.com**

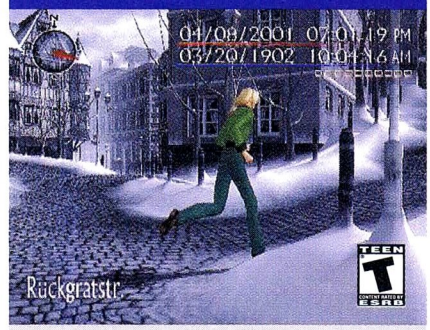
Just like Dino Crisis is Resident Evil with dinosaurs, Onimusha is Resident Evil with swords. Er, and samurai and demons and stuff. At least that's what I thought when I first saw shots for this game a good two years ago (when it was still being developed for the PS one), but it turns out I was only partially right. Yes, there are plenty of similarities to Capcom's flagship horror series: polygon characters on rendered backgrounds, near-identical controls, some nifty puzzles, the ability to take control of another character for a limited time, and a super-short playtime. But, thankfully, Onimusha also improves on the classic RE formula in many ways. First of all, the graphics. Yes, this is the PS2, so nice visuals are to be expected. But man, **I didn't know rendered backgrounds could look this good**. The detail and color is incredible, and the little animations, like the way water looks and moves, are stunning. The character models, with their many, many, many polygons, also deserve an equal amount of praise. And then there's the gameplay: While it's quite a bit different than RE, it's no less satisfying. Slicing through hoards of decrepit foes instead of shooting them is still a blast, and the upgrade system is a great addition. Onimusha is very short though; something seems out of place when a game you've been waiting years for can be easily beaten in a hair over three hours. But hey, it's a great three hours. **Ryan**

With just a couple puzzles, the focus in Onimusha is definitely on action—**luckily combat is a blast**. Blocking, soul-sucking and the sidestep maneuvers make fighting a lot faster and more engaging than your average Resident Evil-style adventure, although the lack of a real lock-on system is a bit annoying when you're close to multiple enemies. One real disappointment is the story—it's hard to believe that after some awesome RE story lines, Flagship came up with this save-the-princess snoozer of a plot. Also the game feels too small—I finished the first time in about four hours. Still, in the current sea of mediocre PS2 titles this is one of the best you'll find. **Mark**

OK, let's get the bad crap out of the way first. **Onimusha is short. Like, about four hours short**. Then again, Metal Gear Solid was short. On the upside, Onimusha features awesome-looking characters, nice backgrounds and some sterling sound effects. Some characters in the game are based on real-life historical figures and it adds to the immersion. The puzzles are actually puzzling, and not nearly as contrived as in the aging Resident Evil series. Upgrading your weapon is awesome as it takes on new shapes per upgrade, and the action is fast-paced since you're not dealing with maggot-filled zombies anymore. I love this game. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	8	7	6

Shadow of Destiny



Publisher:	**Konami**
Developer:	**Konami**
Featured In:	***EGM* #140**
Players:	**1**
Supports:	**None**
Best Feature:	**Cool basic idea...**
Worst Feature:	**...that's soured by lame logic**
Web Site:	**www.konami.com**

I really thought Shadow of Destiny would be an incredible game, and I was really looking forward to it. The idea behind this title—traveling through time to stop your multiple deaths is amazing, but man, there are a few major chinks in the armor that turn Shadow into...well, a shadow of what it could be. First of all, **Konami went way too far with the time-traveling idea**. I'm standing next to a tree when suddenly the killer jumps from behind it and stabs me. So when I'm brought back to life, I naturally decide to go back 400 years to stop the tree from being planted instead of oh, I don't know, *not* standing next to the freaking tree! There are dozens of examples like this, the way Shadow defies logic in order to give a grander feeling story, which, of course, backfires thanks to the idiocy of your character's decisions. Also it has to be said Shadows of Destiny has some poor voice acting. I could visualize the main character's voice actor reading from a script; the pacing and emotion is terrible. But, even with these hiccups, Shadow is still worth trying out; there are a couple very cool moments and some nice red herrings. The story line gets quite compelling a few hours in, and the graphics are pretty sharp. It's keen how each time period has its own "color," and the character models are great (if a bit plasticy). Adventure fans should enjoy Shadow, as long as they don't let the main character's stupidity bother them. **Ryan**

Not to be outdone by Sega's Shenmue, Konami's Silent Hill folks churned out this, er, "life sim" of their own. The object is to prevent your own demise by traveling through time and figuring out how and why it happened. The gameplay is defined mostly by walking around and talking to people in different time periods, but the eerie European environs are gorgeous, making the many cinemas all the more enjoyable. Sure, the idea's a little odd, but the unique story is **really engaging if you've got the patience for a low-impact title like this**. Expect to use your head much more than your hands, and be challenged just a bit along the way. **Jonathan**

I'm surprised no one has tried this Back to the Future time-traveling plot device in a game before—it's quite a cool concept, and **it gives the otherwise average dialogue and straightforward adventure gameplay of Shadow of Destiny an interesting twist**. The graphics are rather tame (the pale, uniform colors for each time period were no doubt intentional but the horrible textures sure weren't) and the gameplay is pretty passive—there's no real combat or fast action required, and you often go for long periods just watching the game. It may not be the sort of thing you bought a PS2 for, but if you already got one SoD makes a good weekend rental. **Mark**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	8	6

Star Wars: Starfighter

Publisher:	**LucasArts**
Developer:	**LucasArts**
Featured In:	***EGM* #139**
Players:	**1**
Supports:	**None**
Best Feature:	**Multi-faceted missions fun to play**
Worst Feature:	**Mediocre graphics**
Web Site:	**www.lucasarts.com**

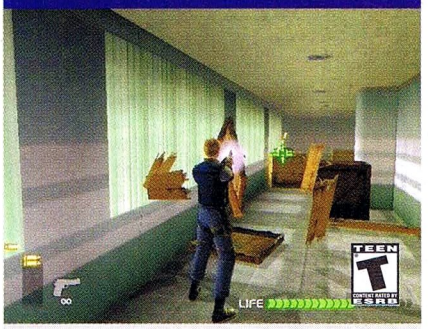
On the heels of N64's Battle for Naboo, Starfighter makes you really appreciate the power of the PS2. Extensive audio communication between your pilot and allies guides you colorfully through each mission, and the game won't stutter with dozens of ships on-screen. While the story's only a notch above the usual crap, the gameplay is the best you'll find in a Star Wars console title, with intuitive targeting and flight controls, plus wingman commands that let you give orders to your allies. Missions are split fairly evenly between land and space settings, and you even get to fly through an enemy space station at one point (cool). What disappointed me was the consistently choppy framerate and mediocre graphics—I kept getting the feeling that the game was rushed. Some of the ground terrains look out-and-out ugly. I'd blame it on the youth of the hardware, but there are already games on the shelf that look a heck of a lot better. If you're into the PC Star Wars sims, you're not going to be overly impressed—Starfighter doesn't do anything that the PC games haven't, and joystick users will lament the controls. Nonetheless, Starfighter has a lot of cool mission objectives that make the game very fun to play, even for those who aren't big fans of the genre. PS2 owners should consider this one as a **refreshing break from the recent barrage of lame titles**, whether you've followed the series on consoles or not. **Jonathan**

Starfighter isn't the PS2 killer app I was hoping for. The visuals, although slick, get choppy—especially during planetside levels—and mission design here is nothing special. Later sorties suffer from that chronic flaw of the space-combat genre: They start out easy, last too long, become impossibly hard near the end, and thus force you to repeat them over and over. It's tedious. Still, this game does plenty right. It tosses an enormous amount of enemies at you; **you really feel like you're part of a battle that's true to the epic scale of the films**. And just wait until you weave through the innards of the massive droid-control ship! Fun but flawed. **Crispin**

If there's one thing that this game excels at, it's making you feel like you're flying in the middle of an epic battle. The amount of laser-fodder on screen at once is amazing, but comes at a price: The gameplay often slows down during the planetary missions and there's lots of glitchy graphics that you just don't expect in a PS2 game (often I "parked" inside a capitol ship and blew it up from within when the polygons glitched and let me in). All of those enemies also cause lots of deaths, which sucks because you have to constantly restart long, difficult missions from scratch. But **if you have patience, you'll definitely enjoy this visceral adrenaline rush.** **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	9	5	6

Winback: Covert Operations



Publisher: Koei
Developer: Omega Force
Featured In: *EGM* #140
Players: 1-4
Supports: None
Best Feature: Non-stop action
Worst Feature: Repeatedly visiting the same areas
Web Site: www.koeigames.com

When Winback was on the N64, it was overlooked by many because of its plain graphics. Maybe now it'll get the attention it deserves—it's **a good warm-up for when MGS2 comes out this fall**. It's still got a few problems, though. The camera's better than it was on the N64, but it's still a bit tough to work with. Locking onto enemies is sometimes a hassle, and once you've locked on there's no guarantee you'll hit them when you shoot. Thankfully plentiful checkpoints mean that you're not set too far back if you die (and if you're like me, you'll die a lot). Many times you'll find yourself going through the same areas again and again because that's the way the game's structured. Although not a problem per se, it makes Winback seem smaller. The graphics aren't as plain as they were on the N64, with big explosions and dynamic lighting. A cool extra feature is a language option so you can hear the original Japanese voice acting with subtitles (which the hardcore will appreciate). Multiplayer's not too bad, but the arenas aren't as big as games like GoldenEye or even Quake. But because of the small levels and the fact that you can see the other players in the split-screen, there's definitely not as much hide-and-seek. It's too bad you can't use the main building from the game in a four-player match. If you liked Metal Gear Solid, then this is worth your time—Winback is definitely one of the better PS2 games out there now. **Chris**

I must admit, even as a fan of the original Winback, I really was hoping for a lot more from its PS2 release. I mean, yes, the graphics have been improved, but it's hard to shake the feeling that I'm looking at nothing more than a higher resolution version of the original game—the fogline appears to be in the exact same place. Also, even though the enemies seem a little more aggressive, they still have the same tendency to not move when you shoot them—one of the biggest flaws in the N64 release. The new bot mode is very cool, and the multiplayer has exclusive stages, but **Koei could have done much more in upgrading Winback**. Good, but not great. **Ryan**

This was one of the best action-adventure carts on the N64, and for those who missed it, Koei's PS2 port is a worthwhile purchase. Even WinBack vets will want to take a look—the graphics have been dramatically improved, and the camera is now pretty easy to work with. **Jean-Luc may be a cub scout when compared to Solid Snake, but he's arguably more fun to control**. Spinning around corners, ducking for cover, and taking out terrorists provides an adrenaline rush that has yet to be matched by any other game on Sony's new machine. If it weren't for the god-awful voice acting and uninspired narrative, this release would stand as a minor classic. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	7	6

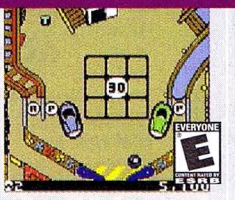
Aqua Aqua

Publisher: 3DO
Developer: Zed Two
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Good clean PS2 puzzle action
Worst Feature: The steep learning curve
Web Site: www.3do.com

Back when Aqua Aqua's predecessor, Wetrix, first hit the N64, I couldn't get into it. I think the steep learning curve kept me from giving it enough of a chance. This is not a puzzle game like Tetris, where you can pick it up and play immediately—not only do you have to worry about placing blocks, but also where to put water and the occasional bomb which can screw up everything. **It's like Tetris mixed with Civilization.** Aqua Aqua makes you play through a Training mode before Story Puzzle opens up, but I wish it would've opened up a second round of lessons that taught more advanced techniques or how to best repair damage after an Earthquake. The two-player versus mode moves fast and isn't bogged down by much slowdown, but unfortunately the only really useful view in split-screen is all the way zoomed out. There are four stages, but I wish there would've been more meat to it (maybe a versus mode against the computer?). Graphics and sound aren't bad, but aren't great. It may take some getting used to, but it's a decent challenge. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	7	6

3-D Ultra Pinball



Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Left Field Prod.
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-4
Supports: link cable
Best Feature: Great pinball action...
Worst Feature: ...but only one board!
Web Site: www.sierra.com

If you are a pinball fanatic, you will absolutely love this game...for the first 45 minutes of play. In this short period, you'll have the chance to savor some of the smoothest, sharpest-looking handheld pinball ever produced, accented with a well-implemented rumble feature. The cart features a four-player mode that's handy for group trips, a tilt mechanism that adds a healthy dose of strategy to play, and a quad flipper design that nicely captures the feel of deluxe arcade machines. But when you're ready to move on to the next board, a staggering flaw is revealed: There *isn't* a next board. Nope, **this package only offers one primary stage**. And that is absolutely unacceptable for a full-priced cart. Would you buy an action game with only one level, or a racing game with only one track? Didn't think so. There are a handful of mini-games thrown into the mix, and many of them are quite fun, but that doesn't compensate for the absence of multiple play fields. It's a shame; with three more boards, this would've been an 8. As it stands, it's not worth the cash. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	4	1

Mega Man Xtreme

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Featured In: *EGM* #134
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Classic Mega Man gameplay
Worst Feature: Goes by faster than Quickman
Web Site: www.capcom.com

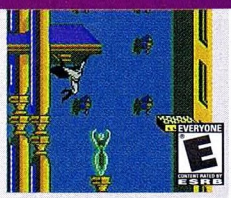
There's never really been a bad Mega Man game for the Game Boy, just very good ones and pretty good ones. This is the first time X has found his way to the handheld, and he does it with all the style and fierce gameplay of the original hero. Xtreme is actually a remake of Mega Man X for the SNES, so you'll see some familiar stages and bosses, but Capcom's added a couple of new nemeses to keep things interesting. The story and Mega Man's sidekicks are also partially new (Zero and Dr. Light are still in there), plus X can dash from the get-go, rather than having to find the power-up later in the game. Xtreme only falters significantly in its brevity and poor control on the GBC hardware. The game's challenging, which will likely increase your playing time until you learn the patterns for gunning down each boss (in classic Mega Man style), but **the levels go by in the blink of an eye**. You'll be wondering where the game went once you blast through it. Controlling things on the GB ain't easy either. Any gaming veteran knows nailing jumps and timing shots with precision is the key to Mega Man titles, and while grittier tactics (eg., dash jumping while charging) have always been tough to pull off, they're even tougher on the GBC. Fortunately, there's auto-charge and rapid fire settings to take away some of the headaches. Despite its drawbacks, Xtreme is an ideal rental, though it might disappoint as a purchase. **Jonathan**

This game is exceedingly average: **no better and no worse than what you'd expect from a Mega Man outing on the Game Boy Color**. If you've played any one of the blue bomber's 742 games, you know the drill—charged shots, dash-jumps and challenging bosses with patterns. It's a solid, if a bit dusty, formula. Graphics look all right, usually between NES and SNES in overall quality but with somewhat drab colors. The stages seem quite short though, and often it feels like you can't see enough of the level around you to move comfortably. But as long as you don't expect much more than you're used to from MM, you won't be disappointed. **Mark**

Mega Man has an extremely loyal following, although for what reasons I am not exactly sure. The gameplay has never reached the heights set by Castlevania or Contra, and **the series has seen little innovation in the 10-plus years it's been around**. Mega Man Xtreme should then satisfy fans of the barely evolving "blue bomber," as it remains a static hodgepodge of what's come before. The game is quite difficult, though. While the stages themselves are easily learned and conquered, the bosses are of a particularly prickly variety. You will die many times during the course of this "extreme" game, but Mega Man fans like this sort of thing. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	7	7	6

Batman: Total Chaos



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Digital Eclipse
Genre: Action/Adventure
Players: 1
Supports: None
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com

Best Feature: Looks decent
Worst Feature: Too challenging for younger kids

Turning to the original animated series for inspiration rather than Batman Beyond (after the horrid PS and N64 Beyond games, can you blame 'em?), Digital Eclipse packs in a lot of gameplay while keeping Total Chaos graphically solid. BTC does a nice job of breaking away from the standard side-scrolling model by dropping in driving and flying levels here and there, and while playing as Batgirl offers only mild relief from the belabored punch-and-kick action of The Batman himself, the game keeps you mildly entertained throughout. But more than anything, Total Chaos **reminds us that we're all more than ready for GB Advance**. The same generic, cheap-suited bad guys keep popping up all through the game, throwing mindless punches or firing the periodic bullet. And getting the sluggish Batso to respond to your commands is very trying. It's tough to tell when and where to use your small array of Bat-items, which will no doubt make this game even more frustrating for novice players, so keep it near the bottom of your GBC to-do list. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	6	5

Looney Tunes Racing

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Xantera
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1
Also Try: Wacky Racers
Web Site: www.infogrames.com

Best Feature: Bunch of great characters
Worst Feature: The game is incredibly boring

Anyone who played Test Drive Le Mans or Wacky Racers on the GBC will experience some major dejá vu when they fire up Looney Tunes Racing. Unfortunately, unlike the first two games, which were both above-average, this third GBC racing title from Infogrames is just sad. Looney Tunes Racing still sports some great scaling and very nice character graphics, but the super-simple racing is almost mind-numbing. Even the smattering of weapons on each track does nothing to make this title entertaining. You'll have raced every track and unlocked every character within an hour or so, and be left wondering why you wasted that much battery life on Looney Tunes Racing. It definitely feels slapped together. Heck, there's only one music track that plays throughout the entire game. Actually, it could be two, but they're so similar they might as well be the same. **I can't recommend this game in any way**, even if you're a die-hard Looney Tunes fan. I wanna see Yosemeti Sam and Marvin the Martian on the Game Boy too, but not like this. **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	2	2	5

Marvin Strikes Back!

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Link Cable
Web Site: www.infogrames.com

Best Feature: A new take on character collecting
Worst Feature: Levels are a little on the boring side

Finally, a licensed GBC release for kids that strives to be more than a crappy action/platformer. **This unconventional adventure game may well be the best handheld Loony Tunes cart on the market**. It's cool to see these classic characters being put into a package that's well thought-out, ambitious and meticulously designed. Taking a cue from Pokémon, this title allows you to collect familiar figures from the Warner Bros animated universe, trade them with friends via a link cable, and use them in completing your top-down quest. You can carry a total of 14(!) at one time, and each has a unique set of skills—Marvin can shoot a laser gun, Speedy can enter mouse holes, etc. The stages are vast, the characters are well-animated, and the gameplay is diverse...but regrettably, the whole thing is lacking a bit in the "fun" department. Mission objectives are clear cut and easy to follow, and carrying them out can get a bit tedious. Still, it's one of the better GBC games out there. And if you have a buddy who owns a copy, you'll dig all of the multiplayer options. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	8	7

Force 21

Publisher: Red Storm
Developer: Code Monkeys
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1
Supports: None
Web Site: www.redstorm.com

Best Feature: Ambitious design
Worst Feature: Too complex

Ever wonder why there haven't been many real-time strategy games on the GBC? Force 21 provides the answer. Here is a genre that works best on PC's, where a keyboard/mouse combo allows for a maximum level of control. It's tough enough to get a handle on a game like Command and Conquer with a Playstation pad—imagine trying to play it on the four-button Game Boy. Of course, Force 21 is not as deep or demanding as that Westwood game, but therein lies another problem: **how many RTS fans will want to play a watered down interpretation of their favorite genre** in the first place? This is a cart without a clear audience—it's too simple for military strategy pros, yet too complicated for casual players. A clumsy interface is the nail in the coffin: as you set your soldiers up for battle, enemies will annihilate your off-screen battalions. These troops can only be monitored by a full-screen map that's a pain to toggle on and off. In the end, this is a noble effort that doesn't add up to much. For GBC strategy gaming that's fun to play, pick up Cannon Fodder. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	4	5	3

Magi-Nation

EGM SILVER

Publisher: Int. Imag.
Developer: Interactive Imagination
Featured In: *EGM* #139
Players: 1
Supports: None
Web Site: www.magi-nation.com

Best Feature: Strong adventure elements
Worst Feature: Another take on a stale genre

Third-party companies seem to be incapable of capturing the magic of the Pokémon games. Interactive Imagination has taken an interesting approach to this problem: Instead of emphasizing the "gotta catch 'em all" elements of play, their game concentrates on storytelling and character development. **Magi-Nation feels more like a traditional RPG than a rip-off of Nintendo's franchise**—the monster collecting stuff is more a marketing tool than anything else. The development team is based in the United States, and this is definitely reflected in the game's tone and sense of humor: The characters Tony Jones (the story's protagonist) runs across are fitted with genuinely witty dialogue, and the environments these figures inhabit are beautifully realized. When random, turn-based battles pop up, they're a lot of fun to engage in. The monsters may not be as interesting as Pikachu's buddies, but the sheer variety of their attack and defense moves keeps gameplay invigorating. On the whole, this is a surprisingly refreshing take on an all too-familiar genre. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	7	9

NBA Hoopz

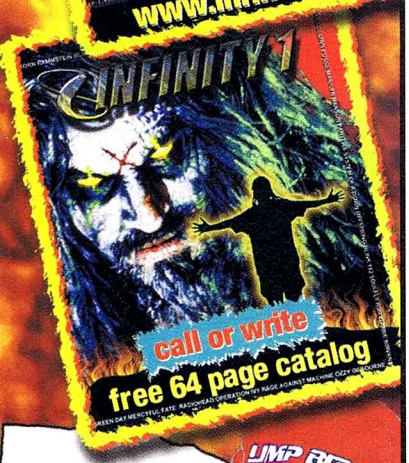
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Torus Games
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Link Cable
Web Site: www.midway.com

Best Feature: Pretty good graphics....
Worst Feature: ...until there's annoying flicker

This side-scrolling, 2D basketball game has just enough in common with its console counterparts to share the same name: There's three people on each team, and they like to dunk on one another quite a bit. But that just isn't good enough if you like Midway's action/sports games. Hoopz's main draw is its obnoxious dunks and nifty moves—things that are conspicuously absent from the GBC hardcourt. All you do here is go back and forth, meander around for a good place to shoot, and let it fly. The only thing that stands in your way is an occasional steal (performed by running right on top of someone and pressing the button). Graphics may be above-average, but there's no pushing and shoving, no cross-over dribbles, and no flair. In fact, **the flashiest move happens when the players flicker because the system can't keep up with the action**. I know I can't expect a perfect translation, but the omission of all these things takes the soul out of Hoopz, making it a boring, generic sports game devoid of the personality that made it stand out elsewhere. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	2	2	4

LARGEST SELECTION OF MUSIC STUFF



BANDS
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Sony Playstation 2, Sega Dreamcast, PS1, and GameCube. Get all four or trade what you don't want for cash. Options include plenty of games, Xbox, Gameboy Advance, accesories and 36" monitor. Base prize package value $1400.

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700 MHz, 128 mb RAM, 27 gig hard drive,8X DVD-ROM, CD-RW drive, modem and 17" monitor. Options include software and accessories. Base prize package value $2600.

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Directions. Follow the directions below to fill in the puzzle. Check the boxes on the entry form to specify the contests you are entering. Add up the entry fees and send that amount with the entry form to the address below. Remember, you can't win if you don't enter. Only one entry per person. Prize totals are described below puzzle. **All entries must be post marked by JULY 25, 2001. ALL ENTRY FEES MUST BE PAID IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT CANADIAN CHECKS.**

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EARTH	- X	EMPTY	- V
WORLD	- U	WATER	- T
SPACE	- W	COAST	- A
~~HAPPY~~	- O	FIELD	- B
SHARE	- Z	BLADE	- D

		T				
H	A	P	P	Y	O	
	L					
			S			
				L		

SECRET WORD →

SECRET WORD CLUE:
What comes after yesterday but before tomorrow?

Clip This Order Form And Mail It

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Tricks of the Trade

By Trickman Terry
tricks@ziffdavis.com

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

Floating Skater
From the main menu screen, press and hold the L-Trigger button. While holding it, press Up, Up, Up, Up, A, X, Up, Up, Up, Up, A, X, Up, Up, Up, Up. The wheel will turn to confirm that you entered the code correctly. Now begin a game in any mode. In the middle of the game, press A to jump and then hold A in the air to start rising up! Hold Y to hover above the ground. Use L-Trigger and R-Trigger to strafe left and right. Use the D-pad to move forward, back, left and right. Once you touch the ground, you will have to press A and then hold A again to rise into the air. As long as you are in the air, you can continue to complete objectives, even when time runs out. Once you land, the game will tally your score.

PLAYSTATION 2

Dynasty Warriors 2

VARIOUS CODES

Enter these codes at the title screen. You will hear cheering if the code was entered correctly.

1 **Every Wu General:** Square, Square, R2, R2, R1, R1, Square, Square.
Every Shu General: Square, Square, R1, R1, Square, Square, R2, R2.
Every Wei General: Square, Square, Square, Square, R2, R2, R1, R1.
Side Select in Free Mode: Press and hold Triangle. While holding it, press R1, L1, L2, R2, R1, L1, L2, R2.
BGM Test: L1, L1, L1, R1, R1, R1, L2, R2. Go to the Options, choose Sound and access the BGM Test option. Now you will be able to listen to the game's background music.

Theme Park: Roller Coaster

MULTIPLE CODES

These tricks are entered while playing the game. You will hear a sound when they are entered correctly (make sure you don't pause before entering them).

2 **255 Golden Tickets**
Up, Down, Left, Right, Circle, Right, Left, Down, Up, Circle. Press this button combination a total of four times to make it work.

Free Purchases
Press Left, Down, X, Circle. Press this button combination a total of eight times to make it work.

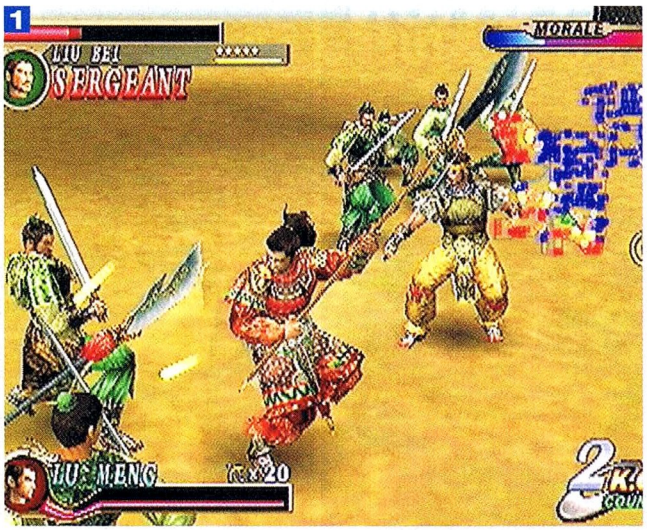
DREAMCAST

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

EVERY LEVEL OPEN

From the main menu screen, choose the Proquest Mode. Go to the level select screen and press Left, Up, Right, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Y. Now, every level will be open!

1



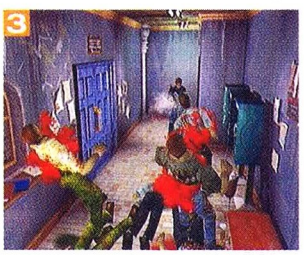
Resident Evil 2

UNLIMITED AMMO AND MORE

3 **Unlimited Ammunition**
In the middle of the game, press the B button to bring up the inventory screen. Now press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, R-Trigger. The number of bullets under each gun you possess will turn into an infinity symbol. After you pick up a new gun, it will also have unlimited ammunition!

4 **HIdden Outfits**
Begin the original game and while playing, don't pick up any bullets, guns or items. Make your way to the stairs leading to the tunnel next to the police station. Go down the stairs and you will be faced with a zombie (he's actually Brad Vickers from the first Resident Evil). Kill him and search his body. You will find a Special Key. Take the Special Key

3



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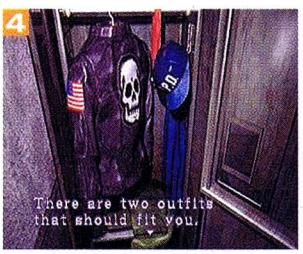


2

and go into the police station. Make your way to the room at the bottom-right of the stairs. In this room there will be a film development room, a locker and a desk. Go to the locker and use the Special Key to open it. Inside will be new clothes for either Claire or Leon.

Secret Film D
Go to the S.T.A.R.S. office, which is located upstairs in the police station. Search the desk where it says, "It's trashed. Someone must have searched it." Do this a total of 50 times. On the 50th time, Film D will appear. Take the film and go back downstairs and through the door at the end of the small hallway, on the right of the stairs. Go into the red room and develop the film. You will now see a picture of Rebecca from the first Resident Evil in a basketball uniform.

Star Wars: Demolition

UNLOCK FMVS

On the main menu screen, access the options. Next, go into the preferences. On the "Preferences" screen, press L-Trigger+R-Trigger simultaneous-

ly. This will bring up the "Passcode" option. Enter your passcode as one of these shown below to automatically be taken to a sequence of cinemas. Press A to get past the cinemas you don't want to see.

5 **Unlock Winner FMVs**
MOVIE SHOW
Unlock Loser FMVs
SAD MOVIES

Tomb Raider Chronicles

ACCESS THIRD AND FOURTH STORIES

6 **Third Story**
On the main menu screen, have the New Game option highlighted. Then press and hold L-Trigger+R-Trigger+Left. Hold these buttons until the game loads. This will bring you to Black Isle, which is the third story in the game.
Fourth Story
On the main menu screen, have the New Game option highlighted. Then press and hold L-Trigger+R-Trigger+Right. Hold these buttons until the game loads. This will bring you to the Tower Block stage, which is the fourth story in the game.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

AWESOME CODES

To do these tricks, press START to pause in the middle of a game. Now, press and hold L-Trigger. While holding it, enter any one of the codes shown below. The screen will shake if the code was entered correctly.
Low Gravity
A, X, Left, Up, Down, Up, X, Y.
Slow Motion Tricks
B, Up, Y, X, A, Y, B.

7 **Wire Frames**
Down, B, Right, Up, X, Y.
No Texture Maps
Down, Down, Up, X, Y, Up, Right.
Flashing Ramps
Down, Up, X, B, Up, Left, Up, A. Once you do a successful trick off a ramp, it will start flashing.
Real Physics
B, Right, Up, Left, Y, B, Right, Up, Down.
Unlock Trixie
Down, Up, Left, Left, B, Left, Up, Y, Y, Up, Right, X, X, Up, A. Trixie will be unlocked once your time runs out.

NINTENDO 64

Star Wars Episode 1: Battle For Naboo

MANY CODES

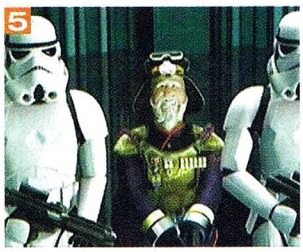
From the Main Menu Screen, enter the Options. Access the Passcodes option and put in any of these codes.
All Upgrades: OVERLOAD
More Difficult Game: NASTYMDE
Showroom Concert Hall: WAKEUP
Credits: MEMEME!
Bouncy World: DRJEKYLL
Infinite Lives *(Note: This cannot be used to obtain medals)*: PATHETIC
Audio Commentary During the Game: TALKTOME
One-Hit Kills *(enemies and you)*: EWERDEAD

PLAYSTATION

007 Racing

NEW CAR IN TWO-PLAYER MODE

On the title screen (where "Press Start" is flashing), quickly press L1, R1, Triangle, Circle, X. You will hear an evil laugh when this is entered correctly. From the main menu, choose Two-Player mode and your type of game. On the car select



screen, scroll left or right until you see the Aston Martin Vantage. You may now use this car in the two-player mode!

Blade

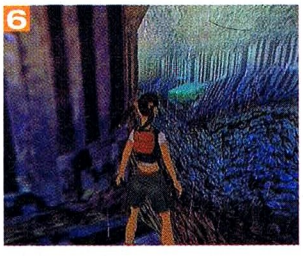
COOL CHEATS

At the main menu screen, enter these tricks. In the middle of the game, press START to pause and access the Cheat Menu to activate them.
Infinite Weapons: Down, Right, Up, Left, L2, L1, R2, R1.
Infinite Health: Left, Left, Left, Right, L2, L1, R2, R1.
All Items: Right, Left, Up, Down, L2, L2, R2, R2.

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

EVERY LEVEL OPEN

From the main menu screen, choose the Proquest Mode. Go



TOP 5 TRICKS

The top 5 games of the last month given the full-on *Trickman* treatment:

1. Pokémon Gold/Silver

GAME BOY COLOR

Duplicate Pokémon and Items
WARNING: THIS TRICK AFFECTS YOUR SAVED GAMES. USE WITH CAUTION! First, you must decide on the Pokémon and item you want to clone. At any time during the game, press Start and access the Pokémon option. Choose the Pokémon you want to clone and make it hold an item that you also want to clone (such as a Master Ball). Next, go into a town and find a Pokémon Center. Move in front of the PC and press Start. Move down the menu and access the Save option. After saving your game, press the A button to turn on the PC. Access Bill's PC and deposit the Pokémon you want to clone into one of the boxes. Then choose "Change Box" and move to an empty box. Press A and choose "Switch." When it asks if you want to save the game, choose "Yes." Now, this part is very important and requires precise timing. The game will tell you that there is already a save file, and it will ask you if it is OK to overwrite the file. Choose "Yes" and immediately turn off the Game Boy. Be sure to turn it off before any words other than "Saving" appear on the screen, or the trick will not work. Turn the Game Boy back on again. Check your party status and you should see the Pokémon you wanted to clone still in your party. Access Bill's PC and look at the box in which you deposited the Pokémon. The Pokémon and the item it was holding will be cloned inside the box, and still in your party! You can clone up to 5 Pokémon and items at one time by doing this trick.

2. WWF: No Mercy

Find Hidden Wrestlers
From the Superstar Select screen, you can find new wrestlers.
Jacqueline
Press C-Left or C-Right while highlighting Ivory.
Funaki
Press C-Left or C-Right while highlighting Taka Michinoku.
Goodfather
Press C-Left or C-Right while highlighting Godfather.
Debra

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

Press C-Left or C-Right while highlighting Terri.

3. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

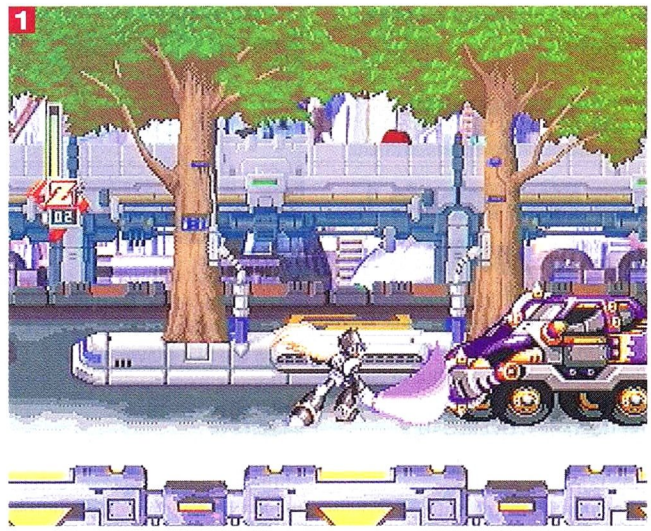
Cool Codes
From the main menu screen, access Career Mode and choose to continue a career or start a new one. On the Select Player screen, choose a character and begin your game. In the middle of play, press START to pause the game and then press and hold the L1 button. While holding this button, enter any of these codes to unlock the following features. The screen will shake when each of these tricks is entered correctly.
Unlimited Special Meter
X, Triangle, Circle, Up, Left, Triangle, Square.
Fast Motion
Down, Square, Triangle, Right, Up, Circle, Down, Square, Triangle, Right, Up, Circle.
Full Statistics
X, Triangle, Circle, Square, Triangle, Up, Down.
No Blood
Right, Up, Square, Triangle.
Skinny Skater
X, X, X, X, Square, X, X, X, X, Square, X, X, X, X, Square.
Obese Skater
X, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, X, Left.

4. NBA 2K1

Hidden Teams
From the main menu, access the Options. On the Options screen, access the Codes option. On the Cheat Codes screen, type in vc as your password and then the Enter key. The screen will then say that the Superstars feature has been unlocked. Now you have access to the Sega Sports, Sega Net and Mo Cap teams!

5. Super Mario Bros. Deluxe

Sweet Tricks
Many of the old tricks for the original Super Mario Bros. game on Nintendo work on the new Game Boy Color version. For example, the warp zone found in World 1-2 is still intact!



to the level select screen and press Left, Up, Right, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Circle. Now, every level will be open!

Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge

VARIOUS CHEATS
Enter any one of these tricks while paused during play. You will see a visual confirmation that the codes worked after entering them.
Level Select
Hold the Square button. While holding it, press Up, Down, Left, Right, Right, Right, Down, Left.
Level Skip
Hold the Square button. While holding it, press Right, Left, Up, Up, Up, Right, Left, Left.
Unlimited Lives
Hold the Square button. While holding it, press Down, Down, Up, Down, Right, Down, Up, Up.
Every Character in Multiplayer
Hold the Square button. While holding it, press Left, Right, Left, Left, Left, Up, Left, Left.
Temporary Invulnerability
Hold the Square button. While holding it, press Left, Left, Up, Left, Down, Right, Right, Right.
Mad Garibs On
Hold the Square button. While holding it, press Right, Left, Right, Left, Up, Up, Left, Right.

Medal of Honor Underground

COOL PASSCODES
From the Main Menu Screen, choose the Options. Access the Passwords screen and put in these codes for the results shown. Once these passwords are in, choose Secret Codes from the Options screen to activate them. The codes will work in the levels you've already completed.
Ultimate Cheat: First, put in ENTREZVOUS and press the Send key. Enter the Password screen again and put in PORTECLEFS as your code and press Send. Everything will now be opened on the Secret Codes screen.

Mega Man X5

ULTIMATE ARMOR
Ultimate Armor for X: On the Character Select screen, highlight Mega Man X and press Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, Down, Down, Down, Down, Down. You will hear a sound if the code was entered correctly.
1 **Ultimate Armor for Zero:** On the Character Select screen, highlight Zero and press Down, Down, Up, Up, Up, Up, Up, Up, Up, Up. You will hear a sound if the code was entered correctly.

Mike Tyson Boxing

MULTIPLE TRICKS
From the main menu, choose the World option. Access the New Career option and pick any boxer. When asked to enter your name, enter one of these codes. After entering them, do not choose "End." Instead, press the Triangle button to exit the World mode.
John L. Sullivan and Docks Stadium
OLD MAN
2 **Jimmy Flex and Club Fud Stadium**
CLUBFUD
Invisible Man
GONE
Large Heads
BONGY
Small Heads
BINGY
Large Hands and Feet
STUPID
Stretchy Neck
NECK
Pulsating Head When Punched
OUCH
Head Spins When Punched
HURTS
All Features Back to Normal
NORMAL

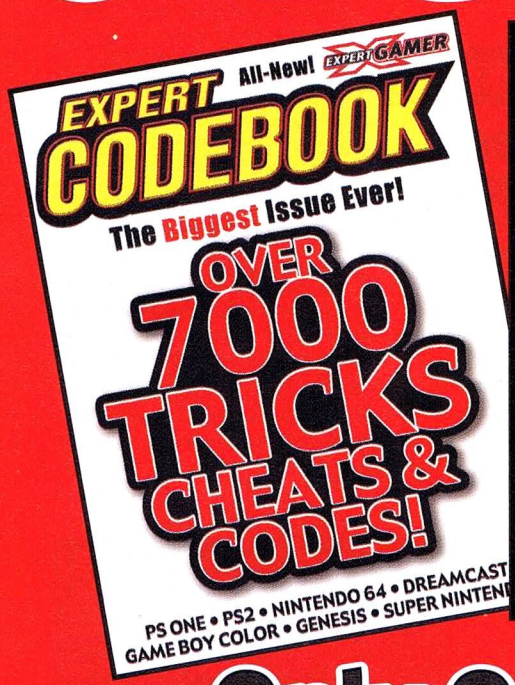
Star Wars: Demolition

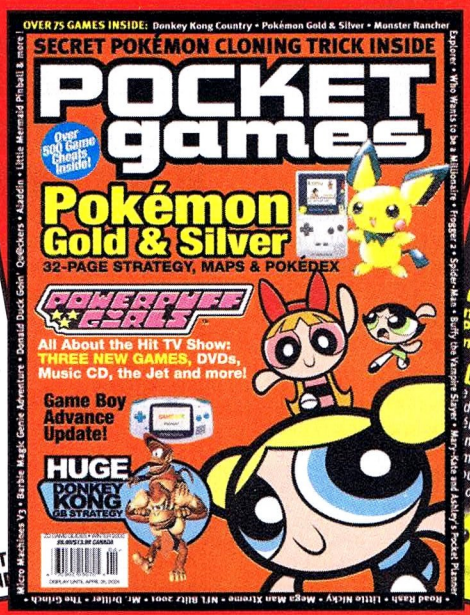
UNLOCK FMVS
On the main menu screen, access the options. Next, go into the preferences. On the "Preferences" screen, press L1+R1 simultaneously. This will bring up the "Passcode" option. Enter your passcode as one of these shown below to automatically be taken to a sequence of cinemas. Press X to get past the cinemas you don't want to see.
Unlock Winner FMVs

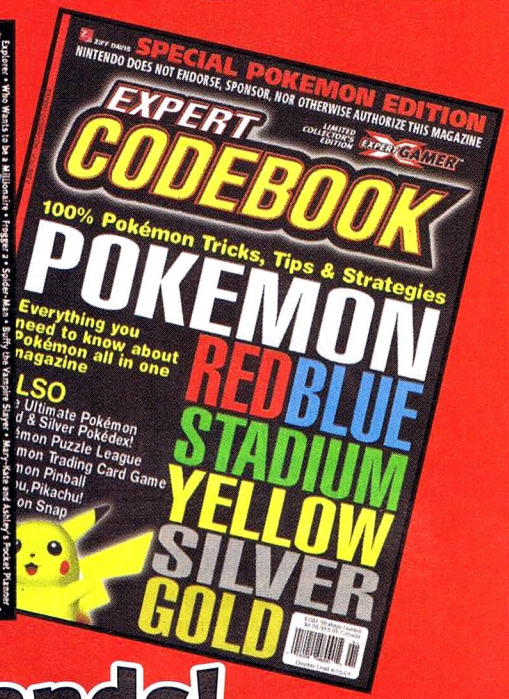
tricks@ziffdavis.com

We want your tricks! We want to include your best codes and tricks in every issue, to put along with all our great tricks we pack in every issue. You can even win prizes if we pick yours as Trick of the Month!
*see page 120 for contest rules

On Sale Now







Only On Newsstands!

Each year, the hard-workin' editors of *Electronic Gaming Monthly* create special-edition magazines such as *Expert Gamer's Codebook*, 2001 *Video Game Buyer's Guide*, *Pocket Games* or *DCM* the *Unofficial Dreamcast Magazine*. These magazines can only be found on the newsstands or through back order. Look all three magazines above on sale now at Babbages, Software ETC., Barnes & Noble, Wal•Mart, K-Mart, Walden Books, Target, Borders, B. Dalton and many supermarkets and drugstores near you!

Are You Missing Something?

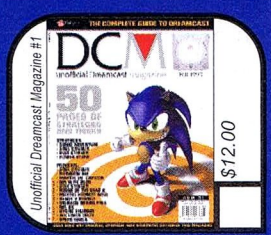
Pocket Games - Summer '99 — $12.00

Pocket Games - Winter '99 — $12.00

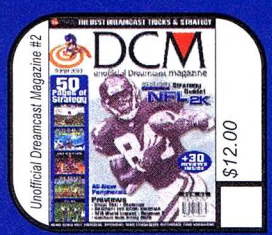
Pocket Games - Summer 2000 — $12.00

Pocket Games - Fall 2000 — $12.00

2001 Video Game buyer's Guide — $12.00



Unofficial Dreamcast Magazine #1 — $12.00



Unofficial Dreamcast Magazine #2 — $12.00

Unofficial Dreamcast Magazine #3 — $12.00

Unofficial Dreamcast Magazine #4 — $12.00

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MOVIE SHOW
Unlock Loser FMVs
SAD MOVIES

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

AWESOME CODES

Floating Skater
From the main menu screen, press and hold the L1 button. While holding it, press Up, Up, Up, Up, X, Square, Up, Up, Up, Up, X, Square, Up, Up, Up, Up. The wheel will turn to confirm that you entered the code correctly. Now begin a game in any mode. In the middle of the game, press X to jump and then hold X in the air to start rising up! Hold Triangle to hover above the ground. Use L1 and R1 to strafe left and right. Use L2 and R2 to turn completely around. Use the D-pad to move forward, back, left and right. Once you touch the ground, you will have to press X and then hold X again to rise into the air. As long as

you are in the air, you can continue to complete objectives, even when time runs out. Once you land, the game will tally your score.

Various Cheats
For these next tricks, press START to pause in the middle of a game. Now, press and hold L1. While holding it, enter any one of the codes shown below. The screen will shake if the code was entered correctly.

Low Gravity
X, Square, Left, Up, Down, Up, Square, Triangle.

Slow Motion Tricks
Circle, Up, Triangle, Square, X, Triangle, Circle.

Wire Frames
Down, Circle, Right, Up, Square, Triangle.

No Texture Maps
Down, Down, Up, Square, Triangle, Up, Right.

Flashing Ramps
Down, Up, Square, Circle, Up, Left, Up, X. Once you do a successful trick off a ramp, it will start flashing.

Real Physics
Circle, Right, Up, Left, Triangle, Circle, Right, Up, Down.

GAME BOY COLOR

Buzz Lightyear of Star Command

STAGE PASSWORDS

From the main menu, access the Password option and enter these codes for new levels.

2. CVVBB
3. XBVBB
4. YVVBB
5. GBVBB
6. HVVBB
7. 3BVBB
8. 4VVBB
9. LBVBB
10. MVVBB
11. 7BVBB
12. 8VVBB

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

ALL GOALS AND TROPHIES

On the main menu, access the Password option. Put in your password as R6KZBS7L1CTQMH to complete all goals and open all the locked levels.

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

Warp Zone
Go to World 1-2 and find the second set of moving platforms (the ones moving upward). Get on these platforms and ride them until you reach the top. Then jump up and to the right. You will land on the top bricks of the level. Run right and keep going until you reach an opening. Fall down the opening and you'll see three pipes that will allow you to automatically warp to worlds 2, 3 or 4!

The Lost Levels
Basically, you must get the number-one position on the "Ranking" screen (a minimum score of 300,000 points). Then on the title screen, select the Luigi icon for an entirely new game—Super Mario Bros. 2: The Lost Levels.

Play as Luigi
Press the SELECT button at the Map screen before you begin a level. This will let you play as the green plumber instead of the red one.

HEY, YOU; WANNA WIN FREE STUFF?

If your trick is selected as Trick of the Month, you will win a free GameShark provided by InterAct, and a Twin Shock, or a Hyper64, or an Advanced Pad, or a DC carrying case from Blaze. If you are given credit for submitting a hot trick in this section, you will win a free game. See page 120 for rules.

Note: If you send your trick by e-mail, you must include your real name and address.

Send your best tricks, codes, Web sites, anything that can help make games more fun or interesting to:

Tricks of the Trade
P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook IL
60522-3338

or send e-mail to:

tricks@ziffdavis.com

GAMESHARK CODES

DREAMCAST

Capcom vs. SNK
P1 Infinite Health
5FB77CEF00003840
P2 Infinite Health
F1E99D3000003840

Jet Grind Radio
Infinite Time
2AA7AEC100005208

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Infinite Health (Jill)
EFE73CD4000000C8
Have All Files
74753769FFFFFFFF
Have All Maps
43967BA2000000FE
7469B769000000FE
Have 10 Slots
98F02E9D0000000A

NINTENDO 64

Spider-Man
All Costumes Unlocked
810ecd7effff
All Game Covers Unlocked
810ecd8effff
Comic Collection Unlocked
810ecd88ffff
810ecd8affff
All Characters In Viewer
810ecd80ffff
810ecd82ffff
All Slides Unlocked
810Ecd84ffff
810ecd86ffff

PLAYSTATION

Colin McRae Rally 2.0
L1+R1 = Instant Win (Rally)
D005966EF3FF

800E2BECFFFF
All Cheats Unlocked
3004C66C00FF
Infinite Repair Time
D00675540000
800675562400
All Cars And Tracks
8004D9E4FFFF

NCAA Final Four 2001
Away Team Scores 150
8006318C0090
Home Team Scores 150
800626740000
Away Team Scores 0
8006318C0090
Home Team Scores 0
800626740000

NEXT MONTH

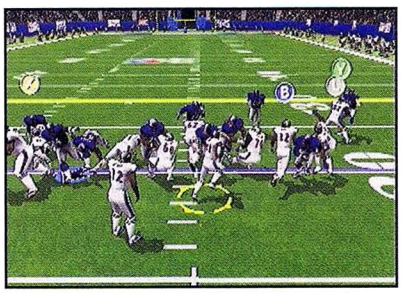
ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

May 2001

On sale April 3

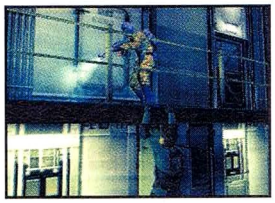
The State of Online Gaming

Online gaming has finally arrived, but has it really caught on? We take a look at the home-grown communities and clans that have sprung up around online console play, in addition to what the big boys (such as Sony and Microsoft) are cookin' up for the future. Online play is here to stay, and we'll show you where it's going. But next issue gives non-online games a fair shake, too. Check out our reviews of Triple Play Baseball, Tiger Woods 2002 and Illbleed.



The Dreamcast's NFL 2K1 was the first SegaNet game—how is it faring now?

First hands-on preview of Metal Gear Solid 2. We finally get our grubby little mitts on what could be Solid Snake's final adventure.



- **Zone of the Enders reviewed on PlayStation 2**
- **Daytona USA Network Racing and 18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker reviewed for Dreamcast**
- **Conker's Bad Fur Day reviewed for N64**
- **T.J. Lavin's Ultimate BMX and NBA ShootOut 2001 reviewed for PlayStation**

*All editorial content is subject to change.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

April 2001

On sale March 13

Demo Disc

Video Previews

- **Twisted Metal Black (PS2)**
- **Shadow of Destiny (PS2)**

Playables

- **Tigger's Honey Hunt**
- **Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball**
- **Championship Surfer**

Twisted Metal Black

Sweet Tooth is back—and grumpier than ever! The original star of the classic vehicular combat franchise returns in a new PS2 game that promises to be darker, grittier and more action-packed than anything previously seen on the PS one. Plus, *OPM*'s annual awards—which games will win? Also, Fear Effect 2, Onimusha, Shadow of Destiny, NHL FaceOff, Oni, Star Wars: Starfighter reviewed. And don't miss *OPM*'s exclusive chat with the amazing Derek Jeter!

EXPERT GAMER

April 2001

On sale March 20

PS2 Mania

The PS2 games are beginning to pour in, and *XG*'s journey begins in feudal Japan, as they take on Capcom's newest PS2 epic, Onimusha Warlords. Next, Star Wars: Starfighter hits the PS2 with a bang. *XG* has fighting tactics and level-by-level breakdowns of LucasArts' first PS2 release. Well, they've also got blow-by-blow details on The Bouncer. Things aren't so bad in last-gen land either, as Paper Mario hits the N64. Finally, toss in continuing coverage on the import scene, as well as a Final Fantasy X preview, and it's an issue you can't miss.

- **Huge Onimusha walk-through with maps**
- **All puzzles solved for Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix**
- **Starfighter blowout**
- **Paper Mario guide**
- **International section and previews**

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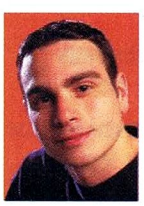
Sega dumps the dream but fulfills our wishes

Greg Sewart

Jim Cordano

Dean Hager

Jonathan Dudlak



Kraig Kujawa

James Mielke

Greg: I couldn't be happier about Sega's announcement. We get Dreamcast titles from them all year, so those of us who invested in the system don't get burned. We get hot titles like Virtua Fighter 4 on the PlayStation 2. Sega on Game Cube, Game Boy Advance and Xbox? Man, I think I have to go change my shorts! Who knows what great Sega titles will hit the big consoles? What titles will finally get the sales and recognition they deserve? This is the best decision Sega's made since Sonic the Hedgehog! 2001 will truly be a historic year in video games, and I can't wait to experience it. I just have to wonder what's going to happen with SegaNet.

"This is the best decision Sega has made since Sonic the Hedgehog!"

Jim: Add my shorts to that pile, Mr. Sewart. When all the rumors started flying, I was seriously depressed to think the DC was going the way of the Saturn. Whoda thunk that we'd still get the juicy DC-exclusive lineup and see the rest of the gaming world get the "all clear" to feel all warm and fuzzy about Sega at the same time? Not this fella. I am particularly interested in the Palm, GBA and Xbox line. Oh, it's like Christmas all year long. Can't wait to see where NFL 2K2 ends up! Hold me Dean, hold me...

Dean: I'm here for ya Jim. Take a deep breath...it's OK. I'm just as excited as you. I only wish I would've waited a few more months to buy my Dreamcast at the sweet $99 price. Damn, I wonder if Toys R Us would take it back now. Seriously, it makes no sense that the best machine out there is odd-man out. It's an unjust world that's for sure. But like everyone else, I think it's a great move on Sega's part. NBA 2K2 on the Xbox, ahhh yeah.

Jon: This is going to be a great leap for Sega. As hard as it is for all of us to imagine, it makes sense for them to focus on their major strength in the market—their incredible software, and I can't wait to see them compete on other platforms with it. But I keep thinking about what it would have been like if this happened after the demise of the Saturn—all the stuff we might have missed if there was no DC. You have to wonder what would and would not have flown on other consoles...Seaman? ChuChu Rocket? Probably not. Hey, I'm just glad we got a lot of awesome consoles and supporting software out of Sega thus far, and that we're still going to see them active on next-gen hardware. It's going to be a very cool year, kids.

Kraig: Jon's getting pretty worked up, but that happens to all the new gaming editors. What I would like to ask the audience to do is listen very closely—maybe you can hear Electronic Arts quaking in their boots. I can't wait to see Sega's games on superior hardware such as the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, but I'm sure EA isn't happy about it. This added competition is really going to make EA's, Eidos' and Infogrames' lives miserable, but the competition will definitely benefit all of us gamers. Think of what GameDay did to Madden—it made that franchise wake up. I think EA's sports games are going to have some major competition with the NBA and NFL 2K series in less than a year, not to mention anything else Sega decides to attack the market with (action games or otherwise). We'll look back at this as one of the gaming industry's milestones; maybe even a renaissance.

James: One part of me laments Sega's inability to recapture the glory days they experienced with the Genesis. The name Sega has always been as synonymous with their hardware as it has been with their software. But another part of me knows that this is for the best. Instead of pumping billions of dollars into hardware R&D and manufacturing the actual hardware and selling it at a loss, they can now put all those resources into software development. Considering that Sega's software has always kicked everyone else's ass, now that they can rid themselves of the stigma their hardware provides, I see domination on the horizon. Good for them.

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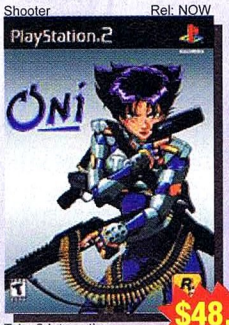

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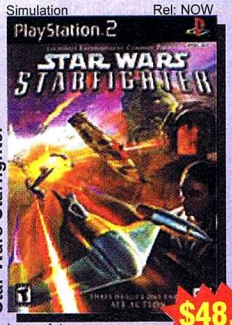

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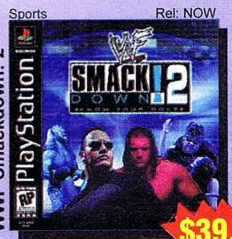

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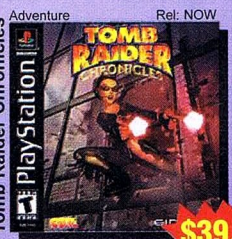

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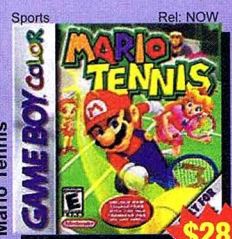

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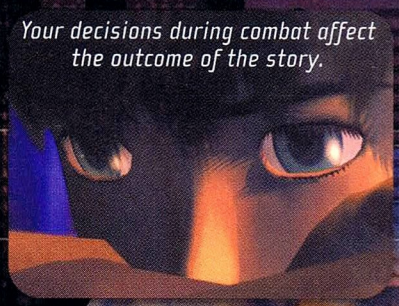

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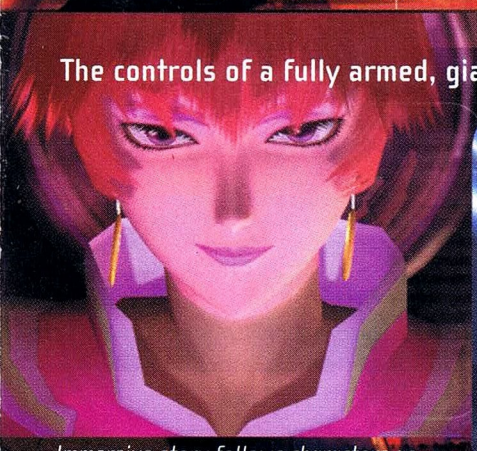

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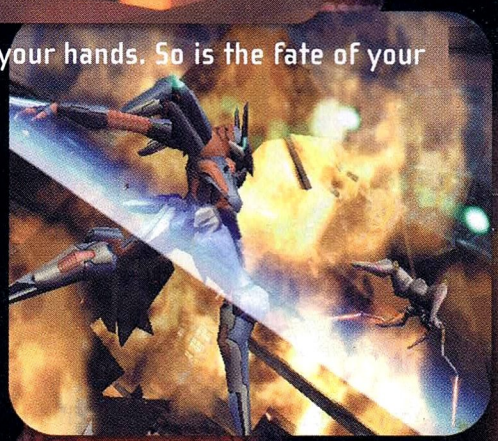

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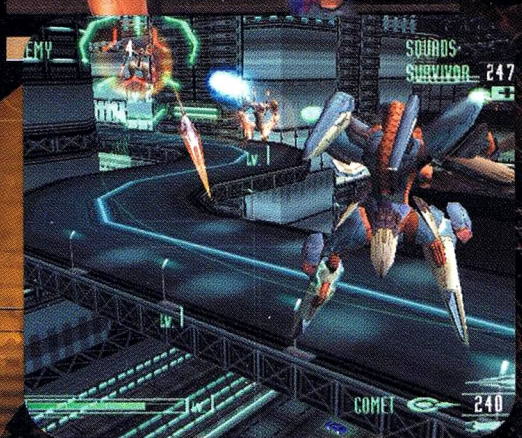

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