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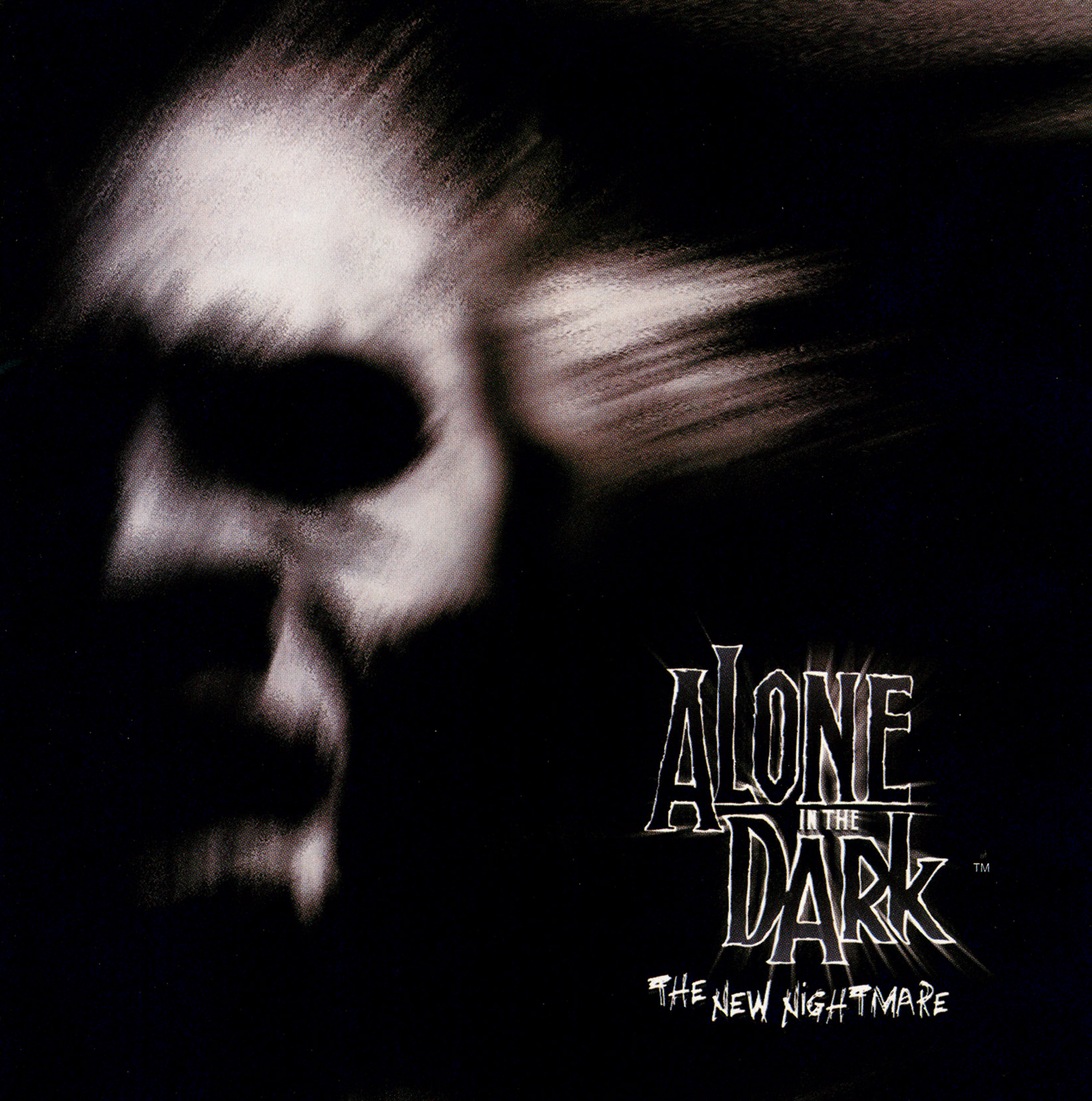
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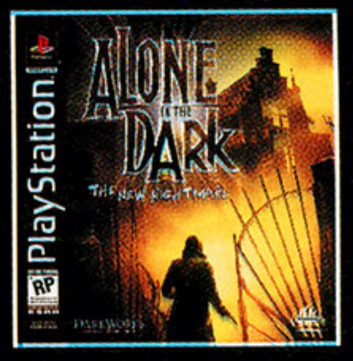

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EDITORIAL

The New Old Guy in Town

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

Hello. Some of you regular readers may remember me from such magazines as *Electronic Gaming Monthly's* #82 through #130. I disappeared around this time last year to flirt with the dot com seductress, only to discover that she was all talk and no future. Luckily for me, *EGM* was kind enough to ask me back (after a lot of pleading and begging and bribing on my part). Even better, the only spot open was the Editor in Chief position, so they decided to tempt fate and put me there. Suckers.

If I may blah-blah-blah for a bit...*EGM* has always been the industry leader among gaming mags. We gave gamers their first look at the 16-bit Super Nintendo Entertainment System (1989). We broke the news on 3DO's 32-bit console (1993...OK, maybe that didn't end up being such a big deal). We showed the world's first screenshots of Street Fighter III (1996). We surprised everyone this year with the first images of Microsoft's Xbox (February issue) and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (last month). We have always set the standards and pushed the boundaries, and I'm not about to break that trend.

What I promise you, the reader, is an authoritative, ground-breaking, news-scoopin', unbiased, kick-booty magazine. And I promise you you're going to have fun reading it too. We're not a bunch of pompous editors ('cept maybe our new editor Jeanne Kim, after she reads enough of your love letters) who like to show off how hooked up we are in the industry or how "controversial" we can be or how much more bad-ass hardcore we are than you. We're just a bunch of guys (and one gal) who know the business, love games (almost more than life itself) and enjoy writing about 'em.

In the upcoming issues, look for some semradical changes to happen around here. *EGM's* headed toward some great times, and we hope you'll be there with us. And if you don't like what we are and will be doing, you can always let me know at monkey@kissmyass.com. (Just kidding of course...as always, we value your opinions. Really we do. Please give us your feedback at egm@ziffdavis.com.)

So for this month, take a gander inside to see some of the goodies we've cooked up for you. Pay special attention to the Game Boy Advance stuff. Are 18 pages too much to spend on a mere handheld system? Well, considering the old Game Boy (Color) platform is the world's most popular game system ever (did you know last year, GB/GBC made up over 40 percent of hardware sales?), we don't think so. Game Boy Advance is going to be nothing short of a phenomenon—trust us.

By the way, to buy your love right off the bat, I'm offering some free gifts. Look around the issue for either a *Simpsons* or a movie reference (actually, this issue has at least three, 'cause I got a little overzealous, but you only need to give me one), not counting anything in our Summer Movie Double-Feature Feature. Find the reference, e-mail it to us at egm@ziffdavis.com (subject: "July Issue: Eat My Shorts"), and we'll pick out five folks at random and send them a copy of this issue's Review Crew Game of the Month™.

Love, Shoe

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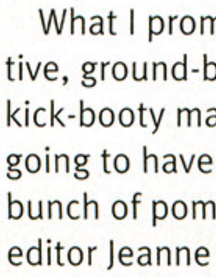
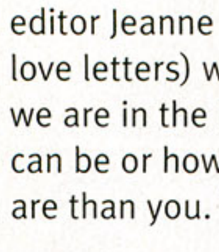


Ethan Einhorn

Freelancer extraordinaire Ethan continues to rock the house party by helping us out with all the reviews we don't have time to do.



David Hodgson

This month, industry veteran David "Hoagie" Hodgson brings us the latest chapter of "Where Are They Now?"

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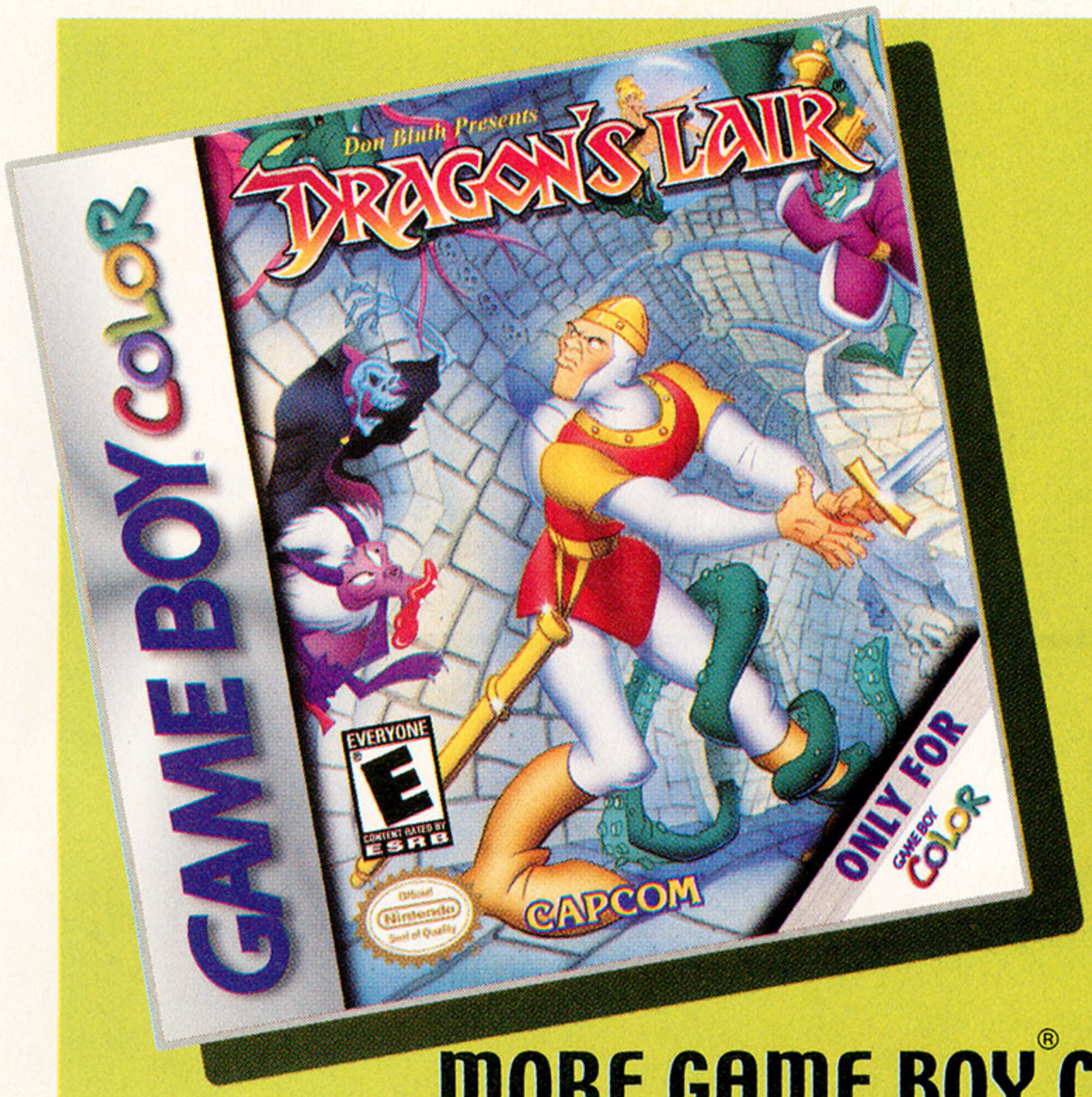

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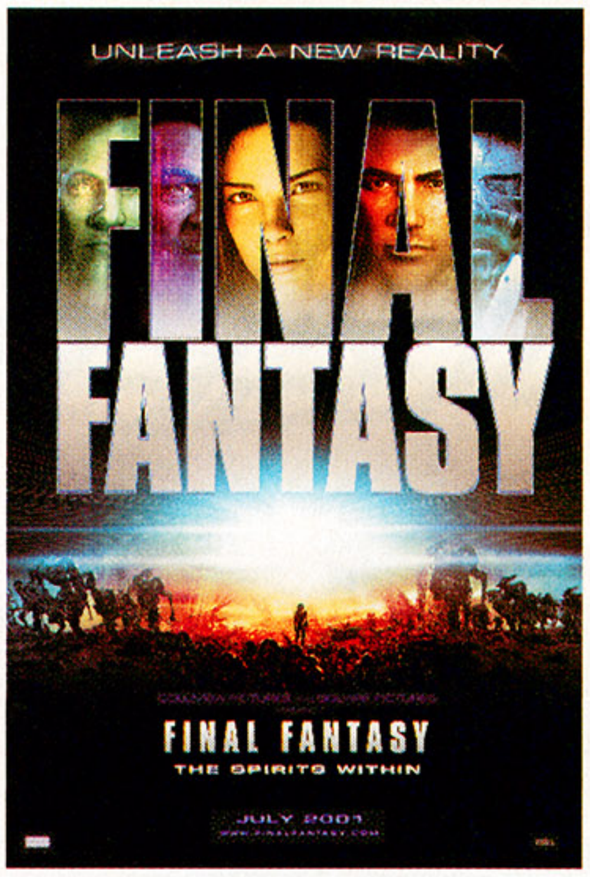
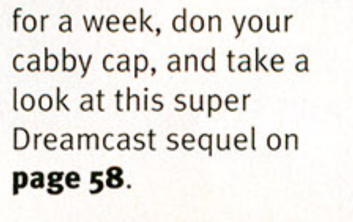
Game Boy Advances Here it is: The ultimate guide to Nintendo's ultimate handheld. We do the usual stuff, such as review the launch games and preview everything else. But, whazzat? You say you wanna know which battery brand lasts longest? How much abuse the system can take? Which multiplayer games are worth getting? We answer all that and more starting on **page 82.**



EGM's Summer Double-Feature Feature The billion-buck movie and game bizes are colliding in a big way this summer, so we trekked to the sets of Tomb Raider and Final Fantasy to see if game flicks will finally be any good. **Page 100**.

Driving Gran Turismo 3 It seems like years since we first saw the early GT3 demos running, but now we're ready to kick the tires and light the fires with the Japanese release. Wanna know what's new? Wondering what other cars Polyphony shoehorned into the game at the last minute? We tell all this issue. It's our pleasure...really! **Page 70**

Crazy Taxi 2 Ever get the urge to haul a car-load of mimes across town? Then don't bathe for a week, don your cabby cap, and take a look at this super Dreamcast sequel on **page 58**.



Twisted Metal: Black The original creators of the franchise were tired of watching their brainchild go down the tubes, so they got the gang back together to right what was wrong. The end result? The sickest, most demented edition to the franchise ever. See why we couldn't be more excited on **page 68**.

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It's summer, so get ready for the deluge of blockbusters. Read all about Phantasy Star Online Ver.2, Twisted Metal: Black, Gran Turismo 3, Crazy Taxi 2, Shrek and Final Fantasy Chronicles. Also: old games made new: Crazy Taxi and Half-Life for PS2. And, oh yeah, Animal Forest for N64.

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The world of PS2 is looking up with titles like Dark Cloud and Red Faction. Check out our reviews, as well as those of DC's Pro Trucker, Confidential Mission and N64's Dr. Mario 64, Mario Party 3.

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You've read the Advance feature, saw the previews and reviews. But what do we *really* think? Read our enlightening jibber-jabber to find out whether we think the Game Boy advanced enough.

SYSTEM KEY

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

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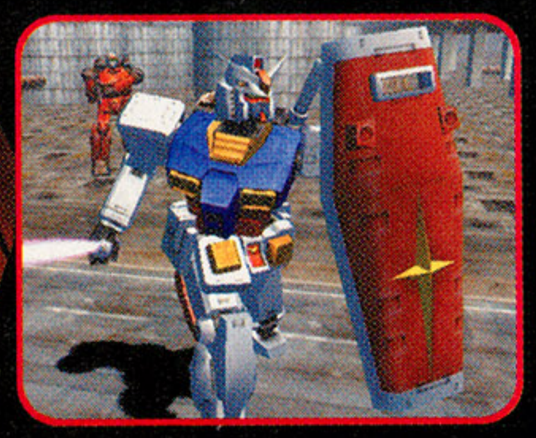

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Letters to the Editors

LETTER FACTS

- Readers noticing the DBZ art: 24
- Requests for Mining Prospector Dancing Sims: 1
- Letters written on box tops: 13
- Letters welcoming Che Chou back: 49
- Correct guess(es) at our new EIC: 1
- Ratio of anti- to pro-Canada mail: 6:1

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Disenchanted Gamer Has Visions Of X(box)

I have been listening to all the buzz about the next wave of gaming systems, with little interest. Don't get me wrong. I am a fan of *EGM* and own a lot of games. I'm just not as excited about the coming technology as most people are. Dare I say that I am one of the many who are becoming too comfortable with current video games?

I hope this does not stir up a flood of e-mails that ask, "How can you just sit there? This is a great time to be alive [for gamers]." Yes, I bought the PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Dreamcast right away, and I waited in line for a PlayStation 2...but in retrospect, I feel I may have fallen for all the hype.

The other day, however, I saw a Game Boy Advance demo running next to a wall of pre-order tickets. The only people playing it were a 9-year-old and his mom, and his mom was looking at me suspiciously.

"Look," I was thinking, "I am just curious to see how it plays and feels..." But I started to feel like Nintendo had already gotten to me. "No!" I told myself, "I will not play this machine. It will be released, sold out, then re-released, then I'll pick it up...you don't have to run with the pack." Then it happened: The 9-year-old and his eye-ballin' mom moved on and I stood there. I held out for a second, but then I played the Game Boy Advance for a bit...and I liked it.

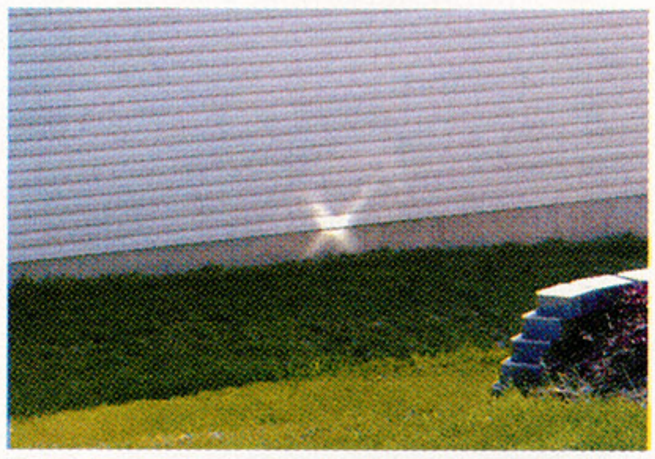
Later, one morning while dragging the garbage to the curb, I had a vision. This has got to be the first time in video game history that a vision appeared before one of gaming's own lost souls. I dropped the garbage, fell to my knees, threw up my arms and said, "Oh Bill Gates, oh Bill Gates! I believe...I believe your machine is coming to dominate!"

"This has got to be the first time in video game history that a vision appeared before one of its own lost souls."

Which brings me to the point of this e-mail. I am a true believer now. I will be in line to help support the video game industry. I will be one in the army of millions helping the Xbox and others grow to become a wonderful game system.

I am sorry I gave up hope before.

RicLaciak@aol.com



Photographic proof of the mystical vision

We have lots of readers lamenting the fact that they aren't sure what new system to buy, or the lack of a "wow factor" from the crop of PS2 titles currently available. But you are the first to claim some sort of mystical inspiration in answer to your quandary. While we don't doubt your revelation, we caution you that by submitting it to us for publication, you are setting yourself up for an influx of gamers swarming all over your property seeking the same sort of inspiration you claim. Good luck.

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 121 for official rules.

Reader Needs Help, Doesn't Need Help

You know, games just don't excite me anymore. I'm not sure what it is, but the thrill that I got while playing games like Shinobi, Zelda: A Link to the Past, Street Fighter II...even more recent releases like Suikoden, Gran Turismo and FFVII, just isn't there anymore. This can't be. Gaming is life to me (maybe not exactly life, but at least my number-one hobby). Please, somebody help me!

Maybe it's the drought in good games lately, especially on the PS2 front, that's got me so worked up. I do have Gran Turismo 3 and Twisted Metal: Black to look forward to in the near future. And please tell me that Dark Cloud is at least a good game. Hey, wait a minute. I also have Devil May Cry, FFX, MGS2, Virtua Fighter 4, Ace Combat 4, Silent Hill 2, The Getaway and a number of other PS2 games to look forward to this year.

Now that I think about it, it's not really as bad as all that. Crisis averted. Get back to work guys, I don't need your help after all.

FlyGuyLX@aol.com

Whew. That was a close one. We had already scrambled the choppers full of an elite squad of High-Crisis Interdiction specialists. We take these situations seriously, ya know. Note: Expect a bill to cover the helicopter and jumpsuit rentals.

MotoGP Fan Urges Us To "Keep It Real"

Namco's MotoGP is one of the best and most underrated games for the PlayStation 2. Is there any word of a sequel? I would love to see updated riders and teams with more tracks and improved customization of the bikes. Keep it real.

Kevin R.
xagnt@telusplanet.net

Good news, Kevin. A little while ago Namco revealed to investors

All titles available June 13.

getintothegame.com

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LETTERS

EGM@ziffdavis.com

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

that they were doing a whole bunch of new sequels, a new MotoGP among them.

As far as "keeping it real," rest assured it's being kept as real as humanly possible.

Weepy Gamer Puzzled

Just a couple days ago I bought Unreal Tournament for my PS2. Something weird has been happening lately. I will be playing on the Facing Worlds stage, and then after 10 or 15 minutes I have to pause the game because my eyes will suddenly start to get extremely teary. For some reason it is only on that stage too. I was just wondering if you have any advice for how to stop this problem.

Glugory
glugory@yahoo.com

A quick office poll revealed you seem to be alone in this affliction. Not much luck on finding a solution either. However, a couple people did say that when they let their dogs stick their heads out the car window, the dogs' eyes tend to get really dried out. You might try that, or rig some sort of wind machine in front of your television. Beyond that you're on your own, Glug.

Second-Hand Buyer PSO'ed At Sega

I bought Phantasy Star Online used on eBay. However, I had no idea about the serial number restrictions. You can only enter these once into a Dreamcast. Why would Sega completely do away with any resale value of one of their most promising games? And not to blame you, but you have not mentioned it either. I feel sad, hurt and disillusioned.

Trumpy13@yahoo.com

Warning to anyone else wanting to buy a used copy of Phantasy Star Online: Sega made it so each disc could only be used on a specific Dreamcast once the serial numbers were entered in (the info is stored in your DC's internal memory and on

the servers). Try as you might, you cannot later take that disc to play online on another machine.

Why did Sega do this? To help curb piracy. You can't register the same disc multiple times, so this certainly discourages any would-be bad guys from cloning the disc. Sorry you had to find out the hard way.

An Overlooked Trend?

My friend and I would like to bring to your attention the complete lack of a major sport yet to be emulated on the major systems. You see, we enjoy dancing like 1930s mining prospectors, yet haven't seen a video game that has brought respect to this sport. There are basketball, hockey, even skateboard games, but what about prospector dancing? Why is there a complete disregard for this sport that is quickly reaching the ranks of baseball in terms of popularity?

poopzilla@aol.com

First, excellent choice of e-mail address. Now, we don't know how this prospector dancing craze could have gone untapped for this long, poop, but rest assured its time is near. Let's just say that with E3 upon us, we'll have the ear of the gaming world, and they really look forward to input from the gaming press for say, new video game ideas (wink wink).

You're a little off on your history, however. The prospectors were livin' large in the late 1800s, not the 1930s. This does not diminish our enthusiasm for this genre, however.

"…after 10 or 15 minutes I have to pause the game because my eyes will suddenly start to get extremely teary."

Question of the Moment

What Sega games do you want to see most on Xbox?

NiGHTS!!!!! The game was incredibly fun on the Sega; think what a console as powerful as the Xbox could do to it! With the right controller...

ActionMan9876@aol.com

Crazy Taxi Crazy Taxi Crazy Taxi Crazy Taxi oh yea and Crazy Taxi 2.

STRONGWIND316@aol.com

I don't want Sega just porting over Dreamcast games. I already have a Dreamcast! Let's see some exciting new games and sequels! Shenmue 3 on Xbox!

SlothBorn@aol.com

Every Dreamcast game and arcade game that Sega never brought home (like GunBlade NY) should be brought to Xbox. Sega please stick with Xbox. Genesis and Saturn games on PlayStation please!

ajoo49@hotmail.com

Virtua Hamster.

jamminsthebest@hotmail.com

Of course it would have to be the classics (duh)! Sonic, VF4, the whole Sega Sports 2K series, and my personal dream, Skies Of Arcadia 2…drooling time!

kilik2k1@sega.net

Three words: Soul Calibur X. Never mind, that's two words.

Codtrimm3@aol.com

Sega on Xbox? I'd rather see them all on PS2…but if I have to make a choice, I'd go with Phantasy Star!

jetgrind87@hotmail.com

I couldn't care less what games show up on Xbox…but I wouldn't mind sending them on over to the PS2.

nhl_flyers03@hotmail.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

Game Boy Advance: Portable bliss or resounding miss?

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

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TEEN T Violence — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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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

Hellish Blunder In Charlie's Angels

I recently discovered a mistake in the movie *Charlie's Angels*. When Drew Barrymore is naked she runs to a

copyright 2001 Colombia Pictures

house where two kids are playing a video game together. Guess what? One of those poor boys is out of luck because they were playing Final Fantasy VIII, a one-player game.

O2Athletic@aol.com

Thanks for the heads-up. We've contacted the good people at Columbia Pictures, and they have agreed to reshoot the scene in question and rerelease it in theaters nationwide and as a special director's cut version of the DVD. We suggested they replace FFVIII with either Mr. Domino or Mr. Driller.

EGMullets in Demand

In the November 1999 issue of *EGM* (#124), Crispin celebrated the occasion with his customary launch-day mullet haircut. If it's a customary launch-day haircut, where was his mullet during the PlayStation 2 launch? We readers demand to see Crispin (and the rest of the crew, even Sewart!) in mullet greatness once more.

muahahahahahahahahahaha
@hotmail.com

Camaro Cut, Ape Drape, Business Up Front, Party in the Back, Kentucky Waterfall, Hi-Lo... whatever you call it, the mullet is king. And back in the day, Features Editor Crispin Boyer was the proud owner of this crown of glory. As for the others, check out this month's Final Word. Let's just say we know how to welcome back one of our own...

SHORTS

Direct, to the point, here they are. This month's shorts:

Will Game Boy or Game Boy Color games work on the GB Advance?

oovyandwiz@mymailstation.com

Almost all of them will, yes...but like in Japan, there are a very select few that will not work.

Is anybody still working on IQ Remix+ for the PlayStation 2?
JESSE@nwns.com

It's out in Japan, but a publisher hasn't picked it up for U.S. release yet.

EGM Crew's Debut On the Silver Screen

Hey, when I was reading the article on Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (*EGM* #143), I noticed the sign for the theater in a screenshot said "*Rear Admiral*, starring the *EGM* Crew." What's up with that?

While we here at *EGM* pride ourselves on our love of gaming, our creativity is not limited to the printed page. The pic you refer to is in homage to the theatrical debut of a soon-to-be classic, in which the gang gets themselves in all manner of sticky situations. We can't reveal much more than that right now, but look for this title in video stores soon. Hint: It'll be in the little room with cowboy doors in the back of the store.

Ah...those Neversoft guys...so funny.

Oops

We know, we know. It's hard for us to believe too, but occasionally we do make a mistake. Here are some items we felt needed sorting out:

Last issue, we were a tad liquored up and forgot to run the "Crazy Taxi 2 on Xbox" coverage we featured on the cover. Well, maybe not. Actually, we received word on the game but no solid confirmation. And even though some poor schmuck was able to go home early since he didn't have to write it up, we forgot to remove it from the cover.

On page 52 of the June issue we incorrectly listed Keith Hager's last name as Golvellius. For our RPG Maker contest, Keith received Honorable Mention in the "Coolest Character" category for his entry Robot Go Home.

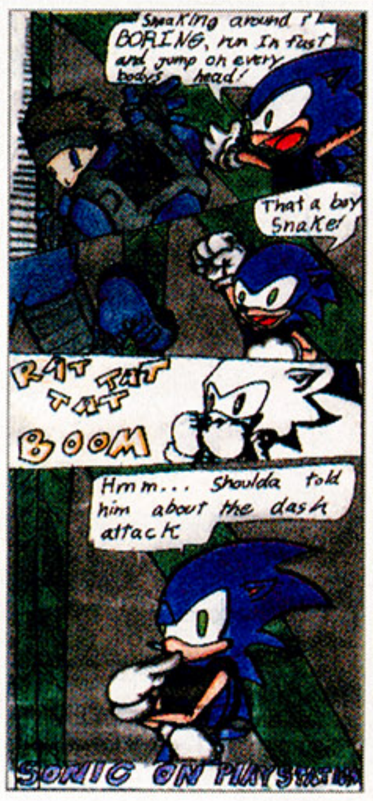
We really messed up his 15 minutes of fame, didn't we?

LETTER ART

WINNER

Samuel Lewis
Atlanta, GA

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:

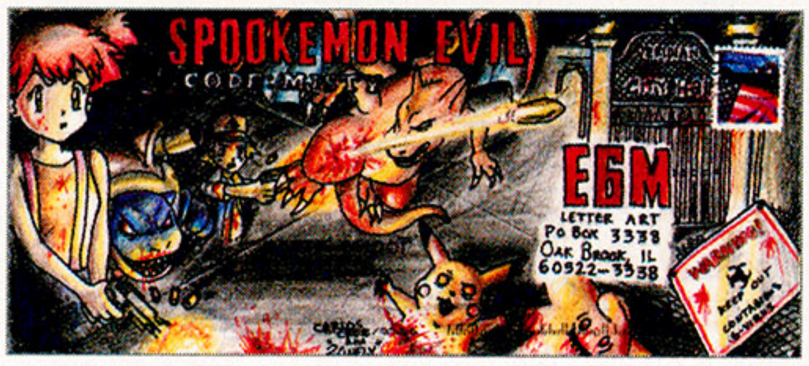
EGM Letter Art
PO Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL
60522-3338

(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.

Kali McKee
Long Beach, NY



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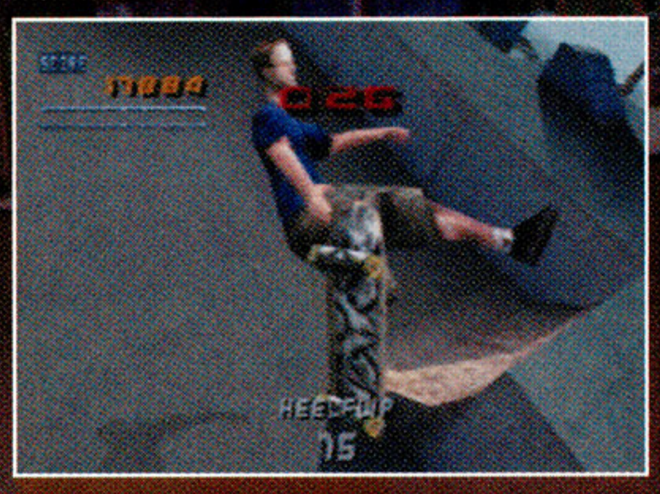
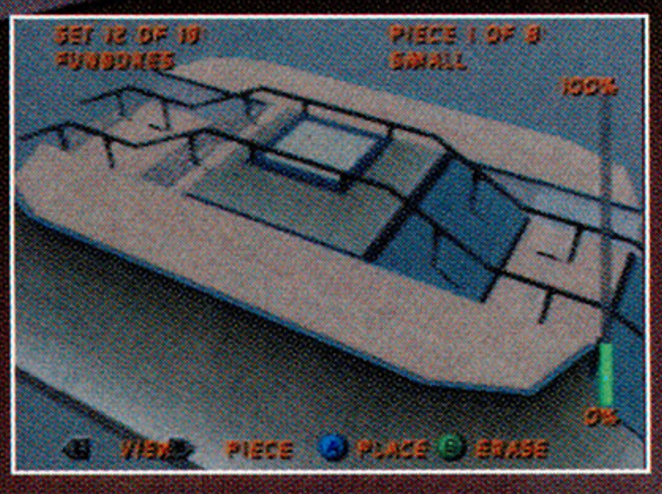


Skate like one of 13 top pros including the legendary Tony Hawk or create your own custom skater.

Skate head-to-head with your friends in sick new multi-player modes including Trick Attack, Graffiti, HORSE and the newest addition Tag Mode.



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Press Start

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

GameCube Hits Hyperdrive

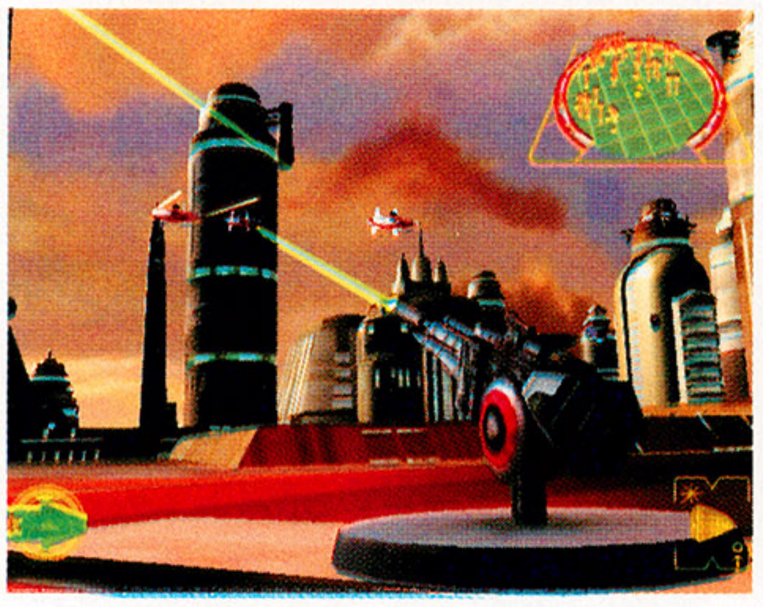
LucasArts Boards the GameCube With Rogue Squadron Sequel

It came directly from the chronically outspoken mouth of Nintendo Company Limited President Hiroshi Yamauchi himself: At a recent stock analyst meeting in Kyoto, Japan, he announced Nintendo was pushing back the GameCube's launch in that country a full two months, until Sept. 14. At the same time, Nintendo revealed the official target month for the system's U.S. debut—November—although Yamauchi hinted that the system might be delayed if its doesn't get a warm enough reception at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3).

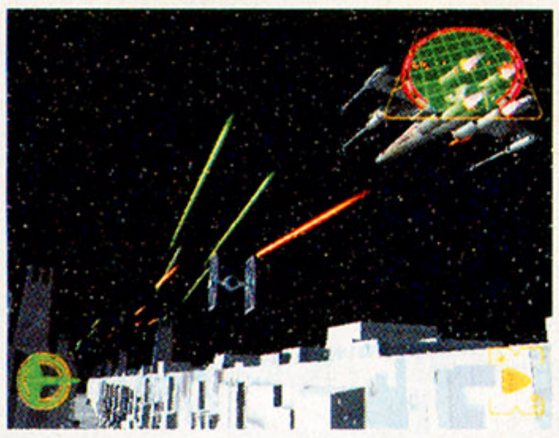
But we reckon the average E3 attendee would have to be darn near dead not to get excited about the bona-fide GameCube game (it's not a tech demo, nor a cancelled Retro Studios title) we're showing for the first time right here. These spectacular real-time screens are from LucasArts' GameCube sequel to the 1998 Nintendo 64 hit Rogue Squadron. Called Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II, it's being developed in conjunction with Factor 5, the same San Rafael, Calif., guys behind the first game, for the system's launch.

Don't look for Gungans, Federation Fighters or tow-headed punk-kid podracers here; Rogue Leader is set in the classic Star Wars universe (that's Han and Luke's old 'hood, in case you were born less than 18 months ago). "The player will fly all of the classic vehicles featured in Rogue Squadron," says Brett Tosti, the game's director. Those include the X-wing, Y-wing, Snowspeeder and A-wing. New additions include a B-wing starfighter and a Cloud Car, to name a few. "And of course we'll have a number of secret vehicles."

Unlike Rogue Squadron—where all the

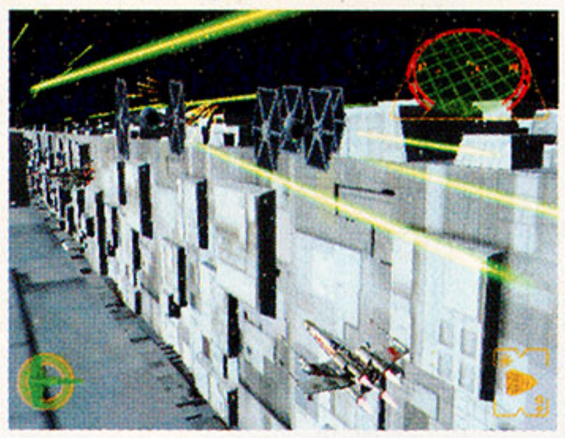


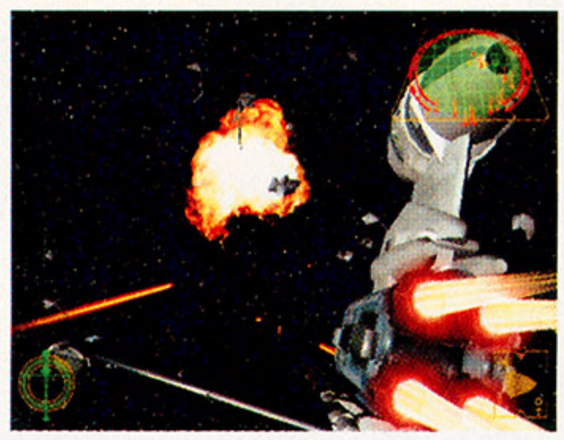
action was set at low altitude above various Star Wars planets—about half the levels in Rogue Leader take place in deep space. The E3 demo gives us a peek at three of the stages, and they pack the killer mission objectives that were a highlight of the N64 original. The first

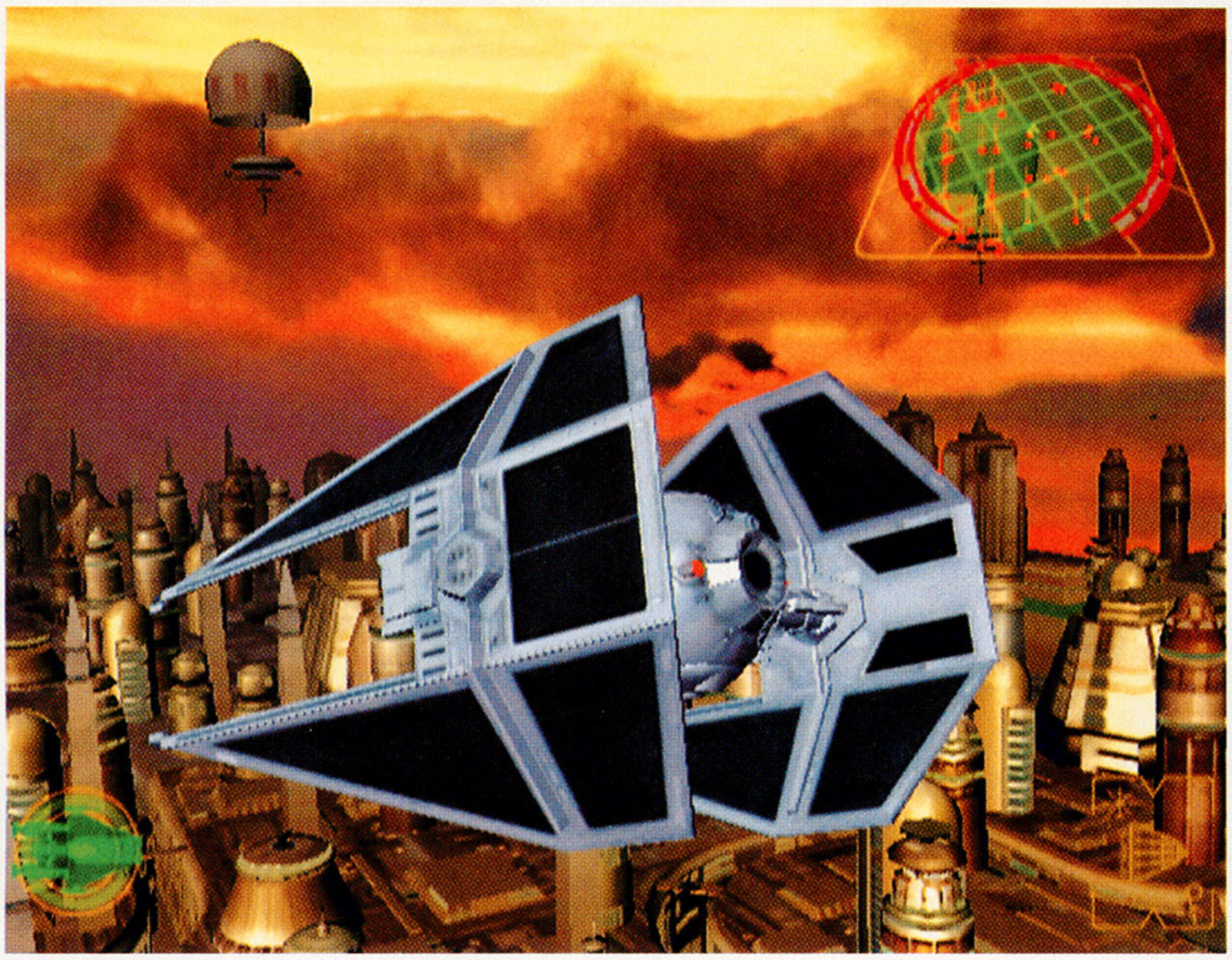


POLY PROWESS

Director Tosti says the new Rogue Squadron flexes between 12,000 and 25,000 polys on its ships, 30,000 on its terrains, 13,000 on an AT-AT, and 3,000 on each TIE fighter. The N64 prequel only did 300, 1,200, 600 and 200 respectively. Let us be the first to officially say wow.

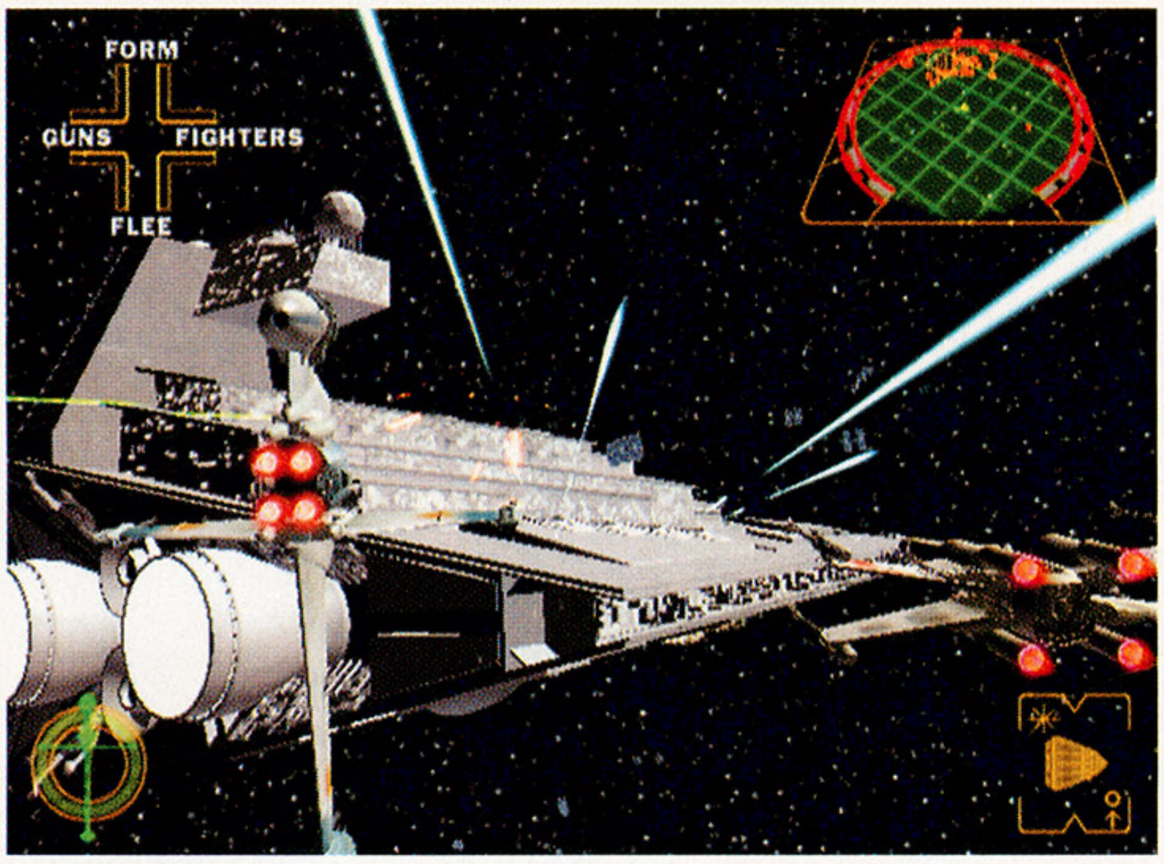






re-creates the explosive finale of *Star Wars*, with you flying an X-wing as Luke Skywalker. You start the mission skimming the Death Star's surface, blasting gun turrets and TIE fighters. Then you dive into the classic trench run to destroy the massive battle station (another famous movie sequence—the battle over Hoth—will be in the final game). The second E3 level is a protection mission set on Bespin. Flying an A-wing with two X-wing wingmen, you'll need to defend Could City from a vicious Imperial attack. The third demo level is set in space above the planet Kothlis, where you'll have to protect a Rebel frigate. Succeed and you'll be rewarded with the daunting task of destroying a Star Destroyer along with a full complement of TIE fighters. Remember the insane amount of enemies that filled the screen in Starfighter on PS2? That's the kind of white-knuckle stuff we're talking about here.

It's a safe bet that Rogue Leader will sound phenomenal, considering that Factor 5 designed the GameCube's audio libraries. Expect lots of radio chatter and flawless Star Wars tunage. The visuals speak for themselves in these screens, but we let Tosti tick off the improvements in the sidebar at the top of the page, if your interested. "But the funniest part," he tells us, "is that the hangar people in Rogue Squadron were made of two polygons on the N64—and 8,000 on GameCube." Suddenly, all those Xbox games aren't looking so staggeringly advanced after all. If nothing else, these first GameCube shots point to a looming system battle that could evolve into an all-out intergalactic war. –*Crispin Boyer*



TIDBITS

DOA3 Exclusively Xbox

Last issue we told you that Team Ninja's latest fighter, Dead or Alive 3 was headed toward Xbox. Since then, Tecmo has announced that DOA3 will premiere exclusively on the machine. Of course, that doesn't mean another version of DOA3 won't appear on another console later on (like what happened with DOA2/DOA2 Hardcore), but Tecmo says that the only version on the schedule is for Xbox. DOA3 is currently scheduled for release around the time Xbox launches this fall.

The women of Tecmo's Dead or Alive 3 bring their assets to Xbox.

Families of Columbine Victims Sue Game Makers

Nearly two years after the bloody massacre at Columbine High School, the victims' families have filed a $5 billion lawsuit against 25 media companies, including game makers Nintendo of America, Sony and id Software (creators of Doom). The suit "seeks literally to change the marketing and distribution of these super-violent video games that take kids...to become addicted and turn them into monster killers," said attorney John DeCamp, who filed the suit on behalf of the families. Next up, a suit filed by the Trix Rabbit against General Mills for wrongful withholding of cereal.

Would You Like an Xbox with Your Taco Supreme Value Meal?

Taco Bell visitors intent on filling their guts with cholesterol-busting burritos will also be able to get a taste of Xbox this fall thanks to an agreement between Microsoft and the restaurant chain. The system will be featured in Taco Bell advertising, along with in-store promotions. Yo quiero Xbox!

PRESS START

SILENT HILL 2

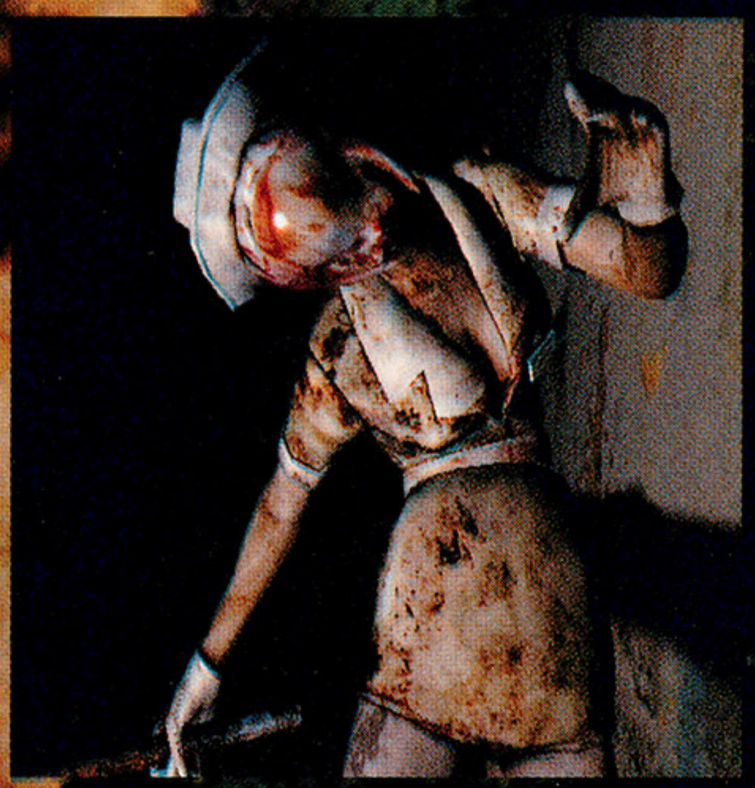
The horror geniuses behind Silent Hill talk shop about their follow-up frightener

Uncertainty can trigger some of the most potent fears within human beings. Walking through a deserted alley at night, coming home alone to a dark, empty house, or fumbling through a pitch-black basement when the light's burned out, not knowing what's around you can be very disconcerting. That's exactly what the creators of Silent Hill 2 are preying on to make their new PS2 title the pants-wettingest game in history.

At last month's Tokyo Game Show, *EGM* cornered the game's producer, Akihiro Imamura for some Q&A about the game's features, and how he plans to use next-gen hardware to better convey this spooky ambience. "The fear of not being able to see what is ahead or around you is something that really disturbs human beings," muses Imamura. "For the original we used the flashlight to cut down on the number of polygons displayed on the screen," he confesses (aha! we knew it!). "But at the same time, it worked really well as a presentation tool and helped set the mood. So for Silent Hill 2, we want to do the same sort of presentation again."

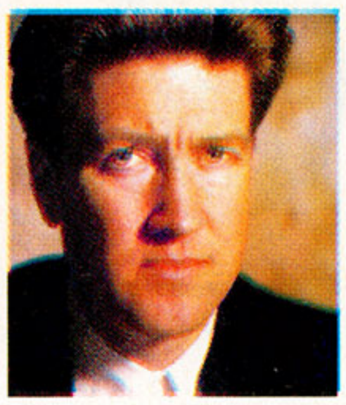
If you've played the first Silent Hill, you already know it packs more creeps than a Greyhound Bus station. Between scattered entrails in the schoolyard and scalpel-wielding doctors intent on all sorts of malpractice, it certainly isn't a game for the faint of heart. Those of you who got swept up in the Pokémon tide and missed the little PS1 Greatest Hits title, fear not. You don't need to know any backstory for SH2. Despite its aesthetic ties to the original, Silent Hill 2's story is totally independent of the first game's. In fact, the two share little more than the whacked-out small-town setting of Silent Hill. The new plot focuses on James Sanderland, who finds himself in Silent Hill after receiving a message from his wife to meet there. James is most intrigued by the summons, as his wife has suffered from a rather acute case of death for quite some time. From there, it sounds like SH2 will follow the same "figure out what the hell's going on" structure as its predecessor, just with a whole new set of characters and environments.

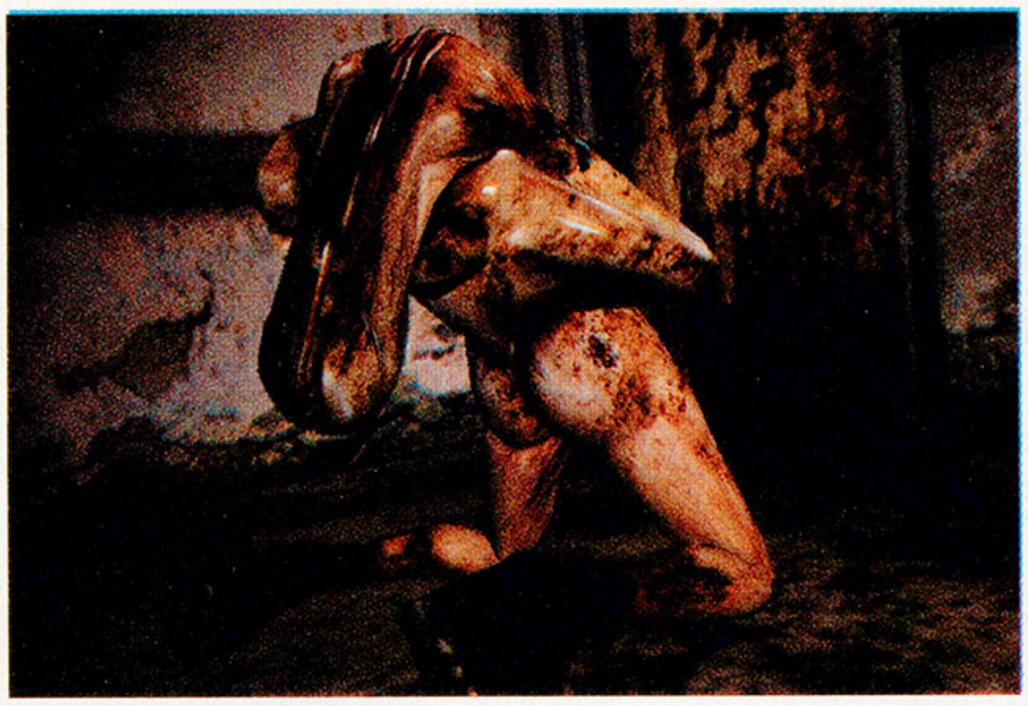
Main picture: Actual gameplay screen from Silent Hill 2. Note the grainy texture implemented to give the game its unique, analog film appearance.



FILM BREAK

Want to gear up for Silent Hill 2 but have already played the first game? Producer Akihiro Imamura says the sequel is influenced by the theatrical works of David Lynch, so grab some Junior Mints and digest some of this filmmaker's works. Check out *Lost Highway* for a twisted, dark thriller, or *Blue Velvet* if you wanna be truly weirded out. Feeling especially brave? Pop in the four-hour version of *Dune*—it's like time is actually standing still.





He's not much to look at, but he's got a great personality. Monsters like this, um, "guy" (above) and a ton of blade-wielding foes (bottom) lurk in the shadows of the Silent Hill 2 demo. Then there's the love interest, Maria (left).

To set the stage for his new interactive thriller, Imamura has expanded his morbid motivations, drawing on techniques used by filmmaker David Lynch (*Lost Highway, The Elephant Man*) to give his work that extra-psychotic look. The most noticeable trait is easily the grainy texture against which all the action is set. "In Silent Hill 2," Imamura explains, "we are really proud of the analog film kind of style. We wanted to create a more realistic, non-computer-generated look. That's why the game has that grainy look to it." While the grit in the first Silent Hill was probably more due to PS1 hardware limitations than artistic flair, you can bet the sequel will pull off that '50s horror film style and maintain a polished look.

Along with tweaked graphics and an overhauled plot, SH2 is tapping the PS2's sound capabilities to round out the fear factor. "[An audio] library provided by Sony allows us to create placement for sounds," says Imamura. "You'll be able to hear where sounds are coming from within the game environment...using just two speakers or a pair of headphones." Sounds like a tasty feature for those of us without multi-thousand-dollar home theater setups.

As cool as the first game was, navigation and combat were about as easy as piloting a mini-sub. But Imamura reassures: "We have been thinking about ways to improve it." Imamura describes the new controls as somewhere between "radio-control style" (Resident Evil) and "Super Mario 64 style."

The shape of the PS controller may not have changed, but bringing Silent Hill into the 21st century has definitely taxed Konami's resources a bit more. Imamura claims the size of the team has about doubled, but all the core members from the first are still working on the sequel, so we can expect that same brilliant design and gameplay. Akira Yamaoka, the man behind the mandolin-rich score from SH1 will also be returning to track the new game.

The brief SH2 demo shown at the Tokyo Game Show played a lot like the first Silent Hill, but these screens suggest tons of creative visual and gameplay possibilities, thanks to the stepped-up PS2 hardware. It'll be landing in the thick of things this fall as the PS2 tries to defend its next-gen crown against the Gamecube and Xbox (the latter already has a version of SH2 in the works).

"We wanted to create a more realistic, non-computer-generated look." *-Tetsuhiro Imamura*

BEHIND THE MUTANTS

Fear By Design

Imamura (right) and CGI director Takayoshi Sato expound on SH2.

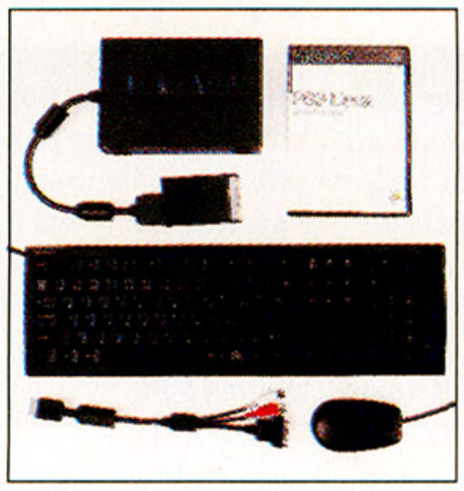
If there's one thing that Silent Hill demonstrated and Silent Hill 2 reaffirms, it's that the designers must have some pretty twisted ideas floating around in their heads. Imamura and CGI Director Takayoshi Sato have certainly given fans of the horror series many a nightmare with their first title, so we thought we'd see how the game affected their own peace of mind. "I don't get haunted by the games because I see the creatures we deal with every day," admits Imamura. "I guess I've gotten used to them." Not even a bad dream?! Wow.

Sato sees it the same way, but suggests lightheartedly that the game has taken to messing with other aspects of his life: "For some reason, one of our hard drives crashed three times...we lost so much data on it. I just couldn't figure out what was wrong with it. But now I'm honestly thinking it has to do with Silent Hill."

If nothing else, working on Silent Hill 2 has been somewhat of a spiritual experience for the guys. After editing a particularly graphic scene (let's just say the phrase "lots more vomiting" was used to describe it), the computer crashed and the scene was ruined. "I figured it was a message from God telling me that we went too far, so we decided to tone it down," said Imamura.

Maybe it was God, or maybe just the CESA (Computer Electronics Software Association, which monitors game content in Japan) influencing the severity of the content in SH2, but it's sure to have plenty of disturbing sequences regardless. So, what really scares the guys who get paid to scare the gamers? "Marriage...and the whole 'having my girlfriend staying over night' thing," laughs Sato. Well, it's not quite as ominous as a rusted, decaying parallel world with deformed, bloodthirsty monsters, but we know where you're coming from, man.

PRESS START



LINUX ON PS2

Six thousand geeks simultaneously orgasmed when Sony announced the June release of its PlayStation 2 Linux Kit in Japan. The kit will let the loyal fanbase of Linuxheads run the operating system on the PS2 (joy!), but will not include the code for the runtime environment necessary to run games on it. What can you actually do with it? Well, other than watch it run we have no idea. It'll cost you 25,000 yen (about $200) to buy the kit, which comes with an external 40 GB hard drive, keyboard, mouse, monitor cable and a DVD of software.

Bleem! Arrives

The emulator Sony doesn't want you to play is released for Dreamcast

Bet you never thought this day would come. As you read this bleem! for Dreamcast, a PlayStation emulator that allows you to play PS1 games on the DC, is on store shelves, following its promising debut at E3 last year. Before you run out to the store and buy it, there's some good and bad news. First the good news: You can now play Gran Turismo 2 on your DC by buying the bleem! for DC disc for its $5.99 MSRP at your local game store, and it looks absolutely gorgeous. The bad news: GT2 is all that it supports—at least for now.

When bleem! first showed off its PS1 emulator for the DC at E3 2000, we were promised game packs with code to emulate a hundred games per disc. If it seemed too good to be true at the time, well...it was. David Herpolsheimer, founder and president of bleem! explains, "I wish we could have brought it out sooner, and made a version that worked with everything, but this stuff is hard, especially working blind and without assistance from the original game developers."

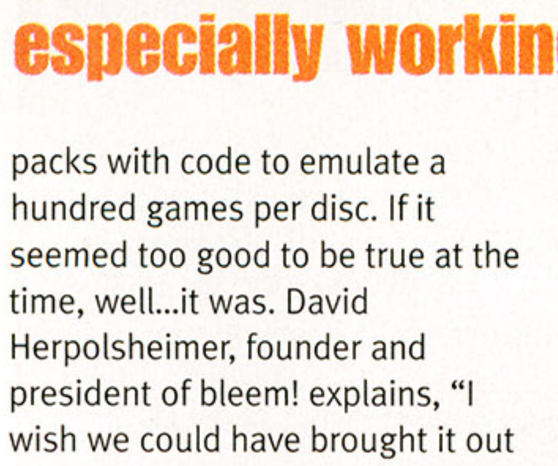
If Herpolsheimer is a tad on the defensive side, we can't really blame him. Ever since its fateful debut at E3, bleem! for DC has been choking under Sony's legal death grip. With the company hemorrhaging cash for legal fees and no feasible settlement in sight, Herpolsheimer decided to recoup costs by changing bleem! for DC's business plan and focus on emulating only best-selling PS1 titles in cheap, single game packs. After GT2, bleem! is considering bringing out more discs, each compatible with one top-selling PS1 game for the same price (no-brainers include Metal Gear Solid, Syphon Filter and Spyro).

But why even bother with a release now, especially given that Sega has discontinued the DC? "Why not? There are still several million Dreamcast owners out there, and they all want the same thing: great games," contends Herpolsheimer.

"I wish we could have brought it out sooner...but this stuff is hard, especially working blind..."

As for the GT2 bleem! disc, it certainly lives up to their year-old promise, even if it's only one game. We ran GT2 side by side on a PS1 and DC and, as you can see from the screenshots, the jump in image quality is downright obscene. If you're expecting it to look like the PS2's GT3, then you might be let down. Keep in mind it's still limited by what was originally programmed for the PS, and for that it looks really good. bleem!'s compatibility extends beyond just graphics, of course; GT2 will work with standard DC controllers, steering wheels and even VMUs.

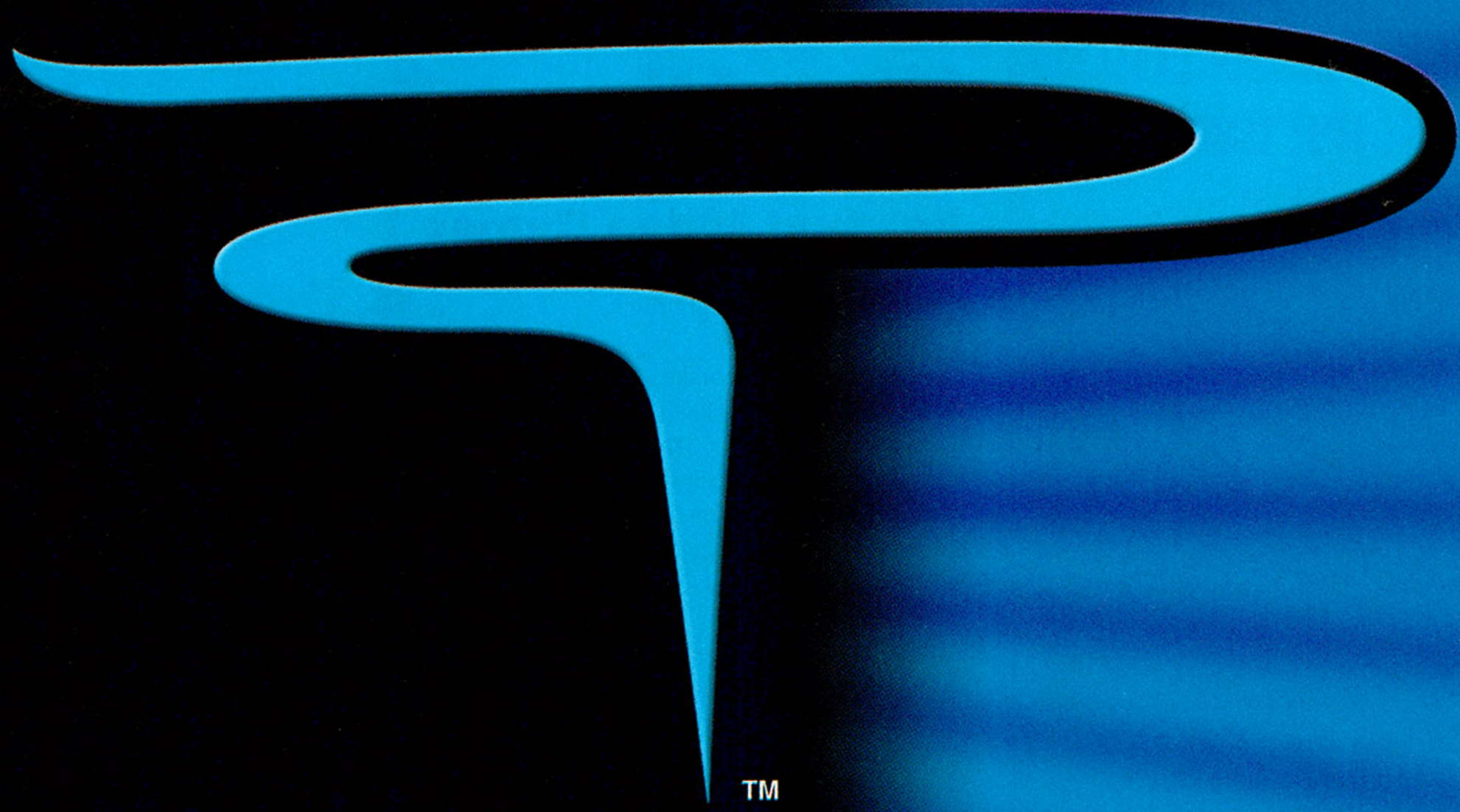
Gran Turismo 2 running on a PlayStation (above) and on the Dreamcast (below). We don't need to tell you which looks better.



The folks at bleem! are still on the fence about a release of their bleempods (adapters that would let players use their Dual Shock controllers and PS1 memory cards on the DC), but if they get enough user interest, it may see life at retail after all. Be sure to hit www.bleem.com and contact them if that's something you might like for your DC's last hurrah.

At the moment, the future for bleem! is precarious at best. It's the classic analogy of David versus Goliath, with Herpolsheimer and his team on the brink of financial meltdown against Sony's padded resources and legal tactics. While they've long stopped making ambitious promises they won't be able to deliver on, they do hope to make a grassroots difference in the gaming community. "We're sticking it out and hoping Dreamcast gamers will appreciate that we're sticking with them and making great software available for their console, when companies with zillions of dollars and piles of resources have dropped out left and right," Herpolsheimer adds. "But in the end, I think what will make them care is that GT2 running on bleem! is simply awesome, and that's what it's really all about."

–Che Chou



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DEVELOPER PROFILE

Irrational Games

Year Founded: 1997
Location: Boston, MA
Web Site: www.irrationalgames.com
# of people: 40

What are some of your previous games? Thief, System Shock 2 (both PC).
What are your current projects? The Lost (PS2), Freedom Force (PC).
During late-night programming sessions we: Fall asleep and let magical elves finish our work.
Music that inspires us around the office: Our lead programmer, Bryn, usually plays the soundtrack to *A Chorus Line*.
Story behind our name: Well, I think Irrational aptly described the minds of three guys with no money and no business experience trying to start a game company.
What's different about programming for the PS2 instead of the PC? One PS2 is just like another one, so you don't have to worry about annoying things like hardware conflicts.
Why did you choose Dante's Inferno as the subject matter for The Lost?: Well, if you've played our game System Shock 2, you'll know it takes place on nine levels of a space ship, with different monsters on each level and dead people telling you their stories. When I thought about Dante's Inferno, it occurred to me that it had almost exactly the same structure: nine levels, different monsters on each level, lots of talking dead people.
Is there anything you wanted to do in The Lost that had to be cut?: Not really, we just extended the schedule! That's the lazy man's way of solving a problem. Throw more money at it!
Our favorite game to play in the office (not by us) is: SSX (PS2).

The View From Japan

Not Just Video Games

Despite what you might think, Japanese video game companies don't just make video games. In times like this when the economy's not so good, it's nice to have something to fall back on for extra income. And for some companies, making video games isn't their main business. So what kinds of things do they do?

Most have dipped their toes into the extremely popular pachinko (like pinball only upright) and pachislot (half pachinko, half slot machine) market. Both are considered gambling and if you're under 18 you're prohibited from playing them. These machines sometimes have LCD screens that work like slot machines. Game developers (recently Tecmo and Konami) lend characters for use on these displays. Companies like Aruze and Sammy actually made pachinko machines first, with video games as their side business.

Since Aruze acquired SNK last year, Pachislot machines have appeared featuring characters from their popular fighting game Samurai Shodown. Pachinko machines helped Irem (known for the R-Type series) survive some hard times.

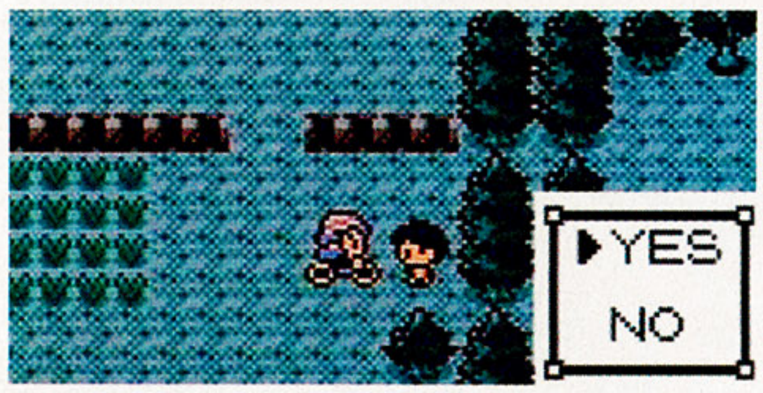
Kotobuki System, widely known as Kemco, is also active in the restaurant business, with more than 20 stores across Japan.

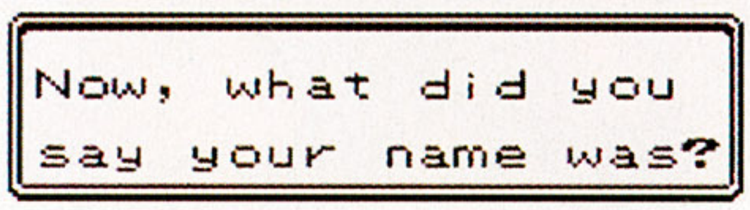
Pacific Century Cyber Works Japan, formerly known as Jaleco, has one of the more unique side businesses in this industry. They sell—get this—fish tanks and personal-sized beer taps. The taps are popular among beer drinkers in Japan, and other companies sell their own versions. Alas, these side businesses don't always pay off. This past fall Jaleco stopped selling fish tanks, and Data East's mushroom business went bad a while back.

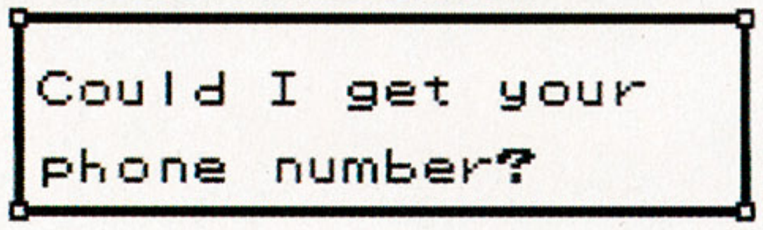
But the mother of all side businesses is Nintendo's. Some of you probably know that Nintendo was established in 1889 by President Hiroshi Yamauchi's great grandfather as a manufacturer of the Japanese card game Hanafuda and other playing cards. At one point, they discovered other areas—like ready-to-eat rice, and they even operated a cab company. About 40 years ago they realized that they should focus on the "entertainment business." In a sense, it was the beginning of Nintendo as we now know them. But after more than 100 years, Nintendo still makes playing cards in addition to video games. You can easily purchase a deck of their cards at stores in Japan. *–Yutaka Ohbuchi*

It's Crystal, But Still the Same Pokémon

Nintendo has confirmed what we suspected all along—Pokémon Crystal is coming to the U.S. For all you women who play Pokémon, your wish has now been granted—at the beginning of the game you can now choose to play as a girl. You have a little time to save your juice money, though. The game won't hit stores until July 30.







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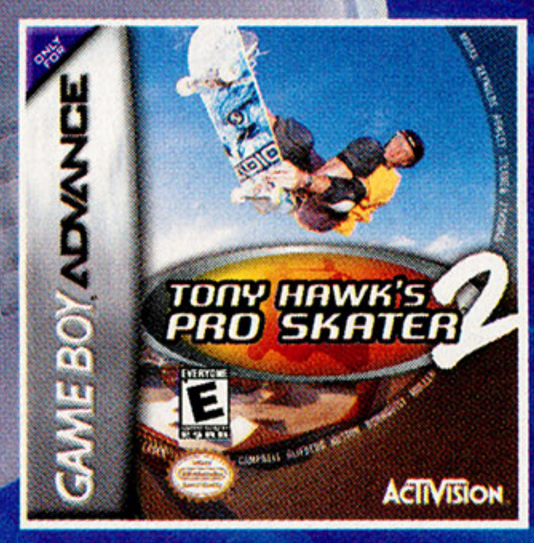

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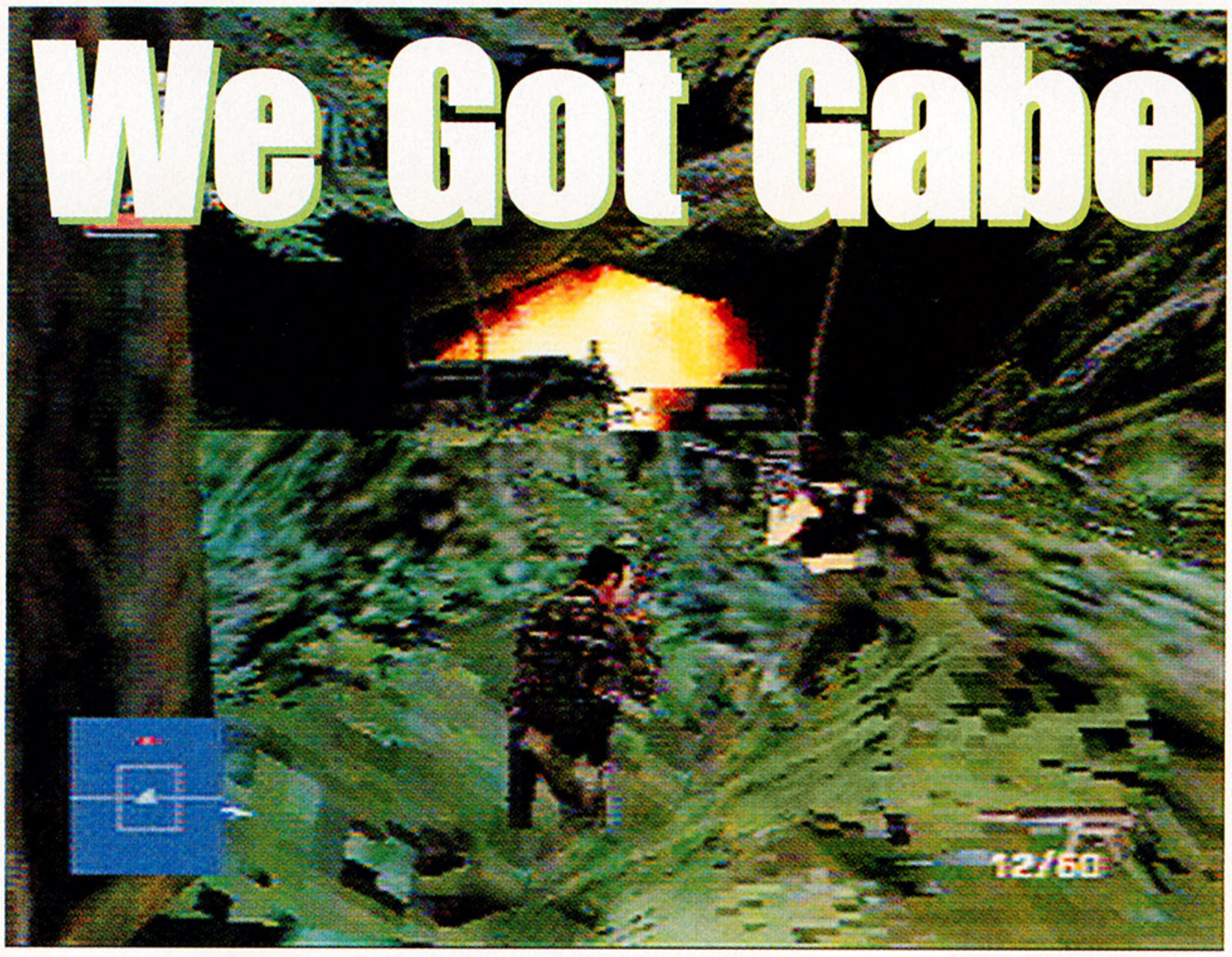
Syphon Filter 3



Recognize this scene? It's the same Costa Rican rainforest from the intro of the original Syphon Filter, only this time you get to play through exactly what happened there.

Proximity mines join the giant arsenal of old favorites, including shotguns, grenades, gas guns, sniper rifles and, for all you sadists, the convulsion-causing taser.

How do you make three successful games in three years? With SYPHON FILTER 3, Sony's answer is stick to the formula, and forget about the vacations.

The last time we spoke to the Syphon Filter team a little over a year ago they were slaving through 16-hour workdays to finish up Syphon 2 and looking forward to finally enjoying the long vacation they skipped after completing the first game. So what did they do with their well-deserved time off? "It pretty much didn't happen," says Assistant Producer Ron Allen, with a chuckle. Good thing for us, 'cause instead of spending quality time with friends and family, relaxing on a beach, or some other useless activity, the team began work on the third Syphon Filter game in as many years, trying to finish it up for its debut on the PS1 this September. Vacation-shmacation.

It might not seem—wait a second, did someone say PS1? You mean the next game isn't making the leap to the PS2?! That's right. As you can no doubt tell from these screenshots, Sony decided to keep the series on their older platform for a wider audience to enjoy.

"There's a lot of people out there who don't own PS2's," Allen explains, "and we want to make sure that the people who still own the PS1 are happy that games are still coming out—good games. 'Cause there's not too many really good games coming out for the PS1, and I know some people out there who are upset (about that). And the PS2 does play PS1 games so there's a whole huge market out there, and I think it's good that we're trying to tap into that." Is there any work being done on a PS2 Filter? Level designs? Graphics tests? Early gameplay concepts or scripting or—for the love of god, anything? "No, nothing right now," says Allen, "We are completely focused on Syphon 3."

If the team seems resistant to change, it's with good reason. The espionage action/adventure formula they struck upon with the original Syphon Filter and followed closely with the sequel made them two of the most popular PlayStation games ever, selling a combined 2 million copies worldwide. That might explain why these first screens look almost exactly like the previous two games (take our little quiz on page 36 to see if you can tell them apart)—it seems Sony is taking an "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" attitude with their blockbuster franchise once again: The same radar in the lower left for spotting enemies, the same status bars up top (armor for your health, target for your lock-on enemies, and a danger level that increases as they zero in on you) and the same auto-targeting crosshair and weapon selection menu. Fans of the series will be instantly familiar with the controls as well, which Allen confirms will be identical to the previous game's. The interface is definitely something he doesn't think needs adjustment: "The controls are very up front—with our target lock, you run through and it's just straight action. It's really easy to just pick up and play. Some other games have first-person shooter controls, but we've steered away from that, (remembering) to make it a console game."

But the screens here don't tell the whole story—or any of the story, as in the plot—whose surprise twists and double-crosses have always been one of the most satisfying aspects of the series. Picking up right where part 2 left off, Syphon 3 begins with our heroes, Gabe Logan and Lian Xing, on trial at a closed Senate hearing

cont. on page 36

"Smile you son of a bitch!" One of the first levels takes place in a Tokyo hotel, where you run across this happy fellow.

...Are you receiving this?...|

I do no read you... [send...)

not re target site.

...[have] enco ed

heavy resistance...

need ku atley

Contact...at HQ and es

encrypted the frequency
in this message,
you must decode

[targ

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SYPHON SAYS...

Even diehard fans of the series can't deny Syphon Filter has changed very little over the years. At right we have one screenshot each from Syphon Filter parts 1, 2 and 3. Can you tell the difference?

Answer: left to right: Syphon 2, 3, 1.

"We want to make sure that the people who still own the PS1 are happy that games are still coming out—good games." -Asst. Producer Ron Allen

cont. from page 34

for their actions in the first two games. The super-secret government agency they once worked for (so secret it doesn't even have a name—it's known only as "The Agency") has set them up as patsies for crimes they didn't commit, and it's as our heroes recount what really happened that the game introduces most of the levels you play. Allen explains: "Basically what happens is, as they're in court—(the Agency is) trying to blame everything on Gabe. So, Gabe will say something like "No, I didn't kill so and so, this is what happened" and it will jump into a level about that. There's a lot of flashback stuff." Meanwhile that pesky Syphon Filter, a deadly virus that can be genetically manipulated to target certain ethnic groups, is being secretly leaked in different locations all over the globe. Sounds like it's time to save the world again.

As far as gameplay is concerned, the biggest difference Sony is touting for Syphon 3 is a batch of all-new mini-games. But before you picture Syphon Bass Fishing or Gabe in hot pants for some wild dancing contest, this isn't your typical use of the term mini-games: These are just levels that break away from the typical Syphon Filter mold—stuff like timed, stealth, assassination and cover-fire operations. And that's not all; the mini-games also add some variety through randomly changing elements. Allen gives an example: "One particular mini-game will be going in and stealing something and then making your way back out. So you start in a certain position and you're looking for something. But here's the catch: Say you find this thing and you get caught. Well, you've failed, so you start back over, and when you (do), you're in a different position, and the thing you're trying to find is in a completely different position. So yeah, you're running back like 'Oh, where is it now?'" Other things will change too, like the positions of all the enemies (sorry, no more memorizing where every guard appears and lighting him up with your mini-gun the second he sticks his head out).

No alcohol, no tobacco, but plenty of firearms: Gabe and Lian flashback to their old days as ATF agents, raiding a militia compound. Somewhere Janet Reno is smiling.

Other gameplay adjustments are less obvious. "I know that in the first game some people really liked the stealth (aspects), but in the second game I guess we added a little bit too much," admits Allen. "So in this game, there are levels where you can still be stealthy, but it's your choice. You don't have to. You can run and gun through certain levels, no problem. But it would be better for you if you would sneak. It's up to the player. It's a lot more similar to the first one—there's a lot more action."

But on other topics Allen is tight-lipped enough to make any secret agent proud. We know the two-player split-screen game will return with some new modes and variations, but exactly what he wouldn't say. Playable characters? You'll at least control Gabe and Lian again, but everyone else is being kept under wraps. Ditto for the supporting cast, although we have learned Lawrence Mujari and Russian vixen Mara Aramov will return, along with "a few surprises I'd rather not spoil" says Allen. Seems about the only thing he'll be completely honest about is the likelihood of finally getting that time off after Syphon 3. "You know it's funny, we're all hoping (for a big vacation), but it's probably not gonna happen."

—Mark MacDonald

TIDBITS

Namco, Enix and Square to Work Together

Three of the biggest game publishers in Japan announced in April their intent to work together in the future. While there are no plans to merge the companies, each group's president agreed to buy up to 5 percent of the stock of each other's companies. What's next, Tekken characters in a Final Fantasy game?

Interplay to Deliver The Matrix exclusively to Xbox

In a deal inked between Microsoft and Interplay, Shiny Entertainment's game based on the blockbuster film, *The Matrix*, will appear first on Xbox and have exclusive features that won't be in any other version. The game is tentatively scheduled for a 2002 release.

3DO Mo-caps Moseley

Ever been to a motion-capture (mo-cap for those down with the lingo) party? It's wild stuff. We attended one recently where Olympic gold medalist Jonny Moseley was showing off some of his signature moves for 3DO's latest PS2 skiing game. When 3DO asked if he would star in an extreme skiing title, he had only two requests. "I wanted it to be trick-based and I wanted it to be as fun as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater." It's good that he's involved, because Moseley, who plays plenty of games when he's not doing "360-mute grabs" off the side of a mountain, will have plenty of input into 3DO's latest project due out this fall.

Quick Bits

Activision will release a Dreamcast version of its popular BMX game Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX in the fall. **Vivendi Universal Publishing** will publish games based on the Lord of the Rings license, the first of which will be released in early 2002 for an unspecified next-gen console. VU will also co-publish several games with Fox Interactive—COPS (PS2/Xbox), Die Hard: Next Generation (GameCube), No One Lives Forever (PS2) and its sequel (multiple platforms).

ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE?

COLIN McKAY KICK FLIPPING INTO
THE 20 FOOT TALL DC SUPER RAMP.

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- (B) *PAL AB2000 POLYURETHANE-COATED LEATHER TOE CAP*
- (C) *RUBBER HEEL AND TONGUE PULL TAB*
- (D) *ULTRA LIGHTWEIGHT EVA MIDSOLE*
- (E) *LIGHTWEIGHT BREATHABLE MESH WITH INJECTED TPR STRUCTURAL RIBS*
- (F) *OPTIONAL HIDDEN LACE LOOPS*
- (G) *TPR RUBBER LACE DOME*

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PRESS START

PORTABLE ATARI 2600

Hard to believe that it's taken this long, but there is finally a portable version of Atari's first video game system from the late '70s, the 2600 VCS. Built and designed by Ben Heckendorn, the various models of VCSp (the "p" is for "portable") play all 2600 cartridges and have color screens, a paddle and pad controller, and of course, one action button (that's all you need!). The newest revision also has a port for a second controller. It all runs on a rechargeable digital camera battery. How can you get one of these modern miracles for your very own? Visit Heckendorn's site, at http://www.classicgaming.com/vcsp/ for all the info.

Harry Potter Conjures Up Video Game Magic

Seeing that having the name Harry Potter attached to any kind of product virtually gives you the ability to print money, Electronic Arts paid big bucks with hopes that Potter will work his magic on three games due out this fall.

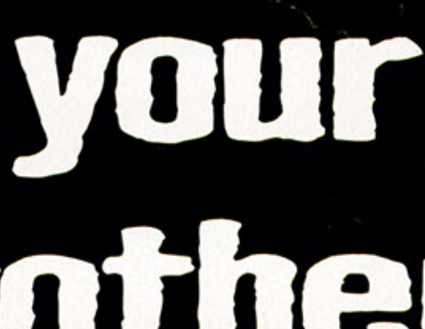
All three are entitled Harry Potter and the Sorceror's Stone and have a similar story: You must help Potter unlock the secrets of his own abilities at Hogwarts, but depending on the platform, each game will play significantly different. The PlayStation version is a 3D action game that will involve plenty of jumping and monster fighting with a few mini-games thrown in for good measure, while the Game Boy Color edition will use tradable Wizard Cards and play as a full-fledged, turn-based role-playing game. There's a Game Boy Advance version, too, so see our feature this issue for more on Harry Potter GBA.

DRAGON WARRIOR VII

Hardcore RPG fans, your time has come. Enix has made it official—their PS1 RPG Dragon Warrior VII is coming to the U.S. this November. This will mark the first time in nearly 10 years that a Dragon Warrior game (known as Dragon Quest in Japan) has made it to the U.S. Although still early in the localization process (more on that next issue), here's the first English screenshot to come out of Enix HQ.

This ain't your little brother's card game.

Features exciting 3D Polygon Battle Sequences!



DIGIMON DIGITAL MONSTERS

DIGITAL CARD BATTLE™

PlayStation

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PRESS START

Will you buy an Xbox if it costs more than $300?

Source: GameSpot poll, 4/9/2001

IMPORT CALENDAR

Final Fight One

Import Pick of the Month: You Gundam fans are probably wondering, "Why didn't you pick Gundam Battle Online?" That's a fair question. See, even though it's probably going to be cool, it'll have loads of Japanese text. Besides, getting a Japanese game to work online can sometimes be a pain. That's why this month's pick is Capcom's newest GBA title, Final Fight One. It's a remake of their late '80s side-scrolling beat-'em-up that, quite frankly, was sorely in need of revisiting. Smash, Haggar, smash!

PlayStation

5/24 Tear Ring Saga, Enterbrain (RPG)
6/7 Dance Dance Revolution Extra Mix, Konami (Music)

PlayStation 2

5/31 Endonesia, Enix (RPG)
6/21 Evergrace 2, From Software (RPG)
June Gitaroo Man, Koei (Music)
June Ka (Mosquito), Sony CEI (Action)
7/19 Final Fantasy X, Square (RPG)

Dreamcast

5/31 Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2, Sega (Network RPG)
5/31 Crazy Taxi 2, Sega (Action)
5/31 Sega Gaga, Sega (Simulation RPG)
6/23 Sonic Adventure 2, Sega (Action)
June Gundam Battle Online, Bandai (Action)

Game Boy Advance

5/25 Final Fight One, Capcom (Action)
June Choro Q Advance, Takara (Racing)
7/19 Klonoa: Empire of Dreams, Namco (Action)
July Breath of Fire, Capcom (RPG)
July Golden Sun, Nintendo (RPG)
July Super Street Fighter II X Revival, Capcom (Fighting)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import game store for the latest release information. Don't ask us what Haggar is doing to poor J.

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Hey gamers, didja miss ol' Q? It's another short one this month, so, erm, maybe I should get to it, eh? OK!

...**Bad news** for N64 owners. In addition to not having much to look forward to anyway, **Treasure**'s action shooter **Sin & Punishment** is no longer coming to the U.S. from Nintendo or anyone else. N64 is dead in Japan (**Animal Forest** is likely the **last game** from Nintendo over there) and will soon be dead in the U.S. But why pass up this opportunity to give us all a good game?

...Lots of cool **GameCube** stuff happening. First, one **spiky blue hedgehog** is in talks to appear in **Nintendo's Smash Bros. sequel.** Will it happen? It looks good, so the Q's keepin' his fingers crossed! A **Sonic game** is headed to GameCube whether or not he's in Smash Bros.... **Miyamoto** has a bunch of GC projects on his plate, including a supersecret game called **Piki**. Whoah there, wait 'til E3 Quarterfriends, I've been sworn to secrecy on that one, but lemme tell ya, it's cool.... The fine peeps over at **Activision** are on board the 'Cube too, with two titles in the works—**Tony Hawk** and **Spider-Man** (**based on the movie** this time). In addition to the GC Resident Evil Zero, a **completely real-time version of the first Resident Evil** is headed to **GameCube and PS2**, with new areas and more chills n' thrills.

The fine folks down at **LucasArts** have been keepin' busy. Quartermeister's personal faves **Full Throttle** and **Maniac Mansion** will soon be landing on **PS2** (and possibly other platforms too), while **Obi-Wan and Starfighter Special Edition** (an update of the PS2 game) are headed to **Xbox**. Speaking of Xbox, don't tell anyone, but that Project K-X game from **Dream Factory** is really the Xbox-exclusive fighter **Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon.**

It's time for me to get outta here, kiddies. If ya feel like talkin' to The Q, drop me an e-mail at quartermann@ziffdavis.com. -The Q

METAL GEAR SOLID 2 WATCH

Send your MGS2 questions and information to egm@ziffdavis.com, subject heading "MGS2WATCH"

? Hey, what about the voice actors from the original Metal Gear Solid? Will they be back for MGS2?

! Although Konami kept mum on the subject, *EGM* has confirmed through outside sources that, yes indeedy, members of the original U.S. voice acting crew will return for MGS2: Christopher Fritz as Otacon, Patric Laine as Revolver Ocelot, and most importantly David Hayter as Solid Snake.

? I must have played the playable MGS2 demo included with Z.O.E a thousand times—is there anything more I can do with it?

! Sure, if you have a PS2 GameShark, there are even some cool items you can't get otherwise. Try a guard uniform on for size, blow up the wet bar with some C4, or go nuts in the storage room (look at them melons blowed up, Ma!) with a fully loaded FA-MAS rifle.

FIRST, ENTER THIS CODE (it must be on for any of the others to work):
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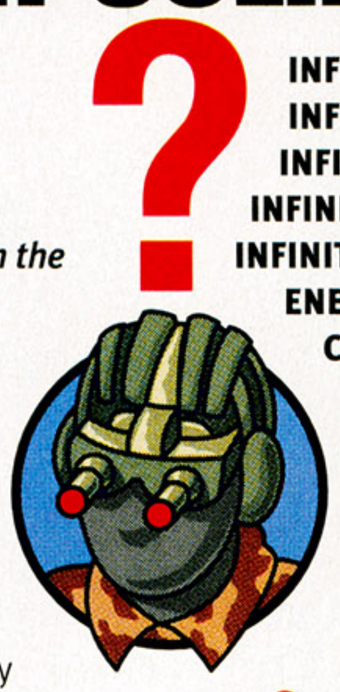

INFINITE RATIONS: 3cbb523e 1456e7a2
INFINITE M9: 4cbb53ce 1456e788
INFINITE USP: 4cbb53d4 1456e788
INFINITE SOCOM: 4cbb53d2 1456e788
INFINITE FA-MAS: 4cbb53d8 1456e788
ENEMY UNIFORM: 3cbb5250 1456e7a6
C4: 4cbb53e2 1456e781
EMPTY MAGAZINES: 4cbb53fa 1456e781
GRENADES: 4cbb5300 1456e781
CAMERA: 4cbb5262 1456e7a6
KILL OLGA WITH ONLY 1 HIT: 4de8b5ac 1456e7a6

? Wait a second, couldn't I use these codes to cheat and get an incredible score on Konami's MGS2 demo Internet rankings page (www.konami.co.jp/kcej/products/mgs2/)?

! Well...uh...actually, yeah, there is a way to use the "Kill Olga with only one hit" code to lower your time and boost your score, but Konami claims they have been cracking down on "dishonest" registration codes and removing them from the ranking pages, adding that Hideo Kojima and his staff are "disappointed and sad" that players have been trying to cheat. There, are you happy? You made Kojima cry. Hope you're proud of yourself, cheater.

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PUCKIN' KIDS

In the U.S., Pac-Man was to be called "Puck-Man," because of his puck-like shape. Namco realized, however, how quickly the "P" on the arcade cabinet could be turned into an "F" in the hands of American youth. So Pac-Man stayed Pac-Man.

Where Are They Now?

Toru "Pac-Man" Iwatani

Gamefather of a Video Game Icon

Toru Iwatani, creator of the single most recognizable icon in gaming history, talks about simplicity in gaming, spinach, combo-topped pizzas and shocking the president of Namco with multi-colored ghosts.

The year was 1979, the place was Namco's headquarters in Japan, and the hour was lunchtime. Game creator and visual designer Toru Iwatani sat down to eat his meal, a recently cooked pizza. This wasn't just any old pizza, though: "It was a combination pizza with many toppings," says Iwatani. After grabbing a single slice, he gazed at the pizza and saw something in the shape of the remaining pieces: It looked like a hungry mouth. From this spark of inspiration the character of Pac-Man was born. But only after the pizza was finished.

Five years previously, Namco was focused on decidedly non-game stuff like rocking horsey rides. Then they acquired Atari Japan, and this foray into Printed-Circuit-Board (PCB) technology allowed Iwatani to write down a concept for a simple yet wildly addicting arcade game. "It was important for me to first write down the concept," he says. "Later, after obtaining a superior's approval for the concept, we began working on the specifications." Iwatani, along with a programmer and PCB engineer, started to create this labor of love. Once the pizza revelation was digested, Iwatani-san completed his designs for Pac-Man himself. "I chose it because it was a simple design that easily expressed the image of eating," he says. "In fact, the main concept of this game was eating, and in Japan the onomatopoeic sound of eating is 'pac pac,' so we named this game 'Pac-Man.'"

Next up, Iwatani chose Pac-Man's colors. His hue was selected after the team agreed with Iwatani's inarguable reasoning—"because I like yellow," he says. Next, Iwatani

lovingly named his four ghosts: Shadow, Speedy, Bashful and Pokey (who were nicknamed Blinky, Pinky, Inky and Clyde). Although these names passed muster with the president of Namco, the big cheese was less certain of their coloring. "I ran into some problems when I first made the presentation [of the game] to the president," Iwatani says. "He was upset that I had four colors for the ghosts. He suggested that the enemies must be all uniform and painted in red." Thus, a company-wide crisis meeting followed, and a detailed questionnaire was handed out to ascertain whether everyone liked red only or four separate colors for the ghosts. When the results came in, "the president finally accepted that the ghosts should be in four different colors," Iwatani tells us. "It was a sweet decision and a nice memory for me."

Once this near-catastrophe was resolved, the team set about completing the game. Originally, Pac-Man's diet consisted only of small yellow dots. But halfway through the design process, slightly larger "power pellets" were brought into the equation. What was once a simple premise of chowing down on dots and running around in a maze and avoiding ghosts was turned into more of a tactical battle. "We added the idea of turning the tables," Iwatani says. "That's why we added the 'power pellets' during production. I wanted to give Pac-Man some power, like spinach for Popeye."

One year later in 1980, the game was released. "I didn't think it would be a big hit," Iwatani says. "Of course, after I saw its appeal with the players, I realized it had achieved great success." Twenty years and one cheesy novelty song later, Pac-Man still holds a special appeal in the pantheon of gaming, as well as in Iwatani's heart. "Pac-Man to me has become a precious friend," he says. "I also love the ghosts."

Where is he now?

After the success of Pac-Man, Iwatani-san continued the trend of arcade and console domination through yellow pizza-shaped monsters by involving himself in Pac-Land and Pac-World. Next, he turned his attention to titles like Gee Bee and Bomb Bee (a crazed attempt at melding Super Breakout with Pinball). Nowadays, Iwatani is in Namco management, serving as producer of Ridge Racer, Time Crisis and other Namco hits. He also has a special message for today's game designers: "Games have become more complicated, [and] we must remember to maintain the fascinating aspects that have always drawn us to them. This is easily lost if [games] become too complicated. Simple games must be given continued support."

—David S.J. Hodgson

Gamester Rap: What makes this creative mind tick?

Favorite Movies?
"I enjoy *Roman Holiday*. Audrey Hepburn was so beautiful."

Favorite Music?
"I've always liked the Allman Brothers Band. I instantly recall me youth."

Favorite Food?
"Sea urchin—it is delicious."

Favorite Game?
"Legend of Zelda on the Super Famicom. The technical balance between mechanics, gameplay, story line and secrets was astounding. I also like the Pillar—the candle-shaped creature from Atari's Marble Madness. It is simple and its movements are too cute!"

What is your motto?
"Simplicity is the best."

Gameography:
Pac-Man, Pac-Land, Pac-Man World, Gee Bee and Bomb Bee. Oversaw Ridge Racer, Time Crisis and other Namco hits.

"...in Japan the onomatopoeic sound of eating is 'pac pac,' so we named this game 'Pac-Man.'"

—Toru Iwatani

Photography by Shuji Kondo

Each month, *EGM* tracks down and profiles different gaming godfathers and finds out what they've done for us lately. Next issue: Warren "Adventure" Robinett.

PRESS START

Compiled By Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

Coming Soon

June

Game Boy Advance

Army Men: Advance—3DO	Action
Bomberman Tournament—Activision	Action
Castlevania: COTM—Konami	Adventure
ChuChu Rocket!—Sega	Puzzle
Creatures—Conspiracy	Misc.
Dodge Ball Advance—Atlus	Sports
Earthworm Jim—Majesco	Action
Fire Pro Wrestling—Bam!	Sports
F-Zero: Maximum Velocity—Nintendo	Racing
GT Advance Championship—THQ	Racing
High Heat Baseball 2002—3DO	Sports
Hot Potato—Bam	Action
Iridion 3-D—Majesco	Action
Konami Krazy Racers—Konami	Racing
Namco Museum—Namco	Misc.
Pinobee: Wings—Activision	Adventure
Pitfall Mayan Adventure—Majesco	Action
Rayman Advance—Ubi Soft	Action
Ready 2 Rumble Round 2—Midway	Sports
Super Dodge Ball Advance—Atlus	Sports
Super Mario Advance—Nintendo	Adventure
Top Gear GT Championship—Kemco	Racing
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2—Activision	Sports
Tweety and the Magic Jewel—Kemco	Misc.

Game Boy Color

High Heat Baseball—3DO	Sports
Portal Runner—3DO	Adventure

PlayStation

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Arc the Lad Collection—Working Designs	RPG
Digimon Card Battle—Bandai	RPG
Inspector Gadget—Ubi Soft	Action
Millionaire 2nd Ed.—Sony CEA	Misc.
Motocross Mania—Take 2	Sports
Roswell Conspiracies—Redstorm	Adventure
Sea-Doo Hydrocross—Vatical	Sports
Time Crisis: Project Titan—Namco	Action
WDL WarJetz—3DO	Action

PlayStation 2

18 Wheeler—Acclaim	Racing
Bloody Roar 3—Interplay	Fighting
CART Fury—Midway	Racing
Championship Motocross 2002—THQ	Racing
Esc. from Monkey Is.—LucasArts	Adventure
Giants: Citizen Kabuto—Interplay	Adventure
Motor Mayhem—Infogrames	Action
MTV Music Generator 2—Codemasters	Misc.
NBA Street—Electronic Arts	Sports
Paris Dakar Rally—Acclaim	Racing
Portal Runner—3DO	Action
Seven Blades—Konami	Adventure
Test Drive Off-Road—Infogrames	Racing
Twisted Metal Black—Sony CEA	Action
Ultimate Sky Surfer—Crave	Action
WDL War Jetz—3DO	Action

Dreamcast

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Half-Life—Sierra	Action
Heroes of Might & Magic III—Ubi Soft	Strat.
Outtrigger—Sega	Action
Soldier of Fortune—Crave	Action
Sonic Adventure 2—Sega	Adventure
World Series Baseball 2K2—Sega	Sports

July

Game Boy Advance

F-14 Tomcat—Majesco	Simulation
Final Fight—Capcom	Action
Fortress—Majesco	Action
Klonoa—Namco	Action
Mega Man Battle Net—Capcom	Adventure

Game Boy Color

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Dragon Warrior III—Enix	RPG
Playmobil Hype—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Pokémon Crystal—Nintendo	RPG
Razor Freestyle Scooter—Crave	Sports
Toki Tori—Capcom	Puzzle
Trouballs—Capcom	Puzzle
VIP—Ubi Soft	Action

PlayStation

Final Fantasy Chronicles—Square EA	RPG

PlayStation 2

Ephemeral Fantasia—Konami	RPG
Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec—Sony CEA	Racing
Gundam Journey—Bandai	Adventure
Klonoa 2—Namco	Action
NCAA Football 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Rune Viking Warlord—Rockstar	Action
Supercar St. Challenge—Activision	Racing

August

Game Boy Advance

Lady Sia—TDK	RPG

PlayStation 2

Alon D'ar—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Batman Vengeance—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Commandos 2—Eidos	Strategy
Conflict Zone—Ubi Soft	Action
Half-Life—Sierra	Action
Herdy Gerdy—Eidos	Misc.
Hype: The Time Quest—Ubi Soft	RPG
Ico—Sony CEA	Adventure
Jekyll Hyde—Dreamcatcher	Adventure
LeMans 24 Hour—Infogrames	Racing
Project Eden—Eidos	Action/Strategy
Soul Reaver 2—Eidos	Adventure
Test Drive Offroad—Infogrames	Racing

Dreamcast

Conflict Zone—Ubi Soft	Action
Floigan Brothers—Sega	Adventure
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX—Activision	Sports
Ooga Booga—Sega	Misc.

September/Fall

Game Boy Advance

Breath of Fire—Capcom	RPG
Dark Arena—Majesco	Action
Harry Potter—Electronic Arts	Adventure
Jedi Power Battles—THQ	Action
Mat Hoffman Pro BMX—Activision	Sports
Pac-Man Collection—Namco	Misc.
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Super Street Fighter II—Capcom	Fighting
X-Men—Activision	Action

PlayStation

Digimon Grand Prix—Bandai	Racing
NASCAR Racers—Hasbro	Racing
Sheep Raider—Infogrames	Misc.
Spider-Man 2—Activision	Adventure
X-Men Mutant Acad. 2—Activision	Fighting

PlayStation 2

Baldur's Gate—Interplay	RPG
Barbarian—Interplay	Action
Beast Wars—Bam!	Action
Duke Nukem—Rockstar	Action
ESPN Skateboarding—Konami	Sports
Forces of One—Interplay	Action
Lotus Challenge—Interplay	Racing
Run Like Hell—Interplay	Action
Silent Hill 2—Konami	Adventure
Time Crisis 2—Namco	Action
Trophy Bass—Sierra	Sports

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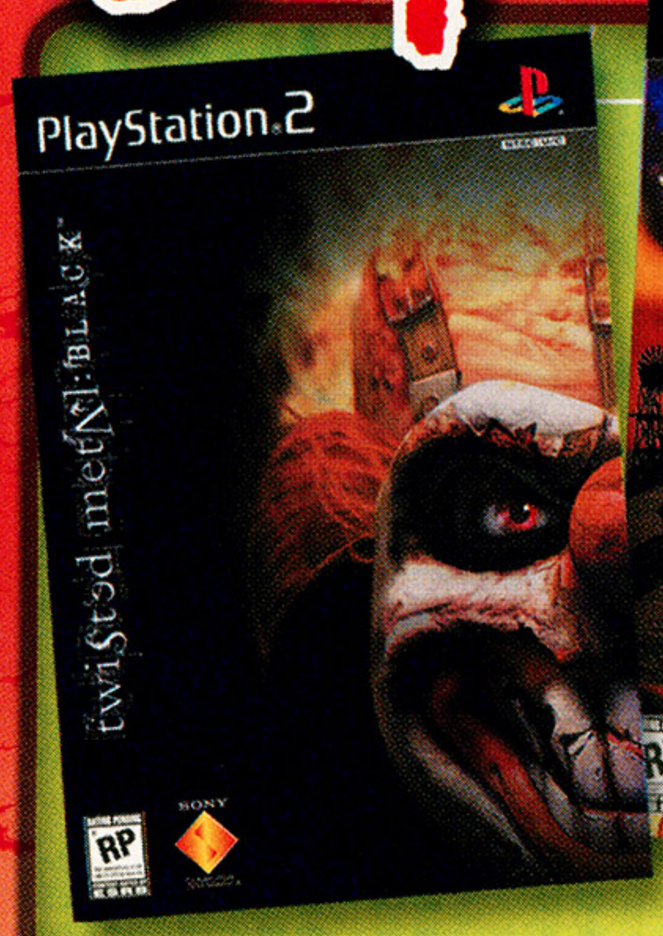

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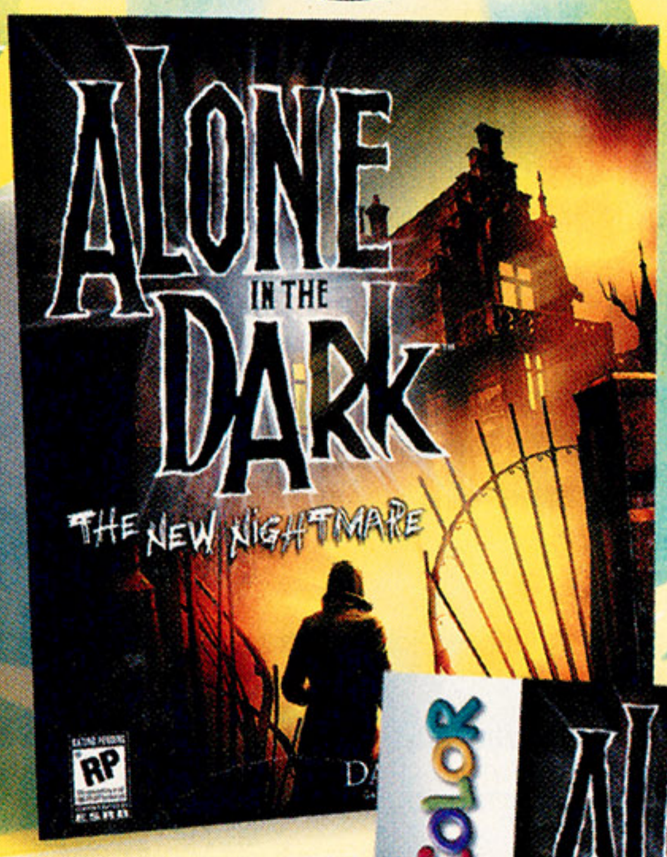

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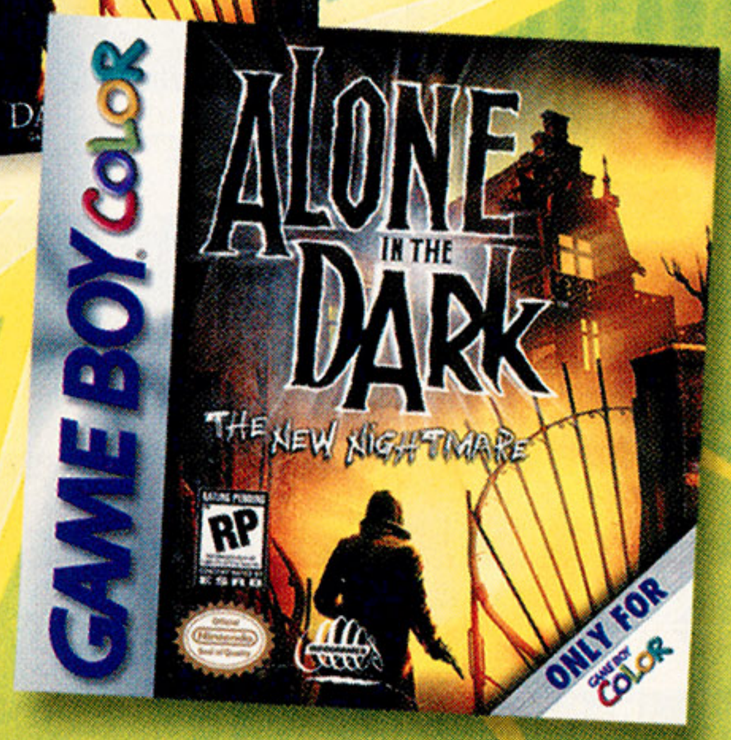

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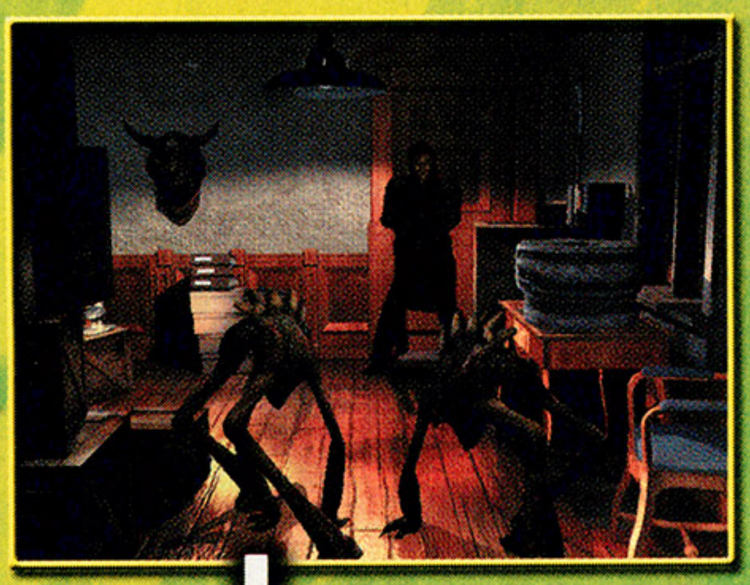

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PRESS START

The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of March, 2001

We think **Nintendo** could release an 8-bit NES game next month and it'll still make it to number one. Even with the waning popularity of **Pokémon**, **Sony** publishers like **Capcom**, **Square** and **EA** still can't knock the Big N out of the top slot. We still say it's only a matter of time, though. Look at all the **PlayStation 2** games infesting this page! And did you notice not one returning game moved up in sales this month? The only real question is how long will it take for the **Game Boy Advance** to pick up where Pikachu and the **GBC** left off? Oh, and how long will it take **Spec Ops 2** to sell a million units?

1 Pokémon Stadium 2
Nintendo

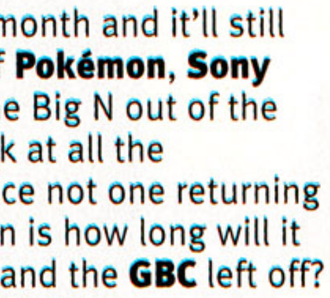
NEW! 5.0 Chris | 6.0 Jeanne | 6.5 Ethan

2 Onimusha Warlords
Capcom

NEW! 7.5 Mark | 9.0 Milkman | 9.0 Ryan — EGM SILVER

3 The Bouncer
Square Electronic Arts

NEW! 6.0 Crispin | 7.0 Jonathan | 6.0 Joe R



4 Pokémon Silver
Nintendo

9.0 Chris | 8.5 Crispin | 8.5 Mark — GAME BOY COLOR — EGM SILVER

5 Pokémon Gold
Nintendo

9.0 Chris | 8.5 Crispin | 8.5 Mark — GAME BOY COLOR — EGM SILVER

6 Zone of the Enders
Konami

NEW! 7.5 Che | 7.5 Greg | 8.0 Milkman

7 Triple Play Baseball
Electronic Arts

NEW! 6.0 Dan | 7.5 Dean | 7.5 Kraig

8 Madden NFL 2001
Electronic Arts

9.0 Dean | 9.0 Kraig | 9.0 Joe F — EGM GOLD

9 Paper Mario
Nintendo

9.5 Greg | 9.5 Jonathan | 9.0 Mark — EGM GOLD

10 Conker's Bad Fur Day
Rare

NEW! 7.0 Chris | 8.5 Mark | 9.5 Ryan — EGM SILVER

11	ATV Offroad Fury	Sony CEA	EGM SILVER
12	Star Wars: Starfighter	LucasArts	
13	Tiger Woods PGA 2001	Electronic Arts	NEW!
14	Gran Turismo 2	Sony CEA	EGM PLATINUM
15	NBA Live 2001	Electronic Arts	
16	Mario Tennis	Nintendo	EGM SILVER
17	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Activision	EGM PLATINUM
18	Driver 2	Infogrames	
19	Spec Ops	Take 2 Interactive	
20	All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	NEW!

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Kristin Barnett-von Korff at (516) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list. Chart description written by the *EGM* staff. Arrows by Reisel.

JAPAN TOP 10

1	Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec	Sony CEI
2	One Piece: Rufi's Dream	Banpresto
3	Hamtarou 2	Nintendo
4	Super Mario Advance	Nintendo
5	Dragon Quest Monsters 2: Luke's Departure	Enix
6	One Piece: Grand Battle!	Banpresto
7	Dragon Quest Monsters 2: Iru's Adventure	Enix
8	F-Zero for Game Boy Advance	Nintendo
9	Bomberman Story	Hudson
10	Armored Core 2: Another Age	From Software

Gran Turismo 3 A-spec was released just a day before the cut-off for this week's chart and not surprisingly, it took over the number-one spot. Nintendo's portables dominated the rest of the chart. Both of the One Piece games on the chart this week are based on a popular animé series in Japan about a boy who wants to be a pirate, which a few of the editors here can relate to.

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 4/29/2001

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HEAD

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GLACIER 201798-6
ARCTIC 201796-0
INDIGO 201794-5

GAME BOY ADVANCE

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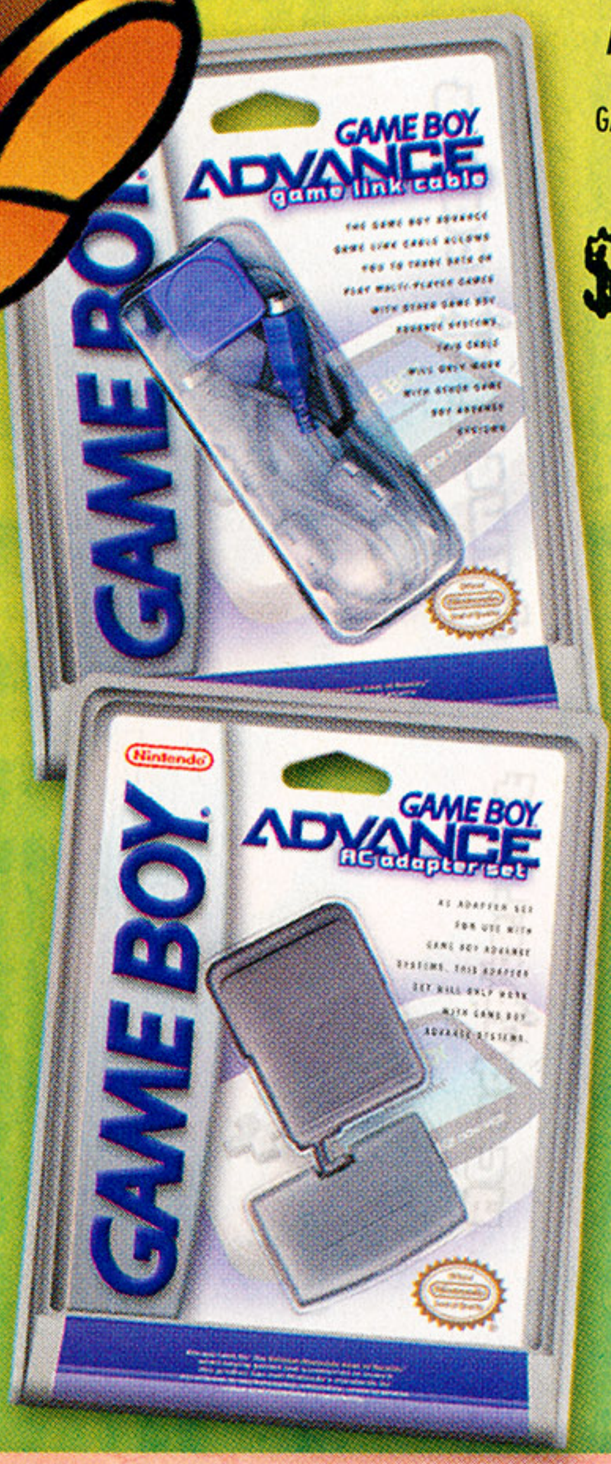

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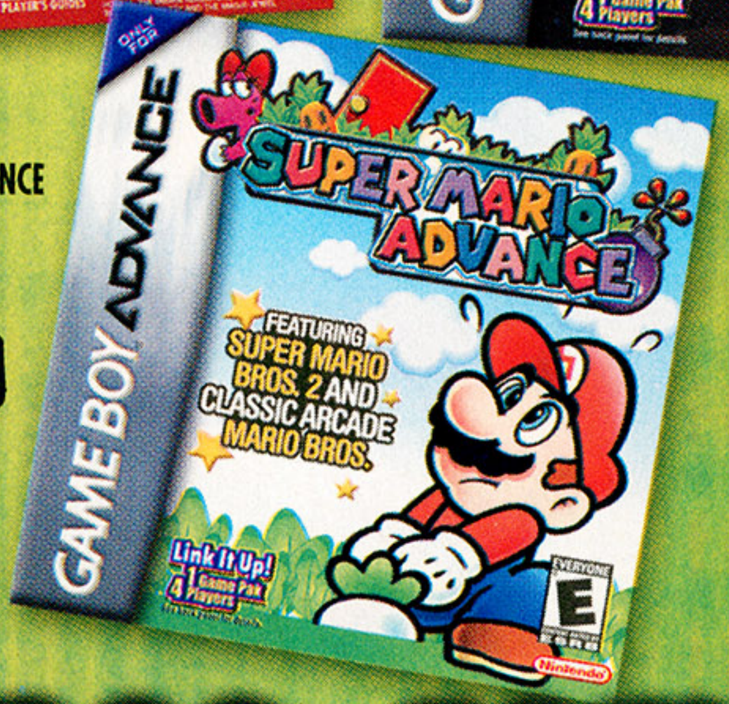

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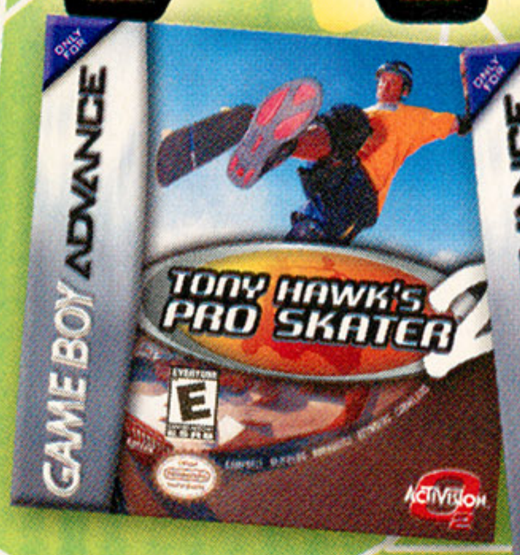

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2
GAME BOY ADVANCE - ACTIVISION
#201133-6

CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON
GAME BOY ADVANCE - KONAMI
#201124-5

FIRE PRO WRESTLING
GAME BOY ADVANCE
BAM ENTERTAINMENT
#201131-0

EARTHWORM JIM
GAME BOY ADVANCE - MAJESCO
#201112-0

IRIDION -3D-
GAME BOY ADVANCE - MAJESCO
#201105-4

PINOBEE: WINGS OF ADVENTURE
GAME BOY ADVANCE - ACTIVISION
#201770-5

BOMBERMAN TOURNAMENT
GAME BOY ADVANCE - ACTIVISION
#201769-7

KONAMI KRAZY RACERS
GAME BOY ADVANCE - KONAMI
#201125-2

GT ADVANCE CHAMPIONSHIP RACING
GAME BOY ADVANCE - THQ
#201303-5

PITFALL: THE MAYAN ADVENTURE
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ARMY MEN ADVANCE
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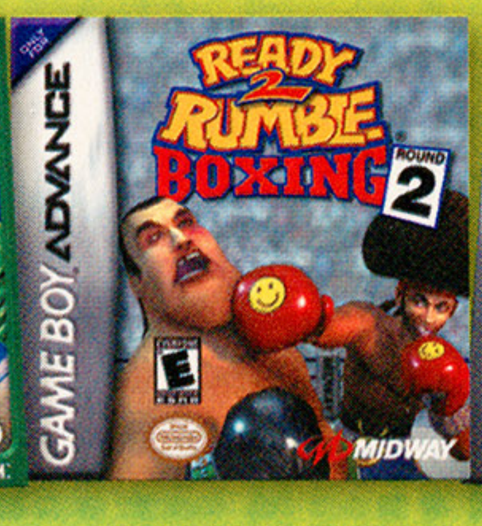

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HSU AND CHAN

GAME DESIGNERS ARE...

"ADVANCED!"

MORE POWER!

BIGGER PECS!

GRUNT!

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M HSU TANAKA, THIS IS MY BROTHER CHAN, AND TODAY WE ARE SALUTING THE LEGACY OF NINTENDO'S HANDHELD MARKETING WONDER, THE GAME BOY!

WITH THE U.S. RELEASE OF THE GAME BOY ADVANCE UPON US, WE THOUGHT IT FITTING TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THIS MODERN MARVEL!

WE SALUTE YOU, DARK LORD OF THE PORTABLE GAMING INDUSTRY!

HOW DID PORTABLE GAMING COME ABOUT? CERTAINLY, NINTENDO WAS NOT THE FIRST ENTITY TO INTRODUCE THIS CONCEPT TO THE PUBLIC!

IN ANCIENT ROME, FOR INSTANCE, IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR AFFLUENT YOUNGSTERS ON LONG JOURNEYS TO BRING ALONG ELABORATE LEISURE CONTRAPTIONS SUCH AS THE ONE SHOWN HERE, AN ITEM REFERRED TO IN ANCIENT DOCUMENTS AS "BRUTUS ANTHONY'S PUNCH-OUT..."

...AND AS EARLY AS 1960, AMERICAN ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURERS HAD GOTTEN INTO THE ACT, PRODUCING **VAC-BOY**, A DEVICE THAT WOULD ENABLE HUSKY YOUTHS TO ENJOY, WHEREVER THEY WENT, THE HIGH INTERACTIVITY OF ALTERING THE FREQUENCY AT WHICH A SINGLE WHITE DOT ON A SCREEN BLINKED!

GRUNT!

IT COULD ALSO ADD COMPOUND NUMBERS, ASSUMING YOU WERE WILLING TO WAIT A WHILE!

INNOVATIVE AS THESE WERE, IT NEVERTHELESS TOOK THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GAME BOY ITSELF TO FINALLY ESTABLISH THE PORTABLE GAMING INDUSTRY AS A VALID CASH HOG!

PEOPLE WORLD-WIDE MARVELED AT THE GAMES MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GAME BOY'S 8 BITS-- THEY COULD NOW ENTER FANTASTIC, ANIMATED WORLDS OF DANGER, ADVENTURE AND INTRIGUE, EVEN DURING IMPORTANT SUMMIT TALKS!

AS TIME ROLLED ON AND THE USER BASE INCREASED, NINTENDO PUT OUT TWO NEWER MODELS, THE GAME BOY "POCKET" AND "COLOR," EACH BRINGING WITH THEM SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS OVER THE ORIGINAL, SUCH AS THE ABILITY TO ACTUALLY TELL WHAT WAS GOING ON ONSCREEN, ASSUMING YOU HAD PLENTY OF LIGHT AND PLAYED AT A SLIGHT ANGLE!

...AND FROM NOW ON, FRANCE WILL BE RULED BY A HEFTY CHIMPANZEE NAMED "SPARKY."

THAT'S COOL.

BEEP! BANG!

BUT PERHAPS THE MOST FASCINATING ASPECT OF THE GAME BOY TO THIS DATE IS THE FACT THAT IT HAS MAINTAINED TOTAL DOMINATION OF THE HANDHELD MARKET FOR OVER TEN YEARS, DESPITE HAVING NO MORE RAW PROCESSING POWER THAN A MIDRANGE WAFFLE IRON!

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS?

MARKETING GENIUS?

DUMB LUCK?

A DEAL WITH A DEMON?

TAKE A GOOD, LONG LOOK AT SOME OF THE NEWER POKÉMON, THEN DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS.

I'LL SWALLOW YOUR SOUL!

WHATEVER THE CAUSE, NINTENDO NOW HOPES TO EXPAND ITS DARK EMPIRE WITH THE RELEASE OF THE GAME BOY ADVANCE, THE T-1000 OF THE HANDHELD LINE! ALREADY THEY'VE COMMITTED 75 KAJILLION DOLLARS TO PROMOTING THE LITTLE BUGGER!

WHY, YOU MAY ASK, WOULD NINTENDO INVEST SO MUCH RIGHT NOW INTO FORCING THE GBA INTO YOUR HANDS AND HOMES, ESPECIALLY WITH THE RELEASE OF THE FAR-MORE TECHNICALLY IMPRESSIVE **GAMECUBE** ONLY A FEW SHORT MONTHS AWAY?

I'M LIQUID METAL!

THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT -- NO MATTER WHO COMES OUT ON TOP WHEN THE BIG BOYS DUKE IT OUT THIS FALL FOR SPACE IN YOUR ENTERTAINMENT CENTER, YOU'RE STILL NOT GONNA BE PULLING A **CONSOLE** FROM YOUR TROUSERS EVERY TIME YOU WANT SOME GAMING GOODNESS ON THE CRAPPER.

IN TERMS OF THE HANDHELD MARKET, NINTENDO IS TRULY THE CHEESE WHICH STANDS ALONE!

BUT WAIT -- EVEN THE FACT THAT NINTENDO HAS NO COMPETITION OTHER THAN ITSELF IS SOMETHING OF A STICKY ISSUE, FOR **ITSELF** IS A FIERCE COMPETITOR, INDEED! YOU SEE, A GOOD PORTION OF THE GAME BOY'S CURRENT USER BASE IS MADE UP OF FEMALES AND PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF THIRTY, GROUPS GENERALLY LESS-SWAYED BY FLASHY GRAPHICS AND THE URGE TO BE FIRST ON THE BLOCK WITH THE NEWEST, HOTTEST THING--

HOW, THEN, IS NINTENDO TO SHAME THESE PEOPLE INTO UPGRADING?

WE CUT OFF THEIR THUMBS!

NO, GILA MOBSTER! BAD!

THE STRENGTH OF THE GAME BOY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ITS GAMES, AND THE STRENGTH OF ITS BEST GAMES HAS ALWAYS BEEN SIMPLE, ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY, THE KIND THAT RULES YOUR DAYS AND HAUNTS YOUR EVENINGS!

PSST! GOTTA CATCH US ALL!

EEK!

OBVIOUSLY, IT IS THESE SORT OF GAMES WHICH WILL MOVE THE GBA OUT OF STORES AND INTO YOUR SOCK DRAWERS... BUT HERE, YET ANOTHER COMPLICATION ARISES!

SURE, YOU KNOW YOU NEED GOOD TITLES, BUT YOU CAN'T JUST GO TO A DEVELOPER AND LIST "MUST BE GOOD" AMONGST YOUR SPECIFICATIONS. NOBODY **INTENDS** TO MAKE LOUSY GAMES, AFTER ALL -- OTHERWISE, "TWISTED METAL 3" WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED A SMASHING SUCCESS.

NO, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO **GUARANTEE** CLASSIC GAMEPLAY...

...AND THAT'S BY SELLING NOTHING BUT **CLASSIC GAMES!** NINTENDO'S NO DUMMY -- WHY WORK HARD AND RISK HUMILIATION WHEN YOU CAN HEDGE YOUR BET BY DEHYDRATING TEN-YEAR-OLD GAMES, REDOING THEM IN PASTELS, AND SELLING THEM TO KIDS TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER 'EM?

WHADDYA **MEAN** SHE'S IN ANOTHER CASTLE?!

BWAH HA HA HA! LAZY AND PROFITABLE!

OF COURSE, A NEW SYSTEM WOULDN'T BE WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN DEAD HAMSTERS WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF TANAKA BROTHERS' GAME DEVELOPMENT--

BUT NO WORRIES THERE, RIGHT, HSU?

YOU ARE QUITE CORRECT, BROTHER!

WE HAVE, IN FACT, THREE TITLES ARRIVING AT LAUNCH--

A PORT OF THE ORIGINAL SNES CLASSIC, "ROLLER DEATH DERBY..."

...A PORT OF OUR CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED 1997 PUZZLE RELEASE, "TOAD SQUISHER."

...AND A GAME CALLED "CAPTAIN HAMMERHEAD AND THE ASTOUNDING CAVERNS OF DEATH," WHICH, IT TURNS OUT, IS **ALSO** A PORT OF THE SNES CLASSIC, "ROLLER DEATH DERBY," ALTHOUGH WE FIGURE, IT'S REAL TINY, WHO CAN TELL?

ROLLER DEATH DERBY

TOAD SQUISHER

AAAIGH! MY GOOD SHOES!

CAPTAIN HAMMERHEAD AND THE ASTOUNDING CAVERNS OF DEATH

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT! EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE GAME BOY, AND A GOOD DEAL THAT YOU DON'T!

UP FOR SOME LUNCH, HSU?

YOU BETCHA! UNTIL NEXT TIME, VIDEO GAMERS, I'M HSU TANAKA, REMINDING YOU THAT DROPPING YOUR GAME SYSTEM IN THE TOILET MAY VOID YOUR WARRANTY. NOW LEAVE.

THE END. BUY ME.

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

This Month in Previews

This intro page almost didn't get to the printer on time. We had to pry the Preview Editor's hands off the GT3 wheel before he'd get to work.

Last month we put out the call for feedback on this section of the magazine. Like the good little readers you are, you sent a flood of serious and not-so-serious suggestions about Previews. We got everything from "you need more full-pagers" to "you need more pictures" to "Crispin is really sexy in a mullet."

So anyway, you'll notice far more full-page previews in this issue. We're gonna try to do right by all these games and give them the space they deserve, as well as all the pretty screens and information you deserve.

Not that the galleries have gone the way of the dodo, we're just planning on less of them in lieu of giving the bigger, more exciting games more ink.

Then there's that pesky matter of the Previews section seemingly getting smaller and smaller each month. Well, what can we say? It's the slowest time of the year, but with the industry's biggest trade show of the year right around the corner (the Electronic Entertainment Expo, which will have already happened by the time you read this), *EGM*'s Previews section is sure to be bigger and better than ever in the coming months. If not, we might have to deport Sewart. Heck, we might do that anyway.

Oh, and don't worry about the lack of Game Boy Advance previews. You'll find all of that stuff in our cover feature starting on page 82. Chances are you've already looked there and now you're back for a heapin' helpin' of all the great DC, N64, PS1, PS2 and Xbox game coverage.

The long wait is finally over. We take the Japanese Gran Turismo 3 for a spin starting on page 70.

E3 Anticipation

With the Electronic Entertainment Expo fast approaching, the editors of *EGM* will soon be off to sunny L.A. to play lots of new games and hobnob with other journalists, game developers and booth babes. Next issue we'll be back with loads of pictures and descriptions of the spectacular sights and sounds from the big show, but we thought we'd take this time to share with you some of the things we're looking forward to seeing:

• More Metal Gear Solid 2

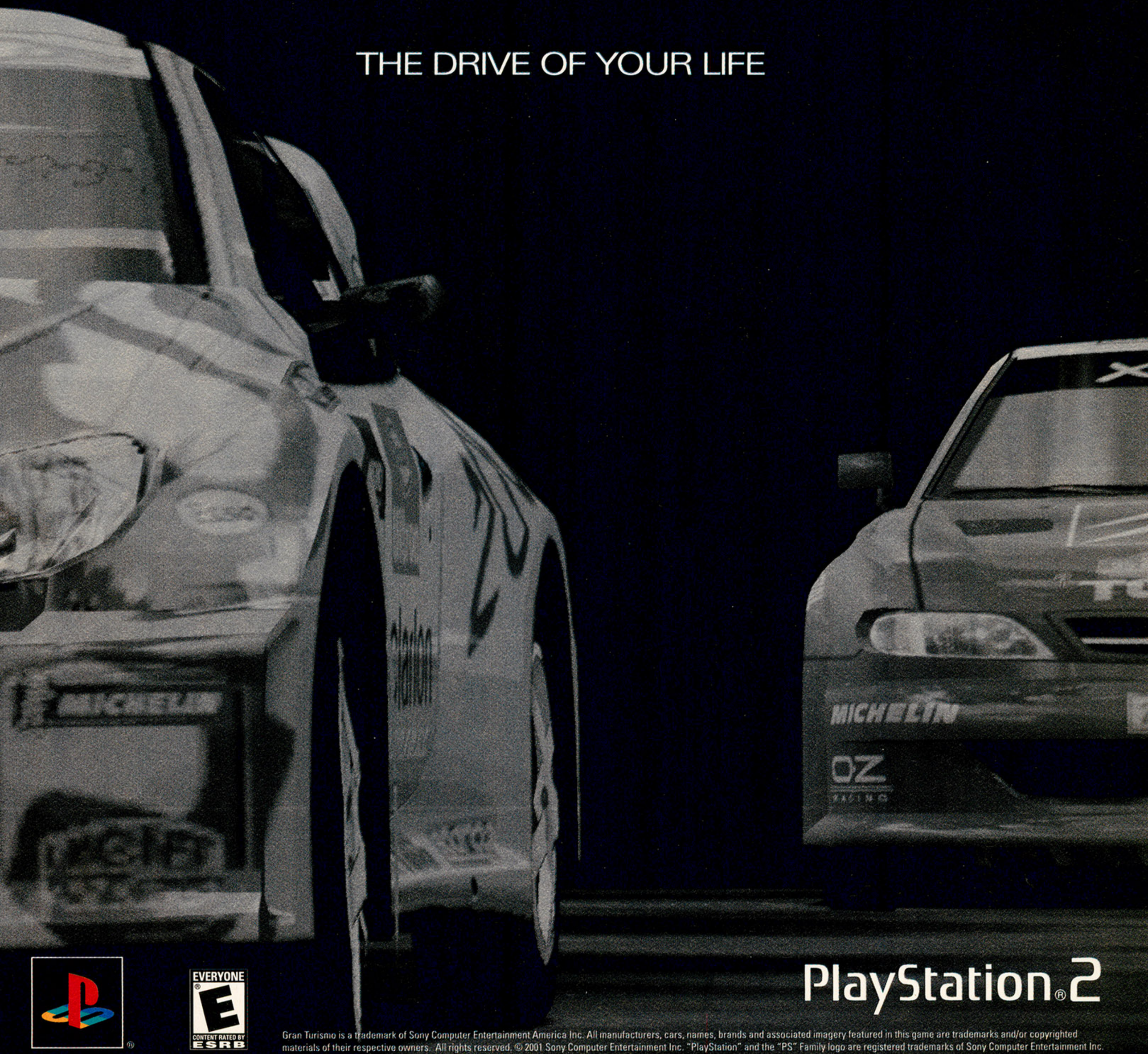
- **Executive Editor Mark MacDonald humping Pikachu**
- **Editor in Chief Dan "Shoe" Hsu getting drunk on the company expense account**
- **Nintendo's GameCube in action**
- **Army Men Kart for PlayStation 2**
- **Microsoft explaining why we'd want an Xbox instead of a PS2 or GameCube**
- **How many free towels and sheets we can pilfer from the hotel**
- **Getting out and seeing this "sun" thing we keep hearing about**

Only the most stylish tactical espionage experts can pull off the mask and camo combination like Solid Snake does in this picture. Notice how the explosion brings out his eyes? Anyway, we can't wait to see more of Snake and co. at E3.

Getting Closer

GRAN TURISMO™3 A-spec

THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE



PlayStation®2

EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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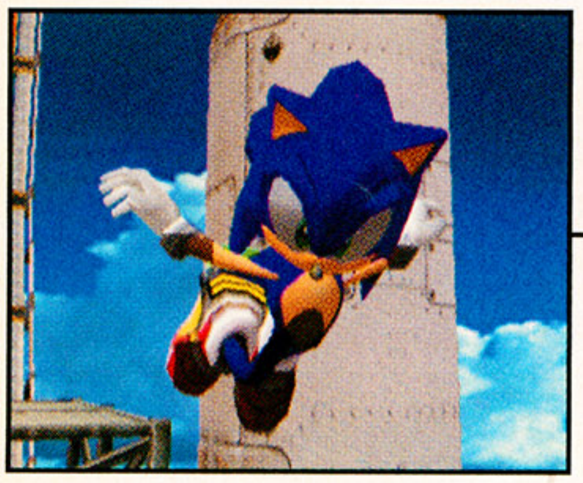
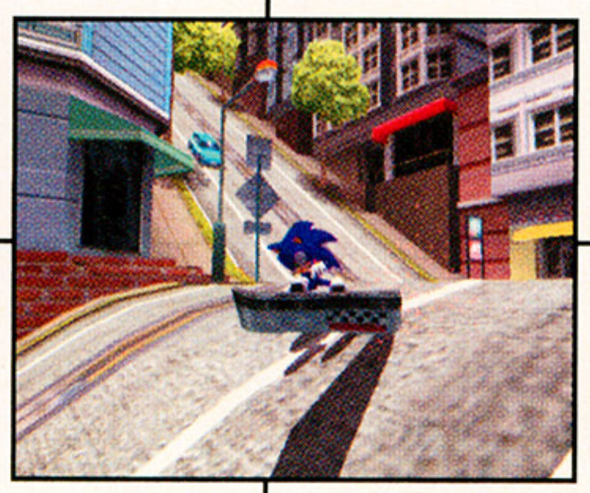
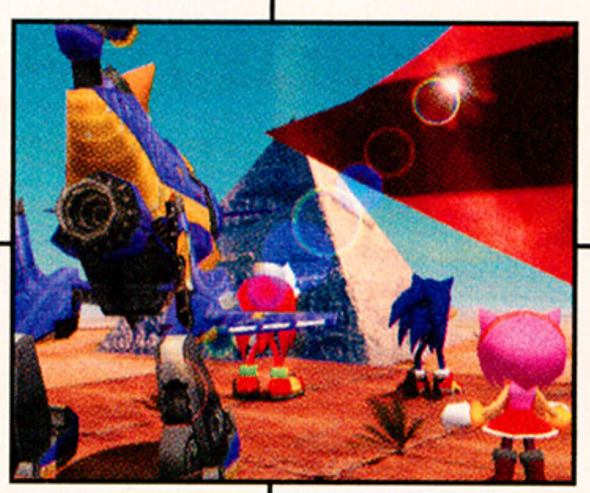
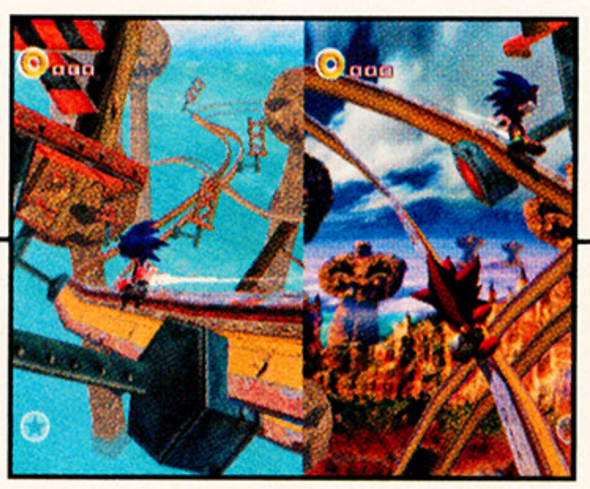
GOOD HEDGEHOG.









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10TH ANNIVERSARY SONIC

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Violence

Play as Shadow, Sonic's evil double, and conquer the world.

Dreamcast™

PREVIEW

Crazy Taxi 2

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	Hitmaker
Players:	1
Genre:	Driving
% Done:	90%
Release:	May 2001
Also Try:	Crazy Taxi (DC/PS2)
Web Address:	www.sega.com

The Good: More of the crazy drivin', driftin' and jumpin' you love.

The Bad: This feels like an upgrade, not a sequel.

And The Ugly: Being stuck on Crazy Pyramid for three freakin' days!

Multi-customer fares mean every tip you get for a Crazy Through is multiplied by up to four times. Talk about crazy money.

The brand-new jump feature on all the cabs adds a whole new dimension to Crazy Taxi 2. Master it to win the game.

CRAZY LANDMARKS

Authenticity

Seeing all those real locations like Pizza Hut and FILA made Crazy Taxi extra-cool. Crazy Taxi 2 features more of the same, with such locations as Burger King, FAO Schwarz and The Hard Rock Café. Learning the relative location of these and other landmarks is key to being a great cabbie.

Crazy Taxi still sits atop the Dreamcast sales charts, well over a year after its release. It's safe to assume there are loads of series fans out there who're about ready for a sequel.

Now the Crazy Cab Company has expanded to New York with a whole new roster of hip, edgy drivers—Slash, Iceman, Cinnamon and Hot-D—who're prepared to do anything to get those fares delivered on time. In order to do so, the cars in Crazy Taxi 2 are equipped with the ability to jump on command. Mastering this new technique is paramount to getting the elusive Crazy License and gaining the respect of your friends and loved ones.

You can also make more use of that extra upholstery in your car now. Throughout each city there are blue fares, which signify a group of four passengers you need to deliver to four different locations within a time limit. The nice thing is that, as your Crazy Through bonus builds up, it gets multiplied by the amount of customers in your cab at that time. It goes without saying the blue fares are some of the hardest to successfully complete.

Like the first title, CT2 comes with a collection of mini-games—the Crazy Pyramid—designed to help you get a handle on all the different driving techniques you'll need to conquer the congested New York streets. Not only that, but completing each tier of mini-games unlocks everything from city maps to hidden vehicles. It's a much more gratifying system than the Crazy Box from the first game, and it's much easier to complete.

The original city from the first Crazy Taxi was generally considered to be a poorly designed shadow of the city from the arcade game. So how do the two entirely new cities in Crazy Taxi 2 stand up? Well, they're definitely different. Gone are the wide-open areas and huge hills. Instead CT2's cities are rife with skyscrapers and loads of traffic. Being able to weave in and out of busy lanes and mastering the Crazy Jump is the only way to complete the game. Sega's hoping that'll be enough to draw people to a game that otherwise feels uncomfortably close to being nothing more than a mere upgrade.

–Greg Sewart

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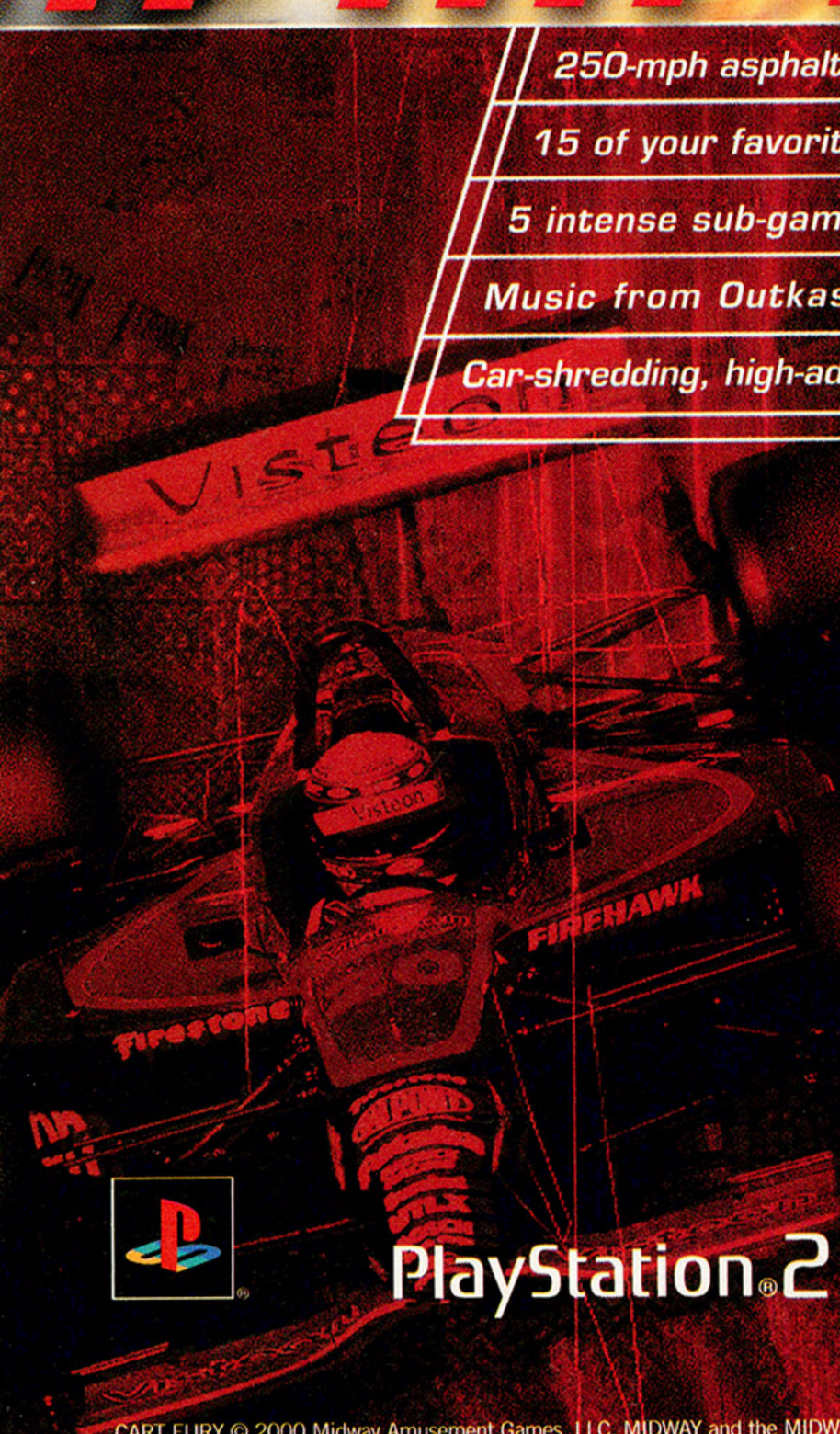
- 5 intense sub-games that will keep you driving for hours.
- Music from Outkast, H2SO4, Nullset, and Disturbed!
- Car-shredding, high-adrenaline crashes and multi-car wrecks.

FURY™ CHAMPIONSHIP RACING



PlayStation.2

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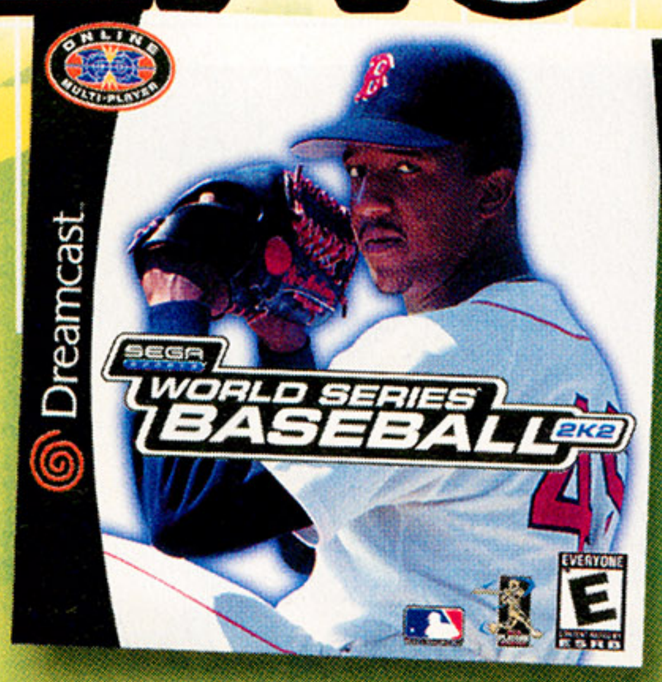

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PREVIEW

Blast From The Past

PSO Version 2 comes with some "interesting" new Mags. Recognize this thing? Nope, you're most definitely not playing with power.

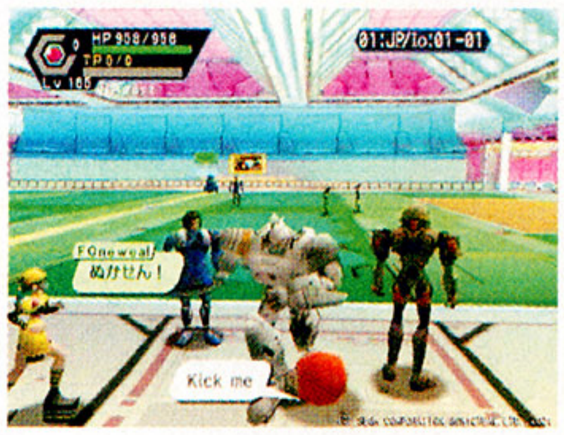
Phantasy Star Online V.2

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	Sonic Team
Players:	1-4
Genre:	RPG
% Done:	75%
Release:	Summer 2001
Web Address:	www.sega.com www.sonicteam.com

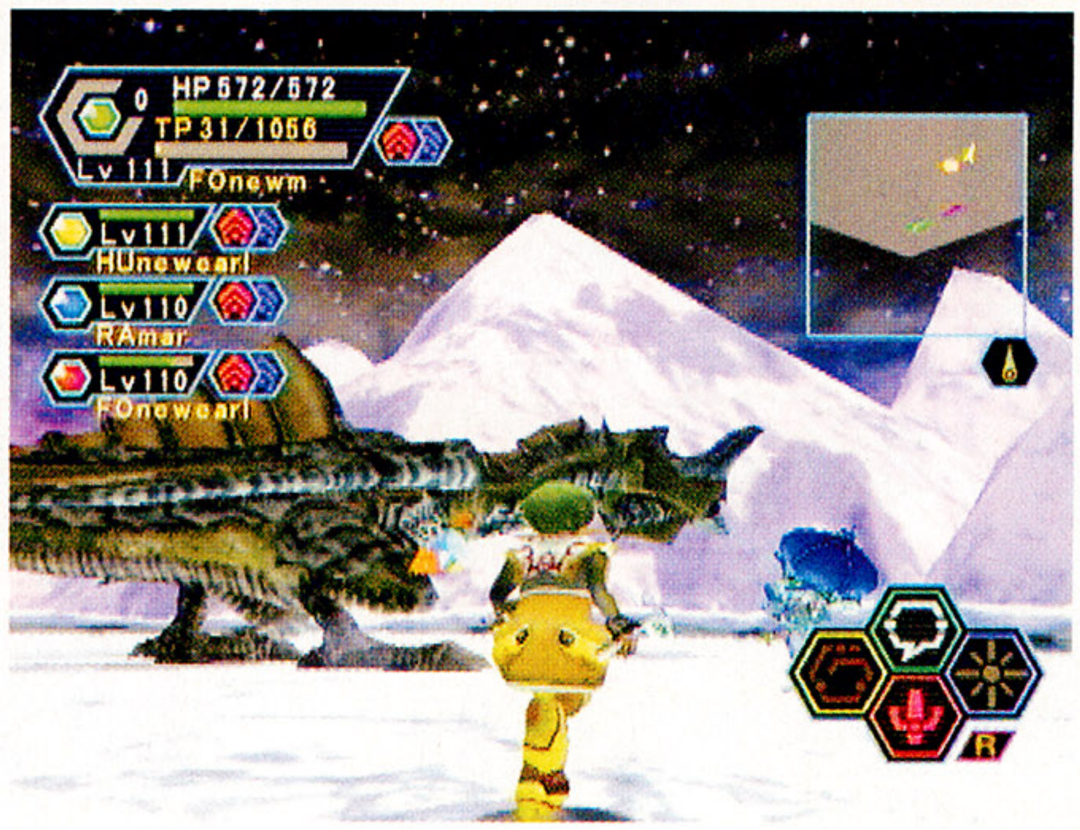
The Good: New monsters, new items, new mini-games.

The Bad: No new environments for the standard multiplayer game.

And The Ugly: The thousands of PSO addicts who went cold turkey while Sega updated its servers for Ver. 2.



Tired of twiddling your thumbs or group cybersex in PSO's lobbies? Version 2's new lobbies offer a fresh way to get your kicks—virtual soccer!



Version 2's new beasties are mainly just variations on the original game's critters. Think of it as monster plastic surgery.

MINI-GAMES

Friendly Fire

You'll find two diversions in Version 2 that'll have you playing online in nifty new ways. The first game is Battle Mode, in which you stalk other players in the maze-like Spaceship and Temple stages and attack them deathmatch style, as well as hit 'em with freeze, slow or confusion traps. The other new game, Challenge Mode, works like an endurance test. Here, four players head into the game worlds with only a limited amount of items and locked at a certain level. The catch? Fall in battle and you won't return to the city—instead, you'll see a tombstone engraved with your last chat words. The tombstone's position is saved, so you'll see how far you made it next time you play.

Maybe this tale sounds familiar: "I was walking down the street when a gust of wind made a sound *exactly* like the dying scream of a Booma monster from Phantasy Star Online," says Christian Iozzi, an *EGM* reader from Providence, R.I. "I stopped in my tracks and looked around a little shocked. I knew then that I was probably playing the game a little too much." Don't worry, Chris; we've been there. And right now, Sega estimates that more than 235,000 gamers worldwide have caught the PSO bug, too. At any given time, you'll find up to 26,000 players online, raising mags with parental precision and trading rare items with like-minded bleary-eyed players.

And good for us: Sonic Team is readying a PSO update just in time to curb waning interest in the game. Called Phantasy Star Online Version 2, this standalone disc (you don't need the original to play it, although you can transfer over your character) will hit Japan May 31 and has just been confirmed for U.S. release. Sega just hasn't set a date yet.

Far from a true sequel, PSO Version 2 packs a pile of extras, fixes and quirky mini-games rather than a whole new experience. For starters, it offers five larger lobbies, as well as a new "Ultimate" difficulty mode—finally, you'll be able to break through that 100th-level ceiling and progress all the way up to the big two-double-oh. Two new environments—a spaceship and a temple area—arrive in Version 2, as well, although you can only access them in the special Battle Mode (see sidebar). These new zones aren't available in the standard multiplayer game.

Once you save your character in PSO Version 2, you can't go back and use him or her in the original game (although you can play with Version 1 folks—they just can't follow you into the new lobbies and newly arranged areas). No big whup, though, because "PSO2 has all the stuff PSO1 offers," Sonic Team honcho Yuji Naka told Japan's *Weekly Famitsu*. "The frequency of certain items, the Mag's learning curve—those are almost exactly the same." You will encounter several new monsters, which are slight variations on the original critters. Expect to uncover loads of new items, too.

Other additions fall into the "tweaking" category. For instance, Sonic Team is fixing the first game's bugs, and you'll finally be able to customize that top-most chat icon. But don't look for any new character models—you'll only be able to change the color of your Version 1 character's outfit and hair, for a fee. Most enticing are the features and tweaks Naka's building into Version 2 but will only release via download if gamers demand them. "Right now, monsters can only attack you inside rooms," Naka told *Famitsu*, "but that can be changed later. It depends on the response from players. Scary, huh?"

Not as scary as a PSO addict who's missed his fix.

—Crispin Boyer

EIGHTEEN 18 WHEELER™

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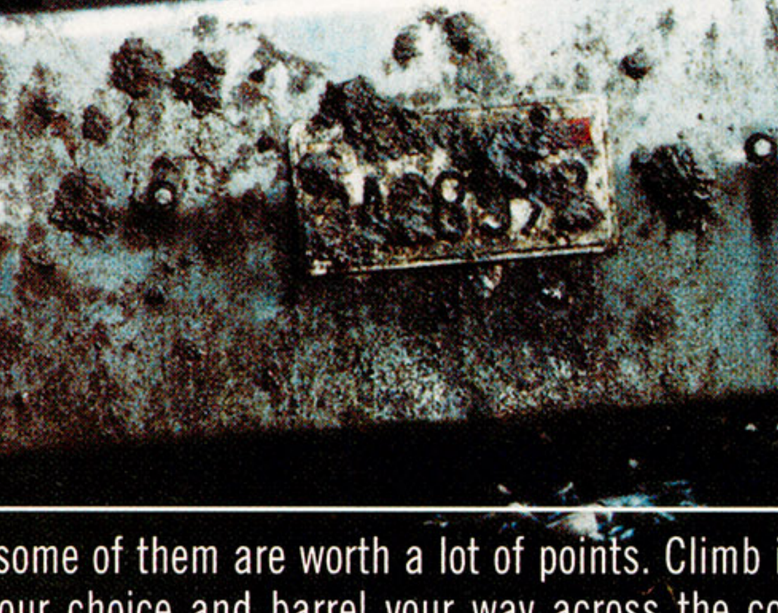
Accidents will happen—and some of them are worth a lot of points. Climb into the burly high-powered semi of your choice and barrel your way across the continent while being smack-talked by rival truckers over your CB radio. Barricades, cars, vans, and yes, even Smokey, are all yours for the smashin'. But keep your eye on the clock, cuz there's always another trucker who'd like to beat your tail to the loading dock.

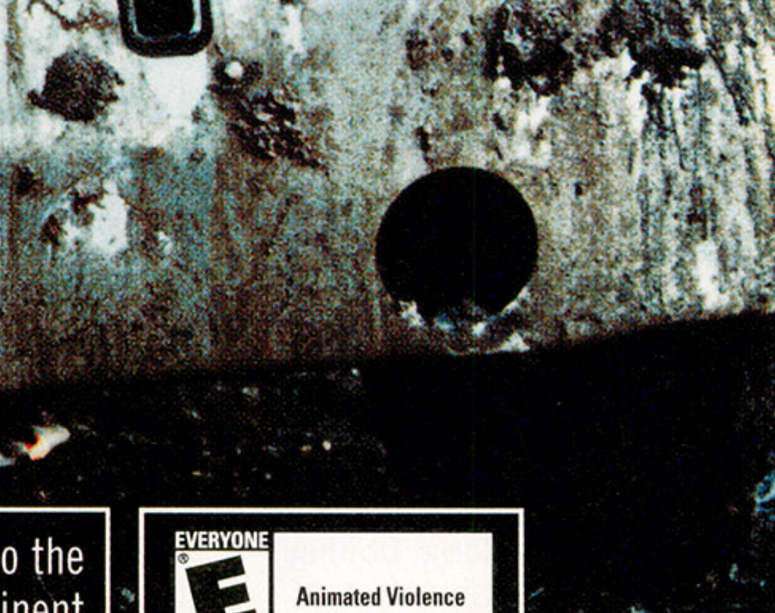
EVERYONE

Animated Violence

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Dreamcast™





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PREVIEW

Animal Forest

Publisher:	Nintendo
Developer:	Nintendo
Players:	1
Genre:	Communication Game
Release:	Now (Japan)
Web Address:	www.nintendo.com

The Good: Cute graphics, charming gameplay.

The Bad: No bosses, no blood, very little action (but is that so bad?).

And The Ugly: Your face, after getting stung by a pack of angry bees. Ouch!

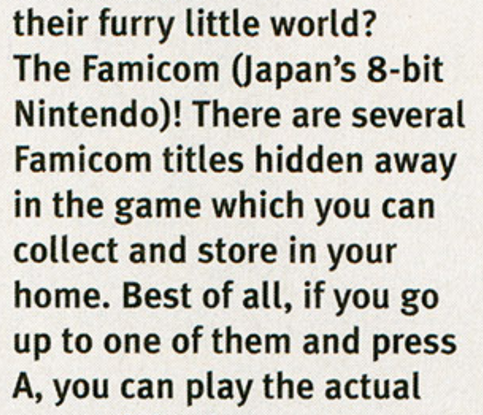
As the seasons change in the real world, so do the ones in the Animal Forest.

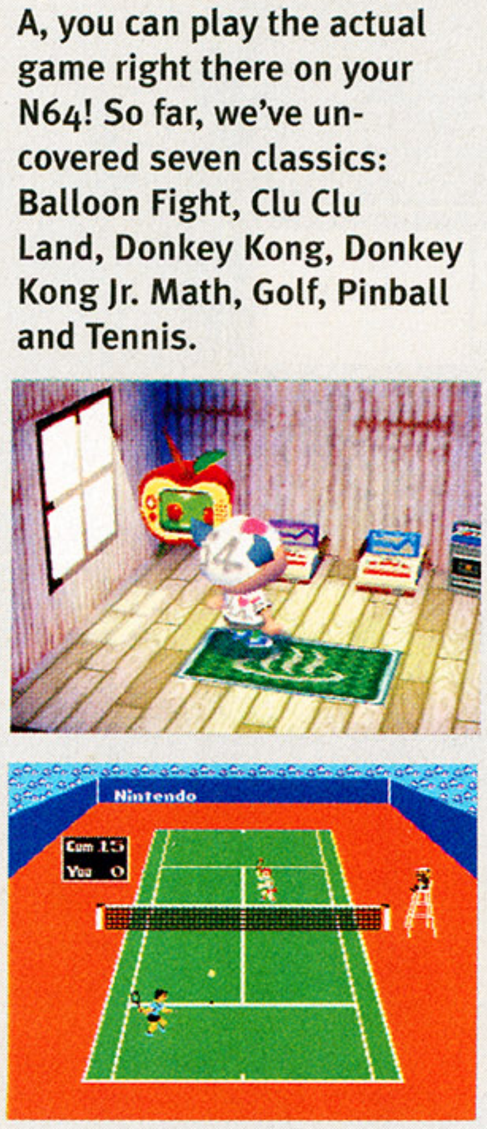
There are tons of different objects and items you can use to decorate your room.

FAMILY COMPUTING

NES On N64

Just like you and me, the denizens of Animal Forest are big video game fans. The console of choice in their furry little world? The Famicom (Japan's 8-bit Nintendo)! There are several Famicom titles hidden away in the game which you can collect and store in your home. Best of all, if you go up to one of them and press A, you can play the actual game right there on your N64! So far, we've uncovered seven classics: Balloon Fight, Clu Clu Land, Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Jr. Math, Golf, Pinball and Tennis.





On April 14, Nintendo released a quirky new N64 game called Doubutsu no Mori (Animal Forest), one of the most offbeat, innovative games ever to grace the aging black box. Instead of shooting guns, racing cars or saving X world from Y evil ruler, your character in AF lives for the simple things—like planting gardens, catching fish, working part-time for spare cash and of course, playing video games (see sidebar).

You see, Animal Forest isn't like anything you've played before. It's got a top-down view that's sort of a 3D evolution of Super NES Zelda, and at its core, it kinda looks and feels like an RPG, but in reality, it's an entirely different animal (sorry, we had to). Animal Forest is what Nintendo calls a "Communication" game. The entire game takes place in a village, and no two are alike. So essentially, everyone who purchases the game has their very own town to live in, with its own layout, its own characters—heck, even some of its own fruits and insects. Four players can move into your village (i.e., there are four save slots on every cart), and to visit other people's villages, save your data to a Controller Pak, and use it with their cart.

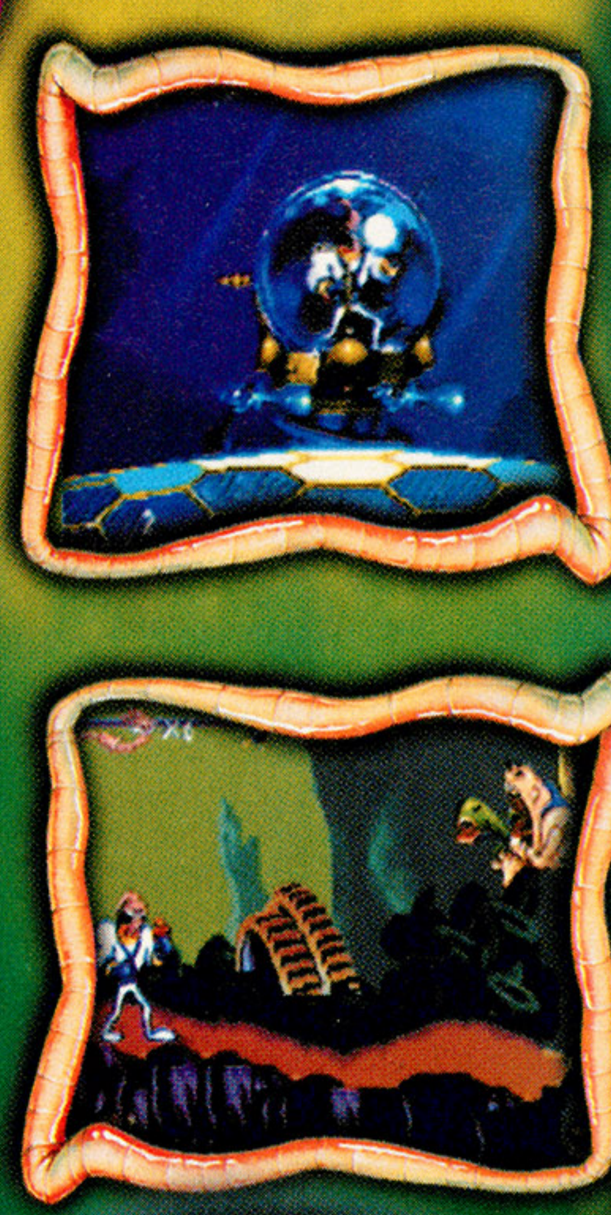
So what exactly do you do in this village? Basically, just about anything you want. You can fish, play games, listen to music, dig for treasure, collect insects, chop down trees, build an orchard or a garden, get a part-time job, send and receive letters, post messages on the town bulletin board, decorate your home with one of the hundreds of different pieces of furniture you can find...you can even play the stock market! There are plenty of time-specific events, too, thanks to the game's built-in clock. If you turn on your game at 10 a.m. on May 15, it's 10 a.m. on May 15 in the game world, as well. The environment changes along with the seasons, there are special fairs and holiday celebrations, and so on. Things often happen when you're not playing, too, so it's a good idea to check in often.

We've barely scratched the surface of Animal Forest, and we're already out of room. But to sum things up: This is one of the most unique games to come along in quite some time, and while it may not be for everyone, it's got an undeniable charm that simply can't be ignored. Fortunately, it seems that Nintendo of America would agree. According to the game's producer, Takashi Tezuka, an "overseas version" is already in the works, which means the chances of this gem showing up in the U.S. later this year are pretty good. More on that after E3!

–John Ricciardi

There are literally dozens of things to do in your village, plus you can use a Controller Pak to explore someone else's village!

EARTHWORM JIM



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PS2

PREVIEW

Half-Life

Publisher:	Sierra Studios
Developer:	Gearbox Software
Players:	1-2
Genre:	First-Person Shooter
% Done:	25%
Release:	Q3 2001
Also On:	PC, Dreamcast
Web Address:	www.sierra.com

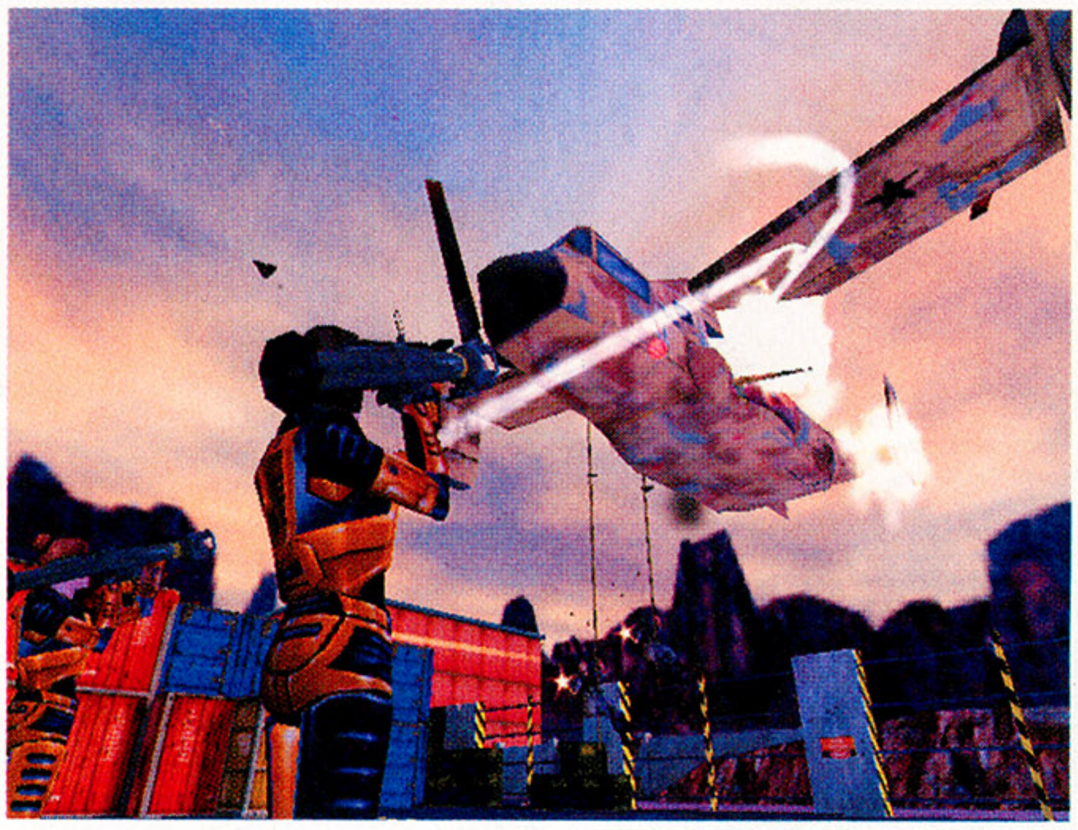
The Good: The "best action game ever made" gets even better on the PS2.

The Bad: There's no online multiplayer support.

And The Ugly: Going back to the ol' PC version after playing it on the PS2.

Grrl power: In HL: Decay, you and a friend play as Gina and Colette, hazard-course trainers who must escape from Black Mesa hell.

We'd show you more of the split-screen co-op puzzles in HL: Decay, but frankly, we think these look more fun.



HALF-LIFE: DECAY

Double-Life

Half-Life: Decay, the exclusive co-op mission for the PS2, takes place just shortly before the poop hits the fan at the Black Mesa Research Facility. You play as Gina and Colette, hazard-course trainers for HEV suit operators. Those of you who have played HL may recall that when Gordon Freeman put on his HEV suit, there were two empty suit containers nearby. Guess what? Gina and Colette are the very same assistants who prepared the cart of anomalous materials Gordon pushed into the "core reactor." After all hell breaks loose, they have to make their escape from the compound before the government nukes the site like they did with Raccoon City. Oops, wrong game!

I'm sitting in the offices of Gearbox Software in Plano, Texas, when somebody passes me a real hand grenade. "Yeah, we actually used this thing for texture maps in the game." It's funny, but you don't actually get a sense of how heavy a steel pineapple can be until it's rolling around in your palm. "People from all over come to shoot guns at the target range nearby. Just the other day, I saw an entire family in there." Located in the accidental mecca of "murder simulators" in Texas, Gearbox has been handed the responsibility of introducing (nay, reinventing) Half-Life for the PlayStation 2.

Yes, for those of you who never dabble in the decadent excesses of PC gaming, Half-Life was seen as something of a revolution over two years ago.

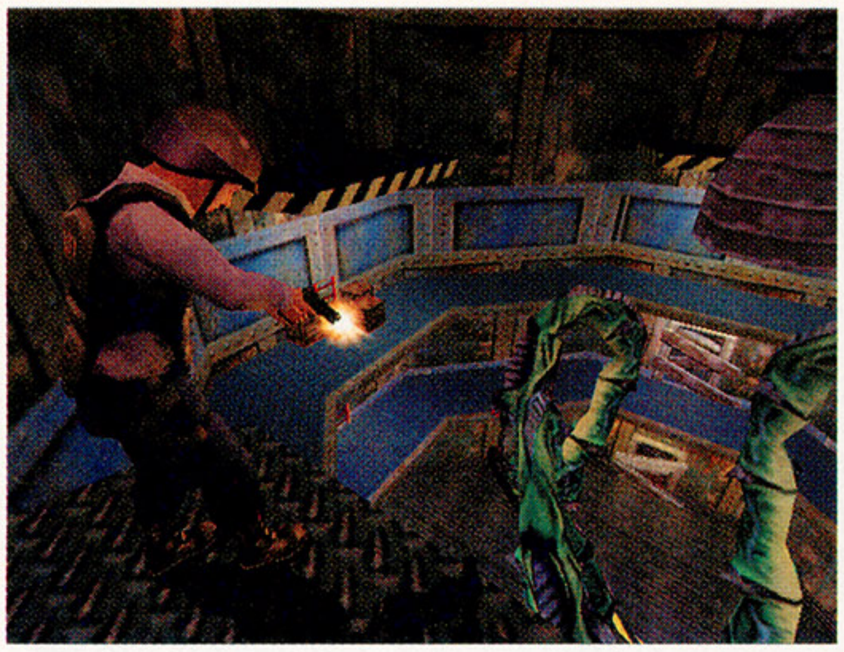
Now, it's looking to stretch its legs on a console system near you. But we've all seen awkward, and downright lazy, ports of PC favorites on consoles before; what makes HL for the PS2 any different? Randy Pitchford, head honcho at Gearbox encapsulates their approach to HL on the PS2: "Obviously, we want to deliver it in a way that enhances the experience. If you've played it before, we want to keep it new and exciting, and if you haven't played it before—then this is the one you'll want to play." After getting hands-on with it at Gearbox, it's hard not to get a little giddy when I look to the PS2 version in the near future.

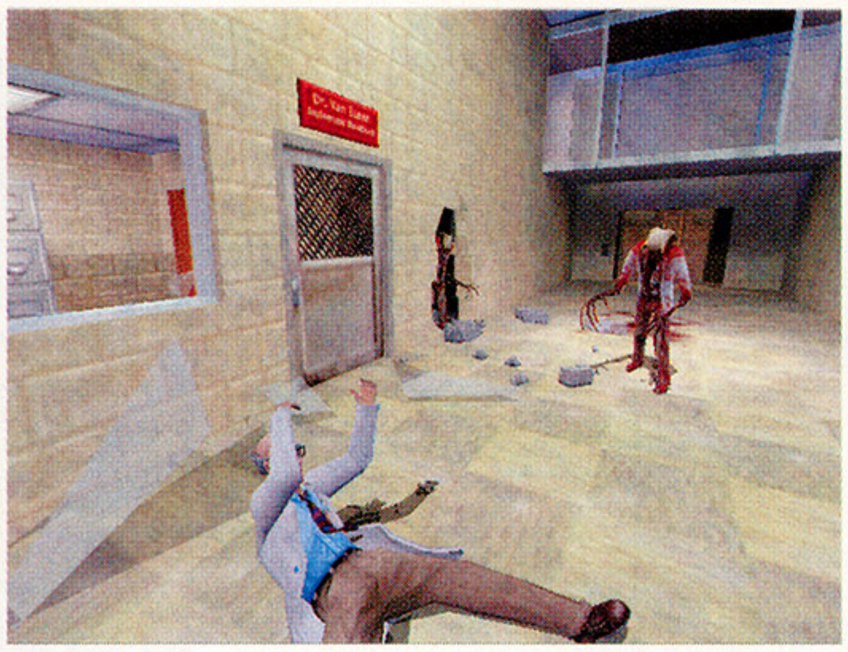
To get an idea just how much of an upgrade HL will get on the PS2, let's just say Gearbox is pulling an overhaul of Namco proportions—think Soul Calibur arcade versus the Dreamcast version. For starters, HL is aiming to glide along at 60 fps. For Gearbox, optimization is everything. Pitchford adds,"We're targeting a very fast game. The PS2 is a fast computer, and we're doing some special things to make sure it runs fast on the system." It's all about pulling you into the world of HL and keeping the experience as seamless as possible. Even in its pre-alpha state, Gearbox was getting half-a-second load times for new map segments.

Pitchford's confidence in the Emotion Engine has also pushed HL's graphics, for both character models and textures, to levels beyond even that of

"HL on PS2 is already relatively fast...it's as fast as UT or Q3, but this is the slowest it's ever going to be."

–Randy Pitchford, President of Gearbox Software





the newly released "High Definition" retrofit that comes with the Blue Shift add-on for the PC. To ensure that HL performs as fantastic as it looks, Gearbox has implemented a "levels-of-detail" (LOD) system that renders only objects closest to you in the greatest amount of detail. This extra layer of visual frosting includes facial animations for all the lovable non-player characters you encounter. To demonstrate, the folks at Gearbox walked up to a lab technician, whipped out an assault rifle, and pointed it to his head. The poor sob in the white lab coat went into one of his convulsive, panic animations: mouth agape, arms flailing about, and eyes on the verge of combustion. Flesh and blood weren't the only things to receive a makeover; weapons and items on the PS2 also look a notch better than the PC and DC versions. Among them, the standard H&K MP5 sub-machinegun with grenade launcher has been upgraded to a hefty Colt M4A1 Carbine rifle (with grenade undercarriage, of course). HL newbies will take for granted that the game looks great on the PS2; HL veterans will be startled with the transformation.

While the graphics are nice, the real reason to play this game on the PS2 is for Decay, the latest chapter in the ever-expanding Half-Life mythos. More than just another add-on, Decay is an exclusive co-op-based multiplayer PS2 adventure. "We wanted to take advantage of the fact that with consoles, you sit around with your friends and play games together. In this sense, multiplayer takes on new meaning. It encourages us to create games where it doesn't matter if you see the other guy's screen." To this end, Pitchford and his crack team of level designers are creating shiploads of co-op puzzles and combat scenarios that require both players to work together and communicate.

I ran through a couple of levels in Decay with the guys at Gearbox, and found the experience completely rewarding. A particular puzzle had one of us tweaking the optical lens of a laser network, while the other guy would flip the switch to make it all happen. Activate the lasers at the wrong time and your buddy is skewered. If nobody wants to go on a HL date with you, not to worry—you can still play through Decay in single-player mode, albeit with a bot. While the AI won't straight up solve any puzzles for you, it will be smart enough to maneuver around obstacles just to keep up with your pace of movement. And aside from being able to send commands to your bot, you can also jump into its powersuit at anytime to make sure things get done your way.

It's a really elegant solution to the co-op story scenario. Let's hope Gearbox can pull it off without any AI casualties, because the last thing Decay needs to be is schizophrenic. With recent news of Half-Life 2 (developed by originators Valve) being built from scratch as more of a console experience, HL and Decay on the PS2 serve as a perfect introduction to the legendary series. Oh, and have I mentioned that the game will support the ever-so-elusive USB keyboard and mouse configuration? Huzzah.

–Che Chou

Thelma and Louise take down a military personnel carrier with two well-placed shots from a rocket launcher.

SKIRMISH MODE

Battle Royale

If you're not in the mood for Decay's co-op mode, you and a friend could always work out your differences in HL's skirmish mode. In the spirit of Perfect Dark, HL will allow you to tweak any number of parameters to fit your every whim. Select your own weapons, player models, number of bots and levels to construct the perfect deathmatch. For instance, you could set up a soldiers versus aliens premise where the last man standing wins the round. Since bots will work together as a team (complete with squad leaders and sweeping tactics), you could even sit back and just watch entire battles unfold before your eyes. Because it's the first game with the HL engine to utilize bots (Counter-Strike: Condition Zero on the PC will be the next HL game to use bots), HL PS2 pushes the series to new heights. Gearbox also mentioned that they were interested in making Counter Strike-esque "round-based" battles, where both teams try to fulfill a certain objective to win the round. Gearbox could do it all, but with HL coming out for the PS2 this fall, time is their only obstacle.

PS2

PREVIEW

Twisted Metal: Black

Publisher:	Sony CEA
Developer:	Incognito
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Action
% Done:	75%
Release:	June 2001
Also Try:	Twisted Metal 2 (PS)
Web Address:	www.scea.com

The Good: Twisted Metal is really back, with a vengeance, even.

The Bad: We had to endure TM3 and TM4 before this one.

And The Ugly: Watching pedestrians disintegrate into bloody splotches after you ram them at full speed.

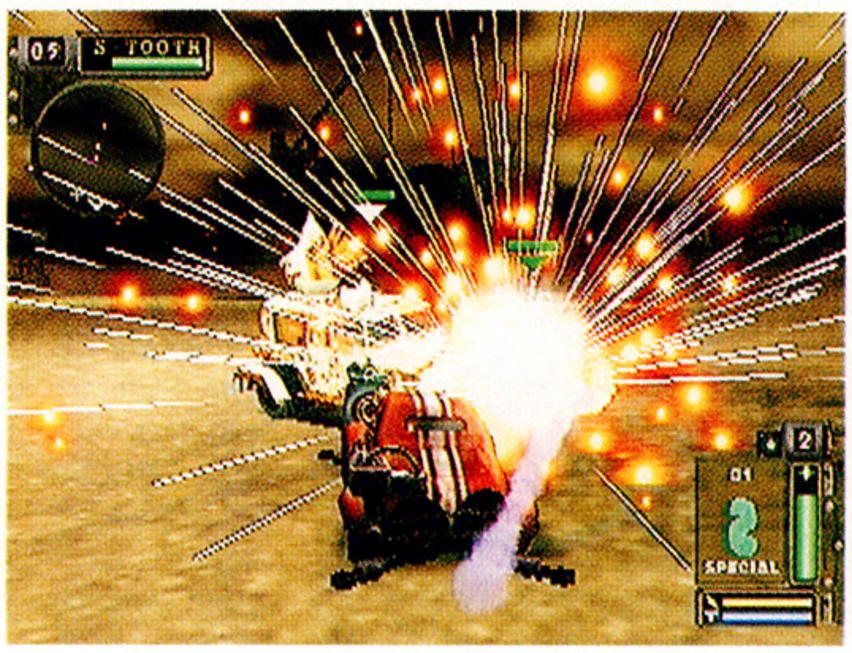
Missiles not the right antidote for the situation? Simply tuck them away and try Outlaw's special weapon—a tailgunner who pops out of the sunroof and rotates to turn his enemies into Swiss cheese.

If the director of *Se7en* tried his hand at making a monster-truck movie, then it might resemble Twisted Metal: Black. The evil head honcho behind the metallic carnage, Calypso, is even a convenient dead ringer for Kevin Spacey, give or take a nasty flesh wound or two.

It may seem like a reach to compare a car-destruction game to a horror flick, but then again, it isn't often that a car-destruction game could flirt with getting a Teen ESRB, either. Incognito, the developers of the first two Twisted Metal games, has succeeded in giving this game a dark and disturbing—black, if you will—atmosphere that isn't created solely by running over pedestrians or slamming missiles into oncoming traffic. That anti-social behavior is deliciously sadistic in its own special way, but what really sucks you into Twisted Metal's frightening world is a shadowy ambience that rivals some of the best filmed movies.

One must wonder how gloomy a game can really be when you trash oversized ice-cream trucks and a gargantuan man holding two large tires. Well, plenty. Clowns, porcelain masks and stitched cadavers are just a few of the 14 opponents that you'll fight against in the post-apocalyptic world of Twisted Metal. Die-hard fans will be glad that many of their old favorites such as Minion and Sweet Tooth are back. In fact, Incognito has pulled creative rank and chose to (for the best, we think) completely ignore Twisted Metal 3 and 4 when it came to making the PS2 edition. If you're entering the series cold, don't worry. Each character has his or her sordid story revealed through cutscenes played between levels. One combatant, for example, quests to find the answer to "why do I enjoy murdering?" Even better, the cleverly designed menus let you take a peek inside each driver's window, and some of their profiles are disturbing enough to make the most ardent Goths think twice about their lifestyles.

The only time you'll see these characters on the battlefield is when they run out of their flaming vehicles with their backs on fire. Putting them out of their misery with a "mercy shot" is the easy part. How you pry them from their vehicles is the fun part, of course. Each vehicle comes outfitted with its own special weapon, and it's typically the one that'll do the most damage. You can pick up staples such as Homing, Fire and Power missiles, but the battle will almost always be won with your specialty. Some are fancier than others. Crazy Eight has a four-pronged electricity field that shocks everything within spitting distance; Outlaw sports a sunroof that opens to let a machine gun-wielding "tailgunner" spray targets. Sweet Tooth has our favorite: a full-on transformation into a rolling robot whose obscene flurry of guided missiles can single-handedly change

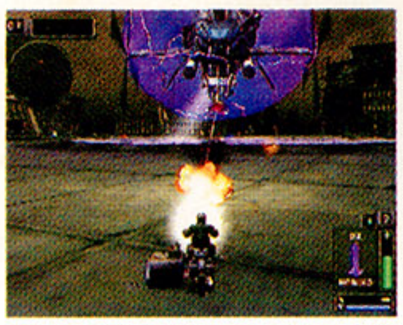


Remember Minion? He's a big boy now, roughly twice the size of his former petite self, and with much bigger attitude to boot.

FULL CIRCLE

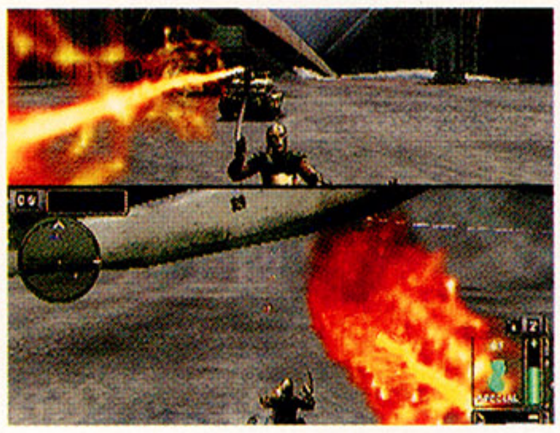
Darker Days

After SingleTrac made it big with TM1 and 2, they headed off in search of greener pastures at the now-defunct GT Interactive. Rogue Trip, another vehicular-destruction title, arrived a year later, but never caught on. Over half of SingleTrac's original members reconvened in spring of 1999 and formed Incognito, their first task being to put their wayward first born back on track. Scott Campbell, president of Incognito, promises "Twisted Metal: Black will be a total redemption of the franchise." So far, so good.



THE REBIRTH CONTINUES

The futuristic helicopter that you battle deep in TM: Black resides on a level with an interesting name: Warhawk. That happens to be the name of SingleTrac's other classic PlayStation game, heavily rumored to also have an update on the way to PlayStation 2.



Running over pedestrians has never been so fun, and if you want to cause more havoc, try blowing up pedestrian vehicles to cause a traffic jam (above middle). Get the feeling someone's tailgating you and want a visual? With one touch of a button you can see who's bearing down on you for the kill shot (above right).

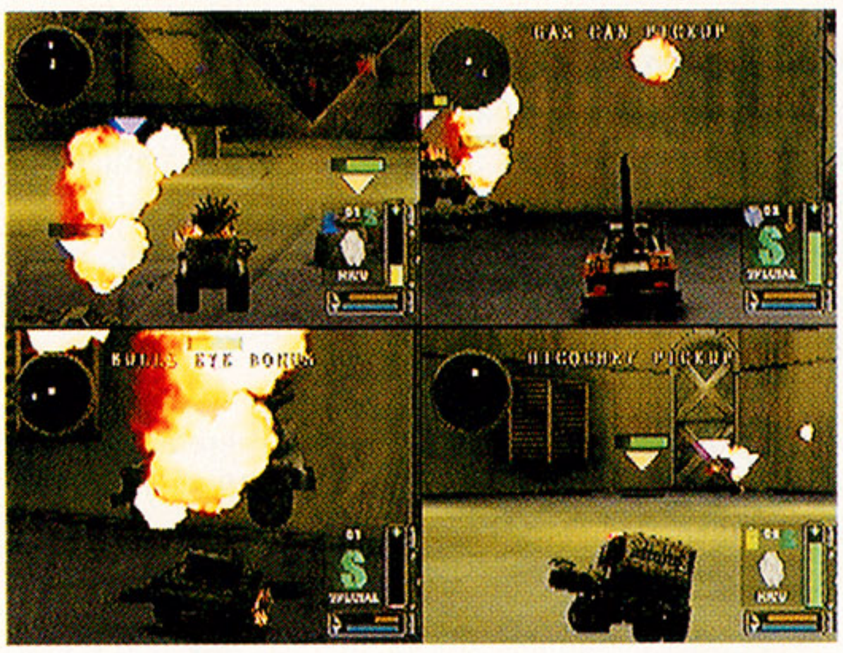
the outcome of a game. Fans of the series will be familiar with the weaponry, but they'll be pleasantly surprised on how it's presented. The vehicles have been seemingly constructed by the same company that brought Inspector Gadget to life—things pop up out of literally everywhere. Half the fun in taking new vehicles out for a spin is seeing where the missiles and special weapon will be unloaded from...and that's not even mentioning the gigantic "boss" contraptions that are awaiting your arrival.

The attention to detail is impressive, but there's no time for sightseeing. Twisted Metal: Black has been turbocharged to run faster than any of its predecessors, making life difficult for Sunday Drivers. In the blink of an eye, four or five vehicles will fire missiles at you, your life bar can be chopped in half, and a whole row of houses may go up in fire and smoke thanks to badly aimed ordinance. And that's just the beginning. Just about everything can be destroyed on the huge battlefields. If you're not alert, or are idle in one place for long, chances are you'll end up with a crumbling building or two on your cranium. Campers who sit around and lie in wait will usually find a quick demise, but if you're cunning enough, traps can be set with land mines and level-specific weapons that can be engaged remotely.

Despite all of this mayhem, the PlayStation 2 doesn't seem to have any trouble keeping pace with the action. Incognito has spent a year and a half perfecting the game engine, and the fact that the unfinished version we tested didn't hiccup under the strain of four players duking it out simultaneously via split-screen shows that it's been time well spent. There's a ton of multiplayer modes including an Endurance match (where you kill as many opponents as possible with one life), team matches, Deathmatch (20 levels) and the historically popular two-player cooperative mode where you and a buddy can gang up on Calypso's lackeys.

If you don't have road-warrior friends, don't worry—this game is shaping up to be amazing whether or not you're playing with someone, and that can seldom be said for car-destruction games. But then again, we probably shouldn't expect less from the developers who created this genre.

–Kraig Kujawa



DEVILISH DIVERSION

5 Satisfying Twists

Part of the charm of TM: Black is its over-the-top mayhem and dark humor. Here's some things that tickled us black while our knuckles went white from pressing the fire button.

1) Going House Bowling:
Hitting the Ferris Wheel with a missile and sending it down a hill to topple houses like bowling pins is rewarding indeed. Hopefully they had insurance.

2) Sticking it to Satan:
Devil worshippers get prime real estate in this world. A skyscraper rooftop chapel? Time to preach a little fire and brimstone of your own and send that Satanic statue back to, well, hell.

3) Watching Sweet Tooth Transform:
This work of art makes anyone who watched *Transformers* when they were little take pause. Which brings us to....

4) 20-Hit Combos With Sweet Tooth's Missile Flurry:
Got a comfortable lead? Think again. This weapon makes grown men cry.

PS2

PREVIEW

Gran Turismo 3 A-spec

Publisher:	Sony CEA
Developer:	Polyphony Digital
Players:	1-6
Genre:	Racing
% Done:	100%
Release:	July 2001
Also Try:	Tokyo Xtreme Racer 0
Web Address:	www.playstation.com

The Good: Yet another PS2 game that raises the visuals bar.

The Bad: We're still waiting for the American version.

And The Ugly: The amount of money you spend to keep your car competitive.

Conservative use of the heat-wave effect on the PS2 lends an amazing air of realism to some replays.

Driving up the hill in Monaco means dealing with the harsh glare. Some sections of the track are blinding.

LAUNCH DAY

GT Sleepover

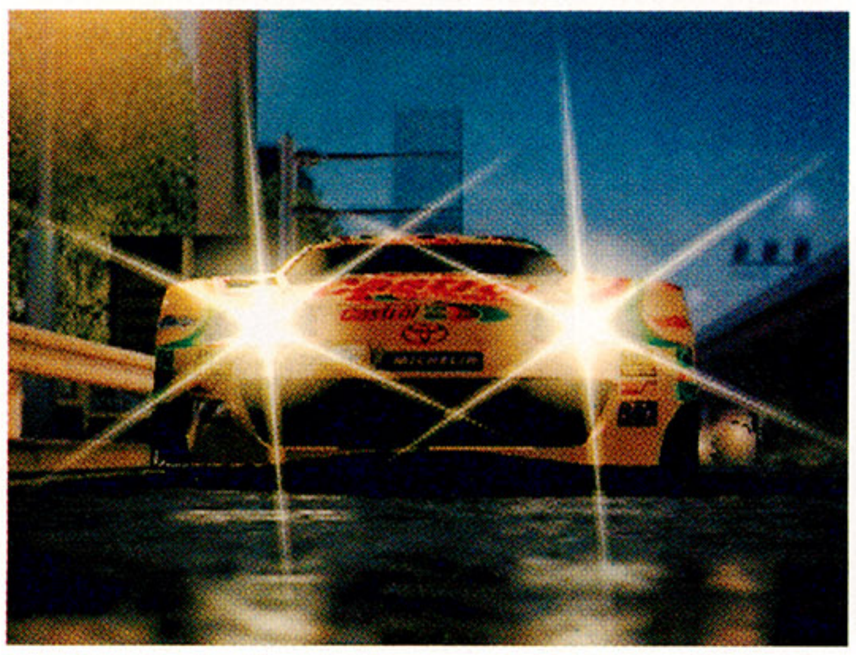
Gran Turismo 3 A-spec launched in Japan on April 28 with a huge amount of success. The following day Sony CEI issued a press release stating that GT3 had managed to sell over 1 million units in 48 hours. That's a PlayStation 2 sales record, folks.

Sony's hoping for similar success in the U.S. They hope that, like the PS2 before it, GT3 is something Americans will actually camp out overnight in front of stores for.

Kazunori Yamauchi considers himself more than just a mere game producer, describing his Gran Turismo series as an ever-evolving work of art. We tend to agree, especially after some serious play time with Gran Turismo 3 A-spec. In fact, Kazunori's background as an accomplished amateur photographer and his unequalled passion for cars of all types complement each other like never before with the power of the PlayStation 2.

Yeah, we know that sounds like something Sony paid us to say, but if you have any soul at all one game of GT3 might leave you weeping. The sheer detail on all of the cars—from the sunken headlight wells to the fully rendered wheels and brake rotors—is absolutely staggering. The cars cast real-time shadows as they scream around the tracks, all the buildings are full 3D models, the glare of the sun blinds you around certain turns and casts long, dark shadows on some sections of the courses. Oh, and did we mention this is all reflected perfectly in the glossy finish of your racing machine?

But the most breathtaking part is entering a wet-weather race in Special Stage 5. Sure, we've all seen moist race tracks in past driving games, but nothing has prepared you for what you'll witness in GT3. Mere screenshots don't do it justice, but the rain-soaked asphalt you're navigating is actually reflecting every car, light and roadside object in sight. It's truly something to behold, especially when you consider the game is locked at 60 fps and never drops a whit...ever. Nonetheless, there is one limitation; the game can only handle four cars on the wet track at one time. We'll chalk that up to this being the first generation of Gran Turismo on the PlayStation 2 and move on.



Of course, to go along with all the great graphics is the same tried-and-true gameplay of the original two games in the series. But Polyphony isn't resting on its laurels—there have been a slew of play improvements made as well.

Most noticeable of these is the Rally Mode. When GT2 was released in 1999 the rally racing felt like an afterthought—something players endured rather than enjoyed. GT3 has remedied that with a much larger, more authentic-feeling Rally Mode complete with huge courses tailor-made for powersliding. It even rivals some rally-specific games on the Dreamcast and PS1.

Gran Turismo 3 also features a much more robust Arcade Mode than its predecessors. There are 34 races to complete on three levels of difficulty. As usual, racers can load their own personal garages from a memory card for use in the Arcade Mode, as

cont. on page 72

Despite being a huge title, Yamauchi ended up delaying the game to include cars like Mazda's RX-8 and Nissan's new "Z."

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Black

VOCAL STYLINGS

GT3 has really made it. Two artists, Rae Kwon and Snoop Dogg, have recorded original songs just for the game. Lenny Kravitz has also done GT-specific mix of "Are You Gonna Go My Way."

cont. from page 70

well as a head-to-head mode that supports up to six players using an iLink hub. Even if you don't have six PS2's, six televisions and six copies of GT3 lying around (and who will?), it's possible to play up to six players with only three systems and televisions using split-screen.

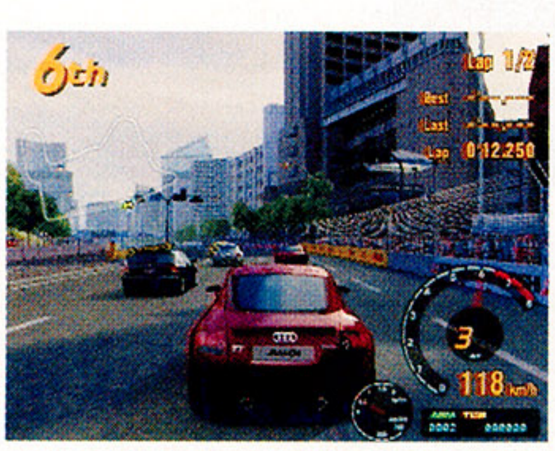
Fans will also be pleased to hear that the interface for the Sim Mode has been simplified. Now there's only one screen to navigate rather than that irritating world map from GT2. When you decide to upgrade your car it's not a matter of remembering which manufacturer and what part of the world you bought it from. Rather, you just go to a single "Tune Shop" icon and all the parts you can buy are laid out before you. Buying a new car is much the same, where you simply choose a region (i.e., Japan, America, Germany, etc.) from a single list and are presented with every car you can buy immediately.

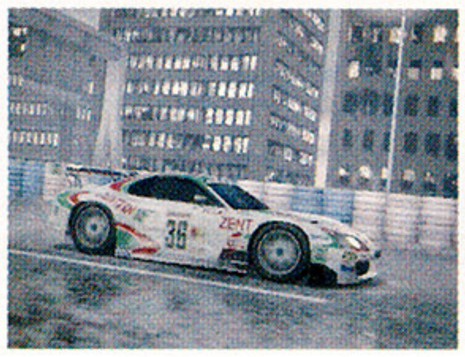
But it's the true car enthusiasts who'll be able to appreciate all the other little enhancements in GT3. They mostly consist of nice touches like h aving to watch the oil pressure in your car throughout Sim Mode. Sooner or later the red indicator light will go on, reminding you to go to the speed shop for an oil change.

Gran Turismo 3 doesn't need any pansy meter to indicate whether or not a player is caught in the draft of another car, either. Instead, the game uses audio clues and the driver's good sense to send that message. As you draft up behind a car (which is to say entering the vacuum created behind it), your speed will increase dramatically. Now's the time to slingshot past him (read: pull out of the draft and use the extra speed for the pass). But the moment you pull out into the clean air again you'll notice the sound of the wind whipping against your front bumper and drastically slowing you down. It's probably the best drafting physics model seen in a racing game yet, and it's so subtle you can't help but be impressed. The strategy added to tracks with long straight-aways (especially the Test Course) is absolutely awesome.

So what's Sony changing for the U.S. release of the most important racing title on the PS2? Only a few minor things. Besides the obvious English translation for the pages and pages of technical information on each car and the expected alterations to the soundtrack (see "Vocal Stylings" at the top of this page), American players might also see a slightly modified AI in some of the more difficult races. As it is right now, some of the earliest events feature one or two cars that simply can't be beaten unless you upgrade your chariot to a ridiculous degree. It slows down the entire progression of the game. Otherwise, it looks like all systems are go for the mid-June U.S. release. Look for the Review Crew's final impressions of Gran Turismo 3 next month...now if you'll excuse us, there's racin' to be done.

— Greg Sewart

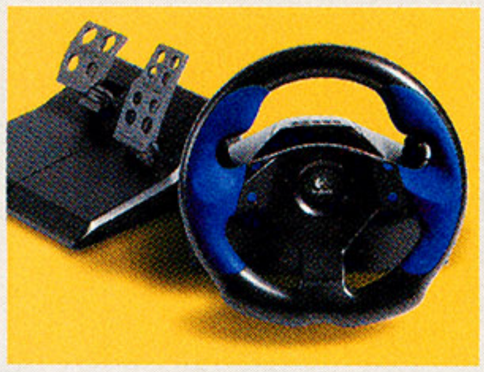




Although mere screenshots really can't do the game justice, the images in this group should give you a good idea of just how beautiful Gran Turismo 3 is. Imagine it running at a silky-smooth framerate. After a certain distance, you'll need to head over to GT Auto and get an oil change (left).

PERIPHERALS

Wheel Deal



So what's the real deal with the wheel? Sony's been rather quiet about whether they'll be releasing the force-feedback wheel developed by Logitech specifically for Gran Turismo 3. We're here to report that they are, in fact, going to make the wheel available to GT fans in the U.S. They just haven't decided on a final price or distribution model yet.

Here's what we do know: The wheel might end up being distributed through the Internet only, and should clock in at under $100.

That might sound steep, but for real racing fans it's nothing but a drop in the bucket once you experience the sheer quality of the GT3 wheel. It's probably the best console-driving peripheral released since Namco sold the NeGcon.

The wheel plugs into one of the USB ports and comes in two pieces: a wheel base that clips onto a table-top or desk lip, and a pedal platform that sits on the floor. Even though the platform is really light, it doesn't seem to slide around, even for drivers with a lead foot.

The coolest part, though, is the force feedback. To actually feel the wheel fighting you around a hairpin or as you hang a tire off the course into the gravel literally takes this game to the next level.

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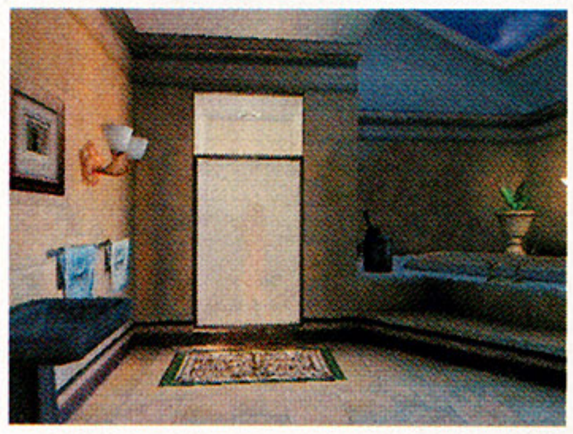
James Bond in Agent Under Fire

Instead of basing this first-person shooter on a mediocre movie that was best known for having Denise Richards in a short, tight T-shirt, **Electronic Arts** has scrapped both The World Is Not Enough and 007 Racing to cast Bond in an entirely new adventure to be released this **fall**.

Here, 007 must defeat Malprave, an "evil, criminal mastermind" who is wreaking havoc with an army of clones. This may be the first time that a video game has a sensible reason for having hundreds of henchmen that all look the same, but we're more impressed that it has driving sequences as well. The folks behind Need for Speed are in charge of putting Bond on wheels, so these car-combat levels should be solid and maybe even a little realistic. Car chases comprise about a third of the action, but the story behind the mayhem will unfold through in-game events, much like first-person gems Half-life and Red Faction. Whether or not this will be as stirring as those games is uncertain, but it's a solid bet that it won't be as shaky as the last two Bond films.



Finally, Bond uses his stealthy spy techniques for something practical. Like being a Peeping Tom (left). Just imagine his displeasure when he finds that it is actually Q in disguise, voiced by actor John Cleese. Brosnan won't be playing Bond, by the way.

Time Crisis 2

Fans of **Namco**'s light-gun games should take pleasure in the news that Time Crisis 2, the long-lost TC sequel previously playable only in arcades, is now working its way home to the PS2, with an as-yet-**unannounced release date**. Featuring brand-new levels and modes exclusive to the PS2 version, Time Crisis 2 will also be compatible with the original PS1 GunCon and the upcoming GunCon 2. Emulating the two-monitor frenzy of the original arcade cabinet, TC2 offers a two-player split-screen mode, as well as an iLink mode that lets you connect two PlayStation 2's, along with two televisions, for true better-than-arcade action. For macho-solo baddie-blasting, you can also play TC2 double-fisted, John Woo-style. Now where's our Crisis Zone?

Vampire Night

Sega's WOW Entertainment and **Namco** team up to deliver this vampire-themed light-gun game. Due in **Q4 2001** for the PS2, VN will feature two-player action, six levels and home-exclusive features.

AMERICANS LOVE HERDING

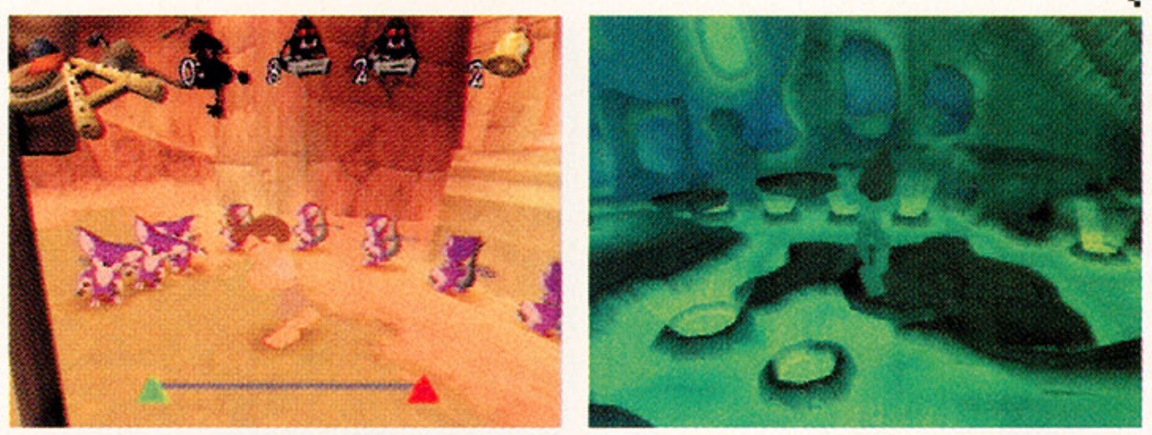
There must be something about herding that brings man closer to nature, the cosmos or pigs. There's no better example of this than when *Babe* won the Golden Globe for Best Picture in 1995, and got a trough-full of Oscar nominations. Who could forget that little porker with his tuft of brown hair and his amazing herding abilities? Truly a cultural phenomenon all us aspiring herders dream of.

PS2

PREVIEW GALLERY

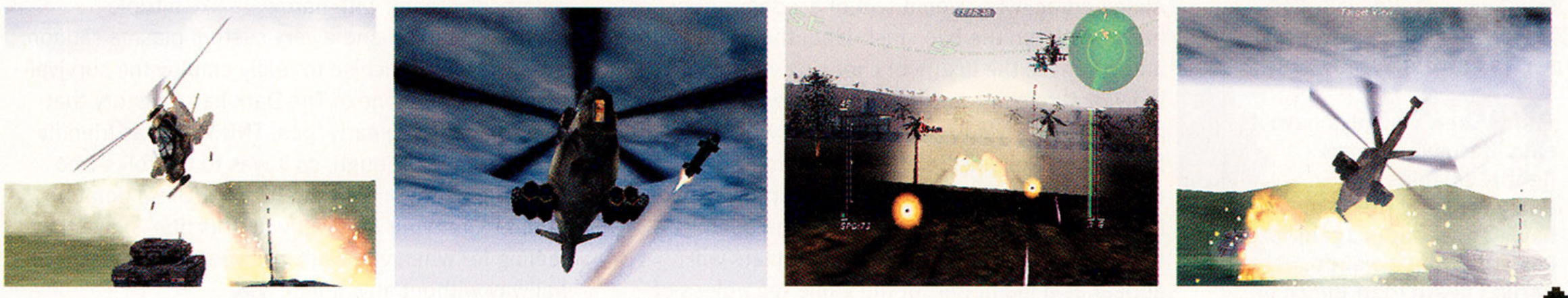
Herdy Gerdy

Herding funky creatures is the name of the game in this upcoming **Eidos** strategic adventure title. Gerdy, to go from apprentice to Master Herder, uses various problem-solving techniques to herd different species of wild animals, each with its own set of unique personality traits. Out in the **fall**, Herdy Gerdy promises 27 detailed levels, an immersive story, seamless animation sequences and beautiful graphics.



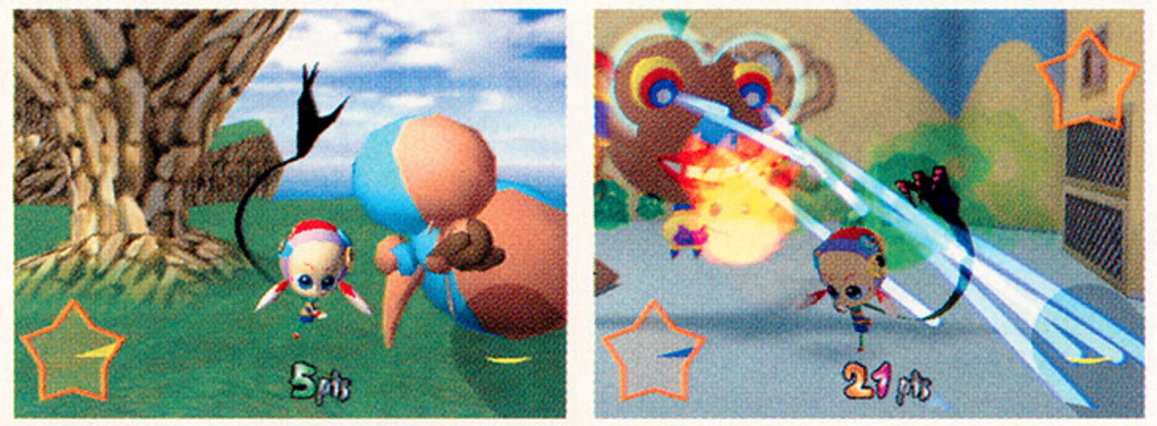
Thunder Strike: Operation Phoenix

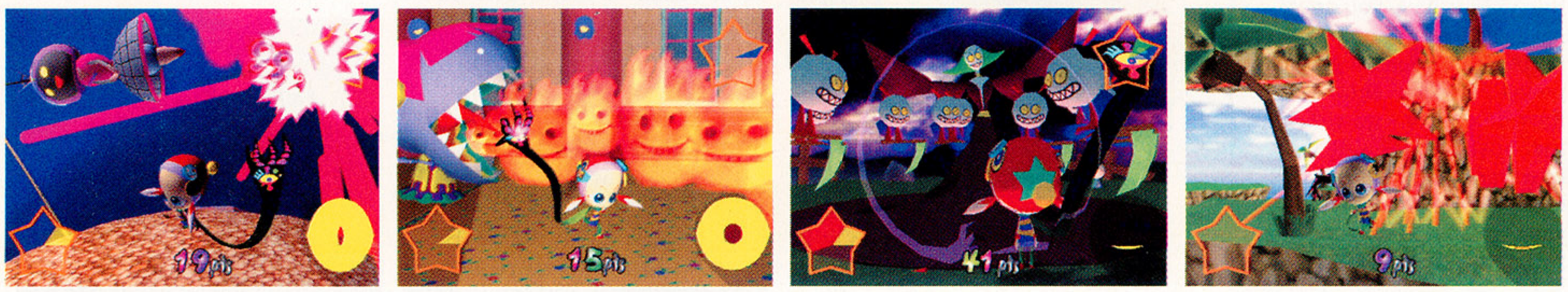
Anyone remember the old Thunder Strike series from the Sega CD and the early days of the Saturn and PS1? **Core** and **Eidos** are reviving it on the PlayStation 2 this **September**, and is it ever hot. You pilot a state-of-the-art gunship on multiple missions into hostile territory. In order to take on all the grounded and air-based attackers you come upon, your helicopter is equipped with everything from a gunship sniper to night vision to guided missiles. In particular, the missiles are friggin' cool. You guide them right into the target, and when they explode your screen is filled with static for an instant. Very CNN. We're pumped about this game.



Stretch Panic

Treasure has always been known for its unique game experiences, but this latest offering is odd, even by their standards. You take control of a little girl named Linda. The unique twist is that you also have control over Linda's scarf, which you use to grab objects. In some levels you even have to grab the huge breasts of your enemies to defeat them (right). You'll see what we mean when **Conspiracy** releases it in **June**.

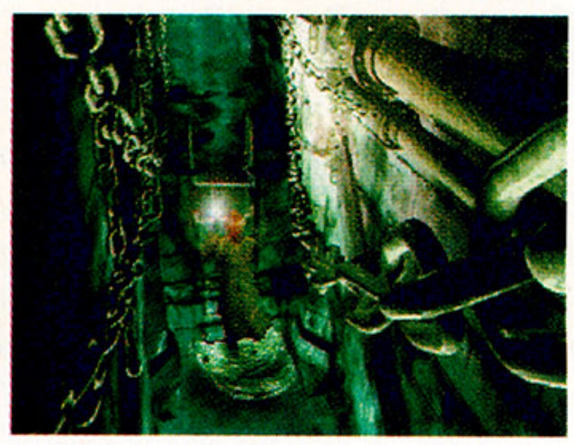


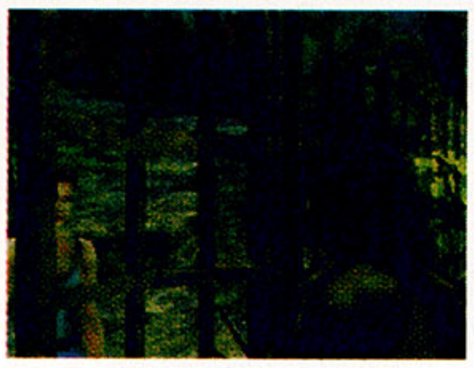


PREVIEW

Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare

Publisher:	Infogrames
Developer:	DarkWorks
Players:	1
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	80%
Release:	June 2001
Also On:	Dreamcast, PC
Web Address:	www.aloneinthedark.com
The Good:	Rich backgrounds.
The Bad:	Does little to expand on the survival-horror genre.
And The Ugly:	Shadow creatures gettin' messed up by any piece of your huge arsenal.





Light is definitely your friend. The mansion in The New Nightmare looks like it's on the same circuit as Northern California, so you'll have to use the 'ol flashlight to get around. It also fights those nasty shadow monsters who so love the darkness. The two protagonists (left) often find themselves alone in the dark, but seldom together. Keep those hands behind the bars, pal.

ROUNDTABLE

Tough Guys

Overheard: Resident Evil's Chris, Silent Hill's Harry and AITD's Edward Carnby.

Chris: Geez, you guys have it easy. Back when I was fightin' zombies...
Harry (to Edward): Man, he's having flashbacks again.
Edward: What a weirdo.
Chris: I heard that! Bunch of pansies, where's my rocket launcher?
Edward: Oh, you're just miffed 'cause Jill was all over Barry in that mansion!
Chris: Oh, I see how it is... (mocking) Look at me! I'm Eddie! Oh no, the shadows are coming to get me!!
Edward (looking around nervously): Shut up, man!
Harry: Hey, have you guys seen a little girl around?
Chris: Man, your daughter's gone, just forget about it!
Harry: I'm gonna go look in that hospital...(leaves)
Edward: Oh GREAT idea.
Chris (to Edward): So Ed, you ever seen the inside of a S.T.A.R.S. van before?

It's not every day that your best friend gets murdered on a remote island, and you set out to look for him, but end up crashing your plane, fighting to uncover the mystical mischief about to unfold, and tie all the recent craziness in your life together. But these things happen from time to time.

Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare brings back familiar frontman Edward Carnby and plops him in the center of the very haunted Shadow Island. He is rather accidentally accompanied by Aline Cedrac, who is on a sort of academic quest of her own. When the two crash-land, the game starts, and you have the luxury of choosing which individual to control. "Carnby provides a recognizable style to people familiar with the franchise," explains Sean Fish, Infogrames' producer on the game, "whereas Aline Cedrac provides a fresh point of view. She asks the same questions that new players would." Both characters will appear as a major part of the game regardless of whom you pick, but you'll have to play through as both in order to get the whole story.

The first thing that probably hit your mind after seeing these screens is that the game looks damn gorgeous for a PS1 title. The backgrounds are prerendered, but they really give the atmosphere an almost tangible energy through the use of vivid colors and shading. Fish maintains that it took several months to implement the flashlight just right in the game. "It's not only visually stunning, but also a great gameplay tool," he says. "The player can use it for exploration and even as a weapon to drive away some of the monsters faced in the game." Fear not, however, the house is stocked like an NRA member's dream, with hardware like a triple-barreled shotgun and a very custom plasma cannon.

As the first franchise to really employ the survival-horror model, Alone In The Dark has a history that dates back to the early '90s. TNN is just as friendly to newcomers, though, as it was to the folks who played the first one on the PC or 3DO. So don't be afraid to get your feet wet with this title—save that feeling for when you walk into your first pitch-black hallway without any ammo.

–Jonathan Dudlak

Have a blast with all the weapons in TNN. It doesn't matter how ya get rid of them pesky ghouls, just don't waste your limited ammo!

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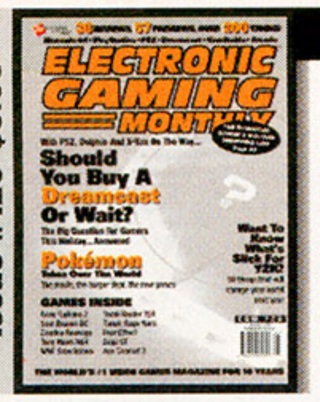

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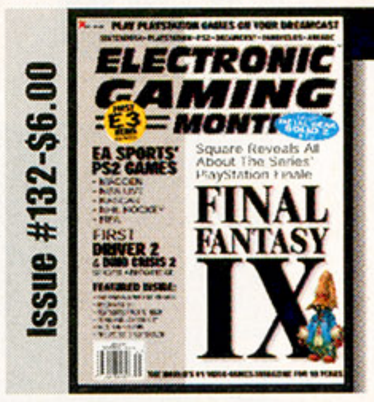

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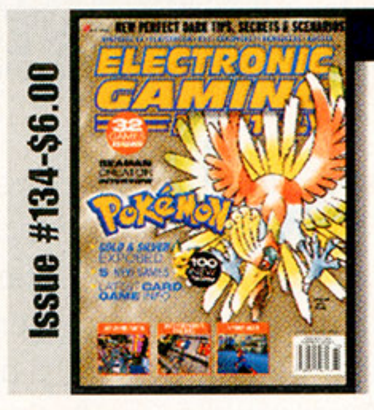

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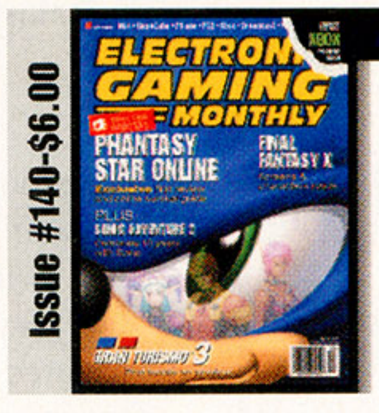
Kirby 64
Smuggler's Run
Chrono Cross
Dragon Warrior I&II
Dino Crisis 2
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX
Virtua Tennis



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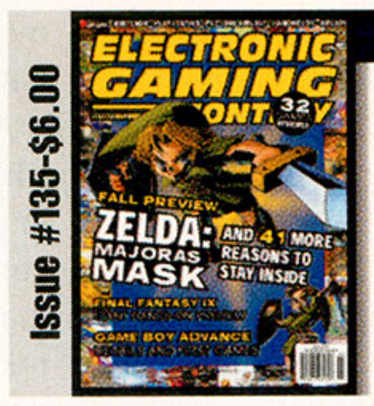

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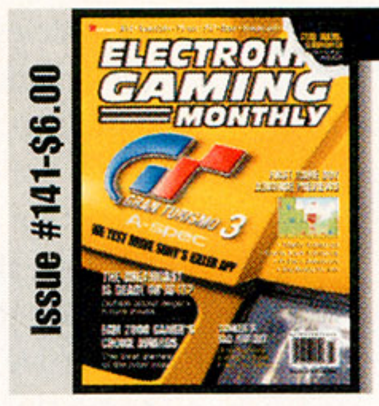

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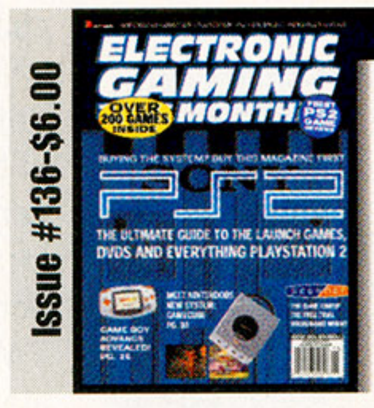

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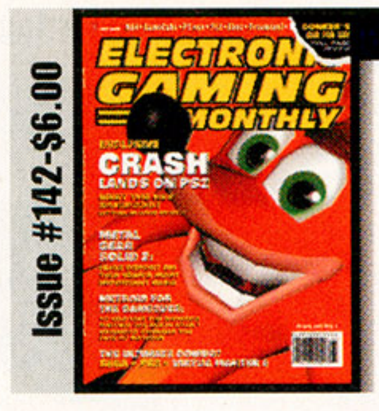

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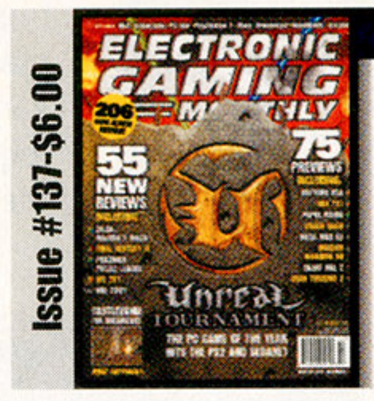

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PREVIEW

SNEAK PEEK WHAT A TREAT CAN'T BE BEAT!

Curious what the cover's gonna look like when it hits stores so you can snap it right up and get to playin'? Well, here it is. Tastefully done, it's nice to see FFIV and CT co-exist on the same cover harmoniously in clean, effective design.

Final Fantasy Chronicles

Publisher:	Square EA
Developer:	Square
Players:	1-2
Genre:	RPG
% Done:	75%
Release:	July 2001
Also On:	Super NES
Web Address:	www.squaresoft.com

The Good: FFIV and Chrono Trigger at long last!

The Bad: 8-bit graphics fool no one!

And The Ugly: Still no sign of Tobal 2...yet.

Remember this scene from Chrono Trigger? Well, if you don't, you'll soon be able to see it for yourself! Lucky devil!

While not actually a part of the Final Fantasy legacy, are you really going to complain about Chrono Trigger?

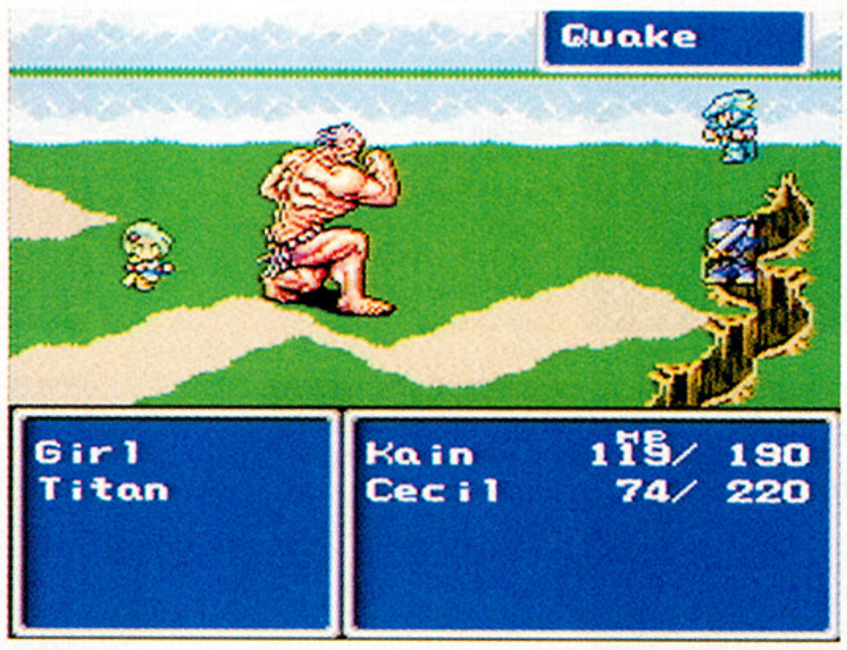
You got your Final Fantasy in my Chrono Trigger! Well, maybe not, but RPG fanatics will have their hands full this July when Square rereleases two of the most highly treasured (and requested) RPGs of all time in one consumer-friendly package as Final Fantasy Chronicles. The title contains both Final Fantasy IV (released in the U.S. as Final Fantasy II) and the highly sought-after Chrono Trigger. No longer do eager collectors need to break into their piggy-banks for the sake of skyrocketing eBay prices. Instead, they may take solace in the fact that not only are these two classics coming home again, but will arrive bearing a host of improvements that will come close to making Chronicles essential.

Starting with Final Fantasy IV, which introduced the Active Time Battle (ATB), this year's model includes storyline elements that were omitted from the SNES release. Square added new computer-generated cinemas to bring the storyline to life, and a dash feature to help players move more quickly through towns and dungeons. A simple two-player mode also allows, uh, two players to engage in battles together.

A "supergroup" effort involving Akira Toriyama (Dragon Ball Z), Hironobu Sakaguchi (Final Fantasy) and Yuji Horii (Dragon Quest), Chrono Trigger is considered by many the best role-playing game ever made. With the PlayStation update, Square has taken their time-traveling masterpiece and added new animated cinemas that bring Akira Toriyama's characters to life. Chrono Trigger for the PS also gets a new theater mode, a music box and an art gallery. Both games also benefit from a complete overhaul of the translation, with up to 90 percent of each game's script retouched by Square EA's internal localization team (responsible for the excellent job done on FFIX).

While both games would make excellent stand-alone additions to any RPG-centric library, bundled together, for the price of one game, they are more than anyone might have hoped for. With its classic gameplay and new enhancements, FF Chronicles is required playing for any role-playing fanatic. Enjoy the fruits of an era gone by.

–James Mielke



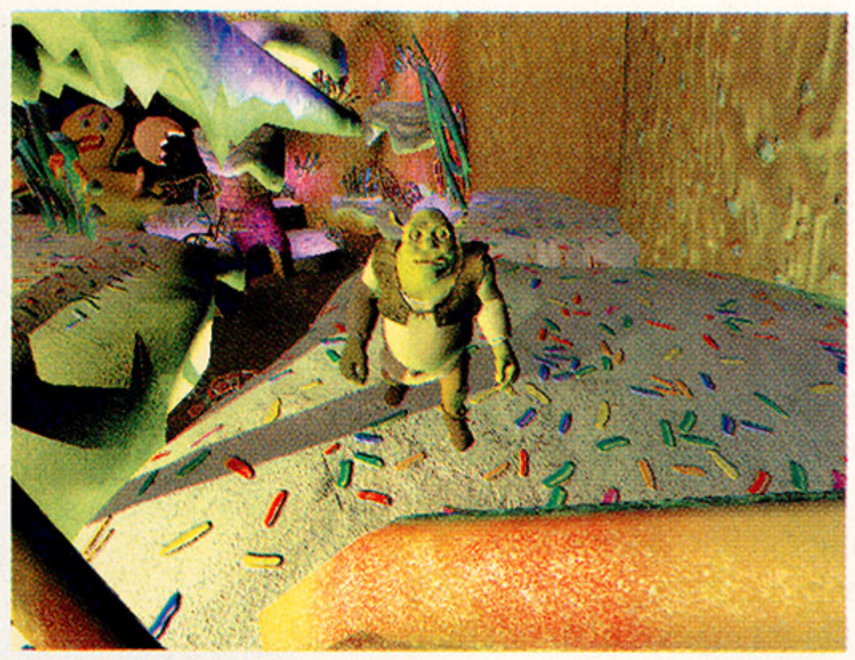
BIRD HOUSE

Toriyama

A key contributor to the much-loved Chrono Trigger, illustrator and cartoonist Akira Toriyama is best known for his *Dragon Ball Z* manga (comic book) and animated series. As the founder of Bird Studios, Toriyama-san is also responsible for a number of other successful creations such as Dr. Slump, Cashman and most recently, Sand Land. While his first Square-related work appeared on Chrono Trigger, he was also responsible for the character designs in Tobal No. 1 and 2. Interestingly, neither he nor CT scenario scripter Yuji Horii returned for the CT sequel Chrono Cross for the PlayStation, instead opting to work on Japan's best-selling game, Dragon Quest VII.

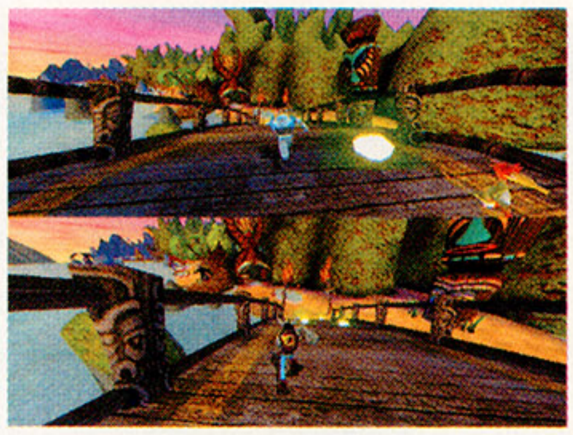
Shrek

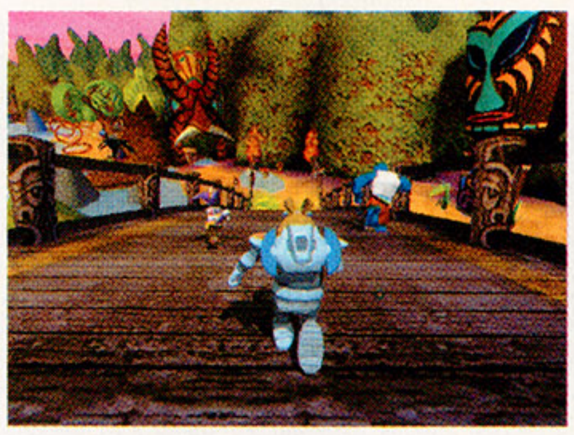
Shrek, the soon-to-be-released computer-animated motion picture from DreamWorks SKG (the same people who did *Antz*), is on schedule to hit the Xbox this **November** under the **TDK Interactive** label. As the movie goes, Shrek (a big, fat lovable ogre) must help a horde of exiled fairy tale characters escape the clutches of the evil Lord Farquaad, then return them back to their respective fairy tales. While the movie plot seems intriguing enough, the game doesn't follow the same line. Instead, the action takes place on four new worlds which include Cinderella's Castle, The Beanstalk, Mother Goose and Candy Lands. WIthin the worlds are 12 levels and some 36 missions to complete. These pics are taken from a development kit but developer **Sandbox Studios** is confident the Xbox will deliver similar quality.

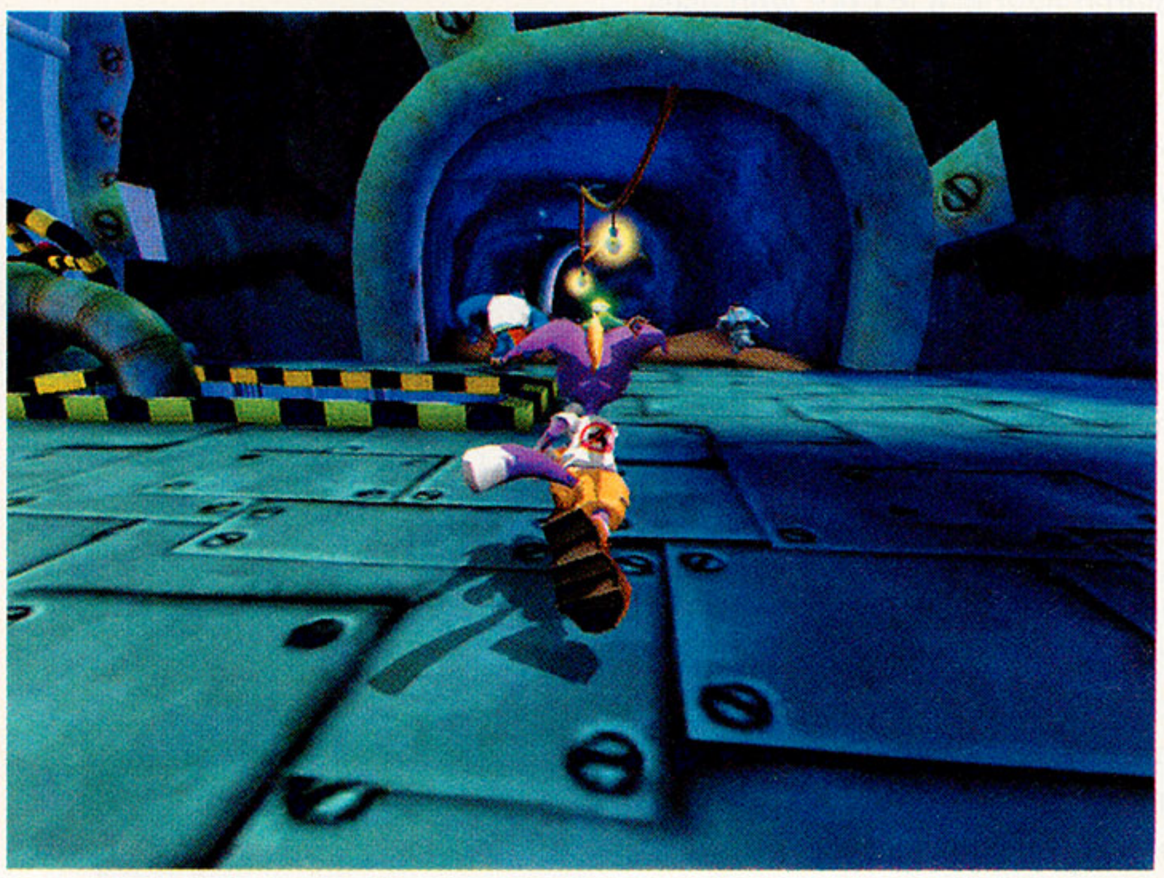


Mad Dash Racing

The folks from **Crystal Dynamics** who brought you Gex on the PS1 are back with more extreme animal antics in Mad Dash Racing. We recently got to play this platform/racer hybrid and things are looking positive for its **Xbox launch** debut. Select from a long roster of cross-training critters and run, jump, climb and glide your way across the finish line. Technically, MDR is a good sign of things to come on the Xbox. The game features huge environments, detailed character models, real-time shadows, vibrant textures and four-player splitscreen. Watch for **Microsoft**'s hype machine in the near future too, as they're apparently keen on this game's mascot potential. Yeah, yeah, we know MDR is no PenPen Tricelon (DC), but then again, what is?



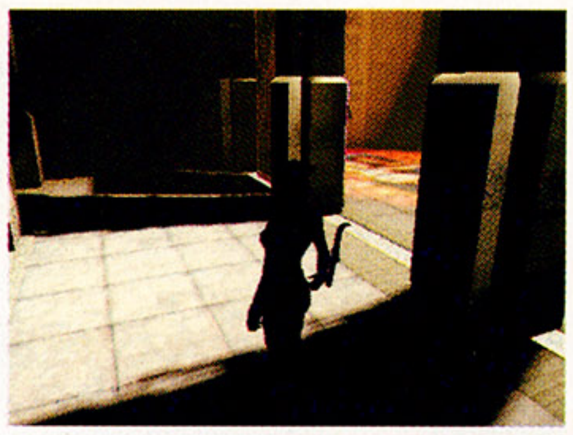




PREVIEW GALLERY

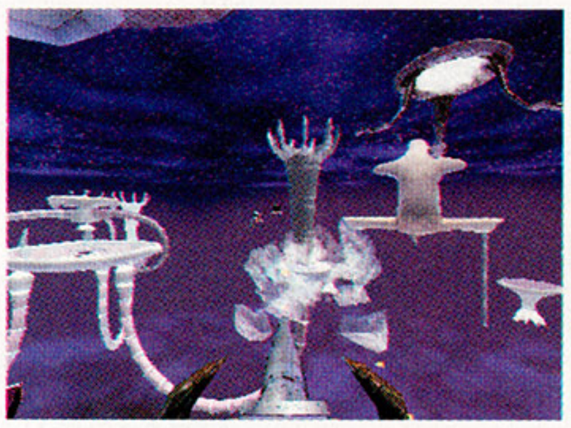
(Nocturne 2)

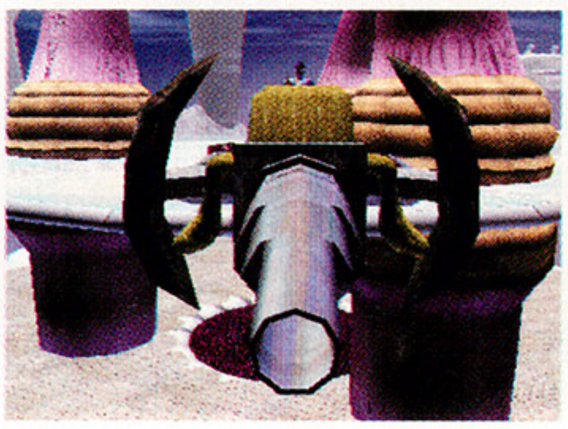
Yet another adventure title for the Xbox that we can't play. Damn. It looks nice, but what we wouldn't give to feel it in action! **Terminal Reality** is currently shopping around for a publisher and a title for their Xbox effort based on the sequel to the PC game, Nocturne. The rather gothic-looking title is actually set in the 1930s, taking place in different regions of the world including Romania and Argentina. From the look of the game and list of the heroine's abilities (including "bloodlust" and transforming into mist), this could be the next Symphony of the Night (PS). Let's hope the third dimension enhances Nocturne 2 instead of mauling it like poor Castlevania. Terminal Reality promises the cinematics will be short but sweet, the control instinctive, and the action riddled with puzzles. Hmm... how does that go about "the best laid plans...?"



Azurik: The Rise of Perathia

This huge and colorful adventure due out this **fall** reminds us of Soul Reaver, but with considerably more action. You control smurf-colored Azurik, a warrior who uses a magical dual-edged weapon that emits wind, fire, water and earth to slay enemies. Each creature has its own weakness, so finding the right magic to exploit and kill it is key to surviving. Azurik's world is huge and "free roaming." In other words, it will allow you to explore anywhere you wish, inhibited only by puzzles that may stop your progress. In spite of the game's fancy visuals, the feature we're most interested in is **Microsoft**'s promise that there will be absolutely no load time during the game, (a feature made possible by the system's hard drive), allowing for a very seamless experience.





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game boy

You say you want an evolution?

We get a grip on Game Boy Advance: the games, the hardware, the gizmos—and what happens when you drop it in the can.

advance

By Mark MacDonald, Che Chou and the EGM staff

Twelve years. Plenty has happened over the past 12 years. We've had three presidents, four flare-ups in foreign lands, and, like, 5,000 new reality TV shows. And things moved even faster in the gaming industry. Nearly a dozen game systems—including the Jaguar, Saturn, Neo•Geo Pocket Color, Game Gear, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64, PlayStation and PS2—have hit the U.S., and of those only Sony's systems are still going strong. But one thing hasn't changed: With over 100 million units sold across the globe, Nintendo's handheld Game Boy system has remained virtually the same since it stuffed every kid's X-mas stocking back in 1989. Sure, it's taken its baby steps—a clearer screen, more battery life, a color display, but nothing major—until now.

Enter Game Boy Advance, Nintendo's next-generation answer to its feisty portable retiree. After months of anticipation, the GBA is in our grip, working its mojo like nothing we've seen on a handheld. Suddenly, everything old is new again. *EGM* looks at the GBA's past, present and future—and helps you decide if it was worth the wait.

Next Stop: Atlantis

News of an "advanced" Game Boy system (codename Project Atlantis) first leaked during the Game Boy Pocket era in 1996. "[Nintendo president] Mr. Yamauchi's mandate [then] was that we will not ship any new handheld unless it's the same size or smaller than the Game Boy Pocket," says Ken Lobb, marketing support manager at Nintendo of America. "The screen has to be bigger and have color, battery life must be longer, and it has to offer a dramatic improvement in the overall gameplay experience."

Achieving these goals would be tricky; Nintendo engineers realized they'd hit the same technological brick walls as their bygone competitors. "At the time the Game Boy Color was launched, all this wasn't possible—some of those jumps couldn't be made," says Lobb. "If we wanted to make something as powerful as the Game Boy Advance back then it would have been too big, and the battery life would have been atrocious." Nintendo wasn't about to make those

Four-Play

Yeah, the old Game Boy link cable was great in theory, but since both players needed a copy of the same game to play anything, it was rare that it was ever really put to use (with the big exception of Pokémon on grade-school playgrounds). That could all change with the Game Boy Advance: Now, not only can up to four people join in, many GBA titles require that only one of the linked systems has the game inserted. (Don't forget, whoever's hosting the game needs to have the purple end of the link cable in his or her system. Everyone else's connector should be gray. See page 98 for more info on the link cable.) Which launch games have multiplayer modes? Take a gander at our handy chart below.

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS:

GAME NAME	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	ONE CART	MULTIPLE CARTS
GT Advance	2	—	Required
Bomberman Tournament	4	Same game options with one or multiple carts	
ChuChu Rocket!	4	Battle and team battle	Trade custom mice and levels
Super Dodge Ball Advance	2	—	Required
F-Zero: Maximum Velocity	4	Single car, single track	Multiple cars, tracks, and race classes
Fire-Pro Wrestling	4	—	Required
Konami Krazy Racers	4	—	Required
Mario Advance	4	Battle mode	Battle and Classic Mario Bros. Modes
Top Gear GT Championship	4	—	Required

This completely candid and unscripted photo of the *EGM* crew was taken during a heated match of four-player Mario Advance.

mistakes. "We would never go backward from Game Boy Pocket," Lobb says. Research and development on the GBA continued until fall of 1999, when Nintendo finally announced the system.

Developing on the GBA

From a developer's standpoint, the GBA couldn't have happened at a better time. Even as the video-game industry rustles from its transitional slumber, developers are realizing they can make a huge chunk of change with handheld gaming—now.

A sure-to-be huge installed base and cheaper development costs aside, game makers such as Vicarious Visions (Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2) and Digital Eclipse (Rayman Advance) appreciate the robust 32-Bit ARM CPU under the hood of the GBA. "It's a very powerful CPU for a handheld," says Karthik Bala, CEO of Vicarious Visions. "All the physics, collision detection, 3D math and the 3D software renderer used in THPS2 are possible because it's a great processor." And after playing his company's port of the world's biggest skating game, it makes us even more excited when Bala says, "With Tony Hawk 2, we're only scratching the surface of what the GBA can do."

Mike Mika, creative director at Digital Eclipse, isn't so concerned with how far the technology has come. "I think it's a smart leap." he says. "The GBA adheres to the rules set by Nintendo way back in the late '80s when they first released the Game Boy. During the Game Boy's lifetime, it has had some really top-notch competition. However, Nintendo had the better games, the better name, and the better battery life." Despite being outpaced by the competition's hardware, Nintendo gambled that gamers were more concerned about longevity and portability in a handheld, and they were right. So the GBA, like all previous Game Boys, embodies this important philosophy. "Would it be cool to have a portable N64 or PlayStation?" Mika asks rhetorically. "Absolutely. But the technology to make it truly feasible isn't quite there yet. Nintendo seems to have taken the proper path of evolution."

The Game Boy Cubed

The GBA might be keeping true to its roots, but Nintendo also has plenty of innovative projects in the works. For starters, there's Pokémon on the GBA. Of course that isn't a surprise, but what is interesting is that Pokémon GBA will support a new add-on called the E-Card Reader. This device uses technologies developed by Olympus Optical to scan special Pokémon cards for stats, images and even sound bites. This may seem like a pokéfanatic's wet dream, but it's exciting news even for those of us who could care less about those dirty little critters: How about games—sports titles, RPGs, etc.—where updated stats or new characters are just a fresh pack of cards away?

Then there's the GBA/GameCube communication cable that will connect the GBA to the controller port on Nintendo's upcoming 128-Bit console. Given the power of the GBA, there's a ton of potential for the

Cont. on page 86

Mighty Midget

Despite being only half the size of their Game Boy Color brethren, Advance carts (shown here actual size) can hold up to 256 megabits—that's *eight times* as much data as GBC games! And since there's no territorial lockout, Japanese carts like the one below will work on your U.S. system, and vice versa.

Notches for Peripherals:

These holes allow external peripherals to snap onto the GBA. The first of these in Japan came in the form of the Light Boy Advance, an officially licensed light source and screen magnifier. Look for accessories here to start making use of them soon.

Communications Port:

This little socket handles all of the major connectivity features for the GBA. Right now, you can only use it for the link cable and various light sources, but soon it's where everything from the GBA/GameCube link to possibly even a cellular phone connection will be made.

A+B Buttons:

Like the D-pad, these are probably from the exact same mold as the previous Game Boys: They have the same size, shape and feel. The letters "A" and "B" are even still engraved a little left of center.

The Screen:

It's all about the GBA's bigger and wider screen. So much wider, in fact, that when you play old Game Boy Color games they need to be either "letterboxed" (with black borders on either side), or "stretched out" to fill the screen (choose with the L button).

Shoulder Buttons:

Since the GBA is horizontally aligned, your index fingers rest naturally over these wide shoulder buttons. The only gripe we have is that they feel a little weak and offer almost no pressure to speak of.

D-Pad:

It just wouldn't be a Game Boy without Nintendo's revolutionary cross-pad design. This is basically the same D-pad we've seen on previous Game Boys for the past 12 years. Works fine, but a slightly larger pad would've been nice.

Game Boy Advance Glacier

(Shown actual size)

On/Off Switch:

You know how this thing works. Flick it on and the GBA kicks into its system intro, complete with ambient jingle. Try holding down the "Start" and "Select" buttons when you power on – you'll hear a sound bite from the Super Nintendo as it pauses your GBA until you press a button.

Headphone Jack:

With the Game Boy Color, we didn't really care much about headphones since the "beep and boop" music and sounds weren't so hot to begin with. But the GBA has the power to really kick out the jams, and you'll miss all the stereo dynamics if you don't use a pair of headphones. Better find a nice pair.

Speaker:

Another mono speaker like the one for the GBC. Thanks to GBA's upgraded sound processor, however, this tinny little speaker has become awfully inadequate. The GBA is equipped with a PCM stereo-sound generator, giving it not only better sound effects, but also the ability to play nice digitized speech and samples. Check out Castlevania: CotM or Tony Hawk if you don't believe us.

handheld to be much more than a glorified Dreamcast VMU. With its four buttons and larger color screen, your GBA could, in effect, be your controller on the GameCube, while still allowing each player to have a private screen to choose plays, select weapons or whatever. But Nintendo is never a company to rush an idea to the market; it appears they're going to take their sweet time exploring the gameplay options of a linked GBA/GameCube (we've heard Miyamoto himself is overseeing the development of games that will use the feature). As Yasuhiro Minagawa, manager of public relations at Nintendo Co., Ltd., tells us, "The GBA/GameCube link is not something we're pushing this year at all. This year we want to sell excellent GBA and GameCube software. After we establish each of these two markets separately, then we are going to link them together, starting next year."

And from our vantage point, Nintendo seems poised to do just that. They've already got us excited for the future by announcing a brand-new Metroid adventure, as well as ports of Super Mario Bros. 3, Super Mario World, Yoshi's Island and Yoshi's Story for the GBA. Add to that list games from Capcom, Activision, Konami, Namco and Sega (including Sonic the Hedgehog Advance), and you have a rock-solid foundation of the world's best developers for upcoming software.

Lastly, Nintendo has yet to reveal plans regarding its Mobile Adapter, a device that lets you connect the GBA to a cell phone for wireless gaming. Already available in Japan, the Mobile Adapter has been getting a surprisingly lukewarm reaction from consumers, so it's no surprise Nintendo is taking a wait-and-see attitude toward the adapter in the U.S. Games like the upcoming Pokémon Crystal on the GBC were actually stripped of their cellular support due to lack of infrastructure in America. But AT&T's recent alliance with the juggernaut of Japanese cell-phone services, NTT's DoCoMo, could change Nintendo's tune in 2002. We've got our fingers crossed.

Power Off

It's been a month since we first got our GBAs, and we still hate to turn the little guy off. Editor Che Chou will second that emotion. Flying 30,000 feet somewhere over the Midwest during a recent trip, all he could think about was kicking his seat back its full two inches and playing some GBA. But he couldn't—the flight attendant on the intercom just decreed, "At this time, all passengers are to stow portable electronic devices such as laptops, Walkmans and Game Boys." As the plane hit its vertical ceiling and leveled out at cruising altitude, Che entertained thoughts of flicking on the power switch and bringing down the entire flight.

That's when it hit him, and us: the realization that the GBA is more than just an audio/visual upgrade to the Game Boy Color. It's a change in the way we think about handheld gaming. You'll see for yourself when you get your hands on it. Boot up Castlevania and then you try turning the thing off.

But until then, check out the next 13 pages for our opinions on all the launch titles, plus a look at the other carts on the way over the next few months. Oh, and watch the skies for falling passenger jets.

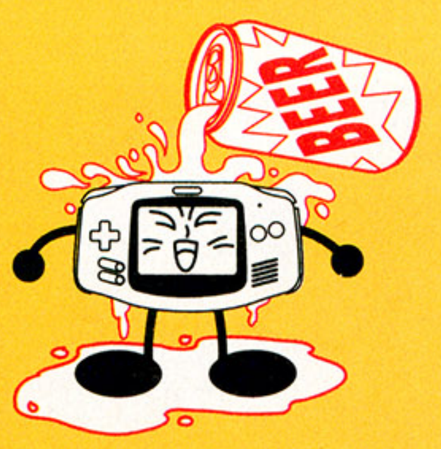
Which Color is Right for You?

Arctic (white), Glacier (see-through blue) or Indigo (purple)? One cool thing about the Glacier GBA is you can always tell which cart you have inserted without having to pull it out to check. Something else for the ladies—or really self-assured guys: A Fuchsia (pink) model will hit July 2, with other colors (and no doubt a special Pokémon edition GBA like the one out in Japan) after that.

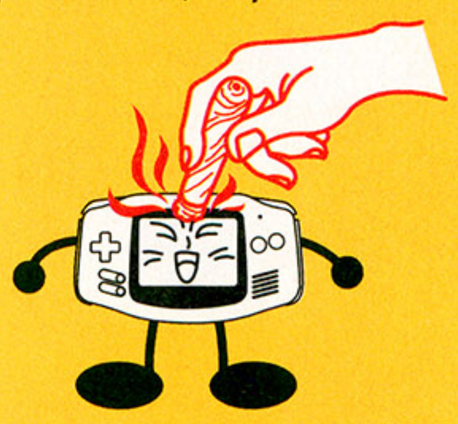
Tough Enough?

Just how much punishment can one GBA take? After dying 40 times in a row fighting the final boss in Castlevania: Circle of the Moon, that question suddenly sprang into the mind of *EGM* Executive Editor Mark MacDonald. Although he knew it would probably mean sacrificing a perfectly good GBA, Mark decided it was worth it to inform you, dear readers, of just how much punishment your new handheld can take before it goes kaput. So after gently tucking his own GBA carefully into its padded carry pouch, Mark grabbed Preview Editor Greg Sewart's unattended unit from his desk and put the system through some everyday scenarios (don't try this stuff at home, kiddies):

DROP FROM 5 FEET: Both on carpet and pavement, the GBA took its lickin' and kept on tickin', no problemo.



GET WET: We knocked over our, uh, "water," on our GBA, and waited the 15 seconds it would take to find a towel to dry it off. Br-ing! It still lives!



BURN: What if you leave your GBA by the campfire, or your dad uses it as an ashtray? Despite some blistering and melting under 30 seconds of flame, our GBA didn't catch fire and still worked just fine.

DROP (AND FLUSH) IN TOILET: Along with long lines and road trips, the can is one of those places the GBA is made for. But what happens when the ultimate nightmare comes true—you drop your GBA into the murky depths and flush? We donned the rubber gloves and, after waiting one full flush, quickly snatched out the GBA to discover it still worked! For five seconds! The next day it still only played for a few seconds before dying. But then, incredibly, three days later it worked good as new! Amazing!

STEP ON: 218-pound News Editor Chris "The Behemoth" Johnston put all his weight on our unlucky GBA—it's still OK.

So what can you do if any of this happens to you and your GBA doesn't recover intact? Try ordering replacement parts from store.nintendo.com or call 1-800-255-3700 to get help from Nintendo customer service.

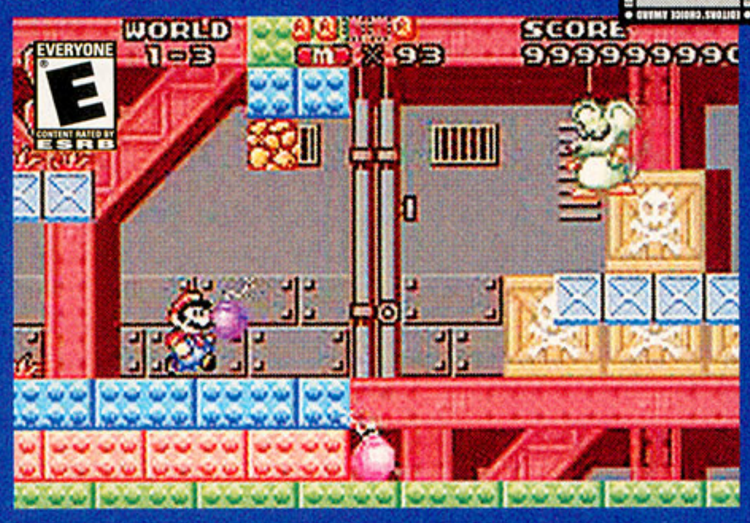
*** One Game Boy Advance was harmed in the making of this feature.**

Super Mario Advance

EGM SILVER

Publisher: **Nintendo**
Developer: **Nintendo**
Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **Multiplayer is a total blast**
Worst Feature: **Annoying, repetitive new voices**



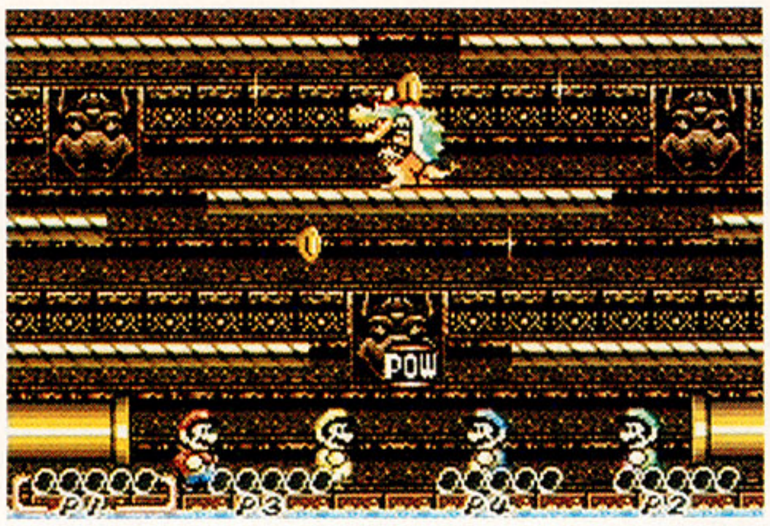
The screens on this page might look familiar. That's because Mario Advance is basically a combo of two remixed older games: Single-player is Super Mario Bros. 2 and multiplayer is like classic Mario Bros. For any youngins who've never tried Mario 2, you play as Mario, Luigi, Princess Peach or Toad, each with his/her own special abilities (jumping, speed, hovering, etc.). In all there are 20 levels—over grassy hills, ice, deserts, inside caves, pyramids and finally, Wart's lair. This time, enemies aren't killed by stomping on their heads. Instead, you jump on them, pick them up, and toss them at other enemies or off ledges. You can also grab vegetables, turtle shells, bombs or other weapons out of the ground and use those, but the most important thing you can find are the potions. These rare items open doors to subspace, an alternate version of the levels where you can dig up coins for extra lives, or find 1-ups or bonus health mushrooms. So what's new for the GBA? Some enemies and levels are slightly different, plus each stage has five special Yoshi coins to find and—after you've beaten the game—two Yoshi eggs hidden in subspace.

HUGH JASS ENEMIES

Some enemies have had growth spurts since we saw them in Mario 2:

Birdo

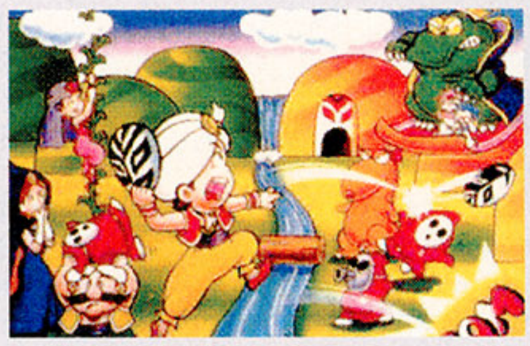
Shyguy



There's two multiplayer modes: Classic and Battle (right). Pick up your opponents and toss them, hit the floor underneath to trip them—basically screw them over any way you can.

A Tale of Two Marios

Super Mario 2 originally wasn't a Mario game at all. Nintendo thought the Japanese version of SMB2 (known here as The Lost Levels) was too difficult, so they took a game called Doki Doki Panic and altered it—which is why all the enemies and bosses were not the usual Mario characters (Goombas, Koopa, etc.). It was rereleased in Japan as Super Mario USA.



Doki Doki Panic (1987)

I spent so much time with Mario 2 back in the day that I could finish the game blindfolded. The ending was so good it nearly brought me to tears. OK, maybe I'm exaggerating slightly, but I consider Mario 2 to be one of my favorite games of all time, so it's no wonder I love Mario Advance. If you've never played it, it's one of the best 2D platform games out there. My biggest gripe with this new version? They didn't add enough. Almost all of the changes are cosmetic—there aren't any new levels. The only new areas are small parts of levels, which isn't much. **I expected—and wanted—something new.** Maybe they could've had the original Doki Doki Panic open up when you finish the game or something. The robotic Birdo is the only new boss, and it just made me want more. Finding the Yoshi eggs and getting all the coins is a bit of a challenge, but you don't uncover any extra goodies by completing those. I hear lots of people complaining about the new voices, but I played through the entire game and didn't get annoyed. Graphics are about on par with the version included on the Super NES' Super Mario All-Stars. Aside from the regular game, the Mario Bros. Battle Mode is excellent. It is unbelievably addictive and super fun with four players. I played so much multiplayer my thumbs started hurting. It's still an absolutely must-buy game in my opinion, but it's too bad they didn't use this opportunity to add more to SMB2. **Chris**

Now we're talking. Super Mario Advance is 100 percent grade-A quality, old-school classic gameplay. Like Super Mario Bros. Deluxe (GBC) before it, SMA is an improved version of an already practically perfect game...though most people would probably agree with me that SMA/Super Mario 2, although great, is the least favorite in the series. The original stuff here is preserved nicely—even down to the details like where the 'shrooms are located in the "other world." The three biggest changes are negligible (graphical tweaks, coins, etc.), annoying (**What's with these new voices?** Someone please shoot-a-me!) or flat-out awesome (four-player modes). **Shoe**

If you've never played Mario 2 before, you'll love Mario Advance: solid platforming action, with four very different playable characters, air-tight control, and the added twist of an alternate dimension for all the levels. If you've already played Mario 2 to death like me, there are a few cool additions (except the annoying voices), but nothing worth getting excited about. Nothing, that is, until you hook up a link cable for some multiplayer; that's when you'll discover (or rediscover) **the most frantic, chaotic, laugh-out-loud-fun party game-on-the-go yet**. Easy to learn but deep with advanced tricks and strategies, it's the reason you'll want to own SMA long-term. **Mark**

Visuals 8 Sound 7 Ingenuity 5 Replay 8

ChuChu Rocket!

EGM SILVER

Publisher: **Sega**
Developer: **Sonic Team**
Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **New mice with special powers**
Worst Feature: **It's hard to play with GBA controls**

What is it? Cute mice are running loose in this party/puzzle/board game. Lure them into your rocket and score points by plopping down arrows that control where the rodents go. Enemy cats abound, however, trying to make meals out of your lil' point-makers.

The addicting yet short-lived Dreamcast game comes to the bound-to-take-over-the-world GBA. Hopefully, more gamers will get to experience this brilliantly designed game this time (though it's bound to be overshadowed by the higher-profile launch tiles). ChuChu Rocket! is awesome, with four players frantically fighting over mice and avoiding (or delivering to opponent rockets) the dreaded cat bastards, who can dramatically change the outcome of a game. The GBA-exclusive special mice, who offer up new "events" that include kitten (as opposed to cat) attacks or blindness, add to an already great game—even ChuChu veterans should check out this updated version. **Make sure you play against other peeps because it's the best way to play and also because you can all be equally pissed at the GBA controls together.** You see, on the DC, you had four buttons that allow you to quickly lay down the directional arrow of your choice. This version gives you three control options, all of which are lacking in one way or another. Combine that with the GBA small screen/D-pad combo that makes laying down arrows quickly *and* accurately difficult, and it's slightly more frustrating than ChuChu's meant to be. But most folks can adapt fairly quickly, and there's always the one-player puzzles for slower-paced fun. **Shoe**

This version of ChuChu ain't much different from the DC original, but that's why I love it—it's the ultimate time-wasting game to haul on a plane or into the crapper. I reckon a lot of gamers missed out on this gem its first time around anyway. But even if you played it to death, rest assured that the few added features are nifty—namely the new events and create-a-mouse option (which makes for some X-rated fun). This is **yet another launch game that shows the GBA's power**: ChuChu's screen-filling mice army never suffers from slowdown or flicker. Control takes getting used to, but it's a small price to pay for this great li'l port. **Crispin**

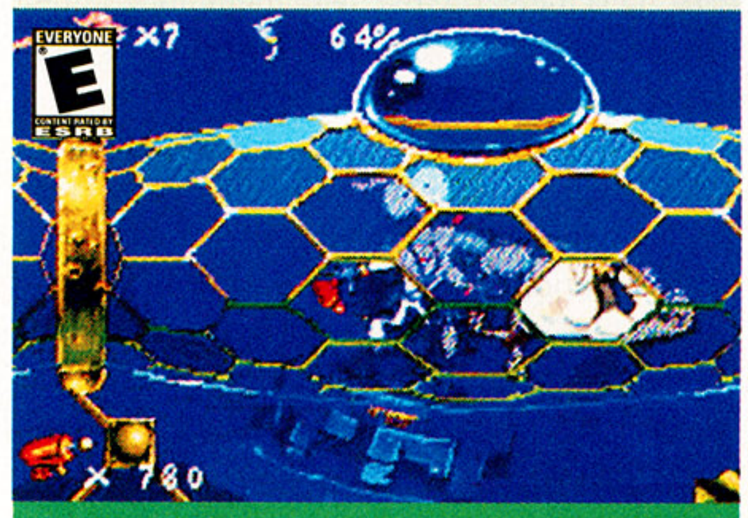
ChuChu was one of my favorite multiplayer games on the Dreamcast, and the same goes for the GBA version. The only real obstacle is figuring out which control setup works best, since you don't have the luxury of the DC controller. It really does **look almost exactly like the home version,** which is proof of the GBA's power (of course, the game's not that graphic intensive to begin with). This is almost a sequel, with lots of new features and events. Yeah the one-player game gets monotonous after a while (it's still damn hard!), but the addictive four-player game more than makes up for it—it's insane! **Chris**

Visuals 6 Sound 6 Ingenuity 7 Replay 8

Earthworm Jim

Publisher: **Majesco**
Developer: **Game Titan**
Players: **1**

Best Feature: **Classic EWJ on a handheld**
Worst Feature: **The control is broken, no save feature**



What is it? Bizarre humor and great platforming gameplay made this game a classic on the 16-bit systems back in the day. As the unwitting hero Jim, you jump, swing and shoot through enemies and obstacles on your quest to save Princess What's-Her-Name.

Being a huge fan of EWJ (the first game, anyway), the thought of a perfect GBA version gave me goosebumps. Too bad this isn't that perfect version. While they definitely got the look right, the movement and control in particular are totally broken. Ol' Jim's missing much of his animation, which has an adverse effect when you're trying to spray an area with his blaster—you end up missing a lot for some reason. The other problem is that the whip is super-touchy now. In the original EWJ games just hitting an item with any part of your whip was usually successful. Now you have to hit everything with the very tip of it in order to make contact. It makes swinging across chasms and even some boss fights a crapshoot at best. What's worse, there's no sort of battery or password save feature to be found. While that was forgivable years ago when EWJ was a full-fledged console game, as a handheld game it would be nice to be able to save and turn off your GBA whenever you have to. Oh, and the music...blah. One of the most impressive parts of the original game was the awesome collection of sound effects and music. That's all been reduced to tinny renditions of the tunes and a few garbled voice samples. When you look at a game like Rayman on the GBA, it's easy to see **there's just no excuse for this poorly programmed port.** **Greg**

Let's hear it for ports! Seriously, playing classic action games like Earthworm Jim on a handheld is a refreshing break from the now-standard 3D console fare. EWJ on the GBA is almost identical to the Super NES/Genesis versions, which is **nice, except for the fact that you have to cap off the game in one sitting**. This most notably sucks when you're not sitting at home for a few hours straight with nothing else to do, and if you are, you shouldn't be playing a portable, anyway. Someone in development obviously didn't think that whole thing through, so those of you who buy a GBA for the ride to school or work may want to axe it from your list. **Jonathan**

Rule number one when you're porting a home game to a portable system: add a save feature! Without it, EWJ's portability has been killed. Even something like a "hot save" where you can only continue from a save once or even a password would've been nice. If, for some reason, you have to shut the power off, you have to start *all over*. Aside from that, it's **an OK port of the original.** The animation's been downgraded a bit from the Genesis version (one of its best features), the whip isn't as user-friendly, and the sound effects and music are pretty scratchy. Since you have to beat it in one go, you may as well just play the home version if ya got it. **Chris**

Visuals 6 Sound 4 Ingenuity 5 Replay 5

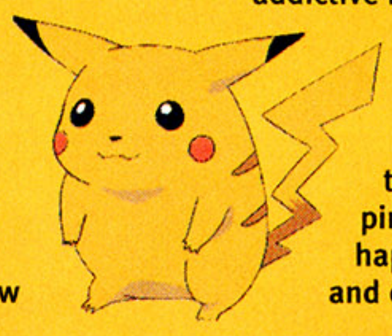
Oldies But Goodies

While you're deciding which GBA titles you're going to pick up at launch, don't forget Nintendo's new handheld is still 100 percent compatible with hundreds and hundreds of older Game Boy and Game Boy Color titles already out there. But with so many to choose from, finding the good games isn't easy; that's where we come in. Here are our picks of the best games from the last 10 years' worth of Game Boy:

Pokémon

There are two types of people in this world: those who love Pokémon, and those who want to see them shoved into a blender set on pureé.

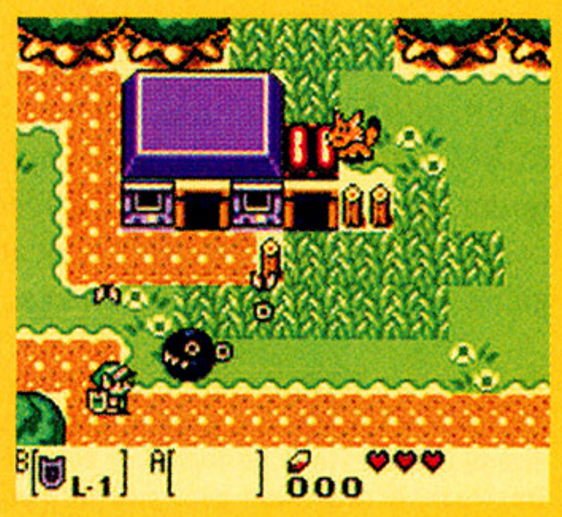
For the hardcore, cartoon-watchin', trading-card game-collectin', Pikachu underoo-wearin' avowed Poké-playah, nothing tops the "true" games: Pokémon Red, Blue and Yellow and the sequels, Gold and Silver. All of these titles play like simple RPGs: You travel from town to town, with dungeons between, fighting and collecting monsters, items and new abilities for your ever-growing roster of domesticated Pokémon. These games may seem strictly for the tykes, but honestly, there is enough to them that any open-minded person who enjoys a good video game can get hooked.



But even if you'd rather have bamboo shoved under your fingernails than spend 50+ hours gathering and training a bunch of cutesy mutated stuffed animals, there are two great GBC Pokémon games you should own. Honest. Pokémon Puzzle Challenge is really just an updated version of Tetris Attack, an awesome puzzle game so addictive it was briefly banned at the *EGM* offices to make sure the magazine would get out on time. Likewise, Pokémon Pinball is easily the best handheld game of pinball out there—it just happens to feature Pikachu and company.

The Legend of Zelda

Nintendo hasn't said anything yet about a new GBA Zelda game, but that's all right—two great new Game Boy Color Zeldas (Oracle of Seasons and Oracle of Ages) just came out this month! In case you missed our huge preview last issue (see what happens when you miss a month? Shame on you!) here's the deal: Both games look similar, but they are actually two completely separate quests, with different dungeons, puzzles and characters unique to each of them. The cool part is both games give you passwords you can use in the other to get items and



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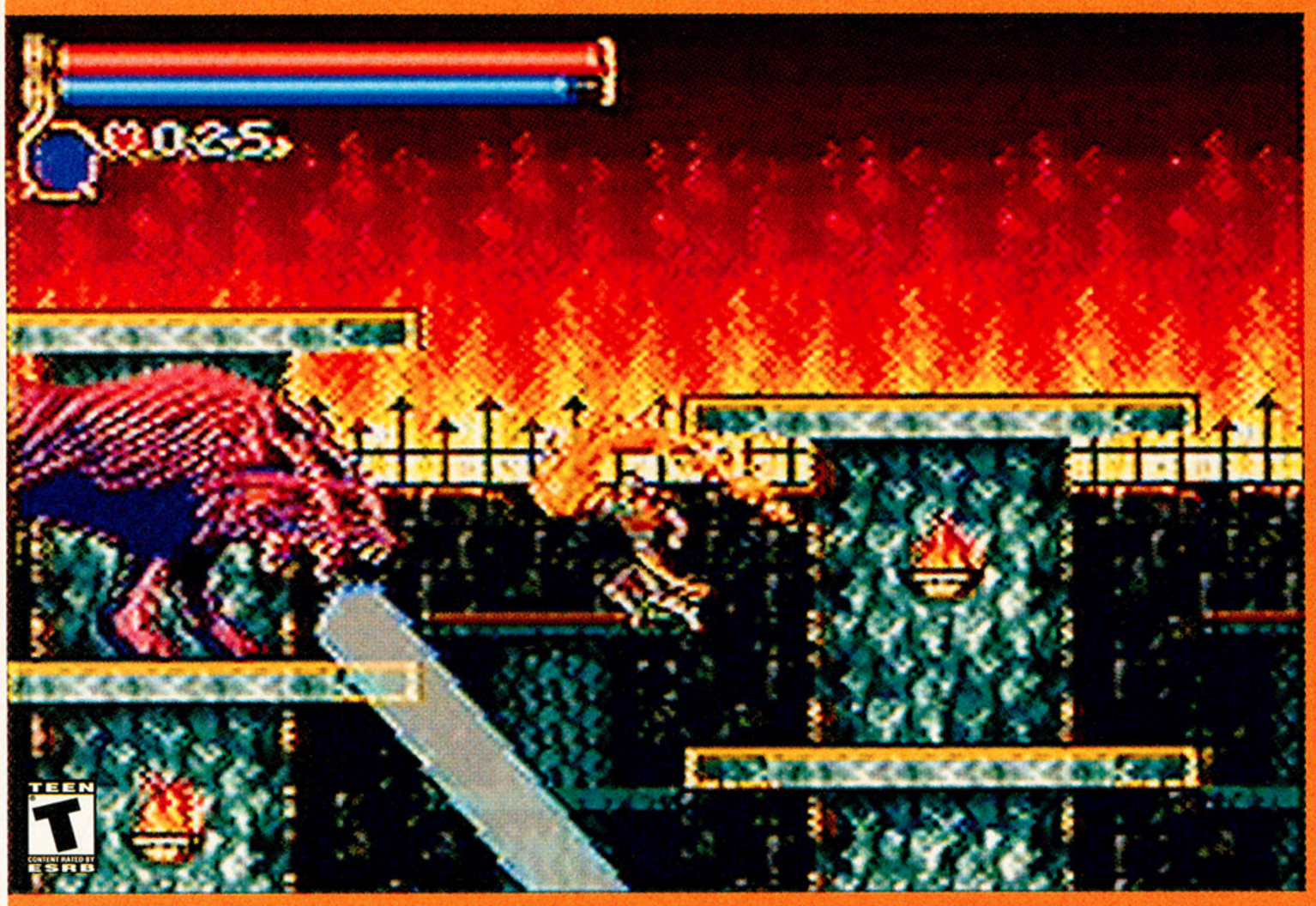
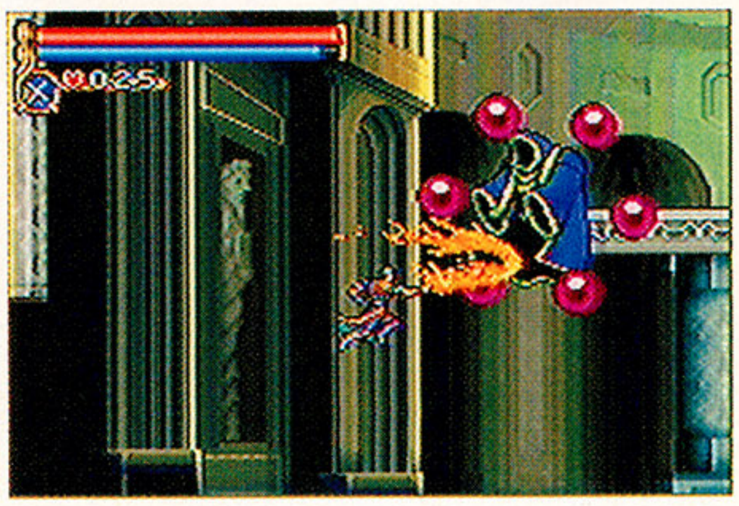
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon



Publisher: **Konami**
Developer: **KCE Kobe**
Players: **1**

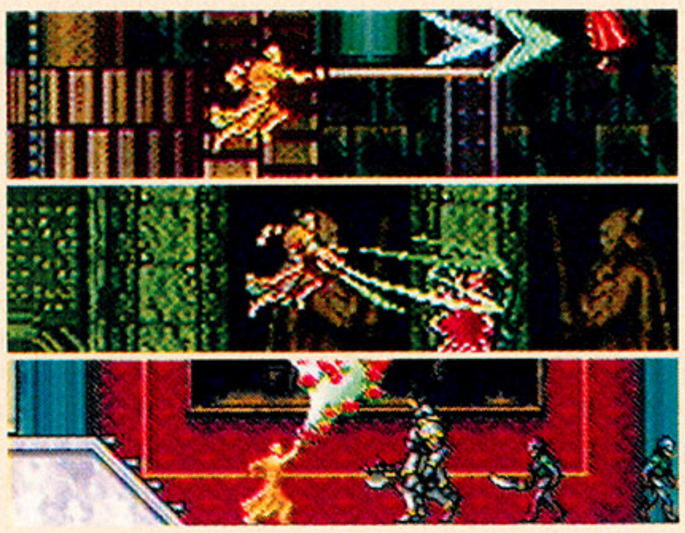
Best Feature: **Deep gameplay and magic system**
Worst Feature: **The graphics are a little too dark**

When we prayed to the gaming gods for another Castlevania as good as Symphony of the Night, who knew our prayers would be answered? Furthermore, who could've guessed it would come to us in the form of a tiny Game Boy Advance cart? CotM brings new blood to the Castlevania series with Nathan Graves, an apprentice who has to save his master from the resurrected evil of Dracula and his undead minions. Like all vampire killers, Nathan's weapon of choice is a whip. Explore Dracula's logic-defying palace, level up your stats, and equip items dropped by vanquished monsters. If it all sounds familiar, yes, it's a lot like Symphony of the Night but thankfully, CotM is different enough to emerge from the shadow of that PS classic. Nathan must combine special action and attribute cards in order to gain magical powers. There are 10 cards in each category, for a total of—get this—100 different variations. CotM also gives a nod to the old school by featuring remixed tunes from previous Castlevanias. With COTM, KCE Kobe, the same developers who worked on the 3D Castlevanias, bring the series back on track.



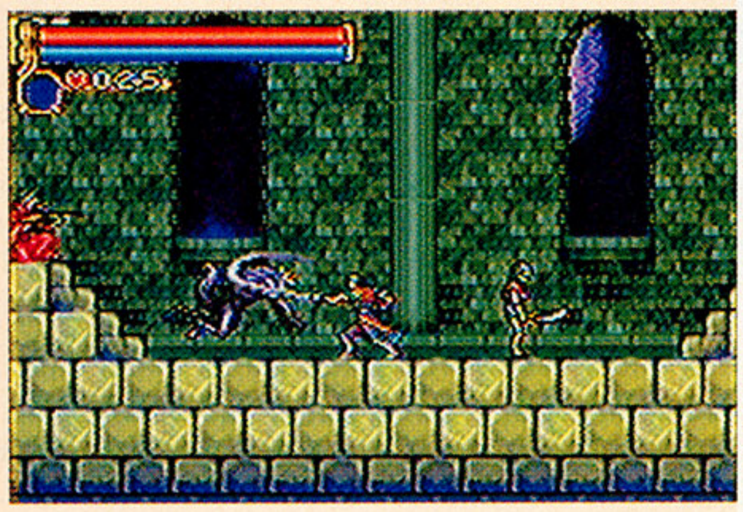
DSS COMBO SYSTEM

It's In The Cards



There's no doubt about it, Nathan's a whip-and-chains kinda guy. But sometimes, he needs that extra sting in his snap, and that's where the DSS card combo system comes in handy. By combining action cards with attribute cards, ol' Nate can conjure up 10 variations just for whip-enhancing abilities alone. With the "Mars" card, Nathan can use 10 different kinds of swords, depending on the combo, not to mention cards that give you projectile attacks, familiars, summons and explosives too. Kabooooshh!

This is one of the most replayable Castlevanias yet: At around 95 percent into the game, players find a *tough* optional area that requires straight-up old-school skills to finish. And after you beat Dracula, check out one of the four new modes you can open.



When I finally forced myself to put down Circle of the Moon in order to play some of the other GBA launch games, it was 25 hours and many sleepless nights later. The fact that I was spending all this time, at home, baking under a lamp for a handheld game simply blew my mind. The knee-jerk thing to do with CotM is to see how it stacks up with Symphony of the Night, but that just wouldn't be fair. Sure, there's a lot of resemblance, but CotM and SotN overlap in each other's successes and failures. Whereas SotN became incredibly easy as Alucard became more powerful, **CotM maintains a challenge and consistency throughout**. Intrinsic to how powerful you are is the card combo system. To keep things balanced, some of the more wicked cards are extremely difficult to find. My one gripe with this system is that despite being able to choose from 100 different combinations, only a dozen of them are ever crucial to your quest. Nothing major, but definitely some wasted potential there. Visually, CotM comes surprisingly close to the quality found in SotN. Some people find the graphics to be exceptionally dark, but it didn't really bother me. Excellent sound has always been an important factor to the series and CotM holds up exceptionally well; be sure to use headphones for the full effect. CotM is an incredibly hardcore game, and probably the best handheld title, outside of Tetris, I've ever played. **Che**

As far as I'm concerned, this is **the best reason to own a GBA so far**. Graphically it's a bit dark and hard to see, but with a good light source you can fully appreciate the crisp and very detailed visuals. Some really fun—and very tough—bosses and a huge castle to explore (with enough items, secrets and assorted goodies to make it worth your while) guarantee you'll get your money's worth. The DSS card system deepens the gameplay, adding so many cool power-ups that different gamers can play the game according to their own tastes. Incredible tunes and sounds too—Castlevania will have you hauling your GBA around everywhere like a doting mother. **Mark**

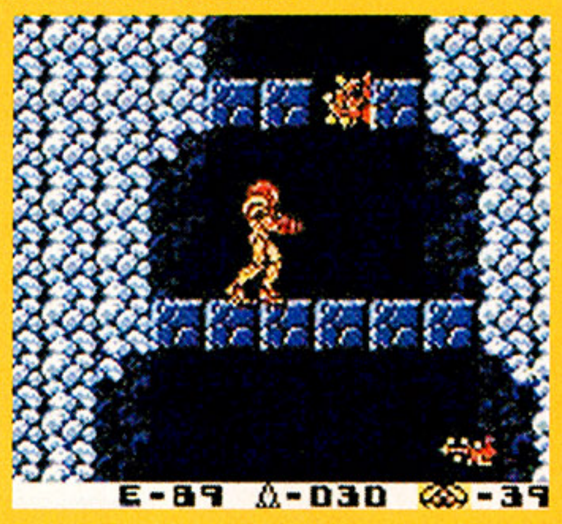
Son of a bat, this game is cool. Konami's taken the best parts of SotN and Dracula X, merged them on the GBA, and added a metric ton of new abilities via a card-collection system. I'll leave it to Che and Mark to tell you why **you need this game like Dracula needs the ol' AB positive**, but now let me explain why it didn't get a "10." The items, in amount and usefulness, are totally unsuited to the difficulty of the game, which is pretty well off the charts (enjoy the battle arena). When you've got 300 hit points, a bottle that refills 20 isn't even worth the time it takes to use it. Barring the items and weak story, though, CotM is a masterpiece of 2D gaming. **Jonathan**

Visuals 8 Sound 9 Ingenuity 8 Replay 9

open other secrets. And if you're still hungry for more Zelda, there's always the awesome classic Link's Awakening DX.

Metroid II
Return of Samus

What better way to kill time waiting for Samus' upcoming all-new GBA adventure than a trip down memory lane via this classic cart? Metroid II uses the same tried-and-true controls of the NES and Super NES games, with you jumping, shooting and rolling through the underground caves of planet SR388 once again, this time in your search to hunt and destroy each of 39 Metroid aliens. The graphics aren't so hot—this was made for the original Game Boy and



never received a proper color update—but the gameplay will give any fan of the series that warm-'n'-fuzzy feeling. While searching the giant maze for metroids (each one of which is like a mini-boss in itself) you'll find energy tanks, new weapons, missiles, secret rooms and items for new abilities. Plus you can finally fill in the story gap between Metroid and Super Metroid yourself.

Donkey Kong

Not to be mistaken with Donkey Kong Country or any of the Donkey Kong Land games, Donkey Kong is more like the classic arcade game, but brilliantly updated. That means platforms, ladders, barrel jumping, conveyor belts and hammers, but also new moves (you can duck, swim, grab and throw items), boss battles, and a huge number of deviously

design puzzle-like levels you need to figure out in order to progress. The colors may seem simple by GBA standards, but the gameplay is up to any of the new titles out there.

Metal Gear Solid

OK, graphically the GBC version of Metal Gear may look closer to the original 8-bit NES game, but, much to our surprise, Konami did an awesome

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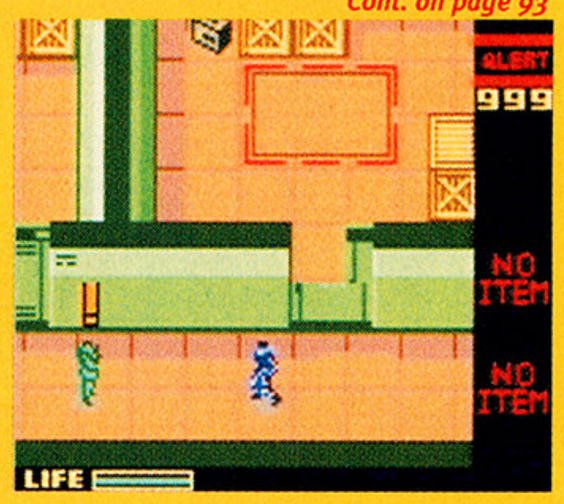


Super Dodge Ball

Publisher: **Atlus**
Developer: **Atlus**
Players: **1-2**

Best Feature: **Awesome multiplayer action**
Worst Feature: **Single-player is easily mastered**

What is it? Forget kickboxing, wrestling or the UFC—this is the real sport of the future. Assemble your team and hit the court, using a combination of special attacks, throws, passing and jumping to crush opponents across the globe and take the number-one spot.

I have fond memories, not of Super Dodge Ball for the old Nintendo 8-bit, but of the real thing. Nothing was more satisfying than taking that big red ball and force-feeding it to classmates on the other side of that halfcourt line. A good line-drive to the noggin was nigh-unstoppable, and so it is with extreme pleasure that I dispatch link-cabled friend after friend with Super Dodge Ball Advance. SDBA offers you 13 teams to choose from (pick the Americans—they kick everyone else's ass), with each of the four players per team possessing his or her own special throws. Control is excellent, and for such a simple premise, there's a surprising amount of technique. From passing a super-throw to any of the out-of-ring team members for a behind-the-back throw, to simply catching your opponent's assault, there's a lot to learn as you improve your skills. One of the best parts of the game is the multiplayer: There's plenty of smack-talk to be had, and the game never gets old with a link-up. Sadly, there are moments where the game literally freezes ("lag" would be a poor term here) as data is transferred through the link-cable, occasionally interrupting what would otherwise be a flawless experience. The single-player mode is fine, but is easily beaten in no time at all. Still **easily one of the best GBA launch titles**. **Milkman**

In today's politically correct world, assaulting others with a hailstorm of large, inflatable rubber balls might be considered a crime, but not in this game. Super Dodge Ball's one of those games you buy for one of two reasons: You loved the old 8-bit game, or you've already played the major GBA games and need something more. It's a good title, but **it doesn't hold my interest.** It's very easy to dominate the computer after playing once or twice. Two-player link-up would've been fun if not for the occasional lag, ruining that experience almost entirely (why was this not ironed out?). If it didn't lag up and had a four-player mode, it would've fared much better. **Chris**

Let's forget for a sec that this game is based on the ludicrous premise of international dodge-ball competition. The point is, Super Dodge Ball is fun. **Once you figure out the button combinations, the game packs a surprising amount of technique**—especially when you master the method of sending your little guys forward for quick-pass combo attacks. I never really bothered with the loads of team-positioning and strategy options, but they're here if you want something more than just a twitch experience. Track down someone with another copy, too—the two-player game is really the best thing here. Just turn down the freaking music. **Crispin**

Visuals 6 Sound 4 Ingenuity 7 Replay 7

Rayman Advance

Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
Developer: **Jester**
Players: **1**

Best Feature: **Colorful, plump graphics**
Worst Feature: **Skimpy and uninspired sound**

What is it? Rayman's got to restore balance to the world by stopping Mr. Dark's evil schemes. Collect electoons to restore the Great Protoon and make the world peaceful again. This game offers classic side-scroller action, lots of strange worlds to explore, and a sense of humor.

Once upon a time there was a Rayman who was a virtual nobody in the world of platform games. But ever since he debuted back in 1996, our half-there hero has experienced a nonstop tripped-out whirlwind of success, making himself a rare trump card in the fickle gaming world. Rayman has made leap after bounding leap from the PC to GBC, N64, PS, DC, PS2 and now GBA, and he doesn't show any signs of slowing. **Rayman Advance out-and-out nails the GBA full on** with big, bold and beautiful visuals, music that reflects the whimsical yet strangely funky Rayman style, and of course, clever puzzle platform gameplay. The designers at Jester really show off the GBA's power with a perfect combination of exhilarating colors and plump, detailed, and easy-to-see backgrounds and characters. It's a pleasure being able to actually see what's happening on a hand-held screen, even in low light—a huge plus for someone who's been frustrated time and again with shoddy light problems. Bad points are few: The sound effects are skimpy and uninspired, and some may argue the game goes too abruptly from easy to super hard. But overall, you get the feeling the designers actually picked their brains a bit when making this game for GBA. Beautiful visuals plus kick-booty side-scroller action make this a must-have. **Jeanne**

One look at this game in motion and you see just how powerful the GBA really is. **This game is gorgeous!** The only minor thing wrong is that it seems a little too zoomed in: Rayman's got a lot of areas where even just slightly more information on screen would've been a big help (like the many blind jumps). Aside from that, it looks, plays and sounds exactly like the home game. In a few levels I noticed touches of slowdown, but nothing too distracting. As much as I liked Rayman 2, it'd be nice to sometime in the future see Ubi Soft do a new 2D Rayman game just to see what they could do with it now. A strong platformer that's visually stunning. **Chris**

I must admit I'm pretty impressed. Outside of the music, this is a pretty spot-on port of the original Rayman game. All of the classic platforming action has been retained, but with a zoomed-in camera so that you can clearly see our disjointed hero with all his cool moves and fluid animation. This game is solid, no question. The problem, though, is that the camera's scaled in a little too much. You can't see a lot of what's happening around Rayman, and because of that there are more leaps of faith required than I'm really comfortable with. Nonetheless, **you won't find any better run-'n'- jump action outside of Mario Advance**. **Greg**

Visuals 8 Sound 7 Ingenuity 6 Replay 6

Army Man Advance

Publisher: **3DO**

Developer: **DC Studios**

Players: **1**

Best Feature: **Colorful environments**

Worst Feature: **Clumsy controls**

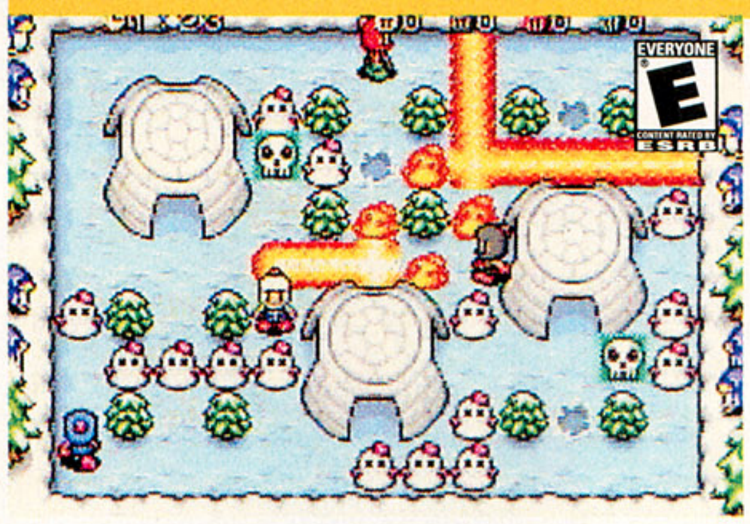
What is it?

What platform would be complete without an army of...well, Army Men games. In this latest chapter of the prolific saga, Plastro's back and kicking it old school. Leave it up to party crashers Sarge and Vikki to shut things down on the Tan Army, 3DO style. AMA harkens back to the 8-bit shooter days, offering up large character sprites, a top-down perspective and plenty of twitch gameplay. Explore 17 areas and even more sub-levels; go forth, and blow thine tiny foes to even smaller bits.

You'd think the Army Men franchise would feel perfectly at home on the GBA, but it isn't so with Army Men Advance. Despite looking somewhat like 2D heavy-hitters of yesteryear Commandos, Ikari Warriors and Front Line, AMA ultimately fails to live up to their legacy. I mean, what the heck went wrong? This game had the potential to be a tight little 2D shooter that kicks off a long line of sequels, all featuring the same impeccable gameplay mechanics. But as it is, we hope 3DO scraps this engine and starts something from the ground up with their next Army Men game on the GBA. The problem here isn't the game's graphics and sound (even if they're unextraordinary at best). It's the gameplay, and to a certain extent, the controls. **Moving and shooting your enemies is a total chore most of the time.** What's worse, it's also an adventure game where you have to find objects and open doors in a tedious puzzle-like manner. AMA could have been a frantic, balls-out shooter in the grand tradition; but instead, it's just another middle-of-the-road Army Men game. **Che**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	6	5	3

Bomberman Tournament



Publisher: **Activision**

Developer: **Hudson**

Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **A portable multiplayer Bomberman**

Worst Feature: **Slow combat**

What is it?

Cross Pokémon and Zelda with the bomb-blastin' action of Hudson's popular Bomberman series and you've got Bomberman Tournament. Collect and train Karabons to do your bidding while setting bombs for unwitting enemies and to uncover hidden areas underneath obstacles. Or, if multiplayer gaming's more your speed, hook up with up to four players to blast each other off a variety of boards, ranging from the good ol' standard Bomberman stage to more futuristic ones.

Activision was smart when they named this Tournament instead of Adventure. Seasoned Bomberman fans already know that **the *real* meat of this game is Battle Mode**. Blowing your friends into smithereens is as addictive as ever, benefitting greatly from one-cartridge multiplayer. Lay down bombs, destroy obstacles and opponents, and collect as many power-ups as possible—you can't get more old school than that! The revenge option is also included, where losing players can sit on the sidelines and toss bombs at the survivors—great fun. Unfortunately, the main game, the one-player Quest Mode, isn't so good. Destroying bushes with bombs to get items slows it down (you have to wait a few seconds for some bombs to explode). Combat between Karabons—Pokémon-type creatures—is rudimentary. Tactics are decided pre-fight (attack/defend/special) and you just watch. It's fun to experiment with the different bombs, but you'll probably end up mainly using one or two types. In the end, the quest is dry, but multiplayer is plenty fun. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	5	7

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

Publisher: **Majesco**

Developer: **Majesco**

Players: **1**

Best Feature: **Smooth animation**

Worst Feature: **Ugly, muddy graphics**

What is it?

The original Pitfall is still as big a part of gaming history as Pac-Man and Pole Position, but this version dates back to the days of the 16-bit Genesis and Super Nintendo. You'll have to leap and swing through all varieties of temples and (surprise) forests to satisfy your archaeology itch. Ultimately, you'll face-off against the evil Mayan warrior spirit, who has taken Pitfall Harry (your father, played by Sean Connery) hostage. OK, all except the Sean Connery part.

The Mayan Adventure was a mediocre game when it debuted six years ago on the Super NES, and sadly, time has not been kind—by today's standards, it's virtually unplayable. **The levels are confusing, the controls are sloppy, and the boss fights are tedious**. Worse still, the game's color palette is extremely dark and muddy; on a screen that isn't backlit, that translates to platforms which are nearly impossible to see! Enemies are often the same color as the backdrops, so they frequently dissolve into the screen. Why did you fall off that rope? Because a brown rat bit you. Can't see it? Take your GBA out into the sunlight and look very carefully (if you're lucky, you might be able to make out its eyes). As if this wasn't bad enough, the developers have elected not to implement a password system, so you have to play this sucker straight through. This package has only one redeeming feature: The original Atari 2600 Pitfall! game can be unlocked and played. No doubt about it, that ancient Activision program is leagues better than this utterly lame remake. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
2	4	3	2

Pinobee: Wings of Adventure

Publisher: **Activision**

Developer: **Artoon**

Players: **1**

Best Feature: **Huge, beautifully detailed levels**

Worst Feature: **It's over too quickly**

What is it?

Pinobee's got a problem: He's a robotic bee without a heart. See, his creator Grandpa Bee was about to install one when he was kidnapped. Now, Pinobee must travel through dangerous territory in this side-scrolling adventure so he can get that heart once and for all. The storyline of the game changes depending on where you go and what you do, giving you a choice of eight different endings. Collect power-up icons and trade with friends to upgrade your lil' guy.

After playing Pinobee, you can tell Artoon is made up of ex-Sonic Team staff. The levels are **very reminiscent of old-school 2D Sonic.** But instead of speed, this lil' robotic bee has dash attacks, which you can use to kill enemies and reach places a normal jump wouldn't get you. Eventually Pinobee is so powered-up—by finding fairies within the levels—that he can buzz all around the screen with ease. When you've finished a level, you get to take a peek into his diary, which gives you a few hints on how to uncover new areas and get the other endings in the game. The richly detailed levels can be huge if you take the time to explore them, but it's also easy to just buzz through them. From start to finish, I was able to get through the game in an hour and a half the first time I picked it up. In the game's 20 levels there's maybe three bosses, all beaten fairly easily, but there could've been more. You do get a cool power-up feature where you collect icons (or trade them with a friend) to gain special abilities, such as increased offensive power. It's good but short. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	7	5

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

EGM SILVER EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD

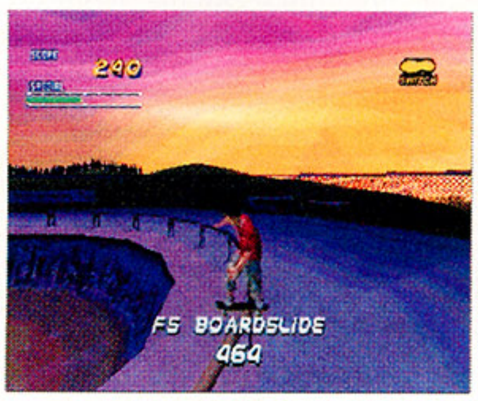
Publisher: **Activision**
Developer: **Vicarious Visions**
Players: **1**

Best Feature: **The classic THPS gameplay**
Worst Feature: **Perspective can mess with your eyes**

Your character in the stellar GBA launch title Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 is tiny—about the size of your fingernail—but he sure is a high-tech little guy. "The biggest visual difference between THPS2 GBA and other current GBA games is the real-time 3D engine used for the skater," says Karthik Bala, CEO of developer Vicarious Visions. "It allows us to render animation frames on the fly instead of storing prerendered sprites. This gives us really smooth animation and gameplay that feels identical to the PSX game—all running at 60 frames per second."

And your slickly animated skater ain't the only thing that makes THPS2 such a GBA overachiever. The levels, though seen from a top-down, isometric perspective, are handled in 3D by the game. In other words, all the rails, half-pipes and gaps have 3D data associated with them, so your skater interacts with them in the same way he does in the PlayStation original. Long story short: Vicarious Visions has set out to re-create the 3D experience of the PS1 game as closely as possible on the 2D GBA hardware. And as an extra added bonus, they even put in the blood.

You get the familiar roster of skaters and six levels in all: the hangar, school, France, New York and Skate Street parks from THPS2, as well as the warehouse level of the first game (oh, and you might find a secret stage crammed in here, too). The layout of these parks is mostly the same as in the PlayStation games, although some of the secret areas have been nixed. Unfortunately, the multiplayer and park editor modes didn't make it into this version, either. Activision tells us we might see them next time. Hmmm, does that mean a sequel is in the works?



Close call: OK, so maybe the PS1 (left) and GBA (right) versions of THPS2 don't look so much alike that you'd ever confuse the two, but squint your eyes and dare to compare these shots anyway. Not bad for a handheld system, huh?

Lay of the Hand: Wonder how you'll unleash sick tricks with the GBA's limited button layout? Have a look-see...

Iridion may pack a wowie-zowie 3D engine, and Advance GTA certainly looks snazzy, but neither tops THPS2 as **the most visually stunning, technically superb launch title for Nintendo's new handheld**. Squint your eyes just right and this thing looks like the PlayStation version—except with a smoother framerate. Wait 'til you see the game in motion: The playfield scrolls with amazing fluidity. Your little skater can bust out just about all the tricks—complete with every frame of animation—from the PS1 original. Best of all, this GBA version captures to near perfection the free-form gameplay that makes the series so dang fun. Just be warned: You Pro Skater pros are probably going to struggle with the control for a while at first. Using the shoulder buttons for kick tricks and grabs is kinda tricky, but it's really the only workable config considering the GBA's shortage of buttons. The levels themselves are surprisingly good isometric adaptations of the PS1 originals. I will say I prefer the smaller skate-park stages. They offer better lines and are more faithful to the PS1 levels (right down to many of the hidden areas). In the more sprawling levels, unfortunately, the top-down perspective can make things confusing. It's sometimes hard to judge the distance between gaps or tell the difference between the ground and a rooftop in the foreground. Just practice a bit in Free Skate and you'll overcome these little problems. **Crispin**

THPS2 can do no wrong—the damn thing is golden on every system it touches. If shrinking several detailed 3D environments from THPS1 and 2 weren't amazing enough, Vicarious Visions also did a fine job of re-creating the trademark gameplay (not every trick is possible though). But don't wet your pants just yet; the larger levels are paired down somewhat, plus a few secret areas are absent. In addition, due to space constraints, bigger objects (like the half-pipes) become transparent when your skater disappears behind them. It's a little confusing but a small price to pay given the great overall package. **When you buy your GBA, pick up THPS2 as well. Dean**

This is an unbelievable handheld version of THPS2. The stages are all very similar to their PS big brothers, and all the moves and animation you could want have been retained in the transition from full-3D gameplay to the isometric view on the GBA. But no matter how impressive the feat is, it doesn't change the fact that **the awesome control scheme loses something in the translation**. In this view and with this button layout, the game is tremendously awkward at first. If you're patient enough to stick with it there's a lot to love about THPS2 on the GBA, but the key word is patience. I foresee a lot of people getting frustrated with this game. **Greg**

Visuals 9 Sound 8 Ingenuity 7 Replay 9

Iridion 3D

Publisher: **Majesco**
Developer: **Shin'en**
Players: **1**

Best Feature: **Amazing 3D visuals**
Worst Feature: **Simplistic, repetitive gameplay**

What is it? **You've heard this tune: Earth's under attack and it's up to a lone pilot to save it from yada, yada, yada. The draw: Iridion is a full-on 3D shooter—think Afterburner with space levels. You also get power-ups in the form of pods that charge up your shot, double it, etc.**

Do yourself a favor before you flip on the power to this game: Tear off a foot of duct tape and batten down the fire button. Iridion is one of those mindless never-stop-shooting shooters in which you don't gotta worry much about weapon upgrades or strategy. The power-up system here is bare-bones—it's hard to tell the difference between shot types. Each of the seven levels spits out repetitive waves of enemies, in the same patterns. The game just becomes a tiring exercise in swiveling the pad counter-clockwise to avoid baddies 'til your thumb's numb. And what's up with the difficulty curve? Level three's easier than the first stage! **The whole thing feels like Star Fox meets an Amiga demo.** But—kee-ripes, man!—does this game look good. Iridion's 3D engine throws loads of scaling sprites at you, and the tunnels and scrolling terrain blow by with amazing fluidity. Planetside levels gradually shift from day to night. Distant planets gradually grow larger as you whoosh toward them in space. And bosses come alive with lots of animated gizmos. The 3D perspective does make it hard to aim at distant targets, and many enemies score cheap hits because it's tough to see how far they are into the background. But if you want a nice bit of flash to show off the GBA's power to your pals, Iridion is all yours. **Crispin**

Arcade shooters can come and go, and this one can definitely go. While Iridion is visually impressive, with smooth 3D-ness flying at you all over the screen, the gameplay is just so blah and frustrating. The first rule of being a shooter is you need an interesting hook, usually with the power-ups. The power-ups in Iridion...they do nothing! They all behave the same, and the game doesn't even offer a screen-clearing bomb attack. The second rule of being a shooter is, you have to *be a shooter*. It's hard to line up your targets in Iridion, so I often just avoided things rather than shooting them. **Hmm...do we have a new genre here? The "avoider"?** **Shoe**

Wow...what a beautiful technical demo! **Iridion is just *loaded* with style**—its visual effects are absolutely astonishing. The environments are meticulously detailed, the enemies are masterfully constructed, and the 3D scrolling effect has been flawlessly executed. With such incredible looks going for it, it's really too bad that the game itself isn't much fun to play. The enemy AI is incredibly stupid; opposing bots all fly in set patterns that are easy to discern and take advantage of. Another setback is the ship's lack of interaction with the environment; sometimes you feel as if you're playing on top of painted backgrounds. Good, but not great. **Ethan**

Visuals 9 Sound 6 Ingenuity 5 Replay 5

F-Zero Maximum Velocity

Publisher: **Nintendo**
Developer: **Nintendo**
Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **Super-fast speed**
Worst Feature: **Finger-cramping controls**

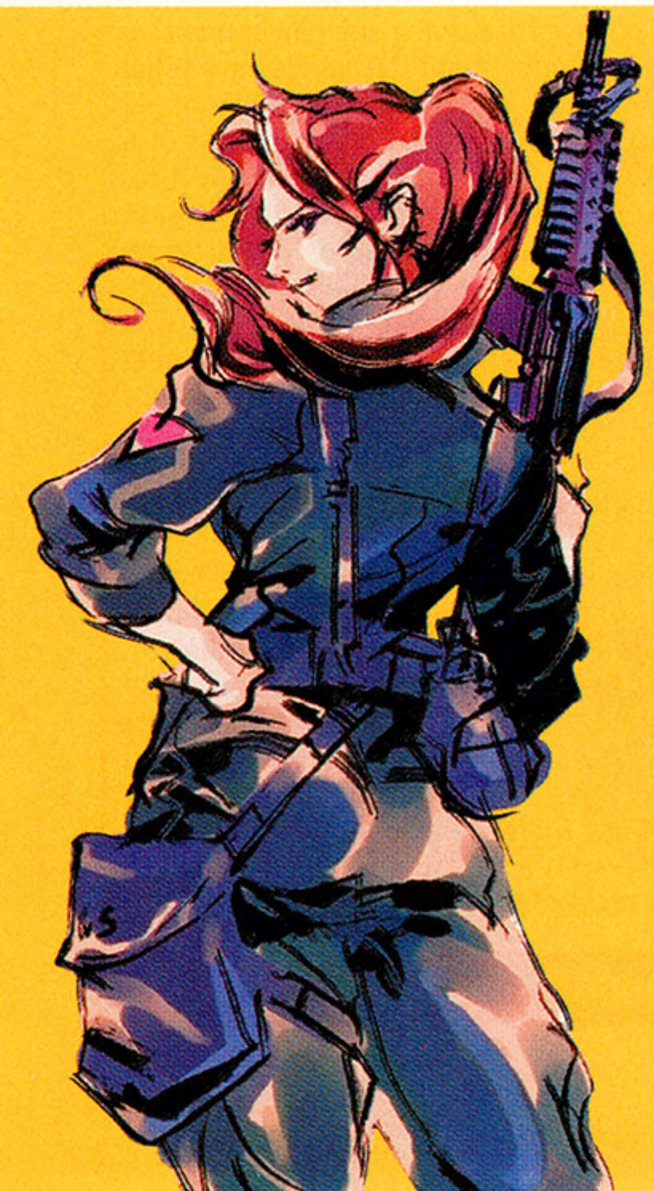
What is it? **The original futuristic hovercraft racer is back in pocket form. F-Zero Maximum Velocity aims to give GBA owners an upgraded taste of the SNES classic. Race along fast, dangerous tracks suspended hundreds of feet above the earth's surface.**

I'm new to F-Zero so I can't offer any nostalgic gobildy gook about the Super NES version. To me it's a simple racer that skates the border of fun and frustration so closely that I often felt like launching my GBA against the wall. The problems stem from the inability of certain vehicles to hug the road. Crafts with a "C" rating for balance are a real handful. Considering how much it hurts to touch the walls, the drifting is a bit excessive. On the other hand, **with practice and patience it becomes addictive...but never easy**. Two-player linked is fun, and it's nice you don't need two copies. Still, I think F-Zero is best suited for fans of WipeOut-style racing only. **Dean**

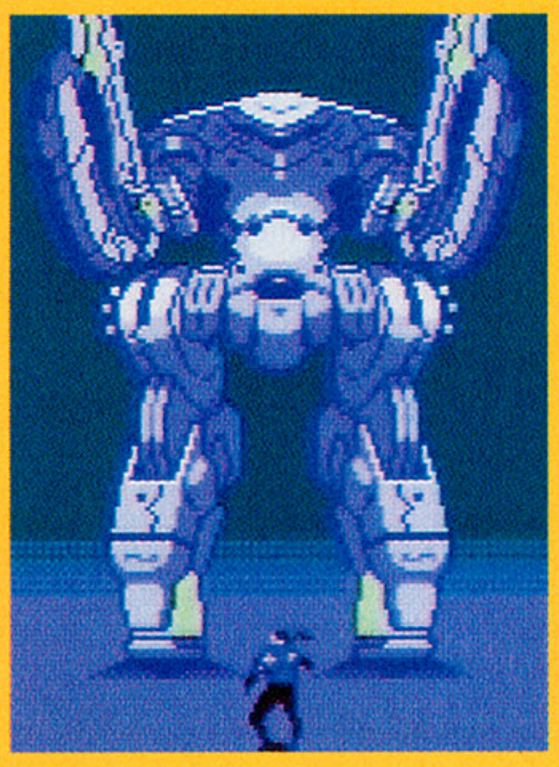
A lot has happened to the racing genre since the original F-Zero hit the Super NES, but the GBA version proves that you don't need karts or combat to make a good racer nowadays. Fans of the old game should pretty much forget everything they know about the controls—this one's a lot more slippery. Not worse though, it's just different. **It still has that incredible feeling of speed**, and very similar cars to the SNES title. You won't get stuck in the dust, either; even a last-place position can be turned into a third-place finish by a skilled driver. It's not the most innovative GBA effort, but F-Zero is good nostalgic fun for anyone with enough sunlight to play it. **Jonathan**

Visuals 8 Sound 7 Ingenuity 6 Replay 8

I was prepared for a game on par with the classic Super NES version of F-Zero, but Nintendo delivered a lot more. The graphics are every bit as good, only now there's extra unlockable hovercrafts and all-new tracks. The controls are a little different, too: Now your craft wants to slide more around every turn, so you have to feather the gas a lot to get around each course. Otherwise this is the same game: You drive really fast around hover-tracks bordered by hazardous electric walls and generally littered with all sorts of nasty barriers and traps. Keeping your power up is key to staying at top speed and surviving a chance encounter with a rival driver or a wall. Take too much damage and your craft explodes, handily ending your race. Here's my problem with F-Zero (come on, you knew there'd be at least one): Using the shoulder buttons to drag one side or another of your craft around the turns is an integral part of mastering the game. The problem is the tiny GBA makes it very uncomfortable for anyone with big hands to play for very long—they get sore holding your fingers on the shoulder buttons. If you're willing to take the pain or you have little girly-hands like Jonathan, don't worry about my singular complaint. If you're into racing games at all, then **F-Zero should be at the top of your list come launch day**. **Greg**



Oldies But Goodies continued...



job cramming almost all of the gameplay of the incredible PlayStation title into this bite-size version. It's got the twisting storyline, VR training levels, cool boss battles, variety of weapons (including explosives to blow holes in walls and a guided missile launcher), trademark sneaking ability—in grass, mud, under tables, etc.—Snake even has an itsy-bitsy pack of cigarettes he can smoke. This game never got the attention or sales it deserved from the mostly younger GBC crowd (meanwhile they could hardly keep Mary Kate & Ashley carts on the shelves), but the introduction of the GBA means a whole new audience that can hopefully play and definitely appreciate this great game.

Dragon Warrior I & II (III on the way)

One category the GBA is sorely lacking at launch is a good RPG, but these games from Enix should do the trick. It's straight 8-bit role-playing with few frills, but enough to kill plenty of hours riding a bus or a plane.

Mario Golf/ Mario Tennis

Don't care much for sports games? No matter, you'll still enjoy these two awesome GBC games; they combine a simple but great-playing arcade version of their respective sports with an RPG world, so you can build up your character's stats and then put them to use out on the courts or golf course. Even dad will enjoy these.

EGM SILVER

Konami Krazy Racers

Publisher: **Konami**
Developer: **KCE Kobe**
Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **Super-deformed characters**
Worst Feature: **Not enough courses**

What is it? What happens when Konami's popular (in Japan, anyway) characters aren't starring in their own games? They race go karts! Similar to Mario Kart, you work your way through four cup circuits of four races each, vying for title of kart racing champion of the universe.

These days, kart racers are a dime a dozen. So it's cause for celebration when one comes along that's actually (gasp) good, and Konami Crazy Racers is quite good. Yes it's a Mario Kart rip-off, but since that isn't out yet, this is a good fix. The brightly colored levels each have one of Konami's big games (most of which are Japan only) as its theme. Power-ups are balanced and conveniently color-coded—speed boosts in blue bells and random weaponry in red. That's handy for times when you don't want a weapon but desperately need an extra boost of speed to get ahead. Another cool feature are license tests (time trials and head-to-head matches), which you must pass in order to open up additional courses. Krazy Racers is not without its problems: Music is inexplicably absent from multiplayer games and there aren't enough tracks. It's cool that you can use coins you collect on the tracks to purchase weapon upgrades, but that makes you pretty unstoppable. Another gripe with the level design is with the collision detection on the edges of some of the water tracks—too many times when you fall into the water, you'll repeatedly fall in and out before you get back on the track. It's **a tad bit short,** but there are more characters to unlock and a good amount of mini-games and multiplayer to keep it fun. **Chris**

Nothing's crazier than spelling crazy with a "k," believe you me, and this game really lives up to its title. Where else can you drive as the Ninja from Metal Gear alongside Goemon while Castlevania music plays in the background of the fiery race course? Not only is KKR entertaining for its eclectic mix of racers, but also for its **intelligent level design, well-balanced items, and heart-pounding multiplayer** matches. Now if only there were a few more circuits to make this one last a while. It's also too bad everyone needs a copy of the game to play head to head. How about a Contra level for Krazy Kart 2? Write those letters to Konami, kids. **Jonathan**

With no Mario Kart on the launch roster, KKR is a welcome addition to the lineup. It's almost exactly the same game, though I wish there were some more recognizable characters to race with. Outside of Goemon, the Ninja from MGS and the Easter Island head of Gradius fame, I doubt many Americans will care about the cast in KKR. Not that it should stop you from spending your cash on this game—**it's a total blast**. Hooking up four GBAs and going at each other out on the track is absolutely addicting, even if your favorite plumber is nowhere to be seen. Konami Krazy Racers could be accused of being a total ripoff, but who cares? Buy it anyway. **Greg**

Visuals 8 Sound 7 Ingenuity 6 Replay 8

Top Gear GT Championship

Publisher: **Kemco**
Developer: **Vision Works**
Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **Good variety of cars**
Worst Feature: **Lame Pole Position-style scrolling**

The fact that Top Gear GT features archaic, horizon-line vertical scrolling really kills it for me. You know what I'm talking about—the road comes straight at you from the top of the screen—just like every Game Boy racing title has done for the last 10 years. That was fine then, but after experiencing just how advanced (pardon the pun) a 3D GBA racing game can be (see THQ's GT Advance Championship Racing), **poor Top Gear looks downright dated (and it's not even out as I write this!).** It's not all sour milk though. If you're accustomed to that style of play, you'll probably like it. Technically there's nothing wrong, it just doesn't break any new ground. **Dean**

I might give Top Gear GT a decent review in a world where stellar GBA launch racer Advance GTA didn't exist. But then again...nah. This game tries to come across as extremely robust, with plenty of race options and performance tweaks for your autos. Truth is, the actual racing itself is just plain boring, barely on par with Atari's trusty ol' Pole Position—and the graphics ain't much better. The up-close horizon means you spend more time eyeballing the course map—to anticipate turns—and less time watching the road. You just never really get a sense of speed here. **Get Advance GT instead. It easily blows the doors off this sucker.** **Crispin**

Visuals 5 Sound 4 Ingenuity 3 Replay 3

Among the huge onslaught of GBA games these past few weeks, we've found at least two or three titles representing each major gaming genre. Some immediately rose to the top of our faves list, and then there are those that don't quite cut the mustard. Top Gear, unfortunately, is still slicing away. It's not that TG does anything particularly poorly, but it **comes across as very average**. The static landscape rehashes the days of old Atari driving sims rather than shows off the new hardware capabilities in an exciting way—something that games like F-Zero do very well on the GBA. The controls are tolerable, but if you happen to inch off the track for any more than a second, you come to a dead stop and have an awful time getting back up to speed again. The custom tweaks you can make to your car (gear ratio, aerodynamics, etc.) didn't make a noticeable difference in my track performance, either. I can say that the large selection of cars in their default configurations offered several unique driving experiences as far as speed and handling are concerned, and enthusiasts will appreciate the recreation of actual Japanese tracks and cars in the game, as well. You can link up to race four cars at once, but you still have to deal with the mediocre visuals and frustration of unintentional off-roading. **Jonathan**

What is it? Take six of Japan's fastest racers out on a half dozen of the country's premier tracks in Kemco's Top Gear GT Championship. Hook up with three friends and see if you can't run 'em off the track in a hairpin turn or two—it's what all the pros are doing!

EGM SILVER

GT Advance Championship

Publisher: **THQ**
Developer: **Motorsports Software**
Players: **1-2**

Best Feature: **It's like Gran Turismo Pocket**
Worst Feature: **All the batteries you'll go through**

What is it? Think of GT Advance as a pocket version of Gran Turismo: Win races to earn new cars or upgrades for your old ones, then link up with a friend to find out who's the better racer. THQ's ready to cultivate an entire generation of reckless drivers on the GBA.

I'd have to call this **the killer-app for racing fans on the Game Boy Advance**. I can't believe I'm playing a driving game with this kind of depth on a handheld system. Choose just about any Japanese car manufacturer—from Honda to Toyota—and you'll likely find one or two of your favorite sports cars in GTA. The game itself doesn't get too realistic out on the track: While you can add different performance-enhancing parts to each car, all they really do is increase the accuracy of the handling or raise your top speed. Out on the track you always have to play like you're racing in a rally mode; drive fast down the straights and throw the car into the tight corners so the rear slides out. It's a real rush, if not entirely authentic. Still, trying to stuff more intricate setup details into such a tiny game, especially playing on the flat, mode-7-type tracks, would bog it down beyond belief. Instead, the developers decided on a mix of simulation elements and arcadey controls. The result is a game that's instantly enjoyable by everyone from your dad to your little brother, but with enough play options and licensed vehicles to keep hardcore car geeks happy for hours on end. Personally this is *the* game I'm gonna spend my hard-earned money on come launch day, and I suggest you do the same. **Greg**

"Holy crap, I can't believe I'm playing such an impressive 3D racing game on a handheld unit." That was my initial response to GT Advance—and yeah, I'm still pumped about it. First of all, the lay of the tracks are visible at a distance. In other words, it doesn't use simple vertical scrolling—thank God. **The ability to see and anticipate a turn rather than having it indicated by an arrow makes all the difference** in the world. Second, the huge selection of licensed cars and upgrades borders on Gran Turismo-like depth. But by far the gameplay is the best part: Imagine drift-style racing similar to that in Need for Speed, in a tiny portable package—awesome. **Dean**

Even though GTA is technically a 2D racer, the controls and gameplay are something we would've never seen back in the 16-bit days. The feel of GTA is entirely based on more recent 3D titles like Gran Turismo and the mid-period Ridge Racers. For those of you who liked the real cars of GT but miss the outlandish powerslides and tight arcade handling of RR, GTA will be right up your exhaust pipe. There are a ton of tracks to beat and even more goodies to unlock. Plus the game is good about not being a pain in the ass: There are unlimited continues per track, and you can restart a race whenever you like. **GTA is a must-buy for racing fans.** **Che**

Visuals 8 Sound 7 Ingenuity 7 Replay 8

Ready 2 Rumble Round 2

Publisher: **Midway**

Developer: **Midway**

Players: **1**

Best Feature: **Whoopin' ass**

Worst Feature: **Easy to master (and no two-player link)**

What is it?

No doubt you're familiar with the now classic arcade puncher—Ready 2 Rumble Round 2. This GBA version features Afro Thunder and the whole crew, along with some of the same trademark moves, training scenarios and combo features that made the console title such a knockout. Plus, new strategies and techniques make for some very different gameplay from the PS2 version. So strip down to the boxers and beat the summer heat with R2R2, and maybe a nice glass of punch.

Capturing the essence of this personality-rich boxing game on the tiny GBA screen is no small task: Afro Thunder's fro has no visible bounce, Mama Tua doesn't jiggle violently (maybe that's a good thing), and the boxers' faces are too small to show expression. So needless to say some of the R2R panache is simply lost to the small screen. On its own merits however, Rumble does a decent job of matching up the now familiar mix of fighters. Many of the same punches are present, the atmosphere is similar and they even brought back that announcer. But when it comes to actually winning the contest, the combos-equal-success formula is no longer the most effective way to win; a simple punch-and-cover technique takes its place. Take any boxer, throw an uppercut and boom—you get the "R." Now cover your face, wait until your opponent gets tired, then smack him again and cover up. Repeat process until you've spelled RUMBLE, then go medieval on him. **It's cheap, yet effective, and shows how shallow the AI is**. And where's the link-up multiplayer? **Dean**

6.0

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	5	4

Firepro Wrestling

Publisher: **Bam!**

Developer: **Spike**

Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **Extremely deep game**

Worst Feature: **Steep learning curve**

What is it?

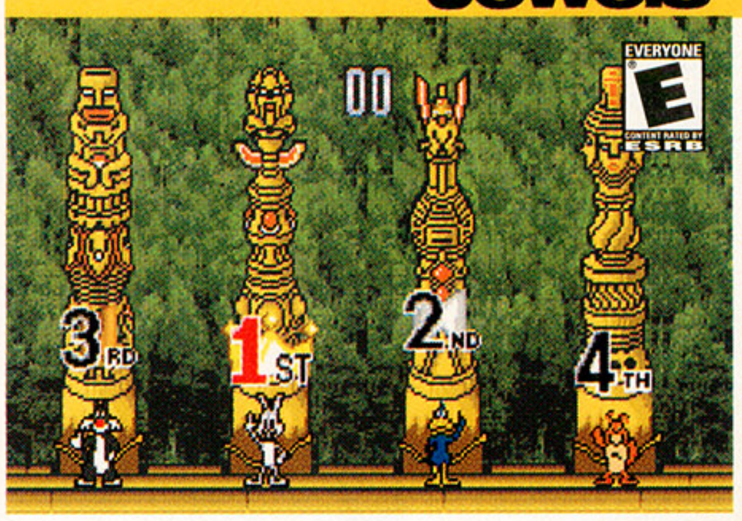
Evolving from one of the deepest, most revered wrestling brands around, Firepro hits the GBA at U.S. launch. Sporting over 200 wrestlers and enough tournaments, modes, and create-a-wrestler options to keep virtual grapplers busy for months, Firepro is getting a healthy jump on the WWF for rasslin' representation on the handheld. Combining traditional gameplay with the showy flair of modern ring warriors, it's a big contender among the GBA's strong action lineup.

The Firepro name may be alien to wrestling fans on this side of the Pacific, but for import fanatics (say "hello" Saturn fans) and Japanese gamers, it's synonymous with ultra-deep, hardcore gameplay. And amazingly, Spike has crammed much of that same feeling into this tiny GBA cartridge. Featuring a couple hundred ready-to-go wrasslers, and a create-a-wrestler mode that would make SmackDown blush, Firepro Wrestling, although lacking any sort of cheesy American license, can instead fall back on the depth of its own unique, cheesy roster. Creating a player, his moves and his appearance is matched only by the number of modes and tournaments you can then enter. The big deal, though, is the ability to link four people together for multiplayer. **The problem is the steep learning curve involved in learning all of your wrestler's moves** using the limited set of buttons at your command. Graphically, the game isn't very flashy, but that comes as little surprise since this series has never been much to look at. Only the patient need apply. **Milkman**

7.0

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	6	8	9

Tweety & The Magic Jewels



Publisher: **Kemco**

Developer: **Kemco**

Players: **1-4**

Best Feature: **First time through's not so bad**

Worst Feature: **Gets old quickly with just one board**

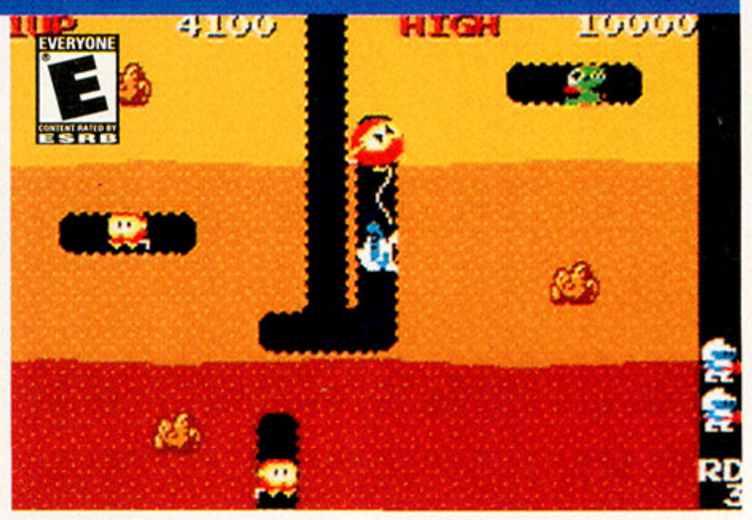
What is it?

In this board game-style title, you must travel to various locales around the world collecting the power of five jewels. As you search for the jewels, you compete in simple mini-games (20 in all) and collect character points which can be used to buy items to screw over your opponents. *EDITOR'S NOTE: Because we could only play this party game two-player, we decided not to give it a proper review score. Keep in mind these are Chris' impressions of the one- and two-player game.*

Turning a board game into a video game ain't an easy job. Nintendo did it with Mario Party, but no one's been able to successfully copy that formula yet. Kemco tries with Tweety, but comes up short. As one of six Looney Tunes characters, you have to gather the power of five magic jewels to save Tweety, who's slowly being turned to stone, before your opponents do (up to four players total). As in Mario Party, you compete in mini-games when you land on special red-colored spaces on the board or you can also challenge opposing characters when your paths cross. Whoever collects the power of all five jewels first is the winner, saving Tweety. Unfortunately, **the mini-games are pretty lame, and the board is huge and confusing** with lots of dead ends and alternate routes. Plus the jewels are located in the same spots each time you play, which kills the variety it could have had. The board graphics look fine, but the mini-games look like they were made for the GBC. I won't give it a score since I could only try two-player, but it's a bit below-average. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
-	-	-	-

Namco Museum



Publisher: **Namco**

Developer: **Mass Media**

Players: **1**

Best Feature: **All the old games!**

Worst Feature: **All the old games?**

What is it?

Now you can flash back to the '80s, portable-style, and jam on five of arcade's best and brightest, which isn't half bad for a quick old-school fix. If you liked Pac-Man, try Ms. Pac-Man! If you liked Galaga, try Ms. Galag...uh, that is, Galaxian! Pole Position and Dig Dug round out the roster of old quarter-munchers. For some reason, these titles never really get old—maybe they could teach today's developers a thing or two about replay value!

Ms. Pac-Man and Pole Position, sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G. First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes Dig Dug in a baby carriage! Throw the Galaga and Galaxian fraternal twins into the mix and you have one hella happy family in Namco Museum for the Game Boy Advance. If I need to explain any of the above games to you, you're too young to be reading this magazine. What I can say about these games is that they completely rock on Nintendo's newest handheld unit. Now you can take the big, yellow she-dot on the road, along with the flatulence-inducing Dig Dug, a man who deserves a 128-bit update if there ever was one. Pole Position hasn't aged as well, coming across like a sub-par F-Zero. Galaga and Galaxian fare a little better, but they bring back too many miserable laundromat memories to be of much use. **The big drawback is that there should have been more games on the cartridge**. I don't know how many Museums Namco plans on putting out, but they would have been better off releasing one volume loaded with the best games. **Milkman**

7.0

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	5	10

Magical Vacation

This new "Communication RPG" comes to us from newcomer Brownie Brown, a Nintendo-funded development company comprised of ex-Square employees. Little is known about the game other than the fact that it's a 2D RPG and that it will support the link cable—hopefully for multiplayer adventuring, seeing as how **these are the same guys who made the classic multiplayer action-RPG Secret of Mana**. The graphics even look like that Super Nintendo classic—we're getting goosebumps.

Final Fight One

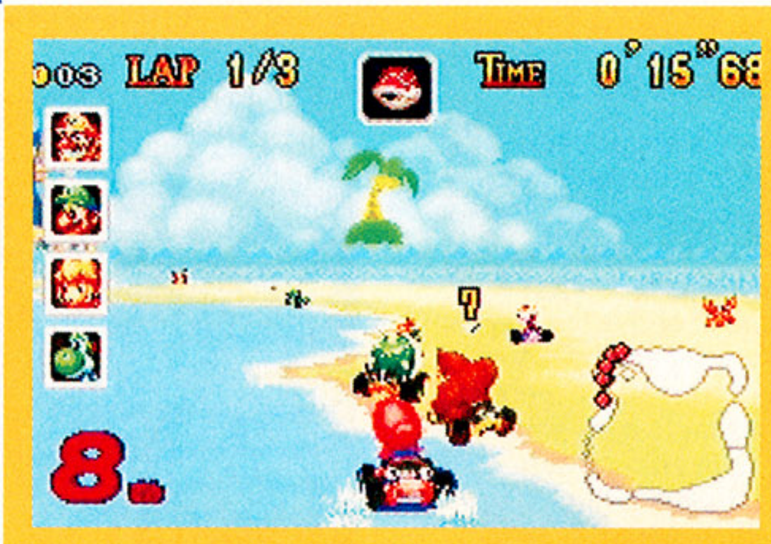
The side-scrolling beat-'em-up that spawned a thousand imitations turns portable in this remarkably faithful version of the arcade classic. Never heard of it? You play one of three characters (each with his own strengths and attacks) on his way to rescue a kidnapped girl, picking up weapons and food along the way, and **beating the living crap out of every single person you meet**. Two-player link-up is included, but will Capcom change the women you fight into men like the politically correct Super NES version?

Super Street Fighter II

Handheld fighting games typically have all the thrills and strategy of a rock, paper, scissors match, but that could change this September. Arcade Street Fighter fans will notice changes to the backgrounds, effects, and some slight slowdown. But even so the early version we played of SSFII was **by far the best on-the-go brawler we've ever played**. Link up play is included of course, but how does it handle six kinds of attacks with four buttons? Press and hold for one attack, or just tap the buttons for another.

Mega Man Battle Network

The latest Mega Man spin-off due this July is an altogether different style of game from what fans of the Blue Bomber are used to. This one is **an action-RPG of sorts, with an overhead isometric view and turn-based (yes, turn-based) battles**. An evil computer virus is causing trouble in the virtual world, and it's up to Mega Man (as a preprogrammed virtual-pet-like personality) to infiltrate the network and put an end to the menace. Expect more typical Mega Man titles for the GBA down the line from Capcom.



Mario Kart Advance

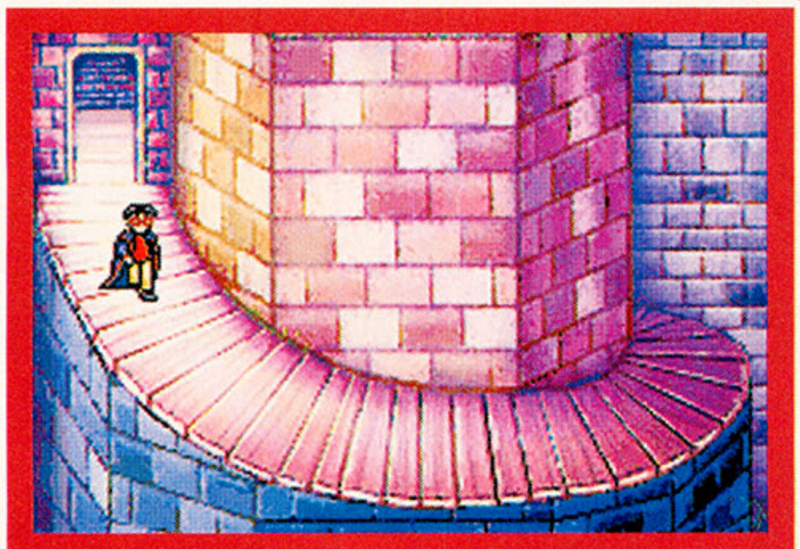
Sure we all love Konami Krazy Racers, but we still can't wait for Nintendo's kart battle/racing game. First shown at Nintendo's Spaceworld 2000 show in Japan last August, and most recently at the Tokyo Game Show this past March, Mario Kart Advance has been in development for quite some time now. According to Nintendo, the game is nearing completion, and hopefully will come out here late this summer or early fall. Mario Kart Advance has been designed as something of **a cross between the two previous Mario Karts, featuring Mode 7-esque 2D-styled tracks similar to those found in the Super NES game, but with the weapons and characters (as well as the "rendered" character designs) of Mario Kart 64**. Adding to all this is the game's most prized feature: four-player full-screen play. And unlike Krazy Racers, you'll be able to play a limited version of the multiplayer game with only one cart between you and your friends' systems, or more tracks and modes if everyone has a copy. We've had a chance to briefly play this one ourselves, and it brought back all the old fond memories.

Golden Sun

Camelot, the creator of Mario Golf, Mario Tennis and the Shining Force series, has teamed with Nintendo to bring the first true RPG to the Game Boy Advance. Featuring gorgeous 2D graphics and **pseudo-3D fight scenes that actually scale and rotate during battle**, Golden Sun is one of the most visually impressive GBA games thus far. The story may be typical (boy and friends vs. evil power), but with Camelot's amazing track record and penchant for making strong RPGs, this one could be hot.

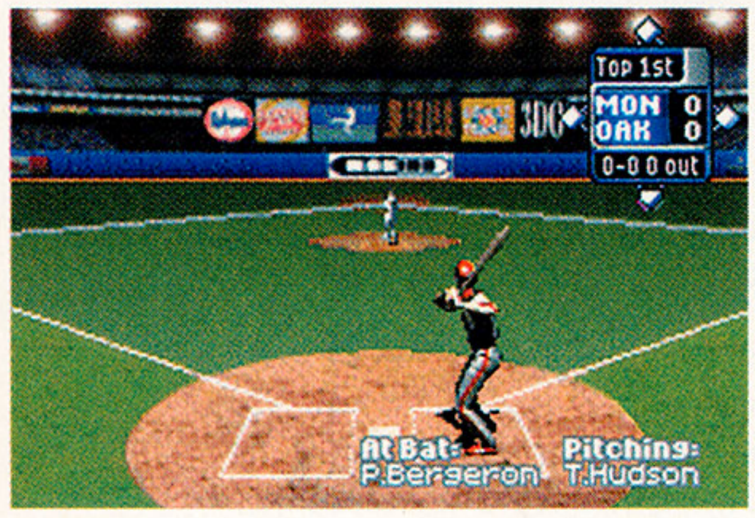
Breath of Fire I

Since Square won't be bringing Final Fantasy to the GBA anytime soon, you're gonna need to **get your handheld RPG fix** elsewhere—and you could do a lot worse than this port of Capcom's Super NES original. For the uninitiated, BOFI is a traditional RPG that puts you in the role of Ryu, the last member of a clan of manly men who can transform into dragons during battle. You'll trek across several continents, build up a party of rugged outdoor types, and—we're not kidding—go fishing a lot. It hits in September.



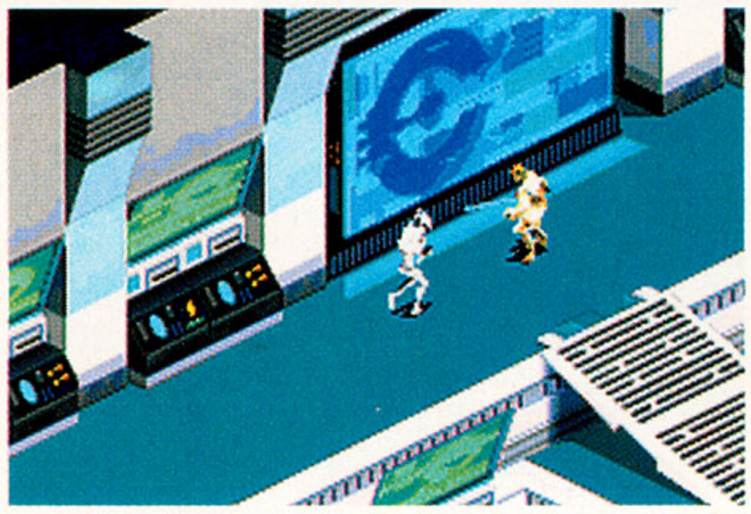
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Other than its fall release date, details from EA are hard to come by (the unmagical screenshot above is the only one they would give us), but we know Harry is a 2D isometric **action/puzzler that also has top-down Quidditch and flying broomstick sequences**. Challenges will include learning to cast spells, chasing Hagrid's runaway pets, and navigating through the maze of Gringotts. More than 20 characters from the book are present, so hopefully this won't be a generic game with the Potter license tagged on it.



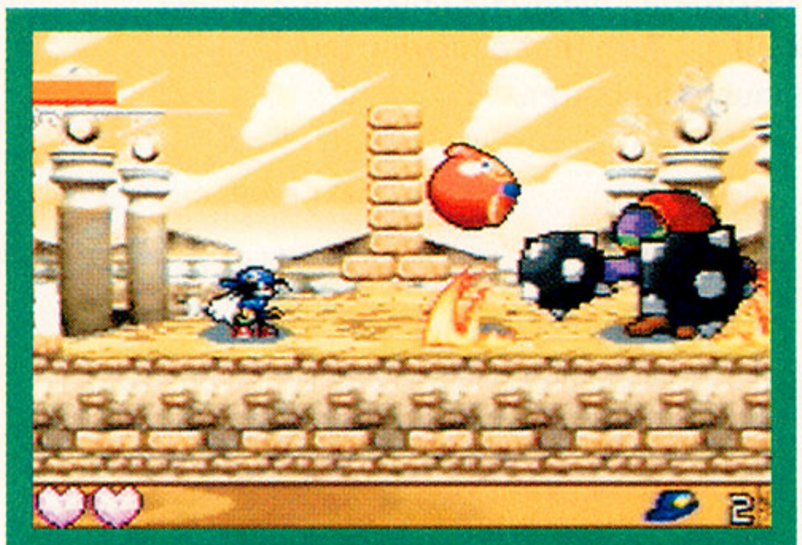
High Heat Major League Baseball 2002

As great as RBI Baseball was on the NES, we never did get the appeal of those stubby, deformed-looking players. 3DO's High Heat MLB Baseball 2002 takes a more realistic approach to its graphics and combines fluid animation and **real 2001 player rosters for some promising hardball on the go**. If WSB2K1 on the DC was your cup of tea, you can even turn on auto-fielding! Due out any day now in June.



Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles

If you're not tired of slashing Battle Droids into pieces by now, then maybe this version of the Episode I action game is worth a look. You assume the role of Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon or Mace Windu, (two-player simultaneous is an option), who must hack and shoot their way through 10 levels that span the palace in Naboo to the Droid Control Ship. Most of the action is pretty straightforward, although **there are secrets to find and even a vehicle or two to drive** in LucasArts' September release.



Klonoa: Empire of Dreams

Namco's long-eared rabbit-cat-thing is landing on the GBA. It's more of the awesome Klonoa side-scrolling joy first made famous on the PlayStation, but the GBA edition features over 40 levels of mayhem, **including some of the hoverboarding sequences that first appeared in the recent PS2 game**. You can also choose between an action stage or a puzzle stage before each boss, adding to the replay value. Klonoa: Empire of Dreams will reach the States early this summer.

Power Up!

So which batteries are best for your GBA? *EGM* commissioned nobel prize winning physicist and Game Boy junky Mr. Dr. Professor Sebastian Honeydew III to test some popular brands (and one generic type) to find out. Mr. Dr. Prof. Honeydew told us, for scientific purposes, each battery type was tested twice on GBAs playing the repeating demo of Castlevania with the volume turned all the way down—so battery life actually playing the games will be shorter, but the overall results should represent which batteries last longer relative to each other.

DURACELL

Average Lifespan: 17 hours 15 minutes
Cost: $4.59 Rating: 4/10.
Not cheap, and the worst performance. Nobody tops the Copper-top, my butt.

ENERGIZER TITANIUM

Average Lifespan:
19 hours 30 minutes
Cost: $5.29
Rating: 6/10. Pricey, but the longest-lasting batteries by far.

RAYOVAC MAXIMUM

Average Lifespan:
17 hours 25 minutes
Cost: $2.79 Rating: 9/10.
Cheapest and not a bad lifespan. The best overall value.

ENERGIZER

Average Lifespan:
18 hours 20 minutes
Cost: $4.49 Rating: 7/10. Average price and with a solid performance.

WALGREENS GENERIC

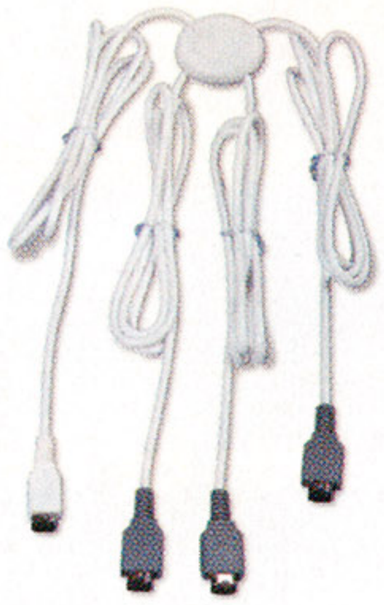
Average Lifespan: 17 hours 38 minutes
Cost: $2.99 Rating: 8/10. Super cheap and a surprisingly long lifespan. Great value.

FUN BATTERY FACT:

The GBA's power light changes from green to red about 75 percent through your batteries' life, then slowly fades out from there.

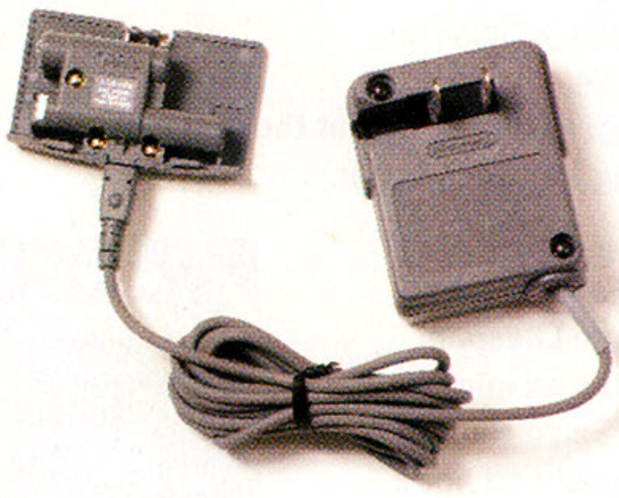
Accessorize!

Link Cable: Your old link cable will work with your GBA for multiplayer GBC games (you still need a copy of the cart in each system of course), but if you want to play any GBA games with a friend you'll need to shell out for a new cable. There's even a wild one on the way from third parties that has four connections in one—kinky. The Nyko model has a switch for GBC or GBA, and a pass-through for lights and other stuff. (Official Nintendo cable $12.99, third-party 4-in-1's start at $9.99)



Lights: Until Nintendo comes to its senses and introduces a backlight option for the GBA, some kind of lighting device is almost a necessity. And not just for playing in the dark: The GBA can be dang hard to see anytime during the day you don't have access to sunlight. Although the old Worm lights will still work if you plug one into the GBA's link port, it puts out a lot less light due to changes in the hardware. Don't worry, a bunch of new designs are on the way—pick up one of these to save your sanity and your eyesight. (Make sure you get one with a pass-through for your link cable!) ($10-$20; Nyko Worm Light pictured above: $10)

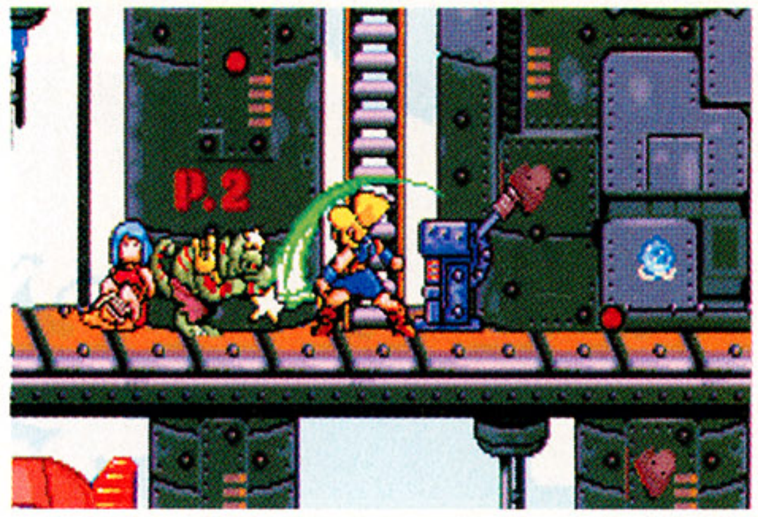
Carrying Case: You can bet on plenty of new carrying cases to appear in the next few months for the GBA, and because the GBA's screen is so easily scratched, you'll want to have something to protect it from the other junk bouncing around in your pocket, backpack, luggage or whatever. The good news here is that, because the dimensions of the GBA and GBC are roughly the same, most any of your older carrying cases will also fit the GBA nicely. (anywhere from $5-$20)



AC Adapter: Yup, you'll have to buy a new one of these—the GBA has no port for a power cable like the old GBC, so the new AC adapter plugs right into the battery hatch. (Official Nintendo adapter $19.99)

Headphones: The only way to really hear the GBA music the way it is meant to be heard—in stereo. And if it'll make your sister/girlfriend/parents/cranky old grandpa quit whining, "Turn that annoying music down!" so much the better.

Crazy Other Stuff: The Game Boy equivalent of giving your Ford Taurus five-foot-tall tires and giant, flame-spouting pipes in the hood, these sort of things are hardly necessary, but hey, since when does necessity have anything to do with it? Magnifying glasses, giant speakers, battery packs, sewing machines and more can turn your handheld into a real handful. Examples? The Japan-only Light Boy Advance (top right, about $22) is a magnifier and light source in one, perfect for use in total darkness. The Shock 'N Rock ($24.99) features stereo speakers, a battery pack, and rumble feature all in one. And there's plenty more where that came from...



Lady Sia

TDK Mediactive makes their GBA debut with Lady Sia, an **action/platform adventure aimed not just at game boys, but apparently game girls as well**. You play as the title character, a young warrior princess on a quest to save her homeland from all sorts of negative creeps. To help her with the task at hand, Sia can morph into a giant sasquatch (we knew the legends were true!). Featuring some pretty sharp graphics, a unique sense of identity, and solid hack-'n'-jump action, Lady Sia hits the GBA this summer.

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX

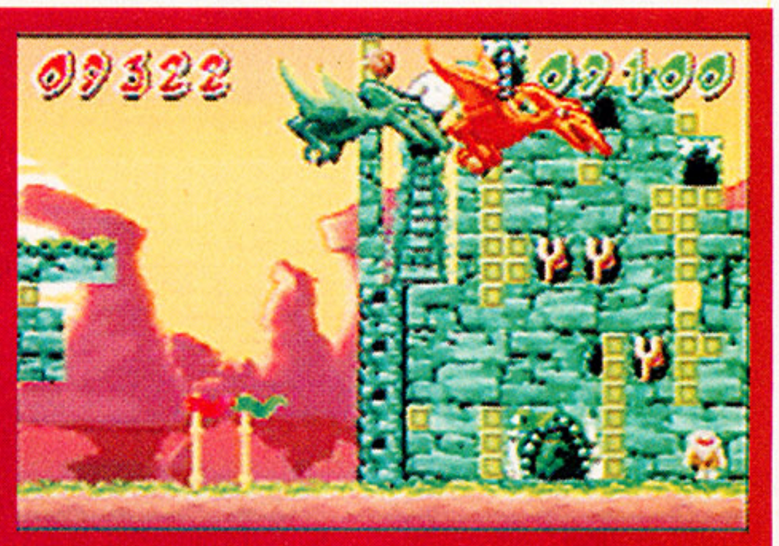
It's not from the same developer as the GBA version of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2, but Activision's hand-held port of Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX, due this fall, is just as ambitious. Developer HotGen Studios is including the same number of dirt, street and vert courses—eight in all—as well as all the pro riders. **Expect the same tricks from the PlayStation original, while the gameplay itself will be similar to GBA Tony Hawk**. Activision says the game will feature multiplayer modes with AI opponents, as well.

Monster Rancher 2 GO

The PlayStation edition of this originally used music CDs to generate monsters for you to fight with, but obviously, Tecmo must take a different path with this Advance version, arriving in July. Instead of sitting back and popping in a CD to play God, **Rancher 2 makes you become a more involved parent by choosing where your creature will grow up and which elements it will harness**. All of them have a bearing on the growth and abilities of your beast, whom you must eventually lead to battle to slay foes.

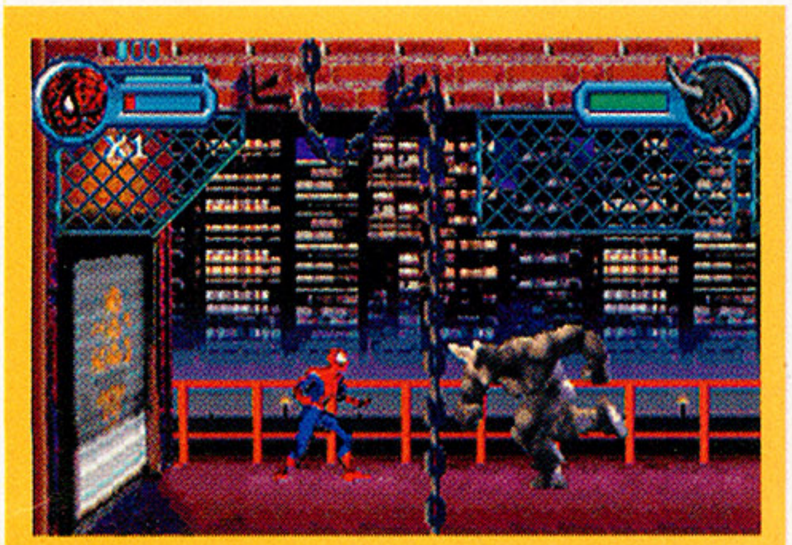
Pac-Man Collection

Pac-Man's been diversifying his portfolio a bit lately. After making an appearance on next-generation platform games, Namco's mascot is gobbling his way to the Advance in an unlikely compilation due this fall. In this collection, you'll find him and his fellow ghost rivals in a **Tetris Attack clone (called PacAttack), classic Pac-Man, an Arrangement Mode only previously available in arcades, and Pac-Mania**, an updated version of the classic game that features more colorful mazes and pseudo-3D graphics.



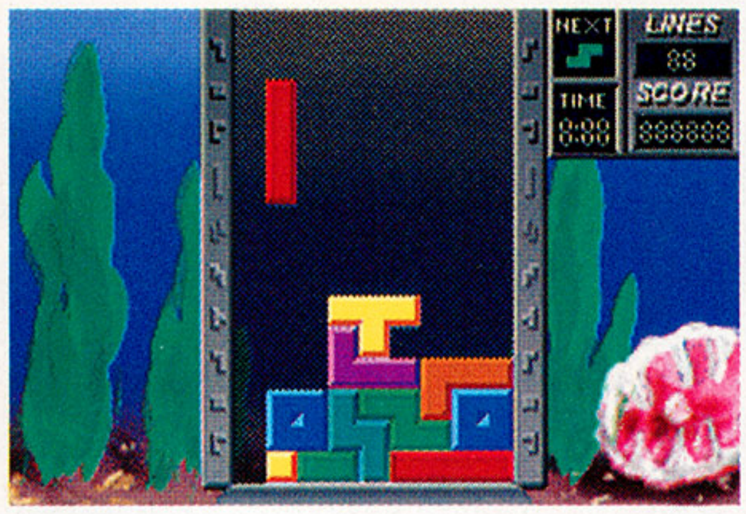
Fortress

There's plenty of great Game Boy Color puzzle games already out there for your GBA, but even so this upcoming title from Majesco is one we've got our eye on. The basic idea is borrowed from Tetris: align falling blocks into solid columns. But as you place pieces in Fortress they turn into parts of your home base; **the bigger your stronghold gets, the more weapons and special attacks you earn**—stuff like little guys to help repair your fort or attack your opponents, cannons and other missile weapons, even giant dragons and UFOs to do your bidding. The look of your fortress, as well as your weapons and everything else, all depends on which of the game's four time themes you are playing in: prehistoric, medieval, pirate and space. There are also Tournament and Battle modes, three difficulty levels, and we haven't even tried a two-player linked-up game yet. This one just missed the GBA launch window but should be out soon—watch for a review next issue.



Spider-Man: Mysterio's Menace

You didn't think your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man would miss out on the Game Boy Advance, did you? The wall-crawler promises pocket gamers **a lot of the features found in his earlier game on the PlayStation**, including all those cool extra outfits to find. Mysterio takes center stage as the super-villain set on destroying the web-slinger once and for all. If Activision's other GBA titles are anything to go by (especially Tony Hawk), we're sure Spidey will kick butt when he's released this fall.

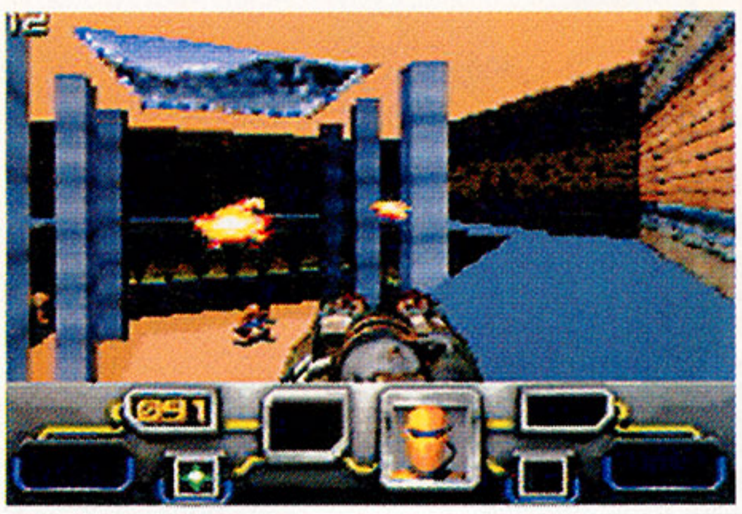


Tetris Worlds

Releasing a Game Boy system without Tetris is like a Big Mac without fries...insane! Even though Nintendo dropped the ball on this one, THQ's picking up the slack and readying Tetris Worlds for release sometime around September. **Along with Classic Tetris, there are seven different game modes slated to be on the cartridge**. Most exciting, though, is the reported four-player link mode. Hopefully it will require only one cart for multiplayer and look a lot better by release than the shot above—yuck!

X-Men: Reign of Apocalypse

Rogue, Wolverine, Storm and Cyclops return as playable characters in this GBA beat-'em-up from Activision that looks suspiciously like the old X-Men arcade game. Taking a cue from games like Final Fight, the developers hope that classic side-scrolling action will be in high demand on this new, powerful portable. **Along with a story mode, X-Men will feature a simplistic one-on-one fighting game when you link two GBAs together**. Expect loads of cameos by your favorite bad guys this fall.



Dark Arena

It's the mid-22nd century, and who better to fight against than the poster children for future science gone wrong—genetically engineered misfits! Clocking in **somewhere between Wolfenstein 3D and the original Doom graphically**, Majesco's first-person shooter certainly packs a lot of gameplay: 20 levels and a half-dozen weapons. Dark Arena should be gracing the GBA by this fall, leaving Nintendo's handheld plenty of time to find its way into the hands of action gamers everywhere.

Sonic Advance

From the Game Gear to the Neo•Geo Pocket Color, Sonic has never failed to please his handheld audience, and the velocitous vermin's appearance on the GBA is sure to shine. Although the new pocket-size Sonic will be **getting back to his 2D, side-scrolling roots**, Advance will incorporate a lot of the characters and style from the DC's Sonic Adventure. Looks like we can expect yet another gorgeous platformer out of the GBA this year. See, now isn't it nice when all the big game companies get along?

Also Coming Soon:

Metroid Advance
Super Mario Bros. 3
Yoshi's Island
Yoshi's Story
Super Mario World
Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius
Rocket Power
Power Rangers Time Force
F14 Tomcat
Pocky and Rocky 3
Car Battle Go
San Sara Naga
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Men in Black
Razor Freestyle Scooter
Puyo Puyo Advance
Bonx
Batman Vengeance
Doom
Broken Sword
Tiny Toon Adventures Advance
Feivel: An American Tale
Creatures
Spyro The Dragon Advance

EGM'S BIG

DRIVE-IN

THEATRE

LARA CROFT:
TOMB RAIDER
JUNE 15

FINAL FANTASY:
THE SPIRITS WITHIN JULY 11

TAXI

Summer Movie Double-Feature Feature

by Crispin Boyer and Chris Johnston

Games are a great source of characters and stories," says Lloyd Levin, producer of this summer's Tomb Raider movie, "and we have a big responsibility here to make sure this turns out right, so people see the potential." Levin knows the score: Previous game-to-movie translations like *Super Mario Bros.* and *Street Fighter* have turned out less fantastic, more sucktastic. But he's betting his big-budget *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, starring Angelina Jolie in the—dare we say it—titular role, will buck this ugly trend. And you better believe the folks at Square Pictures, the Hawaii-based studio that's crafting July's *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*, feel the same way.

This summer, the billion-dollar movie and game industries are colliding like never before with these two high-profile pics. Unlike most of the game-to-celluloid crud we've suffered through in the past, *Raider* and *Fantasy* aren't B movies; both flicks pack production values and star power well beyond stuff like—shudder—*Double Dragon* and even the fairly respectable *Mortal Kombat*. And if these movies hit the summer box-office mother lode, you can bet they'll blaze the trail for a gold rush of future game-related flicks—a few of which are already waiting in them thar hills (see sidebar on page 105).

A potential golden age of game movies notwithstanding, you probably only care about one thing this sweltering popcorn season: whether these two flicks are any good. So grab an aisles seat for our exclusive on-the-set look at this summer's big double feature to find out.

Angelina Jolie's Lara Croft doing what she does best—raiding tombs (left)—in the big-screen adaptation of Tomb Raider. Above, Dr. Aki Ross leads the Deep Eyes squadron toward one of the eight life forms that will save Earth from marauding aliens in *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*.

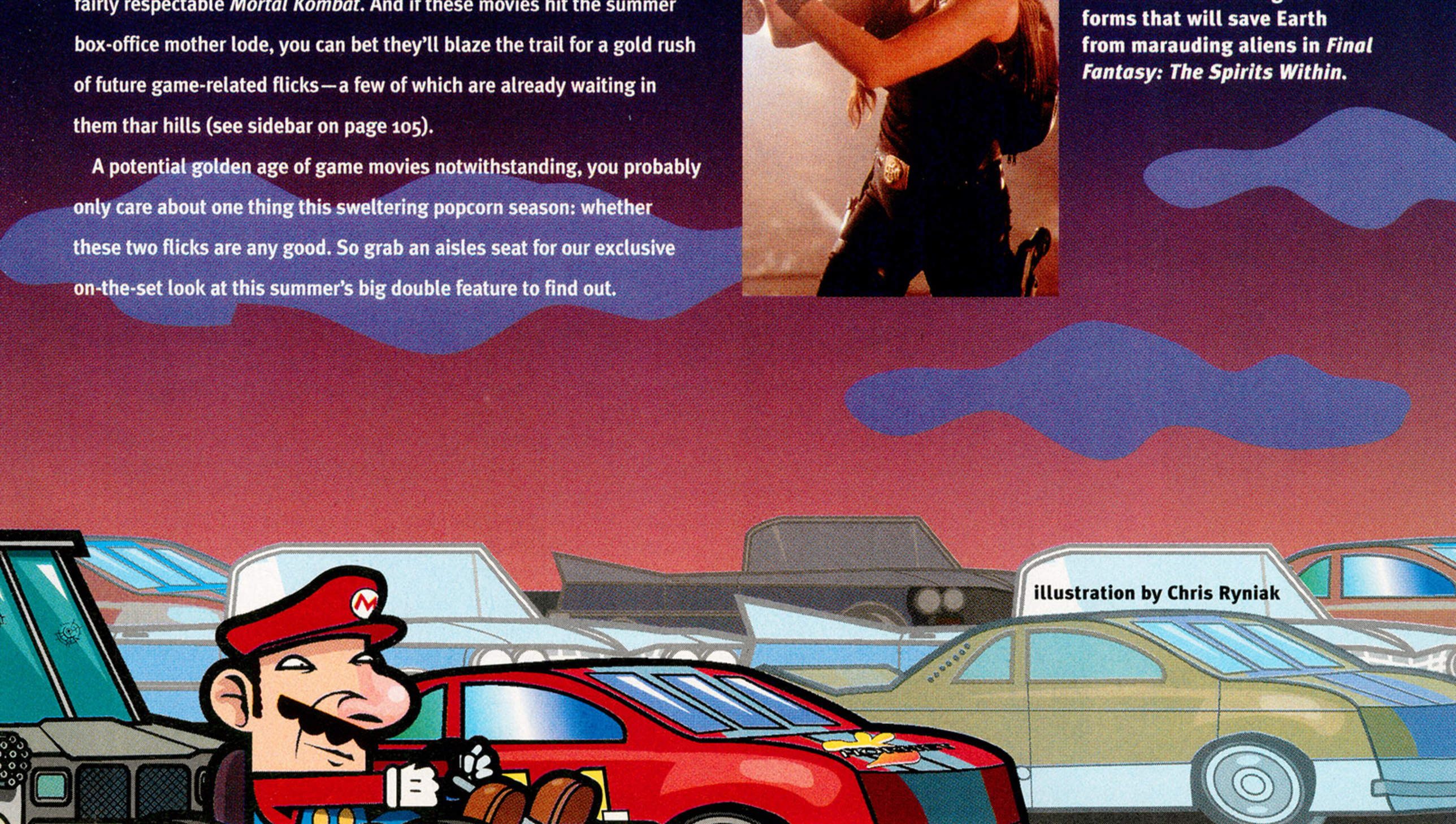


illustration by Chris Ryniak

EGM GRAND DRIVE-IN

LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER

JUNE 15

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Nobody ever said raiding tombs was easy—and we're not even talking about typical on-the-job hazards like vampire bats, prowling wolves or Eurotrash thugs. Sometimes it's the little things that leave scars. "I have a burn mark on my leg from standing on a chandelier too close to a bulb," says Angelina Jolie. "I still have marks from the harness I wore during the bungee ballet scene. And I tore some ligaments in my ankle and had to use a cane."

Sounds like someone could use a Medkit power-up.

Jolie has, quite literally, thrown herself into the role of digital danger girl Lara Croft, whom she brings to flesh-and-blood life in this summer's high-octane Tomb Raider flick. The Oscar-winning actress pulls off many of her own stunts in the film, including the aforementioned bungee sequence—in which she bounds around her mansion HQ, fending off a mercenary squad—as well as kung-fu fights in silk pajamas, machine gun battles from the seat of her revved-up Norton motorcycle, and plenty of *Matrix*-style wire-assisted acrobatics. Jolie spent three months preparing for the role, learning Lara's signature fighting style and buffing up to match the virtual vixen's buns-of-steel physique (see our interview with the Croft superstar in the fold-out poster for more details).

And Paramount isn't pulling any punches with this nearly $100-million production, either. The flick was shot at England's Pinewood Studios, home of the Bond movies and the largest film house in Europe (it requires as much electricity to run as a small city). Last fall, we went on our own expedition to the movie's three soundstages, each the size of an airplane hangar. Here we found a life-size rendition of Croft Manor, sort of an elegant high-tech museum crammed with artifacts and computer gadgetry. One stage over we explored a sub-Siberian tomb called the Orrerry, where we found a spinning model of the solar system the size of a basketball court. But the set that had us most slack-jawed was the Cambodian tomb. Complete with heavy fog, 40-foot ledges, hidden passages, serpentine roots and stone walls resplendent with bas-relief sculptures, this gymnasium-size soundstage nearly had us convinced we'd fallen into a Tomb Raider game—especially when we spied the six-armed Buddha "boss" monster.

But don't expect a carbon copy of Lady Croft's video-game exploits to show up on screen. Although the gang at developer Core Design served as advisors to the film, its story was actually created by director Simon West, who never picked up a joypad to put Lara through her paces (he had an assistant play through and videotape the games for him). "The fact that this movie's based on a game is a bonus," West tells us, "but it's not the main criteria. If the game didn't exist, and someone thought up this great character Lara Croft who does this stuff, it would still make a great film."

The plot may sound like one of Lara's typical PlayStation adventures—she sets out on a globetrotting quest for two time-altering artifacts that could unravel the reasons behind her father's death—but the movie still takes several liberties with Croft's world. For starters, Lara's look ain't the same (see sidebar to find out why), and none of the games' recurring characters, such as Werner Von Croy or her flatulent old butler, makes an appearance here. Instead, Lara gets a whiz-kid sidekick who supplies her high-tech gadgetry, a much younger butler who gets mixed up in the action at least once during the film, and a brand-new villain named Manfred Powell. We even get to see Lara's MIA father, Lord Croft, played by Jolie's real-life papa John Voight. "The things from the game are subtle—mainly the way Lara moves," says special-effects supervisor Chris Corbould. "I think it would be too Indiana Jones if you took everything straight out of the game. We kept a few of the core

New faces include butler Hillary, nerdy sidekick Bryce...

...and nemesis Powell (he's a lawyer—of course he's evil).

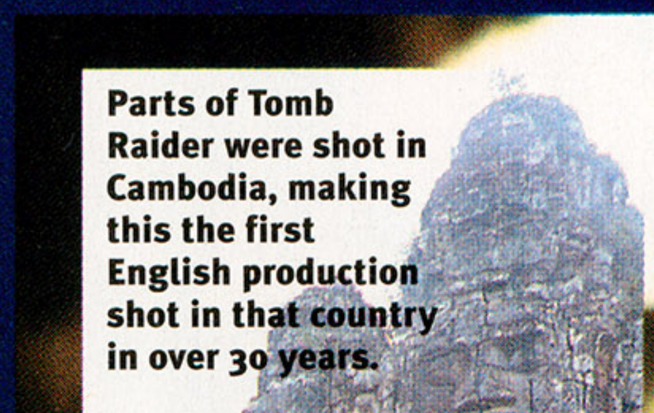
Not in the game: Lara's pop is an archeologist gone missing.

And we're not sure what to think of rival raider Alex. We smell a rat.

essential things while basically trying to convey a totally original story everyone will want to watch and not feel like they're just seeing another movie version of a computer game."

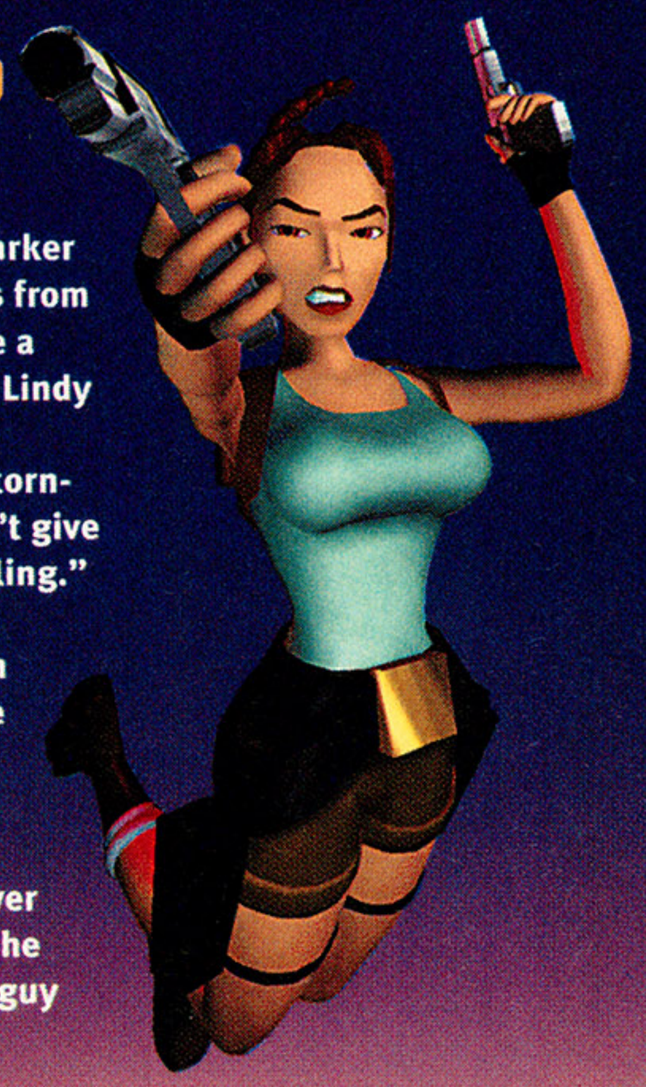
OK, but will it be any good? Director West's previous flick *Con Air* proves this guy can handle over-the-top action, and early footage we've seen of *Tomb Raider* shows plenty of stellar stunts and quick-moving camera work that captures the feel of the games without being out-and-out silly like many previous game-to-movie conversions. "There's no winking, no camp, which I think is a good thing," producer Lloyd Levin tells us.

Paramount's hoping filmgoers think this is a good thing, too—a Tomb Raider film franchise hangs in the balance. All the principal actors—including Jolie—have signed up for sequels and "we have enough ideas for three films," Levin says.



Parts of Tomb Raider were shot in Cambodia, making this the first English production shot in that country in over 30 years.

She's Got the Look?



You've no doubt noticed that Lara Croft wears slightly different, much darker tomb-raiding duds in the flick than her usual power-blue top and khakis from the game. Well, there's a reason for that. "Nobody told me I had to make a rubber T-shirt or torn-off jeans," says Oscar-winning costume-designer Lindy Hemming, who crafted Croft's 13 outfits (one of them—yikes!—merely a towel) for the Tomb Raider flick. "The original Lara had much more of a torn-jeans, broken-down-leather look. But when you read the script, it doesn't give her the opportunity to look like Mad Max. It led to a more high-tech feeling."

Don't expect Ms. Croft to be endorsing Timberland boots, or any other brand, in the movie, either. Hemming wanted to avoid designer labels on Jolie's costume, so she tailor-made every bit of it—from the boots to the backpack to the holsters—for the actress. And as for the darker color scheme, Hemming explains, "that's actually because Angelina is one of those people who feels uncomfortable in color."

Still, even without the straight-from-the-game attire, Jolie has won over even the most discerning critics. "I think she's a great choice for Lara. She certainly looks the part," Toby Gard tells us. He should know—he's the guy who originally designed Lady Croft back in 1994 for Core Design.

When Square's Final Fantasy VII hit the PlayStation in 1997, its use of computer-generated imagery (CGI) changed the way people looked at video games forever. At the same time Square was getting its feet wet crafting FFVII's CGI cutscenes, moviegoers packed theaters to see the first truly digital cinema masterpiece, Disney/Pixar's *Toy Story*. This got Final Fantasy director Hironobu Sakaguchi's creative juices flowing, and a movie version of Final Fantasy was put in motion.

No longer held back by the limits of game hardware, Sakaguchi assembled a team consisting of some of Hollywood's top digital artists at Square Pictures' Honolulu, Hawaii studio to push technology and filmmaking to its limits. Just outside their windows is a breathtaking view of the Pacific Ocean, but you wouldn't know it. On each floor, the drapes are pulled and sheets cover windows—the only light comes from the screens of the high-end SGI Octane computers. In the basement lie 960 supercharged CPUs, which take on the complex job of rendering the entire movie digitally. The result is 96 minutes of jaw-dropping CGI (oh yeah, and a story, too) called *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*, which hits theaters July 11.

When you see the film's digital actors on screen, you're really watching three actors per character. First are the Hollywood-caliber voice talent—Alec Baldwin, Ming Na, James Woods, Donald Sutherland, Steve Buscemi, Peri Gilpin and Ving Rhames. Then you have the actors who supplied the digital characters' body movements, which were captured on a Honolulu soundstage—the same studio where some of *Baywatch Hawaii* is filmed. Square used a unique 16-camera motion-capture system to record the movement of its motion actors (Gemini from *American Gladiators* is one of them). Sorry, Mr. Lucas—these characters are way more convincing than any goofy-looking Gungan. Finally, the digital animators back at the office, one for each main character, created all of the facial expressions/movement you see in the film from scratch under the guidance of animation director Andy Jones.

The Final Fantasy loyal won't find any Chocobos scampering around in this adventure. The story is set on Earth, a first for

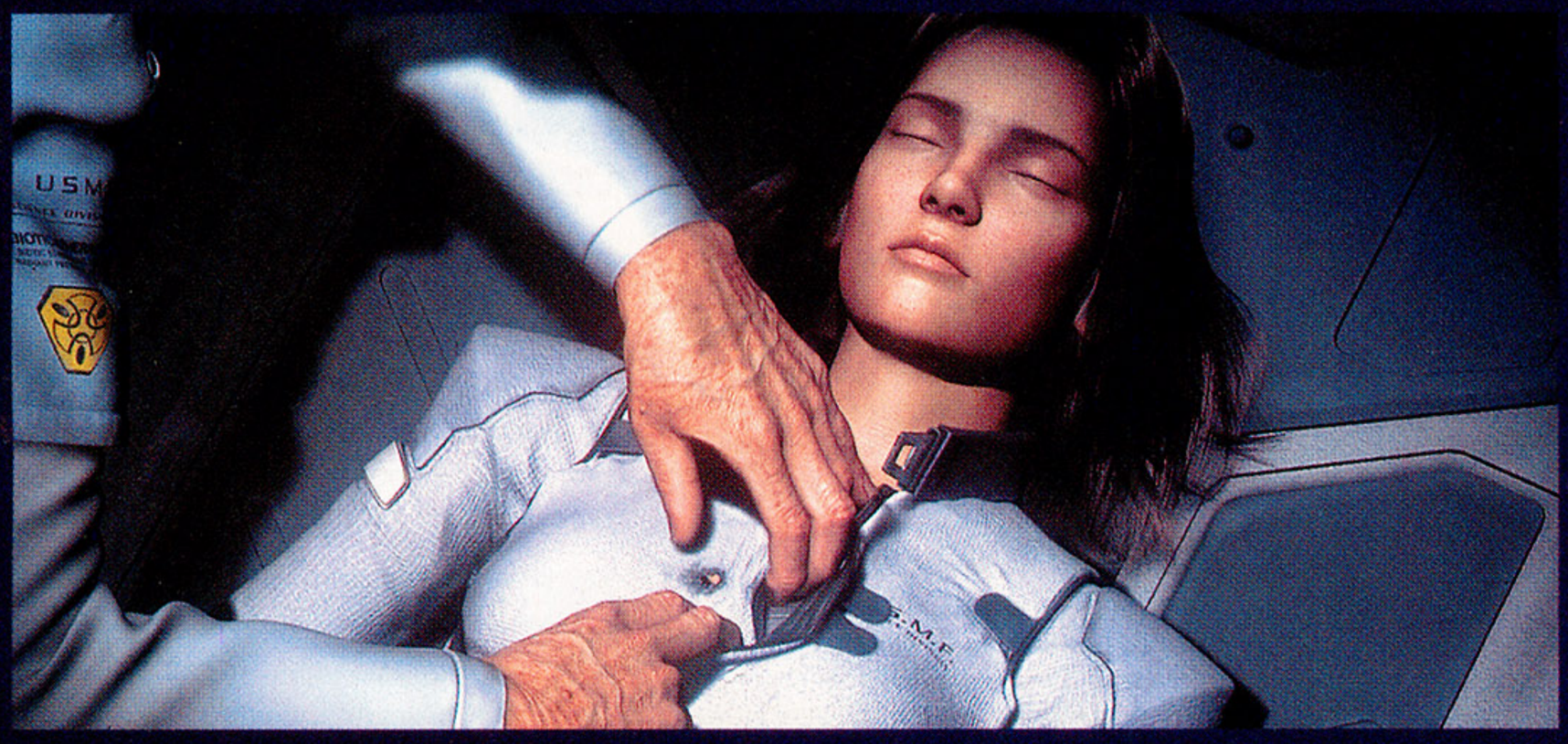
The Deep Eyes squadron (top row, left to right): leader Gray Edwards (Alec Baldwin), second-in-command Ryan Whittaker (Ving Rhames), Neil Fleming (Steve Buscemi) and Jane Proudfoot (Peri Gilpin). The team's ship (bottom right) sees plenty of action running from Phantoms, while General Hein (James Woods, bottom left) plans world domination.

the series, in the year 2065. The world of the future is a desolate place. Ghostly aliens called Phantoms have invaded, killing off most of the world's population by eating life energy, leaving a few ruined cities still standing. But there is hope. Dr. Aki Ross (voiced by Ming Na) and a crack military team called Deep Eyes search the globe for eight spirit waves that might just be the key to salvation. After being "infected" by the aliens, Aki discovers she has a strange connection to the Phantoms, and begins searching within herself and her dreams to find the key to humankind's survival. That is, unless the insidious General Hein (James Woods) is able to put his plans for an orbital space cannon—which would destroy both the aliens and what remains of Earth—into motion. It's a race against time and hordes of aliens, the likes of which haven't been seen since *Starship Troopers*.

While the movie differs in a lot of ways from the game series, it does share common themes—life, death, love, an evil that threatens our very existence, and inner conflict with powers the characters don't quite understand. "I didn't intentionally want the movie to fall into the environment of the games," Sakaguchi explains, "because one of the reasons why games that get turned into movies may not do so well is that they're familiar and predictable. Even though the games are called Final Fantasy, each time they have different plots, characters, etc. But players recognize it to be distinctly Final Fantasy."

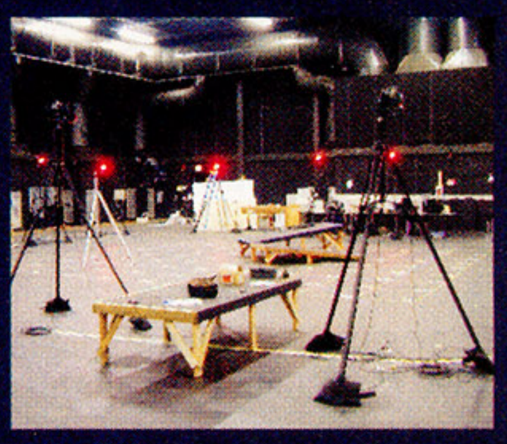
OK, but will it be any good?

One thing's for sure—if you're looking for eye candy, get ready for the ultimate sugar high. But stunning visuals don't necessarily equal a good movie (see 1998's *Godzilla*). The big question is whether Sakaguchi's expertise in creating a compelling game world can translate into making a good flick. Instead of 50 hours to tell a complex and gripping tale, Final Fantasy's plot is packed into a little over an hour and a half—although this 90 minutes will certainly dish out plenty of the director's high-concept storytelling. "What is life...and death?" Sakaguchi asks us. "In [the movie] the stage is Earth in the future, where science has analyzed life and death, with life expressed as a form of energy. There we face death as we part with our loved ones. We begin to question what 'life' and 'love' is, as well as the philosophical definition of the 'heart.'" Sounds deep, man, but some have also voiced concern that the flick's dialogue is a little dry. After all, the script was penned by two largely untested screenwriters. As fans of the Final Fantasy games, we're excited, but the lil' Ebert inside us says wait n' see.

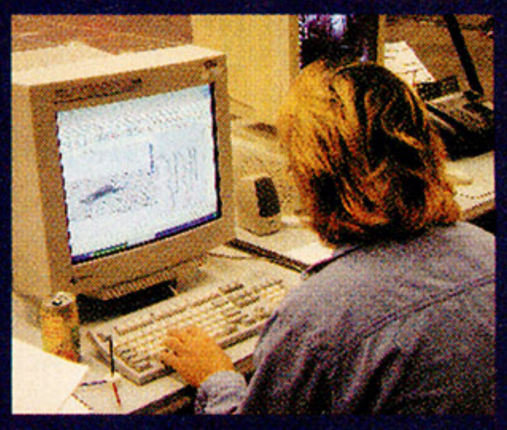


From Fantasy to Reality...

We visited Square Pictures' Honolulu, Hawaii studios to find out just how *The Spirits Within* materialized.



All of the body movements in major action sequences were recorded on this motion-capture soundstage.



Technicians can review the capture data quickly to make sure it's a good take, then send it to the artists.

Walls of SGI CPUs in Square's basement take hours to render a few minutes' worth of scenes.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

This summer's super flicks are paving the way for a flood of other new game-to-movie transfers. Production on The House of the Dead and Parasite Eve movies seems to have stalled right now, but here's the latest word on other game flicks in the works...

Resident Evil

Currently in production and directed by *Event Horizon*'s Paul Anderson, the Resident Evil movie has almost nothing to do with the games. But it does star *The Messenger*'s Milla Jovovich and *Girlfight*'s Michelle Rodriguez, who fight an out-of-control computer (yawn) that's turned a lab full of scientists into an army of the undead. It hits Oct. 26.

Soul Calibur

Sammo Hung (of *Martial Law* fame) is set to direct a film based on Namco's popular fighting game (which is soon to have a sequel). Rhythm & Hues will do the CGI honors, but we have no date on when the production will begin filming or be released. We wonder if Sammo would star as well as direct. He'd make an interesting Mitsurugi, eh?

Duke Nukem

Threshold Entertainment is currently developing a film based on the first-person shoot-'em-up that was popular five years ago for Dimension Films. Duke's all-American redneck-with-a-machine-gun-surrounded-by-buxom-women image will be slightly toned down for this action/comedy violence fest, which should begin production later this year.

Gex

Eidos' gecko with a 'tude is rumored to be starring in a film for DreamWorks, although the project has yet to begin production.

Review Crew

This Month...

Here's the deal: You may see reviews of Gran Turismo 3 A-spec in the July issues of other magazines, but you're not going to find one in *EGM*. Why? 'Cause we got this whole "credibility" thing to maintain. Turns out the U.S. version of GT3 wasn't ready for review (Sony's tweaking the AI), so any reviews you see elsewhere are of the Japanese version. We'd rather give you an accurate review than a rushed judgment of the import. What's the early word on GT3 though? Very very nice. Oh, and same goes for Outtrigger on the Dreamcast—Sega hadn't set up its servers for online play yet. So, again, we're holding off (but if you see a review somewhere else, bear in mind they didn't test Outtrigger's online modes). Expect full reviews of both games next month.

The Crew

Crispin Boyer

Red Faction's Geo-Mod system and Dark Cloud's Georama mode inspired Crispin to dig out his Neo•Geo Pocket Color and play it in Chris Johnston's '96 Geo Prizm.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure

Chris Johnston

After getting his *Superman* DVDs, Chris is convinced he is the Man of Steel. While not able to leap buildings, he swears he's got X-Ray vision. Bzzt!

Favorite Genres: Adventure, Puzzle

Che Chou

When he wasn't playing GBA games this month, Che was laying down suppressive fire on a handful of Counter-Strike servers. Stick together, team.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Driving

Jeanne Kim

Now that Jeanne's had time to test the waters at *EGM*, she's discovered kinsfolk expertly schooled not only in the art of gaming, but also in trash talkin'.

Favorite Genres: RPG, Adventure

Jonathan Dudlak

On the heels of hosting an *EGM* barbecue, Jon's loading up the Mystery Machine and planning the group's next trip to the scenic village of Silent Hill.

Favorite Genre: Fighting, Action

Kraig Kujawa

Kraig did some spring cleaning to make room for all the new game systems on the way. Charities were pleased to get his old *Abs of Steel* and *Tae-Bo* videos.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy

Dean Hager

Dean insists that Keith Hager, the creator of the RPG "Robot Go Home," is no relation to him. He says Hagers in general are just damned good, that's all.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Racing

Mark MacDonald

Was this picture taken just after Mark a) played Castlevania for the GBA, b) heard Crocodile Dundee was back, or c) got kicked in the junk? We aren't sure either.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure

Dan "Shoe" Hsu

Our new Editor in Chief (but old friend), Shoe has given up the empty dot-com promises and swingin' bathhouse scene of San Francisco to return to *EGM*.

Favorite Genres: Everything

James Mielke

Milky recently watched the restored Akira in theaters. Now he makes staff members' stuff disappear off their desks with his augmented "mind powers."

Favorite Genres: Action, Fighting

Greg Sewart

Sewart grabbed our copy of GT3 and locked himself in his apartment for a month. We didn't even know they *had* cars in Canada!

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action

Additional Contributors

Ethan Einhorn	You may know him better by his gangsta rap name: L.L. Sweet E. (Ladies Love Sweet Ethan).
Dan Leahy	A serious sports game nutjob, Dan has gotten a total of 17 hours sleep since NFL 2K1 came out.
Gary Steinman	Want to read more about Gary? Check out the *Official U.S. PlayStation Mag* at your local library.

Our Awards

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

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

Games that average at least an 8.0 receive **Silver Awards.**

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

Castlevania: Circle of the Moon Pg. 89

Attention! Attention! You're not going to find our game-of-the-month review in this section. Instead, head back to our Game Boy Advance feature to find out why Castlevania: Circle of the Moon wins this month's top spot. It's reason enough to pick up a new handheld.

STAFF'S CURRENT FAVES

1	Gran Turismo 3 A-spec Sony CEA	PS2
2	Castlevania: Circle of the Moon Konami	GAME BOY ADVANCE
3	Mario Advance Nintendo	GAME BOY ADVANCE
4	Red Faction THQ	PS2
5	Twisted Metal: Black Sony CEA	PS2
6	F-Zero: Maximum Velocity Nintendo	GAME BOY ADVANCE
7	Dance Dance Revolution 4th Mix Konami (Import)	PS
8	Mars Matrix Capcom	DC
9	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision	GAME BOY ADVANCE
10	Dark Cloud Sony CEA	PS2

18 Wheeler

Publisher: Sega
Developer: AM2
Featured In: *EGM* #138
Players: 1
Supports: Jump Pack, Steering Wheel
Best Feature: Big-rig truckin' highway love
Worst Feature: No ONLINE!
Web Site: www.sega.com

While the thought of playing a game that lets you live life on the open highway (hauling cargo from coast to coast in under six minutes no less) sounds grand, AM2's 18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker is yet another Sega arcade port that fails to graduate from guilty-arcade-pleasure to worthwhile 50-dollar purchase. While the basic tenets of the game are straightforward enough (drive down the highway, slipstream your opponent, get to the destination point before him, cargo intact), that's pretty much all there is to it. As with any arcade port of this nature, there's the prerequisite handful of tracks, as well as a small selection of typically diverse truck drivers (the burly trucker, the now-clichéd afro-soul-brother, the equal-rights female trucker, etc.) to choose from. Each has its own pros and cons, but in actual practice, there's little tangible difference. While the port itself is arcade-faithful (nicely rendered trucks, 30 frames per second), and the control is permissible, **AM2 has neglected to add the extra value (read: like Namco does) required in a home conversion**. While the game features a series of parking challenges between levels, these are nowhere near the quality of Crazy Taxi's own mini-games, and can hardly be considered fun. The biggest letdown, and something that would have added significant life to the game, is the complete lack of Internet play, which was a major feature initially promised by Sega. Over in a flash and a rental at best. **Milkman**

18 Wheeler is a lot like Crazy Taxi, only with trucks, the open highways and an even simpler premise—haul your load from point A to point B before your rival does. It's good looking (on par with Daytona), the sound is excellent, and it really feels like you're driving a big rig—it's loads of fun. But unfortunately it's a straight port of the arcade version. That's all fine and dandy but to my surprise it only takes about 2-4 hours to beat the game on the normal setting. What a shame: It's a blast while it lasts but the **lack of online play, interesting upgrades and new levels make it way too short**. On a positive note, it's perfect for a one-night rental. **Dean**

Having finally played 18 Wheeler on the Dreamcast, two things are crystal clear: The huge steering wheel on the arcade machine added a lot to the playability of this game, and the planned online racing option (which was cancelled at the zero hour) would have given it so much more longevity. As it is, even with the different parking mini-games, **18 Wheeler is over almost before it begins**. Four short stages and the credits roll. The idea is cool, the graphics are above-average, and the entire game has that indescribable Sega feeling, but it's not enough to shell out full price for. Only buy this if you're one of those hardcore fans who needs all the Sega racing titles. **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	6	5

Confidential Mission

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Hitmaker
Also Try: The House of the Dead 2
Players: 1-2
Supports: Light Gun, Mouse
Best Feature: Fast, engaging gameplay
Worst Feature: Only three stages?!
Web Site: www.sega.com

It's about time all of us with DC light guns had another place to use 'em besides House of the Dead 2 (and the Smash Pack, I suppose—shudder). That's really the only way to play Confidential Mission—using the controller is too frustrating and playing with the mouse is too easy. The game pans out very similarly to Time Crisis, complete with nondescript henchmen popping in from off screen to take shots at you, but the crisp graphics and faster gameplay make it a lot more fun for me than Namco's shooters. The story is just as forgettable, but if you're playing a gun game for the story, you may as well read *Playboy* for the articles. Depending on how you perform at one or two crucial points per stage, you take harder or easier paths, which is pretty cool. But **you almost have to invent your own ways to extend the gameplay**, since there are only three quick scenarios to bust through. All you can really do to get your money's worth out of the game is rack up more points, either by nailing bad guys with "justice shots" (disabling their gun-wielding arm) or chaining shots together without missing a target. I also don't know what they were thinking with the two-player mode. Each enemy flashes one of two colors, and only the player of the corresponding color can hit that enemy until he shoots you. It feels like an artificial attempt to make a too-easy game slightly harder (read: more annoying). Pull a one-night rental on this one. **Jonathan**

Playing Confidential Mission has confirmed one thing for me: I'm a horrible shot. I guess I should forget about that career in espionage and international intrigue. This runs into the same problem that most arcade/gun games get into—**it's easily beaten in an hour.** Thankfully you don't have unlimited continues, but even with the eight credits it gives you, it's easy to walk right through the game. The missions are about as long as those in House of the Dead, but there's only three of them. Because of the difficulty, I'd suggest renting it for a weekend; that's about all the time you'd need to get through it. I like its James Bond style, but it's over way too soon. **Chris**

For being such a top-secret mission, an awful lot of henchmen seem to be lying in ambush to pounce on your James Bond wannabe. There's little confidentiality to speak of, but there's a crapload of shooting. The body count tallied in a romp through this short game seems record-breaking and the cadavers pile up with flair. Bad guys react wildly when they're hit, sometimes falling off buildings or even better: absorbing multiple gun shots ("combos") that twist them like puppets. The cheesy over-the-top bosses (one is covered in monitors) and plot does well at poking fun at cliché spy movies—**the only thing missing is a bedroom scene or two.** **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	6	5

Giga Wing 2

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Takumi
Also Try: Watching the end of *2001*
Players: 1-4
Supports: Jump Pack, Arcade Stick, VGA Box
Best Feature: Good ol' 2D shooter action, 4P play
Worst Feature: More gimmicky than anything
Web Site: www.capcom.com

The 2D shooter has been an endangered genre for quite some time now. A few gems (like R-Type Delta) come out now and then, but most modern-day shooters are pretty forgettable. It's this situation that makes Giga Wing 2 so difficult to review. Compared to a lot of classics, GW2 isn't that good at all. Sure it's graphically impressive, with lots more flash and polygons than its predecessor. Sure it's challenging, with crazy...I mean CRAZY amounts of screen-filling projectiles flying at you (even worse than the nutty Giga Wing 1, which was king of dealing out death and mayhem). Sure it's cool to be able to play with four people at the same time—once you try this you're going to demand four-player support for all future games of this type. Sure the game offers more ships and a new Reflect Laser. But...because of the nature of the Giga Wing games (throw a billion and one things at you so you can reflect it back every few seconds), you aren't necessarily challenged like you would be with a traditional 2D shooter. There's no skillfully avoiding enemies, there's no figuring out boss patterns to exploit their weaknesses, there's no real technique here. Just shoot and reflect, that's it. But hey, it's not like the market's flooding with 2D shooters, right? **Despite my complaints, I will still pick up Giga Wing 2**, just because I can't play many new games like it nowadays. It's playable, it's flashy and it's a 2D shooter. I guess that'll do. **Shoe**

The first Giga Wing threw a lot of stuff on the screen, but this sequel is ridiculous. I mean, c'mon—**how much screen-filling enemy fire can a gamer stand before a shooter stops being a game of skill and becomes a novelty?** GW2 walks that fine line throughout every level. For the most part, the game's both fun and way intense—and it earns bonus points for packing a four-player mode. I don't even mind the slowdown (it makes enemy fire a little easier to walk around). But after a while, you just end up relying too much on your gimmicky reflector shields and super bombs instead of ol'-fashioned hand-eye coordination to evade the scads of undodgeable fire. **Crispin**

This may be the prettiest shooter I've ever seen. The razor-sharp graphics and transparencies are astounding, and make you feel like you're actually flying directly over buildings and nearby clouds. It's not without a price, however. As soon as things get busy, even if on solo flights, the game slows to a snail's pace. The action and power-ups are very similar to Mars Matrix's, only GW2 is a lot more dependent on the reflect barrier (a shield that blocks and returns enemy fire). It's also disappointingly short, but the translated text is nonsensical to the point of hilarity, and it's worth playing through with all five pilots to hear what they have to say. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	7	7

Mars Matrix

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Featured In: *EGM* #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack
Web Site: www.capcom.com

Best Feature: Tons of unlockable features
Worst Feature: Tough to play solo

Anyone who's played Giga Wing will recognize the obvious similarities between it and Mars Matrix. The refreshing thing about both of these titles is that the object lies not just in survival, but in building your score and gaining experience. Points you accumulate can be used toward buying upgrades in the shop at the main menu, where you can purchase extra ships, open new bonus levels, or tweak the gameplay from this shop—it's incredibly cool. During the game, downed enemies drop experience cubes that you collect to power-up your weapons. It takes several levels of play to get really juiced up, though, so the game is definitely on the difficult side. Using your gravity bomb to reflect the insane amounts of lasers and bullets is essential to navigating screenloads of enemy fire, but I'm not sure I like that kind of dependence on a power-up. It would also be nice to have one or two more ships to choose from (only two are available) and a wider array of weapons, but Mars Matrix does so many things right, it's hard to put down (literally and figuratively). **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	8	9

Spider-Man

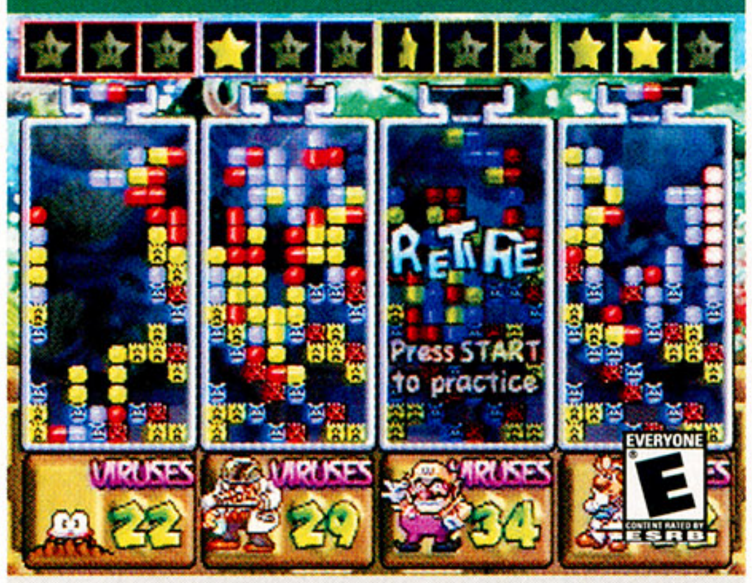
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Treyarch/Neversoft
Also On: PS1, N64
Players: 1
Supports: Jump Pack
Web Site: www.activision.com

Best Feature: Smooth, clean visuals
Worst Feature: Controls are difficult when climbing

Like the great Tony Hawk before him, Spider-Man now gets his turn to visit the Dreamcast via Treyarch. And like Tony Hawk, the DC version is definitely the one to own if you've got the hardware to spin it. Spider-Man is one of those rare, really good superhero games. The "stages" are more like crucial events linked together with cutscenes that make the whole game flow really well. What makes them so entertaining is the high variety of gameplay from one to the next. One area might involve a building-top chase or flight from police, while the next may be more combat-intensive or puzzle-oriented (you have to find alternate routes into seemingly inaccessible places). The **only real gripes I have are with the controls and the camera when climbing**. It's really easy to get disoriented when switching between level ground and ceiling or wall climbing, especially in dark areas or tight spaces. Nonetheless, adventure gamers should definitely own some version of this title. If you already own it, though, you're not going to unmask anything new here. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	8	7

Dr. Mario 64



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Featured In: *EGM* #143
Players: 1-4
Supports: None
Best Feature: Multiplayer, duh!
Worst Feature: Few rewards for extensive gameplay
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

In the spirit of gaming science and personal curiosity, I decided to try a little experiment with Dr. Mario 64. The hypothesis: Everyone is a gamer at heart, it's just a matter of finding the right game to make him or her realize it. The subject: my 24-year-old sister, who is very much a non-gamer. Day 1: After preliminary exposure, the subject took mild but passive interest in the test material, only observing as I played. When casually offered a turn, the subject took the controller with disinterest and fumbled through the first rounds. Day 2: Subject approached me about playing a competitive game, and I agreed. Frequent questions about performing combos and other gameplay features were asked of me. Day 3: Subject actually deciphered the complex matrix of switch boxes and remote controls necessary to get the game up and running on my TV. Greater gameplay proficiency was observed. Day 4: Subject has defeated me and two friends in a heated multiplayer bout, and has begun learning how to become most adept at the new Flash Mode (make three designated blocks buried amongst viruses disappear). Day 5: Too tired of losing to continue experiment. Result: There is indeed a gamer in all of us. Even Dr. Mario 64, which is 90 percent rehashed material, virtually devoid of unlockables, and darn ugly in multiplayer, can awaken a gamer in denial. It's **$30 well-spent**, whether you've played prior versions or not. **Jonathan**

I used to be a Dr. Mario master, but I lost my skillz with the pills a long time ago. Next to Tetris and Pokémon Puzzle League, this is one of the best console puzzle games. They did add a story mode which spices up the one-player game quite a bit. The four-player mode is fun too, although I wish you could somehow choose which of your opponents gets the garbage blocks thrown their way. But nothing in the gameplay department's been improved or refined. Visually **the game hasn't changed at all since the SNES version,** and it's still damn difficult. Even though this is the same Dr. Mario that it's been since the '80s, at under $30 it's a good value. **Chris**

This was a great puzzle game...back when I was a kid and hadn't seen a whole lot better! By today's standards, Dr. Mario is pretty clunky, both in feel and looks. Game design-wise, Dr. Mario 64 is rather basic—it's child's play next to something like Pokémon Puzzle League. After all, you're only playing with three basic colors, and it's easy to set up combos. But **this was never intended to be a hardcore puzzle game**, and as it is, it's a very family-friendly and easily accessible title. (Dr. Mario 64 accommodates a wide variety of skill levels.) If you're an old school Dr. Mario player, however, don't expect anything exciting and new here. **Shoe**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	5	8

Mario Party 3

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Hudson Soft
Featured In: *EGM* #144
Players: 1-4
Supports: Rumble Pak
Best Feature: The new Duel Mode
Worst Feature: Game Guy mini-games. Gah!!
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

The disgustingly cute and happy-happy Mario crew is back for more in the best party/board game series around. Part three is both a disappointment and a breath of fresh air at the same time. Disappointment: While this chapter is full of new mini-games (compare that to MP2, who stole most of its games from MP1), a lot of them are...oh, how should I put this...ass. A handful are fun (like the Aces High, the dogfighting one, or Puzzle Party, which the computer really cheats at). But the rest are really uninspirational, unlike most of the mini-games seen in the first two Parties. The Game Guy mini-games make it worse. These are events based on pure chance. You can't control the outcome, and if you choose the wrong thing, you can lose all of your coins, just like that. Whose brilliant idea was this? Who (besides the *other* three players) is going to consider "you lost all your coins and are now in last place and there wasn't a damn thing you could've done to prevent that" a fun thing? Breath of fresh air: I'd score Mario Party 3 much lower if it weren't for the redeemable Duel Mode. This one-on-one game is quite fun, with the Mario universe's supporting cast (folks like Boo and Whomp) acting as partners with special powers and unique attributes. **Overall, you can get the same bang for fewer bucks with either of the first two games in the series**. But if you're jonesing for more, Mario Party 3 isn't a horrible bargain. **Shoe**

Duel Mode is a nice addition to Mario Party 3 since it lets you go head-to-head with a friend and play strategically to win. Picking partners with different abilities to aid you in battles has got a Pokémon-esque feel, and the salary system cleverly keeps the role of coin collecting significant. The mini-games, though, especially the Game Guy ones (which only require guessing), don't serve much of a purpose strategically, as opposed to in the main game. **The mini-games come across as other "things to do" on the board versus being possible strategic turning points.** But taken as a side feature, Duel Mode does offer a little extra fun to the overall game. **Jeanne**

I went back and played the original Mario Party after getting my feet wet with number three, just to see if it's really improved that much. The difference is like night and day. MP3 is **the best, most balanced entry in the series.** Sure, the computer is still a bastard, but it's a lot better than usual. Duel Mode adds a new dimension to the one- or two-player game which was previously a bit of a weak point (I always hated playing a two-player game and waiting for the computer players to finish their turns). A few of the mini-games are unbalanced, weighted toward one player or team, but there are enough of them either way that it evens out. Yet another great N64 game. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	7	8

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Runecraft
Featured In: *EGM* #134
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Classic THPS gameplay
Worst Feature: Some cruddy visuals
Web Site: www.activision.com

Here's an easy review: Take Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, swap the skateboard for a BMX bike, ramp up the difficulty a bit, make the controls slightly less responsive and—boom!—you have Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX. But what's that? You want details? OK...Mat Hoffman really is poured from the same mold as Tony Hawk—right down to its Graffiti, Trick Attack and Horse multiplayer modes. Trouble is, the game borrows mostly from the first THPS rather than the heavily refined sequel. Sure, Mat Hoffman features the robust course editor and essential trick-linking manual maneuver from THPS2, but then it lacks the heartier mission objectives and level interactivity (remember how you can topple that light pole in THPS2's school level to open a new grind line—you'll find little of that kinda thing here). Mat Hoffman's eight levels (two of which are competition parks) are well-designed—a couple are absolutely sprawling. You'll find some nifty secret parks, too. But **this game's controls are going to stymie THPS stalwarts a bit**. For starters, even the so-called "quick tricks" here take longer to pull off than skateboard kick tricks, so you can't load up the move buffer with trick after trick like you can in Tony Hawk. And manuals and special moves just seem tougher to pull off. Still, I like this game more than Dave Mirra (although I miss the trick modifier). Mat Hoffman moves faster, feels less floaty, and is just more fun. **Crispin**

I think we all assumed Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX would be a good game. How could you go wrong with the awesome Tony Hawk game engine? And it's true, MHPB is total quality, but I kinda wish they'd modeled the game after THPS2 instead of the first one. As it is, Mat feels kinda dated for such a new game. Not to say it's bad, there's still a lot to do and loads of tricks to master for each rider, just that in this post-Tony Hawk 2 world it feels like there's something missing. Otherwise I think the control feels a little laggy—like you have to worry too much about landing straight or something—and the music isn't too special. **Mat's good, but could have been great.** **Greg**

Seems like anything that uses the Tony Hawk engine is automatically on the fast track to success—Pro BMX is no exception. And while it didn't knock my socks off like THPS did, **it's a seriously good game**. The tricks interface is just about right—not too tough but not dummied down either. I thought it might be plagued with land-anything-syndrome, but it isn't. The camera transitions are smooth, the framerate fast, and the tricks catalogue, while not as extensive as THPS's, offer loads of challenge. Actually it's almost too hard at times. I spent nearly two hours on the first level alone—what the hell? Oh yeah, The sound track rules, especially the Bad Brians. **Dean**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	8	6	9

MLB 2002

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: 989 Sports
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Spring Training
Worst Feature: Too much down time
Web Site: www.989sports.com

I look at 989 sports games more out of curiosity than necessity, as I always wonder, "did they try something different?" The answer, invariably, is no. That's true of 989's latest MLB offering, and while it's not an indictment of the gameplay, **a chimp could code the roster update that it takes them a year to pump out**. The one feature this game has that even remotely makes it interesting is Spring Training Mode. Create a player (presumably a near facsimile of yourself, only with height, strength, etc.) and try to earn a spot on a big-league roster. Your performance during a series of spring training games is evaluated until just prior to the season, where you can be called up. Pretty cool. Other than that, MLB performs about the same as always. It's homer-friendly, a bit arcadey in terms of control, and all in all a palatable game of baseball. One major gripe I have, however, occurs between pitches and between batters. You are forced to watch the lengthy animations, as the ball goes back to the pitcher, pitcher turns around, steps off mound, puts ball back in glove...etc. Batters also have these "canned" sequences. Add it up and you're talking some serious dead air. It really kills the anticipation and rhythm of the pitcher/batter confrontation. I mean, if this was PS2 and they were showing off some great textures, fine, but here it just bogs things down. Not bad, but definitely try before you buy. **Dan L**

I'm all for keeping a good thing around but man, MLB's third-generation graphics are really starting to look dated. Aside from new overlays and a few other menu tweaks (let's not forget the touching opening movie sequence), it looks identical to the last three editions. **Bringing players up from the farm system is still a great feature**, but I can't recommend the game by that alone. Overall MLB is still decent (despite the occasional stat glitch), but with the PS2 leveling stiff competition like High Heat, Triple Play and others, you may want to save the cash—especially if you already own MLB from any of the last three seasons. Now, where's MLB for the PS2? **Dean**

This has a lot in common with ex-girlfriends: you used to think she was hot, but after a few years she's not nearly as pretty as you remember her to be. I understand that this can't compete with the glut of gorgeous next-generation baseball games, but at least **they could have added new features to make you feel like you're buying more than just roster and rule adjustments.** If you haven't played MLB recently, then this might give you a welcome change of pace from the also stale PS1 Triple Play franchise. After all, the Spring Training Mode is still unique, and the speedy, semi-realistic gameplay and bright graphics still make it an enjoyable game. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	6	4	6

Spec Ops: Ranger Elite

Publisher: Take 2
Developer: Runecraft
Also Try: Rainbow Six
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: It's 10 dollars
Worst Feature: It's worth one-10th of that price
Web Site: www.take2games.com

This game's predecessor rode its clearance priced sales tag to the top of the sales charts, and thus our worst nightmare came true: a sequel priced at—you guessed it—10 dollars. Some of you have learned a hard lesson by playing Spec Ops: You usually get what you pay for. The rest of you, well, read on. The hook of this game is supposed to be its gritty realism, but the rudimentary, low-color 3D graphics aren't convincing and **the gameplay often seems like babysitting instead of tactical combat.** Spec Ops is a team game; you can have two players work together, but most of the time you'll issue orders to your comrade, which is tedious since they often will walk mindlessly into battle like Lemmings. Alternating manual control between soldiers is aggravating, but it's necessary since squad members are dumb enough to be killed by an enemy who walks right up to him before pulling the trigger. At least it works both ways. During "stealth" missions you can pick an enemy off with a loud rifle and none of his comrades will react. Even better, if you kill one of his buddies within his visual range, the other still won't budge. There are very few aides to help you navigate the long missions. The maps and waypoints are so confusing that it feels like you're fighting the interface more than your enemy. And that's not going to make for a fun game, let alone simulate what it's like on the battlefield. **Kraig**

I played both the Dreamcast and PS1 versions of the first Spec Ops before and boy, were they garbage. So I was ready to lob this one into the recycle bin too (while patriotically yelling "Fire in the hole!"), but it's **not as bad as I expected.** Sometimes it's a chore to distinguish enemies from trees or phone poles or whatever else happens to be around as it emerges out of the fog. Most of the time you don't notice an enemy until you've already been shot. An option for two-player cooperative play makes up for the lame-duck computer AI that normally controls your partner. This game lies on the border of average, and for 10 bucks that's the best you can hope for. **Chris**

The Spec Ops team is back for more, and while it's no Rogue Spear, for 10 bucks you can't really complain about what you're getting. Well, maybe you can. Throughout the phalanx of missions, you're assaulted by a so-so framerate, a rather dim CPU-AI ally (who can either be the point man or your bosom-buddy backup) and some not-so-special graphics. However, if you're a less exacting gamer, you'll probably find plenty to do among the plethora of missions on offer. The controls are as "simple" as a game like this is likely to get, and equipping your man is a relatively painless affair. **This game has its issues, but remember, you get what you pay for.** **Milkman**

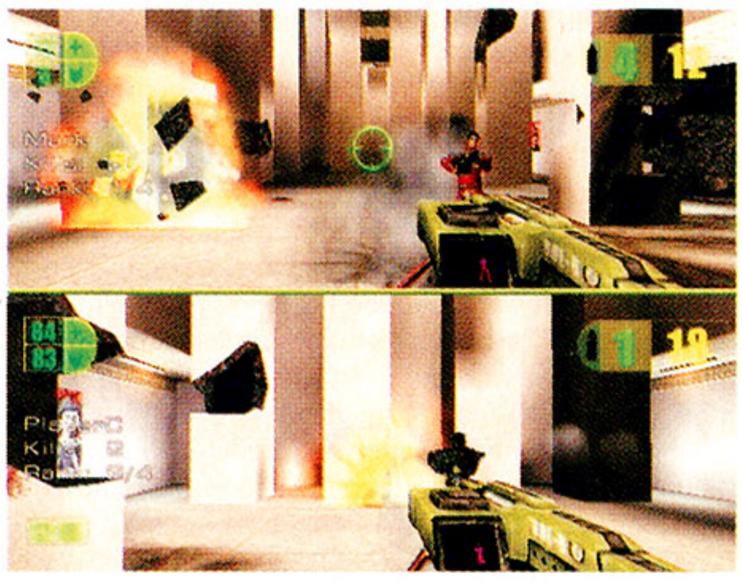
VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	4	5	3

EGM SILVER

Red Faction

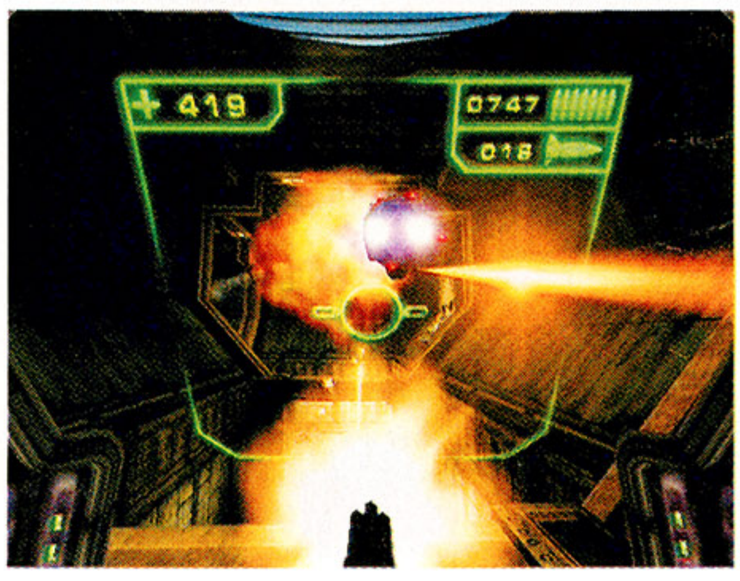
They may be few and far between, but boss encounters in RF are intense. Take the big box of bolts below—it stalks you through the level until you figure out how to destroy him (hint: your weapons won't do it).

Publisher:	**THQ**
Developer:	**Volition**
Featured In:	***EGM* #138**
Players:	**1-2**
Also try:	**Quake III, Unreal Tournament**
Best Feature:	**Involving single-player game**
Worst Feature:	**Sparse multiplayer options**
Web Site:	**www.redfaction.com**



"How 'bout we knock down that wall and open up this room a bit?" BOOM! Red Faction is a home remodeler's wet dream.

At a time when most first-person shooters (also known as murder simulators to the more uptight members of our society) are all about the multiplayer experience—Quake III, Unreal Tournament, TimeSplitters—here is a game that stands out. Sure, Red Faction has a two-player split-screen deathmatch mode, but its limited levels and barebones options make it obvious that the developers had a different kind of game in mind—a game that doesn't require split- screens and multiple controllers to really enjoy. A game that's actually fun the other 90 percent of the time you sit down to play your PS2—alone. For example, remember that thing lots of games used to have that made you want to keep playing...I think it was called...a plot? Red Faction does. And not just a bunch of FMV or cutscenes: Most of the involving sci-fi story unfolds as you play, through radio communications, overheard conversations, and events that happen right around you in real time. Along with the fact the game isn't divided into levels (there's just a pause while the next section loads), this keeps you in the moment, in character, and in the middle of the action. And let's not forget Red Faction's big claim to fame: Its geo-mod system makes it so that all explosives blow realistic holes in the levels. An incredibly cool feature, especially when you can use it for a specific purpose. (The door is locked? Make your own door!) The quality dips here and there—the alarm goes off for no good reason in a couple areas you sneak around undercover, and bad guys move a bit funky sometimes (doing a cartwheel toward you while somehow sliding off to the side)—but overall RF is the promising start of a new breed of PS2 titles: games that look great, are hard to put down, and wouldn't be possible on Sony's old grey box. In other words, it's games like this you bought a PS2 for.



Start with the basic ingredients: smooth, steady framerate, good—if not great—graphics, a variety of levels both indoors and out, and controls that feel comfy the second you pick up the joypad. Those things alone make Red Faction worth playing, so everything else is gravy—and there is a *lot* of gravy. Add a complement of superb weapons (the budda-budda rumble of the assault rifle and shooting through walls with the railgun are guaranteed to give you an evil grin) and kick-ass vehicles to pilot. Top it off with a winding story packed with scripted events, sound effects that make a difference, and the long overdue ability to blow holes in almost everything (the few sections that truly make use of this are genius) and you end up with **one of the best reasons yet to own a PS2**. By concentrating on the single-player experience, Volition has done what I started to doubt was possible: make first-person shooting fresh and exciting once again. One thing to keep in mind though—near the end this game gets harder than hell—even on normal difficulty; inching forward and saving often becomes necessary. A couple places were a bit too frustrating, but for me the ramped challenge made the final hours all the more intense. Despite the awkward stealth sections, sometimes clumsy animations and other random oddities, I wholeheartedly recommend Red Faction. Just like Arnie said, get your ass to Mars. **Mark**

Consoles have always lacked a first-person shooter that has the gameplay, innovation and story to rival PC juggernaut Half-Life. But not any longer. **I came into Red Faction knowing very little and then not able to get enough.** Every time shooting up the bad guys came close to being monotonous, something new was introduced to the mix. Whether it be a cool new weapon, a twist in the story or even a 20-ton drilling vehicle that allowed me to carve out my own cave, RF's excellent design and subtle innovation kept me on my toes. Hell, I had more fun punching holes in the wall with my rocket launcher than I did with a few of the games I reviewed this month. **Kraig**

Do yourself a favor and stay away from that short, choppy Red Faction demo that's out there. **This is the best single-player experience since Half-Life.** I didn't really care about the "revolution" taking place on Mars, nor did I even really pay attention during the cutscenes. It was just one battle after the next, and sure, you had to solve the occasional puzzle or two, but RF never strayed far from this winning formula. And while Volition's Geo-Mod engine is a blast to mess around with, halfway through the game, RF becomes more than just being about blowing holes in the wall. A lackluster two-player mode rounds off an otherwise excellent game. **Che**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	8	7

Cool Boarders 2001

Publisher:	Sony CEA
Developer:	Idol Minds
Players:	1-2
Supports:	None
Best Feature:	Fast and fluid
Worst Feature:	The interface could be a little more intuitive
Web Site:	www.playstation.com

The power of the PS2 is the best thing to happen to Cool Boarders in a long, long time. No more do the graphics break up at the seams, or the riders animate like robots, or the speeds bog down. Nope, it's better in just about every way. **Of course the question on everyone's mind—is it as good as SSX? Mmm, not quite.** Graphically it's more sedate and not nearly as bright and flashy. But make no mistake, the depth of field, shading, textures and riders are very well-done. The interface is reminiscent of years past. In addition to regular one- or two-button tricks, a "pre-ollie" combo system lets you perform big-daddy maneuvers. It works OK, but it'd be nice if it were more intuitive. Maybe I'm spoiled by Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, but punching in a combo before the trick happens is awkward to me. Still, on the whole, it's very user-friendly (more so than SSX). You can jump in and have several new levels and riders unlocked within the first three hours. Depending on how hardcore you are, that may or may not be a problem. I found it challenging enough. In addition, riders don't awkwardly morph onto grinds like they have in the past. Smoke pots mark where sequences begin—that's very useful. And, best of all, it's fast, smooth and fun to play. Two-player is also speedy, plus in some of the events AI riders tag along. It may not be strong enough to topple SSX, but CB 2001 is much improved and a tight package overall. **Dean**

It's weird but I think I'm becoming a sucker for anything extreme. Maybe it's the transition into my late 20s that has me yearning to "tweak, shred or break off" some mad tricks. Or maybe Cool Boarders 2001, like Tony Hawk or SSX, is just a fun game. I certainly recommend it, as the lighthearted arcade controls suited my skill level just right. The environments are superbly brought to life, and the control is more than adequate. Game progression is pretty standard, as you attempt to win specific events and challenges to unlock attributes, new courses, etc. With 20 tracks and nine events, **you can expect a pretty decent shelf life with this one**. Get carving! **Dan L**

I'll say this for the Cool Boarders series' U.S. debut on PS2—it sure does give you a lot to do. Aside from the standard downhill racing and halfpipe stuff, you'll find a slick new mode that has you learning tricks and techniques from the pros (you have to match their moves button for button—and this can get tough really quickly). Most of the modes are also expanded with fun little challenge sequences you'll need to find and complete. But SSX fans will be most at home in the CBX race, which is the most arcade-like thing here. Trouble is, **CB2K1's stiff control and lack of trick finesse make it clear it's definitely not in the same league as SSX.** **Crispin**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	7	7

Dark Cloud

EGM SILVER EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD

Publisher:	Sony CEA
Developer:	Level 5
Featured In:	*EGM* #140
Players:	1
Supports:	None
Best Feature:	Building towns
Worst Feature:	Monotonous dungeons
Web Site:	www.playstation.com

Sony's first major RPG for the PS2 is an interesting amalgam of older, better games in the genre: The battle mechanics are ripped straight out of Zelda, the dungeons feel as if they've been lifted from Phantasy Star Online, and the much-touted town-building component plays like a throw back to Actraiser. **Yet, while all of its parts are derivative, the game as a whole offers a remarkably fresh experience**. Constantly shifting between crawling around dungeons and rebuilding shattered communities provides for a temporal flow that feels just right; this is the delicate balance of action and puzzle solving that Majora's Mask strove for but fell just short of. Arguably the most exciting aspect of the game is its high level of customization; no two players will create identical towns or build identical weapons. Tweaking the environments and powering up your tools becomes incredibly addicting—it's easy play for 8-10 hours at a time. So...with all of these great elements, why not a higher score? Well, for starters, dungeon hacking becomes a bit monotonous after hours of play. The story is silly and contrived; it awkwardly attempts to make sense of the game's disparate elements, but comes up way short. The graphics, while sharp, are hardly awe-inspiring; nothing here screams next-generation. If you can live with these flaws, then dig in—ultimately, Dark Cloud is a deep and satisfying game. **Ethan**

Dark Cloud was initially hyped as the PS2's answer to Zelda: Ocarina of Time. It ain't. This game's story and dungeon puzzles are way weaker than the stuff in Zelda. But that's OK, because **Dark Cloud's random dungeons and nifty Georama spin make for an addictive RPG experience**. Comparisons to the Super NES classic Actraiser are unavoidable. Truth is, Dark Cloud is much deeper in the combat and world-building departments. Dungeon-crawling is the weak link here. Trudging around and hacking enemies gets dull, despite the weapon-customization options and some tricky areas. But town building is so rewarding I didn't want to stop. **Crispin**

Dark Cloud achieves the rare feat of successfully combining so many different gameplay elements and integrating them seamlessly, resulting in a unique and captivating experience. Sure, you've seen the real-time dungeon crawling before (think Zelda). You may have played a world-building game already—although those are a bit more rare. And you've come across the story-driven RPG aspects in...well, countless RPGs. But it's somehow different this time, as **Dark Cloud spins its sundry parts into a deep, charming, new kind of game that, most of all, is tons of fun to play**. And with its gentle learning curve, it's just as good for a newbie or an experienced gamer. **Gary**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	8	7

Gauntlet: Dark Legacy

Publisher:	MIdway
Developer:	Midway
Featured In:	*EGM* #142
Players:	1-4
Supports:	Multitap
Best Feature:	Simple multiplayer game
Worst Feature:	Repetitiveness
Web Site:	www.midway.com

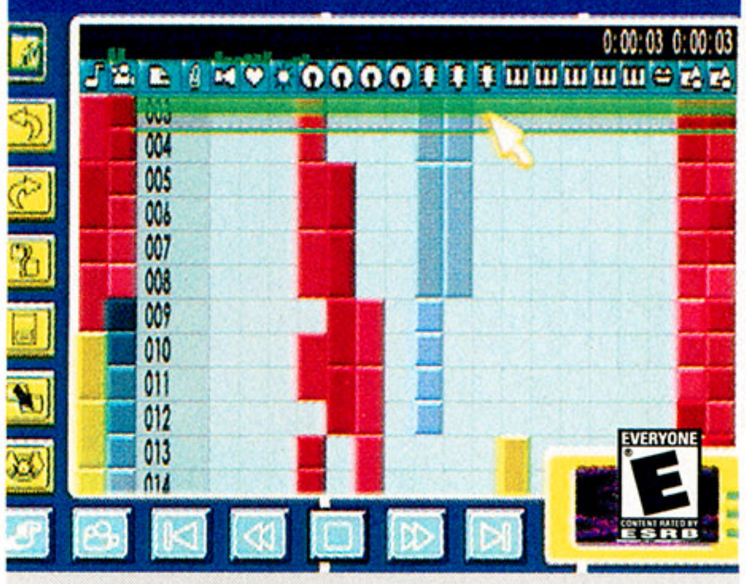
I liked the first Gauntlet remake that Midway made over a year ago, but sadly, **the PS2 doesn't get a true sequel to take advantage of its heartier engine.** Instead, it's burdened with a remake of the first remake..follow me? To make this a technically new title, Midway added new characters, power-ups and additional levels. But that's really not what this new Gauntlet game needs. The previous one was already incredibly long; how much more does anyone with a life really need? What Dark Legacy could have used was a something wholly new to give it a shot in the arm instead of the rehashed levels whose slightly new designs often feel less refined than the ones they replaced. To be sure, Legacy has more enemies per square foot, but that doesn't make it better. I can't tell you how many cheap and unavoidable hits I absorbed right before having the pleasure of being clobbered by creatures that I didn't have a prayer of beating the first few times around. To get past some levels I had to repeatedly trudge back through previous levels to regain health and magic, and that gets mundane pretty damn quickly. If you play with friends, Dark Legacy is considerably better. Bitching with each other about who gets the food, and scheming how to beat enemies is a blast, and it's even more fun with an adult beverage or two. But if you're flying solo, it's unlikely that you'll have the patience needed to enjoy the game's substantial depth. **Kraig**

I can dig the effort Midway has made trying to spice up this formerly classic arcade game, by adding RPG elements (such as leveling up) and whatnot, but something's been lost in the transition. Perhaps it's the tepid pace of the game, maybe it's the sub-hack-'n'-slash redundancy that has me reaching for the java to keep me awake. Gone is the fast-paced manner in which my allies and I would search for treasure and avoid the cold mitt of death. Replacing it is a ponderous, gratuitously 3D aberration that just goes to show you that three dimensions are not necessarily better than two. **Pick up the Arcade Classics and play the original instead.** **Milkman**

As repetitive as this game is, it's not a bad time. If, of course, your idea of fun is hours upon hours of battling drone enemies and collecting vital knicknacks. Seriously, it's better than it sounds. **Midway did a fine job of adapting this fortified classic to the PS2 platform**. It's seamless, smooth and doesn't suffer from any fatal graphical glitches or calamities. The camera, however, is a little troubling at times. It doesn't always pan out to reveal the path you're walking (not much of a problem). Dark Legacy is cheesy, but when you factor in the multiplayer laughs, the easy learning curve, and the 30-plus hours of play time, you could do worse. **Dean**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	6	6

MTV Music Generator 2.0



Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Jester
Featured In: *EGM* #141
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Simplistic interface
Worst Feature: Too simplistic for non-amateurs
Web Site: www.codemastersusa.com

I must say I'm rather surprised that there are still so few games that explore music and audio creation on the consoles. It's a genre that's bound to grow as the technology gets better and better, but for now, the new MTV Music Generator 2 is not a bad start. Jester Interactive has simplified the interface and made it really **easy to get rolling with just a few instructions**. I'm not a big fan of the vertically scrolling interface—having used a lot of audio programs that all track left-to-right, it's a bit of an adjustment. Still, the wide array of samples from eight different popular musical genres opens the door to much creativity. The game basically turns the PS2 into your own multitrack recorder with the convenience of removable storage, thanks to the 8MB memory card. With the USB sampler (that can be purchased as an optional accessory), you can break free of a lot of the limitations that prerecorded riffs hold you to. Those who are musically inclined will definitely want to make use of it—for a video game, there's a lot you can tweak with the stock samples, but to get rid of that canned feel, you really need some original recordings. Video creation/editing is nothing spectacular, but it provides some decent eye candy while you're grooving to your homebrew tunes. I'm not sure why there's this "MTV" logo in the title, though—I'm pretty sure there's no reality TV shows or programs about people undressing in this game... **Jonathan**

Despite MTVMG2's interface being touted as more user-friendly, **putting a song together has never been more annoyingly difficult.** Whoever decided to "upgrade" the interface so it scrolls vertically and not horizontally, must have been hit up for some originality on the fly. The bulky colored blocks get so in the way when you're placing samples that you're constantly scrolling up and down to make room. And did I mention that a USB mouse is not supported so you're forced to use the analog stick to place riffs? You'll spend more time trying to perfect pressing tiny buttons with a swinging cursor than making "phat beats." I don't care what DJ FM Flex says. **Jeanne**

For budding composers lacking a true, professional music recording setup, you could do worse than to mess with MTV Music Generator 2. The method in which you lay down tracks using the considerable library of prerecorded samples is extremely simple, and building a powerhouse "choon" in any of the different styles is a relative breeze. What's not a breeze is getting accustomed to managing all of the features using a Dual-Shock controller. The layout is unnecessarily complicated and could definitely use some serious streamlining. But **for virtual virtuosos looking to dabble in composition, it's an excellent entry point at an affordable price.** **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	7	6	6

Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero

Publisher: Crave
Developer: Genki
Featured In: *EGM* #142
Players: 1-2
Supports: Steering wheel
Best Feature: The added two-player mode
Worst Feature: Racing for 500 yards is getting old
Web Site: www.cravegames.com

We've been through this more than a few times already, this "Tokyo highway racing thing." Yet, each time it appears in slightly more refined form, it gets just that much better, and **with TXR Zero, Genki may have just perfected the formula**. The control has improved enough from the DC version to make it manageable in either digital or analog mode, while the L2 button reveals what your opponent is up to by putting you in first-person mode with a rear-view mirror. The graphics have taken a nice leap from what's come before, with superbly rendered car models, a wicked-smooth framerate, and some of the sharpest, cleanest textures yet seen in a PS2 game. Adding an element of strategy is a time penalty you incur should you hit a wall. Hit a wall hard and you lose lots of time, even if you are in the lead, so no sloppy driving! The problem with the game is the rather severe level of dedication required to unlock the better cars (which are all exact replicas of their real-life models)—the prize money you earn is disproportionate to the cash required to buy car upgrades, which in turn is necessary for beating the more aggressive rivals (over 400) littering the highways. Driving around for extended periods of time looking for rivals can also be tedious, and the way some traffic will cut you off during a race is maddening. Not for everyone, but high-quality and certainly worthy of your dollars. **Milkman**

These TXR games always give me issues. On the one hand I still think the handling of each car could be a lot less "skatey" and actually hug the road. On the other hand I just can't tear myself away from the controller when I have one of them playing. There's something incredibly cool about illegal midnight racing on the Tokyo freeways in a car you've upgraded out the wazoo. As far as improvements, Zero is definitely just a kind of "director's cut" of TXR2 on the Dreamcast. The graphics look just about as good as the previous game, with some very nice environment mapping on the cars. There are some nice DVD extras, too. **What can I say? I'm hooked.** **Greg**

Man, there's nothing I like better than dropping a big ol' HKS exhaust onto my turbo II RX-7 and hunting for 4-bangers to blast with the rotary rocket. OK, so the brand names aren't actually in the game, but Zero is still **one of my favorite racers sheerly for the customization possibilities and "street rival" gameplay**. Like the DC version, the tracks lack variety and the control is a little to abstract for my liking. It's tough to feel at one with your vehicle if you can't make it perform when it needs to. But you can really get hooked on building up a total pig of an automobile you bought for five grand until it can smoke cars five times its worth. Delicious. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	7	9

Crazy Taxi

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim/Sega
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1
Also Try: Midnight Club
Web Site: www.acclaim.com
Best Feature: An almost perfect DC port
Worst Feature: Crazy Taxi's over a year old

Going by the early versions of CT we saw on the PS2, there's no way I thought the game was going to look and play this good when all was said and done. But Acclaim has managed to pull off **an almost perfect port of the Dreamcast hit**, and it's just as much fun as ever. In fact, I think the PS2 version is slightly easier to play in arcade mode. Once you get used to the different driving techniques needed in the game, Crazy Taxi offers hours of enjoyment. Having cut my teeth on the DC version, I still find the Dual Shock 2 controller a little odd for this game, and to this day I still can't pull off a Crazy Drift whenever I want, but the fact remains that it just takes a little practice to get over the learning curve. I guess my only real problem with Crazy Taxi is that I played the hell out of it over a year ago, and with Crazy Taxi 2 on the horizon I don't think I want to spend $50 on the original, especially since CT on the Dreamcast is only $20 right now. Even for people who haven't played Crazy Taxi before or don't own a DC, this game might feel a bit dated for you. **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	6	9

KISS Pinball

Publisher: Take 2
Developer: Tarantula
Try this instead: Give $10 to charity
Players: 1-4
Supports: None
Web Site: www.take2.com
Best Feature: It's 10 bucks!
Worst Feature: It's still a ripoff!

Ten bucks will get you into a movie, buy you a decent dinner, or allow you to add KISS Pinball to your video game collection. Of these, the last option is the only one that's guaranteed to leave you really pissed off at the end of the night. This game has a cool license, but does absolutely nothing interesting with it. Naturally, a CD game headlining a major rock band would have to feature a lot of cool tunes, right? Think again. Inexplicably, none of the group's music has been mixed into the game! I could live with this deficiency if the pinball action was solid, but the developers dropped the ball on that front, too: The boards are cluttered, the artwork is garish, and the play mechanics lack finesse. There doesn't seem to be any real strategy involved in racking up high scores—you can keep that ball in the air for what seems like hours. Not that you'll be playing this for such an extended period of time; **after about 15 minutes, it will be tucked back into its jewel case, never to be pulled out again**. Blow your 10-spot on A-1's Bowling instead. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
1	1	1	1

http://www.gamespot.com/theonlywayyouwilleverbeaninja/

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Tricks of the Trade

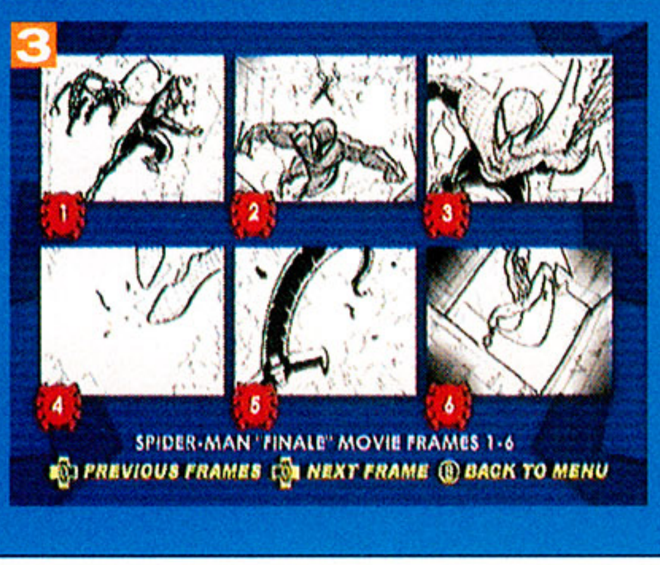
By Trickman Terry
tricks@ziffdavis.com

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Spider-Man (DC)

Web-Slinging Tricks
On the main menu screen, highlight and enter the Special option. Then move down and access the Cheats option. From here, enter any of these passwords.

Level Select
MME WEB
Unlimited Webbing
GLANDS
Invulnerable
ADMNTIUM
Movie Viewer
CINEMA
Character Viewer
RGSGLLRY
Full Health
WEAKNESS
Game Comic Covers
KIRBYFAN
1 **Comic Collection**
FANBOY
"What If?" Contest
UATUSEES
Pulsating Head
EGOTRIP
Stick Spidey
STICKMAN
Quick Change Costume
SM LVIII
2 **Amazing Bag Man Costume**
KICK ME
Scarlet Spider Costume
XILRTRNS
Symbiote Spidey Costume
SECRTWAR
Peter Parker Costume
MRWATSON
Spidey 2099 Costume
MIGUELOH
Ben Reilly Costume
CLUBNOIR
Spidey Unlimited Costume
SYNOPTIC
Captain Universe Costume
TRISNTNL
3 **Storyboard Viewer**
ROBRTSON
Everything
LEANEST

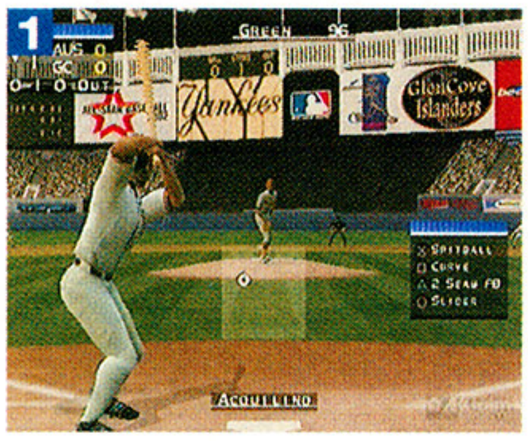


PLAYSTATION 2

All-Star Baseball 2002

1 HIDDEN TEAMS

From the main menu screen, choose MLB Play, and then choose Exhibition. On the Team Select screen, press L2+R2 simultaneously. You will hear a sound to confirm correct code entry. Now scroll through the teams until you reach the two hidden ones: the Islanders and the Dingers.



Army Men: Air Attack 2

2 FINAL PASSWORD

From the main menu, choose Continue Game and then scroll to the Password option. Then enter Up, X, Circle, Up, Left, Square, Circle, X. Now choose a Single or Cooperative game. You will then see that you are on Mission 20. Move Left to scroll through previous missions and select any one you want to play.

MDK2: Armageddon

INVINCIBILITY, ETC.

Invincibility
In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Press and hold L2+R2. While holding these, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Left, Right, Right, Square, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Select.

Matrix Camera
In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Press and hold L1+R1 to remove the pause menu and give you a better look at the rotating view while paused.

Stationary Camera
In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Press and hold L2+R2. While holding these, press Circle, X, Circle, Triangle.

3 **Racecar Camera**
In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Press and hold L2+R2. While holding these, press Circle, X, Circle, X.

Metal Gear Solid 2 (Trial Edition)

FUN TIDBITS

In the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo that comes with Zone of the Enders, you can do some things to make your experience more interesting. Just refer to these tidbits as shown.

Full View of Bridge
On the title screen, use the right analog stick to move the screen around, and get a full panoramic view of the George Washington Bridge.

CODEC Fun
When you're in CODEC mode, you can move the heads of Otacon and Snake with the analog sticks. Also, hold the L1 and R1 buttons or the L2 and R2 buttons and move the analog sticks up and down to get zoom effects on the faces.

4 **Adult Humor**
These tidbits have to do with the posters in the locker room. Open up either of the two lockers with the "model posters" on them and stand with your back toward one of them. Now press the Circle button and knock in the middle of the poster. You will alert the guards! Another thing you can do is to have Snake face the poster and press R1 for first-person mode. While holding R1, press the SELECT button and then press Circle to call Otacon. Snake will look like he's having too much fun and Otacon will scold him for it.

Onimusha: Warlords

BONUS SECRETS

5 Onimusha: Warlords 2 Trailer
After you beat the game, a new option called "Special Feature" will appear on the game select screen. In the Special Feature menu, you will find a short sneak preview of Onimusha: Warlords 2.

Extra Costume
Another bonus that you earn for beating the game is Samanosuke's extra costume. If you start a new game and choose the "Extra" option, the mighty samurai Samanosuke will be wearing a lovable panda costume. The soul-stealing Orb on his arm is even changed into a happy, smiling flower.

Bonus Game
If you've managed to find all 20 of the Fluorites in the game, you'll open the pot-smashing mini-game, Oni Spirits. This 12-level game is very tough, but fairly addictive.

Wild Wild Racing

6 ALL CARS AND CHALLENGES

On the main menu screen, access the Options. On the Options screen, press and hold the Square button. While holding Square, press Up, Circle, Down, Circle, Left, Right, Left, Right, Circle. A new option called "Secret" will appear underneath the rest of the Options. Access this new option and you will be able to turn all of the classes and challenges on. Next, go back to the main menu and choose Single Player. Enter your name as NORTHEND and you will hear a voice say, "Wild Wild Racing." Now go back to the Options and access the "Secret" option again. Another new option will appear called "Top Secret." In here, you can turn on All Cars, All Upgrades, I.C.V. and Saucy.

Winback: Covert Operations

MANY CODES

On the title screen where it says, "Press Start," enter any of the codes to get these results. You must enter them before the game goes into demo mode.

Max Power
L1, R2, L2, R2, L2, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Circle, press and hold L1. While holding L1, press START. This option will appear on the main menu and will give you all weapons and unlimited ammunition.

Trial
Up, Down, Down, Right, Right, Right, Left, Left, Left, Left, press and hold Triangle. While holding Triangle, press START. This option will appear on the main menu and will allow you to begin from any level in the game.

7 All Characters
Up, Down, Down, Right, Right, Right, Left, Left, Left, Left, press and hold Circle. While holding Circle, press START. Go into Versus mode and access the Character option. You will see that all the characters will be unlocked and playable in this mode.

Sudden Death
L2, R2, L2, R2, Circle, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, press and hold L1. While holding L1, press START. This option will appear on the main menu, and will make your character and opponents vulnerable to one-hit kills.

DREAMCAST

Unreal Tournament

NUMEROUS TRICKS

Invincibility
In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Now press Left, **8** Left, Right, Right, Down, Up.

Full Health
In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Now press Down, Down, Down, Left, Up, Right.

Full Ammo
In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Now press Left, Right, Left, Right, Right, Left.

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 five Pokémon and items at one time by doing this trick.

2. Mario Tennis — GAME BOY COLOR

Secret Courts
There are five hidden courts in Mario Tennis. If you want to play on them, however, you're gonna have to do a little work. Use these methods to unlock all the courts.
Castle Court: Earn at least 60 points in Level 3 of Shooting Star.
Jungle Court: Earn at least 60 points in Level 3 of Banana Bunch.
Star Court: Earn all of the

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

medals shown in the Clear Status screen.
Tropics Court: Earn at least 60 points in Level 3 of Target Shot.
Warehouse Court: Using a Mario character, defeat the remaining Mario characters in Exhibition Mode.

3. Star Wars: Starfighter (PS2)

On the main menu, access the options, then go to "Code Setup." Now enter the following passwords to unlock each cheat as shown.
Unlock All Levels
OVERSEER (This will give you everything except the bonus multiplayer missions).
Bonus Multiplayer Missions
ANDREW
Secret Ship for Bonus Missions
BLUESNF
Disable Cockpit Display
NOHUD
Ship and Cast Pics
HEROES
Pre-production Art
PLANETS
Pictures of Simon
SIMON
Development Team Pics
TEAM
View Credits
CREDITS
Invincible Mode
MINIME
Jar Jar Mode
JARJAR (This will reverse your ship's controls.)
Director Mode
DIRECTOR (This will give you alternate camera angles in the game. Press SELECT for the views and R1 for zoom.)
Christmas FMV
WOZ (This brings you a video of Nym having trouble opening a door. When he finally bashes it in, he gets a strange Christmas greeting.)

4. Knockout Kings 2001 (PS2)

Hidden Boxers
From the main menu, choose Modes. On the next menu, choose Career and then pick "New." On the "Name Boxer" screen, put in any of these names to unlock these hidden boxers.
Play as Joe Mesi
BAILEY
Play as Owen Nolan
OWNOLAN

NINTENDO 64

Conker's Bad Fur Day

BAD FUR CODES

From the main menu (where you can choose chapters, options, etc.), access the Options screen. Move down and select "Cheats." On the "Cheats" screen, put in any of these passwords for the results as shown.
50 Lives
BOVRILBULLETHOLE
Easy Game
EASY
Very Easy Game
VERYEASY

Dr. Mario 64

DIFFICULTY CODES

1 **S-Hard in Story**
From the main menu screen, choose Story. After choosing a name, go to the Story menu and move down to Game Lv. Highlight the Hard setting and press the Z button to get the S-Hard difficulty.
Hard and S-Hard in Vs. Computer
From the main menu screen, choose Vs. Computer. After choosing a name, go to the Vs. Computer menu and choose your player. When choosing the computer player, press and hold the L-Shift button. While holding L-Shift, press A. The computer's level will increase one star to give it the Hard difficulty level. For S-Hard level, hold L-Shift and press B.

Indiana Jones and the I.M.

COOL CHEATS

From the main menu, choose the Options. On the Options screen, access the Passcodes option. Enter any of these passcodes for the results as shown.
Expert Difficulty
REALHARD
2 **Level Select**
FORGEOFF
Development Team Picture
CHEESE!!

PLAYSTATION

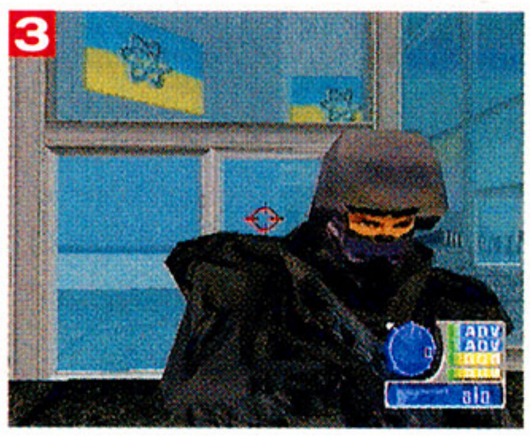
Army Men: Air Attack 2

FINAL PASSWORD

From the main menu, choose Continue Game and then scroll to the Password option. Then enter Triangle, X, Down, Left, Right, X, Circle, Square. Now choose a Single or Cooperative game. You will then see that you are on Mission 22. Move Left to scroll through previous missions and select any one you want to play.

Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear

3 **MISSION SELECT**
(Note: You must not have any memory cards inside the PlayStation while doing this code.) Go to the main menu screen and choose Campaign. After the game searches for memory cards and doesn't find any, it will prompt you with a password screen. Enter this code to acquire a selection of starting levels.
Mission Select
P8H!H!P8P?H!?



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 121 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

TRICKS FLASHBACK!

Crazy Taxi

ENDING CINEMA

From the mode selection screen, choose either Arcade or Original Mode as well as the amount of time you want. Next, at the "Now Loading" screen, press and hold the following button combinations until the driver select screen appears.

No Arrows

Press and hold R-Trigger+ START. When the driver select screen appears, you will see "No Arrows" in the lower-left corner of the screen. If you haven't memorized the locations, you will have to listen to your passengers and pay attention to where they point.

No Destination Mark

Press and hold L-Trigger+START. When the driver select screen appears, you will see "No Destination Mark" in the lower-left corner of the screen. You'll still see a small green outline around your destination point, but it won't be nearly as prominent as before.

Expert

Press and hold L-Trigger+R-Trigger+START. When the driver select screen appears, you will see "Expert" in the lower-left corner of the screen. The combination of No Arrows and No Destination Mark makes up the Expert Mode.

Hidden Bike

Go to the character select screen and highlight the driver you want. Press L-Trigger + R-Trigger three times simultaneously, then press the A button to pick your driver. You will hear bicycle chimes if entered correctly.

Cool Boarders 2001

ALL BOARDS, PLAYERS, ETC.

From the main menu, choose Career Mode and enter your name as GIVEALL when the Choose Player screen appears. A voice will say, "Hey, no cheating" when you enter the name correctly. You will now have access to all boards, players and events in the game.

Twisted Metal 4

TWISTED CODES

From the Options screen, access the "Password" option. Now enter the button codes shown below for various results. You will hear an evil laugh if entered correctly.

Unlimited Specials

Triangle, L1, Down, Triangle, Up.

Only Pick Up Napalms

Right, Left, R1, Right, Circle.

CPU Shoots Only You

Right, Triangle, Right, Triangle, L1.

Supercross

TRACKS AND FEATURES

On the main menu, access the Game Options. Then move down and access the Enter Codes option. Put in these passwords to unlock many different tracks and features as shown.

Launching Pad Track
OSSFMOGLFM
Washougal Track
WMXPLIBWWA
Riverbed Track
OTRATTWTGHWG
FMF Championship Series
NEEDNEWEXHAUST
Etnies Freestyle Games
SHOESANDTRICKS
Parts Unlimited Championship Series
SANDBOLTS
Wrenchead Championship Series
SUPPLIESONLINE
Scott Championship Series
THROWMEGOGGLES
Parts Unlimited Championship Series
SANDBOLTS
Invisible Bikes
NOBIKES
Joke Riders
JOKERIDERS
Exploding Text (Freestyle only)
EXPLODE
Unlimited Power Clutch
UNLIMITEDPC
Invisible Riders
NORIDERS
Your Own Weakness
I AM WEAK
Short Track Fences
LOFENCES

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Castlevania: Circle of the Moon

UNLOCK MODES

(Note: This trick was done on a preproduction version of the game and is subject to change.)

From the main menu screen, choose Data Select. Begin a new game and on the Name Entry screen, put in one of these names to access different modes for your character. (Note: You may have to complete the game the number of times shown in each mode before the tricks will work.)

Magician Mode

Beat the game once. Put in FIREBALL for your name to give your character magician stats. During the game, press START to bring up your statistics. Choose DSS and you will see that you have all the cards. You will also see that the word Magician will replace Vampirekiller in the upper left-hand corner.

Fighter Mode

Beat the game twice. Put in GRADIUS for your name to give your character fighter stats. During the game, press START to bring up your statistics. You will see that the word Fighter will replace Vampirekiller in the upper left-hand corner.

Shooter Mode

Beat the game three times. Put in CROSSBOW for your name to give your character shooter stats. During the game, press START to bring up your statistics. You will see that the word Shooter will replace Vampirekiller in the upper left-hand corner.

Thief Mode

Beat the game four times. Put in DAGGER for your name to give your character thief stats. During the game, press START to bring up your statistics. You will see that the word Thief will replace Vampirekiller in the upper left-hand corner.

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

Play as John Botti
JBOTTI
Play as David Defiagbon
DEFIAGBN
Play as Junior Seau
JRSEAU
Play as Ray Austin
AUSTIN
Play as Steve Francis
STEVEF
Play as Trevor Nelson
NELSON
Play as Ashy Knucks
MECCA
Play as Barry Sanders
MRBARRY
Play as Bernando Osuna
OSUNA
Play as David DeMartini
DEMART
Play as Jason Giambi
JGIAMBI
Play as Charles Hatcher
HATCHER
Play as Chuck Zito
ZITO
Play as David Bostice
BOSTICE

5. 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.

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Volume 3

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE ADDICT

ファンタシースターオンライン

Your source for anything and everything to do with PSO

By *Expert Gamer's* Kenneth Miller

EASY PHOTON BLAST BUILD-UP

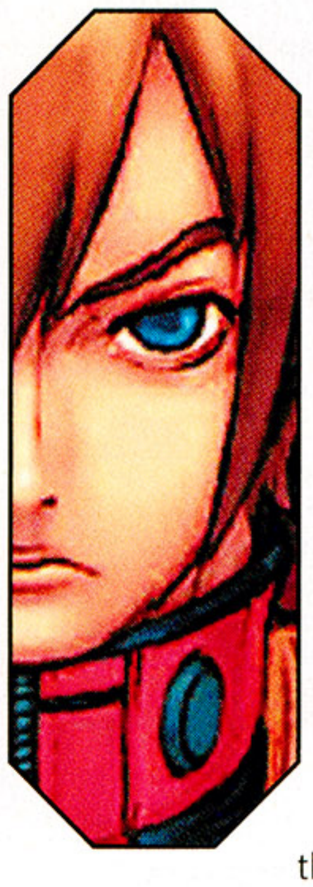
In the customize menu, set a button (let's say A) to use Grants. On the alternate A button (the action that's activated when you hold R and hit A) set Resta (it has to be a high enough level to target other players). When near another player(s), hold R (so the Resta targets everyone), then let go of R right as you hit A. If timed correctly, the Grants will hit everyone your Resta was targeting, filling their PB meter a bit. Cool, eh?

Try it using Reverser instead of Resta and refill your TP—save those forces some money!

(Thanks to Weston "Kasumi X" McClanahan)

AIKIKO'S FRYING PAN

This can only be received after completing all of the quests (on any difficulty level). Play the Secret Delivery quest and find a guy in town who talks about weapons. Answer his questions with "!!" and he will give you a Weapon Emblem. After that, complete the Secret Delivery quest. Next, you must talk to four other members of Weapons to gain their approval. The four members are each found in town in four separate quests: Lost Bride, Gran Squall, The Value of Money, and Claiming a Stake. The Weapons members can be talked to in any order but you must complete each quest after gaining their approval or it doesn't count. After you have met all four Weapons members, play the Secret Delivery quest again and find the original Weapons member. Talk to him again and he will introduce you to the Weapons boss who will give you the Frying Pan.



BLACK SCREEN OF DEATH

There is an uncommon yet potentially devastating server-side bug in PSO that is commonly referred to as the "Black Screen of Death," or BSOD.

When the BSOD hits, your screen will go completely black but the music will continue playing. If this happens, pull the phone cord (or ethernet cable for you BBA users) out of the Dreamcast. It may take a while, but after you've severed the connection, the game will usually report that you've lost your connection and it will save and quit.

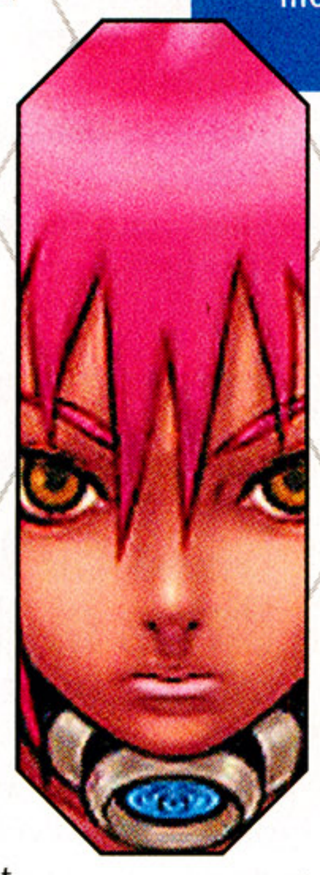
The most important thing to remember when the BSOD strikes is to not turn the Dreamcast off, pull out your VMU, or reset the game. If you do, you may lose anything from your unequipped items to your entire character.

Fortunately, there are two main indicators that foretell the coming of the BSOD. If you see one or both of these signs, take it as a lucky chance to save and quit before the situation gets worse:

First, if a speech balloon doesn't pop up from your character after you've written some text, you may be in trouble. If you notice this happening more than once, disconnect quickly.

The second sign is if you can't pick up items on the ground. Sometimes the server is just lagged and it takes a couple of seconds for an item to pick up. However, if you try several times to pick up an item with no results, especially if your teammates don't see the item on the ground, get out of there.

This bug is caused by the PSO online server, so there's nothing to worry about if you're playing offline.



RUN, RUN AWAY

For non-androids, running into a trap at the wrong time can mean instant death. Trap Vision is OK, but not all traps show up, and equipping a Trap/Search slot unit takes up a much-needed slot in your inventory.

The main problem with traps is that they cause your character to enter his or her battle stance when you go near them. This usually makes it impossible to run away before the trap goes off. There are three ways to solve this annoying little problem, though:

If you have only healing or other personal spells on your R-Trigger commands, you can simply hold R and run right past the traps. This is the easiest method, but if your PB gauge is full, it won't work (since any attack PBs will still try to target the trap).

The other two methods are about the same: You can either press START to bring up the menu, or press Y to bring up the chat keyboard. Either of these will let you run right by the traps without slowing down.

Keep in mind, these methods don't prevent the traps from hurting you; they just let you run away more easily.

SHHH! BE VEWWWY QUIET, WE'RE HUNTING RARE MONSTERS

Rare monsters hold rare treasures. But they don't call them "rare" for nothing—so how can you increase your chances of finding one? In the Forest, you can try "spawning" rare monsters (Al Rappys or Hildeblues) using this method: Whenever you're in a room where Rappys or Hildebears drop in, check to see if any of them are the rare alternate color version, and if not, use a Telepipe or the Ryuker technique to return to Pioneer 2. Use the portal to return to the Forest and the monsters will drop in again, giving you a few more chances at catching a rare one. You can repeat this as many times as you want to increase your chances.

In the Caves, if you use Ice magic (Barta, Gibarta, Rabarta) on Pofuilly Slime, they will split into two. You can do this twice for a total of four slimes. Each time they split, there is a chance one will be the rare red Pouilly Slime. If none are red, you can use the Telepipe/Ryuker method to return to Pioneer 2 and restart the process.

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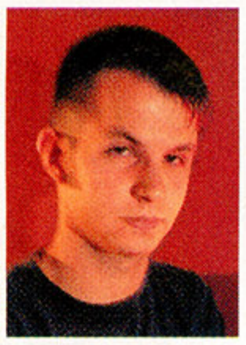
Chris Johnston • chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com
Dan "Shoe" Hsu • shoe@ziffdavis.com
Crispin Boyer • crispin_boyer@ziffdavis.com
Che Chou • che_chou@ziffdavis.com

FINAL WORD

Game Boy Advance...It's beautiful

James Mielke

Chris Johnston


John Ricciardi

Shoe

Crispin Boyer

Che Chou

James: For months, certain Nintendo freaks have been crowing about the GBA like it was the second coming of, oh, I dunno, something Earth-shattering. I never got that excited about it. Although a significant 32-bit upgrade from that damn GBC, it's still a generation and a half old from where we're at currently, technology-wise. Indifferent and aloof, I then received my GBA and Castlevania: Circle of the Moon. Easily as good as Symphony of the Night, COTM is the most-played game I've touched in over a year, and it's on a handheld. The game is incredible (but very dark/hard to see) and it's got to be one of my favorite games ever. Super Dodgeball Fighters is almost as good. F-Zero and Super Mario I can live without, and the GBA itself is small for adult hands. I'm definitely glad to have one, however, and once I'm done with COTM, ChuChu Rocket! and Mr. Driller 2 await. It's amazing how completely Nintendo can (and will) dominate this segment of the market.

Chris Johnston: I haven't been as excited for a system as I am about GBA in a long time, perhaps since the original Game Boy Color. We had the system in the office for about a week before I actually bought one. I purposely stayed away so I could experience it fresh. As soon as I got it I became instantly addicted, playing wherever I could—luckily, GBA's good for that. Seeing these first generation GBA games makes me drool for the second generation of titles in development like Metroid and more installments of Mario. Nintendo's continued domination of the handheld market is assured. Now if only Square could get on board to make some portable Final Fantasy games.

John Ricciardi: I've always been a big fan of handheld games (particularly Game Boy), so naturally, the arrival of GBA was a special event for me. I put aside a ton of money for the launch in Japan, and reserved my system about a month in advance to be sure I had one on day one. Six weeks later, I'm still playing the thing nonstop. Castlevania and F-Zero are my two favorites by far, and I'm looking forward to the tidal wave of SNES (and hopefully Genesis) ports that are on the way. As for the unit itself, I've grown accustomed to it, but I have to admit, at first I was a little bothered by the L button being so close to the D-pad. Otherwise, though, I love it. Great screen, compact design...it's nearly perfect. Next step is to see how they plan on integrating GBA with GameCube. Ahh, the possibilities...

Shoe: Dear people who make games for us: Please bring the following titles to the GBA: Super Metroid, Zelda: A Link to the Past, Metal Marines, Populous and anything R-Type, Final Fantasy or Dragon Warrior. Thank you.

Crispin Boyer: Yeah, I'm really excited to see how this thing will work with the GameCube, too. Like, I'm sure it'll be used for basic stuff, like playcalling in sports games. But I think it'd be awesome if they incorporated it, say, into a space-combat game. You could have the main player use the regular GameCube controller to fly the ship on the TV screen, while three other players jack their GBAs into the system and use them to work subsystems and stuff on the ship. Just one idea. Hey, game-making people who Shoe was talking to, make that game for me.

Che Chou: If you read our cover feature this month, then you pretty much know how I feel about the GBA. Before its launch in Japan, I kept expecting it to be nothing more than a handheld SNES with a 32-Bit processor to get rid of the flicker and slowdown. But a lot of these first-generation games exceeded my expectations for the GBA's performance. What's more, the approach some developers have shown skews a mature gaming audience that I can relate to. There will still be the Pokémon opiates for the younger generation, but—finally—there are handheld games, outside of Zelda, that I care about. If stuff like Castlevania is first-generation software, I can't wait to see what the future holds for GBA. Bring it!

"Nintendo's continued domination of the handheld market is assured."

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NEXT MONTH

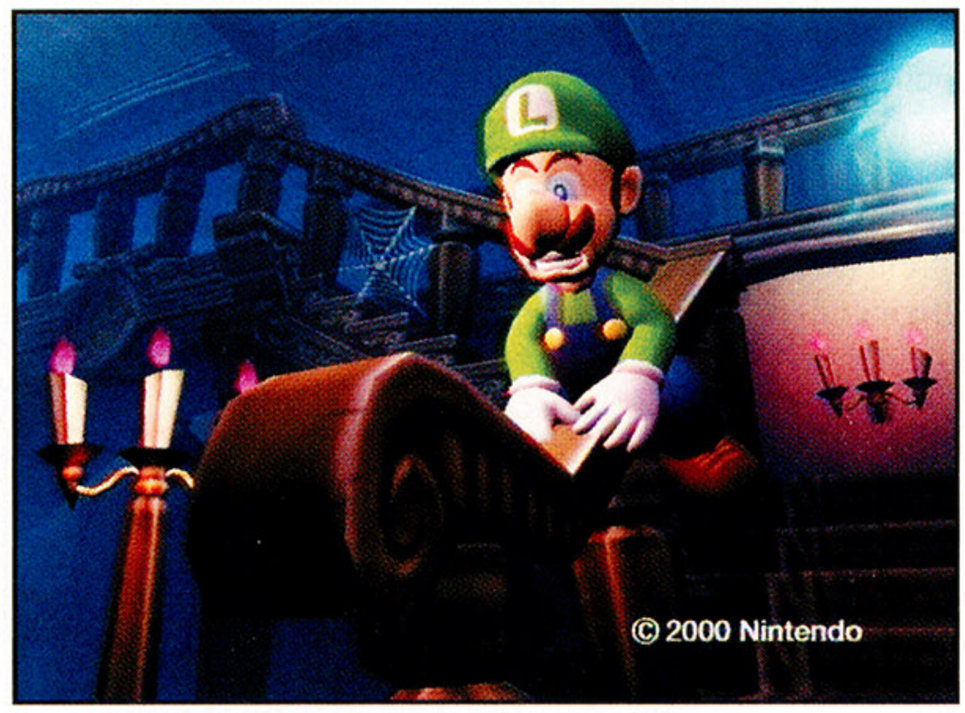
ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

August 2001

On sale July 3

GameCube, Xbox Mysteries Revealed

At long last, we're gonna give you a taste of what it's like to play Nintendo's fancy new system, the GameCube. We'll give you the full scoop on the games, the system, the controller and maybe even how it smells. All that, and the skinny on Microsoft's Xbox launch plans and Sony's PS2 online gaming strategy make this an issue you cannot afford to miss! We promise.



We'll have lots of new information on two of the Nintendo GameCube's heavy hitters: Zelda (left) and Luigi's Mansion (above).

- **Gran Turismo 3 reviewed**
- **PlayStation 2 fall lineup**
- **Crazy Taxi 2 reviewed**
- **Hands-on test of GameCube**
- **Find out which Sega games will land on PS2, Xbox, GameCube**
- **The legacy continues: Soul Reaver 2 and Blood Omen 2 for PS2**

Electronic Entertainment Expo

The Electronic Entertainment Expo is the biggest video game event on Earth, and we'll make sure that you see all the glitz, glamour and games. It'll be like you were really there. Almost.

*All editorial content is subject to change.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

July 2001

On sale June 12

Demo Disc

Video Previews

- **Gran Turismo 3**
- **Winback**
- **Super Bombad Racing**
- **Gauntlet Dark Legacy**

Playables

- **Alone in the Dark**
- **Dave Mirra BMX Remix**
- **Gran Turismo 2**
- **Tomb Raider 2**
- **Tomb Raider 3**
- **Tomb Raider 4**
- **Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge**

Tomb Raider

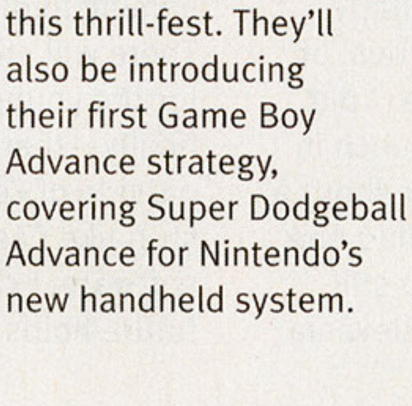
Beautiful but deadly, Lara Croft returns in a hot new movie and a stunning next-gen game. We've got the inside details on everything Tomb Raider. Plus: reviews of Dark Cloud, Red Faction and Gauntlet Dark Legacy. Also, check out the latest previews, tricks and strategies.

EXPERT GAMER

July 2001

On sale June 19

- **18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker**
- **Dr. Mario puzzle action**
- **Complete blowout on Mat Hoffman BMX**
- **Sneak peek hands-on strategy for Twisted Metal: Black**
- **Quake III (PS2) tactics and hints**
- **XG's first Game Boy Advance strategy! Super Dodgeball tips**
- **More FPS fun with Sega's Outtrigger**



Red Faction Action

XG takes on PlayStation 2's first great action game, Red Faction with killer maps and secrets galore to get you through this thrill-fest. They'll also be introducing their first Game Boy Advance strategy, covering Super Dodgeball Advance for Nintendo's new handheld system.

July 2001

On sale June 5

Counter-Strike: Condition Zero

The biggest hit in online gaming is about to get even bigger. Valve Software is ready to unleash an all-new version of Counter-Strike, complete with new maps, weapons and finally, a complete single-player scenario. CGW has an exclusive first look at one of the most talked-about games of the year. Also inside: a 10-page blowout on combat games, and reviews of the first batch of GeForce 3 cards.

Reviews

- **Tribes 2**
- **Tropico**
- **Serious Sam**
- **The Sims: House Party**

Previews

- **Planetside**
- **Empire Earth**
- **Baldur's Gate 2 expansion**

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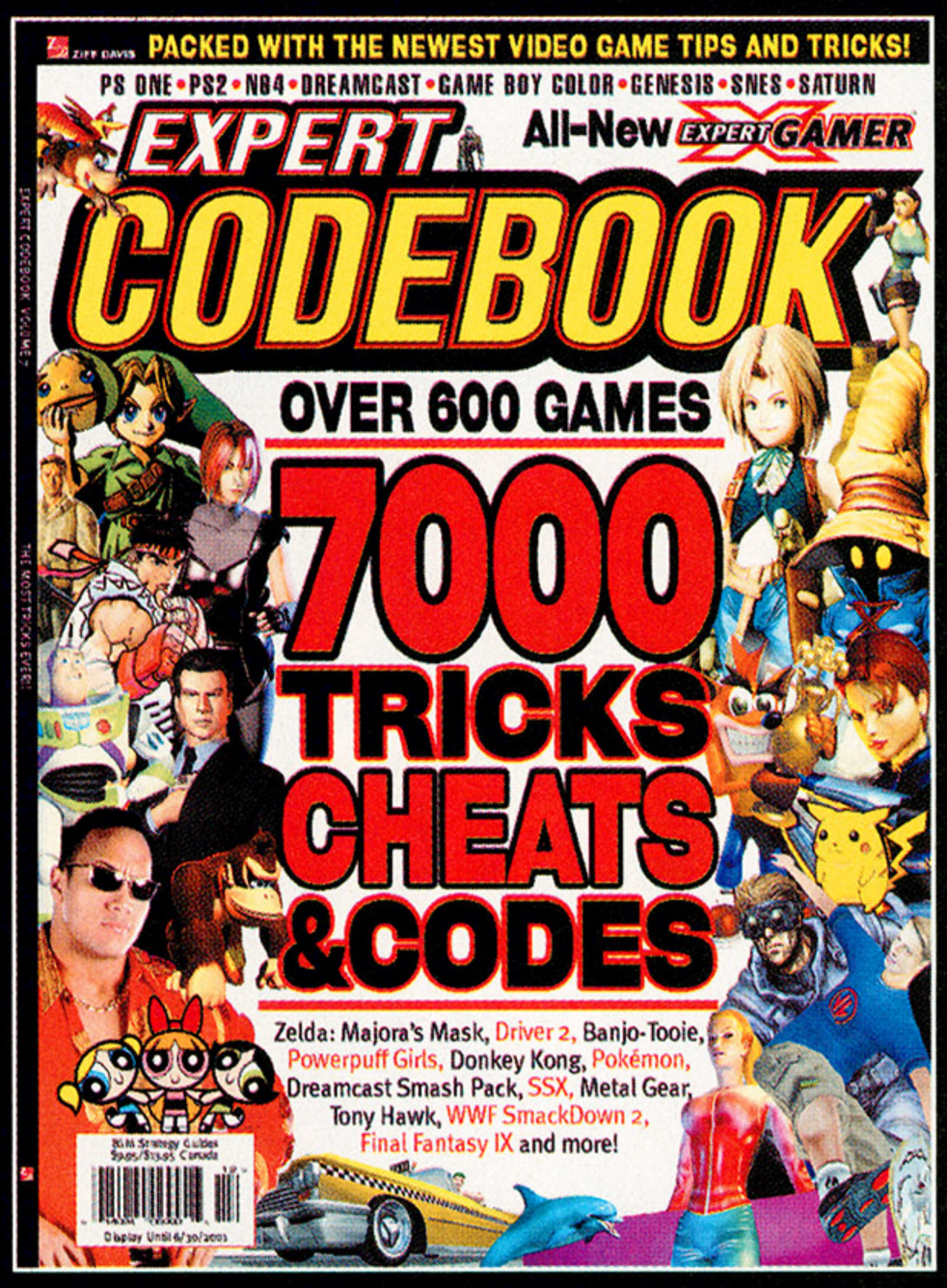

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Trick of the Month

1. **No Purchase Necessary:** To enter, send a letter or standard size postcard with your best trick codes for any video game to "Tricks of the Trade," P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338, or e-mail us at: tricks@ziffdavis.com. Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household. Entries must be received by June 15, 2001.

All entries become exclusive property of Sponsors and will not be acknowledged or returned. Sponsors assume no responsibility for lost, mutilated, late, illegible, incomplete, postage-due, or misdirected entries. Sponsors reserve the right to cancel this contest at any time with appropriate notice. Only one prize per family, organization, or household per issue. Winning entries may be printed in *EGM* and/or *Expert Gamer*, however, only one prize shall be awarded.

2. **Prizes:** First Prize winners will have their name and trick displayed in the magazine and will receive a video game cartridge selected by Sponsor. First Prize has an approximate retail value of $60.00. The best trick submitted by the First Prize winners will be declared the Grand Prize Winner. One Grand Prize winner will receive (in addition to the First Prize awards) one (1) Game Shark. Grand Prize has an approximate retail value of $99.95. Winners will be selected by a judging panel whose decisions are final. Winners shall be selected from all valid entries received. Entries shall be judged on the following criteria: (i) Uniqueness (25%); (ii) Novelty (25%); (iii) Accuracy (25%); and (iv) Originality (25%). Judging to be held on or about June 29, 2001. All prize winners will be notified by mail. Prize(s) are non-transferable. No substitutions of prize(s) are allowed, except at the option of Sponsors should the featured prizes become unavailable.

3. **Odds of Winning:** The number of winners and the odds of winning will be determined by number of valid entries received.

4. **Eligibility:** Contest open to residents of United States and Canada. Void in Quebec. Non-compliance with the time parameters contained herein or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification. Winners or their legal guardians shall sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within five days of receipt or forfeit prize. By acceptance of prize, winner(s) agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of Ziff Davis Media Inc., InterAct Accessories and their respective affiliates are not eligible. Neither Ziff Davis Media Inc., InterAct Accessories nor their respective affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions, or related companies are responsible for any damages, taxes, or expenses that consumers might incur as a result of this contest or receipt of prize. Winners accepting prizes agree that all prizes are awarded on the condition that Ziff Davis Media Inc., InterAct Accessories and their agents, representatives, and employees will have no liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses, or damages of any kind resulting from acceptance, possession, or use of the prizes.

5. **Winners List:** For a list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope identifying the month for which the winners list is requested to "Tricks of the Trade Winners List," P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3338. Requests for winners lists must be received by the 15th day of next month following the on-sale date of the publication. Allow four weeks for delivery of winners list.

6. **Restrictions:** Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

7. **Sponsors:** This contest is sponsored by Ziff Davis Media Inc. and InterAct Accessories, Inc. ©2000 Ziff Davis Media Inc. All Rights Reserved. Printed in USA.

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2. **Prizes:** One Grand Prize winner will receive one of the following prizes at Sponsor's sole option: One (1) SharkPad Pro 64^2 for N64; One (1) Barracuda for PlayStation; or One (1) Eclipse Stick for Saturn. Grand Prize has an approximate retail value of $29.99 U.S. Winners will be selected by the Letters Editor whose decisions are final. Winners shall be selected from all valid entries received. Entries shall be judged on the following criteria: (i.) Originality (50%); and (ii.) Topic (50%). Judging to be held on or about the 15th day of each month. All prize winners will be notified by mail. Prize(s) are non-transferable. No substitutions of prize(s) are allowed, except at the option of Sponsors should the featured prizes become unavailable. The odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply. FOR AN OFFICIAL COPY OF THE RULES, SEND A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE TO: LETTER OF THE MONTH CONTEST RULES, P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338.

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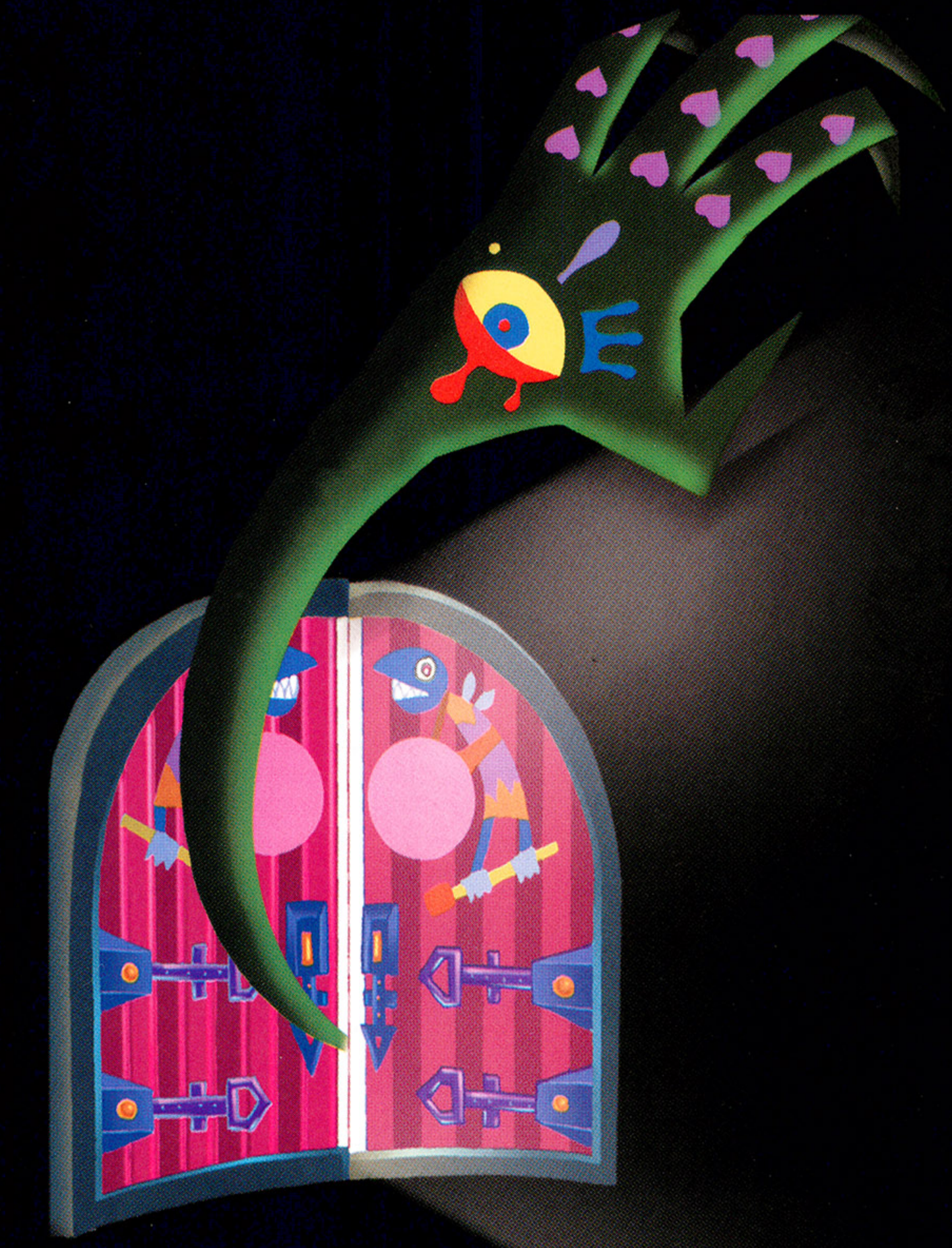

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Suggestive Themes

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