

Issue Fourteen/October 2002

Gamefreaks

PLAYSTATION 2

PC

PS ONE

XBOX

GAME BOY ADVANCE

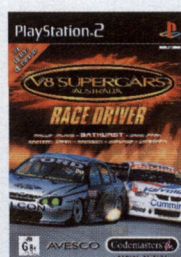
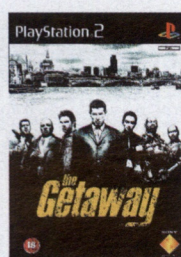
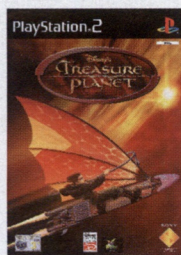
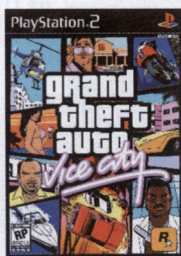
GAMECUBE



HALO
GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY
LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3.0
KINGDOM HEARTS
HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS
RALLISPORT CHALLENGE
STUNTMAN
ODDWORLD MUNCH'S ODDYSEE
TUROK EVOLUTION
DEAD OR ALIVE 3
AND MORE



Cut out and keep Christmas List.



This Christmas remember to be good and remember there is only one gaming platform with all these titles.

- ☐ Tekken 4
- ☐ Ninja Assault
- ☐ This is Soccer 2003
- ☐ Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
- ☐ Onimusha 2
- ☐ Formula One 2002
- ☐ Treasure Planet
- ☐ WRC II Extreme
- ☐ Ratchet & Clank
- ☐ Kingdom Hearts
- ☐ Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness
- ☐ Pro Evolution Soccer 2
- ☐ Alpine Racer 3
- ☐ The Getaway
- ☐ V8 Supercars
- ☐ Stuntman
- ☐ Devil May Cry 2
- ☐ Ty the Tasmanian Tiger
- ☐ Simpsons Skateboarding
- ☐ Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers
- ☐ WWF Smackdown: Shut your Mouth!
- ☐ Red Faction 2
- ☐ Burnout 2
- ☐ Undies
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Bike
- ☐ Blow up Angelina Jolie doll

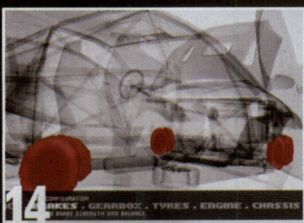
PlayStation®2



THE ONLY PLACE. THE THIRD PLACE.

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read me

It's been another frenetic month for us, what with the Xbox releasing, Sony's PS2 line-up announced, Nintendo slashing the price of the Cube, previews, dinners and parties to attend, more games than we know what to do with – and its only October!

In this issue we herald the arrival of the Xbox, which went on sale in New Zealand stores October 3. Turn to page 8 for our thoughts on Microsoft's remarkable new console and some of the games that we'll be seeing over the coming months.

The line-up of titles we have for you this month is unbelievable, kicking off with a feature review for the amazing Halo and on the PS2 we look at some of the biggest games of the year including Rockstar's Grand Theft Auto Vice City, the long awaited follow up to GTA3 and EA's big licensed titles The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers and Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.

Promising new PS2 titles Kingdom Hearts (the Disney/Squaresoft RPG) and Stuntman are joined by super sequels Colin McRae Rally 3.0 and Turok Evolution which we got to check out the GameCube.

Other Xbox reviews include launch favourites RalliSport Challenge, Oddworld Munch's Oddysee and Dead or Alive 3.

As always we have a lot of prizes, including PS2 and Xbox games and cool WaveBird controllers for the GameCube so get those entries in.

Next month we have an even bigger line-up including Ratchet and Clank, Age of Mythology, The Sims Online, Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness, WRC 2 Extreme, Ty the Tasmanian Tiger and oh so much more.

Spring is definitely in the air readers – feel the love?

thank you

Adrian, Amanda, Anne, Annie, Barney, Beanie, Becca, Ben, Casey, Chris, Craig, Daniel, Darren, Dave, Dean, Debbie, Deborah, Deftones, Ewan, Gamer Network, Izzy, Kenny, Lenska, Luc, Margie, Margaret, Mark, Matthew, Mike, Neal, Pam, Paul, Photonic, Pip, Poon, Pulp, Rachel, Robyn, Scotty, Steve, Teresa, Weezer, Wilf and Yunuen.

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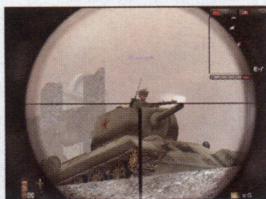
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Ty the Tasmanian Tiger and Sim City 4 were just two of the top EA games on show - we also took part in a Battlefield 1942 LAN tournament

EA UNVEIL BLOCKBUSTERS

Gamefreaks staff out in force at EA's preview event

EA's Imagine preview event was held late last month and Gamefreaks went along to check out the pre-Christmas line up.

The stars were out at Auckland's Planetarium - various members of New Zealand's media, including journalists, radio and TV personalities flocked to the event.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, Harry Potter: The Chamber of Secrets and The Sims Online headed the impressive line up of titles which included most of EA's top franchises.

There were guest speakers from EA's US development team (where 250 people have been working on the Two Towers game) and Weta, Wellington's award winning visual effects studio that have been working closely with Peter Jackson and EA in the making of the game.

Local EA boss Mike Wynands spoke of EA's commitment to localization.

It's no coincidence that we're starting to see games like Cricket and Rugby appearing on the PS2, Holden's and Fords being added to European luxury cars in Need for Speed and an upcoming add-on for Medal of Honor set in the Pacific - EA are now creating games expressly for our market.

Lord of the Rings on the big screen definitely stole the show, but there were plenty of other titles on display including FIFA 2003, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Ty the Tasmanian Tiger, Sim City 4, 007 James Bond: Nightfire - all destined for stores this side of Christmas.

Our afternoon was rounded off with a merciless Battlefield 1942 LAN tournament where Gamefreaks staffer Scott took out the top prize and walked away with \$500 worth of EA goodies - respect.

BIGWIG SHOWS OFF AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

AOE creator Bruce Shelley visited New Zealand to promote Microsoft's PC line-up



Microsoft Game Studios invited Gamefreaks along to preview three spectacular new titles. A bonus treat was the opportunity to chat with the man behind the AOE series and the upcoming Age of Mythology title, Bruce Shelley.

Bruce Shelly has around 20 years of experience in the gaming industry working with such greats as Sid Meier on Civilization and Railroad Tycoon to name a few. Shelley emphasised the fact that AOM had to be differentiated from the AOE series somewhat but at the same time keep all the existing gamers happy. The move to 3D has been one of the new features in AOM, Shelly believed that utilising 3D gave the developers a lot more scope.

AOM looked amazing up on the big screen. Shelly went through the different Greek, Norse and Egyptian mythologies. The different cultures offer some remarkable god powers; the most interesting was the meteorites which tore through the cities. AOM offers 15 map types and the inclusion of a random map generator.

For golfing fans there was Links 2003. Links veterans will notice that the 2003 version has 3D golfer models with plenty of new animations. It also includes some very sweet courses to play: Cabo del Sol, Gleneagles, Skeleton Coast Golf Club and New Zealand's very own Kauri Cliffs.

The last game on show was Combat Flight Simulator 3, which boasts a brand new graphics engine. Players can now fly all of the 18 aircraft in the game, and the selection includes medium bombers such as the British Mosquito as well as propeller and jet fighter aircraft. There's now a tactical map where gamers can turn the tide of war by defeating the enemy and gaining control of squares on the map grid.

All in all it was a great night showcasing the new and exciting PC titles coming from Microsoft Game Studios.

KILLER PS2 XMAS LINE-UP ANNOUNCED

Sony Computer Entertainment New Zealand (SCENZ) has announced its forthcoming sales and marketing programme - key to which is a range of titles exclusive to the PlayStation 2 format this Christmas.

Steve Dykes, SCENZ boss, says the PlayStation 2 Christmas software line-up represents the very best in video gaming.

"PlayStation 2 has simply gone from strength to strength over the last six months, and has totally dominated the video game console landscape despite competition from new entrants to the market.

"Now, for the all-important Christmas sales season, PlayStation 2 will again firmly demonstrate why it is the leader in all world markets and deliver the very best in gaming entertainment experiences."

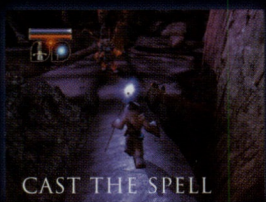
Dykes says the exclusive titles are the result of serious investment by the world's best game development studios.

The exclusive titles include eagerly awaited updates such as Tekken 4, WRC II Extreme, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness, V8 Supercars, Onimusha 2, Devil May Cry 2, Burnout 2, Red Faction 2 and WWF Smackdown - Shut your Mouth!, plus exciting new chartbusters The Getaway, Ratchet & Clank, Stuntman, Kingdom Hearts and the sure-fire hit Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers.

Dykes says PlayStation 2 owners should be very excited, as they are going to be "absolutely spoilt rotten for choice".

the LORD OF THE RINGS™

— THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING™ —



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SWING THE BLADE



WEAR THE RING

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EVER WRITTEN!

COMING SOON

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PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE

PC CD-ROM

VIVENDI
UNIVERSAL
games



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WRC 2 EXTREME

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: SCE ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER



SCE (Sony Computer Entertainment) recently revealed the second of its popular World Rally Championship series, World Rally Championship 2, better known to PS2 fans as WRC2 Extreme.

Recent releases, RalliSport Challenge, Colin McRae Rally 3.0, V-Rally 3 and now WRC2 Extreme have made this a golden age for rally fans on the various consoles.

Unlike many of the others, this first party SCE title comes with an official license and a nice focus on reproducing a realistic, yet enjoyable experience for the gamer.

As expected, the visuals have been spruced up markedly. The cars look better than ever with two and a half times more polygons than the original (now more than 20,000 per car) which makes the surfaces appear smooth and highly reflective.

Of course, your car won't look new for long – damage makes it possible to go from egotism to humility in the blinking of an eye.

WRC2, now bigger than before, features 50 real name drivers, 14 international Rally's and a total of 115 accurate stages with multi-player options for up to 4 players.

The various courses are extremely convincing; many of them 3D mapped using satellite technology. The final few months of this year is seeing an influx of top-notch Rally titles, which isn't a bad thing at all, considering New Zealand gamers ongoing love affair with the sport – check out our full review in next month's issue.

QUANTUM REDSHIFT

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT ■ RELEASE: OCTOBER

Obvious comparisons to WipeOut aside, Quantum Redshift looks spectacular. We played it first at the swanky Xbox launch party earlier this month and with my (WipeOut, F-Zero and Extreme G) background, found myself right at home at the controls.

Rather than gliding around the snaking tracks maintaining consistent speed ala WipeOut, Quantum Redshift encourages players to attack corners, braking late and hard to negotiate hairpins, and the combat is a lot more intense.

There are distinctive characters and numerous tracks and craft to choose from - each ship comes with built-in weaponry and defence systems: guided missiles, lasers, shields etc.

The tracks are quite varied – players will be faced with everything from giant loops to icy lakes, which look great and highly detailed, even in split-screen.

The sound is a great feature - especially if you're using a 5.1 system and of course, the obligatory soundtrack is crammed with foot-tapping electronic hits. Quantum Redshift will be reviewed in full next month.



STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER

PLATFORM: PS2/XBOX/CUBE ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER

Star Wars titles are not all that uncommon in the world of video gaming.

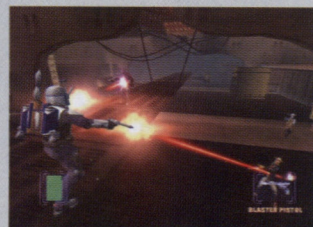
Some past spin-offs however have been more common than others.

Basing a game around Jango Fett (played in the movie Episode Two by New Zealand's Temuera Morrison) is definitely a promising start.

As the renowned Bounty Hunter, you are hired by the sinister Count Dooku who has become concerned about a mysterious cult and wants their leader eradicated.

Players will travel through 16 levels, all designed around the seemingly endless Star Wars universe – there are six planets, including Tatooine and Coruscant.

These are populated with over 100 distinct Star Wars characters – including Dugs, Hutts, Jawa's but no confirmation yet on Ewoks – almost everyone has a score to settle with them. Players will be able to fly around using Jango's patented rocket backpack adding another dimension to the gameplay.



it's what lies ahead

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- Play Magazine.



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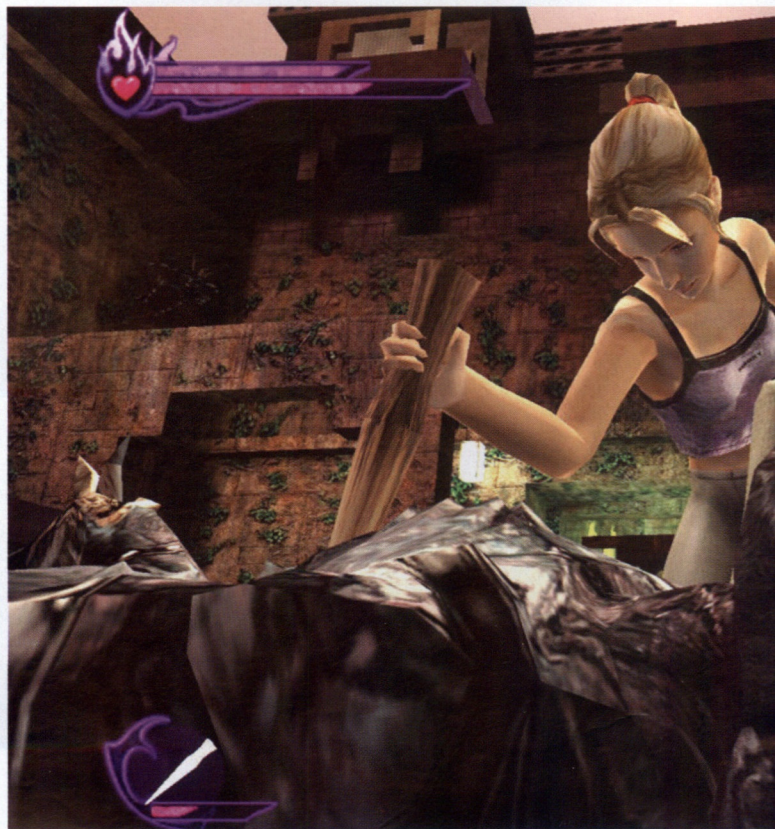
GENIUS AT PLAY™

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BORN IN THE USA - XBOX UNCOVERED

Okay, deep breath, the Xbox is here. There has been a lot said about this new console, where it's come from and whether it can go the distance and be a stayer in the market. Well, all the crew here at Gamefreaks have spent some time in the company of this little black box, and let me tell you, it's all very interesting!

Unwrapping the beast was pretty exciting. We'd read in both the pre-release information coming through and in the international reaction post-release that the box was a no-nonsense size and, in contrast to the cutesy cool or the hi-tech slick look of the other consoles this thing has a presence and a look of its own. Big, aggressive, macho even – something we've come to think of as US Defence Spending chic. Of the 3 gaming set-ups we have here – bedroom, desk/office, lounge/home theatre – the Xbox was most at



"Inside the mind of a console gamer there is a definite right and wrong way to go about things"

home in the lounge, squatting menacingly amongst the other black boxes stacked into the entertainment centre, pumping through the biggest screen and an audio set-up that could best exploit the Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

That's when you realise that the crazy kids at Redmond *do* get it. Inside the mind of a console gamer there is a definite right and wrong way to go about things.

When Microsoft announced they were going to take on the console market and try to win those hearts and minds, the gamer press was aflutter with scepticism and scoffing – few people believed that folks from

the computer world could make the subtle shift and truly deliver a console experience that was competitive.

The difference is that the Xbox sprang from the loins of a software company. While the hardware specs make interesting reading, a lot of work has been done ensuring that the game developers and publishers are able to craft good game experiences. Titles sell consoles, and as a new entrant the Xbox was going to require more than simple ports of existing PC games. Although it was developed in a remarkably short time from concept to delivery, the Xbox benefited from some radical

decisions – not PC compatible! – that have marked it as a genuine bid to up the stakes.

All fine in theory, but do the games play any good? Reviews of Halo, Dead or Alive 3 and Oddworld Munch's Oddysee in this issue suggest that the Xbox is off to a good start.

From the first time you pick up the controller things feel pretty good. It's a nice size, big enough to be comfortable for the ham-fisted and with a nice heft to it, but not tiring to hold and work through an all night Halo mission. While great for driving and perfect for Halo, there is a smaller controller for the petite gamer and expect a host of third party controllers tailored to specific gameplay.

If you've invested in a quality home theatre audio, the Xbox is right there with you. The right amp with a sub and some satellites can transform



The Xbox launch party was the main event in Auckland earlier this month. Hundreds of punters attended along with retailers, media and assorted VIPs to check out Xbox games and see the international acts on offer. Daniel Berry (seen above) flew all the way from Christchurch to purchase the first Xbox sold in New Zealand.



The sheer number and diversity of the titles available already make this easily the biggest console launch this country has ever seen. There's a lot still to look forward to this year with EA Games' Buffy the Vampire Slayer (left) already getting rave reviews, and we like what we've seen so far of Jet Set Radio Future (top). Microsoft's platformer Blinx The Time Sweeper (above) is not far away and there are expected to be around 150 games available before Christmas

the gaming experience. From helping you deal with multiple incoming alien scum to letting you know there's a RalliSport car on your right shoulder, audio is becoming an increasingly important component in gameplay. The Xbox Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound delivers game cues, background audio and music in thumping style.

The future for the Xbox looks good, the games to date play very well and with the broadband capability built-in with the Ethernet port on the box, Xbox is ready for the online multiplayer games set to revolutionise the industry. Xbox delivers quality in all the fundamentals for a console, and promises so much more. As the new kid on the block, Xbox has a lot to prove – and on behalf of gamers everywhere we say bring it on!

INSIDE XBOX



The Xbox is powered by a 733 MHz Intel Pentium III processor and a 250 MHz custom 3D graphics unit (GPU) by NVIDIA. This GPU is around two generations ahead of what is available on the PC.

The custom-designed chip can generate 125 million polygons per second, and output resolutions of up to 1920 x 1080 are supported. The front of the robust looking Xbox has four USB controller ports and the built in 10/100 Ethernet communications port will allow online gaming via broadband connections.

Other key components integrated are the 64MB of unified memory (developers can allocate this to the CPU and GPU as they see fit) 8Gb hard disk drive, 256 audio channels with Dolby Digital support, 4X DVD Player, HDTV support and broadband capability. The hard drive will not be only used for storing game data but it could be used for downloading demos of upcoming games.

Recommended accessories include the DVD Playback Kit, Advanced AV Pack and extra Controllers.

GOT TITLES?

These are some of the games coming out for the Xbox over the next few months.

4x4 Evo 2 ■ AFL Live 2003 ■ Aggressive Inline ■ Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding ■ Azurik ■ Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance ■ Barbarian ■ Batman: Dark Tomorrow ■ Battlefield 1942 ■ Black Stone: Magic & Steel ■ Blade II ■ Blinx: The Time Sweeper ■ Blood Rayne ■ Blood Wake ■ Bruce Lee Quest of the Dragon ■ Championship Manager 2001/2002 ■ Chase: Hollywood Stunt Driver ■ Circus Maximus ■ Colin McRae Rally 3 ■ Commandos 2 ■ Conflict: Desert Storm ■ Crazy Taxi 3 ■ Dark Summit ■ Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX II ■ David Beckham Soccer ■ Dead or Alive 3 ■ Dead to Rights ■ Deathrow ■ Dynasty Warriors 3 ■ Enclave ■ F1 Championship Season 2002 ■ FIFA 2003 ■ FILA Tennis ■ Fuzion Frenzy ■ Gauntlet Dark Legacy ■ Genma Onimusha ■ Gravity Games BMX ■ Gun Metal ■ Gun Valkyrie ■ Halo ■ Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets ■ Hitman 2: Silent Assassin ■ House of the Dead 3 ■ Hunter: The Reckoning ■ James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire ■ James Bond 007: Nightfire ■ Jet Set Radio Future ■ Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer ■ Largo Winch: Empire Under Threat ■ Loons: The Fight for Fame ■ Mad Dash Racing ■ Madden NFL 2003 ■ Mafia ■ Marvel Vs Capcom 2 ■ Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 ■ Max Payne ■ Mech Assault ■ Medal of Honor Frontline ■ Mercedes Benz World Racing ■ MicroMachines ■ Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing ■ Minority Report ■ Morrowind: The Elder Scrolls 3 ■ MX2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael ■ Myst III: Exile ■ NBA Inside Drive ■ NBA Inside Drive 2003 ■ NBA Live 2003 ■ Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 ■ New Legends ■ NFL Fever 2003 ■ NHL 2003 ■ NHL Hitz 2003 ■ NHL Hockey Hitz 2002 ■ Nickelodeon Party Blast ■ Nightcaster ■ Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee ■ Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis ■ Outlaw Golf ■ Outlaw Volleyball ■ Phantom Crash ■ Pro Tennis WTA Tour ■ Project Gotham Racing ■ Quantum Redshift ■ RalliSport Challenge ■ Rally Fusion: Race of Champions ■ Red Card Soccer 2003 ■ Reign of Fire ■ Robotech Battlecry ■ Seabattle ■ Sega GT 2002 ■ Sega Soccer Slam ■ Shadow of Memories ■ Shrek ■ Silent Hill 2 ■ Inner Fears ■ Slam Tennis ■ Smashing Drive ■ Sneakers ■ Spider-Man: The Movie ■ Splashtown ■ Spy Hunter ■ SSX Tricky ■ Star Wars Episode 1: Obi Wan ■ Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2 ■ Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter ■ Starsky and Hutch ■ Street Hoops ■ Superman: The Man of Steel ■ Taz Wanted ■ Terminator: Dawn of Fate ■ Test Drive: Off Road Wide Open ■ Test Drive: Overdrive ■ The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring ■ The Simpson's Road Rage ■ The Thing ■ Tiger Woods PGA ■ Timesplitters ■ Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell ■ Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon ■ Tony Hawk Pro Skater 3 ■ Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4 ■ Total Immersion Racing ■ Toxic Grind ■ Transworld Snowboarding ■ Transworld Surf ■ Ty the Tasmanian Tiger ■ Unreal Championship ■ Vexx ■ Whacked! ■ Wreckless - The Yakuza Missions ■ WWE Raw ■ WWII: Prisoner of War ■ X-Men: Next Dimension ■ Yager

HALO

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: BUNGIE ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Bungie have created first person shooting perfection on the Xbox - with unrivalled options, flawless visuals, seamless gameplay, fantastical weaponry and utterly addictive missions

Halo is the best shooter ever to appear on any console and is a major victory for Microsoft who are over the moon at what has already been achieved with this launch title.

The first-person shooting genre has regained some momentum in the console games market through the strength of PS2 titles like Red Faction, Medal of Honor, and TimeSplitters but before these, we'd need to time warp back to the aging N64 shooters Perfect Dark or the great Goldeneye to find anything worthwhile.

But like a laser blast right between the eyes, Halo has flooded the gaming world, emerging as the undeniable king of all console shooters.

The year is 2552 - an aggressive alien race known as the Covenant has been destroying outer colonies in search of earth.

In an effort to lure the aliens away from our world, your ship makes an uncharted jump to the furthest corners of the galaxy with the space invaders in hot pursuit.

You are the Master Chief, an adroit cyborg soldier hurriedly thawed from a cryogenic snooze to help save your ship, now crippled and under Covenant attack.

The first mission doubles as training for the rigours ahead and is seamlessly integrated into the story and opening cinematics, effectively fast tracking player immersion.

Deep in space, your crew is forced to crash land on a huge ring-shaped relic: Halo. Ten thousand kilometres in diameter, the immense loop has a Death Star like exterior yet it supports an entire eco system on the other side, complete with oceans and islands.

Each mission is refreshingly varied with a measured build



in intensity which makes Halo almost impossible to resist once you're underway.

Apart from between missions, the load times are non existent (thanks to the internal hard drive) and the smooth flow of the gameplay is aided by auto saves at regular checkpoints.

The weapons are a highlight - you start with only a pistol, albeit a highly impressive one that comes with a 2 x zoom feature for the all important headshot.

The diverse enemies come in several classes - the smaller aliens are even somewhat endearing until they toss a plasma grenade at you or open up with a Needle Gun.

The aliens that carry the glowing shields are known as

Jackals - they can be a nuisance though worse still are the Ultimates - these hard-liners are over eight foot of pure killing machine. Their shielding allows them to withstand enormous amounts of damage - you'll unload over 100 rounds with your MA5B assault rifle before they drop.

Sitting at the top of the food chain are the Hunters, these fearsome 12 foot monsters come with a heavy shield, devastating firepower and an insatiable appetite for killing marines.

You can only juggle a couple weapons at any one time so it's important to find the one that works for each level. The MA5B is great for killing alien grunts, with short bursts of fire,



though you'll need something with a lot more stopping power later on.

Luckily there's a high powered sniper rifle, a rocket launcher and a host of hi-tech alien weaponry to choose from.

At various stages of the game, AI Marines come in handy in taking the heat off. Use the backup when it's around because often you'll find yourself alone, hunted and wishing you had a few grunts nearby to draw some fire.

In Halo everything works exactly as you would want it to. The control system is straightforward and intuitive making it instantly playable, even if you're still new to the Xbox controller.

Bungie spent around three



years developing the game and haven't bothered hiding their influences. Halo is a tribute to many games that came before it – Marathon, Quake, Goldeneye and TimeSplitters all paved the way for this evolution.

Halo is played predominantly on foot, but there are a lot of vehicles that you can operate, including the indestructible Warthog – an all terrain, all purpose jeep and there's the 66 ton Scorpion tank, with enough armour and guns on it to satisfy an entire platoon of marines.

Cliff top doorways are accessed using your flight skills in the smoothly manoeuvrable Banshee.

Packing a huge amount of game onto a DVD – the single player missions are challenging enough to make victory truly gratifying but you can also play them co-op with a friend using split screen.

For those that prefer playing multi-player, there are boundless options – including co-op missions and death match or capture the flag type scenarios using either double or quad split screen. But for the ultimate Halo experience, we recommend that Xbox owners get together to link multiple consoles and televisions.

Microsoft couldn't have dreamed for a better flagship title for the Xbox.

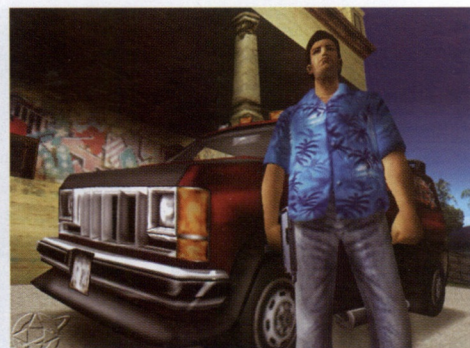
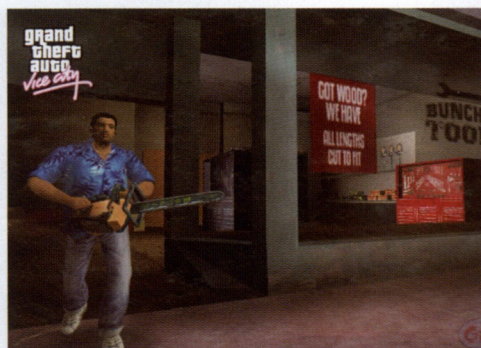


Master Chief is an unbreakable lead character, and he has a really cool space suit - kind of Solid Snake meets Buzz Lightyear



GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER:TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR GAMES ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER 8



New hand-to-hand combat moves make it even more tempting to raise hell when walking the streets but bite off more than you can chew and you'll be dead as disco

Last year's Grand Theft Auto III was widely acknowledged as the game of the year on the PlayStation 2 – or any platform for that matter.

This new title is not a sequel, nor is it an add-on - Grand Theft Auto Vice City is a whole new game and law unto itself.

Rockstar Games could have easily gotten away with a routine sequel – polished up graphics, new missions and a few new cars but what they have achieved with Vice City is something totally new and quite spectacular.

Set in Miami (or a city closely resembling Florida's capitol) during the 80s, Vice City has roughly twice the amount of missions of GTA III, double the playing area of Liberty City (players can access all areas, nothing is locked – including 50

indoor locations), three times the amount of weaponry, over 100 vehicles (compared to GTA III's 40) including motorbikes and jet skis with as many as 9000 pedestrians wandering the streets.

There are around ten hours of 80's music, including hits from Hall and Oates, A Flock of Seagulls and Huey Lewis and the News (to name only a few) adding to the atmospherics of Vice City.

Graphically, Vice City is streets ahead of its predecessor and fans of GTA III will be stunned at the new level of detail – RockStar constructed a new engine, with new lighting effects (lots of neon) and improved texture mapping on the various smooth, chromed surfaces of a typically garish 80s metropolis.

Unlike the nameless lead

character in the previous game, the star of Vice City has a name and a voice – he is Tommy Vercetti, played by Ray Liotta from the Scorsese classic gangster flick Goodfella's who provides the voice along with a host of other Hollywood character actors who you will recognise.

There are 90 minutes of cut scenes that shape the non-linear story, an entire film worth of beautifully pre-rendered cinematics.

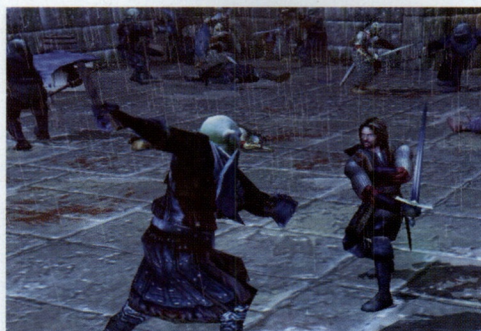
Grand Theft Auto Vice City is the ultimate sequel in that RockStar have managed to improve nearly every aspect of a game that was already adored by millions.

RockStar Games' president Sam Houser believes Grand Theft Auto Vice City will be the best video game ever made and its difficult to disagree.

As this concept art shows, there are plenty of alternatives to a straight power play with a good range of characters showing sinuous movement to dodge, duck and dive

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA GAMES ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER 1



There are five bosses, including the Cave Troll (seen above) and Saruman the White. Many of the game's locations will be recognisable to fans of the films – from the treacherous Mines of Moria to Helm's Deep

I've seen Jackson's first Lord of the Rings film about a trillion times since it was released on DVD, so needless to say I'm up for some good old fashioned, swooshy sword fighting.

My first actual look at the game was at EA's recent media event – selecting Aragorn I quickly found myself surrounded by giant Orcs, flailing wildly and loving every second of it but as we know, the hearts of men are easily corrupted, and the ring of power has a will of its own.

Aragorn predominantly uses a two-handed sword but carries a bow as a long-range weapon.

In addition players can choose either Legolas (who ordinarily uses a bow with long knives as melee weapons) or Gimli with his giant axe – all the weaponry can be upgraded and new attacks unlocked.

I quickly discerned a couple of key commands – a block, a kick, the customary swipe and a swordsman's interpretation of a haymaker.

The small crowd that had gathered were not overly impressed by my semi-psychotic-running-from-Orc-to-Orc-mash-fest and quickly left the auditorium.

The fight sequences are reminiscent of the action combat title Gauntlet – remember Gauntlet? If not, you missed out on some spectacular



"If you want him, come and claim him!" The film's stars lent their voices and were even motion captured giving the hectic battles an even more accurate tone

carnage – bodies strewn everywhere in the wickedest coin-op slash fest ever.

They say the first bite is with the eye and initial impact was definitely the mind-blowing graphics – the characters in the game were made with the help of 'digital doubles' – detailed recreations of the films stars, used during the production of CGI sequences.

EA Games approached Weta Studios in Wellington and through their collaboration they've come up with a wonderfully cinematic experience.

Having secured the rights

to produce games based on Peter Jackson's Oscar winning films it's evident that this is a huge project for EA Games who have had 250 people working on Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers.

Despite the game's title, the levels are inspired by the first two films – all 16 action packed levels are segued by clips from both films.

This game, Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers is a welcome return to the good old days, where adventure, tactical fighting and clever character selection was all that mattered.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3.0

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2



Now that the series has graduated to the PS2 and Xbox, the pretty weather effects and overall presentation are considerably more realistic. Colin McRae Rally 3.0 oozes atmosphere, especially in Championship mode

Codemasters' Colin McRae Rally burst onto the scene back in 1999 offering PlayStation fans their best rallying title to date – the game featured handling physics way better than those in V-Rally and graphics that made Sega Rally (on the antique Saturn) look like a dog's breakfast.

CMR left the competition eating dust with its accurate tracks and nerve wracking time-trial based gameplay.

The PSX sequel proved to be even better and the series continues to evolve – the Subaru has gone, with McRae now racing for the Ford Focus team.

With so many good rallying titles around this year, the pressure was on Codemasters to come up with something extraordinary.

RallyFusion (Xbox) is getting big raps, likewise WRC2 on the PS2 and RalliSport Challenge looks highly impressive as one of the Xbox launch titles.

For the series' first appearance on next generation consoles, Codemasters were not satisfied with simply a refined version of CMR2.

They've spent an entire year with Colin McRae and his Ford team and it seems that among other things, they have discovered there is more to



rallying than driving flat out in the mud.

Colin McRae Rally 3.0 is possibly the world's first rally RPG – players will get to enter a championship (as Colin himself) experiencing all the highs and lows of an international season.

This aspect of the game is known as Championship mode and requires both perseverance and skill. For more impatient drivers who don't care to wait, there are rudimentary quick race options, time-trials and split screen for multiplayer action.

Maintaining the perfect racing line while cornering is something that will take some getting used to, especially with



the insane speeds and narrow tracks – the key is to anticipate, and prepare before you reach the corner and it's important to learn what you can get away with in terms of your speed.

Severe damage causes panel and door loss revealing co-driver Nicky Grist who sometimes appears to be clinging to the roll bar inside.

The game takes players to Australia, Finland, Japan, Spain and the UK experiencing gravel, dirt, mud and tarmac surfaces on fictitious (no WRC license) tracks.

The series has often been recognised for superior handling and gameplay ahead of its graphical style; however

Colin McRae Rally 3.0 is turning heads all over the world with the sheer speed and beauty of its visual representation of the sport.

Extraordinary new weather effects making driving in the rain a realistic and harrowing experience.

The move to PS2 has certainly helped – with cleaner, sharper textures on the car and backdrops and a more impressive draw distance.

With its focus on realism, CMR3 is not all just thrills and spills, it's a journey and an insight into the often perilous life of a Rally driver.

PlayStation®2

Grand Theft Auto

Vice City



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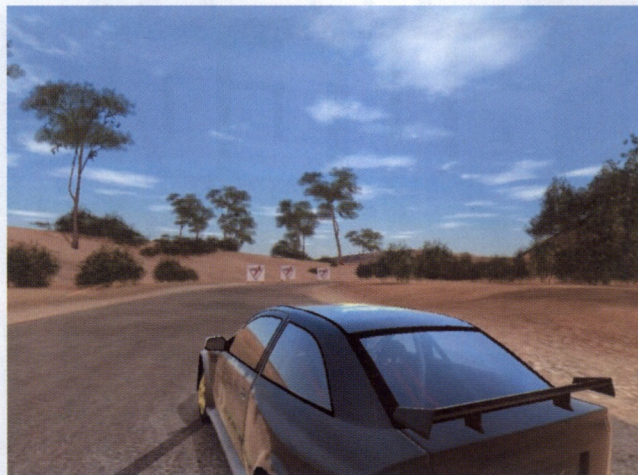
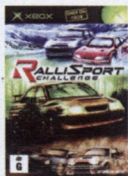
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RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: DICE ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE:OUT NOW



The most noticeable evolution in the graphics are the wonderfully textured tracks and surfaces that catch the light beautifully - watch out for sun strike on the ice

Uncompromisingly beautiful, addictive and fun, RalliSport Challenge is a new force in virtual motor sport.

Every console needs top racing games and the Xbox can boast several amongst the launch titles.

The opening stages have you speeding through dusty African plains. First time Xbox drivers are treated to an array of visual effects, including sunlight reflecting off textured tracks, gorgeous lens flares and the occasional stampeding zebra.

Of course looks aren't everything and any driving game is only ever as good as the handling. Thankfully there are no problems here either - the Xbox controller provides uncomplicated "right trigger gas, left trigger brake" speed control and the left thumb stick offers kindly responsive steering.

The combination of arcade-like action, blended with rock solid control system creates a spectacular racing atmosphere. Rallisport Challenge includes four modes of racing - Career mode consists of finishing a series of tournaments - Rally, Ice Racing, Hill Climb, and Rallycross - Rally and Hill Climb



Having played RalliSport almost daily since the game arrived, the best advice we can offer beginners hungry for success is to always go hard but don't crash - easy!

are point A to point B stages, and Ice Racing and Rallycross features four cars lapping on the track at once.

Despite the exceedingly high detail in the cars, tracks and backgrounds, the frame rate moves like a rocket in any of the four available views.

Rallisport Challenge features over 25 fully licensed cars from world famous manufacturers like Ford, Subaru, Peugeot, Audi and Citroen: the list goes on and on.

There are around 50 tracks but the game begins with most of them locked - there are four

international events from the get go and points gained from winning these will unlock the rest. If you're impatient, trying using the player name "WheelToWheel" to unlock additional tracks and cars.

It's difficult to find anything wrong with this game - yes, it is very demanding at times (like a Rally title should be) but there are beginner options to cater for rookies

Microsoft Games Studios have released word of an upcoming PC version and we'll bring you more on that as details become available.

TUROK EVOLUTION

PLATFORM: GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ OUT NOW



Turok: Dinosaur Hunter was enormously popular when it arrived all those years ago – N64 owners were ravenous for some post-Goldeneye action and the opportunity to load up on cool futuristic guns and raise hell in a prehistoric playground was far too much to resist.

There have been sequels but it's been a while since we've seen anything any really good, until now maybe.

The Dino-hunter series is back and available across several platforms but the version we got to play was for the GameCube.

Turok Evolution is a prequel, returning the series to its primitive roots.

The story takes you back in time to before the original, telling the tale of Tal'Set – the trigger-happy American Indian chap who's killed more dinosaurs than the ice age.

We found that the best approach with TE was to be aggressive from the outset – no hiding behind the lush flora and

fauna for this review, just lots of dead dinosaurs and big grins on our faces.

Anyone reading this that thinks it's a bit mean to kill dinosaurs, hasn't been cornered by one with nothing but a small weapons arsenal to protect you.

There are countless weapons – the trusty War Club, the basic bow, the more deadly Tek Bow, but you don't have to be David Attenborough to know that you can't bring down a T-Rex with an arrow, luckily there are lots of guns – big guns, small guns, automatic guns, pistols, shotguns, machine guns, and even higher powered weaponry in rocket launchers, flamethrowers, plasma cannon, antigrav beam, and many others.

The multiplayer for the game is really good, and there are a lot of options and although this is not the best FPS you'll see, it's a great return to form for the Turok series.

COOL OFF THIS SUMMER!



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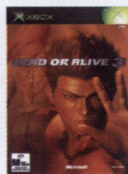


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DEAD OR ALIVE 3

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: TECMO ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



After falling about laughing over the endless hooter jokes fuelled by the original Dead or Alive, developers Tecmo shook off the criticism aimed at their 3 'double D' fighter and came back strong with a capable and energetic sequel for the PS2 and Dreamcast.

Now the series has popped up once again as an Xbox exclusive and already Dead or Alive 3 has sold well over a million copies worldwide.

Graphically, the game is flawless. The opening movie shows dozens of seabirds carried by the wind above a beach bathed in twilight. This kind of sweet scenery is unrelenting throughout the various locations, now richer in detail and with multiple levels to scrap on.

Every good fighting franchise needs strong characters – hard-hitting newcomers include DJ Zack, wrestler (and Hulk Hogan look-alike) Bass and a bunch of other tough guys.

But the real stars of DOA3 are the ladies – namely firm favourites Lei Fang and Kasumi, capably supported by Tina, Helena and Ayane, and joined by new ass-kicking hottie Hitomi.

There are any number of ways to enjoy DOA3 - story mode, Time attack, Tag Battle, Survival, Team Battle, Versus Mode, Watch Mode (this lets you sit on your chuff while the AI thumps the crap out of each other), Sparring Mode and Theatre mode.

With all this variety and numerous multiplayer opportunities, DOA3 stands out even amongst the top 3D fighting games of the new era.

The series continues to evolve - there's a spin-off title on the way starring the girls of DOA in a bikini beach volleyball tournament.



ODDWORLD MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD INHABITANTS ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Abe still has the ability to possess and control other characters and Munch, despite his acute deformities, knows a few tricks too

The first Oddworld title was such a unique gaming experience that it was met with almost universal adoration - the sequel was satisfactory but its gameplay and narrative were purely an extension of the original.

Abe's ongoing saga will be told in four chapters - the first was split into two PSX games, and Oddworld Munch's Oddysee is the long awaited second episode in which Abe has a brand new co-star - Munch is a weird amphibious creature that looks like a fish that swallowed a set of bagpipes.

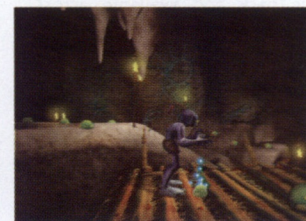
The most obvious addition to the series is a whole other dimension – unlike the previous side scrolling platformers, Oddworld has been brought to life on the Xbox in magnificent 3D.

There's always been trepidation in Oddworld – what's the deal with Abe's sewn up lips? And then there were the slaves with their eyes sewn shut, digging up the bones of their ancestors in Abe's Exodus. Who designs these games – Hannibal Lector?

Despite its darker side, the ever-flatulent Abe and his buddies offer regular laughs – and the green theme that runs throughout the game is subtle, not bossy or preachy.

As always, there are countless gruesome ways to die – Munch will be mauled by mutant dogs, bitch slapped to death by E.T look-alikes, and regularly gets his squeaky wheelchair blown up - with him still in it.

The gameplay is imaginative and clever, the graphics are out of this world but it will take both dedication and brainpower to beat this game and there are cool alternate endings to add replay value.



KINGDOM HEARTS

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: SCE ■ PRICE: \$119.95 ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER 22



Our hero ducks to safety and lets Goofy take one for the team! The combination of famous characters works wonderfully well and the various Disney worlds are brought to life beautifully on the PS2

When it comes to RPG gaming on your PS2, there is only one developer you'd turn to – Squaresoft.

This time they've come up with something a little different, creating an RPG with all the trappings of a traditional Final Fantasy title, combined with the ever engaging characters of Disney.

Kingdom Hearts has been getting great press since E3, with fans and critics alike singing its praises.

The line-up of animated all-stars includes Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy and as many as 100 Disney personalities.

Added to these is a veritable who's who from Square's own stable – including favourites Cloud, Yuffie, Squall, Aerith and Sephiroth, who you eventually get to fight.

The frequent battles are slightly different in that everything happens in real-time, so no meandering through your menu of attacks or potions while your opponent waits politely – you're like to get slapped upside the head while you rummage through your options.

So combat is not just child's play, players will die from time to time, often during Kingdom Hearts' gripping boss battles.

The seamless 2D animation of the Disney characters works wonderfully well in Square's 3D world – it is an incredible achievement to create a game brimming with so many vastly different characters.

The game is set across nine memorable Disney worlds and will take on average about 50 hours to complete, which represents a decent swag of game time for any RPG fan.



HARRY POTTER: CHAMBER OF SECRETS

PLATFORM:VARIOUS ■ PUBLISHER:EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA GAMES ■ PRICE: PS2 \$129.95 ■ RELEASE:NOVEMBER 8



The graphics in the PS2 version are very sharp – here young Harry explores the halls of Hogwarts

Harry's back at Hogwarts for year two of his schooling to be the next big wizard – aided by the supporting cast from the films.

The first display I visited at EA's recent games preview was the Harry Potter room – there were three versions (PC, PSX and PS2) of Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets on show.

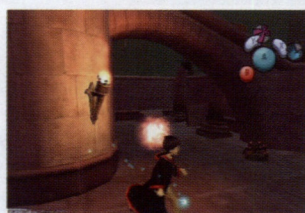
The teeny magician is making his debut on the PlayStation 2 – there was no PS2 game last year because EA felt that they didn't have time to create a title worthy of the film or the platform.

Potter promises to be a huge license for EA who are well aware of the high expectations of fans the world over.

Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets is a blanket release – shipping simultaneously across all major formats on the day the movie opens.

EA have created a dedicated game engine for this new Potter title, which looks to have been well worthwhile – the in-game aesthetics are vastly improved from last year's effort, with notable new lighting effects.

It's evident that the game is aimed at younger gamers but with a revamped, enhanced control system, it is now markedly easier to handle – now, more than ever, fans of the books and films will be able to experience again and again all the adventures of everyone's favourite wizard.



The gameplay is a mixture of 3D action/adventure, level exploration and puzzles galore – players will still be able to have a spectacular game of Quidditch – how wizard!

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STUNTMAN

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRADES ■ DEVELOPER: REFLECTIONS ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



If you have wondered how to become one of those crazy stunt drivers from movies like *The French Connection* and *Gone in 60 Seconds*, *Stuntman* may be a great place to start.

Stuntman has three modes: career mode, a stunt arena construction mode, and a driving mode.

The story itself is pretty straightforward. You're a rookie stuntman starting out in independent (low-budget) films working up in the ranks to work on Hollywood hit flicks that accompany a higher payout.

The cut-scenes fill out your character and the atmosphere



The environment is totally unforgiving of sloppy work behind the wheel and time limits are tight, so developing an intuitive approach to the action is essential



in the game contributes to the 'on-set' feel for the stunt fan in us all.

As you advance in the storyline new cars and toys are unlocked for the Stunt Arena, where you can mix and match parts to create your own action. It's no drama to drop in a couple of choice items and whip up a spectacular for the appreciative crowd, or you can painstakingly plan out sequenced runs for maximum action.

This title really forces you to get better, which is a good feeling that most games can't re-produce.

The graphics seem impressive when you take into account that *Stuntman* features shadow casting.



You actually feel that you are in a living breathing world with pedestrians walking about, traffic, interactive objects and explosions.

Stuntman is a great, original driving game which will have you hooked. It delivers thrills, spills and all that other cool stuff that your mother would never let you try at home.

walking with dinosaurs

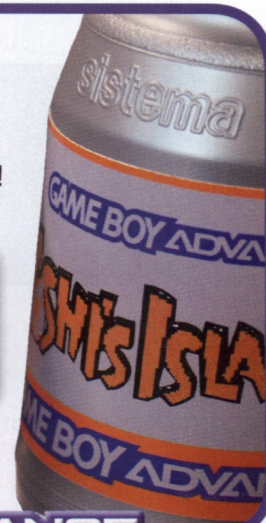
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PROJECT GOTHAM RACING
XBOX ■ MICROSOFT

Don't let the title fool you, this is not Batman Kart racing, its Microsoft's top selling Xbox street racer. Project Gotham is slick, speedy, beautiful and challenging - from the creator's of the highly acclaimed Metropolis Street Racer.



UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003
PC ■ INFOGRAMES

The sequel to 99's "Game of the Year" is upon us, and as you'd expect the bar has been raised in all areas. You've looked at the screenshots on the net, but they don't do this game justice and neither did the demo. Prepare to be owned.



NINJA ASSAULT
PLAYSTATION 2 ■ SCE

Princesses in peril, Evil Shoguns - restore pride in the village with a hail of bullets from your honourable light gun. This is no Time Crisis 2 but it's a reason to dust off the G-Con and it's hard to resist firing guns safely (and legally) indoors.



BEACH LIFE
PC ■ INFOGRAMES

Beach Life is like The Sims and Zoo Tycoon on Fantasy Island - you build up a swanky resort and earn big dollars while all the guests have fun in the sun. Charming, addictive and one of the better game soundtracks in a while.



SSX TRICKY
XBOX ■ EA BIG

It might be tricky to rock a rhyme but it's easy to love EA Big's celebrated snowboarding title on the Xbox. After some testing, our resident SSX specialist (Craig) gave the game and the Xbox controller a solid two sore thumbs up.



DUKE NUKEM ADVANCE
GBA ■ TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE

Duke's back on the small screen shooting everything in sight in the interests of preserving the peace. Duke Nukem Advance is a hilarious trip down memory lane (ugly go-go girls included) but right at home as a handheld title.



ETERNAL DARKNESS
GAMECUBE ■ NINTENDO

This highly touted thriller blends 3D action with an enigmatic plot and along with Resident Evil and Turok Evolution, Eternal Darkness is one of many adult themed Cube titles helping to defuse claims it's just a youngster's console.



PAC MAN WORLD 2
PLAYSTATION 2 ■ SCE

Eating dots and avoiding ghosts is still the name of the game in this strange 3D world. This is PS2 platforming at its best but we still have no idea what's in the special dots that give Pac Man such courage - perhaps we'll never know.



GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY
GAMECUBE ■ NINTENDO

Embark on a lone quest or take a few friends along for a stunning 4-up slash fest in this revived classic. Gauntlet Dark Legacy on the Cube features more than 60 levels, endless power ups, Dwarves, magic, treasure and nonstop action.



AMPED
XBOX ■ MICROSOFT

More like 1080 Snowboarding than Cool Boarders, this offers thrills and spills, with a touch of class. Less insane than Tricky, Amped is a hit with boarders themselves, offering a more realistic, representation of their beloved sport.



THIS IS FOOTBALL 2003
PLAYSTATION 2 ■ SCE

For the second year running, SCE are going up against the long running FIFA franchise with another solid soccer title. 13,500 real players, a Time warp league and you can even pull off disgraceful dives like Rivaldo at the World Cup.

WIN...

XBOX GAMES

Microsoft have given us a copy Halo, RalliSport Challenge, Dead or Alive 3 & Oddworld for some lucky Xbox owner to win. Answer the following to be in the draw.

"The main character in Halo is known as Master _____?"

- a) "Chef"
- b) "Magician"
- c) "Chief"

NINJA ASSAULT

For PS2 light gun gamers, we have 5 copies of Ninja Assault to be won. Answer the following question to go into the draw.



"Which of the following was not a Ninja Turtle?"

- a) "Raphael"
- b) "Donatello"
- c) "Romeo"

GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY

We have 2 copies of Grand Theft Auto Vice City to be won! Answer the question below and you will go in the draw.



"The 80s synth pop band featured on the GTA Vice City Soundtrack is A Flock of _____?"

- a) "Penguins"
- b) "Dodos"
- c) "Seagulls"

WAVEBIRD CONTROLLERS



Answer the following to be in the draw to win one of two Wireless WaveBird controllers for the GameCube.

Complete the sentence. "The WaveBird controller is _____"

- a) "Solar powered"
- b) "Wireless"
- c) "Made of cheese"

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"EA's The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers™ is the one game to rule them all."

- Eliot Fish, Editor: *HYPER Magazine*

RELEASING...
November



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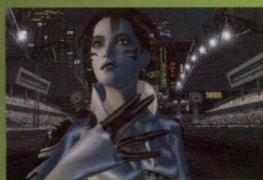
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